FIRST YEAR CHARTS

FOR JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Belwin JAZZ
a division of Alfred

Avenue Swing

MIKE COLLINS-DOWDEN

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor
1st E♭ Alto Saxophone
2nd E♭ Alto Saxophone
1st B♭ Tenor Saxophone
2nd B♭ Tenor Saxophone (Optional)
E♭ Baritone Saxophone (Optional)
1st B♭ Trumpet
2nd B♭ Trumpet
3rd B♭ Trumpet (Optional)
1st Trombone
2nd Trombone (Optional)
3rd Trombone (Optional)
Guitar Chords
Guitar (Optional)
Piano
Bass
Drums

Optional/Alternate Parts

C Flute
B♭ Clarinet
Vibraphone
Tuba (Doubles Bass)
Horn in F (Doubles 1st Trombone)
Baritone Horn T.C./B♭ Tenor Saxophone (Doubles 1st Trombone)

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NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

My goal in composing *Avenue Swing* was to create a piece I could use to teach the basics of swing style to young students. I recommend playing recordings by great swing era bandleaders, such as Count Basie, Bennie Goodman, and Glenn Miller, for your students to give them examples to emulate.

Beginning in m. 5, the drummer should focus on playing a crisp hi-hat pedal on beats 2 and 4 to anchor the time for the rest of the ensemble. The snare drum should be played lightly, except during fills and rhythmic figures such as at m. 57. The written fills are only suggestions, and your drummer should feel free to improvise his or her own. For inexperienced drummers, I recommend keeping fill rhythms simple and focusing on steady time to help the rest of the ensemble make their entrances together.

The bass player should strive to play quarter notes very connected with a slight accent on beats 2 and 4. The guitarist should also emphasize 2 and 4 when playing chords, but should separate the notes by quickly lifting the left hand off the fretboard after each strum to mute the strings. The guitarist should also limit voicings to just three or four strings for a lighter sound. During the melody at m. 5 and solo at m. 37, the pianist can improvise his or her own comping rhythms to support the ensemble/soloist. However, the pianist should play as written during the introduction and the ensemble section at m. 53.

Much of the material in the wind parts incorporates variations on the rhythm above—think "Av-en-ue Swing." See if your students can count how many times this rhythm appears in the piece. Have your students practice chanting "doo-doo-doo-**Dot**" to get them to play the tenuto eighth notes connected and the *marcato* eighth note short. Also, any time there is a long note in the wind parts as the saxes have in m. 7 or the brass have in m. 23, direct your students to sustain the note with a slight *crescendo* all the way to the following rest.

There are several places in the piece where the dynamic quickly changes from *forte* to *piano* (m. 3, m. 55, and m. 89). Encourage your drummer to lead the band in making a big contrast between these dynamics for the ensemble. The quick *crescendos* and *forte-pianos* at m. 57 will be a challenge for young bands. I suggest having your students first sing their parts to practice by going from a whisper to a shout. The climax of the piece comes in m. 65, but encourage your students to maintain the energy through the return of the melody in m. 73.

The solo at m. 37 can be opened up for more students if desired. The written solo is only an example, and students should feel free to incorporate their own ideas. Students unfamiliar with reading chord changes can improvise using the concert F major blues scale (F, G, A♭, A, C, D). The melody is mostly based on this scale, so playing variations on the melody can also be an effective improvising technique.

Good luck and have fun with *Avenue Swing*!

—Mike Collins-Dowden

Mike Collins-Dowden

Mike Collins-Dowden received his B.M. in music education and performance from the Eastman School of Music, and M.M. in music education from Temple University. Mike currently teaches elementary band and middle school jazz band in Glenview, IL. As a music educator, he also teaches jazz at the Birch Creek Music Performance Center in Egg Harbor, WI, and works as a festival clinician throughout the Midwest. As a musician, he performs freelance in the Chicago area on bass trombone and guitar. He specializes in writing music for young bands and enjoys writing music for his own students to perform.

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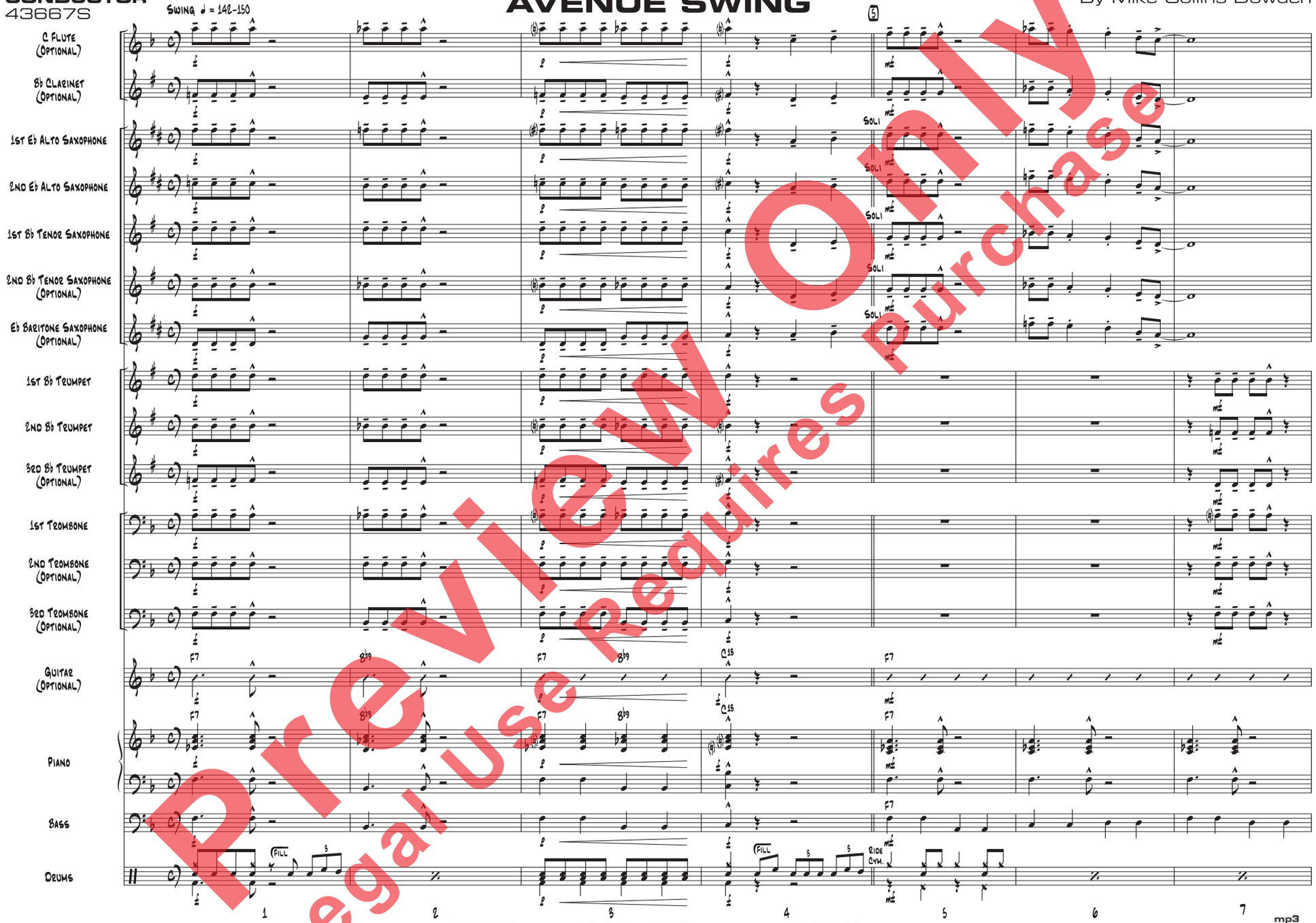
AVENUE SWING

