Daniel Cui

Jasmine Flower (2023)

For SATB Choir and Percussion

PREVIEW ONLY

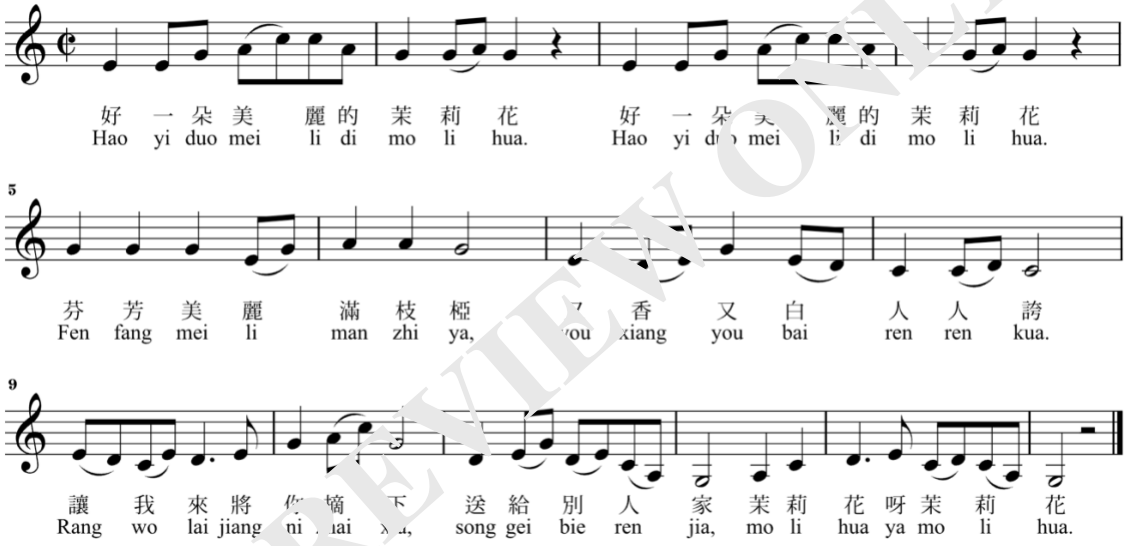
Percussion 1:
Marimba, Chinese Gong (Small)

Percussion 2:
Slapstick (Small), Woodblock

Program Notes:

'Jasmine Flower' is a famous Chinese folk tune originated around the area of my hometown Nanjing. The most well-known appearance of this folk tune in the western art music canon is the opera 'Turandot' by Verdi. As a composer who grew up in the city of Nanjing, I had always intended to adapt this tune into my own work.

Original tune:



PREVIEW ONLY

Text Translation:

Flower of jasmine, so fair!
Flower of jasmine, so fair!
Budding and blooming here and there,
Pure and fragrant all do declare.
Let me pick you with tender care,
Sweetness for all to share.
Jasmine fair, oh Jasmine fair.

Chinese Pinyin:

Hao yi duo mei li di mo li hua
Hao yi duo mei li di mo li hua
Fen fang mei li man zhi ya
You xiang you bai ren ren kua
Rang wo lai jiang ni zhai xia
Song gei bie ren jia
Mo li hua ya, mo li hua

Instead of treating the tune as an entity, my approach is to divide the tune into different phrases and emphasize the meaning of the text. Correspondingly, the meaning of each phrase is captured by dramatic (occasionally extreme) and contrasting musical materials. In some occasions, the original melody can be heard clearly, but in most cases, the original tune is treated as fragments

which drive the motivic developments of this work. Harmonically, colors are of emphasis instead of traditional functions. The text of this work is written in Chinese Pinyin, as the piece should be sung in the language of Chinese.

