Commissioned by the Center for Jewish Culture and Creativity

Russell Steinberg

Cello Tropes

Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello

Op. 49

Duration: 16 minutes

PREVIEW SCORE

BLOWN TO BITS PUBLICATIONS

Cello Tropes
by Russell Steinberg

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www.russellsteinberg.com

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NOTES

Cello Tropes

I. Allegro Cantabile
II. L'istesso Tempo, but more freely
III. Scherzando
IV. Presto ("Appalachia meets the Synagogue")

Cello Tropes is a virtuoso sonata for unaccompanied cello in four continuous movements. Notation is mostly conventional (accidentals hold through the measure at their designated octave, etc.). The "+" symbol indicates left hand pizzicato. The piece should be performed lyrically and with expressive freedom. The finale evokes a "classicized" version of the joy and vigor of country fiddling music.

PAGE TURNS
As much as possible, I've provided for brief pauses to turn pages. In some places this was not possible, particularly in the arpeggio section in the last movement. Cello Tropes is also available in landscape mode where printing and taping can create 11X17 pages for better page turns (allowing four pages to be viewed at a time).

I began composing **Cello Tropes** in March 2004 in Tel Aviv as part of a grant from the Center for Jewish Culture and Creativity intended to bring Diaspora Jewish artists to Israel to draw connections with their work and the wealth of ideas in Jewish thought and tradition. My piece particularly grew out of a suggestion from composer Joseph Dorfman (the director of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University) to explore the cells of cantorial music in the context of a solo instrumental work. He described how the great cantors in Jewish tradition were star performers regarded much like today's classical virtuosos.

I became interested in the cells from "Onochi Adonoy," a complex cantorial prayer that is part of the Anthology of Jewish Music by Chenjo Vinauer (published by Edward Marks Corp. in 1953). I was particularly struck with the sense of developing variation in this prayer, as well as its haunting and folk-like pentatonic quality. I began to imagine a cello representing the Chazzan, first intoning a dark and lyrical prayer, but finally culminatng in a joyous music that suggests the flavor of Appalachian fiddling! I suppose this vision represents my "American" perspective to these ancient chants.

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Cello Tropes

Russell Steinberg

I. **Allegro Cantabile** ♩ = 120

Solo Cello

f robust and "cantorial"

p

4

f

poco a poco sul pont.

7

mp

sul pont.

10

p

pp

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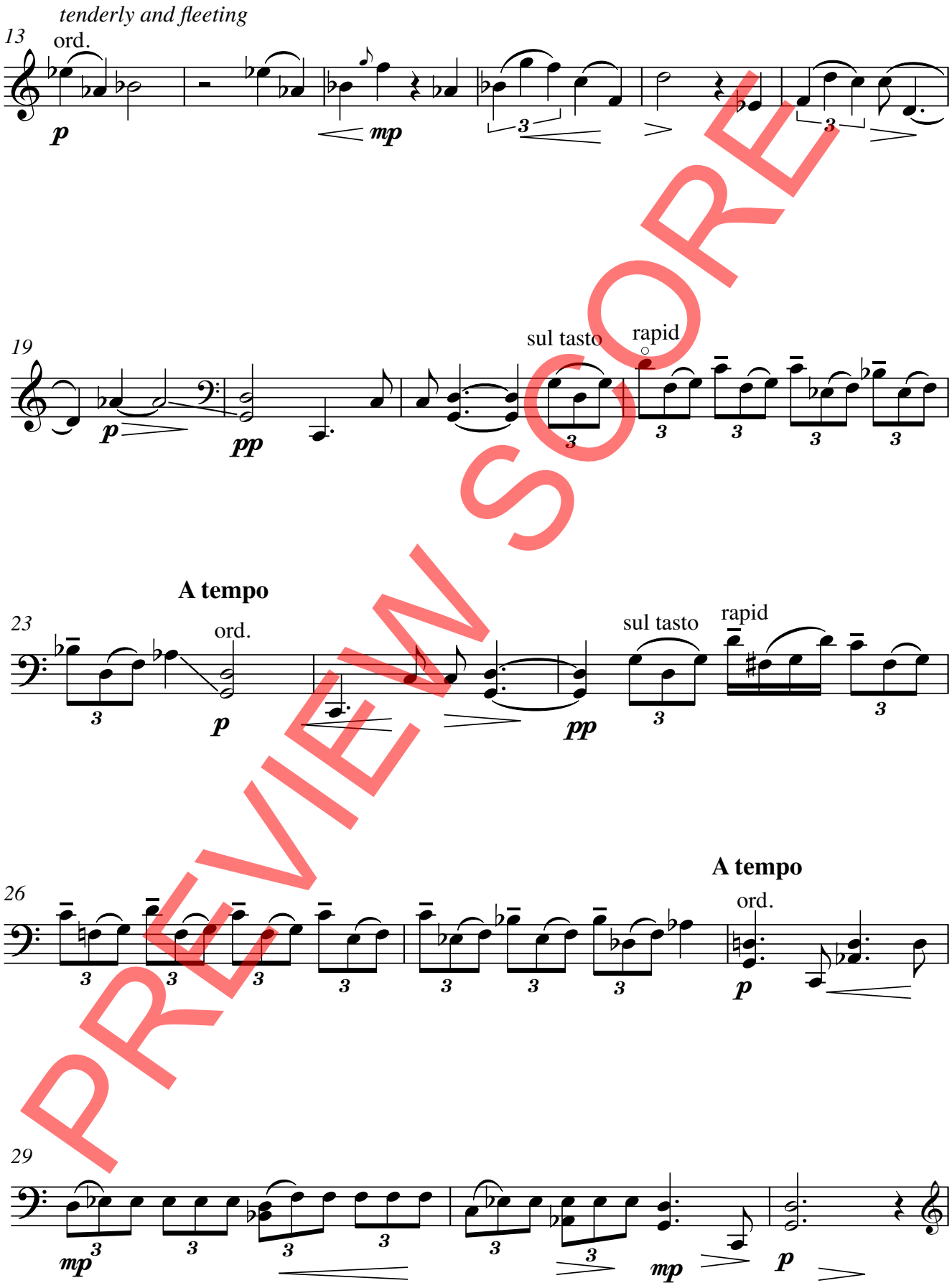

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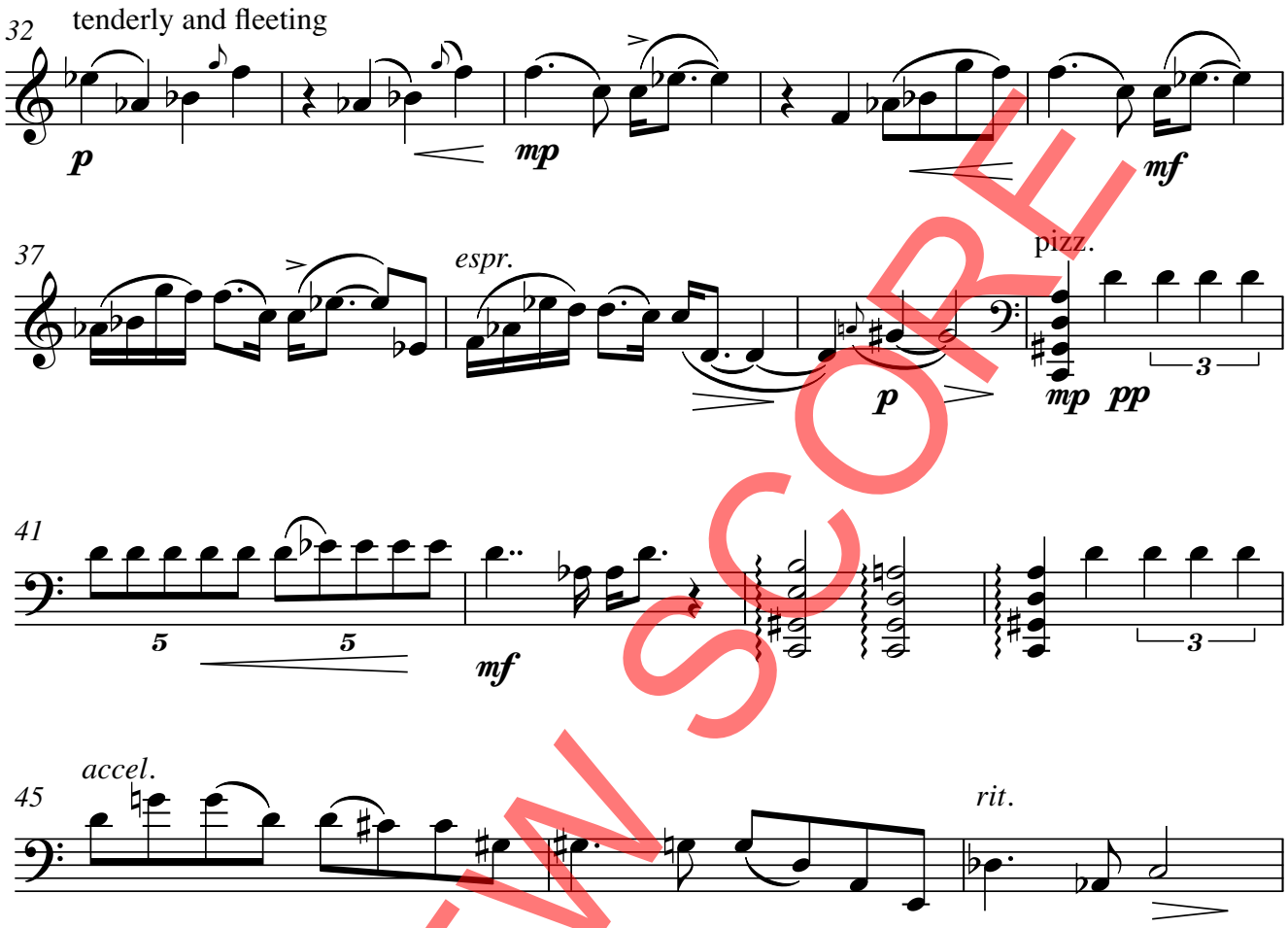

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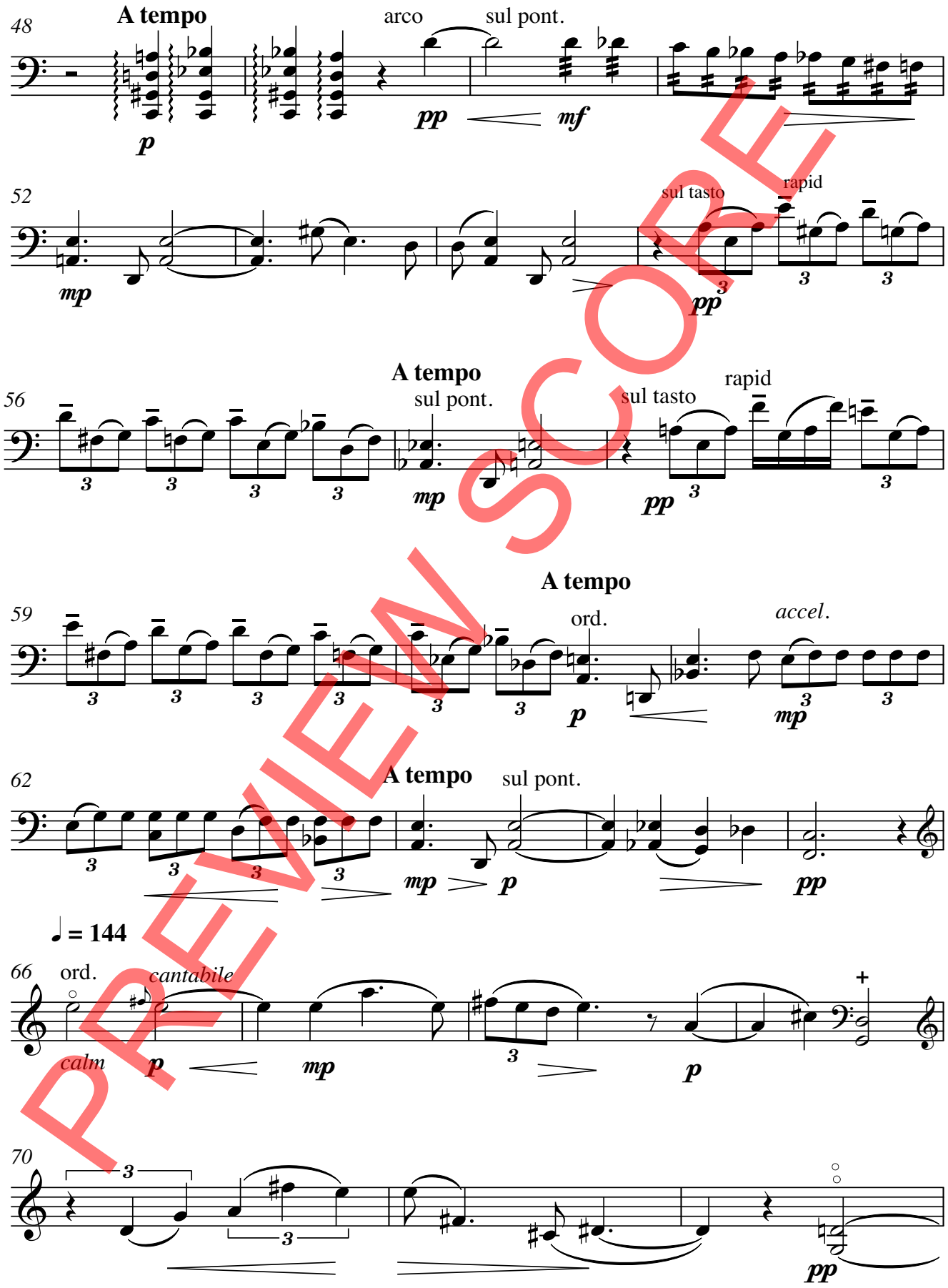

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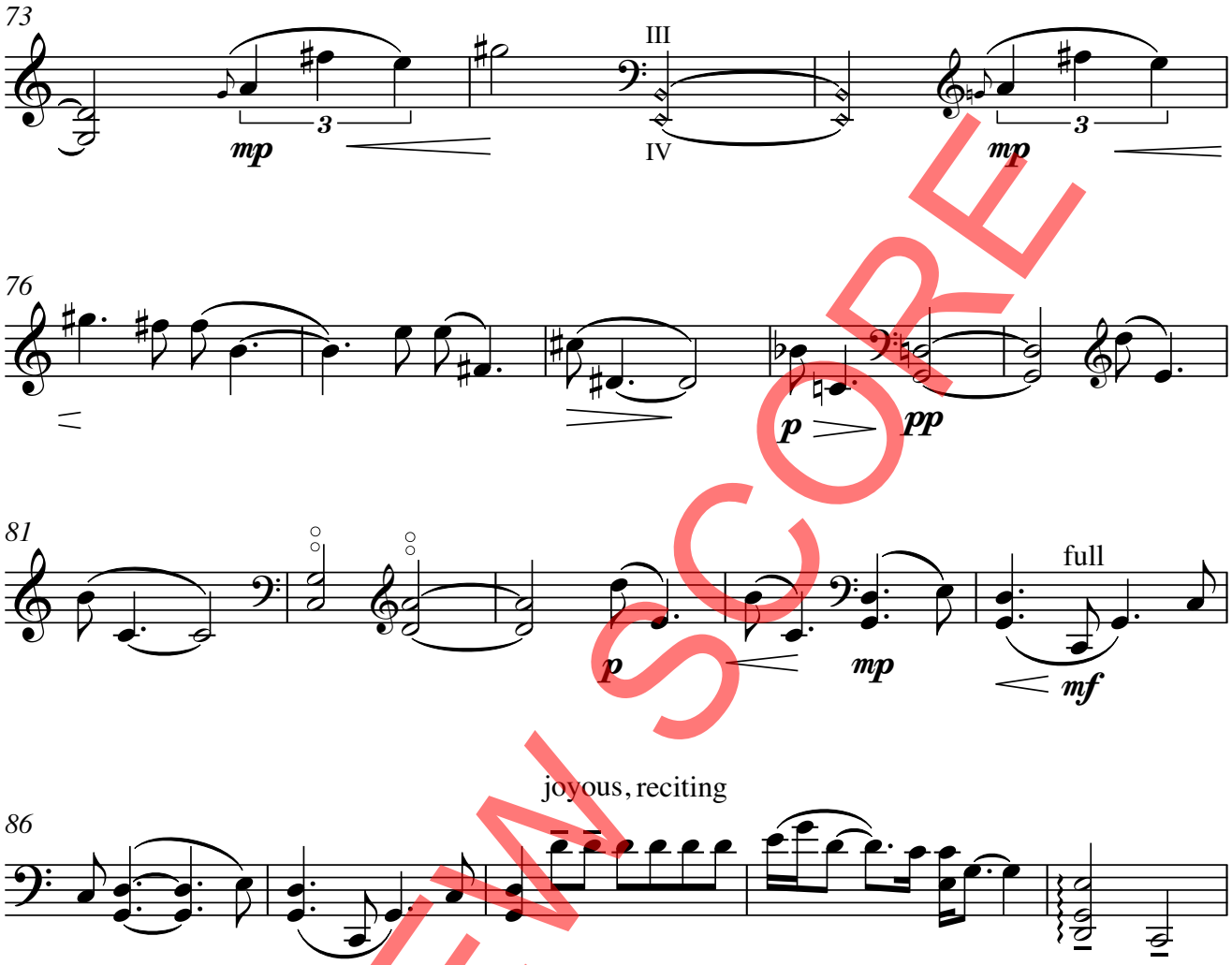

