The Phone Call

An operatic interlude in one act
Libretto: B A Diana
Music: John Webb
Commissioned by ENO Studio and Tête a Tête Theatre

Characters: Natalie (Soprano),
Nick (Bass-baritone)

Instrumentation: Clarinet in B flat (the score is written in sounding pitch)
Double Bass
Accordion
Percussion: Vibraphone
suspended cymbal
high tom tom
low tom tom
bass drum

Two mobile phone rings are also required. Ring A is a common, everyday mobile ring. Ring B should be a tune, preferably the finale of Bach's B Minor suite (BWV 1067).

The Setting: The lounge of Natalie's one-bedroom flat in London. Entrance door on one side. On the opposite corner the door to a kitchen, which may be visible or not. There is a sofa, and maybe a bookshelf, and on a table is a telephone with answering machine. It is around lunchtime on a normal working day.
The whole scene revolves around a very important phone call that Natalie is expecting, and that she does not seem to be able to receive.

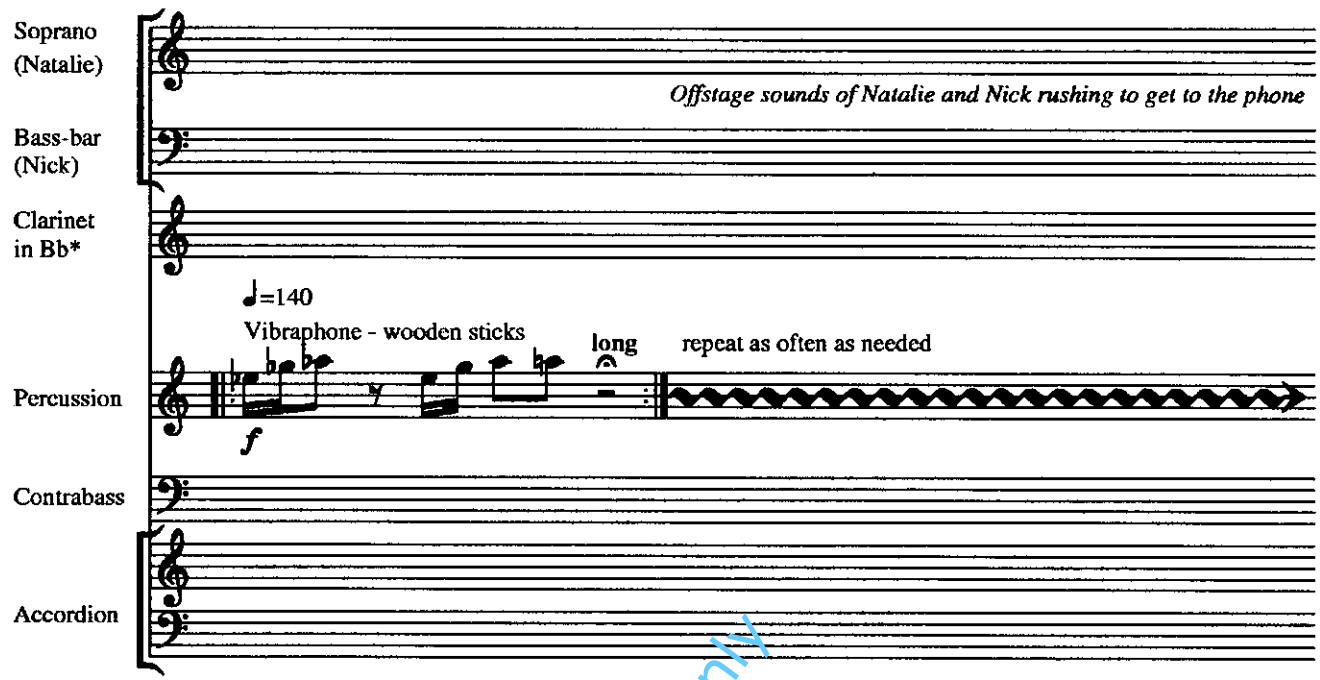
The action: The phone in the flat is ringing. There are noises of people coming up the stairs and trying to get in the door as quickly as possible. Natalie rushes in, followed by Nick. The answer phone switches on. But it's too late - just as she picks up the phone, the caller hangs up....

Revised version: Vocal score

Preview File Only

The Phone Call

Libretto: B. A. Diana
Music: John Webb



*Clarinet is notataed at sounding pitch in this score.

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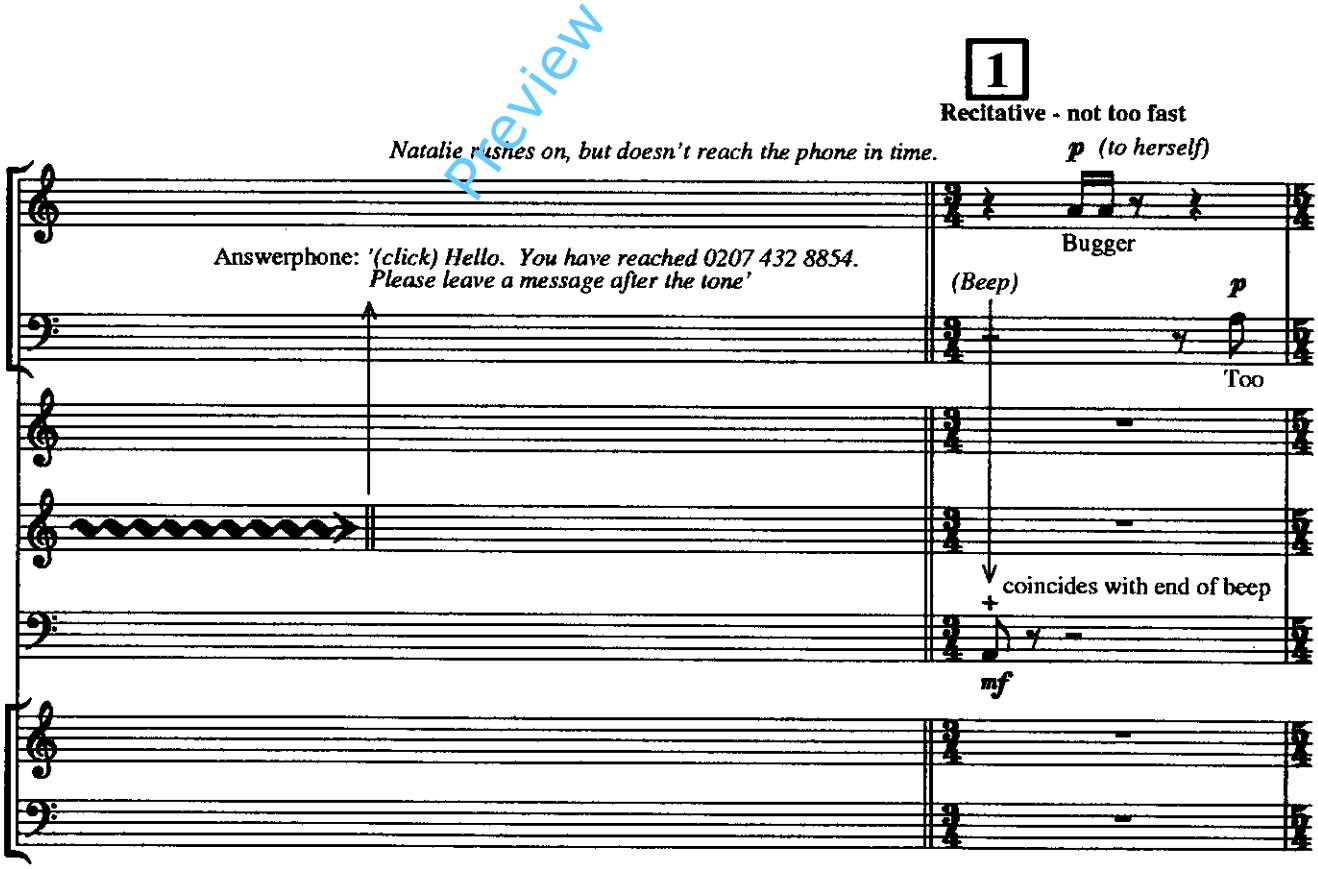

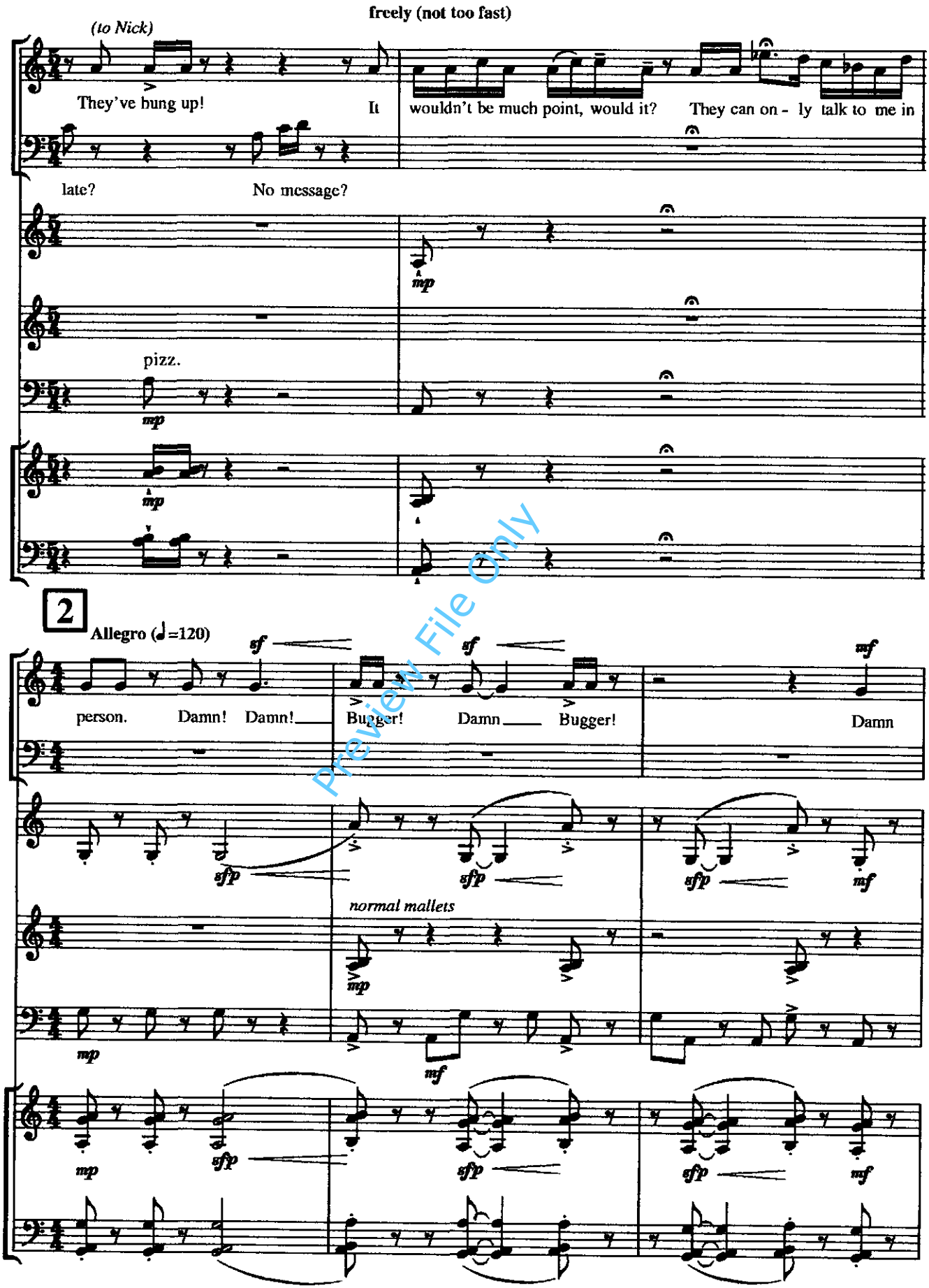

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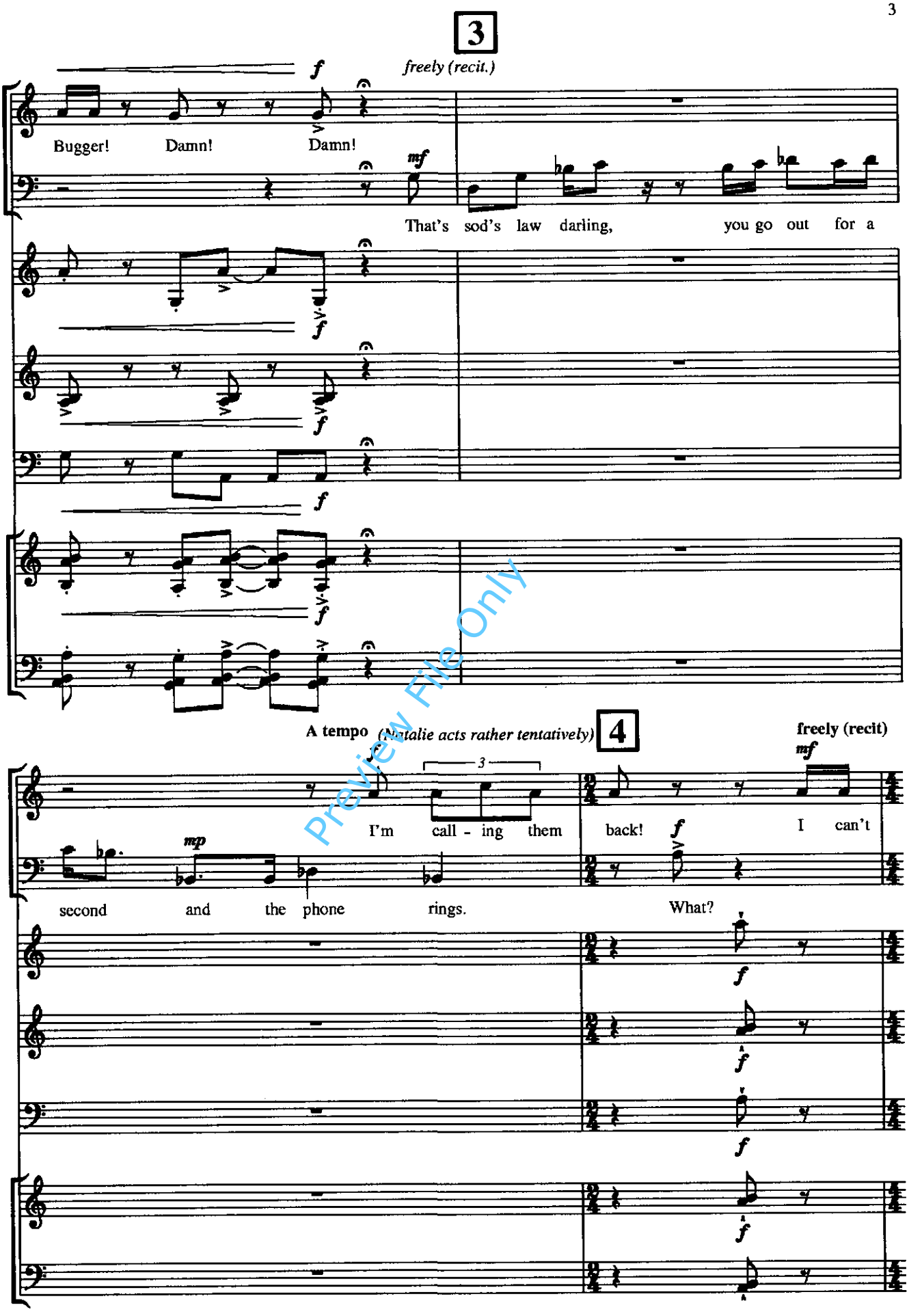

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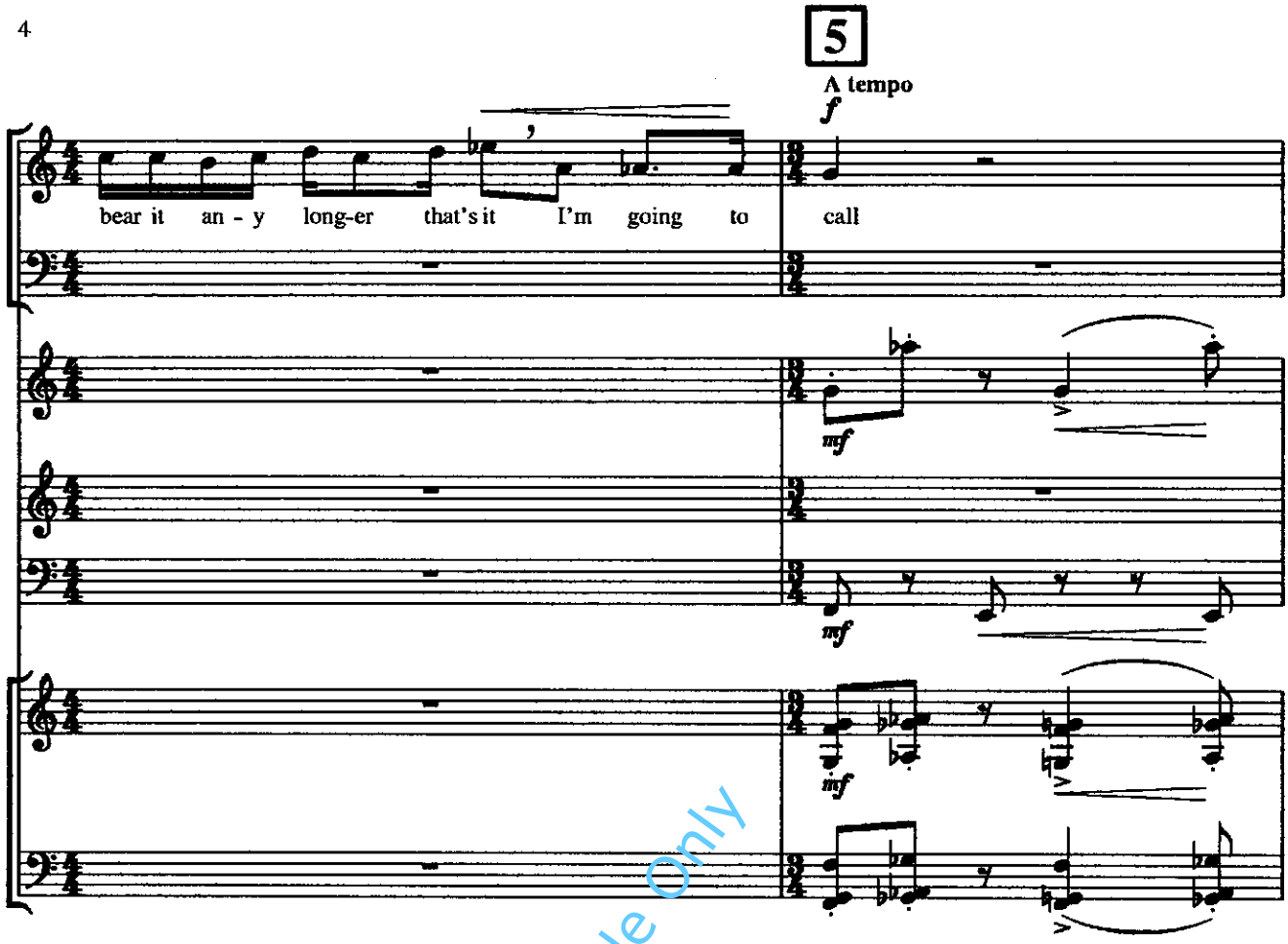

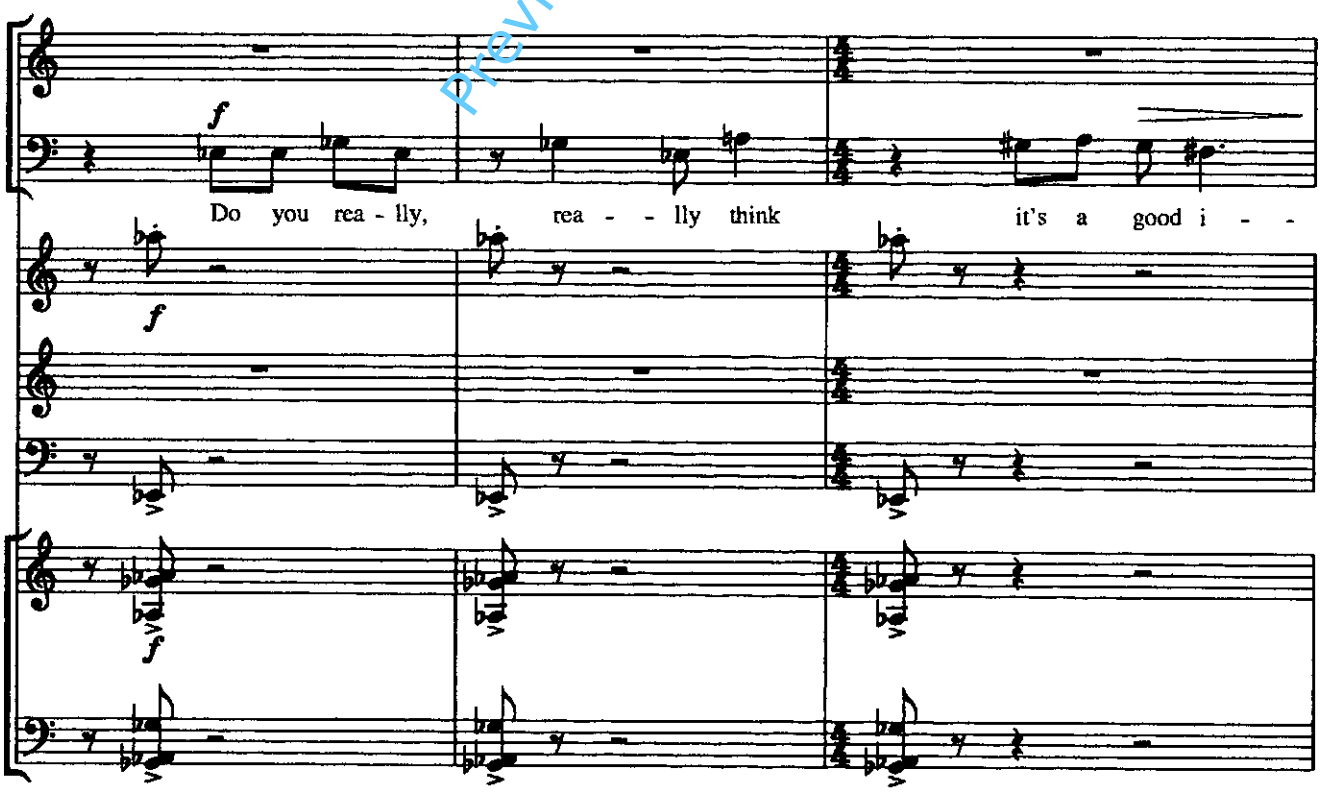

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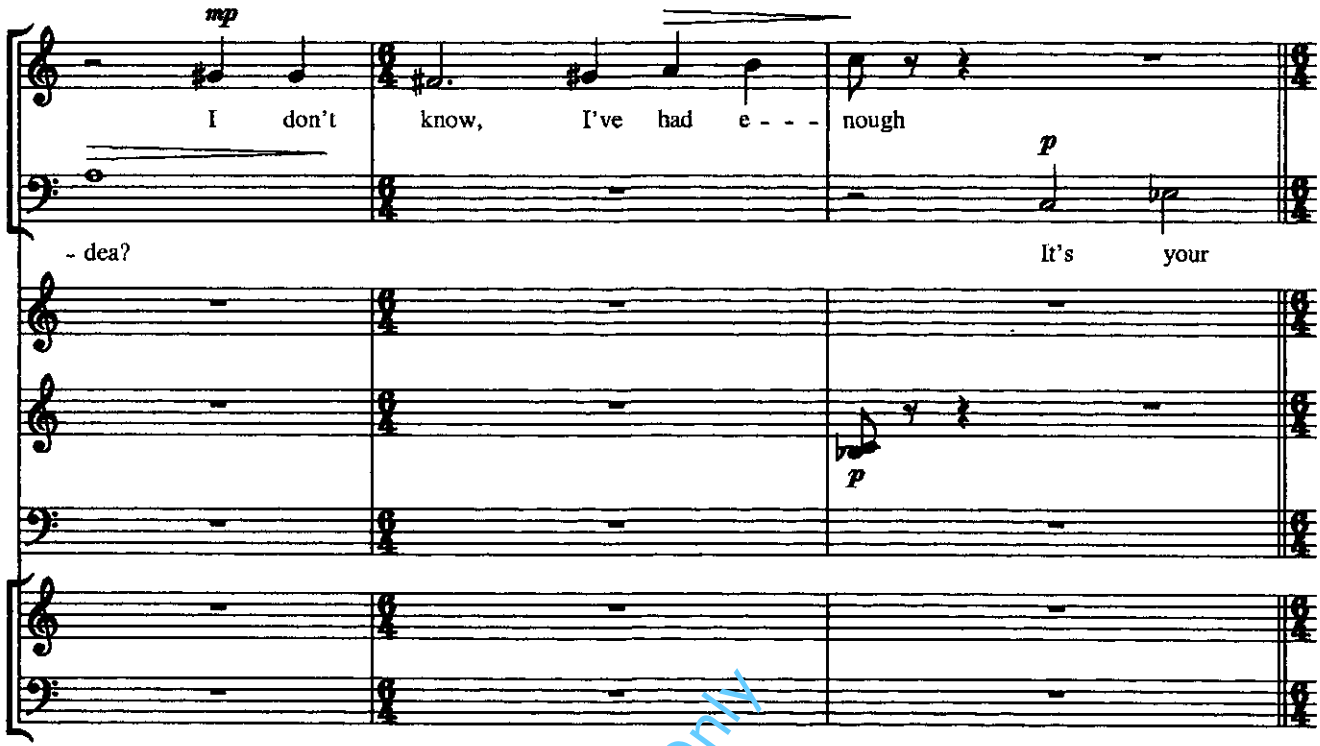

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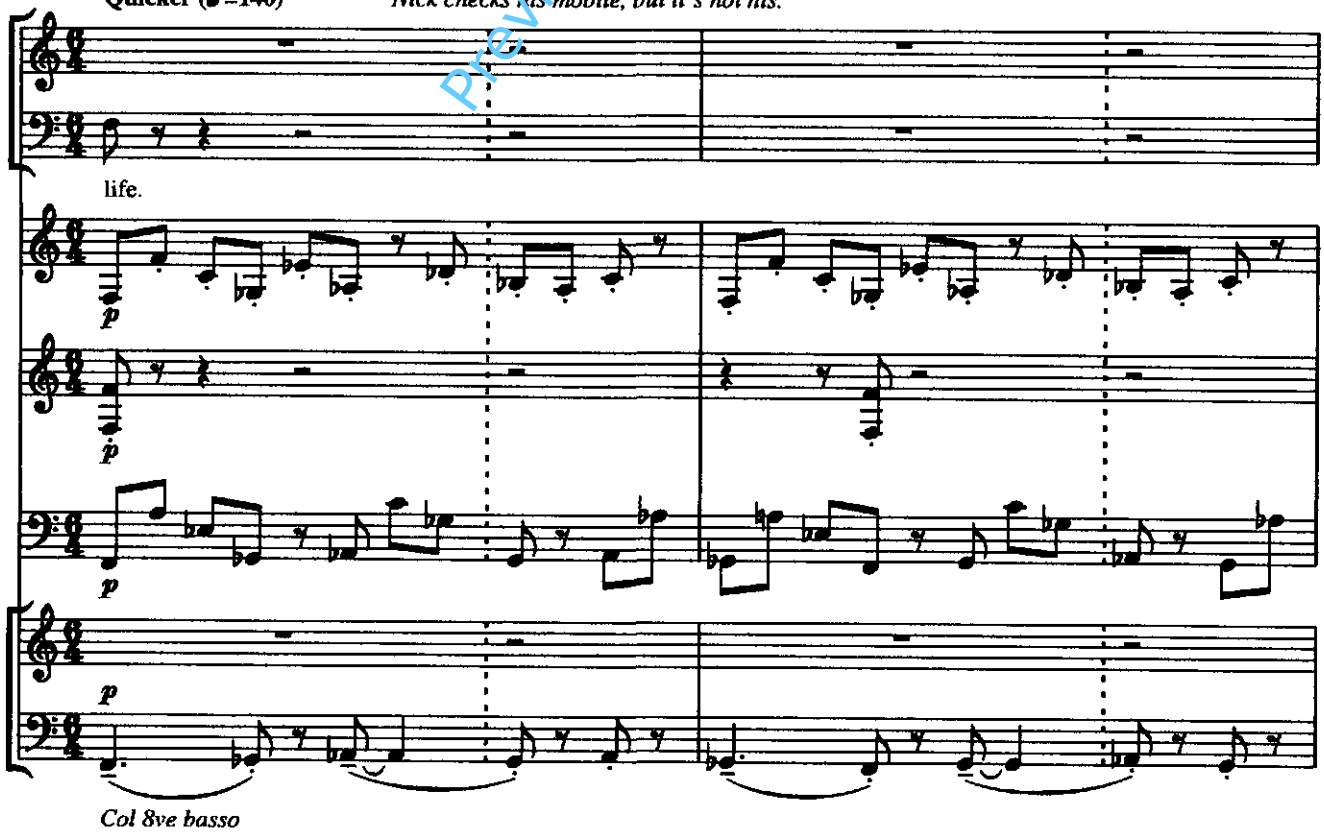
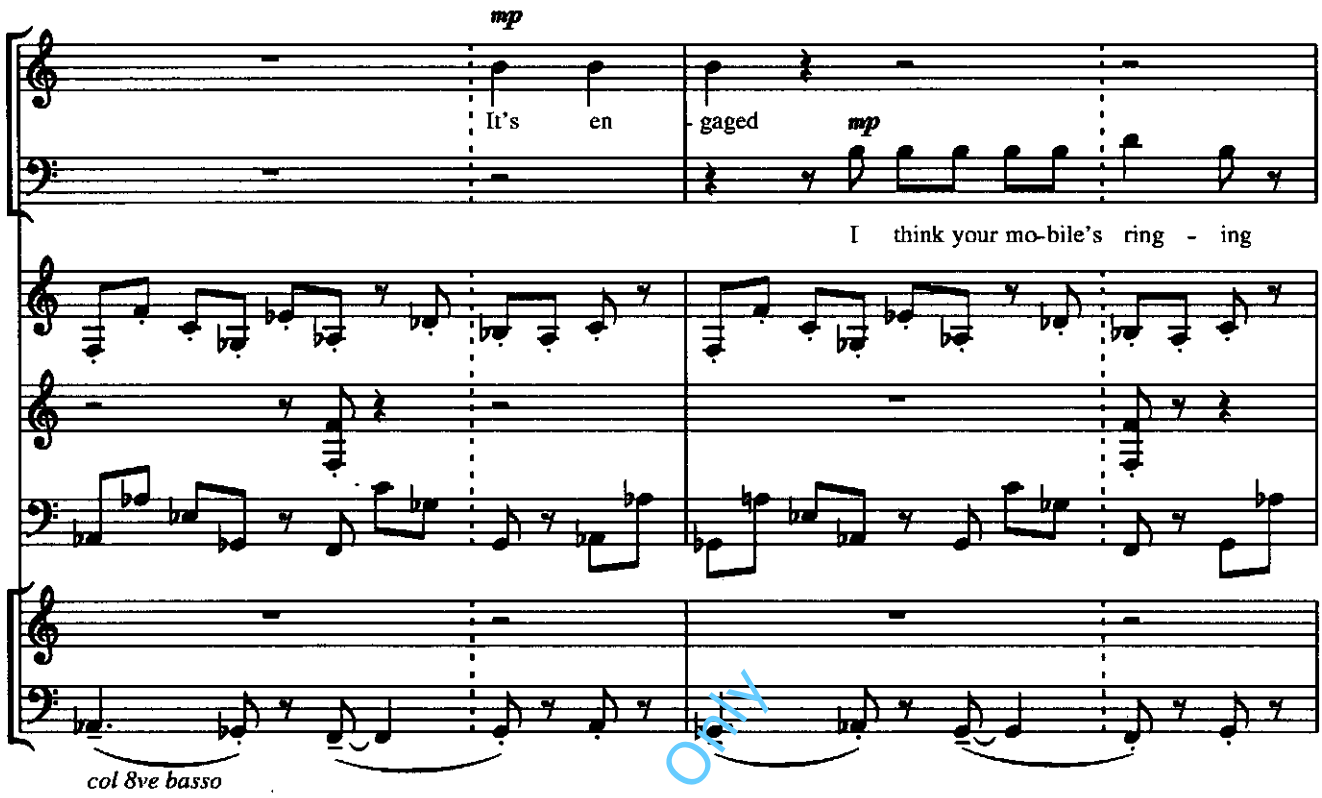
6 *Nick sits down, as if giving up.*

Natalie starts to dial the number. While she's dialling we hear a mobile phone ring (ring A). Nick checks his mobile, but it's not his.

