for John Mitchinson

OLD LOVE'S DOMAIN

Opus 29

A CYCLE OF FIVE SONGS

FOR HIGH VOICE AND PIANO

Words by
THOMAS HARDY

Music by
ANDREW DOWNES

Preview File Only

LYNWOOD MUSIC
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ANDREW DOWNES: OLD LOVE'S DOMAIN Opus 29 (1983) Duration 21'

A setting of 5 Thomas Hardy poems for tenor or soprano and piano.

These songs were commissioned by John Mitchinson and first performed on BBC Radio 3 in 1985 with subsequent performances on radio and in the Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham. At each performance John Mitchinson was accompanied by Michael Pollock.

The songs have since been performed on numerous occasions by Paula Downes: notably at the Candili Singing Course in Greece, accompanied by Verene Rimlinger; in St John's Church, Hagley, accompanied by Anna Downes; in the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, accompanied by Mark Williams; in the Bateman Auditorium of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, and in the Master's Lodge of Trinity College, Cambridge, accompanied by Andrew Tortise; in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and in Birmingham Cathedral, accompanied by David Trippett; and on CD recorded in July 2000, accompanied by David Trippett.

The poems lament the death of a loved one. The cycle takes its title from a line in the fourth poem.

The poems are:

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THE TEXTS

by Thomas Hardy ---

1. The Division

Rain on the windows, creaking doors,
  With blasts that besom the green.
And I am here, and you are there,
  And a hundred miles between!

O were it but the weather, Dear,
  O were it but the miles
That summed up all our severance,
  There might be room for smiles.

But that thwart thing betwixt us twain,
  Which nothing cleaves nor clears,
Is more than distance, Dear, or rain,
  And longer than the years!

1893

2. Something Tapped

Something tapped on the pain of my room
  When there was never a trace
Of wind or rain, and I saw in the gloom
  My weary Beloved's face.

'O I am tired of waiting,' she said,
  'Night, morn, noon, afternoon;
So cold it is in my lonely bed,
  And I thought you would join me soon!'

I rose and neared the window-glass,
  But vanished thence had she:
Only a pallid moth, alas,
  Tapped at the pane for me.

August 1913

3. Where the Picnic Was

Where we made the fire
In the Summer time
Of branch and briar
On the hill to the sea,
I slowly climb
Through winter mire,
And scan and trace
The forsaken place
Quite readily.

Now a cold wind blows,
And the grass is gray,
But the spot still shows
As a burnt circle - aye,
And stick-ends, charred,
Still strew the sward
Whereon I stand,
Last relic of the band
Who came that day!

Yes, I am here
Just as last year,
And the sea breathes brine
From its strange straight line
Up hither, the same
As when we four came.
- But two have wandered far
From this grassy rise
Into urban roar
Where no picnics are,
And one has shut her eyes
For evermore

4. At Castle Boterel

As I drive to the junction of lane and highway,
  And the drizzle bedrenches the waggonette,
I look behind at the fading byway,
  And see on its slope, now glistening wet,
    Distinctly yet

Myself and a girlish form benighted
  In dry March weather. We climb the road
Beside a chaise. We had just alighted
  To ease the sturdy pony's load
    When he sighed and slowed.

What we did as we climbed, and what we talked of
  Matters not much, nor to what it led, -
Something that life will not be balked of
  Without rude reason till hope is dead,
    And feeling fled.

It filled but a minute. But was there ever
  A time of such quality, since or before,
In that hill's story? To one mind never,
  Though it has been climbed, foot-swift, foot-sore,
    By thousands more.

Primaeval rocks form the road's steep border,
  And much have they faced there, first and last,
Of the transitory in Earth's long order;
  But what they record in colour and cast
    Is - that we two passed.

And to me, through Time's unflinching rigour,
  In mindless rote, has ruled from sight
The substance now, one phantom figure
  Remains on the slope, as when that night
    Saw us alight.

I look and see it there, shrinking, shrinking,
  I look back at it amid the rain
For the very last time; for my sand is sinking,
  And I shall traverse old love's domain
    Never again.

March 1913

5. The Curtains Now Are Drawn

I

The curtains now are drawn,
And the spindrift strikes the glass,
Blown up the jagged pass
By the surly salt sou'-west,
And the sneering glare is gone
Behind the yonder crest,
  While she sings to me:
'O the dream that thou art my Love, be it thine,
And the dream that I am thy Love, be it mine,
And death may come, but loving is divine.'

II

I stand here in the rain,
With its smite upon her stone,
And the grasses that have grown
Over women, children, men,
And their texts that 'Life is vain;'
But I hear the notes as when
  Once she sang to me:
'O the dream that thou art my Love, be it thine,
And the dream that I am thy Love, be it mine,
And death may come, but loving is divine'

1913

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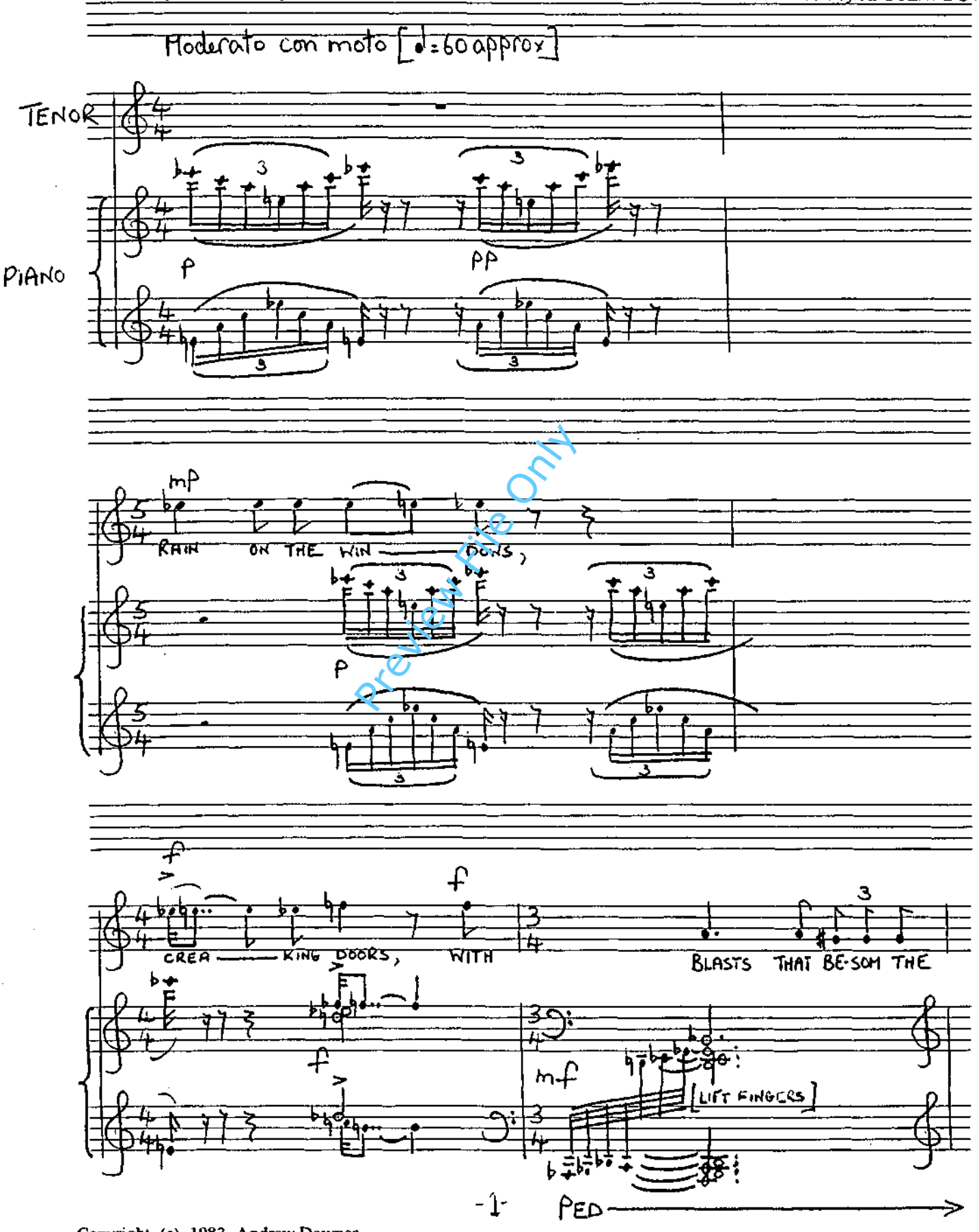
1. The Division

Words by Thomas Hardy

Music by ANDREW DOWNES



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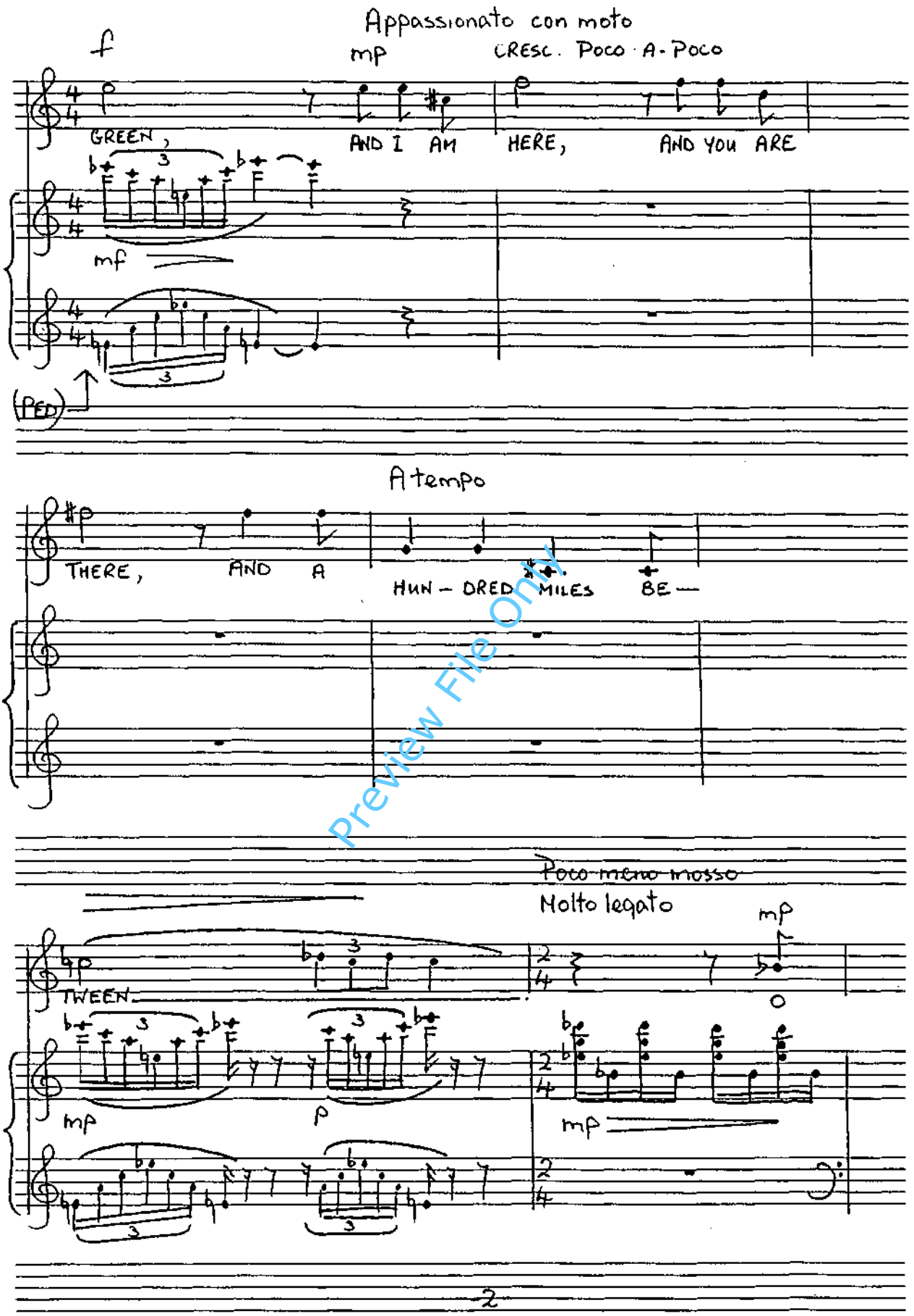

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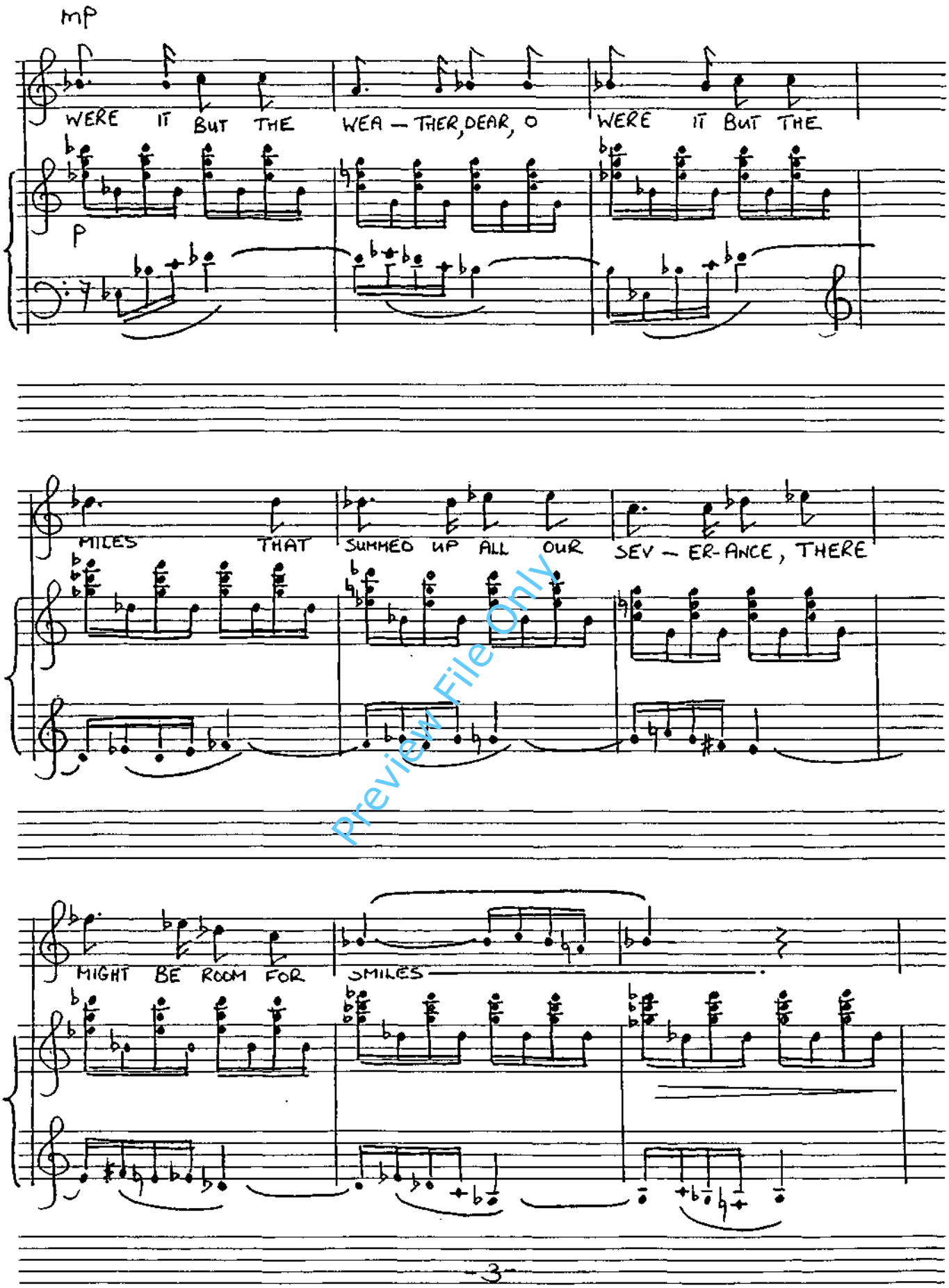

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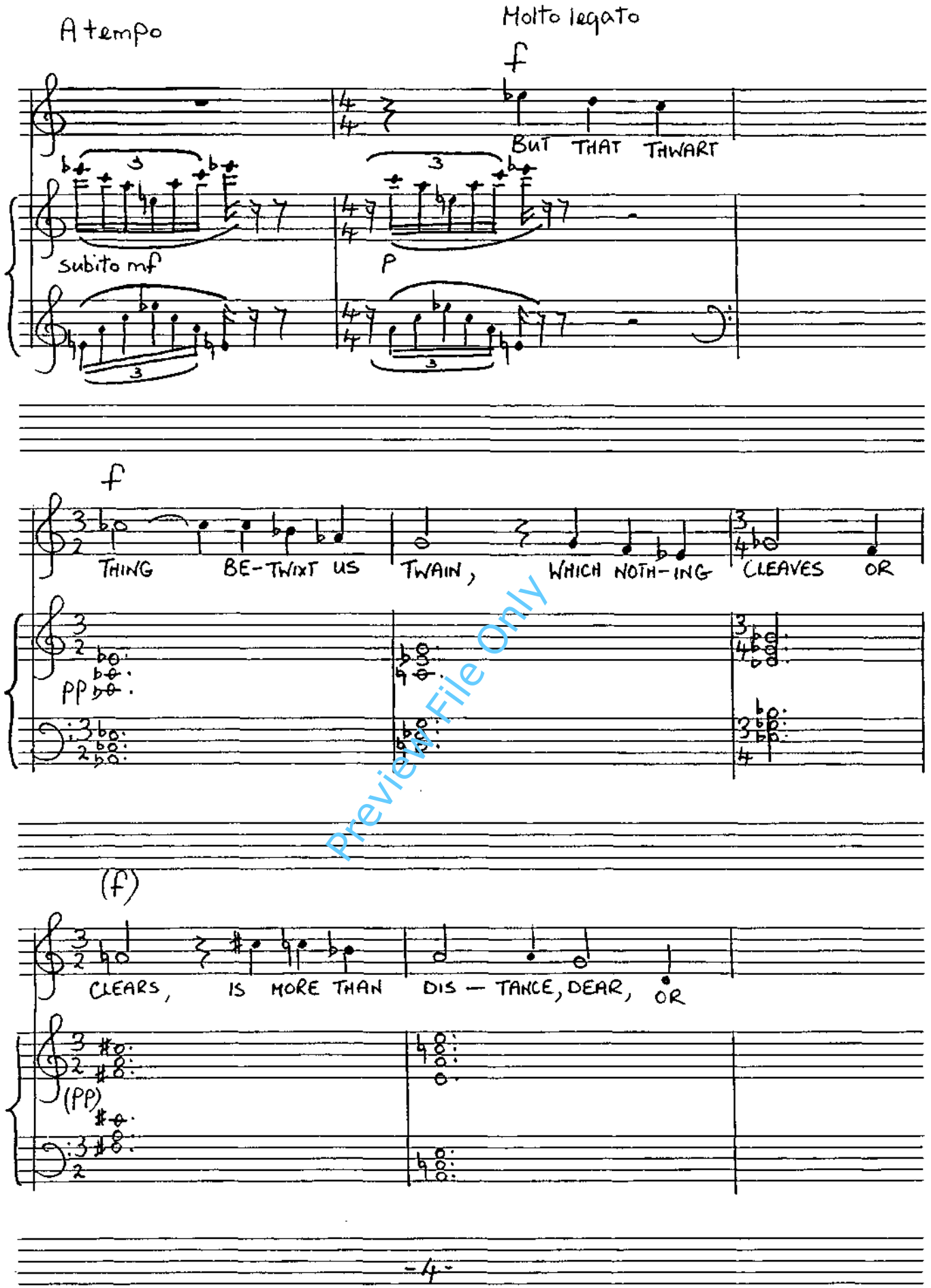

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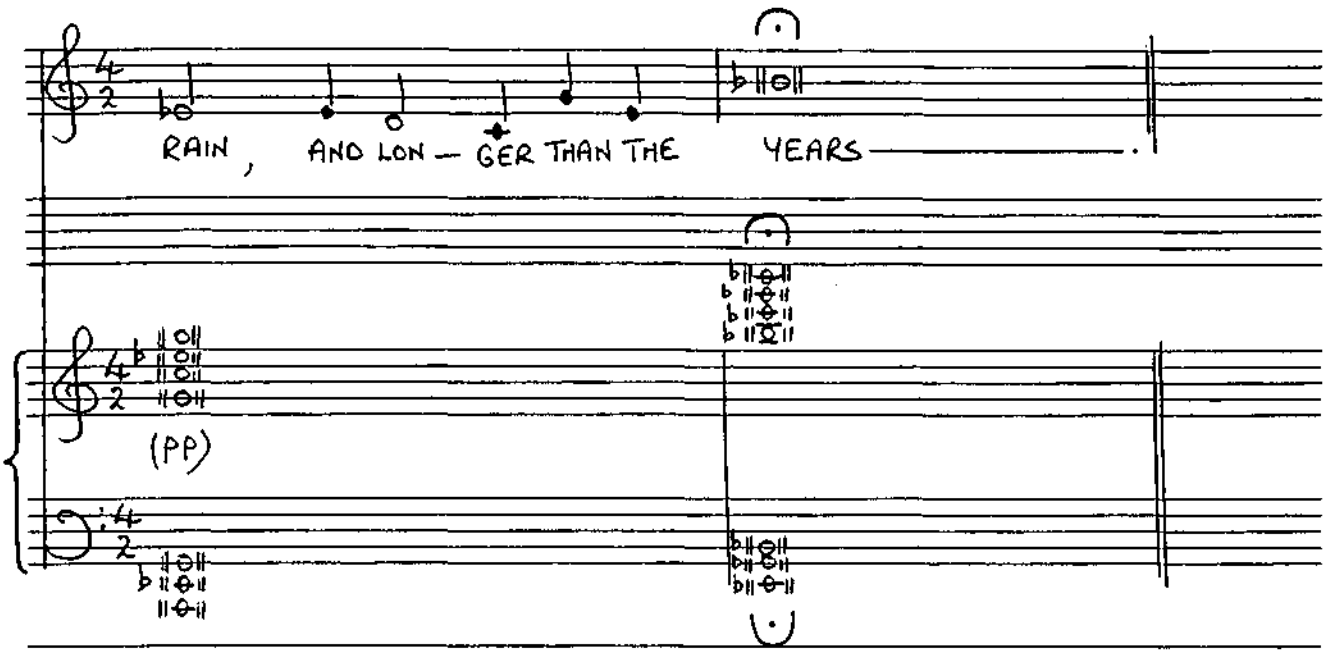