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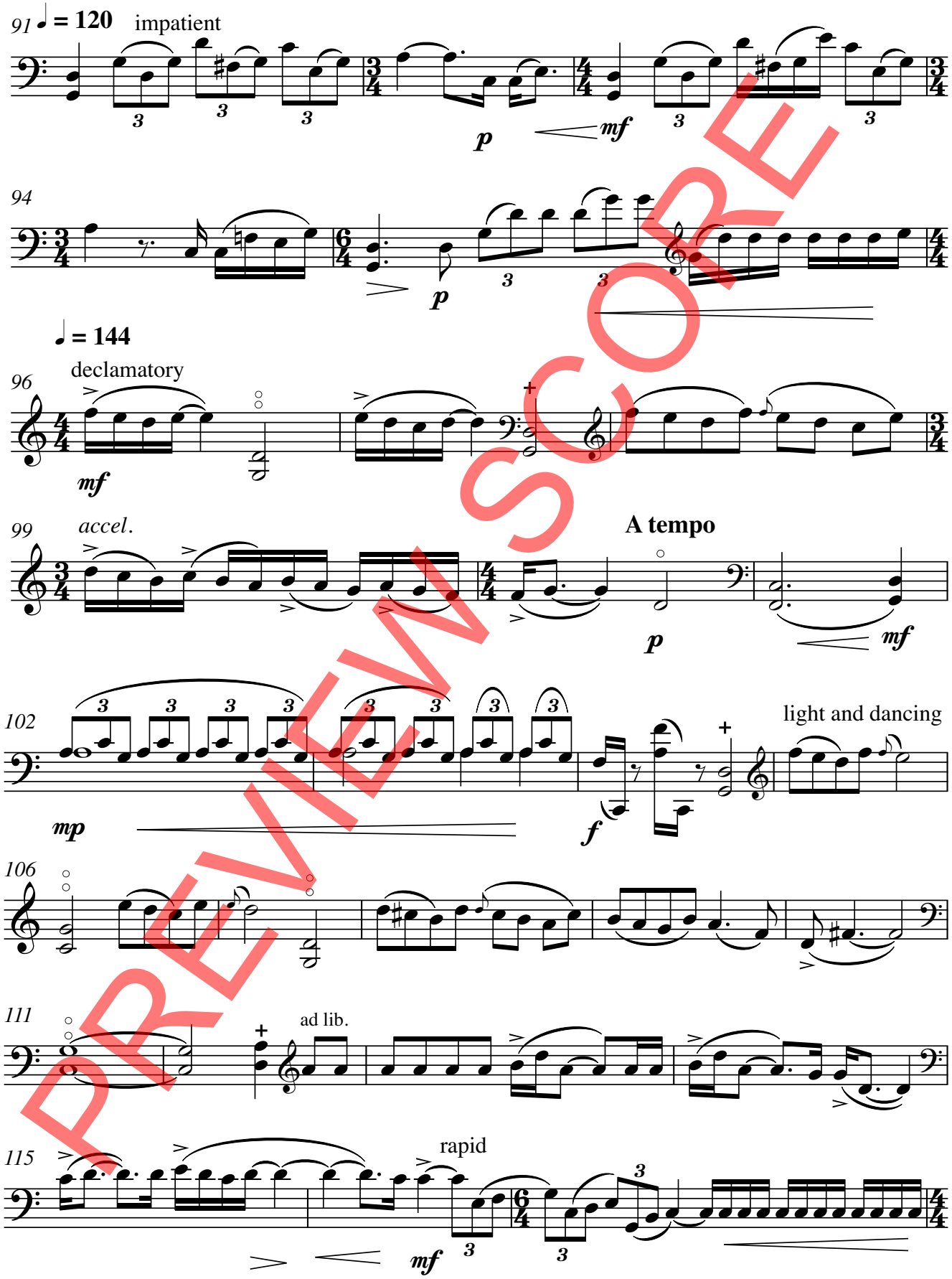

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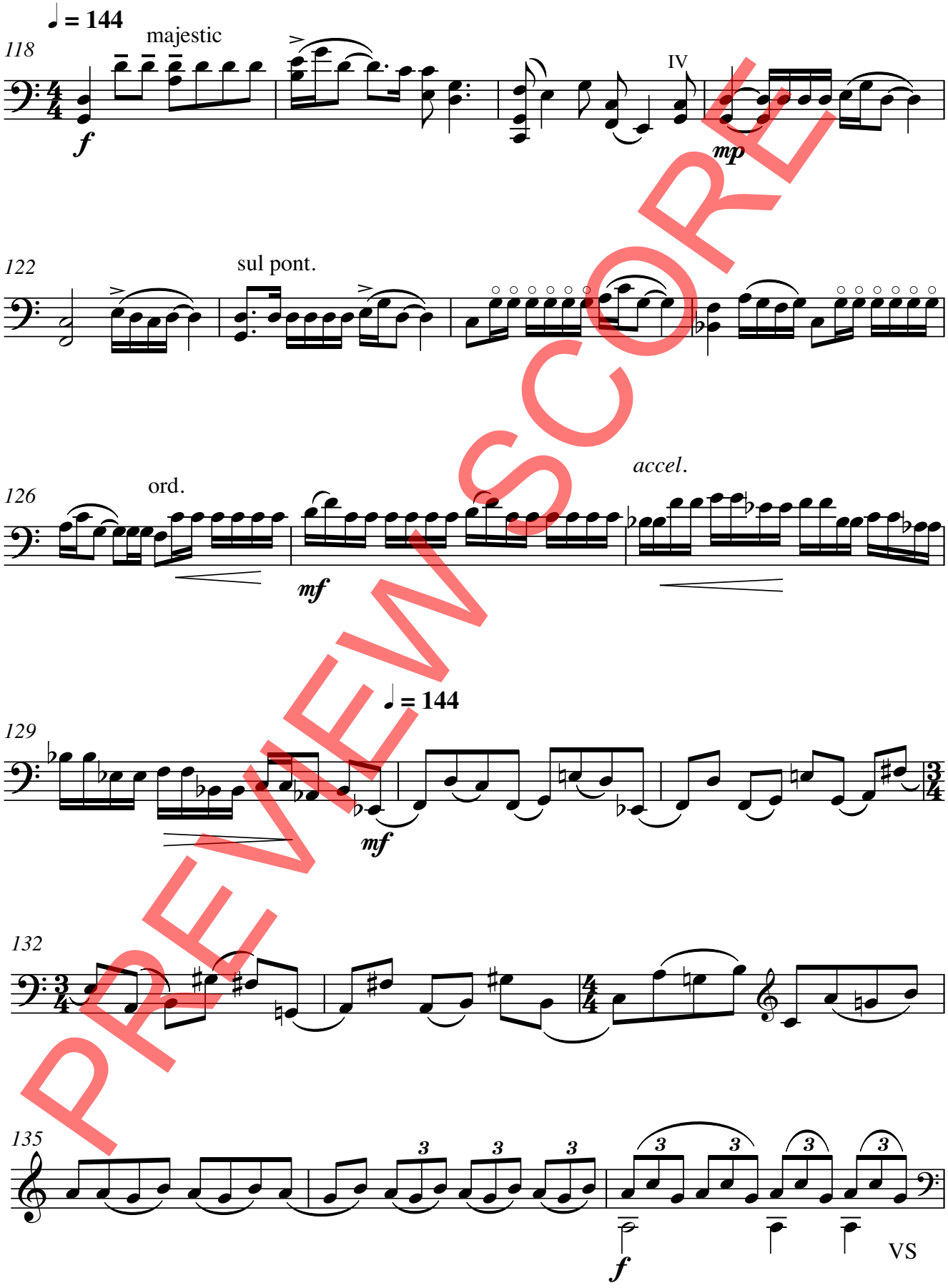

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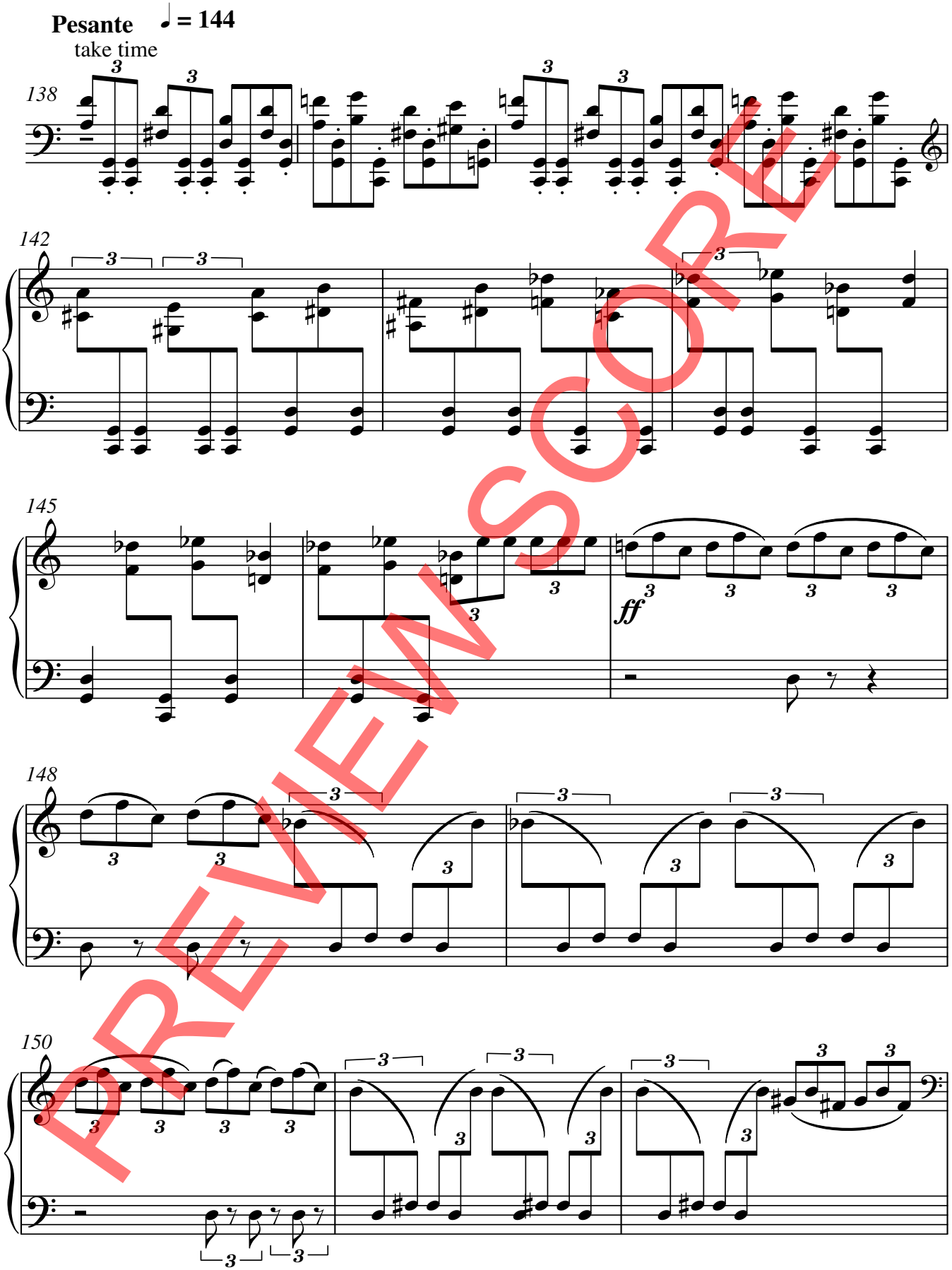

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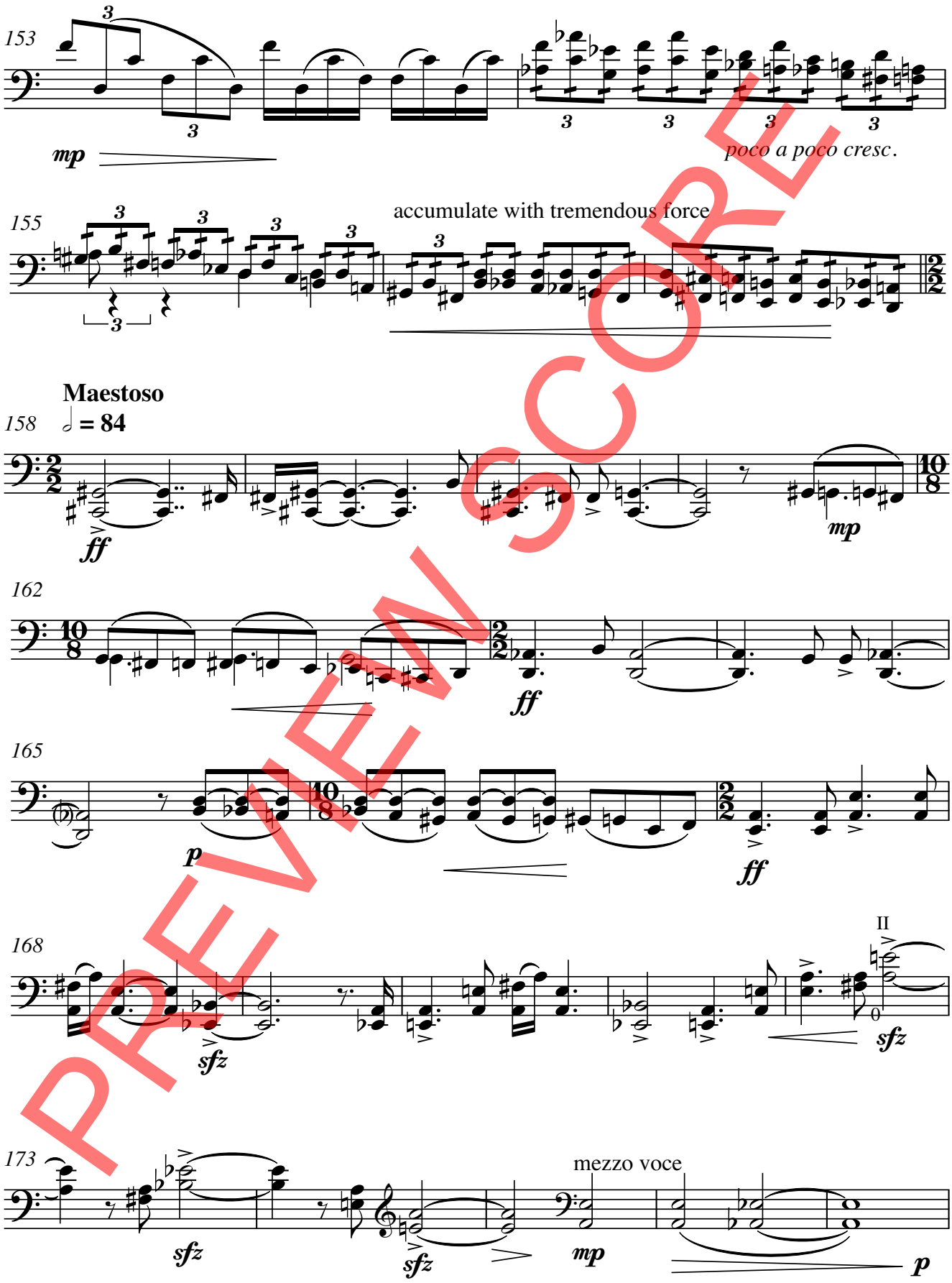

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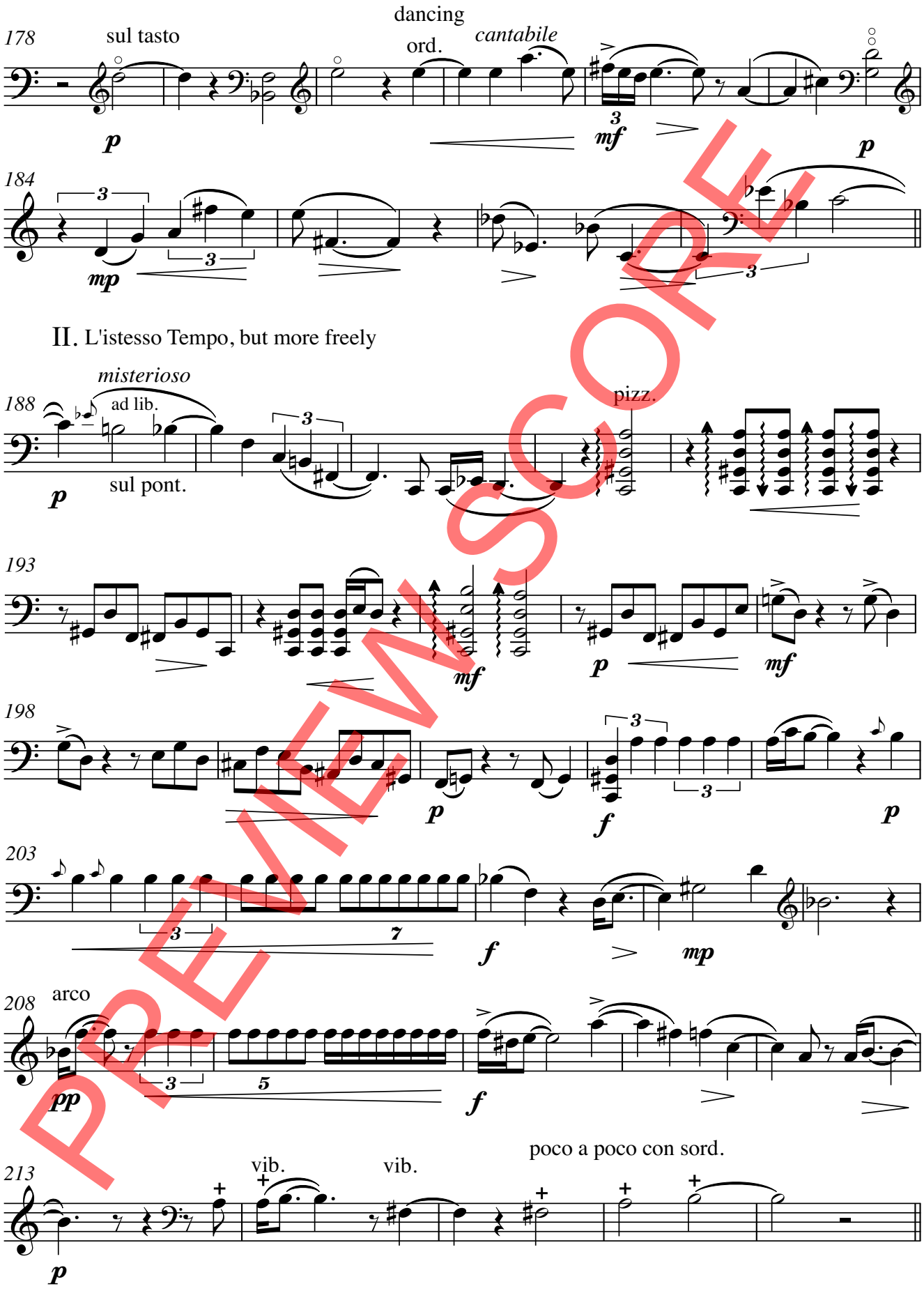