Quicker (♩=140)





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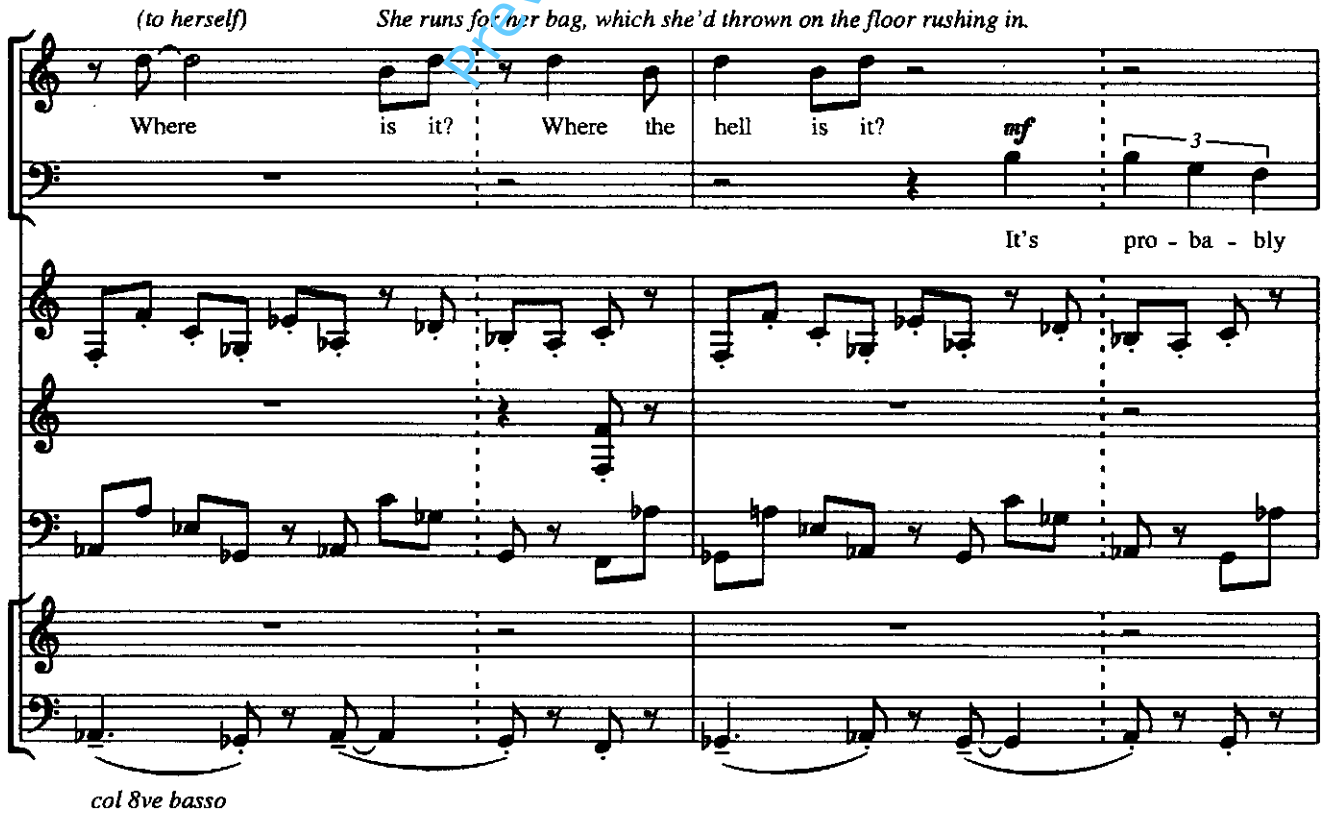
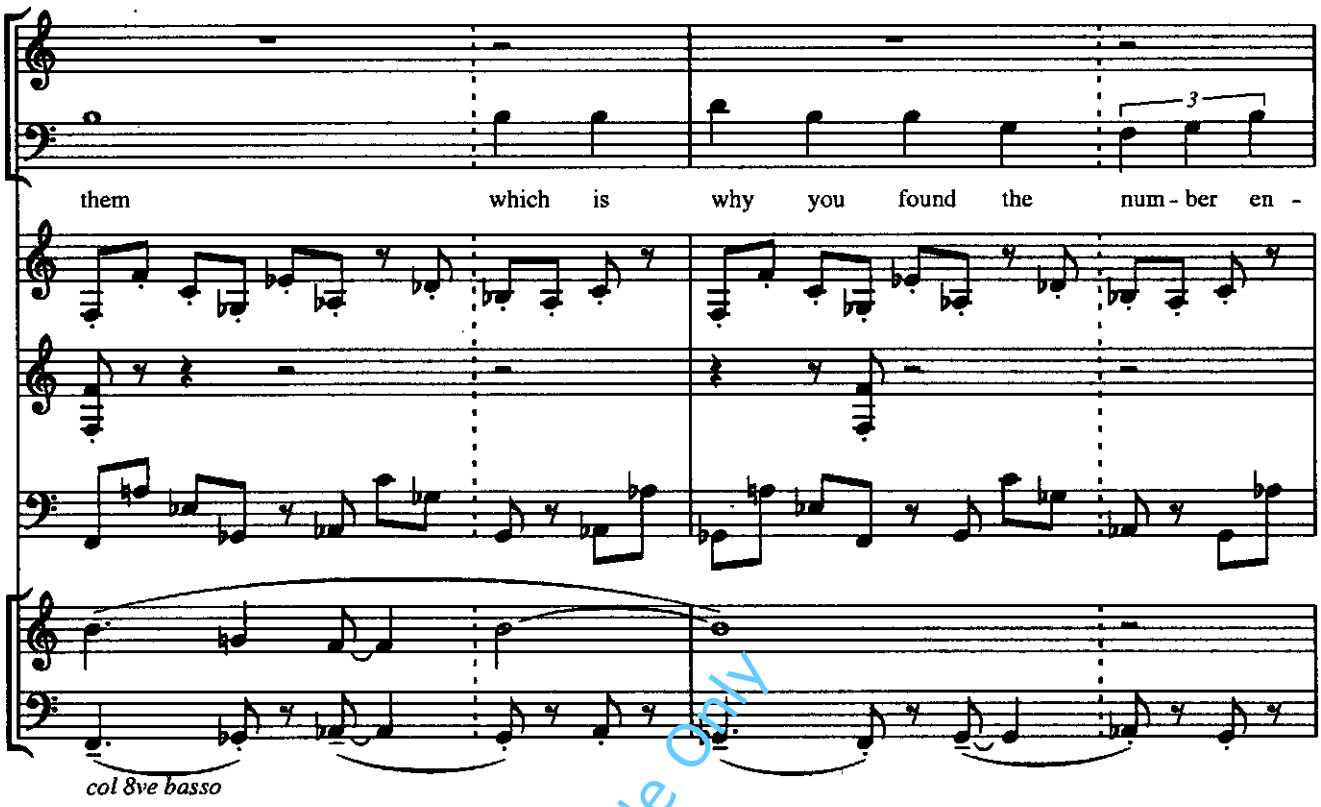
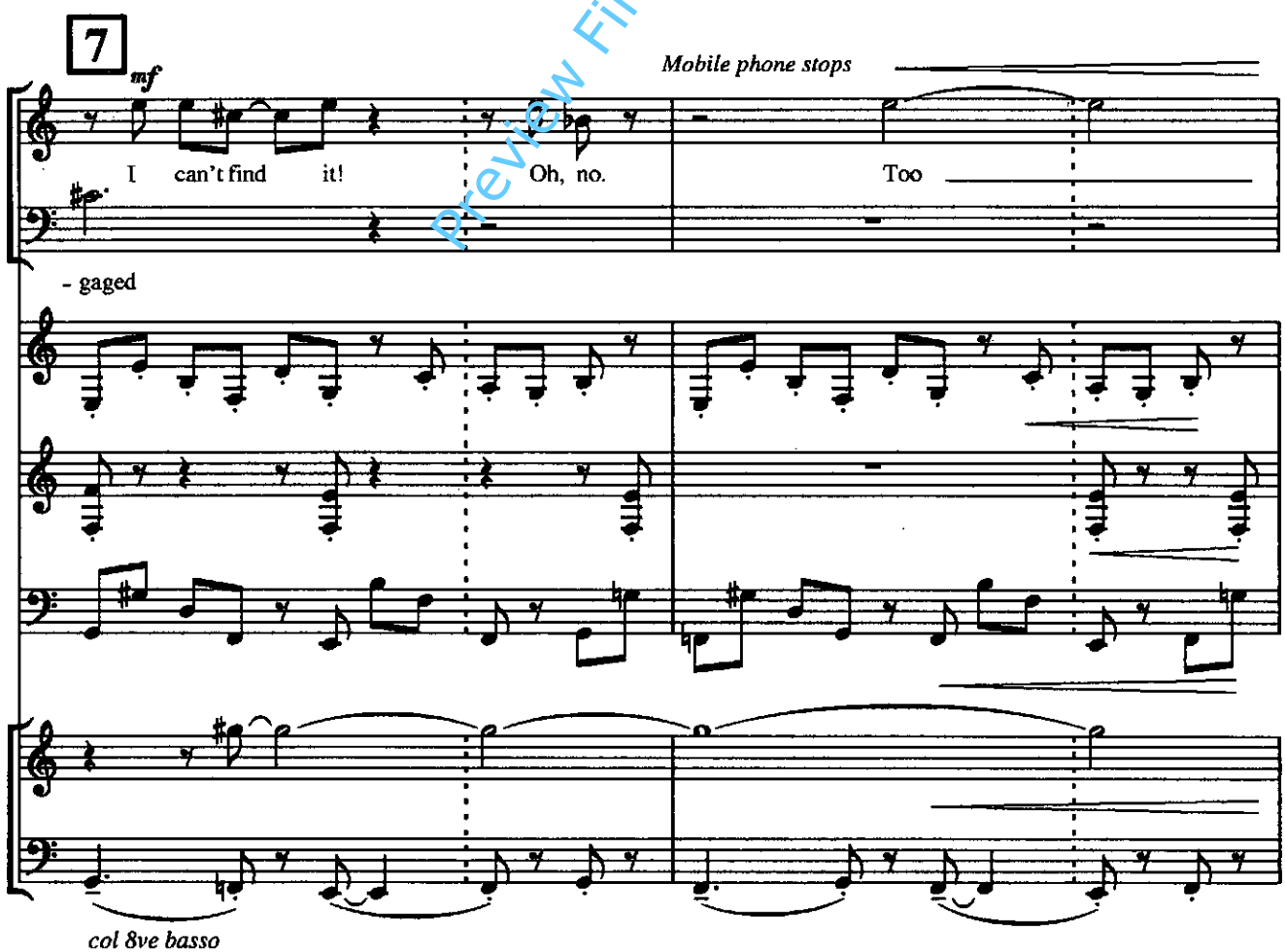


Natalie's not listening.





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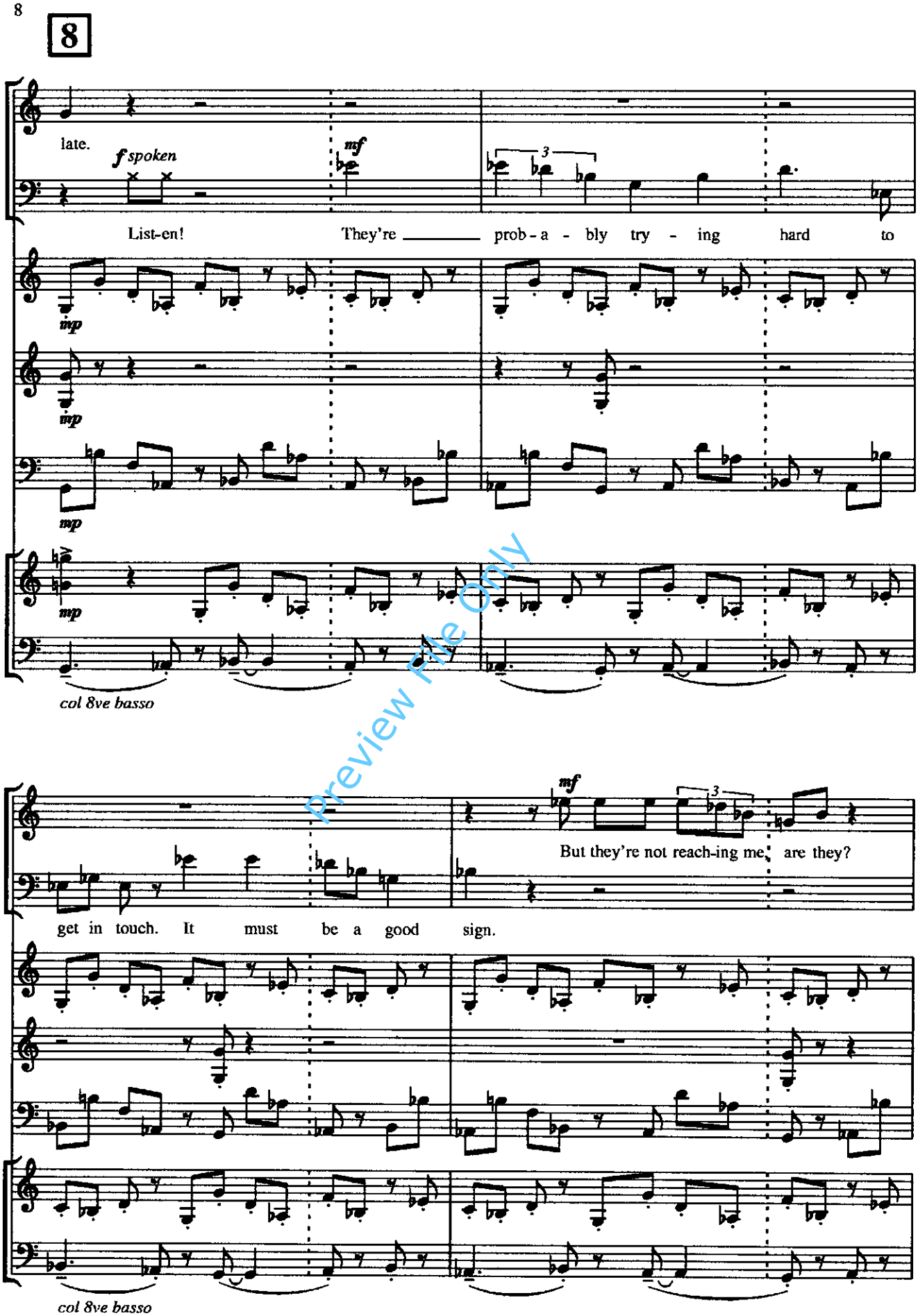

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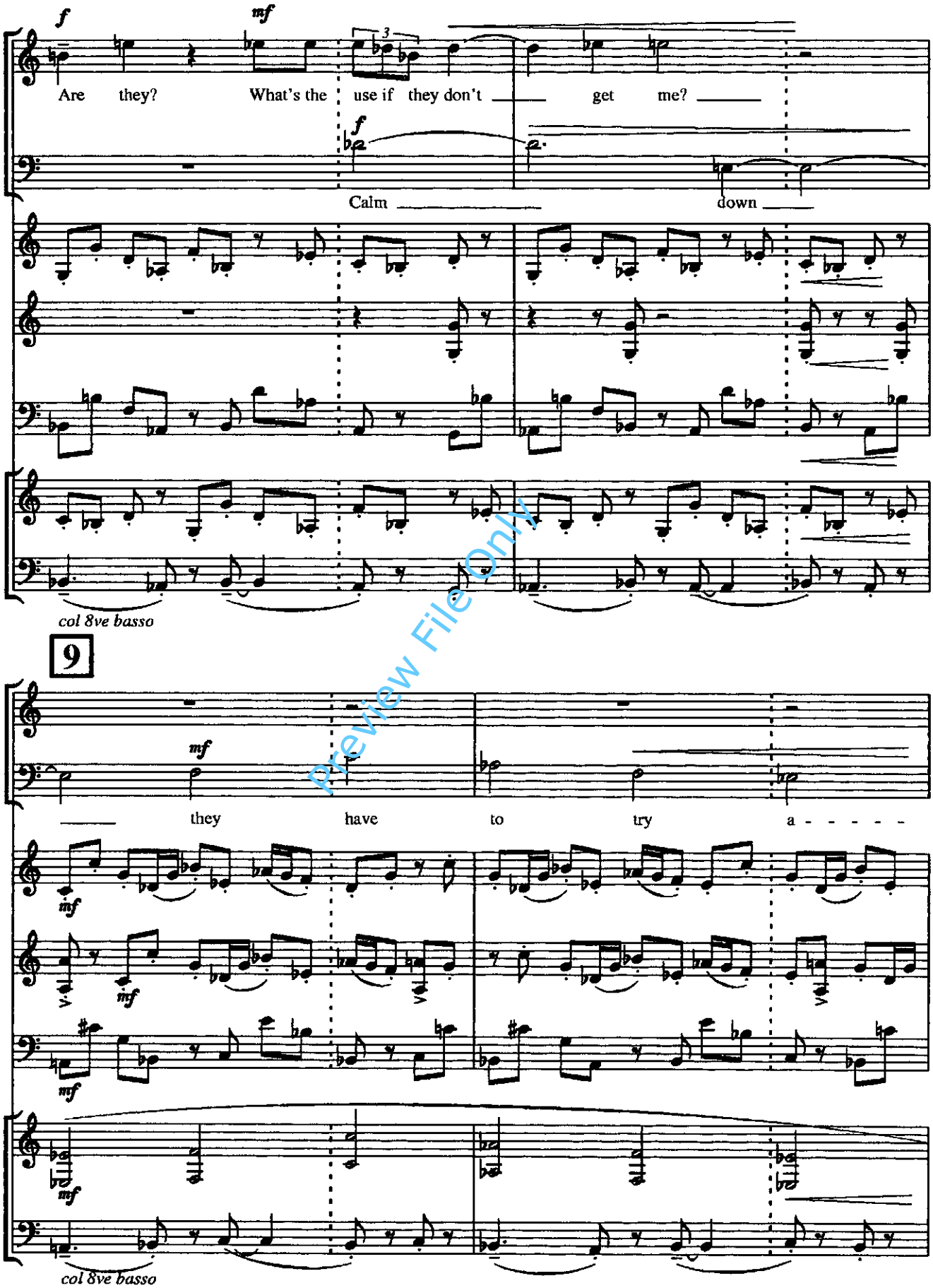

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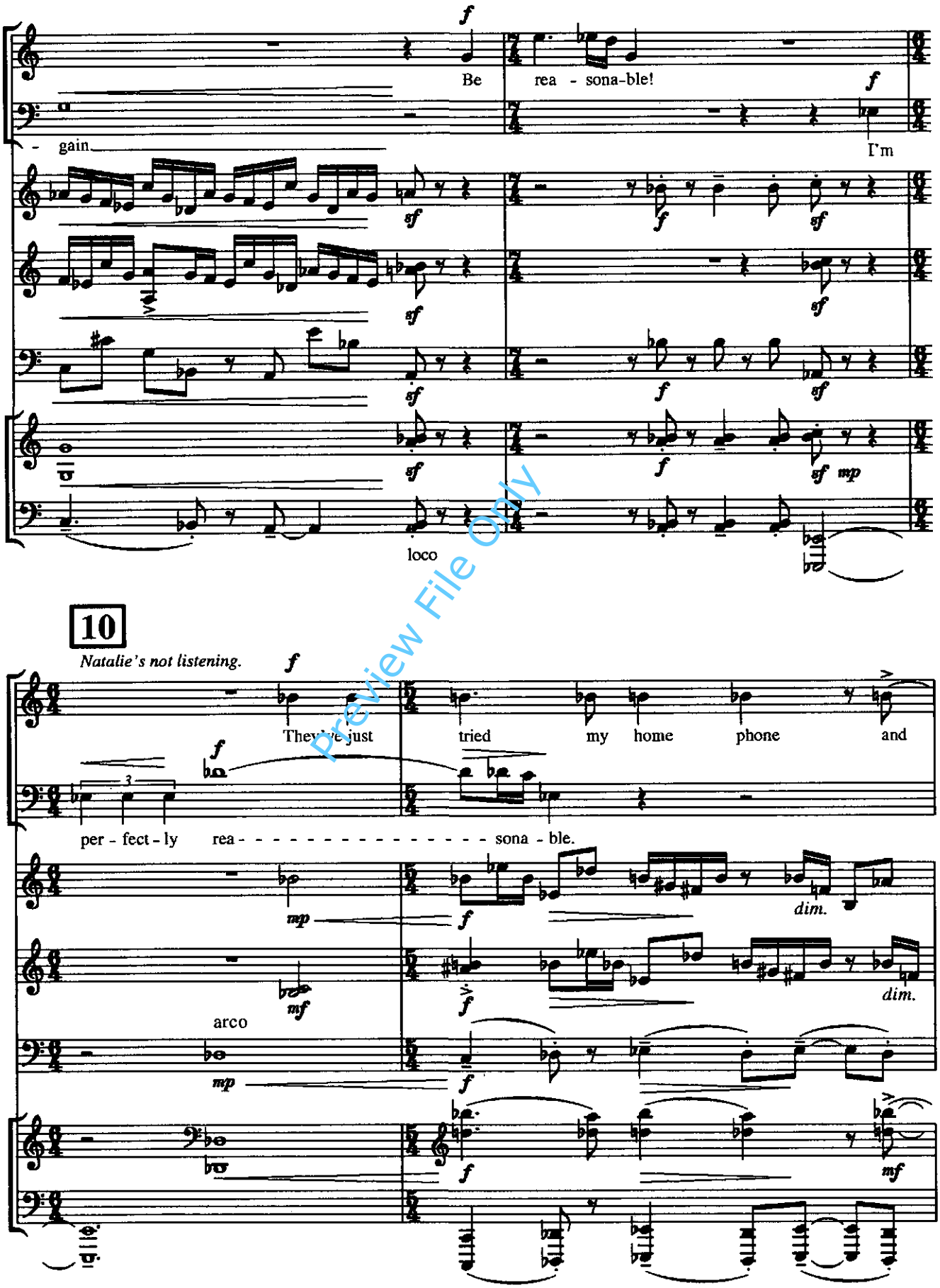

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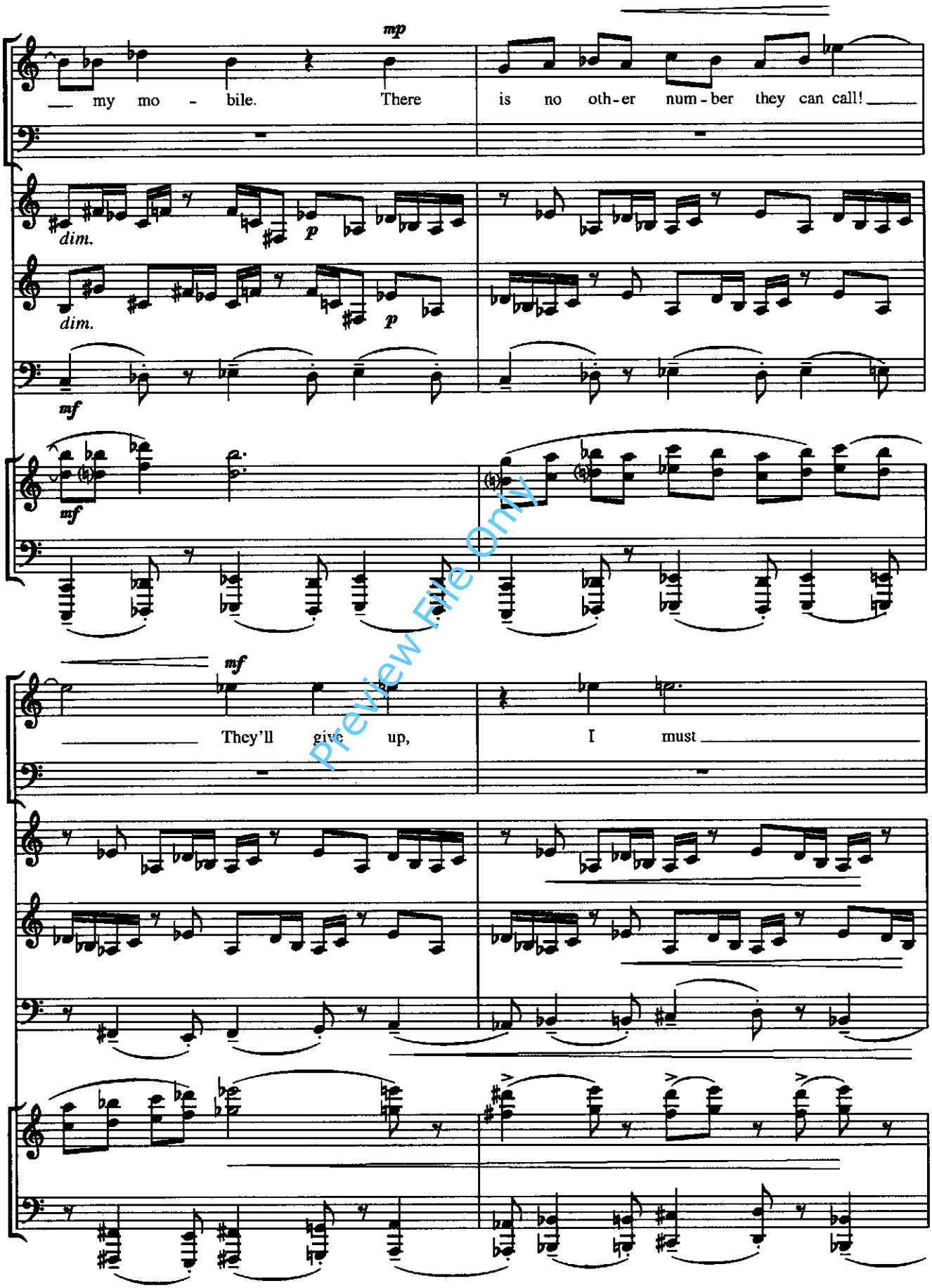

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Mobile phone B starts ringing

call them back!

Natalie is still holding her mobile. She looks at it but it's not that one. She looks at Nick, who says, 'It's not mine, darling!' Music continues at this point

11 *Mobile phone continues to ring*

Slightly slower (♩=c.136)

p

It must be David's. *(spoken sarcastically)* He's left it behind.

