Battle Hymn of the Republic

Critical Edition for Band

Setting by *Peter J. Wilhousky*
Arranged by *Justin P. Tokke*

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J763

INSTRUMENTATION

Full Score	1
Piccolo	1
Flute 1	4
Flute 2	4
Oboe 1	1
Oboe 2	1
Bassoon 1	1
Bassoon 2	1
Clarinet in E♭	1
Clarinet 1 in B♭	4
Clarinet 2 in B♭	4
Clarinet 2 in B♭	4
Bass Clarinet in B♭	2
Alto Saxophone 1 in E♭	2
Alto Saxophone 2 in E♭	2
Tenor Saxophone B♭	2
Baritone Saxophone in E♭	2
Trumpet 1 in B♭	4
Trumpet 2 in B♭	4
Trumpet 3 in B♭	4
Horn 1 in F	2
Horn 2 in F	2
Horn 3 in F	2
Horn 4 in F	2
Trombone 1	3
Trombone 2	3
Trombone 3	3
Euphonium	3
Euphonium T.C. in B♭	2
Tuba	4
Timpani	1
Percussion (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Cymbals)	3
Harp	1

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Critical Notes

Context of the Original Wilhousky Editions

The Battle Hymn of the Republic has become a staple in American parlance. Although the song had huge popularity in various political and social contexts since its composition, it gained a new spread of popularity in the twentieth century. In 1959, the massive and formidable Mormon Tabernacle Choir recorded an album with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy. Here they used a choral and orchestral arrangement by a relatively little-known composer and orchestrator for the NBC Symphony, Peter Wilhousky, who was a major figure of choral music in New York City at the time. The record went on to sell several million copies and won a Grammy Award in 1960 for best choral performance; it even hit no. 13 on the Billboard Charts. With radio and television widespread in America and several historical challenges ahead, the arrangement became synonymous with American patriotism, being sung by choirs all over the country.

The origins of Wilhousky's arrangements are not clear. He had published his famous Carol of the Bells with Carl Fischer in 1936, which became an instant Christmas classic. In 1944 he published his choral version of the Battle Hymn, following with an orchestral accompaniment quickly after the following year. It is hard to say which came first in his arranging process—hopefully future research or manuscripts can shed further light on this matter. Around the same time, likely to capitalize on the choral version, Carl Fischer had James Neilson, an esteemed band educator in his own right, arrange a version for band. Judging from the musical characteristics of this edition, it is unlikely that he had any consultation from Wilhousky's orchestral score. The arrangement takes much of the material in the piano reduction and expands it with rather thick textures and counterpoints reminiscent of a 1940s military band march, which would have been quite stylistically appropriate for the time. Various other voicings of the choral version were made over the years for men's, women's, and young choirs respectively. To summarize, six arrangements are extant:

- SSATTBB Choral CM4743 arr. Wilhousky
- SSA Choral CM6777 arr. Wilhousky
- TTB Choral CM6778 arr. Wilhousky
- SAB Choral CM9356 arr. Russell Robinson
- Orchestra C120 arr. Wilhousky
- Band J678 arr. Neilson

For the most part, the choral versions have proven immensely popular with amateur and professional choirs alike. The band version has also fared quite well through its inclusion in many band libraries and its constant use by the Military Bands of the United States Armed Forces. The orchestral version has seen a rather robust adoption as well and is used by large professional organizations such as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and U.S. Marine Band Chamber Orchestra.

Since both the orchestra and band versions share the choral source material and line up measure-for-measure, a rather ham-fisted footnote was placed on all the different arrangements, that "the band, orchestra and choral arrangements may be used together for mass performance." While I have seen some evidence of this "mass performance" (including a performance of the work with myself as a young trombonist in the All-City High School Orchestra, Band, and Choir of New York–the very ensemble that Wilhousky founded), it is less common than the footnote might suggest. Given the logistical problems, and, frankly, *style* clashes in combining the orchestra and band arrangements together, it is rarely a euphonious whole; often the band totally obliterates the orchestra, which is a shame. From the performances I was able to research I don't believe this practice has ever been done professionally. But if more bands, orchestras, and choirs can play together I see no reason to discourage the practice. It is a thrilling moment indeed when a couple hundred students unite in diverse ensembles to enthusiastically play a piece of quintessential Americana; one might think it would be a microcosm of the country's traditional motto *E pluribus unum.*

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The New Critical Edition

After over 70 years, this new Critical Edition strives to correct many of the flaws of the original publications. The process began with taking the original choral and orchestral versions, by Wilhousky himself, and updating them to modern standards. Of course, the most egregious problem was the lack of a full score. The orchestral materials were originally published with only a piano-reduction/condensed score, and the nuance and usability of the materials suffered. Since condensed scores have (thankfully) fallen out of favor, a full score was produced based on the extant parts. We have also re-engraved all the parts and fixed countless misprints and errors from the old handwritten copyists. In the process we also updated the notation practices and included such modern necessities as measure numbers and rehearsal marks based on them. Poor voice leading, where applicable, has also been fixed; the infamous D♭ Piccolo solos have been removed in favor of C Piccolo; and ambiguous instructions have been clarified in the score directly or in the **Performance Notes** below.

The band version presented more of a challenge. Given some of the stylistic choices of the band version mentioned above, I made the drastic decision to create a brand new arrangement rather than try and rescue the old one. Using the orchestral version as a foundation, I molded it into use for band, bringing out the nuance of counterpoint and texture of Wilhousky's hand. As a result, most of the style choices from Neilson's arrangement, while quaint for their 1940s setting, have been removed in favor of the more refined source. Passages such as the extra trumpet fanfares, the extra trombone counterpoint—as if this were a second-rate Sousa march—and the baffling clarinet arpeggios that obscure the choir's first pensive entrance have all been removed, none of which are extant in Wilhousky's original. Generous cross-cuing and doubling of the choral parts have also been applied in cases where the band version is played without voices.

In the end, the choral editions, the new band arrangement, and refreshed orchestral arrangement are all harmoniously in sync with each other, both musically and practically in performance. Any combinations of these arrangements are playable with the others far more effectively than before. I hope that such flexibility pays dividends for your next performances.

— Justin P. Tokke (2017)

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Performance Notes

Note About Compatible Arrangements

All six of the Critical Editions of the *Battle Hymn* may be played alone or together in any combination:

- Orchestra C120
- **Band J763**
- SSATTBB Choral CM4743*
- SSA Choral CM6777*
- TTB Choral CM6778*
- SAB Choral CM9356*

*For the choral octavos, the Critical Editions replace the older editions but with the same layout. This allows for the older octavos and newer Critical Edition octavos to be used concurrently in rehearsal and performance. It is recommended that performers pencil in the new measure numbers and rehearsal marks on older octavos when mixing editions.

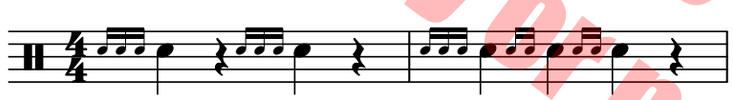
Both the band and orchestral versions can be played without choir with the use of vocal cues placed throughout the arrangements.

Harp

The harp part, which was lifted practically verbatim from the orchestral version, is optional in the band arrangement. Although it adds great effect to the *a cappella* section from mm. 82 to 91, the rest of the part is dispensable. If the director so chooses, the part can be substituted with a piano or synthesizer.

m. 1: Snare Drum

In Neilson's band arrangement, the snare drum part was written with four-note ruffs like so:



It has become somewhat of a tradition to keep these ruffs in performance as they evoke the feeling of an American military march. Since the ruffs are not original to the orchestral version by Wilhousky, they are not retained here. However, directors may choose to keep them according to their own taste. Interestingly, the bass drum is also absent from this section in the band version, so if the ruffs are to be retained, it is recommended that the bass drum remains tacet until m. 29.

m. 47: Snare Drum

Wilhousky calls for wire brushes on the snare drum in this section, a bit of a peculiar instruction. It is probably an attempt to soften the timbre of the snare drum so it doesn't overpower the delicate pizzicato strings, or, in this arrangement, the low brass. The original instruction has been retained for completeness, but the director may opt to either keep the snare and bass drums tacet from mm. 47 to 62, then all percussion enters on the fourth beat of m. 62; or may simply play quietly with sticks as written. Either way, the rhythm should remain crisp and tight between all the accompaniment figures.

