GOD'S HOPE FOR THE WORLD AT CHRISTMAS

THE STORY

DREAM

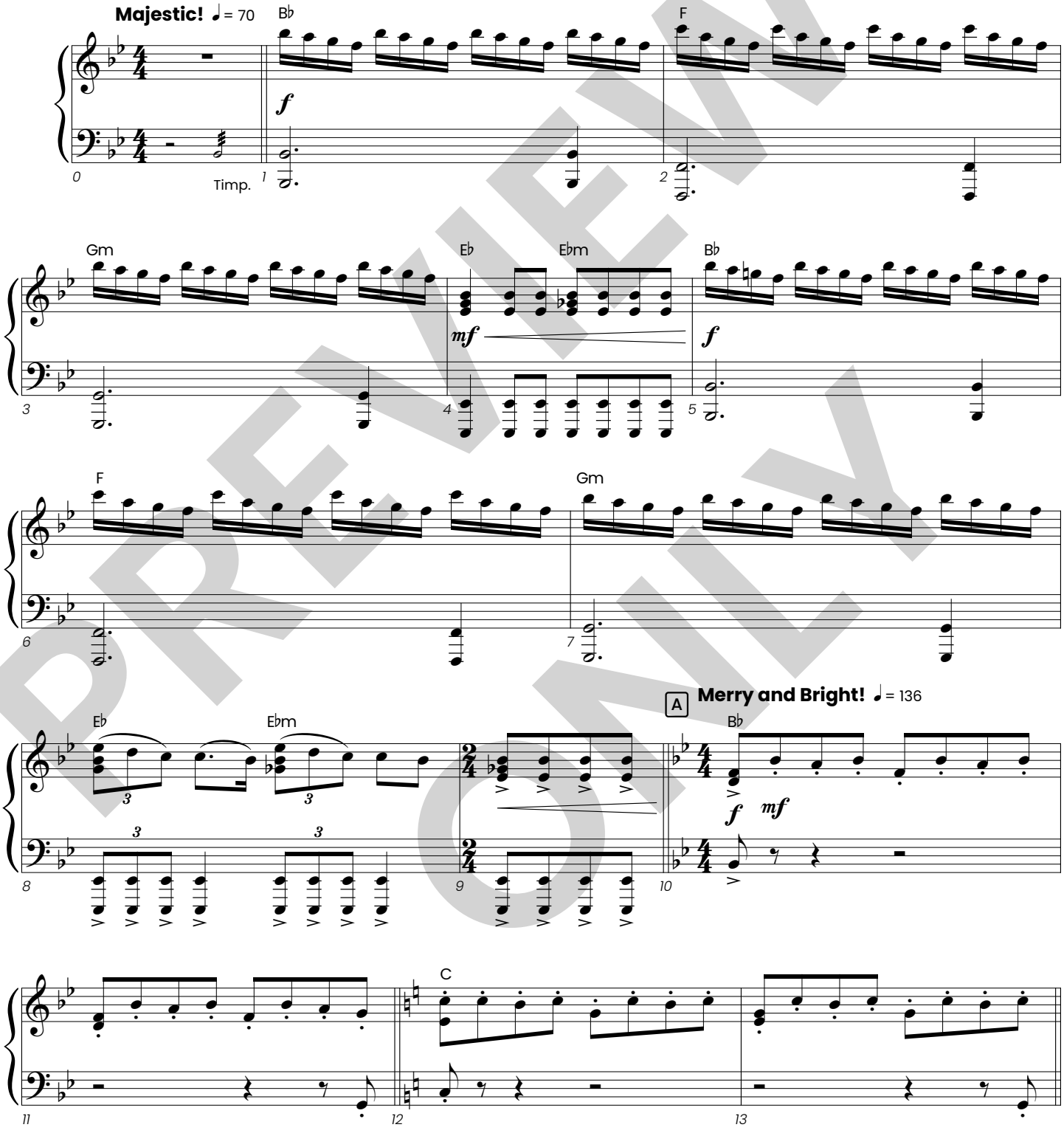
CREATED BY JEFF BUMGARDNER, JOEL LINDSEY,
MARSHA TAYLOR, AND HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Arranged by Eric Belvin, Tim Cates, Cliff Duren, Wayne Haun, and Alfredo Salmeron
Orchestrated by Tim Cates

HFW

Dream Overture

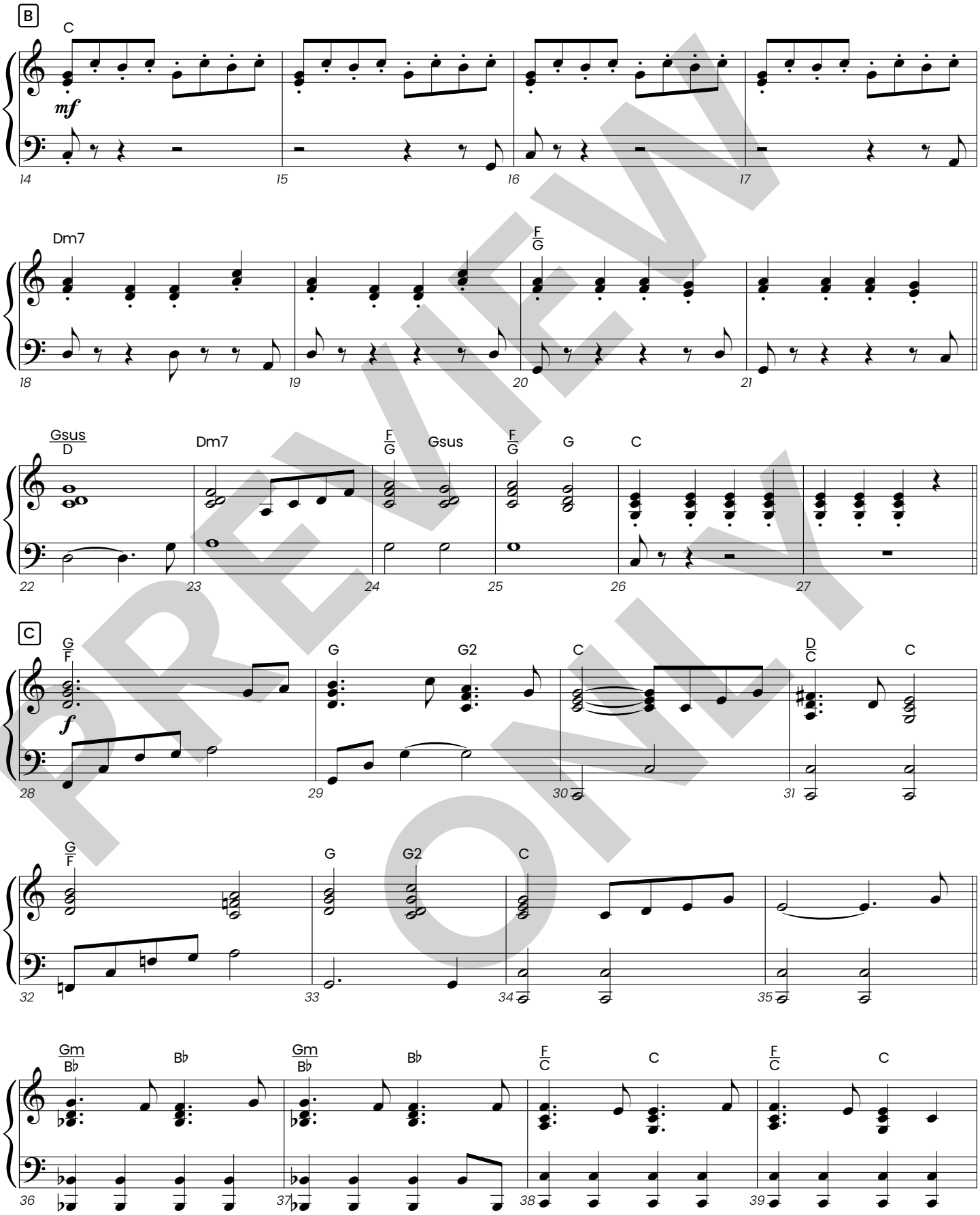
Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Tim Cates



PREVIEW ONLY

HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



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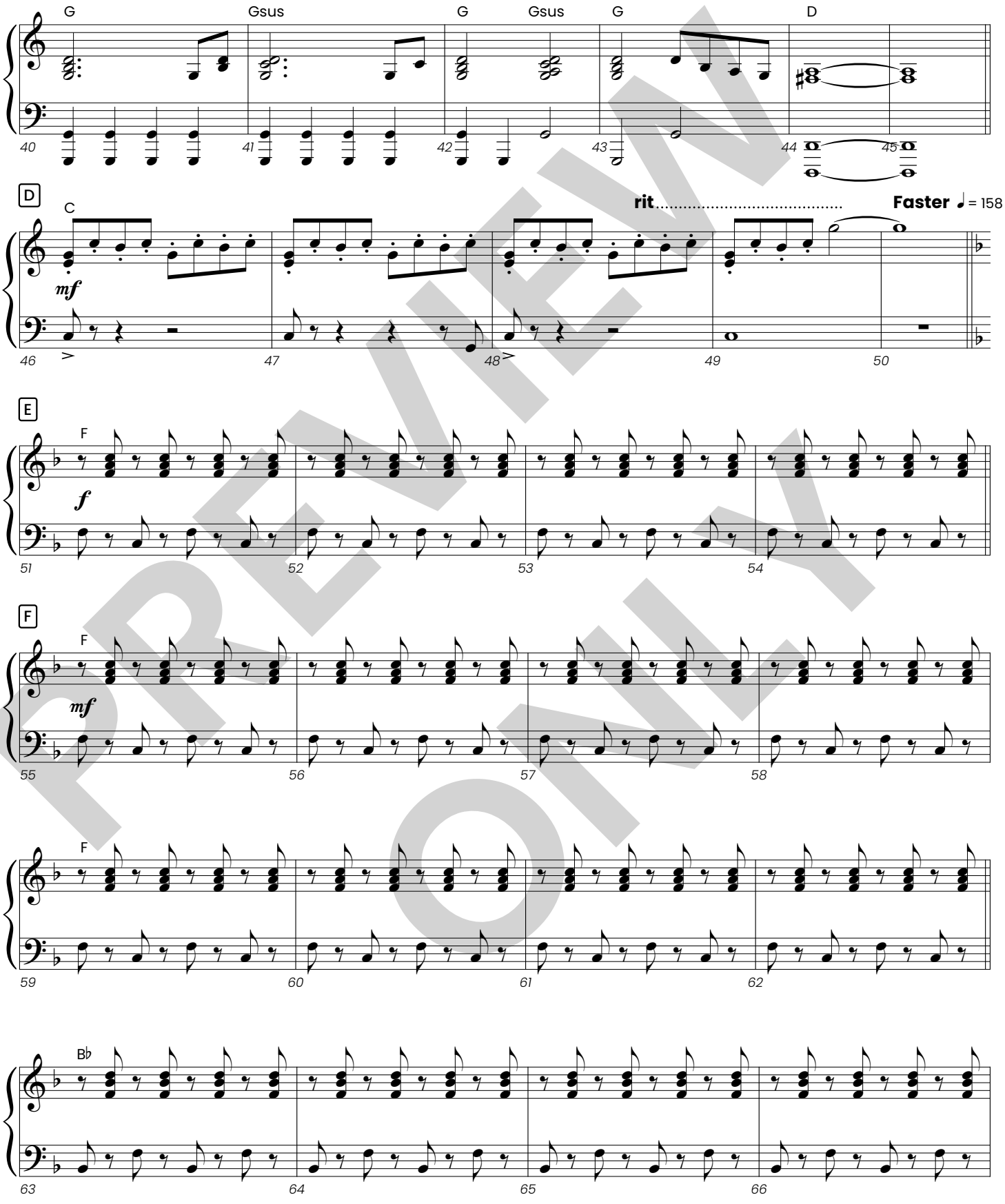

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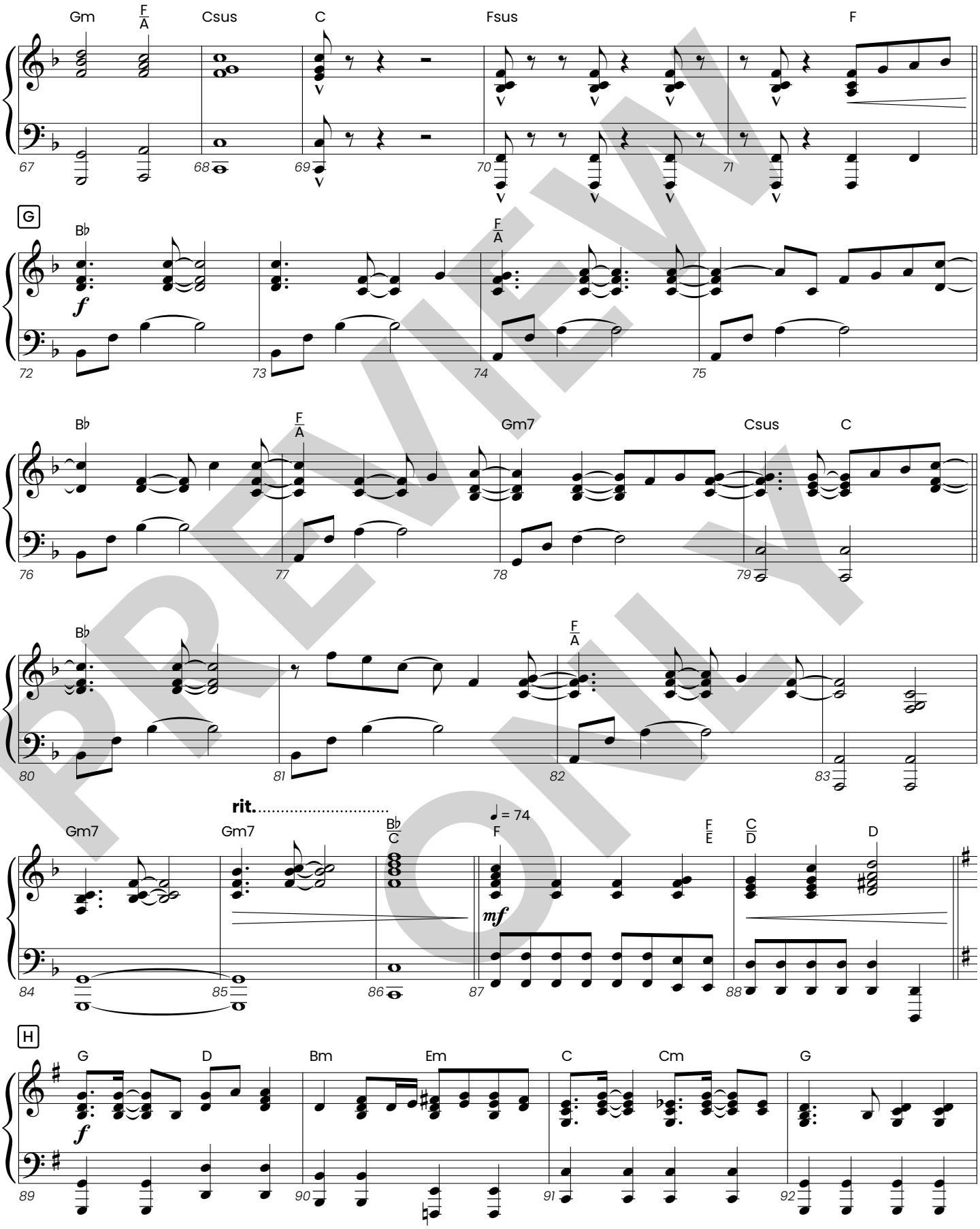

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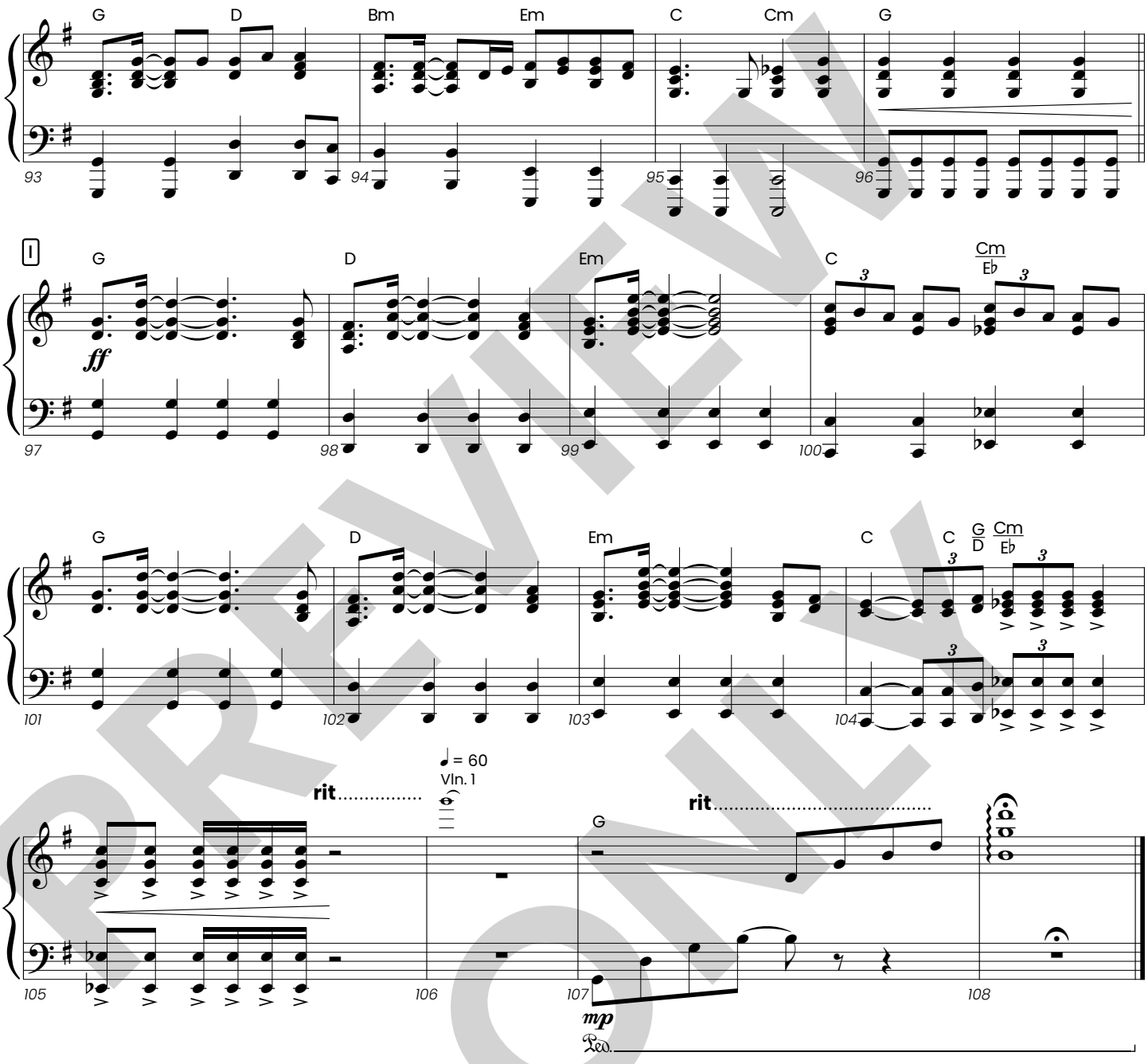


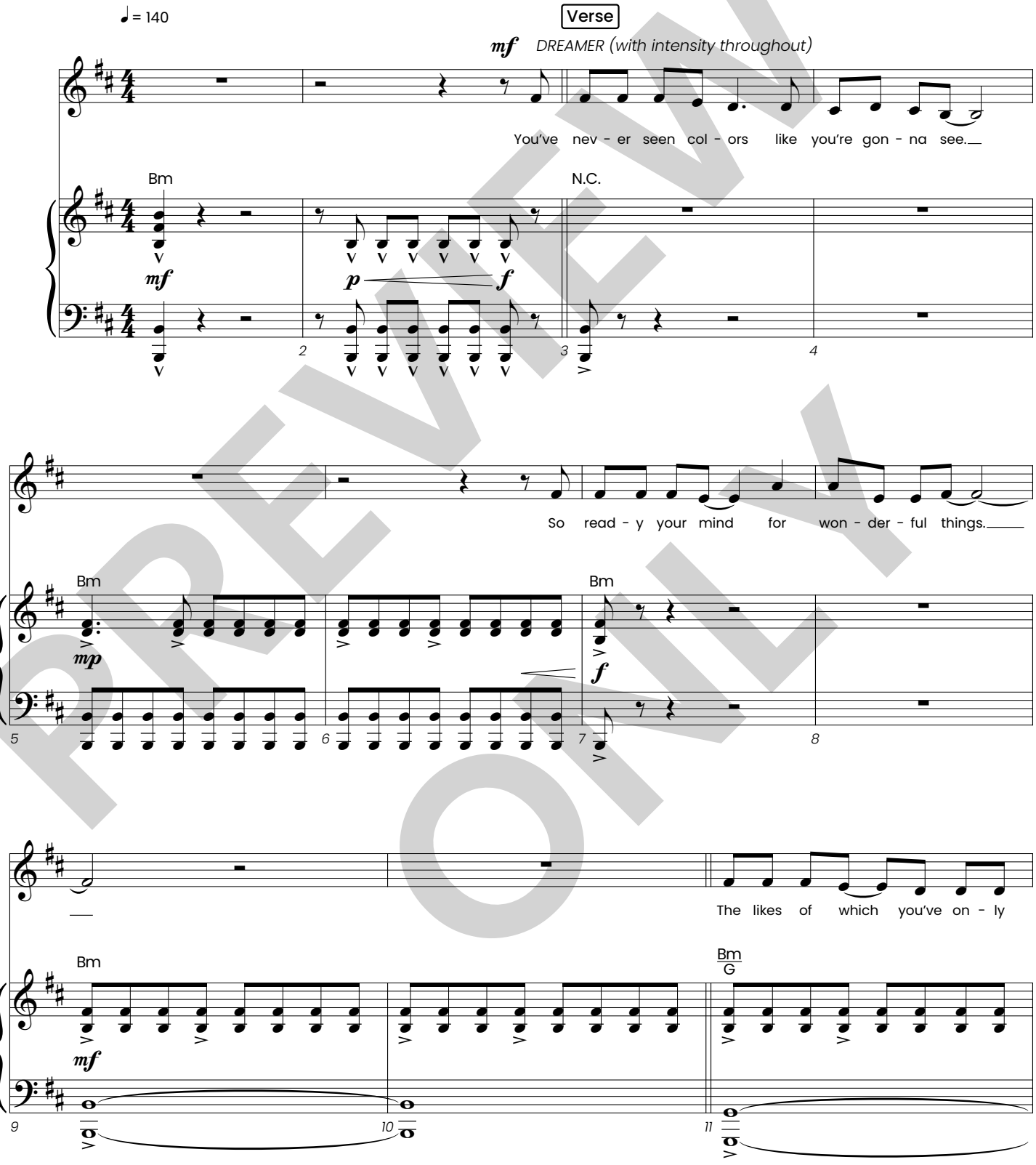
PREVIEW ONLY

ACT 1 – SCENE 1

(Music begins as dream-like images appear in flashes around the stage. Single spot hits soloist in a silhouette-type vision as he begins to sing. **1. Right Here, Right Now.**)

Right Here, Right Now

Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Cliff Duren



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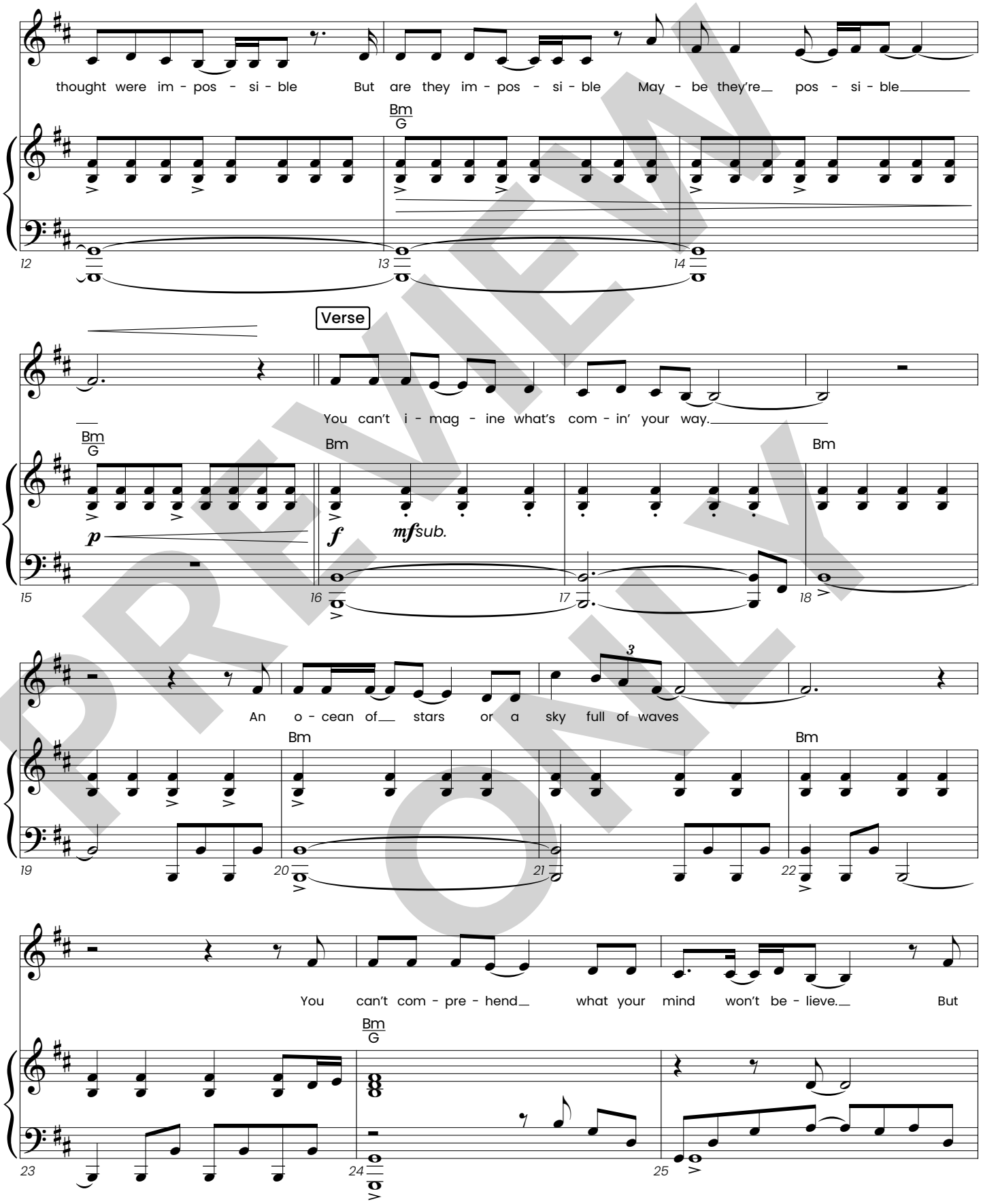

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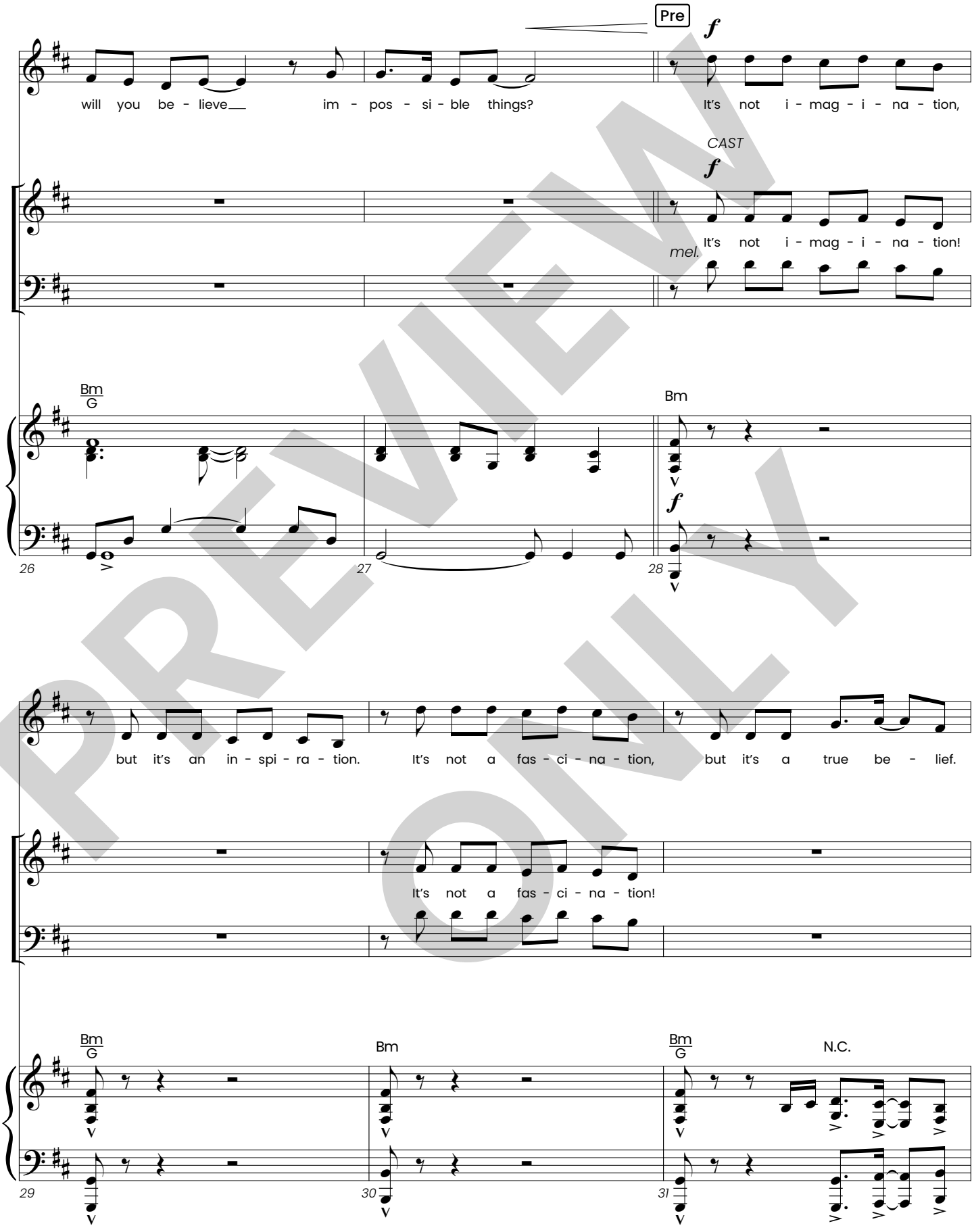

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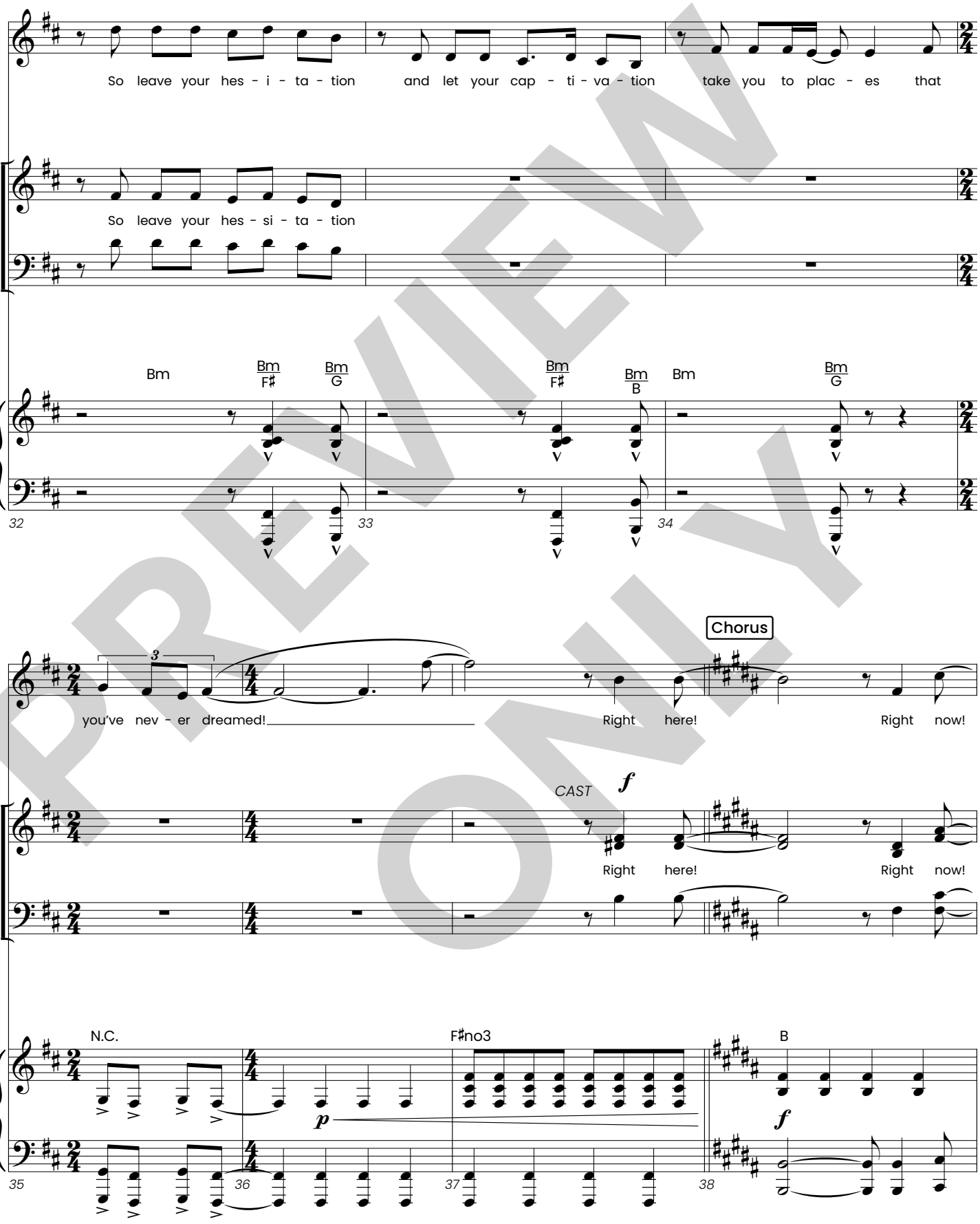

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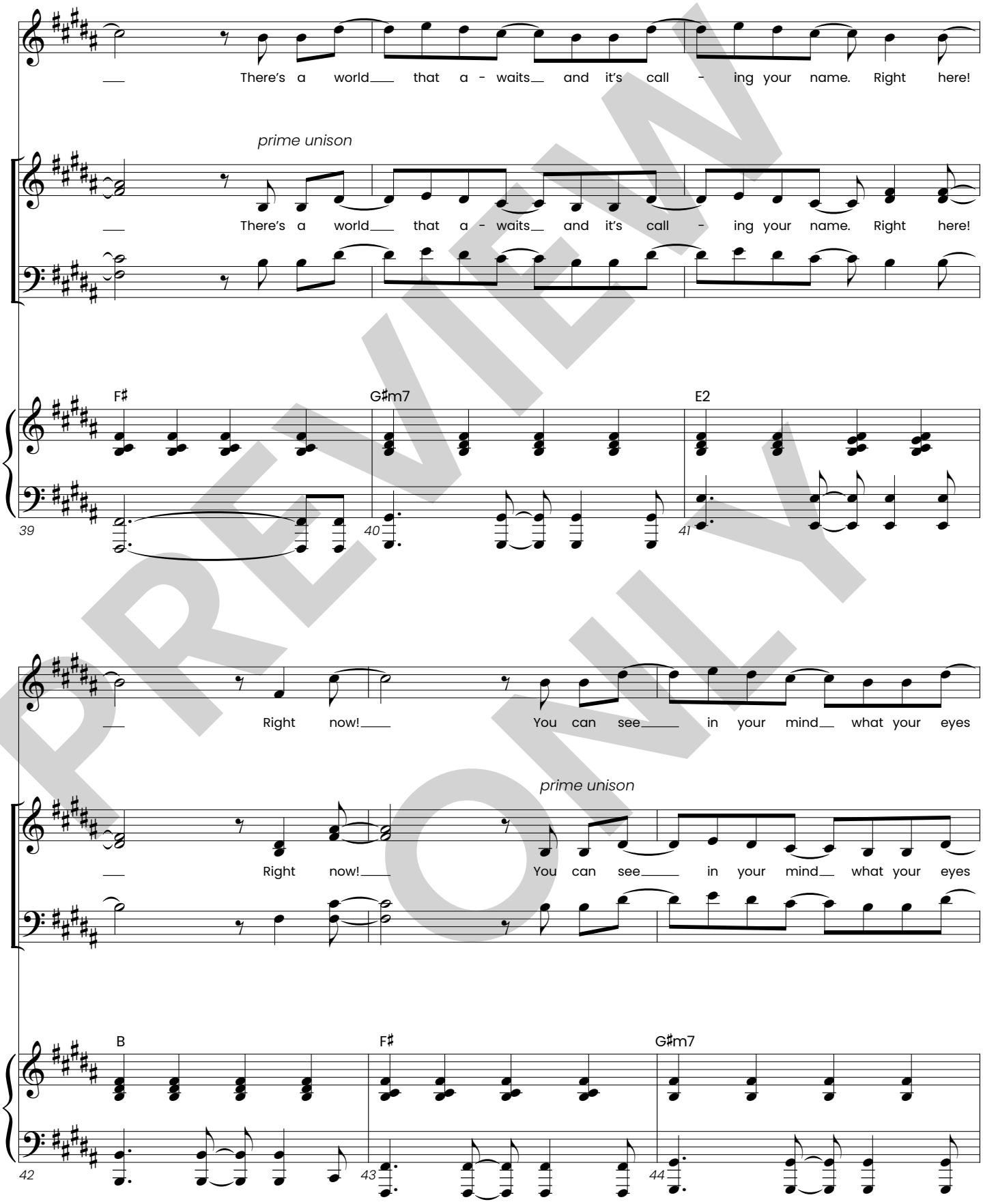

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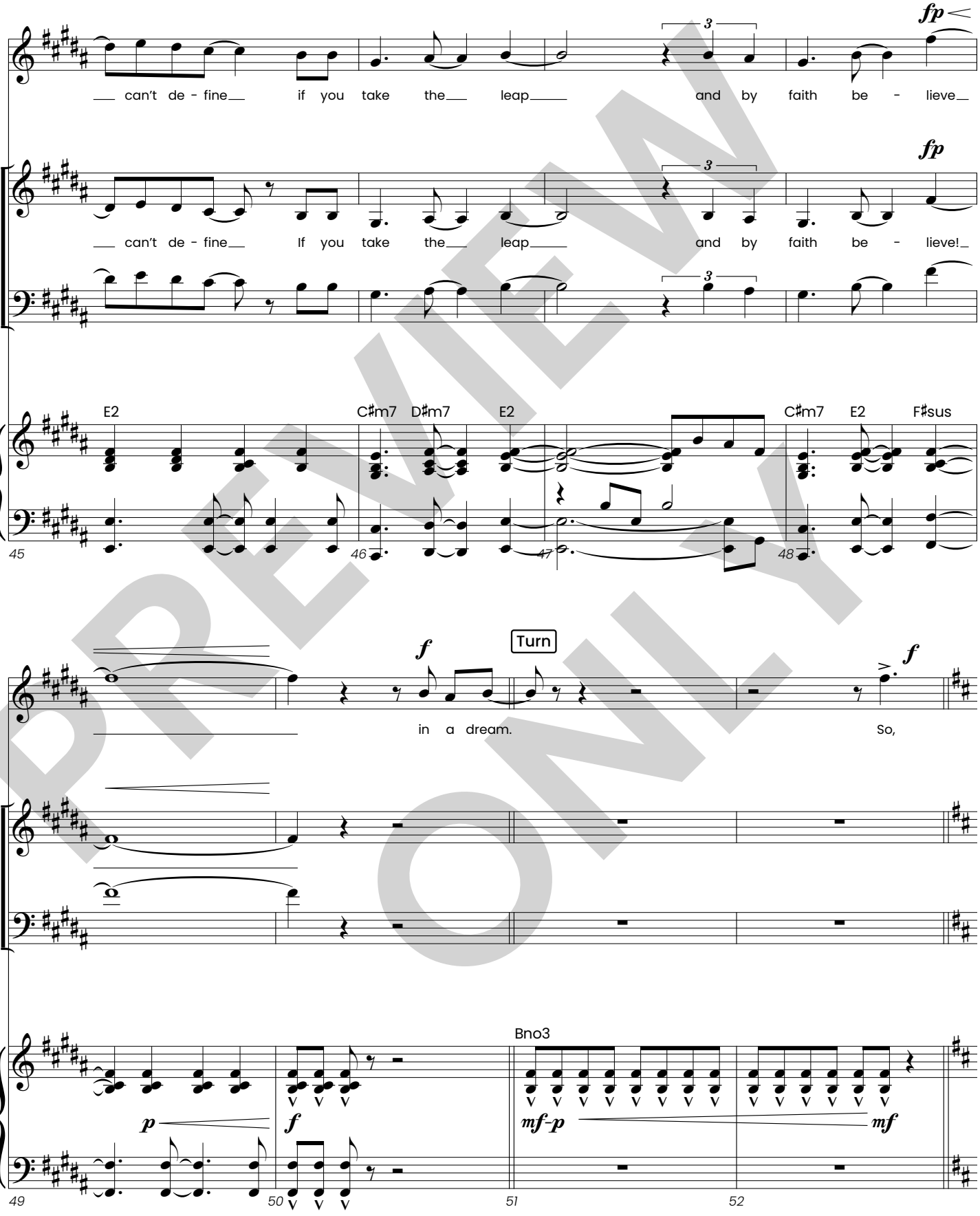

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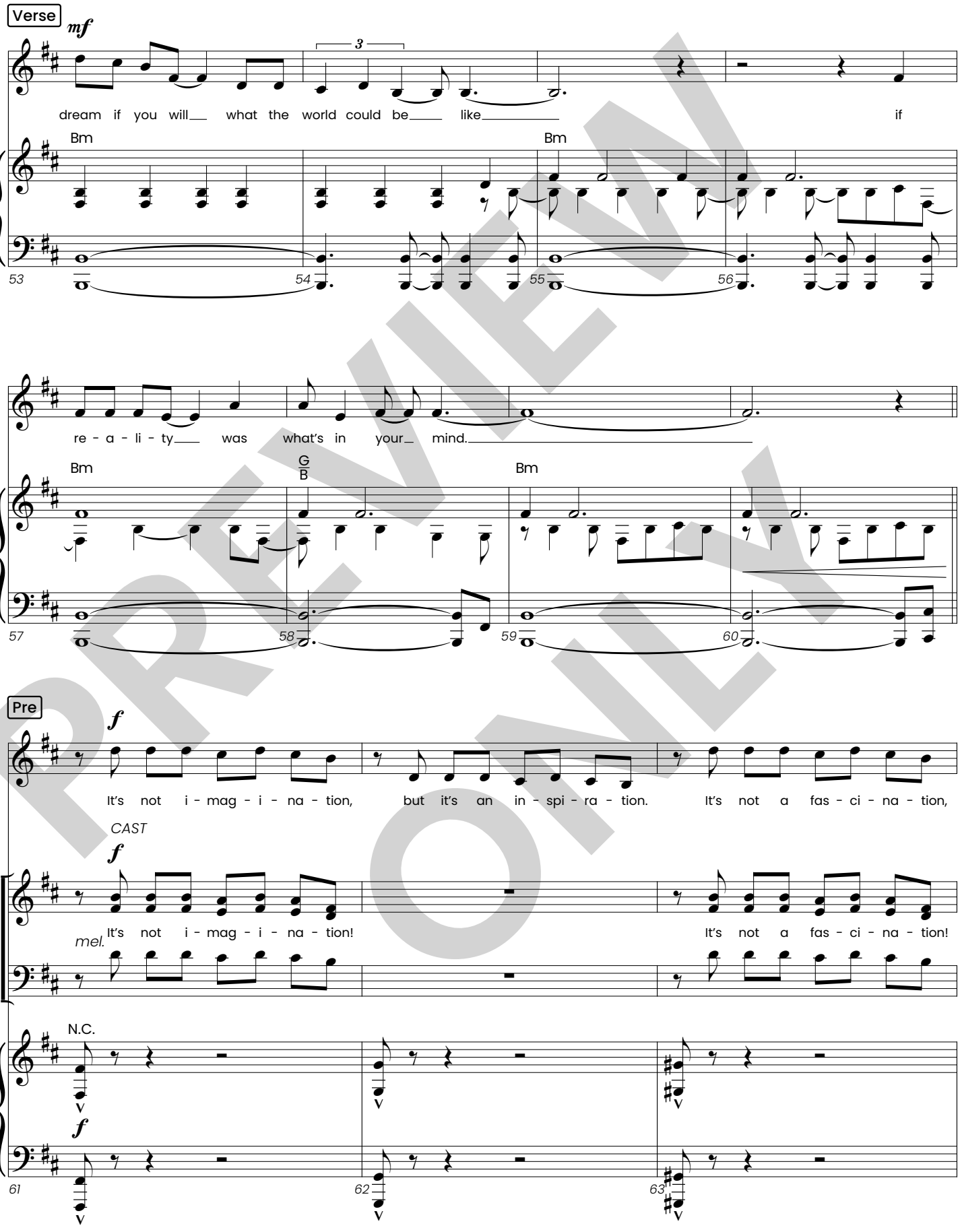

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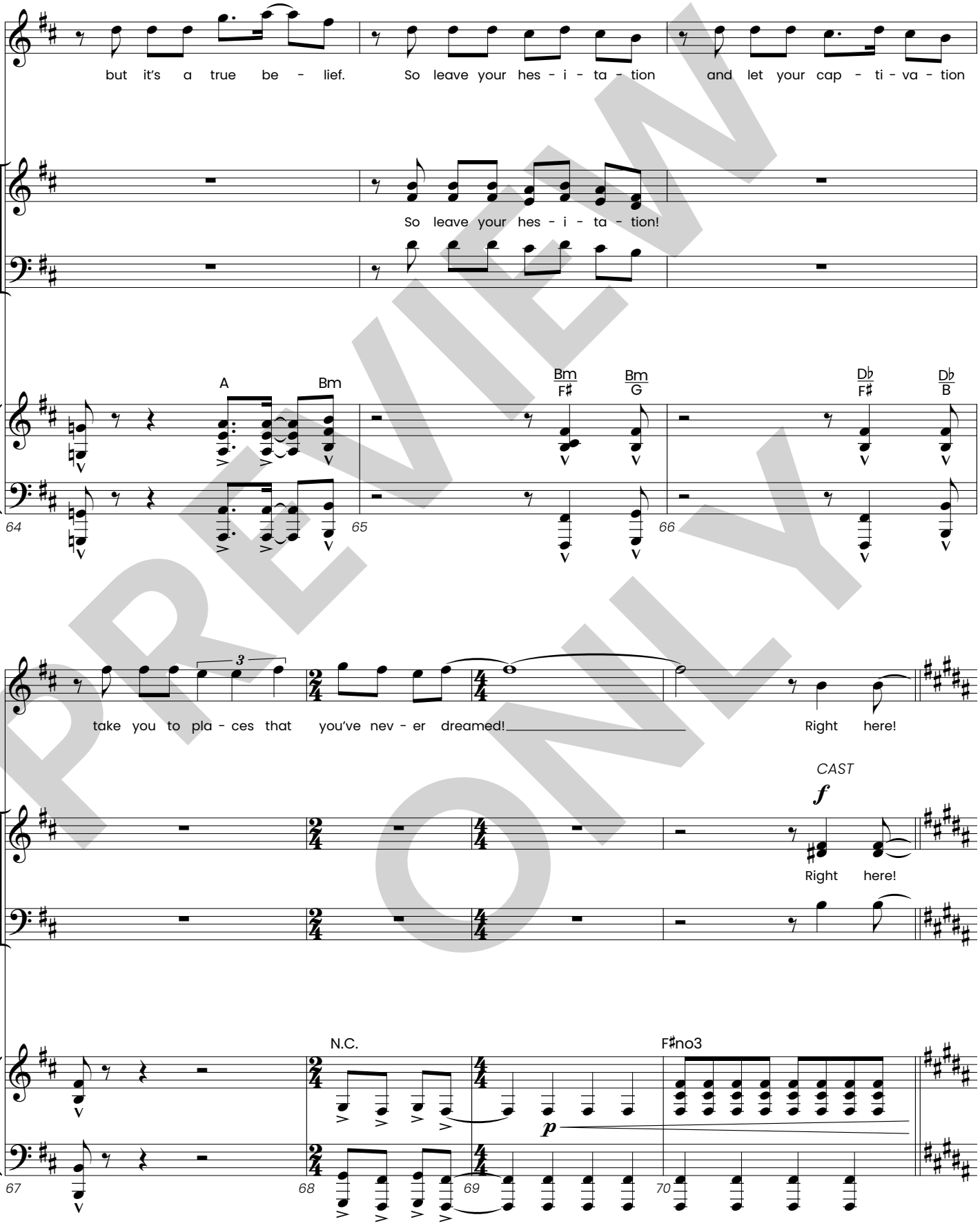

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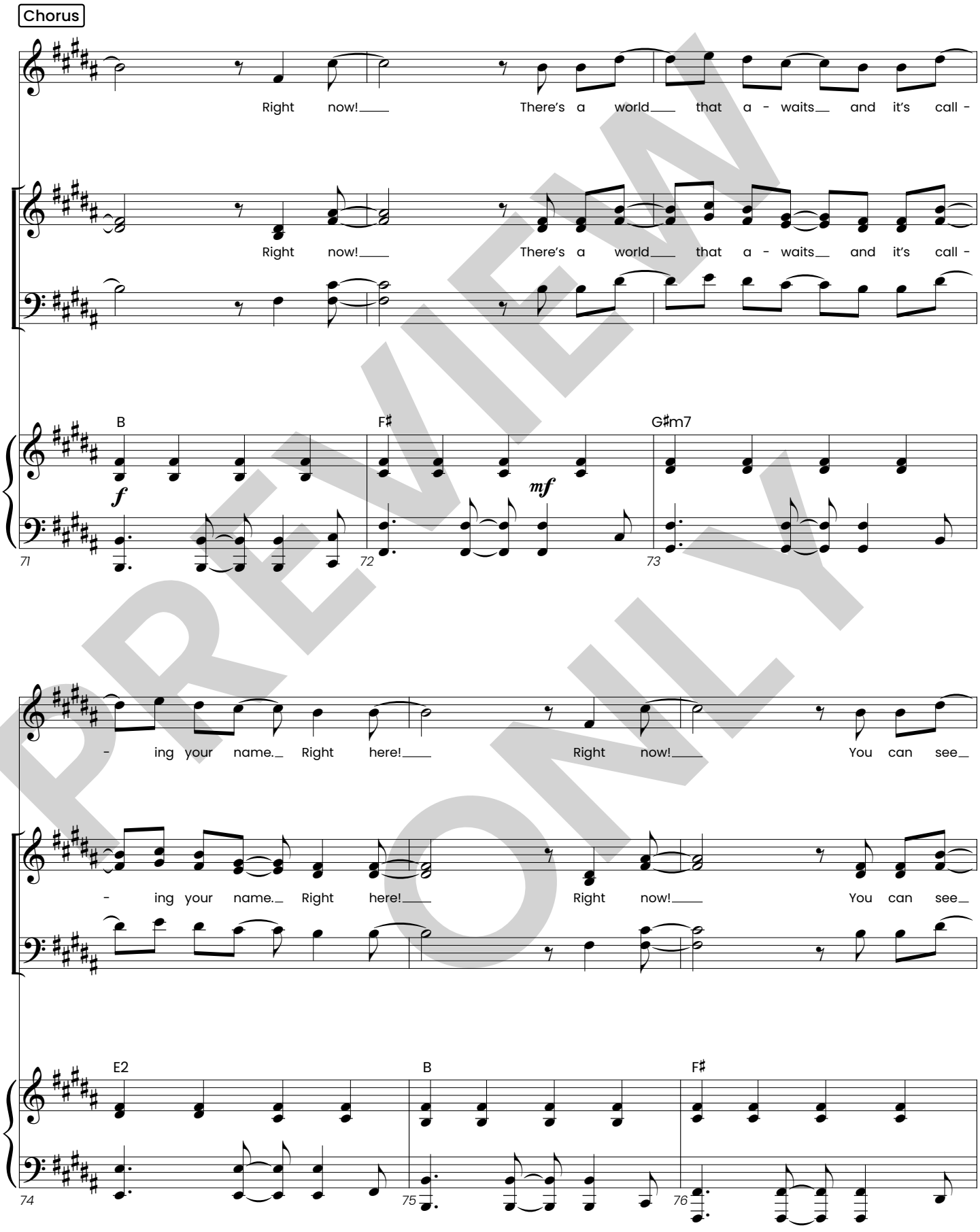

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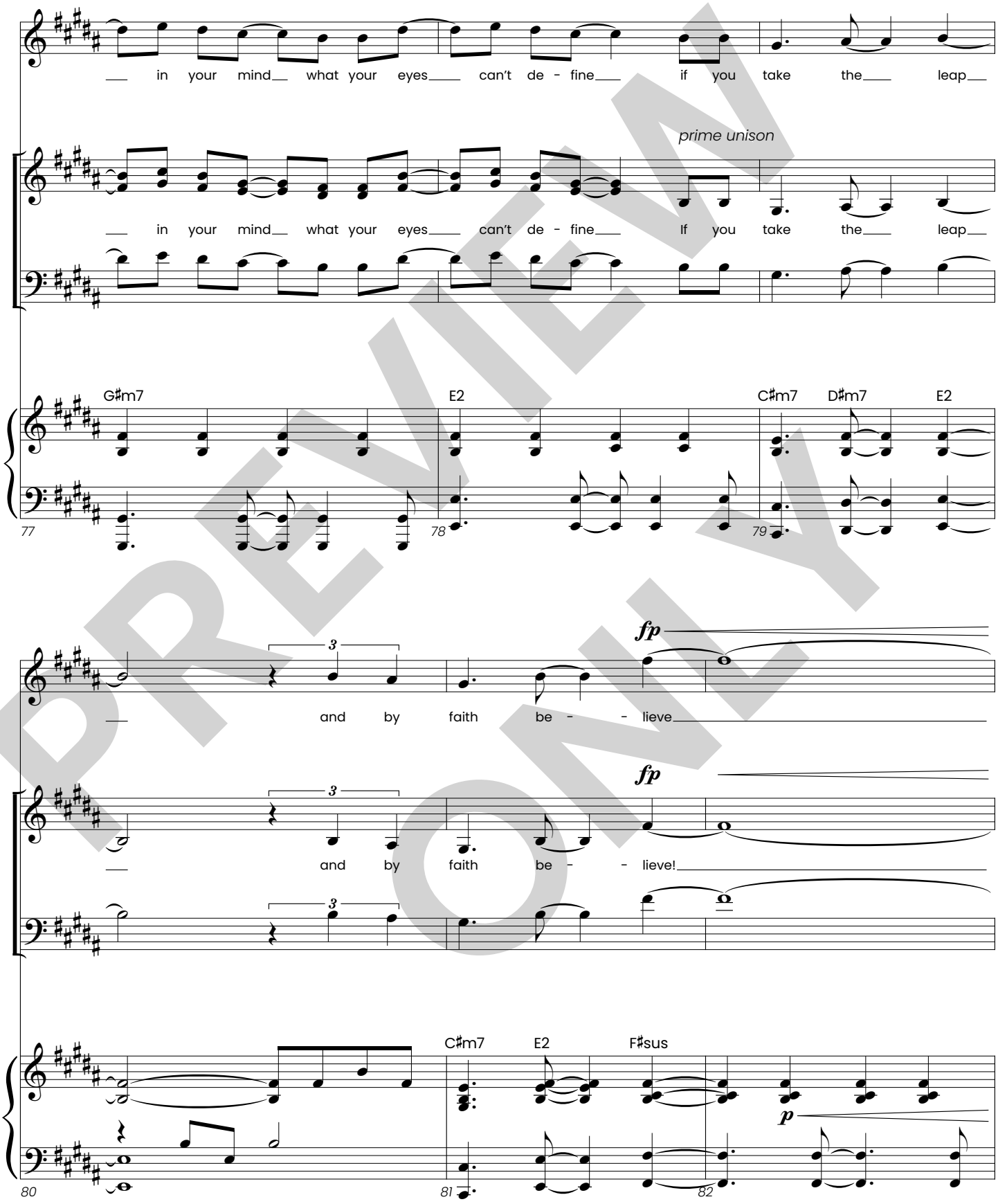

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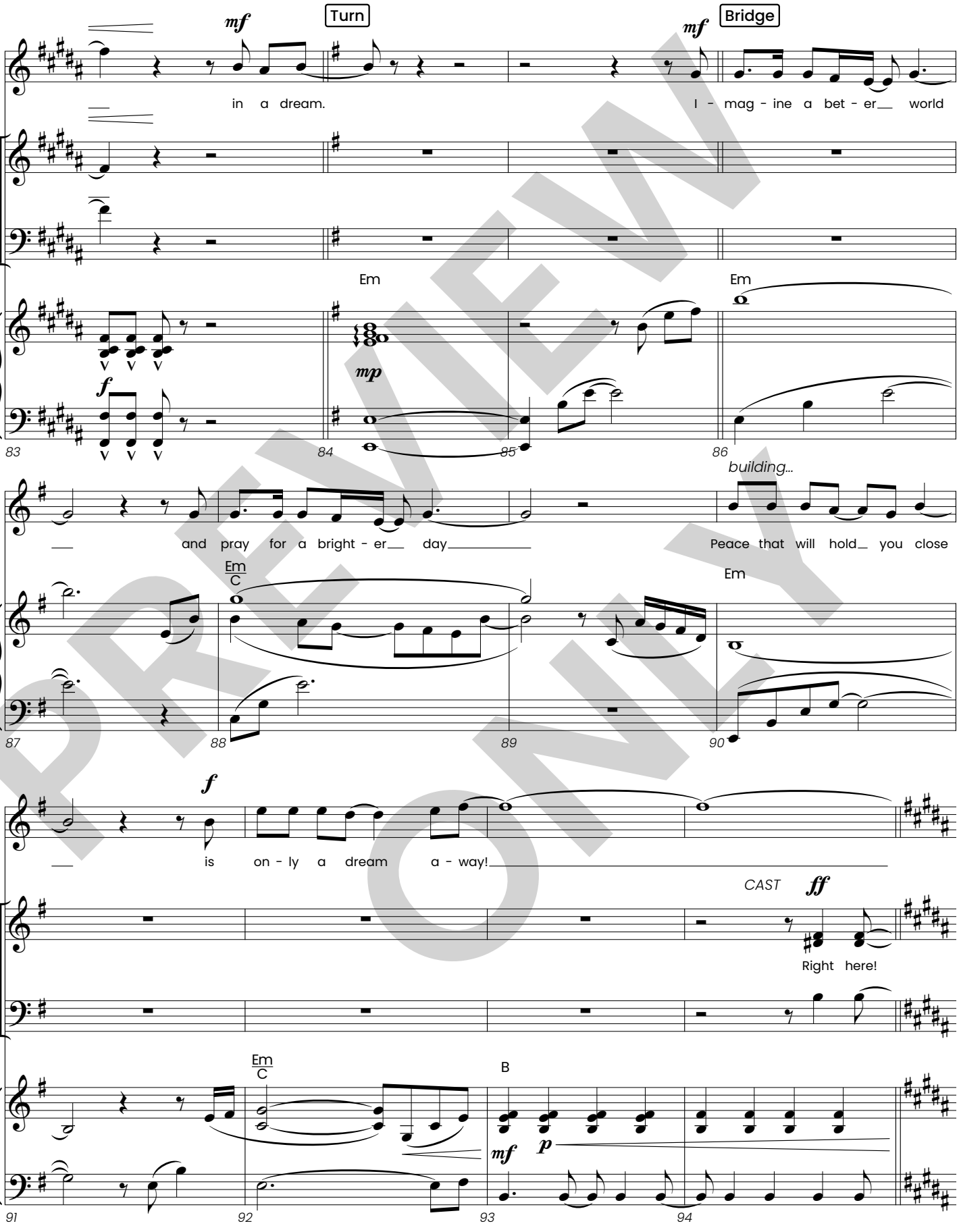

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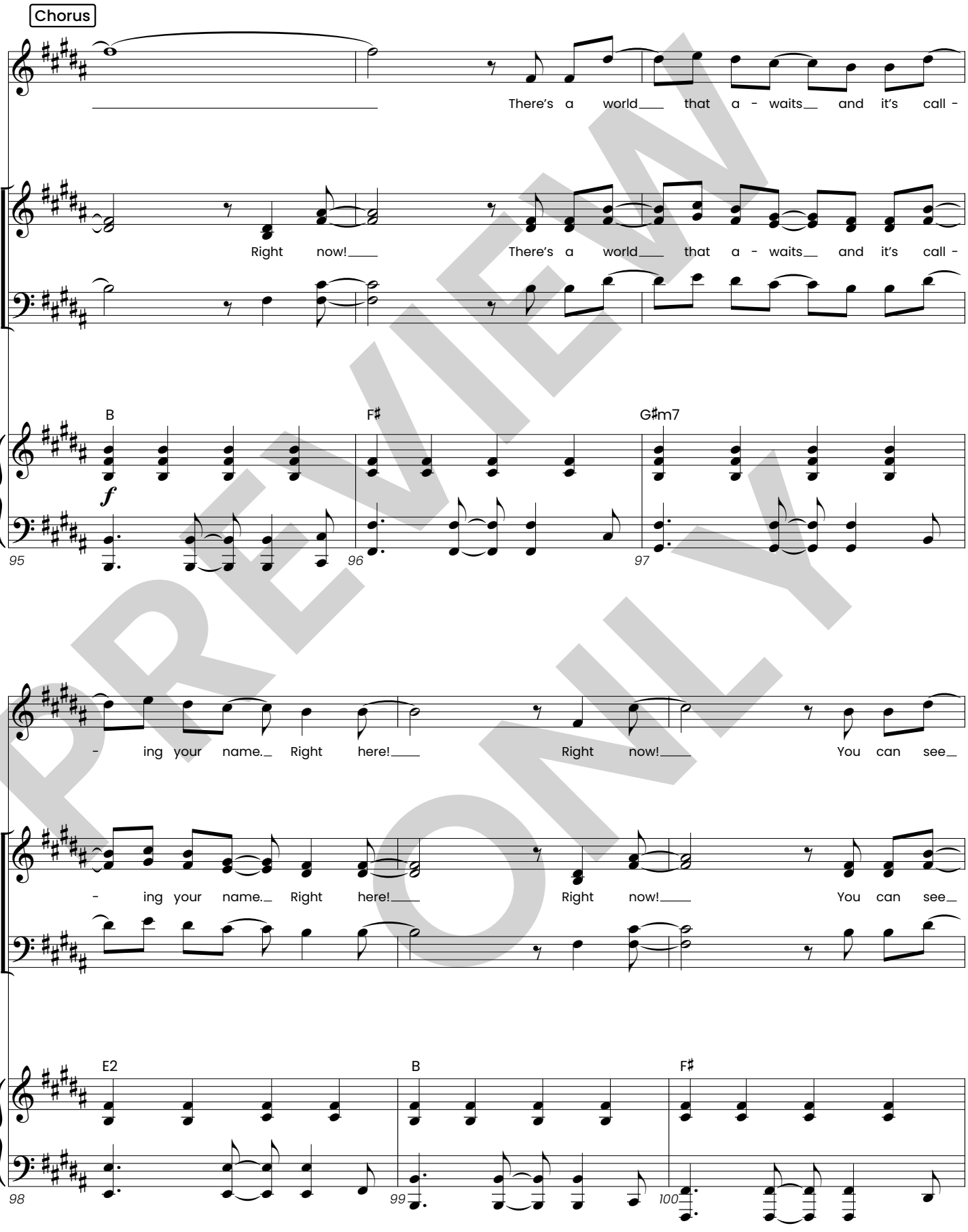

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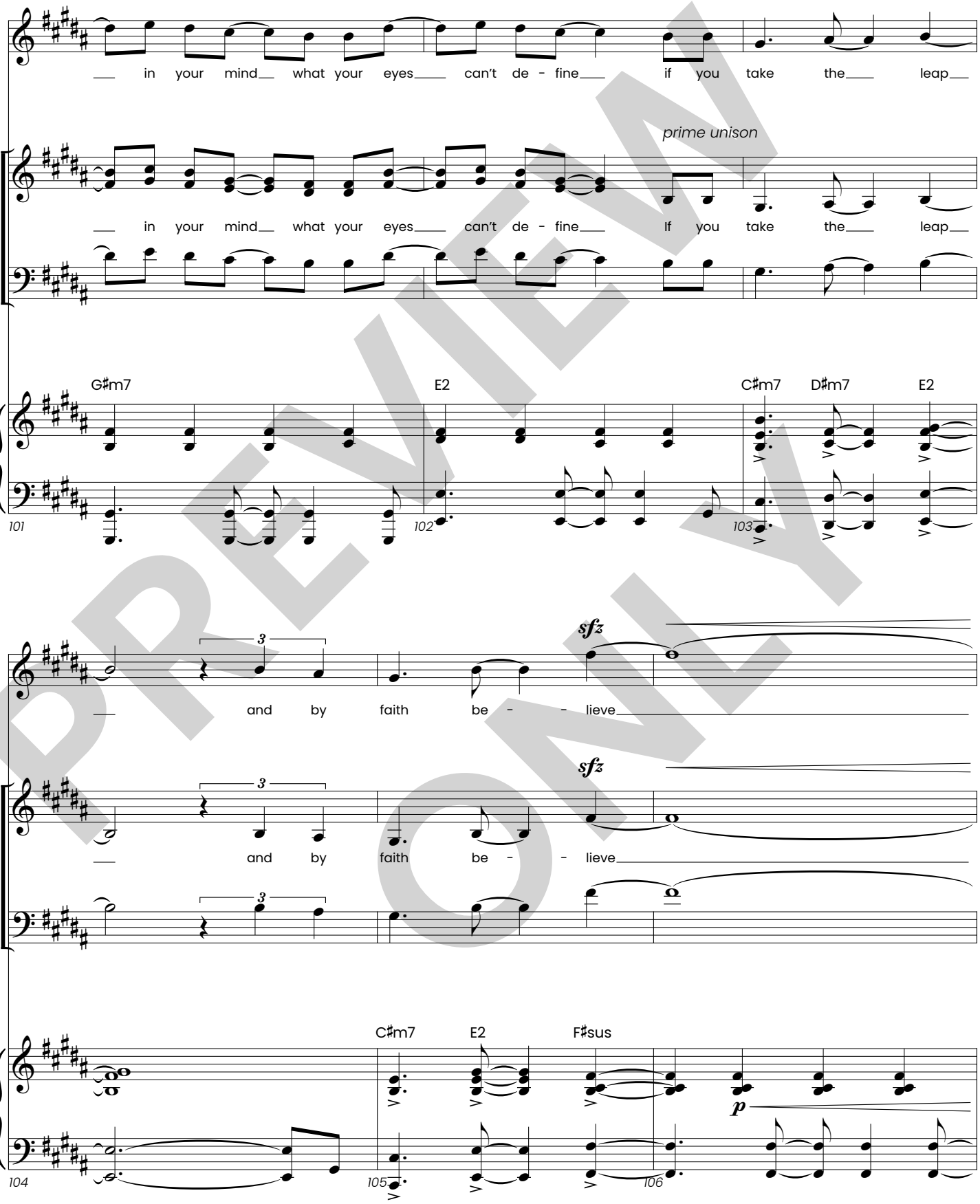

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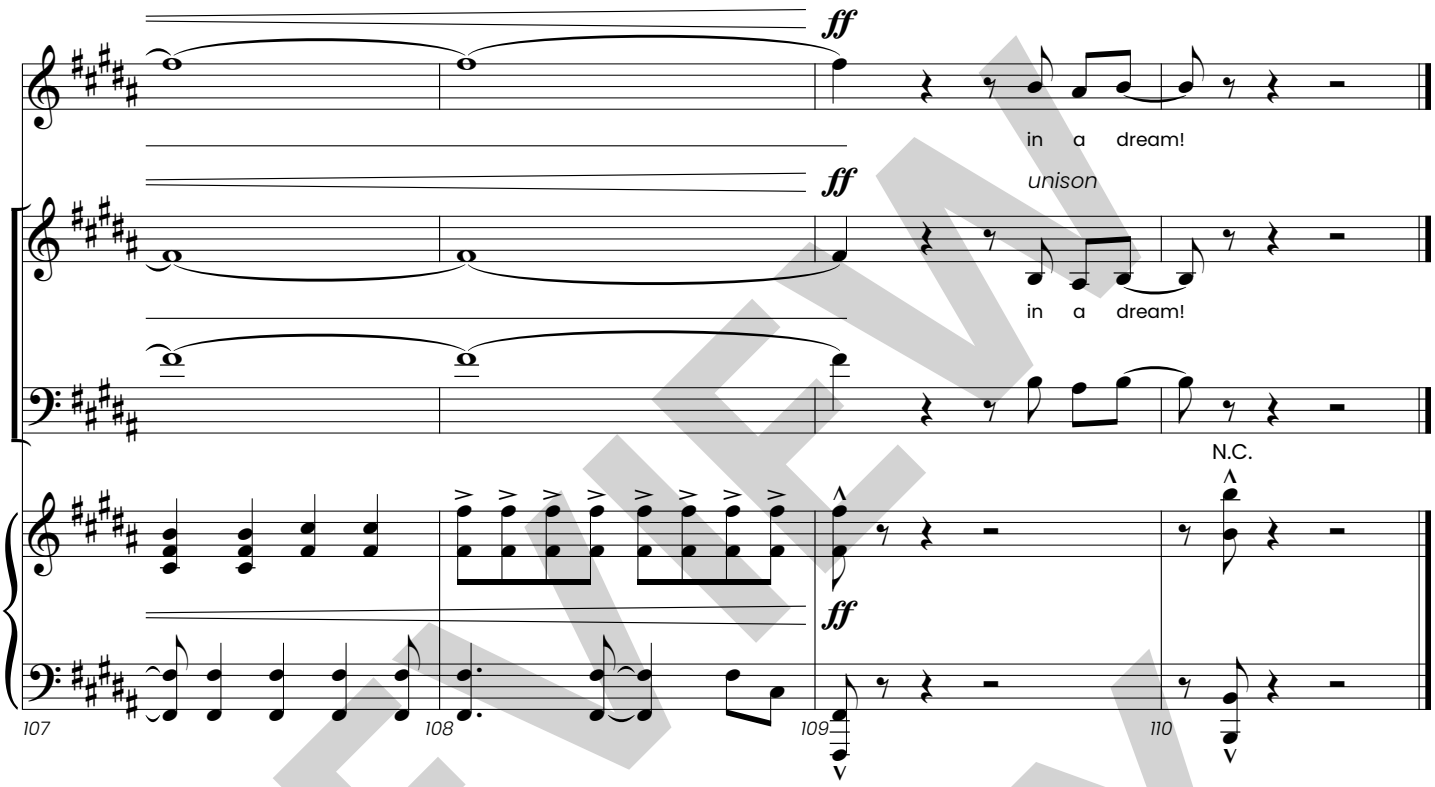


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 2

(Light, Christmassy underscore sets the tone as MATT, LINDA and BENNETT are cleaning the kitchen after dinner.)

MATT
Dinner was wonderful, honey.

BENNETT
Spaghetti and meatballs is my favorite!

LINDA
A special dinner for a special day. I can't believe it's already Christmas Eve!

BENNETT
Oh, I can believe it! It seems like it took five-jillion years to get here.

LINDA
Five-jillion years, huh?

MATT
That's a long time.

BENNETT
It sure is.
(BENNETT and MATT do secret handshake as LINDA speaks.)

LINDA
Well, spaghetti is not the only thing we're celebrating with on Christmas Eve.

(LINDA pulls a present out for Bennett.)

BENNETT
A treasure chest!

(Matt looks surprised, but goes along with it. Linda can't wait for him to open it. BENNETT opens up the treasure chest and pulls out a Pirate's Cove t-shirt.)

BENNETT
(In disbelief.)Mom?! Does this mean what I think it means?

(LINDA shakes her head "yes" excitedly as MATT worriedly shakes his head "no".)

BENNETT (begins pretending to sword fight around the kitchen,)
We're going to *Pirate's Cove!* We're going to *Pirate's Cove!* Take that, Black Beard!

(BENNETT continues in excitement as MATT addresses Linda.)

MATT
I thought we said we were going to wait till his birthday in the spring.

LINDA
I know. But, look how happy he is.

MATT
Of course he’s happy. You just gave him a theme park adventure that we don’t have the money for.

BENNETT
When are we going, dad?

MATT
(Sarcastically to Linda.)
Yeah, mom. When are we going?

LINDA
For New Year’s, honey.

BENNETT
Oh, boy!

MATT
(Looking at the bill, MATT worriedly affirms to Bennett.)
Yeah, bud. New Year’s weekend. Alllll weekend.

LINDA
(Reassuring Matt.)
It’s Christmas. And, as we talked about, we don’t have as many presents under the tree this year so that we can do something a little more over the top.

MATT
That’s three of us all weekend at a theme park. Over the top is a good description.

LINDA
I got a discount online. Tickets are not as expensive as you think.

MATT
No? So the tickets were a steal, huh? How about gas to get there? And the hotel? And the food for the weekend. Did you forget our little buccaneer eats like he’s Black Beard himself?

(Bennett’s excitement noticeable shifts to guilt as he notices the argument heating up between his parents.)

LINDA
We talked about this. I thought we were in agreement.

MATT
We agreed the spring. For his birthday.

BENNETT
Mom?

LINDA
(Ignoring Bennett.)
It’s always so much better around Christmas. It’s decorated and the crowds are smaller.

BENNETT
Dad?

MATT
(Ignoring Bennett and looking over receipt again.)
Which credit card did you put this on?

LINDA
I spent *my* money that *I* made.

BENNETT
Mom!

MATT
Since when is *our* money *your* money?

BENNETT
(Frustrated.)
Dad! Mom! Please stop fighting!

MATT and LINDA(Yelling.)
Go to bed, Bennett!

(Visibly upset, BENNETT runs out.)

LINDA
(Instantly feeling guilty.)
I’ll see you in the morning honey. Merry Christmas!
(To Matt)
You just had to ruin a great moment for him, didn’t you?

MATT
The moment was ruined when you sprung a thousand dollar trip on me.

LINDA
(In a softer tone.)
How did we get here?

MATT
You tell me.

LINDA
I know you think that I am just wasting money and that’s what has put us in this mess.

MATT
I never said wasting. But, I did stress to you how tight things are right now.

LINDA
That's the same thing, Matt.

MATT
It's not the same thing at all.

LINDA
So, what do we do then?

MATT
We have to change. Things have to change.

LINDA
But, it's Christmas? (Calmly.) Listen, the only other extra expense we have is the trip to see my family, then we can reevaluate in January.

(Matt looks away as though he's hiding something.)

Matt? You didn't get the plane tickets? Ohhh, of all the things we could have saved money on, that's what you chose? What am I supposed to tell my family?

MATT
I don't know. Maybe we can just say, "We have decided to start a new tradition this year, and…"

LINDA (pretending to call)
A new tradition? Oh, hi. Mom? Yes. We have decided that after 13 years of marriage, this is the year we are going to start a new tradition. One that does not include you. Is that what you want me to say?

MATT
Well, I mean, that could work, I guess.

LINDA
Unbelievable.

(As the argument continues at a distance, a scene opens with BENNETT sitting up in bed, hearing his parents from the other room.)

LINDA
What are we supposed to tell Bennett?

MATT
I'm not sure why I'm supposed to have all the answers. I didn't create this problem alone.

(argument slowly fades as BENNETT pulls the pillow over his ears and lays down in bed. The argument begins to sound echoey and muted like underwater.)

LINDA
Well, I didn't fire you at Christmas. This isn't my fault.

MATT
It's no one's fault. These things just happen. We'll figure it out.

LINDA
We have to figure it out. We can't just *cancel* Christmas.

END SCENE 2

SCENE 3

(Underscore slowly ends as CHLOE plays with 2 friends. They laugh as the game ends and her friends leave. She notices BENNETT is sword fighting an imaginary swordsman.)

CHLOE
What are you doing? Hello? Hey kid. Can you even hear me?

(Lights come up on BENNETT as he looks at Chloe, then back to his toy sword. He's dressed in same pajamas from opening scene, but with his Pirate's Cove t-shirt over it and an eye patch. He seems confused as he responds to Chloe.)

BENNETT
(Removing eye-patch)
Uhhh…hey. I was just…uh…

CHLOE(giggling)
Saving the world from Black Beard the Pirate?

BENNETT
How did you know?

CHLOE(sarcastically)
Did you win?

BENNETT
Win what?

CHLOE
The sword fight, silly.

BENNETT(embarrassed) (quickly changing the subject)
Oh. That. Uhh. Yeah. What are you playing with?

CHLOE
My doll. I'm brushing her hair.

BENNETT
So, you're pretending, too. I guess we have that in common.

CHLOE
This is Lydia. I'm hoping to get her little sister for Christmas.

BENNETT
That's cool, I guess.

CHLOE
What are you hoping to get for Christmas?

BENNETT
I don't know.

CHLOE
What do you mean, "you don't know"? It's Christmas. Of course you know what you want.

BENNETT
It doesn't really matter. I'm not going to get it anyway.

CHLOE
Not with that attitude.

BENNETT
I guess I just don't want to be disappointed.

CHLOE
I get that. But, dreaming of Christmas morning and all the(getting more excited)lights, the food, and the presents. And did I say food? I can close my eyes and almost taste it now.

BENNETT
Okay?

CHLOE(realizing something is wrong)
I think you're the first kid I've ever met who wasn't excited about Christmas. (Pause) I've got an idea…let's just imagine you could have anything you wanted for Christmas. And whatever you imagine will be waiting for you Christmas morning.

(BENNETT stares at Chloe as she waits for his response.)

CHLOE
Well…I…

BENNETT
Well, what?

CHLOE
What are you imagining is there on Christmas morning?

BENNETT
I'm not imagining. I'm not getting anything for Christmas.

CHLOE
Oh, come on, Pirate Boy. Humor me.

(Reluctantly, BENNETT closes his eyes tight and tries to imagine.)

CHLOE
Well? You got anything?

BENNETT
Hang on. I'm starting to see it.

(beginning to show excitement)

It's my very own pirate ship, in my backyard. It's as big as my house. And every day after school I climb on board as though stinky, no good pirates bring treasure to me. And, I'm making Black Beard walk the plank because I've defeated him and am now the Captain of the notorious Queen Anne's Revenge.

CHLOE
Yeah. You're right.

BENNETT
About what?

CHLOE
You're not getting anything for Christmas.

(BENNETT throws his hands up in frustration.)

(MARY BETH enters. Noticing the children and the sad look on Bennett's face, she interjects in their conversation.)

MARY BETH
Well, I don't believe I've ever seen two kids looking so sad this close to Christmas.

CHLOE
He's just sad because he can't have a bunch of hooks-for-hands pirates bring him treasure as he drives a Queen around on a boat for Christmas.

BENNETT
It's the Queen Anne's Revenge.

MARY BETH
I wasn't aware that was a thing.

BENNETT & CHLOE
It is! It's not!

MARY BETH(laughing)
Well, whatever that is, I'm sure it's important to you, Bennett.

BENNETT(confused)
Wait. How do you know my name?

CHLOE
Yeah. Do you know mine, too?

MARY BETH
I know a lot of things, Chloe. In fact, I know that you both love Christmas. But, Christmas looks different to each of us. For you, Chloe, it's presents and family. For Bennett…well, it's a little different. But, no matter what Christmas looks like, there's always something special about that day. In fact, there's always been something special about Christmas.

Solo

BENNETT
Christmas isn't looking very special for me this year.

CHLOE(Emphatically)
Whatever the reason, just close your eyes and repeat to yourself, "Toys, and presents, and food. Oh, my!"

MARY BETH
Well, while those things are special, they're not all there is to Christmas. Come to think of it, that first Christmas really looked different than Christmas today.

CHLOE
How does the same thing look *so* different to *so* many people?

MARY BETH
I'm glad you asked. I'd love to tell you about how different Christmas is to different people. And how different that is from what Christmas looked like to people where I grew up. You want to hear *that* story?

BENNETT
Wait. You haven't told us *your* name yet.

(Music begins. **2. The Story of Christmas**.)

MARY BETH
(Shaking hands with the kids, starting with Bennett.)
I'm *Mary* Beth. Pleasure to meet you.

