Michael Zev Gordon

Too Many Names

A setting of Pablo Neruda
for soprano and five instruments

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Demasiados nombres

Se enreda el lunes con el martes
y la semana con el ano:
no se puede cortar el tiempo
con tus tijeras fatigadas,
y todos los nombres del día
los borra el agua de la noche.

Nadie puede llamarse Pedro,
ninguna es Rosa ni María,
todos somos polvo o arena,
todos somos lluvia en la lluvia.
Me han hablado de Chiles,
no sé de lo que están hablando:
conozco la piel de la tierra
y sé que no tiene apellido.

Cuando viví con las raíces
me gustaron más que las flores,
y cuando hablé con una piedra
sonaba como una campana.

Es tan larga la primavera
que dura todo el invierno:
el tiempo perdió los zapatos:
un ano tiene cuatro siglos.

Cuando duermo todas las noches,
cómo me llamo o no me llamó?
Y cuando me despierto quién soy
sin o era yo cuando dormía?

Esto quiere decir que apenas
desembocamos en la vida,
que venimos recién naciendo,
que no nos llenemos la boca
con tantos nombres inseguros,
con tantas etiquetas tristes,
con tantas letras rimbombantes,
con tanto tuyo y tanto mío,
con tanta firma en los papeles.

Yo pienso confundir las cosas,
unirlas y recién nacerlas,
entreverlas, desve stirlas,
hasta que la luz del mundo
tenga la unidad del océano,
una integridad generosa,
una fragrancia crepitante.

Pablo Neruda {Selected Poems,
Penguin Books, bilingual edition
ed. Nathaniel Tarn}

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Too Many Names

Mondays are meshed with Tuesdays
and the week with the whole year.
Time cannot be cut
with your exhausted scissors,
and all the names of the day
are washed out by the waters of the night.

No one can claim the name of Pedro,
nobody is Rosa or María,
all of us are dust or sand,
all of us are rain under rain.
They have spoken to me of Venezuelas,
of Chiles and Paraguays;
I have no idea what they are saying.
I know only the skin of the earth
and I know it has no name.

When I lived amongst the roots
they pleased me more than flowers did,
and when I spoke to a stone
it rang like a bell.

It is so long, the spring
which goes on all winter.
Time lost its shoes.
A year lasts four centuries.

When I sleep every night,
what am I called or not called?
And when I wake, who am I
if I was not I while I slept?

Thus means to say that scarcely
have we landed in life
than we come as if new-born;
let us not fill our mouths
with so many faltering names,
with so many sad formalities,
with so many pompous letters,
with so much of yours and mine,
with so much signing of papers.

I have a mind to confuse things,
unite them, make them new-born,
mix them up, undress them,
until all light in the world
has the oneness of the ocean,
a generous, vast wholeness,
a crackling, living fragrance.

Translated by *Alastair Reid* {Penguin Books}

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INSTRUMENTATION

Soprano

2 Clarinets in Bb

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

The score is written in C

Accidentals apply only to the notes they directly preceed or within a group of notes joined by a beam

All grace notes come before the beat

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This song was written for Mary Wiegold and the Composers' Ensemble

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♪ = 104 (♩ = 52)

CL 1

CL 2

p con poco vibrato ma sempre dolciss.

SOPRANO

Se en_re_da el lu_nes con el martes y la se_ma_na

3/8 3/4 5/8 3/8 2/4

VLA

p > pp p > pp sim > sim

CELLO

p > pp p > pp sim > sim

D.BASS

p > pp p > pp sim > sim

7

quite short

p always on the back of the beat

quite short

ppp

p always on the back of the beat

ppp

mp

quite short

p

no breath!

con el a_ño no se pue_de cor_

3/8 3/4 4/4 3/8 5/8

quite short

p

quite short

p

quite short

p

p

p

p

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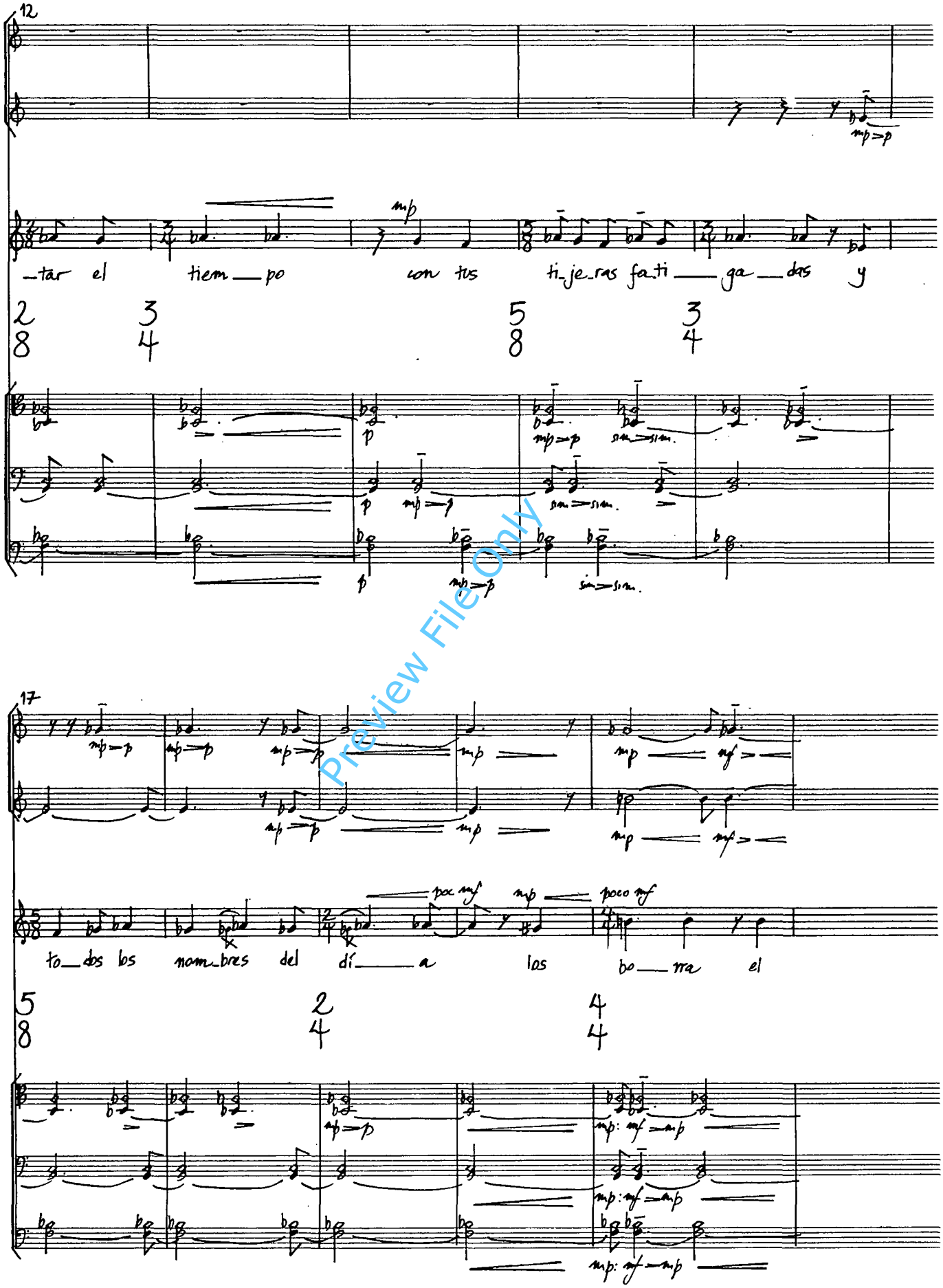