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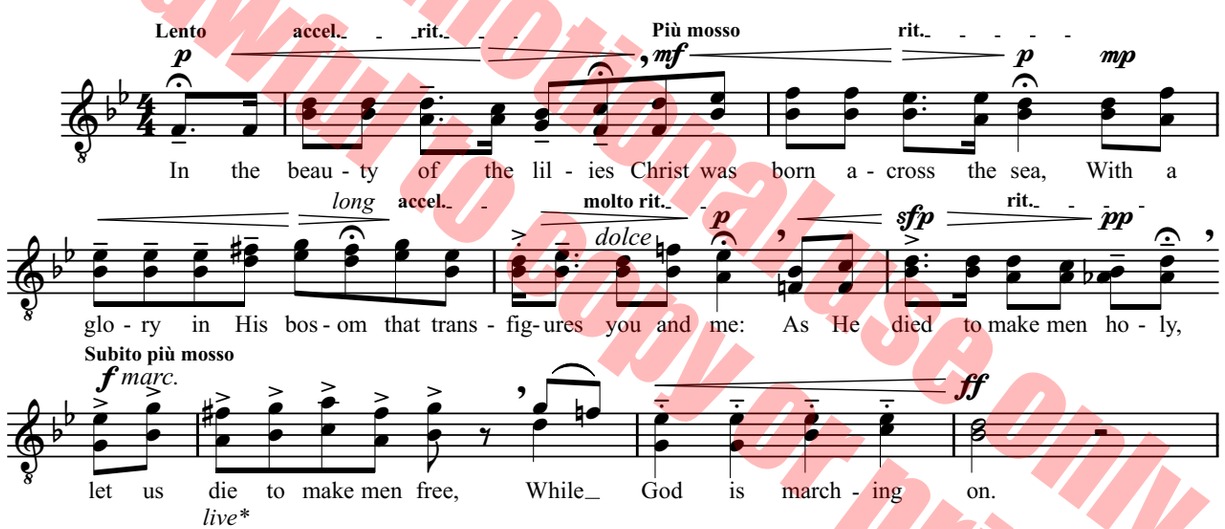
m. 81: Horn 3, 4

It may surprise many conductors, who are used to the old condensed score editions, to see this octave in horns 3 and 4. Indeed, the notes are present in the parts included with the original orchestral edition, however, the condensed scores made no mention of them. To further obfuscate matters, the band version eliminated these notes altogether, most likely because it never consulted the original orchestral arrangement. So, through the inertia of hundreds (perhaps thousands?) of performances over seven decades and many ensembles simply assuming "that's how it's supposed to go," many conductors simply cut off the entire ensemble at the third beat. Then the choir proceeded after a short caesura. (Even the great Eugene Ormandy performed it like this.) But Wilhousky's original parts tell a different story where the horns bridge the gap and cleverly give the men of the choir their starting pitch. All the new editions properly incorporate this subtle but important detail, and I would encourage all future performances to resist the historical inertia of this passage and go with Wilhousky's original intention.

m. 82: Colla voce

The original did not have a clear distinction of tempo here so the "colla voce" marking was added. This section is traditionally sung to the rhythm of the words with much expression. It is a common technique in choral music—especially American choral traditions such as barbershop quartets, hymns, or gospel—where homophonic passages are stretched and pushed for emotional effect. In this case, the director should use his or her best judgment on stretching the tempo and expression. The example below can give an approximation for building your own interpretation:



m. 87: Choir

Wilhousky's original keeps Ward's original words: "As He died to make men holy, Let us die to make men free." However, it has become tradition in some circles to replace the word "die" with "live" to appropriate a more positive message and theology. (The first high-profile use of this was, of course, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Eugene Ormandy's famous 1959 recording and the Choir has used this alteration ever since. Interestingly, most U.S. Military choirs tend to keep the original lyric.) Both are provided for the director to choose which suits his or her ensemble best.

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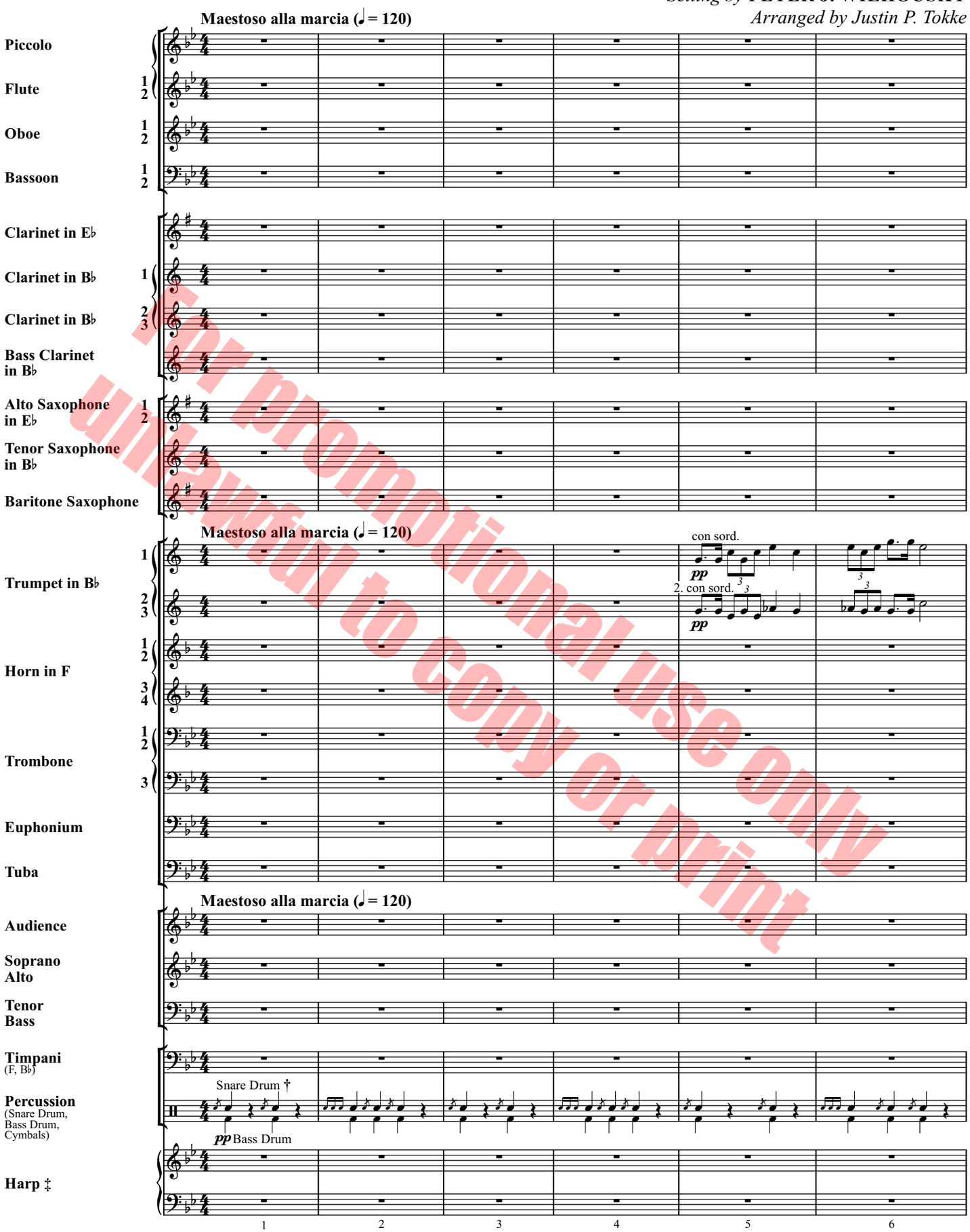
Battle Hymn of the Republic

for SSATTBB Mixed Voices and Band*

WILLIAM STEFFE
Setting by **PETER J. WILHOUSKY**
Arranged by Justin P. Tokke



*See preface note about compatible arrangements.
†See performance note about Snare Drum ruffs.
‡Optional. See performance note about Harp.

J763F

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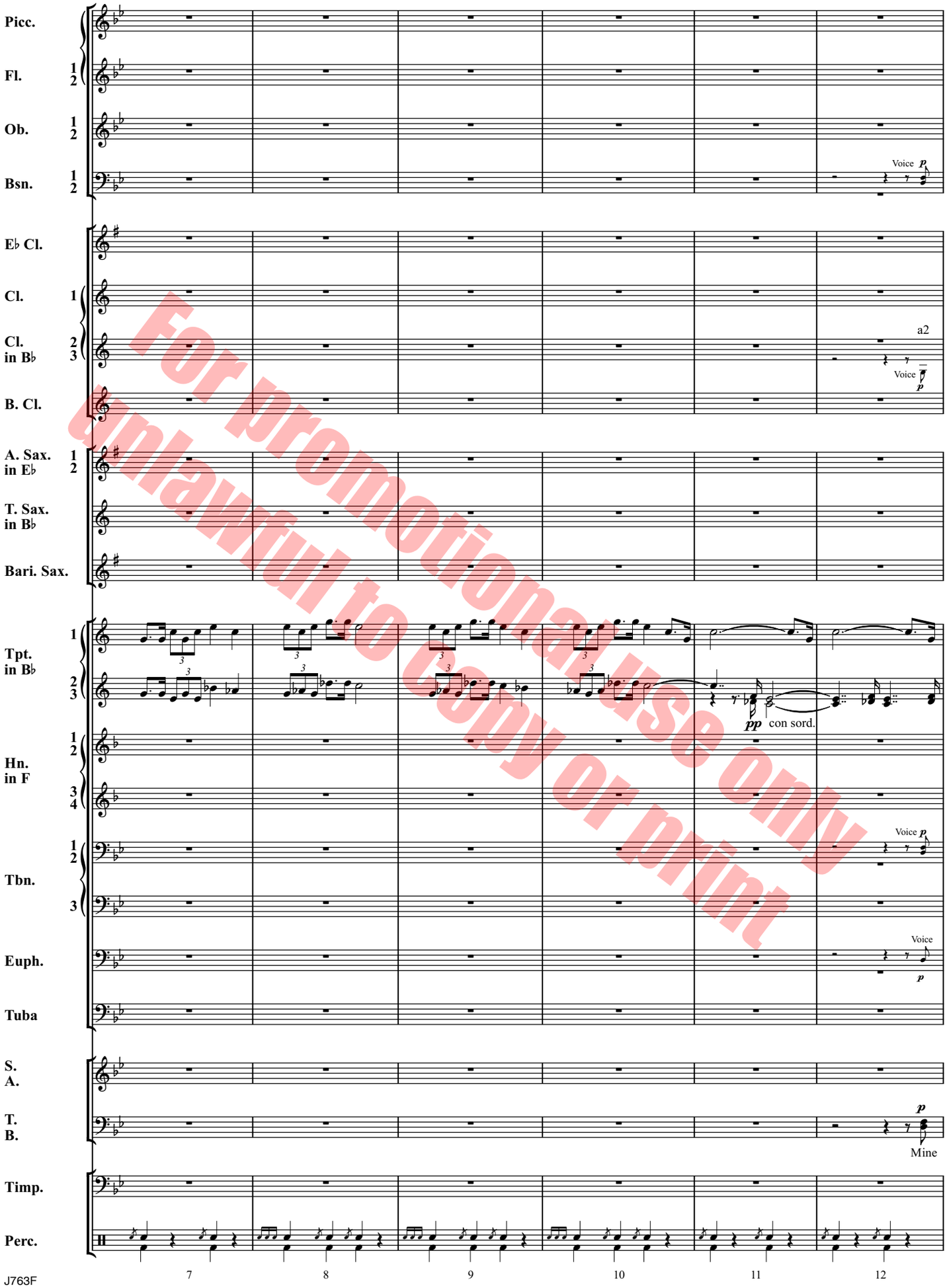

