FIRST YEAR CHARTS

FOR JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Mack the Knife

English Words by MARC BLITZSTEIN
Original German Words by BERT BRECHT
Music by KURT WEILL
Arranged by RICH DeROSA

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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 T.C./B♭ Tenor Saxophone (Doubles 1st Trombone)

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Articulations are written as reminders for the students. A pair of eighth notes occurring on a downbeat (followed by a rest) is always performed long-short. Consecutive eighth notes (in groups of three or more) are usually played legato unless marked otherwise.

The guitar accompaniment is very important to this style of swing. The timbre should emulate an acoustic guitar (barely any amp) and the player should strum mostly in staccato fashion on each beat. The function is not only harmonic but also percussive. It should feel more brittle, like a banjo but quieter.

During the piano solo, the pianist can omit the bass clef accompaniment if a good guitarist is present.

The bassist needs to get a percussive but long sound from the instrument. Momentum is critical. If the performer is not adept with a double bass, an electric bass guitar may be used, but its timbre should be set to emulate the warmth and depth of the double bass. In general, the volume of any electric instruments should match the acoustic instruments.

Rhythmic figures in the drum part are usually representing the horns. The drummer should not play these rhythms only. If this occurs, there will be no rhythmic counterpoint and the music will feel lopsided. The drummer should still play the swing time pattern and integrate the rhythms into that pattern. This concept applies to measures 1 and 2 of the introduction and is called "connecting the figures." In other places, the drummer needs to "set up" the horn entrance by playing through the rest that precedes their entrance. This concept can be used in measure 3. When playing on the hi-hat, it is important for the drummer to make the upbeat stroke of the pattern longer than shorter. This can be achieved by opening the hi-hat gradually so the cymbals touch slightly. With the most-open stroke (beats 1 and 3), the gap is a bit wider but the cymbals should still touch. This provides a nice "sizzle" effect.

Playing with space: everyone needs to feel a "rolling eighth-note triplet" on each beat in this tempo of the swing style. Try saying "doo-dle-dah" on each beat and you'll notice that a nice round phrasing and buoyant time feel emerges. This is critical when playing staccato quarter notes. Mentally saying these words fills the space and keeps the tempo steady. Get the students to say this in unison and you'll hear the precision emerge when the band performs the chart.

Short notes in jazz are not clipped especially at this tempo. They should have a fat interior. Say the word "daht" and you'll emulate the appropriate sound.

Unison passages should always be performed more lightly, but these unison passages require a full sound from each part. The sax soli, starting in measure 36, is representative of a soli harmonized texture that requires each of the support saxophones to blow up to the lead alto. The same concept applies to the "shout" section with the entire band at measure 100.

I hope you enjoy this arrangement.

—Rich DeRosa

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Richard DeRosa

Richard DeRosa is the head of the Jazz composition and arranging program at The University of North Texas (UNT) and is currently an arranger for Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. Other arrangements have been recorded by Gerry Mulligan, Mel Lewis, Susannah McCorkle, Garry Dial & Dick Oatts, and Dominick Farinacci. Published textbooks include *Concepts for Improvisation* (1997) and *Acoustic and Midi Orchestration for the Contemporary Composer* (2007).

CONDUCTOR
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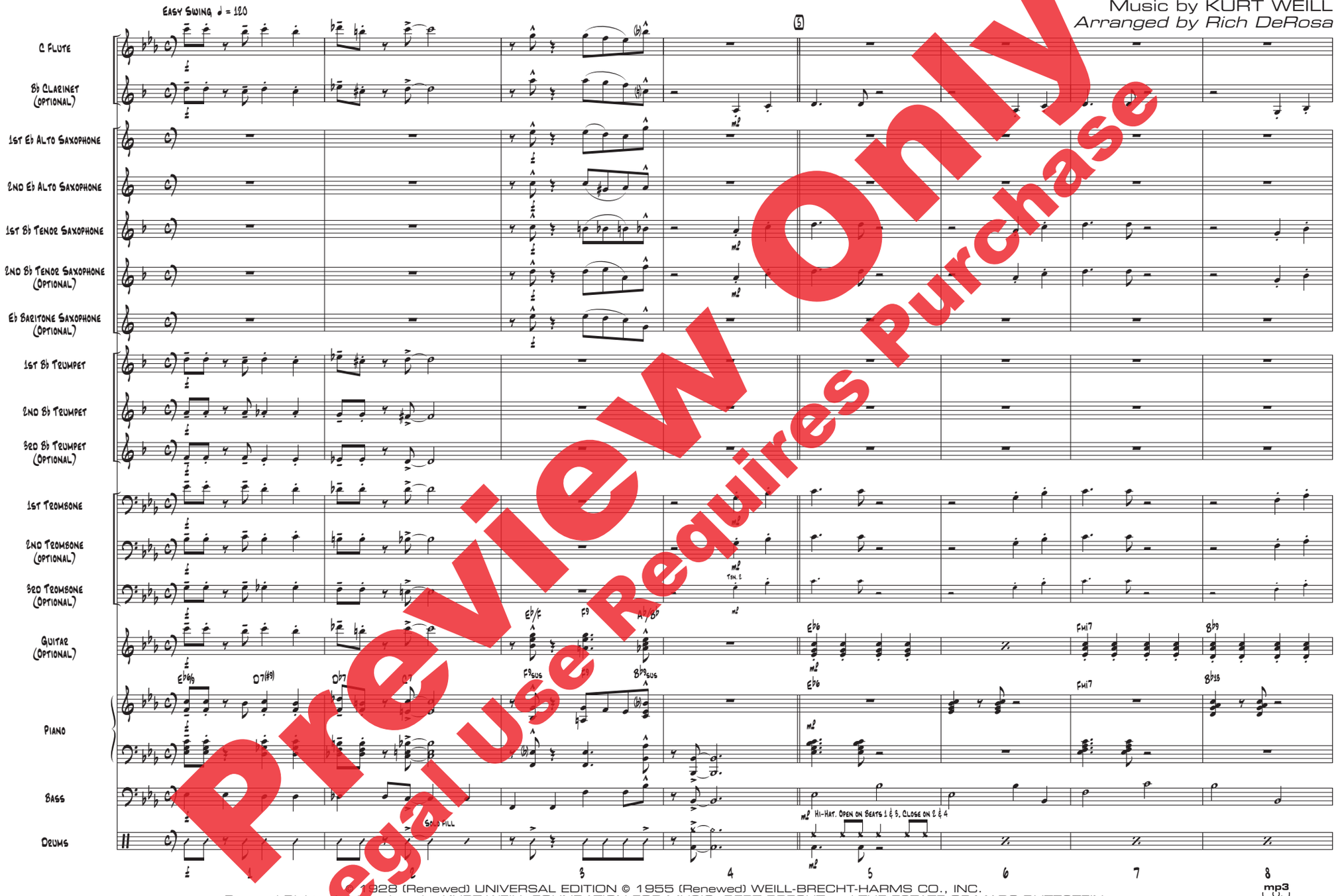