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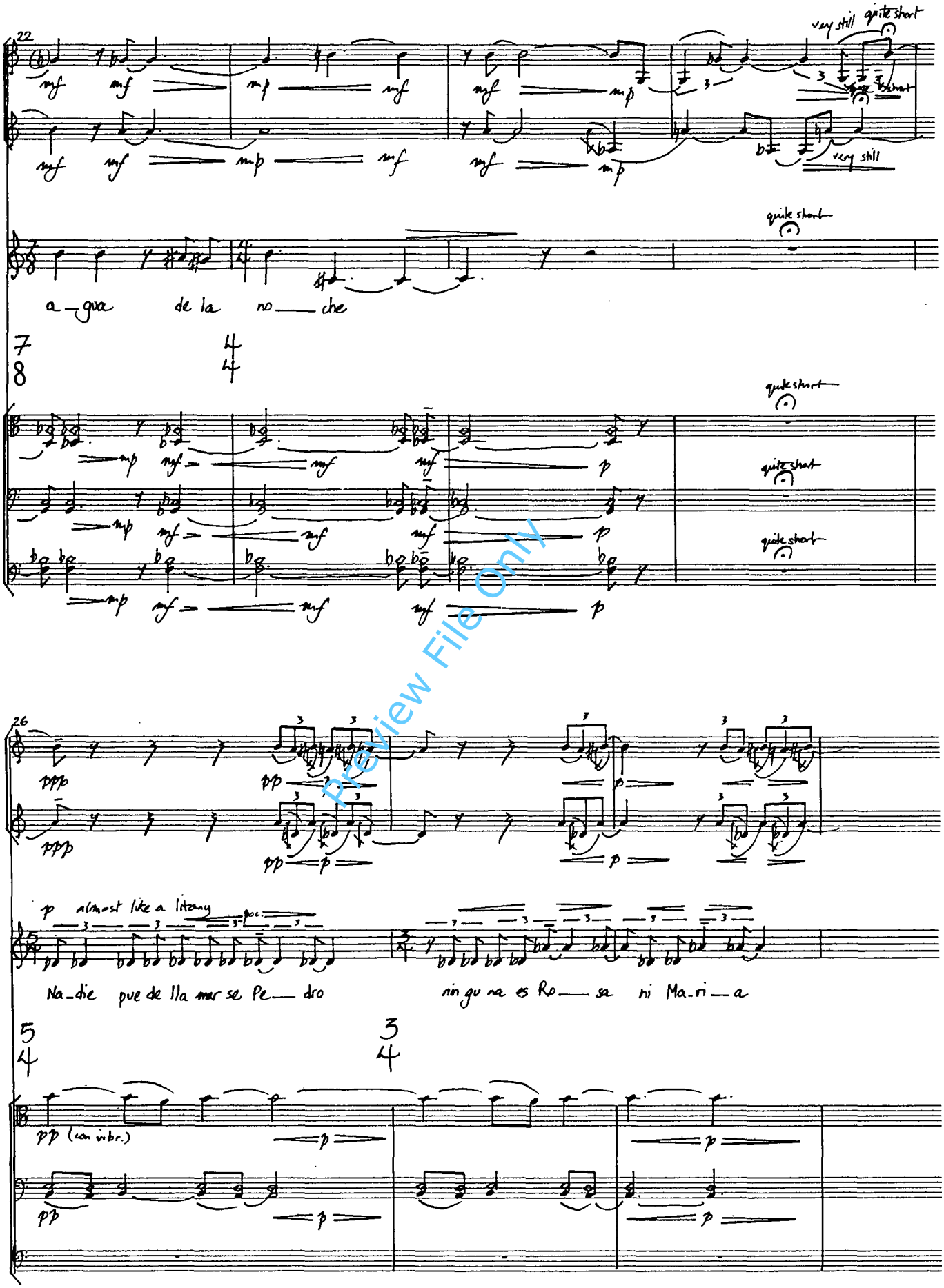

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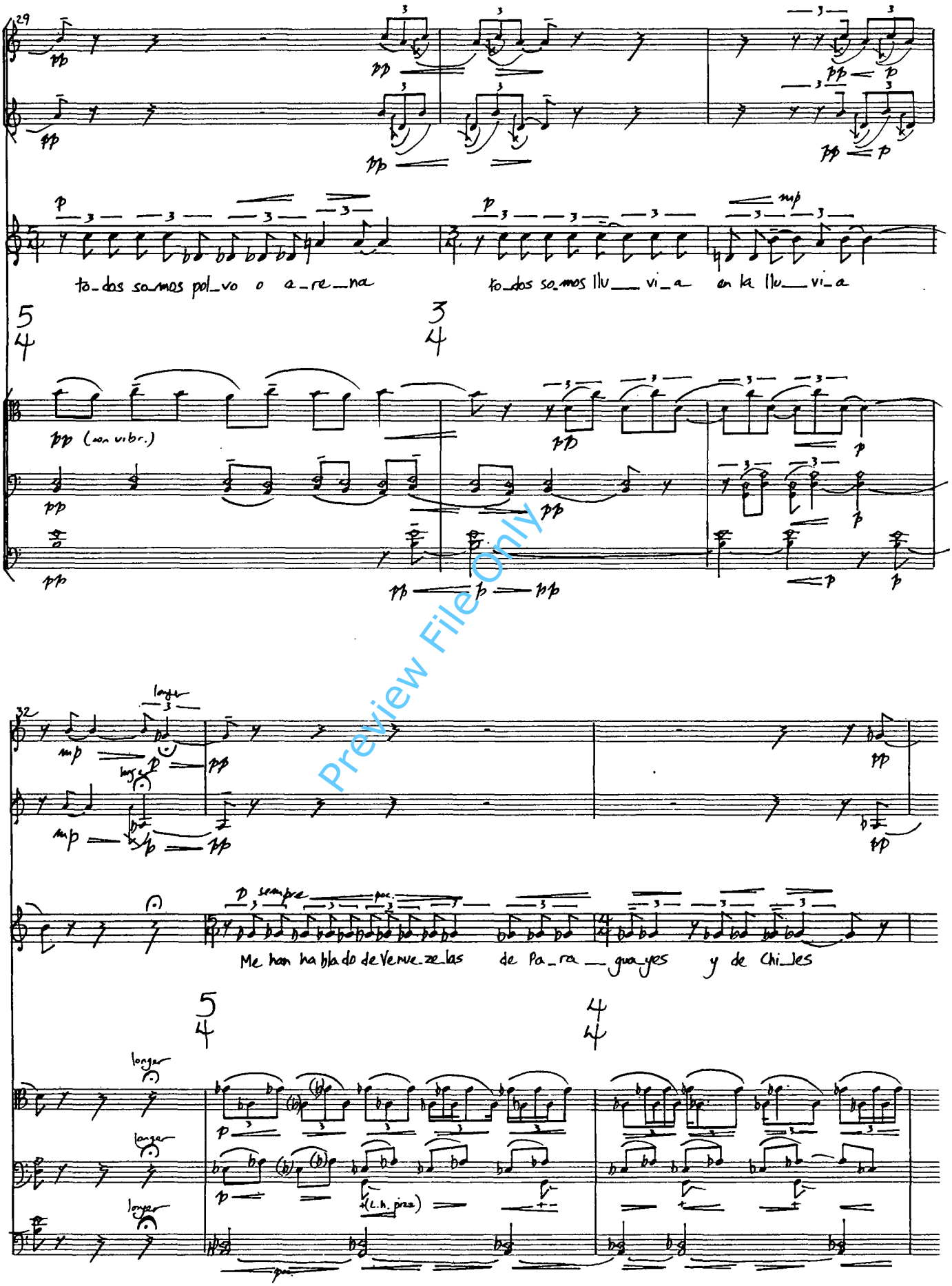

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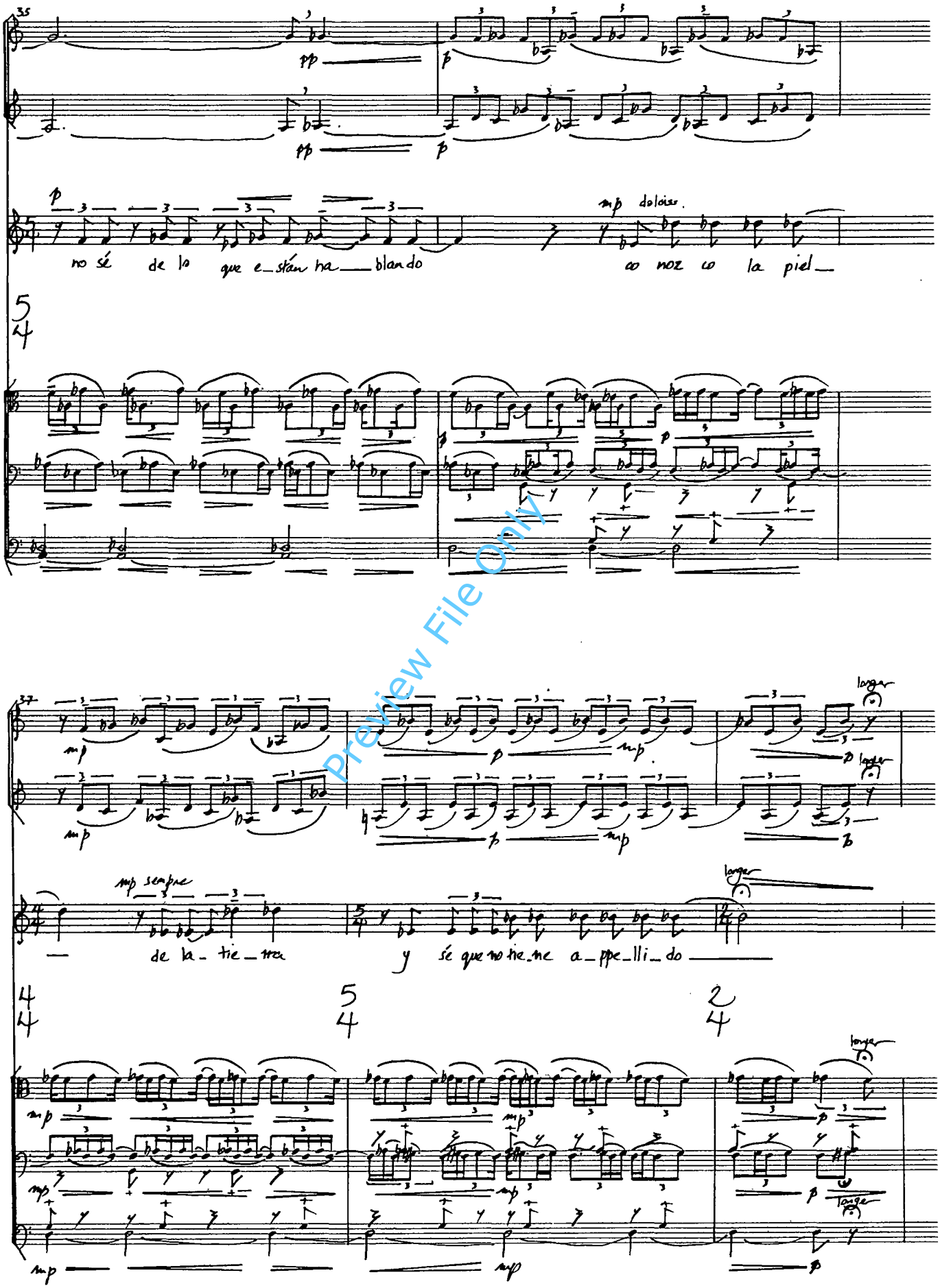

