John Casken

Serpents of Wisdom

for horn in F and piano

(2015)

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PREVIEW
Low Resolution

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First Performance: 1 February 2016
Alec Frank-Gemmill, horn
Alasdair Beatson, piano
Wigmore Hall
London, UK

Duration: c. 11 minutes

Serpents of Wisdom

The title of this piece comes from a Celtic poem by [illegible] MacCaig that brings to life the symbols of an earlier time, carved in stone, [illegible] in links of song", as "Serpents of wisdom whose cool statements show [illegible]." Of course 'serpents' can mean other things, and the idea of [illegible] and horn came together in my mind.

Much of the [illegible] was generated by the opening phrase, a strong and vibrant phrase in which I wanted to capture [illegible] of these noble creatures on Celtic crosses. The idea of plaiting and entwining [illegible] the piece, and the 'sweet strong choruses' that MacCaig refers [illegible]

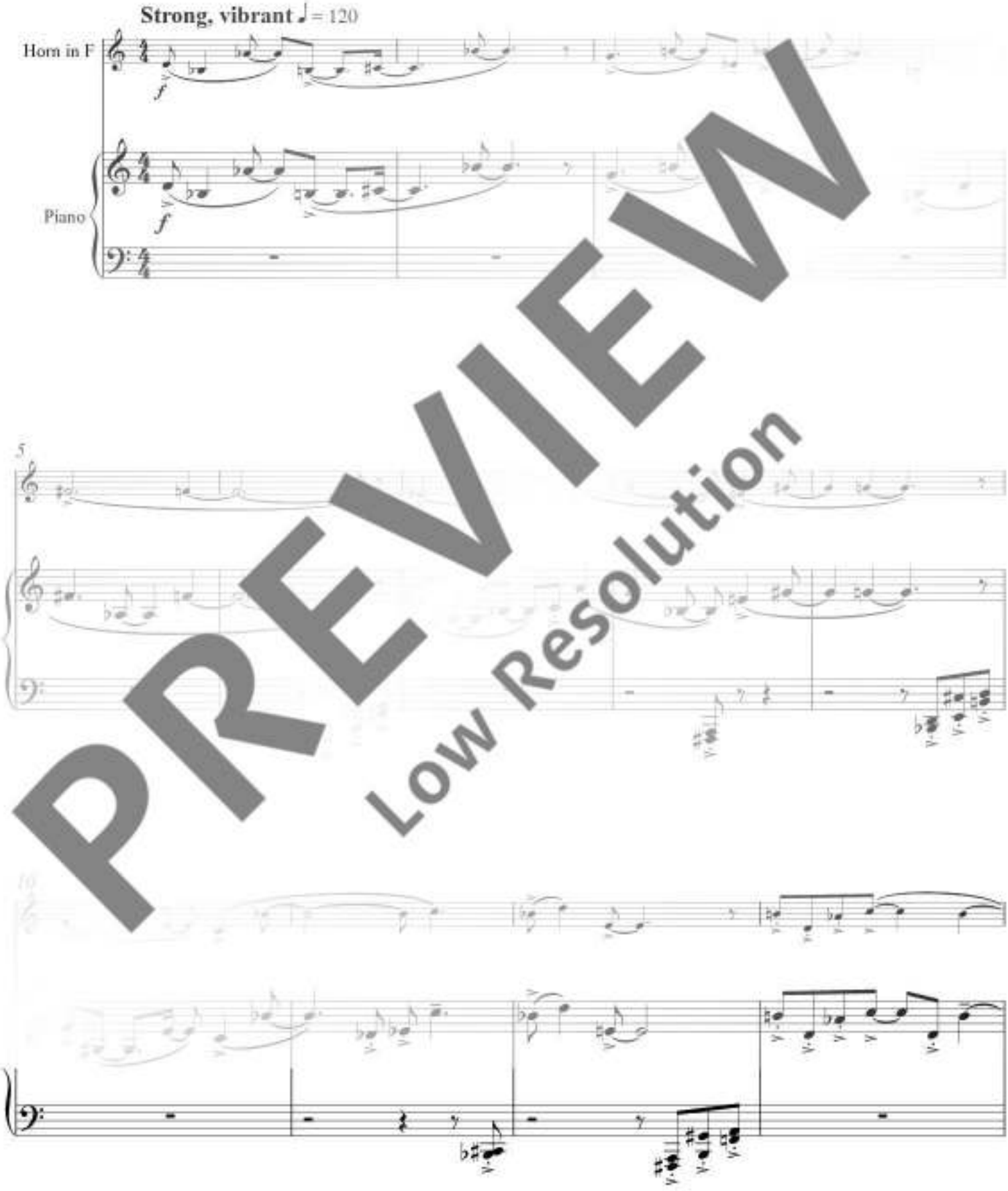
[illegible]