By Mike Collins-Dowden



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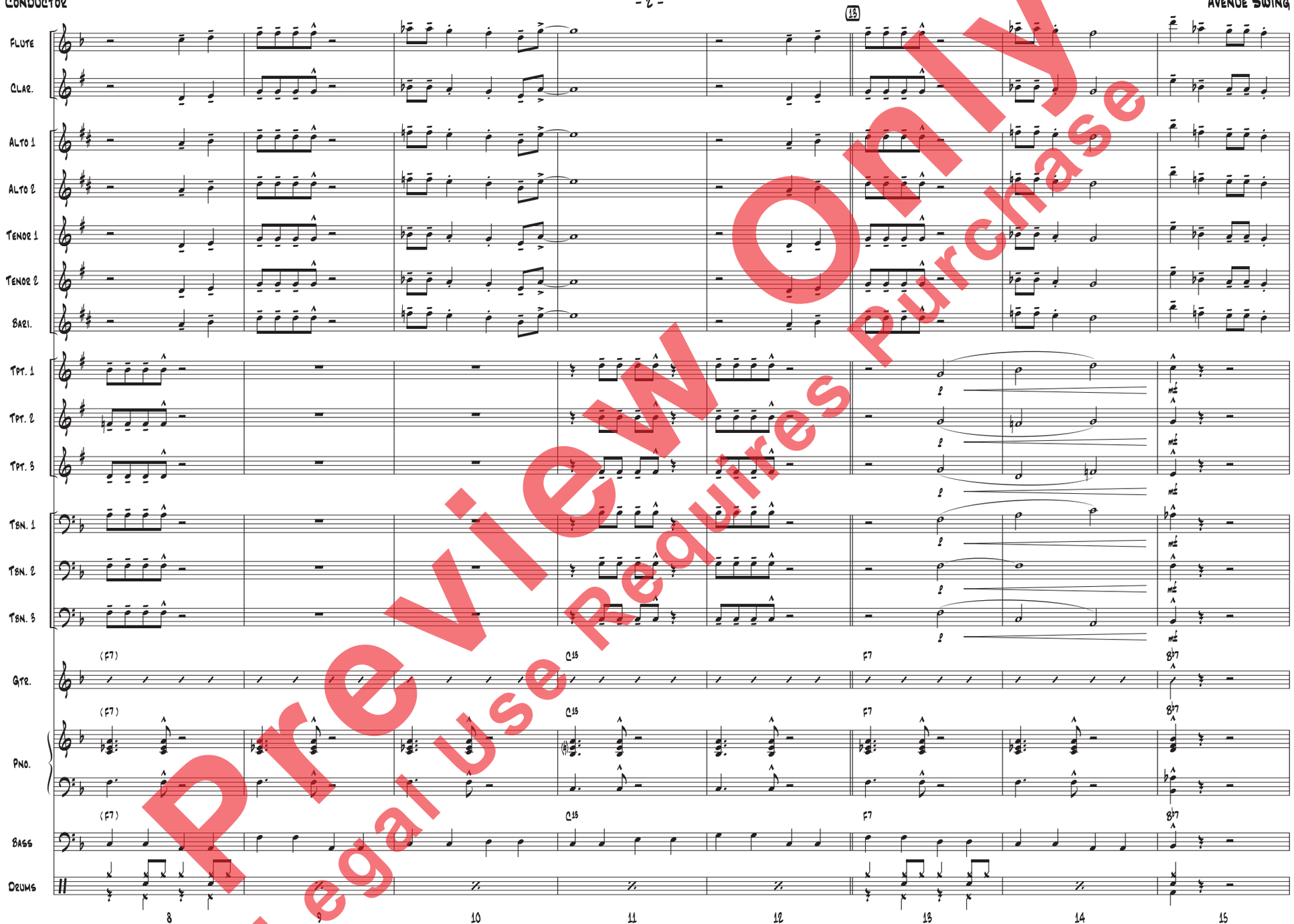

