WOODWINDLY

The Deil's awa' wi' The Exciseman

TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH (BURNS) ARR. HUGH LEVEY

WIND QUINTET

SCORE & PARTS

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The Deil's awa' wi' the Exciseman

TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH (BURNS)

The Deil's awa' wi' the Exciseman was written by the great Scottish poet, Robert Burns, in 1792. It is written in his native Scots tongue and tells the tale of the devil fiddling through the town and dancing away with the exciseman (tax collector). For part of his life Burns himself was an exciseman, with responsibility for bringing smugglers to justice on the Ayrshire coast of Scotland. In the song there is much cheer and rejoicing that the devil has taken away the taxman, so the locals can brew their beer without having to pay any tax.

PREVIEW ONLY

Burns wrote the words of the song, but set them to a variation of an existing tune called The Hemp Dresser which dates from the 17th century or earlier. It is a lively jig which is arranged here for Clarinet Quartet.

The arrangement begins with oboe and bassoon playing the tune and bass line, almost exactly as they appeared in The Scots Musical Museum, published by James Johnson & Co in six volumes between 1787 and 1803. The other instruments all get the opportunity to play the melodic line in the ensuing 5 verses, as the arrangement gets more complex and fun. The arranger makes great use of the tritone; or "devil's interval" as it is often known because of its unsettling presence. However, in this arrangement it merely adds to the fun and excitement.

Duration: 2' 45"

Cover images: (1) Engraving from The complete works of Robert Burns: containing his poems, songs, and correspondence, 1852, published by Boston, Phillips, Sampson, and company. Public Domain, (2) Instruments, Yamaha Corporation, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

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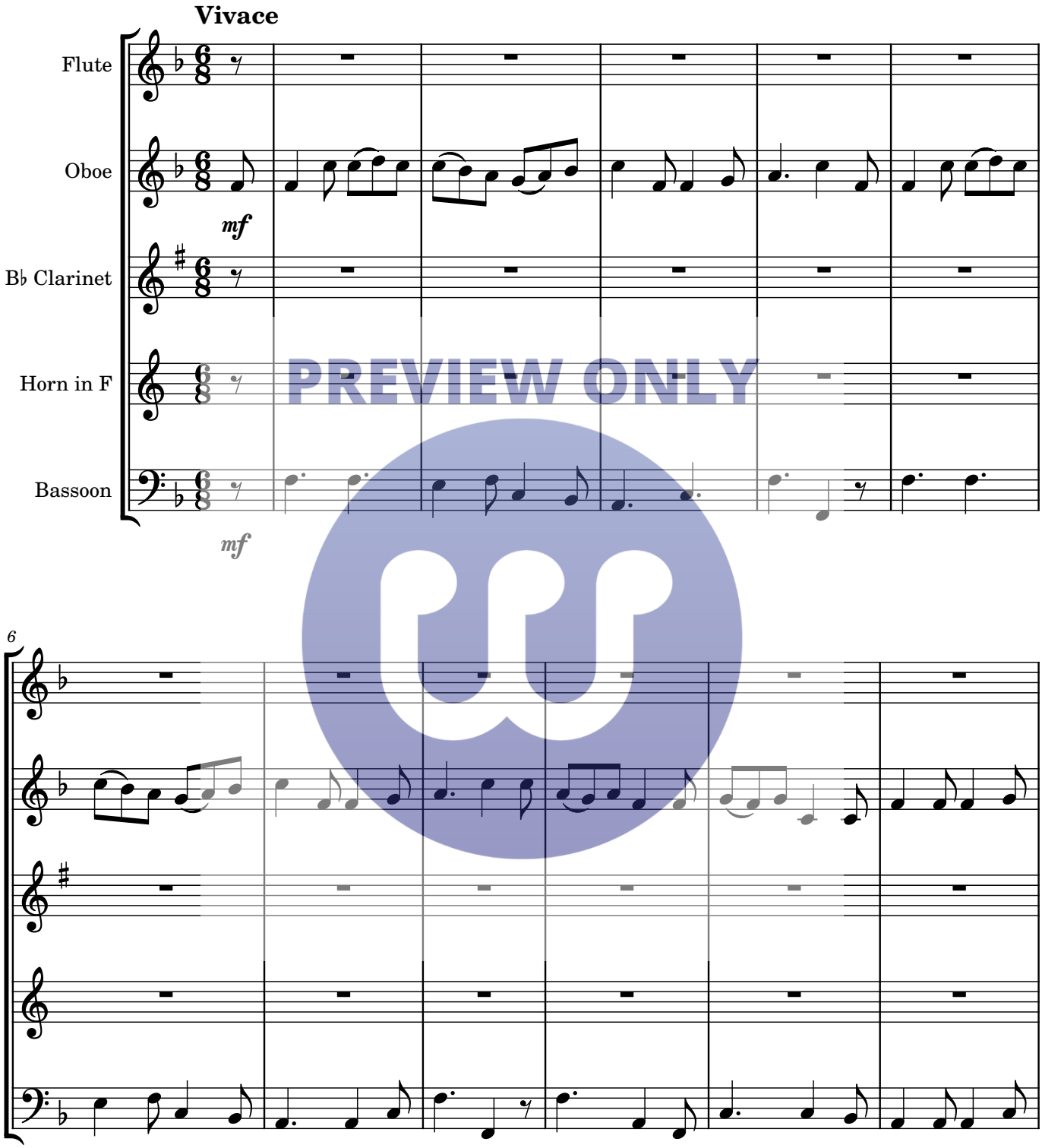
The De'il's awa' wi' the Exciseman

