Piano
by D. H. Lawrence
(1918)

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato. The glam[illegible]
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast[illegible]
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like [illegible]

Composer's note
I began this piece after reading Lawrence's sp[illegible] poem [illegible]. The poem's depiction of a small boy sitting under the pian[illegible] "the bo[illegible]ings" – a wonder[illegible] phrase – had an enormously strong resonan[illegible] with my [illegible] of childhood, and [illegible] the first movement, I wanted to describe the s[illegible] a vanished ma[illegible]-tinted, past. What follows mi[illegible] seen to [illegible] forward from the [illegible] occasional fond backward glances, [illegible] "flood of [illegible]rance", and his weeping for the [illegible]. Althoug[illegible] wanted to [illegible] a more hopeful and joyous world [illegible] one perhaps [illegible] past rather [illegible] in it.

Postscript
After the pie[illegible] performed [illegible] Paul Mann drew my attention to the earlier v[illegible] which [illegible] justify my decision to end the [illegible] with "the great black piano" racing [illegible]

Jon Lord

PREVIEW
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The Piano

Somewhere beneath that piano's superb sleek black
Must hide my mother's piano, little and brown with the back
That stood close to the wall, and the front's faded silk, both torn
And the keys with little hollows, that my mother's fingers had worn.

Softly, in the shadows, a woman is singing to me
Quietly, through the years I have crept back to see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the shaking strings
Pressing the little poised feet of the mother who smiles as she sings
The full throated woman has chosen a winning, living song
And surely the heart that is in me must belong
To the old Sunday evenings, when darkness wandered outside
And hymns gleamed on our warm lips, as we watched [illegible]

Or this is my sister at home in the old front roo[illegible]
Singing love's first surprised gladness, alone in th[illegible]
She will start when she sees me, and blushing, spr[illegible]
To cover my mouth's raillery, till I'm bo[illegible]

A woman is singing me a wild Hu[illegible]
And her arms, and her bosom and [illegible]
And the great black piano is clamou[illegible]
And the tunes of the past are devour[illegible]

PREVIEW
Low Resolution

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To Paul Mann, with great affection and gratitude

Boom of the Tingling Strings

for piano and orchestra

I

Adagio assai (♩ = 48)

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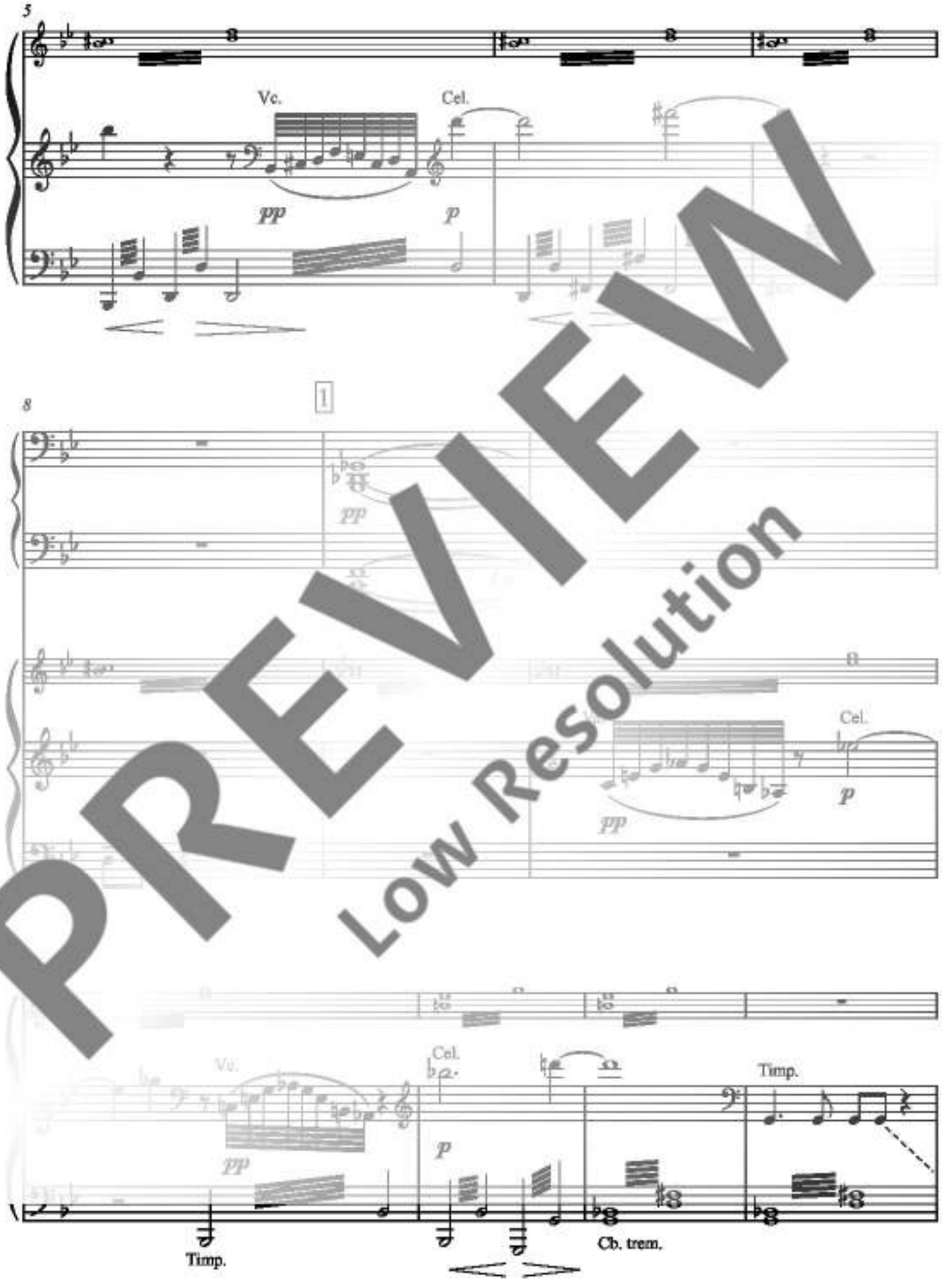