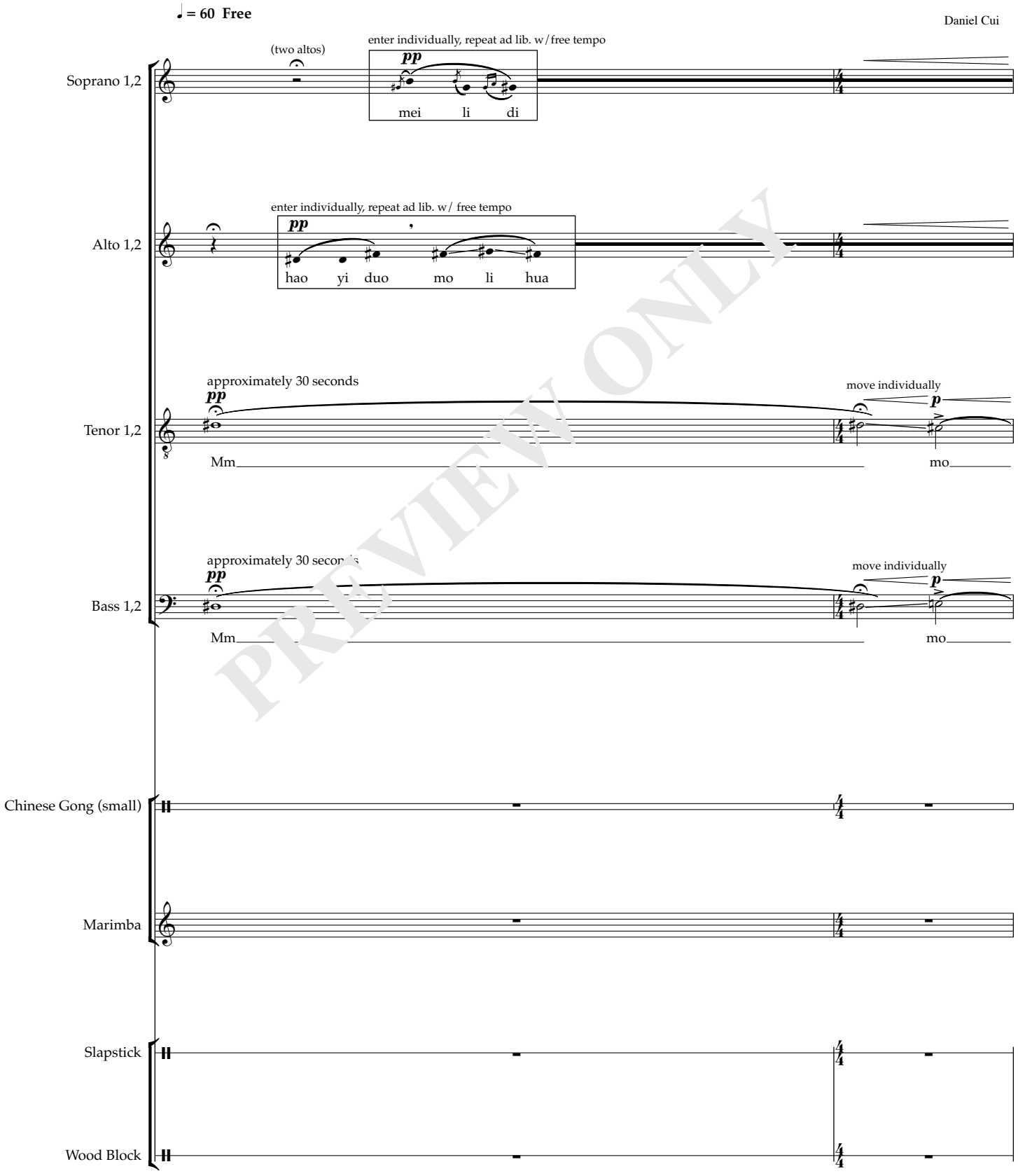
The piece is in three main sections. The opening section starts free and aleatoric, repeating the first two lines of the text, creating a mysterious atmosphere, as if the appearance of the jasmine flower is slowly unveiled. It gradually builds up into a huge tutti sound, as the text moves on to the third line, praising the pure beauty of the jasmine flower. It is then erupted by the percussions which marks the start of the middle section. The percussion duo that starts this section feature instruments and rhythmic motives inspired by traditional Chinese opera, more specifically, the Nanjing style of opera, which always highlights specific percussions and rhythms. In terms of the text, the entire middle section repeats only two words 'Let me!'. It is the only time in the text where the first-person view ('me') is addressed. The intention behind this middle section is to express the excitement from 'me' when seeing such beauty of the jasmine flower. As the drama builds up into an extreme, the music suddenly becomes soft and sweet at the beginning of the last section, as the text moves on to 'pick you with tender care'. The ending section features many cases of 'wordplays' that emphasize on the meanings of 'tender care, sweetness, all to share'. Finally, the piece ends with text repeating the name of the flower 'jasmine, jasmine…' as the music slow decays.

This work is not only a praise to the beauty of jasmine flower, but also my personal expression of love and gratitude to the city of Nanjing where I was born and raised. In this case, the jasmine flower for me, is a representation of my hometown. Nanjing is city of profound history, great liveliness, and sheer beauty, as represented by the three sections of this work. For me, there is nothing more fitting than expressing my love to my city with my own adaptations of a folk tune that is originated from there, and I wish to share this love with this piece of music.