Oh, it's David's.

p

p

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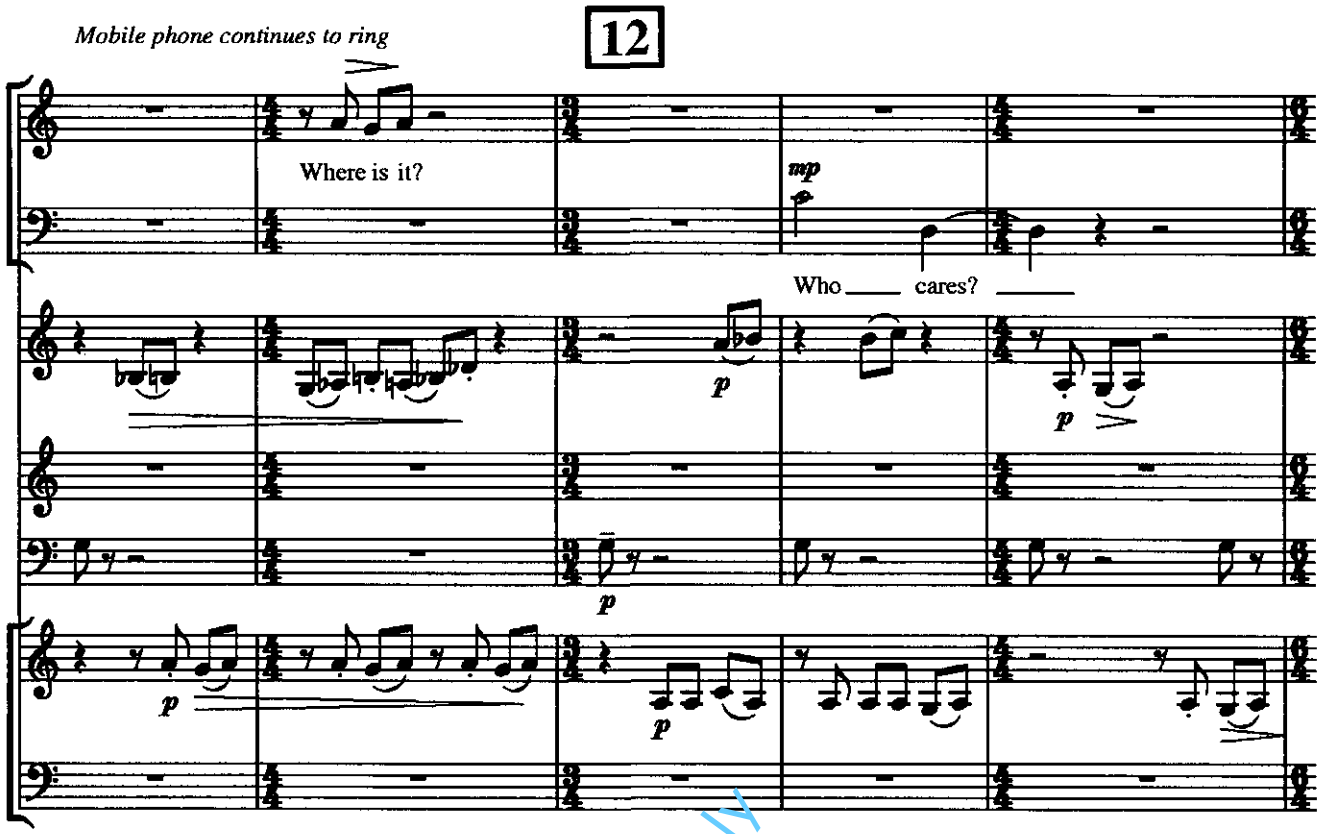

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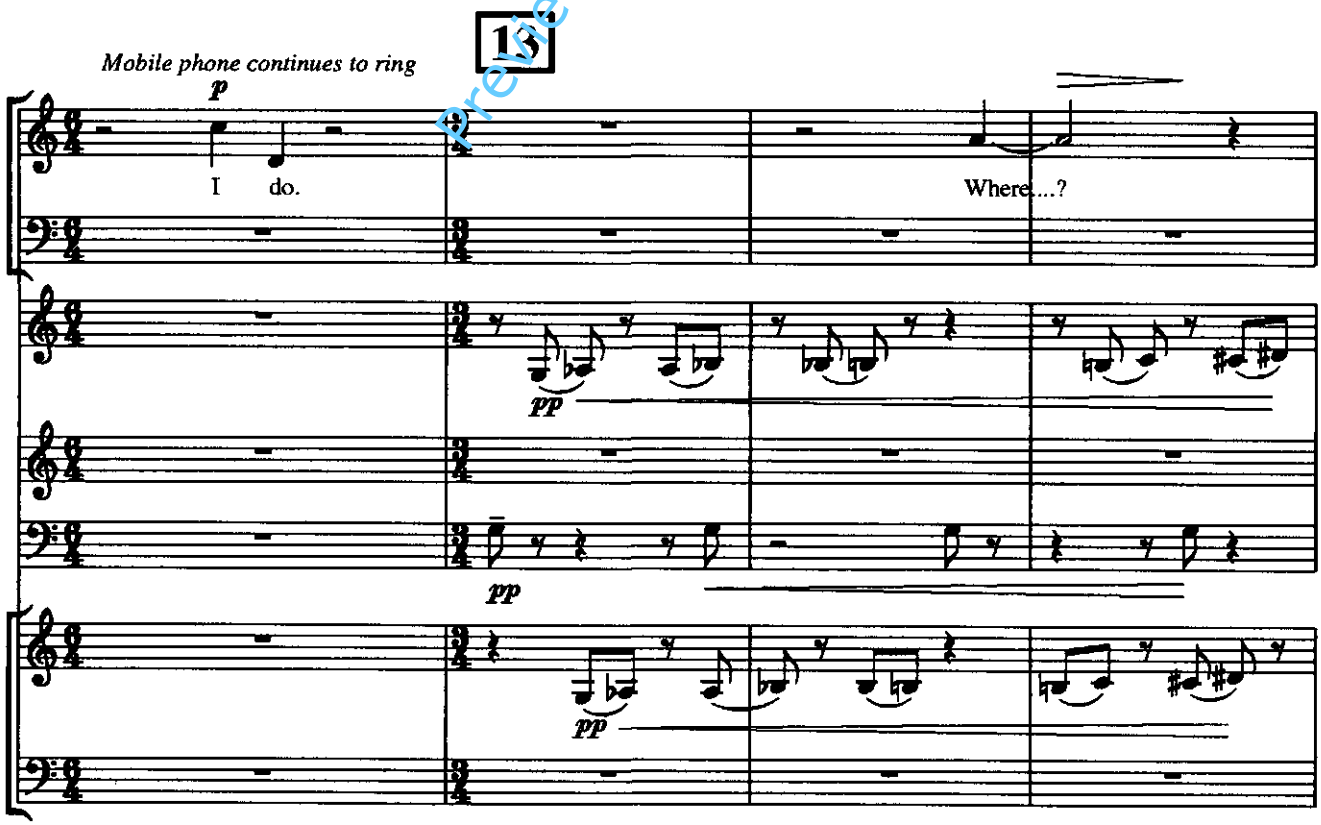
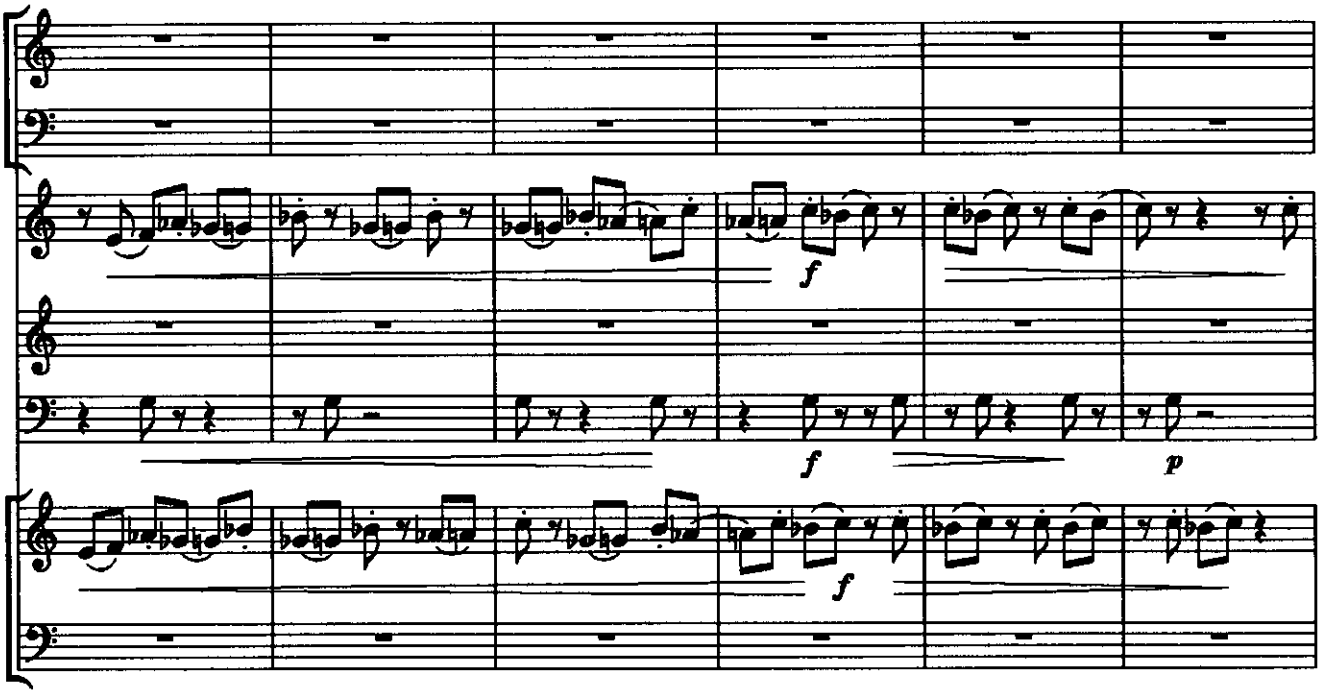


Mobile phone continues to ring. Natalie searches for it. Could be band/audience participation with helpful comments pointing out where the ring's coming from. It might be found in the audience.



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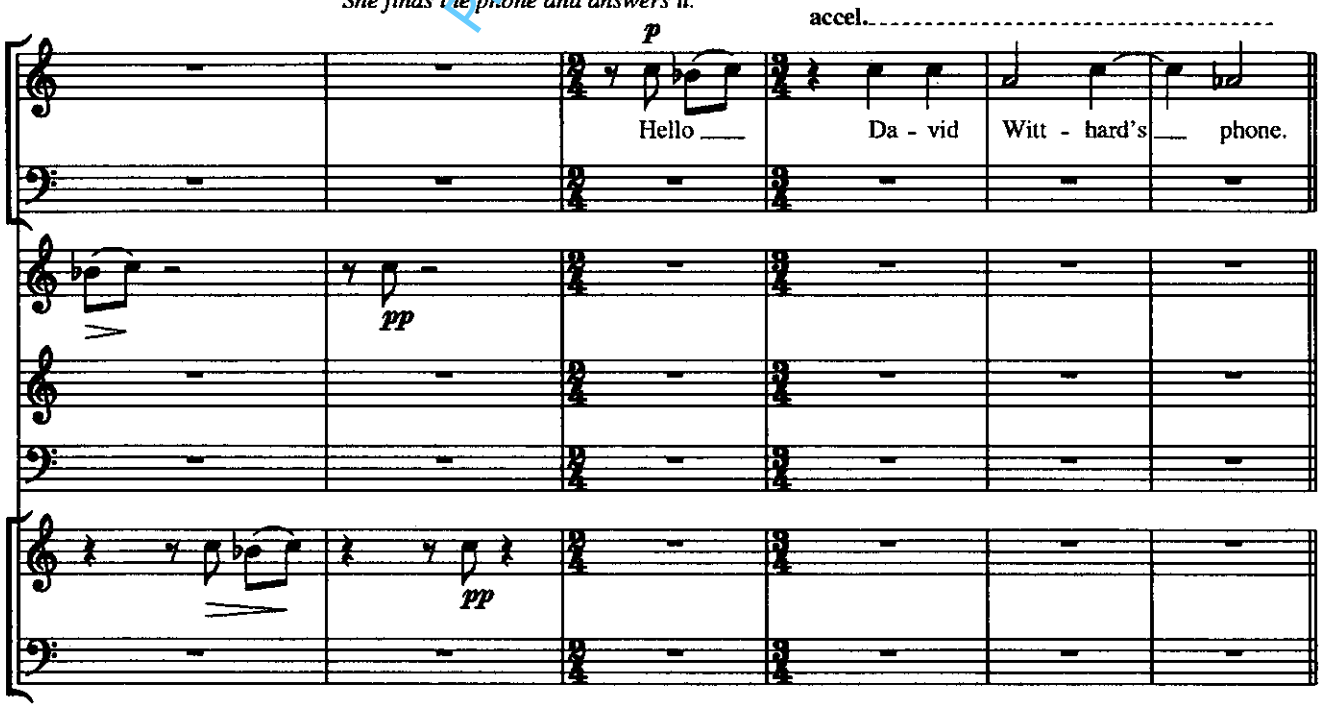
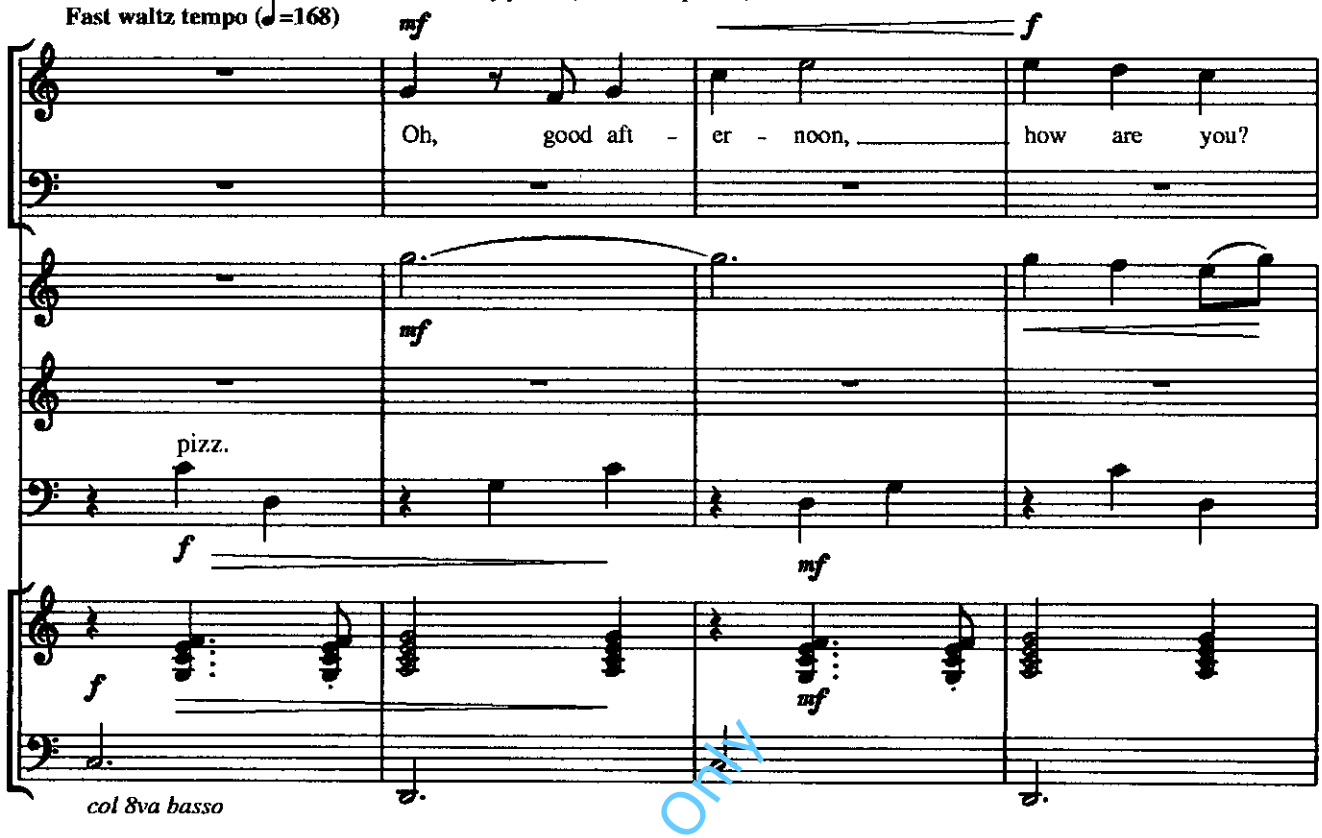
She finds the phone and answers it.



14

Fast waltz tempo (♩=168)

Extremely polite (even obsequious)



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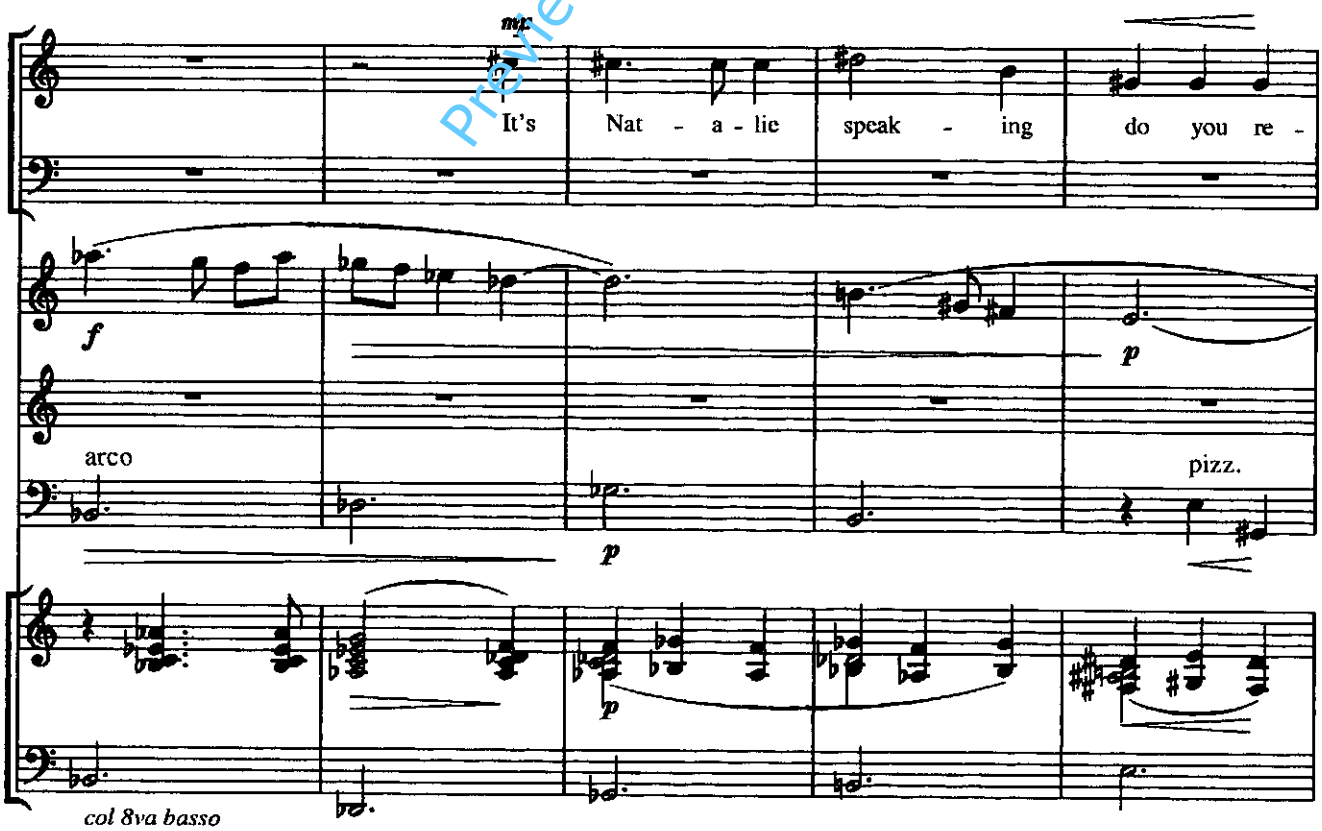

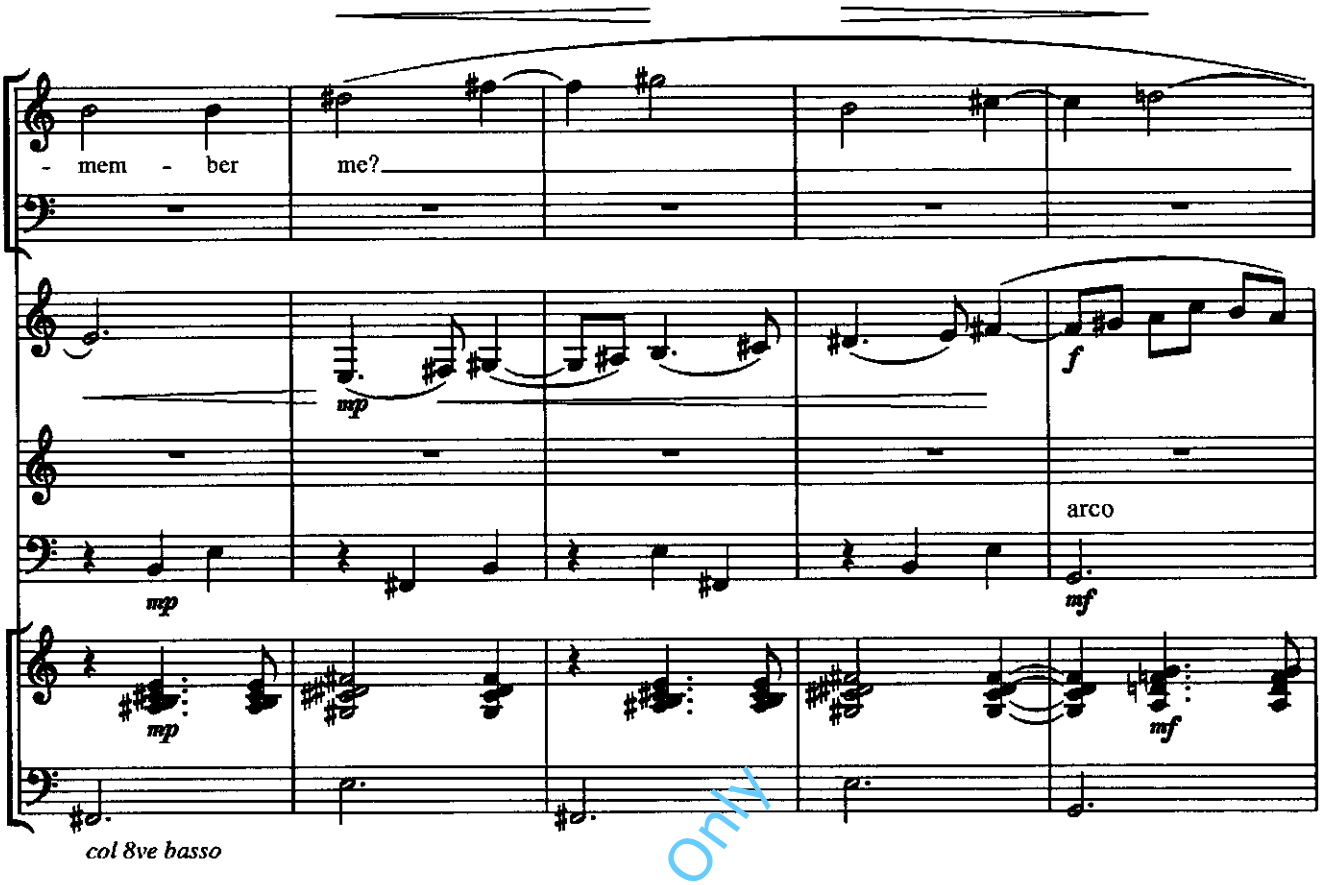

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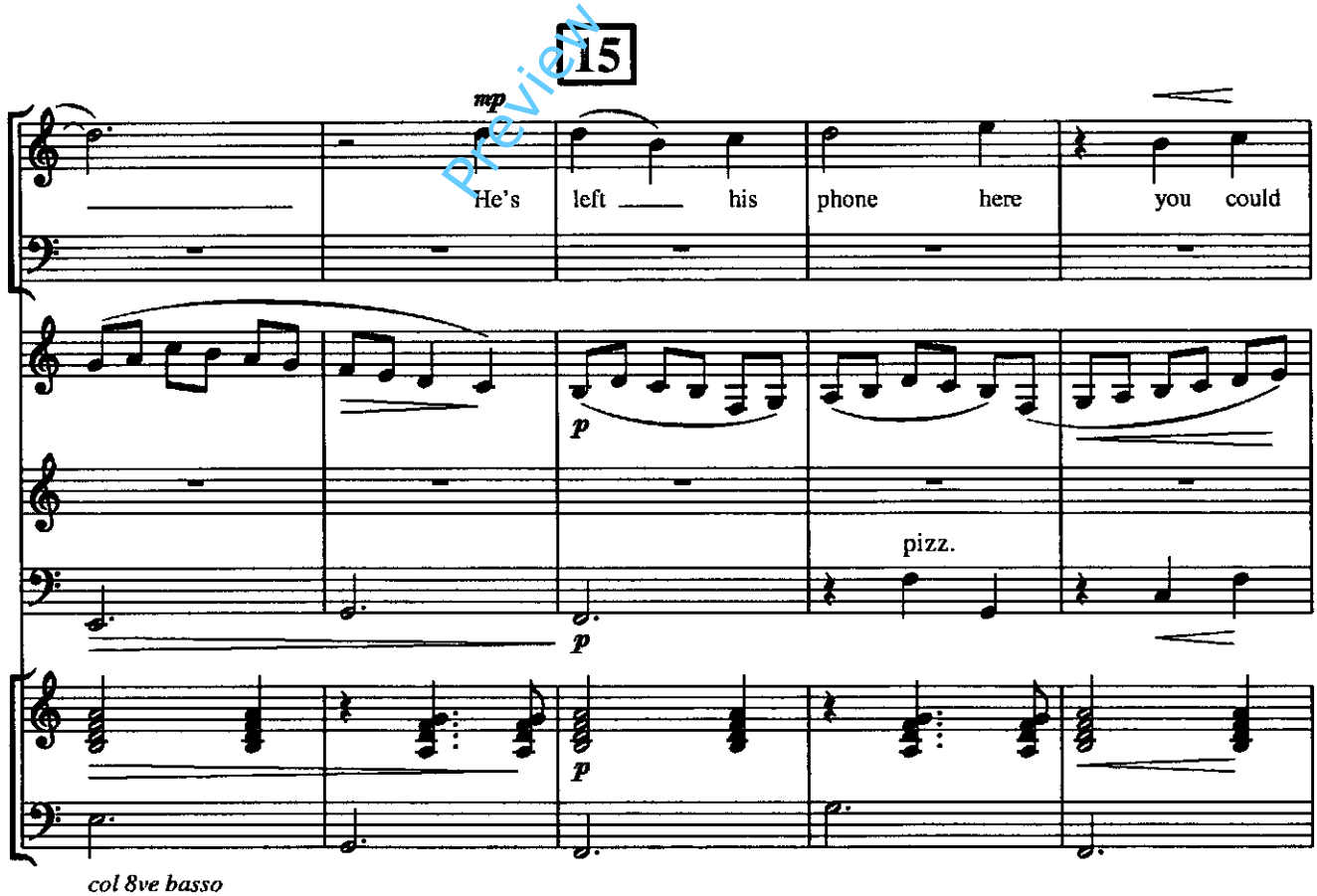
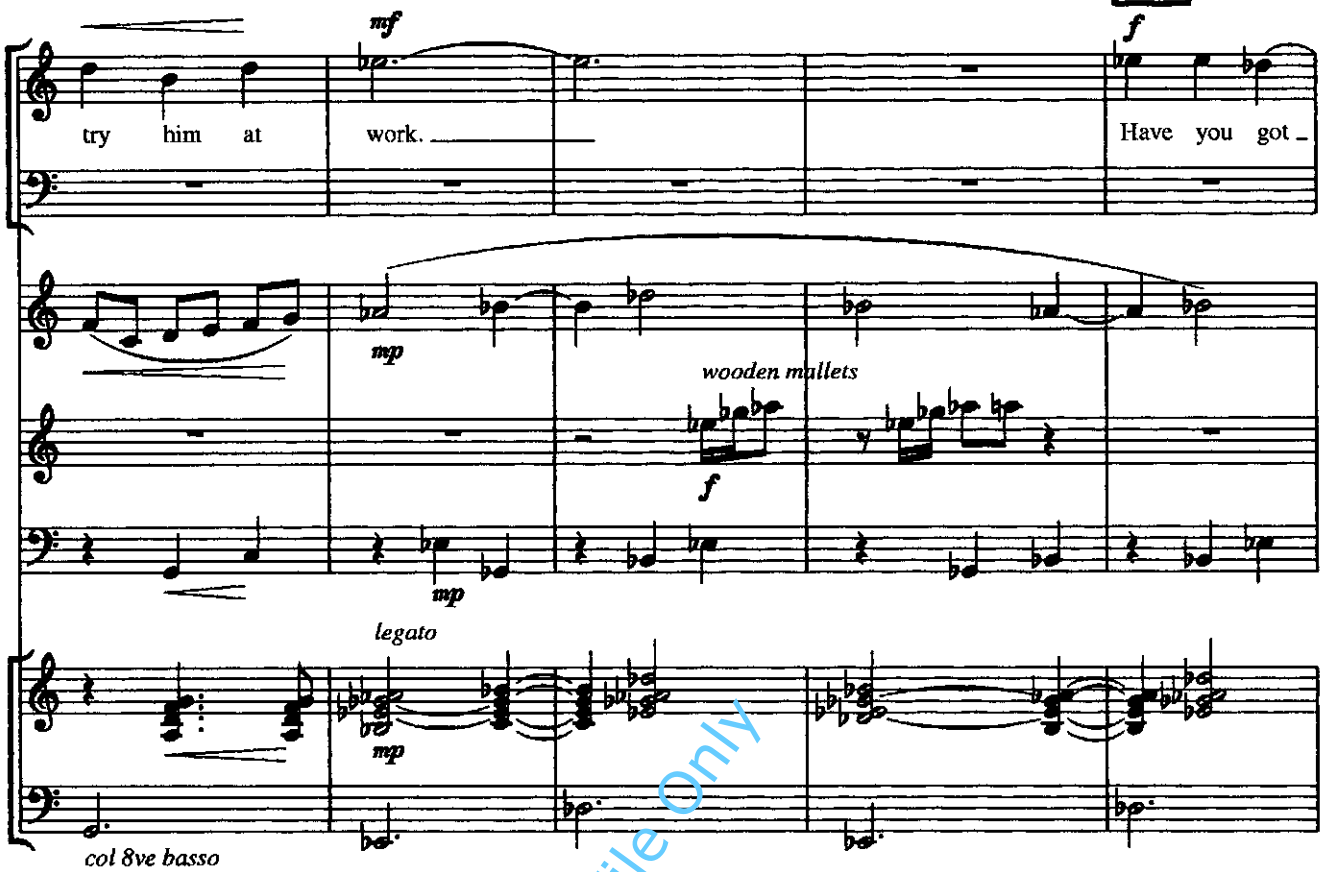