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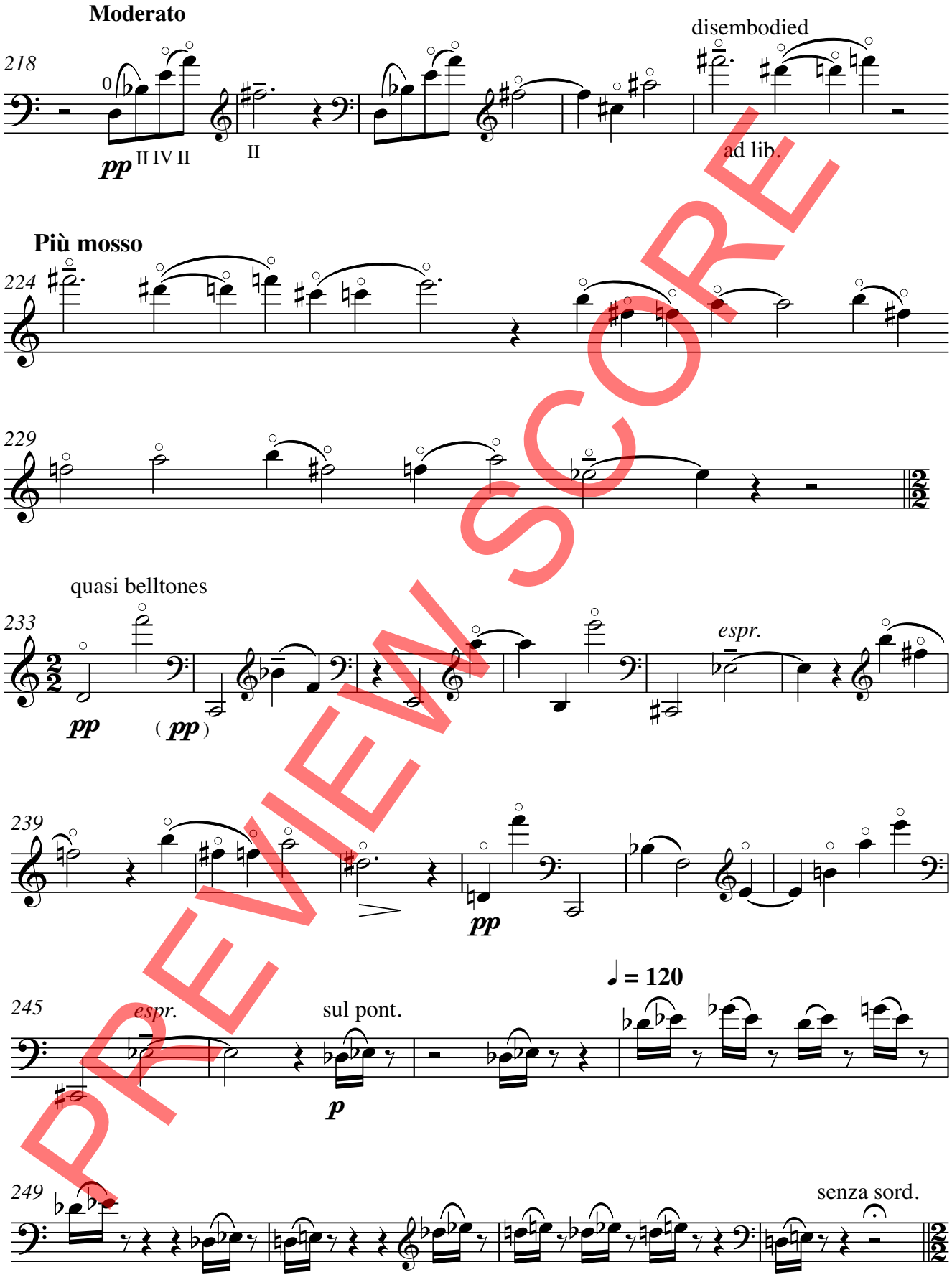

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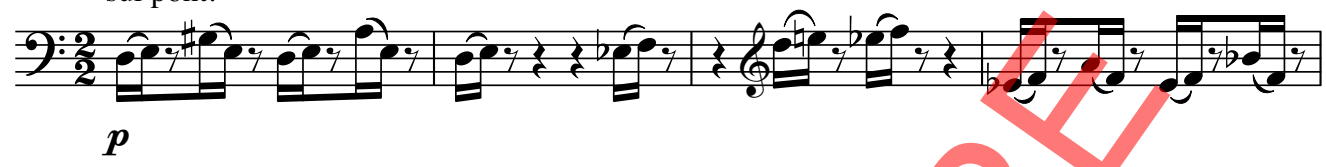
III.

Scherzando ♩ = 132

253 sul pont.



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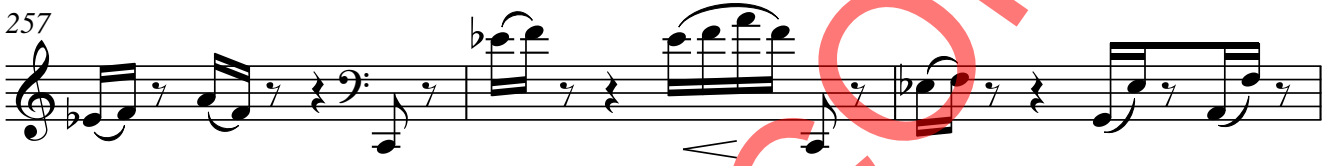
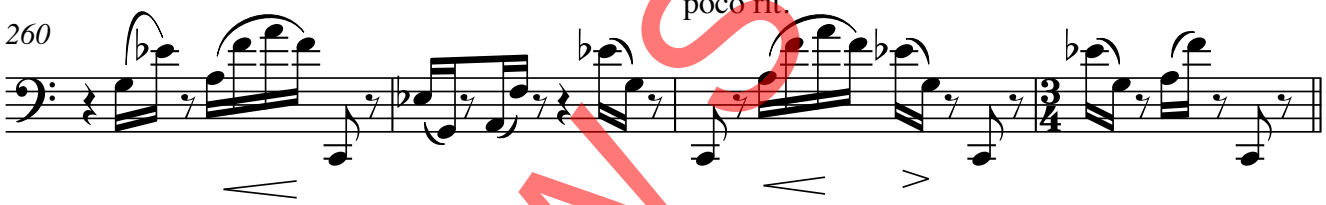
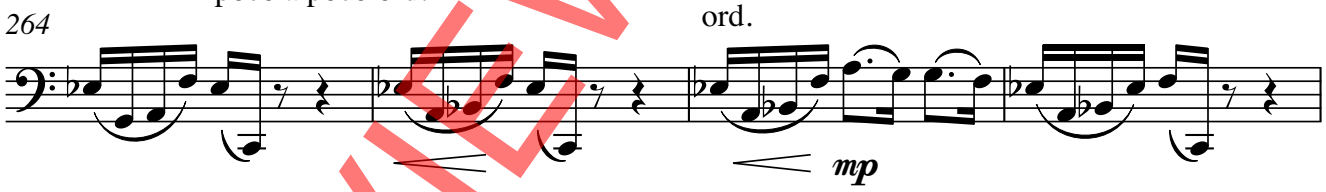


260 poco rit.



♩ = 112 poco a poco ord.

264 ord.



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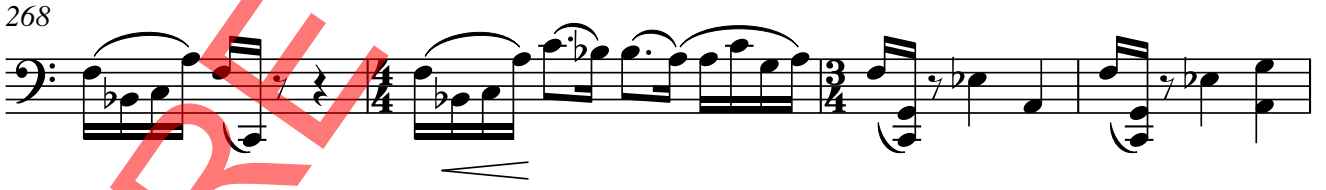

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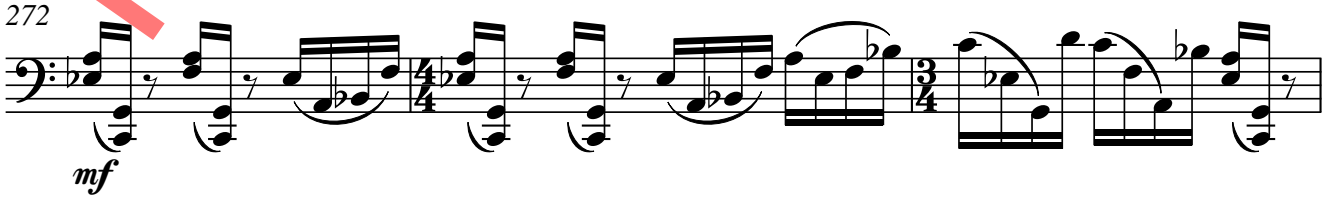

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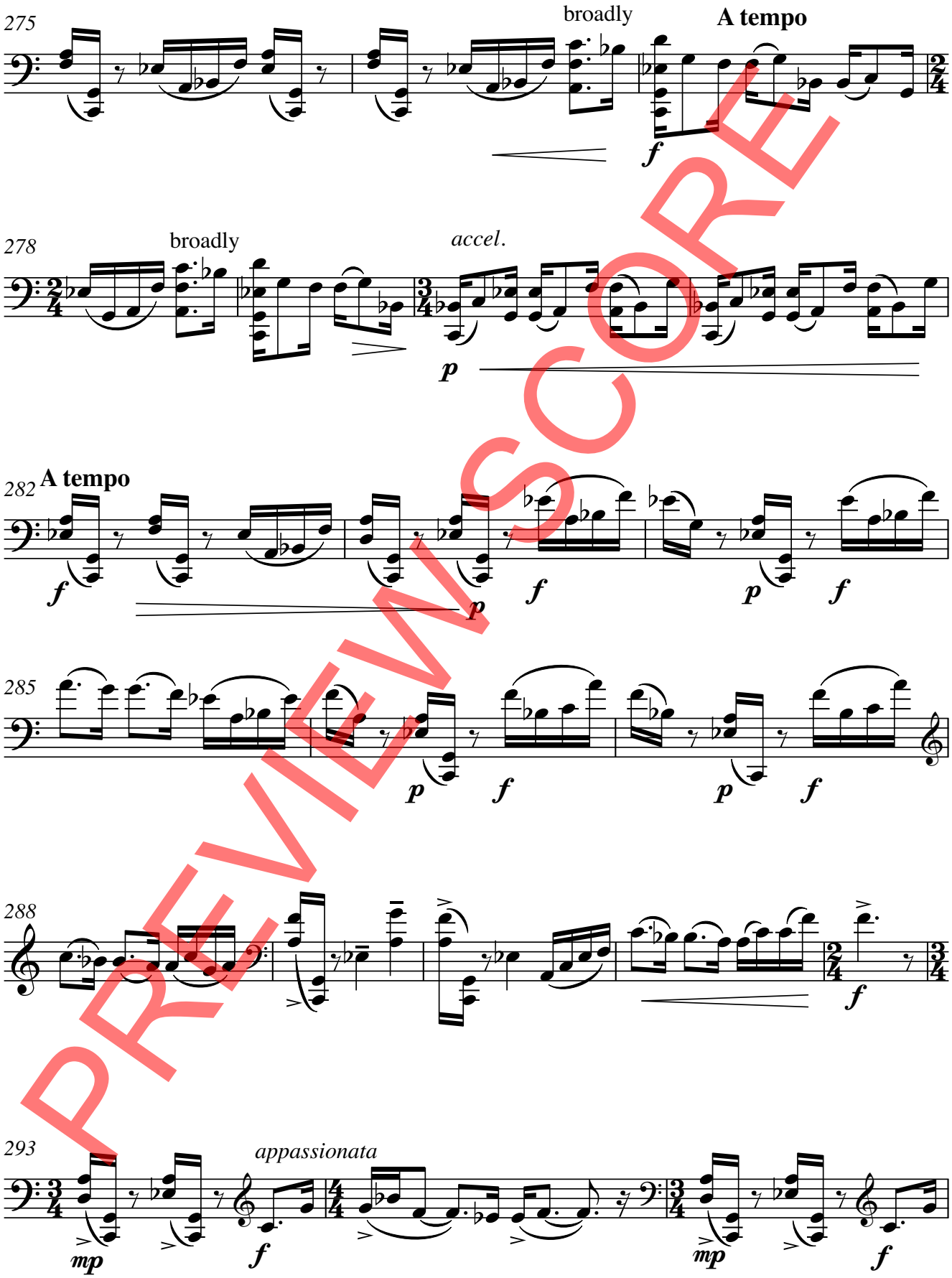

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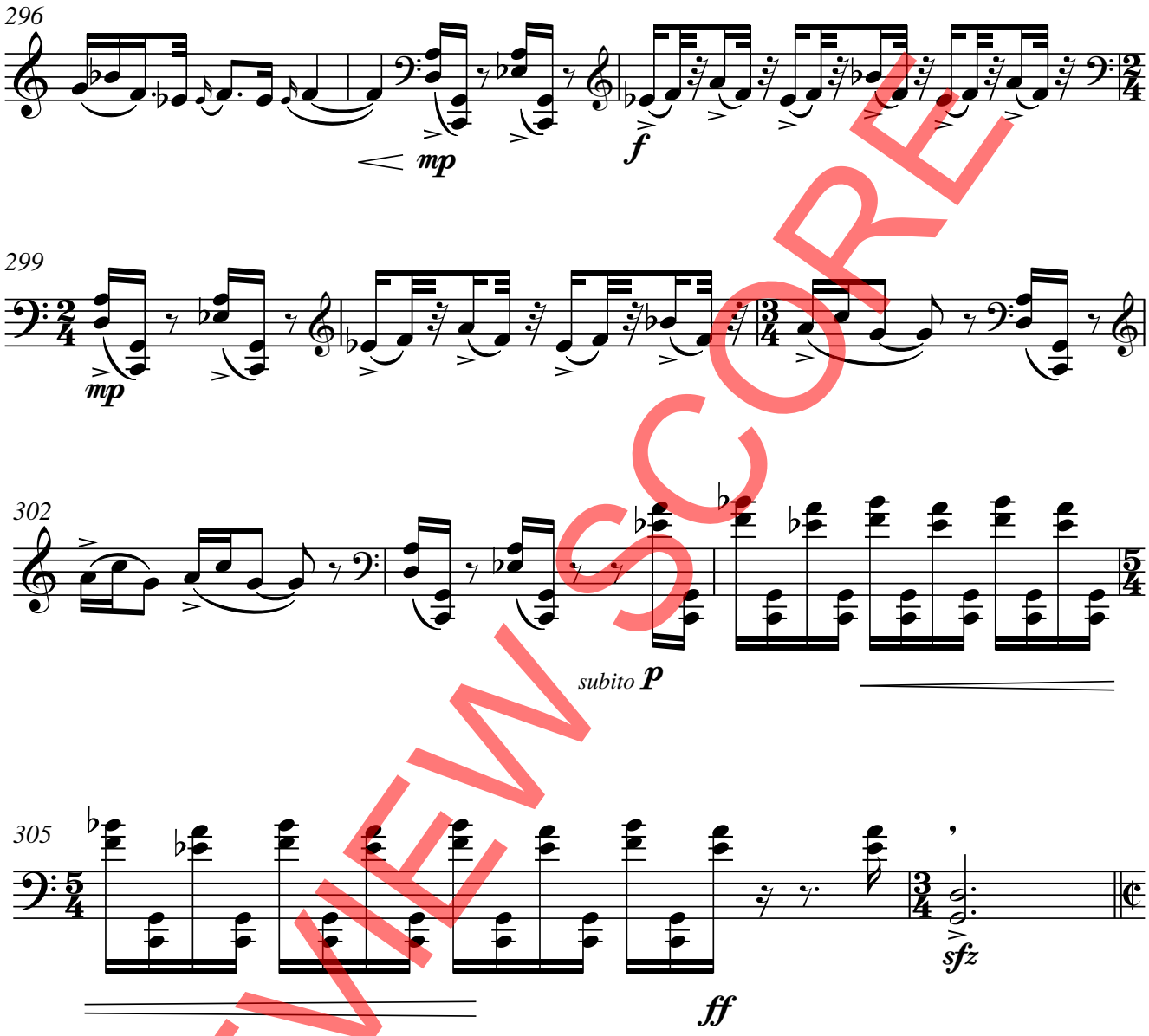

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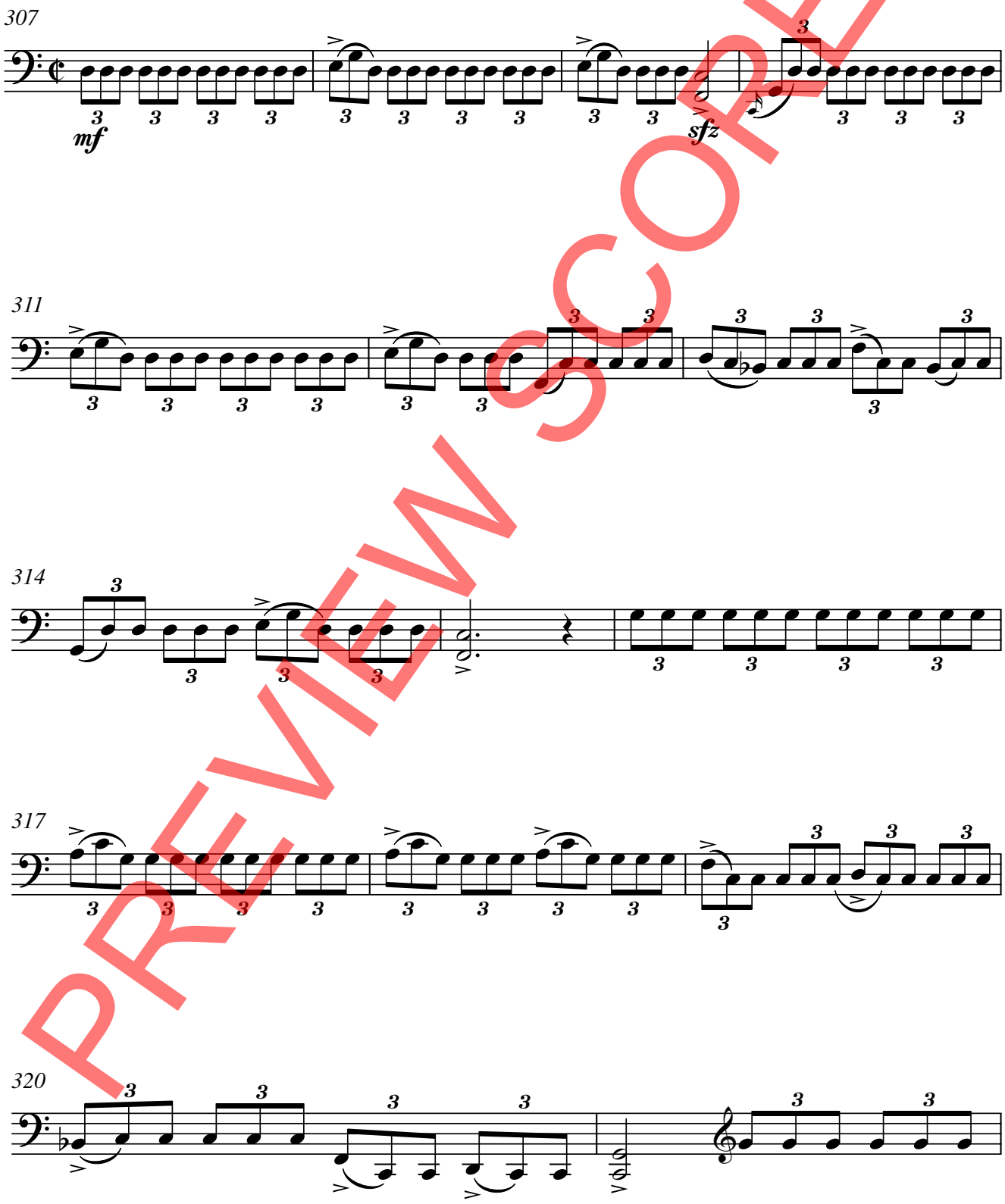
IV. Presto ♩ = 84

