Michael Finnissy

Recent Britain

for four musicians with (optional) assistant and pre-recorded tape(s)

Preview File Only

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RECENT BRITAIN

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Michael Finnissy

'Recent Britain' (1997-98)
For up to four musicians with (optional) assistant and pre-recorded tape(s).

Commissioned by 'Apartment House' with funding partly provided by the Arts Council of England.
Duration: 25 minutes.
First Performance: 25th January 1998 at the Radio Theatre, Broadcasting House, London by Andrew Sparling (clar.), Philip Gibbon (bsn.), Anton Lukoszevieze (vcl.), Ian Pace (piano) and Mikel Toms (assistant).

The piece may be performed as a quartet (with four tapes), a trio (with three tapes) or a duo (with two tapes). In each case the tapes are (preferably) made by the same performers as in the 'live' concert. The Piano part is obligatory. Although specified here as Clarinet, Bassoon & 'Cello, substitutions may be made as follows:

Clarinet (or Flute, Oboe or Violin)
Bassoon (or 'Cello or Trombone)
'Cello (or Bassoon or Trombone)

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There is no master-score. The parts are independent with respect to tempo. The performers may find it helpful to use stopwatches, especially when no assistant is present. The instructions for the Assistant are to be found on pages 112-116. This part, and its text, may be omitted.
The tape-parts are laid-out as follows:
Clarinet (pages 3-19); Bassoon (pages 20-26); 'Cello (pages 27-32); Piano (pages 33-46).
The 'live' parts as follows:
Clarinet (pages 48-59); Bassoon (pages 60-76); 'Cello (pages 77-91); Piano (pages 92-111).

Other general information about the performance is given on pages 2 and 47.

The tape-components may be operated individually by the performers, or be overlaid on a single master-tape (operated by an auxillary technician), relayed from loudspeakers : two 'at the front' is sufficient, though more elaborate layouts (also incorporating slides, video or film)* are perfectly acceptable. It is not essential that the tape- and 'live' source (clarinet, for example) come from the same place or direction.
The tape volume should generally equal (in playback) the live sound, and not dominate it – moment to moment adjustments should be made when necessary. The clarinet tape-part at [H] (page 11) should not, for example, overpower the live music on page 53.
The tapes begin at the following times after the start of the piece :

2'06" (Piano)
2' 12·5" (Clarinet)
3' 16" (Bassoon)
4' 14" ('Cello) all should have finished by 19' 15".

NB. The recordings should have the 'rough and ready' quality of street interviews, including occasional environmental/extraneous noises (which may even obscure the text momentarily) – traffic, passers-by, coughs and sniffs etc. The result should be 'personal' rather than anonymous, god-like, or of pristine studio quality.

* see Note 4 on Page 47.

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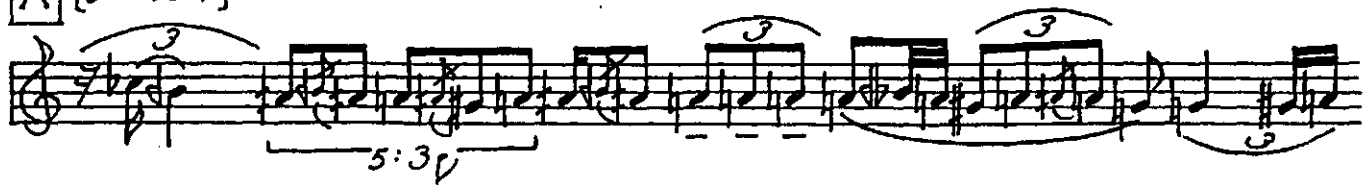
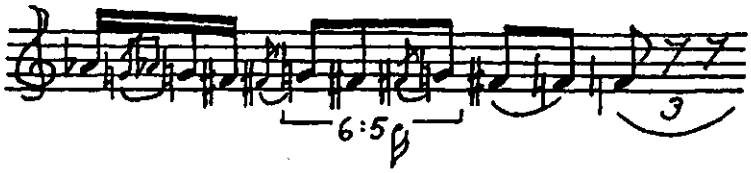
PRE-RECORDED TAPE 1.
CLARINET (IN C)

Each page lasts sixty seconds (one minute).
Sixteen minutes in all.
Music and words virtually continuous.
Words: clearly audible, unforced ('natural' rather than 'dramatic') articulation. At typical interview speed and volume.

Preview File Only

A [♪= 104]





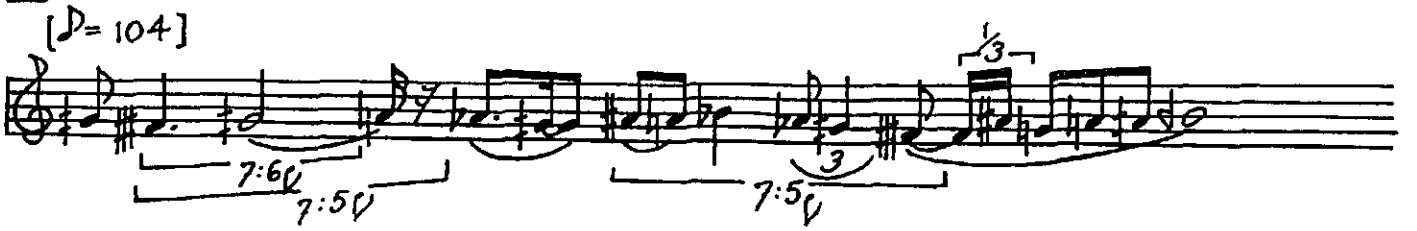
SEE INTO ITS SECRETS . . .

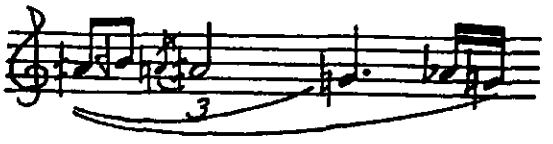
a common immigration, visa and asylum policy - frontier controls - the Western European Union - a new defence arm - the progressive framing of a common defence policy in the perspective of a common defence - limited areas - to embark - wish to sign - such action could be - the principle of flexibility - go it alone -

Preview File Only

B

[♪= 104]





hundreds of bogus immigration

advisers dupe vulnerable people - revealed yesterday - introduce a licensing system - appoint an inspectorate to prevent - follows a huge upsurge - many with no qualifications setting themselves - visas, work and marriage - wrong or fraudulent - barred entry to thousands of people married to British citizens - primary purpose - to prove that is - to gain entrance - awaiting appeals - fall foul of the rule -

Preview File Only

(𝄐)

C

[♪= 104]

inspectorate created to police the system – every inner-city – filling in standard forms, making telephone-calls – there's a massive money to be made do not need any qualifications or training – financially self-sufficient also looking at ways – immigration system – birth certificate – criminals assume a false identity – of –

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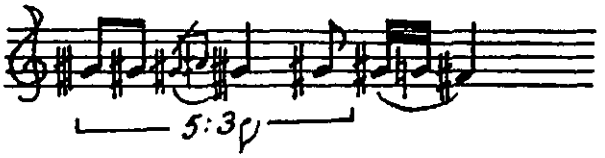
(𝄐)

D



SILENCE . . . NOW ON THE WILD HEATH . . . A RUIN OF THE PAST ALL . . . minister yesterday - criticised a planned review of immigration laws - make it easier - opposed any relaxation of the laws for single-sex or common law relationships - open up the flood -

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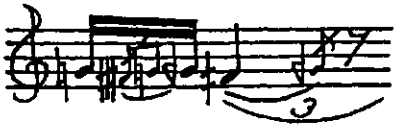
(𝄐)

E

[♪ = 104]



prevent people coming to the U.K. – OF PARTING OR THAT TROUBLE ... THAT PLEASURES ... FLOCK OF BIRDS ... WING, LEAVING NOTHING ... must have valid and subsistent marriage – we think – equally before the law – said it knew – we think everybody –

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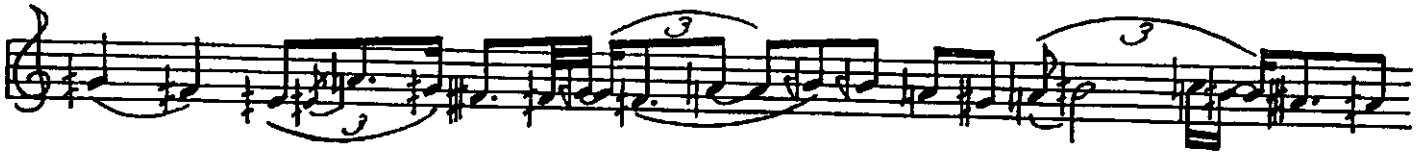
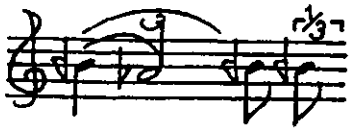
(𝄐)

F

[♪= 104]





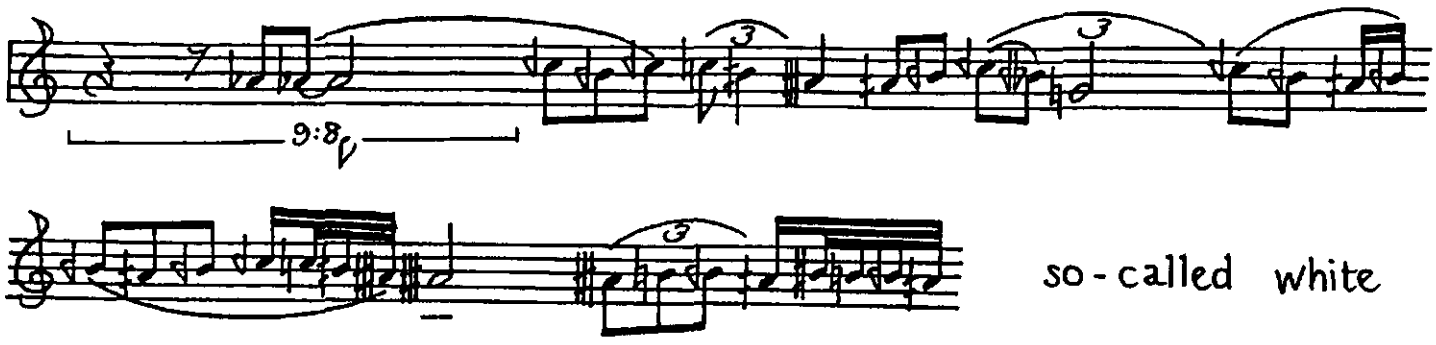
. . . WORDS ARE . . .

(𝄐)

Preview File Only

G

[♪= 104]



so-called white list of countries whose citizens are regarded as facing no serious risk of persecution – unlikely to deserve protection – thousands of would-be refugees from India, Pakistan, Ghana, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland and Romania – presumed to be unsound –

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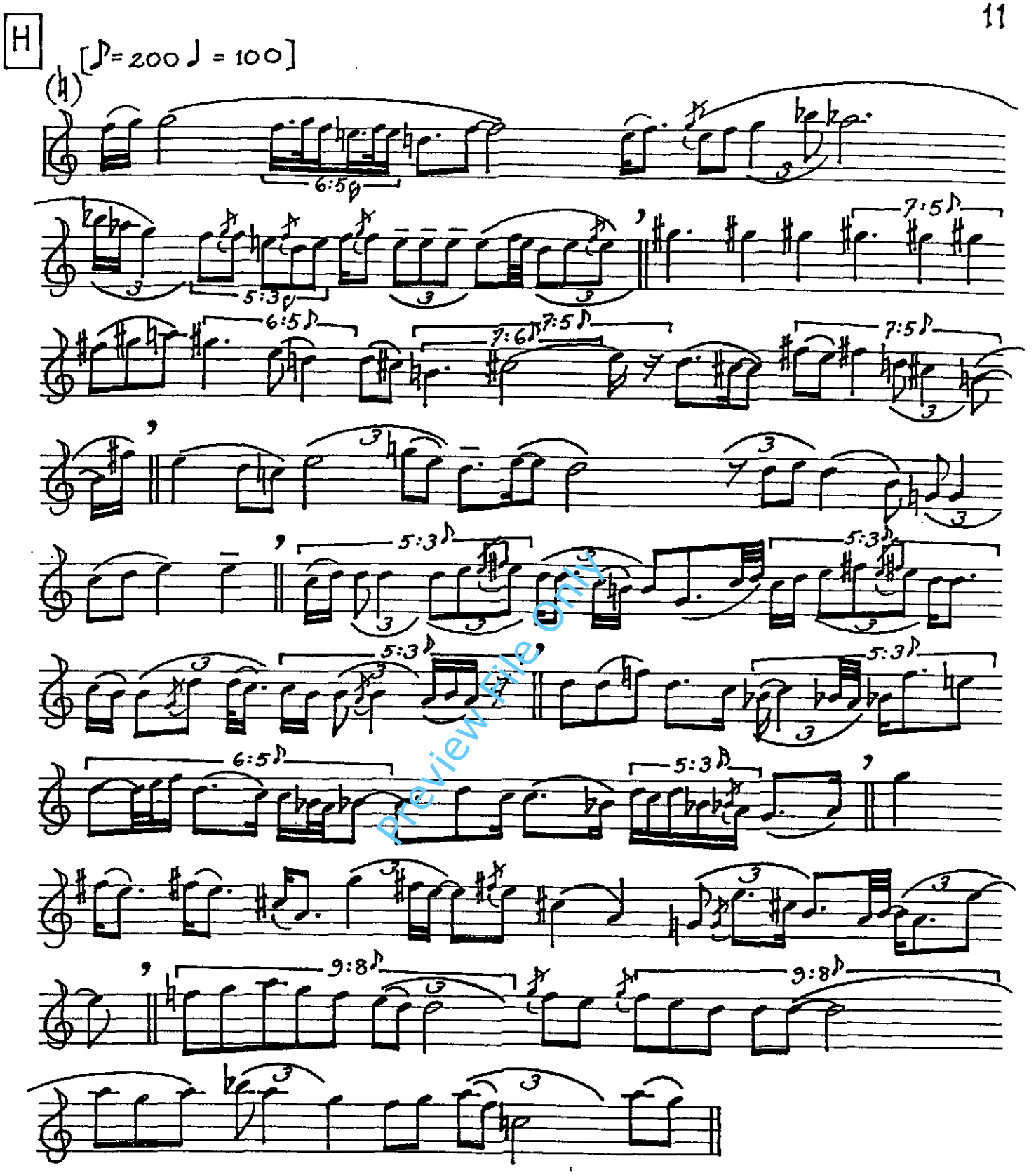
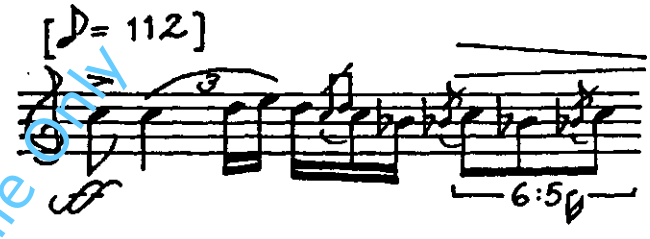
(𝄐)



Preview File Only

I

unsound - unless sound, unsound proved - unless proved otherwise - rights of appeal are severely restricted - came into force in October - the number refused increased by ten thousand four hundred - compel employers to check passports or identity documents of people applying for jobs - crack down on - two million to be checked - [♪= 112]



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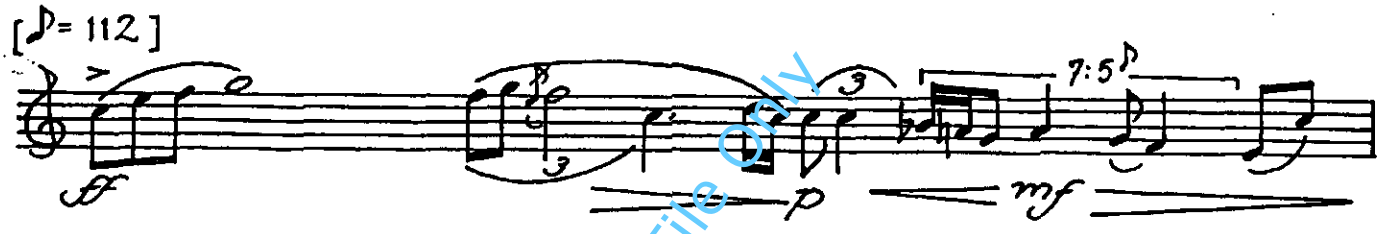
(𝅝)

J

deter employers from giving jobs to ethnic minorities – a system that is firm and fast – of fundamental importance – dangerous and inflexible – controls –



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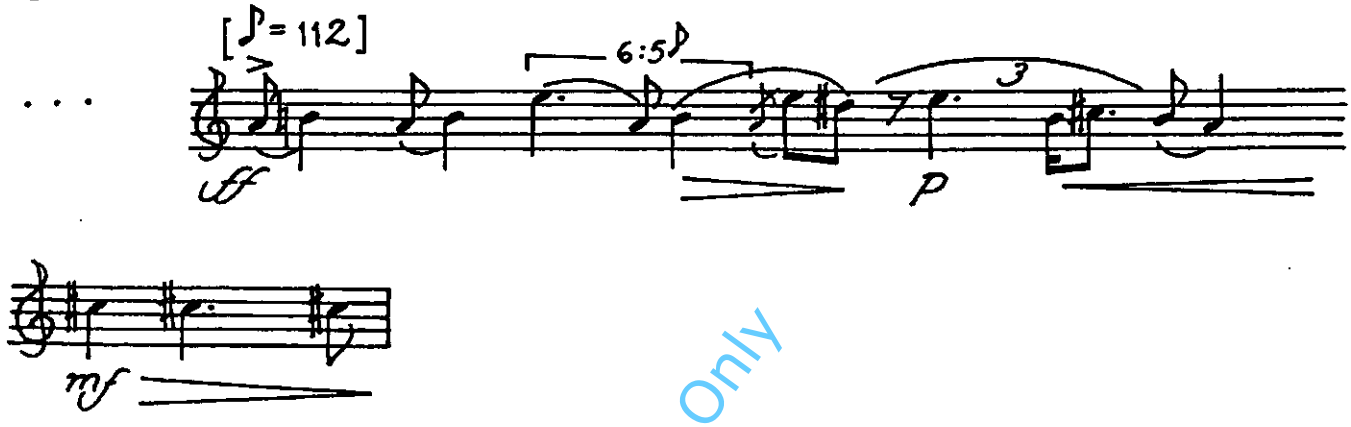
K

go hand-in-hand . . . NATURE HIDES HER FACE . . . MURMURING



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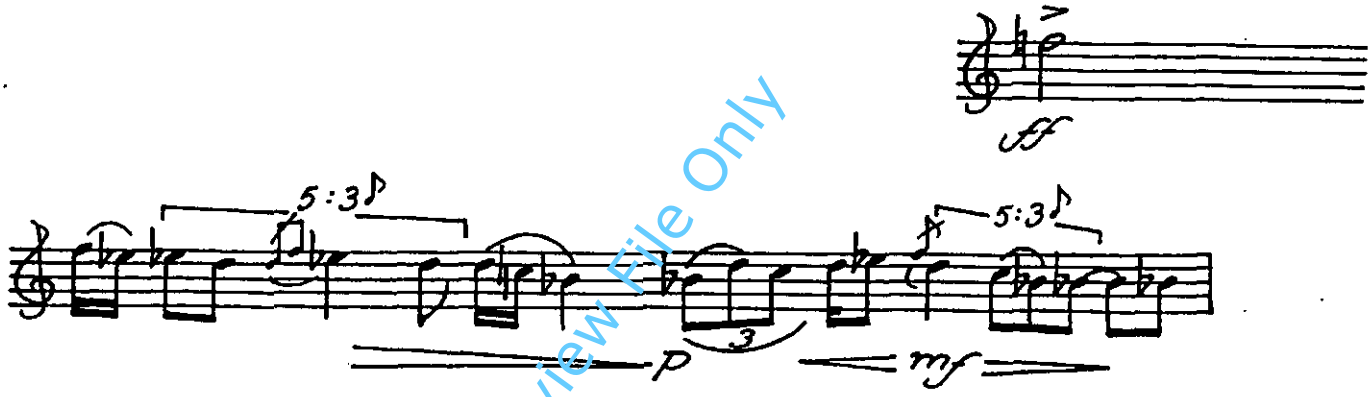
(𝅗𝅥.)

L

SEEK FOR FREEDOM . . . GONE . . . TRAPS . . . SET TO KILL . . . HOMELESS . . . BRAMBLE BUSHES GREW . . . DAISY GEMMED . . . HILLS OF SILKEN GRASS . . . A DESERT . . . VANISHED . . . PASSING . . . HERE FOR EVER ON . . . [♪ = 112]



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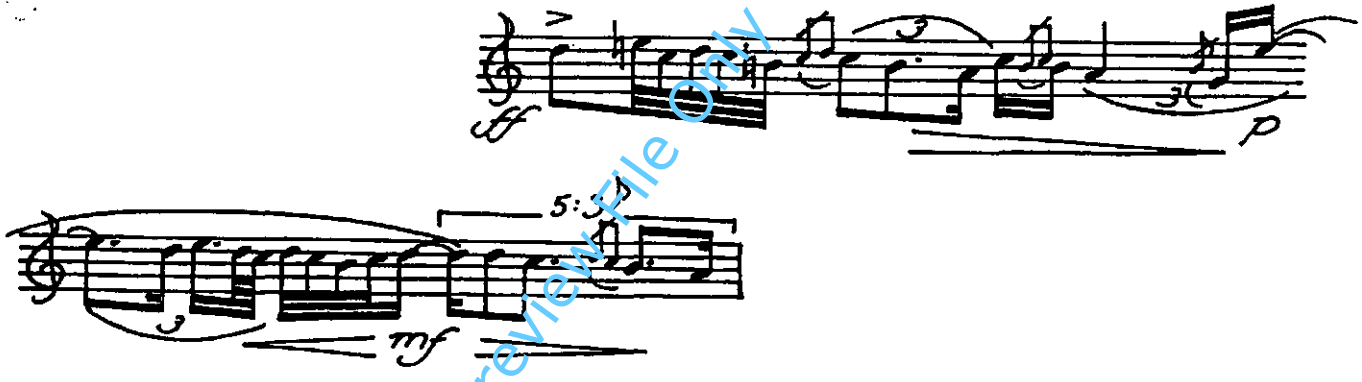
(𝄐)

M

flexible decision-making by which some countries proceed at a faster pace than others - Britain is likely to come under pressure - the timing of - implementation of the Social Chapter - immigration, asylum, defence and voting - to secure a deal - [♪= 112]



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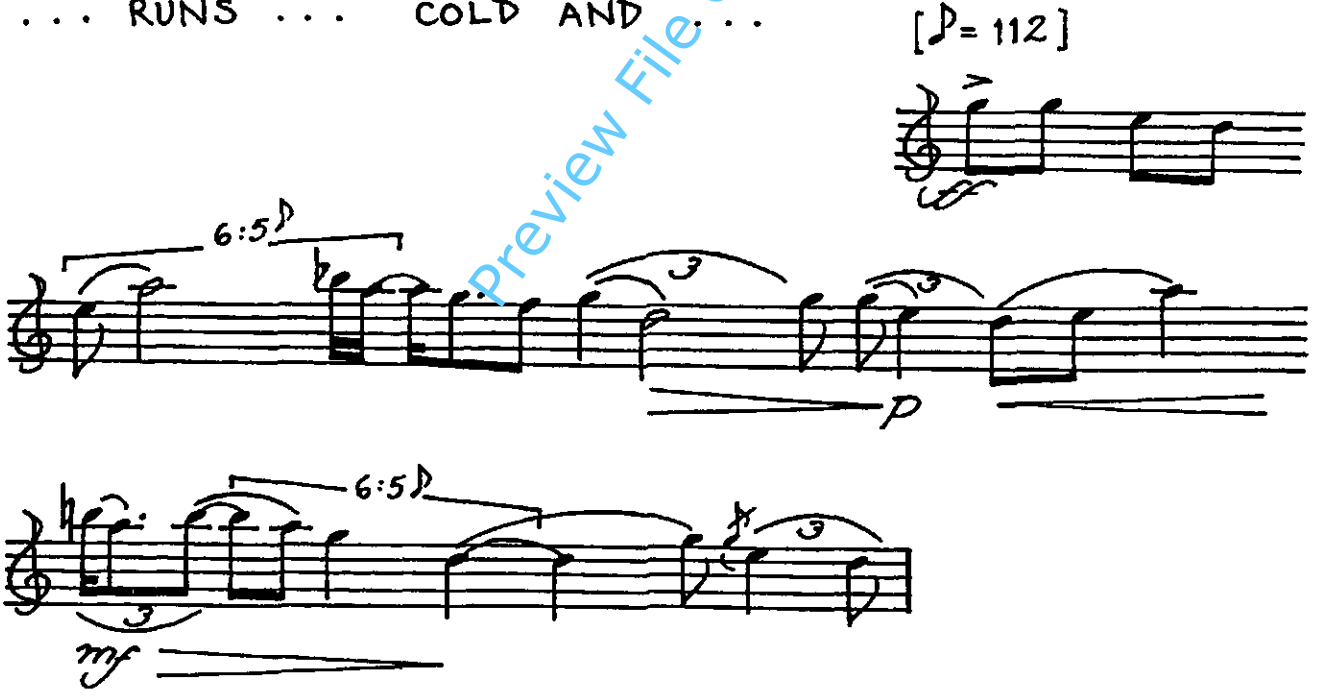
(𝄐)

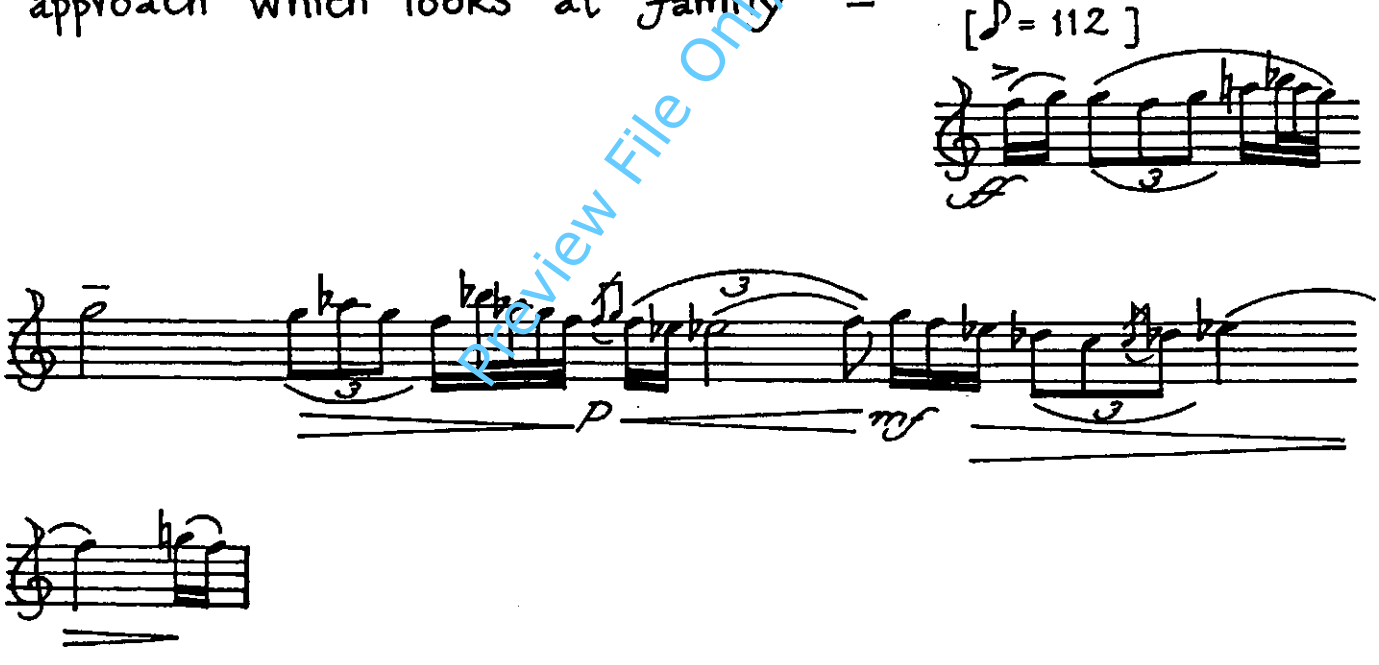
N

PETRIFY FIRST FEELING ... A WINTER COME AT ...
SHRIVELLED ... WITHERED WEED AND TRAMPLED DOWN ...
VANISHED ... an agenda - relevance to people in Europe
- jobs and industries - STRANGE ... CHILL, AND ...
DECAY ... SELF-INTEREST ... HOLLOW ... NEVER SEE
... LEVELLED ... AND LEVELLED EVERY ... RUNNING
... RUNS ... COLD AND ...



Preview File Only

emotive issue – to claim that we won – curb foreign vessels fishing in British . . . LOST ALL KINDRED TO THE FIRST EVEN IN THE TITLE – enforcement of deportation orders – persons who have no right to be here – people who arrive here clandestinely and with – strategic approach which looks at family –



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P

one thousand eight hundred deportation orders signed - widespread alarm within immigrant communities - we are very concerned about reports of large scale deportations - concentrate its efforts - it doesn't matter if I cheat; I'll make up for it later - waiting to know - availability - one point three million - like adder's heads - the public did not trust - damaging our business interests - its essential belief -

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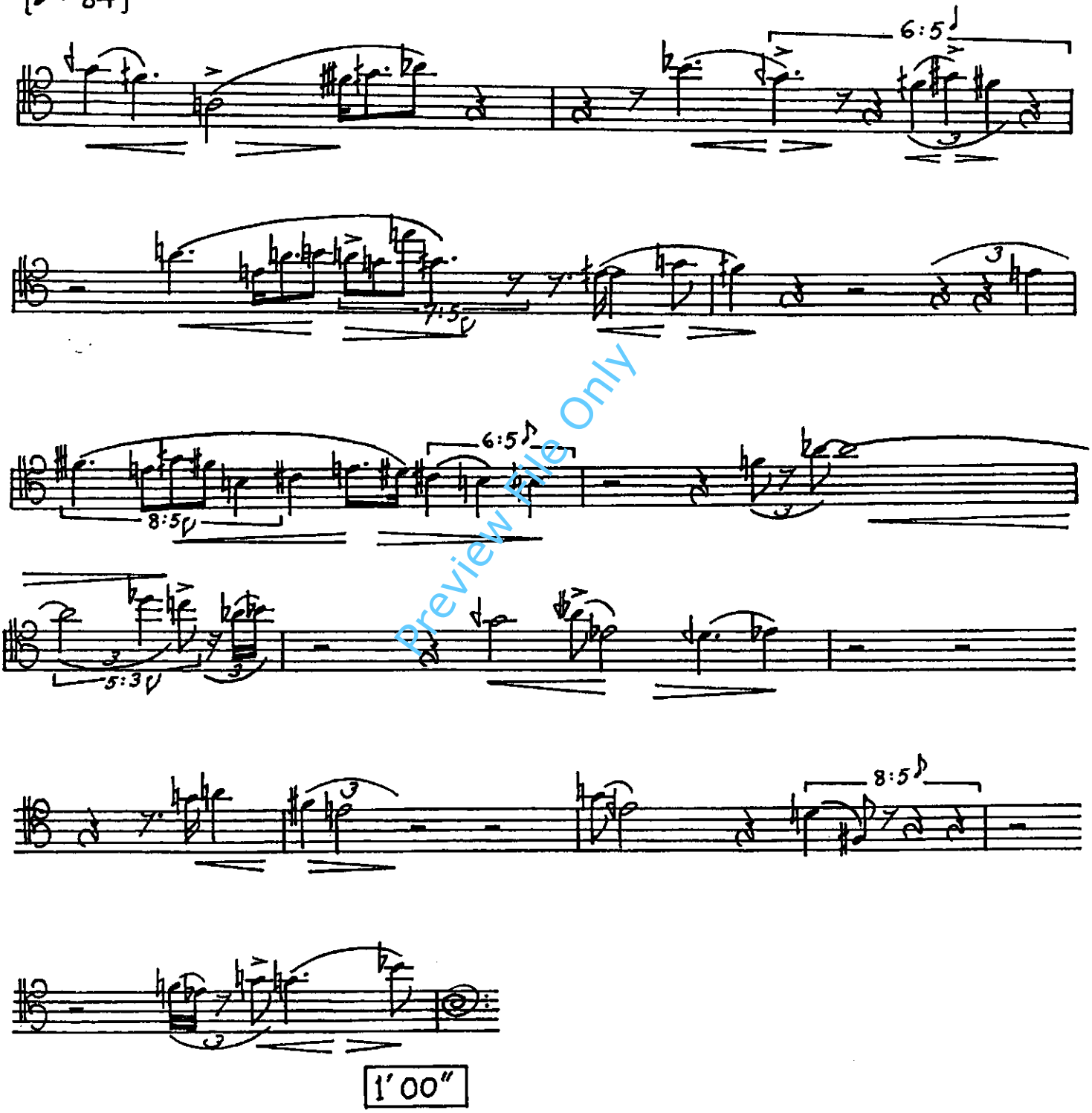
(·)

PRE-RECORDED TAPE II.
BASSOON

A

[♩ = 84]



1'00"

Preview File Only

B

- countryside begins last initiatives although once equated 85 foot
SEE INTO ITS -
- symbols of the new protected life for the measure as high beech
barrier planted in 1746 -
- fiercely divided blighted its own launch unkempt about those but
humbler versions have -

- merits of the change too weak and inadequate SECRETS ... WORDS
ARE ... NATURE ...
- tangled bower for wildlife HIDES HER FACE ... MURMURING ...
SEEK FOR FREEDOM -
- rare deterrent withdrawn in favour of stronger to the vast yews
which screen ... GONE ...

- replanting protection while that equated with poverty and
homelessness ... TRAPS -
- an important stretch without planning recent deadline-beating
... SET TO KILL -
- Regulations 1997 wildlife sustainable farming ... HOMELESS
widely attacked as might -
- amid fears unofficial and ... BRAMBLE-BUSHES ... richly-
named ... GREW -
- suburban resume 56 windblown hawthorn...

Preview File Only

1' 45"

(Each phrase approx. 10")

(Cues C to G: each page lasts one minute.)

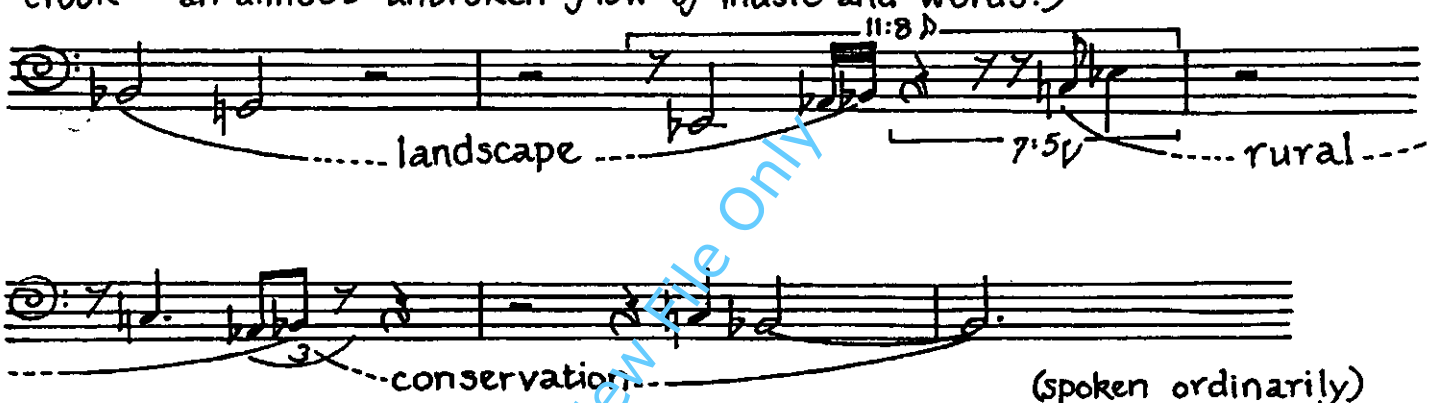
C

(𝄐)

... 1765 Enclosure Act ... DAISY GEMMED ...

