Schilderkonst

to Michael Finnissy

I
Saenredam (2003-4)
for chamber ensemble of 8 players
(2 alto flutes, 2 clarinets in A, oboe d'amore, guitar, vibraphone, chamber organ)
16′

II
Low Country (2004)
for string quartet
20′

III
Duinland (2004)
for piano (with optional vibraphone)
19′

Directions for performance of complete trilogy
In a complete performance of *Schilderkonst* the pieces should be overlapped without a break. The 'cello should begin playing the first page of *Low Country* during the last 8 bars of *Saenredam*, ensuring that there is at least 1 minute of the first page after the end of *Saenredam* before the entry of the violins. The piano should enter during the last 2 bars of page 19 of *Low Country*, ensuring that there is about 1 minute of the repeated-note passage after the end of *Low Country* before the start of the rhythmicised material at the end of page 2.
In a complete performance, *Low Country* should be played a semitone lower than written (by retuning strings).
The vibraphone passage at the end of *Duinland* should only be played in a complete performance of the trilogy.

James Weeks
Winchester, December 2004

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Schilderkonst

2003-4

'*De Schilderkonst*' is the title of perhaps Vermeer's most important painting, in which he depicts a painter (himself?) seen from behind painting a girl posing as Clio, the Muse of History. The reflexive nature of the work is doubled by Vermeer's use of a typical *trompe-l'oeil* effect, a curtain painted as if it were to be pulled across the whole picture. The meaning of the picture (whose title appears to be original) is debated: a plausible view is that in painting a *real-life* scene of a girl dressed up as Clio *being painted*, Vermeer is subverting the view of History as the highest of all subjects of art, deliberately showing the real world around the artificial one depicted by the painter.

Thus the subject of Vermeer's painting becomes the relationship of art to the real, a painting about the aesthetics of painting in which he both depicts (in the painted painter) and implies (in the *trompe-l'oeil* curtain) the *painting hand*. In the same way *Schilderkonst* is an investigation into the aesthetics of music in which technique has become the explicit subject of the work: what I depict and how (and thus, why). The music of *Schilderkonst* adopts an attitude of speculation (in the form of three linked 'experiments') as to its relationship with 'reality'.

Reality is *Schilderkonst* is investigated through the Dutch 'Realist' art of the 17th-century, which entailed above all the visual exploration of the actual world around, as opposed to an idealised, embellished, imagined, caricatured or otherwise distorted vision of it through religious, historical or allegorical imagery. It posits both a morality of living and a view of the role of art in articulating, affirming and critiquing that way of life that is deeply bound up with the philosophical attitudes of the liberal bourgeois society in which it flourished. The Dutch realists – such as van Goyen, de Hooch, Saenredam, van de Velde, Steen, Fabritius and Vermeer – share with the earlier Flemish Primitives a concern for the materiality of things and attention to visual and textural detail, but develop much further a discourse of seeing that is against bombast, artifice, mannerism, over-elaboration, grand gesture and rhetorical flourish. Truth, in this art, is to be found in scrutinising what is close-to, everyday, visibly and experientially present; here, the texture of life as it is (or should be) is essentially calm, contemplative, undemonstrative, optimistic and serene, a slight but constant idealisation of mood that may be seen as reflecting the confidence and optimism of Dutch society of the time.

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Schilderkonst sets out to reconfigure this 'art of everyday living' as the basis of a musical realism for the present day – an aesthetics that necessarily involves moral and political dimensions as well as artistic and spiritual ones. The focus in each of the works in the trilogy is on one painter or genre of Dutch 17th-century art in turn, through which a specific scenario is hypothesised and examined. The first piece is named after Saenredam, the painter of lucid, boldly formalised church interiors; the second, *Low Country,* takes off from the idea of 'genre' painting, such as the courtyard exteriors or street scenes of de Hooch and others; the third, *Duinland* (Dune land), evokes the empty 'tonal' landscapes of van Goyen. From each source certain features are extracted as a conceptual influence on an explicitly musical discourse.

Each of the pieces in *Schilderkonst* is based on the same initial material - the 'In nomine Domini' section from the Benedictus of the *Missa Prolationum* of Ockeghem – which they treat in similar but distinct ways, all involving canon.

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James Weeks

Saenredam

Chamber ensemble
2003-4

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Saenredam

for chamber ensemble of 8 players
(2 alto flutes, 2 clarinets in A, oboe d'amore, guitar, vibraphone, chamber organ)

Duration
16 minutes

Order of performance
Pages 1-29 are performed consecutively. The vibraphone solos on pages 10 and 20 should be performed at the same speed as the previous pages (1 second between each of the dashes), but should not be conducted.
The five oboe/guitar passages (I-V) are overlaid across the whole span of the piece. Overlay I begins at exactly the same moment as Panel 1 at the start of the piece. Overlay V should end at exactly the same time as Panel 3 at the end of the piece. An approximate entry-point for Overlay V is given in the score of Panel 3 (p.27). The oboist and guitarist should ensure (by trial and error) that they do not end before the rest of the instruments; it is however permissible for them to omit a small portion of the end of Overlay V if they would otherwise overrun the end of Panel 3.
The total duration of oboe/guitar material is approximately 9'30. The four gaps should be of equal length, c.1'30 each.

Notation
Accidentals are notated above (or occasionally below) the affected note in all cases, in the manner of *musica ficta*. Unlike *musica ficta*, they are mandatory. They affect only the note above or below which they are placed.
Trills are notated as ~~~~, with the upper note's accidental marked thus: 𝅘𝅥
Diagonal glissando lines (oboe only) indicate a slight pitch-bend (up to a semitone) in the direction of the line.
Quartertones: 𝄲 = ¼ sharp, 𝄰 = ¾ sharp, 𝄳 = ¼ flat, 𝄫 = ¾ flat.
When the stave disappears (ob/gtr), players should improvise a likely pitch solution until it reappears. Breaks in the line (rests) only occur when both the stave and the rhythm (or the grace-note beam) disappear simultaneously (e.g. very end of page I/1).
No difference in performance is entailed by the use of black and white pitches in the vibraphone part (this indicates different contrapuntal lines).

Score in C; guitar is notated an octave above sounding pitch.

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Saenredam

for chamber ensemble of 8 players
(2 alto flutes, 2 clarinets in A, oboe d'amore, guitar, vibraphone, chamber organ)

2003-4

Saenredam is the first in a trilogy of works entitled *Schilderkonst* ('Art of Painting'). All three pieces use a fragment of Ockeghem (the 'In nomine Domini' section from the Benedictus of the *Missa Prolationum*) and explore Art's relation to 'the real' with reference to the Netherlandish art of the 16th and 17th centuries. *Saenredam* is named after the great painter of church interiors, Pieter Saenredam, whose formal clarity and lucid empty spaces are reflected in the three canonic Panels that make up the work. The 'choir' of two flutes and two clarinets is divided into two pairs (each containing one of each instrument) that read slowly through the Ockeghem in canon with each other, sometimes breaking out into quicker diminutions. The organ and vibraphone constitute a second layer, the organ sustaining a constant chordal aura (another very slow-moving canonic system) while the vibraphone marks the start and end of each Panel with a more chromatic refraction of the Ockeghem. Over this are laid five passages for a duo of oboe d'amore and guitar, free-floating over the measured music of the other instruments, examining the same material in a different light.

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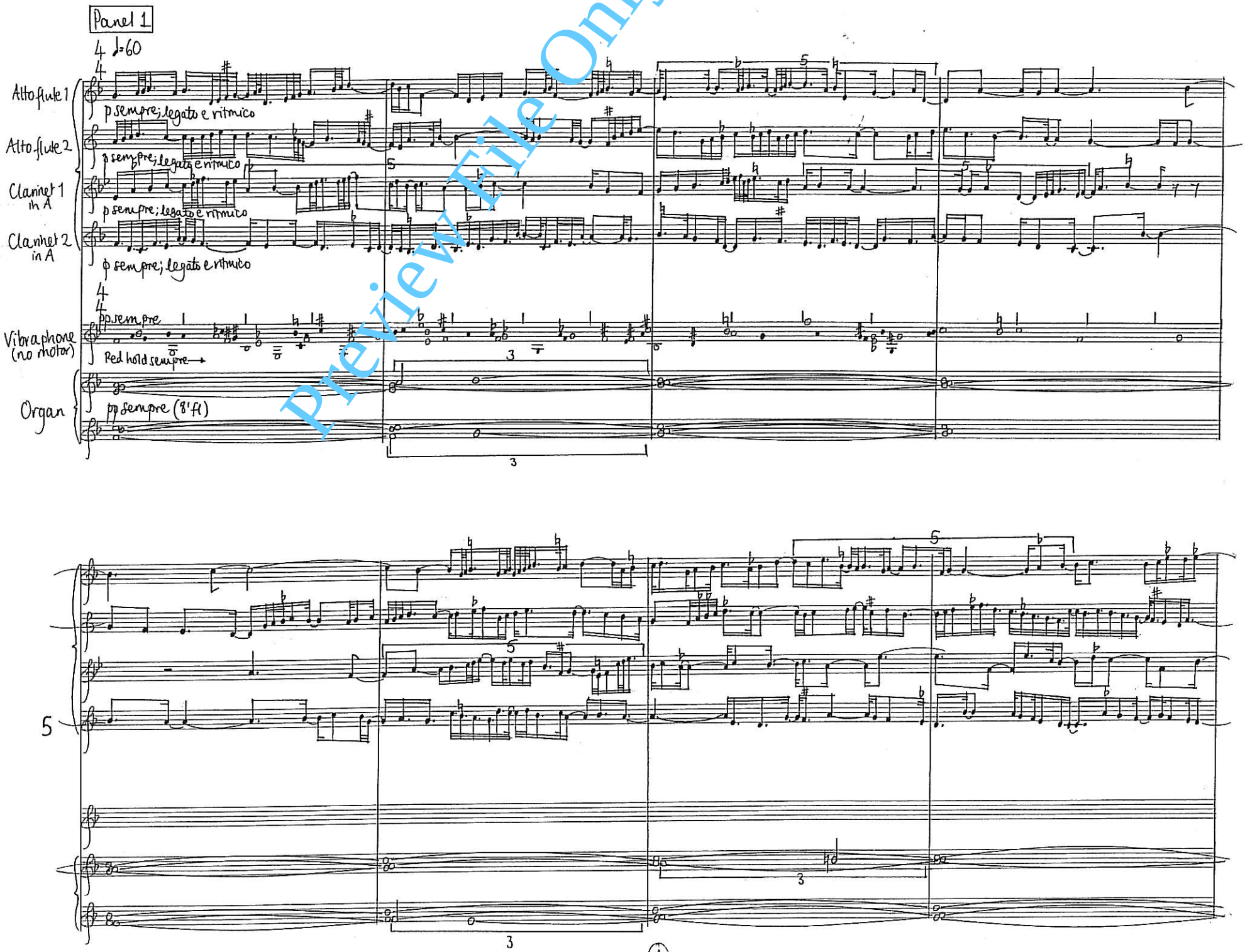
Panel 1
♩=60
Alto flute 1
p sempre; legato e ritmico
Alto flute 2
p sempre; legato e ritmico
Clarinet 1 in A
p sempre; legato e ritmico
Clarinet 2 in A
p sempre; legato e ritmico
pp sempre
Vibraphone (no motor)
Ped hold sempre
Organ
pp sempre (8'ft)
5
3
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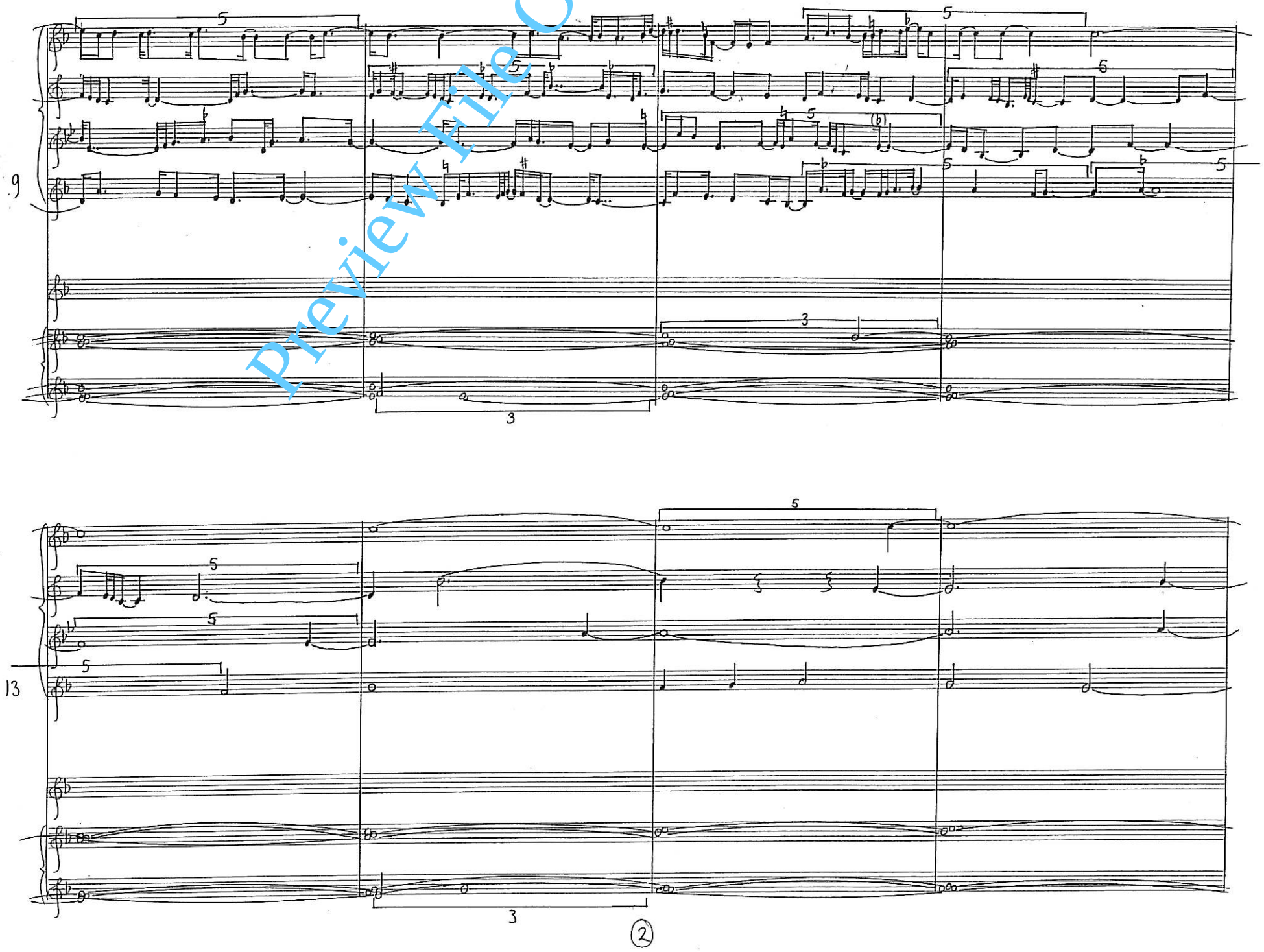

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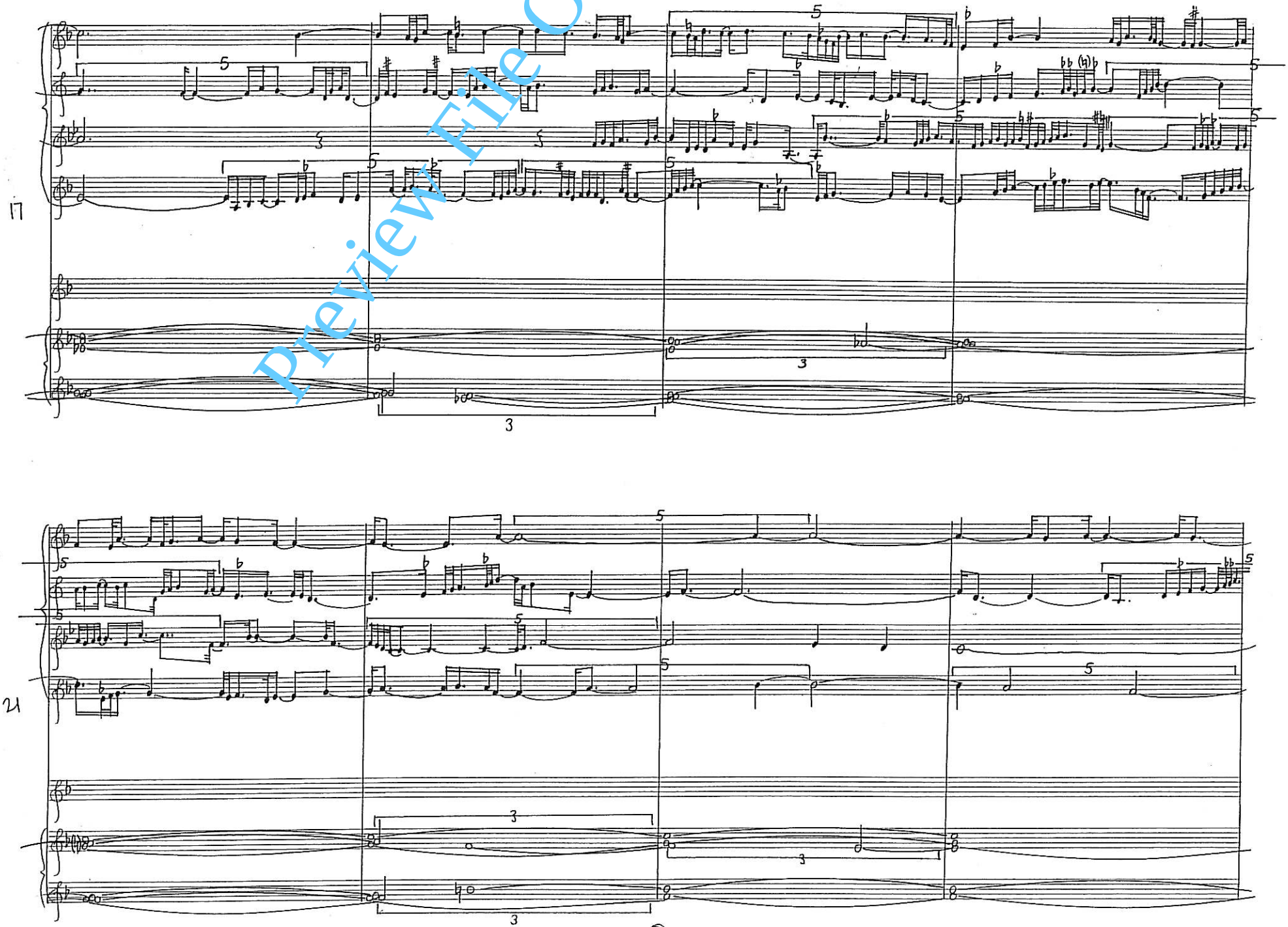

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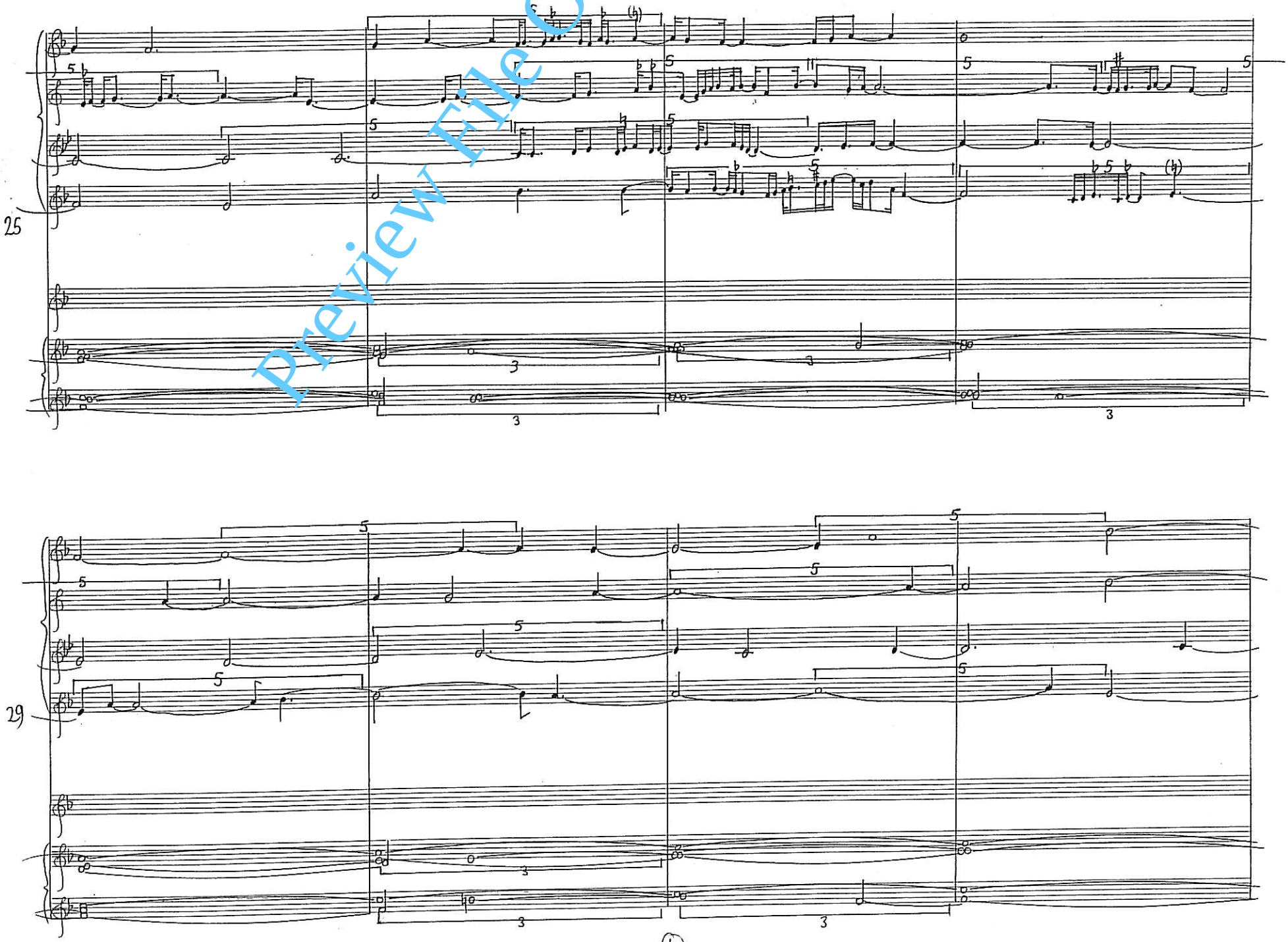

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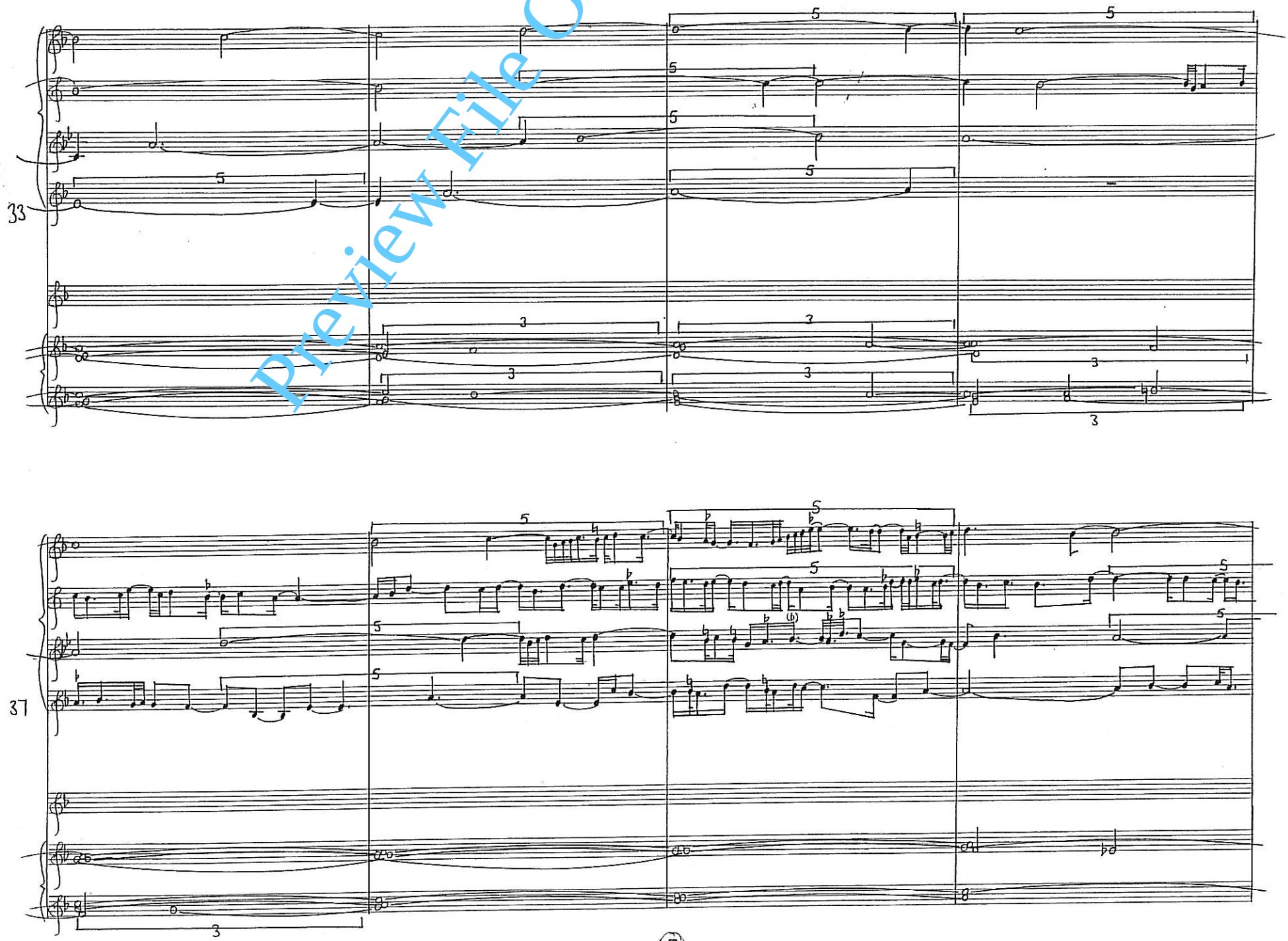

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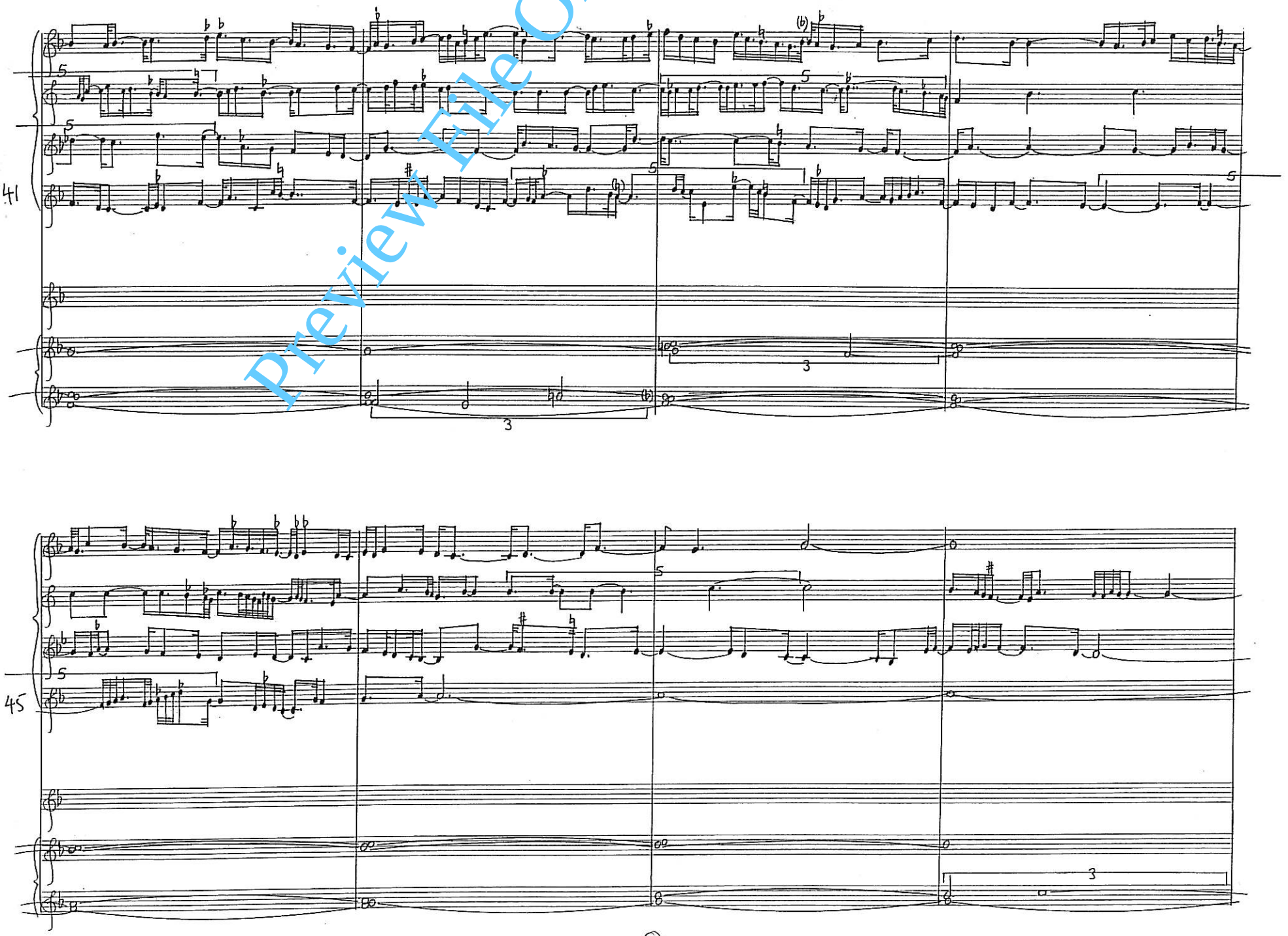