[illegible]

The performer is required to play natural harmonics at given points during the work, e.g. bars 17-18, 83-84, [illegible]. These natural horn passages must be played without correcting the intonation of given pitches.

All instruments are given at concert pitch.

John Casken
Serpents of Wisdom



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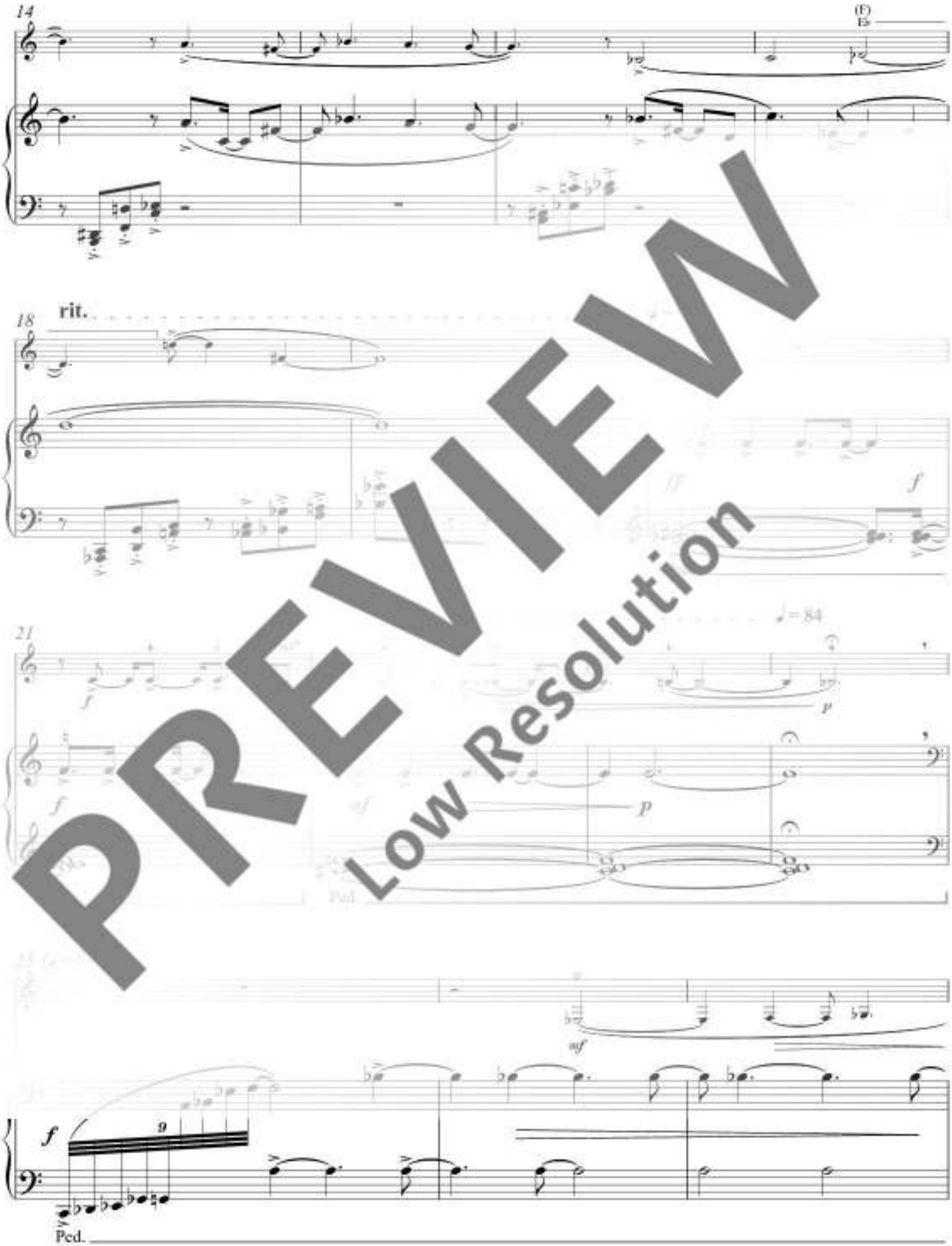