End SCENE 3

The Story Of Christmas

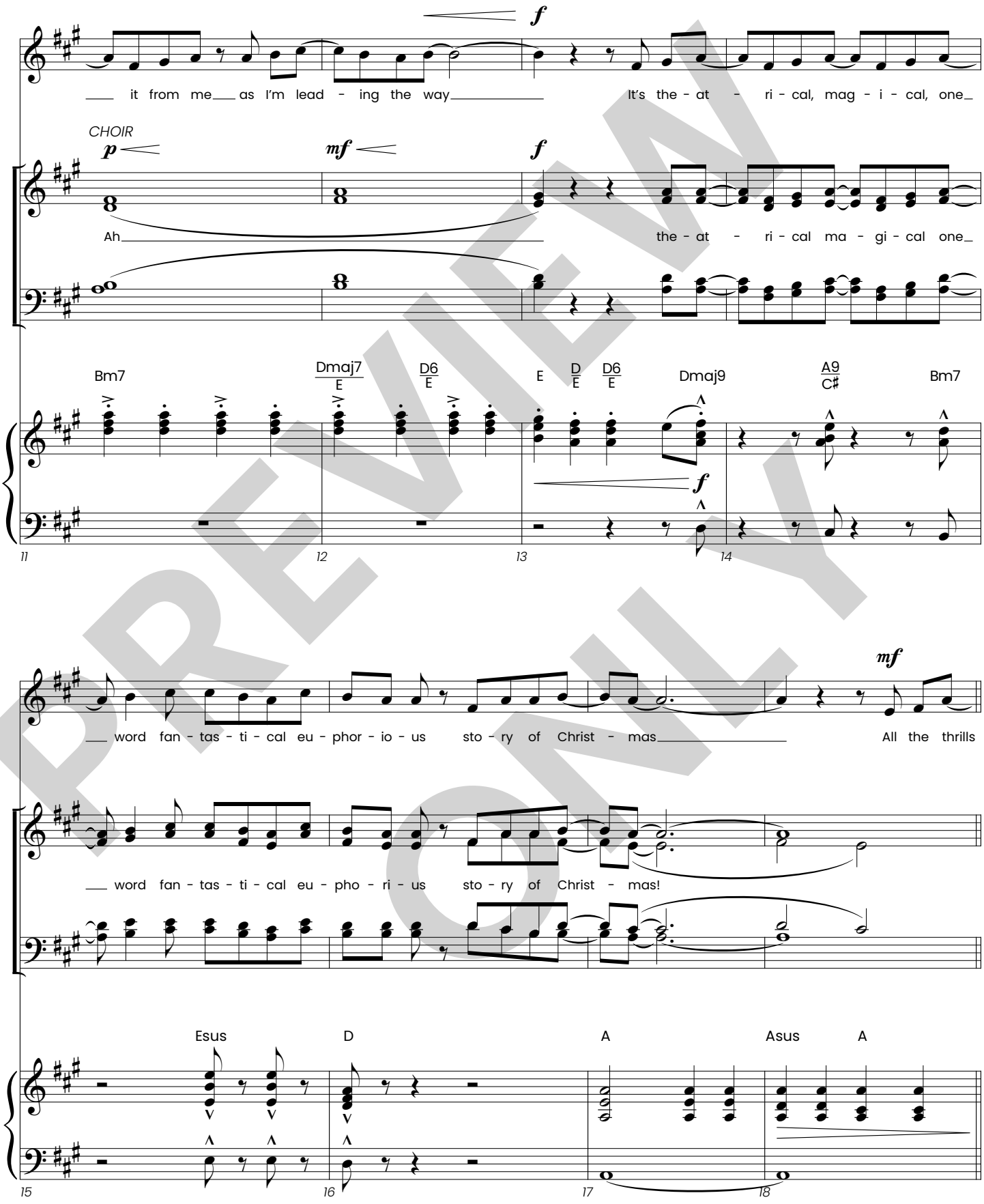
Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Wayne Haun

Swing! ♩ = 133

PREVIEW ONLY

HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



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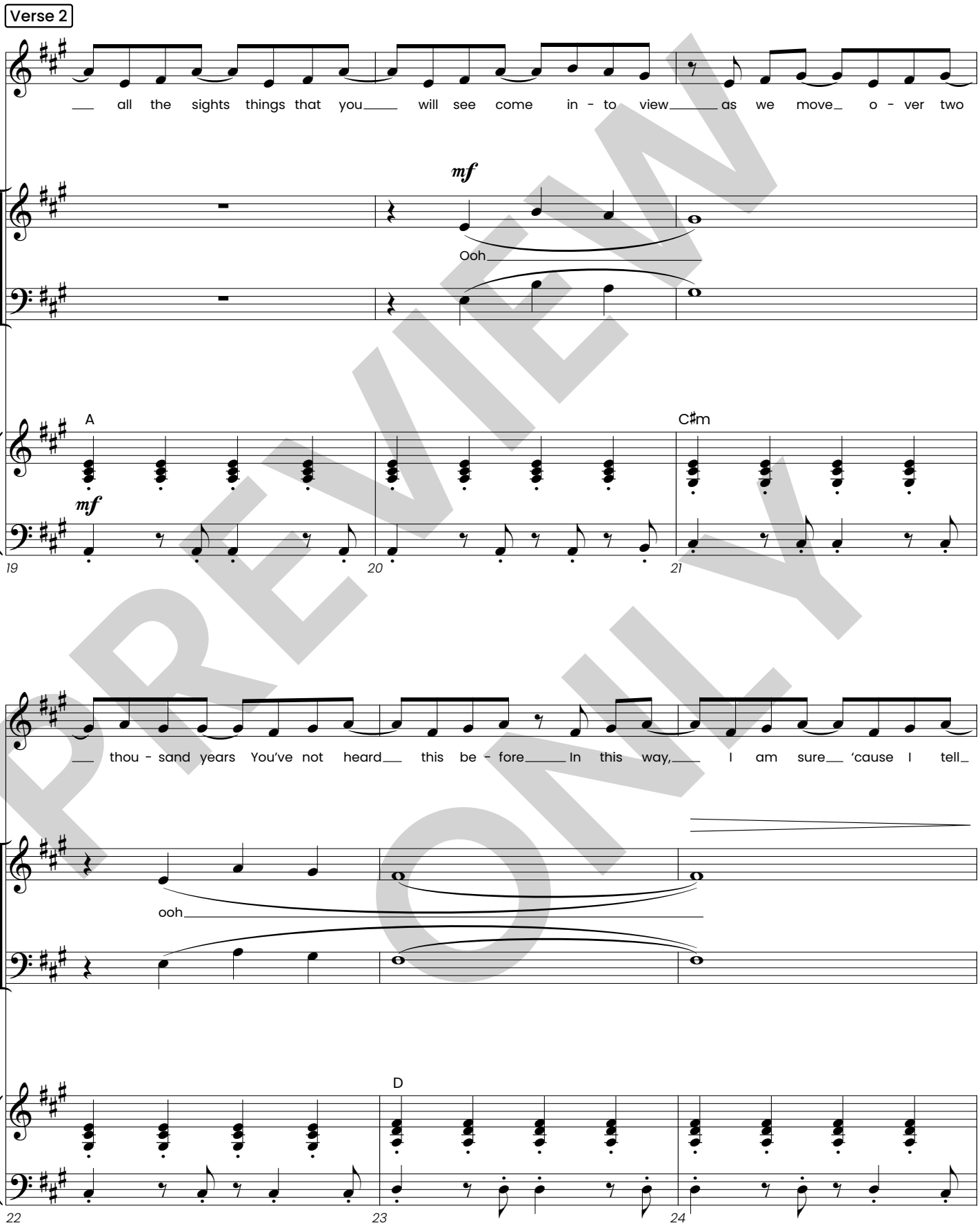

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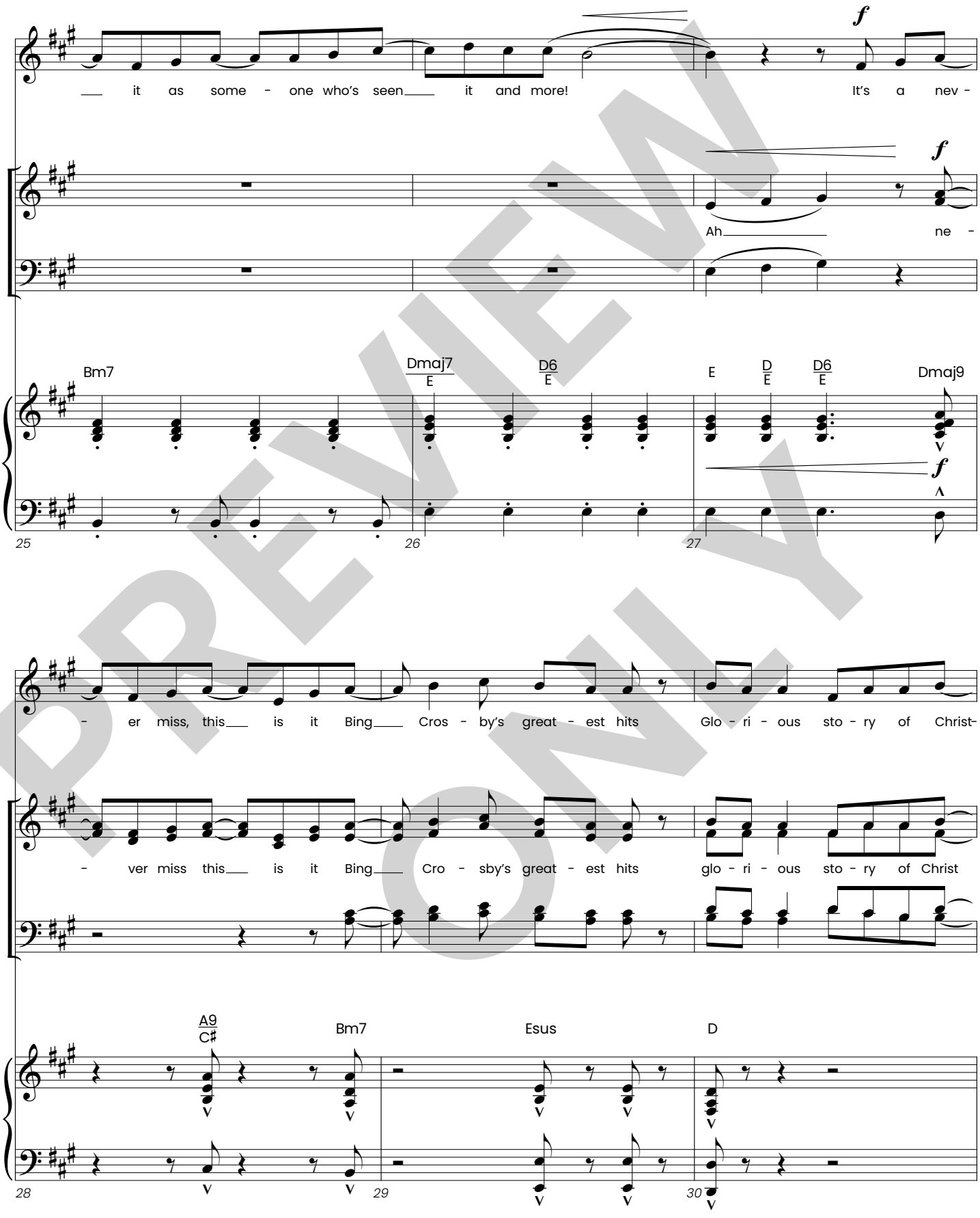

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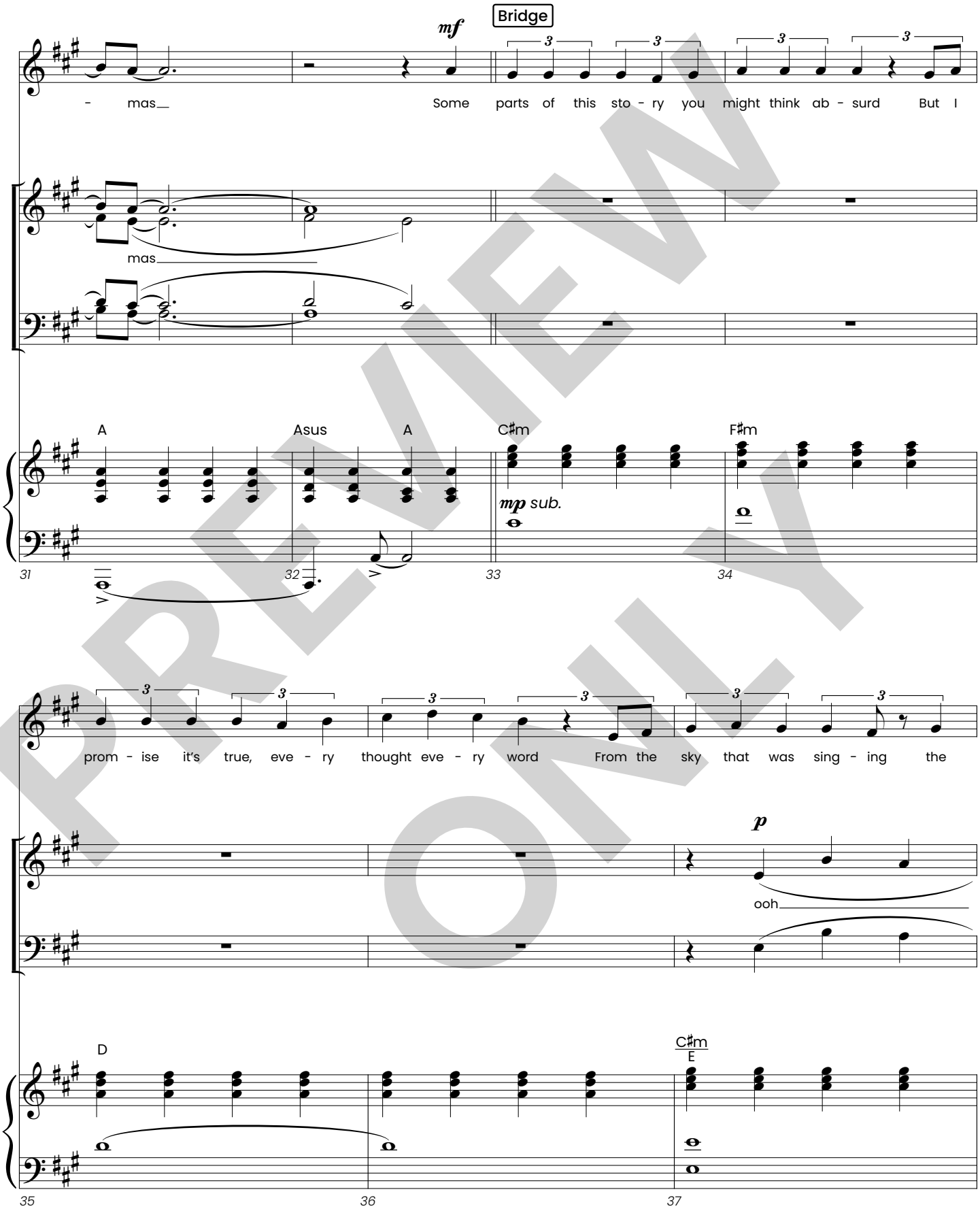

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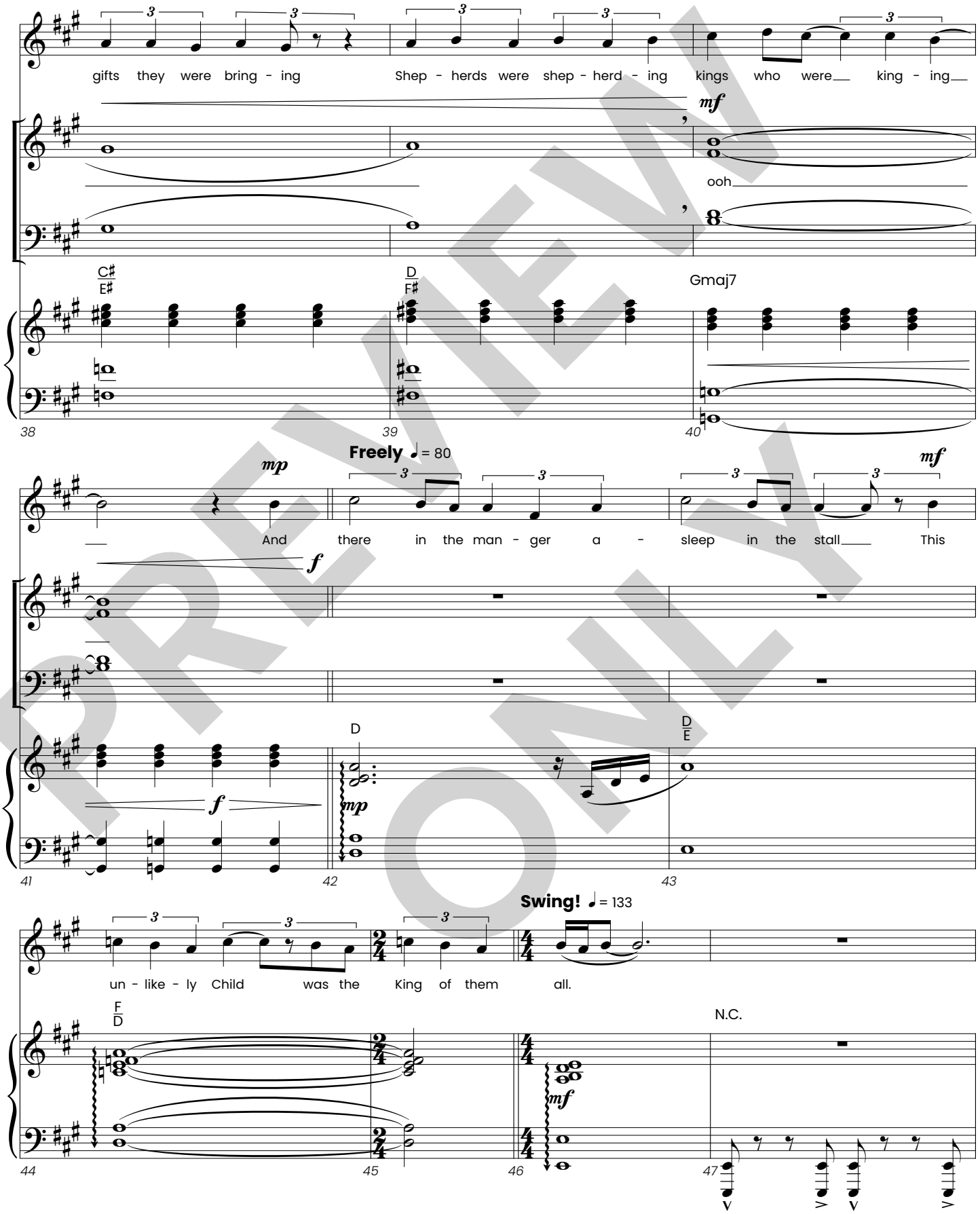

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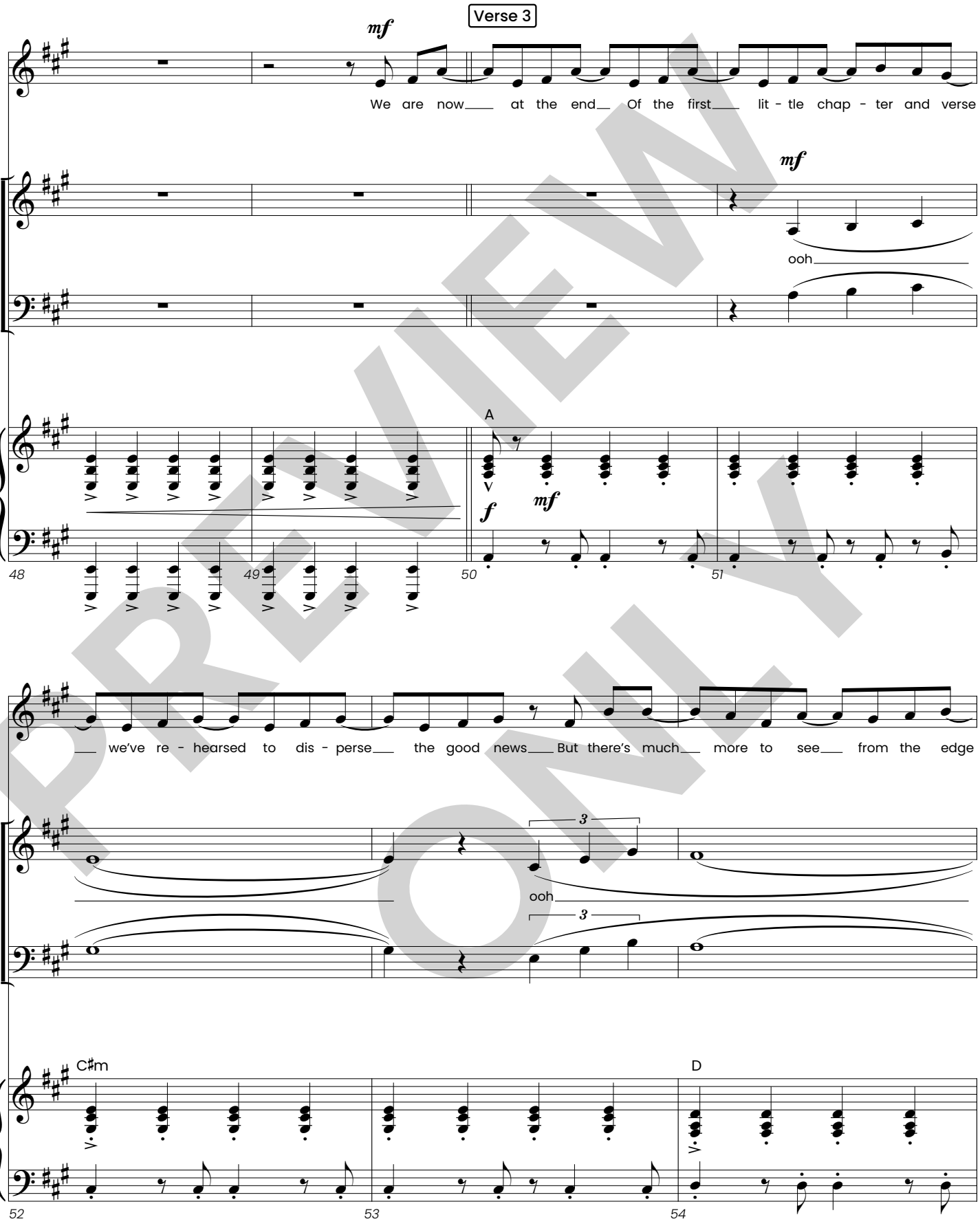

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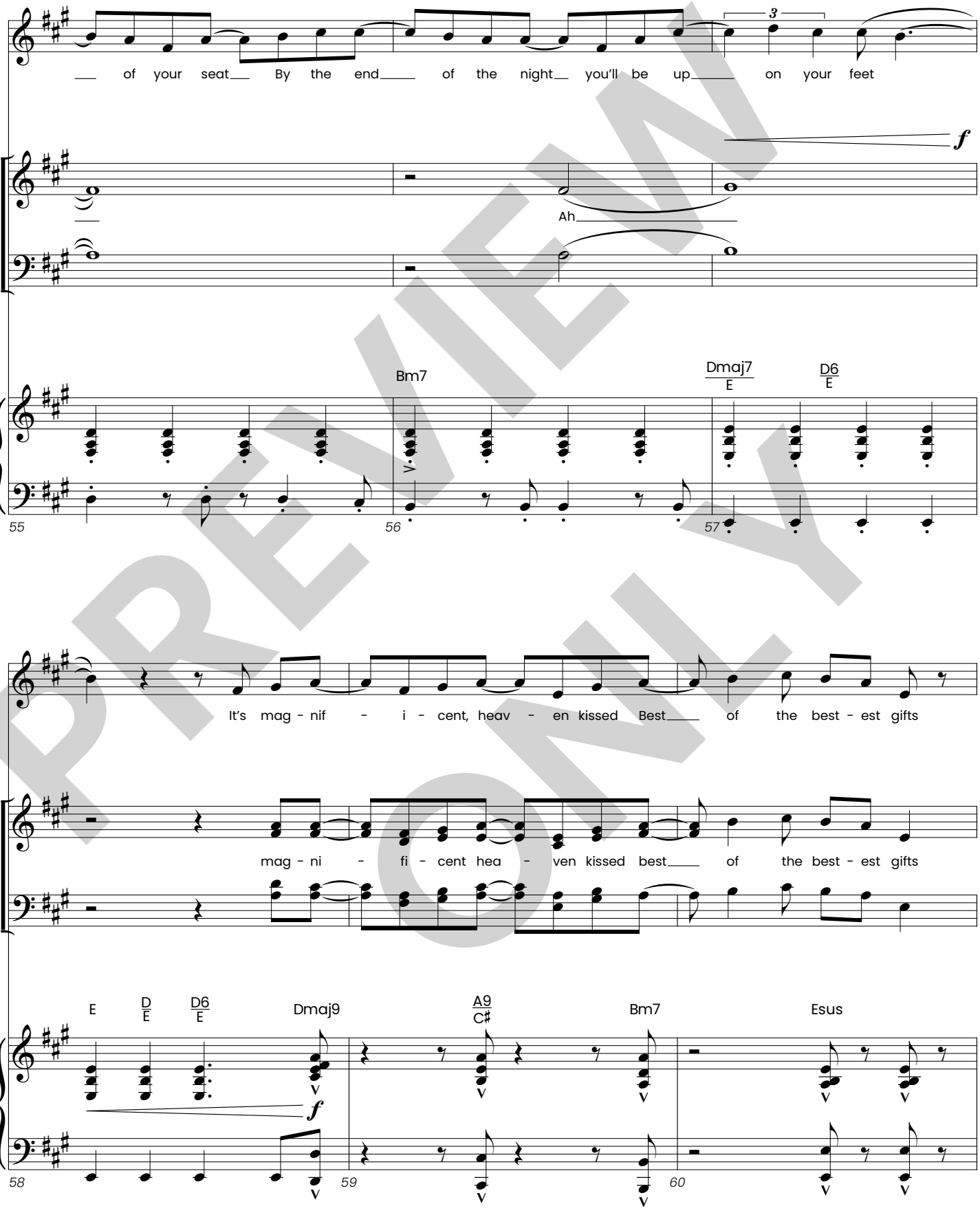

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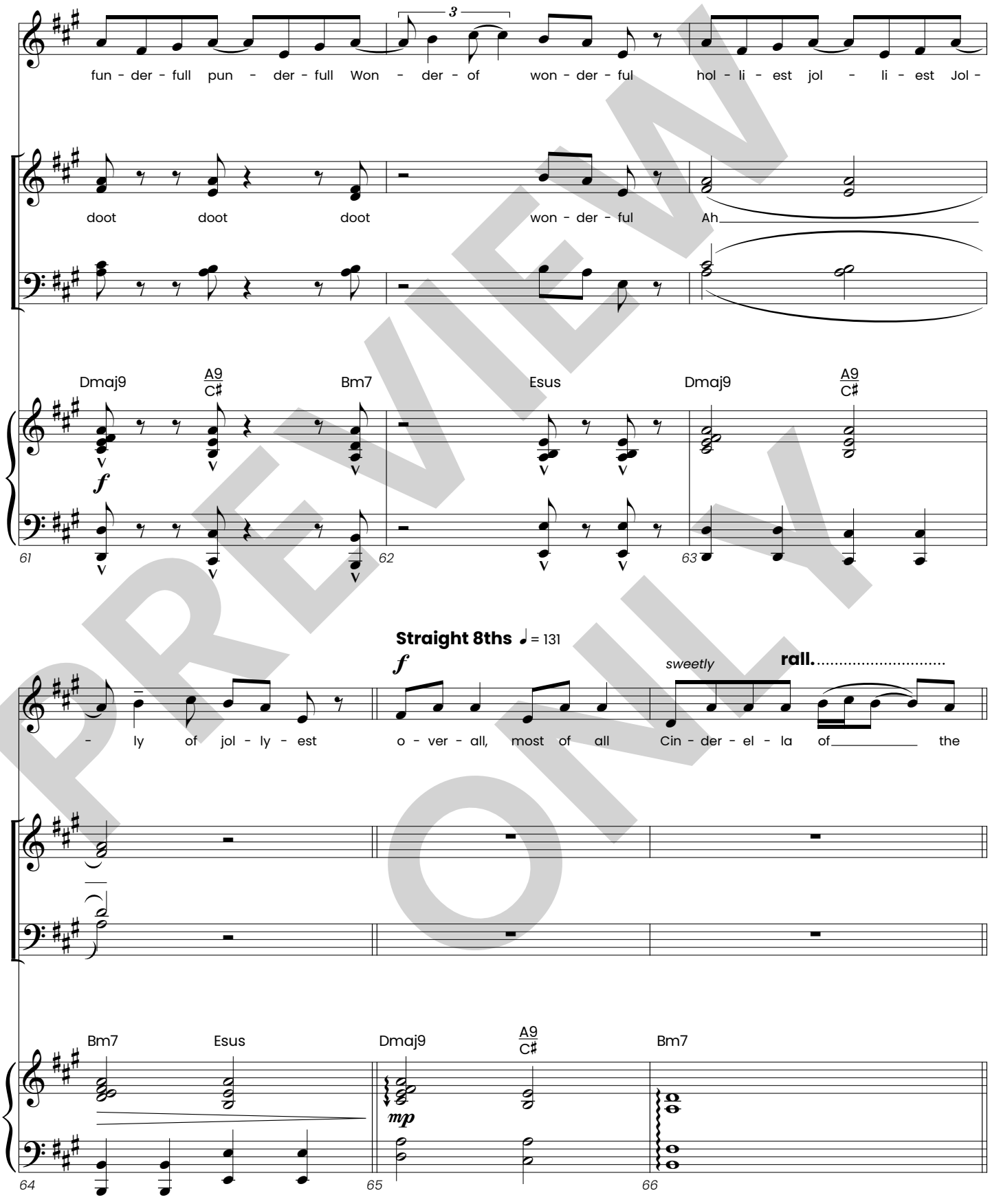

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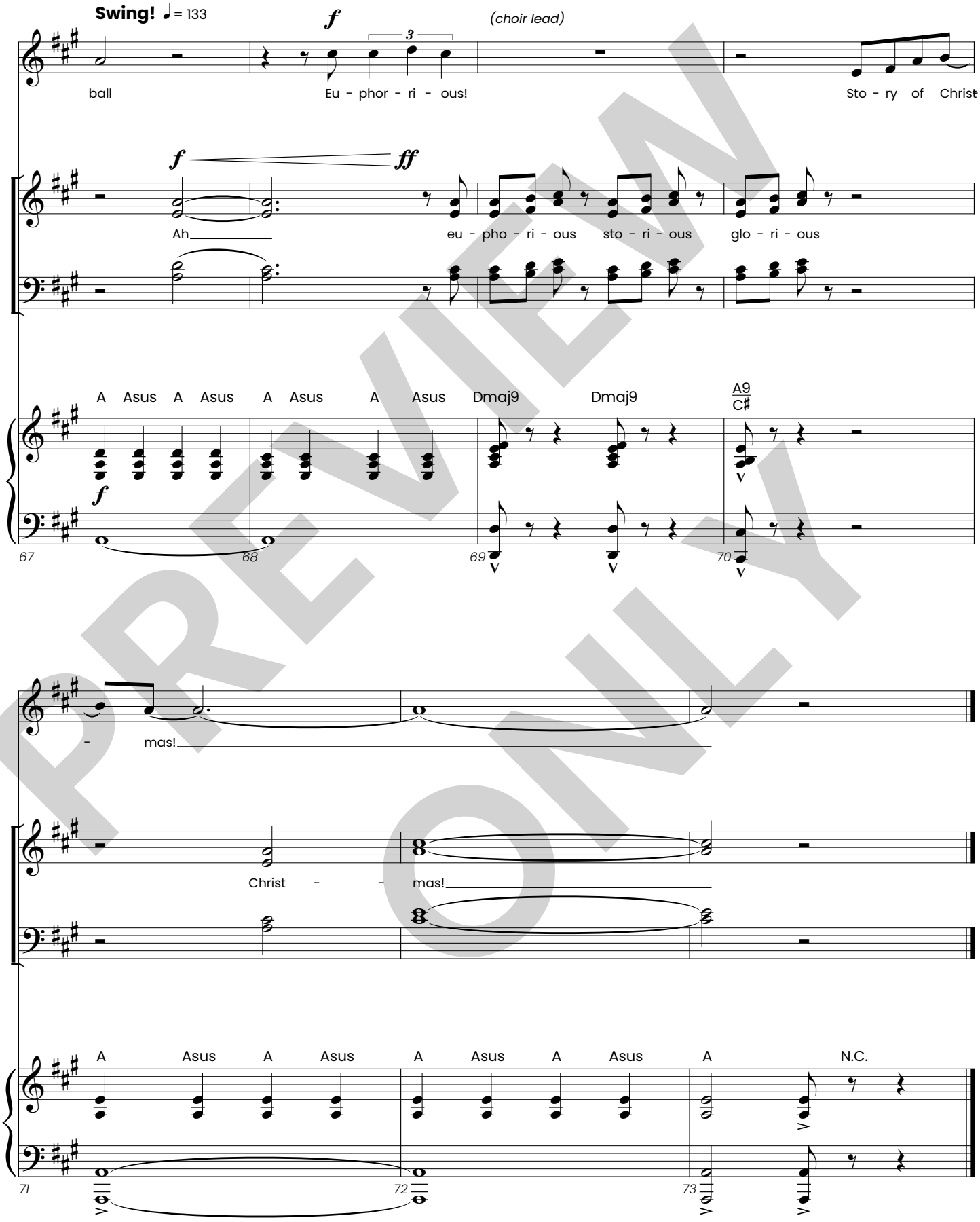


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 4

MARY BETH
All of us have a story of Christmas.
(putting hand on Chloe's shoulder)
Many people dream of what Christmas is like throughout the year.
(putting hand on Bennett's shoulder)
While many others dream of what they *wish* Christmas was like. Come on. I want to show you something.

(MARY BETH, BENNETT and CHLOE wander upon a scene of a Christmas party in a living room. The people are gathering around a piano. Keeping with the "dream" theme, Mary Beth, Bennett and Chloe become a part of the scene. (Music begins.)

CHLOE(excitedly)
This is the Johnson's house. I've always heard about their fun Christmas parties. Can we go in?

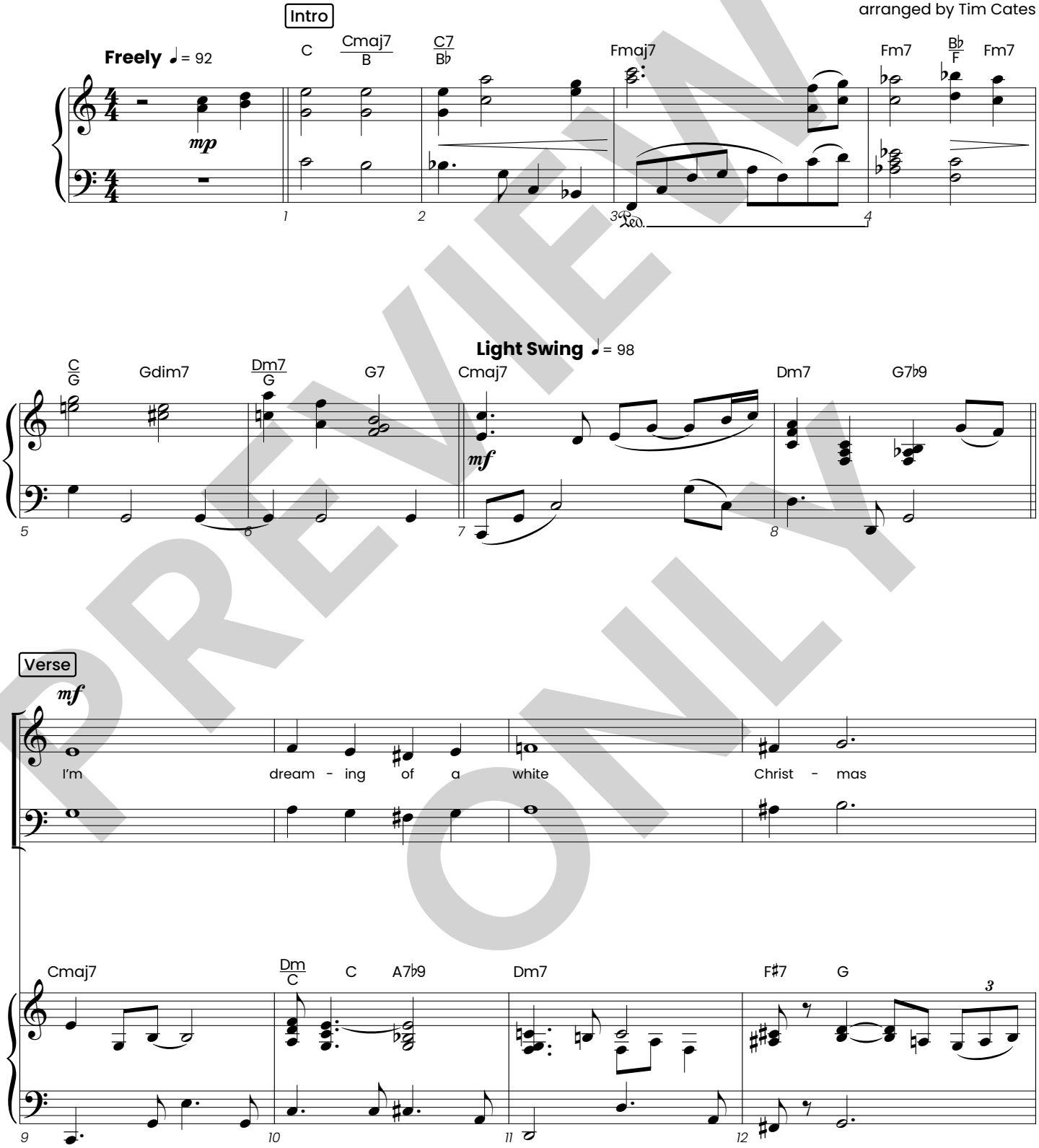
MARY BETH
Sure. Just remember, no matter what visions dance through your little heads, our dreams for Christmas shape our expectations. And those expectations often define what the meaning of Christmas is to each of us.

CHLOE
I don't know what that means, but this party is gonna be fun!

(CHLOE goes to the food table and begins feasting. BENNETT walks with Mary Beth into the room and is listening to the ensemble as they begin to sing. **3. White Christmas**.)

White Christmas

Irving Berlin
arranged by Tim Cates



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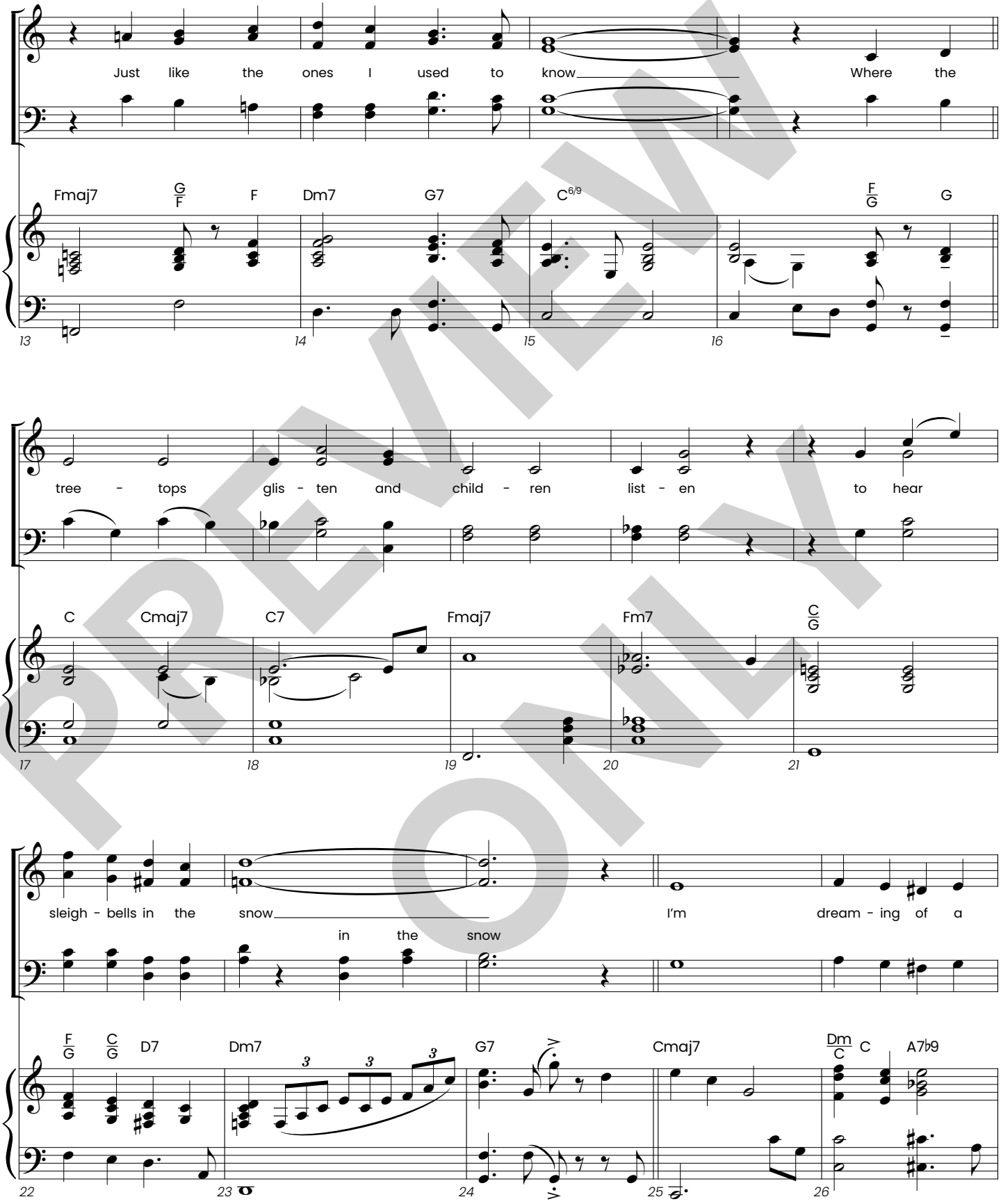
Irving Berlin Music Company c/o Universal Music Corporation



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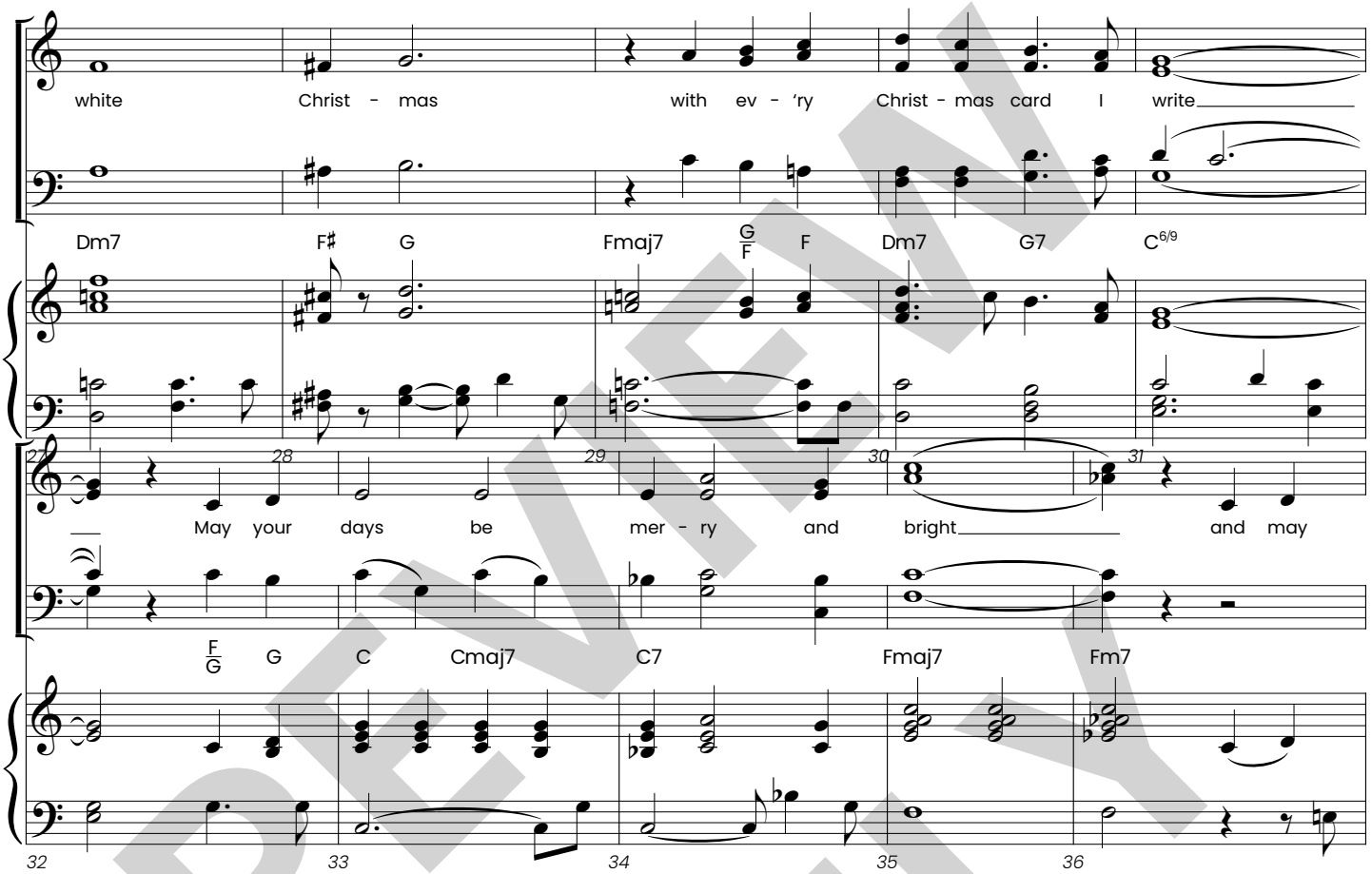
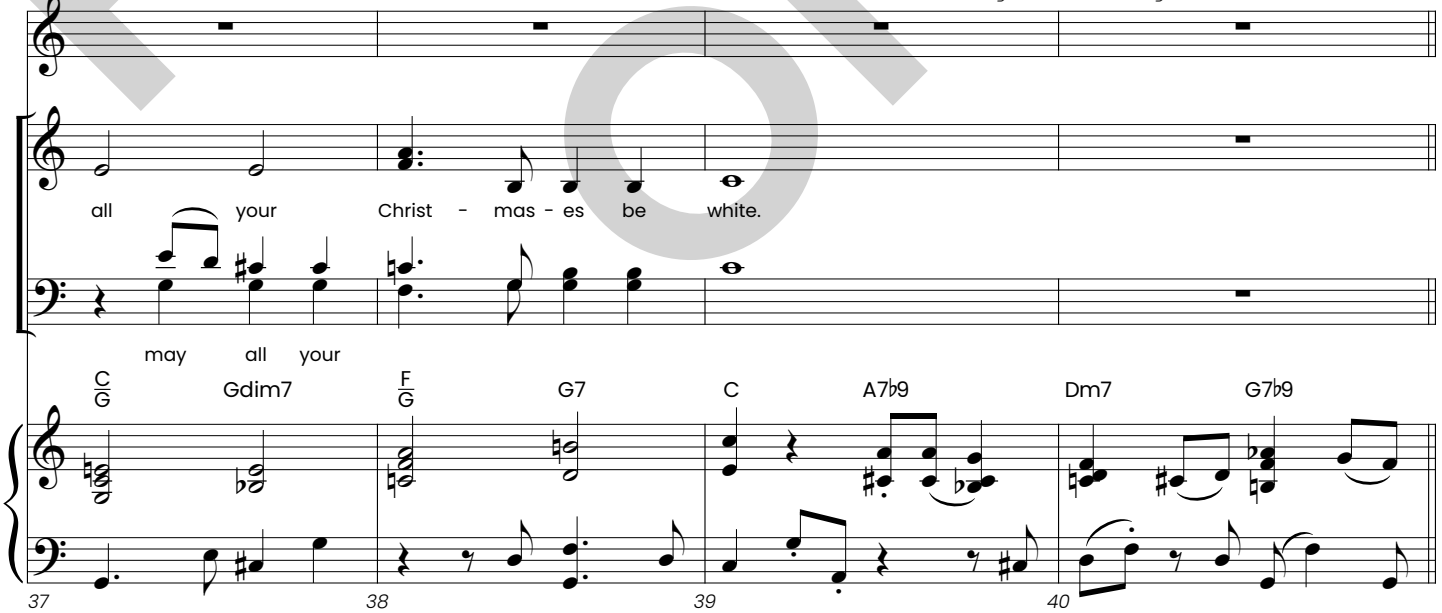
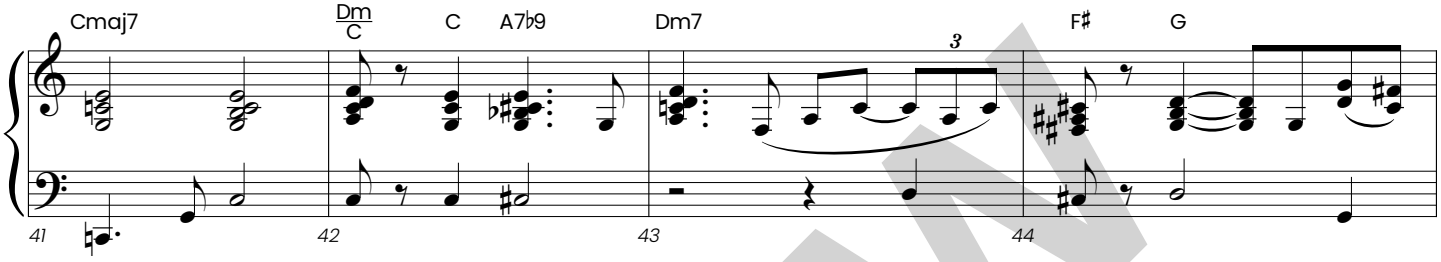


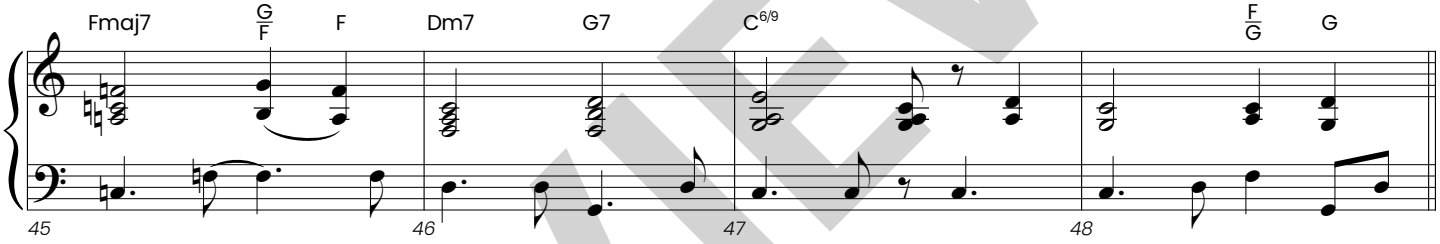
(INSTRUMENTAL break. The couples begin to dance as MARY BETH motions to Bennett to take her hand and dance. He shies away at first, but is finally convinced. MARY BETH and BENNETT dance for a moment as she begins to sing.)

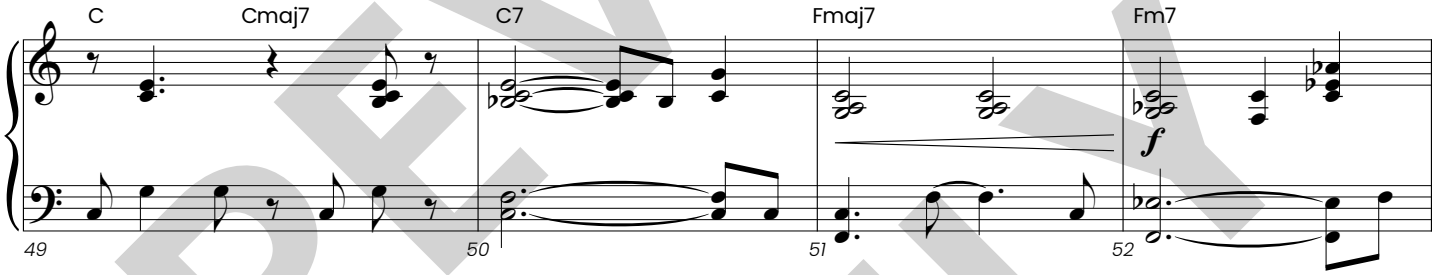


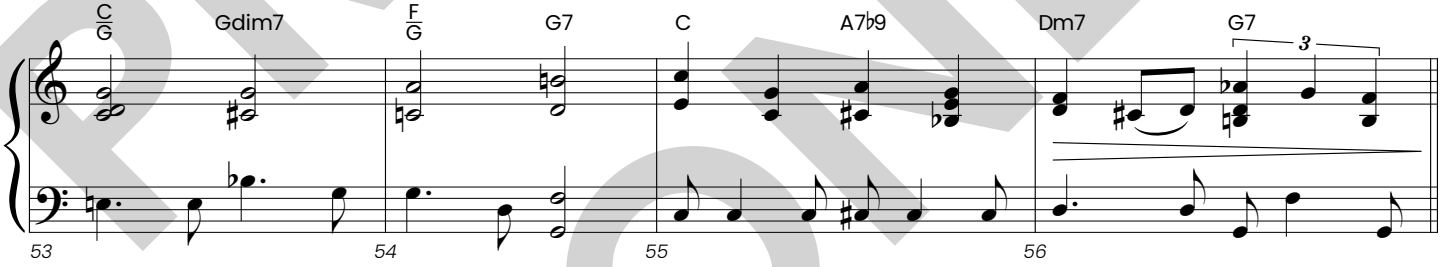
PREVIEW ONLY

Instrumental

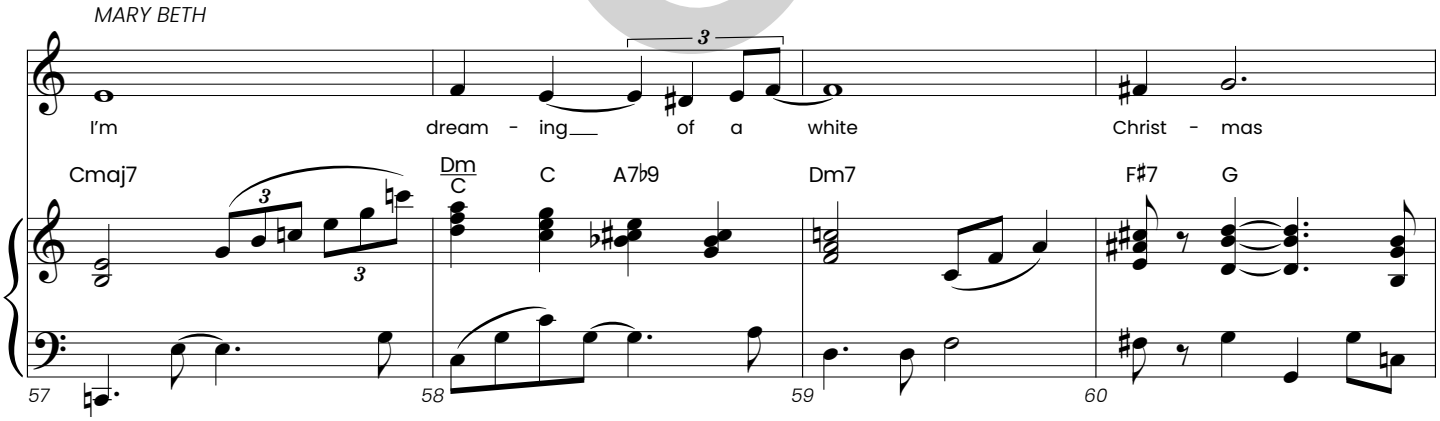








Verse



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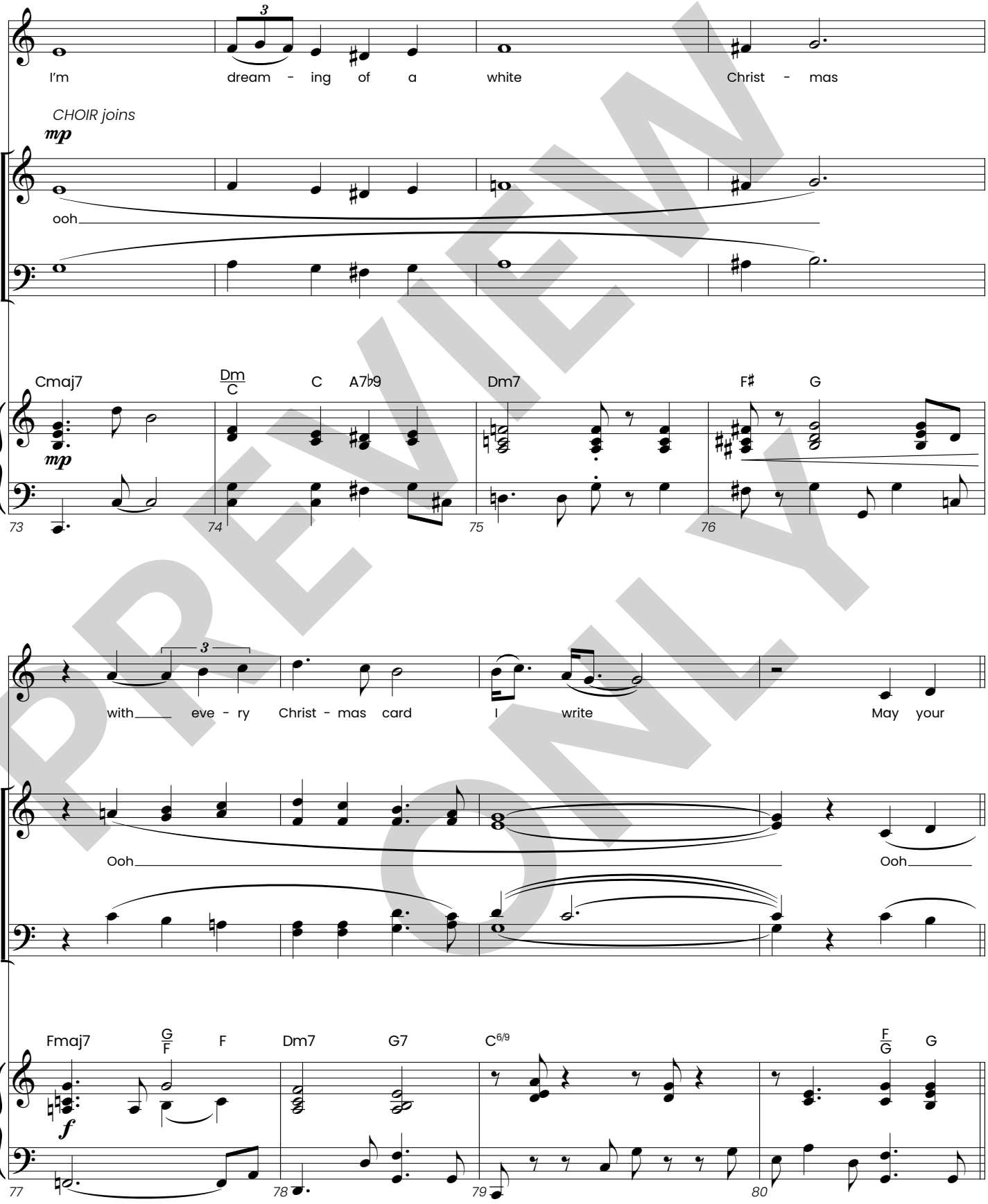

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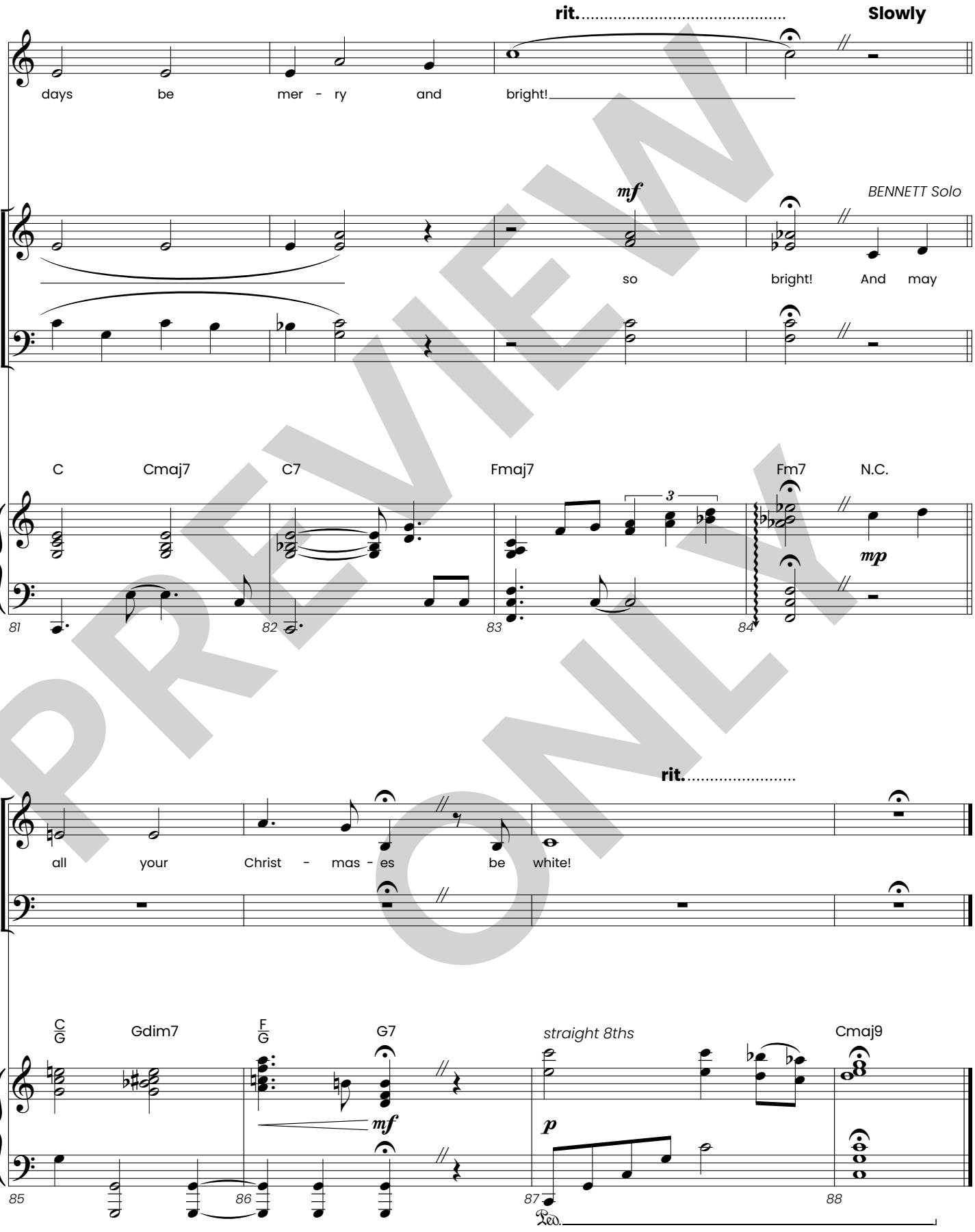


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 5

CHLOE
That was a blast! (CHLOE starts singing loudly) "I'm dreaming…"
(BENNETT and MARY BETH laugh.)

MARY BETH
Bennett, did you enjoy that?

BENNETT
Yeah. It was okay, I guess.

CHLOE
He would have enjoyed it a lot more if he had eaten that cake! Did you see the size of that thing?

MARY BETH(laughing) (concerned)
I'm sure we all would have enjoyed that. What is it, Bennett?

BENNETT
I don't know. I'm just not big on parties, I guess.

MARY BETH
That might be because of your ideas about what Christmas is.

CHLOE
What's there to know? It's lights, and decorations, and presents, and food. Lots of yummy food!

MARY BETH
It can be those things, too. But, at the center of what Christmas is we find peace, hope, love…

CHLOE(interrupting with an idea as though it just came to her)
Hold that thought! What if everything we love about Christmas morning, was every morning?!

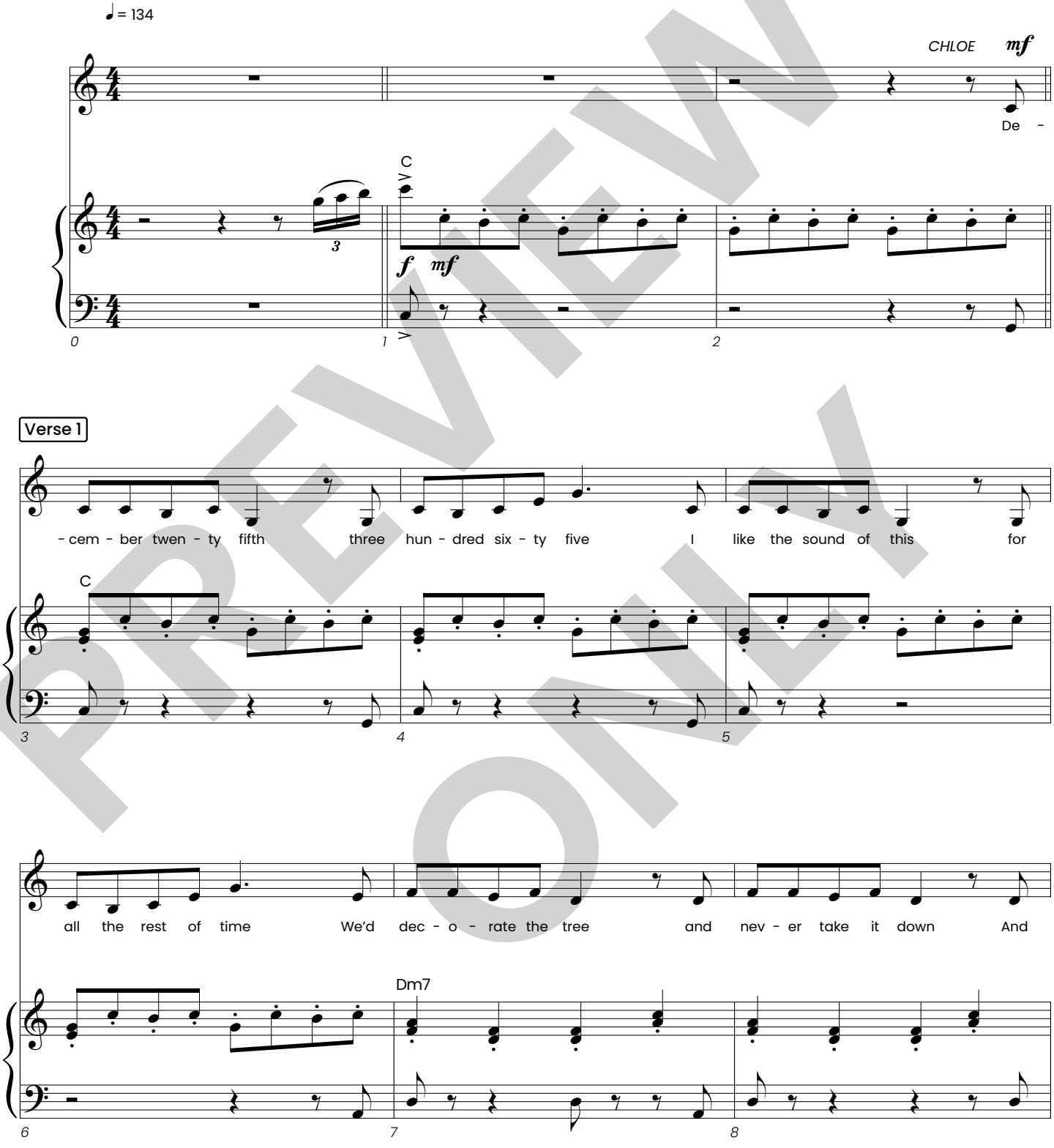
BENNETT
Huh?

CHLOE
That might be my best idea ever! I can just see it now. (Music begins.) Every morning. Every day. No school. No chores. Just sparkles, and snow, and (pause) Christmas.

(Ensemble appears in a dream-like appearance as song begins. UPLIFT kids choir in wings. **4. Christmas Every Day**.)

Christmas Every Day

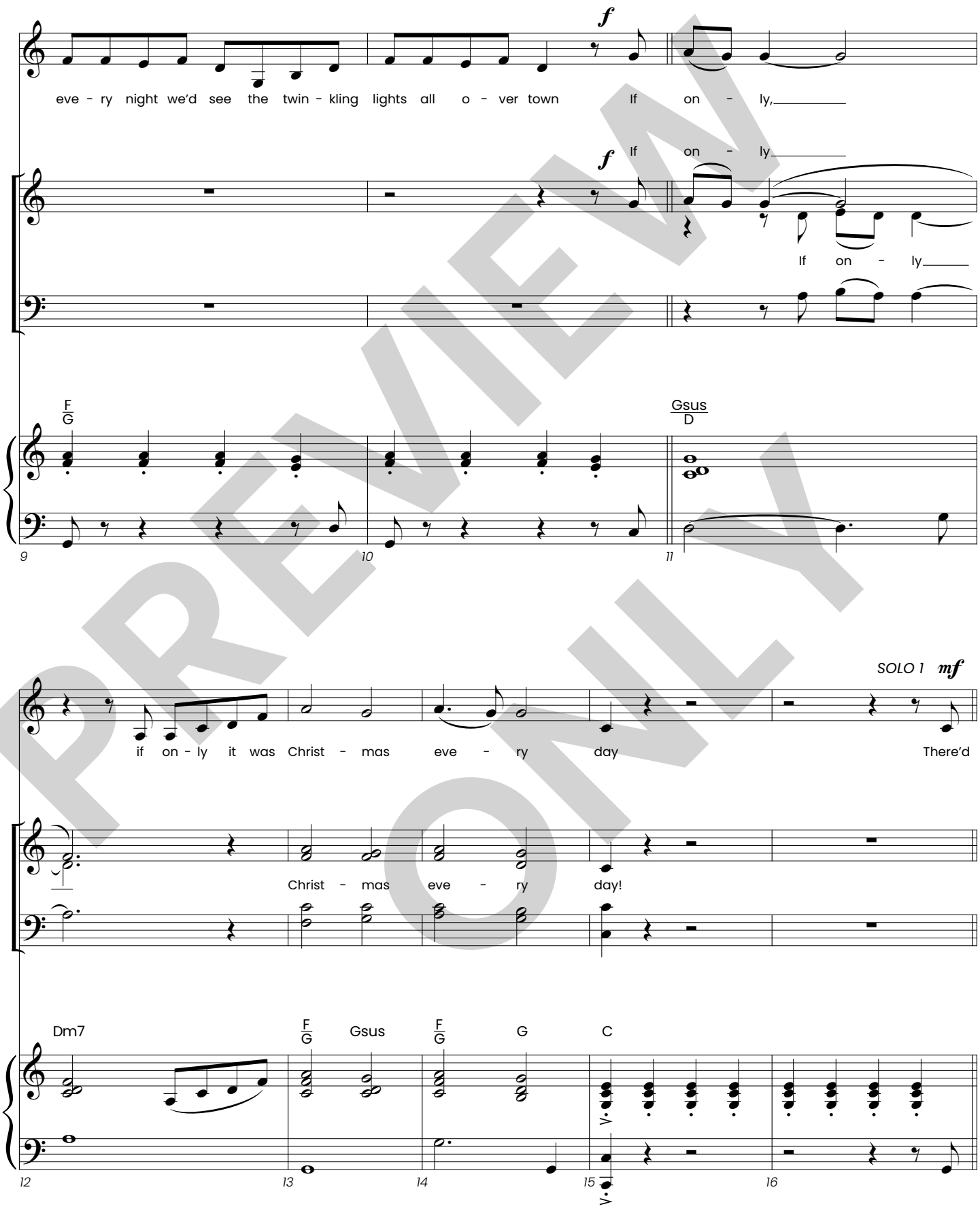
Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Tim Cates



PREVIEW ONLY

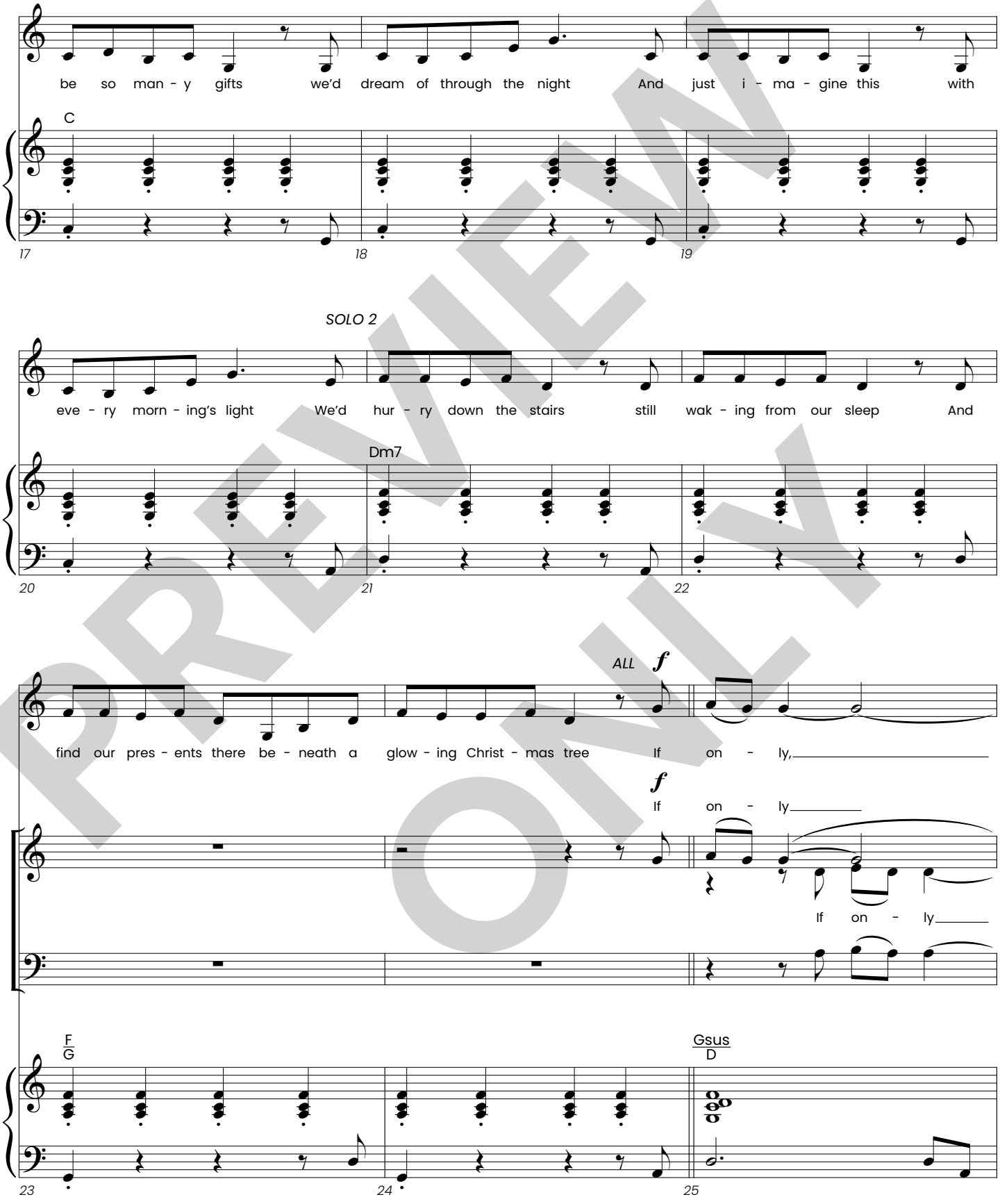
HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



PREVIEW ONLY

Verse 2



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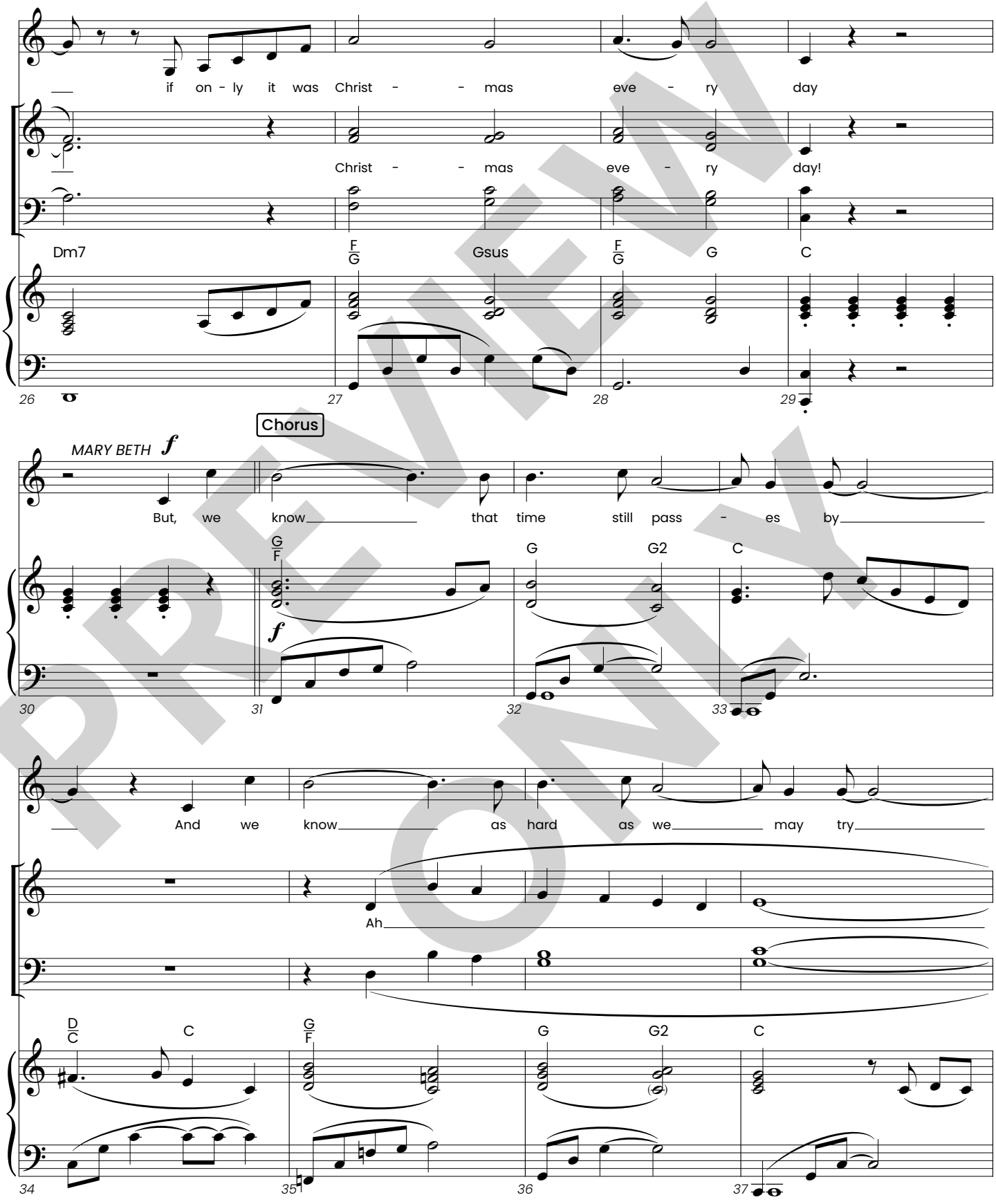