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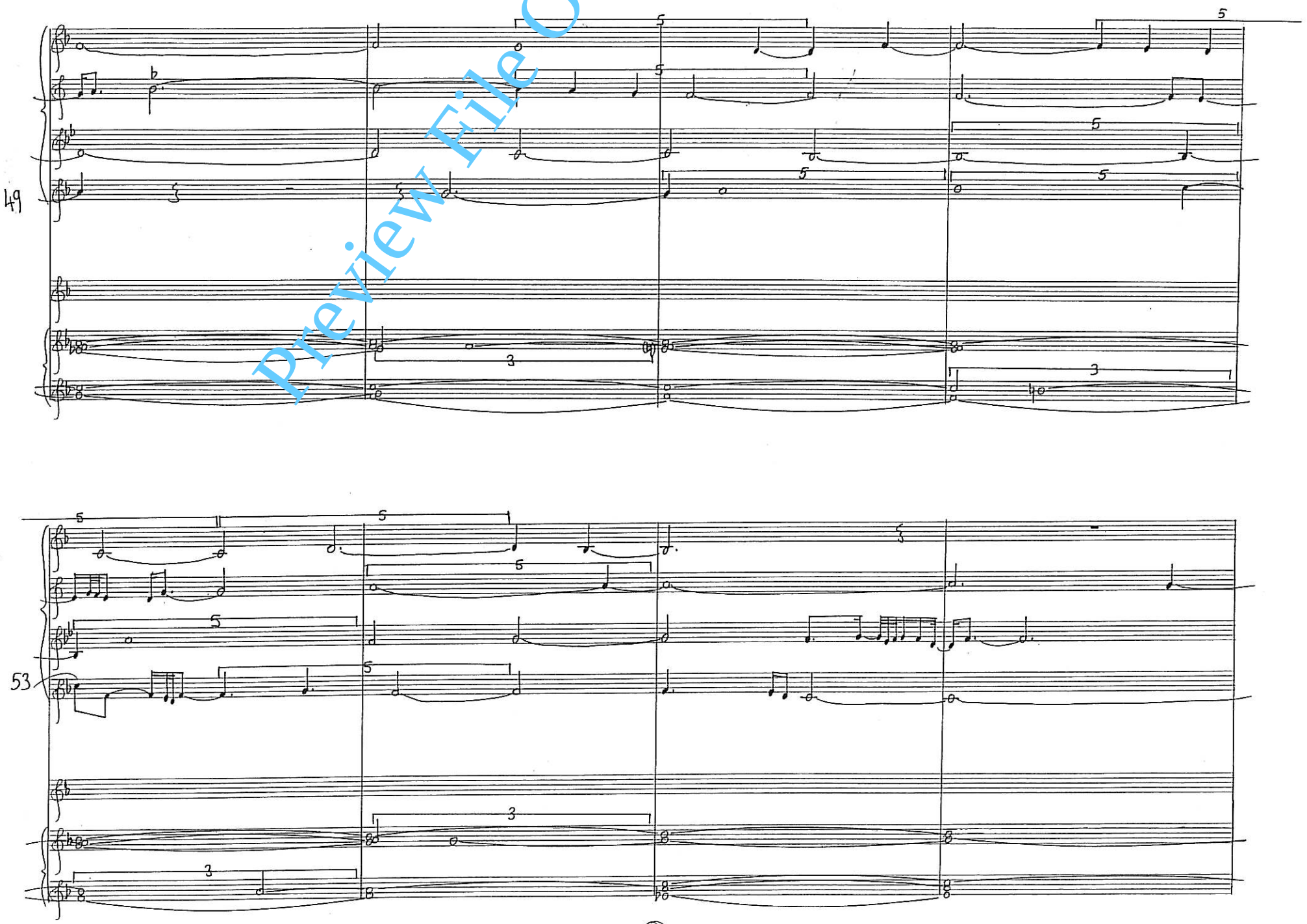

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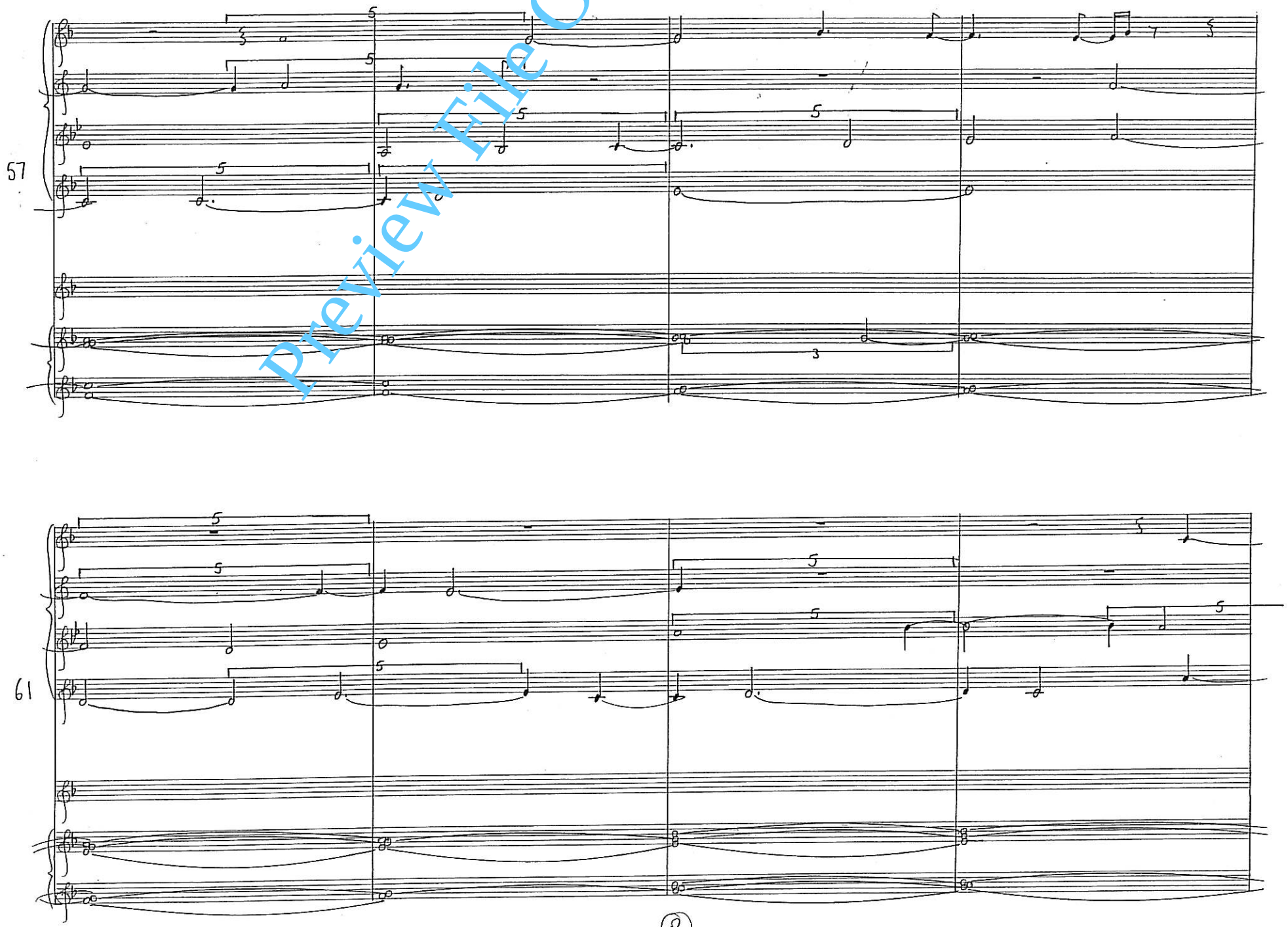

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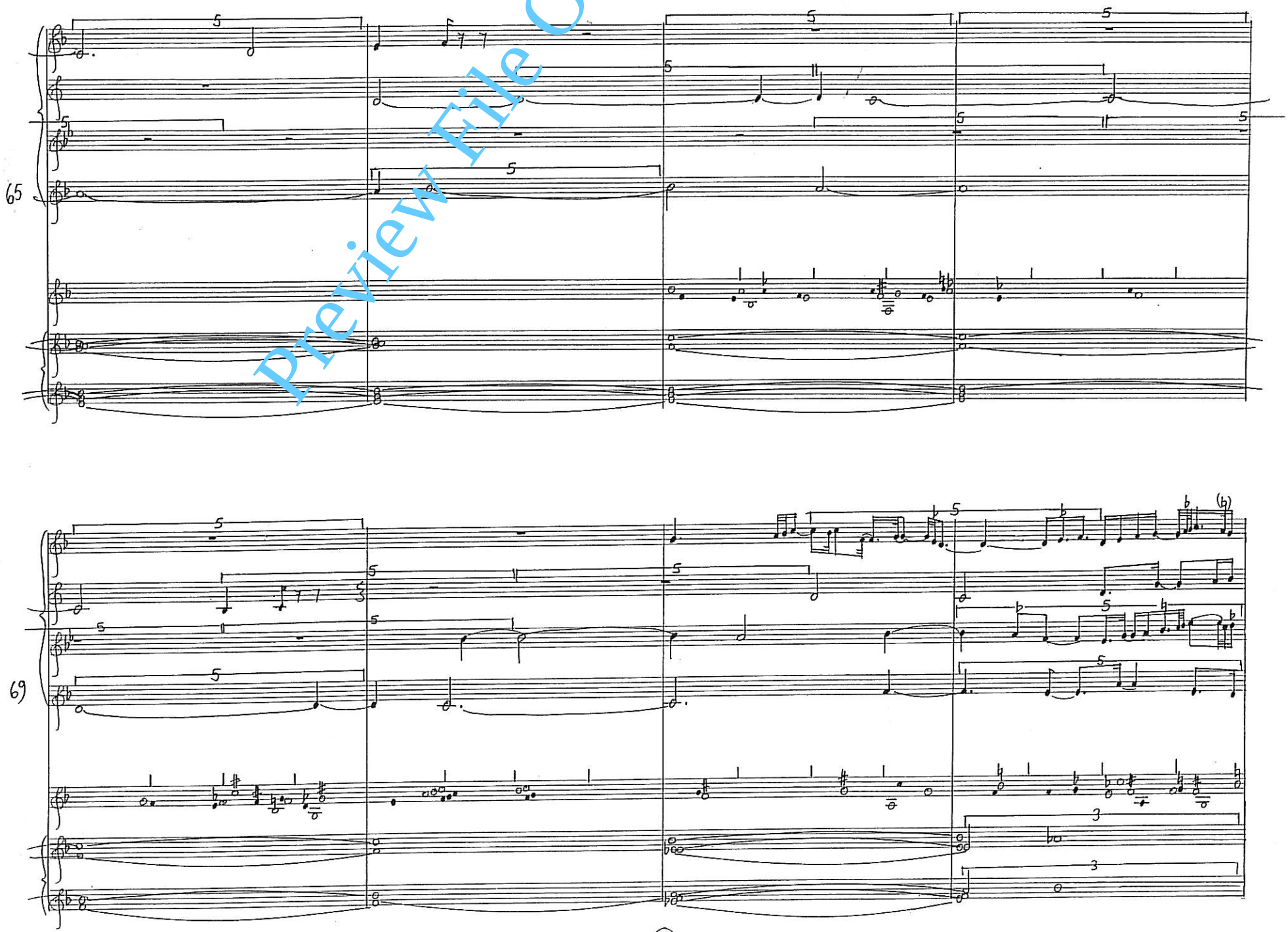

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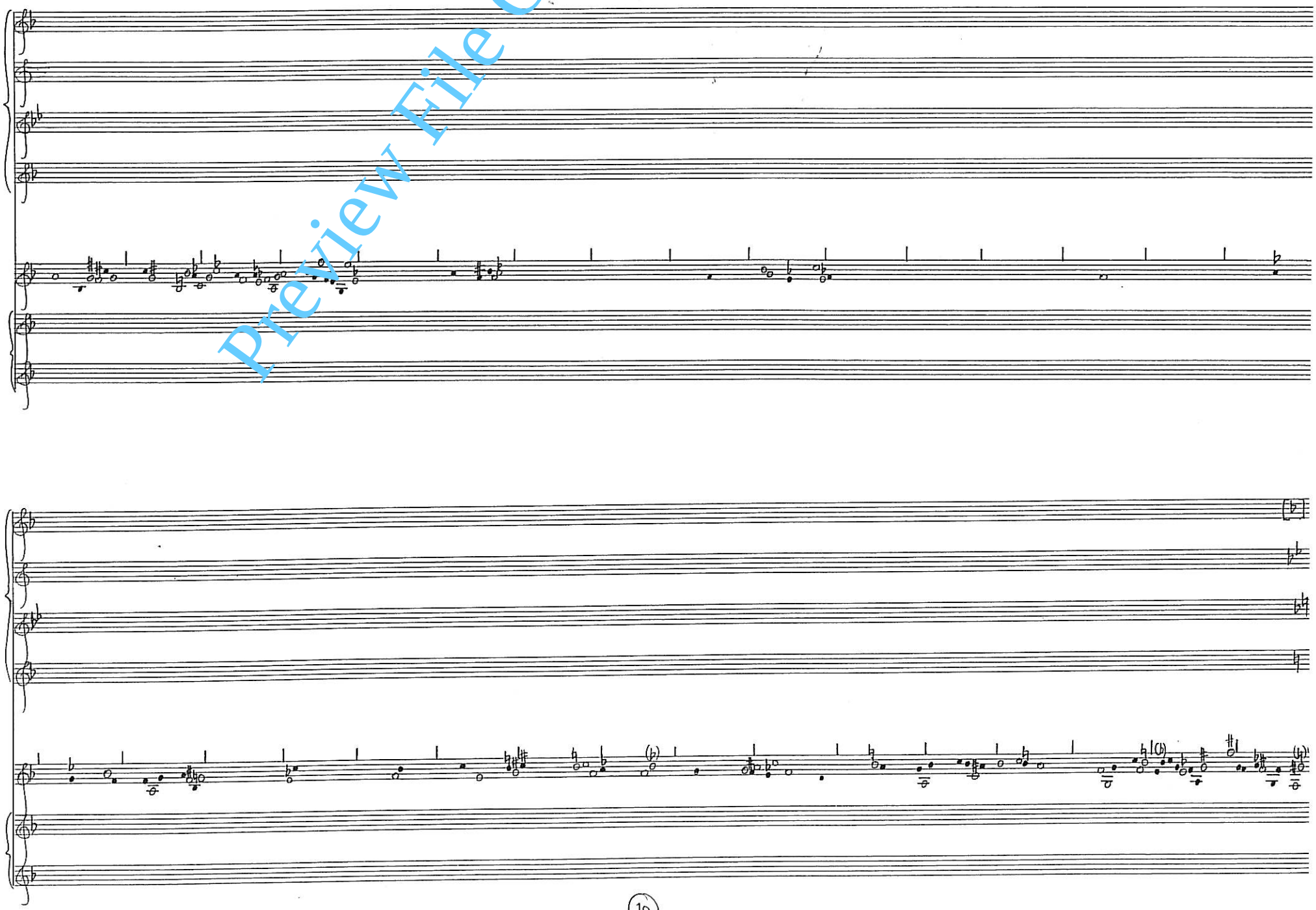

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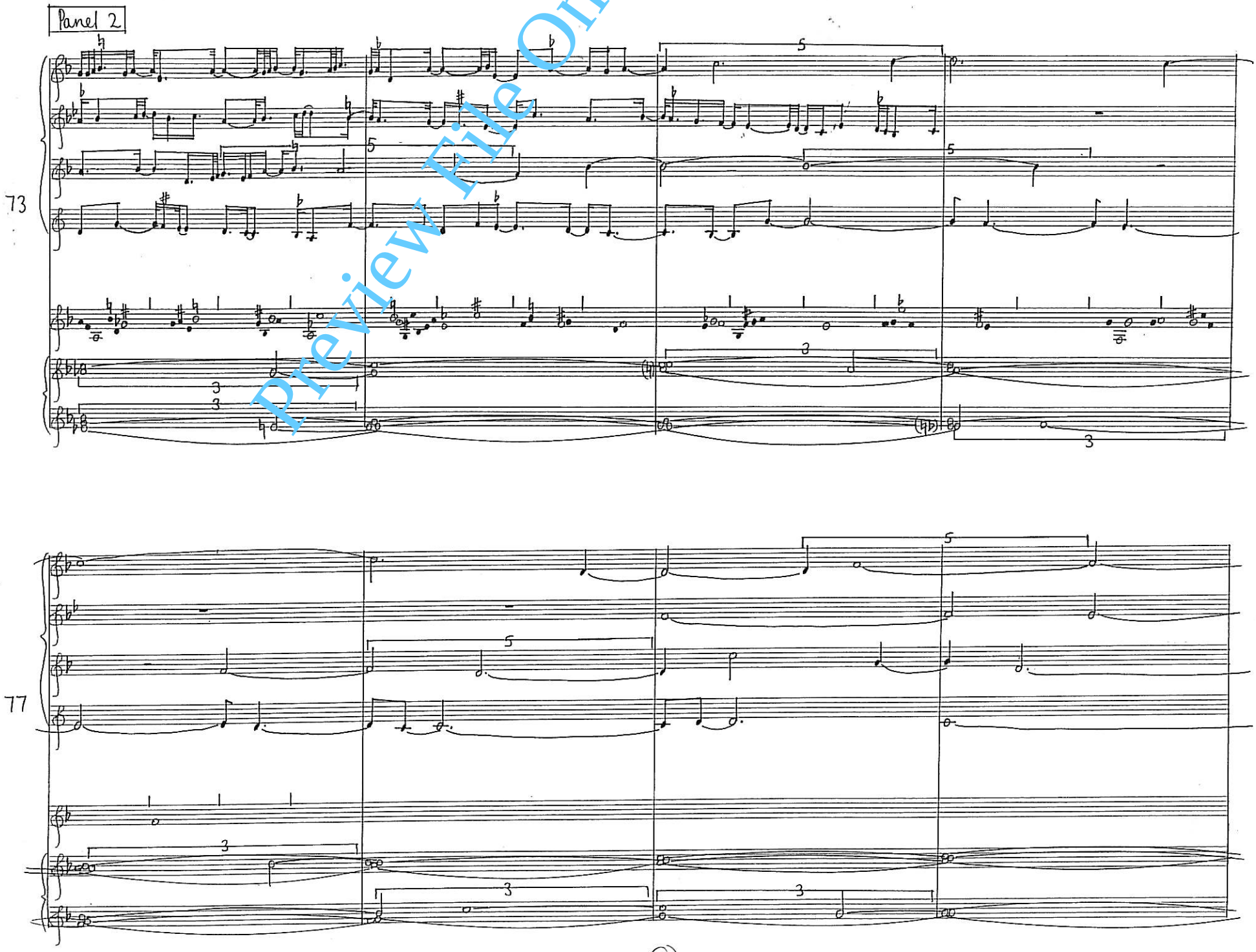
Panel 2



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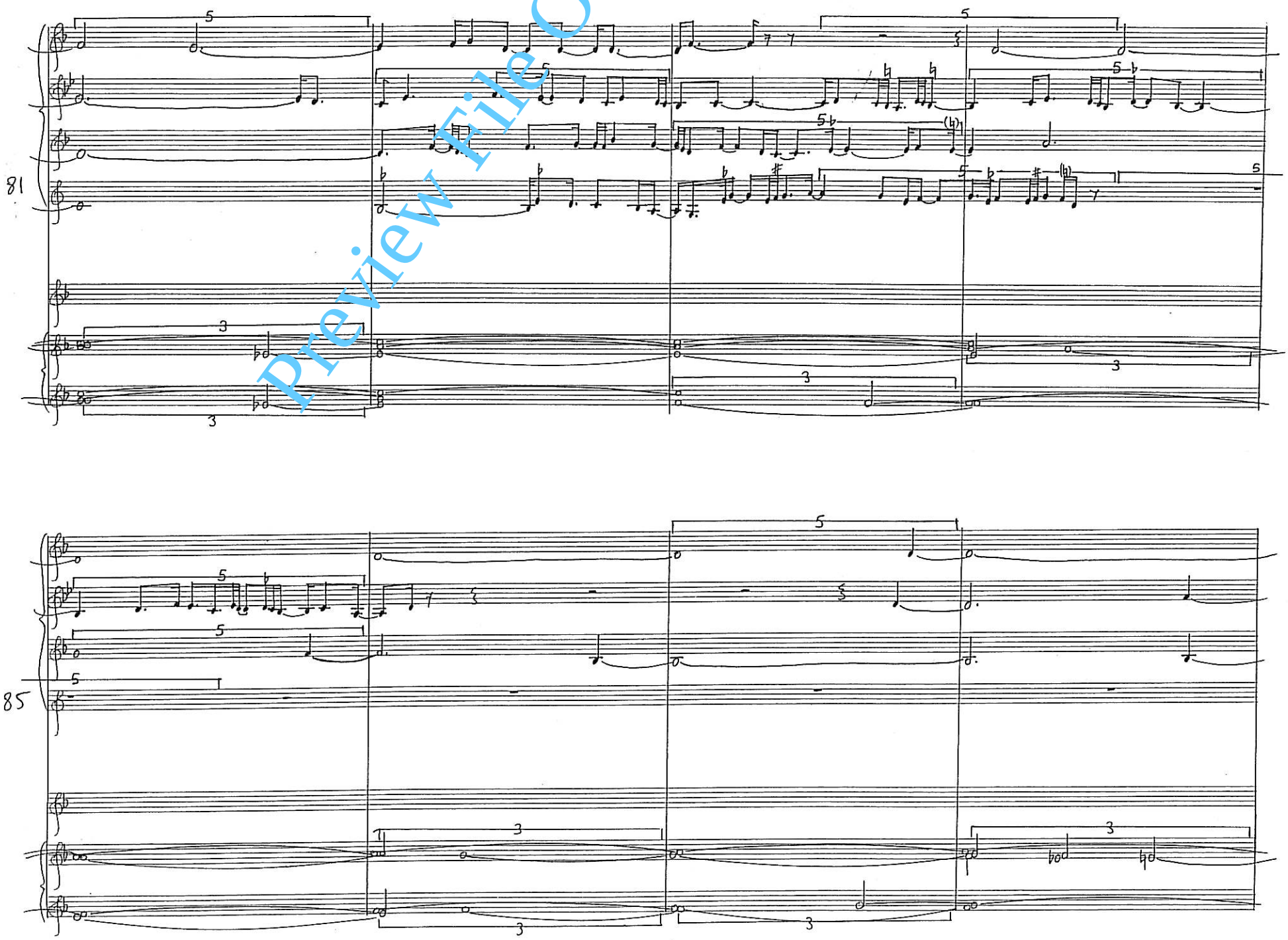

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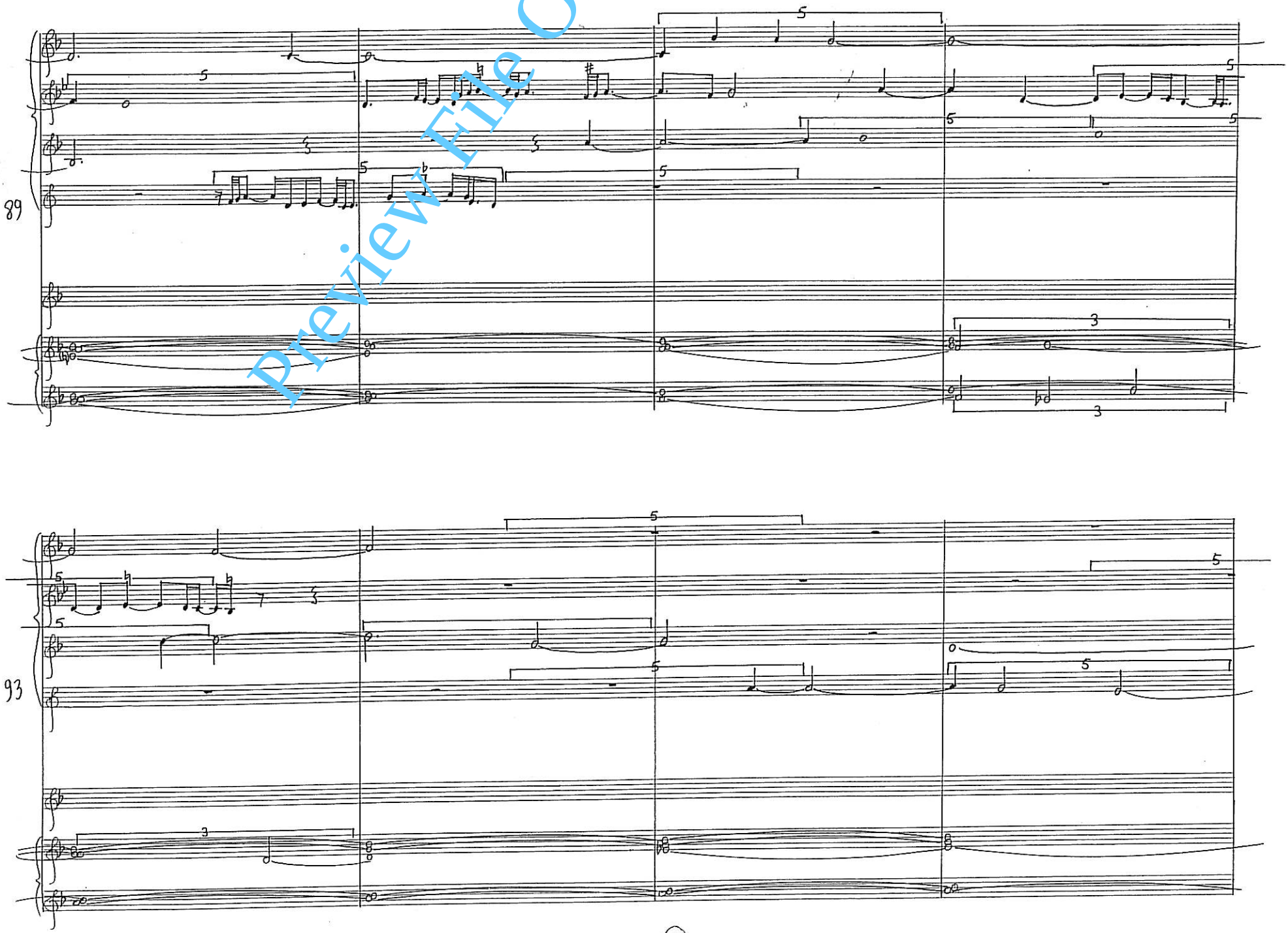

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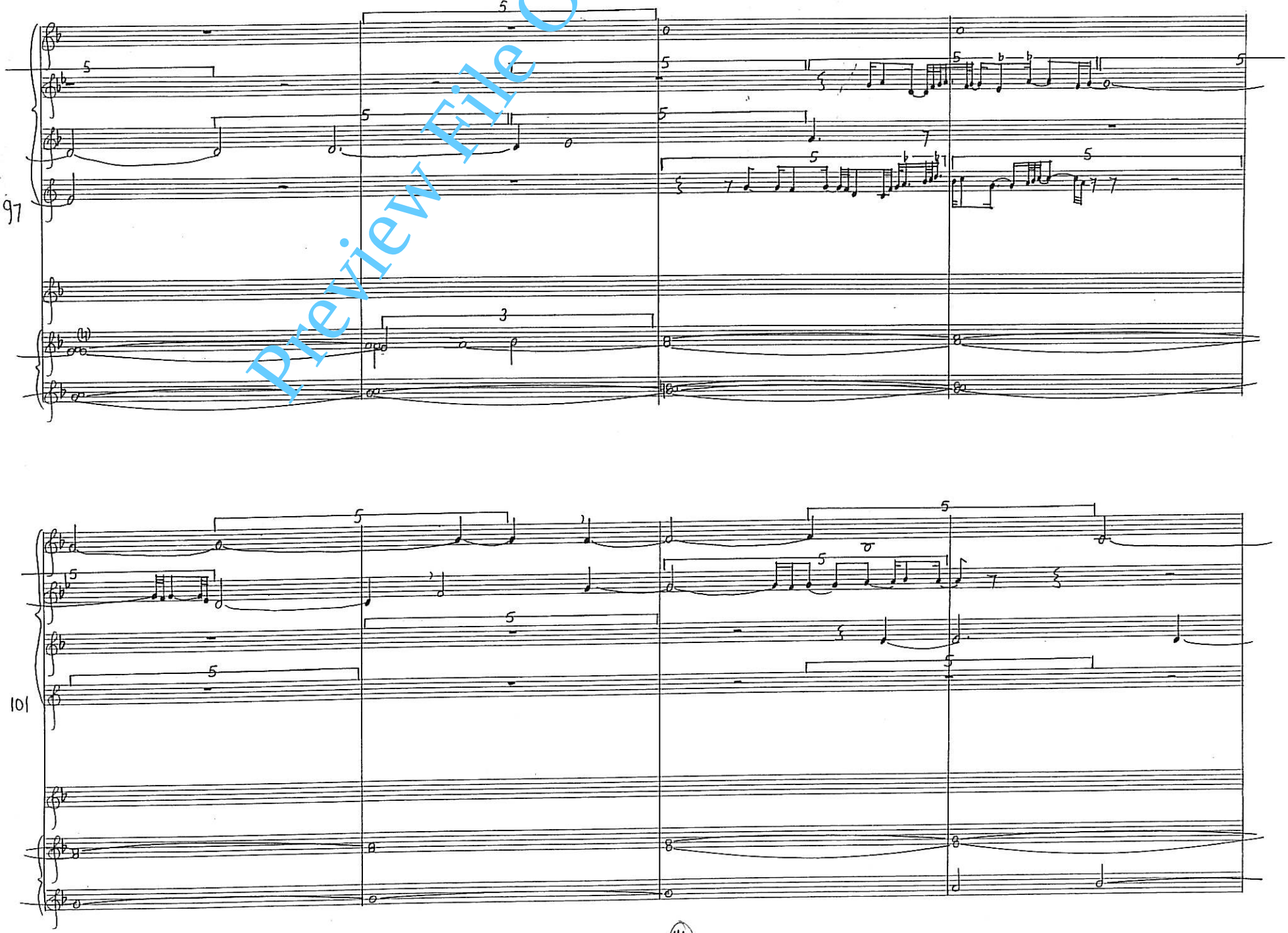