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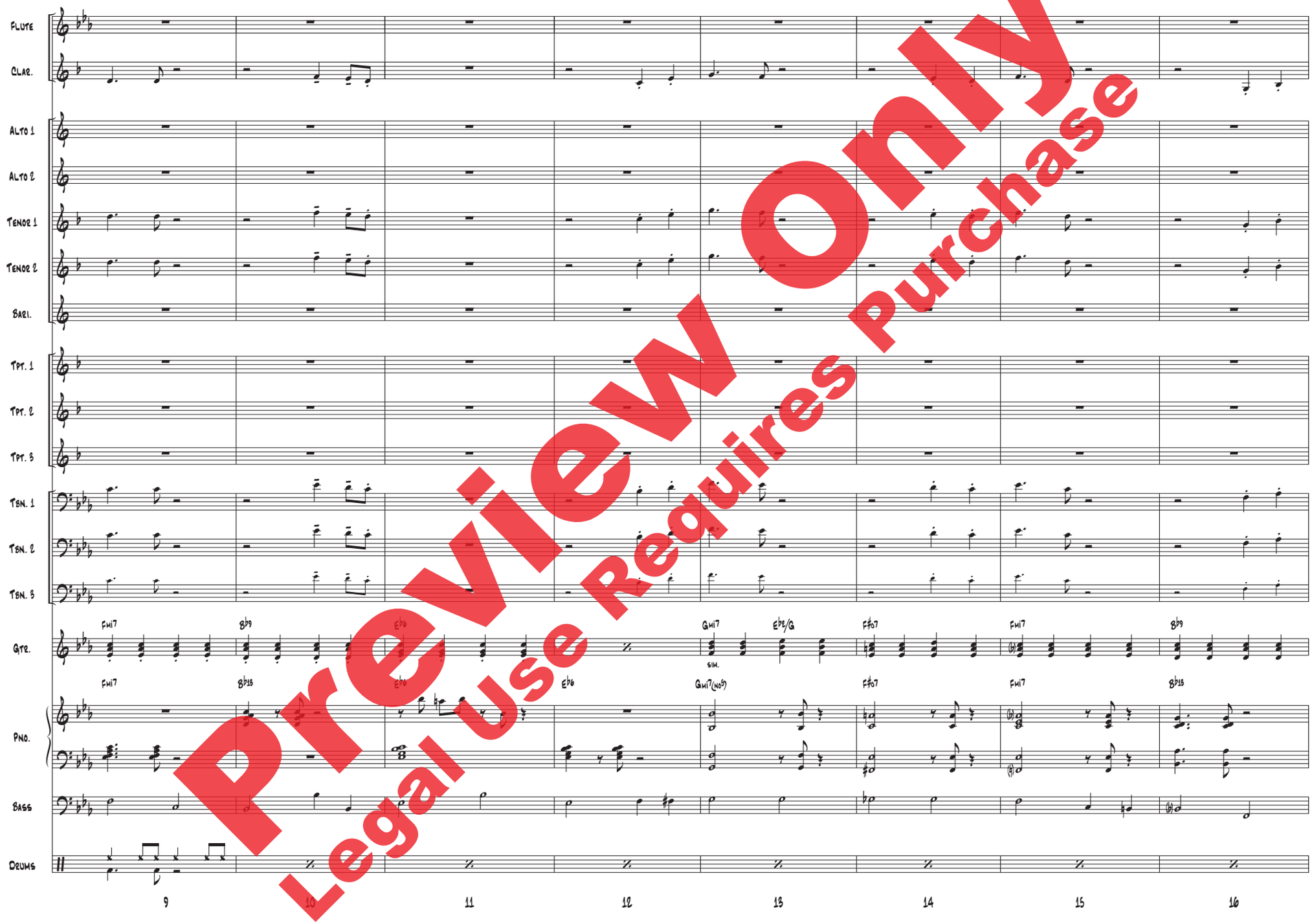

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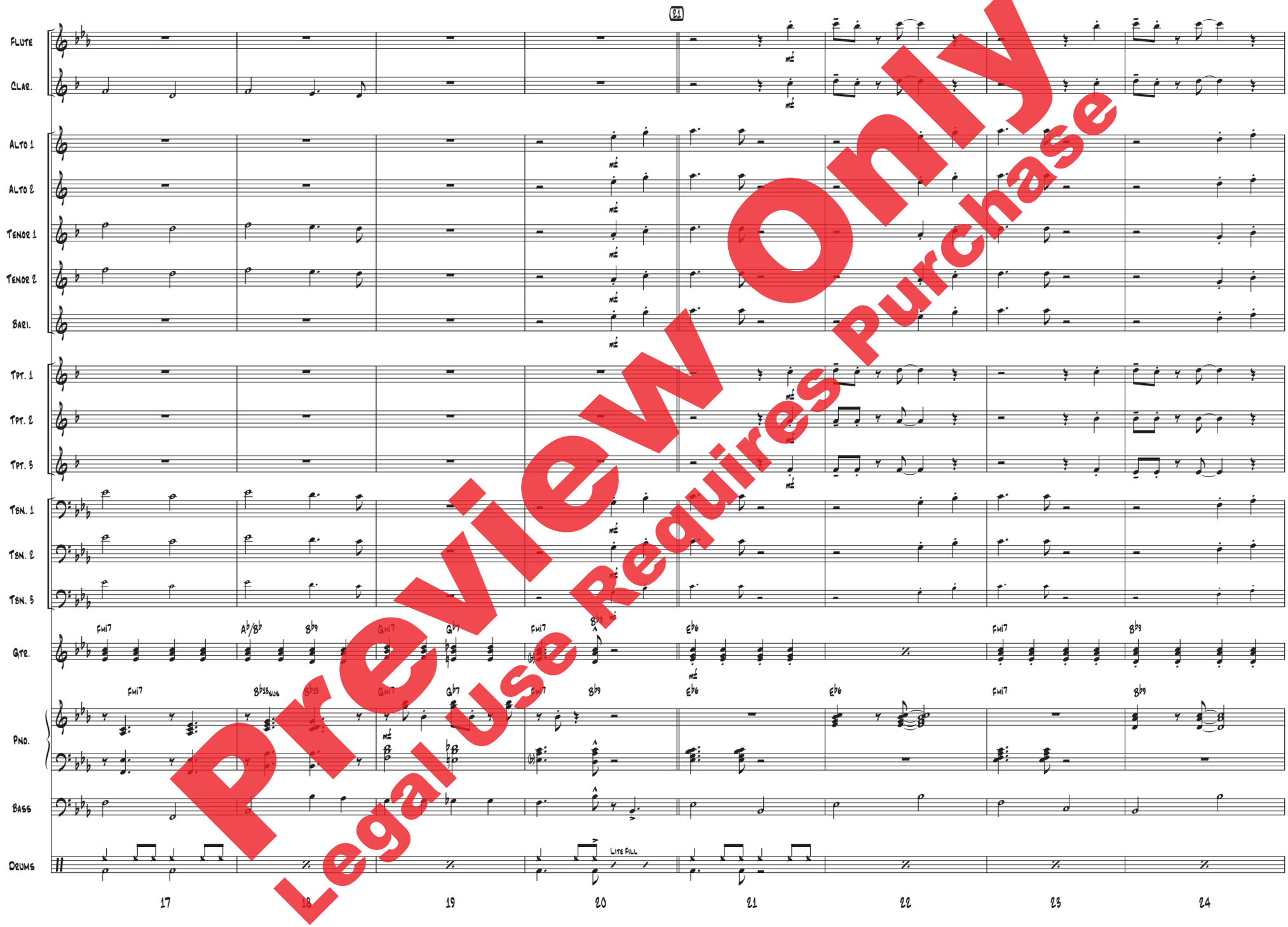