Robert Burns

Traditional Scottish (arranged Hugh Levey)



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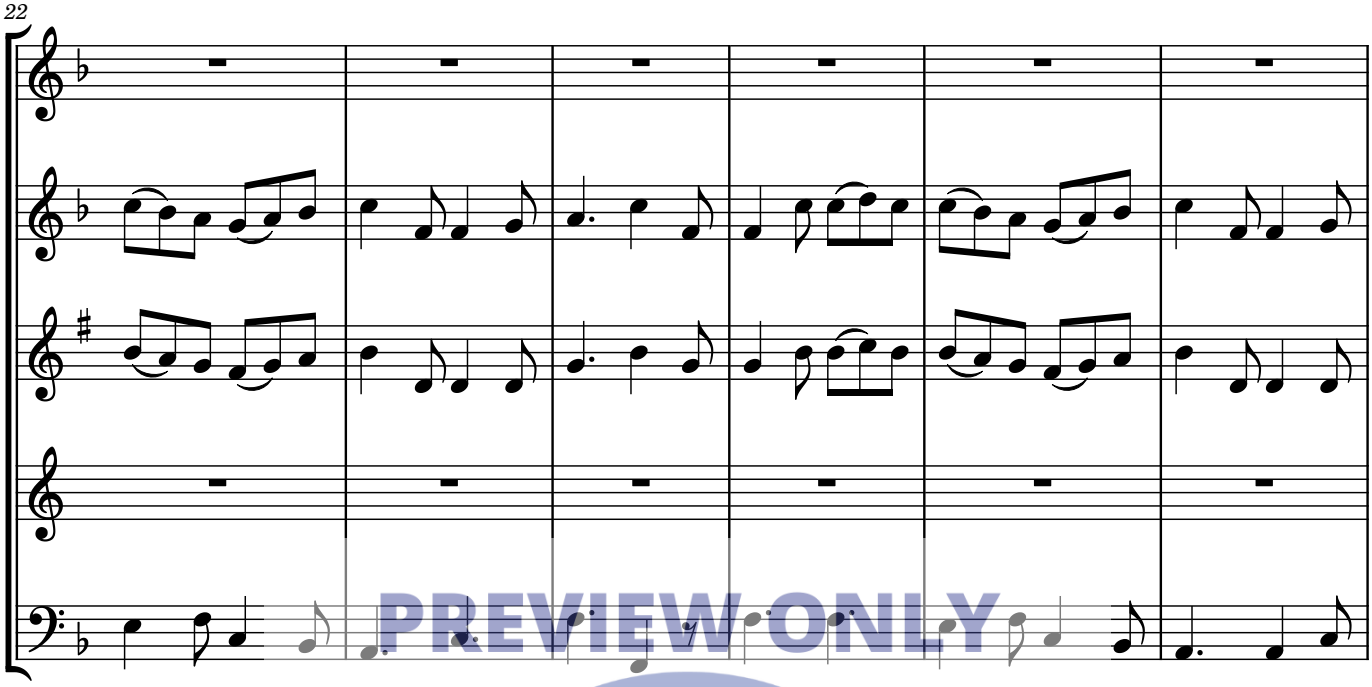

