ANDREW LOVETT

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ICARUS

for clarinet and electroacoustic music

2001

ICARUS *for clarinet and computer (2001)*

2 performers:

1) Clarinet in Bb*

2) computer generated sequences, digital effects, sound diffusion

The score is notated in C.

The sequenced material is tuned to A=440.

Duration: circa 13 minutes

First performance: Gareth Davis and Andrew Lovett. Trinity College of Music, London February 2001

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Commissioned by Jeanne Davis for Gareth Davis.

* A separate part for clarinet in Bb is available.

[score version 2.1]

Performance instructions

Sequences are numbered in the score. They can be played from CD or as sound-files from a computer. At the end of sequences 1, 2. 4 (optionally) and 6 , the CD or computer is paused (when the recorded sound has fully ended) and lined up for the next cue. Otherwise, CD cues are for rehearsal purposes only.

The clarinet should be amplified with the electroacoustic part.

Digital reverberation

Using a Yamaha 01v mixer, I found three settings, based on a warm 'hall reverb' setting useful :

1: rt of 4-5 seconds for section 1.
2. rt of 2-3s for the middle part of the piece.
3. rt of 8-10 seconds for the ending of the piece.

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The reverberation level should be varied to give a blended spacious sound for slow passages and a clear sound for rapid passages.

The clarinet player must be completely familiar with the sound of the electroacoustic part, since there is a degree of freedom in the relationship between 'live' and 'pre-recorded' material: 'sonic markers' in the electroacoustic part should enable the performer to catch up or pause as necessary. Where the CD/computer is paused, the clarinettist should overlap his/her next section with the tail of the preceding CD/computer part, except in those places where silence is specified (for instance at the end of section 1).

Scale and intonation

In C, the notes Bb, Eb and Db should be 1/4 tone flat; F# and G# 1/4 tone sharp. These are primarily expressive inflections, so the performer has some discretion, especially with rapid passages and trills.

Programme note

Icarus is the boy who flew too close to the sun, lost his wings and plunged into the ocean. In a sense, an obvious - and familiar - parable. But it connects with an ancient dream: soaring in to the sky, flying free.

While composing the piece, I had two images in mind: early film footage of attempts at powered flight, as men and women gradually learnt how to negotiate the skies in machines of great delicacy. Once, my partner and I found ourselves in the middle of a meeting of hang glider enthusiasts, on the edge of a cliff. It was a brilliant, sunny but windy morning and flyers were suspended (it seemed) only a few meters above our heads, others wheeling and diving much like the seabirds around them.

A quite different source was the poem 'Musée des Beaux Arts' by W.H. Auden. The poet muses on the painting by Brueghel ('Icarus') which illustrates the story of the young man, not as grand tragedy, but as a small insignificant event, against a background in which others follow their separate paths.

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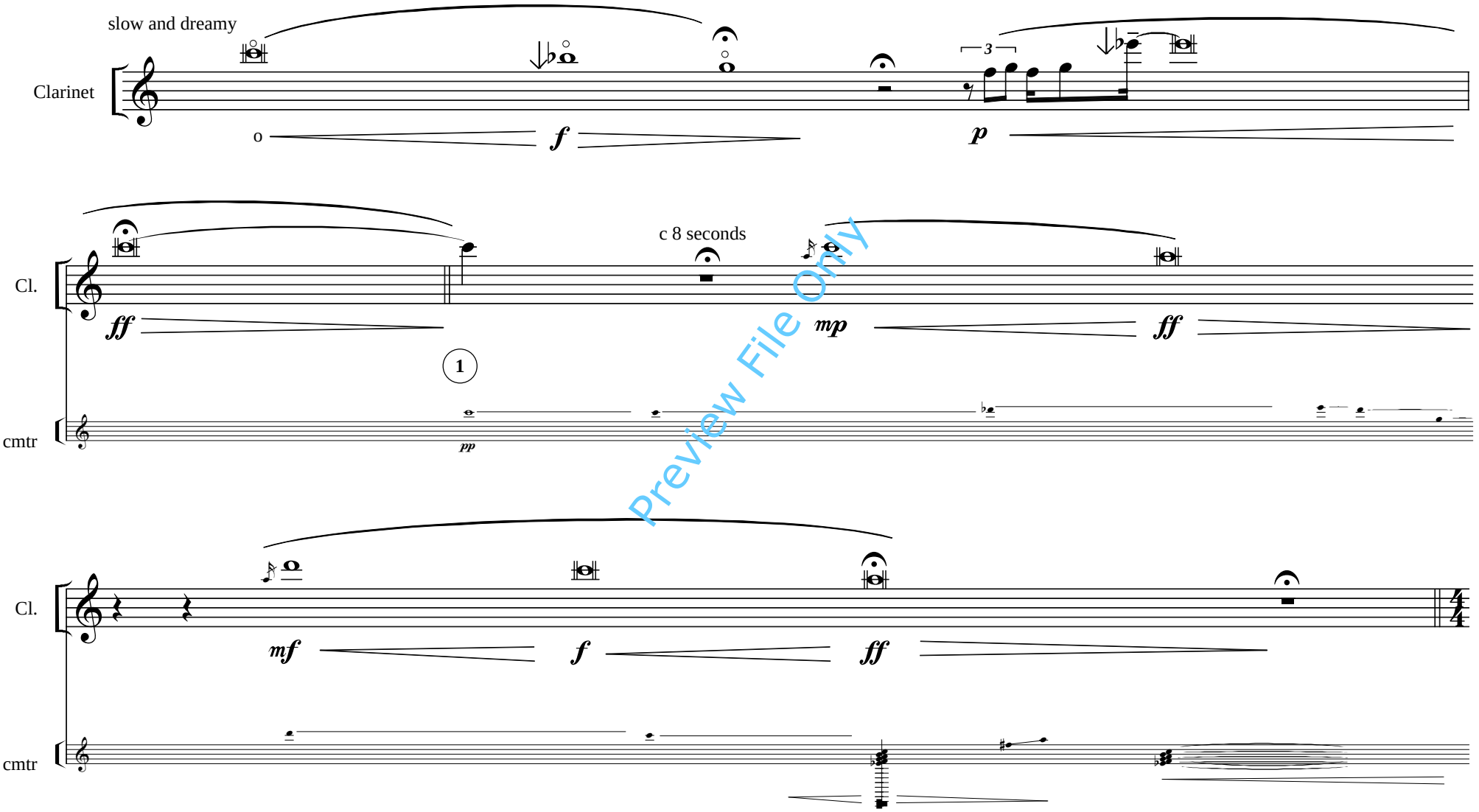
Andrew Lovett's special interests include the combination of instruments with electronics, digital opera, theatre and video. His music has been performed by The London Sinfonietta, Gemini, Aquarius, Marimolin, The Endymion Ensemble, Metanoia and Vocem. His music has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, Swedish Radio, BBC 2 and Channel 4. Unknown Terrors, for cello, keyboard and electronics was commissioned by Sonic Arts Network for Judith Mitchell and broadcast on Radio 3 in April 2000. He lives in Cambridge, UK.

I C A R U S

I : the dream of flight

ANDREW LOVETT



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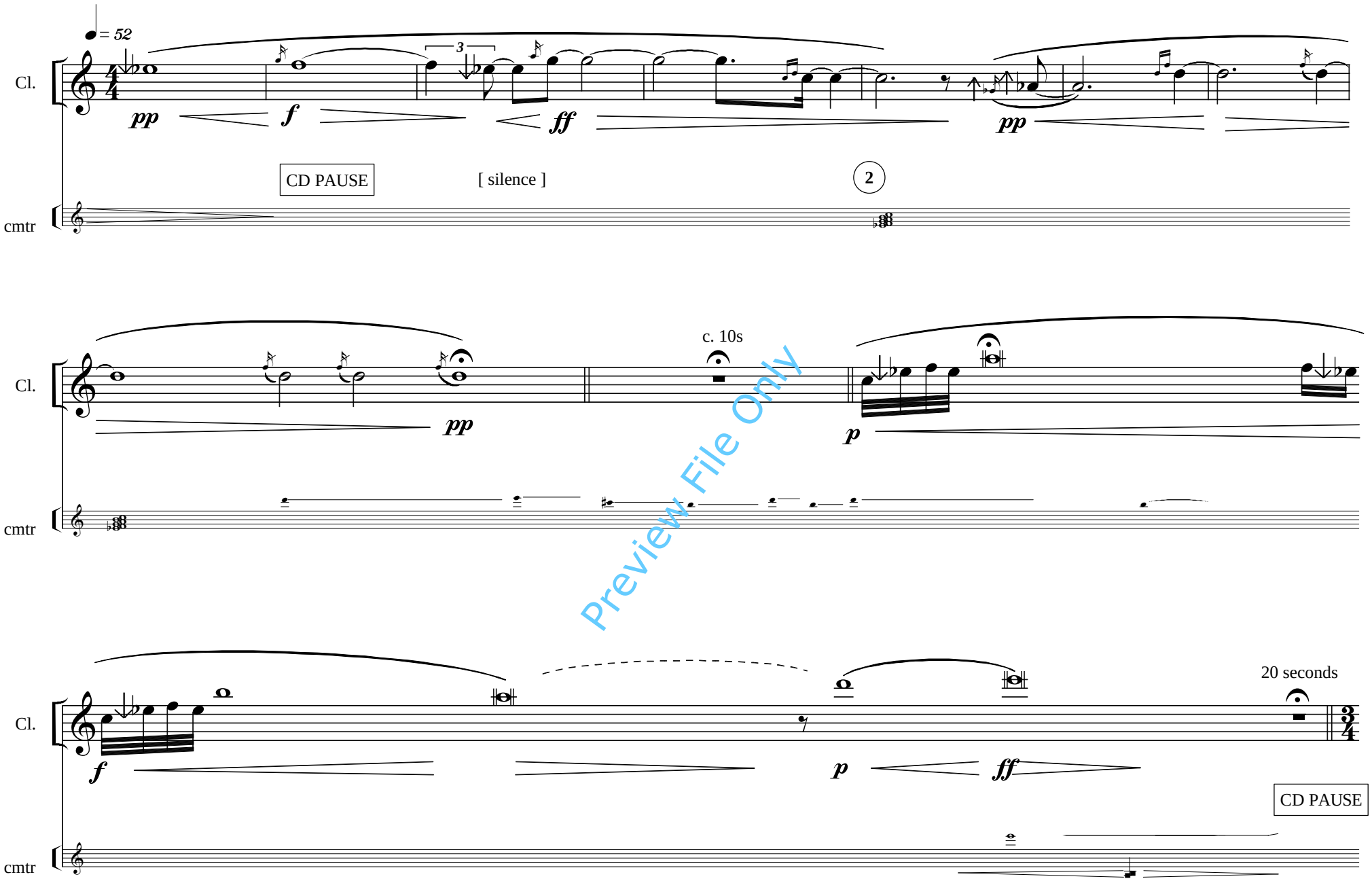