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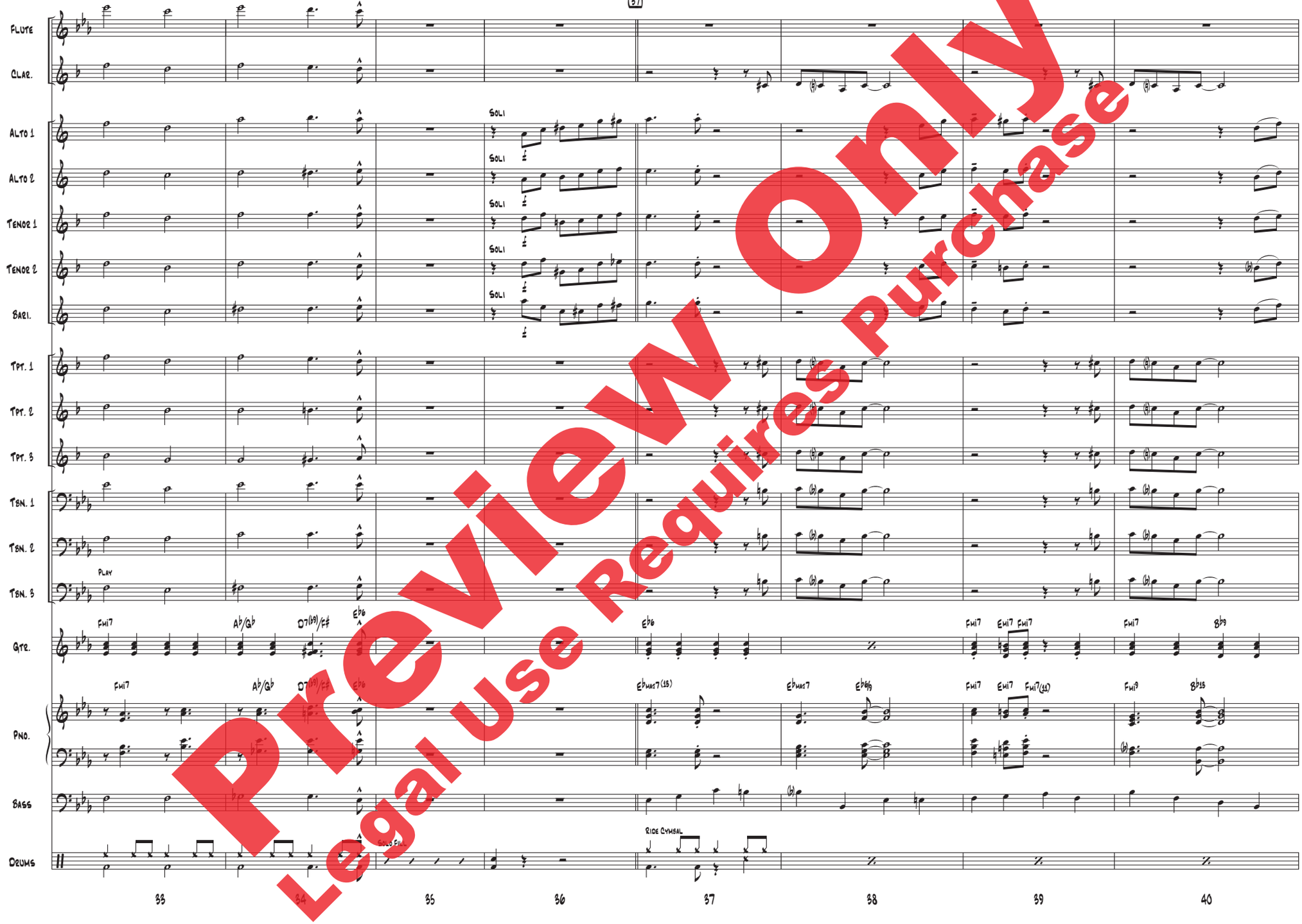