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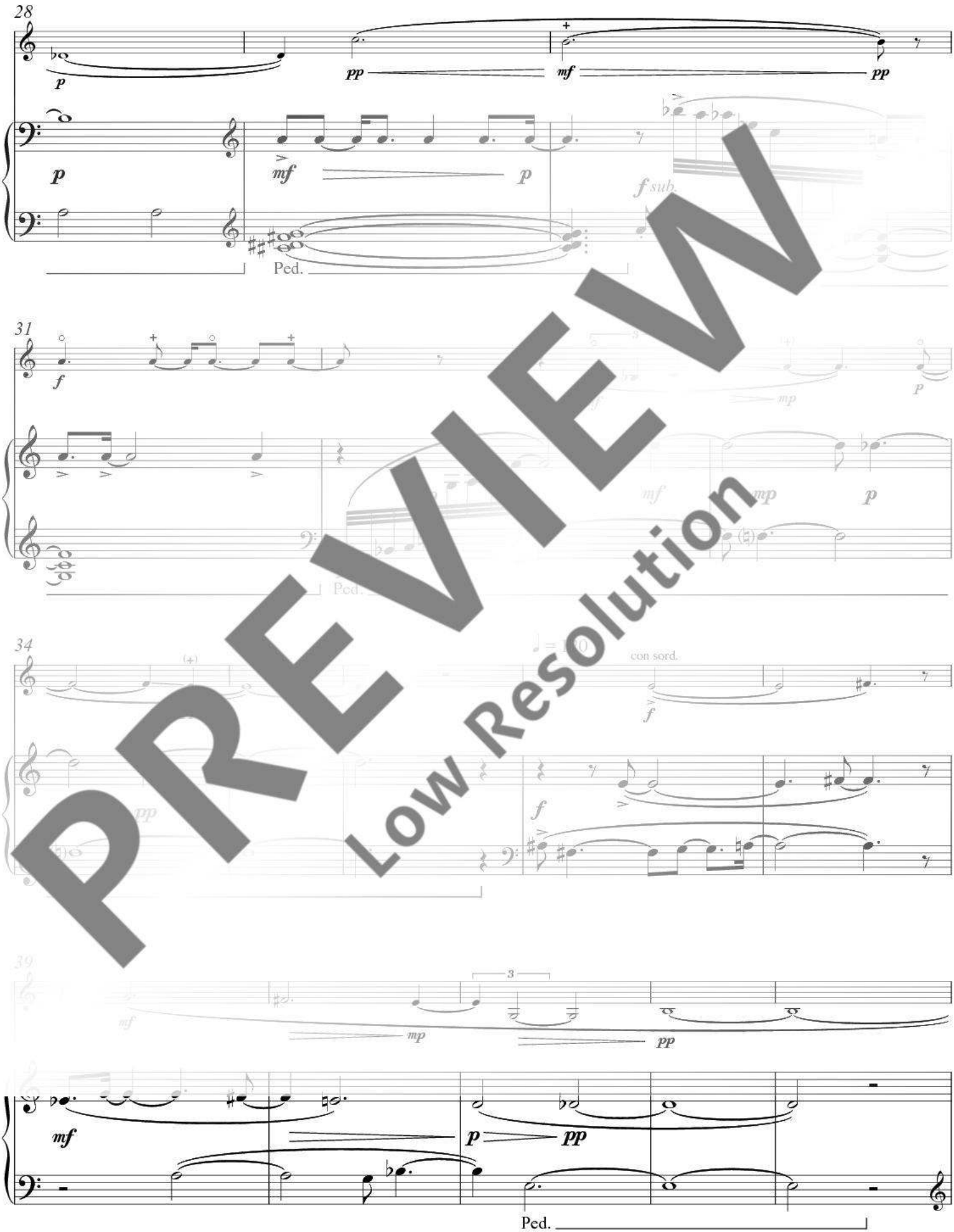
* (+) = half-stopped.