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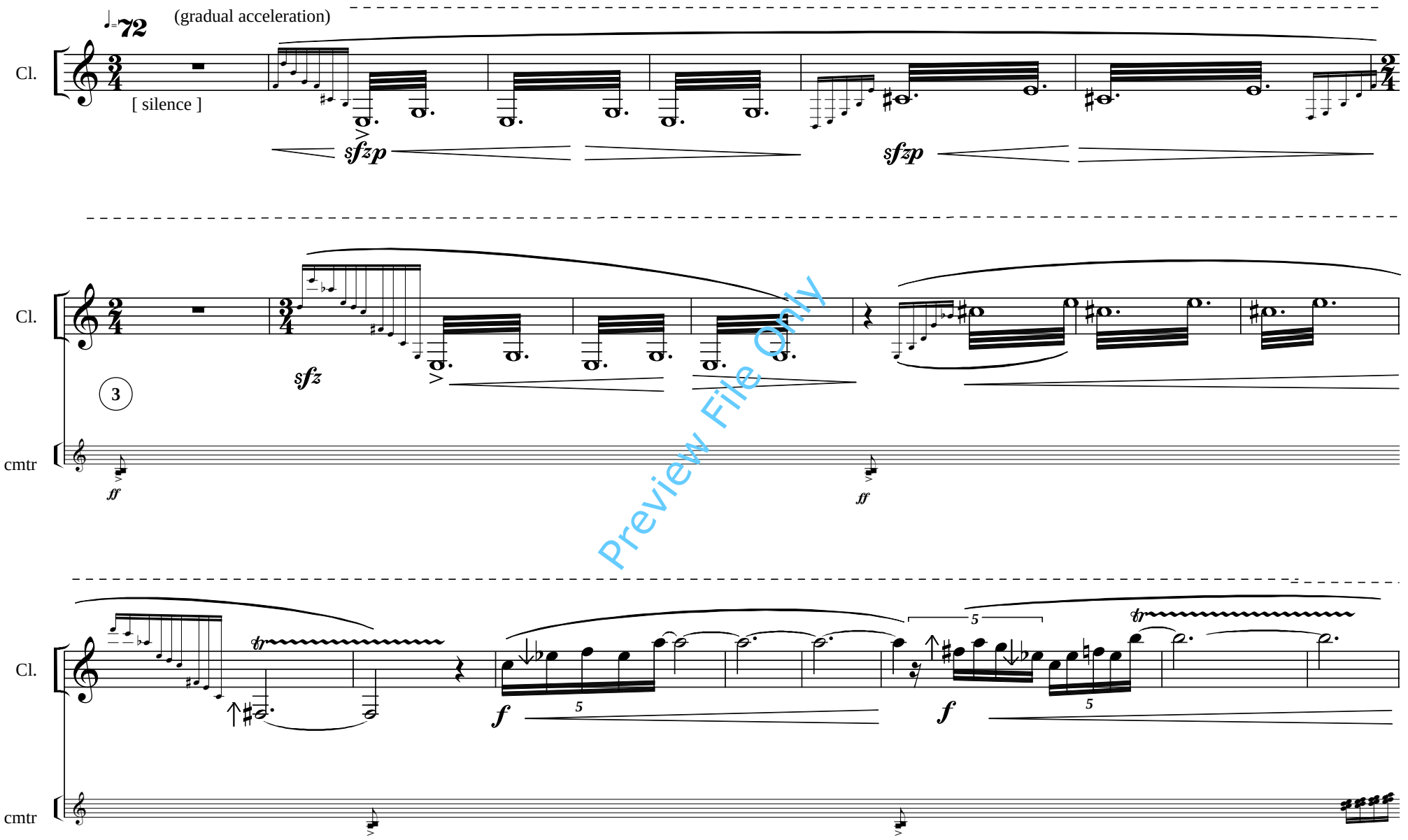
II : with increasing excitement



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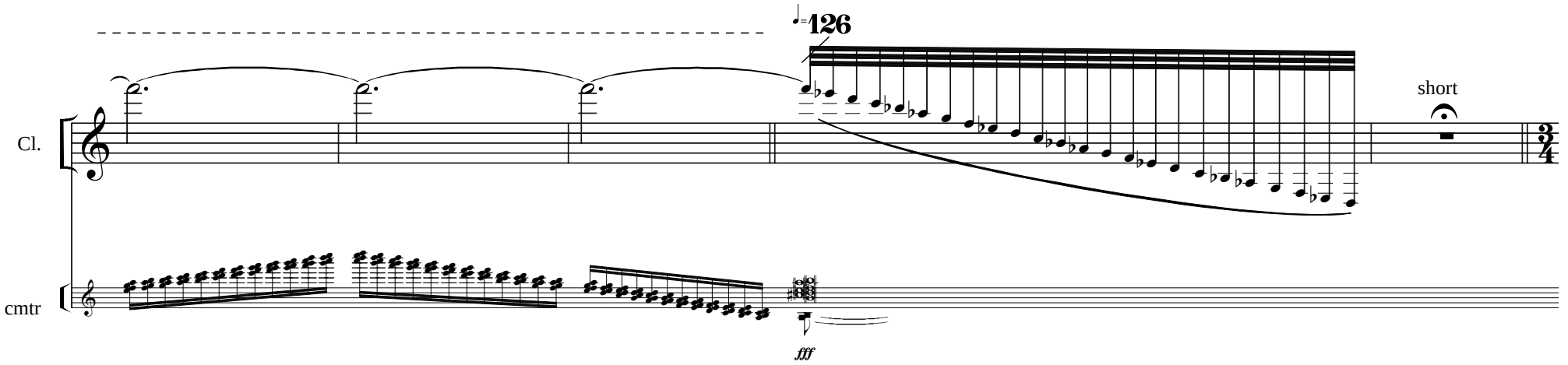
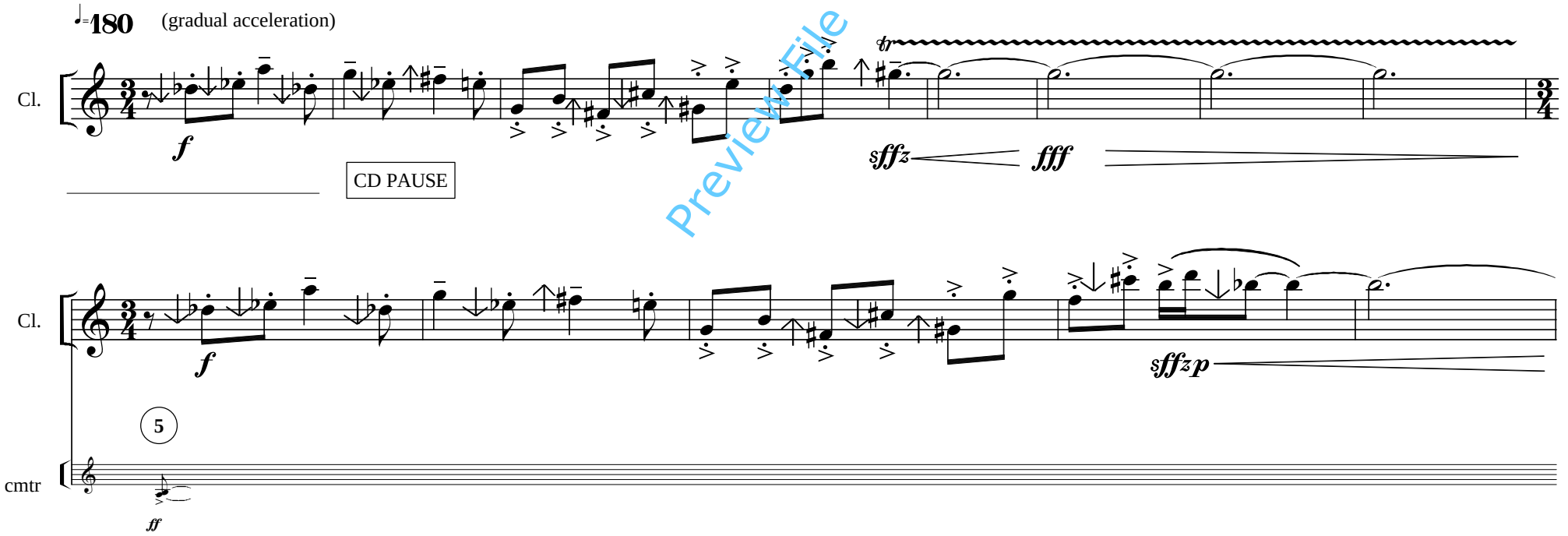