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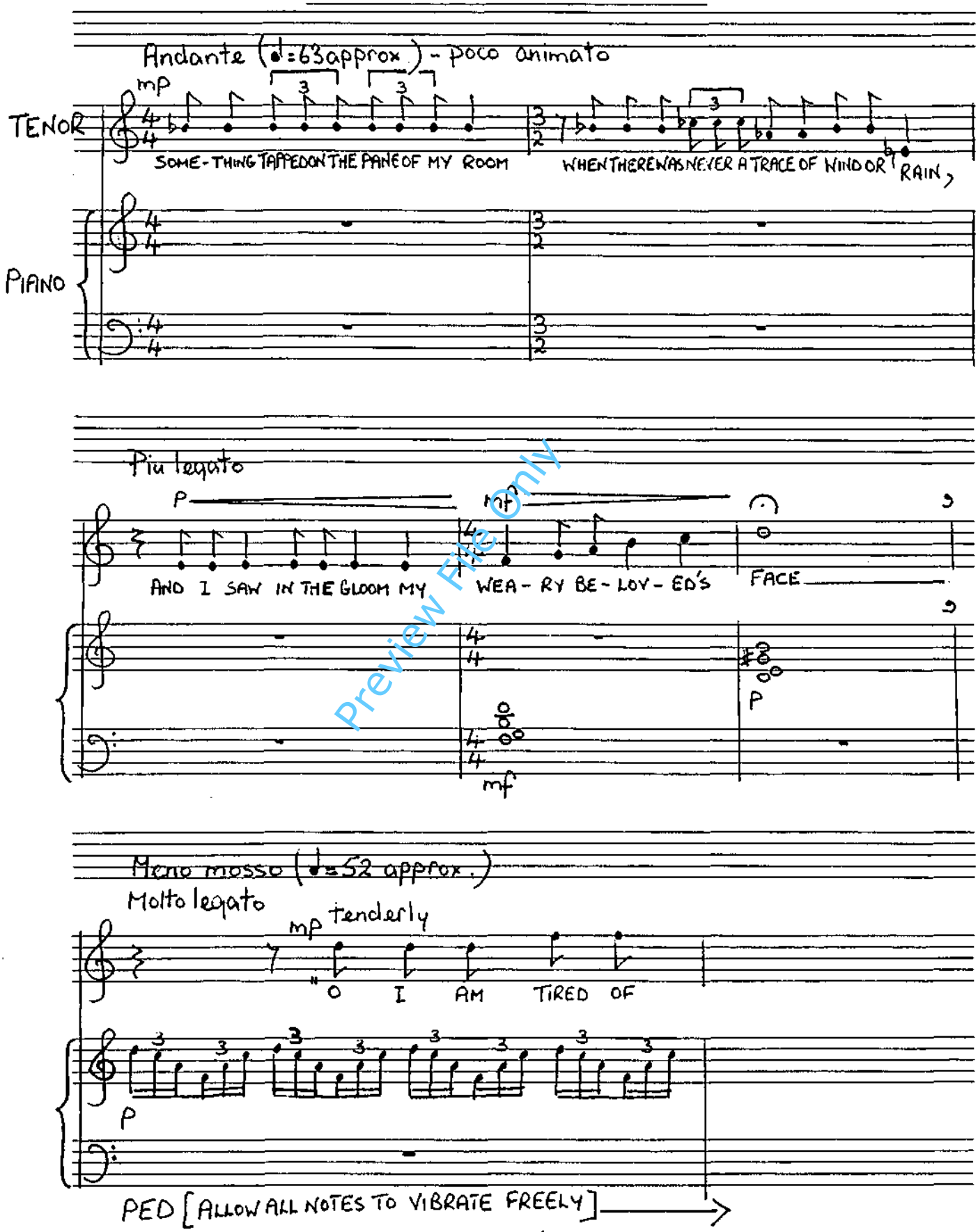
2. Something Tapped



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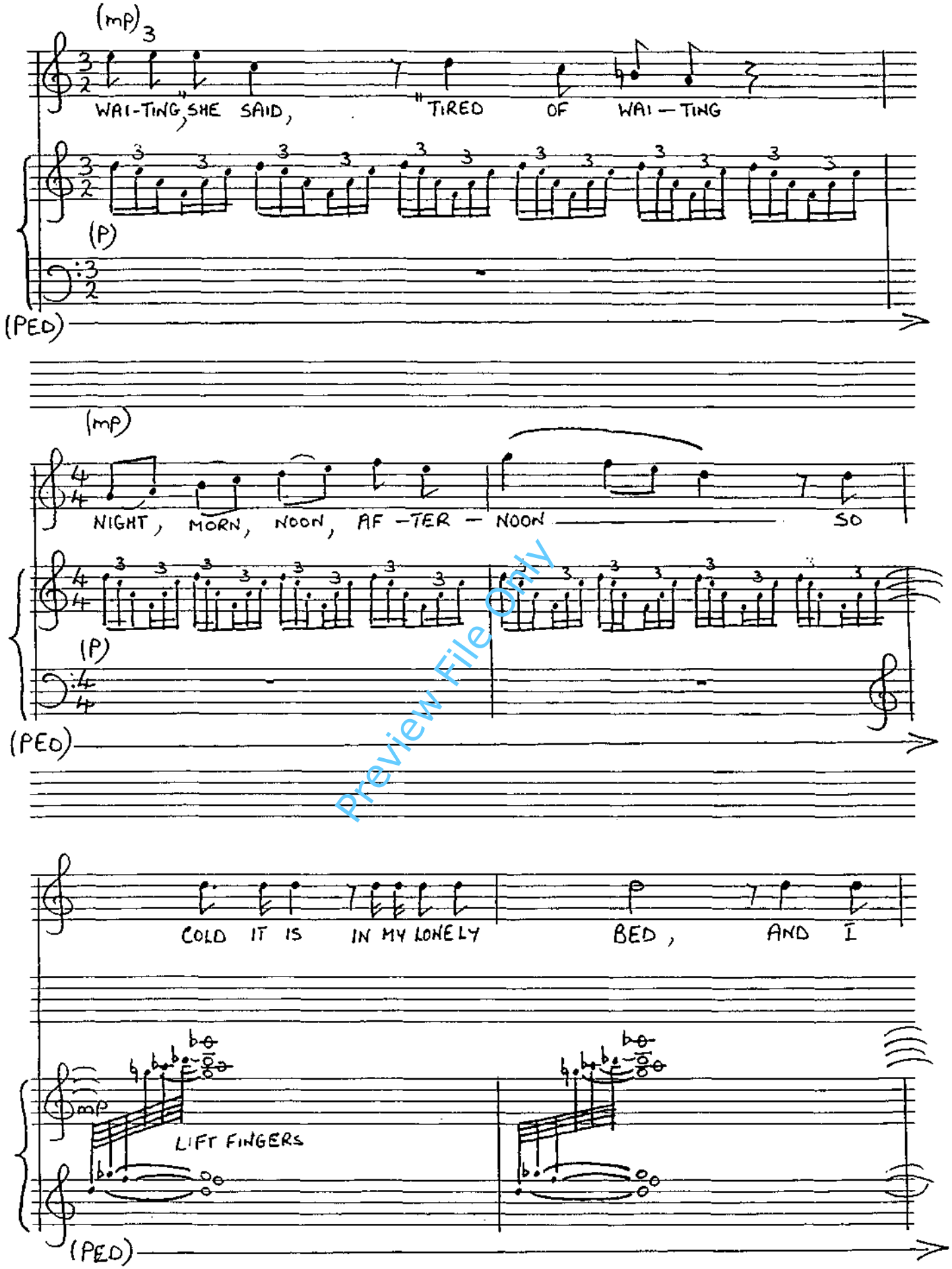

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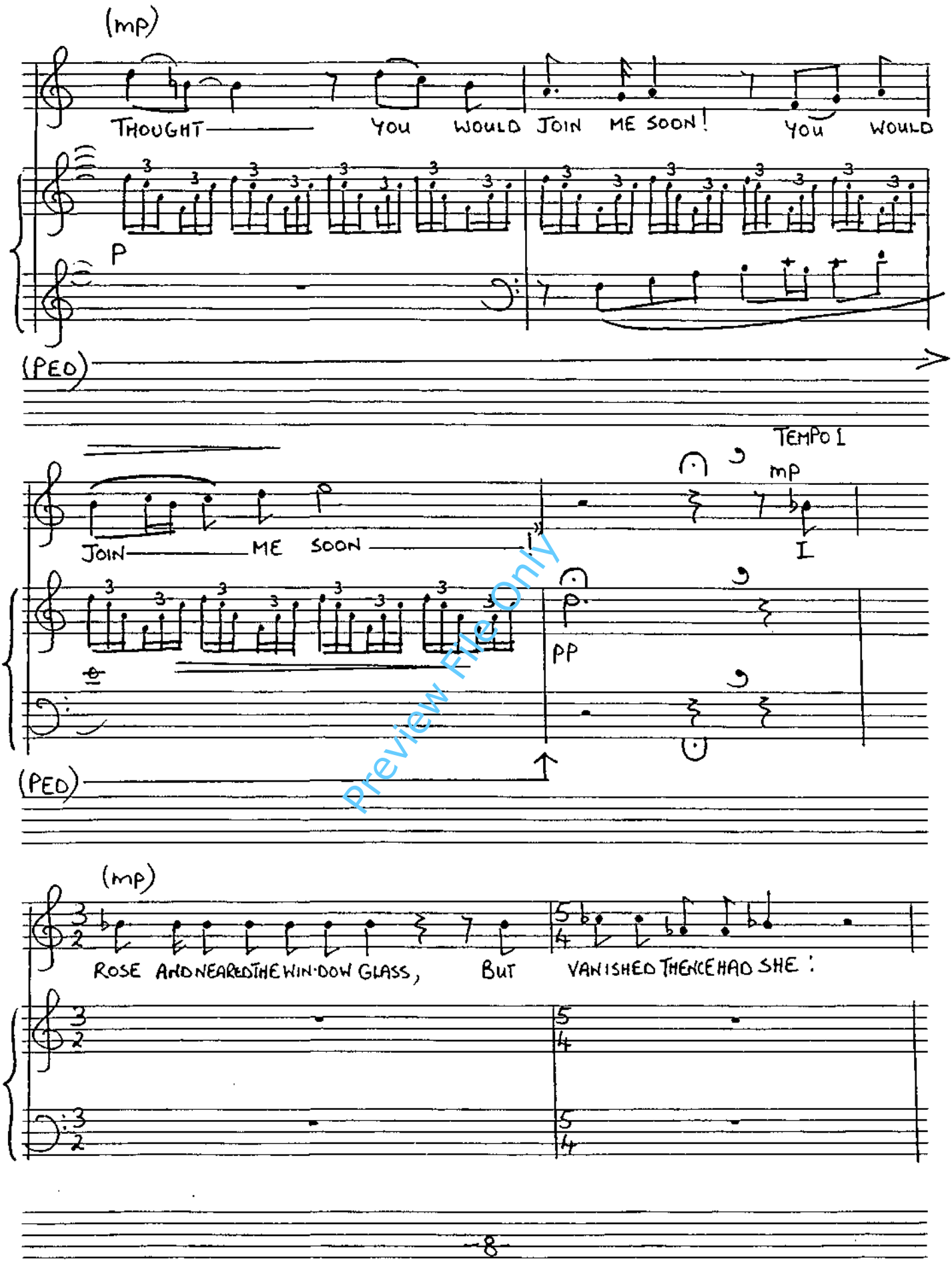

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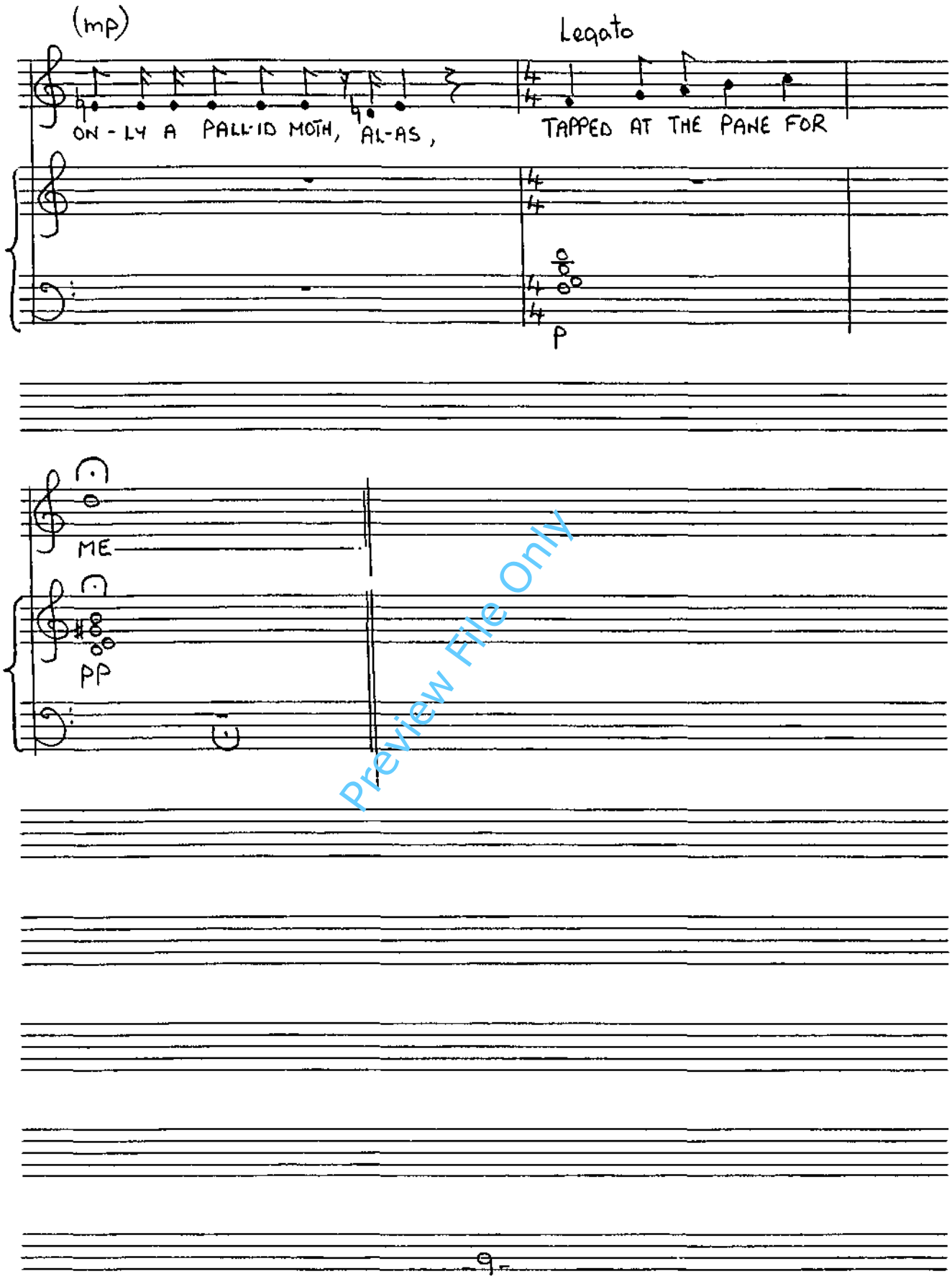

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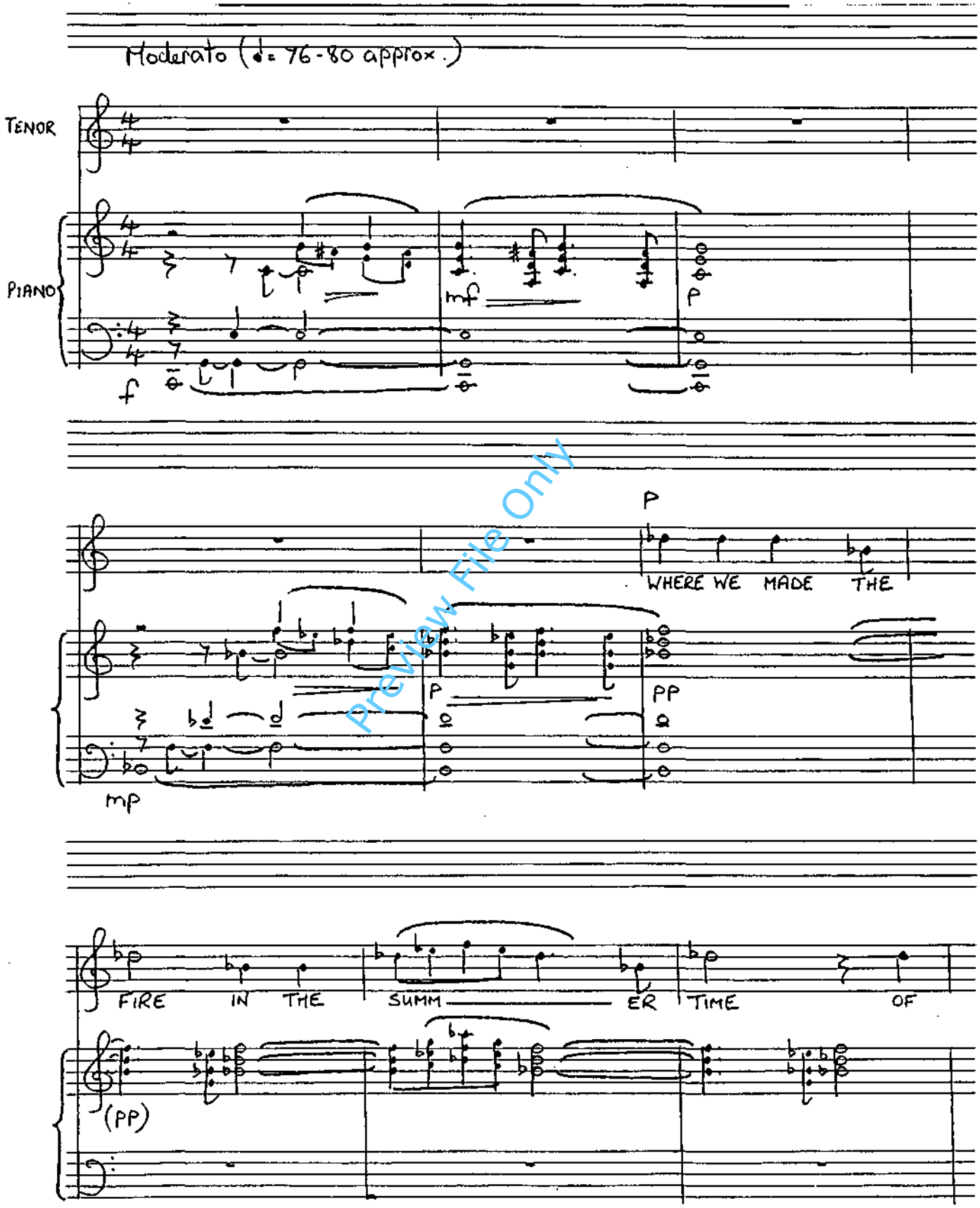
3. Where the Picnic Was



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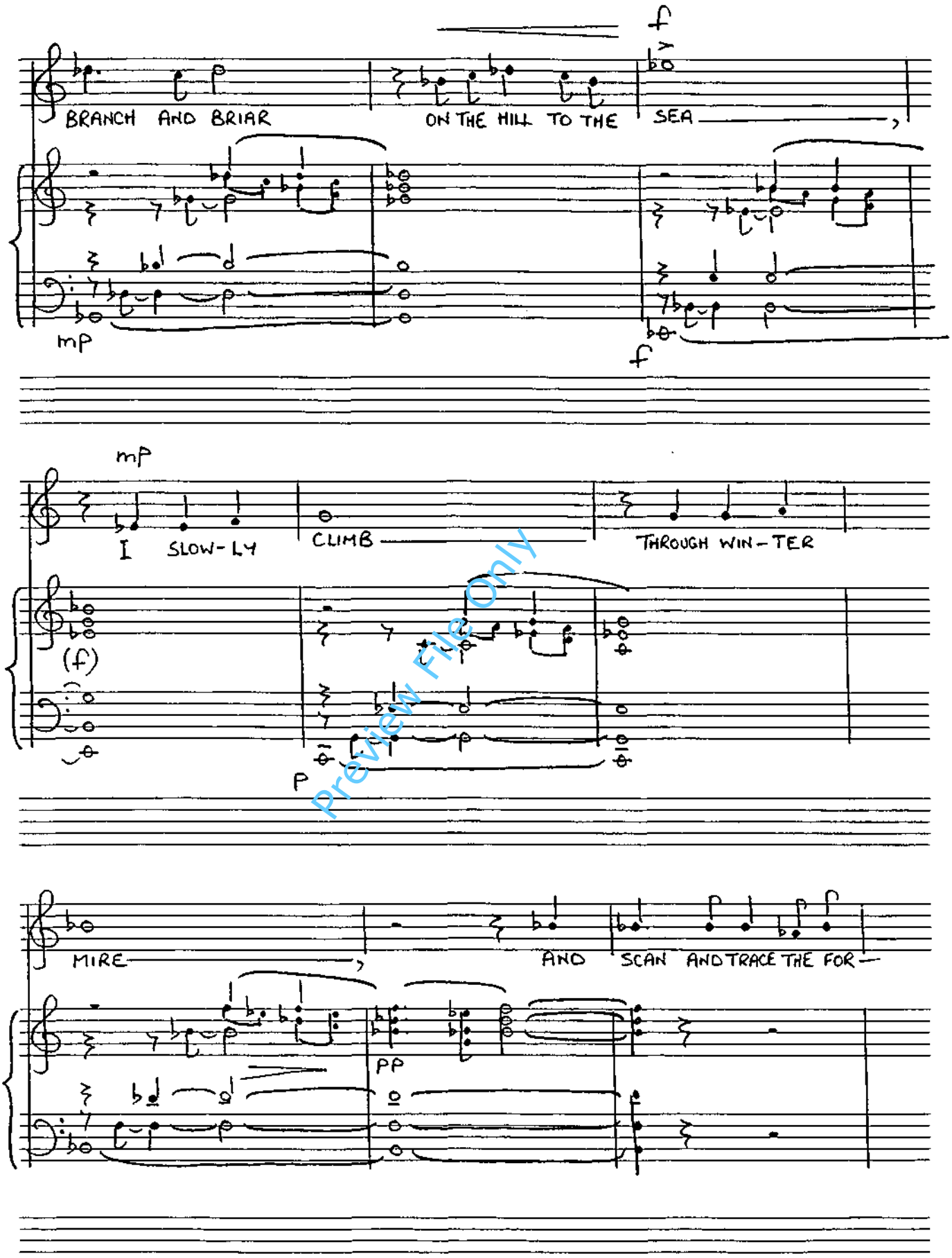