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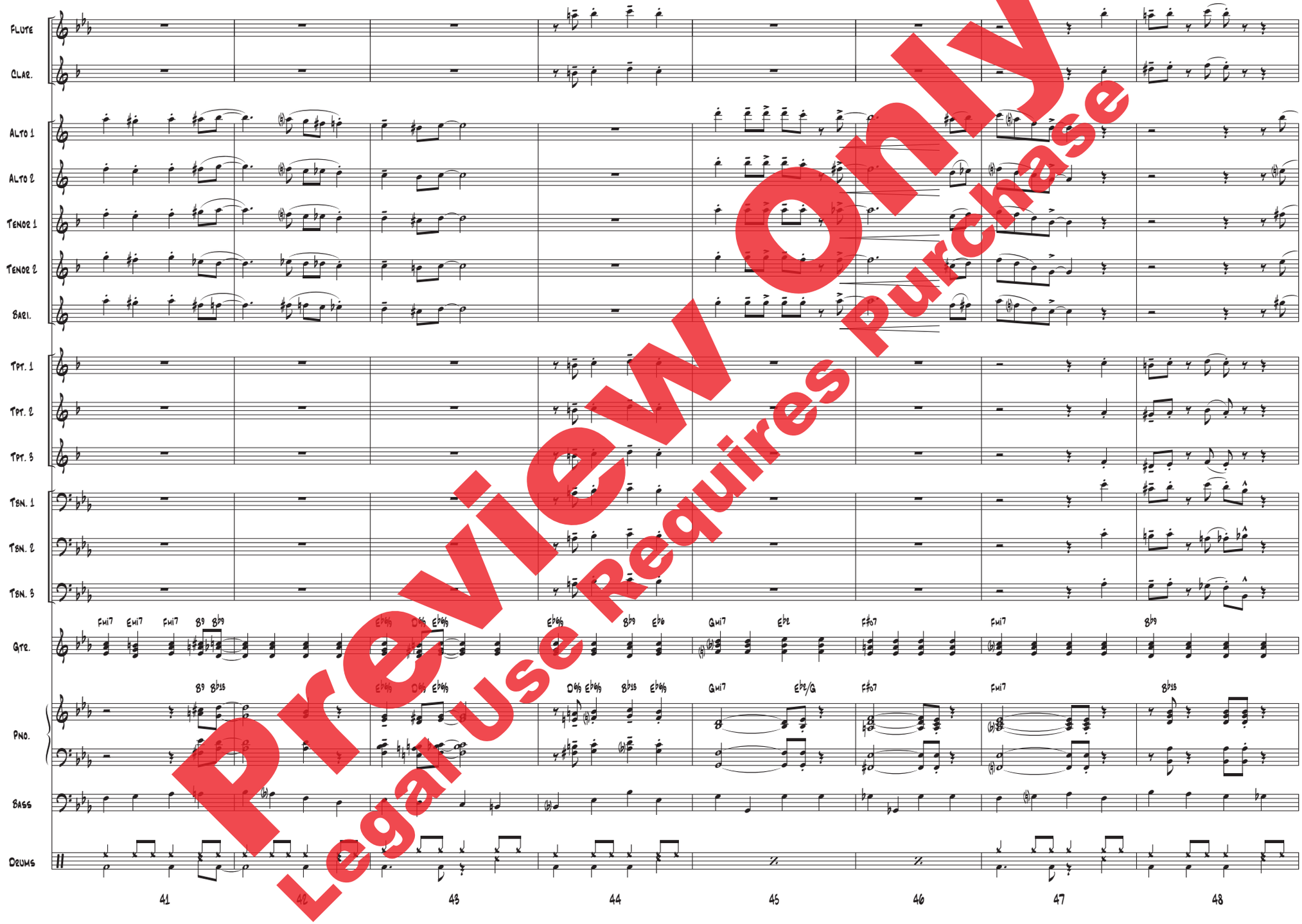

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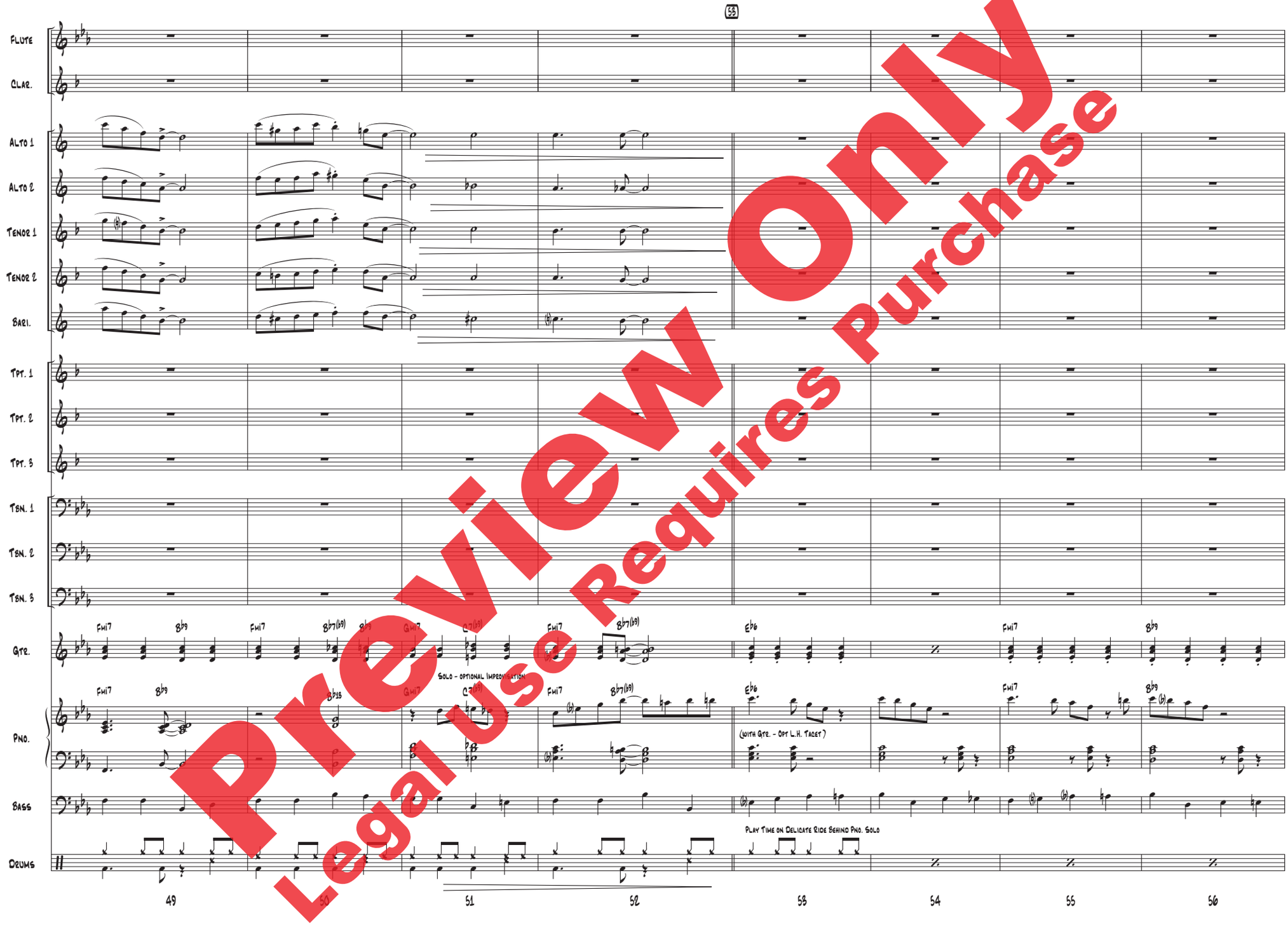

