THE HIGHLAND/ETLING STRING ORCHESTRA SERIES

WEXFORD CAROL

Traditional Irish Carol

Arranged by Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

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INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Cello	5
String Bass	5

In this sensitive arrangement of one of the world's oldest Christmas carols, the haunting melody is passed throughout the orchestra. Changing textures combine with shifting modes to create a lyric and peaceful atmosphere that surely will be remembered long after the concert is over.

HIGHLAND/ETLING
A DIVISION OF Alfred

Please note: Our band and orchestra music is now being collated by an automatic high-speed system. The enclosed parts are now sorted by page count, rather than score order.

Program Notes

This traditional Christmas carol originated in County Wexford on the east coast of Ireland. It reportedly dates from the 12th century, and is said to be one of the oldest carols still in existence. It also is known by its hymn tune name "Enniscorthy," the Wexford town with which it has long been associated, and by its first verse, "Good People All This Christmas Time." The haunting melody of the carol makes use of the ancient Mixolydian and Dorian modes (or scales), and conveys the peaceful spirit of the Christmas story.

Notes to the Conductor

The essence of the "Wexford Carol" lies in the gentle rocking of its 3/4 rhythm combined with its haunting modal context. The melodic and harmonic content alternate between a clear major tonality and Mixolydian/Dorian modes. The arrangement begins with a four-measure introduction that establishes this alternating tonal center, oriented around D.

Throughout the piece, the melodic voices and the accompaniment should always intermesh, creating a sense of continuity. For example, when the primary carol theme is heard in mm. 43–50 (1st violins), the active arco accompaniment in the lower voices and the moving eighth notes in the accompaniment should interlock continuously. The contrasting secondary carol theme is heard, rhythmically augmented, in Dorian mode in mm. 51–58 (2nd violin/viola/cello). A steady bass line and sustained 1st violin held notes serve as a transparent accompaniment in this section; care should be taken to attend to the recurring diminuendo markings.

The primary melody is presented in G major in mm. 64–79 (viola/cello), with rhythmic accompaniment (2nd violin/bass) and a new descant theme in 1st violins. This final thematic statement should be the dynamic zenith of the piece, with care taken to balance the theme and descant. After a brief diminuendo (m. 79), the piece closes with an eight-measure return to the introductory material (mm. 80–84), retreating to a final, fading held chord (m. 84).

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Wexford Carol

CONDUCTOR SCORE
Duration - 3:30

Traditional Irish Carol
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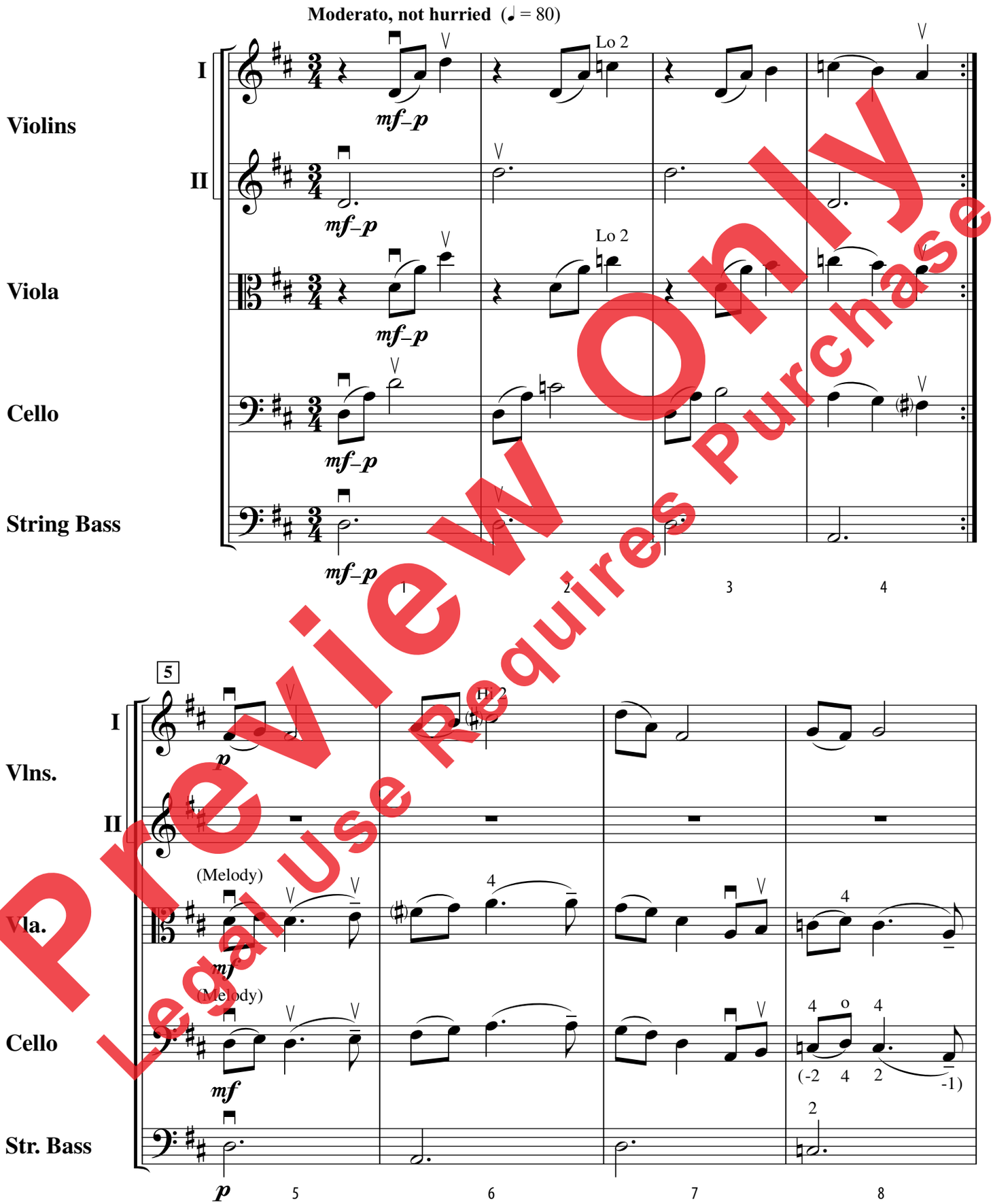

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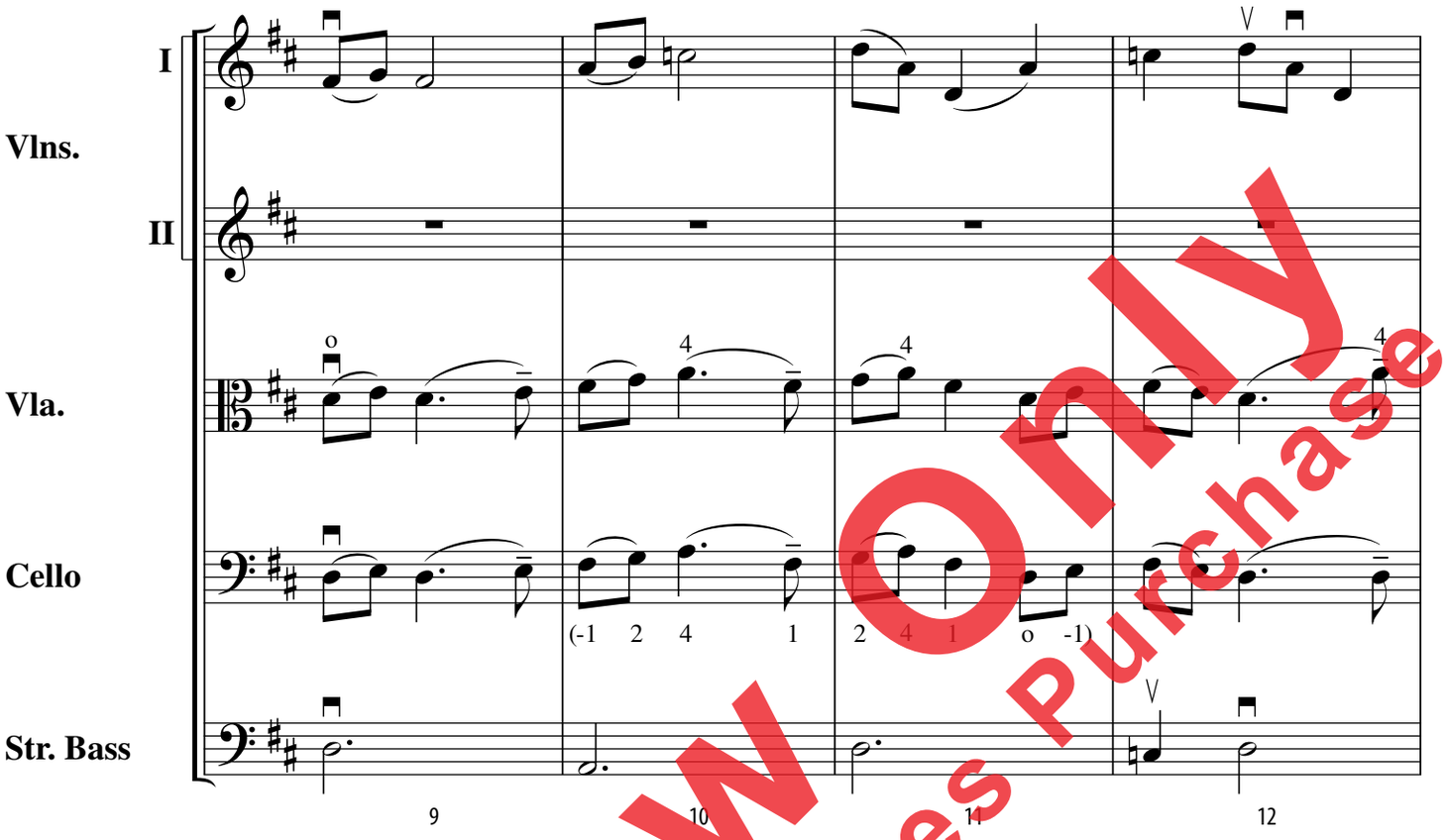