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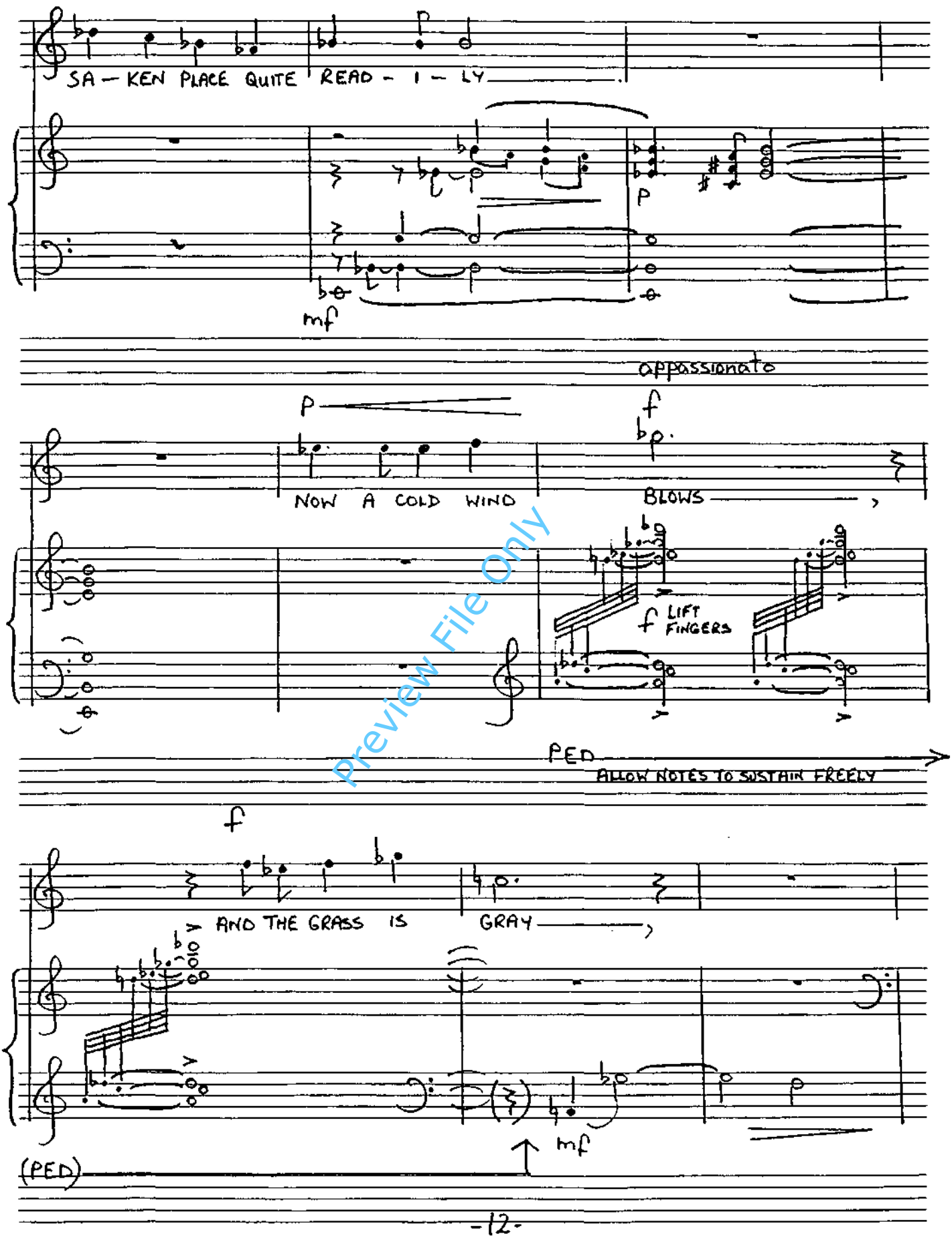

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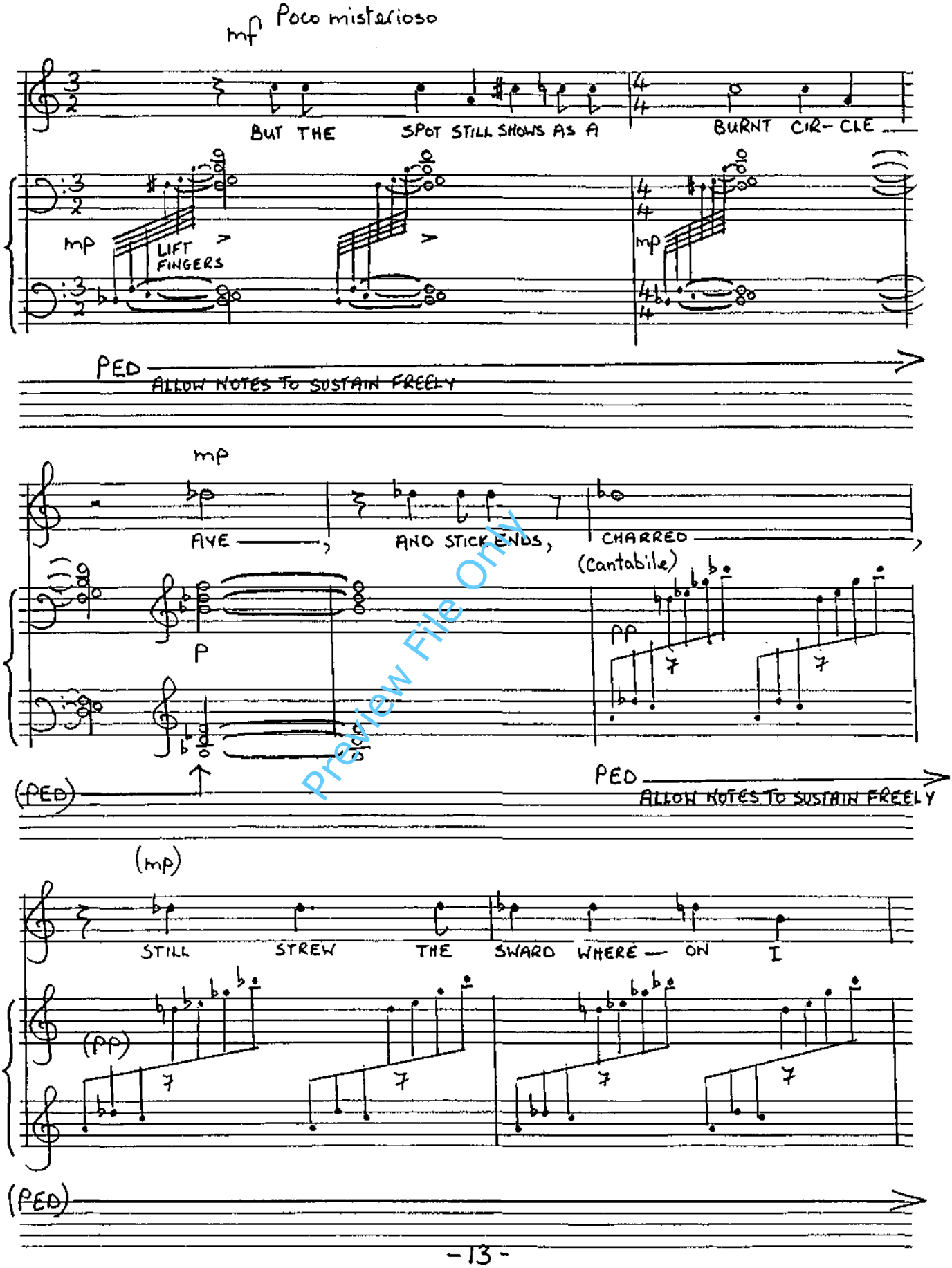

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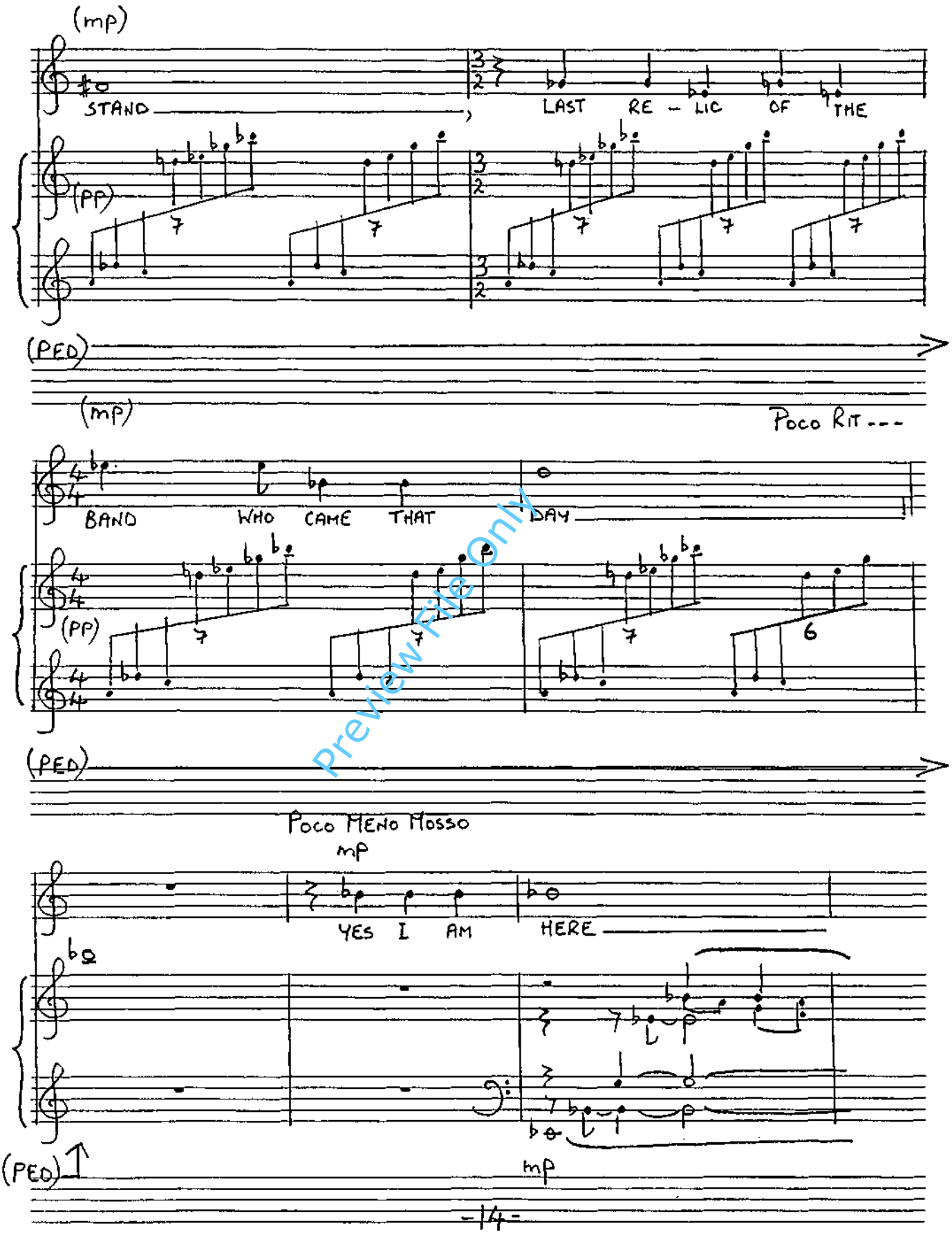

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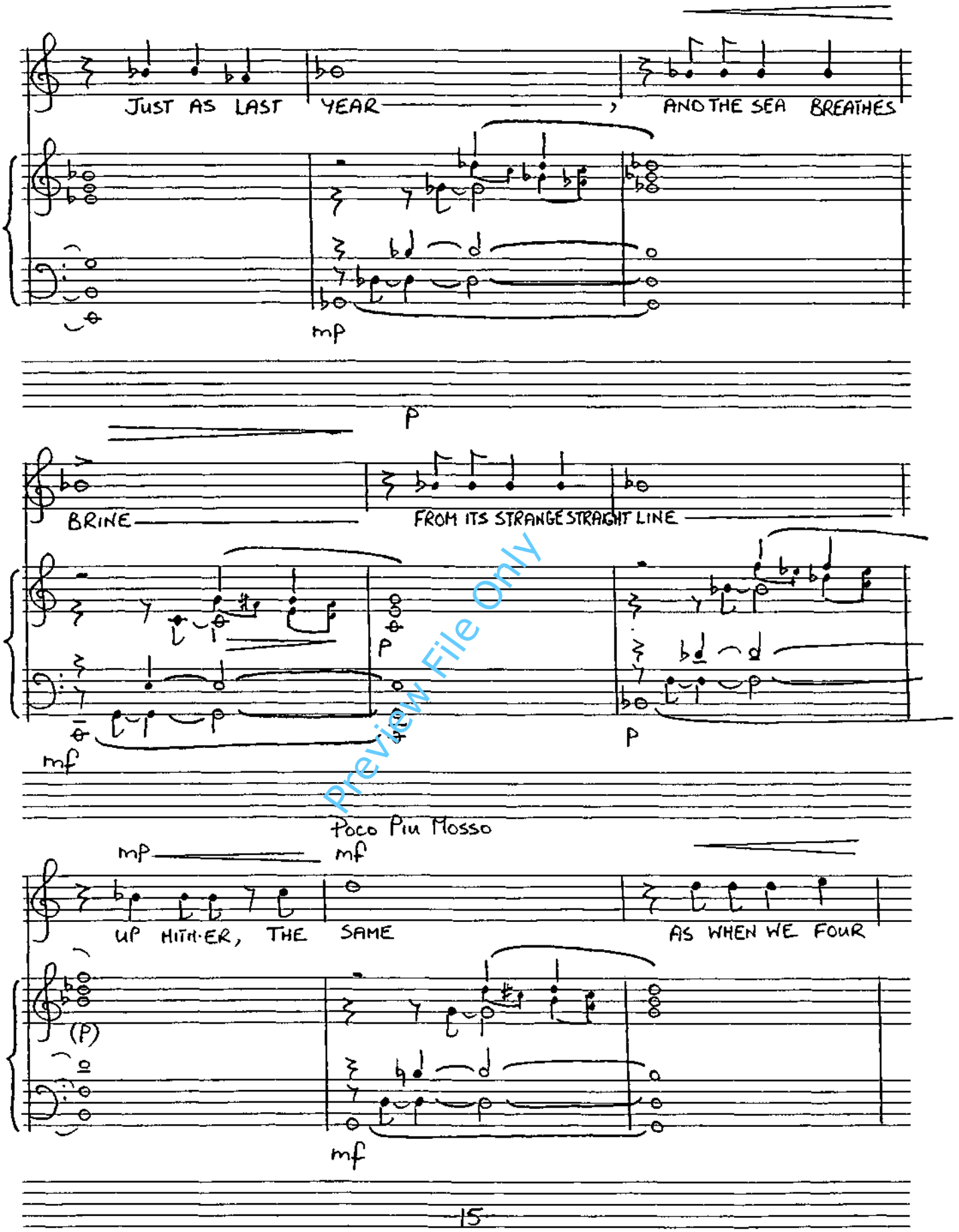

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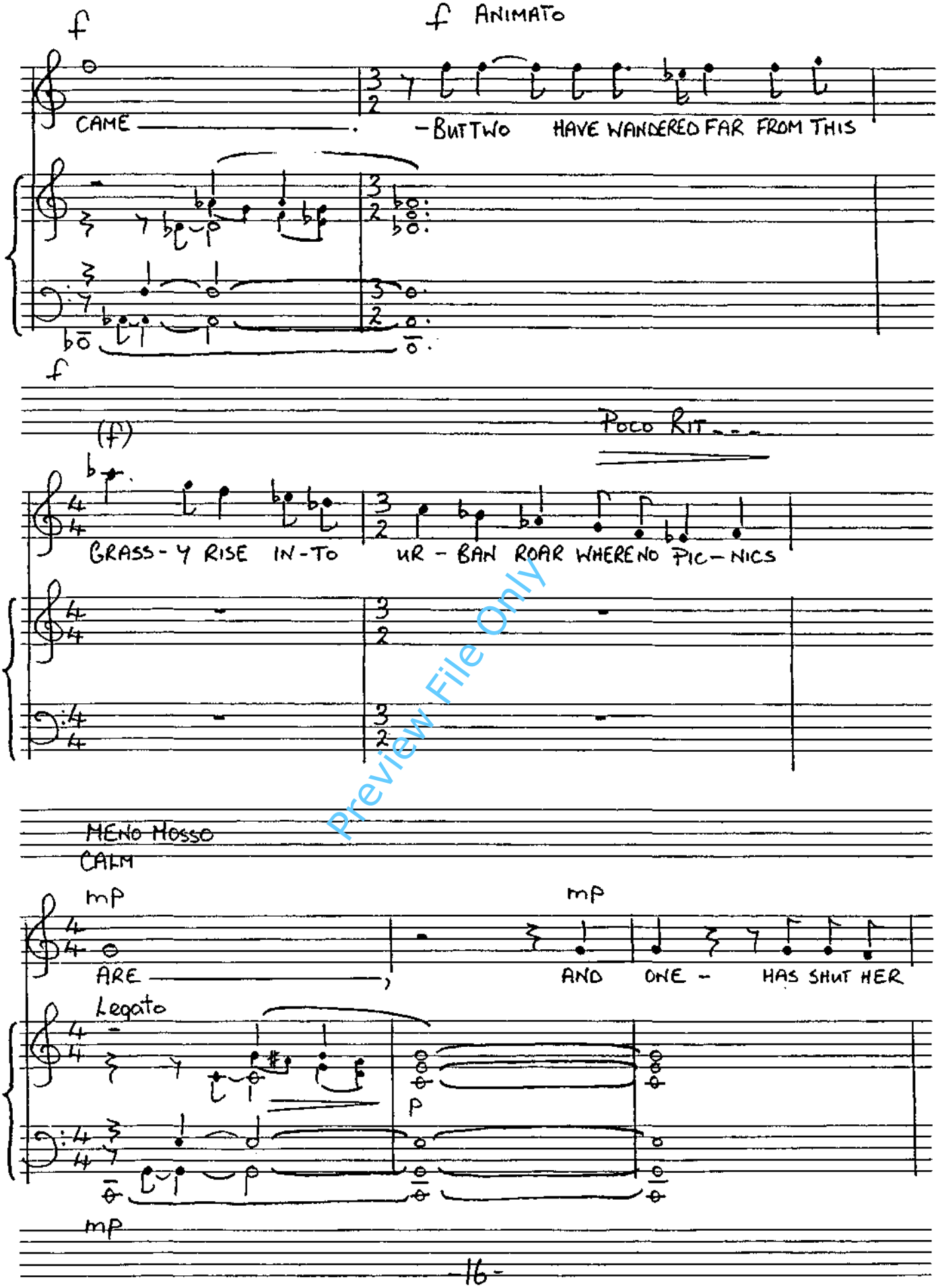

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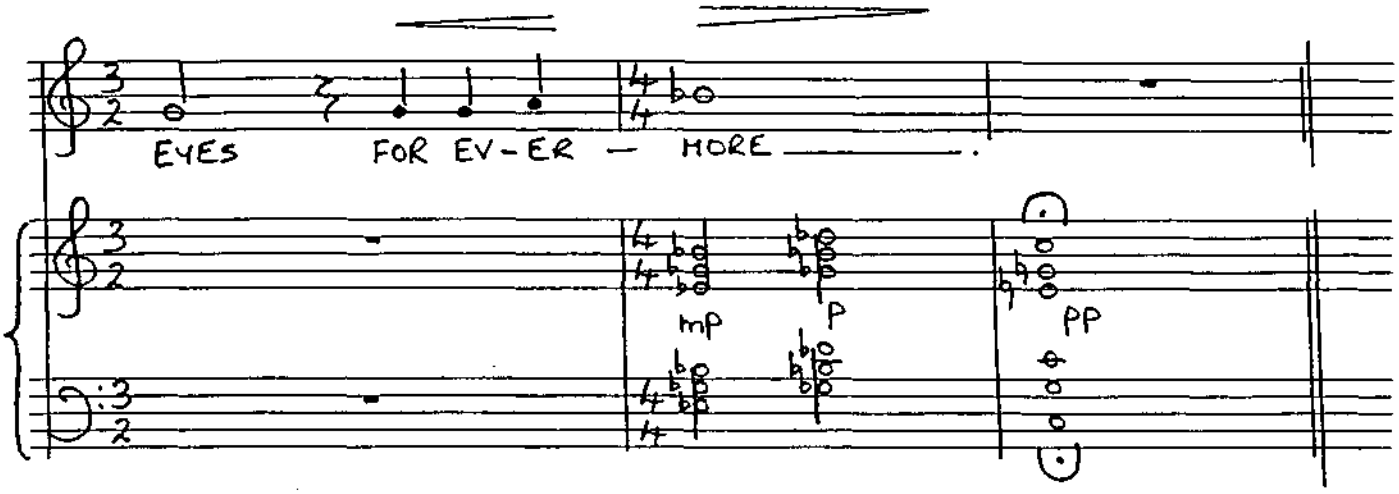