[♩ = 112]

(Reed off. Lips on crook (sounds a semitone higher). Text spoken into crook – an almost unbroken flow of music and words.)



Preview File Only

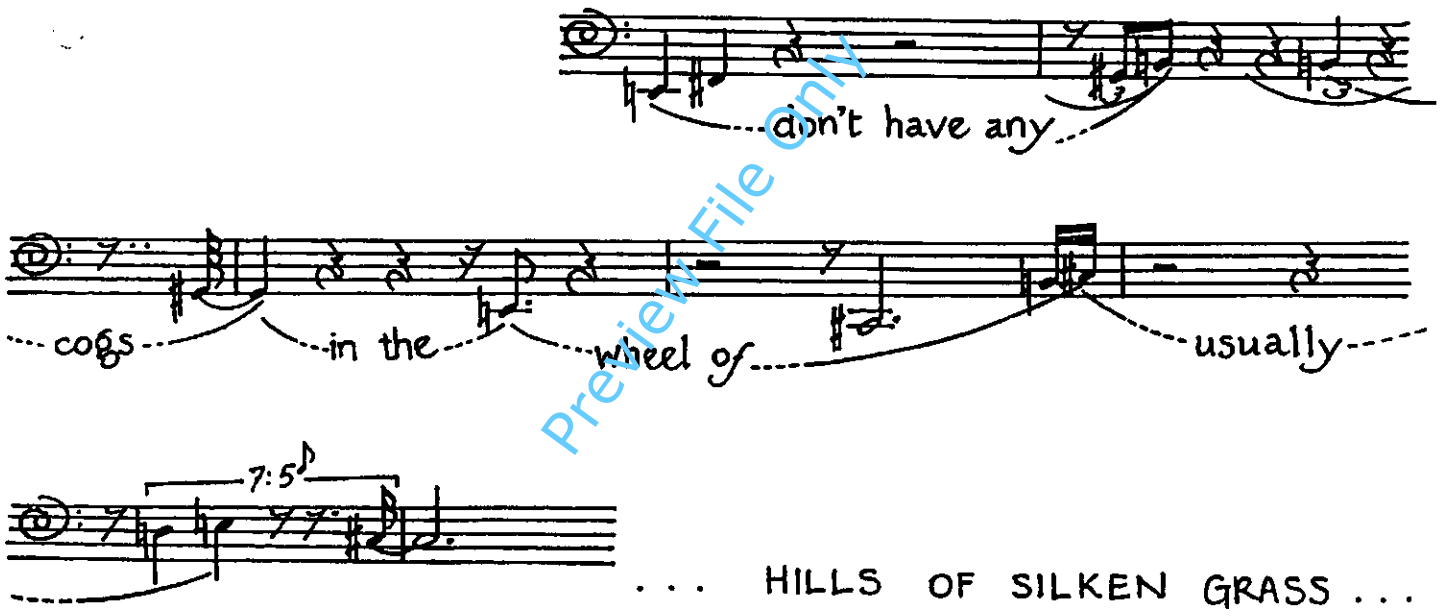
variety of species and the presence of archeological remains ...

(𝄐)

D

(𝄐)

. . . finance act records of 1910 and 1845 set of railway . . . [♩ = 112] (Reed off, as for previous cue)



marking a pre-1850 boundary seven woody species per 35 metres . . .

(𝄐)

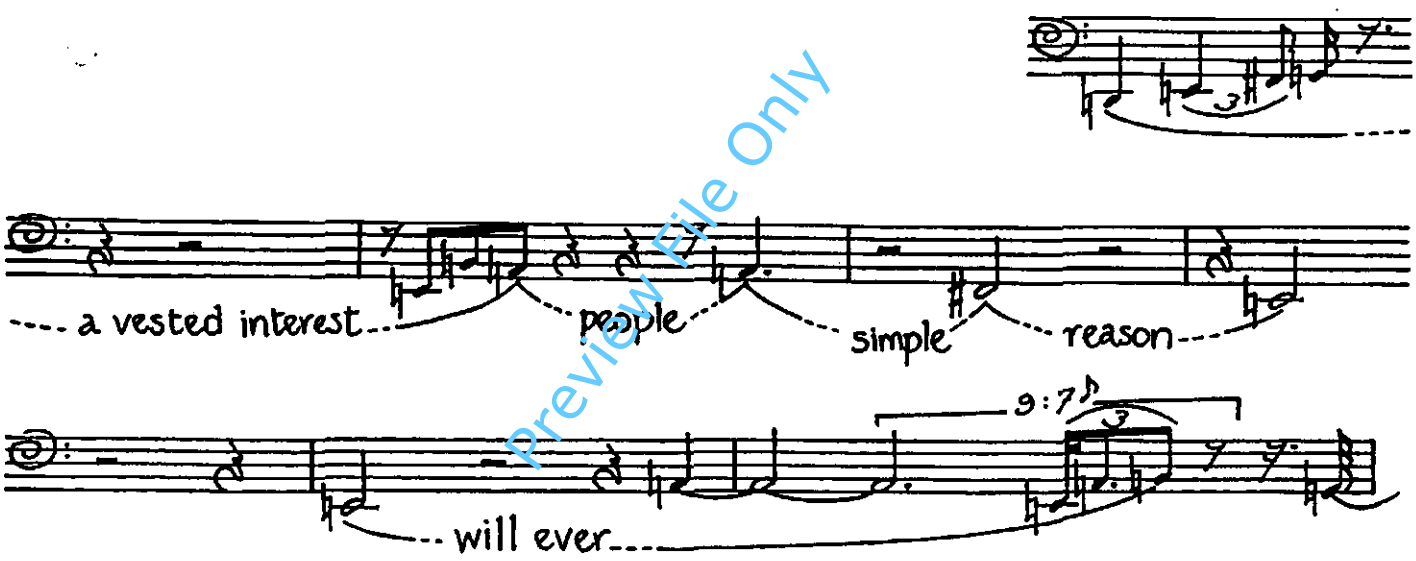
Preview File Only

E

(𝄐)

. . . five species historic stretches . . .

[♩ = 112] (Reed off)



Preview File Only

. . . A DESERT . . . Monk's Way green road . . . VANISHED . . . village of vulnerable to grubbing up without penalty . . .

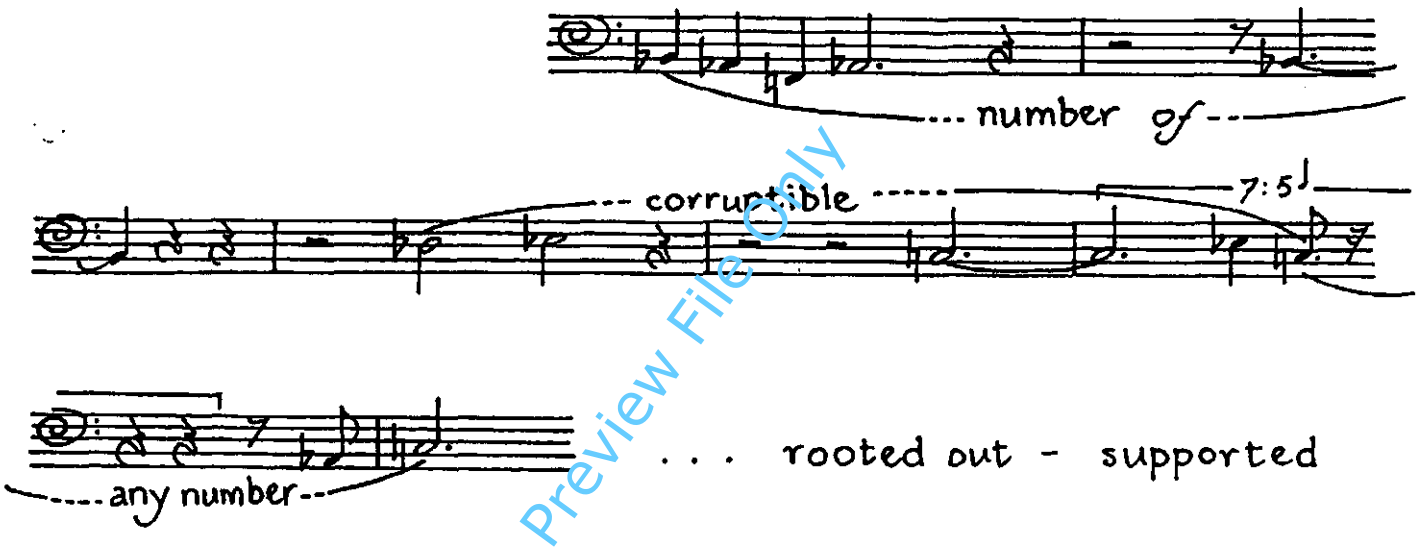
(𝄐)

F

(𝄐)

. . . pressing the merits planted only of holly for

reasons of religious . . . [♩ = 112] (Reed off)



. . . rooted out - supported

PASSING . . . review decision as 'unnecessary' . . .

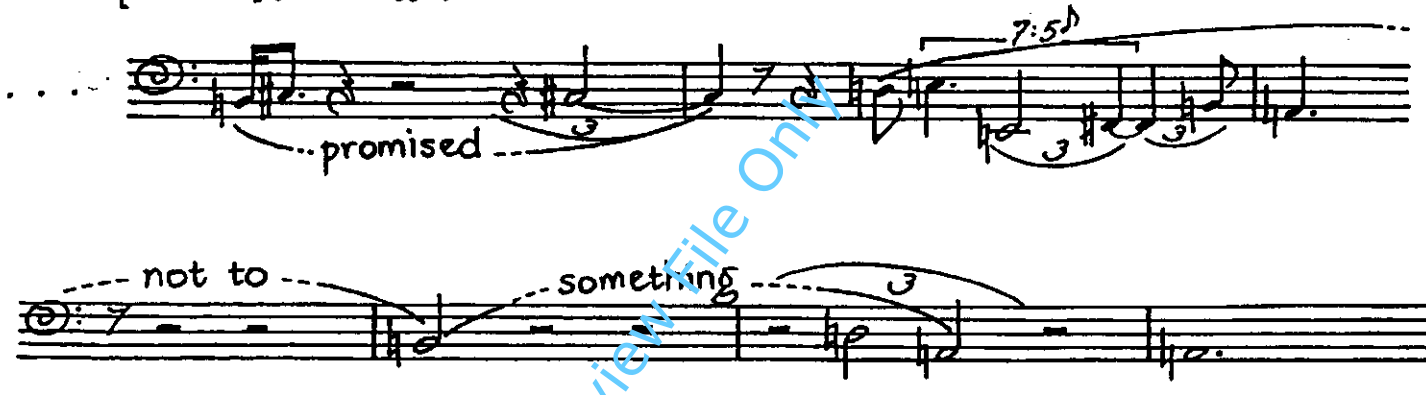
(𝄐)

Preview File Only

G

. . . symbolism 35 - thousand almost half the roadside

[♩ = 112](Reed off)



Preview File Only

. . . HERE FOR EVER ON . . . LOST ALL KINDRED TO THE FIRST EVEN IN THE TITLE represented - included among -

(Total Duration : 7'45")

PRE-RECORDED TAPE III.
VIOLONCELLO

The first nine cues (A – J) last thirty seconds each (4½ minutes in all).

Words: clearly audible, unforced ('natural' rather than 'dramatic') articulation. At typical interview speed and volume.

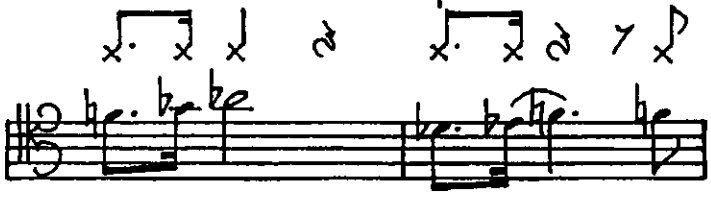
K and L last a minute each, the drone on A♭ and C♮ starts between the words '1994' and 'if'. Each phrase of the text lasts approximately ten seconds (vary the speed of articulation accordingly).

Tape lasts six and a half minutes.

Preview File Only

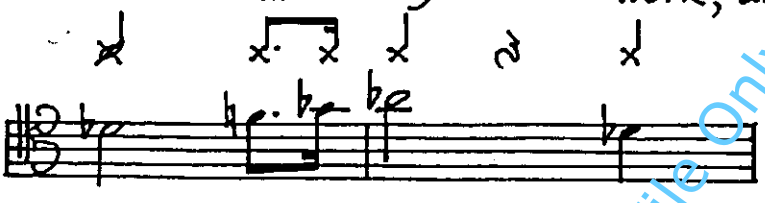
[♩ = approx. 84]

A



a subsidised job - private sector -
hopeful of getting somewhere
in the next few -

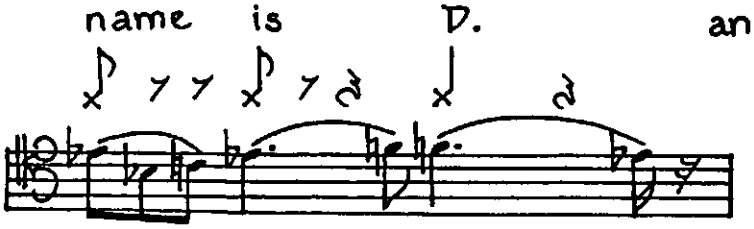
B



work, and full-time education or
training involve -
support from social
services as ask what
plans —

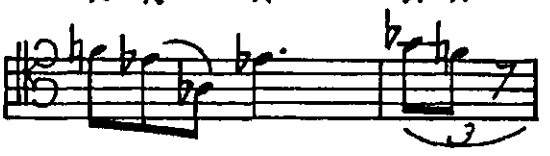
Preview File Only

C



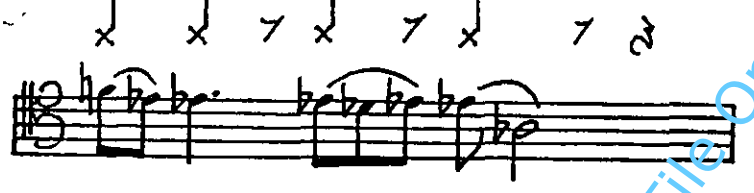
and that was taken into -
chances of progress -

D



get lunch and for some company - "are ..." - young homeless people off benefits - part drive -

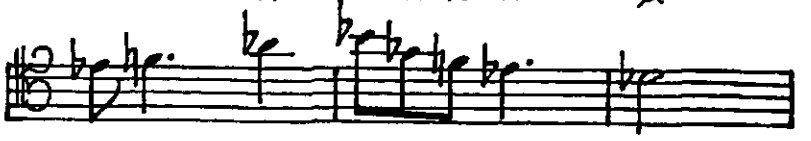
E



who fail to take up - where it's a crime to be poor ... WORDS ARE ...

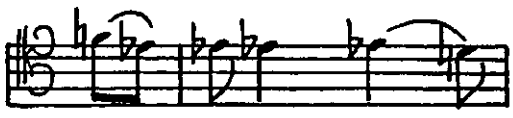
Preview File Only

F



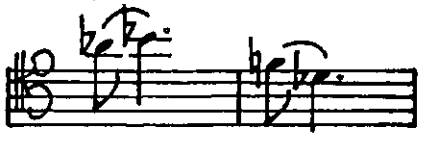
places but chance encounter - ba- by, because mother had nervous - couldn't ...

G



have to say, not in tokenistic - individuals, voices -
an amount to 'beggar' -

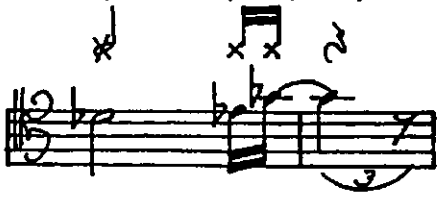
H



in- ter- viewed, try to explain about work-
behalf in whatever -

Preview File Only

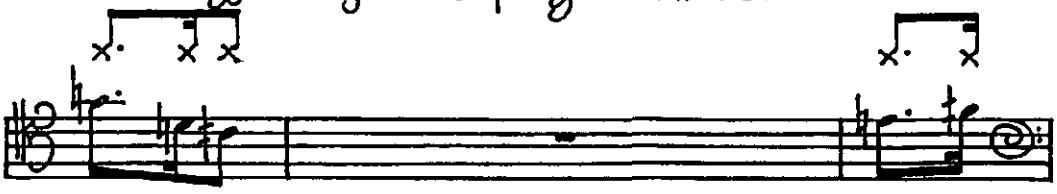
I



ra- ther than on threats, to start - much luck today?
- not - replies "the . . ." -

sending you - for sleeping ... NATURE HIDES HER FACE ...

J



MURMURING - caught, have no -

Preview File Only

K

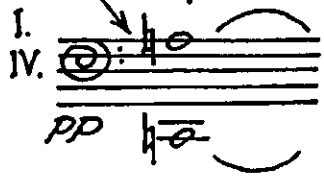
shirtless, coatless, without shoes ... OF PARTING OR
THAT TROUBLE ... THAT PLEASURES ...
FLOCK OF BIRDS ... WING, LEAVING
NOTHING ...
from care system to adult -
out of, and -
Happy land! in every street SEE INTO ITS SECRETS ...
tough sanctions - 18 to -
six months depressingly familiar - care leavers: 1994 -

approx. 1' 00"

L

Sustained throughout the text (including the pauses).

Col Legno : erratic (unpredictably changing) bow-pressure, often producing more 'noise' than 'pitch'. Bow under the strings, and move continually between 'sul tasto' and 'sul ponticello' positions.



Preview File Only

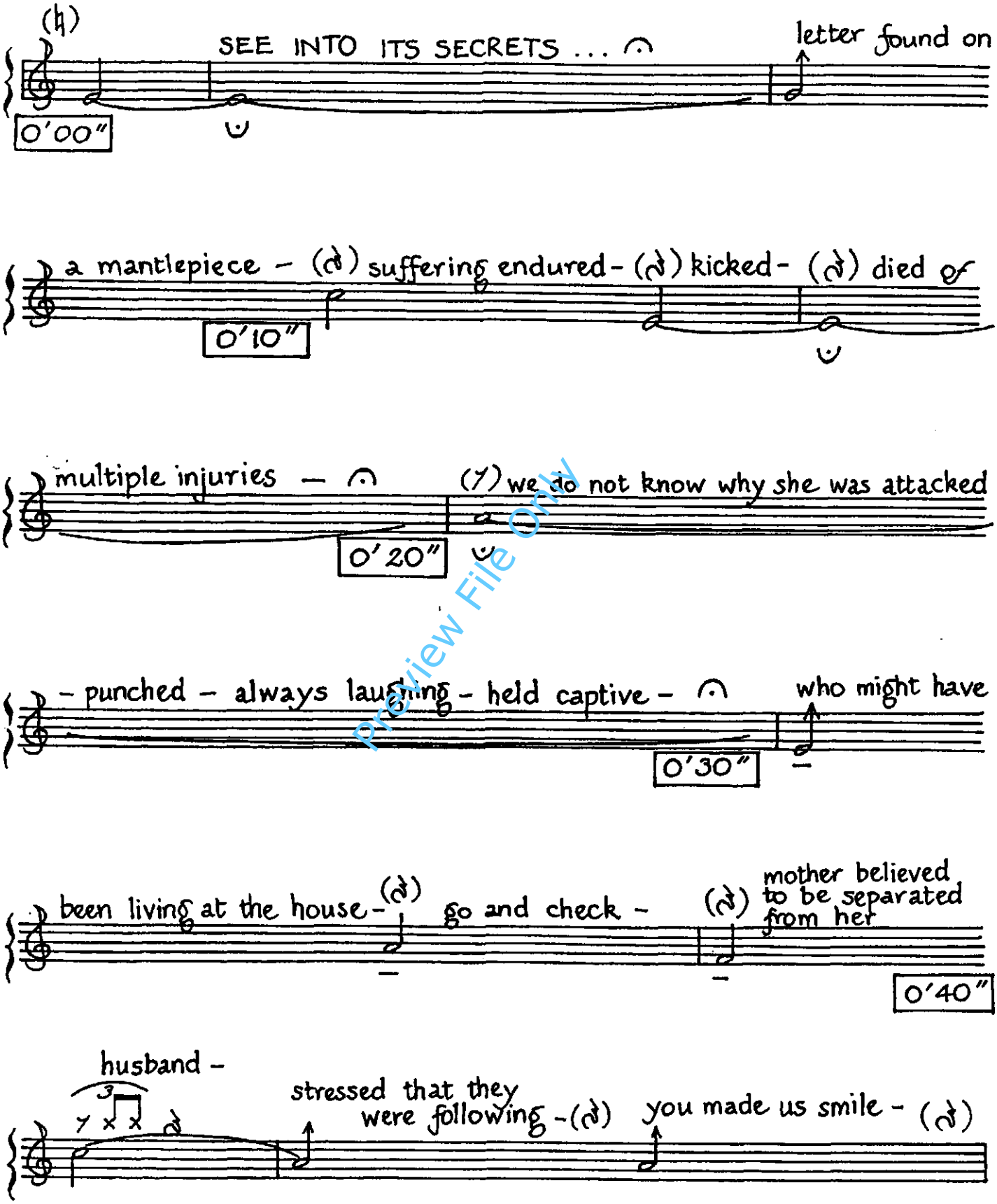
- if you can't find shelter -
- around, he said - "certainly don't believe that . . ." -
  (Pause : 10")
- trust, where a . .
  (Pause : 10")
- way around, said -

approx. 1'00"

PRE-RECORDED TAPE IV.
PIANO

Preview File Only

The timings indicate minutes and seconds elapsed from the beginning of the tape.
Words : clearly audible, unforced articulation (not 'dramatic', and without sensationalising the text).
Very dry and 'expressionless' piano sound - with a minimal amount of sustaining-pedal (especially in the lowest bass-register, between 13'10" and 14'00").
Arrows (⤴) indicate a simultaneity of word and piano.



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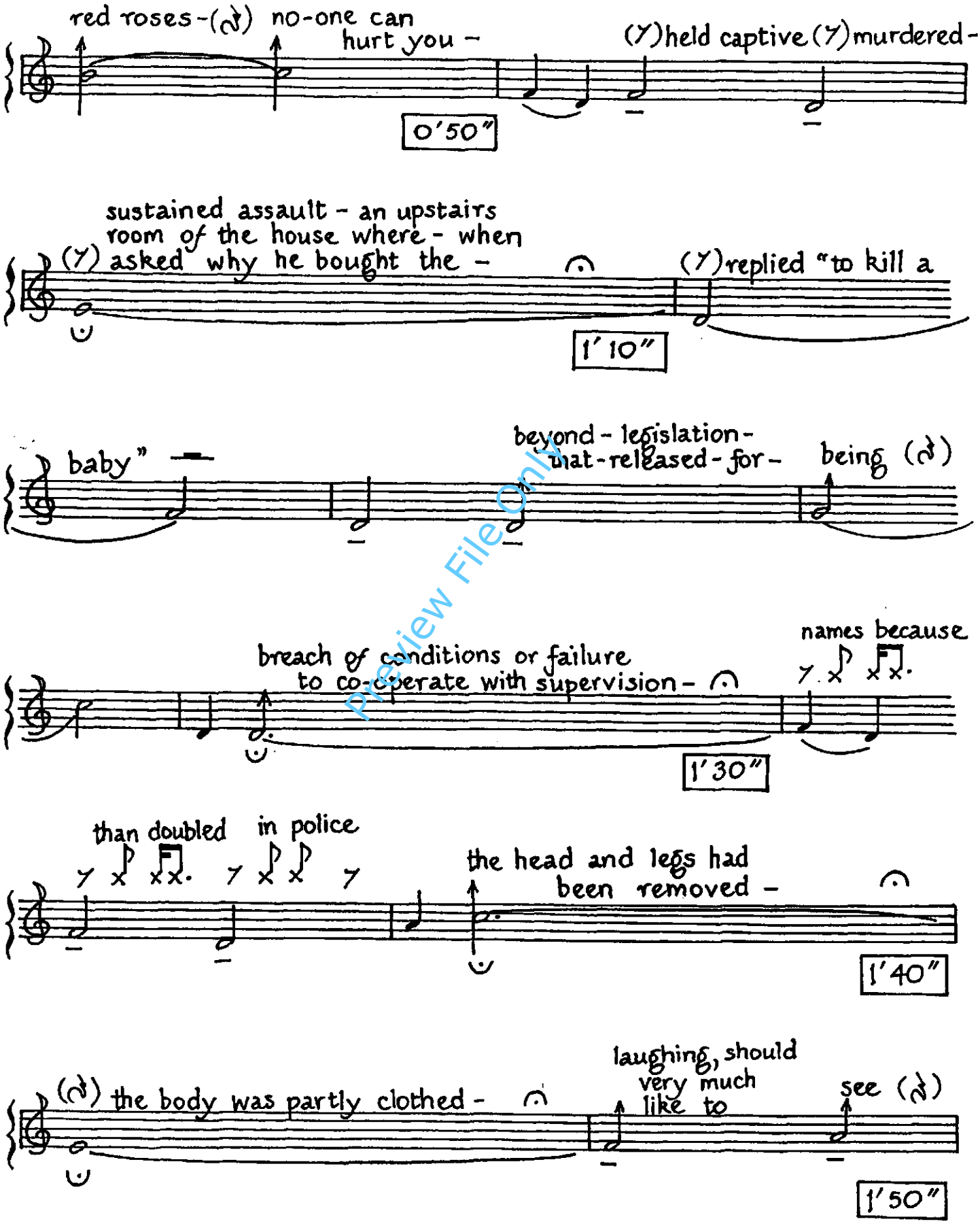

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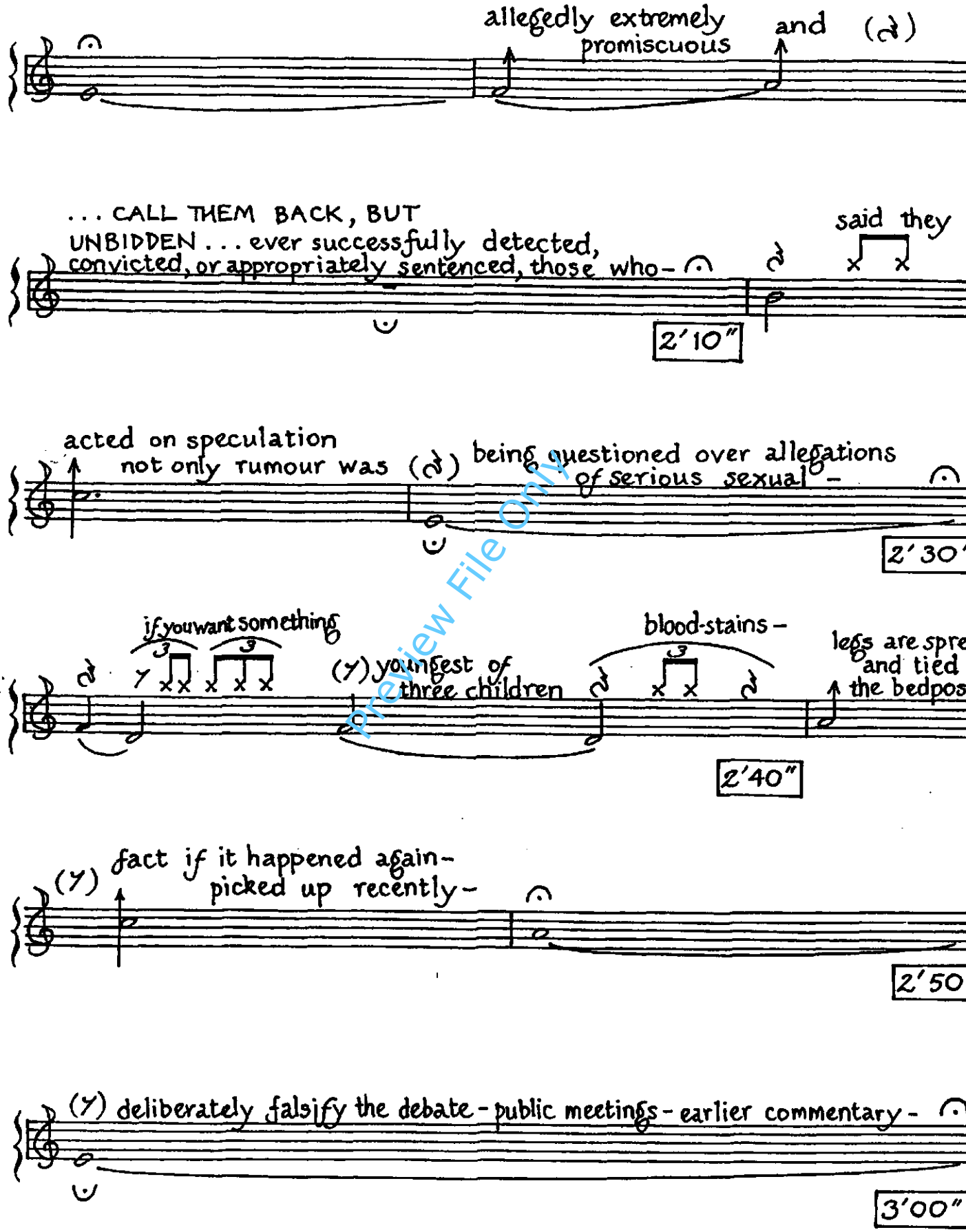

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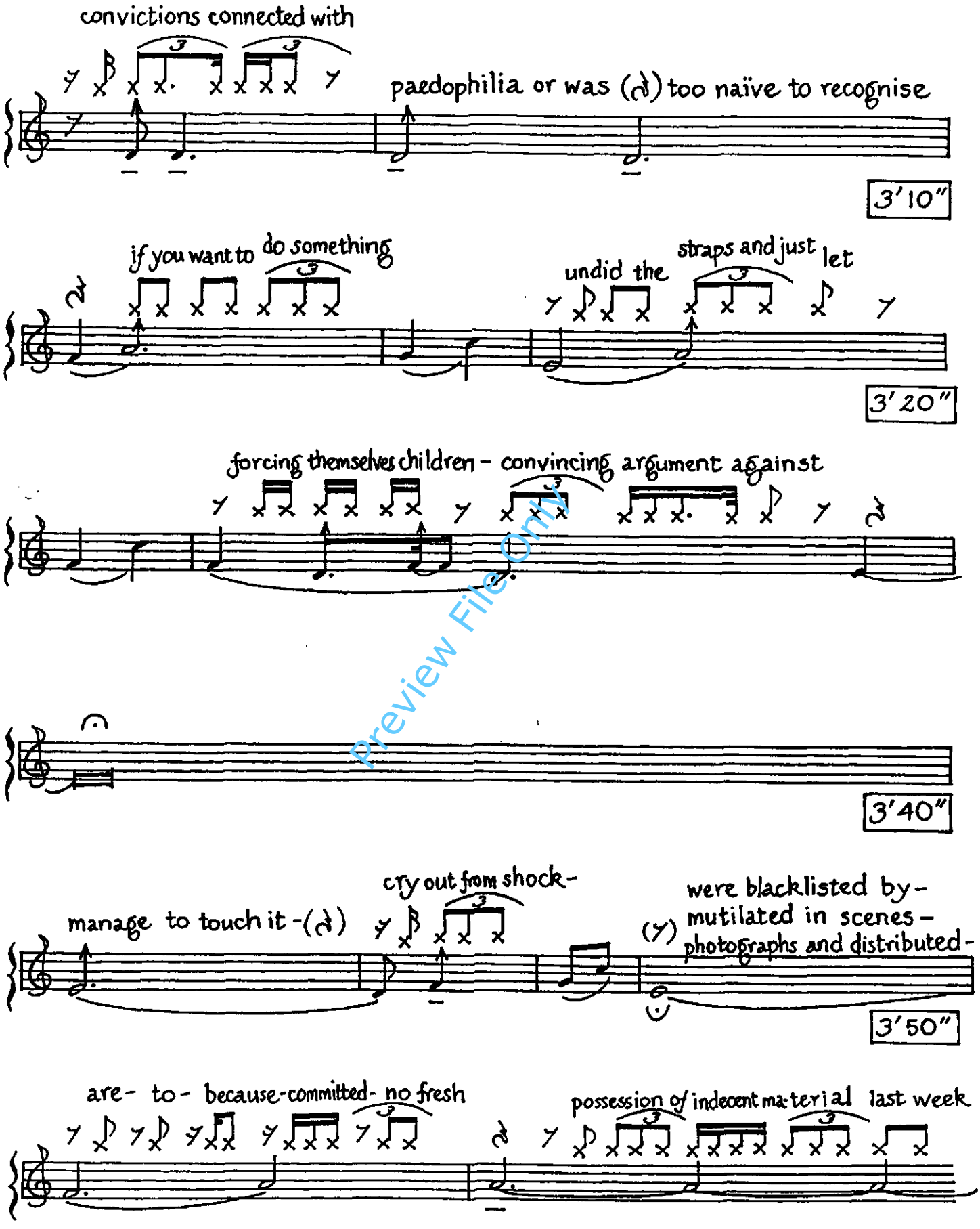