PREVIEW ONLY

Jasmine Flower

For SATB Choir and Percussion



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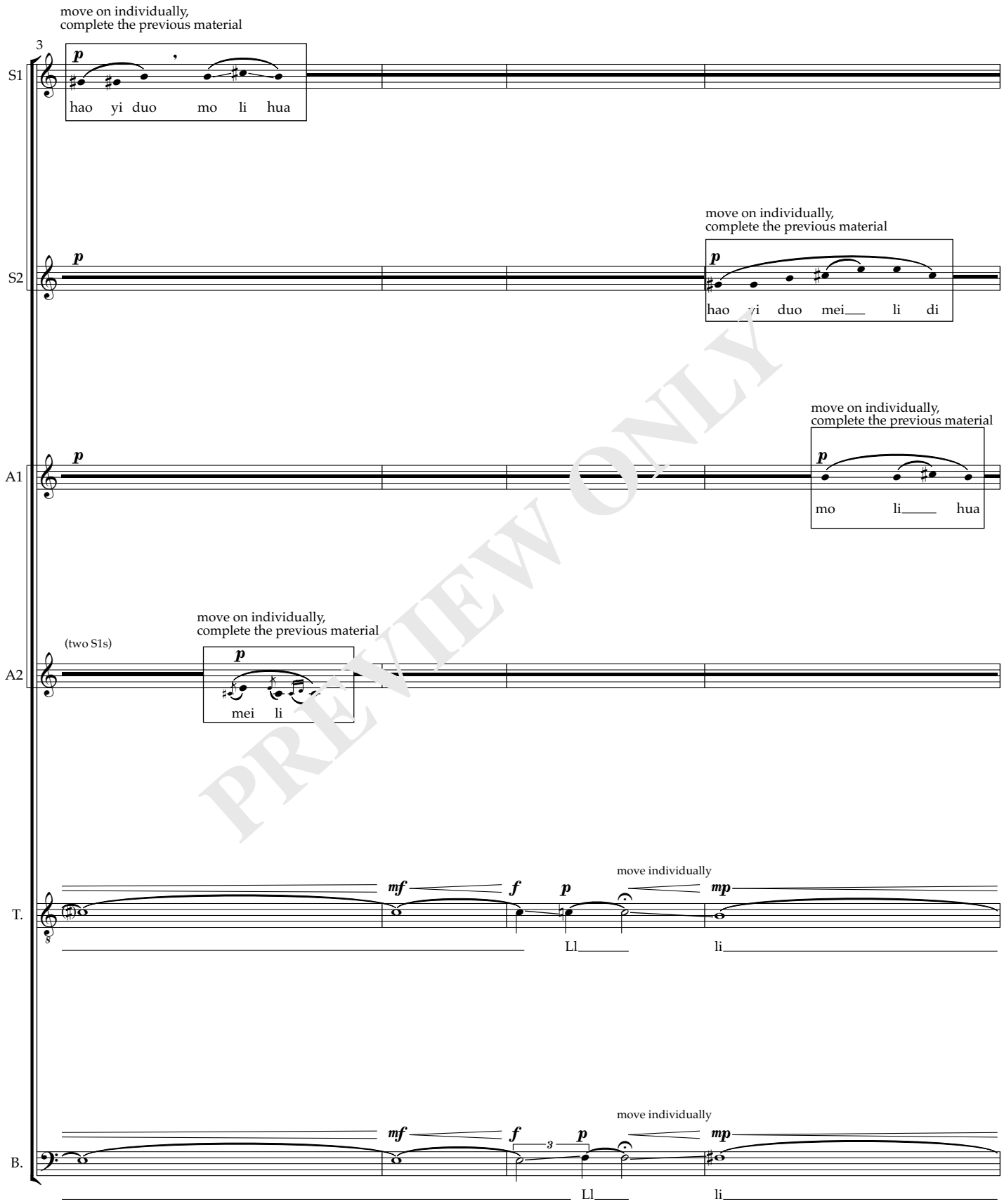