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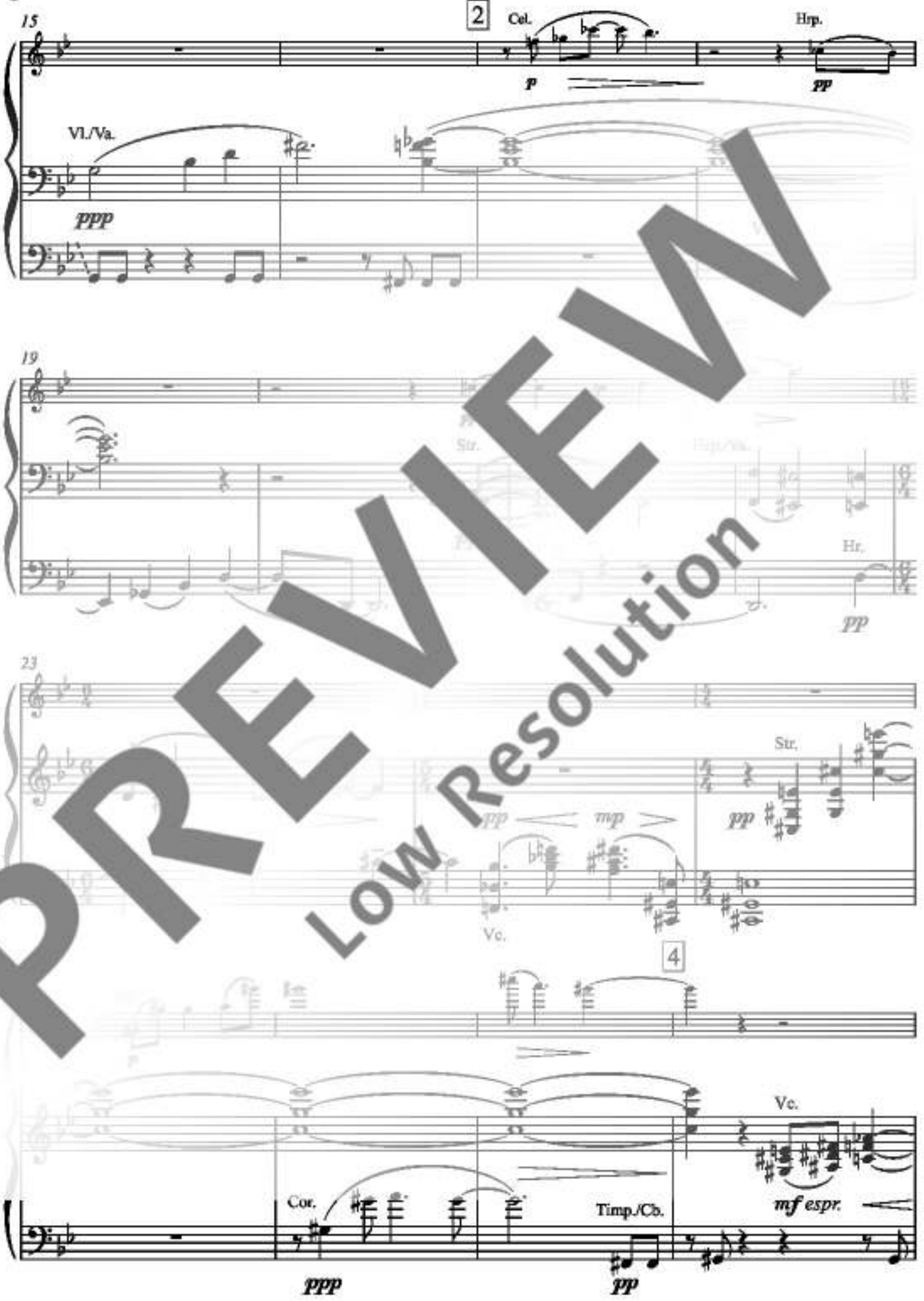

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