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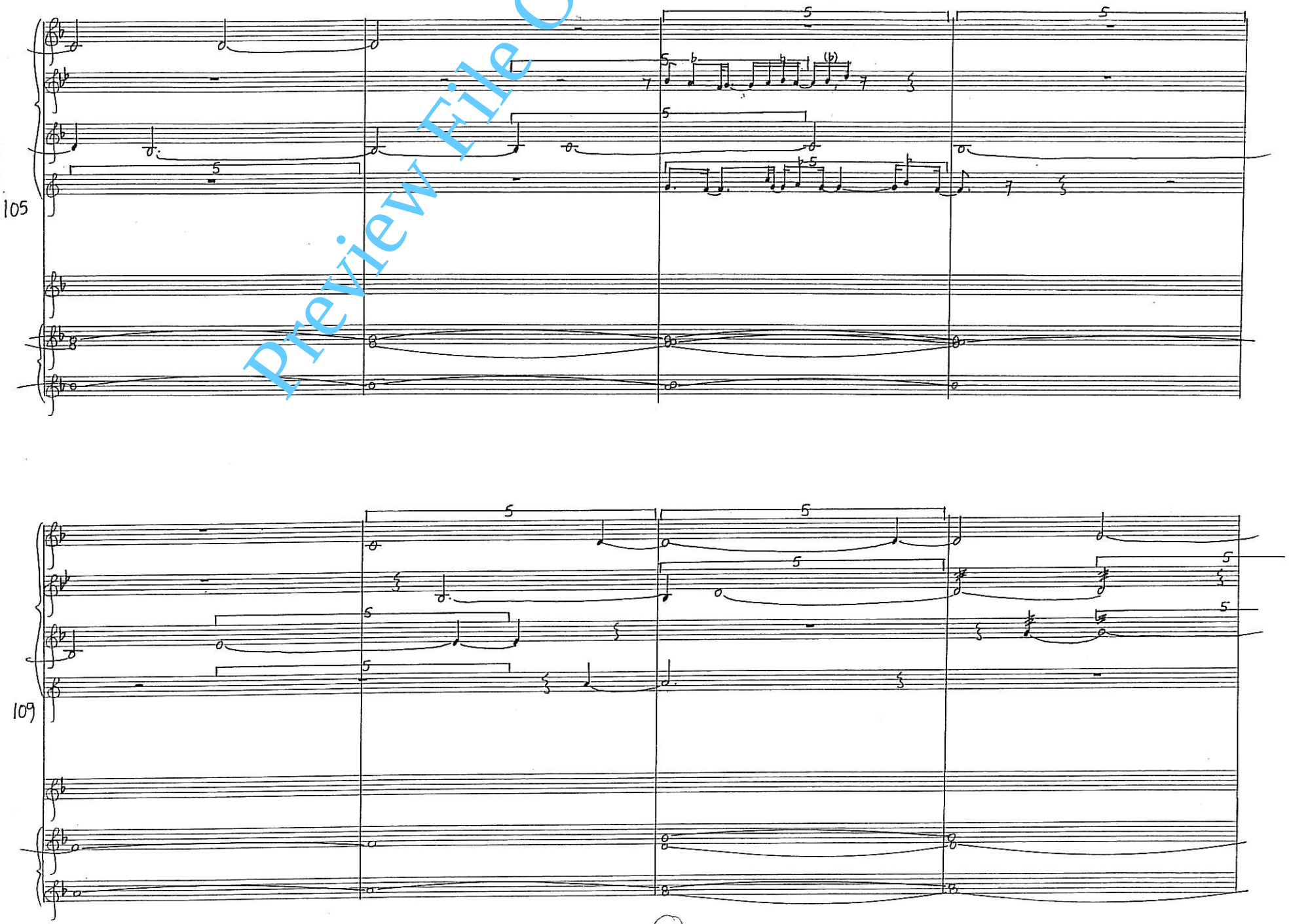

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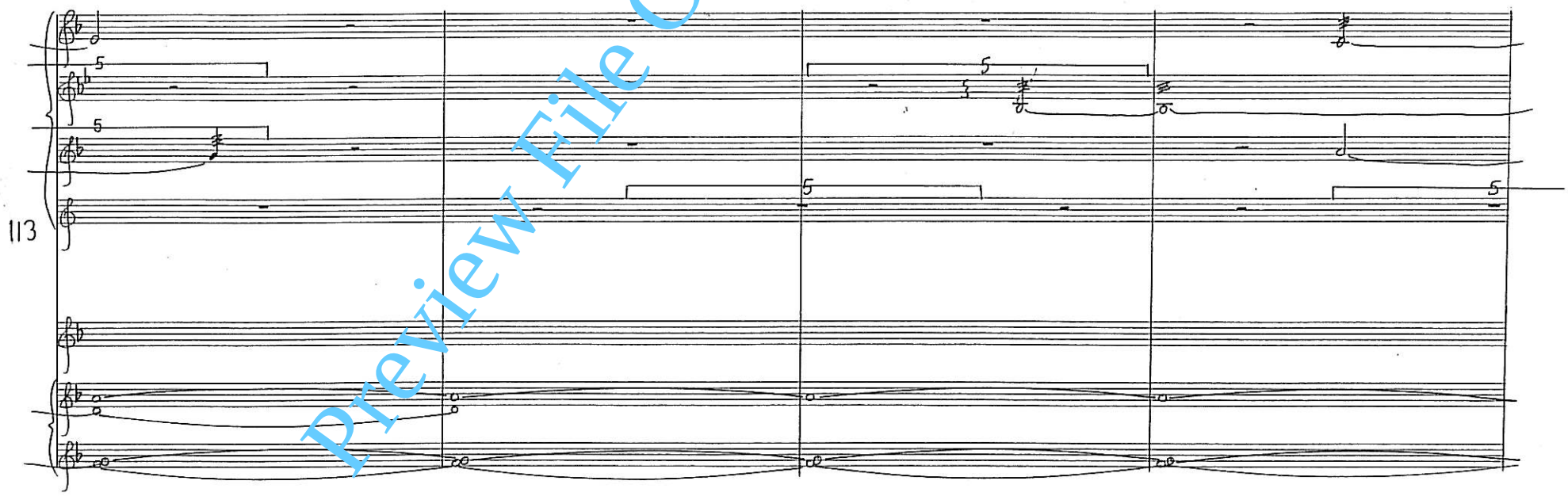

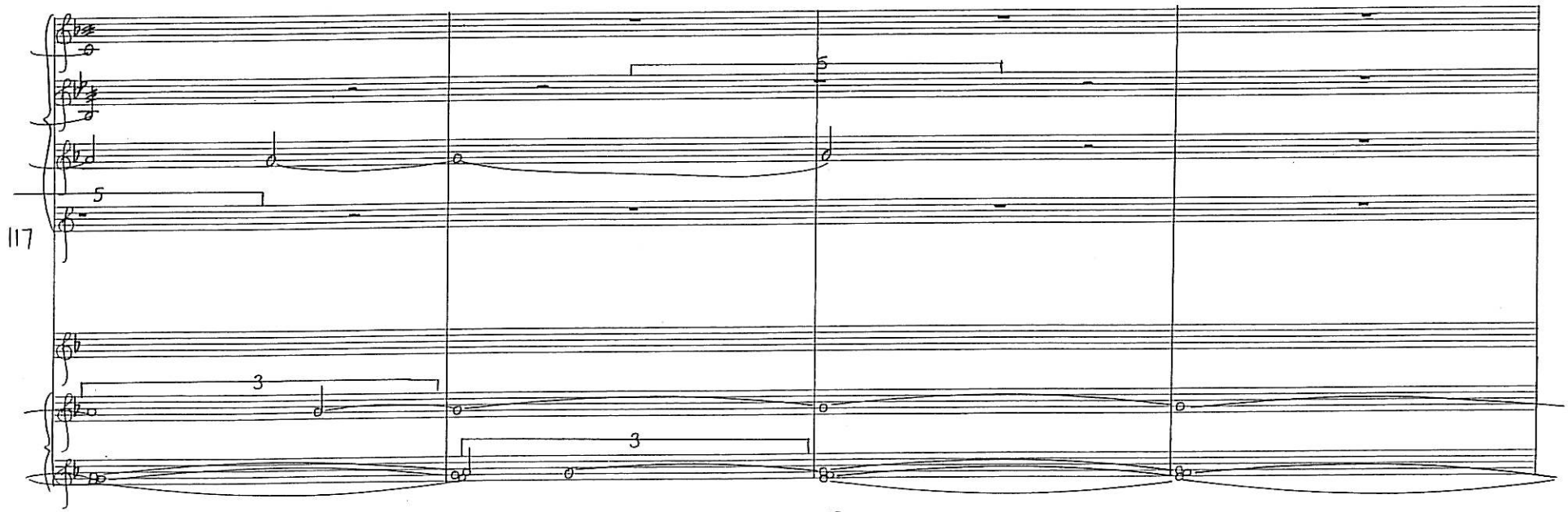

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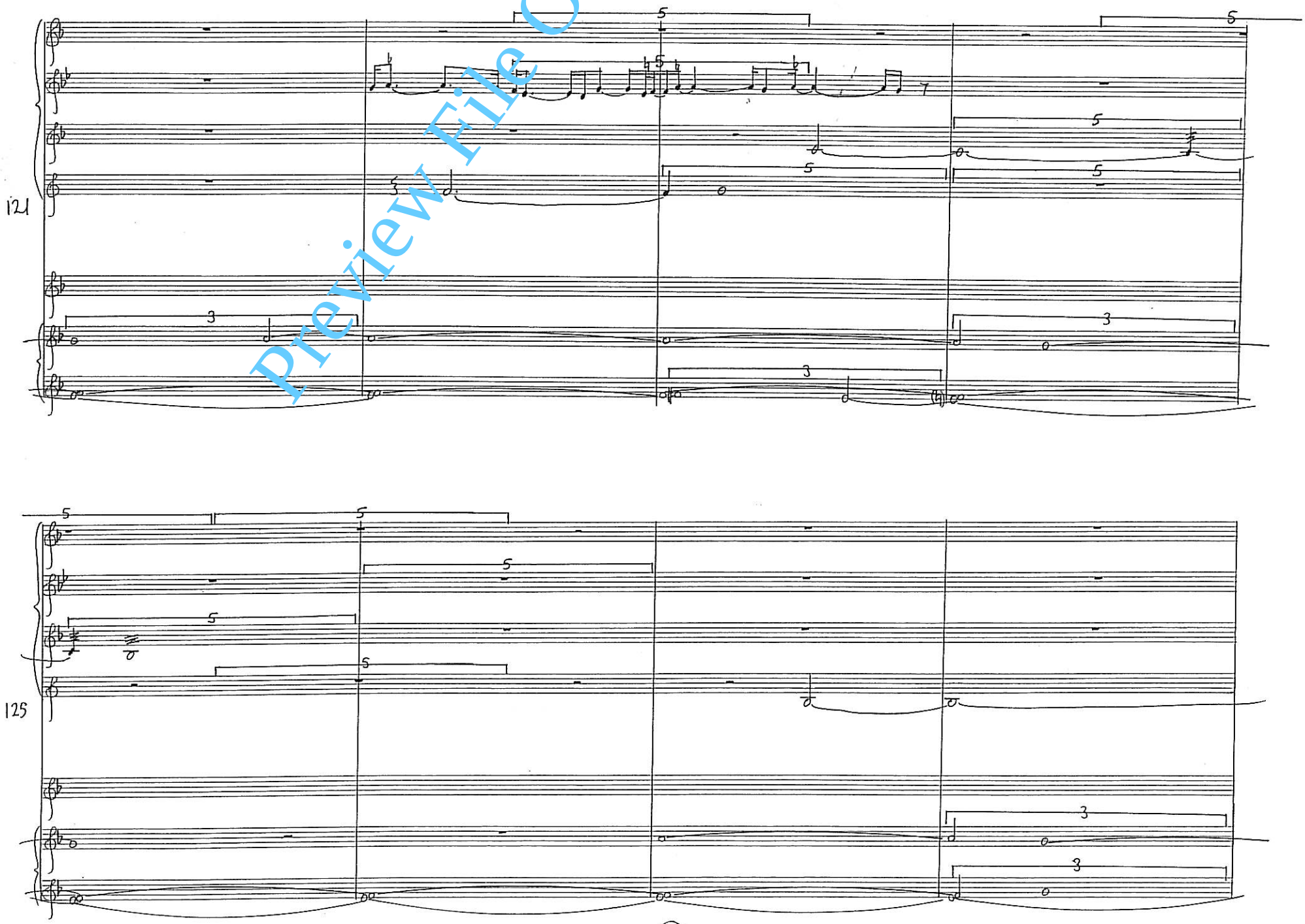

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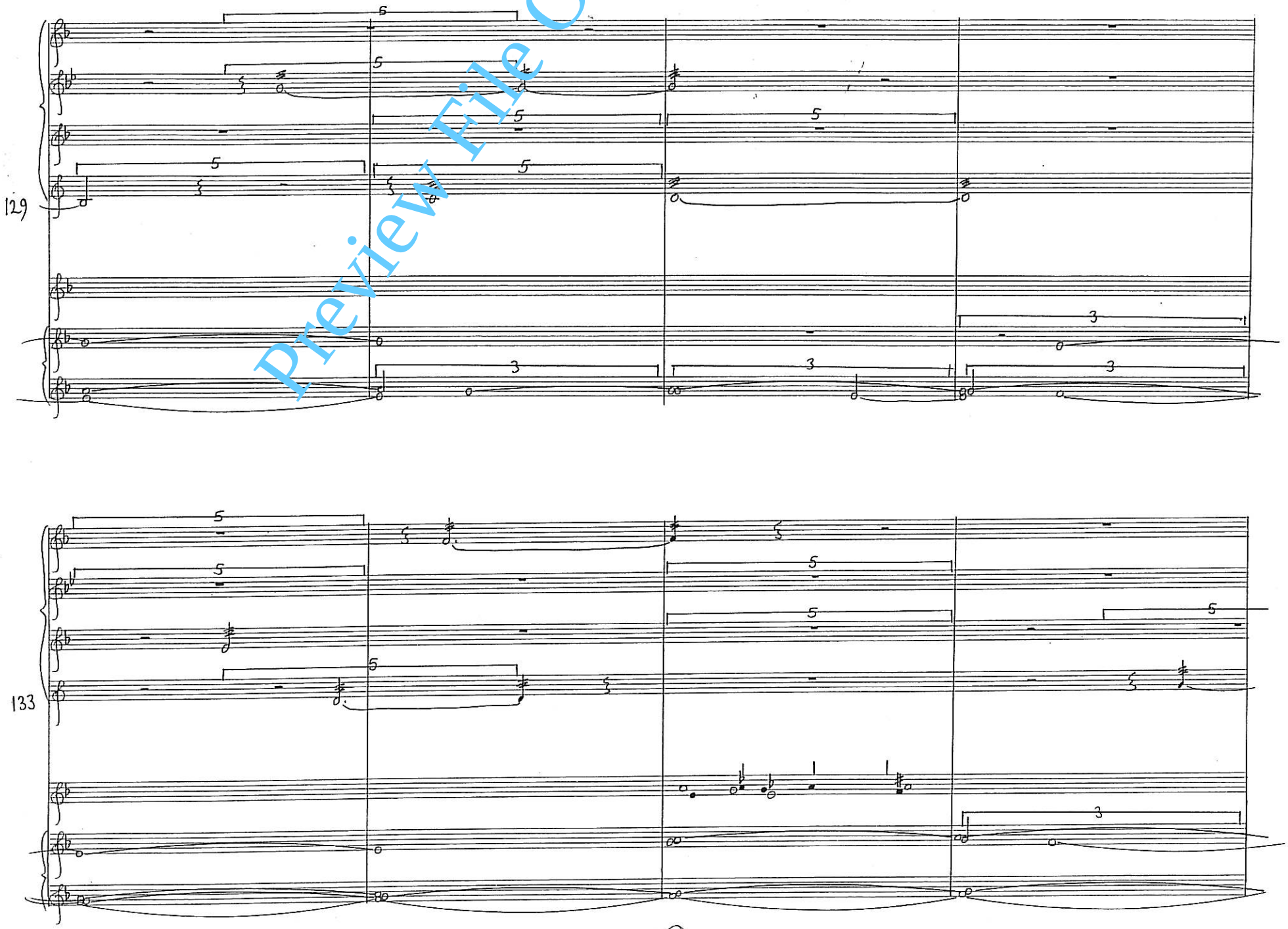

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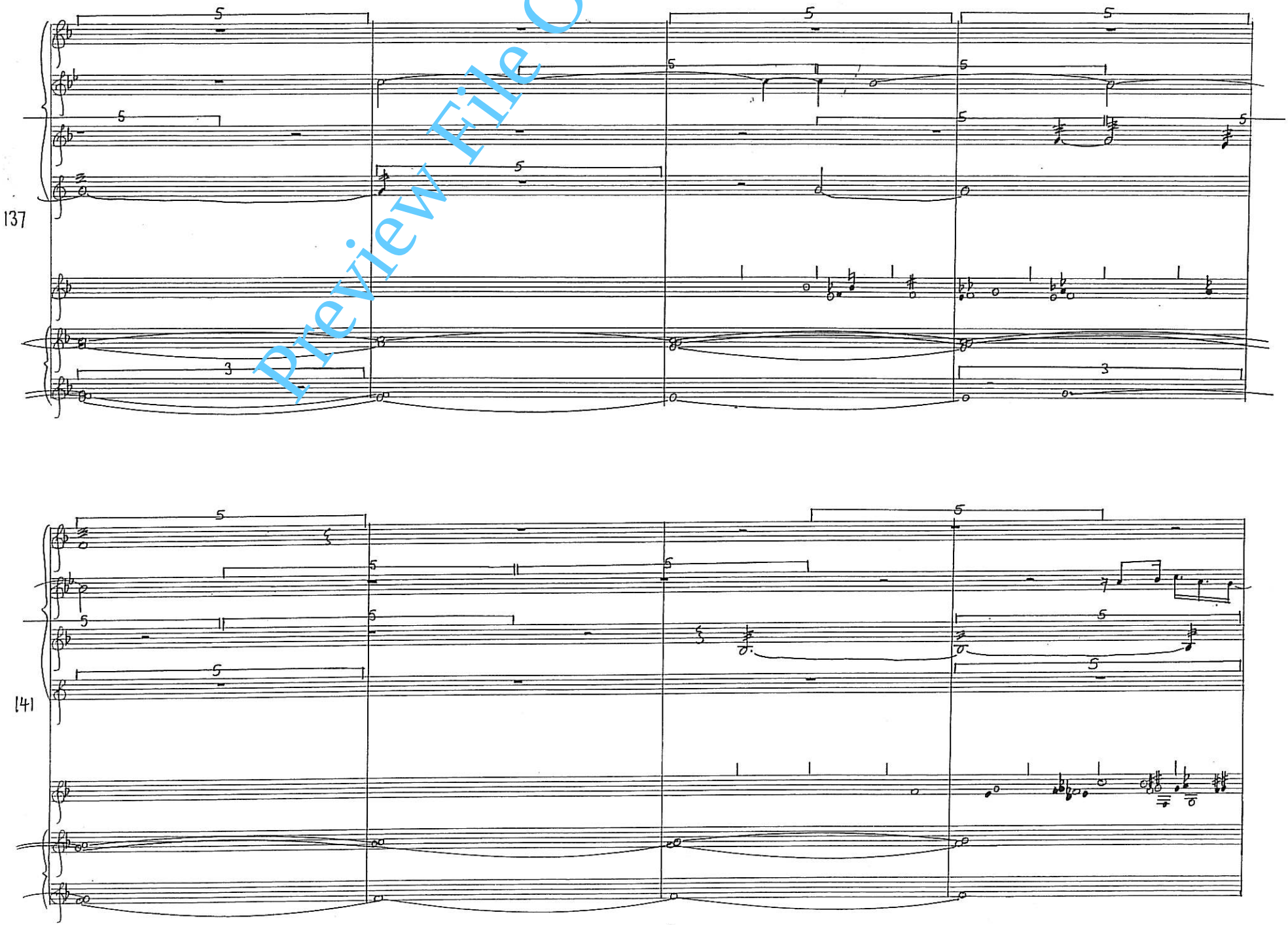

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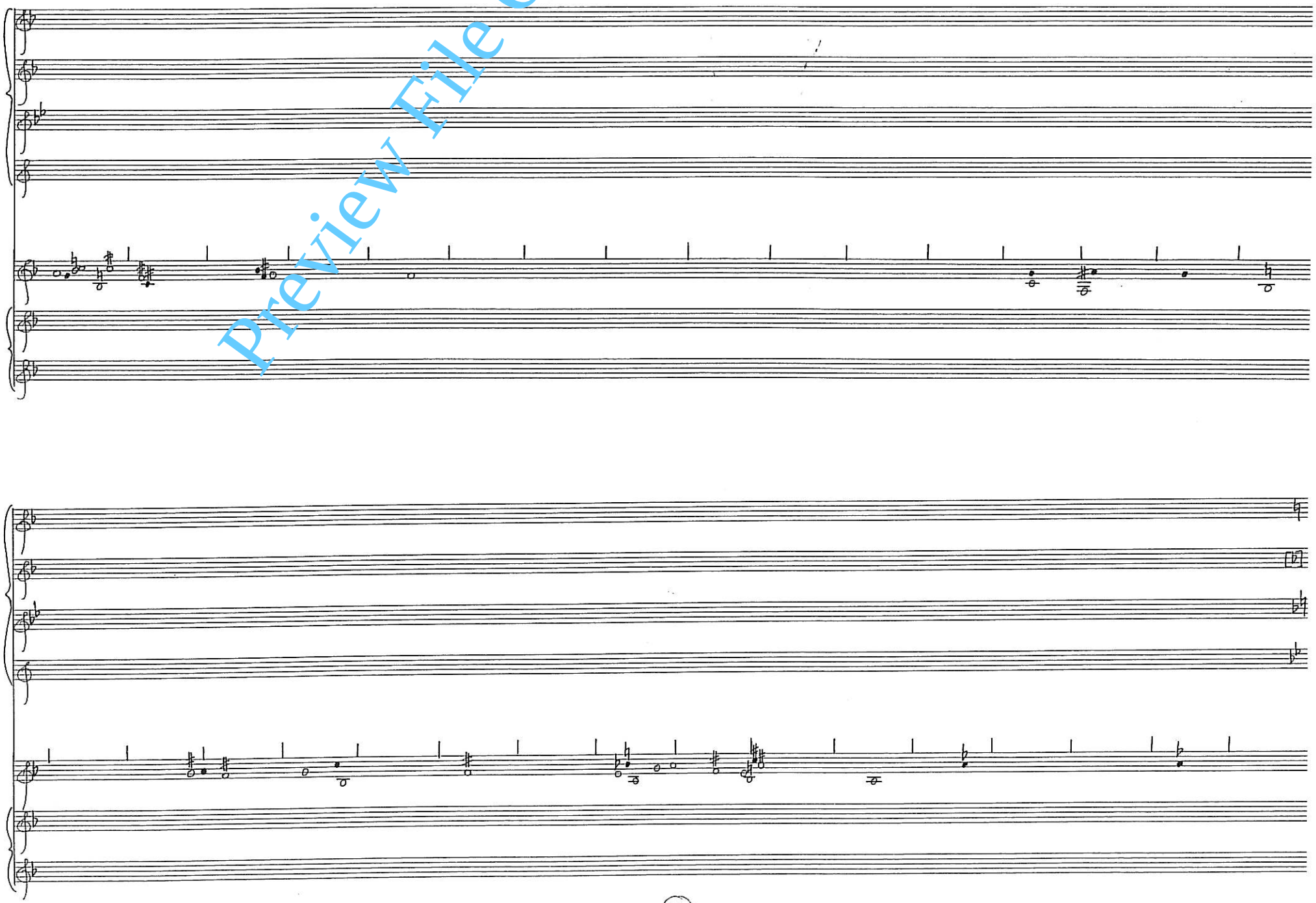

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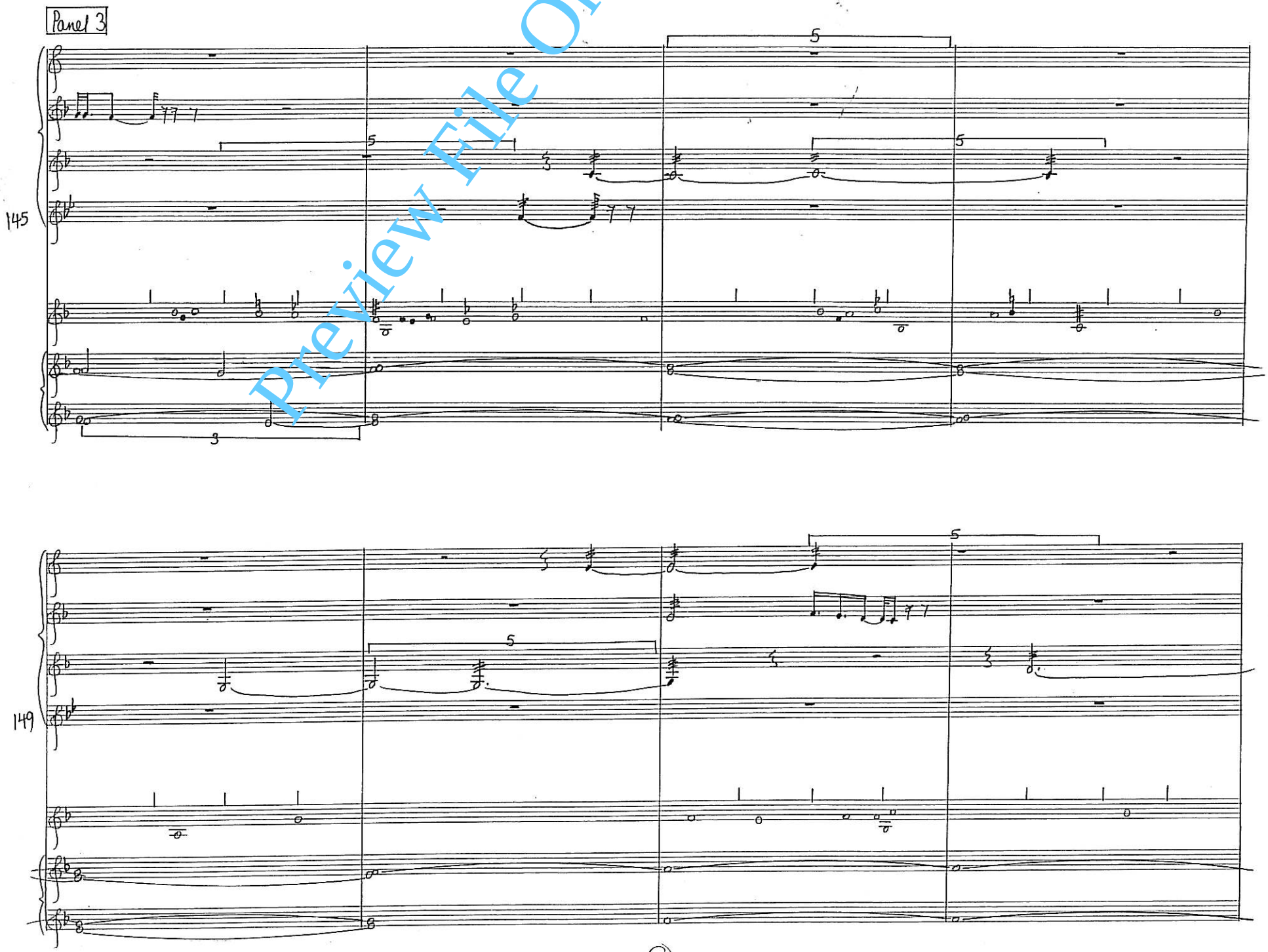