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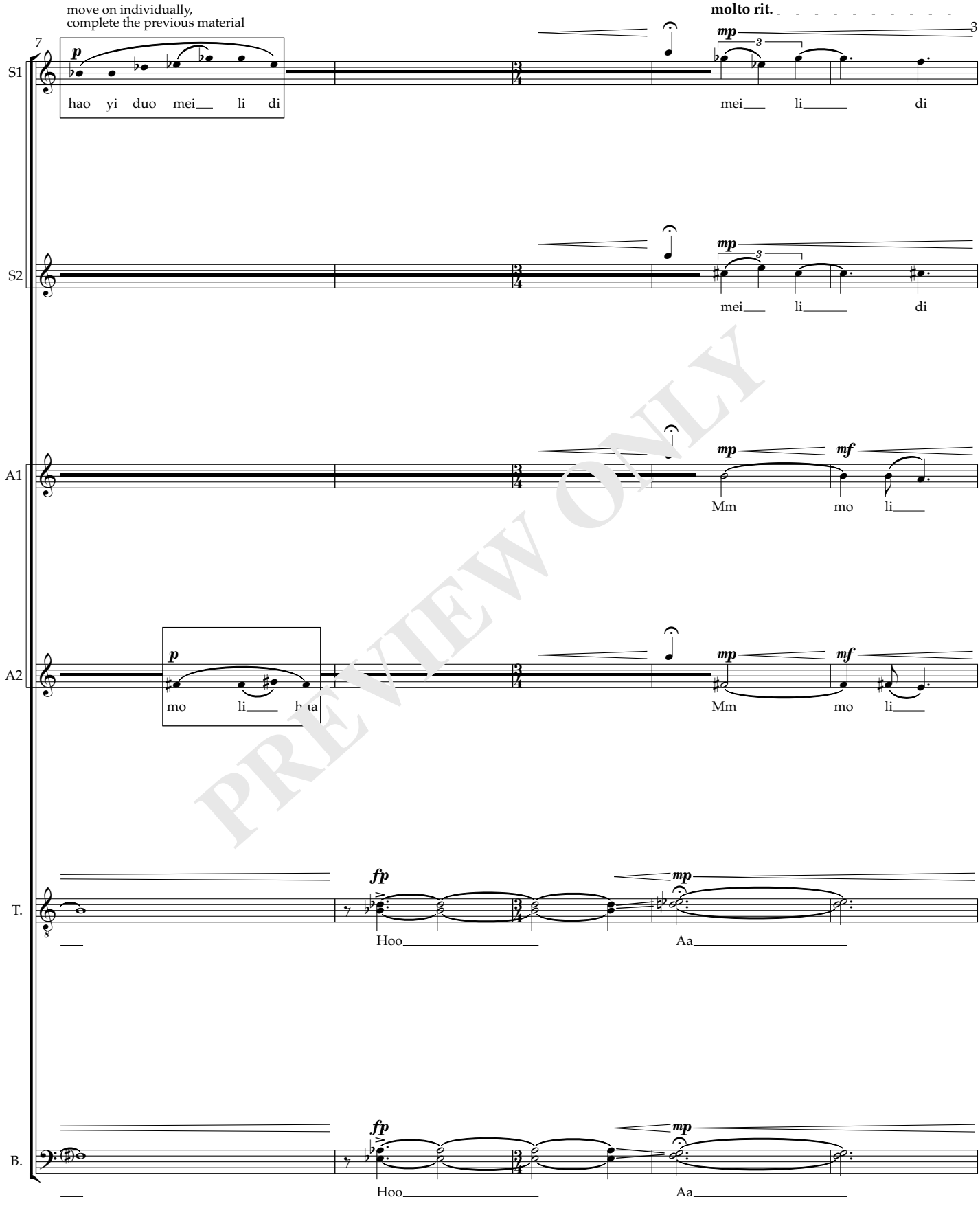