♩ = 𝅗𝅥 "Appalachia meets the Synagogue"



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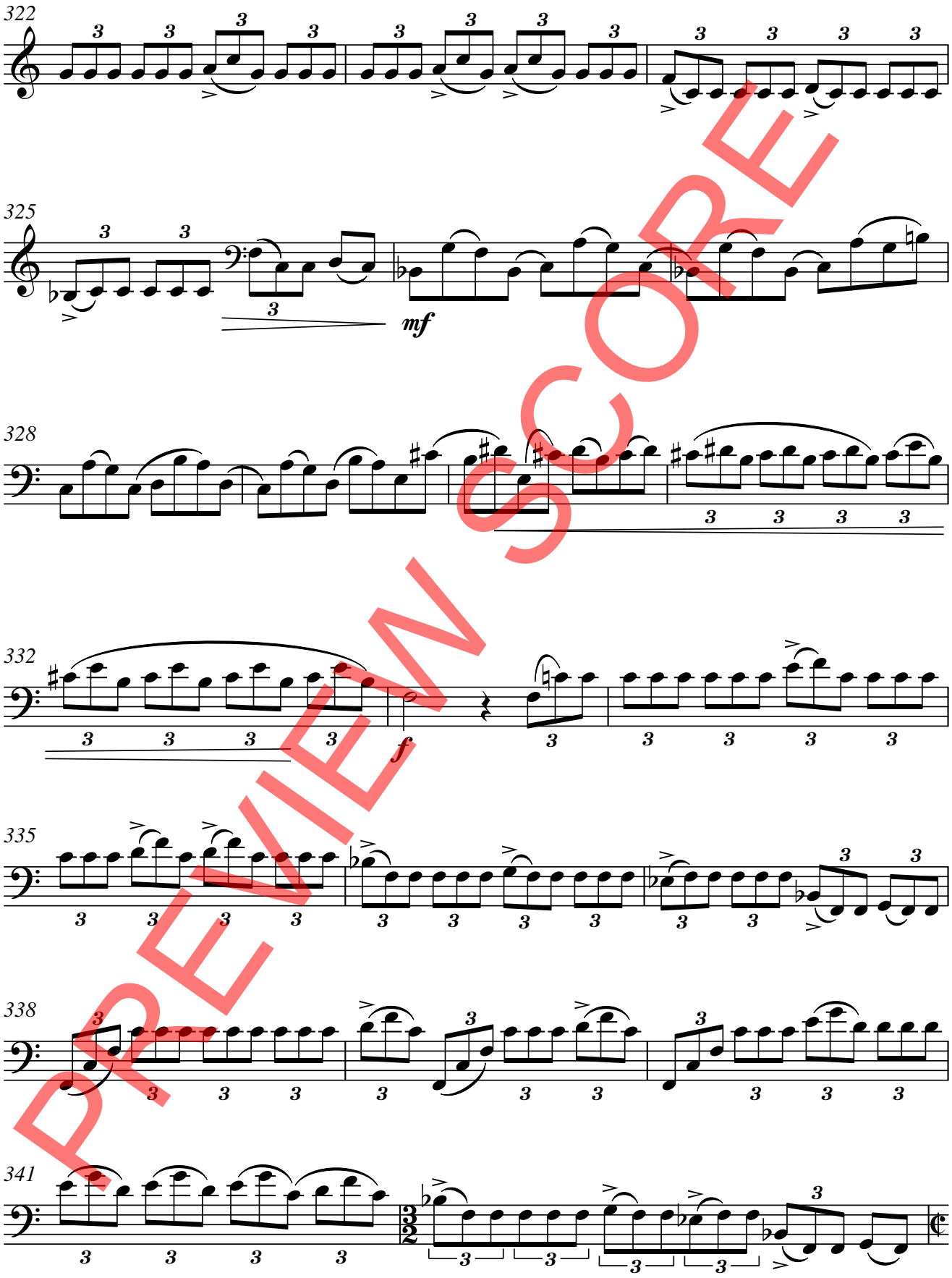

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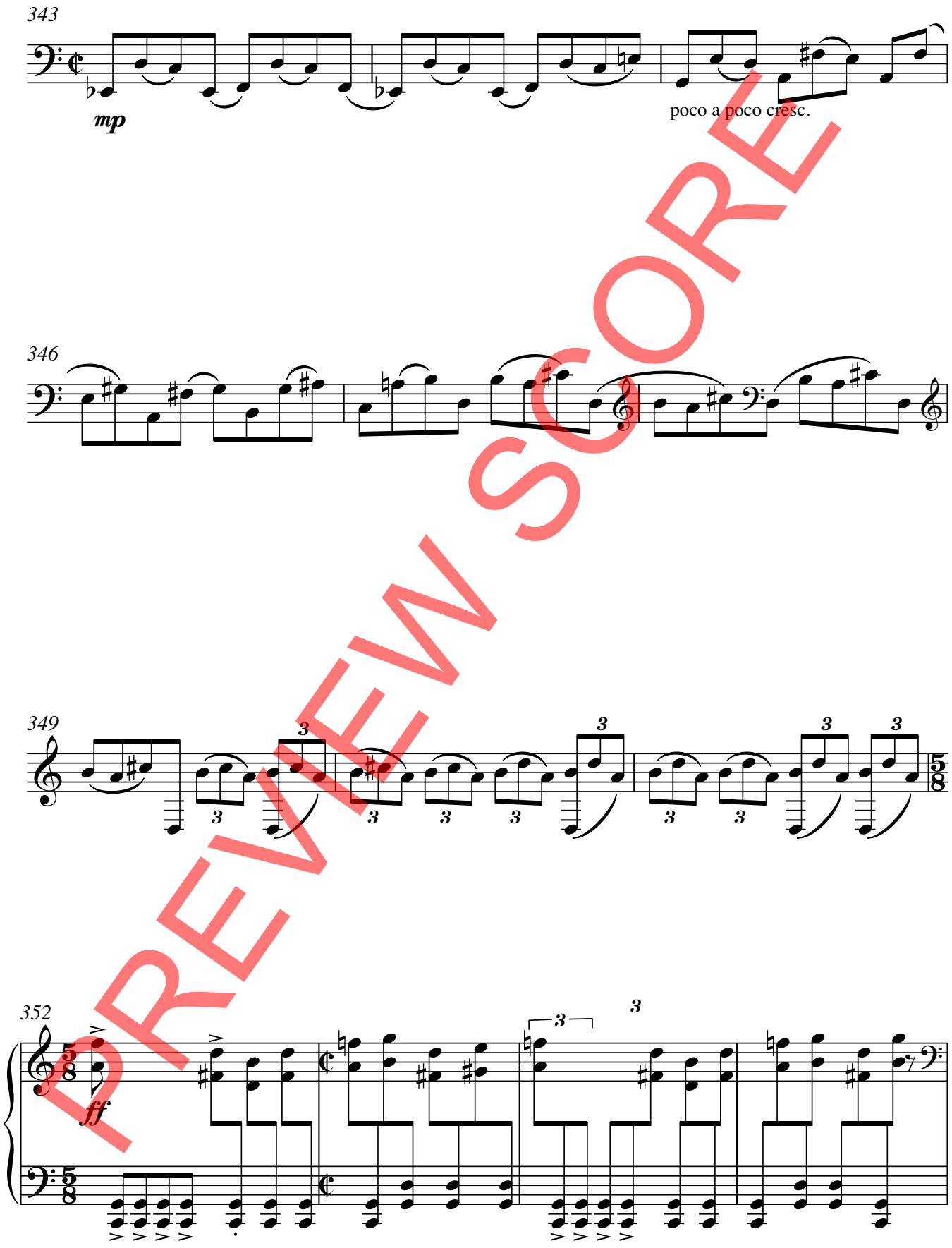

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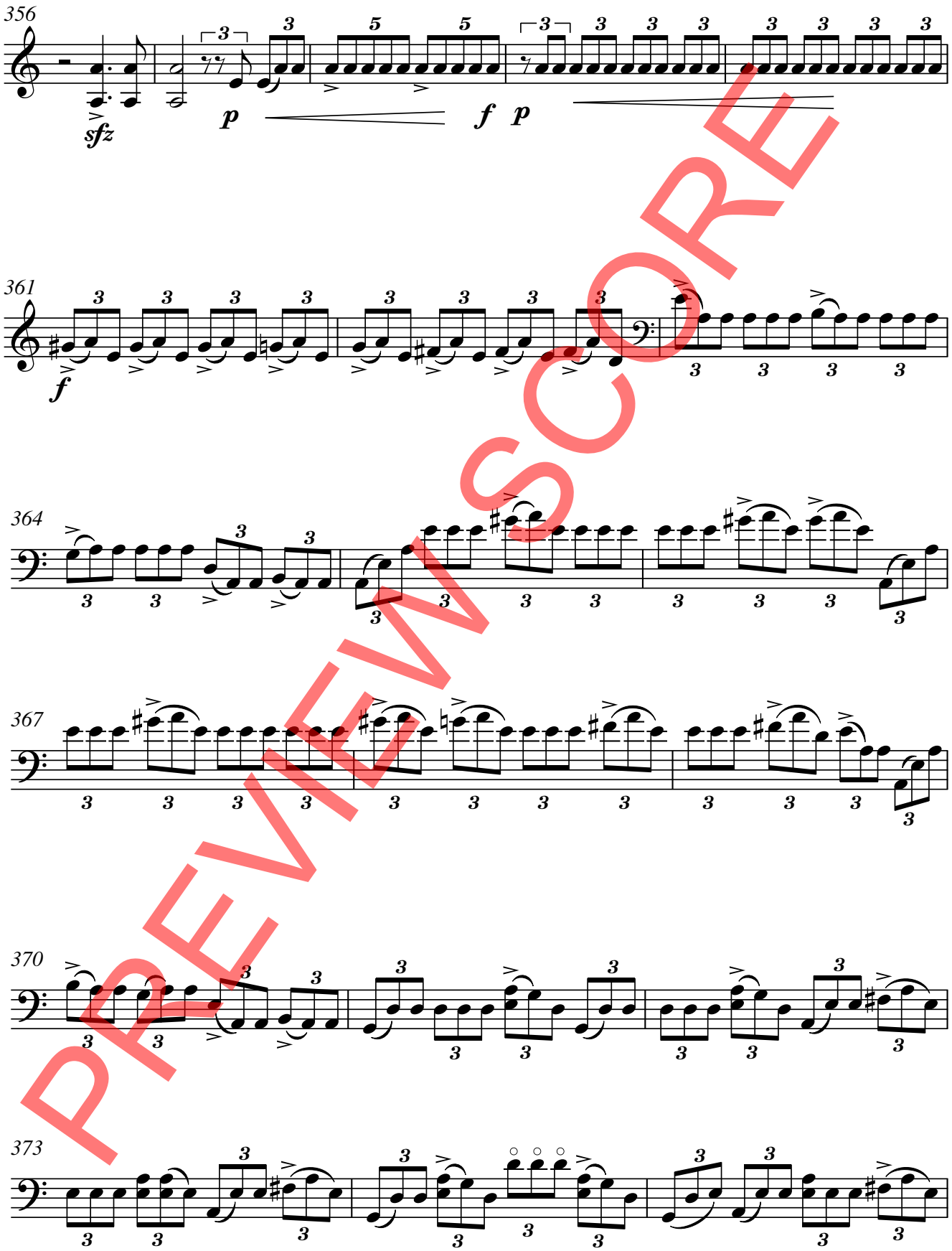

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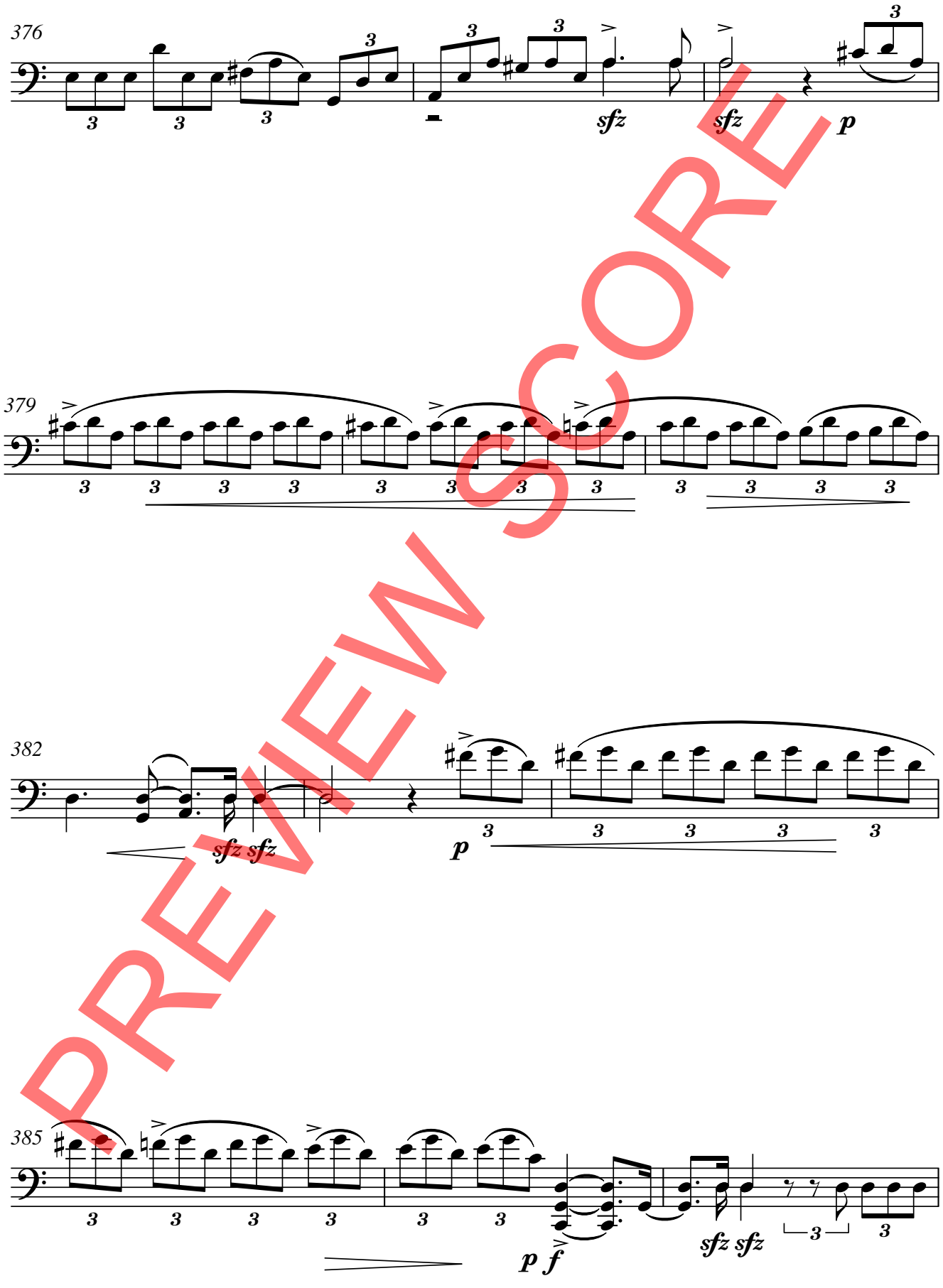