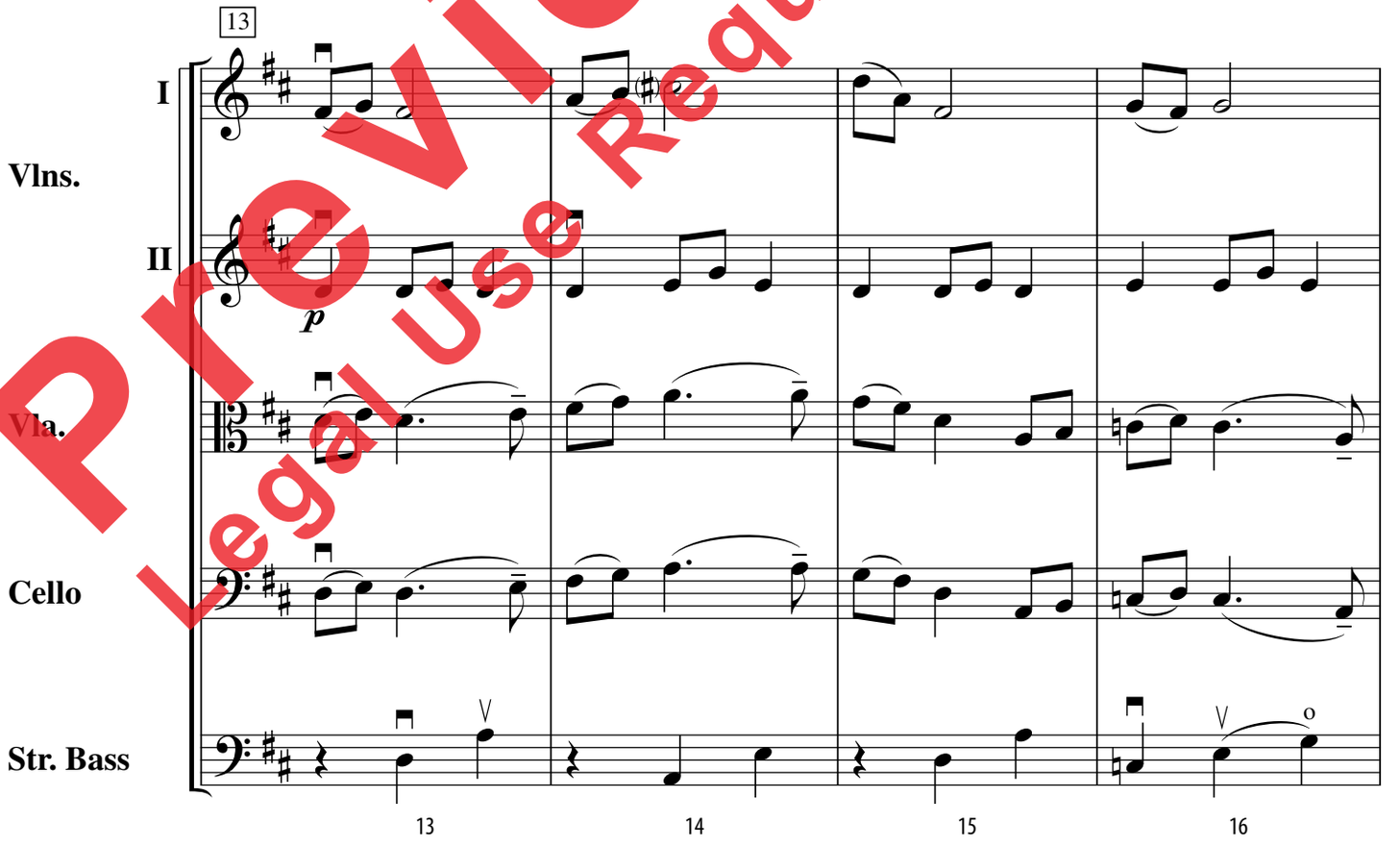

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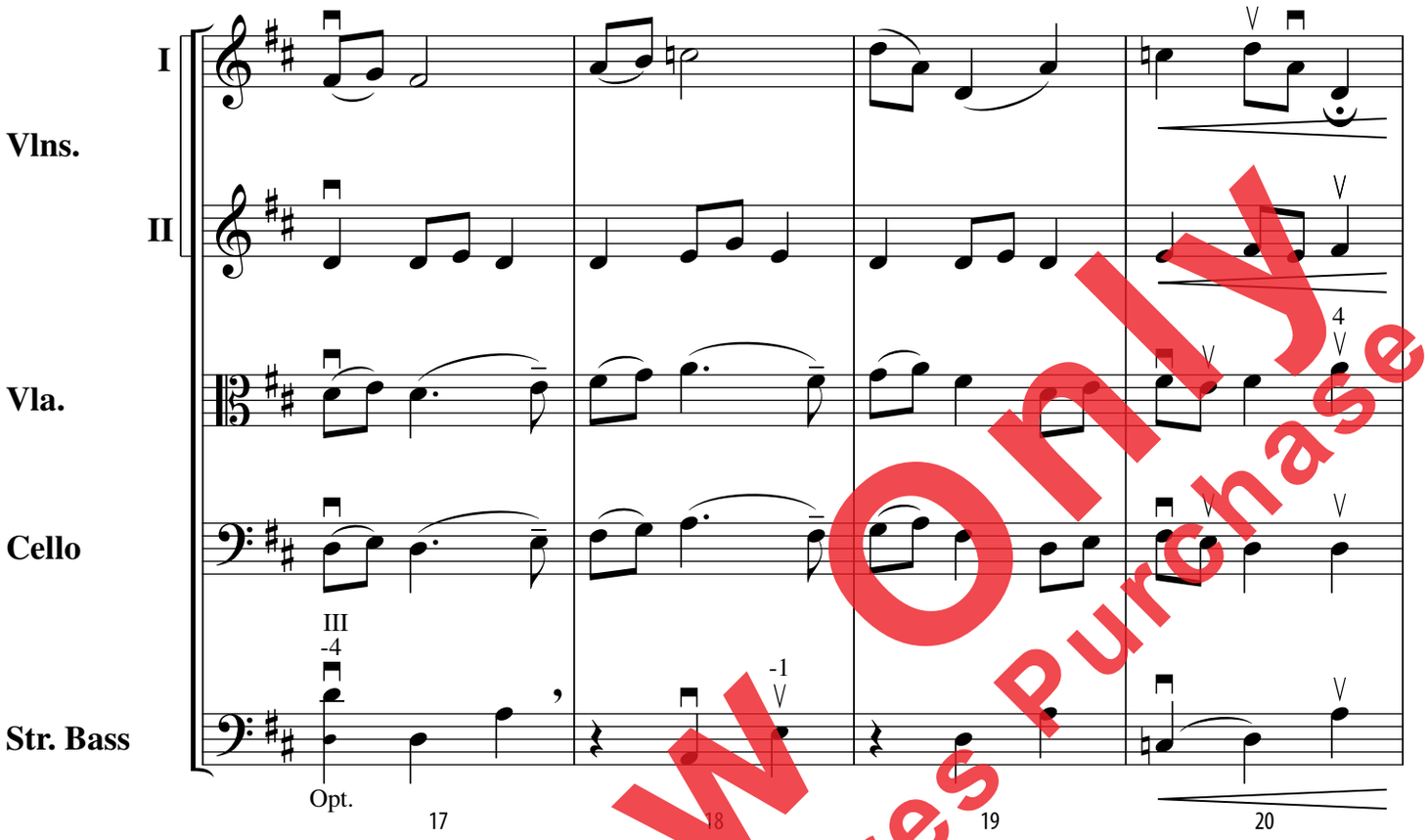