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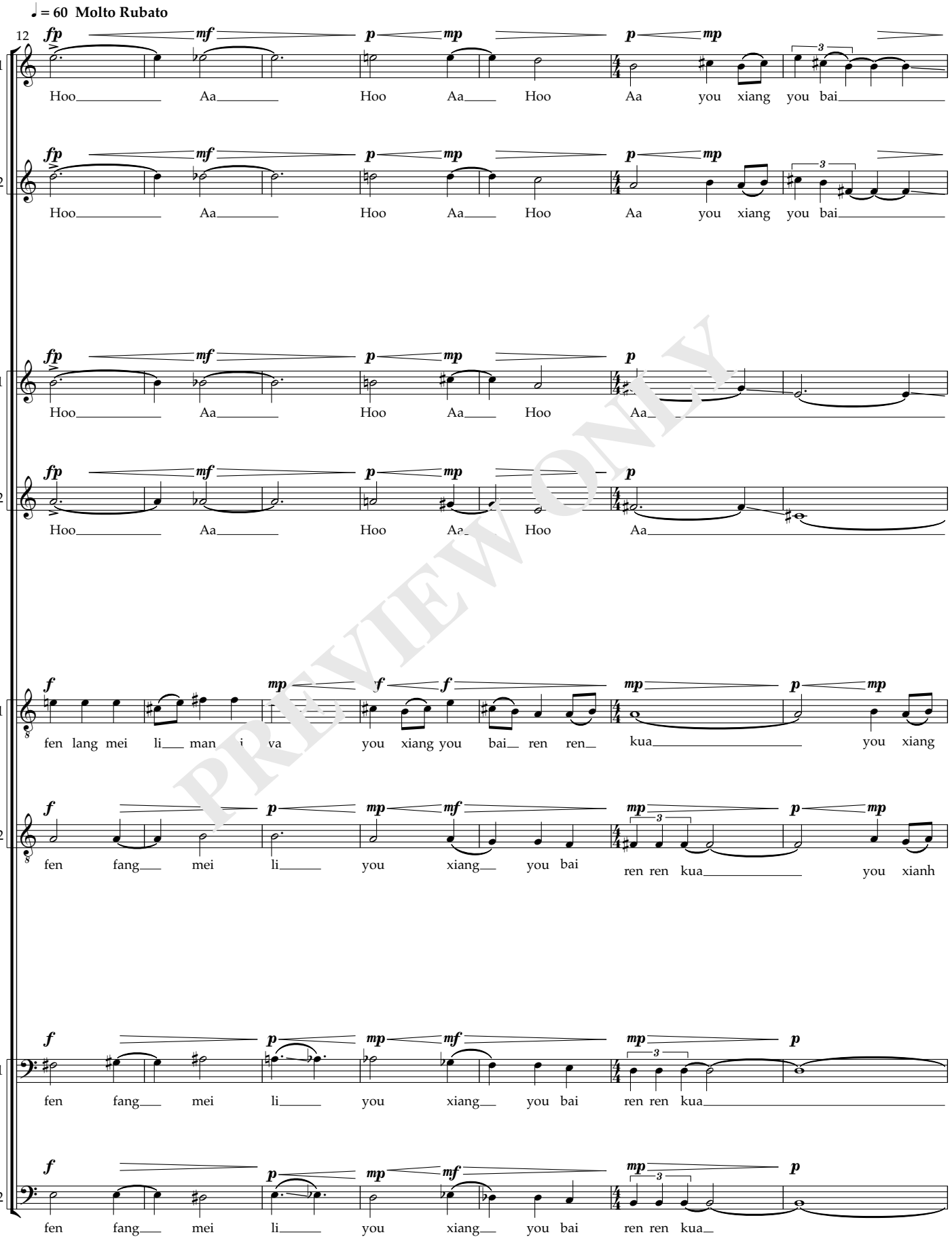