III : insoucient, playful



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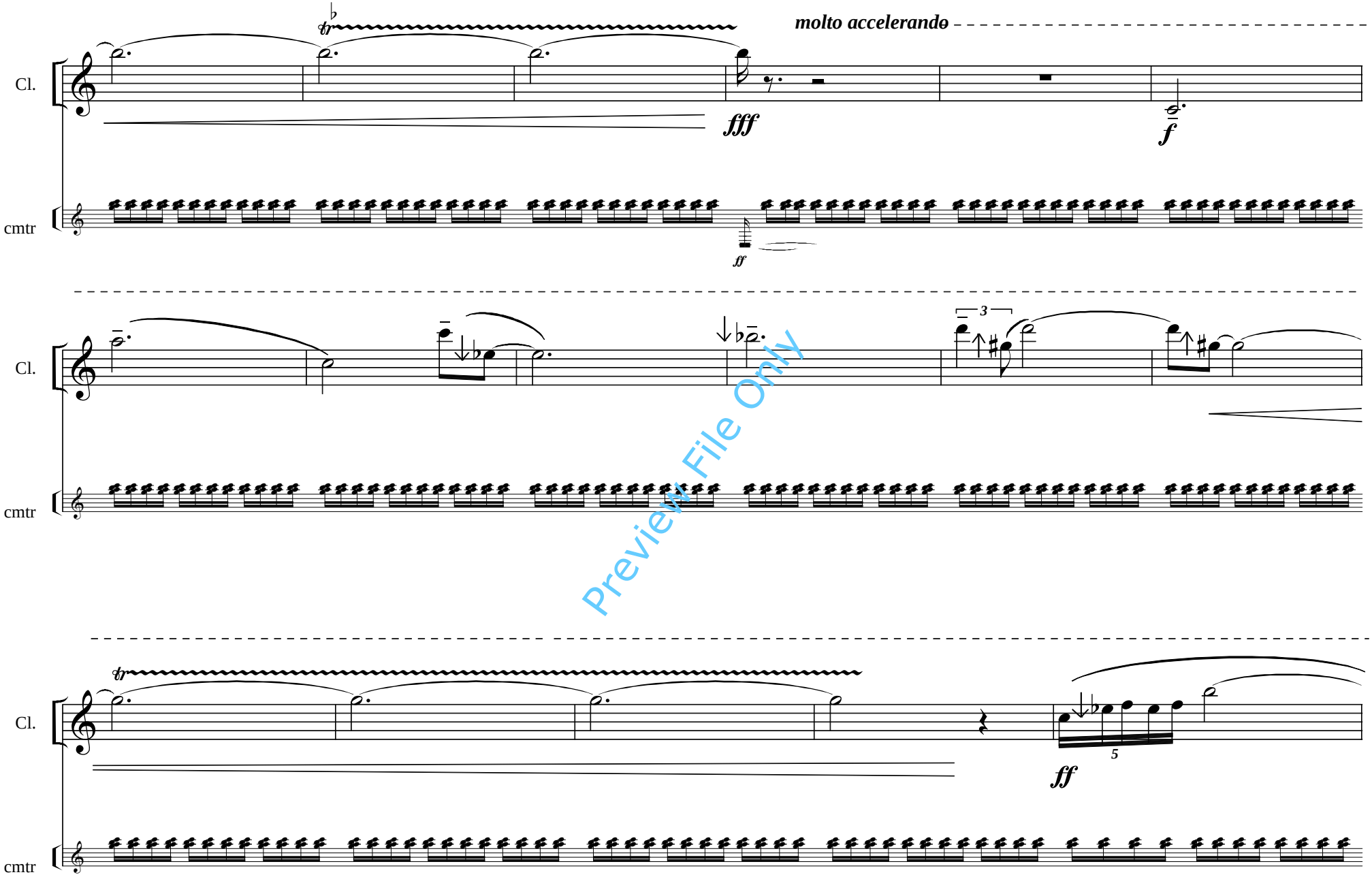

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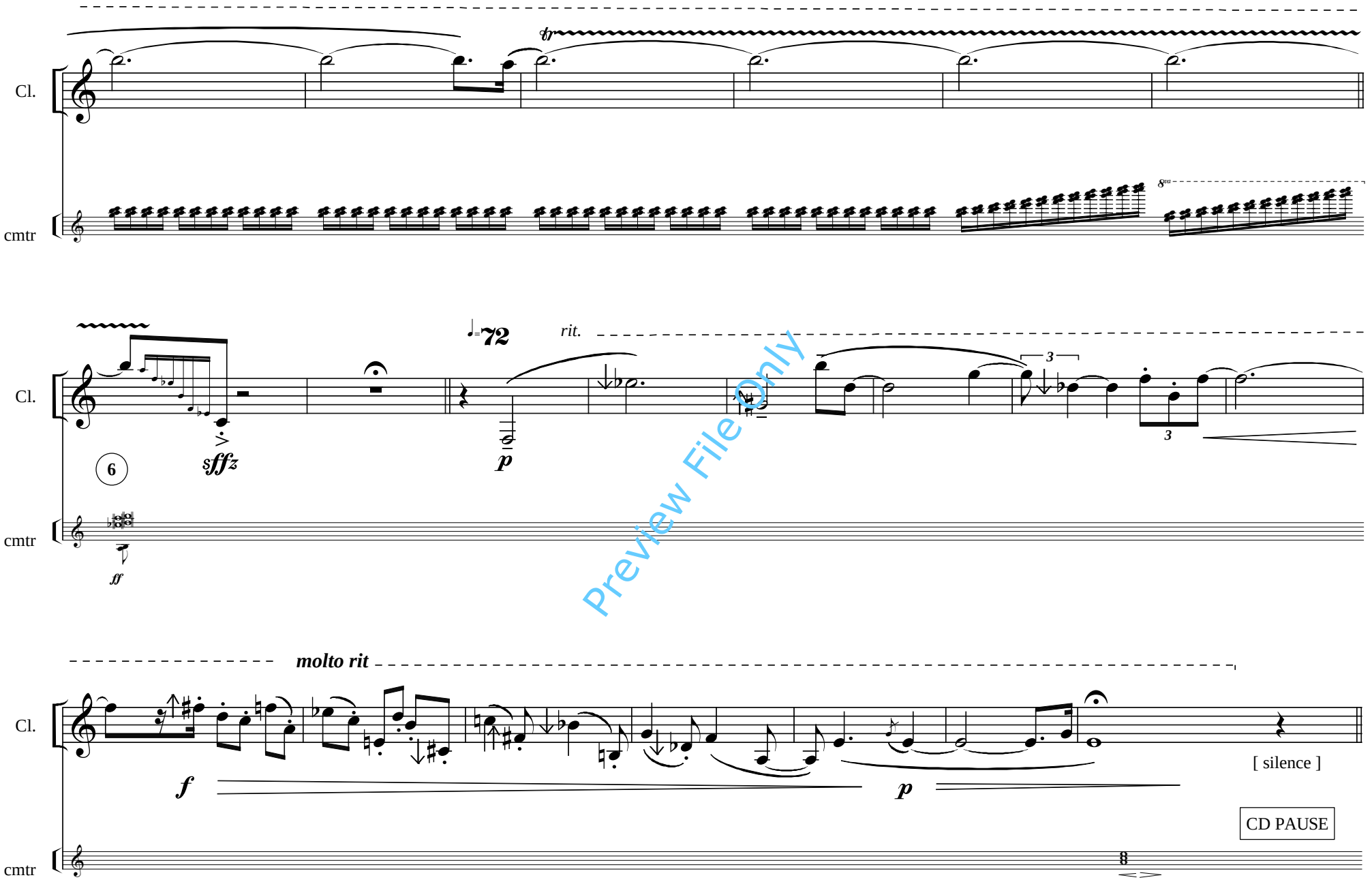