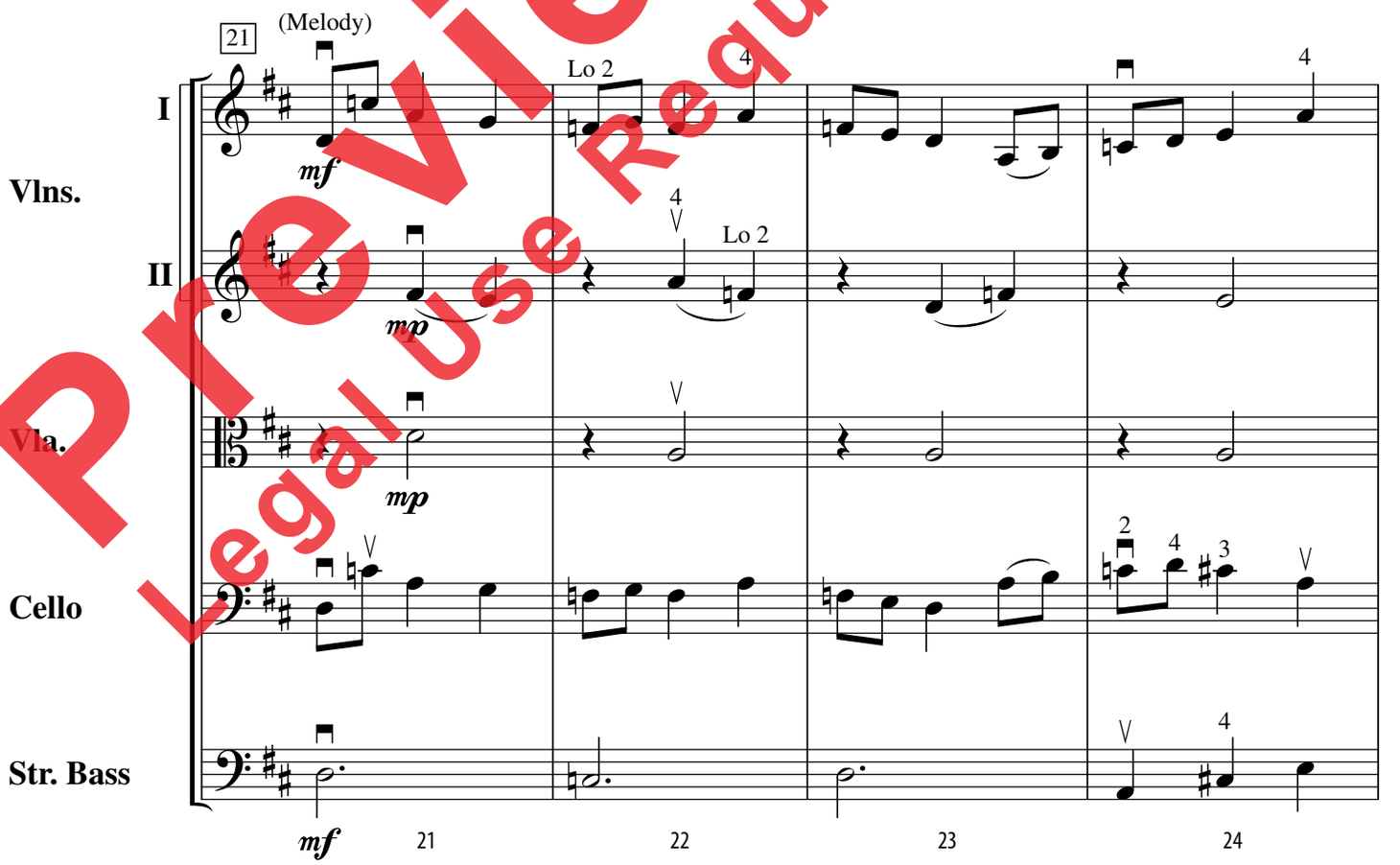

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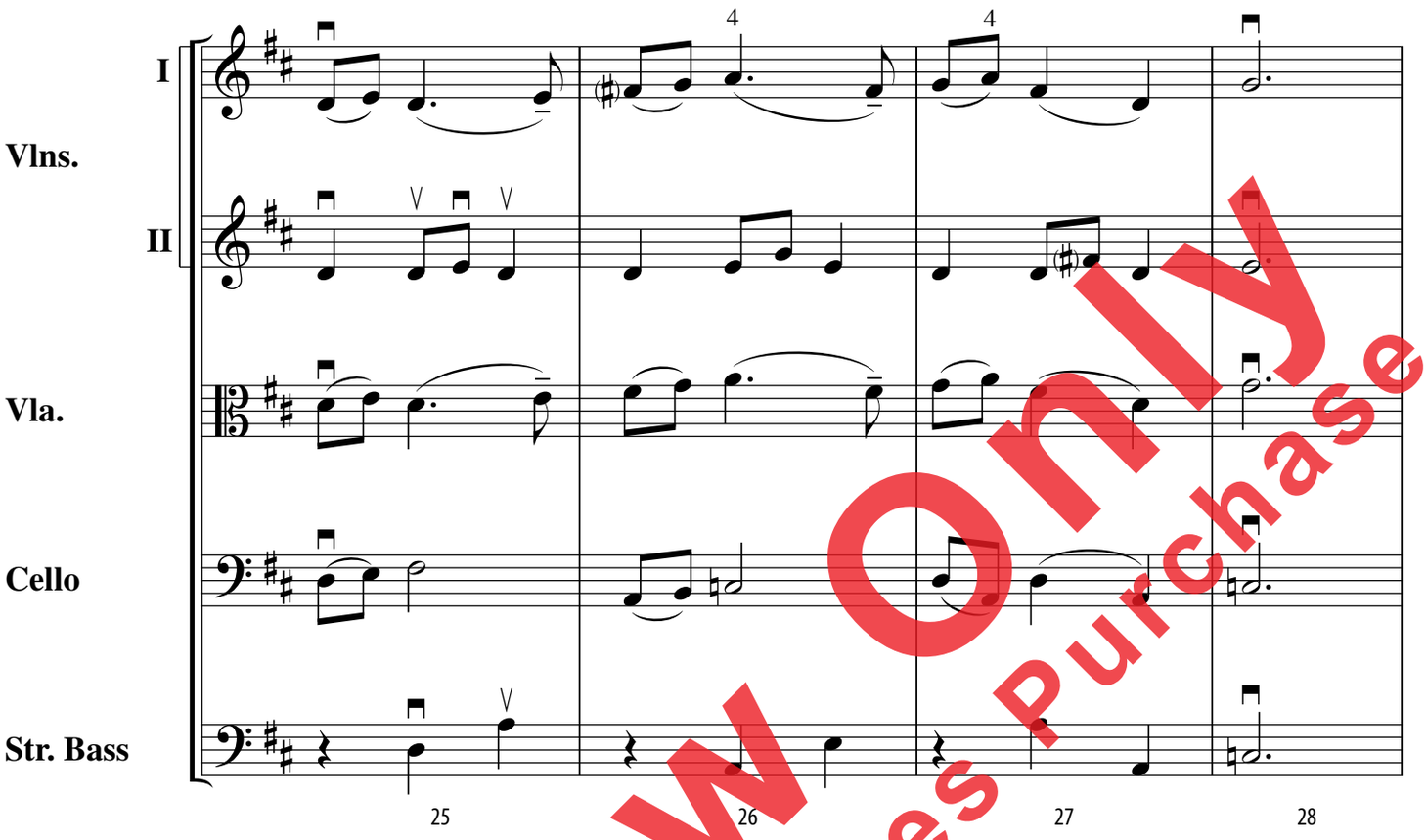