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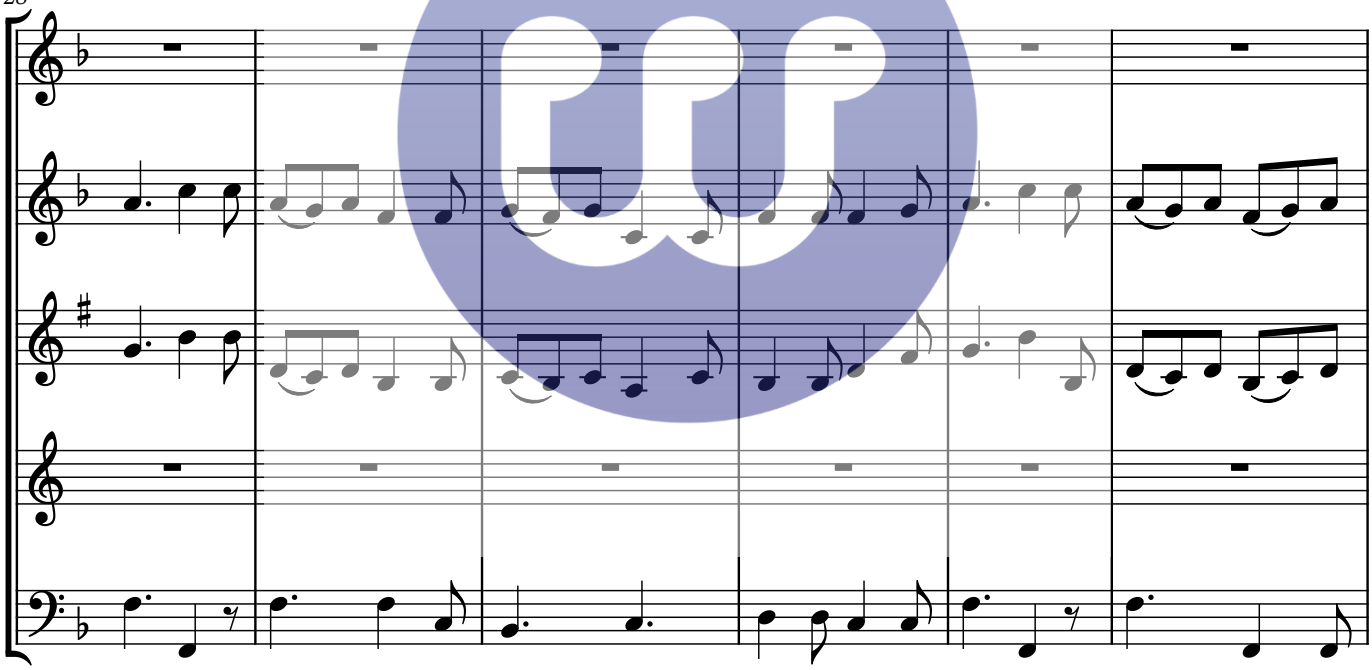