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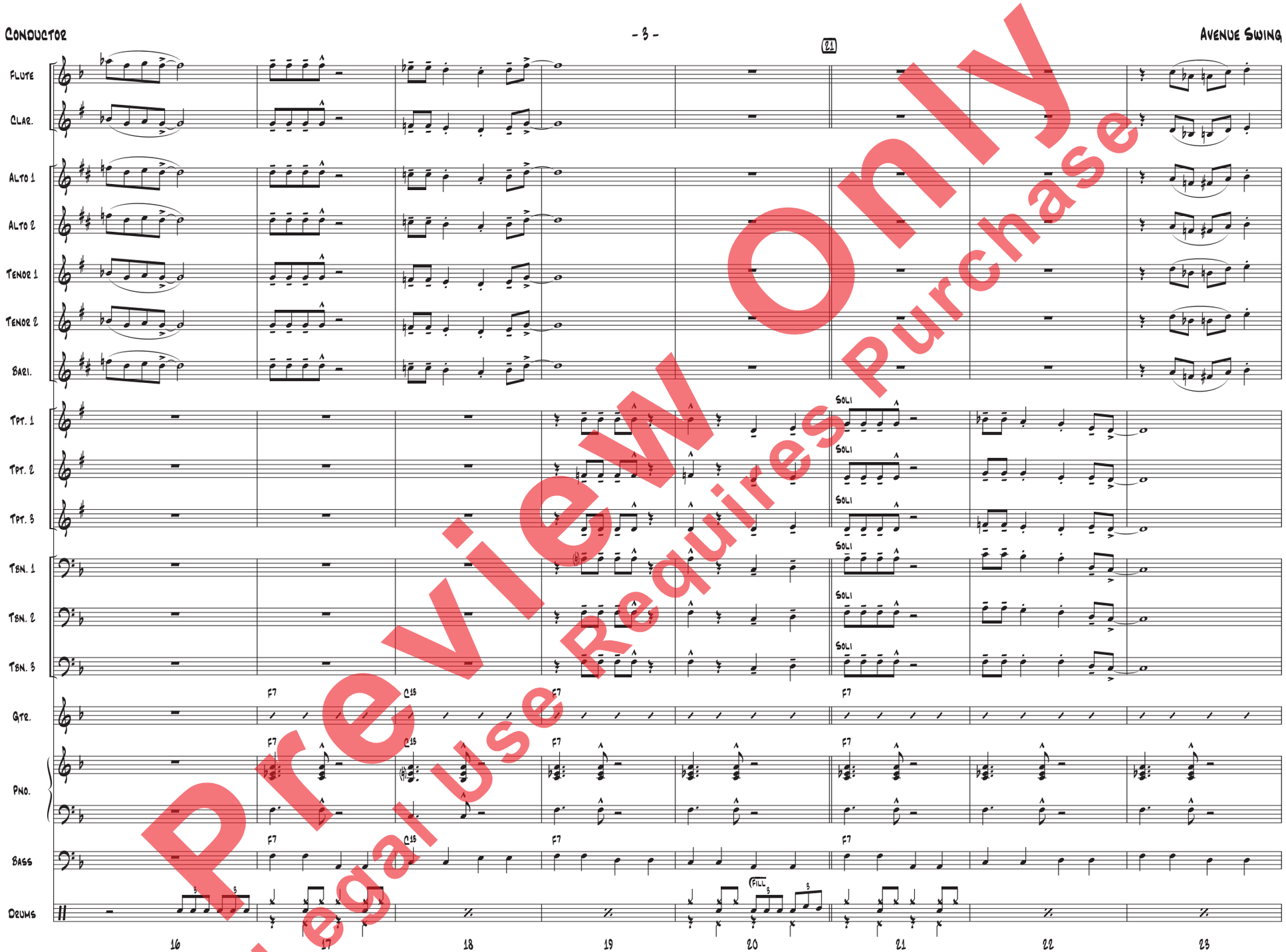

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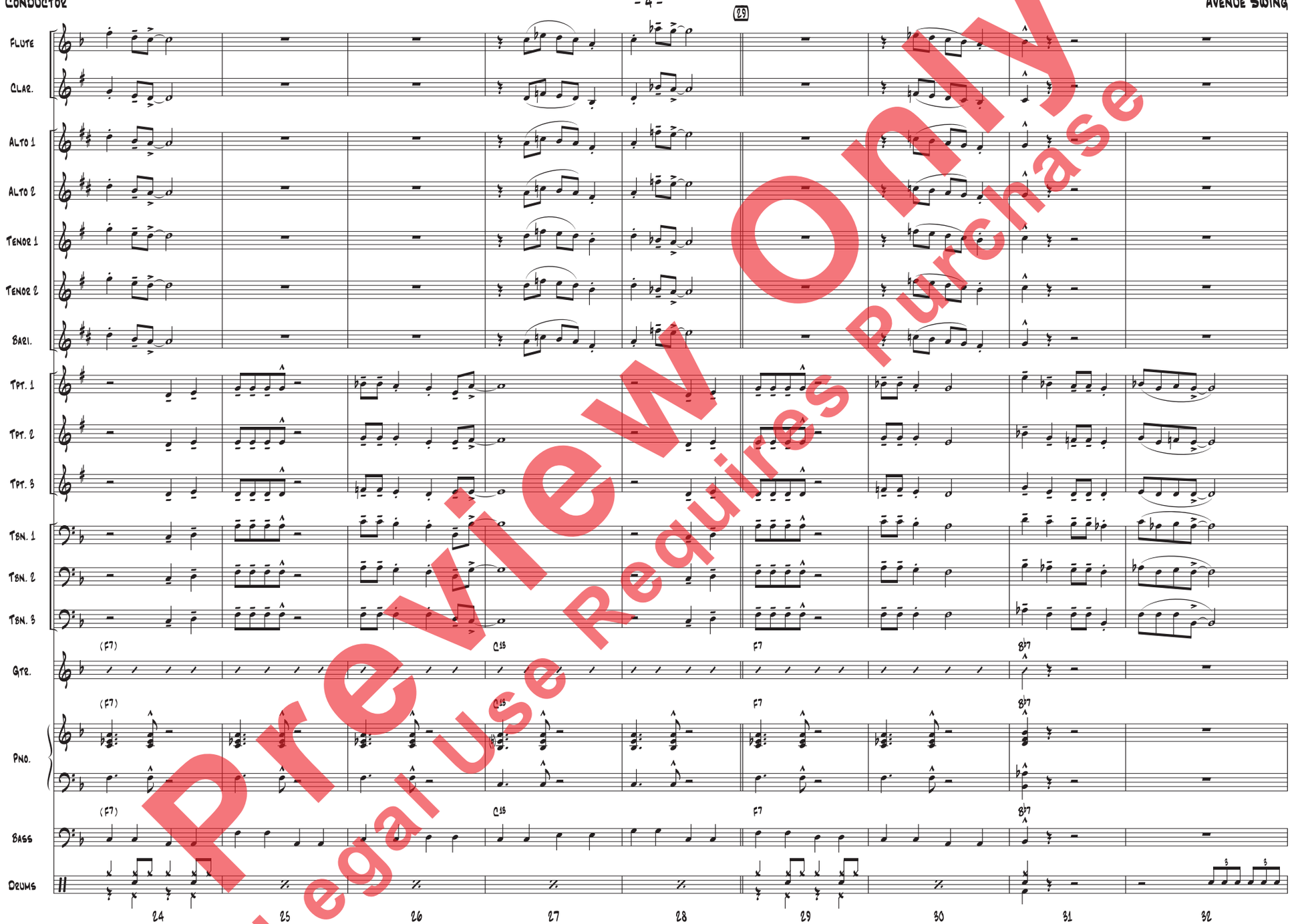