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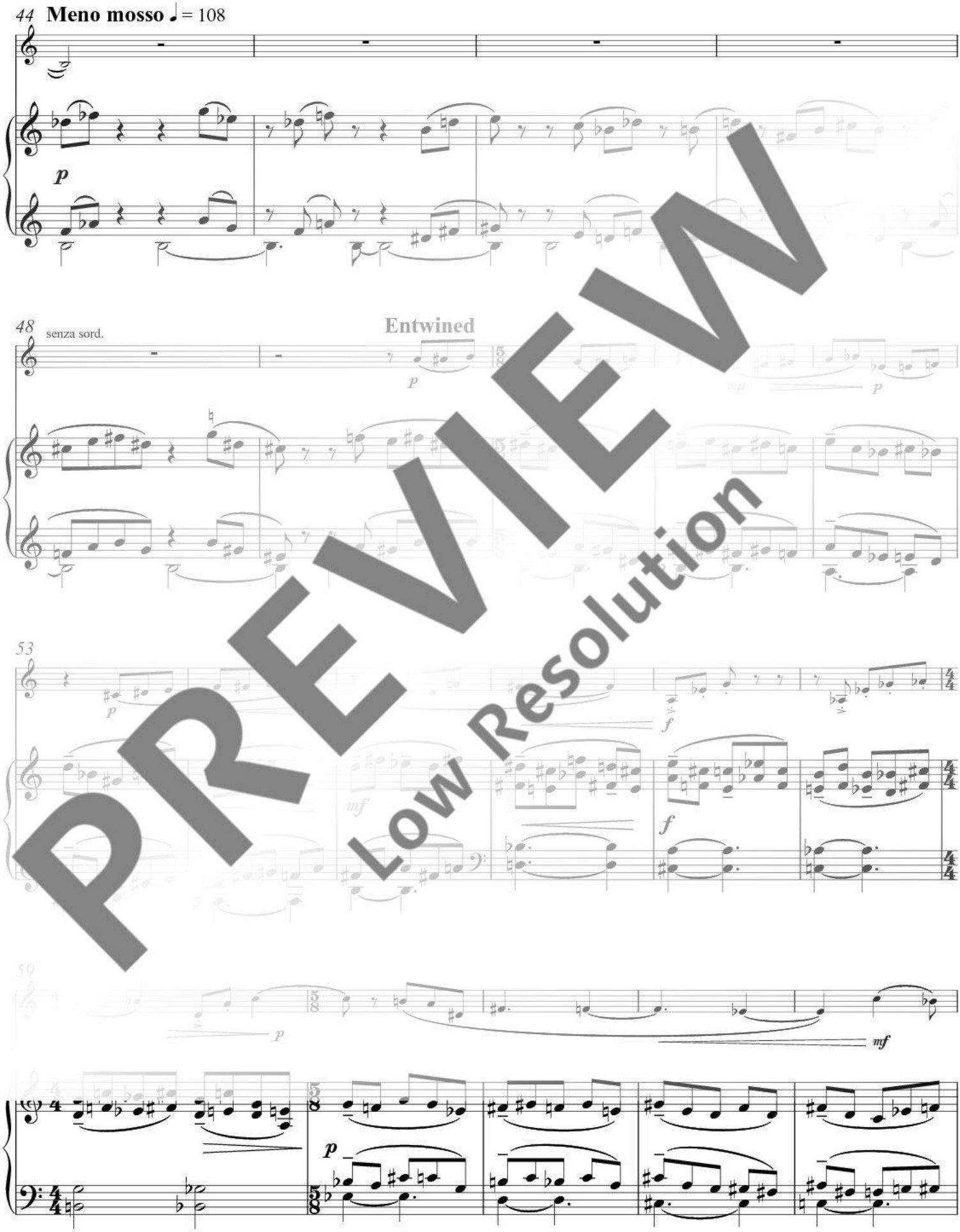