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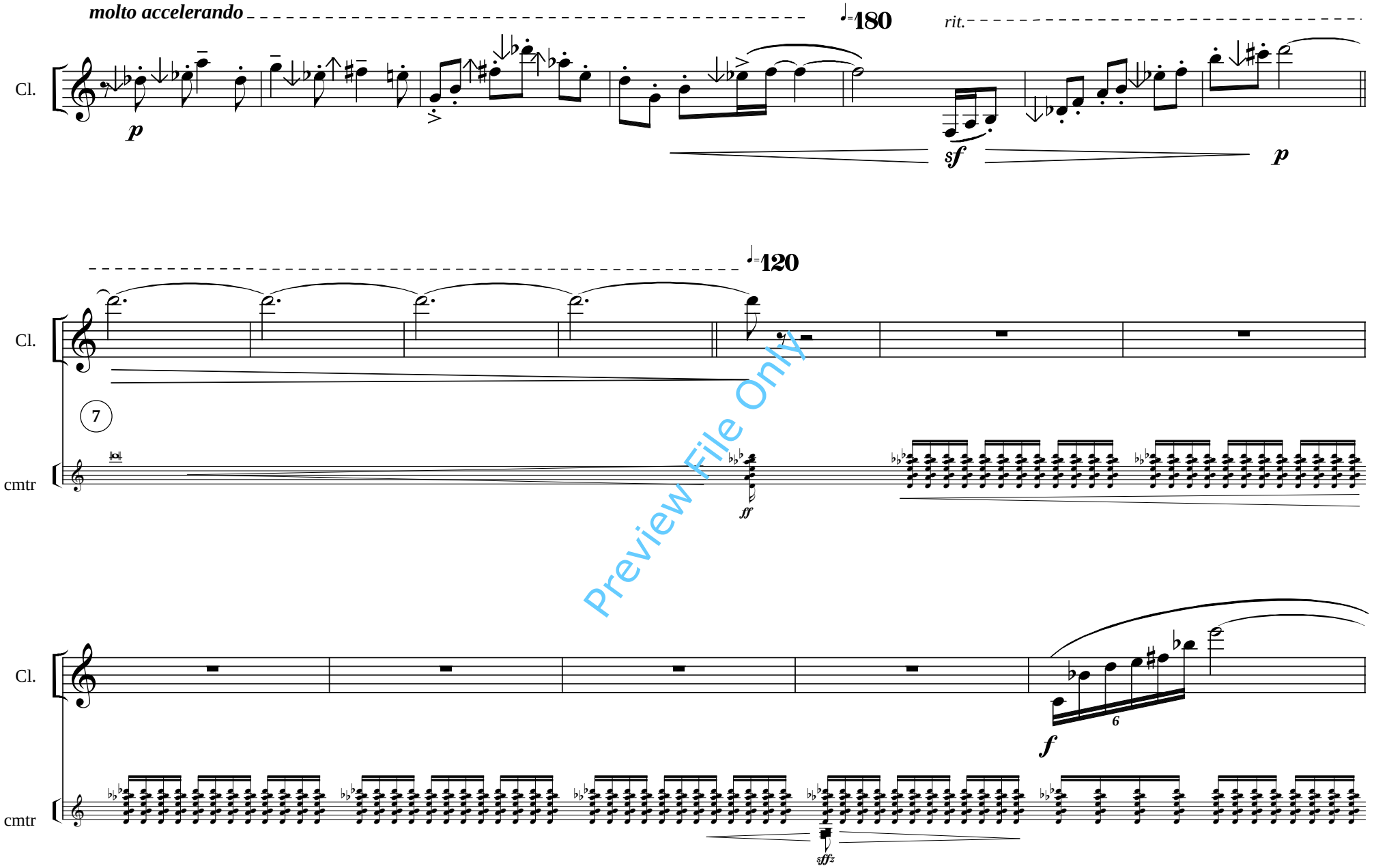

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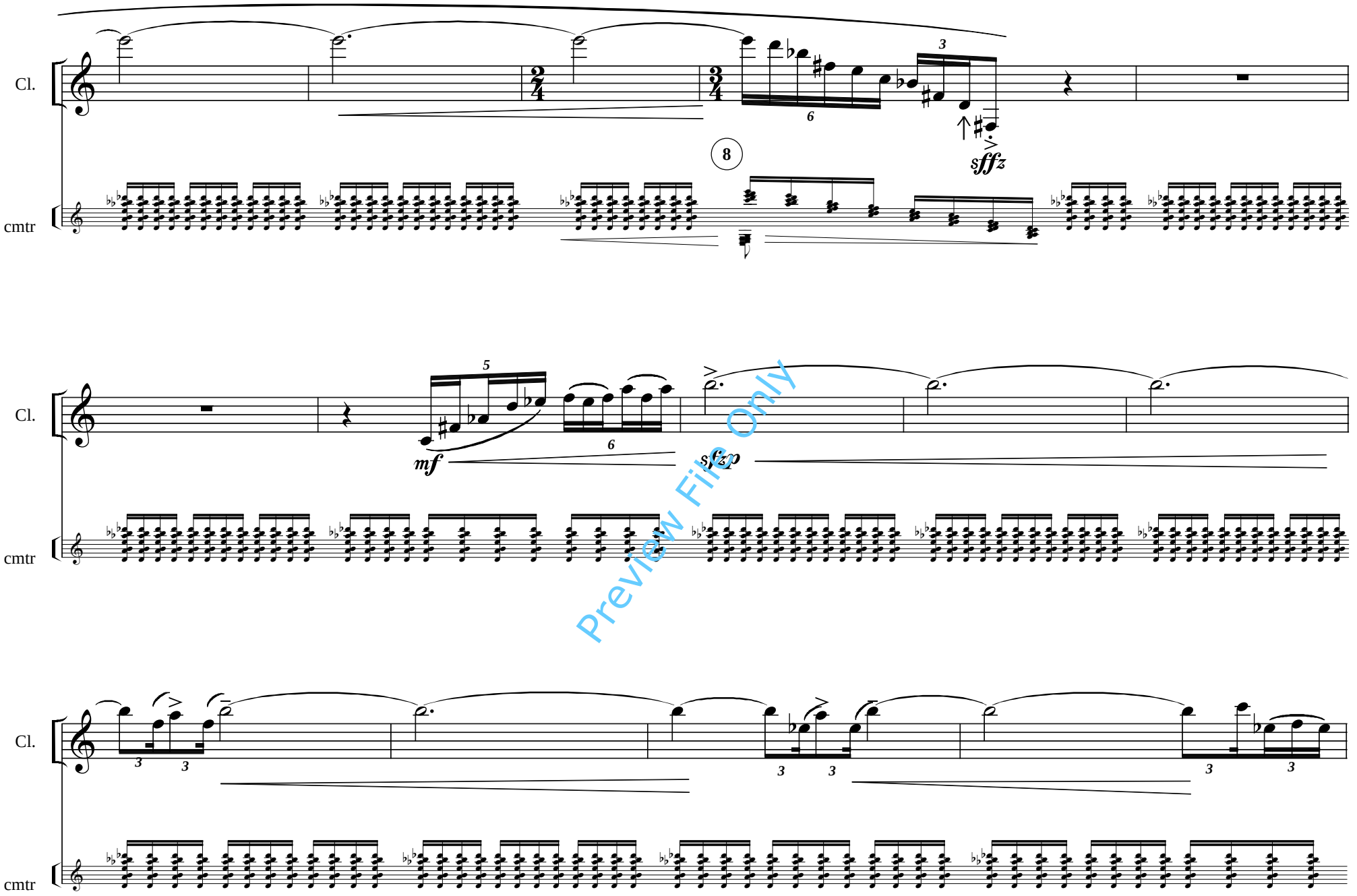

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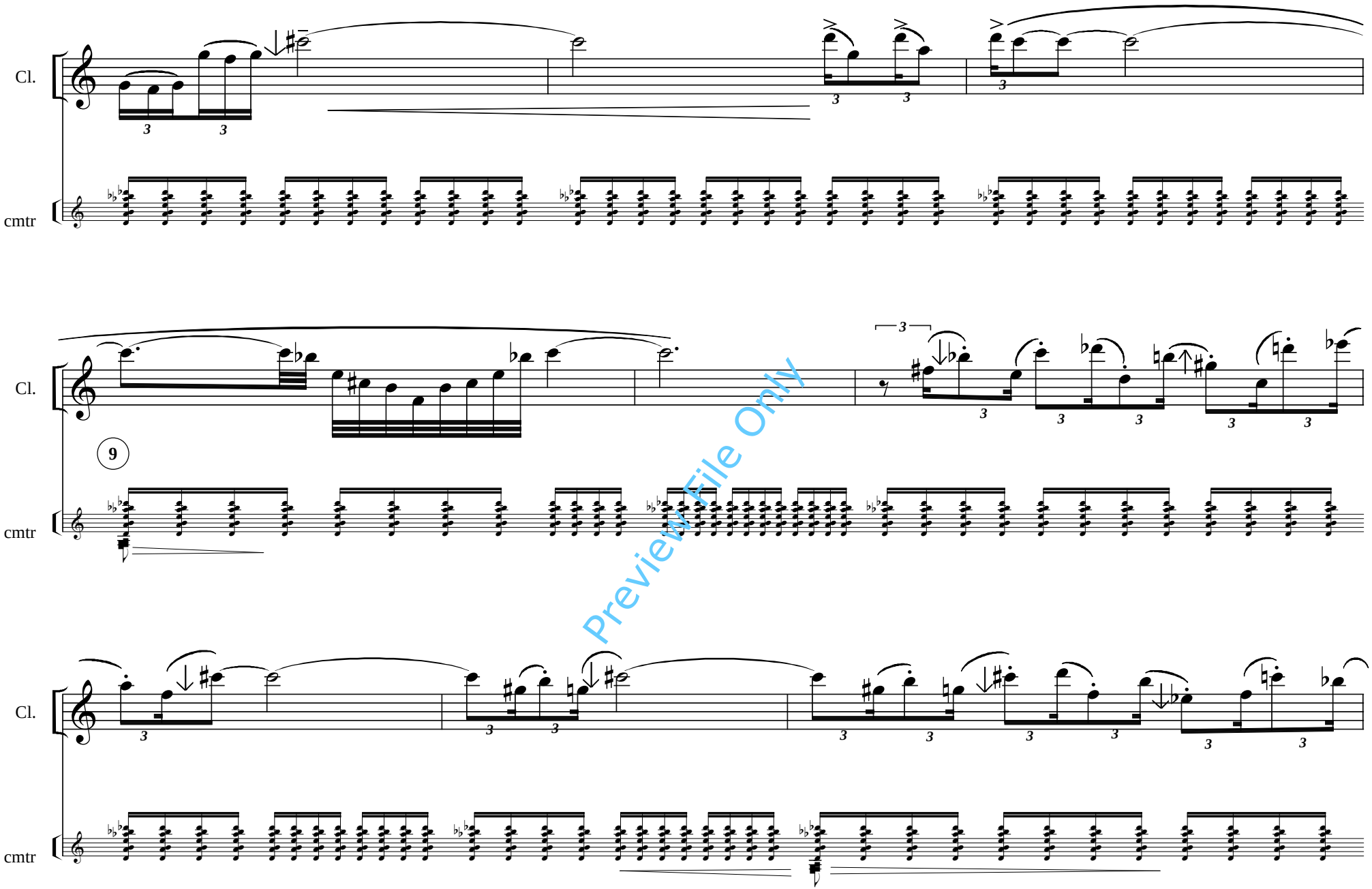