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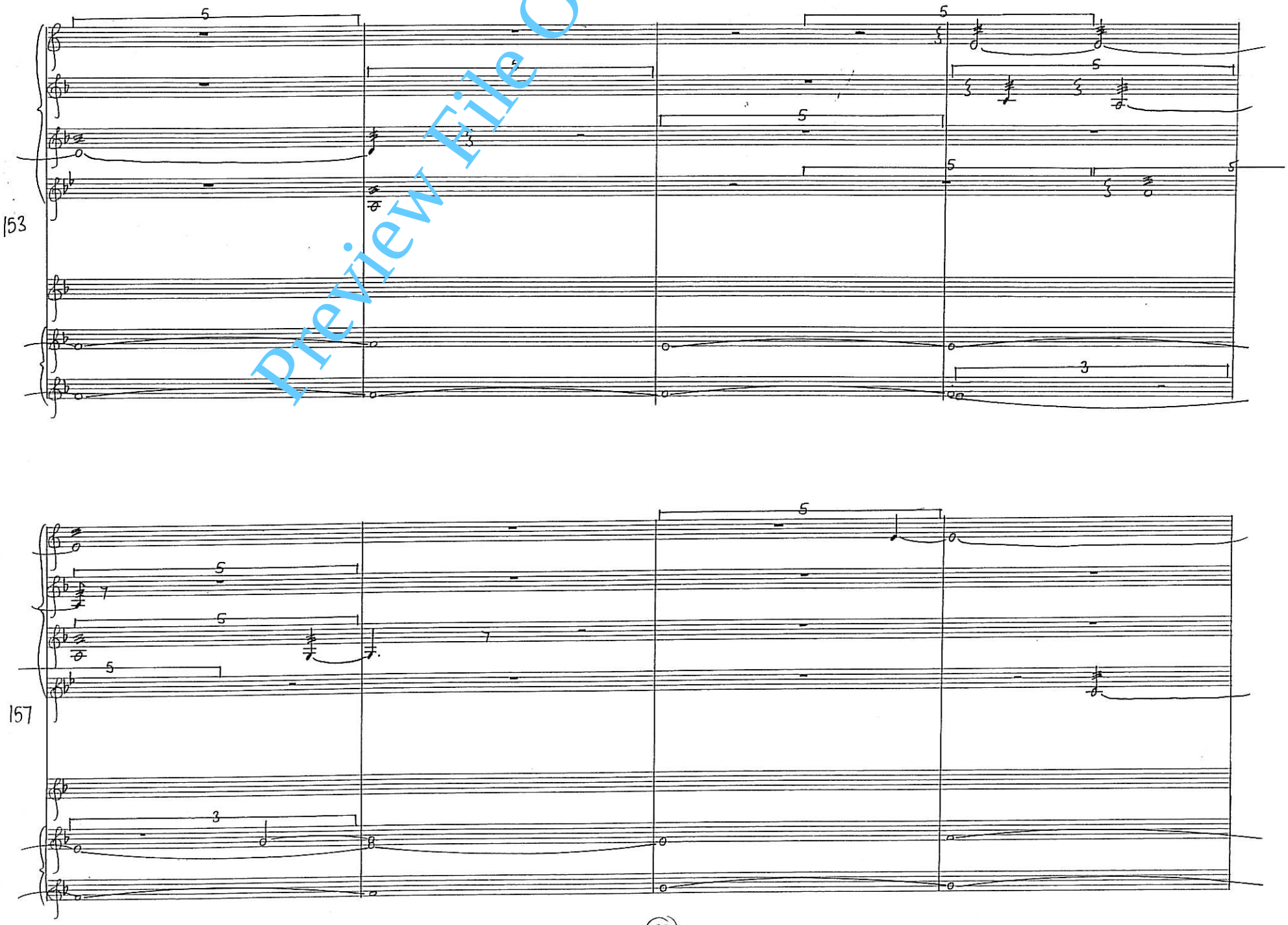

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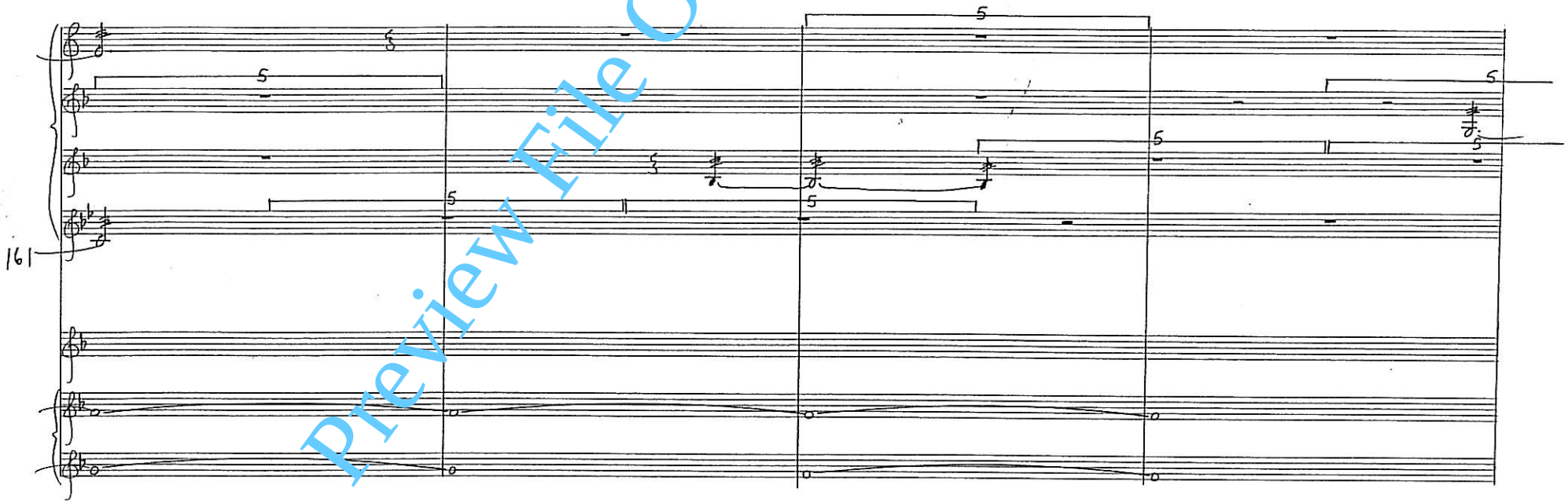

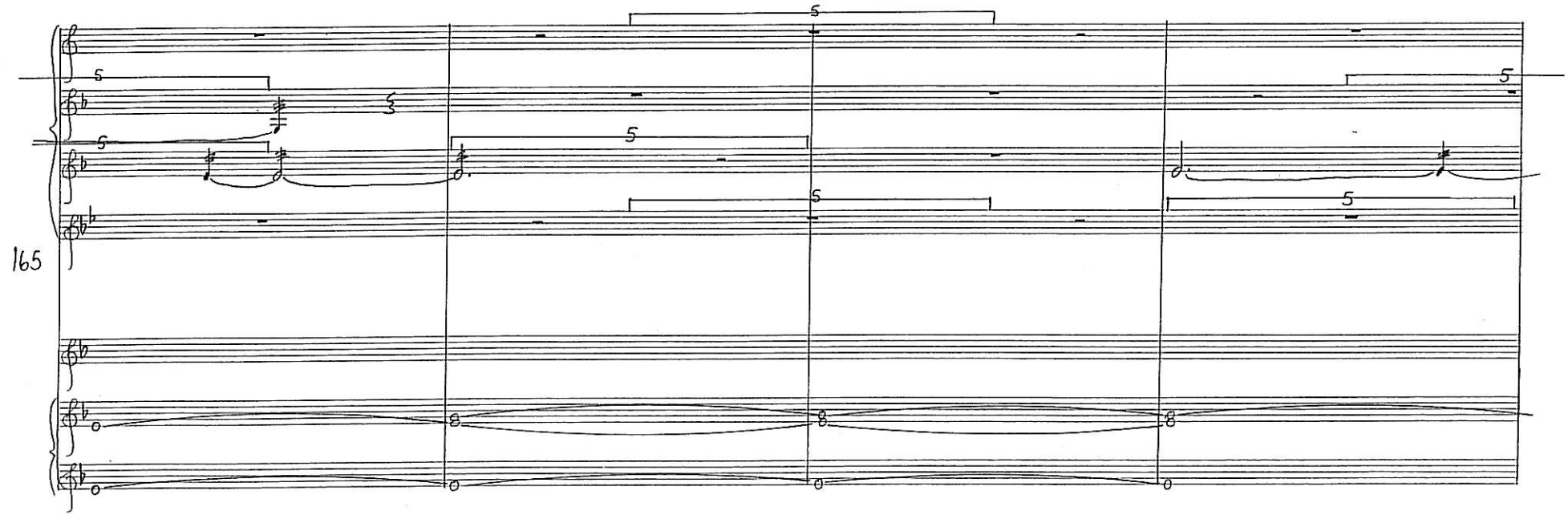

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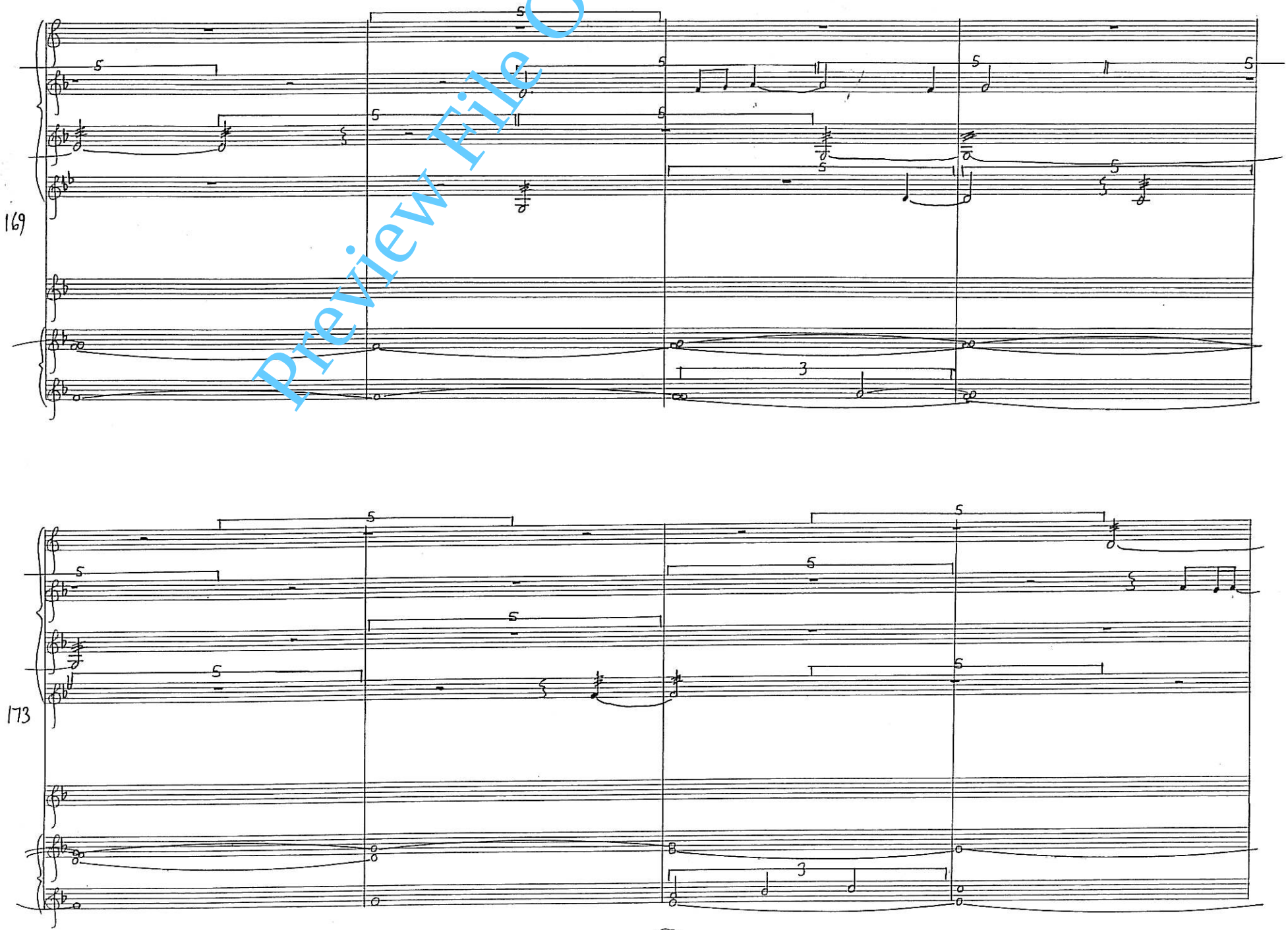

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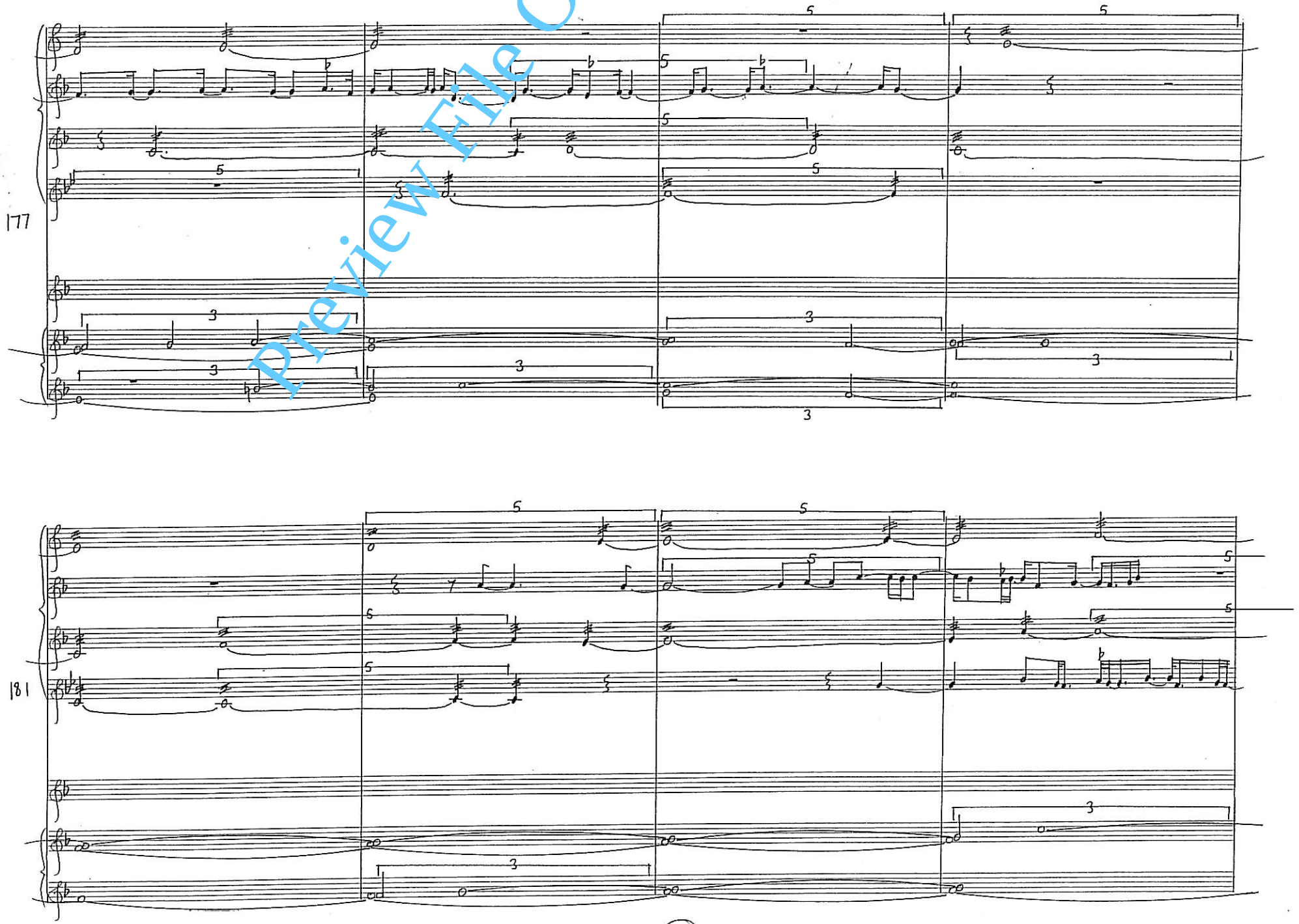

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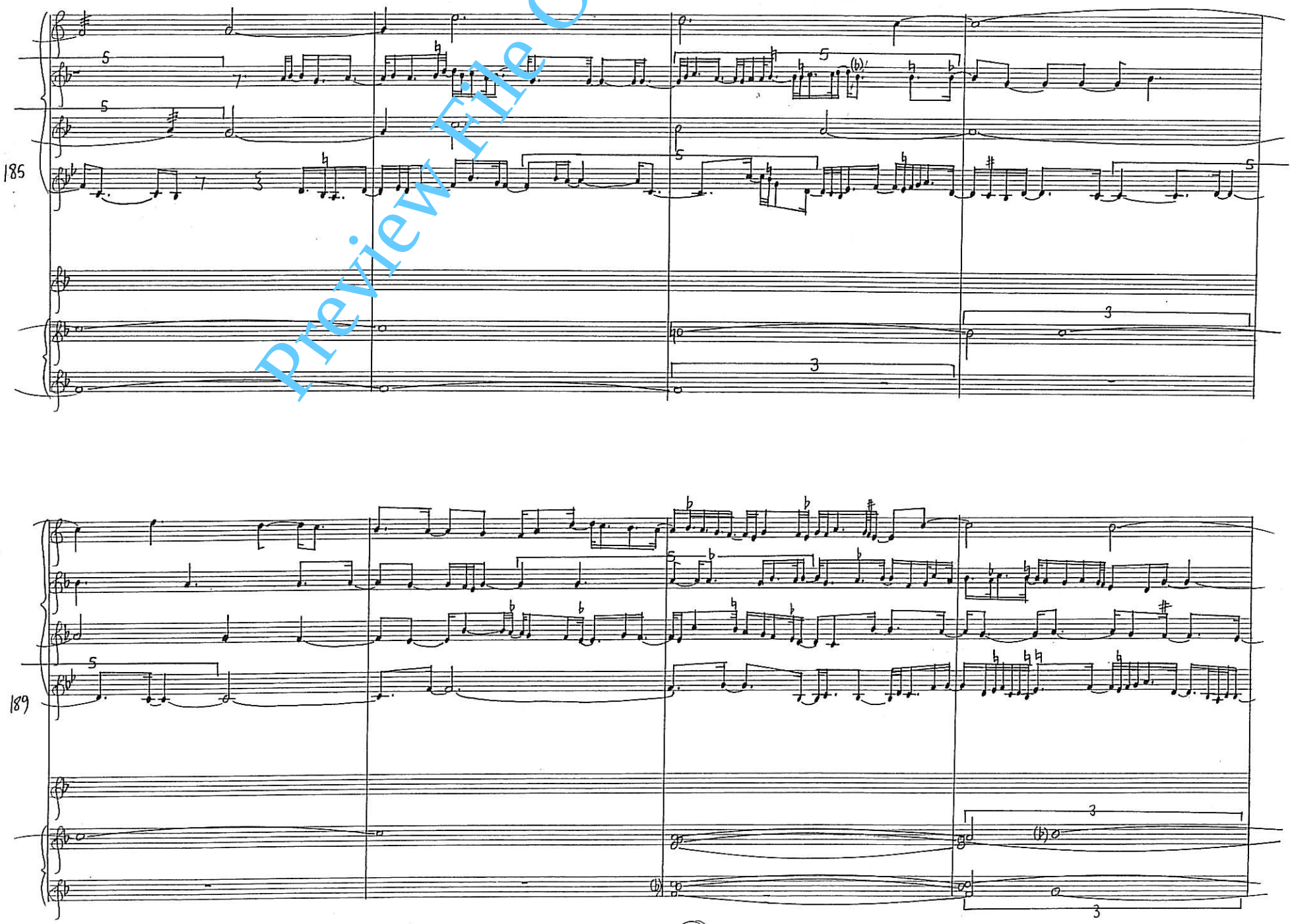

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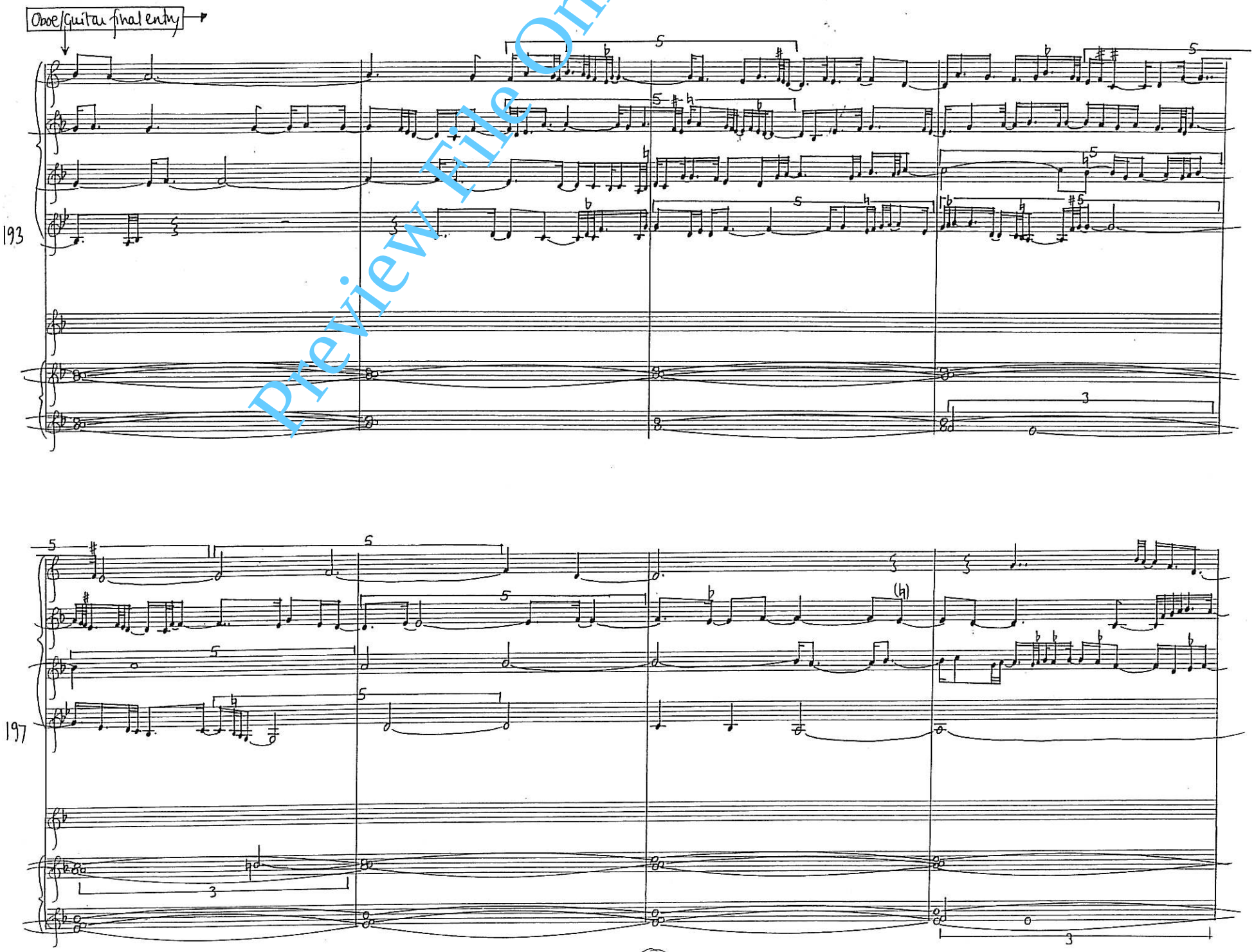

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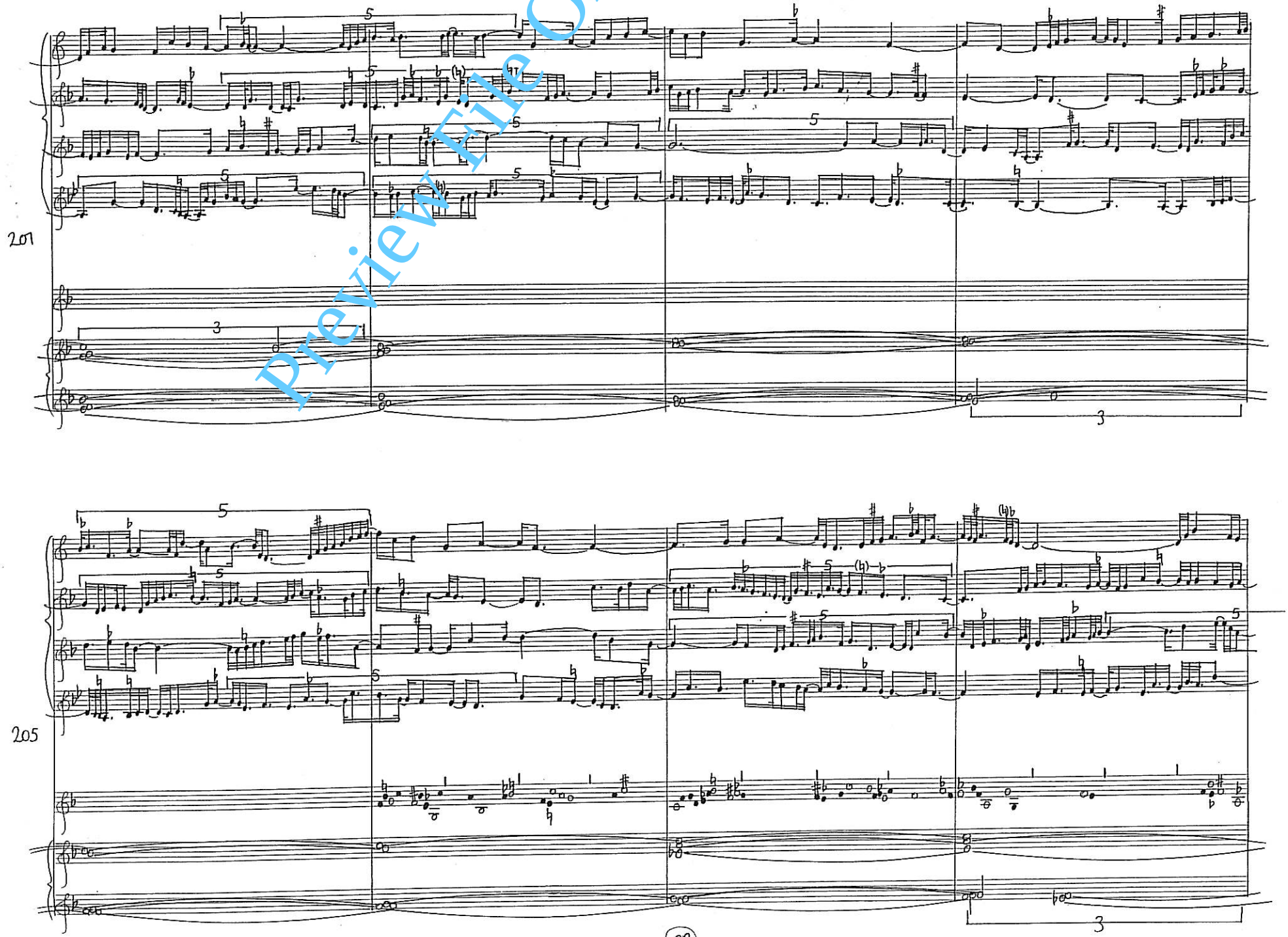

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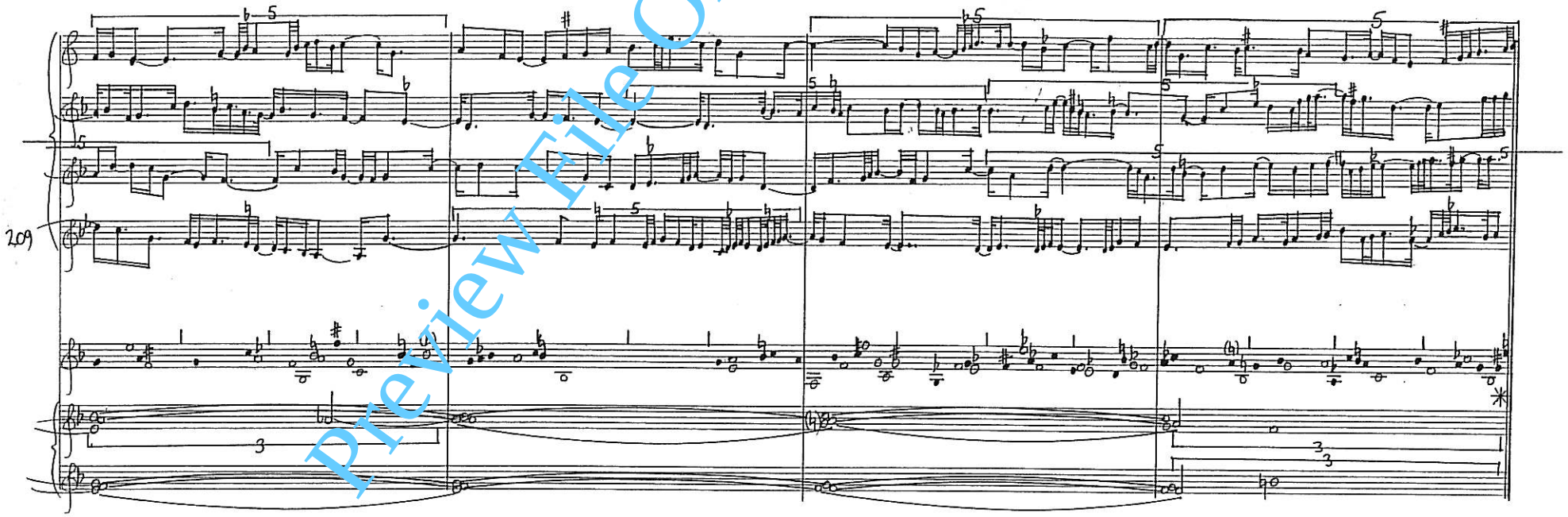

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|----| = 1 second (♩=60'), but with constant small fluctuations in tempo (not in time with other players)

p sempre, legato e ritmico

Oboe d'amore

Guitar

p sempre, legato e ritmico

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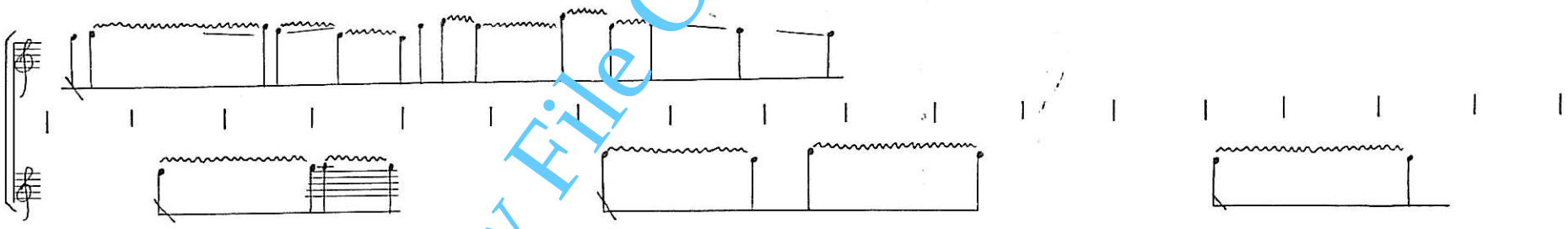