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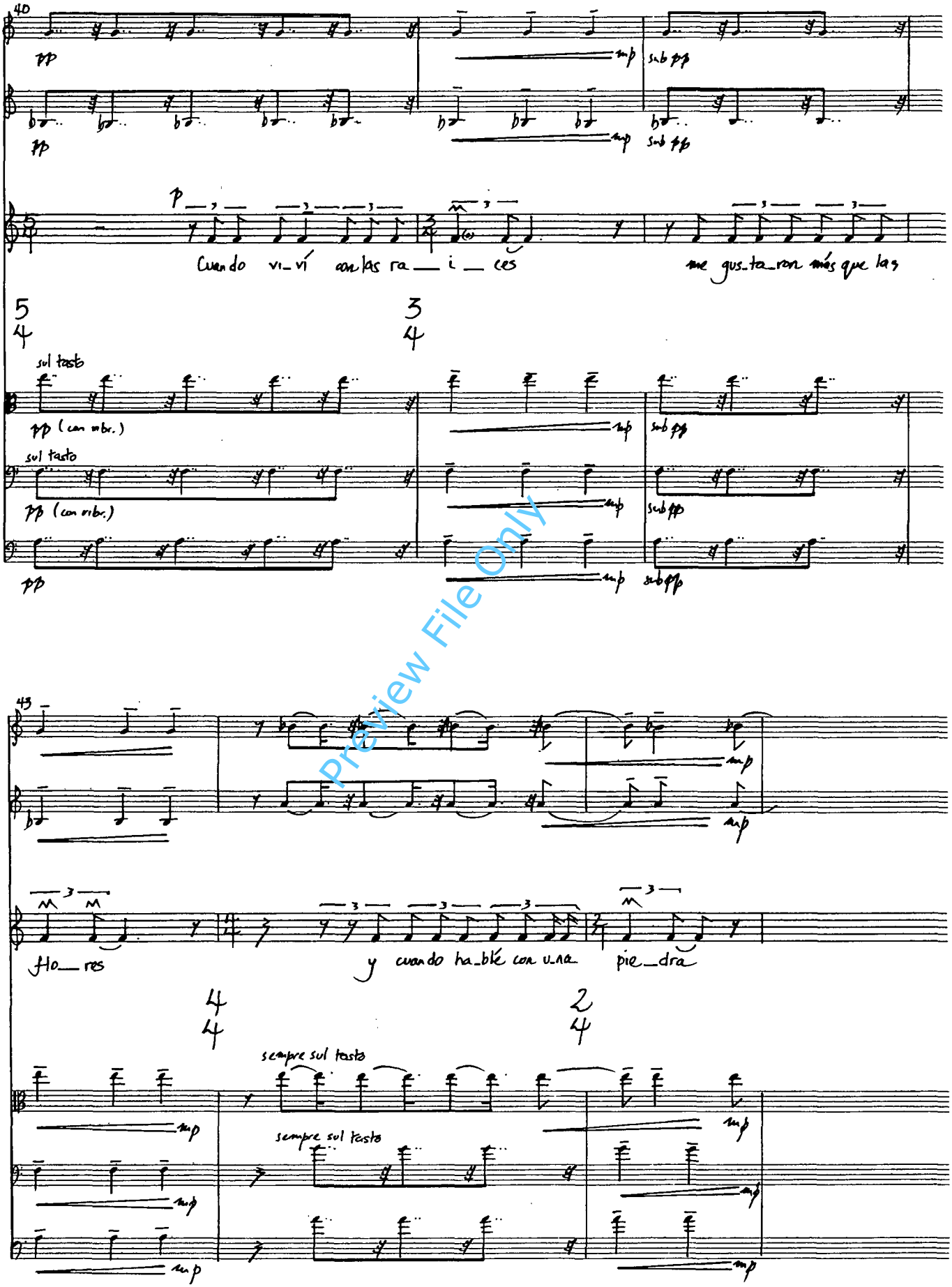

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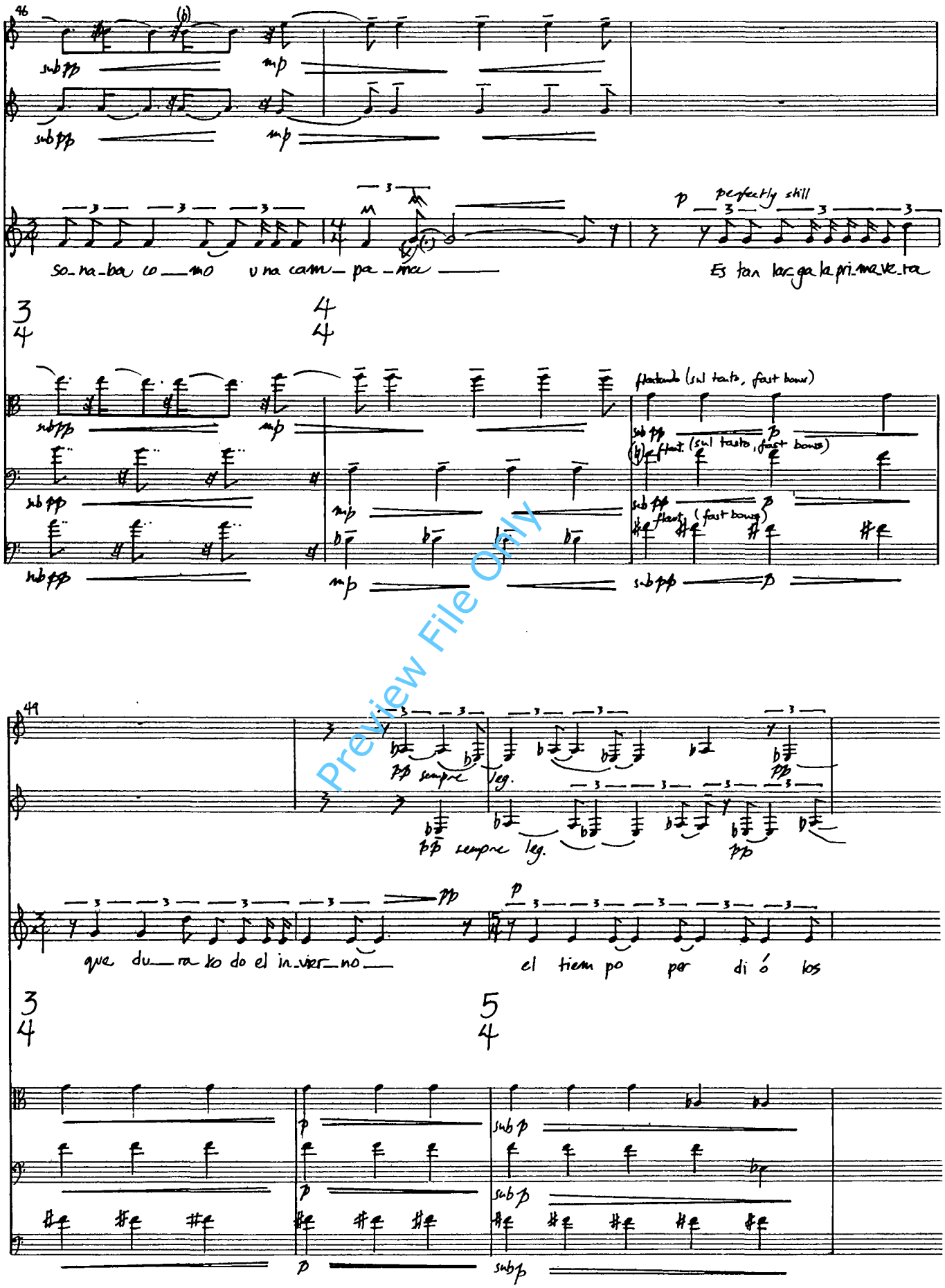