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Words by Thomas Hardy

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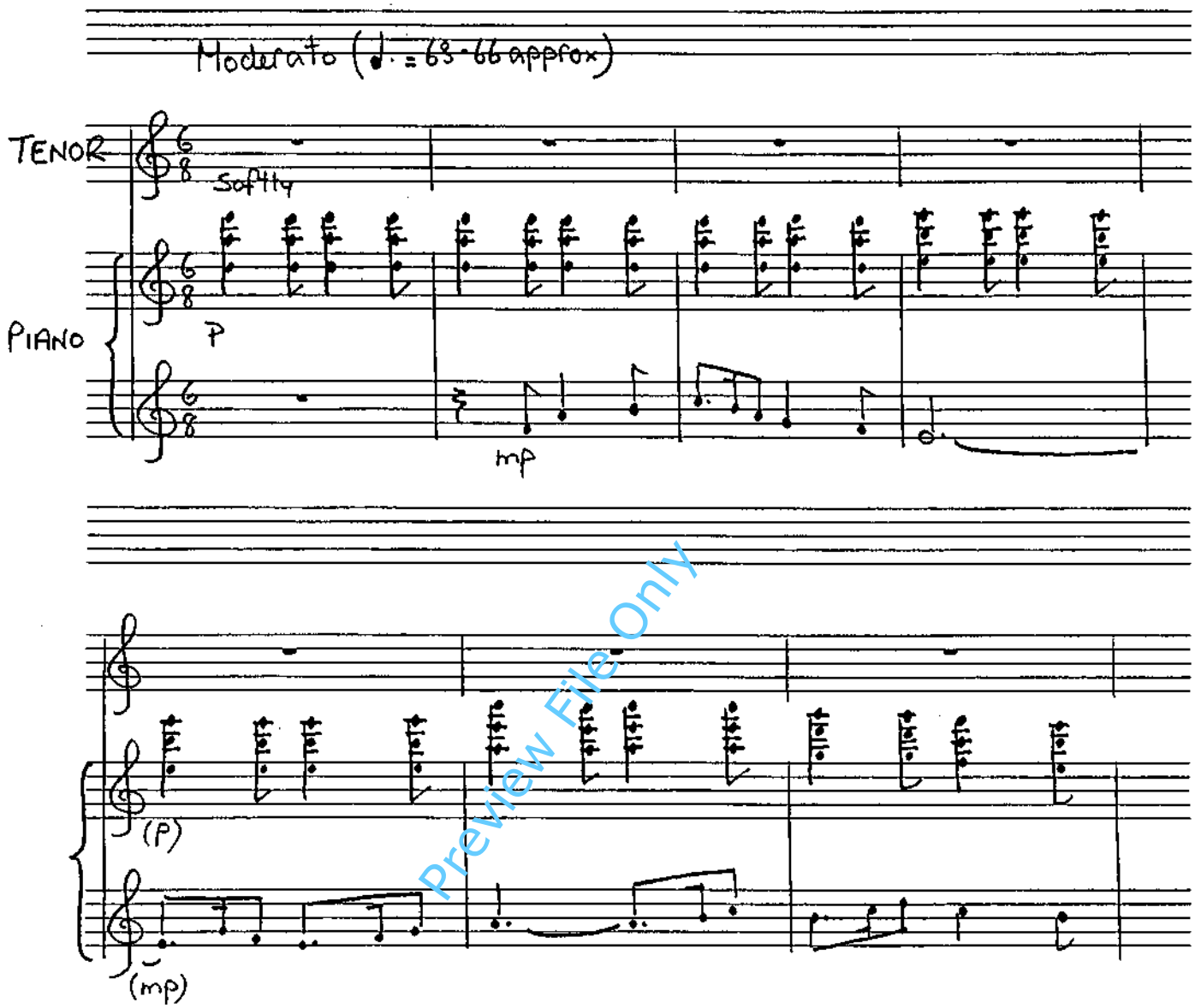
Music by ANDREW DOWNES



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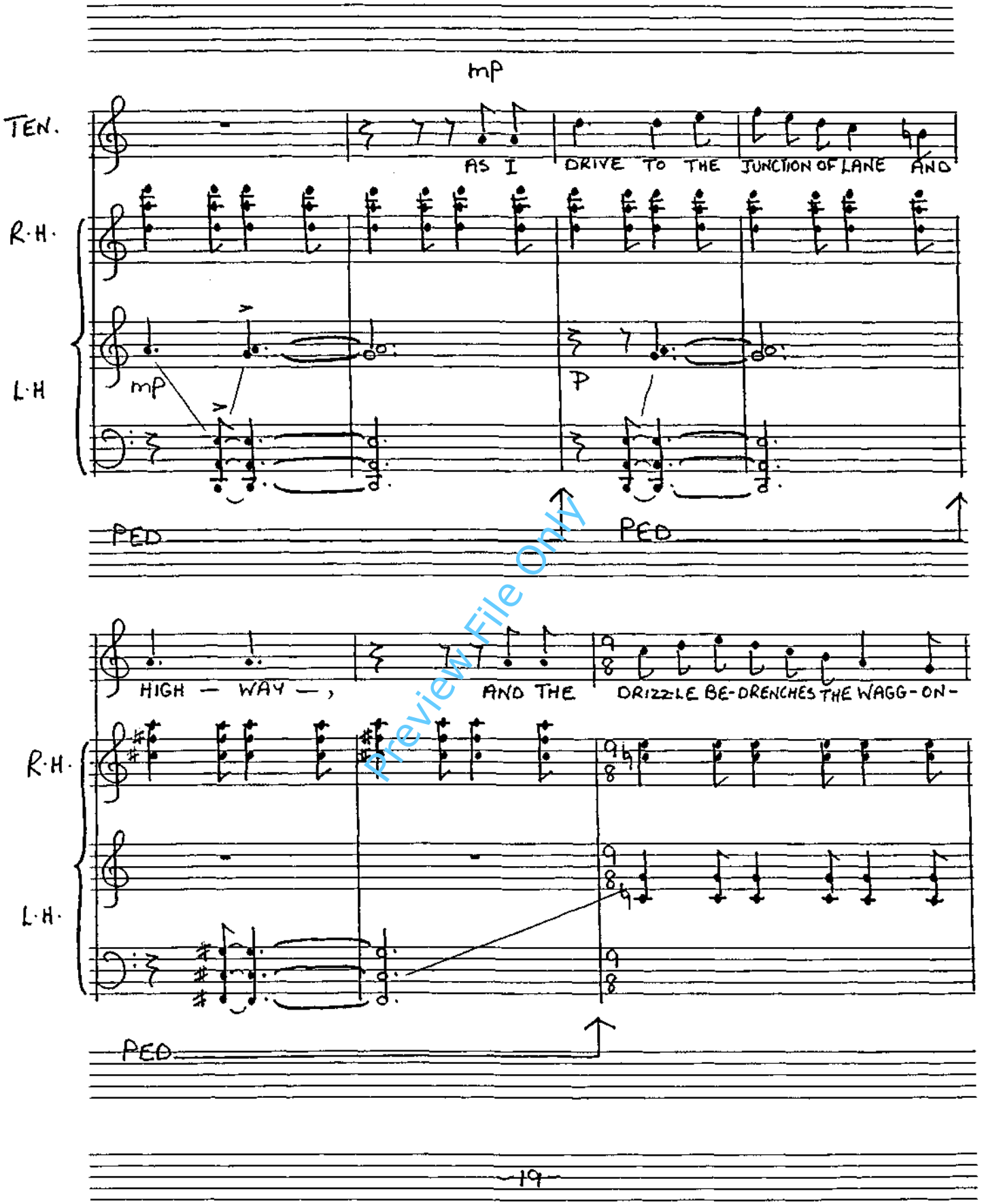

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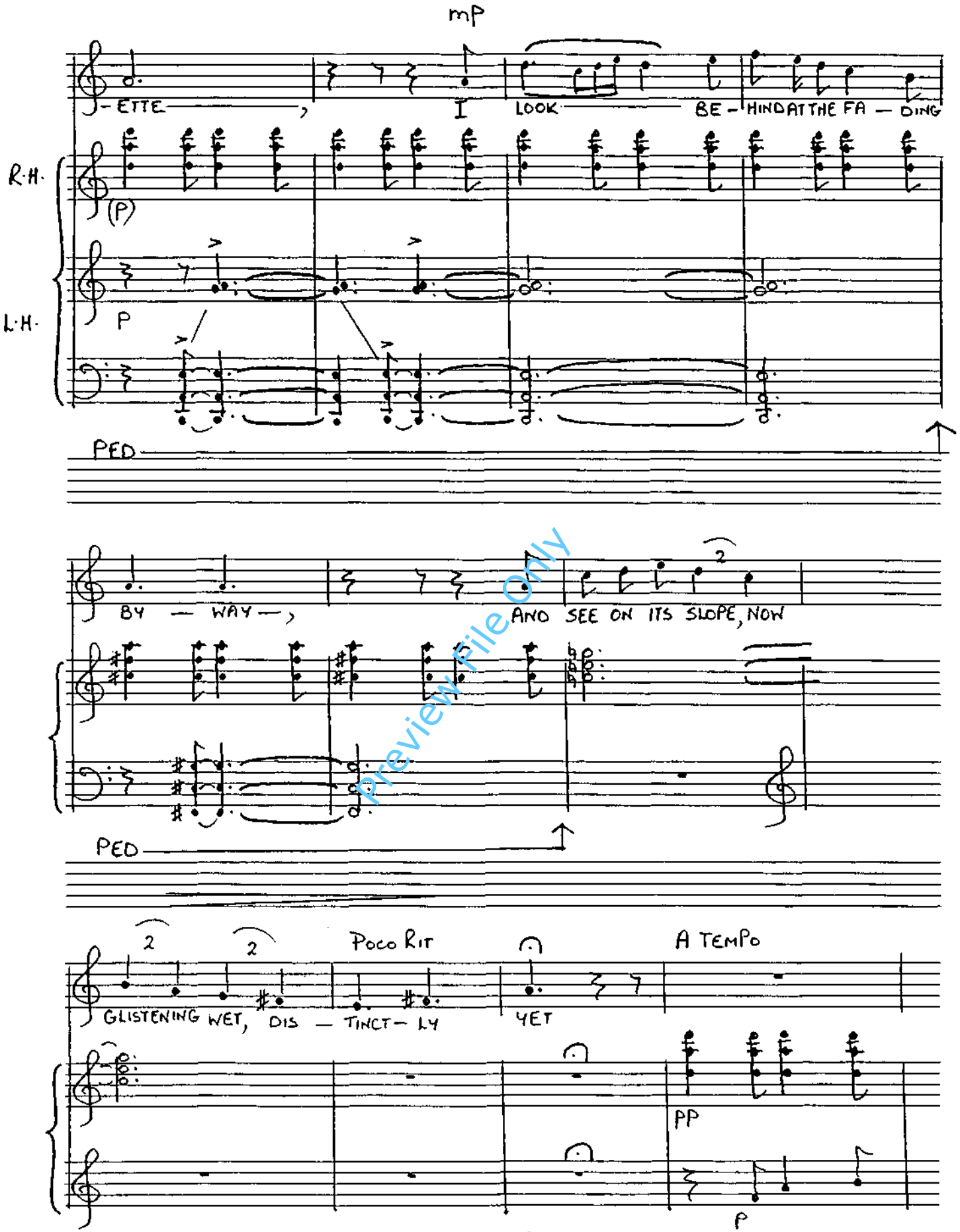

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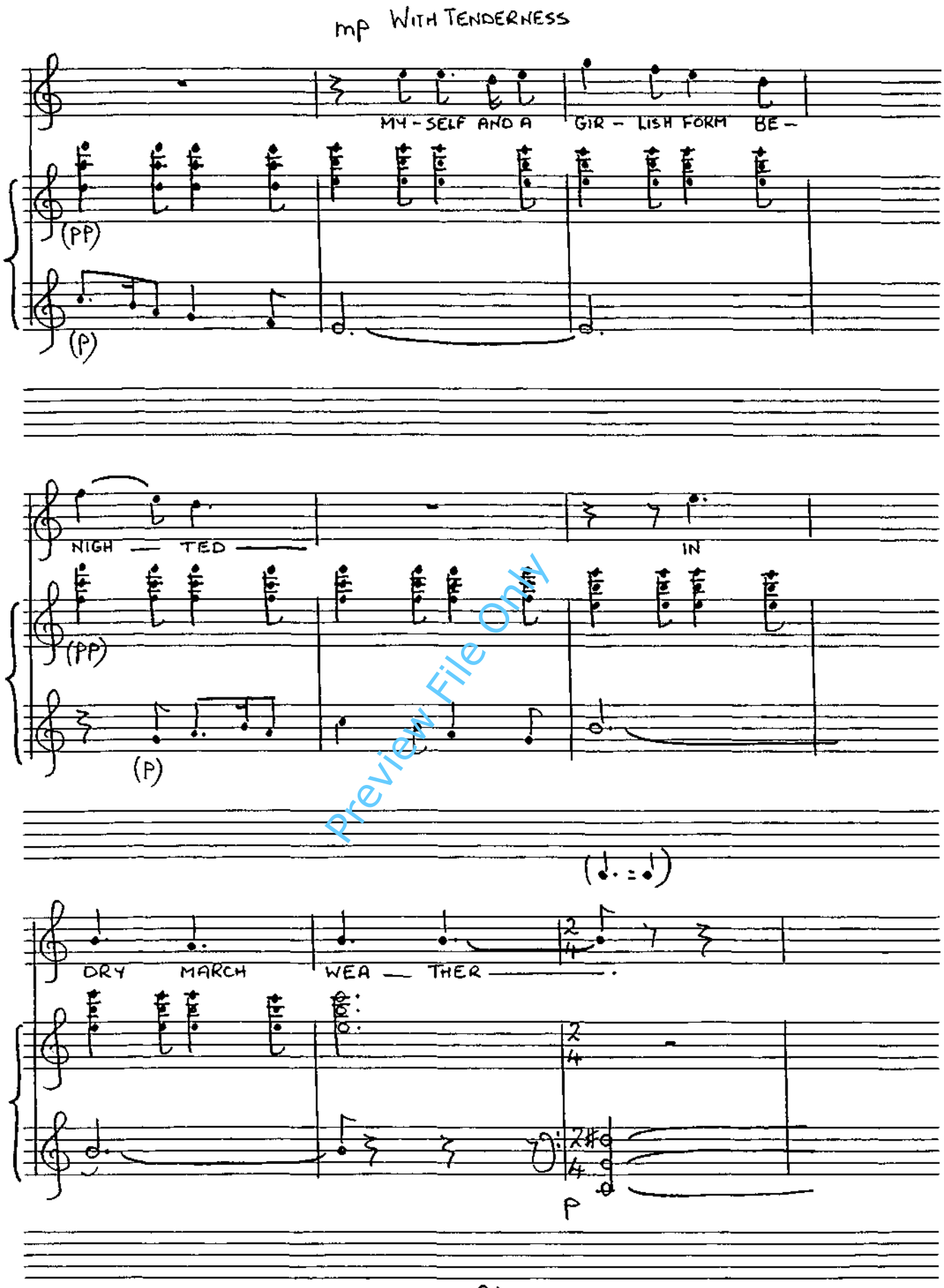

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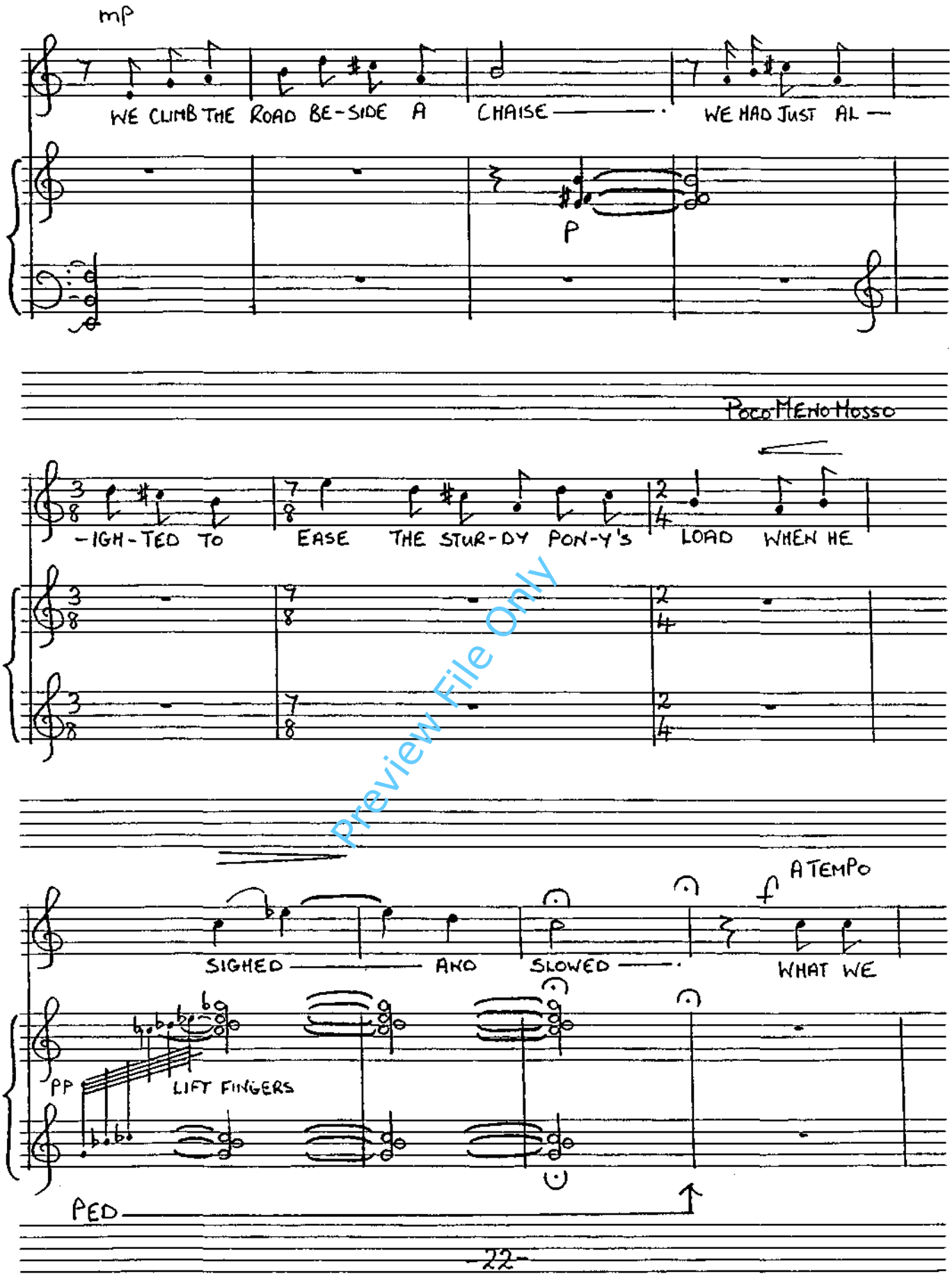

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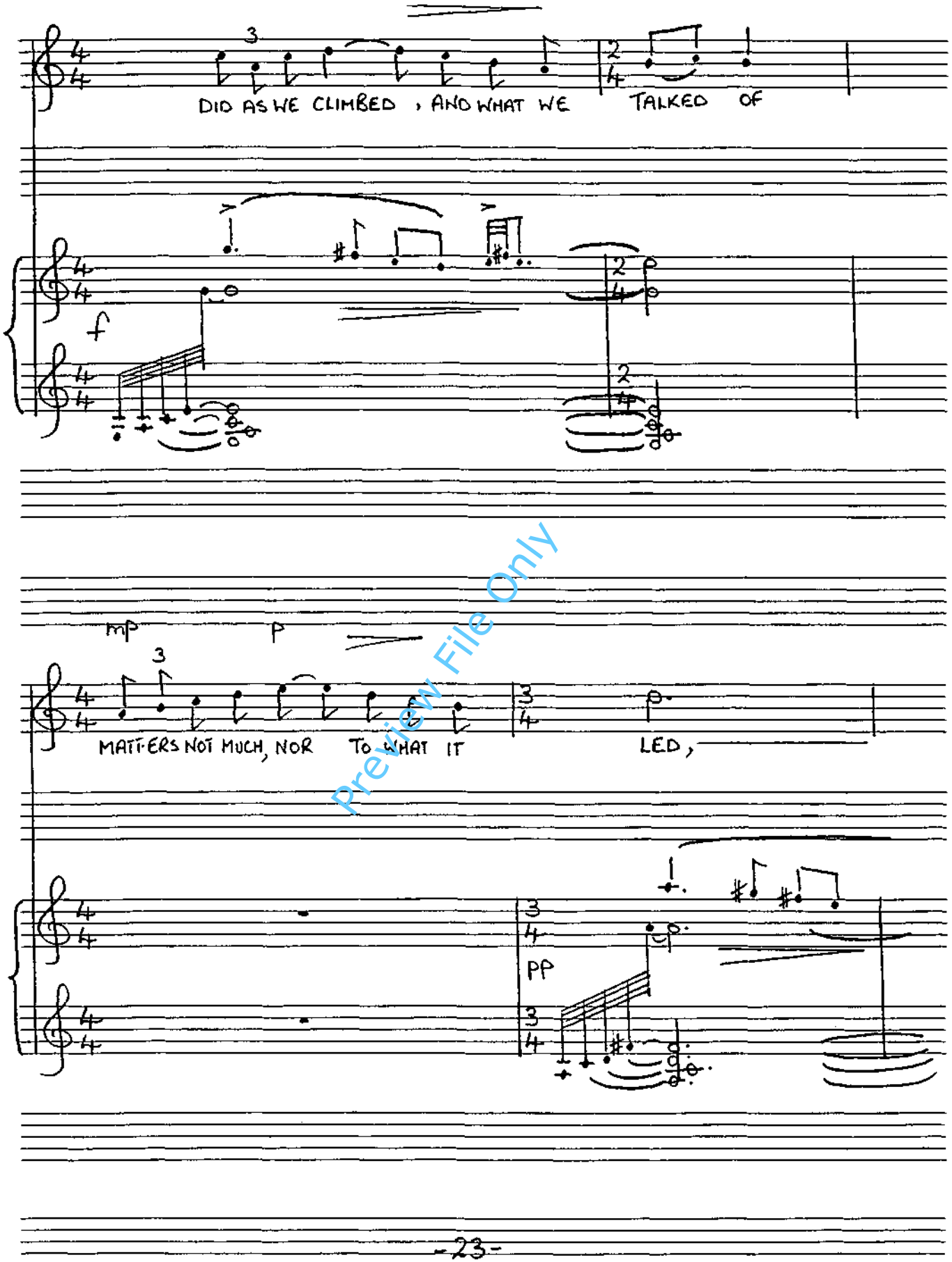

