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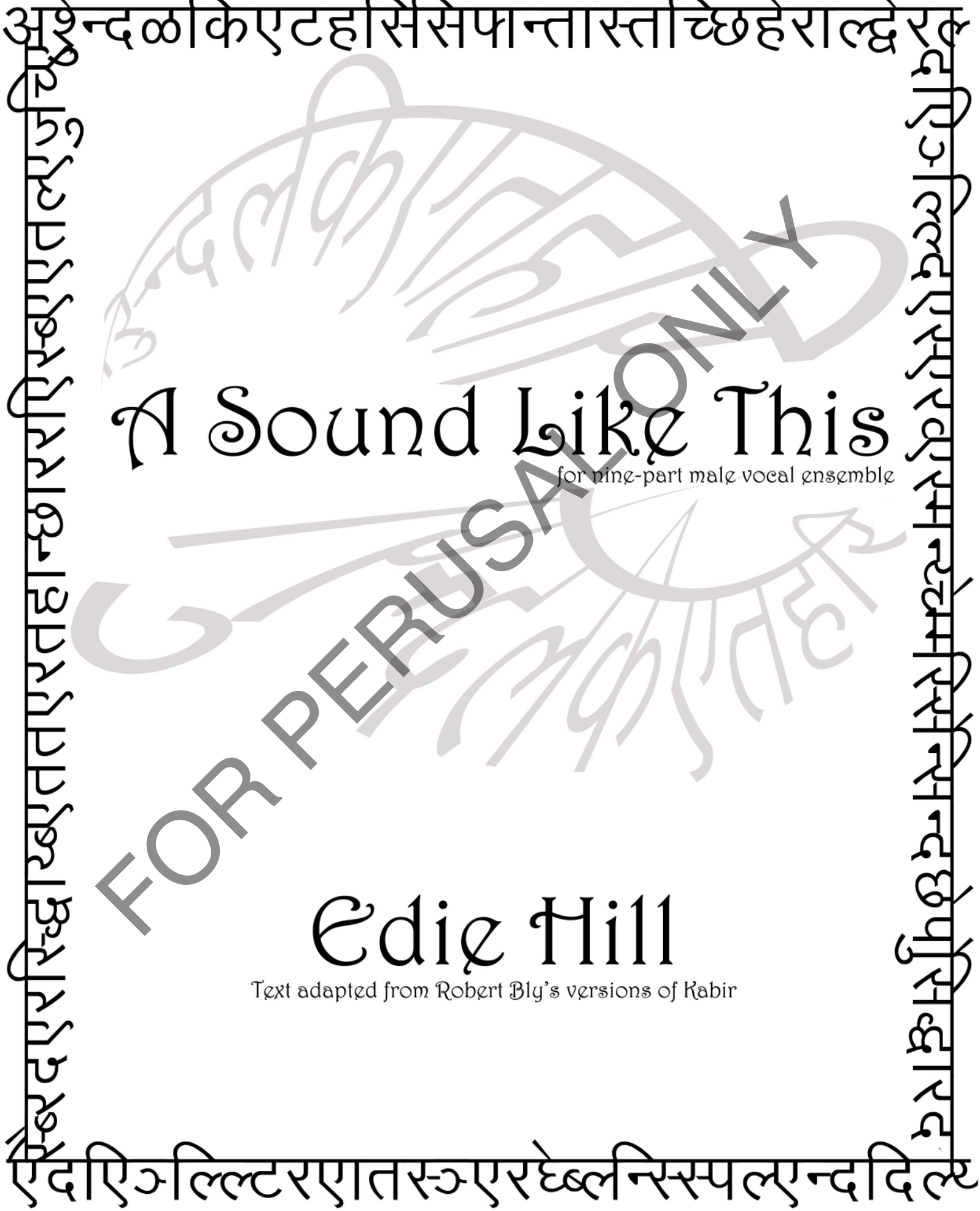

A Sound Like This

for nine-part male vocal ensemble

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

Edie Hill

Text adapted from Robert Bly's versions of Kabir

A Sound Like This

I.

My inside, listen to me, the greatest spirit,
the Teacher, is near,
wake up, wake up!

Run to his feet-
he is standing close to your head right now.

You have slept for millions and millions of years.

Why not wake up this morning?

II.

Listen friend, this body is his dulcimer.
He draws the strings tight, and out of it comes
the music of the inner universe.
If the strings break and the bridge falls,
then this dulcimer of dust goes back to dust.

Kabir says: The Holy One is the only one who can
draw music from it.

III.

Inside this clay jug there are canyons and pine mountains,
and the maker of canyons and pine mountains!
All seven oceans are inside, and hundreds of millions
of stars.
The acid that tests gold is there, and the one who
judges jewels.
And the music from the strings no one touches, and
the source of all water.

If you want the truth, I will tell you the truth:
Friend,listen: the God whom I love is inside.

IV.

Student, do the simple purification.

You know that the seed is inside the horse-chestnut
tree;
and inside the seed there are the blossoms of the tree,
and the chestnuts, and the shade.
So inside the human body there is the seed, and
inside the seed there is the human body again.

Fire, air, earth, water, and space – if you don't want
the secret one,
you can't have these either.

Thinkers, listen, tell me what you know of that is not
inside the soul?
Take a pitcher full of water and set it down on the
water –
now it has water inside and water outside.
We mustn't give it a name,

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lest silly people start talking again about the body and the soul.

If you want the truth, I'll tell you the truth:
Listen to the secret sound, the real sound, which is inside you.
The one no one talks of speak the secret sound to himself,
and he is the one who has made it all.

V.

Friend, hope for the Guest while you are alive.
Jump into experience while you are alive!
Think...and think...while you are alive.
What you call "salvation" belongs to the time before death.

If you don't break your ropes while you're alive,
do you think
ghosts will do it after?

The idea that the soul will join with the ecstatic
just because the body is rotten –
that is all fantasy.
What is found now is found then.
If you find nothing now,
you will simply end up with an apartment in the City of Death.
If you make love with the divine now, in the next life you will have the face of satisfied desire.

So plunge into the truth, find out who the Teacher is, believe in the Great Sound!

Kabir says this: When the Guest is being searched for, it is intensity of the longing for the Guest that does all the work.
Look at me, and you will see a slave of that intensity.

VI.

The flute of interior time is played whether we hear it or not.
What we mean by "love" is its sound coming in.
When love hits the farthest edge of excess, it reaches wisdom.
And the fragrance of that knowledge!
It penetrates our thick bodies,
it goes through walls.
Its network of notes has a structure as if a million suns were arranged inside.
This tune has truth in it.
Where else have you heard a sound like this?

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Adapted from Robert Bly's versions of Kabir.© 1977, Robert Bly. Text used by permission of Robert Bly

Funds for this commission have been provided by
the Chamber Music America Commissioning Endowment Fund.

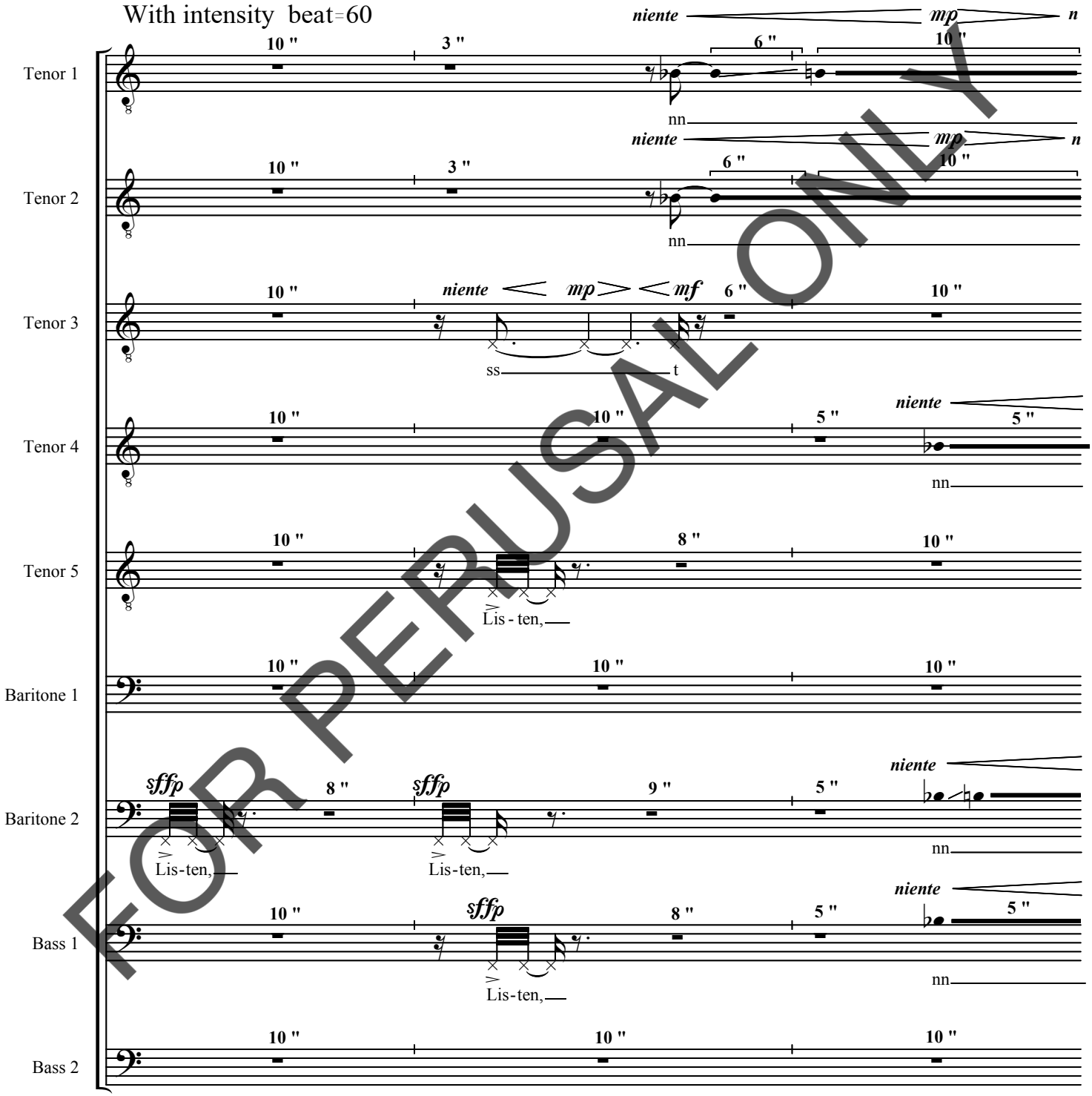
A Sound Like This

for Cantus

Kabir
Robert Bly

Edie Hill

I. An Invocation



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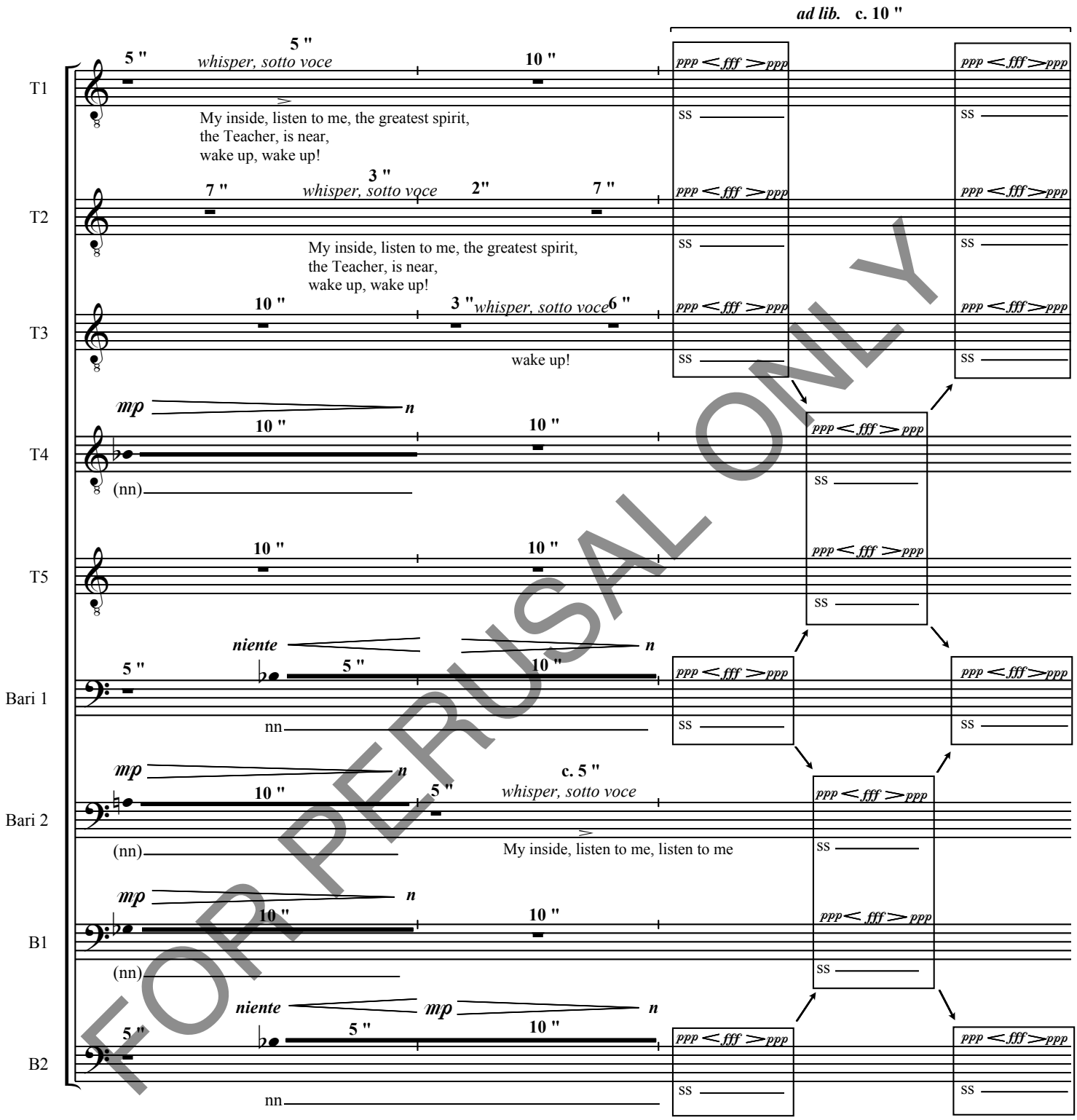

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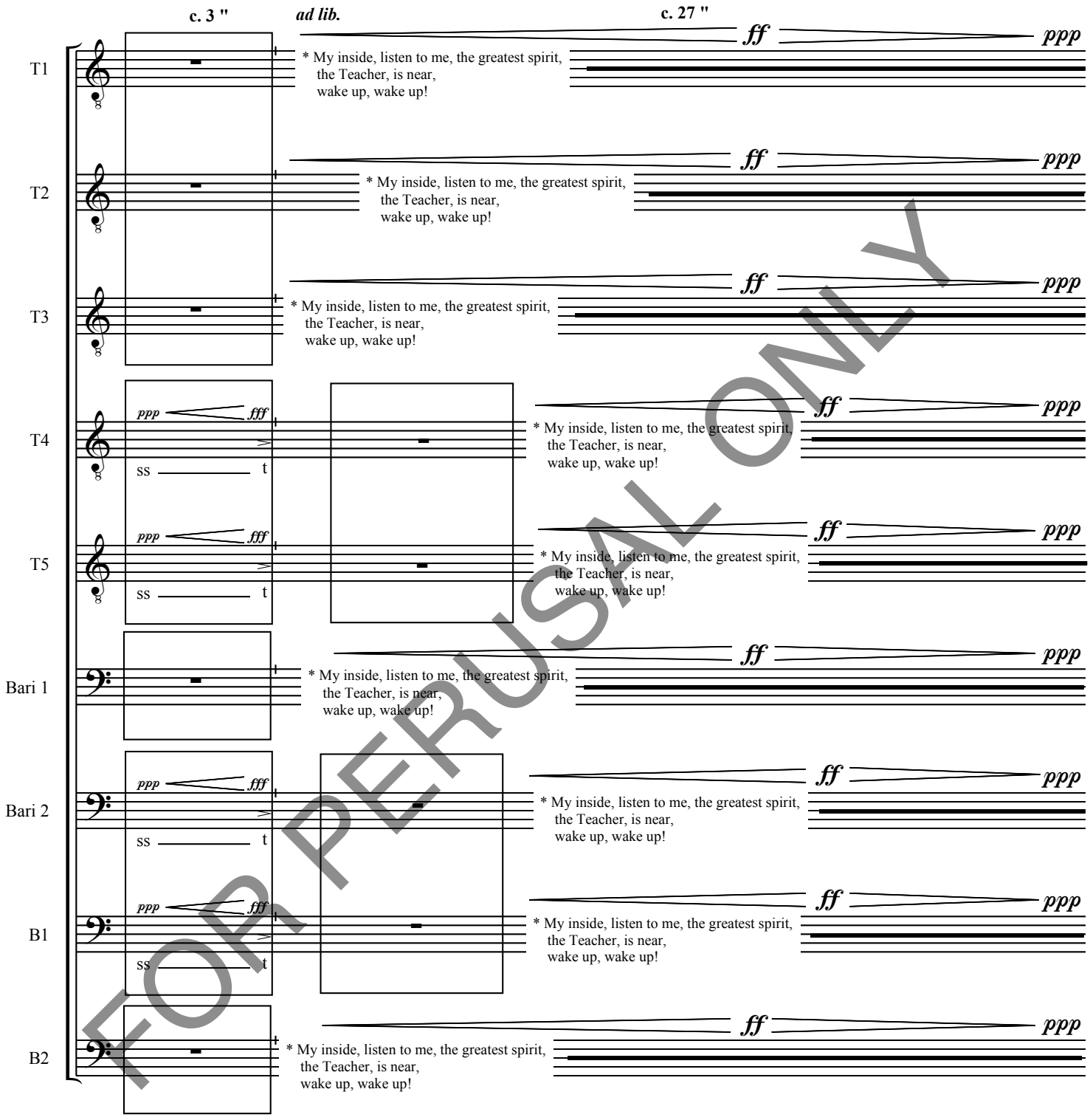

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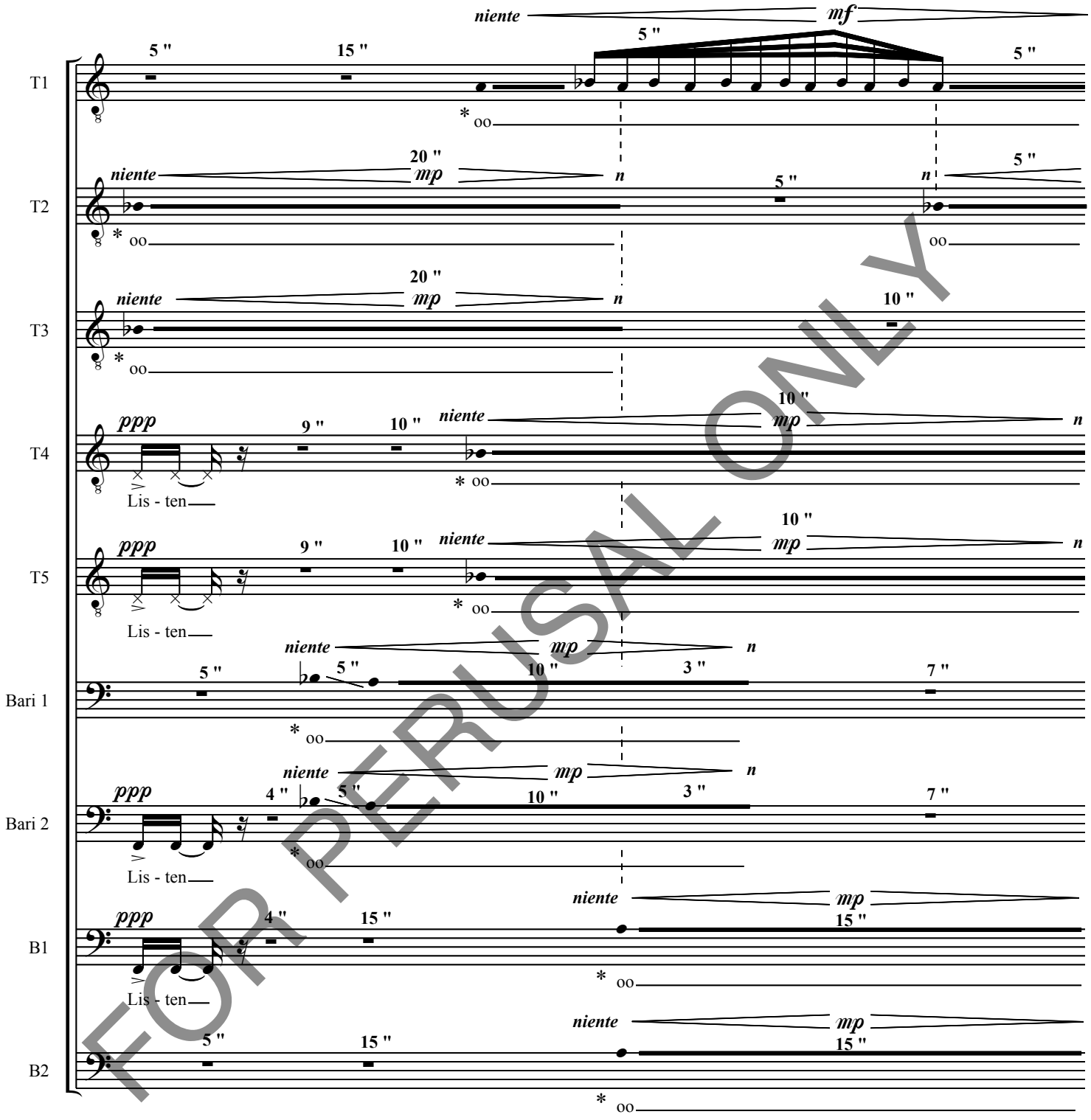
* Whisper all of part(s) of this phrase.
Repeat “Listen” and “the Teacher, is near” and “wake up” at varying intervals.



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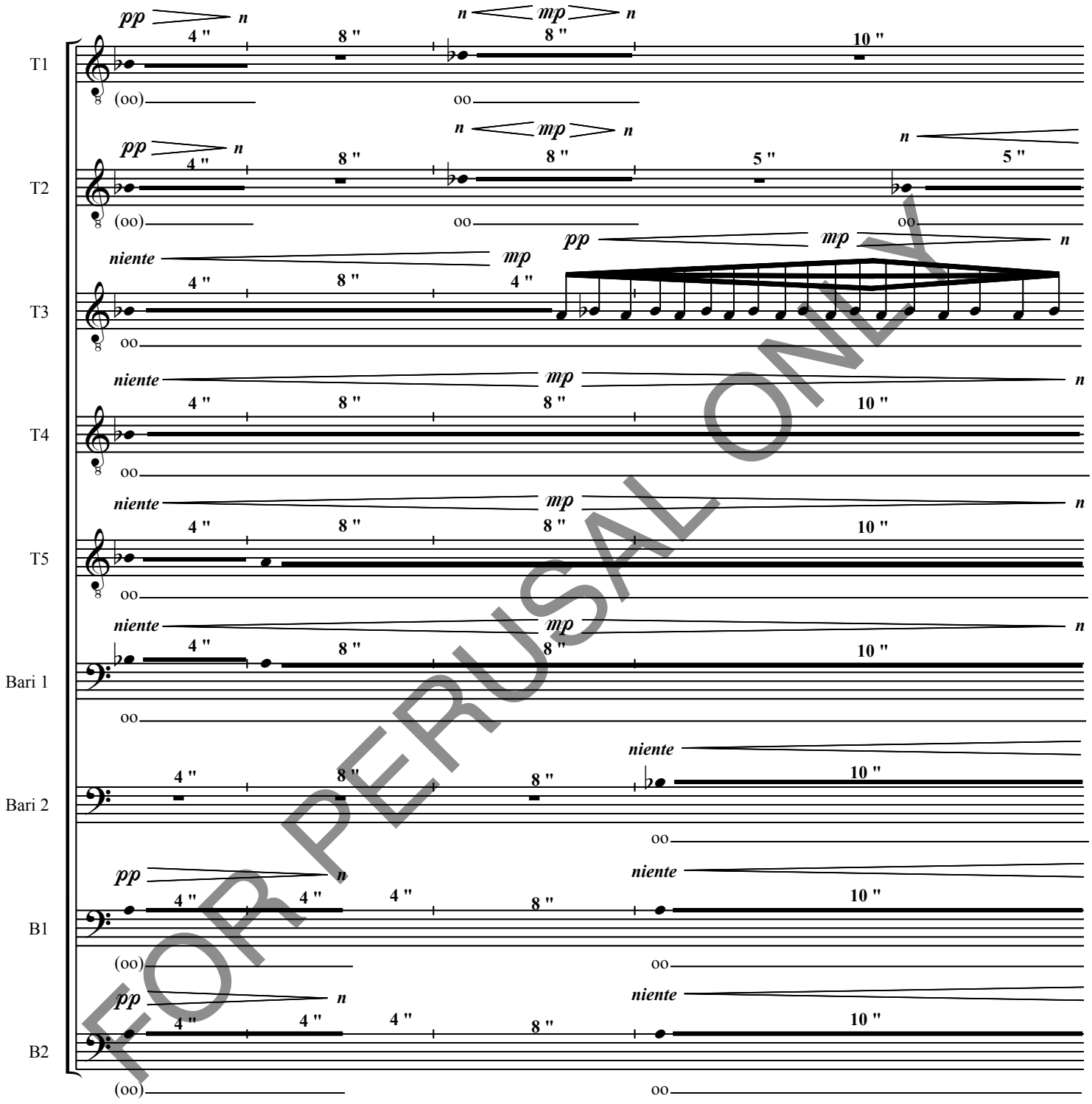
* Begin “oo” with lips barely parted,
gradually open vowel with increase of dynamic.



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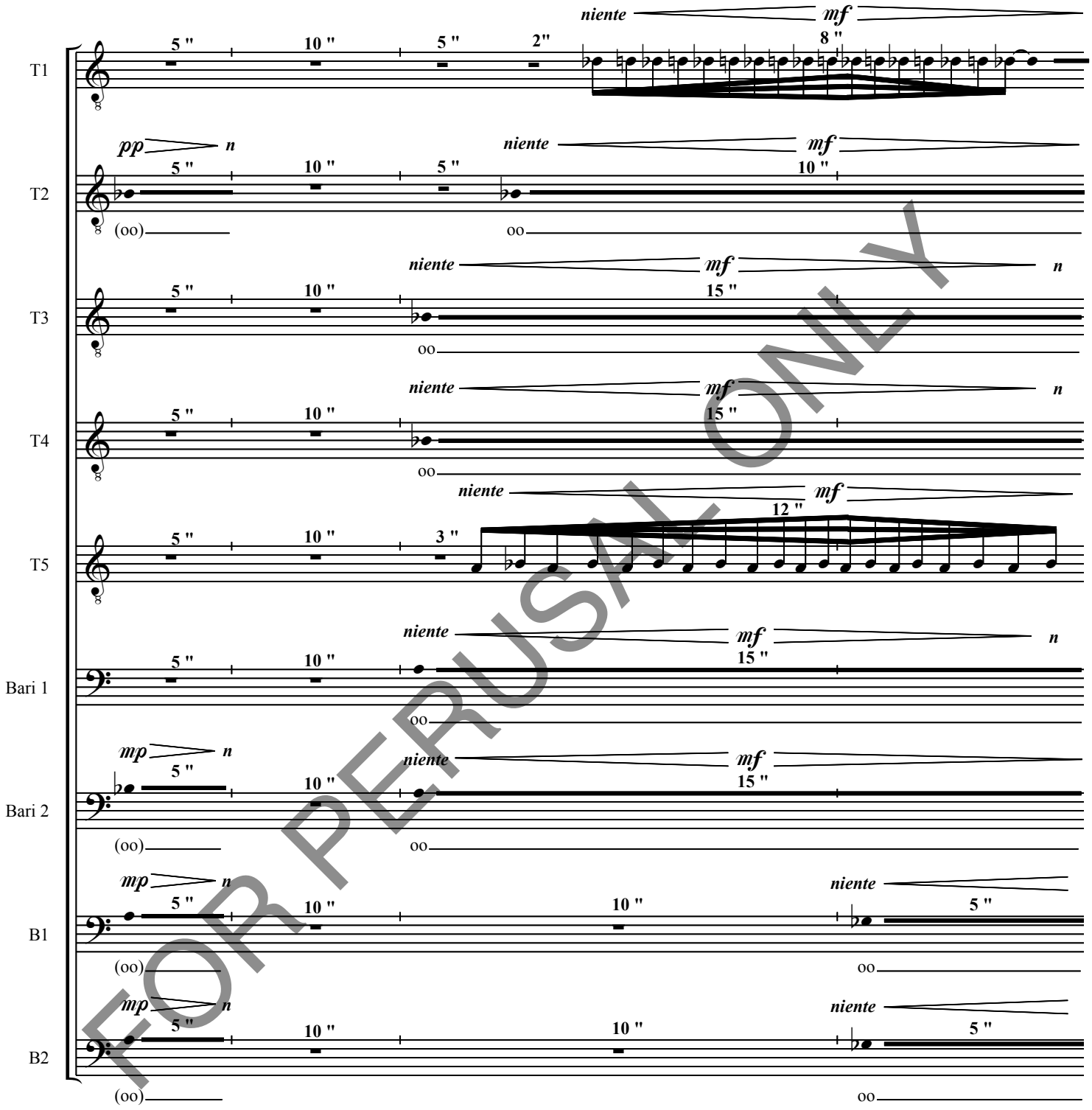

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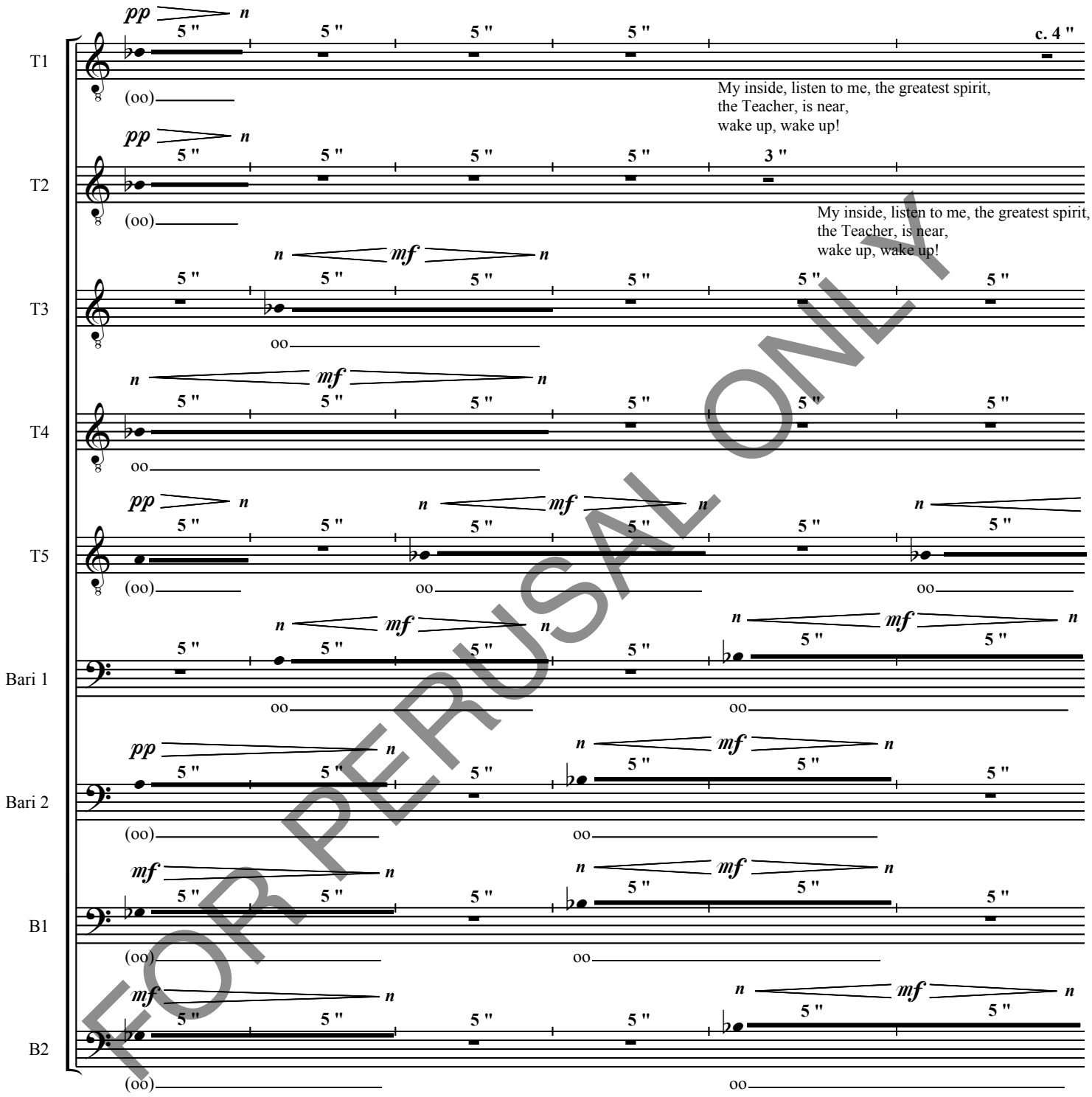

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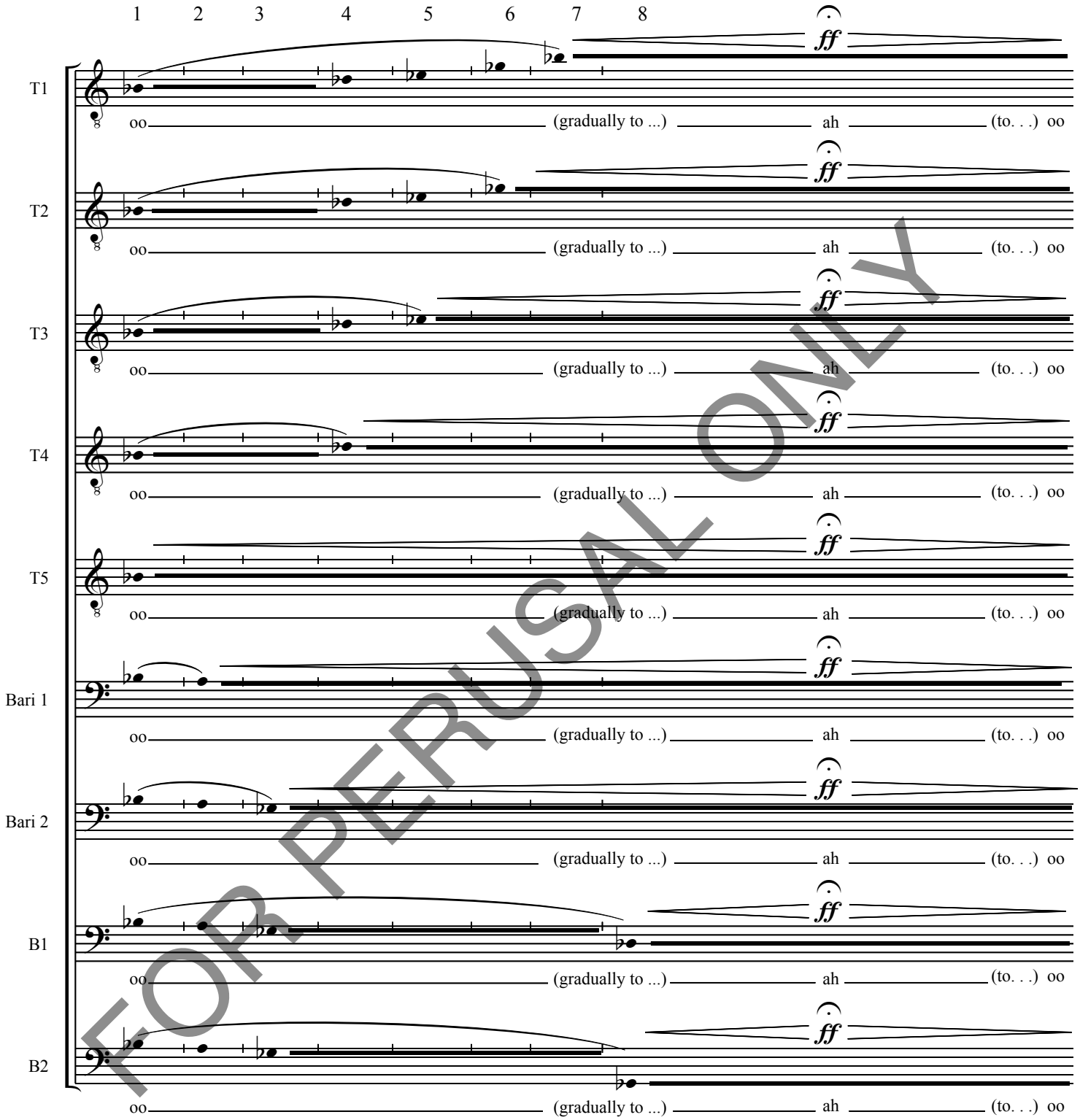

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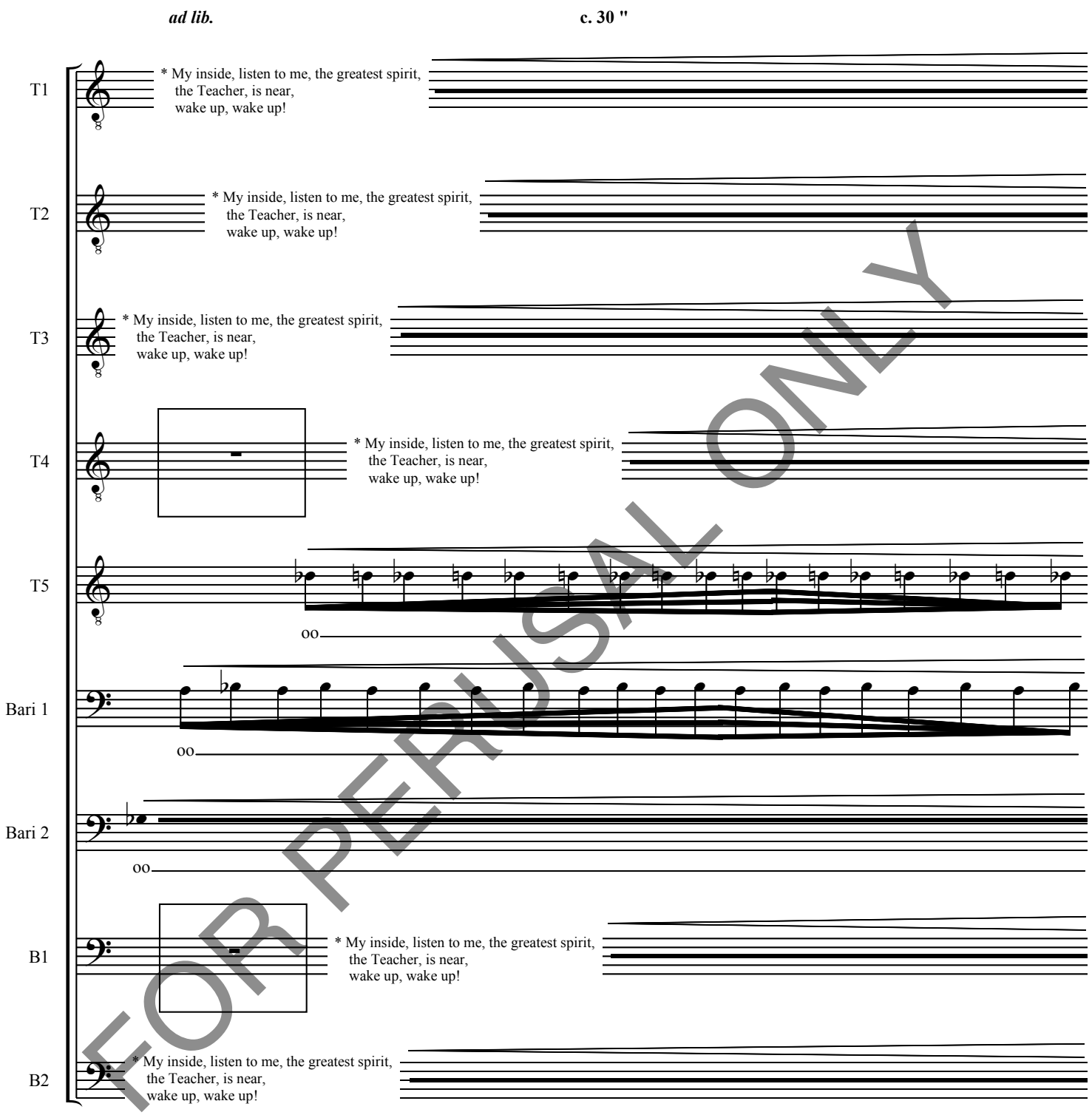

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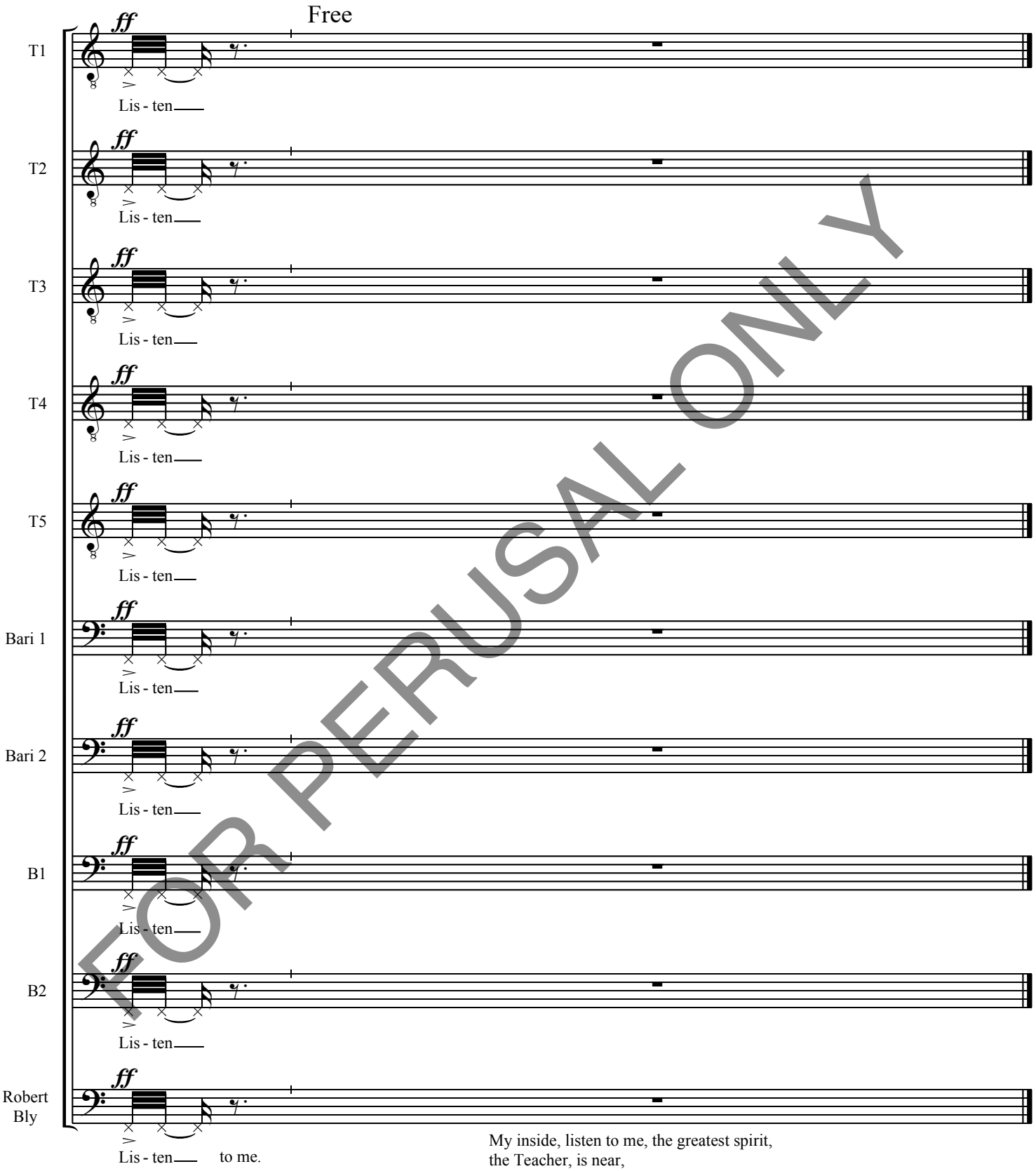
* Speak/whisper all of part(s) of this phrase.
Repeat “Listen” and “the Teacher, is near” and “wake up” at varying intervals.



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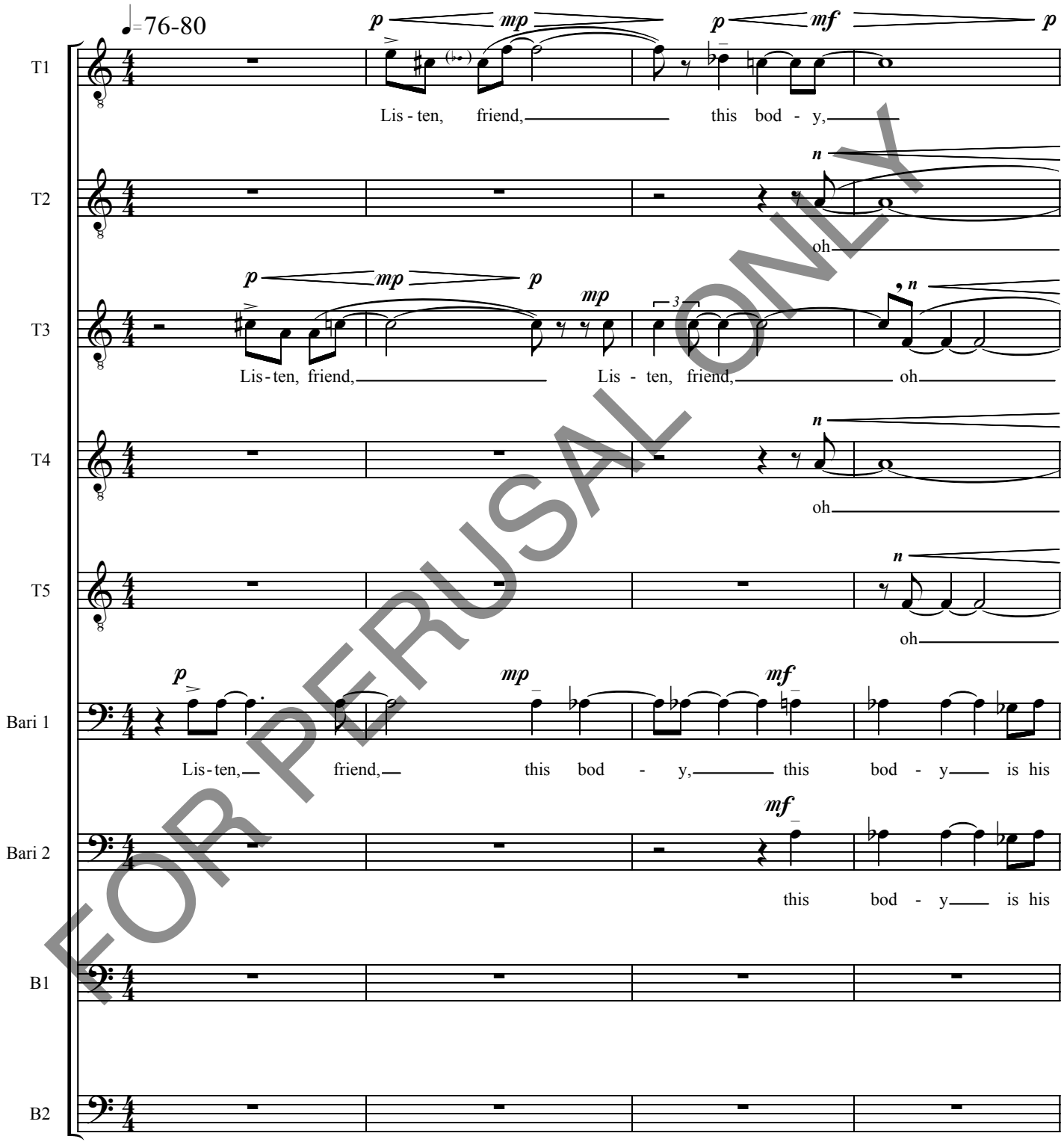
My inside, listen to me, the greatest spirit,
the Teacher, is near,
wake up, wake up!
Run to his feet —
he is standing close to your head right now.
You have slept for millions and millions of years.
Why not wake up this morning?