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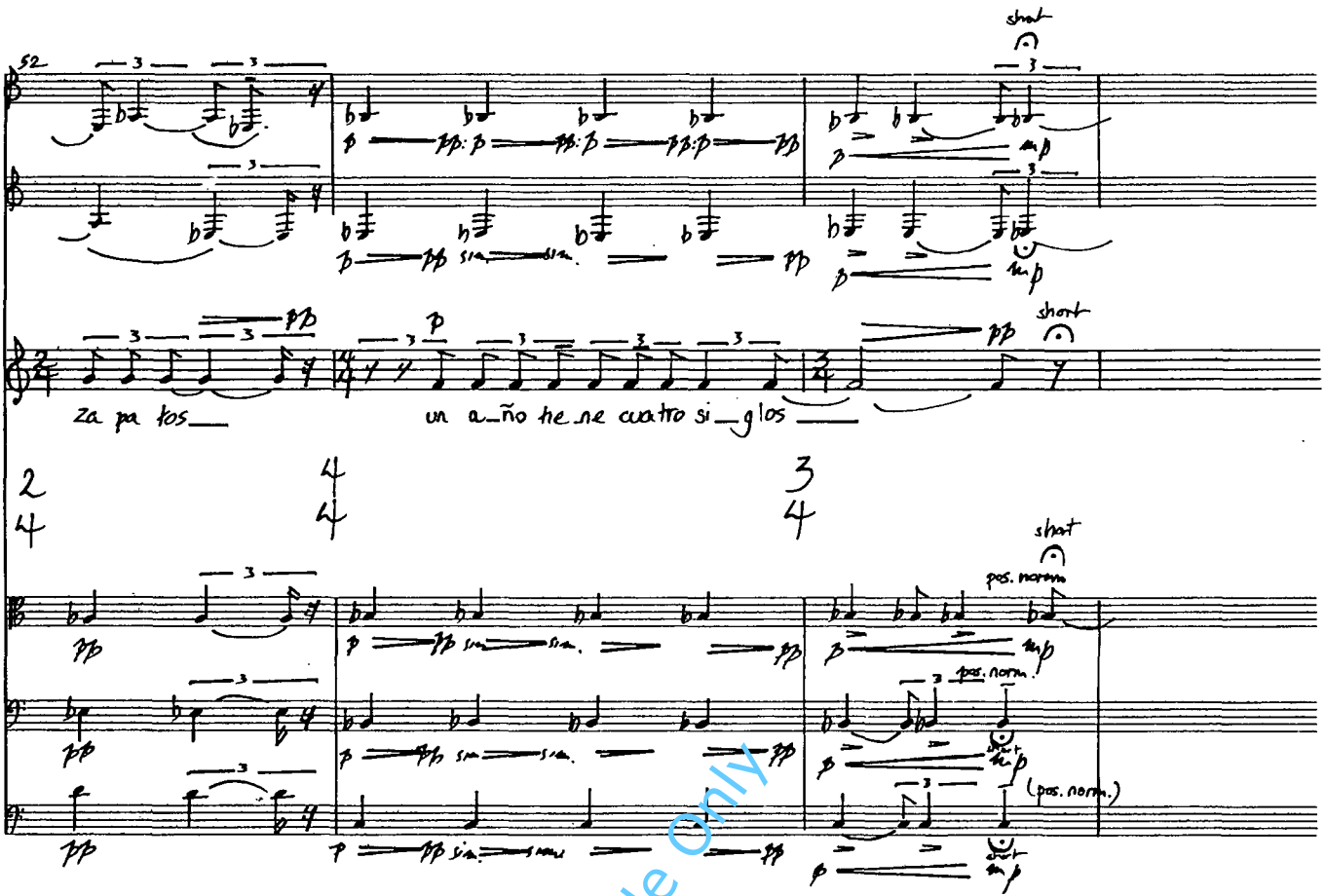

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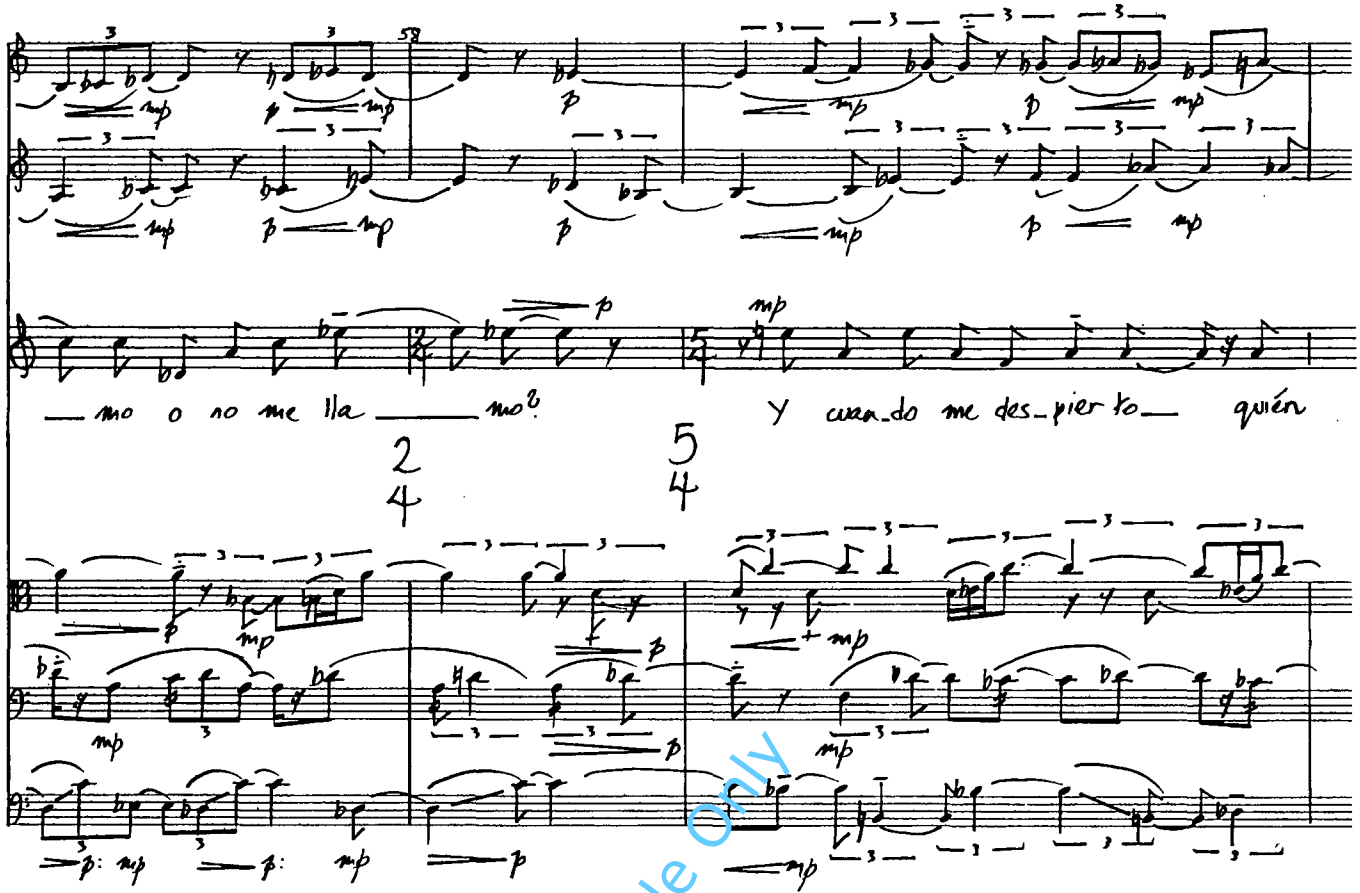