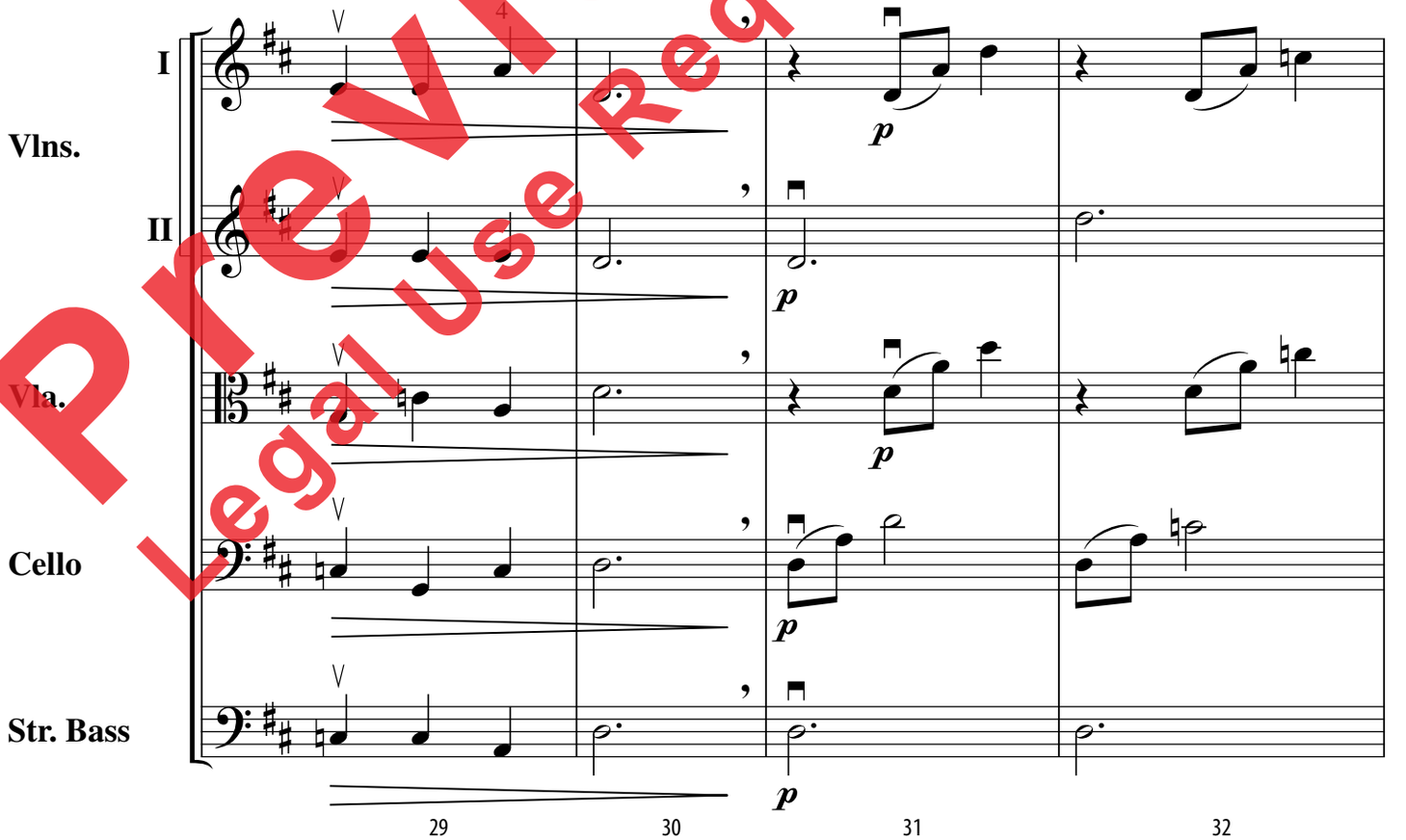

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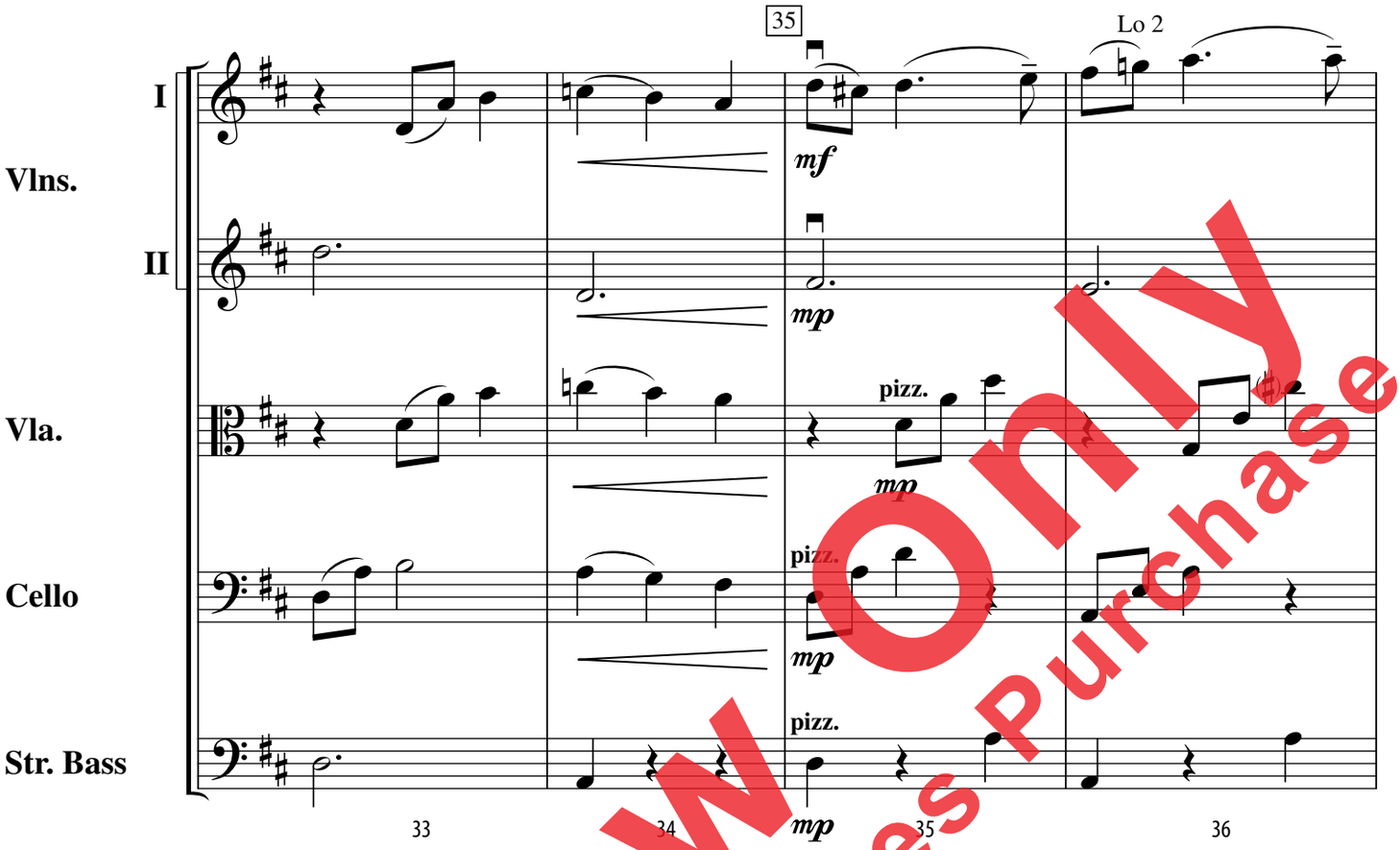

