STANLEY M. HOFFMAN

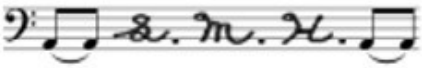
Two Scenes from the Lodz Ghetto

1. At the Clothing Department

2. To Get a Ration

Words by

ABRAHAM KOPLOWICZ



Stanley M. Hoffman

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At the Clothing Department

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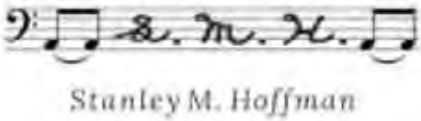

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At the Clothing Department *(W odzieżowym, literally "In the Clothing Department")*

(A Scene from the Lodz Ghetto)

Cast of Characters:

Lady (Soprano)
Old Biddy (Mezzo-Soprano or Alto)
Police Officer (Baritone)
Gentleman (Tenor)
Boy (Boy Soprano)
Doorkeeper (Bass)
The Queue (can be prerecorded crowd noise)

Lady *(coming towards the Old Biddy who is standing in the front)*
What is this line for, my old dear?

Old Biddy
Clothing. I've been standing here since the morning!

Lady
And what can one get here?

Old Biddy
Surely not ermine!

Lady
But what? Please, tell me.

Police Officer *(coming forward)*
Do you want to get one in the head?!

Old Biddy
Just return to the queue!

Lady
Just look, how enraged he is! *(to the Old Biddy)*
I'm not afraid of you at all. *(to the Police Officer)*

Police Officer (*with contempt*)
To the queue!
(he raises his baton threateningly)

Lady *(frightened)*
I'm standing. I'm standing . . .
(she goes to the end of the queue)

Lady *(to the Old Gentleman who is standing in front of her)*
And what are you standing here for, sir?

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Gentleman

Me? I need a suit.
I will also take some “drawers,”
stockings, and a dress for my wife,
for her dress is torn. *(looking sad for a moment)*
And I will take leggings for the child . . .

Lady *(surprised)*

And will they give you such a collection?

Gentleman *(enigmatically)*

I have protection here.

Lady *(looking at her watch)*

It’s eight o’clock already and they are not opening.

Gentleman

Eight? They are letting us in at nine.

Lady

And there are already a couple hundred people.

Gentleman

Plenty of socks arrived!

Lady

How are things in the town, sir?
No rations? . . .

Gentleman *(impatiently)*

Idle talk . . .

Lady *(ruminating)*

No rations? . . . No rations? . . .
Apparently, a kilogram per head of pig fat arrived at the council.
And butter! Nobody can measure it!

Gentleman

Who is going to believe such rubbish?

Lady *(annoyed)*

I’ve heard from a washerwoman . . .

Gentleman *(self-assured)*

My good lady, those are just canards!
I do not believe what people are saying!

Boy *(running up to the protagonists)*

Ladies and gentlemen, you’re standing here is in vain.
Our department is closed today.
That was the order from the council.

(The Boy runs away.)
(The Queue: shouts and protests; *the curtain gradually falls.)*

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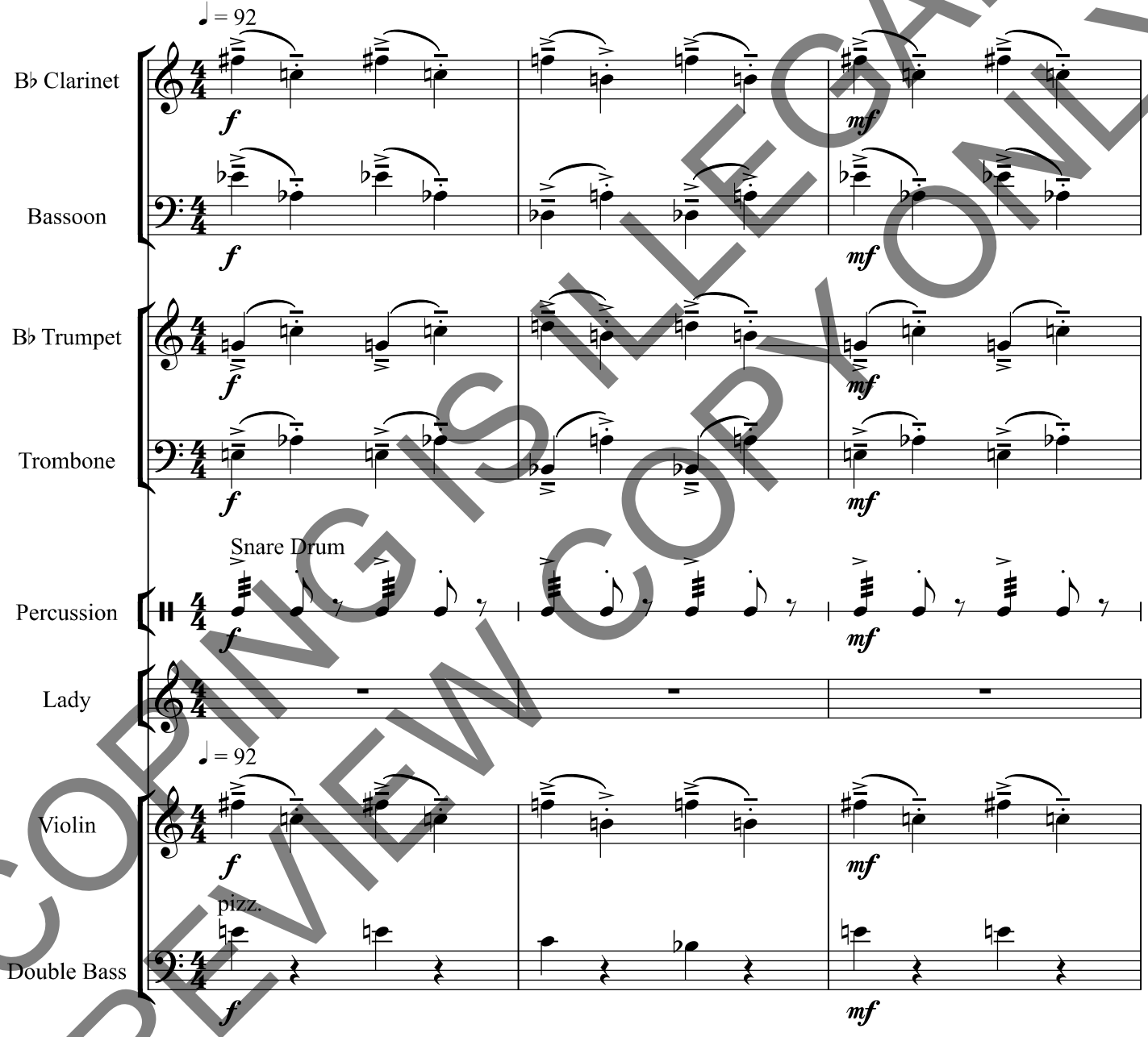
[6] At the Clothing Department *(W odzieżowym)*

Score in C

(A Scene from the Lodz Ghetto)

Stanley M. Hoffman (BMI)

Words by Abraham ("Abramek") Koplowicz
(b. 1930, Lodz, Poland, d. 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau)
Translation by Sarah Lawson and Małgorzata Koraszewska
Adapted by Stanley M. Hoffman



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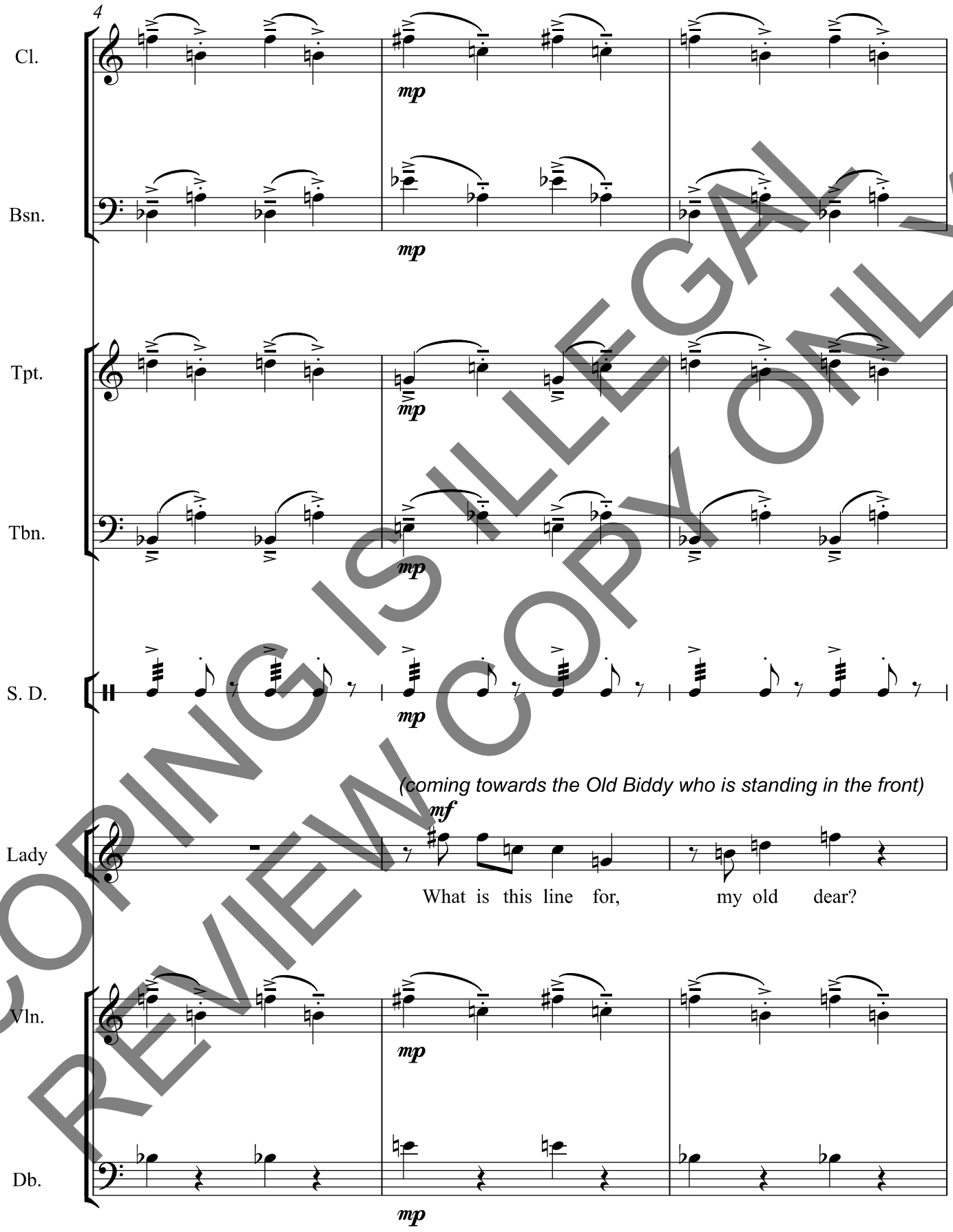

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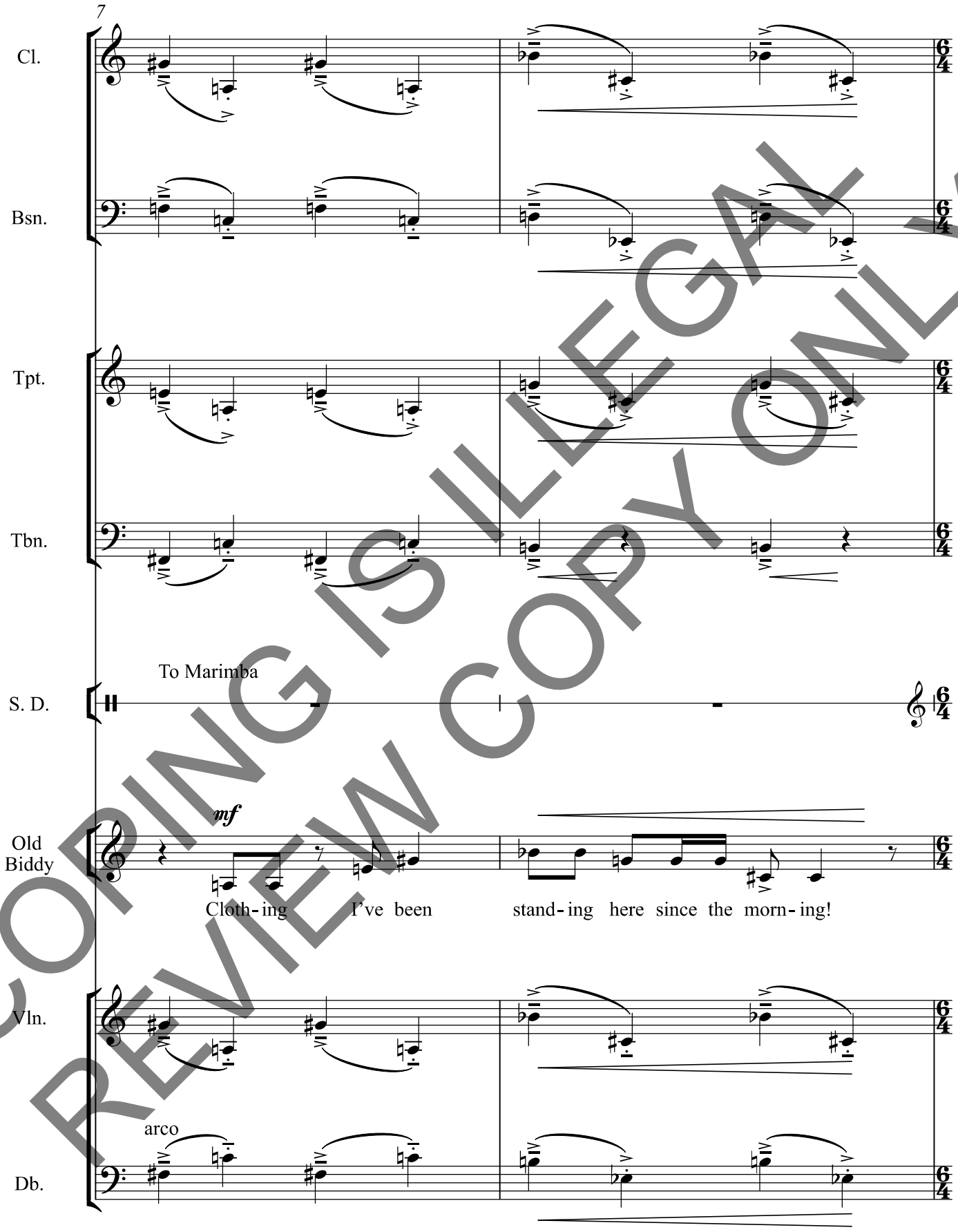

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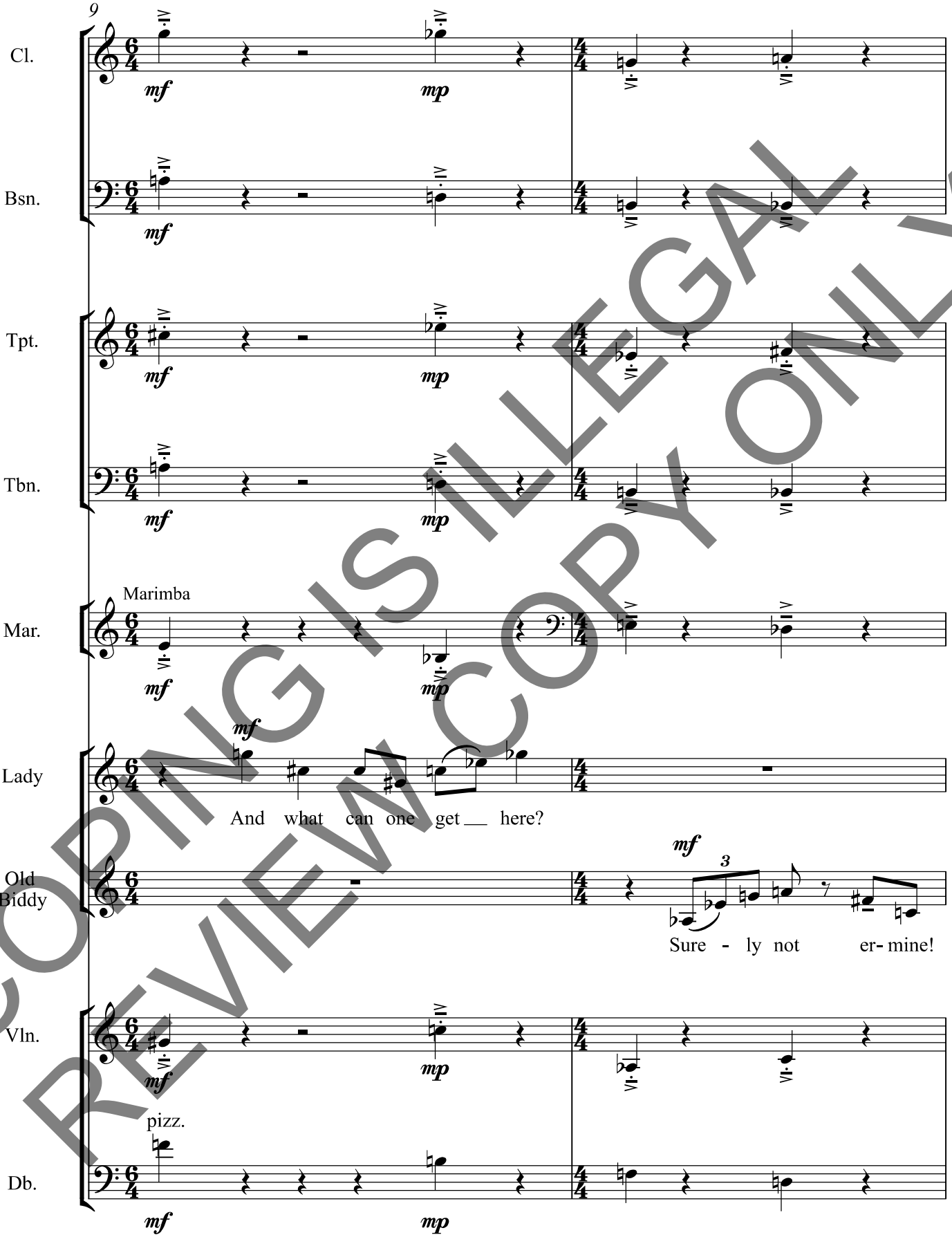

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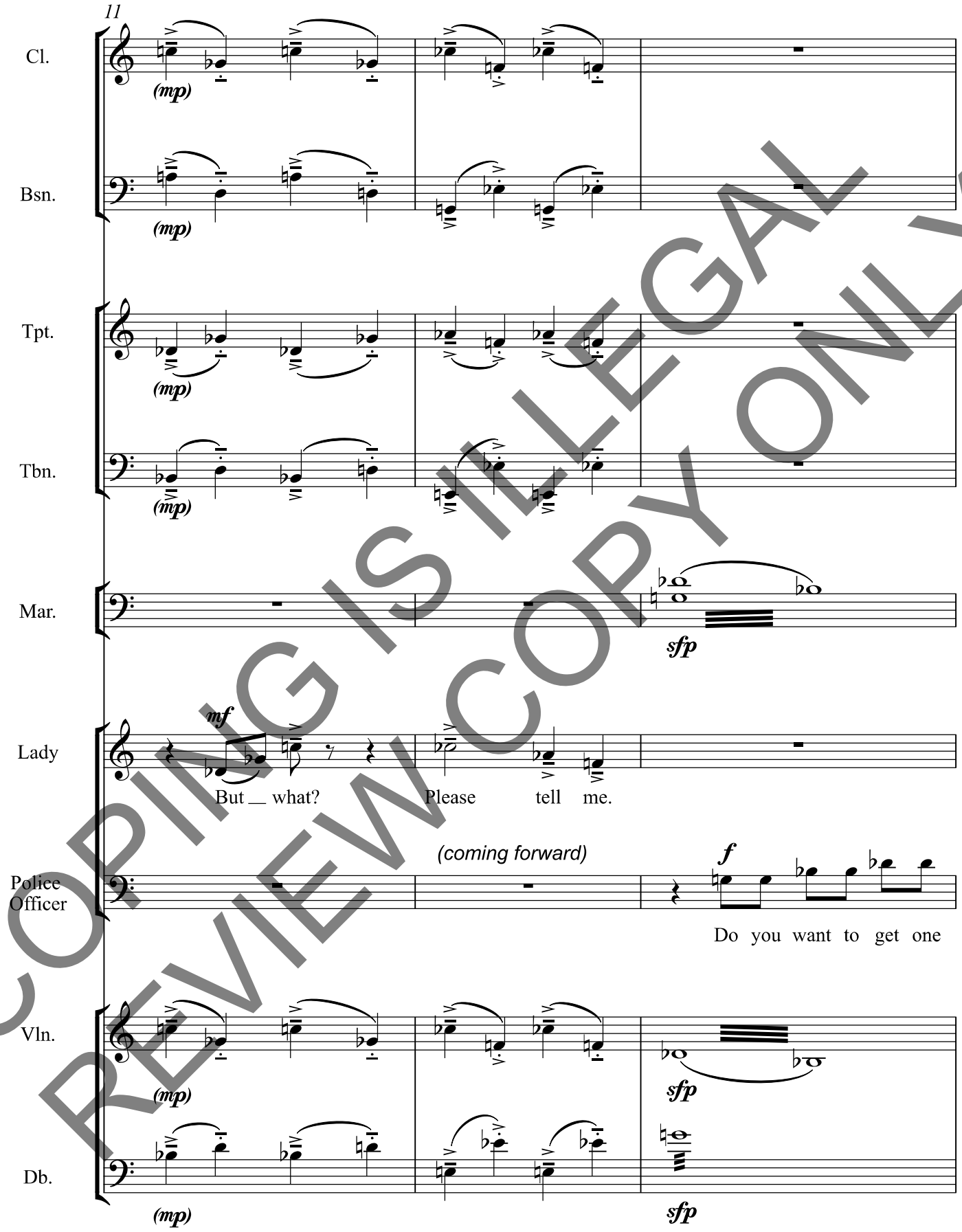

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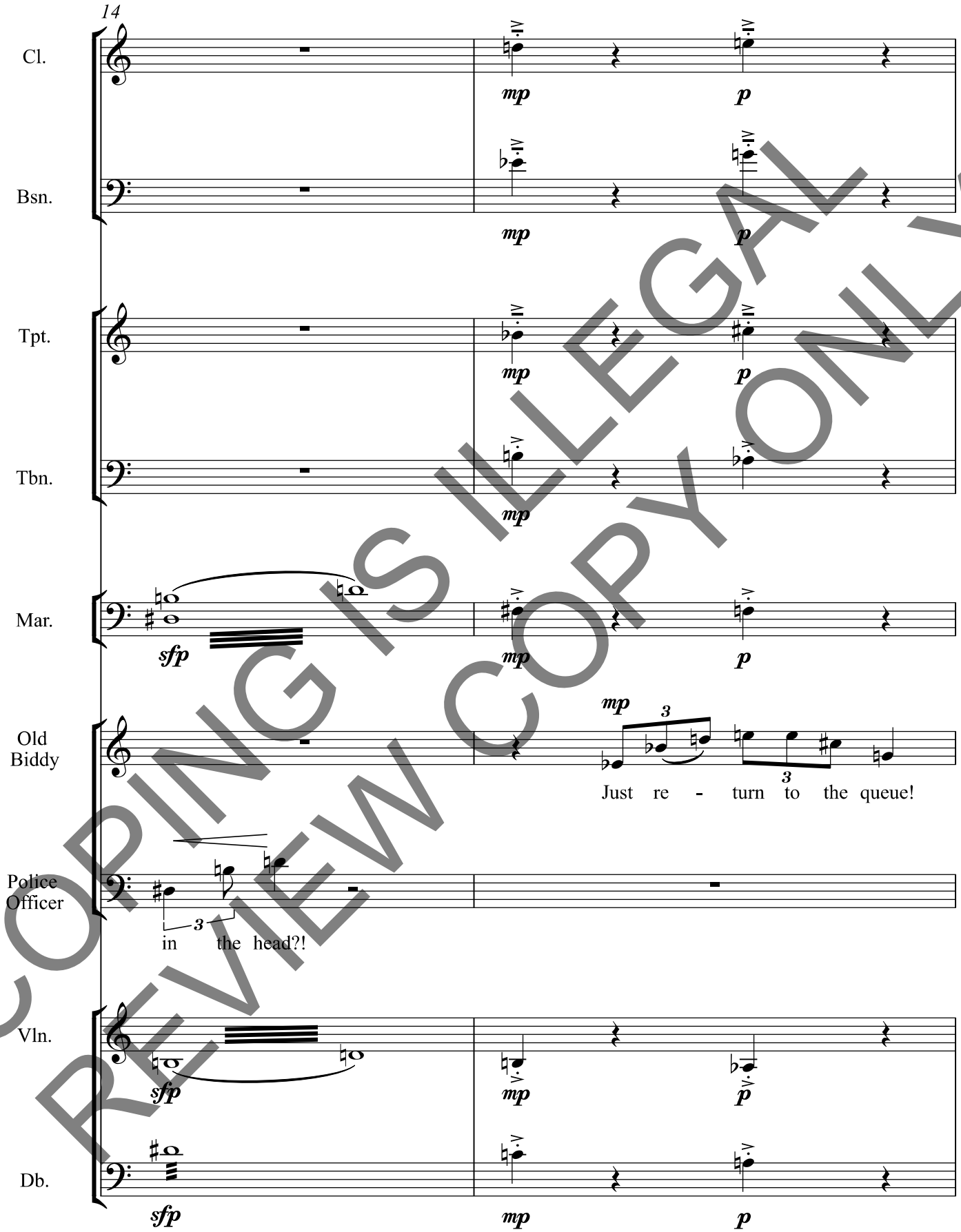

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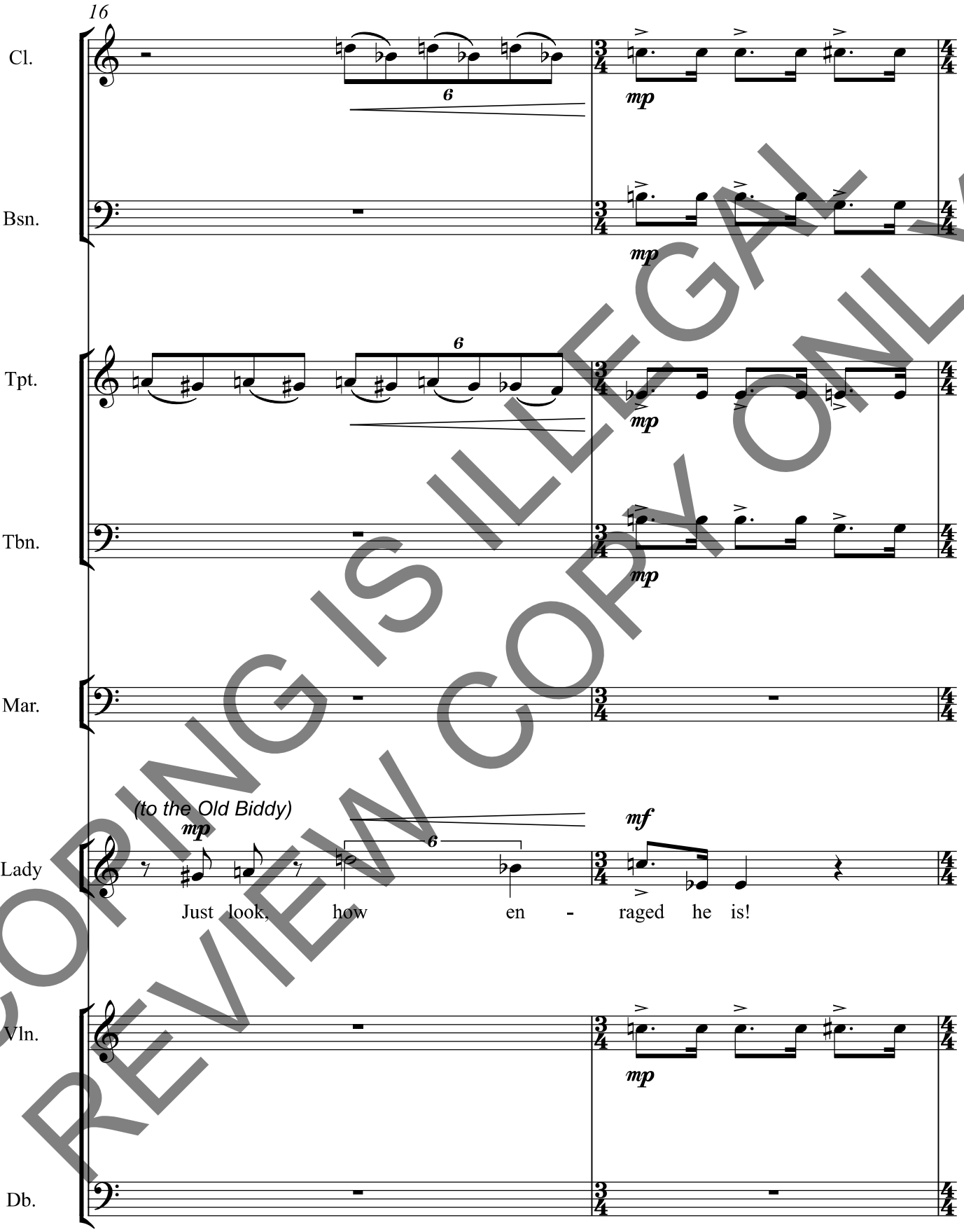

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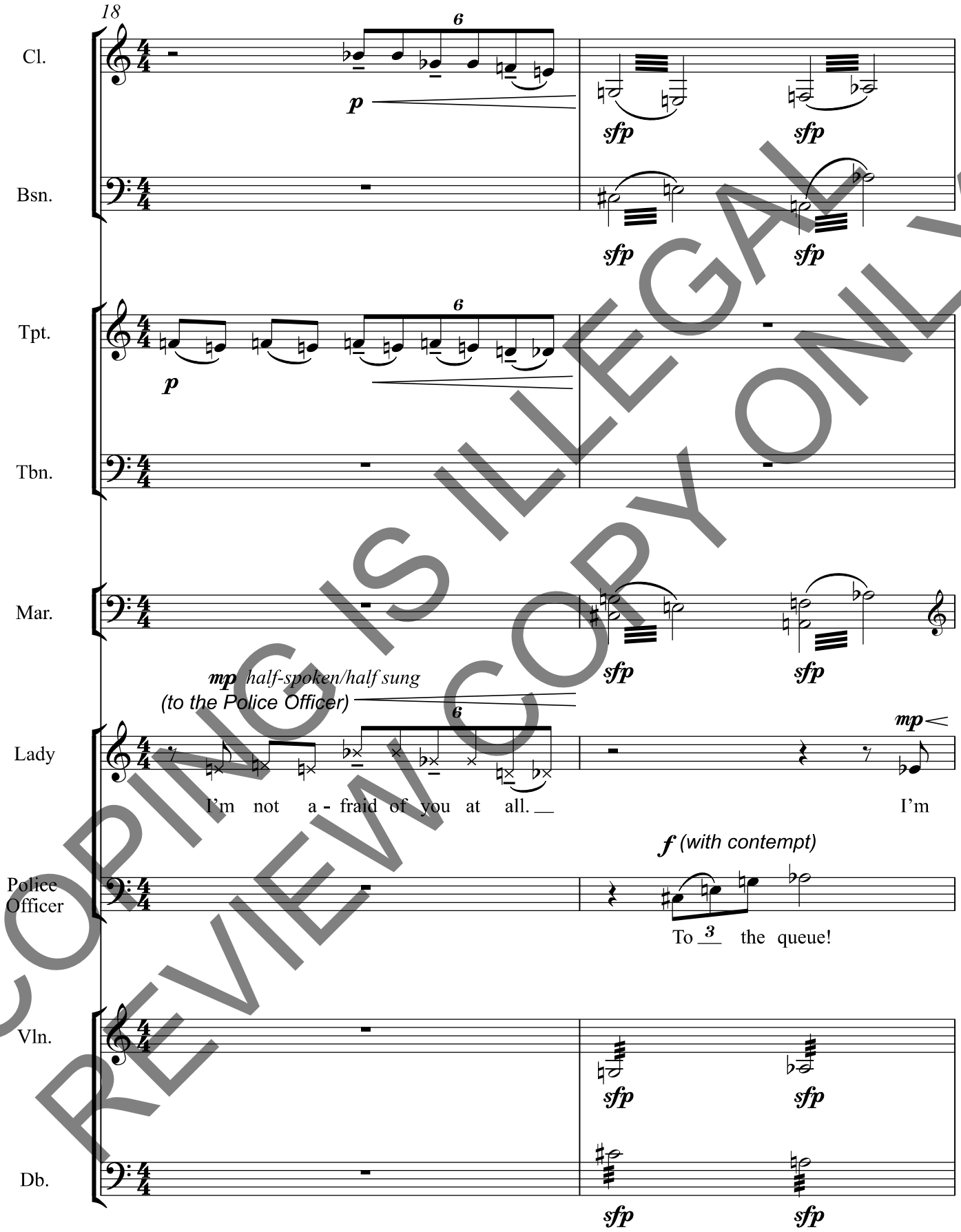

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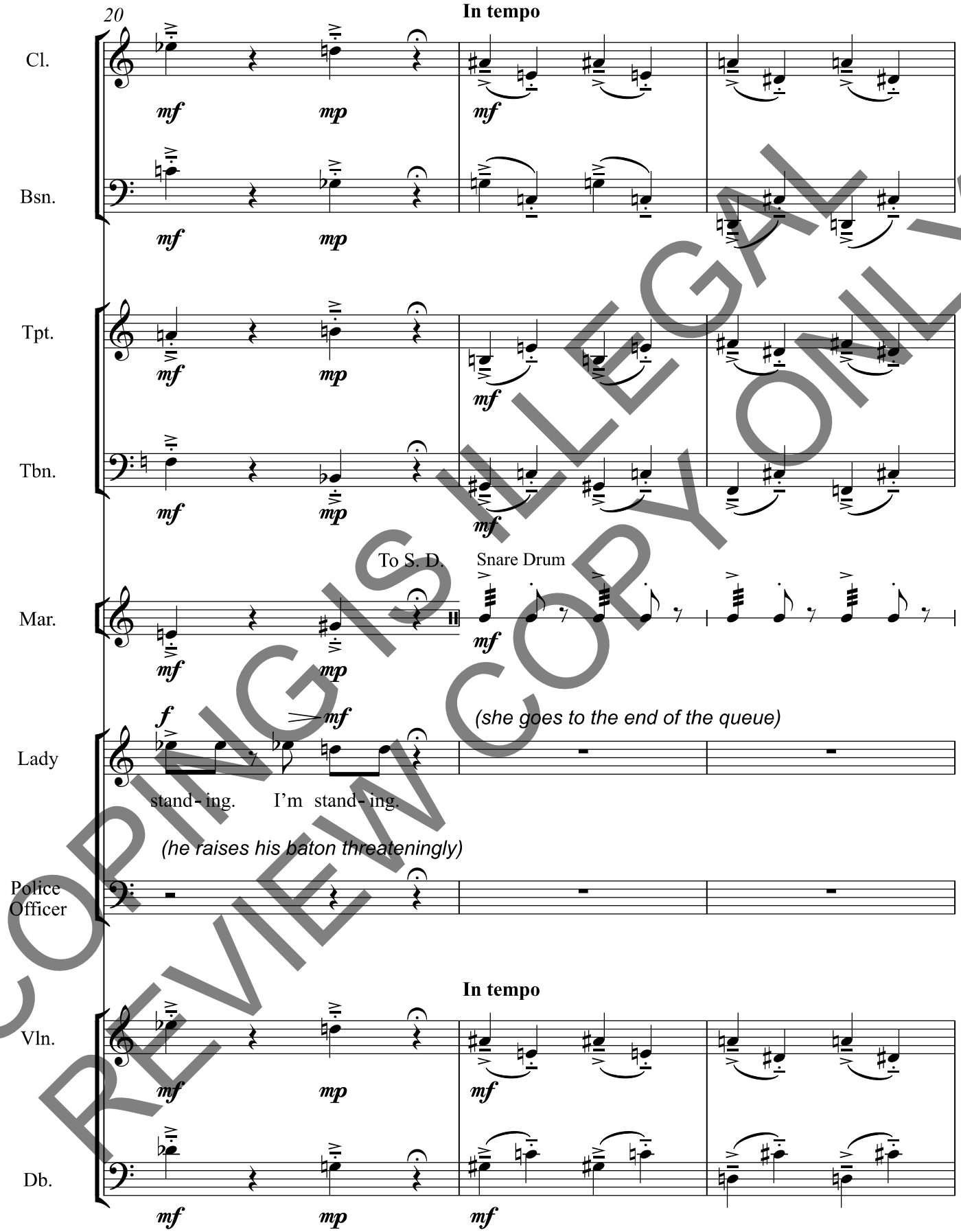

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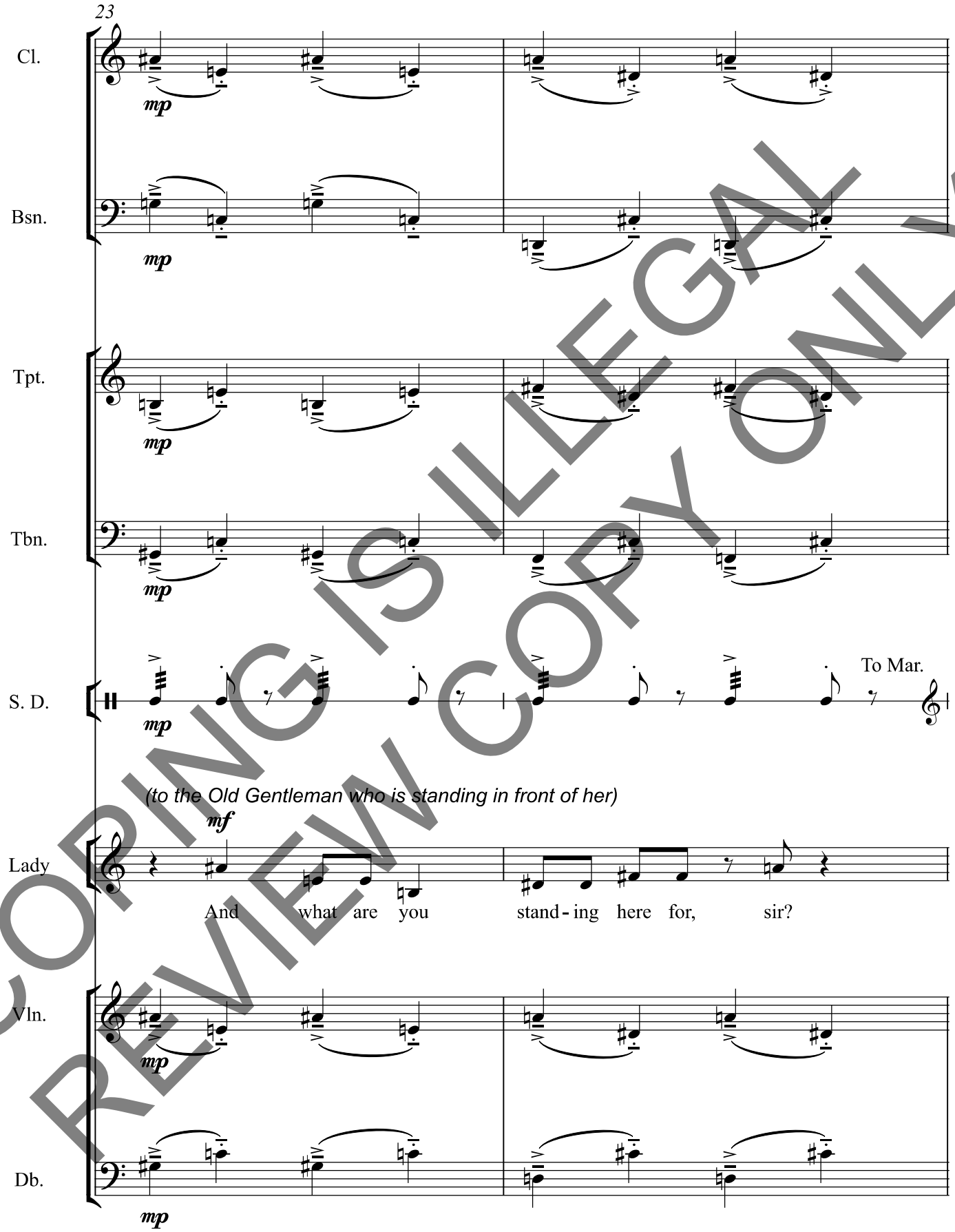

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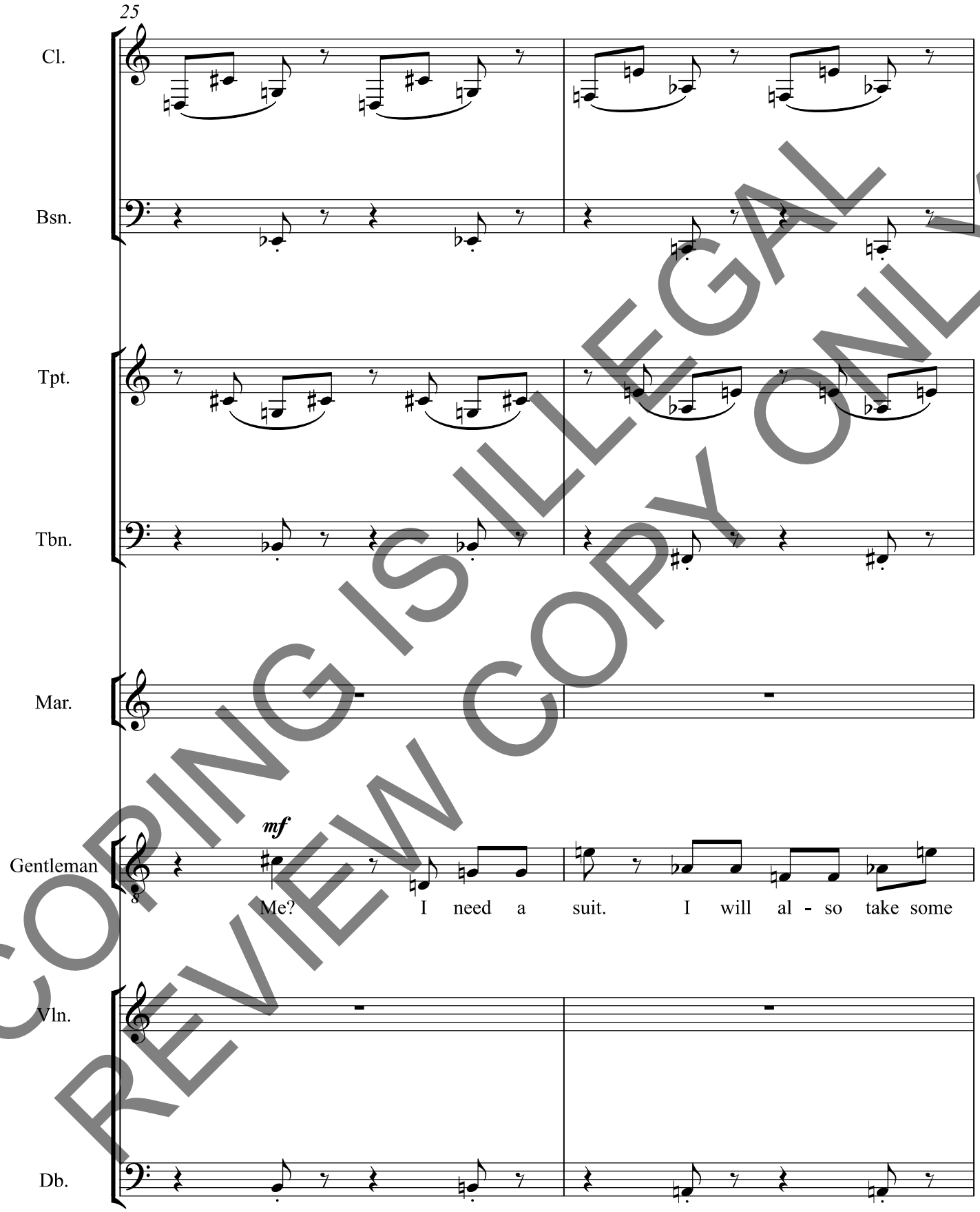

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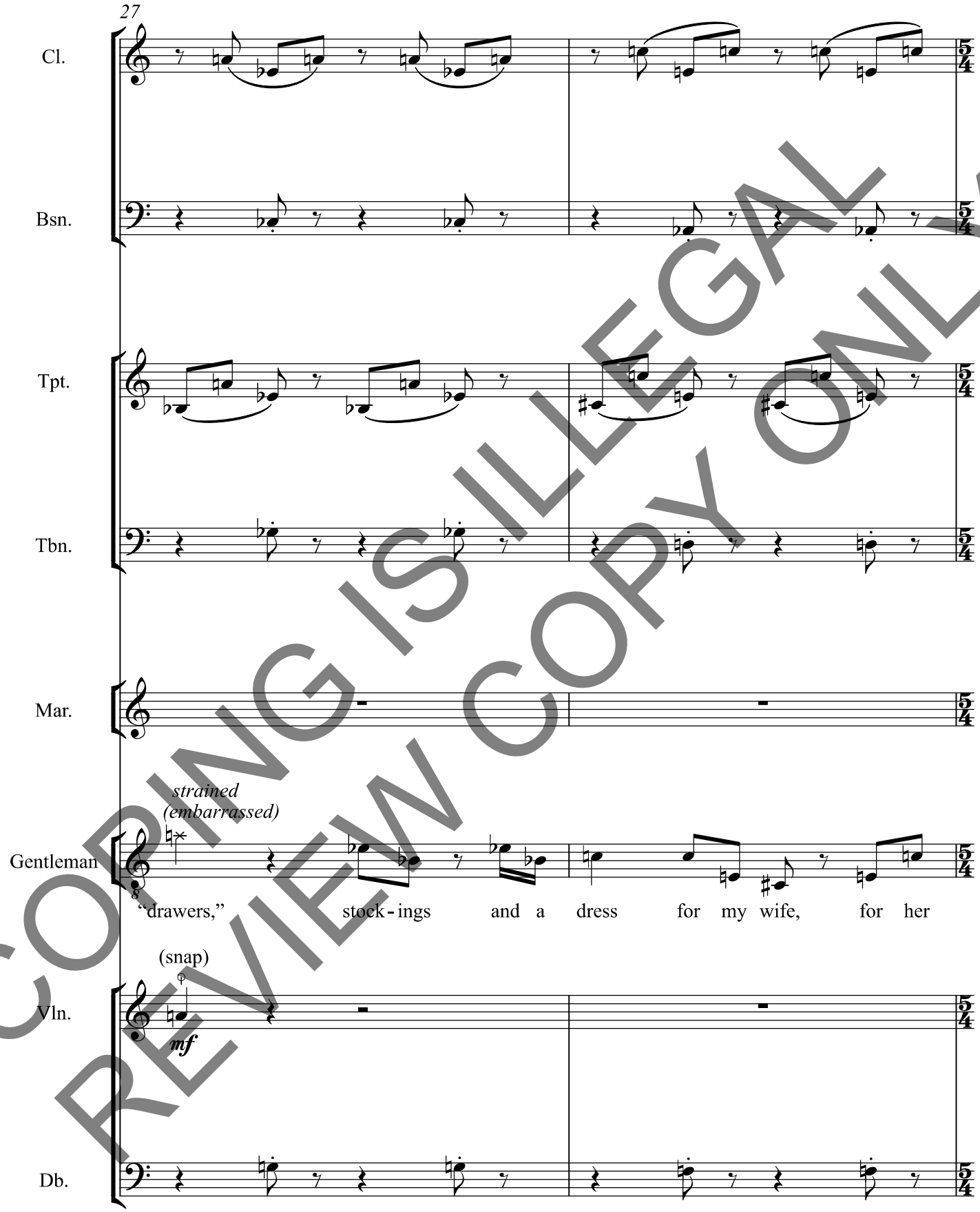

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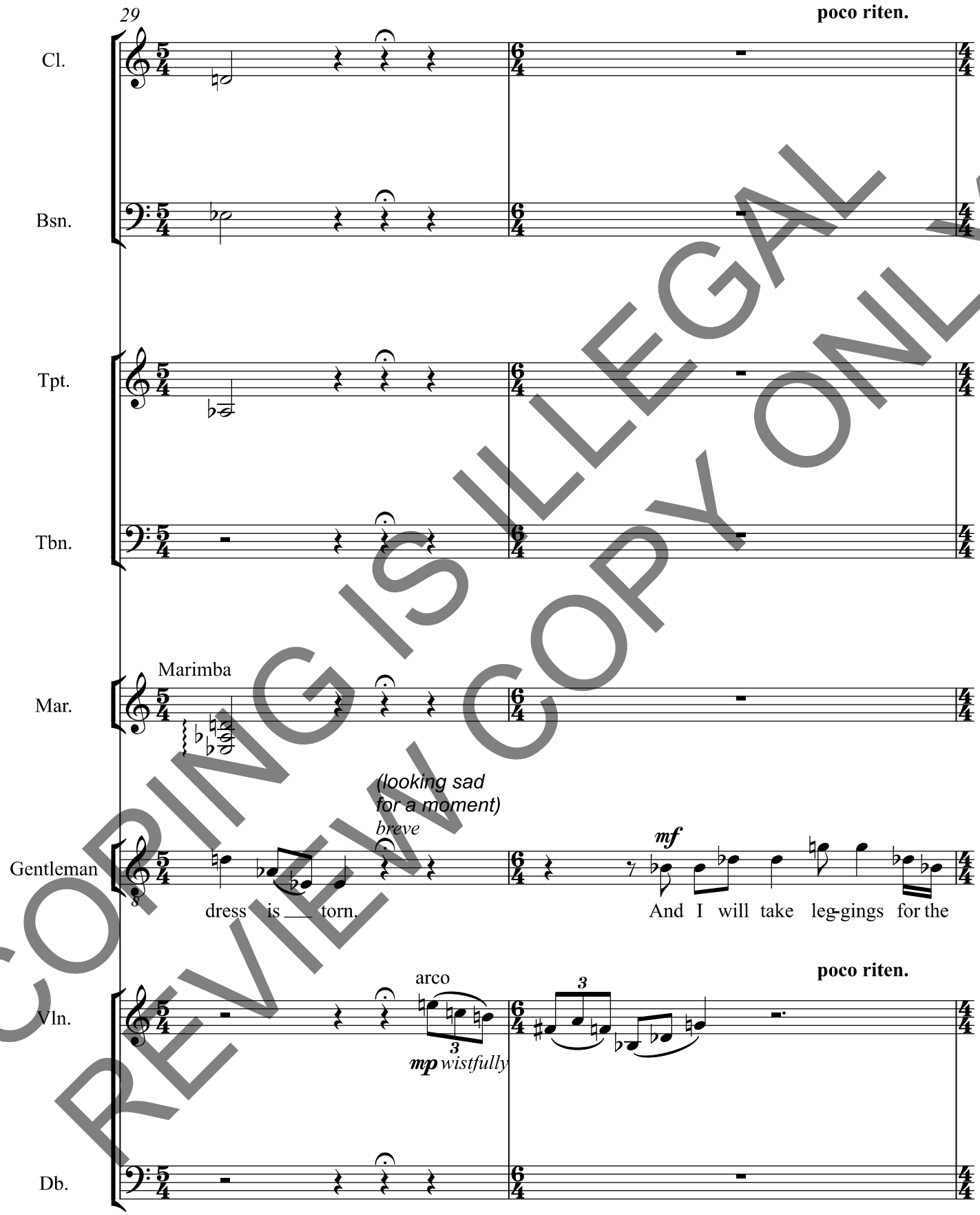

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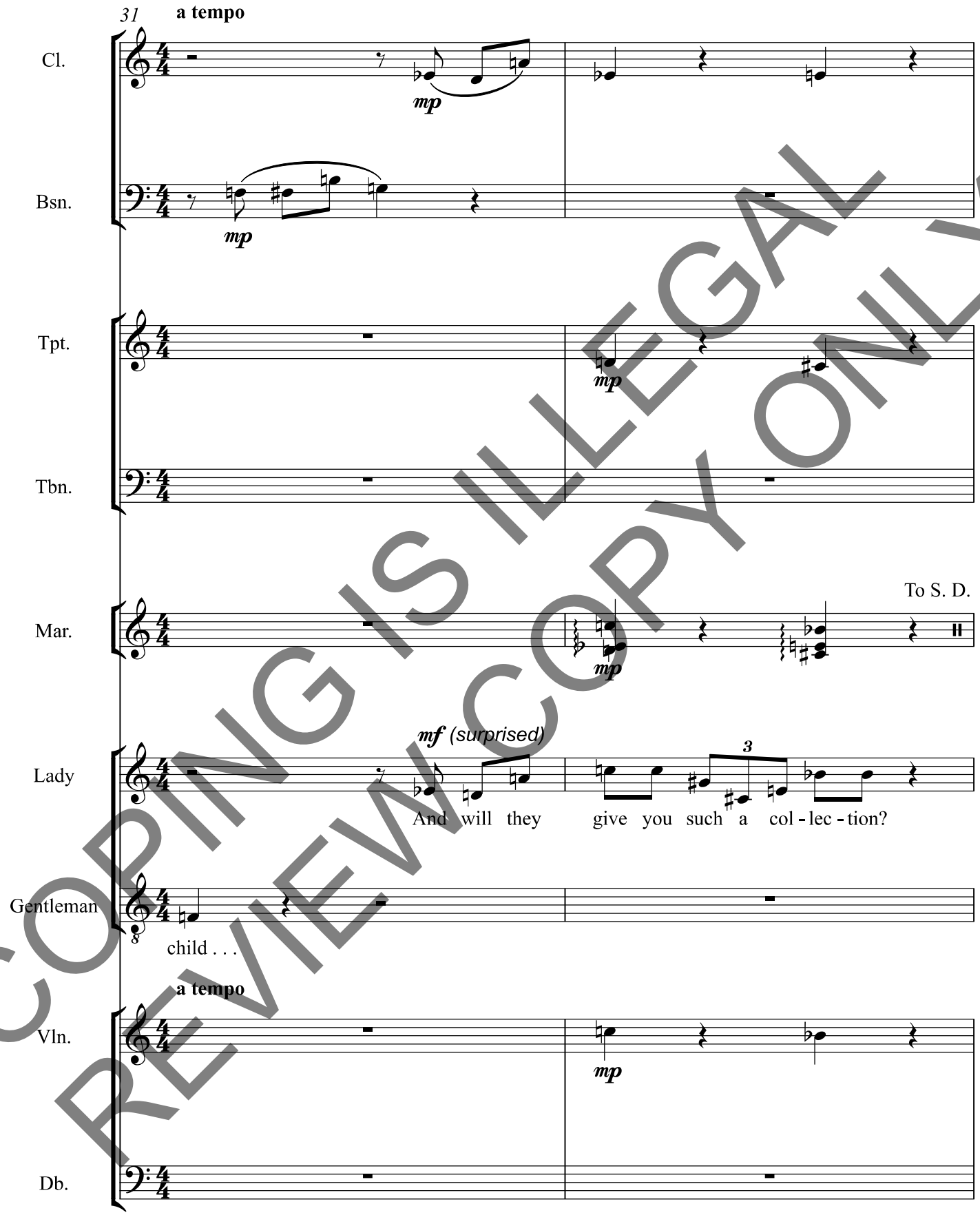