II. He Draws The Strings Tight



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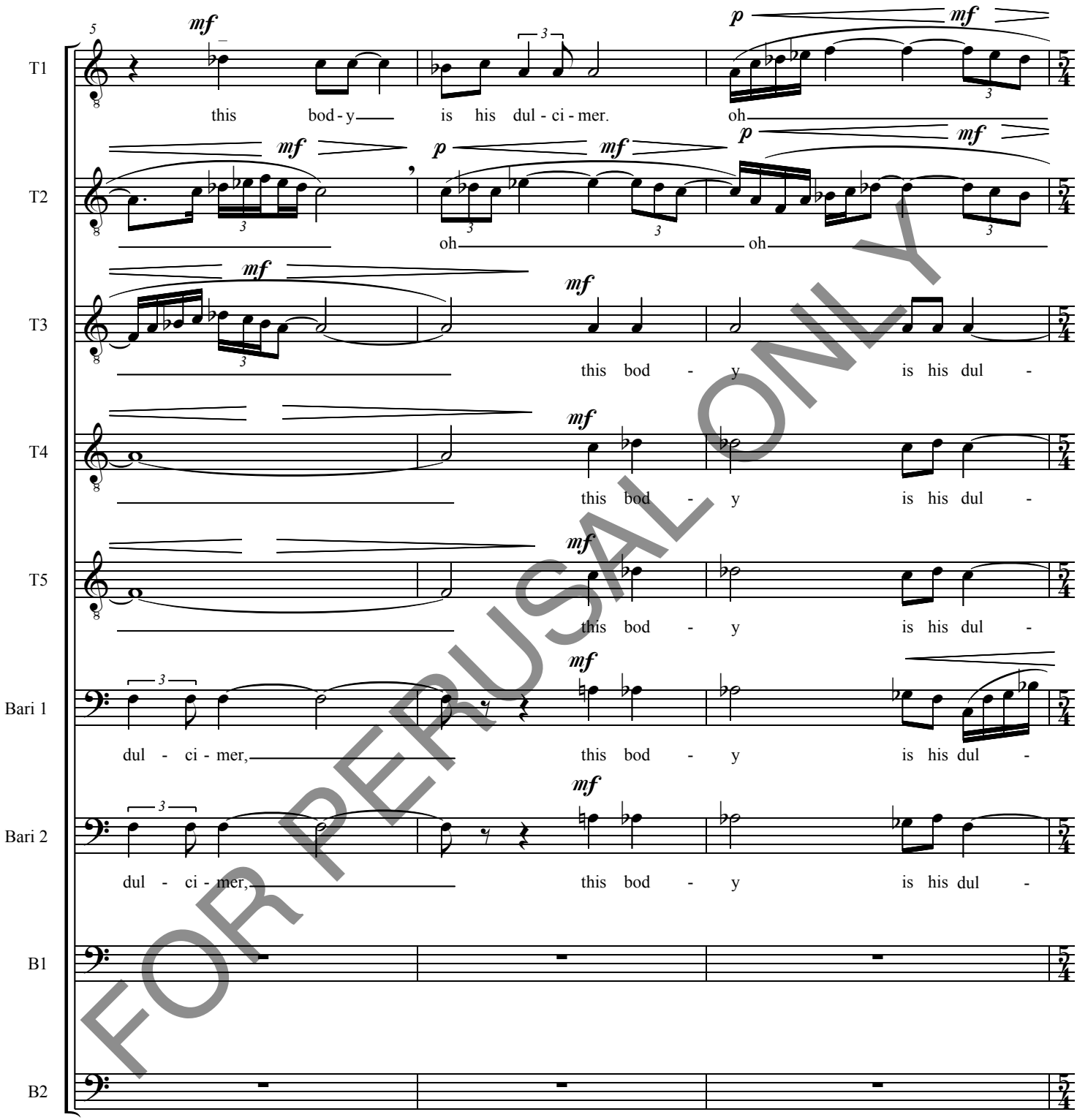

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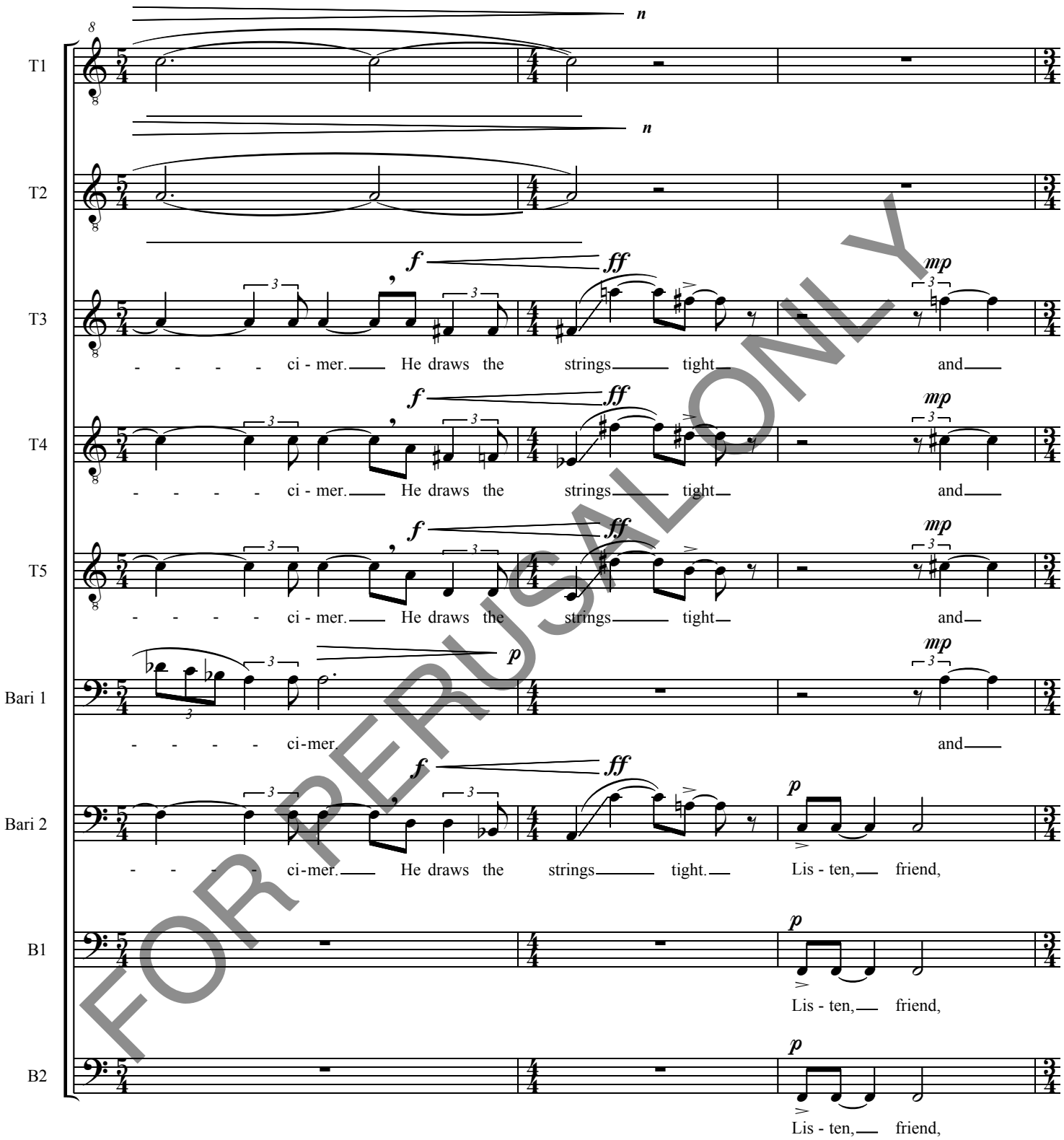

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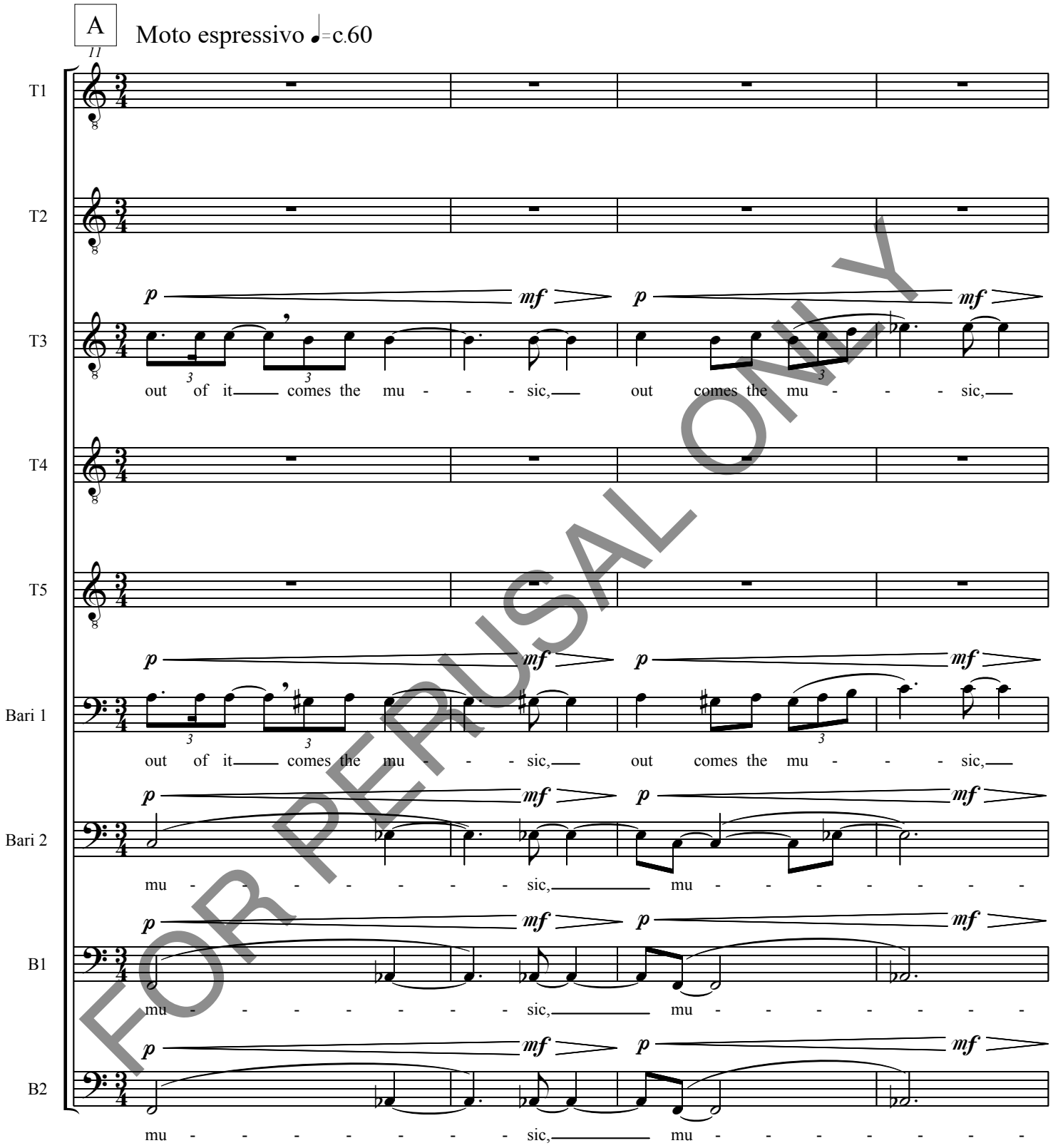

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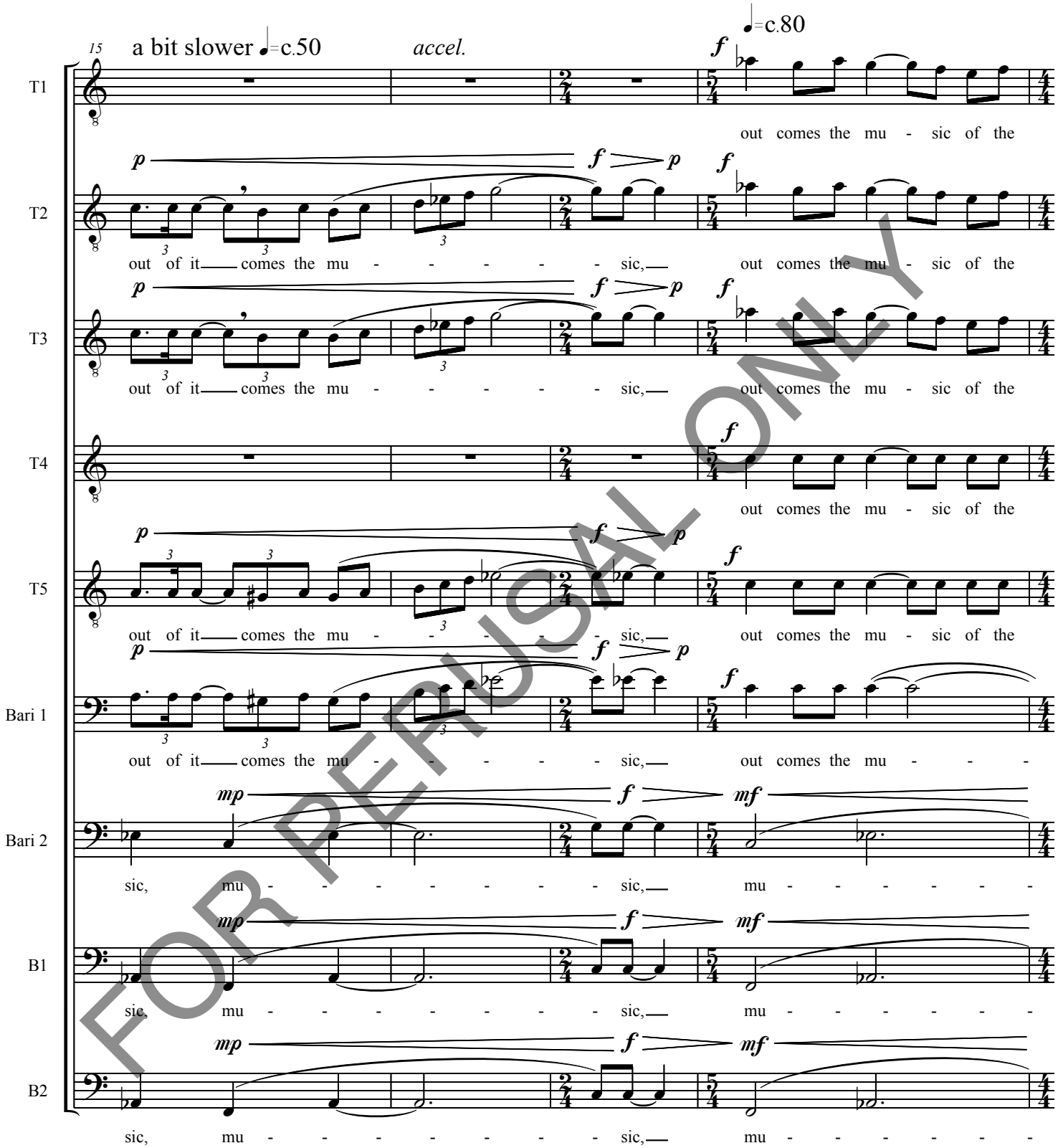

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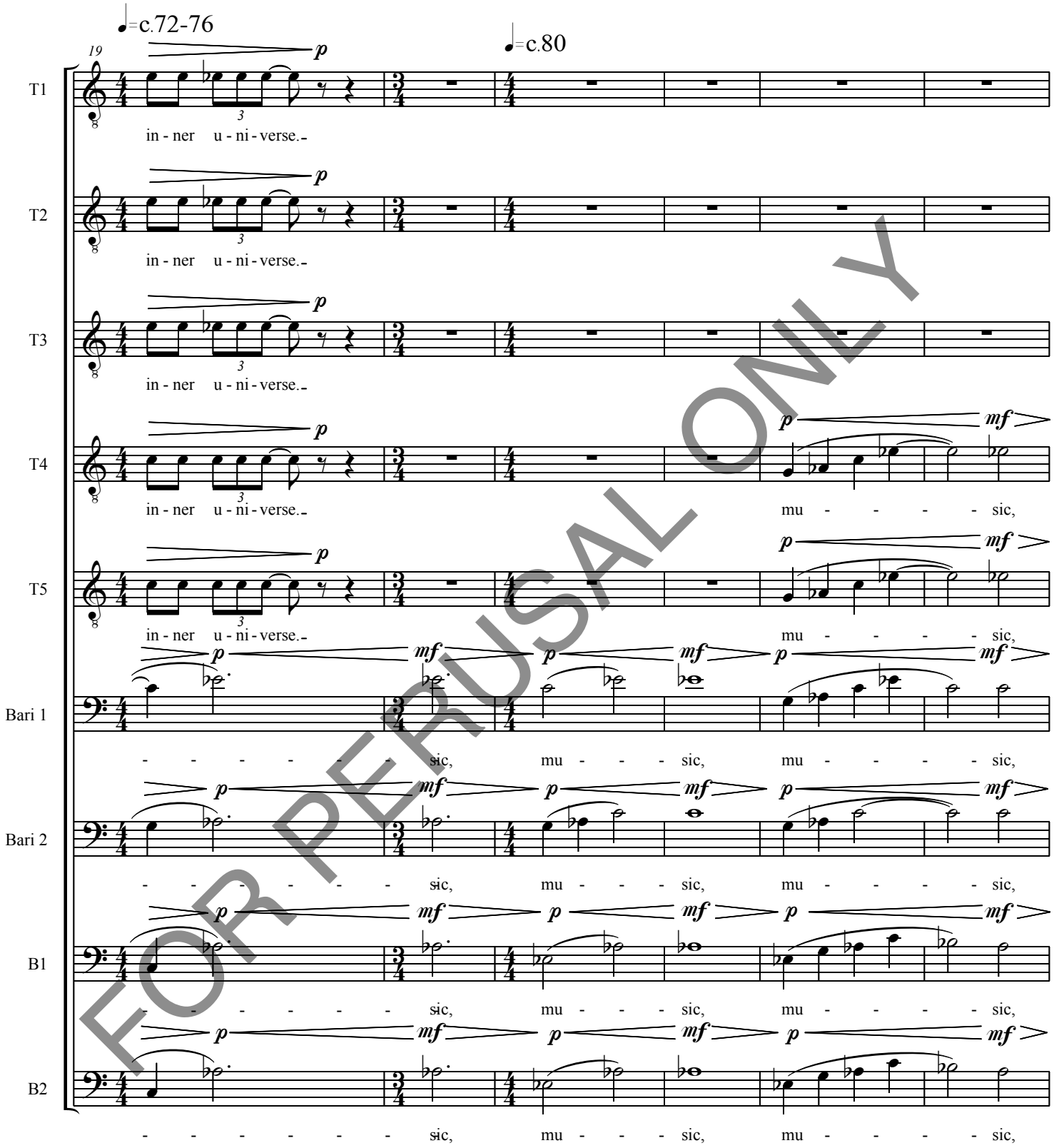

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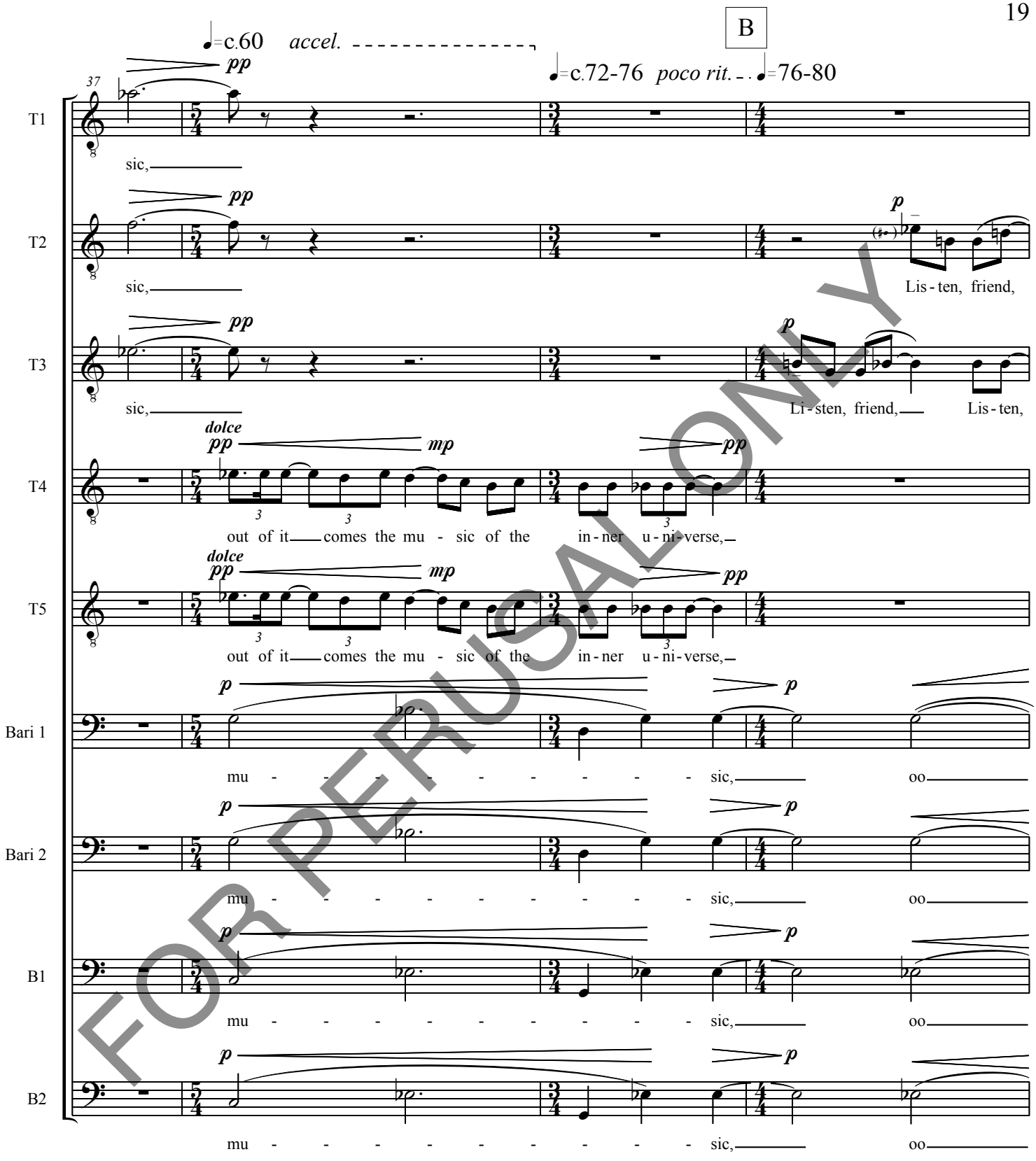

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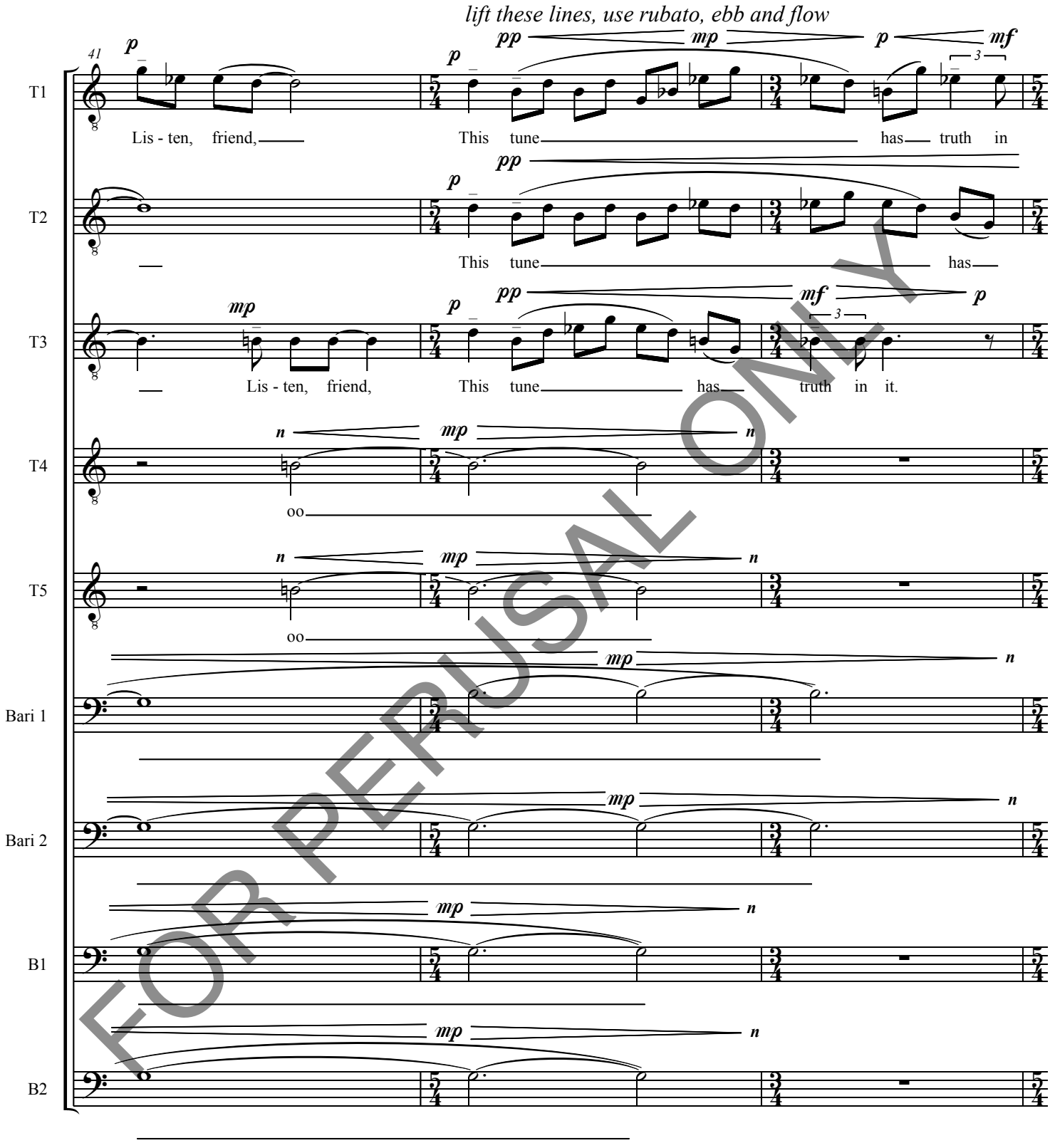

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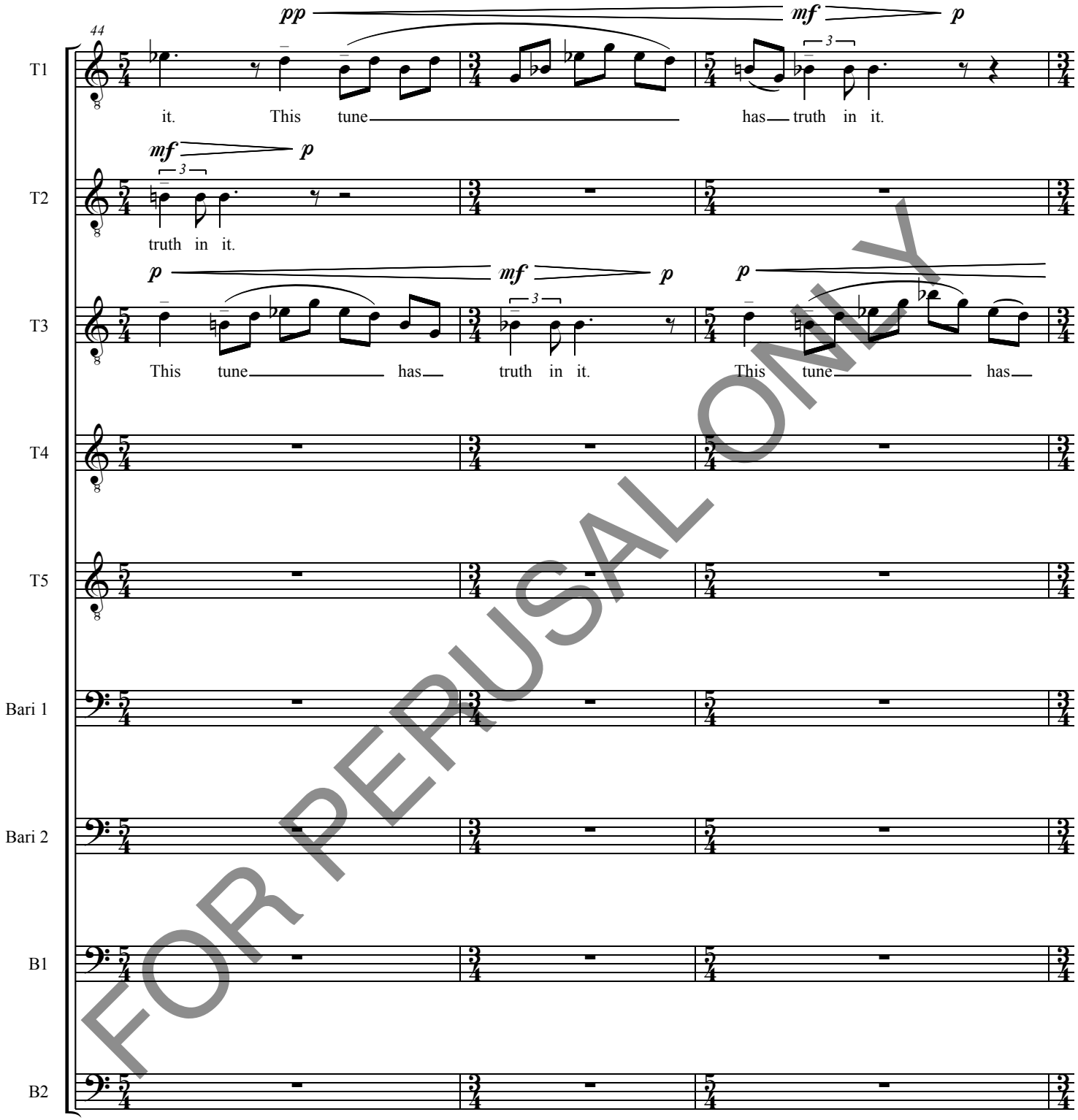

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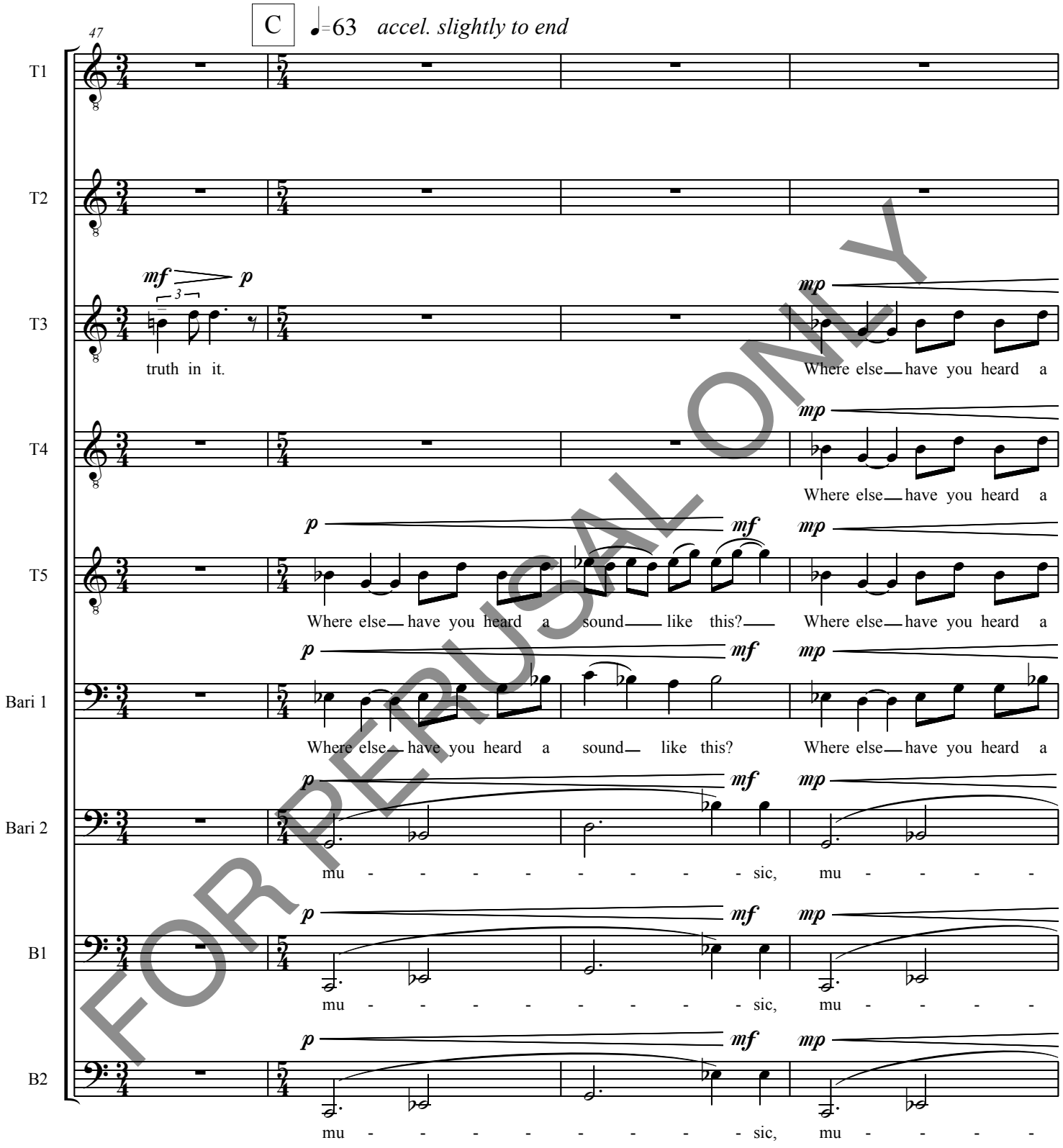

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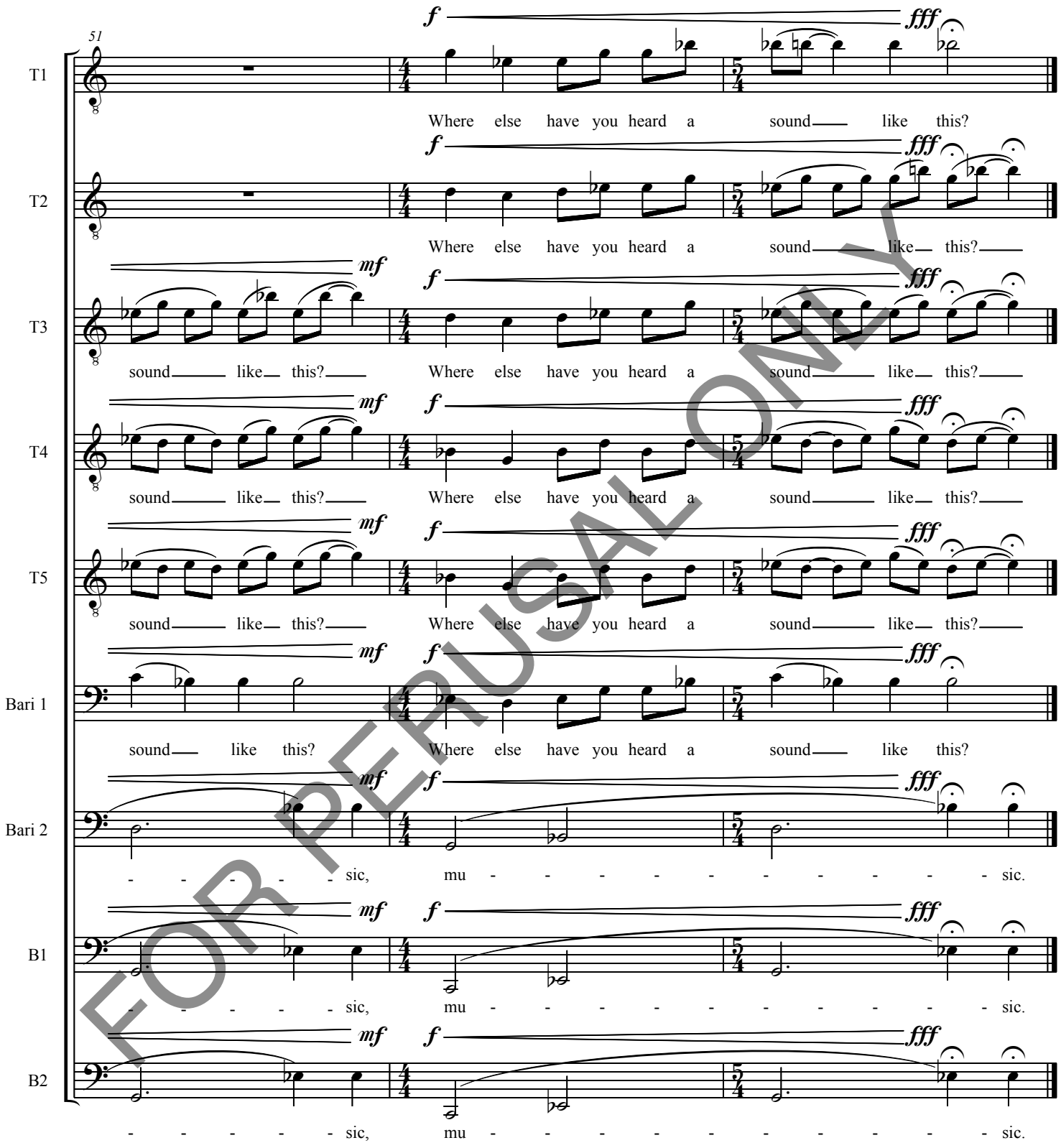

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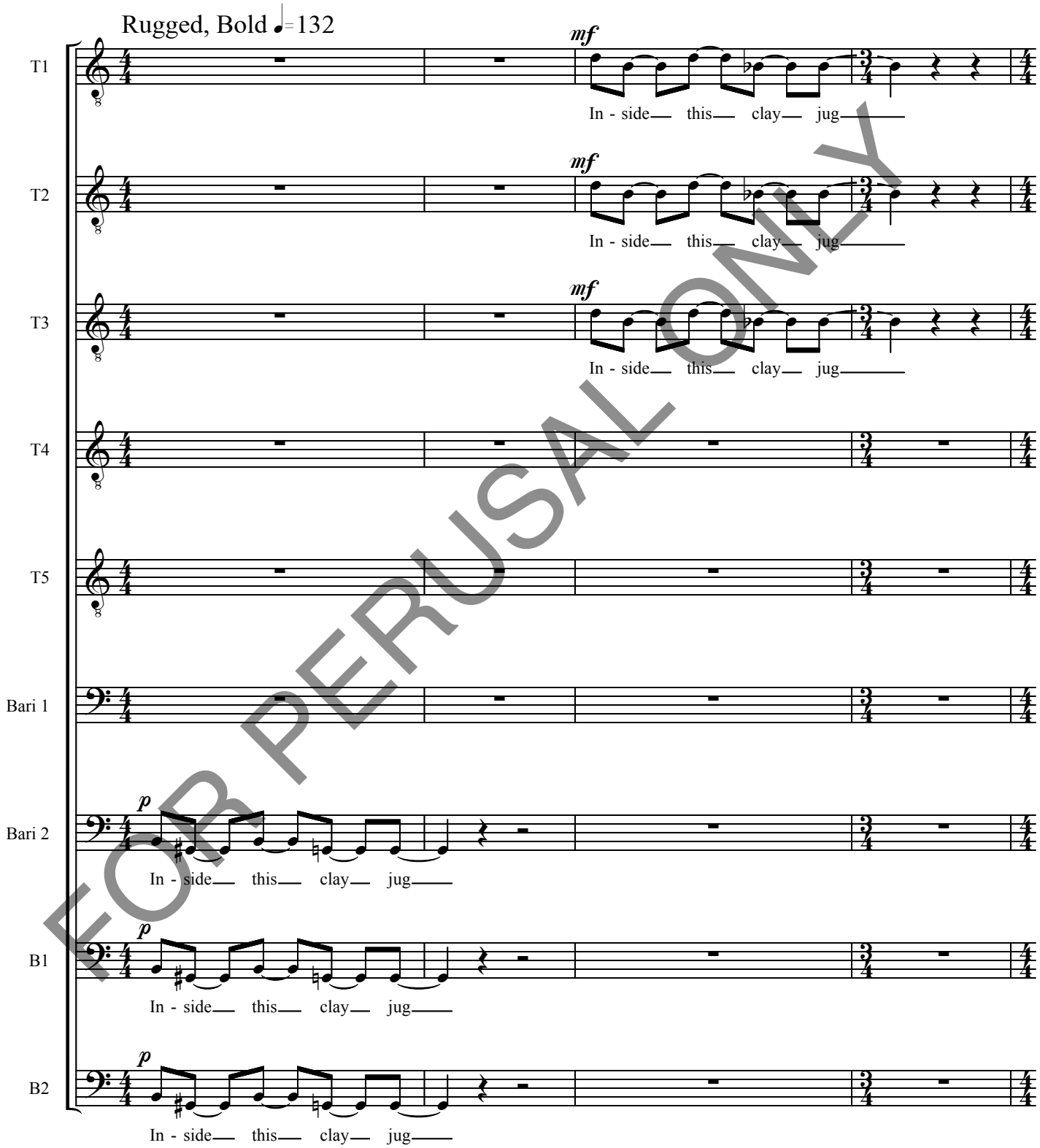
III. Clay Jug



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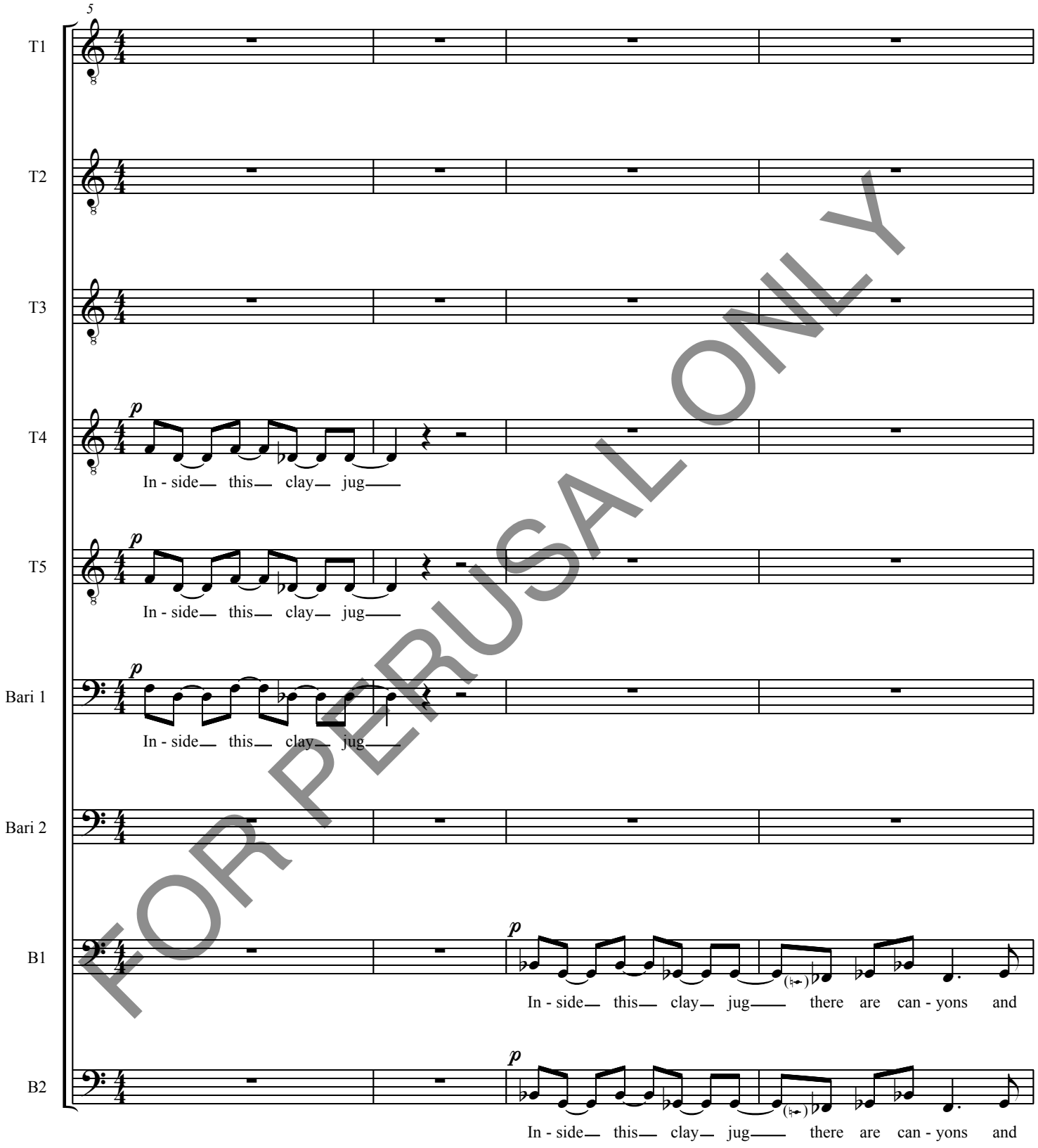

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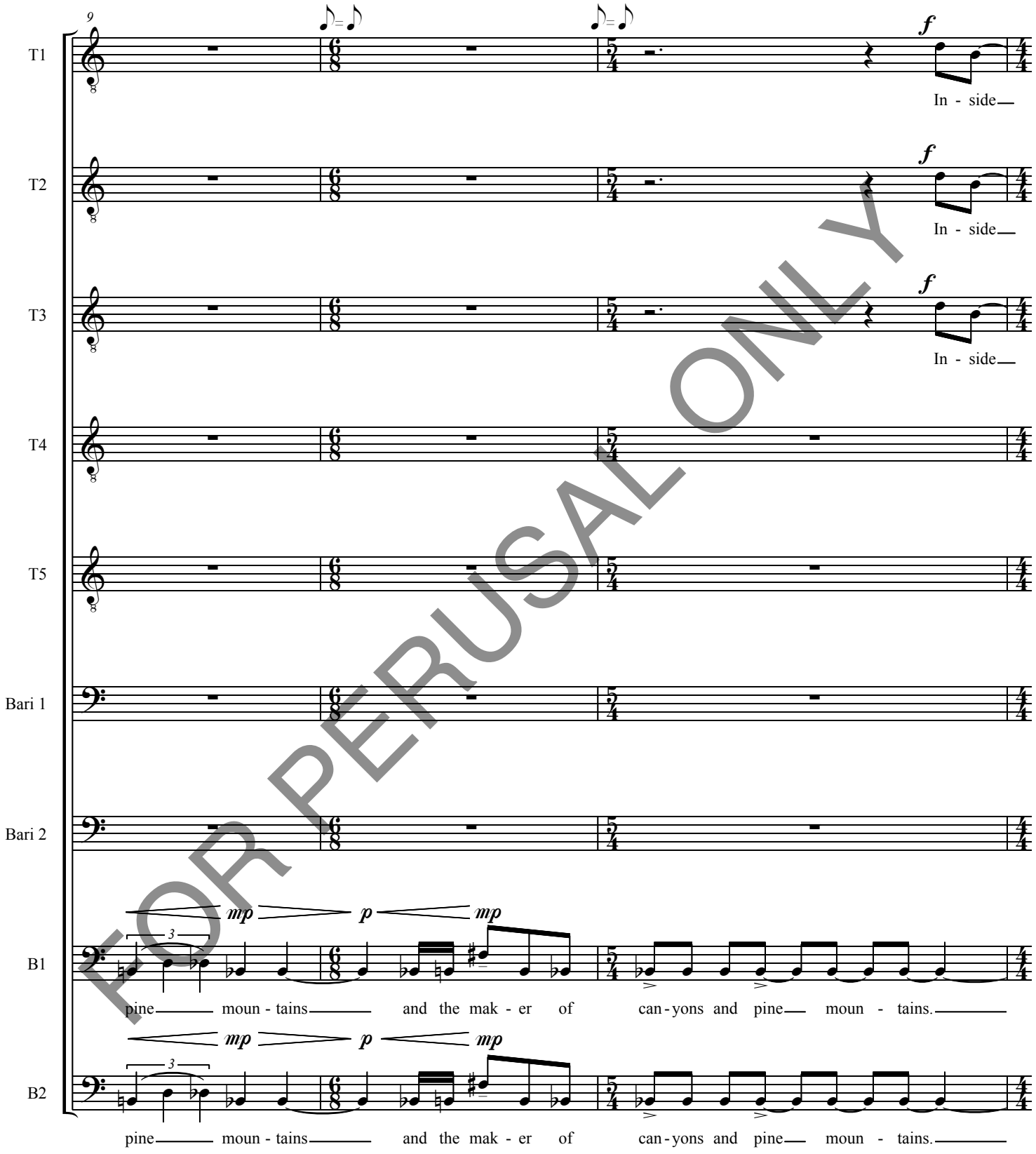