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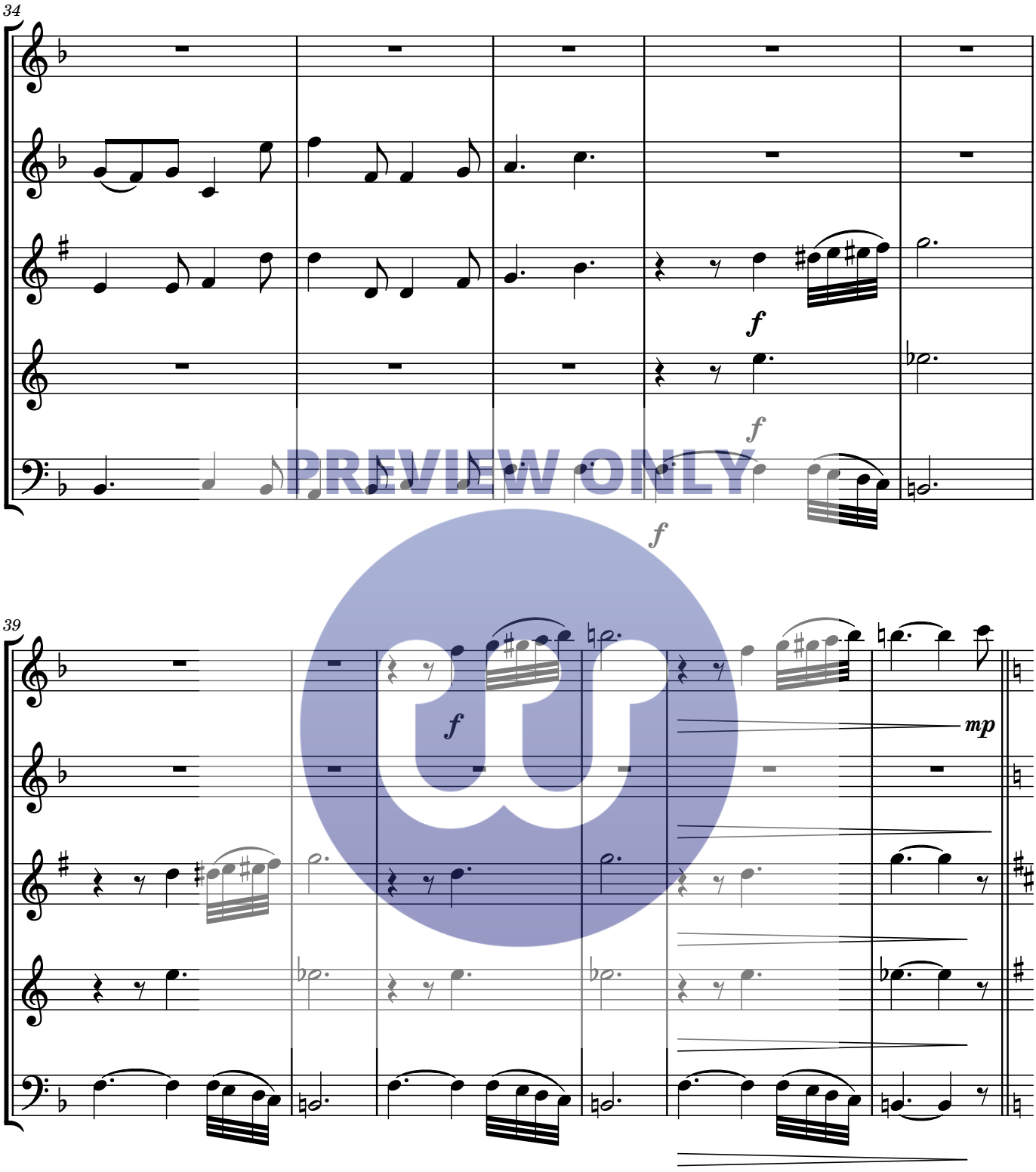