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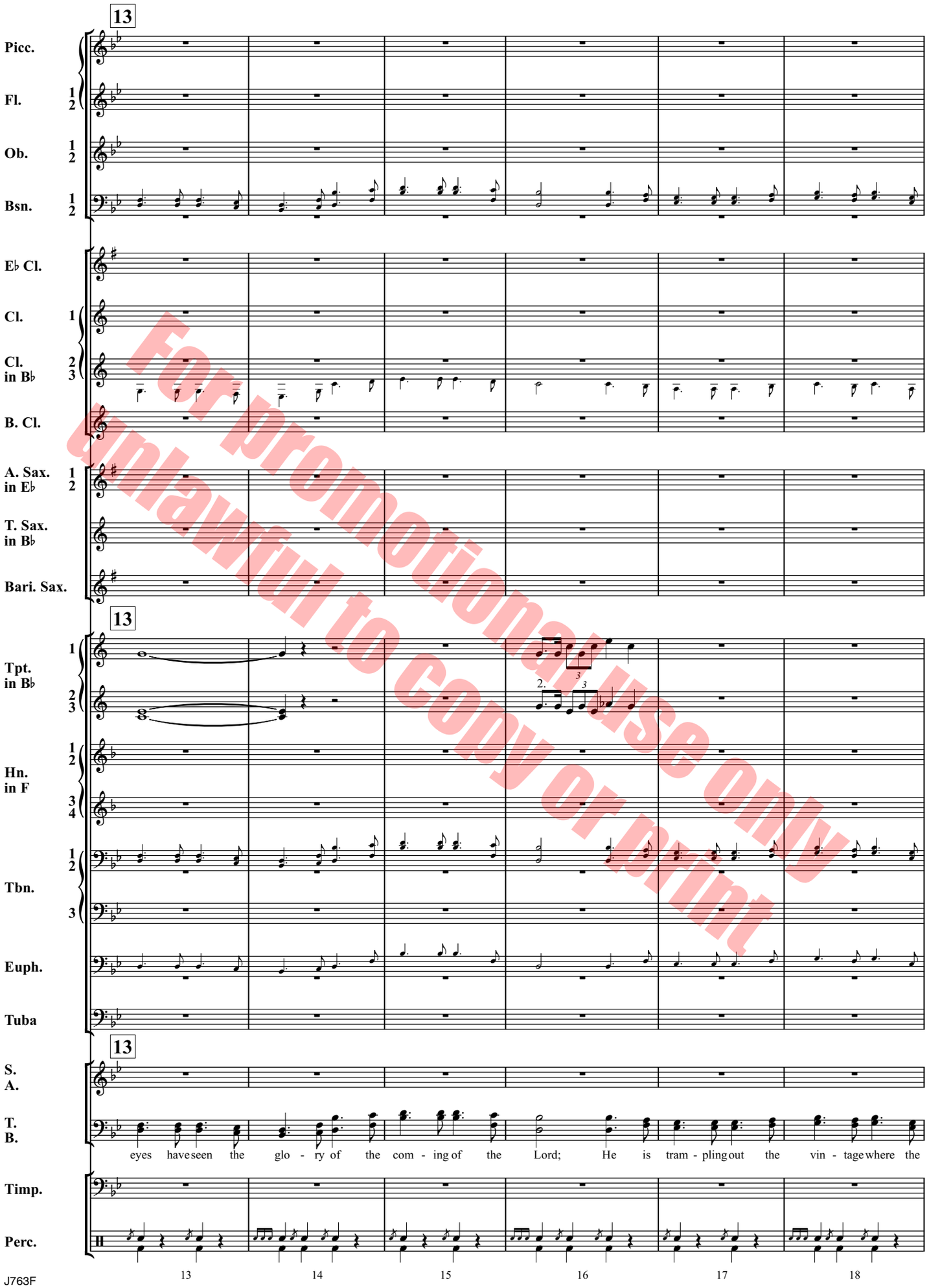

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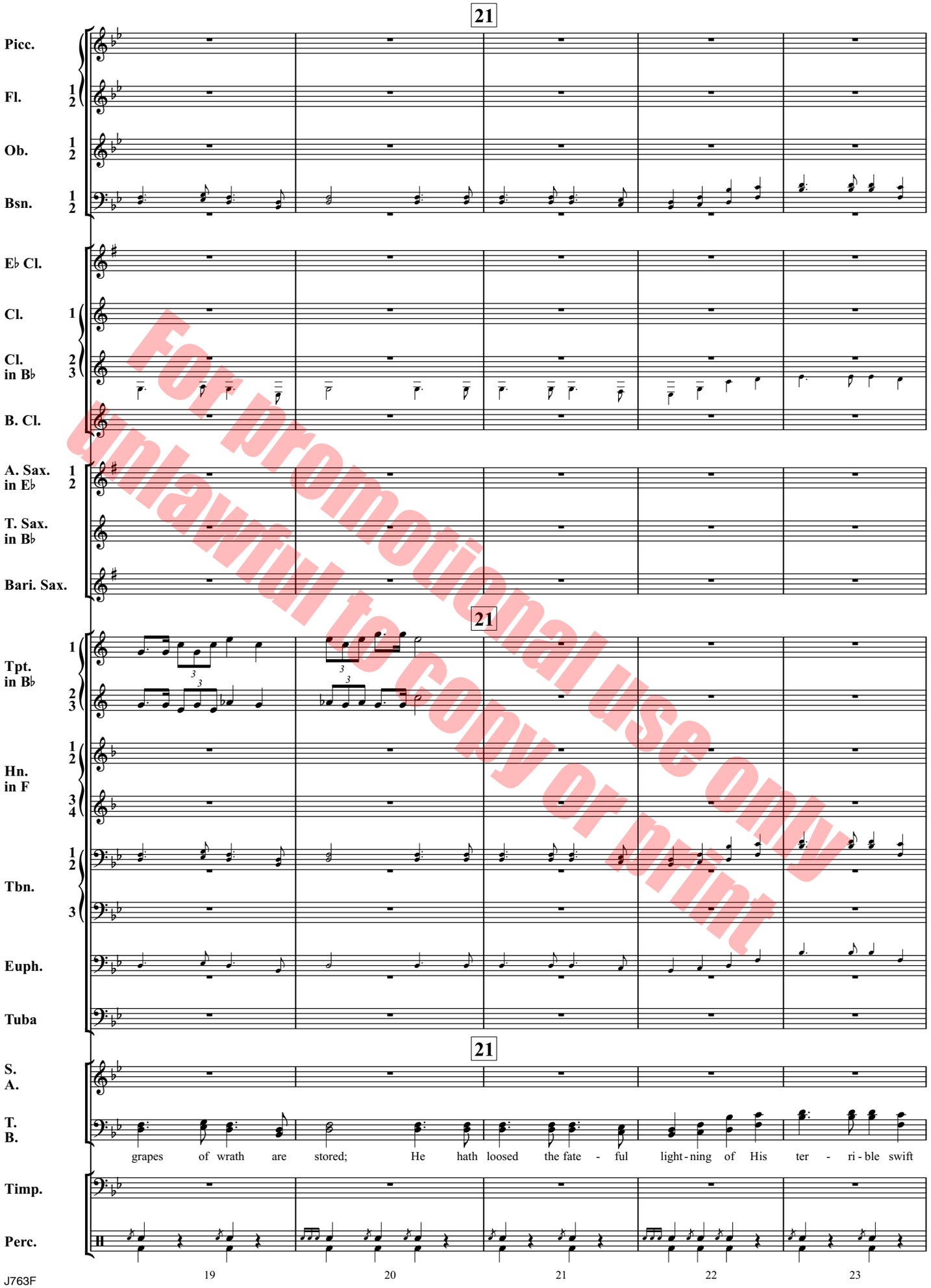

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Picc.
Fl. 1 2
Ob. 1 2
Bsn. 1 2
E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. in B♭ 2 3
B. Cl.
A. Sax. in E♭ 1 2
T. Sax. in B♭
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. in B♭ 1 2 3
Hn. in F 1 2 3 4
Tbn. 1 2 3
Euph.
Tuba
S. A.
T. B.
Timp.
Perc.