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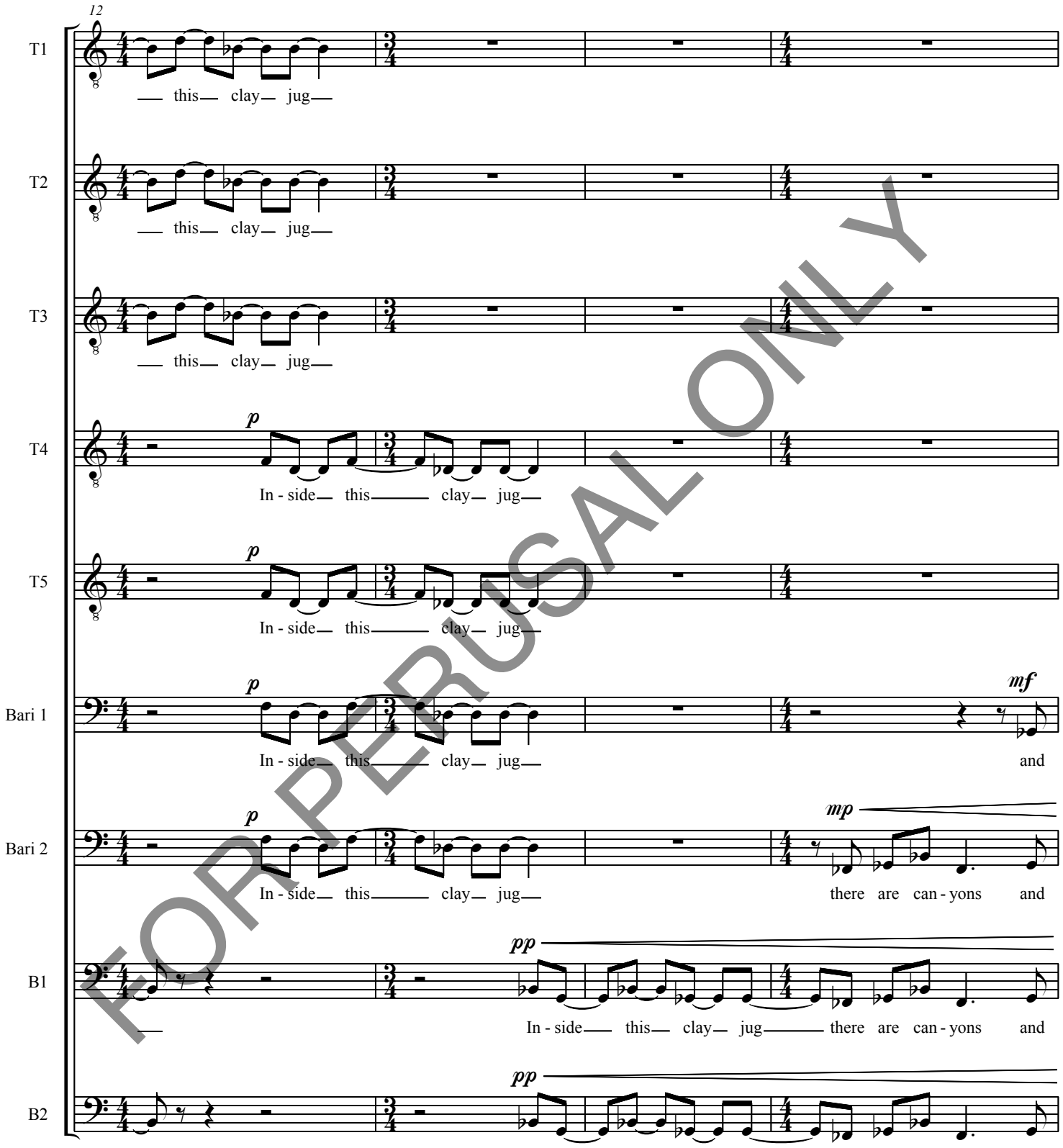

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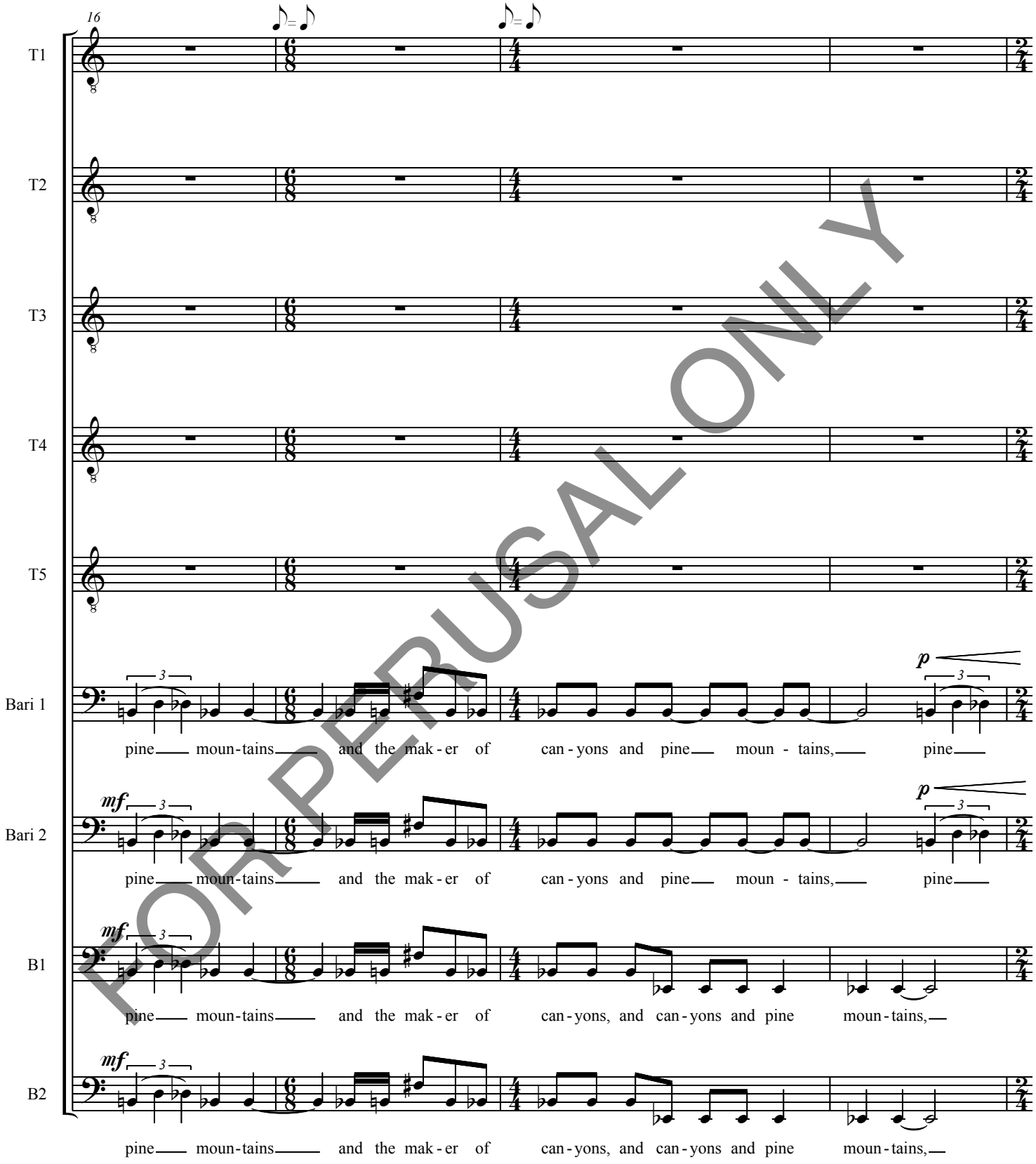

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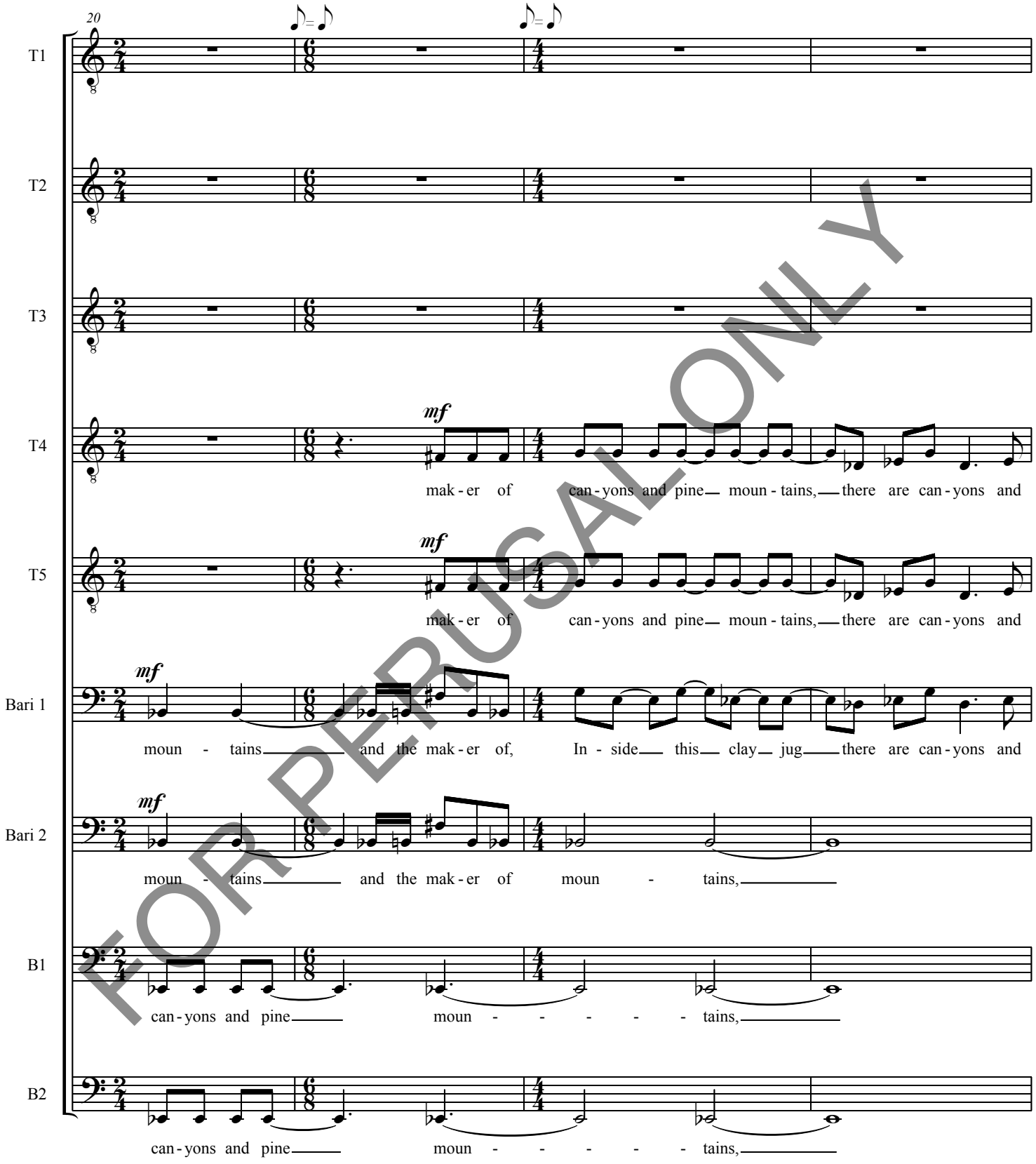

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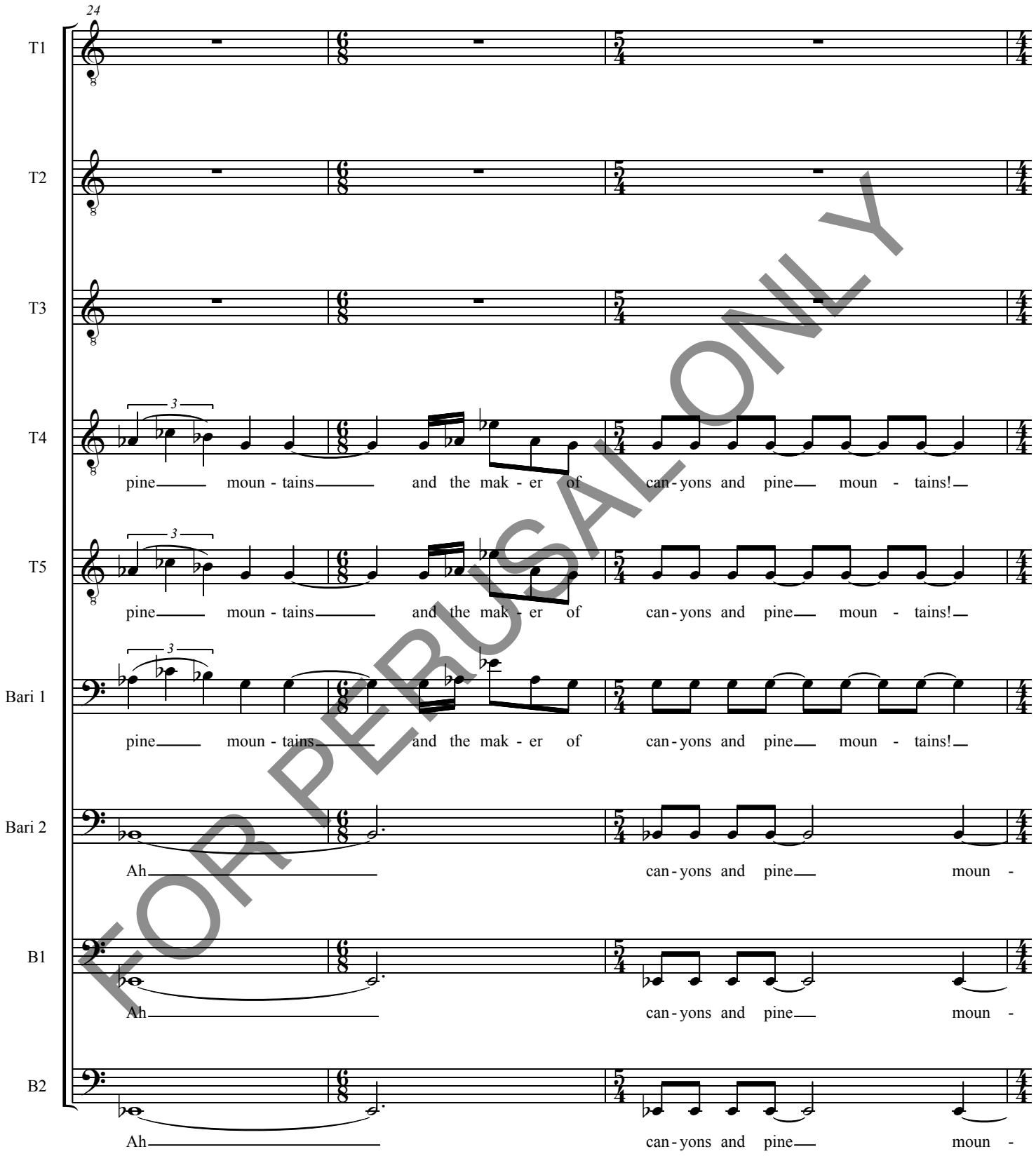

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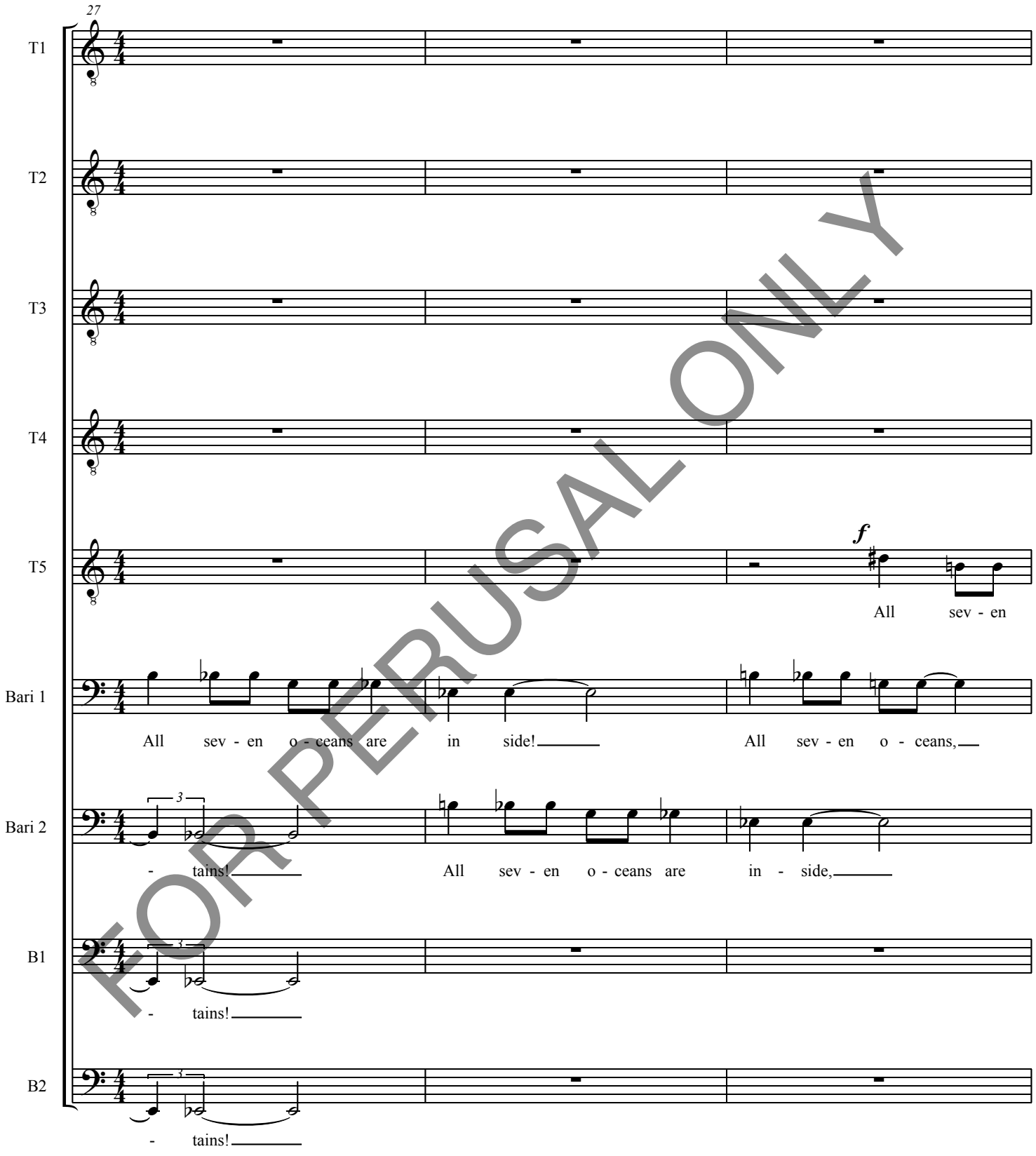

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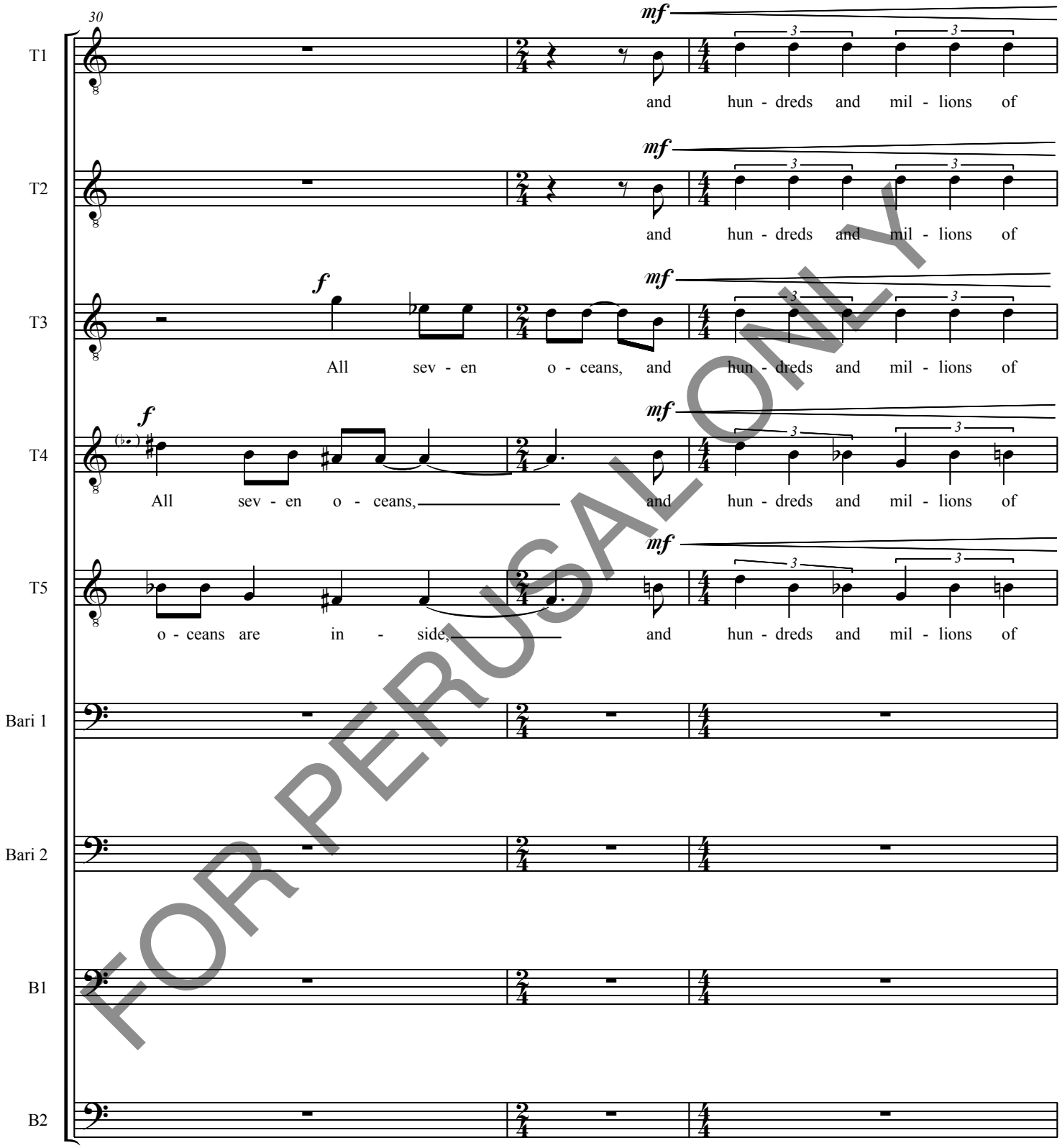

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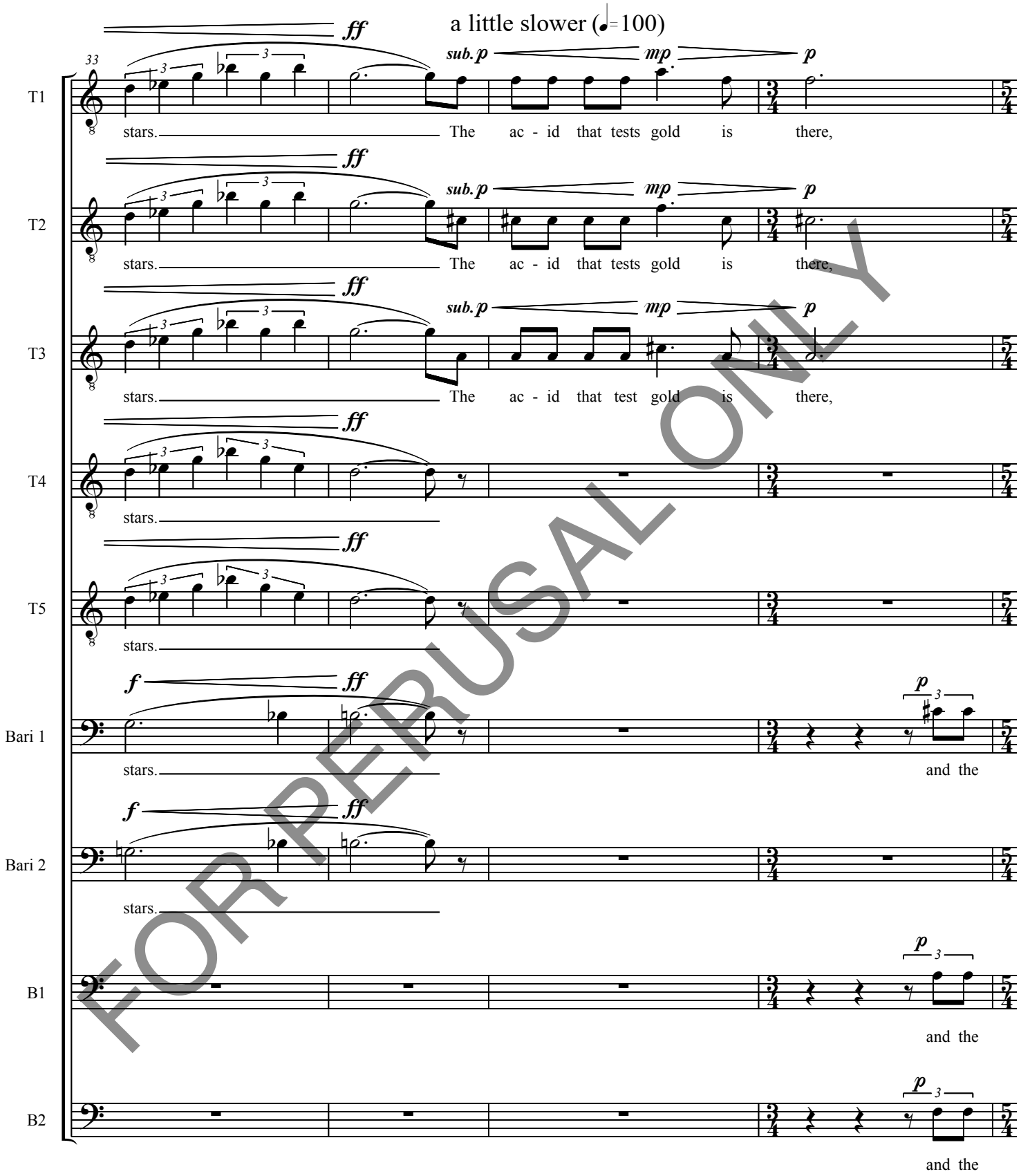

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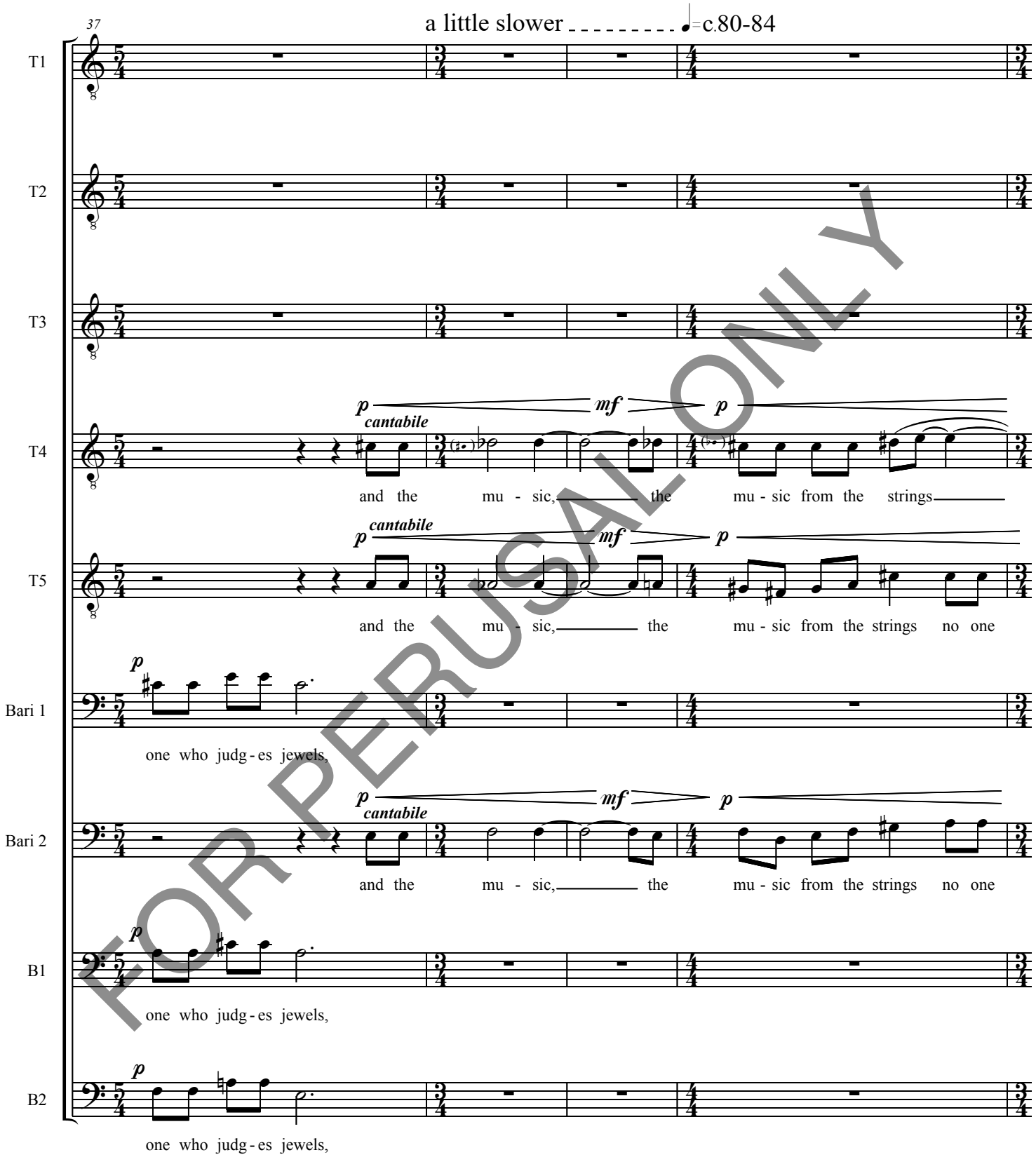

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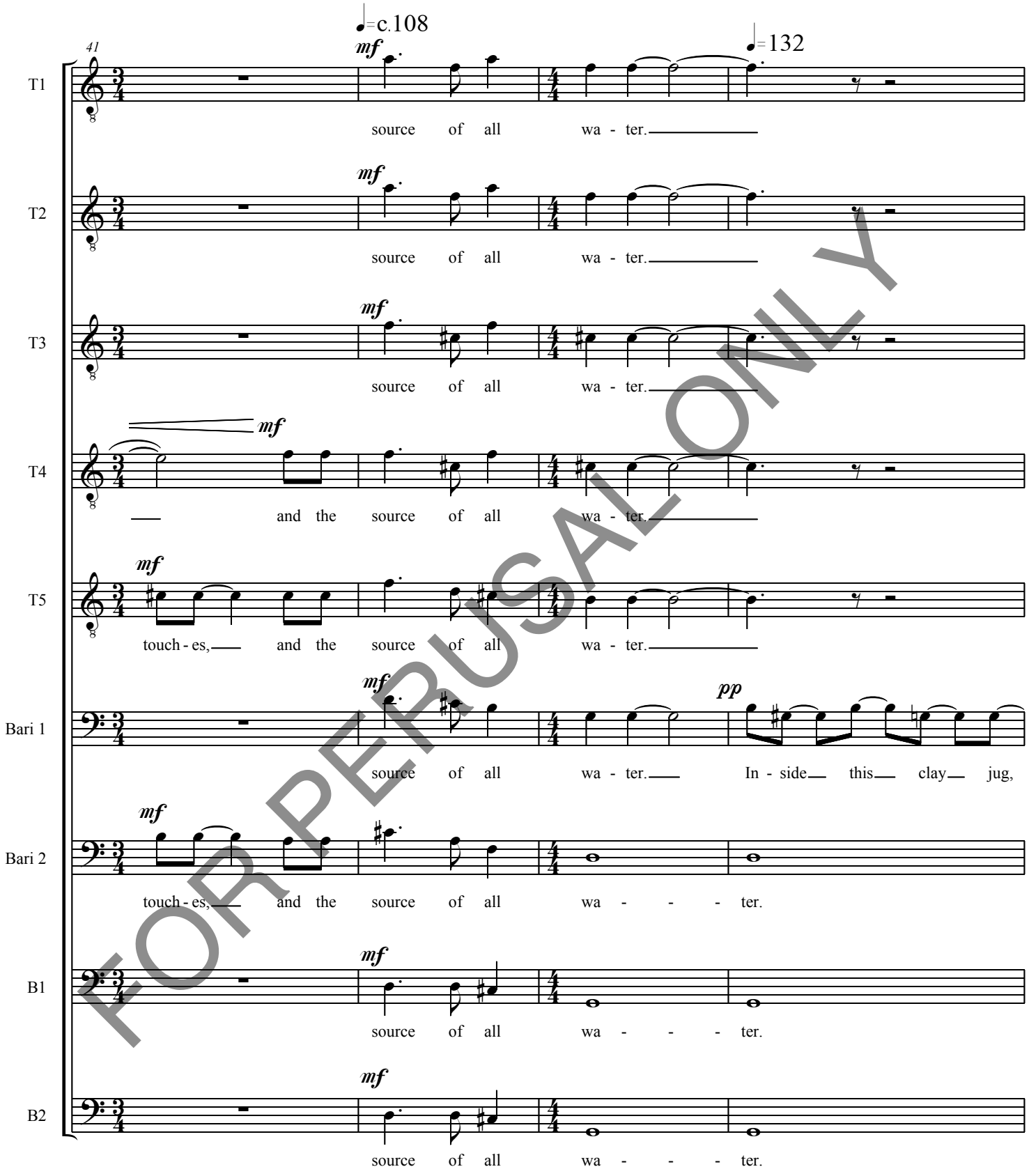

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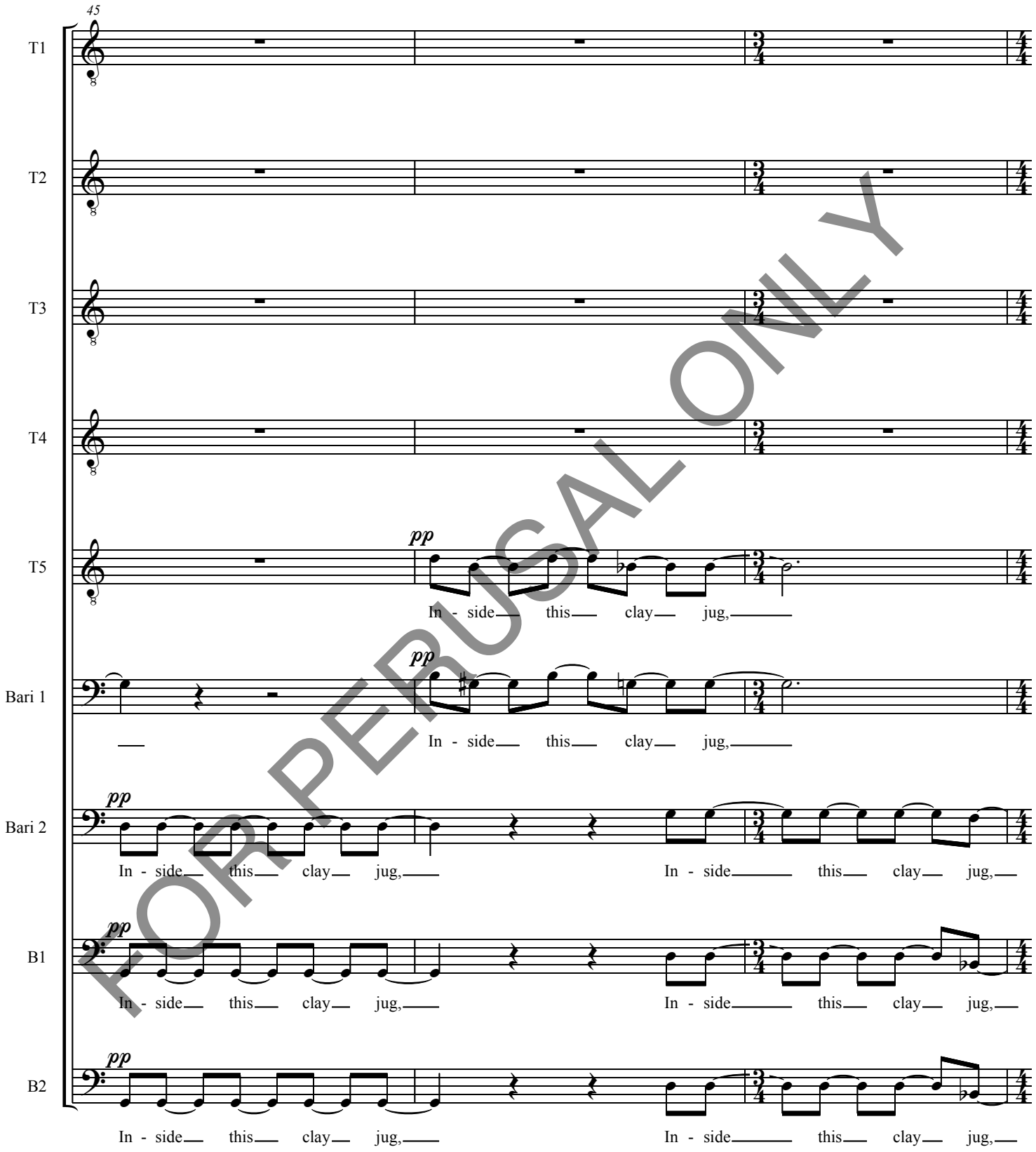

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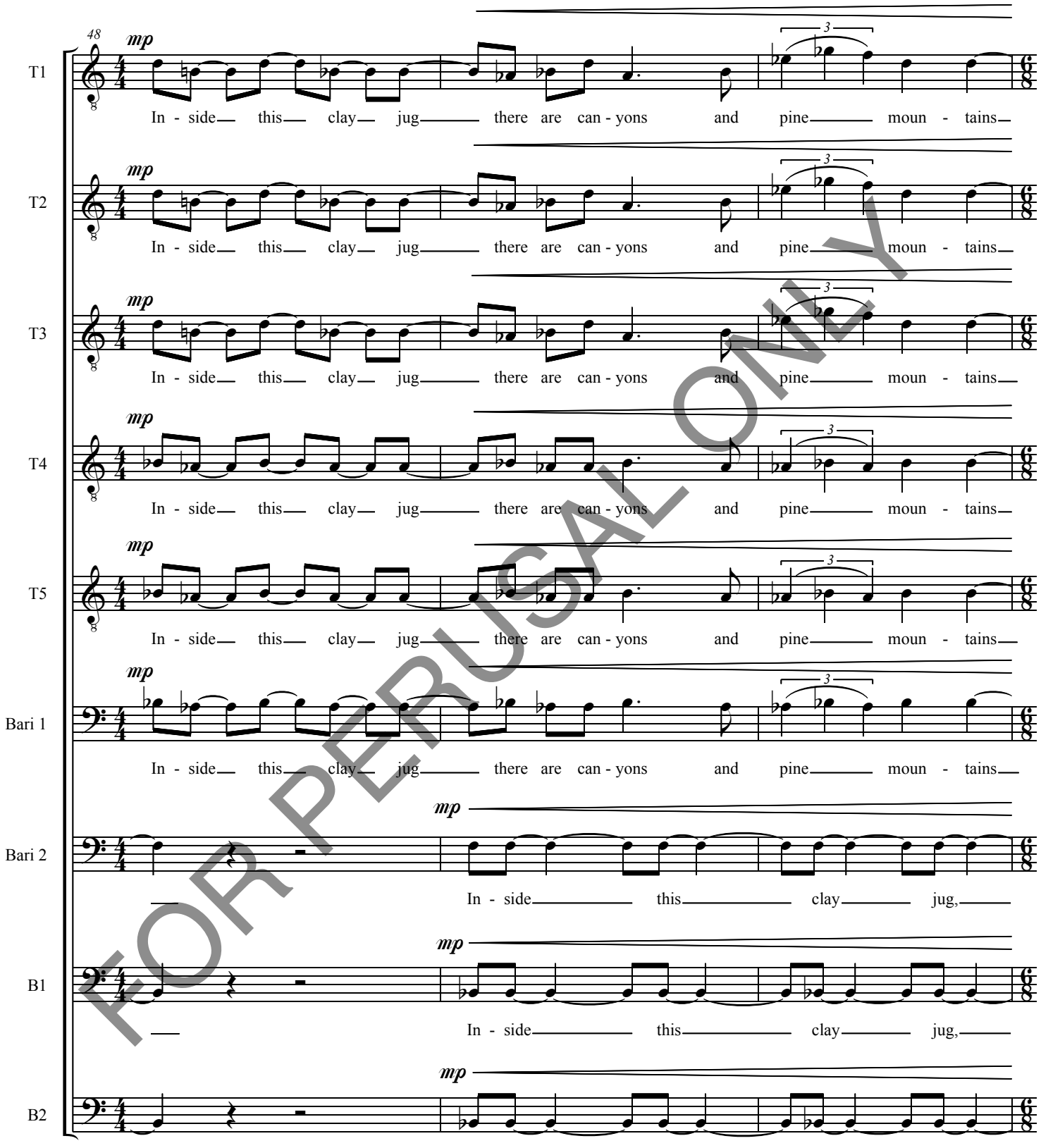

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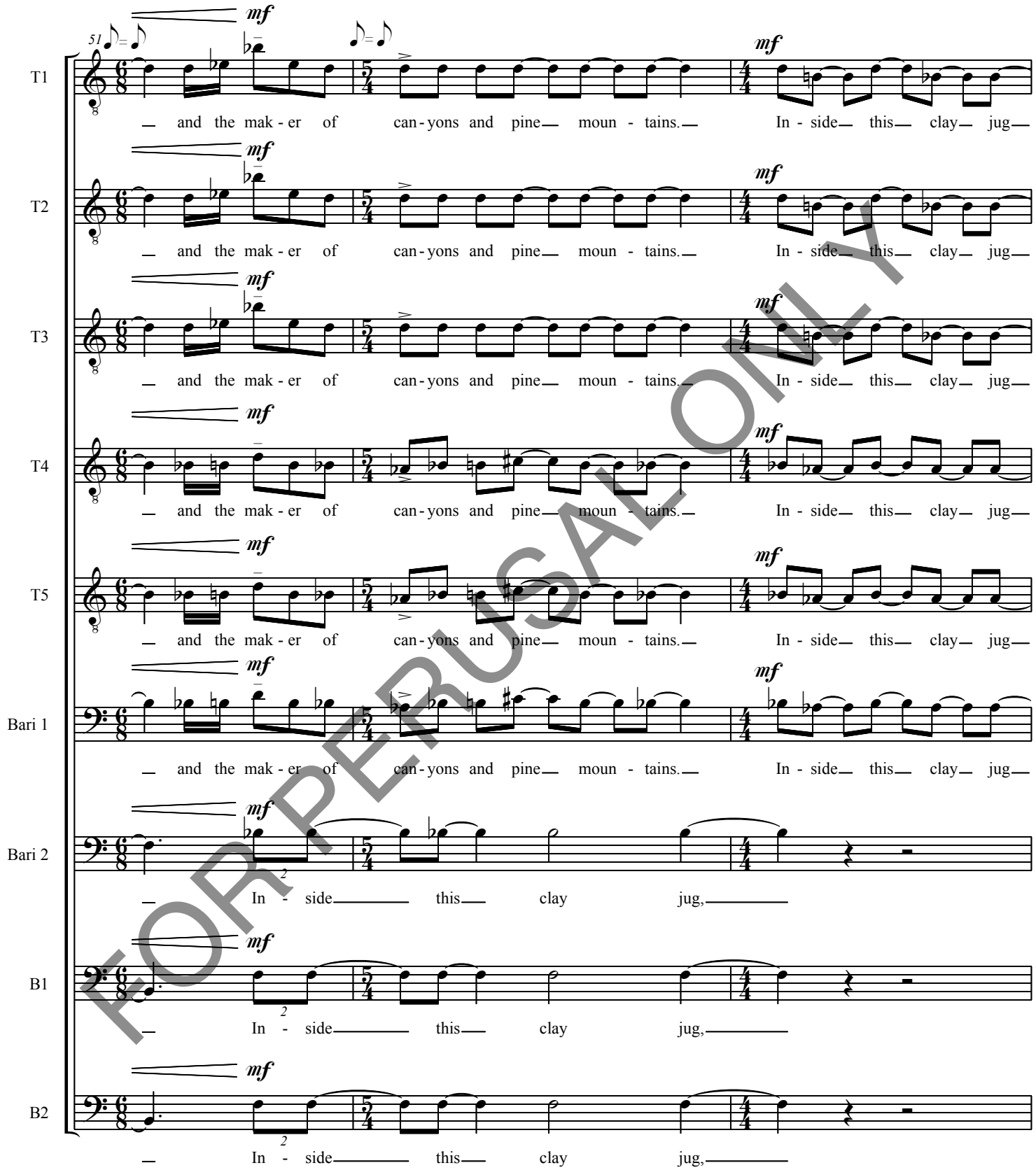

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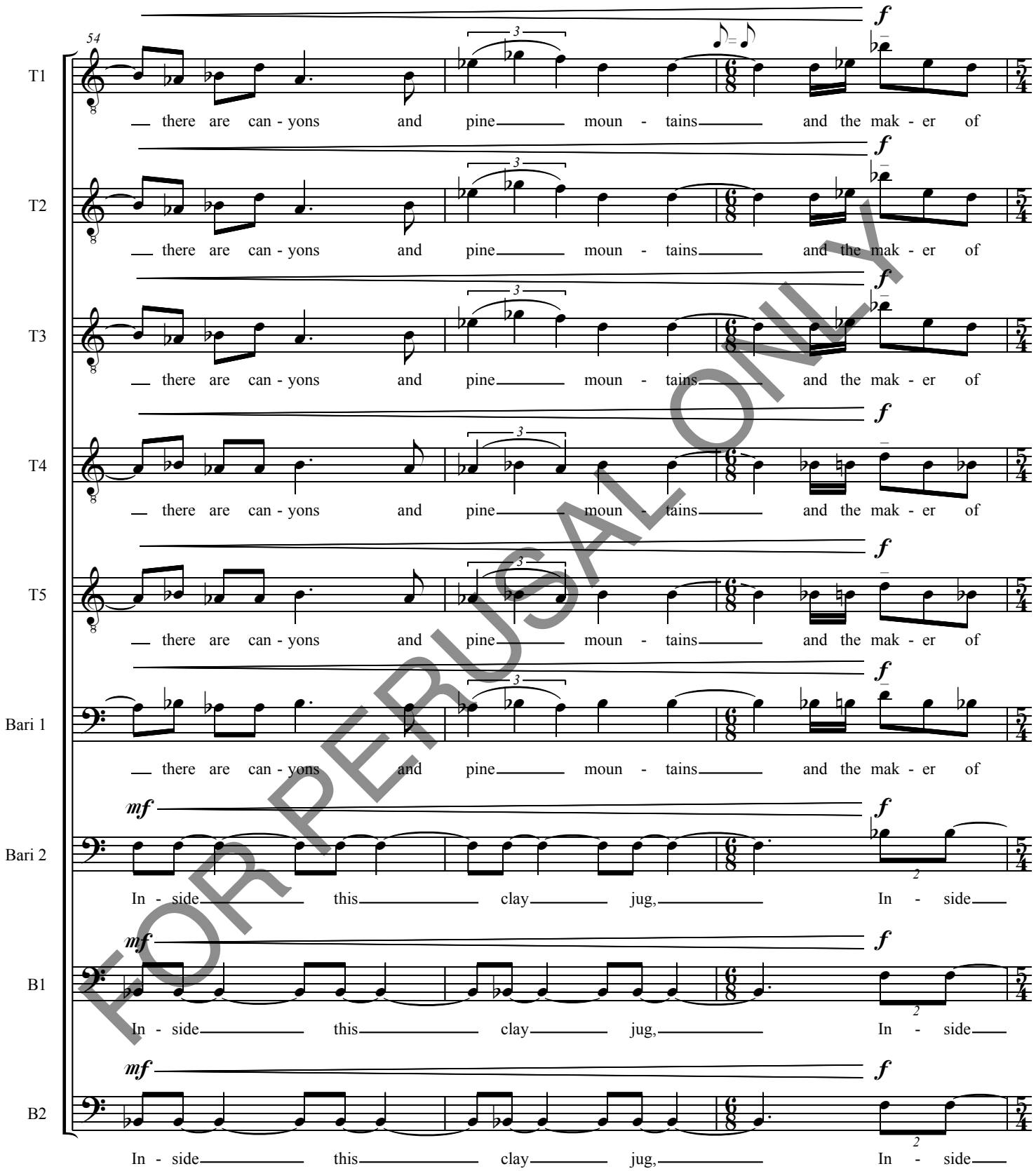

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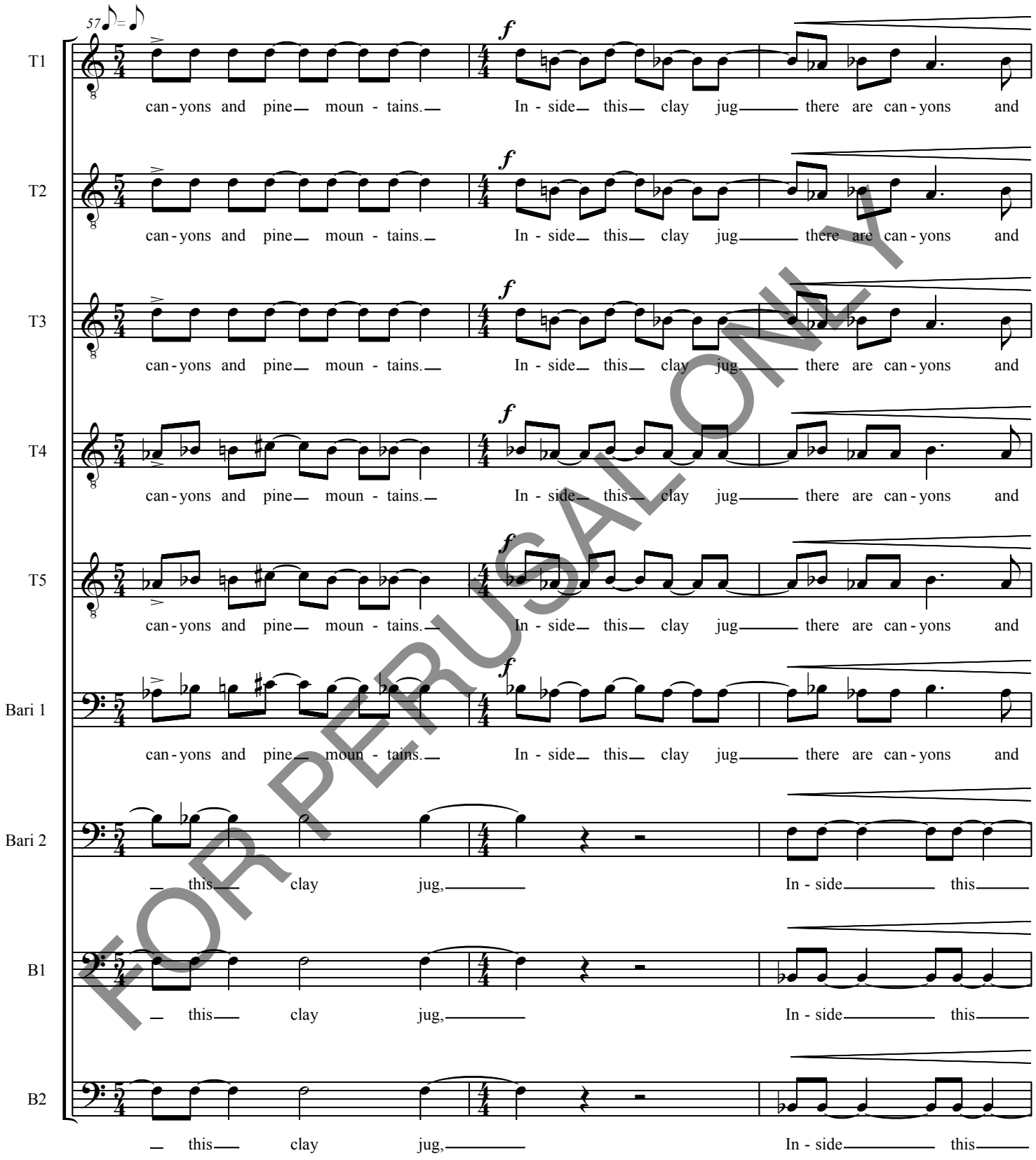