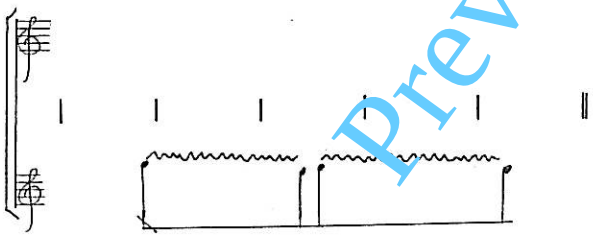

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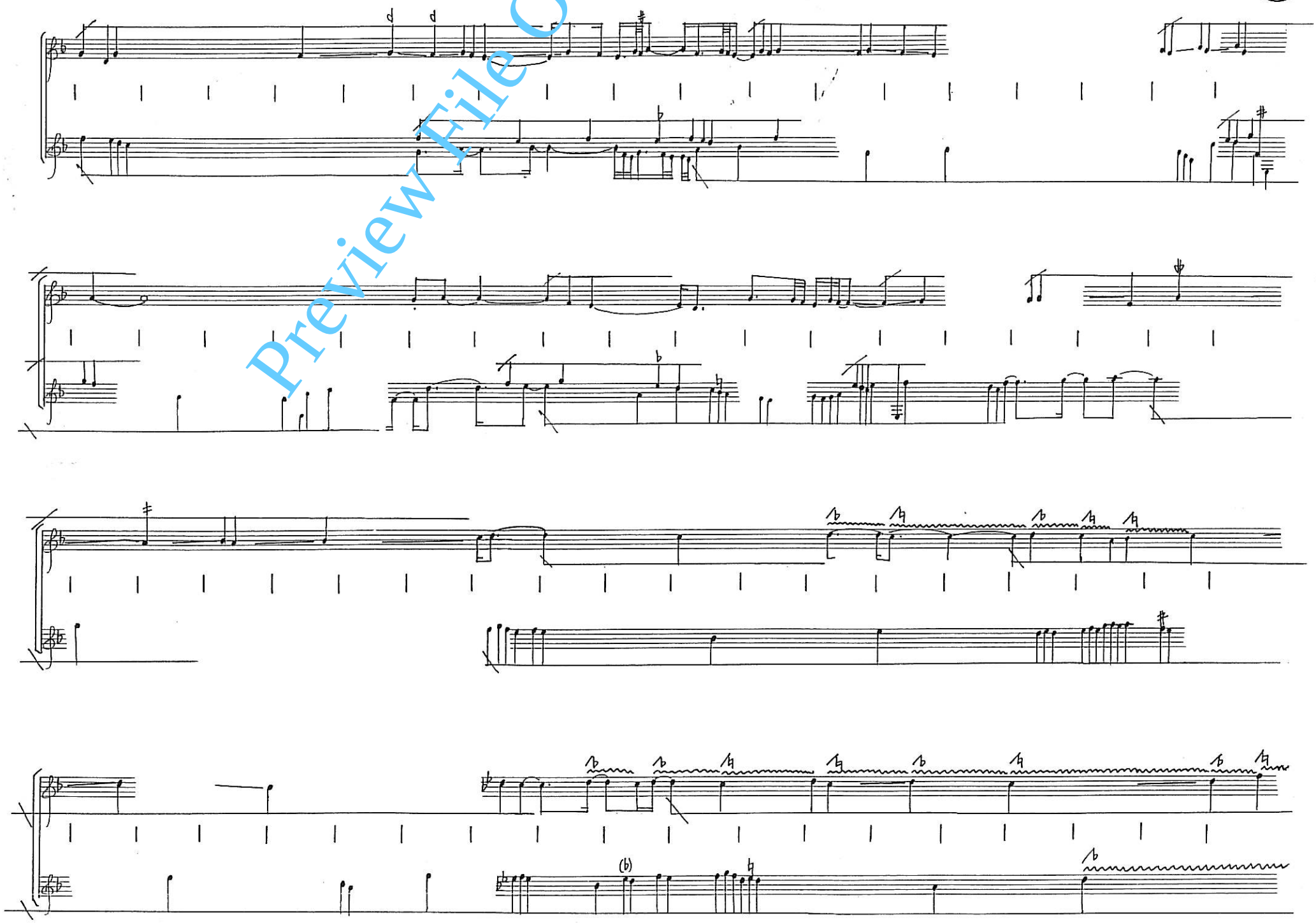

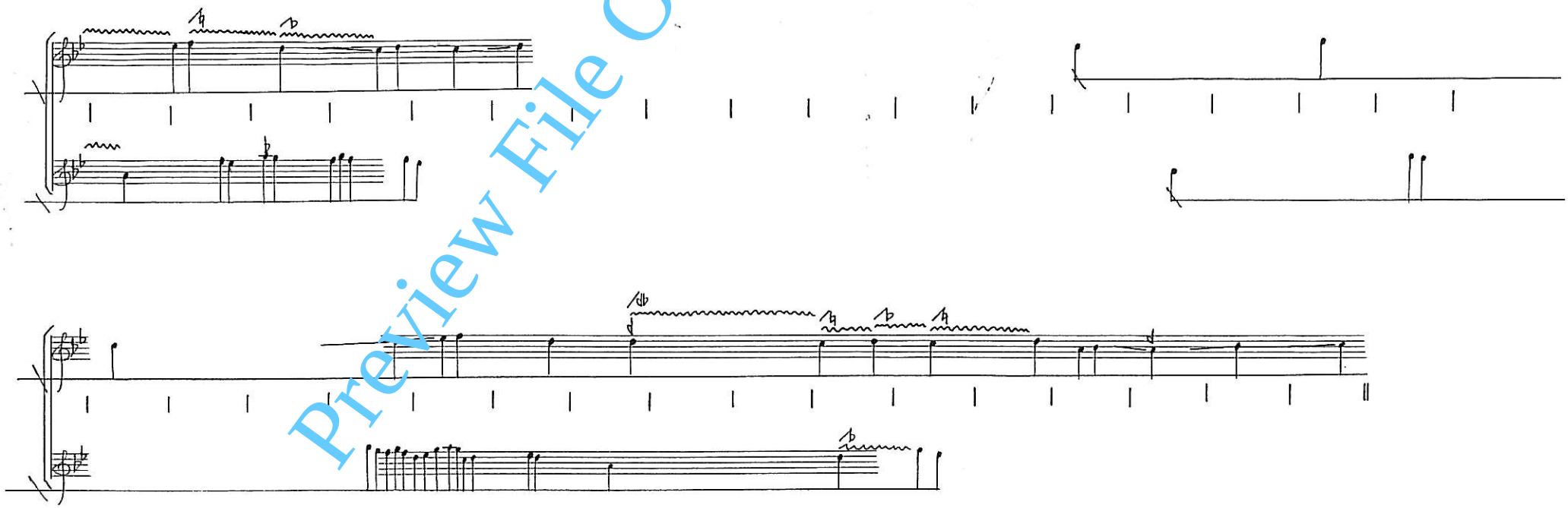

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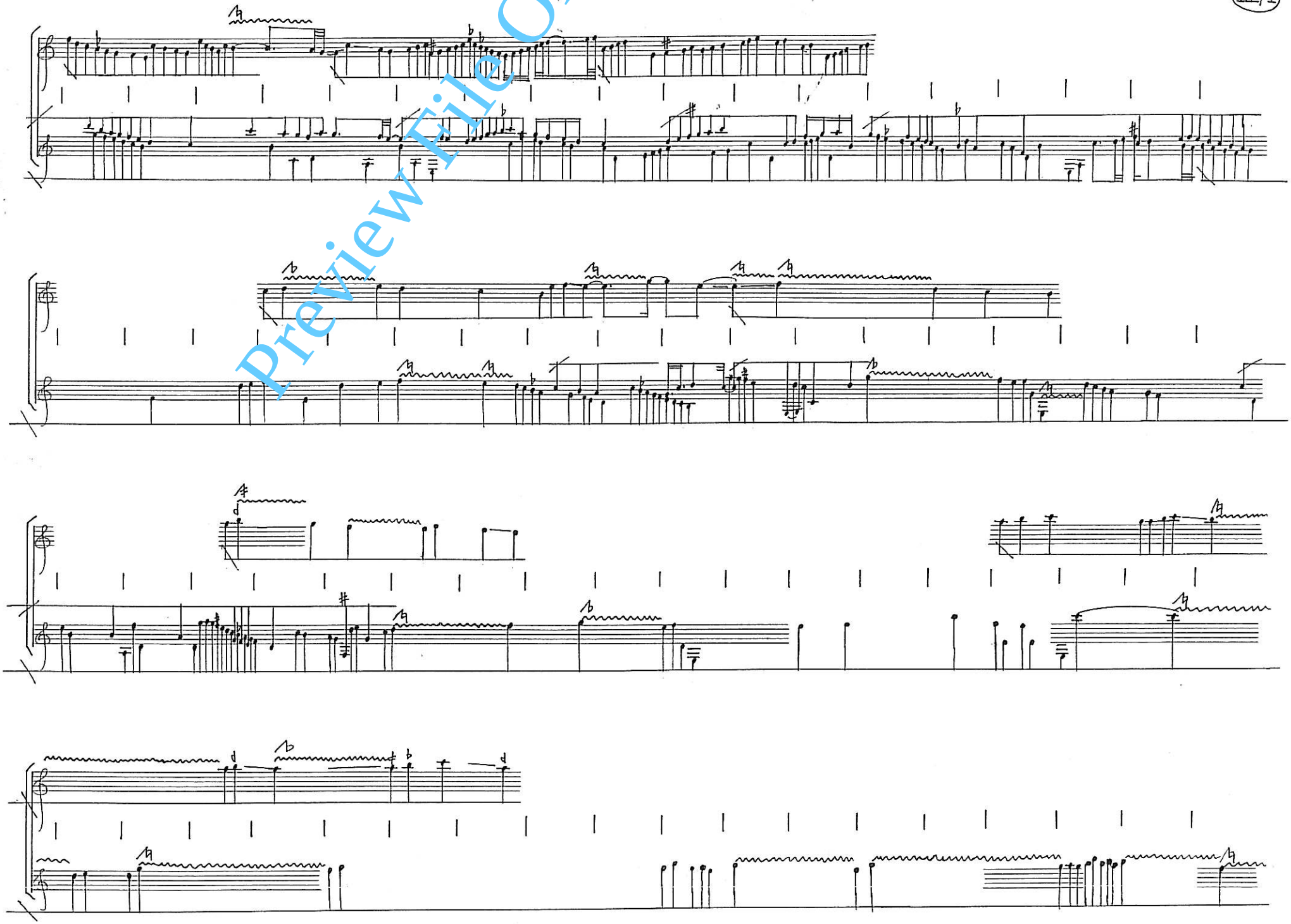

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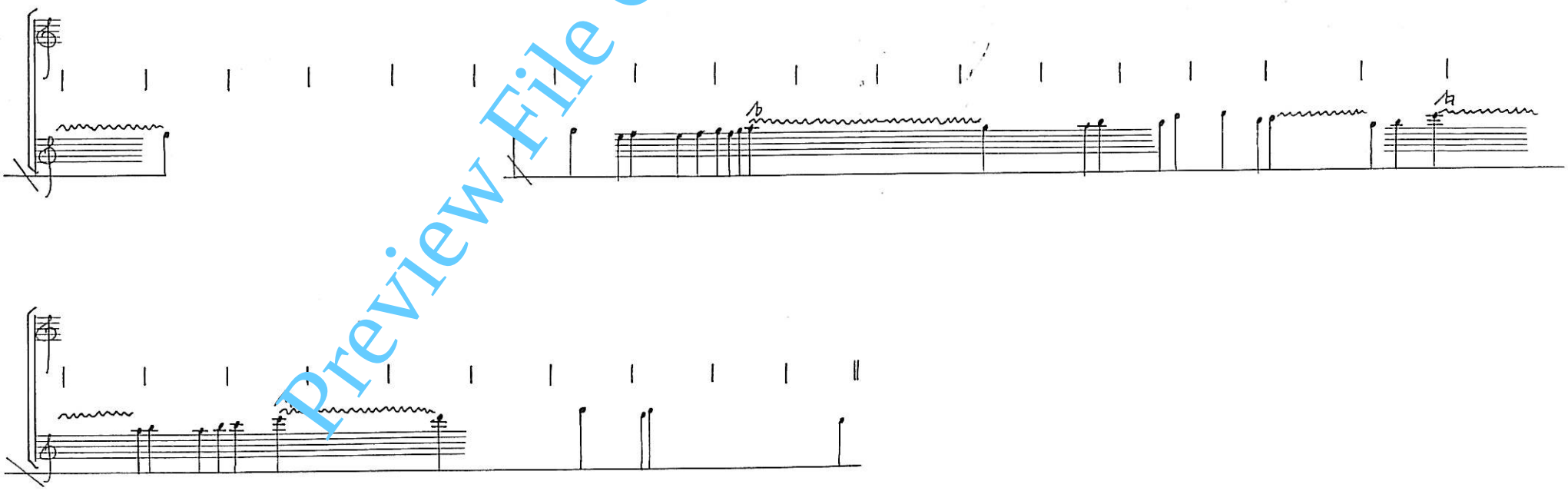

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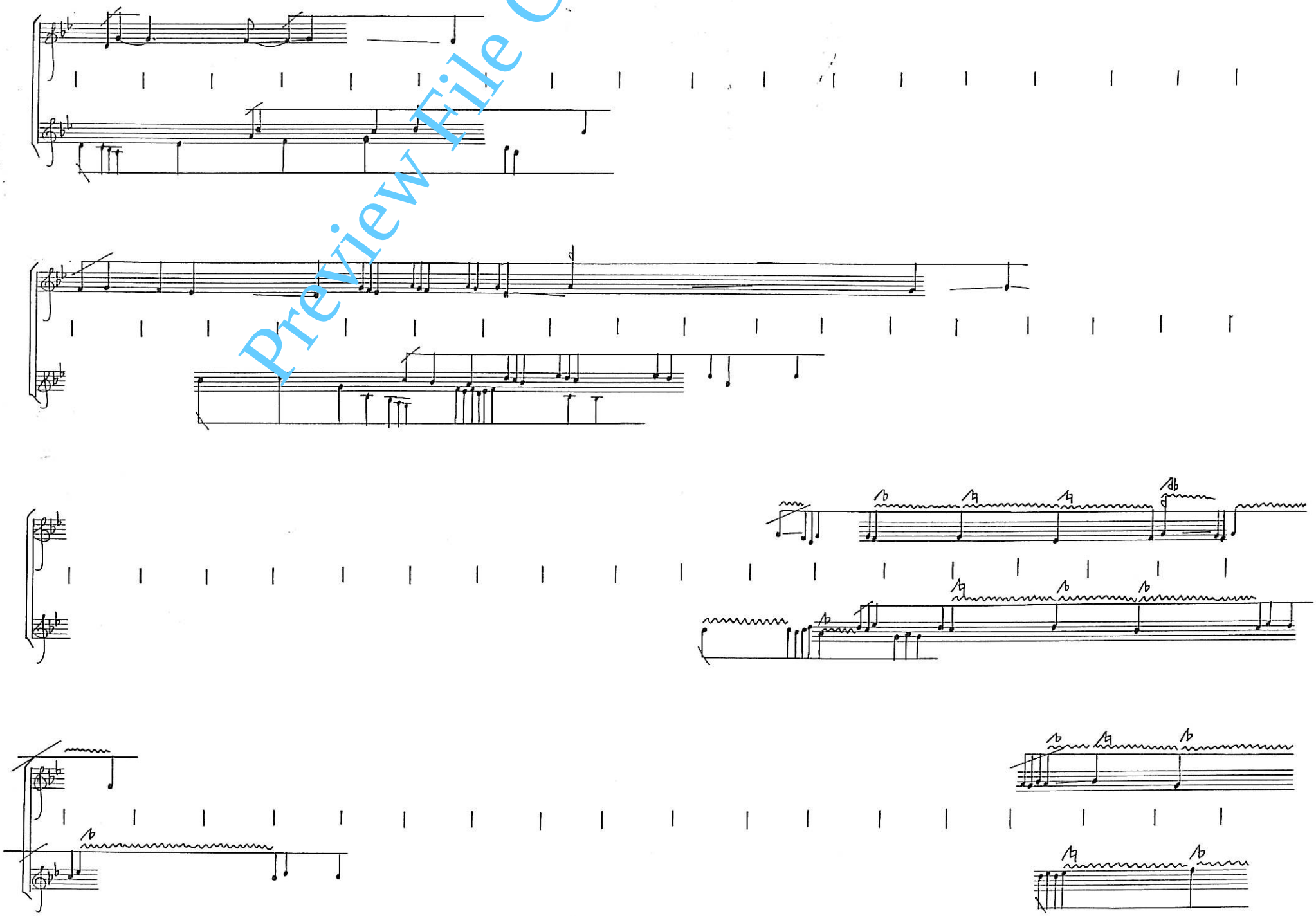

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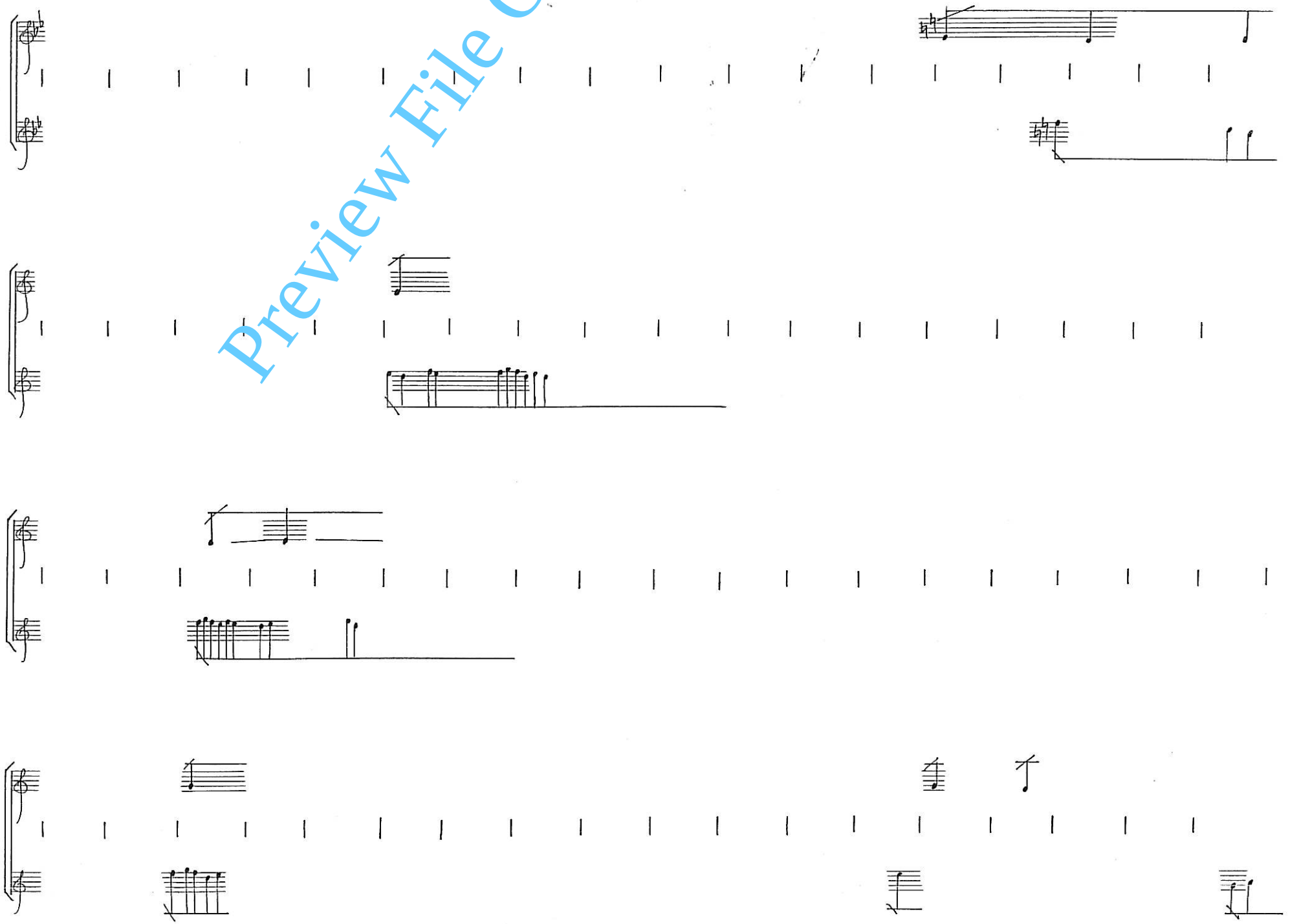

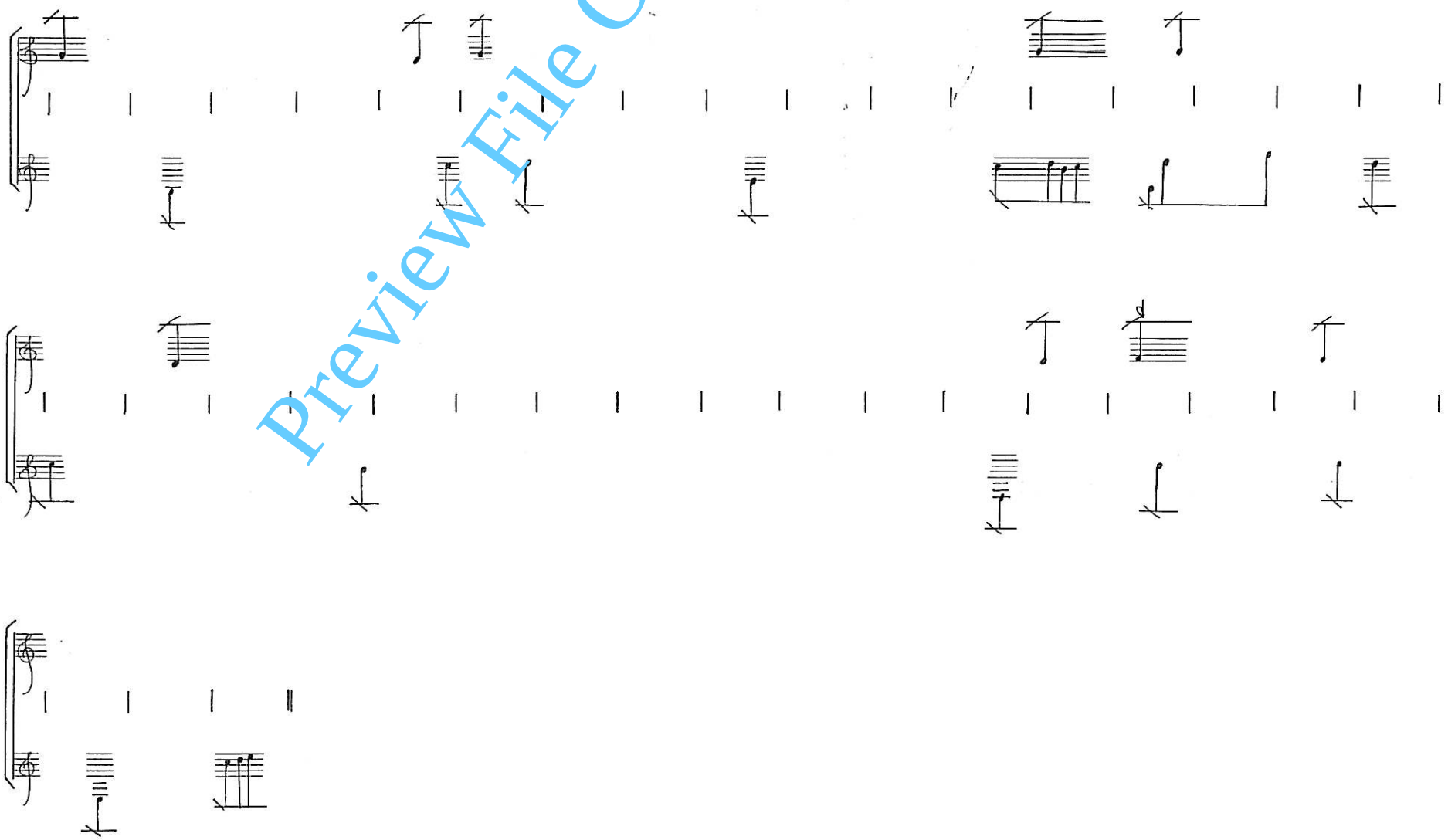

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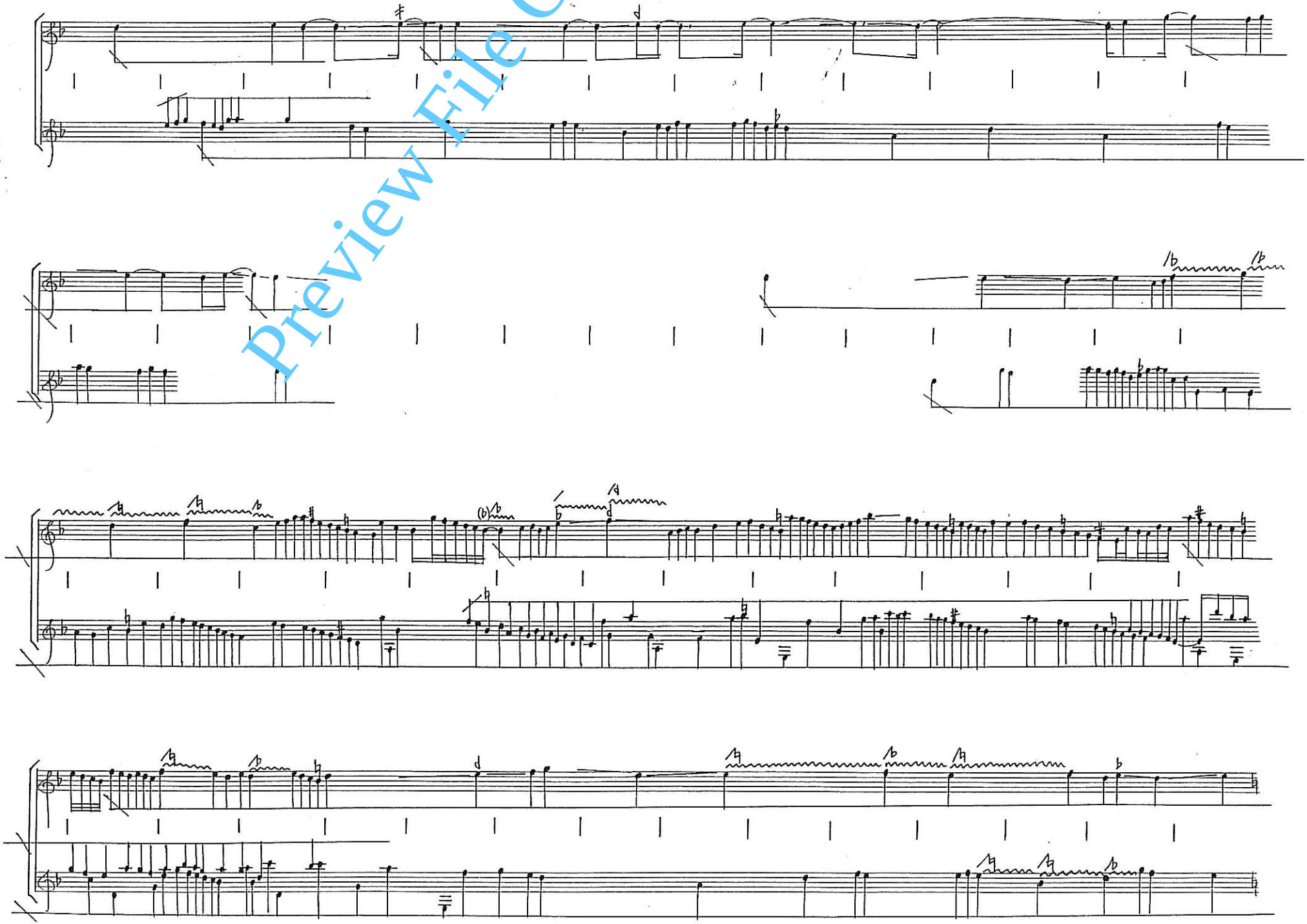

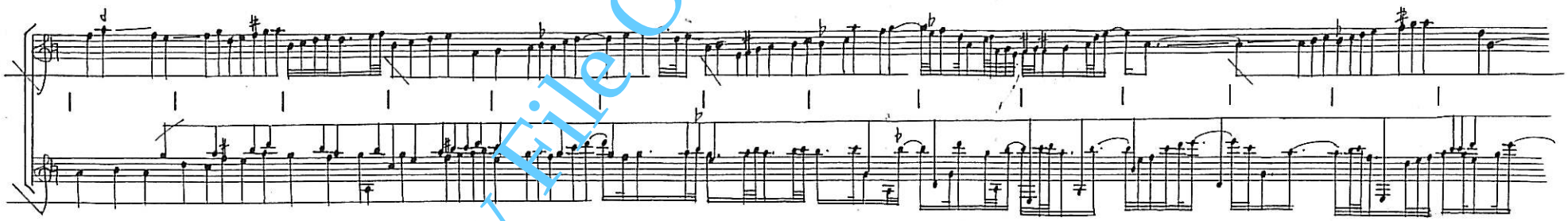

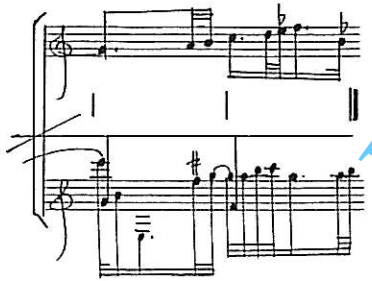

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James Weeks

Low Country

String quartet
2004

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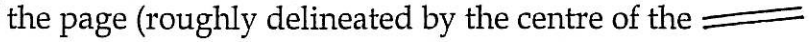
Low Country

for string quartet

Duration
20 minutes

General Notes
Sempre senza vibrato.
Dynamics should be quiet throughout, with some variation ad lib.
The rhythm should be precise and light.