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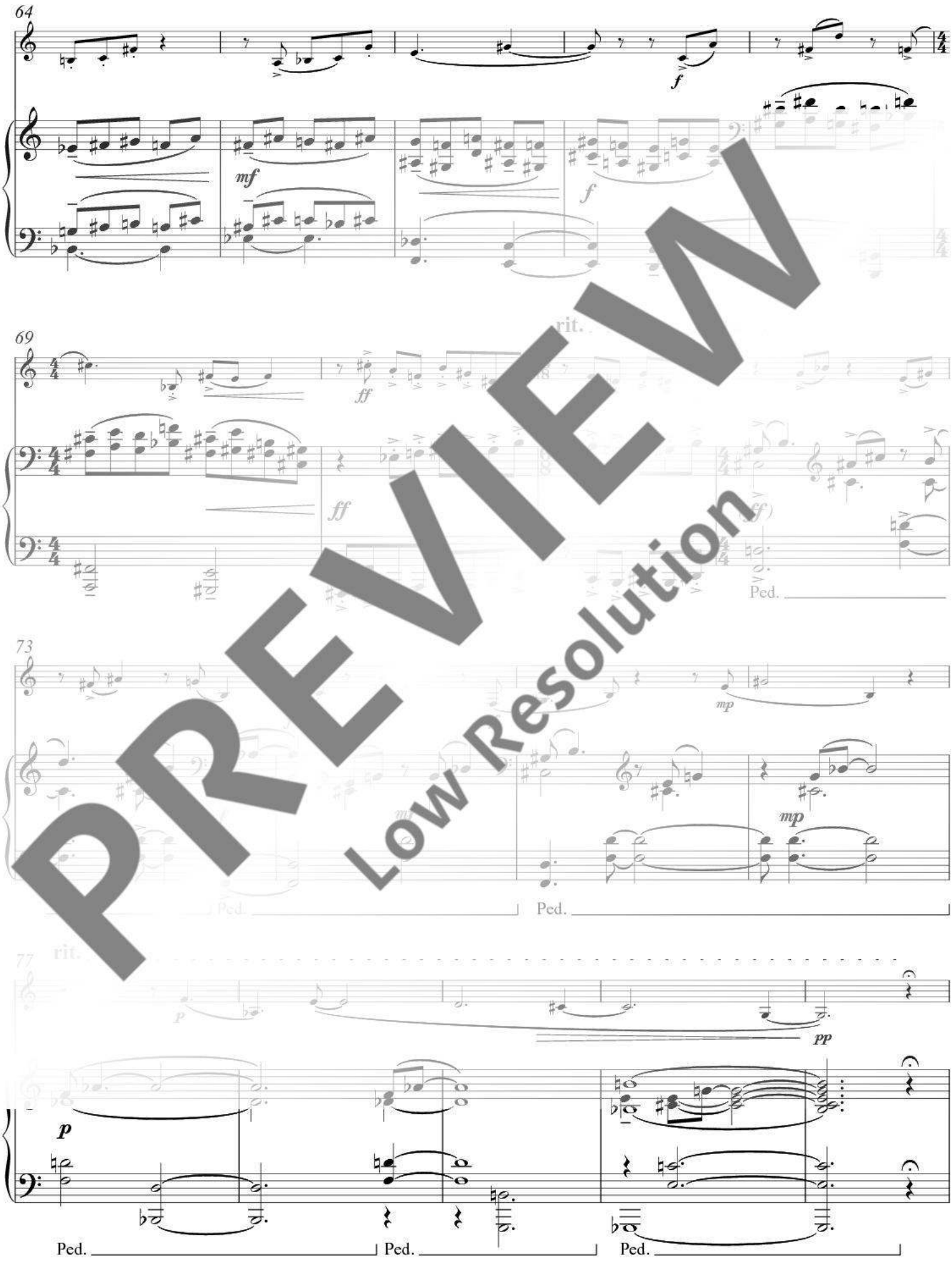