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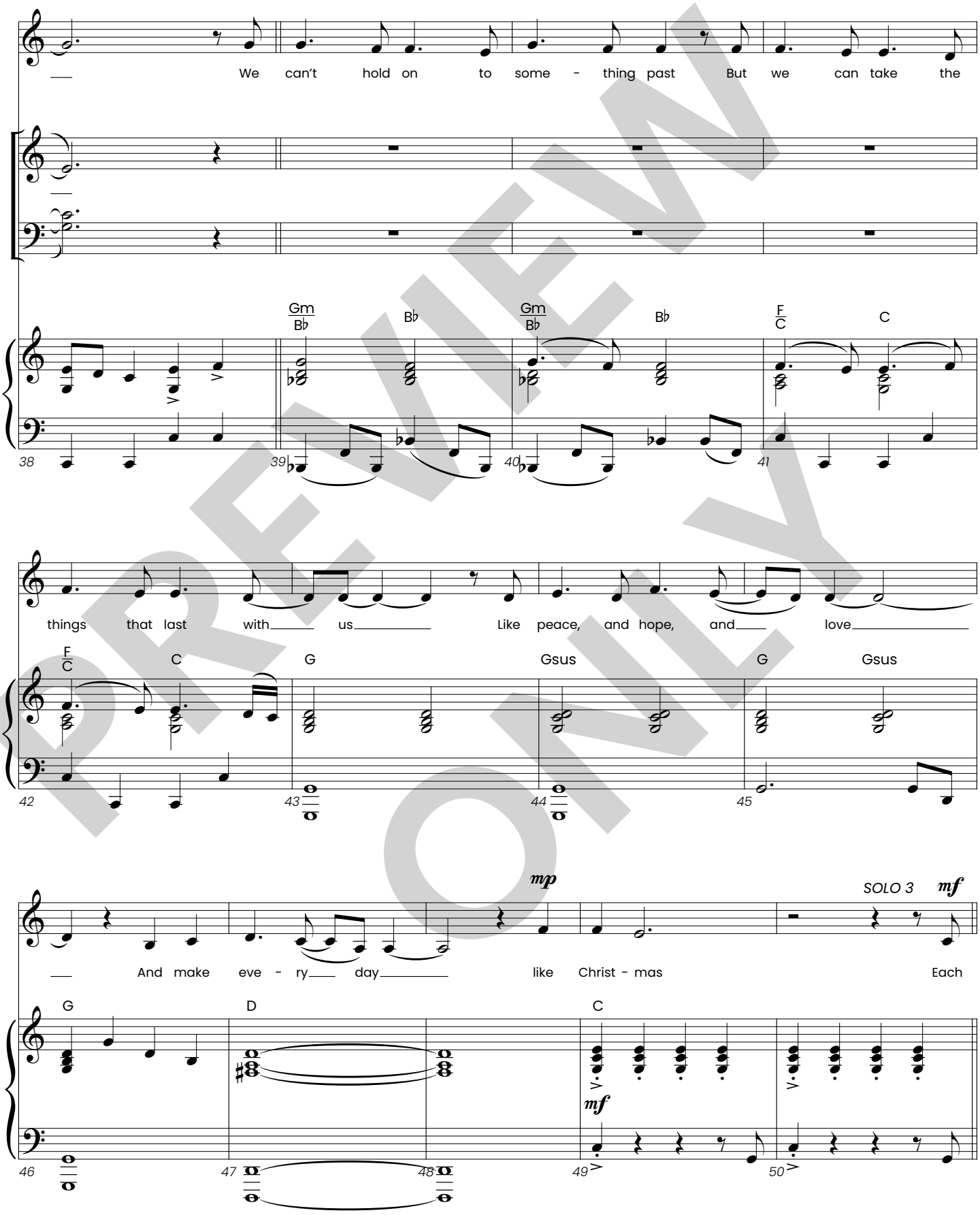

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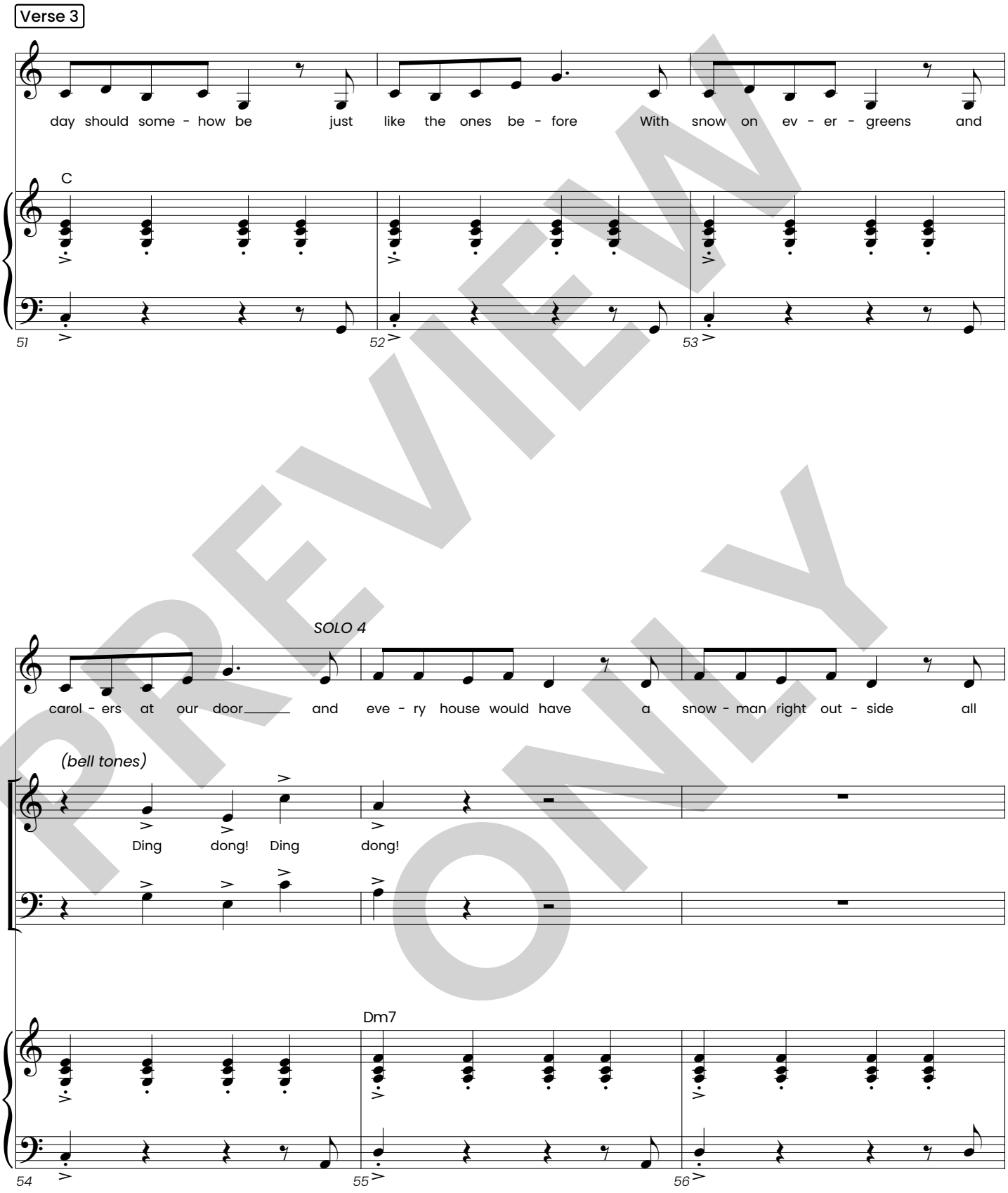

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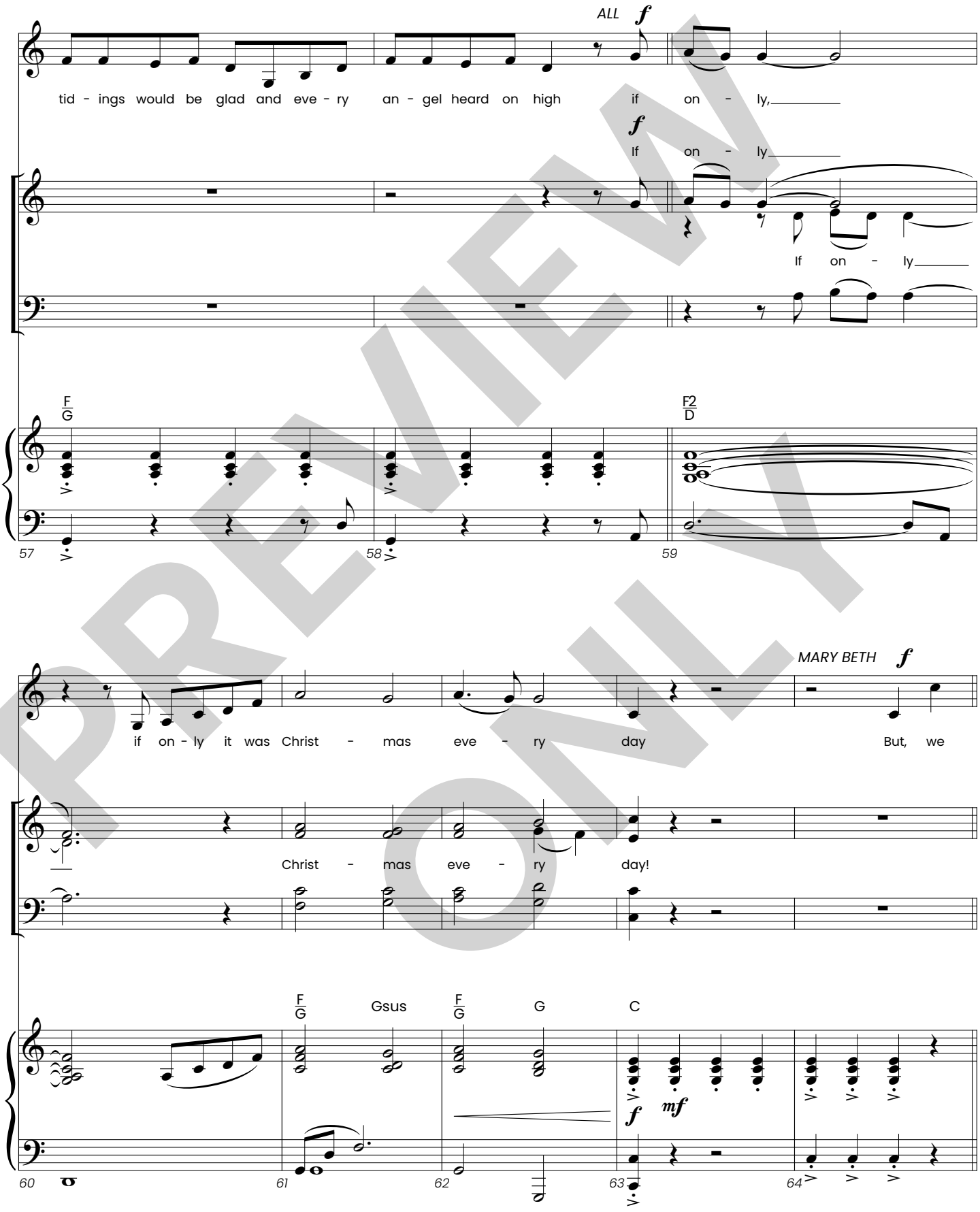

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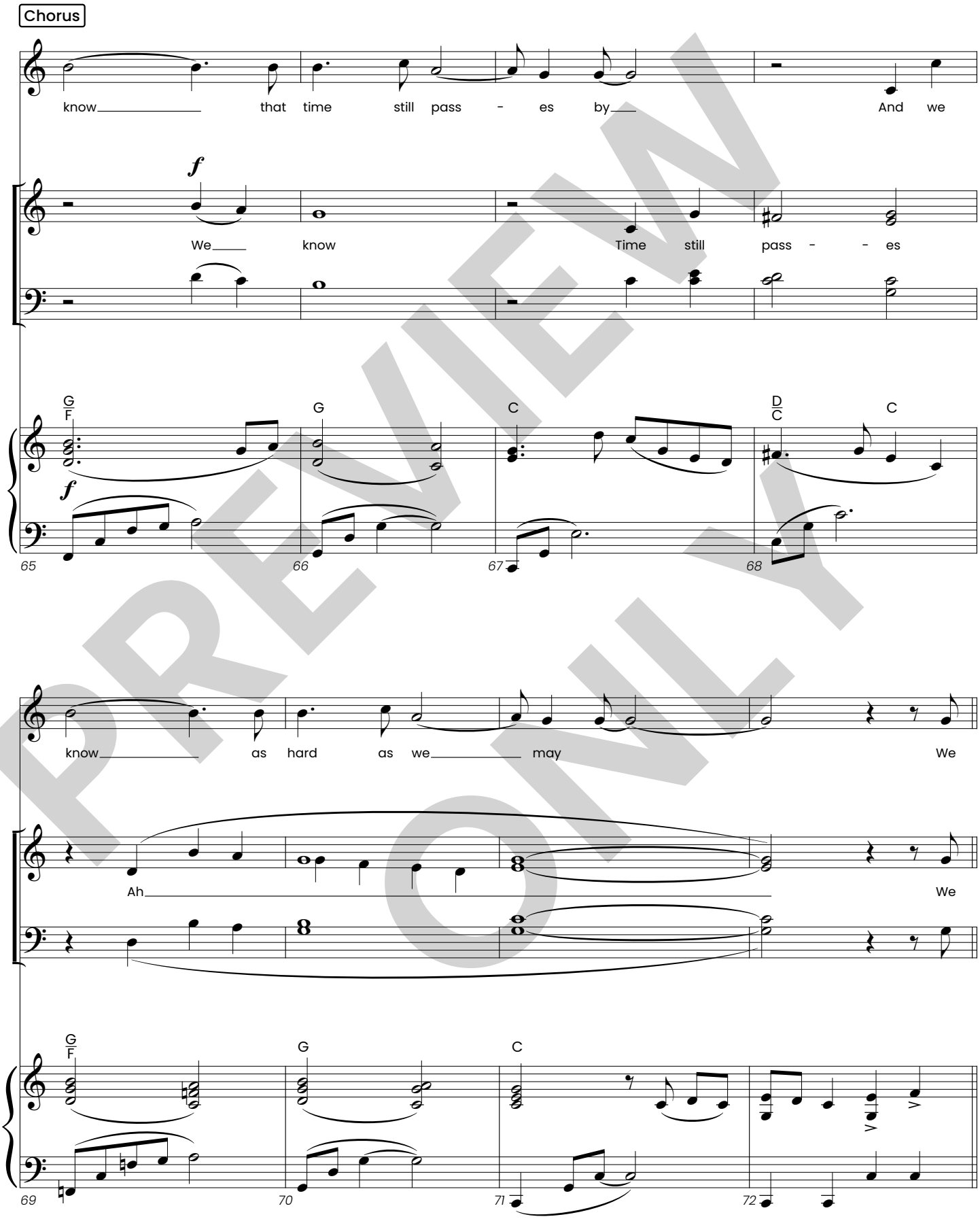

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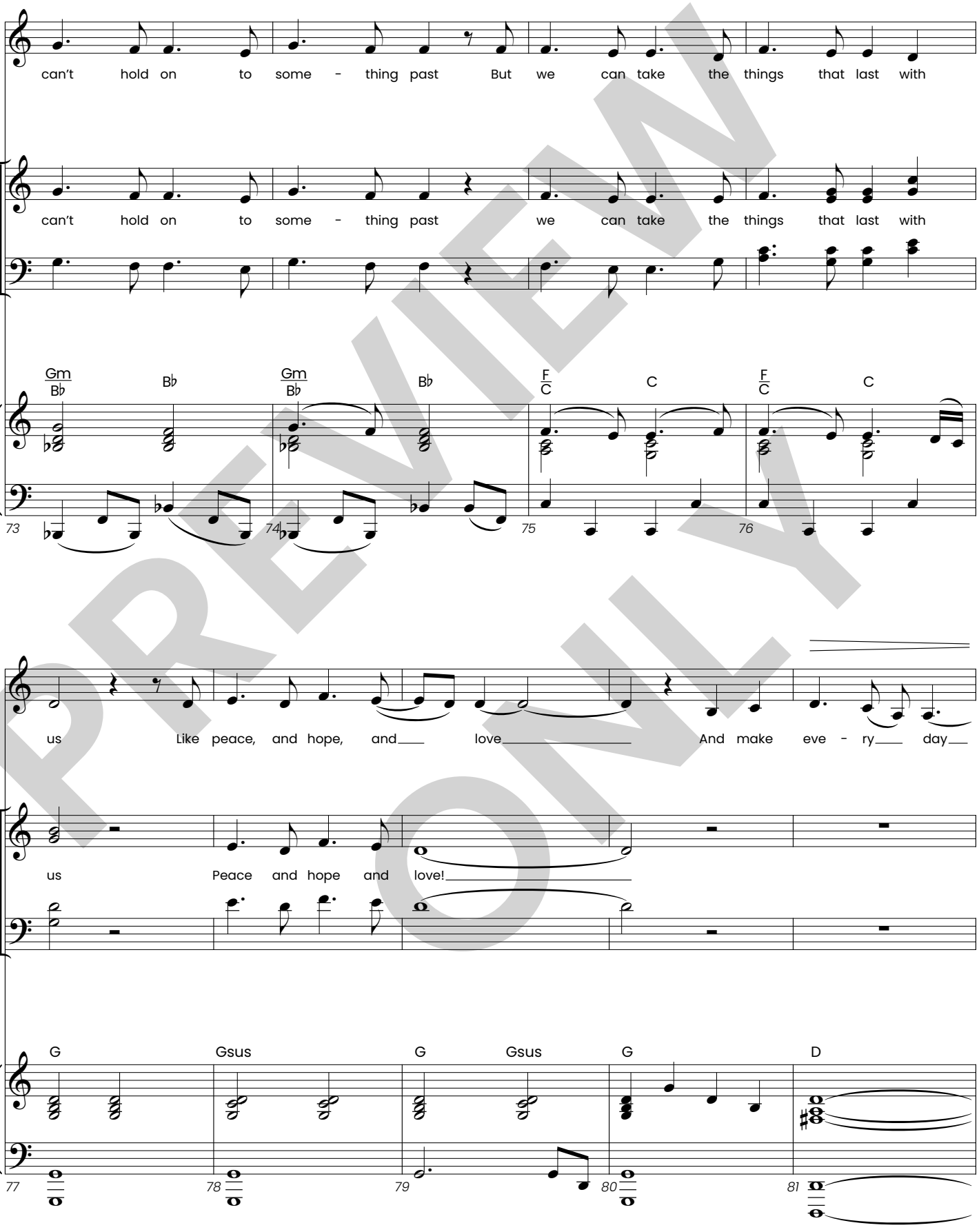

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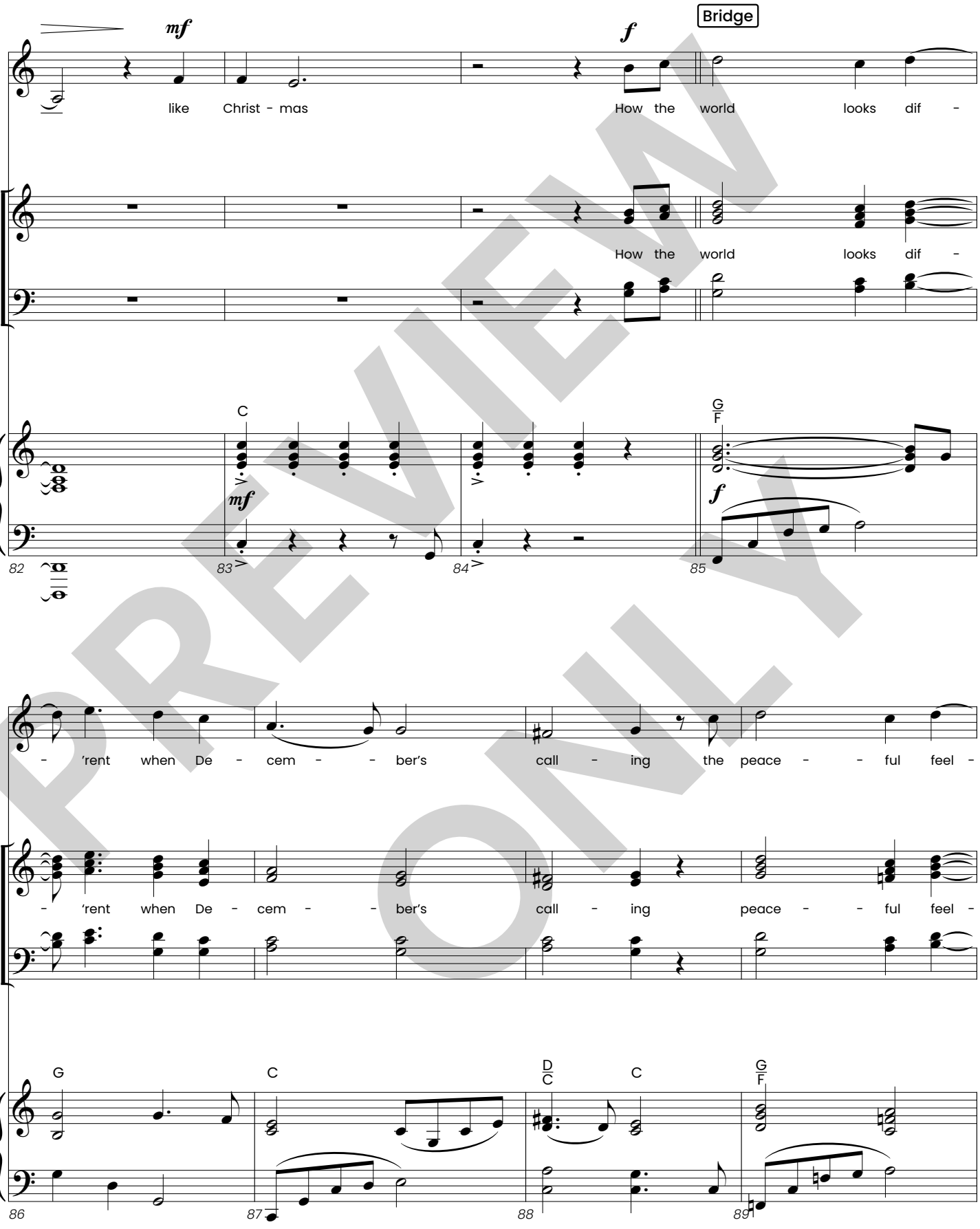

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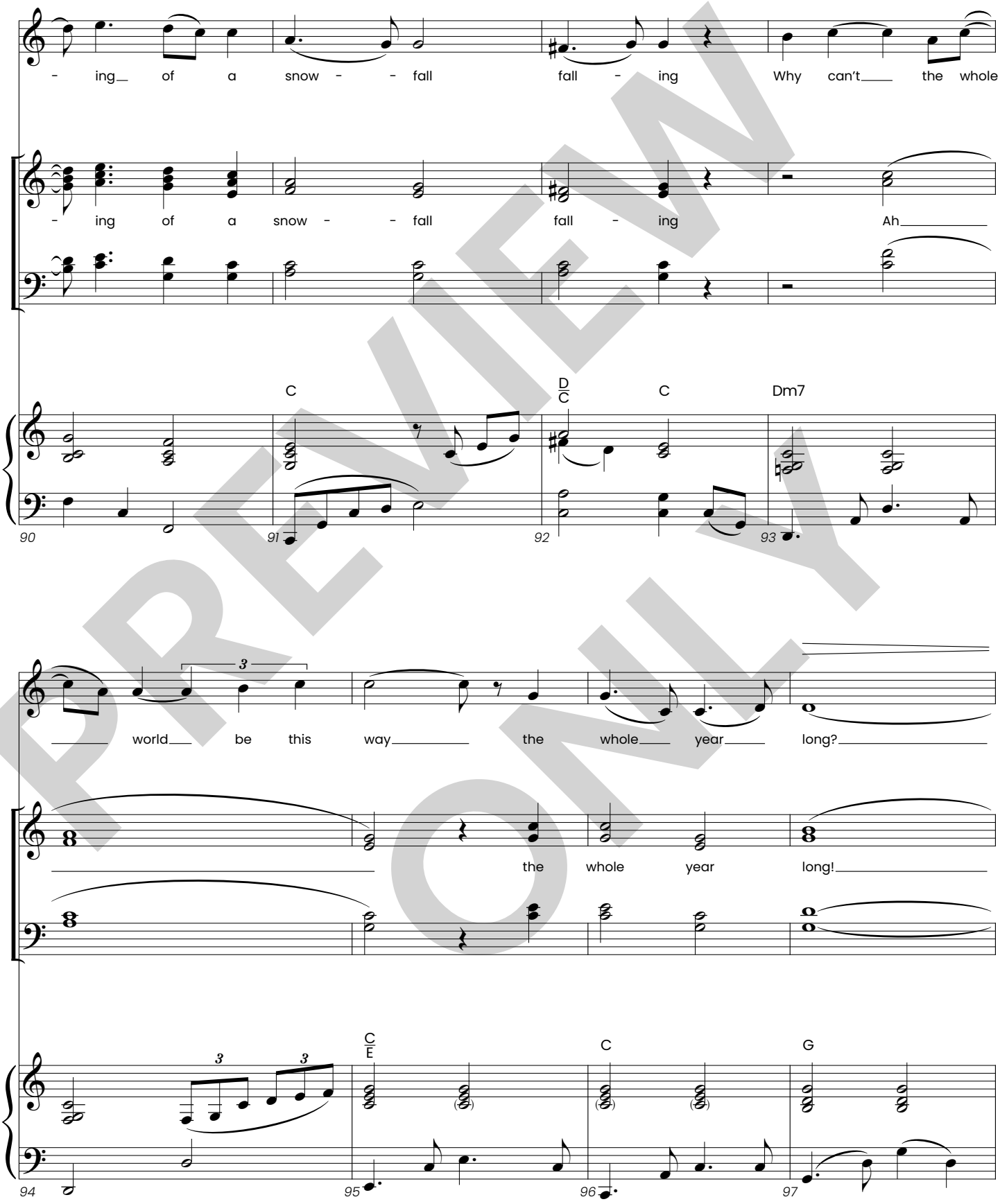

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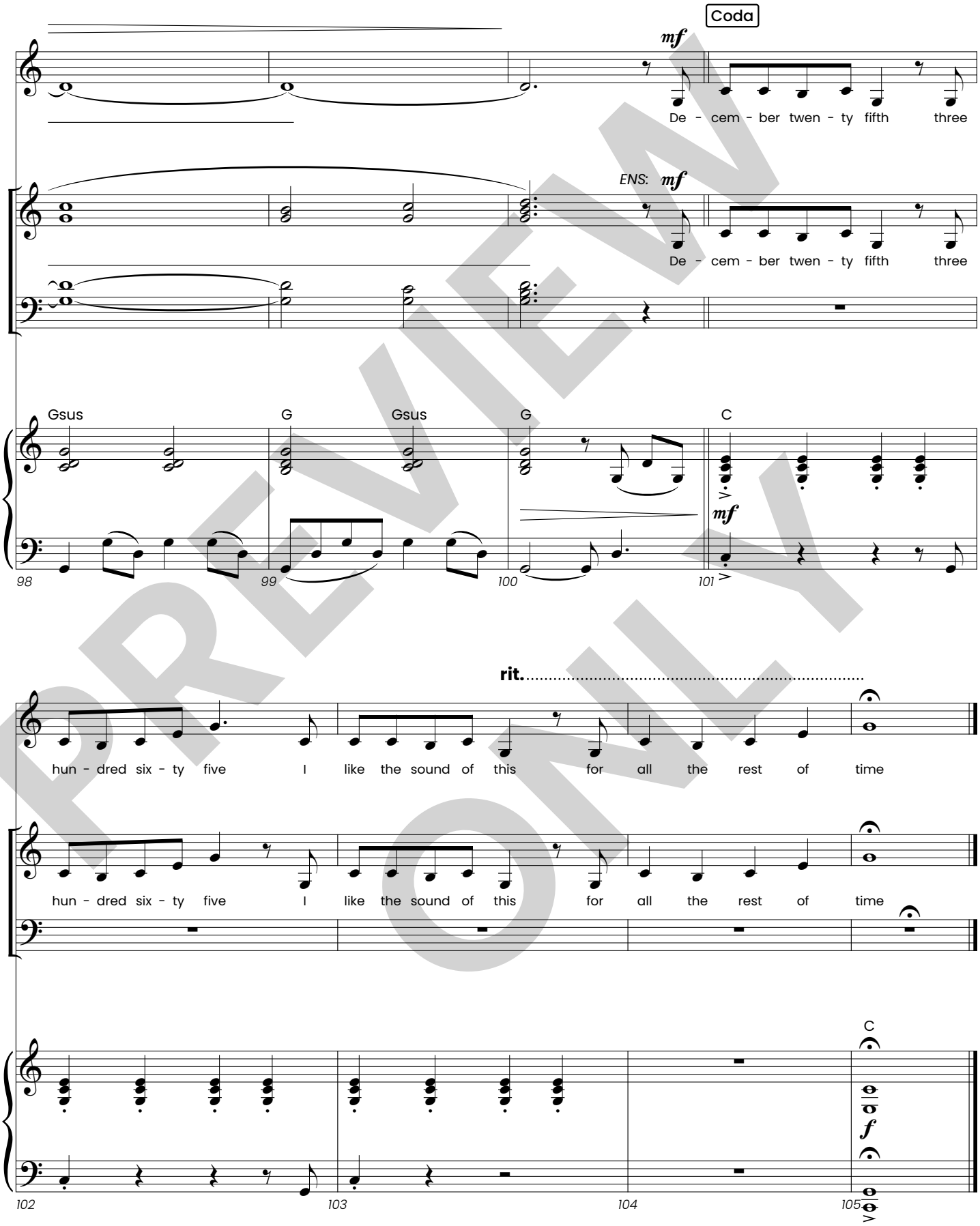


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 6

(Scene opens with MATT talking to Mrs. Hamilton about a job.)

MATT
(the scene opens with Matt in mid-sentence)
…and if you look at my experience, you'll see that I can bring a lot of ideas to the company. In fact, management has always been a strength of mine. I love casting vision, investing in my team, and watching them succeed.

MRS. HAMILTON
Your experience doesn't worry me at all.

MATT
I thought you might say that. So, I've prepared some things I'd love to talk to you about incorporating. I really think, that if given the chance…

MRS. HAMILTON
I'm sure you have some great ideas. I just don't know that you'd be happy here. You do know this is an entry-level position, don't you?

MATT
I do. But, with my experience…

MRS. HAMILTON(interrupting)
It's not about your experience, Matt. In fact, you're overqualified for what we are looking for.

MATT(trying to stay positive)
Oh, I don't believe in being overqualified, Mrs. Hamilton.

MRS. HAMILTON
It's Charlotte.

MATT(rattled)
Right. Charlotte. Uhh, it's those qualifications that are going to help us succeed from the bottom up. Not the top down.

MRS. HAMILTON
Matt, we go way back. First grade, I think it was. I've always liked you. You are a good guy. In fact, I love seeing you and Linda around the golf course. And that swing of hers. We're gonna have to all play a round together soon so she can give me some tips.

(seeing Matt's countenance)

It's just that I don't have a position for someone with your capabilities, Matt. That's all this is.

MATT(in desperation)
No. Mrs. Hamilton, please. I mean, Charlotte. I can do this…

MRS. HAMILTON
I'm sorry, Matt. I'm sure there is something out there more suiting for someone with your experience and abilities.

MATT
But, it's Christmas. I really need this. My family needs this.

MRS. HAMILTON
I'm sorry, Matt. (seeing his desperation, Mrs. Hamilton tries to encourage Matt.) I'll tell you what: I'll hold on to your resume, and if something else opens up, you'll be my first call.

MATT(defeated)
Thank you for your time. Merry Christmas.

MRS. HAMILTON
Merry Christmas. (Matt begins to leave) And Matt, bring the family by the Country Club soon. I'll bring Charles, we can grab some lunch and hit a round of golf. Maybe even a set of tennis while the kids swim.

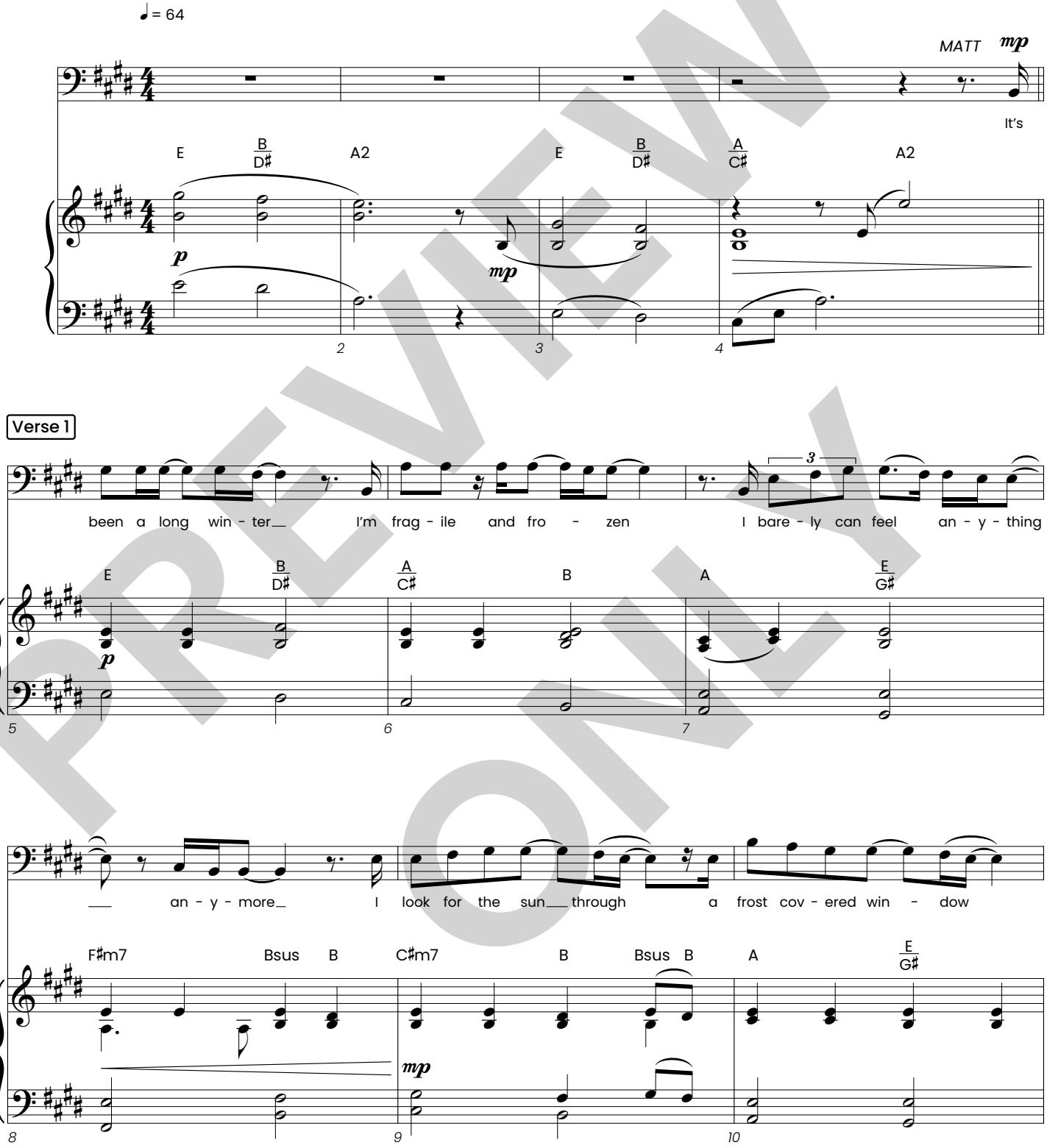
MATT
Sure thing, Mrs. Hamilton.

MRS. HAMILTON(as though nothing is wrong)
It's Charlotte.

(Matt leaves the office and begins to zip his sweater up. He steps outside into the cold as song begins. **5. Long Winter**.)

Long Winter

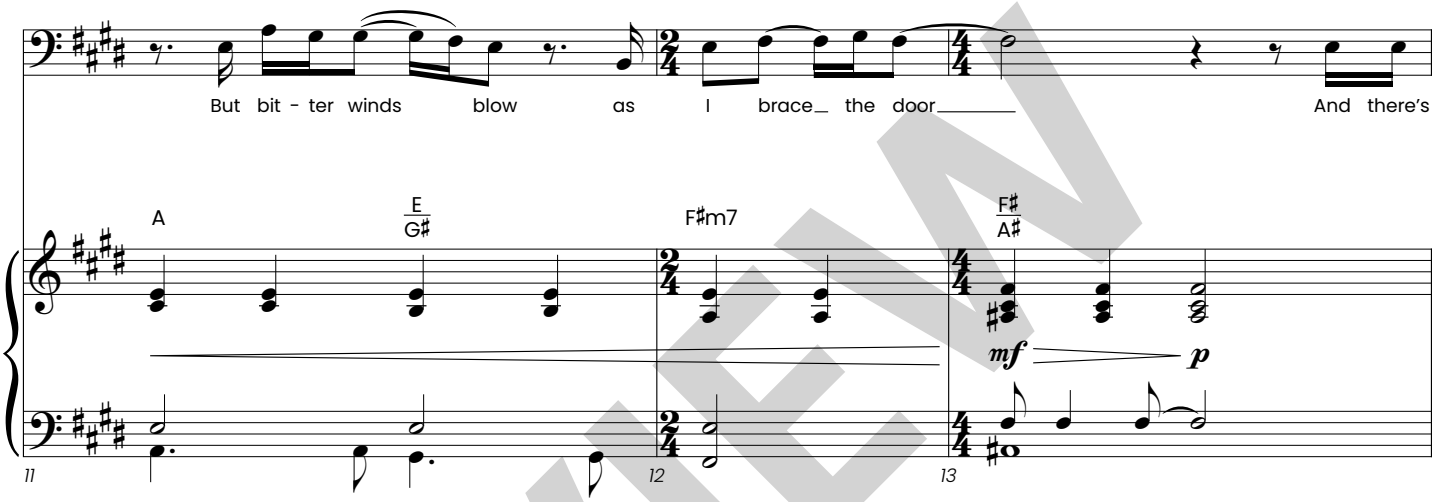
Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey, Jayme Thompson
arranged by Tim Cates

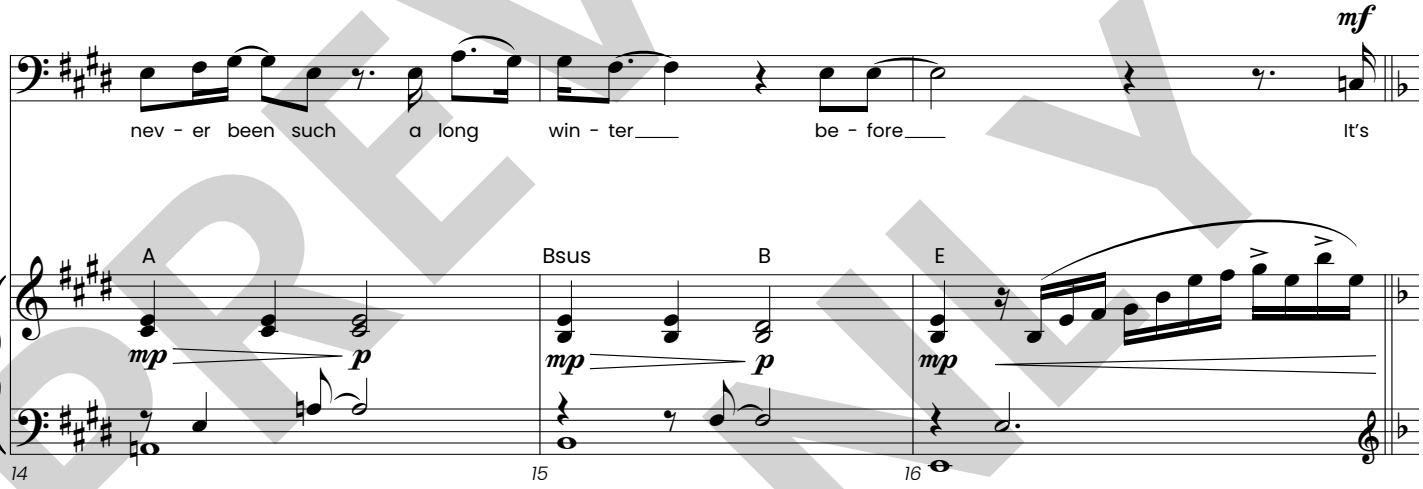


PREVIEW ONLY

HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Sunday Best/ASCAP
Sunset Gallery Music/BMI
Universal Music/Brentwood Benson Songs/Hefton Hill Music/BMI





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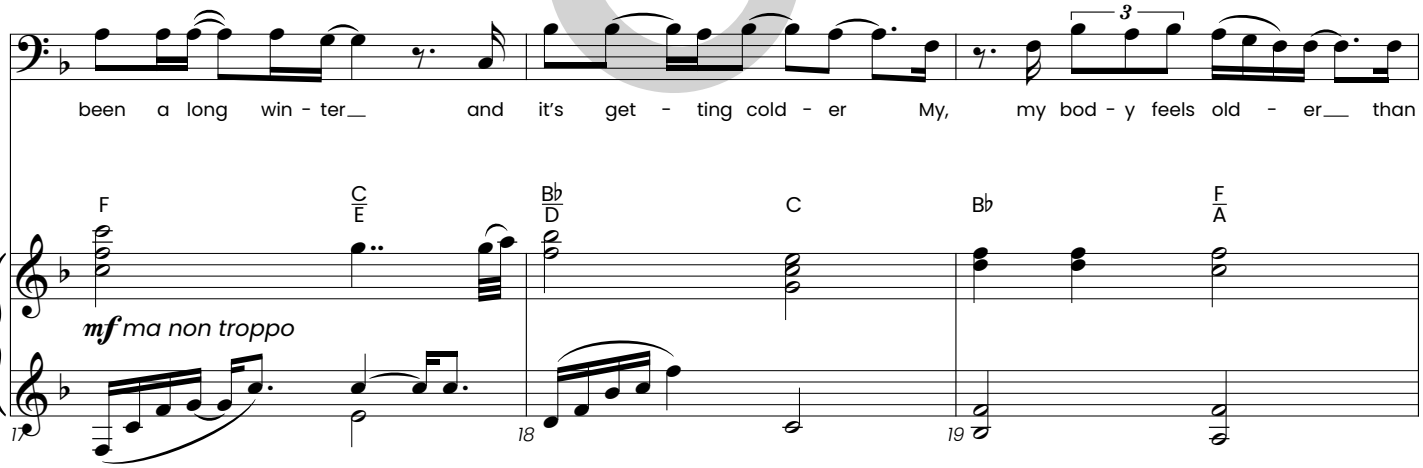

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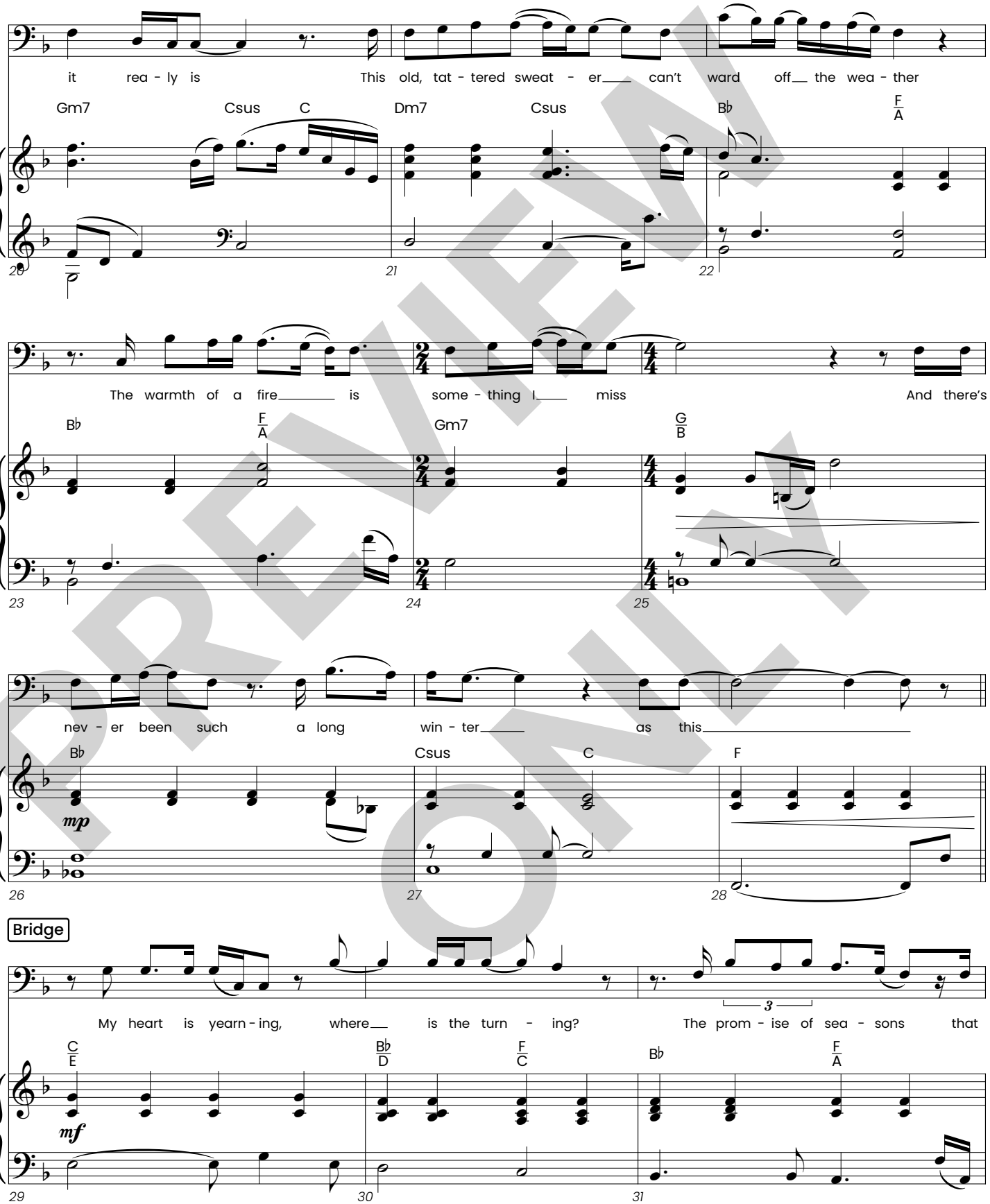

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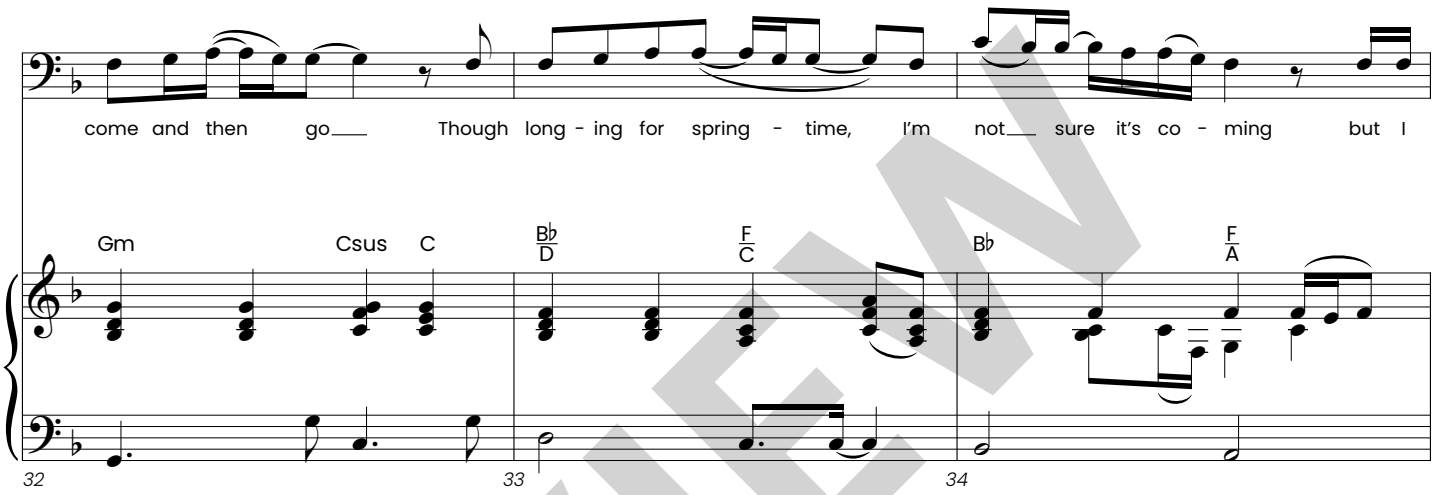

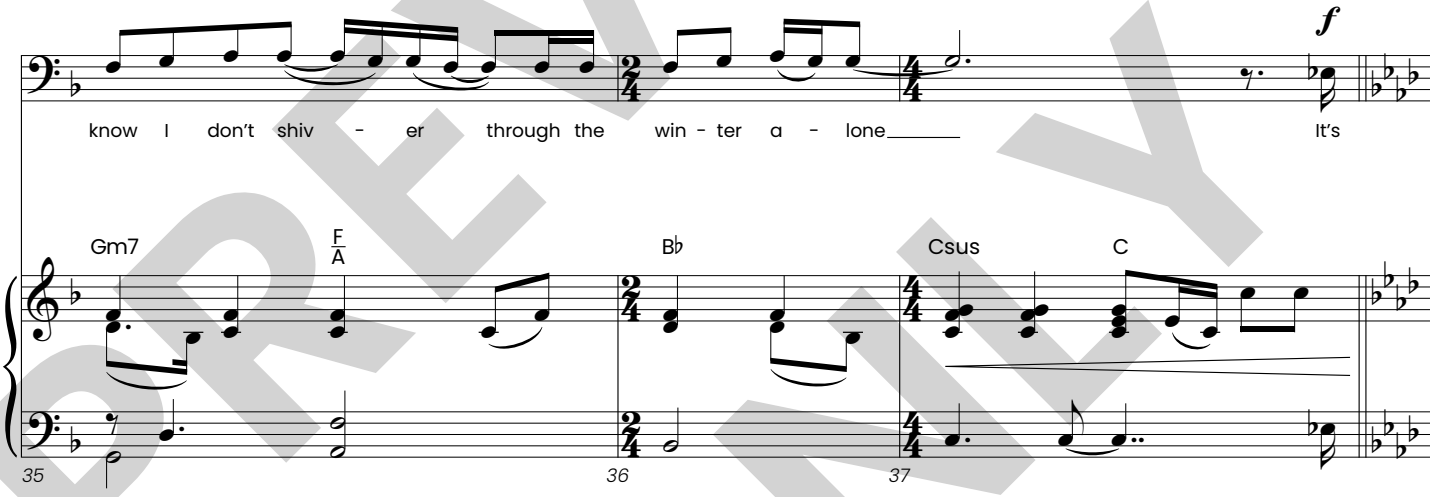

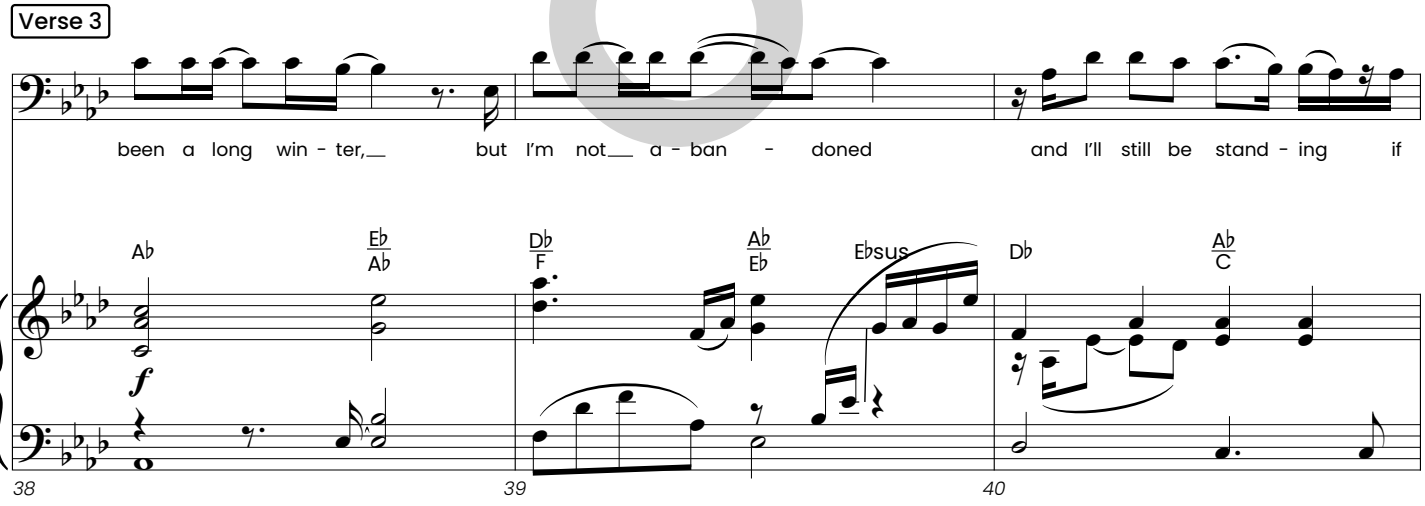

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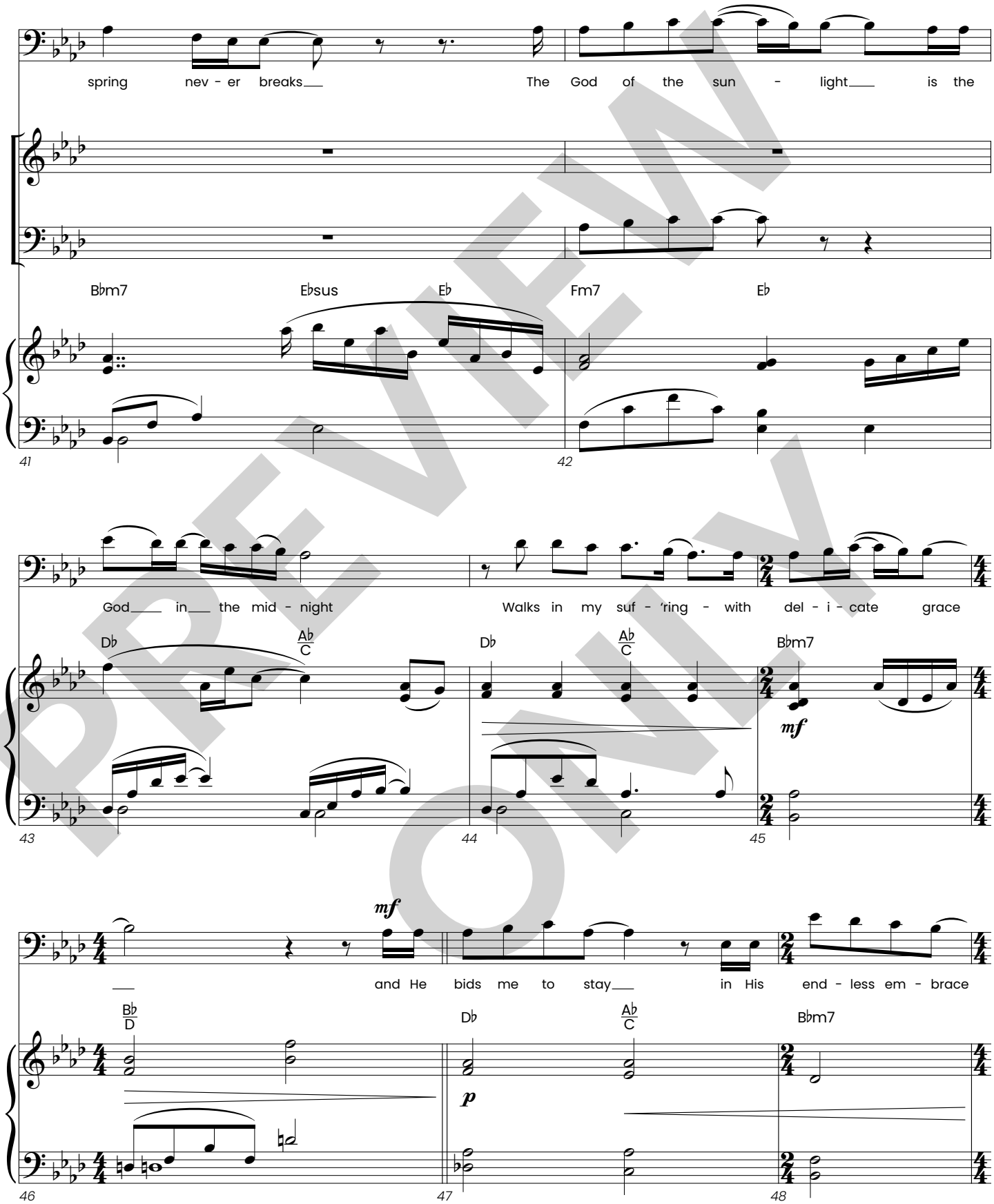

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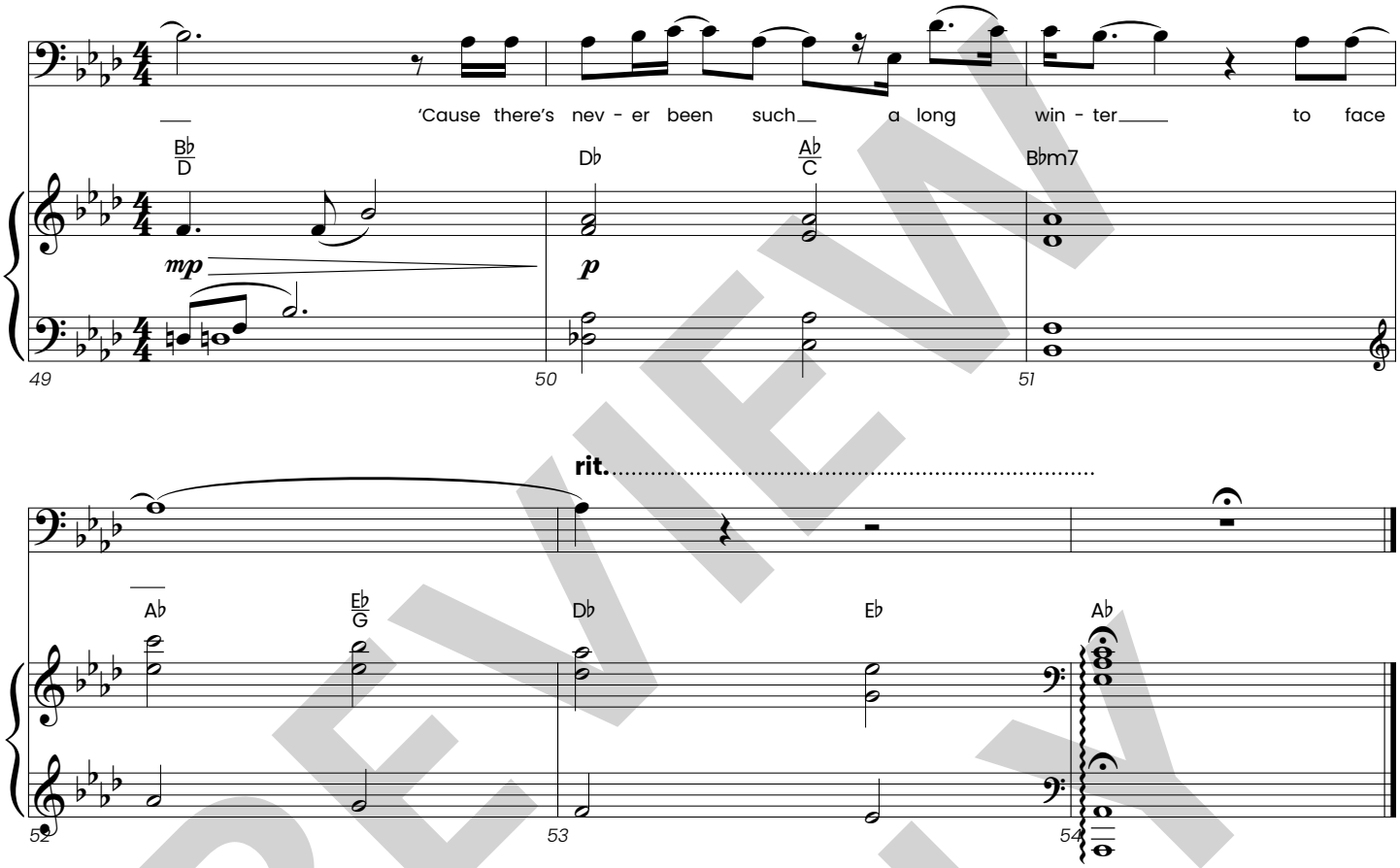


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 7

(Scene opens with MARY BETH, BENNETT, and CHLOE walking in a small-town square.)

MARY BETH
So, what are some fun things you like to do on Christmas break from school?

BENNETT
I usually just sit at home and play video games.

CHLOE
Look! The ice cream shop.

BENNETT(surprised as though seeing something strange)
That's weird.

MARY BETH
What's that?

BENNETT
That candy shop is supposed to be Kingston's Hardware. And there's never been an ice cream store on the corner.

CHLOE
Well, it's an ice cream store now. Who wants ice cream! (Raises her hand)

MARY BETH
In December?

CHLOE(sarcastically)
Why should August get all the ice cream?

BENNETT(as if to himself)
It's so weird.

(Mary Beth smiles recognizing BENNETT is beginning to piece things together.)

MARY BETH
Everything is not always as it seems.

BENNETT
And over there. That's supposed to be the Post Office. And, that's supposed to be the toy store.

CHLOE
Do they have dolls?

BENNETT(ignoring CHLOE)
And, where did the café go?

CHLOE
Ooooo. A café?

BENNETT(still ignoring Chloe)
It’s like it’s the old town square, but everything is different.

MARY BETH(shifting the conversation)
Hey, I have an idea. Why don’t we go caroling!

CHLOE(confused)
I thought we were getting ice cream.

MARY BETH(CHLOE looks sad)
How about we hold off on the ice cream for now and instead, try to bring some cheer to all of these people?

BENNETT(confused)
What people? There’s no one here.

(Bennett’s thought is interrupted by all the people that begin entering the scene.)

MARY BETH
You were saying?

BENNETT(confused)
This day is so weird.

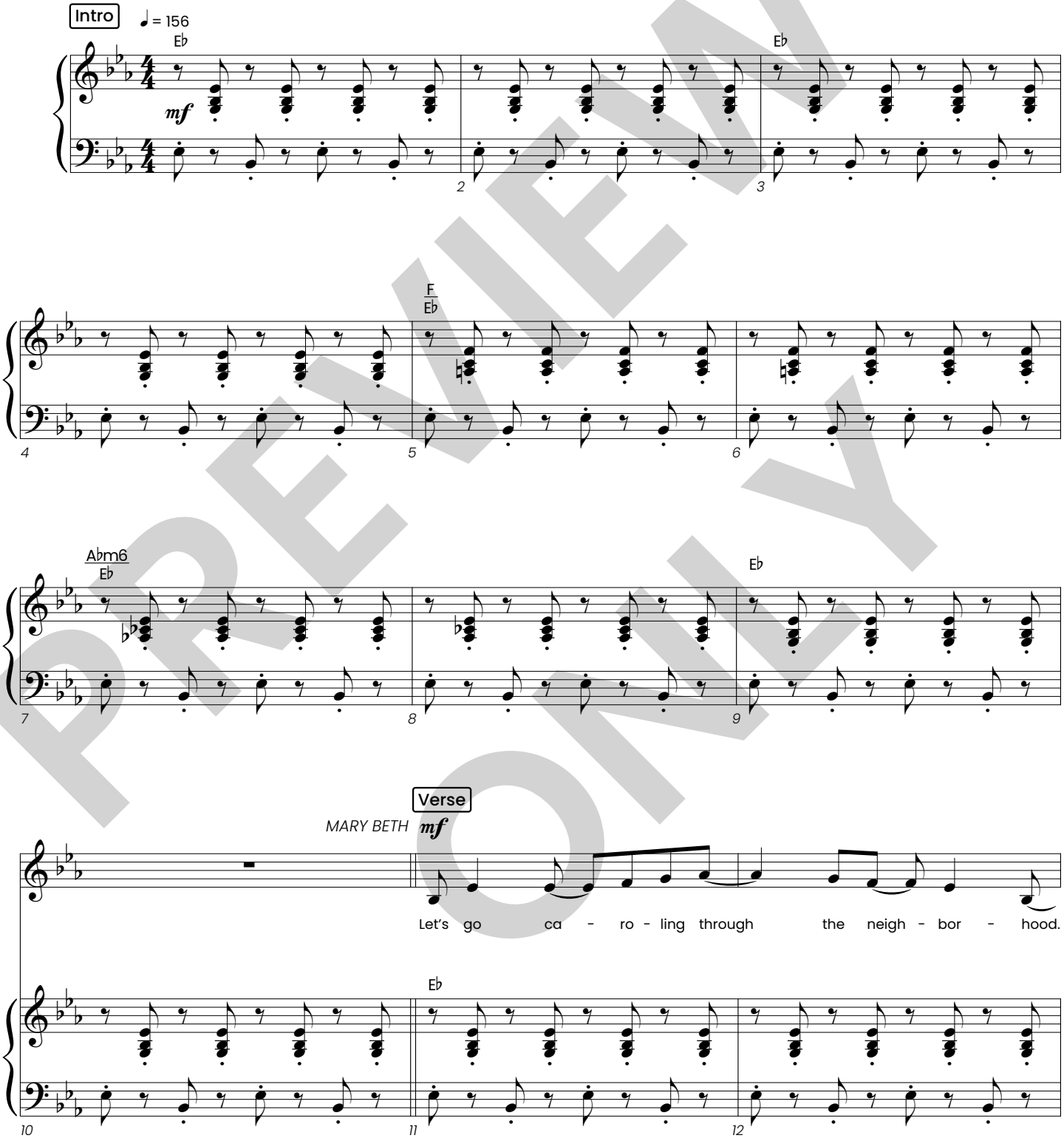
CHLOE
Okay, let’s sing. And, then ice cream?

MARY BETH(Laughing)
We’ll see. But, first…

(MARY BETH sings as she leads Chloe and Bennett around the town square, interacting with the people along the way. **6. Random Acts of Christmas**.)

Random Acts of Christmas

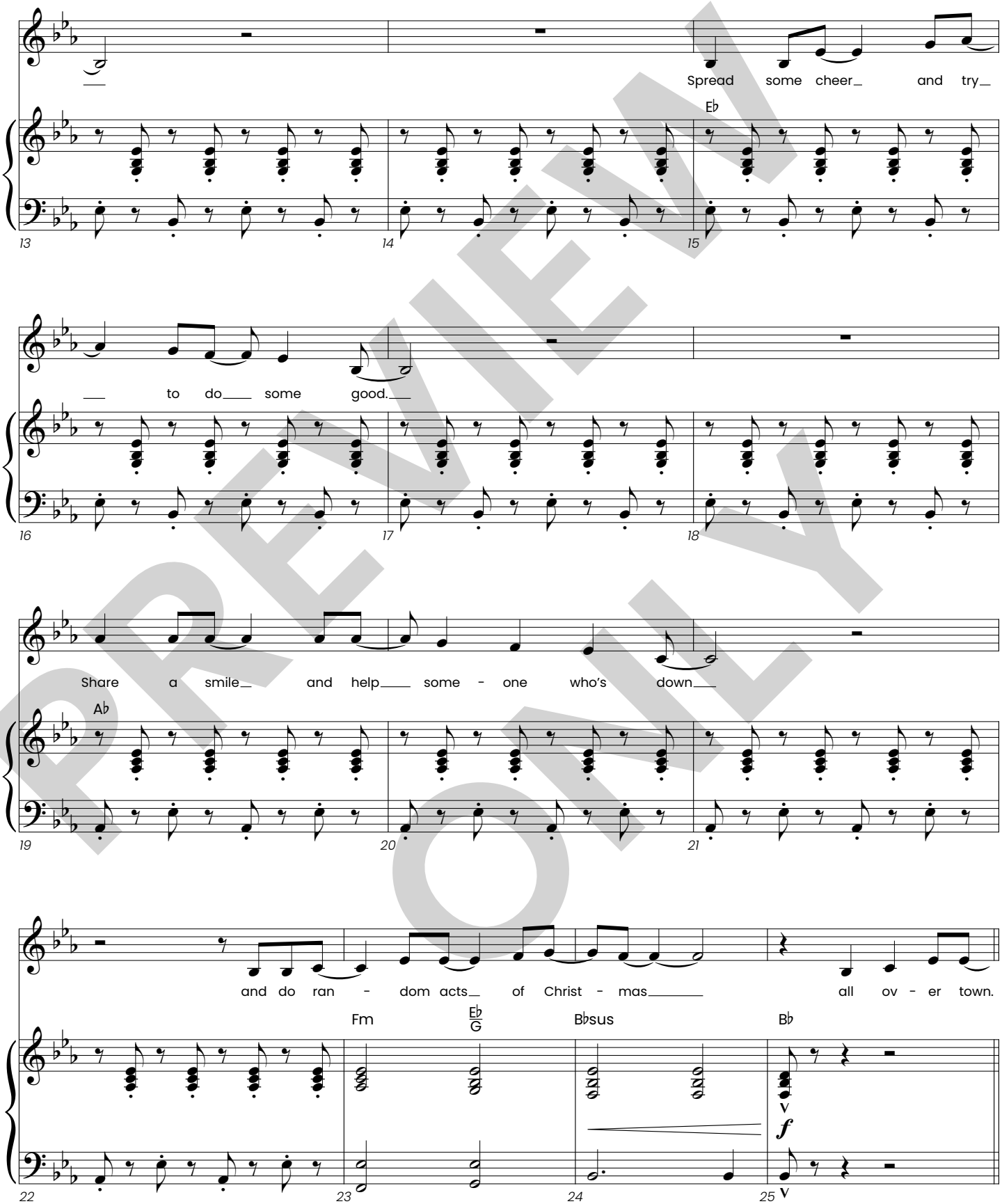
Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Eric Belvin



PREVIEW ONLY

HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



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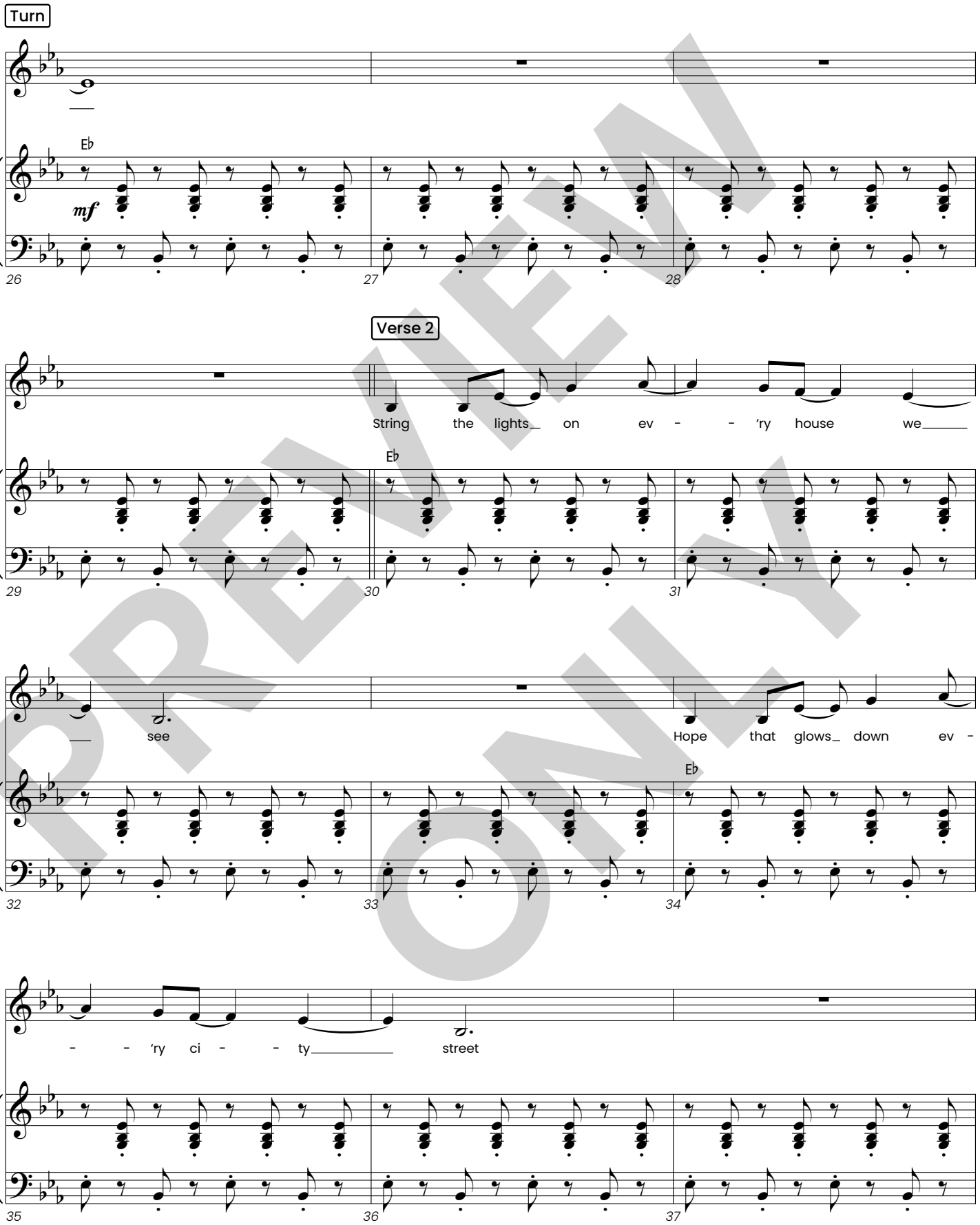

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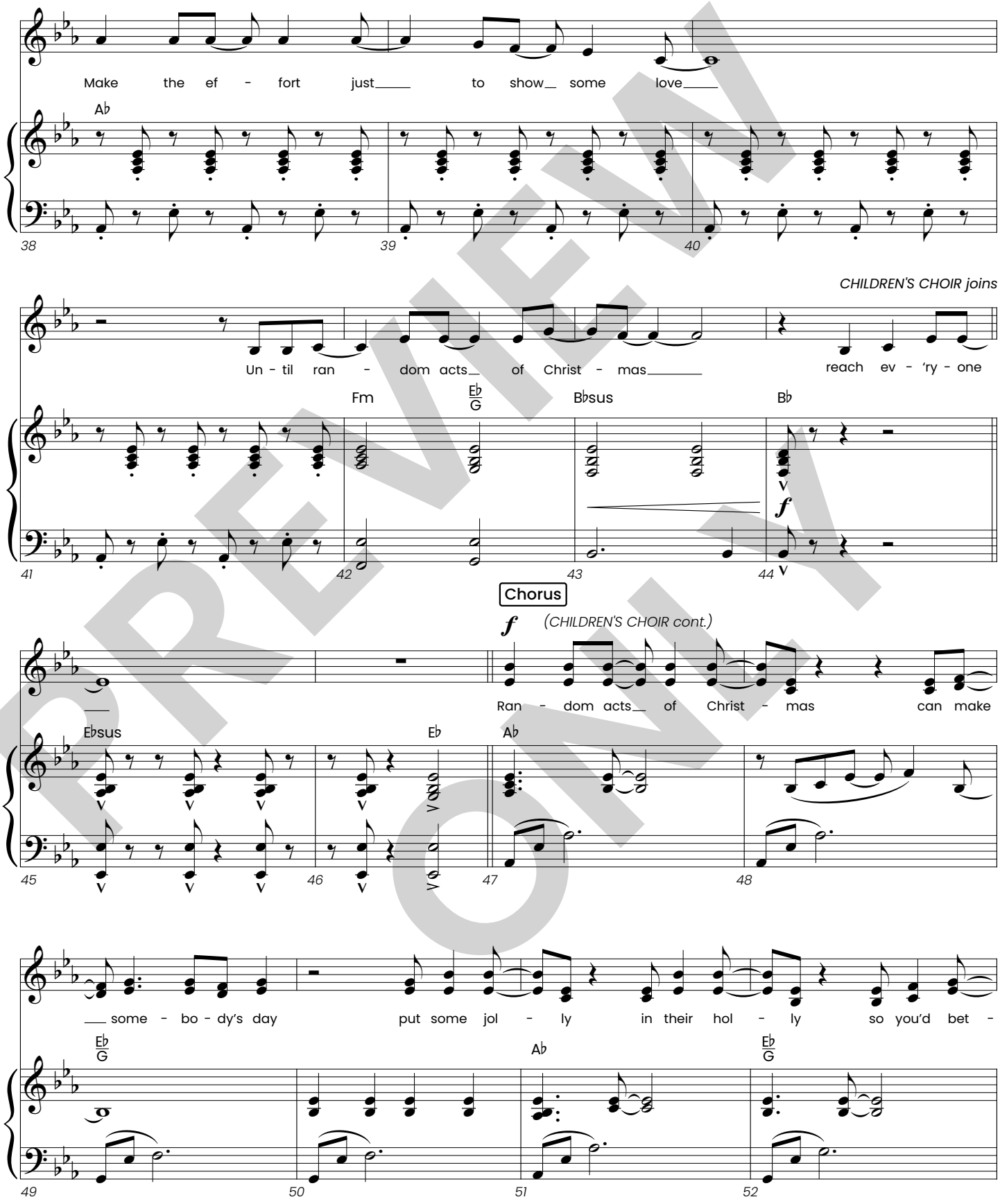

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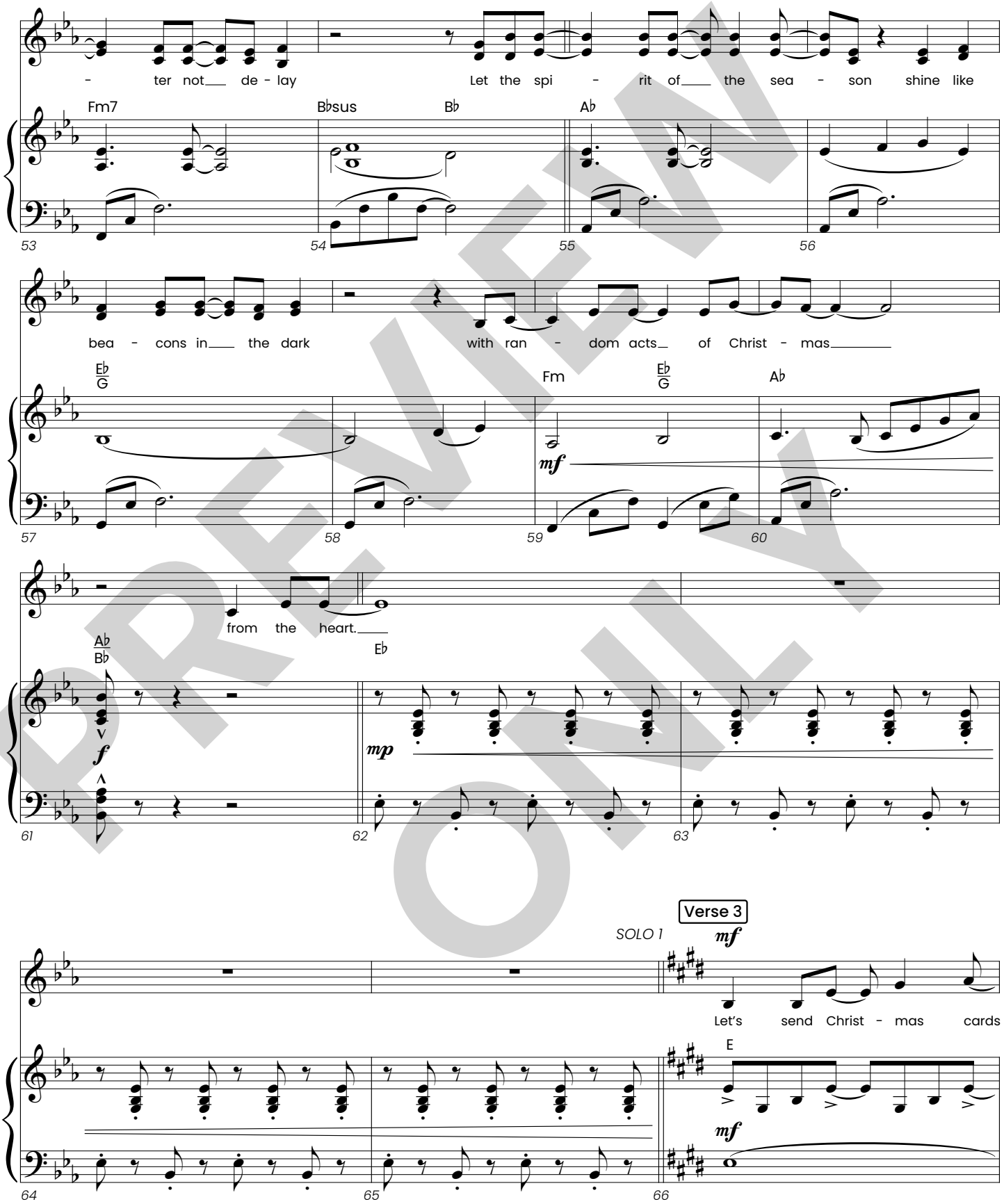