Voice *pp*
Voice *pp*
p
Voice con sord. *pp*
Voice con sord. *pp*
mf
mf
p
pp
S. div.
Glo - ri - a!
sword; His truth is march - ing on.

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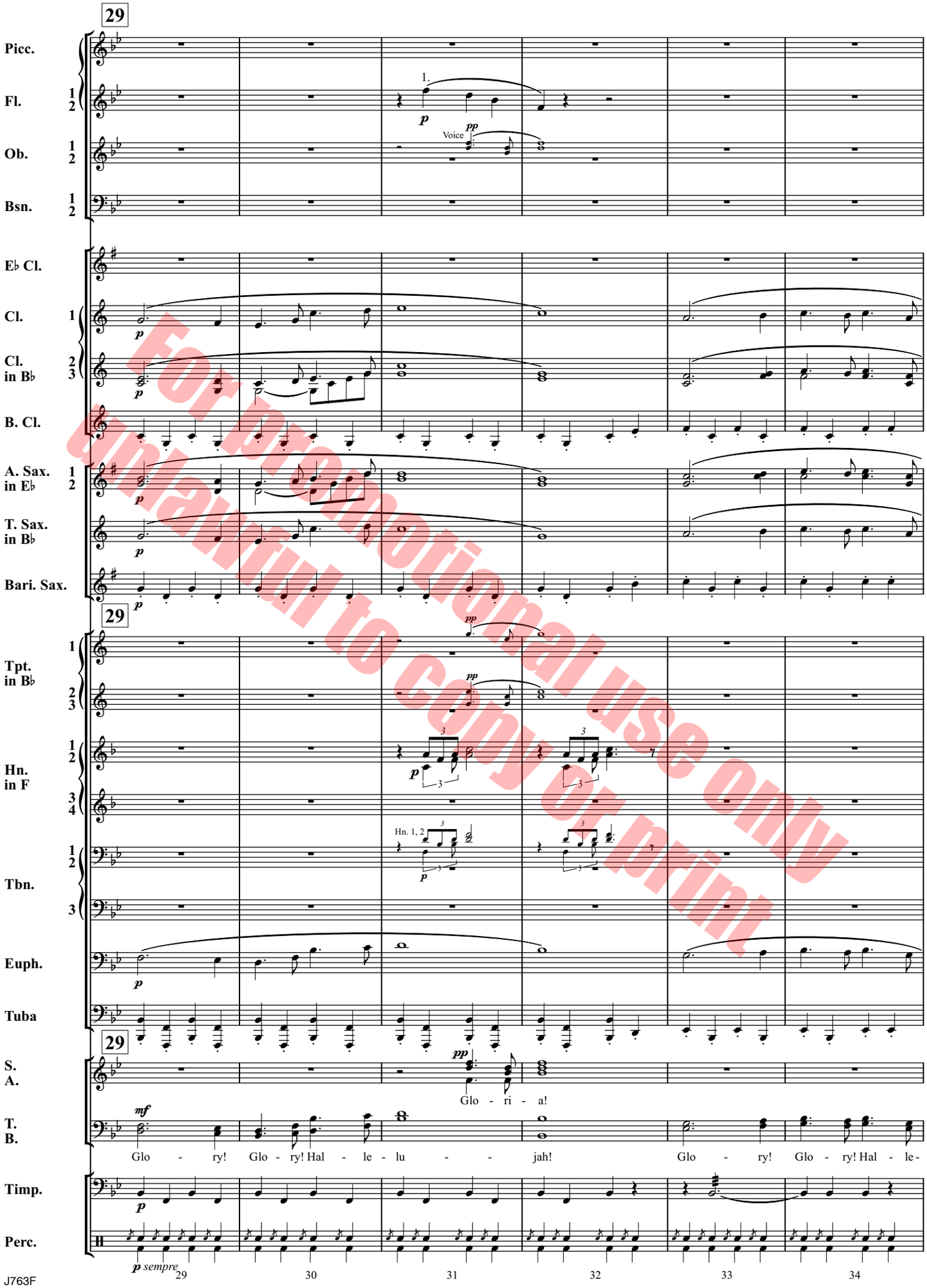

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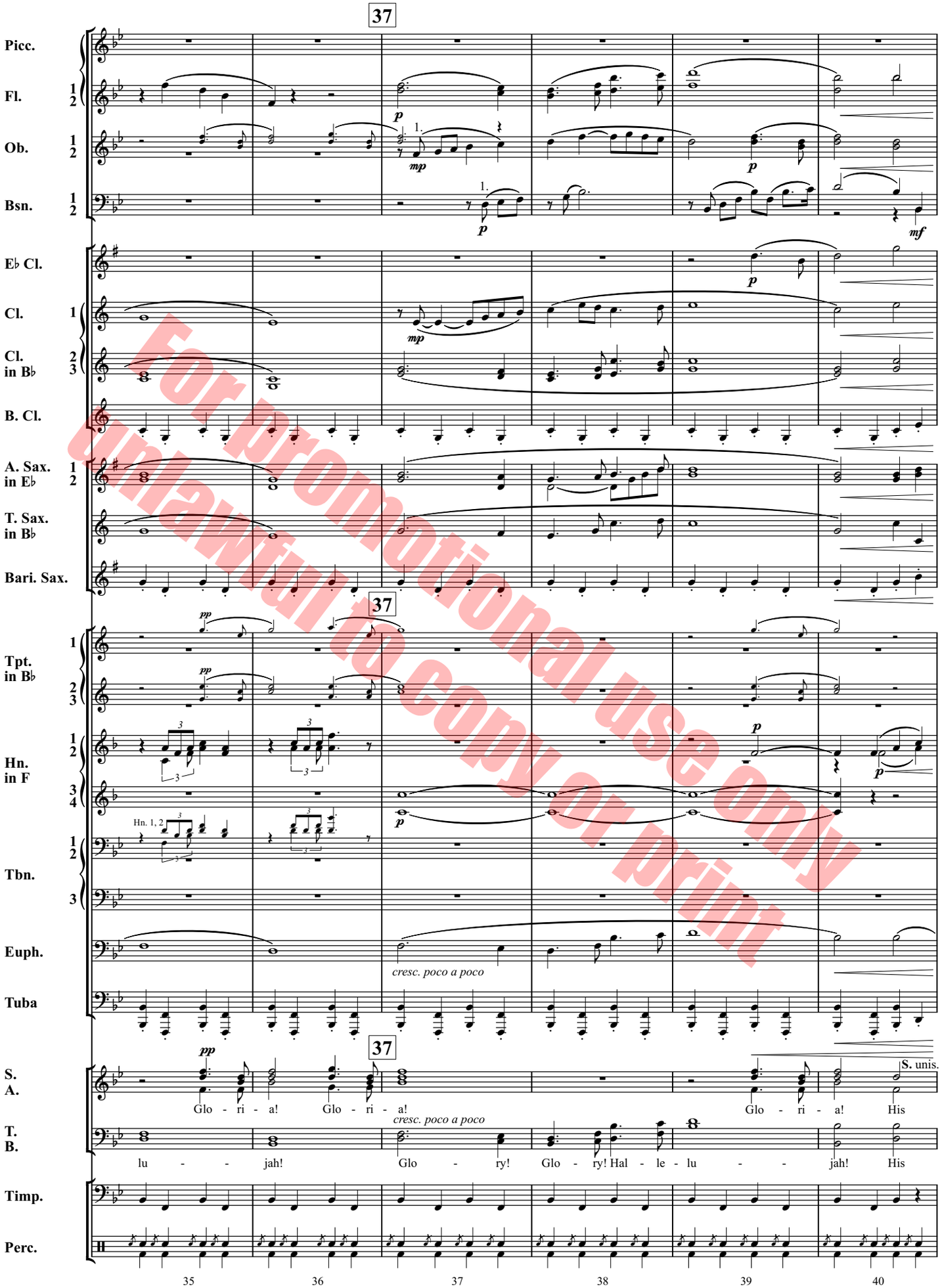