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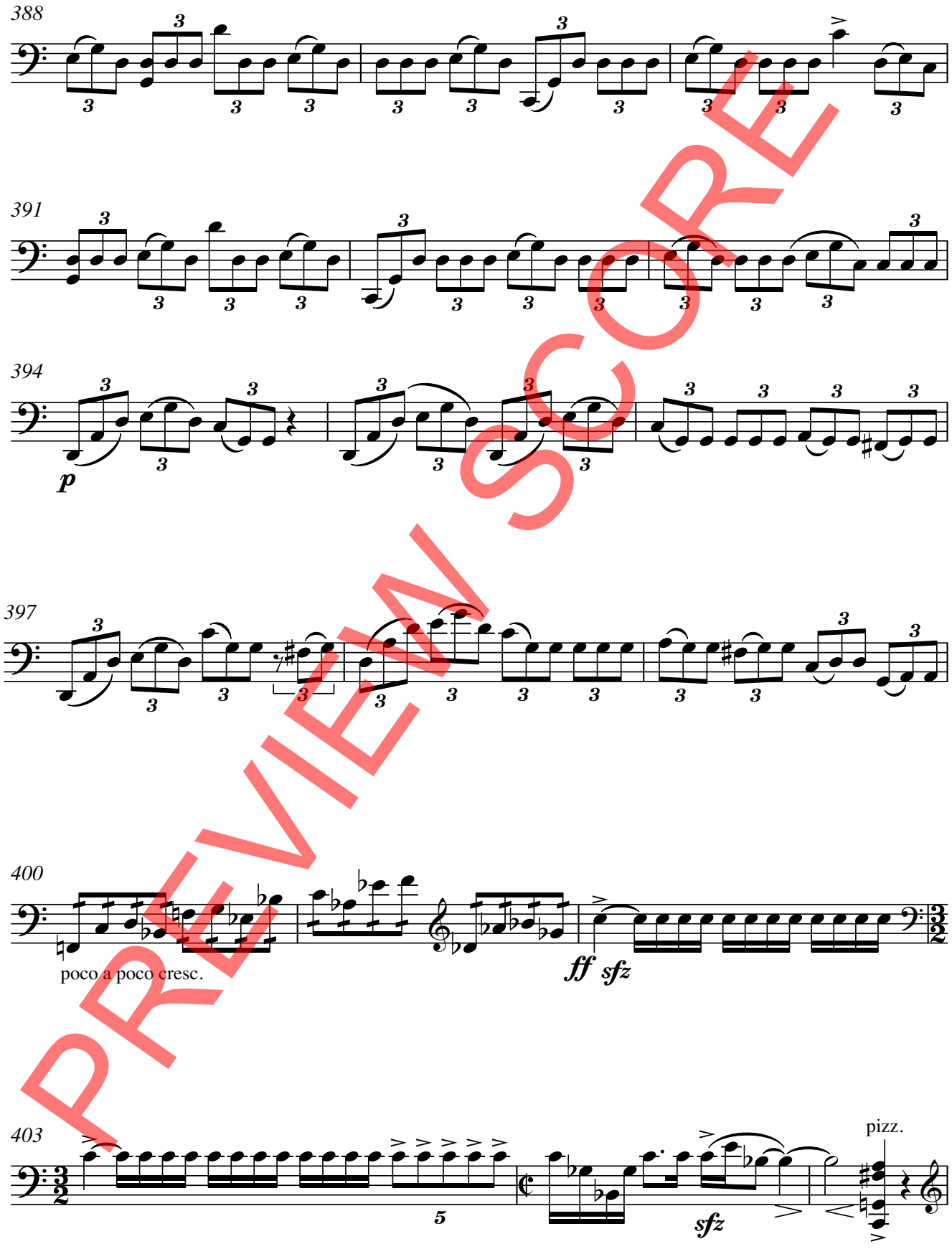

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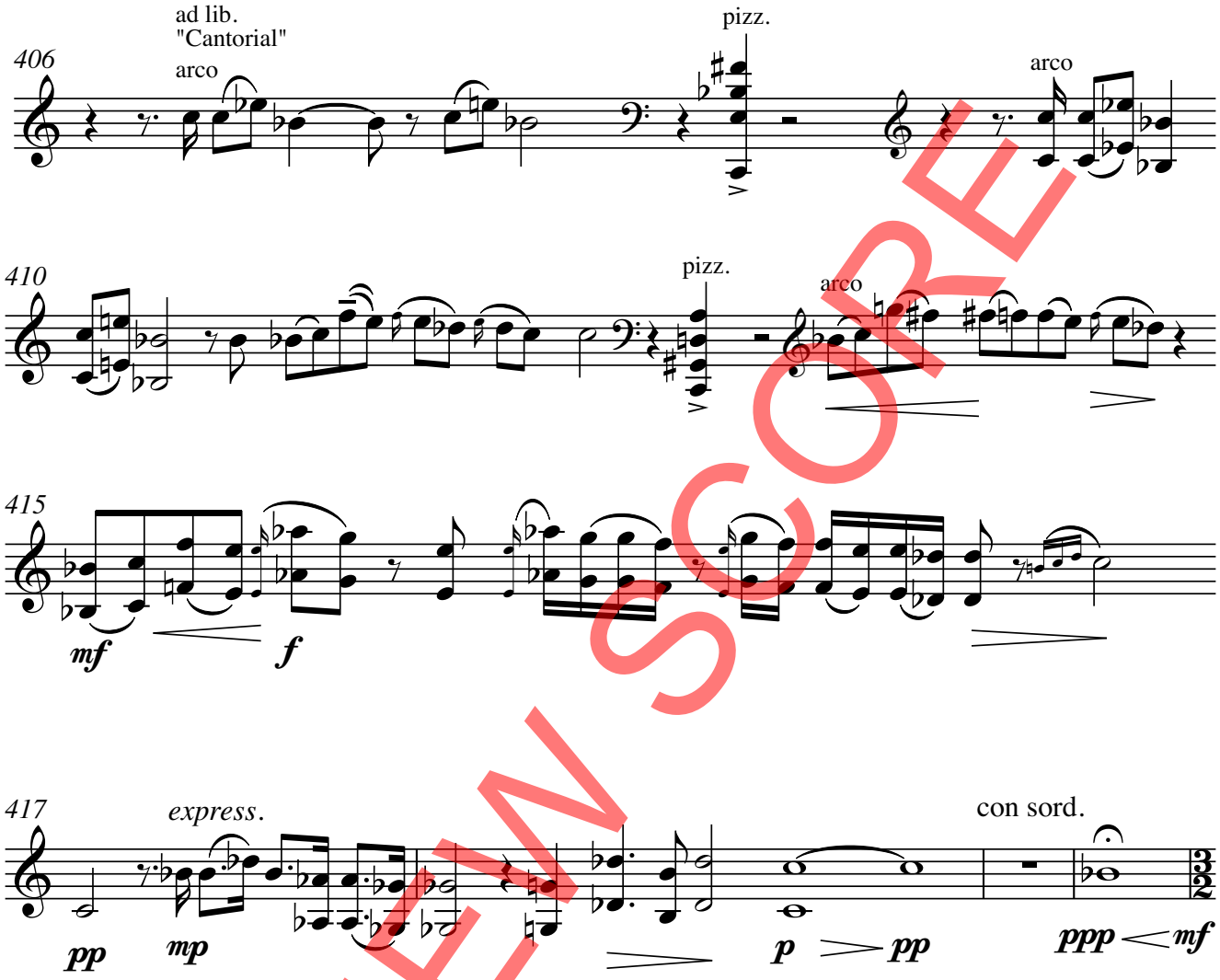

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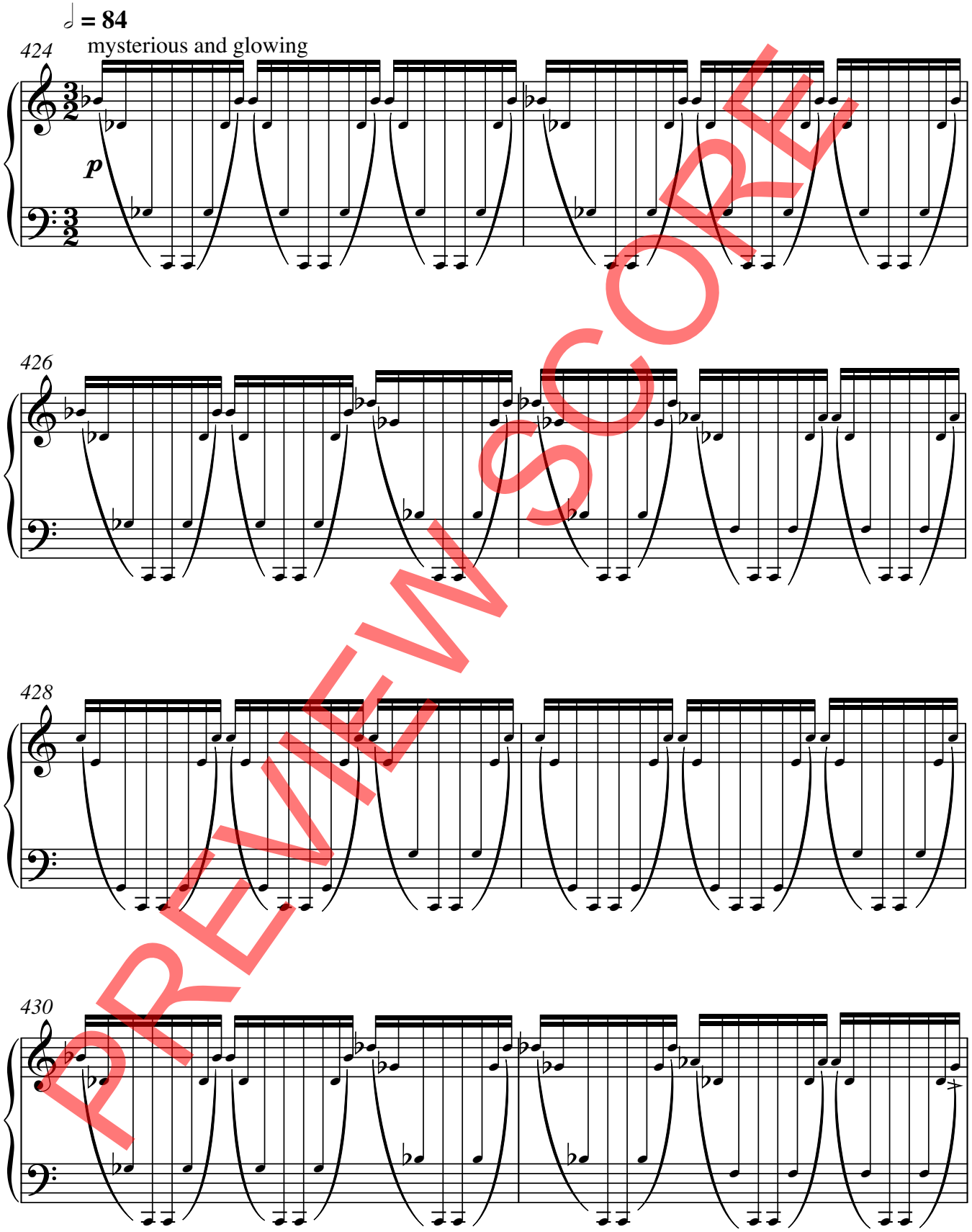

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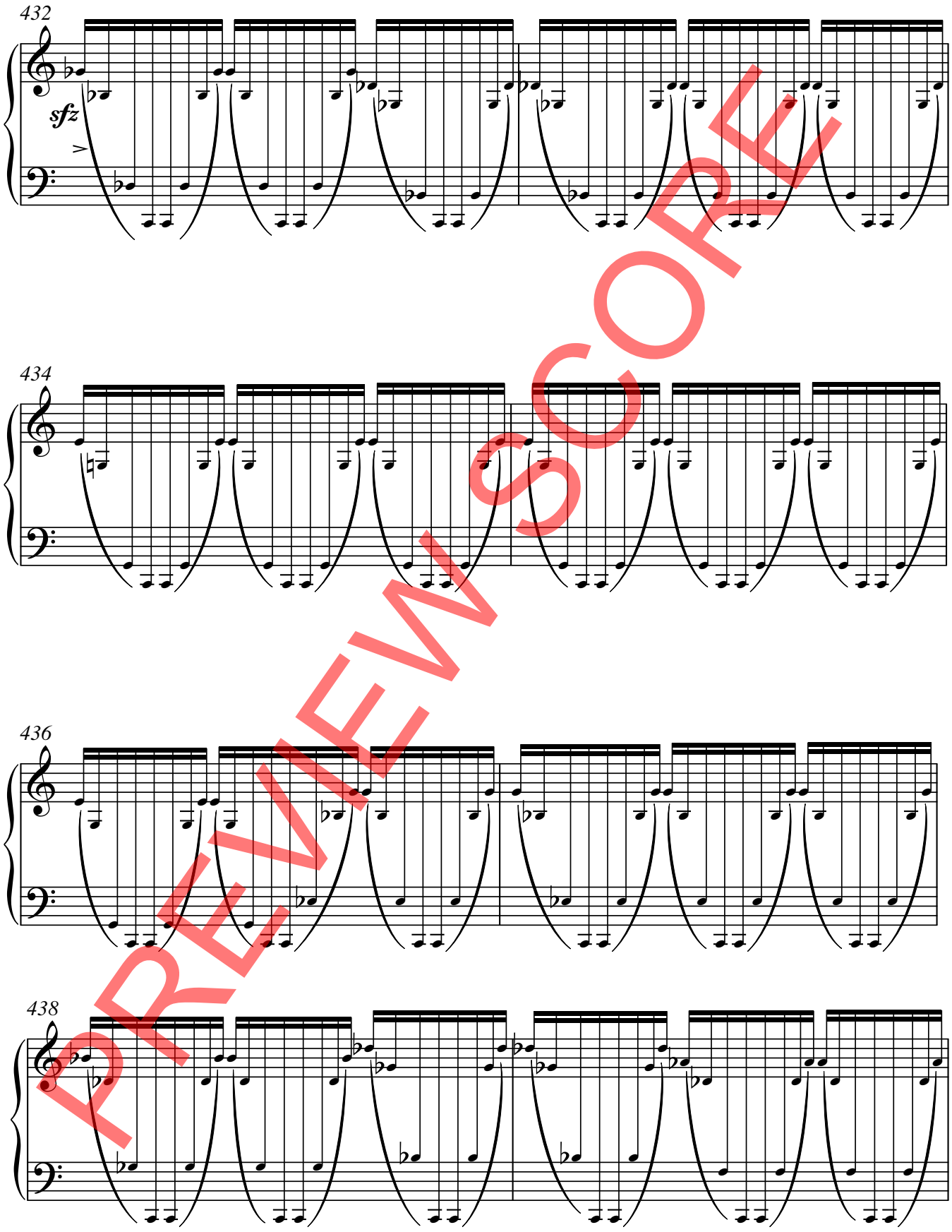

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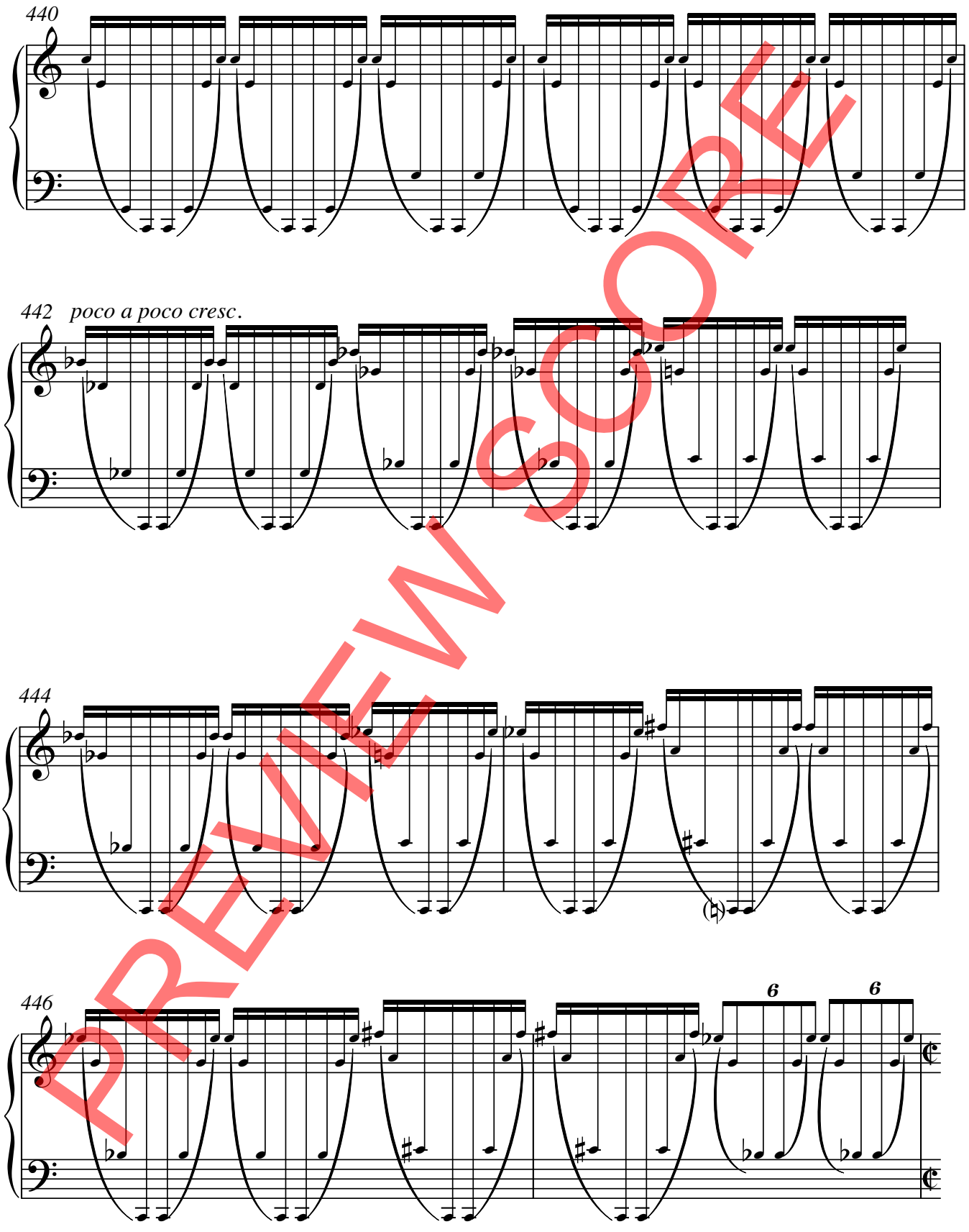