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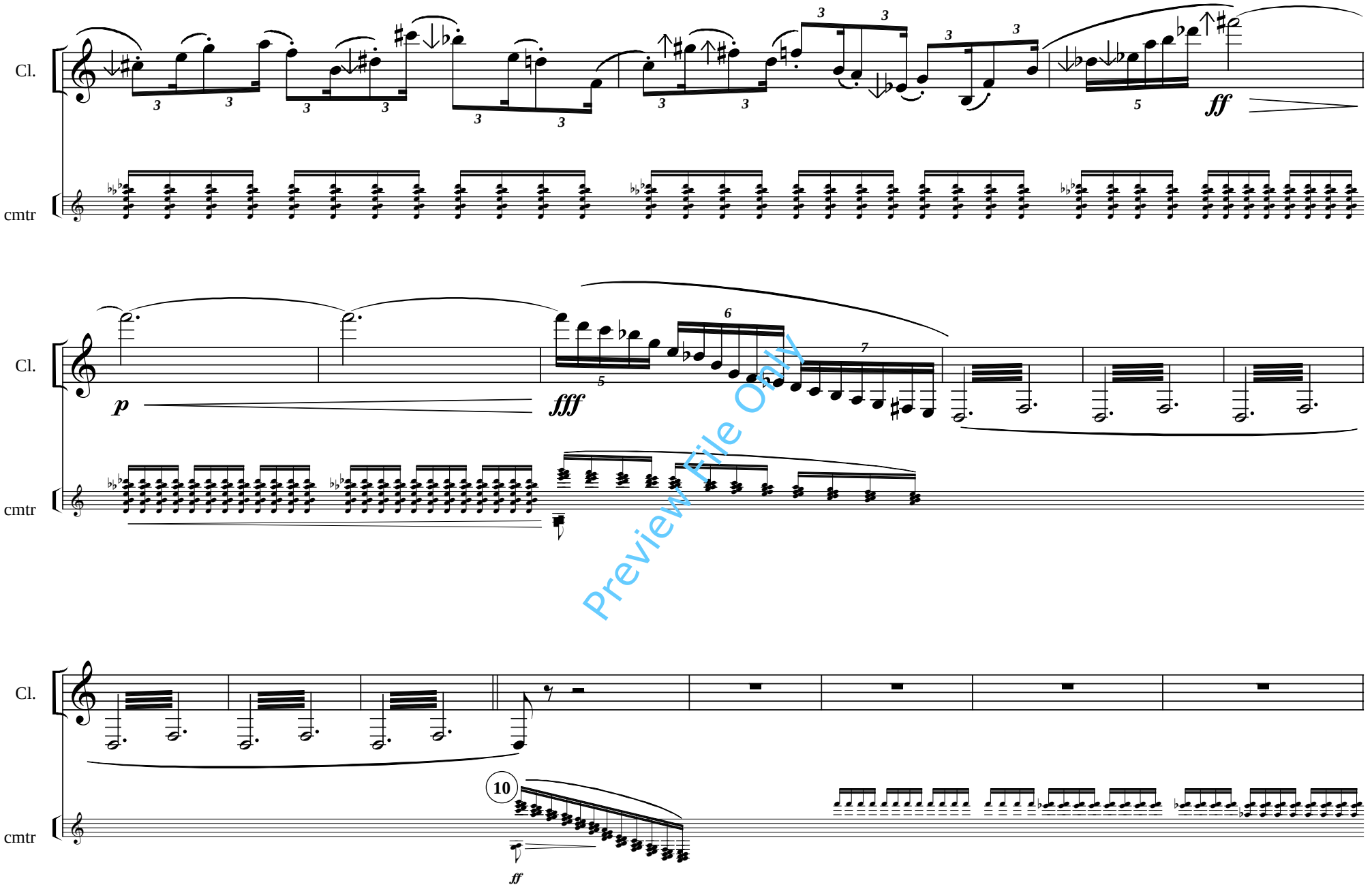

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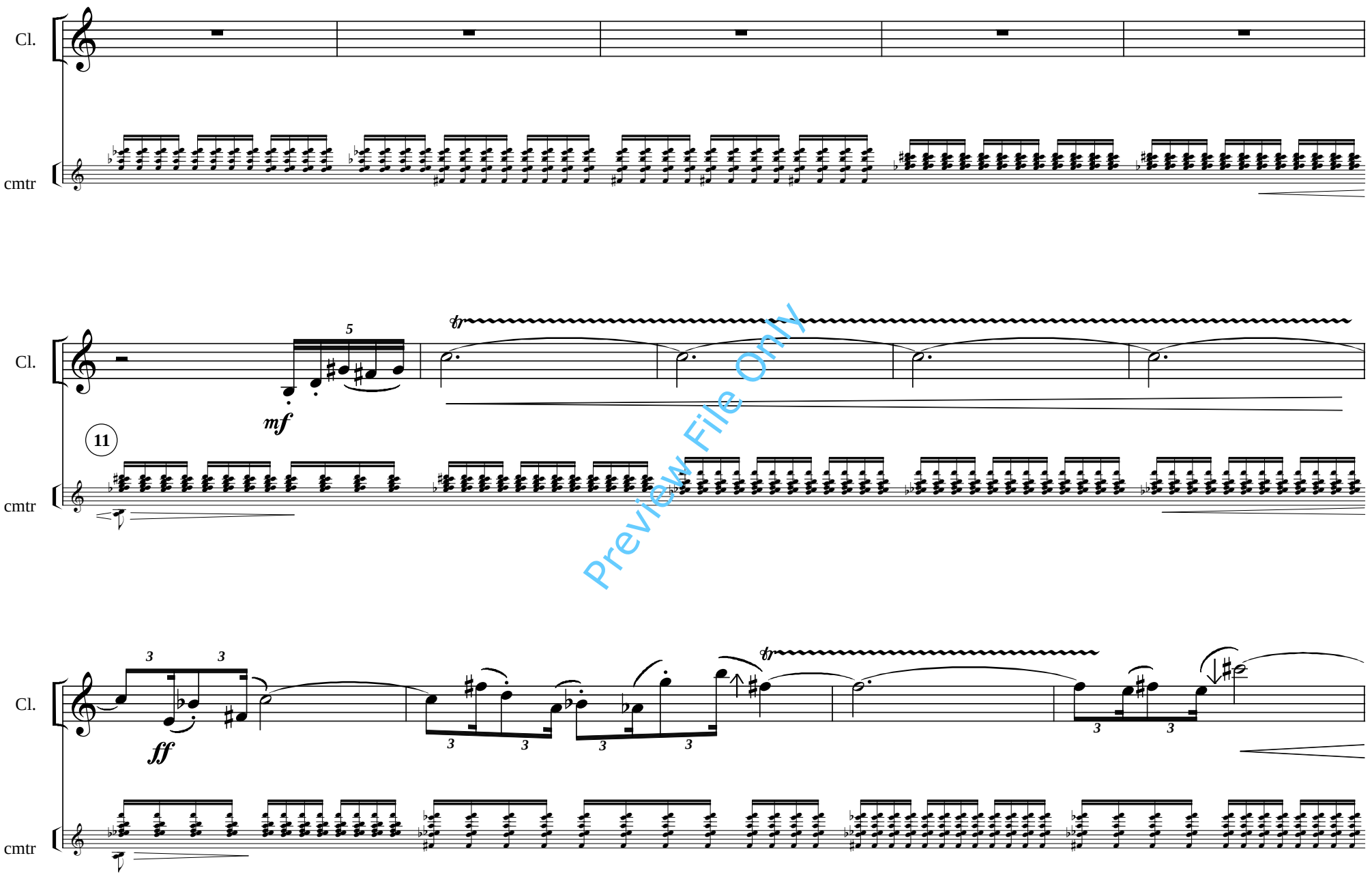