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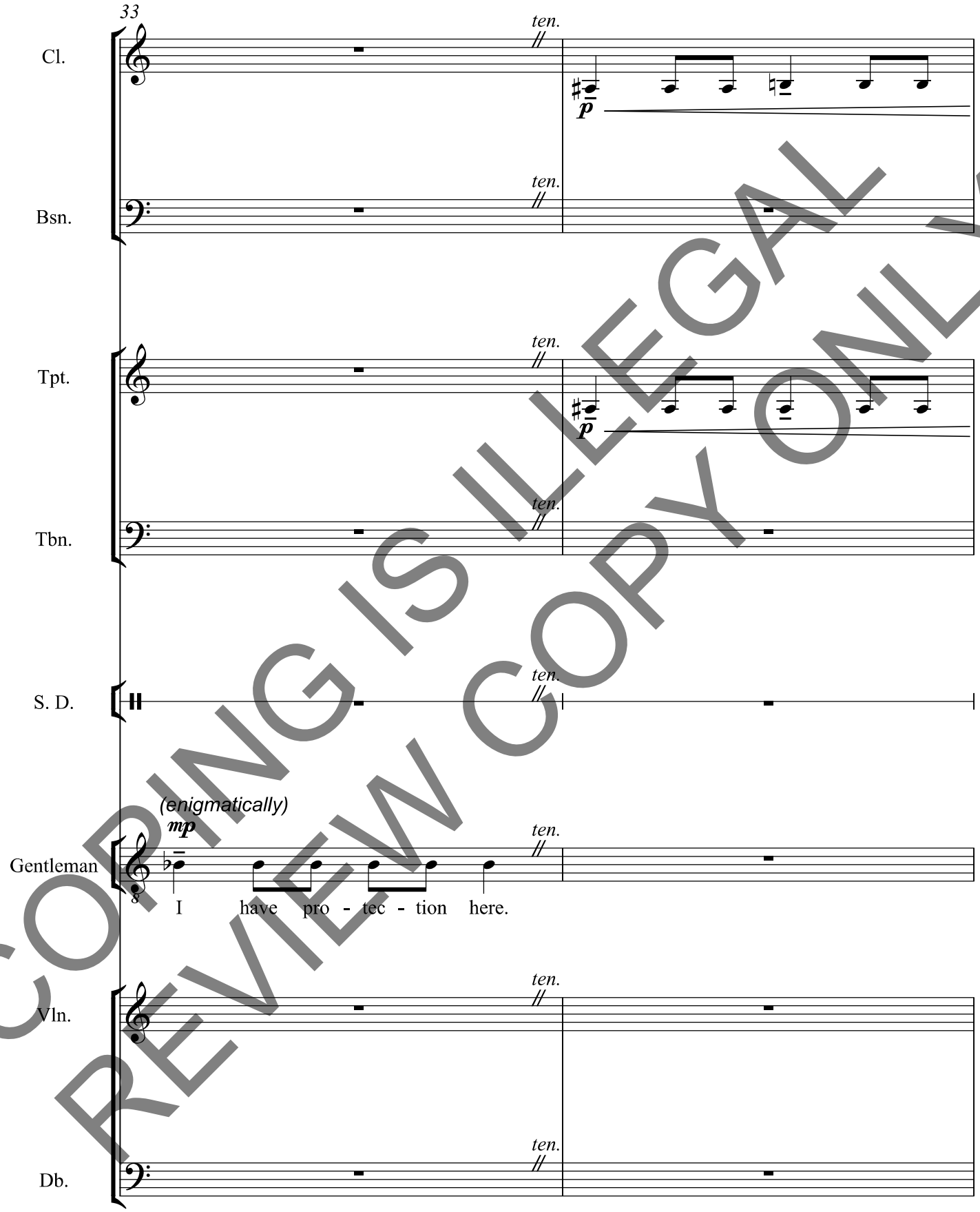

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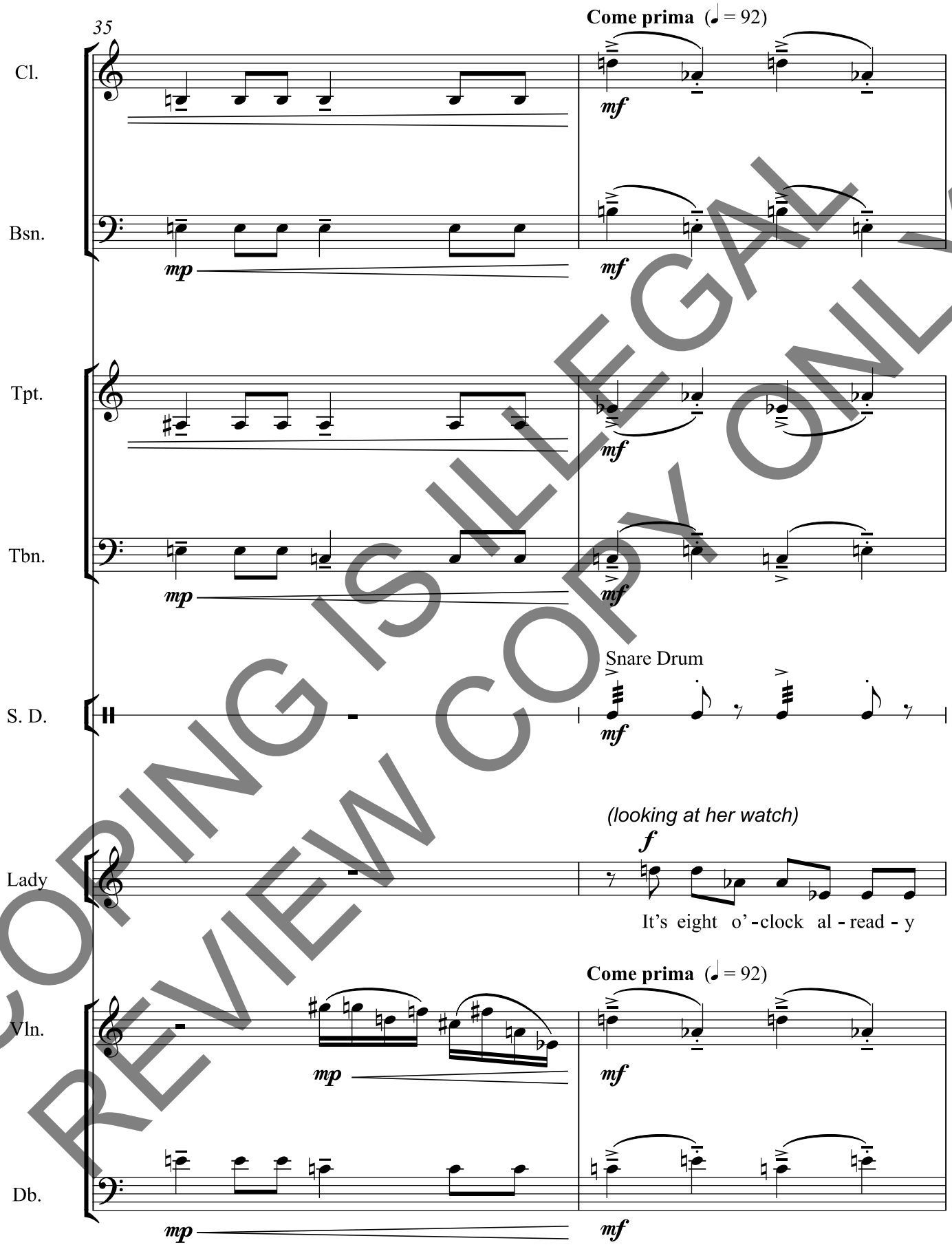

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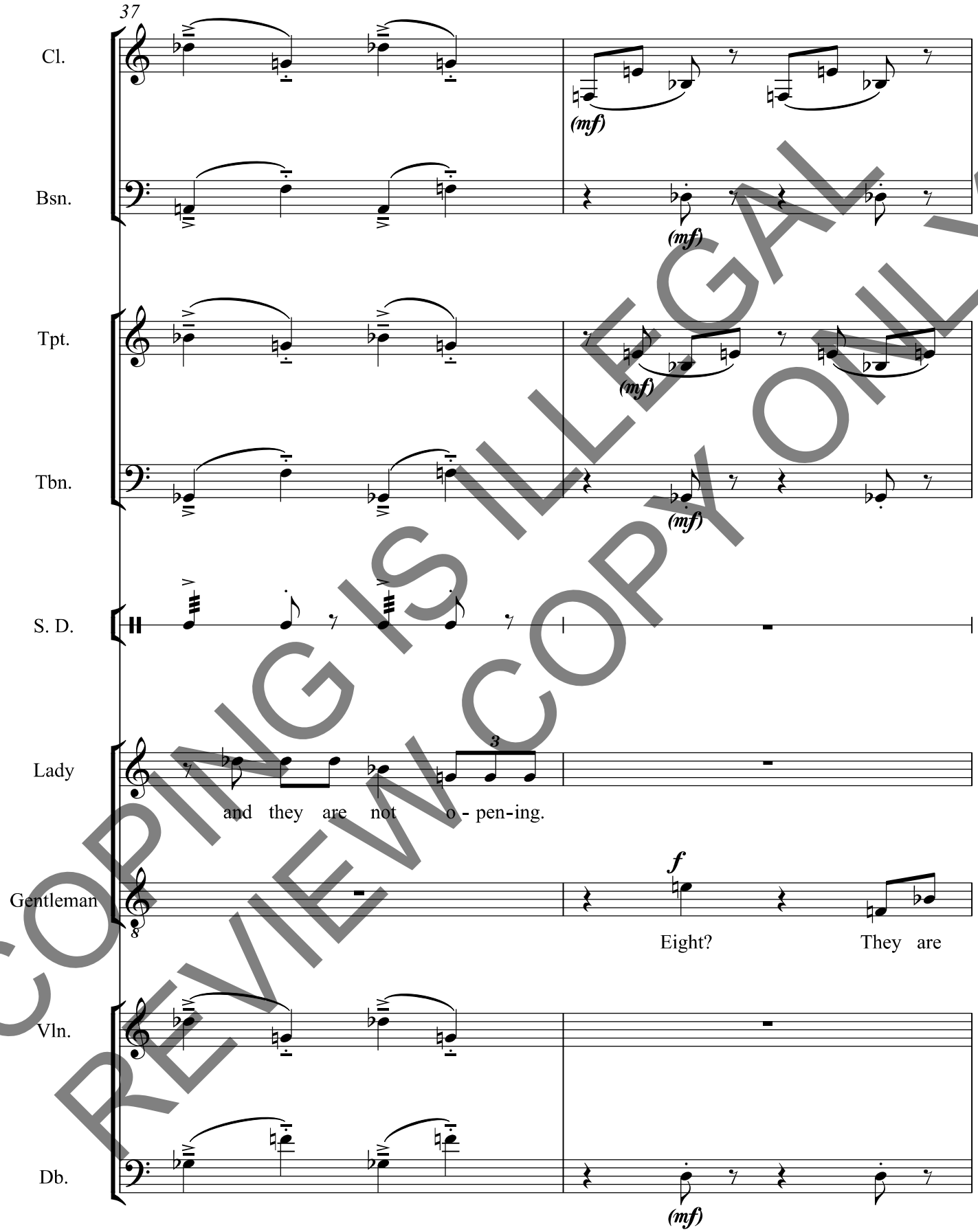

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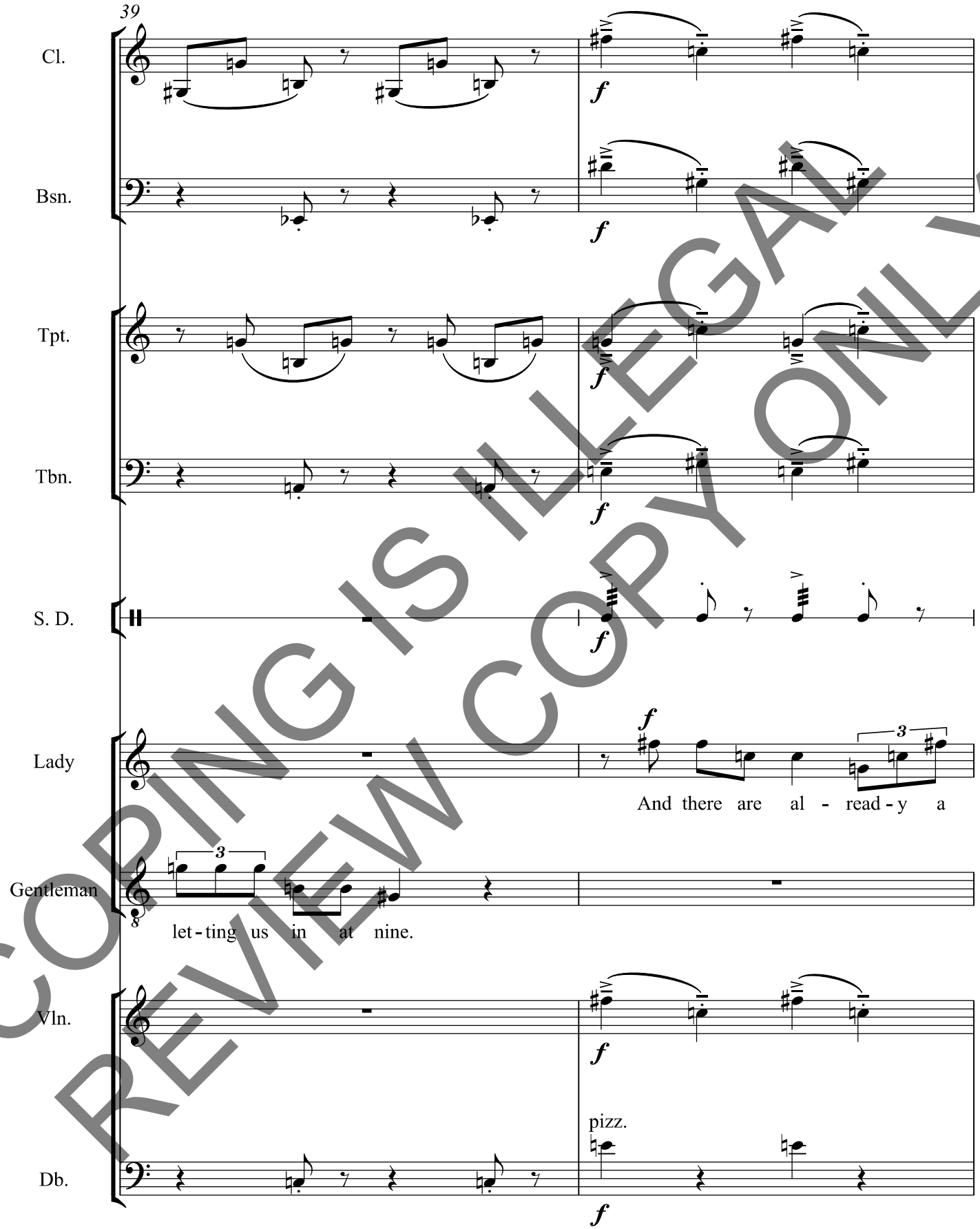

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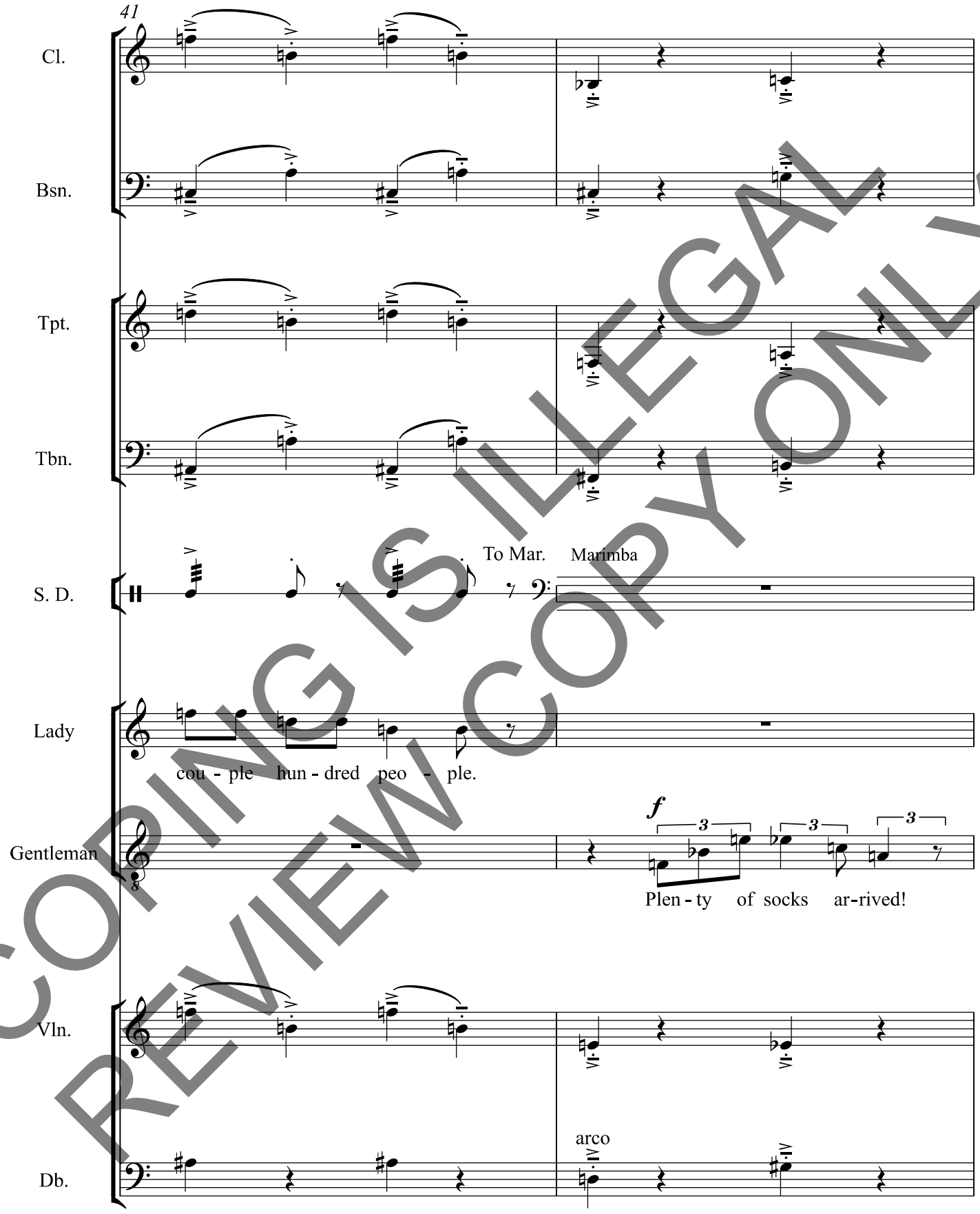

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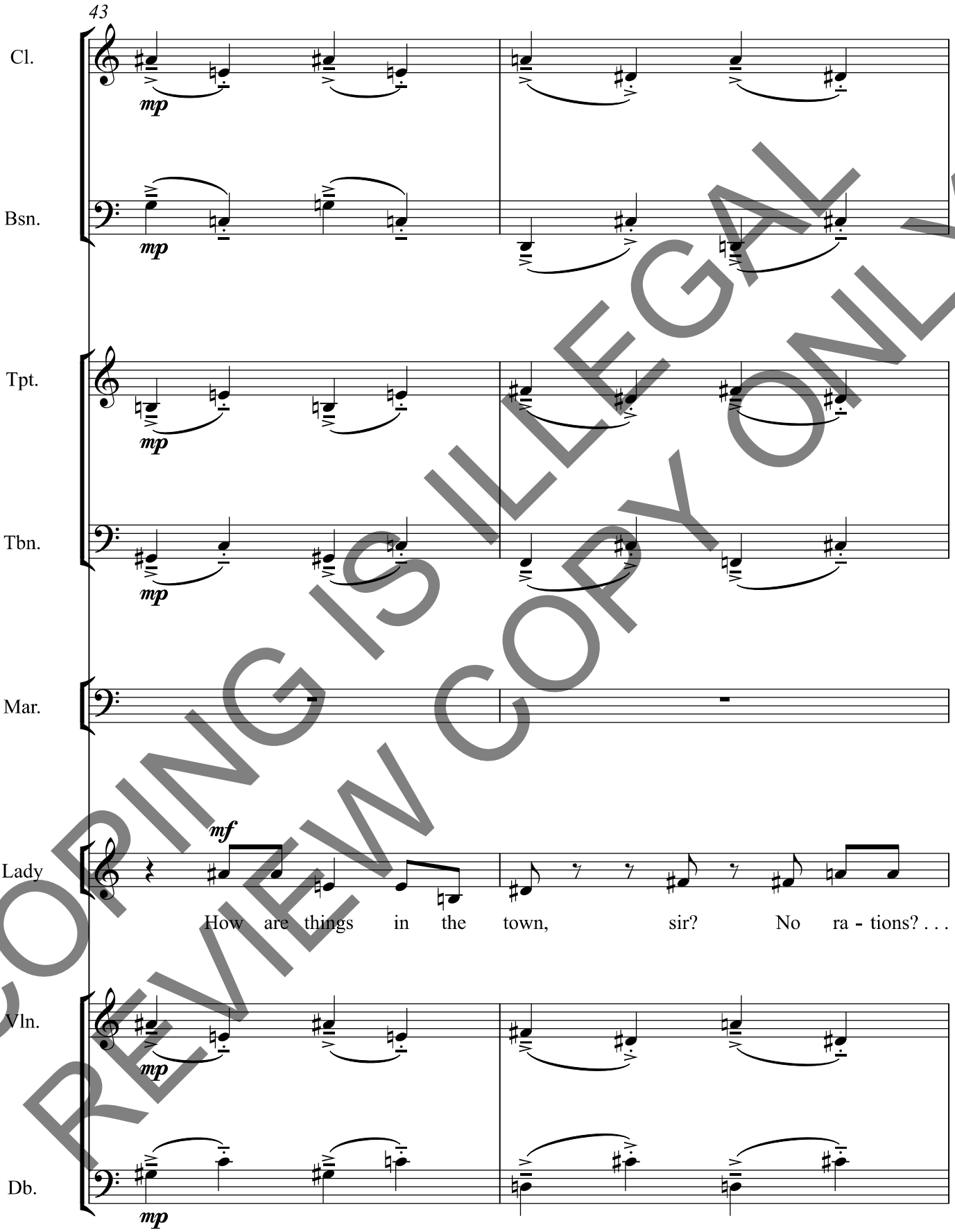

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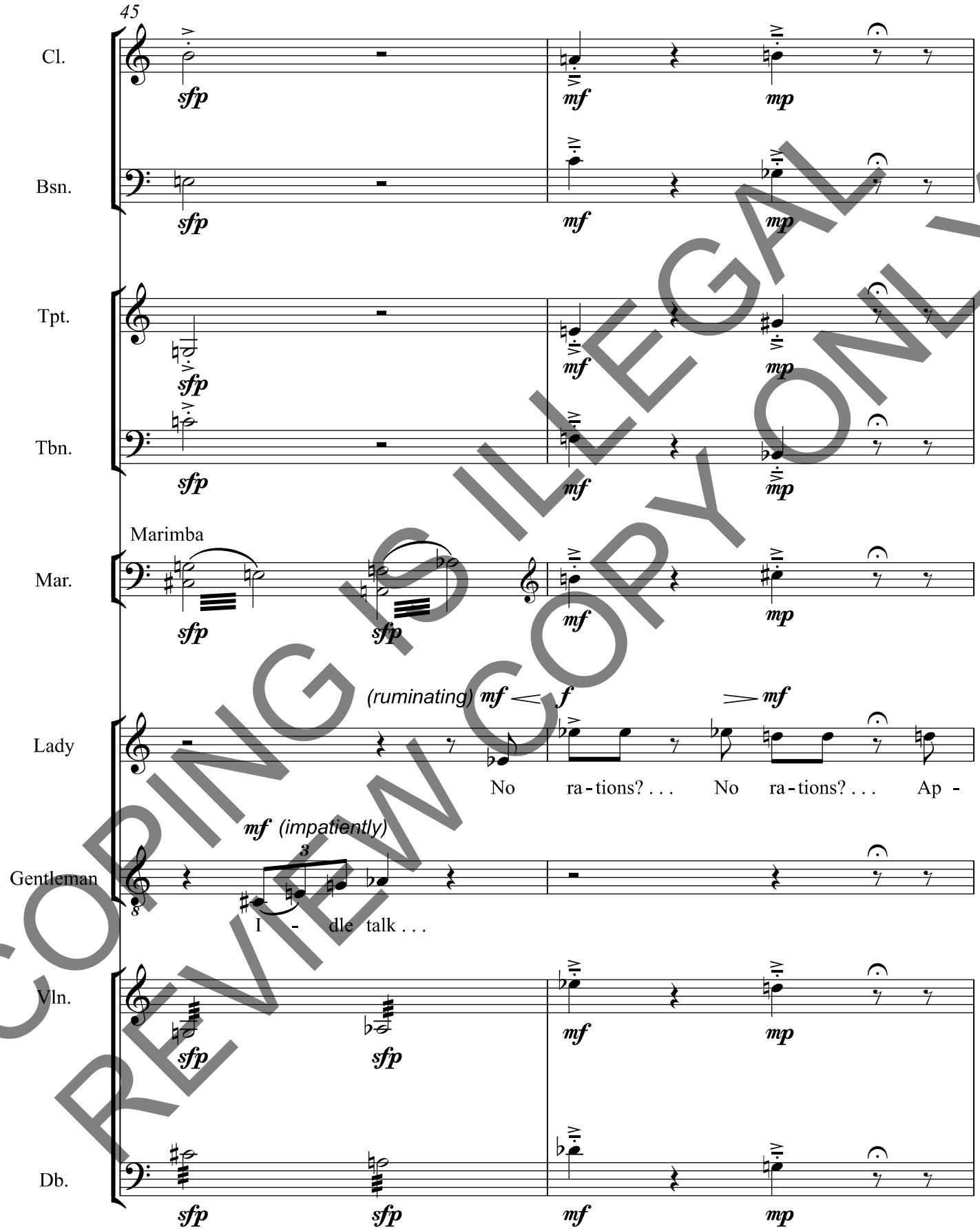

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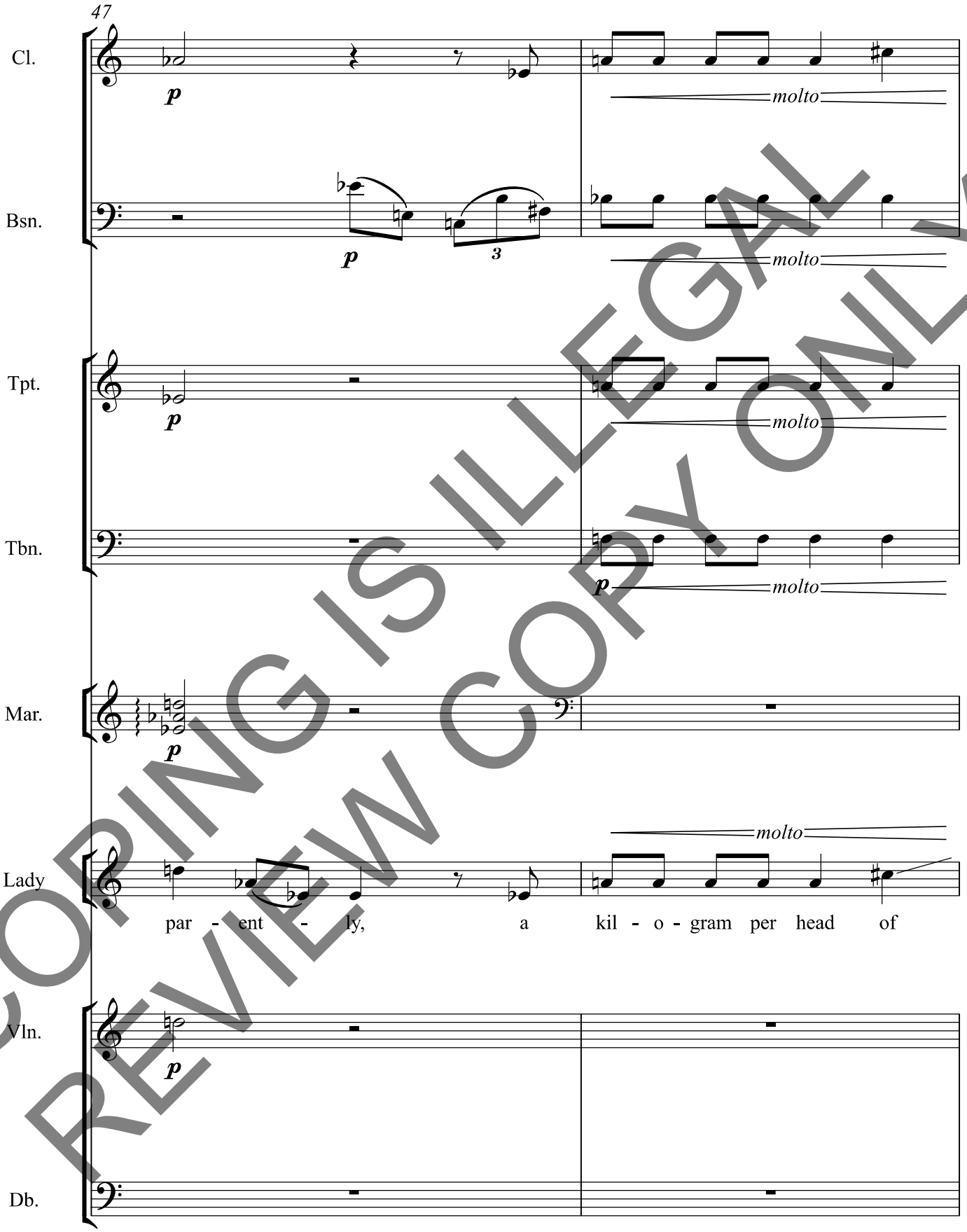

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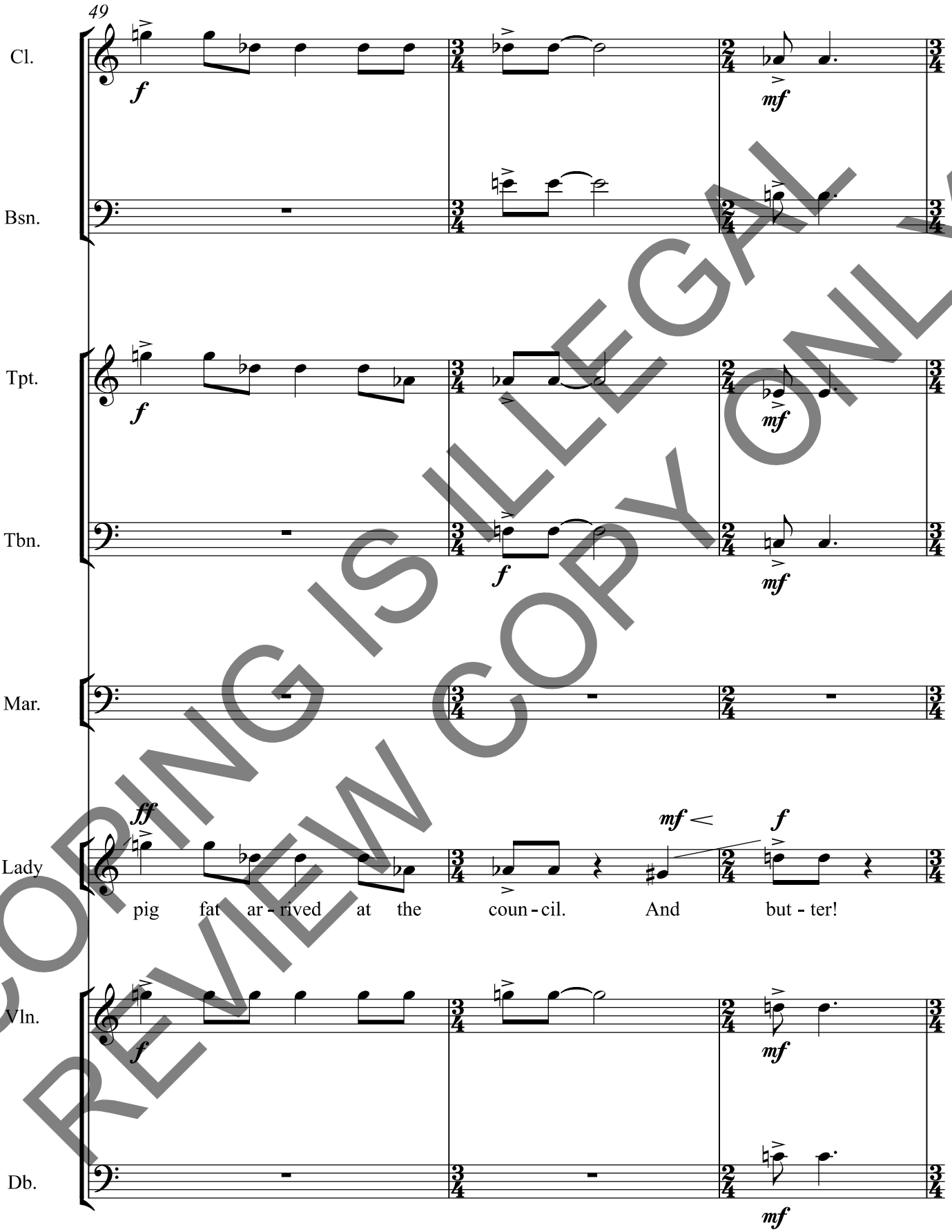

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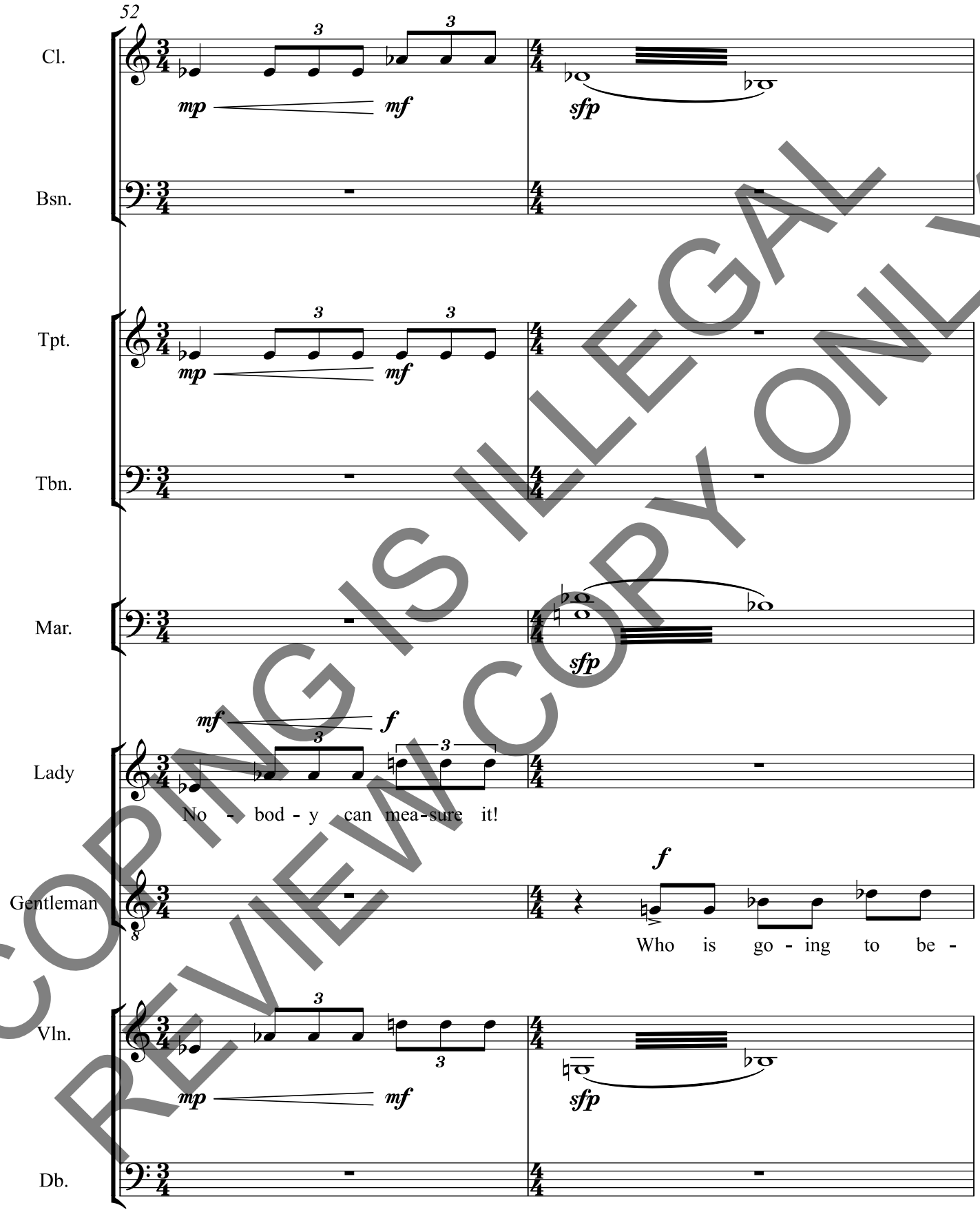

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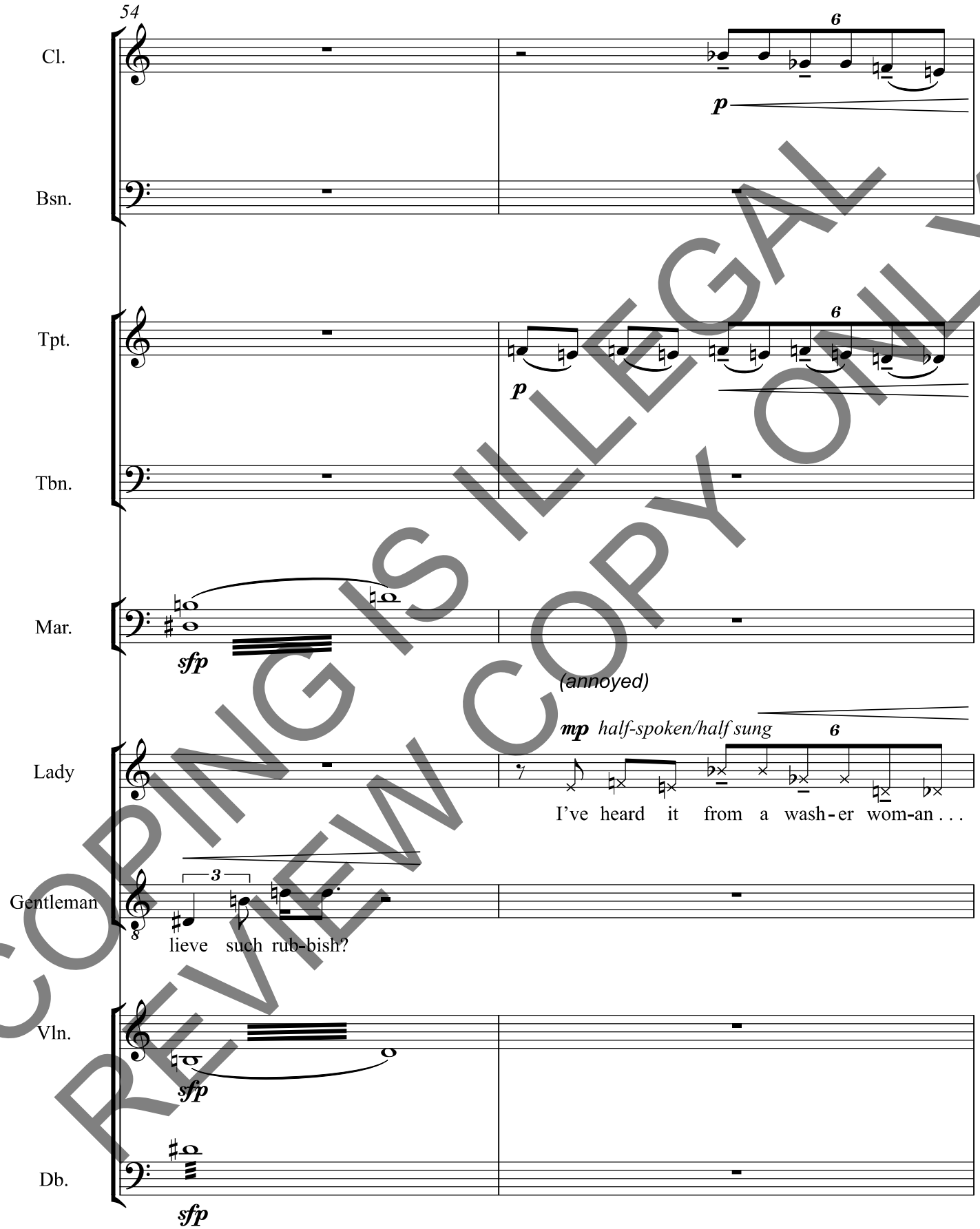

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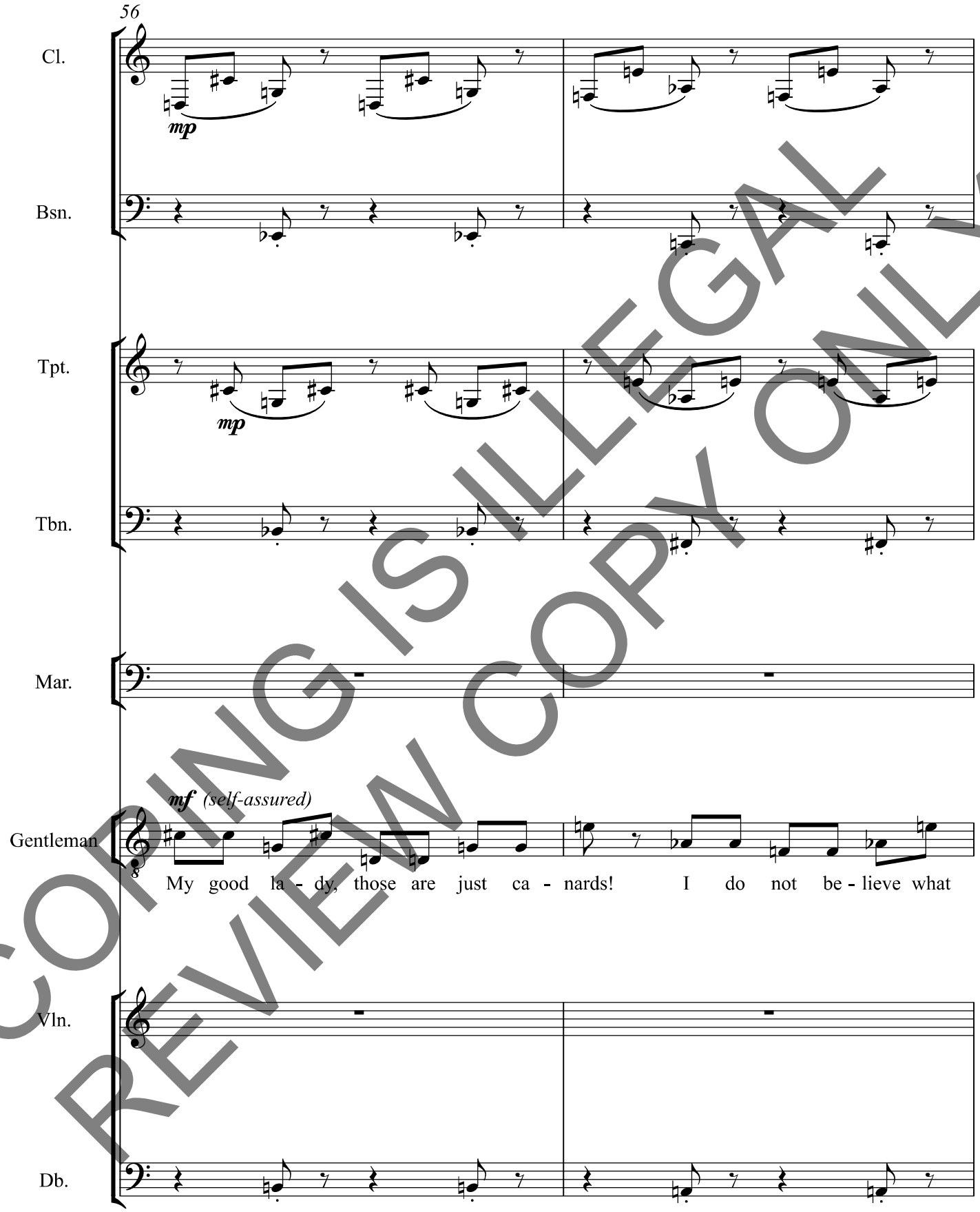

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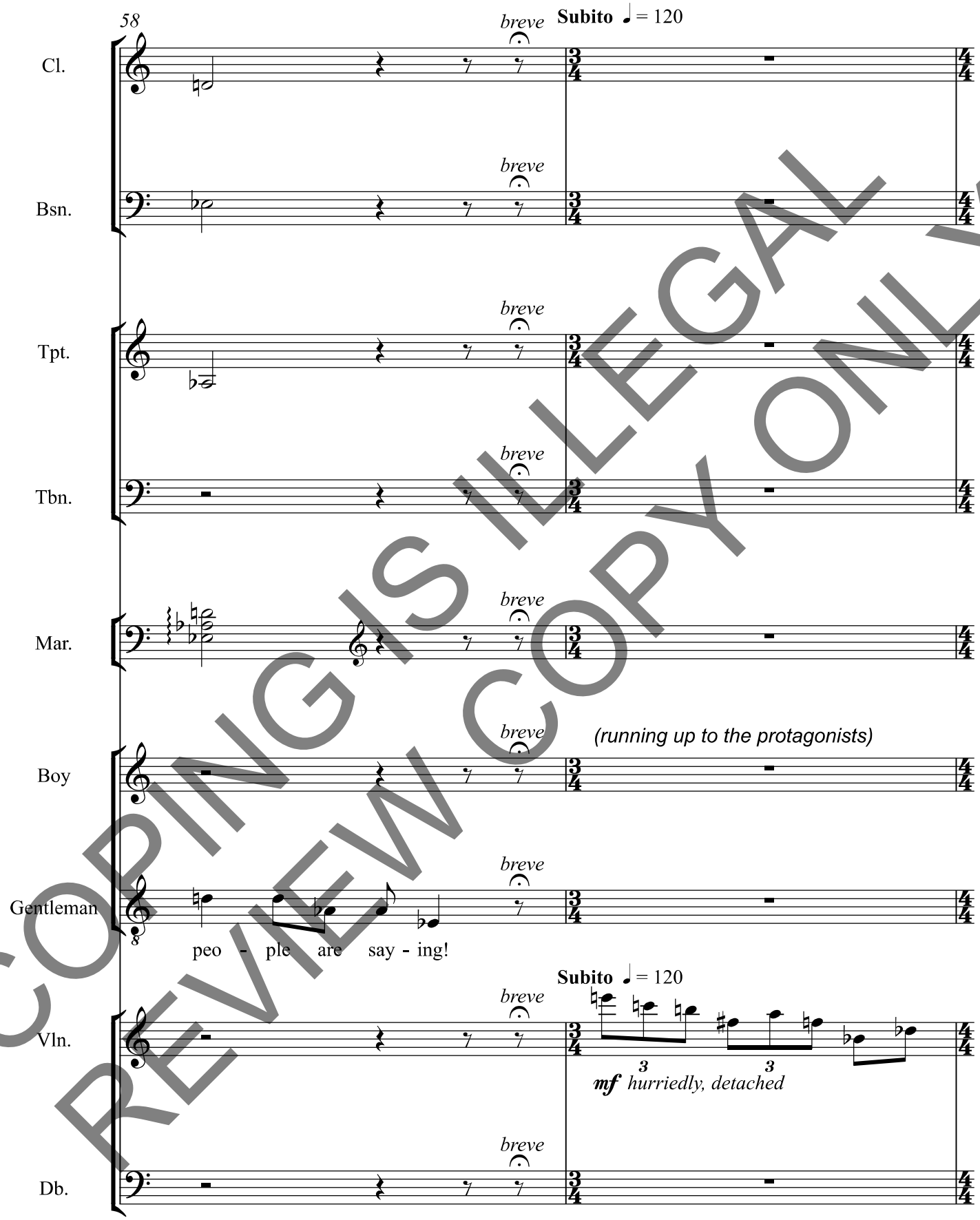

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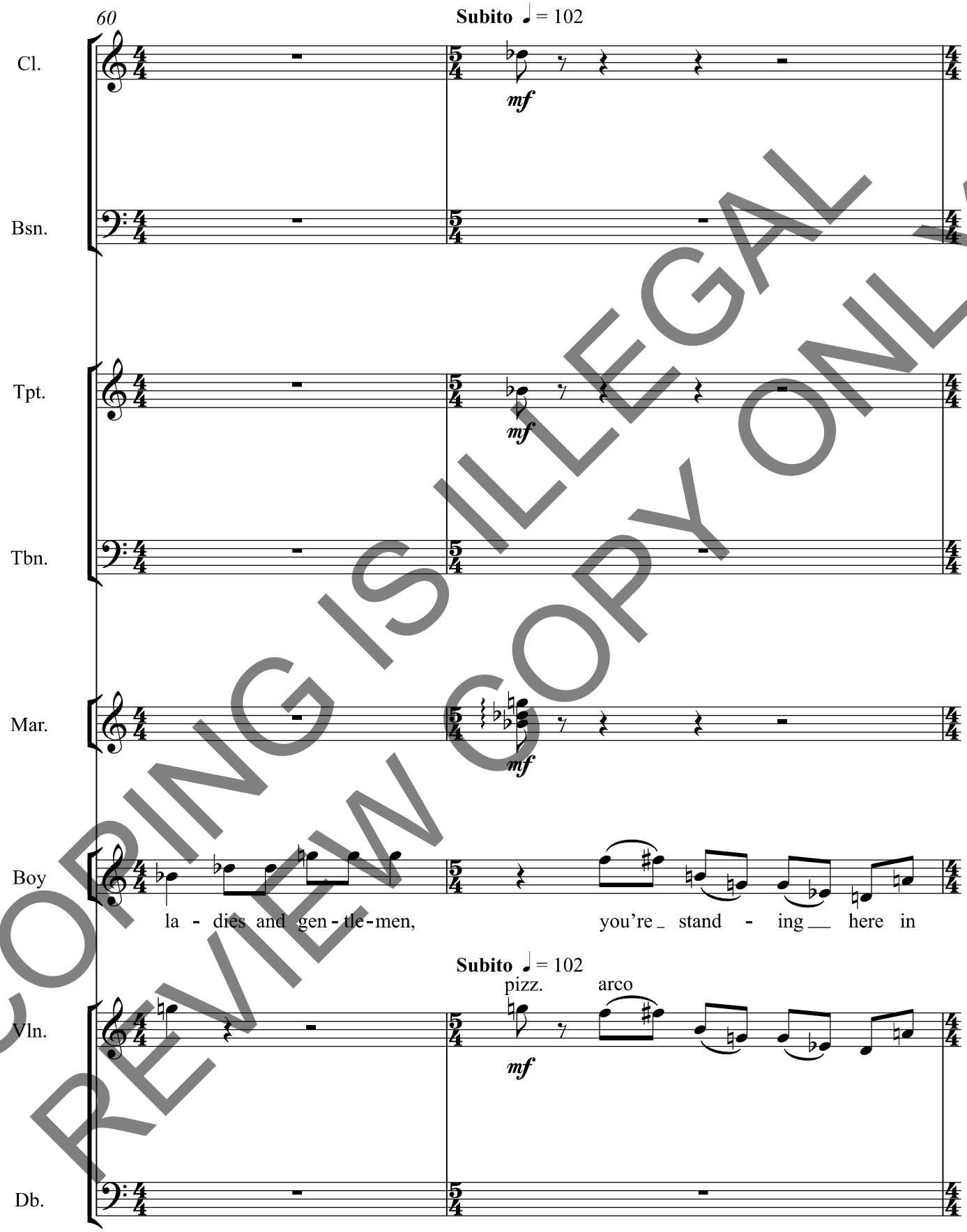

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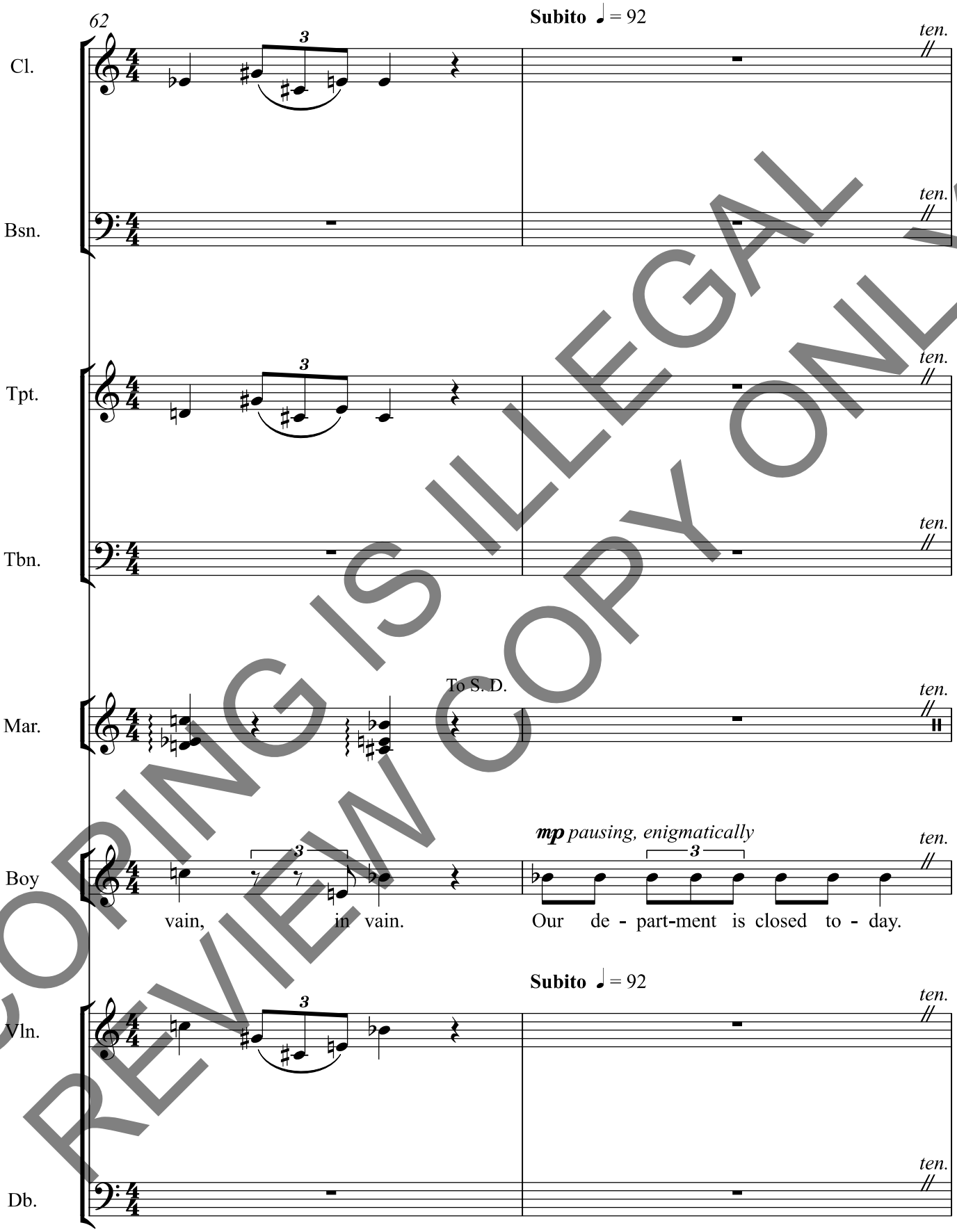