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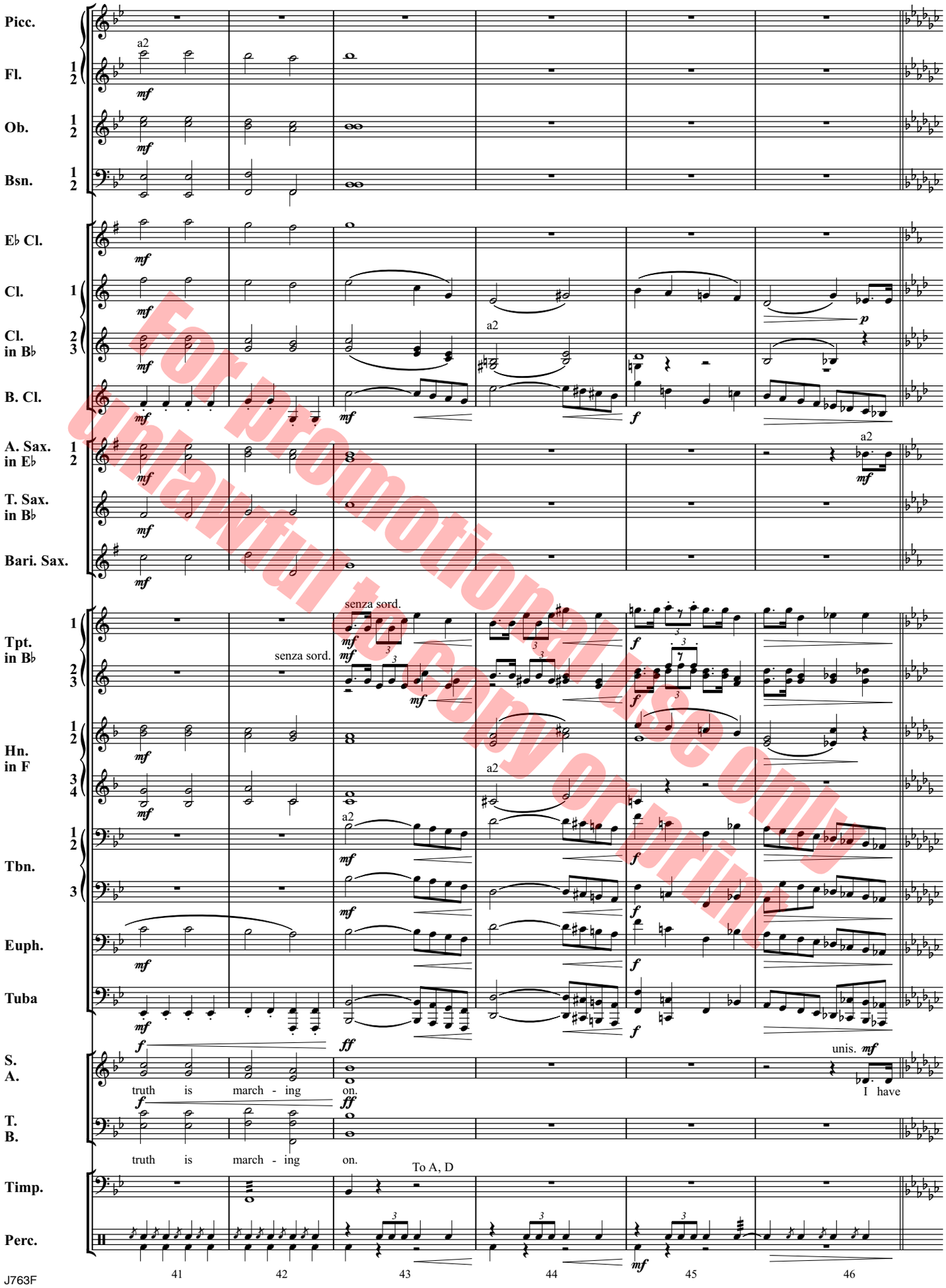

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47

Piccolo Solo

Picc.

Fl. 1 2

Ob. 1 2

Bsn. 1 2

a2

E♭ Cl.

Cl. 1

Cl. in B♭ 2 3

B. Cl.

A. Sax. in E♭ 1 2

T. Sax. in B♭

Bari. Sax.

47

Tpt. in B♭ 1 2 3

Hn. in F 1 2 3 4

Tbn. 1 2 3

Euph.

Tuba

47

S. A.

seen Him in the watch-fires of a hun - dred cir - cling camps; They have build - ed Him an al - tar in the

T. B.

Truth is march- ing, truth is march - ing, truth is march - ing, truth is march- ing, truth is march- ing, truth is march- ing,

Timp.

Wire brush*

Perc.

Hp.

47 48 49 50 51 52

*See performance note in preface.

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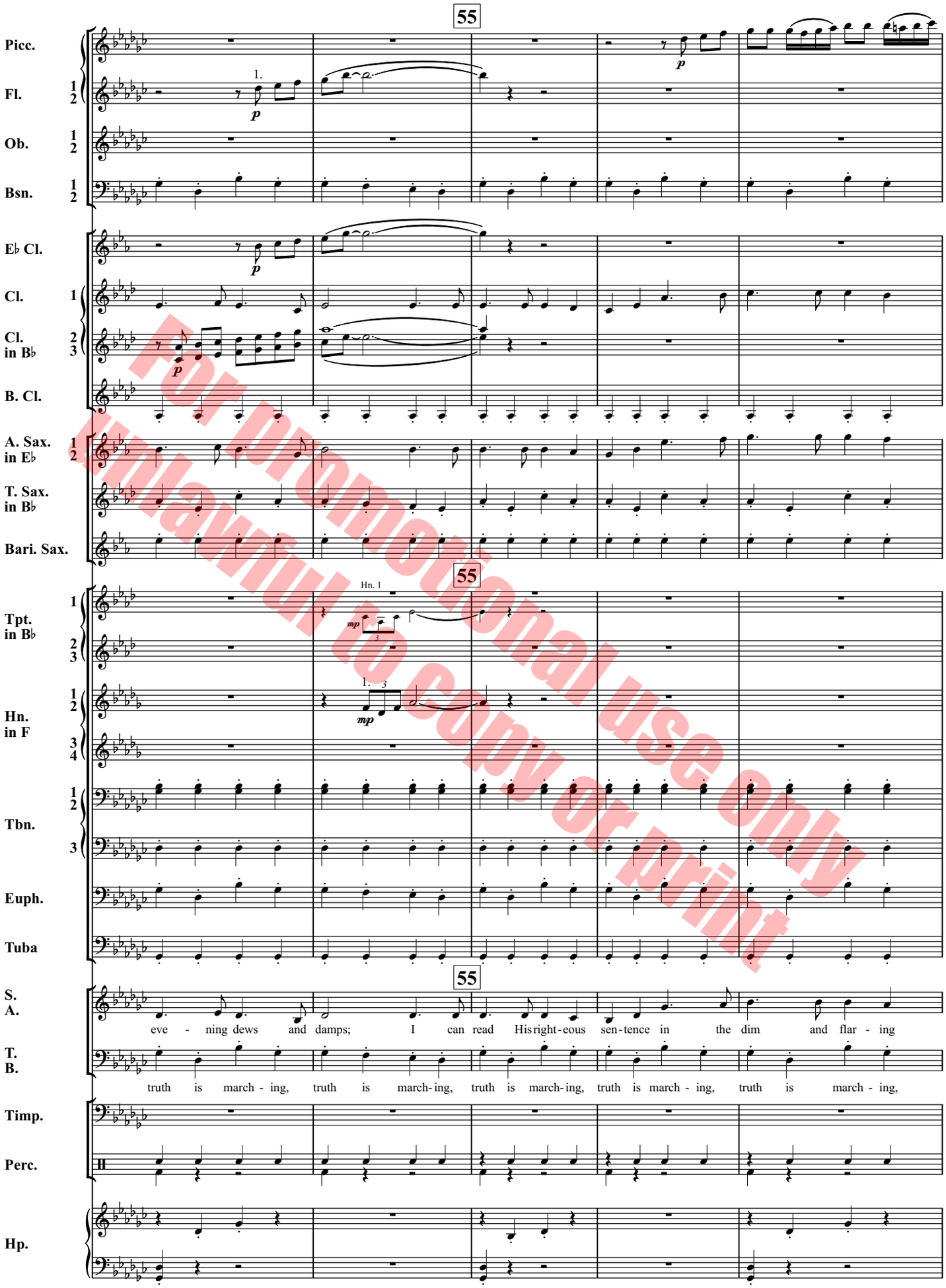