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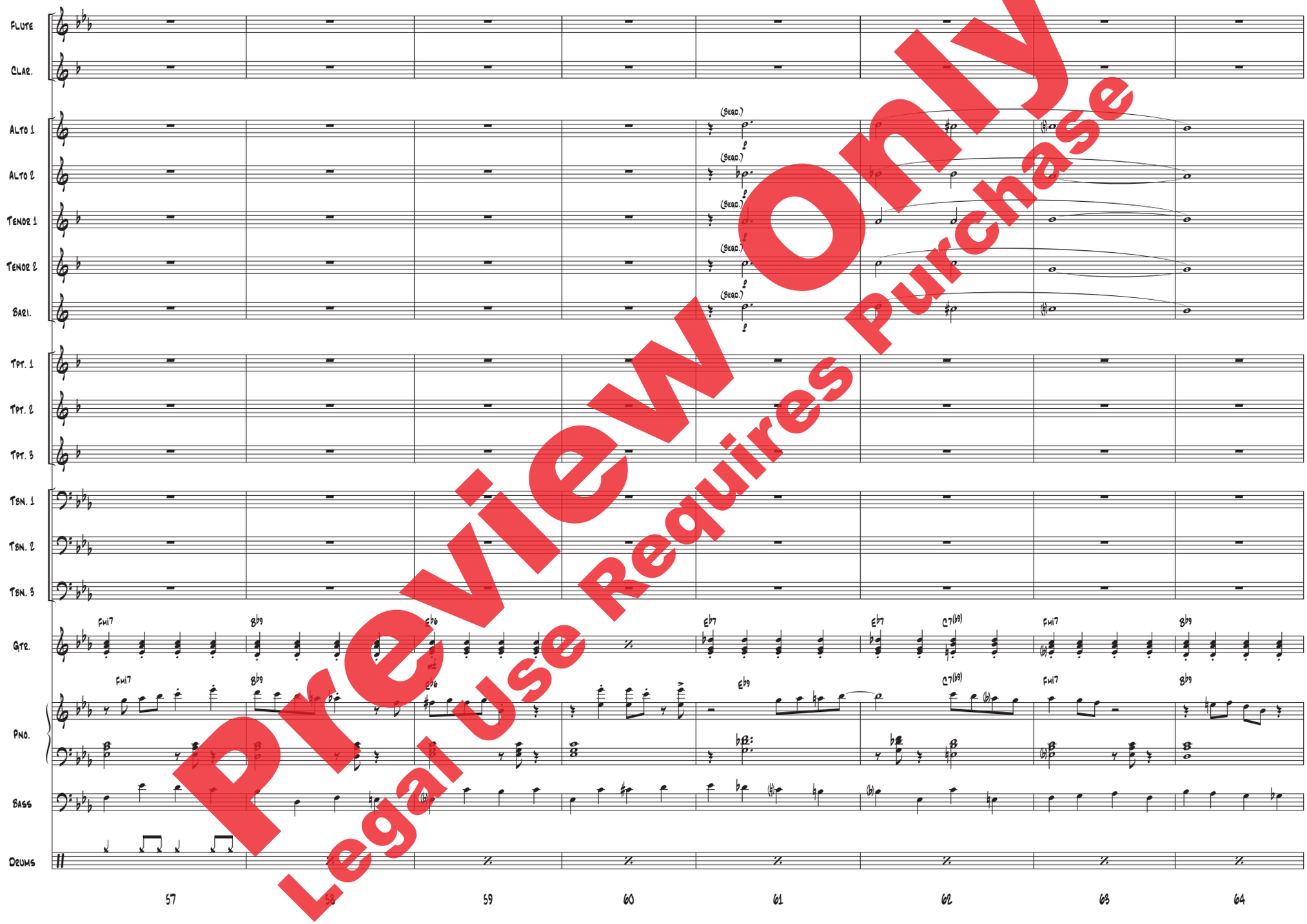

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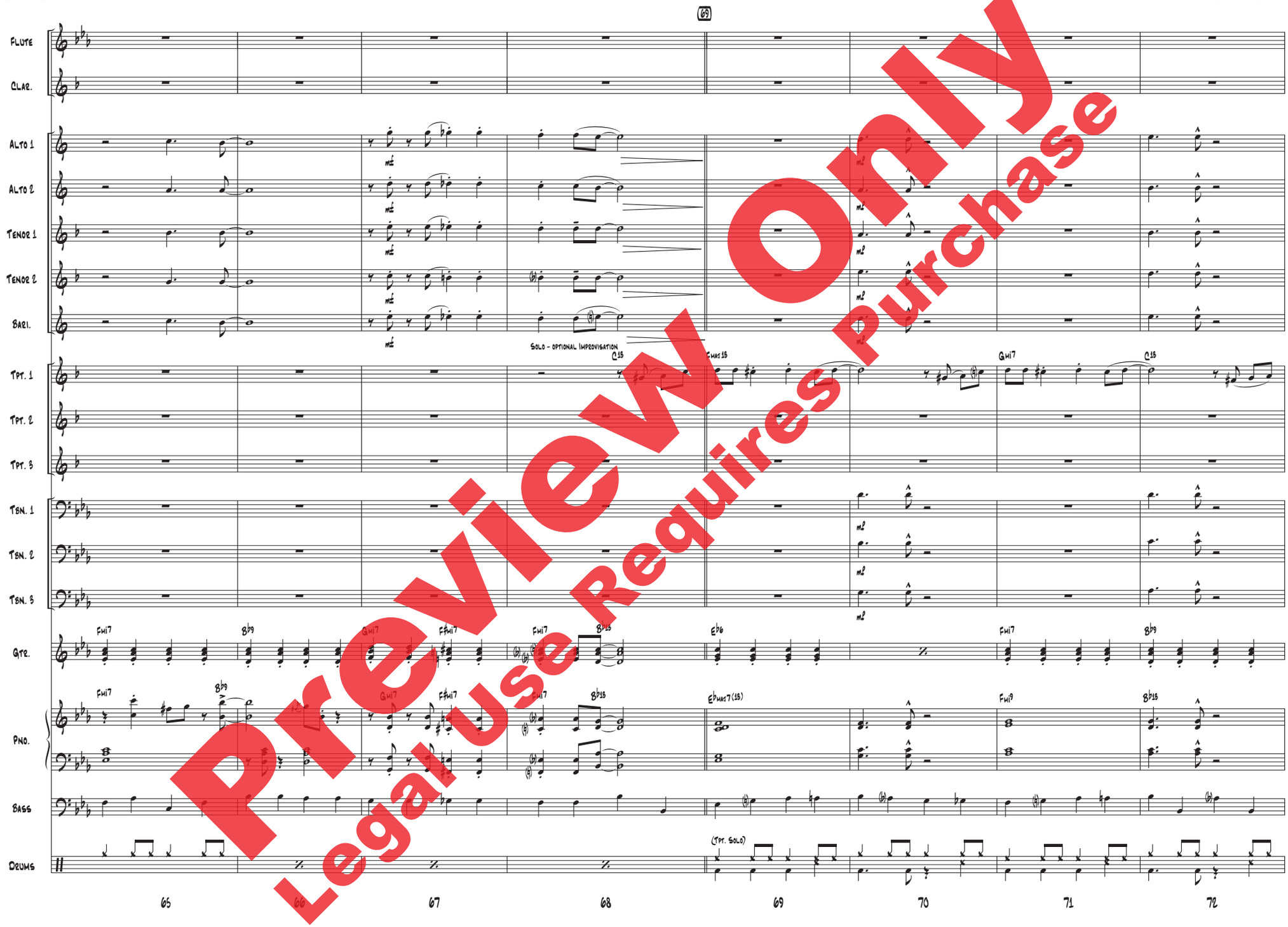