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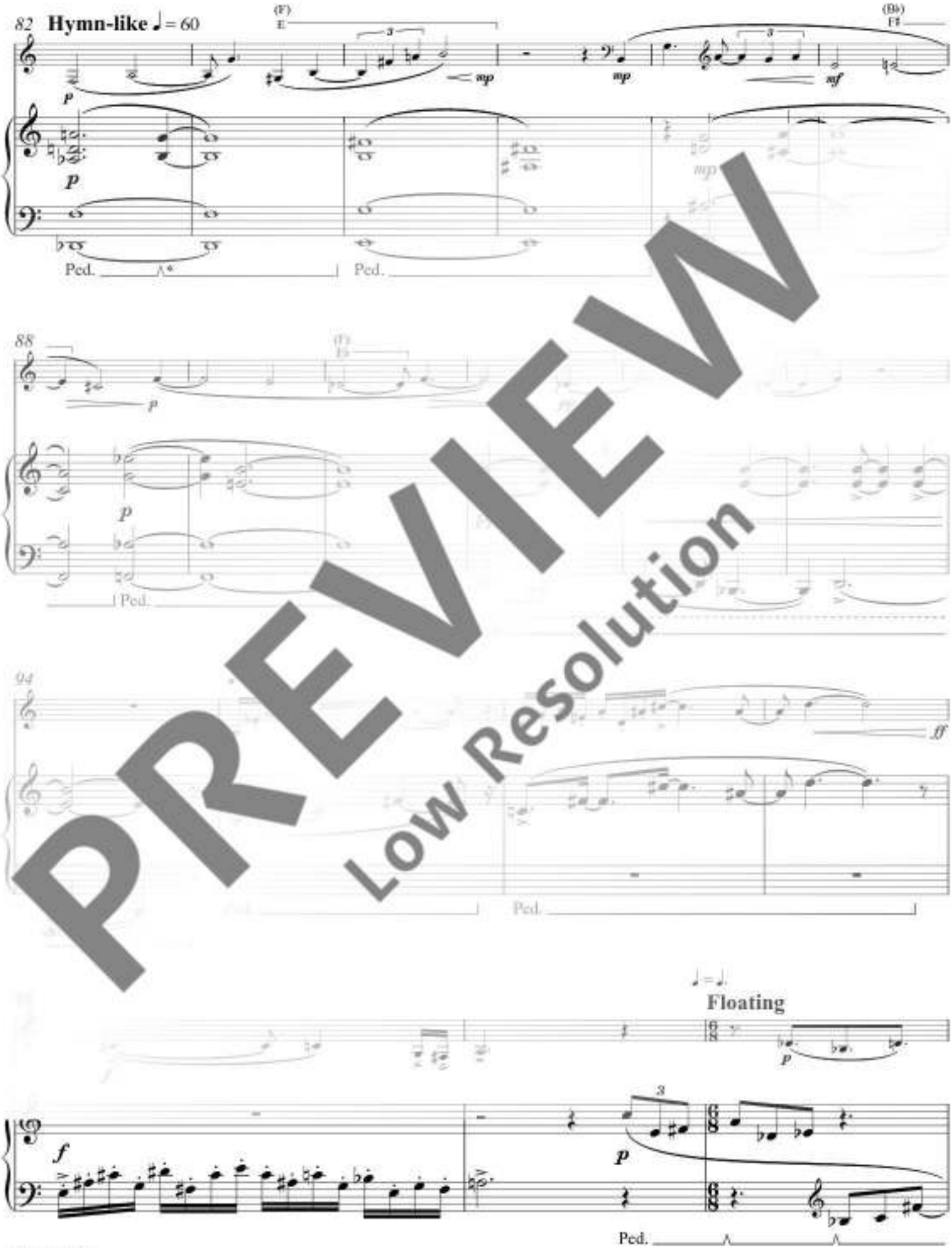

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