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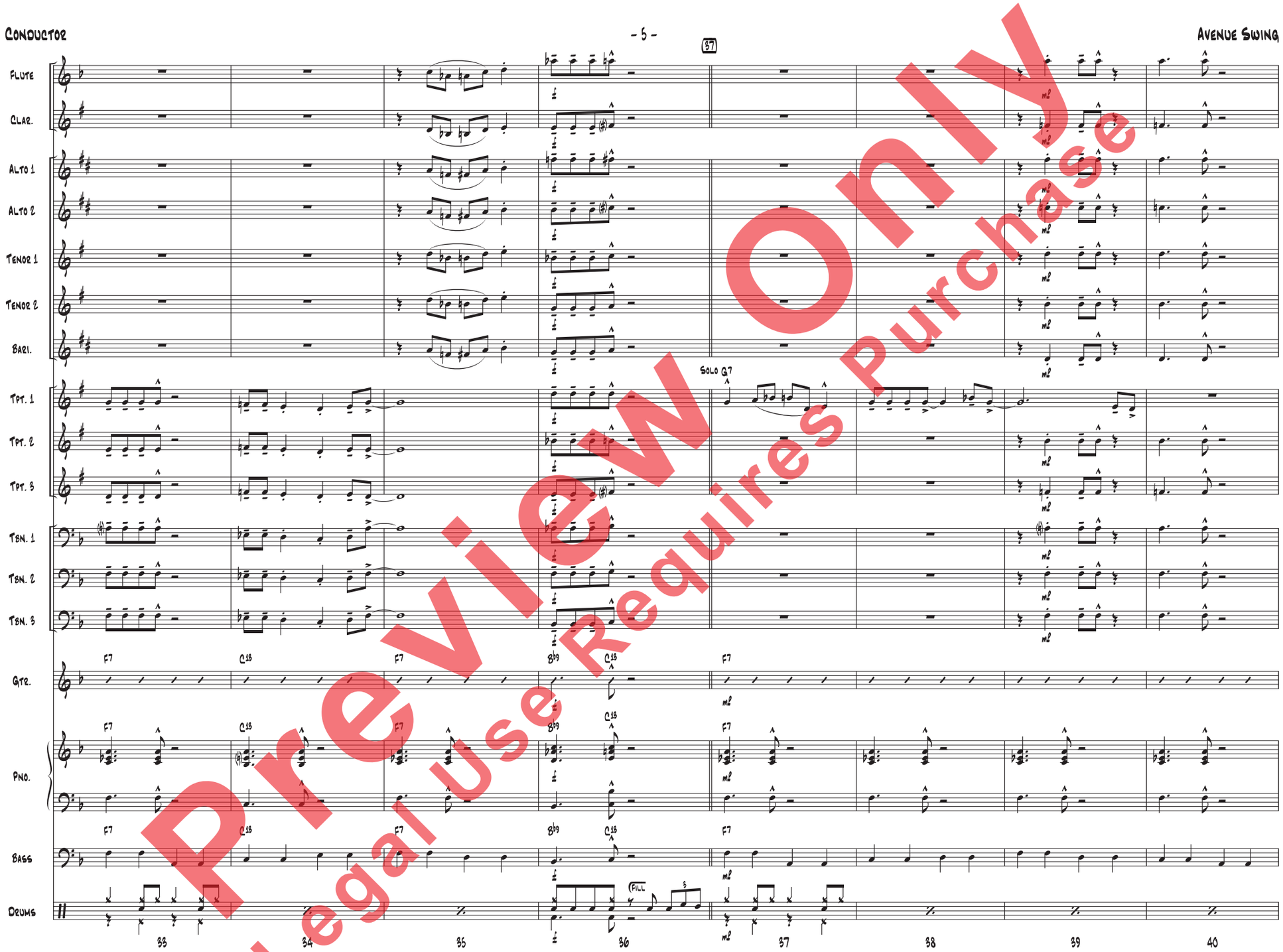