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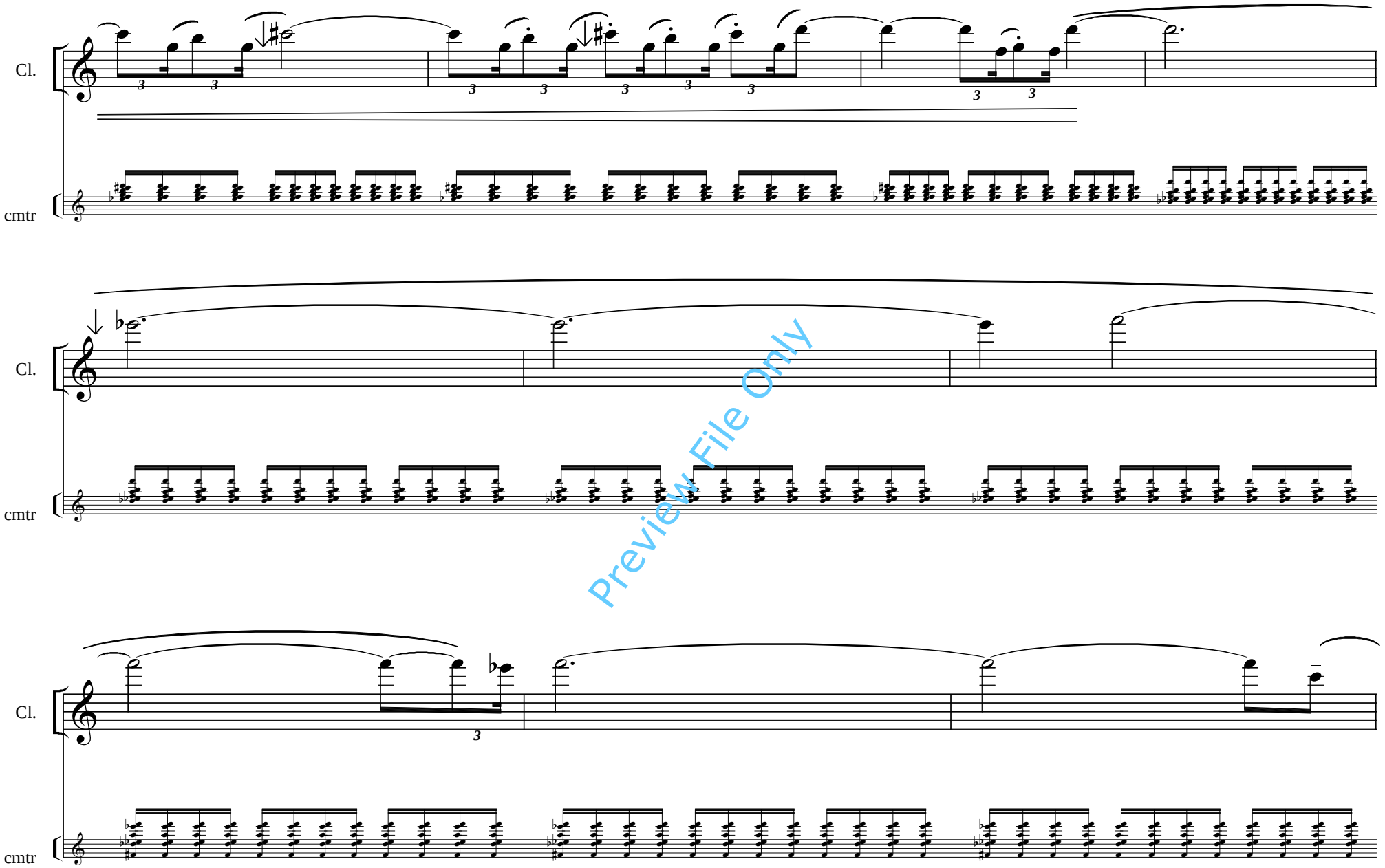

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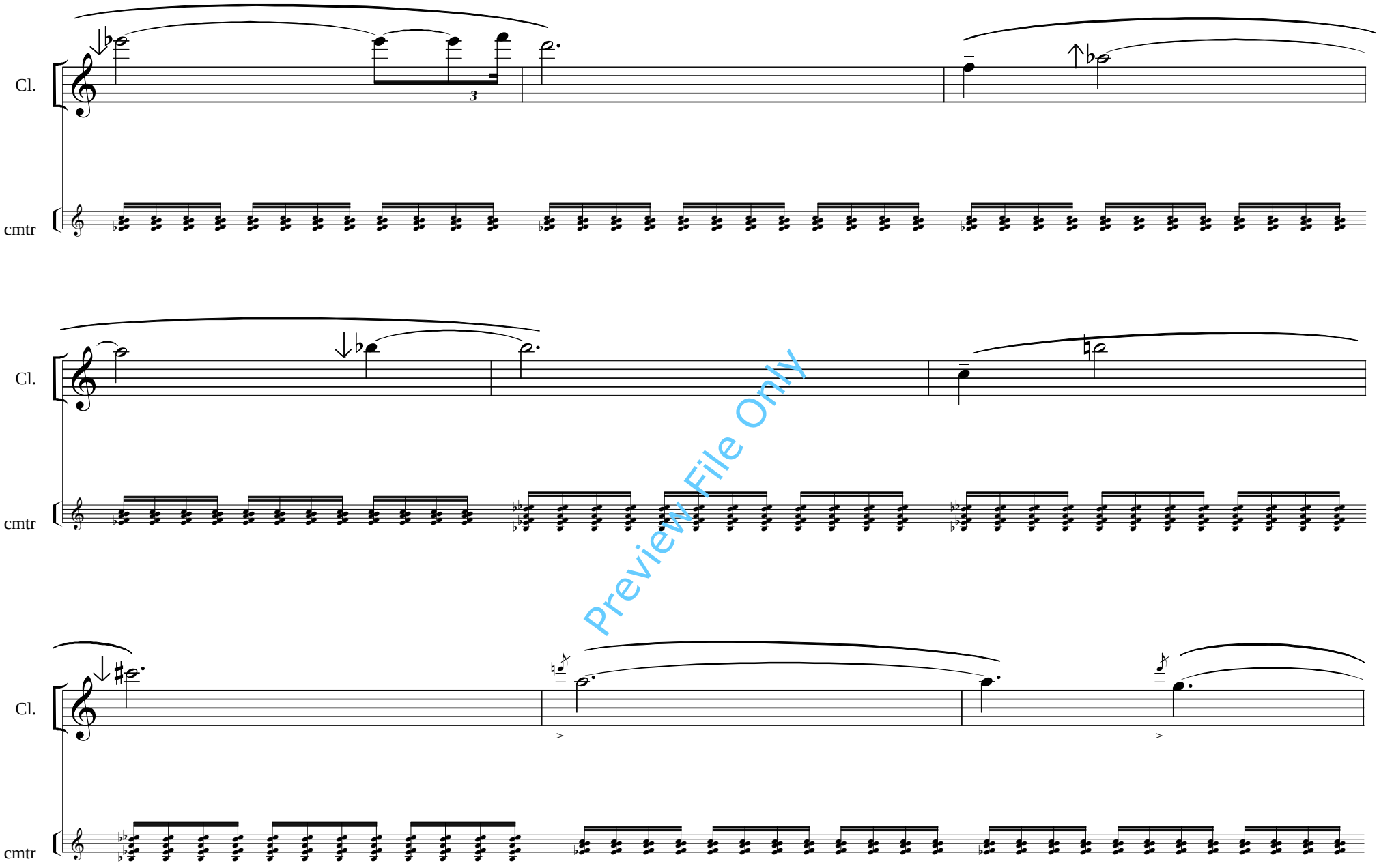

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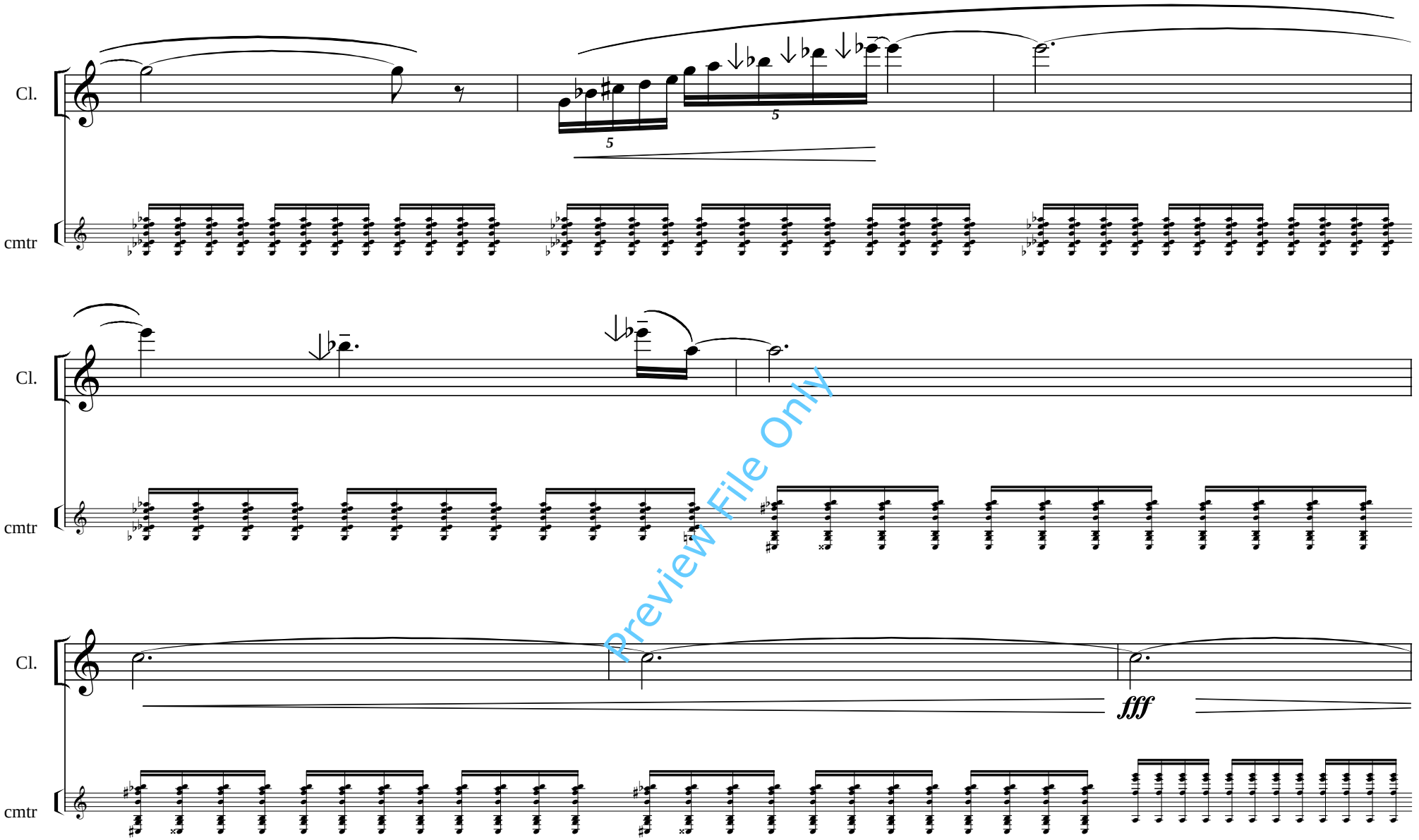