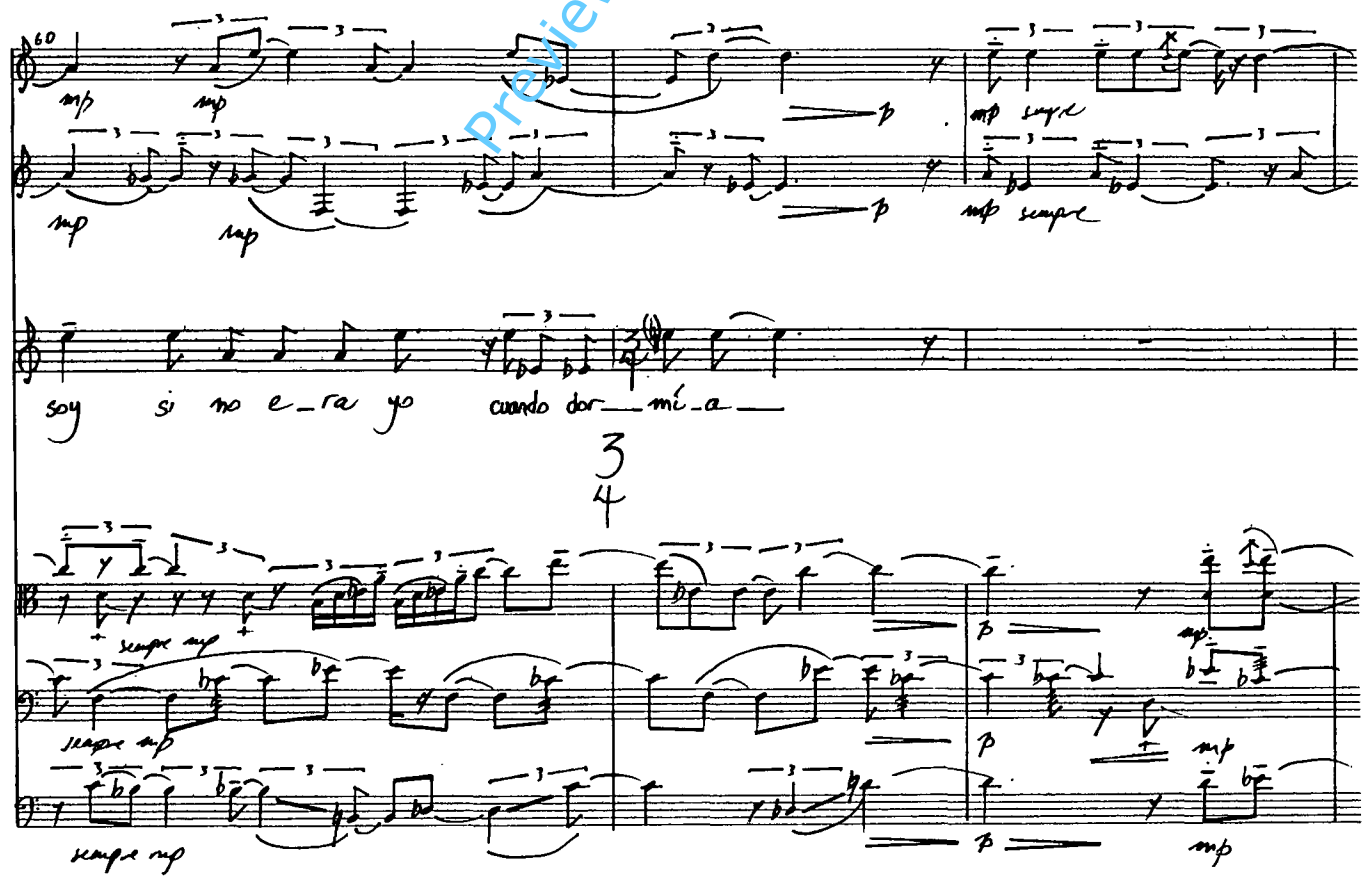

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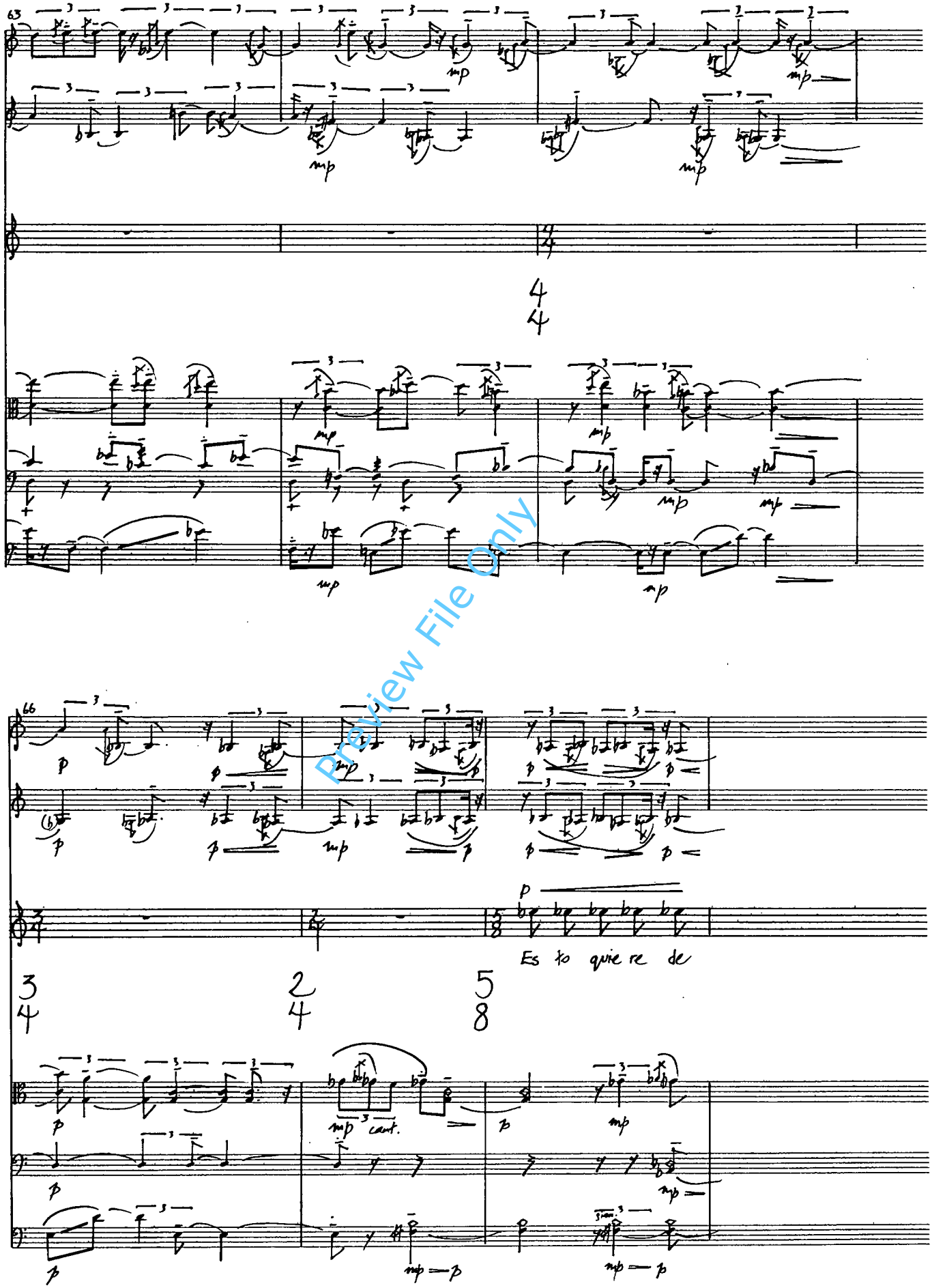