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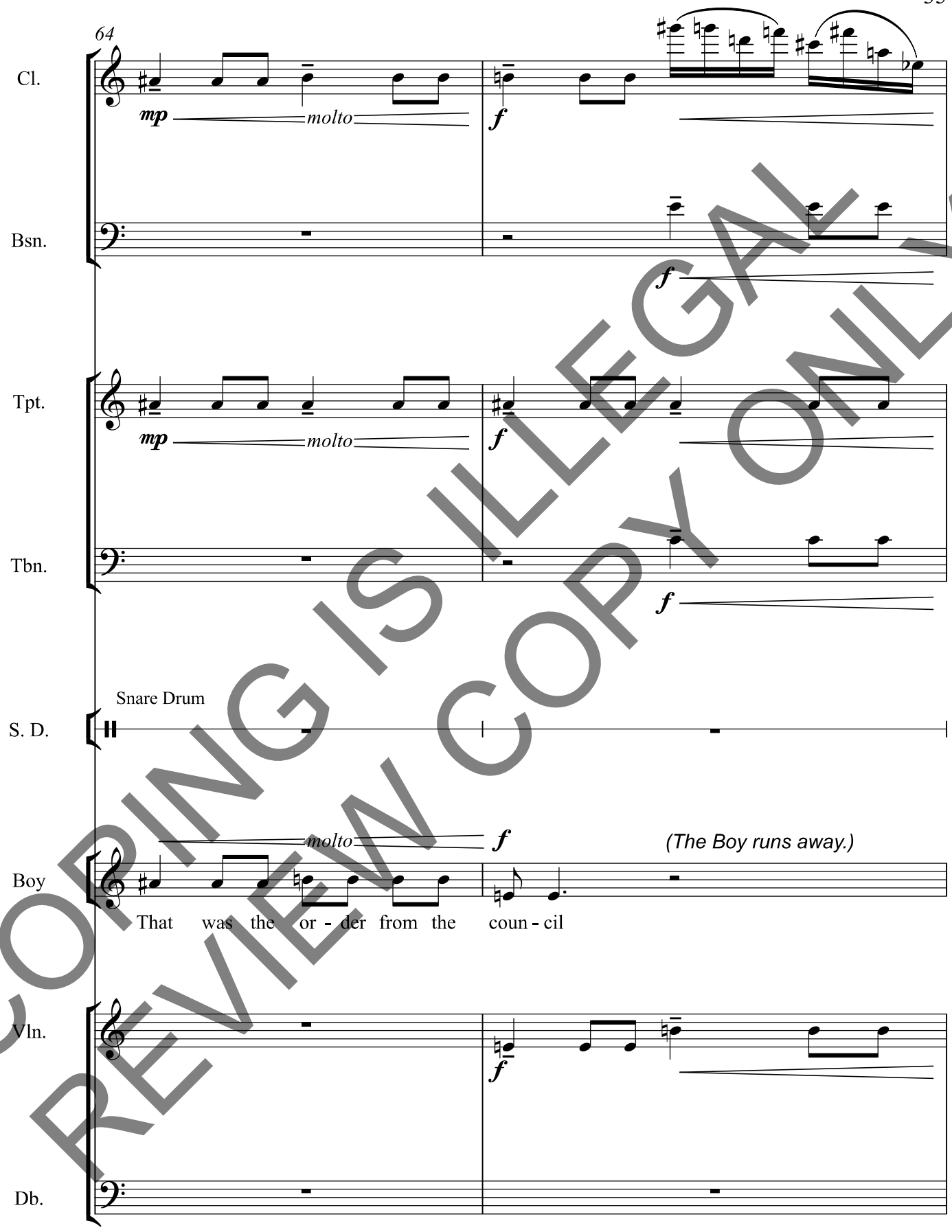

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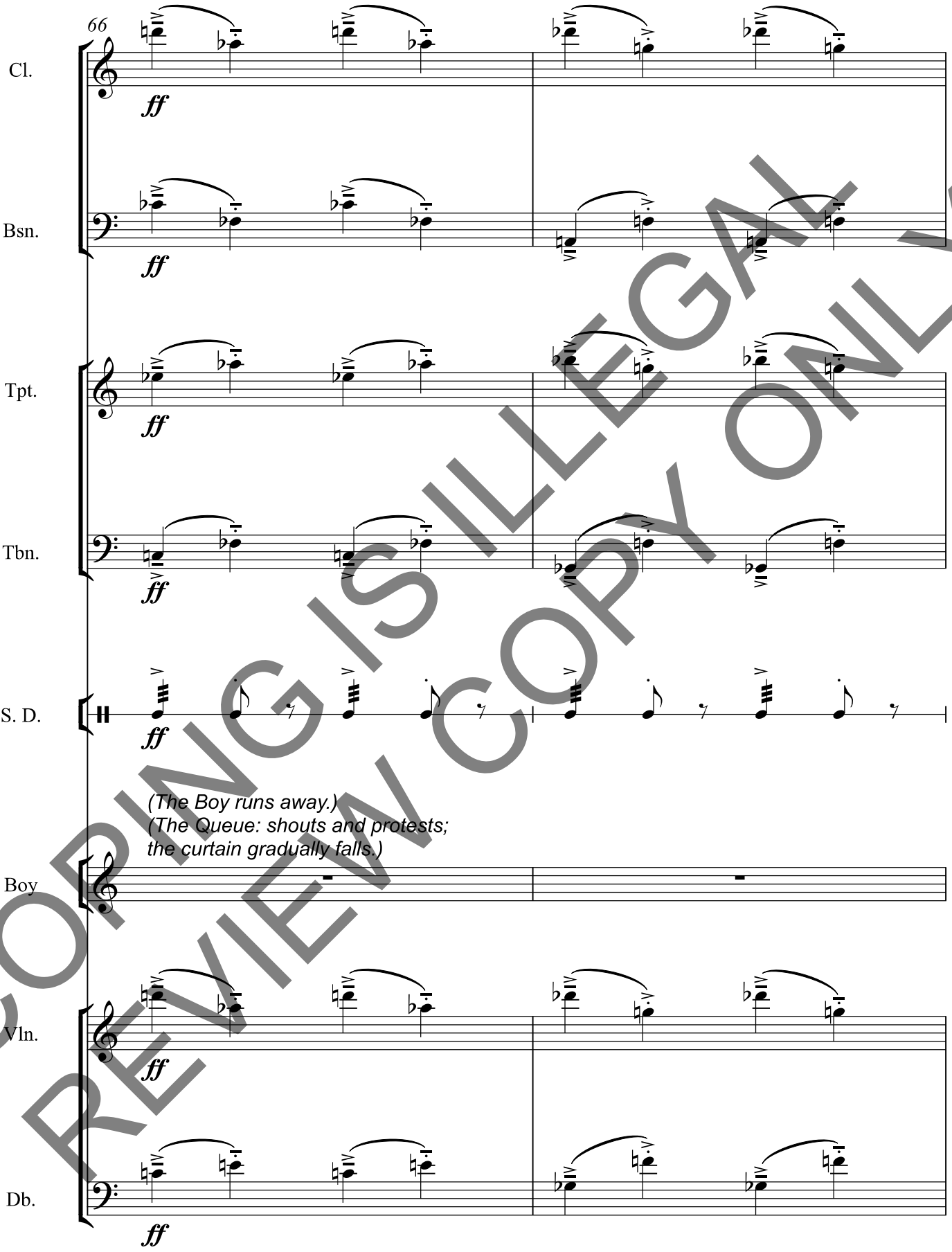

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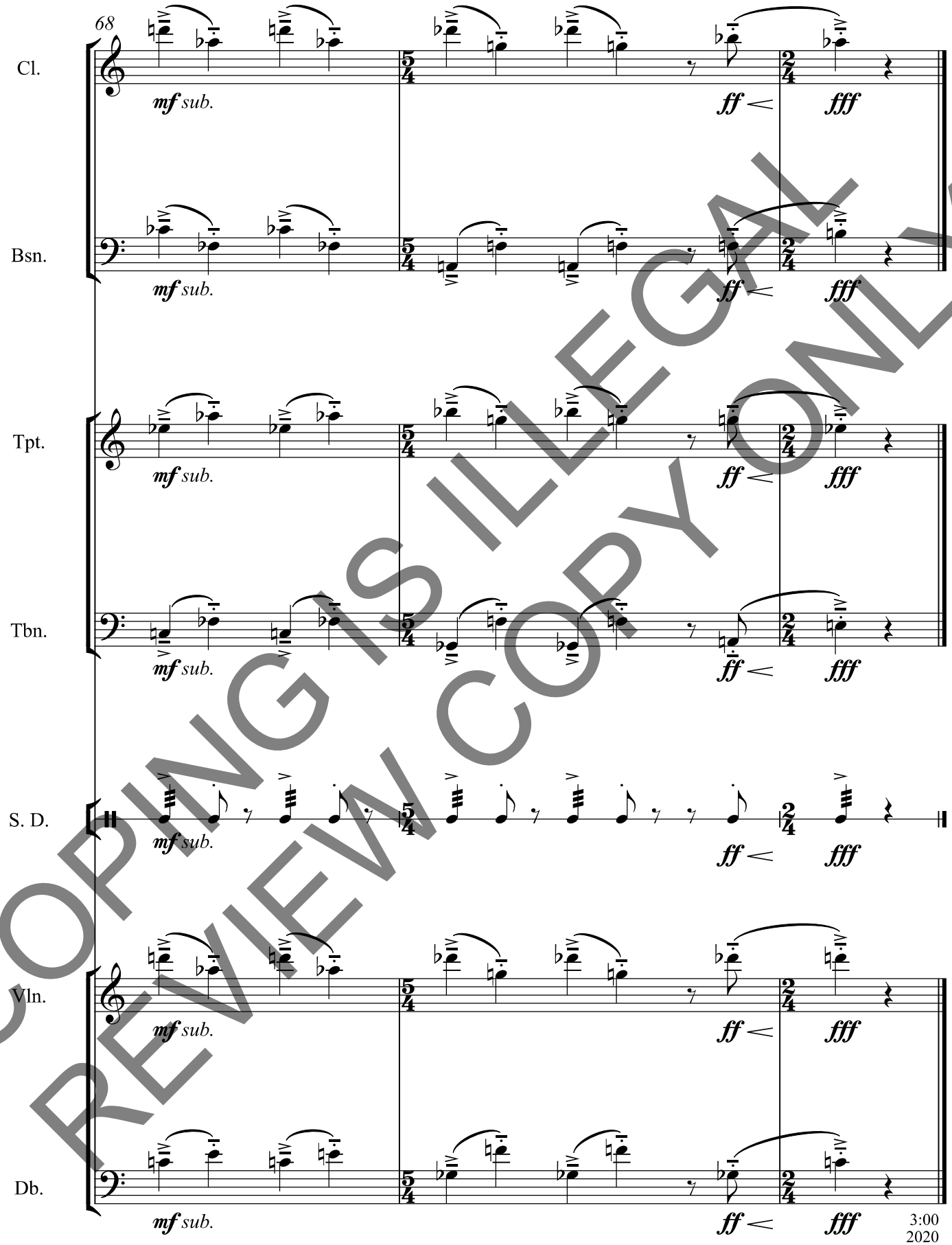

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STANLEY M. HOFFMAN

To Get a Ration

Words by

ABRAHAM KOPLOWICZ

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Two Scenes from the Lodz Ghetto

Words by Abraham ("Abramek") Koplowicz
(b. 1930, Lodz, Poland, d. 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau)
Translation by Sarah Lawson and Małgorzata Koraszewska
Adapted by Stanley M. Hoffman

*2. To Get a Ration (*Po racj [literally "*After right*"])

(Scene in Three Parts from the Co-op in the Lodz Ghetto)

Part 1

In the Entrance Hall

Cast of Characters:

Mrs. Hungry (Soprano)

Protection (Alto)

Mr. Hungry (Tenor)

Hunchback (Baritone)

Janitor (Bass)

Moniu[*(Motł)* (non-singing role [extra]

Manager (Baritone)

The Queue (non-singing roles [extras])

—

Hunchback *(with a pathos to the queue)*
A fine mess they are making today!
It's the fifth hour.
They are afraid to open the shop.
But it is our fault!
The only solution is to kick the door hard.
Only shouts will help here!

Protection
But it would have been impolite!

Hunchback *(outraged)*
Impolite? Impolite?!
She is playing pleasantries.
She distributes the cards from behind, and yet here she is preaching morals!

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Protection *(with tears in her eyes)*
And that I'm here all alone, he doesn't care?!

(*Hunchback and Protection turn their backs to each other*.)

Protection
Anyway, it is unbecoming to talk to such a lout.

Hunchback
Well, I'm amazed at such deception.
(*to the Janitor*)
And you are stepping on my foot . . .

(Suddenly the door opens: Mrs. Hungry bursts in, out of breath, with her husband and Moniu[.)

Mrs. Hungry
Good evening, everybody.
Oh, I've lost my heart somewhere.
Help the poor thing!
I ran here with my husband, with my child, on the double!
I only had coffee today . . . fashionable . . .
Allow me to introduce myself: sir, I am Hungry!

Hunchback *(amazed)*
Hungry? Hungry?!
(he whispers to the queue)
She is going mad!
I, too, am hungry!

Mrs. Hungry *(pleasantly surprised)*
But it is fortunate.
You are my relative.
I am Minola Hungry.
(to her husband)
Motl! Come closer!
To be hungry is fashionable today—but this is our surname . . .

Hunchback *(surprised)*
Ah, so that's it . . .
(to himself)
So I'm nuts today.

Mrs. Hungry *(to herself)*
What is he babbling about?

(The Manager appears at the door.)

The Janitor
Here we have the manager.

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The Manager *(impatiently)*

It will be open presently!

Mrs. Hungry *(outraged)*

We are not going to wait any longer; there are sick people at home.
When we all die, then he will open!

(with pathos)

Oh, this is disgusting; such rabble.
I will complain to Fuku!

The Manager *(angrily)*

Shut your trap!

(The Manager goes into the shop and slams the door.)

Part 2

In the Shop

Cast of characters:

Mrs. Lizewska (Mezzo-Soprano) [from the word liza - to lick.]

Mr. Łazuch (Tenor) [from the word "łasuch" - gourmand.]

Manager (Baritone)

Mr. {arBocki (Bass) [from the word "|arBok - glutton.]

Mr. Wsuwacz (Bass) [from the word wsuwa - to eat greedily.]

Mrs. Lizewska

The boss went out? Thank God!
Does it cost him more that I take a drop of honey?

(she licks her lips)

How tasty it is!

Mr. Łazuch

Give me this porridge.
It's good with oil.
I barely ate two bowlfuls today.

(he glances at her)

How can you not eat at home?

(The Manager rushes in while the shop assistants discretely wipe their mouths.)

The Manager

Hello! Hello! Enough of this licking!
Have you eaten your fill?

(he points to the entrance hall with his thumb)

I've had enough of this cursing.
Animals! Shenanigans!

(he lowers his hand)

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The good radishes and carrots from this delivery are to be put aside,
and when somebody from protection comes, he is to get a portion of the good ones.

Mr. { arlocki

But Mr. Manager, we didn't lick anything.

(The Manager shows them to the door)

This rabble should have ten grams each removed . . .

The Manager (*with sarcasm*)

So they would grumble!

Mr. Wsuwacz

Let them grumble; let them bark!
That's why we work in the shop.
They are thieving somewhere as well.
We will lick some more!

Part 3

In the Entrance Hall

Cast of characters:

The same as for Part 1

Mrs. Hungry *(outraged—to the queue)*

Did you hear this talk?

(she points at the door to the shop)

From this lout?!
To insult ladies so much; I really do not know!

(she looks around)

My husband, where are you hiding?
Oh, my misfortune,
You allowed insults to your wife!

(A tremulous voice from the corner [Mr. Hungry mutters something unintelligible])

I'm . . . afraid . . . of him!

(red with anger, she points to the corner)

But he knows how to stuff himself in spite of the fact that he has hidden himself.

(to the Hunchback)

I'm taking Moniek, to guard him, you understand.
Yesterday, I baked a cake out of coffee . . .

(with disgust)

Oh, you despicable creep! *(at Mr. Hungry)*
He ate it at night without fear. *(to the others)*
In the morning—not a trace.
Two words: heartless husband!

Protection *(incredulously)*

To such a degree?

(The Manager appears in the doorway calling the names of people who may enter.)

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The Manager

Loser, Dope, Hungry . . .

Mrs. Hungry *(frantically gathering her pots)*

I'm here, I'm coming, I'm running!

(She goes into the shop with her husband and Moniek.)

Protection *(to the Hunchback)*
What a perky little woman.
Cool, wise, nice.
I'm also very curious . . . what cake did she bake?

Hunchback
You are looking that far?
It is not worth it, because to bake such a cake is no feat.
So I will tell you: add this mixture to a pound of coffee; pepper and caraway.
Add two glasses of water, a few tablets of saccharin,
and when the bitterness of coffee disappears, add fruit peel,
and then into the oven it goes.

(Suddenly, the door to the shop slams open; Mrs. Hungry, Moniu[, and Mr. Hungry enter, the latter with traces of marmalade around his mouth.)

Mrs. Hungry *(wringing her hands)*
People, oh, great heavens!
God, have mercy on us, find me a way to cope.
(she points towards her husband)
My husband ate all the marmalade in small amounts!

(The curtain falls.)

The End

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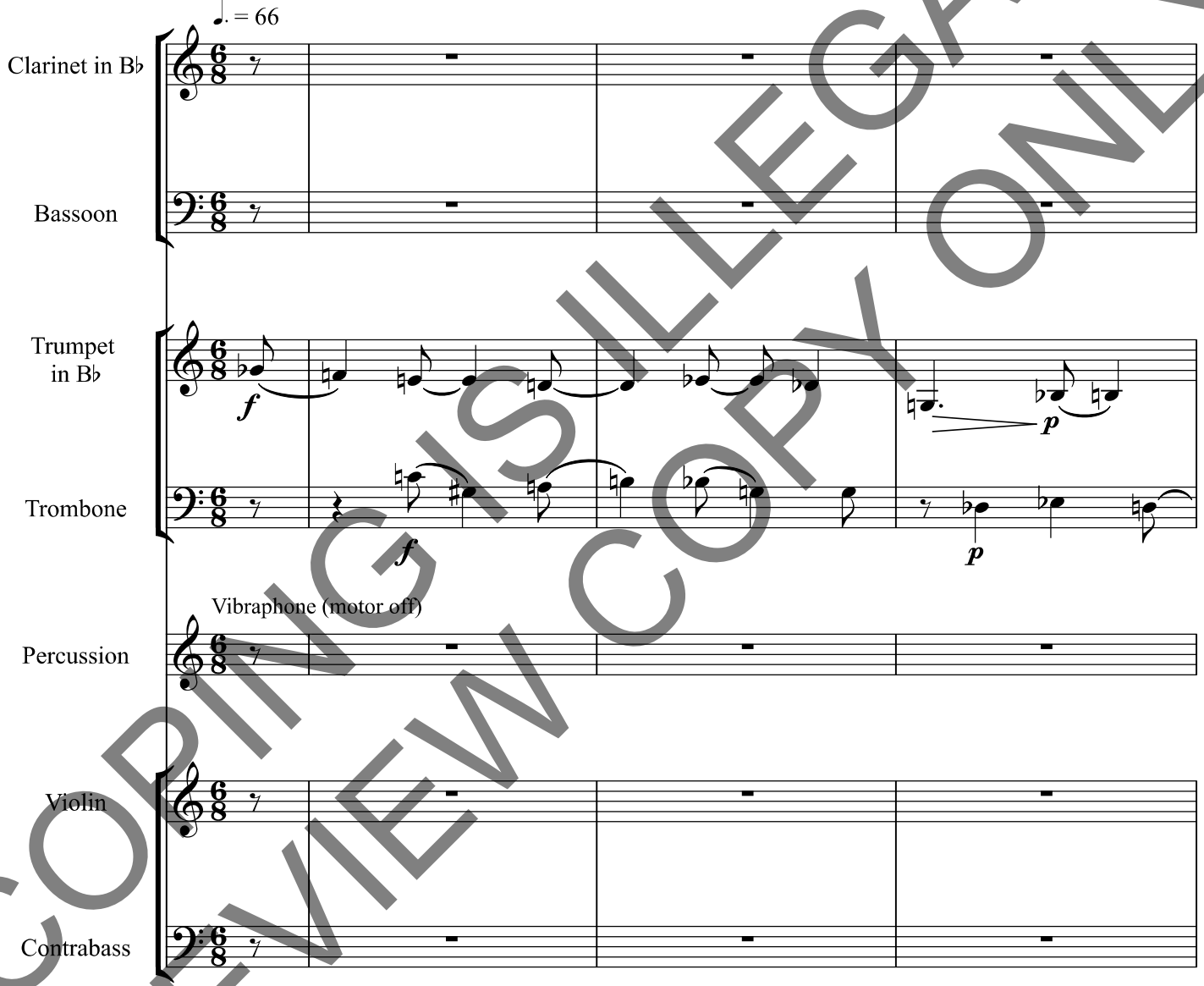
To Get a Ration *(Po rację)*

Score in C *(Scene in Three Parts from the Lodz Ghetto)*

Words by Abraham ("Abramek") Koplowicz
(b. 1930, Lodz, Poland, d. 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau)
Translation by Sarah Lawson and Małgorzata Koraszewska
Adapted by Stanley M. Hoffman

Stanley M. Hoffman (BMI)

Part 1: In the Entrance Hall



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Words: from the Polish by Abraham Koplowicz.
Translation by Sarah Lawson and Małgorzata Koraszewska.
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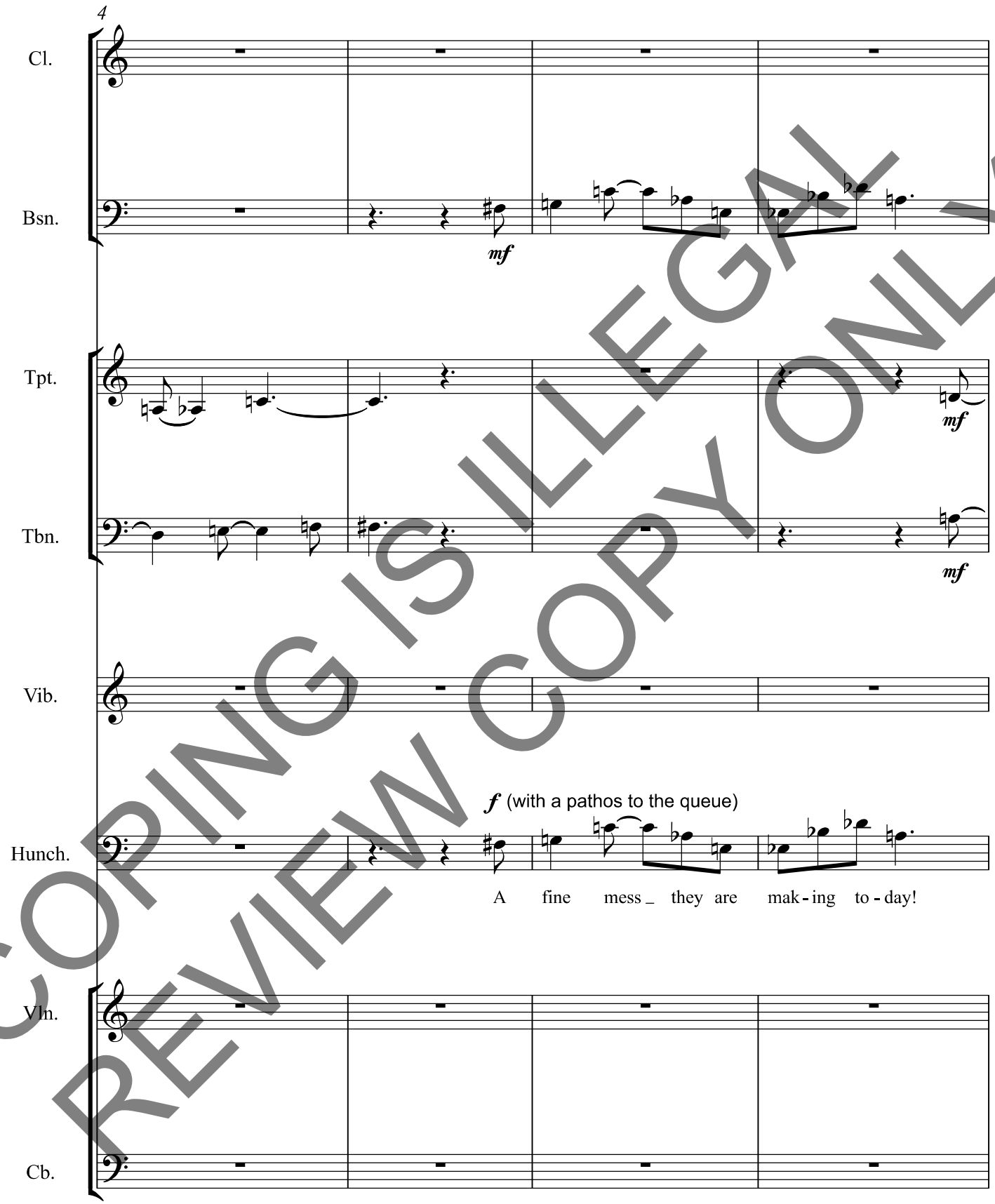

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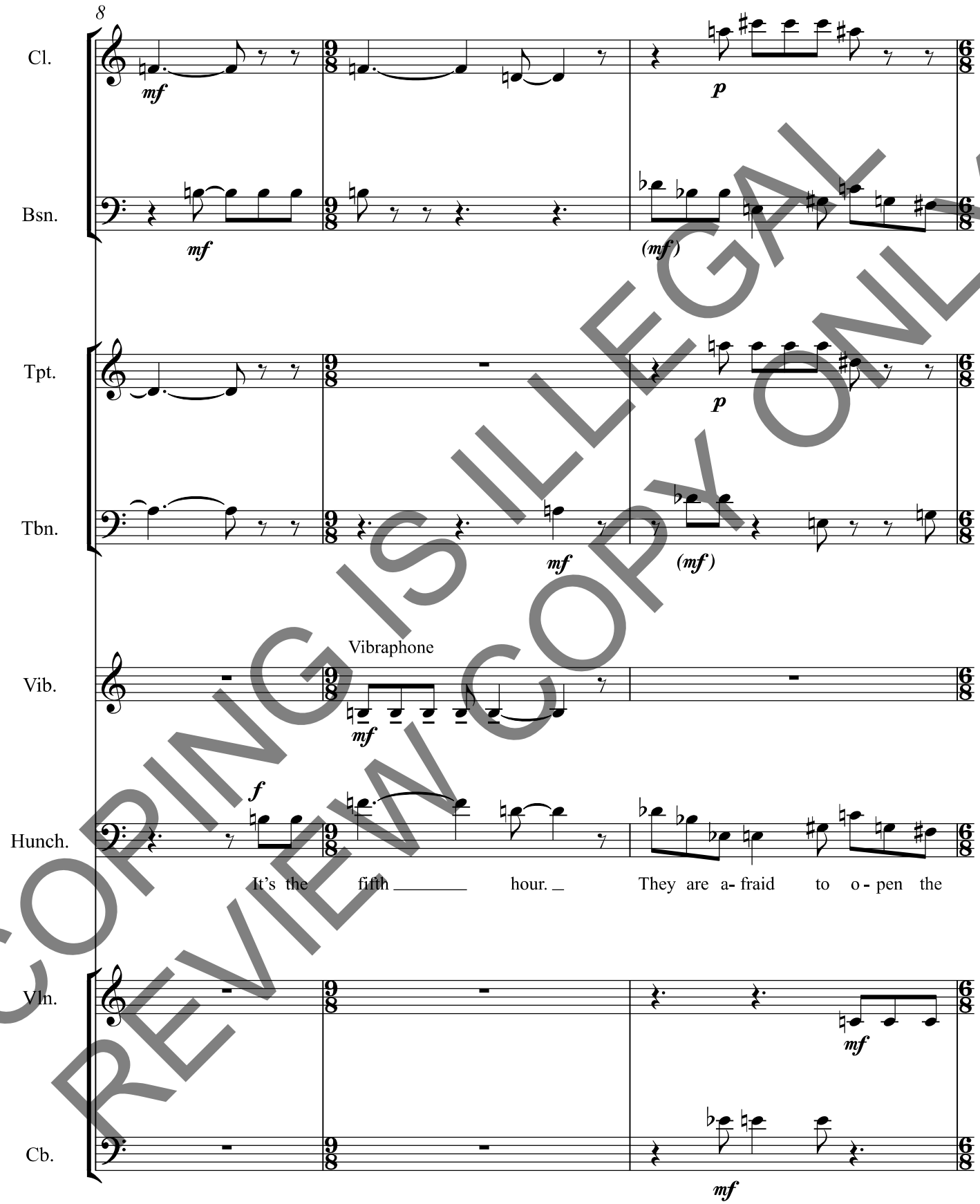

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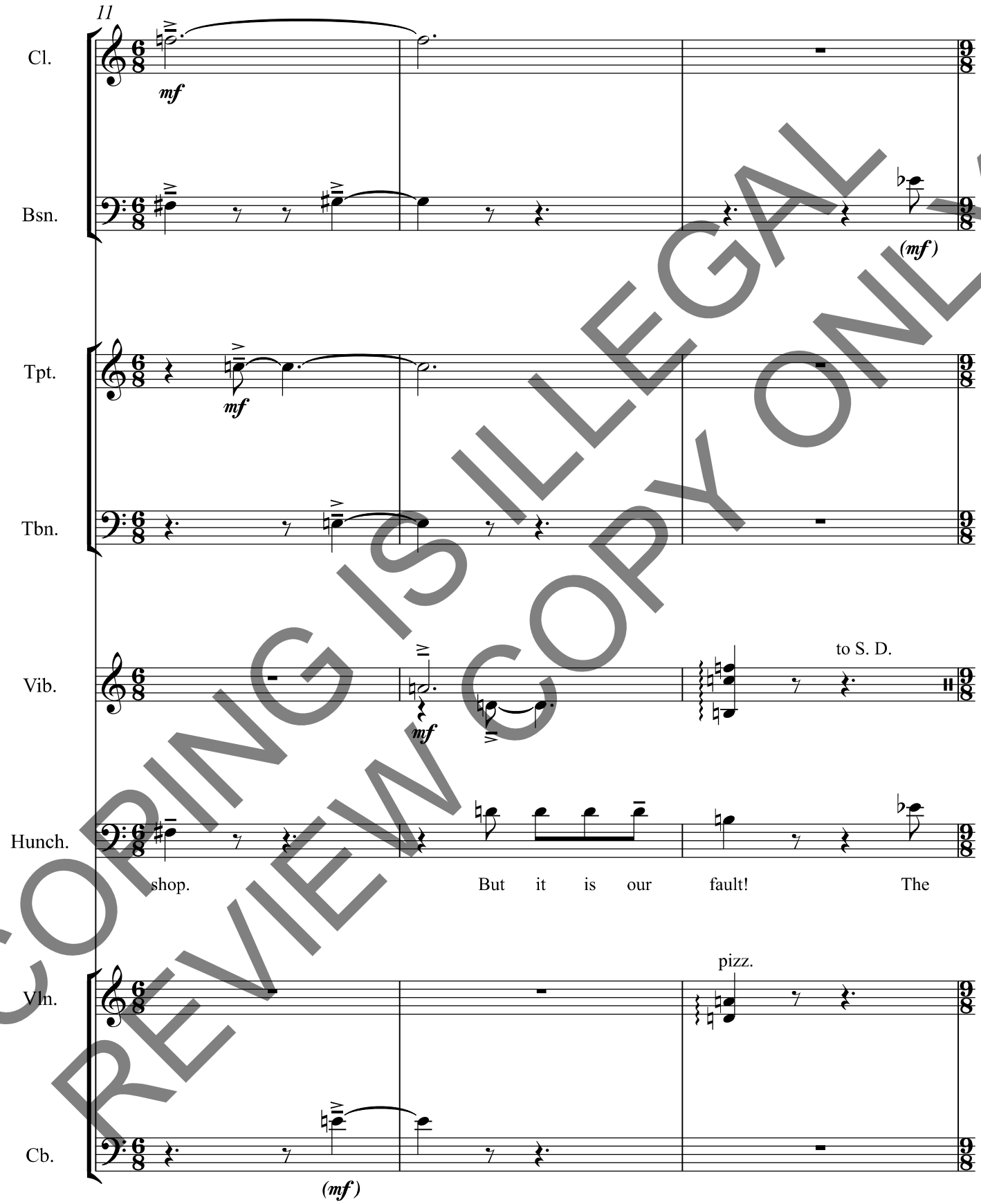

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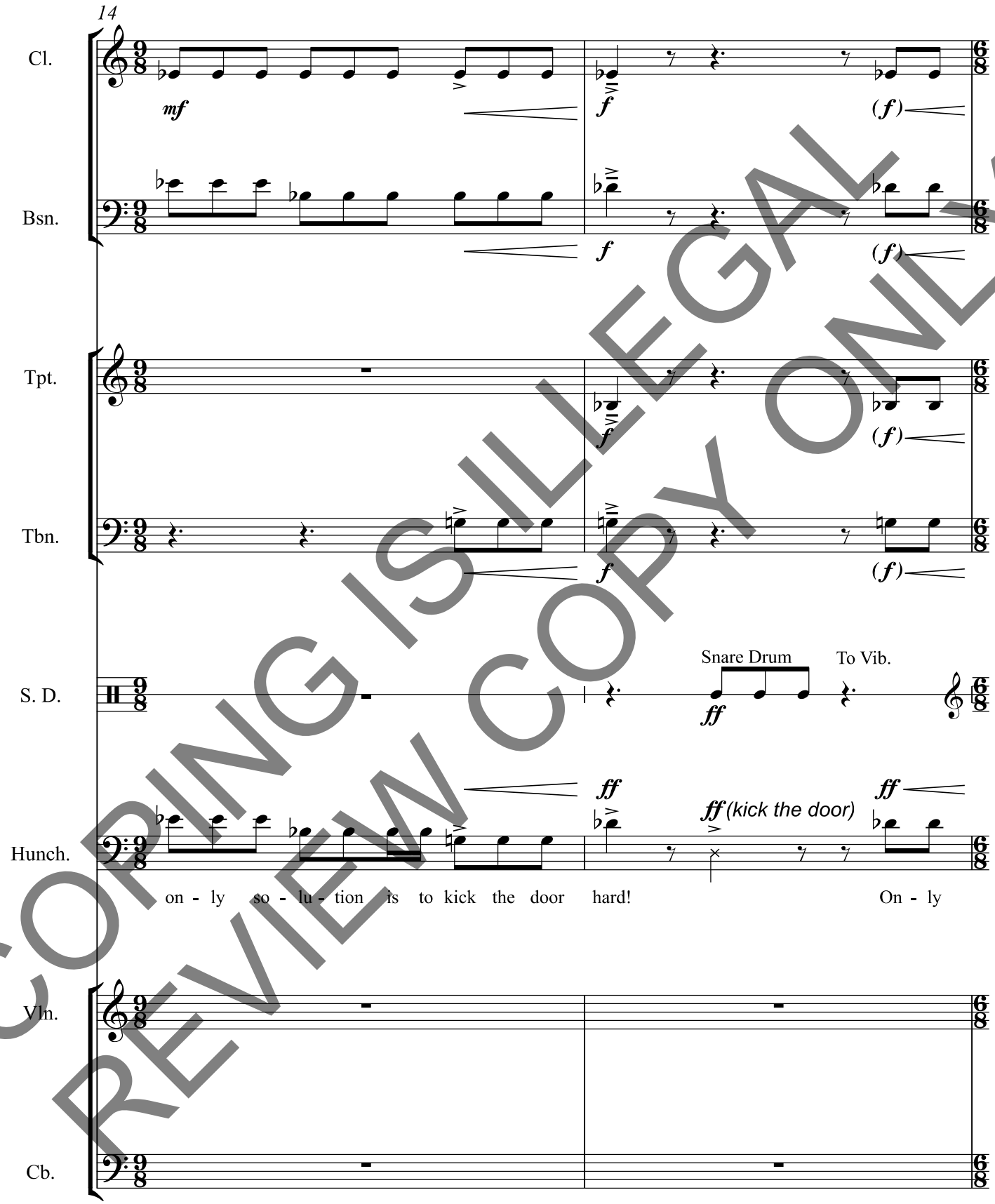

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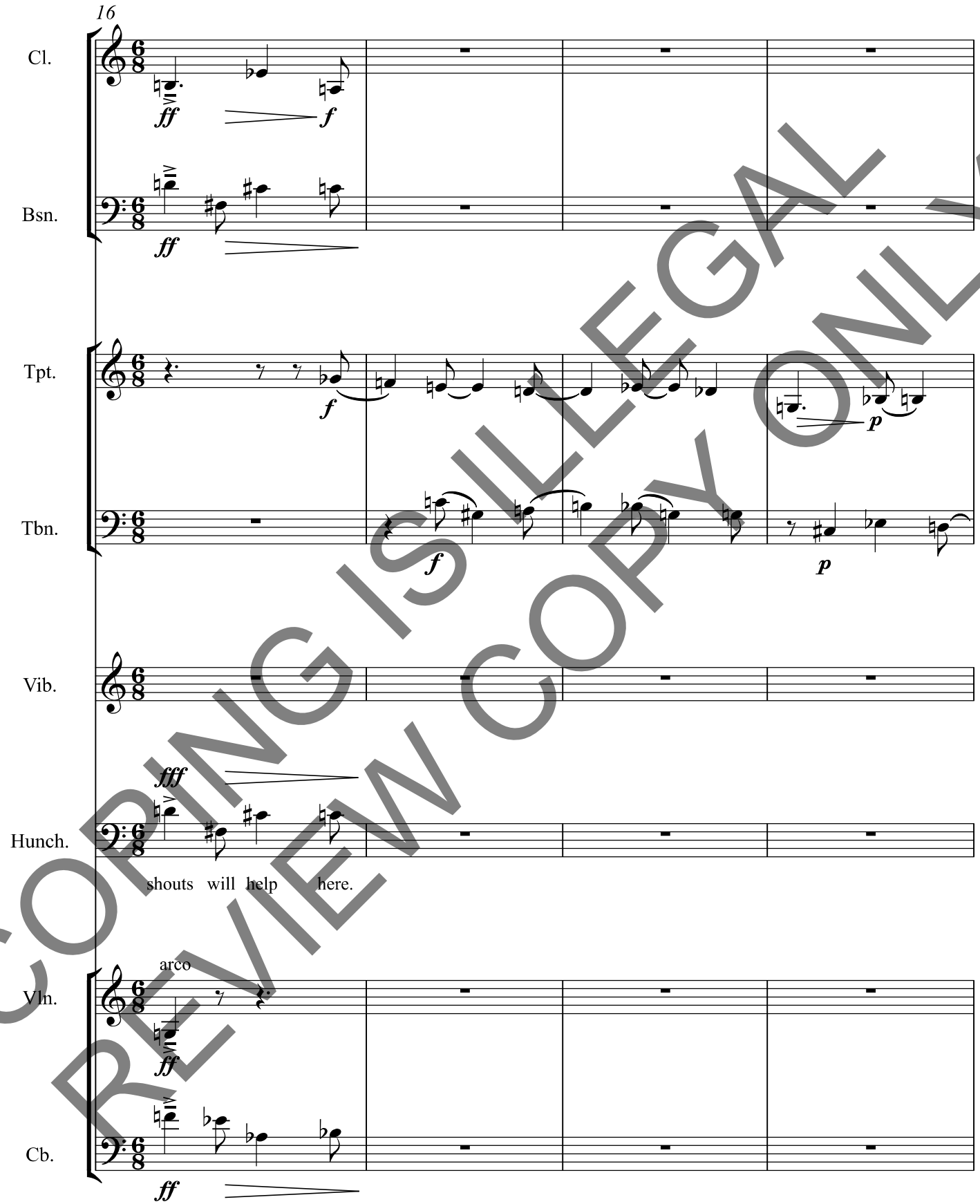

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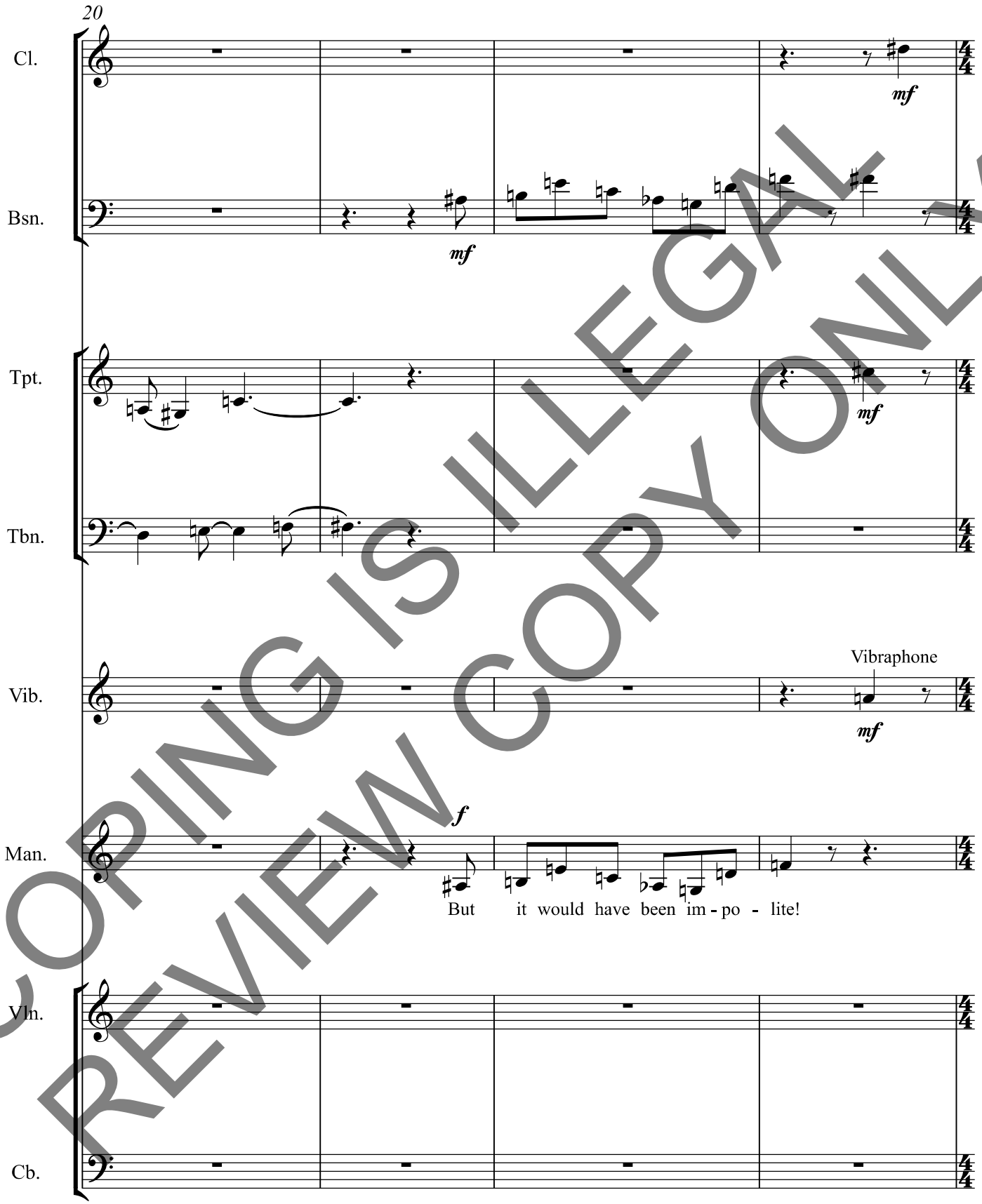

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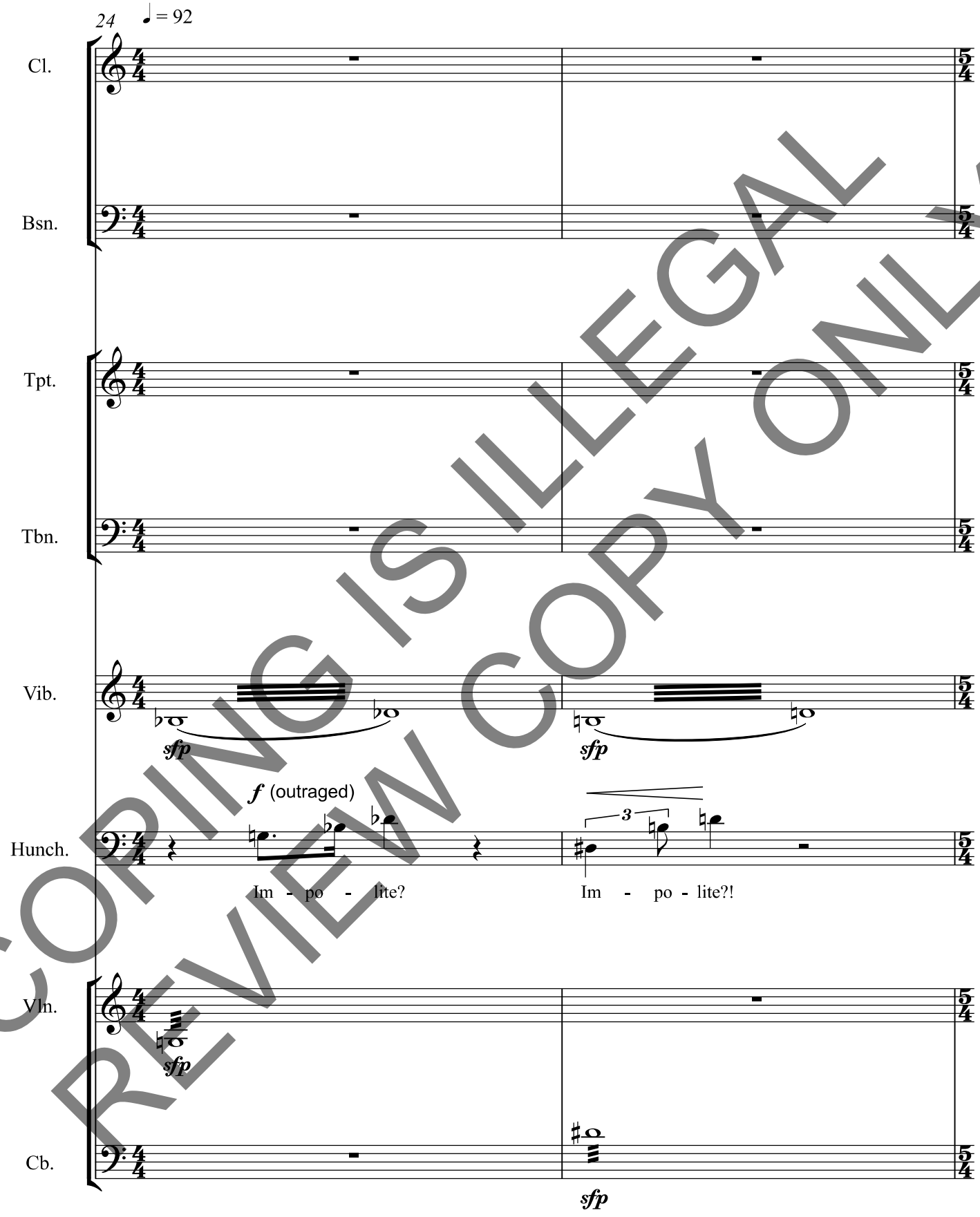

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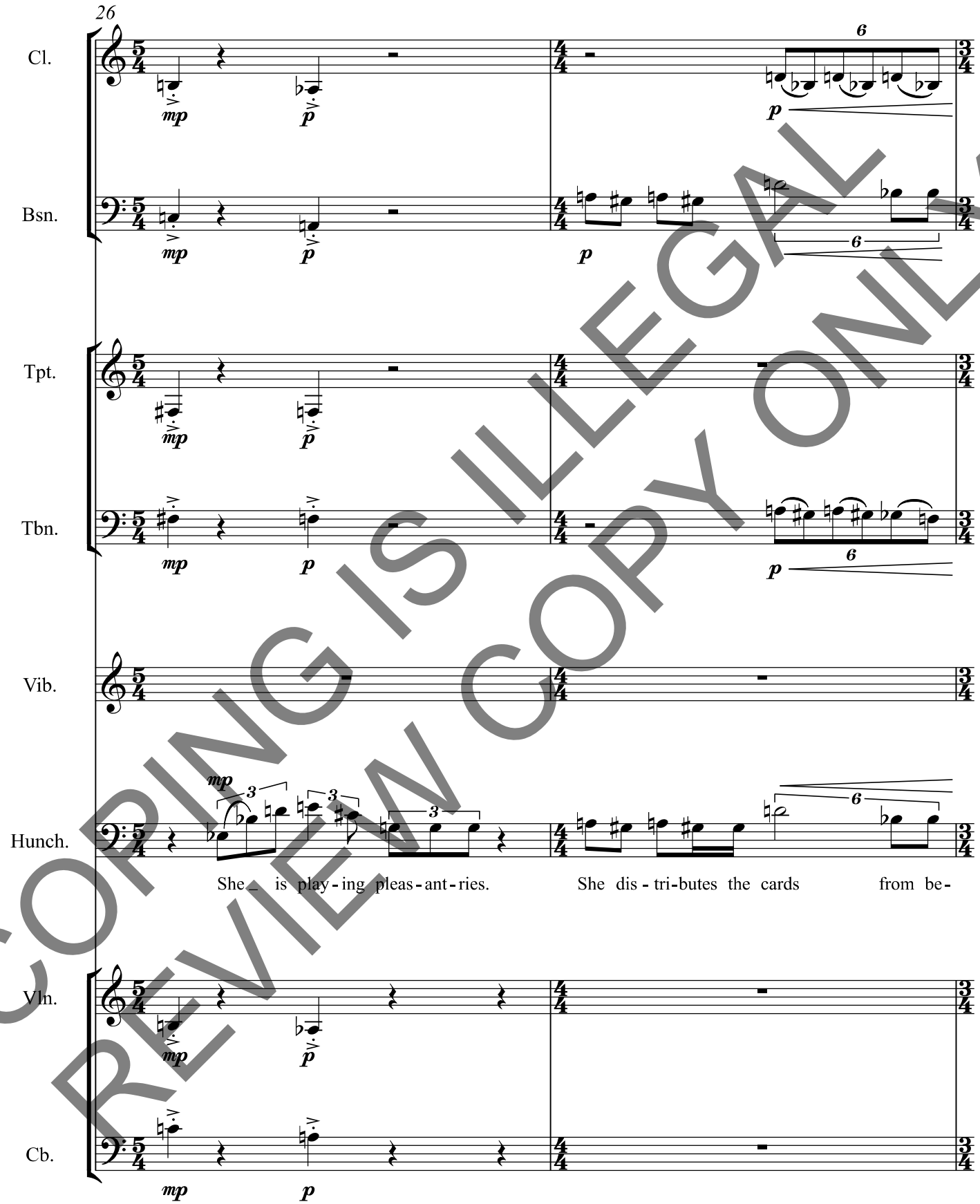

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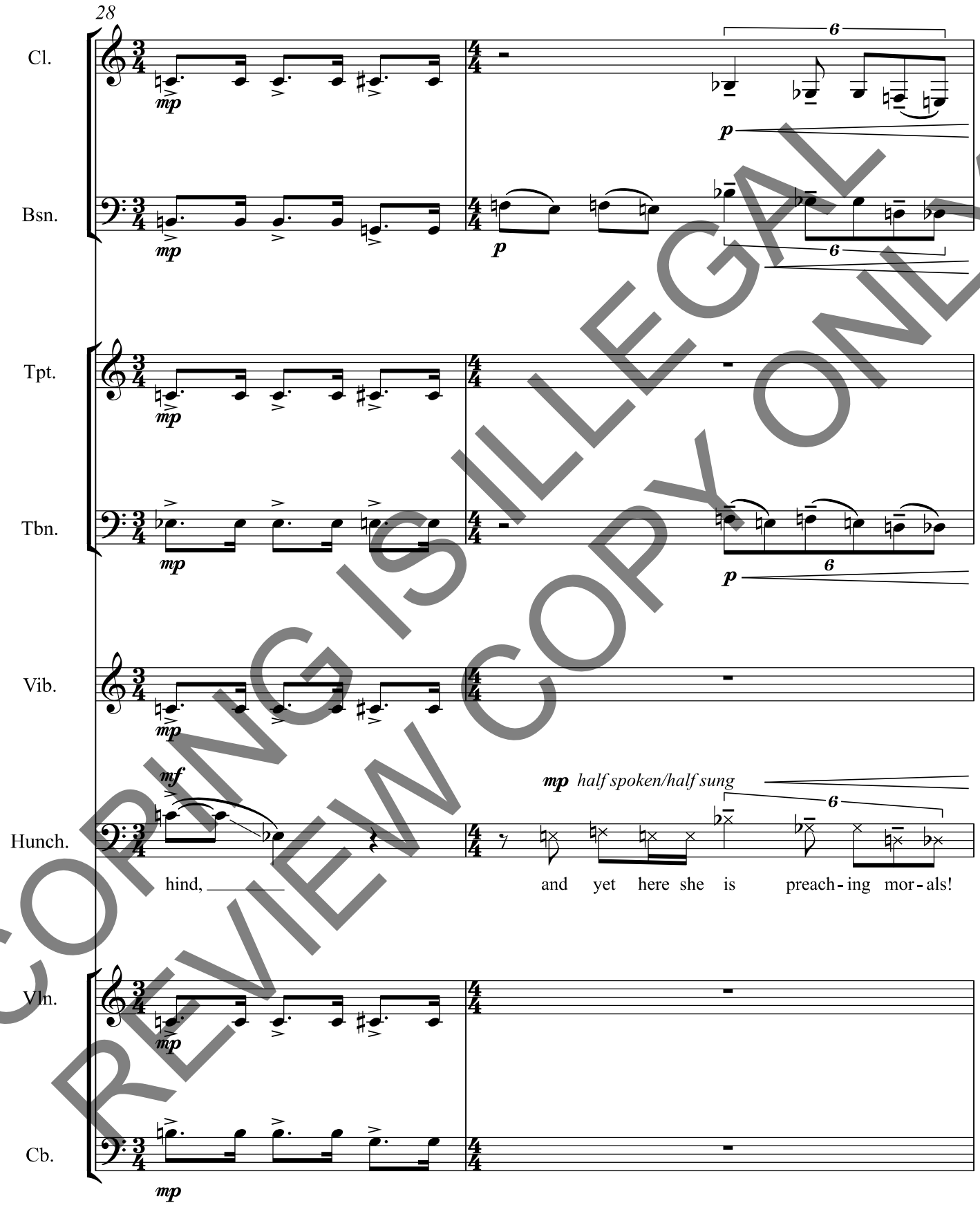