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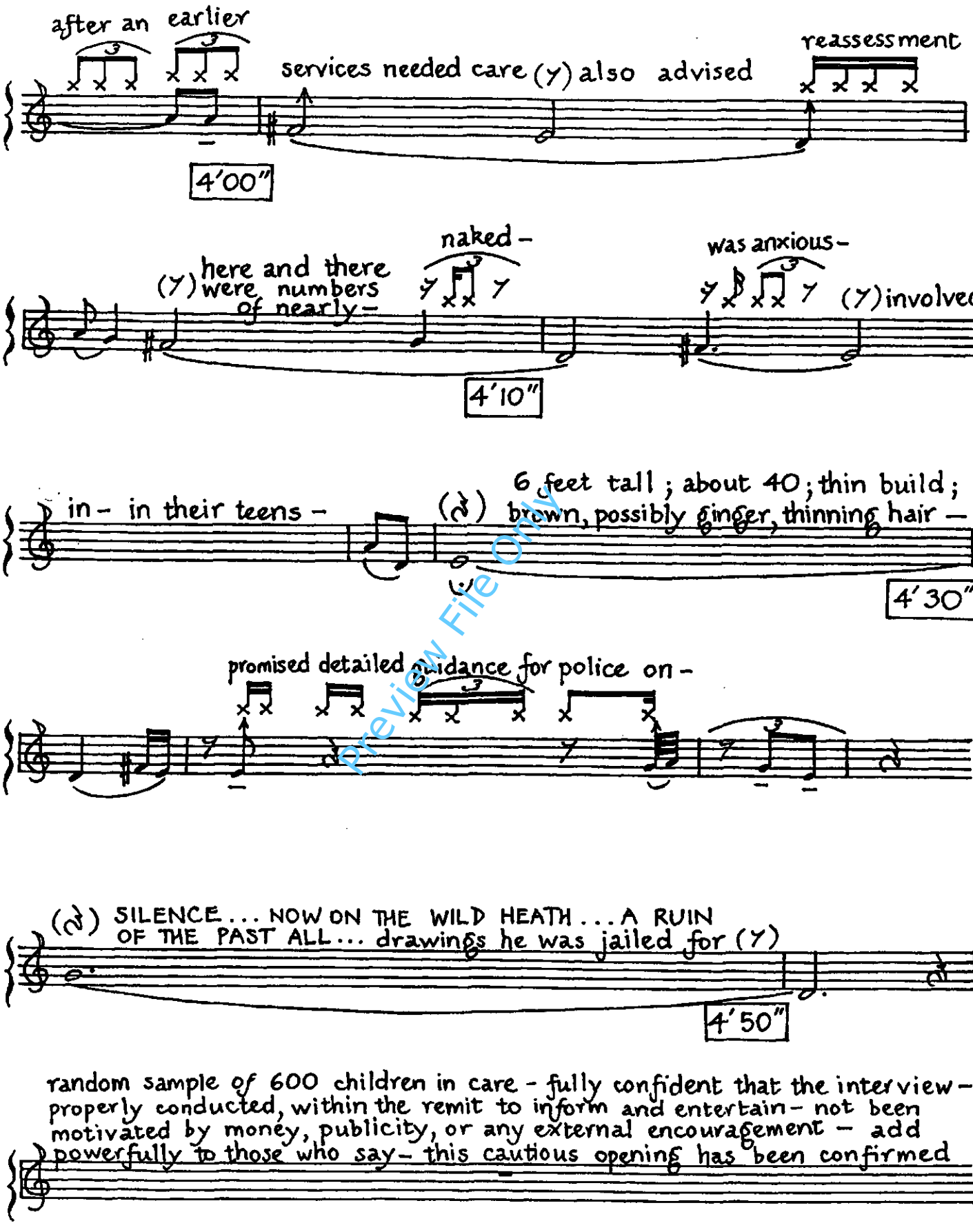

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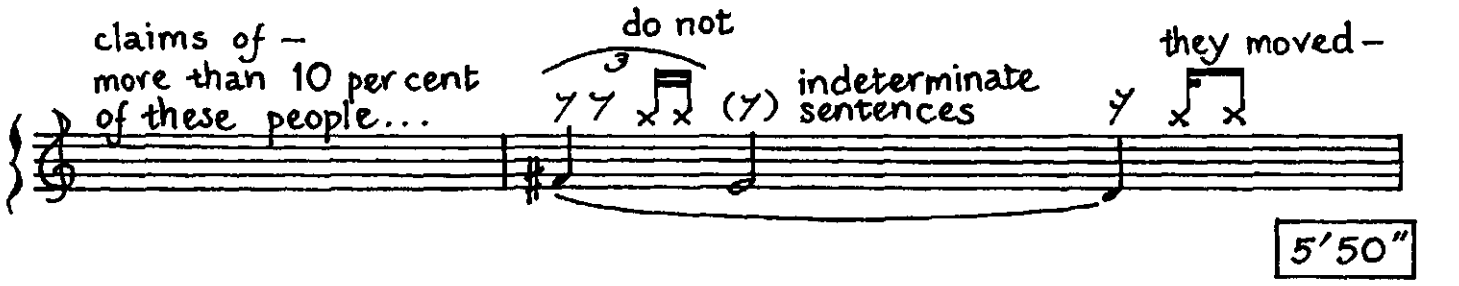
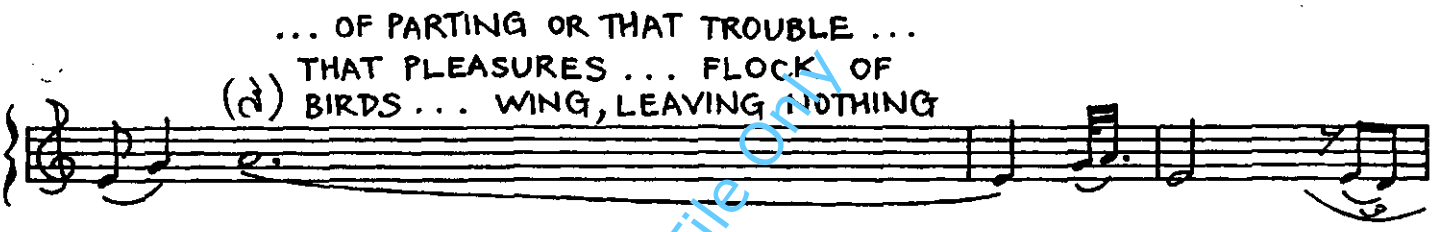
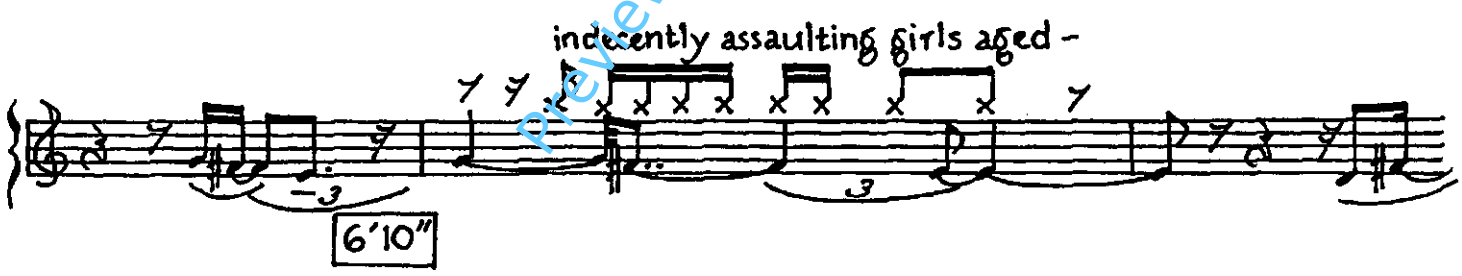
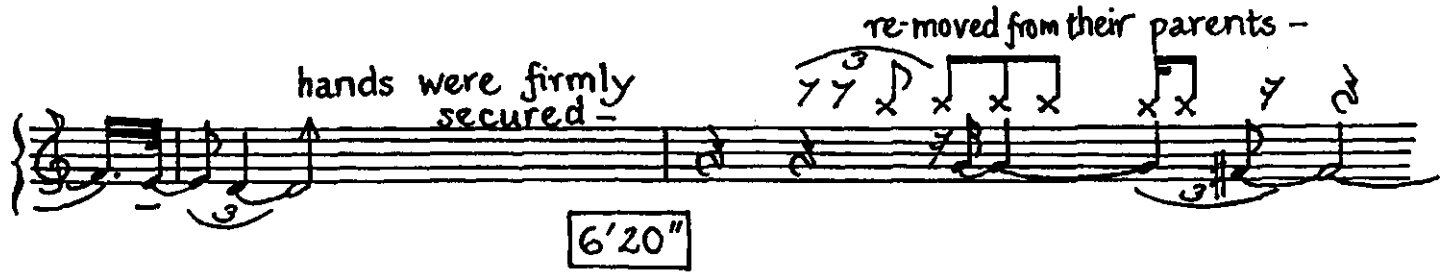
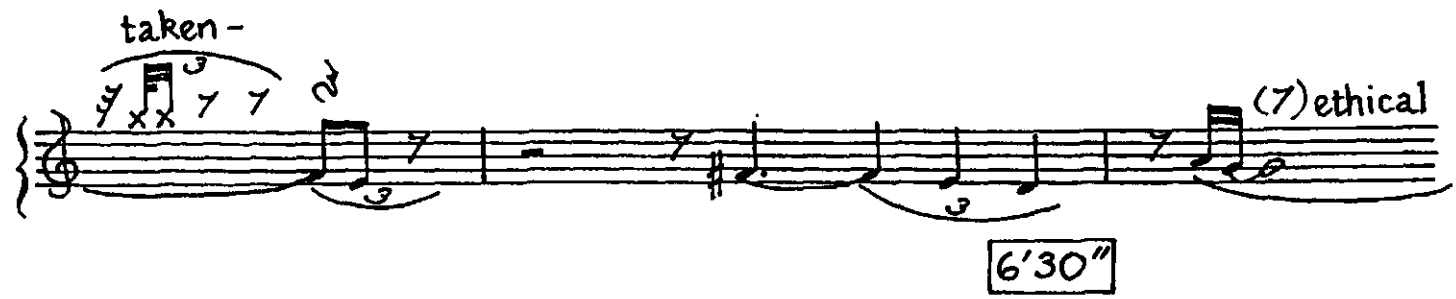
several - tight ban on naming anyone who has not been convicted - wide discrepancies in the reportage - witness claims - alleged in evidence - even so vague a term as 'former policeman' worries reporters - identifying an alleged abuser - had been indecently assaulted by a 'former' - became simply 'another man' - backed up the











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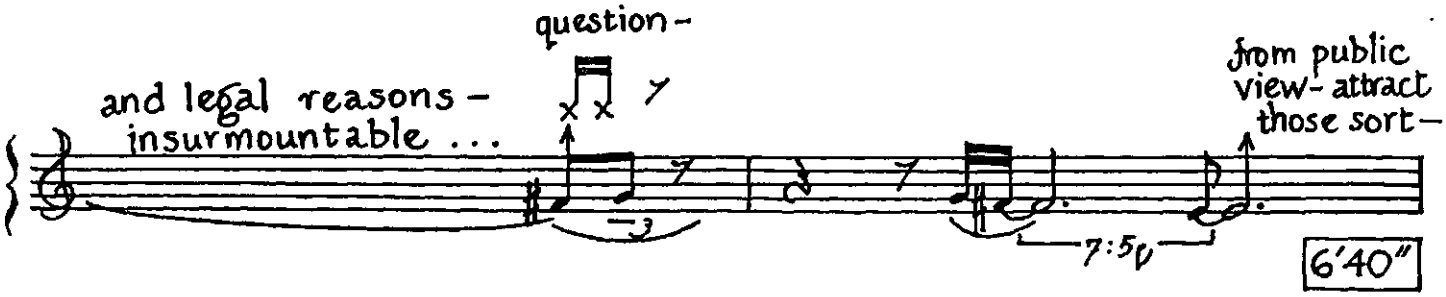
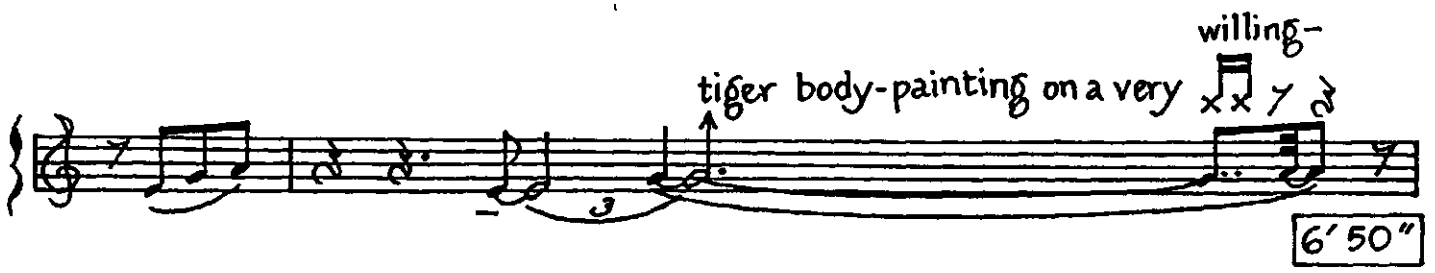
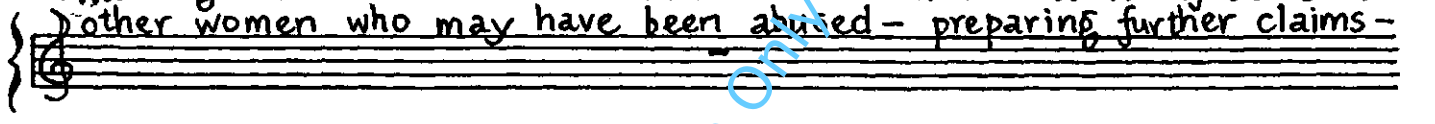
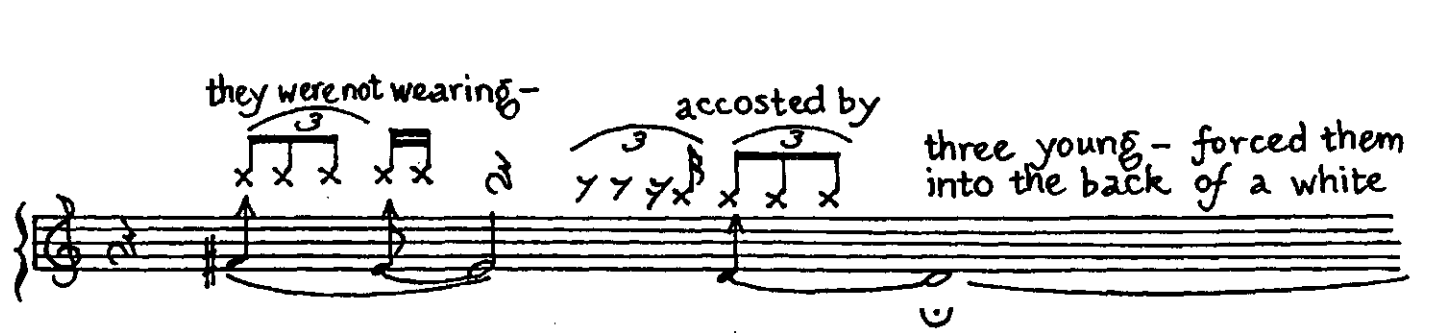




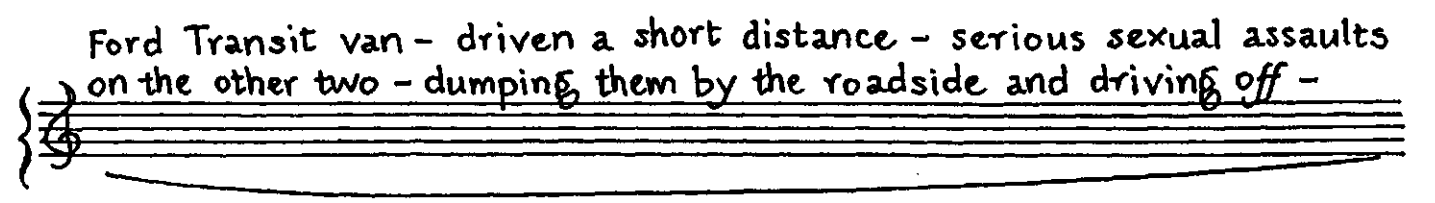
18-year-old patient, has widened rapidly after the chance involvement of an older woman - in connection with treatment - believed that her warnings would be noted - understood to have details of at least other women who may have been abused - preparing further claims -



deeply concerned - taken all this time for this matter - happening now - most vulnerable the health service has to - left in a state of severe depression with two - a warning about a man who had -



Ford Transit van - driven a short distance - serious sexual assaults on the other two - dumping them by the roadside and driving off -



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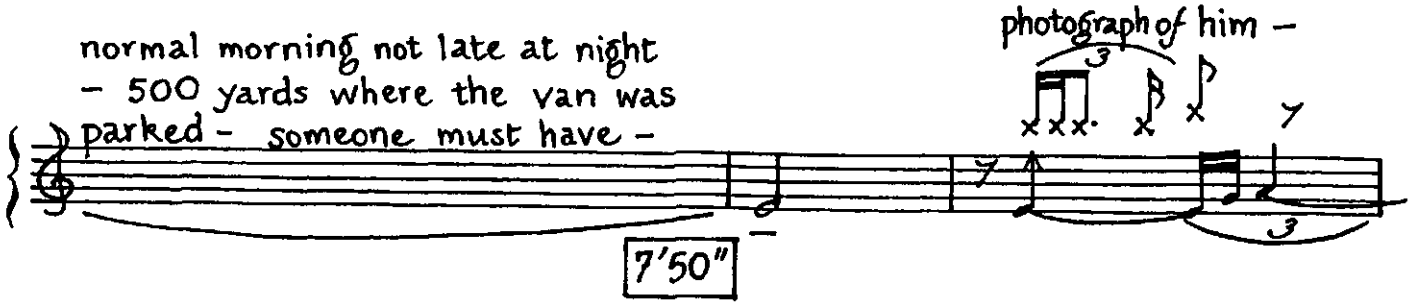

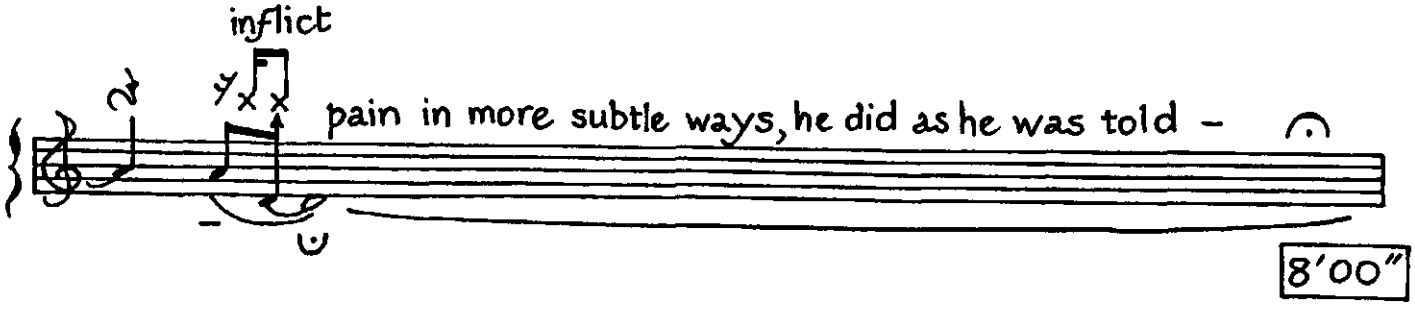

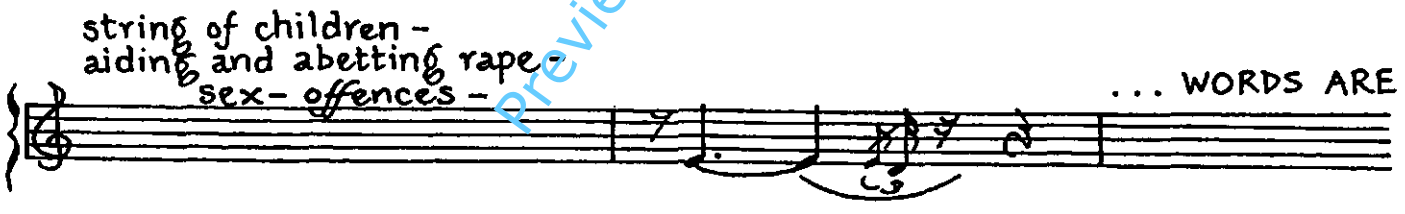

credibility - gained out of the whole - children will not be believed and you'll be safe - refuse to look at this and make a kind of sense of it - removing children - authoritarian methods - neither could produce the sites of torture or the dead, mutilated - allegations were simply the

result of inexperienced - overactive imaginations - claims were dismissed - subsequent claims were true - many of the reporters had already - assumption - not happened - witch-hunt, experts and therapists - lost sense of perspective - 10,000 bodies - evangelical

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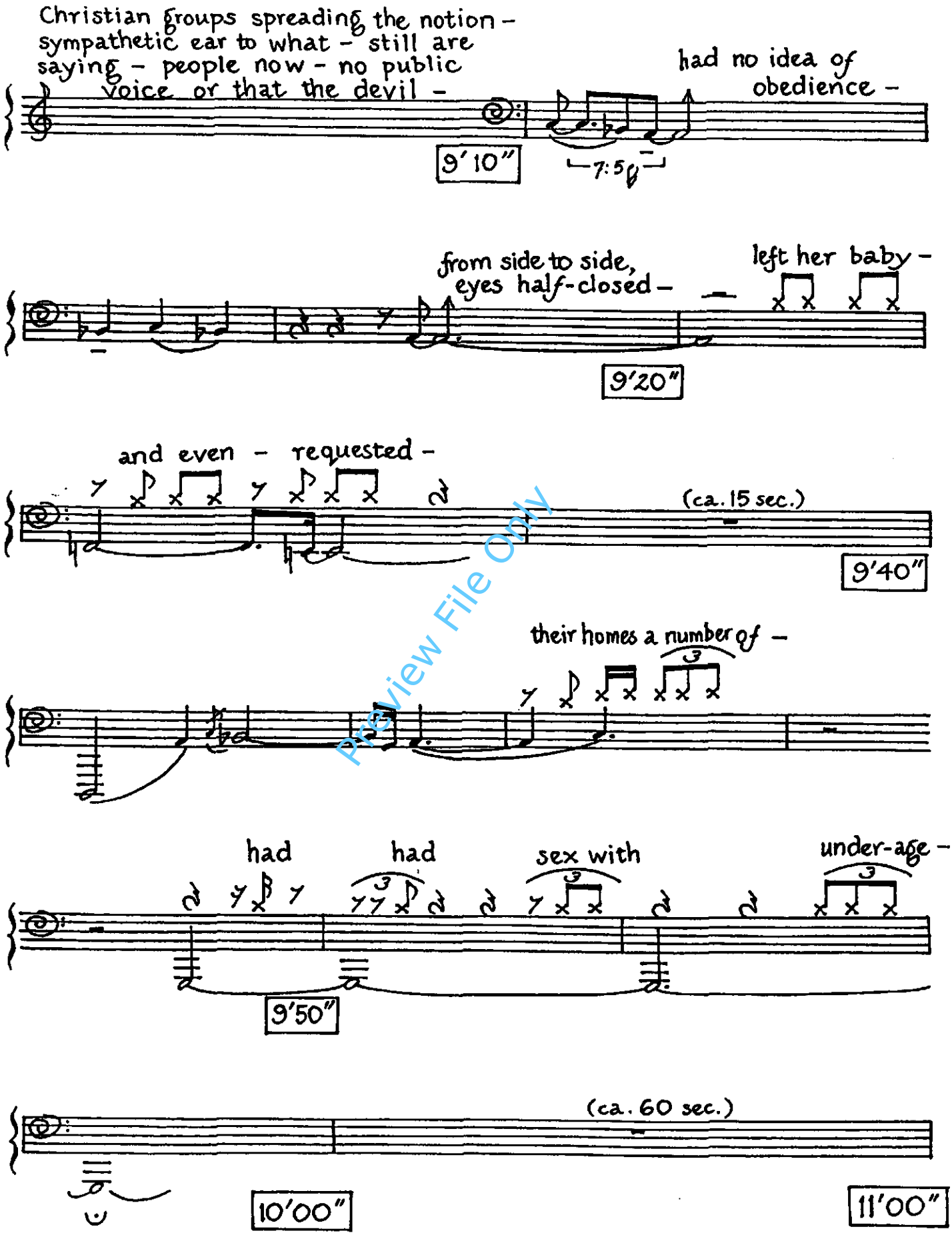

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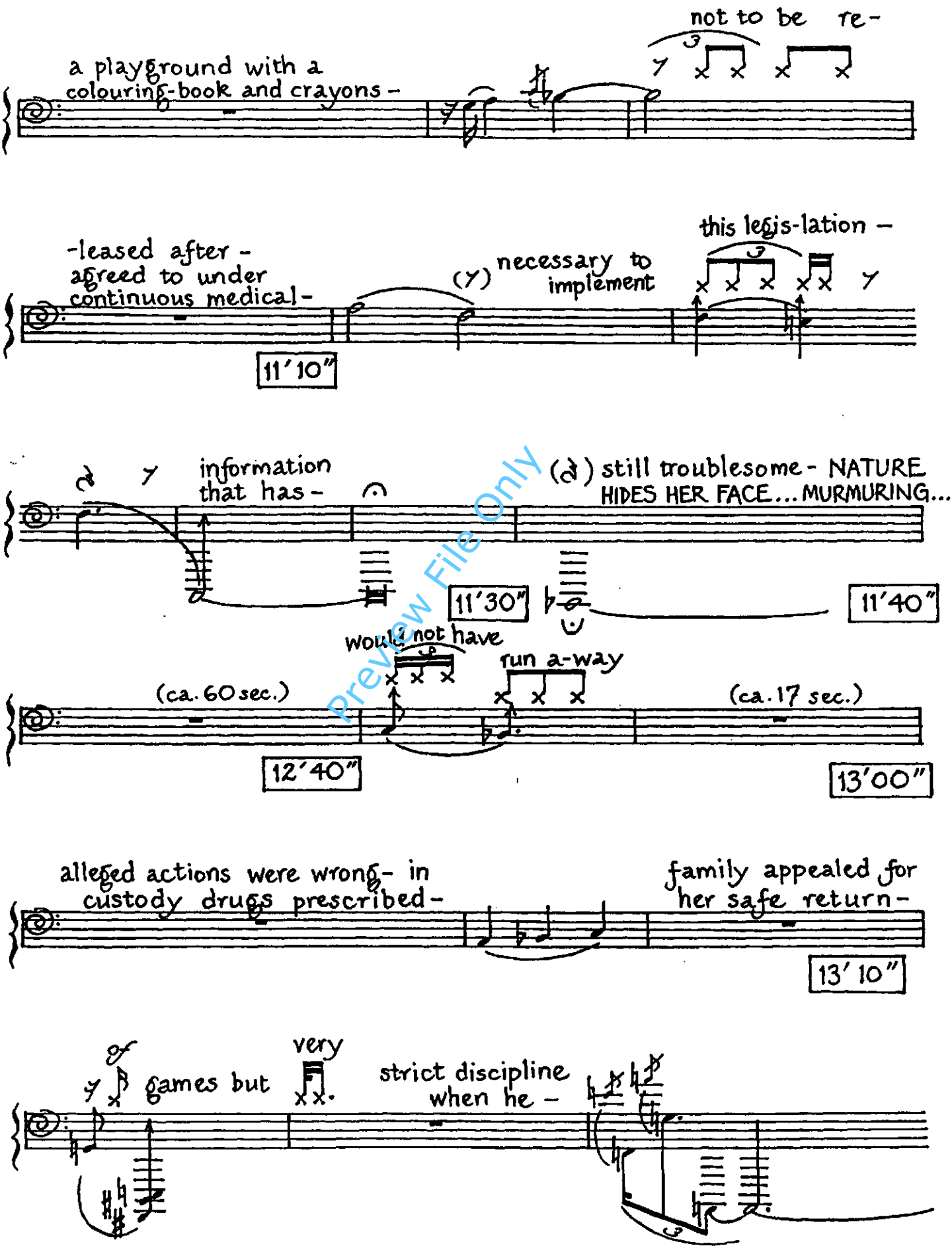

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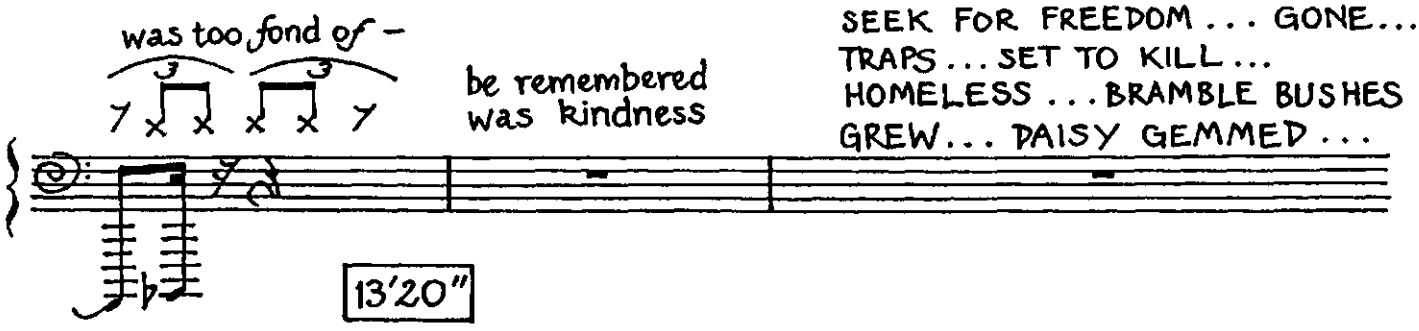

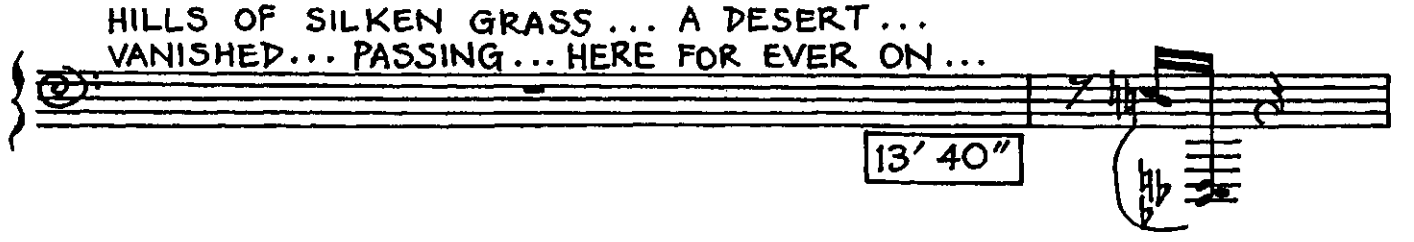

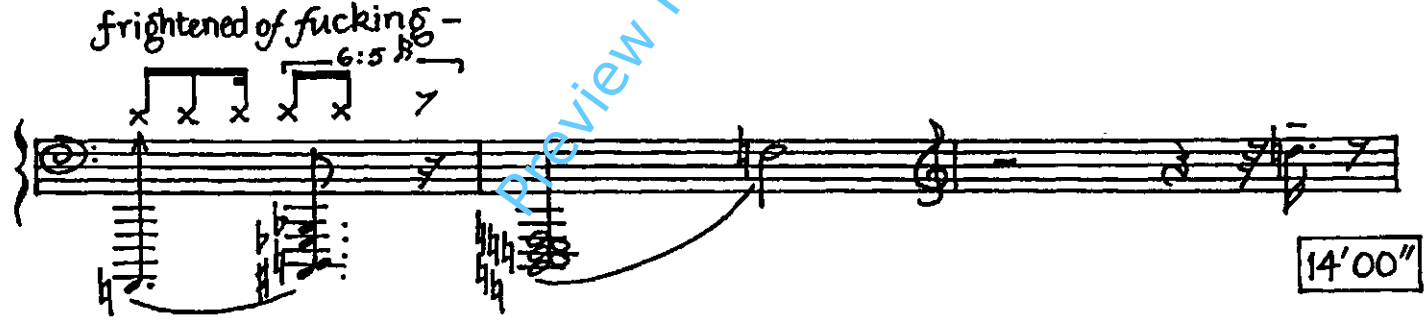

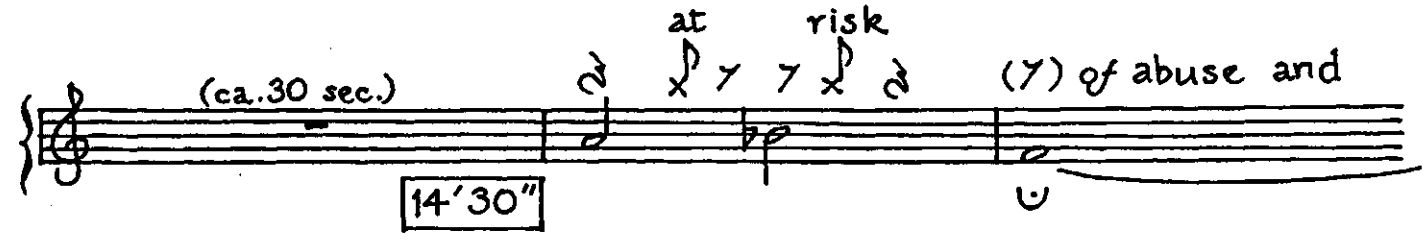

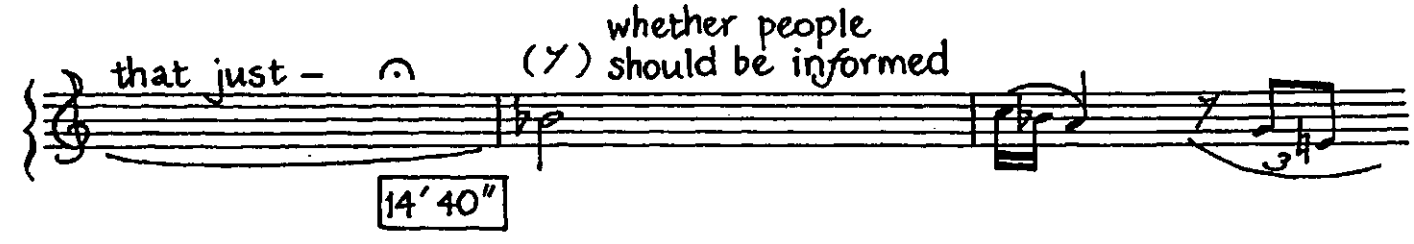

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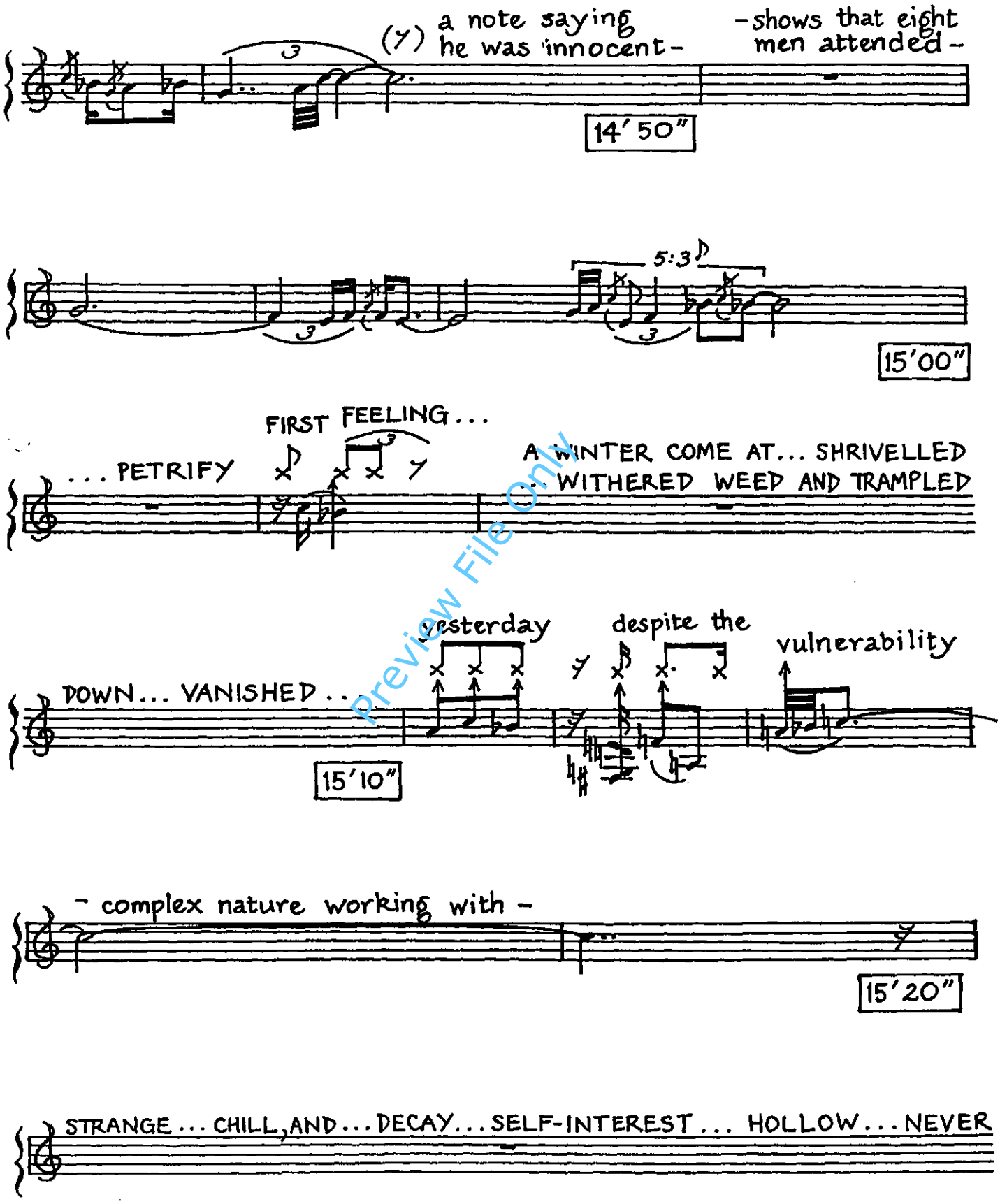
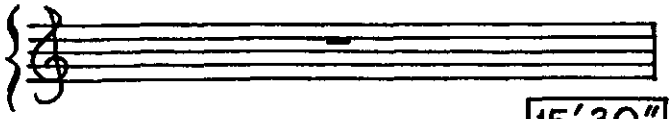


Preview File Only

SEE ... LEVELLED ... AND ... LEVELLED EVERY ... RUNNING ...