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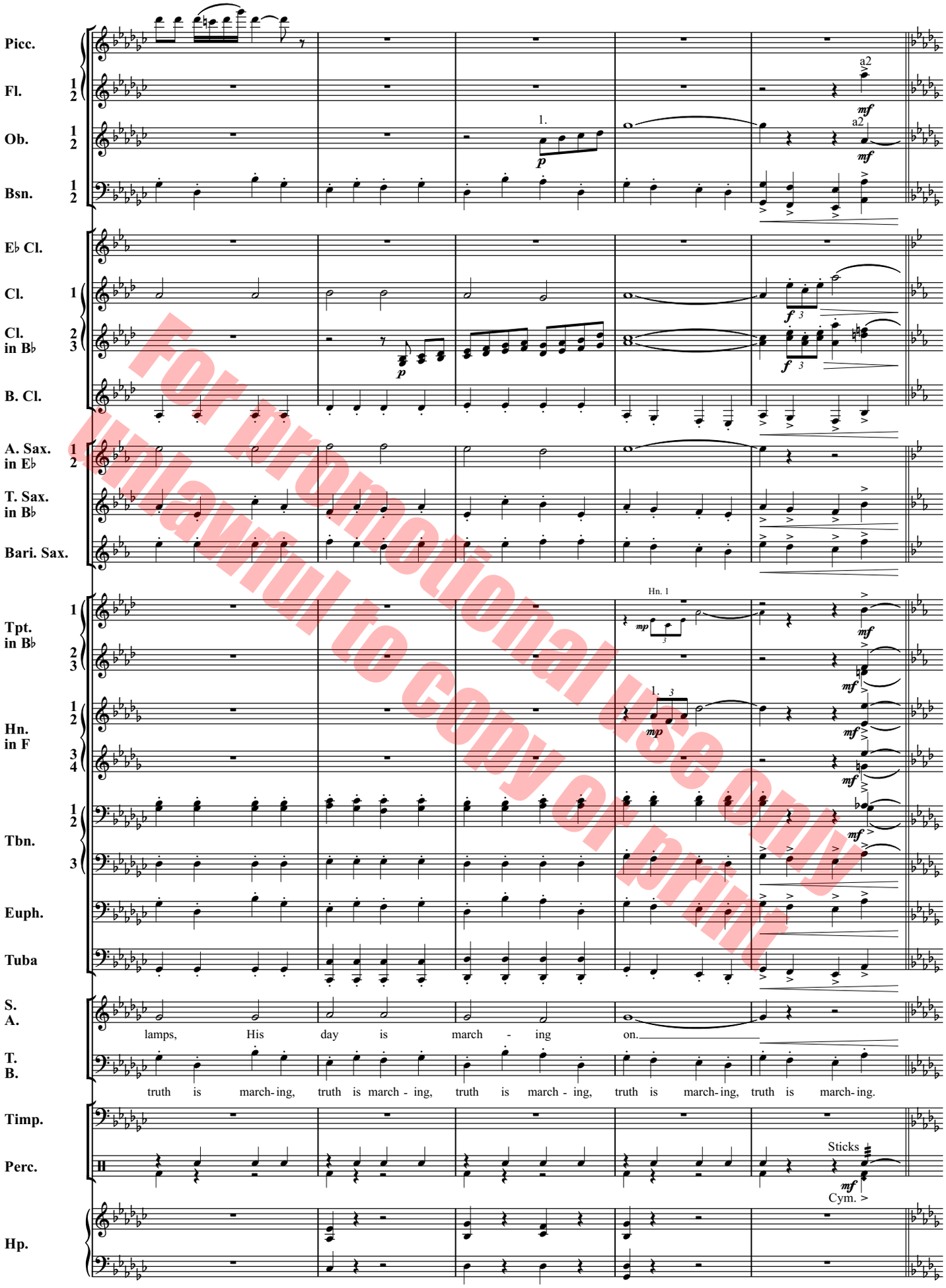

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63

Picc.
Fl. 1 2
Ob. 1 2
Bsn. 1 2
E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. in B♭ 2 3
B. Cl.
A. Sax. in E♭ 1 2
T. Sax. in B♭
Bari. Sax.

63

Tpt. in B♭ 1 2 3
Hn. in F 1 2 3 4
Tbn. 1 2 3
Euph.
Tuba

63

S. A.
Glo - ry! Glo- ry! Hal-le - lu - jah! Glo - ry! Glo- ry! Hal-le - lu - jah! Glo - ry! Glo- ry! Hal - le - lu - jah! His
T. B.
Glo - ry! Glo- ry! Hal-le - lu - jah! Glo - ry! Glo- ry! Hal-le - lu - jah! Glo - ry! Glo- ry! Hal - le - lu - jah! His

Timp.
Perc.
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Hp.

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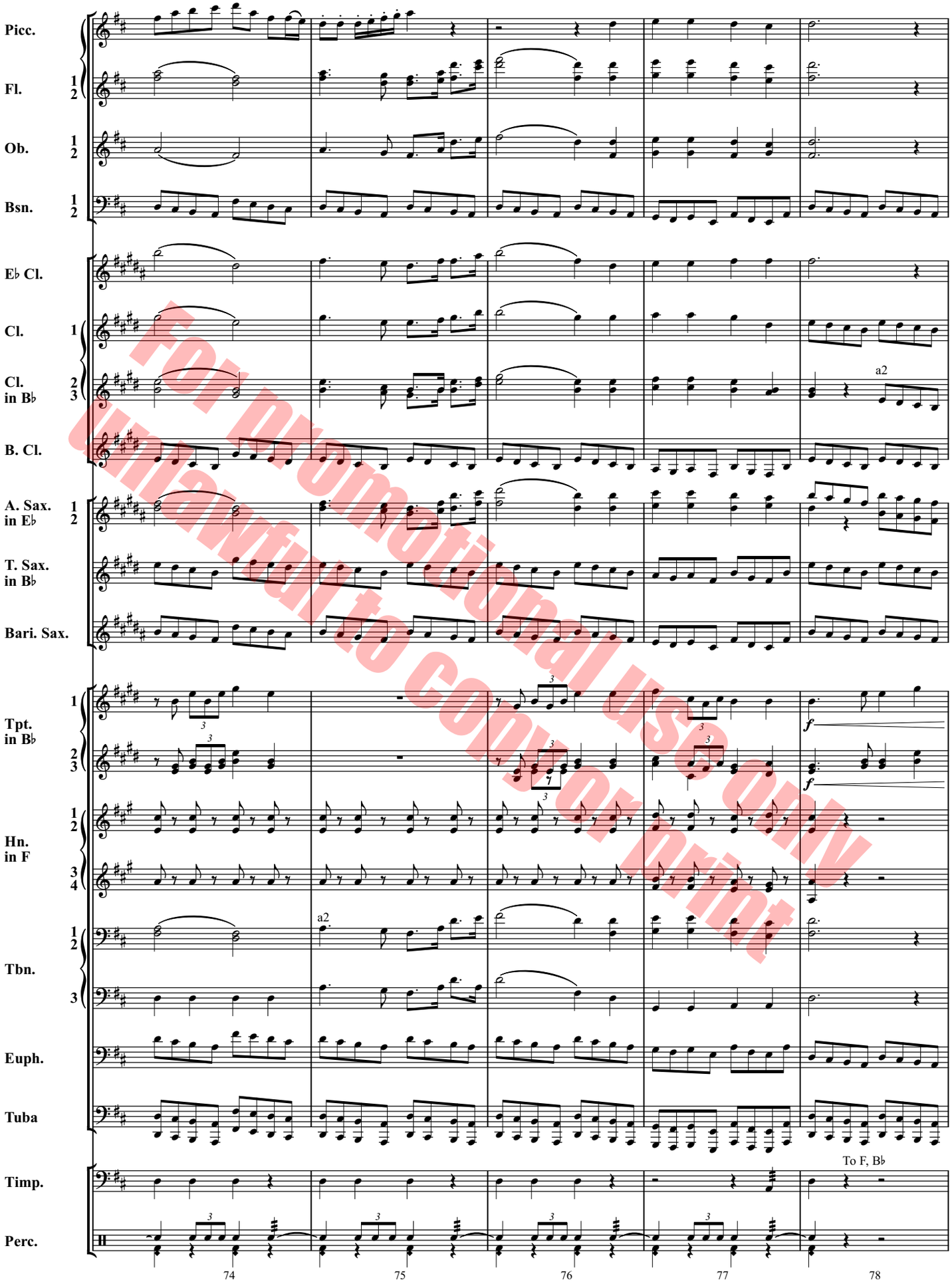

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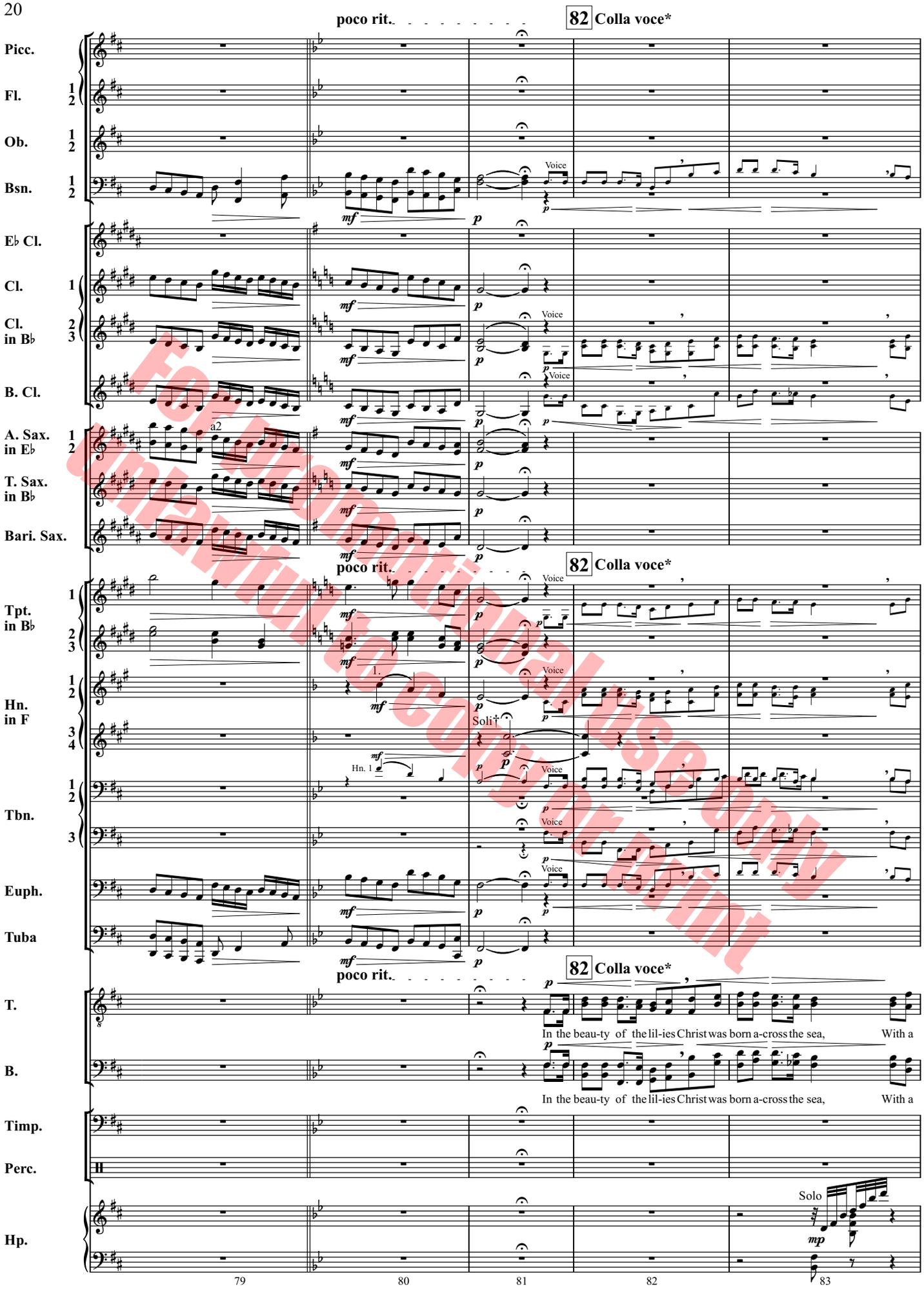