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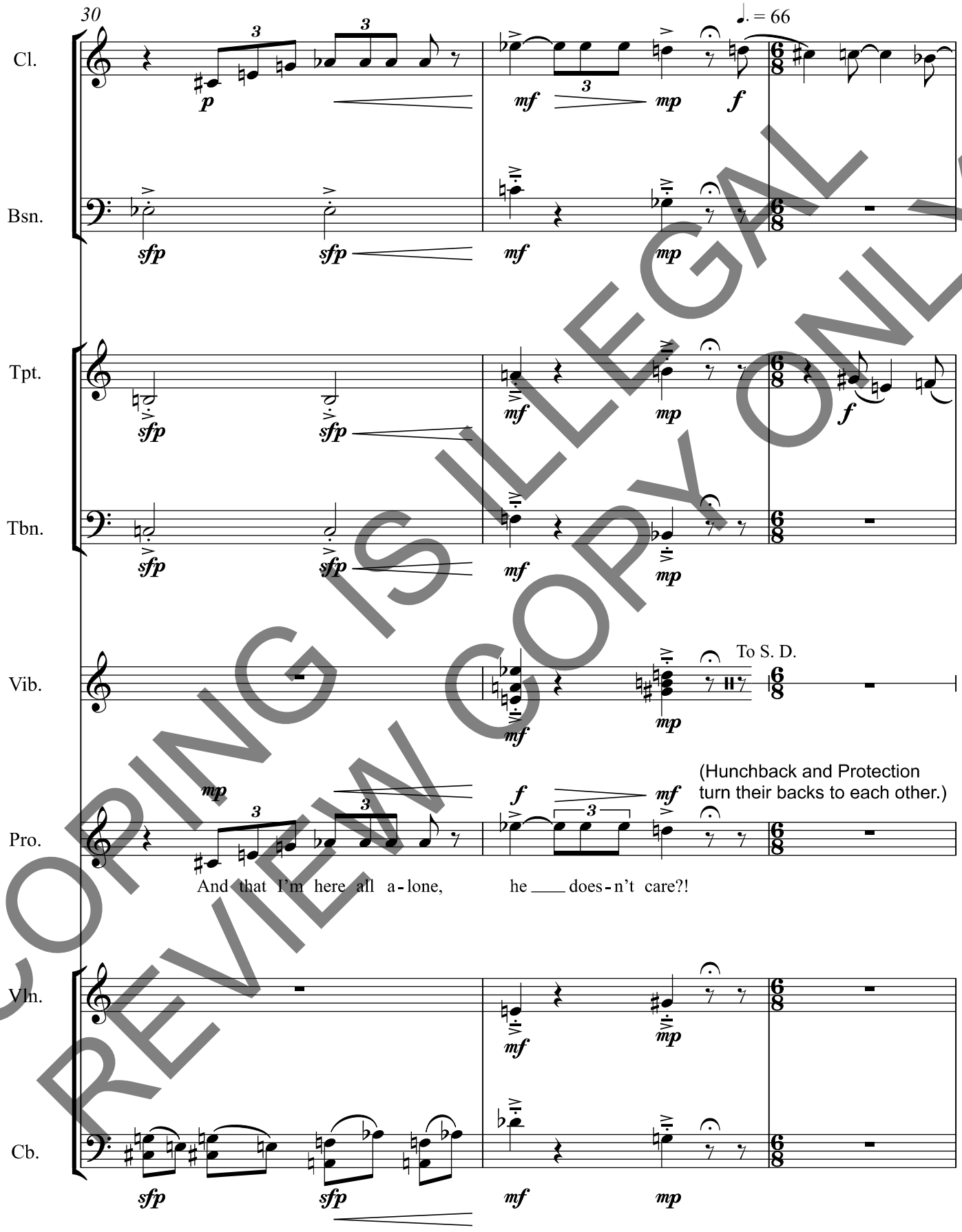

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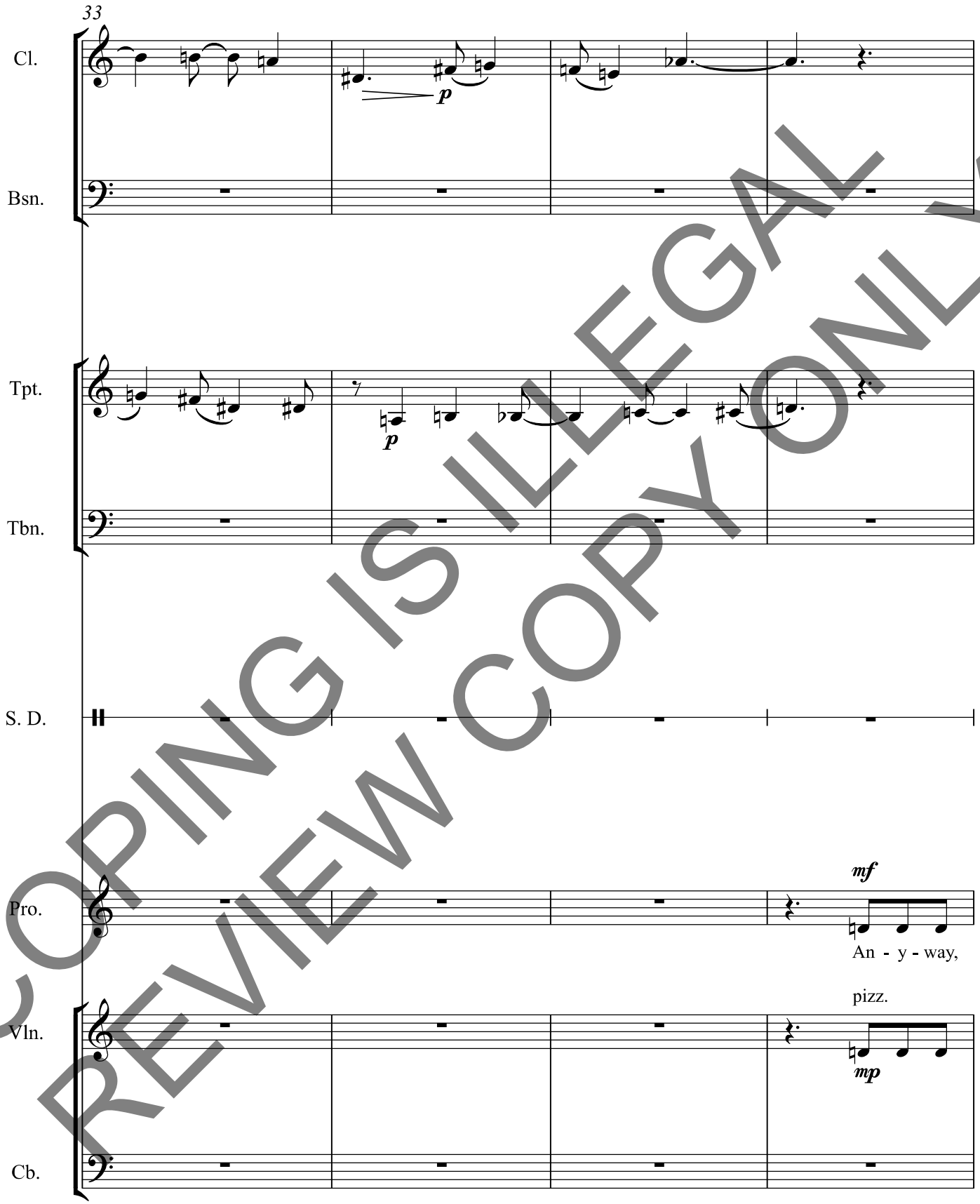

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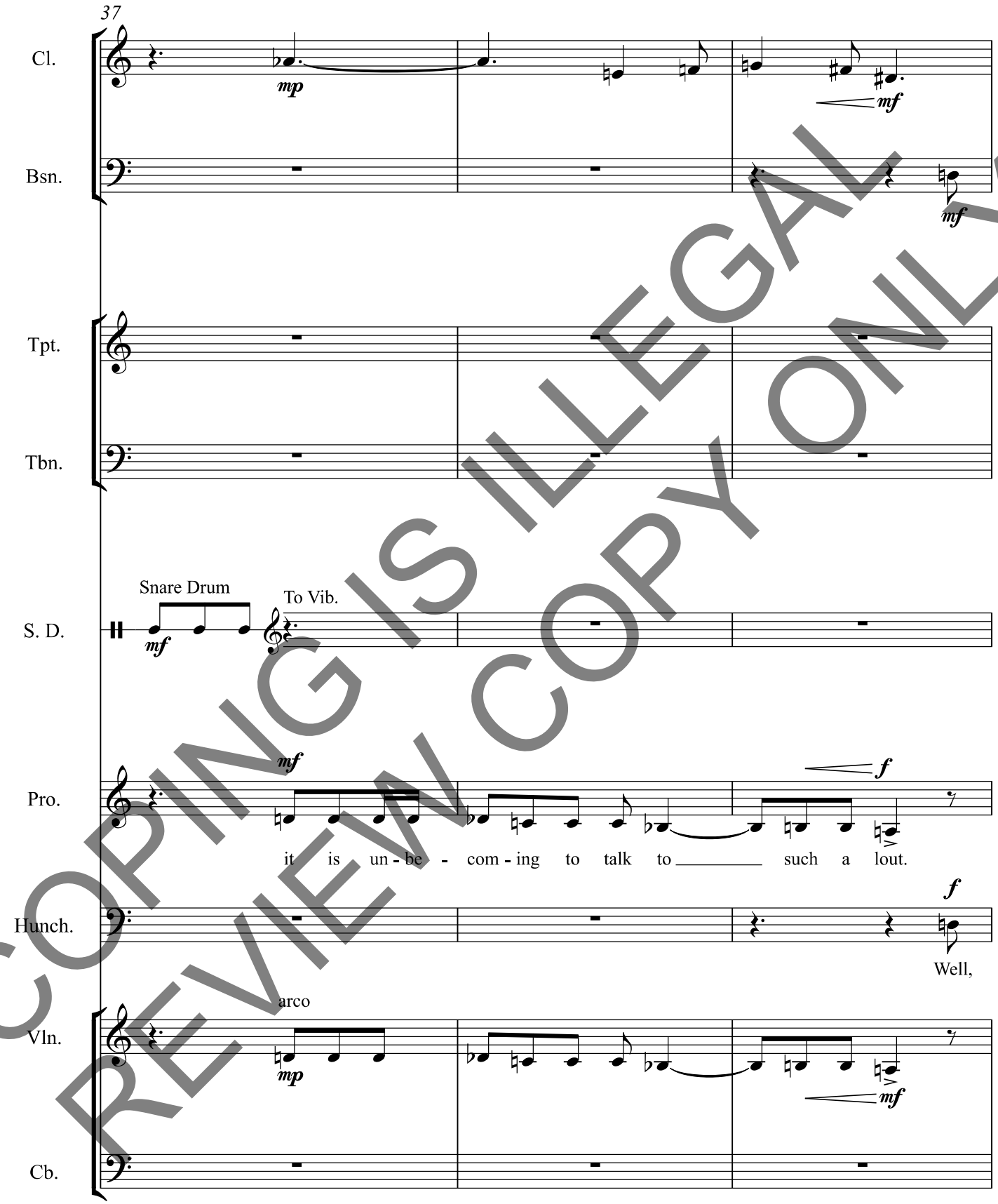

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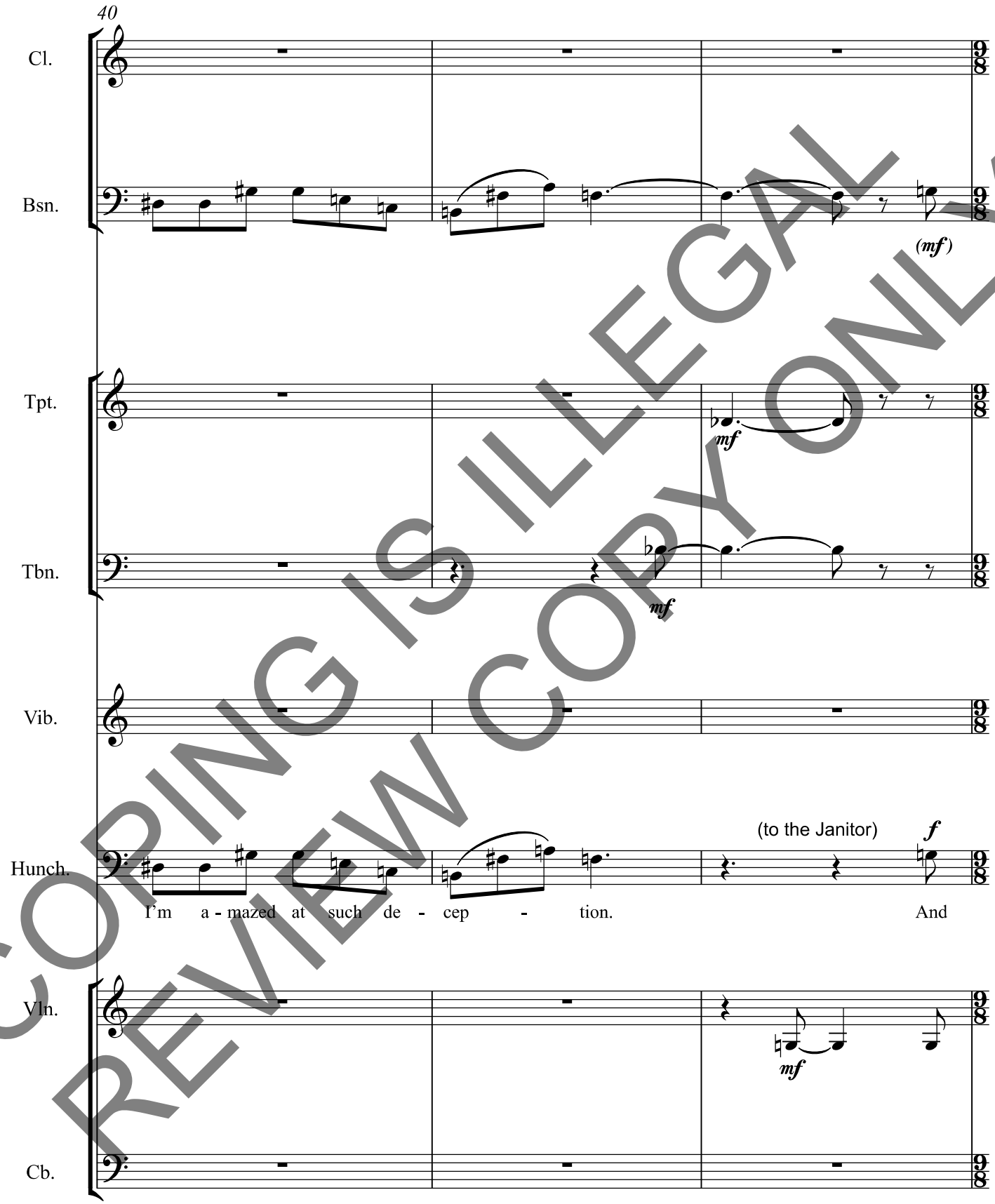

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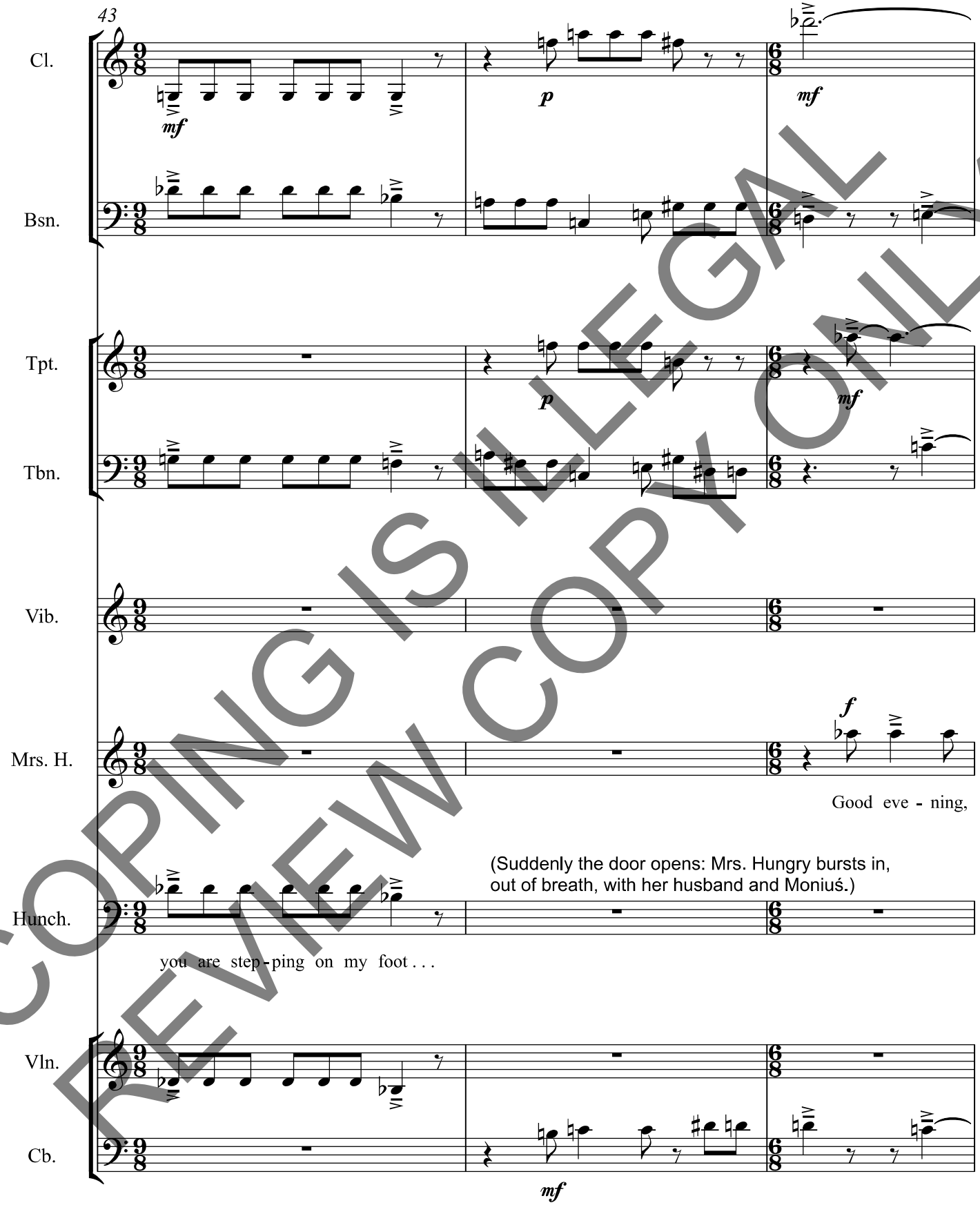

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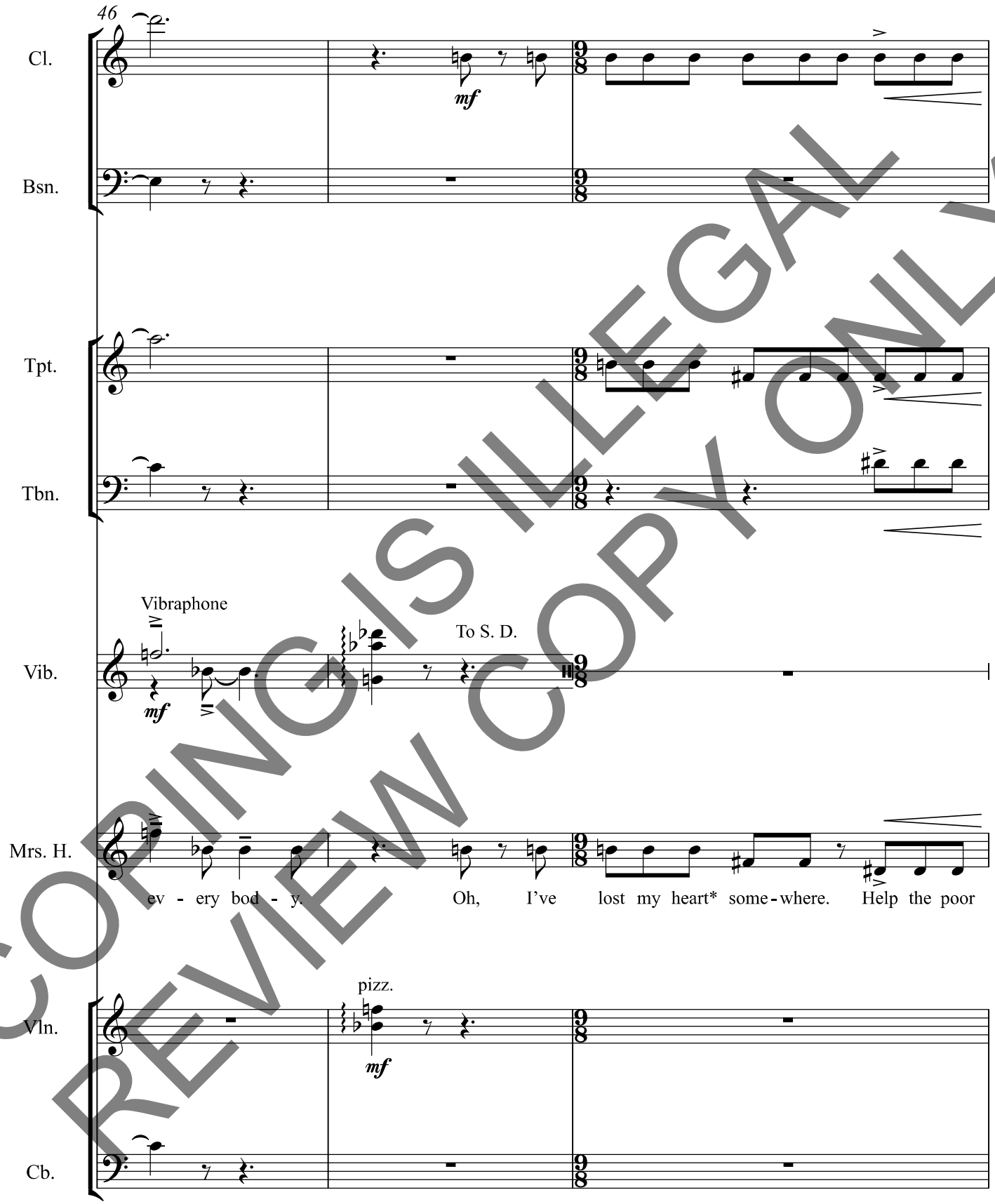

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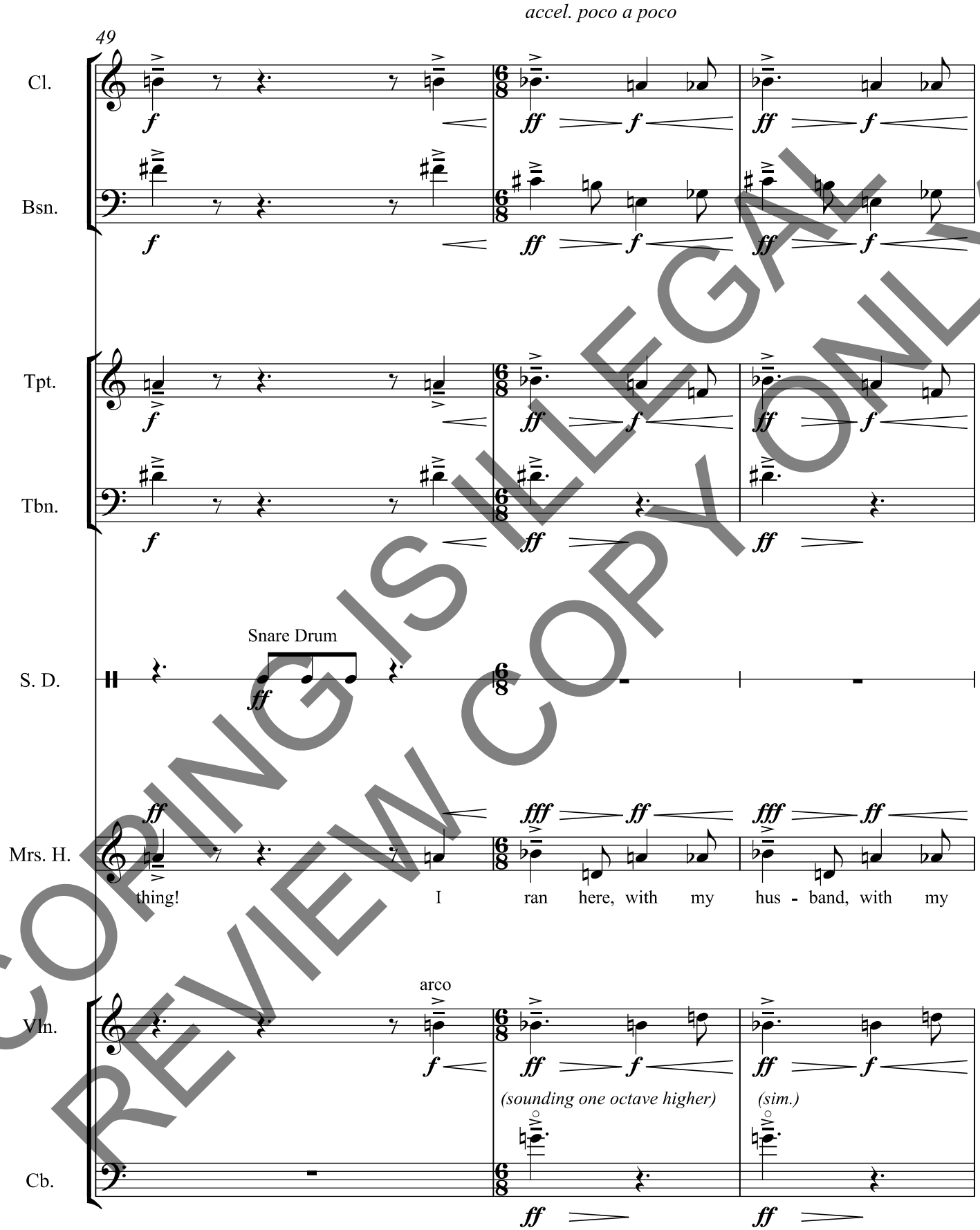
* Her child



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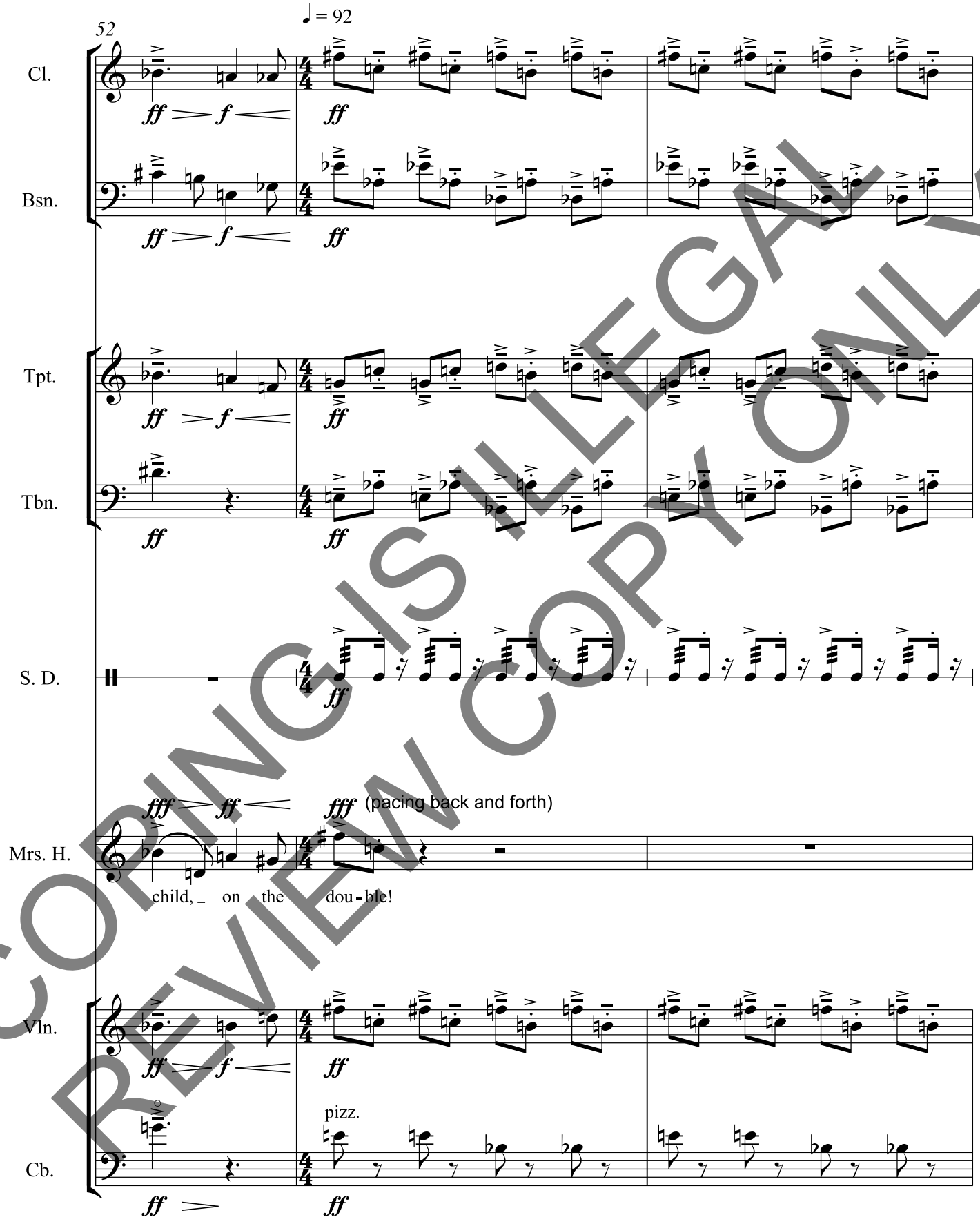

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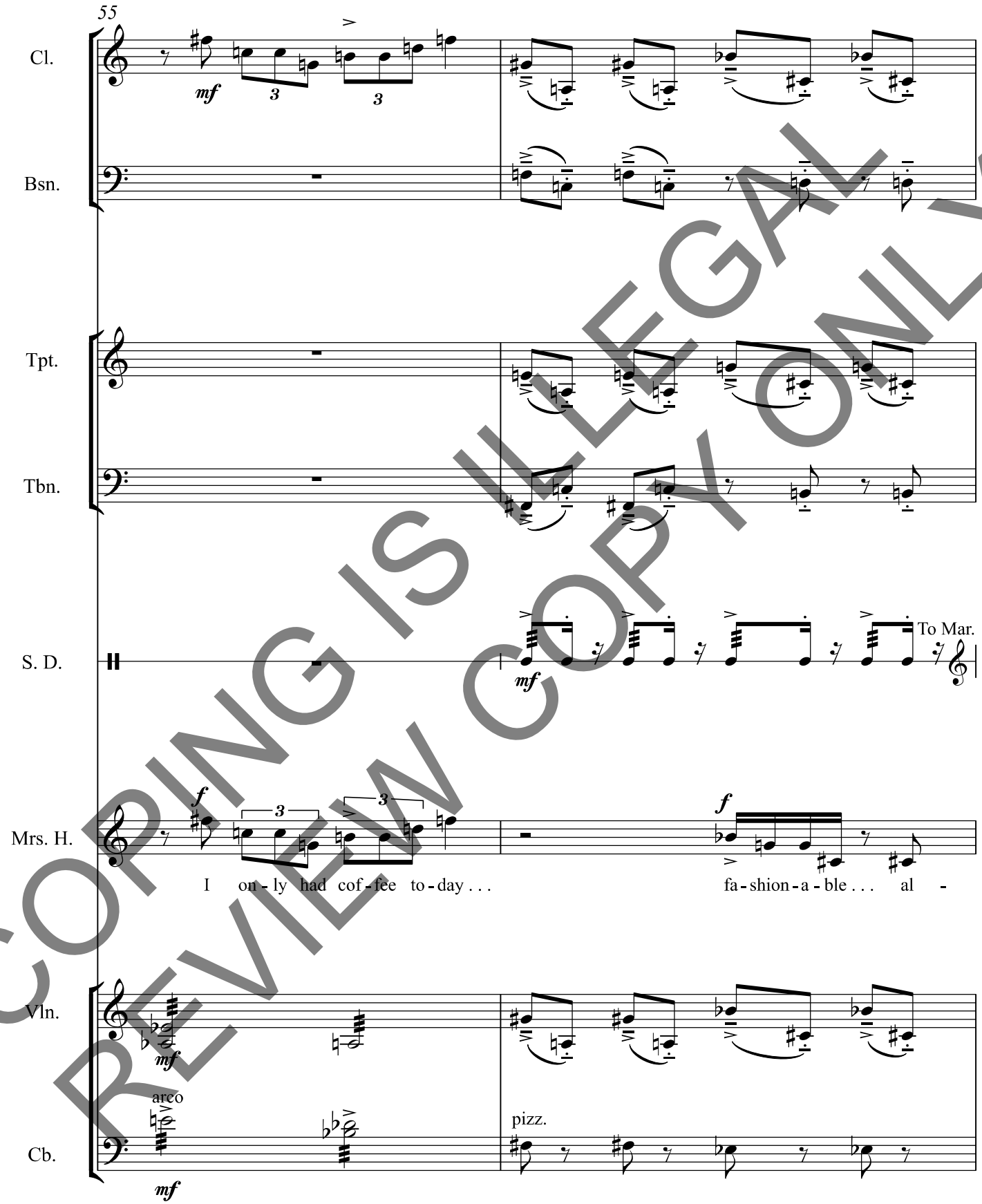

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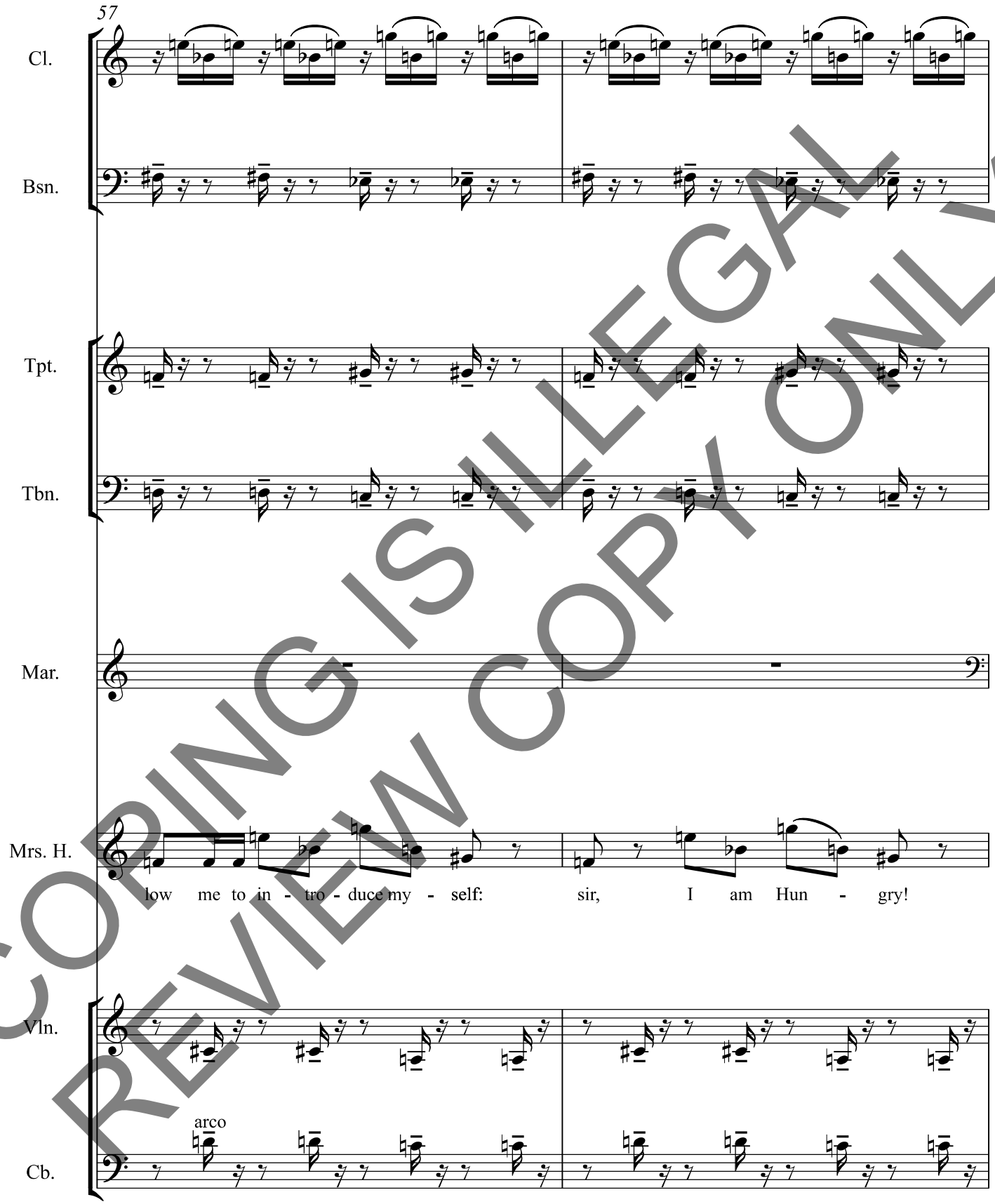

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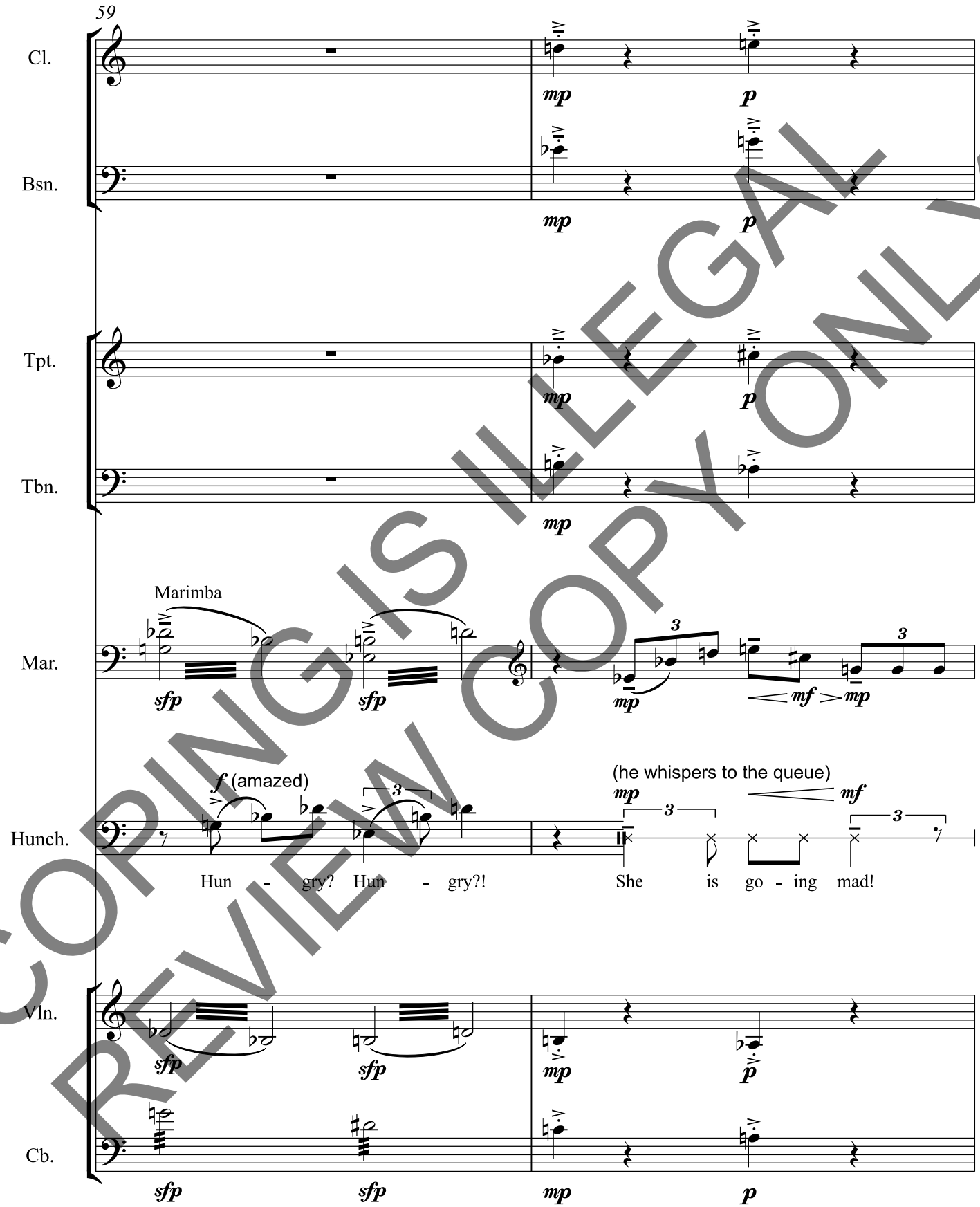

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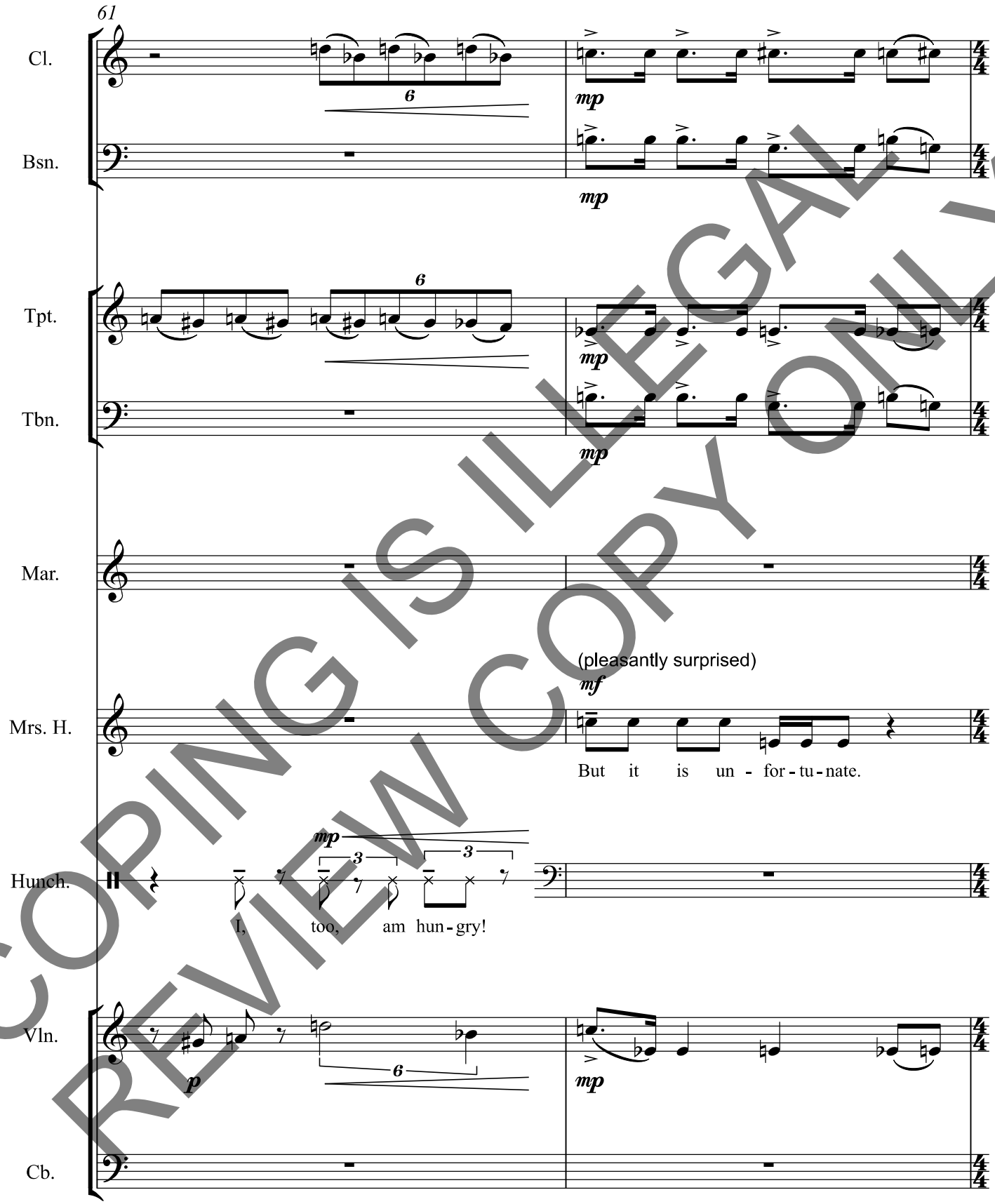

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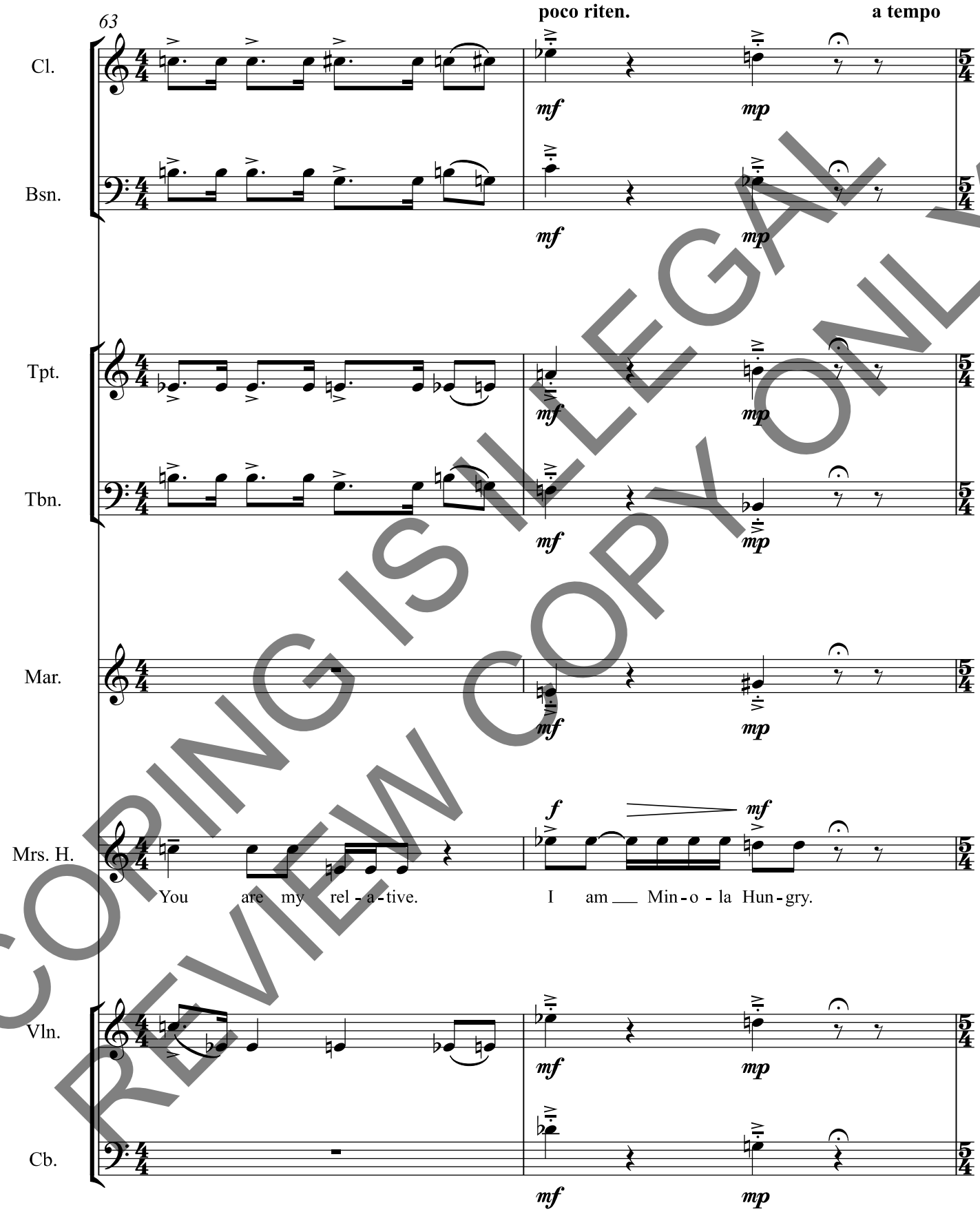

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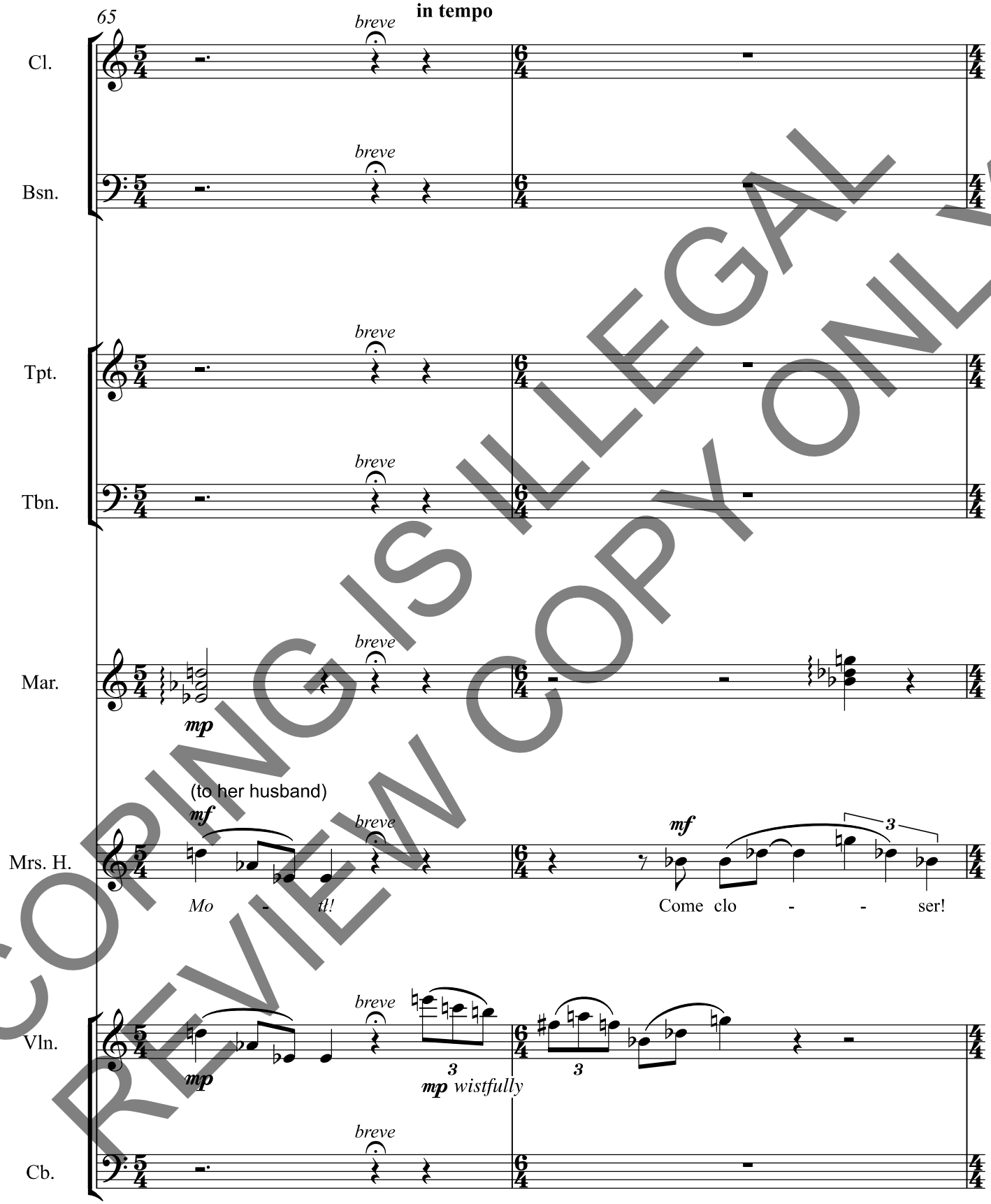

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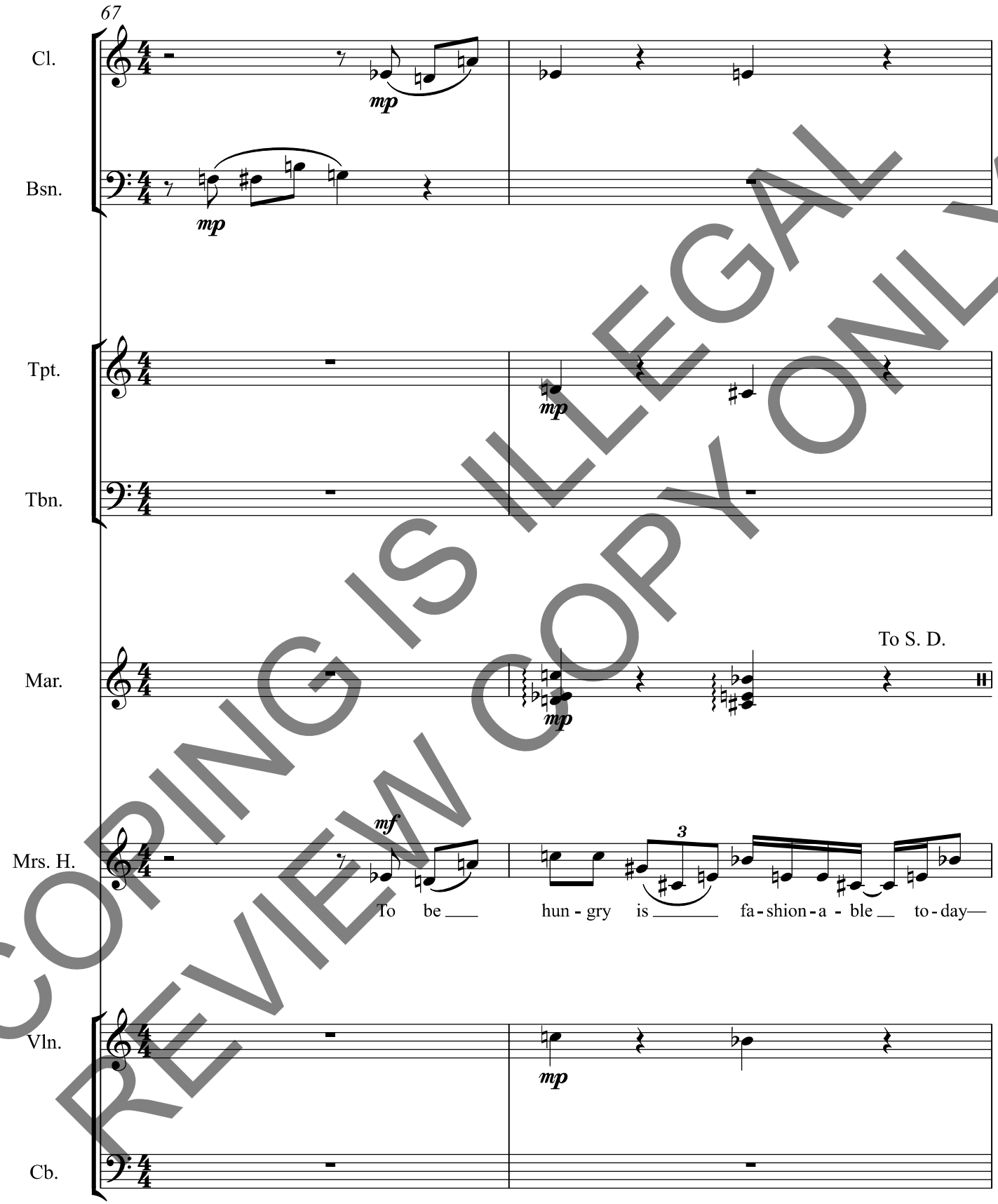