The land line phone rings (vibraphone). **16**



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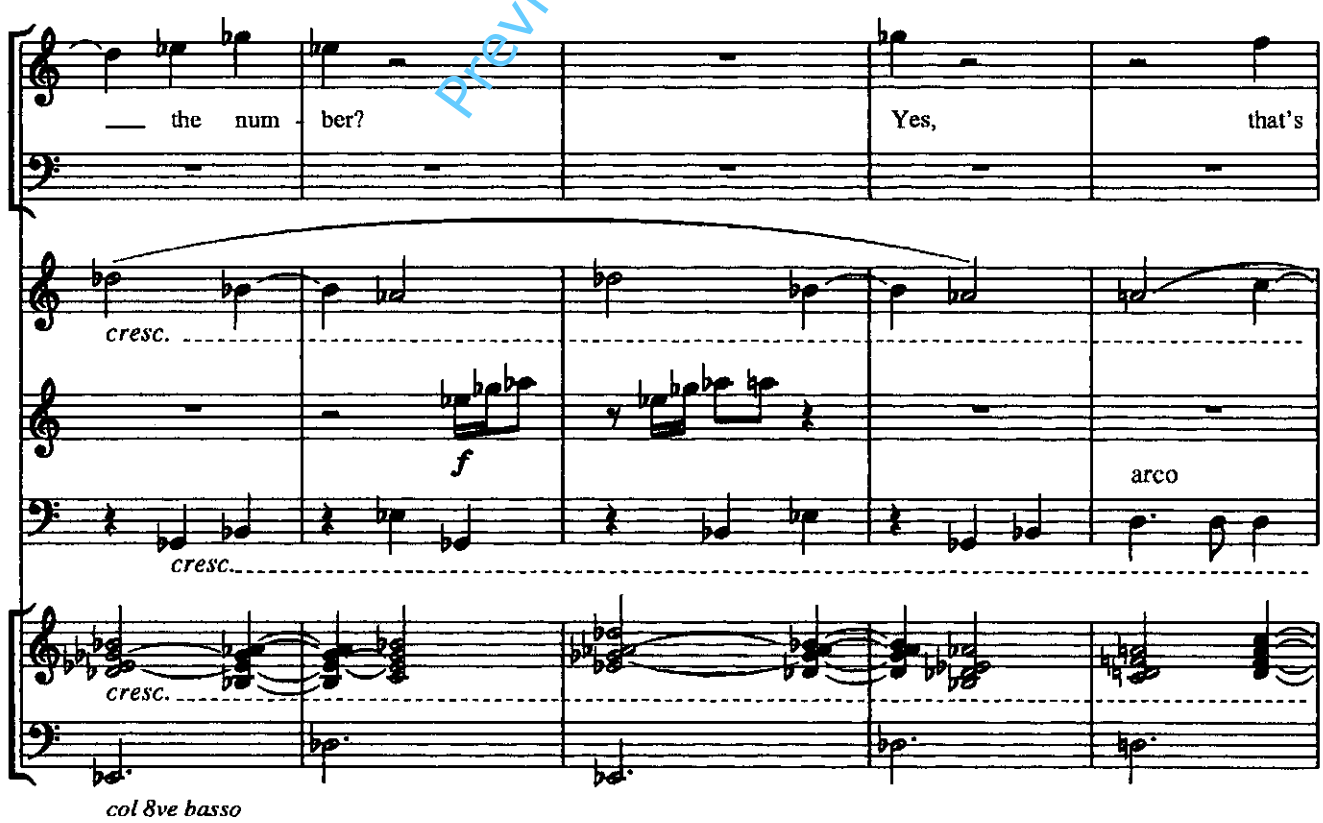
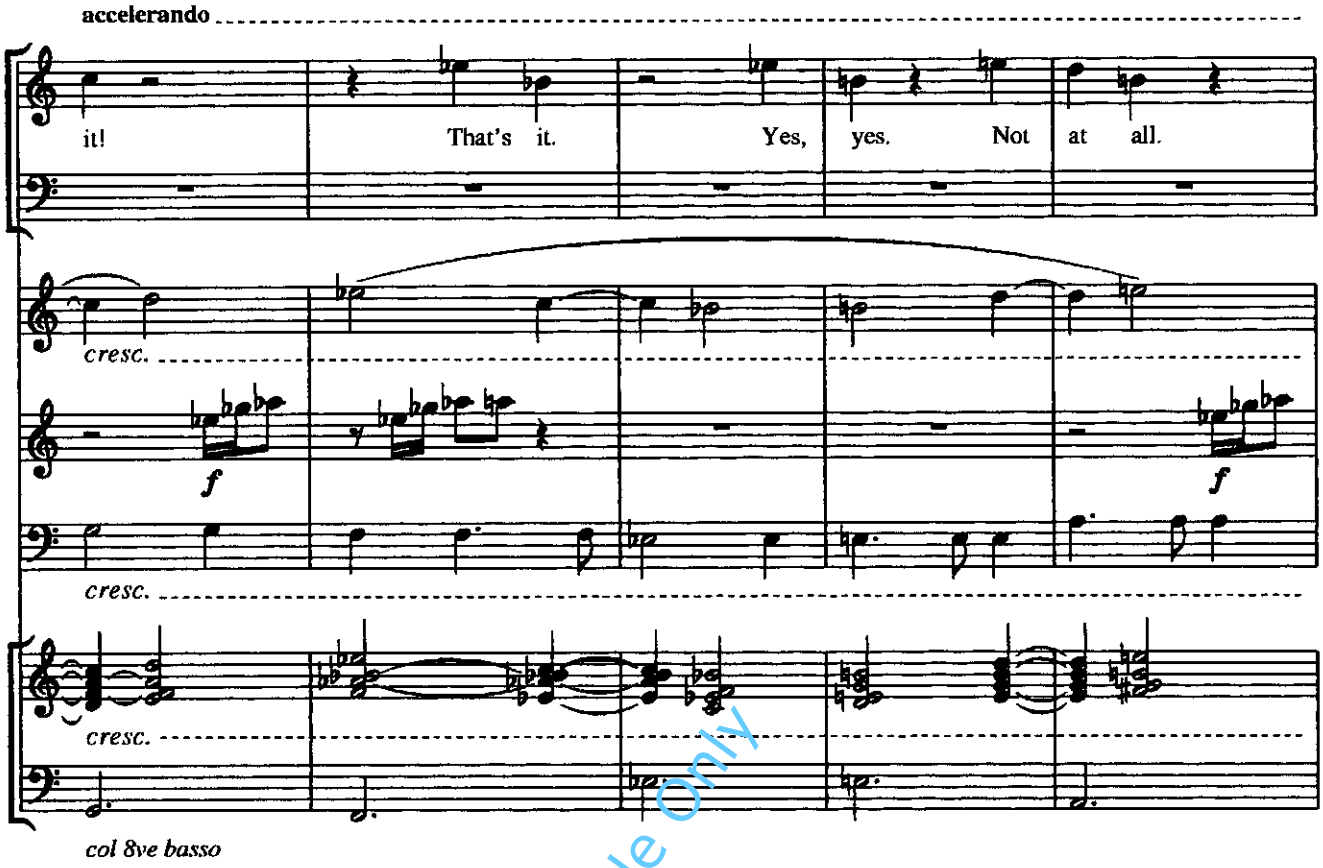
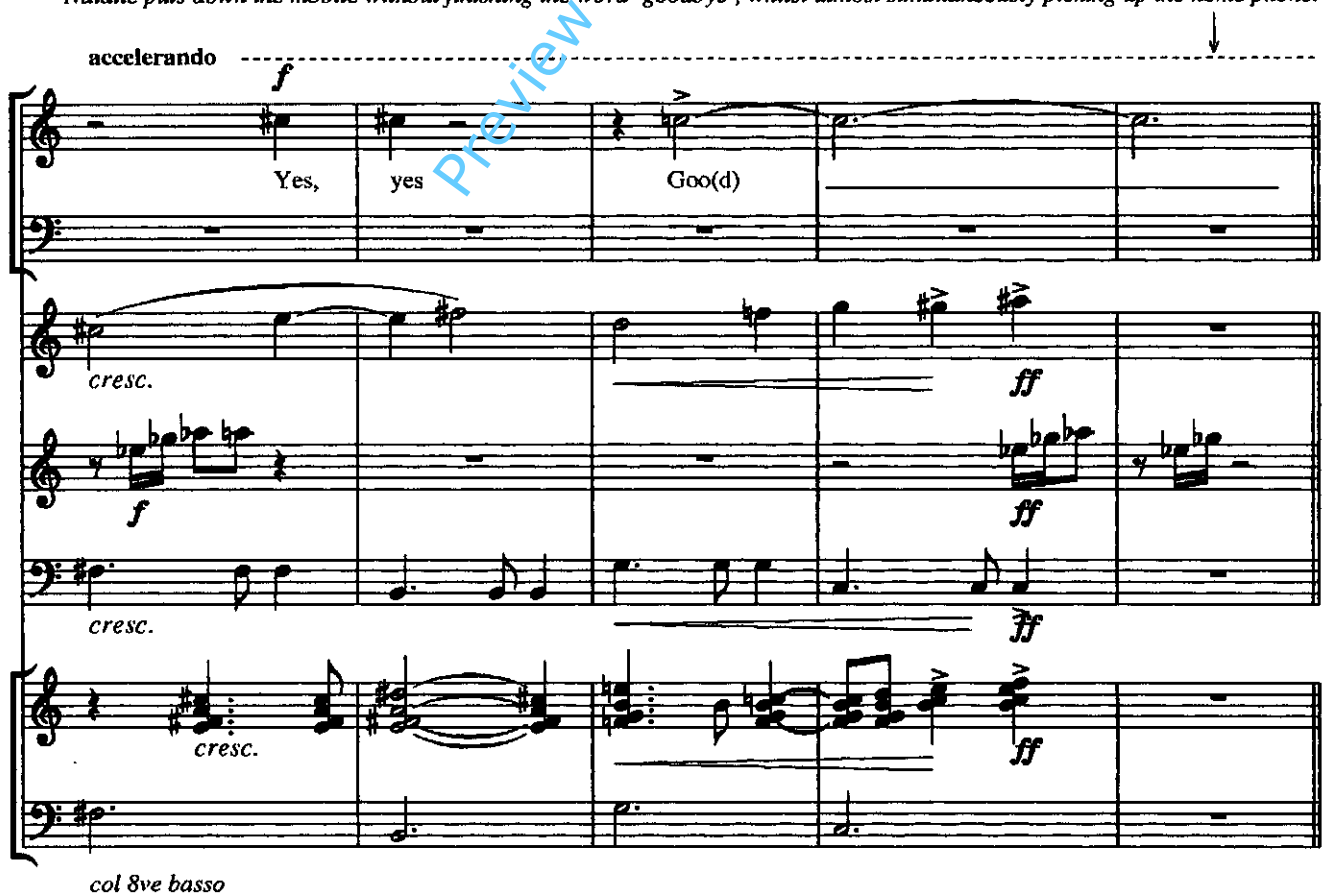
Accelerando





Natalie puts down the mobile without finishing the word 'goodbye', whilst almost simultaneously picking up the home phone.



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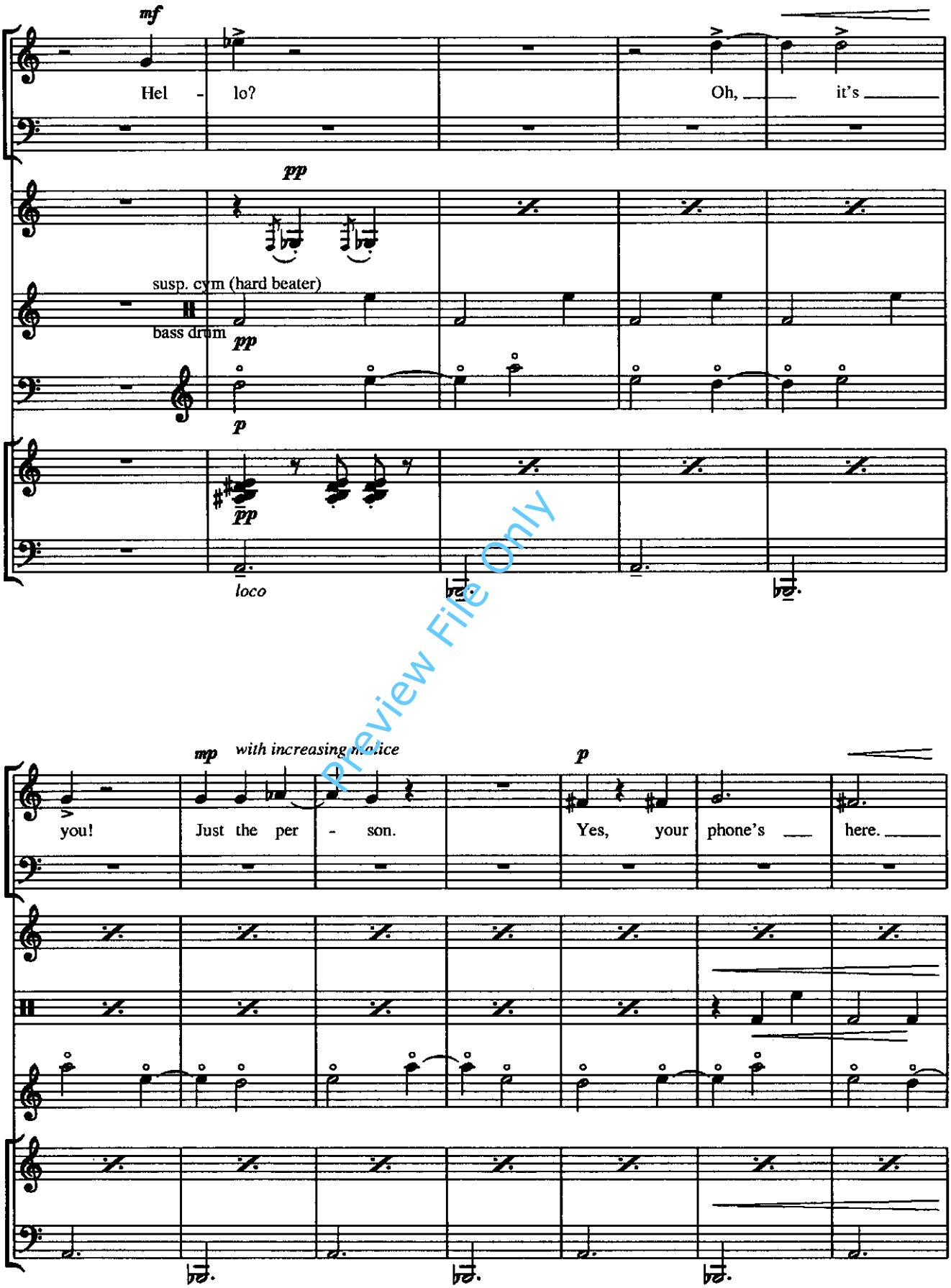
17

Fast but not too fast (𝅗𝅥.=80)



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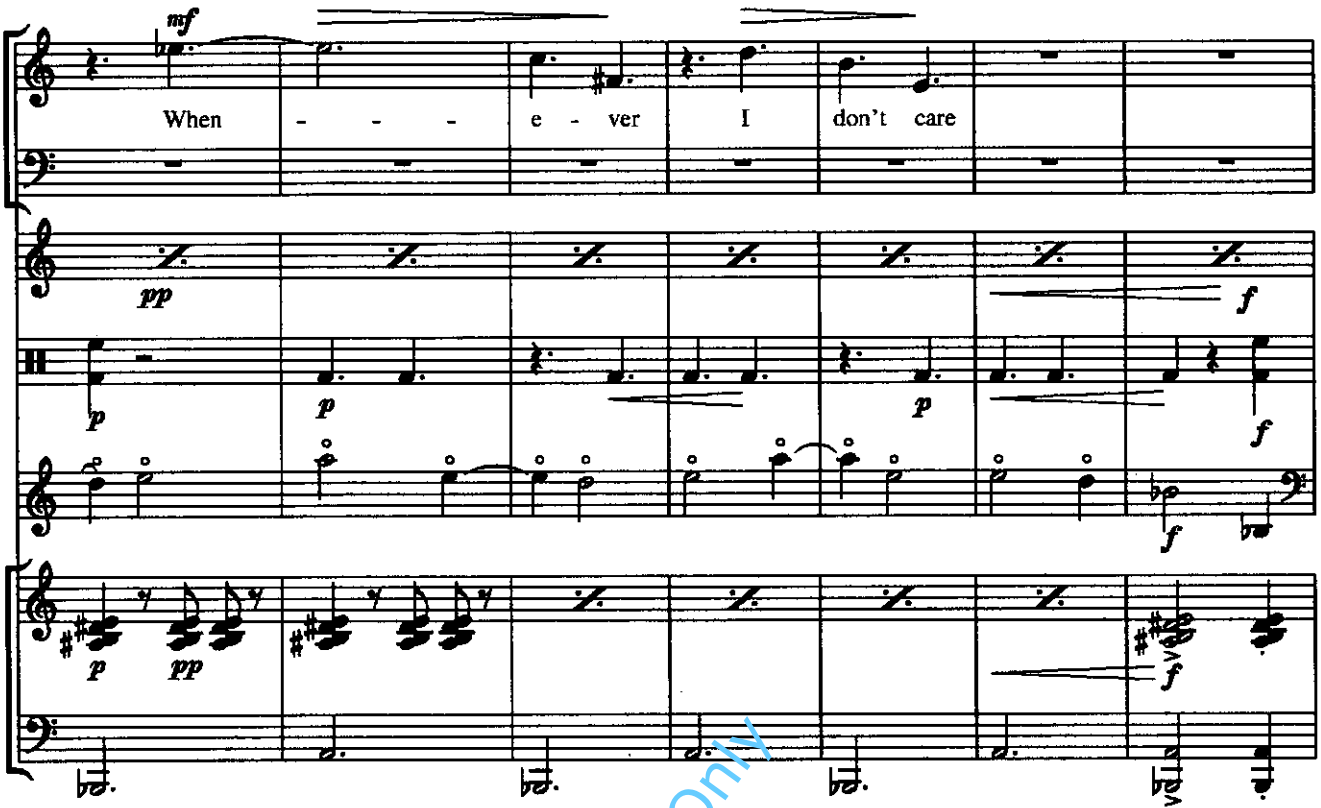

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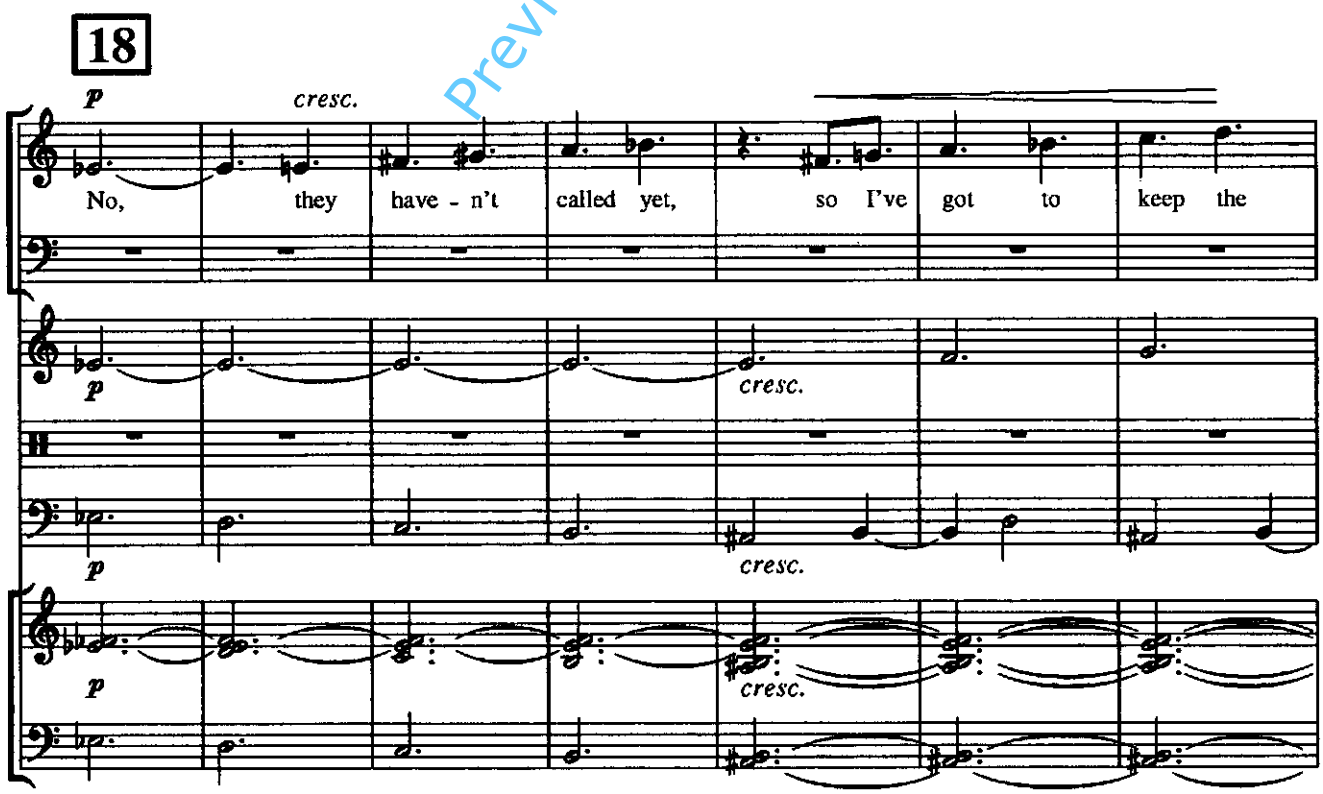
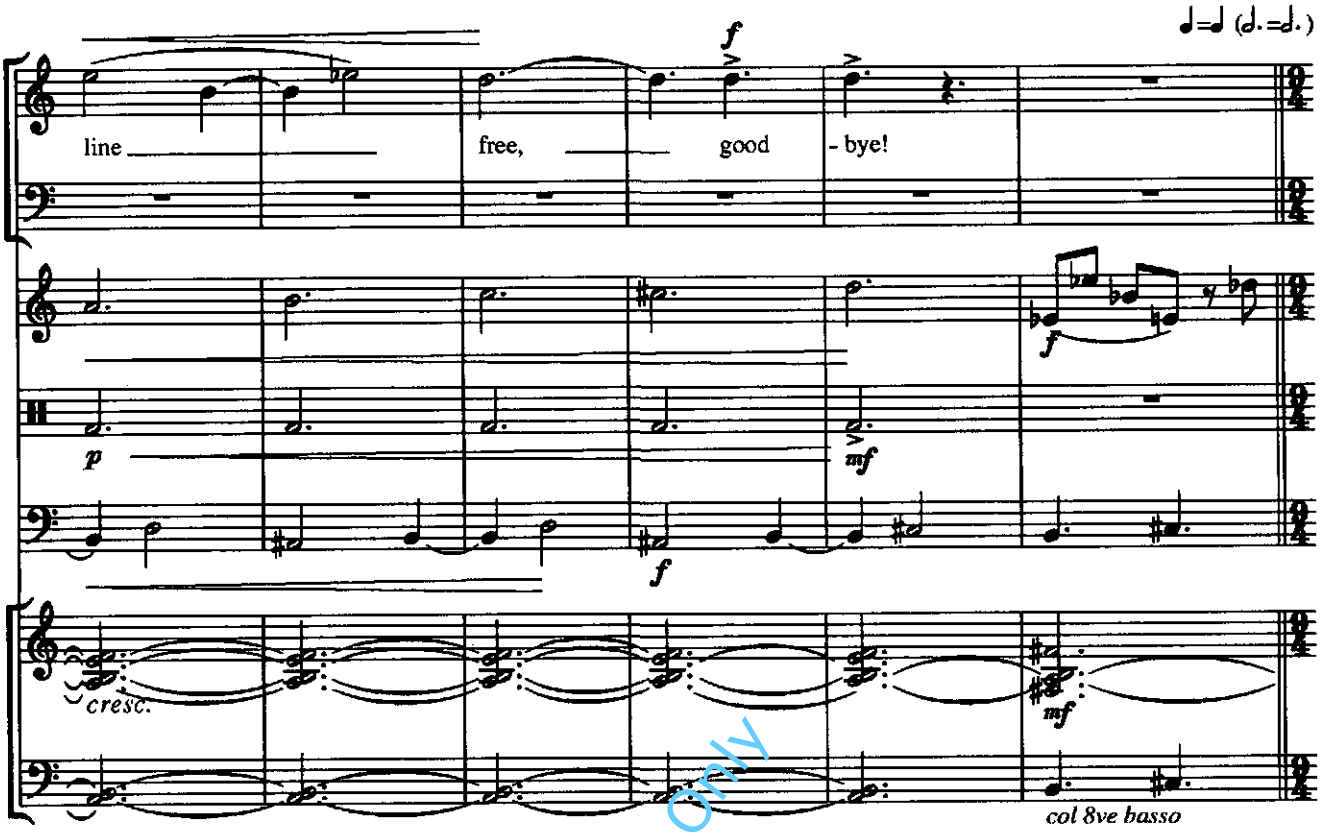


She slams the phone down.
Nick understands it was David and smiles.

♩=♩ (♩.=♩.)