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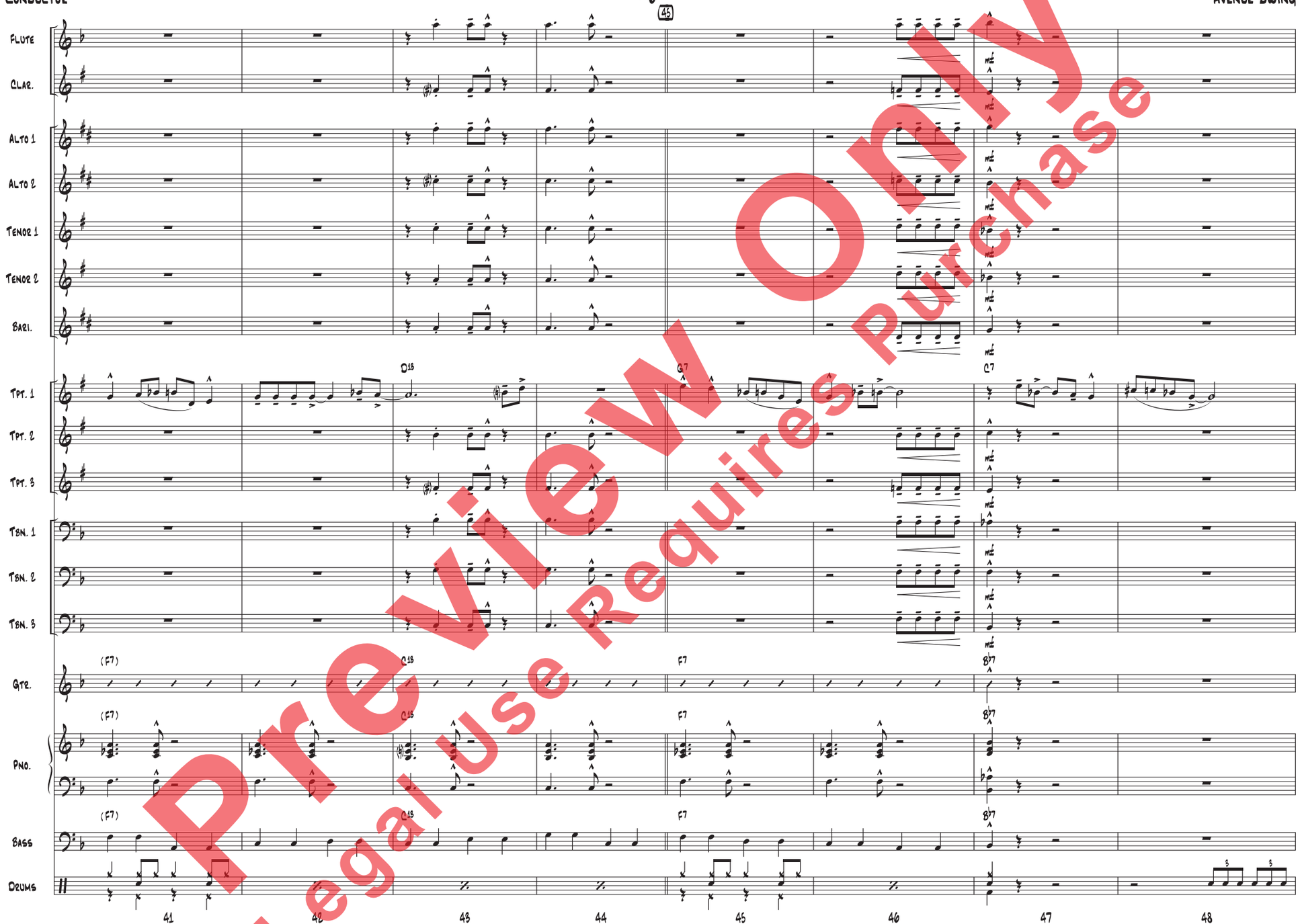

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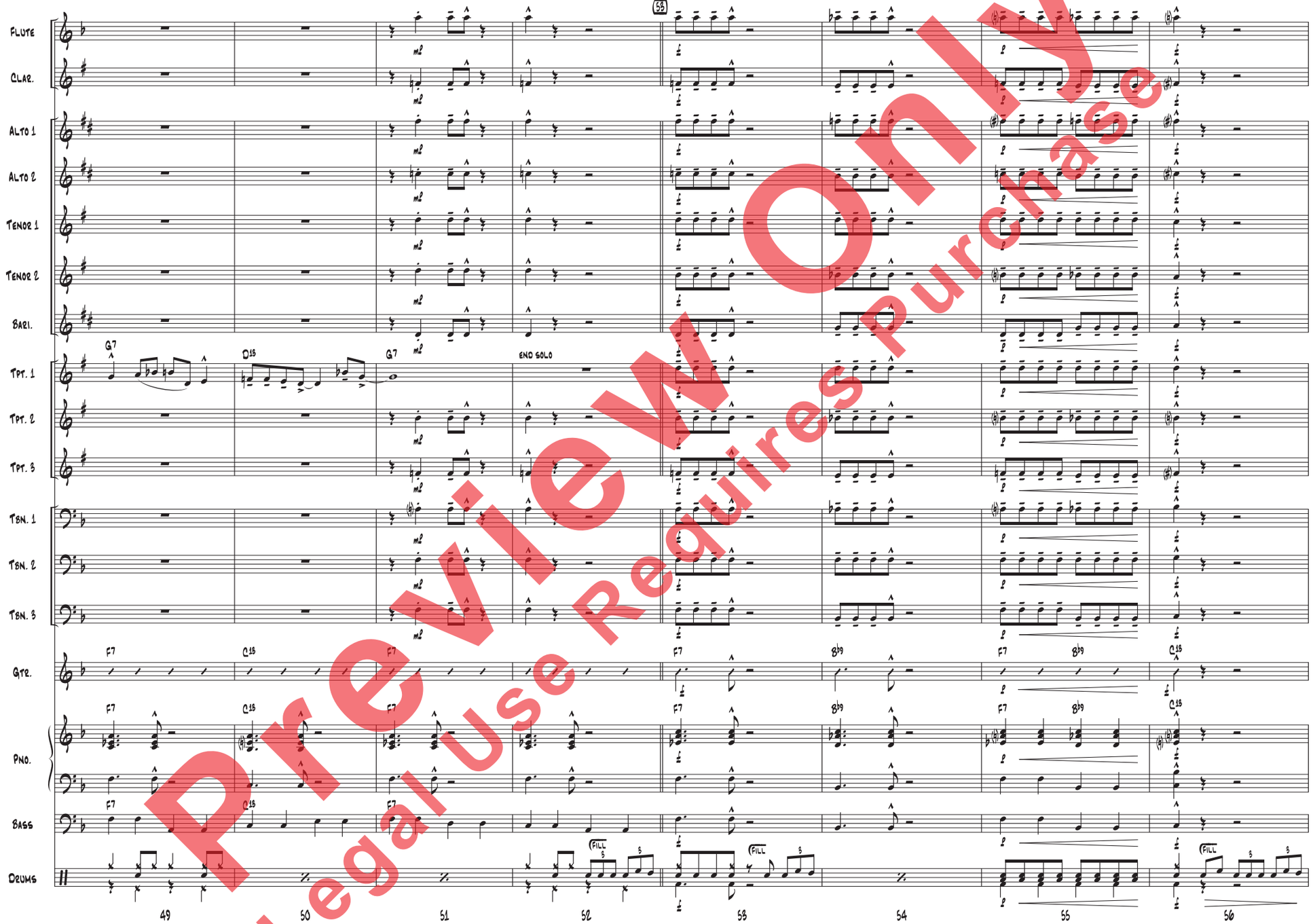