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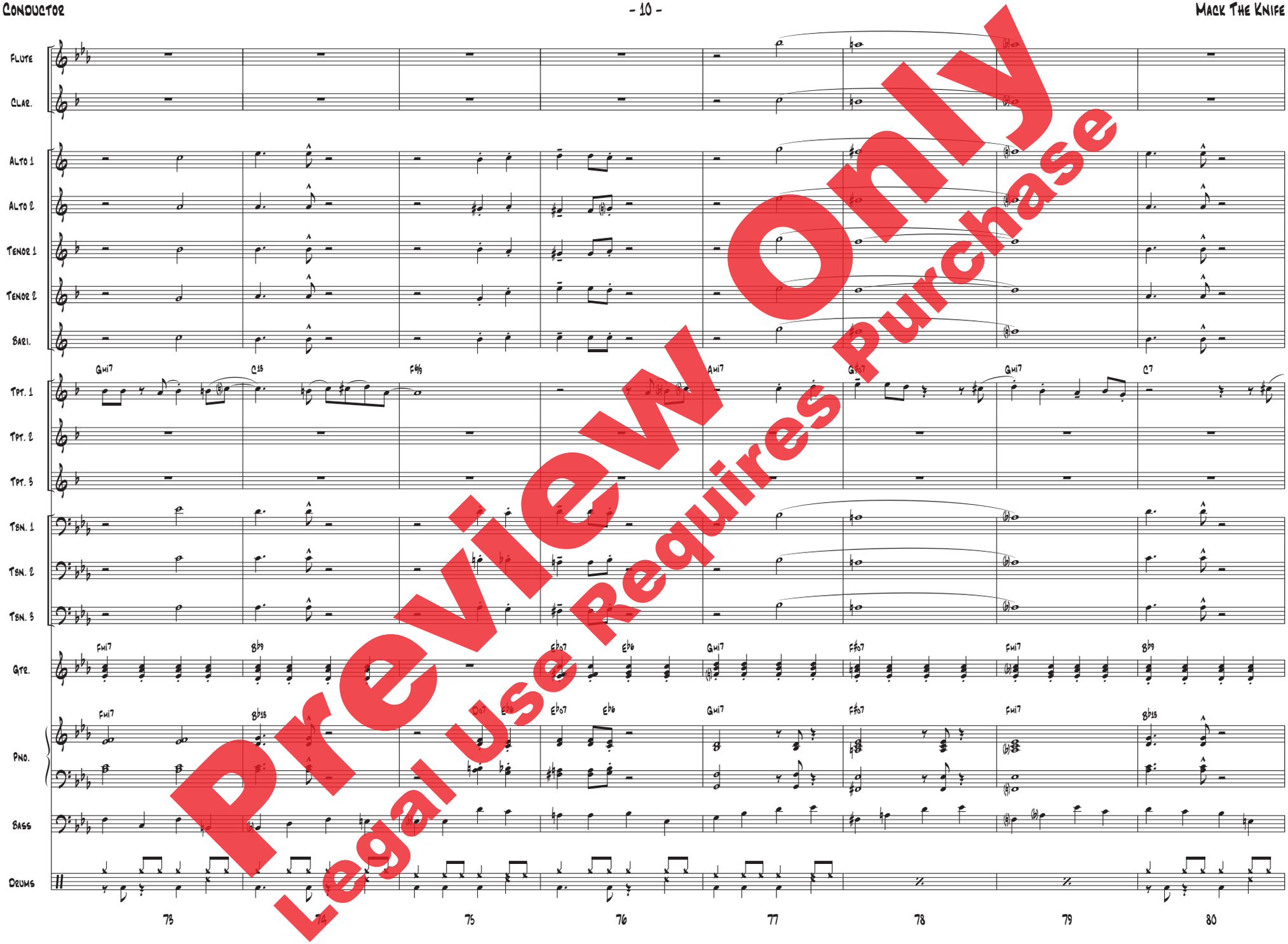

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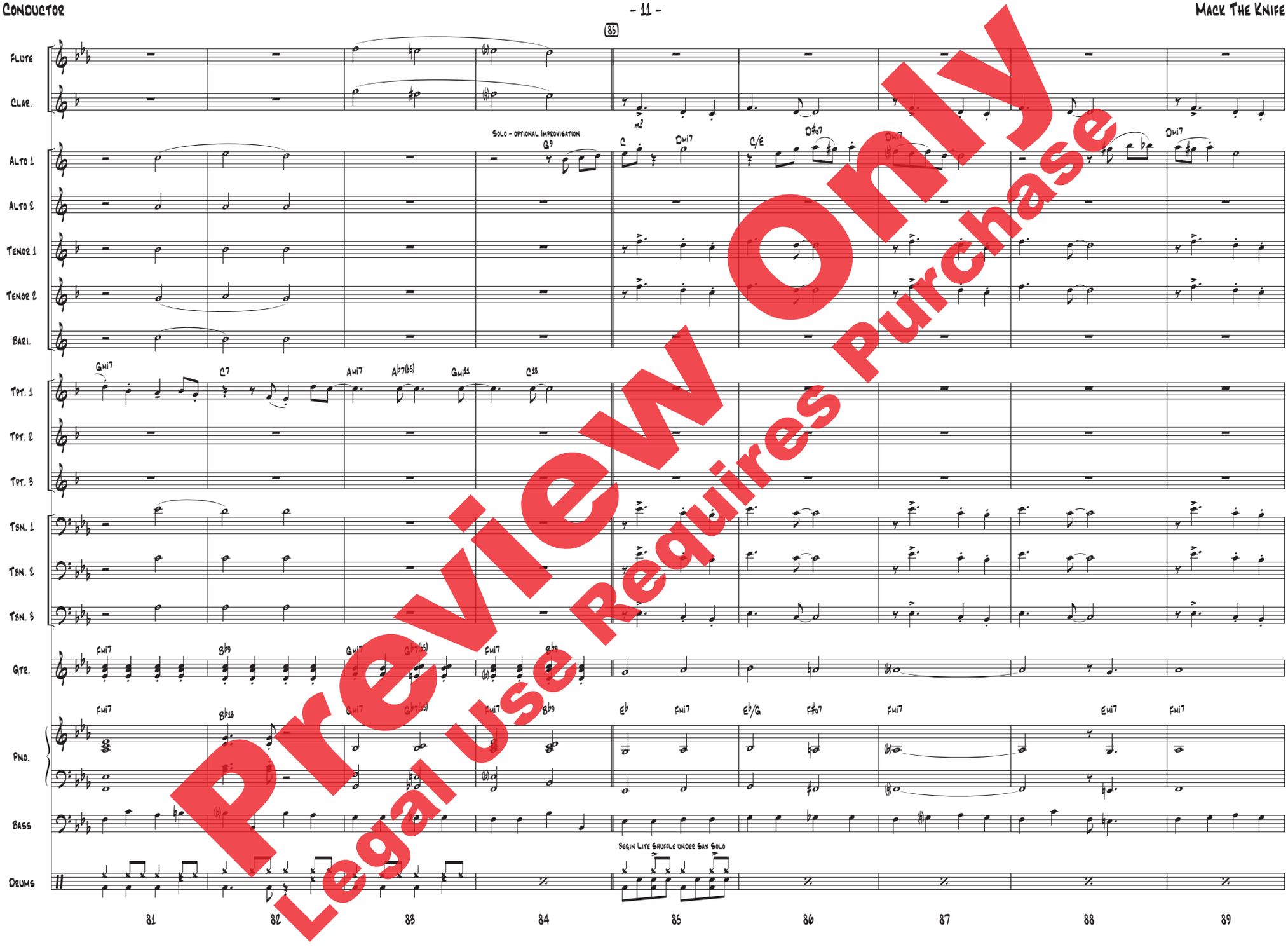