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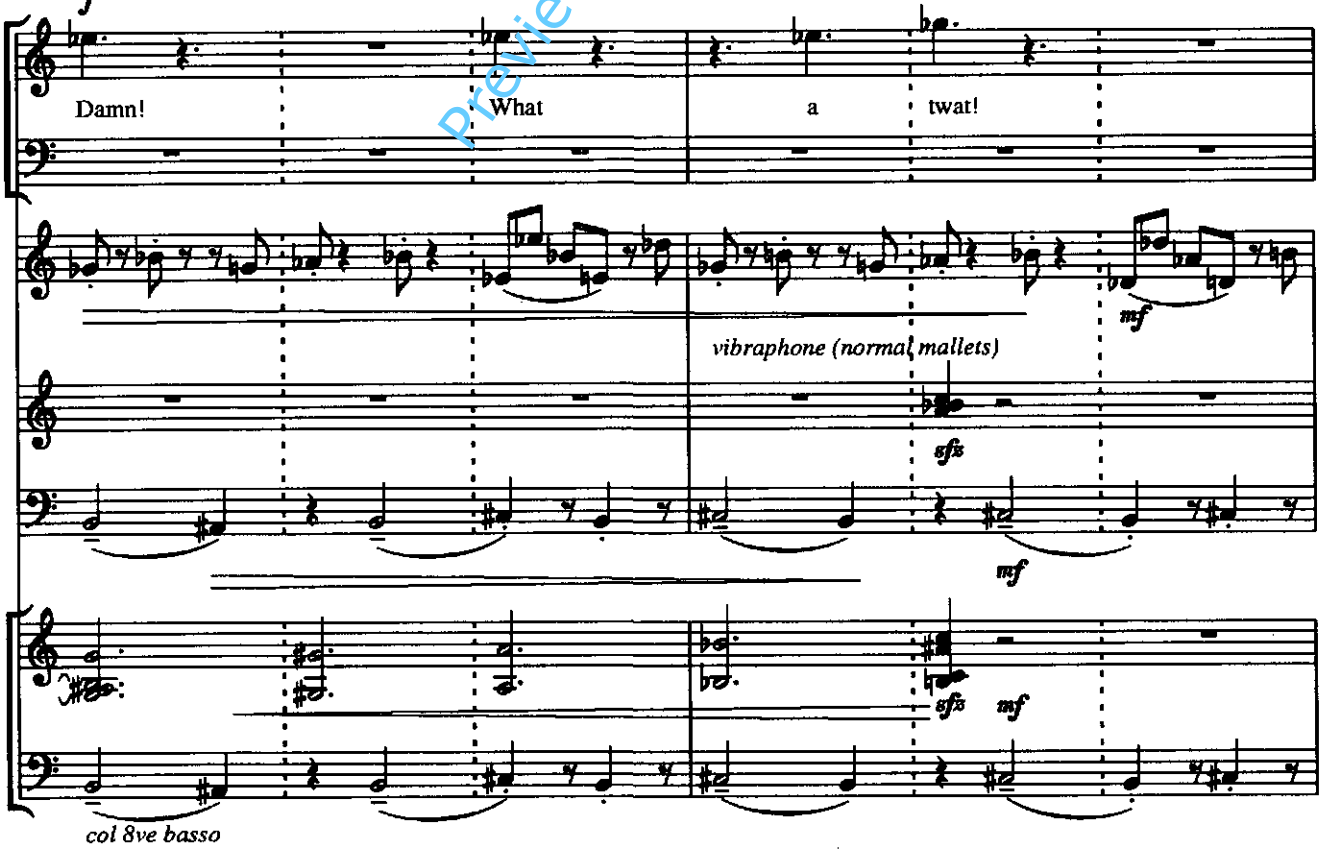
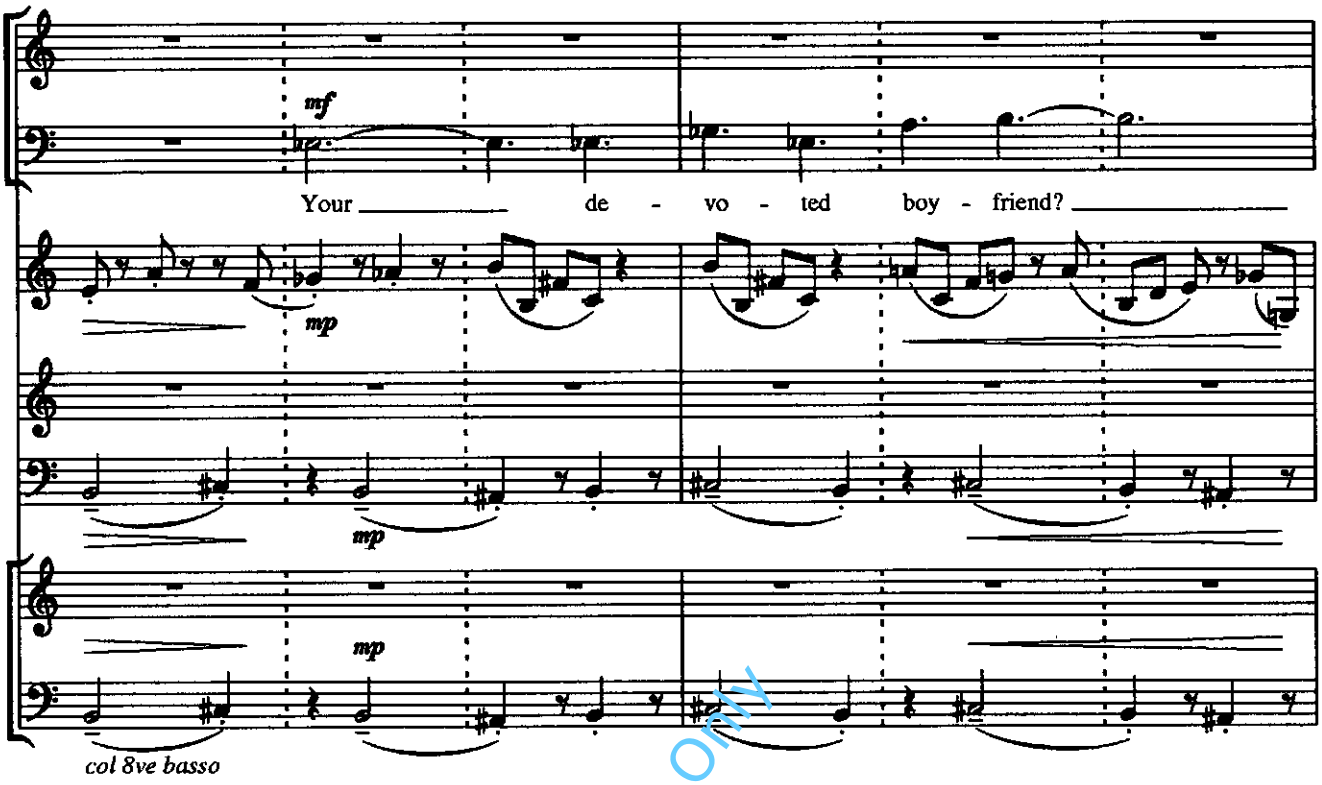
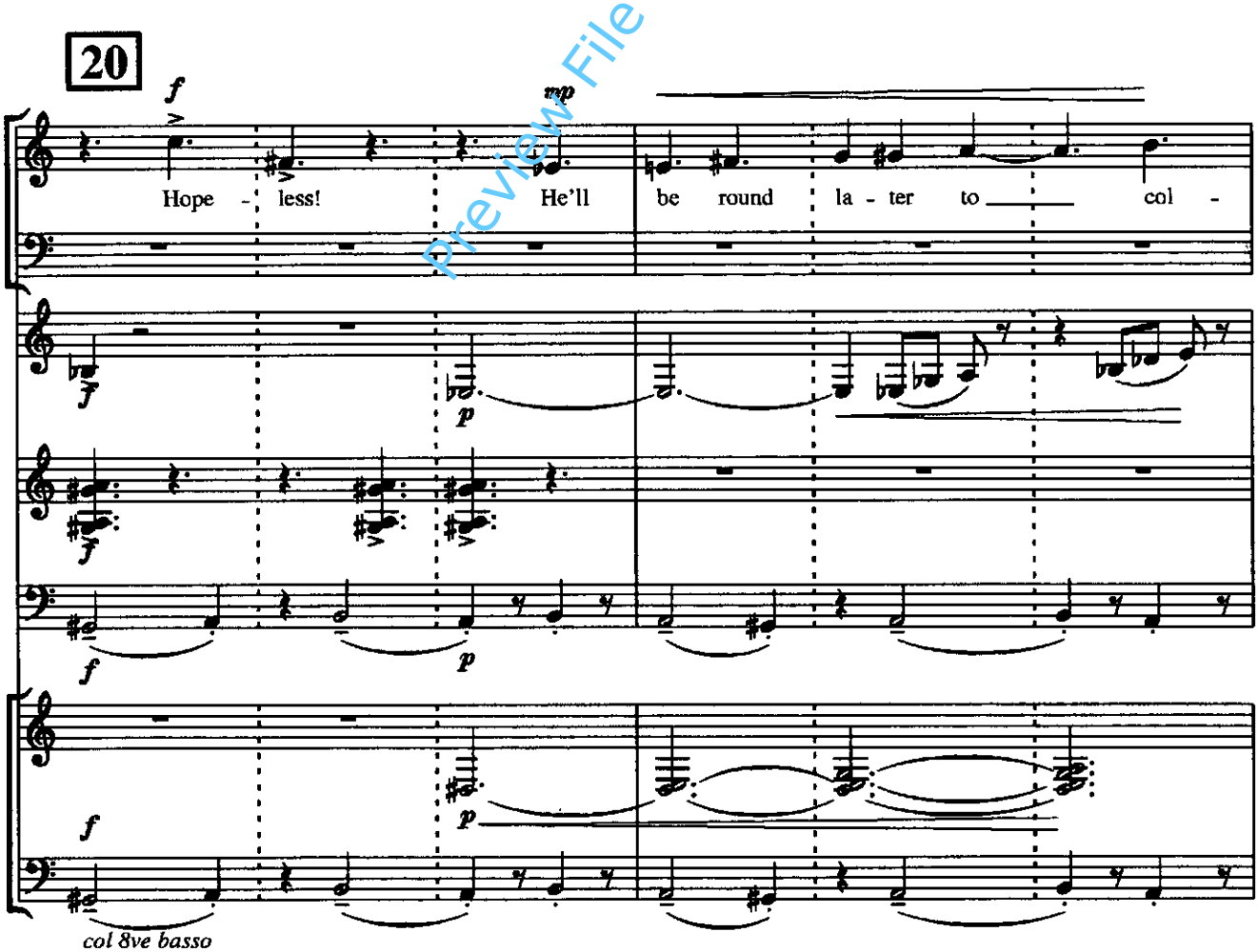
19 ♩=♩ (♩.=♩.)







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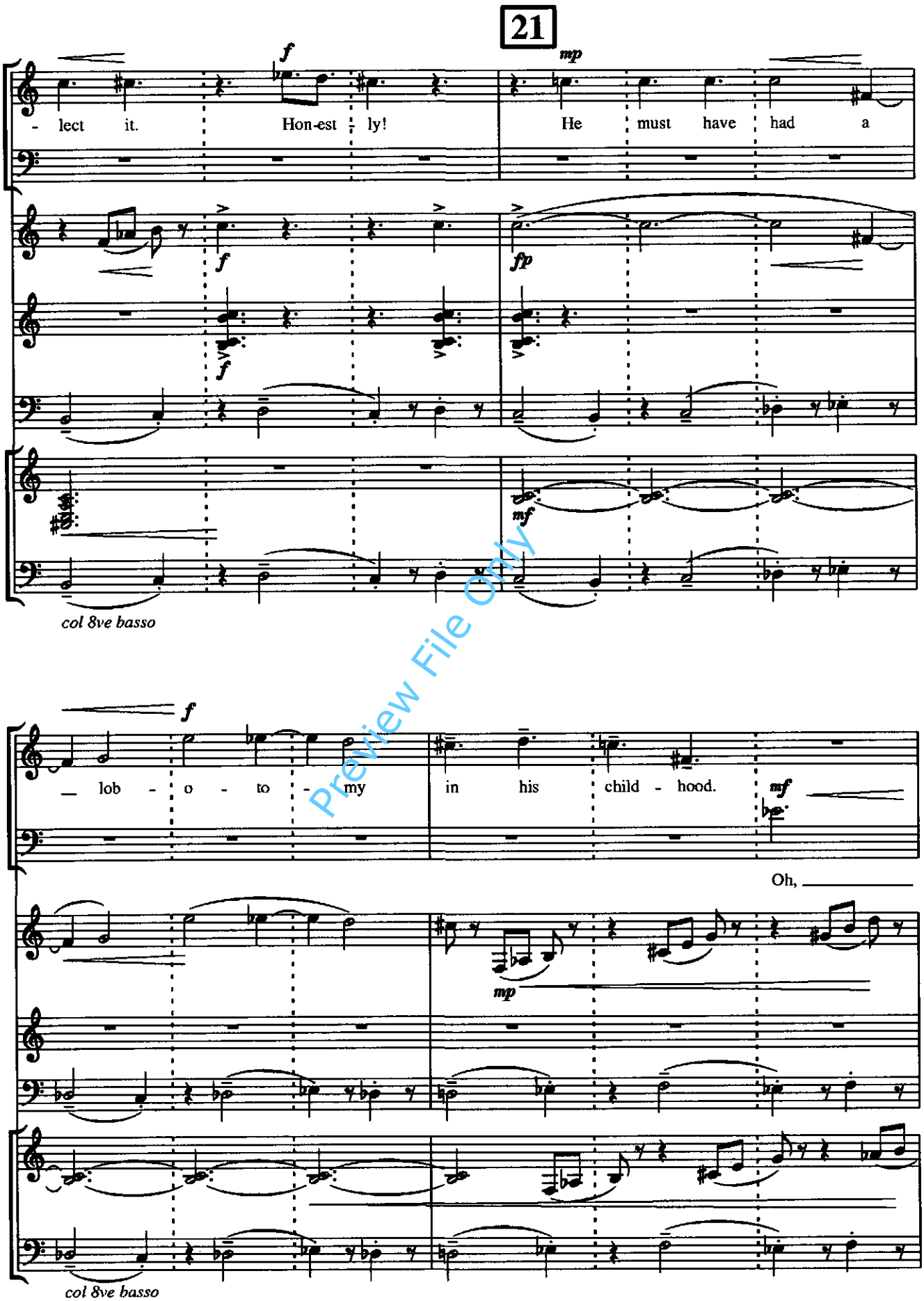

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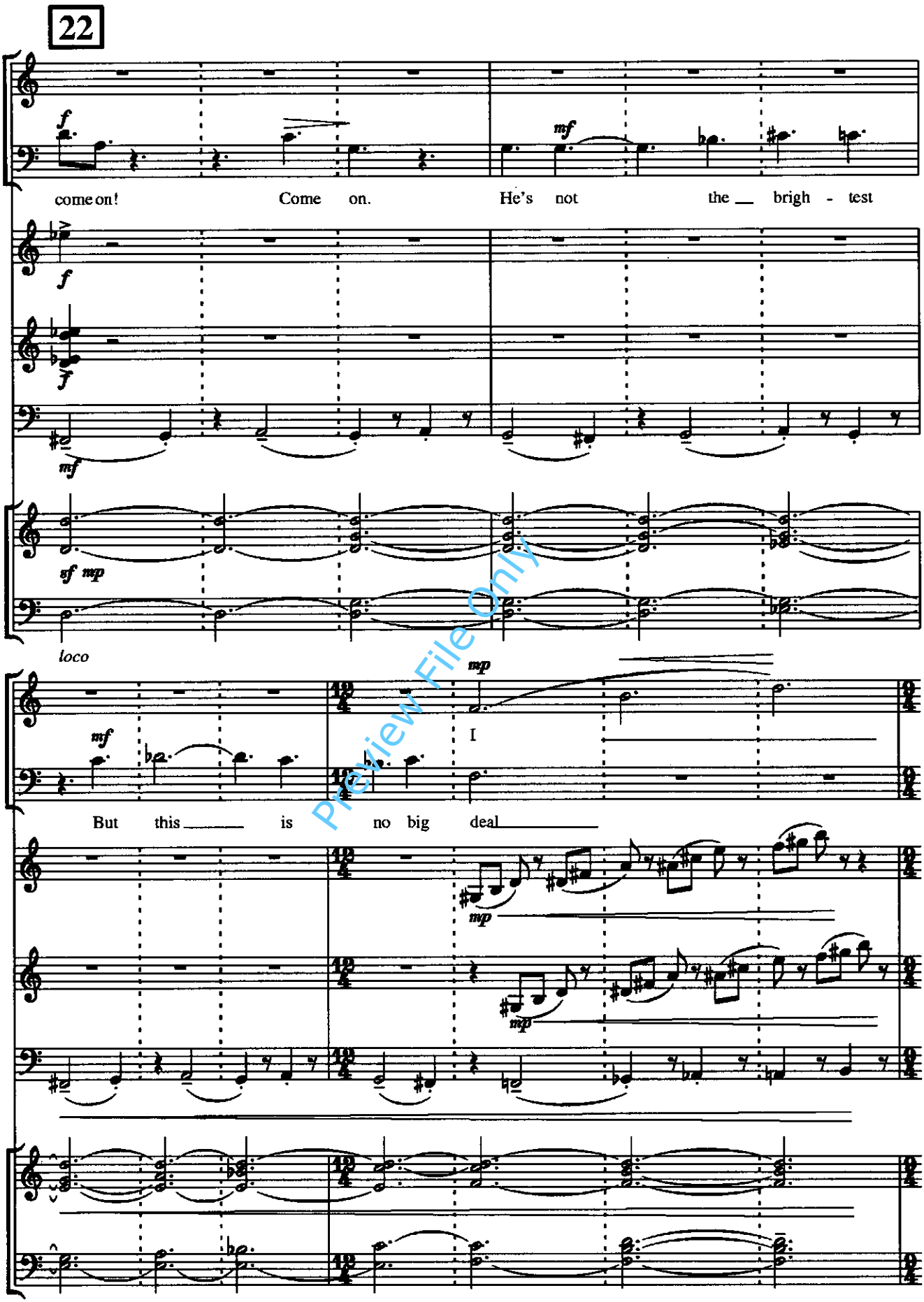

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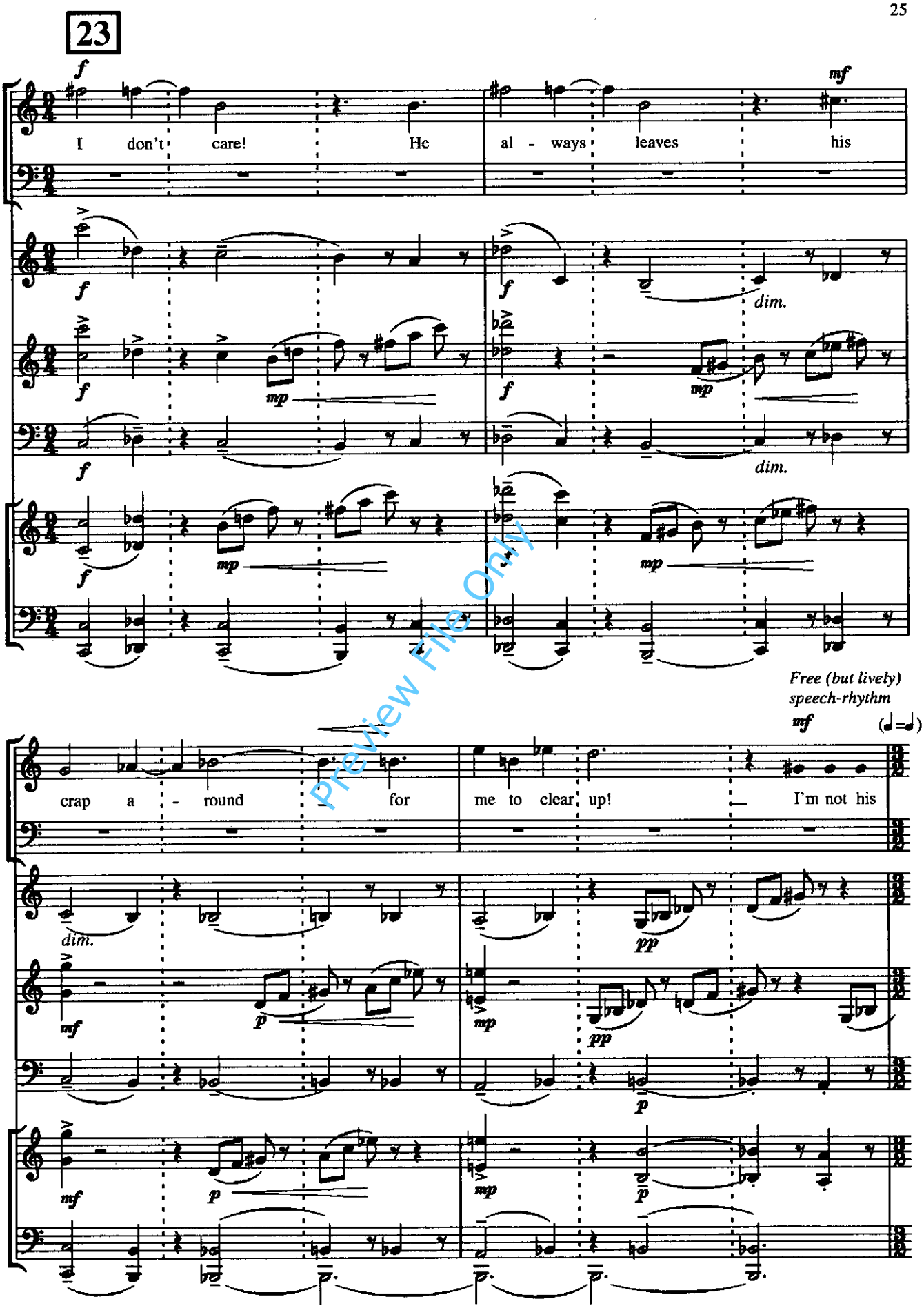

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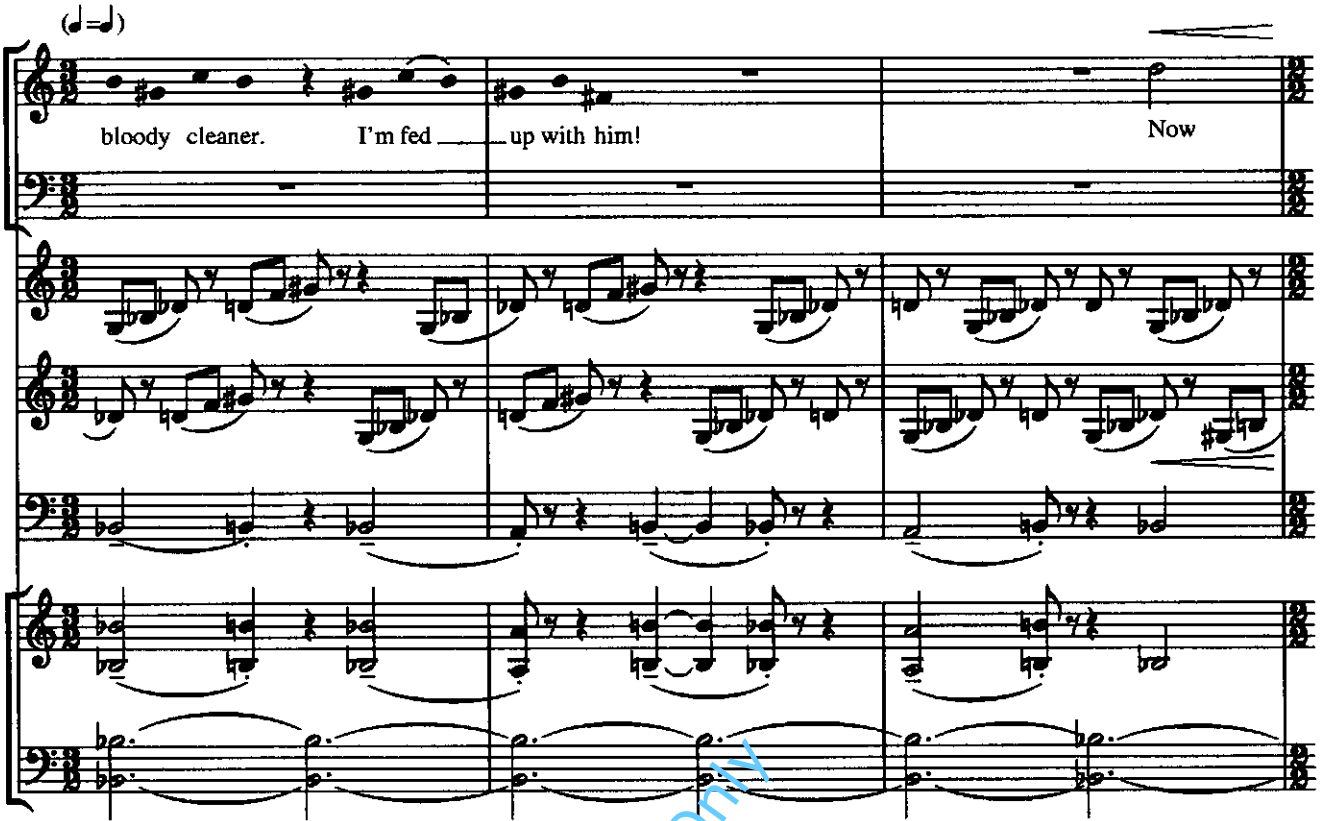

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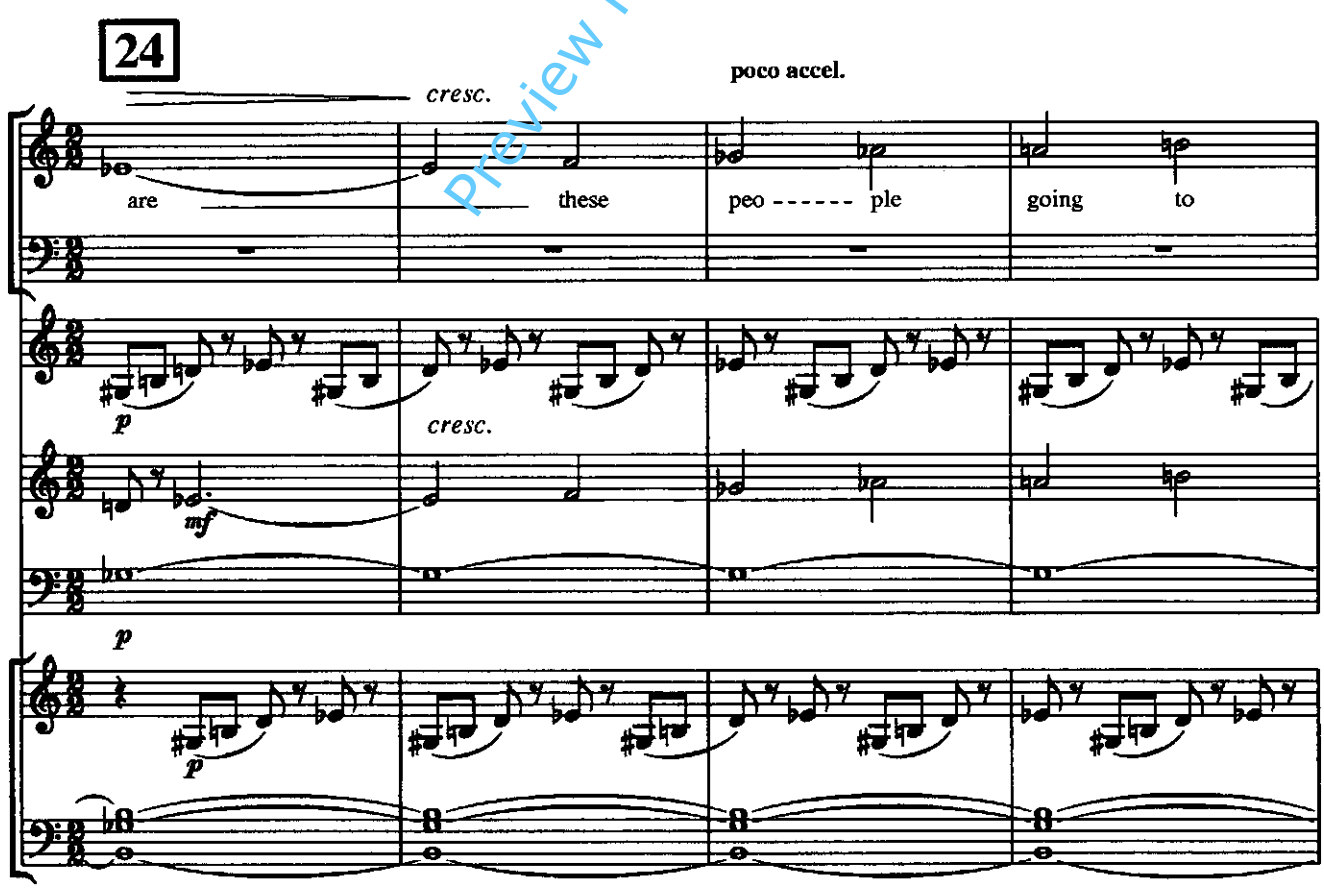

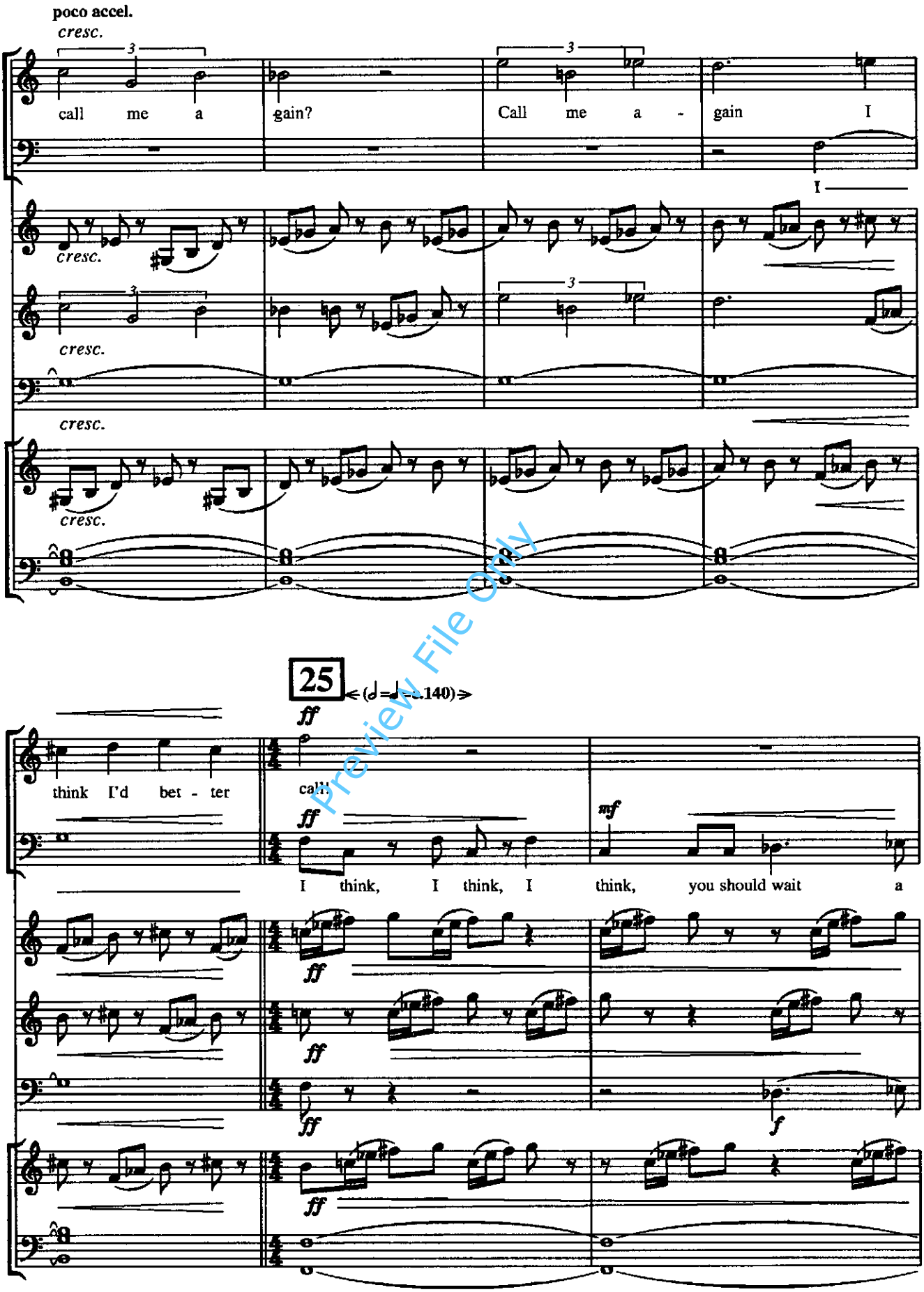

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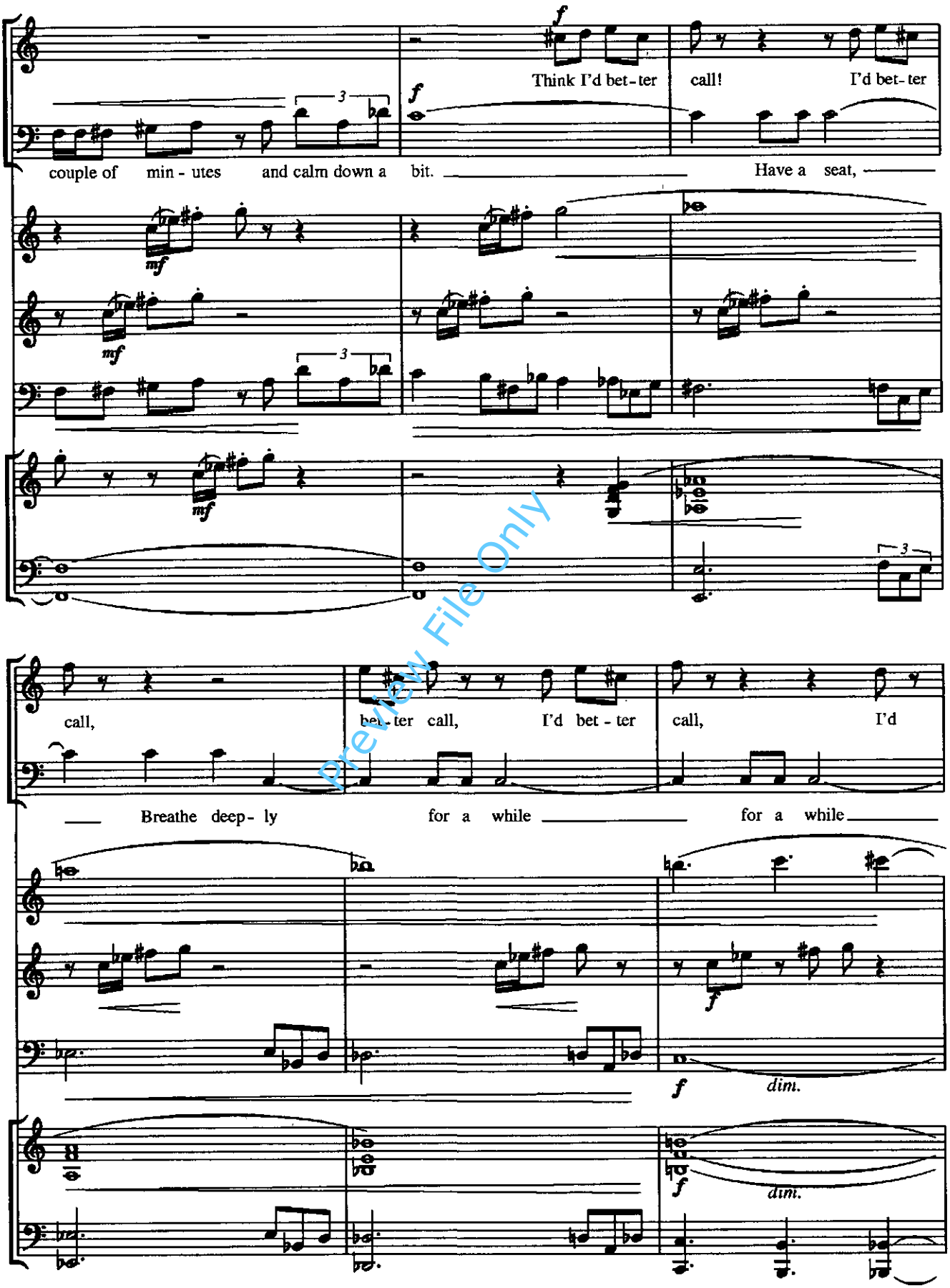