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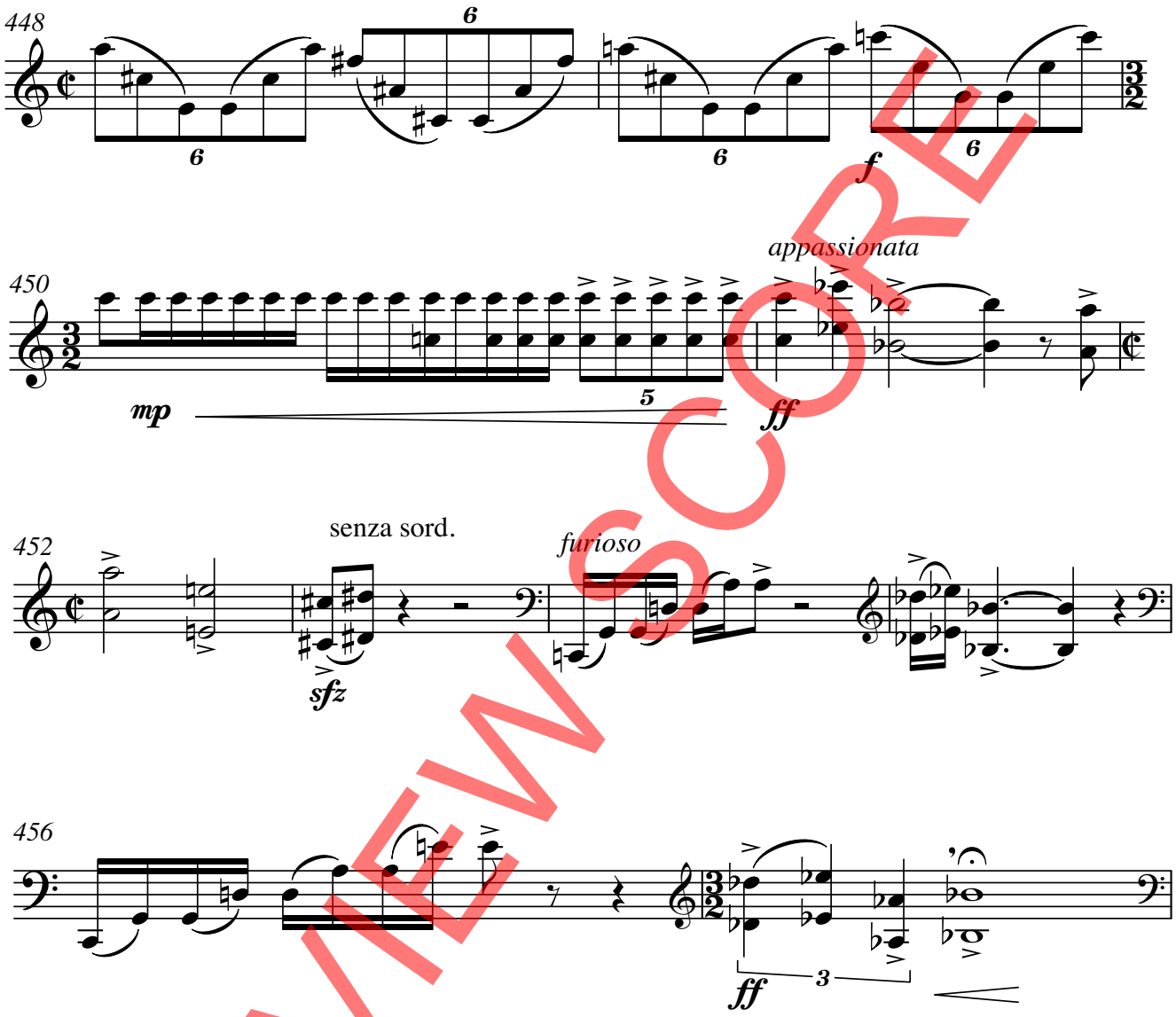

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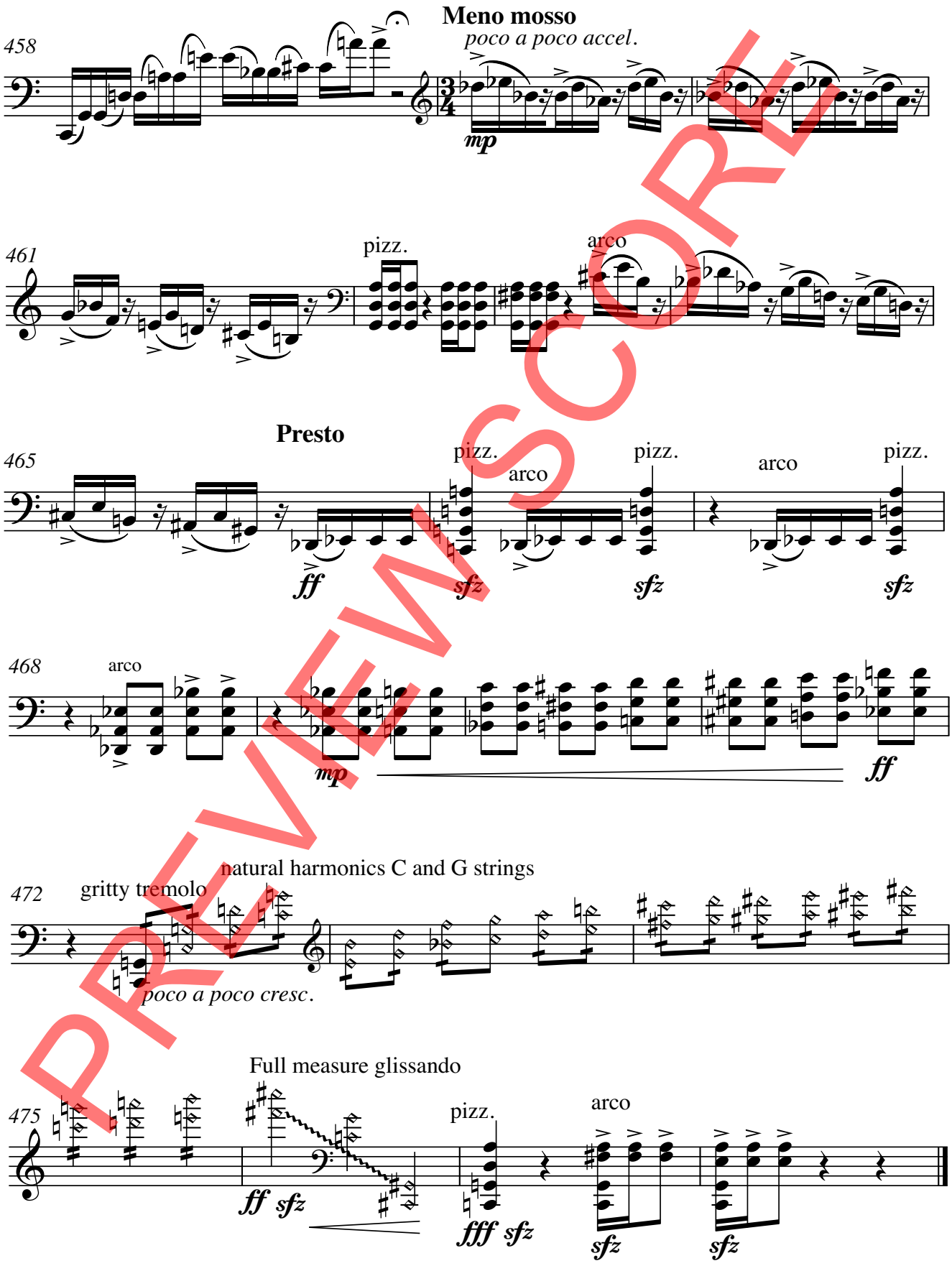

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Cello Tropes

Russell Steinberg

I. **Allegro Cantabile** ♩ = 120

Solo Cello

f robust and "cantorial"

p

f

poco a poco sul pont.

6

mp

p

sul pont.

pp

tenderly and fleeting

13 ord.

p

mp

p

pp

21 sul tasto

rapid

A tempo

ord.

p

pp

sul tasto

rapid

A tempo

26 ord.

p

mp

mp

p

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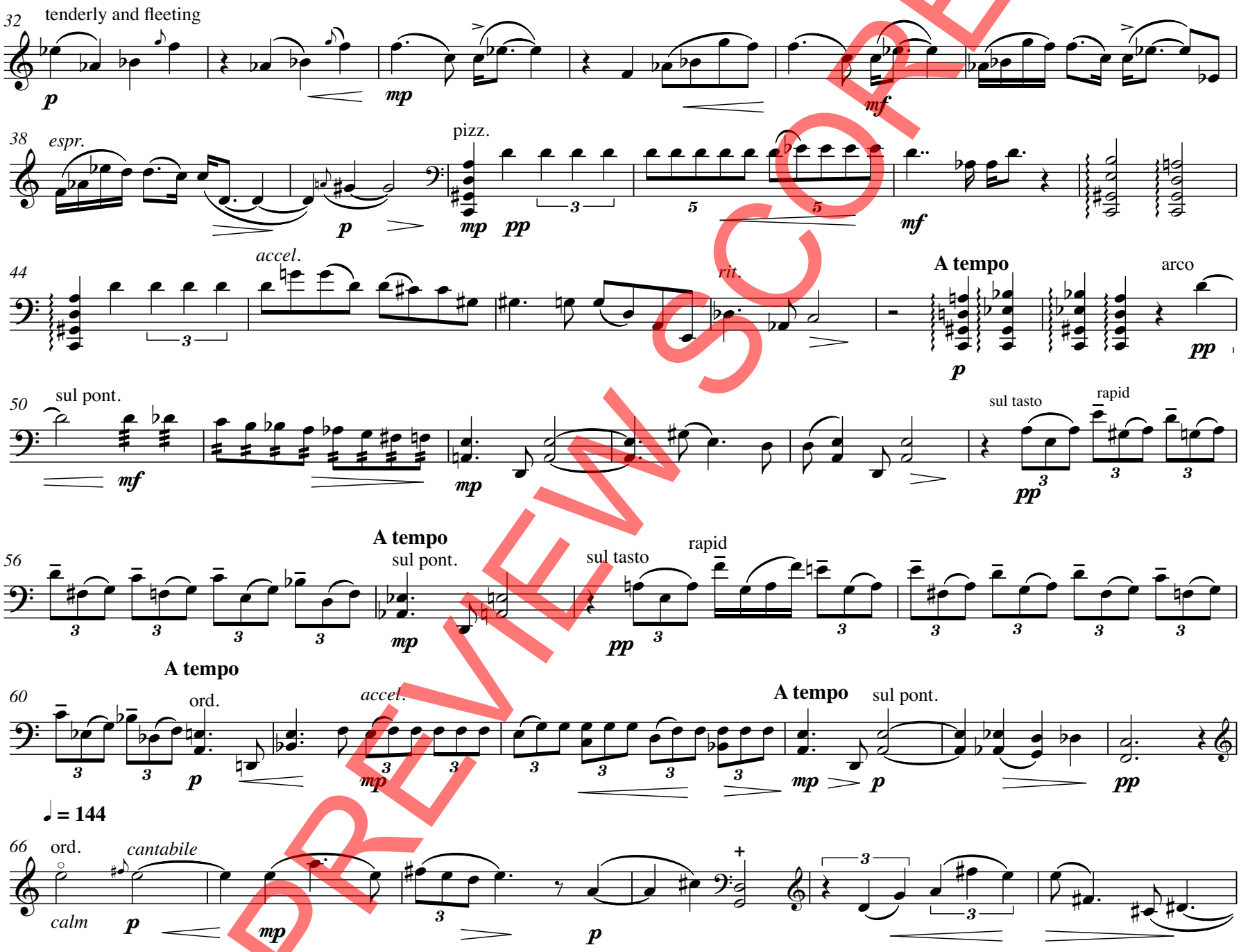

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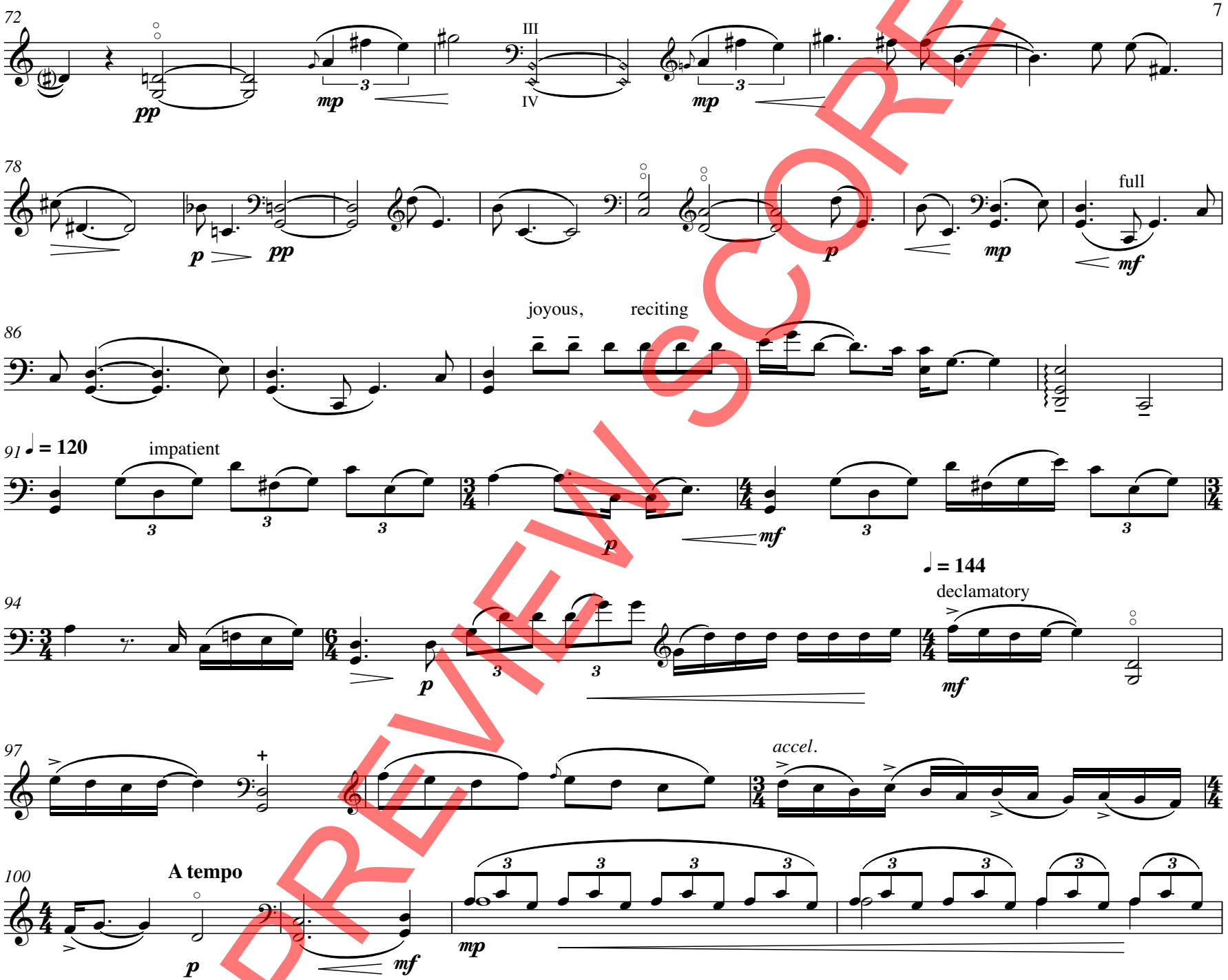

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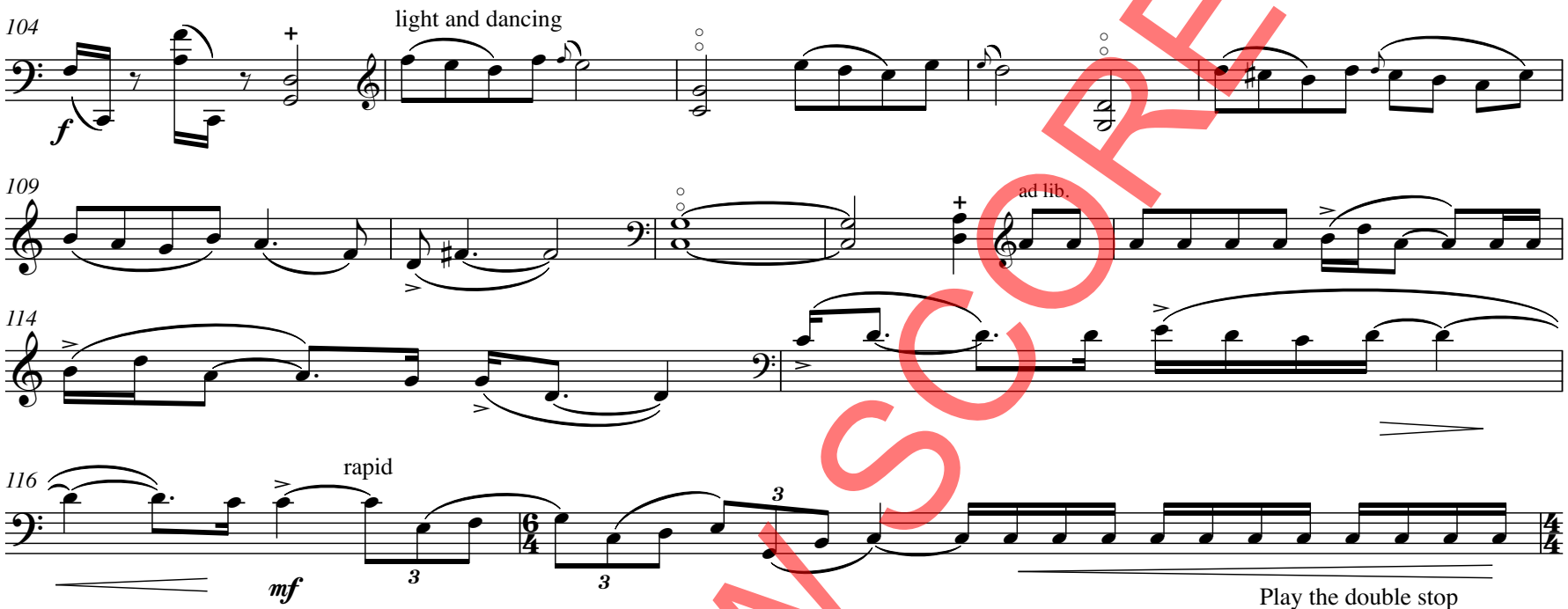