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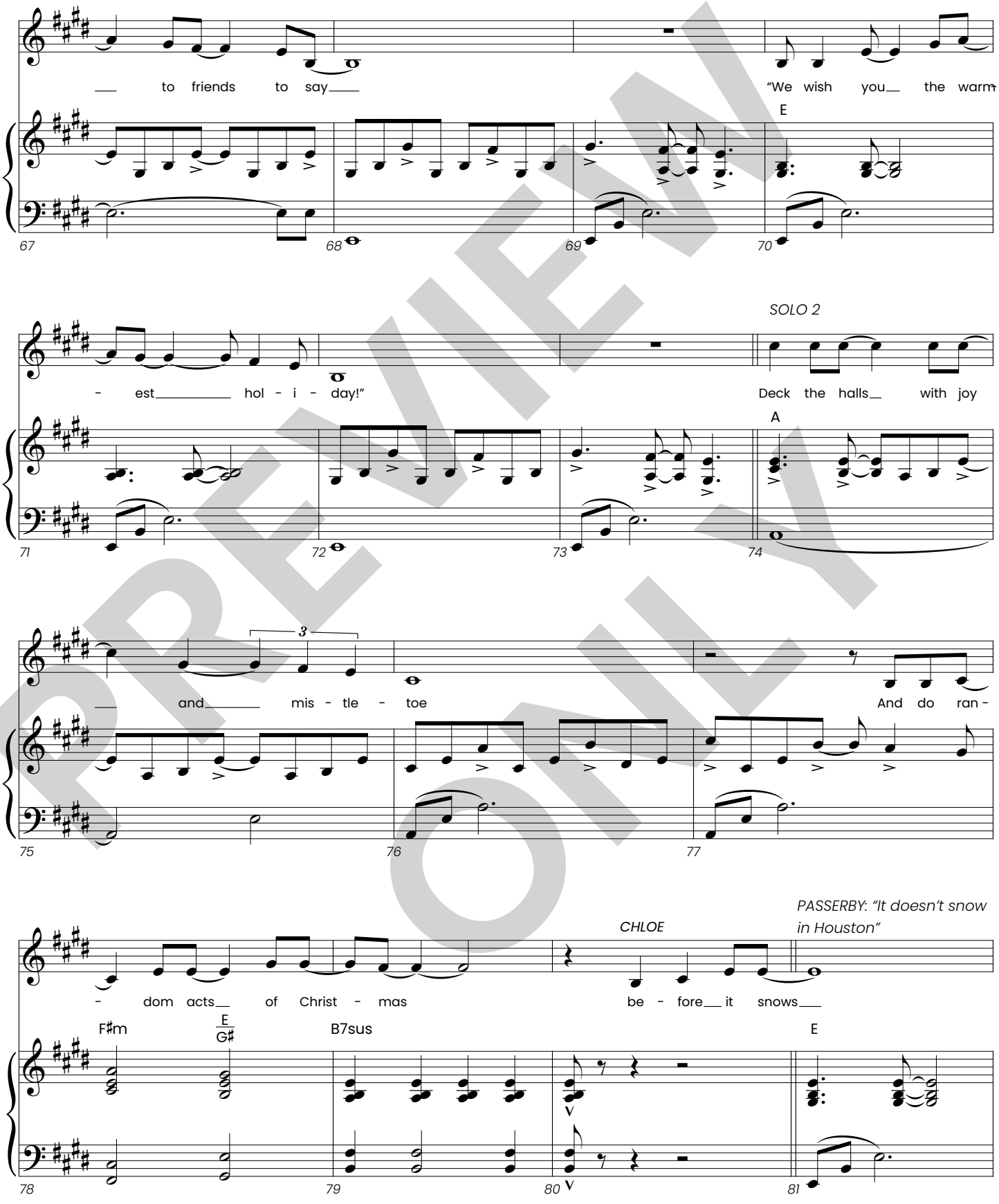

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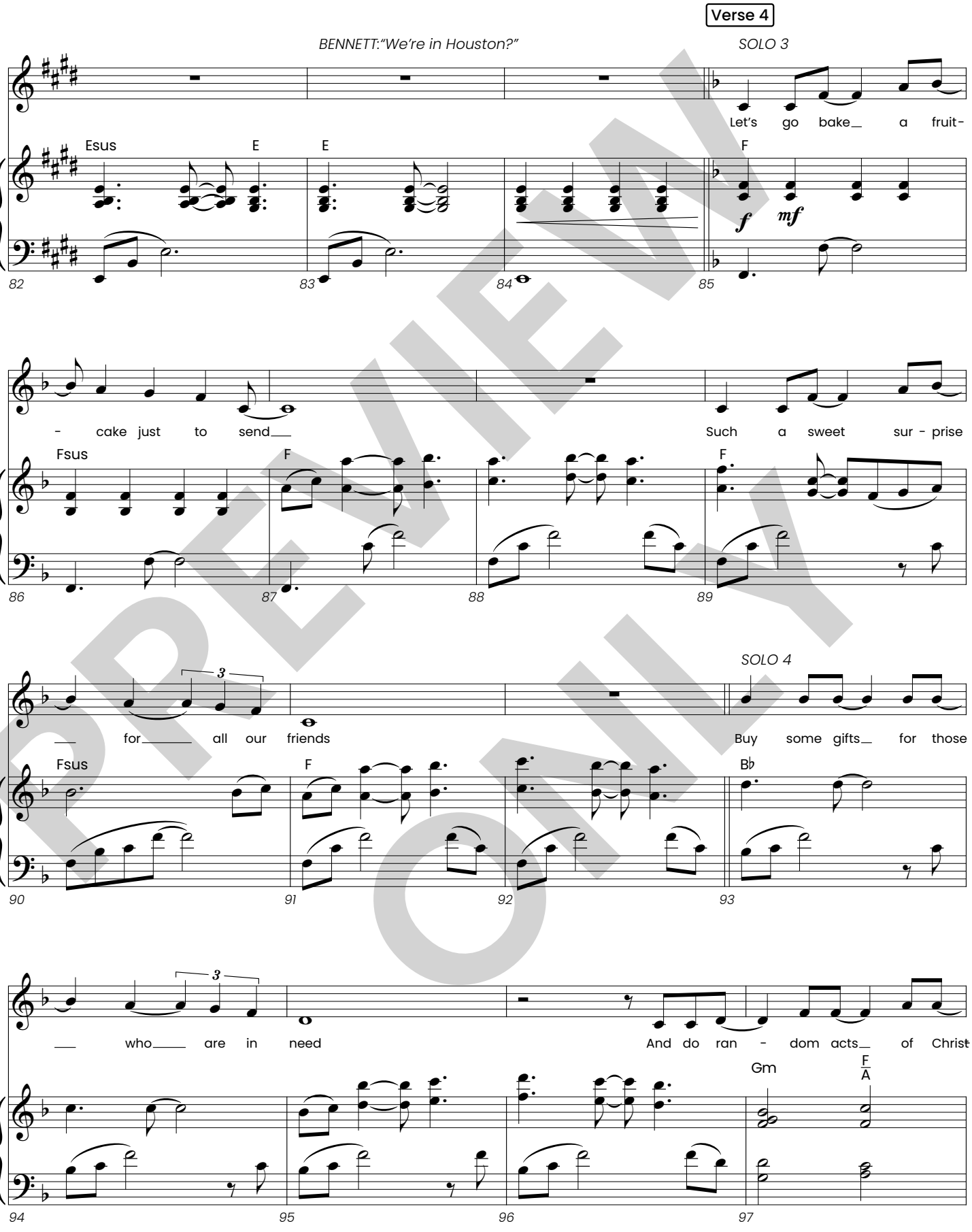

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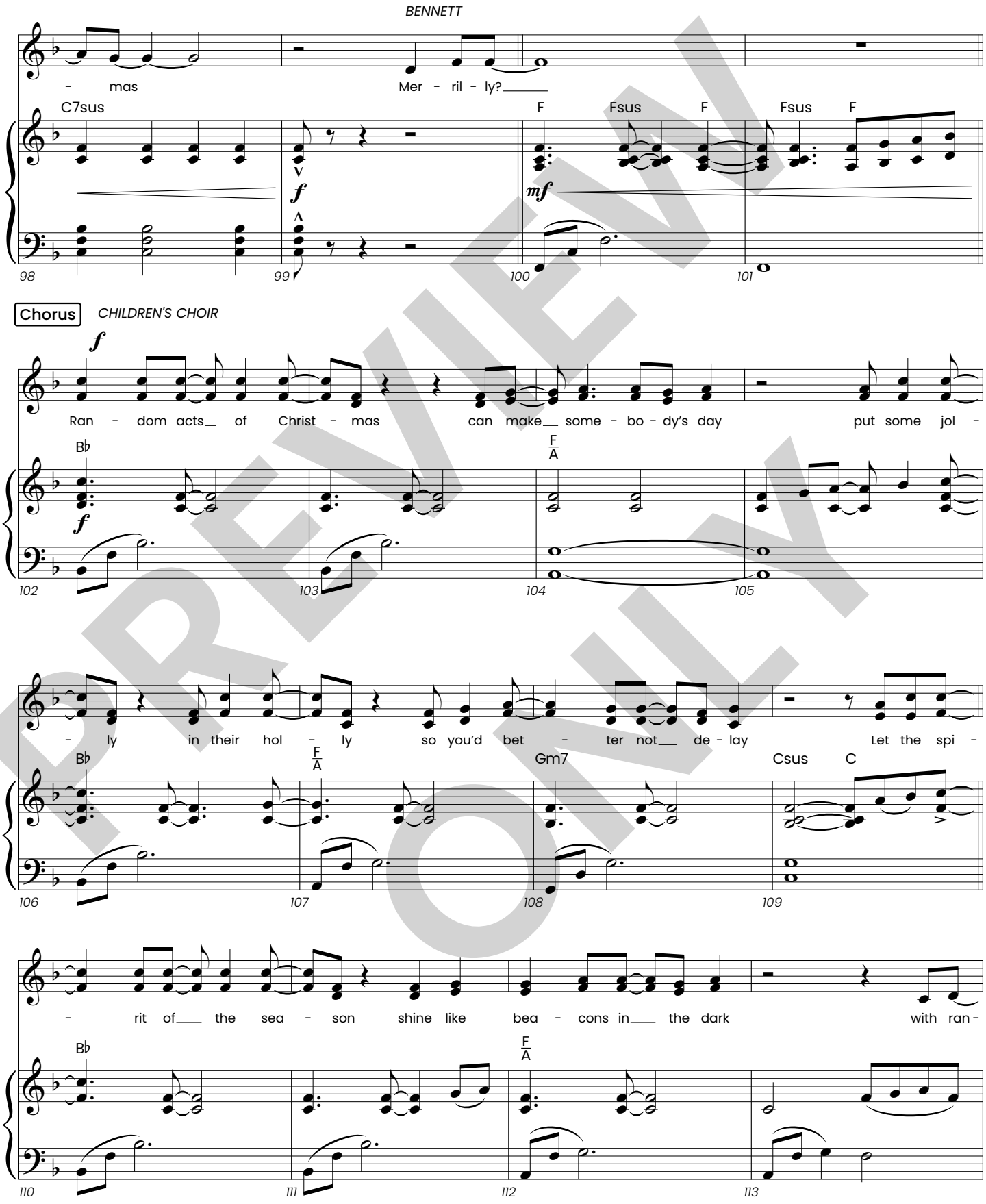

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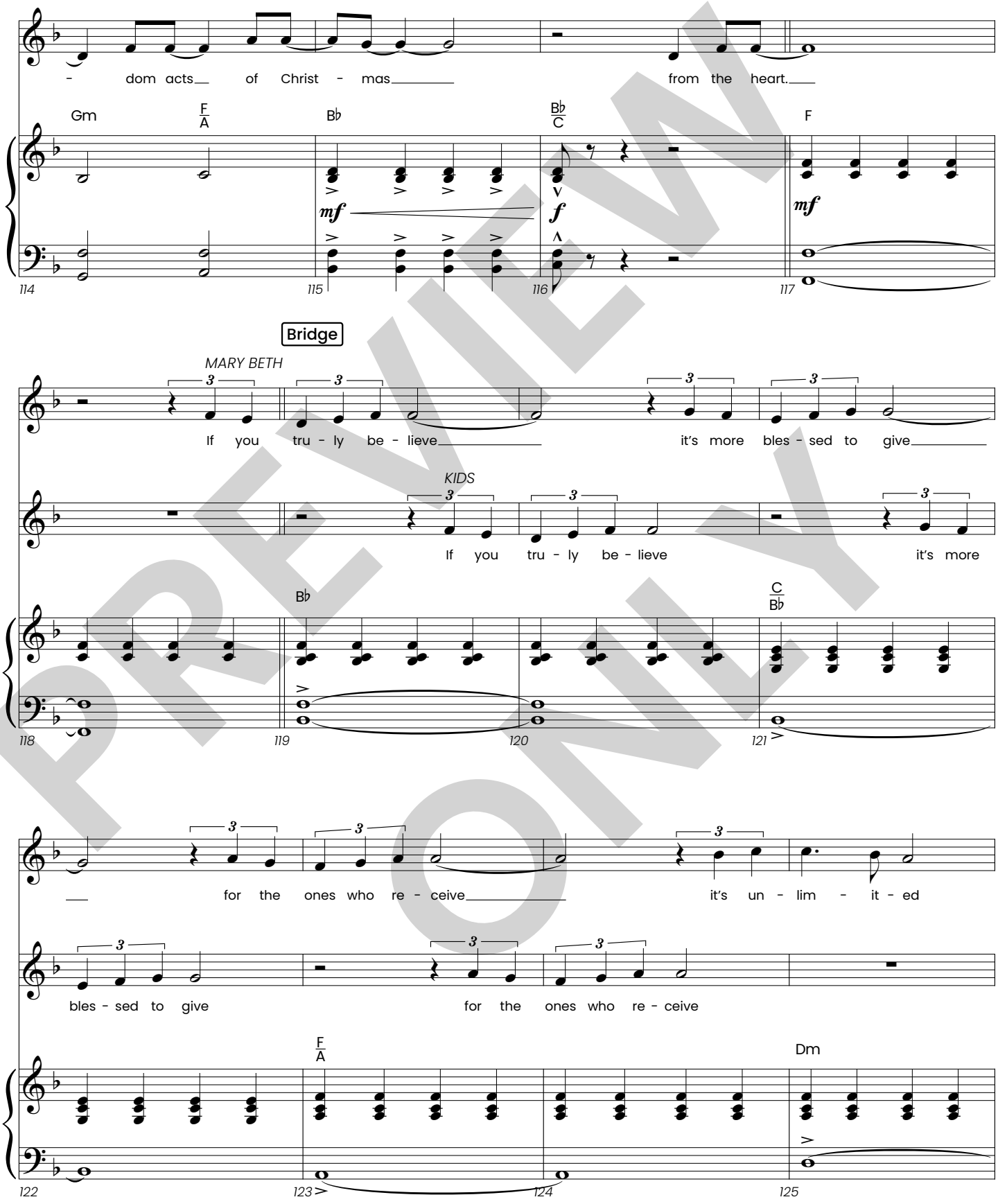

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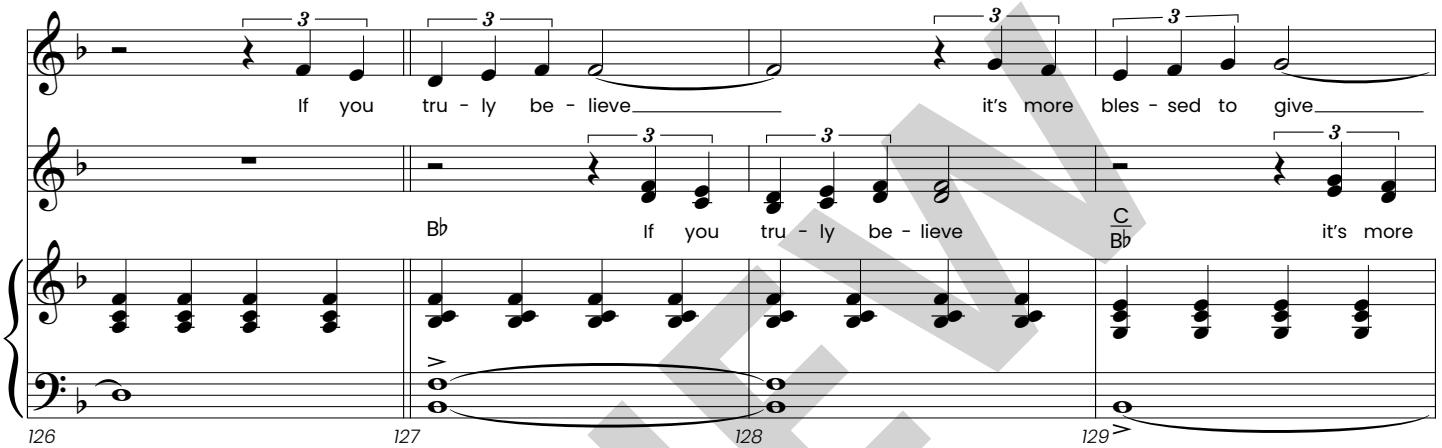
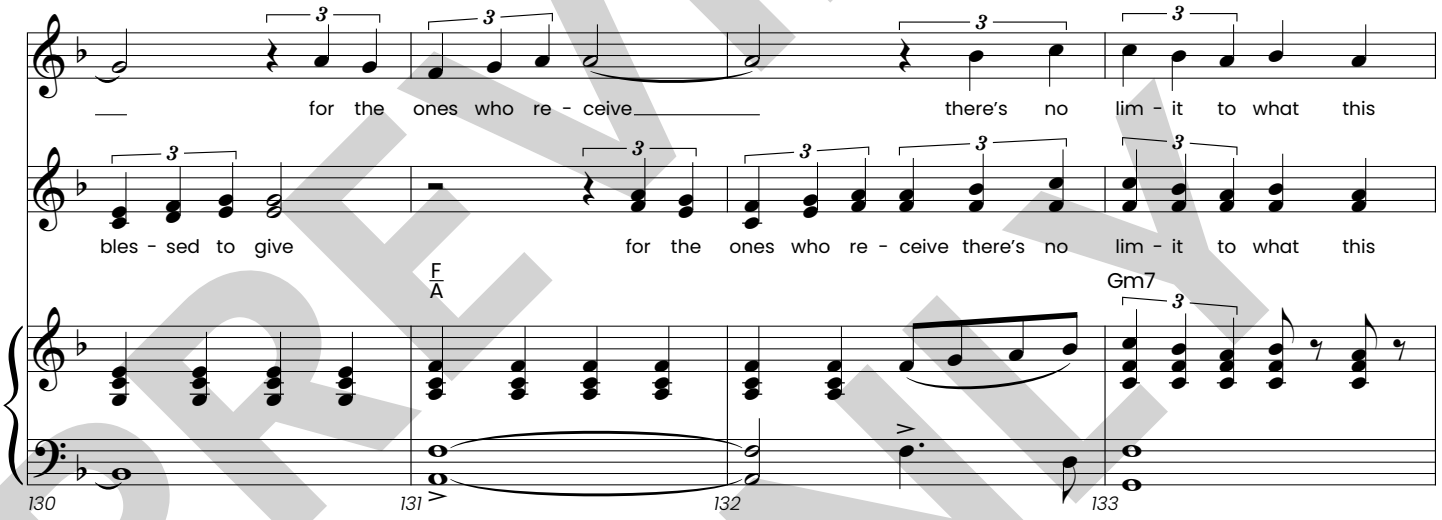
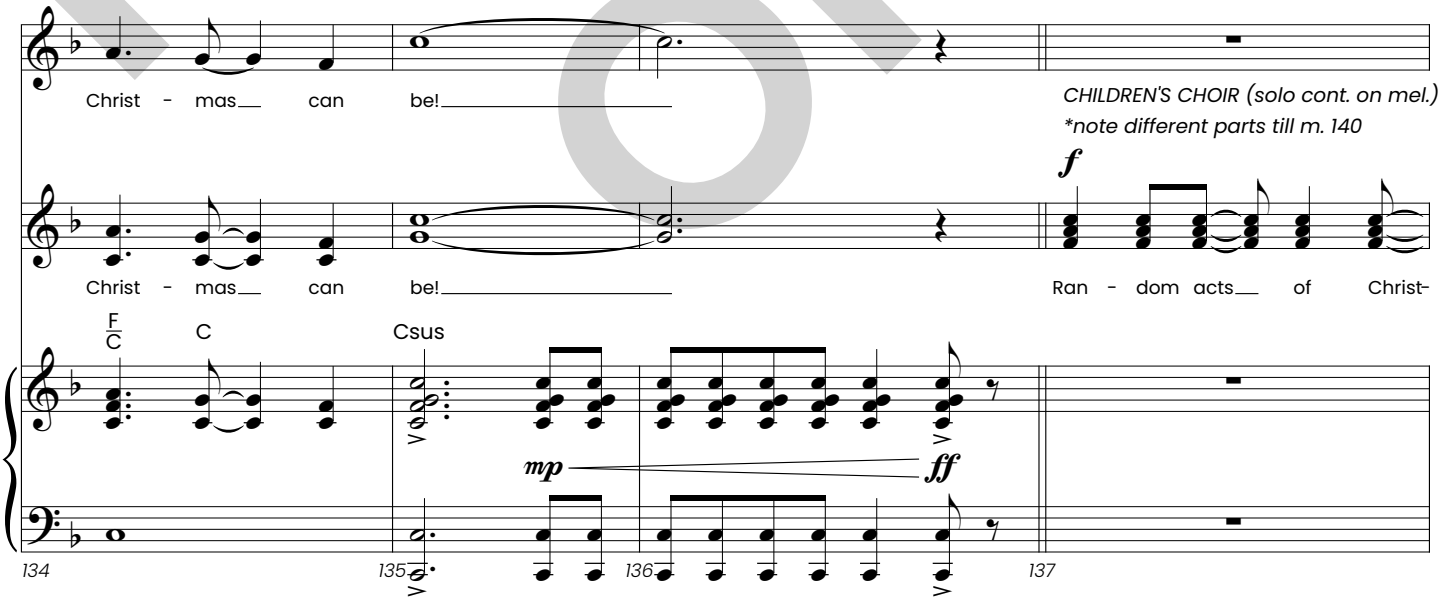




Chorus



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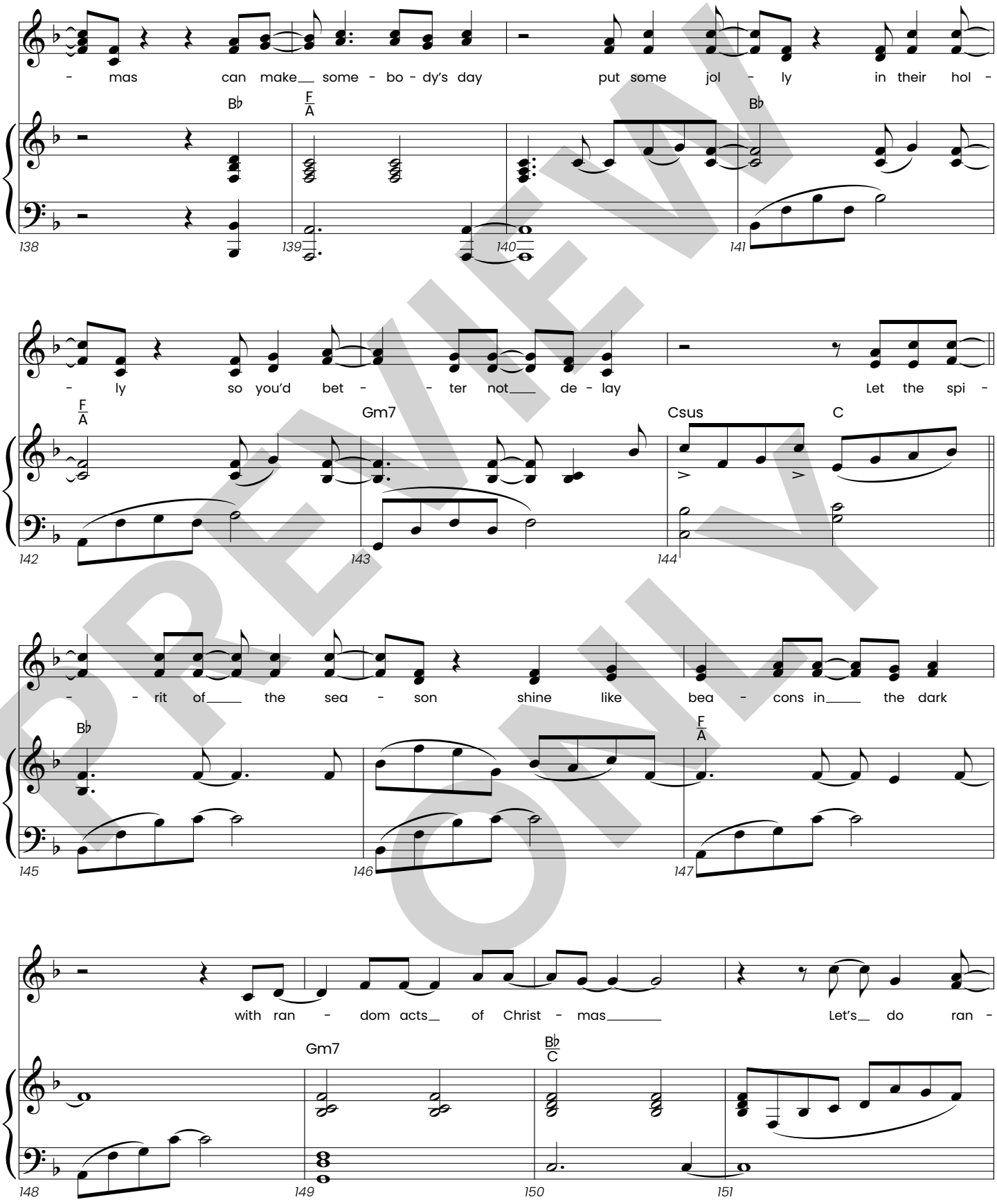

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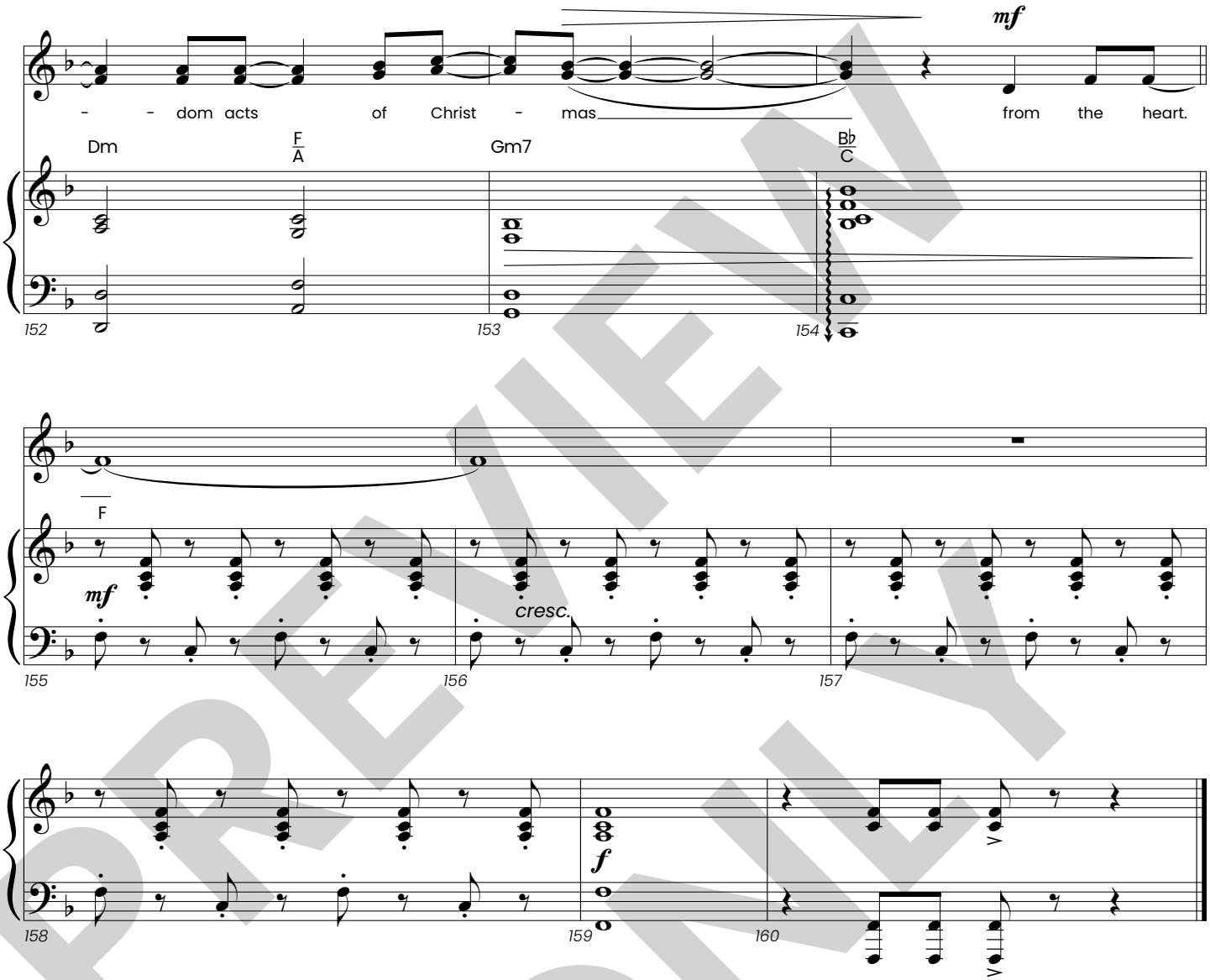


PREVIEW ONLY

CHLOE
That was so much fun! Now it's time for random acts of ice cream. Oh, wait. Is that hot chocolate?

(CHLOE exits)

MARY BETH
Bennett? Wasn't that special making all those people happy?

BENNETT
Yeah. It was okay.

MARY BETH
Oh, Bennett. Our hearts will only smile if we give them reason to.

BENNETT
I guess I just don't have much reason to smile this year.

MARY BETH
Our joy isn't found in what's around us. It's found in who's inside us.

(To CHLOE in the distance)

Hey! I could go for some hot chocolate.

(Mary Beth exits following after Chloe)

END SCENE 7

SCENE 8

BENNETT(To himself)
Joy is found in who's inside us? But, all my problems seem to be on the outside. Where's *that* joy?

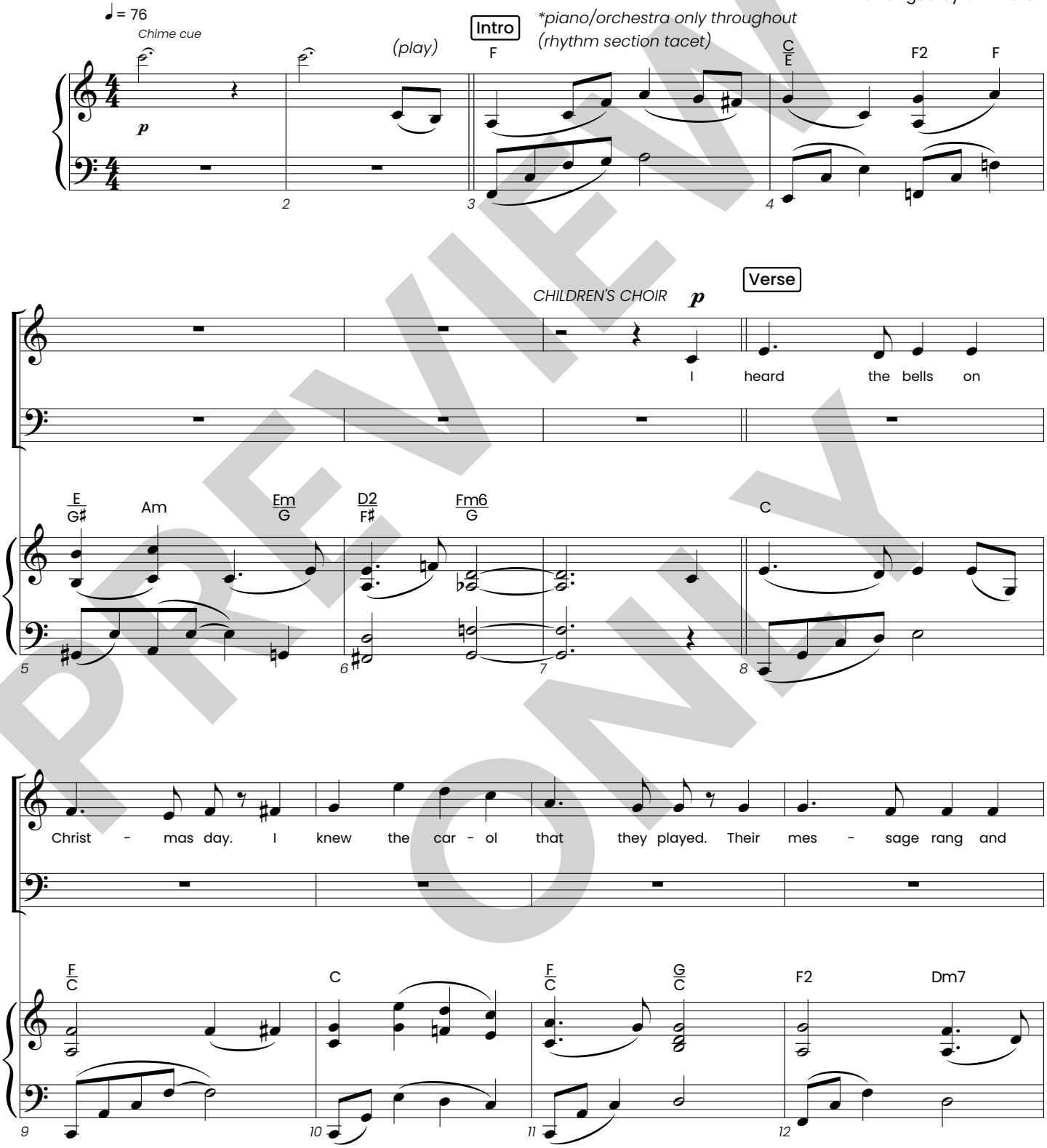
(Bells begin chiming, alarming Bennett, as though he'd never heard them before. He follows the sound to a church. He's strangely surprised the church is there.)

BENNETT
Where did this church come from? This day just keeps getting weirder and weirder.

(BENNETT enters the church where he finds a children's choir singing. **7. I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day**.)

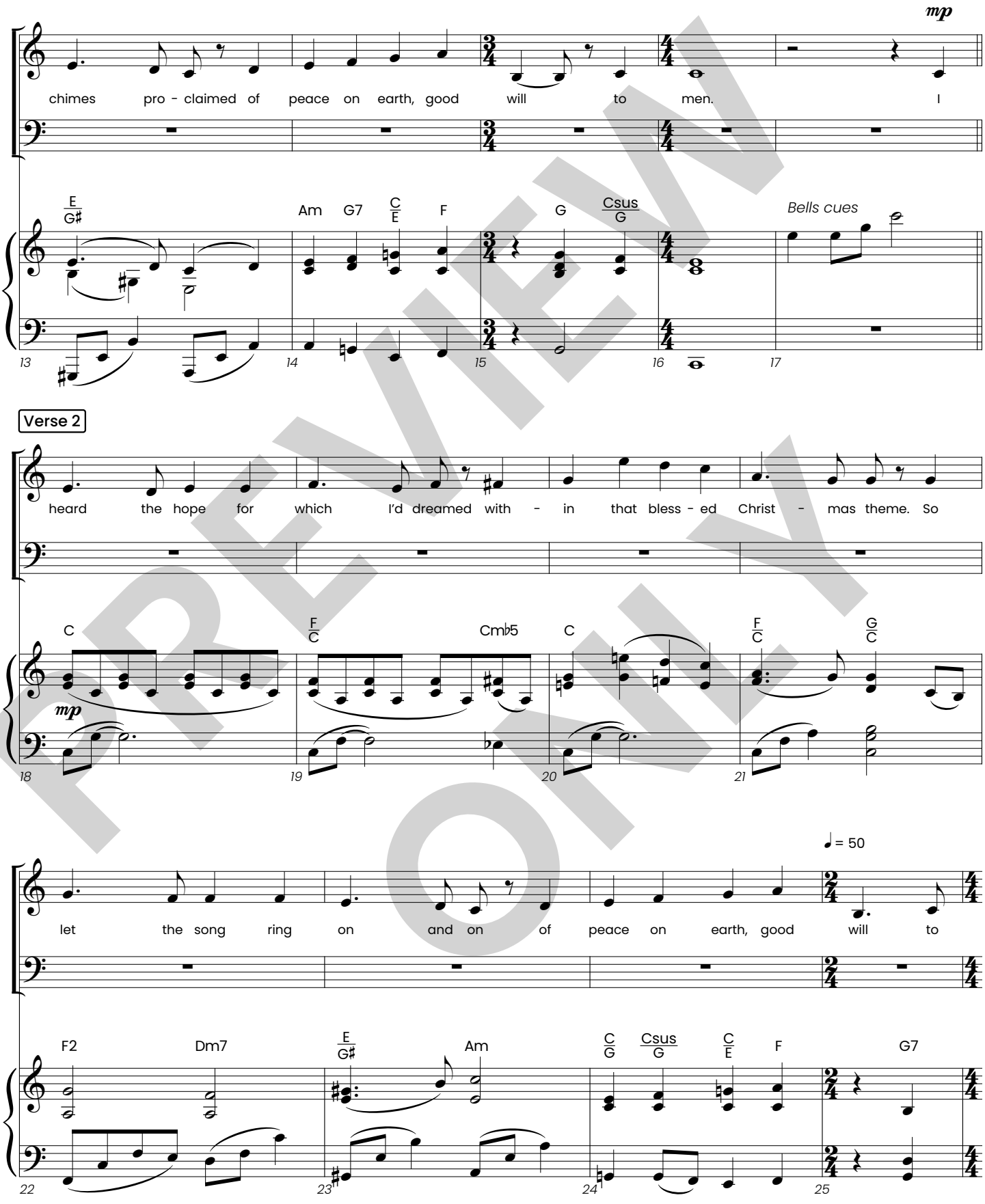
I Heard The Bells

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Johnny Marks
arranged by Cliff Duren



PREVIEW ONLY

Marks Music Publishing



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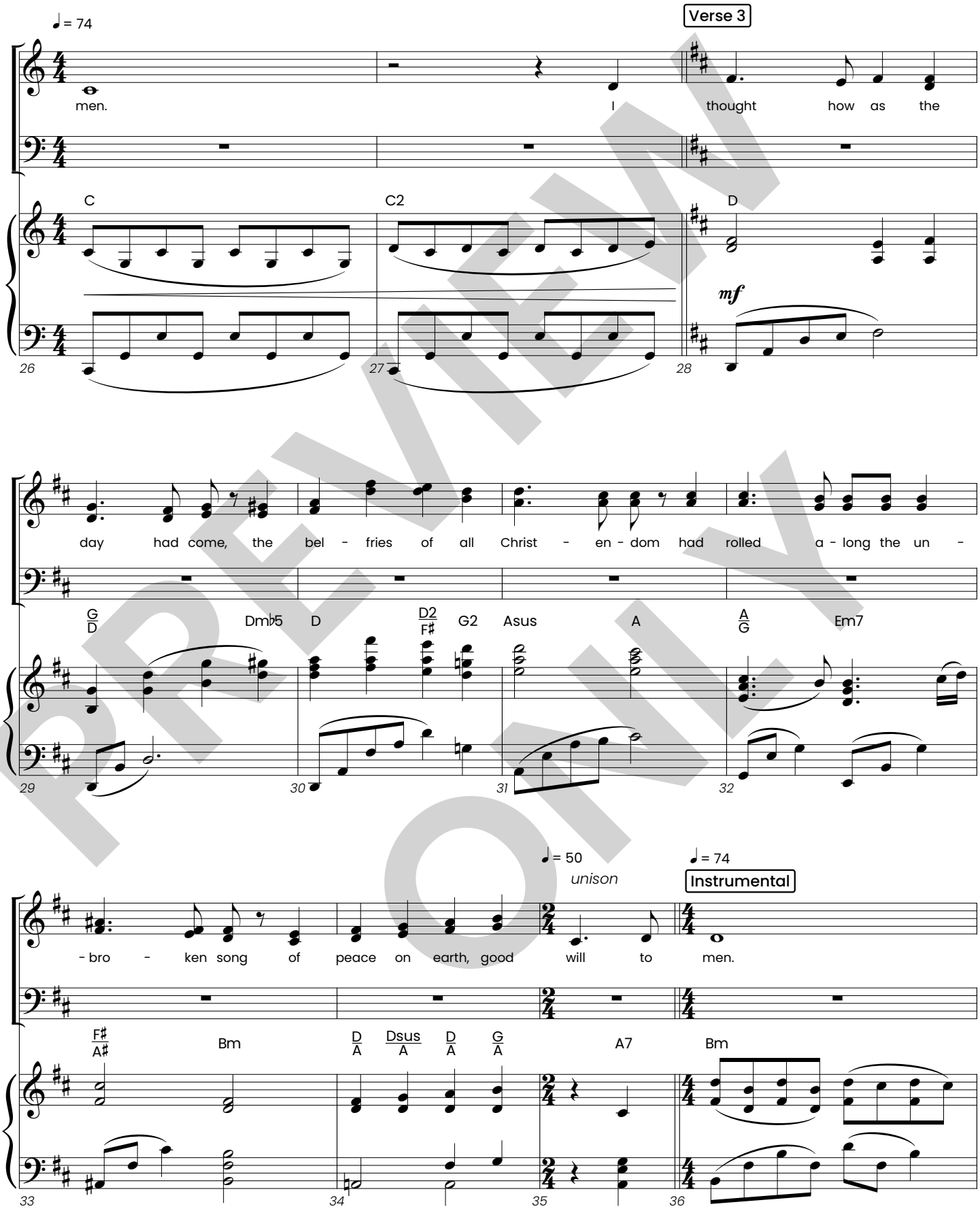

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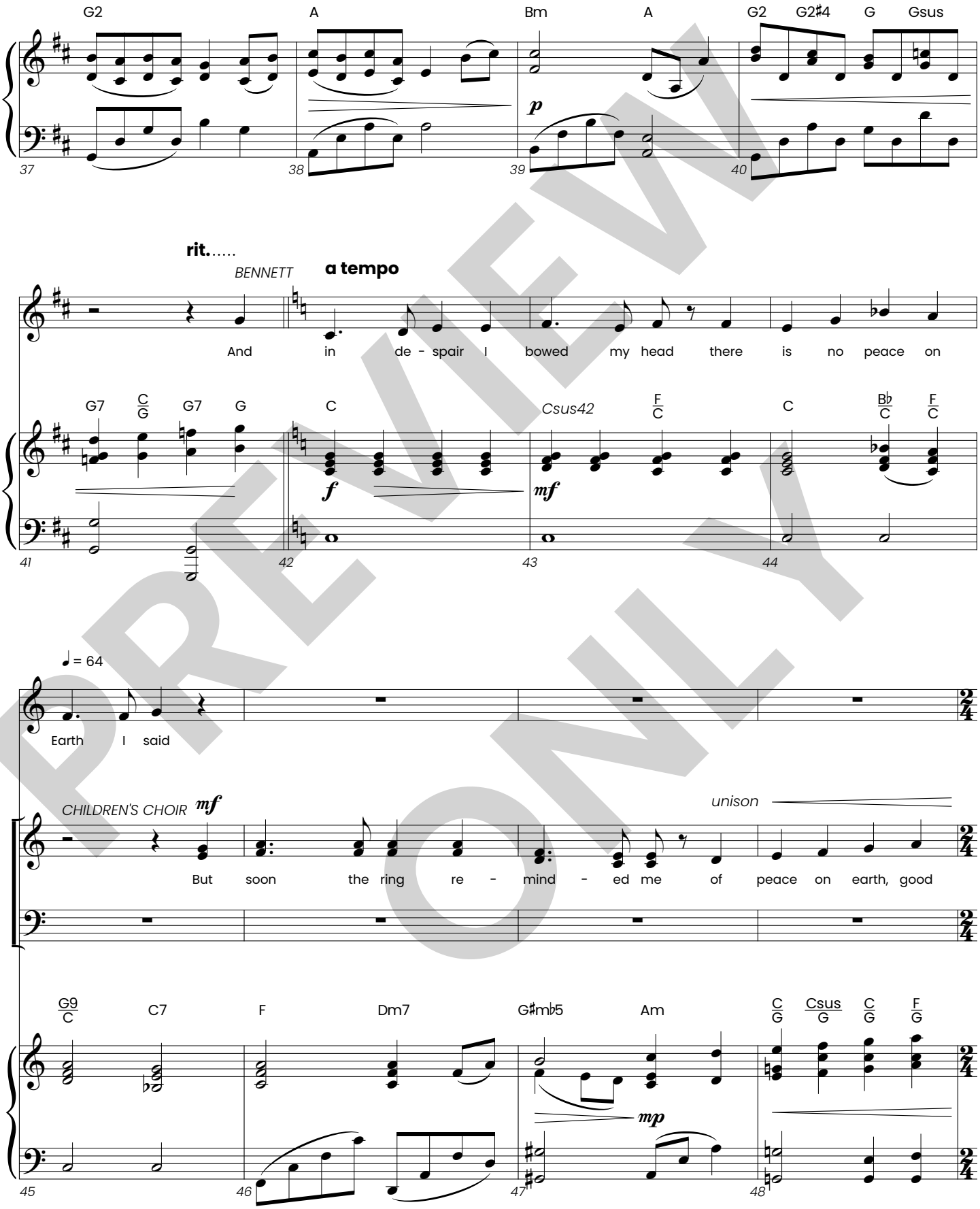

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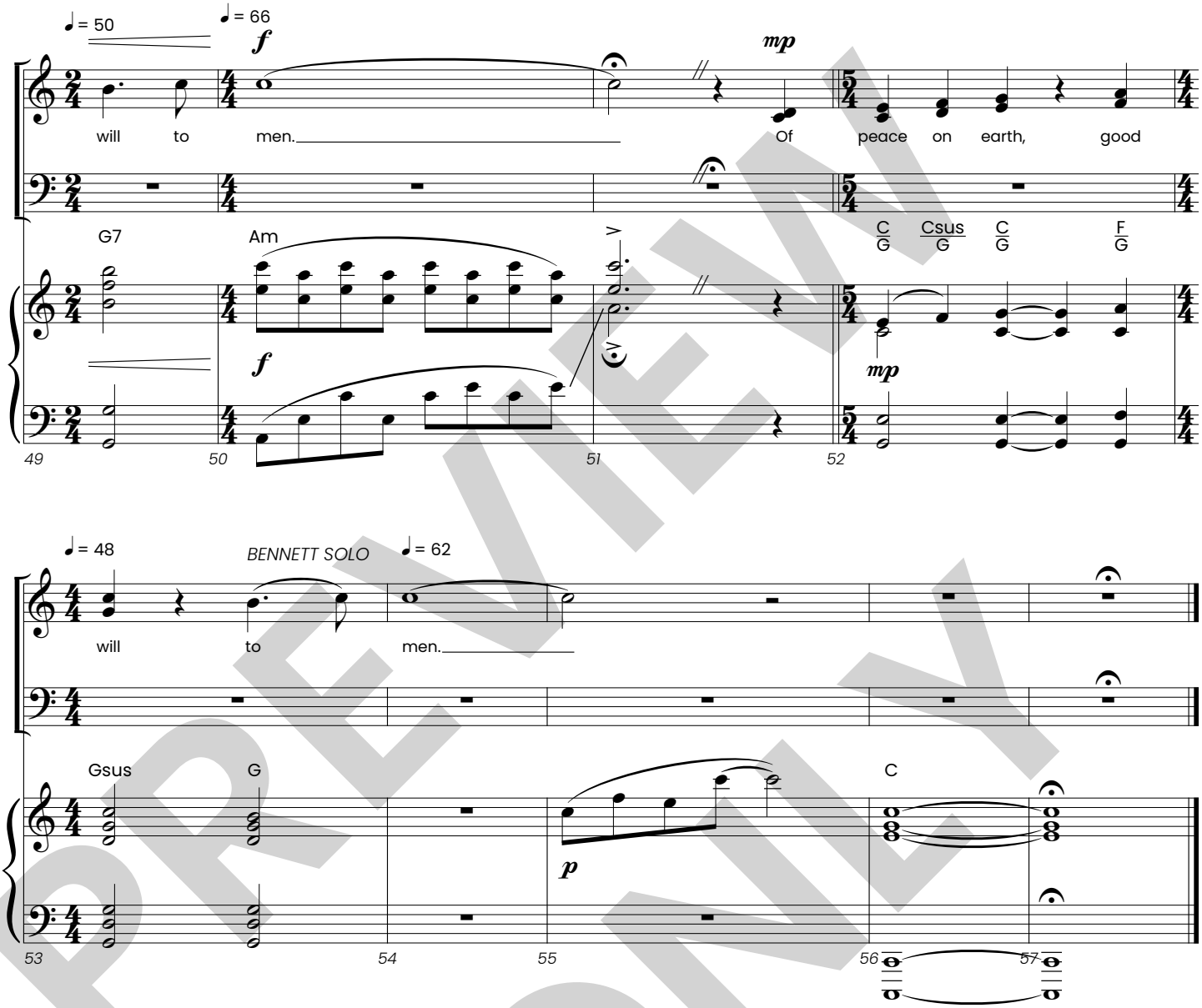


PREVIEW ONLY

(As song ends, MARY BETH enters and sits beside BENNETT.)

MARY BETH
So, it's peace you're looking for.

BENNETT
I'm 12 years old. I'm not really sure what peace is supposed to look like. But, I do know that it doesn't look like the world looks now.

MARY BETH
There it is.

BENNETT
That *what* is?

MARY BETH
The truth of what you've been wrestling with.

BENNETT(resisting)
I'm not wrestling with anything.

MARY BETH
We can't begin to solve a problem until we are willing to admit there's a problem to begin with.

BENNETT
Well, the problem is everyone else. They have the problem.

MARY BETH
We all have problems.

BENNETT(growing angry)
Yeah? Well, why do other people's problems have to become my problems?

MARY BETH
What do you mean, Bennett?

BENNETT
Who fires somebody at Christmas? Who does that?

MARY BETH
Sometimes things we don't like just happen. It doesn't always have to be somebody's fault.

BENNETT
Yes it does! It's somebody's fault. And why do my parents fight about money..all the time?!

MARY BETH
Bennett, we can't control what others do. A lot of times, we can't even control our own circumstances. But, we can control our response to those circumstances.

(BENNETT defiantly folds his arms and looks away.)

(Shifting the mood)

Can I tell you a story? When I was a little girl, something happened to me, and I felt like if I tried to explain it, nobody would believe me. And it was a big deal. I mean a really big deal! It was going to change my life forever.

BENNETT
What did you do?

MARY BETH
Well, first, I prayed. I wanted God to hear my heart. I wanted to be honest with him, about how scared I was and how confusing everything felt.

BENNETT
Did that make you feel better?

MARY BETH
Well, not at first. At that point, all I had done was talk to Him. And that was good, but, a conversation requires talking *and* listening. It was when I truly accepted the message he gave me that I felt better. I knew that things weren't going to be great immediately. But, I knew, that if I trusted Him, He would work everything together for good.

BENNETT
Well, I'm not sure God's listening to me. I keep asking for things to change, but everything keeps looking the same. Well, except for the town square. That was weird.

MARY BETH
You know what I do when things don't seem to be changing fast enough for me?

BENNETT
What?

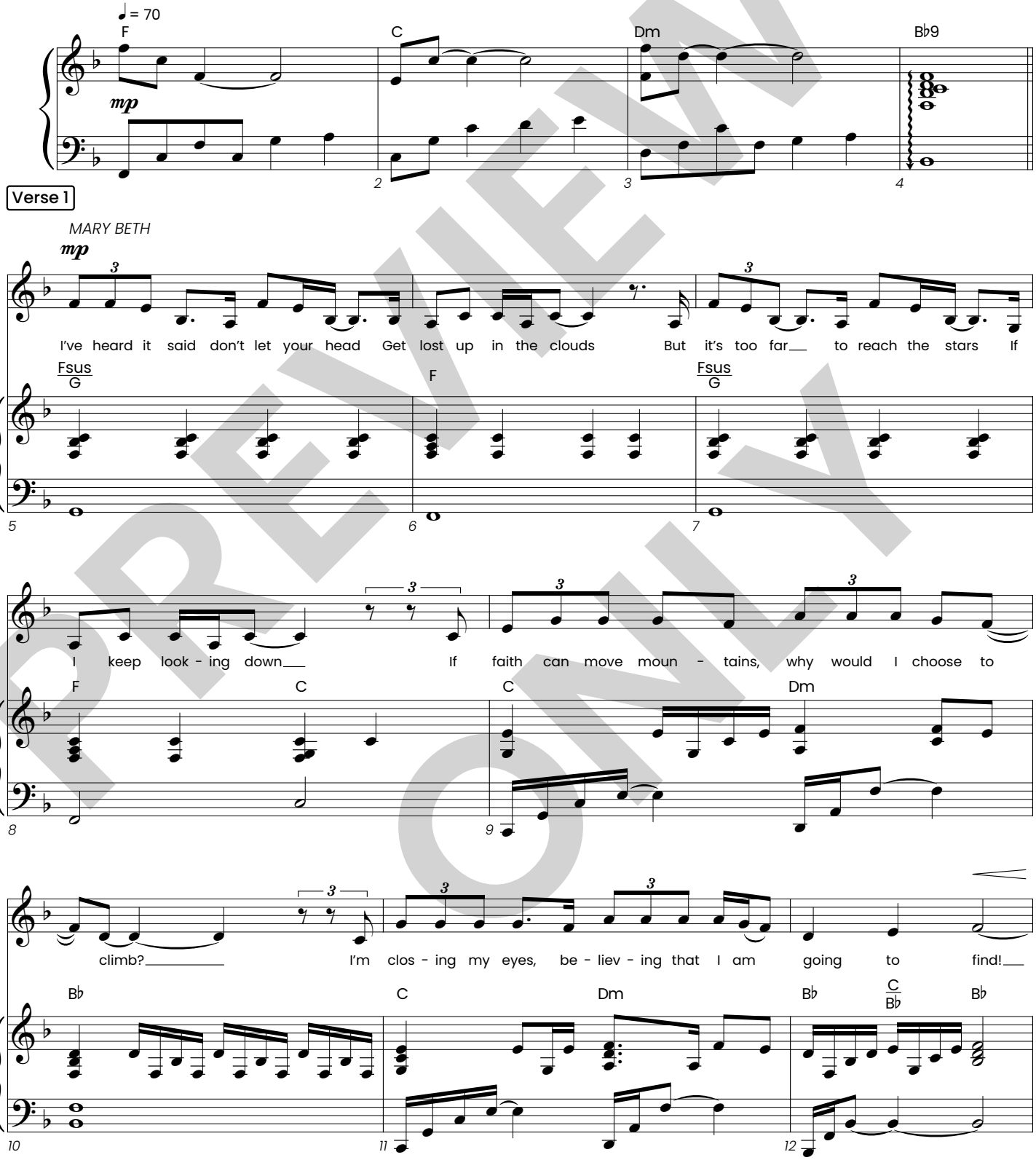
MARY BETH
I simply close my eyes and I imagine the world, not as it is, but as I dream for it to be. And, when my perspective is changed, I begin to respond to my circumstances with a lot more joy and positivity, remembering that my God is in control and His promises are the only thing worth holding onto.

END SCENE 8

(MARY BETH stands and moves downstage. The church scene goes dark and lights lower on Bennett. Lighting is set to depict a dream-like setting. **8. DREAM.**)

Dream

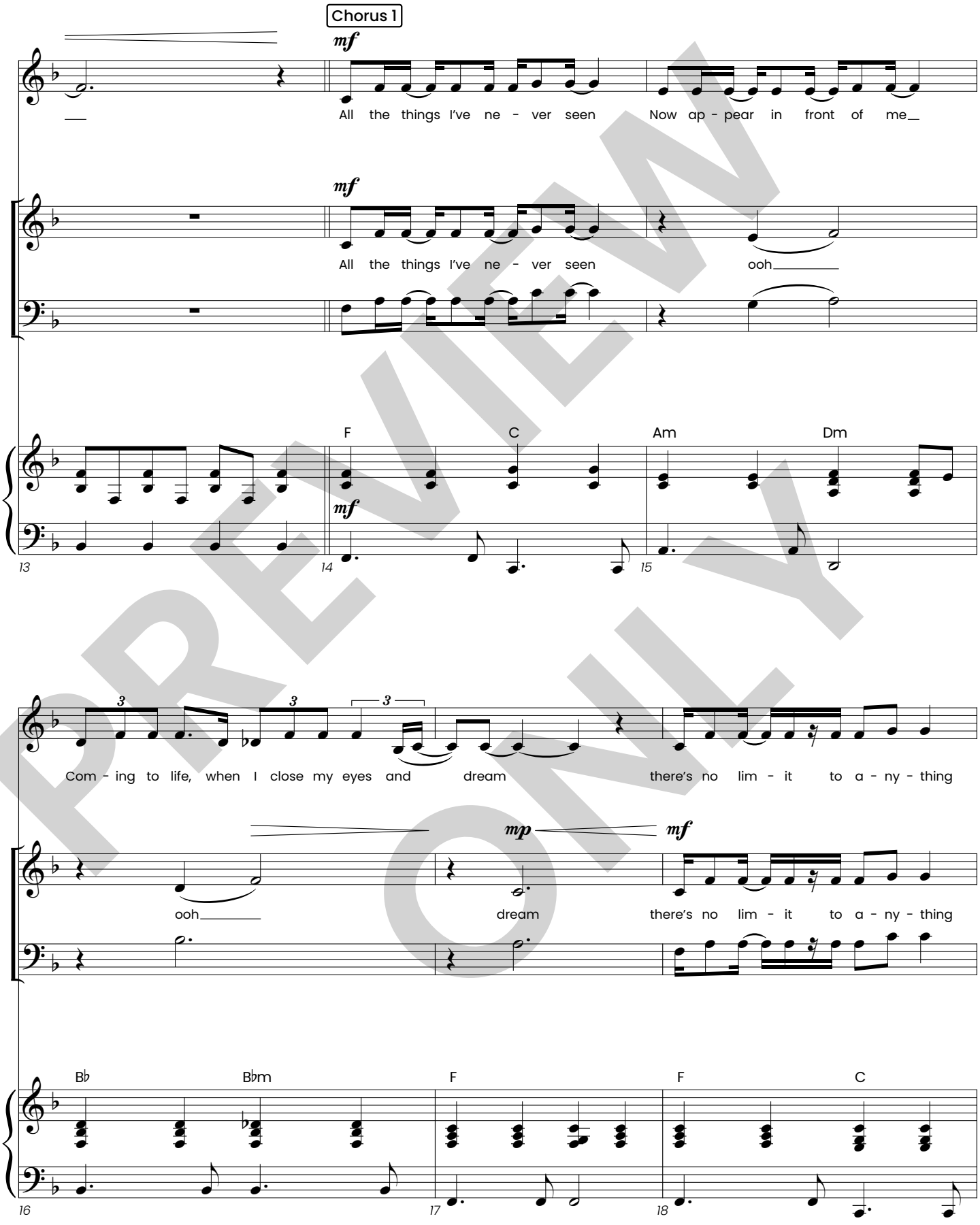
Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Wayne Haun



PREVIEW ONLY

HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



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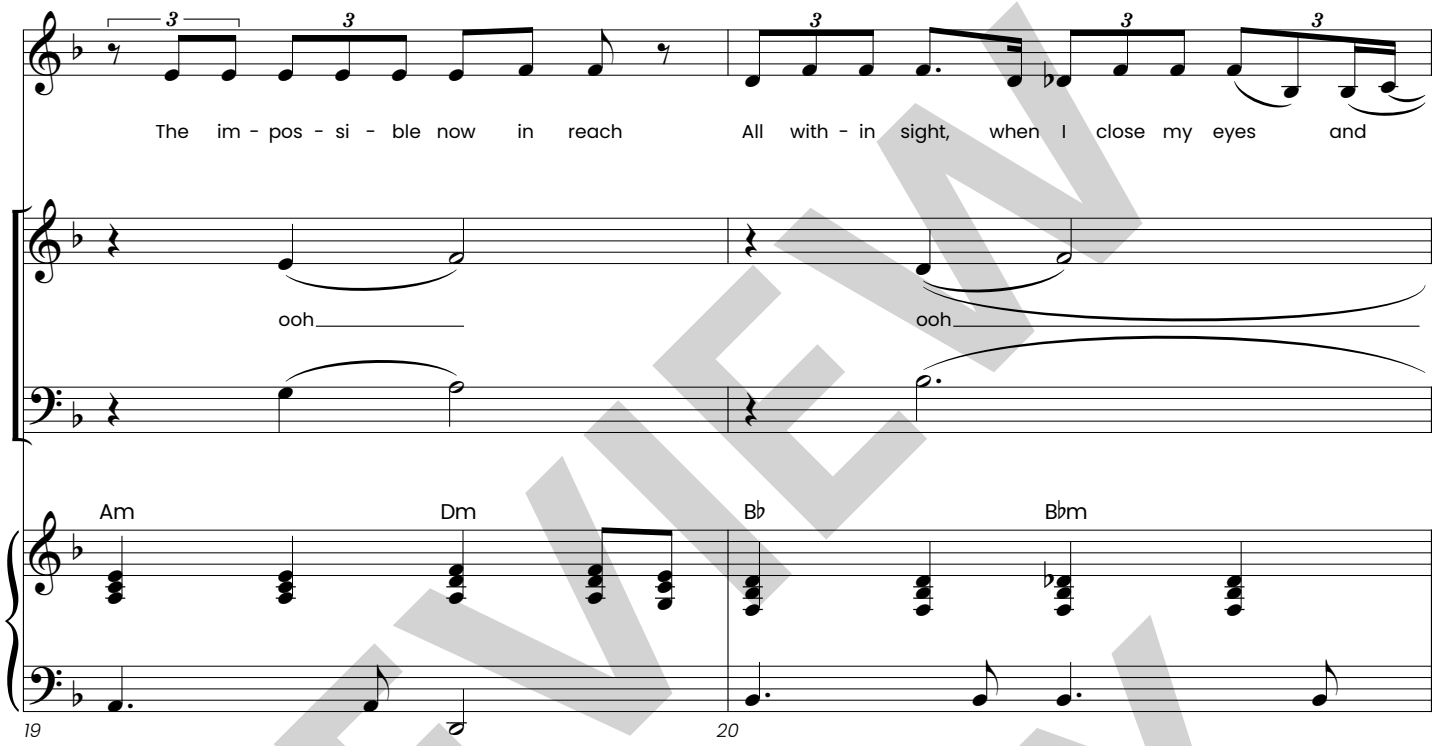

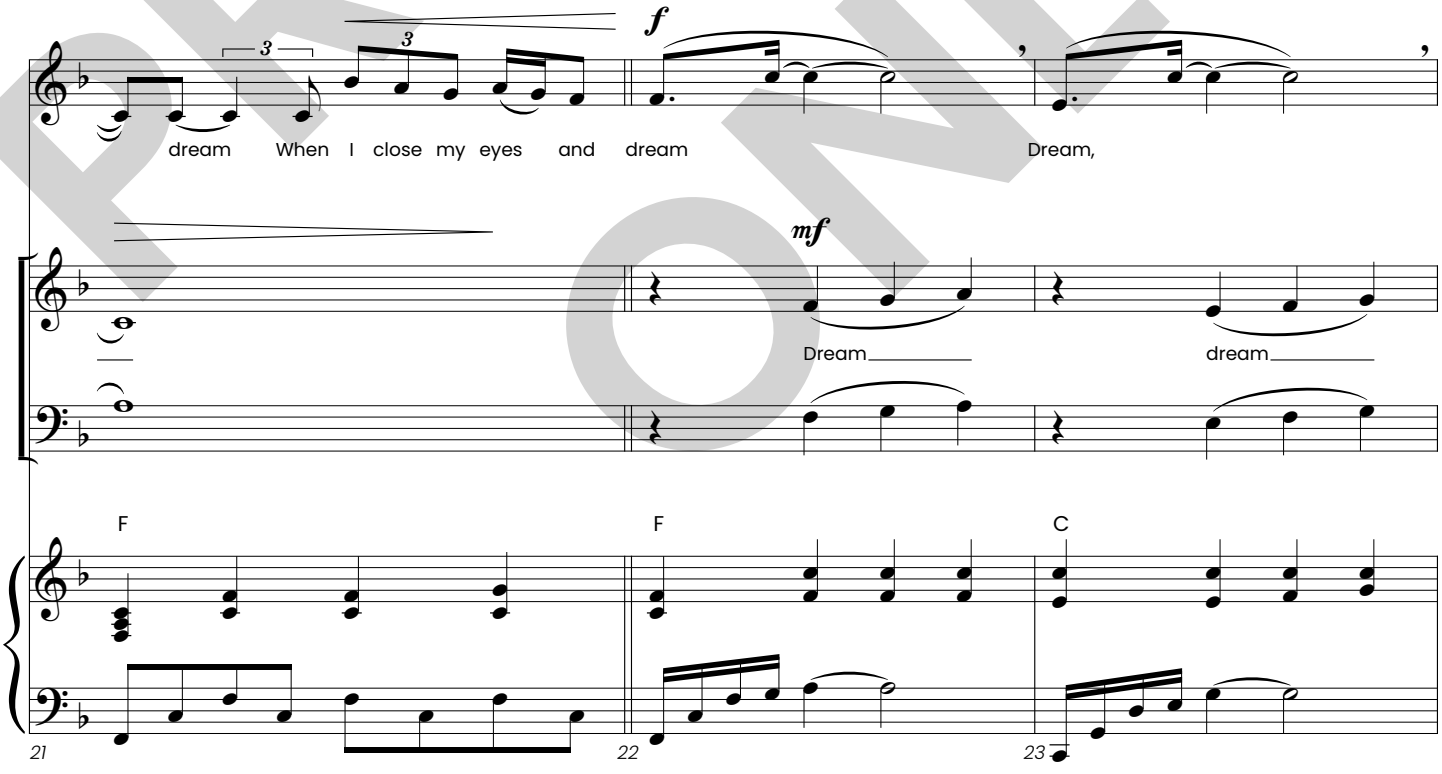

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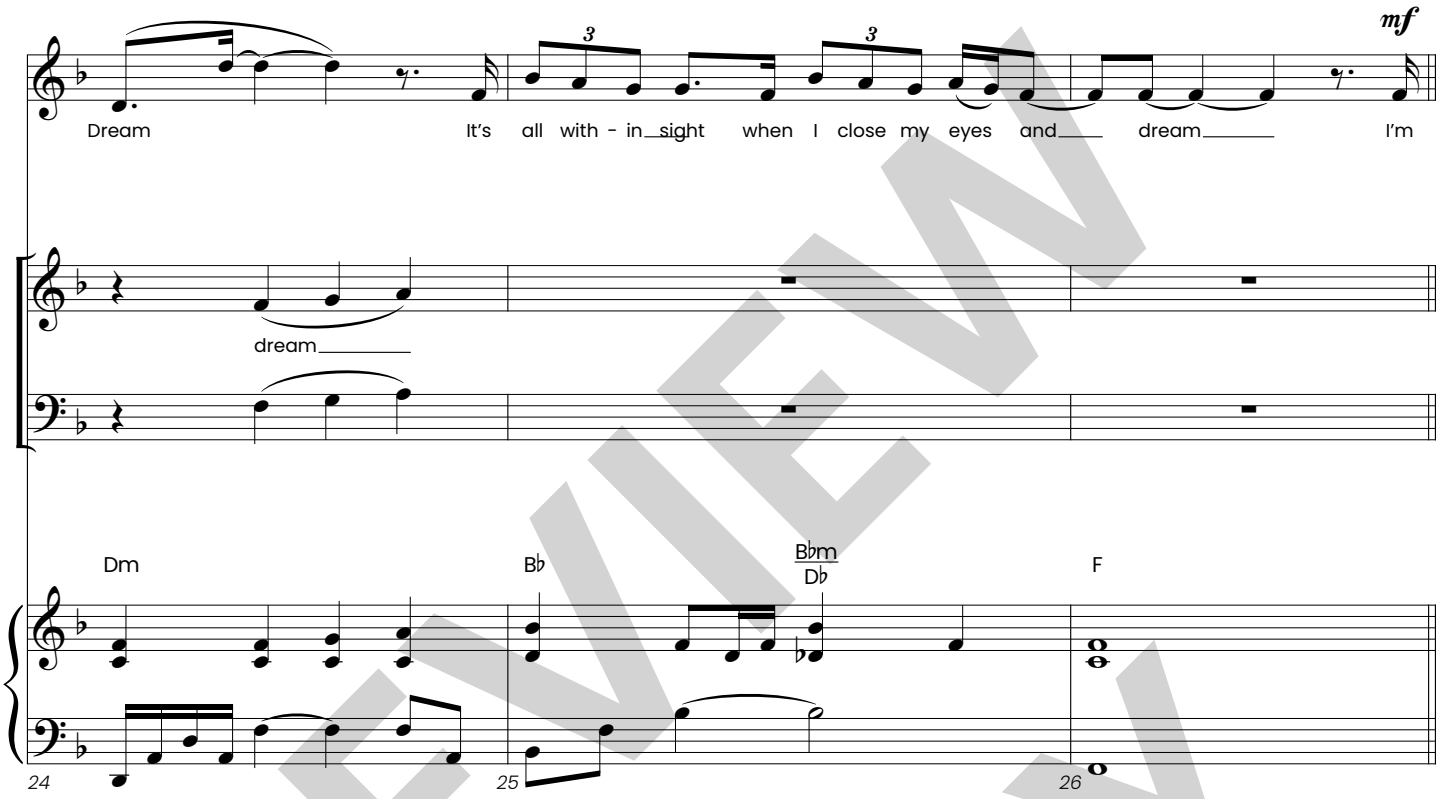

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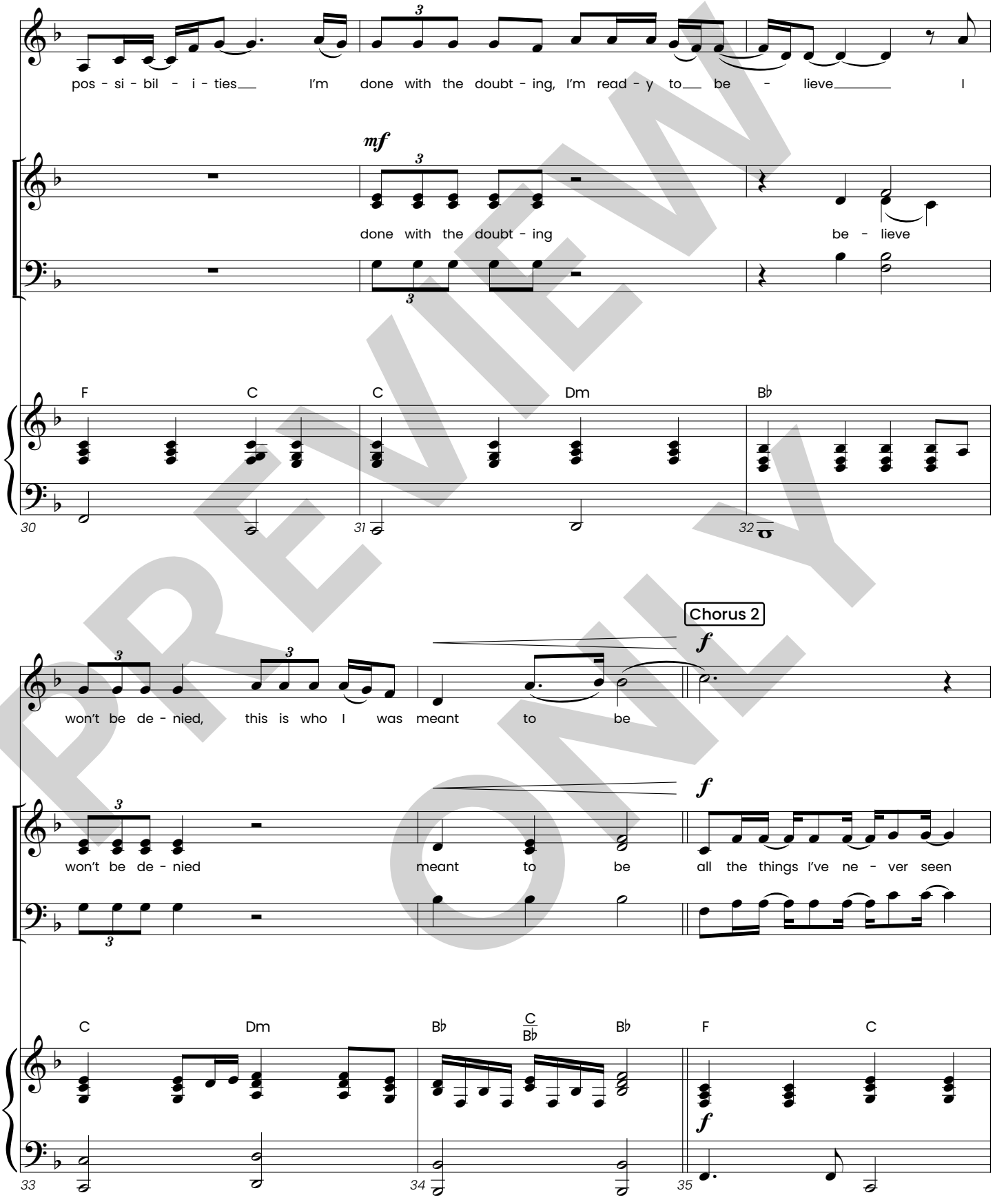

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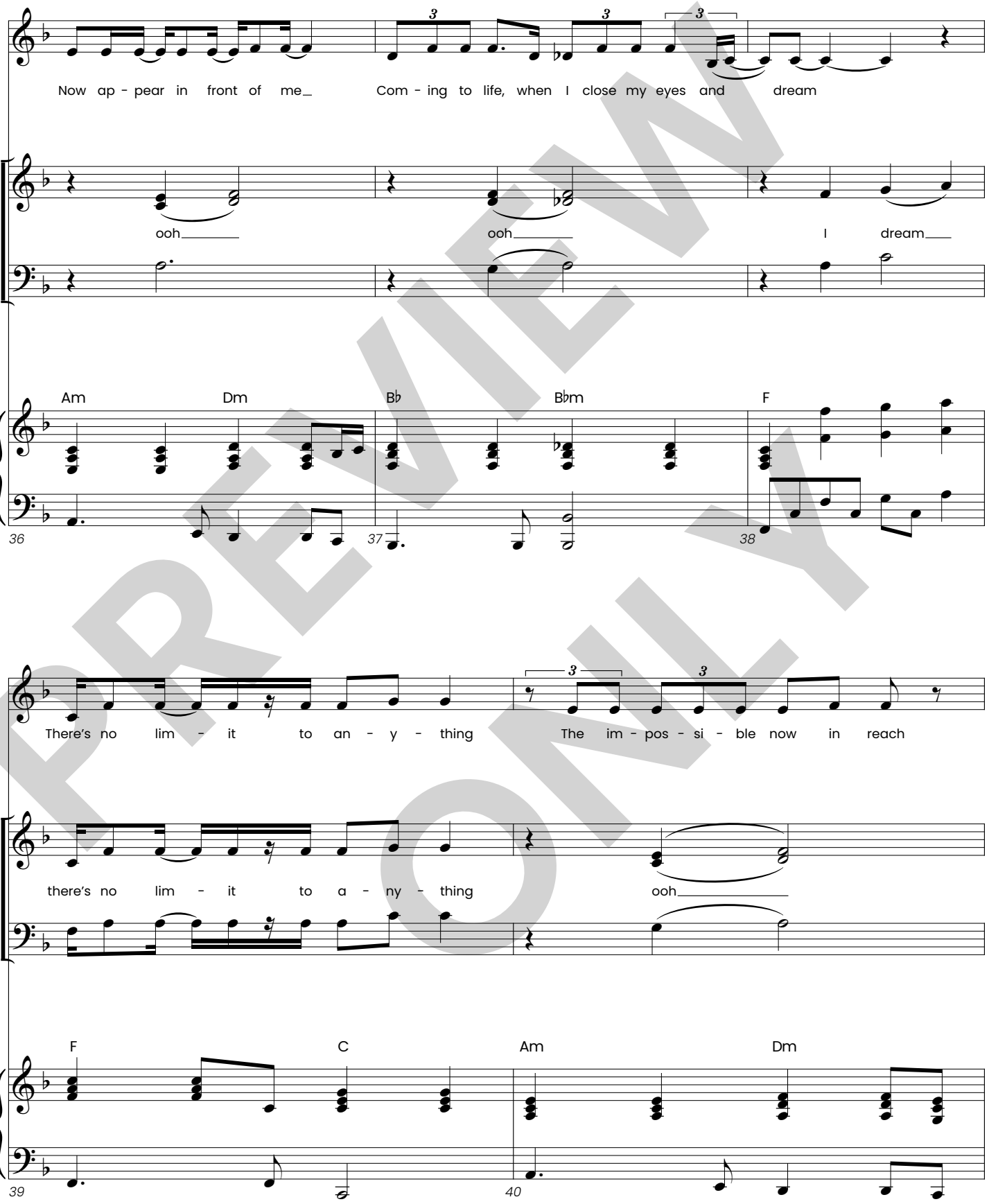

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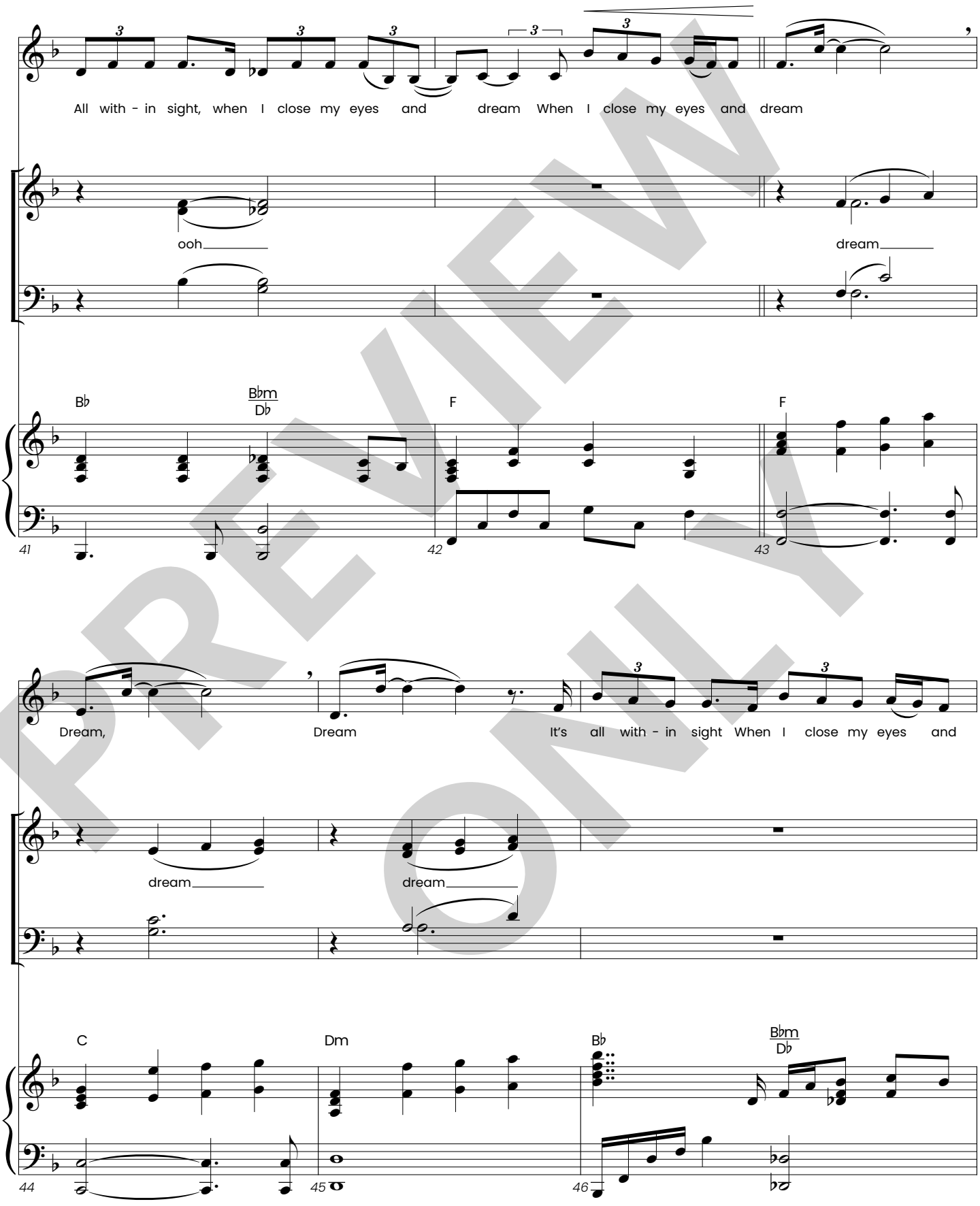