15'30"

RUNS ... COLD ... AND ... HAD I KNOWN ... BUT LOVE ...

15'40"

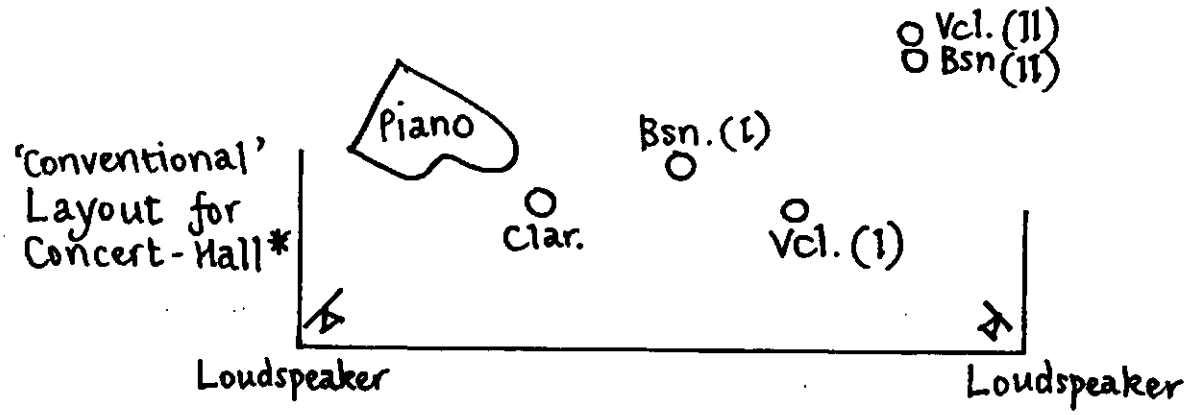
NEVER HEEDED ... COMMON ROAD ... stroked and squeezed ...

LOST ALL KINDRED ... TO THE FIRST EVEN IN THE TITLE

15'50"

16'00"

Preview File Only



* Where possible, place the instruments (and tape-playback) AROUND the audience, and at considerable distances from each other.

Note

1. At least one fairly large, and several other cuddly-toys (teddy-bears, or similar, of various sizes) are to be placed – seated or lying at ground level – around the piano. One of them close enough to pick up easily and without too much movement.

2. The spoken text should be regarded primarily as of rhythmic and timbral interest - NOT as verbal communication. It is to be perceived as an extension of the instrumental sound and an inter-action with it – NOT 'acted', nor actor-like in delivery, nor 'heightened' to become dramatic.

3. Cues [7] and [8] : Ideally the pairs of voices overlap (rather than inter-cutting antiphonally). The 'whisper' should consist mostly of 'white noise', breathy, a sound rather like Maracas – emphasising consonants.

4. Screens displaying 'documentary' materials – slides, video or film (silent) may be – optionally – placed around the performers : the content need not be specifically British, but re-inforce the 'text' and its main topics – the environment and its erosion; child abuse; immigration policies; homelessness.

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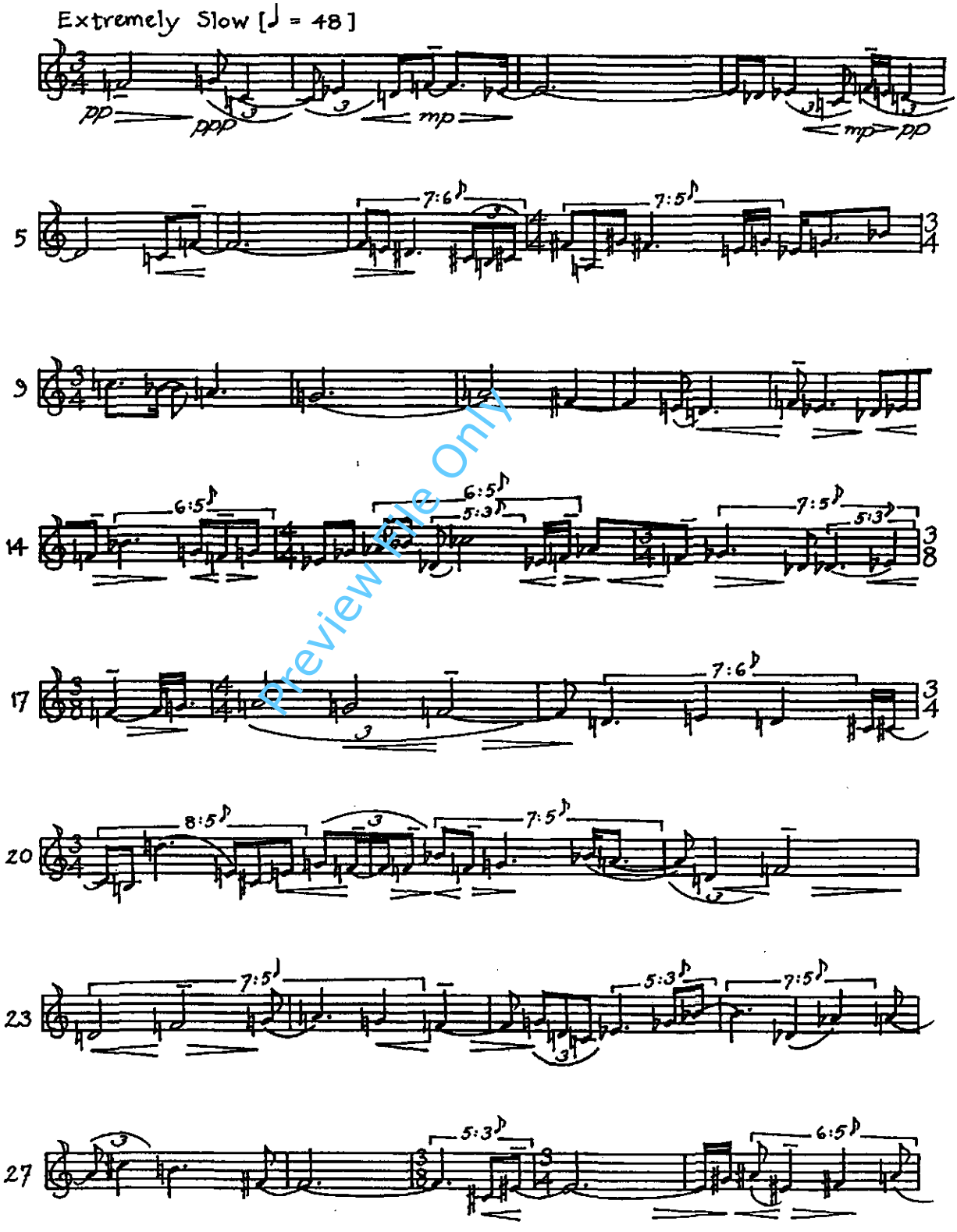
CLARINET IN C



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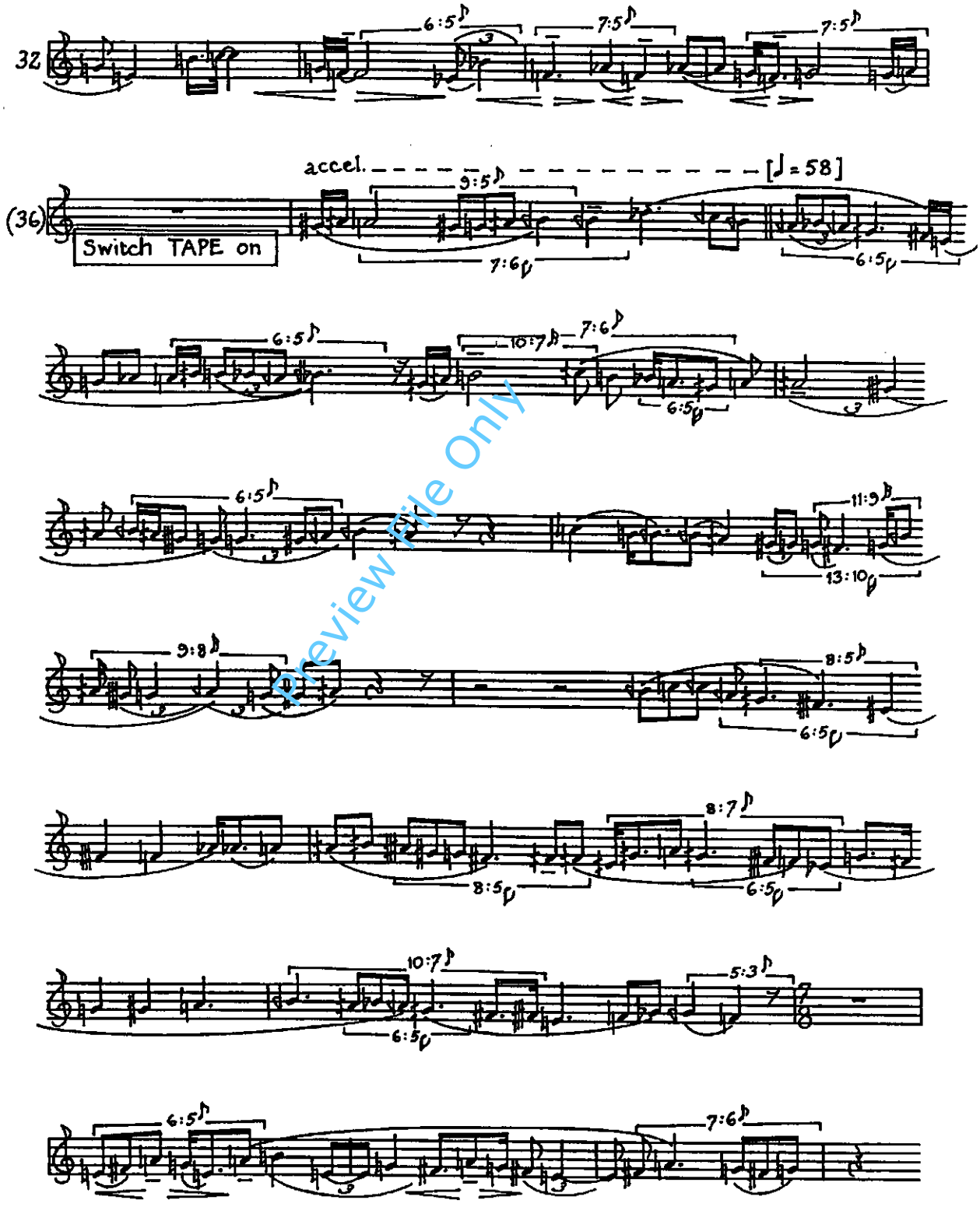

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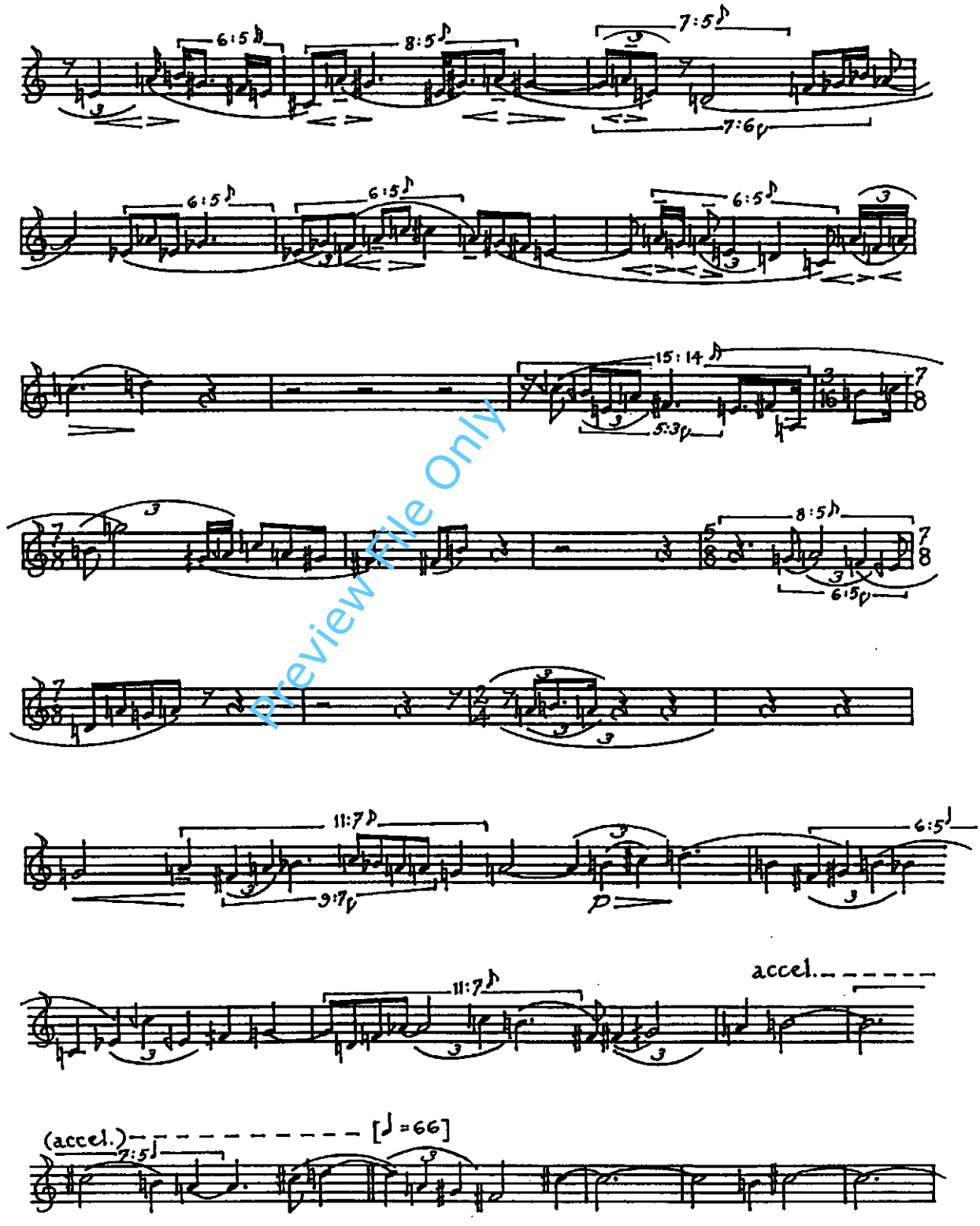

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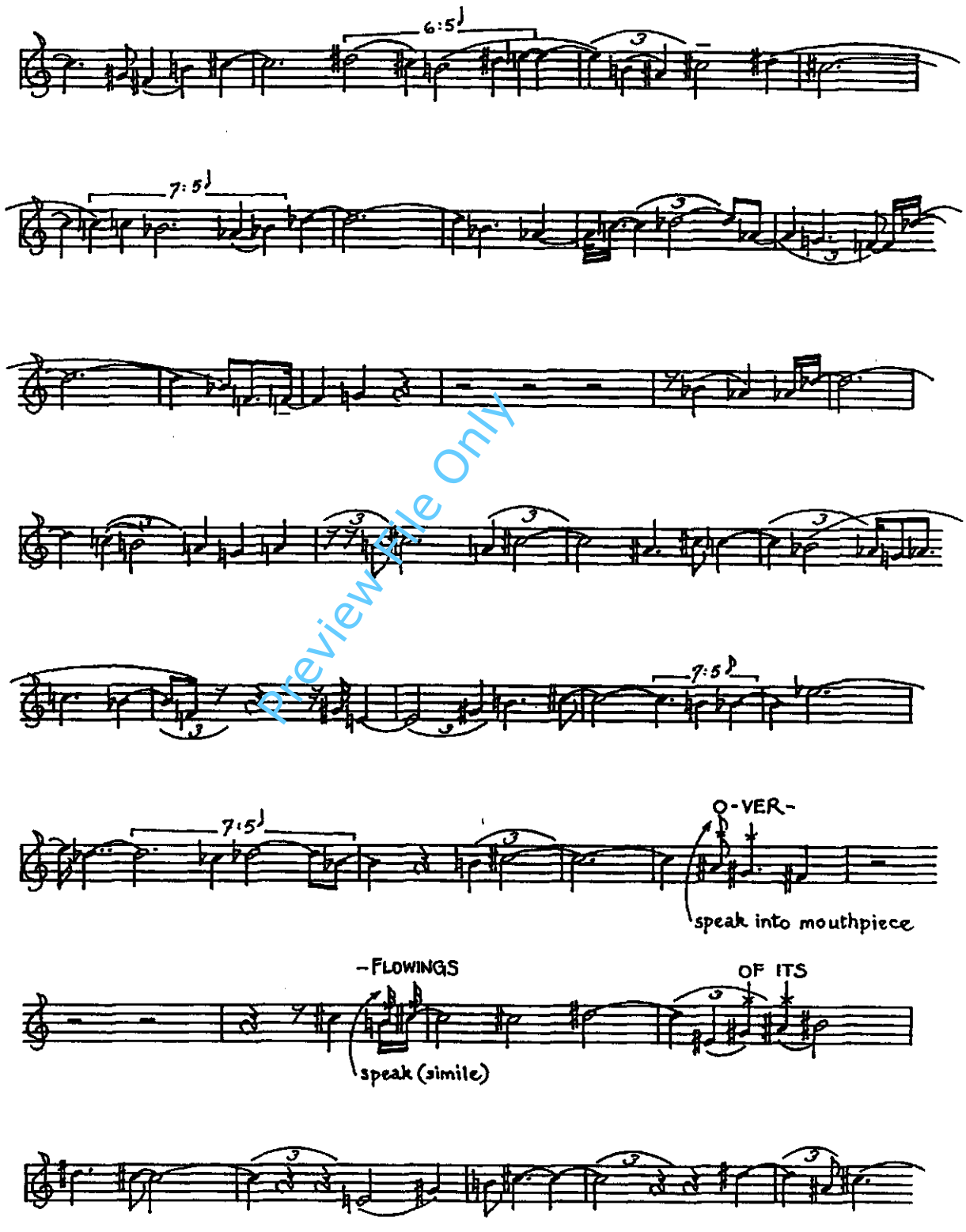

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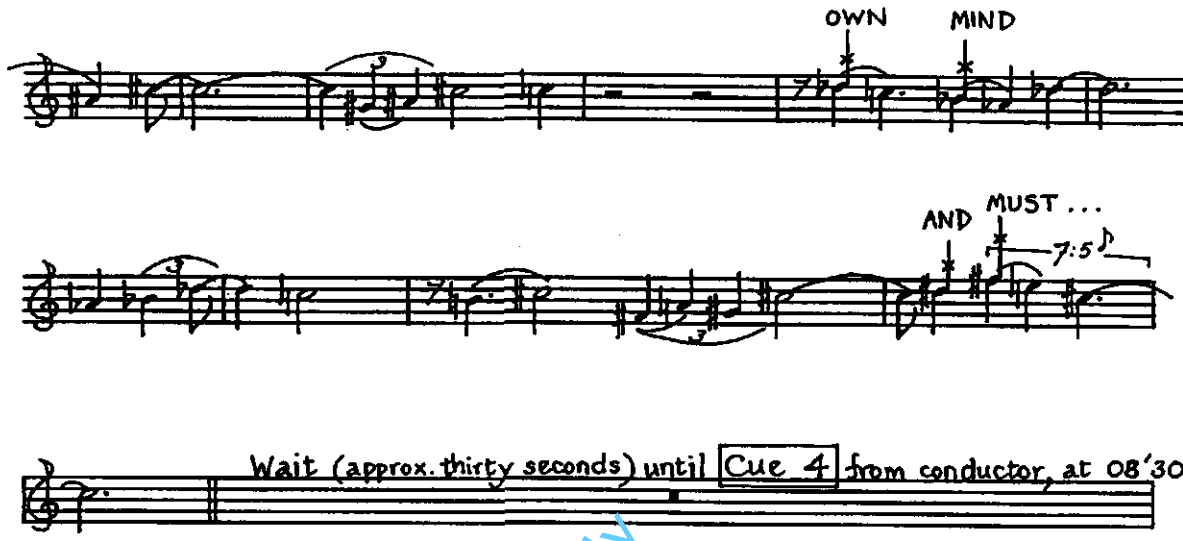

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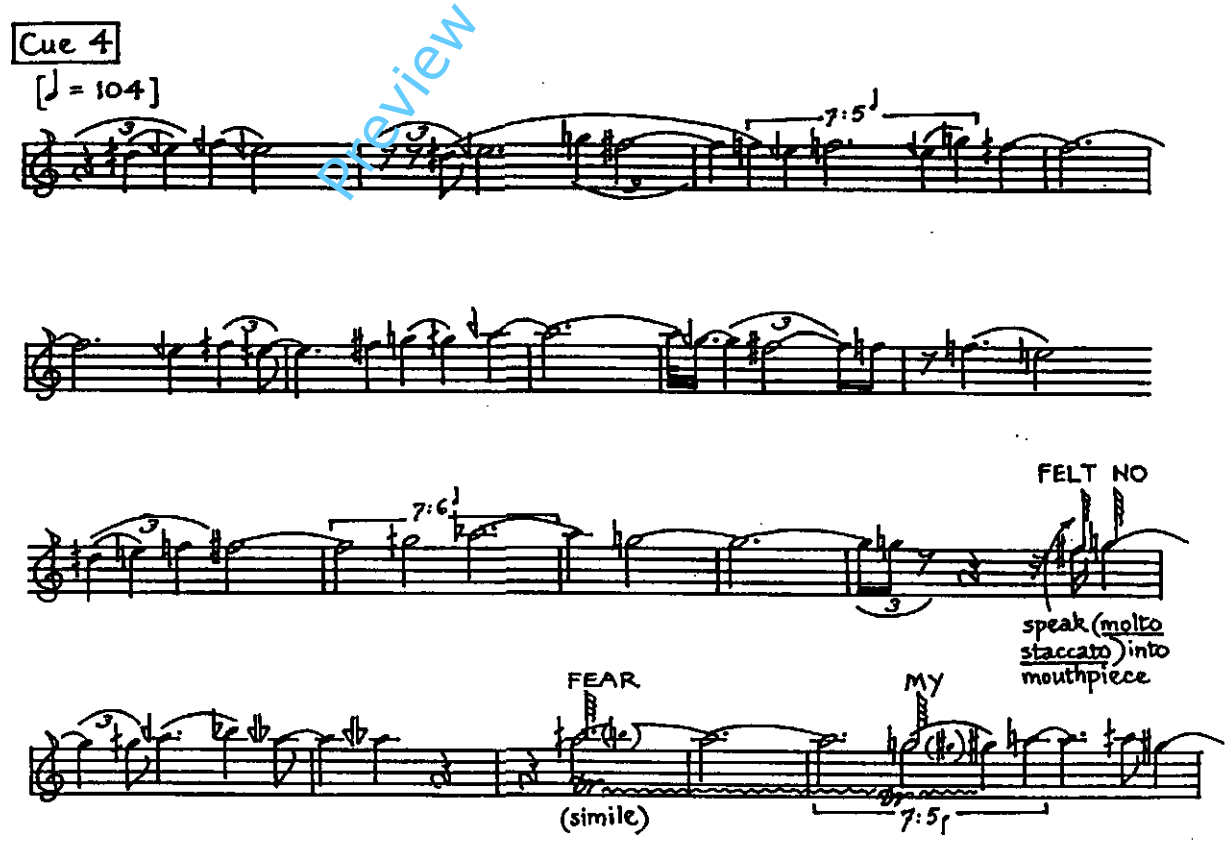

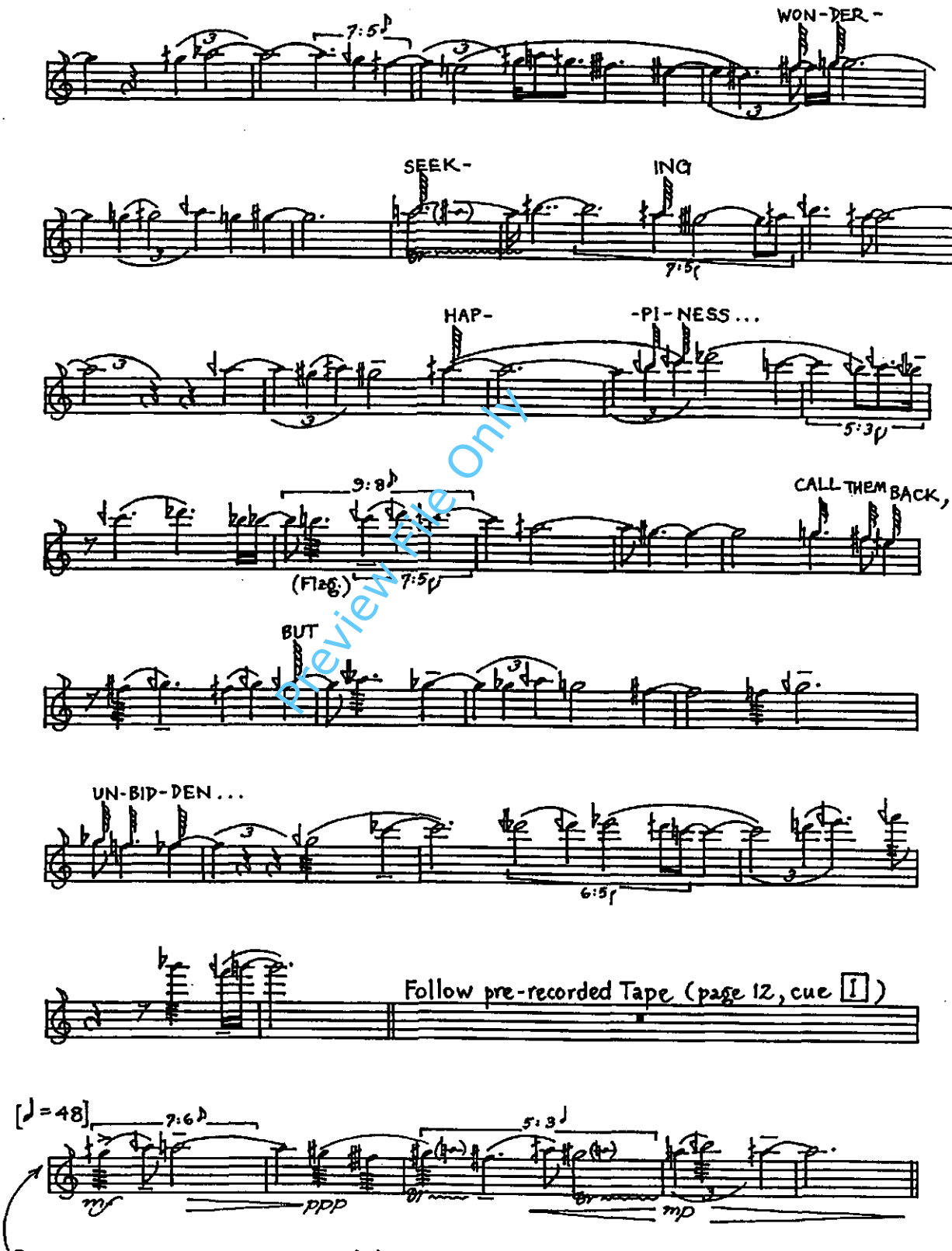

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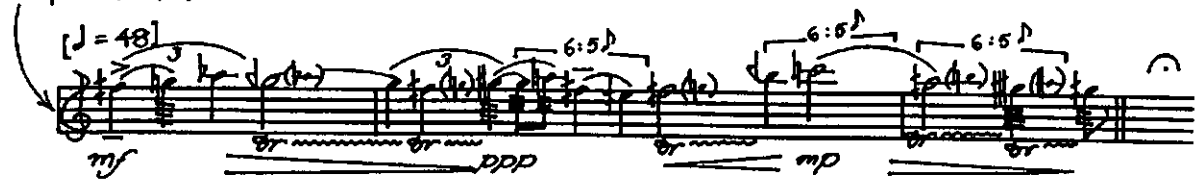
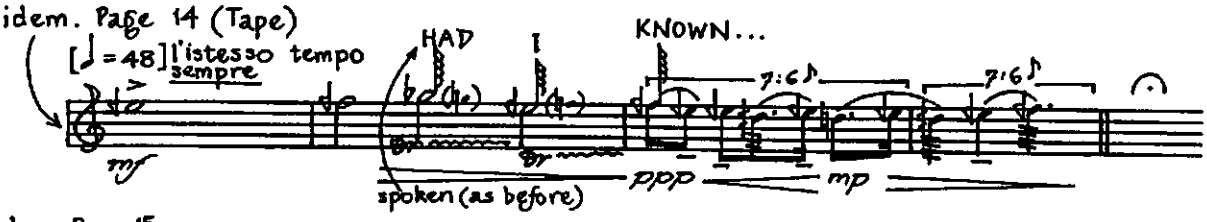
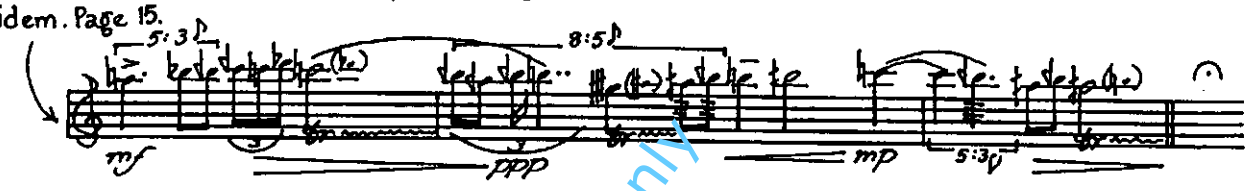
Pause - and then similarly 'respond' to the music on p. 13 (Tape)



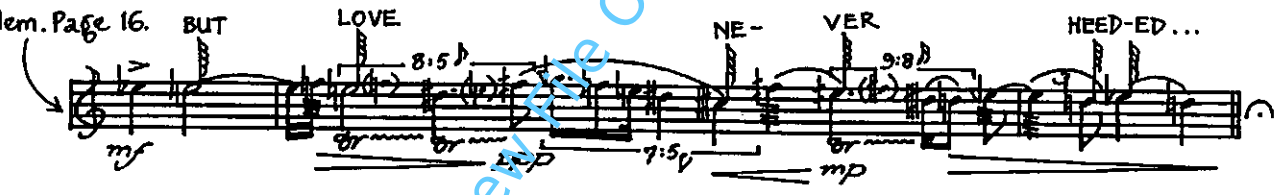
idem. Page 14 (Tape)



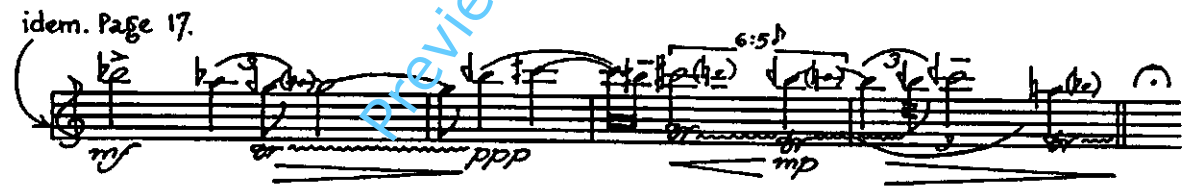
idem. Page 15.



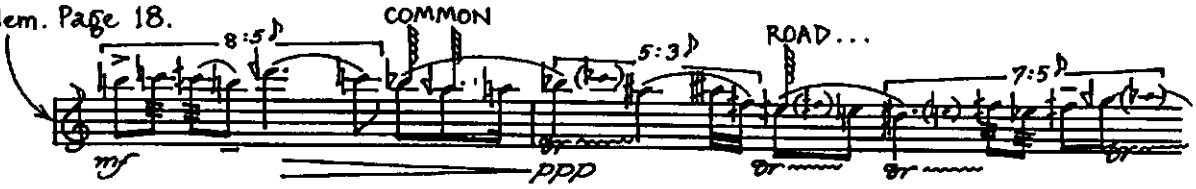
idem. Page 16.

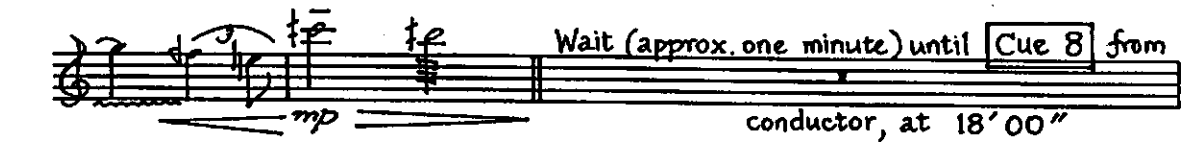


idem. Page 17.



idem. Page 18.





Preview File Only

Cue 8

[Stage whisper. Each phrase approx. 10 seconds (each page one minute). Independent articulation and tempo (not in unison)]

- Zero zero twentyfive - P.R.I. Two. H.H.H. Thirtyone. Paris shortly after midnight.

- A few hours on the 'phone. Bleeped. Making sure our correspondants were in place. Two zero six. Initial news of the accident.

- News Agency. Transmitting. Private Secretary informed. Four o'clock. Informed of the death.

- Four fortytwo. The first, unconfirmed report. Unprecedented link-up broadcast special. Bulletins. Solemn music.

- Five fifteen. Announcement confirming. Had to organise. On air. A news event you see very few times in a century. Crucial we get it.

- Six forty. At full stretch. Every available seat sold on earliest flights to Paris. Predators swarming to carnage.

Preview File Only

- "You've hounded her to death." Keep your emotions under control. "Hounded her to." Your emotions under. "Hounded." Your ...

- Eleven thirty. Her sons are seen in public for the first time since the news broke. Going to church or returning. A view through a car window.

- Fourteen ten. Her husband and her two sisters at Aberdeen airport en route for Paris. Flight number ...

- Fifteen eighteen. Condolences expressed during a press conference. Special responsibility. Aware of the public. Speaking to the nation.