Co-ordination and timing
There are roughly 30 seconds per system (page one lasts 1'30, the rest c.1'00)
Gaps in the music should be judged approximately, according to size.
Allow for small margins at either side of the page (roughly delineated by the centre of the  sign).
When instruments are to continue *without* a break from one system to the next, the signs and are used to indicate this.
For points of entry, each instrument should co-ordinate vertically with the part that entered immediately previously, where possible.
It is expected that vertical co-ordination be generally fluid. Instruments should only co-ordinate exactly with one another when their barlines are joined together. The fourth canon (p.19) should also be in strictly co-ordinated rhythm.

* On pp.12-13, when Vn1, Vla and Vc finish their canons they should co-ordinate with Vn2 in beginning the next section (= 69).
This may entail missing out a few notes or a phrase while the Vn2 part is located. Vn2 will indicate clearly the start of its = 69 passage.

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Other notational points

Clefs are indicated only for each instrument's first entry. They remain the same throughout, as shown:

Violins

Viola

'Cello

Key signatures, which are indicated at the beginning of each line or fragment as normal, are either ♭ or ♮ . Accidentals affect only the notes they immediately precede.

[ ] on p.12: do not play in between the brackets, but continue to follow your line as written.

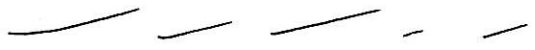
 in front of a fragment: all notes either up or down a quartertone as indicated.

Quartertones: 𝄲 = ¼ sharp, 𝄳 = ¾ sharp, 𝄭 = ¼ flat, 𝄬 = ¾ flat.

light ricochet

'Cello's **notation**

The notation is generic, *not literal*. Do *not* play exactly the strokes indicated, but use the notation as a guide to general frequency and differentiation of strokes (it might be found useful to learn the passage as written first). The two legato passages should occur roughly where indicated. Co-ordinate starts and ends of passages with other instruments.

 upbow strokes of different lengths on harmonic G on C-string (sounds up 8ve).

Vary the weight and speed of bow slightly ad lib, within a general *p flautando*. The tone should be resonant and gentle, mysterious and glowing.

Slight discolorations may occur occasionally (—𝄲 or —𝄭); a few strokes may be entirely 𝄲 or 𝄭 , thus stopping the harmonic.

On page 17 as indicated, begin to cross over to the G string (D harmonic), and use both G and D harmonics separately or occasionally together until end of the passage.

Low Country

Homage to Aldo Clementi

for string quartet

2004

Low Country is the second in a trilogy of works entitled *Schilderkonst* ('Art of Painting'). All three pieces use a fragment of Ockeghem (the 'In nomine Domini' section from the Benedictus of the *Missa Prolationum*) and explore Art's relation to 'the real' with reference to the Netherlandish art of the 16th and 17th centuries. In *Low Country*, the source material is turned into a number of canons (distinguished by tempo and sometimes articulation) which are sounded either partially (with rests, cut into pieces) or in full. The music's discourse is fragmentary, haphazardly arranged. Gestures are accidental and insignificant. The music is 'low' in the sense of ordinary, quotidian (a de Hooch 'genre' scene?), anti-rhetorical, roughly-fashioned, non-transcendental, quiet. The connection to Clementi is the canons.

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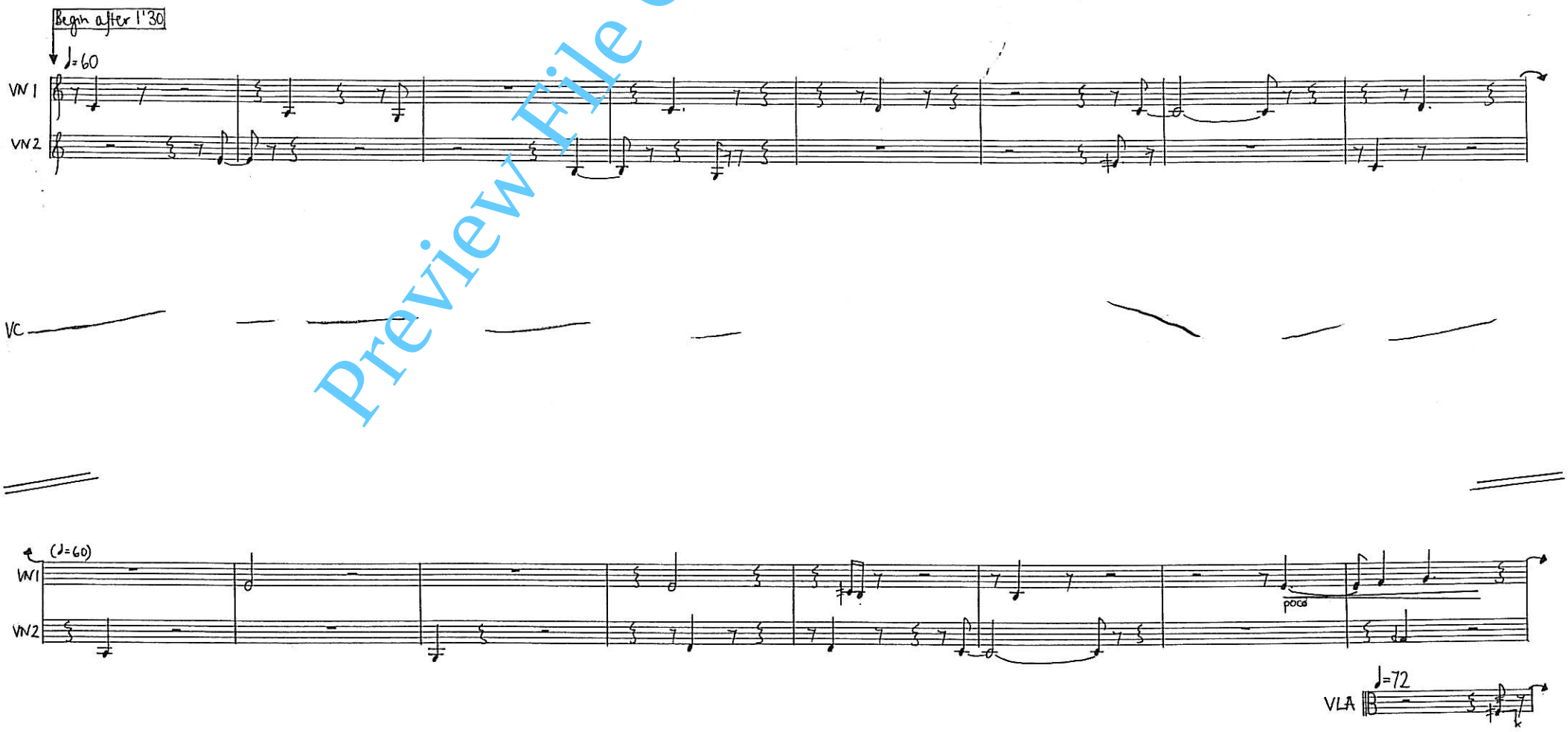

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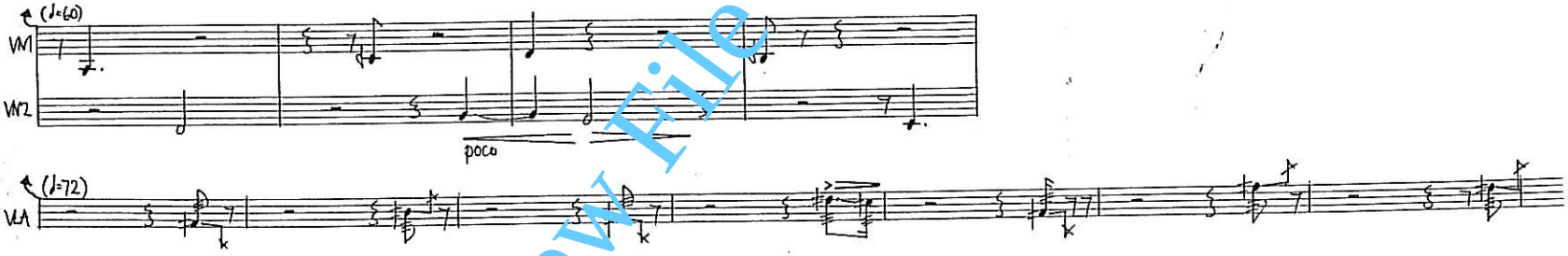

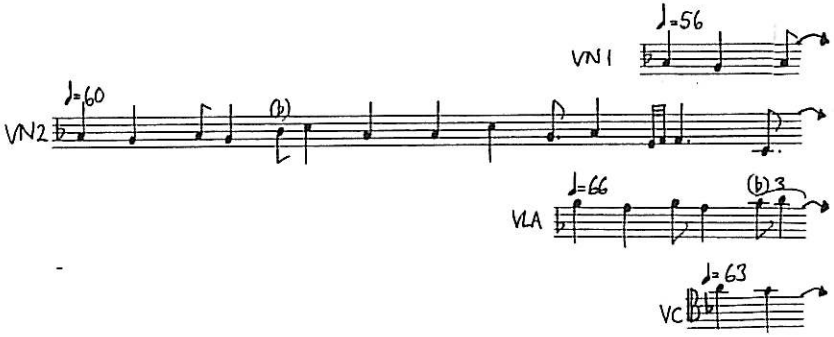

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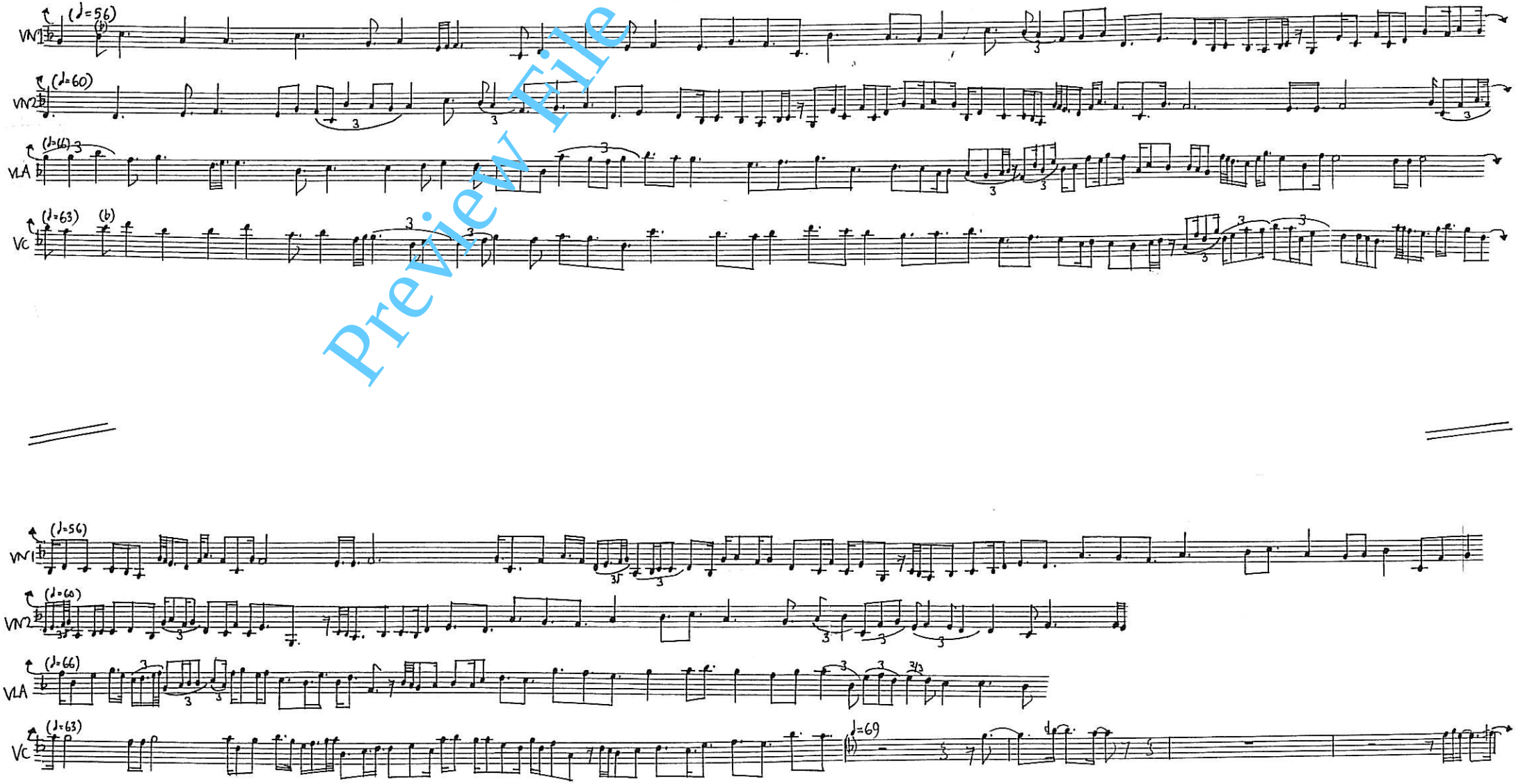

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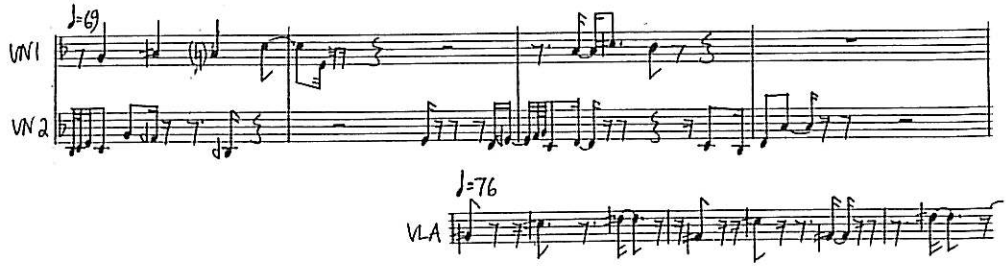

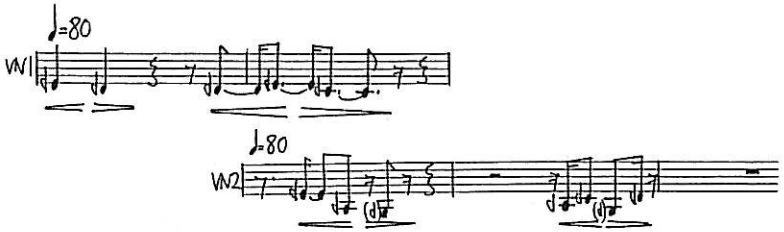

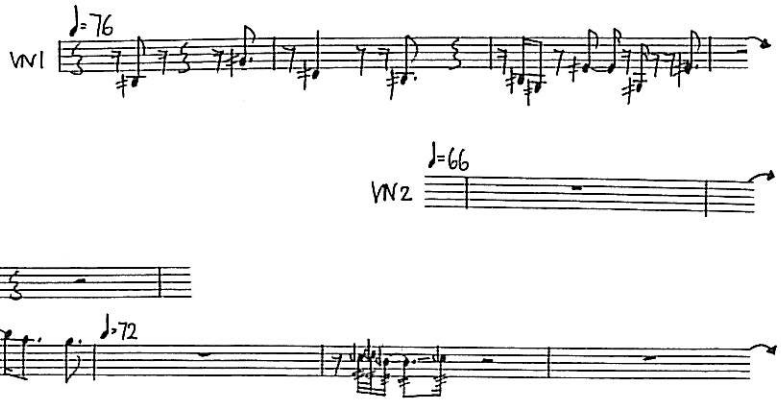

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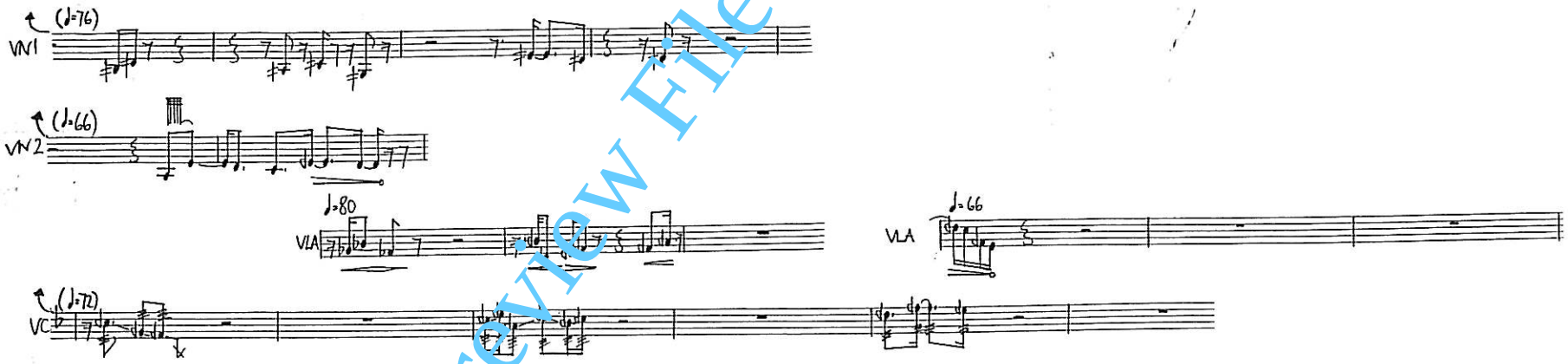

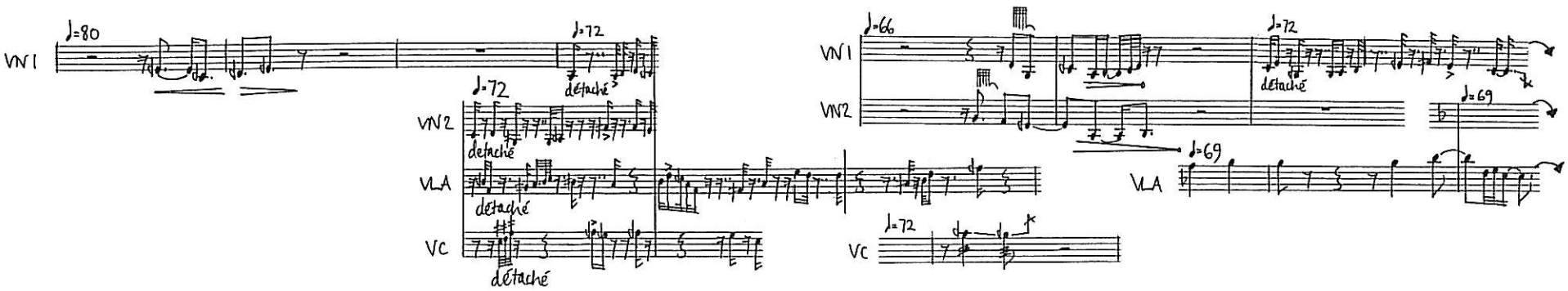

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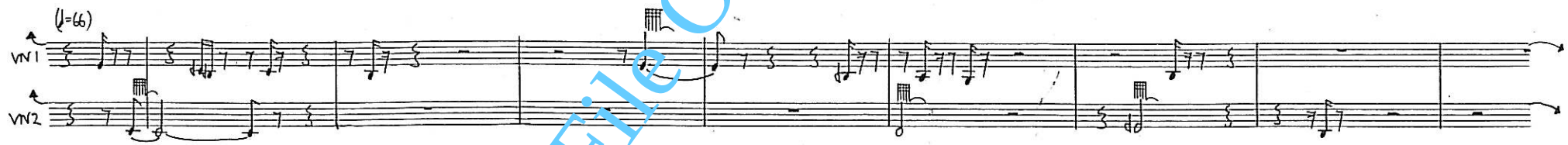

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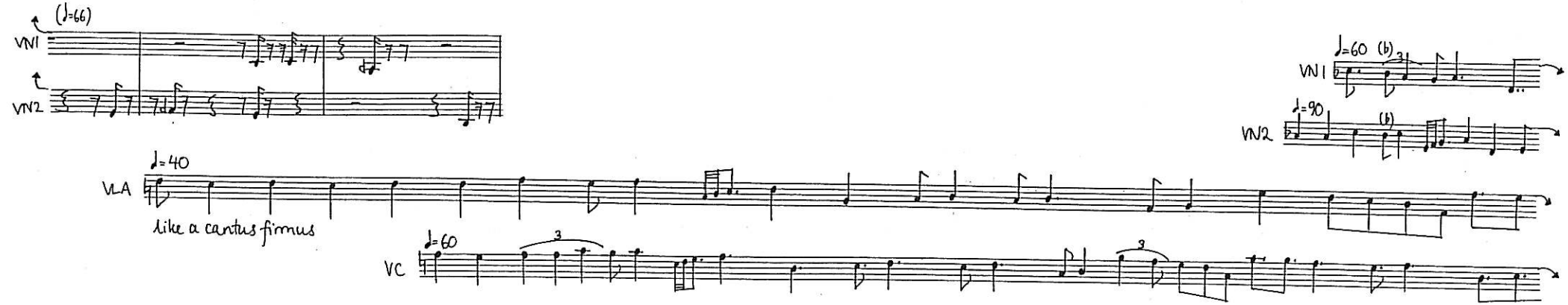

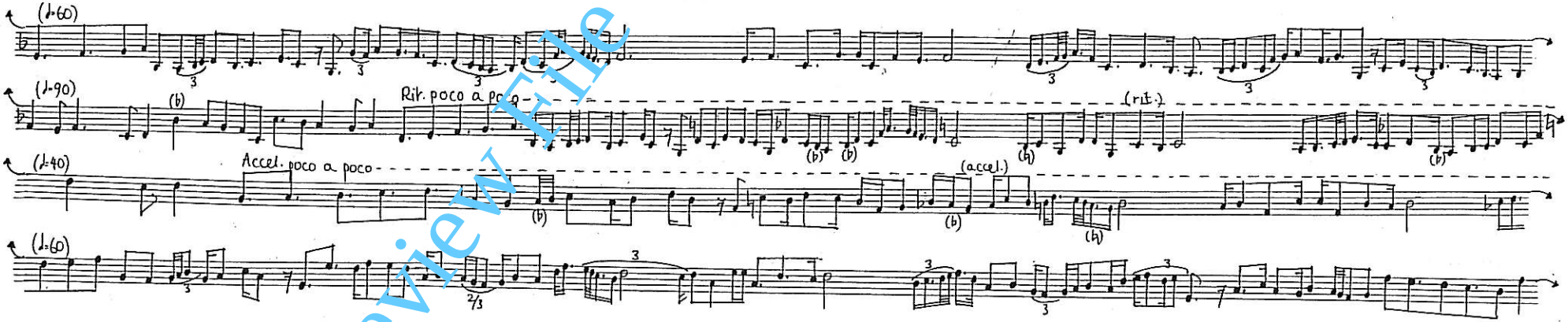

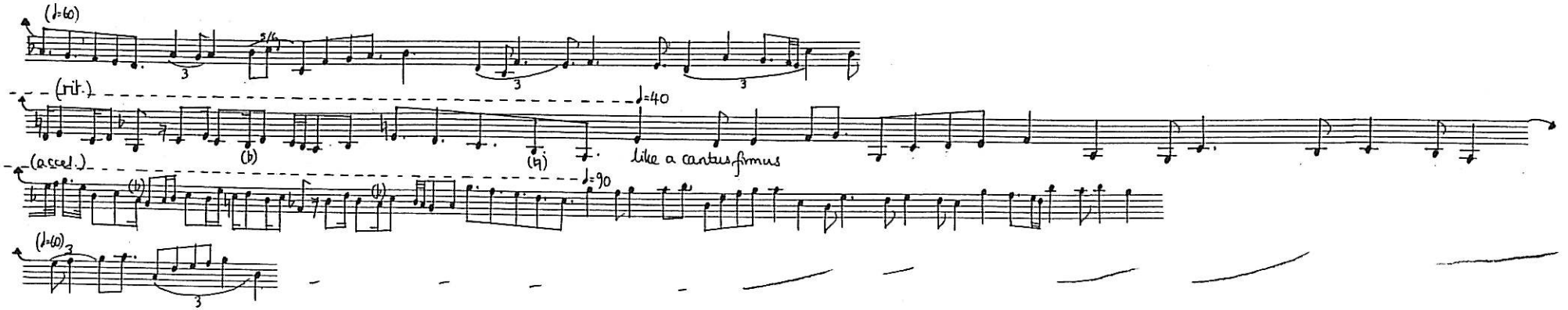

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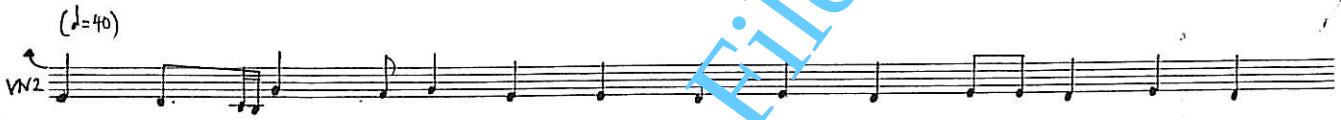

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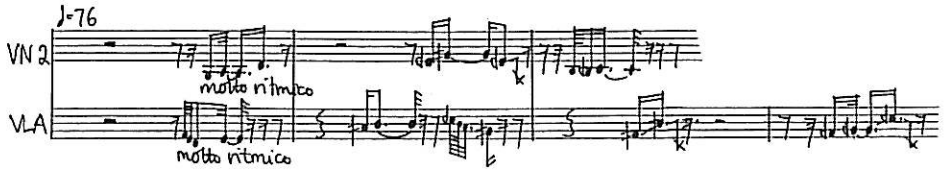

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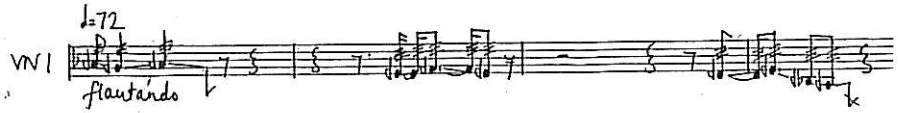

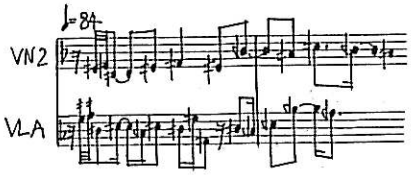

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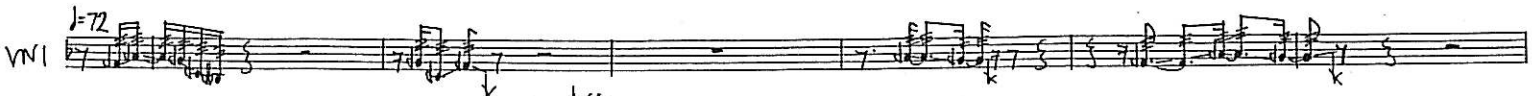

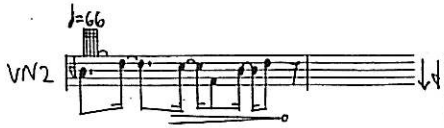

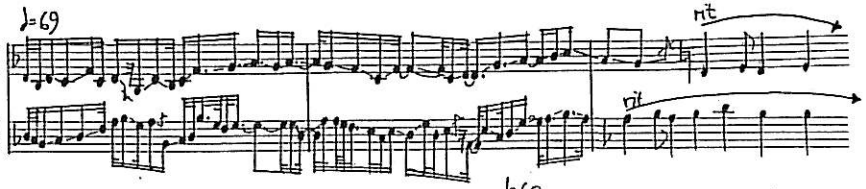

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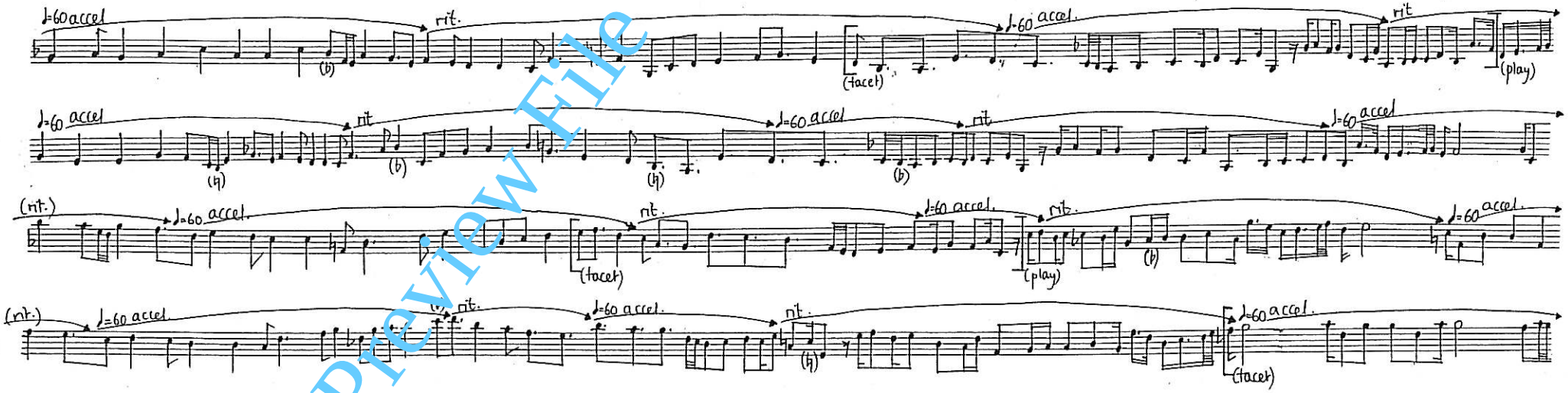