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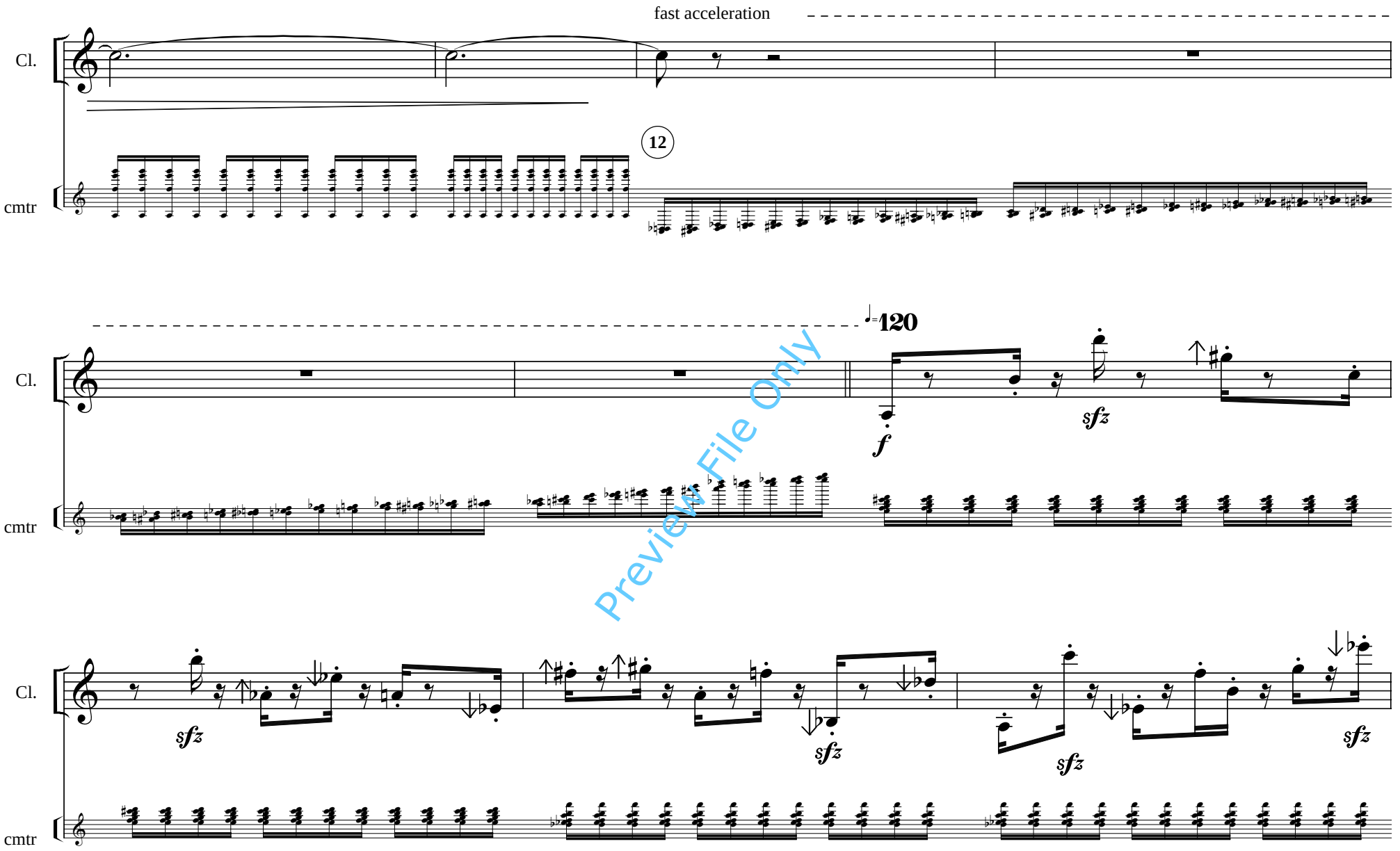

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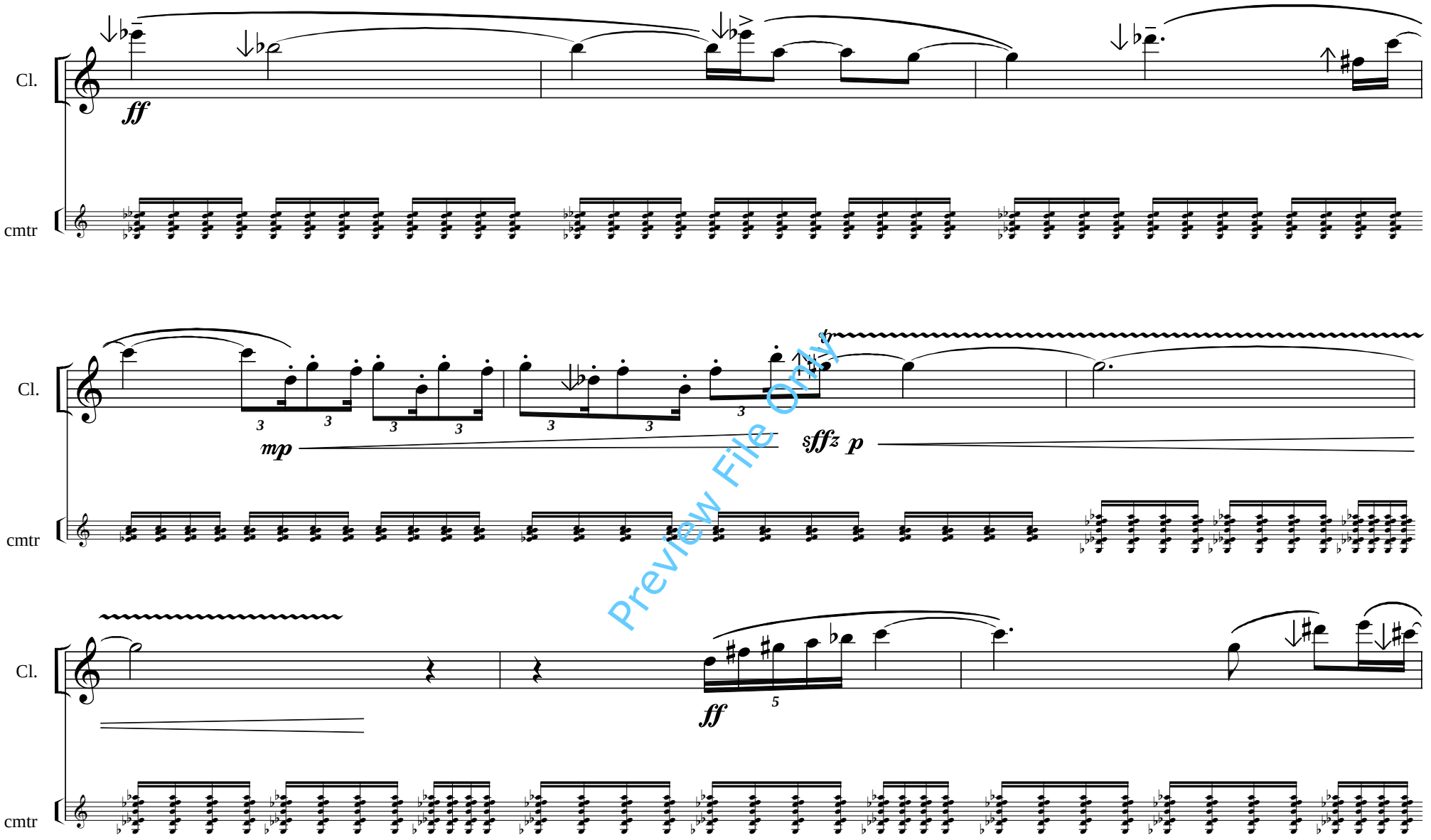

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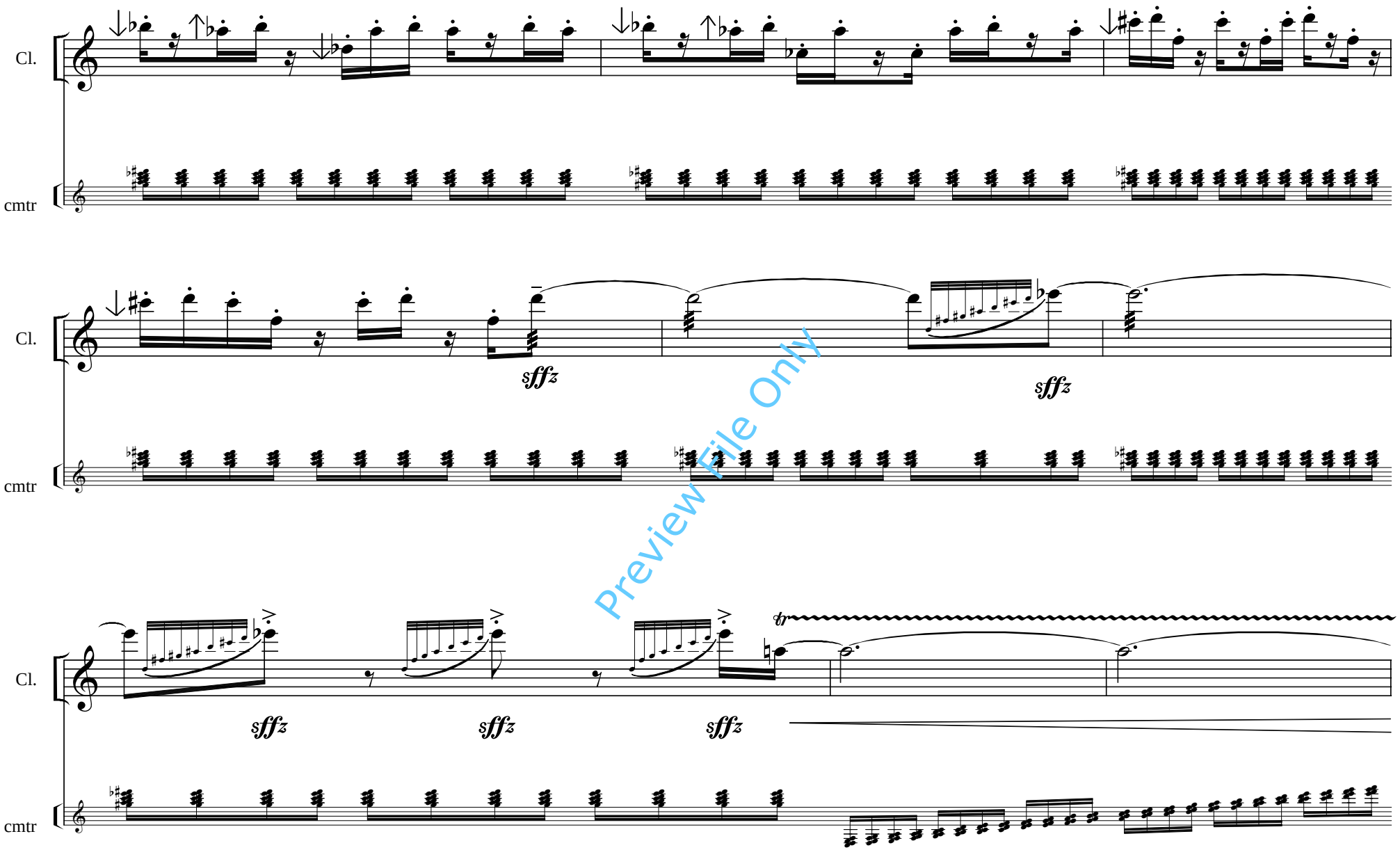