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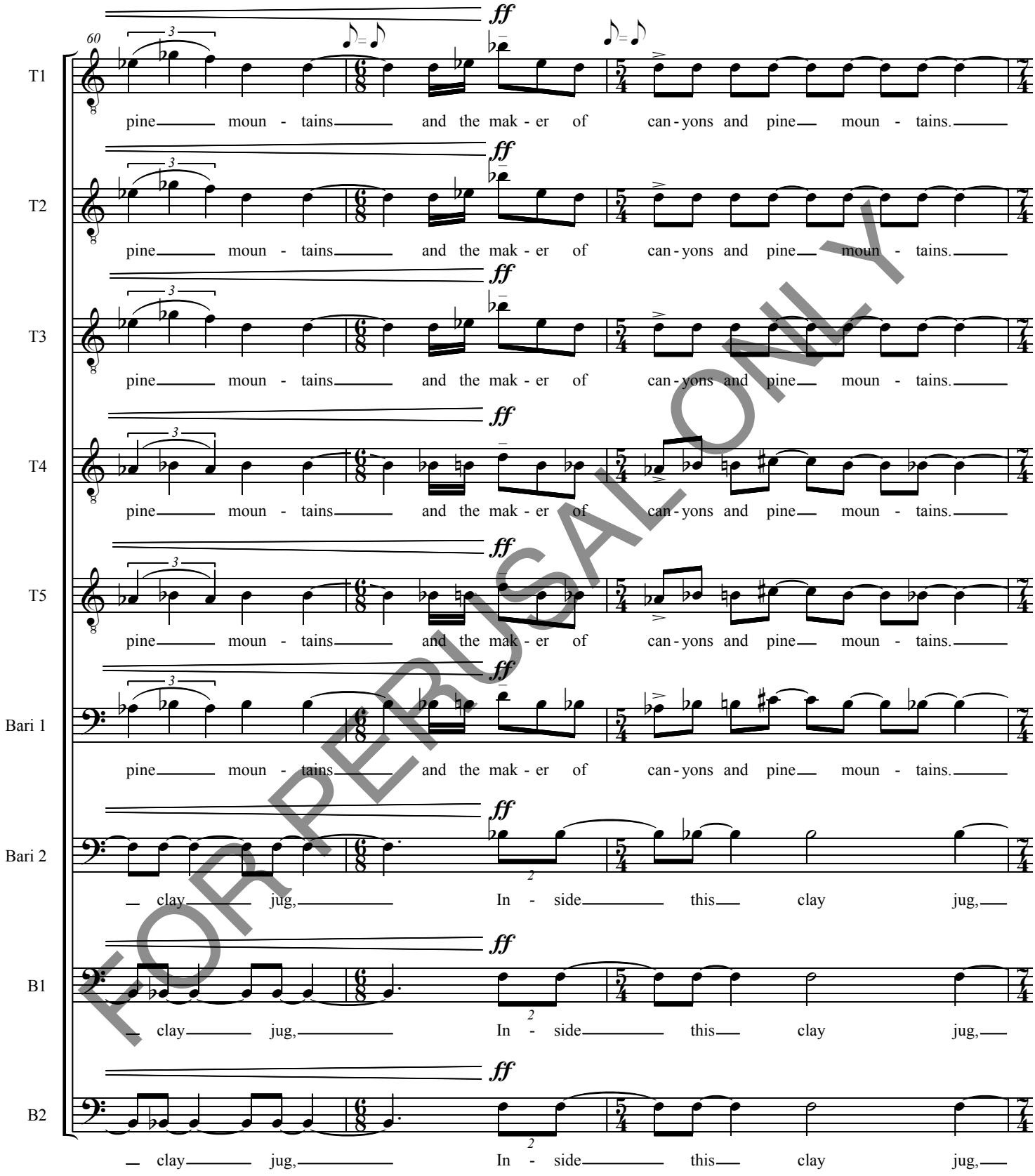

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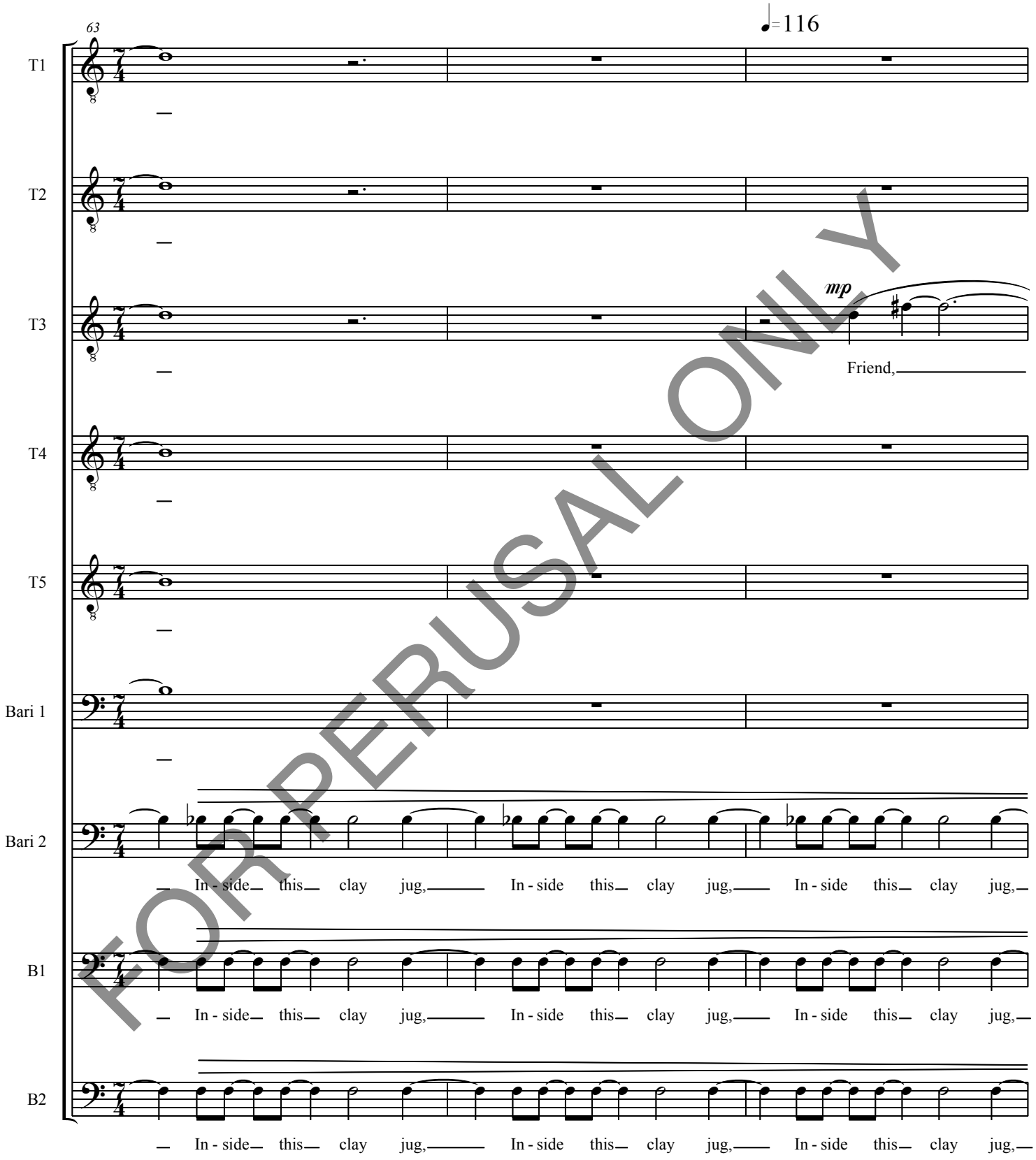

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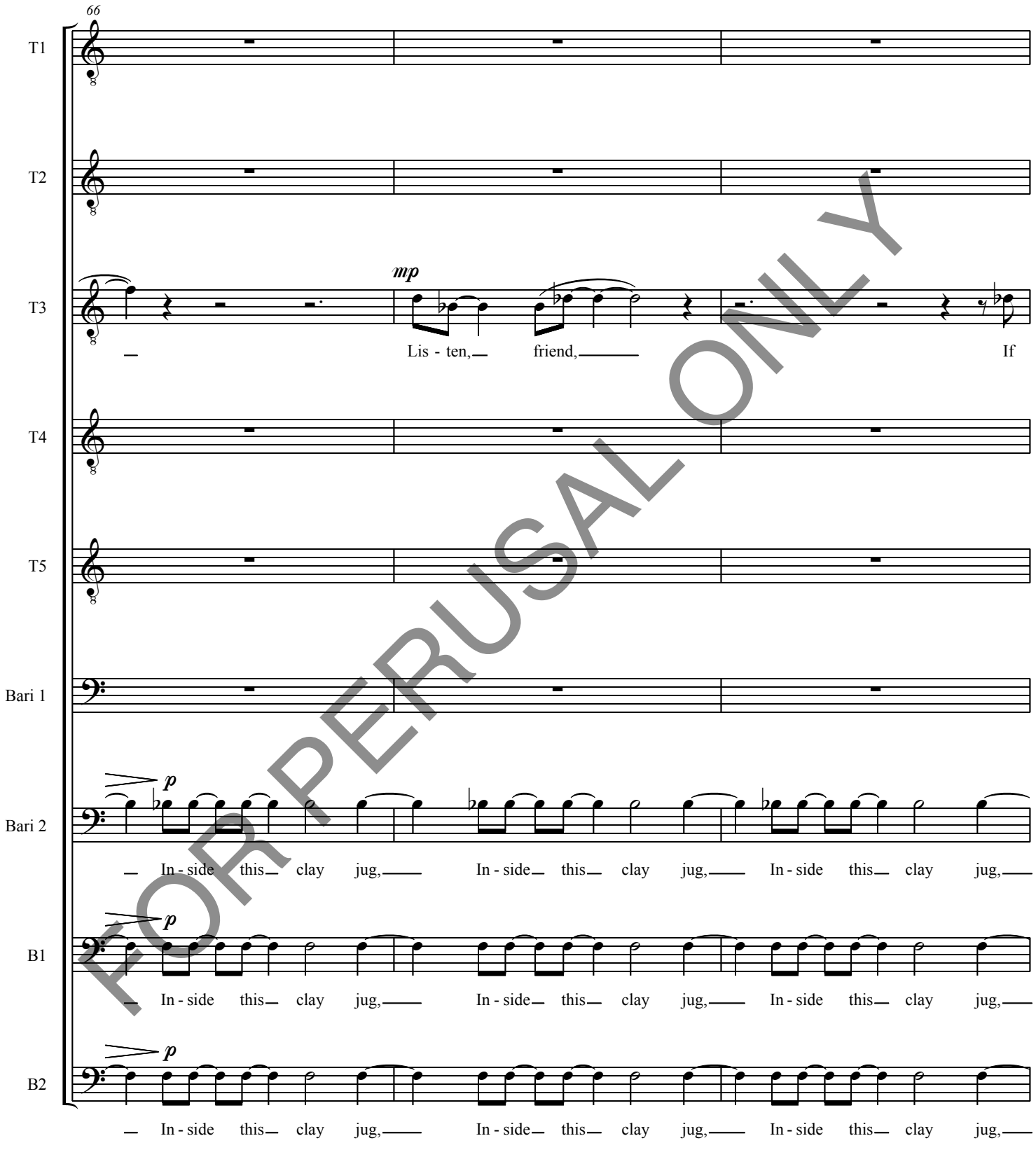

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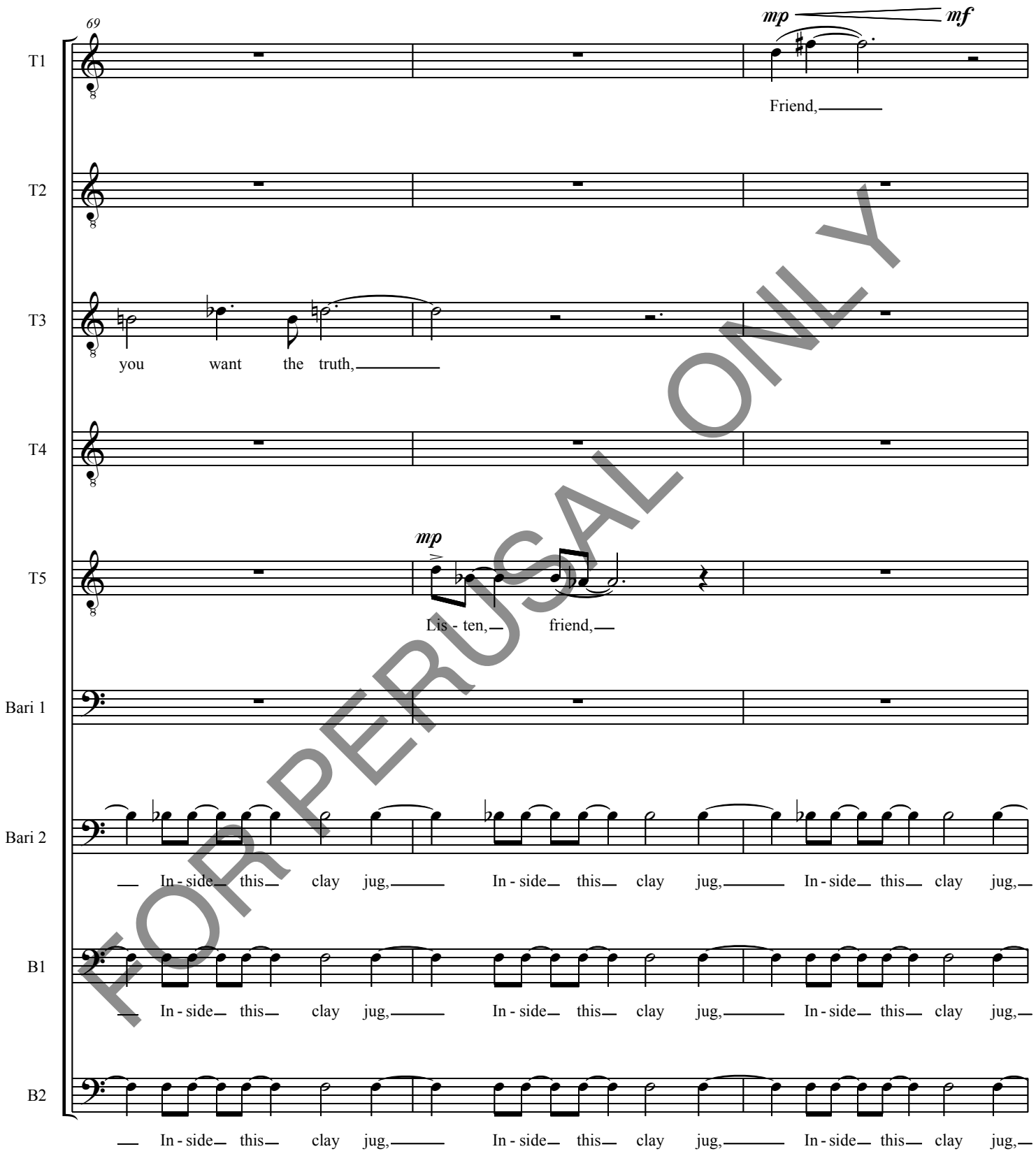

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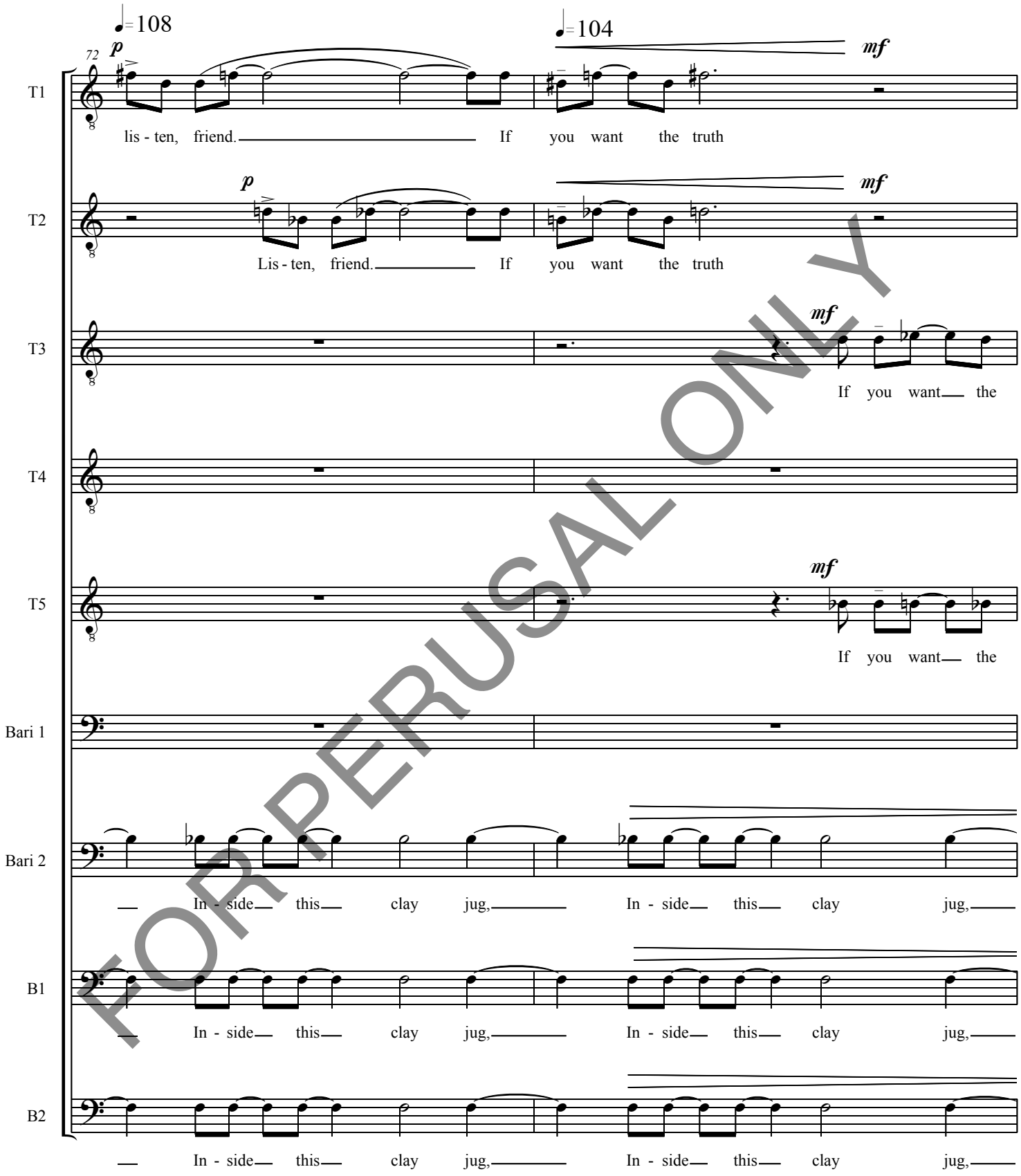

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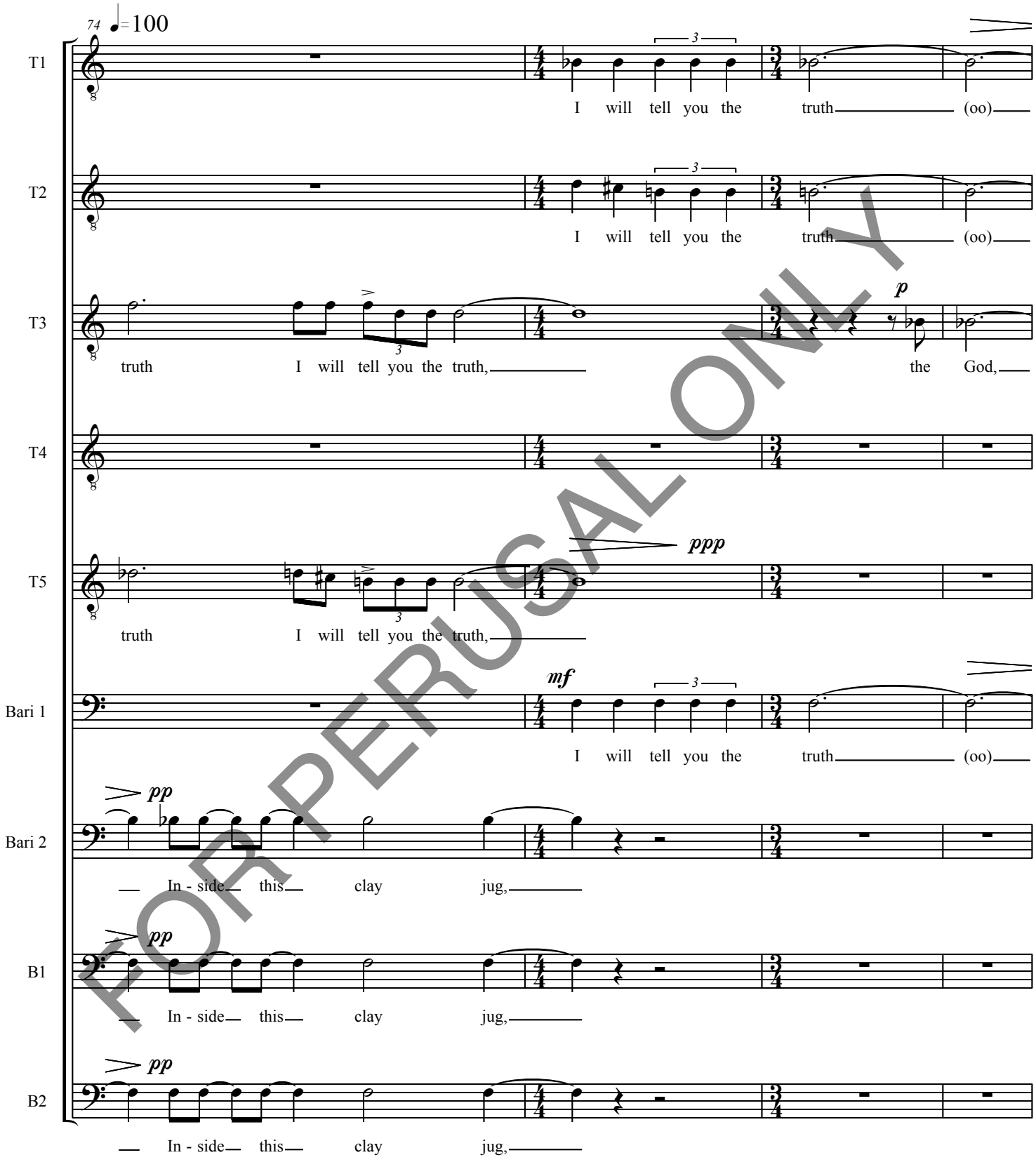

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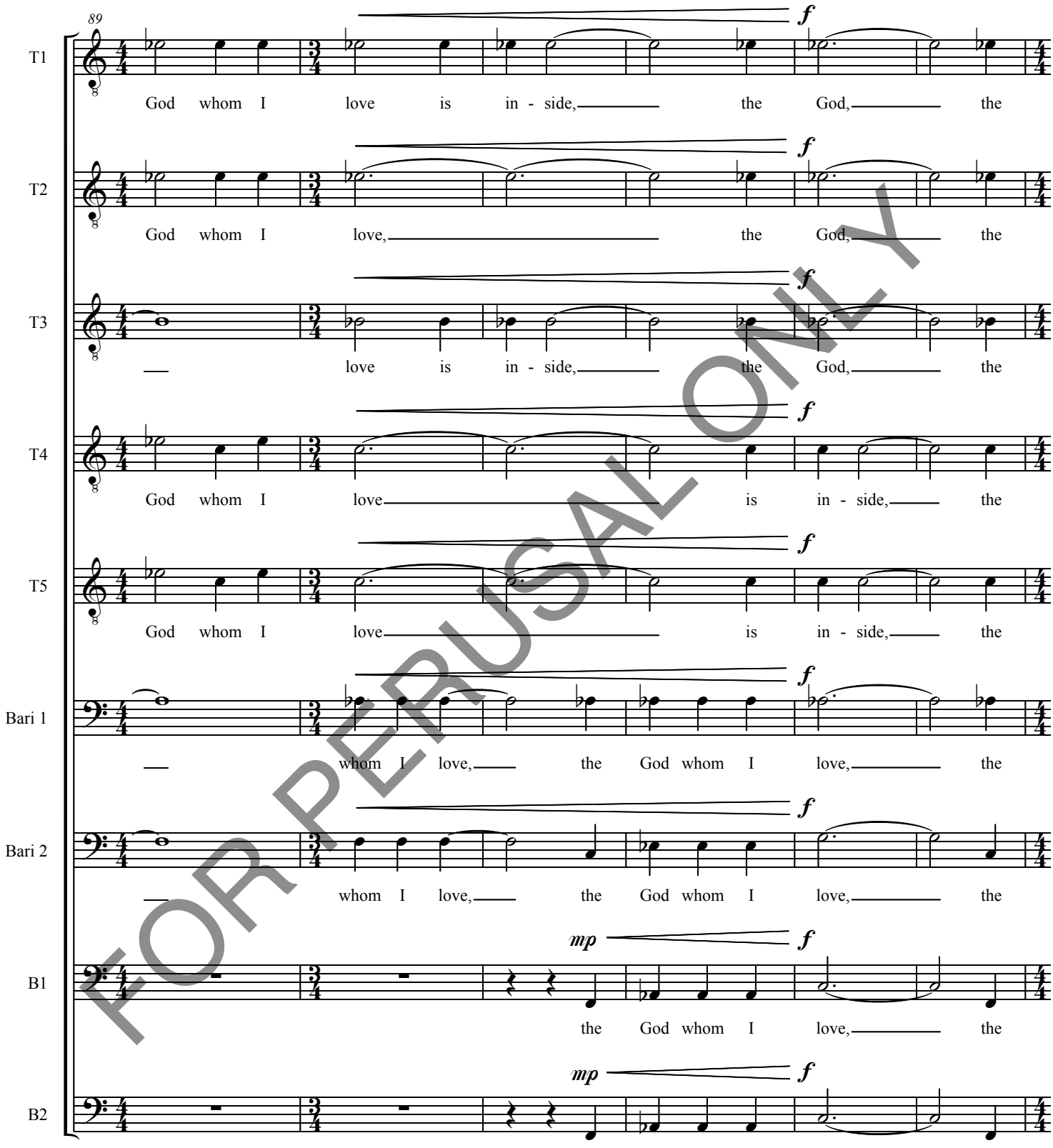

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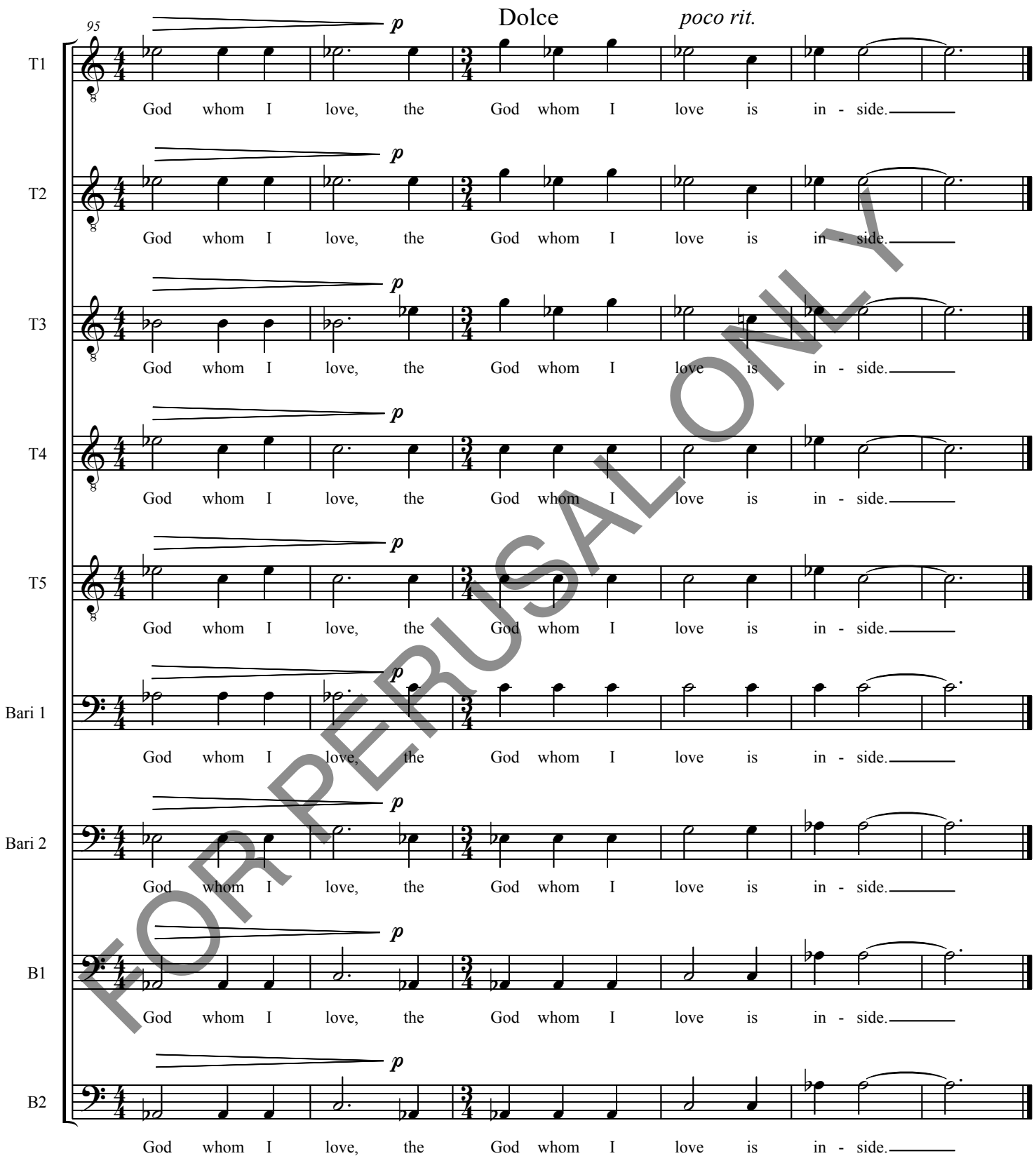

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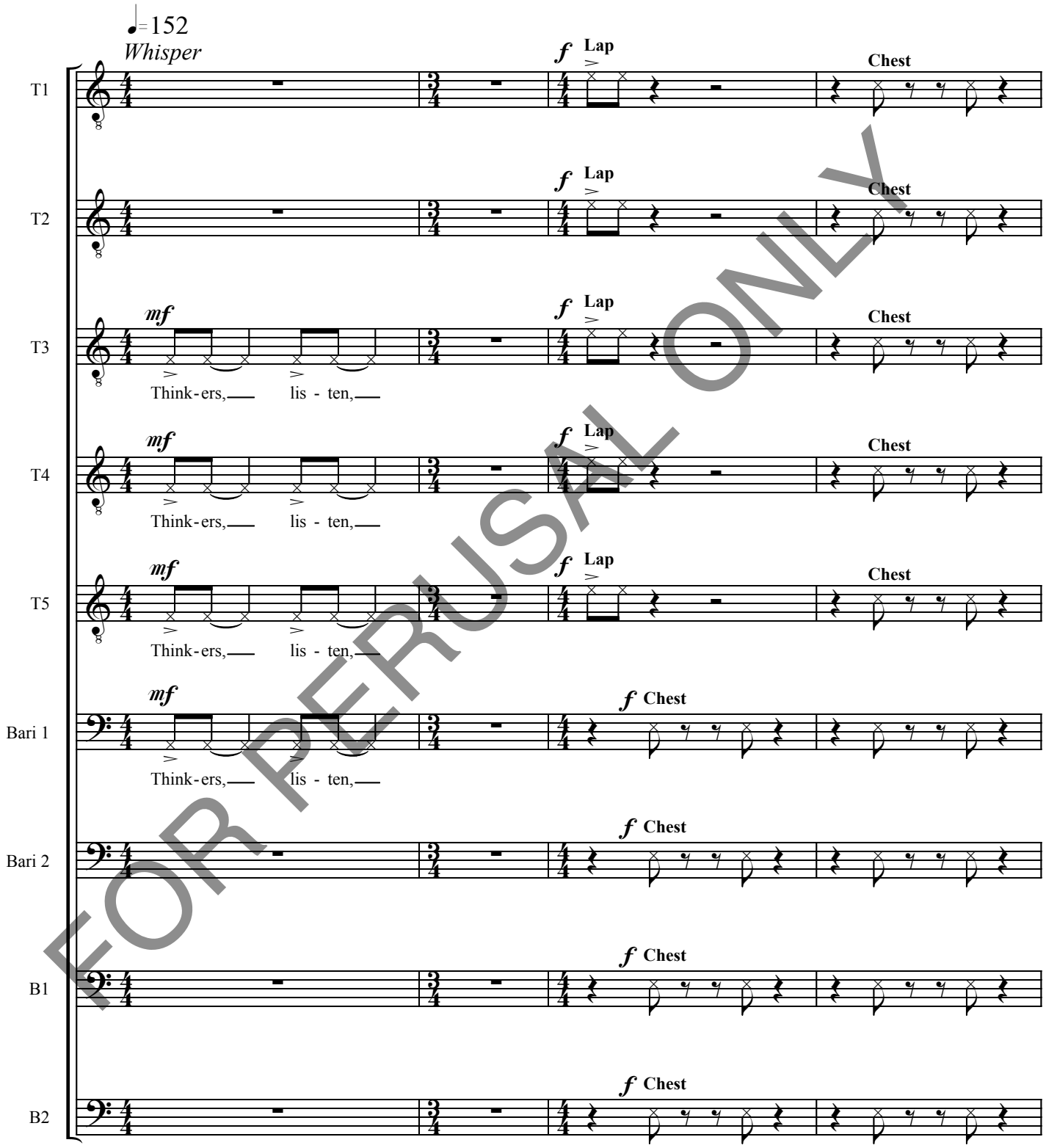
IV. Interlude: Thinkers, Listen!



* Interlude should be performed while sitting - can be done in chairs or on risers, provided there is a place for the foot beats.

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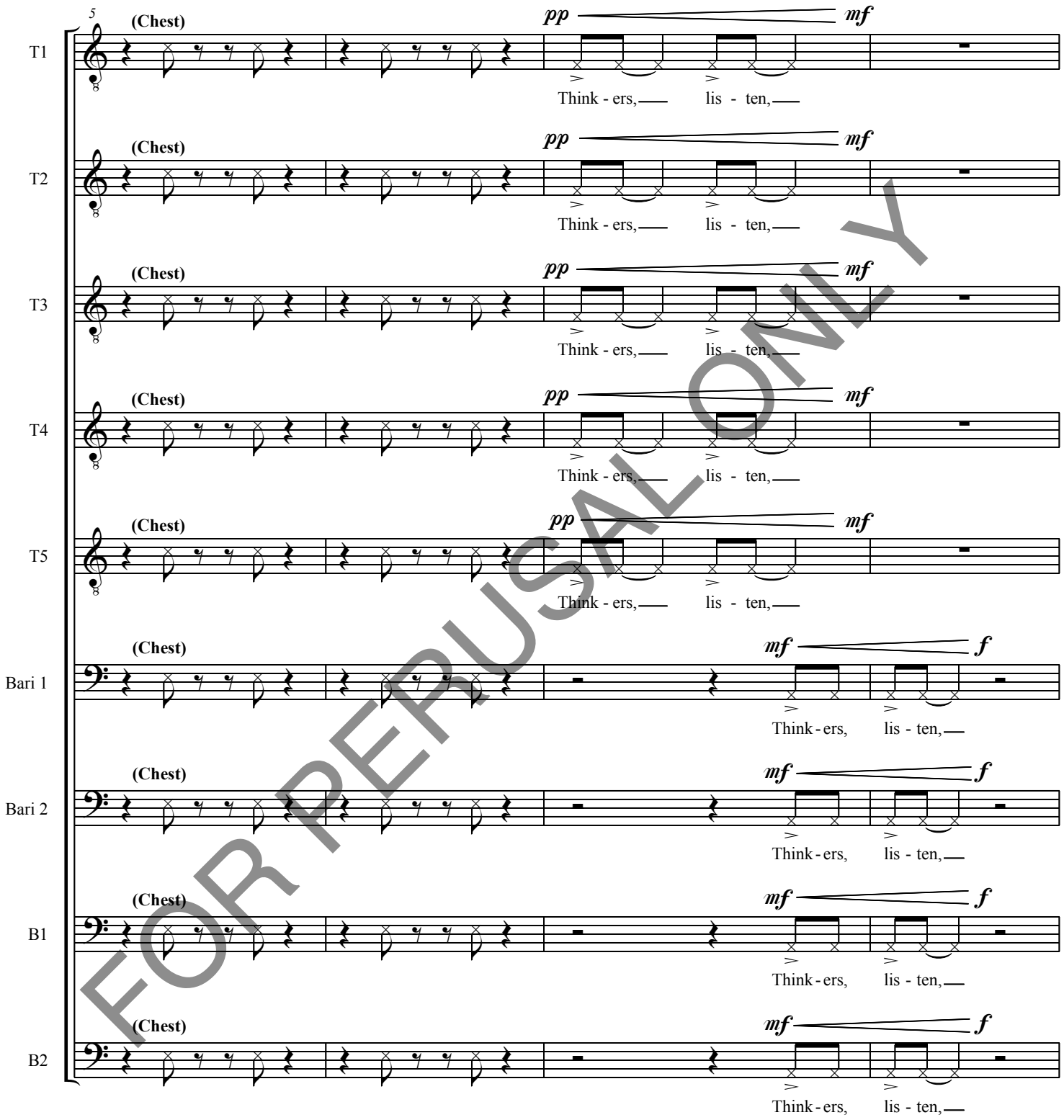

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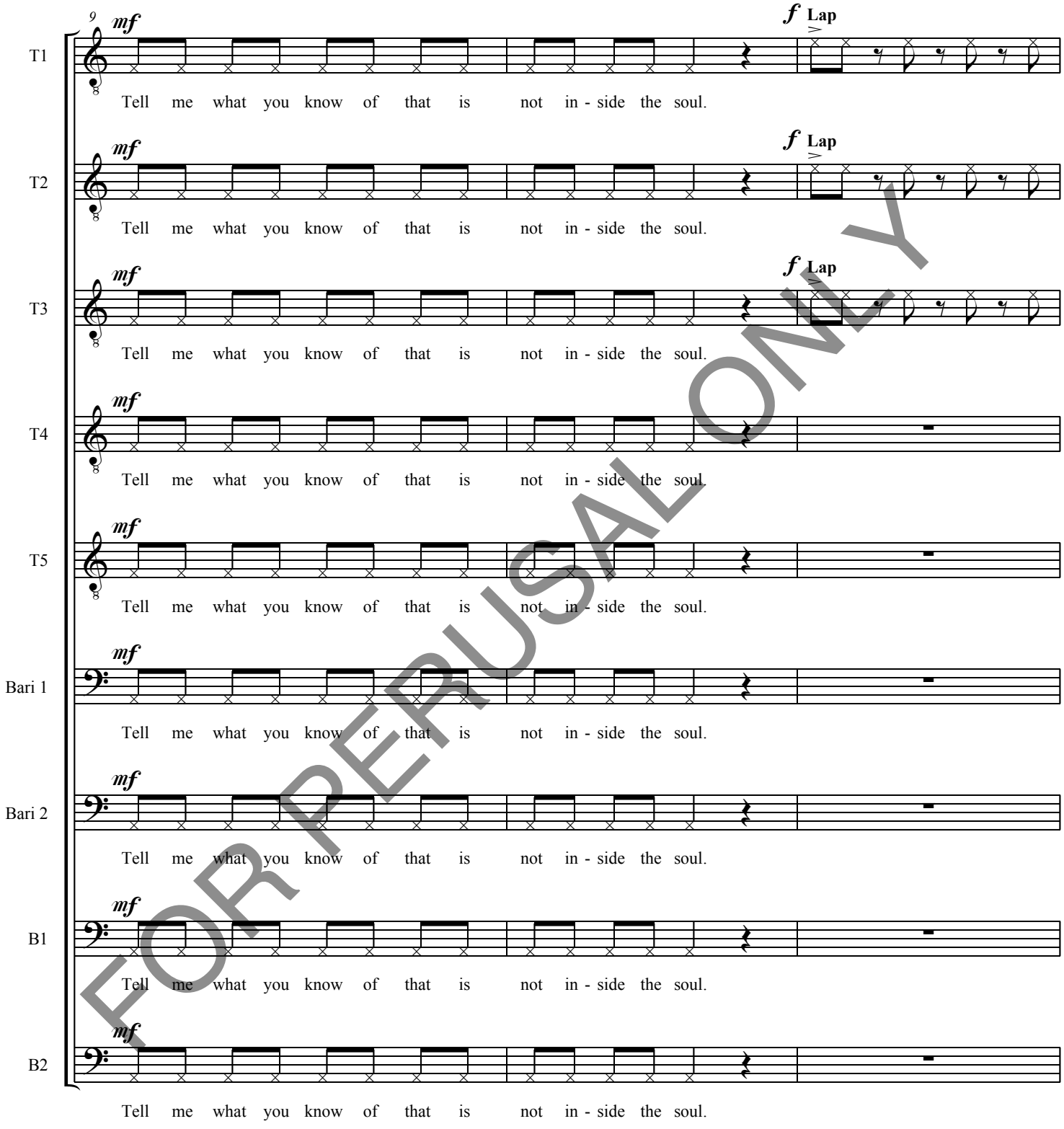

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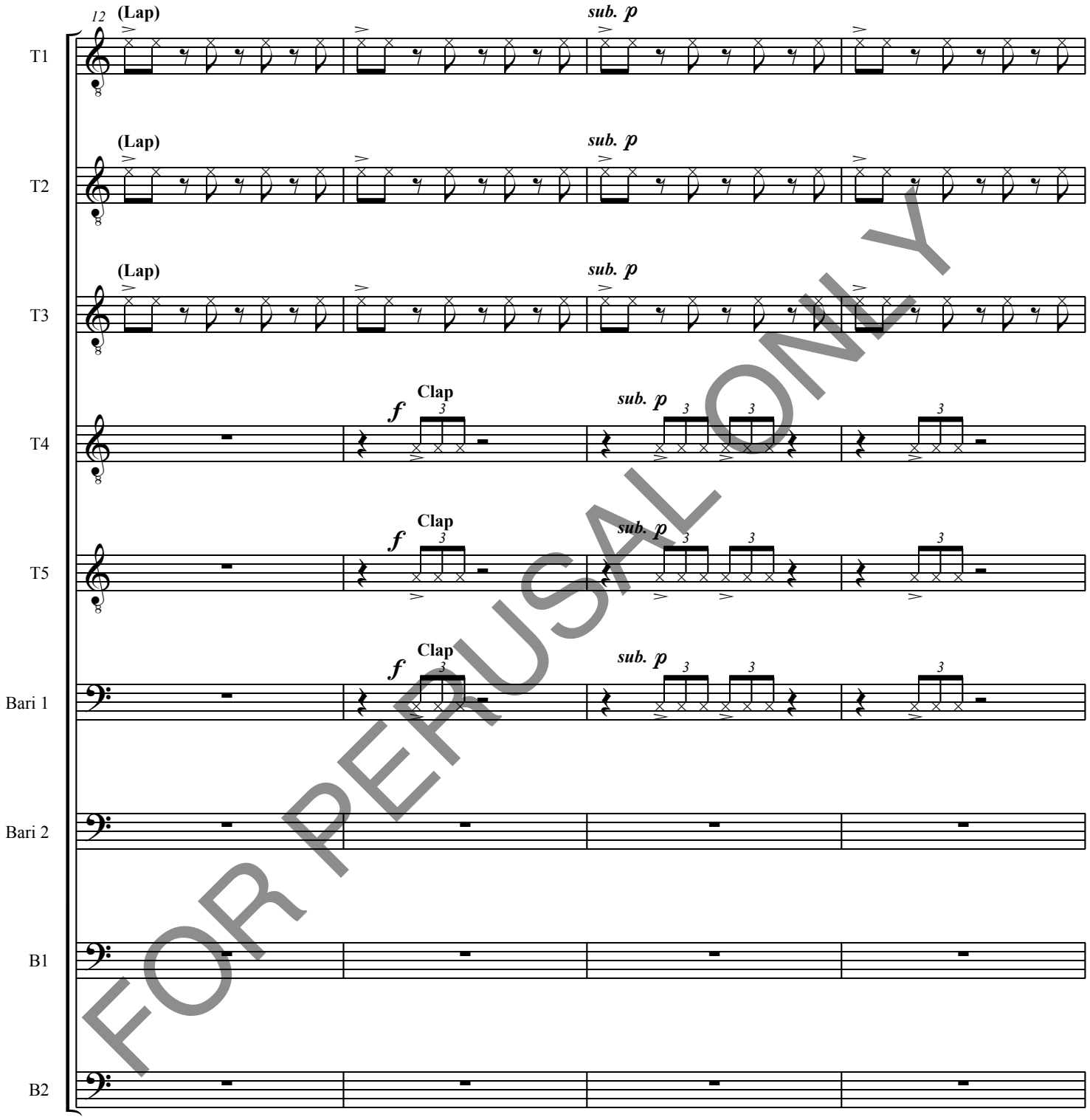

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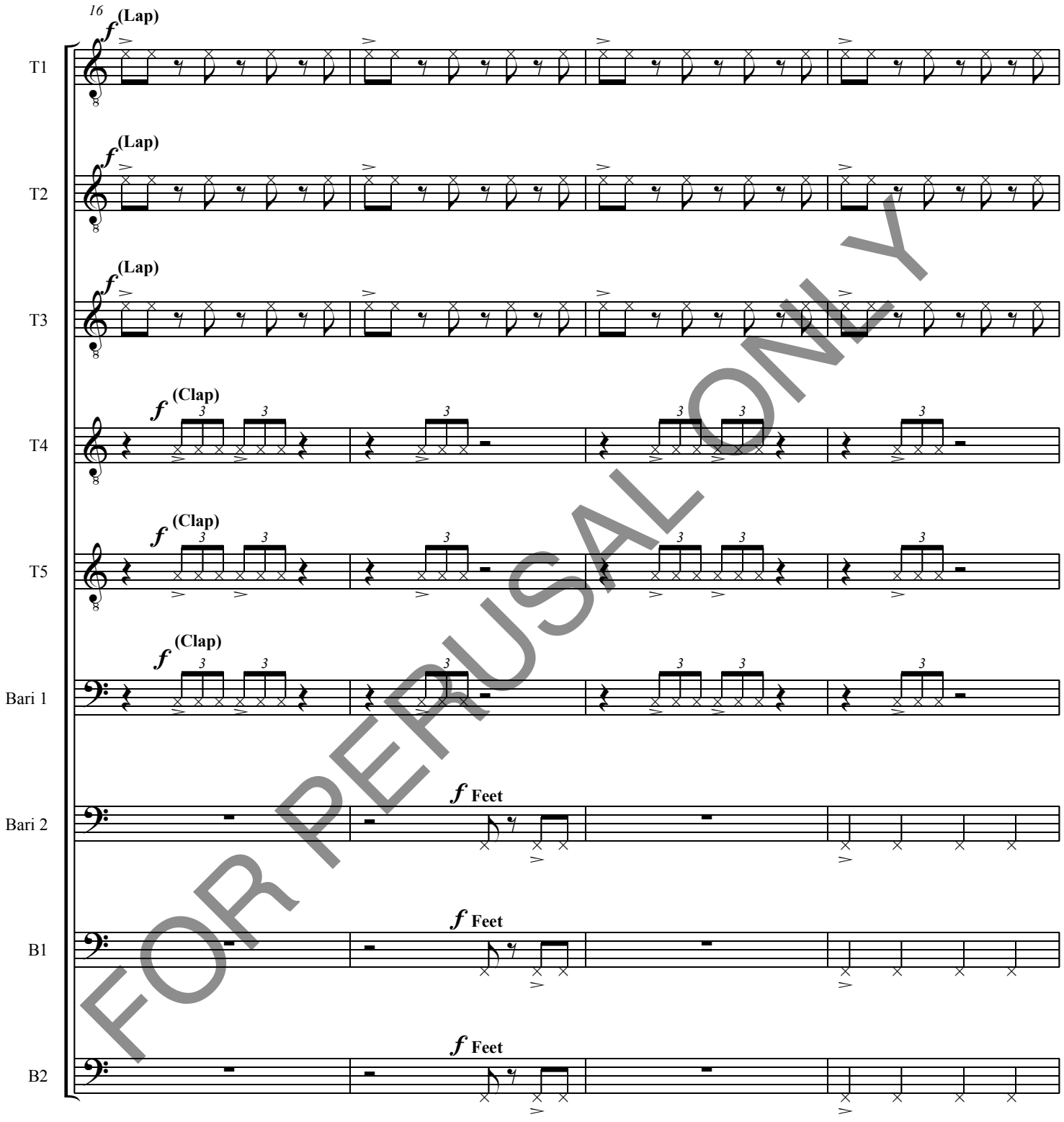

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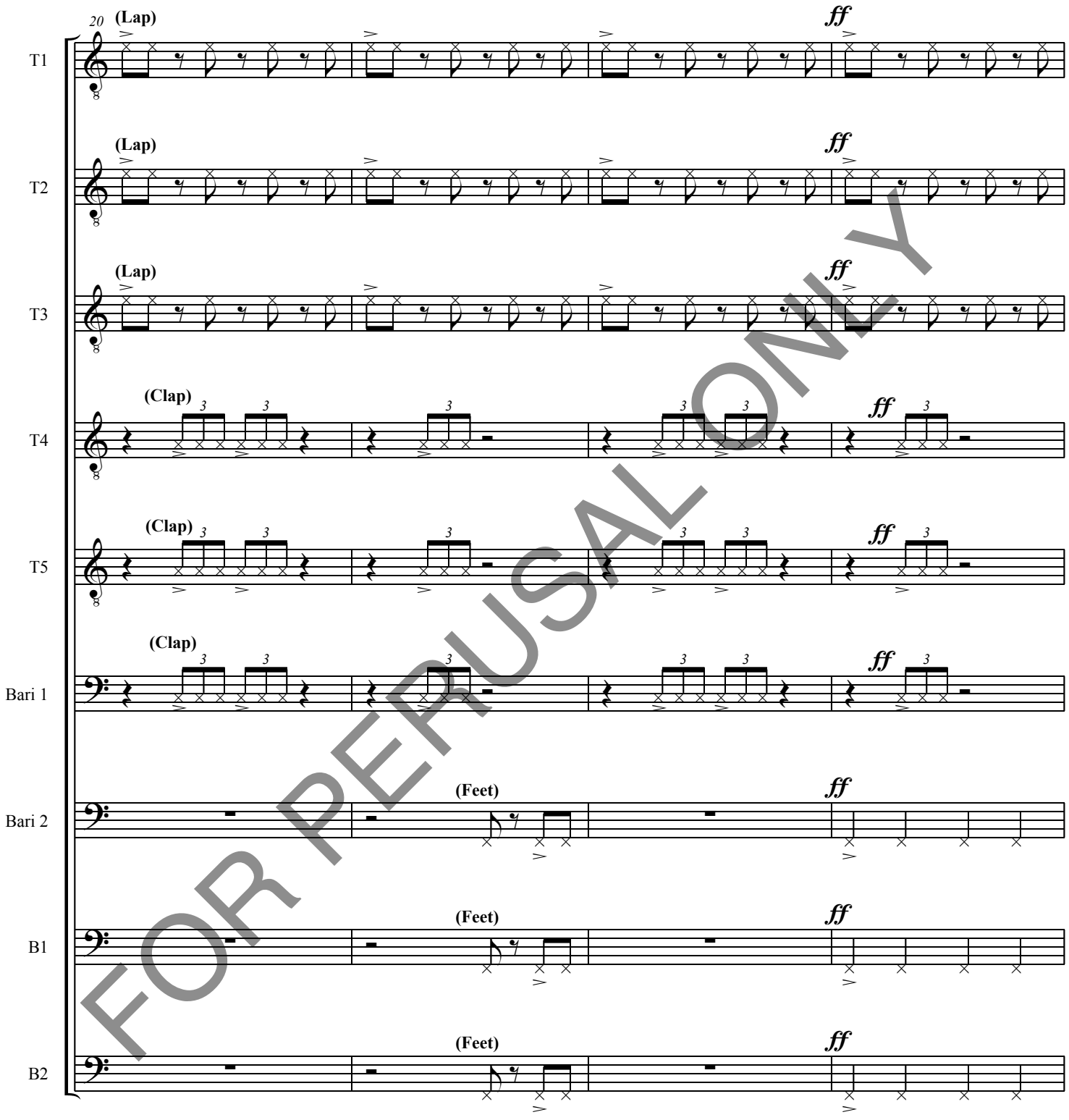
* Can alternate feet or use both, whatever is more comfortable.