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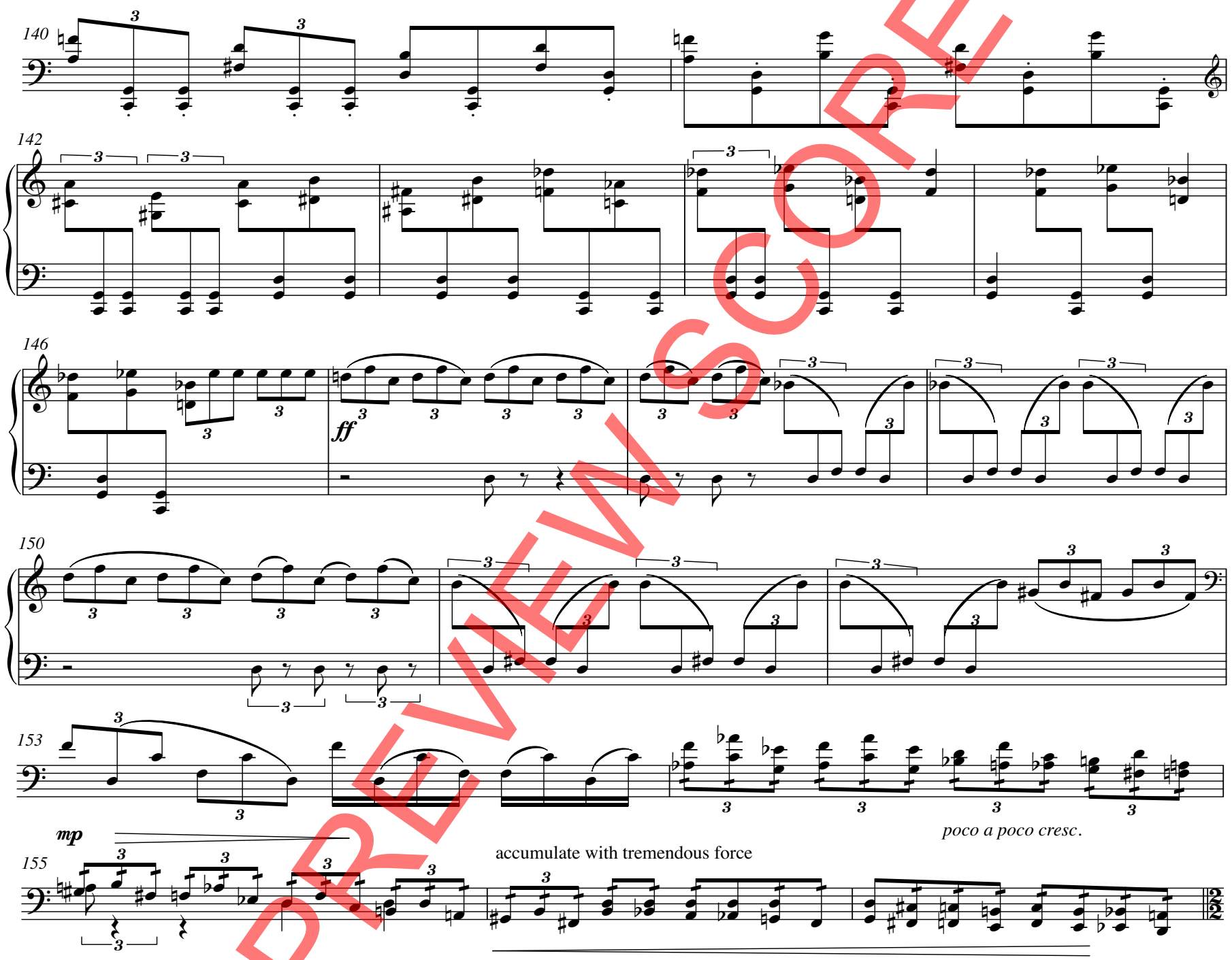

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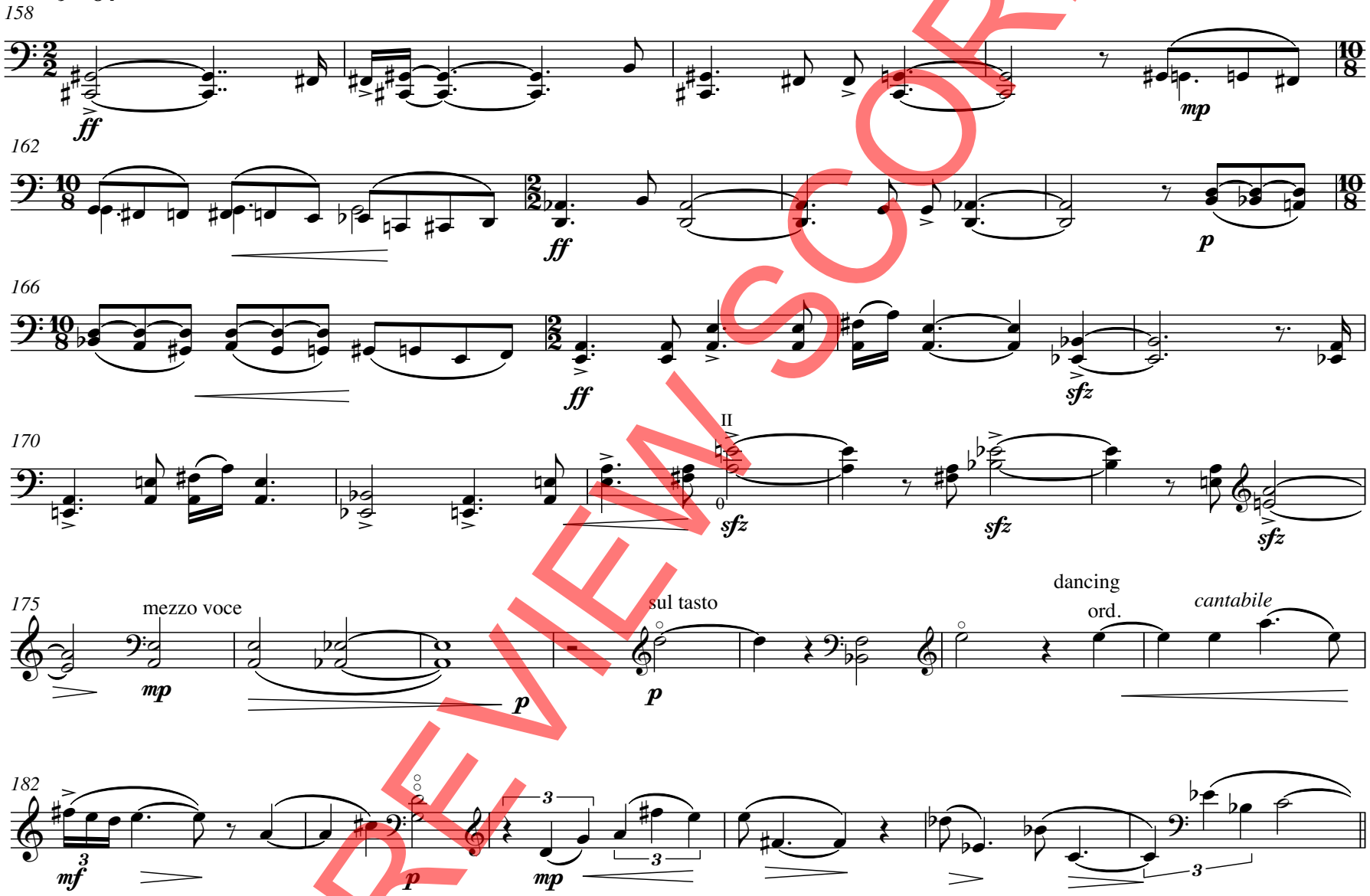

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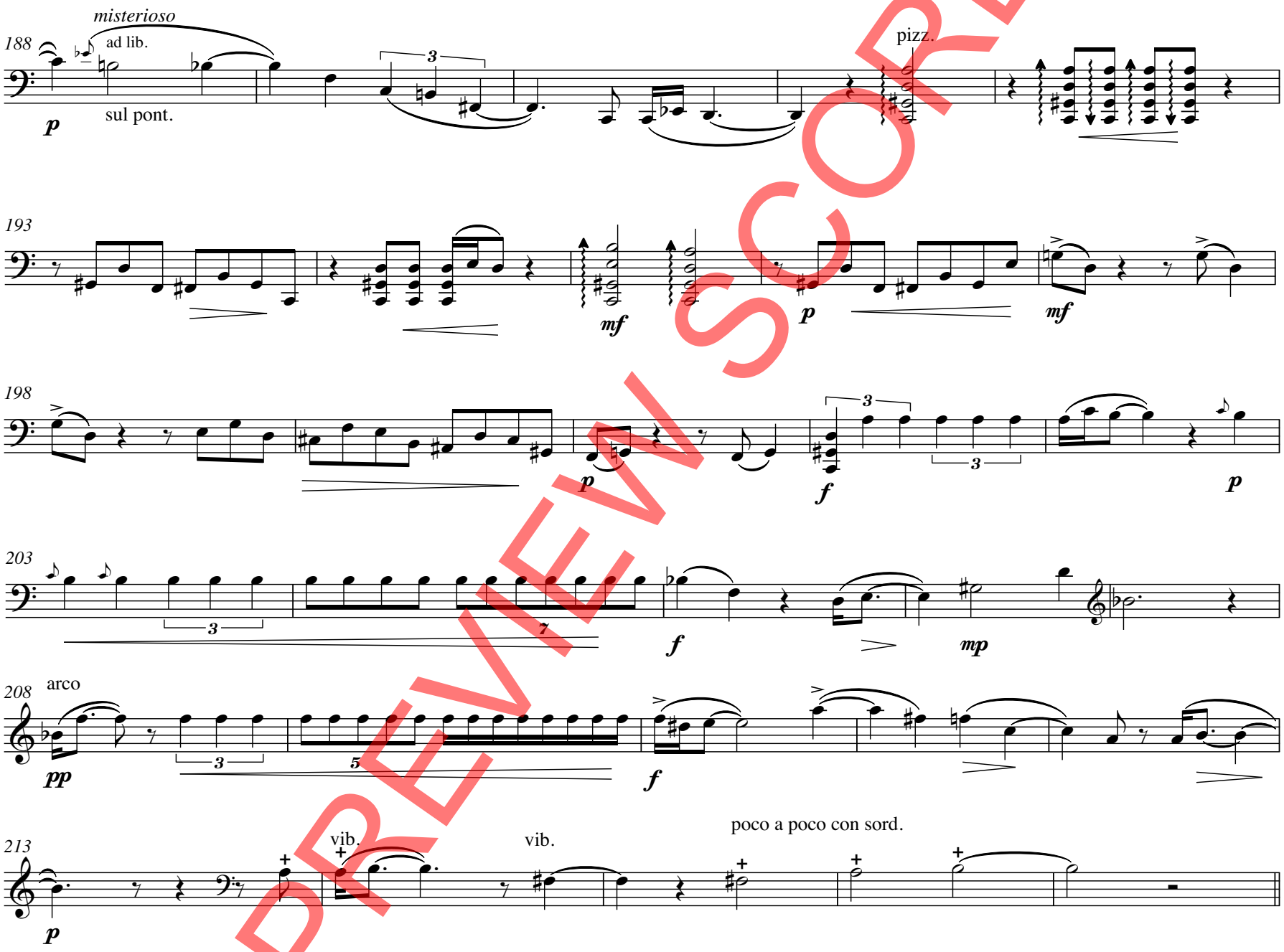
II. L'istesso Tempo, but more freely



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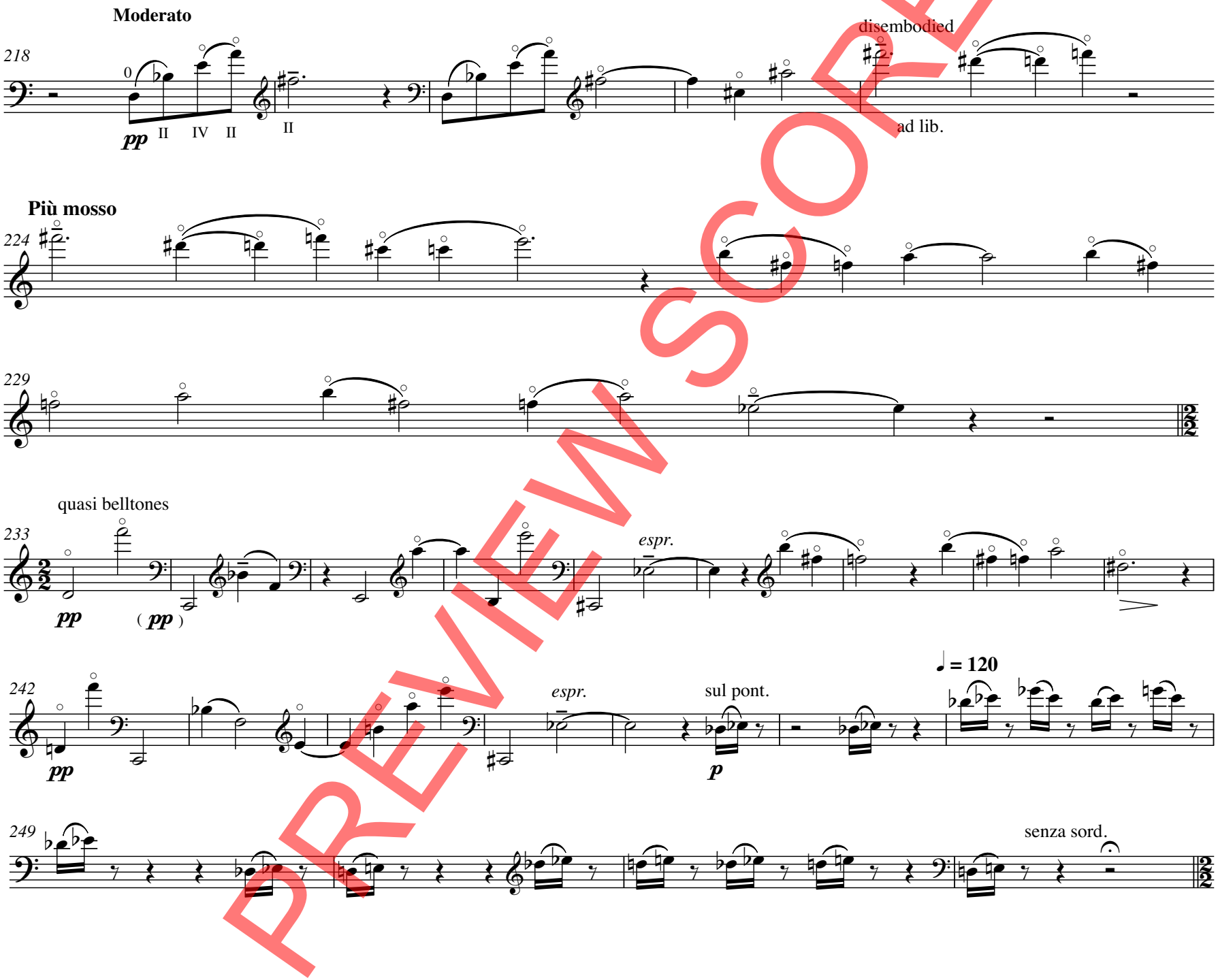

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III.

Scherzando ♩ = 132

253 sul pont.

p

257

260

poco rit.

♩ = 112 poco a poco ord.

264

ord.

mp

268

272

mf

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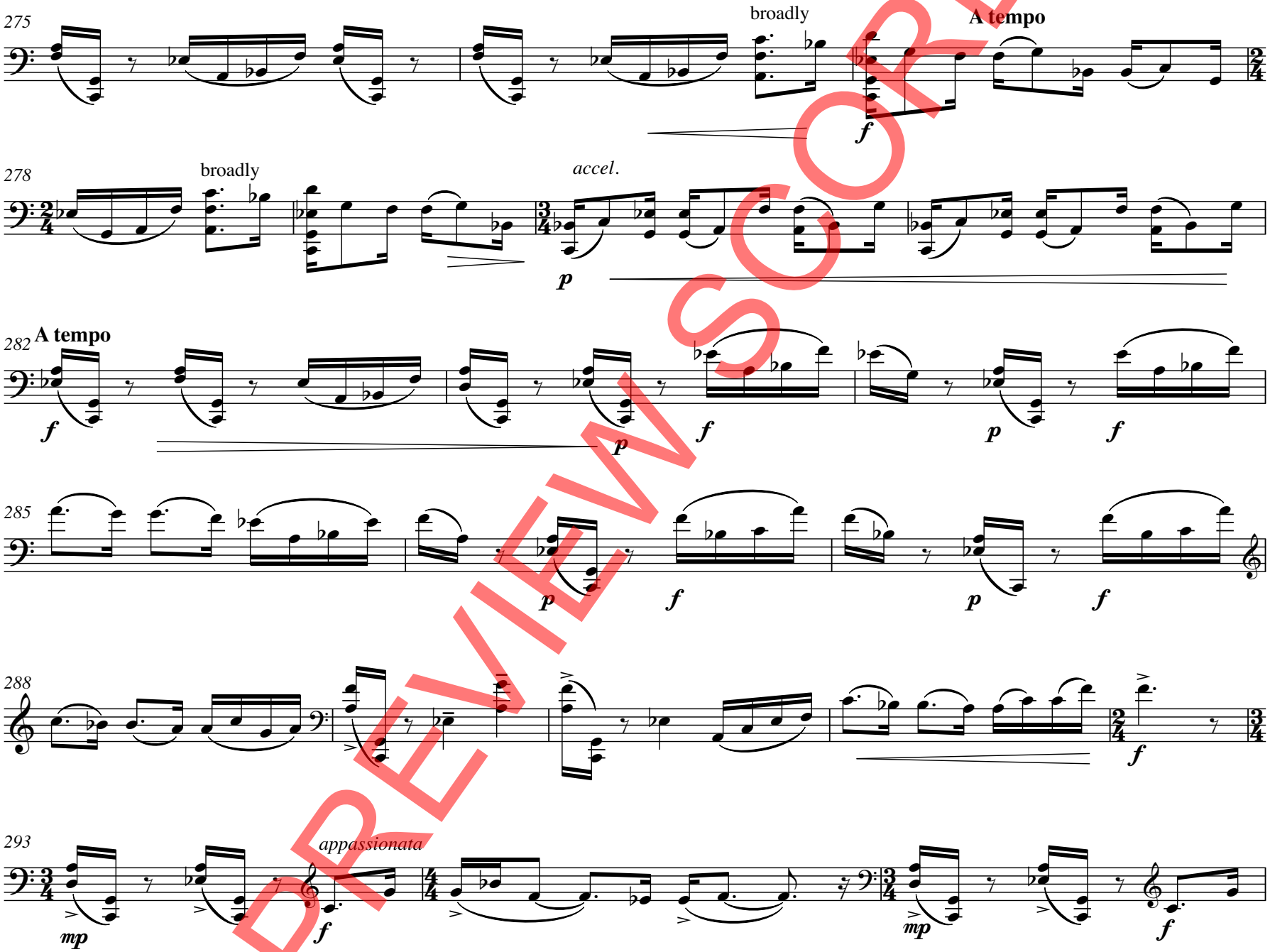

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IV. Presto ♩ = 84

♩ = 𝅗𝅥 "Appalachia meets the Synagogue"