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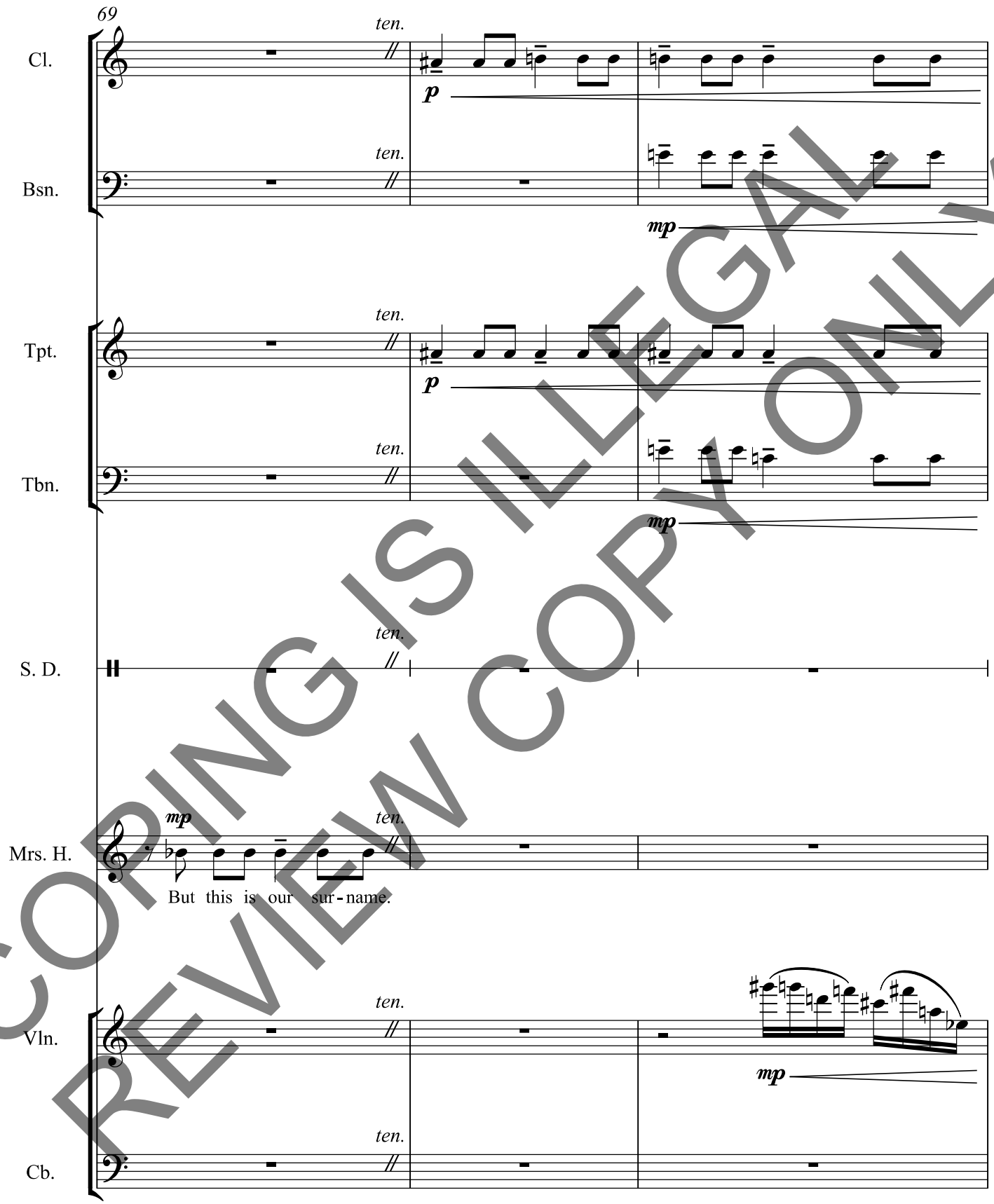

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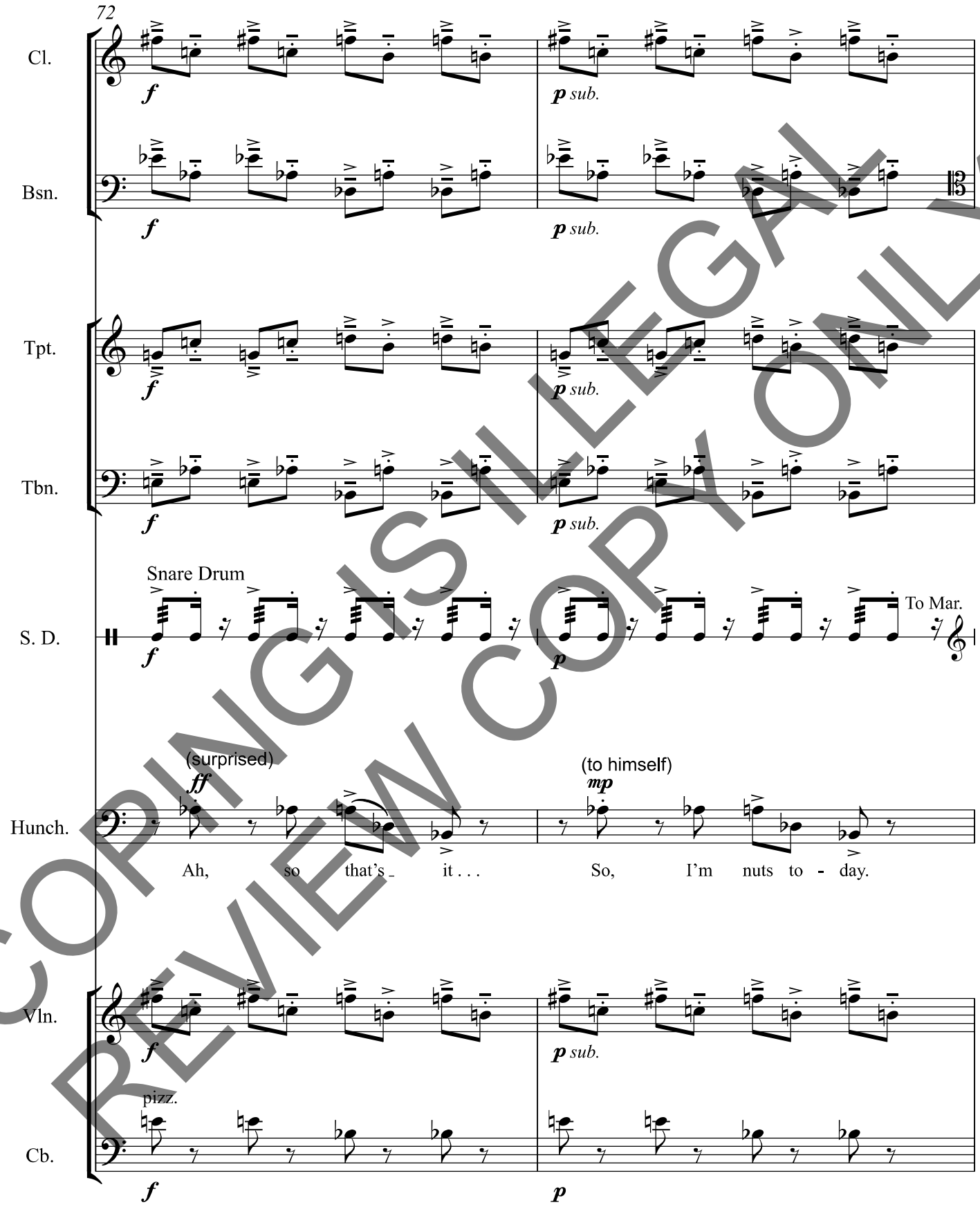

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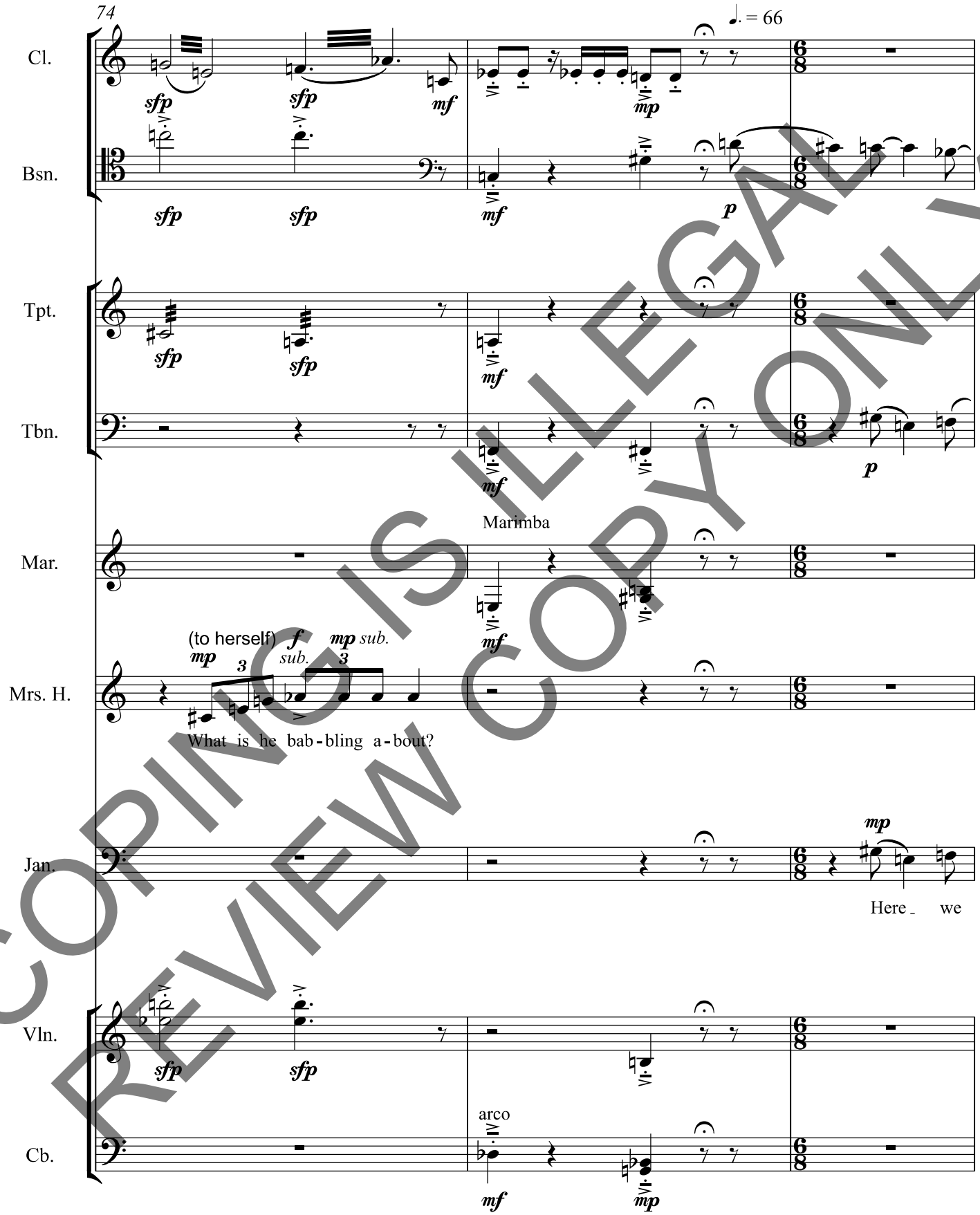

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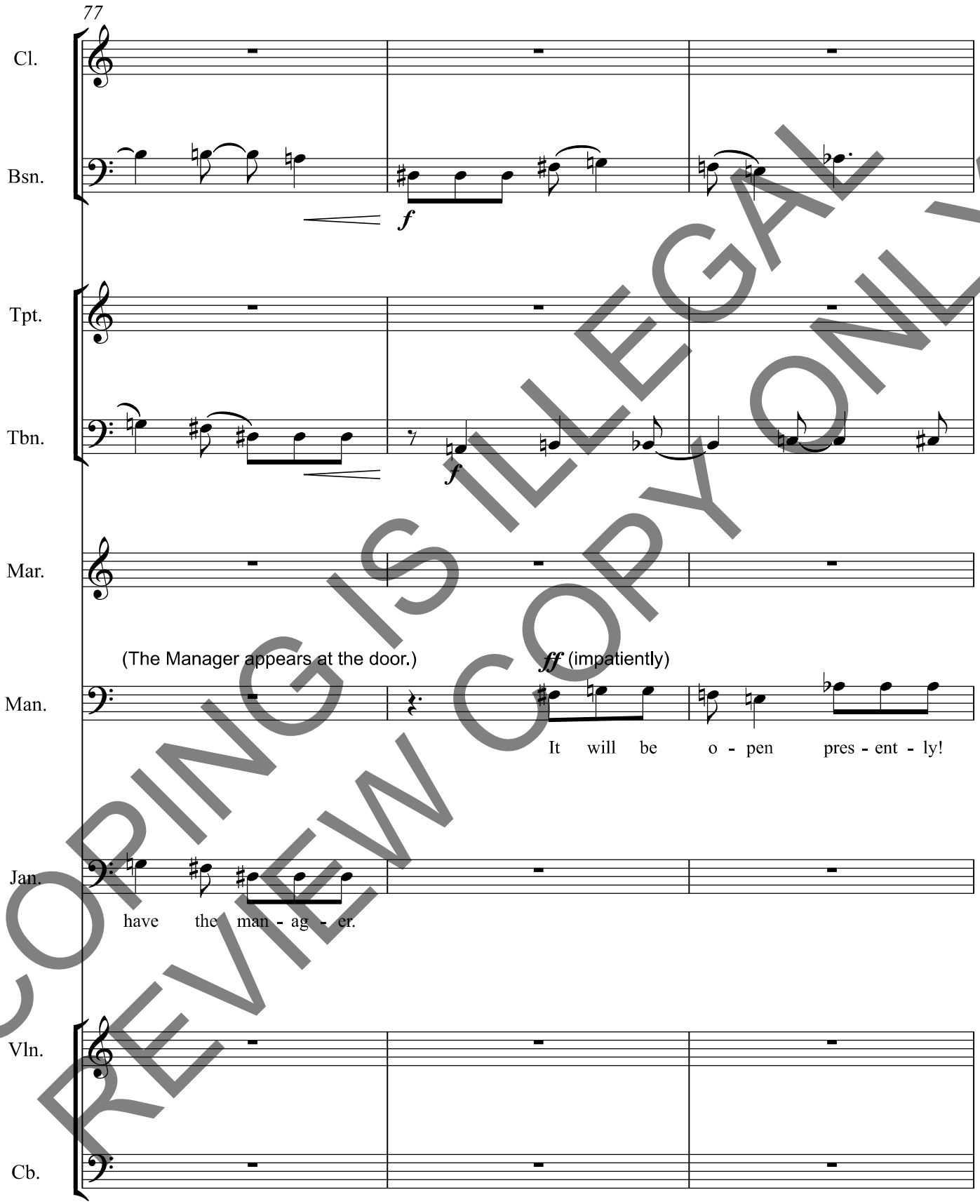

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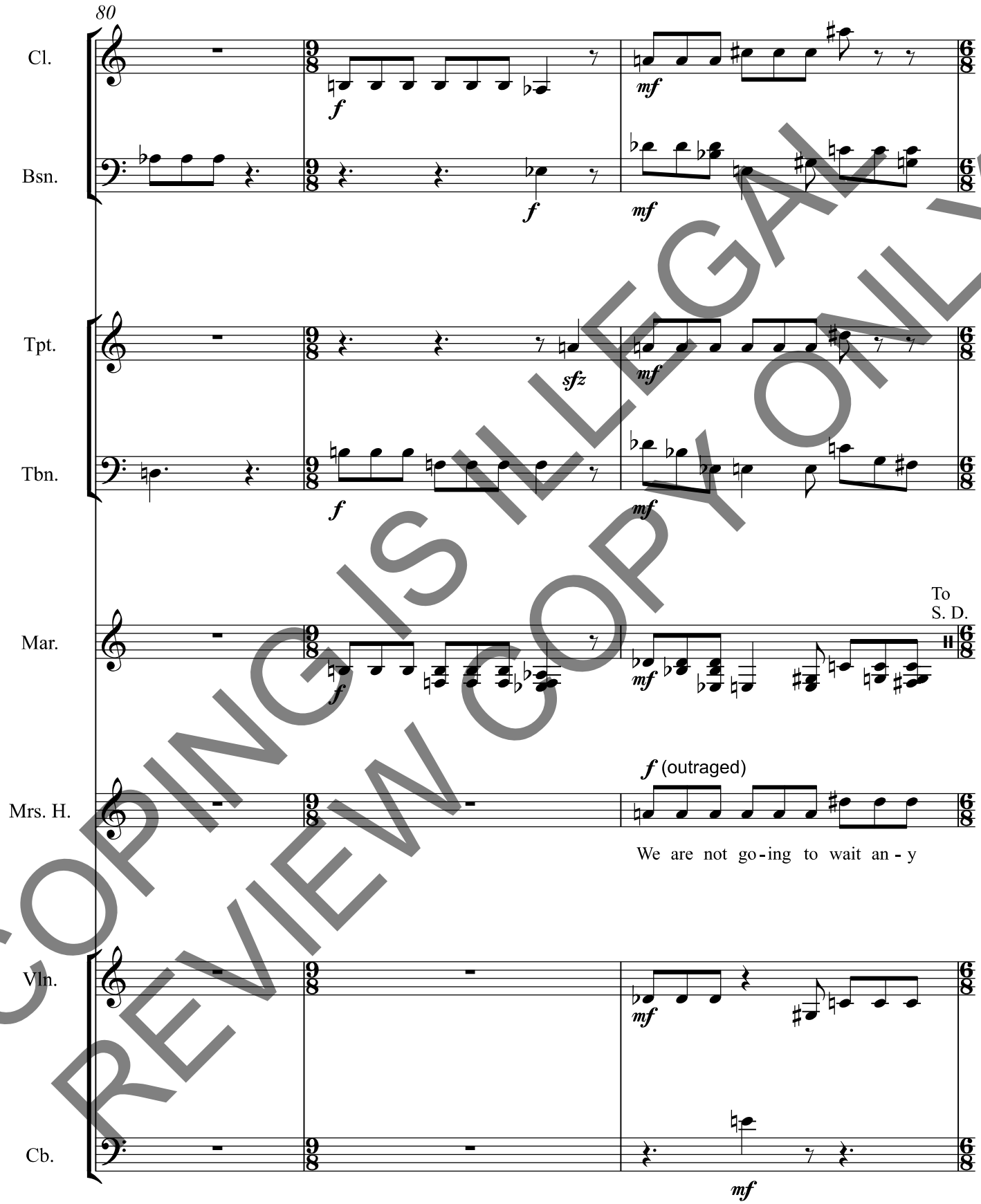

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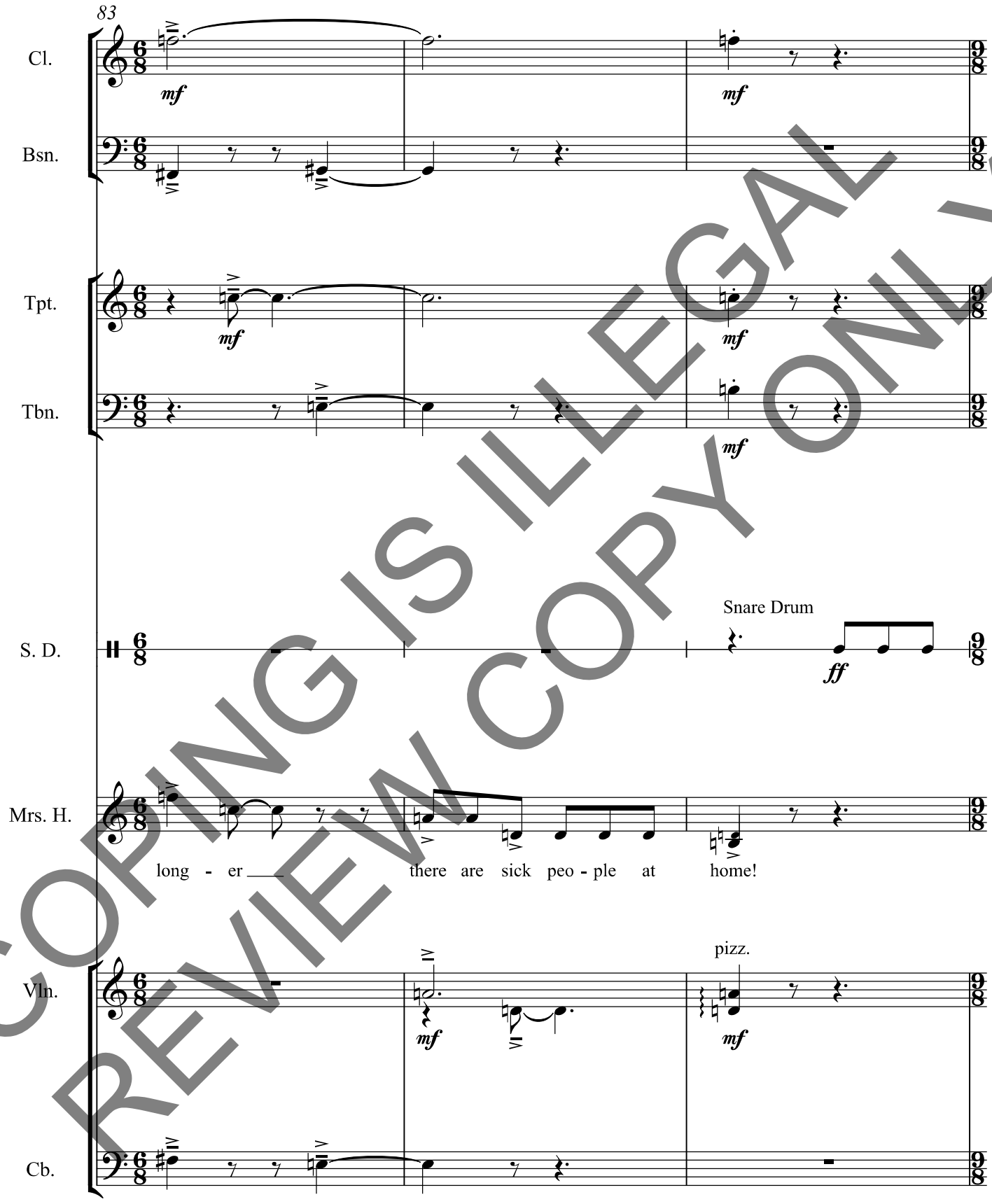

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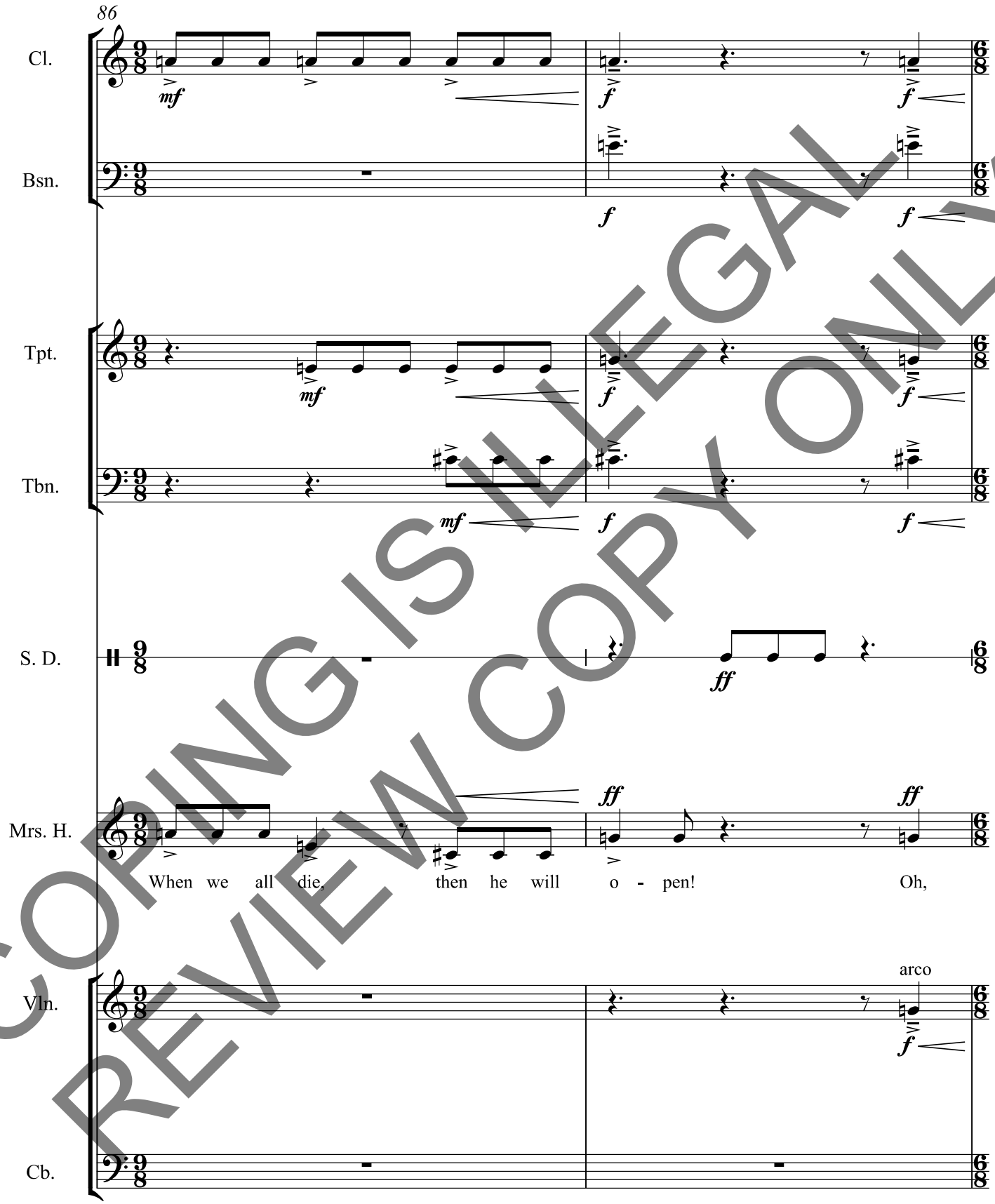

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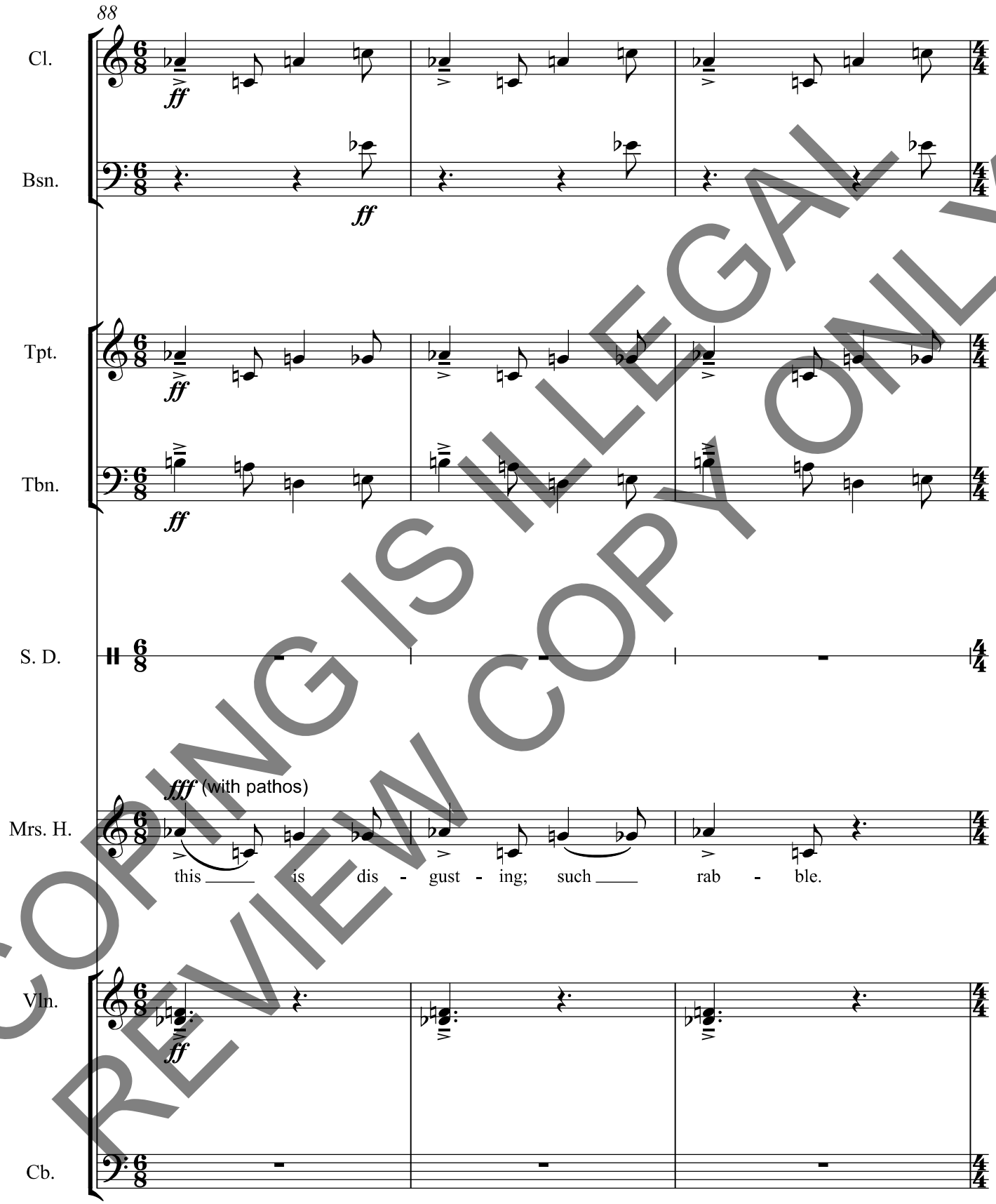

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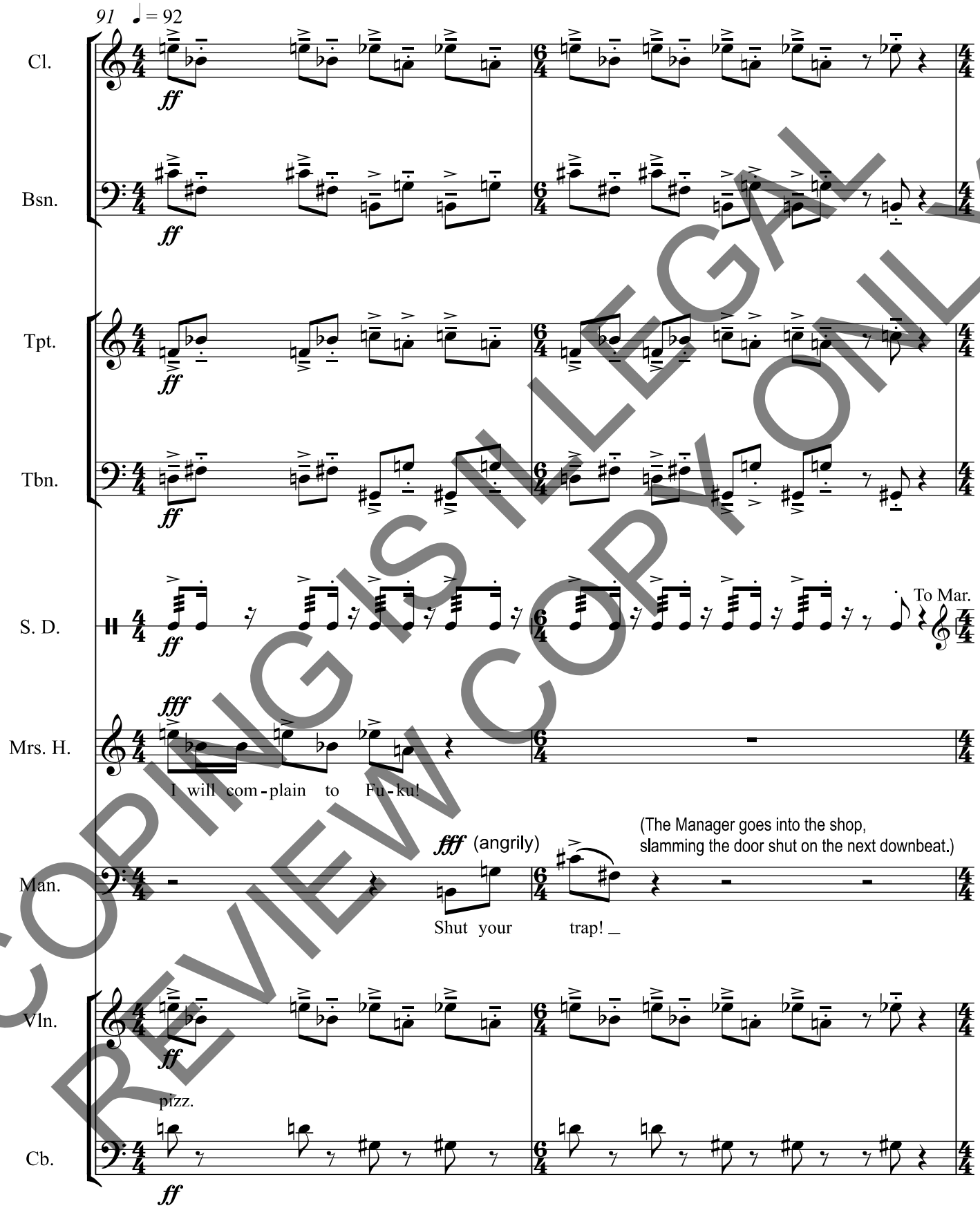

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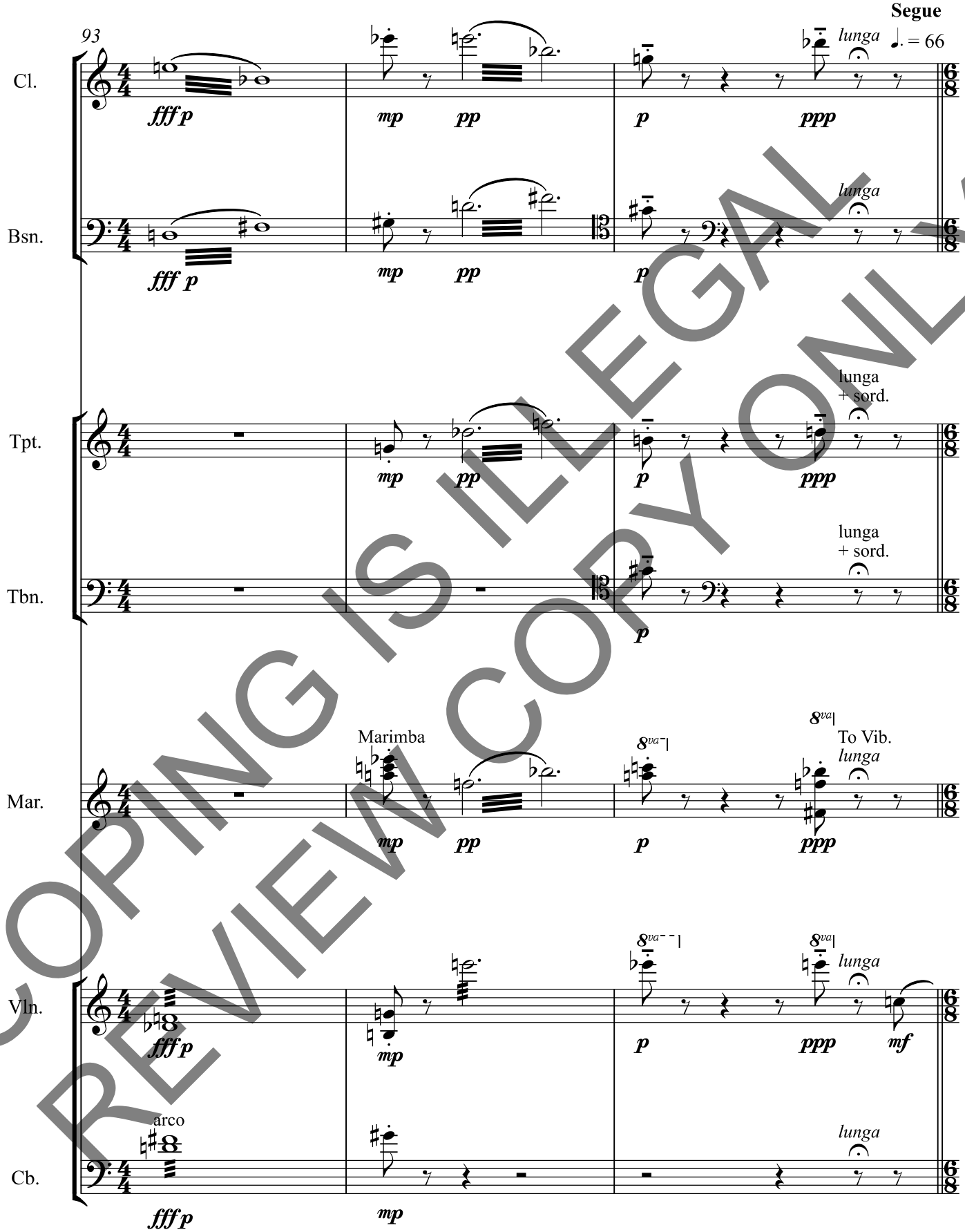

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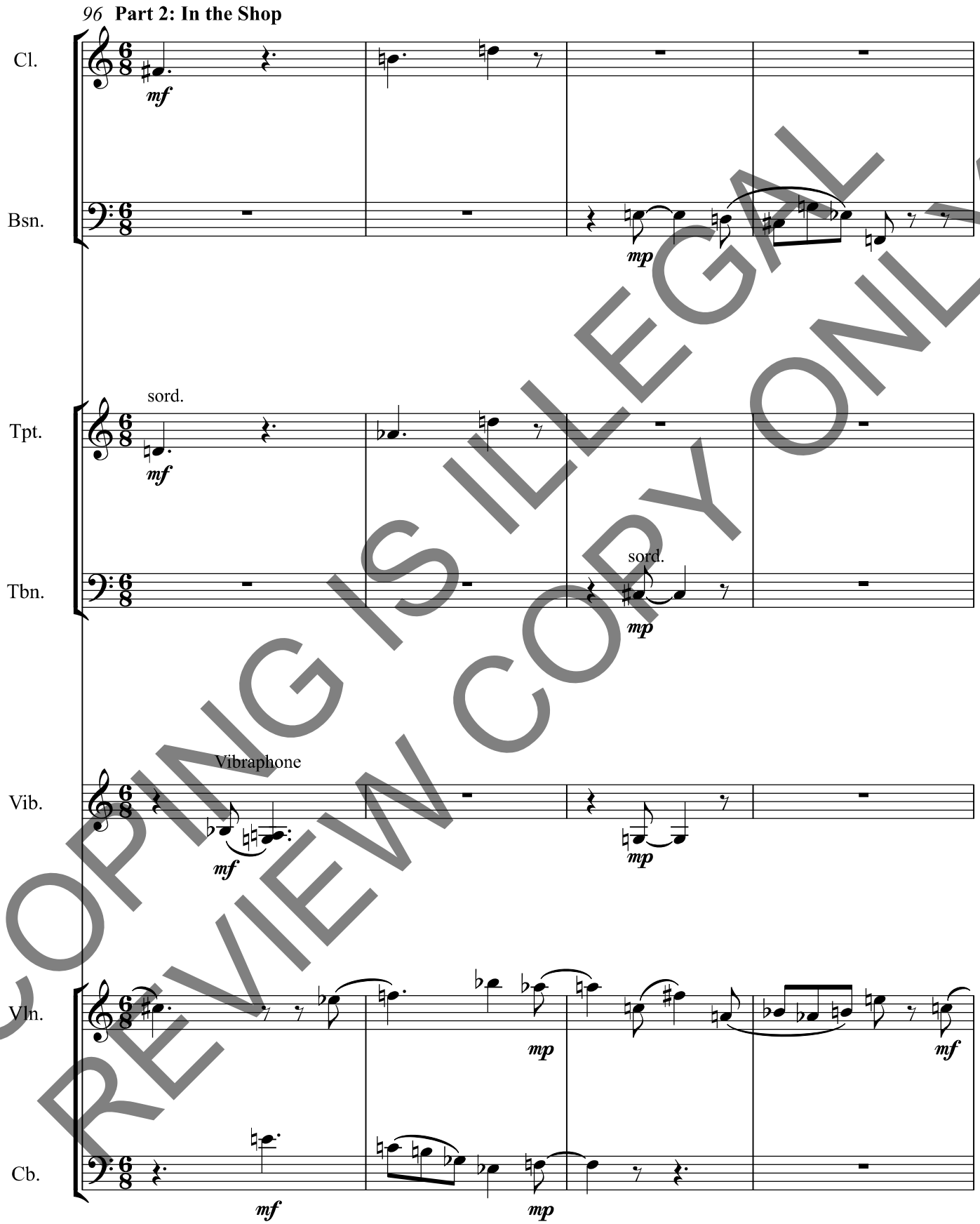

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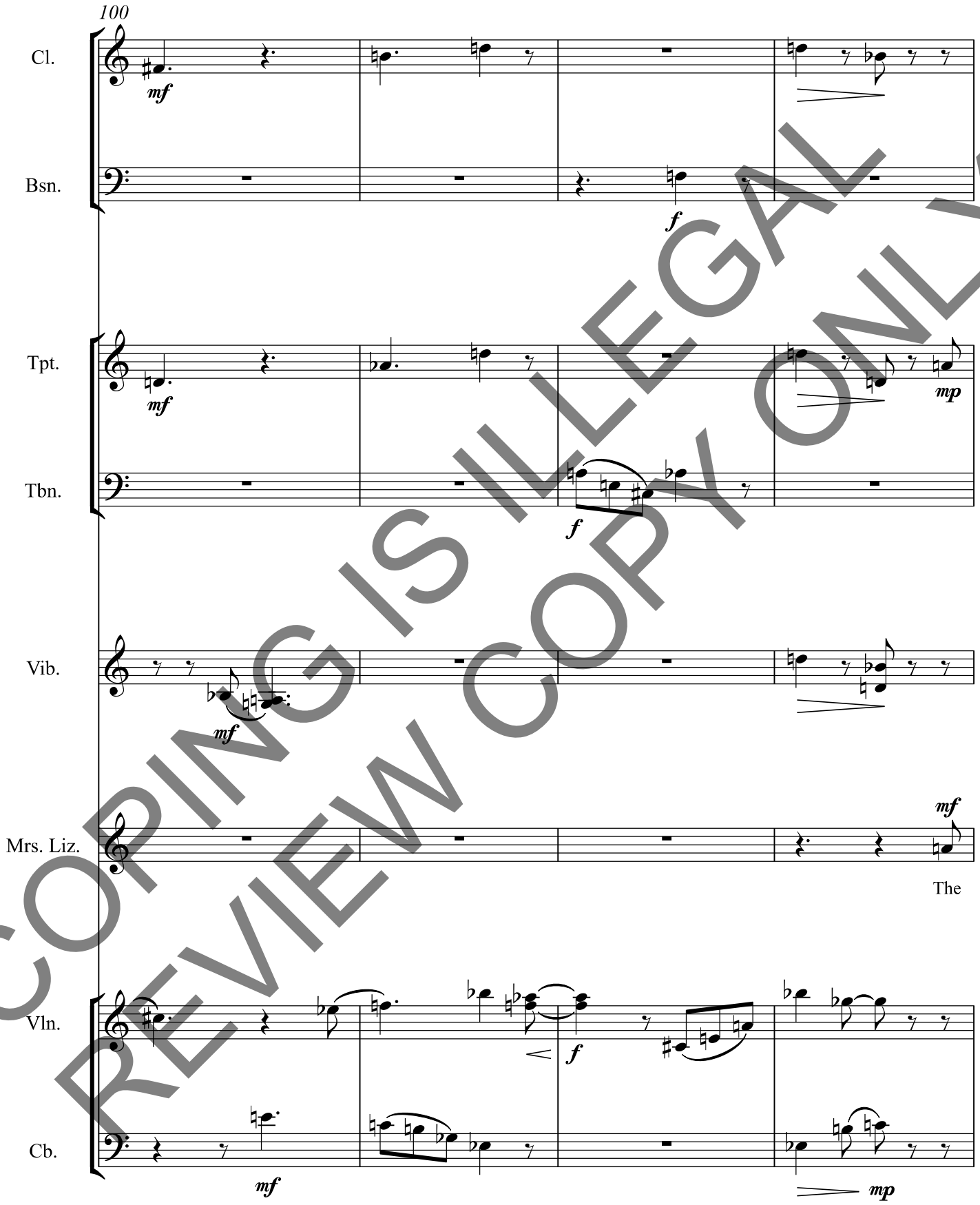

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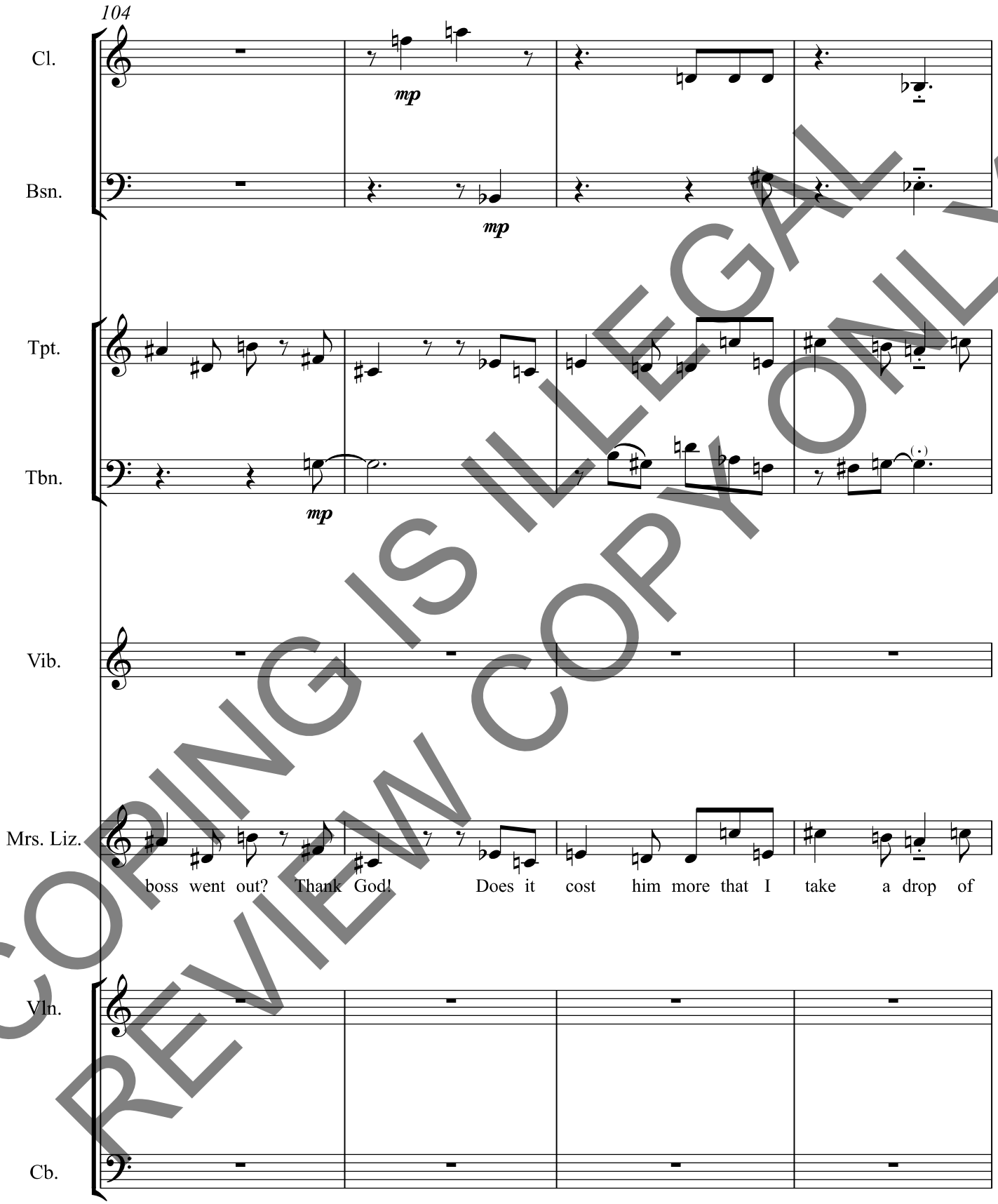

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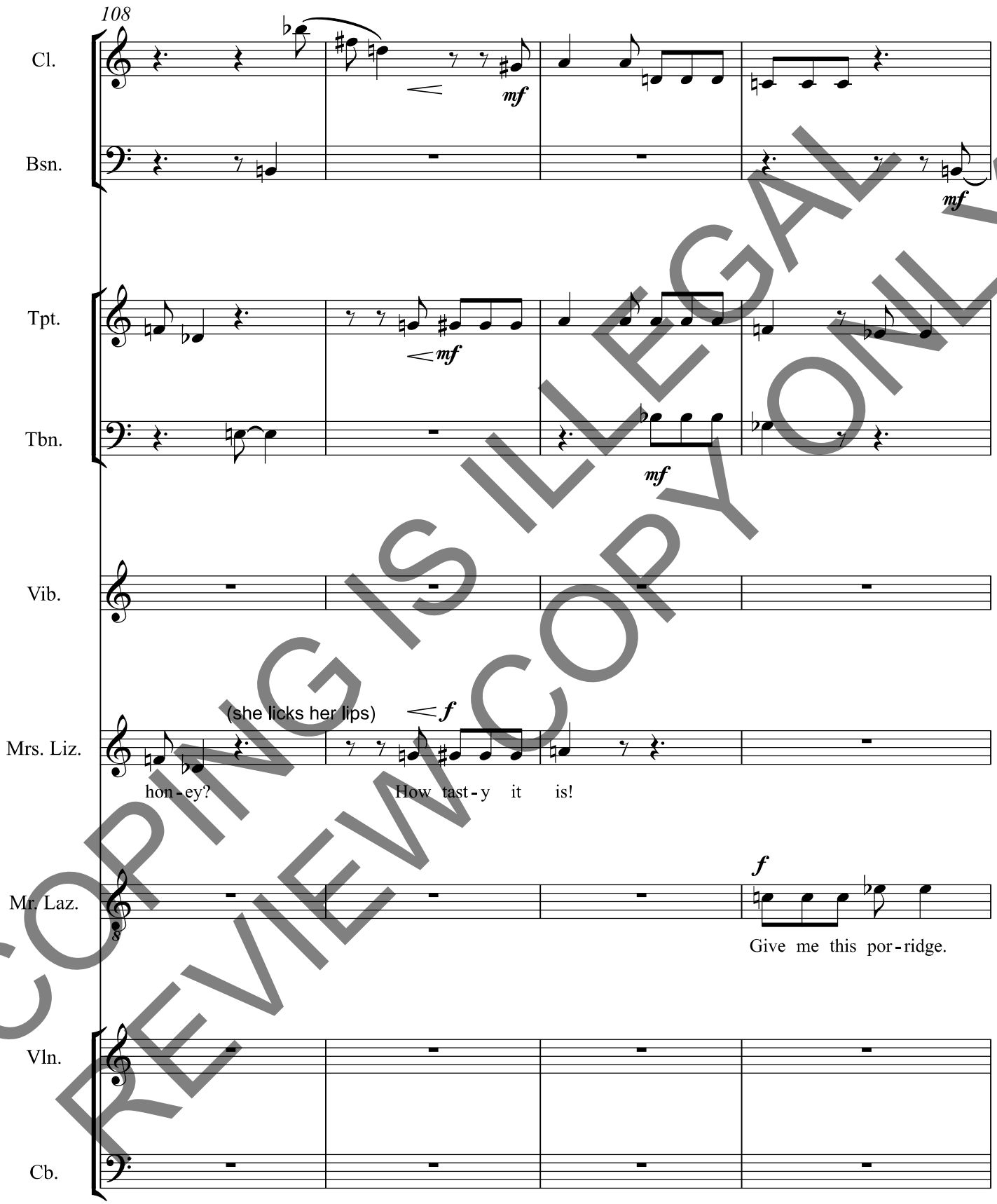

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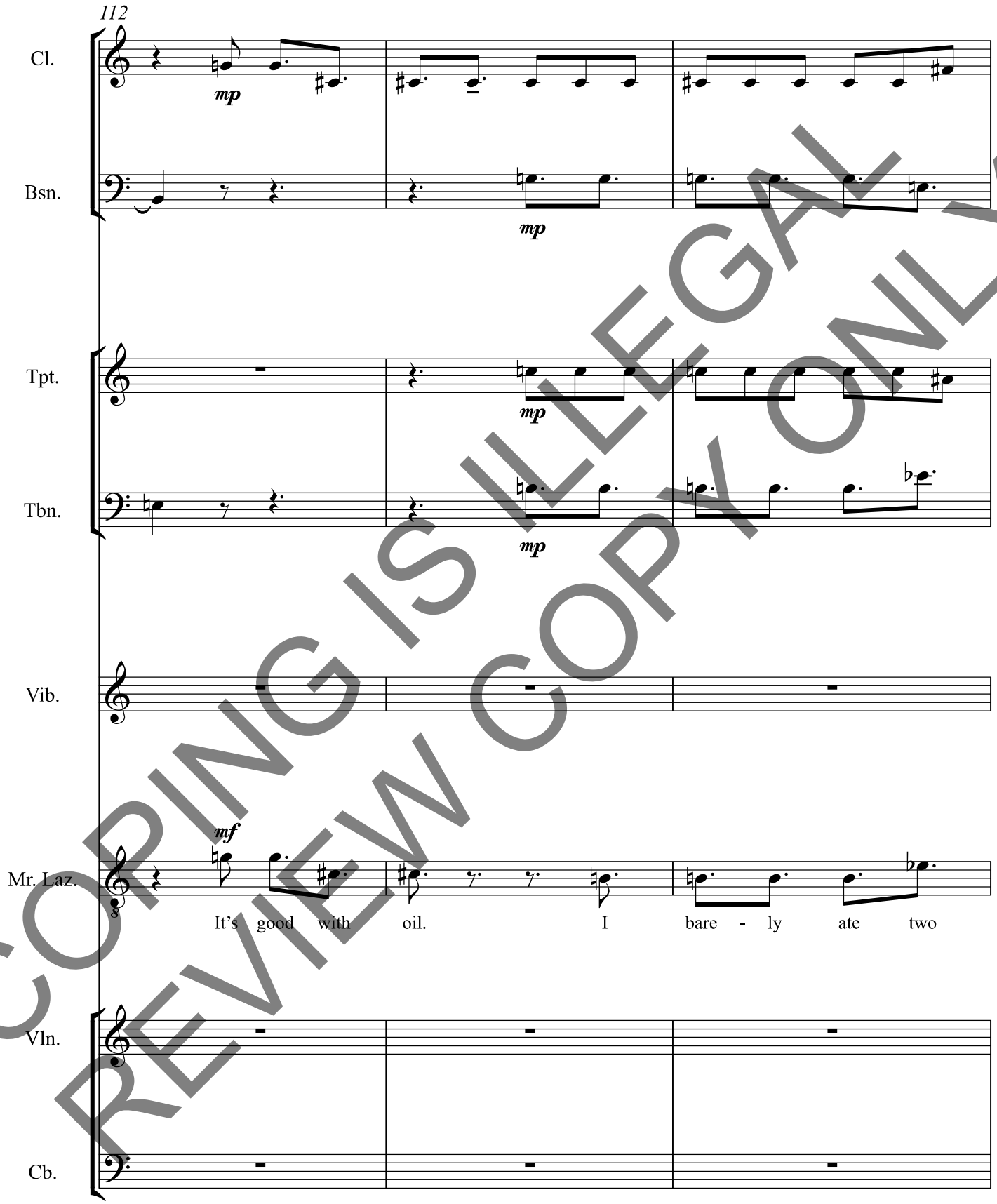