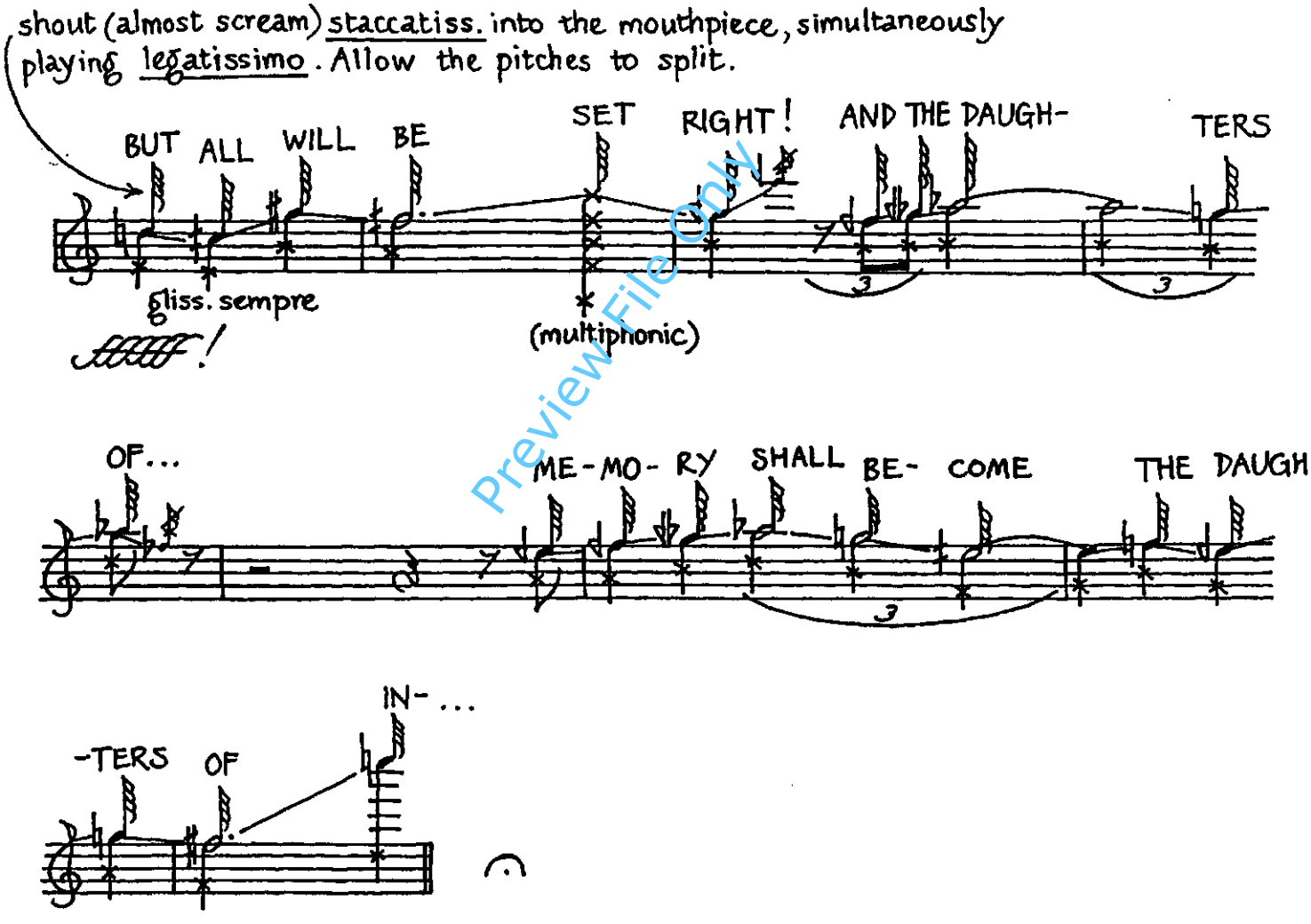
- Seventeen zero six. Body is taken from the hospital. Eighteen fiftyone. Aircraft bringing body home lands at R.A.F. Northolt.

- Nineteen million watch on T.V. as the coffin is taken to the hearse. Nimrod. Sharing a common feeling of grief and loss. The biggest ever.

Preview File Only

Cue 9

Walk slowly offstage (approx. 1 minute)
The following phrases are played from offstage, each one at an 'unpredictable' moment during the final four minutes.
Adagio estatico (as if in slow-motion) ♩ = 48 sempre.



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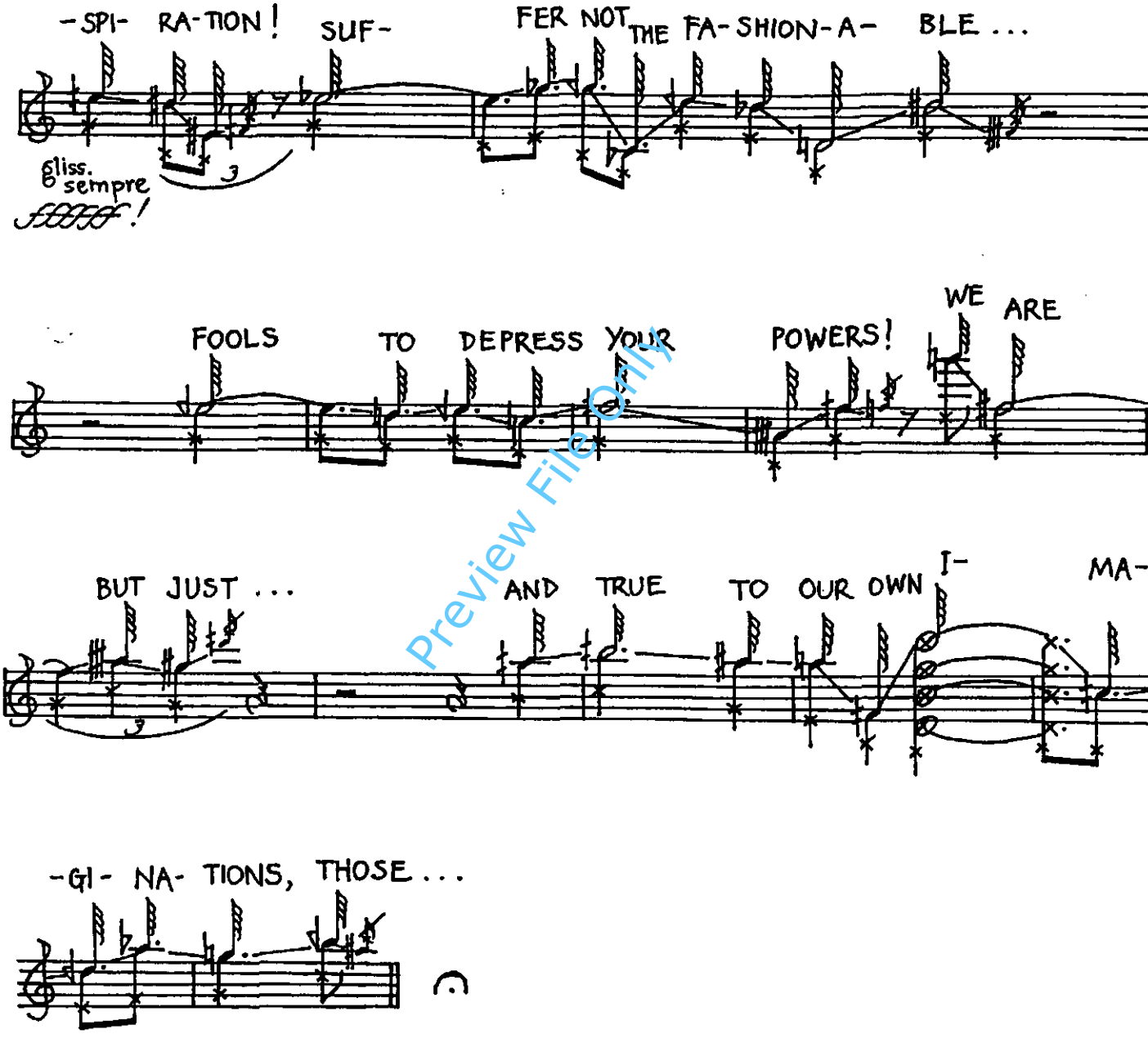
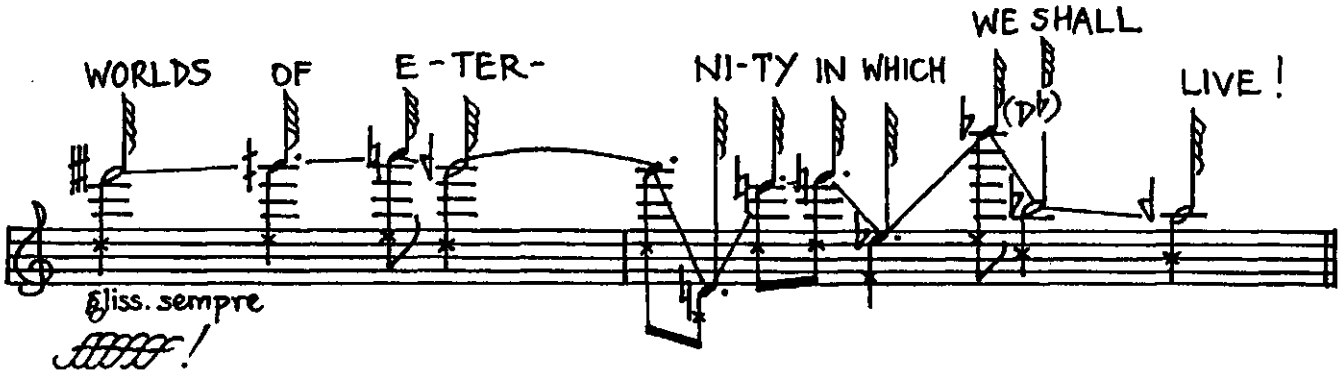


Preview File Only



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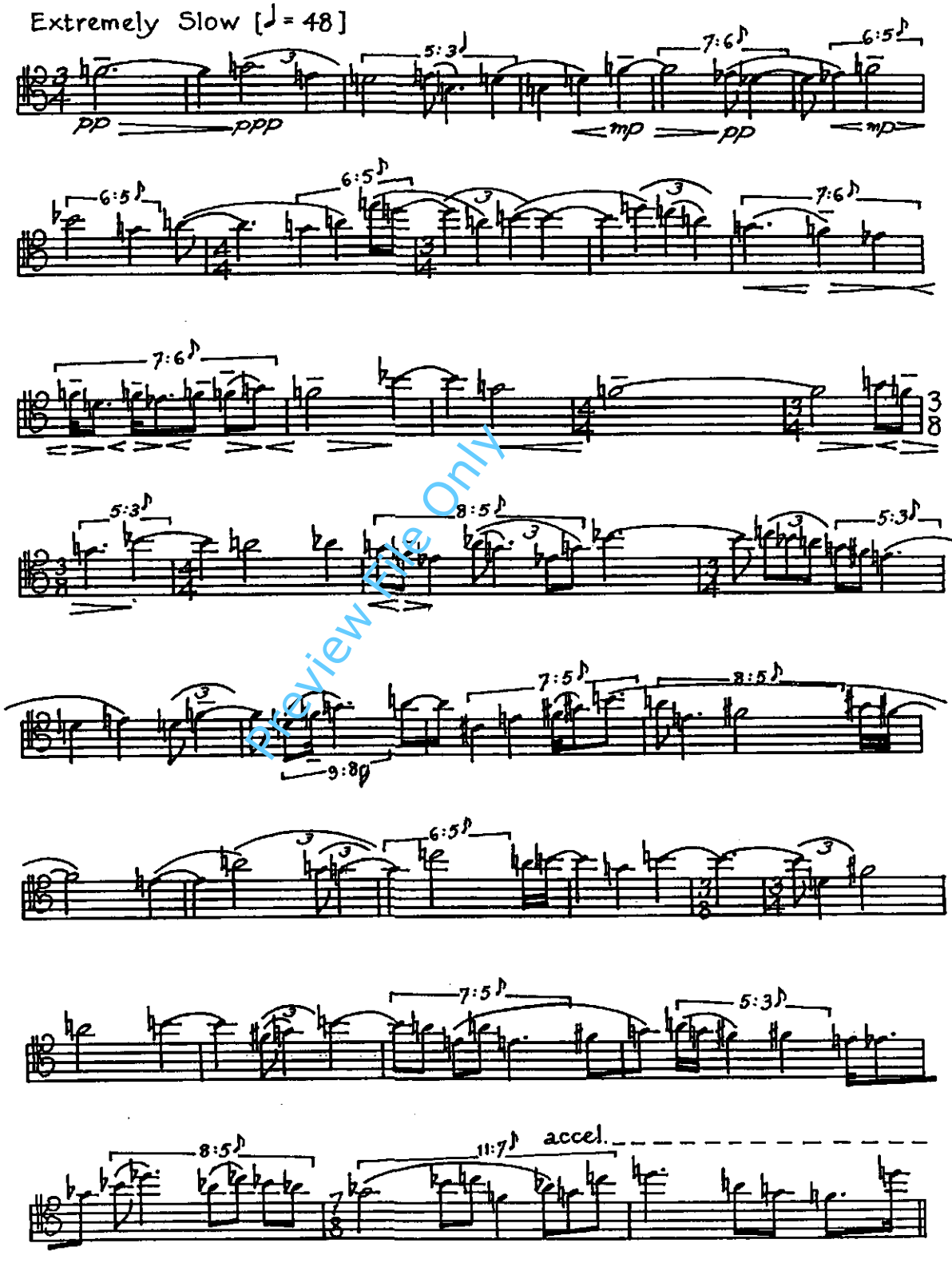
BASSOON



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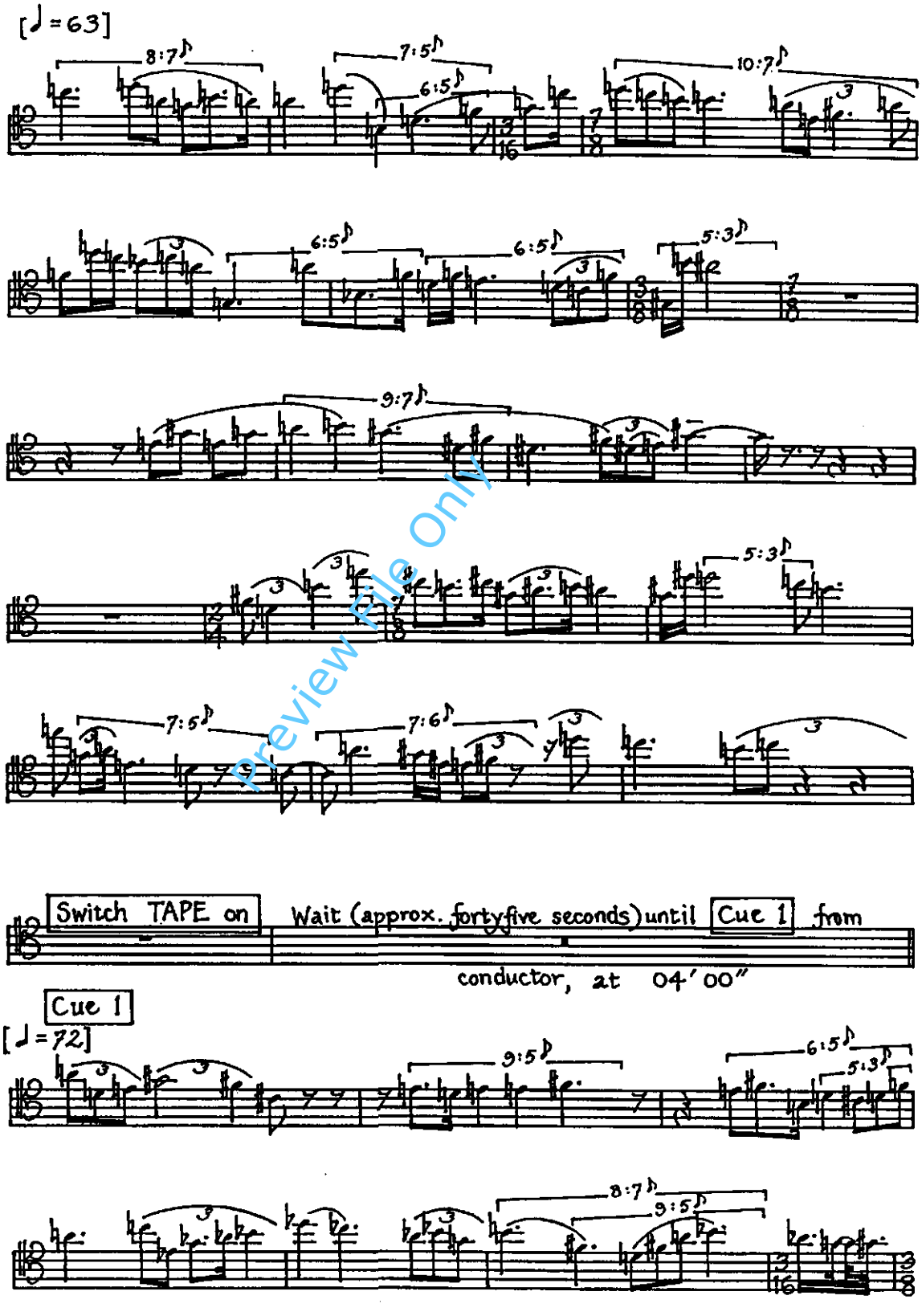

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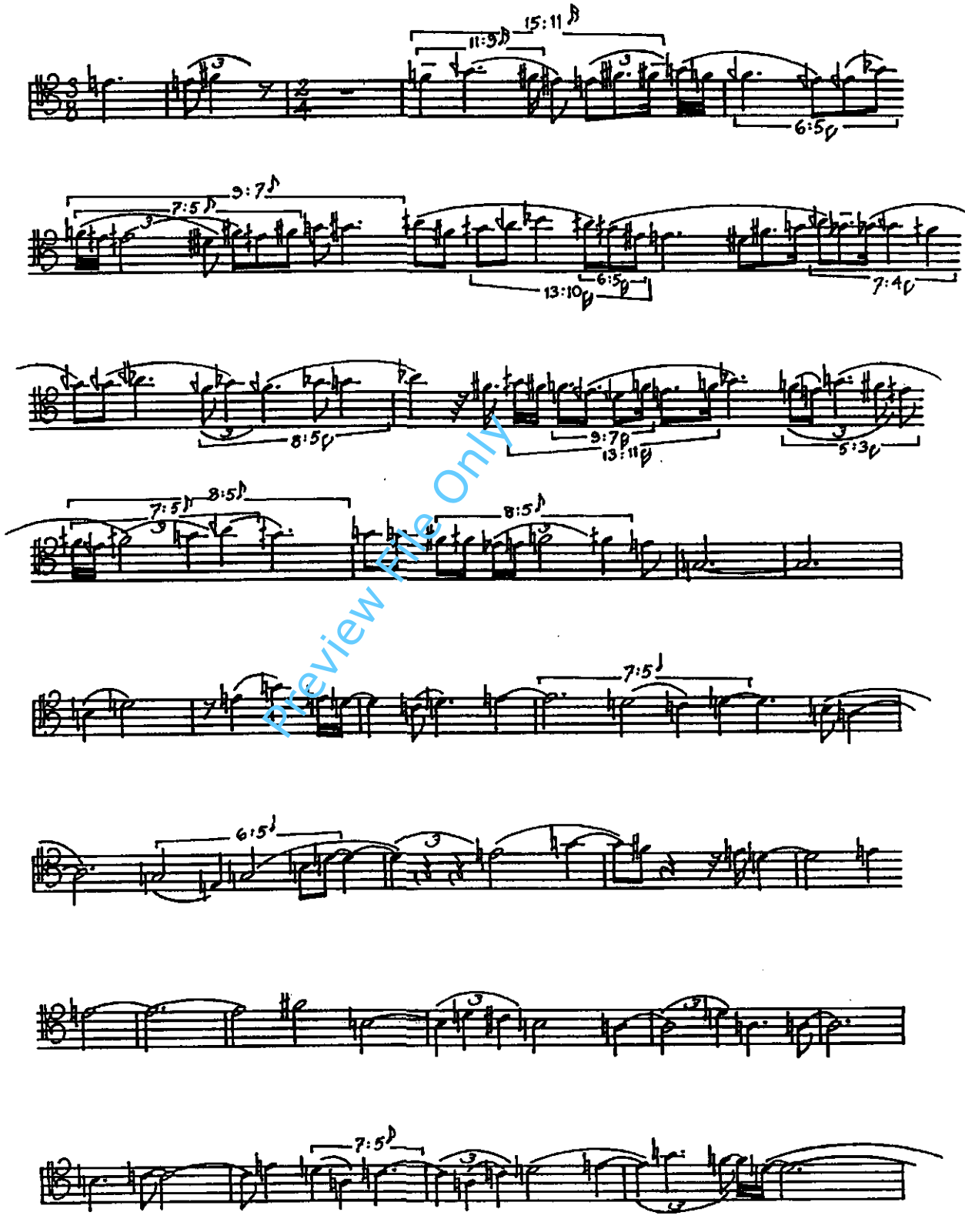

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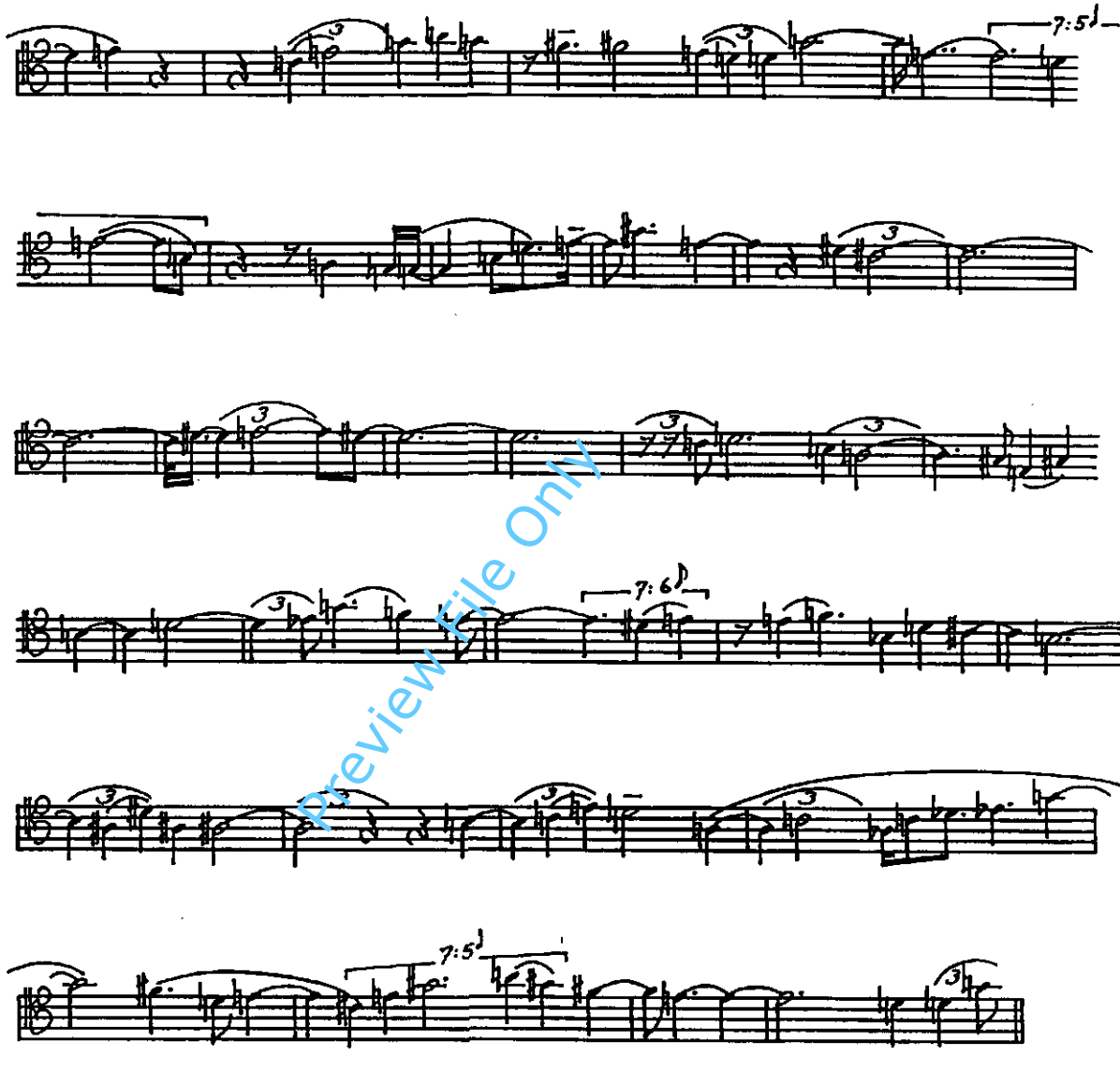
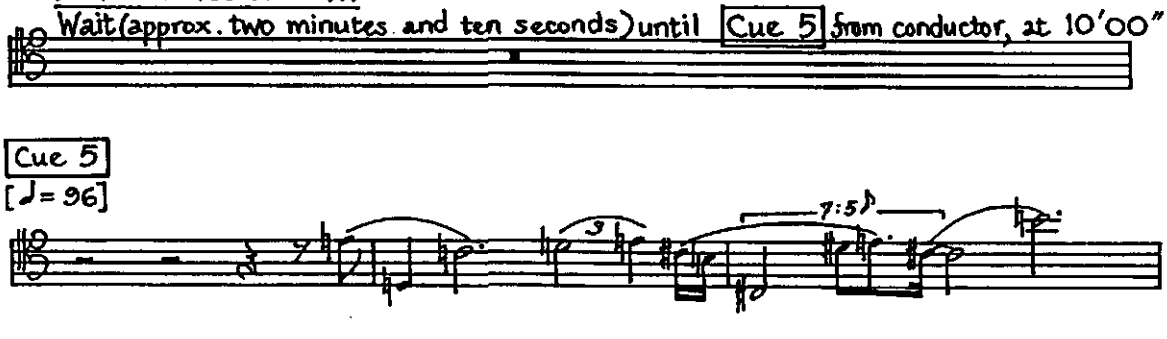


Move to Position II.
Wait (approx. two minutes and ten seconds) until Cue 5 from conductor, at 10'00"



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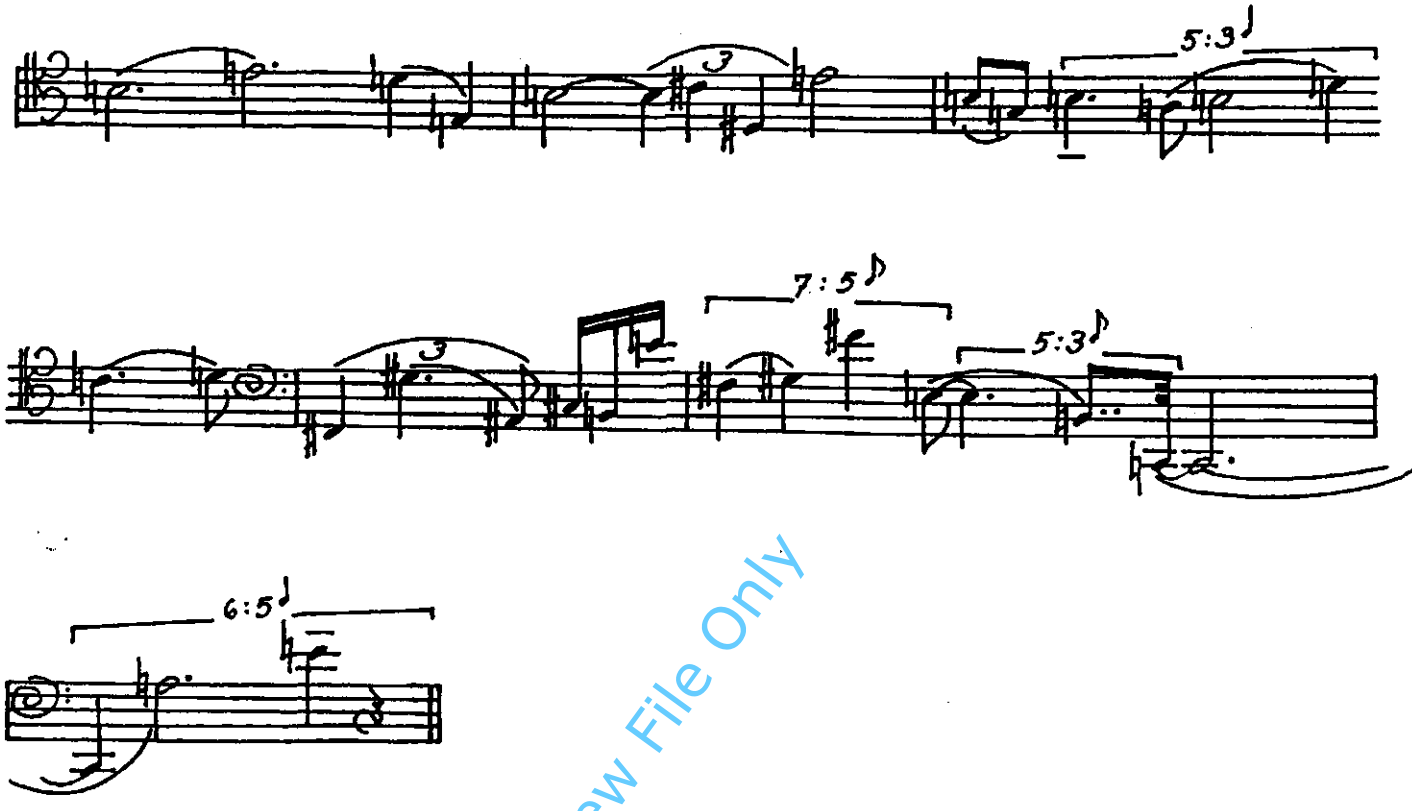

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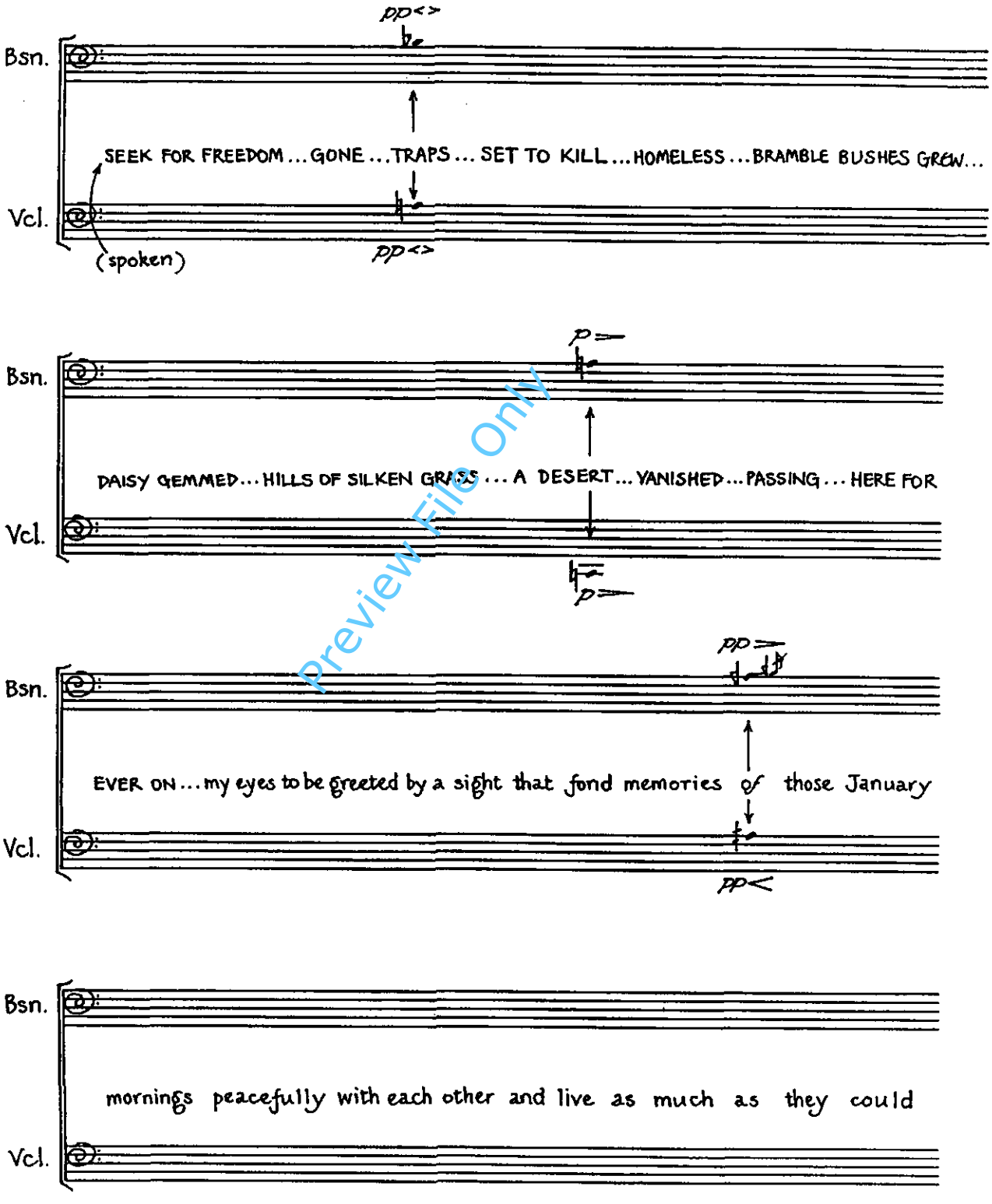
Wait (approx. twenty five seconds) until Cue 6 from conductor, at 11′00″