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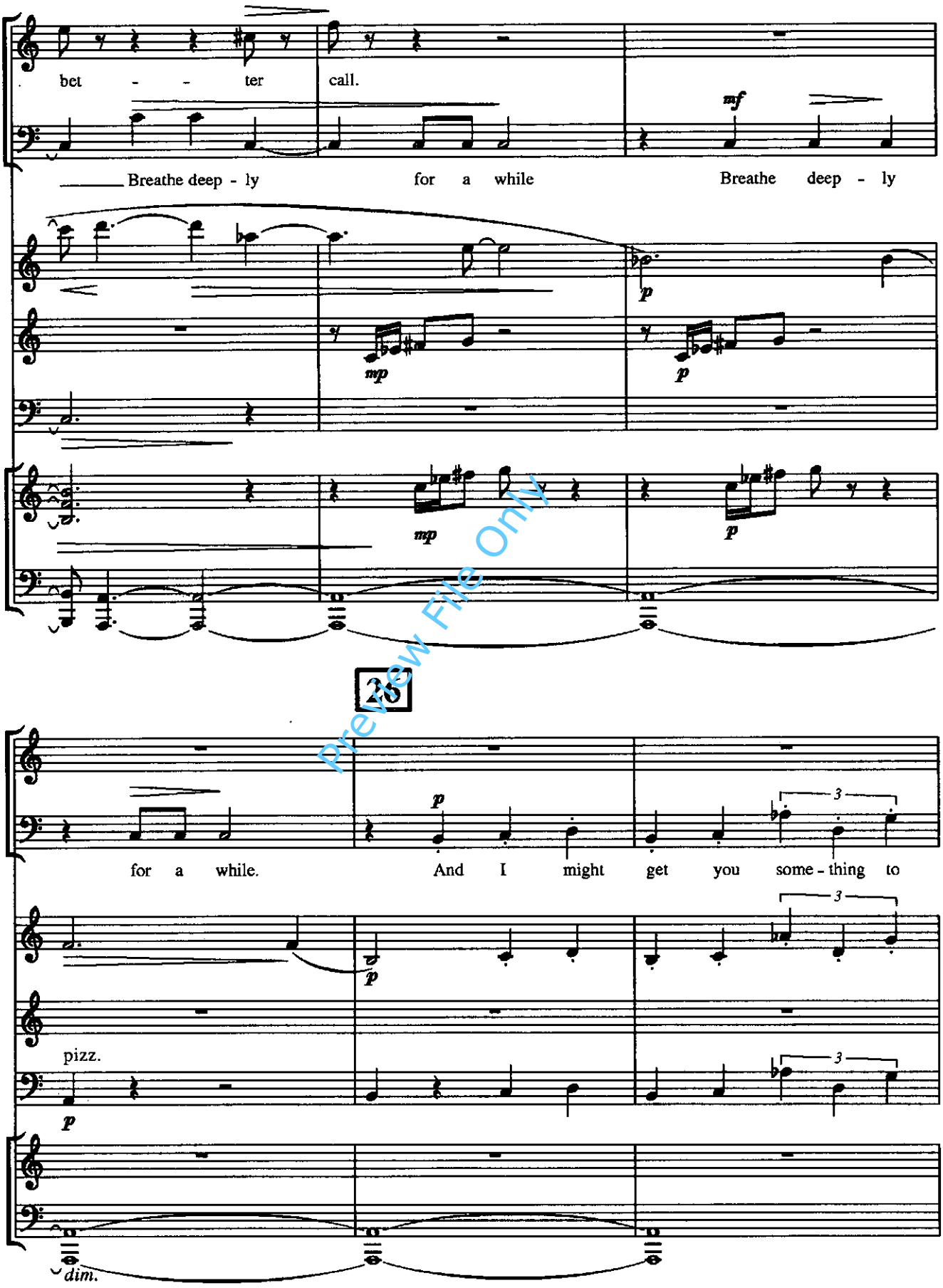

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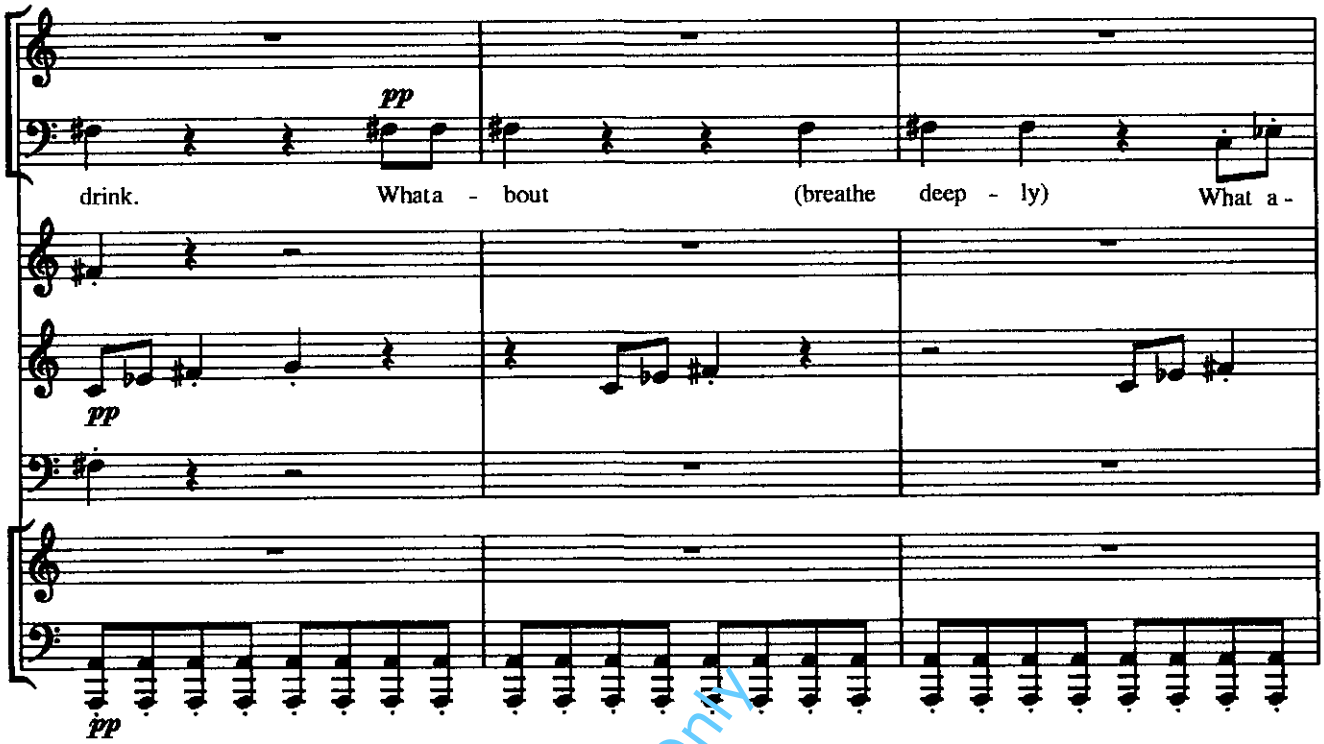

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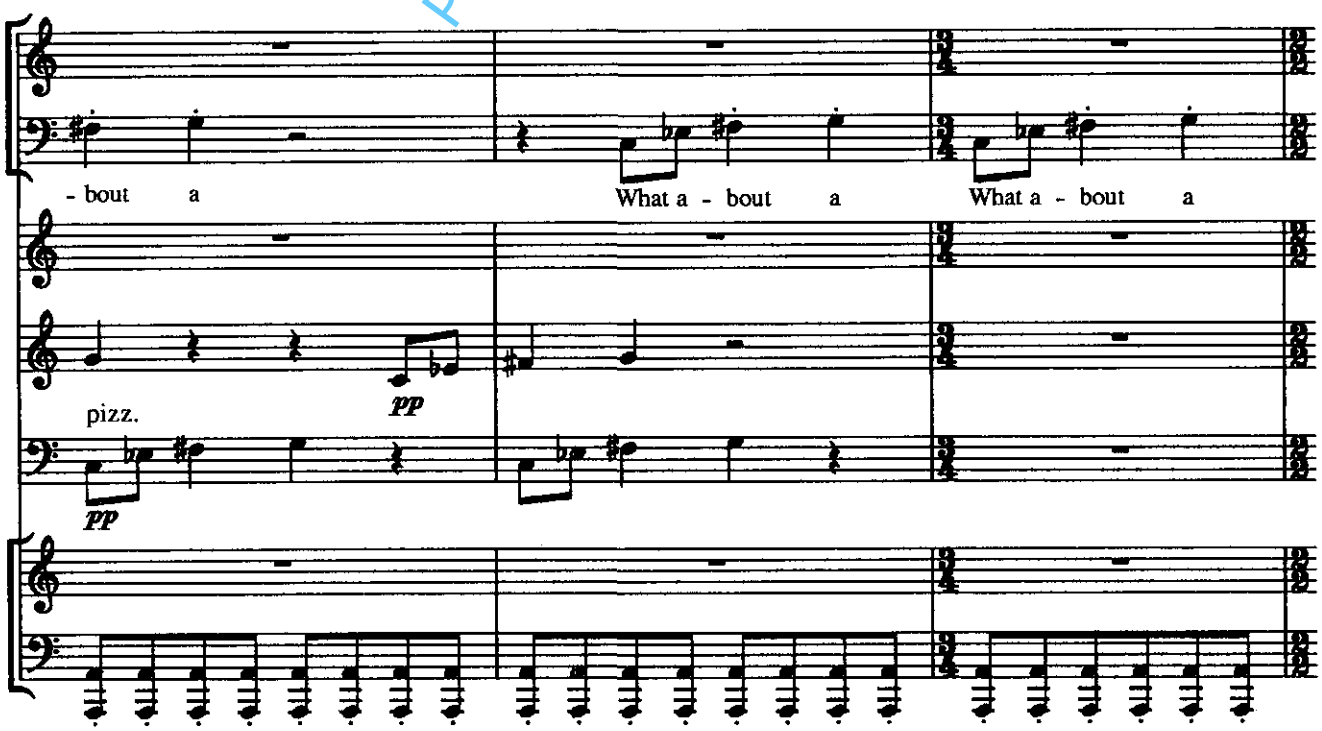

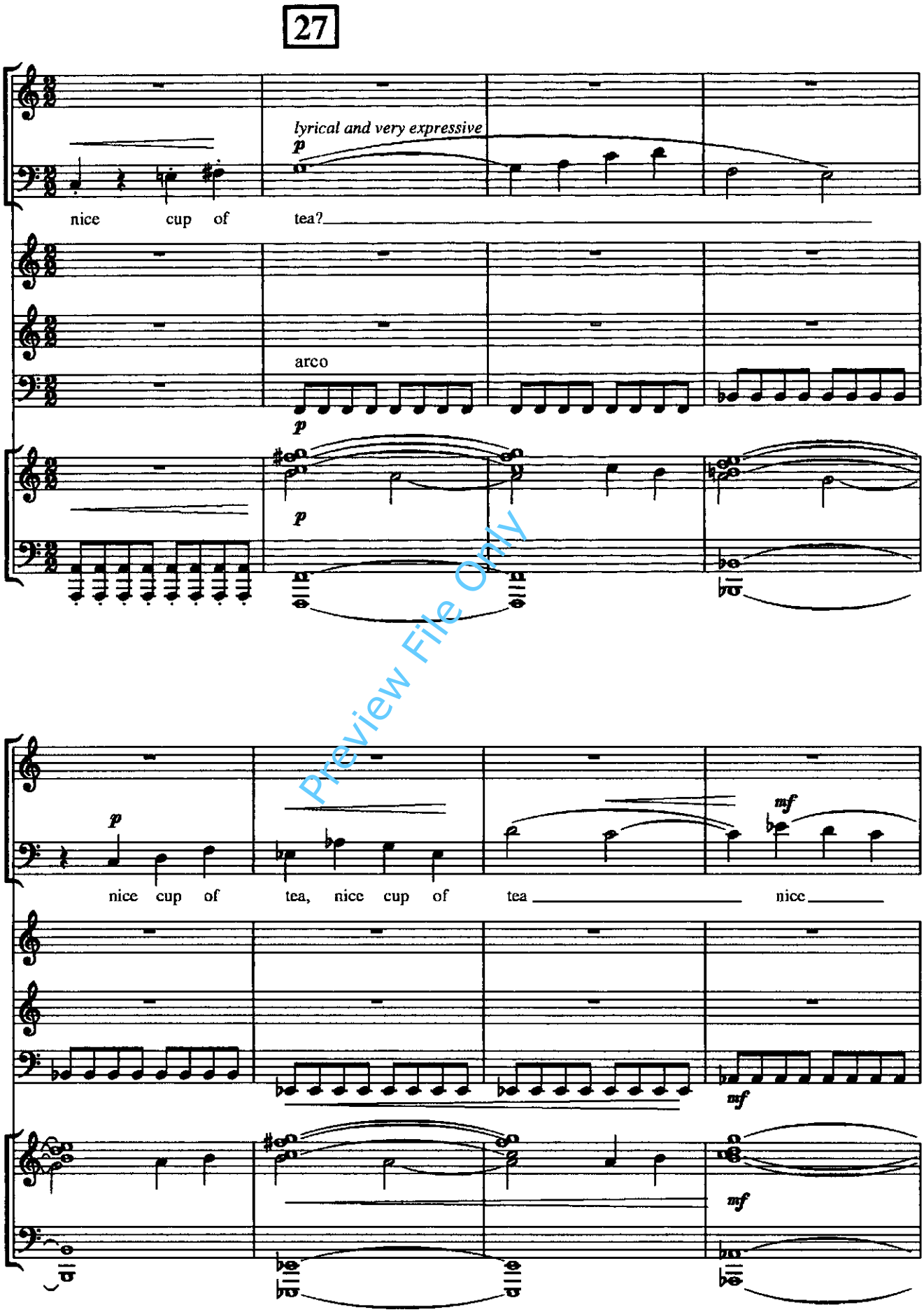

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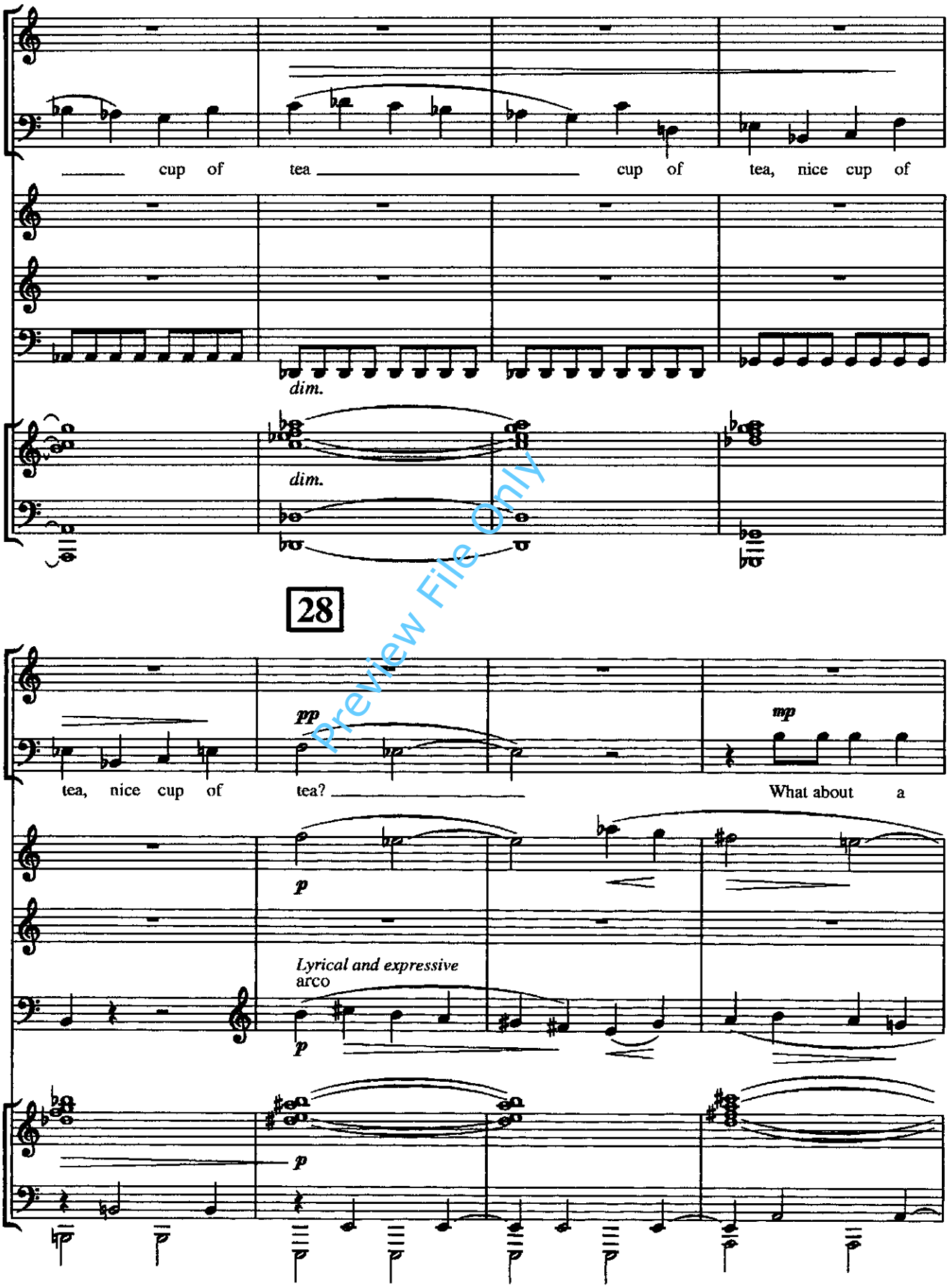
cup of tea cup of tea, nice cup of

tea, nice cup of tea? What about a

Lyrical and expressive
arco

Preview File Only

Nick goes off stage to make the tea.

(calling to him)

mp

Al-right, al - right, Three sugars

nice cup of tea?

29

falsetto *f* *mp* *mf*

What a - bout a nice cup of tea? Al-right? Just a drop of milk. Leave

What a - bout a nice cup of

mf

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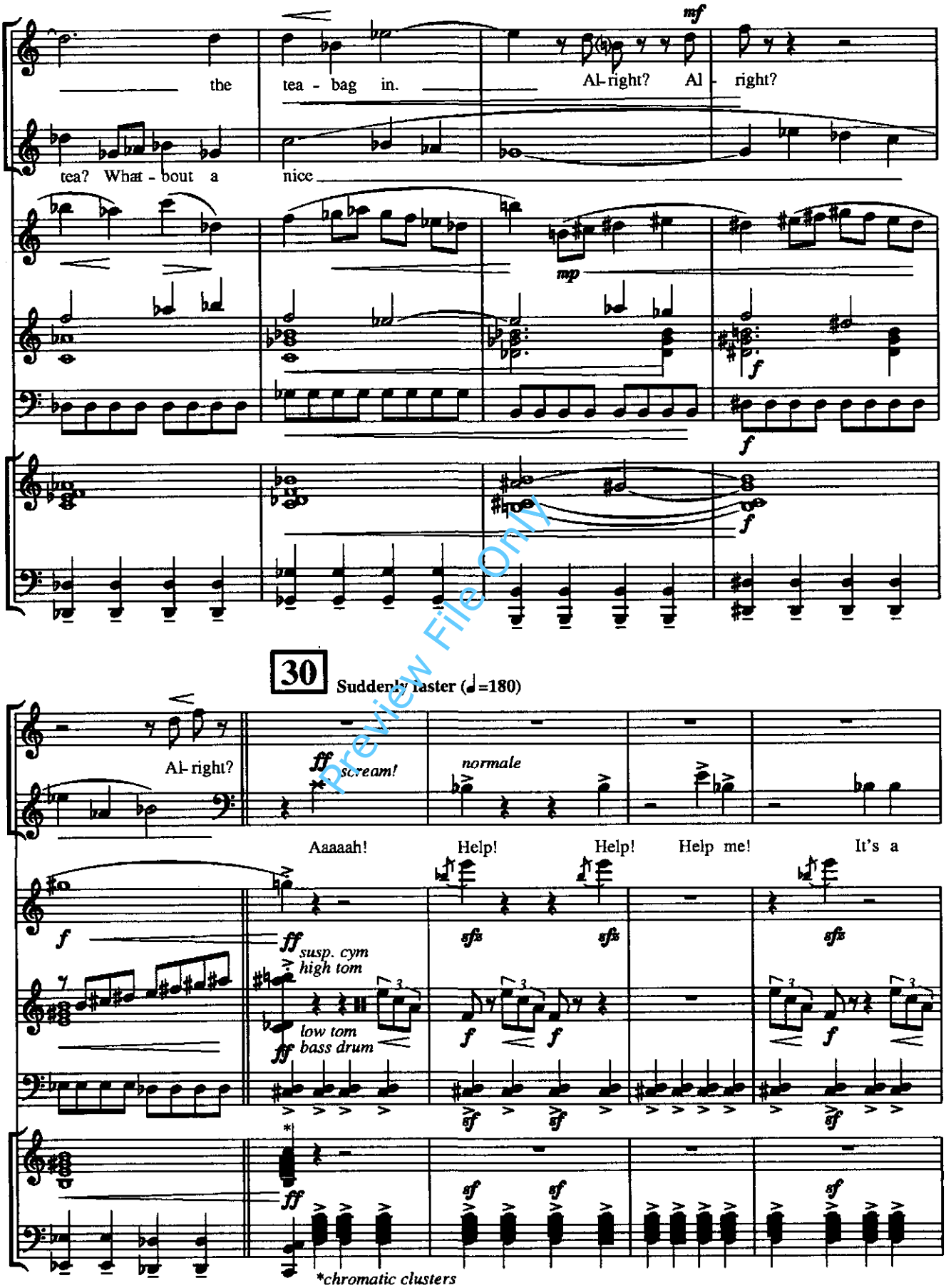

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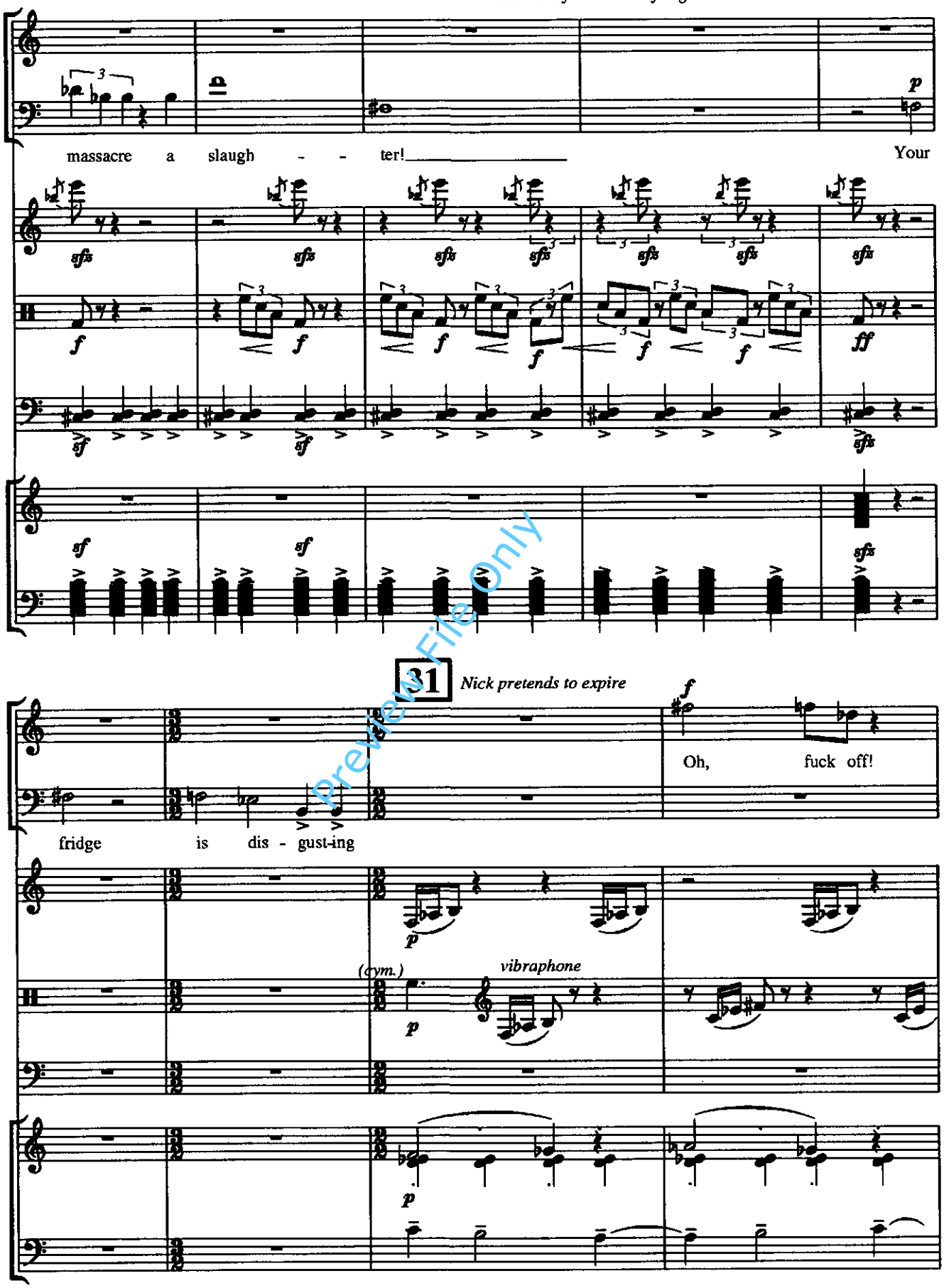
Nick staggers back in, carrying something particularly horrible which he's found in the fridge.