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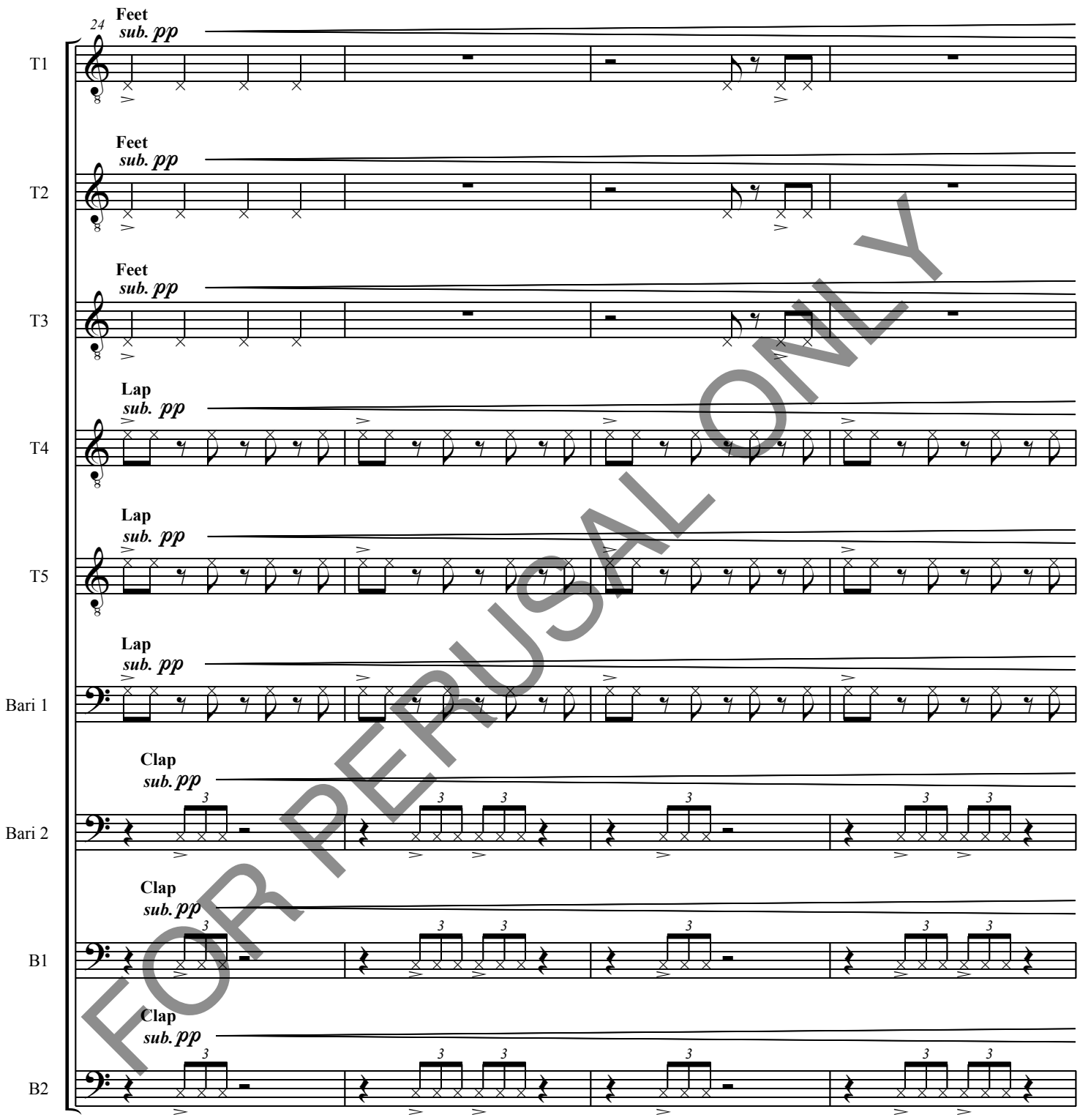

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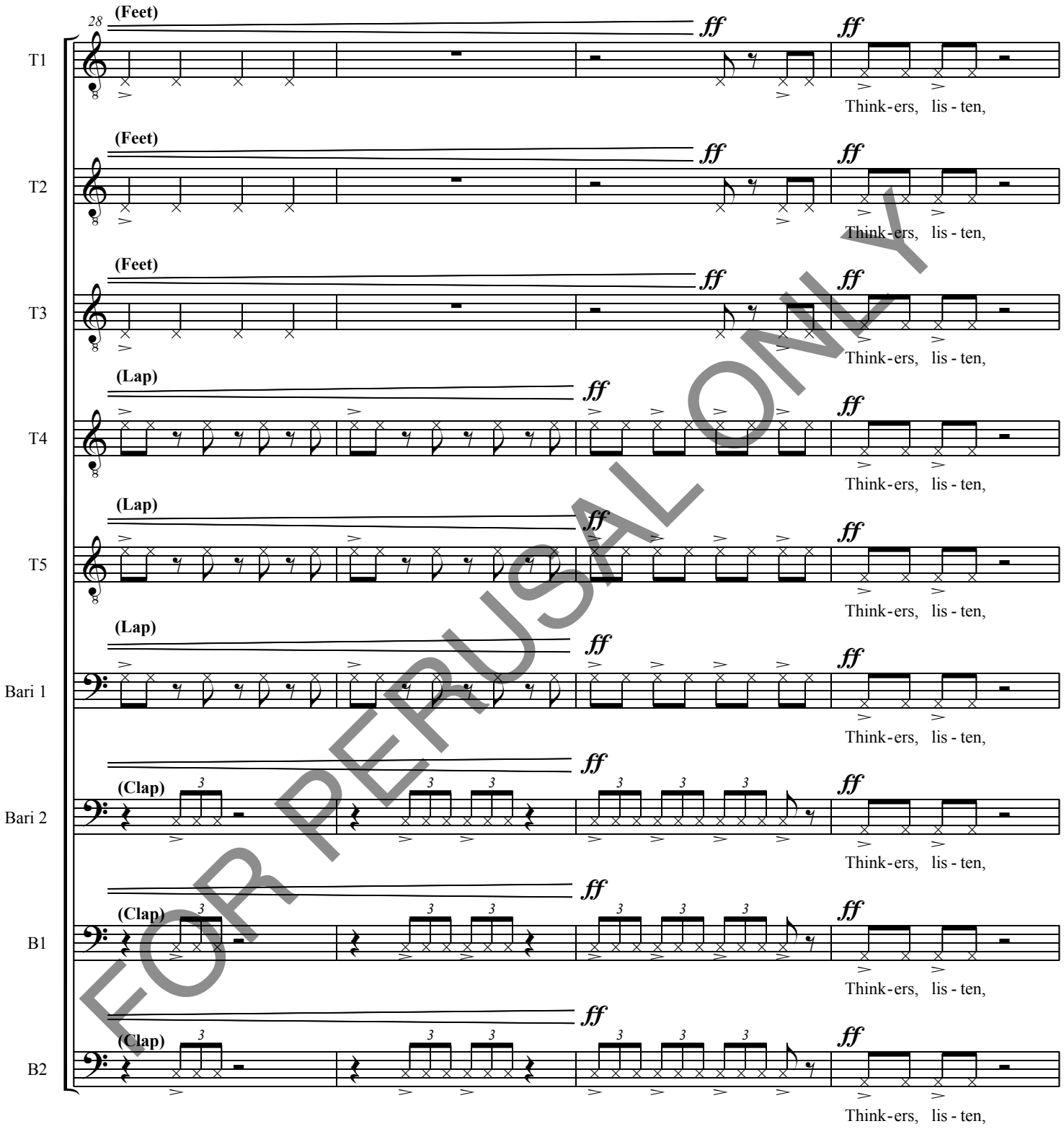

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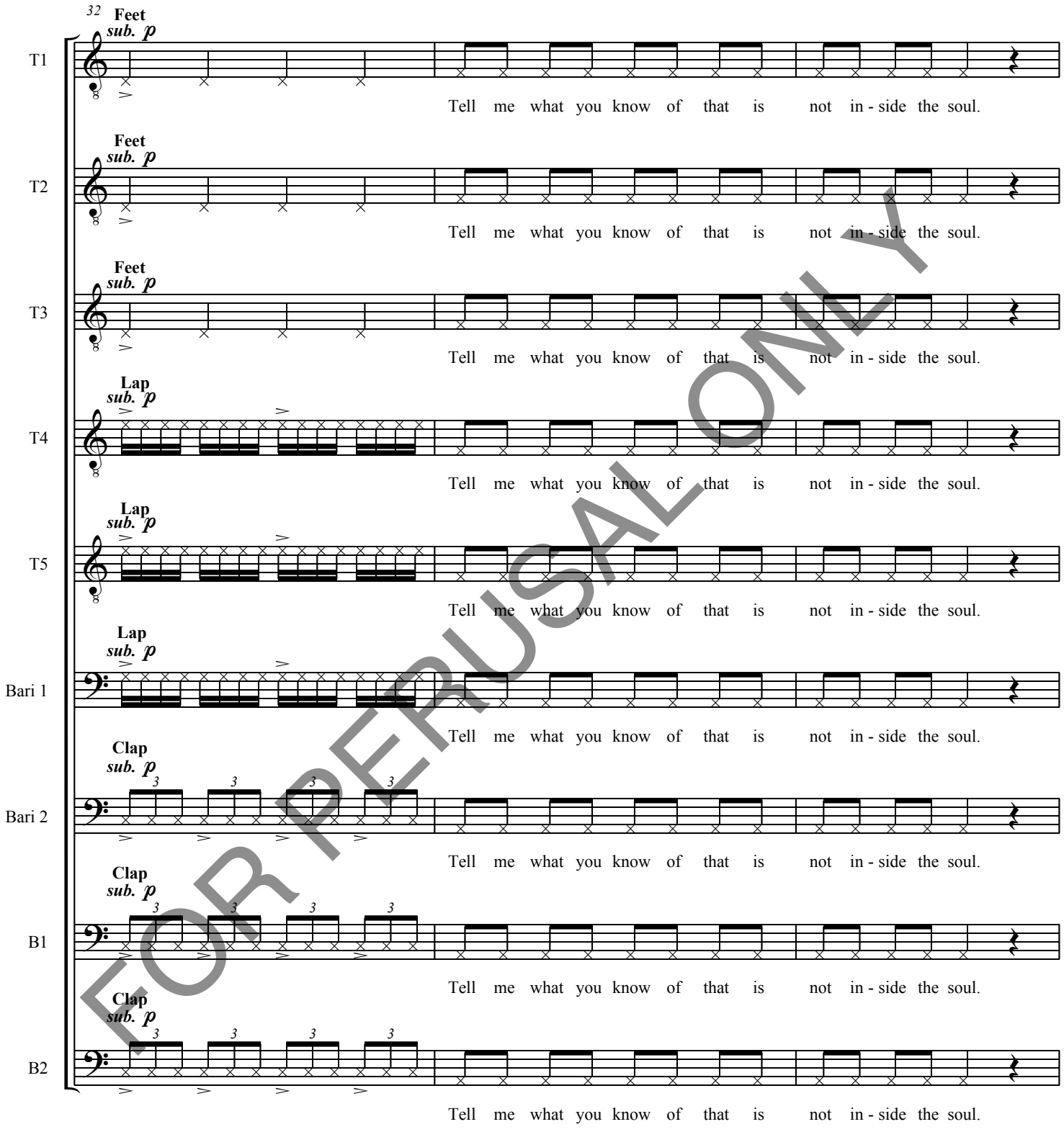

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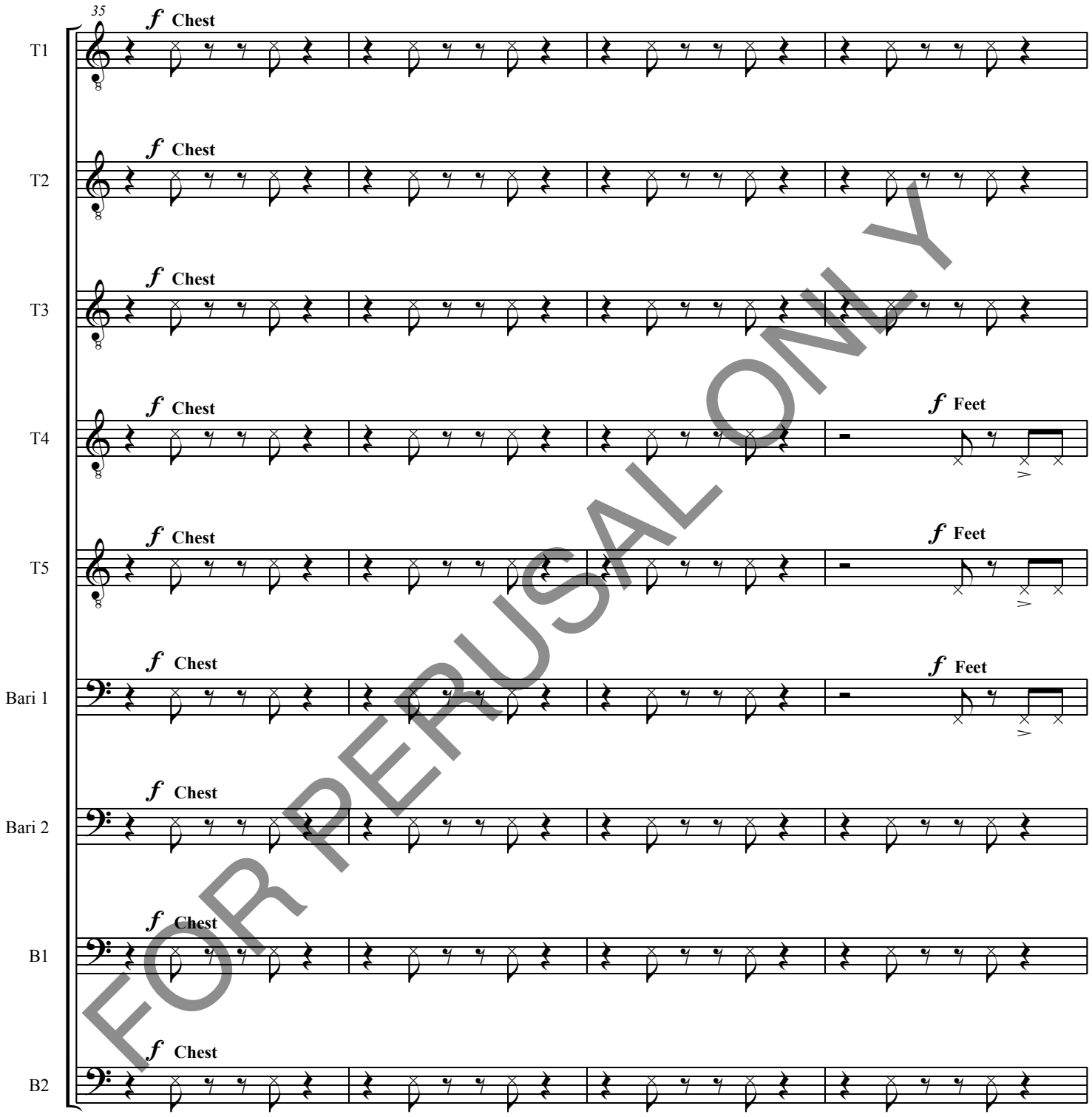

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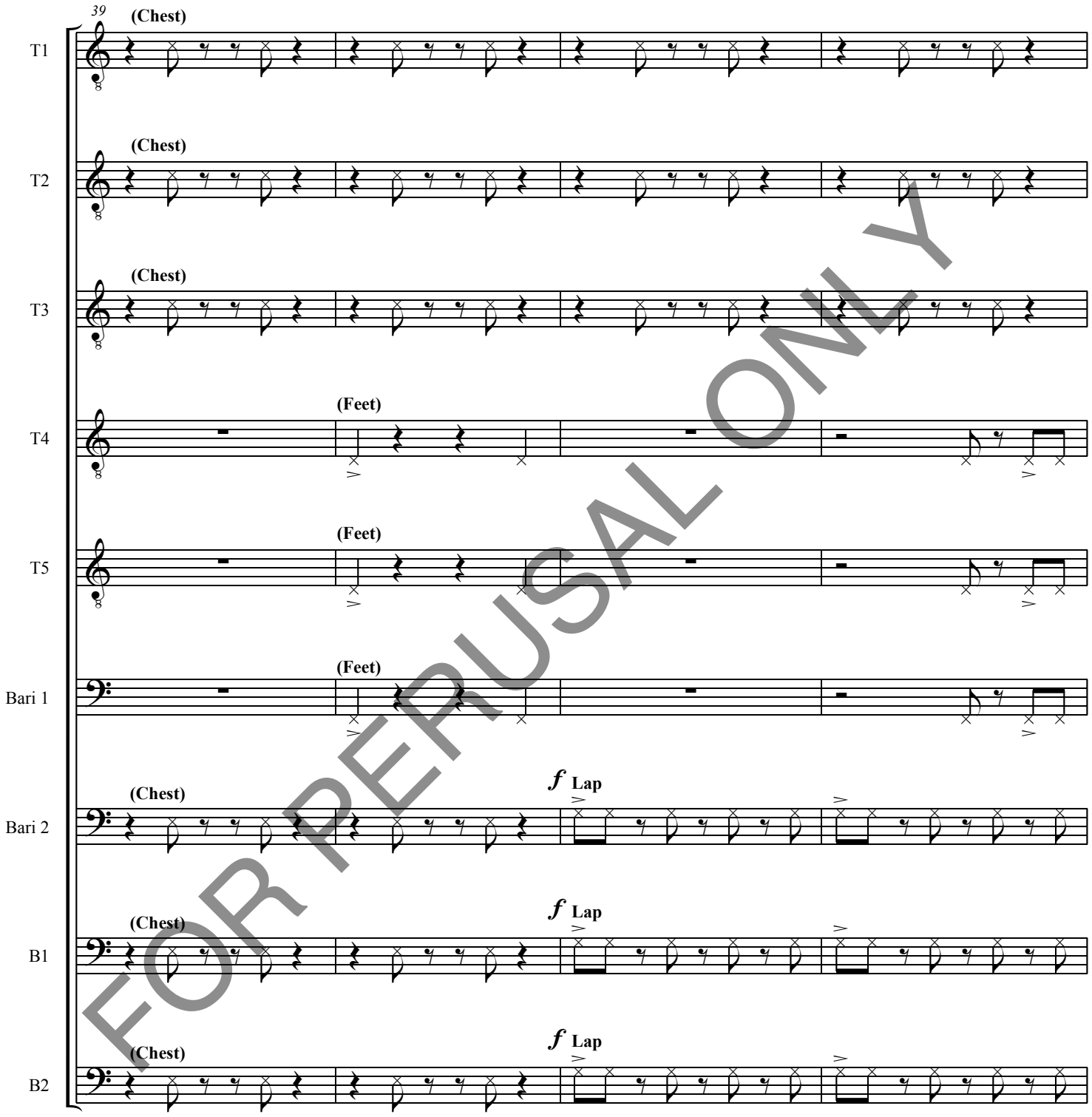

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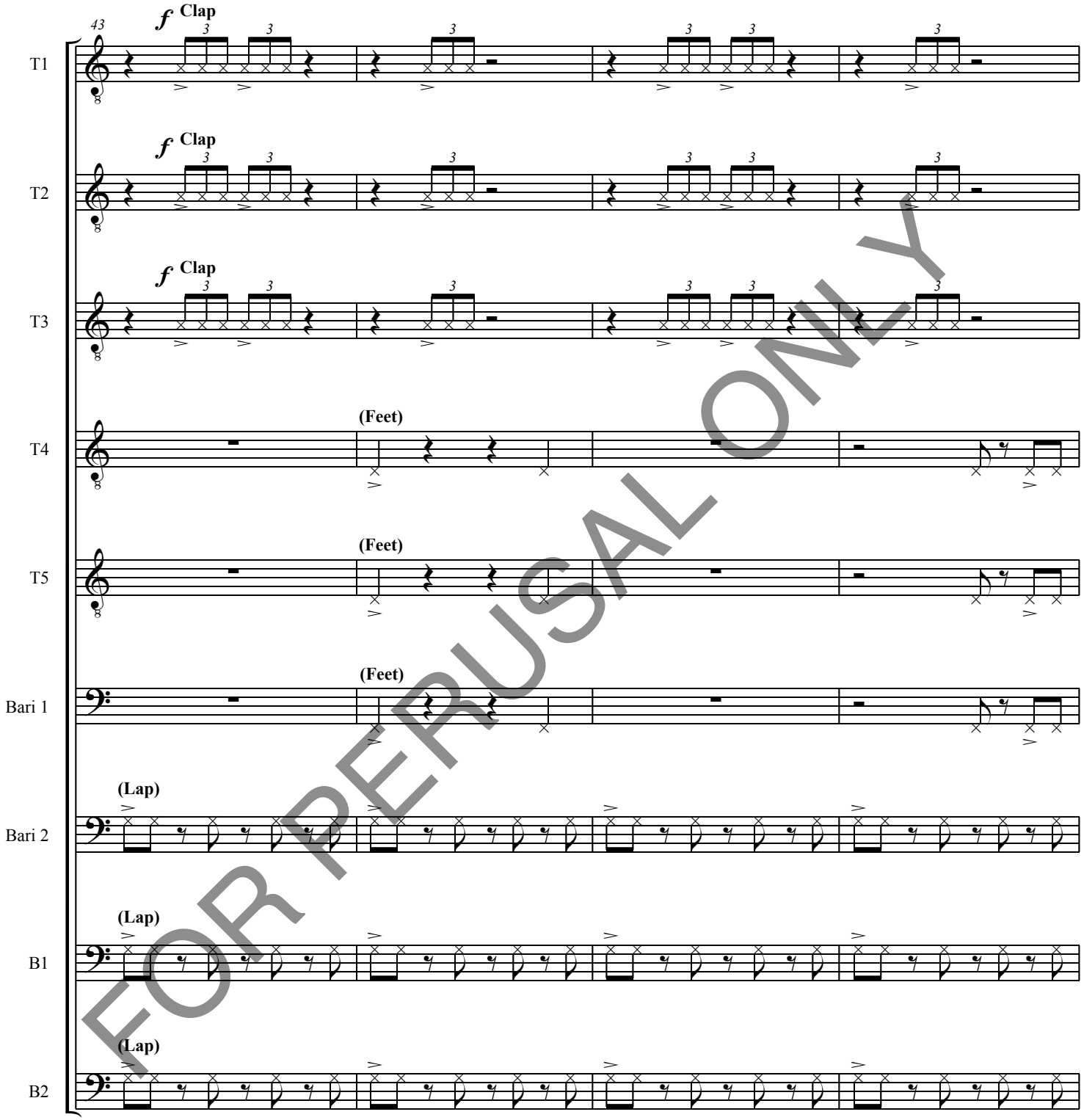

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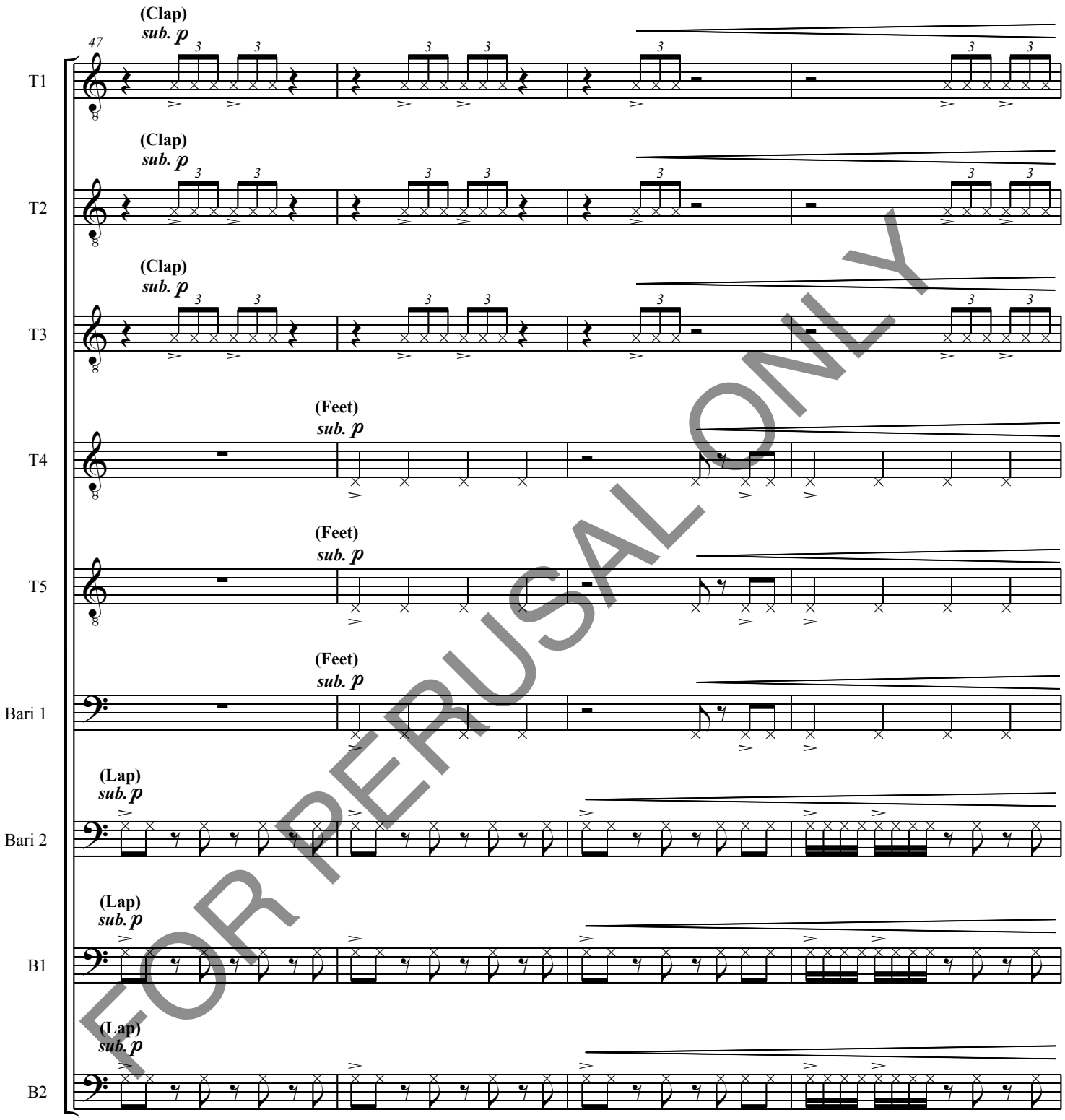

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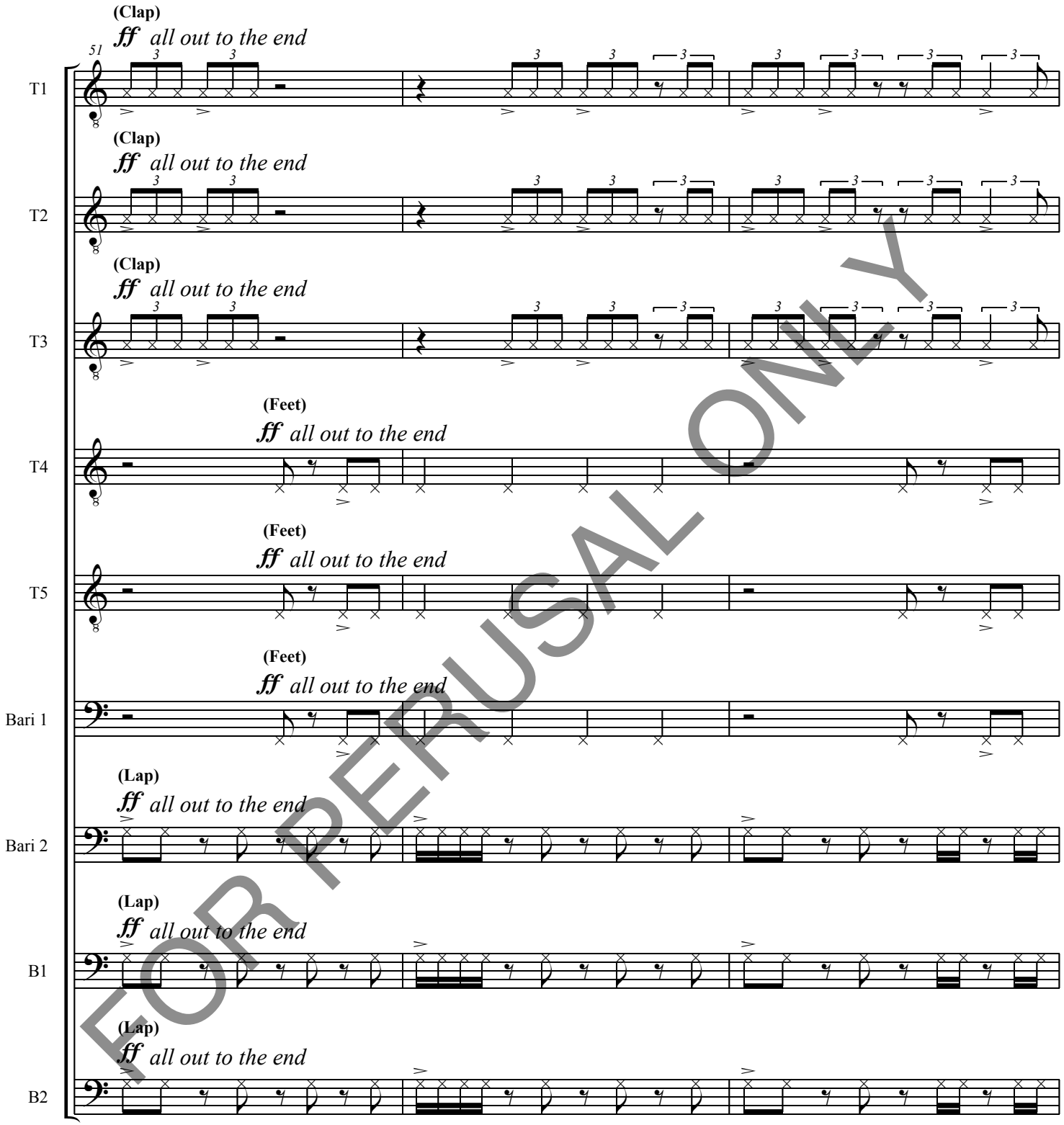

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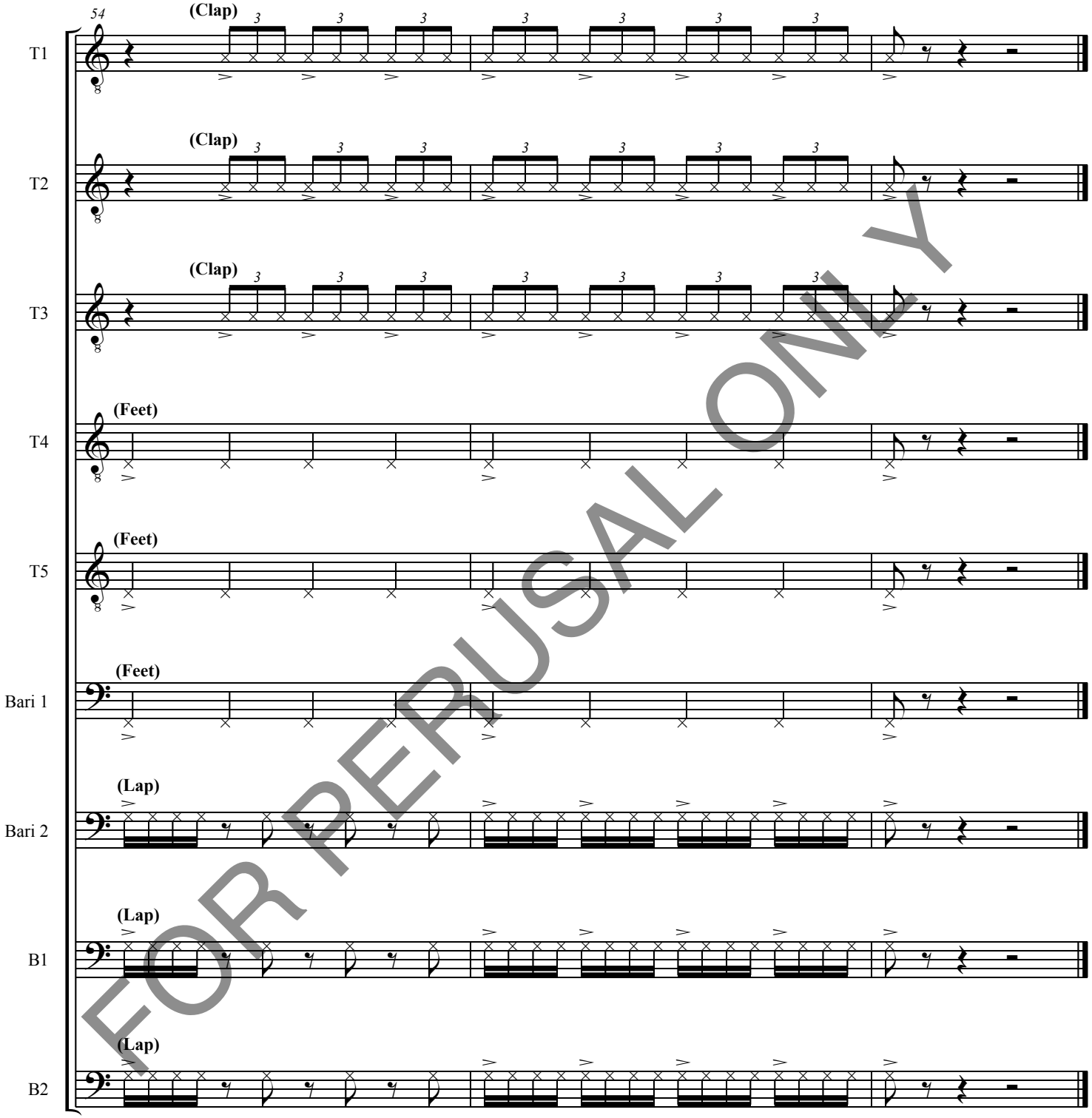

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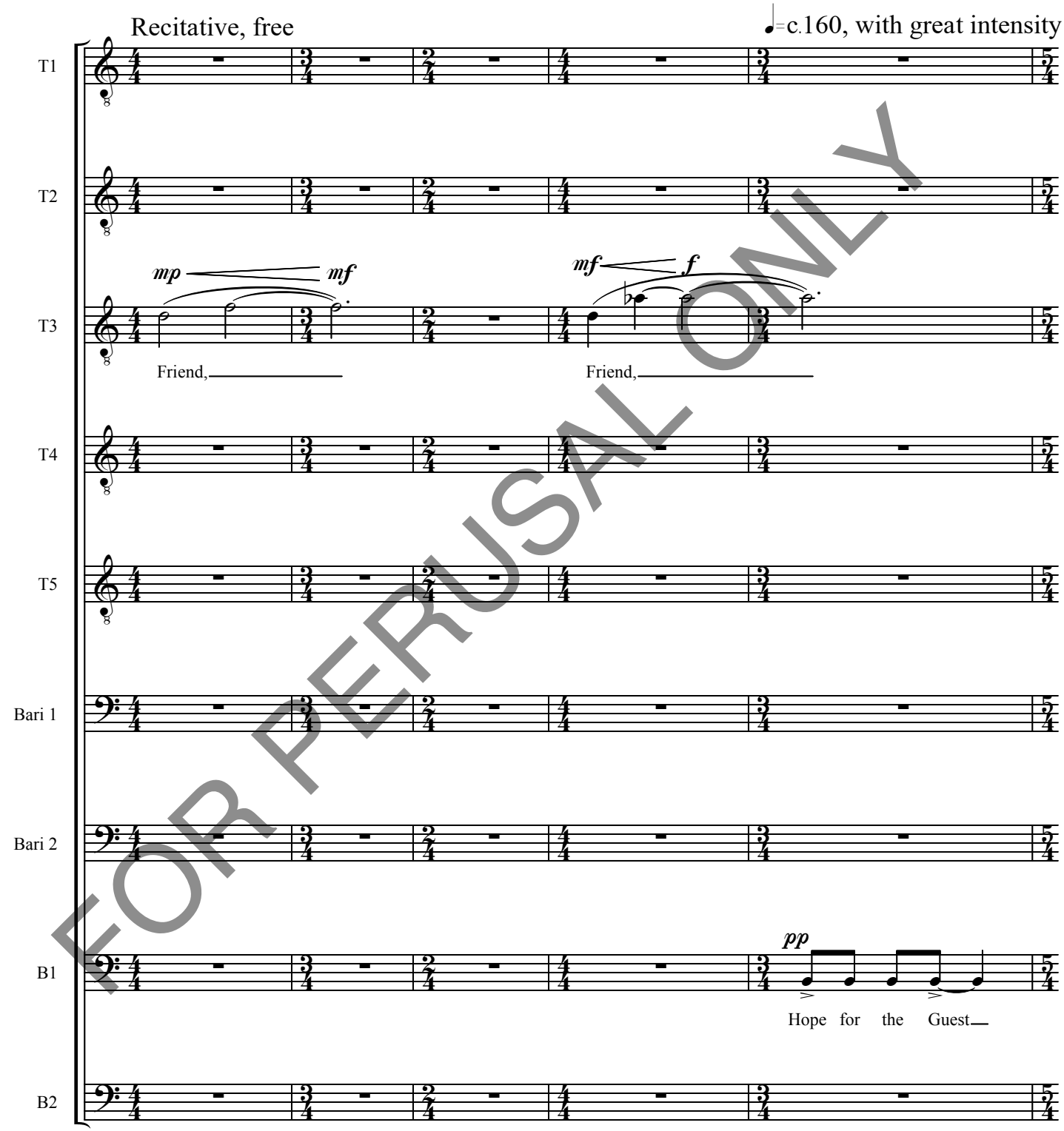
V. While You Are Alive



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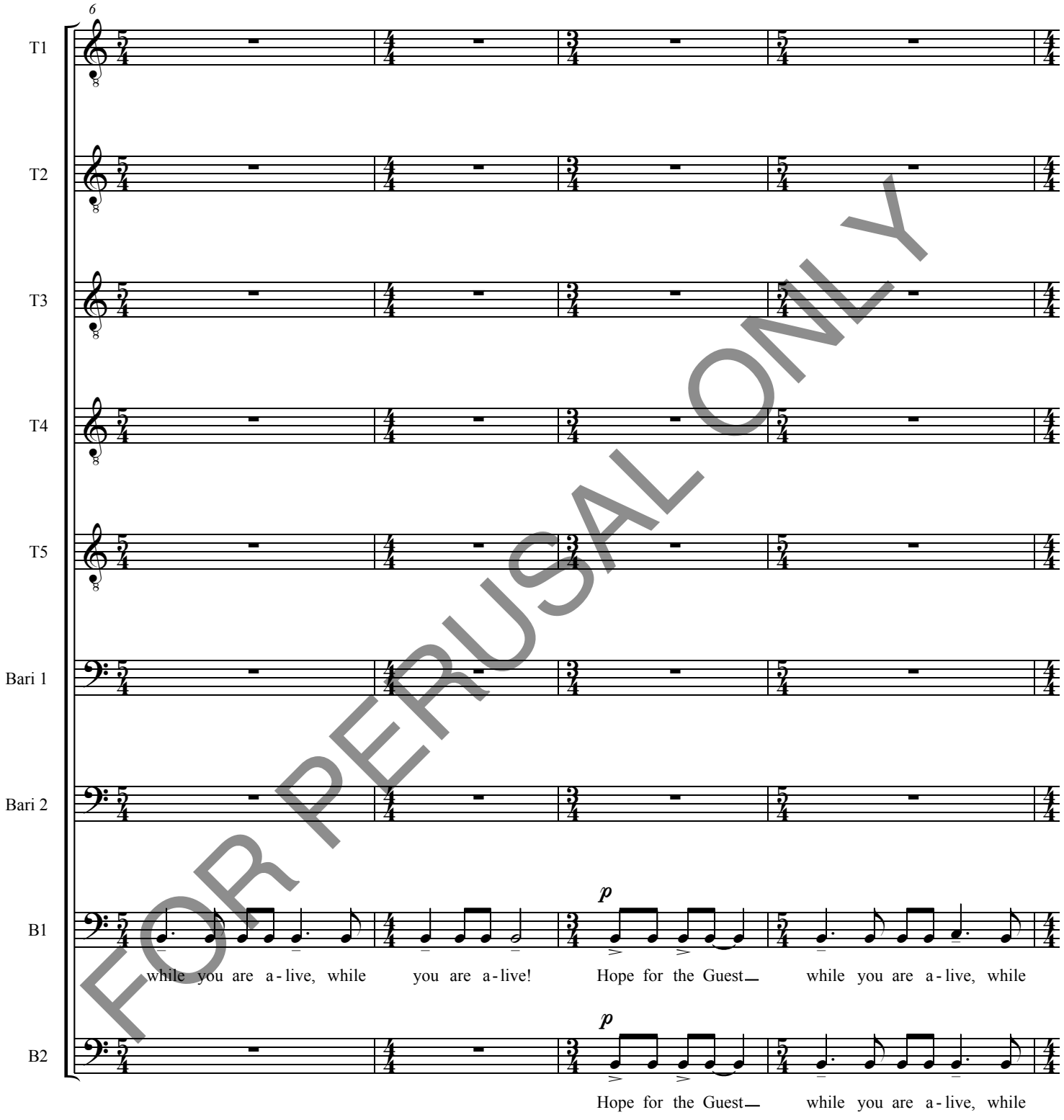

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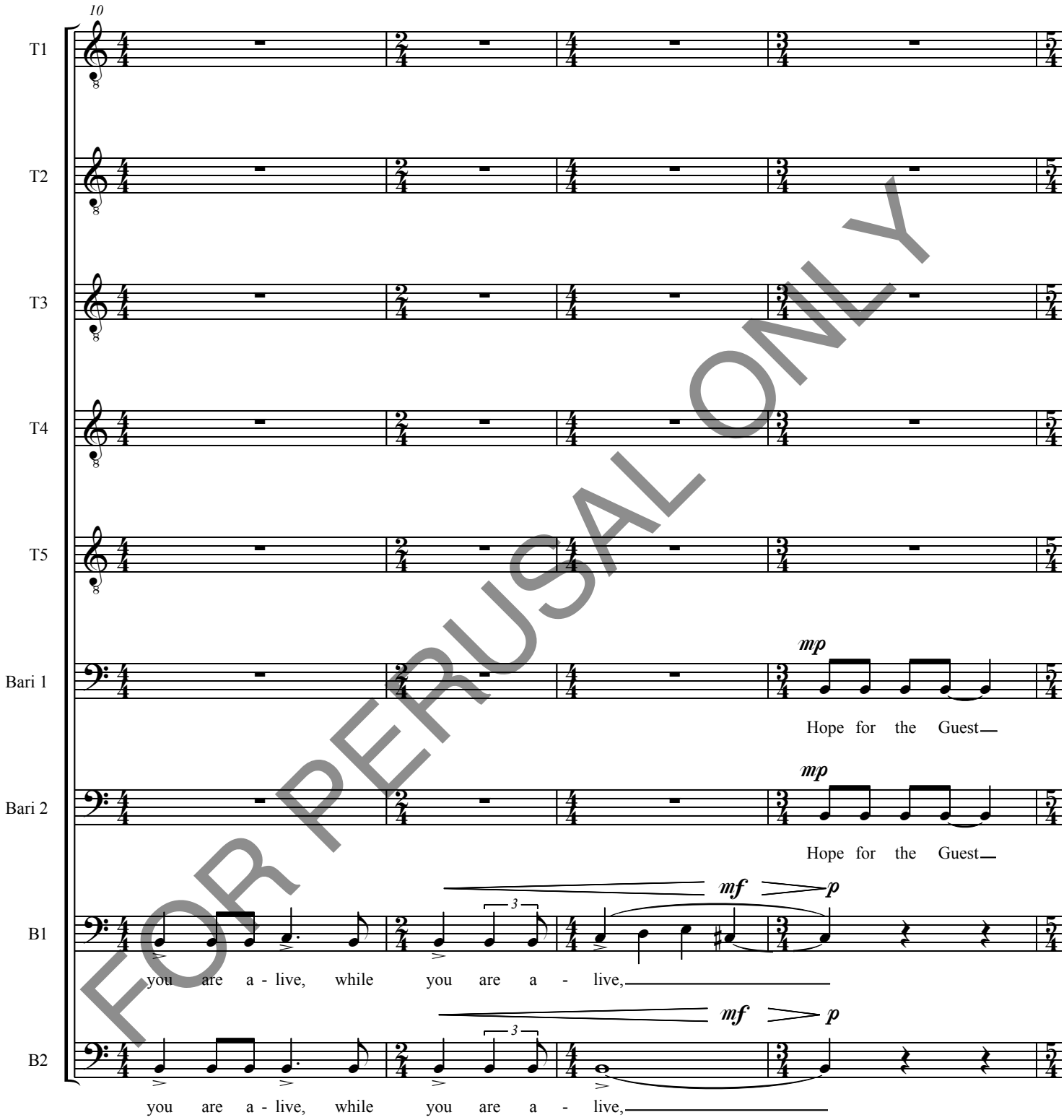