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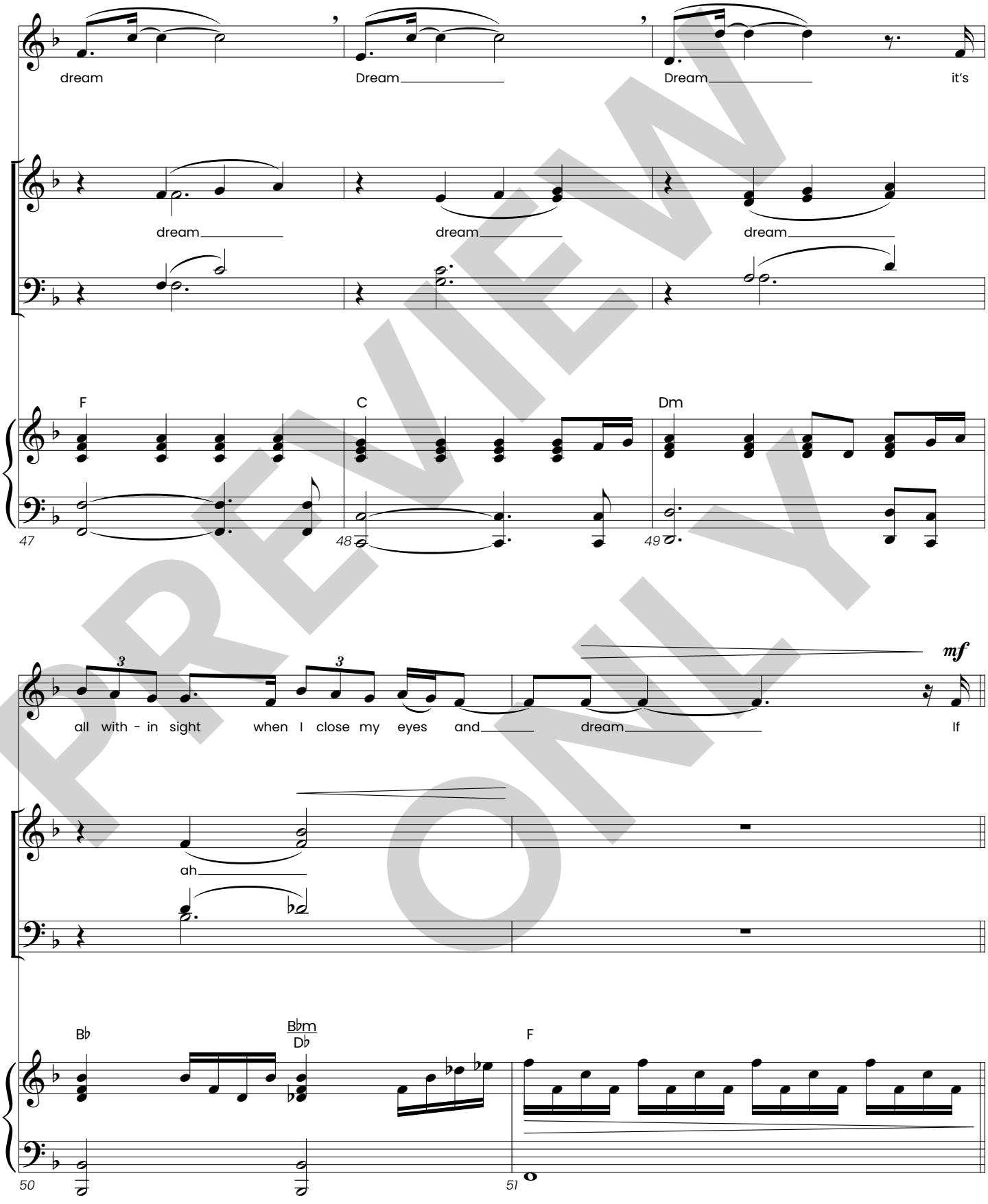

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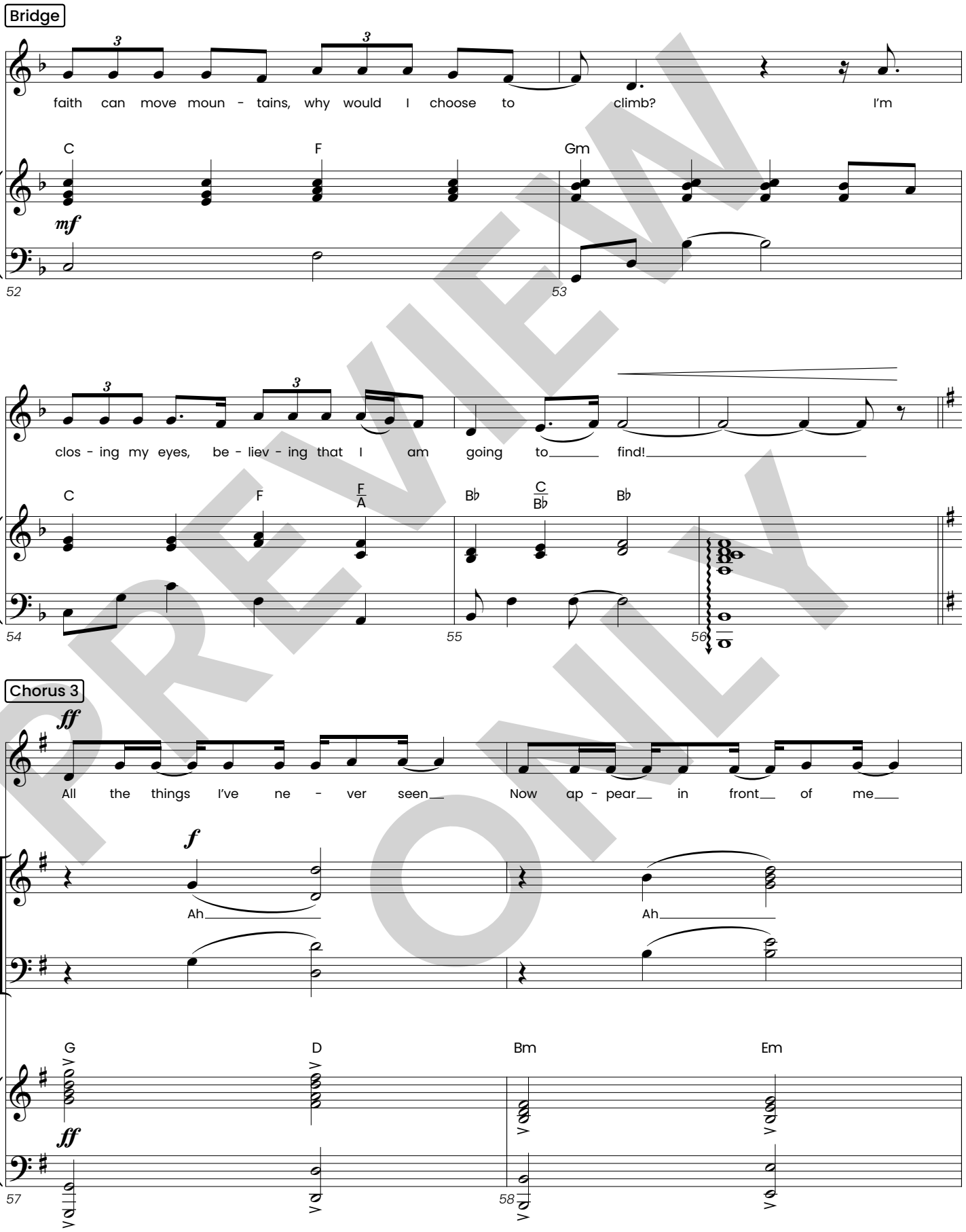

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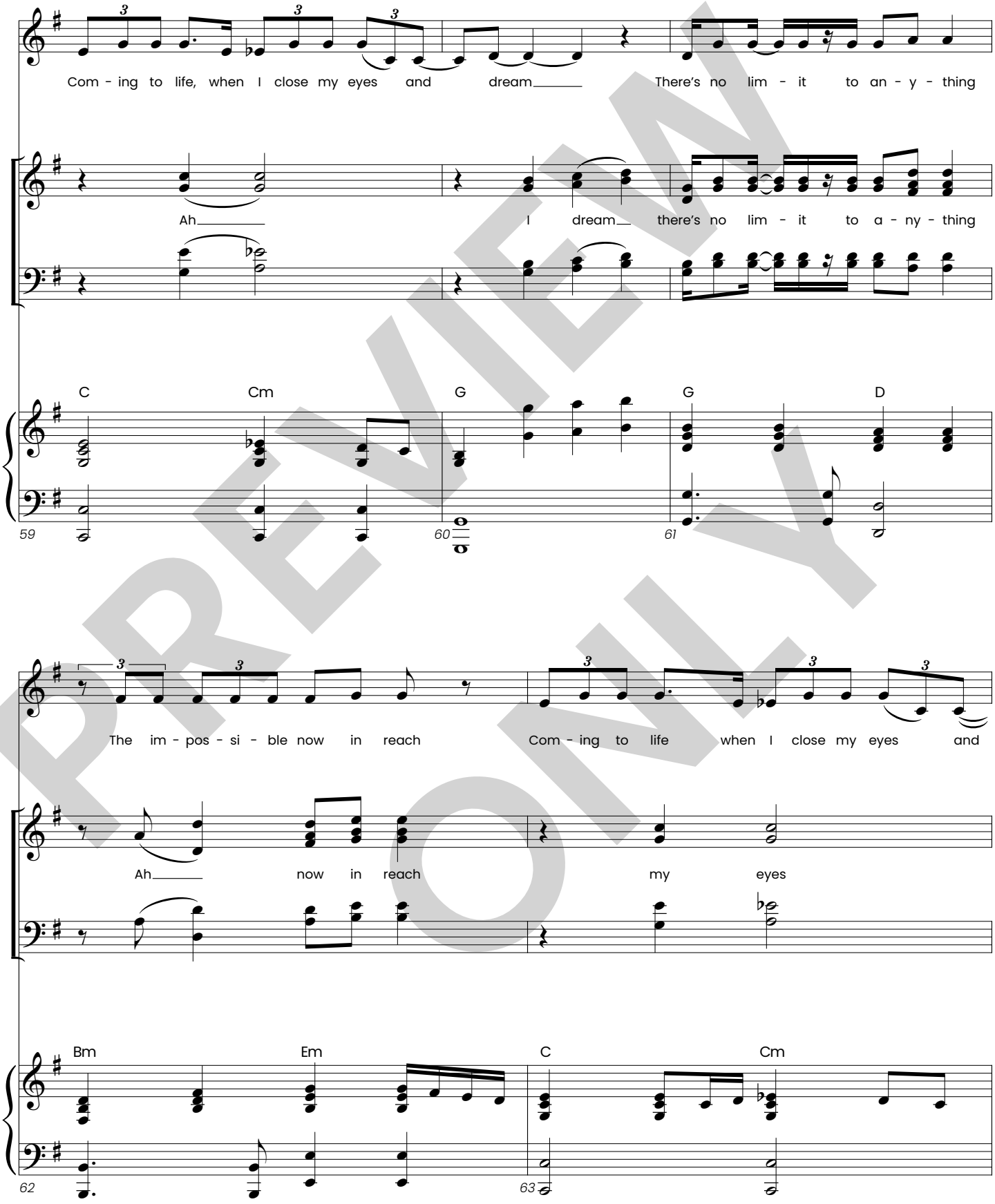

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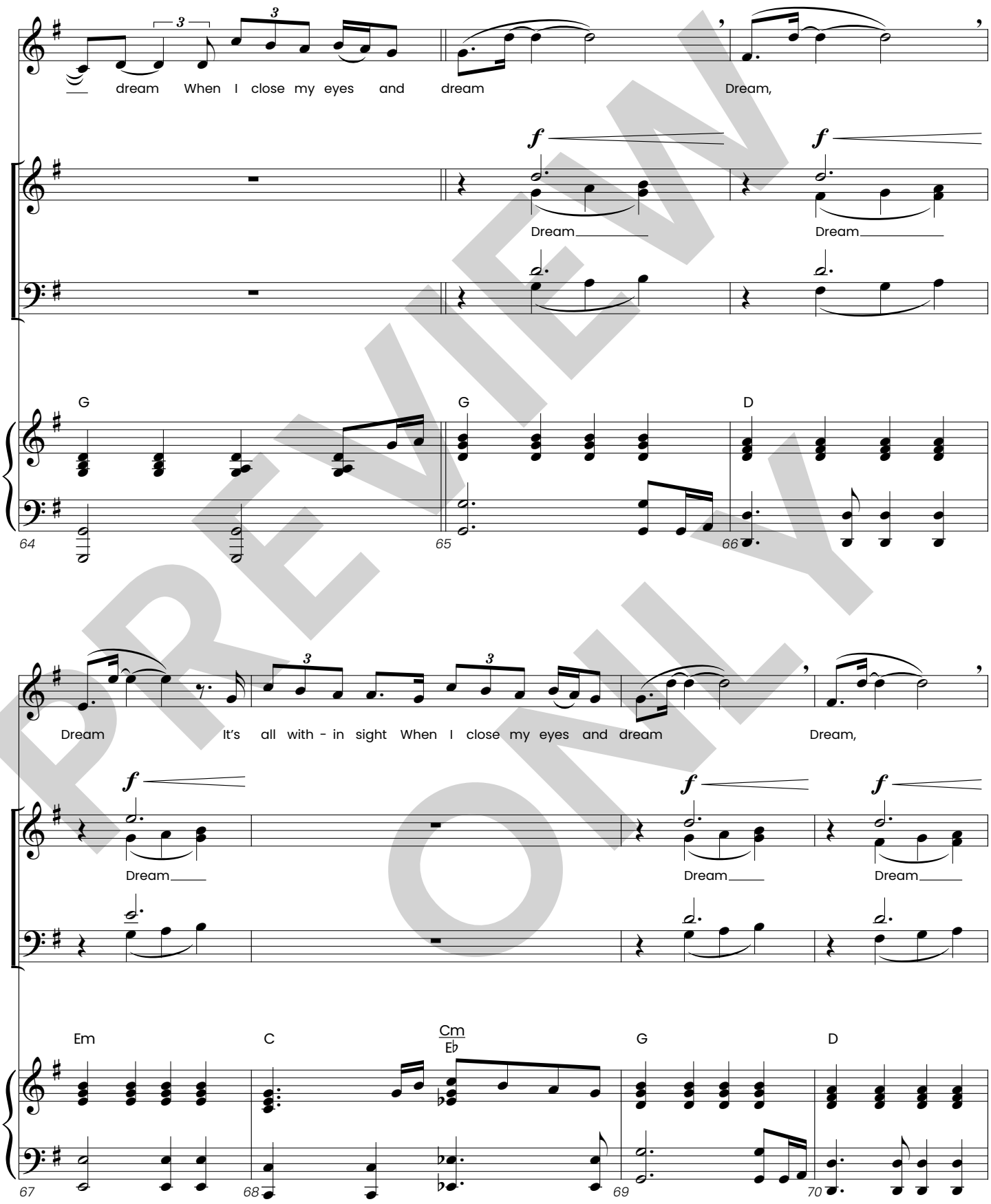

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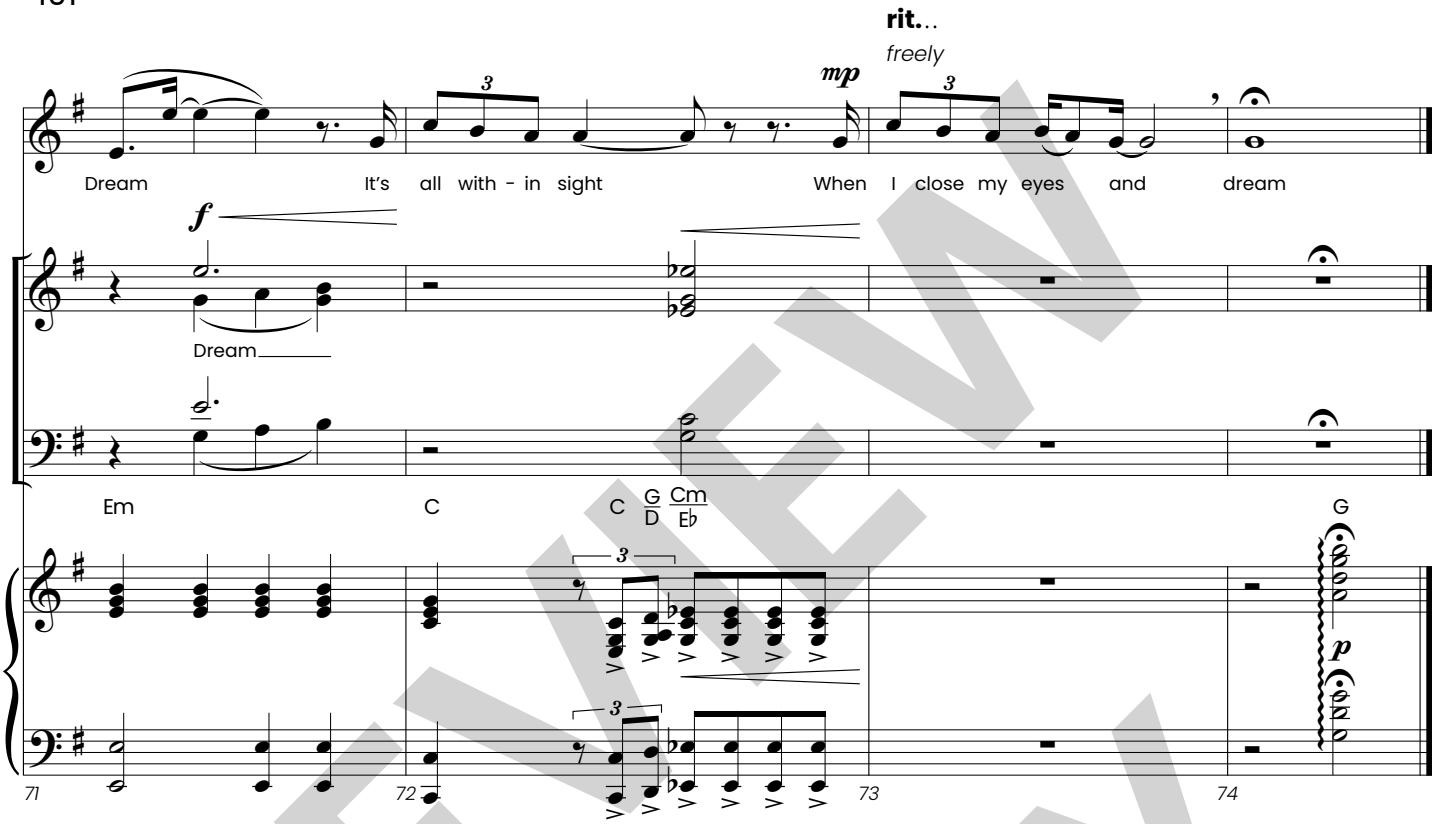


End ACT 1

ACT 2

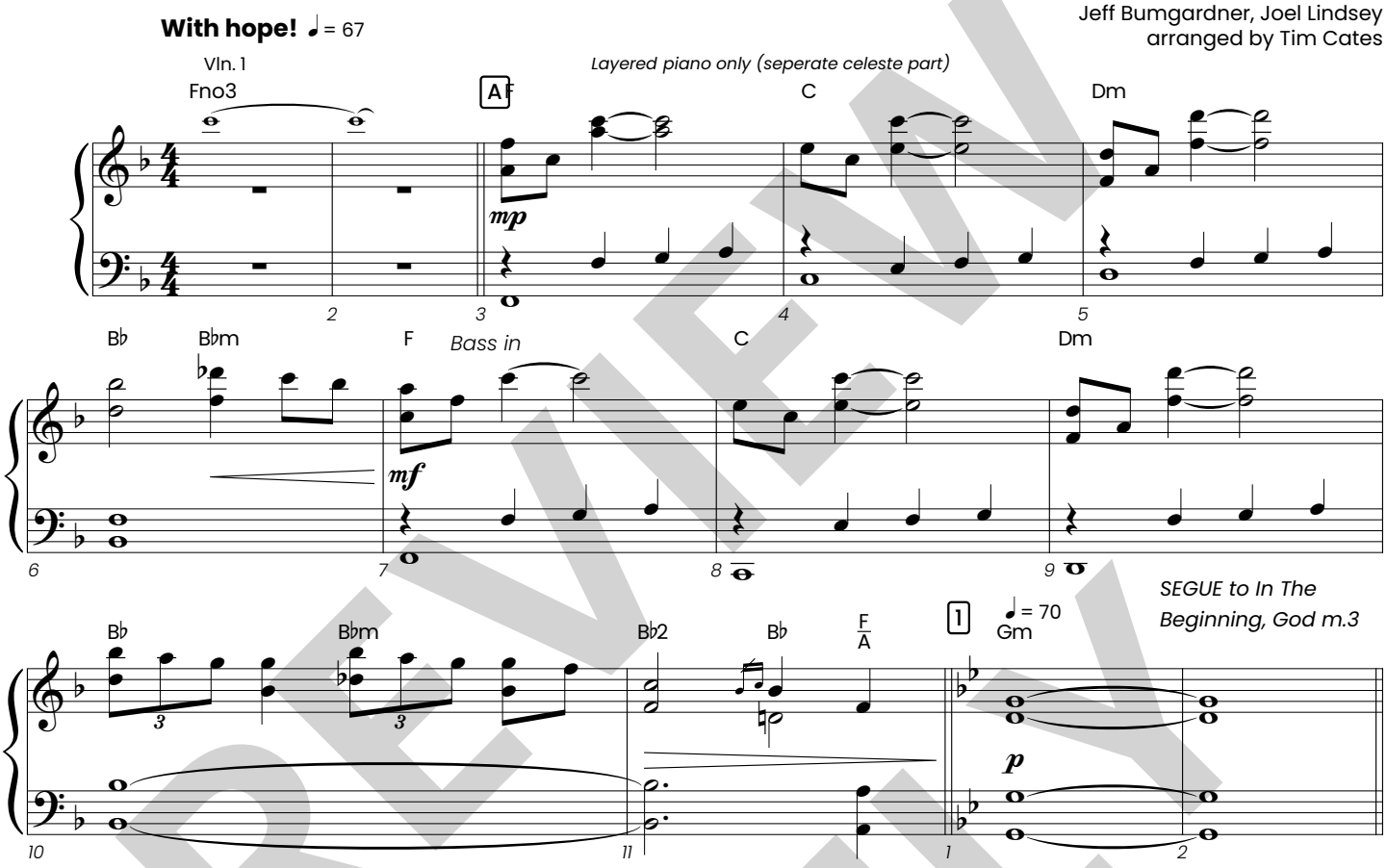
SCENE 1

(Music begins as dream-like images of the Garden of Eden and other creation-themes flash around the stage. An ensemble is in place and begin to sing. **9. In the Beginning, God.**)

PREVIEW ONLY

Entr'act

Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Tim Cates

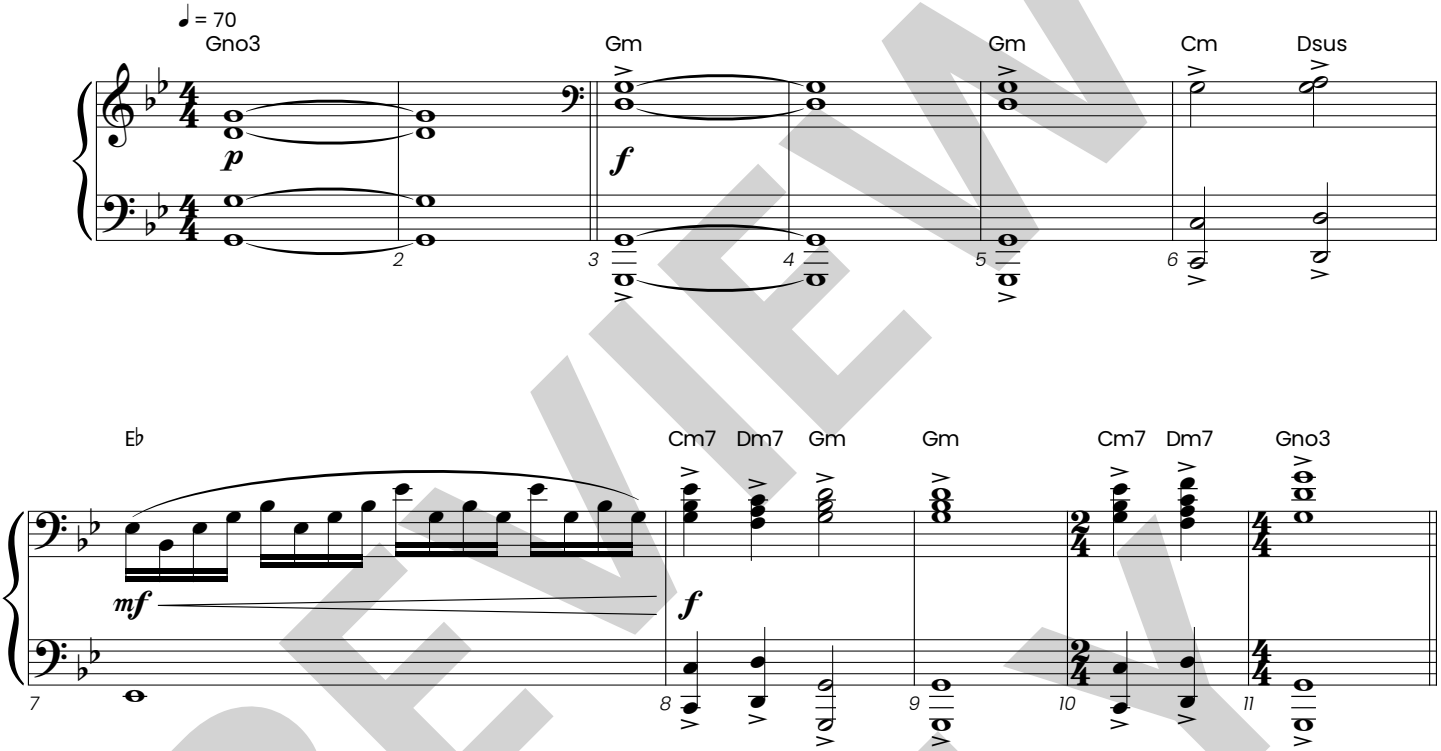


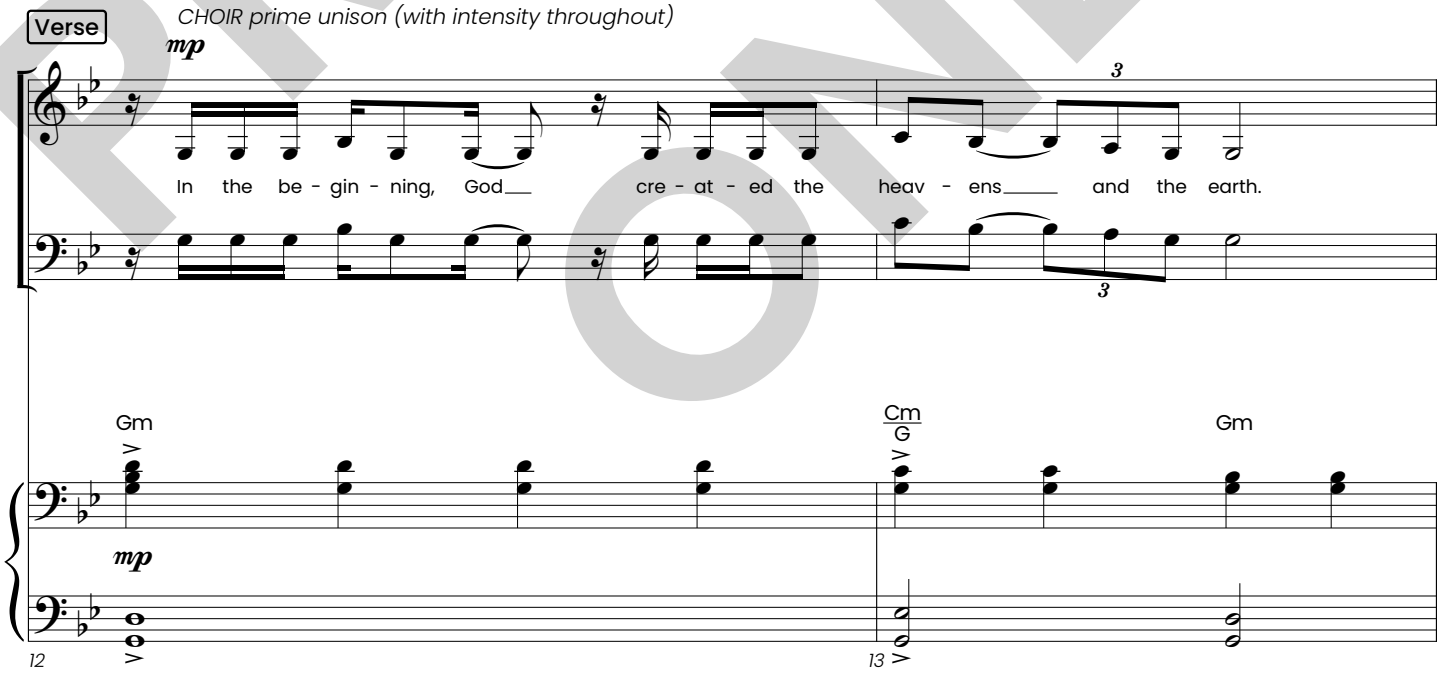
PREVIEW ONLY

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI

In The Beginning, God

Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Cliff Duren

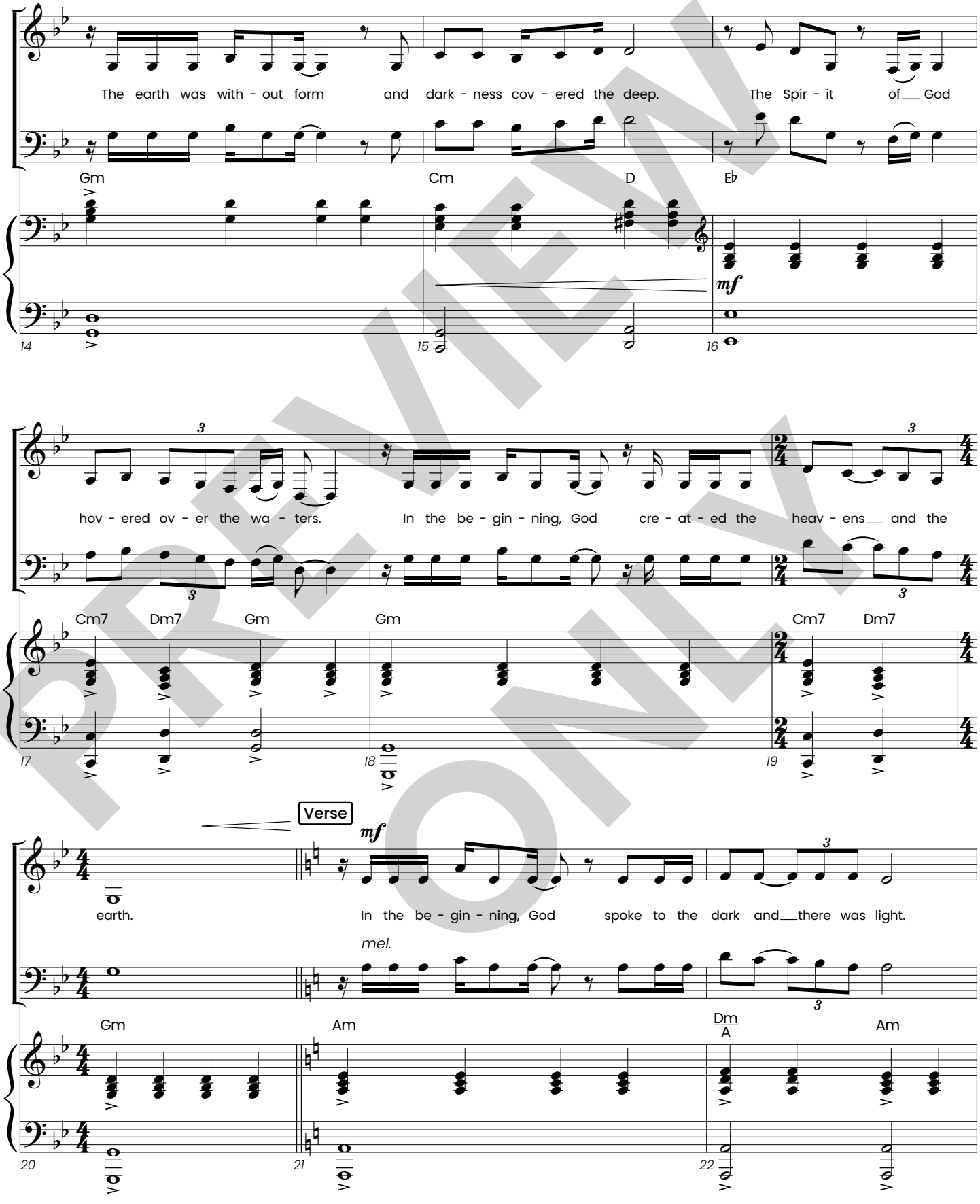




PREVIEW ONLY

HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



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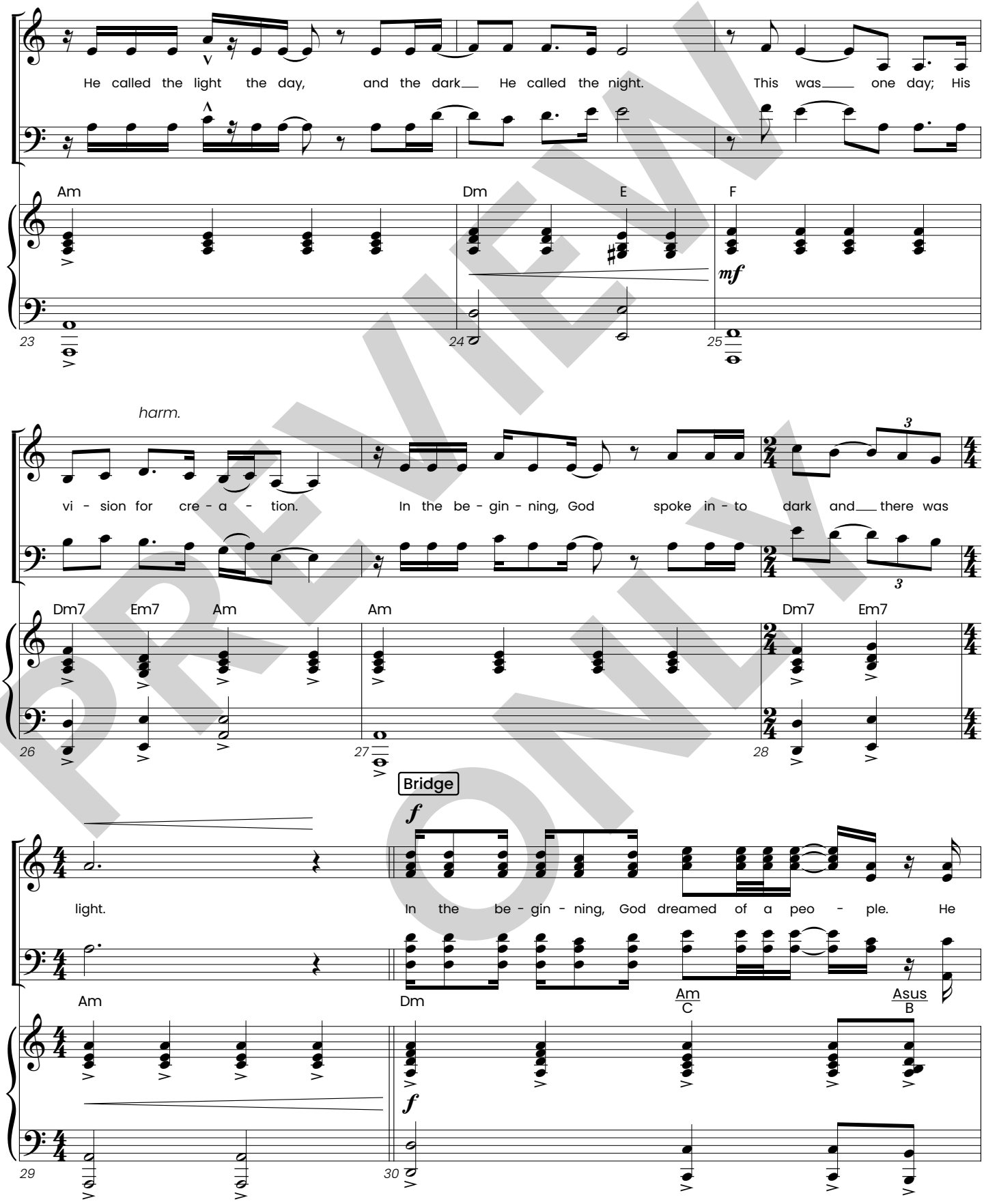

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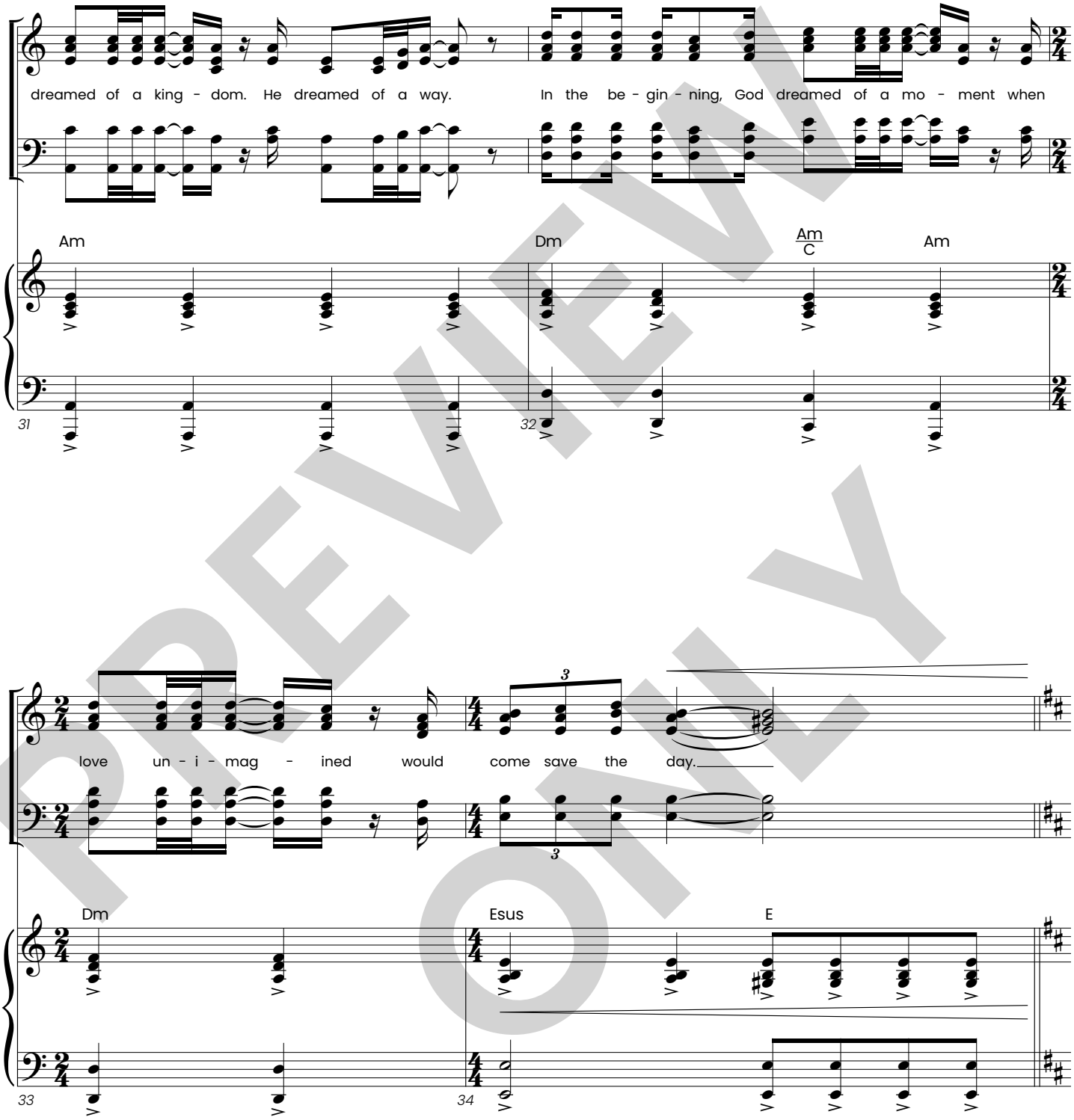
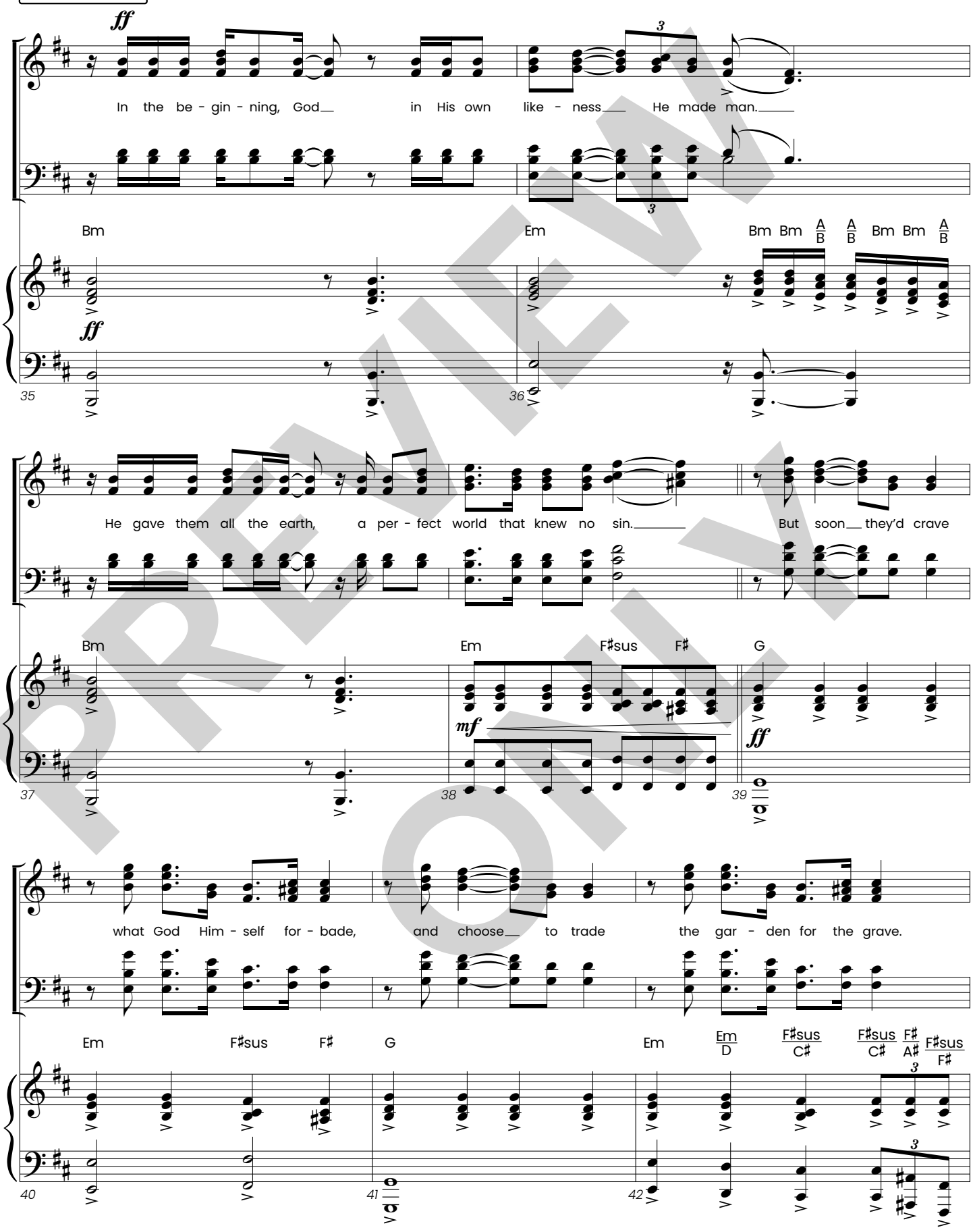


PREVIEW ONLY

Extended Verse



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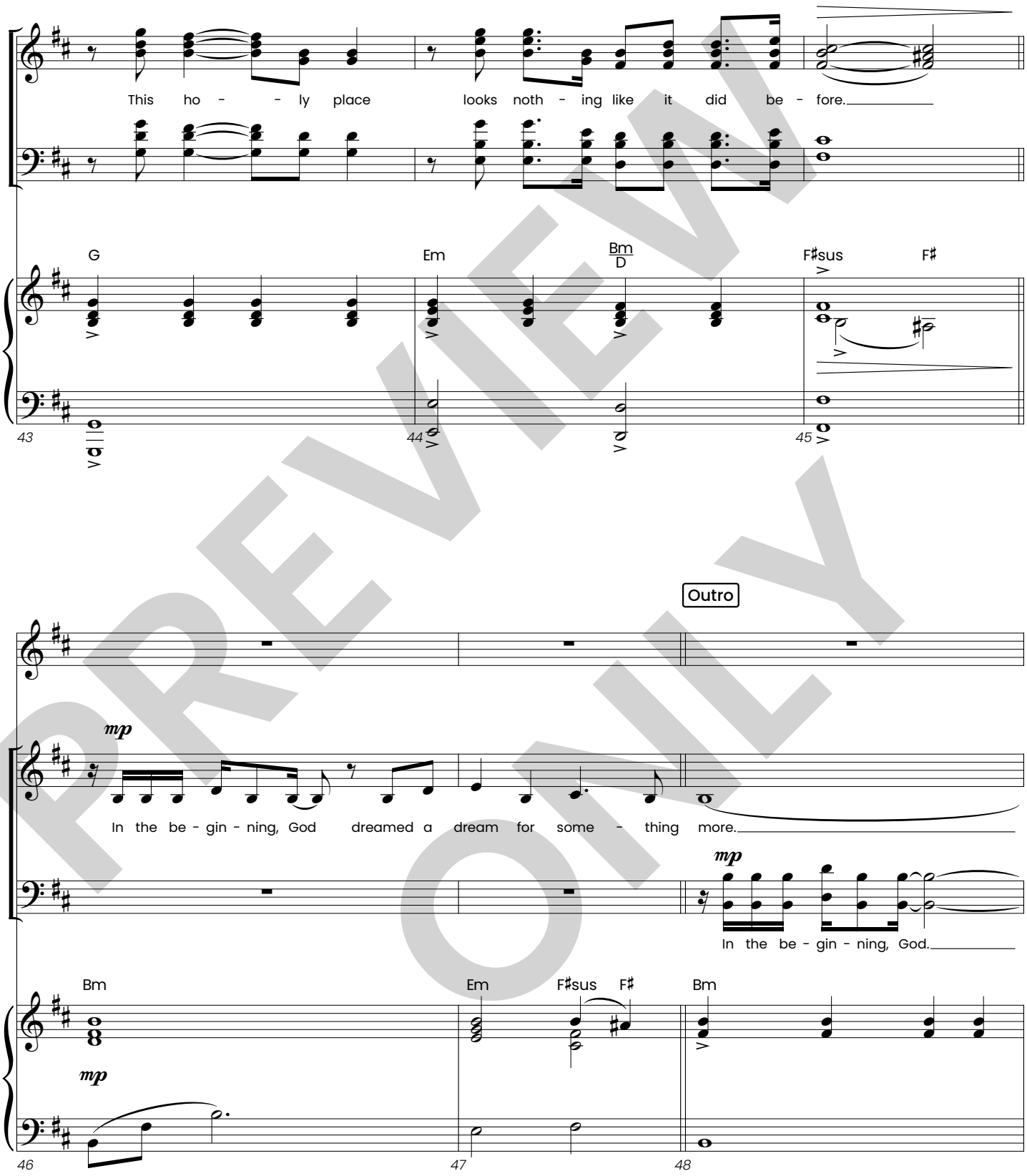

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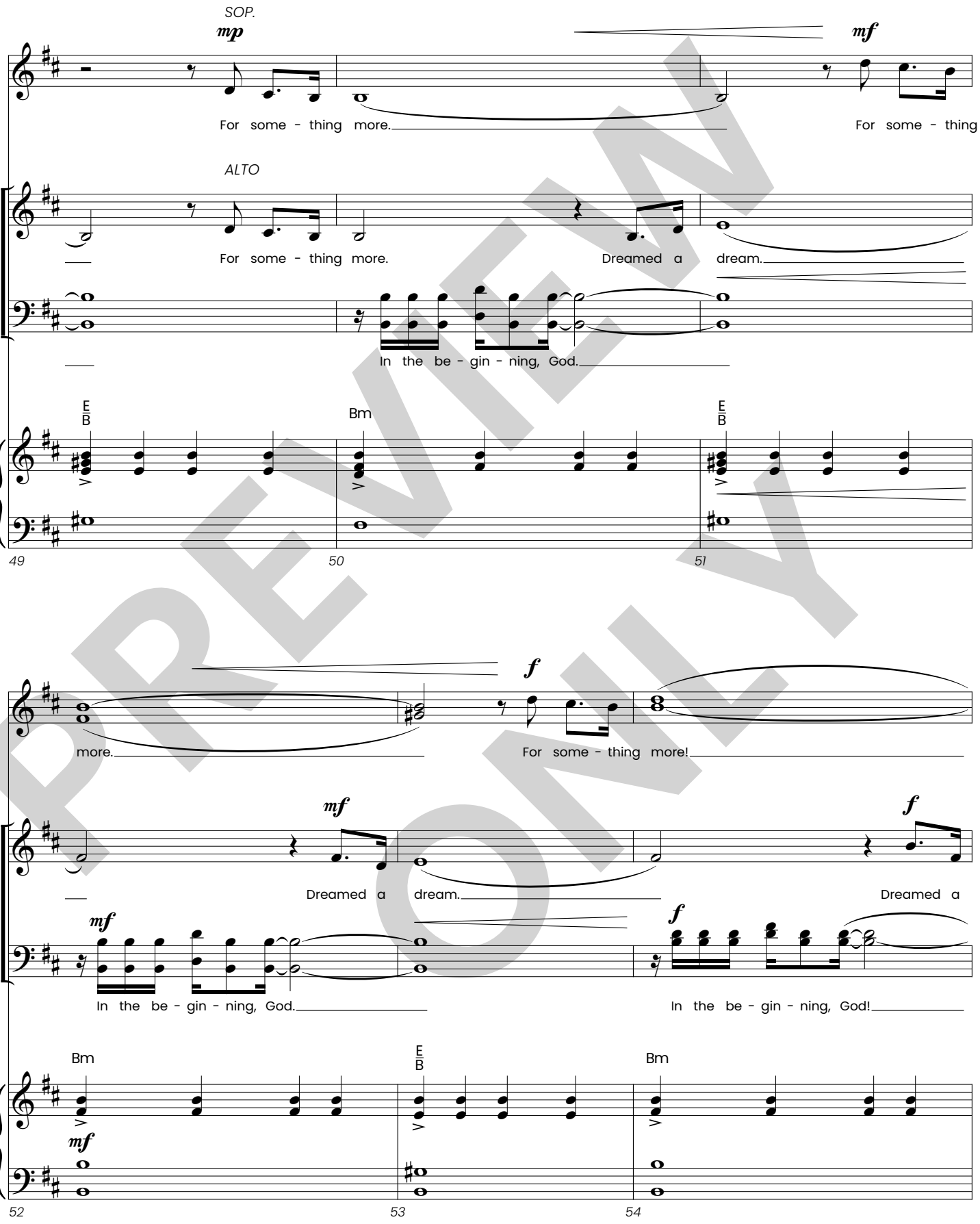

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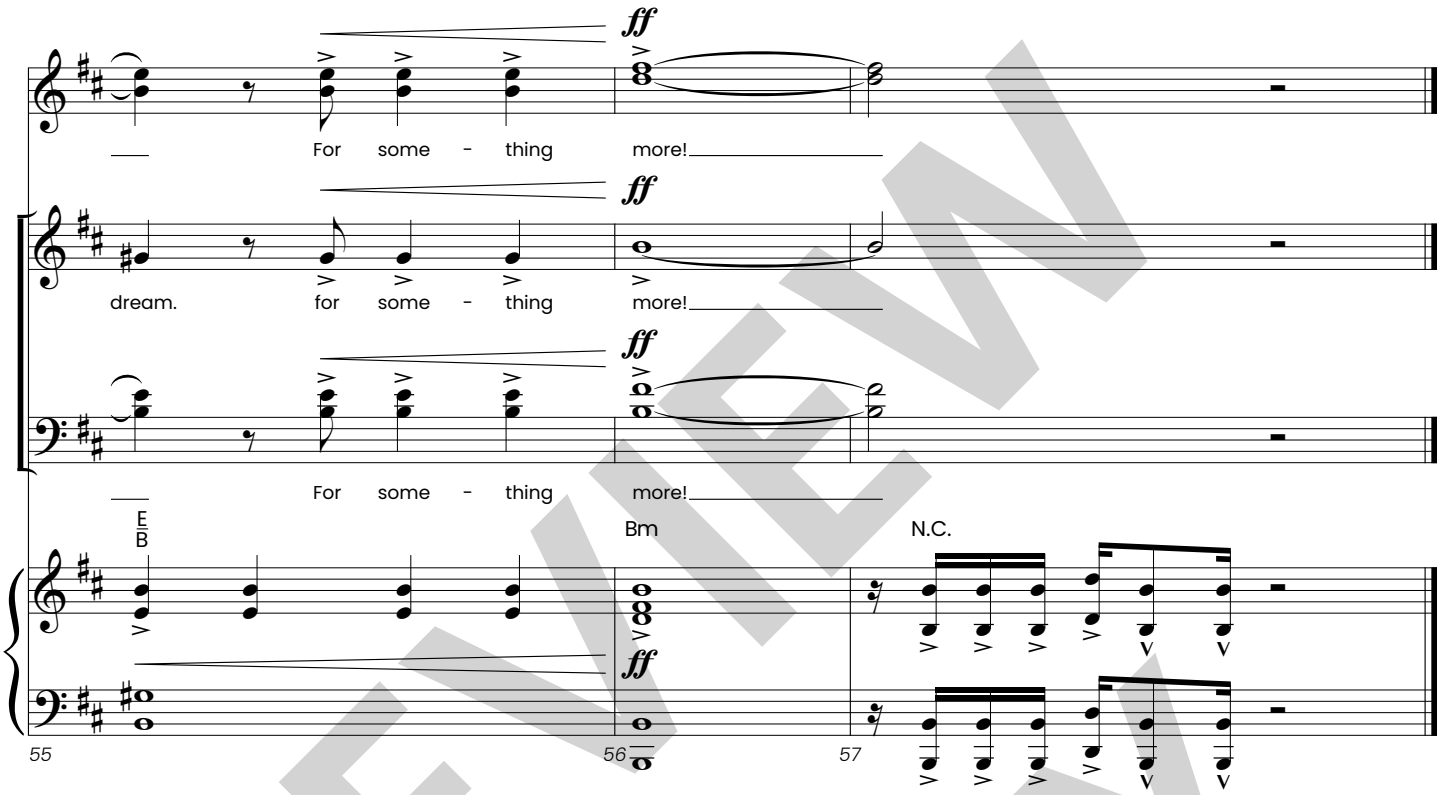


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 2

(Scene opens with MATT walking into Mr Kingston's candy shop. The bell rings as he opens the door to walk in.)

MR KINGSTON
Welcome to Kingston's Candy. Oh, hi Matt!

MATT
Hi Mr. Kingston. How's the day treating you?

MR KINGSTON
Like a dream. How's the family?

MATT
Good. Good. Well, okay.

MR KINGSTON
Uh oh. That doesn't sound good.

MATT
Well, I got some bad news recently, and it's kind of put a lot of pressure on us.

MR KINGSTON
And right here at Christmas time, too.

MATT
Yeah

MR KINGSTON
That's heavy stuff. How's your boy?

MATT
Bennett? Oh, he's doing okay. He's just happy to be out of school for a couple of weeks.

MR KINGSTON
Oh, yeah. I remember those days. So, what brings you into the store today? We have some new chocolate you might like all the way from Switzerland. Let me get you a sample.

MATT
Actually, Mr Kingston, I didn't come for the candy. Wait, when did your hardware store become a candy shop anyway?

(MR KINGSTON looks innocently in response, raising his eyebrows as if he doesn't have a clue what Matt is talking about.)

Nevermind. I'll cut to the chase. Mr Kingston, I need a job. Now, I know you may not have a need for extra help right now, but I am confident I can earn my keep and bring in extra business within a week. I have an extensive background in marketing and brand management. I catch on fast and I think, within a year, two years tops, we could expand and launch a second and third store.

(MATT pauses, awaiting a response.)

Mr Kingston?

MR KINGSTON
Are you done?

MATT
I'm sorry, I'm just desperate, I guess. I'll see my way out.
Thank you for your time.

MR KINGSTON
So, you're gonna give up just like that?

MATT(Hopeful)
Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't think you had any openings. That's great. So, what job can I help you with?

MR KINGSTON
Oh, I don't have a job for you.

MATT
But, I thought.

MR KINGSTON
You thought I meant I was going to *give* you a job. Matt, look around you. I run a candy shop, that until today, you thought was a hardware store. The only people I ever see either wander by, pretending to shop in the background of someone else's conversation, or they are part of one of those song and dance numbers where everyone magically knows all the words and steps. What kind of job could I offer you that could solve your problems?

(Putting his hand on Matt's shoulder and bringing him in closer)

Matt, you don't have a job problem.

MATT
I don't?

MR KINGSTON
You don't. What you have is a vision problem.

(MATT squints and looks around as though checking his sight.)
Not that kind of vision. Vision vision. A plan. The ability to see something happen before it does. You need a new dream, Matt.

MATT
At this point, I'd be happy just to have a new paycheck, Mr Kingston.

MR KINGSTON
The pay will come. The vision must be first. (Pointing to his chest) (motioning to horizon.) You have to see it in here before you can ever see it out there.

MATT
If I could just catch a break, I'm sure I could turn things around.

MR KINGSTON
Sometimes in life, we have to create our own breaks.

(Music begins)

MATT
I'm not sure I understand.

MR KINGSTON
Let me put it another way.

(As the intro is happening, dancers come to the door wanting to enter the scene. **10. IT ALL STARTS WITH A DREAM**.)

(Dancers motion to open the door.)

No. Go away. I'm not opening the door. I'm trying to have a conversation.

(Dancer starts dancing outside and can be seen by the audience through the door as they continue to motion to Mr Kingston.)

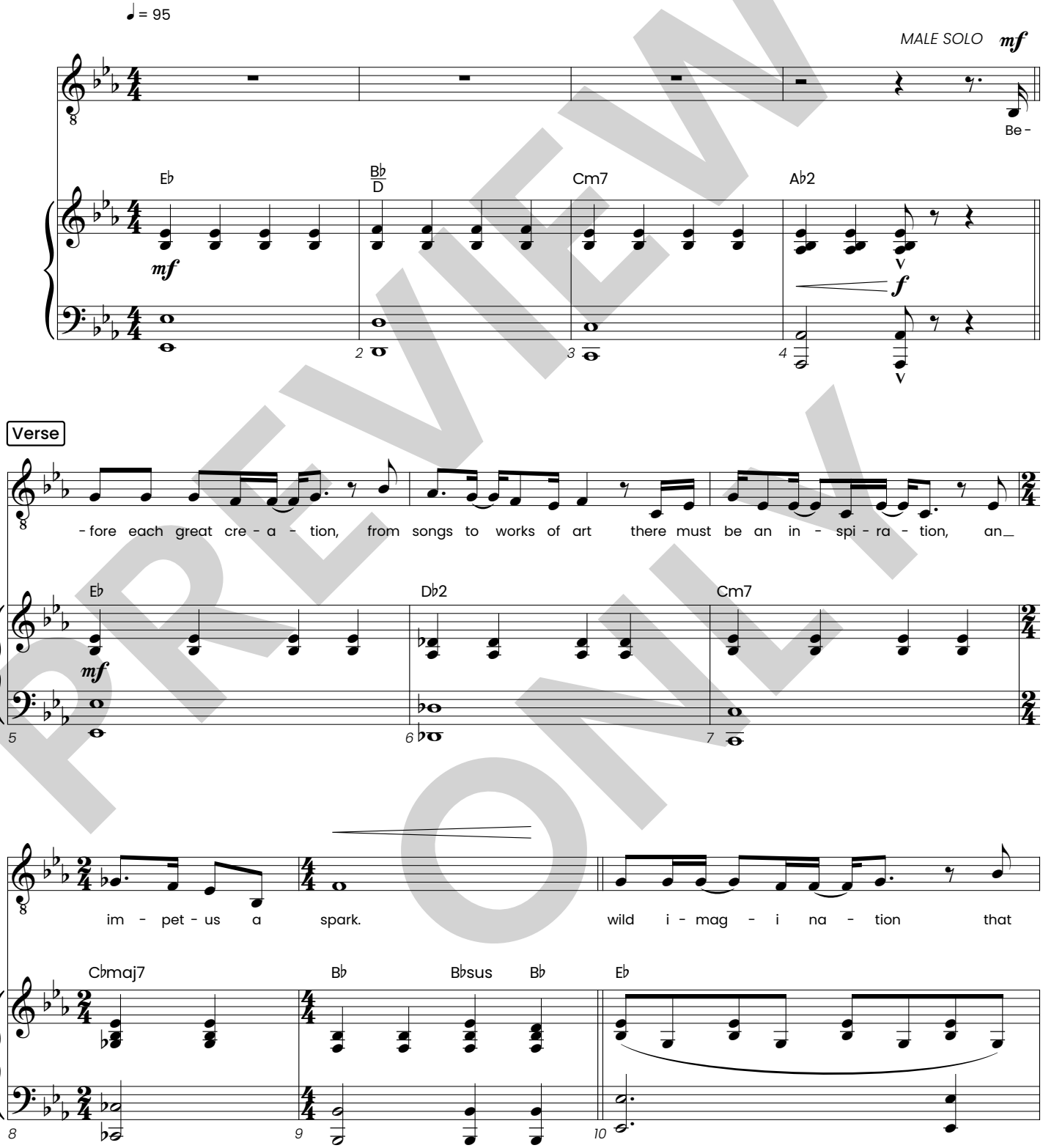
(To Matt)
See what I mean. My shop stays empty until the music starts.

(To dancer)
Fine. Do what you gotta do, just don't knock over my displays.

END SCENE 2

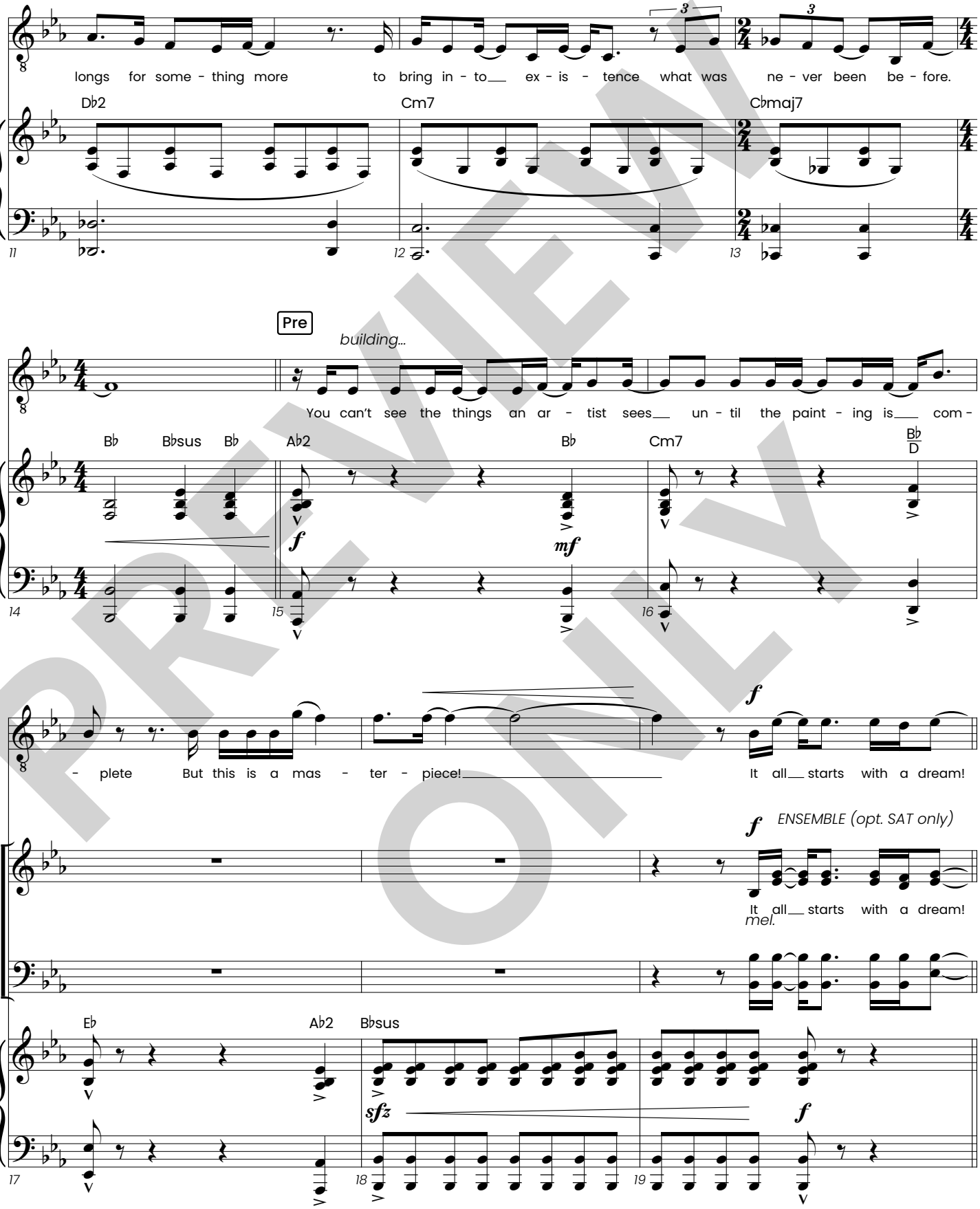
It All Starts With A Dream

Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Cliff Duren



PREVIEW ONLY

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



PREVIEW ONLY

Chorus

It all__ starts with a dream! It all__ starts with the cour -

It all__ starts with a dream! It all__ starts with the cour -

Eb Eb2 Eb Eb/G Bb Eb/Bb Bb Gm7

20 21 22 23

- age of a dream - er; a won't__ back down be - liev - er, who dares__ to chase im - pos - si - ble__

- age of a dream - er;__ a won't__ back down be - liev - er!__

Cm Bb/D Db2

24 25 26

PREVIEW ONLY

SOLO

Turn

mf

things! It all___ starts with a dream! We

It all___ starts with a dream!

Ab2 Ab2/Bb Eb Ebsus

mf

27 28 29

Verse

see a___ world___ that's hope - less with fra - gile___ bro - ken hearts But

Eb Db2

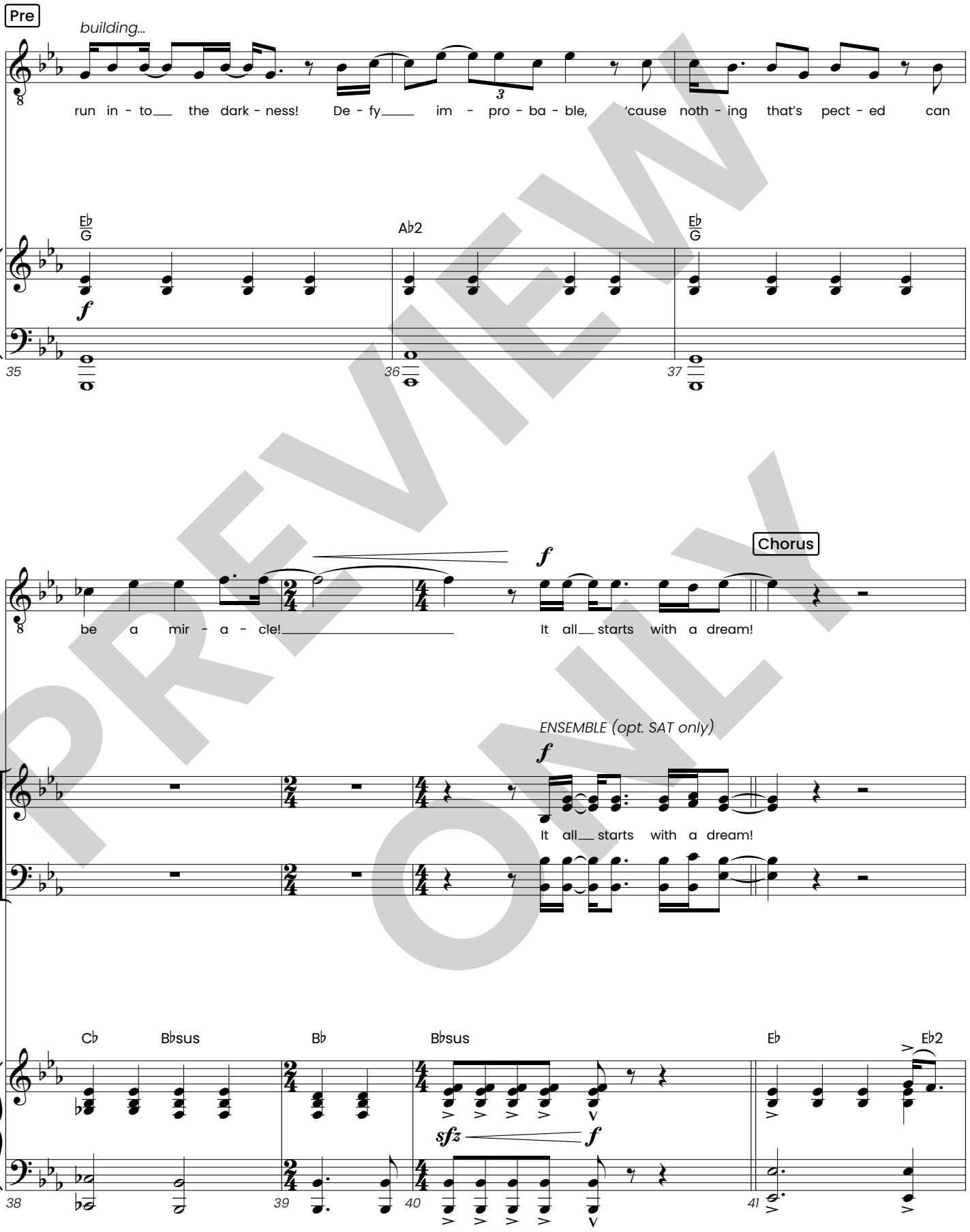
30 31

skies were dark and emp - ty___ be - fore God___ paint - ed stars.___ So,

Cm7 Cbmaj7 Bb Bbsus Bb

32 33 34

PREVIEW ONLY



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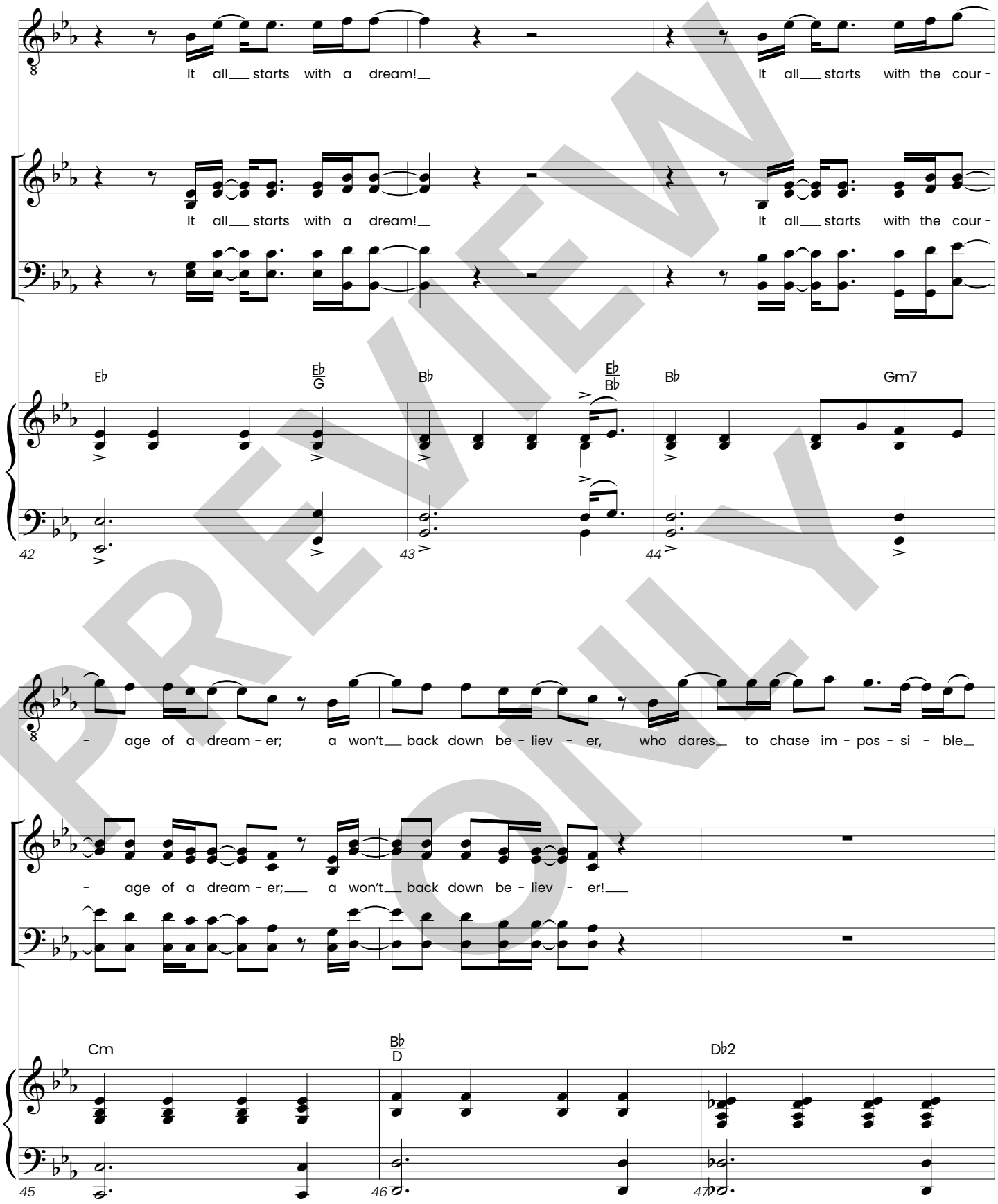

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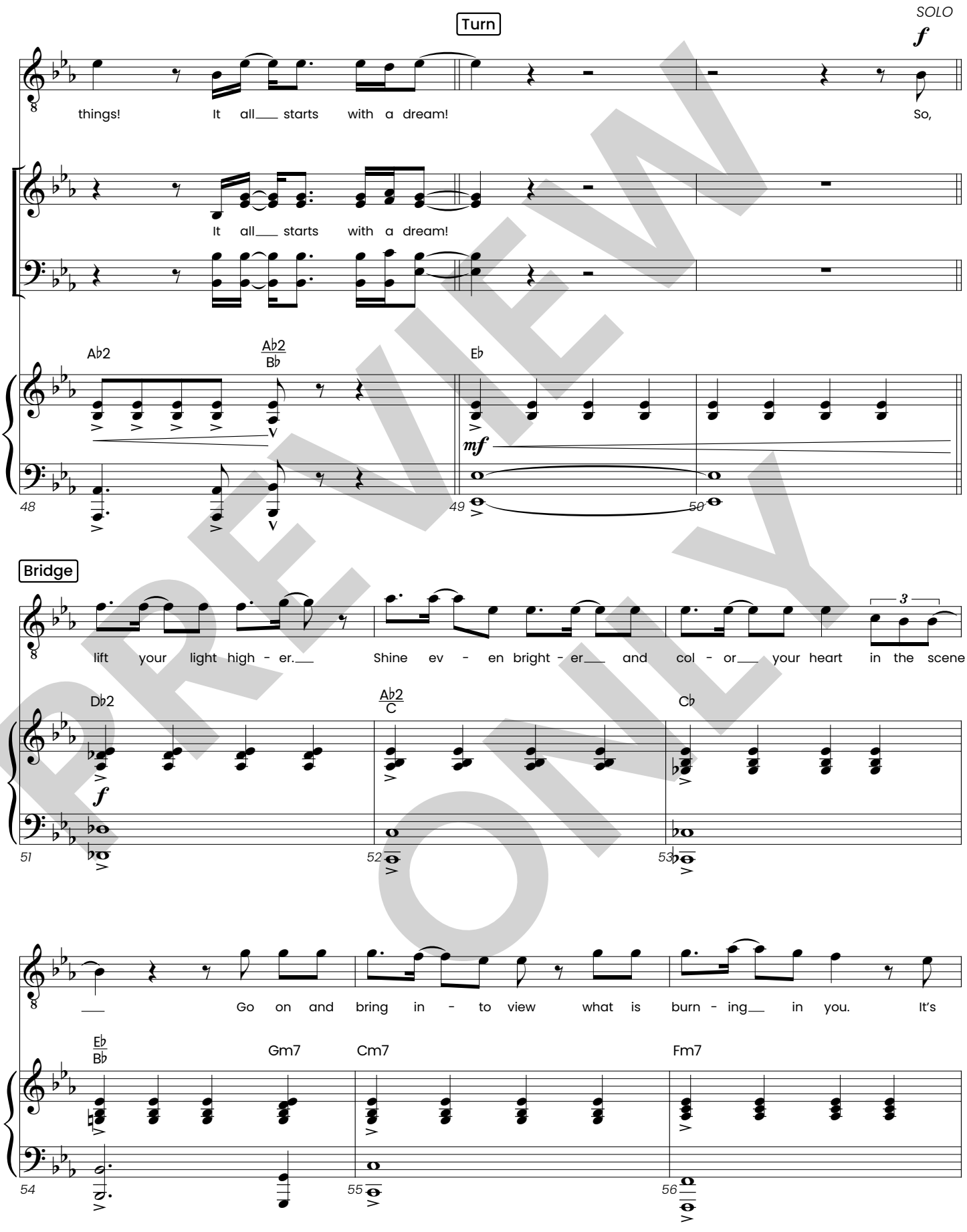

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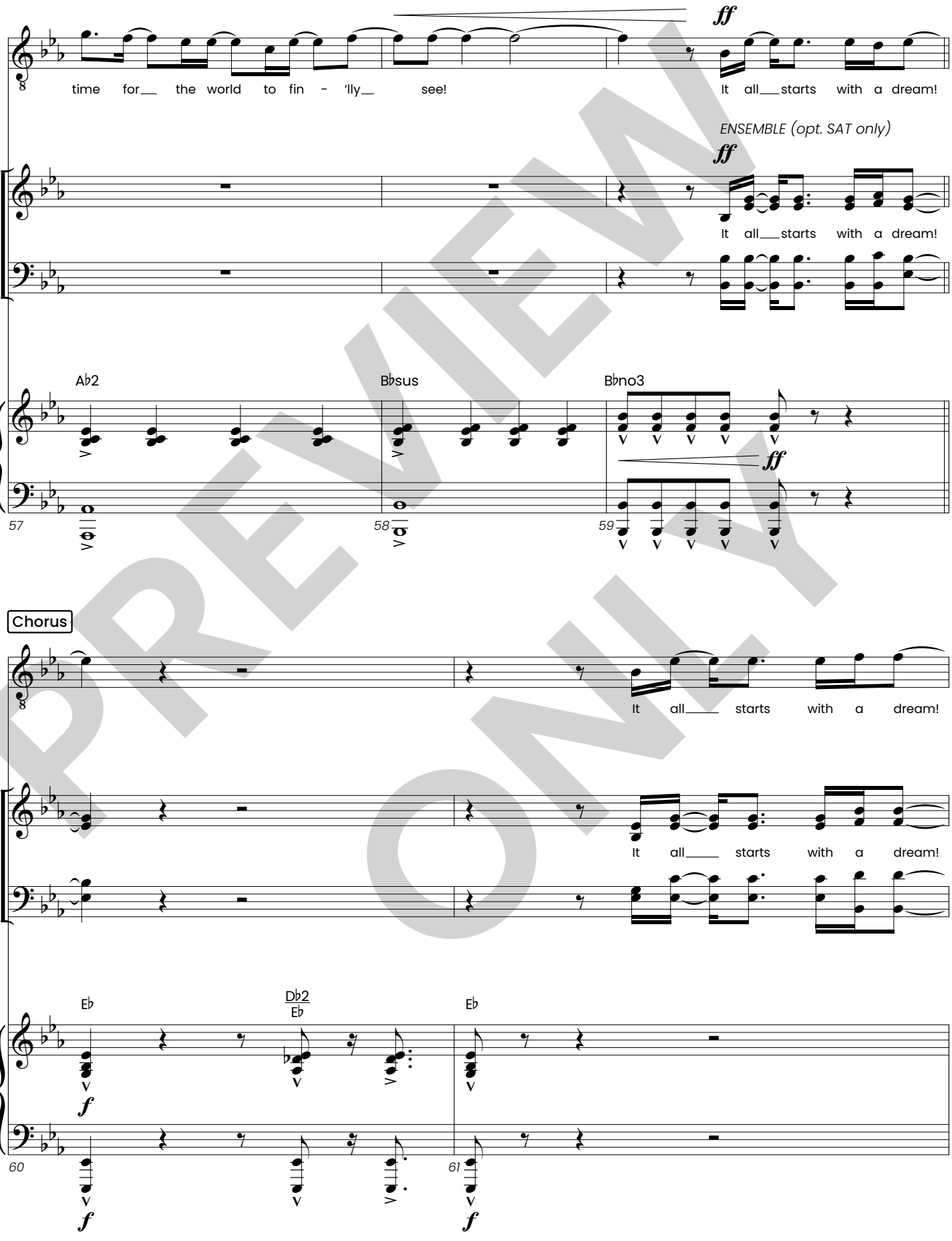

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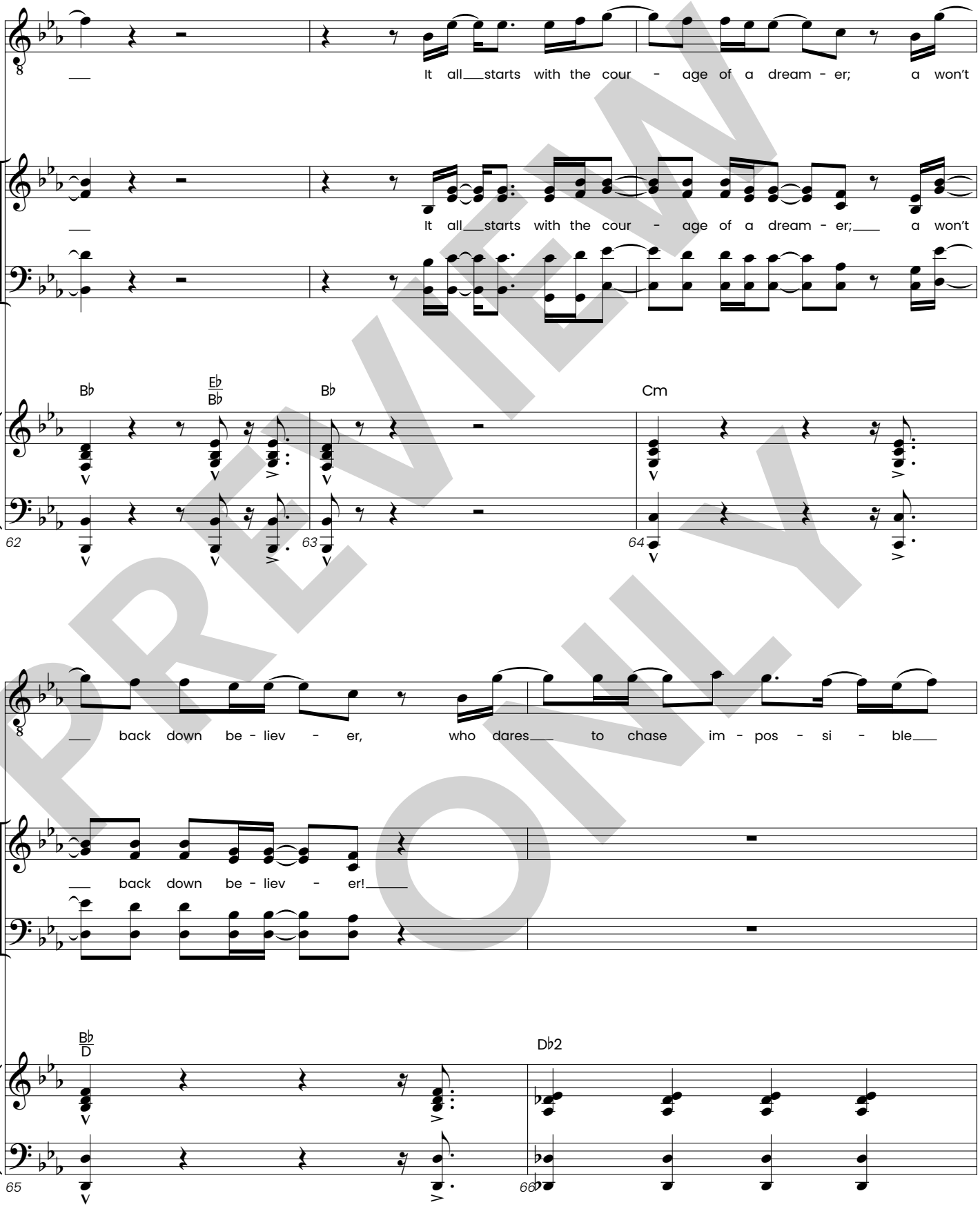

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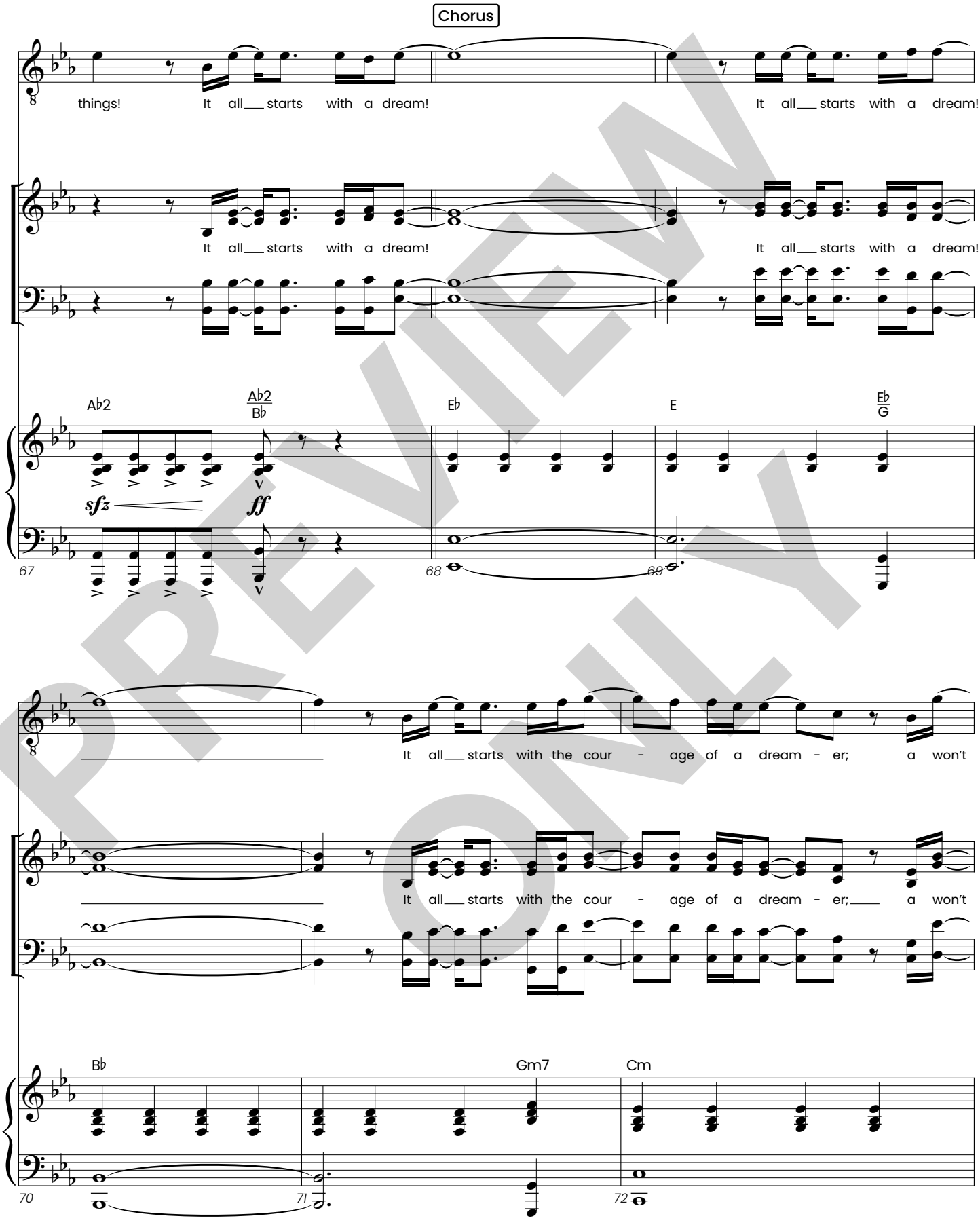

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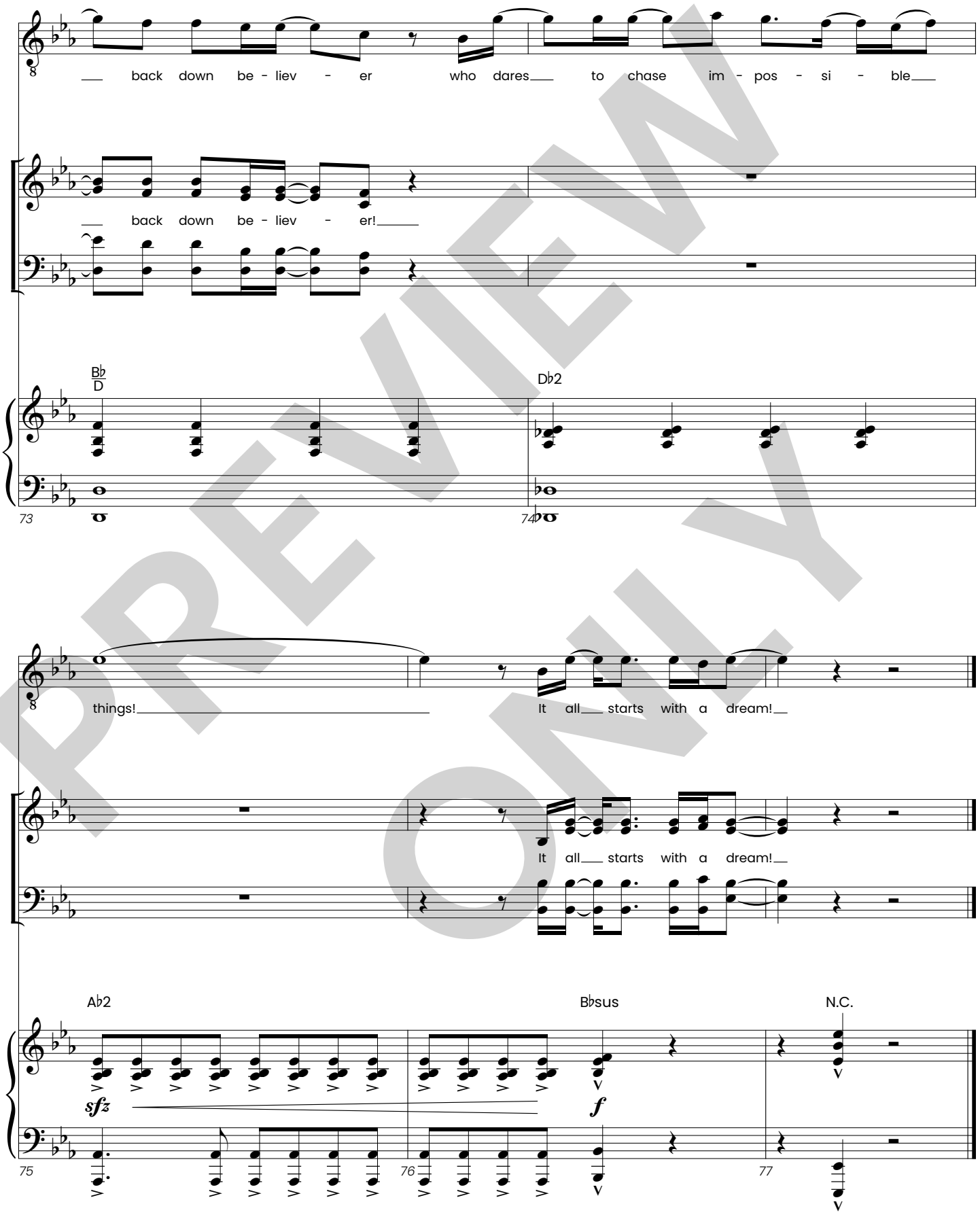


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 3

(Scene opens outside on town square as CHLOE is eating ice cream with a candy cane sticking out and MARY BETH and BENNETT walk next to her.)