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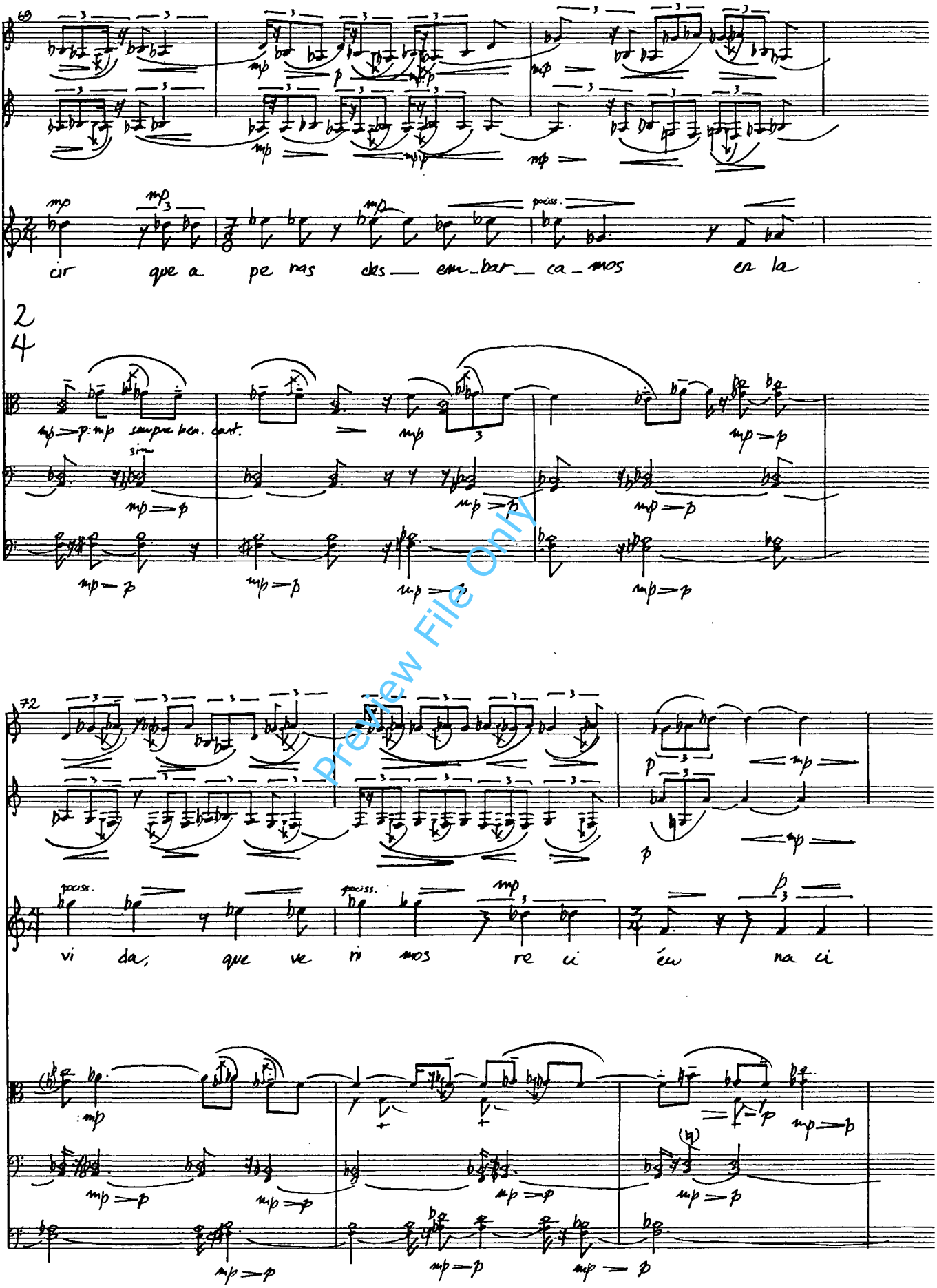

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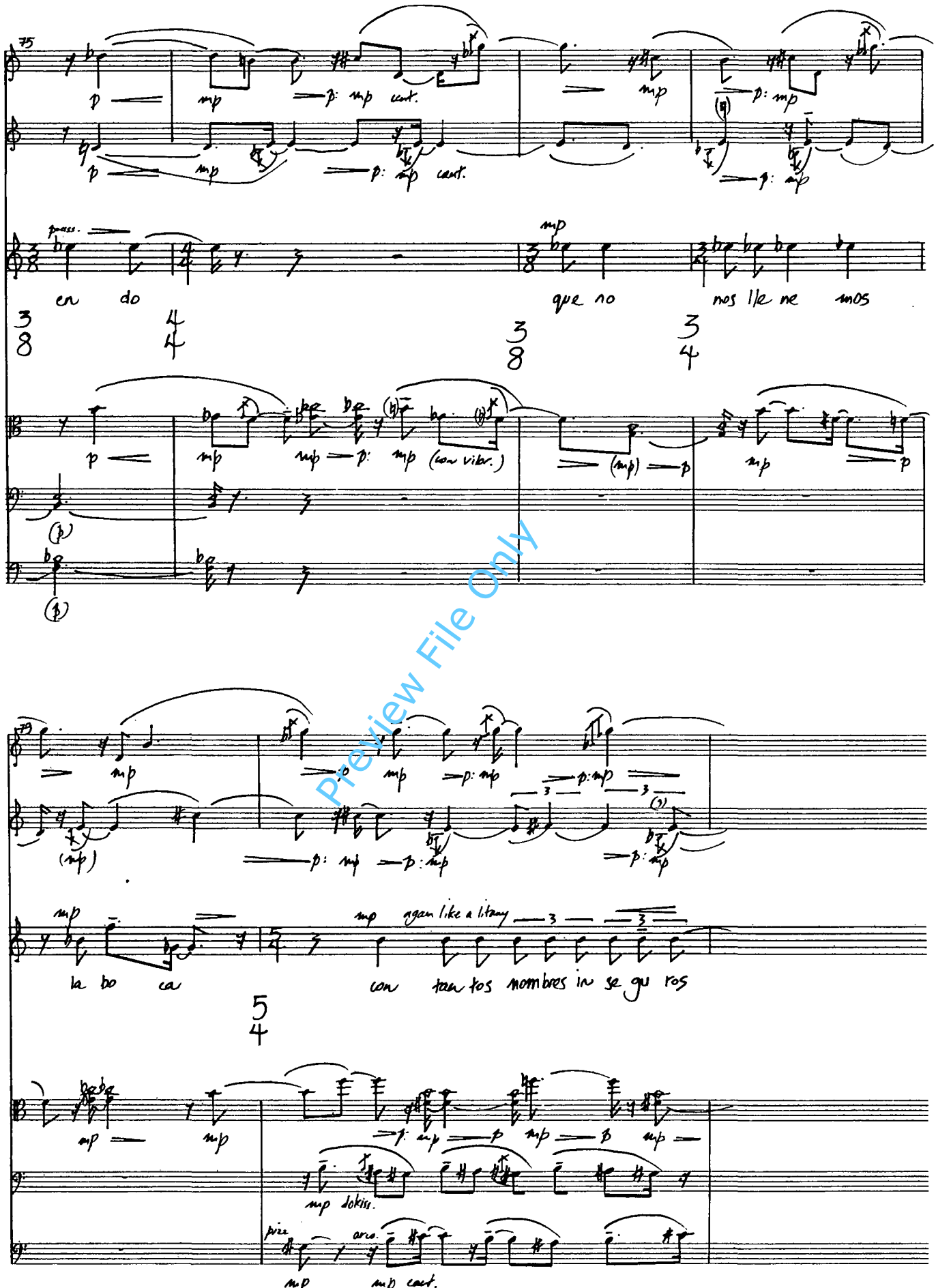