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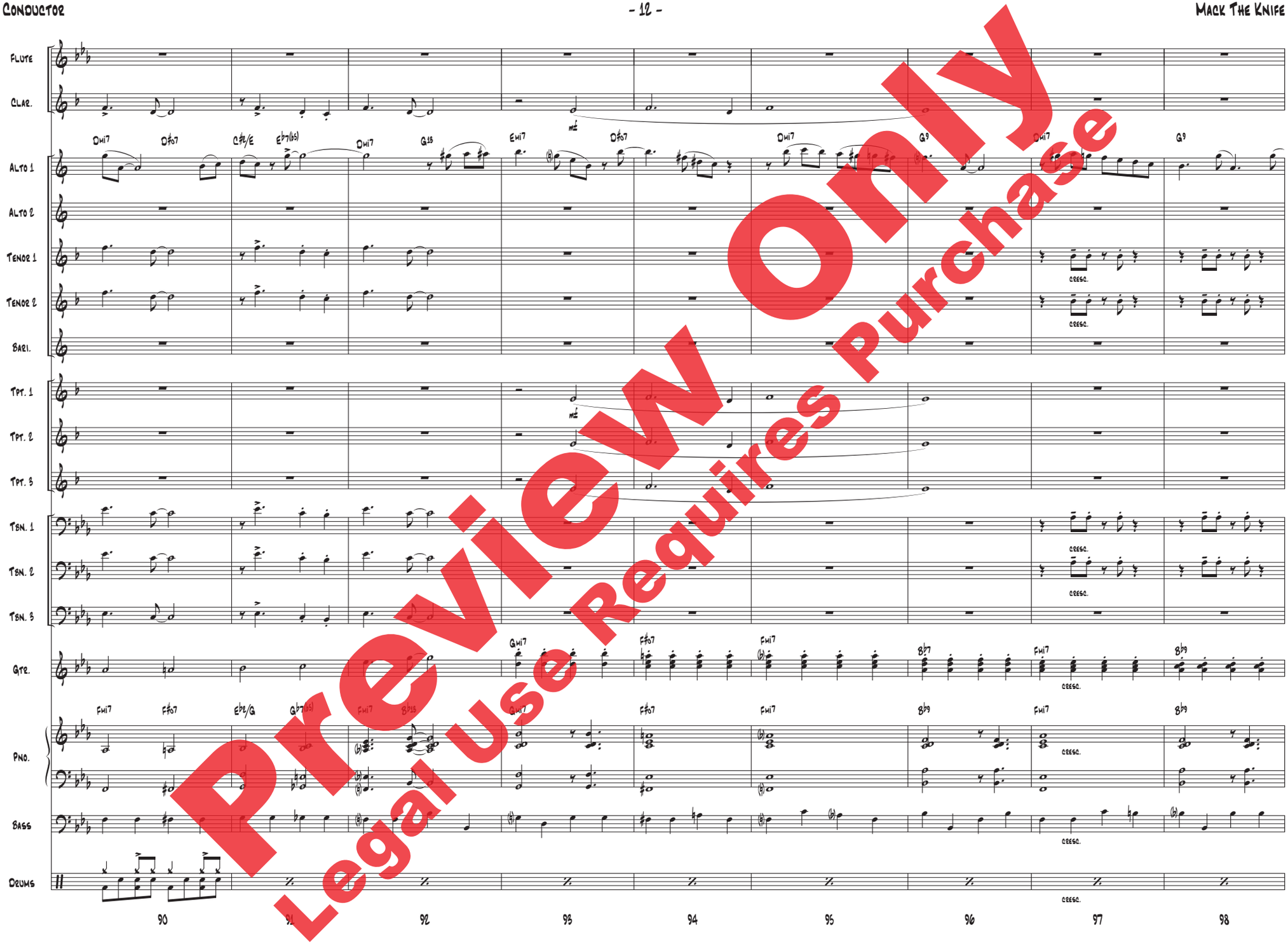