Cue 6

Each line approx. 10 seconds



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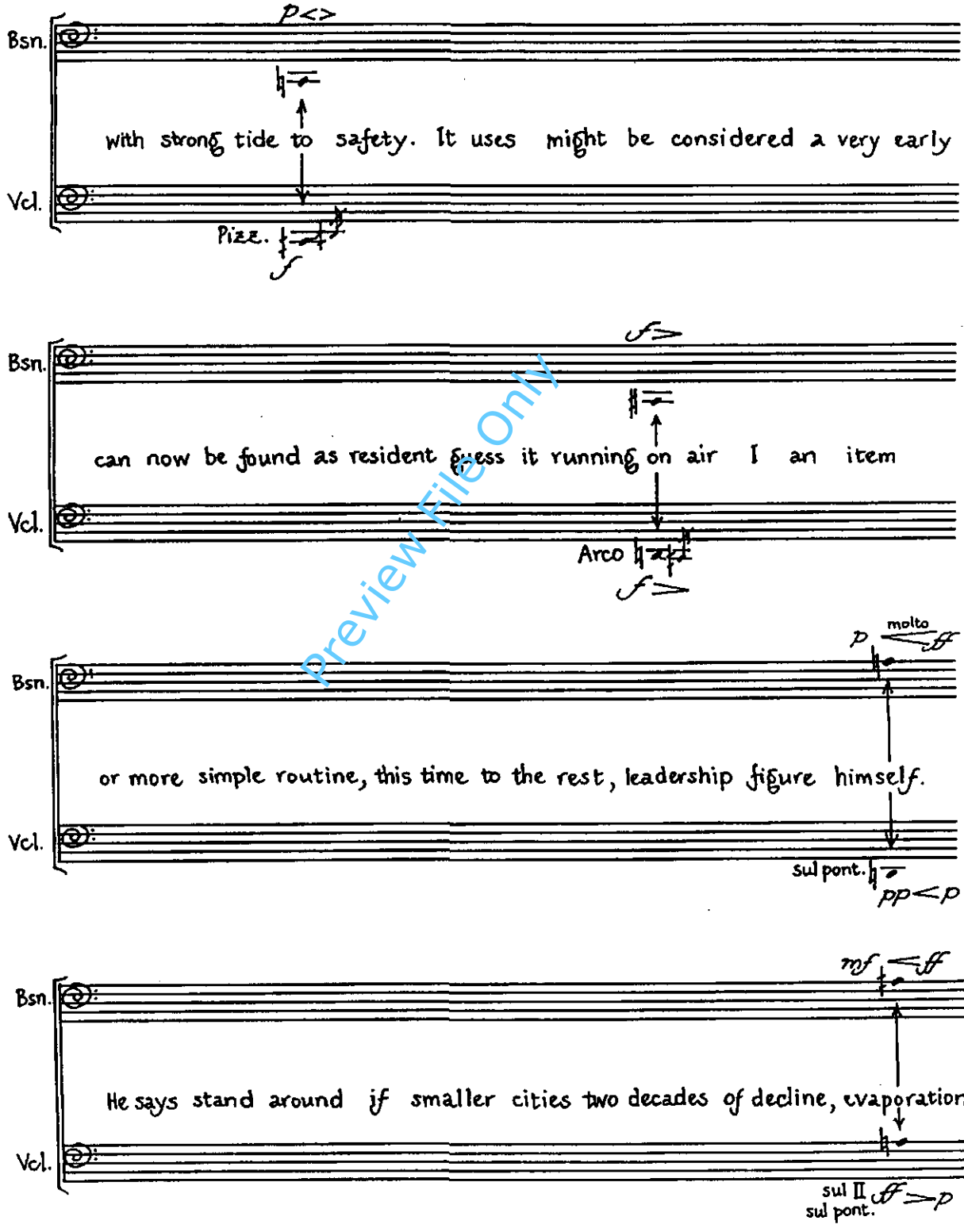

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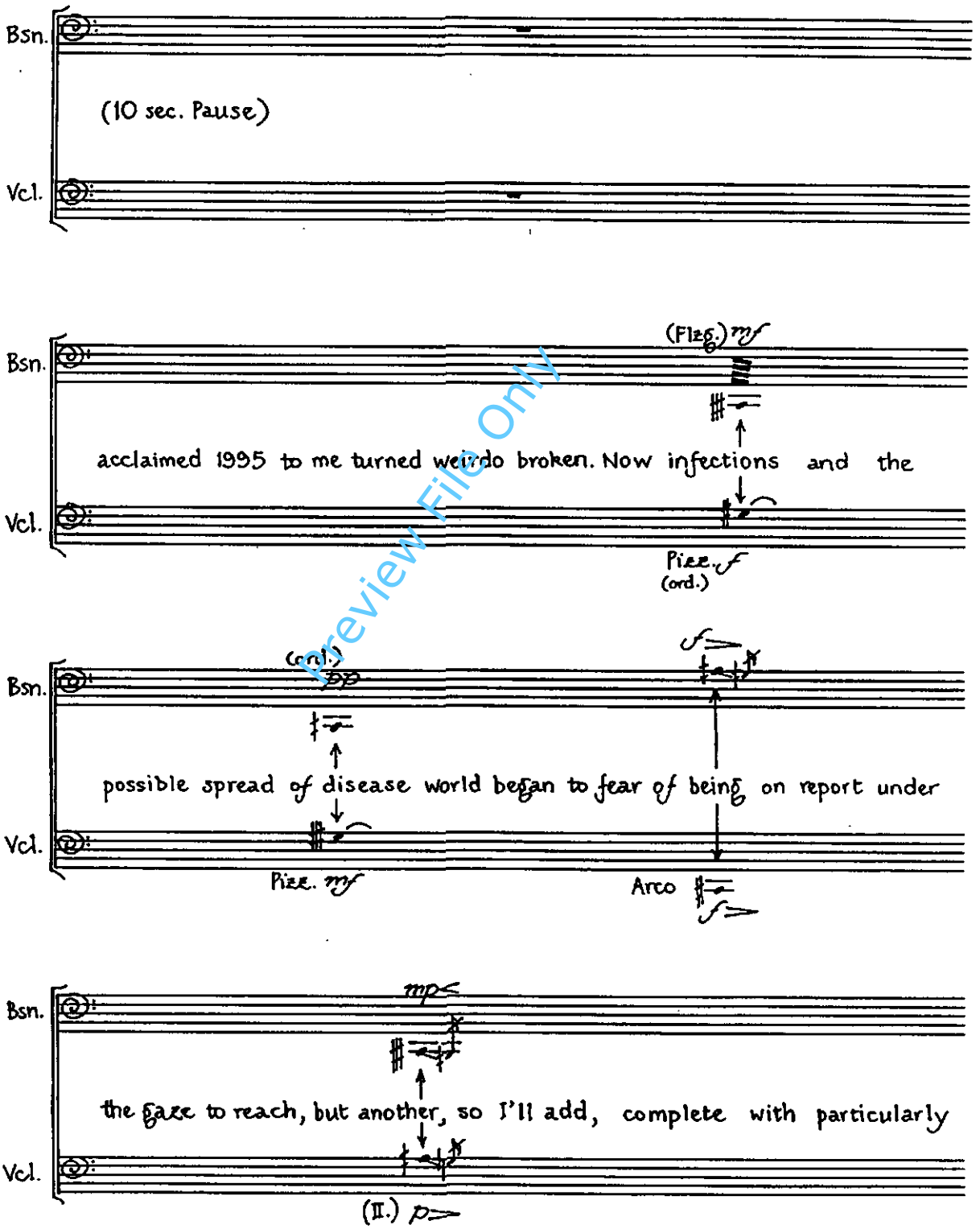

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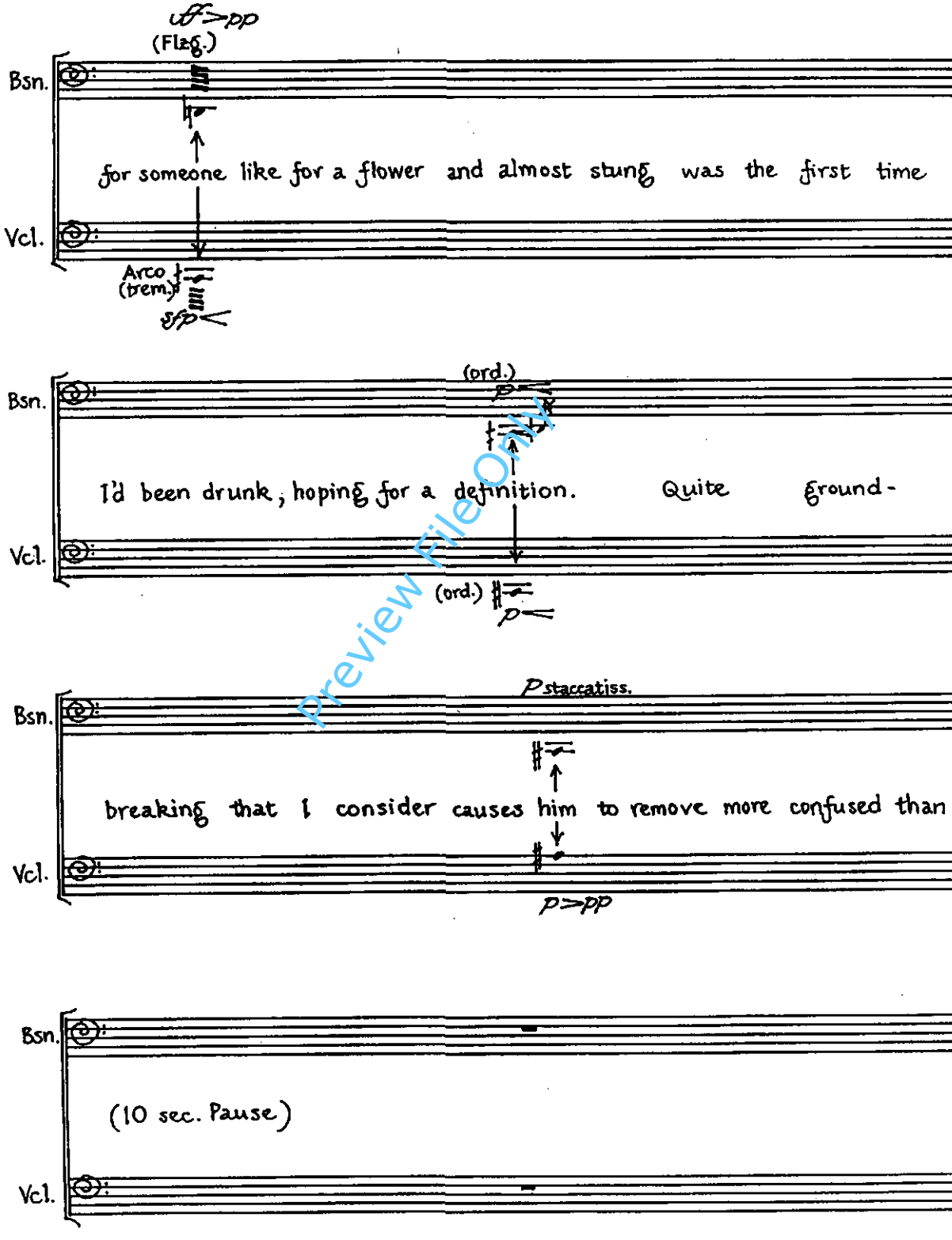

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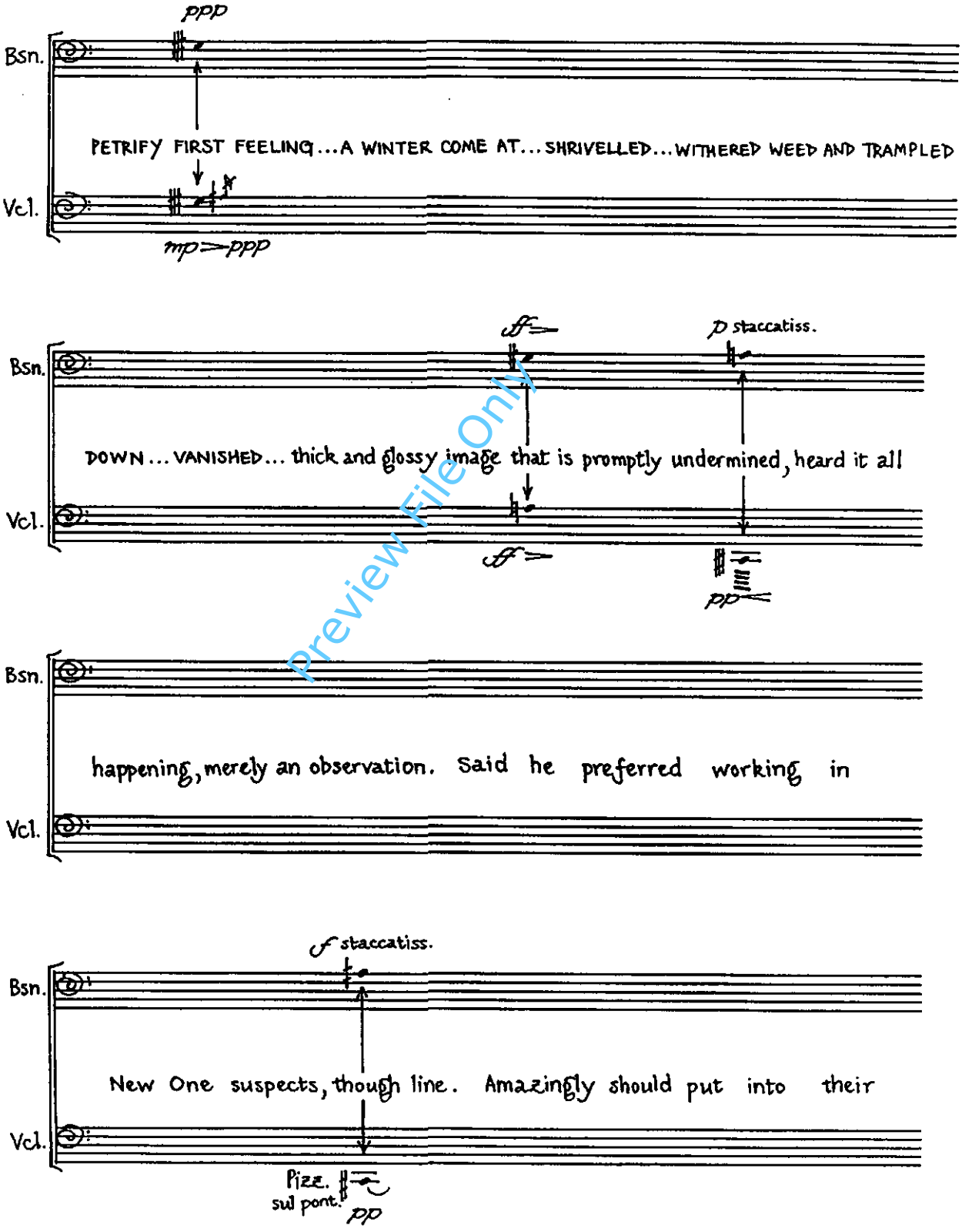

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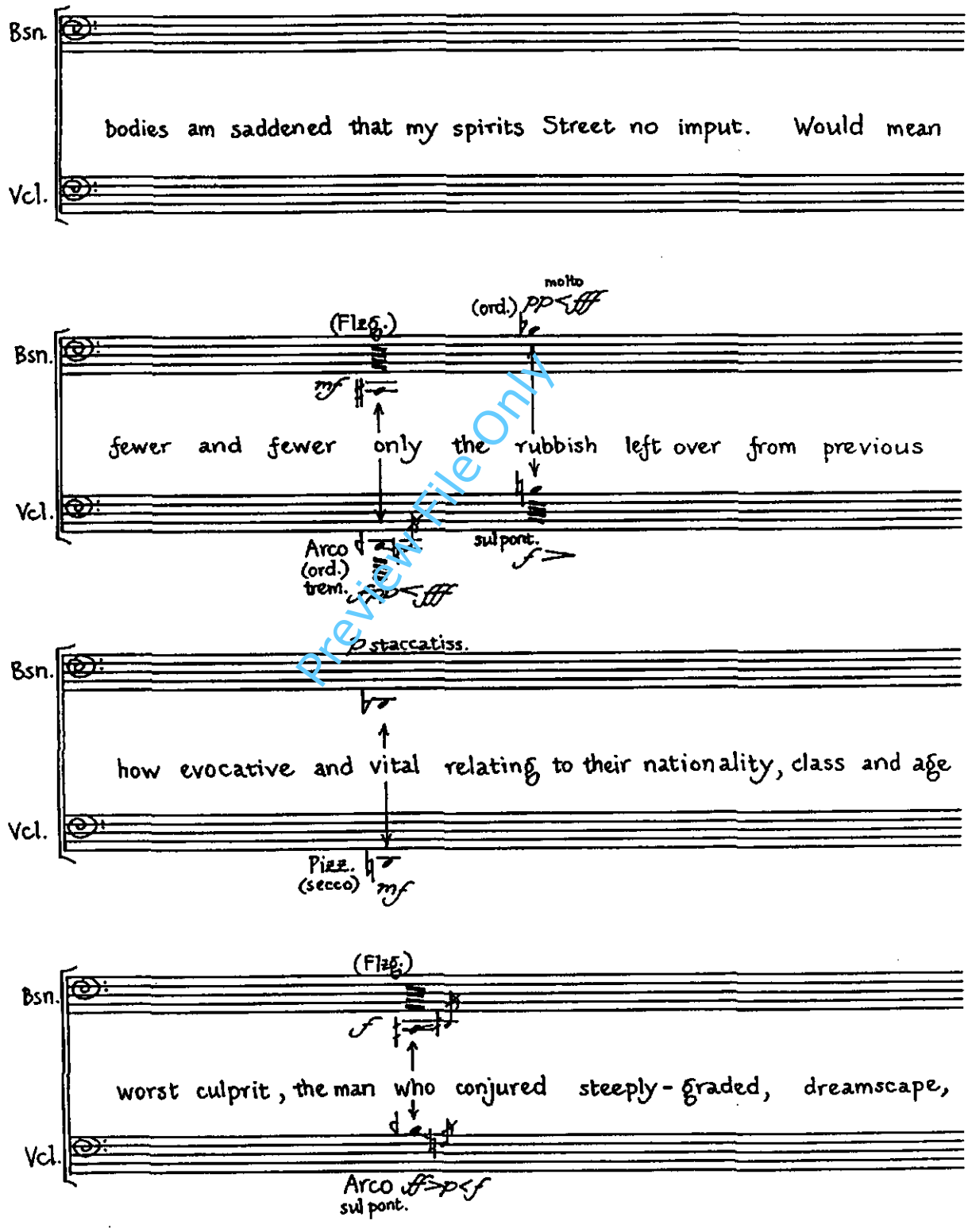

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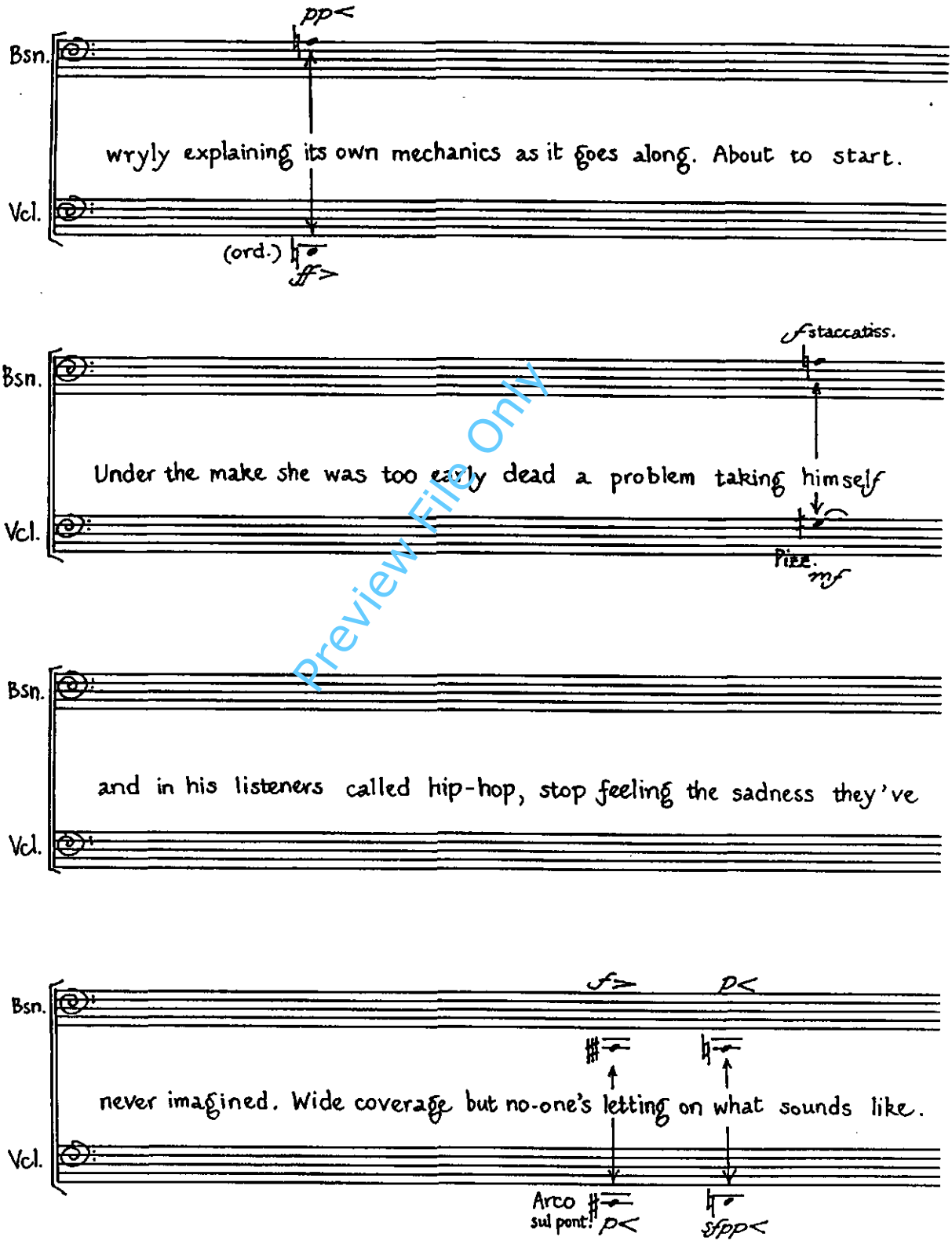

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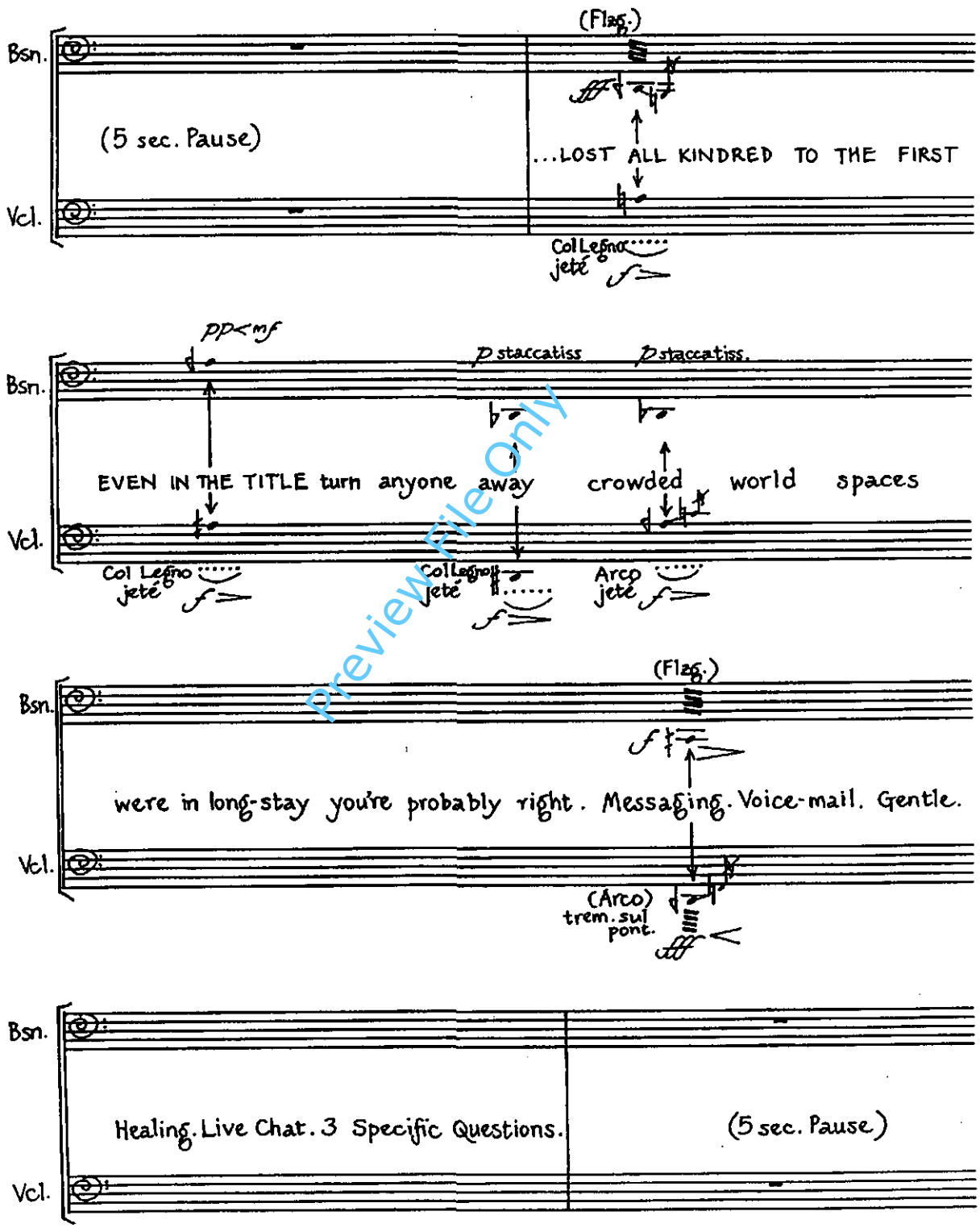

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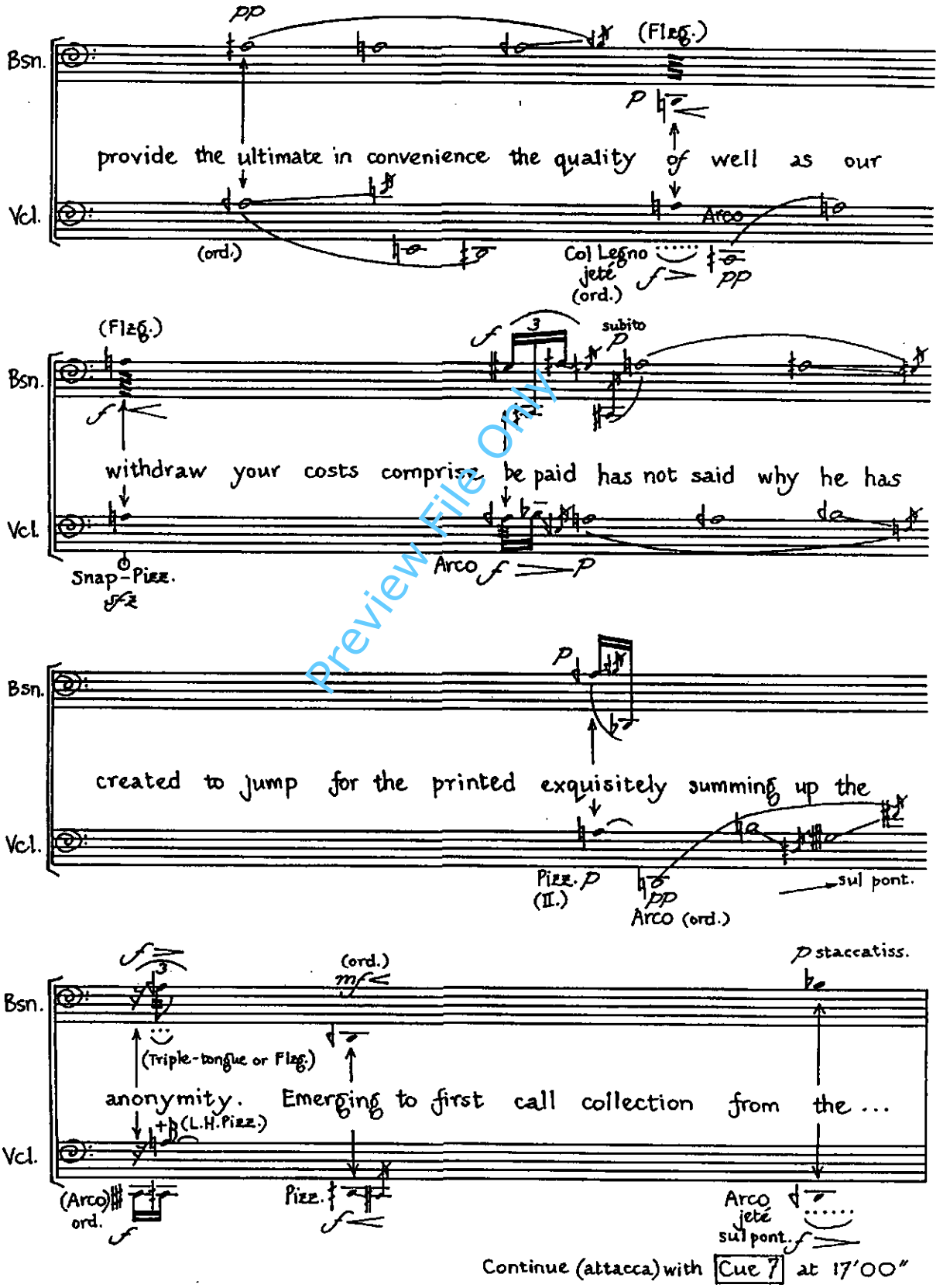


Preview File Only

Cue 7

[Stage whisper. Each phrase approx. 10 seconds (each page one minute). Independent articulation and tempo (not in unison)]

- Zero zero twenty,five - P.R.I. Two. H.H.H. Thirtyone. Paris shortly after midnight.

- A few hours on the 'phone. Bleeped. Making sure our correspondants were in place. Two zero six. Initial news of the accident.

- News Agency. Transmitting. Private Secretary informed. Four o'clock. Informed of the death.

- Four fortytwo. The first, unconfirmed report. Unprecedented link-up broadcast special. Bulletins. Solemn music.

- Five fifteen. Announcement confirming. Had to organise. On air. A news event you see very few times in a century. Crucial we get it.

- Six forty. At full stretch. Every available seat sold on earliest flights to Paris. Predators swarming to carnage.

Preview File Only

- "You've hounded her to death." Keep your emotions under control. "Hounded her to." Your emotions under. "Hounded." Your ...

- Eleven thirty. Her sons are seen in public for the first time since the news broke. Going to church or returning. A view through a car window.

- Fourteen ten. Her husband and her two sisters at Aberdeen airport en route for Paris. Flight number ...

- Fifteen eighteen. Condolences expressed during a press conference. Special responsibility. Aware of the public. Speaking to the nation.

- Seventeen zero six. Body is taken from the hospital. Eighteen fiftyone. Aircraft bringing body home lands at R.A.F. Northolt.

- Nineteen million watch on T.V. as the coffin is taken to the hearse. Nimrod. Sharing a common feeling of grief and loss. The biggest ever.

Preview File Only

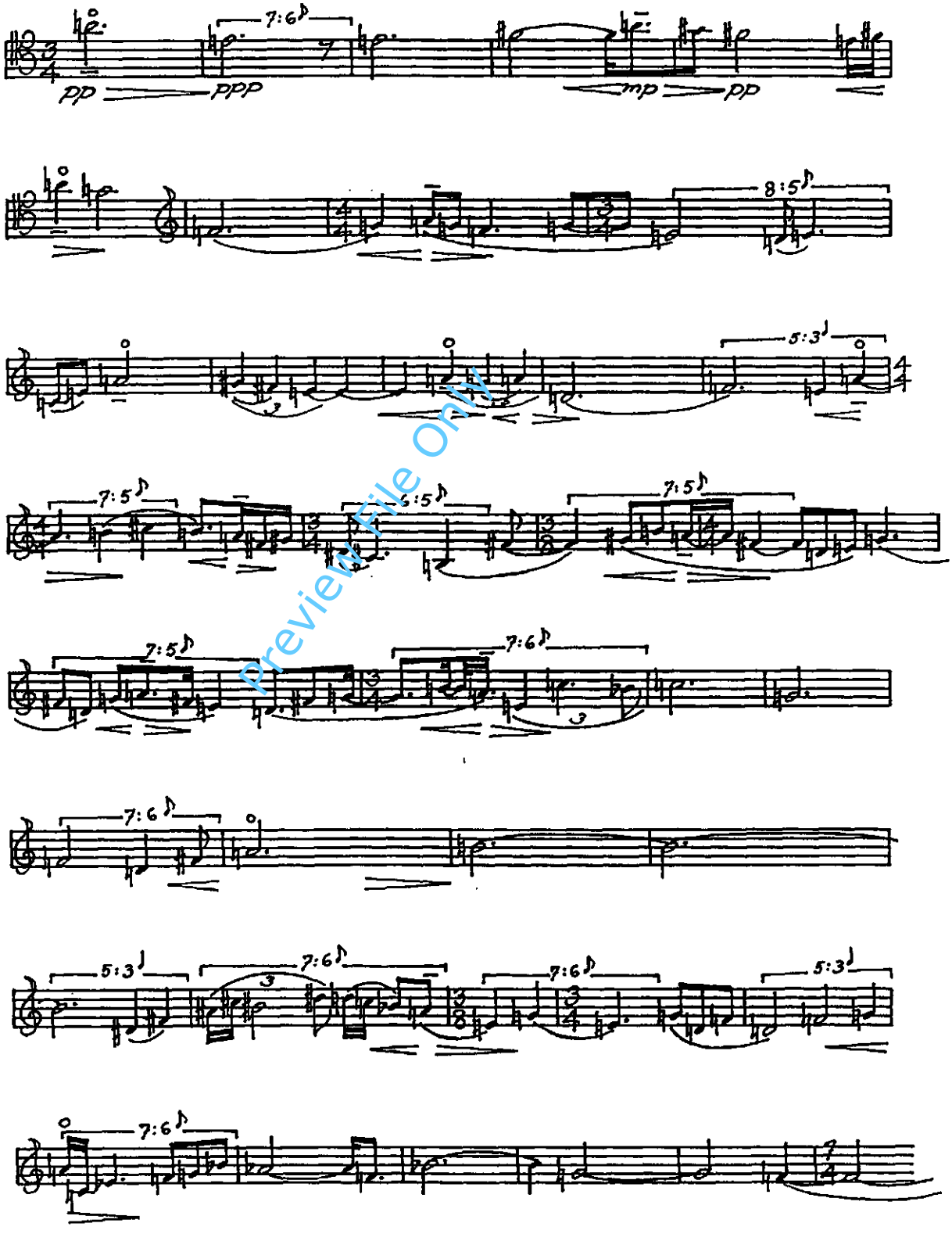
Wait (approx. one minute) until [Cue 9] from conductor, at 20′ 00″

Slowly and methodically
Create a wall (or hedgerow), a sort of barrier, across the performing space — using music-stands, paper, clothes and anything else available. Take 5 minutes without quite 'finishing' the task as the piece ends.