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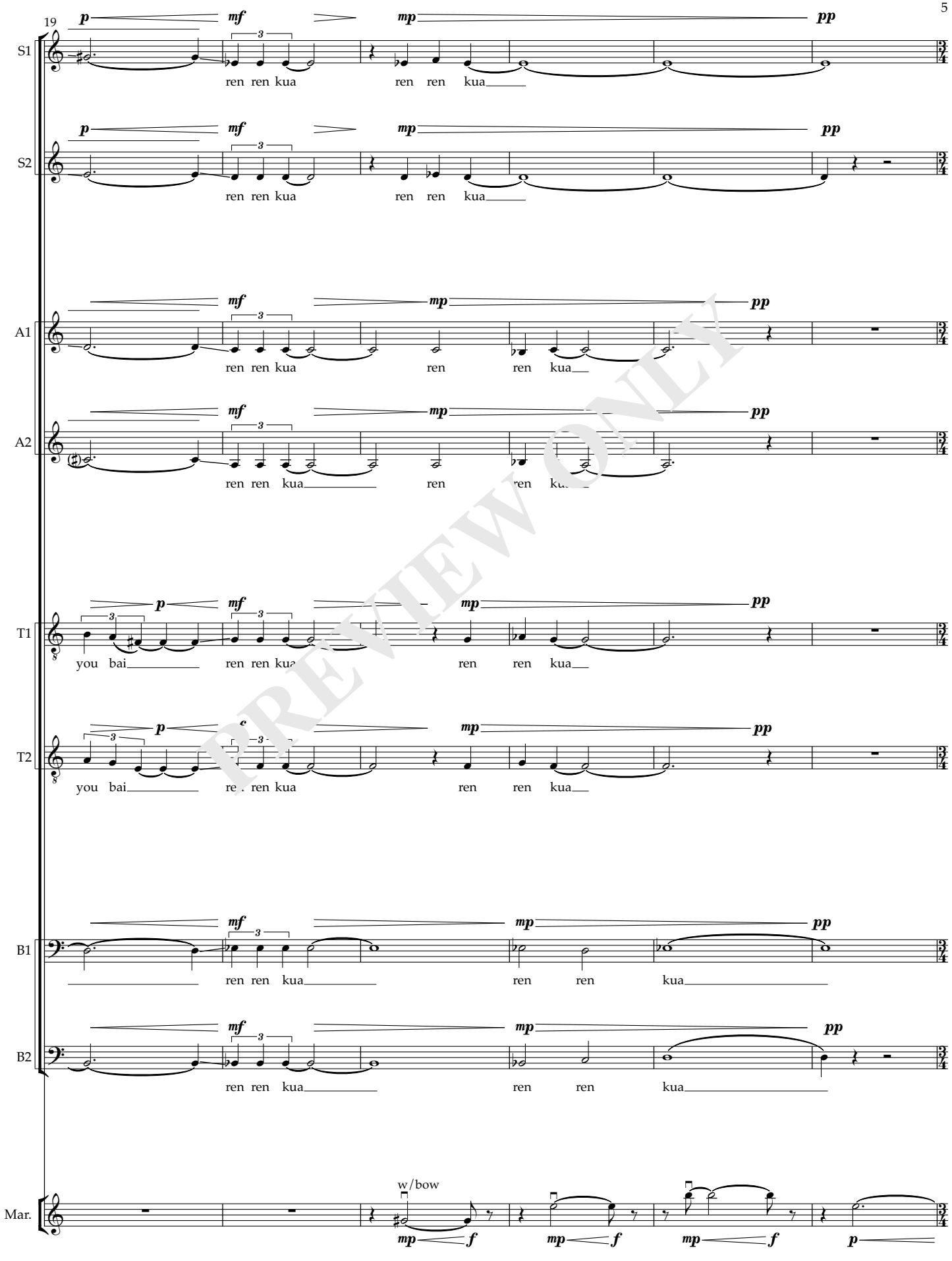

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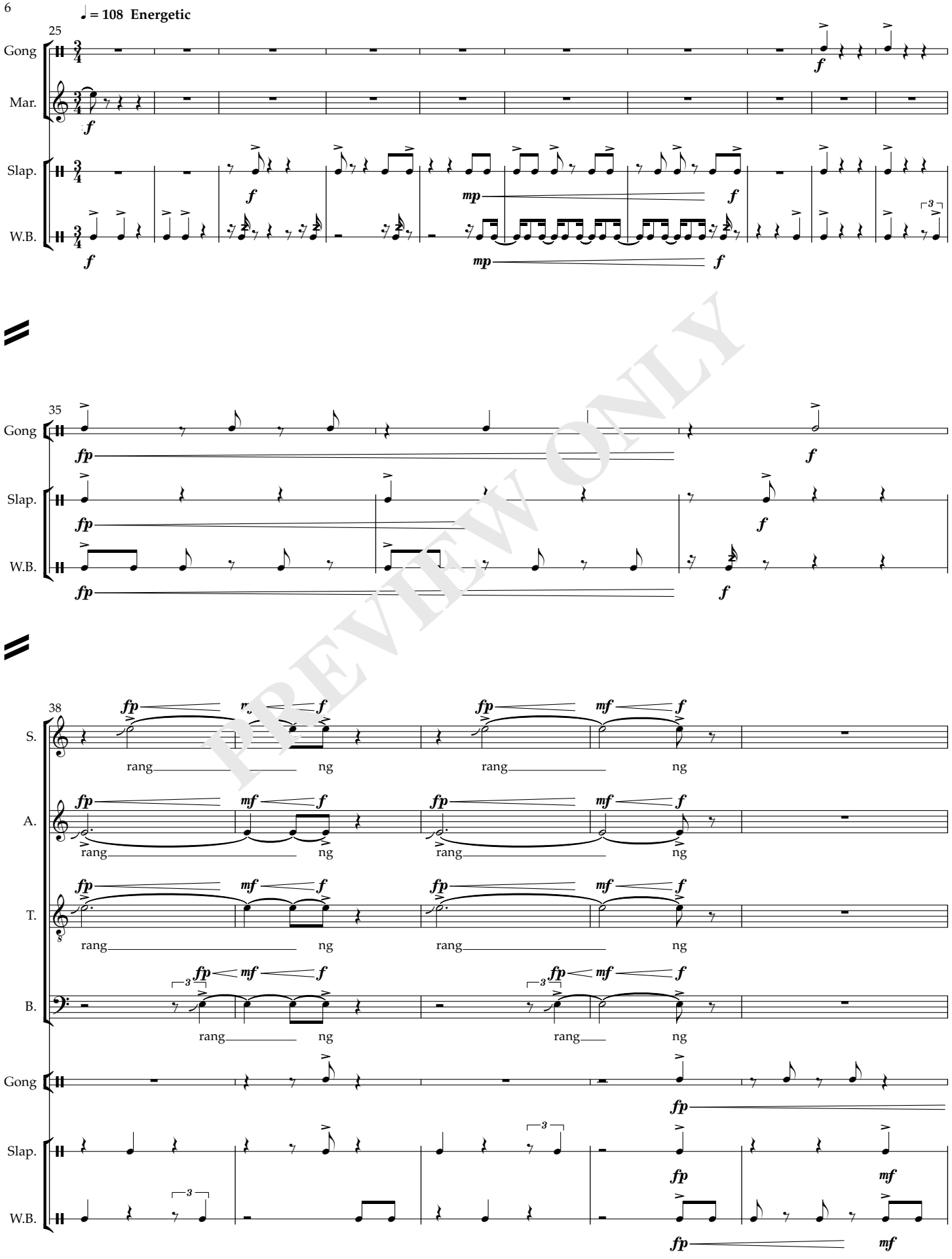