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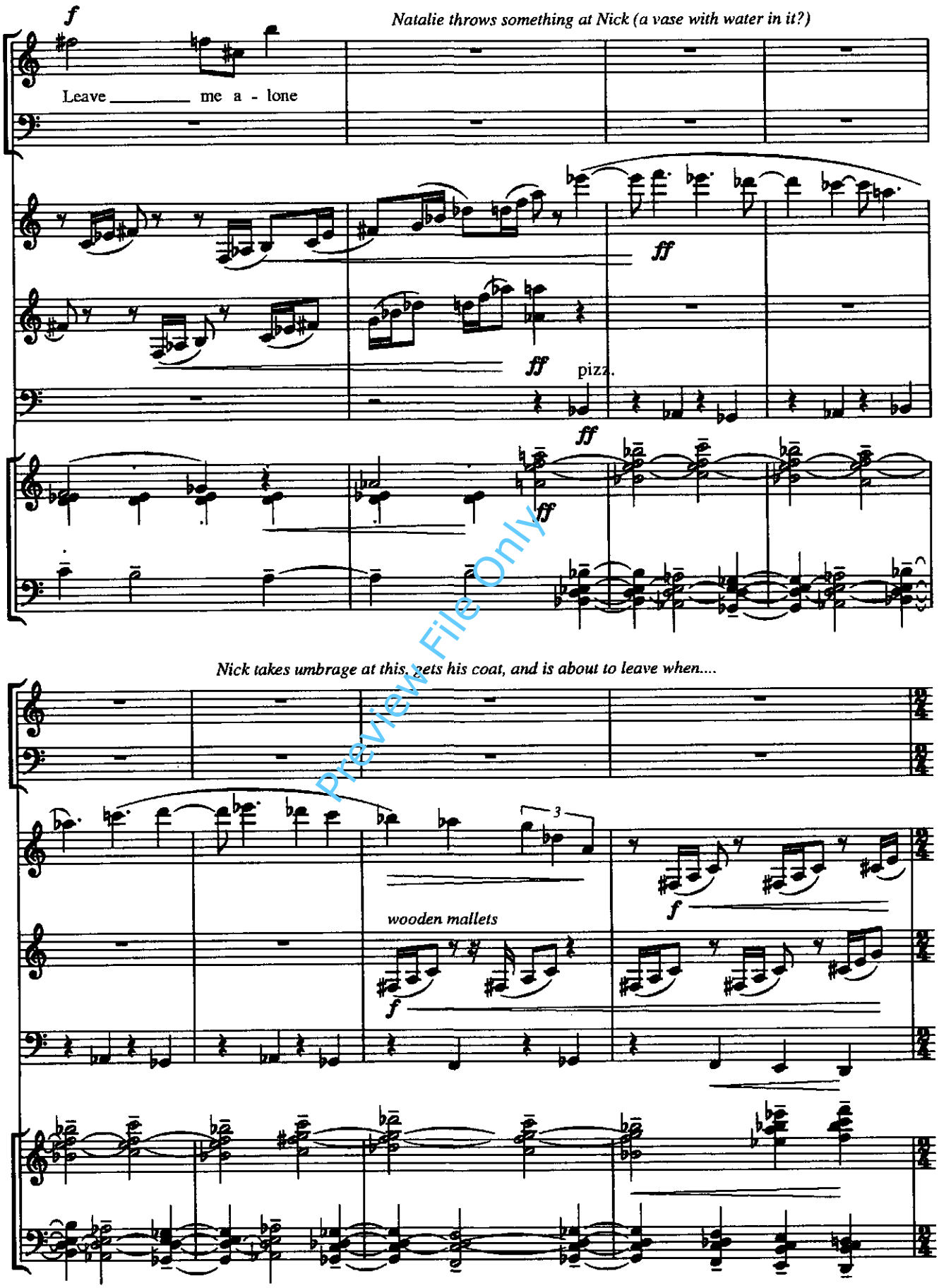

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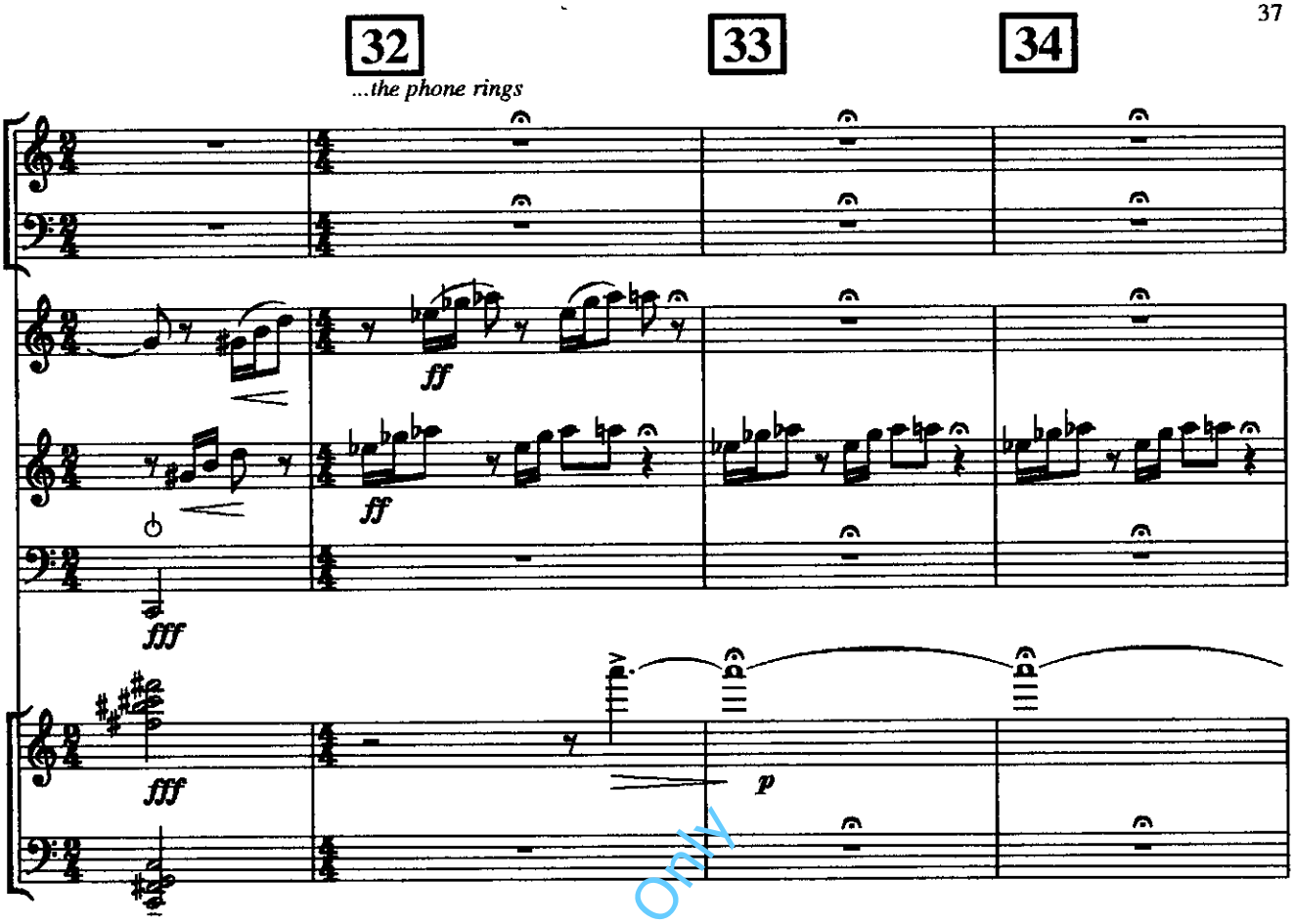

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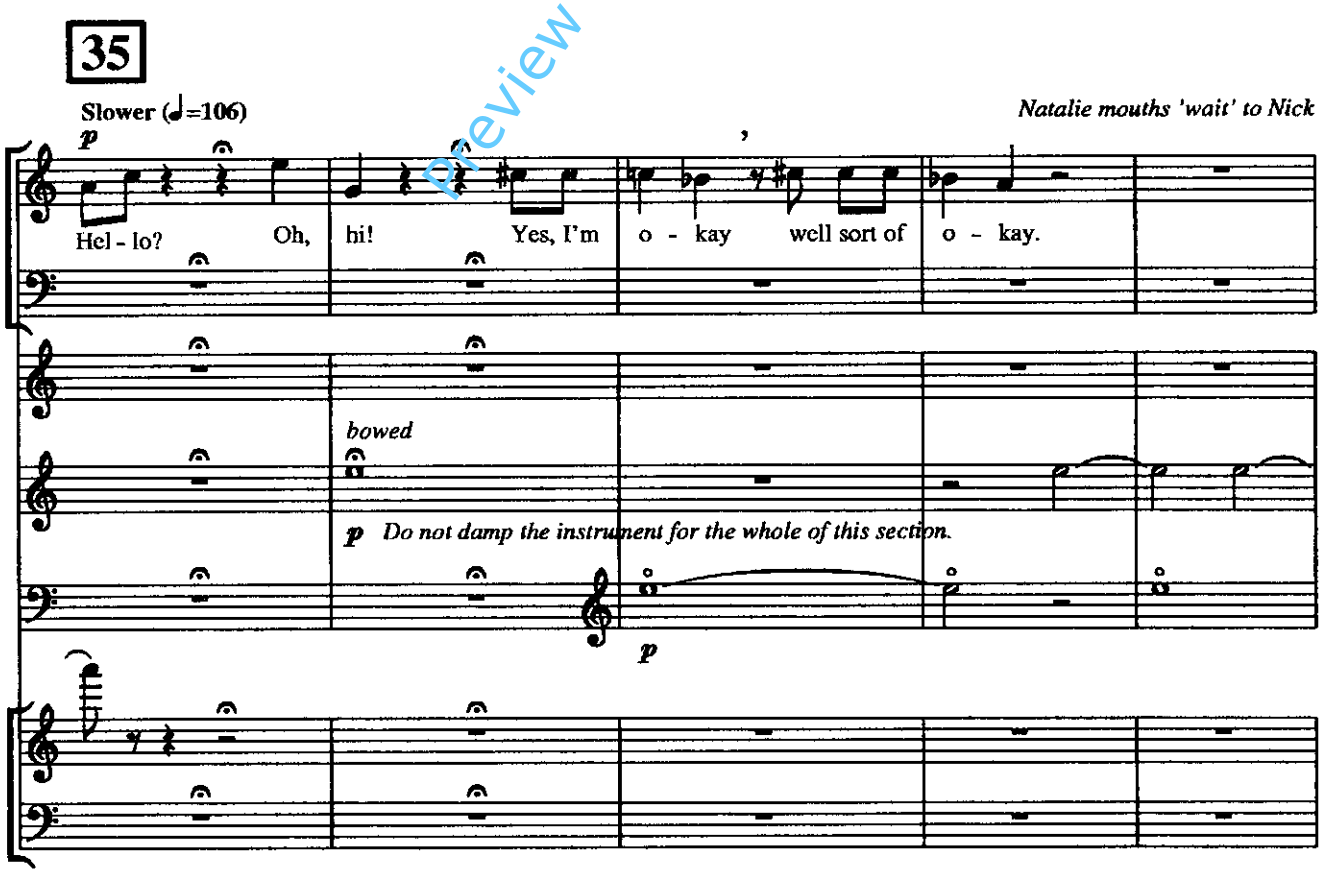

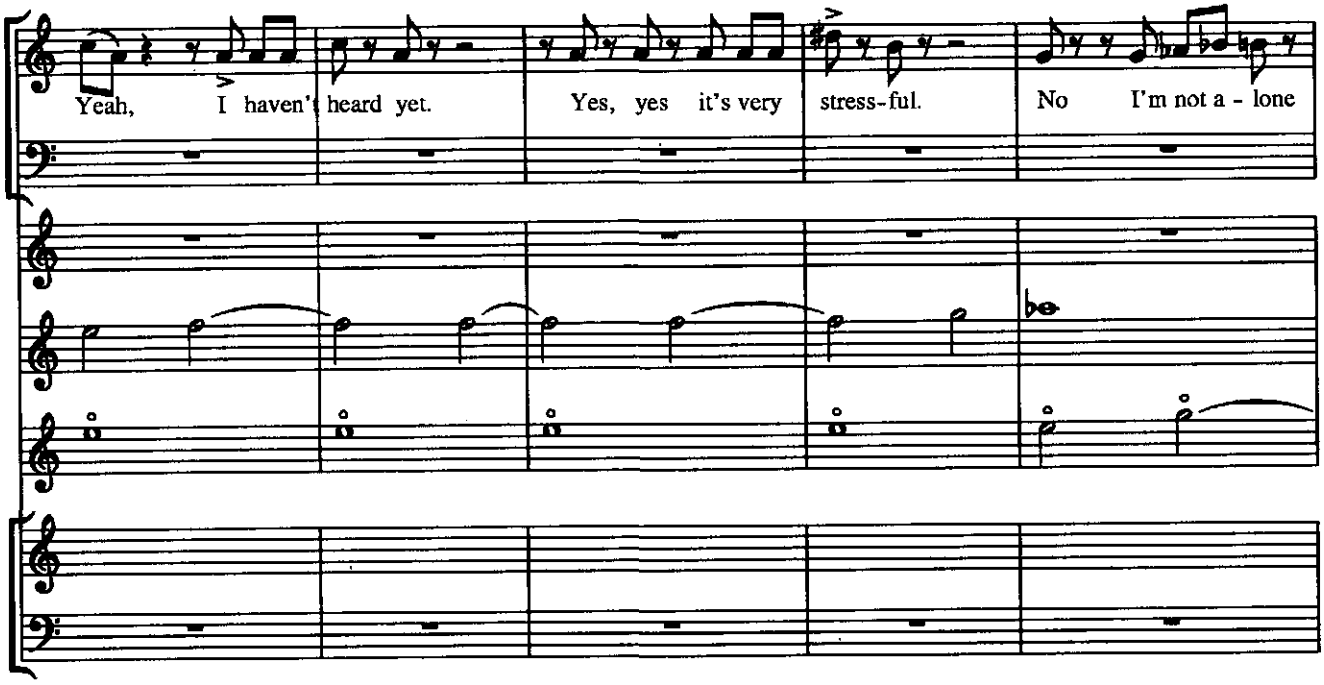

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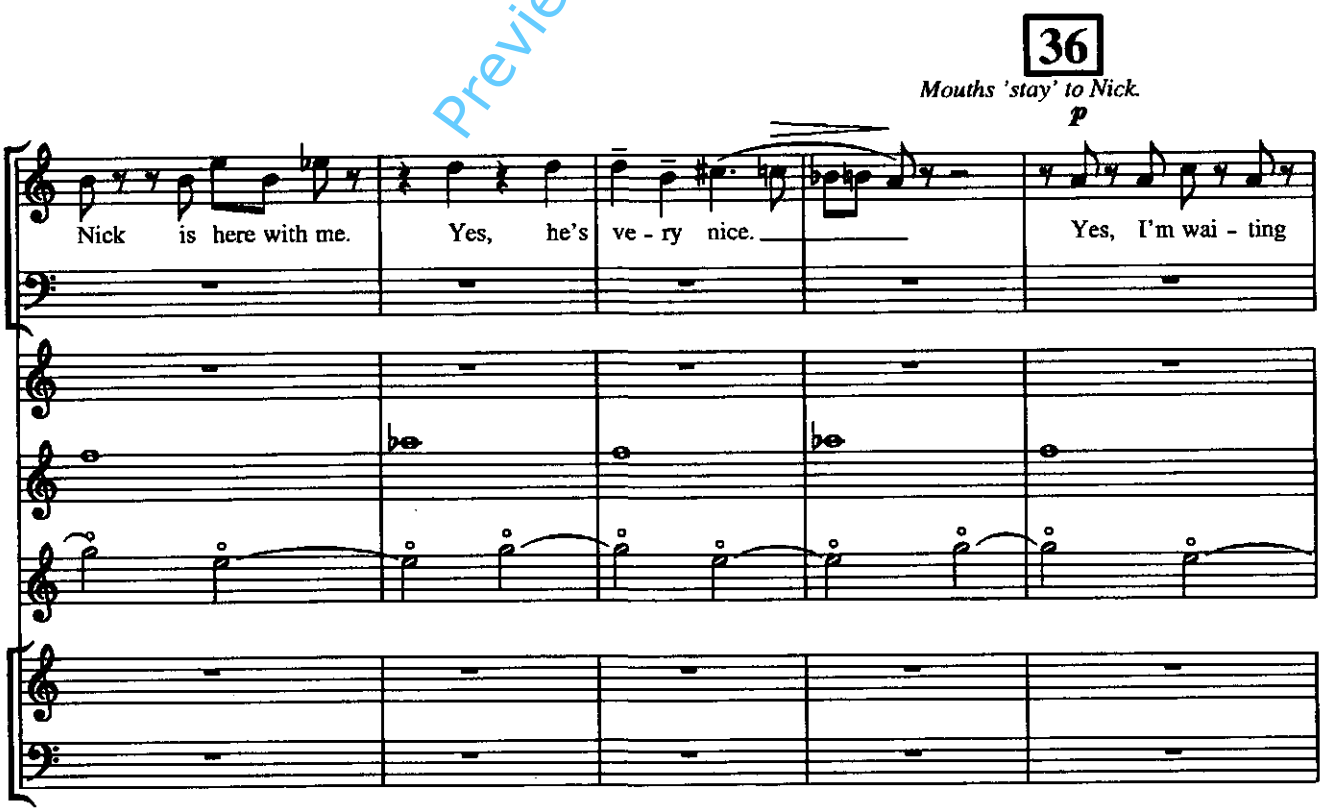

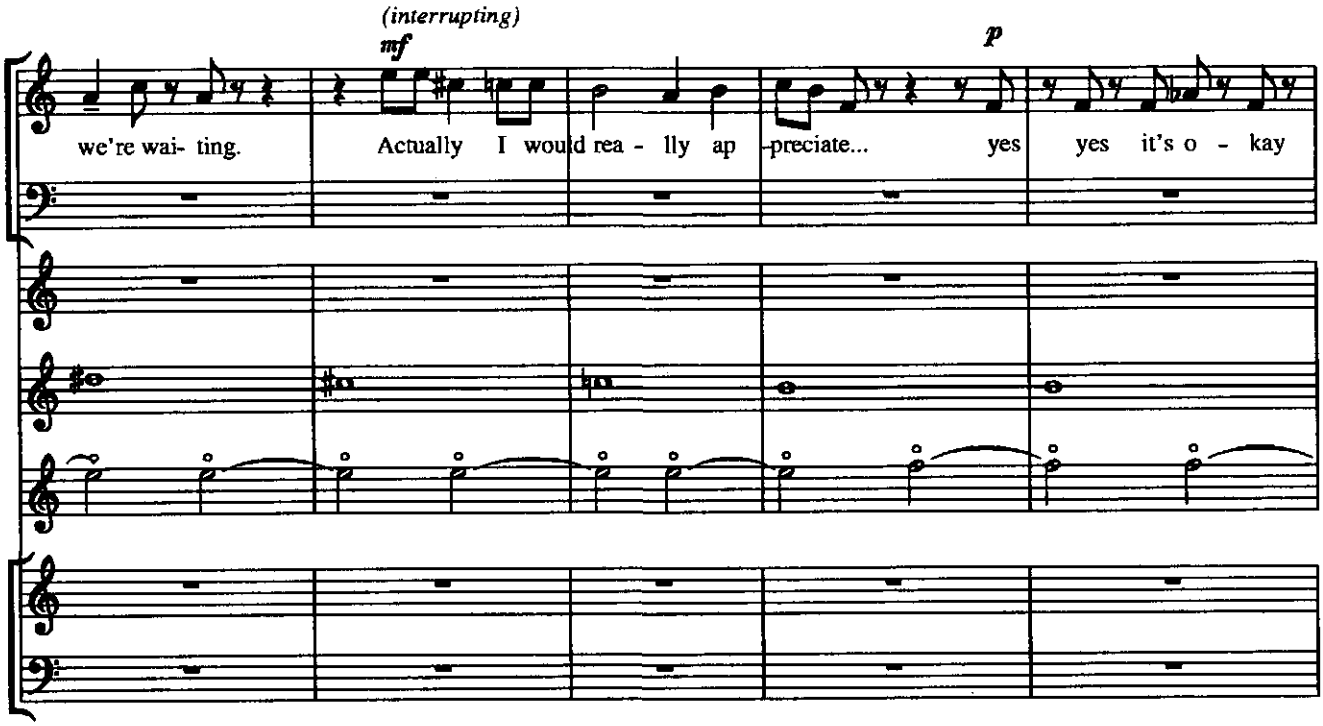

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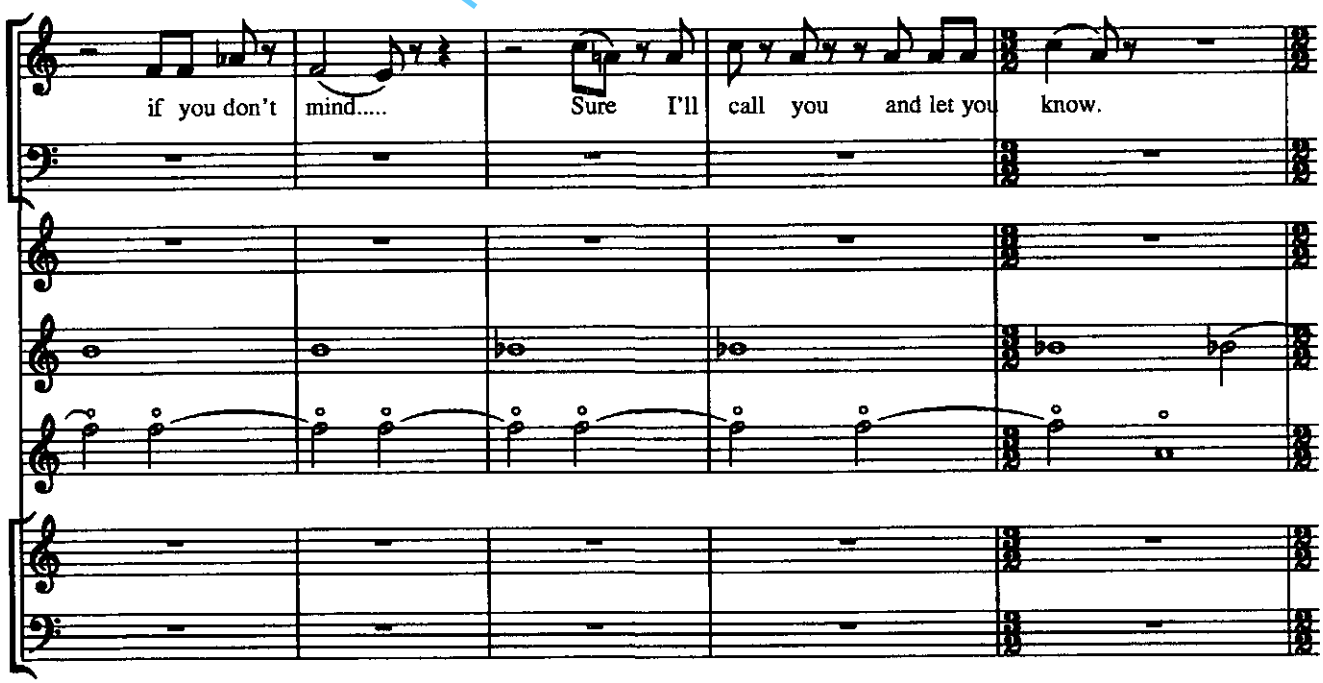

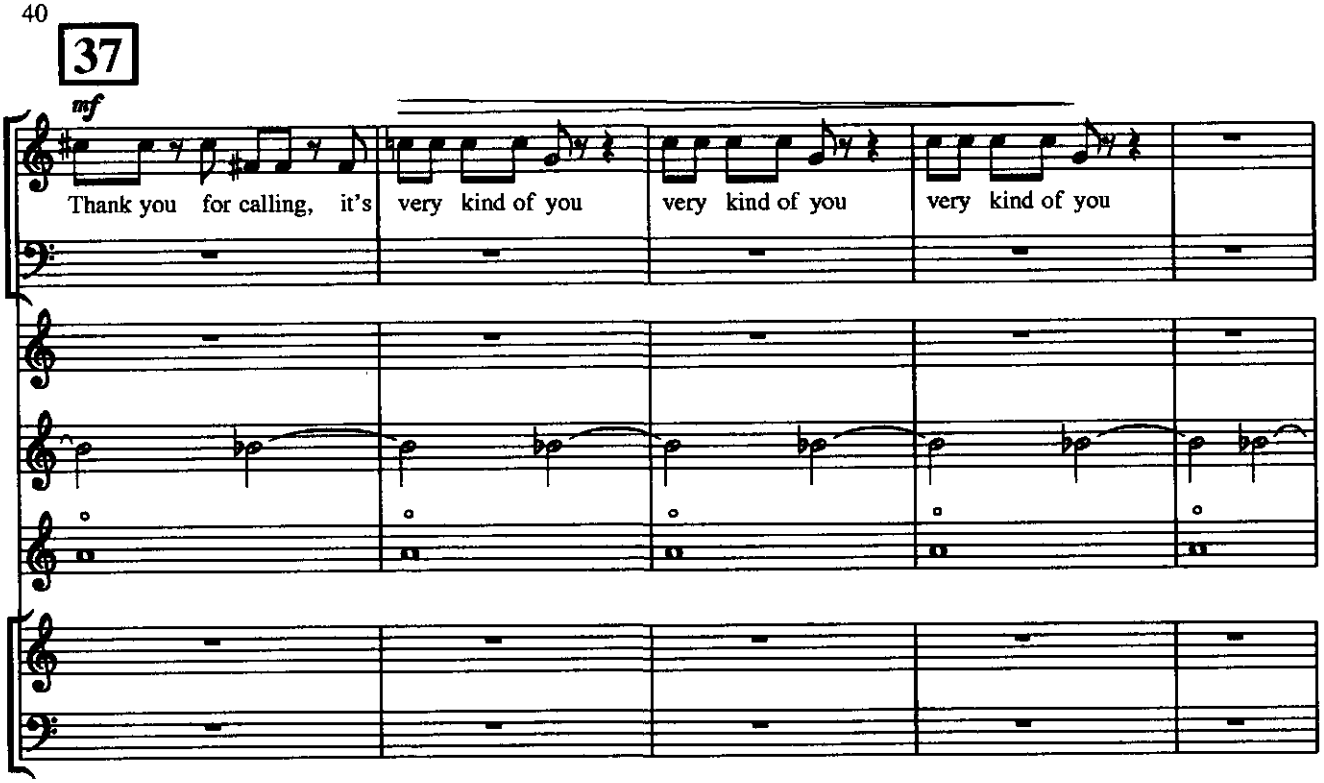

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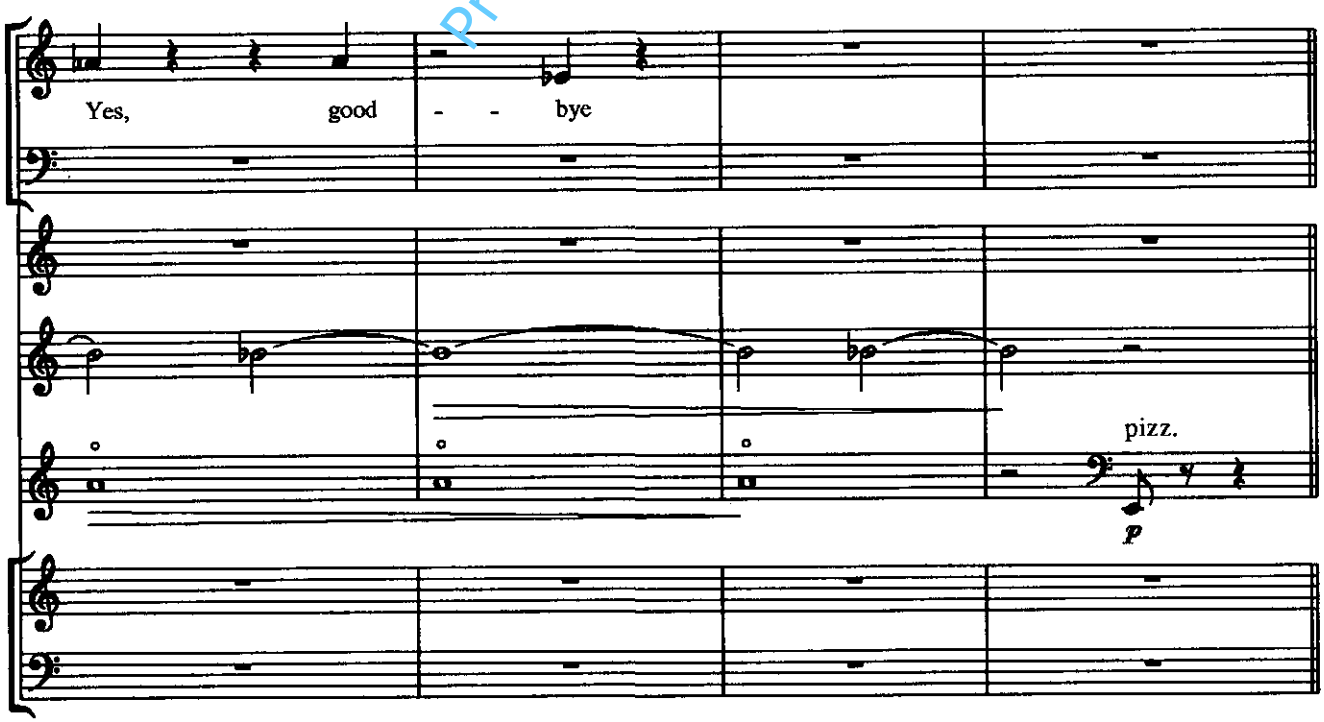


38

Natalie puts the phone down. She doesn't know what to say to Nick (who's by the door).

Freely (recit.) *Nick's looking at her, almost waiting for an apology.* *Nick thinks.*

p

No, it wasn't them. Do you really have to go? Almost half past one.

p

What time is it?

(slightly desperately)

mf

Perhaps I should call them a - gain?