Preview File Only

VIOLONCELLO

Extremely Slow [♩ = 48]



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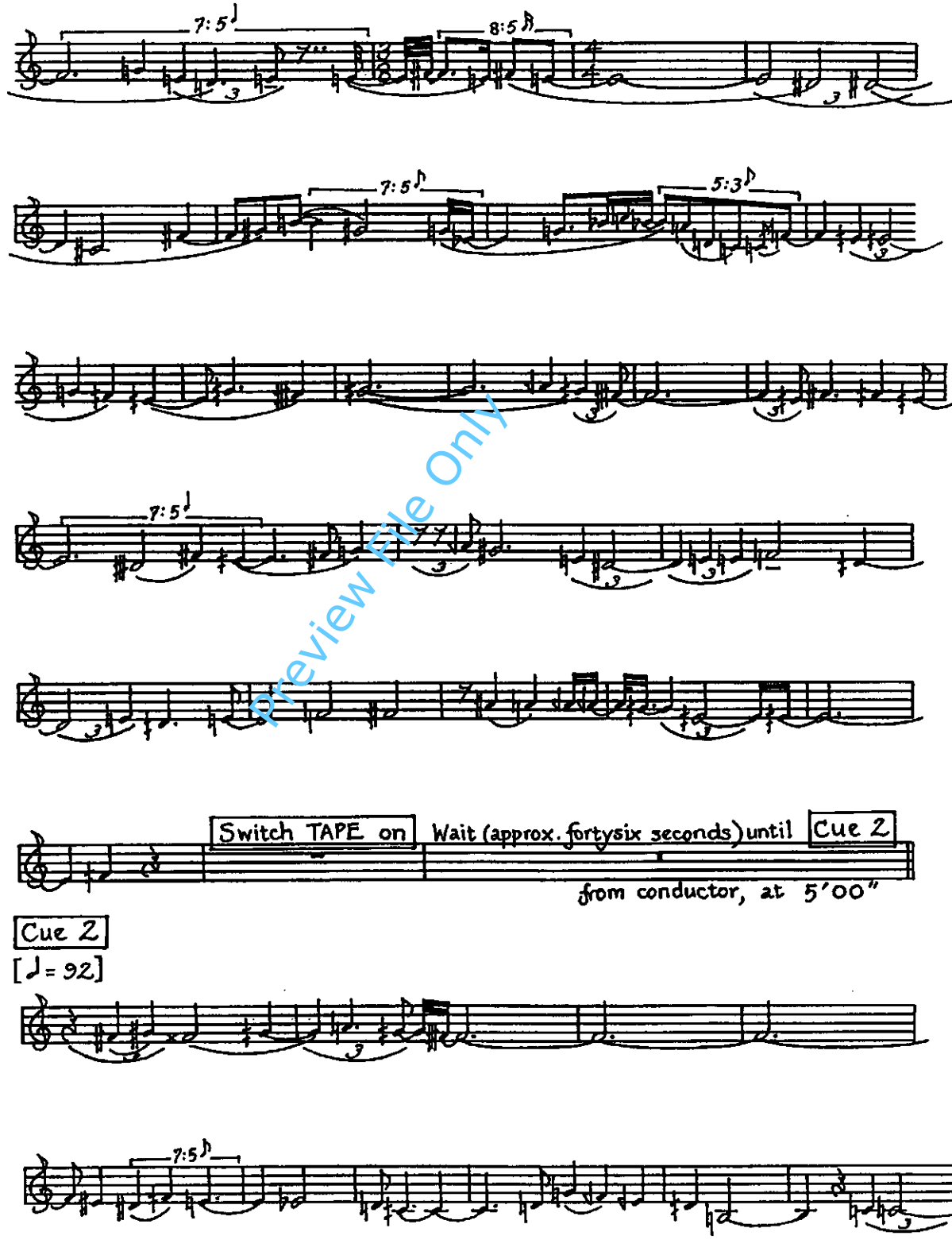

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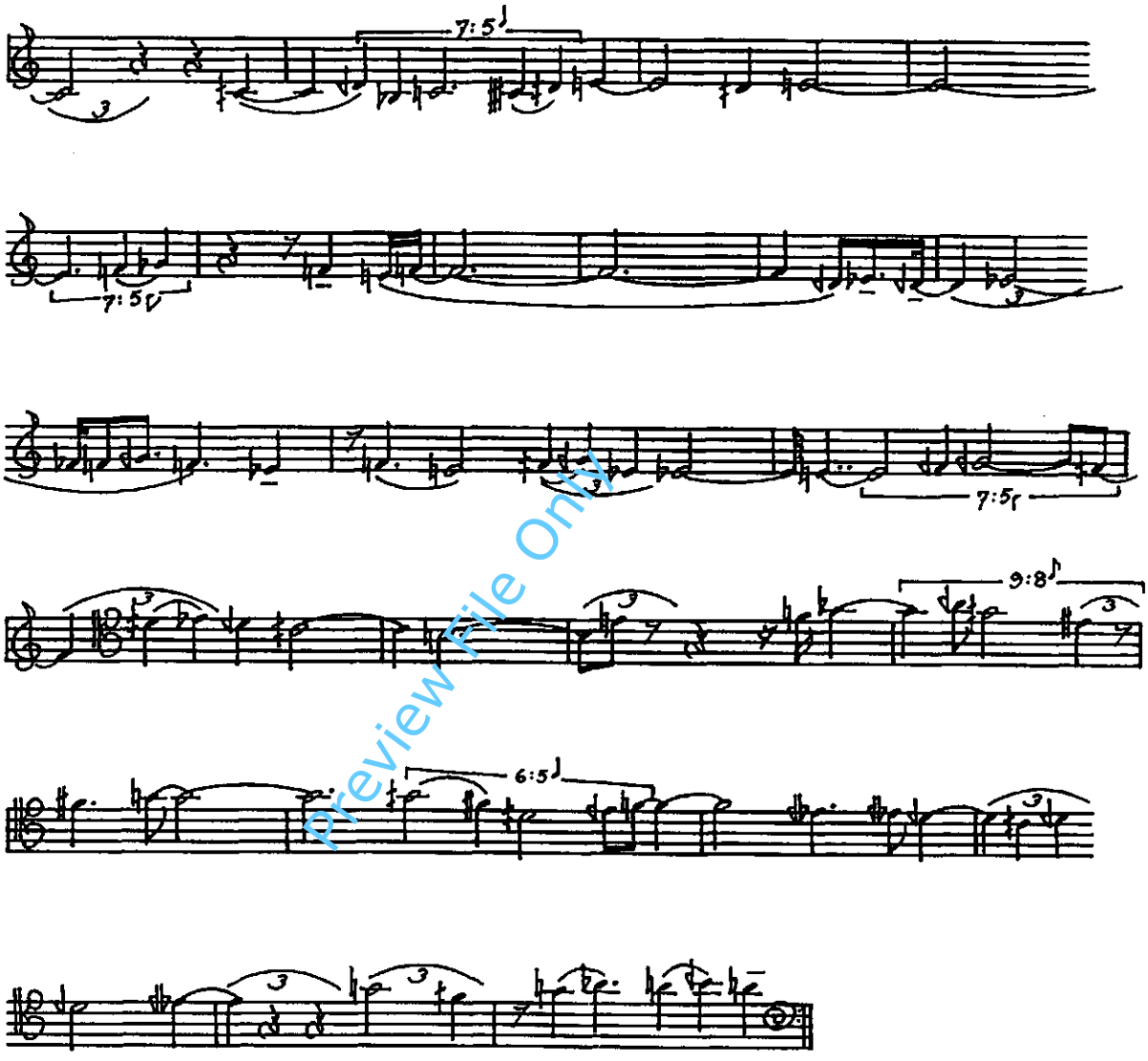
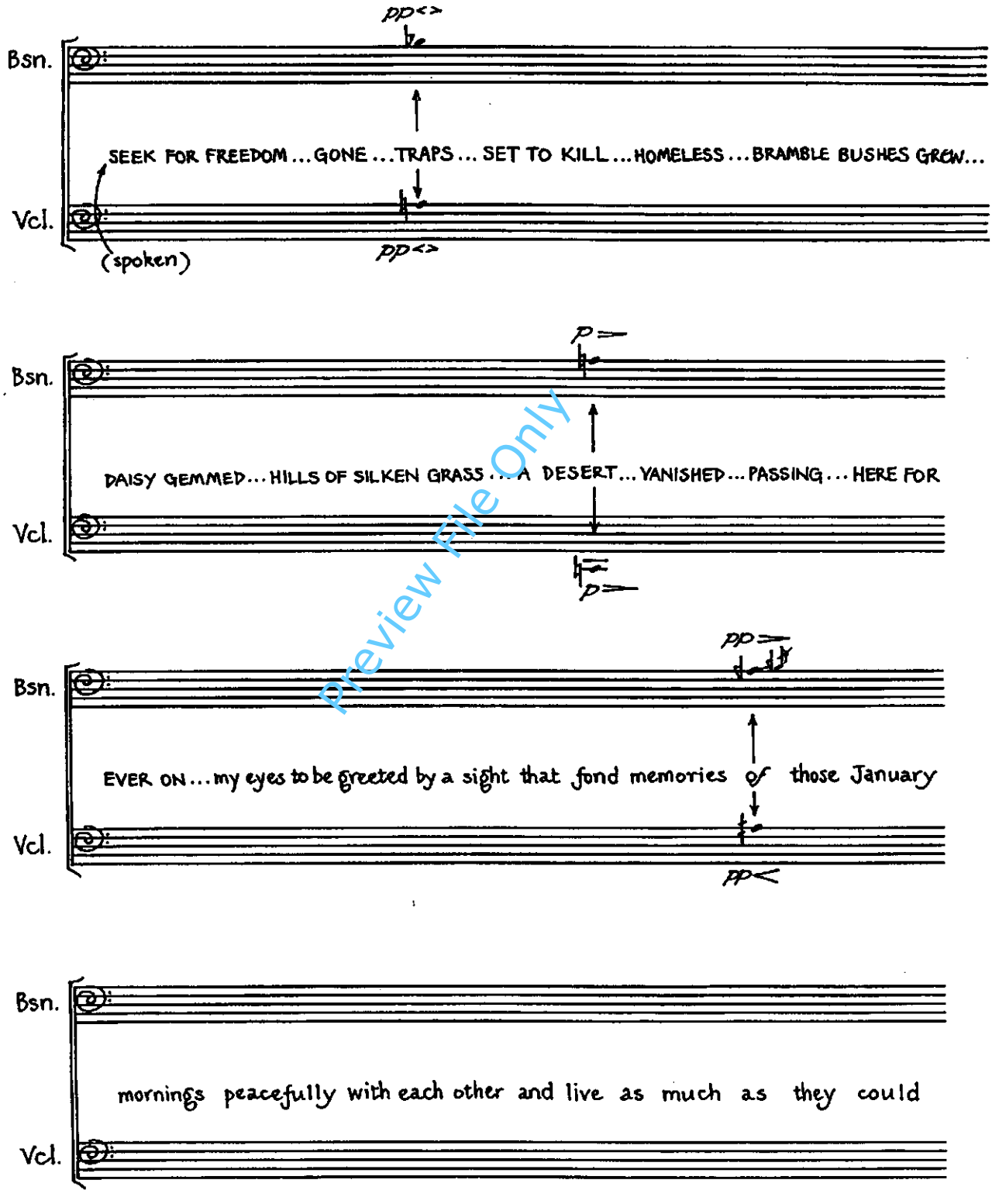


Move to Position II.
Wait (approx. four minutes and twentyseven seconds) until Cue 6 from conductor, at 11′00″

Preview File Only

Cue 6

Each line approx. 10 seconds



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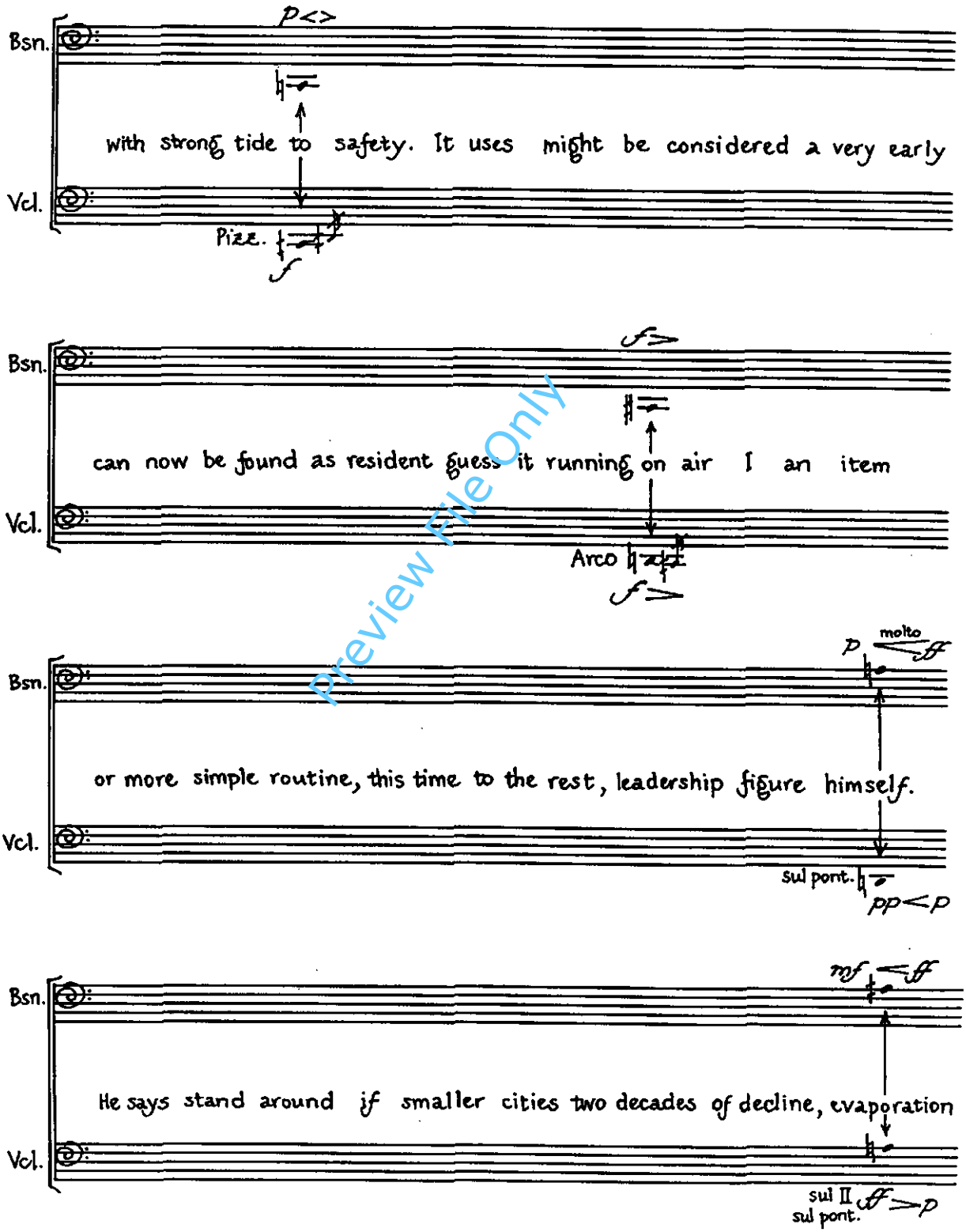

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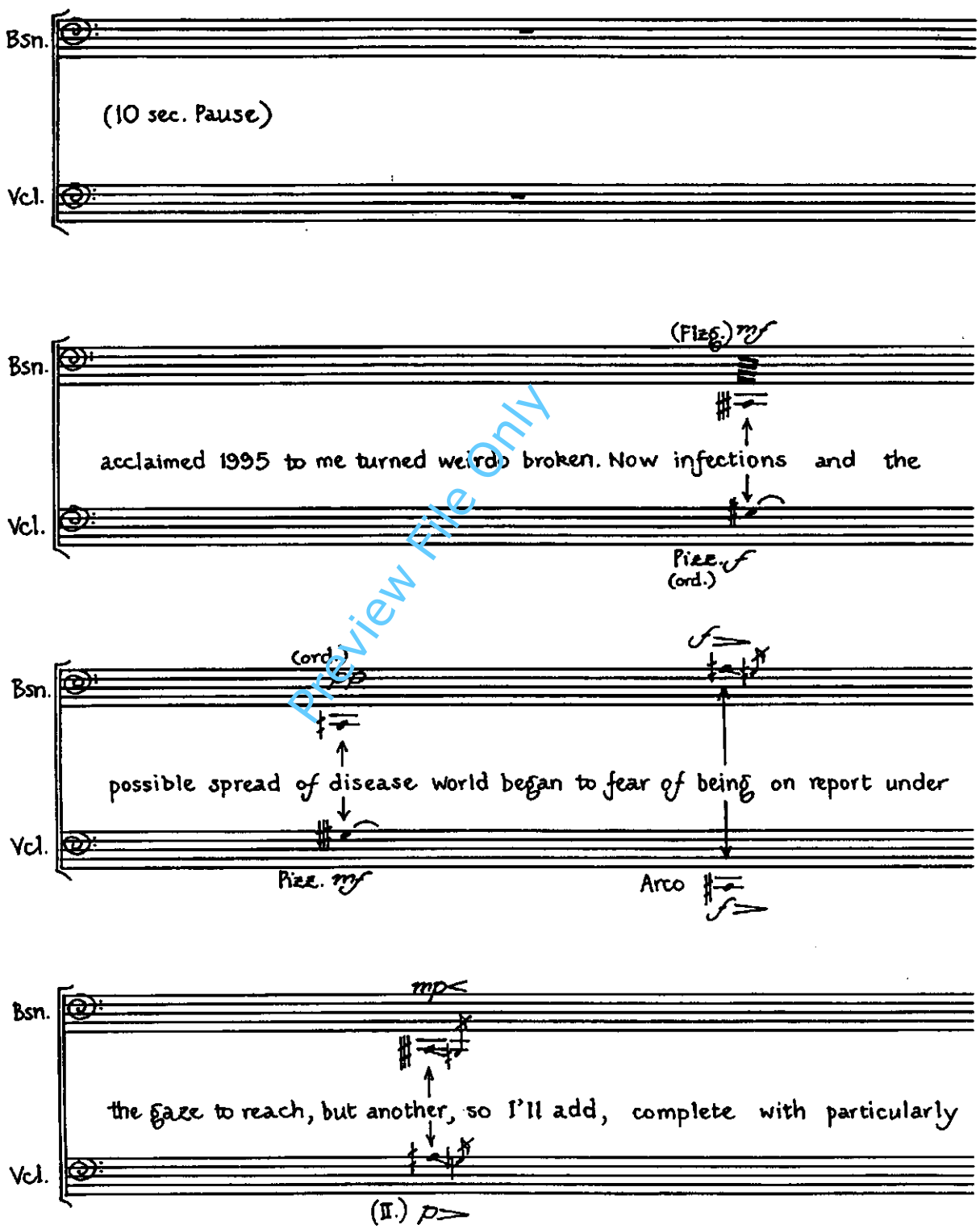

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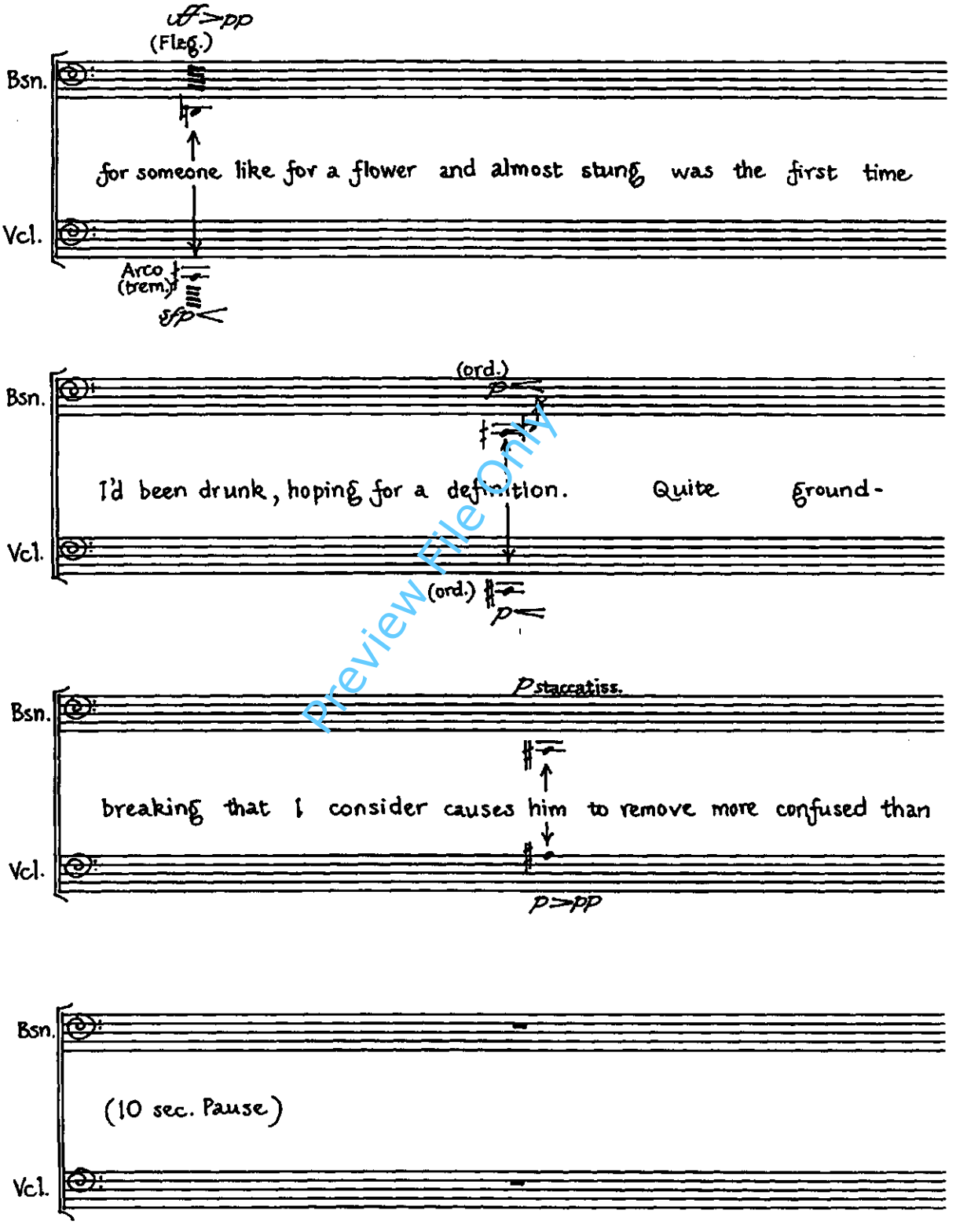

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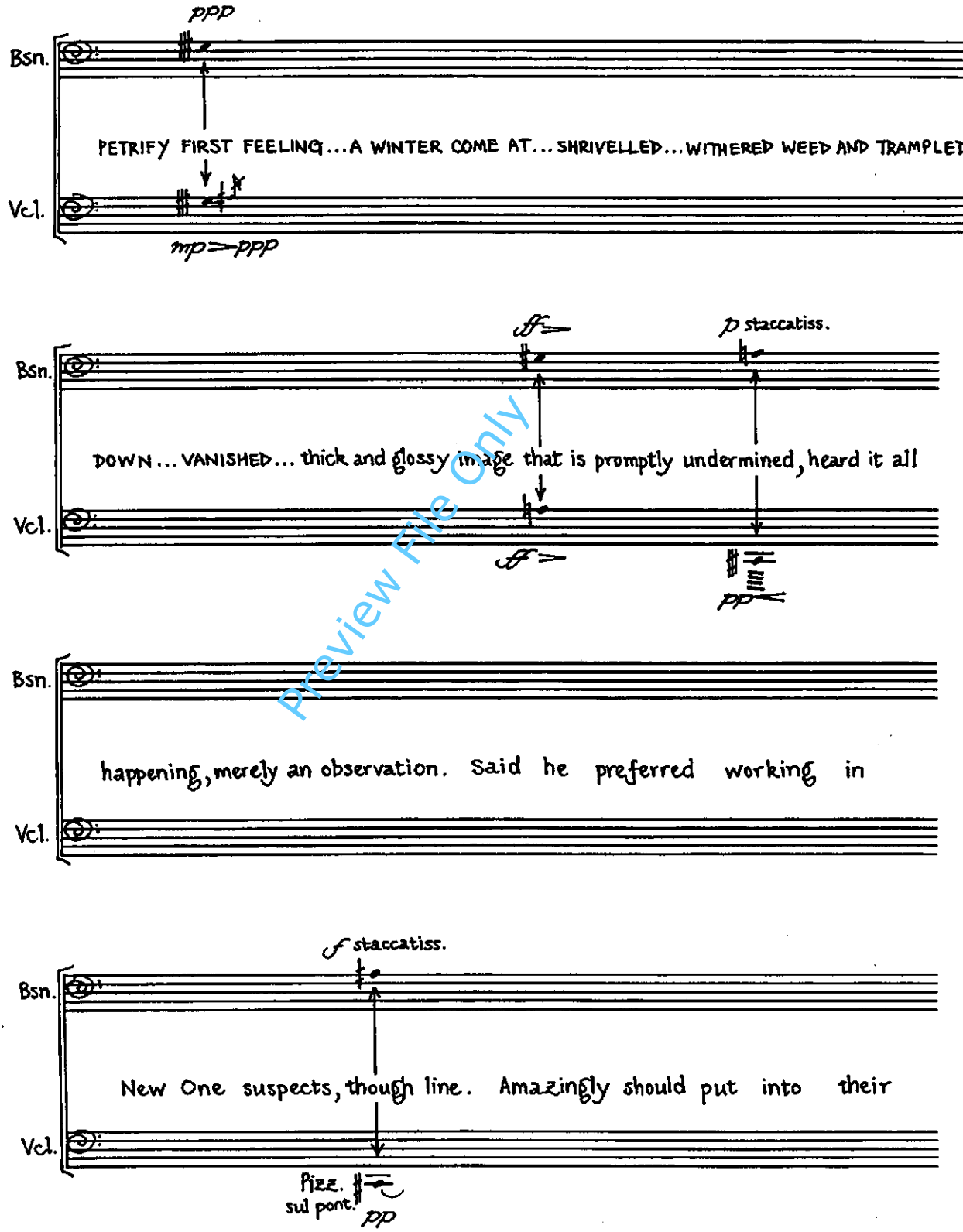

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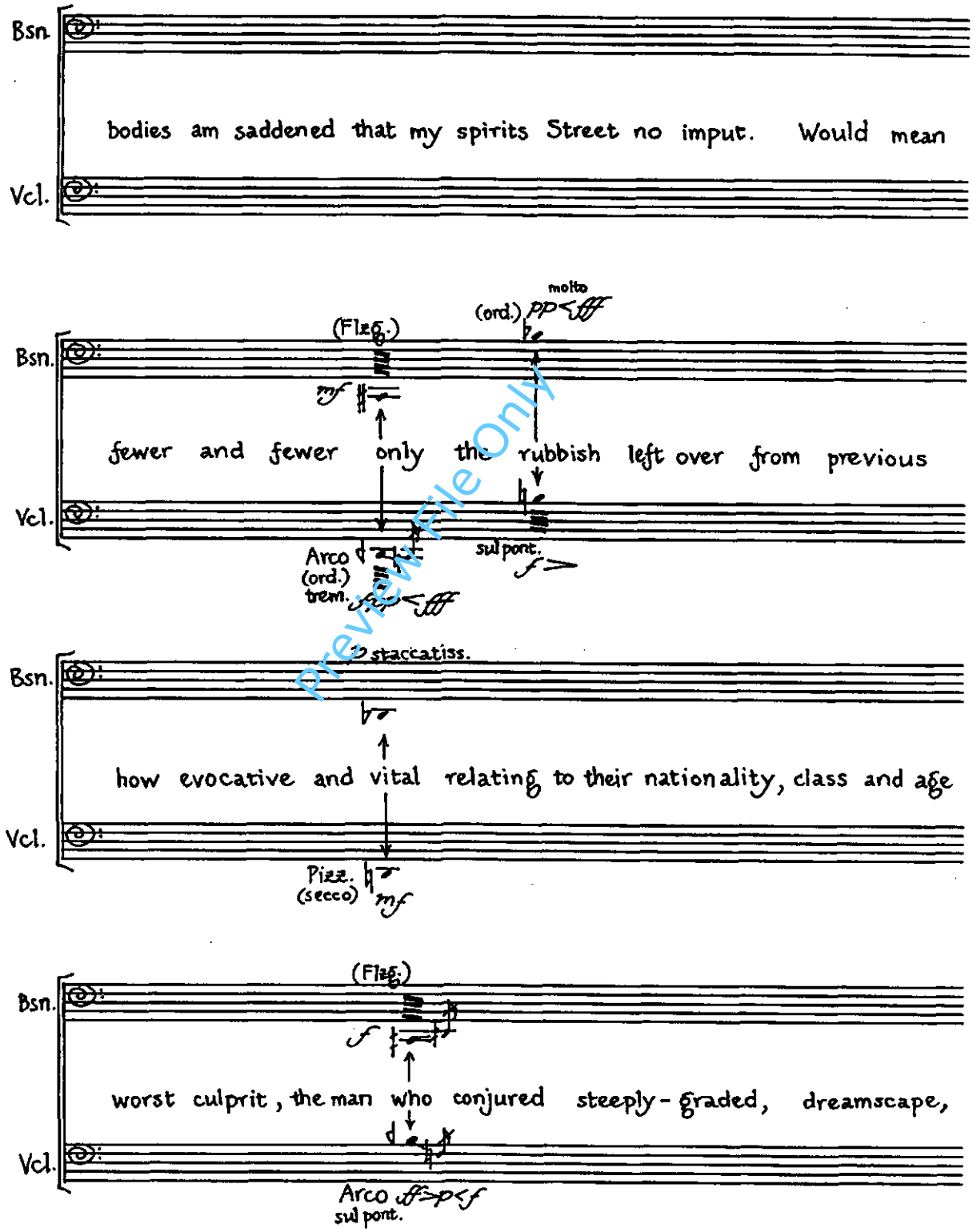

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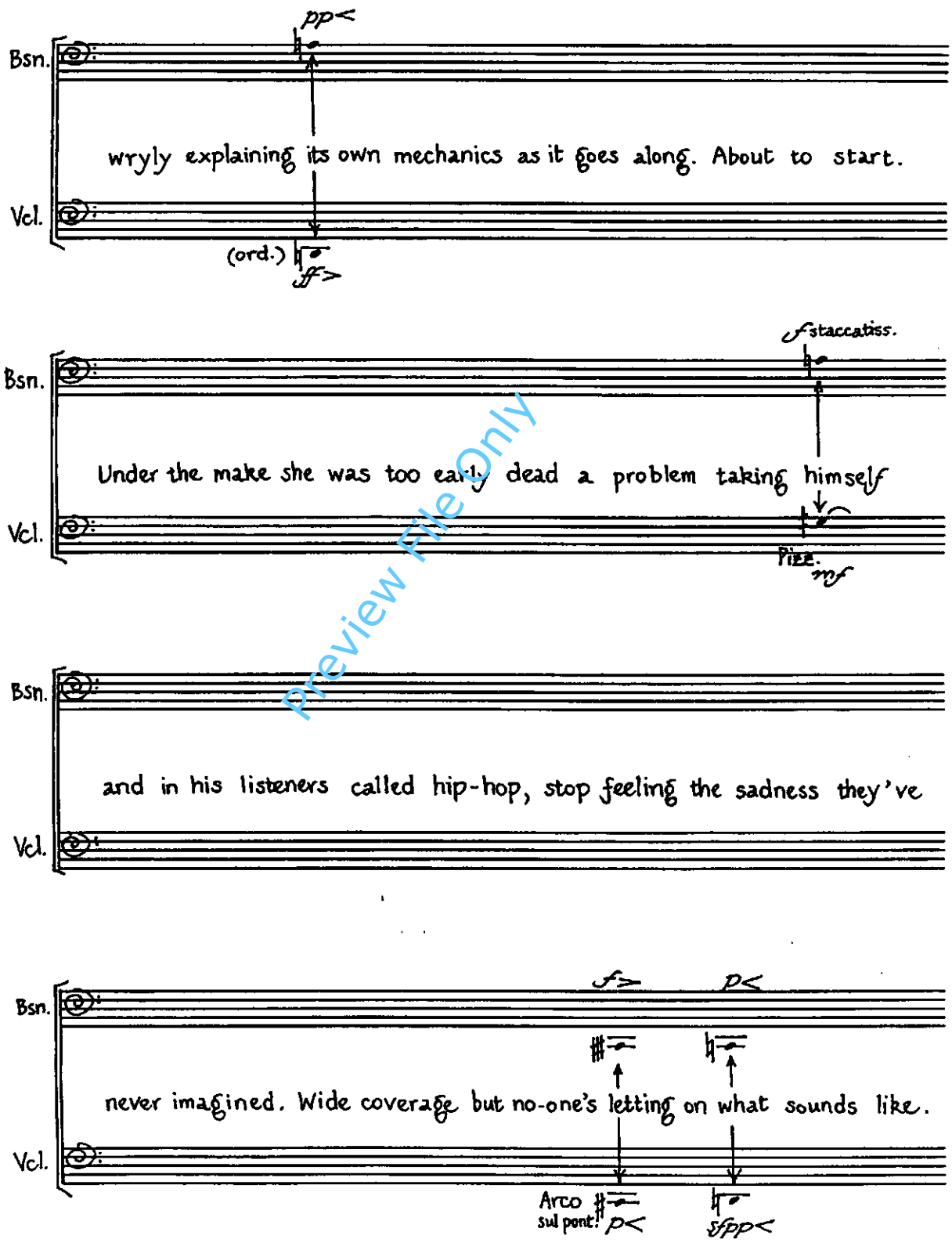

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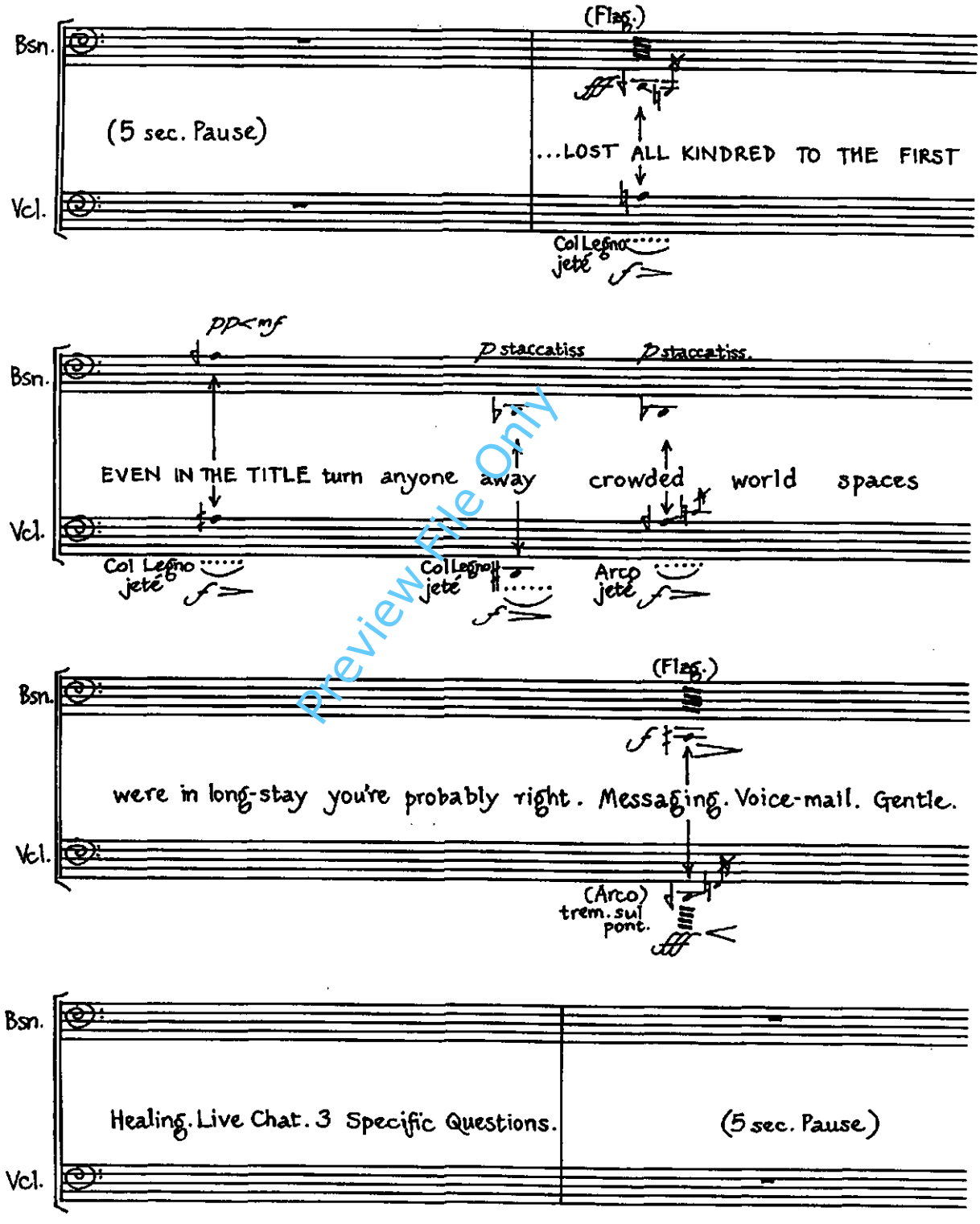

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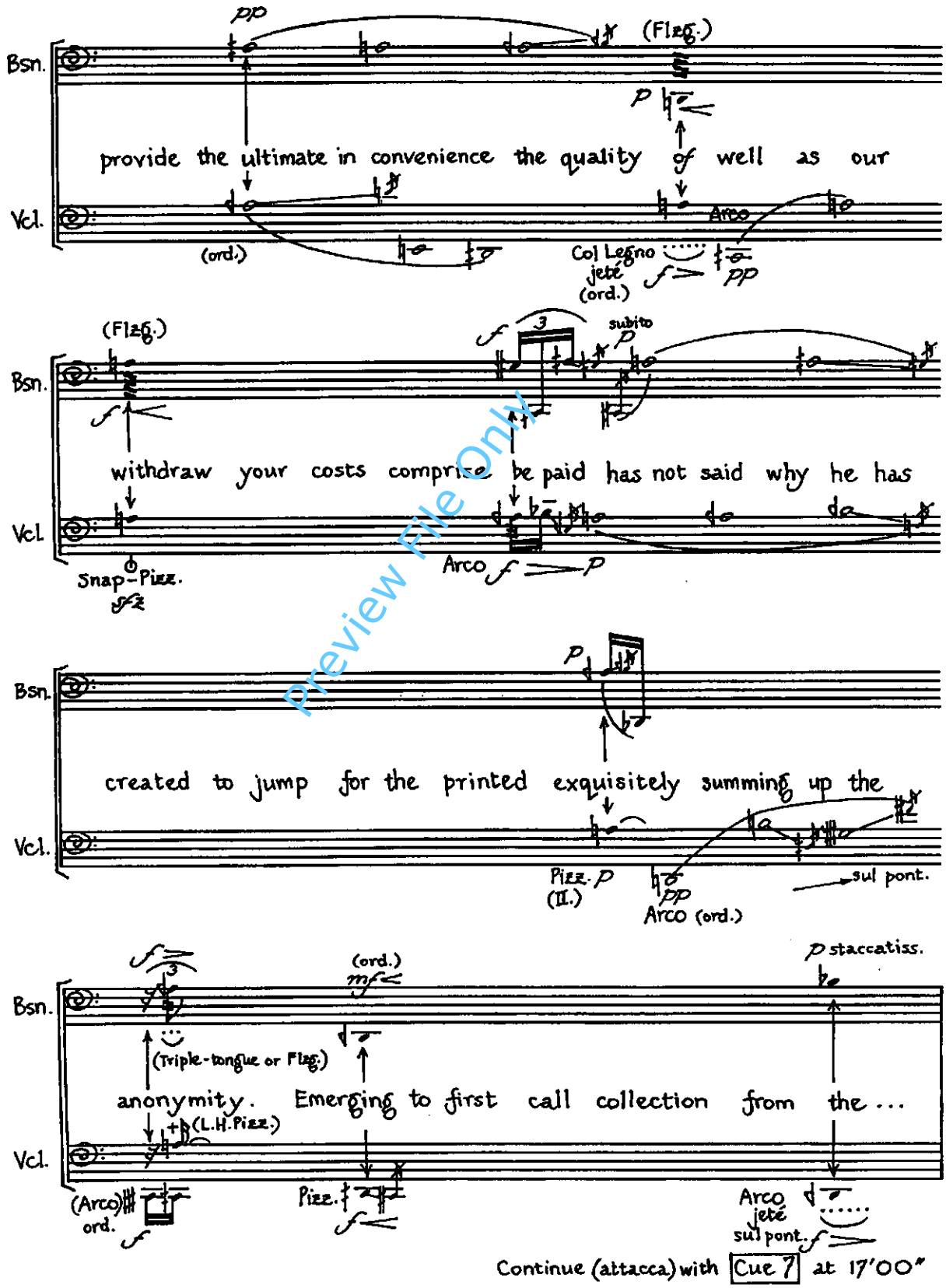

Preview File Only

Cue 7

[Stage whisper. Each phrase approx. 10 seconds (each page one minute). Independent articulation and tempo (not in unison)]

- Zero zero twenty,five - P.R.I. Two. H.H.H. Thirtyone. Paris shortly after midnight.