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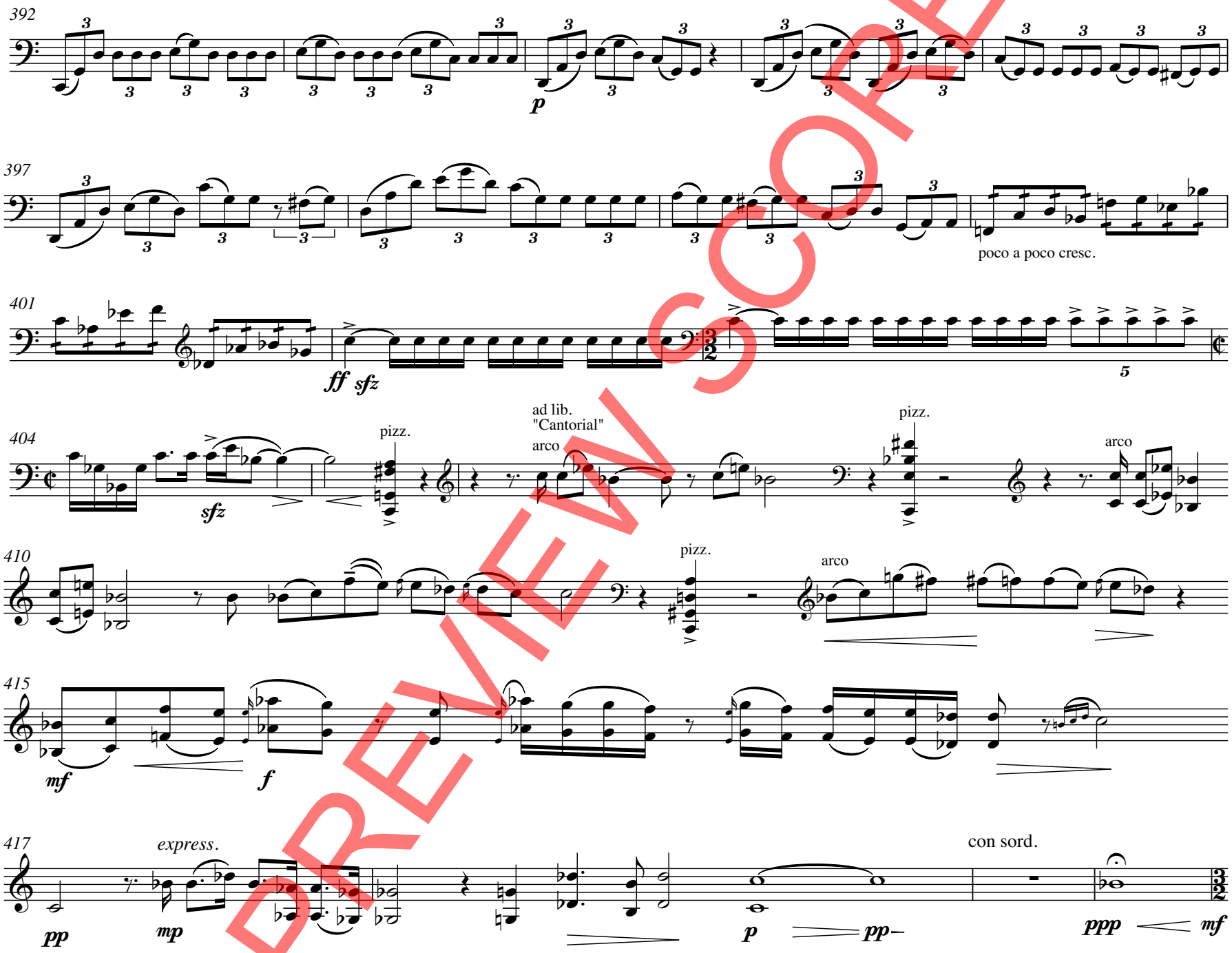

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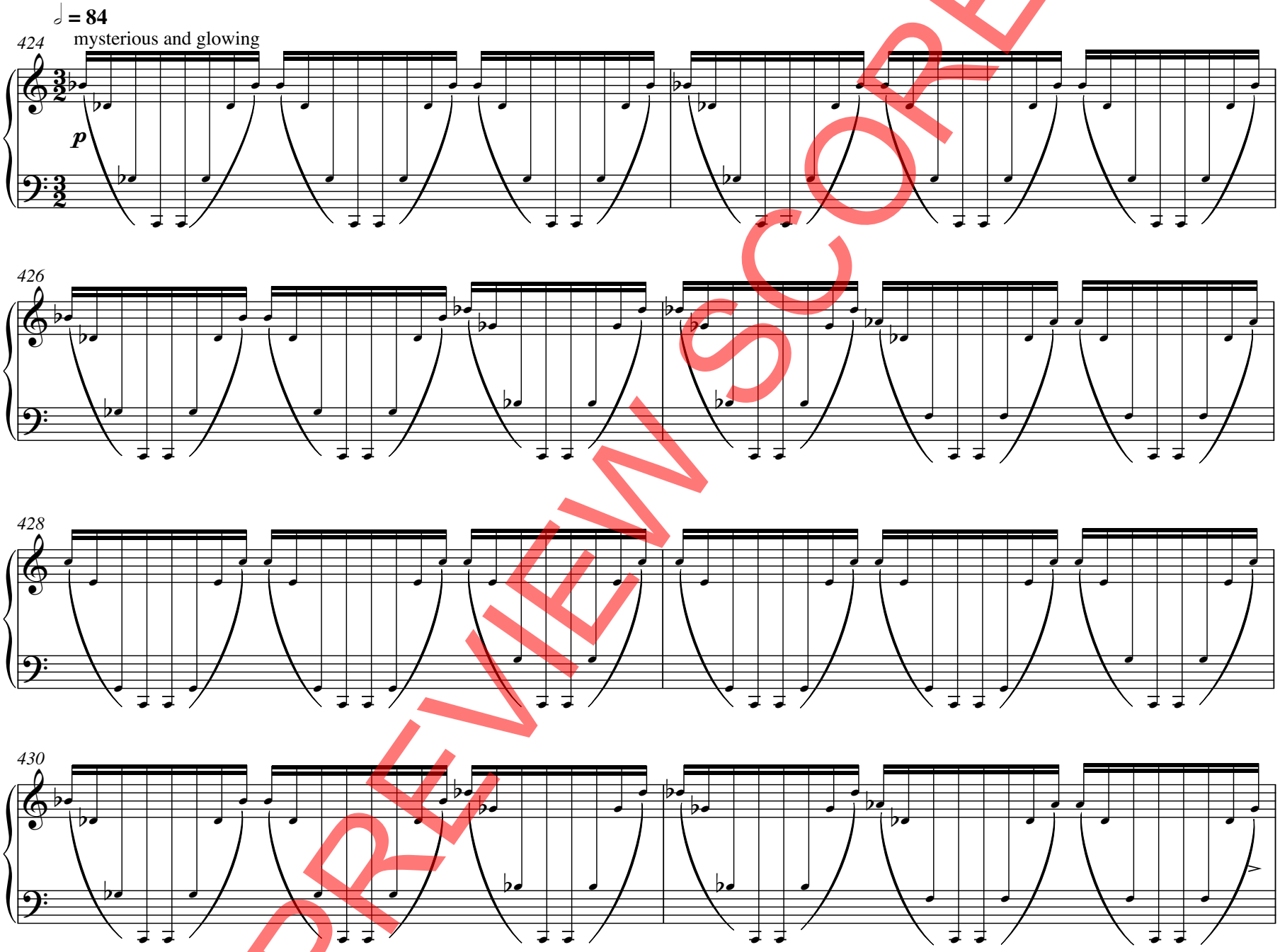

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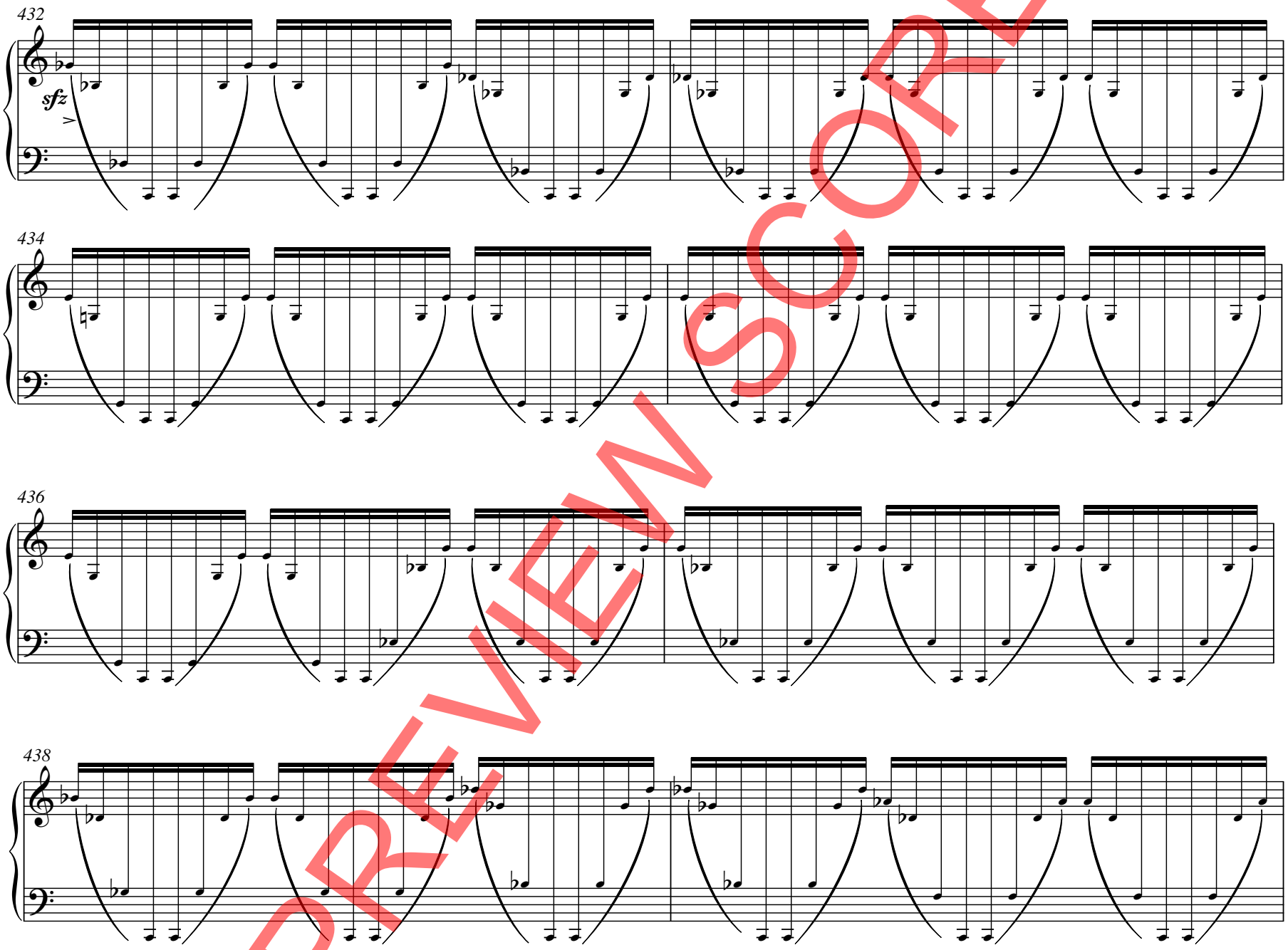

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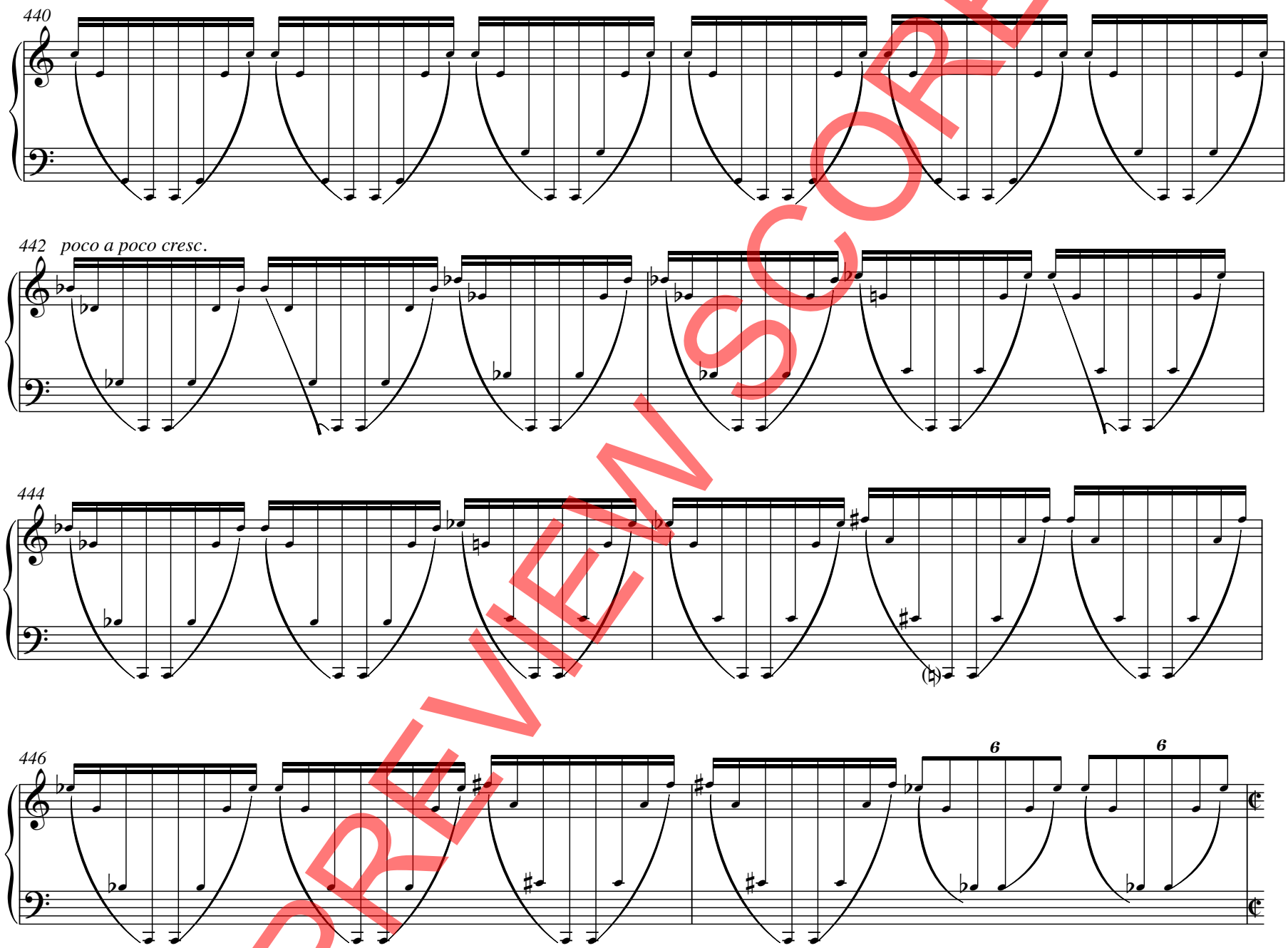

PREVIEW SCORE

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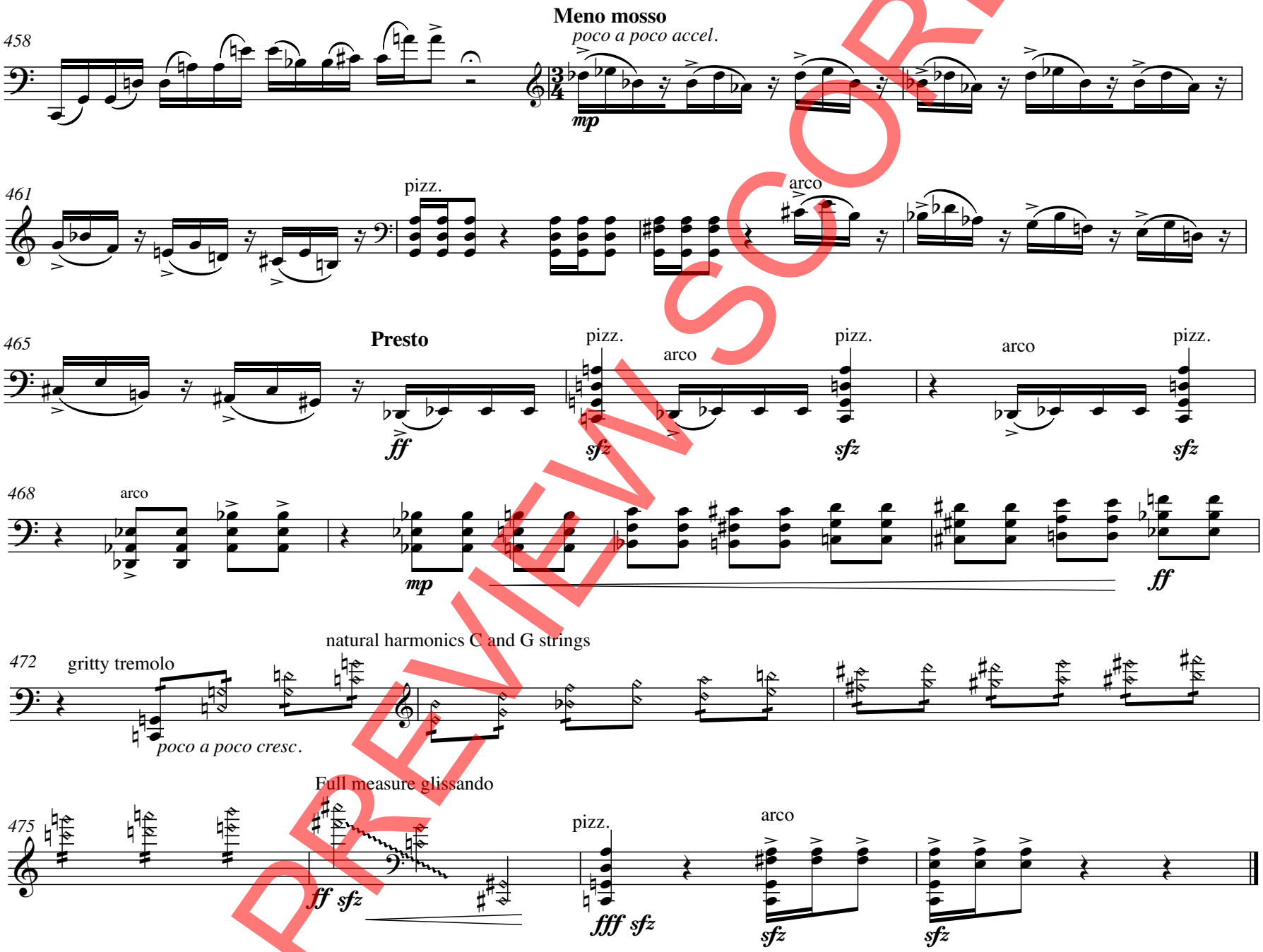

PREVIEW SCORE