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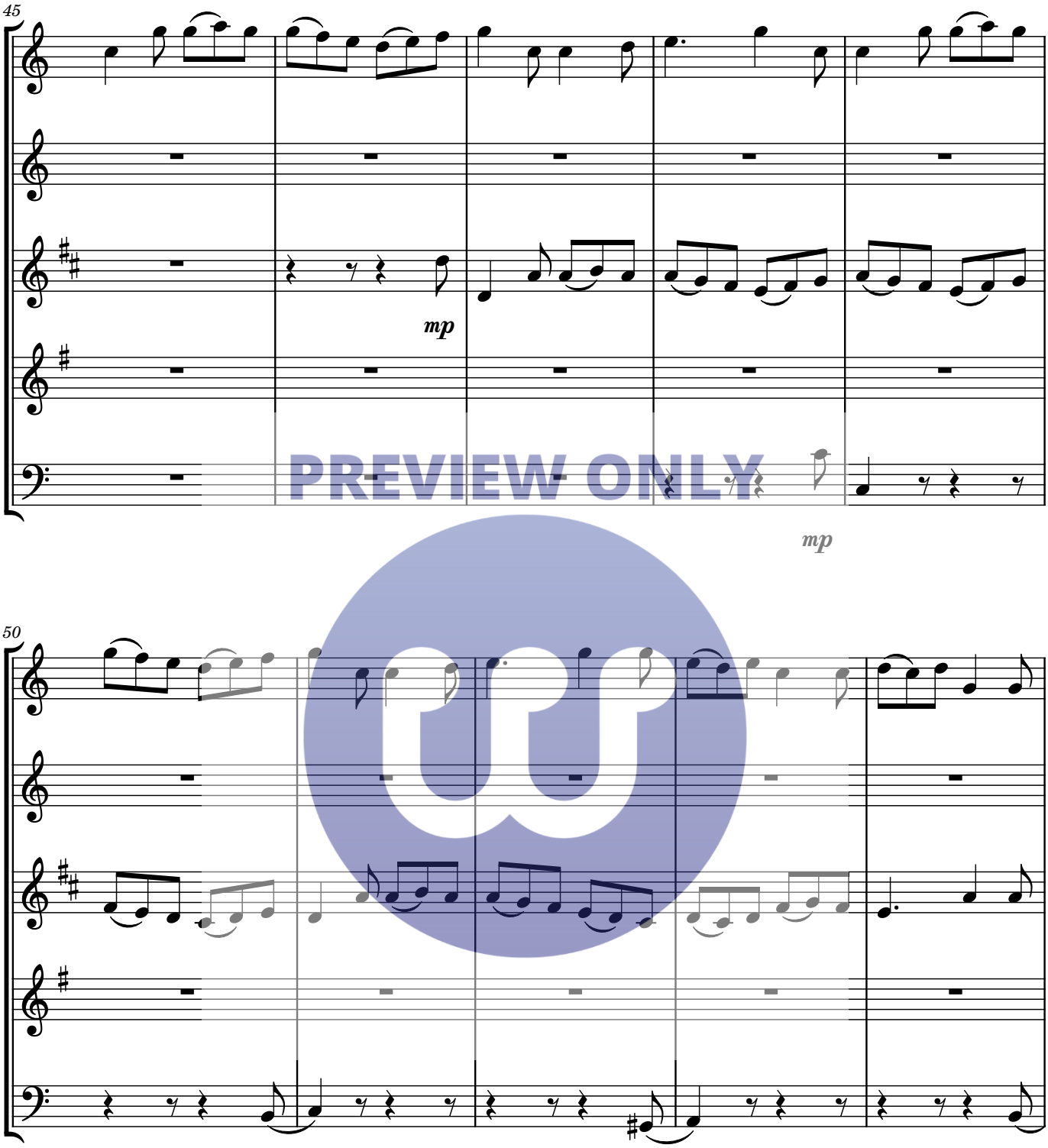