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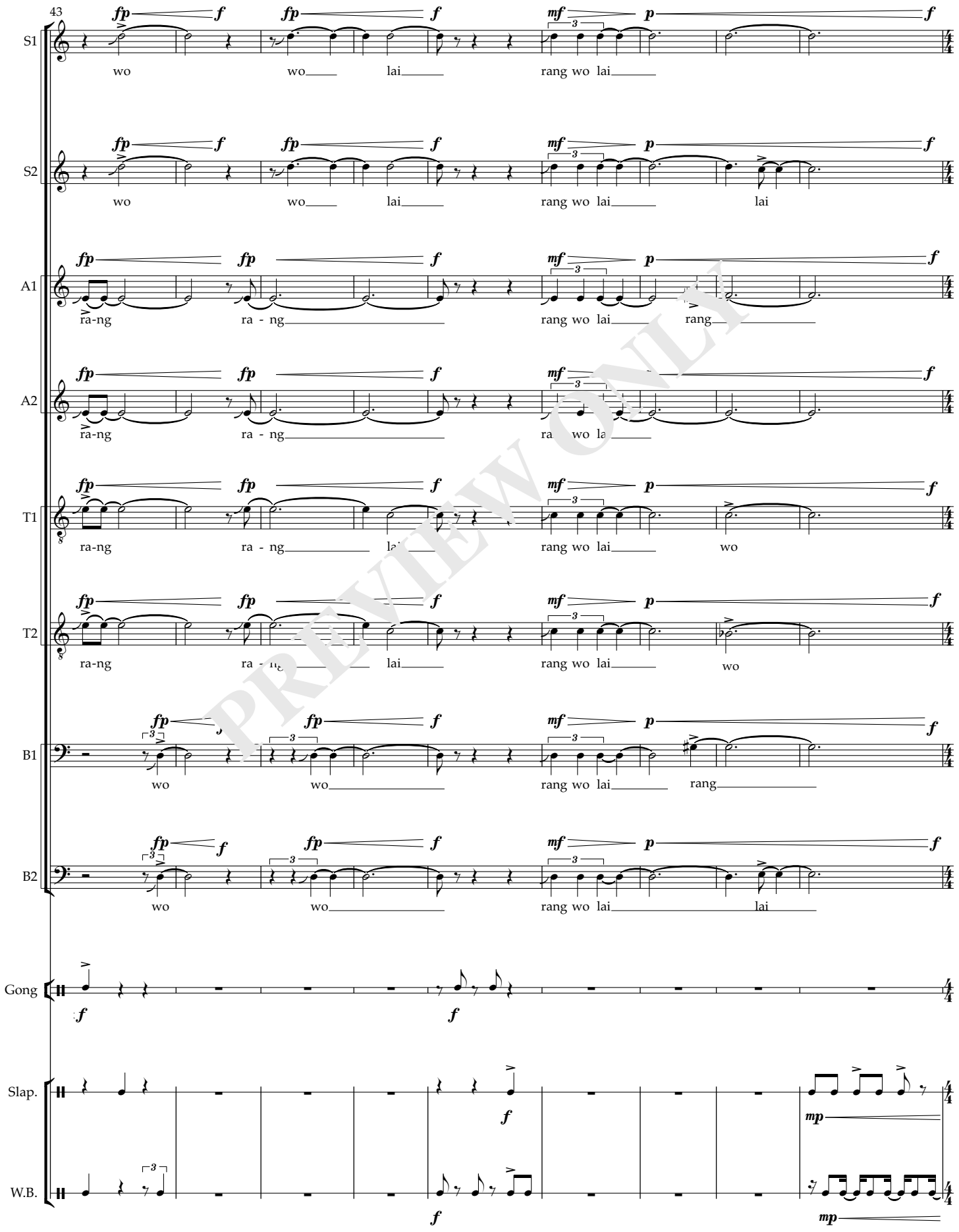