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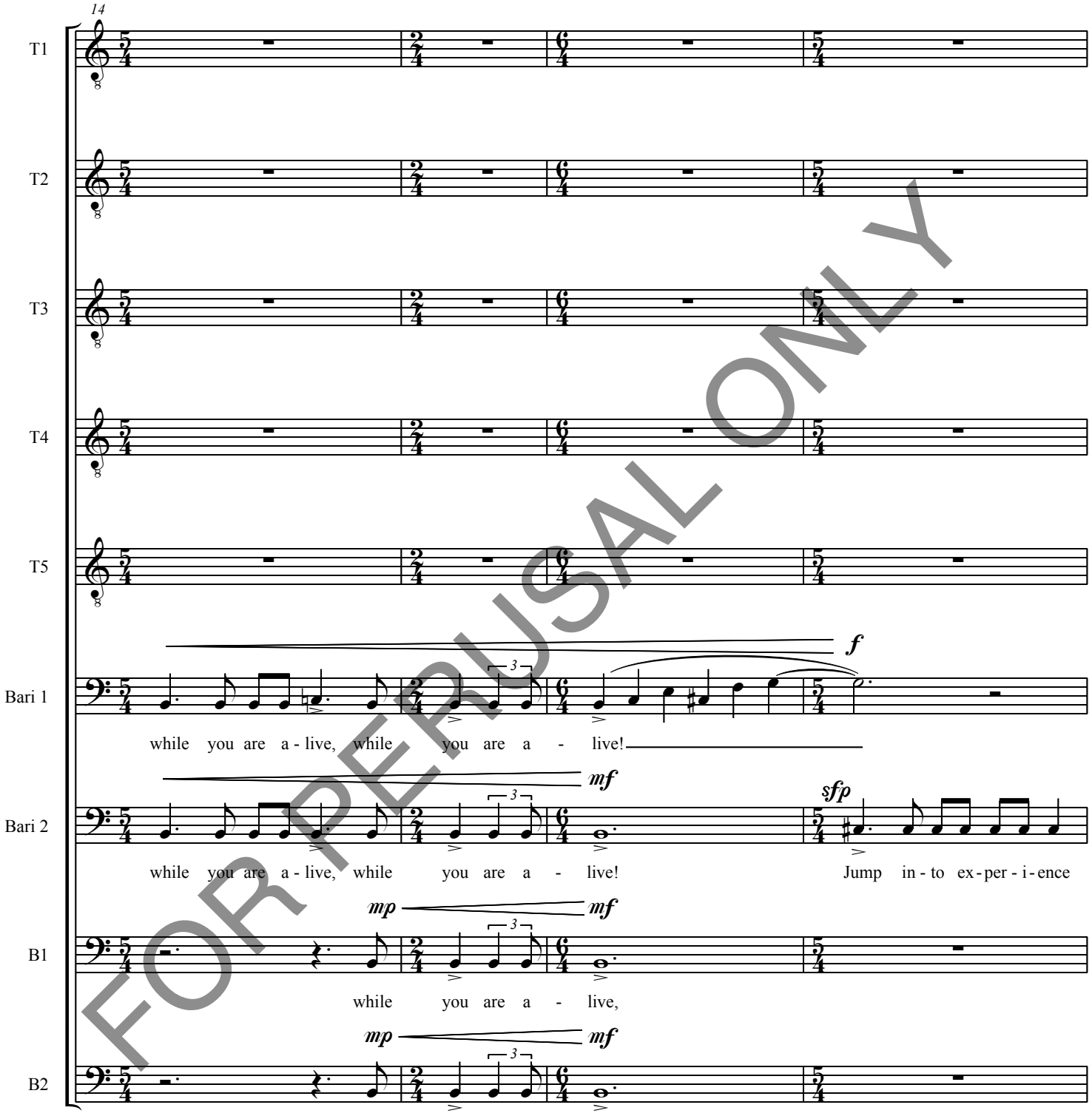

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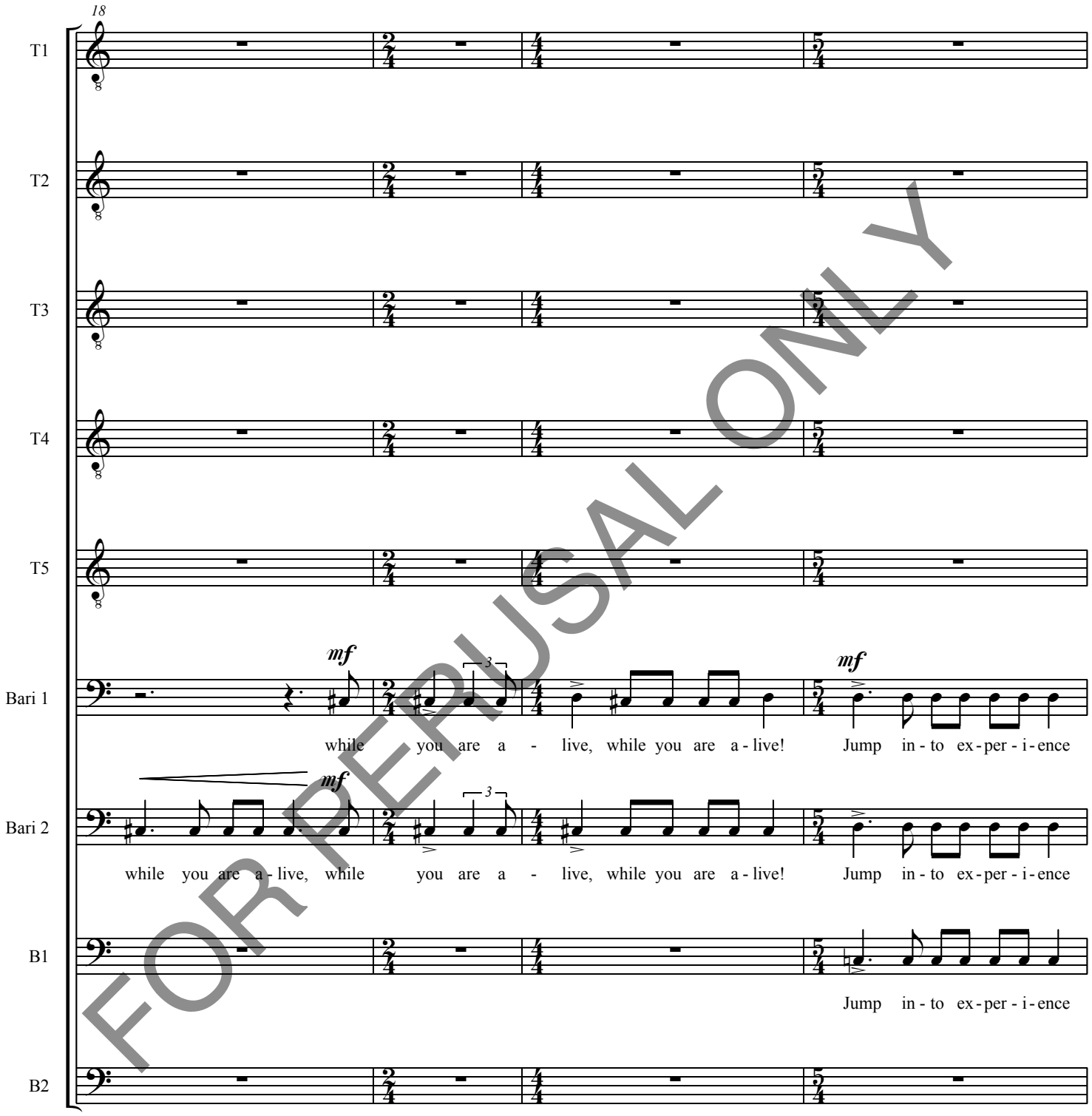

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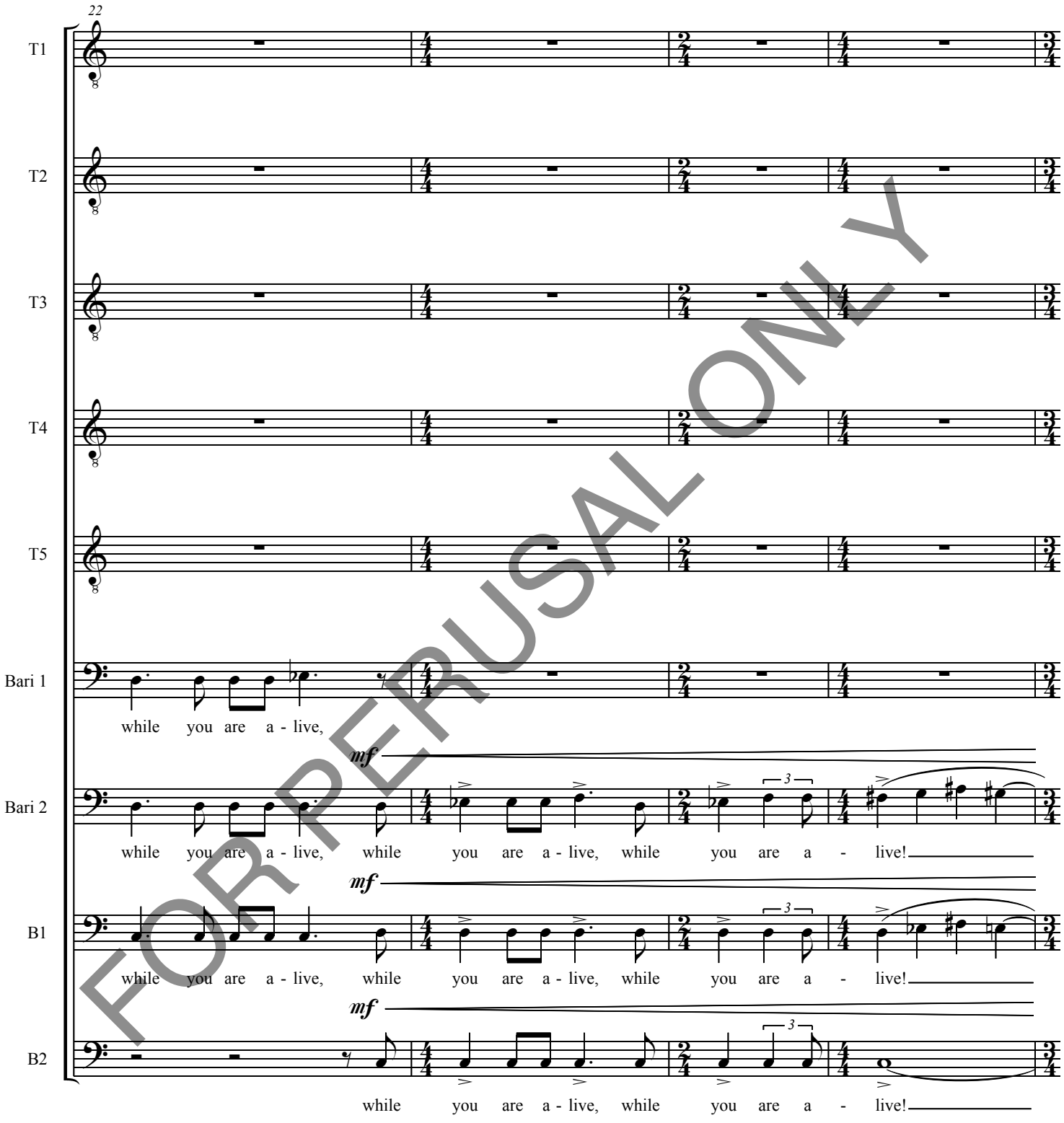

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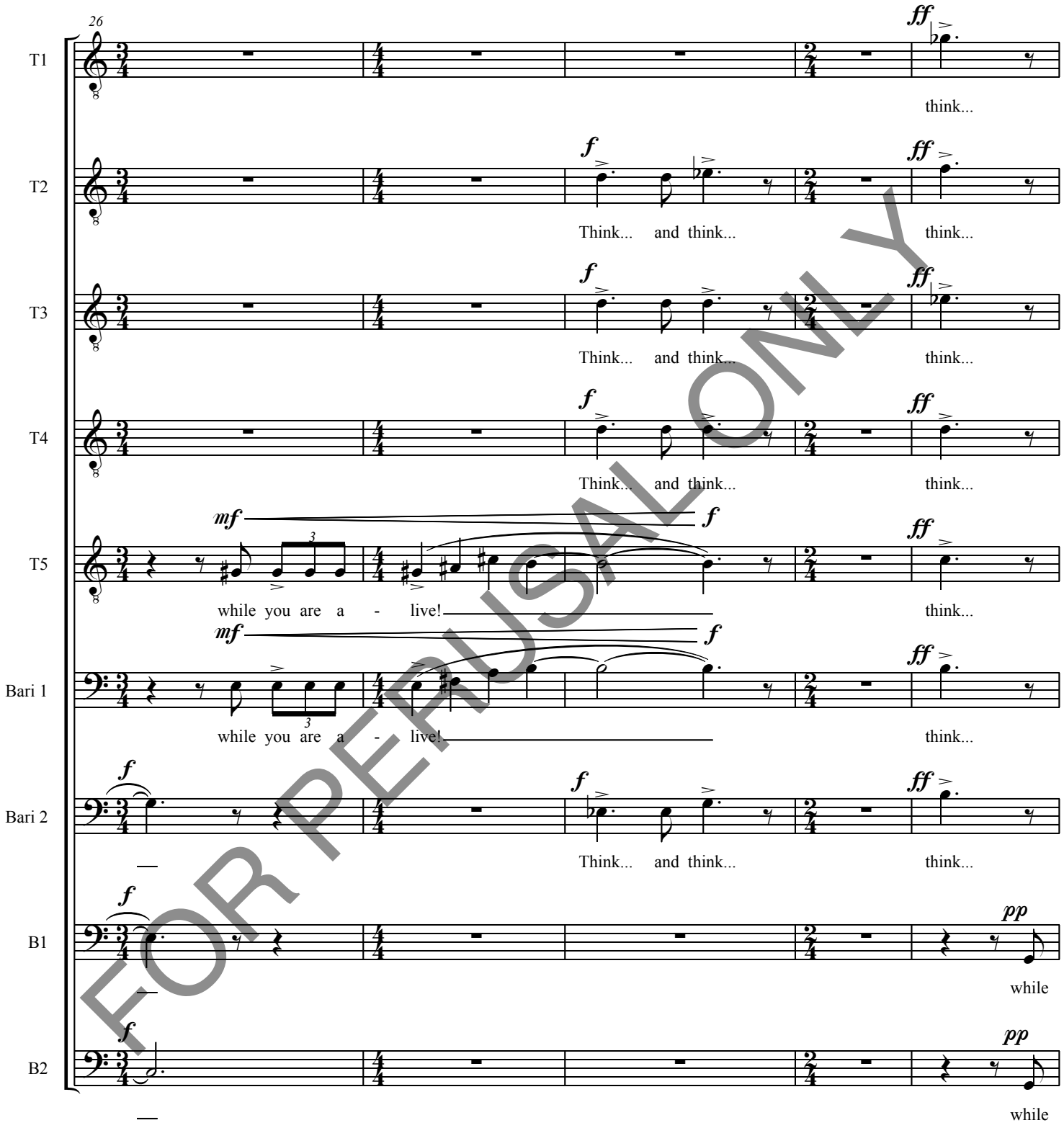

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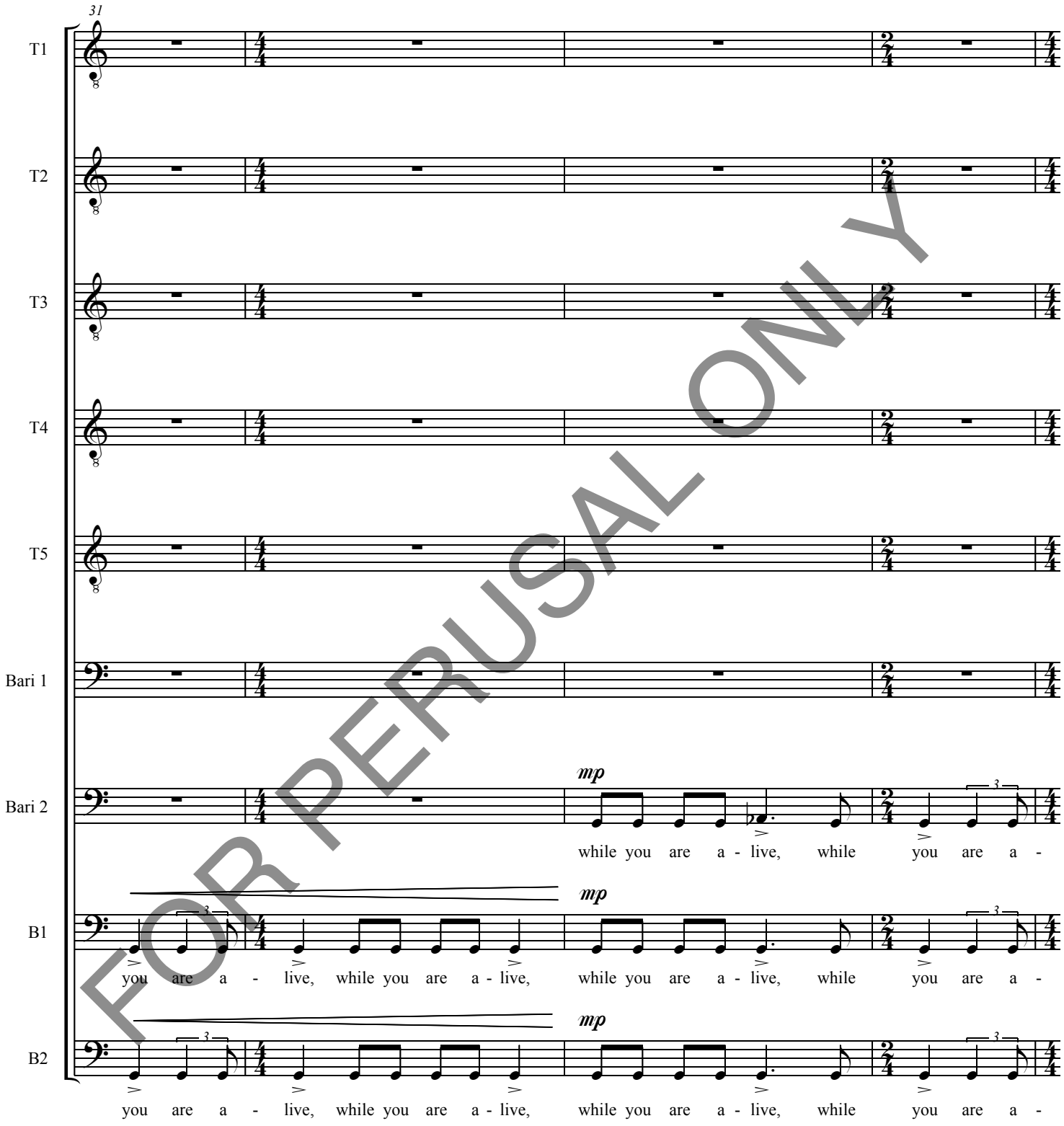

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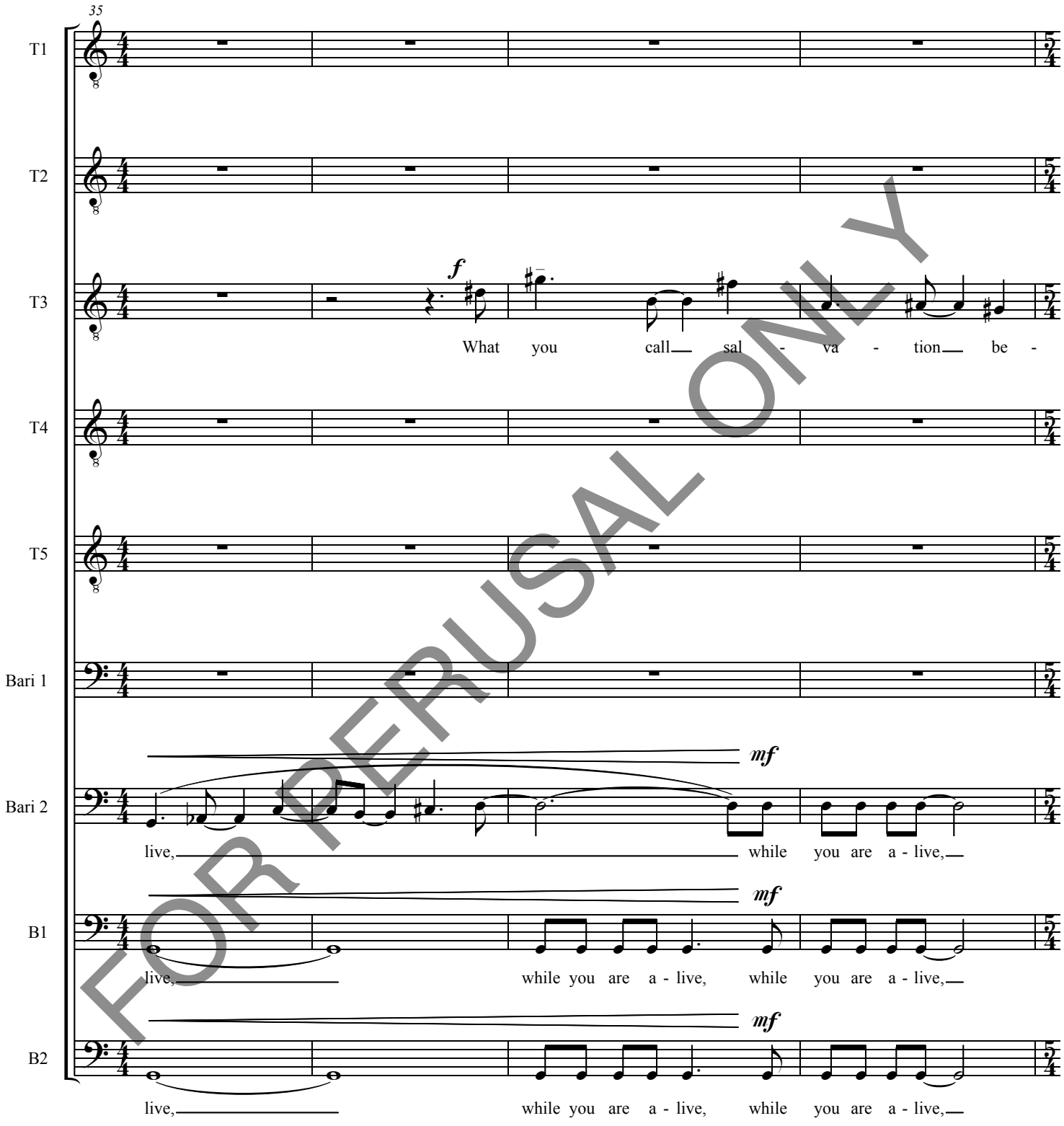

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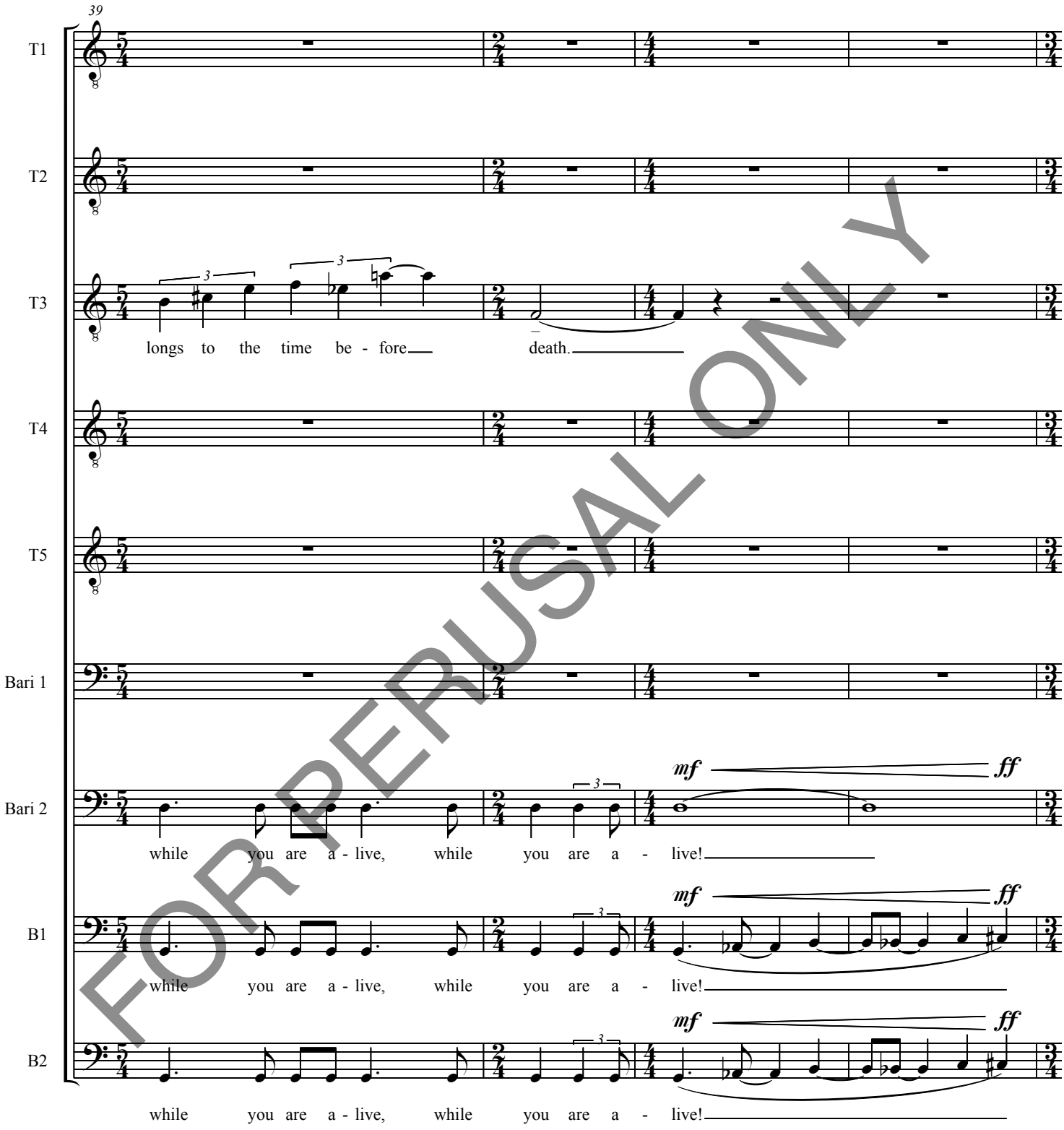

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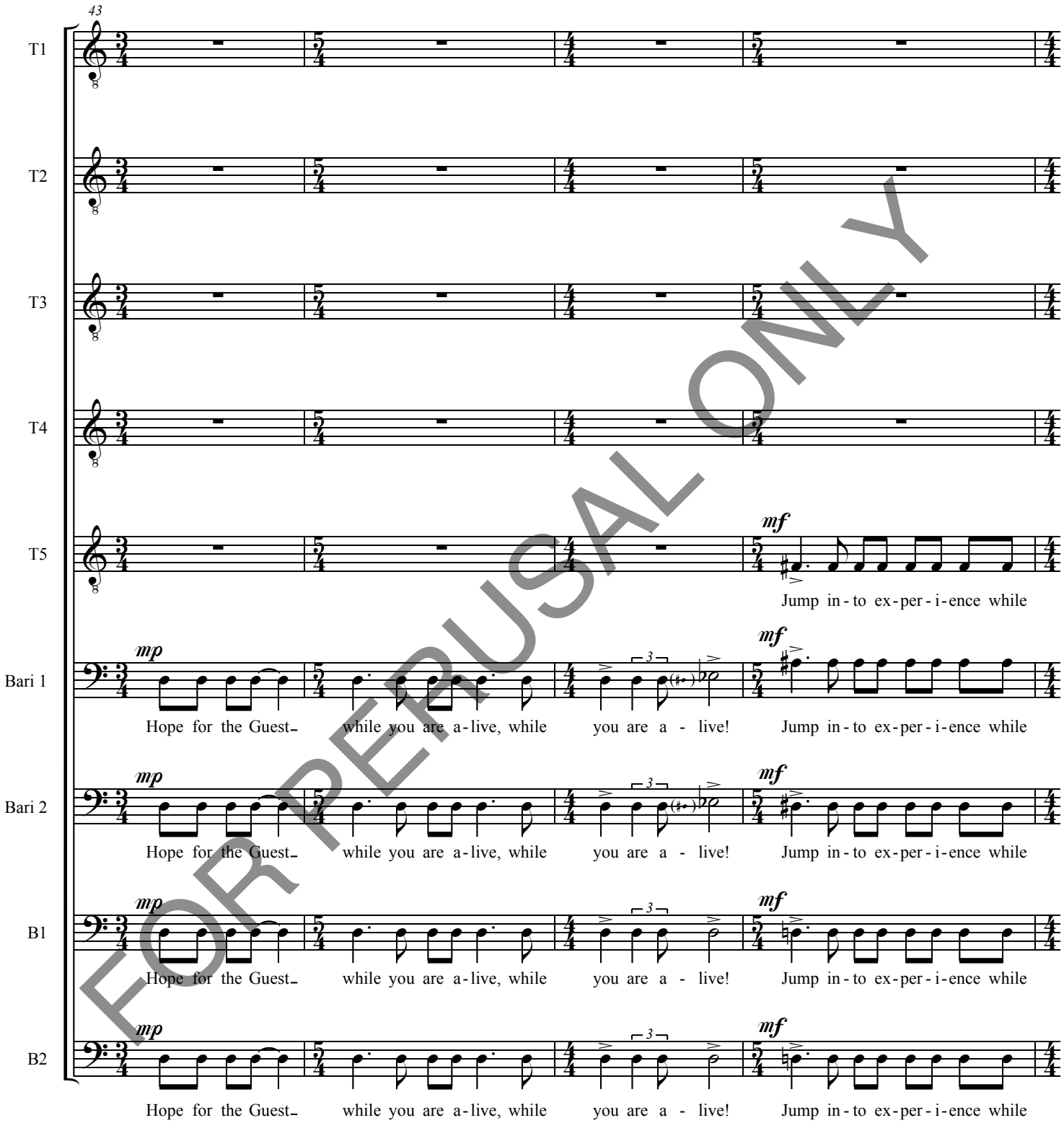

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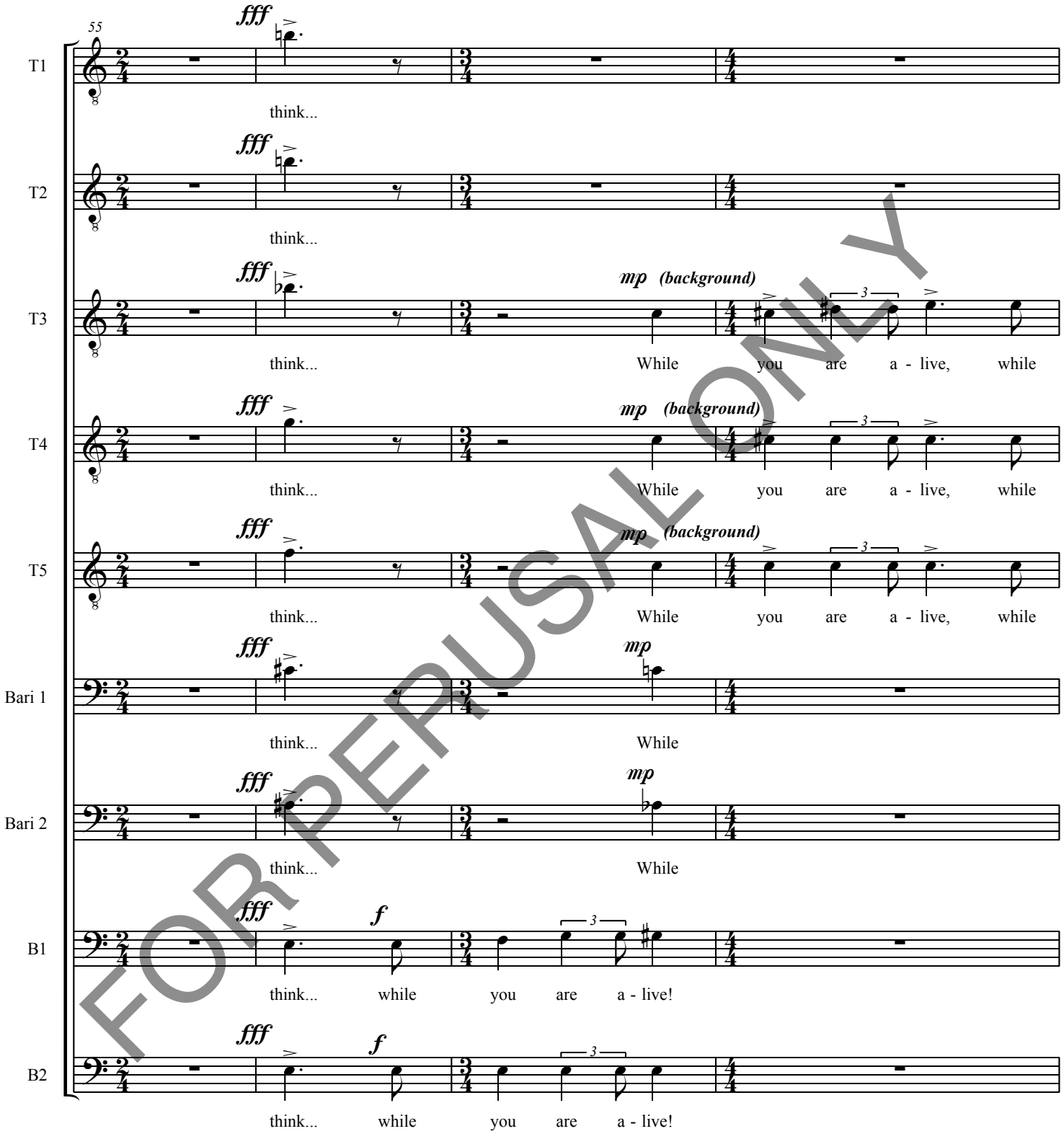

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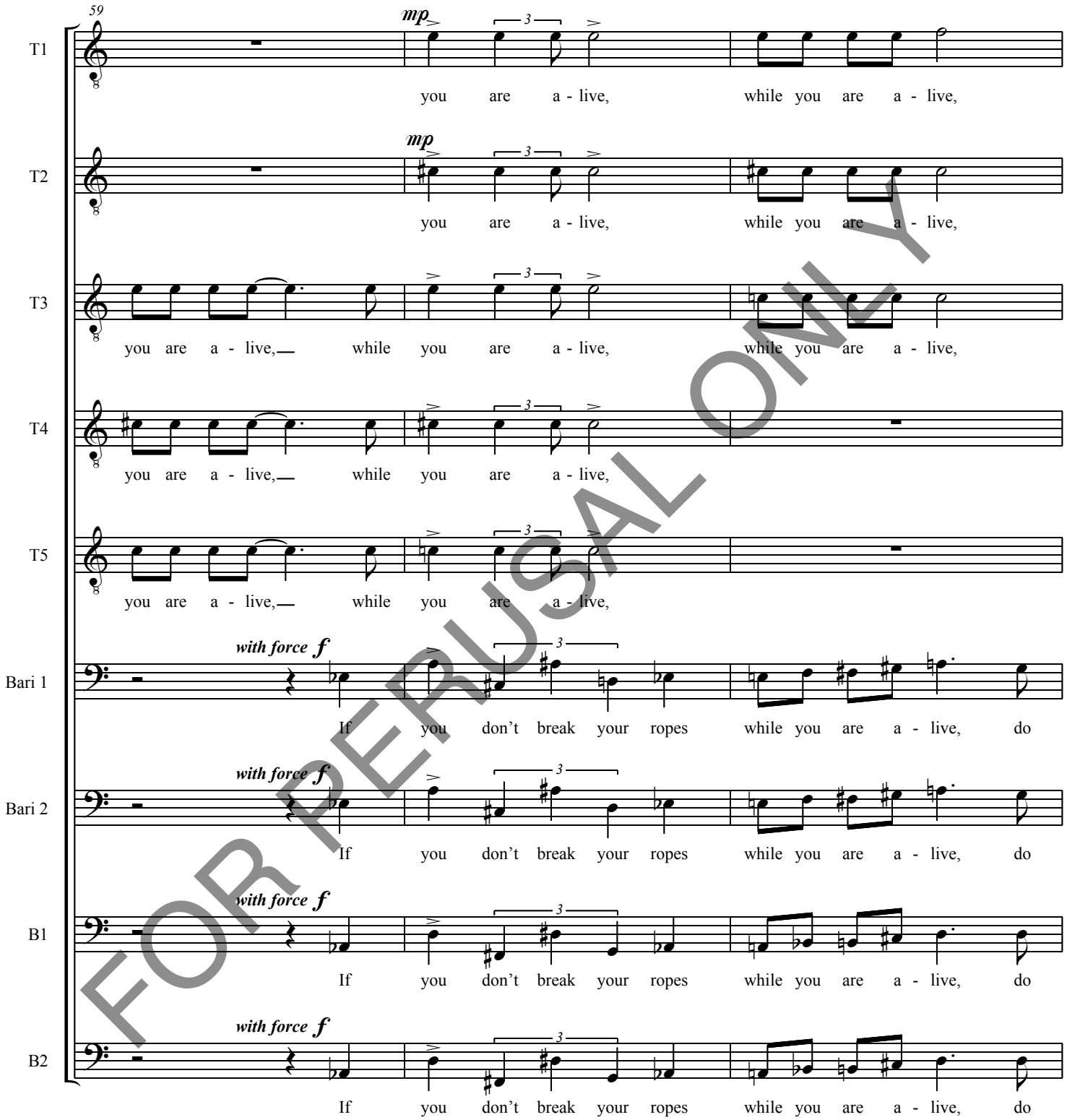

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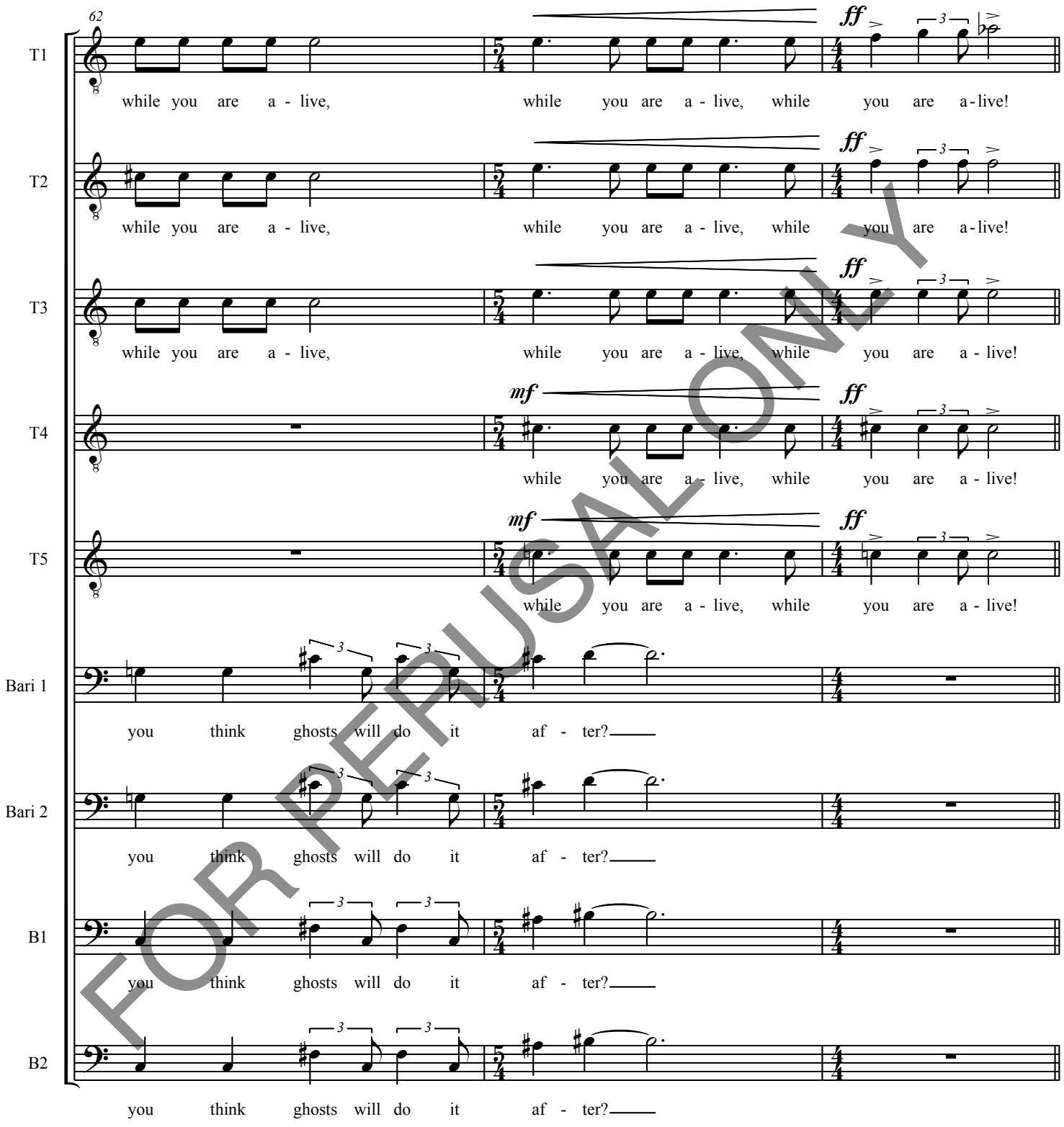

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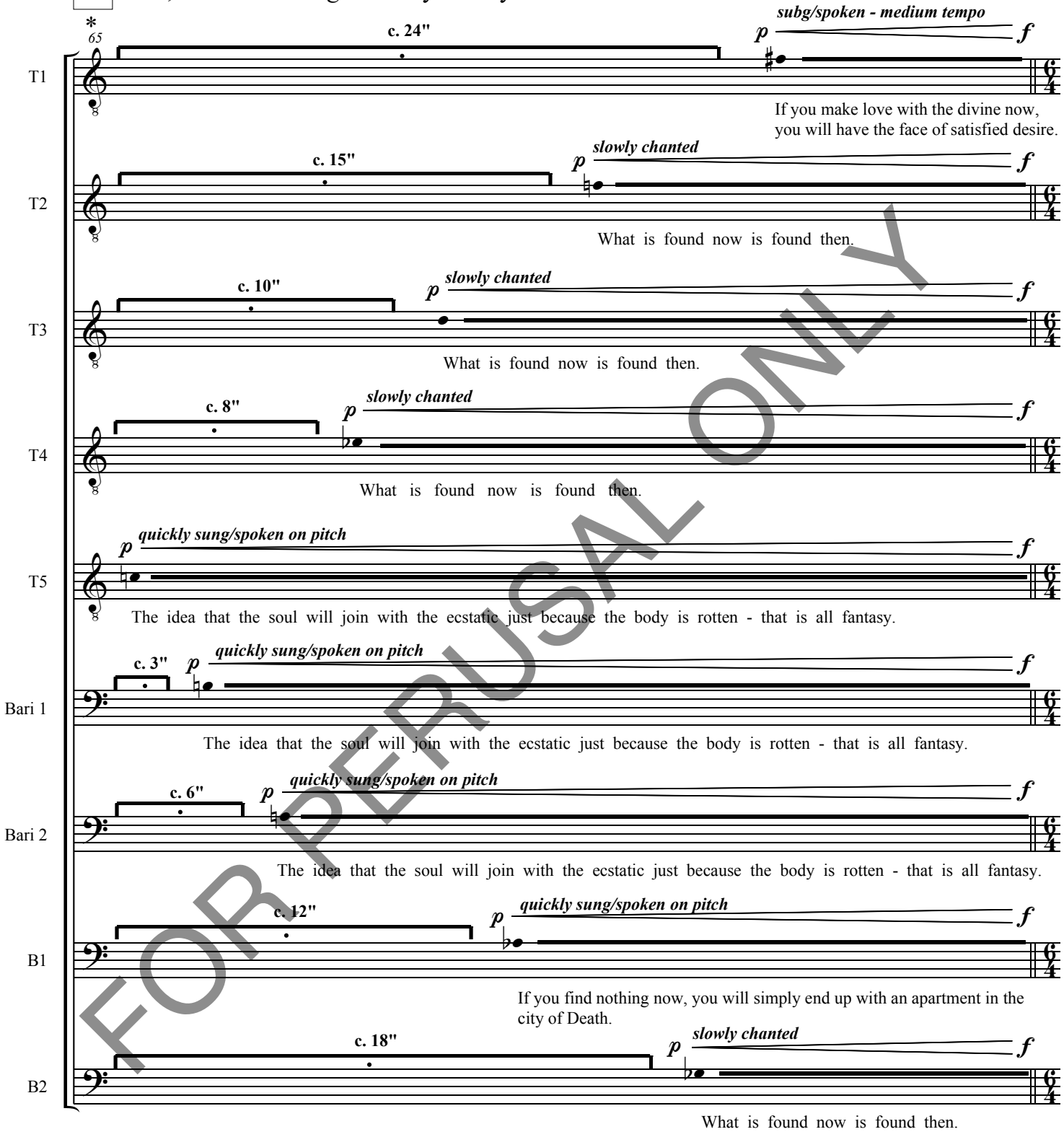
A free, with increasing intensity and dynamic



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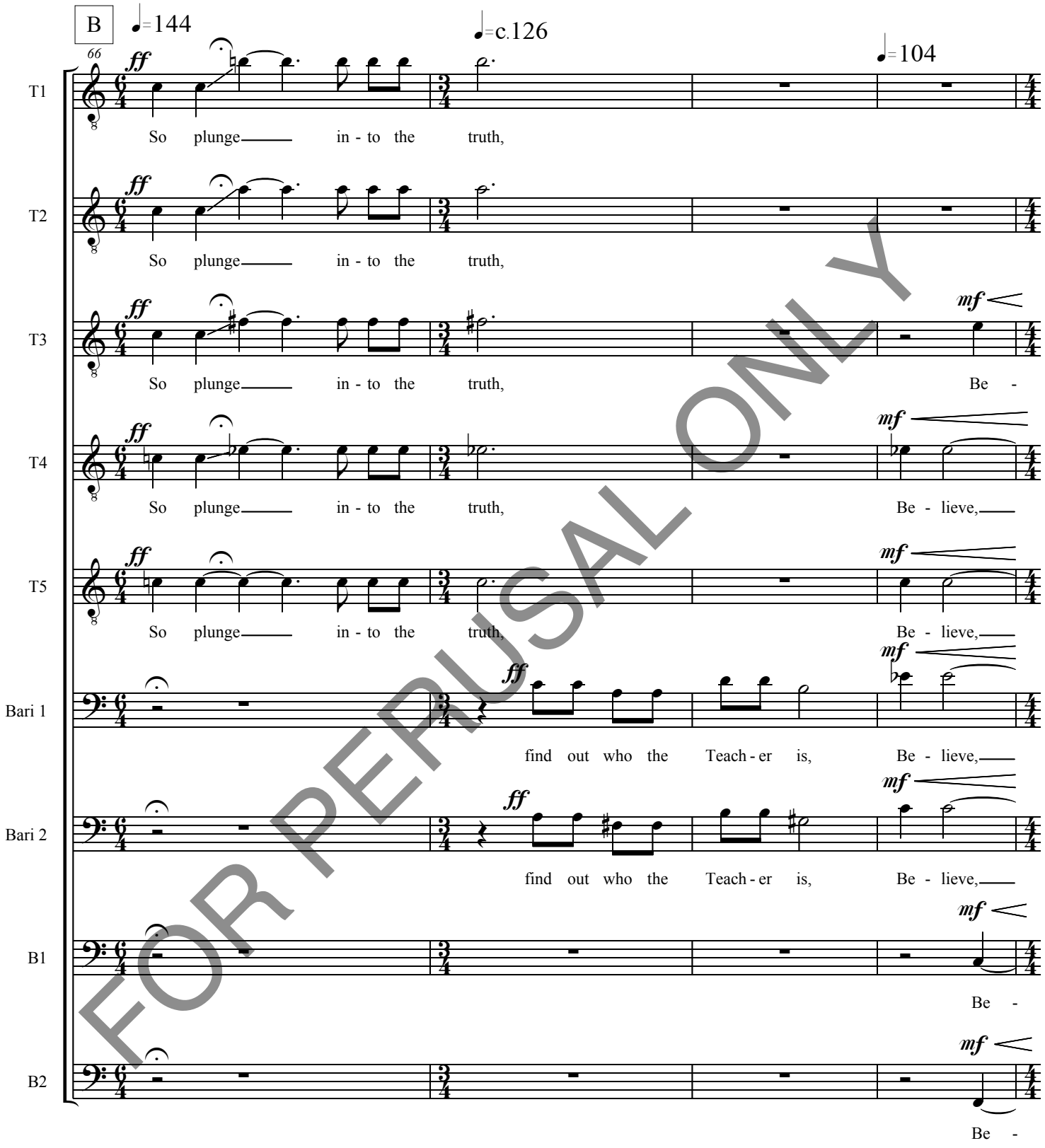
* stagger entrances, allow time to repeat each phrase
at least 2-3 times. Build directly into section B.