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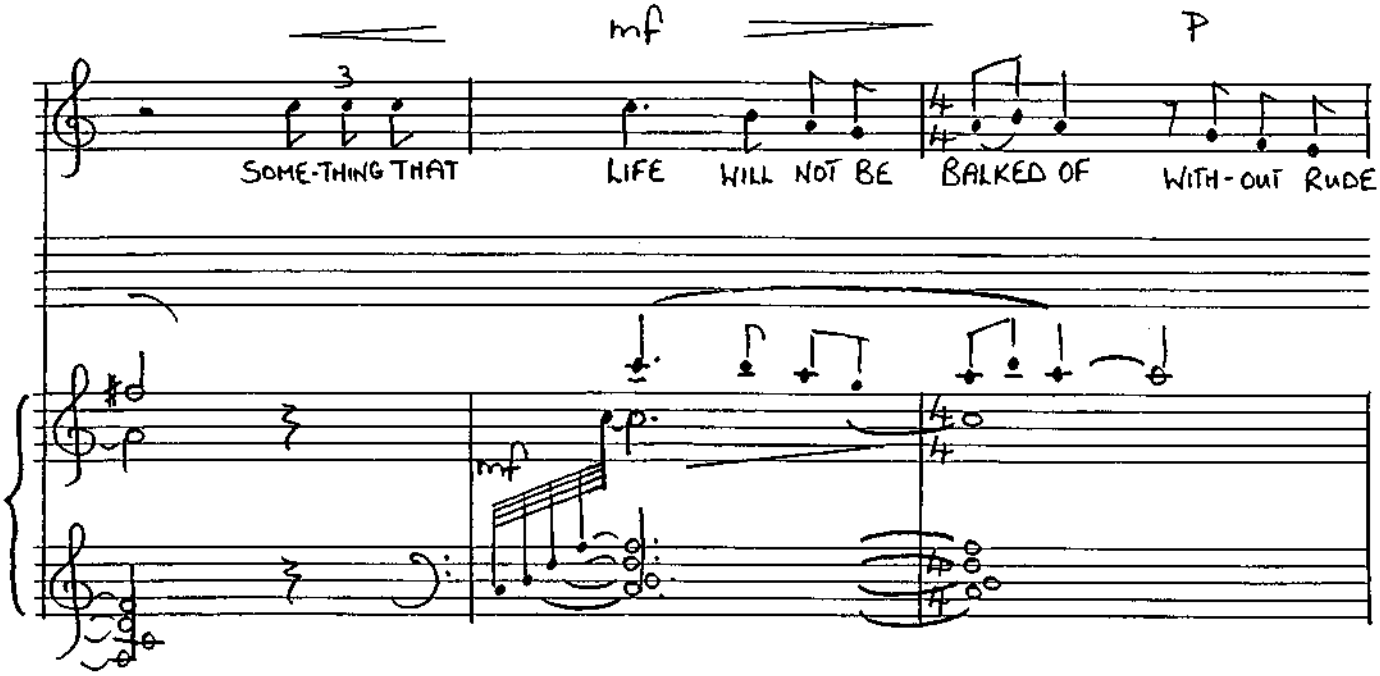

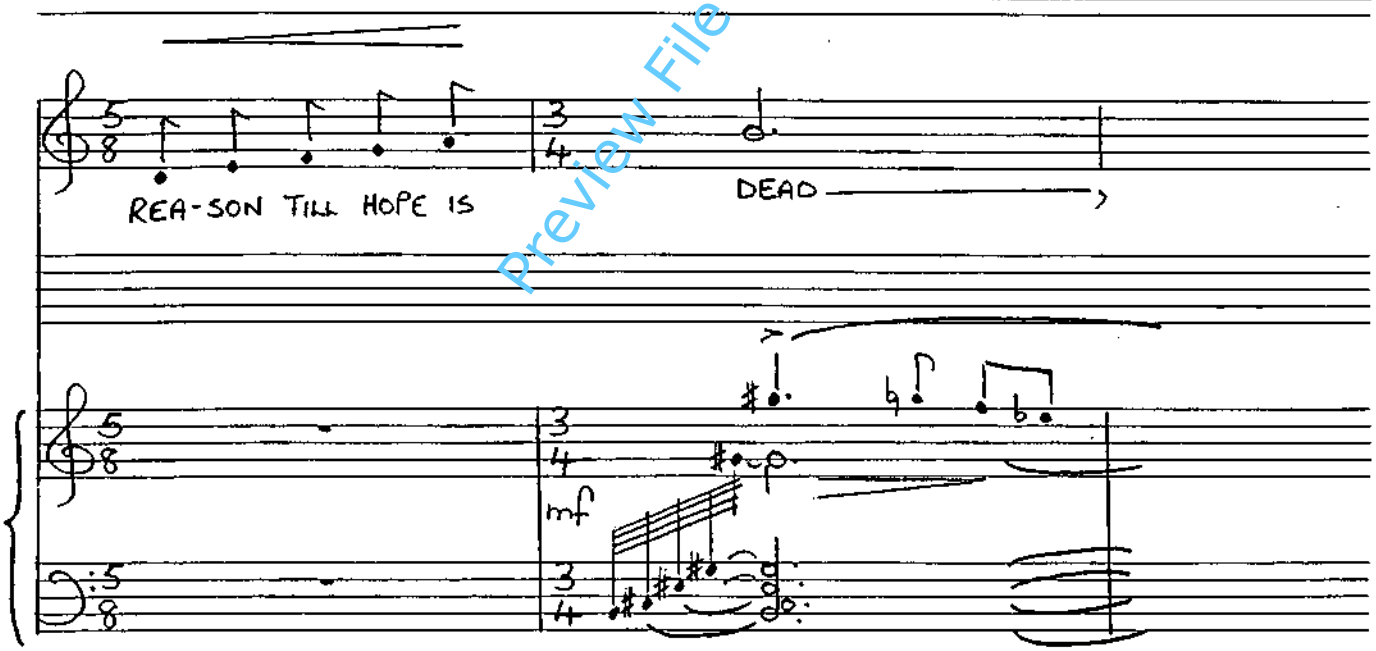

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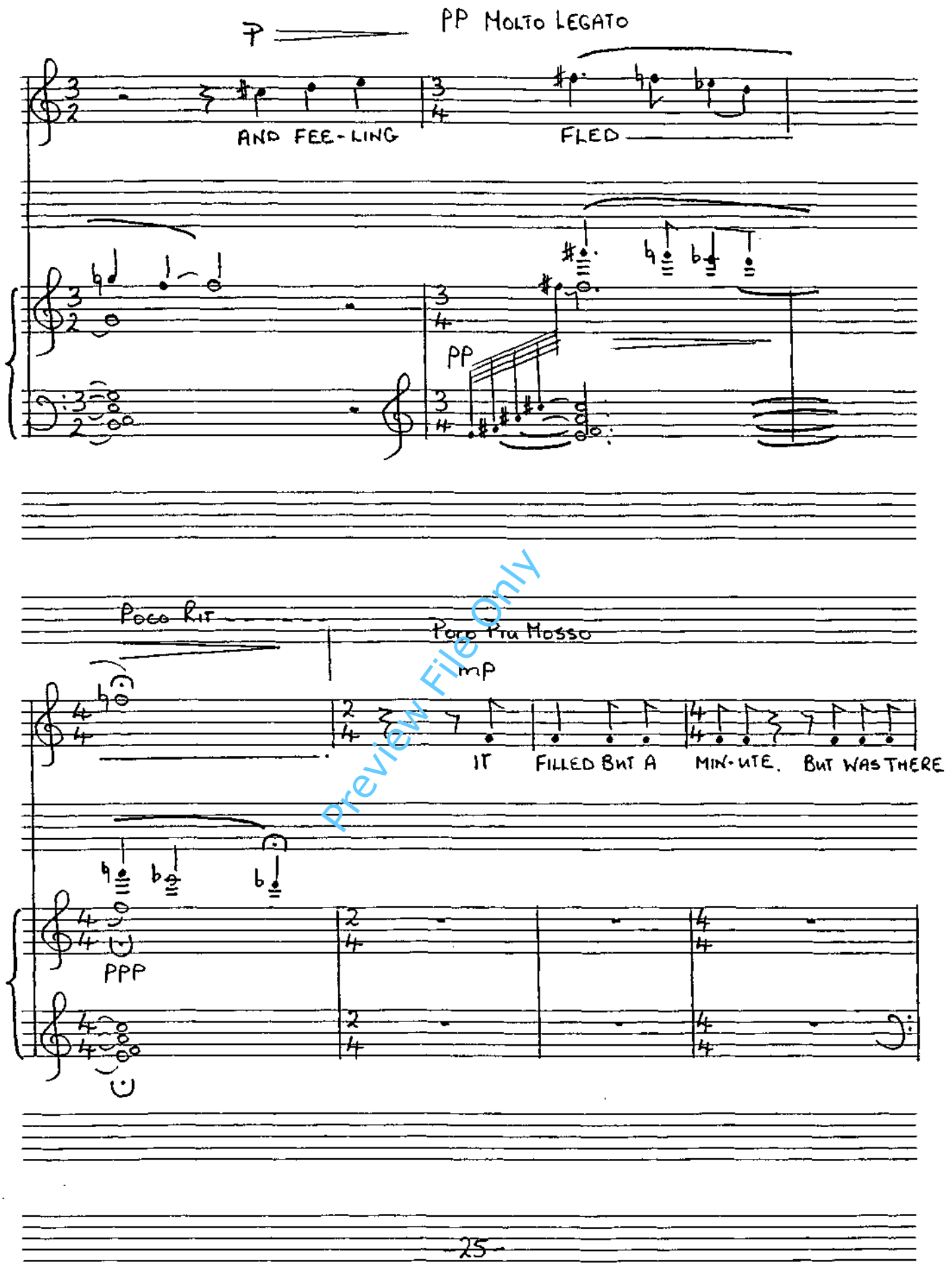

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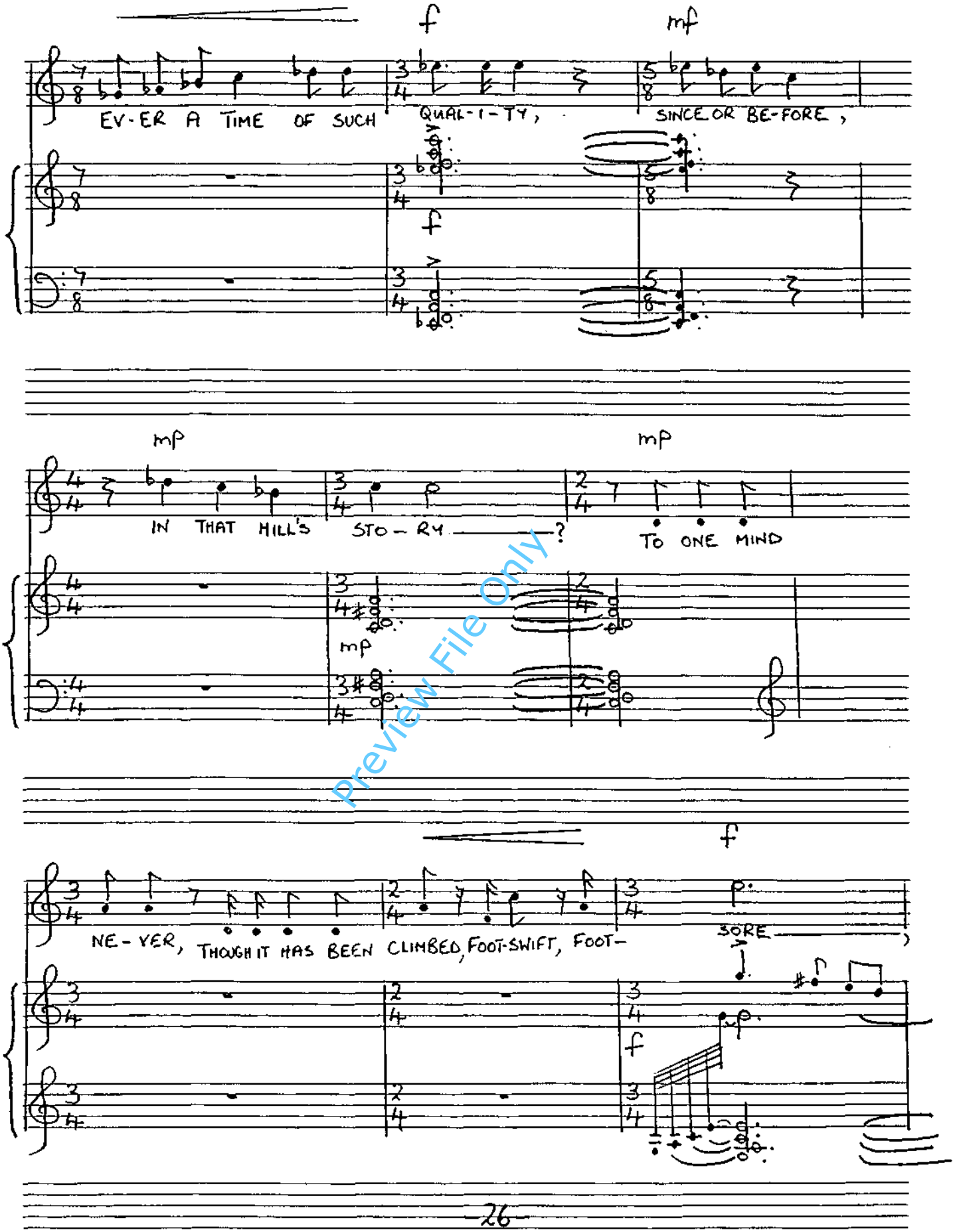

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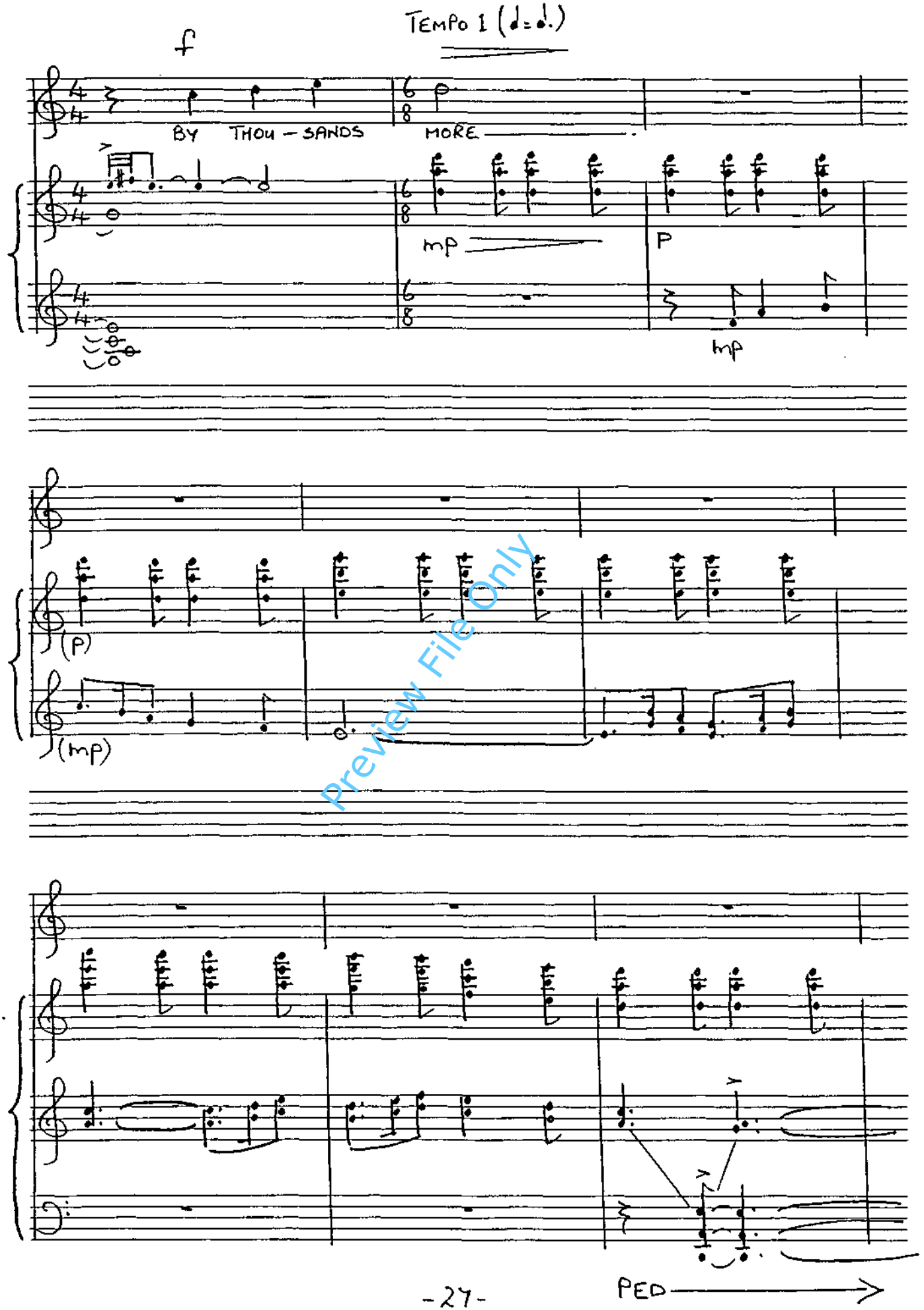

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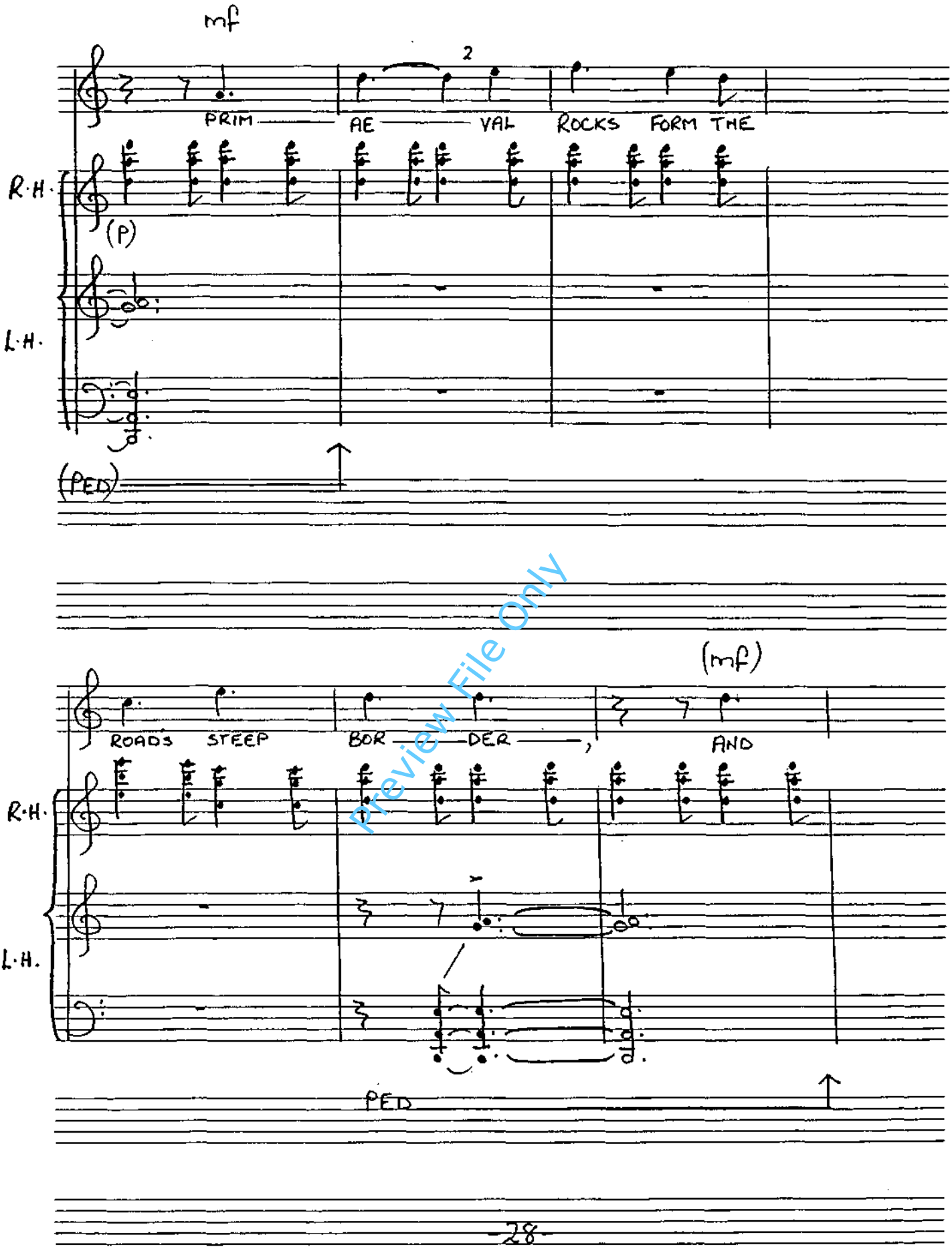

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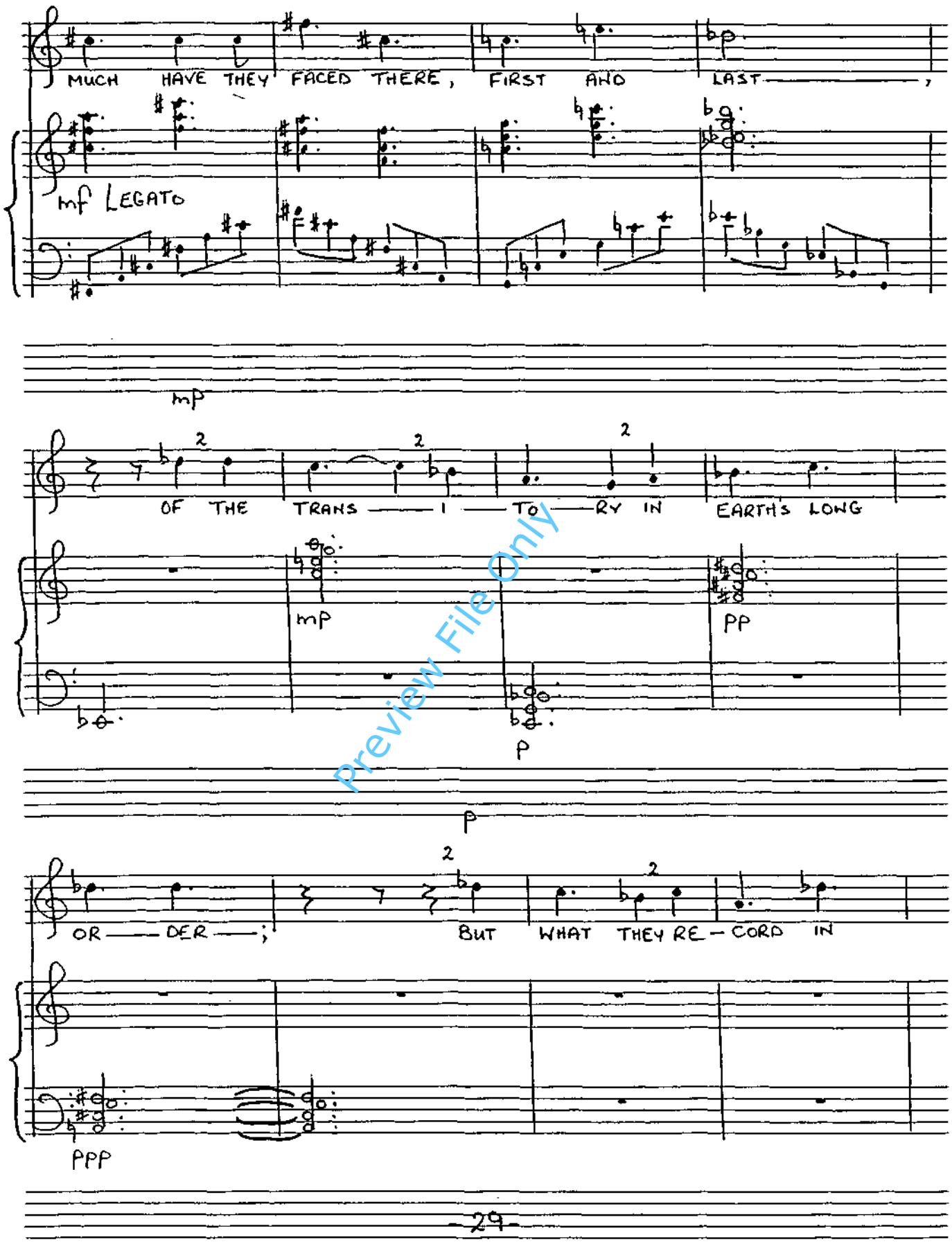