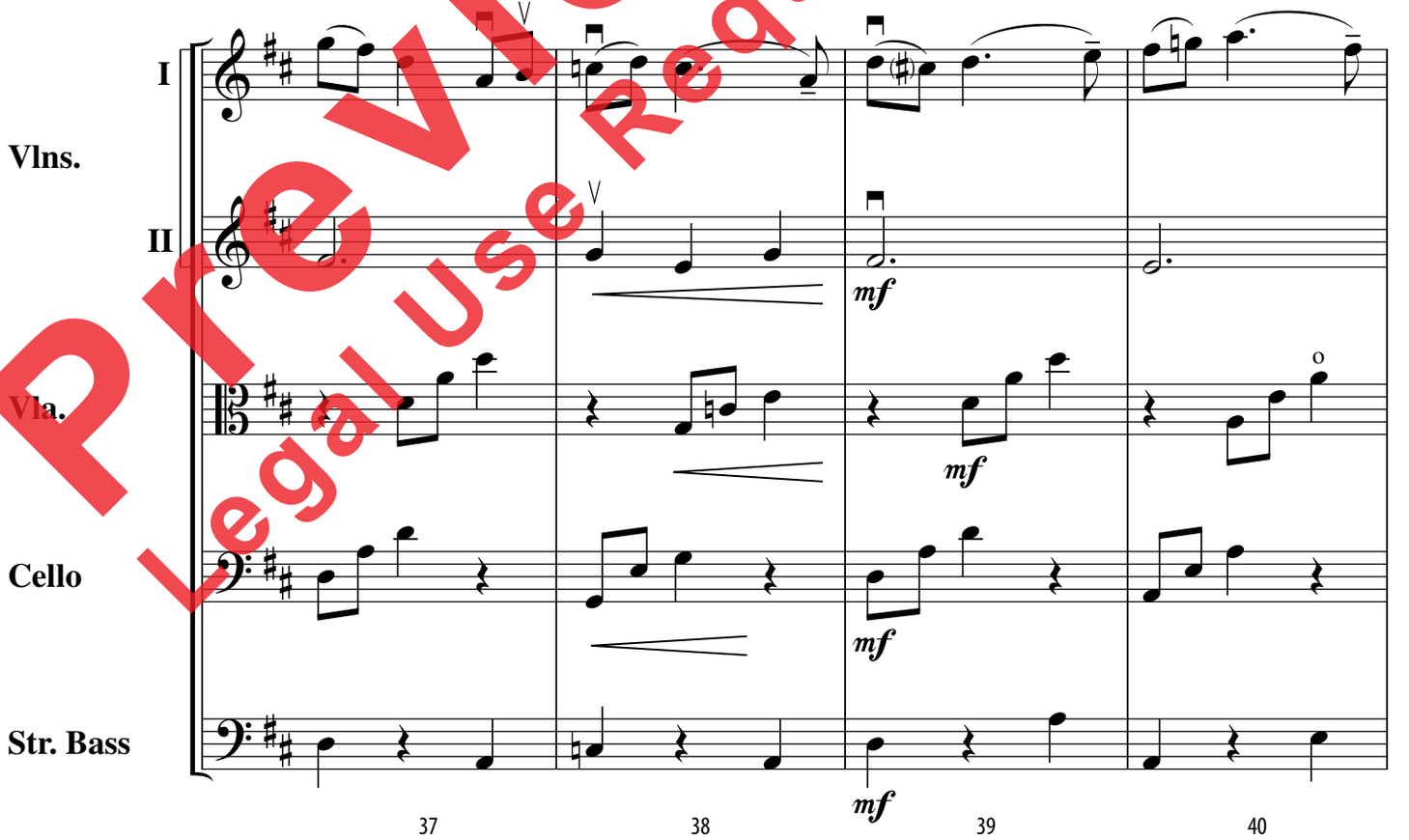

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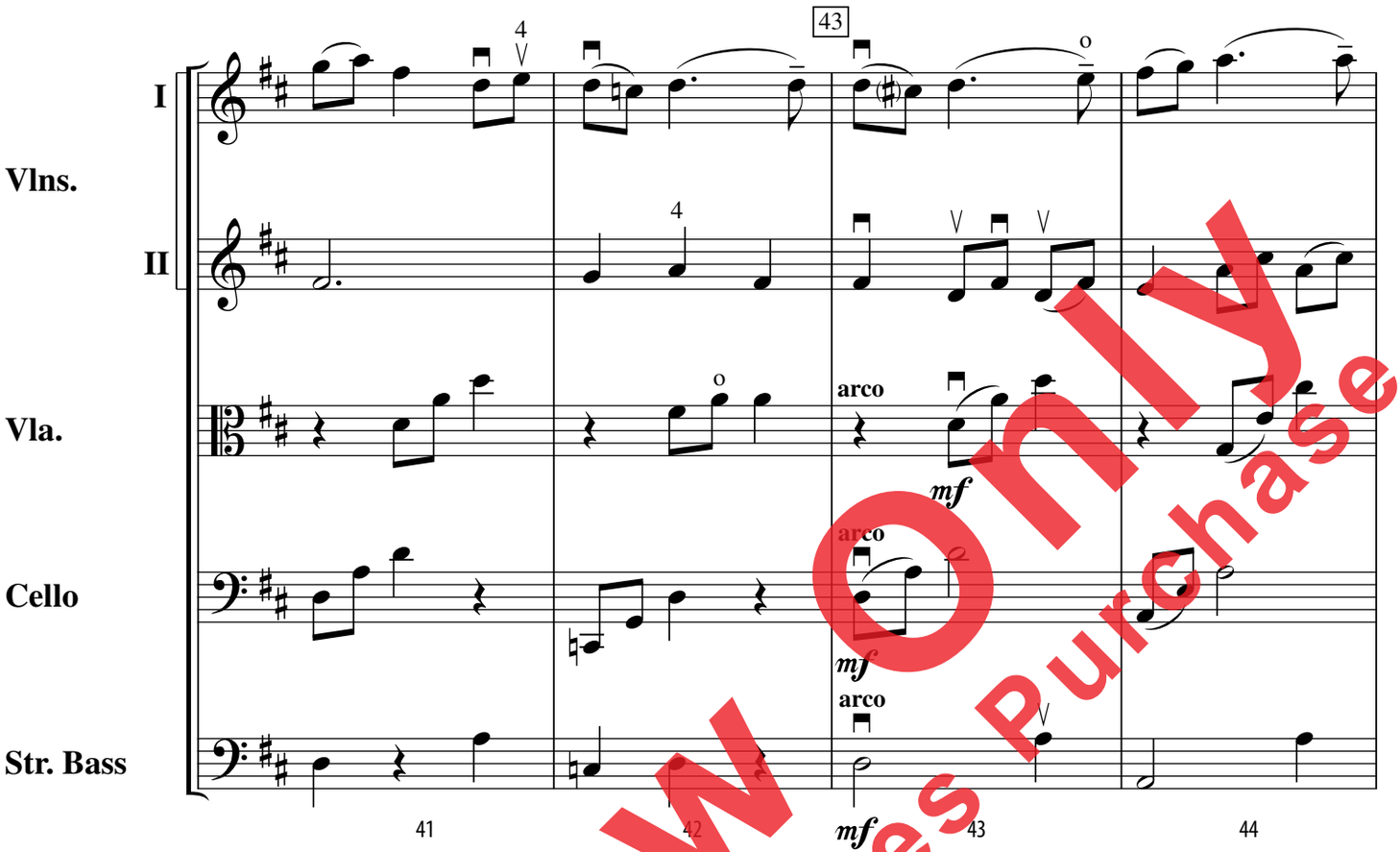