39

♩=60, poco accel. immediately

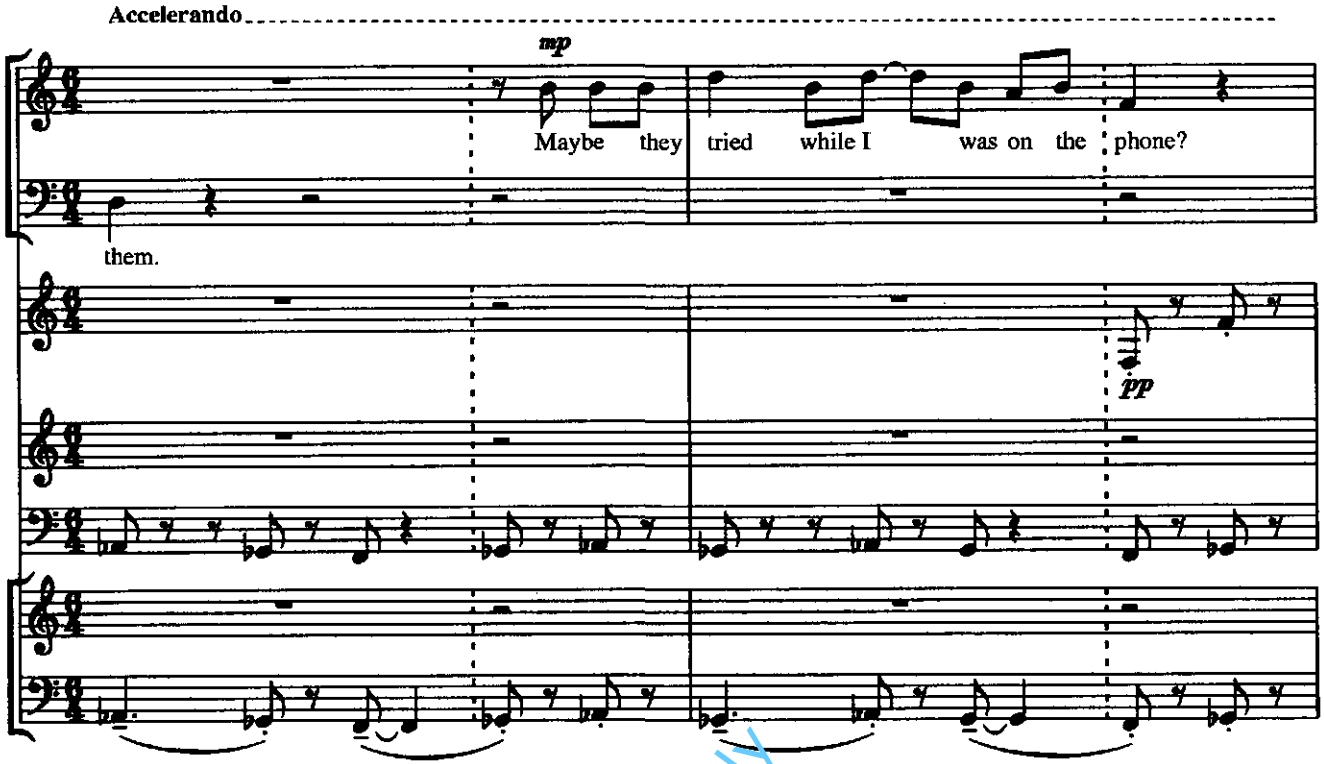
I have to go. I really think you should leave it to

pizz.

pp

pp

Preview File Only



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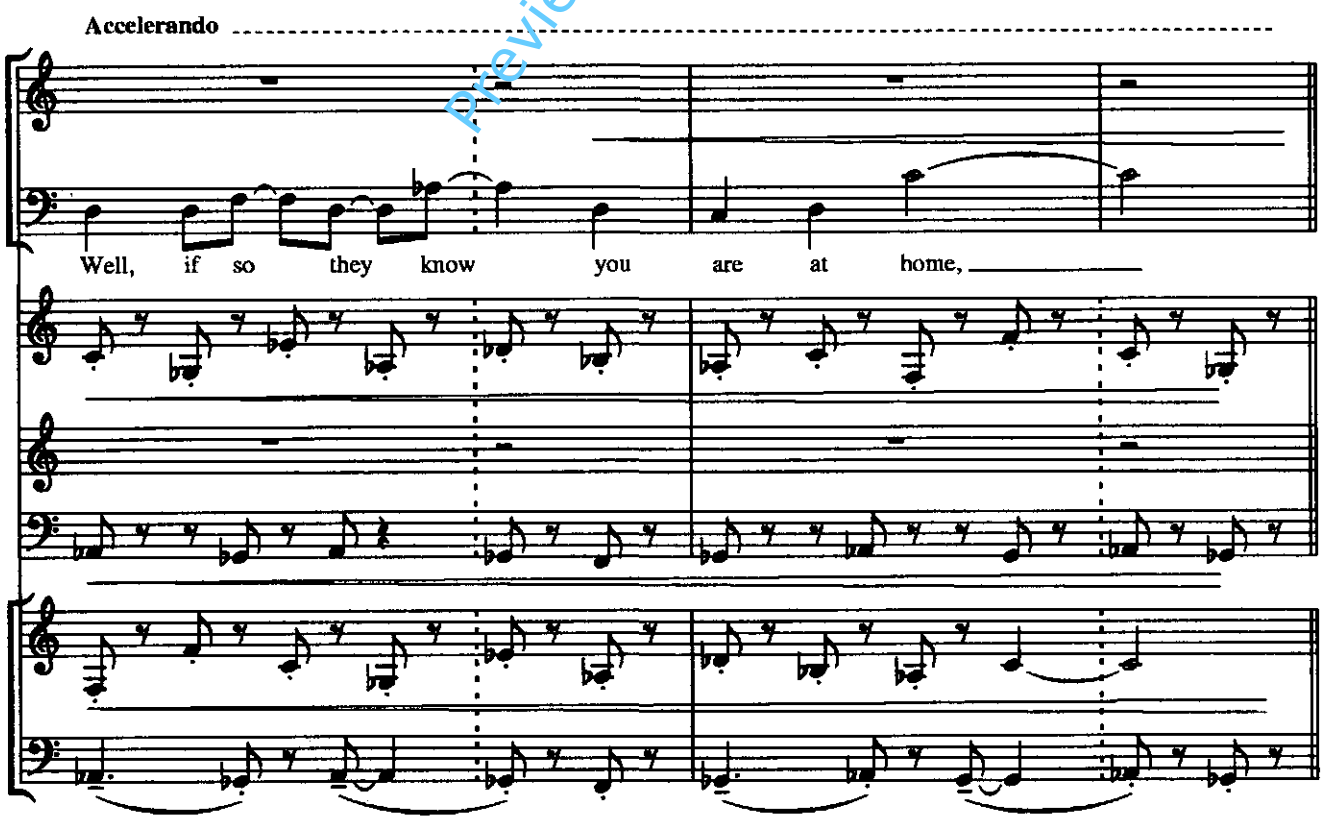
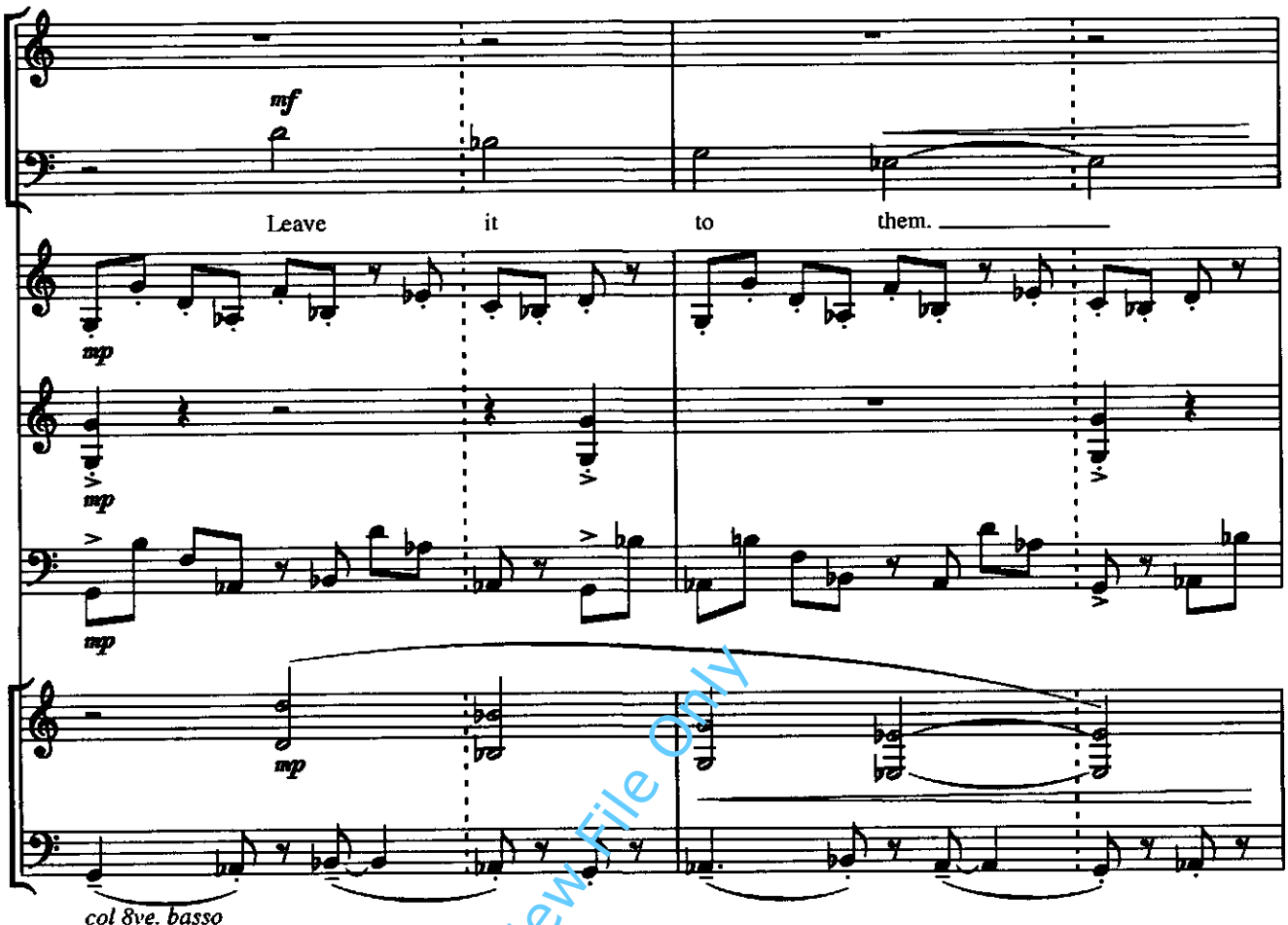


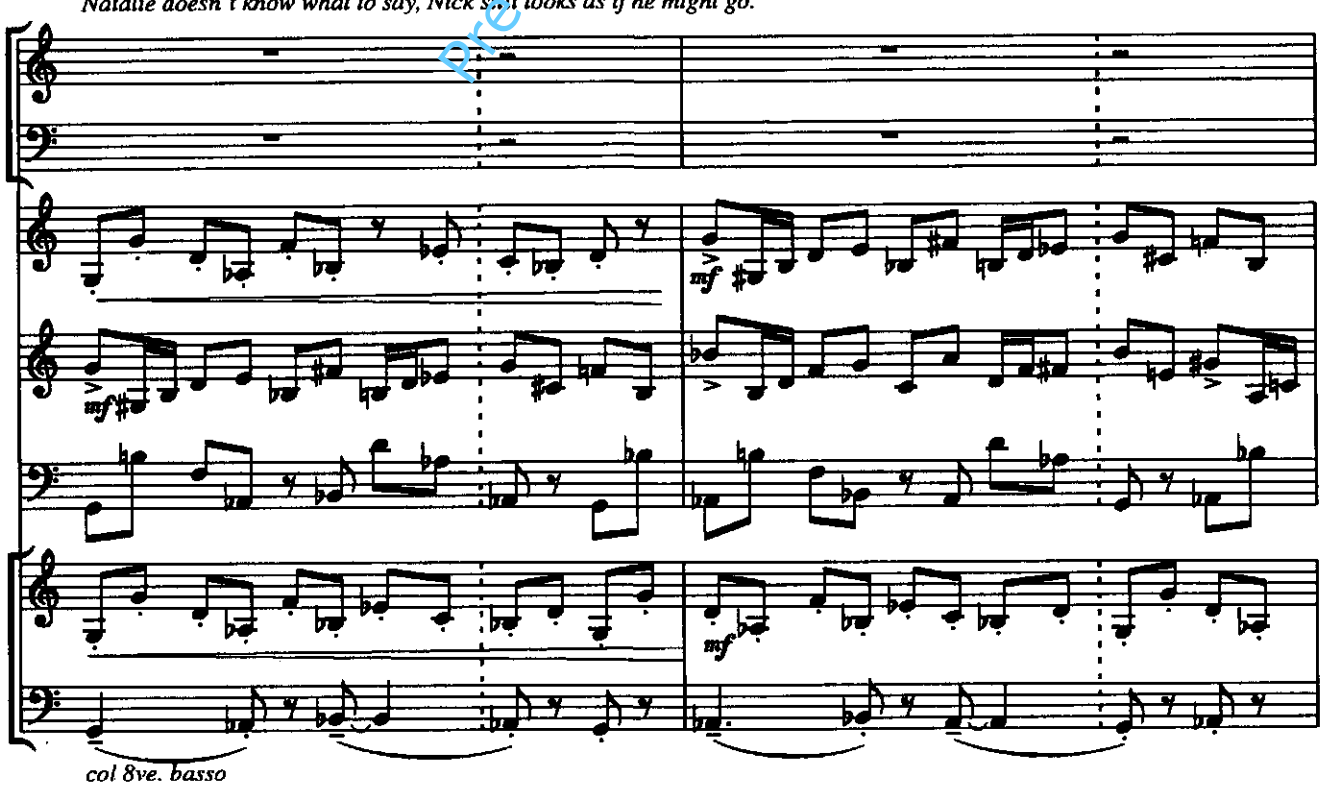
40

♩=140



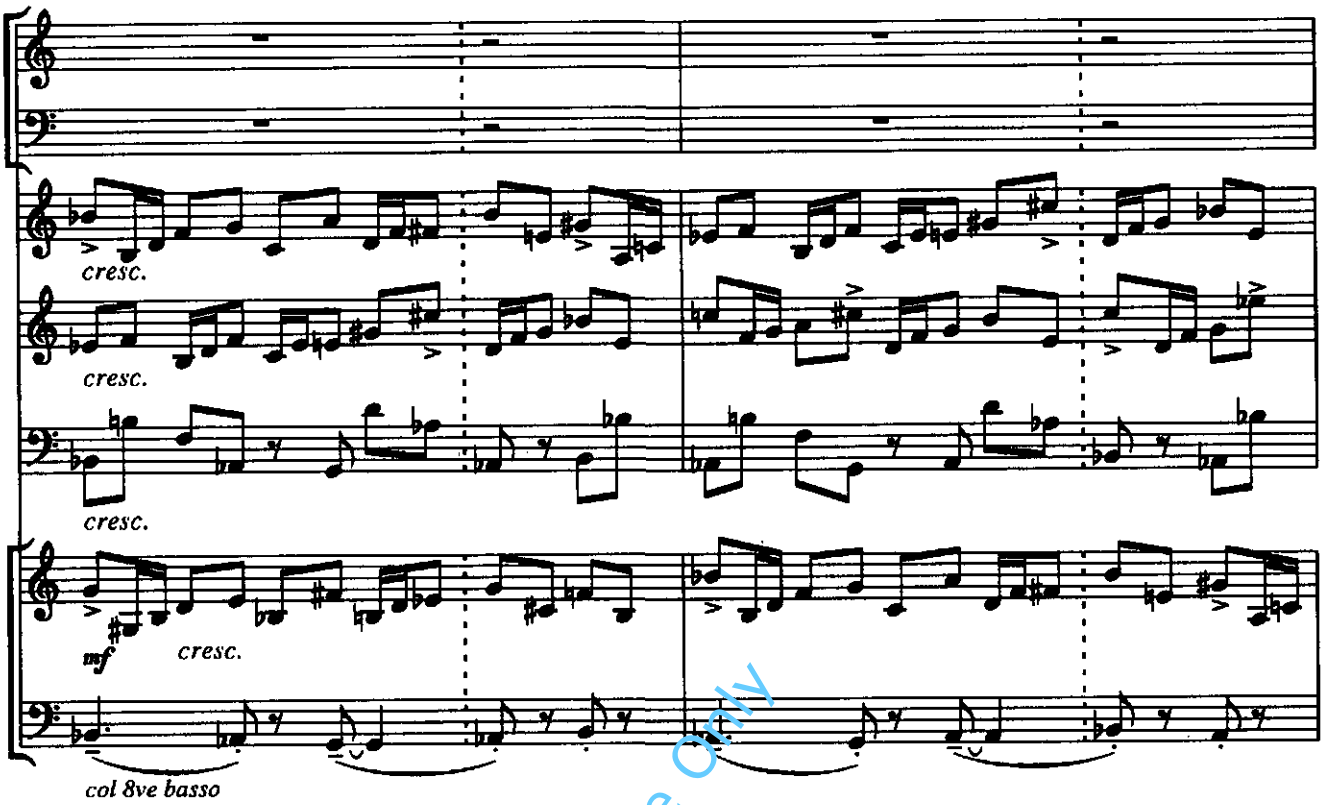
col 8ve. basso

Natalie doesn't know what to say, Nick still looks as if he might go.



col 8ve. basso

Preview File Only



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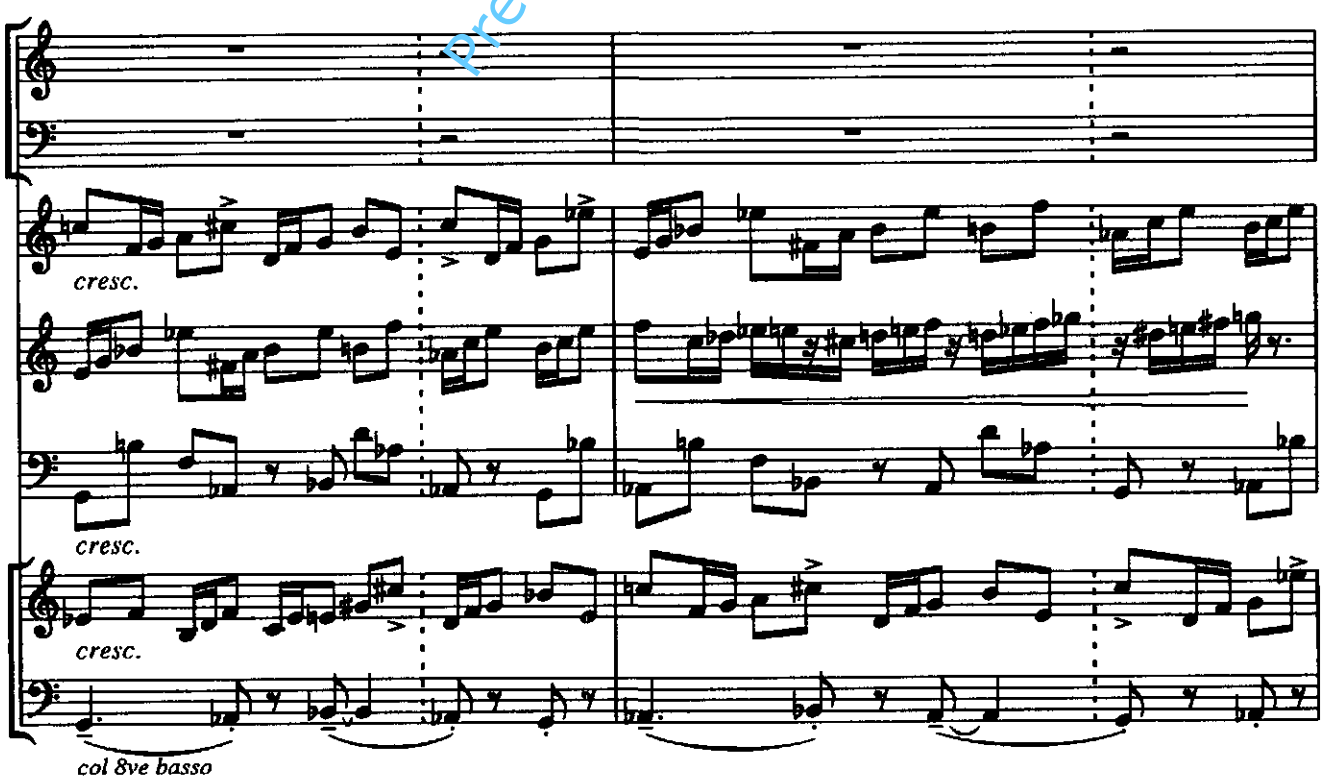
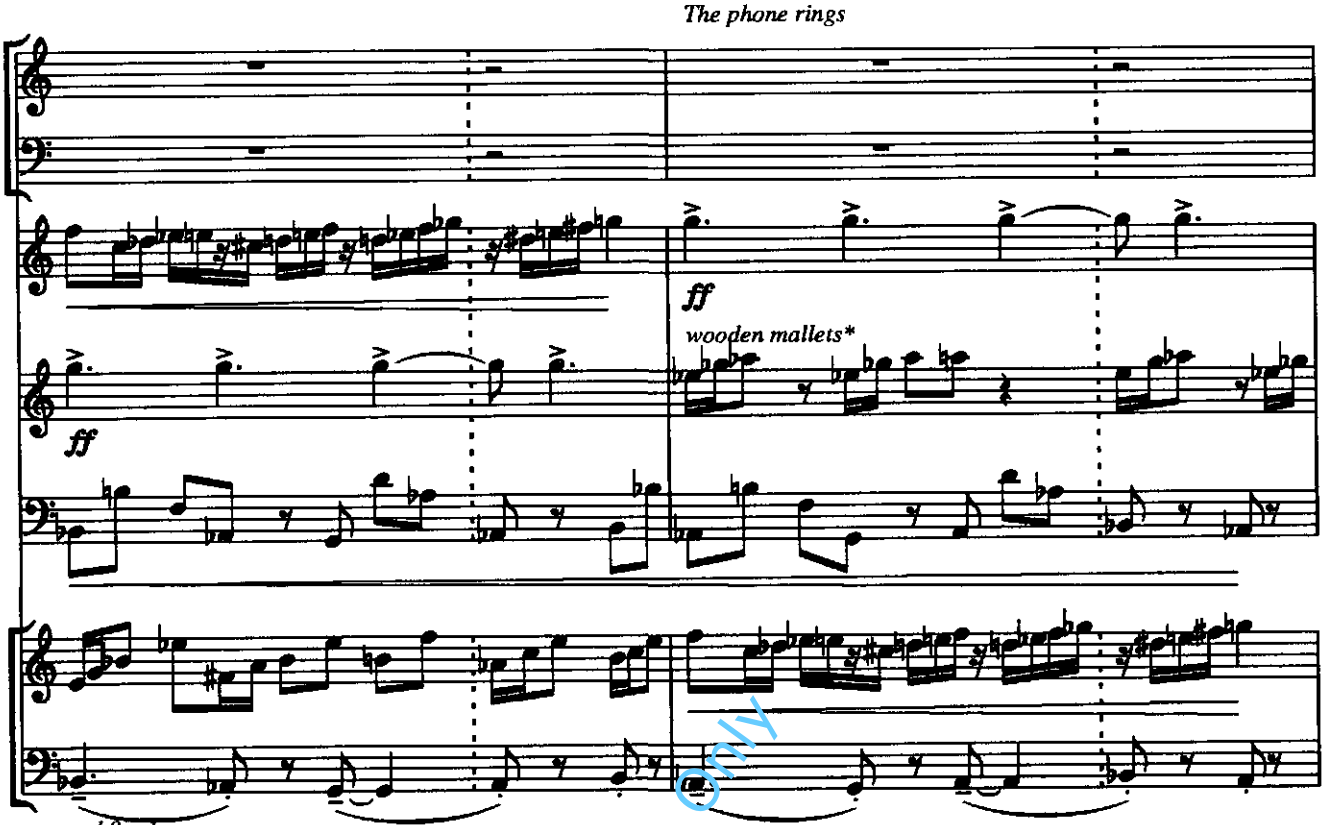


The phone rings



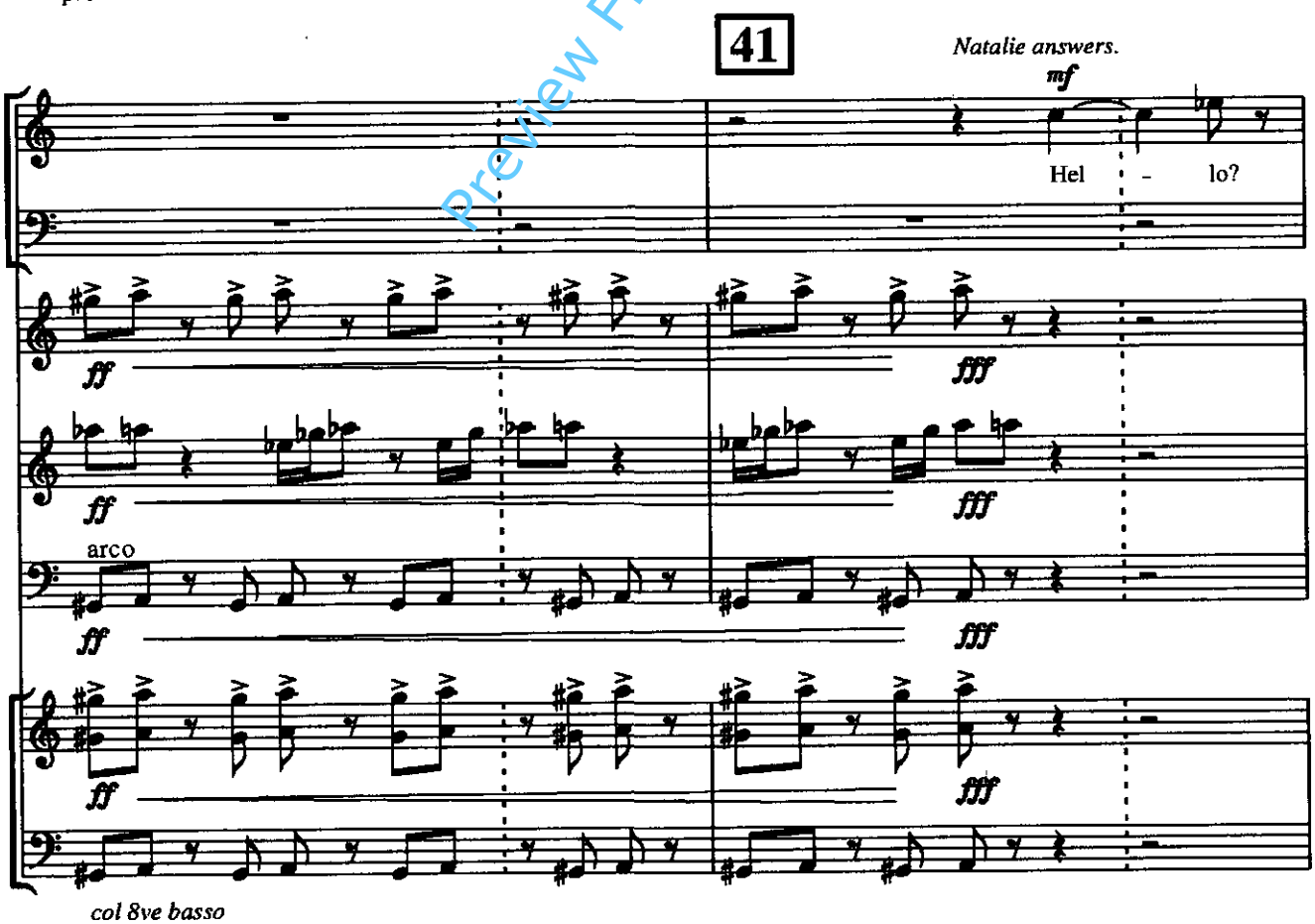
col 8ve basso

**If it's not possible to make this change whilst playing the previous bar single handed, then only play the first g in the previous bar.*

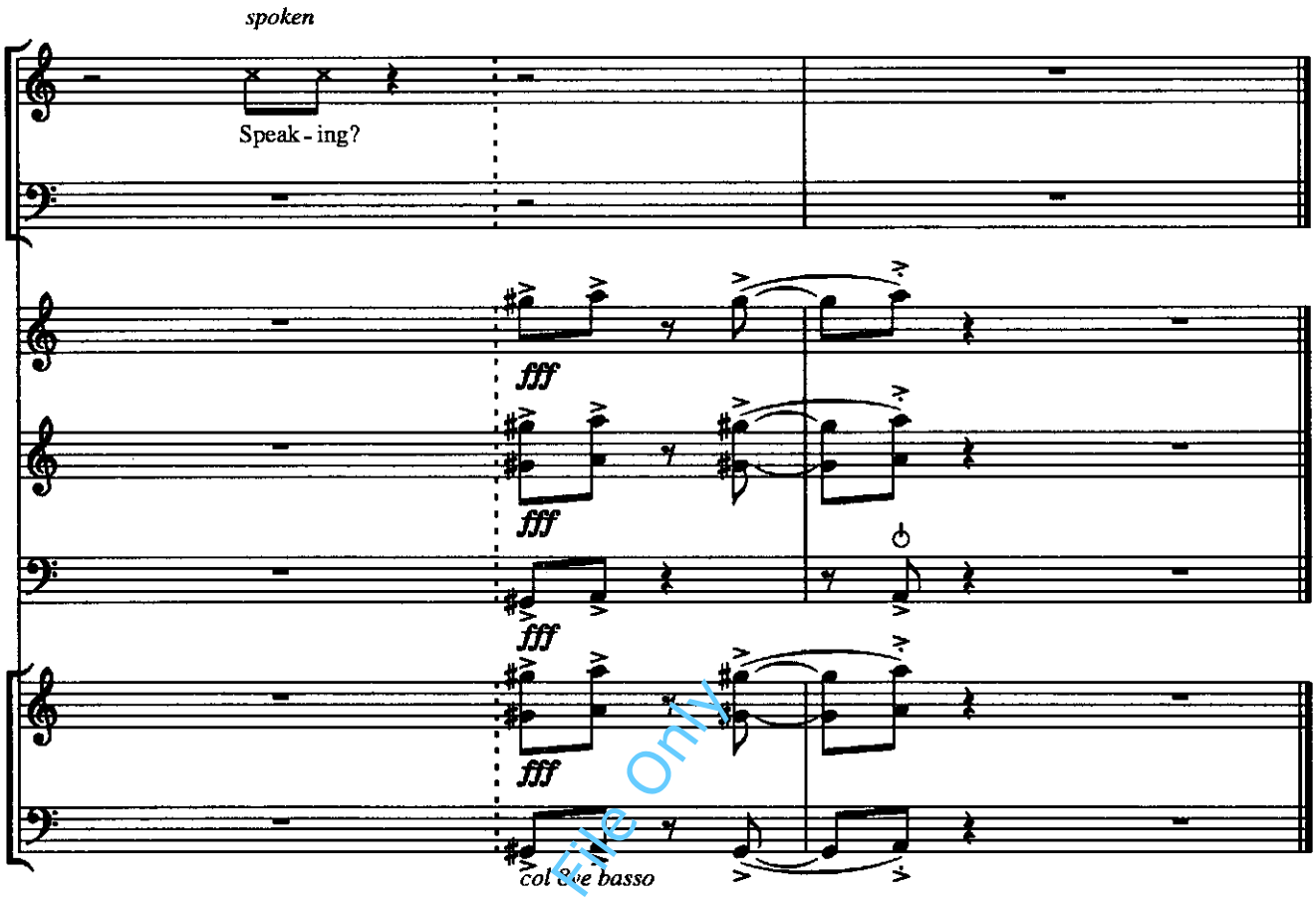
Preview File Only

41

Natalie answers.



col 8ve basso



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