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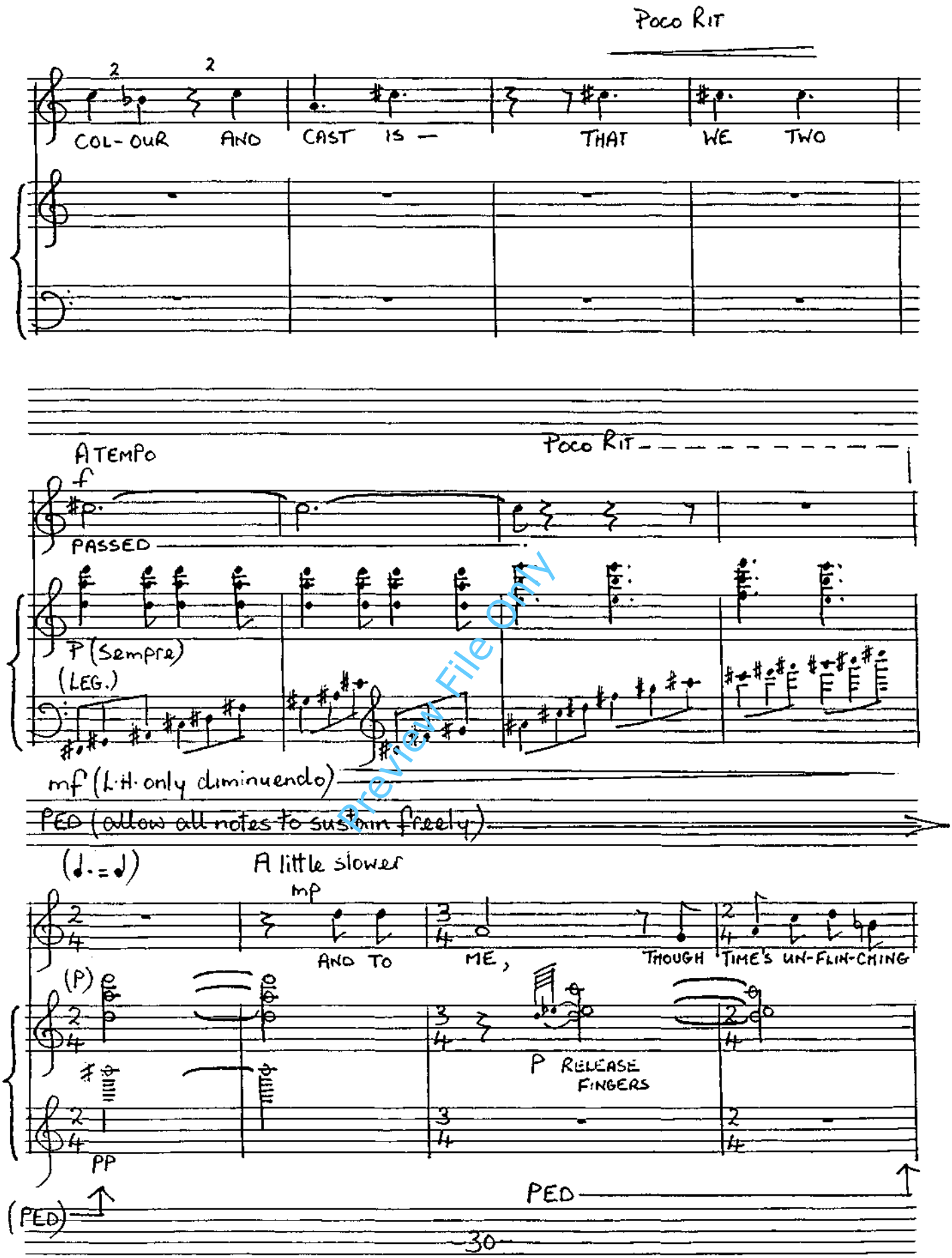

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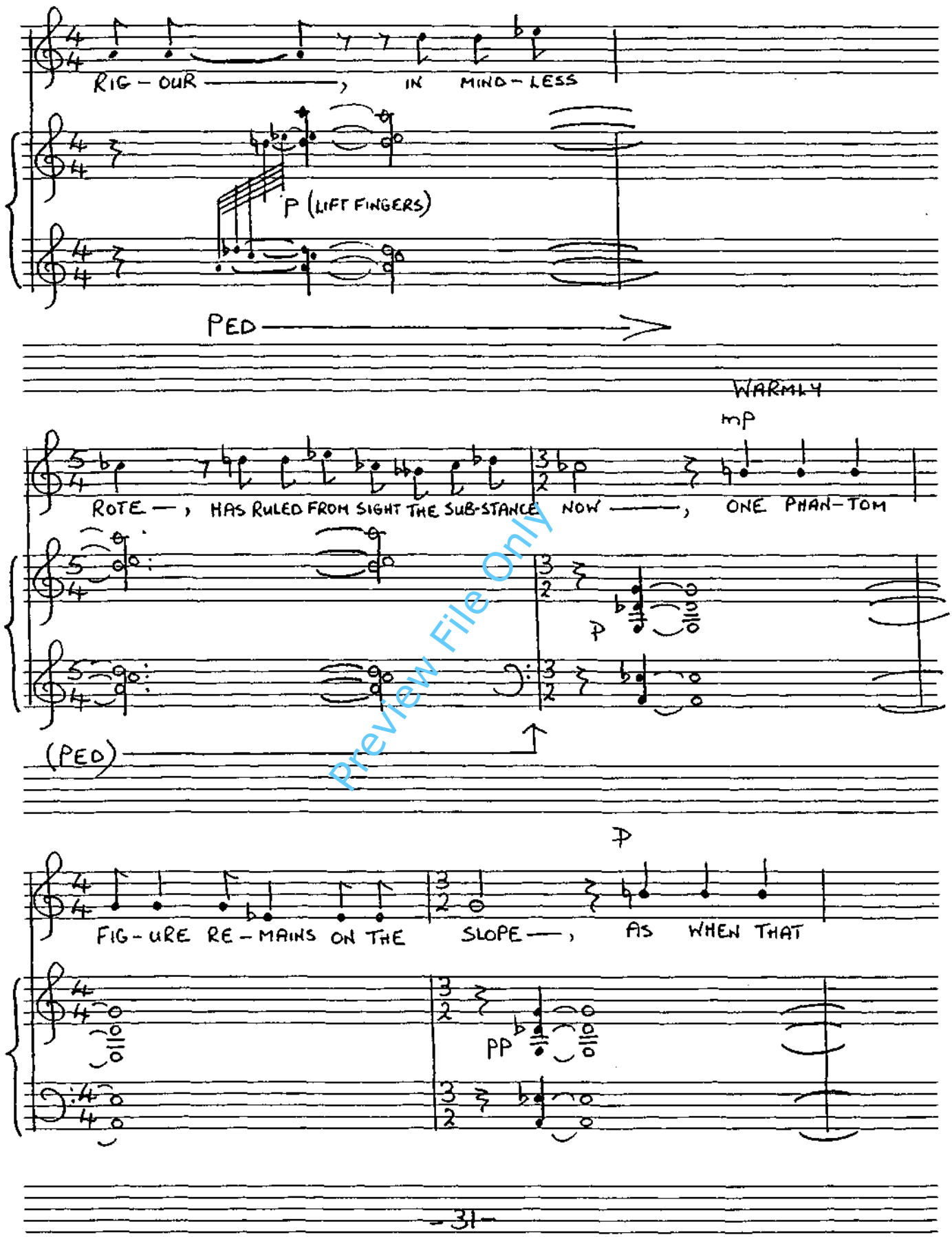

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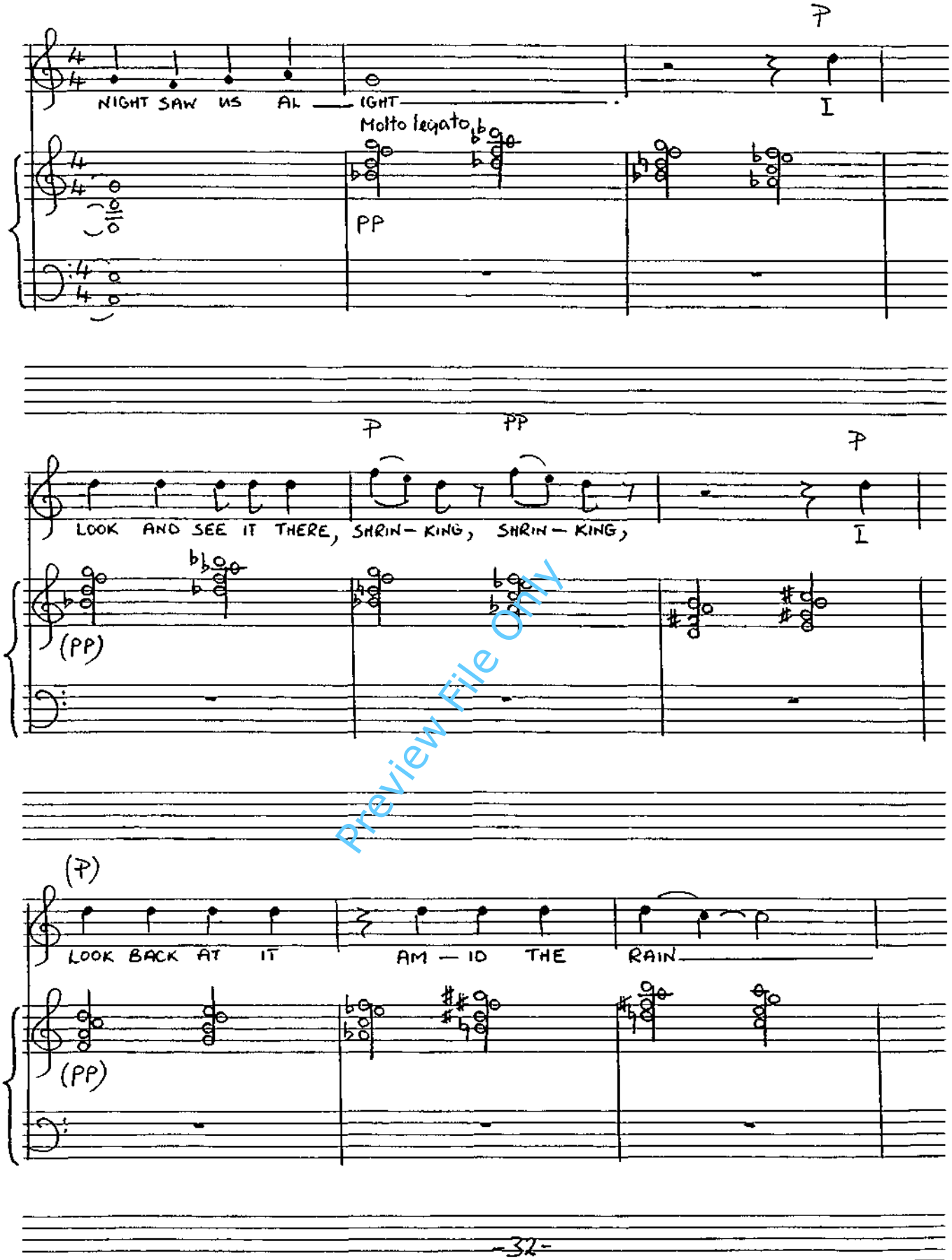

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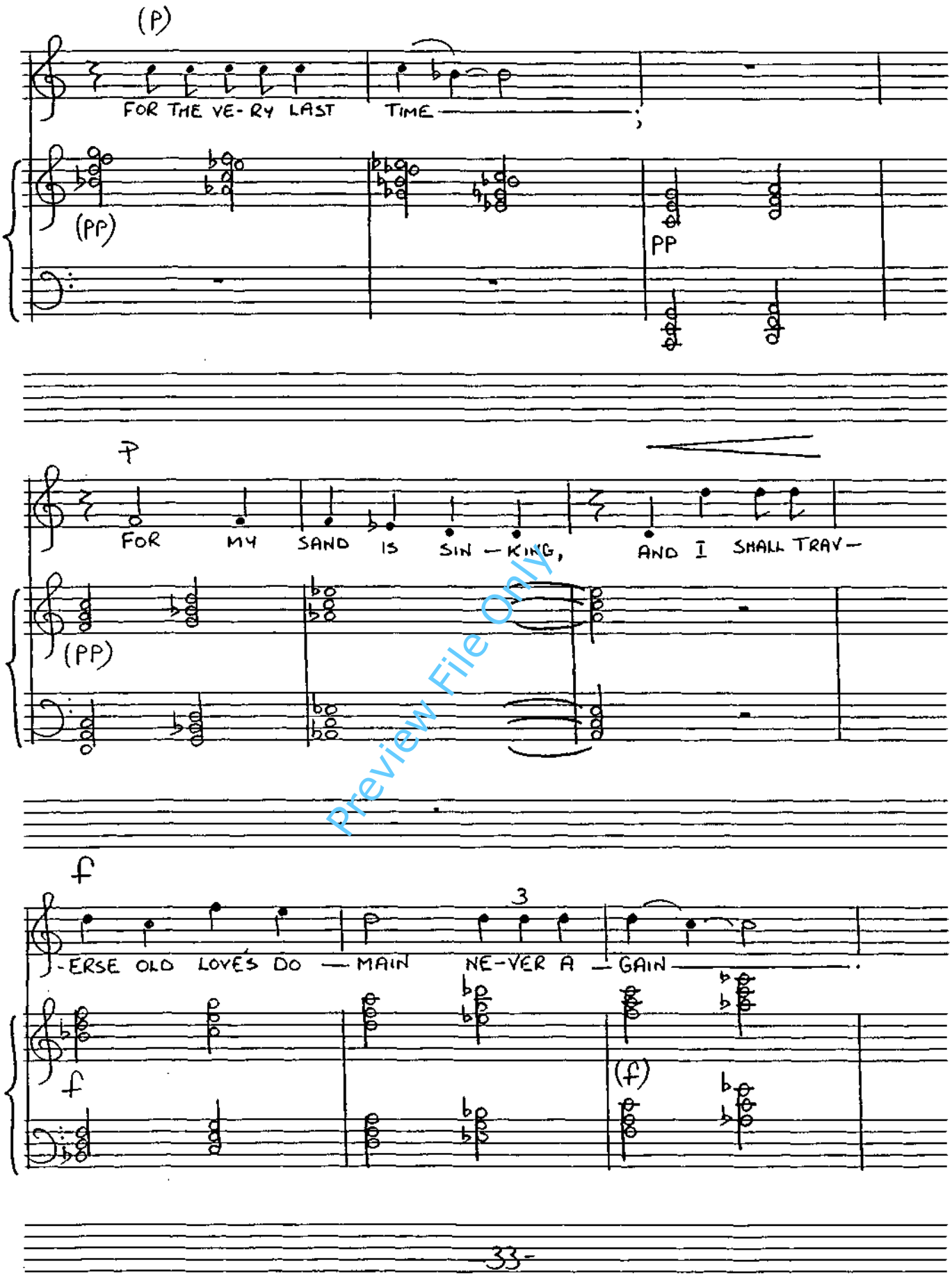

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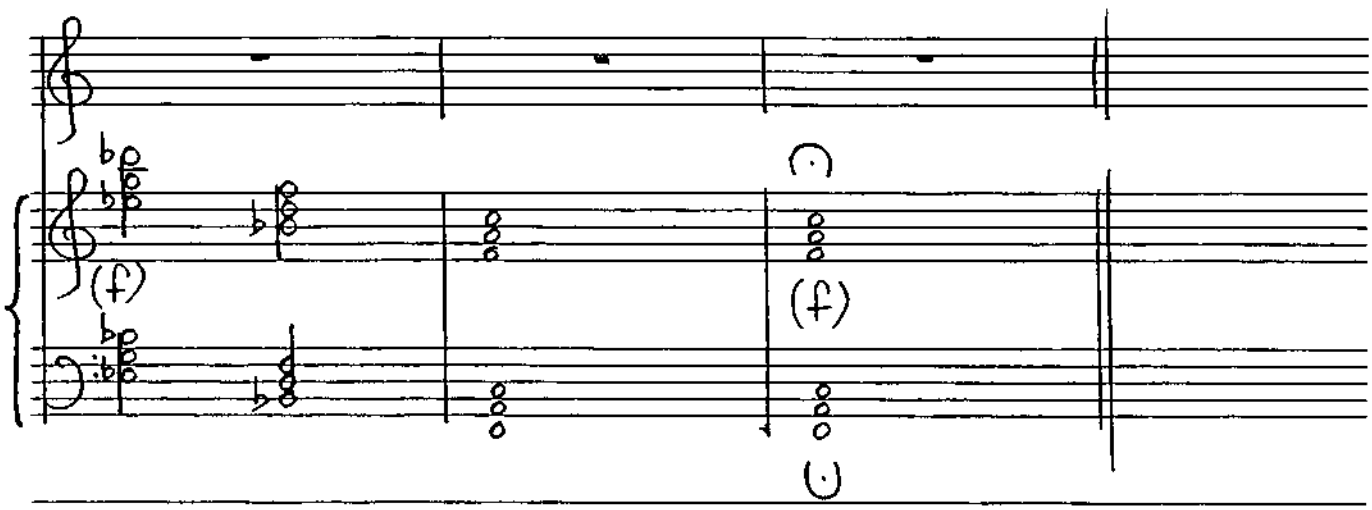

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5. The Curtains Now Are Drawn

Words by Thomas Hardy

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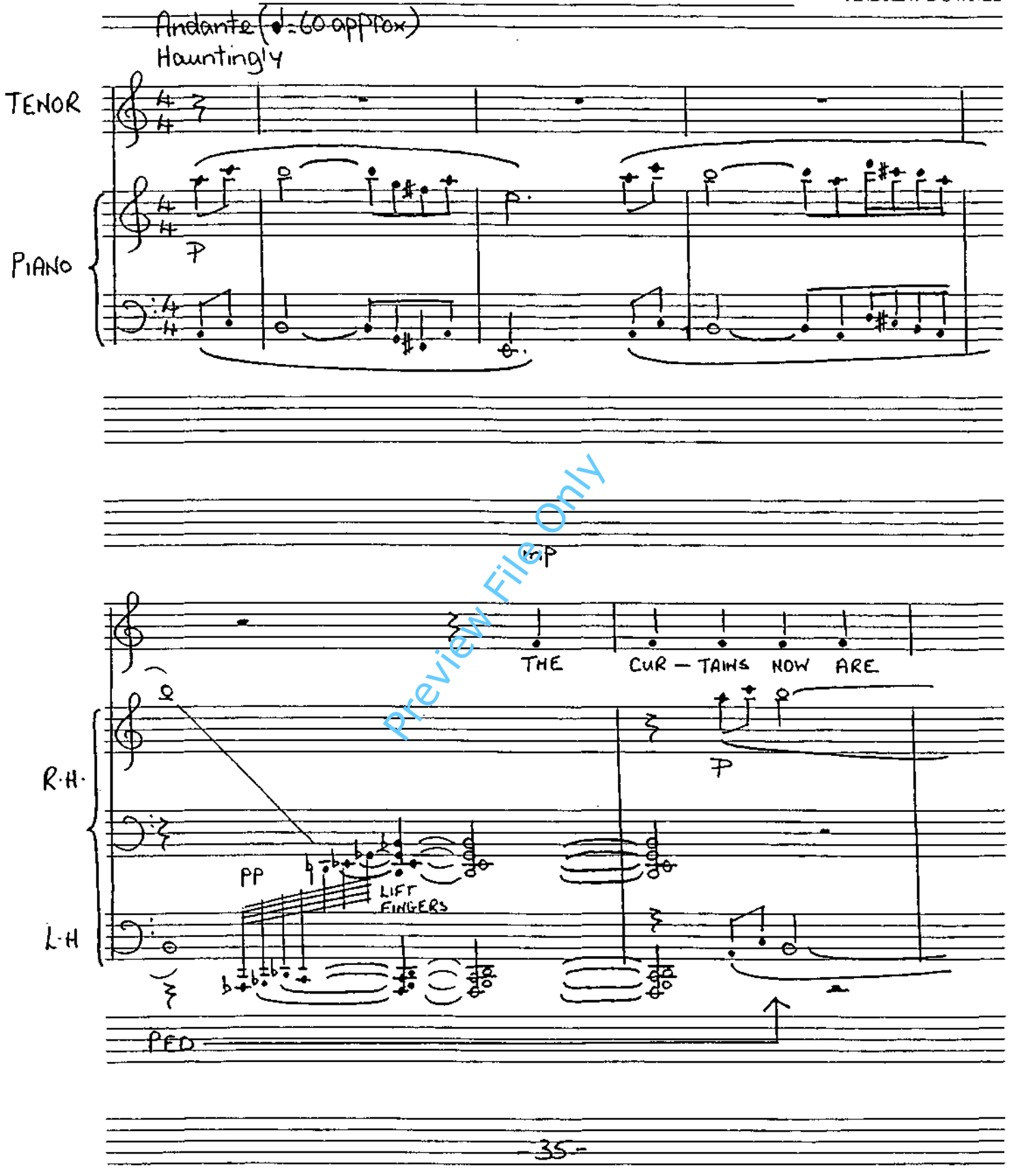