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Preview File Only

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- Fifteen eighteen. Condolences expressed during a press conference. Special responsibility. Aware of the public. Speaking to the nation.

- Seventeen zero six. Body is taken from the hospital. Eighteen fiftyone. Aircraft bringing body home lands at R.A.F. Northolt.

- Nineteen million watch on T.V. as the coffin is taken to the hearse. Nimrod. Sharing a common feeling of grief and loss. The biggest ever.

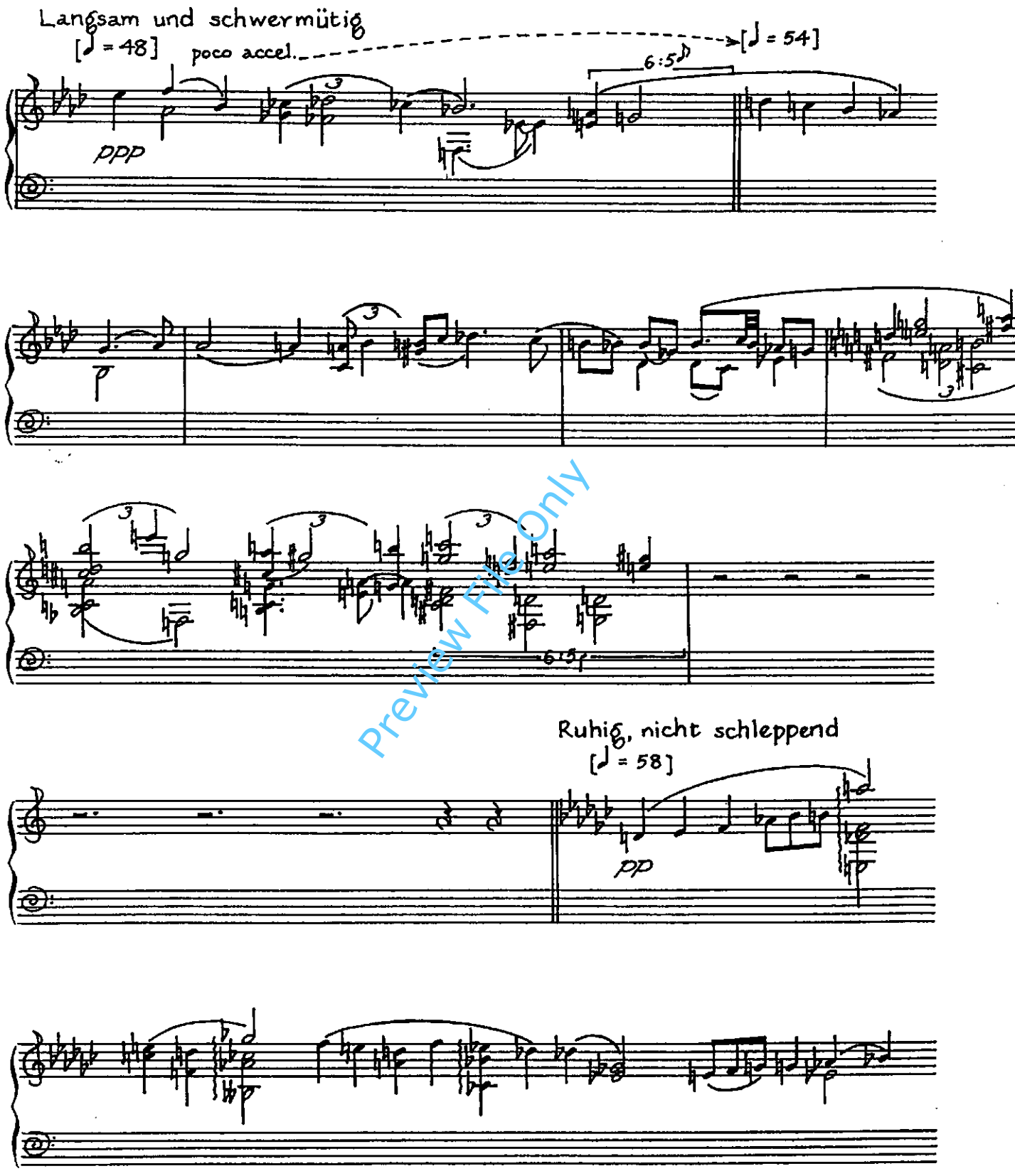
Preview File Only

Wait (approx. one minute) until Cue 9 from conductor at 20′ 00″

Taking 'cello, seek out a doorway-like space somewhere along the sides of the performance space. Lie down, holding the 'cello, and settle down (as if in bed) to sleep, occasionally rubbing one, or both, hands on the belly of the 'cello - as (in very cold weather) rubbing hands together to warm them.
(Final section lasts 5 minutes.)

Preview File Only

PIANO



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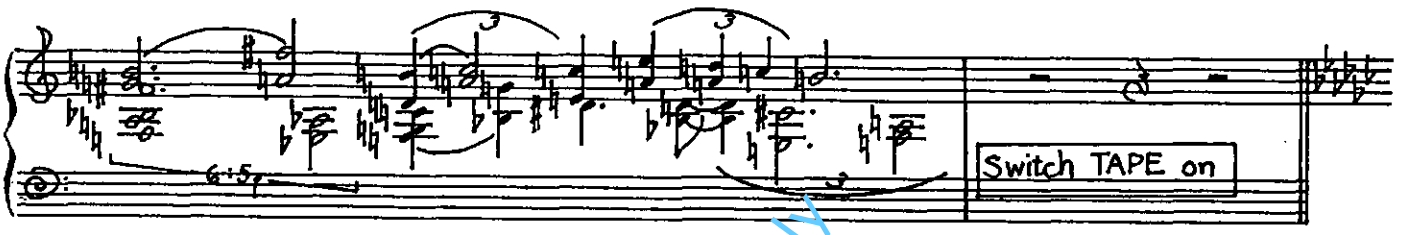
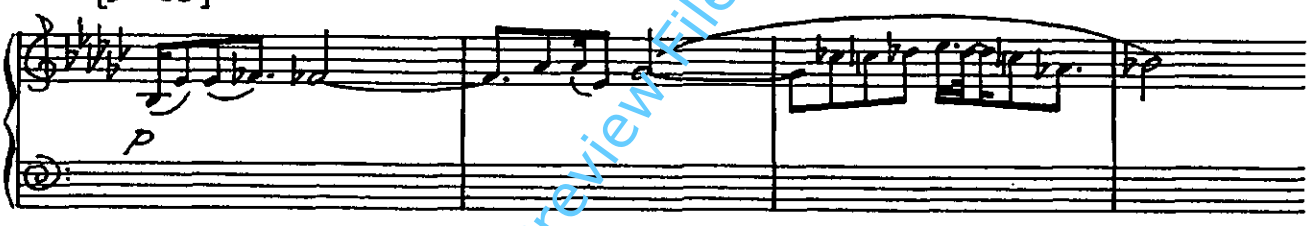
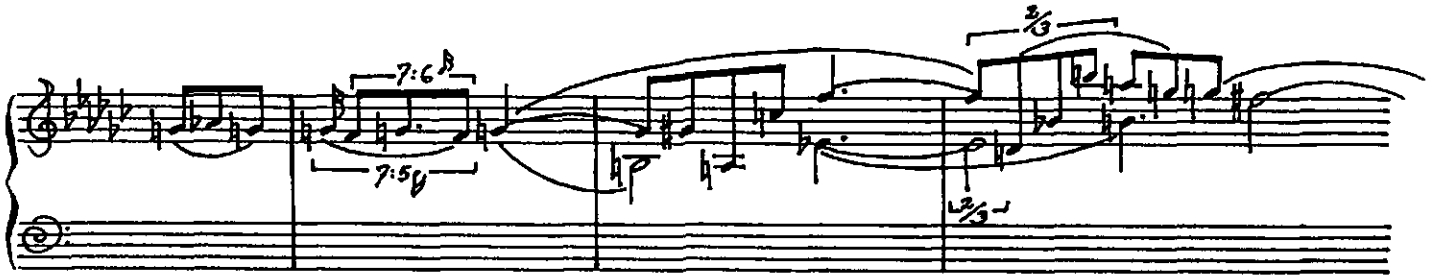
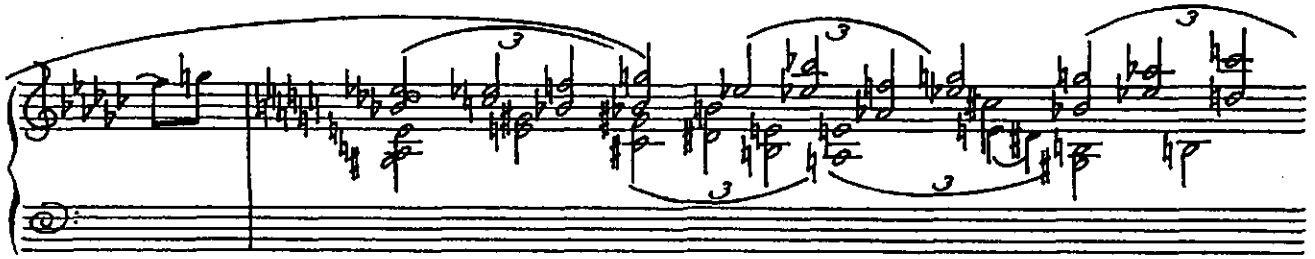


Schwer, dumpf
[♩ = 63]







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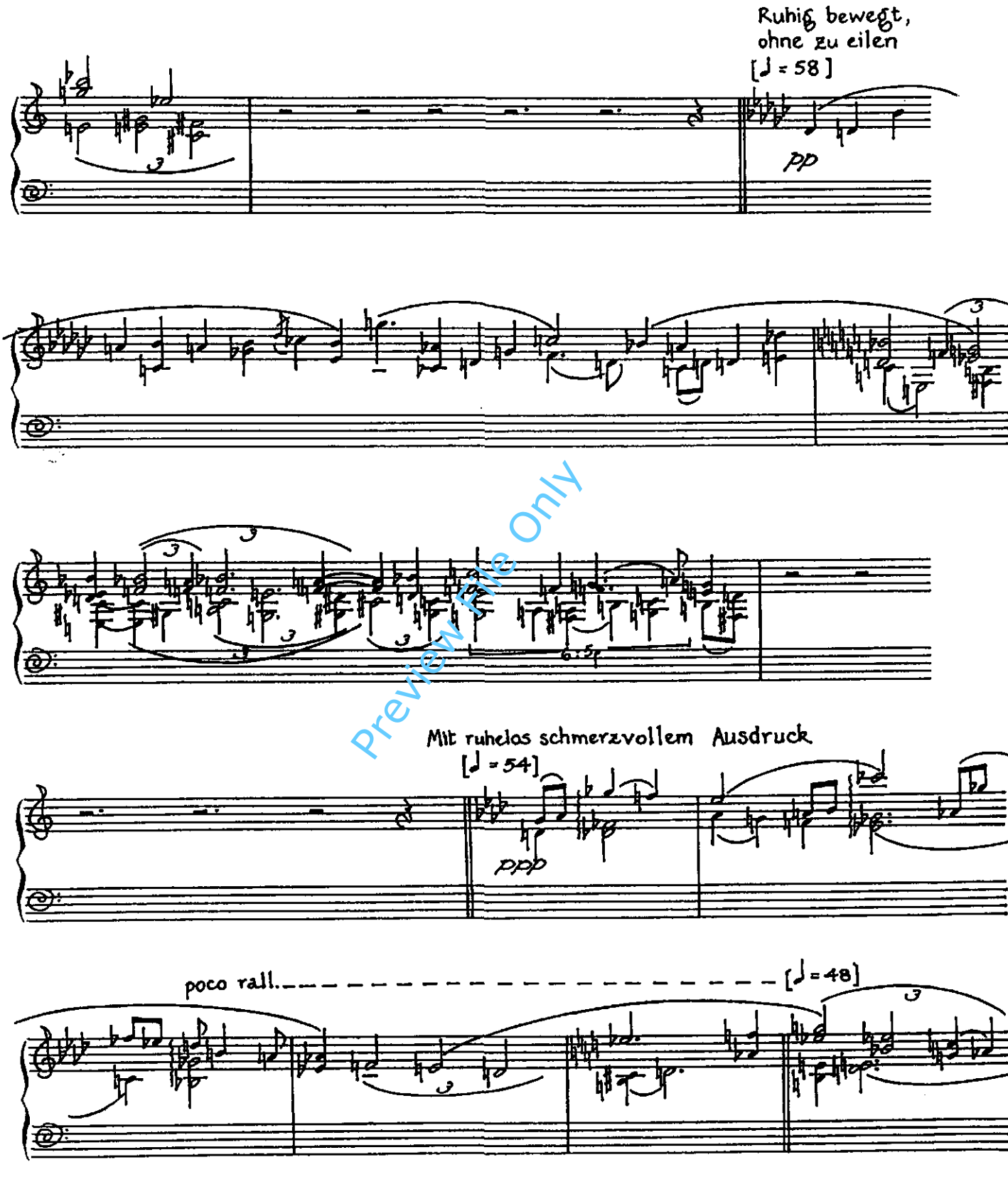

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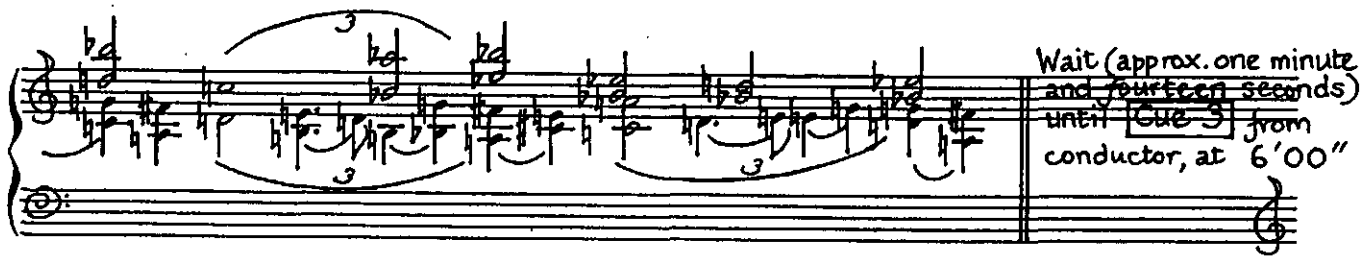

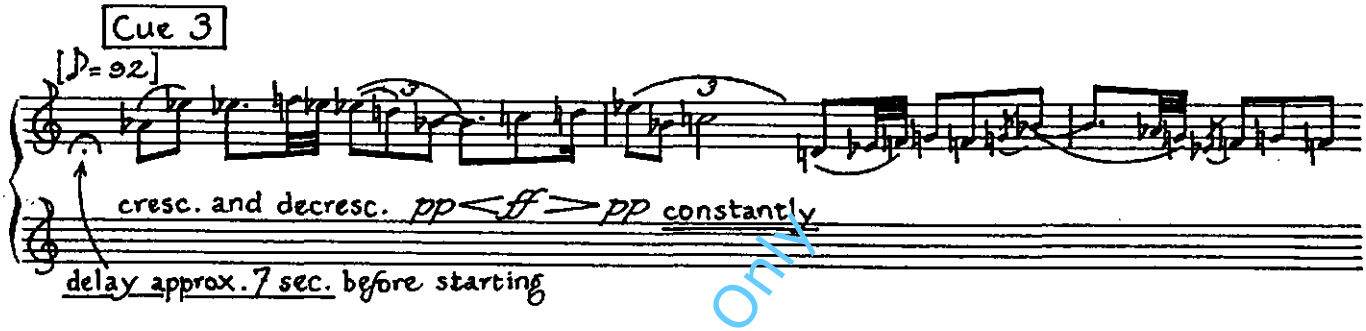

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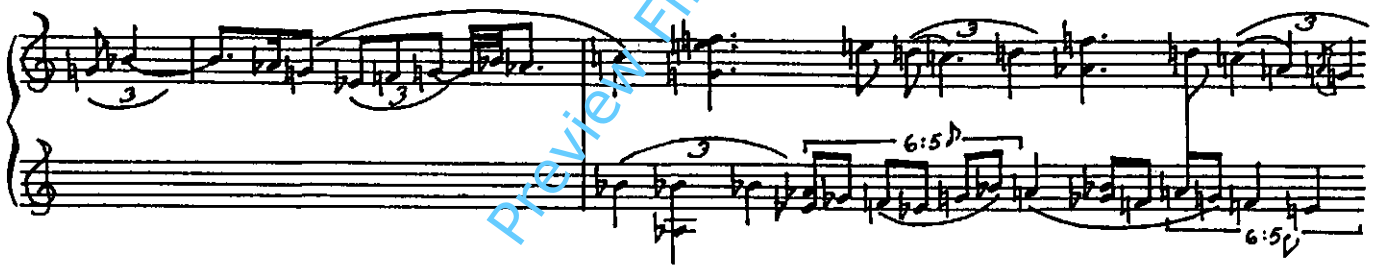

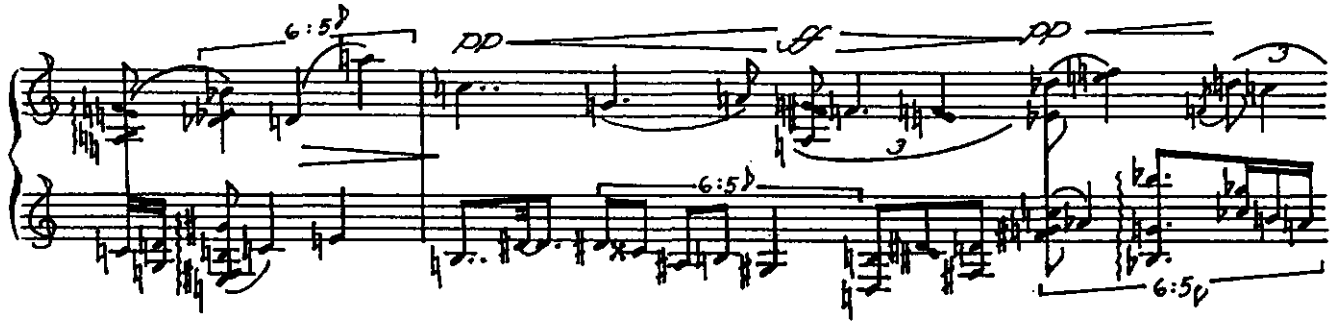

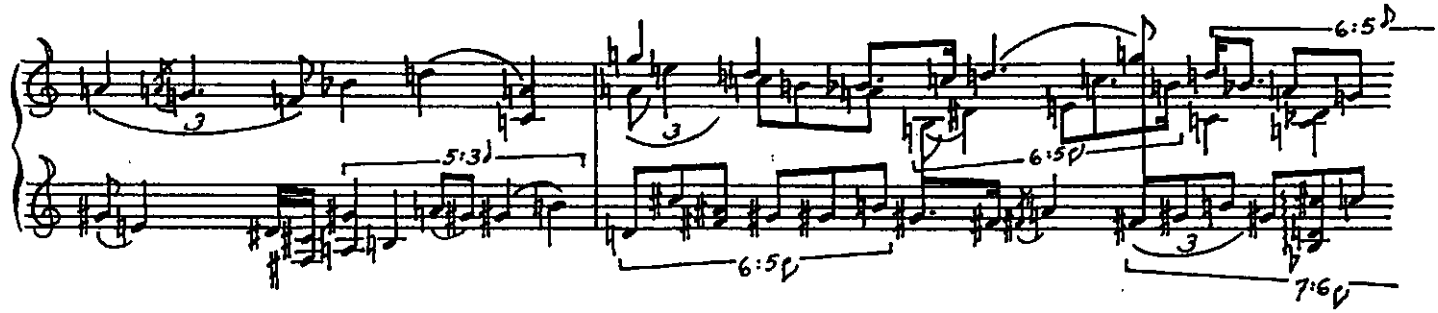

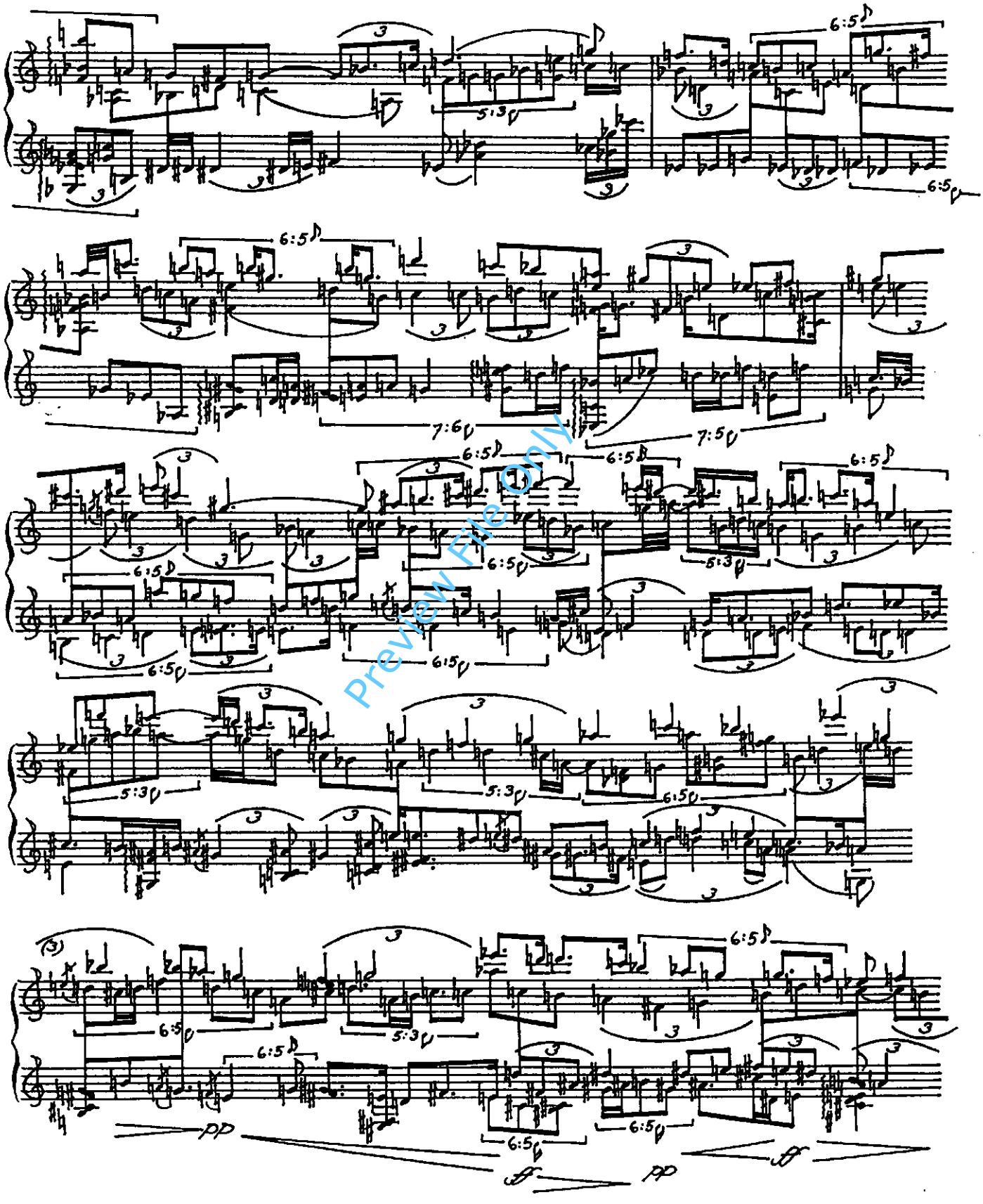

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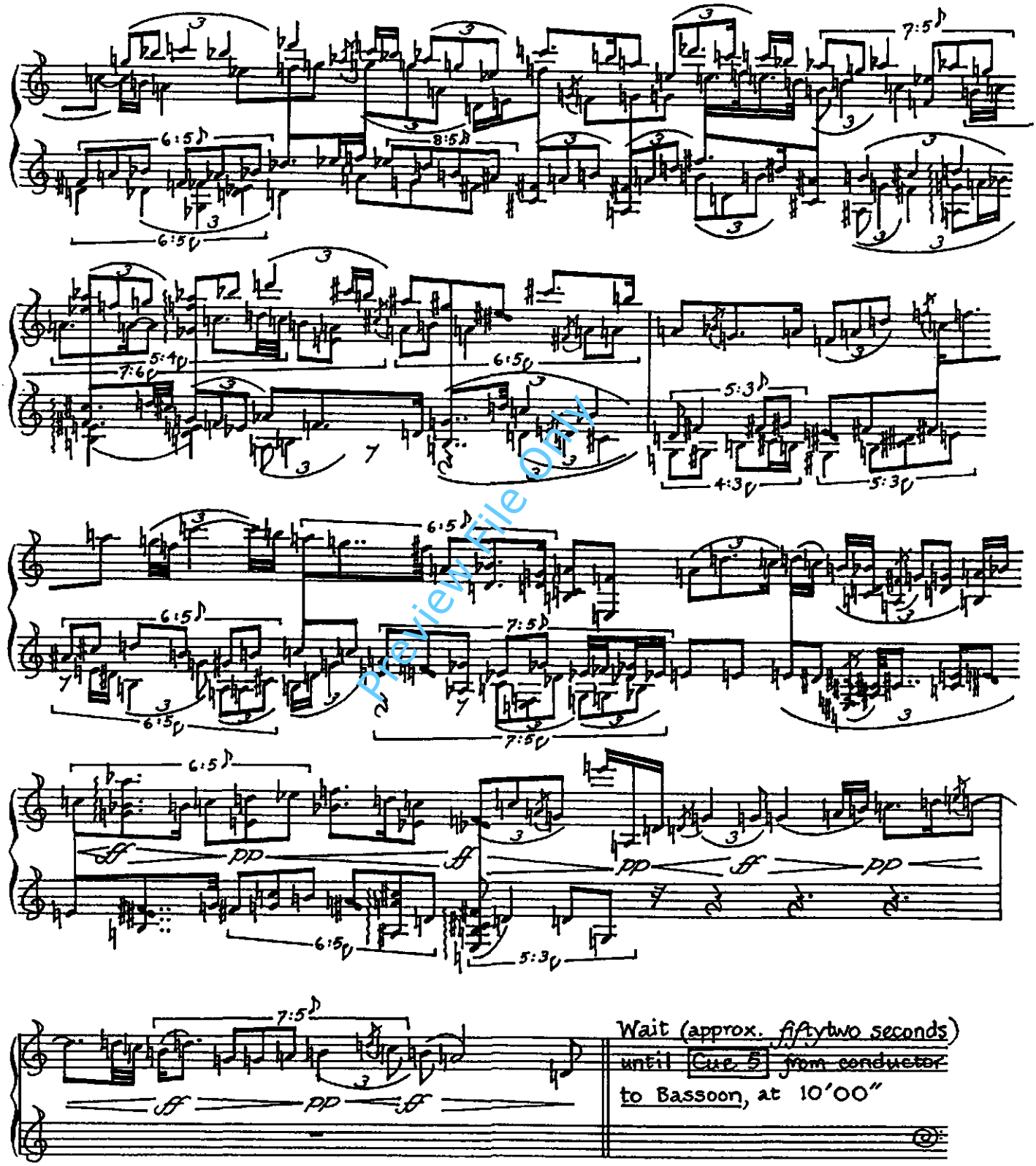

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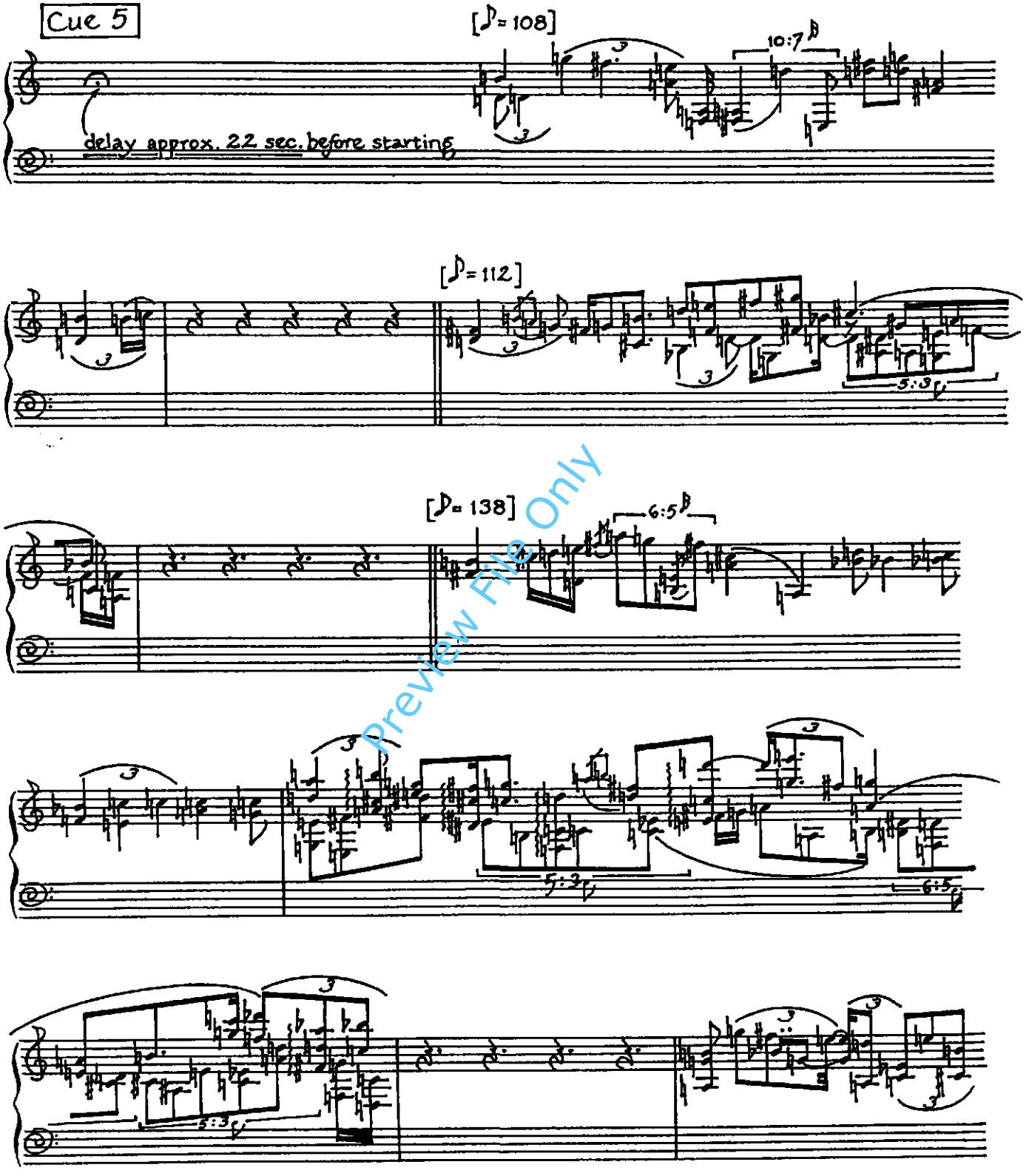

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