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*To the rhythm of the words, *con espress*. See performance note.
†Hold over the break. See performance note.

Picc.
Fl. 1 2
Ob. 1 2
Bsn. 1 2
E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. in B♭ 2 3
B. Cl.
A. Sax. in E♭ 1 2
T. Sax. in B♭
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. in B♭ 1 2 3
Hn. in F 1 2 3 4
Tbn. 1 2 3
Euph.
Tuba
T.
glo ry in His bos-om that trans - fig-ures you and me: As He died to make men ho- ly, let us die to make men free, While God is march-ing
B.
glo ry in His bos-om that trans - fig-ures you and me: As He died to make men ho- ly, let us die to make men free, While God is march-ing
Timp.
Perc.
Hp.

*live**

84 85 86 87 88

*Original words use "die" here, though "live" may be substituted. See performance note.

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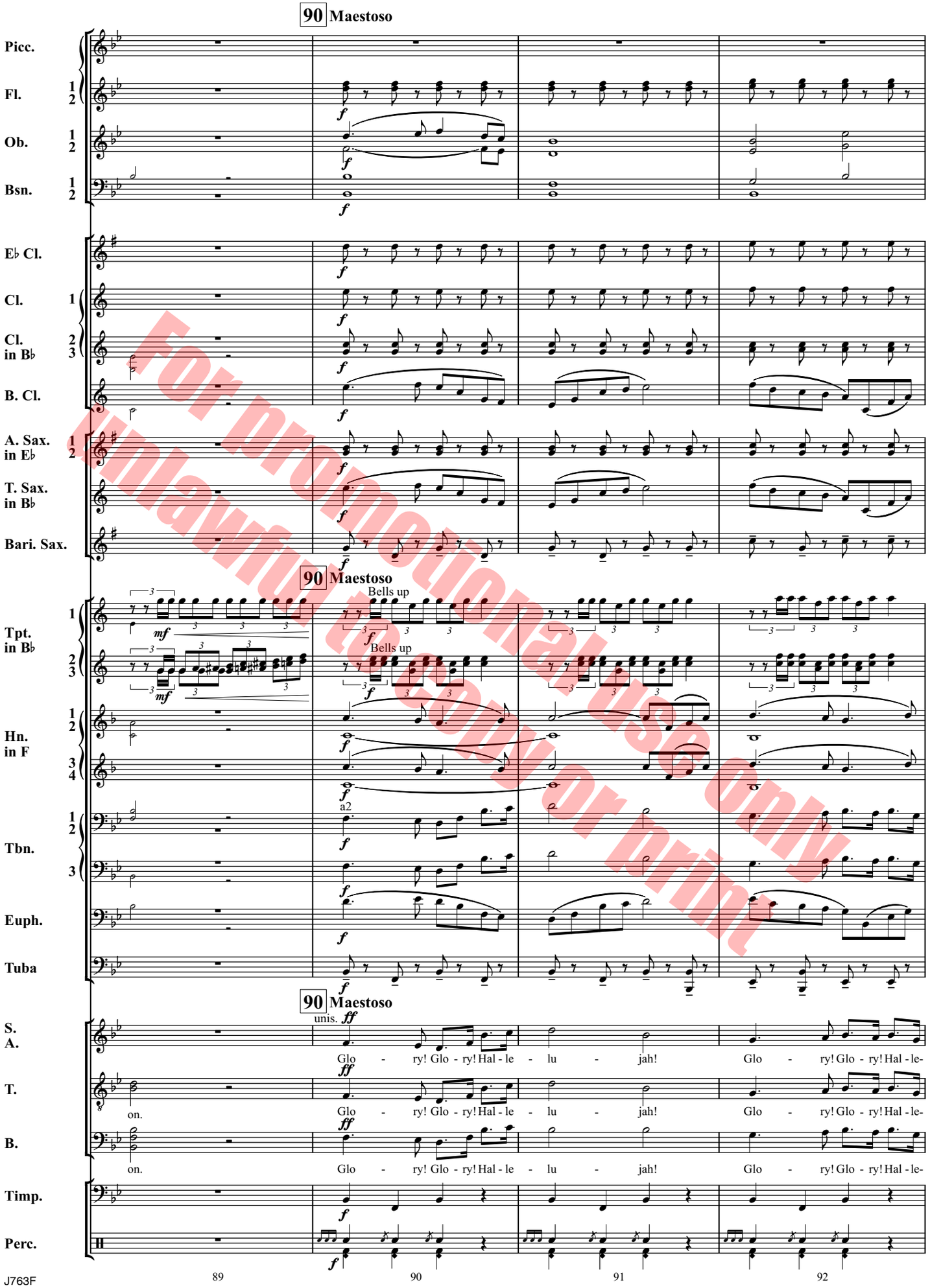

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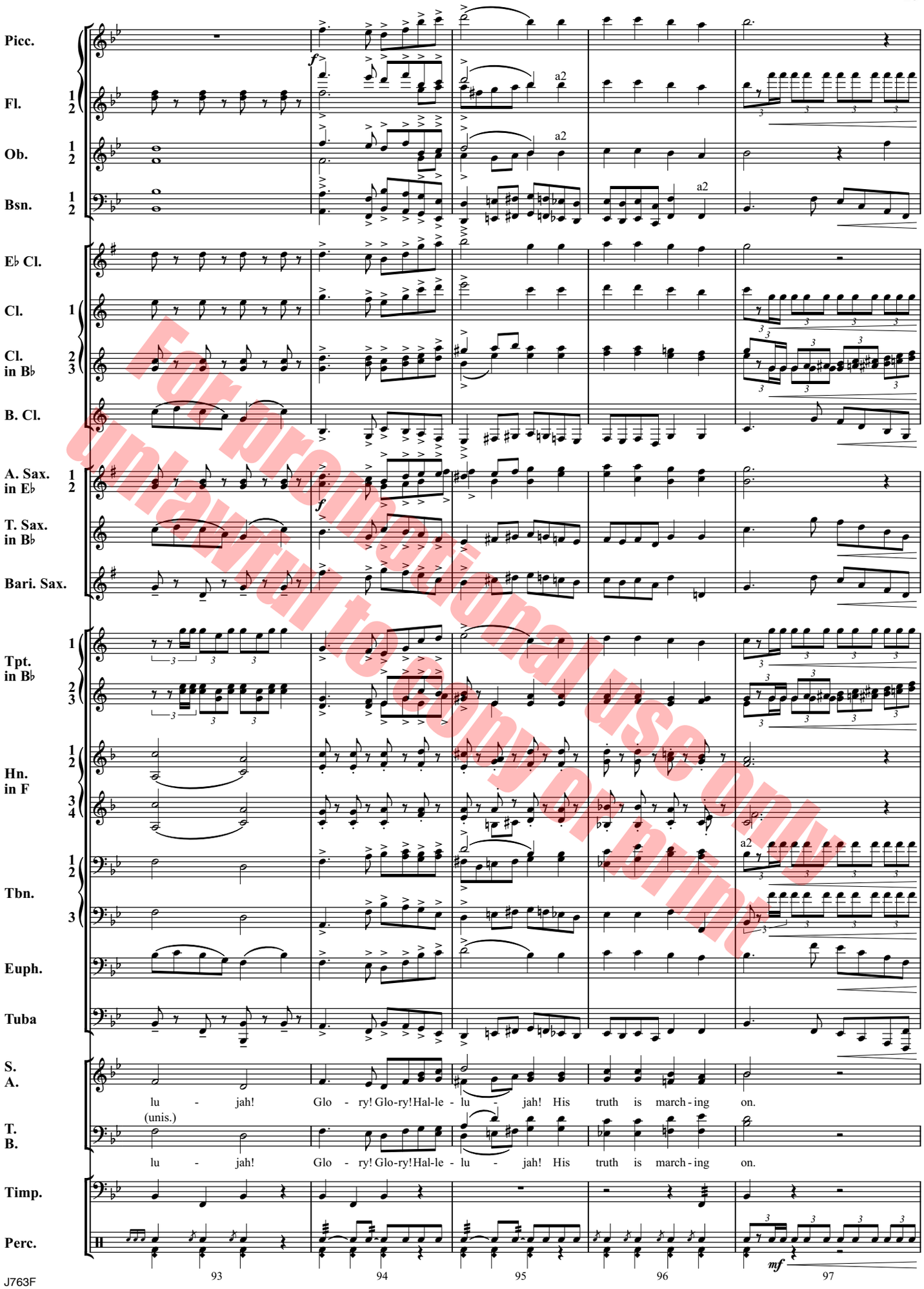