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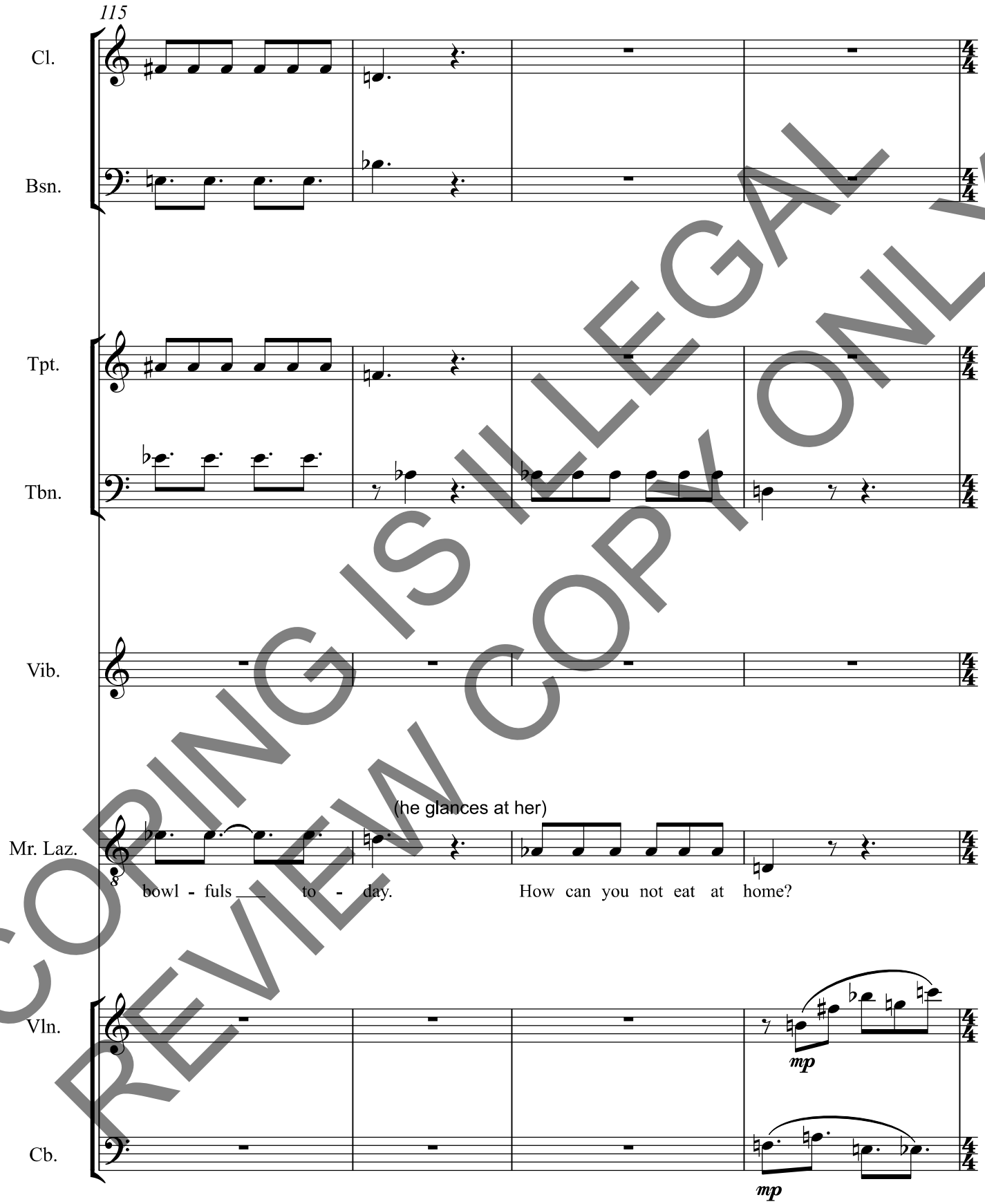

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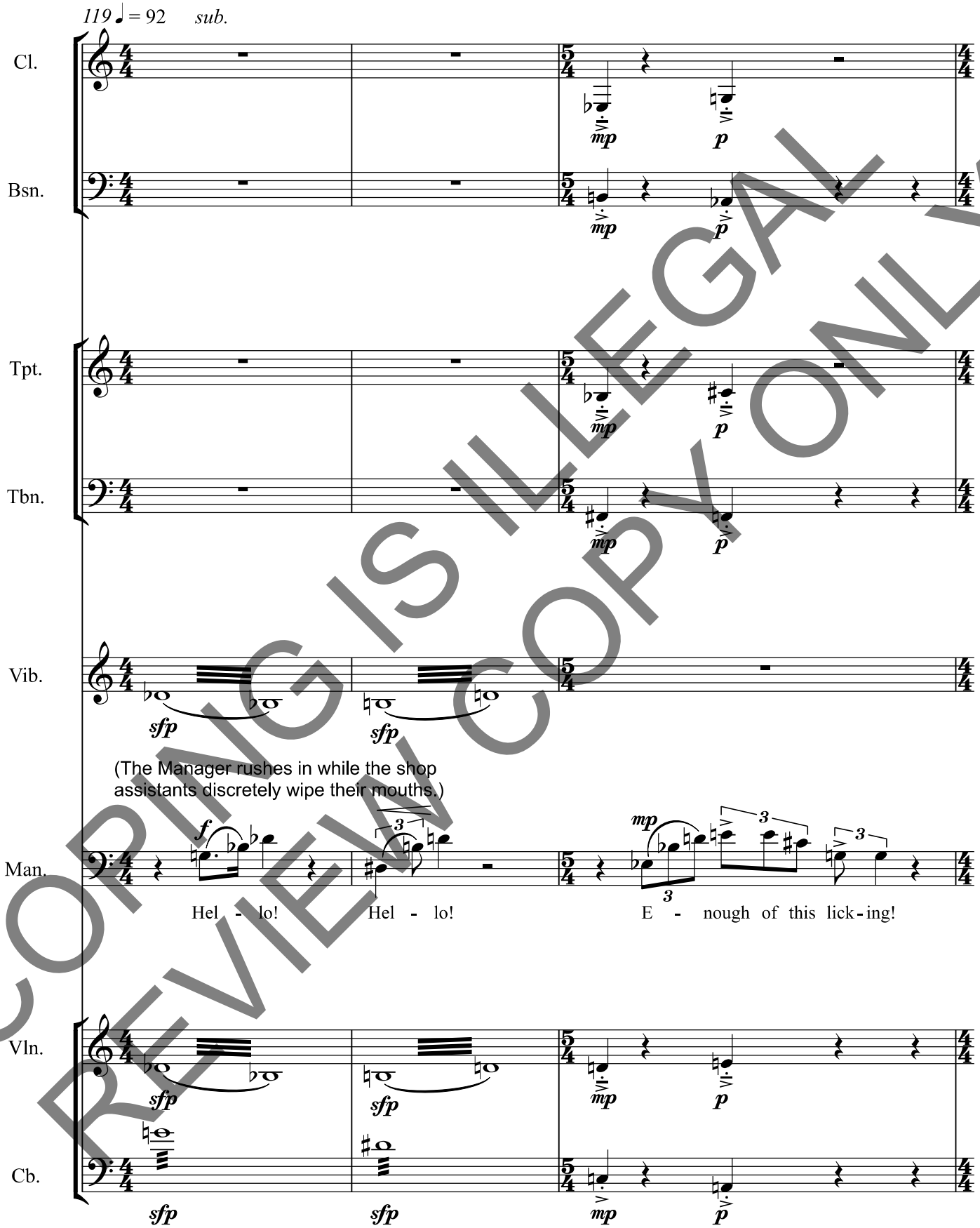

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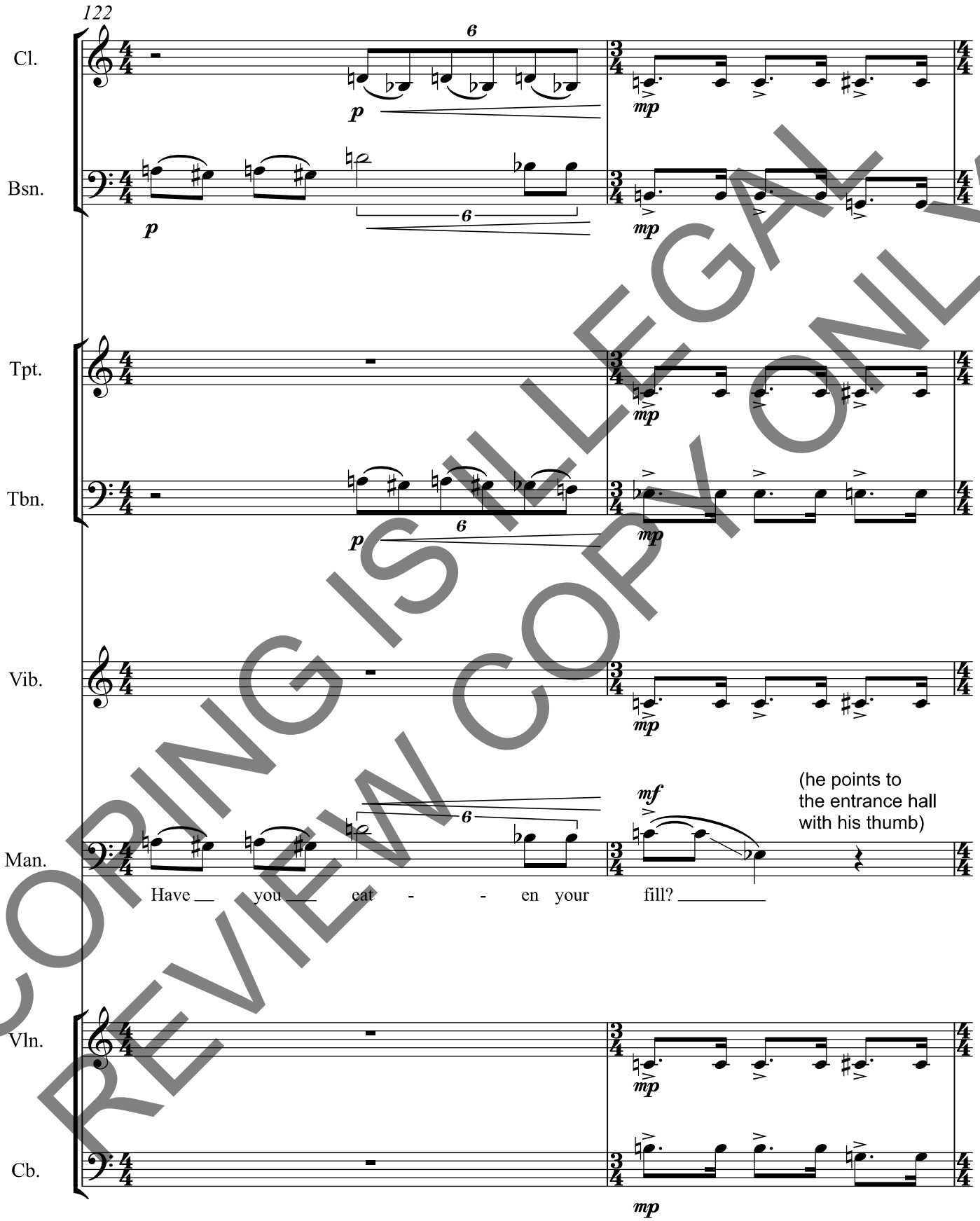

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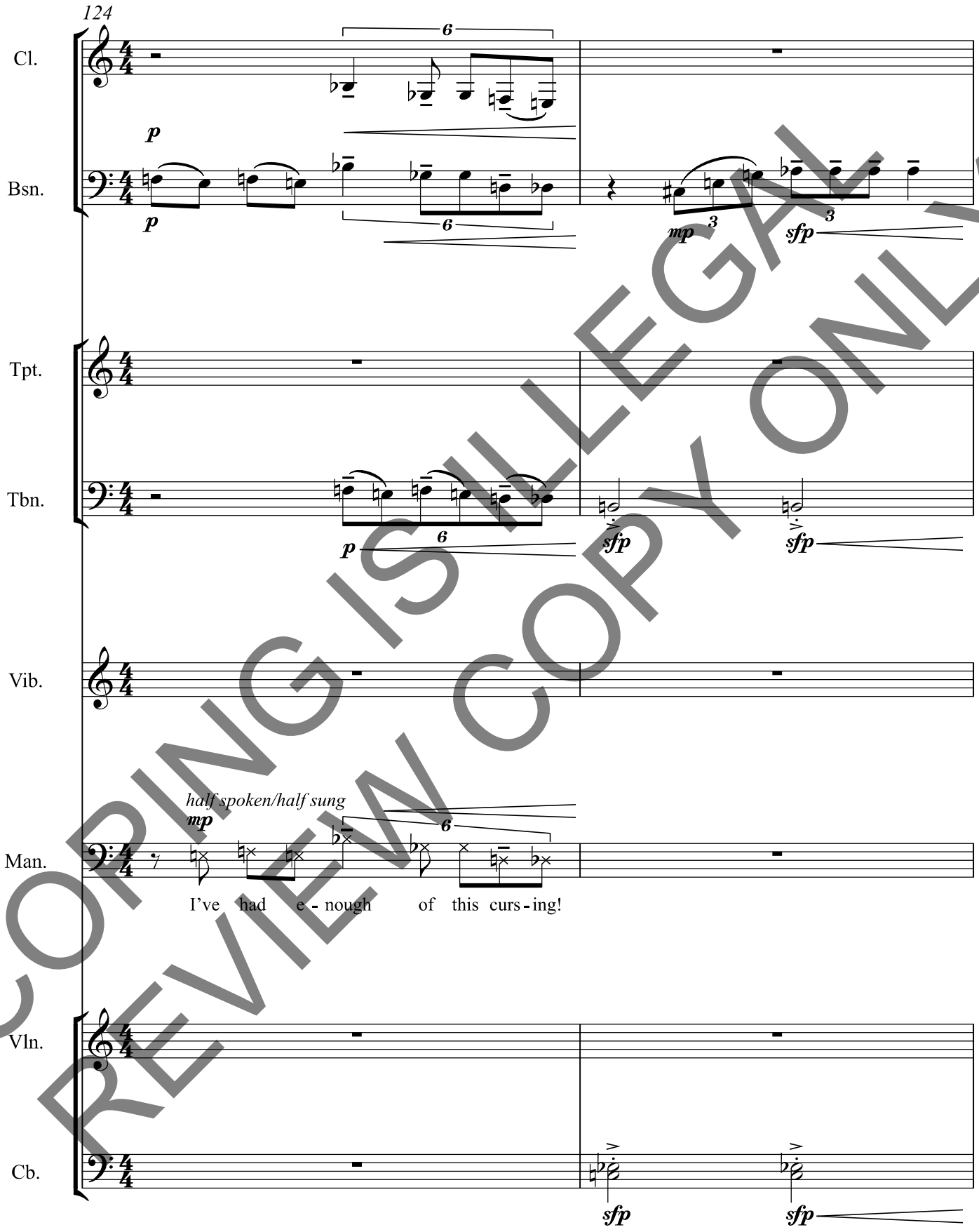

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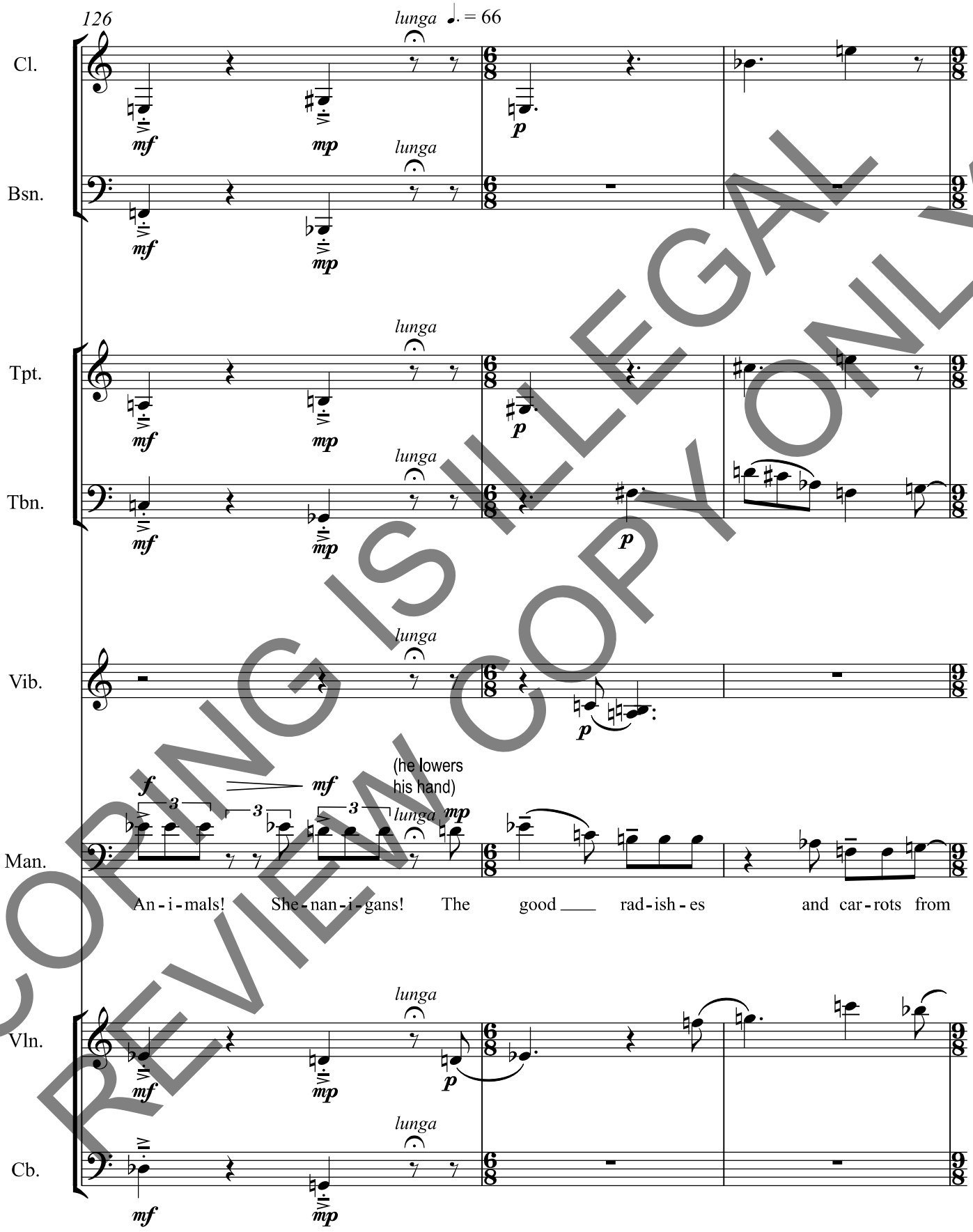

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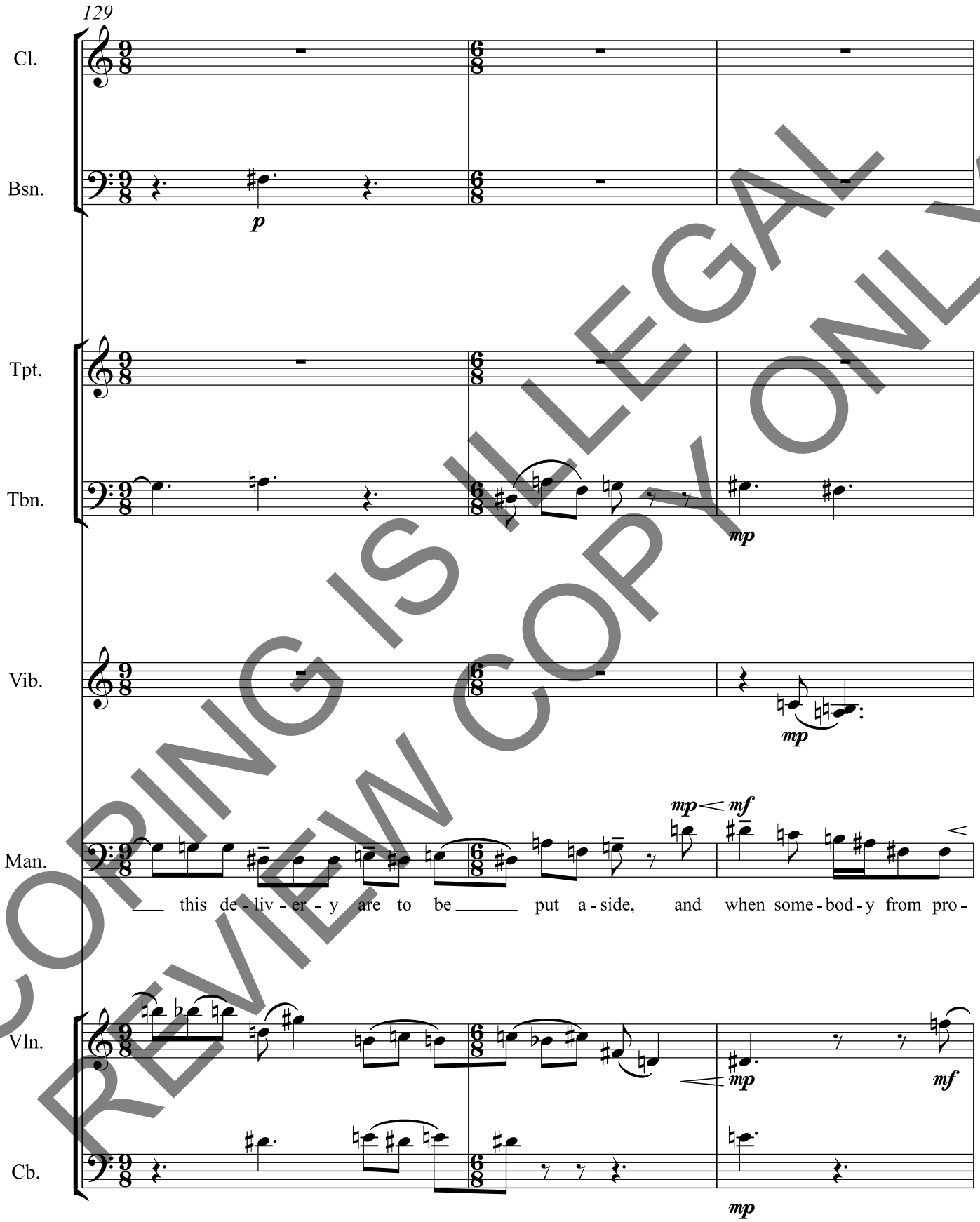

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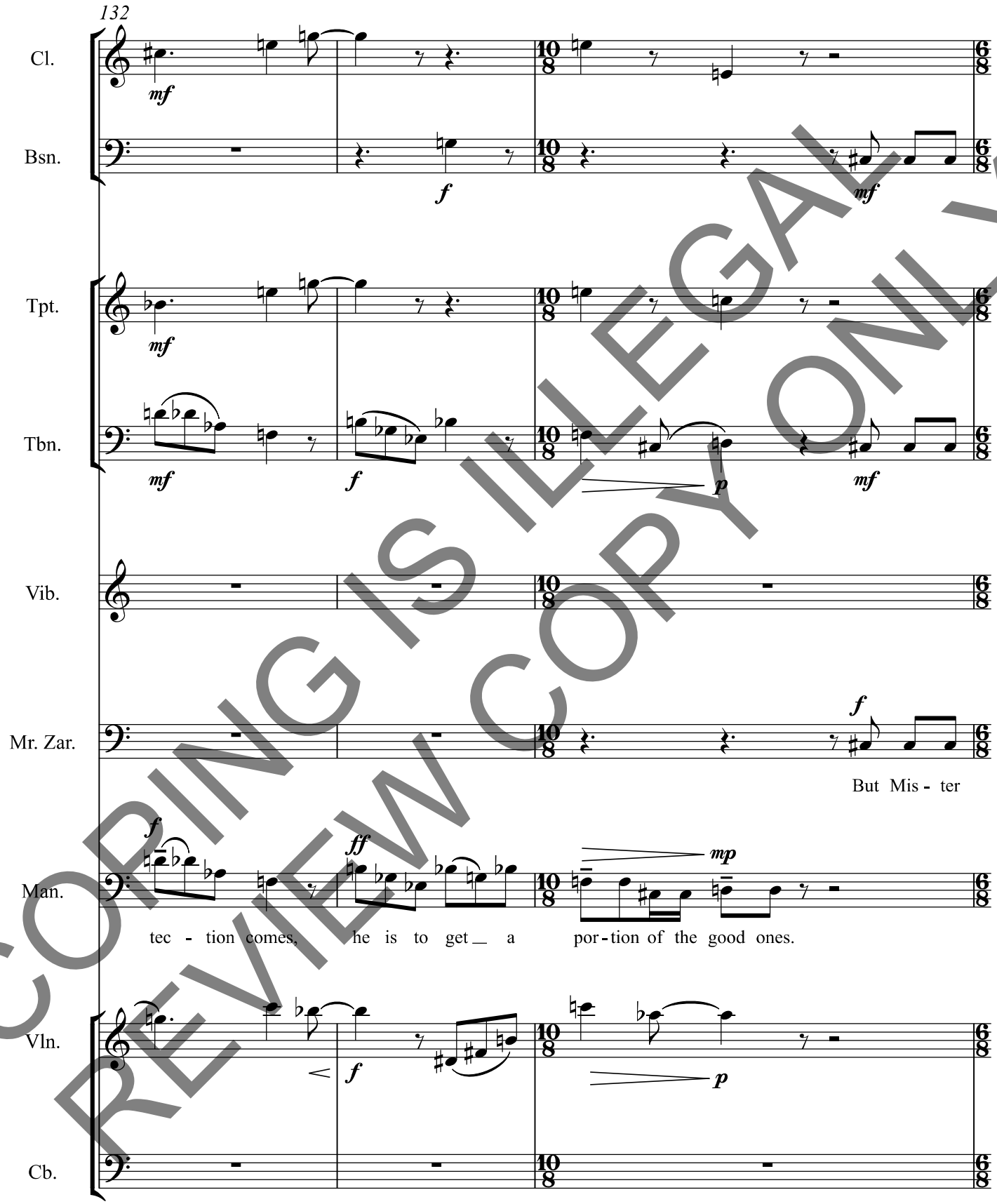

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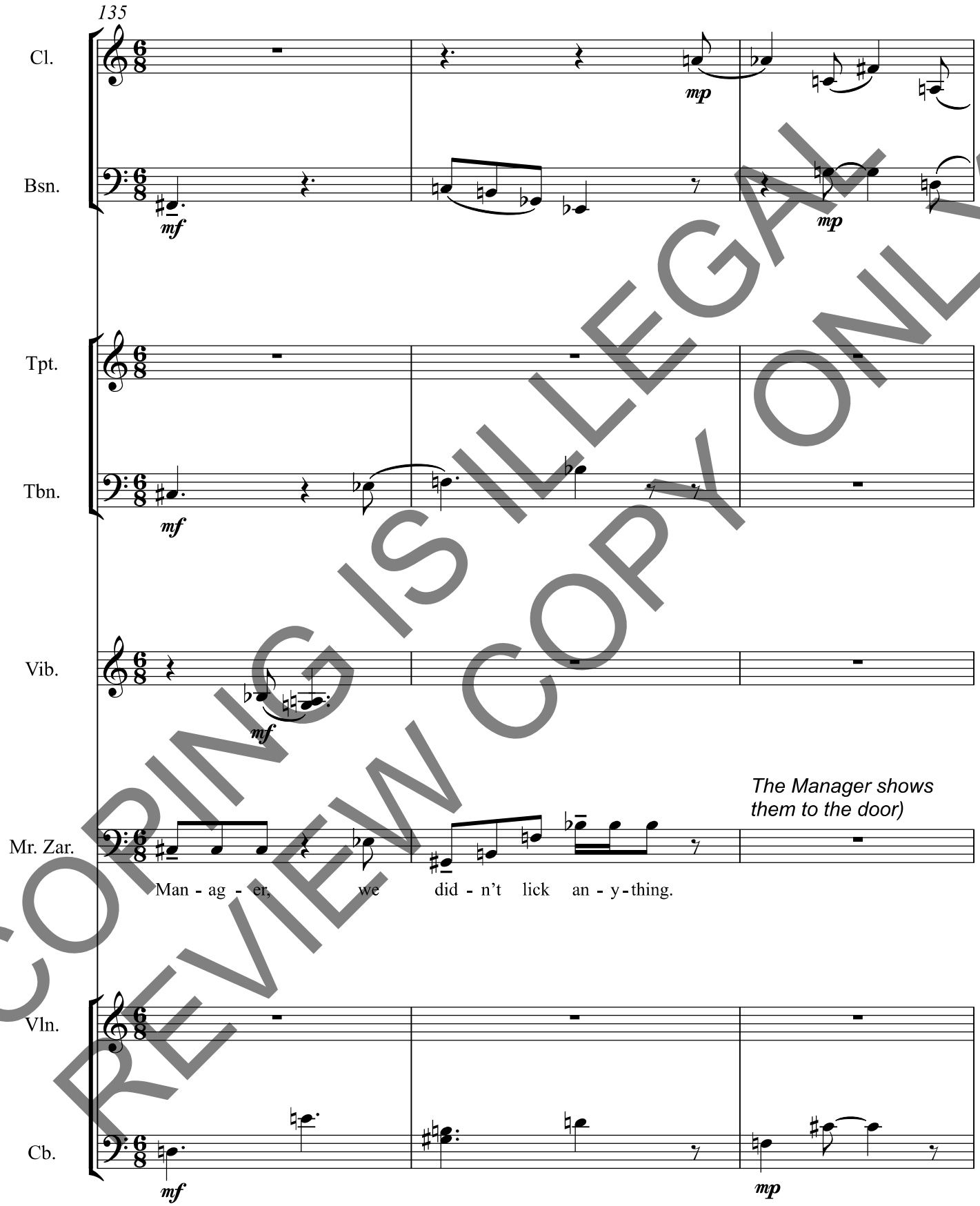

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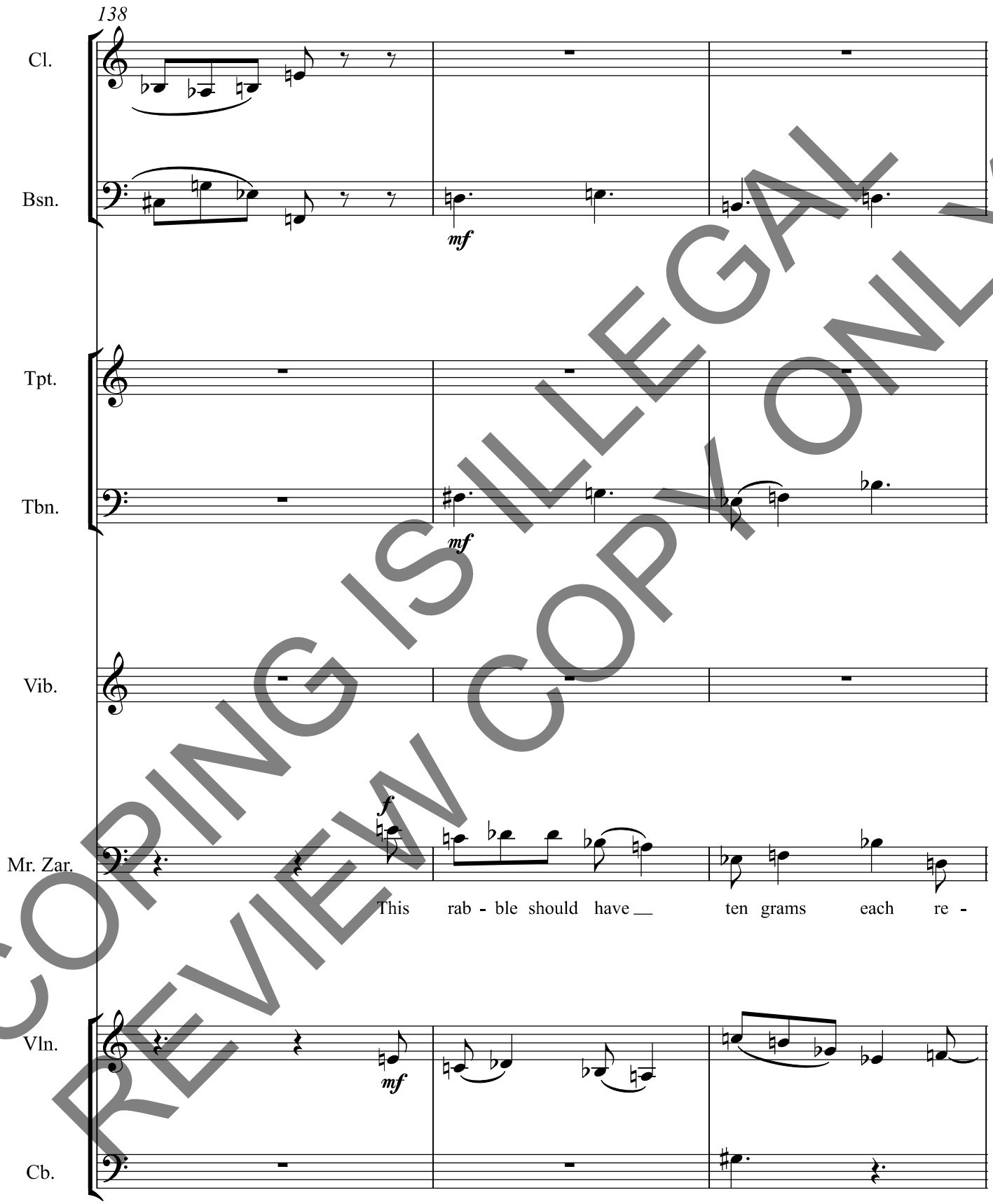

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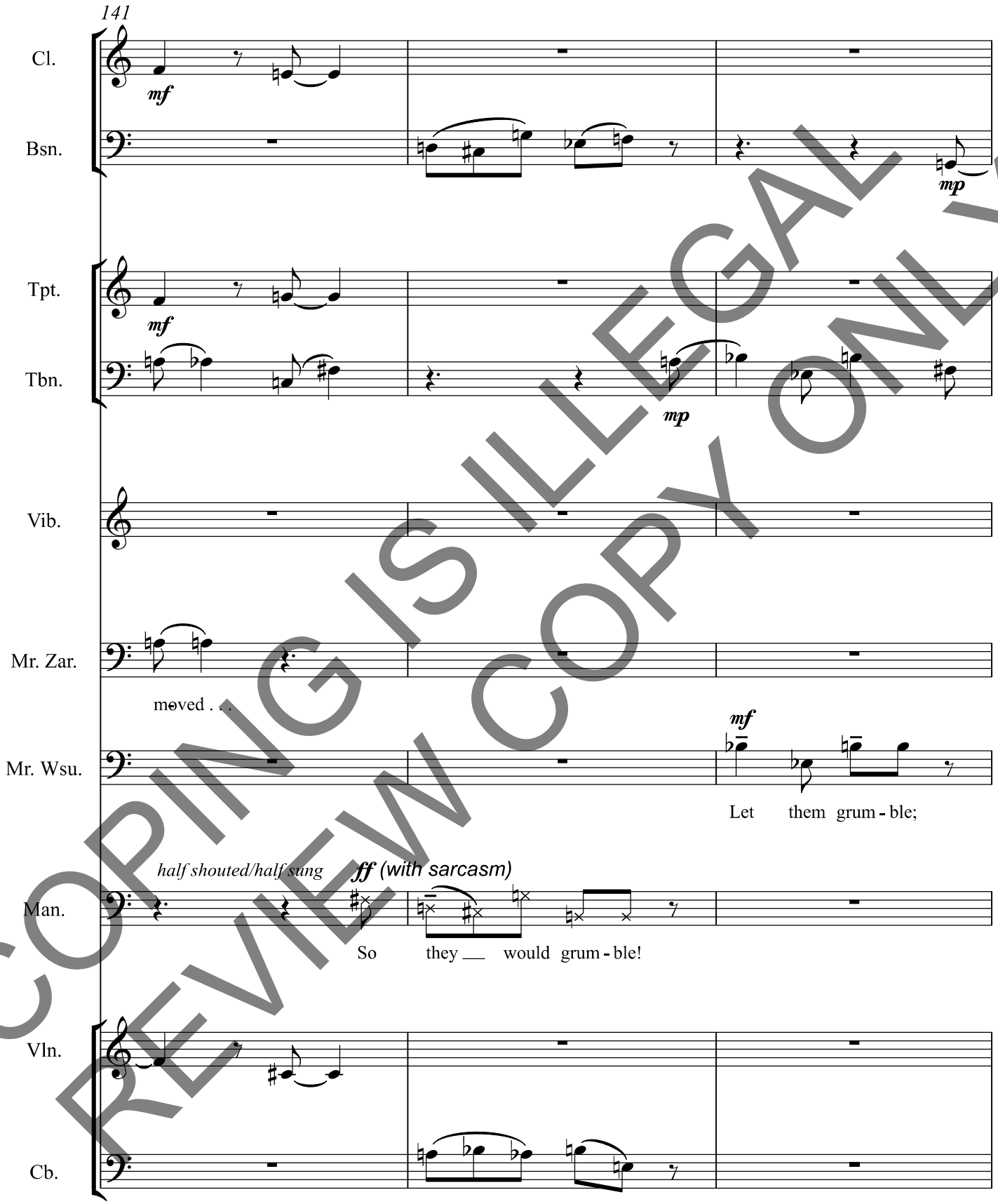

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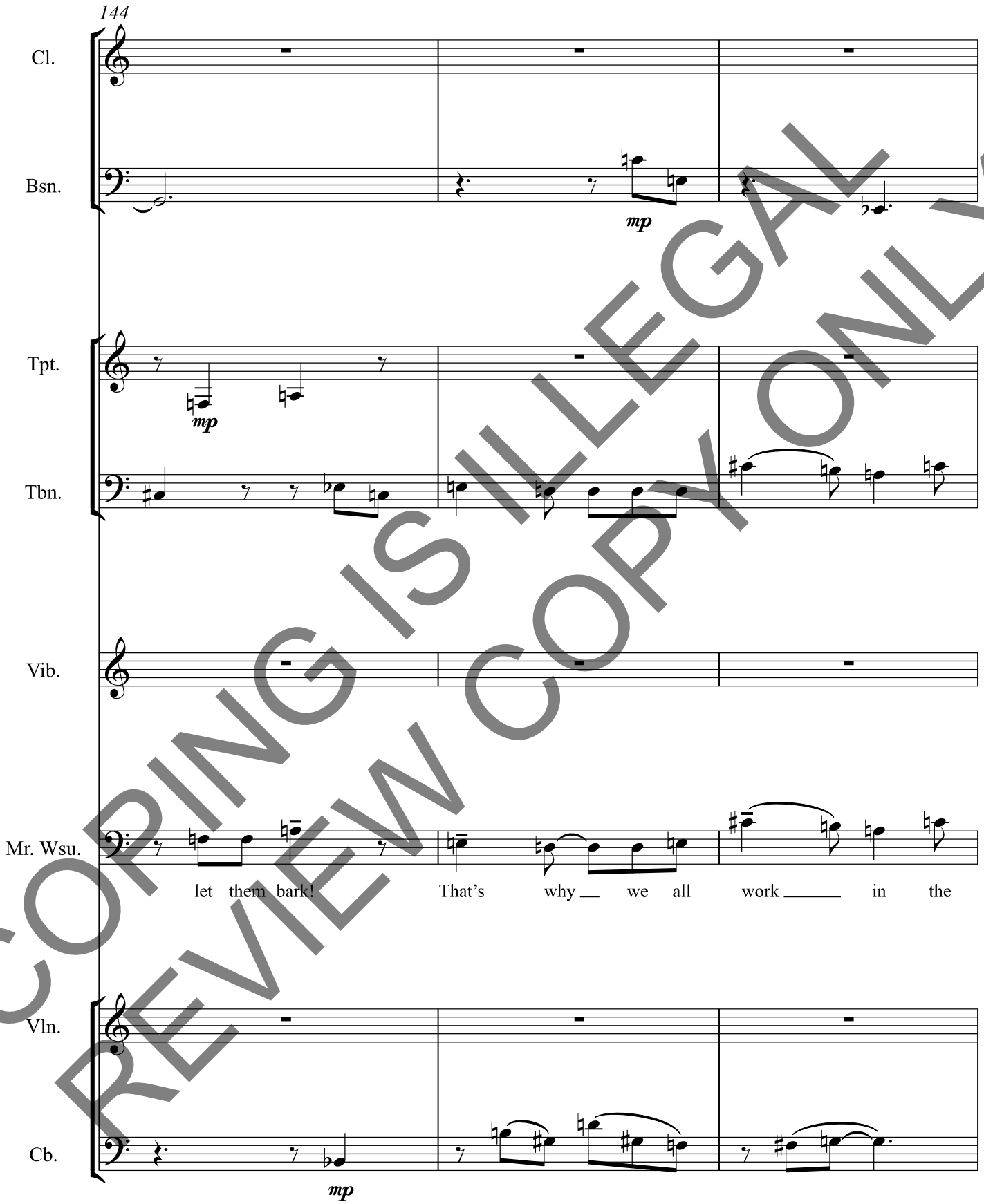

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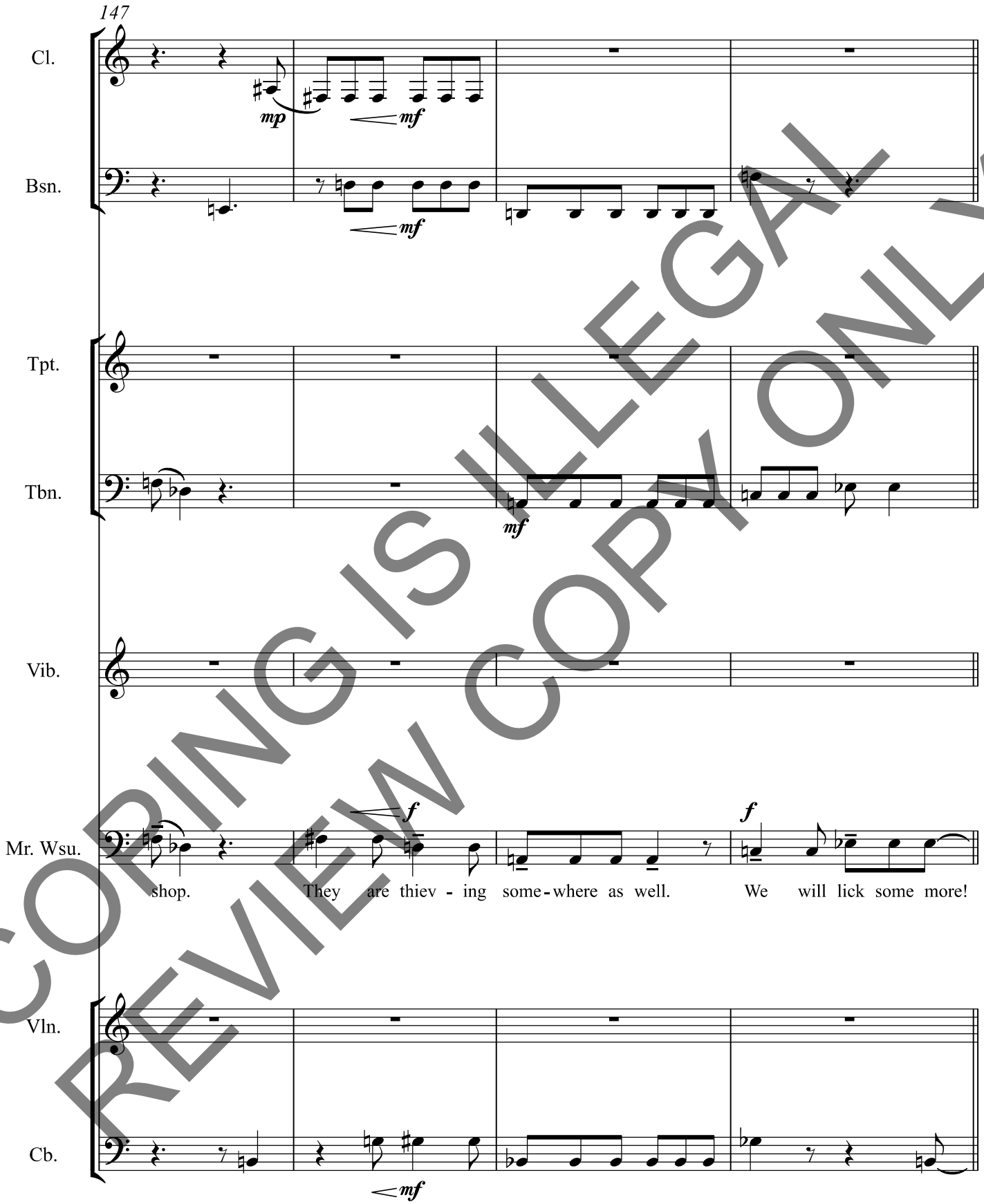

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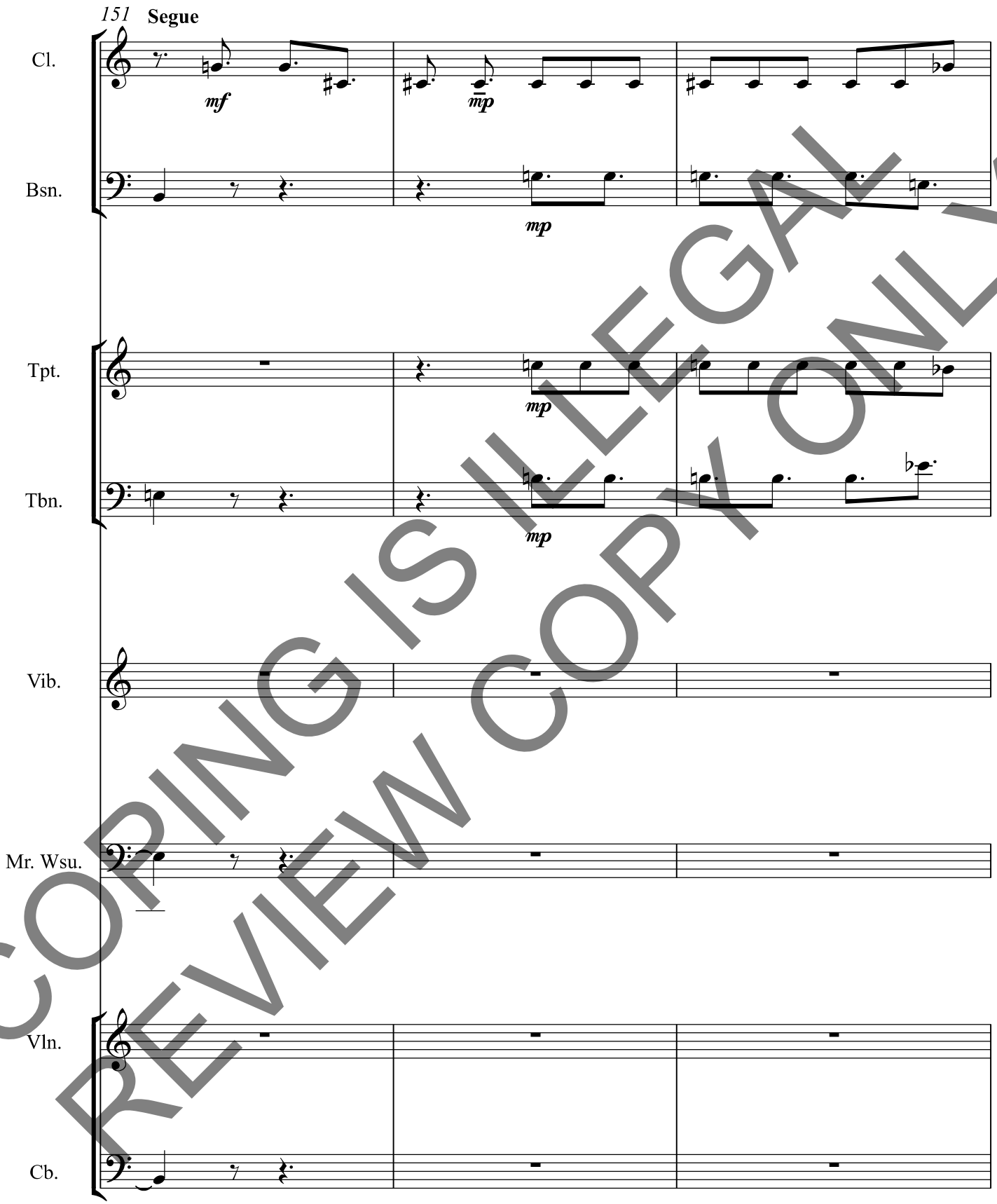

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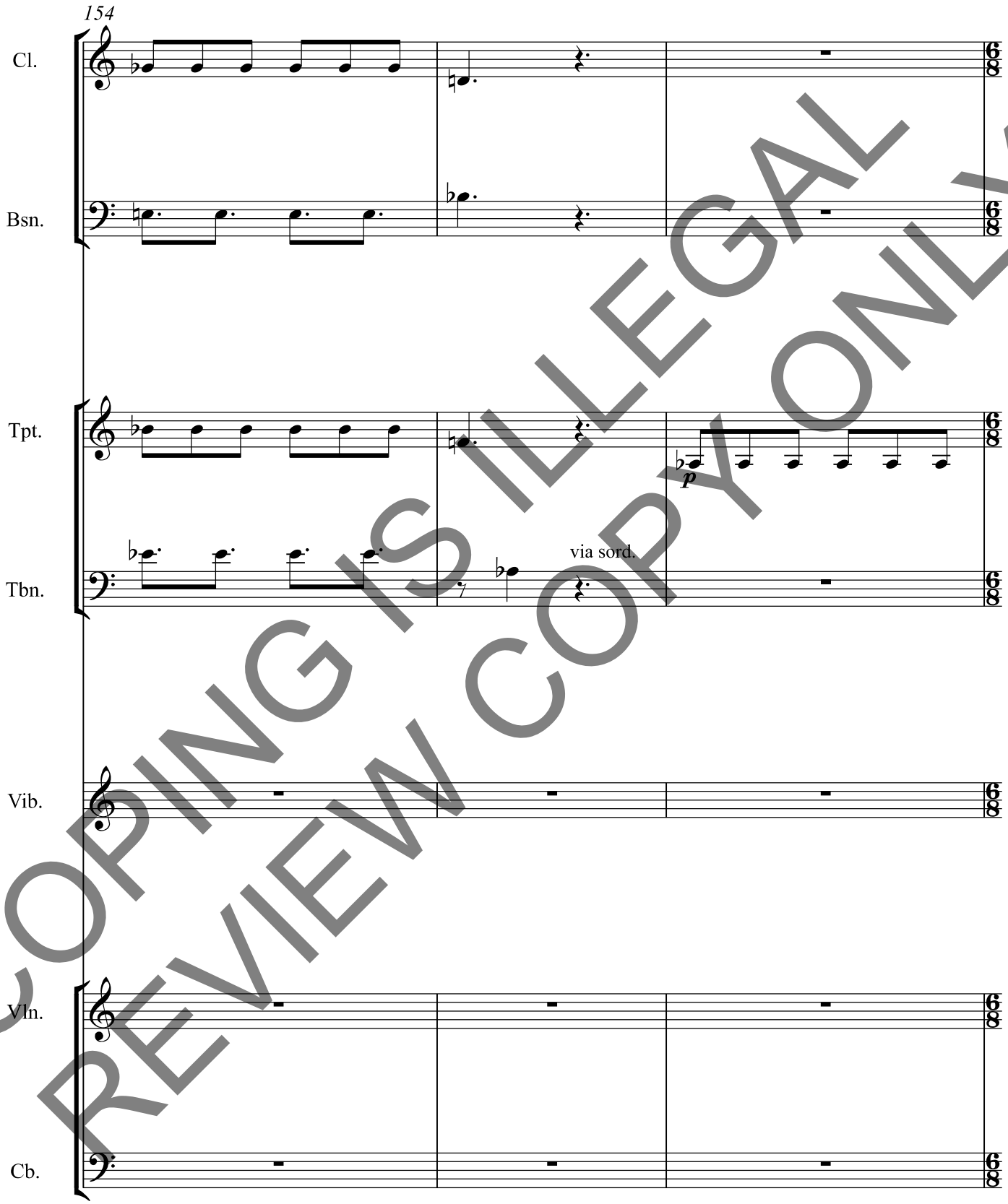