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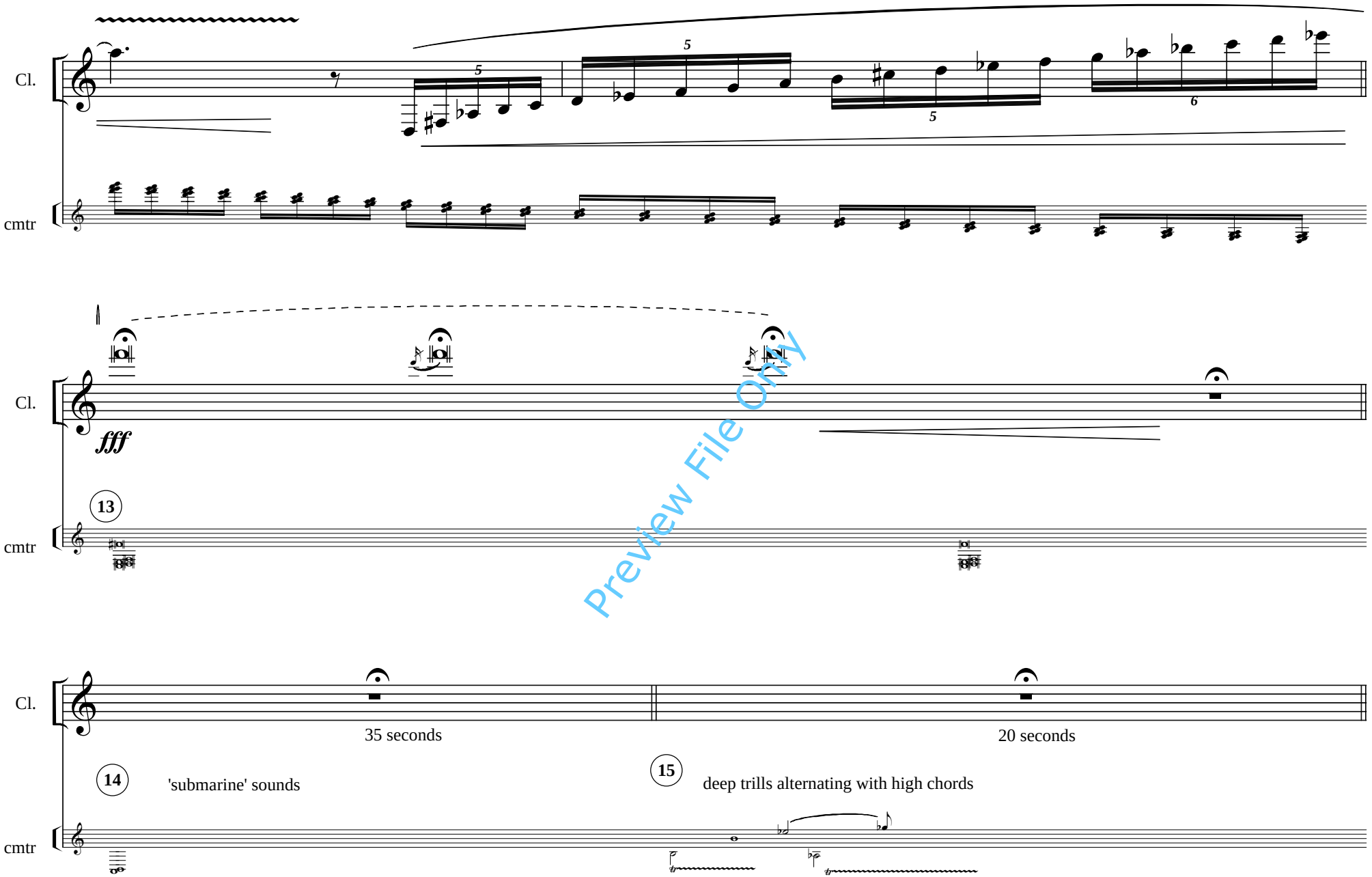

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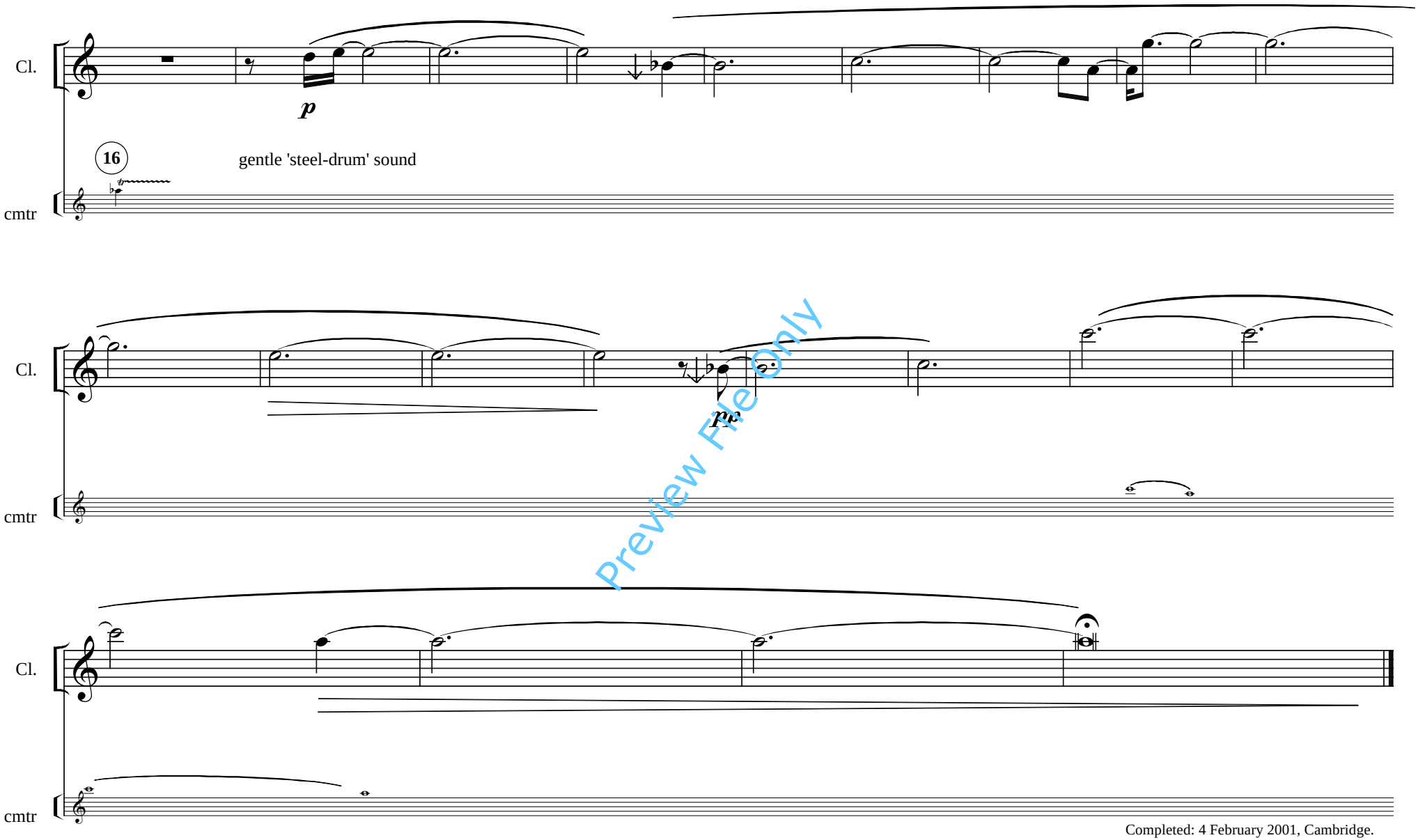
V gentle, reflective ♩=60



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Completed: 4 February 2001, Cambridge.
Revised: August-September, December 2001