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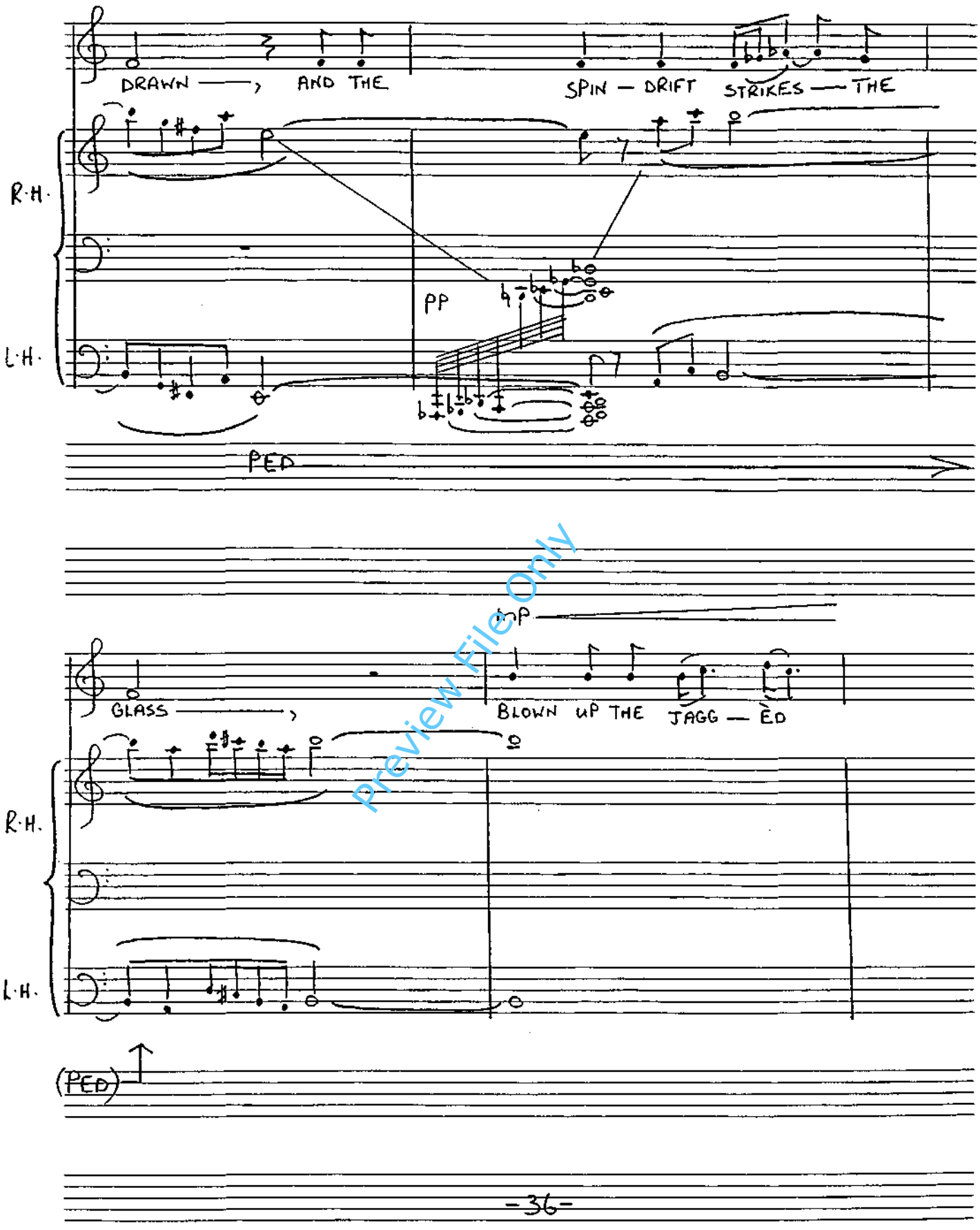

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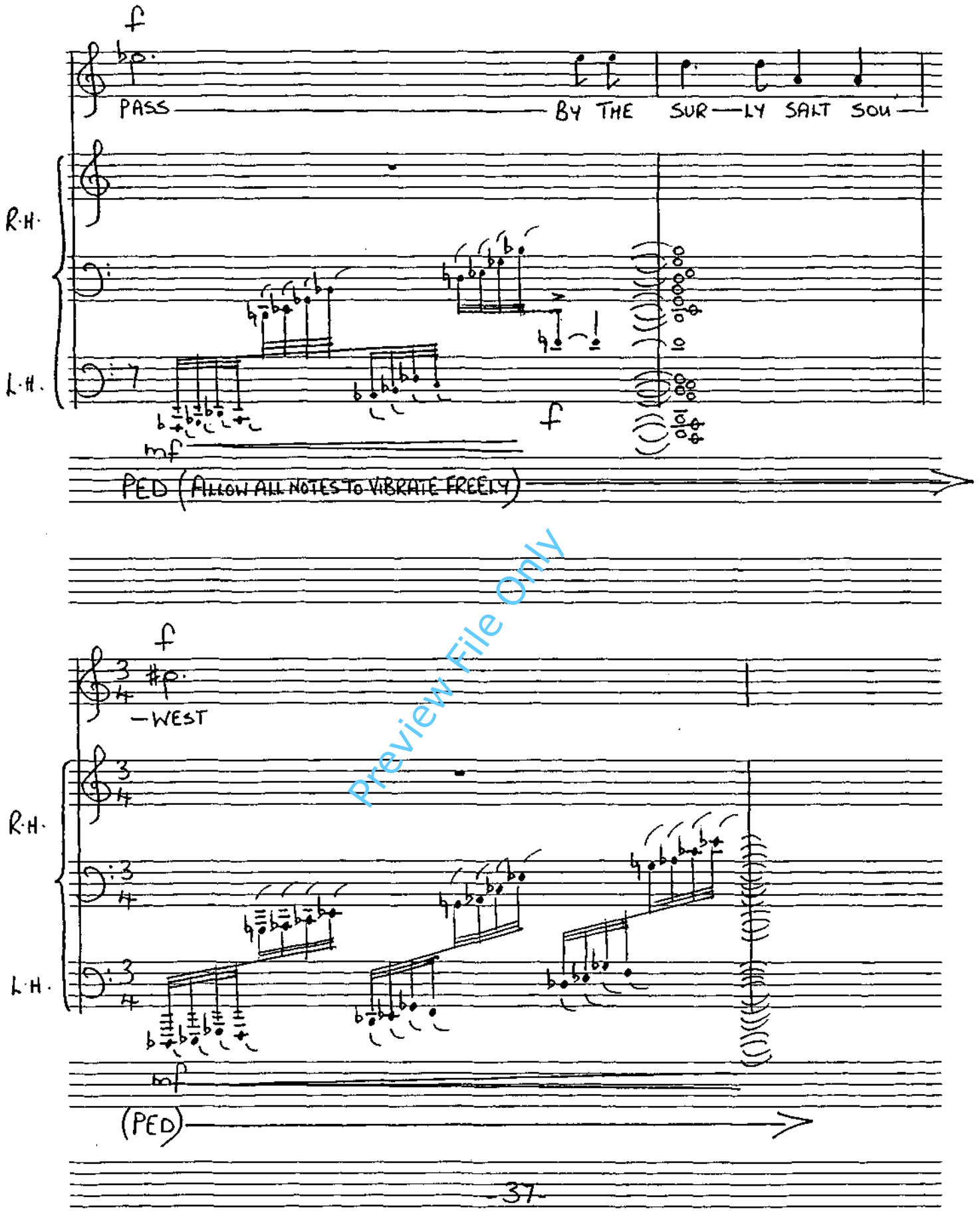

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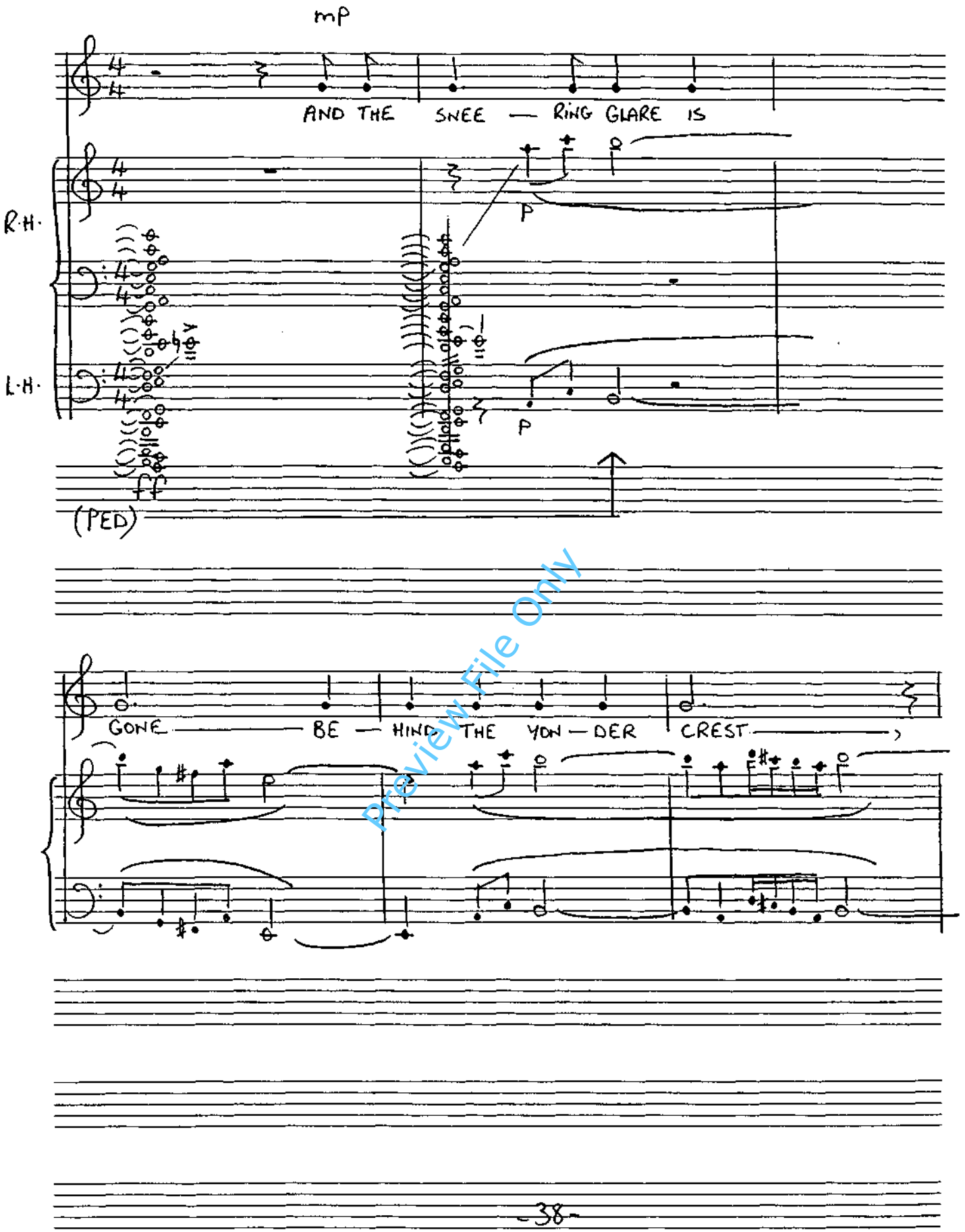

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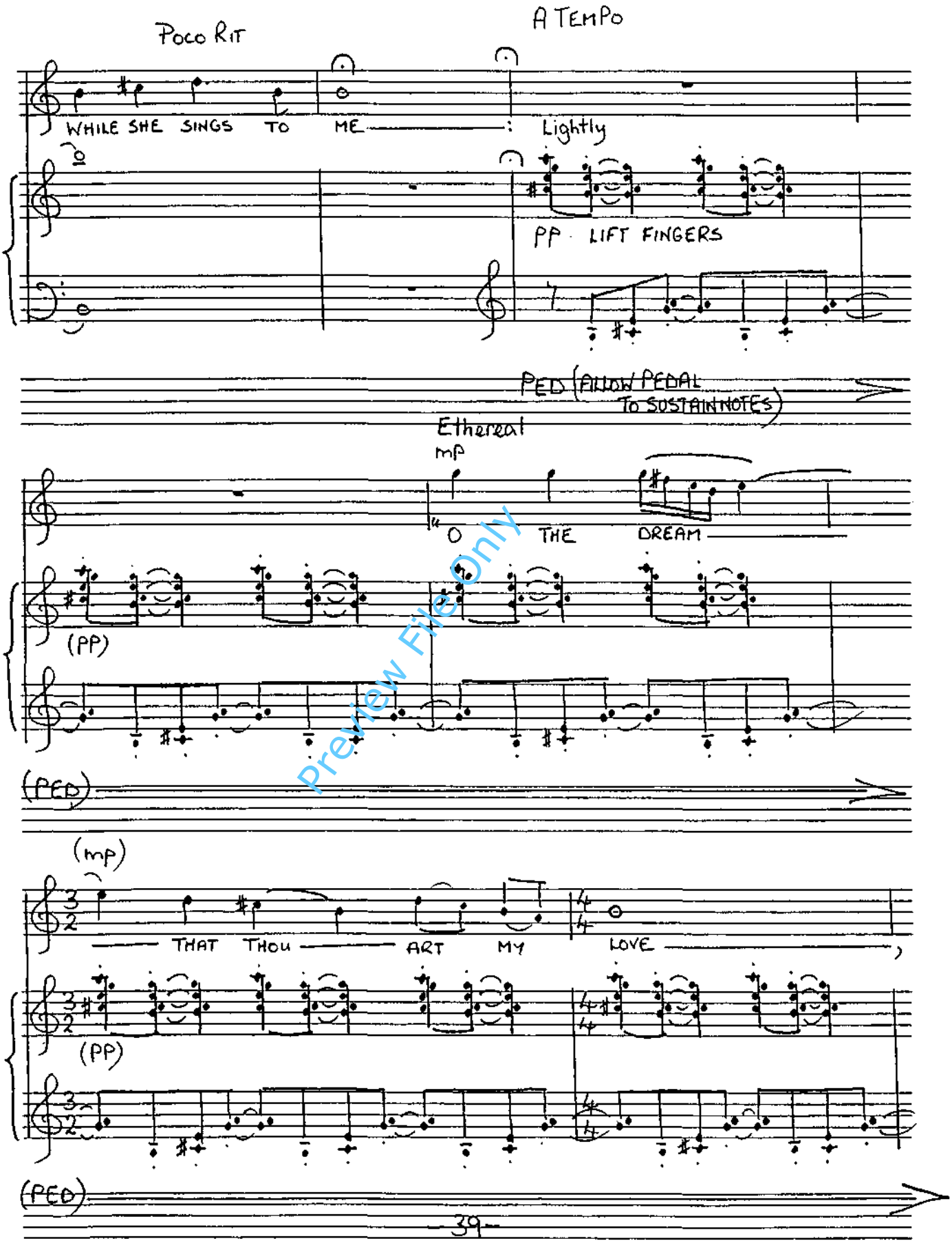

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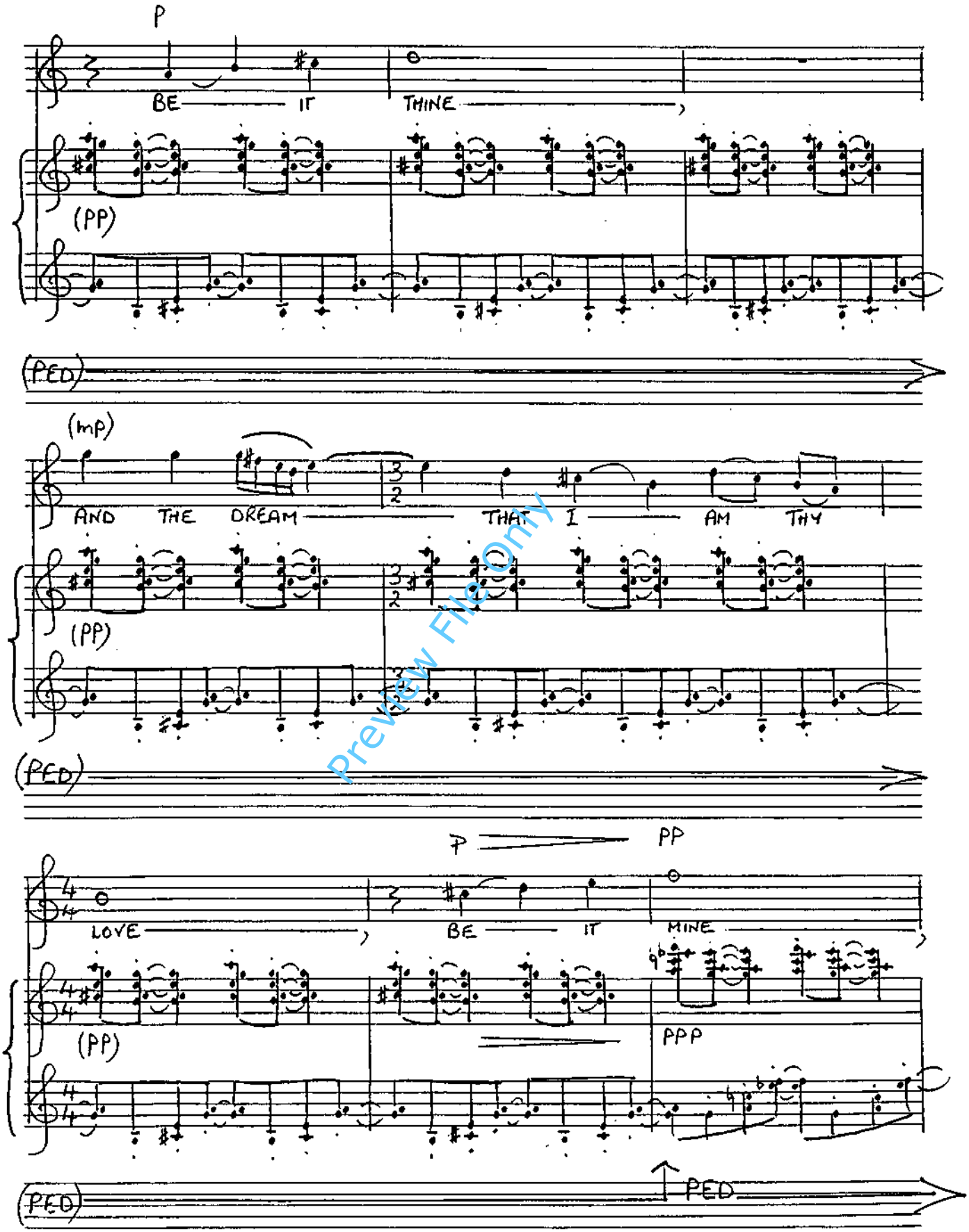

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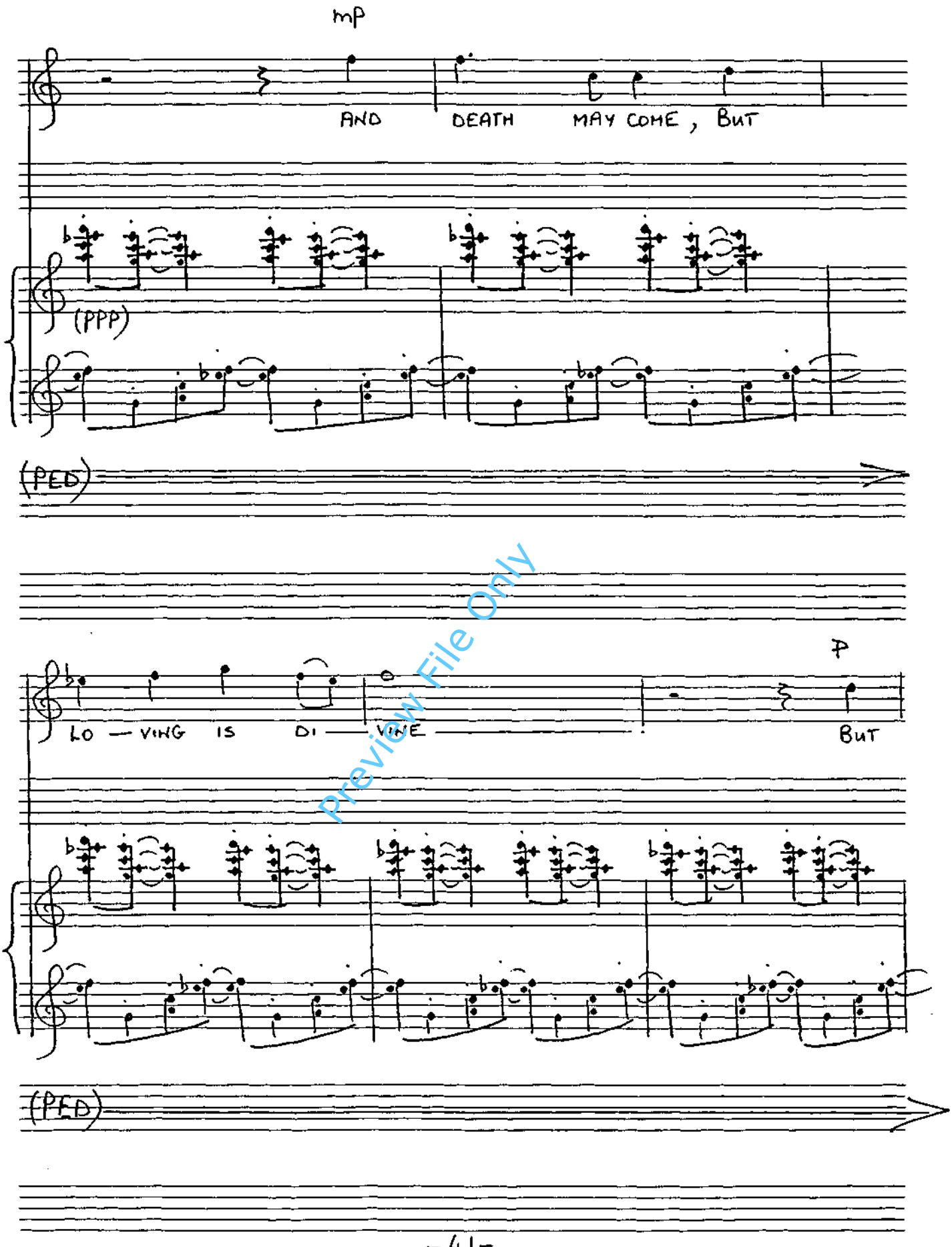