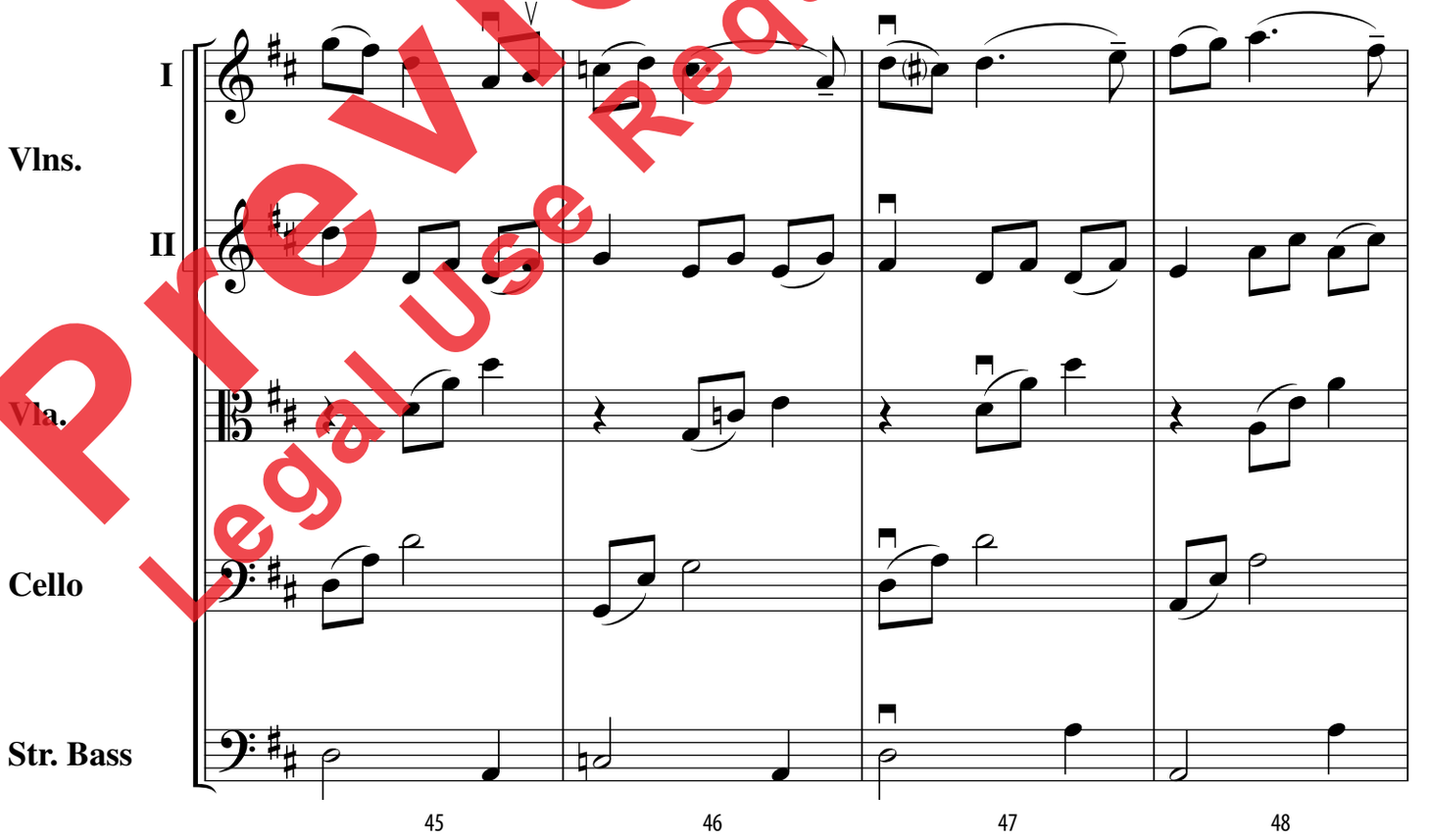

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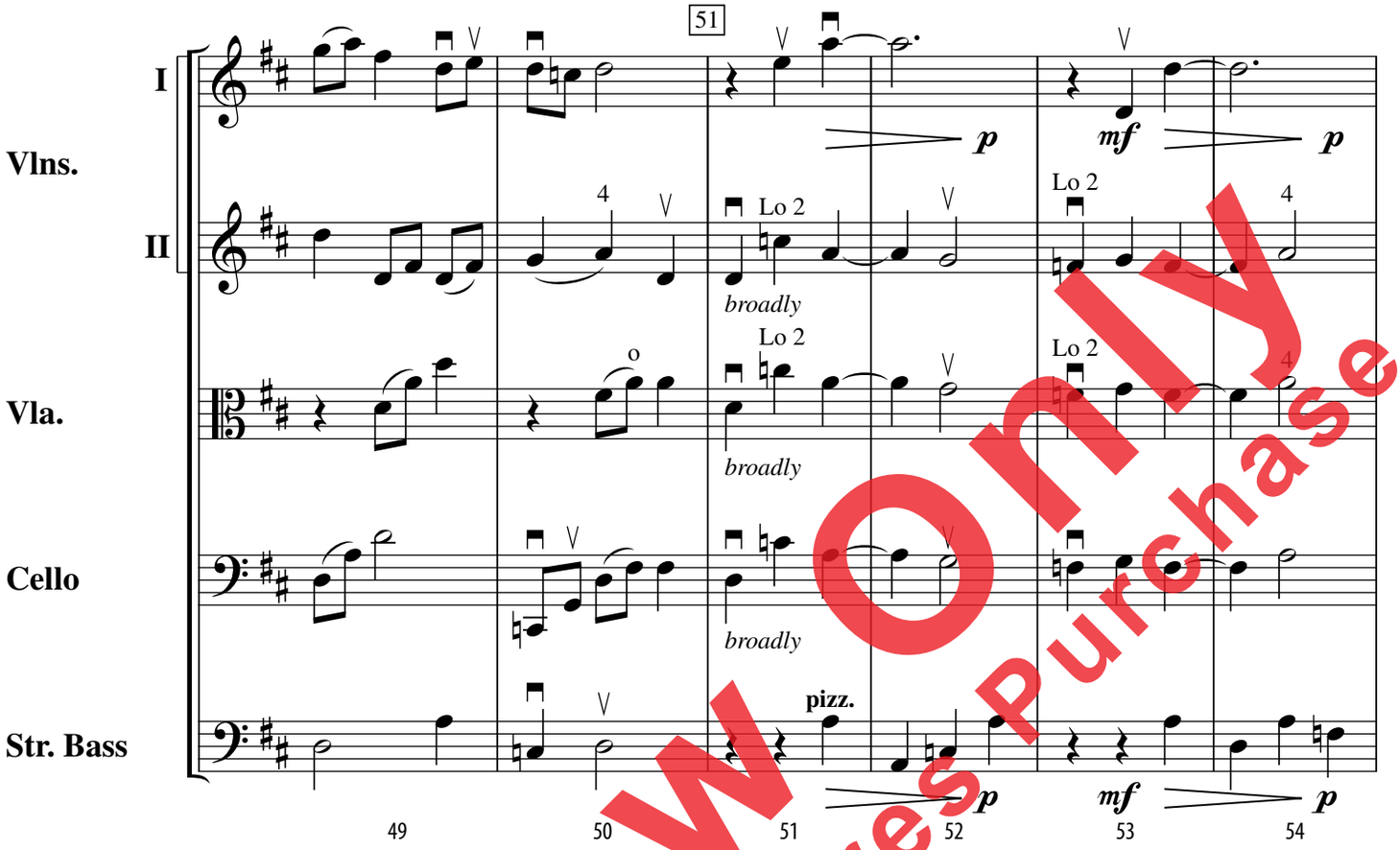