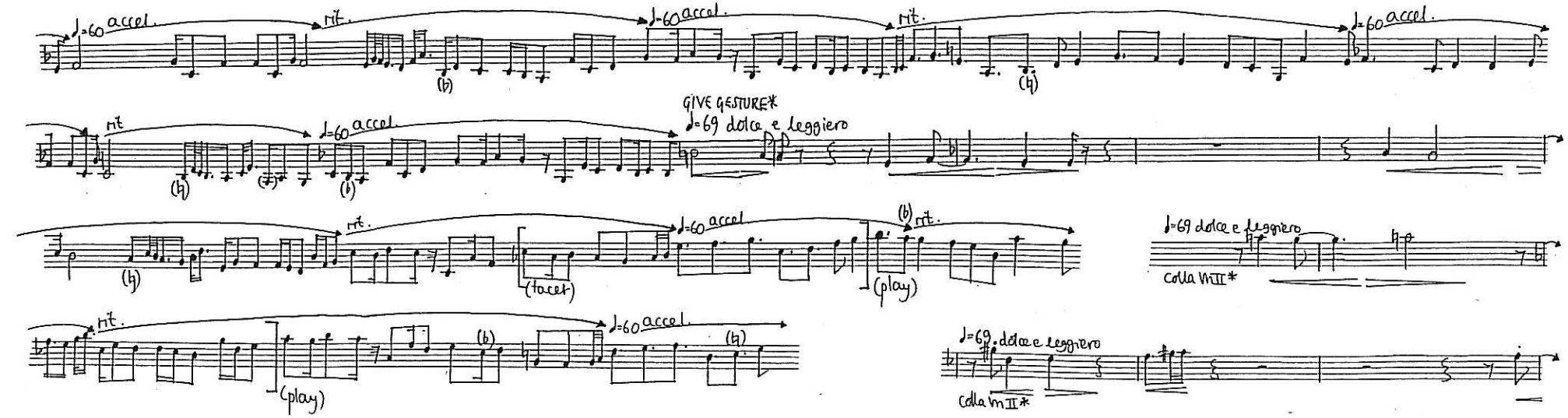

*See performance notes

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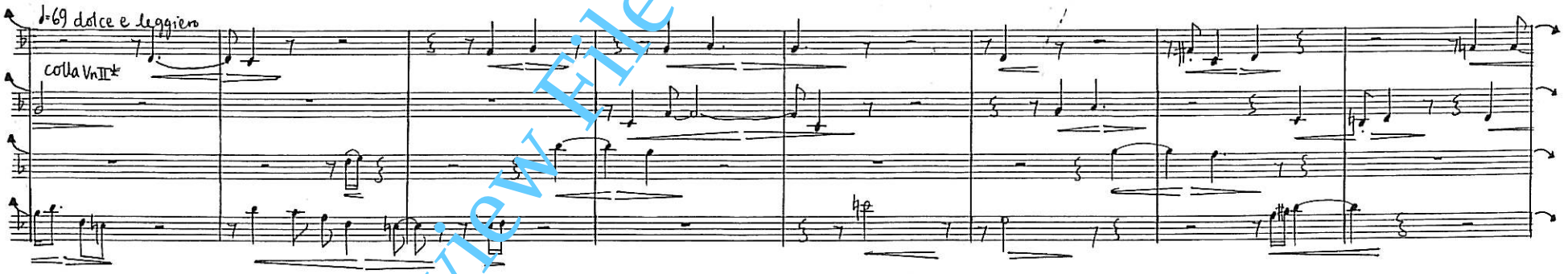

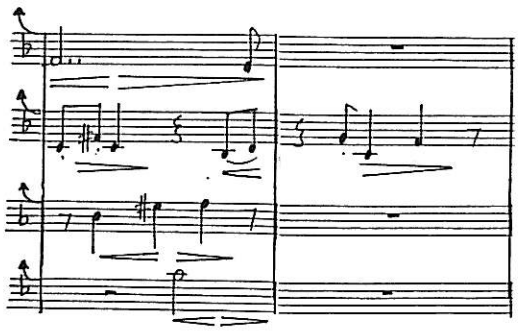

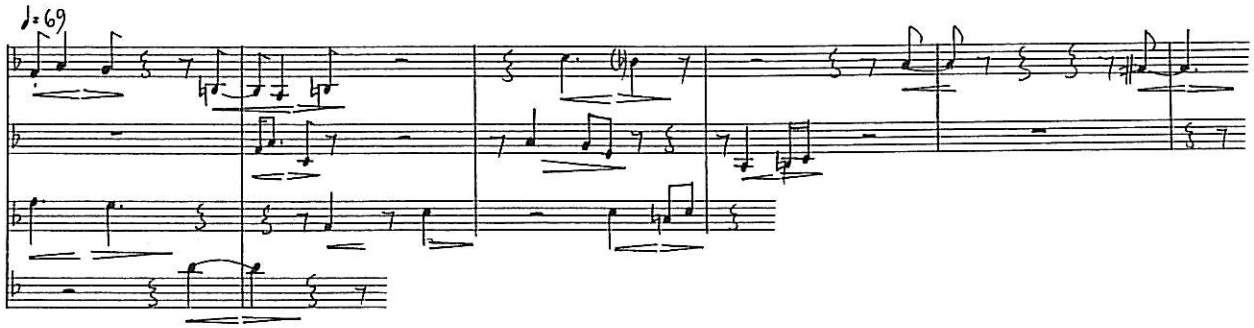

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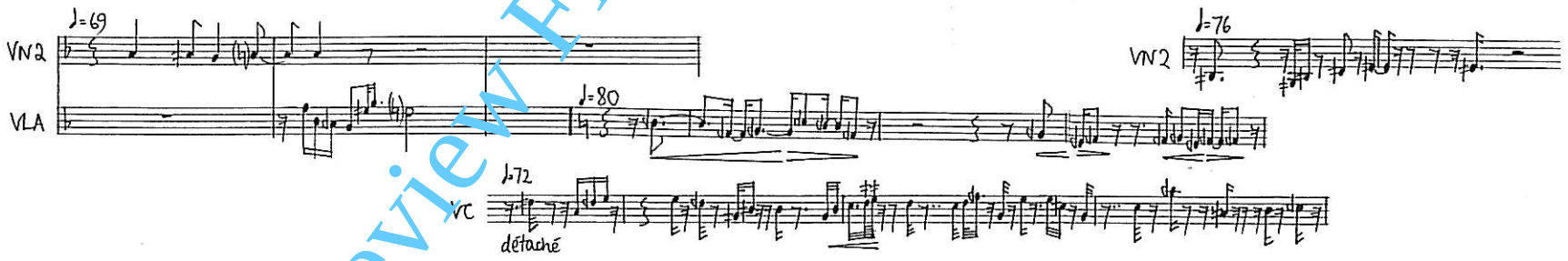

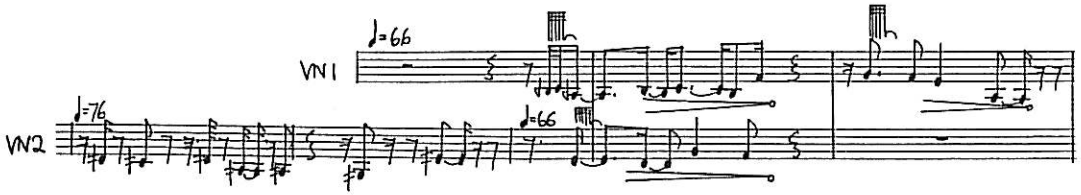

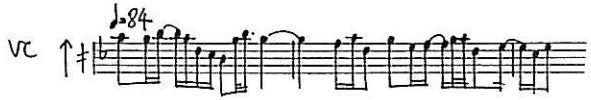

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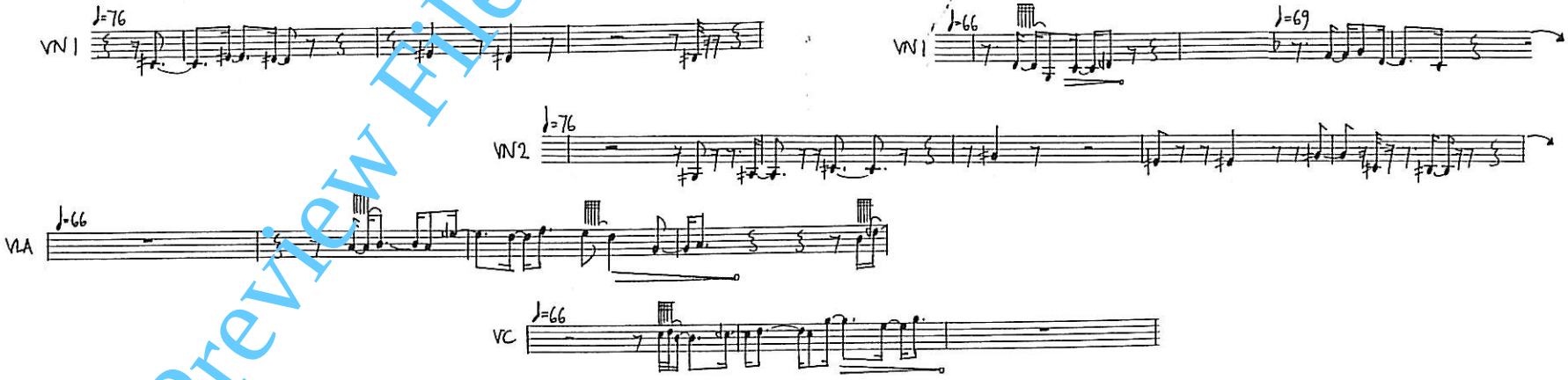

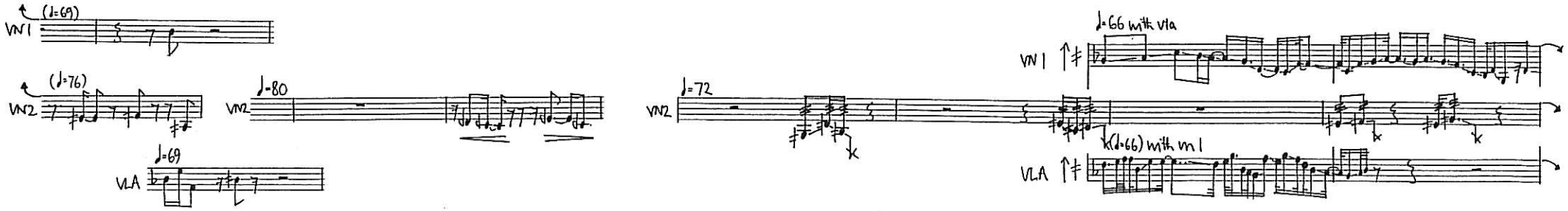

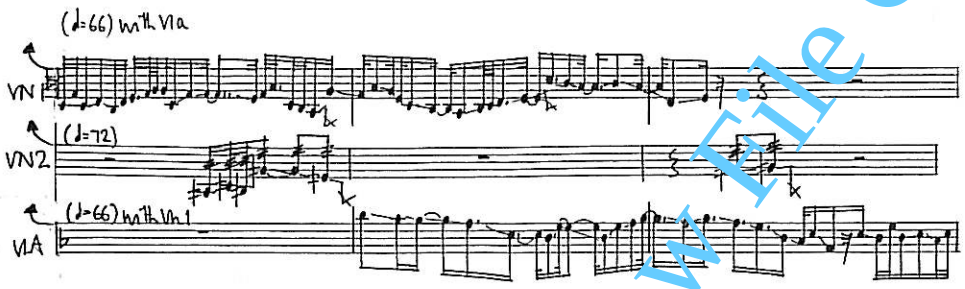

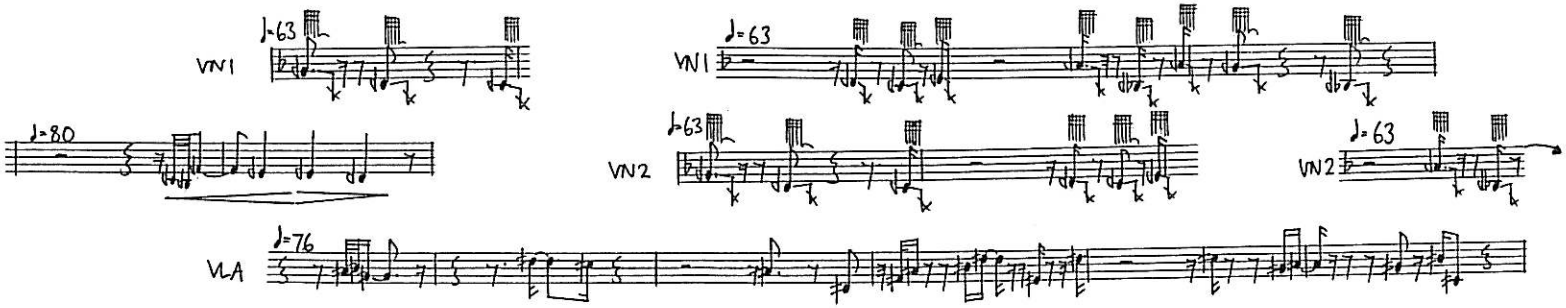

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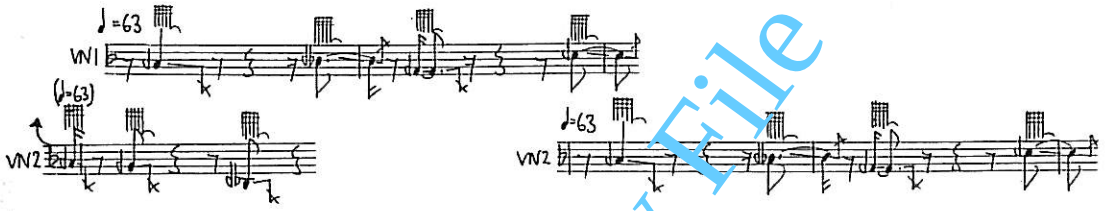

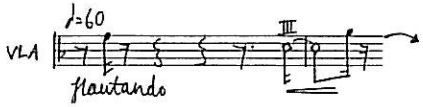

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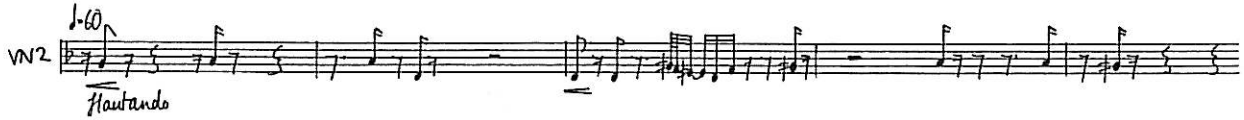

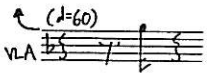

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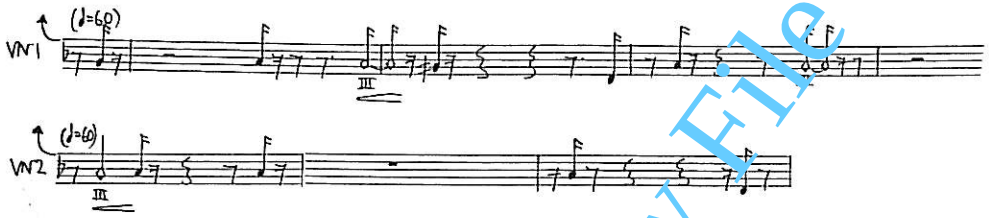

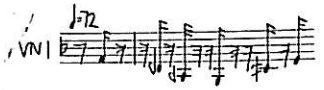

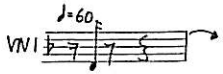

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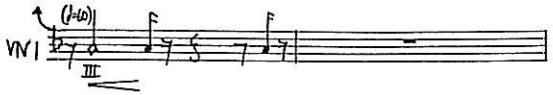

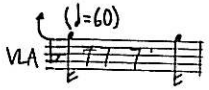

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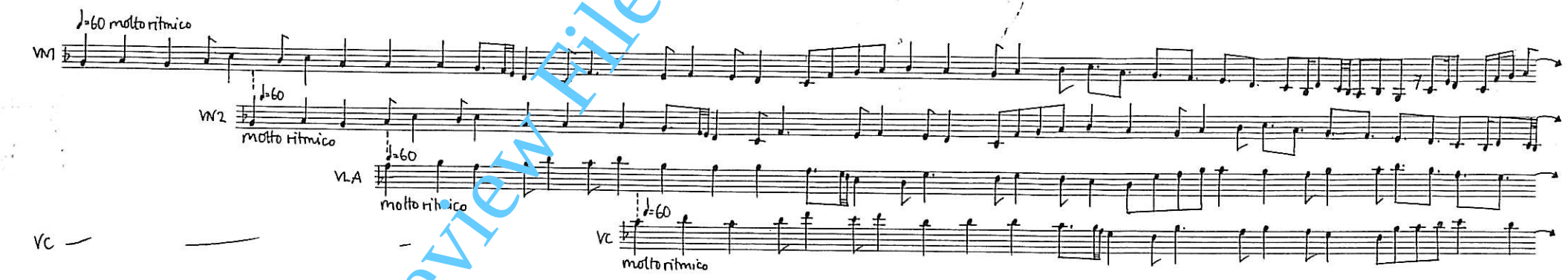

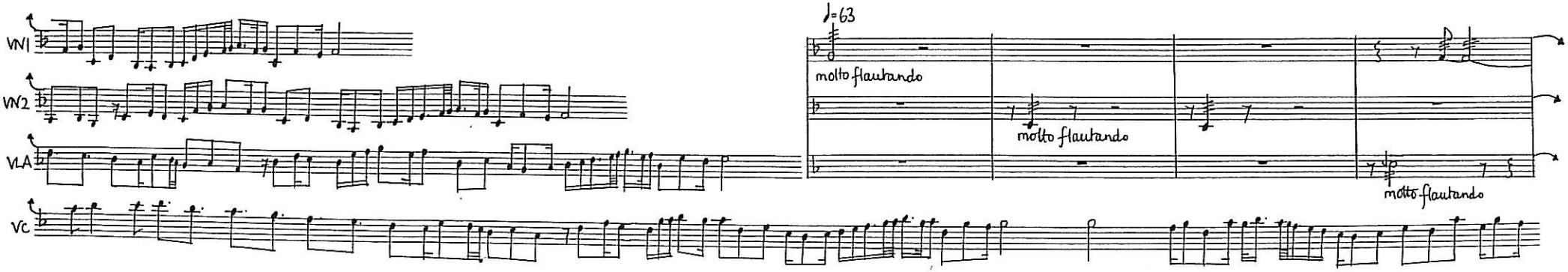

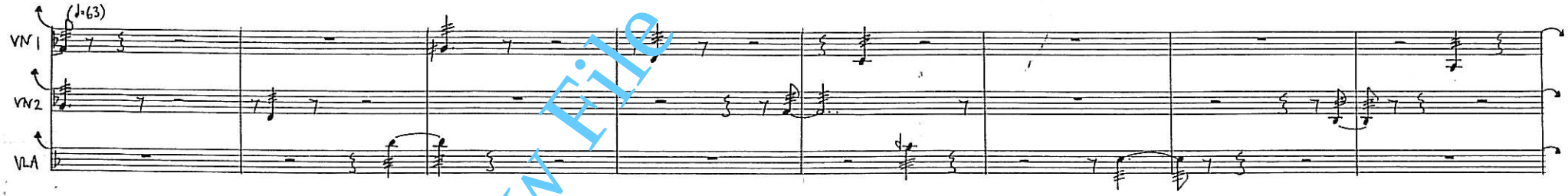

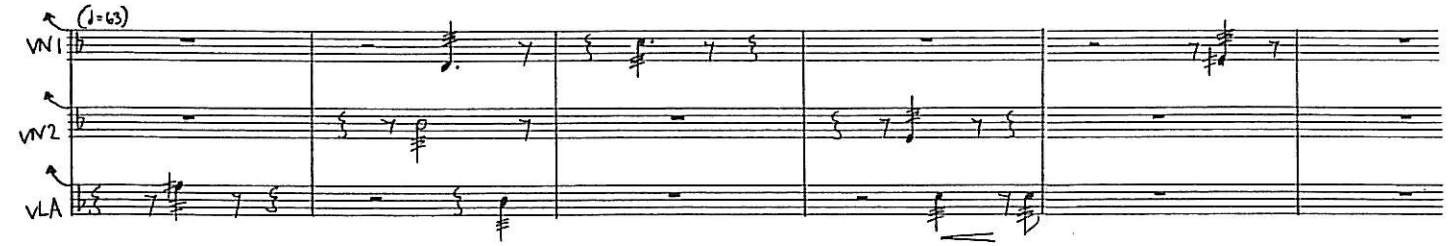

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James Weeks

Duinland

Piano
2004

Preview File Only

Duinland

for piano (with optional vibraphone)

Duration
19 minutes

Directions for performance
The music is notated on a number of fragmentary (canonically-related) staves which hold their exact vertical placement on the page throughout. Only one of these is marked with a bass clef (giving it the status of cantus firmus), although bass clef should be assumed where nothing is marked.
The disappearance of the staves indicates the disappearance from the music of that particular canonic line, but not necessarily a break in the overall musical line: thus on page 3 and following, a continuous melodic line should be played, even though the music oscillates between canonic levels. Simultaneous 2- and 3-part counterpoint is indicated by the presence of brackets [ ] around the passage in question.
Passages lacking specific rhythm should be played in space-time notation, as implied. It is important not to play these passages too fast: for example, the first one (as far as the end of page 2) should take about 1'45 to play.
The piece should be played calmly and quietly.

Performance with vibraphone
The vibraphone material should only be performed when *Duinland* is part of a complete performance of the *Schilderkonst* trilogy. It should enter, above the dynamic level of the piano, around the point indicated on page 28, and play to the end in the same way as in *Saenredam*. It does not need to finish at the same time as the piano, and should hold the pedal until the last notes have died completely.

Preview File Only

Duinland

for piano (with optional vibraphone)

2004

Duinland is the third in a trilogy of works entitled *Schilderkonst* ('Art of Painting'). All three pieces use a fragment of Ockeghem (the 'In nomine Domini' section from the Benedictus of the *Missa Prolationum*) and explore Art's relation to 'the real' with reference to the Netherlandish art of the 16th and 17th centuries. *Duinland* ('Dune land') evokes the bare coastal landscape of north Holland, as depicted in the empty 'tonal' landscapes of Jan van Goyen. The music is a walking-through of this landscape, and follows loosely the paradigm established by Frits Noske to explain the form of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck's keyboard fantasias. This is the idea of *forma formans*, in which the music creates its form as it continues, beginning with the theme in its prime rhythmic form, then moving to slower passages of augmentations and finishing with fast diminutions. For much of the piece the music's focus is on the ground itself; later, after it has slowed to a long period of silence, the sky is heard above it. The vibraphone coda brings together what Noske describes as the two 'authentic' musics of the Netherlands: the organ (Sweelinck's perhaps, represented by the piano) and the carillon (the vibraphone), whose bells return the listener from the reverie of metaphor to the real world outside the concert hall.

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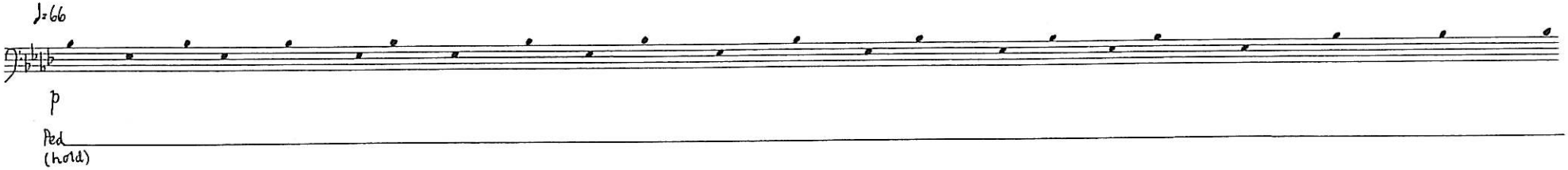

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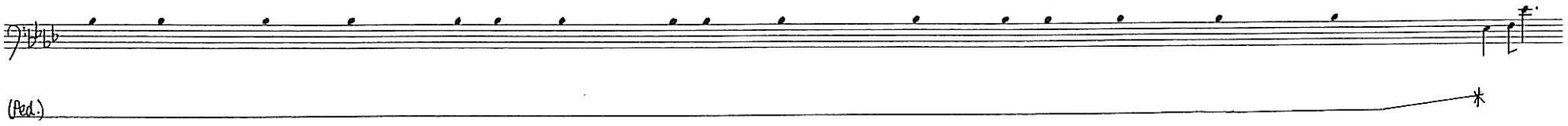

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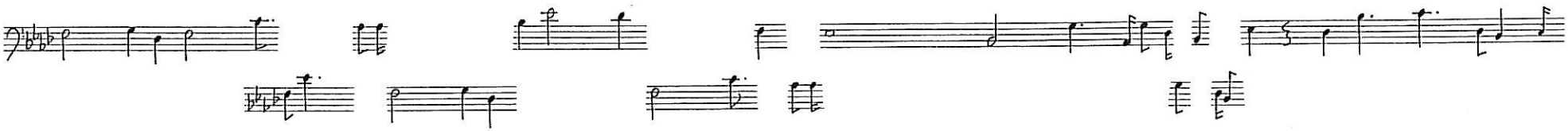

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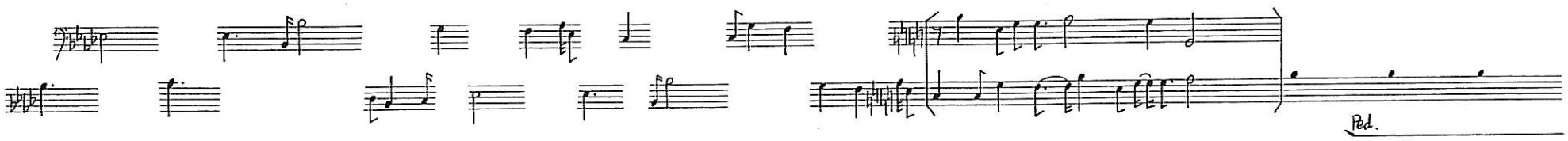

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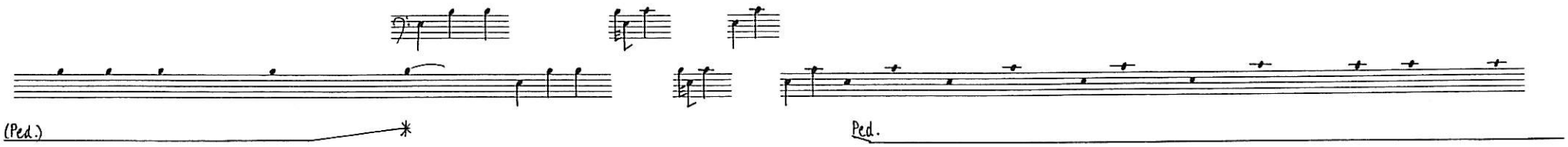

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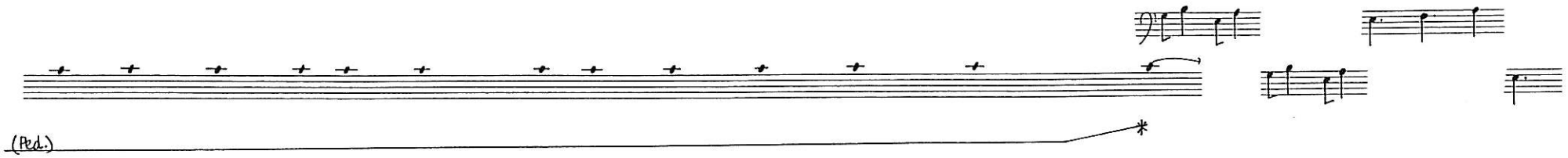

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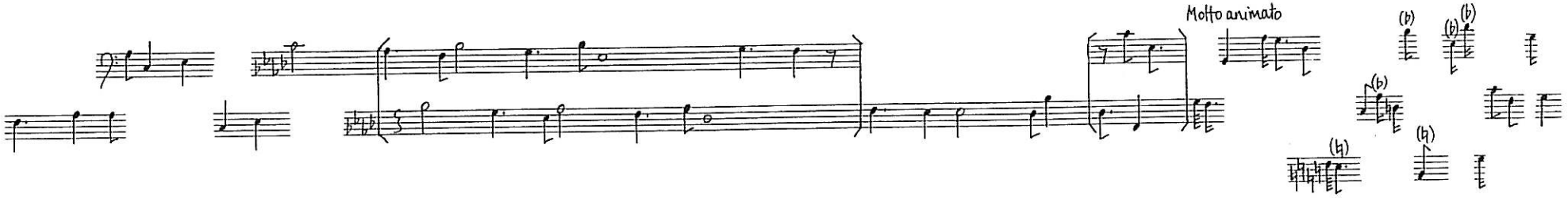

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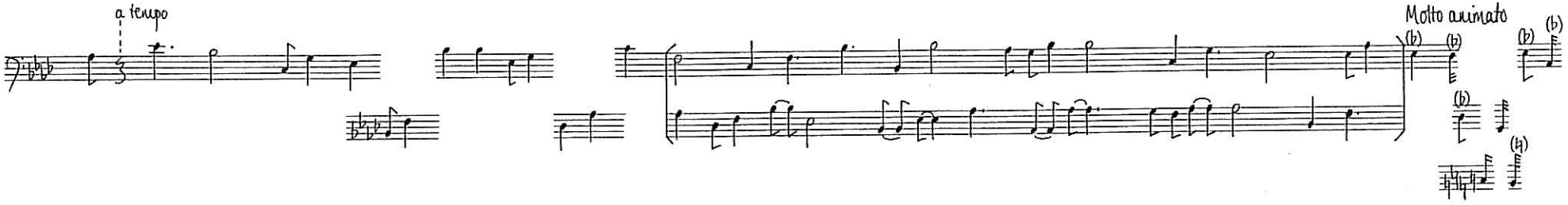