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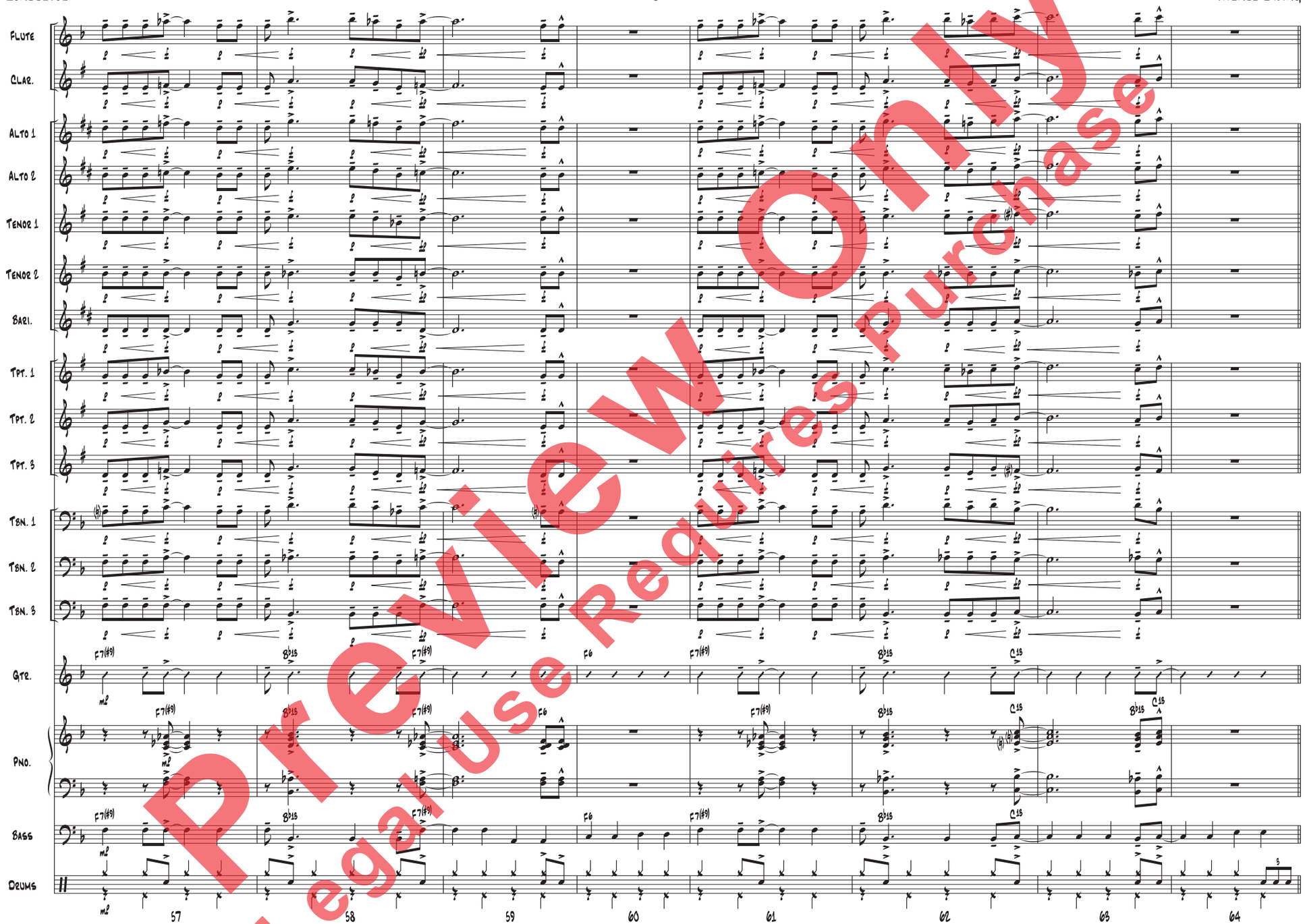

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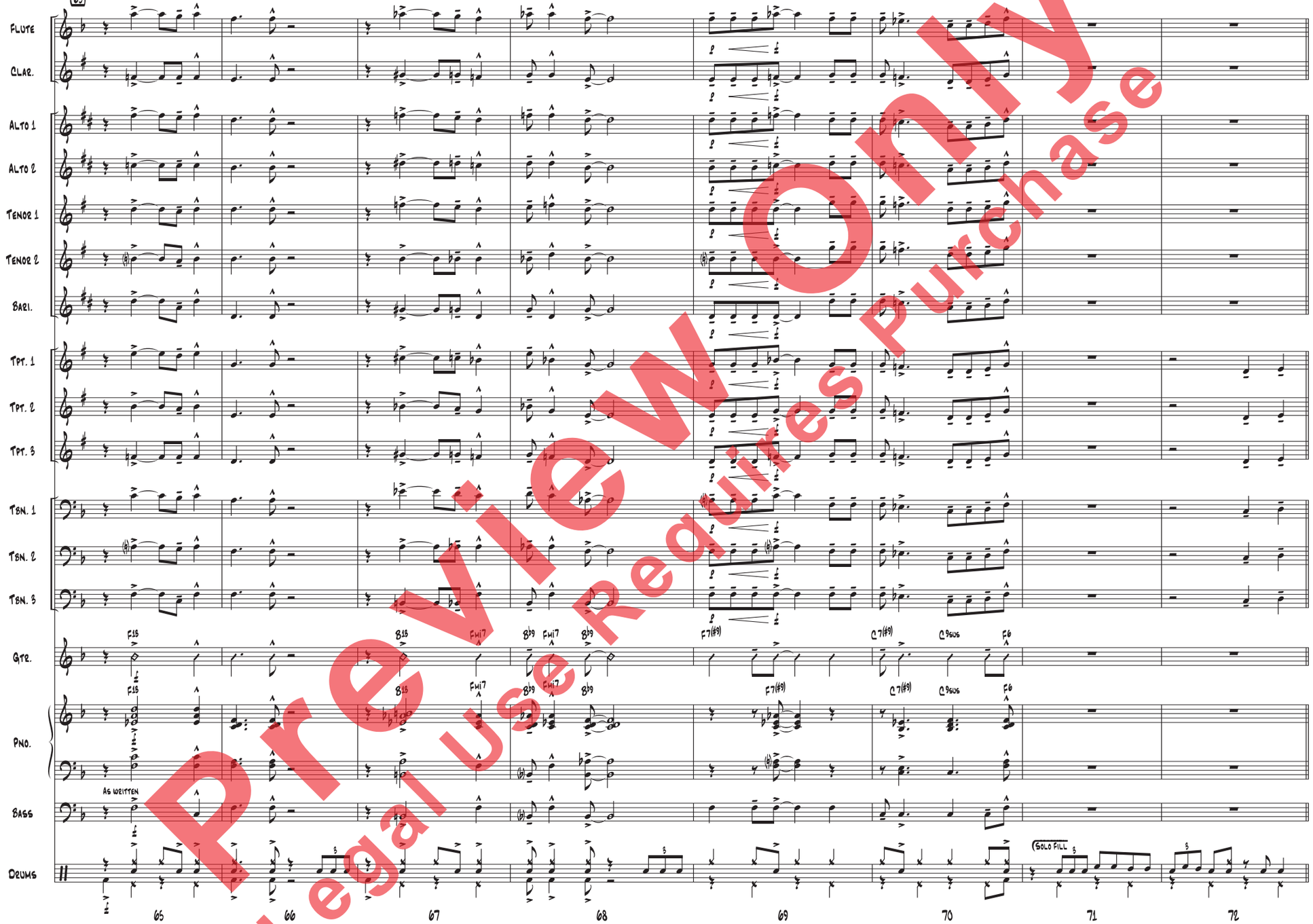