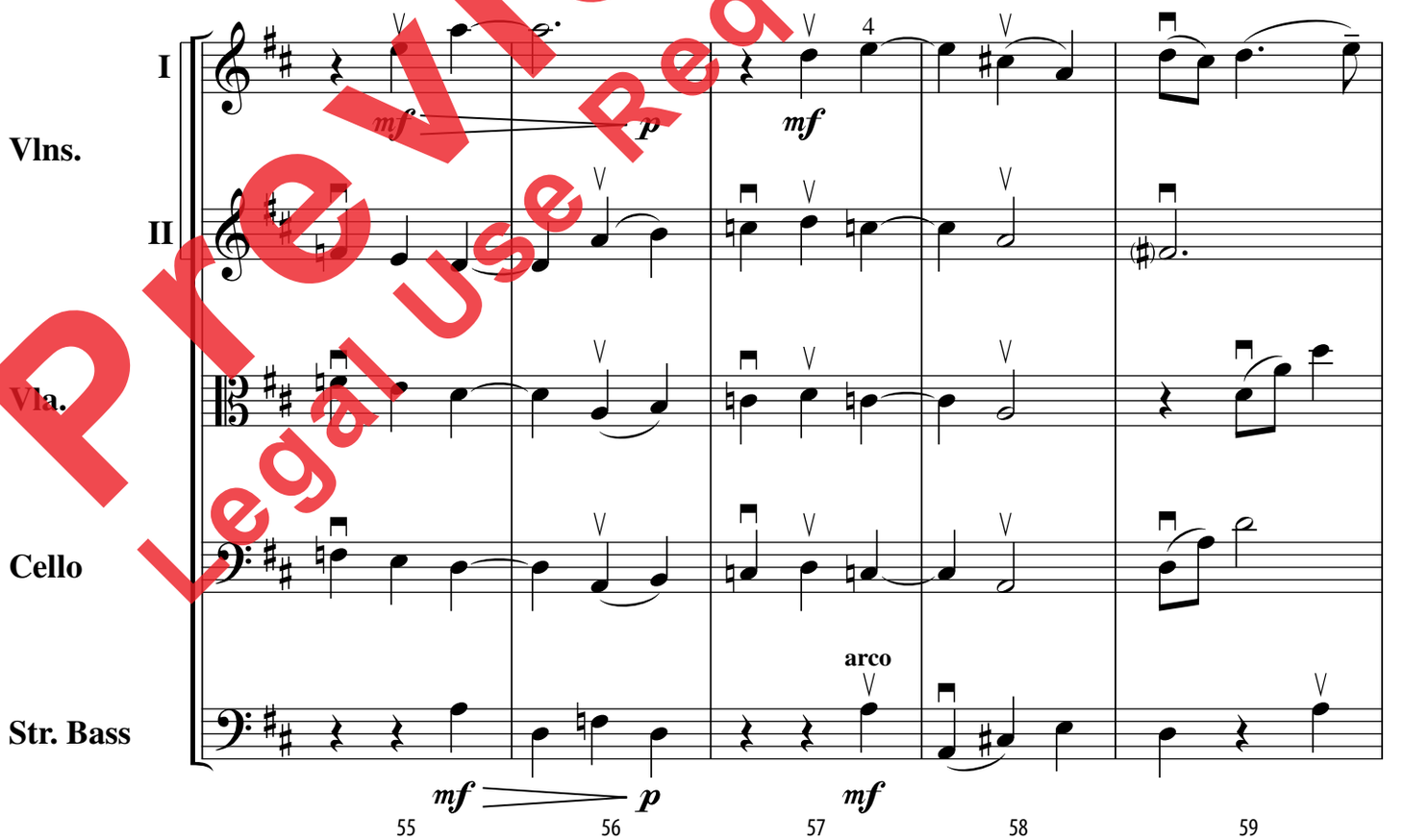

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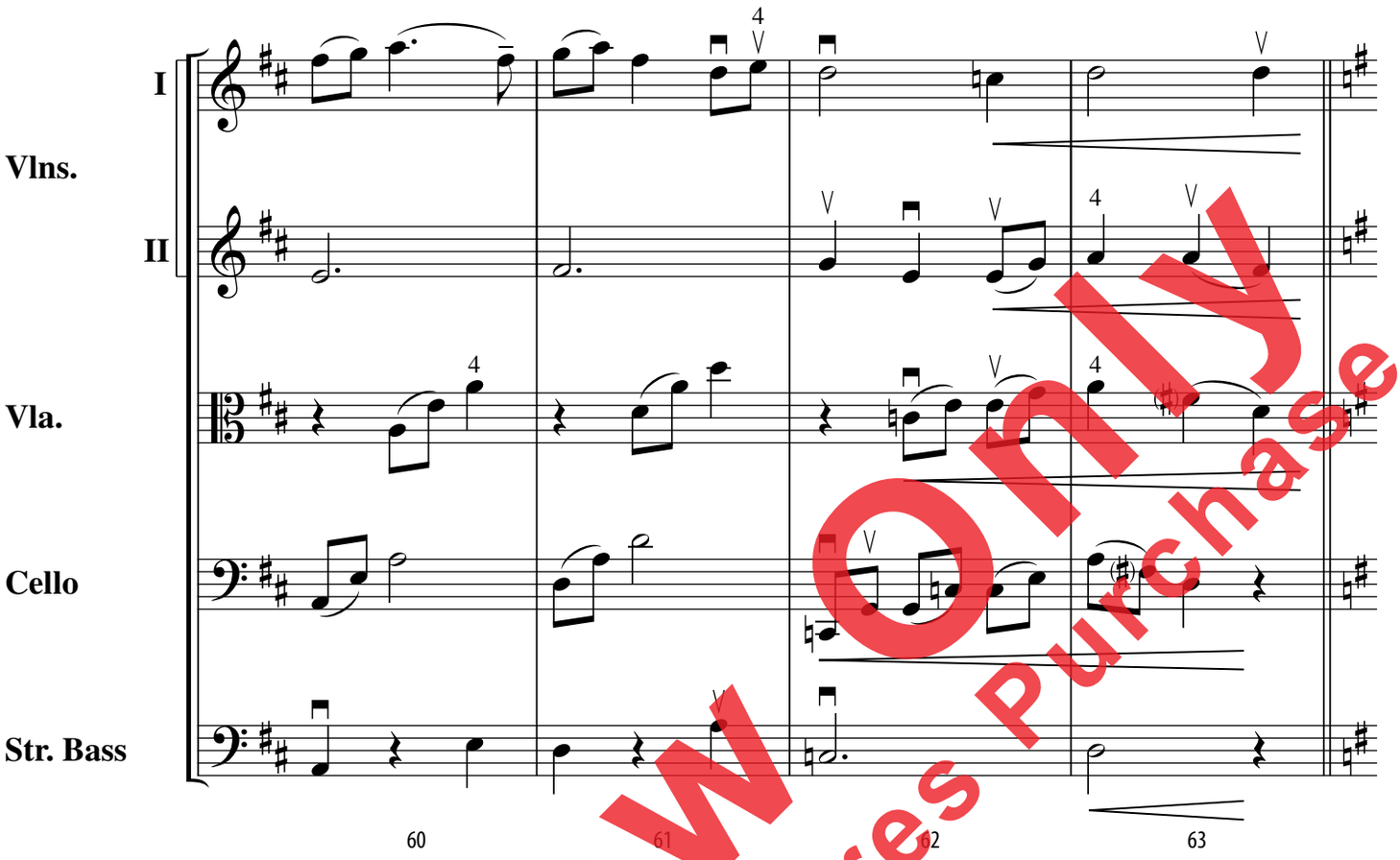

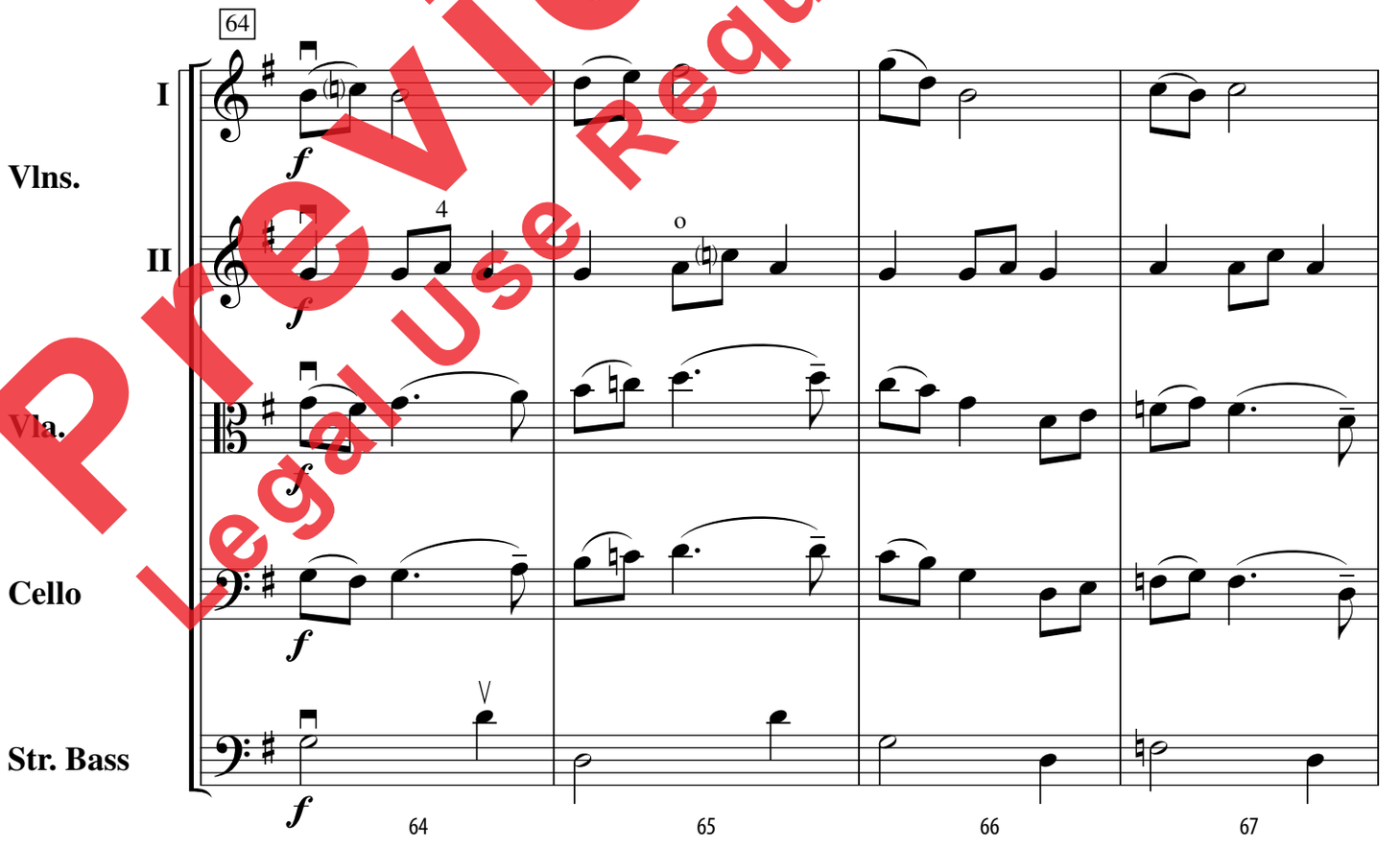

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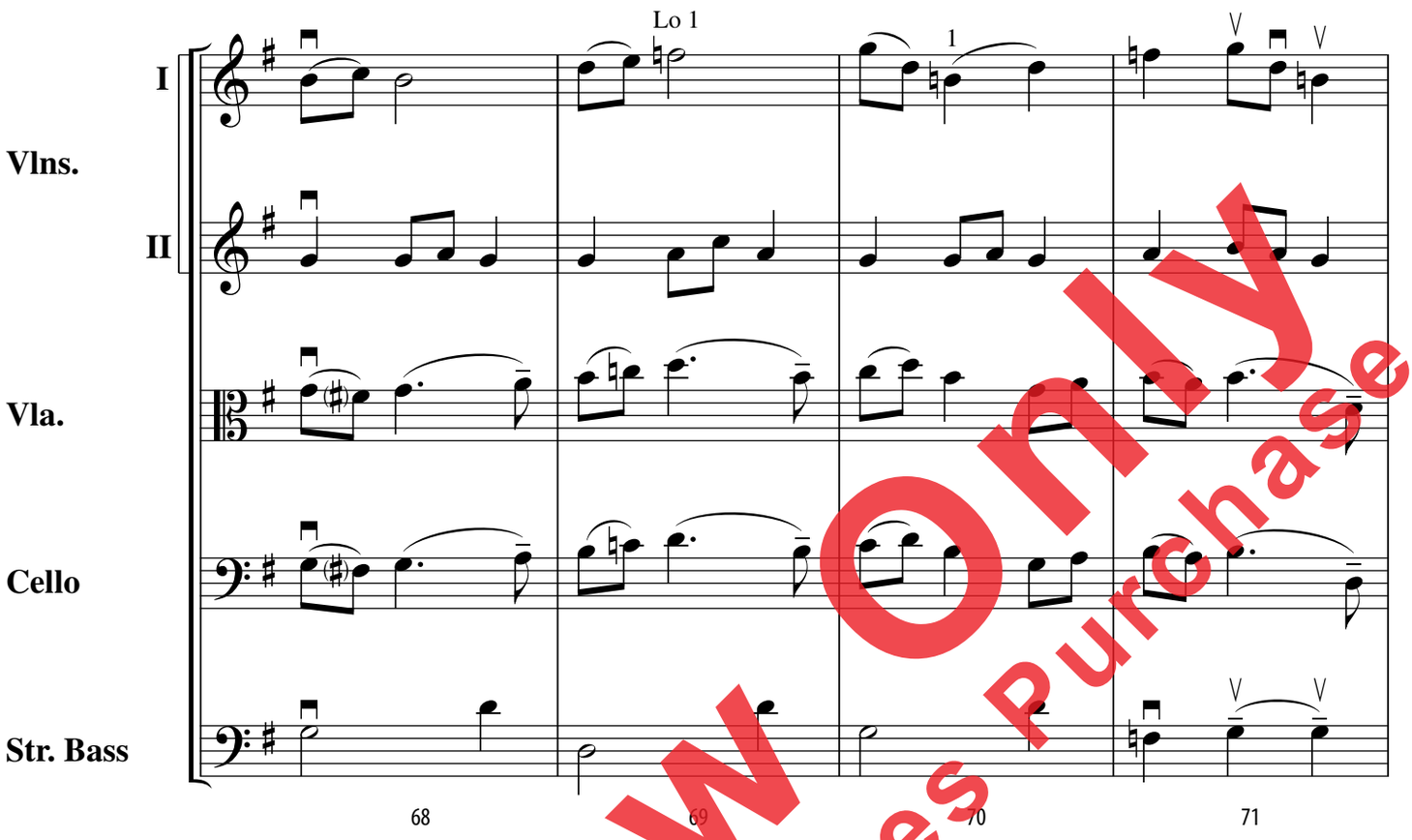