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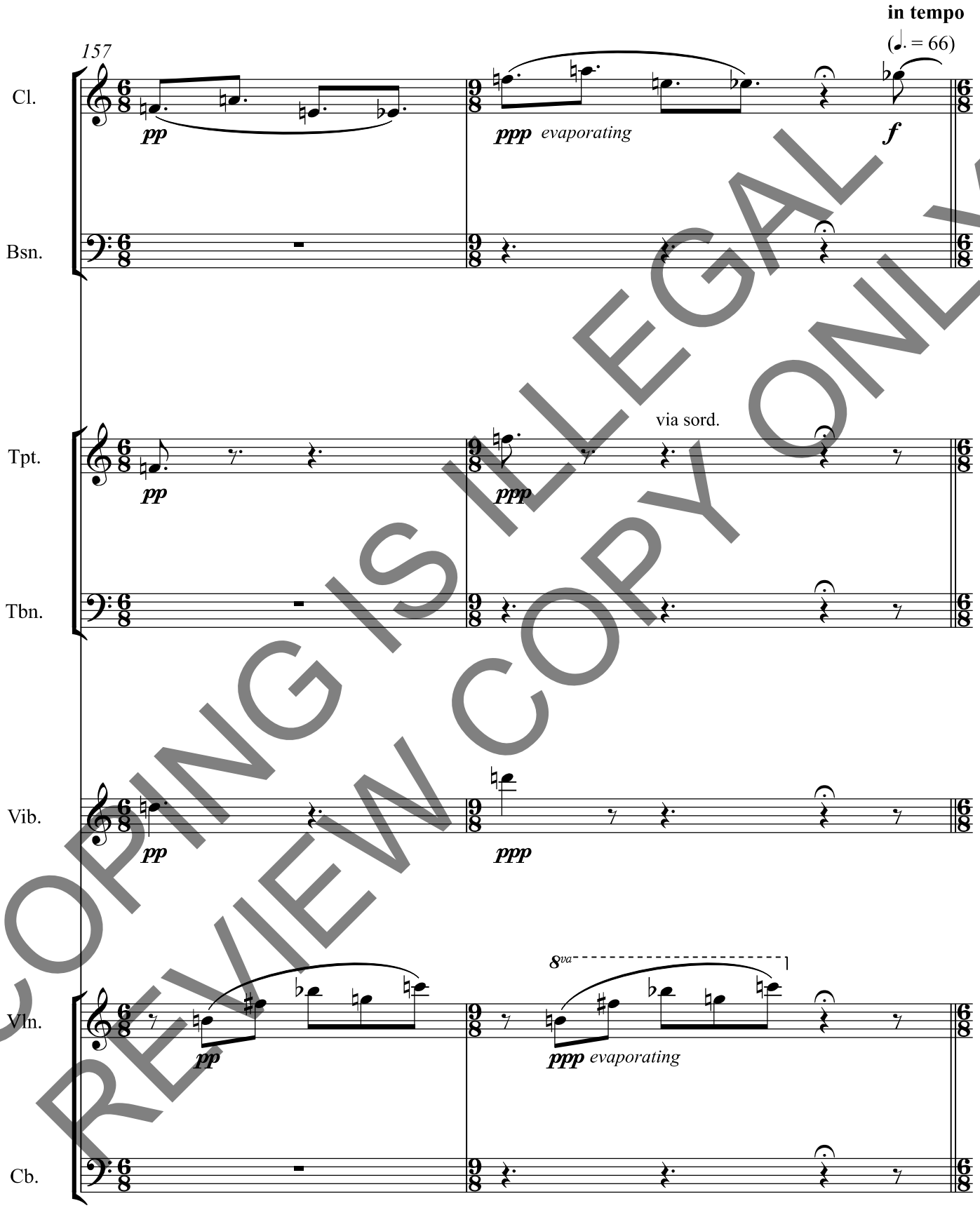

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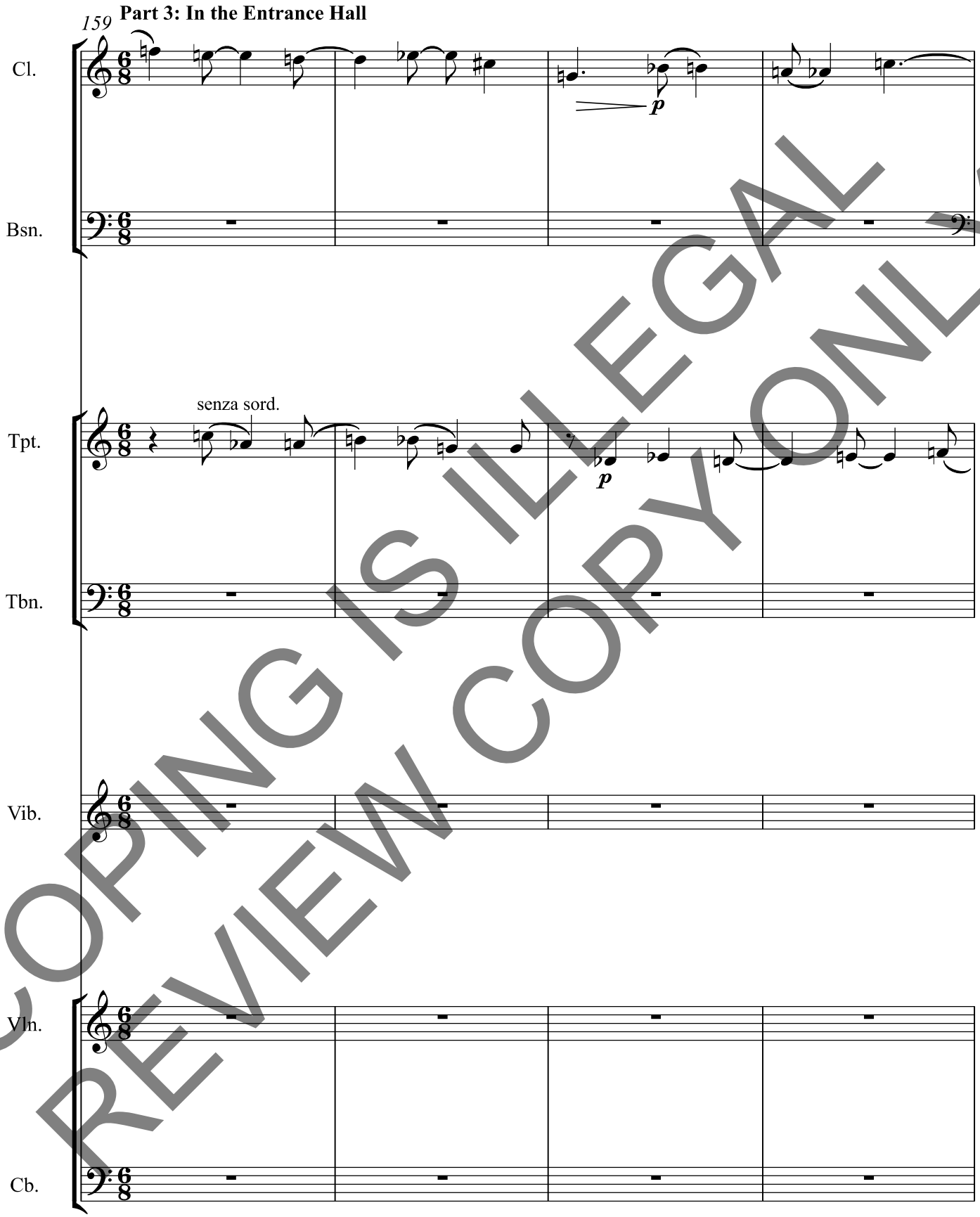

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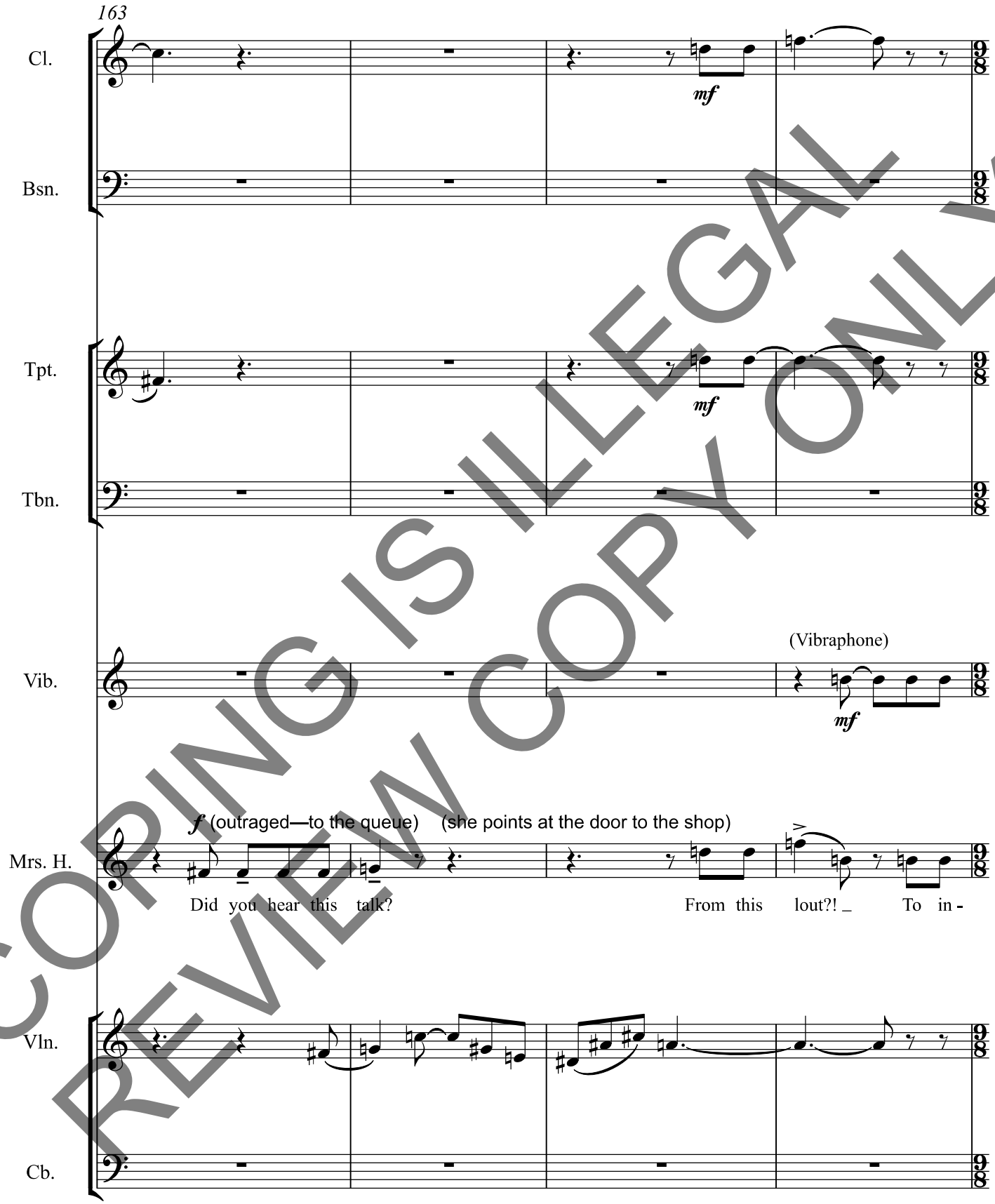

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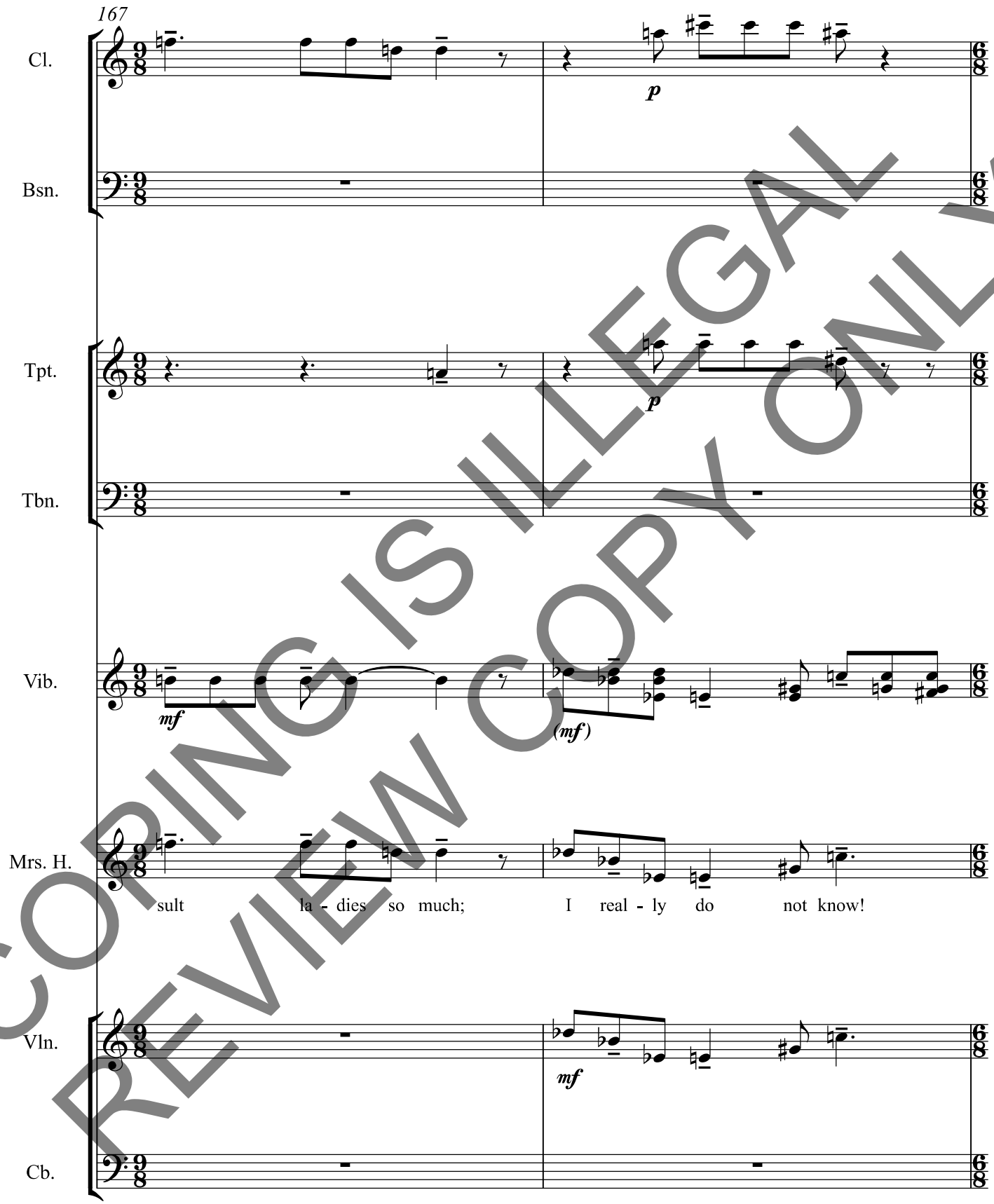

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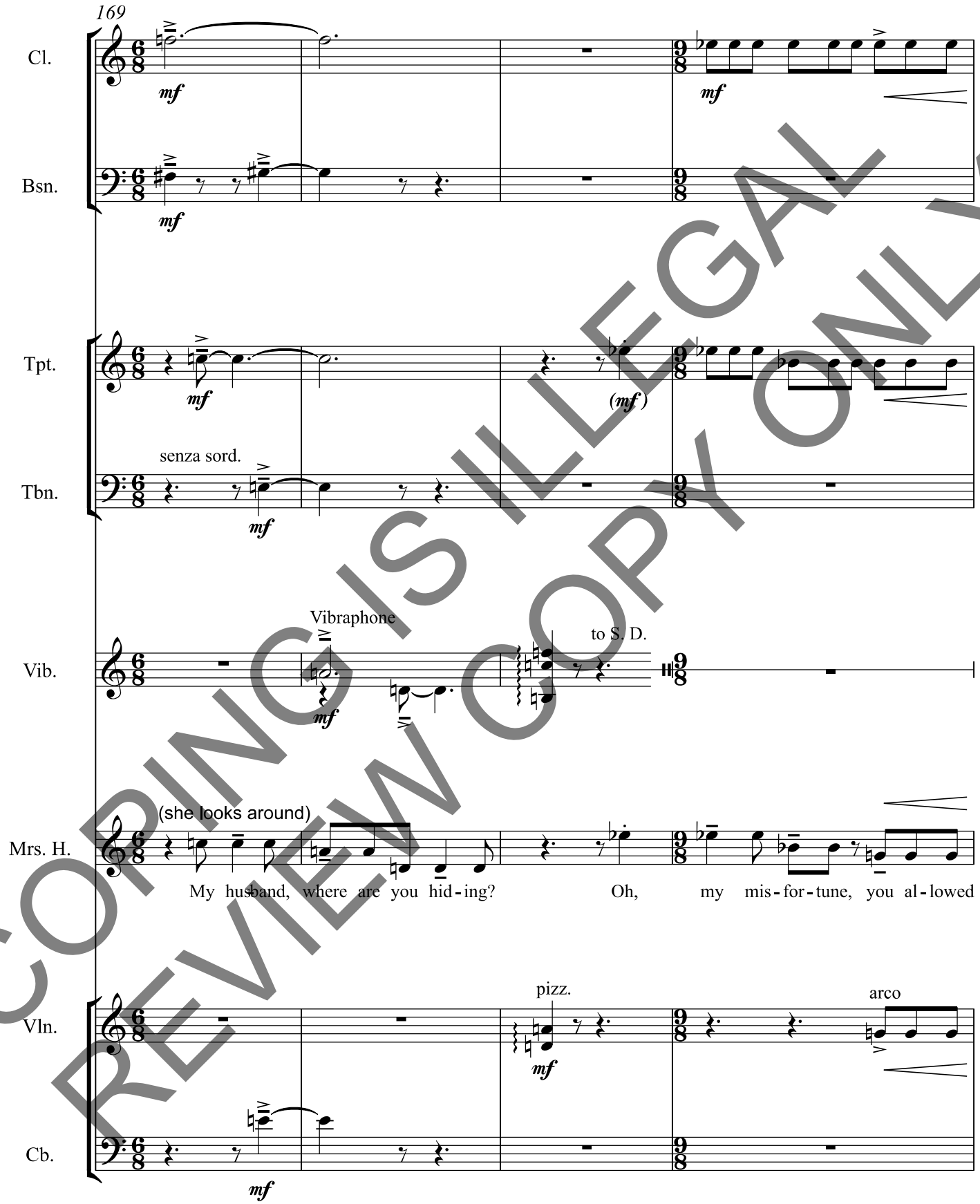

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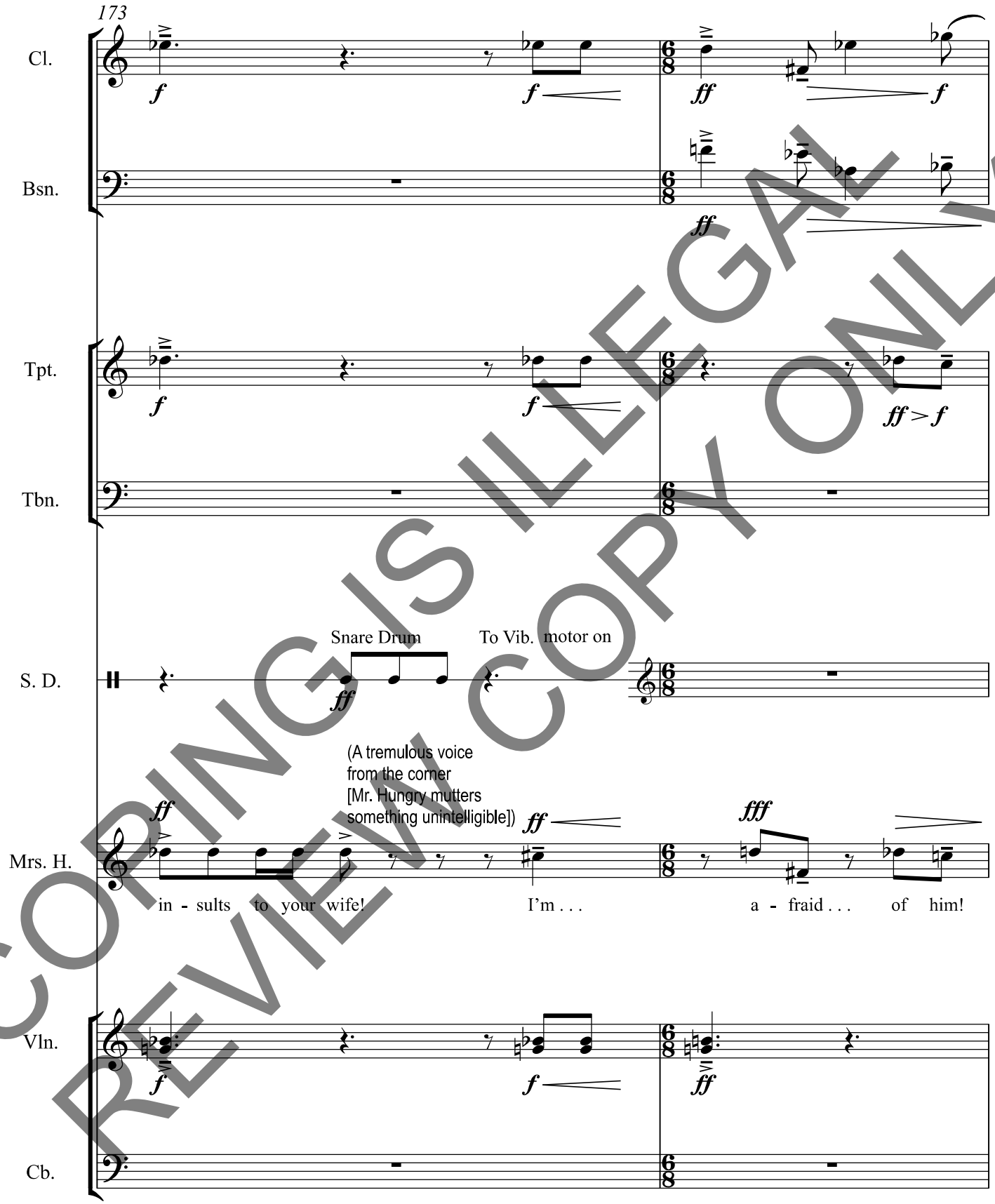

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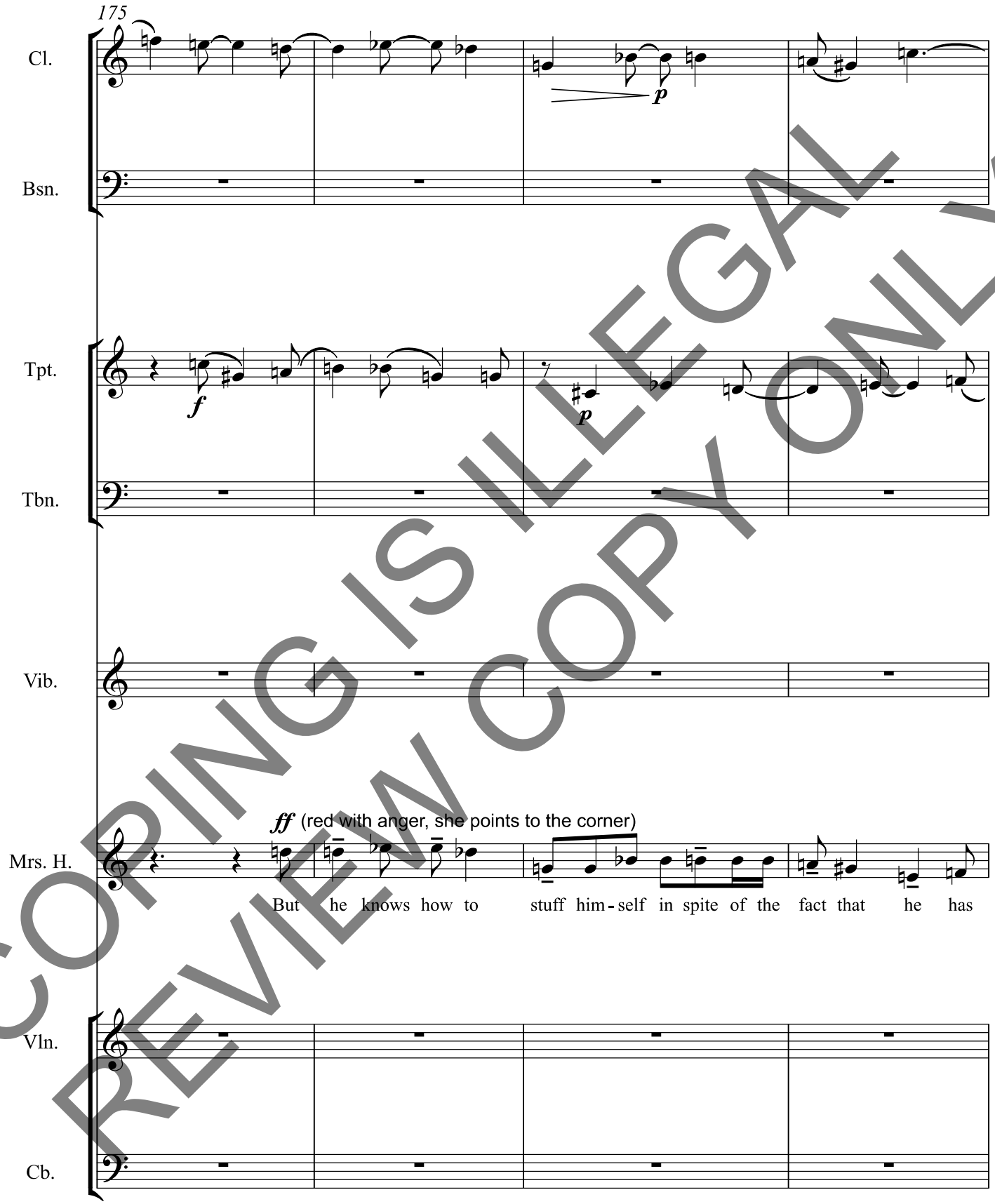

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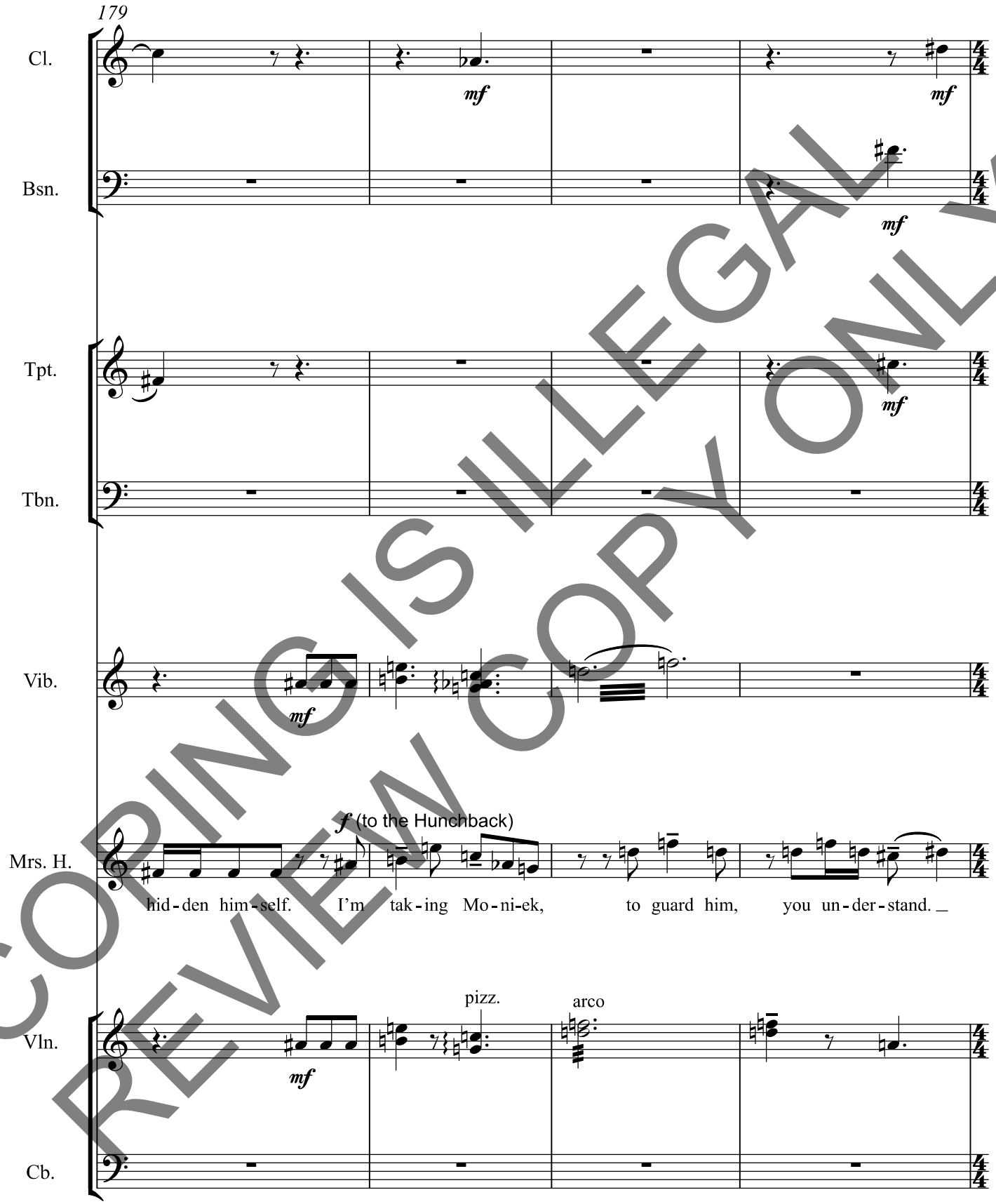

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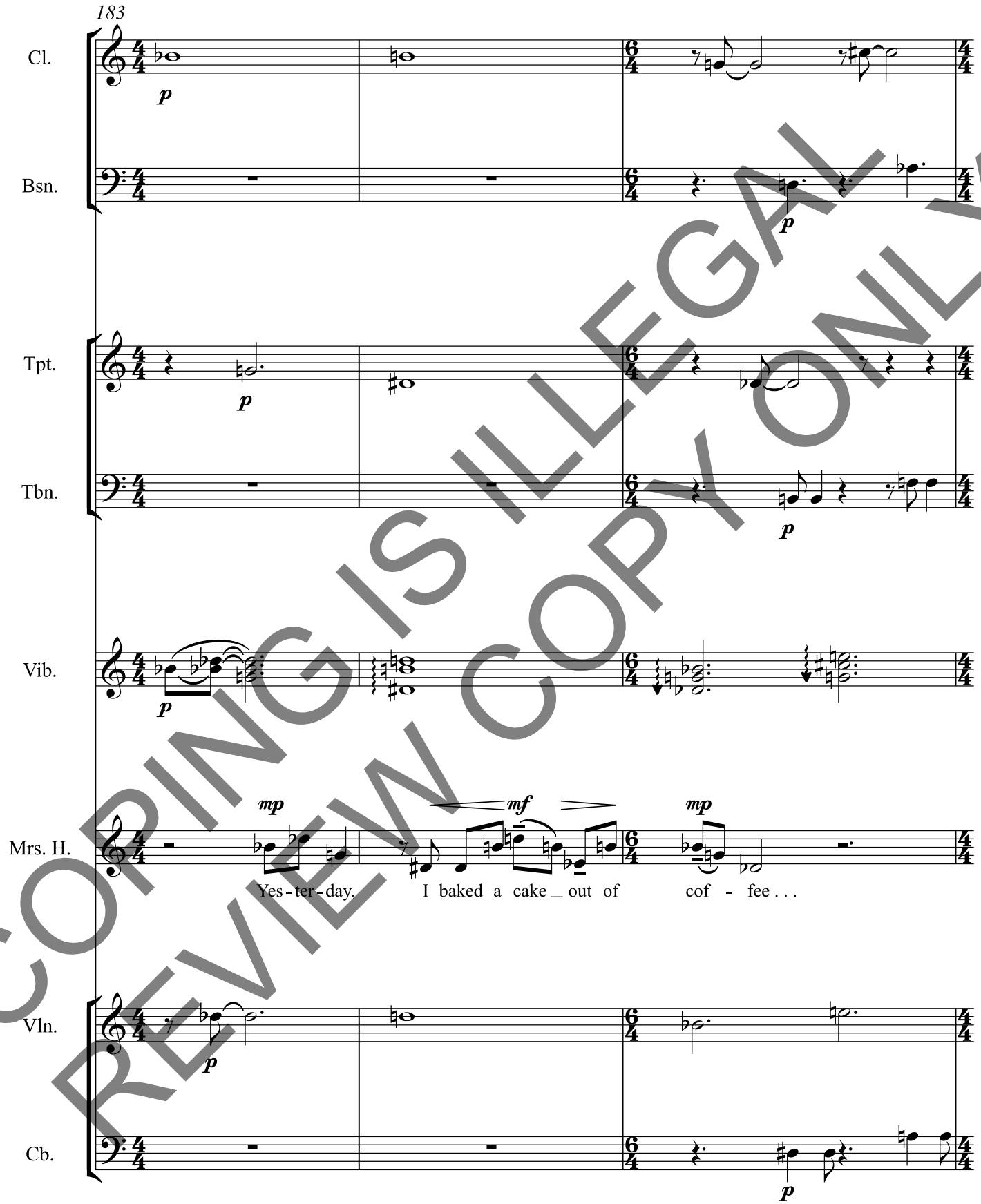

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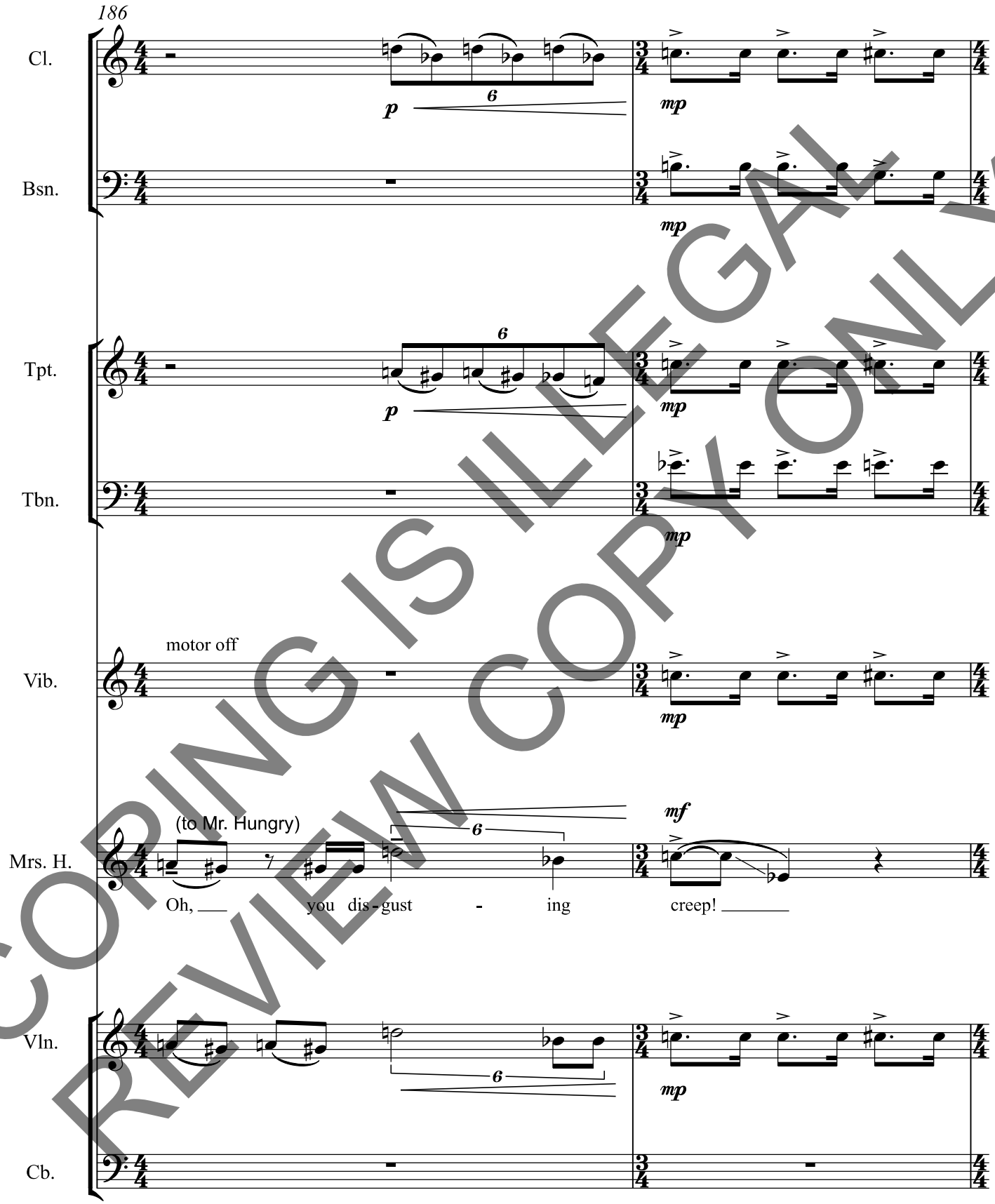

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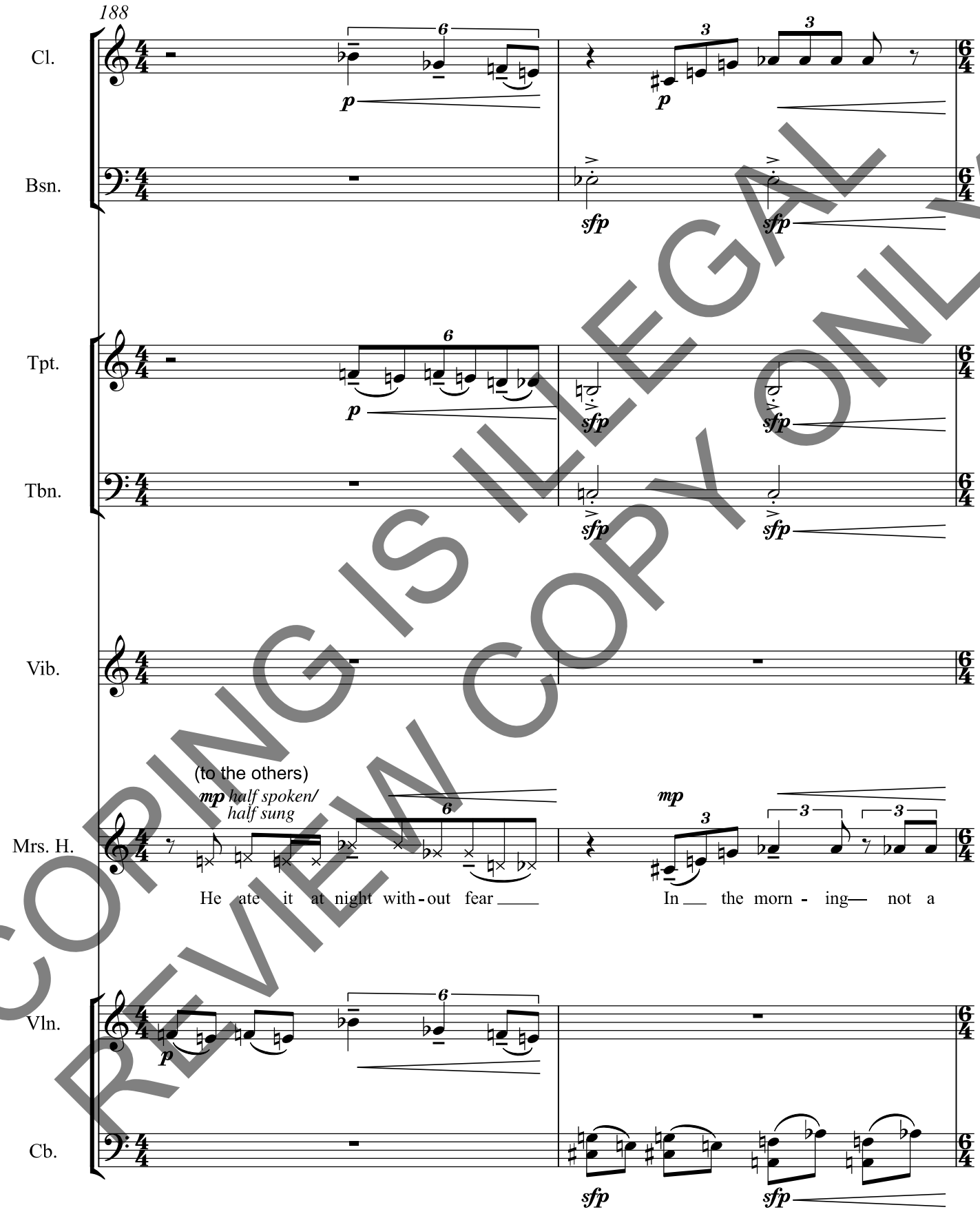

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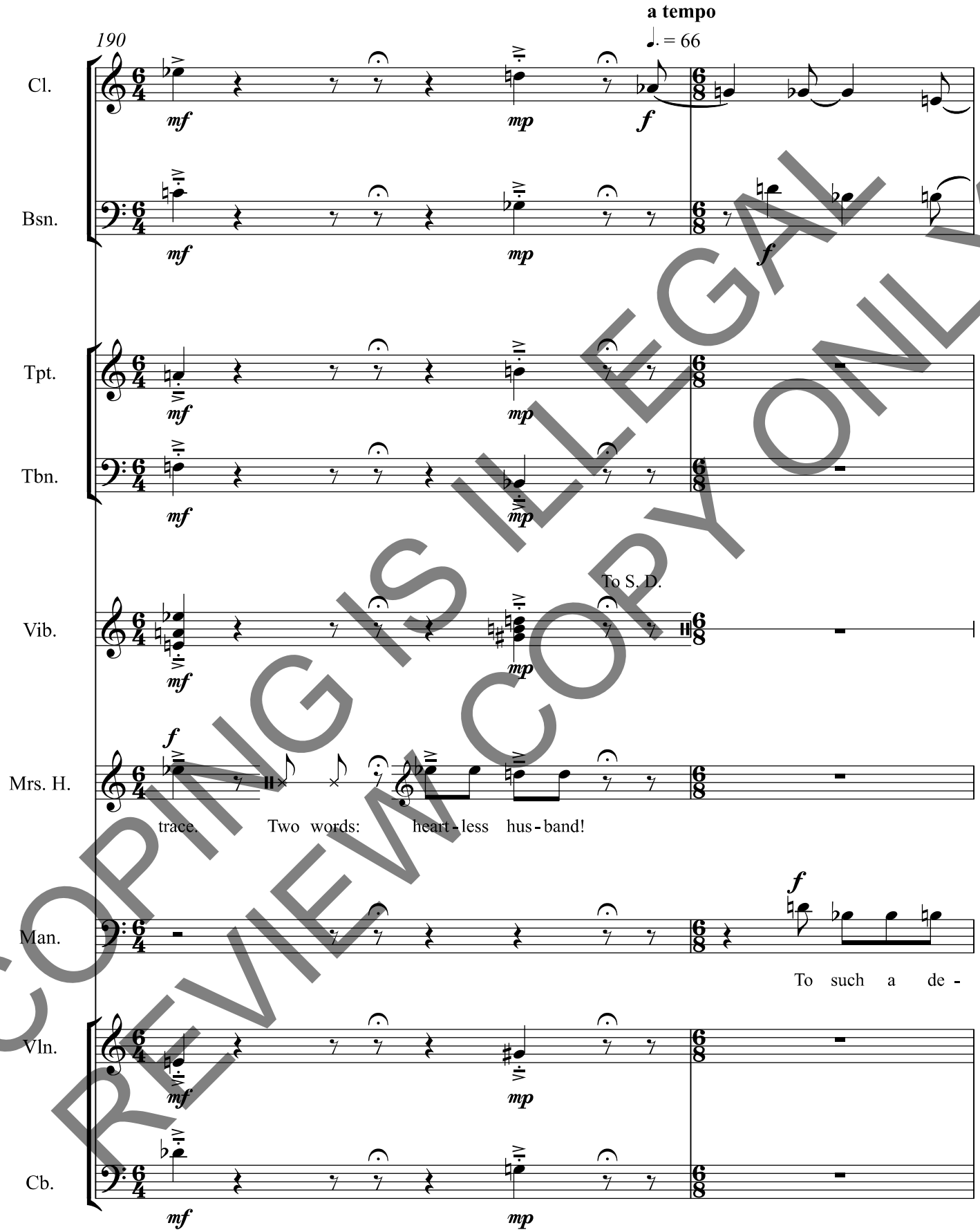

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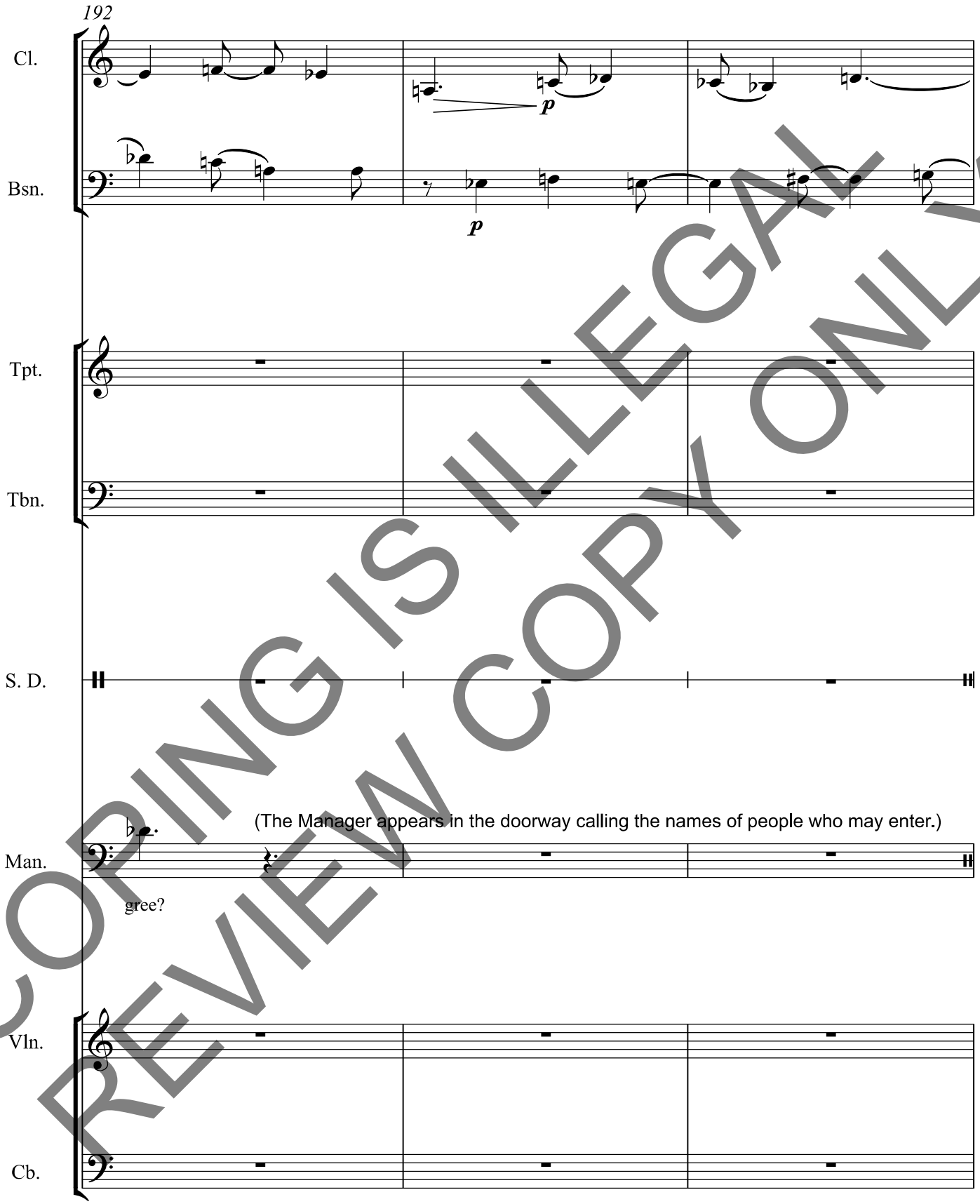

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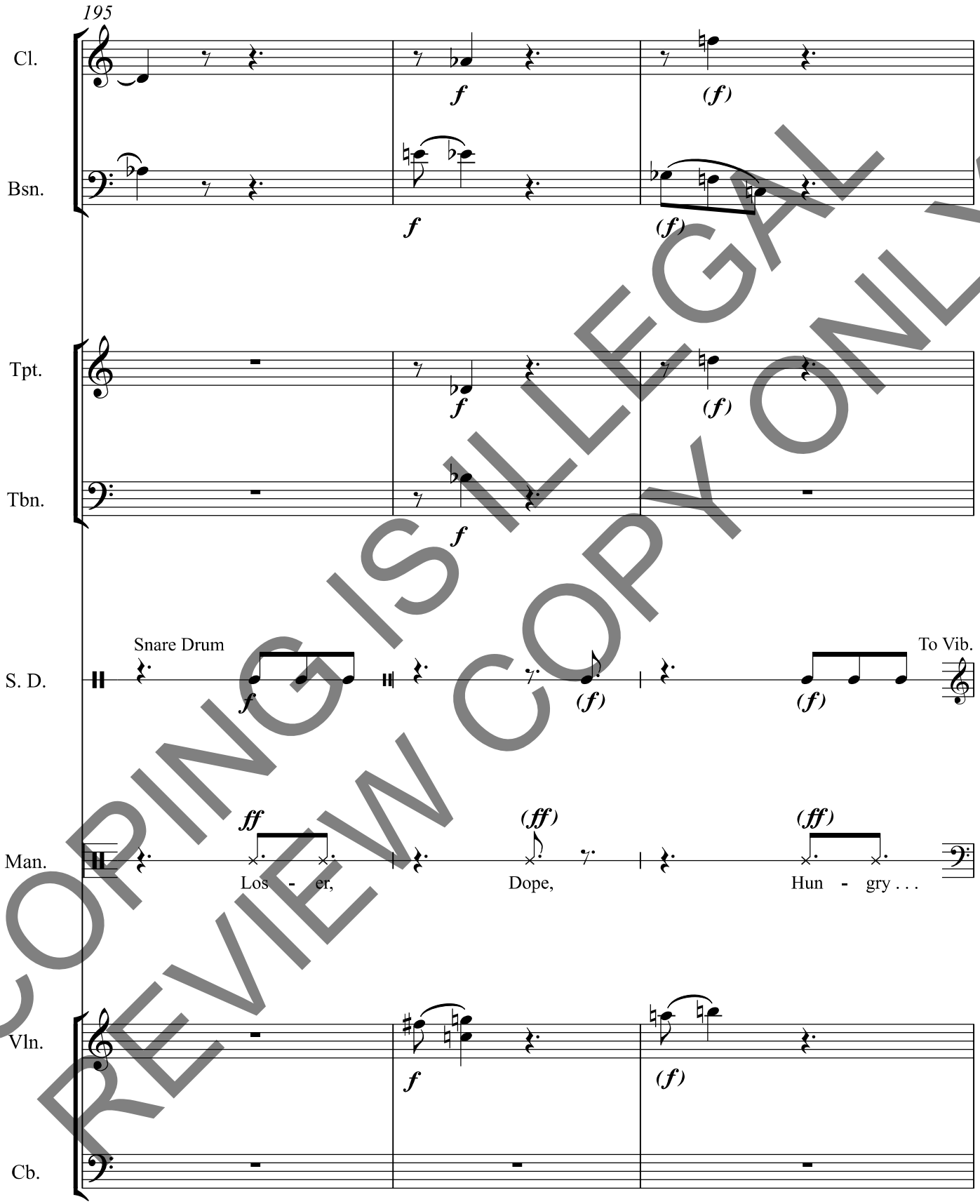

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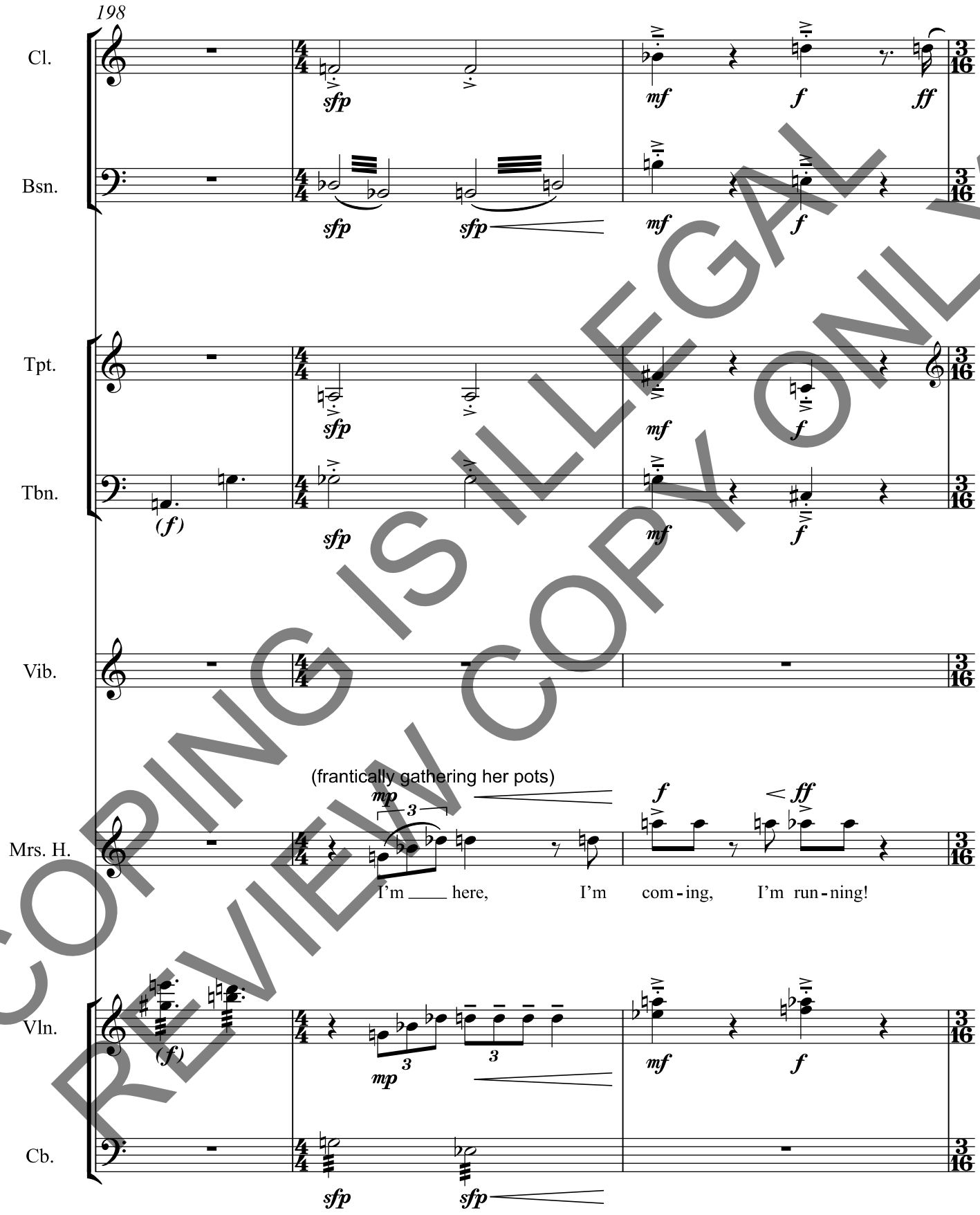