MARY BETH
So, if that wasn't always an ice cream shop, what was it?

BENNETT
The Pharmacy.

CHLOE
Ohhh. That's why there were so many pill bottles. I thought they were toppings.

MARY BETH(Ignoring Chloe)
So, you've lived here your entire life.

BENNETT
Yep. I just can't figure out why everything seems so different al of a sudden.

MARY BETH(To Chloe)
How about you, CHLOE? Did you grow up here?

CHLOE(Concentrating on the ice cream as she talks)
I don't really know. I just kind of showed up one day and there I was. Been here ever since. Look! A candy cane *inside* my ice cream! This day just keeps getting better.

BENNETT(To Mary Beth)
Back there, in the church, you said that when you were scared, you held onto God's promises and trusted that He would work things out for you. What did you mean by that?

MARY BETH
God has promised us all kinds of things.

BENNETT
Like what?

MARY BETH
Well, in the beginning, God had a dream for mankind. He created the earth, and put the first man and woman in a place of perfection. They had everything they could ever want or need. But, they chose sin over trusting God. And that sin caused a divide between man and God, and the world has not been perfect since. God's first promise was in response to their unfaithfulness, when He said that man would triumph over evil.

CHLOE
Oh, yeah. I heard about this. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus.

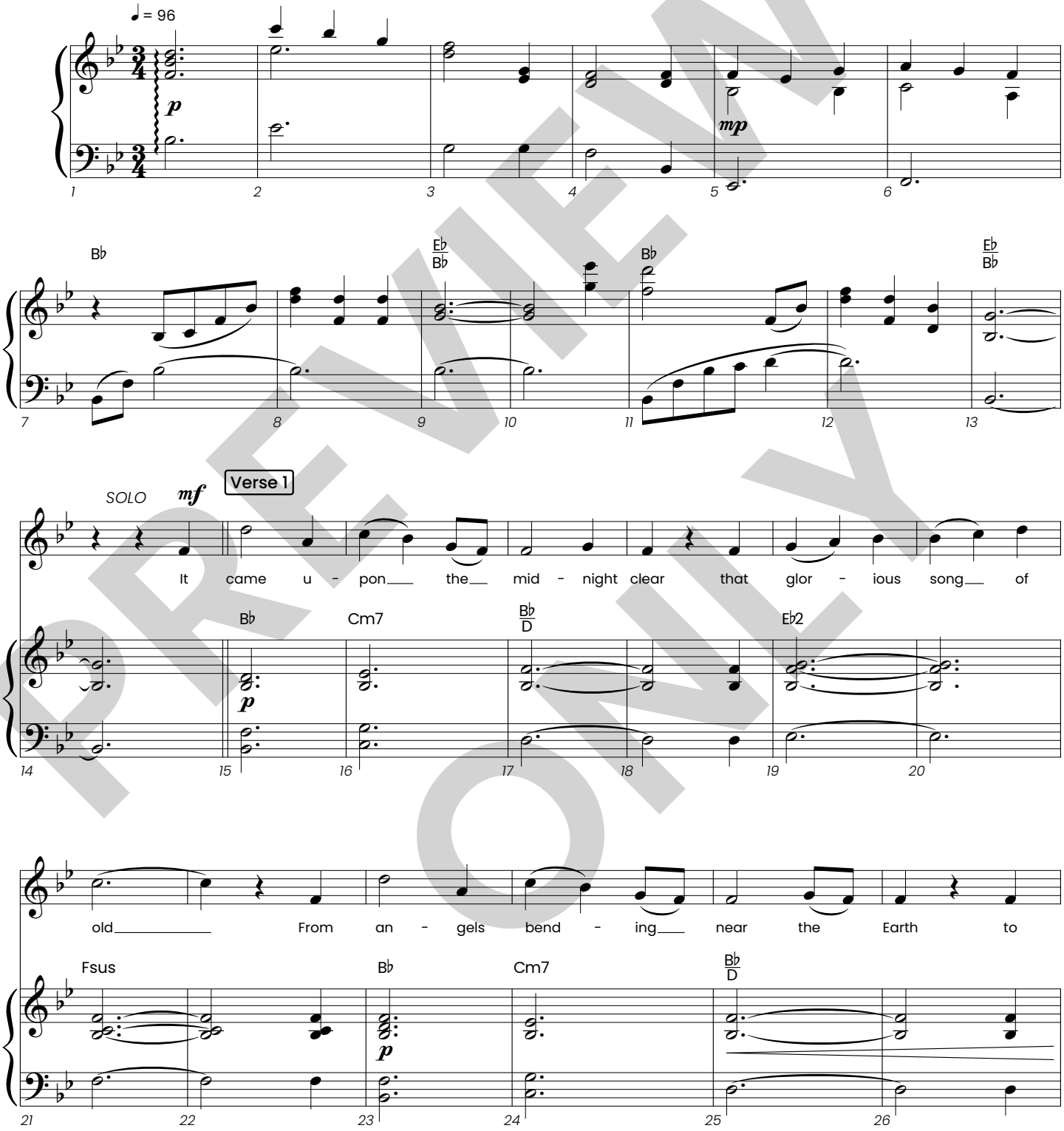
MARY BETH
That’s exactly right! God’s dream didn’t end when man chose to disobey. He still dreamed of a perfect relationship with us. So, He sent His son, Jesus, into our broken world to make a way for
us to come back to God.

(Music starts. MARY BETH begins to sing as if telling a story to the children. Dancers enter scene on chorus. **11. It Came Upon The Midnight Clear**.)

END SCENE 3

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

Edmund Sears, Richard Stores Willis, Jeff Bumgardner
arranged by Tim Cates



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HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

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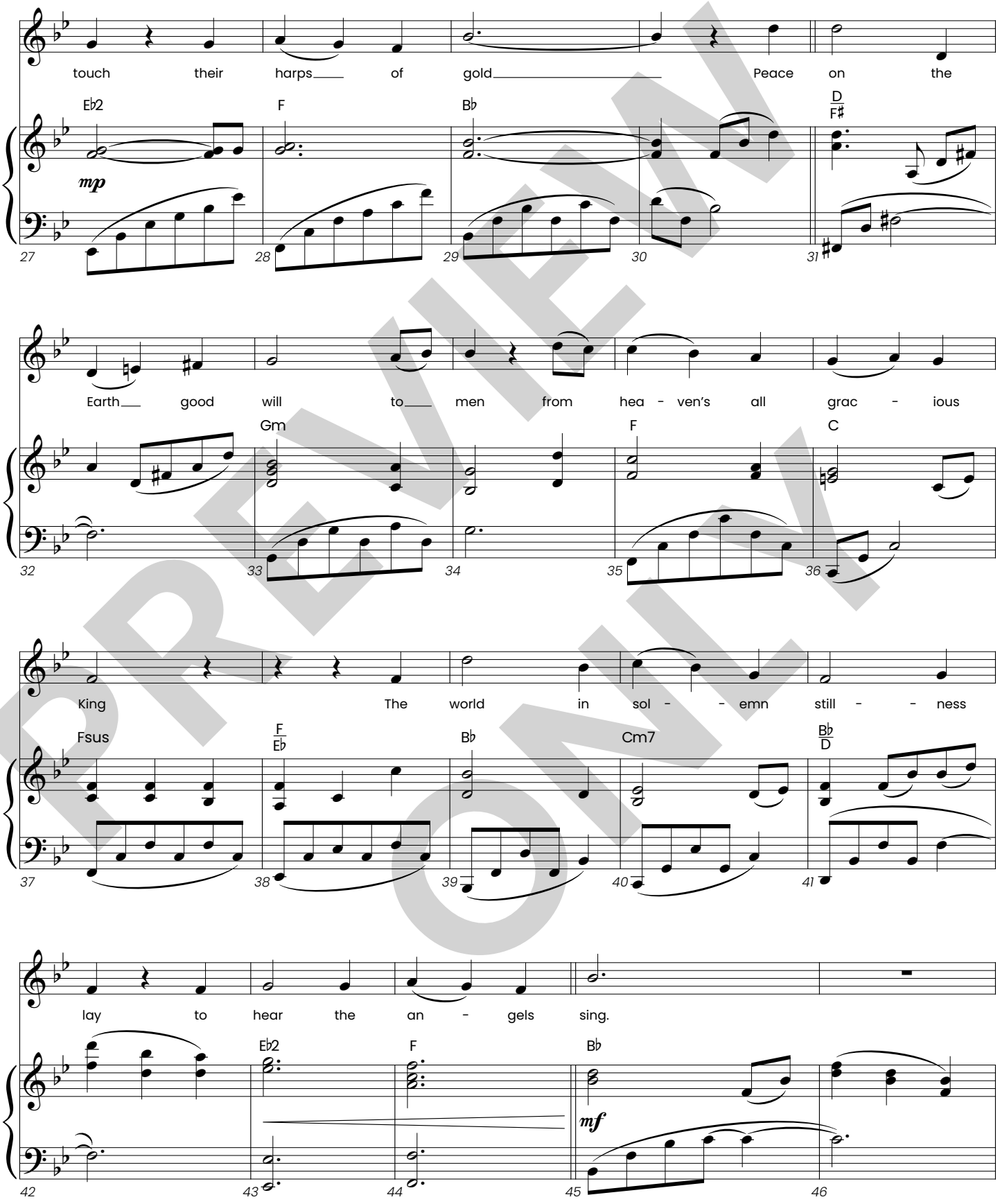

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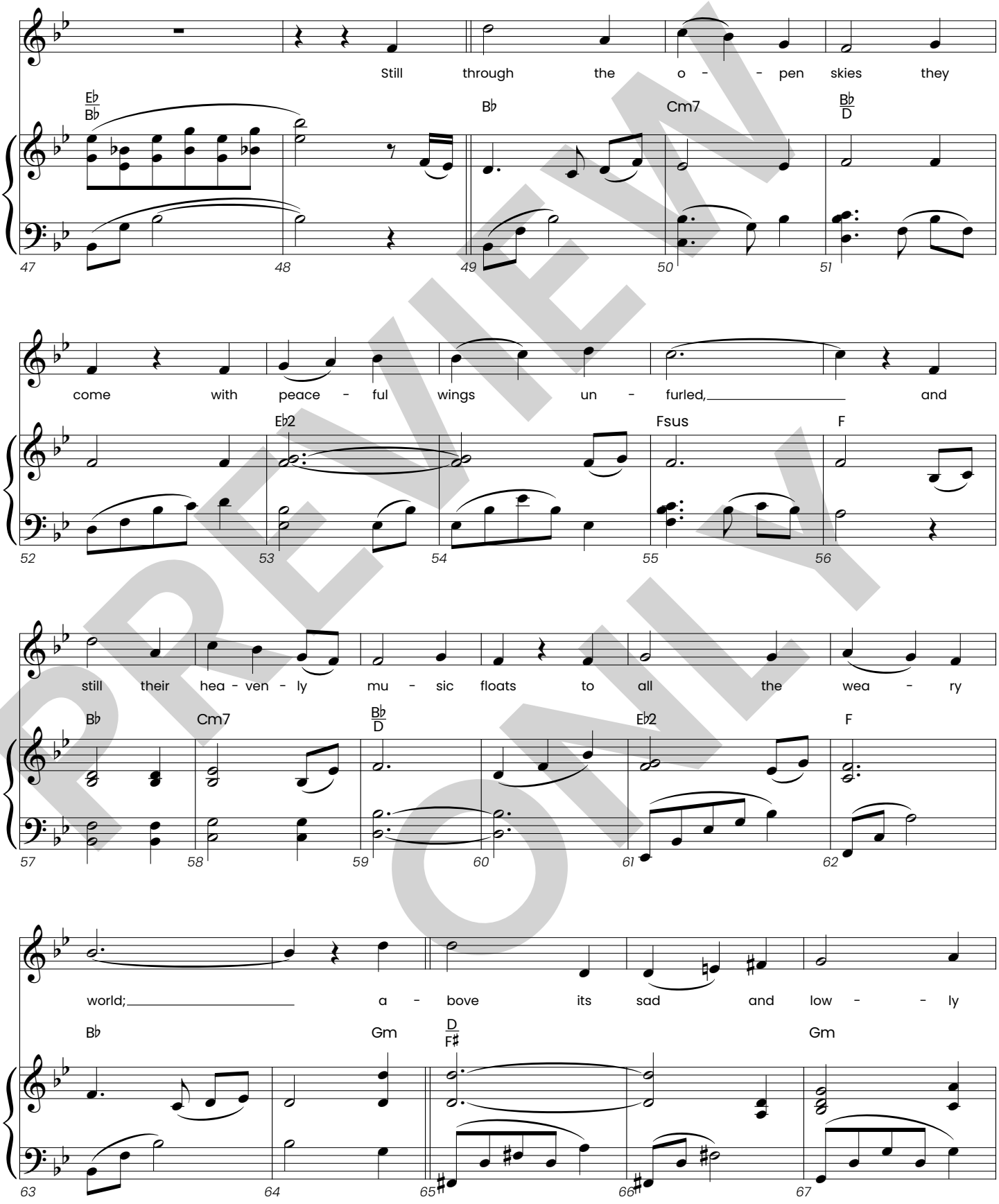
Verse 2



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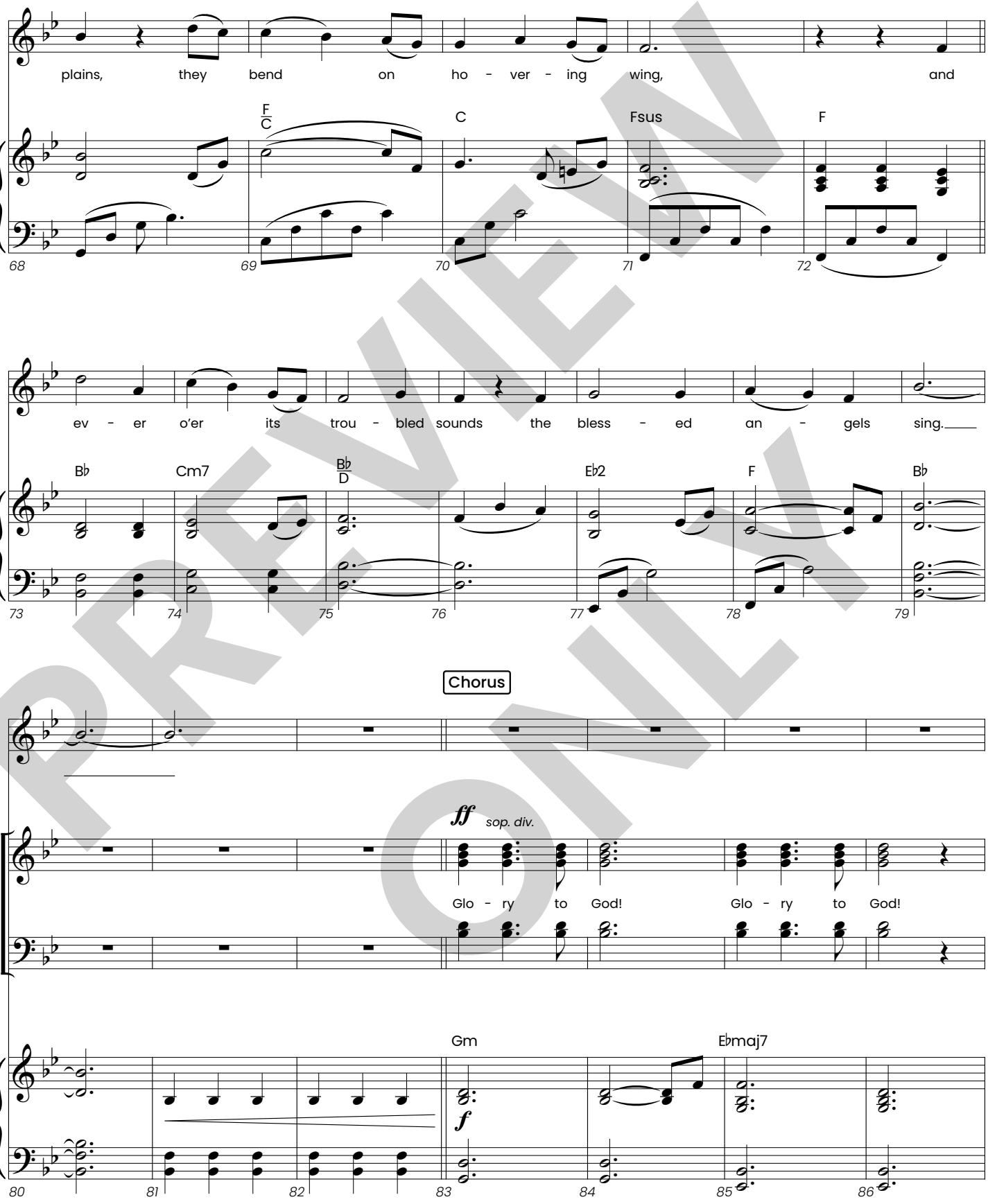

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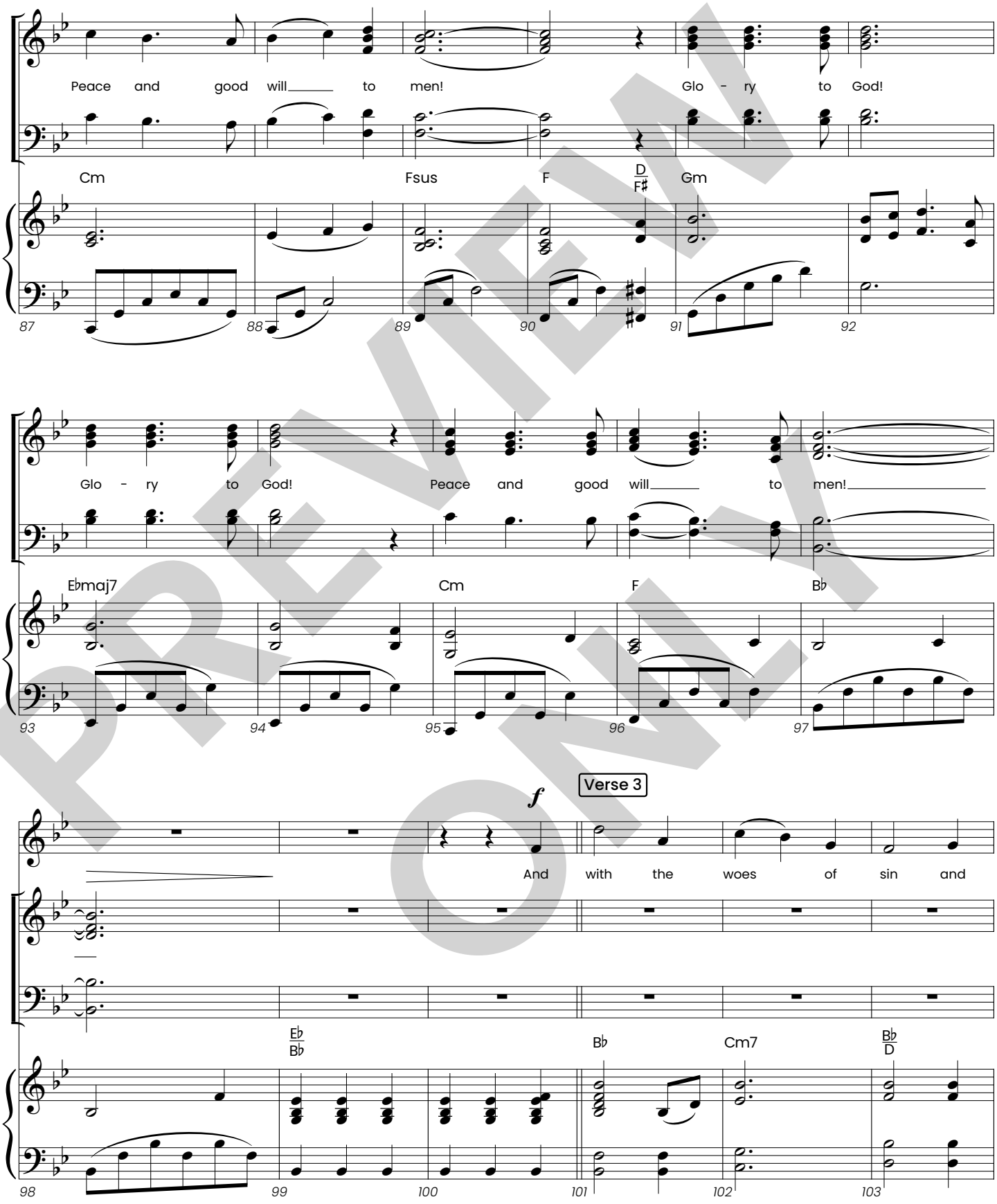

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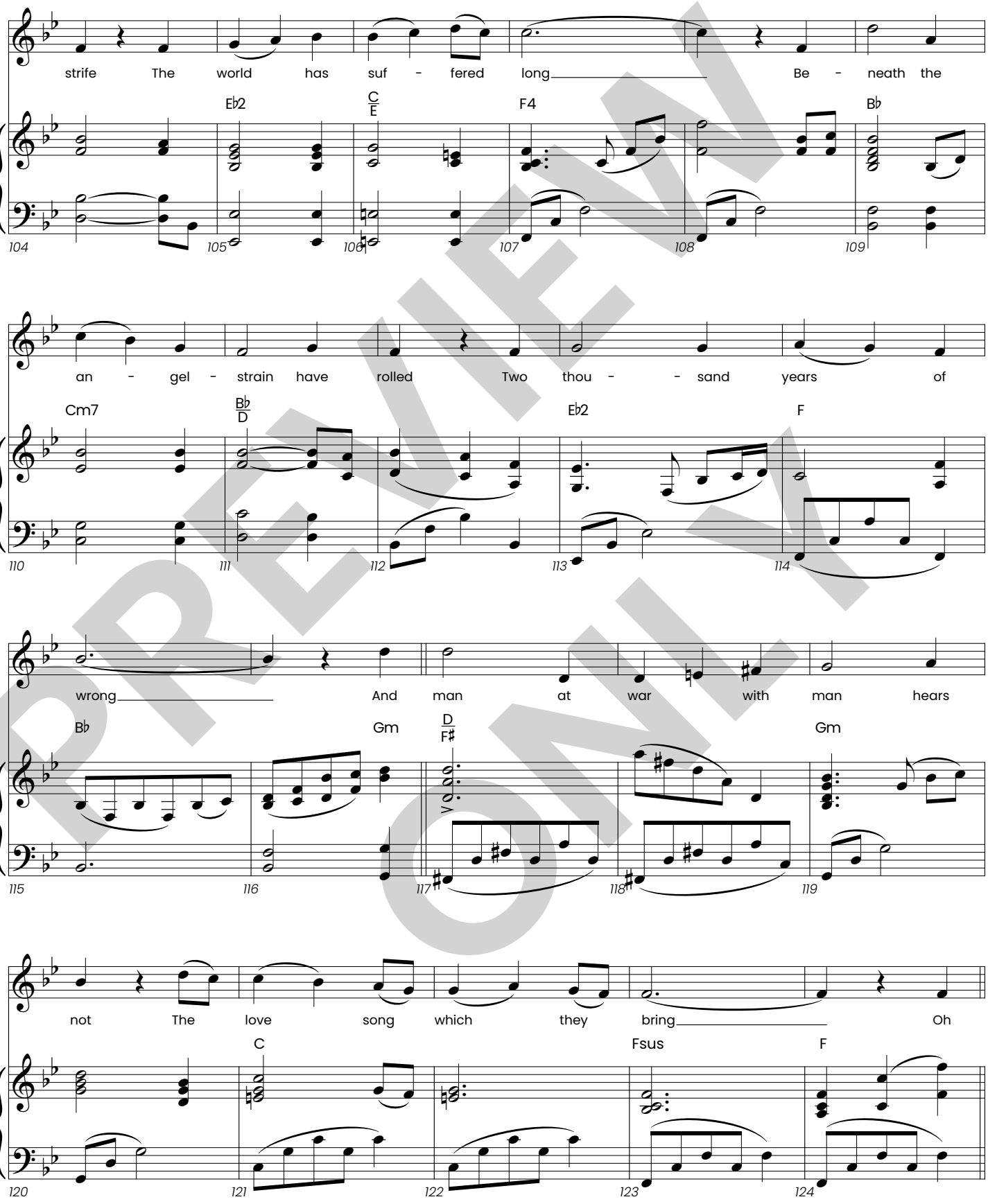

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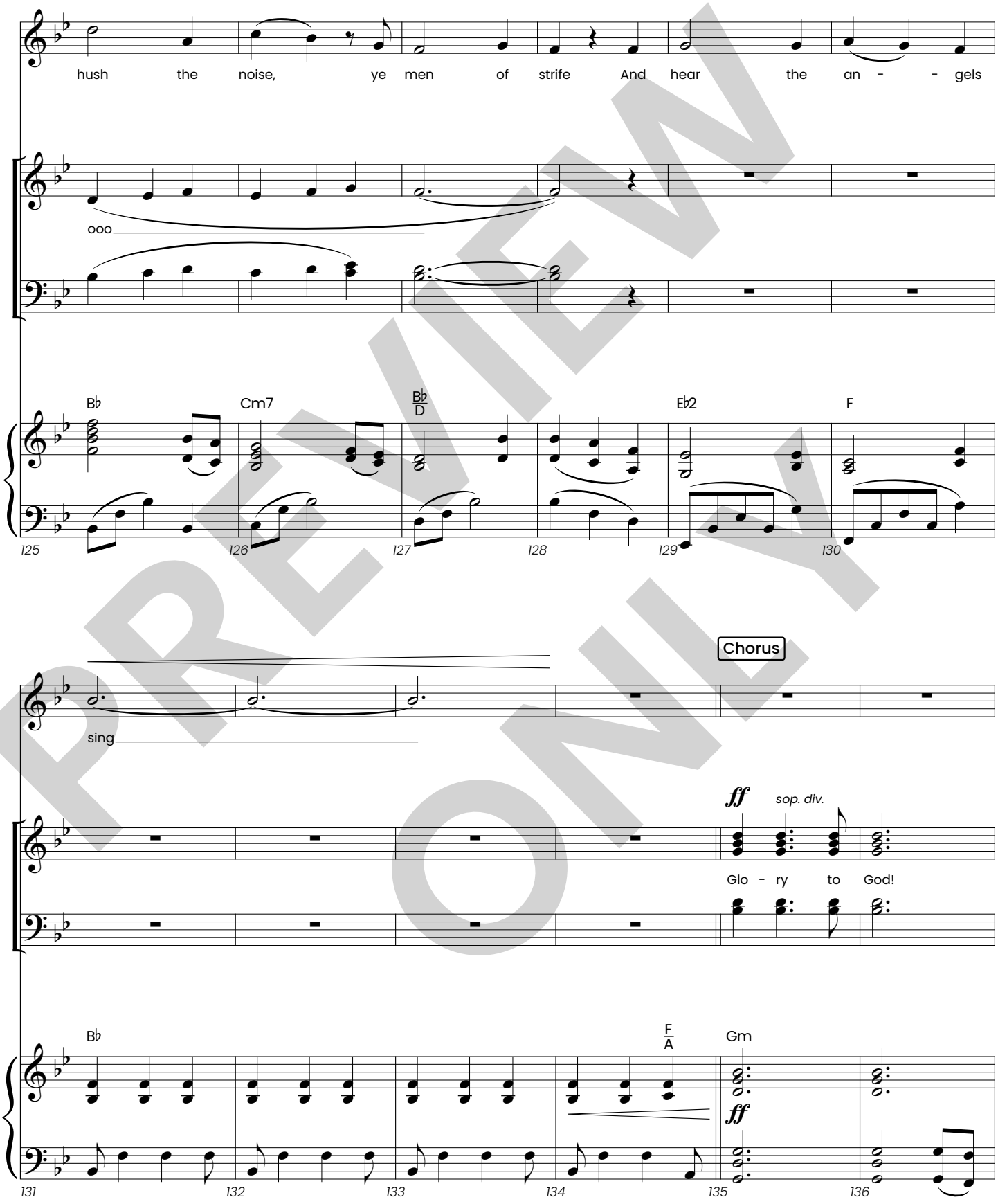

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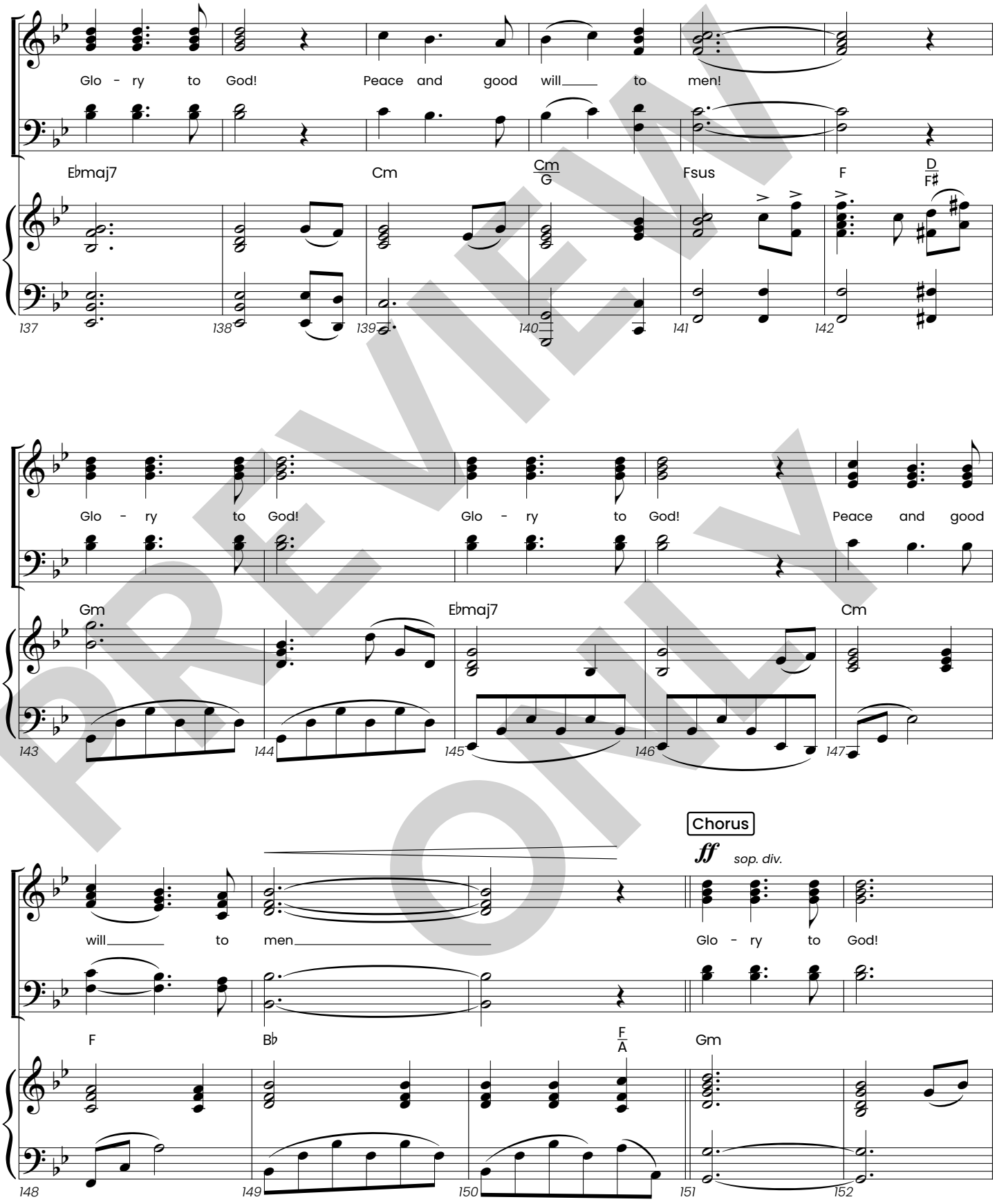

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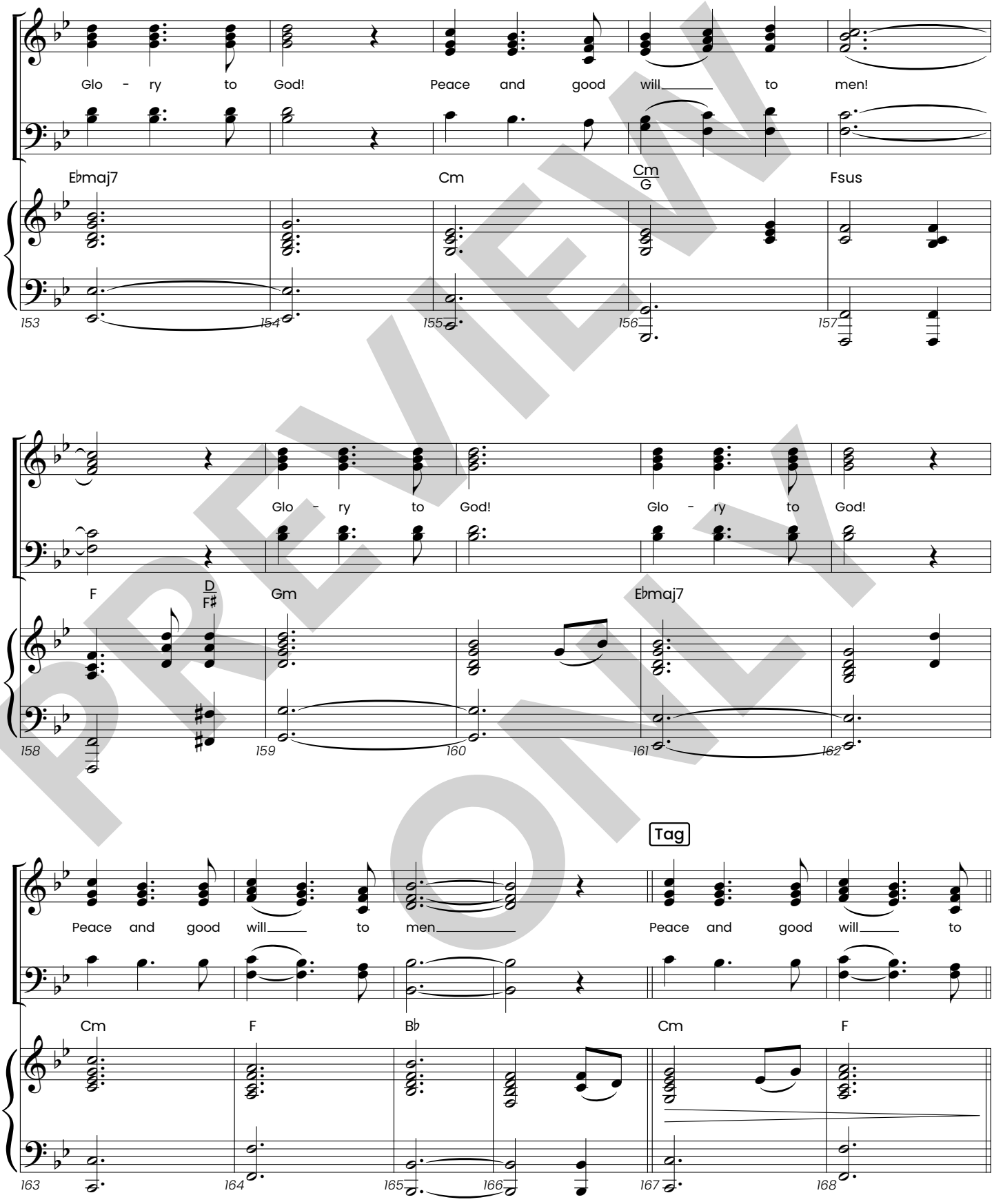

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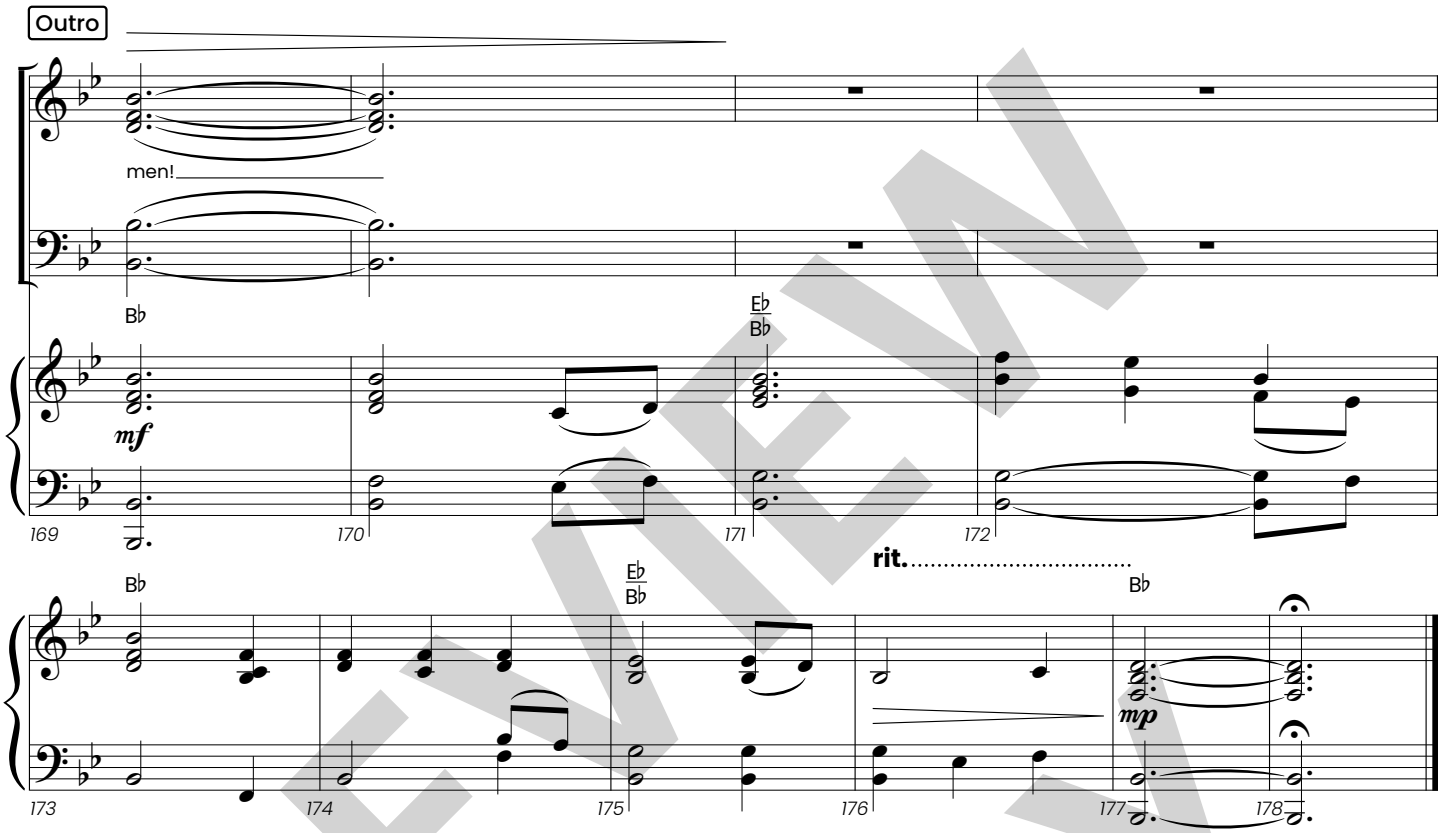


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 4

CHLOE
That was so beautiful.

BENNETT(Jokingly to Chloe)
I almost didn't hear it over the licking of your ice cream.

MARY BETH(Laughing)
I think Bennett is starting to feel a little better.

(BENNETT gives a slight smile at Mary Beth's comment while CHLOE jokingly sticks her tongue out at him.)

MARY BETH
Who's ready for another surprise?

(CHLOE starts to say something when MARY BETH cuts her off.)

And no, Chloe, this is not a surprise you can eat. It's an adventure.
Up for it?

(BENNETT and CHLOE both look excited as they respond.)

BENNETT & CHLOE
Yes! Let's go.

(The scene opens with shepherds in a field.)

SHEPHERD 1(To the other shepherds)
And, that's when I saw it.

SHEPHERD 2
It?

SHEPHERD 3
What was it?

SHEPHERD 1
A wolf. But, he wasn't alone.

SHEPHERD 2(Excitedly)
I knew you were gonna say that! What did you do?

SHEPHERD 1
What any respectable man of my position would do. (Pause) I ran!
(The shepherds laugh together.)

In all seriousness, I froze. At first. I hadn't seen a wolf in so long I didn't believe my eyes. But, pretty quickly I grabbed the nearest lambs and we pulled them into the cave. Most of the sheep were already inside. We lit the fire right outside the cave for some extra distance. But, we were pretty rattled all night. We could hear the wolves howling in the darkness. It was like they were all around us. We had never been happier to see the sunrise!

(MARY BETH, CHLOE and BENNETT appear, as they are looking on the shepherds' fields.)

BENNETT
Where are we?

CHLOE
What's that smell?

MARY BETH
We are in the shepherds' fields, just outside of the little town of Bethlehem.

CHLOE
Pennsylvania?

BENNETT
I've never been to Pennsylvania.

MARY BETH(Singing)
"O little town of Bethlehem…".

CHLOE
Ohhhhh. That one.

BENNETT
What are they doing?

MARY BETH
Those are shepherds.

CHLOE
Like, real live shepherds?

MARY BETH
Yep. And their job is to protect the sheep.

BENNETT
That sounds cool!

MARY BETH
To us it does sounds cool, right? But, for them, it wasn't cool at all. Shepherds were looked down upon by everyone in the towns.

CHLOE
Rude.

MARY BETH
See, in order to do their job, the shepherds had to feed the sheep, sleep in the caves with the sheep, and live with the sheep. Spending so much time with sheep made shepherds smell just like the sheep.

CHLOE(Holding her nose). (Imitating a sheep.)
Is that what that is? They smell baaaaad.(All laugh)

MARY BETH
Now you know why they were looked on as second class citizens. They didn't fit in with the elites of the town. But, even within the shepherds, there were different ranks.

BENNETT
What do you mean, "different ranks"?

MARY BETH
Well, most shepherds tended to the large flocks way outside of town. They kept the sheep far away from the people's homes and businesses because of the smell, flies, and predators the sheep would attract.

BENNETT
But, these shepherds are pretty close to town.

MARY BETH
That's because these shepherds are raising a special flock. The lambs of this flock will be used to make sacrifices in the temple.

CHLOE(Sadly.)
But, they're so cute.

MARY BETH
They *are* cute. But, their purpose is so much more important than their appearance. Because of sin, a sacrifice was required to pay the penalty for sin. But, it couldn't just be any lamb. A sacrifice had to be pure, and holy. So, when the perfect lamb was born, one that the shepherd felt had no flaws, do you know what they would do?

(BENNETT and CHLOE are enthralled with Mary Beth's story. Their faces show how intrigued they are, wanting to know more, as they shake their heads "no".)

They would take the lamb, wrap it up in swaddling clothes, and lay it in a manger so that it wouldn't be injured and it would be safe from any predators. If you saw a lamb in a manger, wrapped up safely, it was a sign that this was a lamb worthy of sacrifice in the temple.

BENNETT
Wait. That sounds familiar. Wasn't Jesus wrapped up like that?

CHLOE
Yeah. Away in a Manger.

MARY BETH
That's right. And that's exactly why God chose for the angel to deliver the news to the shepherds. He knew that out of all the people in the world, they would understand what that was a sign of and that would mean that…

CHLOE and BENNETT
Jesus was God's Son.

MARY BETH
You are two really smart kids.

BENNETT
So, the songs are true. And that's why we sing the Christmas carols.

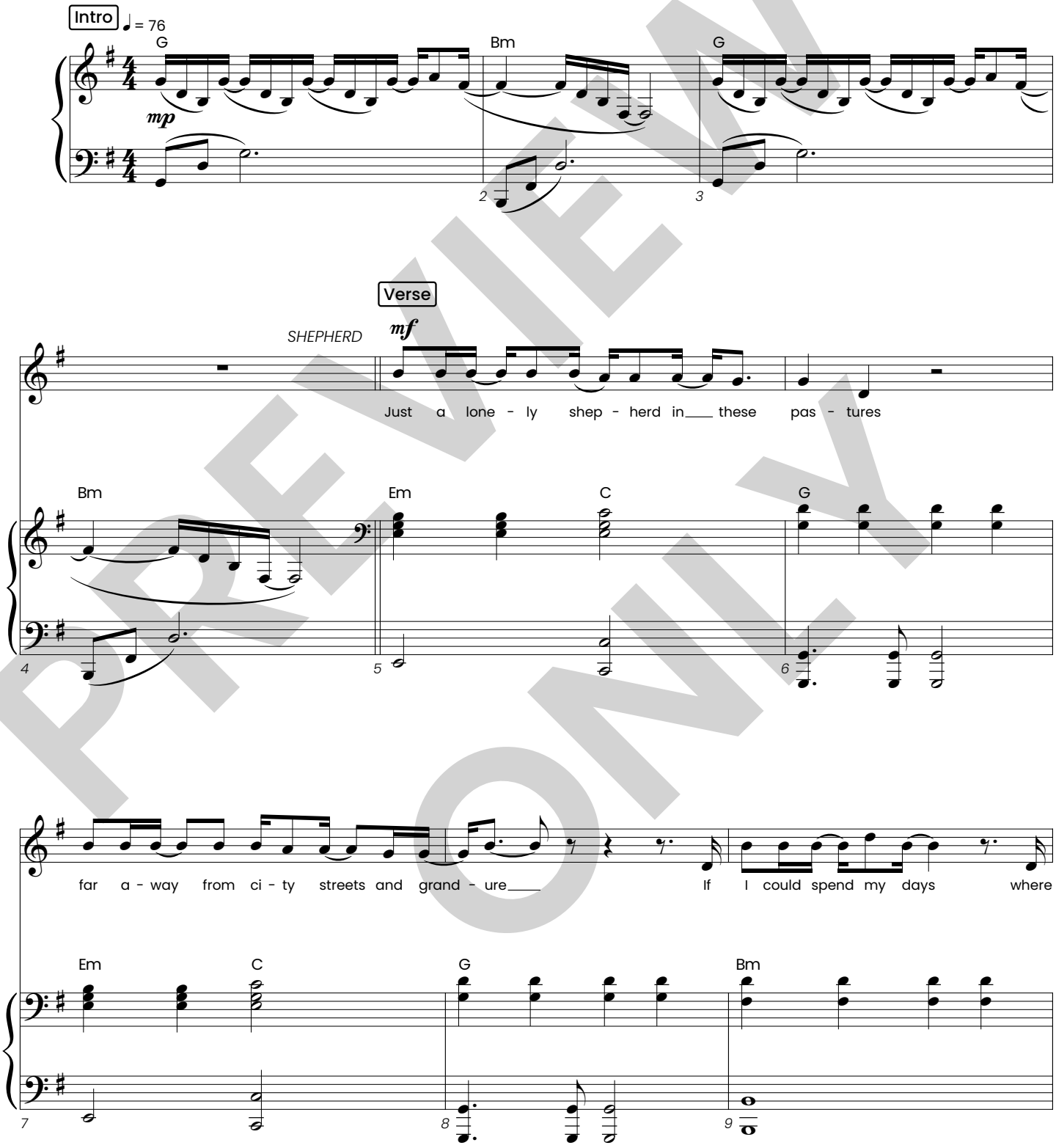
(Music Begins)

MARY BETH
Christmas *is* Jesus. And Jesus *is* Christmas. And that's why even the shepherds are an important part of the story of Christmas. The news of Jesus, our Messiah, wouldn't have been understood in the same way by anyone else.

(Shepherd 1 begins to tell the story through song. **12. Waiting for a Lamb.**)

Waiting For A Lamb

Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Wayne Haun



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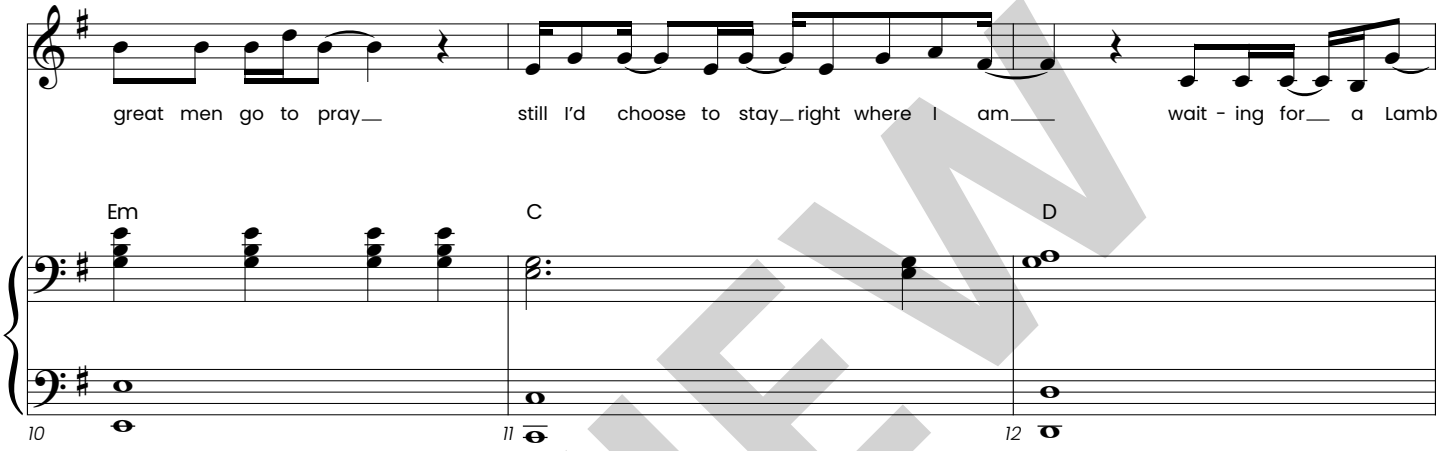
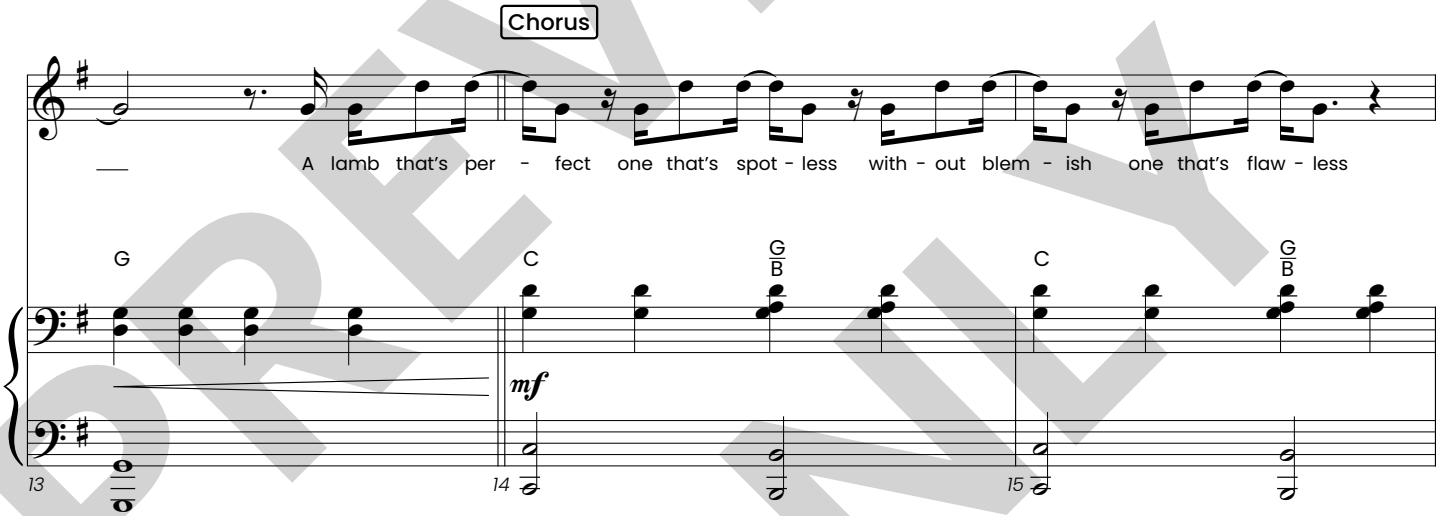
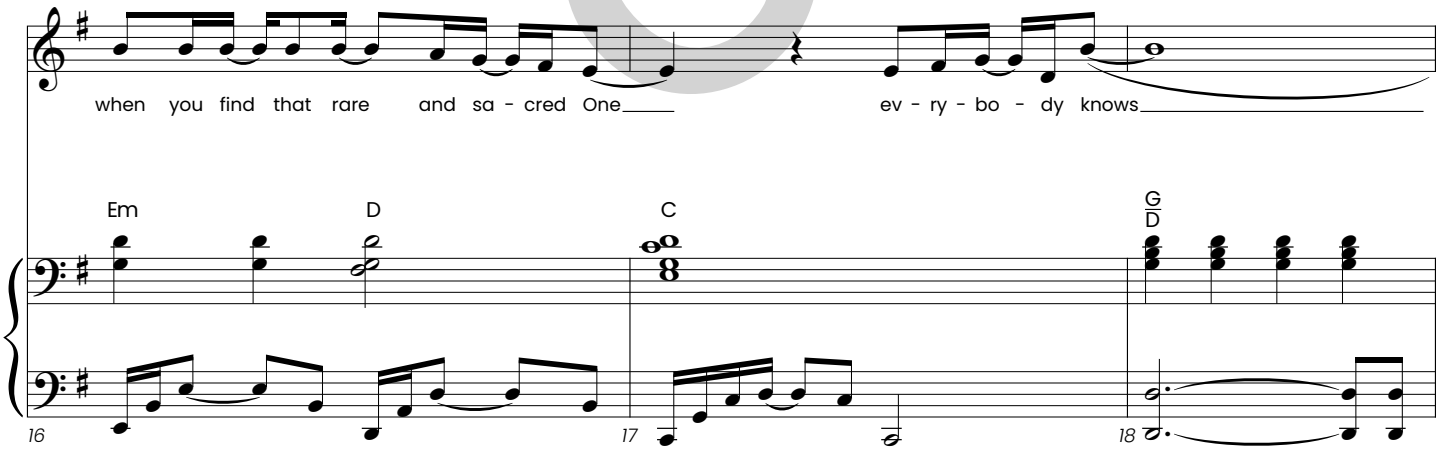
HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI







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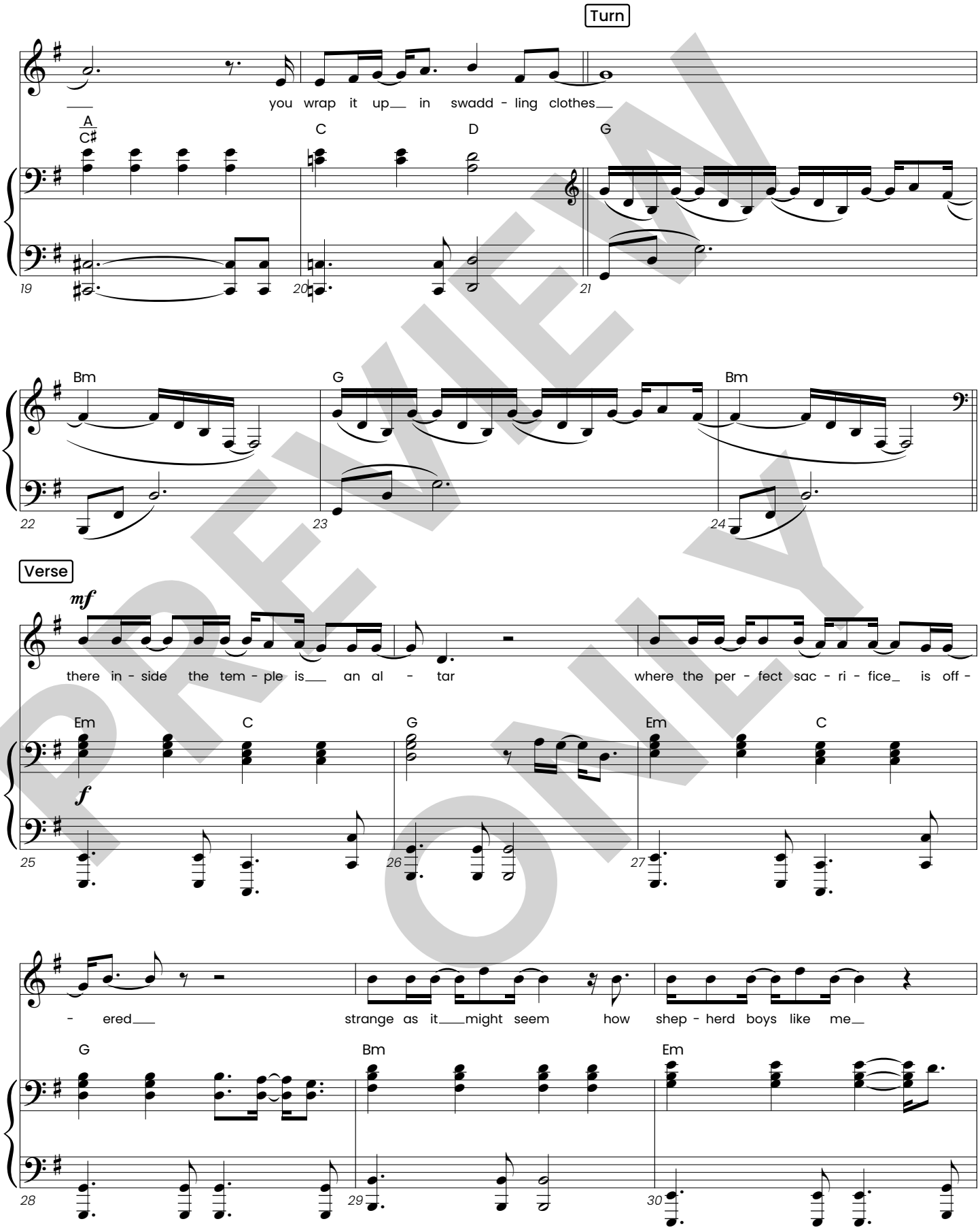

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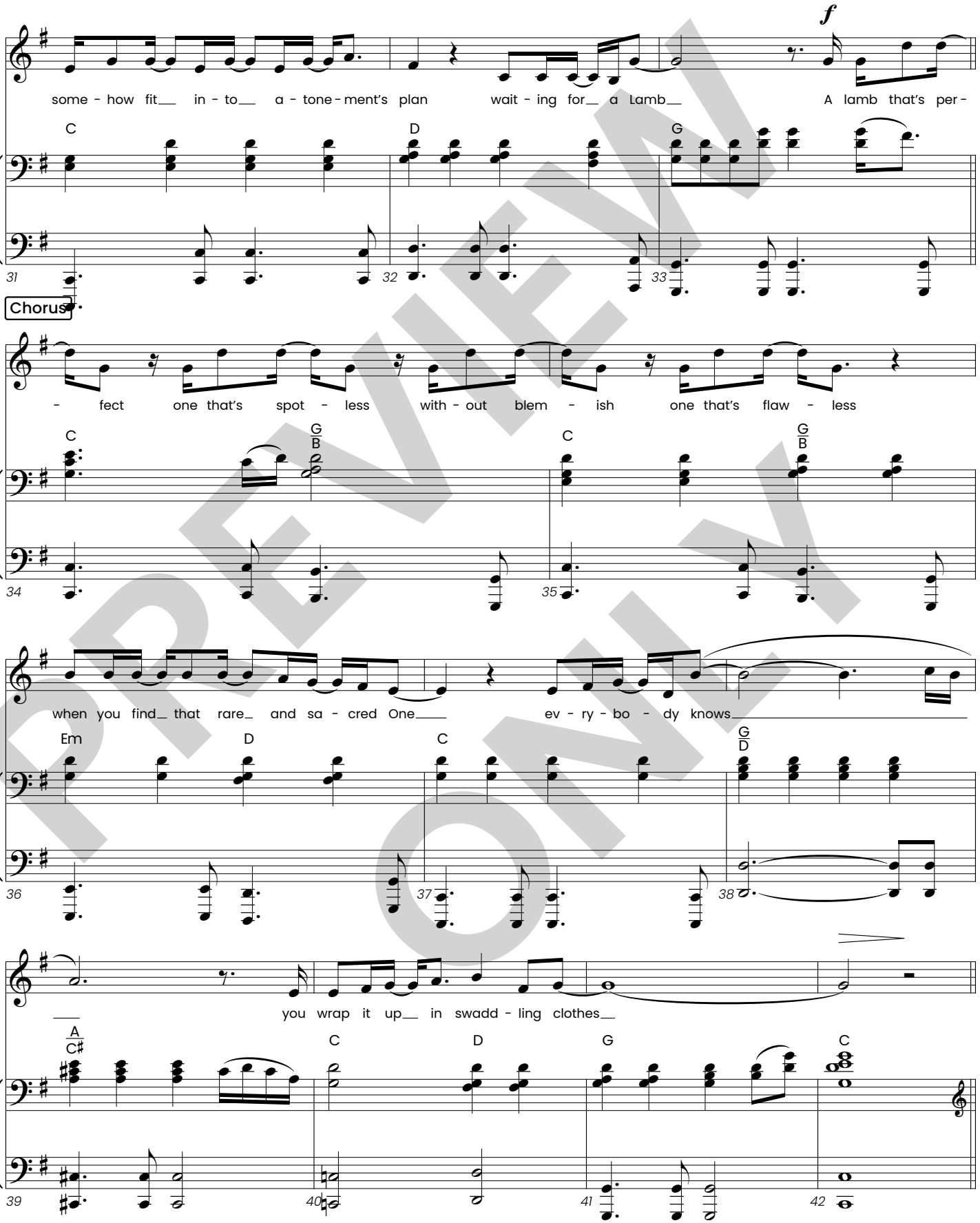
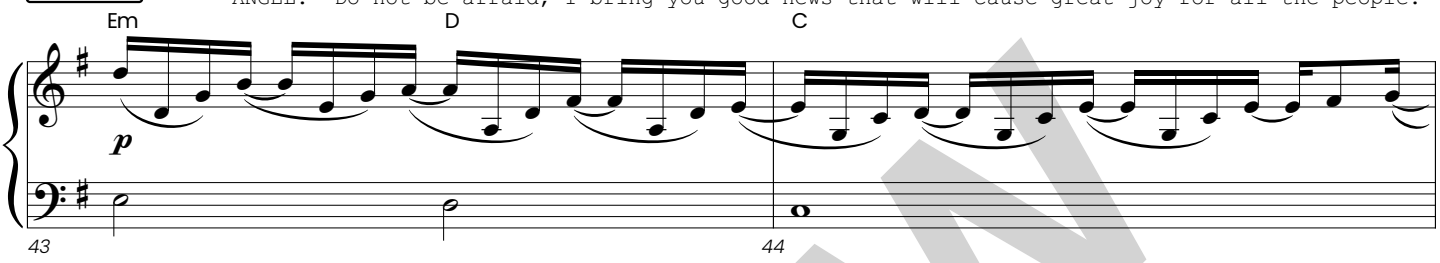


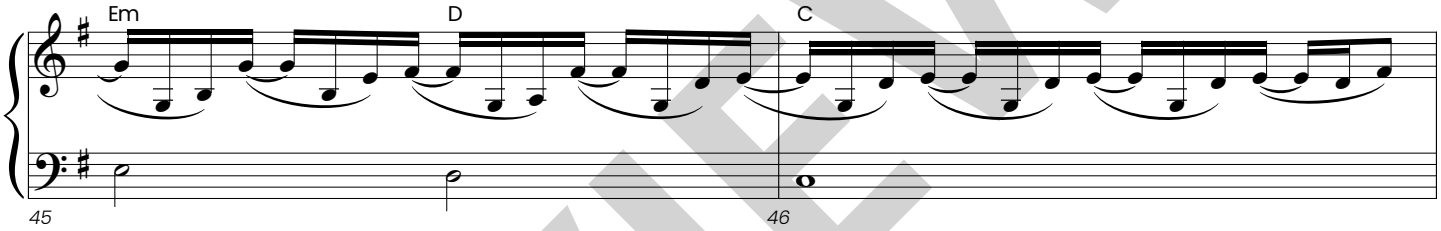
PREVIEW ONLY

Interlude

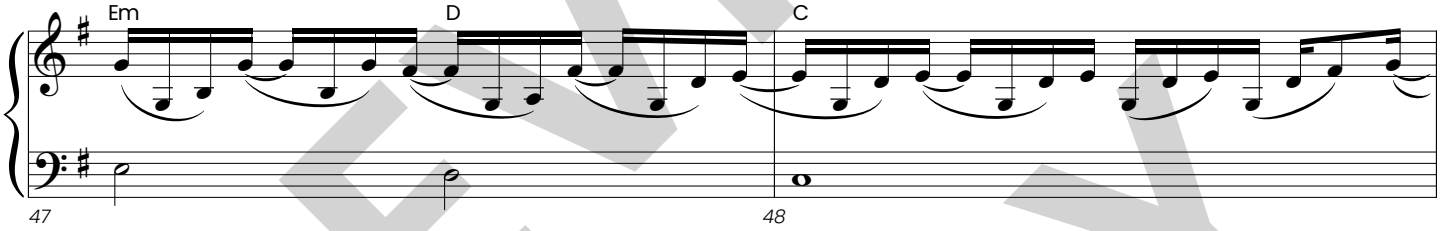
ANGEL: "Do not be afraid, I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

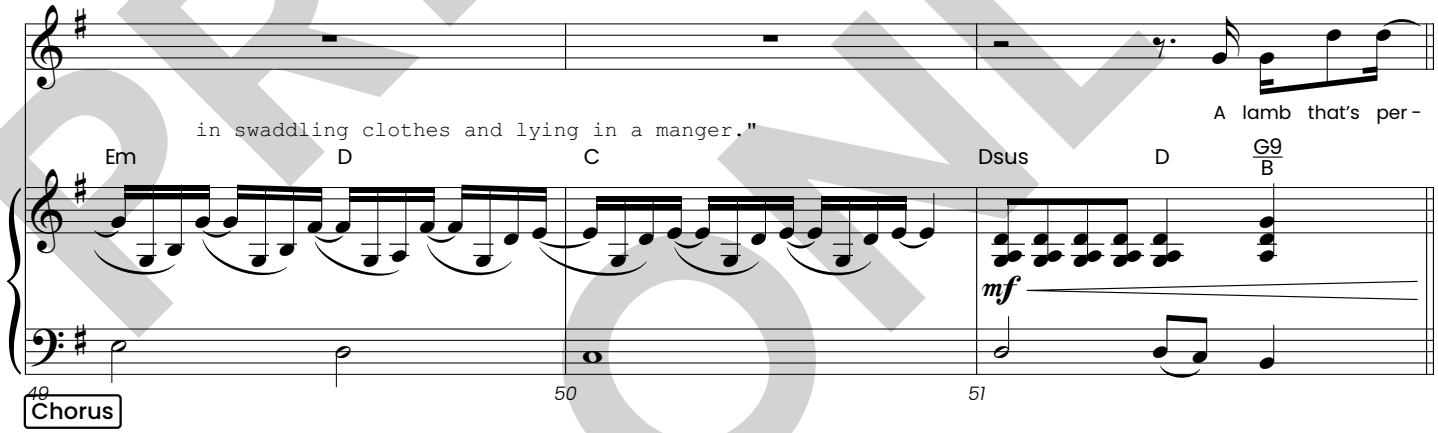


Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.