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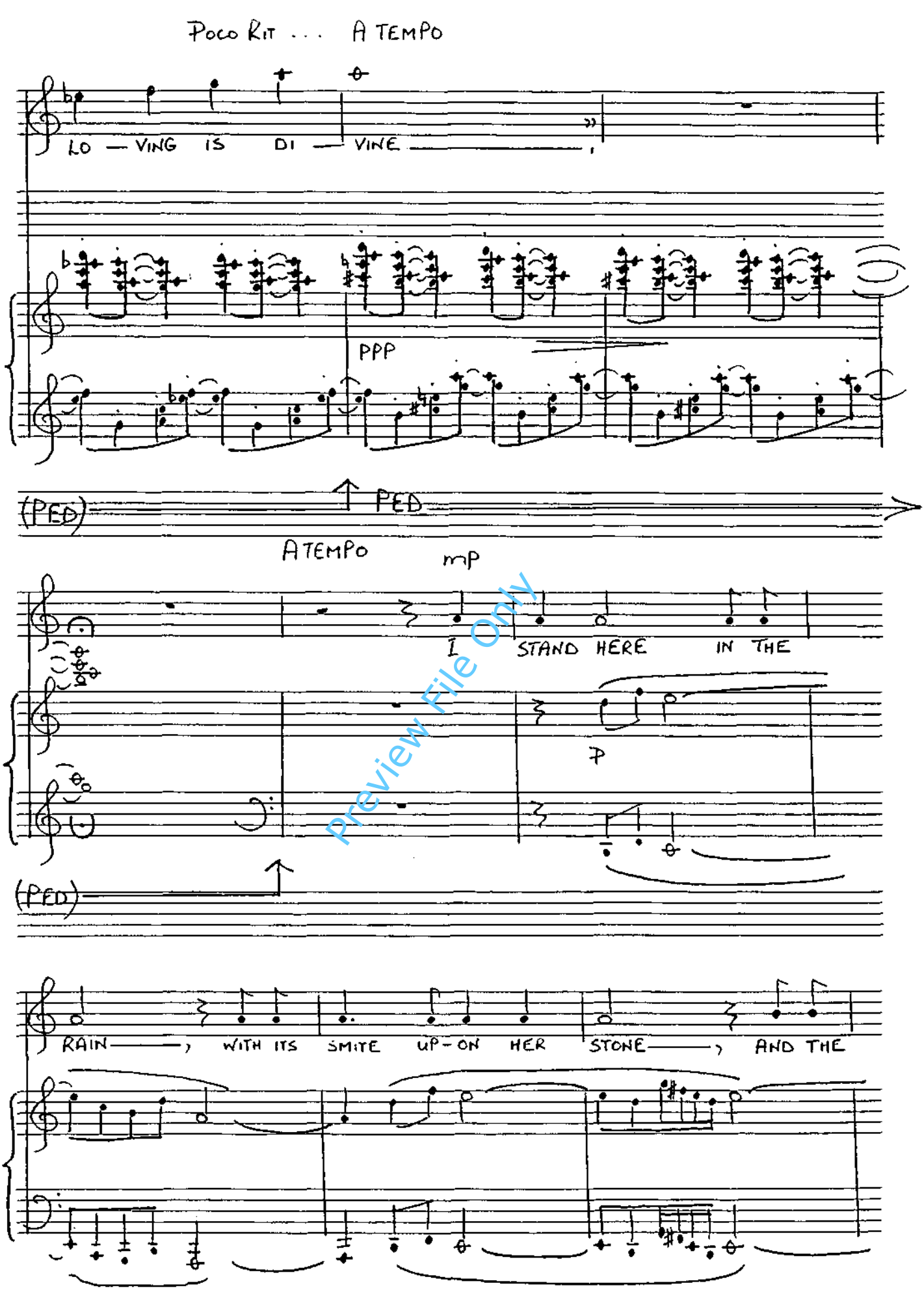

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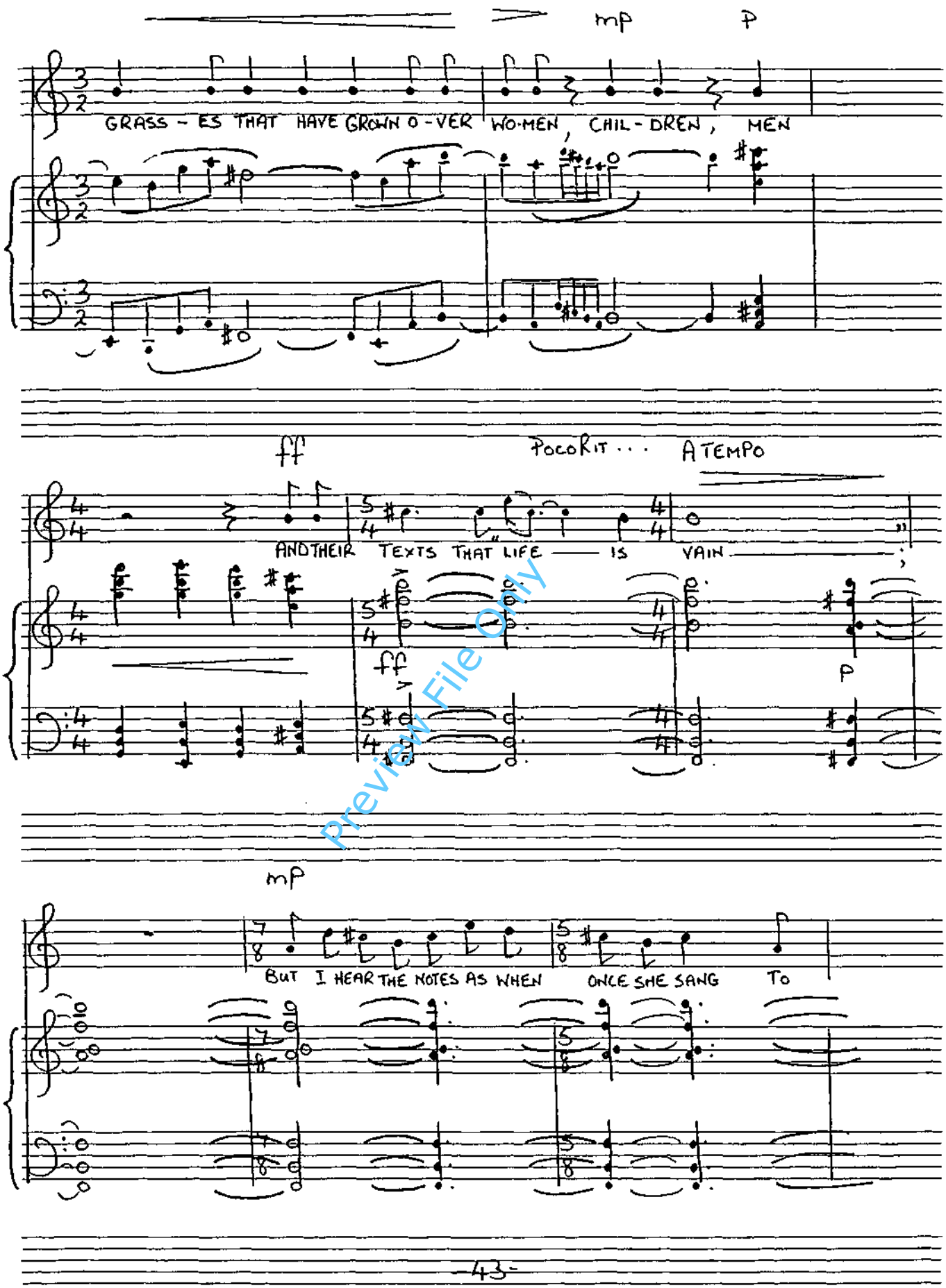

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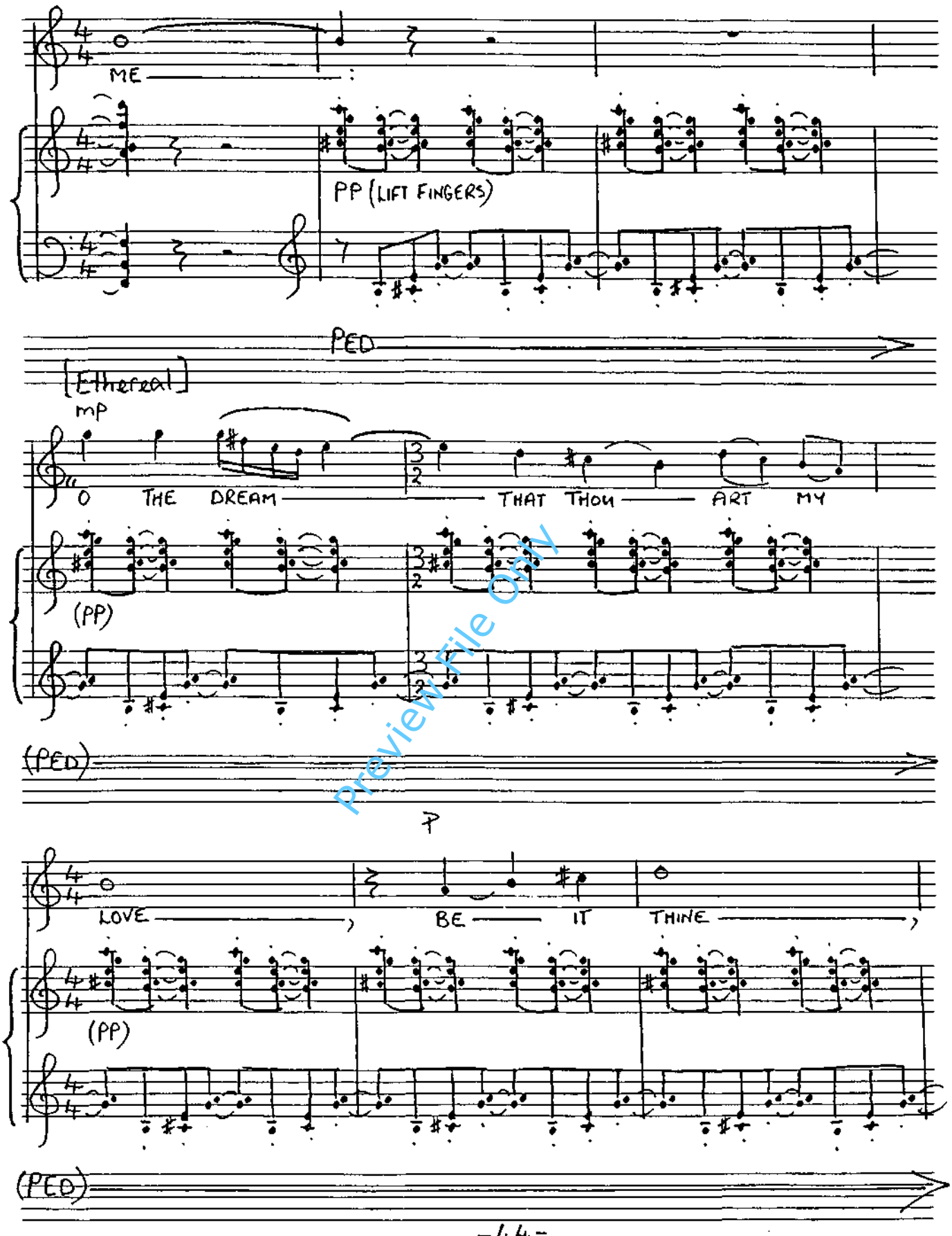

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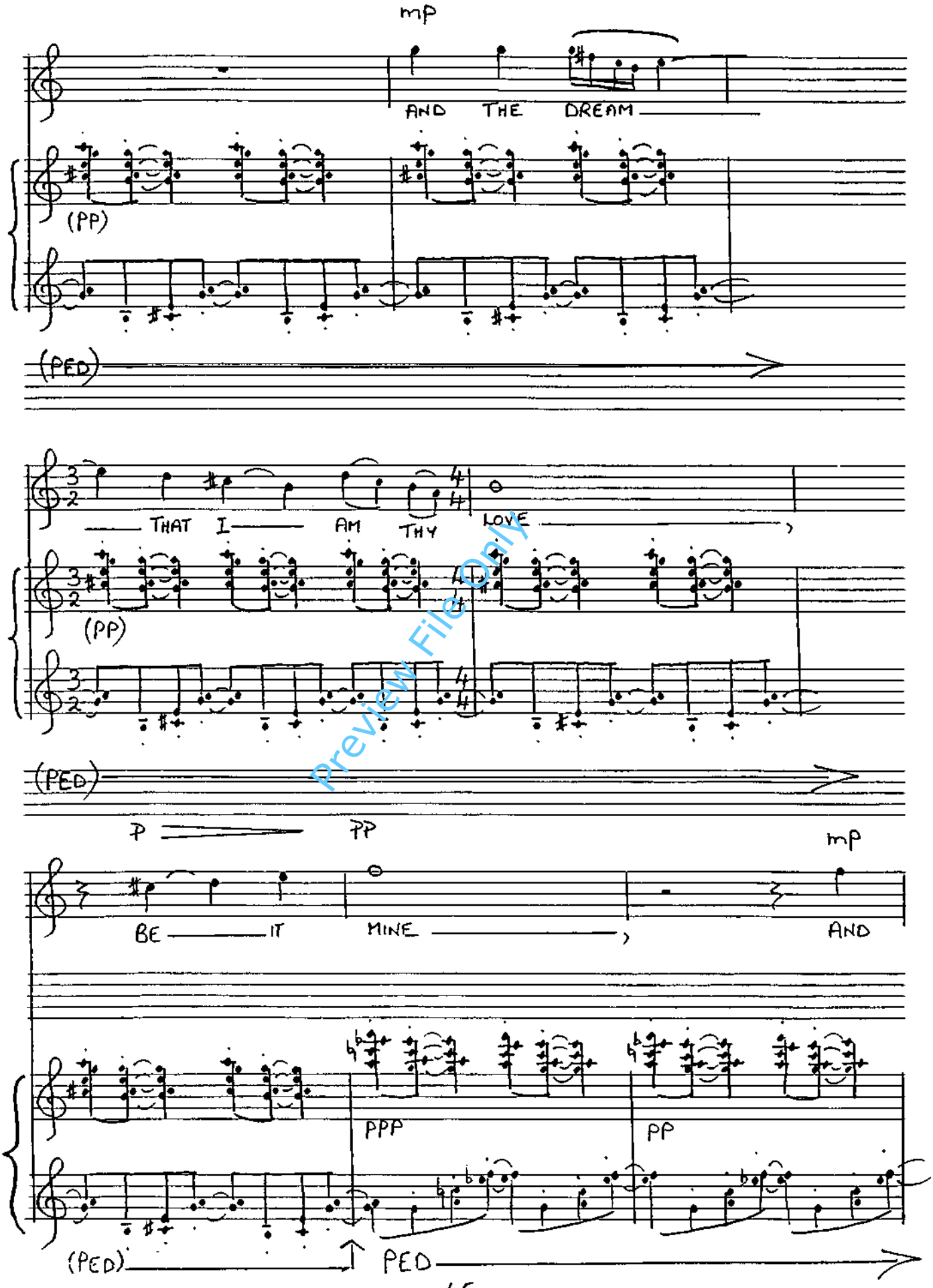

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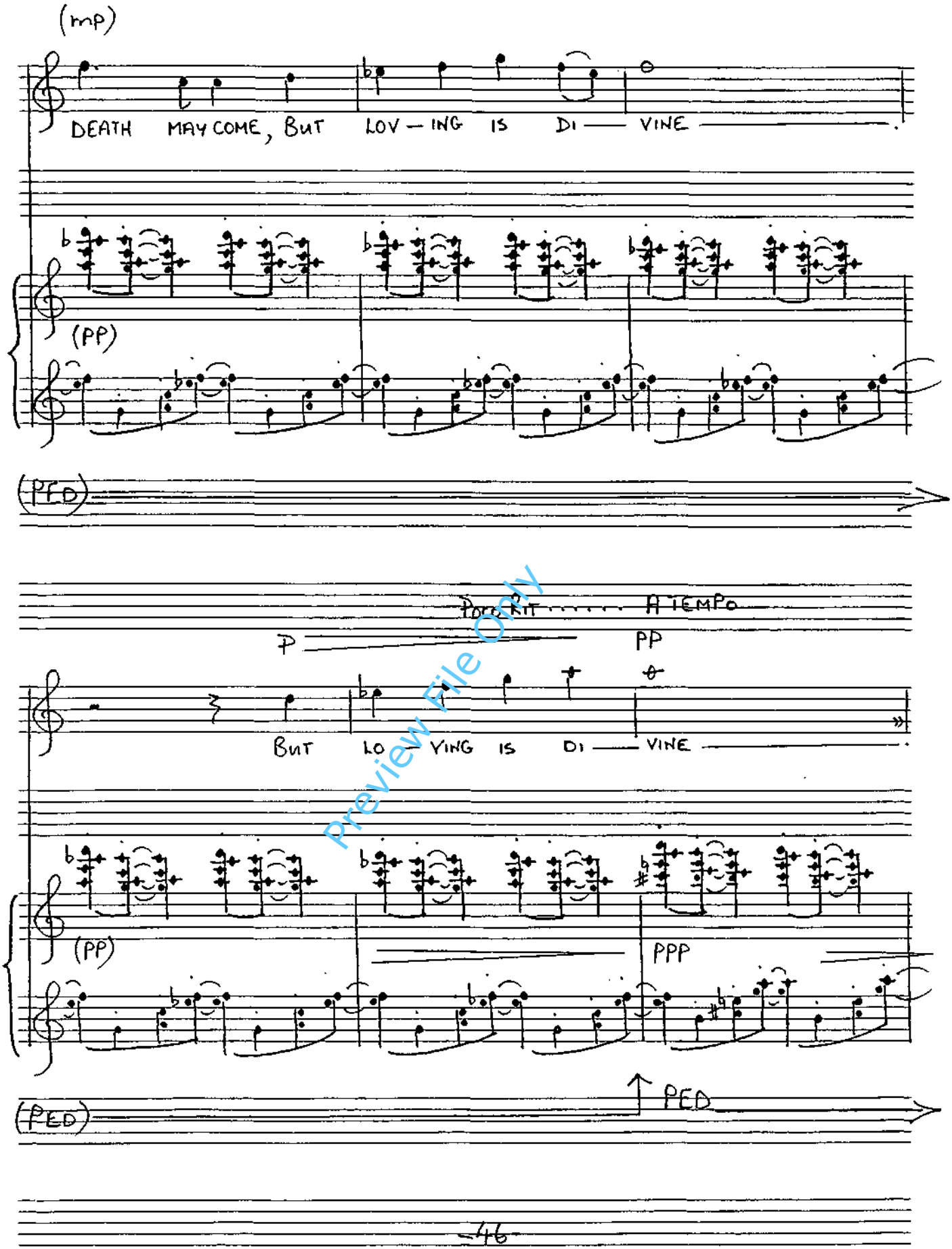

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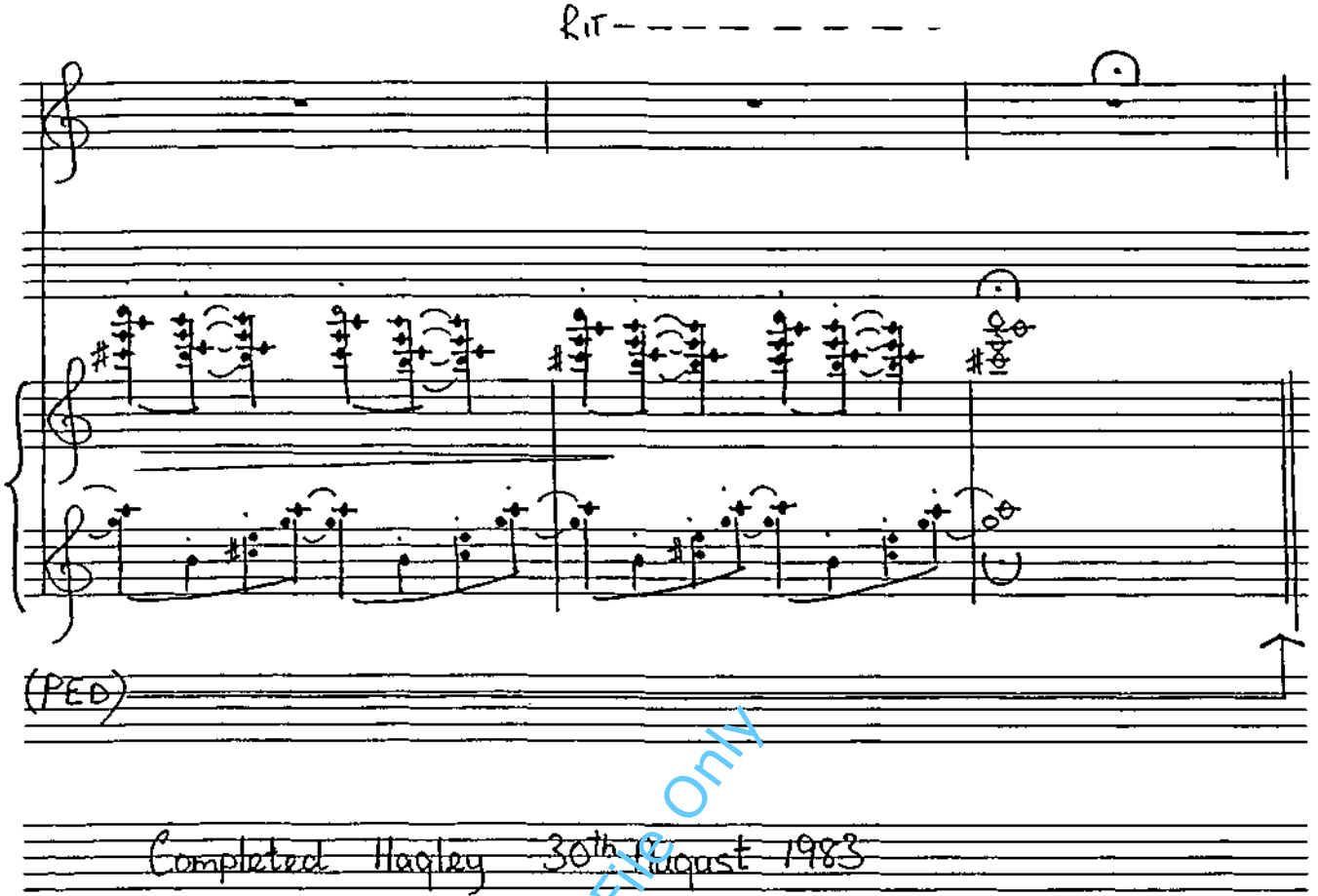

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