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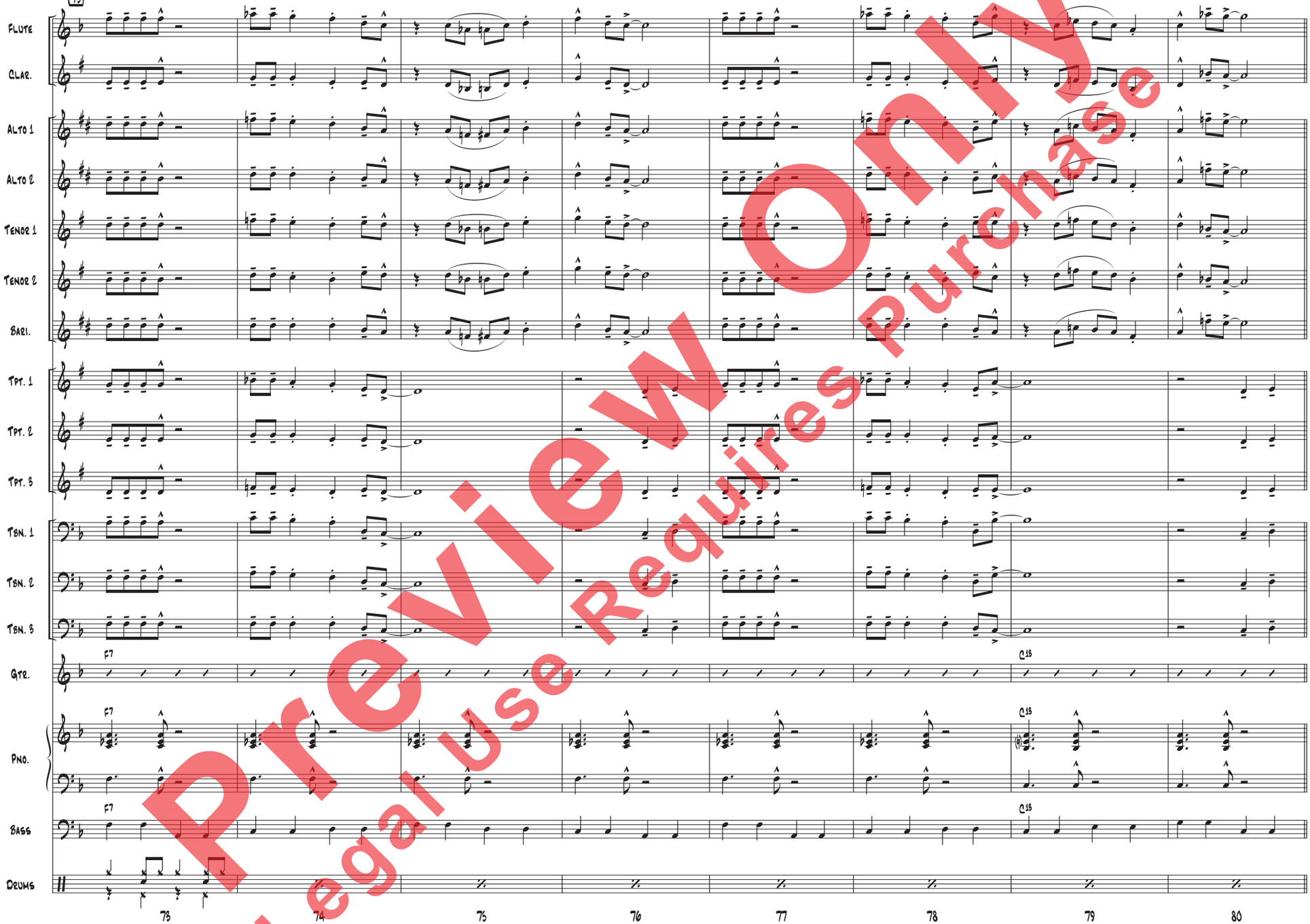