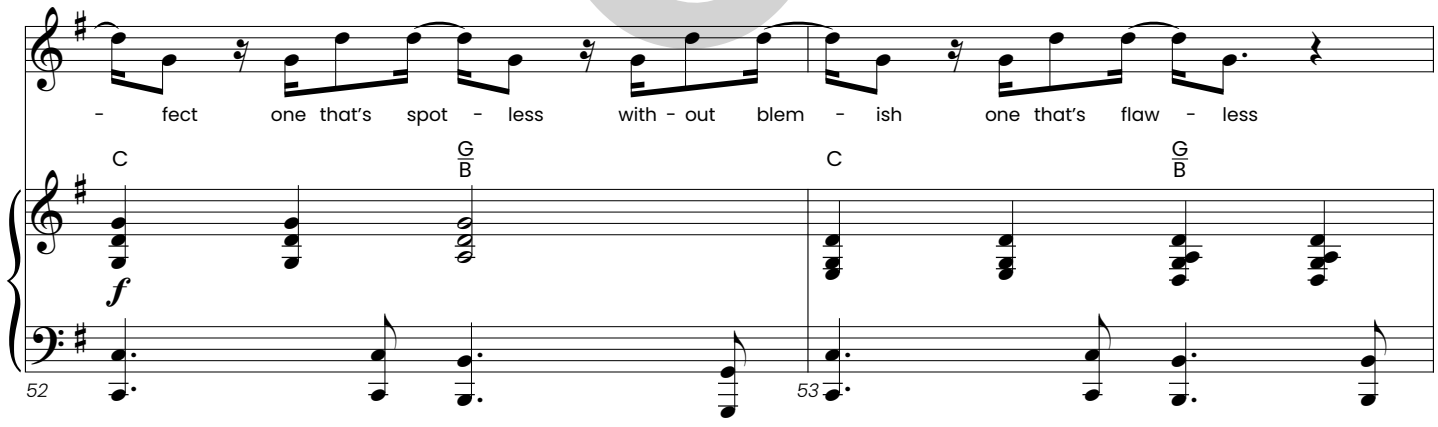


This will be a sign to you: You will find the baby wrapped





Chorus



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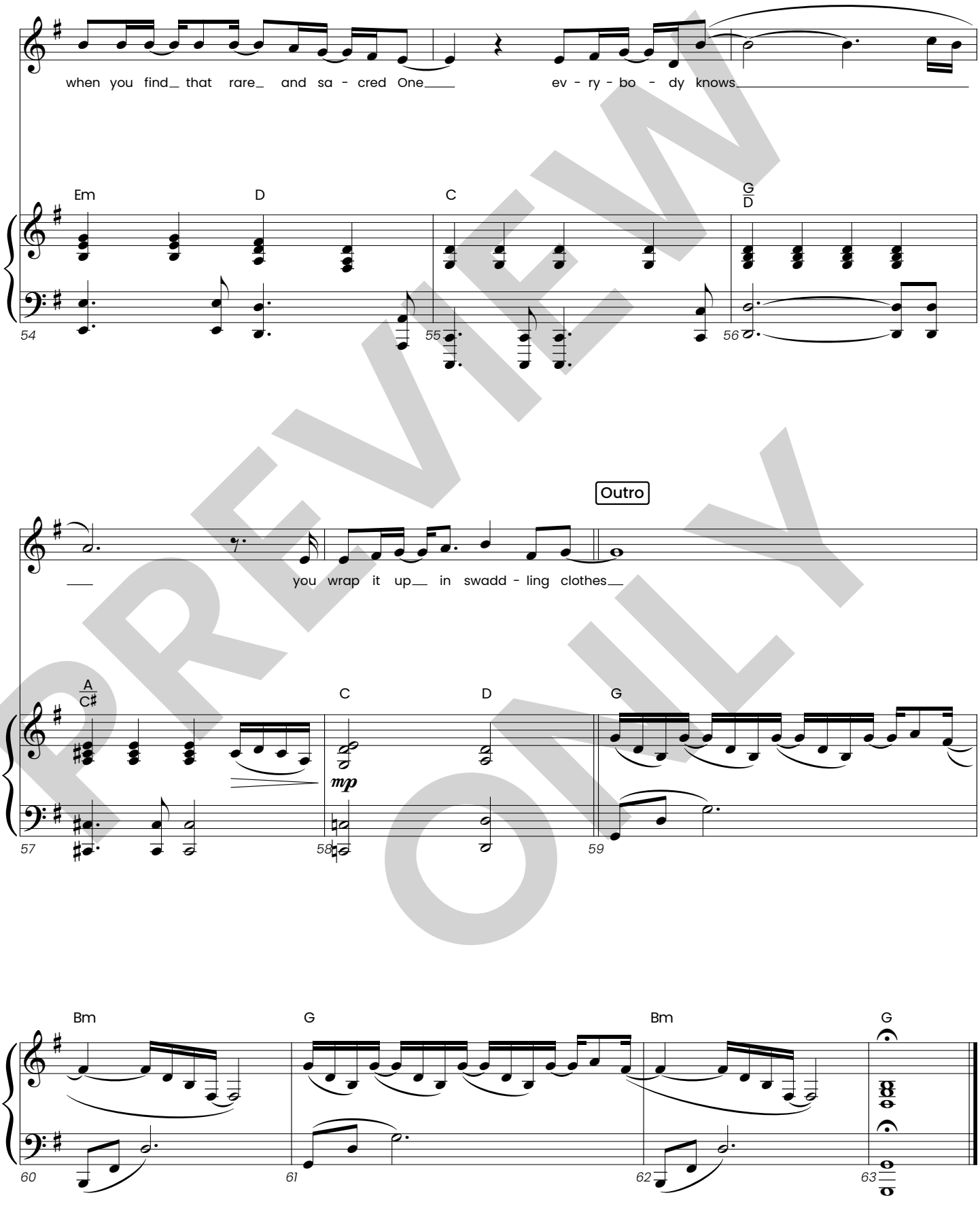


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 5

(Lights down on shepherds, focus shifts to Mary Beth, Bennett and Chloe as they've been looking on.)

BENNETT
I never knew. I mean, I knew there were shepherds. But, I guess I never really knew *this* was Christmas.

MARY BETH
Until that moment, Christmas didn't exist. It was just another night. Another night of watching sheep. Another night of putting children to bed and preparing for the next morning. And for one soon to be mother, it was a hard night of labor, after a long journey.

CHLOE
I guess all my ideas of what Christmas is were wrong.

MARY BETH
Actually, Chloe, they weren't wrong at all. Christmas should be a celebration with gifts, and lights, and all the yummy food you can find.

CHLOE
Really?

BENNETT
I guess it all depends on what you're celebrating.

MARY BETH
And *that's* Christmas. The *what* and *who* we're celebrating.

(Soft music begins in the distance.)

CHLOE
What's going on over there?

MARY BETH
It looks like a royal procession. Kind of like…

CHLOE(Interrupting)
The three wisemen?

MARY BETH
It *is* the very first Christmas.

BENNETT
I can't believe I'm seeing this! I must be dreaming. Someone pinch me.

(CHLOE reaches to pinch Bennett as MARY BETH stops her.)

MARY BETH
How about we hold off on the pinching for now.

CHLOE
But, he said…

MARY BETH
I know what he said.

(Changing to focus of the moment)

Is that music?

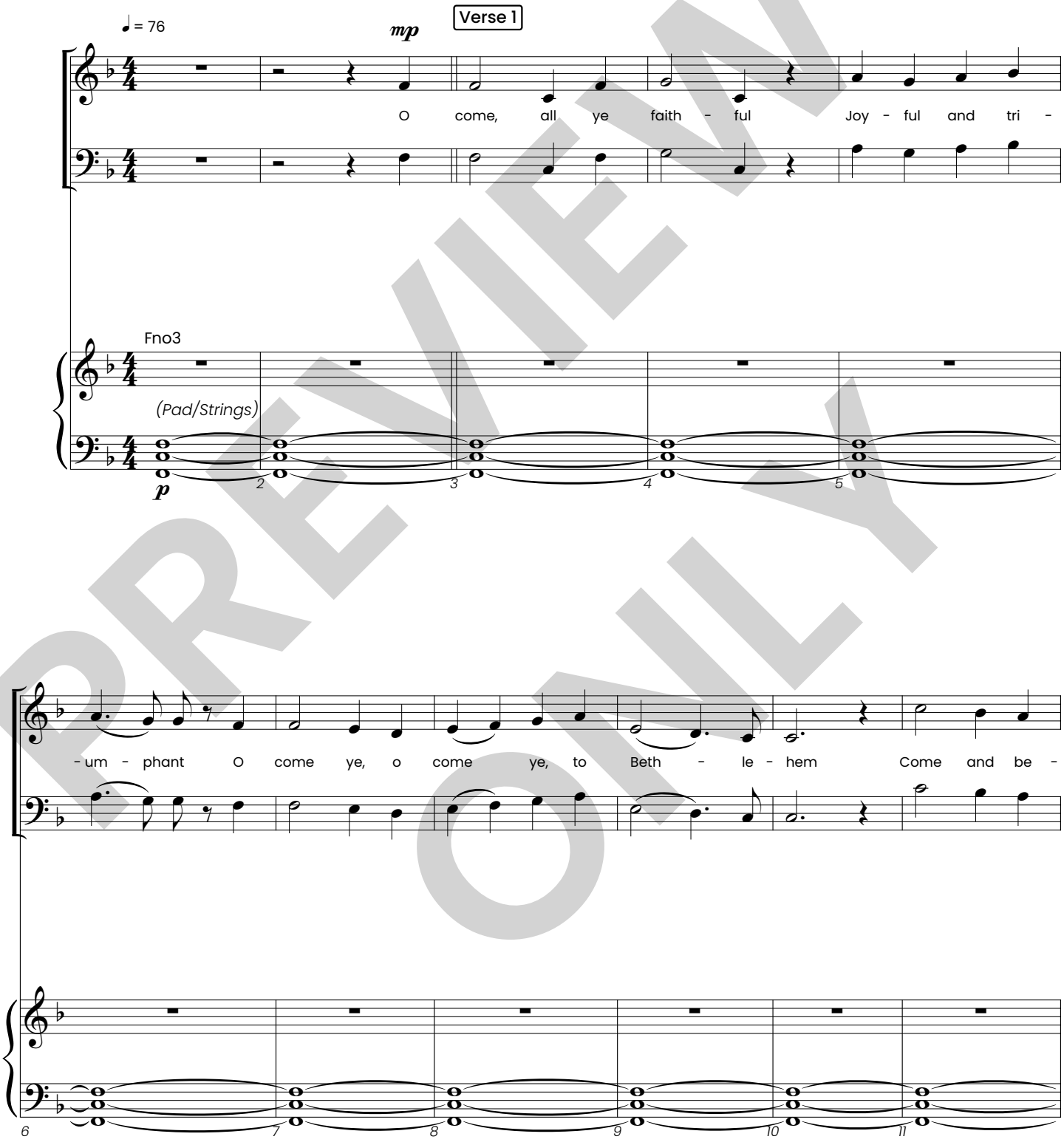
CHLOE
I don't hear anything.

MARY BETH
Shhh. Just listen.

(People are traveling with lanterns and candles as they sing, heading to the manger. The manger appears silhouetted as the entourage with Magi make their way toward it. **13. O Come All Ye Faithful.**)

O Come All Ye Faithful

John Francis Wade, Jeff Bumgardner
arranged by Eric Belvin



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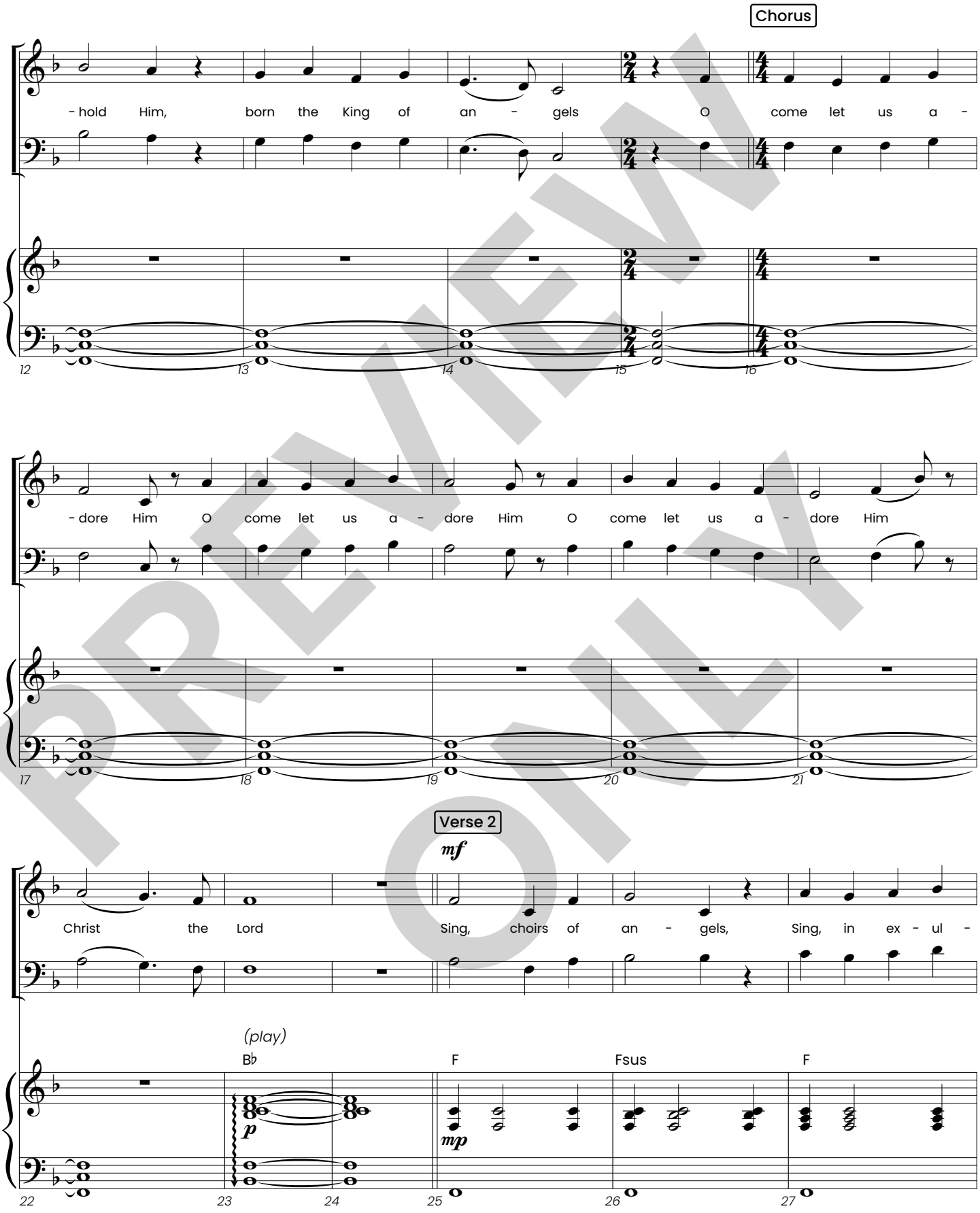

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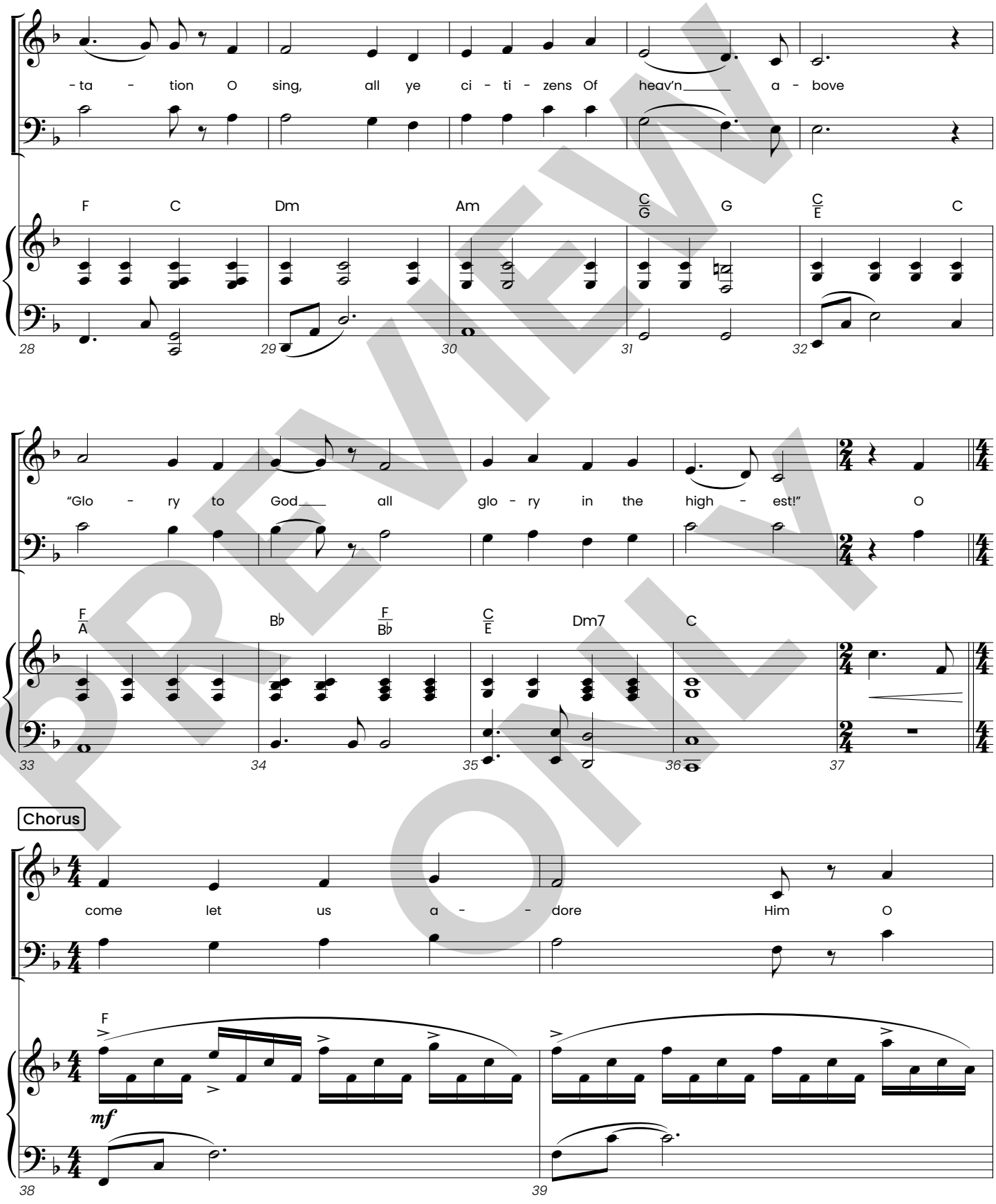

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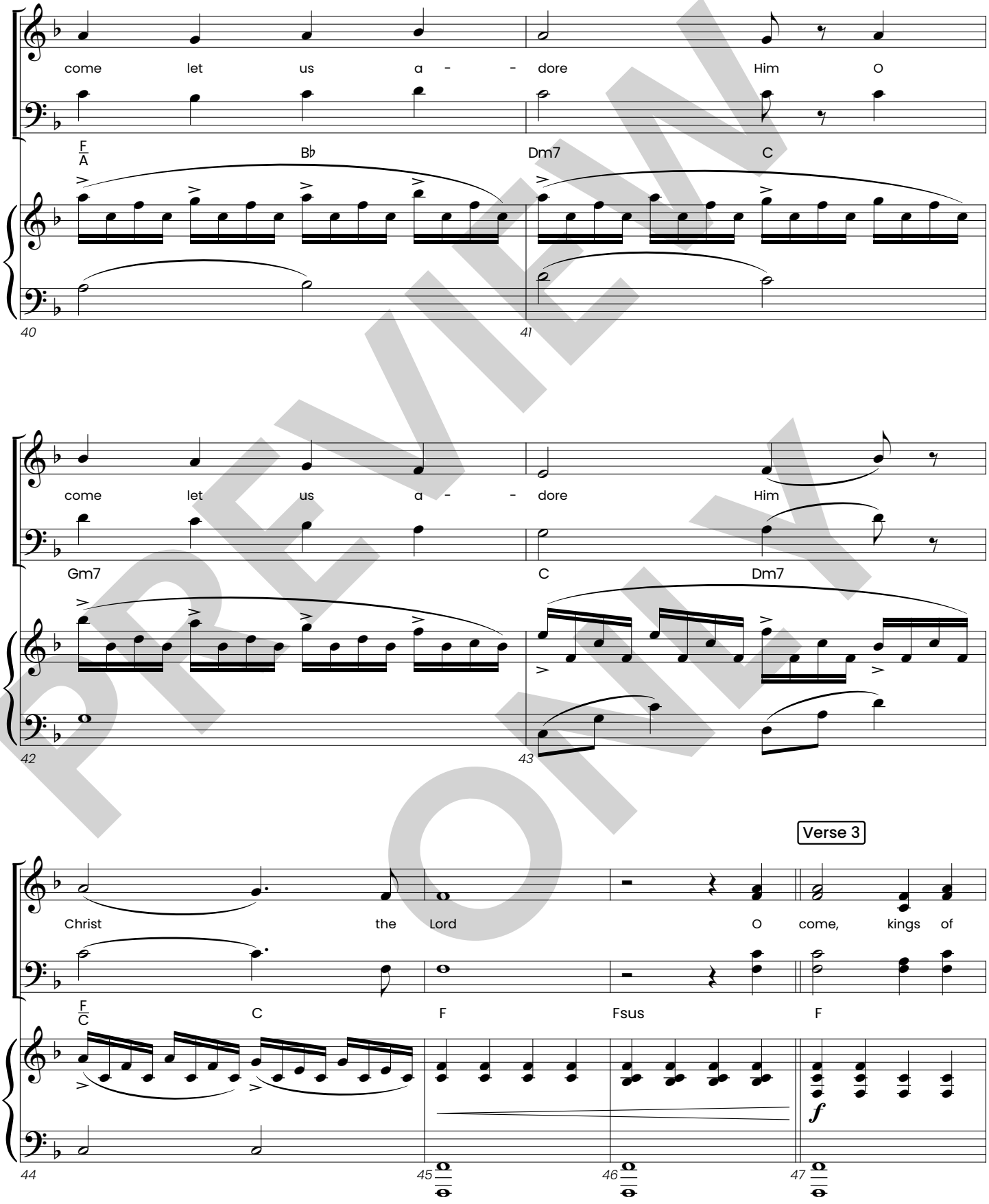

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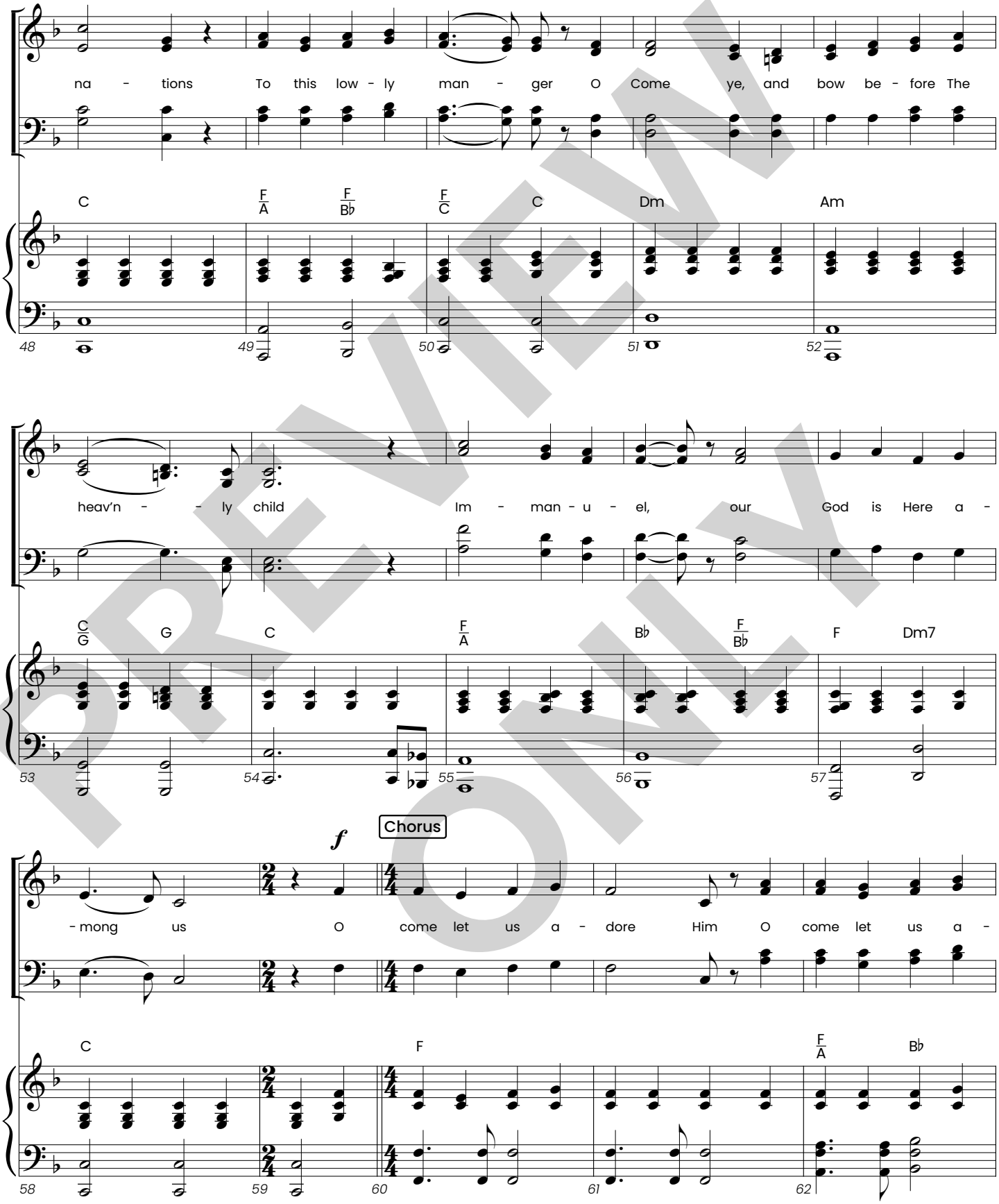

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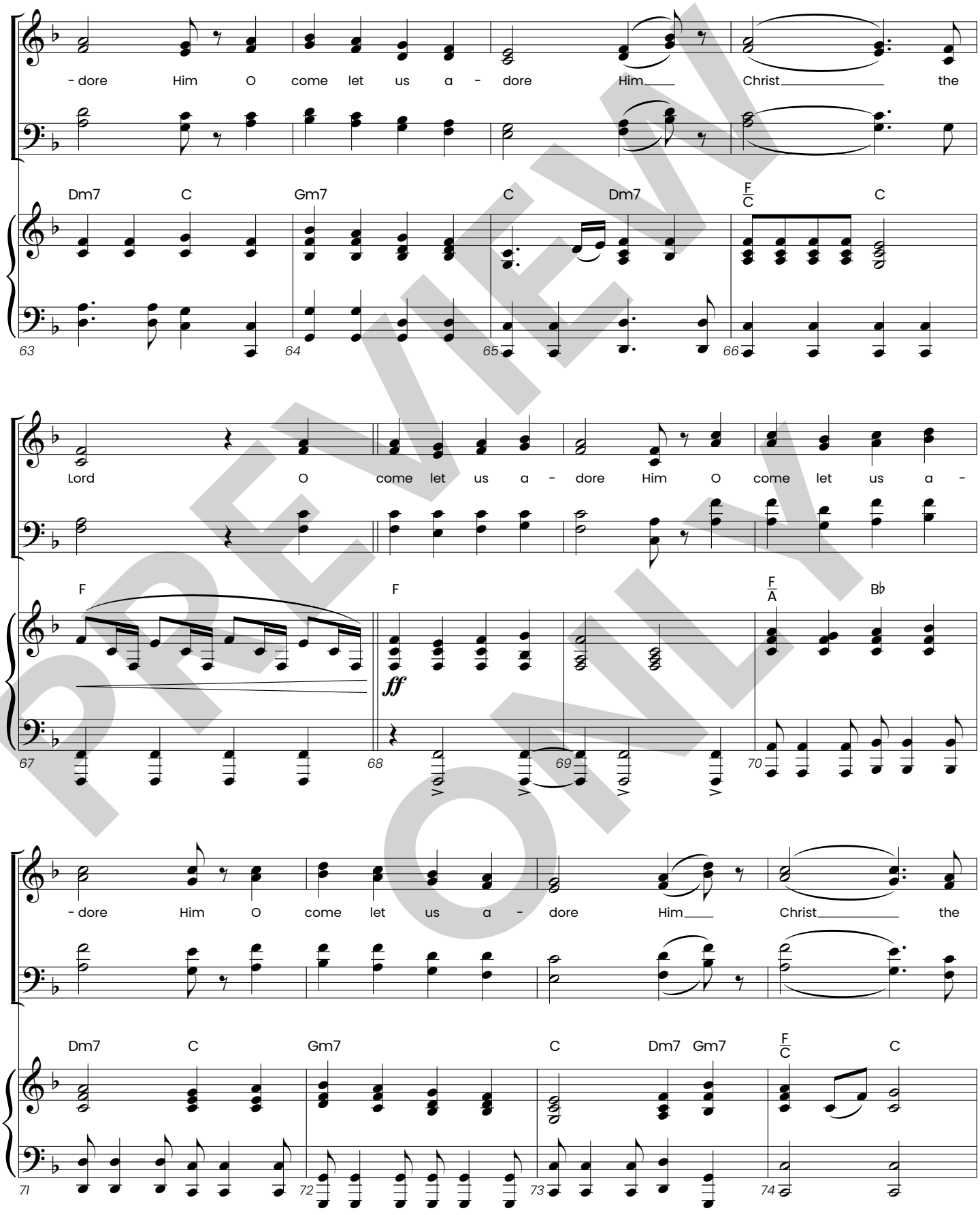


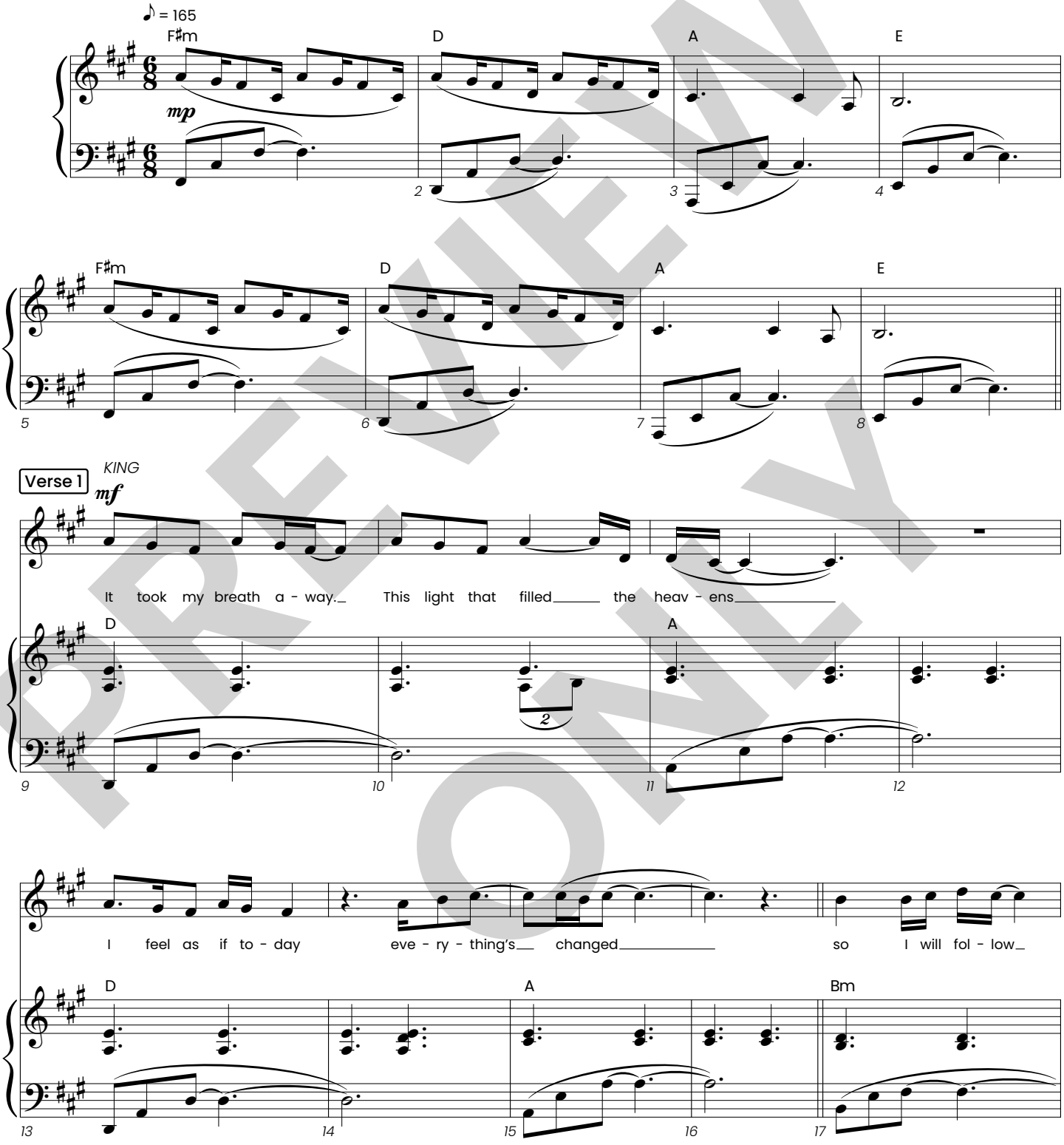
PREVIEW ONLY

PREVIEW ONLY

(Scene shifts to focus on one of the kings. **14. The Brightest Star.**)

The Brightest Star

Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Wayne Haun



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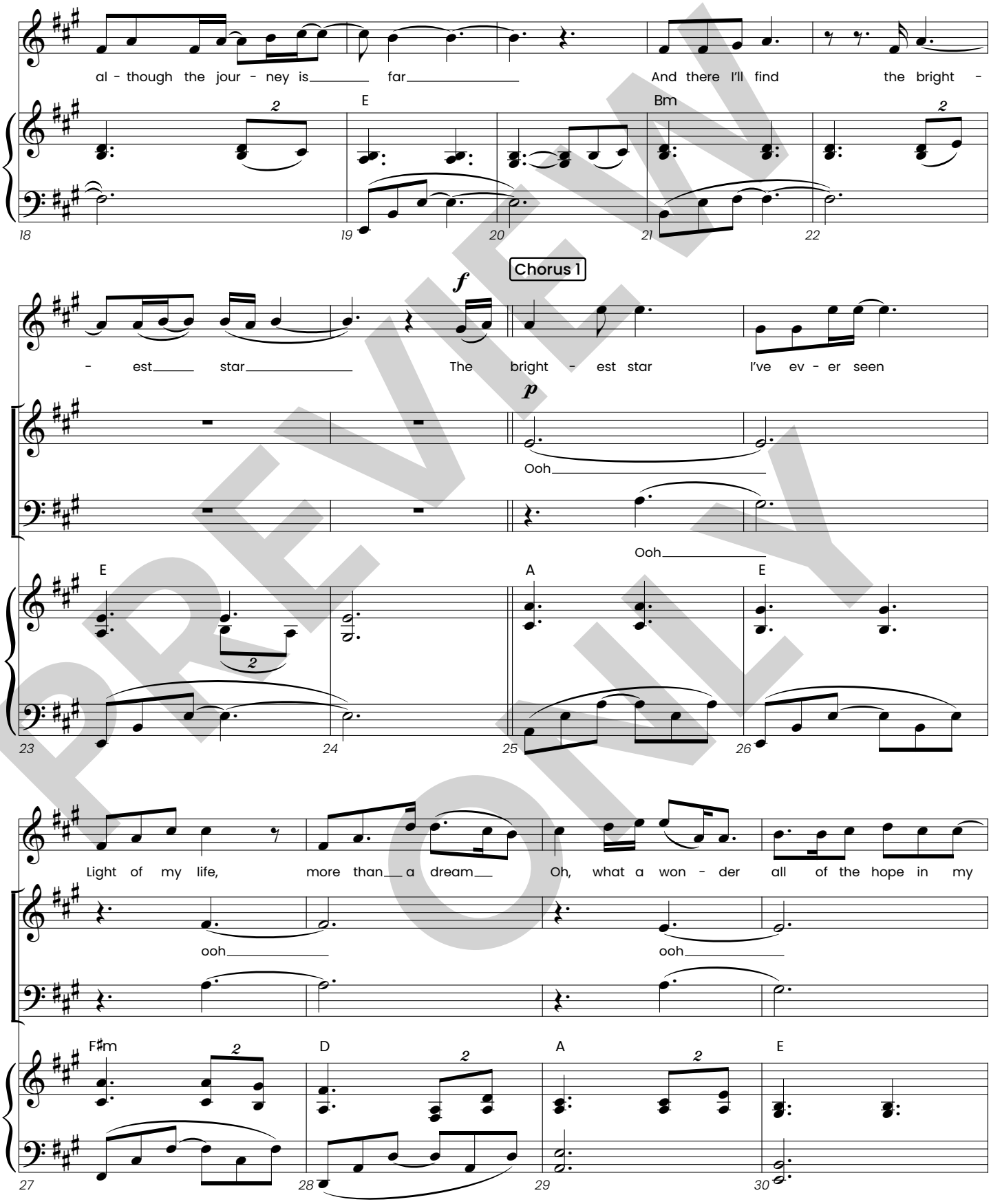
HFW HOUSTON'S FIRST WORSHIP

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



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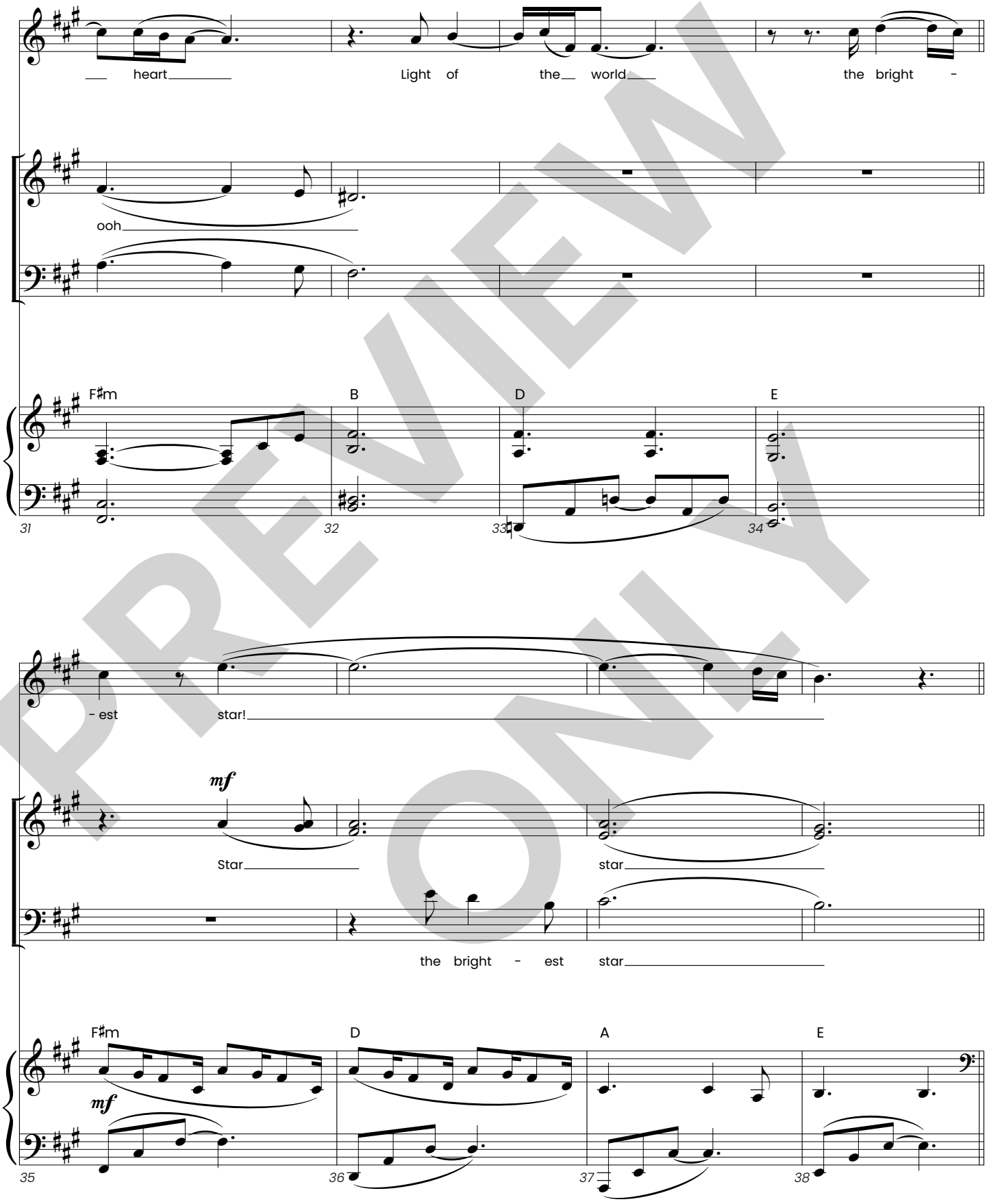

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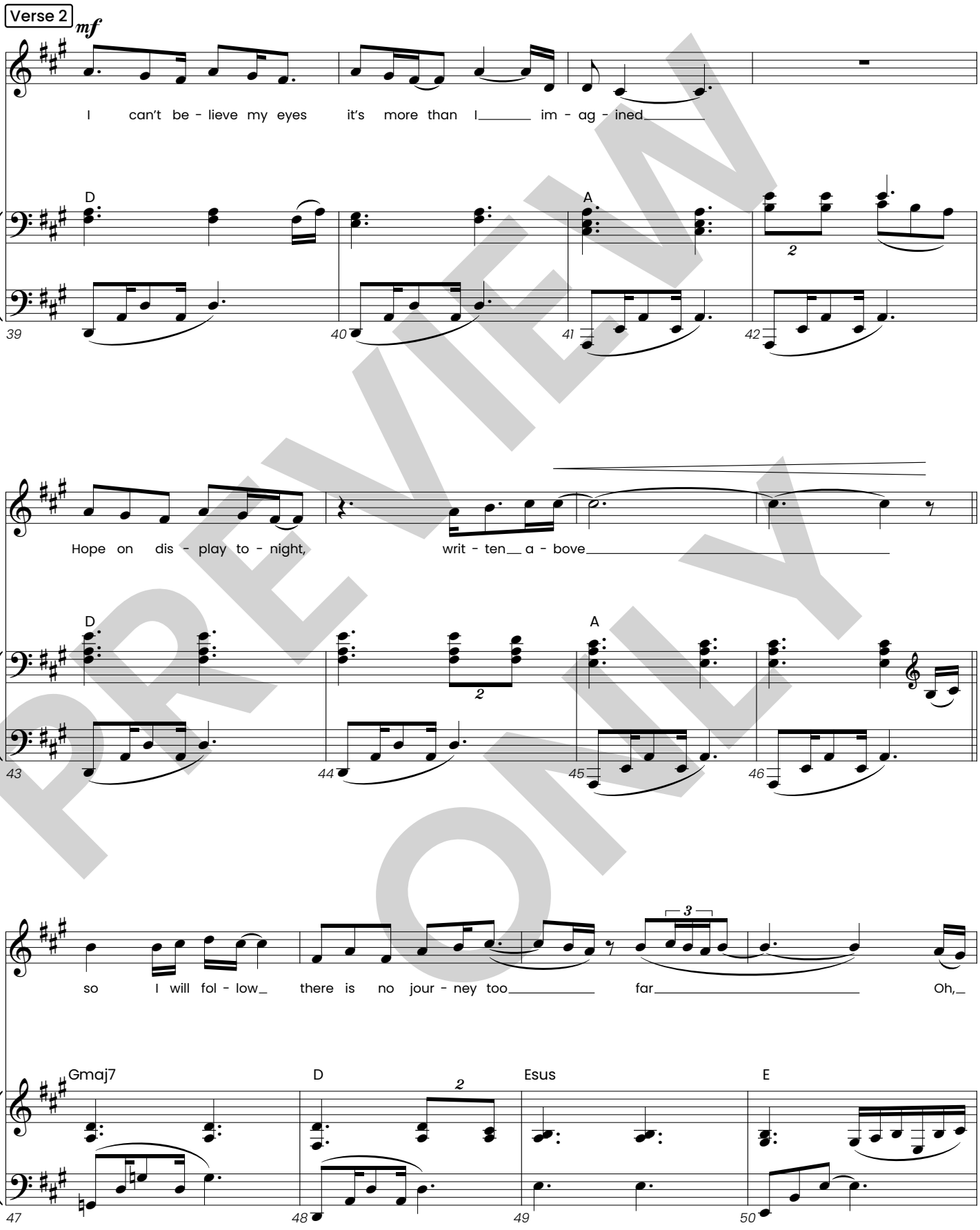

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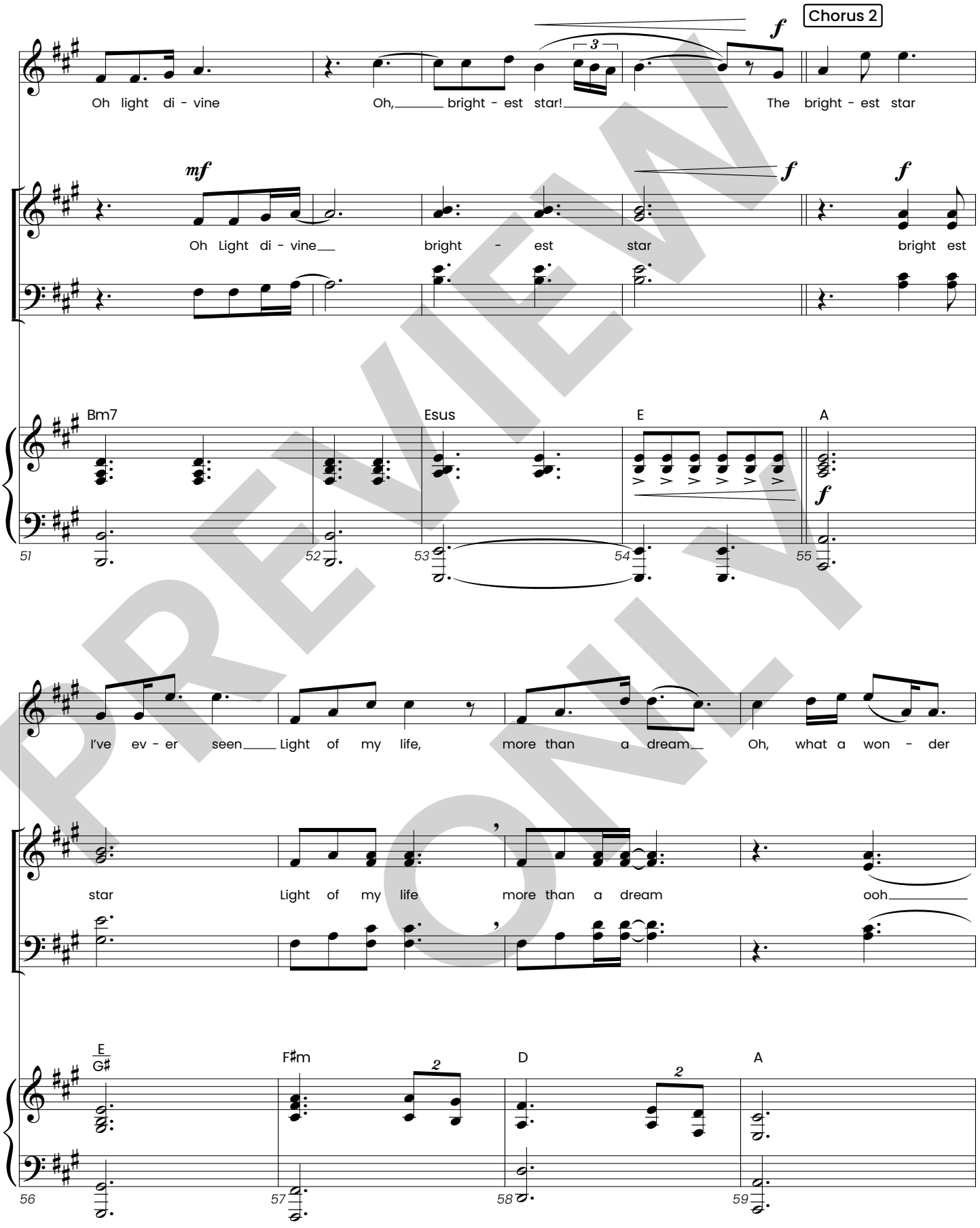

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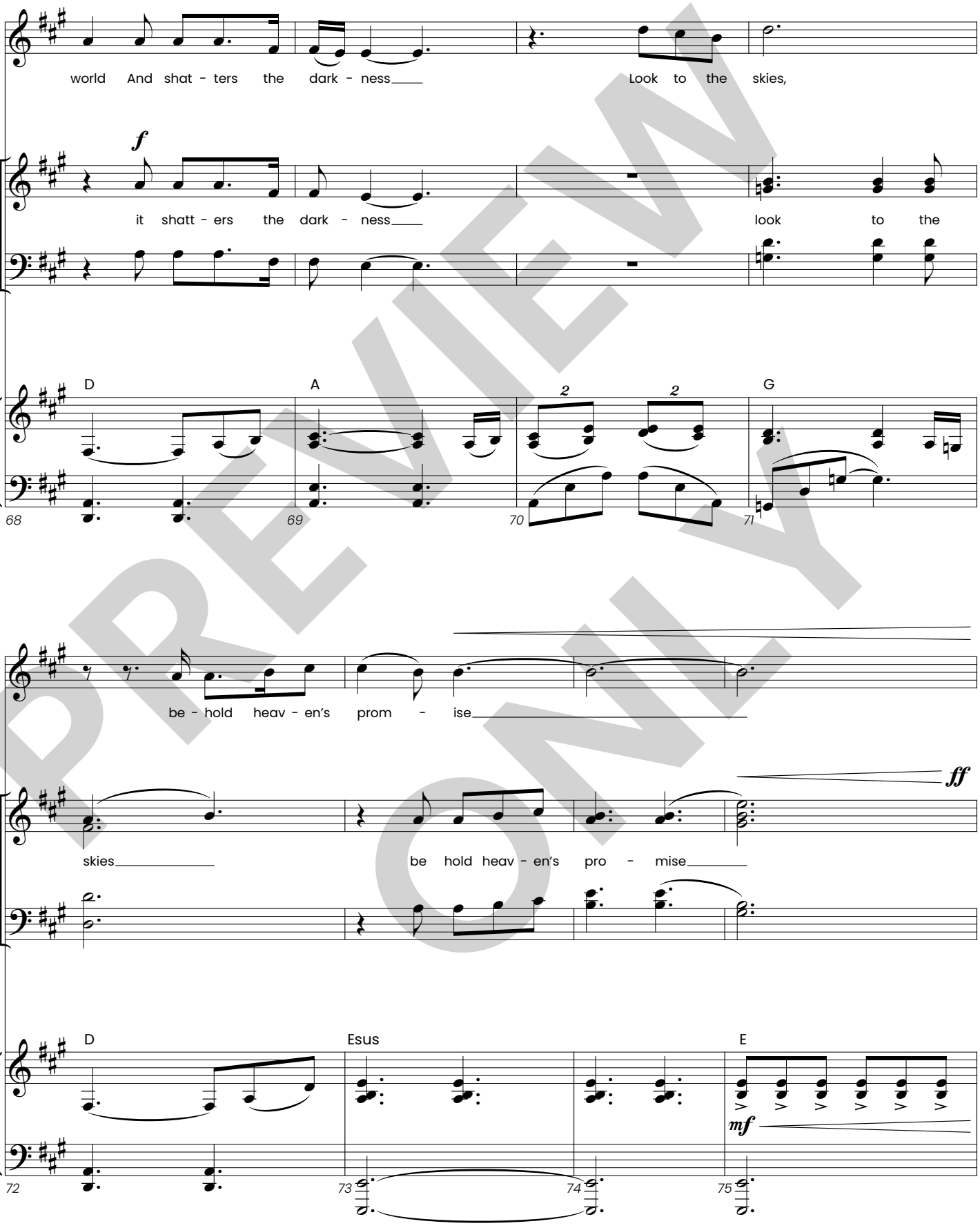

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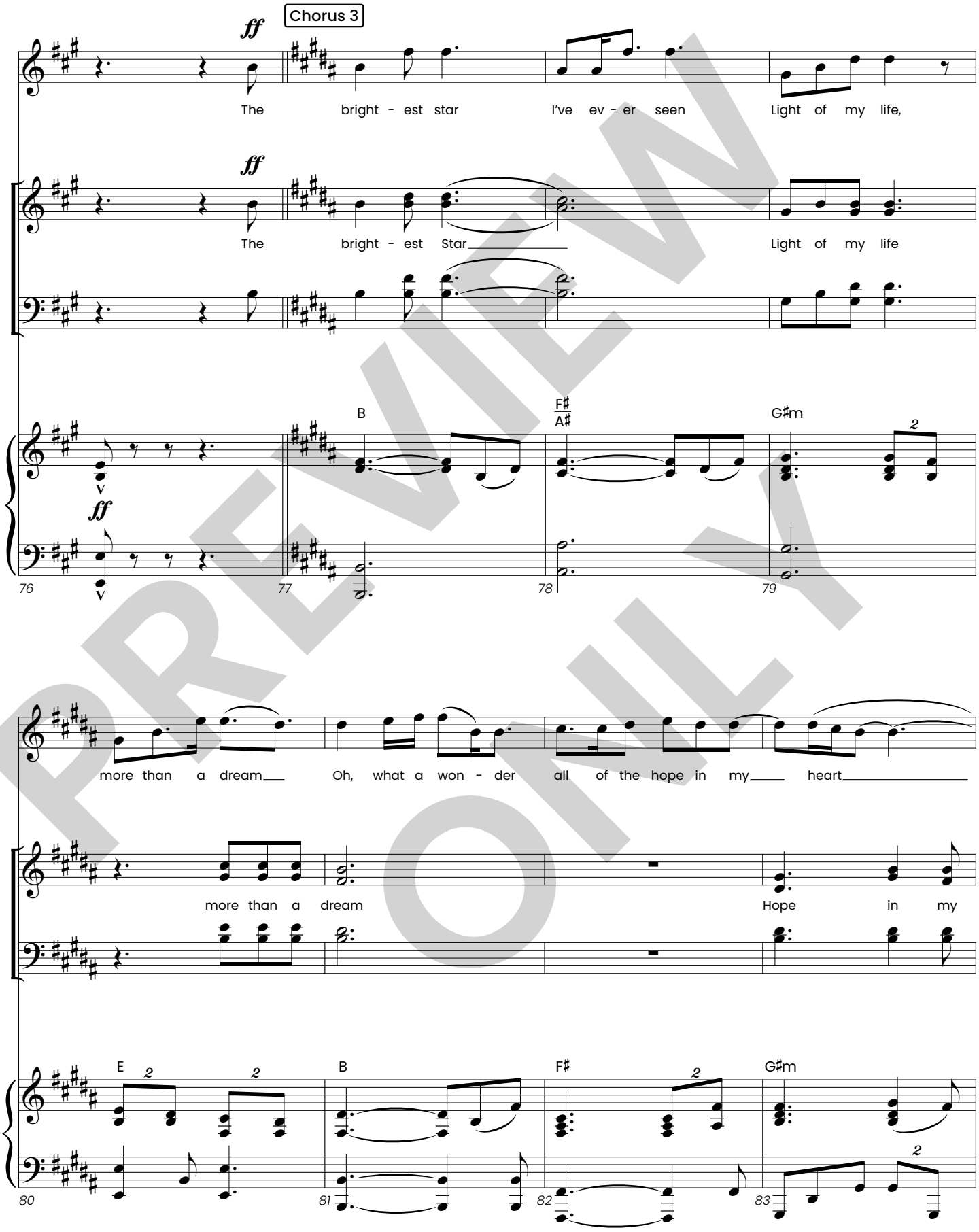

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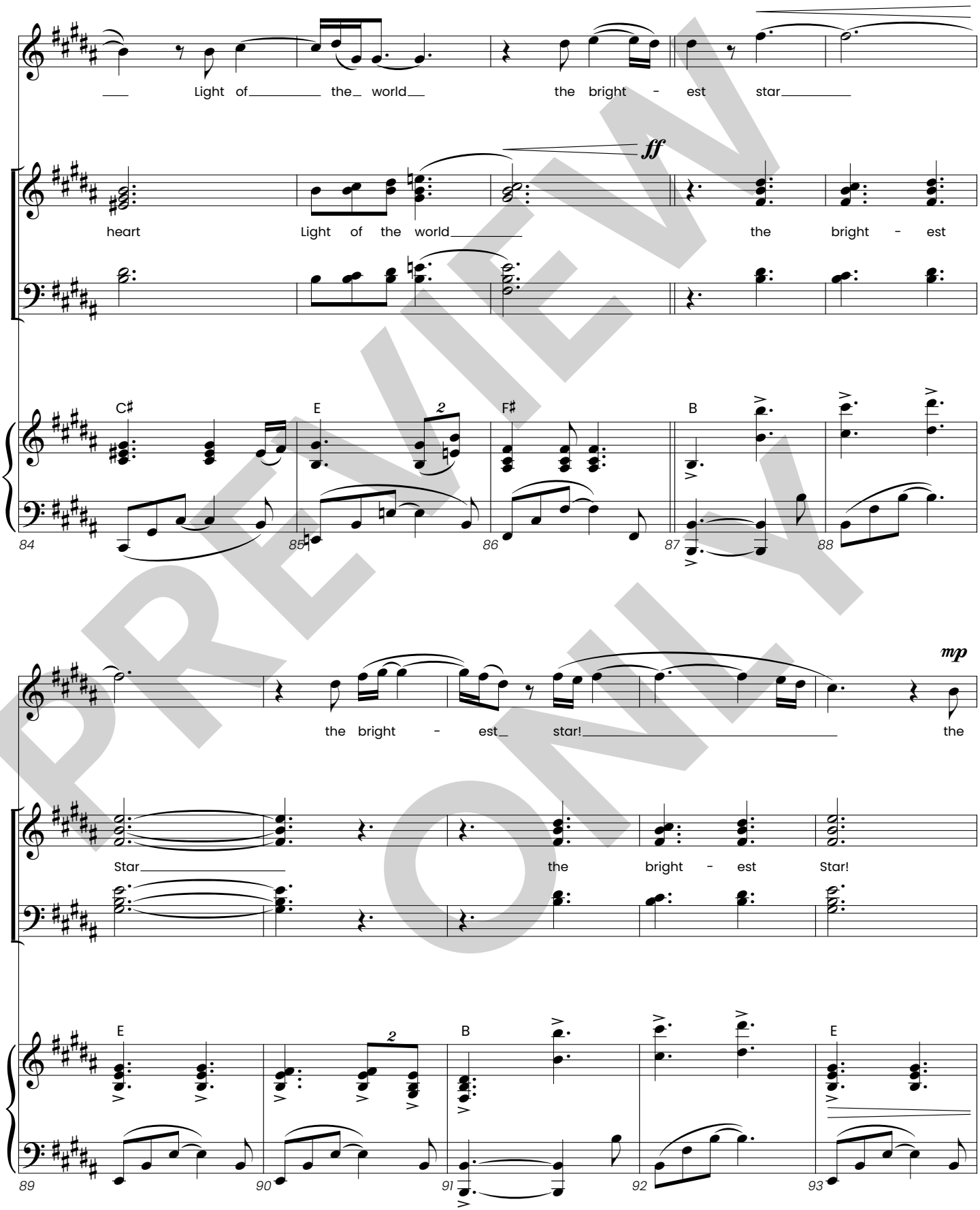

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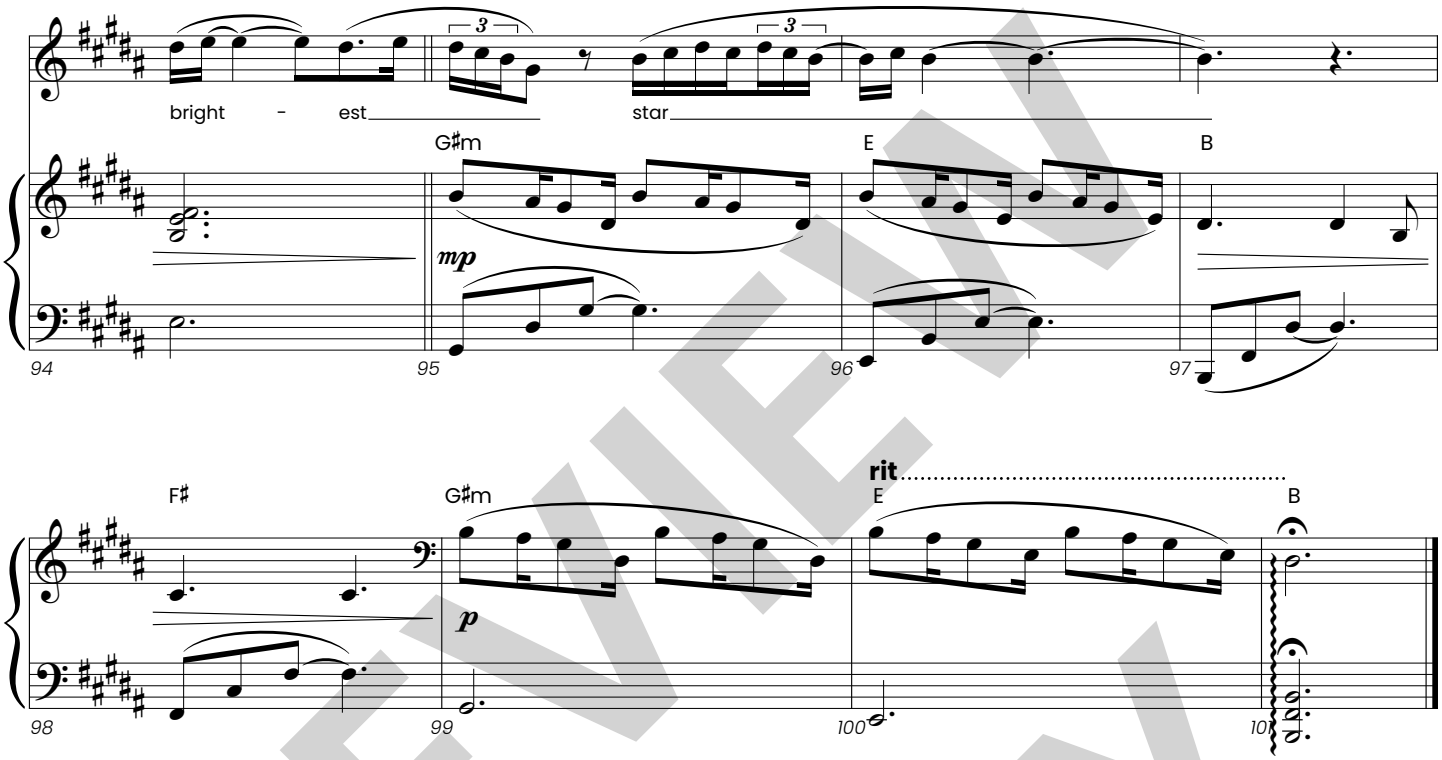


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 7

(Scene opens with Bennett and Mary Beth having just watched the kings' procession. BENNETT is in awe. Chloe's absence is noticeable as BENNETT turns to Mary Beth.)

BENNETT
I've missed it. Every year, I've missed it.

MARY BETH(Smiling to affirm him)
You've missed it?

BENNETT
Christmas! I've always thought of it as vacation from school, decorations, presents, and food. Lots of yummy food.

(Realizing his idea of Christmas is the same as CHLOE's)

Wait…where did Chloe go?

MARY BETH
Who?

BENNETT
Chloe! (Realizing Mary Beth doesn't seem to know who she is) Mary Beth. Come on. You know: (mimicking CHLOE) "That cake was huge! A cafe? Who wants ice cream?" (Raising his hand)

MARY BETH
She sounds fun.

BENNETT
Seriously? (Looking around for her) Chloe?

MARY BETH
You know, sometimes God allows people to come into our story just to help lead us to the next chapter. It seems like the pages have turned in your understanding of what Christmas truly is.

(saying her name as if she doesn't know her)

If *CHLOE* helped lead you to this place, perhaps her part in your story has been accomplished.

BENNETT
But, I don't understand.

MARY BETH
Maybe she was here for you to see yourself in someone else. Now that your perspective has changed…

BENNETT(As if understanding)
…my need to see that perspective has changed! But, it still doesn't fix everything. My parents are still fighting and Christmas won't be the same this year.

MARY BETH
Parents fight sometimes. But, I'm sure they will have it all figured out by Christmas morning.

BENNETT
You think so?

MARY BETH(Assuring him)
I'm pretty sure your parents are just ready to celebrate Christmas with their little boy.

BENNETT
I guess I should be getting home then.

MARY BETH
Christmas wouldn't be the same for them without you.

BENNETT
And what about you?

MARY BETH
Oh, sweet boy. You don't need to worry about me. Just like you, God has written a story for me.

BENNETT
I guess he has. So, will I ever see you again?

MARY BETH
We never know what, or *who* is going to be in the next chapter.

BENNETT
I guess. Well, goodbye then.

MARY BETH
Goodbye, Bennett. I wish you the best Christmas ever.

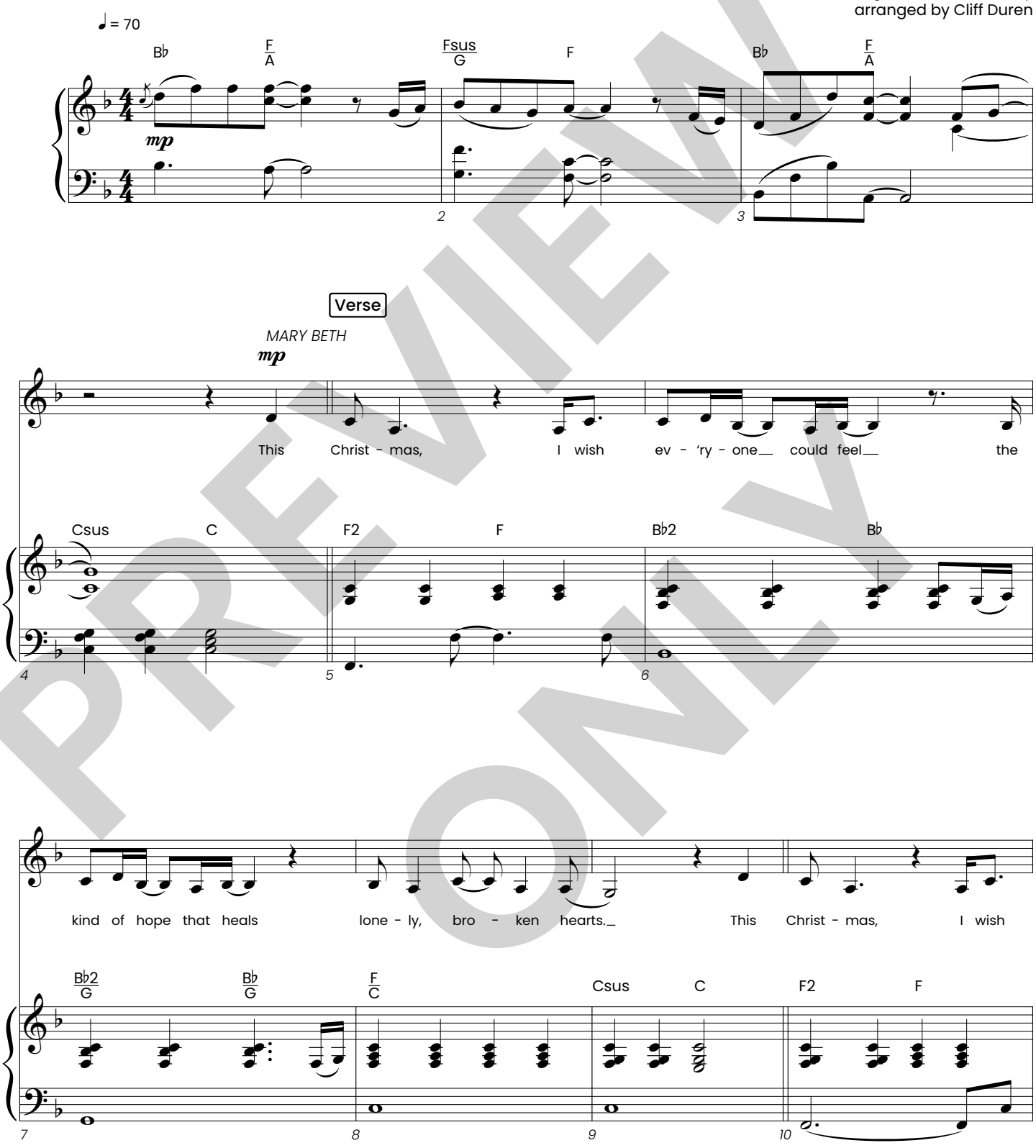
BENNETT
Yeah. It can only get better, I guess. (Turns to leave)

MARY BETH
(music begins) Bennett. Wait. Why don't we do this before you go: let's pray for the Christmas we want to see. Hope for the lonely, peace like you've been searching for, and that the world will experience the *true* meaning of Christmas this year.

BENNETT
I'd like that.
(MARY BETH sings to Bennett. During second verse,biblical cast begins to enter. **15. This Christmas I Wish.**)

This Christmas I Wish

Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Cliff Duren



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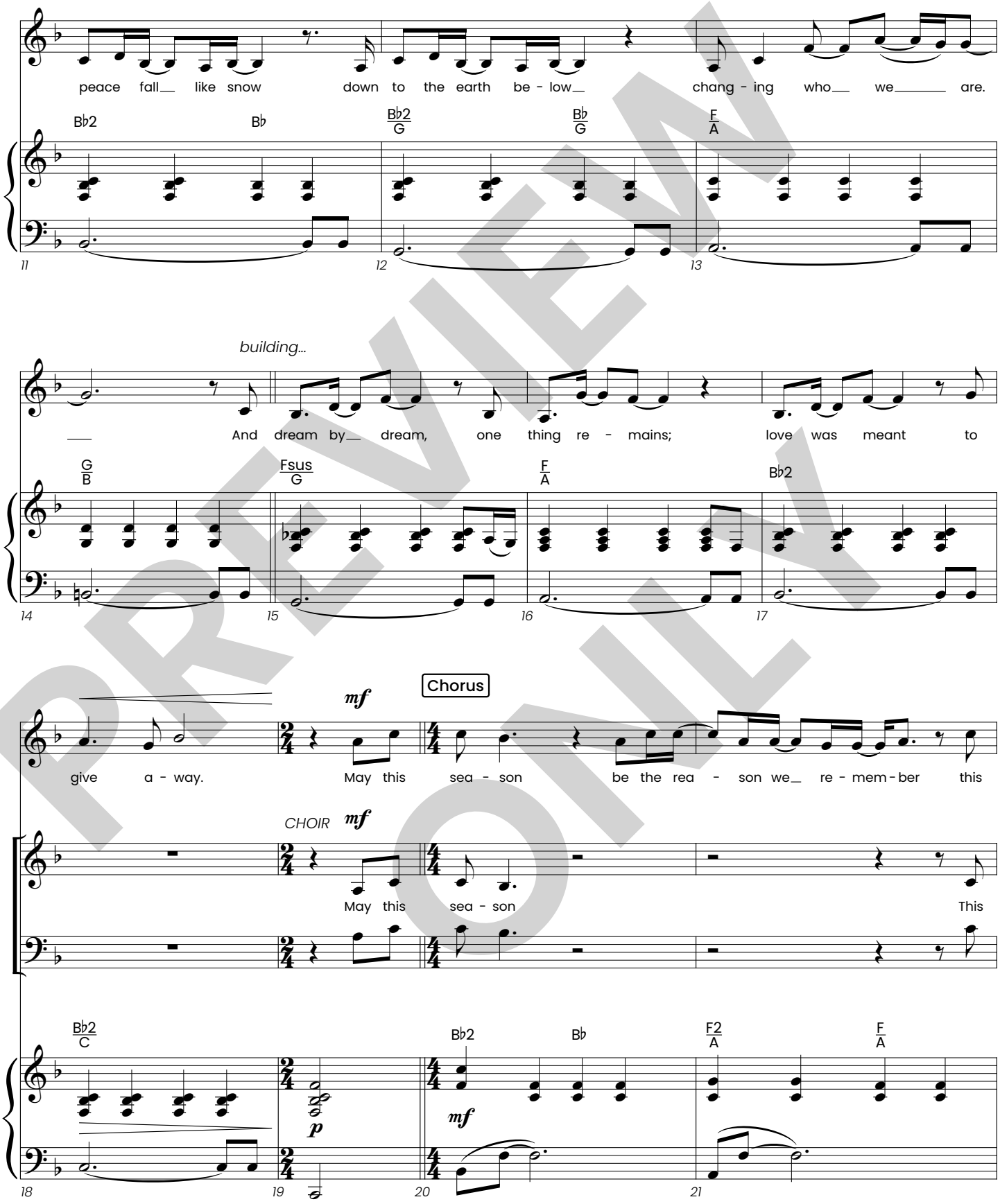
Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



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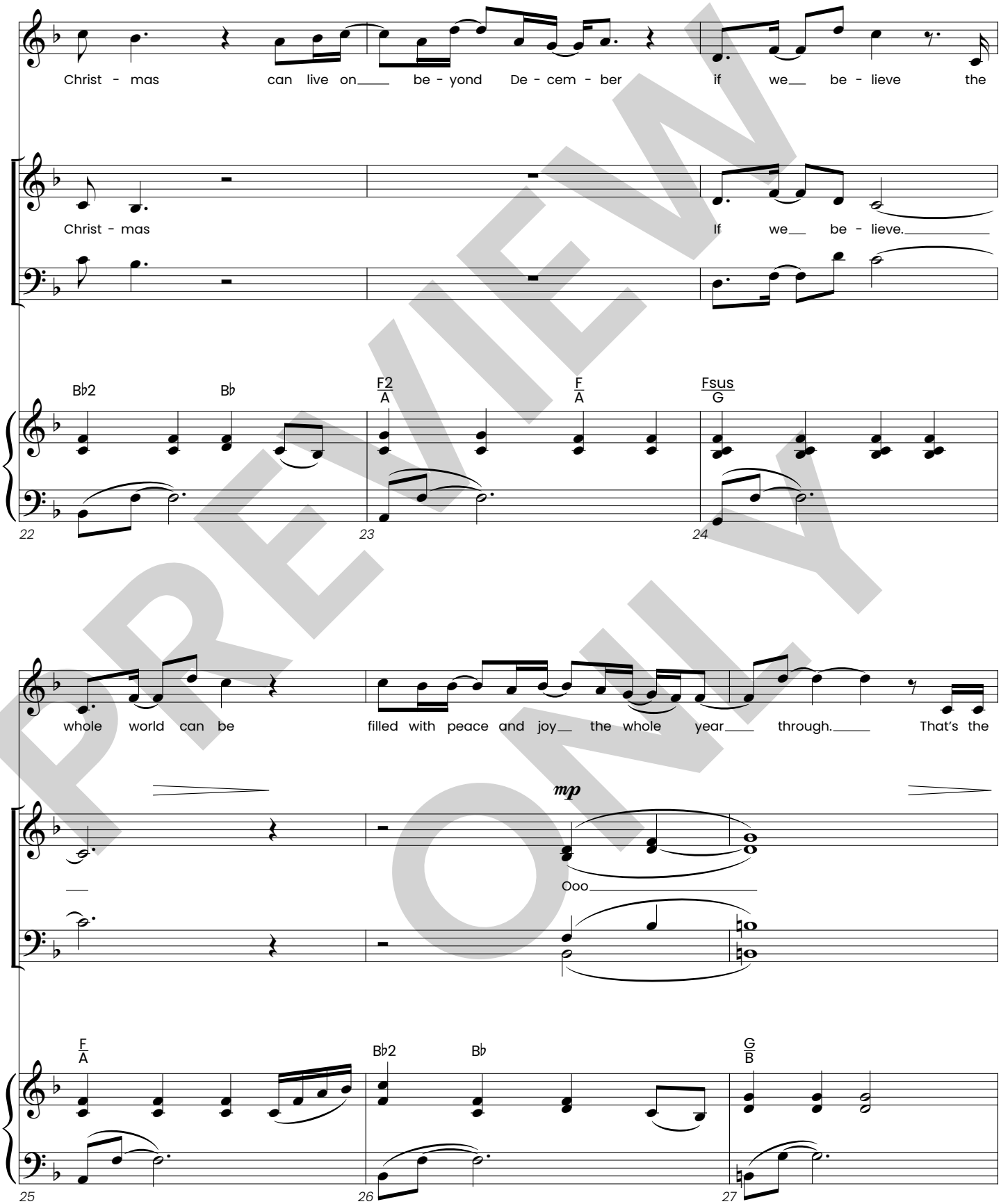

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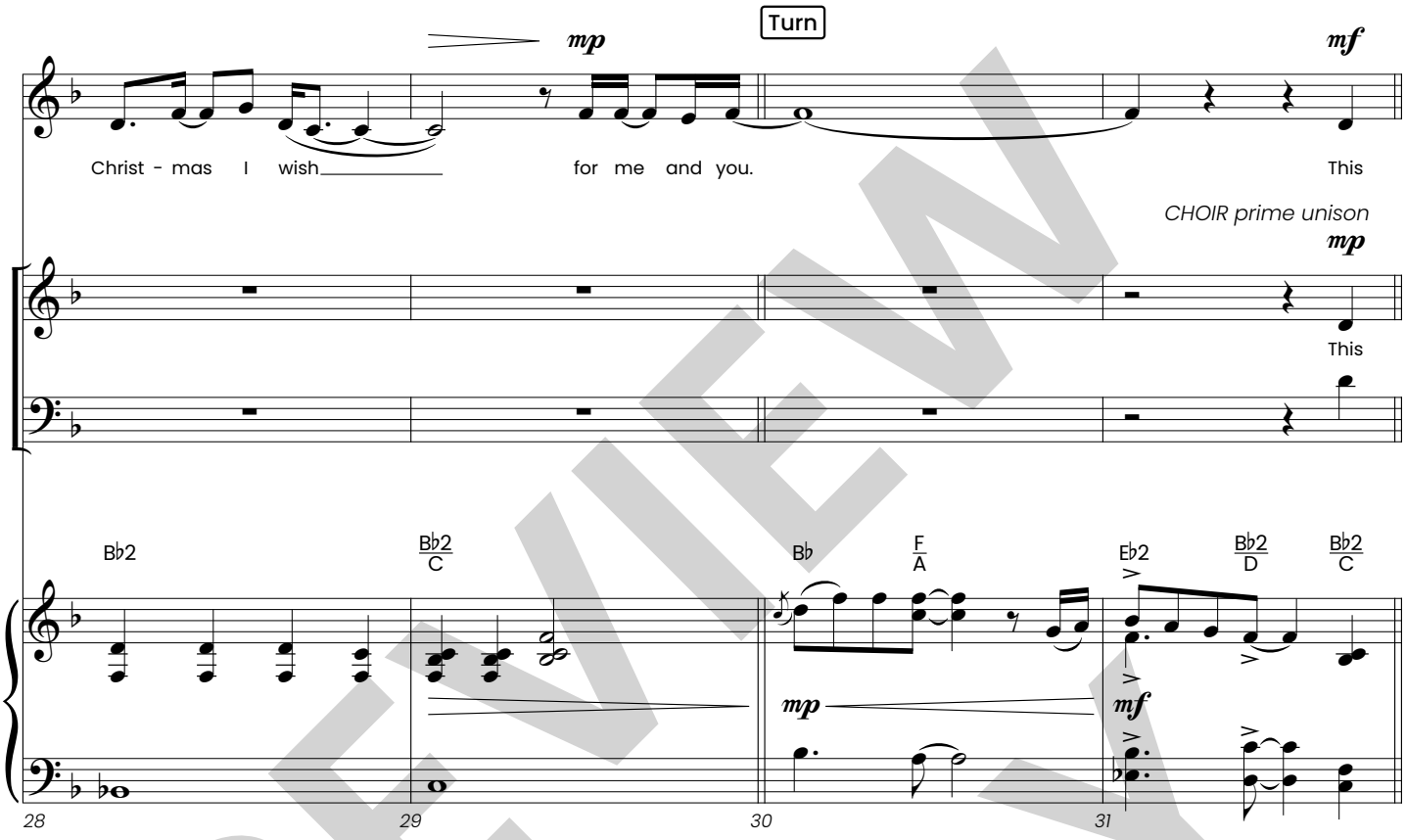