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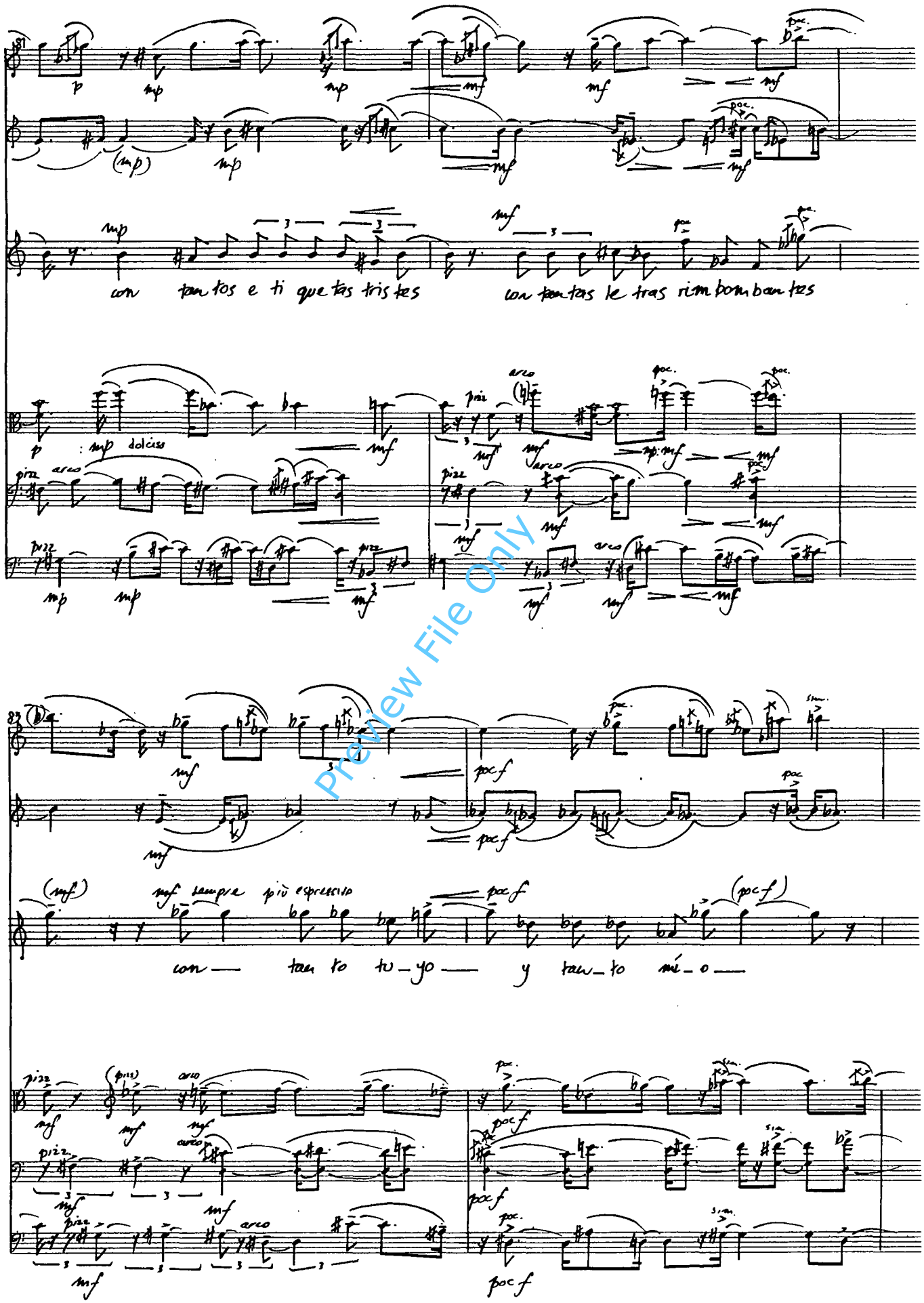

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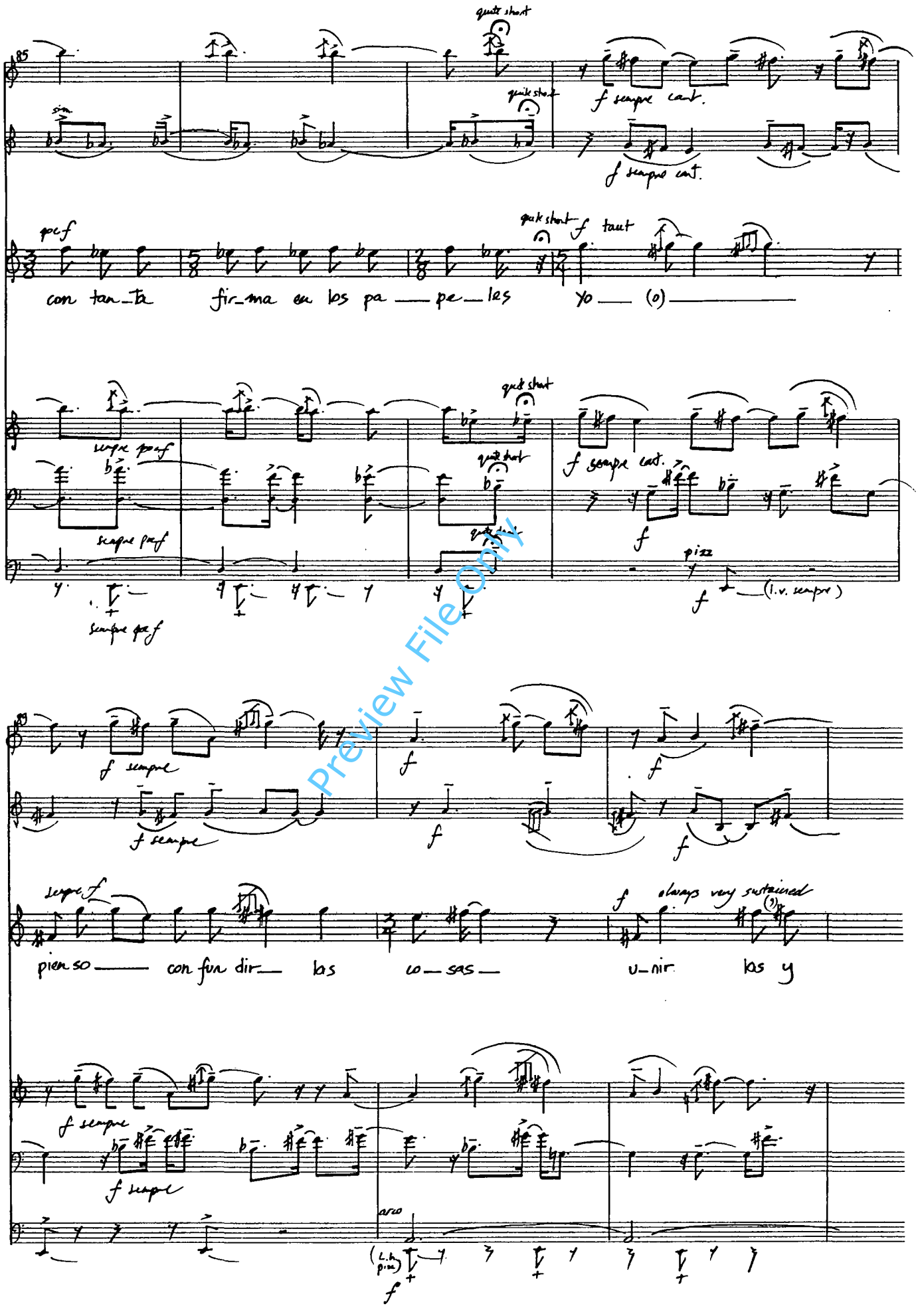

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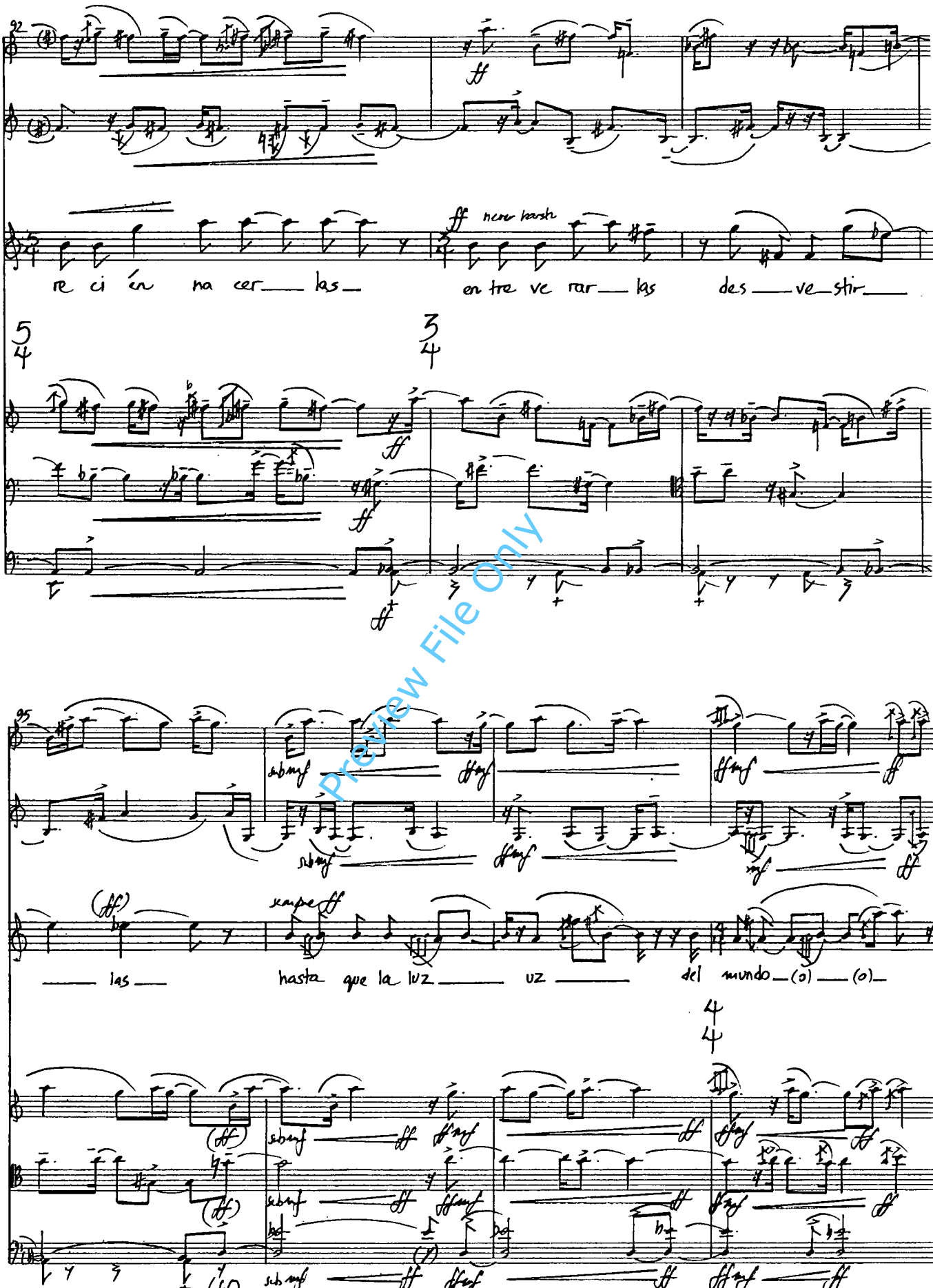