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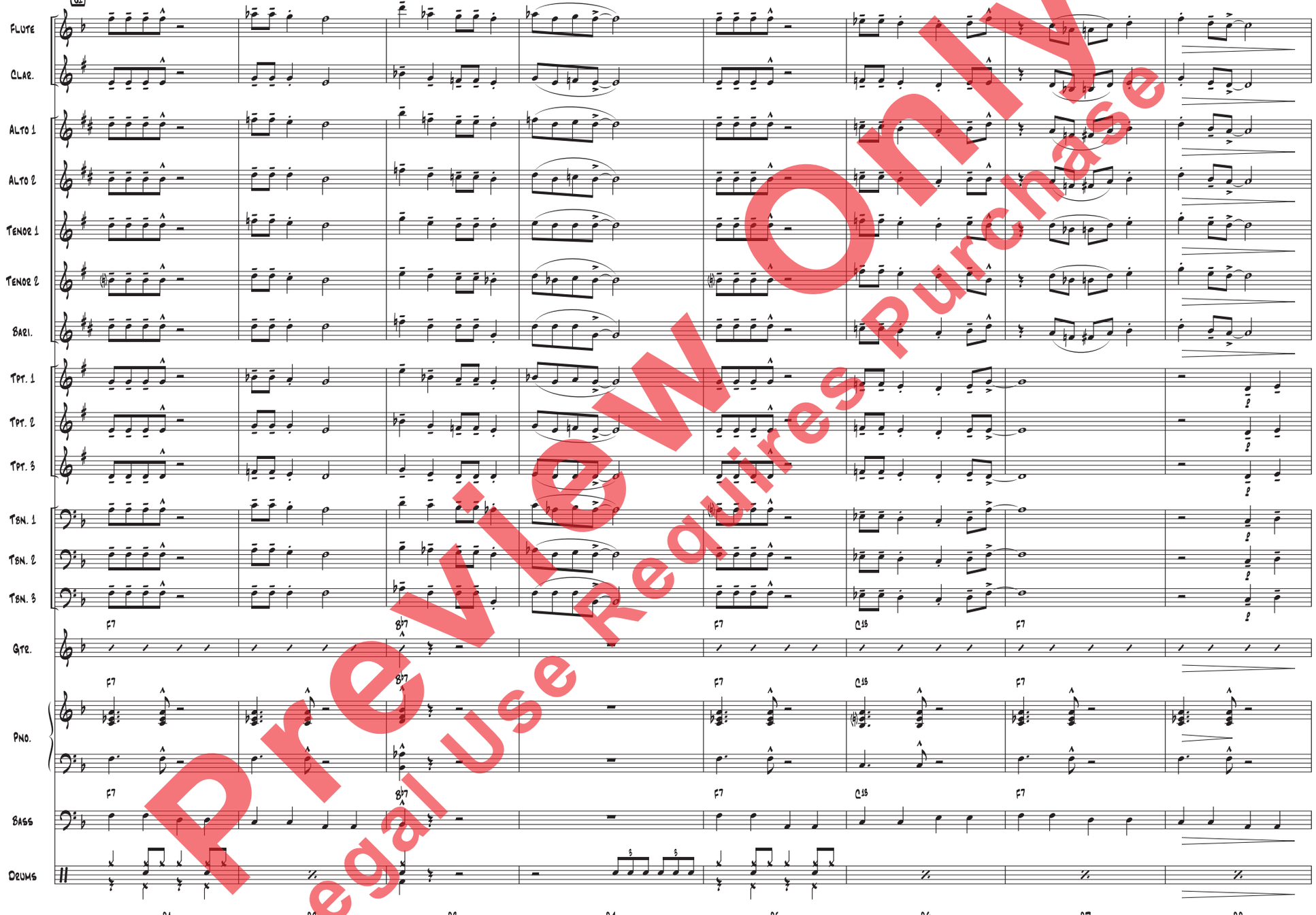

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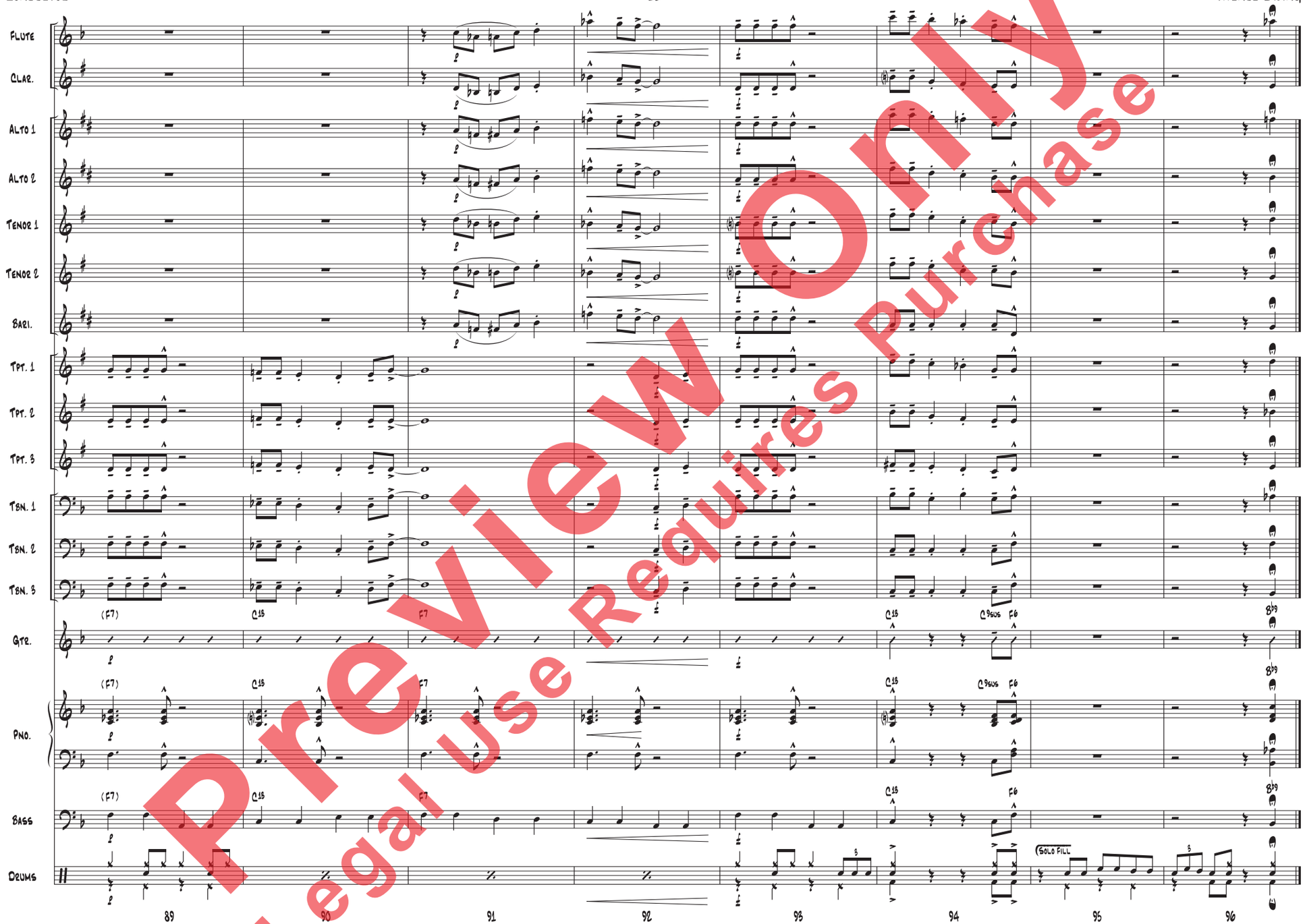

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