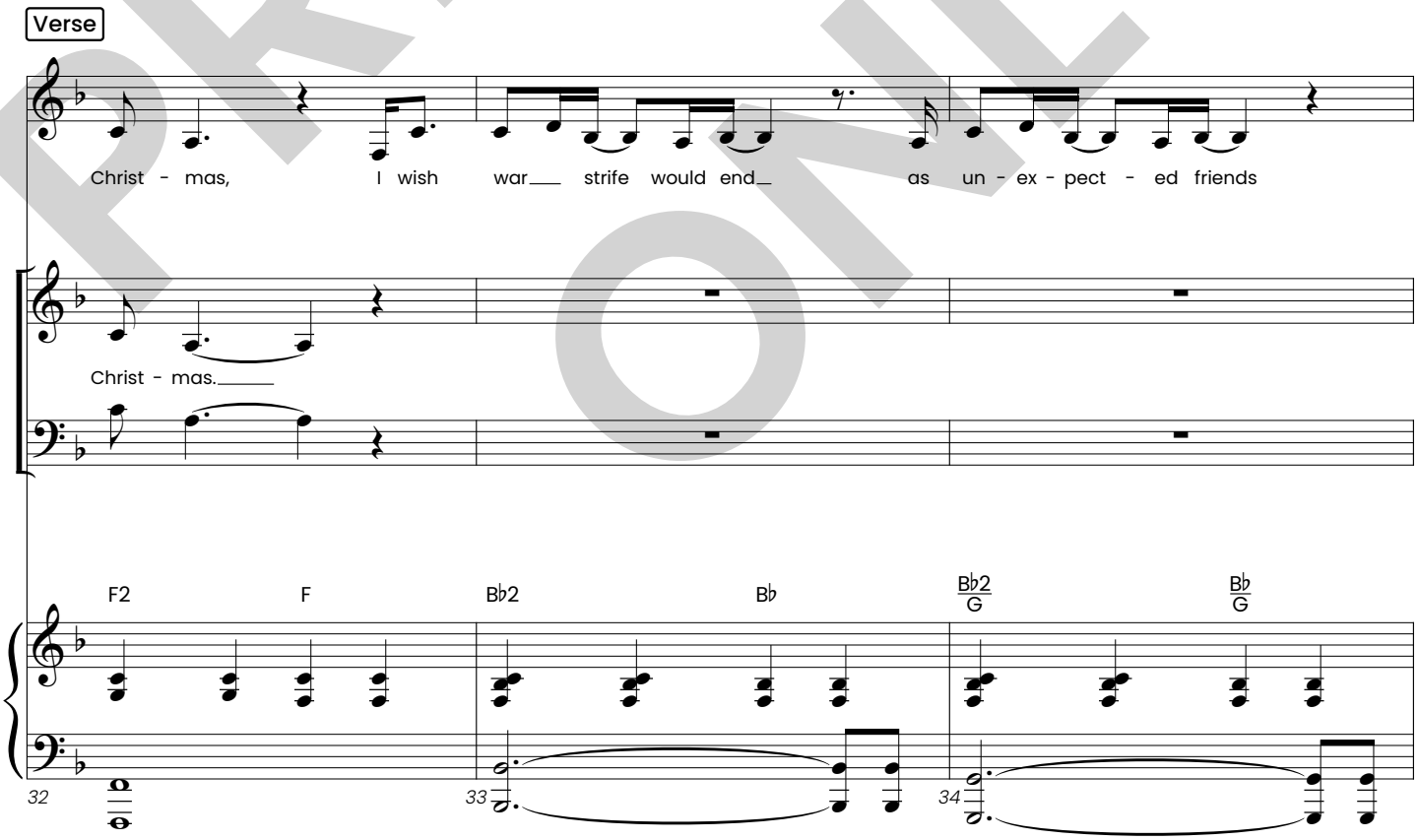

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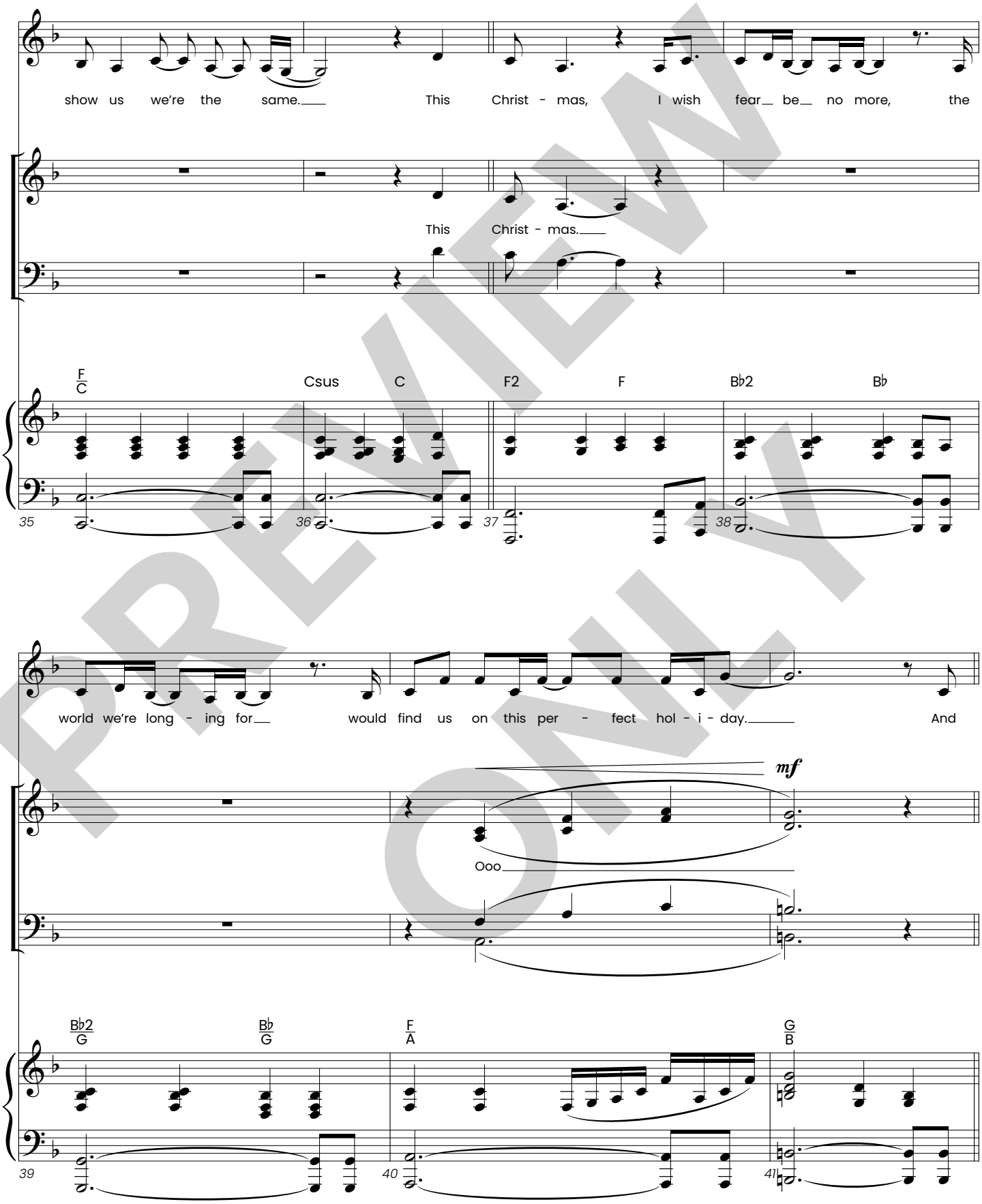

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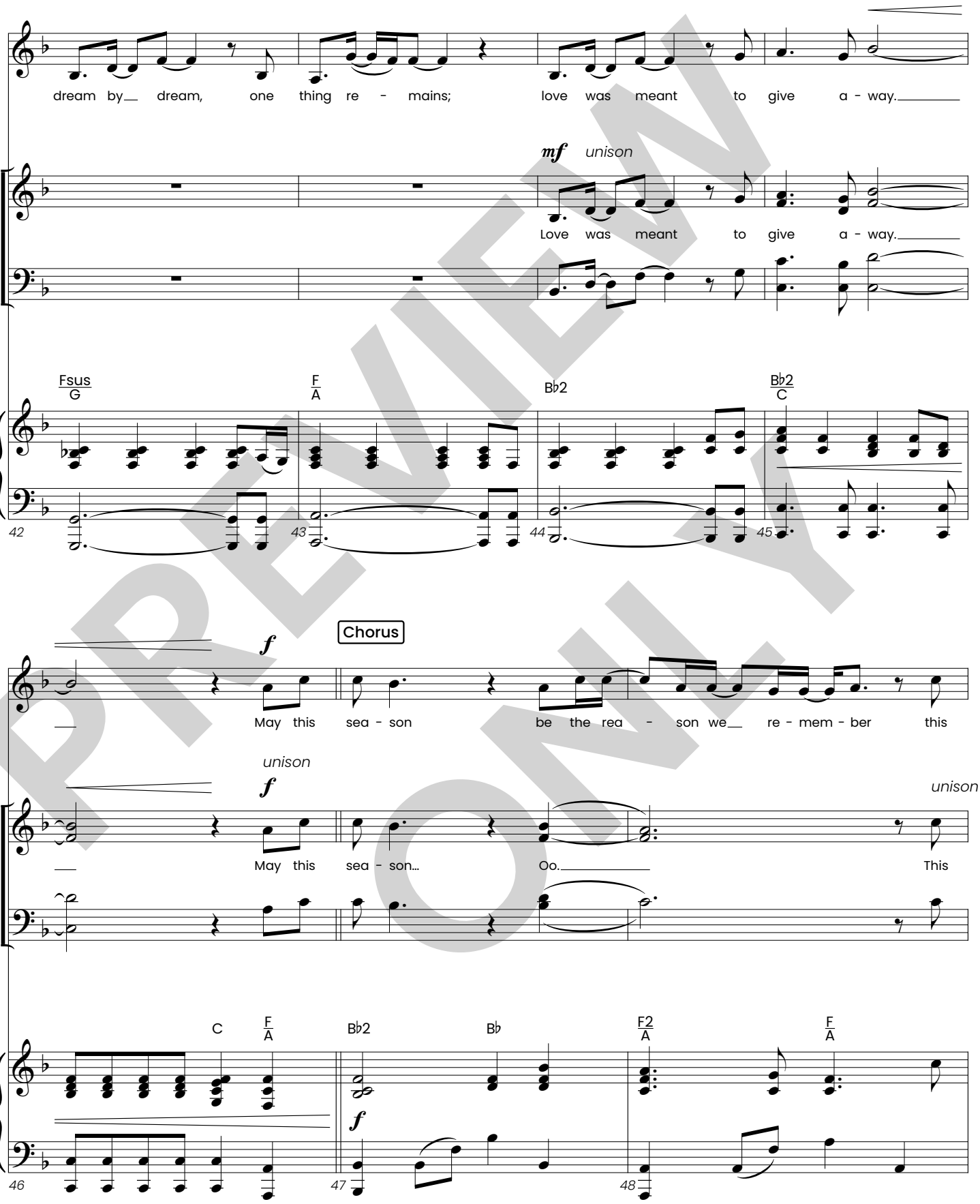

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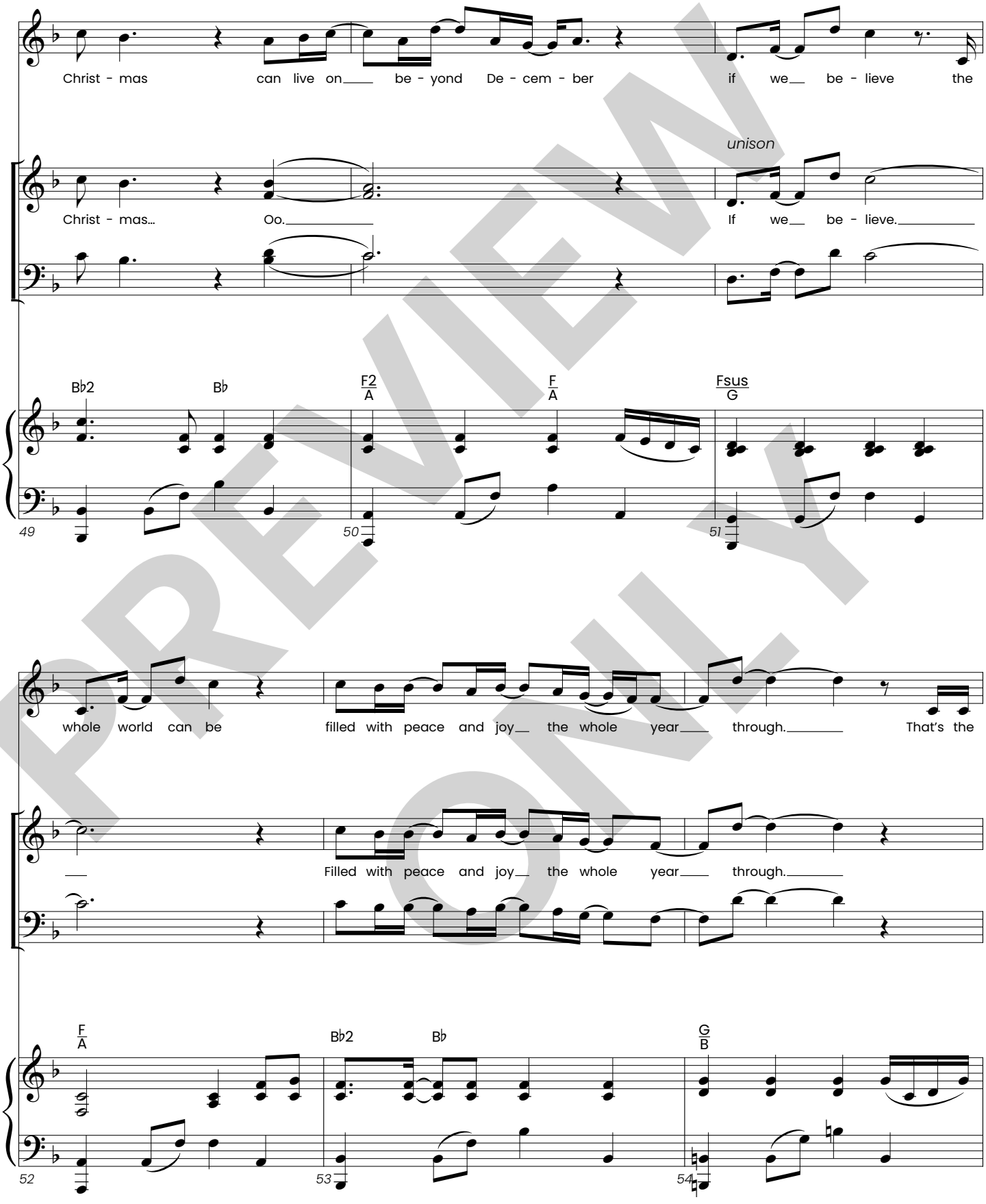

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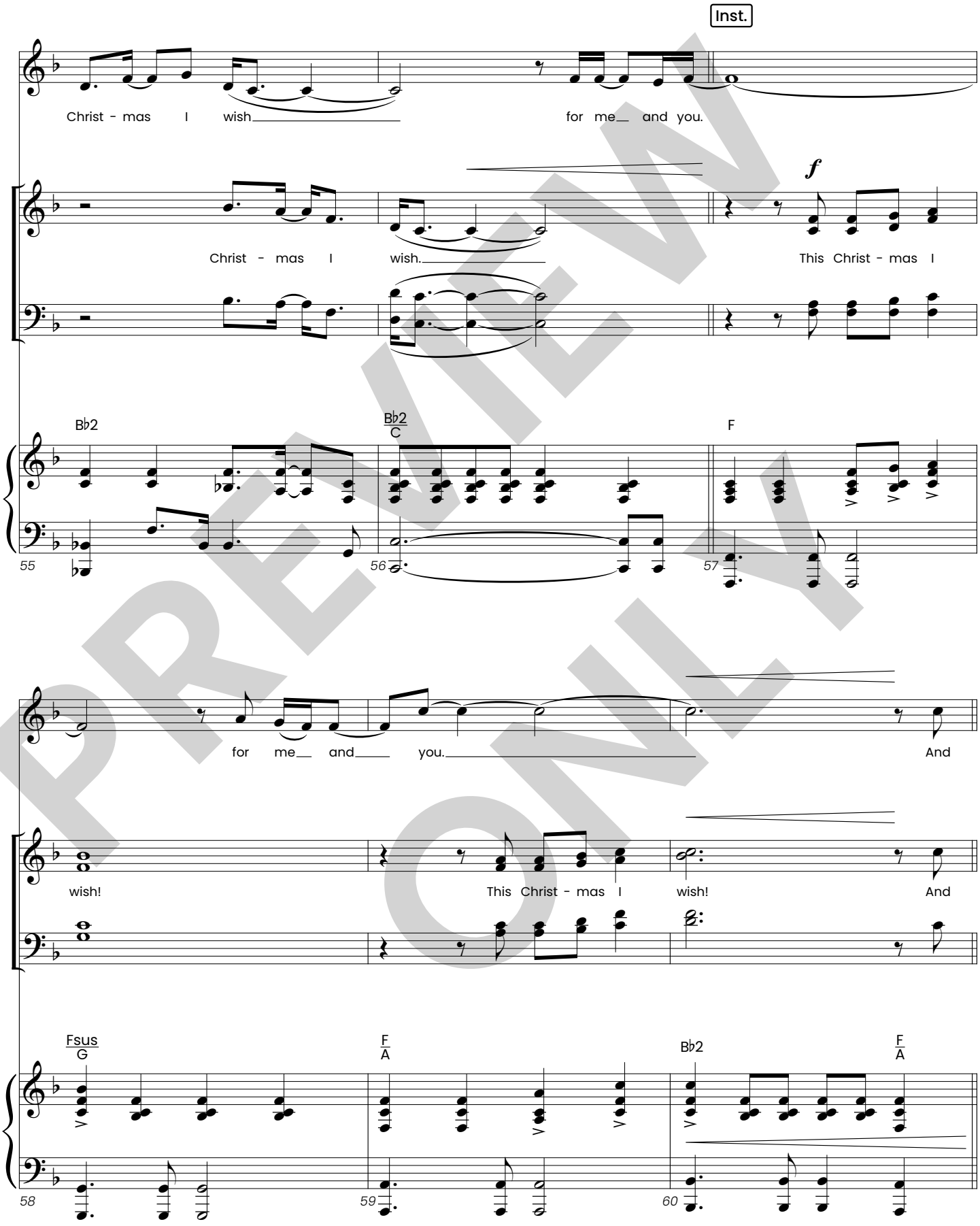

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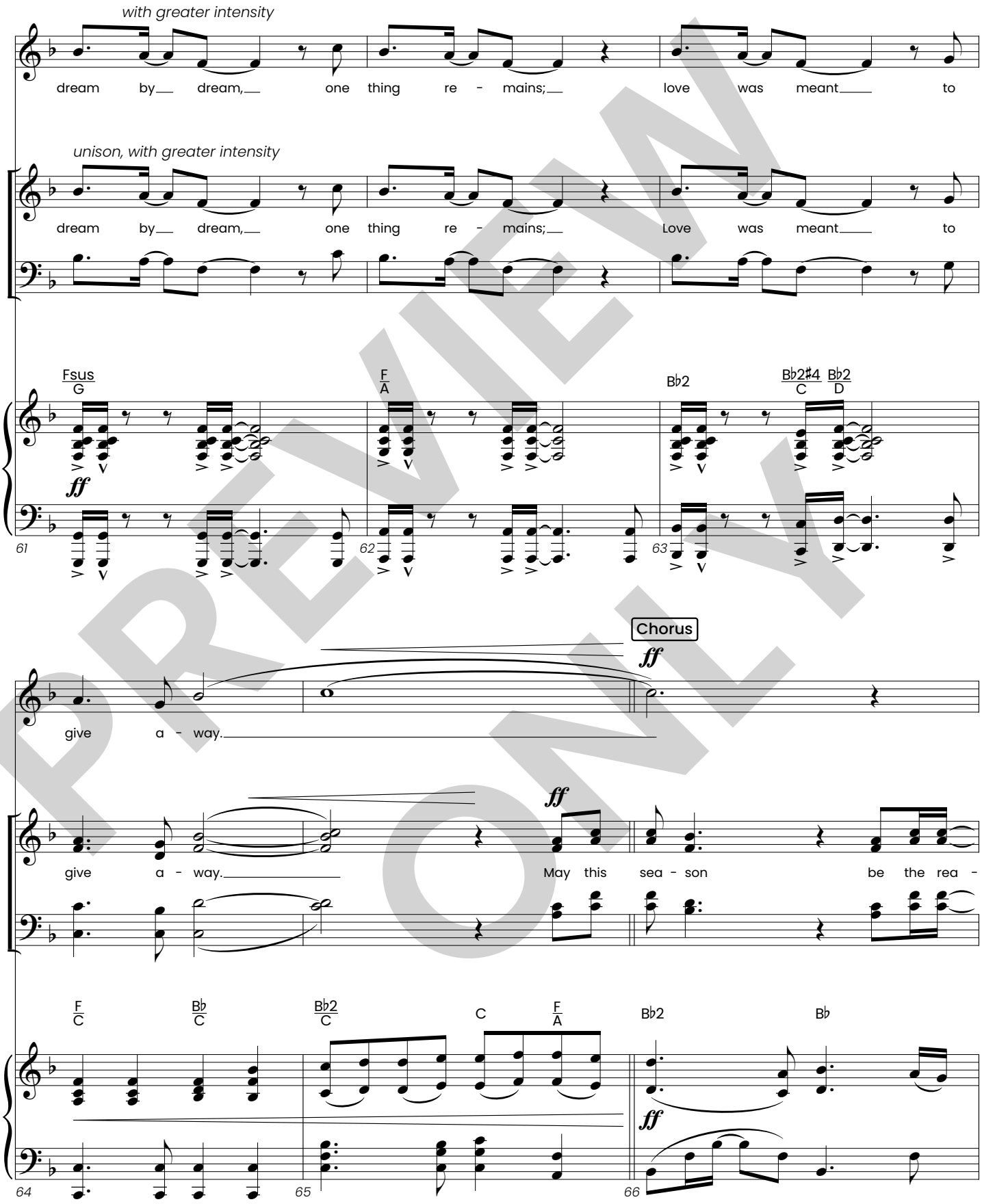

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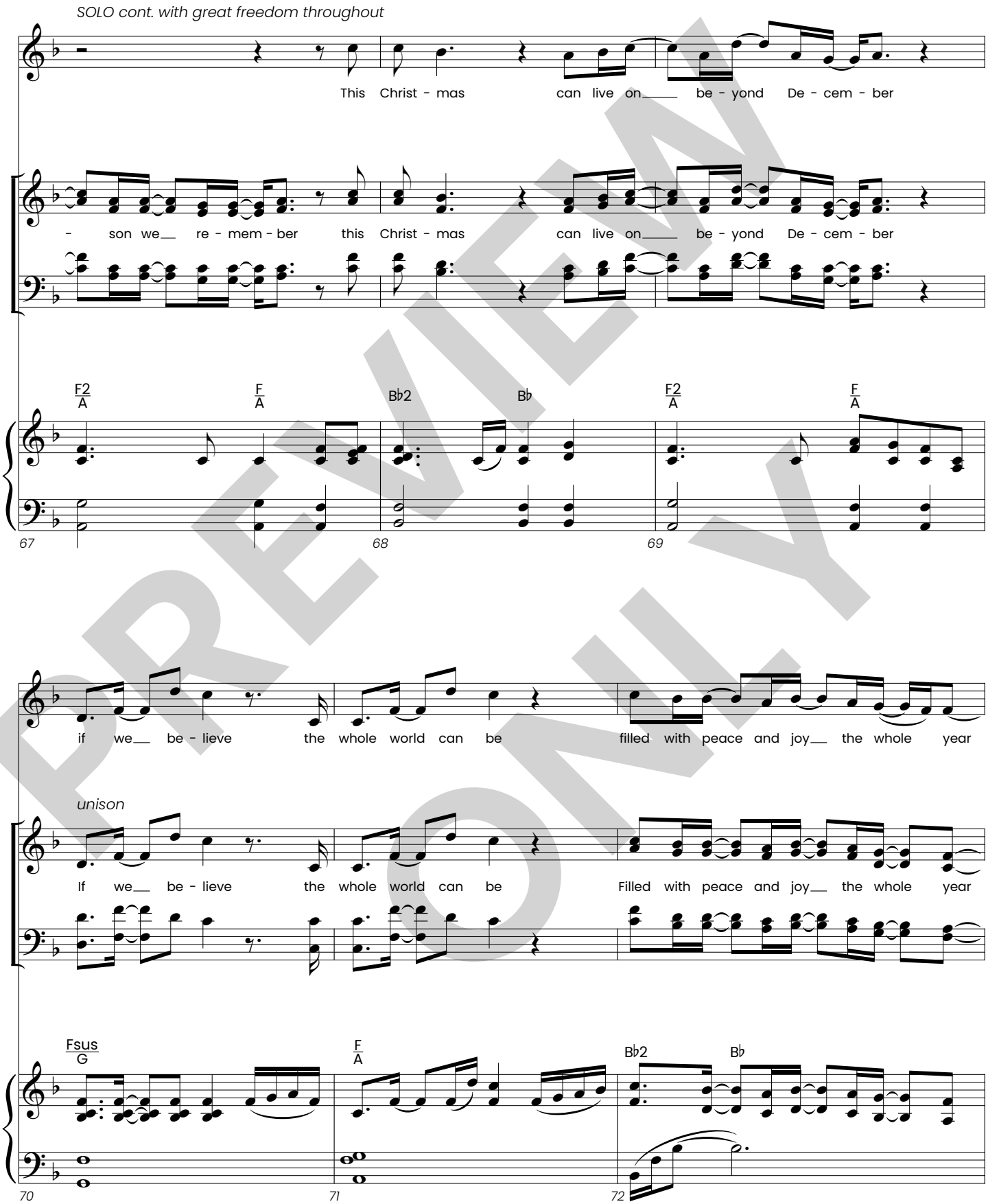

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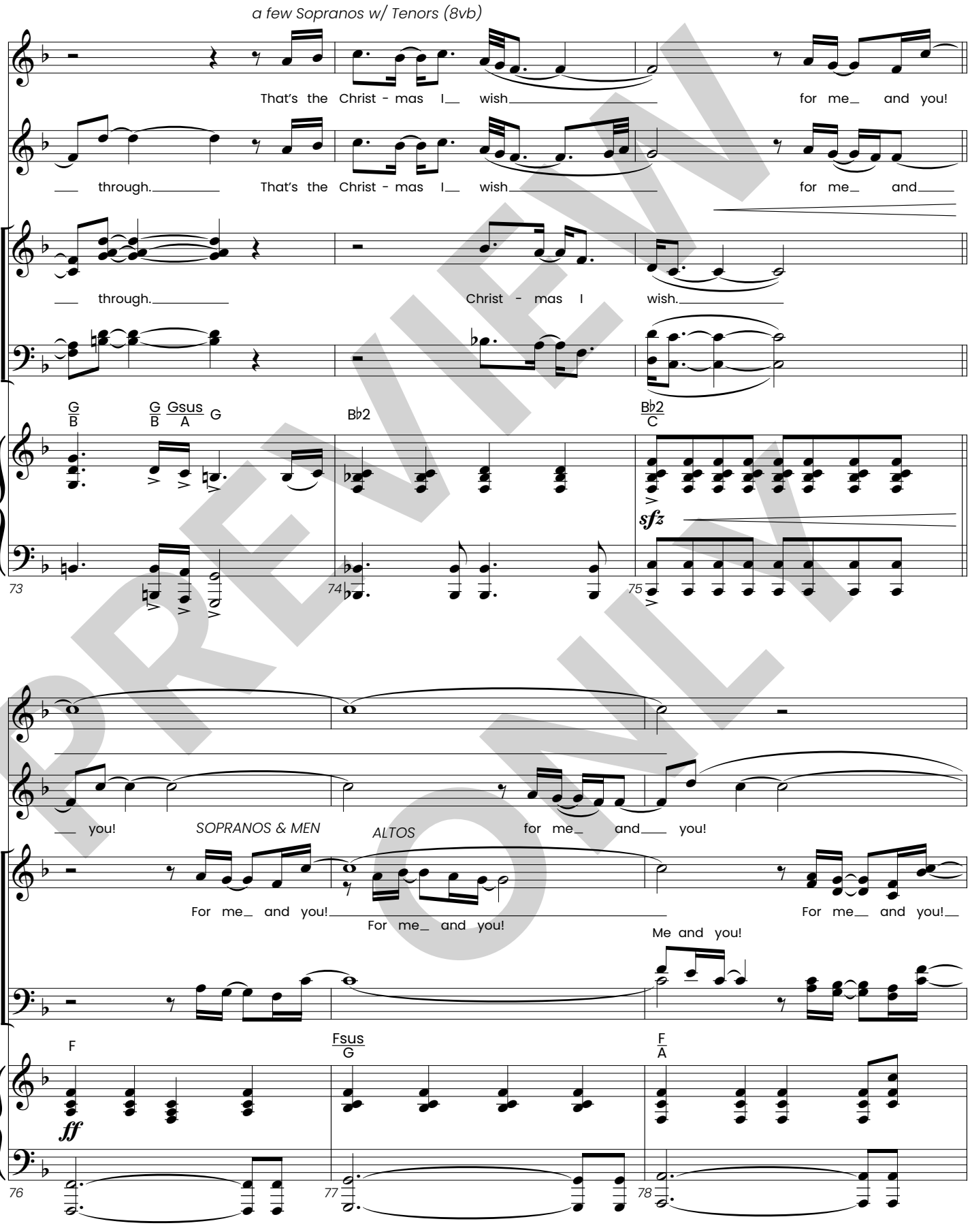

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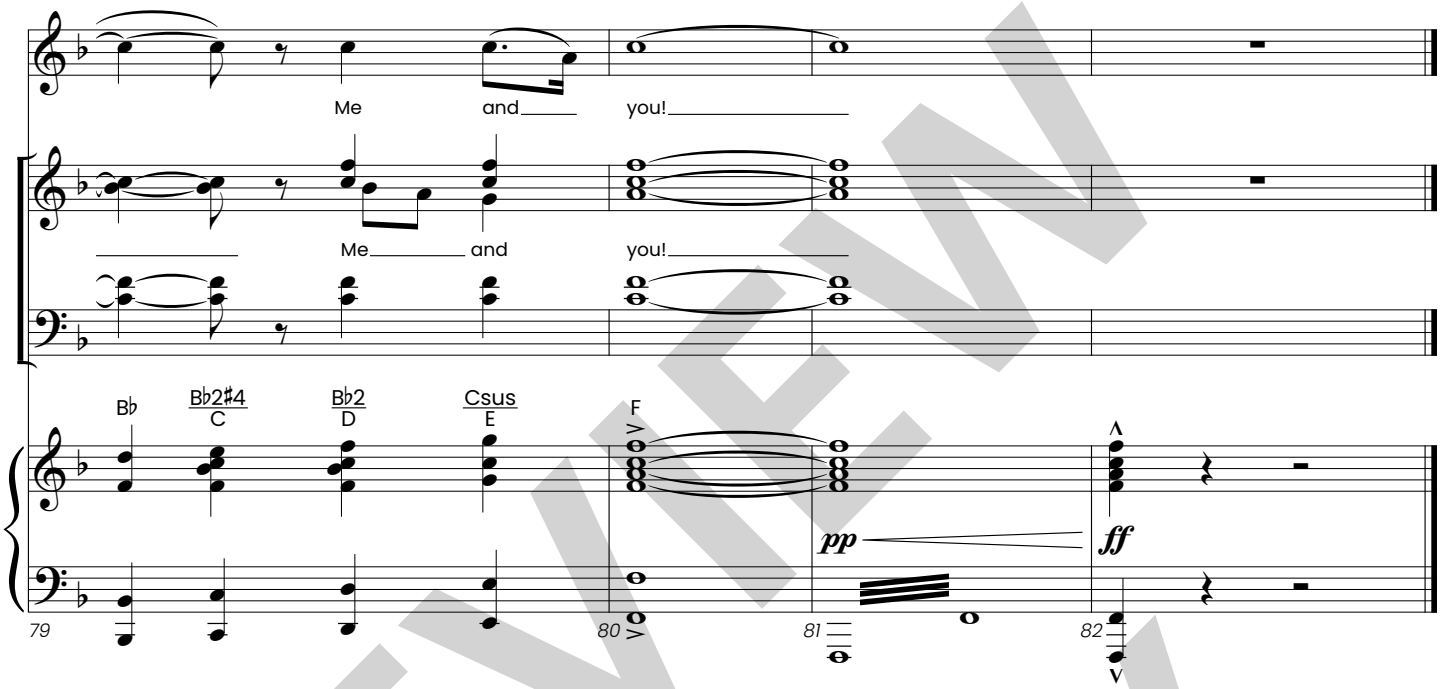


PREVIEW ONLY

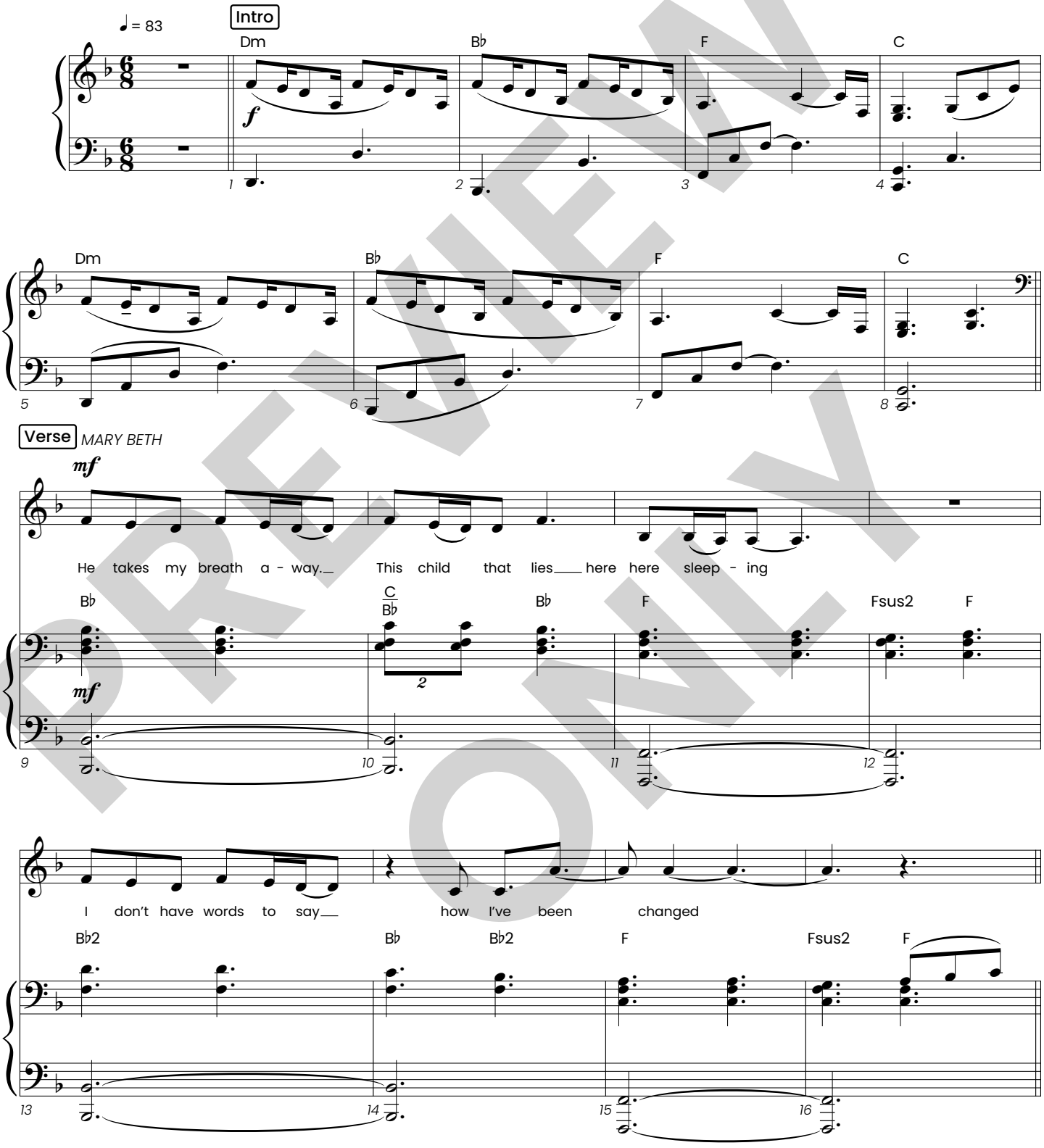
(Ensemble has surrounded Bennett and Mary Beth. As they sing out the end of the song, MARY BETH exits stage. The manger scene opens with JOSEPH holding baby Jesus. Shepherds and Wisemen are there as MARY BETH steps into the scene. JOSEPH hands her baby Jesus. As BENNETT sees this, he realizes Mary Beth's true identity. **16. FINALÈ - The Brightest Star, Waiting for the Lamb, Dream.**)

BENNETT
Mary Beth?

(With confidence) Mary Beth!

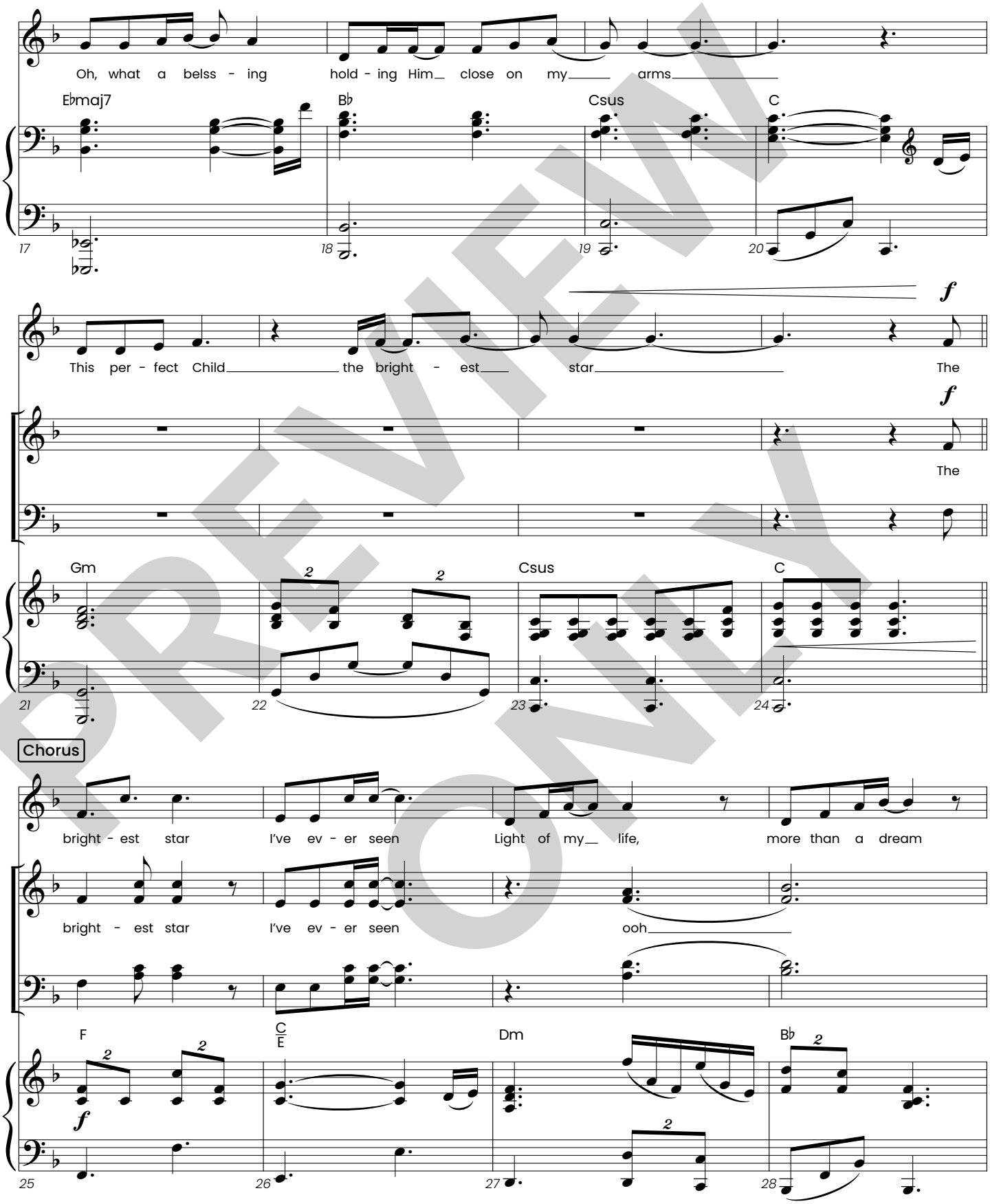
Finale

Jeff Bumgardner, Joel Lindsey
arranged by Wayne Haun



PREVIEW ONLY

Emerald Aces Music (admin. by Sunset Gallery Music), BMI
Mike Curb Music / Songs From the Inside, BMI



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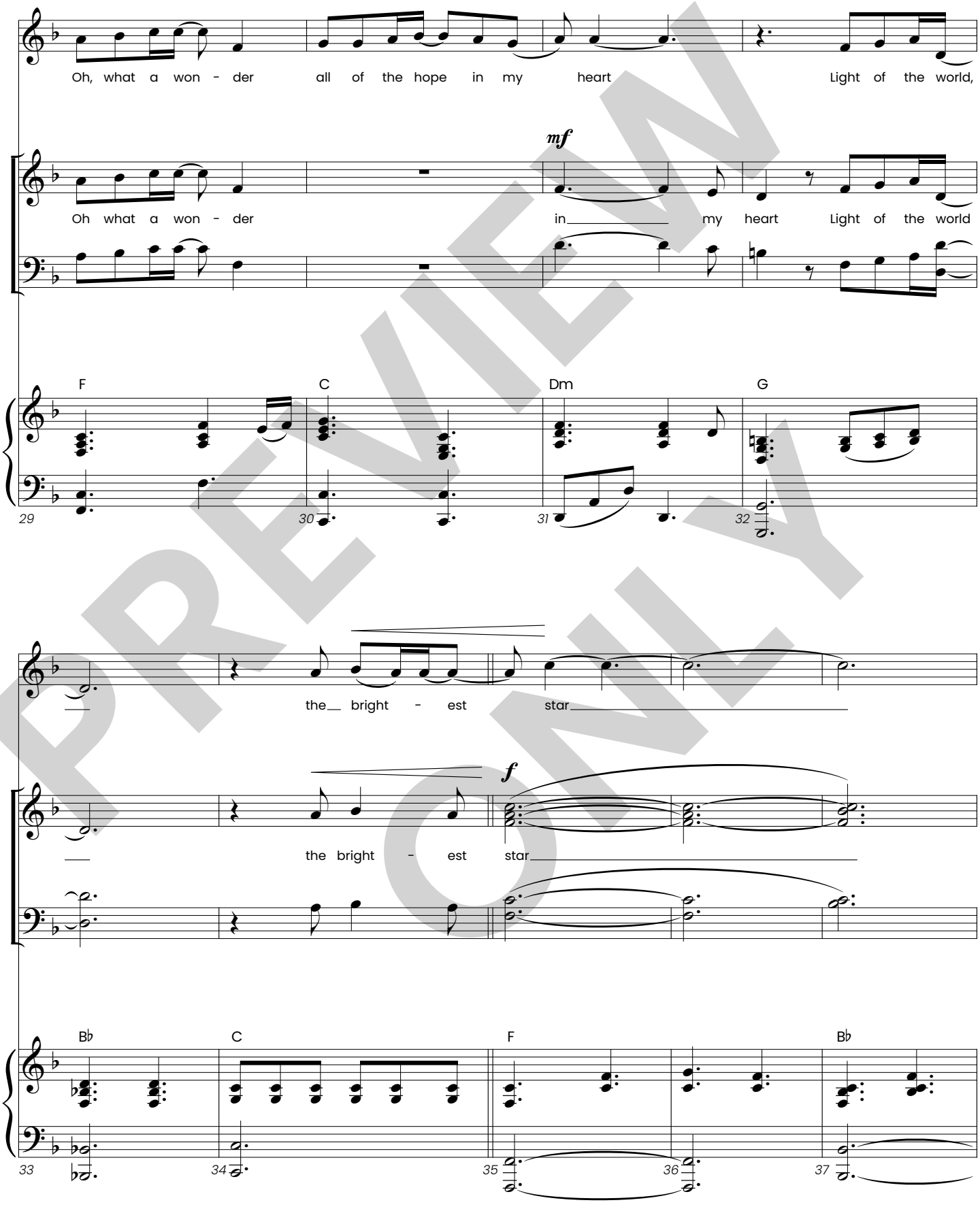

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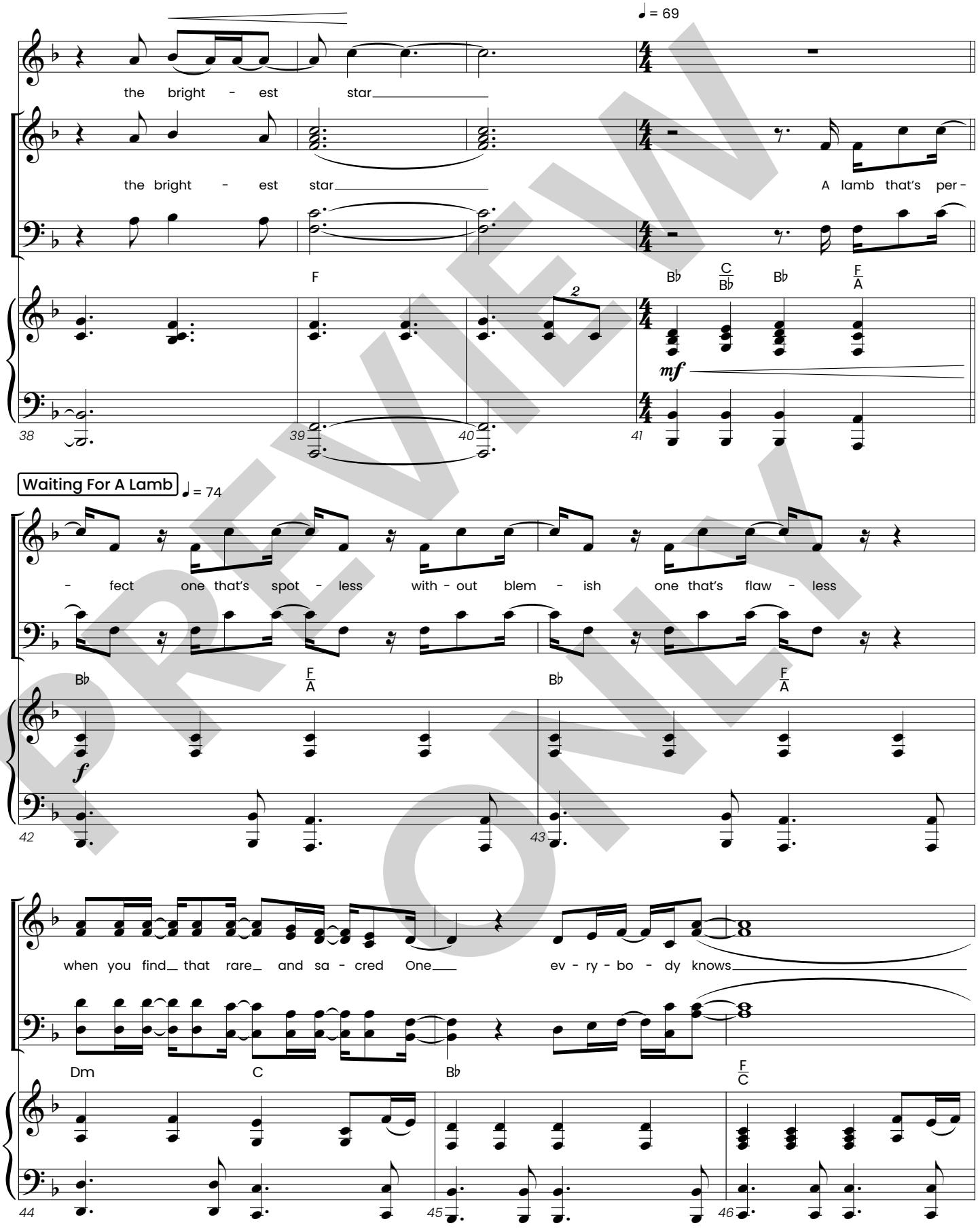

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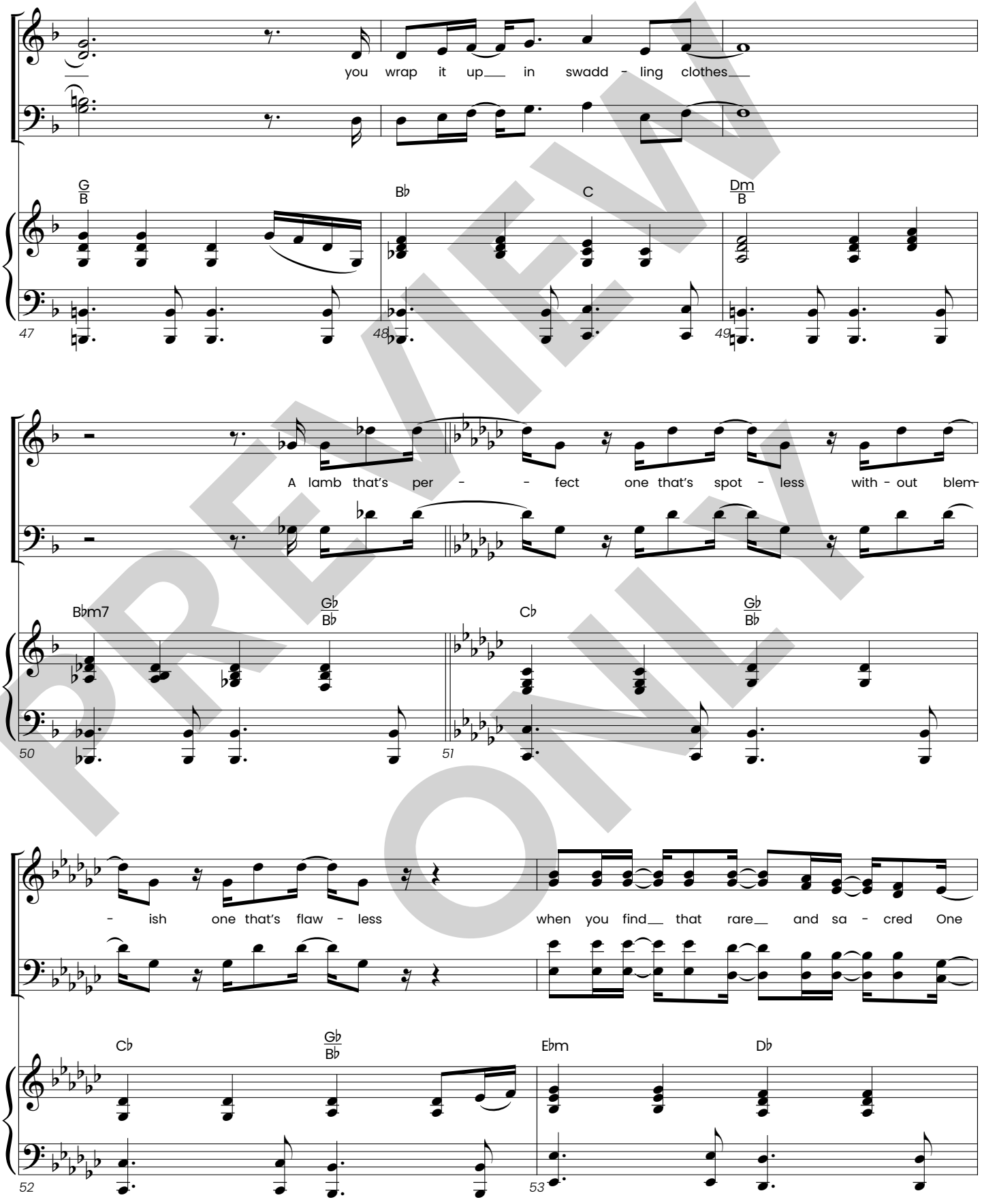

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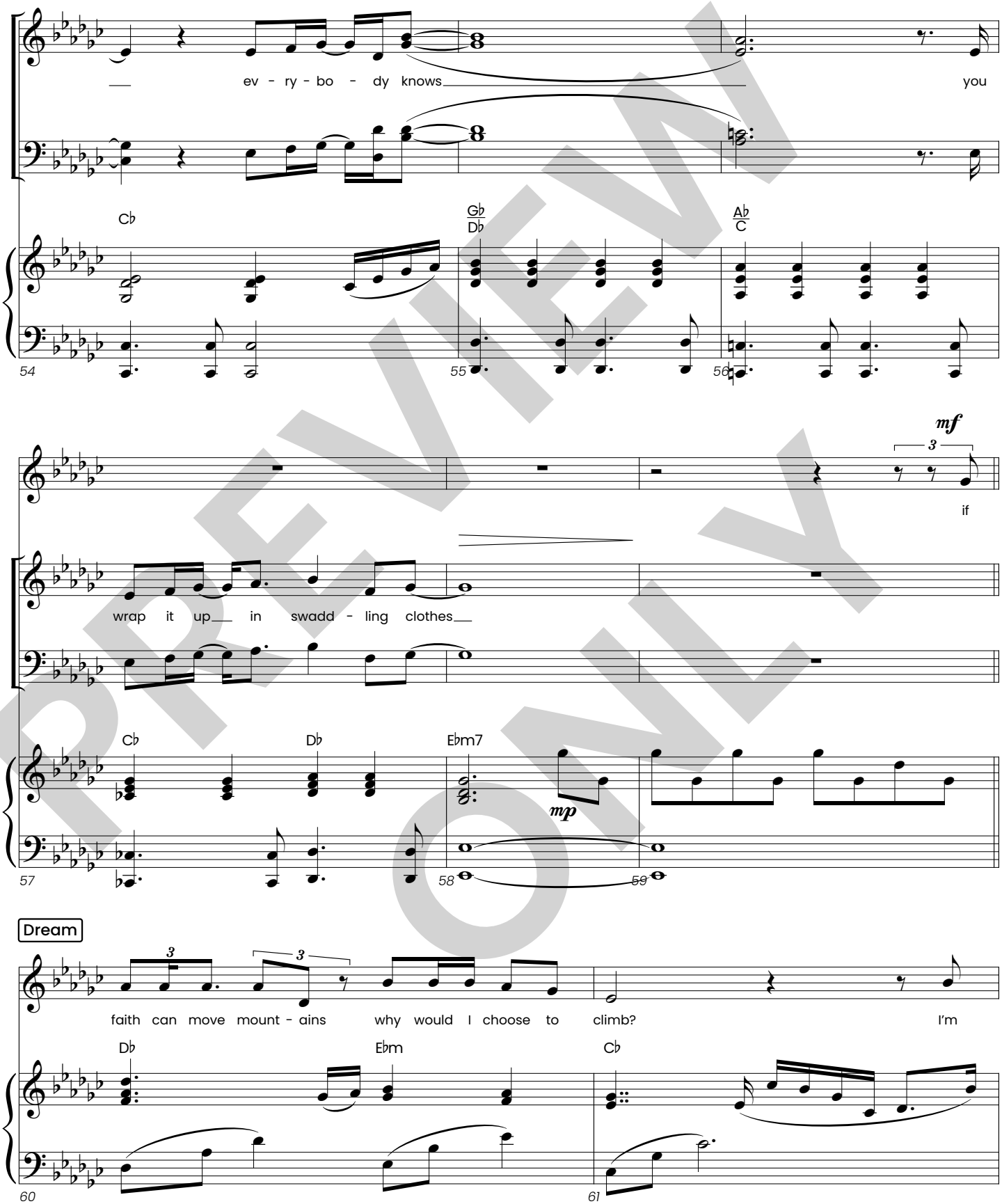

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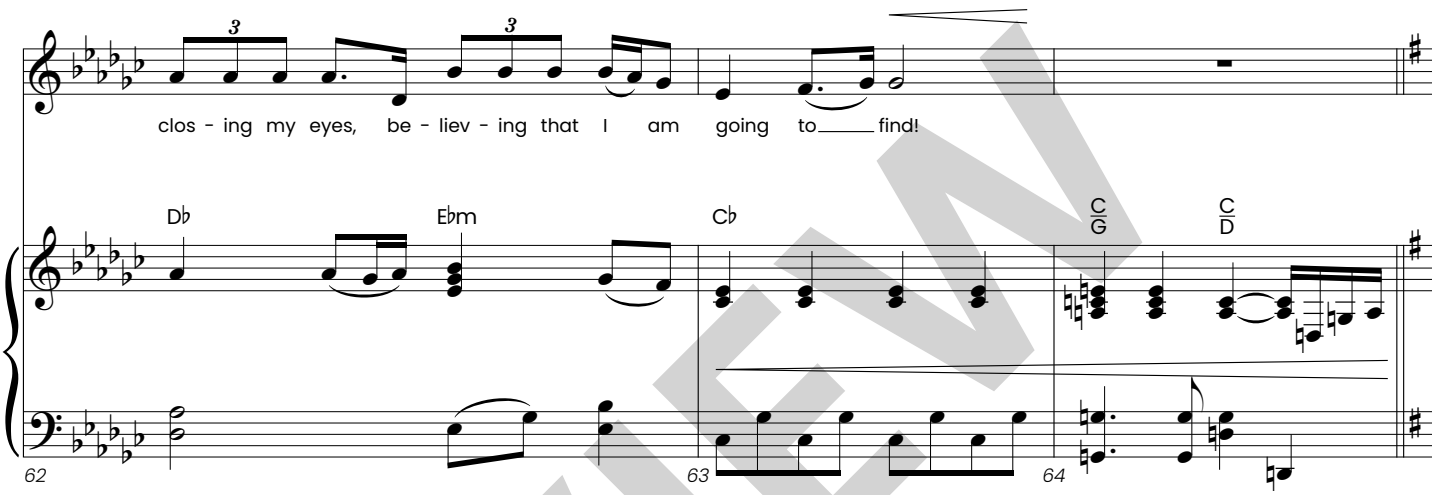

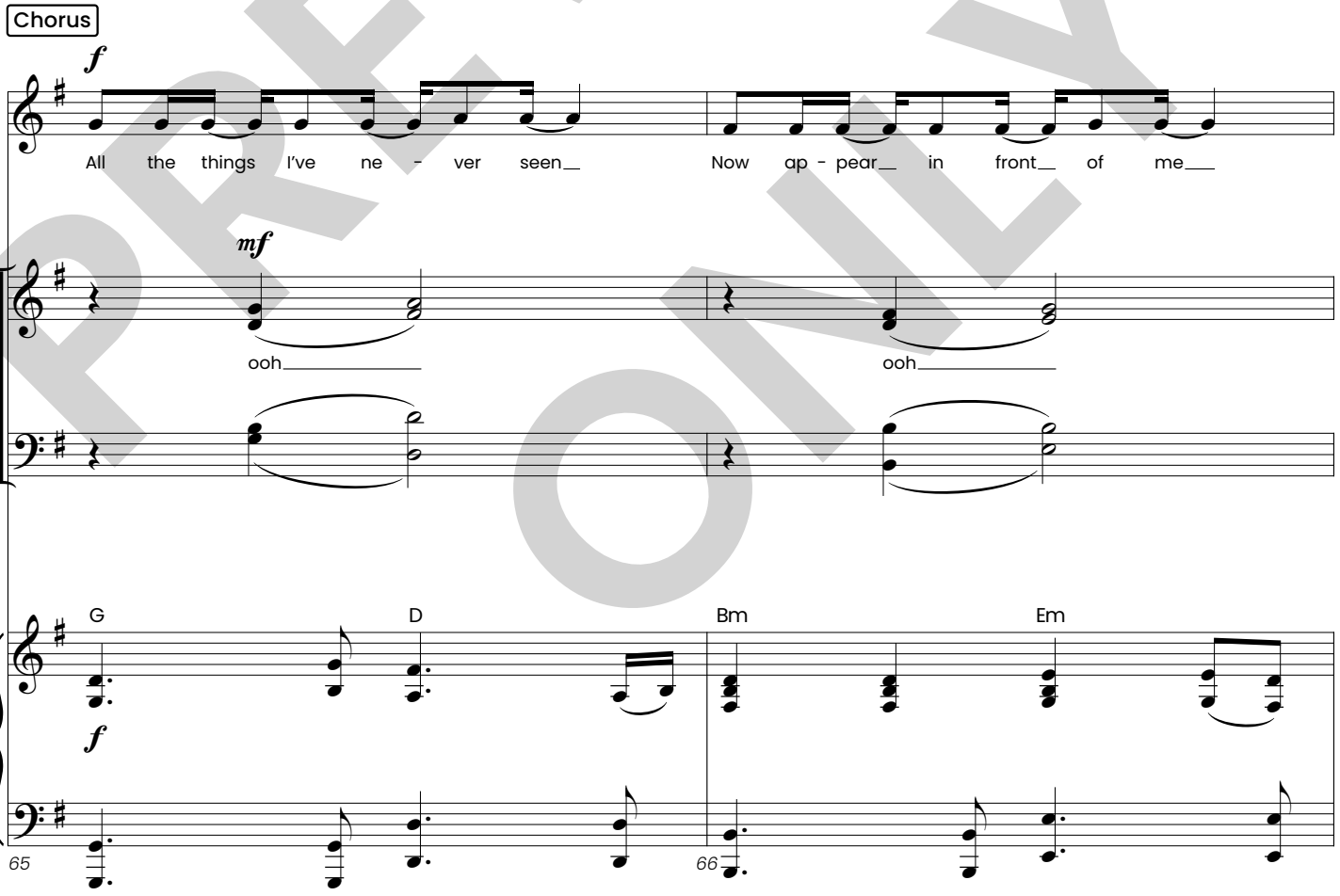

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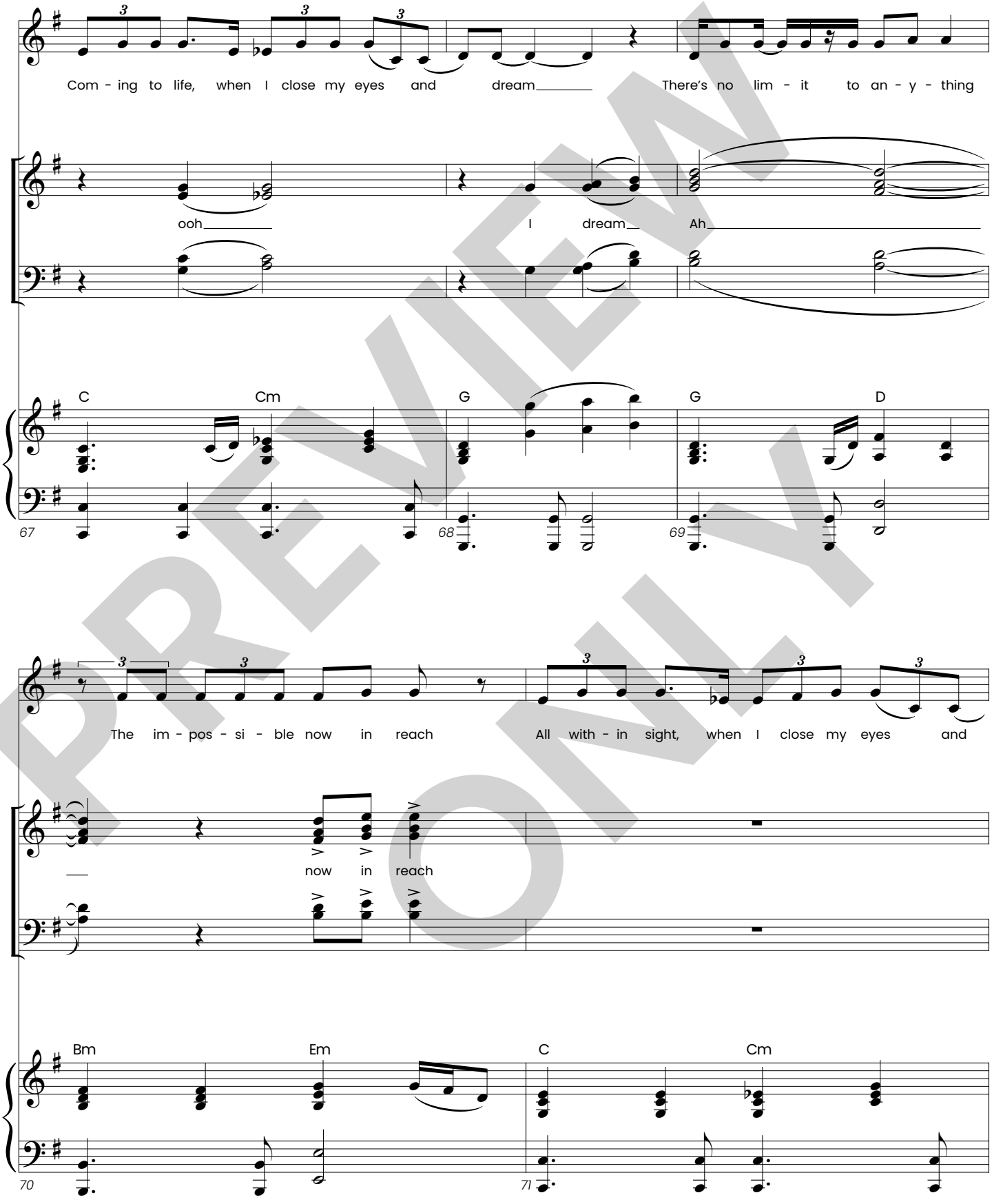

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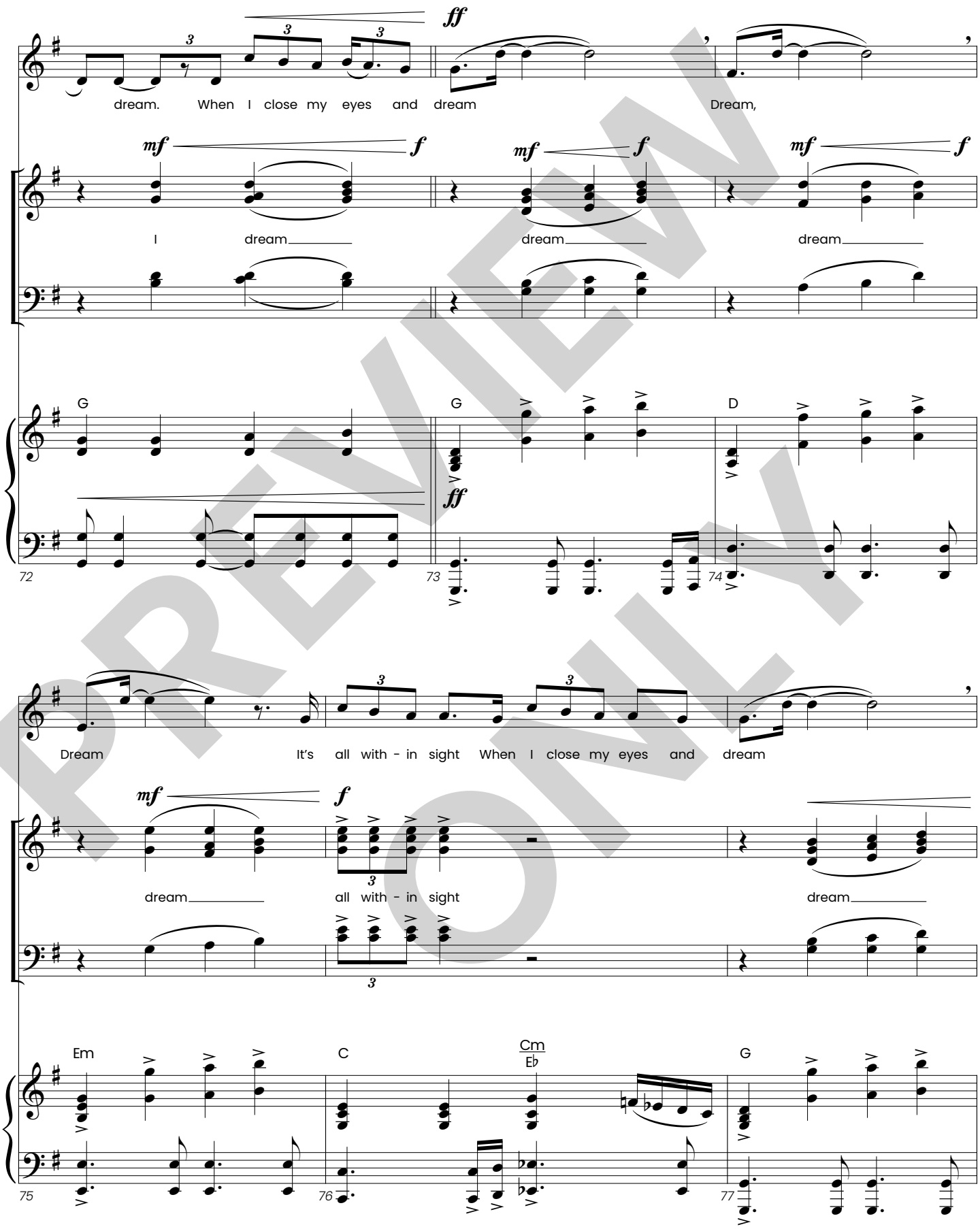

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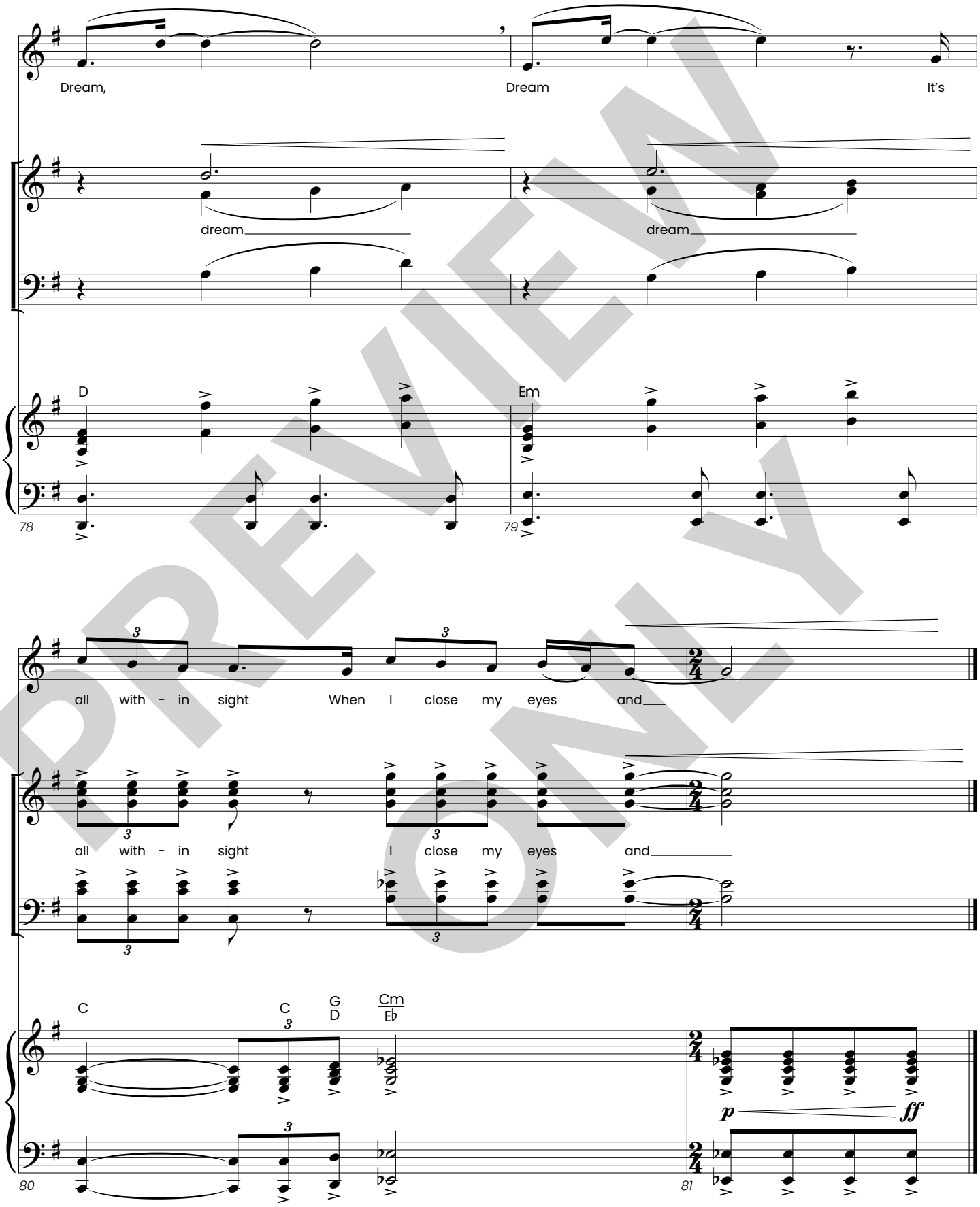


PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 8

(Music stops abruptly as BENNETT inhales deeply, sitting up in bed, as if suddenly waking from a dream.)

BENNETT(Gasp)
Mom? Dad?

(BENNETT cautiously gets out of bed, making his way to the living room.)

MATT
Well, look who's finally up!

LINDA
I can't believe we made it to the tree before you. I think this is the first Christmas you haven't been shaking presents by 4am.

MATT
Our little boy is growing up.

BENNETT
You have no idea.

MATT
What's that?

BENNETT
Uh, nothing.

LINDA
Do you want to open your presents?

BENNETT (Looking back and forth between his mom and dad who are all smiles)
Is everything okay?

MATT & LINDA(Assuring BENNETT)
Of course! Why wouldn't it be? It's Christmas.

BENNETT
It's just that…

LINDA
Parents fight sometimes, honey. I'm sorry you had to hear that.

MATT
Yeah, bud. We got it all figured out. (In his best pirate imitation) "We're going to be taking that journey to Pirate's Cove soon or I'm afraid your mother be making me walk the plank."

LINDA
Matt!

MATT
I'm kidding. I'm kidding. Well, sorta. (Winks at BENNETT.)

BENNETT
We don’t have to. I mean, Dad, your job.

MATT(Chuckles as if he doesn’t know what BENNETT is talking about)
My job?

BENNETT
Yeah. I heard mom say you got fired.

LINDA
Oh, sweet boy, your dad didn’t lose his job. His firm was fired by a very important client. That just means dad has to work a little harder to land a new client to replace that commission.

MATT(Tickling BENNETT)
Yeah. And your old man is up for that!

BENNETT
But, what about the candy shop job?

MATT
That sounds fun.

LINDA
Candy shop job?

BENNETT
Yeah. You were trying to get a job there when the dancers showed up.

MATT
Dancers?

LINDA(Feeling his forehead to check his temperature)
Honey, are you feeling okay?

BENNETT
I’m fine mom. Stop. I’m fine.

MATT(To Linda)
He did eat that spaghetti right before bedtime last night.

LINDA
You’re right. He did.

BENNETT
It was all a dream?

LINDA
Sounds like it was a pretty good one.

MATT(In his best pirate’s voice)
Did you see any no good, hooks-for-hands scoundrels in that dream?

BENNETT(Getting up to start sword-fighting his dad)
As a matter of fact, I took over the Queen Anne's Revenge

MATT
So, you're the new Captain, aye?

(As they sword fight and play, the doorbell rings.)

LINDA(Laughing at Matt and BENNETT.)
I'll get it.

(Singing can be heard in the distance. **17. I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day Reprise**.)

LINDA
Oh, look! BENNETT. Matt. Come in here. We have carolers!

CAROLERS
I heard the bells on Christmas day
I knew the carol that they played,
Their message rang and chimes proclaimed
Of peace of earth, good will to men

(MATT and BENNETT hurry to the door to hear the carolers, still tickling and playing. The lights come up on the carolers. People from BENNETT's dream are in the group. Matt and Linda are all smiles as they notice BENNETT is in awe.)

(Carolers hum as BENNETT speaks)

BENNETT
Mr. Kingston? Mrs. Hamilton? CHLOE?

(From the back of the group, Mary steps forward.)

Mary!

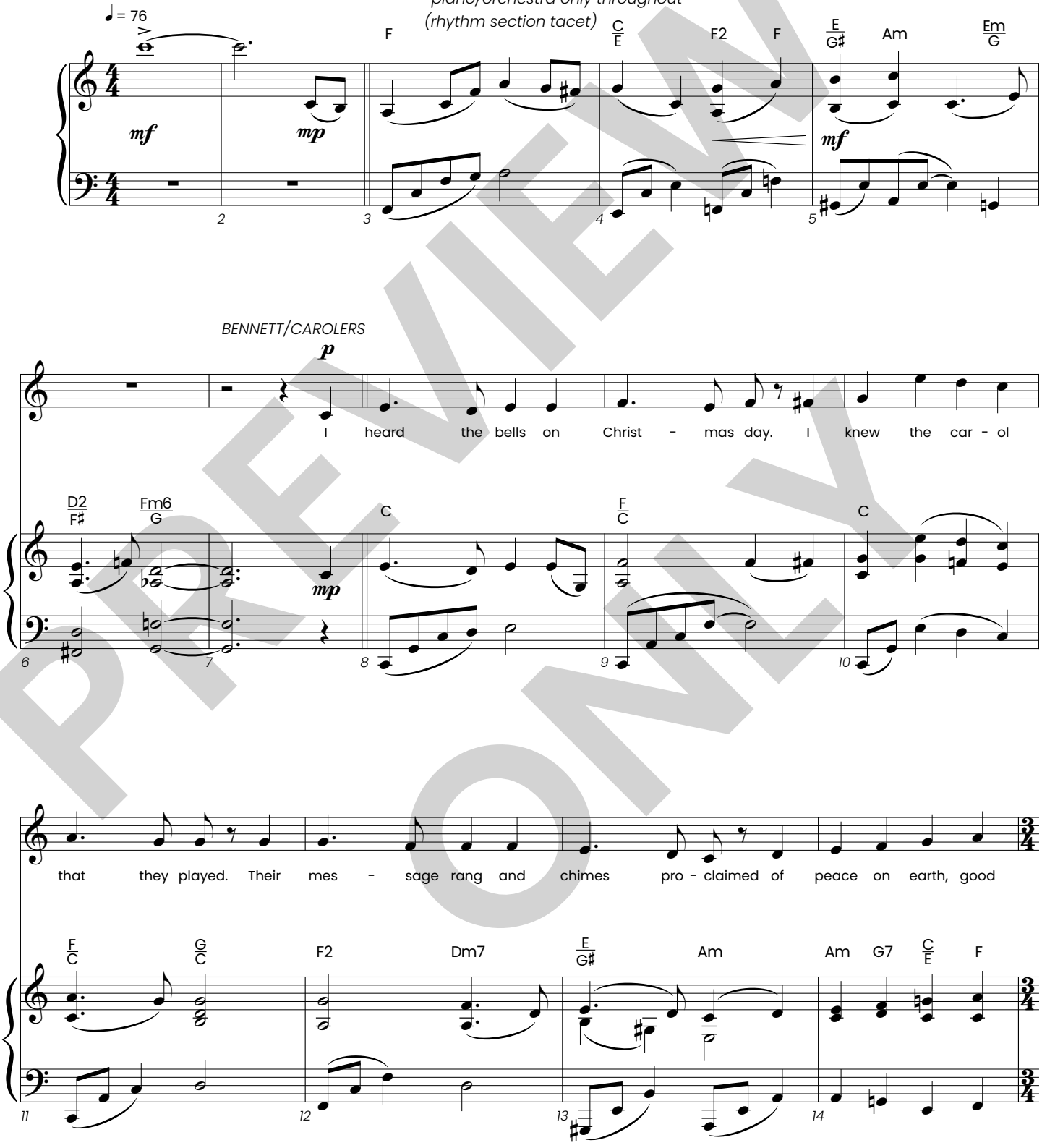
CAROLERS
I heard the hope for which I'd dreamed
Within that blessed Christmas theme
So let the song ring on and on
Of peace on Earth Good Will to Men

End SCENE 8

Reprise: I Heard The Bells

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Johnny Marks
arranged by Cliff Duren

*piano/orchestra only throughout
(rhythm section tacet)



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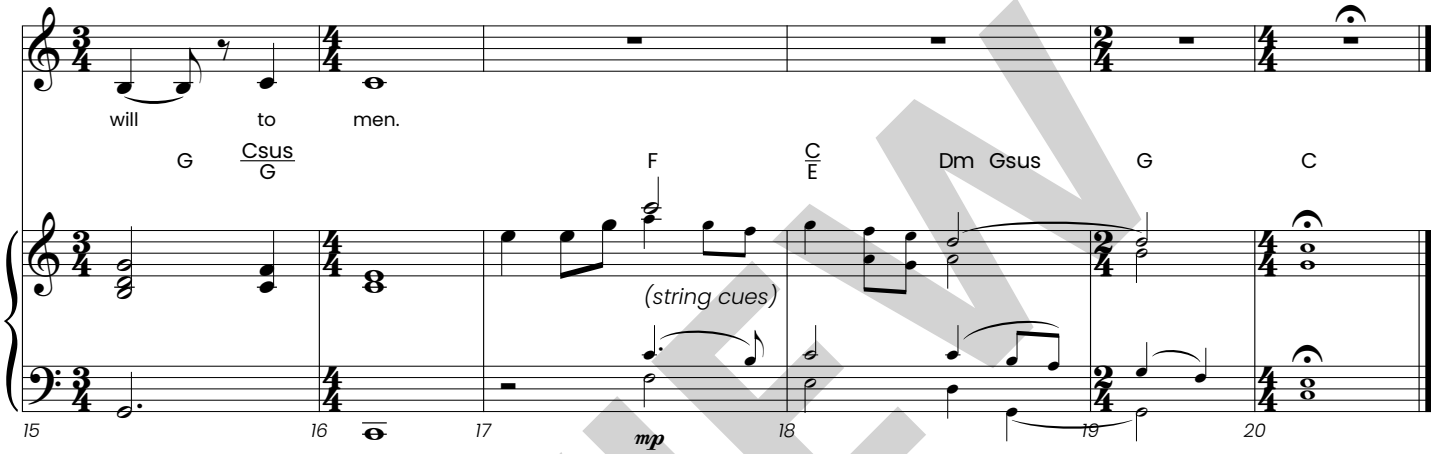

PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 9

(CURTAIN CALL: Music for verse begins.Once full cast is in place, they sing the closer. **18. It All Starts with a Dream.**)

End Scene 9

End Act 2