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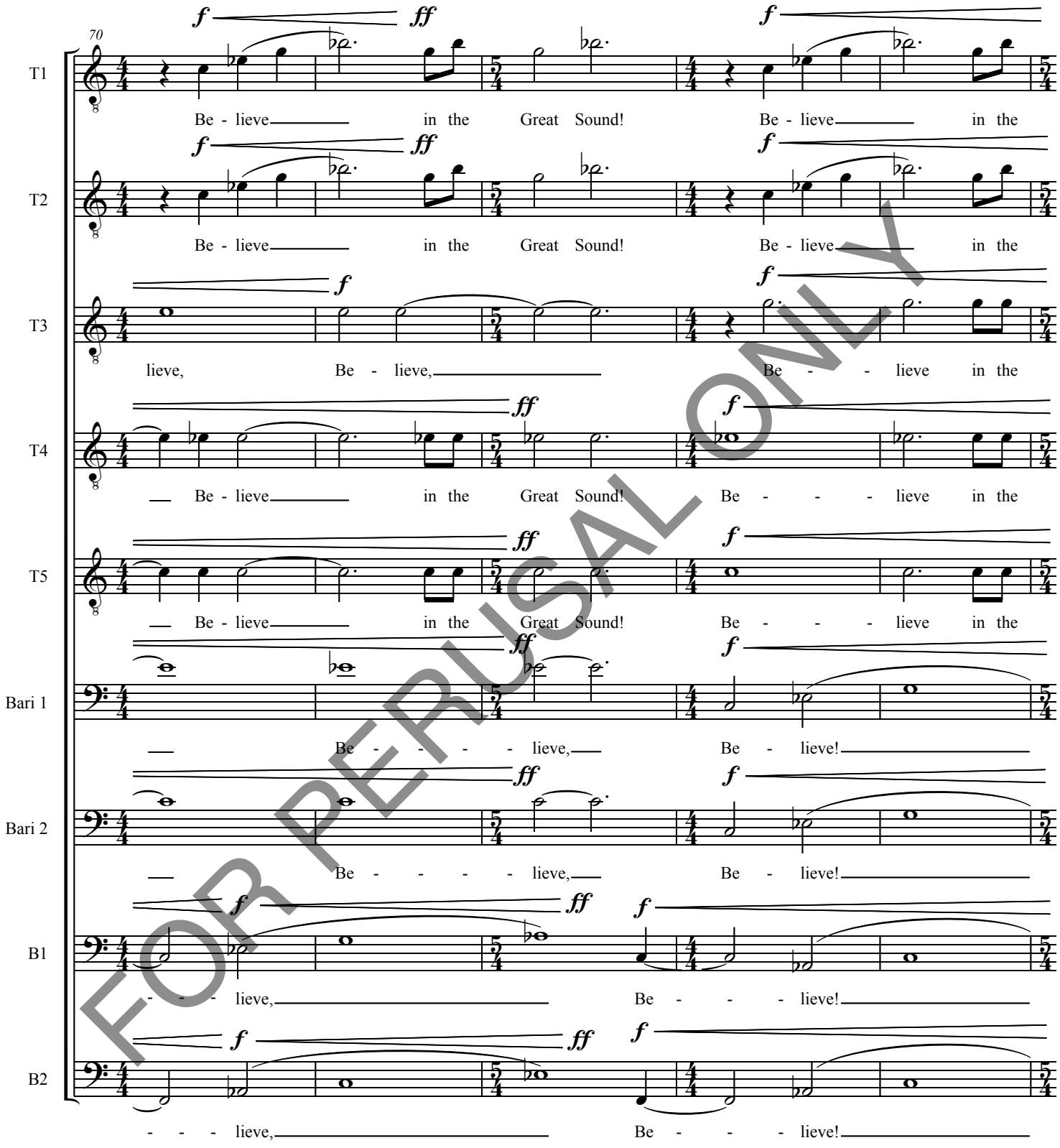

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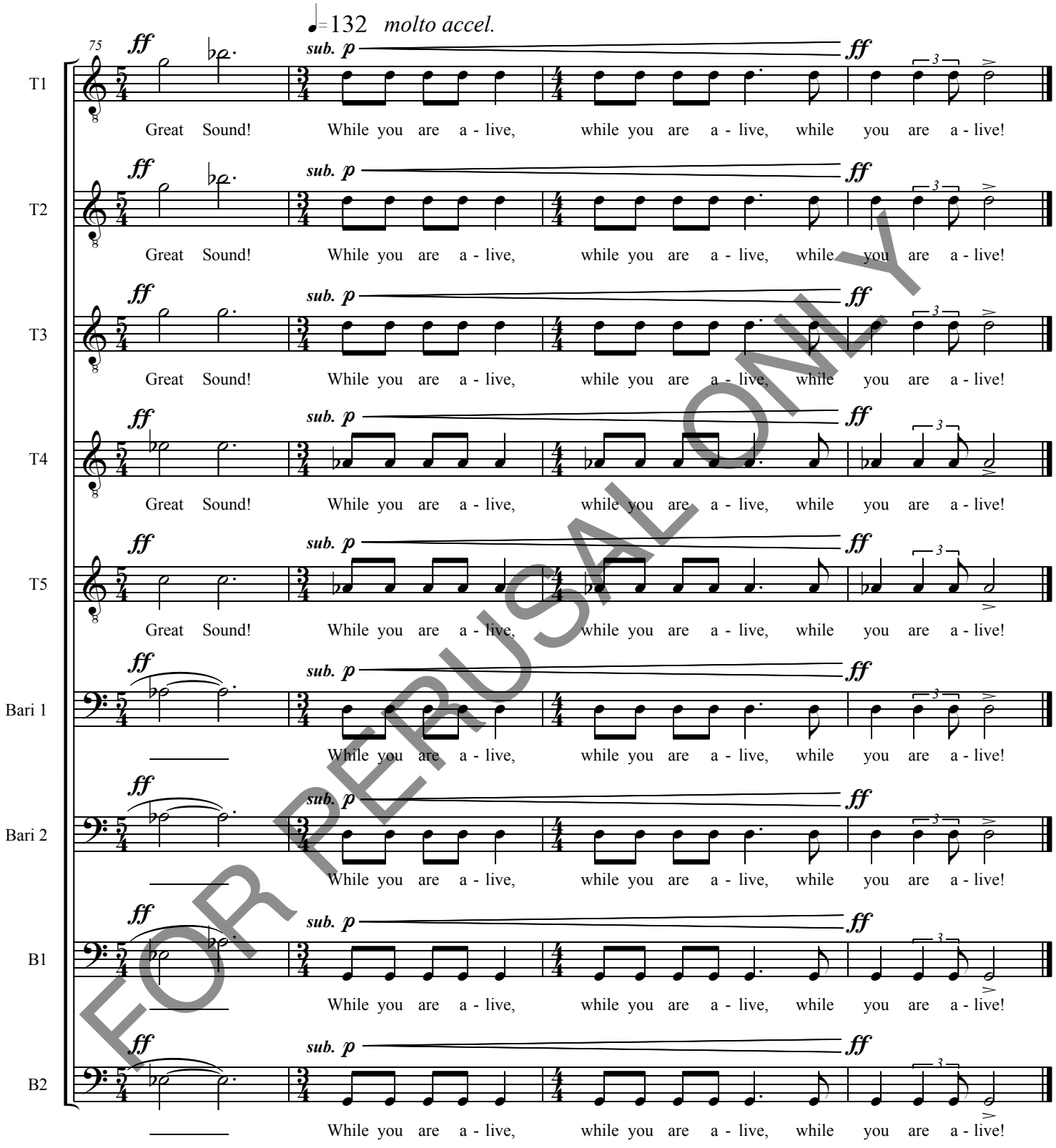

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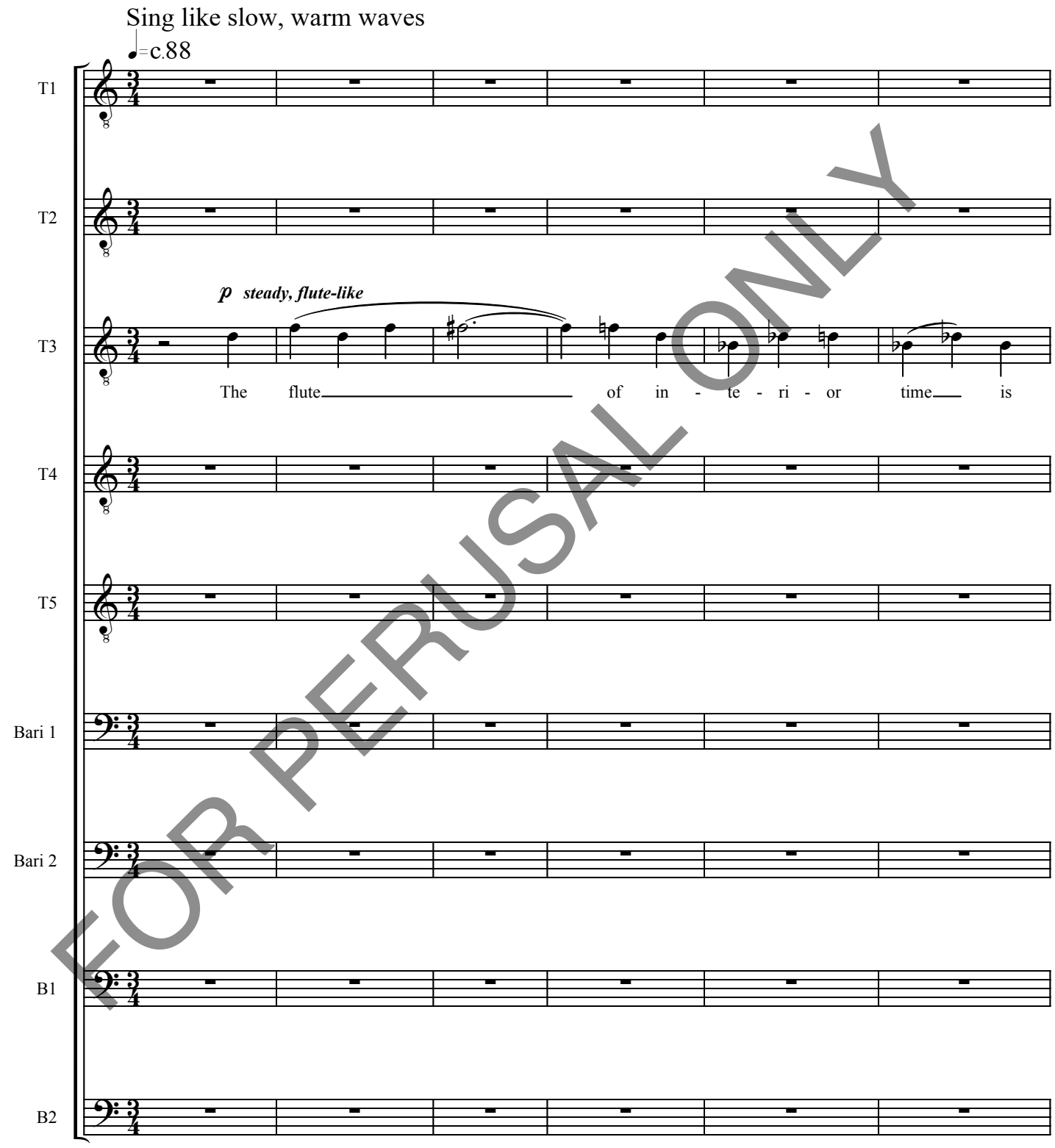
VI. A Sound Like This



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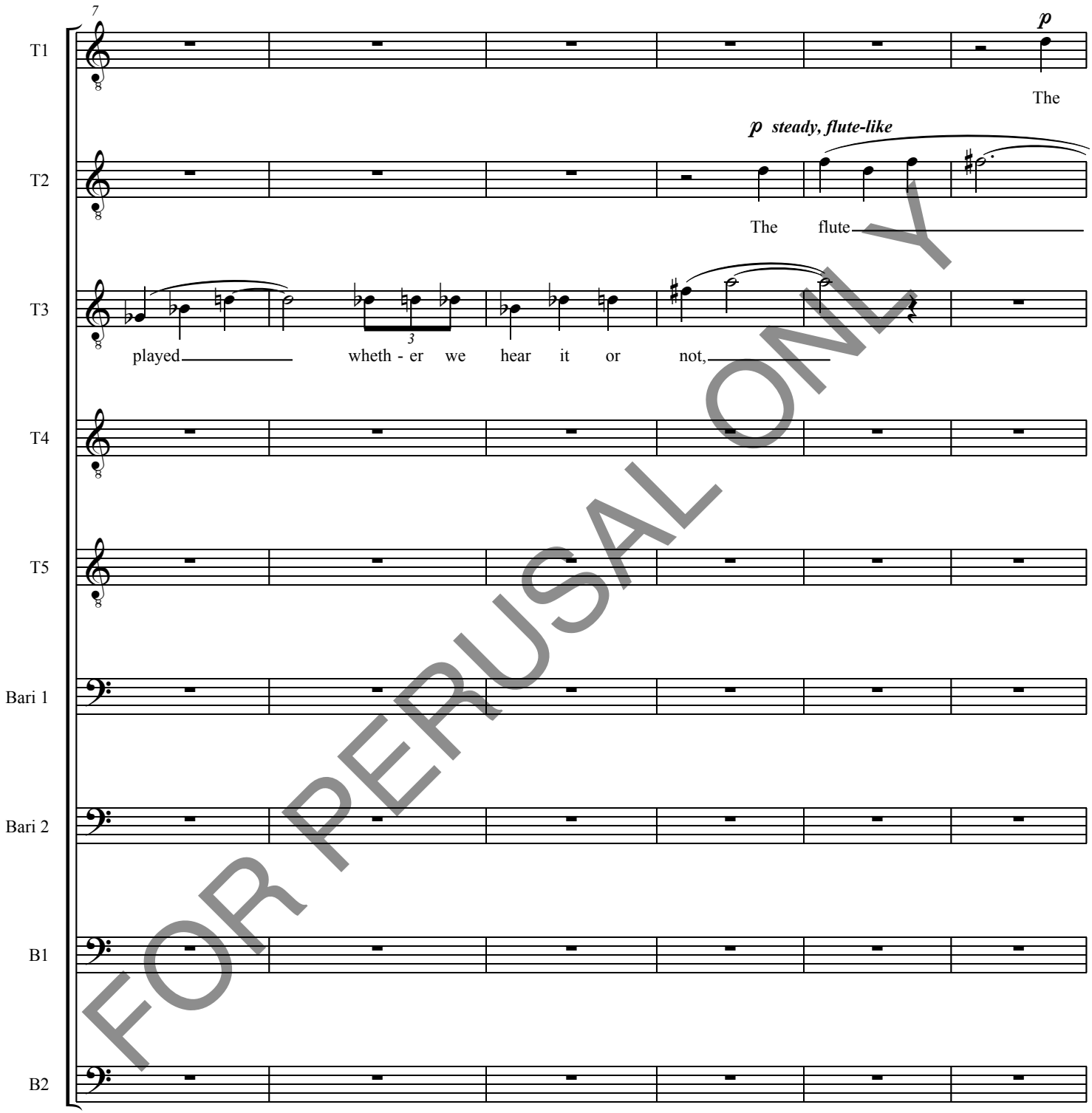

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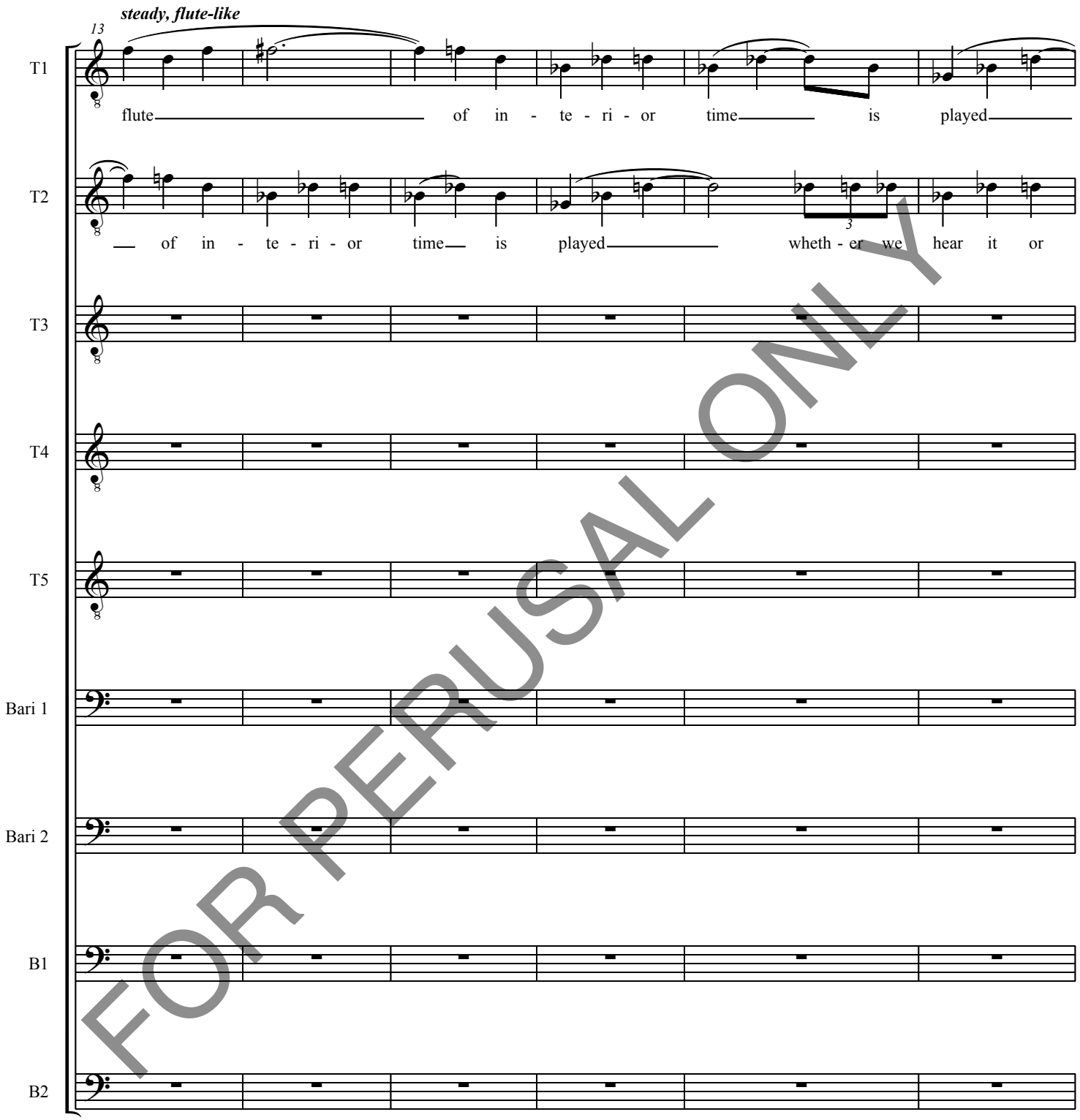

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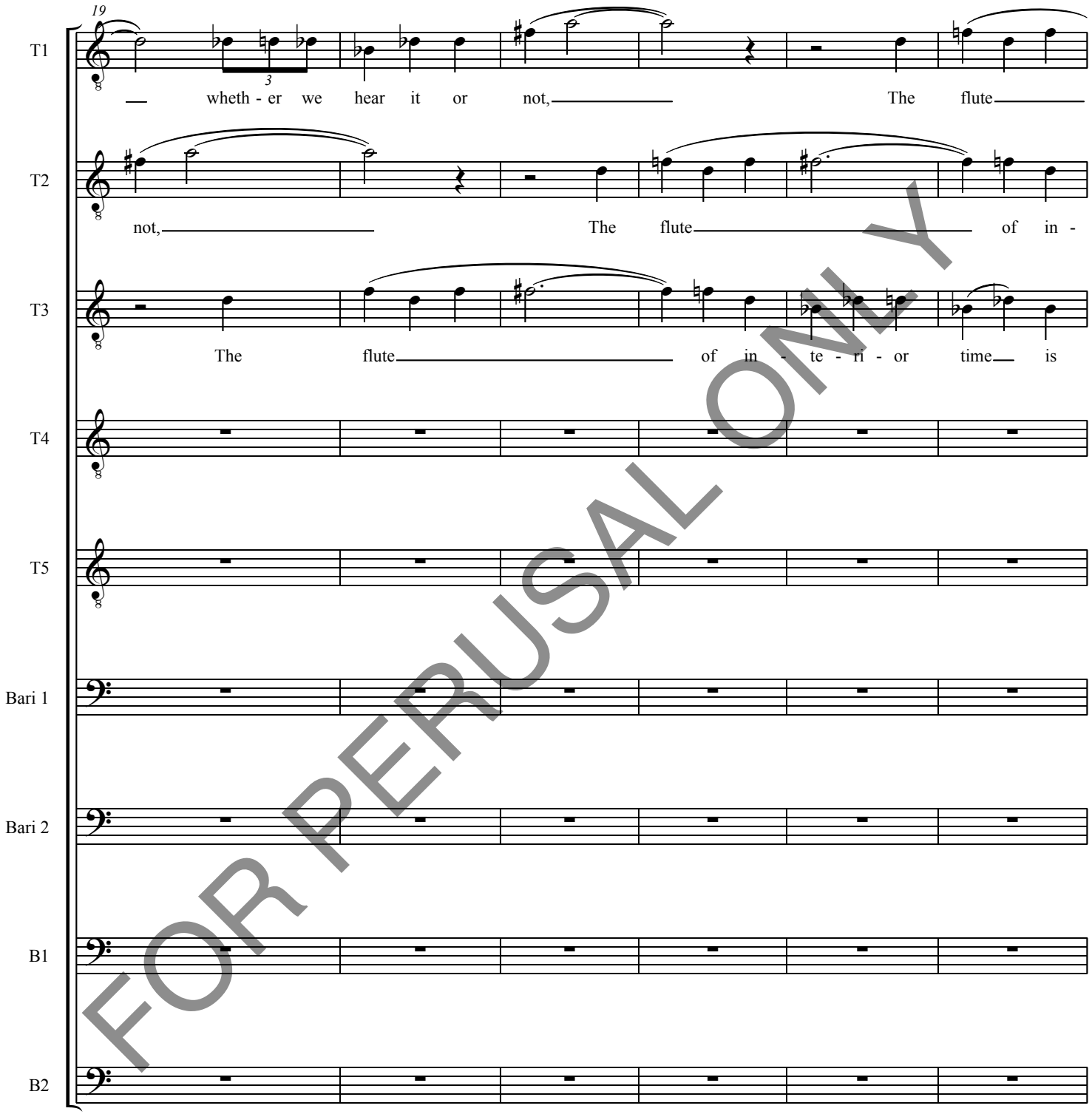

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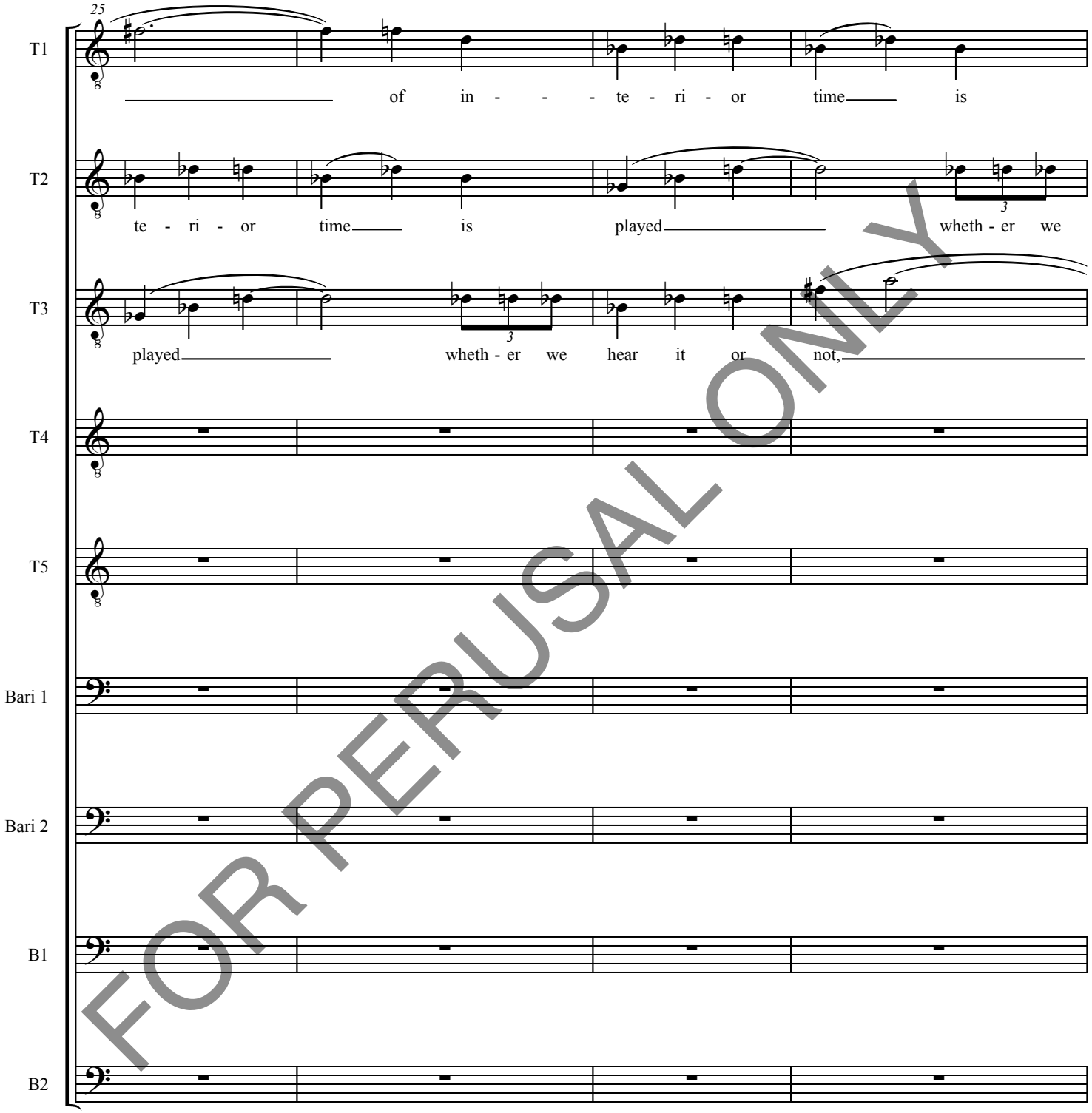

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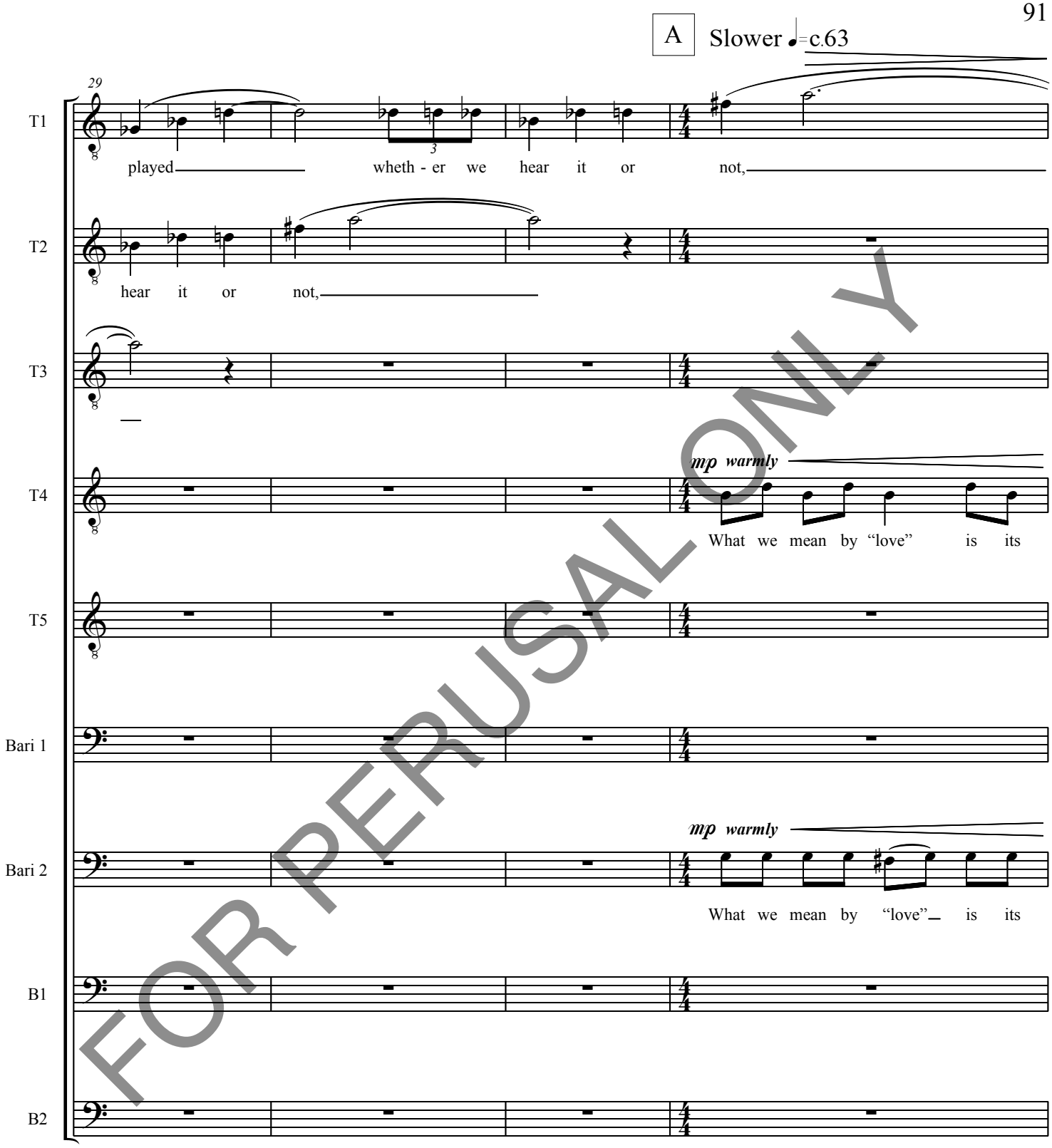

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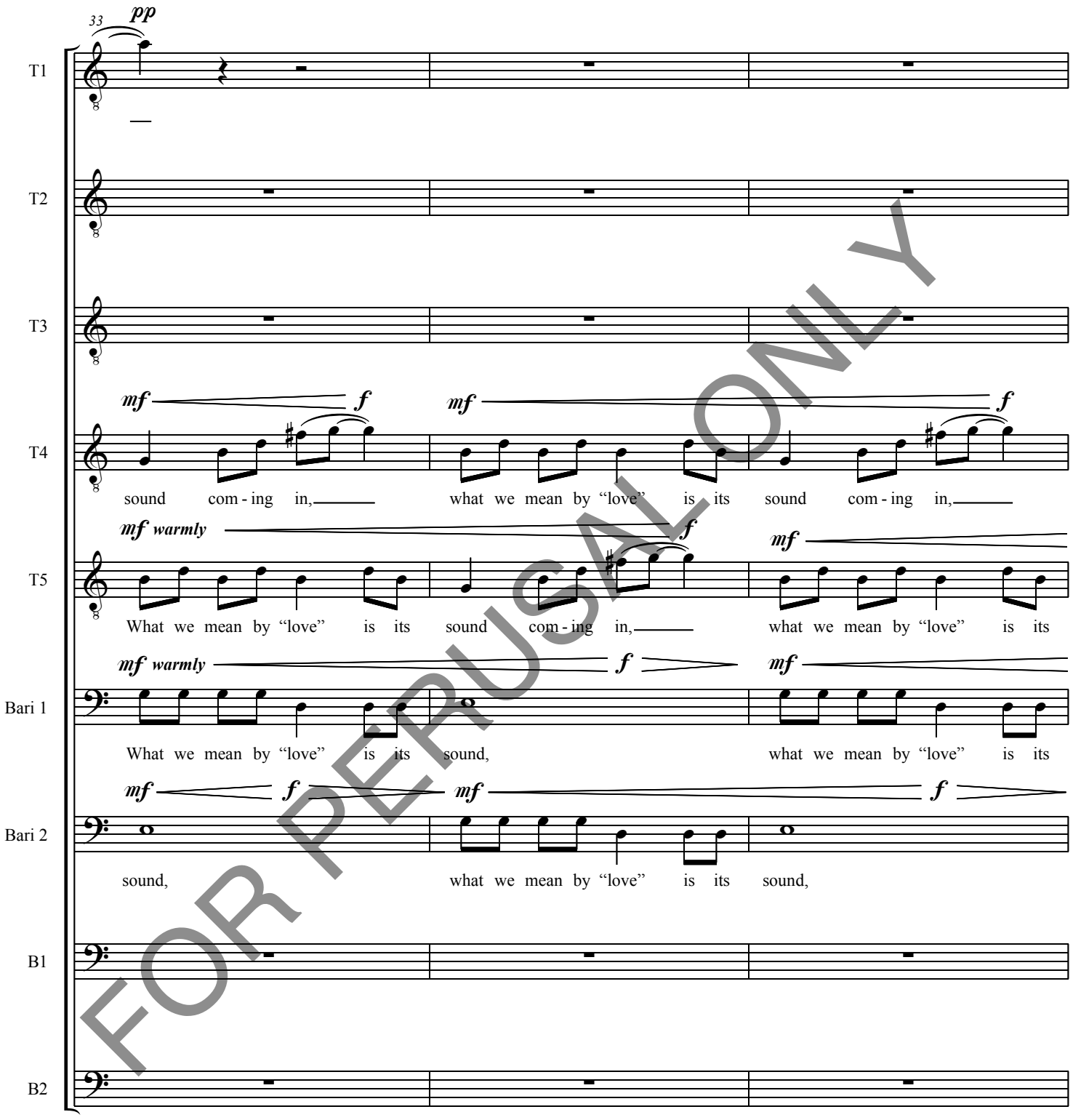

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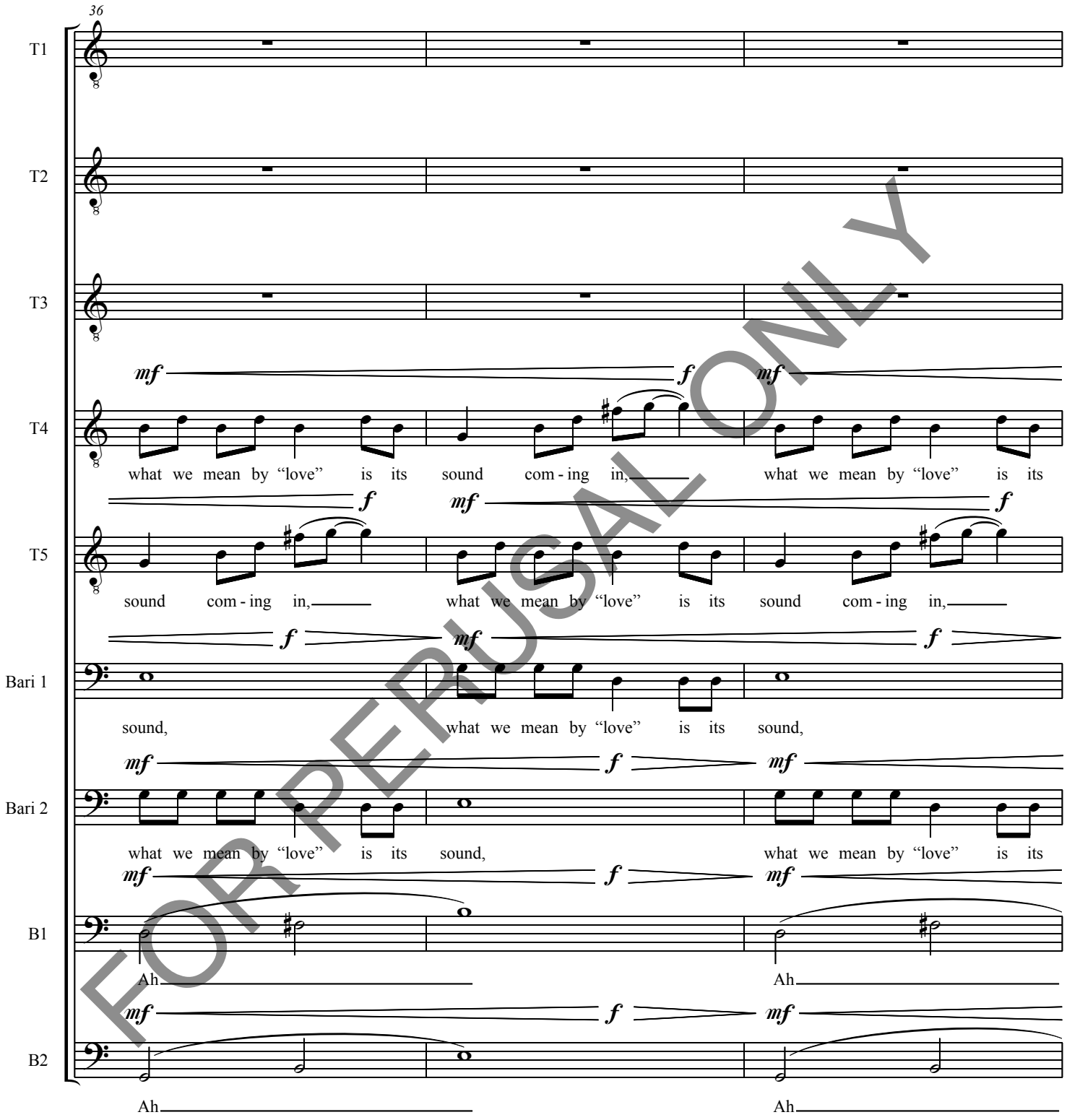

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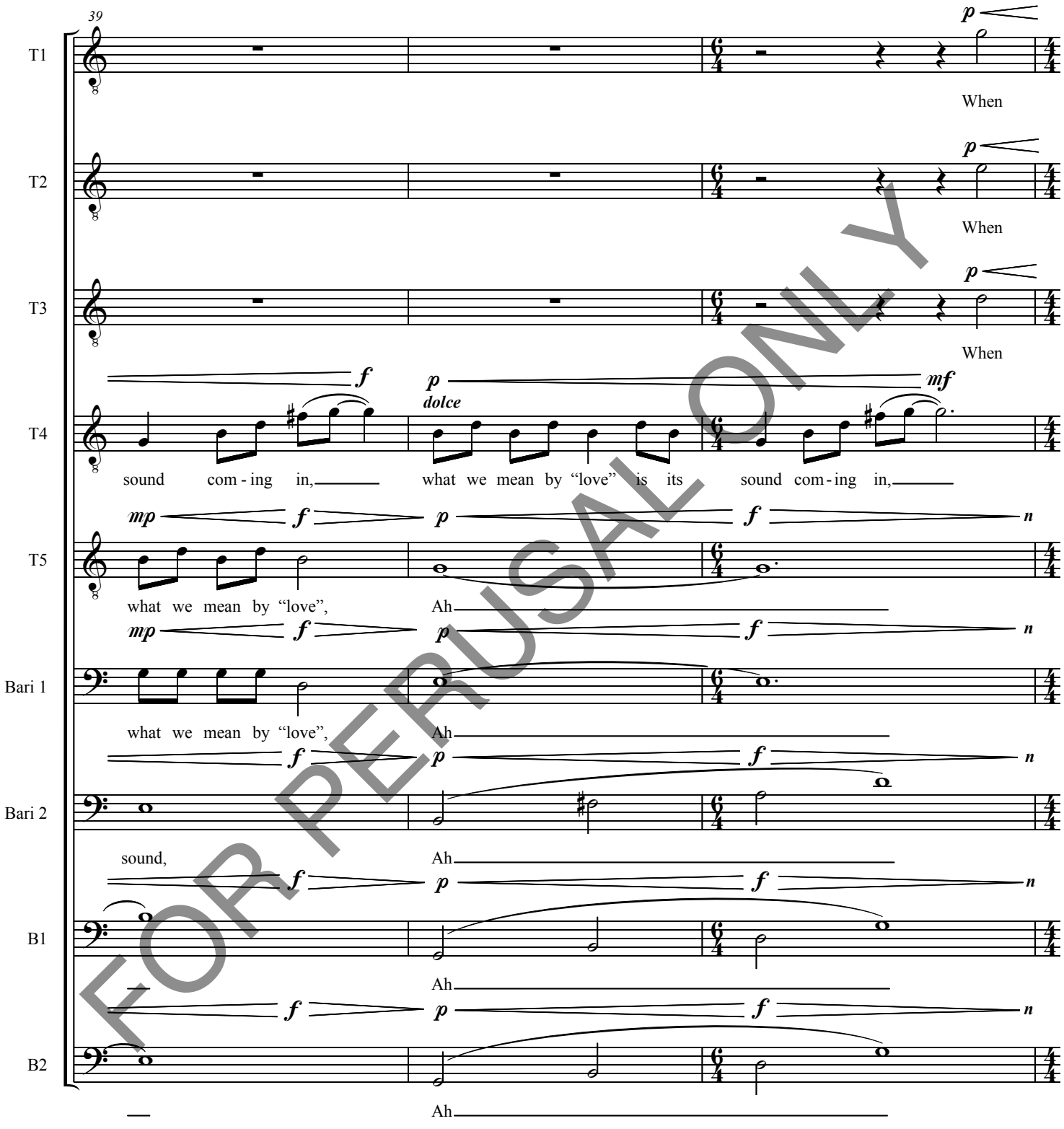

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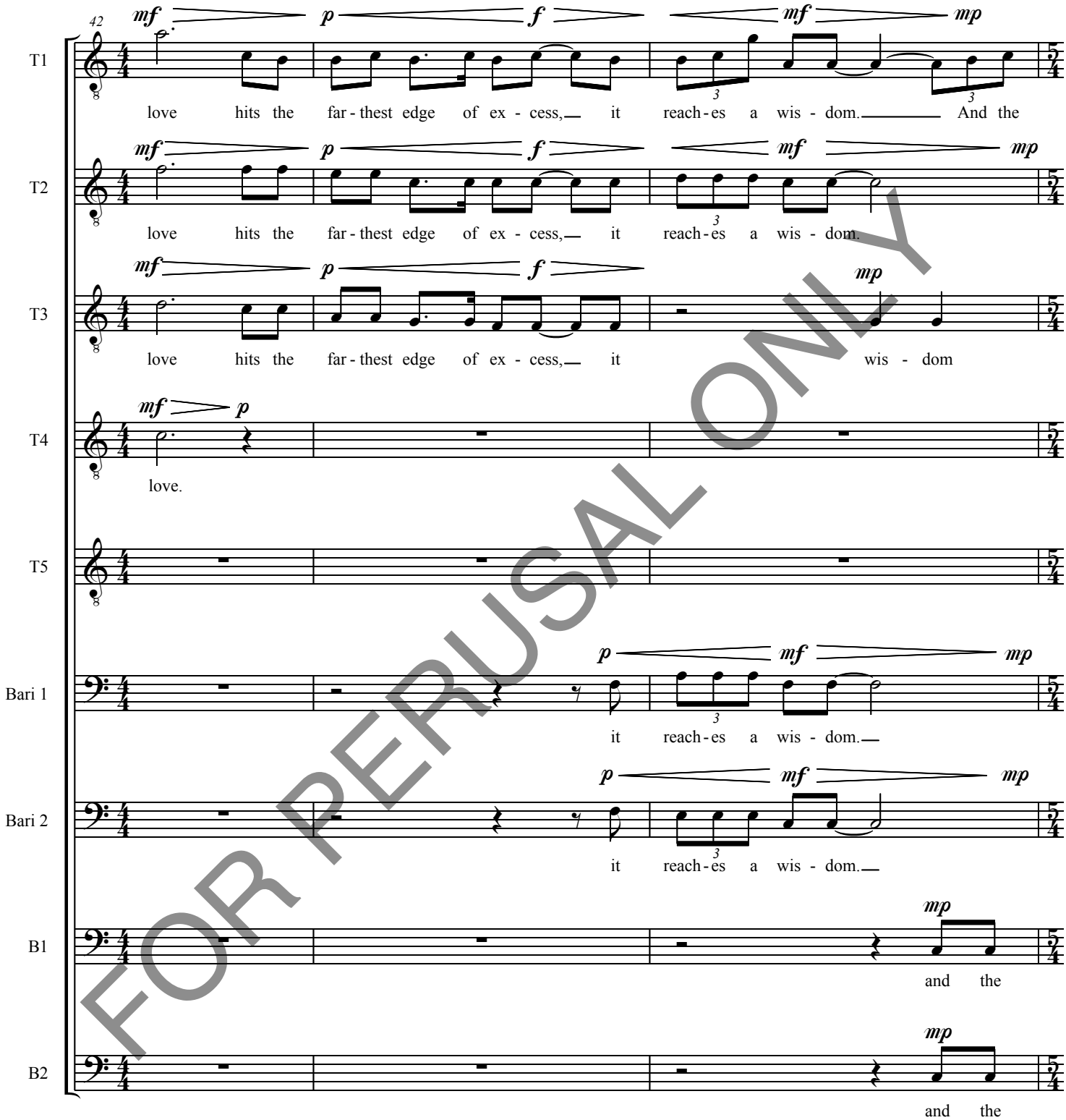

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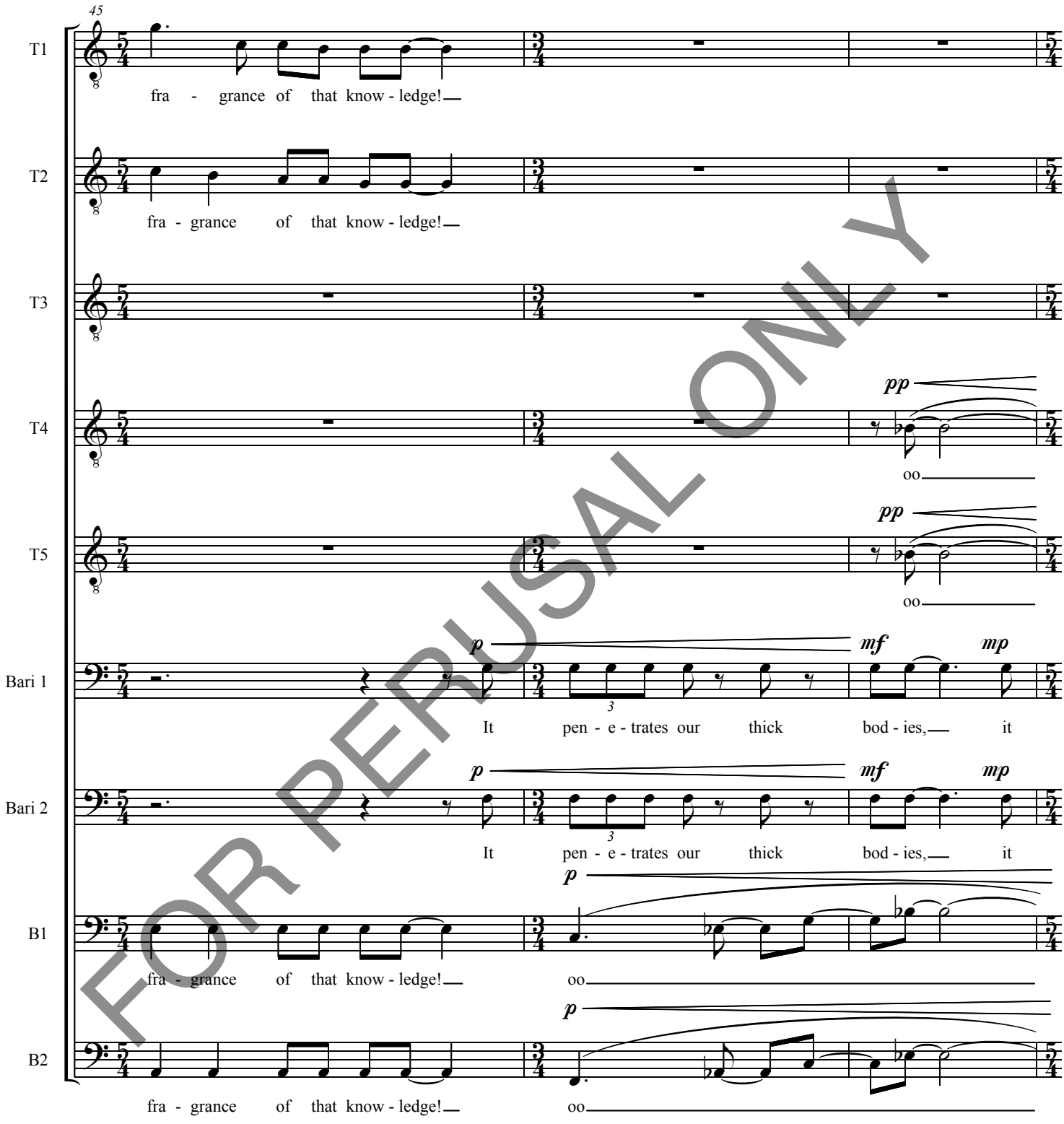