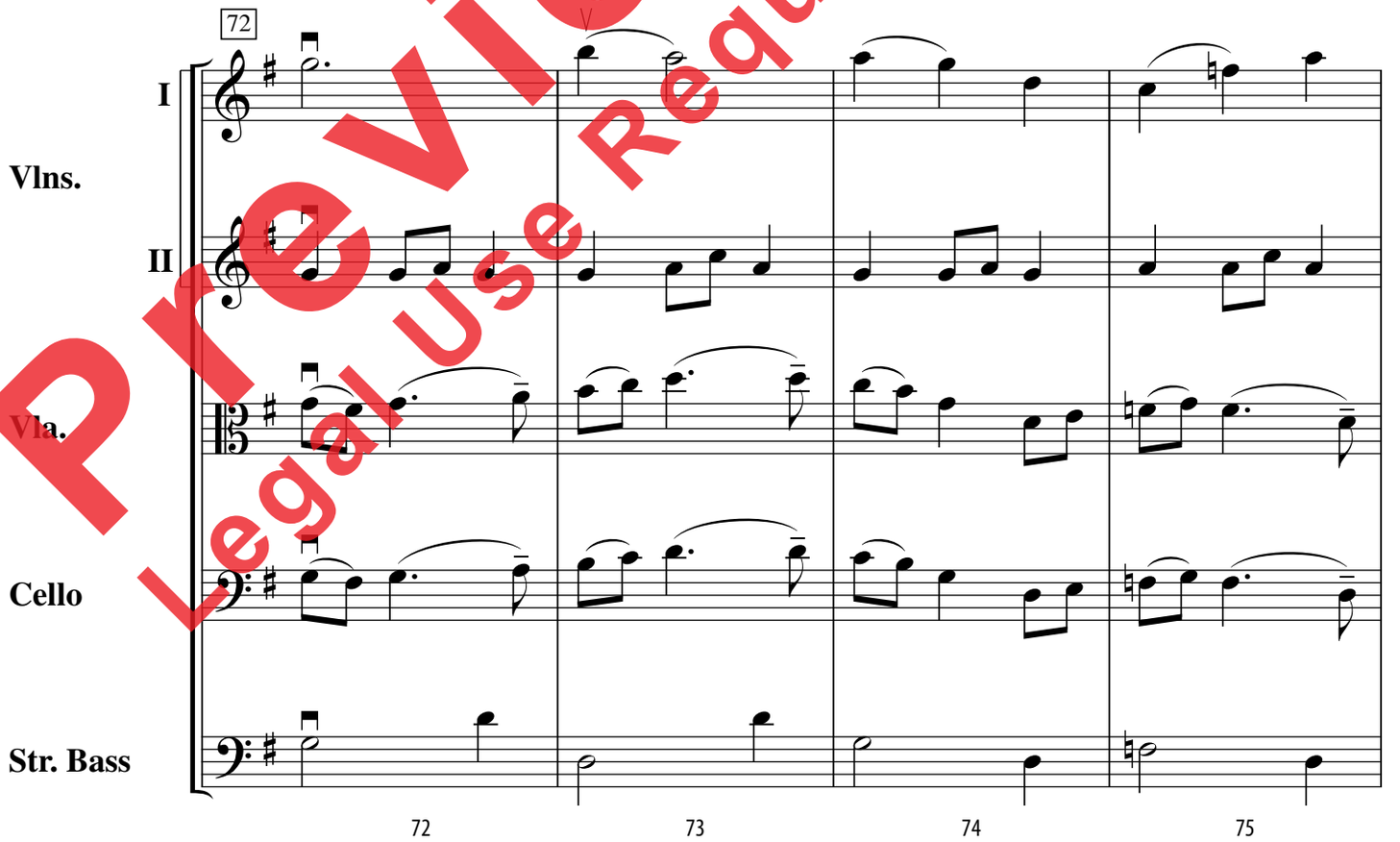

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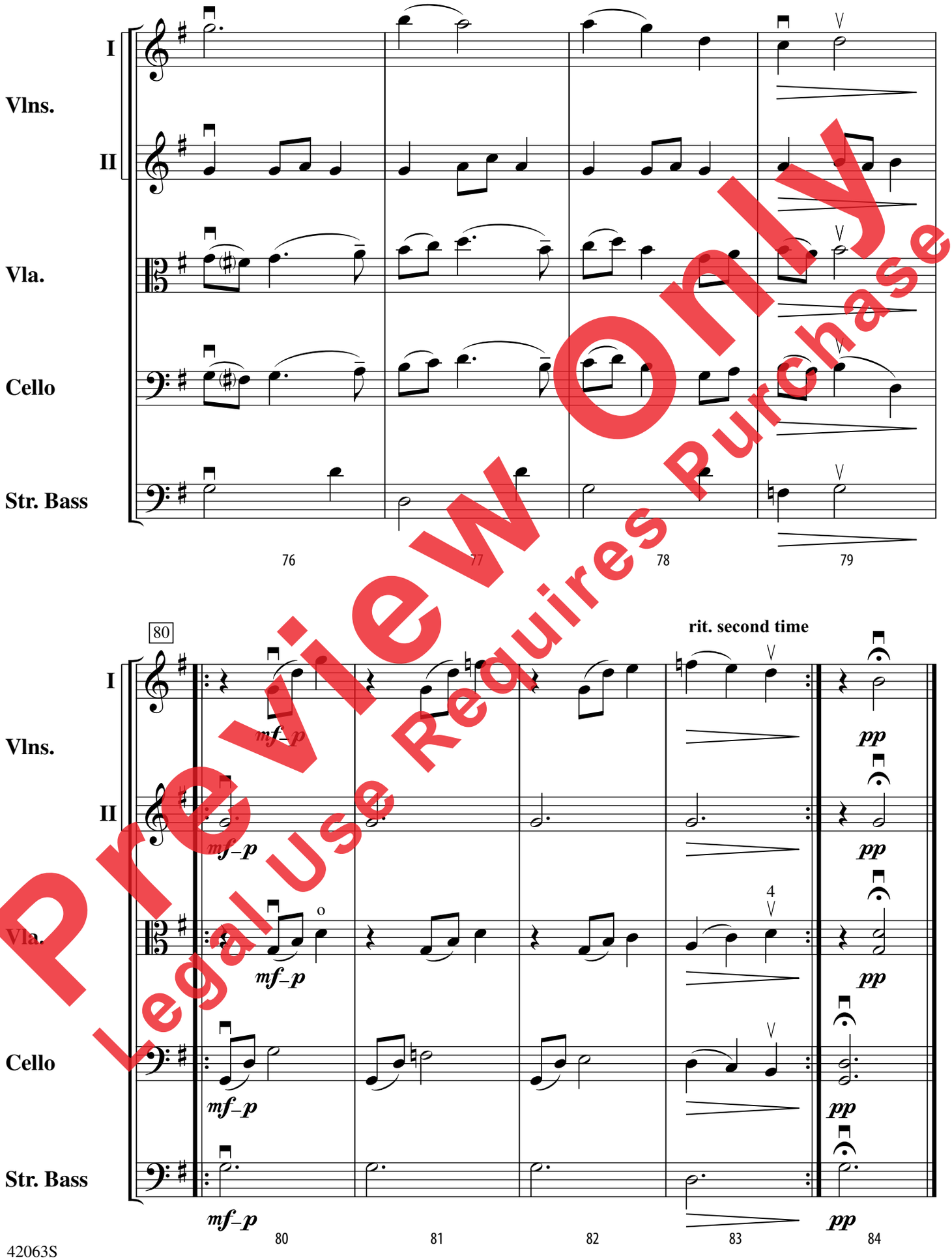

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