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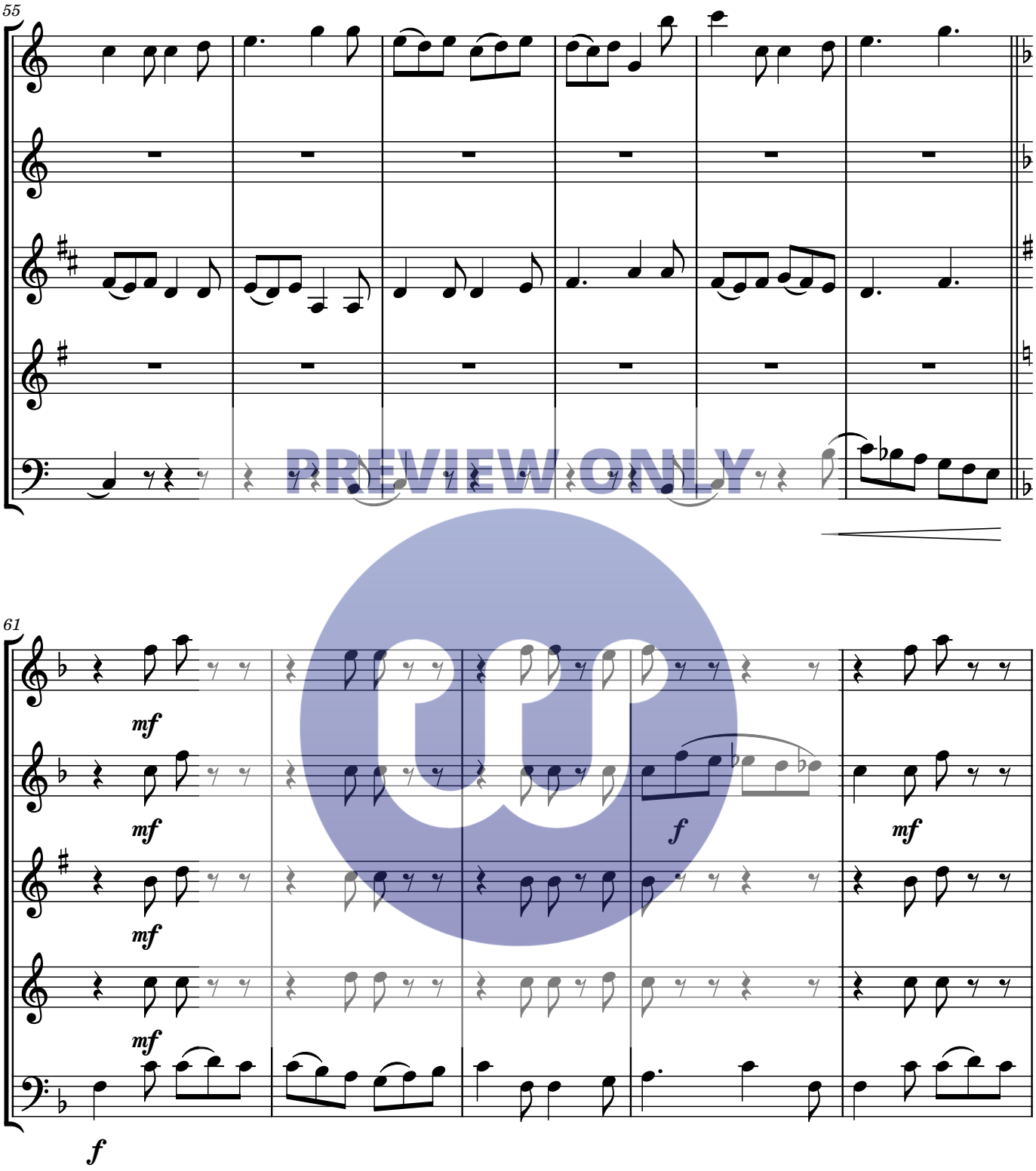

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