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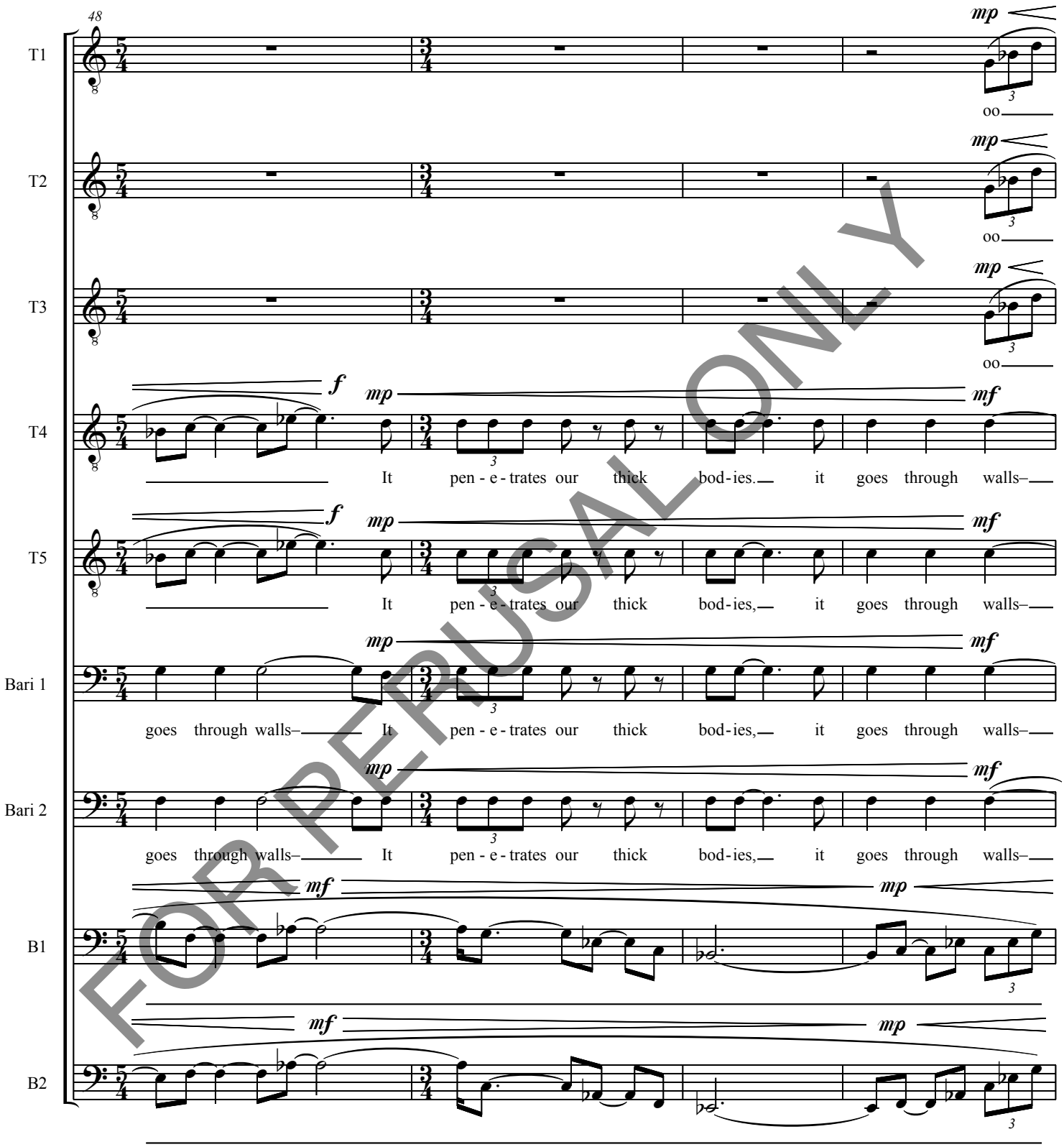

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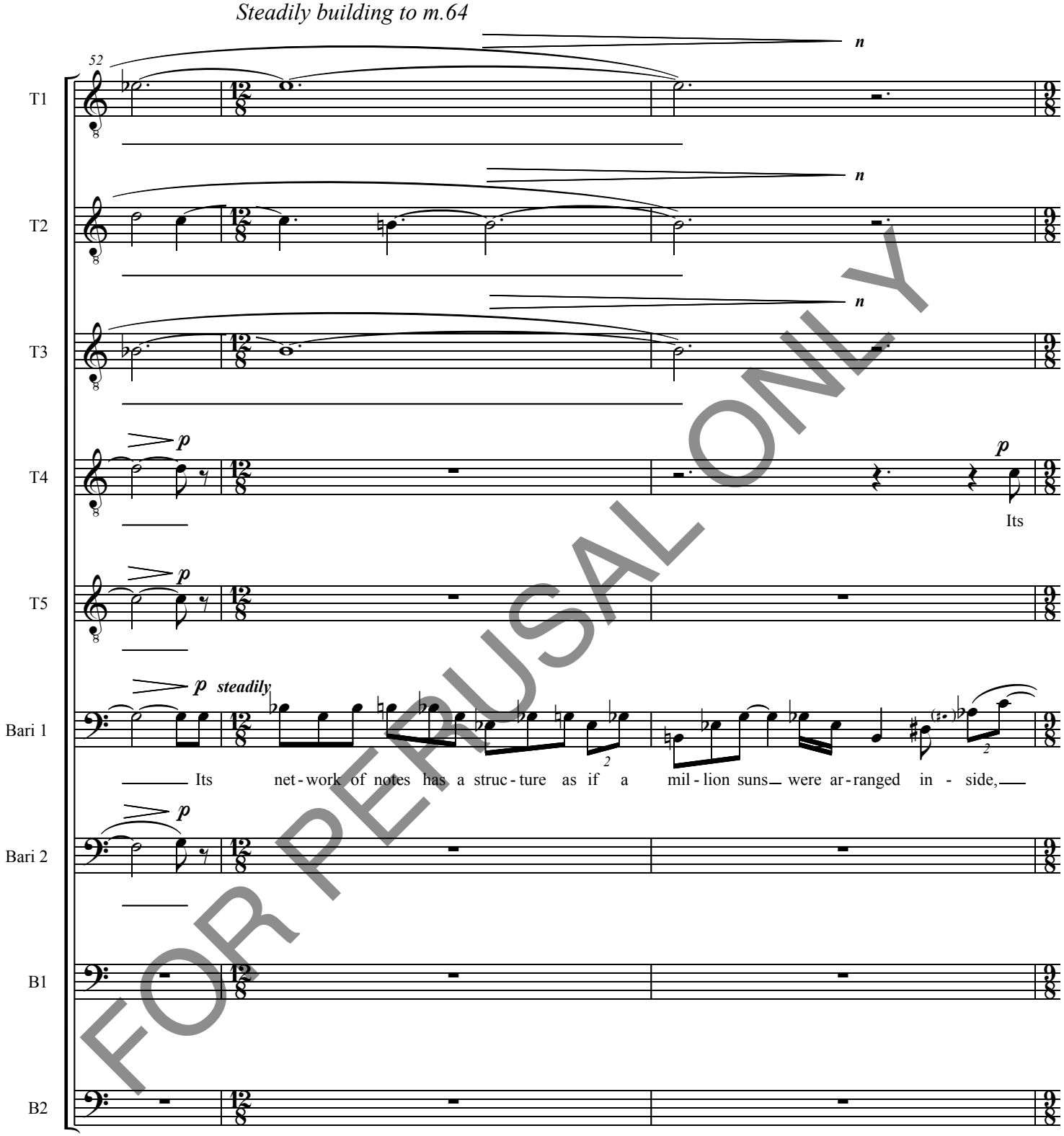

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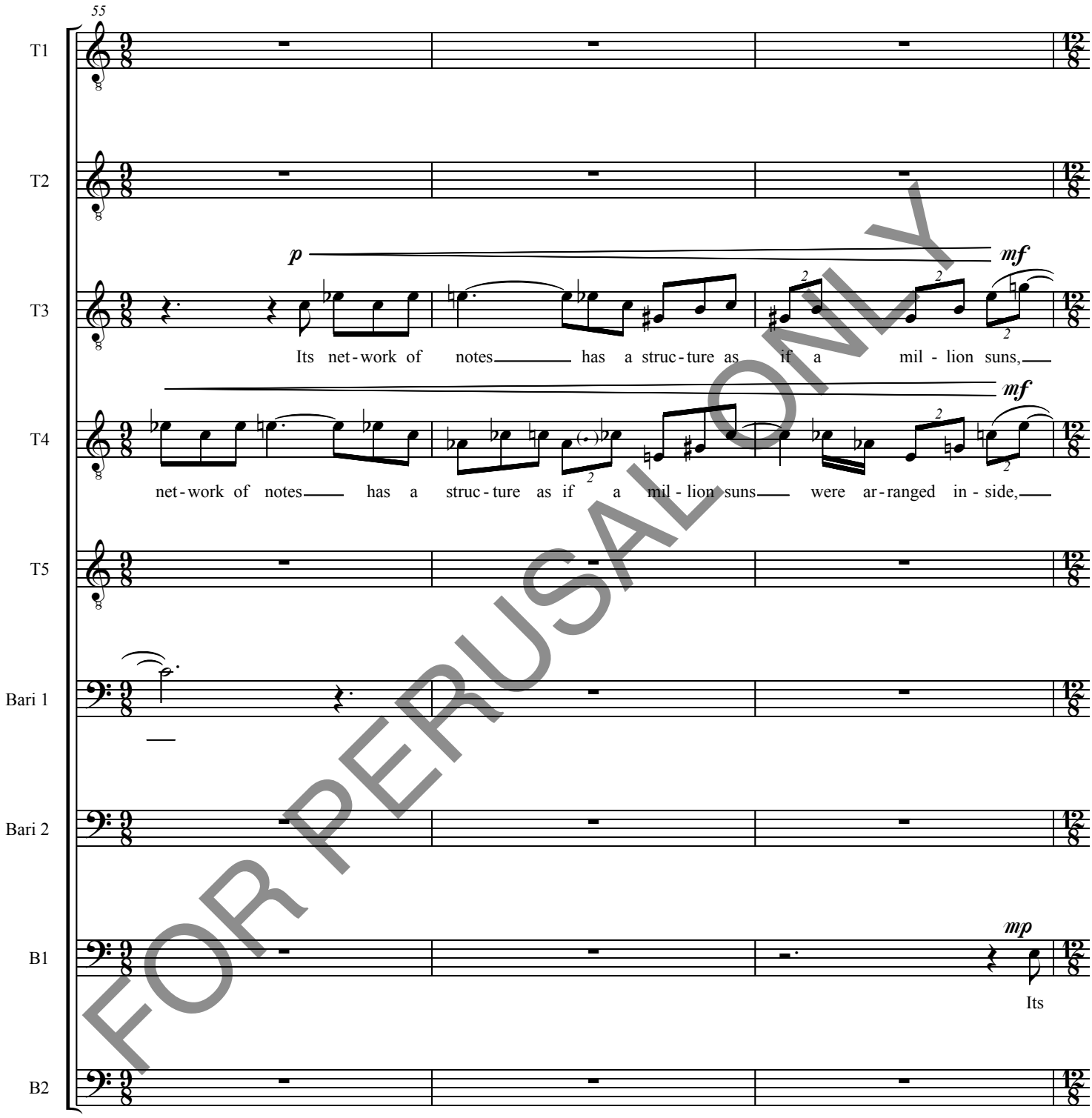

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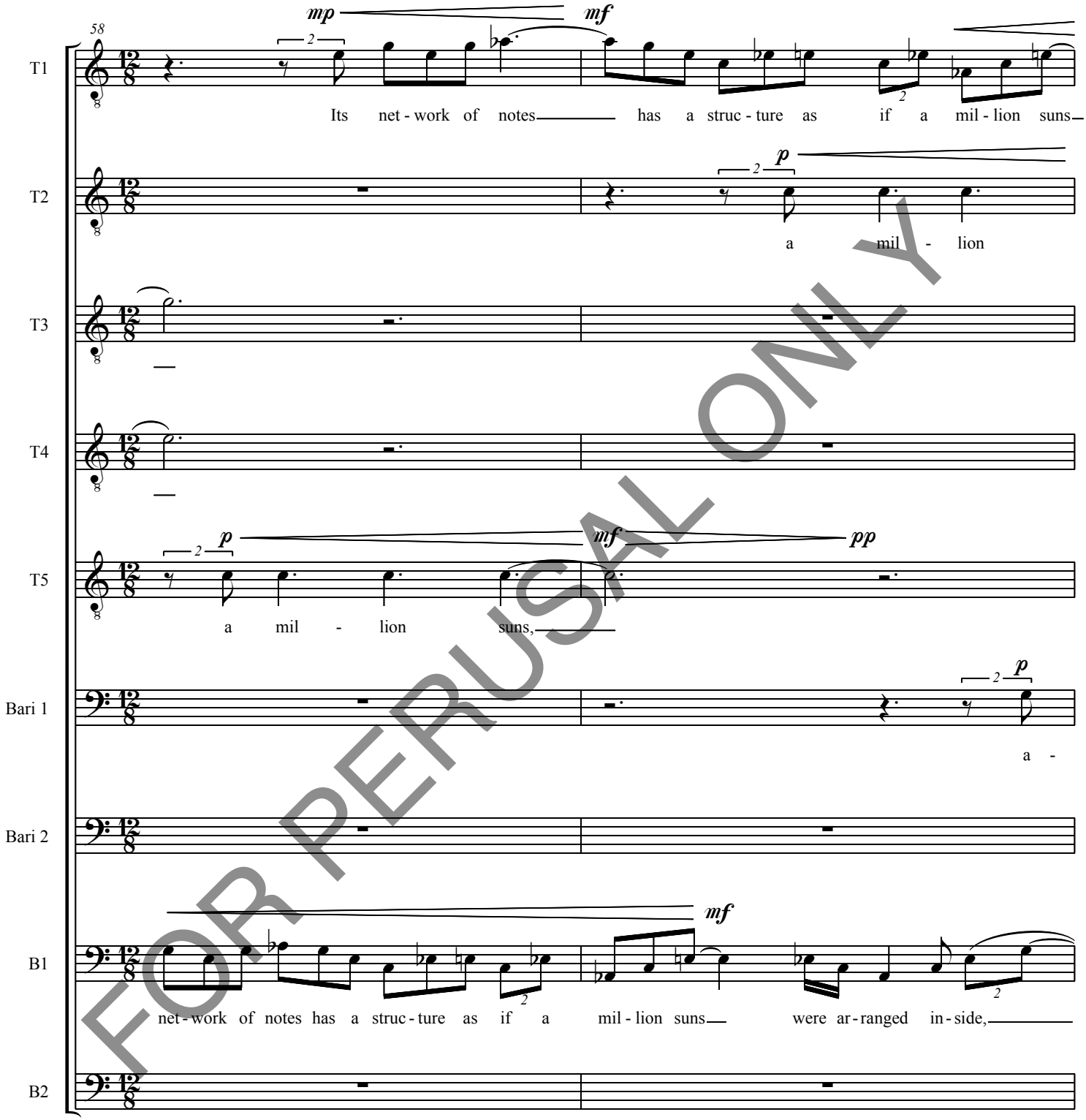

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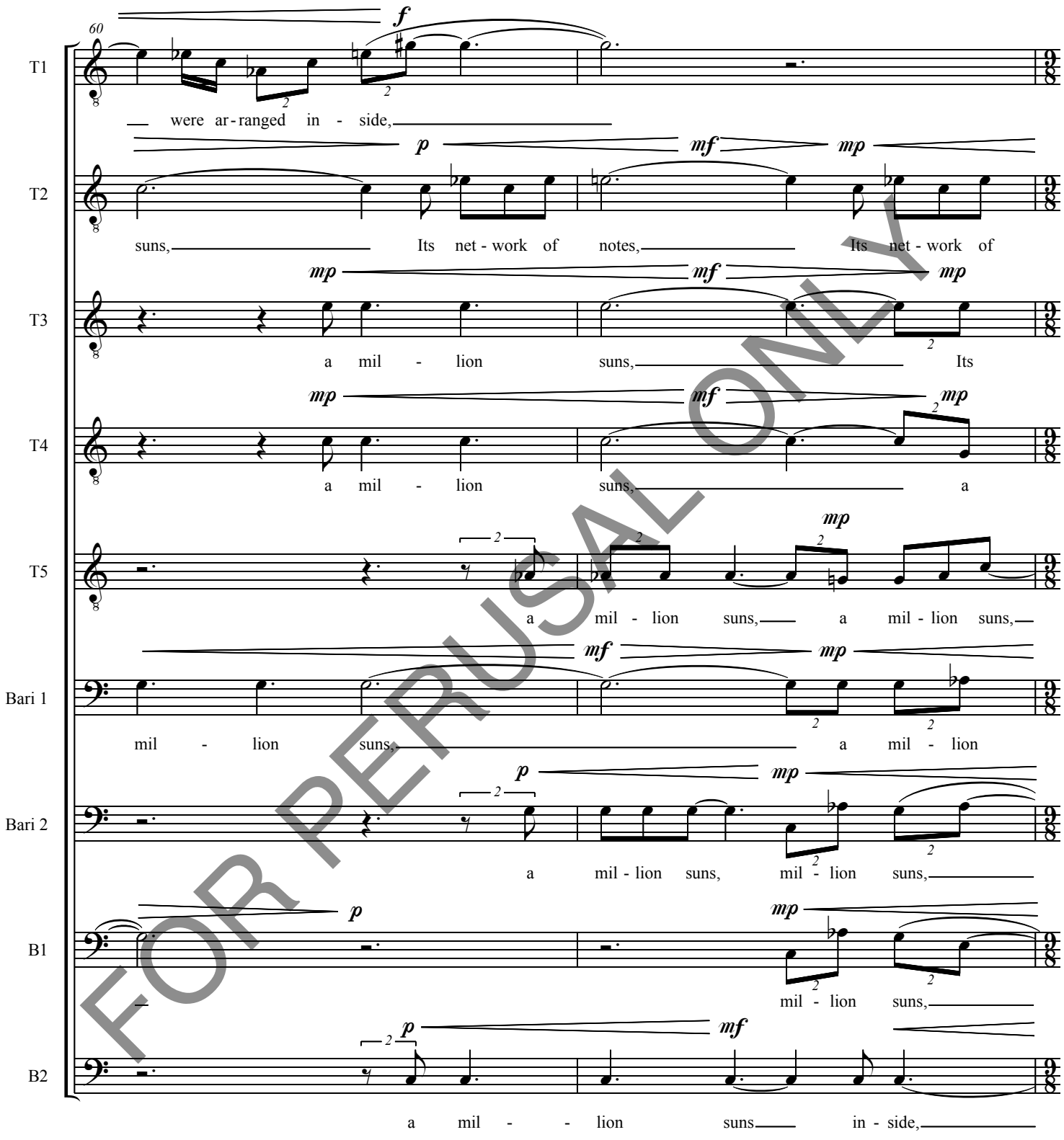

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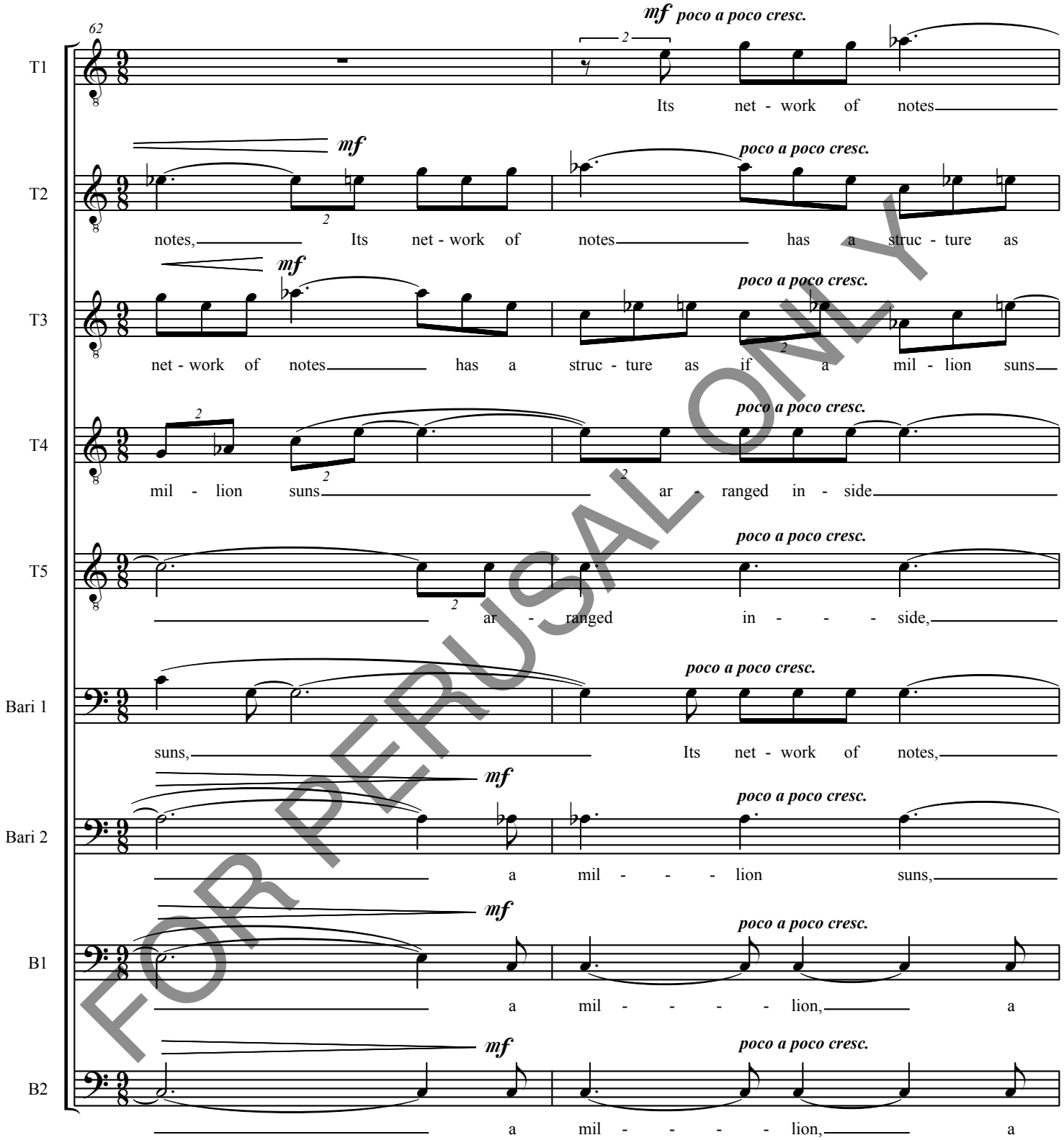

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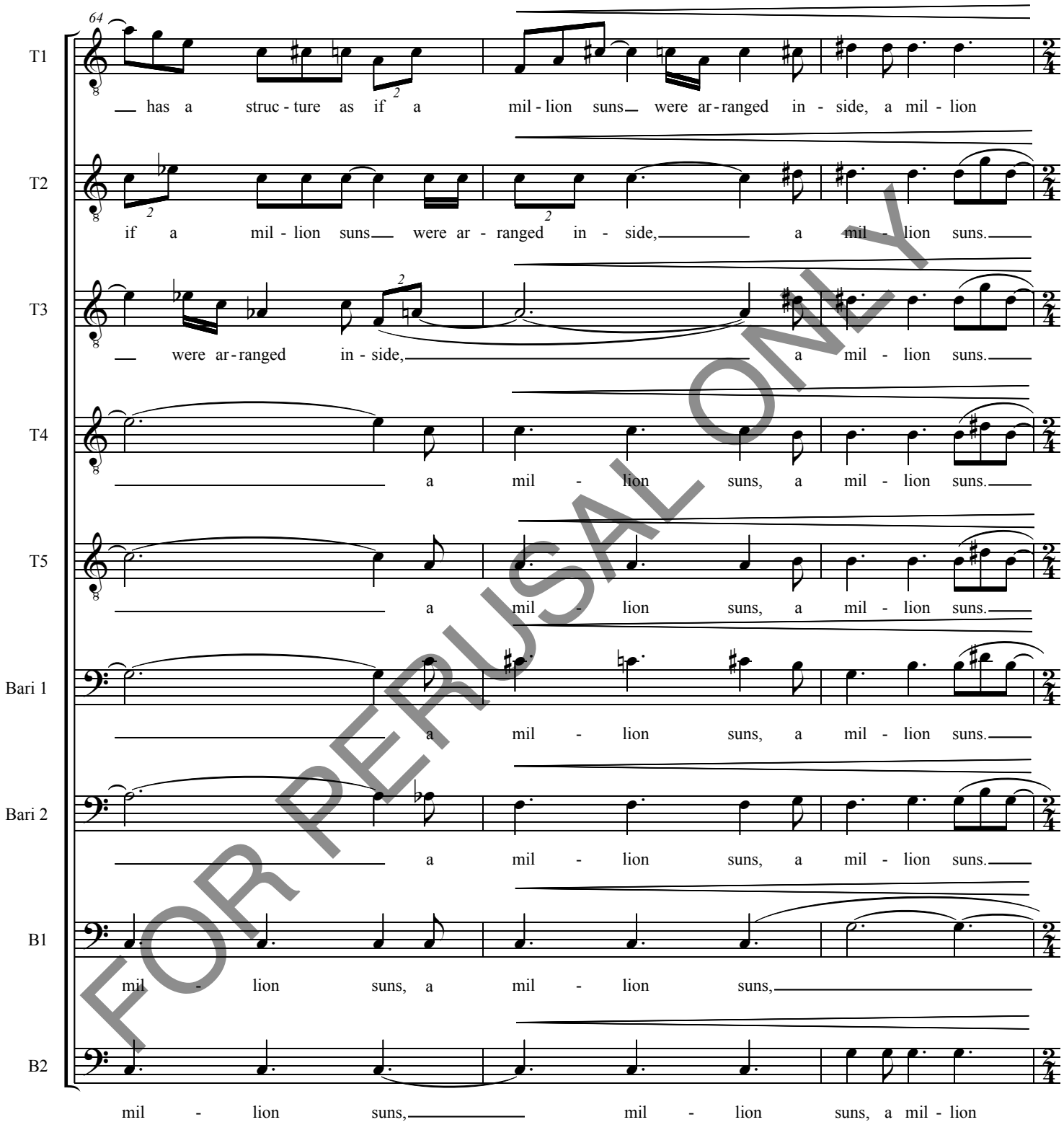

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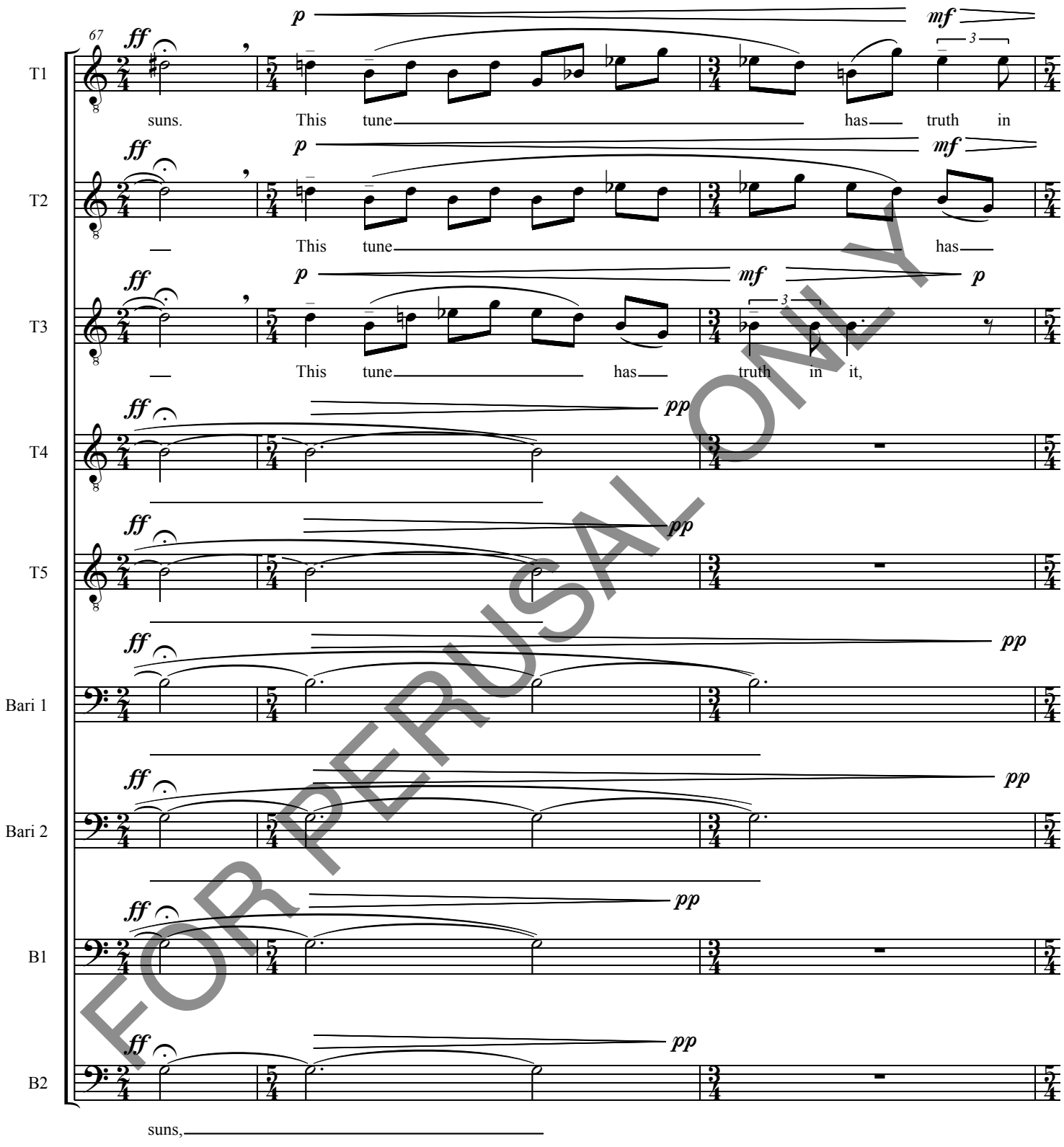

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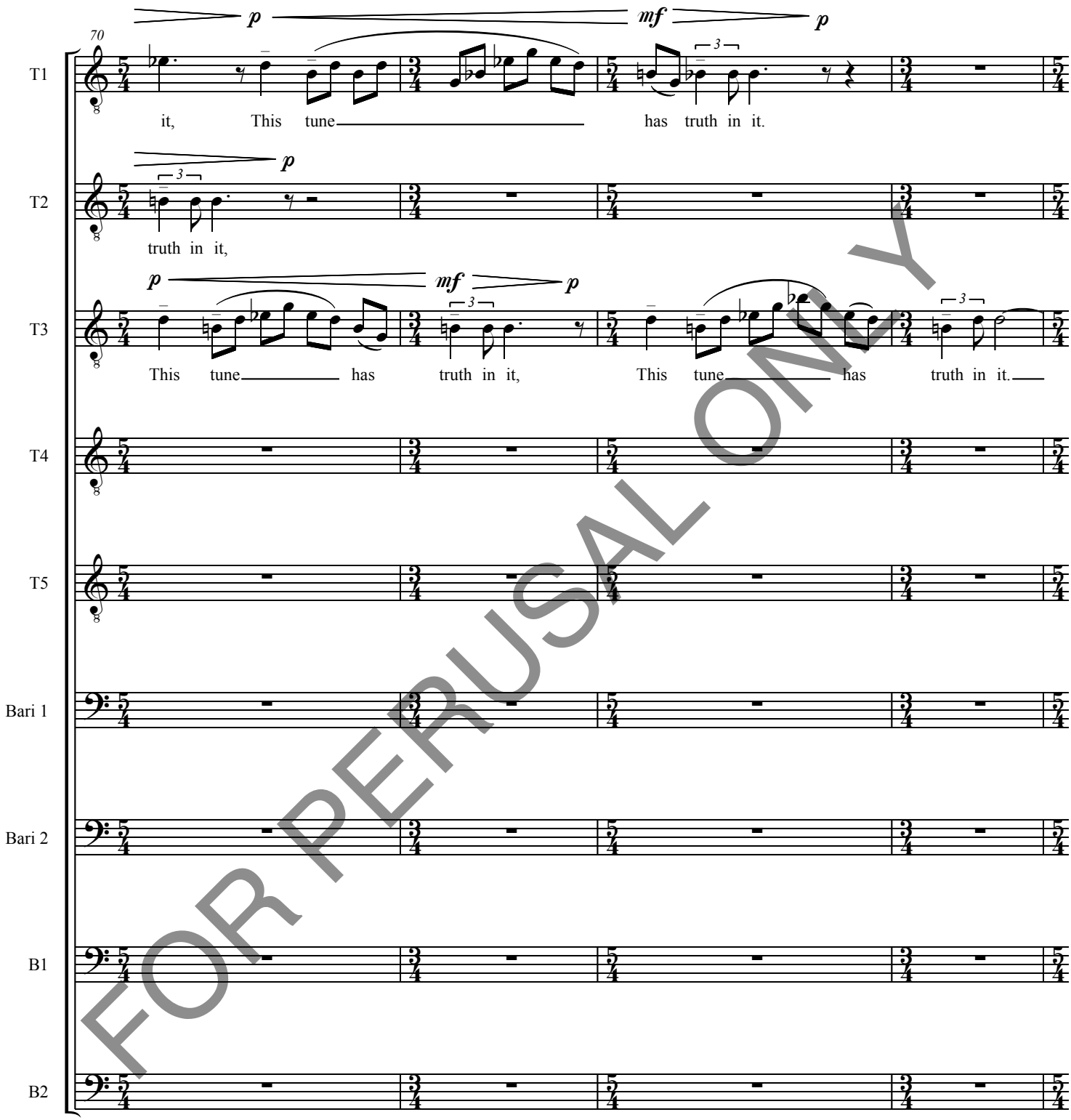

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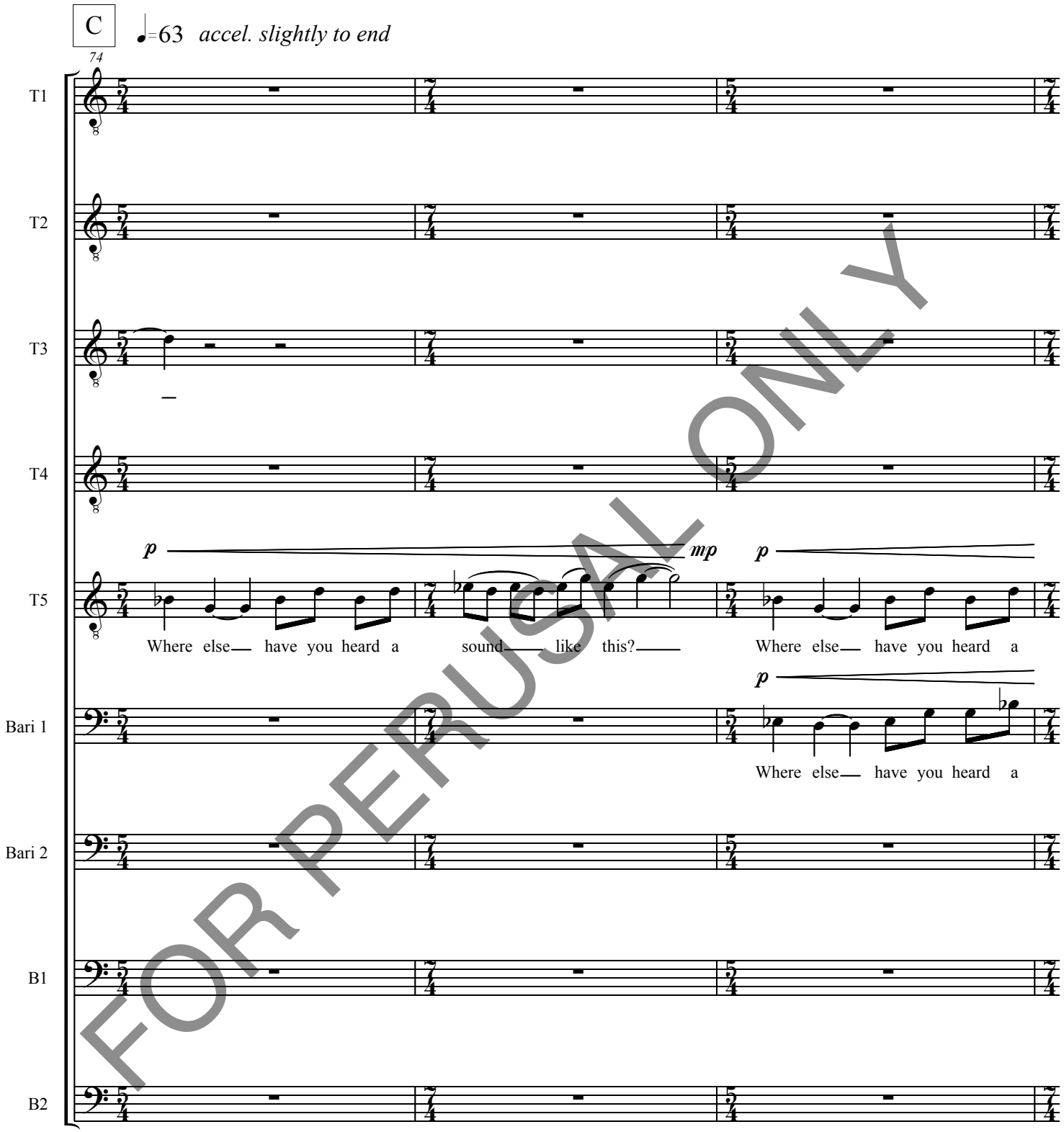

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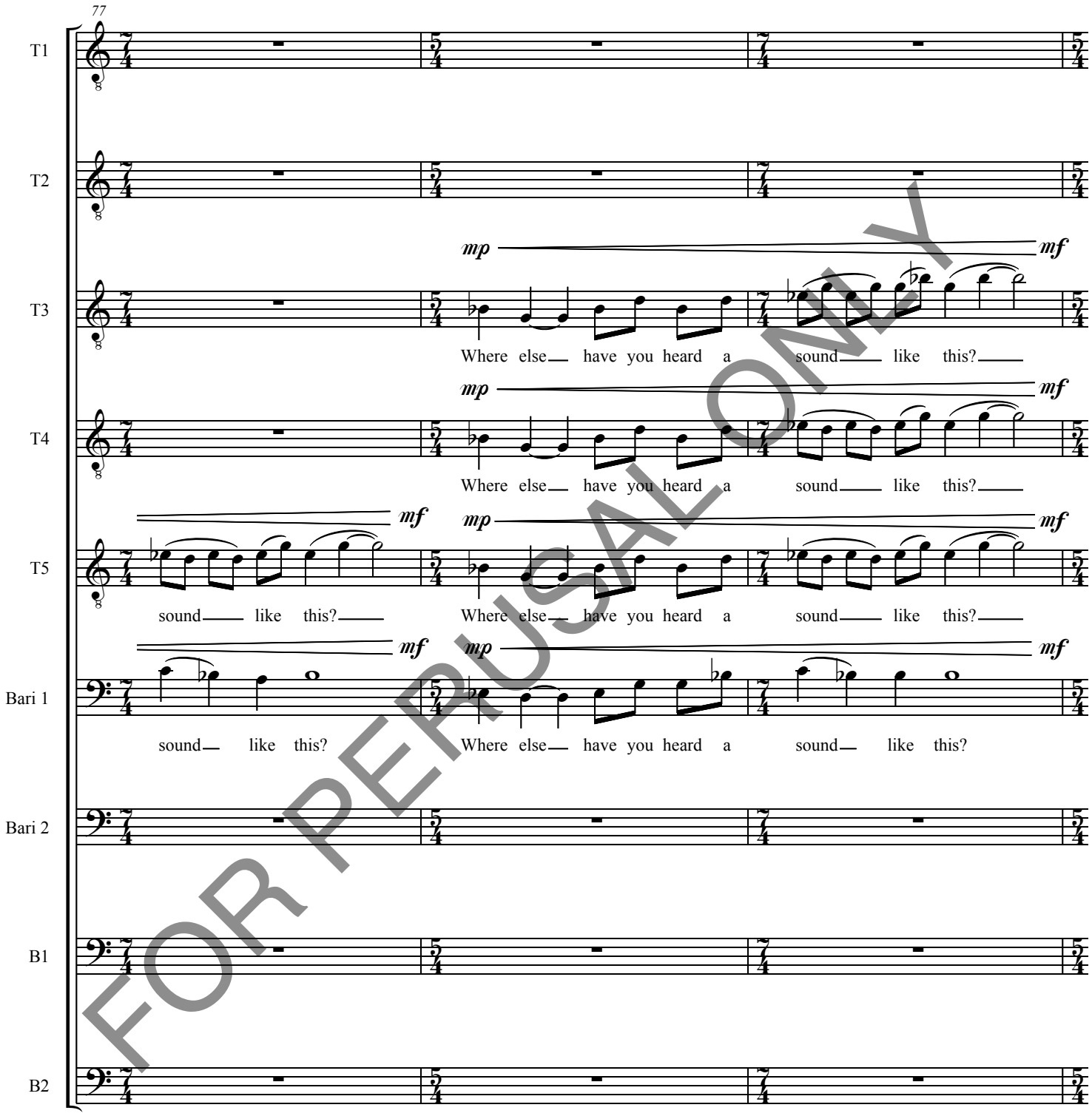

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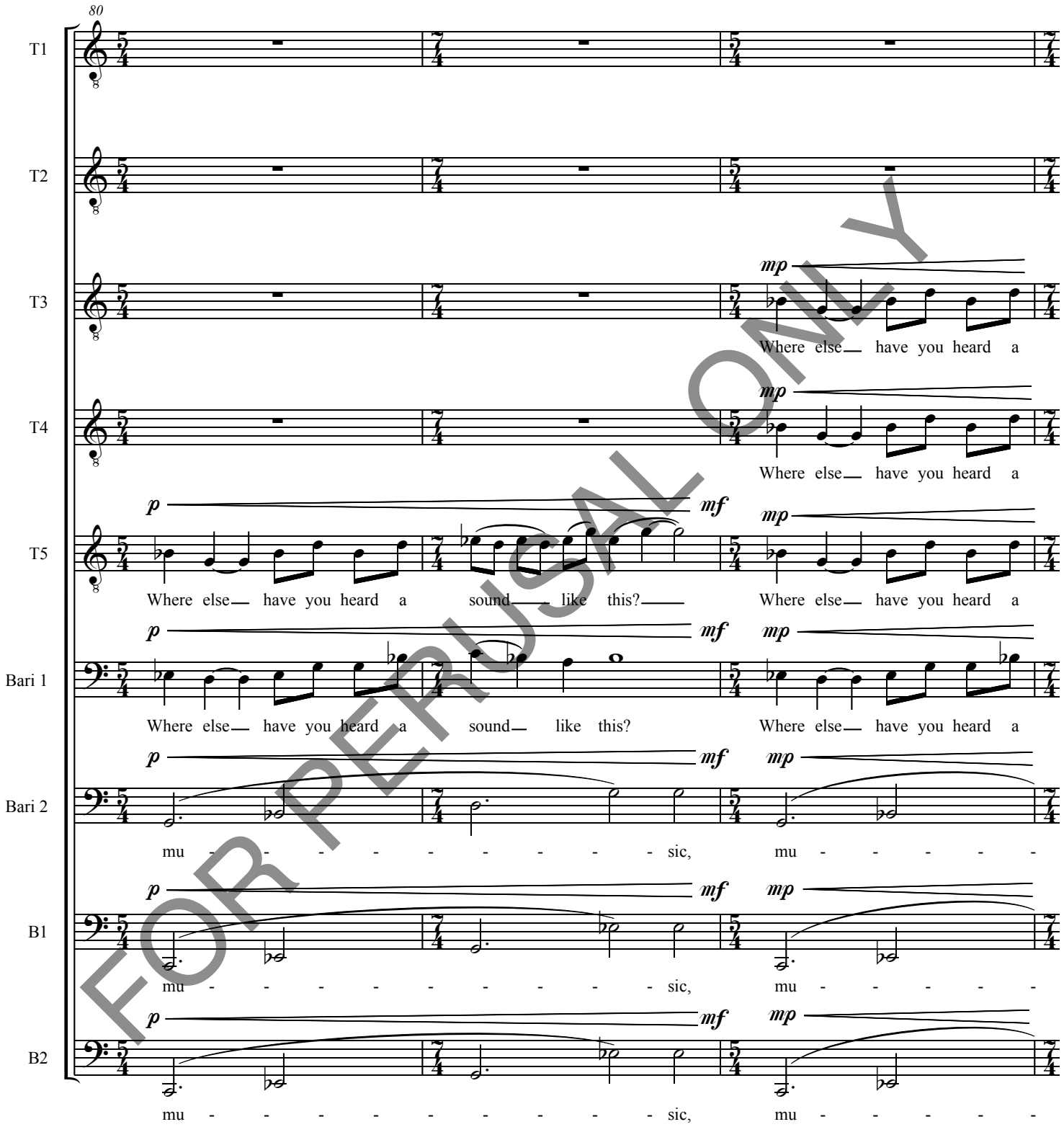

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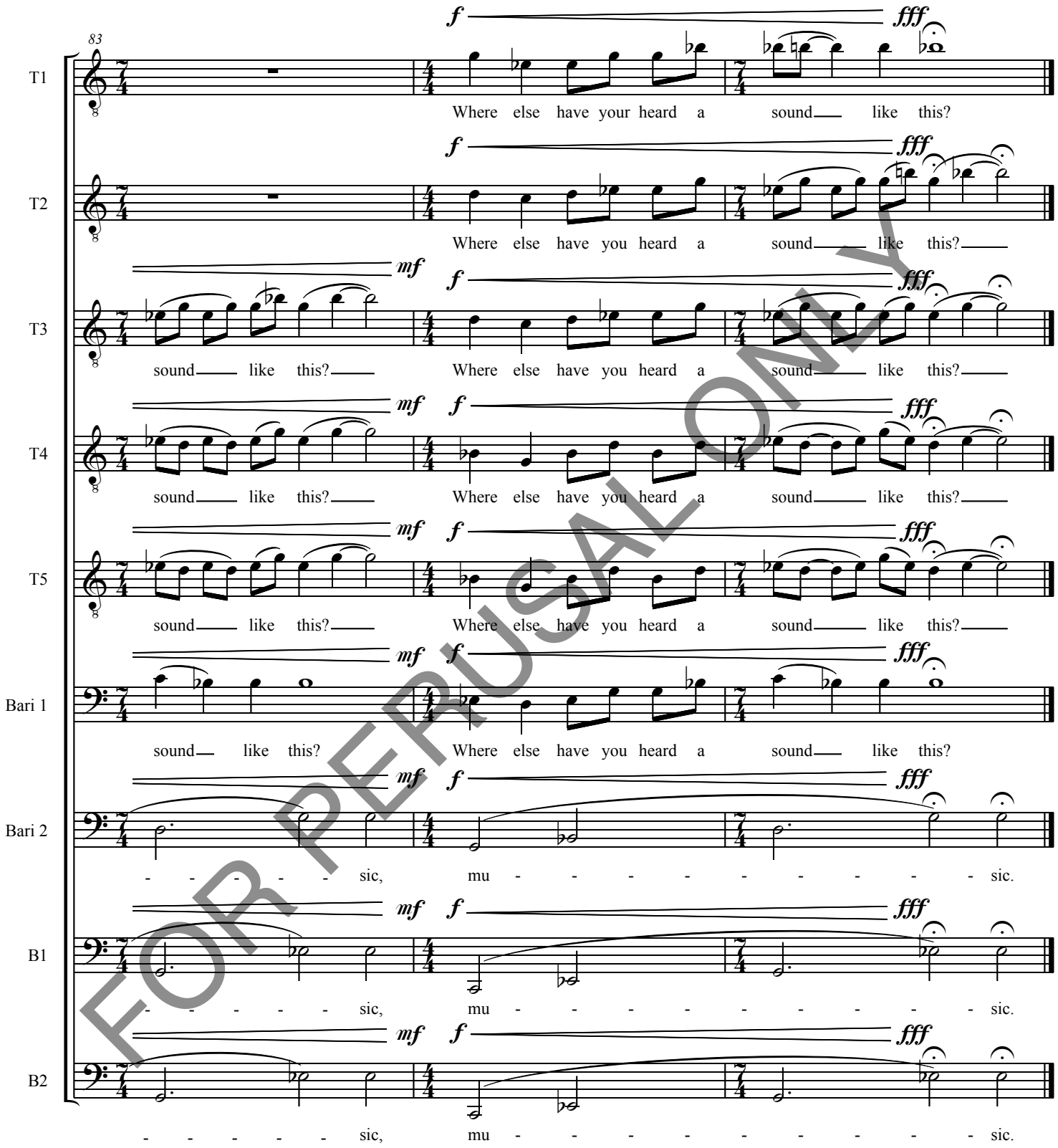

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Described as "...bold...radiant, deftly crafted..." (Musical America), Edie Hill's music is performed all over the world. Venues have included Lincoln Center, Met Cloisters (NYC), Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall (NYC), Musis Sacrum in Arnhem, Holland, LA County Museum of Art, Library of Congress, Minneapolis' Walker Arts Center, St. Paul's Schubert Club, Berwald Hall (Stockholm Sweden), Liviu Cultural Center (Romania), Feszek Müvészklub (Budapest), St. Peter's Basilica (Vatican City).

A three-time McKnight Artist Fellow and a two-time Bush Artist Fellow, Hill has received grants from the Jerome Foundation, ASCAP, New Music USA, Meet The Composer, Minnesota State Arts Board, Chamber Music America, and was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. The album, *Born: music of Edie Hill and Michael Gilbertson* won the 2023 GRAMMY® for "Best Choral Performance" for The Crossing (Donald Nally, conductor). She has a B.A. from Bennington College and earned her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Minnesota.

Composer in Residence at Schubert Club from 2005-2017, she ran and grew the Mentorship Program for high school composers. She was Composer Mentor for MN Varsity for composers 14-18 years of age co-sponsored by The American Composers Forum and Classical Minnesota Public Radio. She has lectured at colleges, universities and various institutions in the States and abroad.

For Hill, writing music is an opportunity to research, learn, muse, reach down deep, and allow inspiration to come from the stuff of life. Her compositions are fueled by her experiences, passions and curiosities.

for complete biography as well as works for perusal and sale, visit ediehill.com

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