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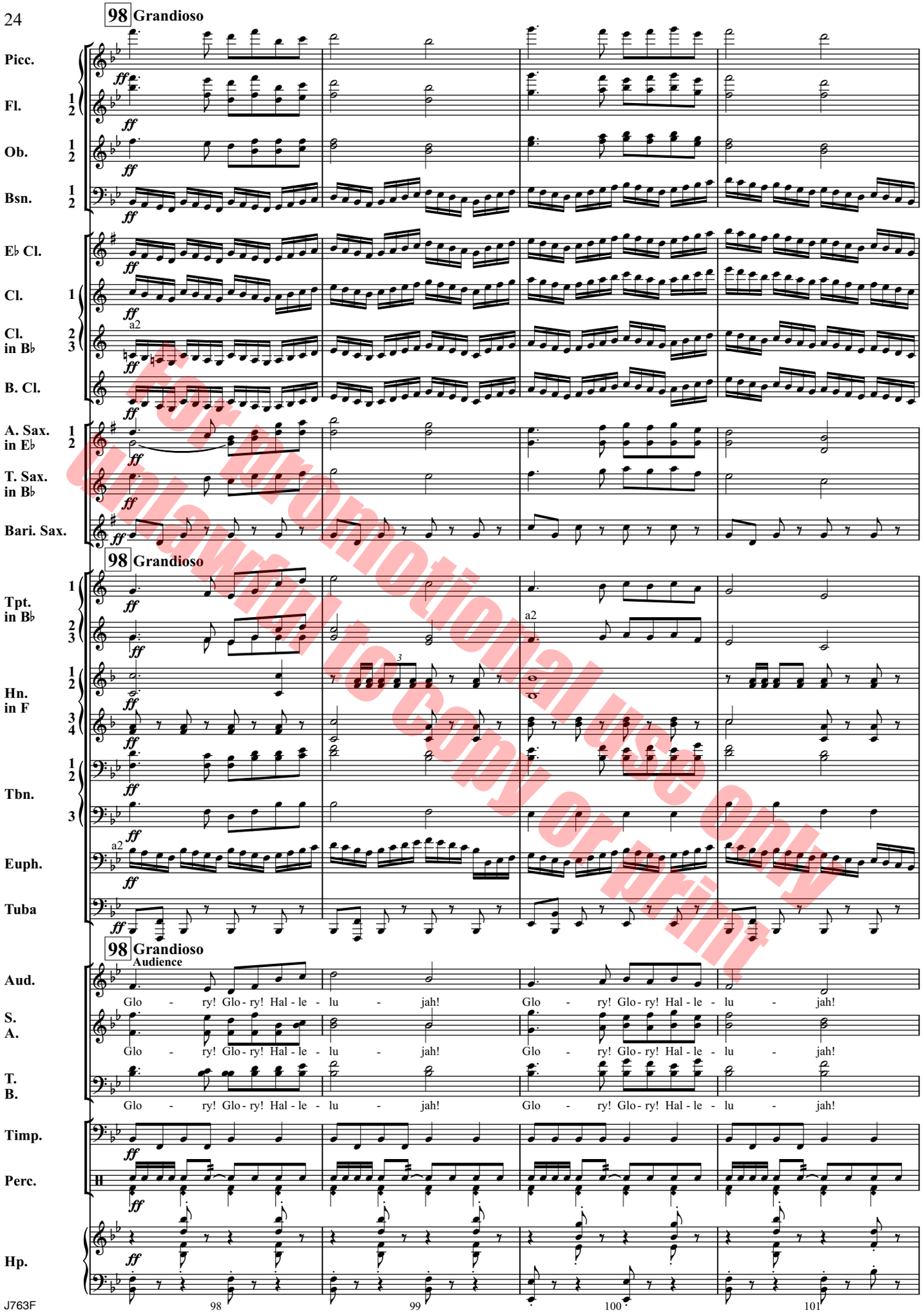

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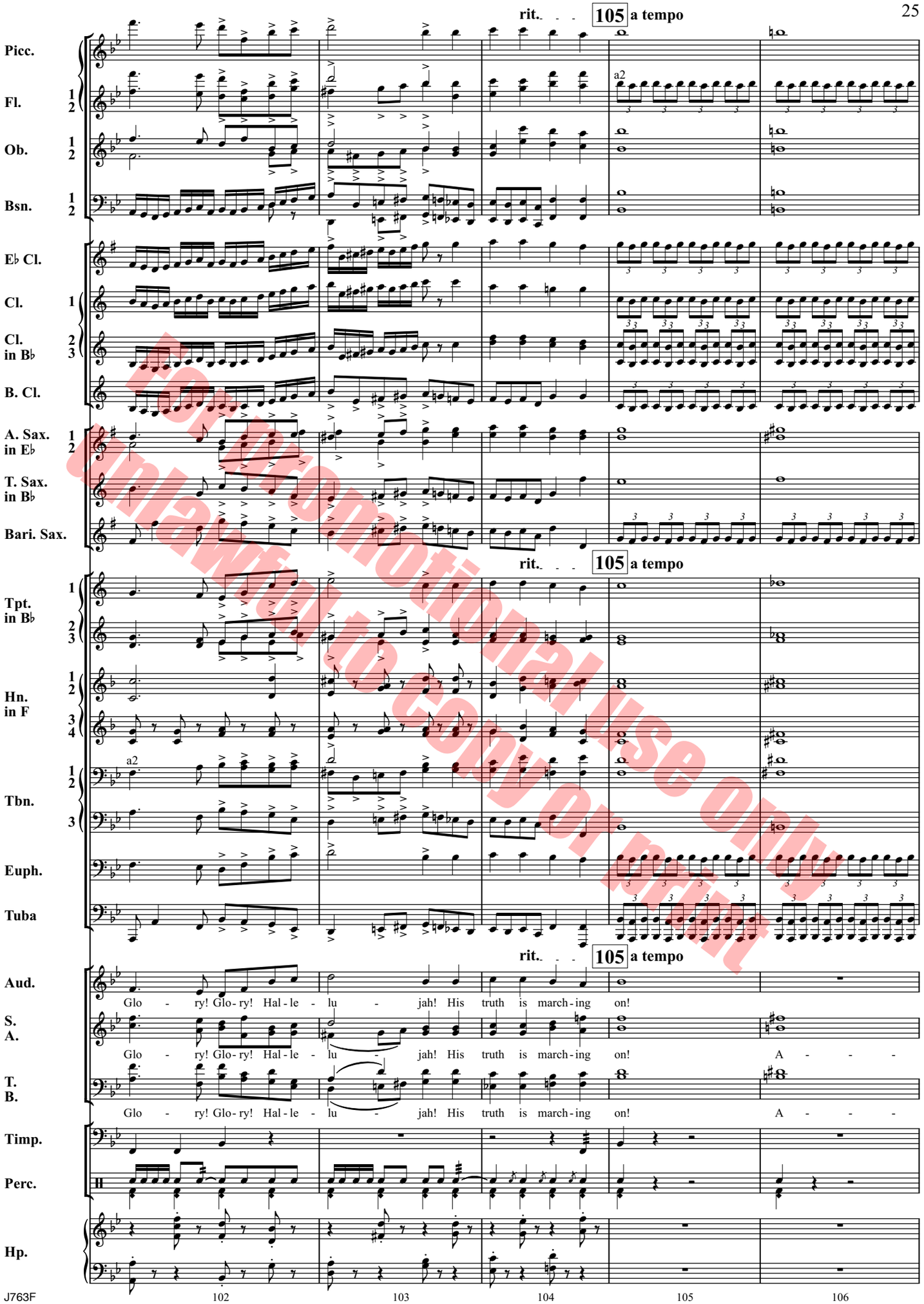

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Picc.
Fl. 1 2
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E♭ Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. in B♭ 2 3
B. Cl.
A. Sax. in E♭ 1 2
T. Sax. in B♭
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. in B♭ 1 2 3
Hn. in F 1 2 3 4
Tbn. 1 2 3
Euph.
Tuba
S. A.
T. B.
Timp.
Perc.
Hp.

rit.

fff

men! A - - - men!

men! A - - - men!

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