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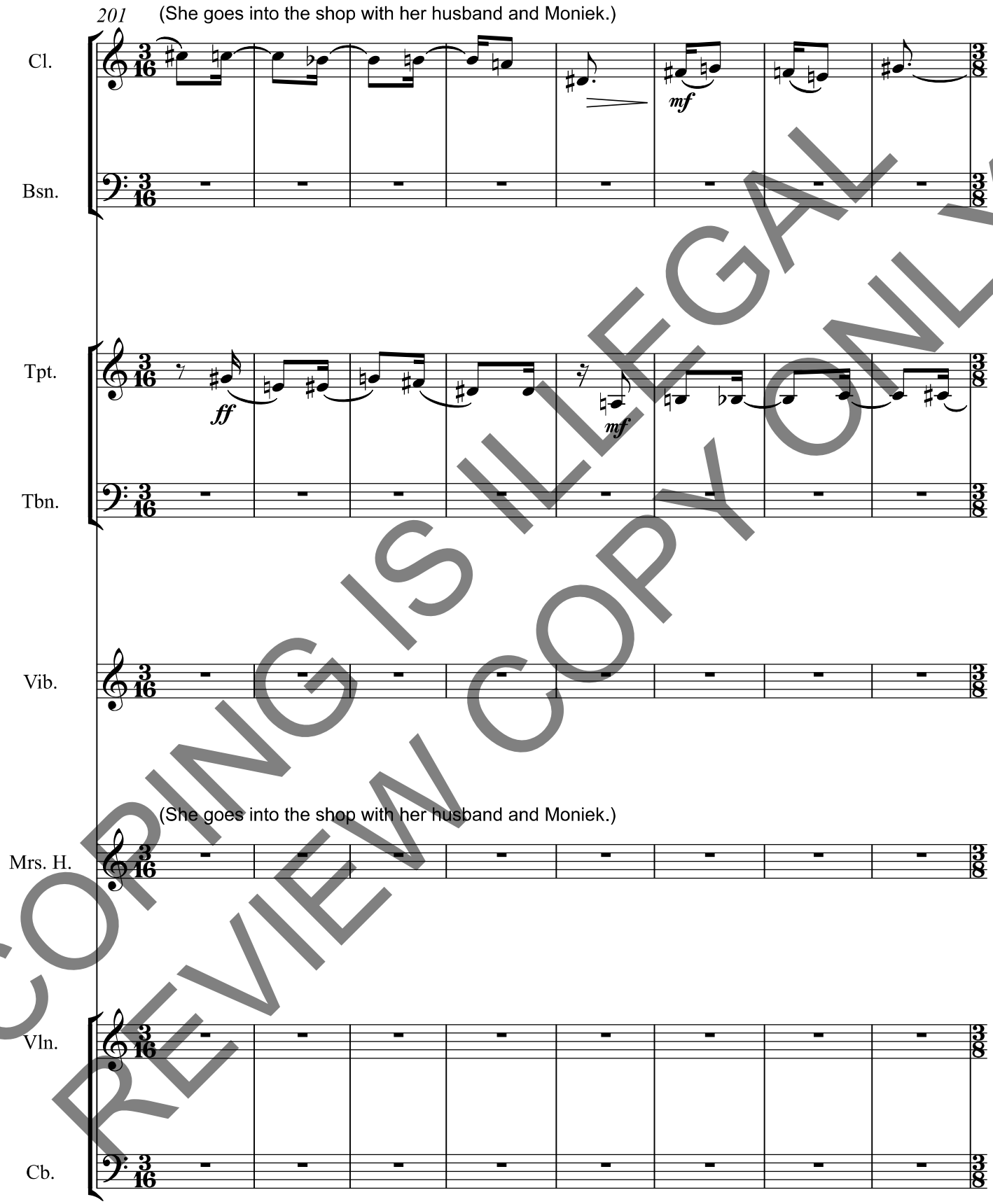

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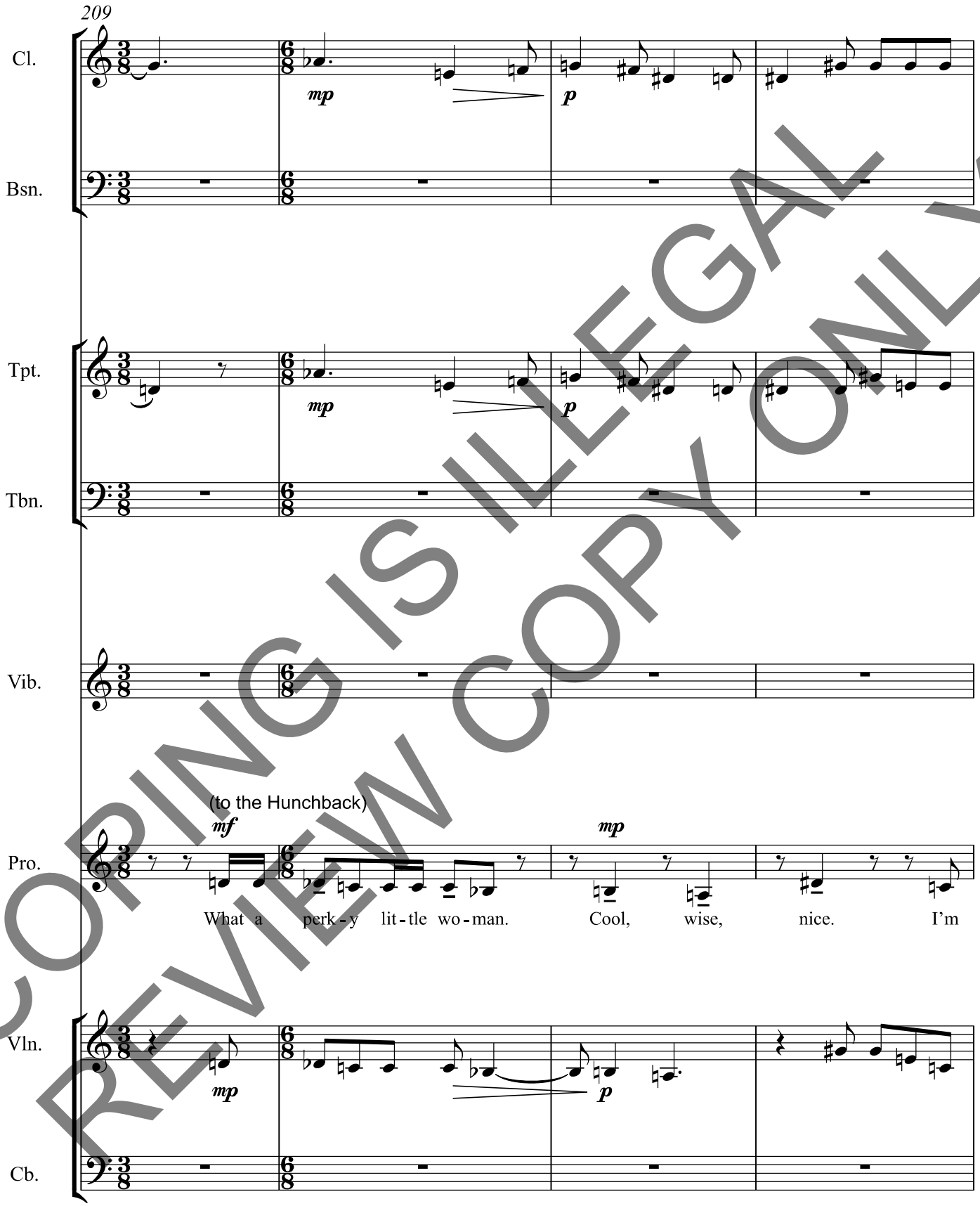

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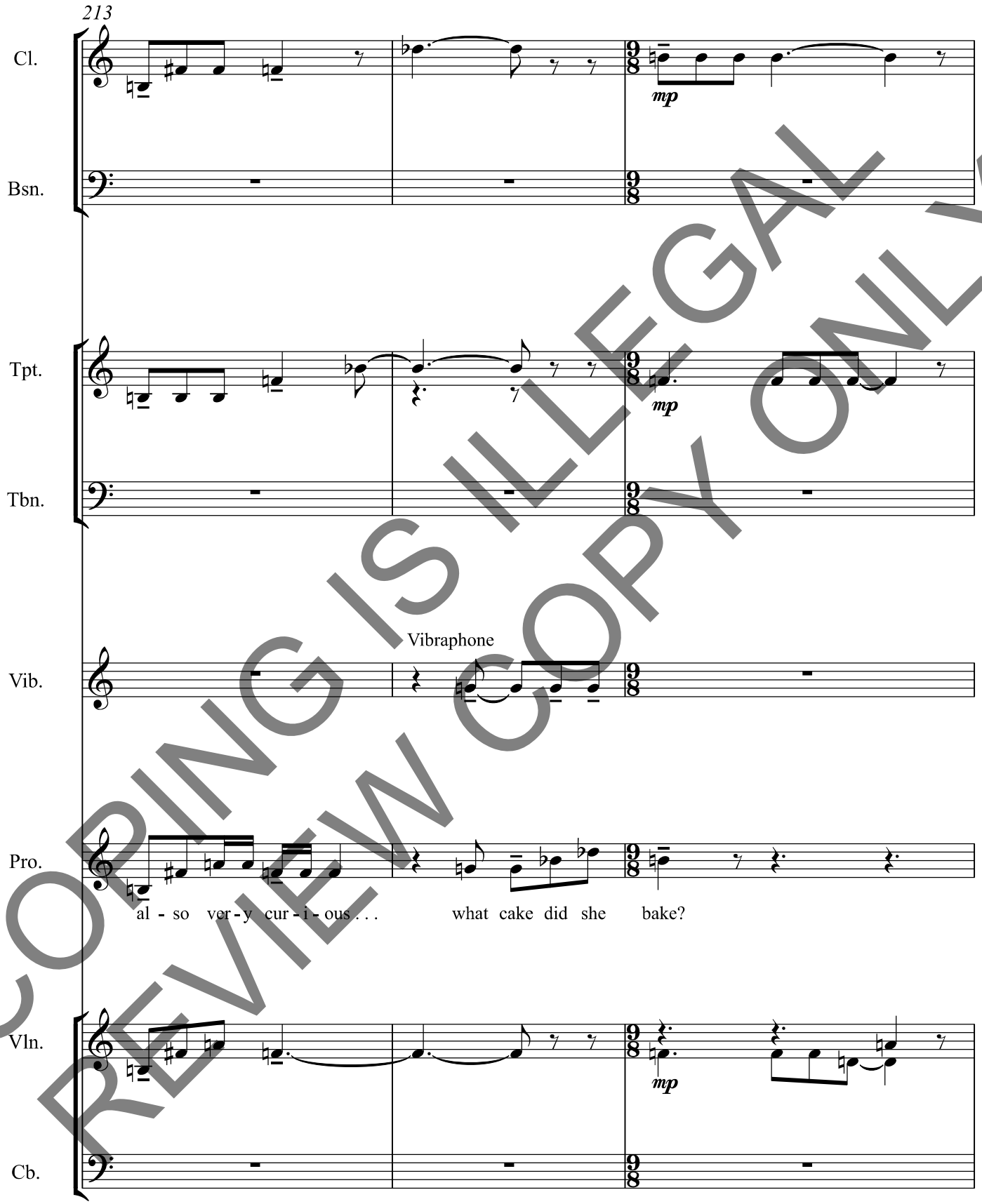

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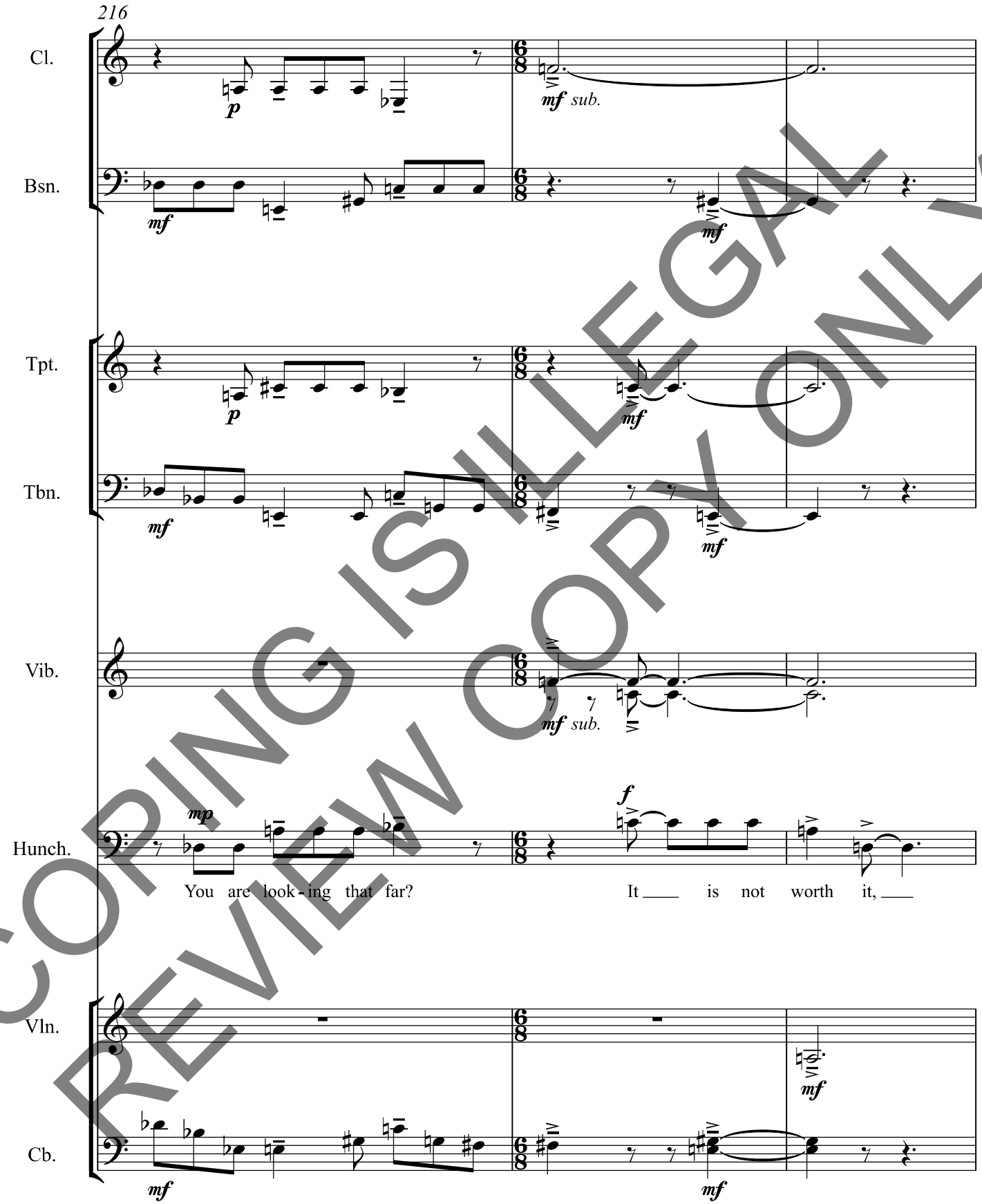

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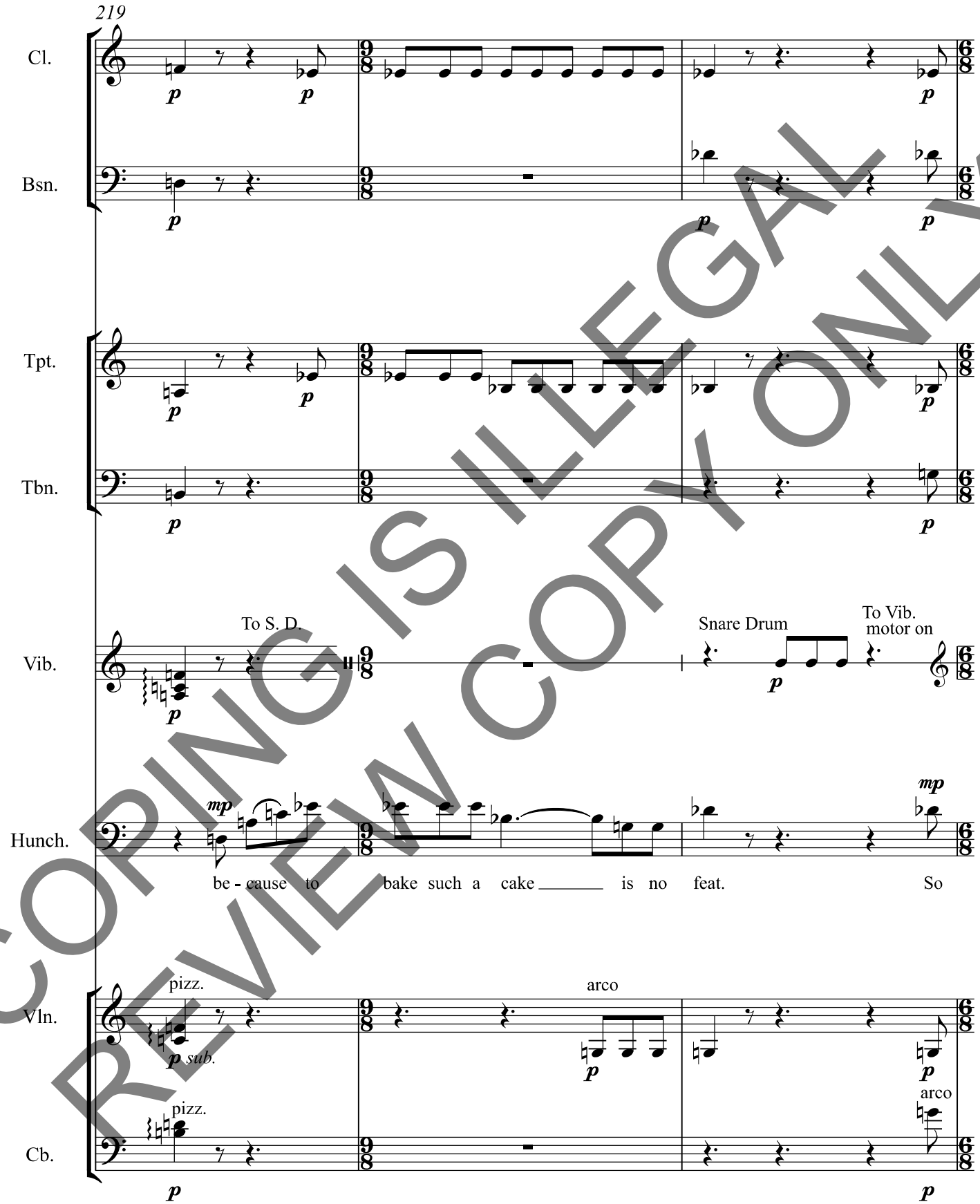

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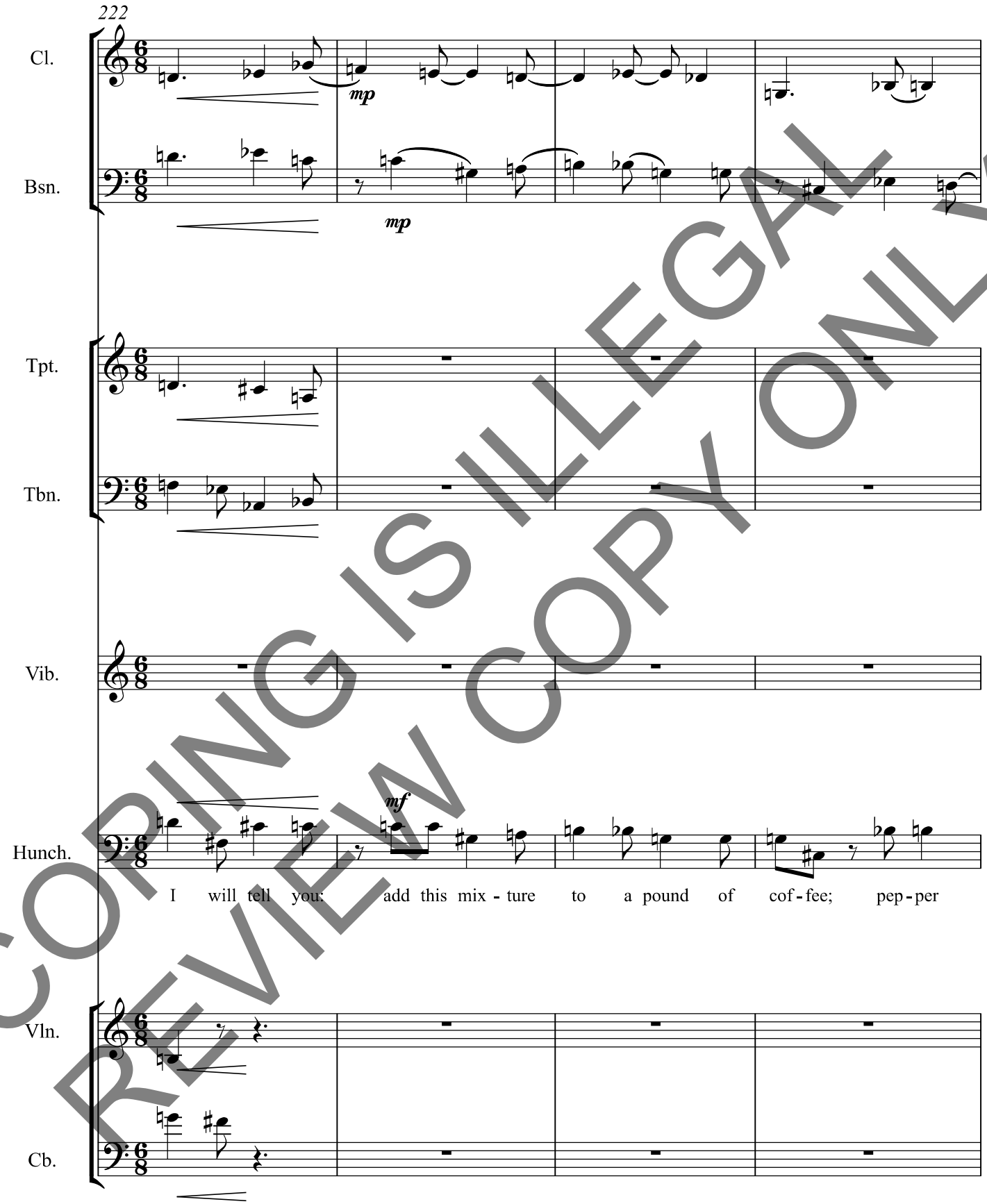

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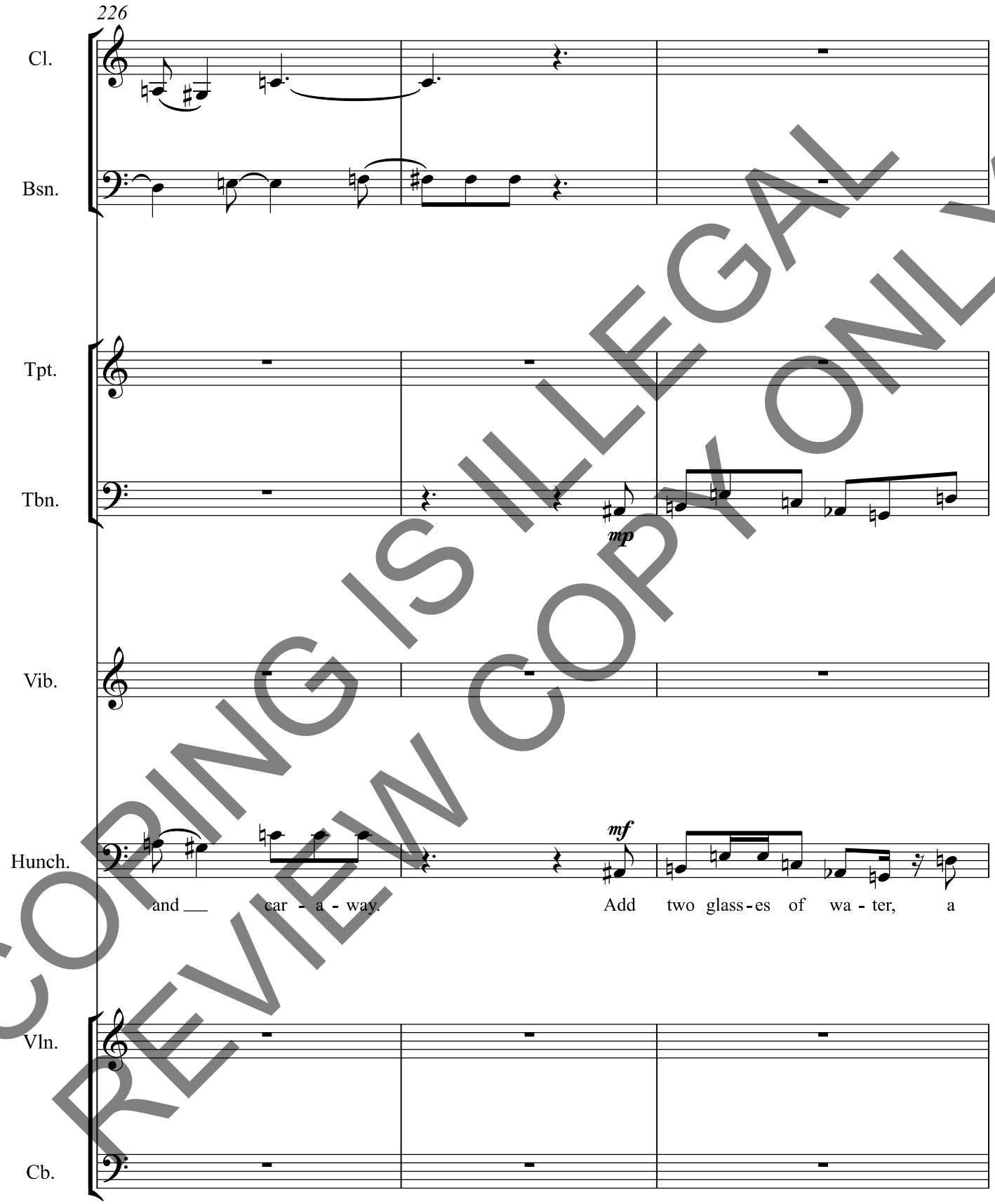

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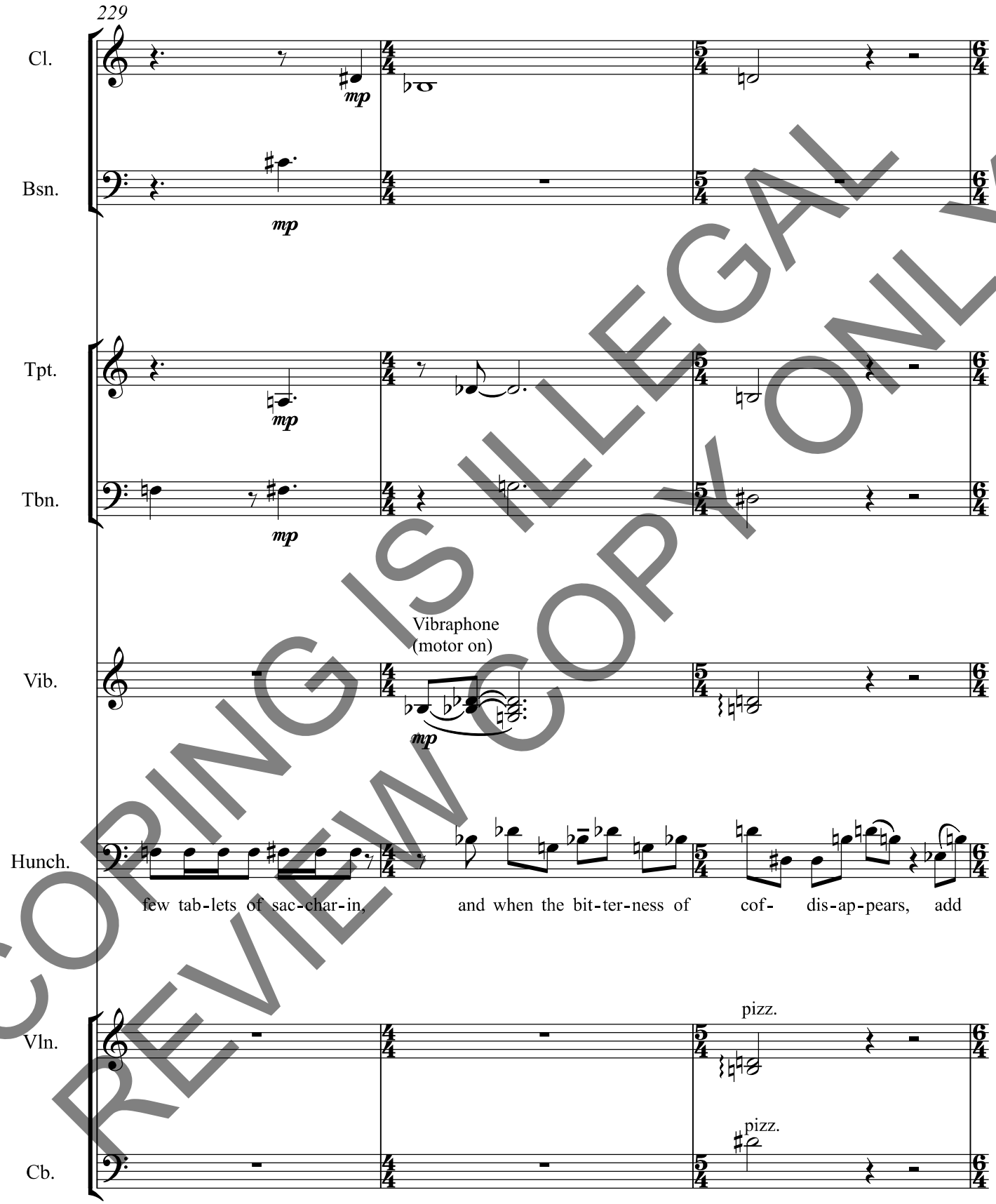

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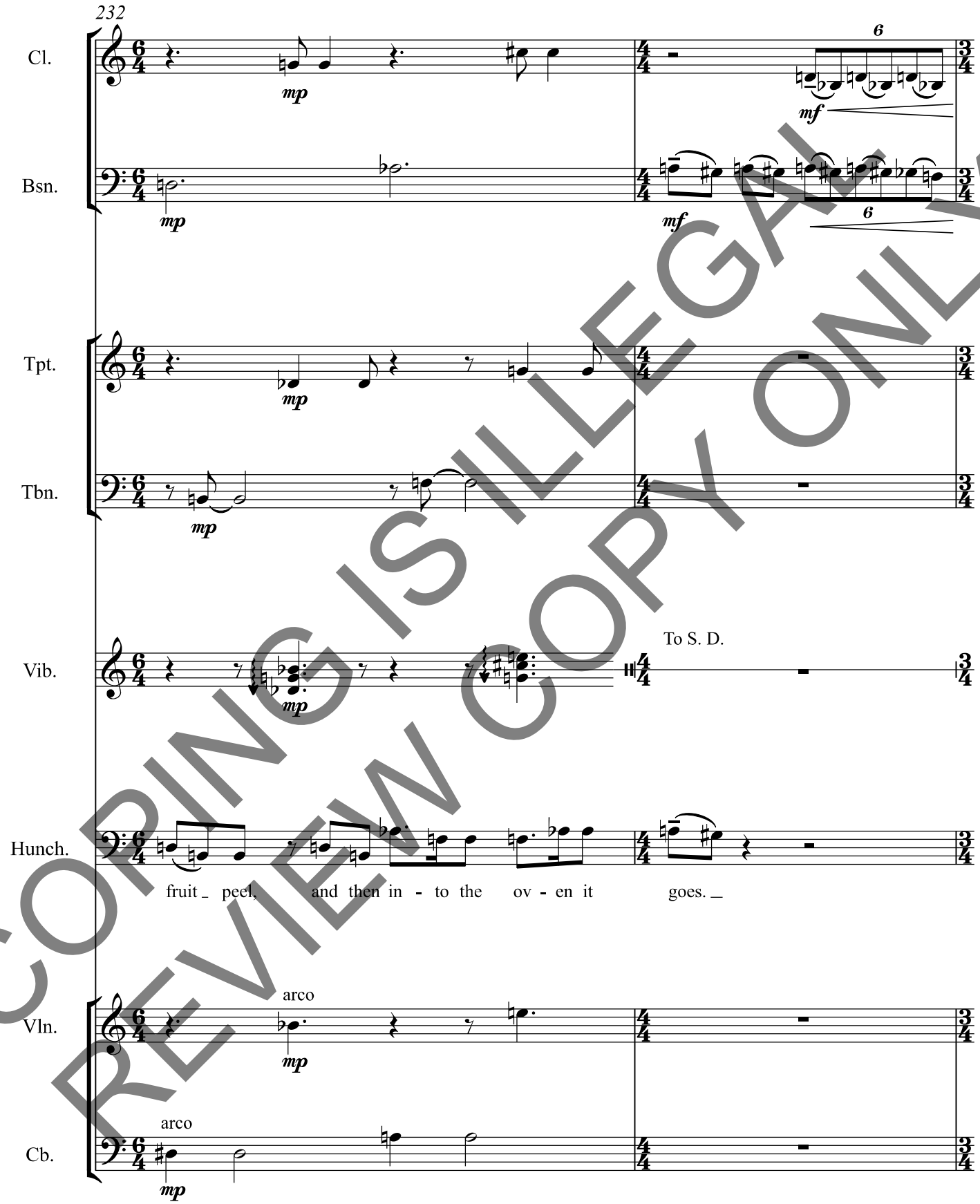

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(Suddenly, the door to the shop slams open; Mrs. Hungry, Moniuś, and Mr. Hungry enter, the latter with traces of marmalade around his mouth.)

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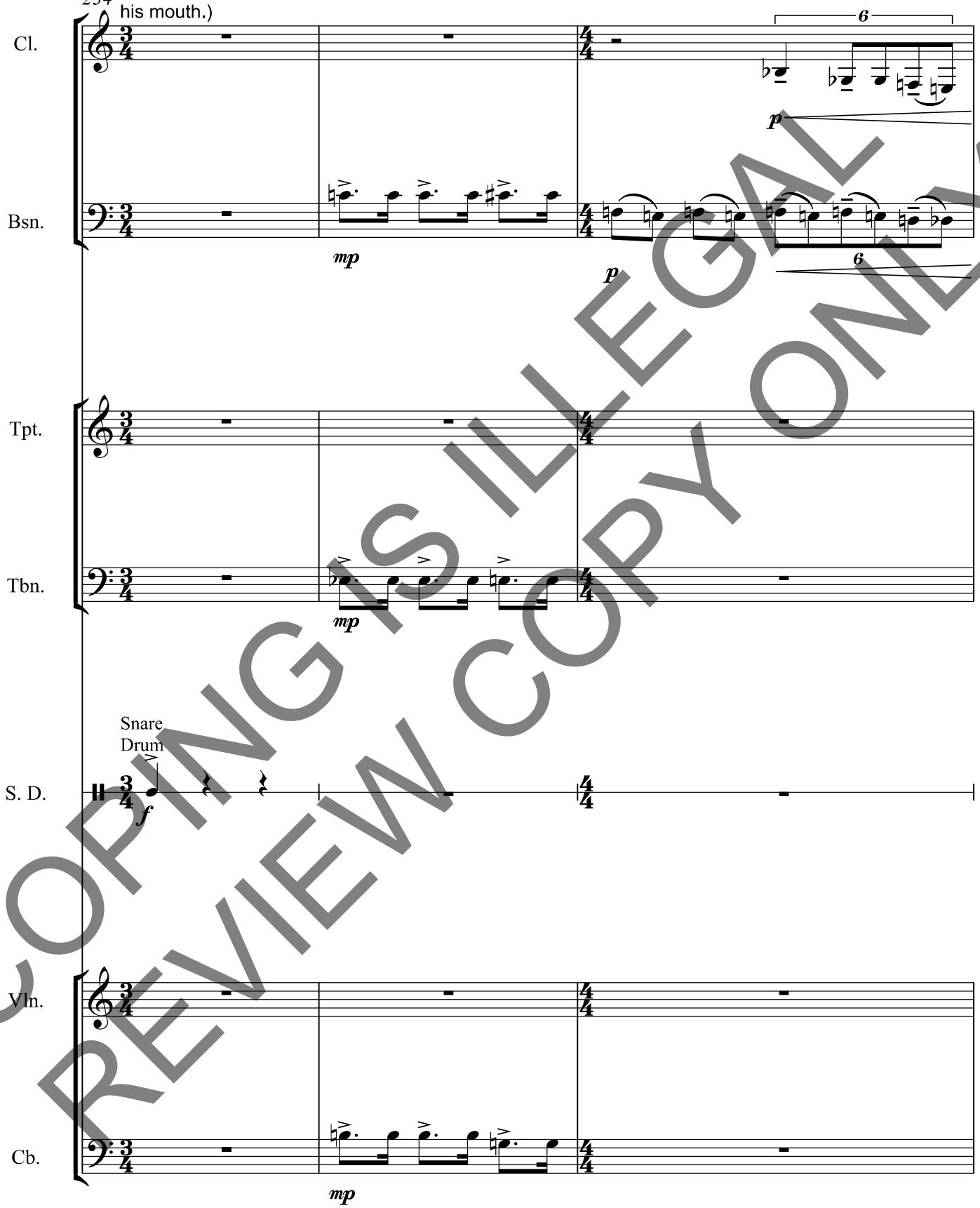

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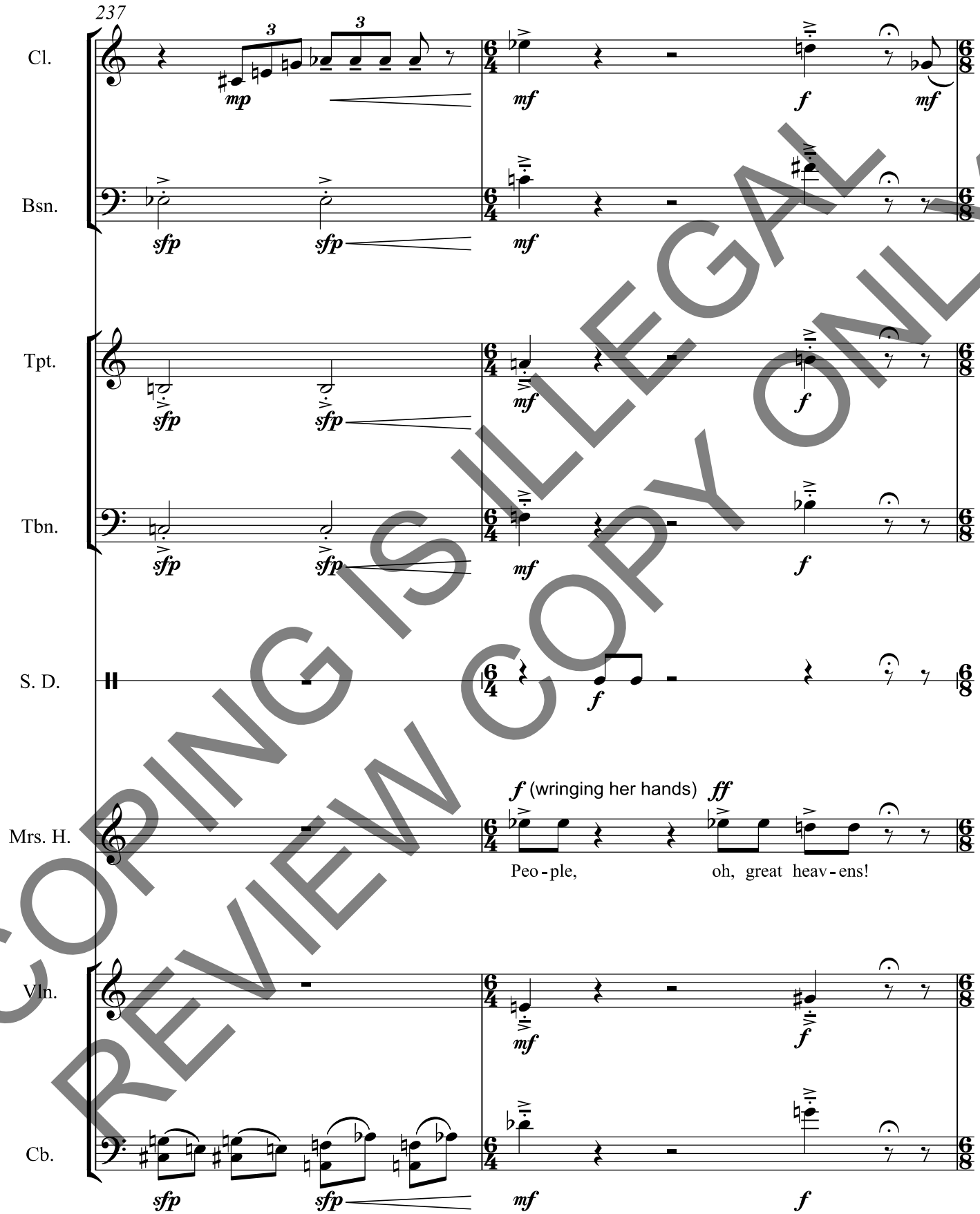

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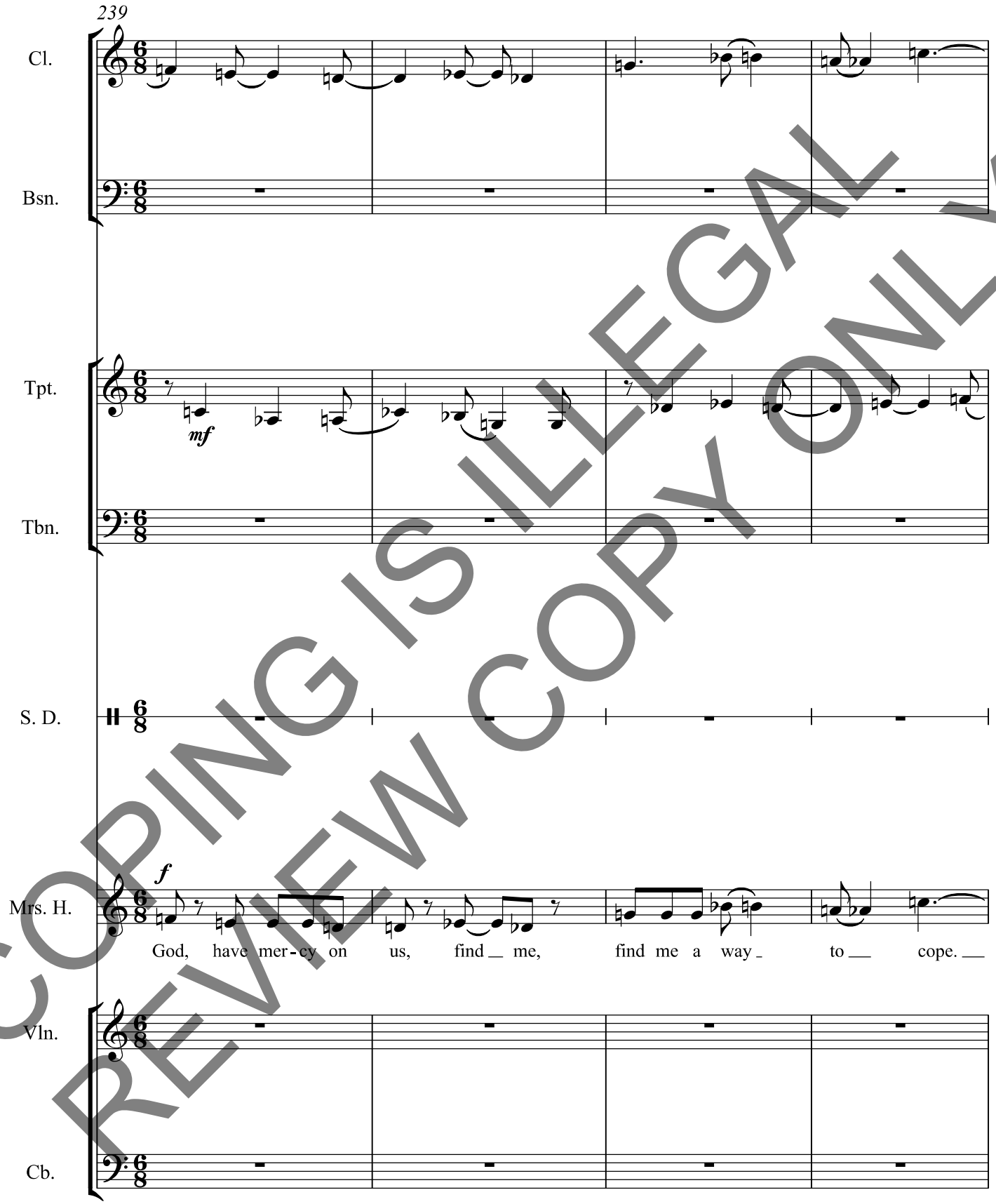

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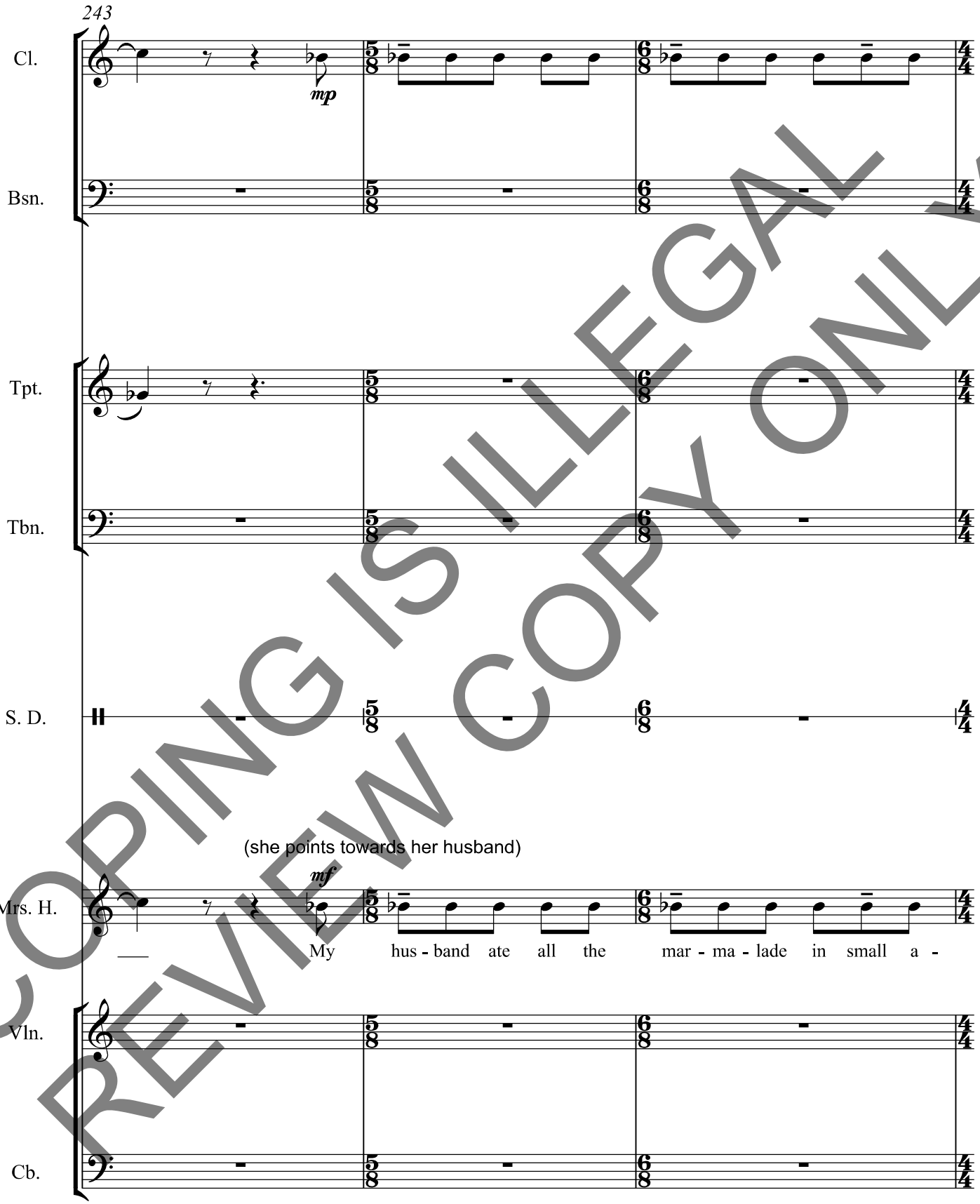

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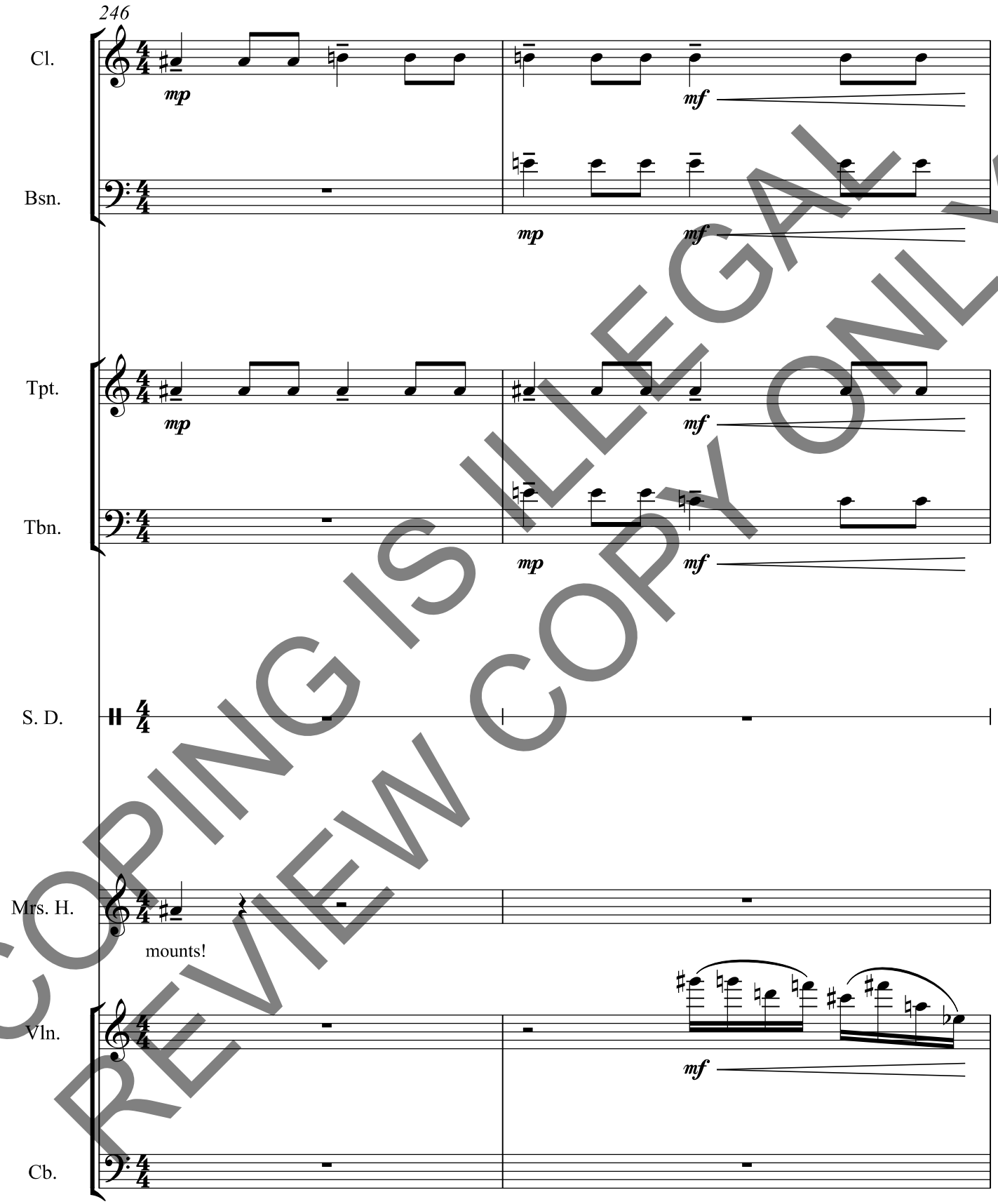

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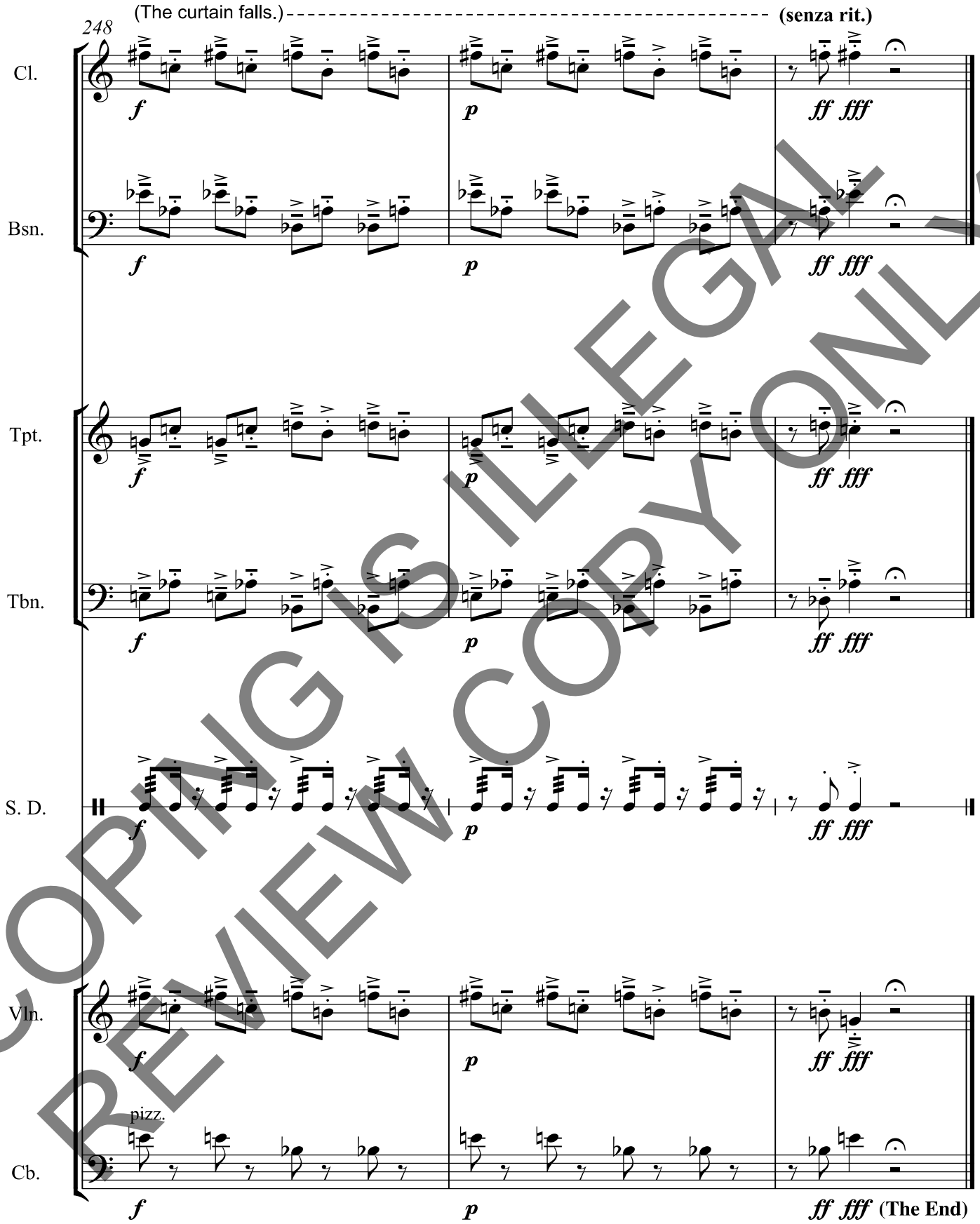

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May 9, 2024 | Framingham, Massachusetts | ca. 9:00
Total with *At the Clothing Department:* ca. 12:00

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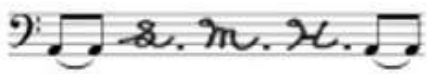

Stanley M. Hoffman

www.stanleymhoffman.com