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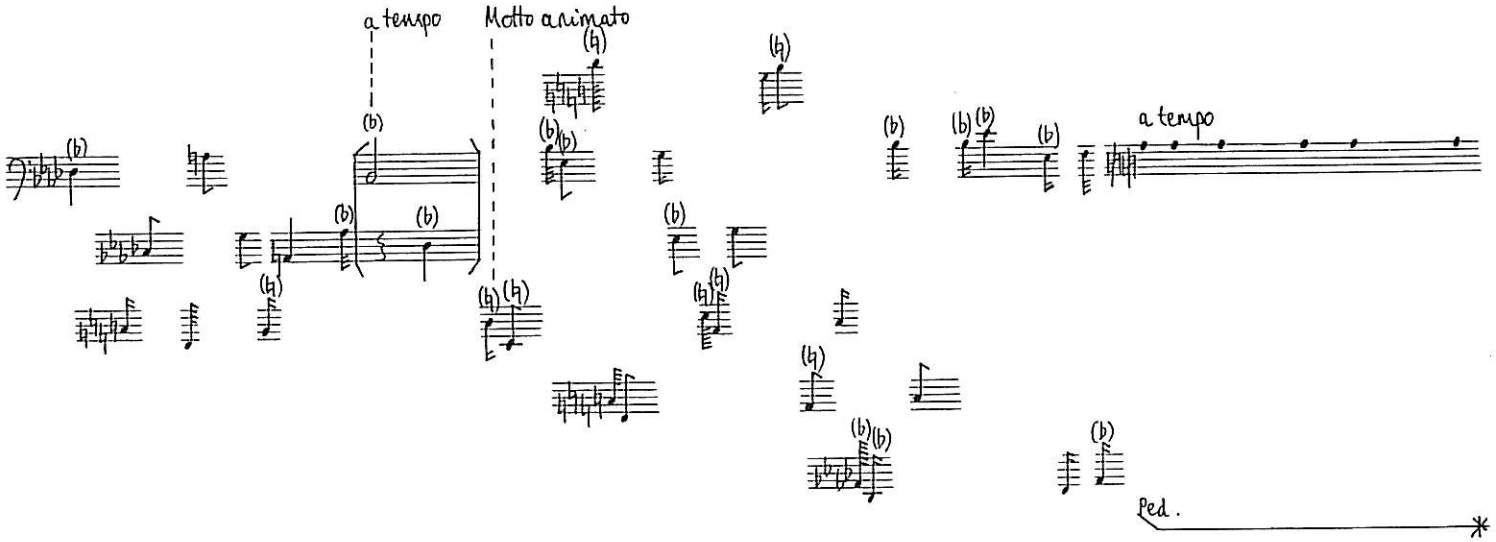

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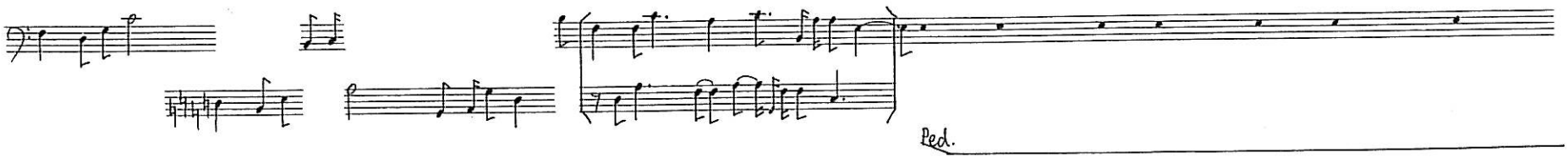

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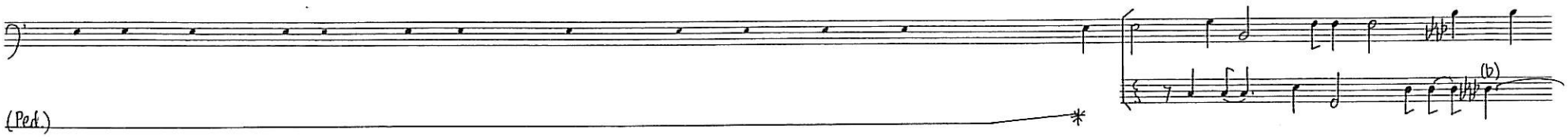

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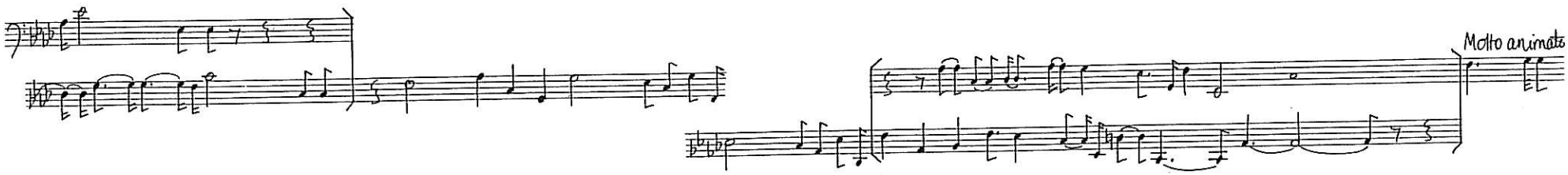

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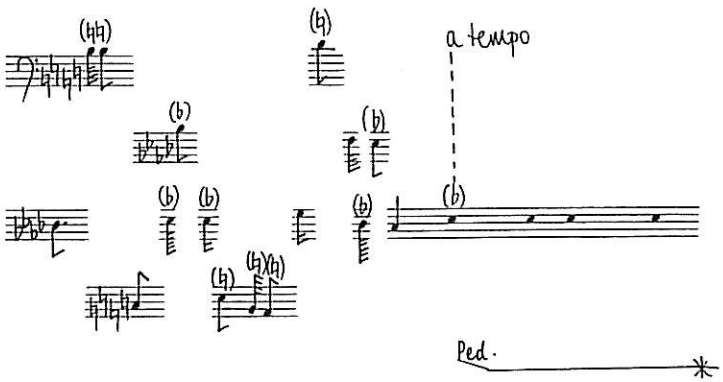

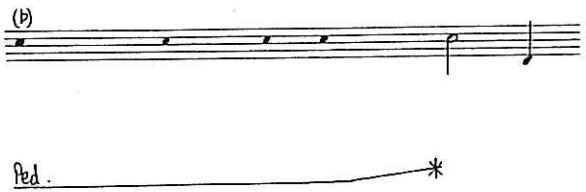

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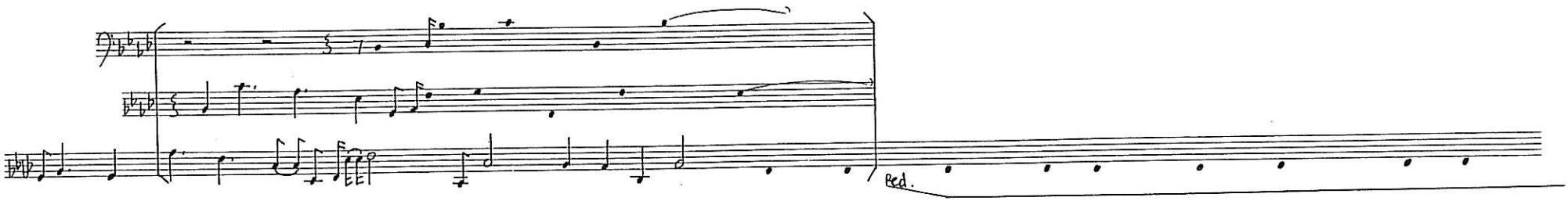

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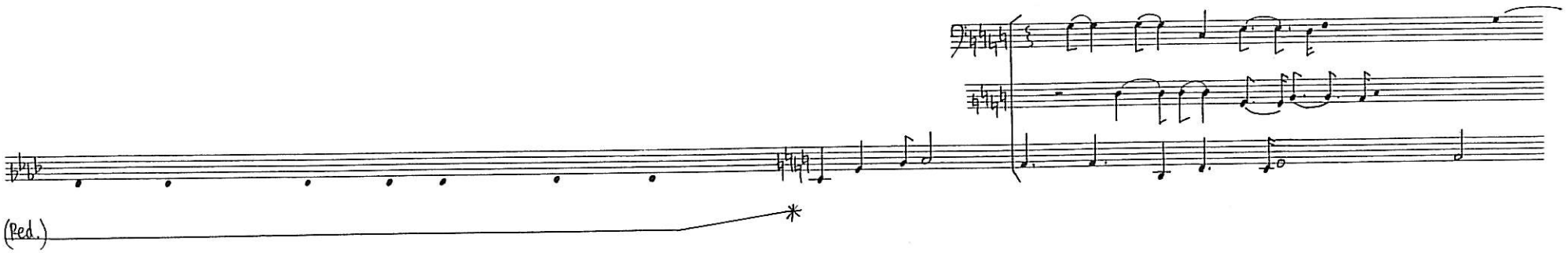

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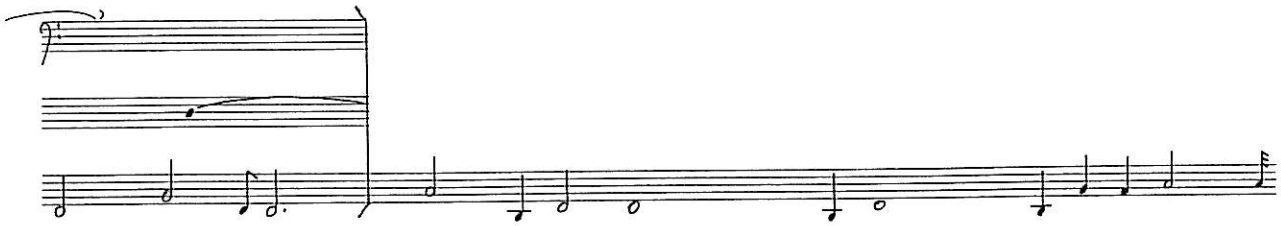

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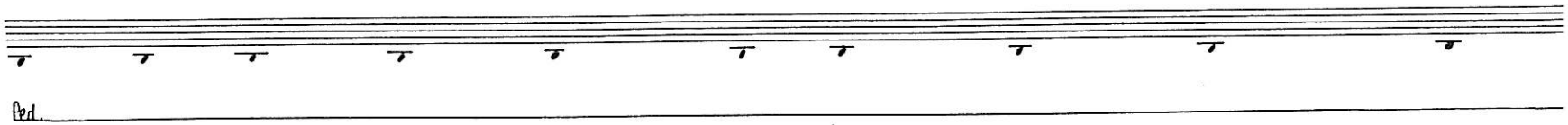

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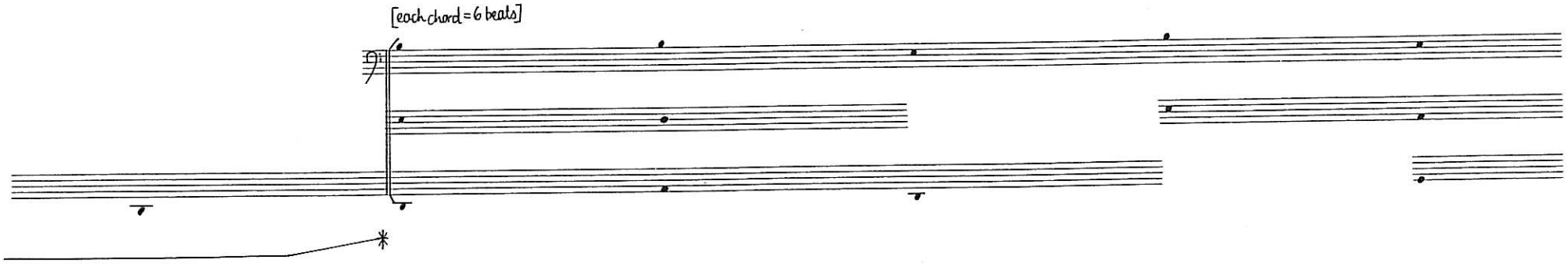

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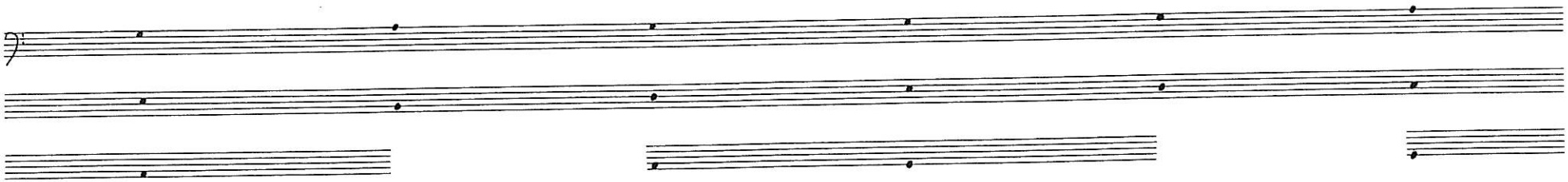

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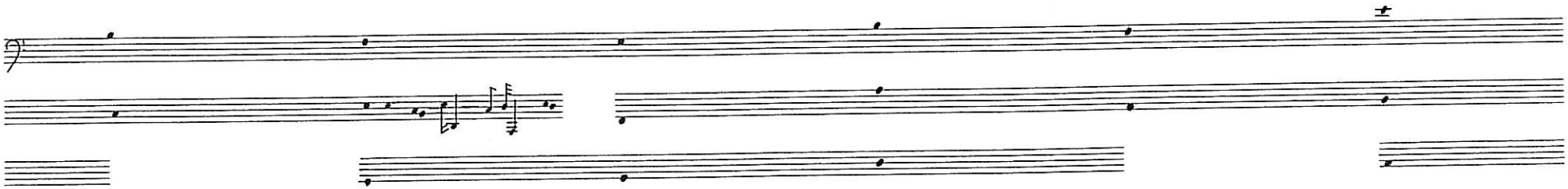

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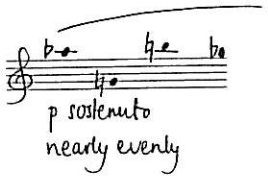

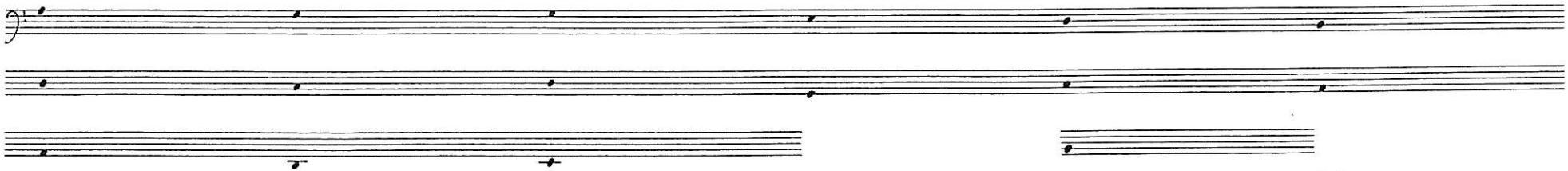

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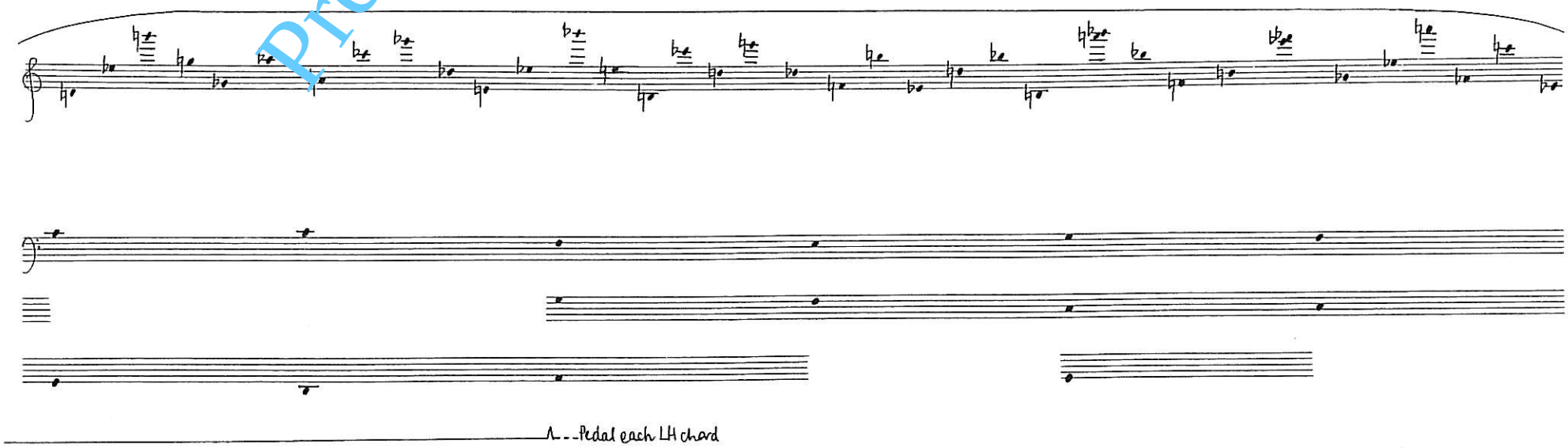

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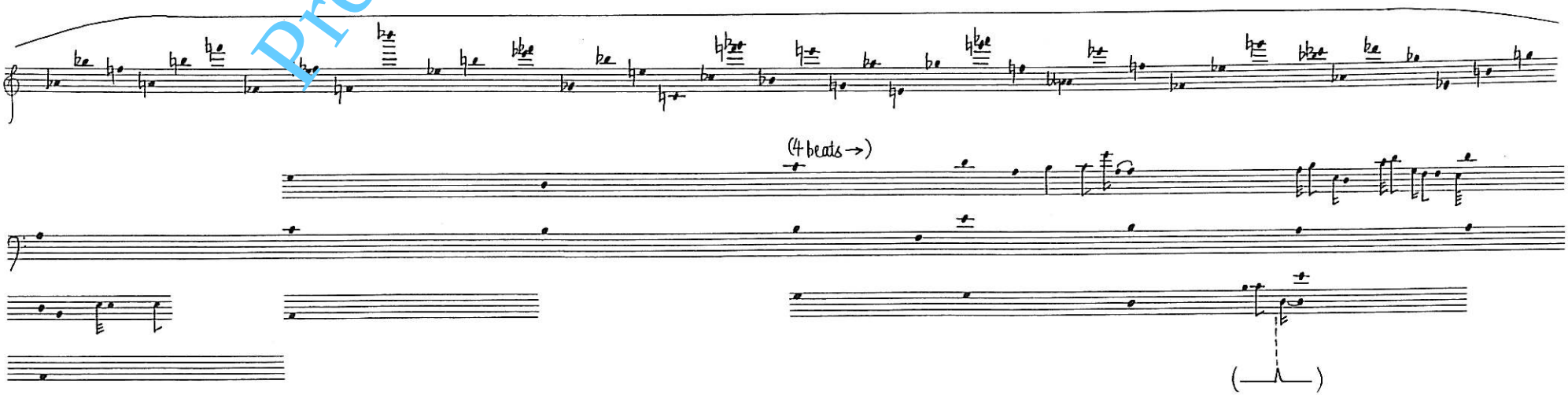

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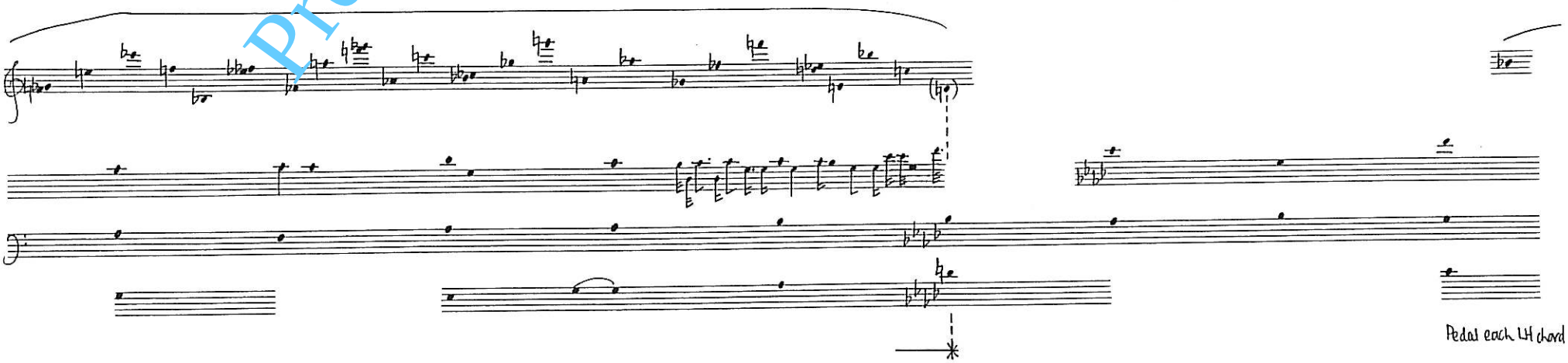

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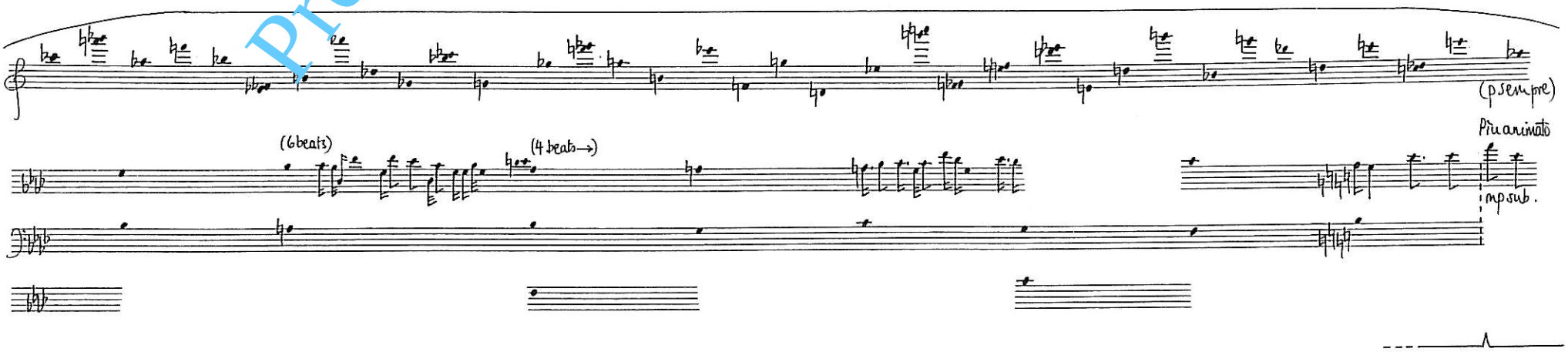

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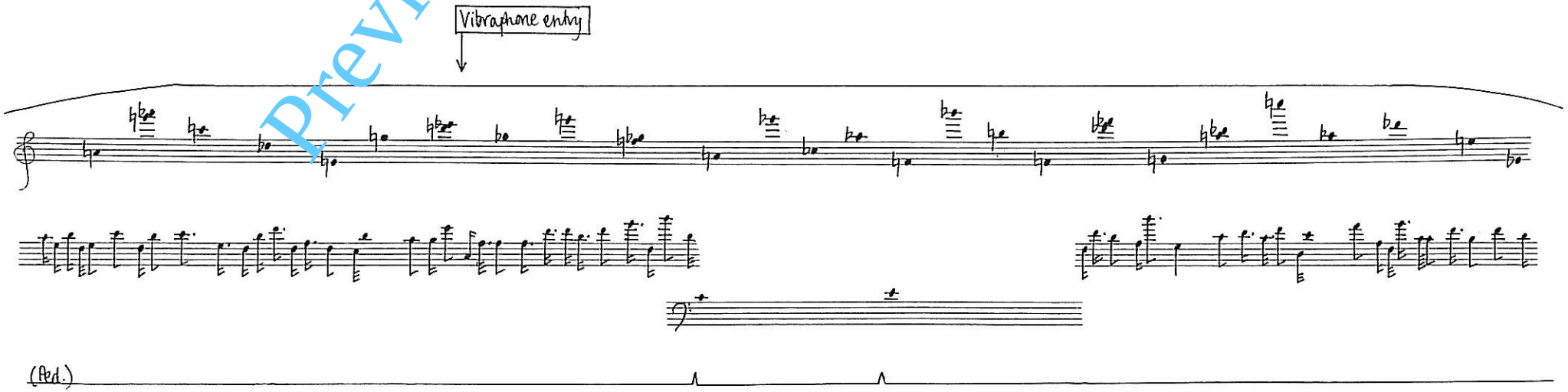

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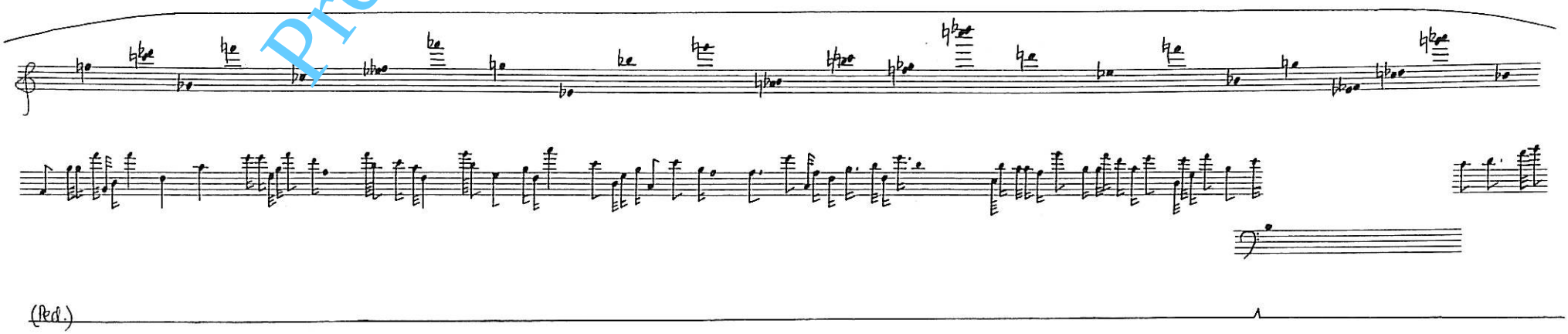

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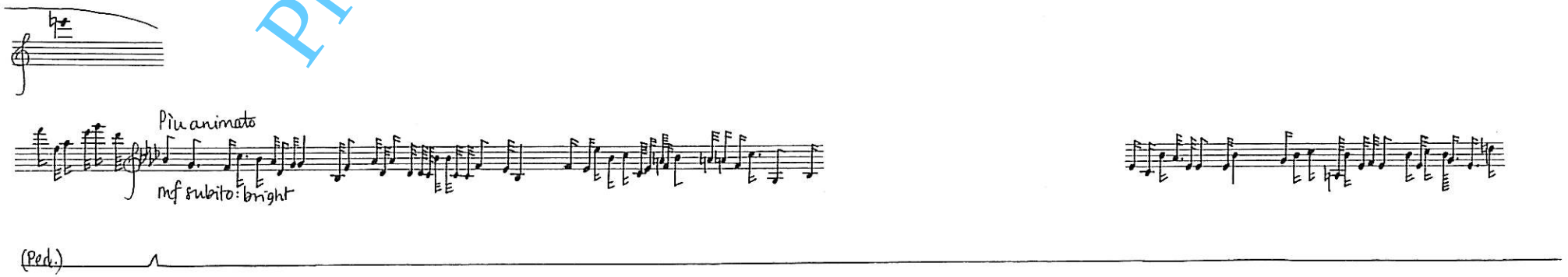

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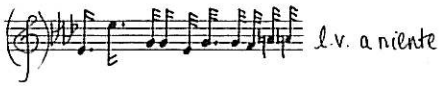

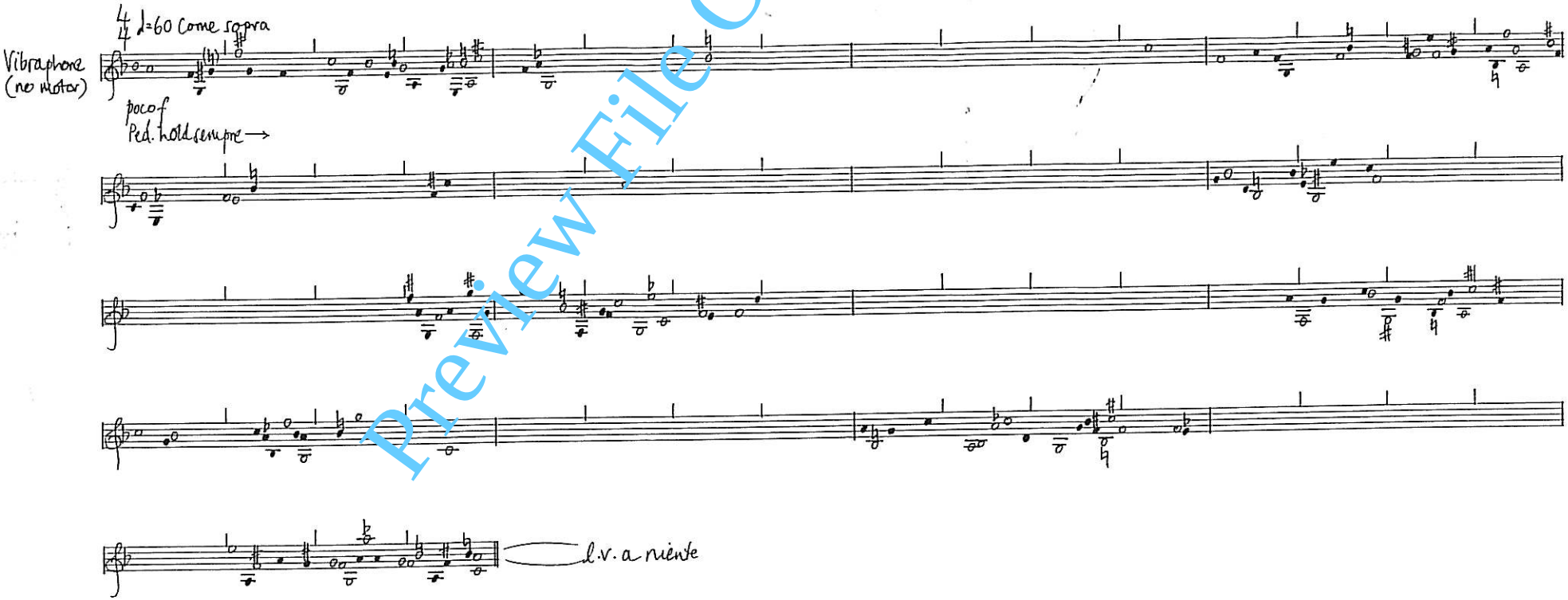

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