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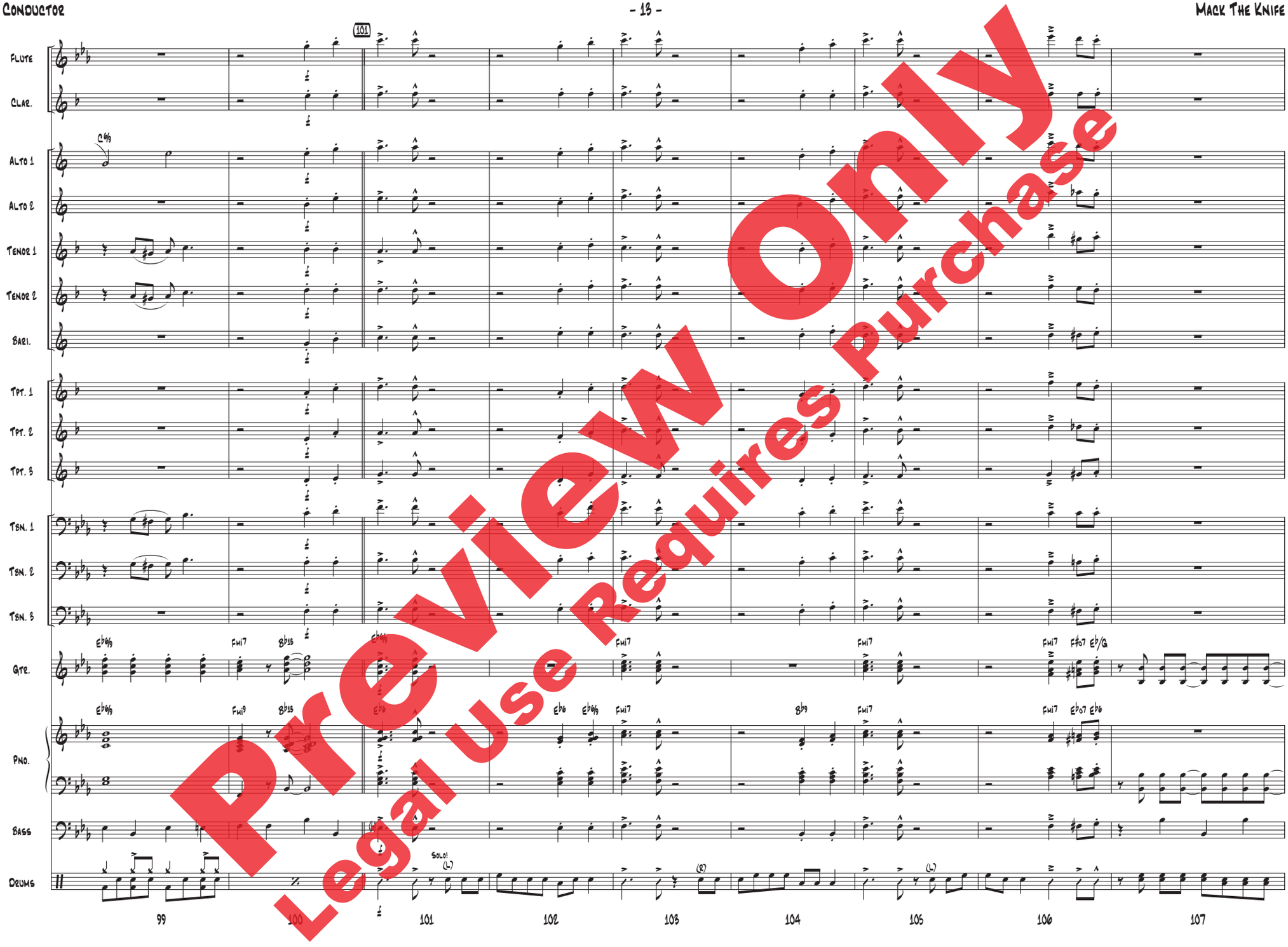

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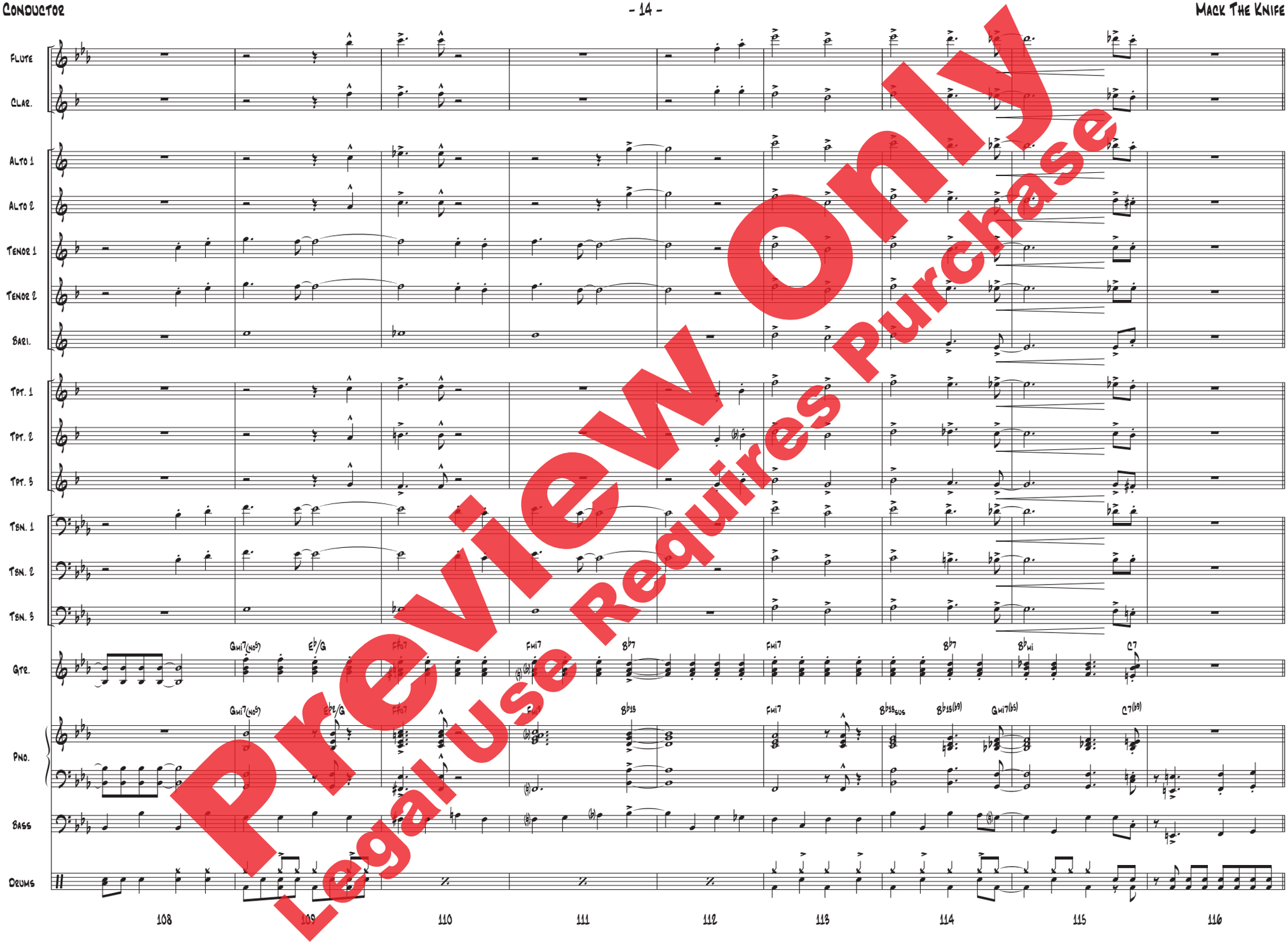

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