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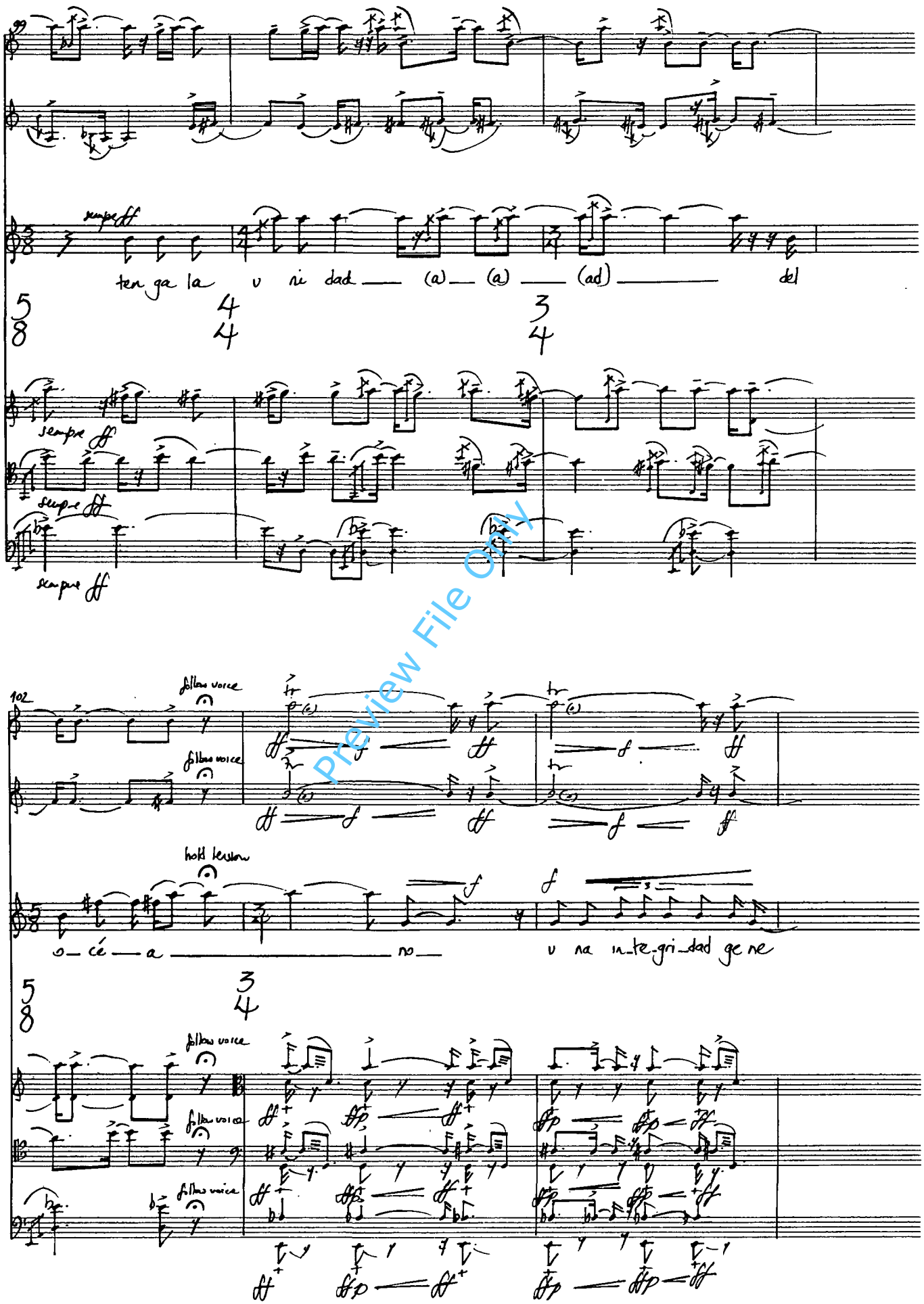

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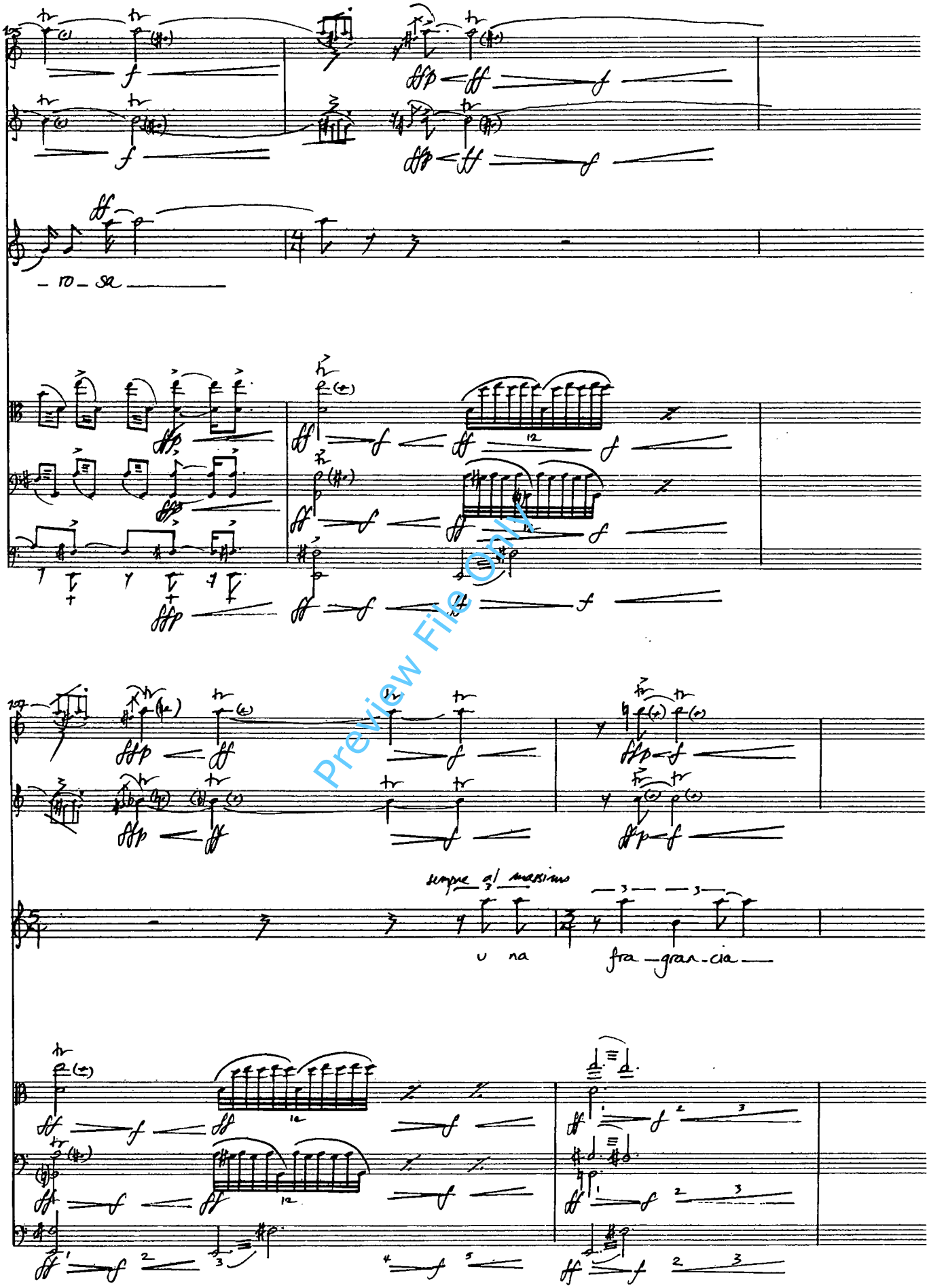

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