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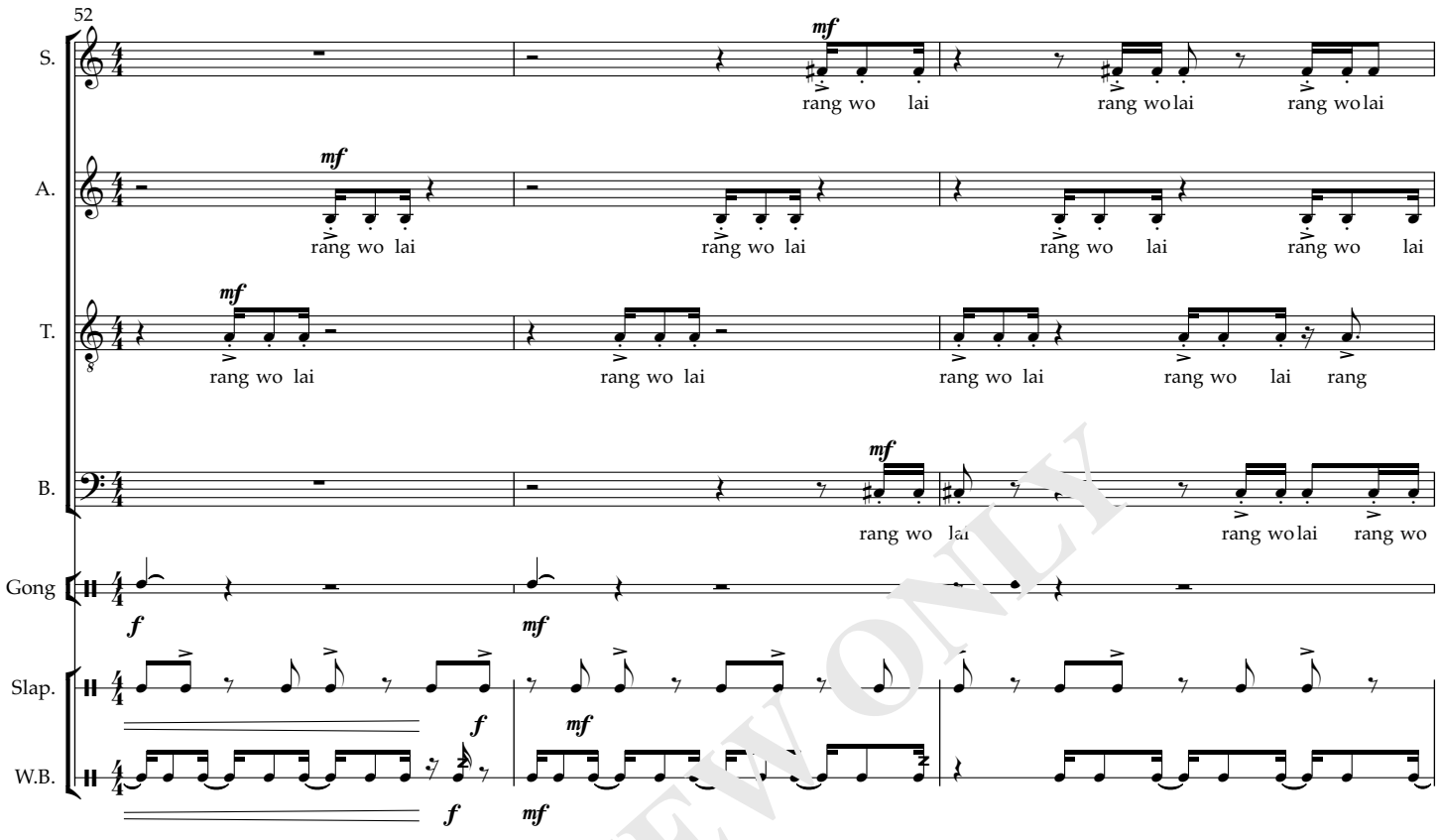

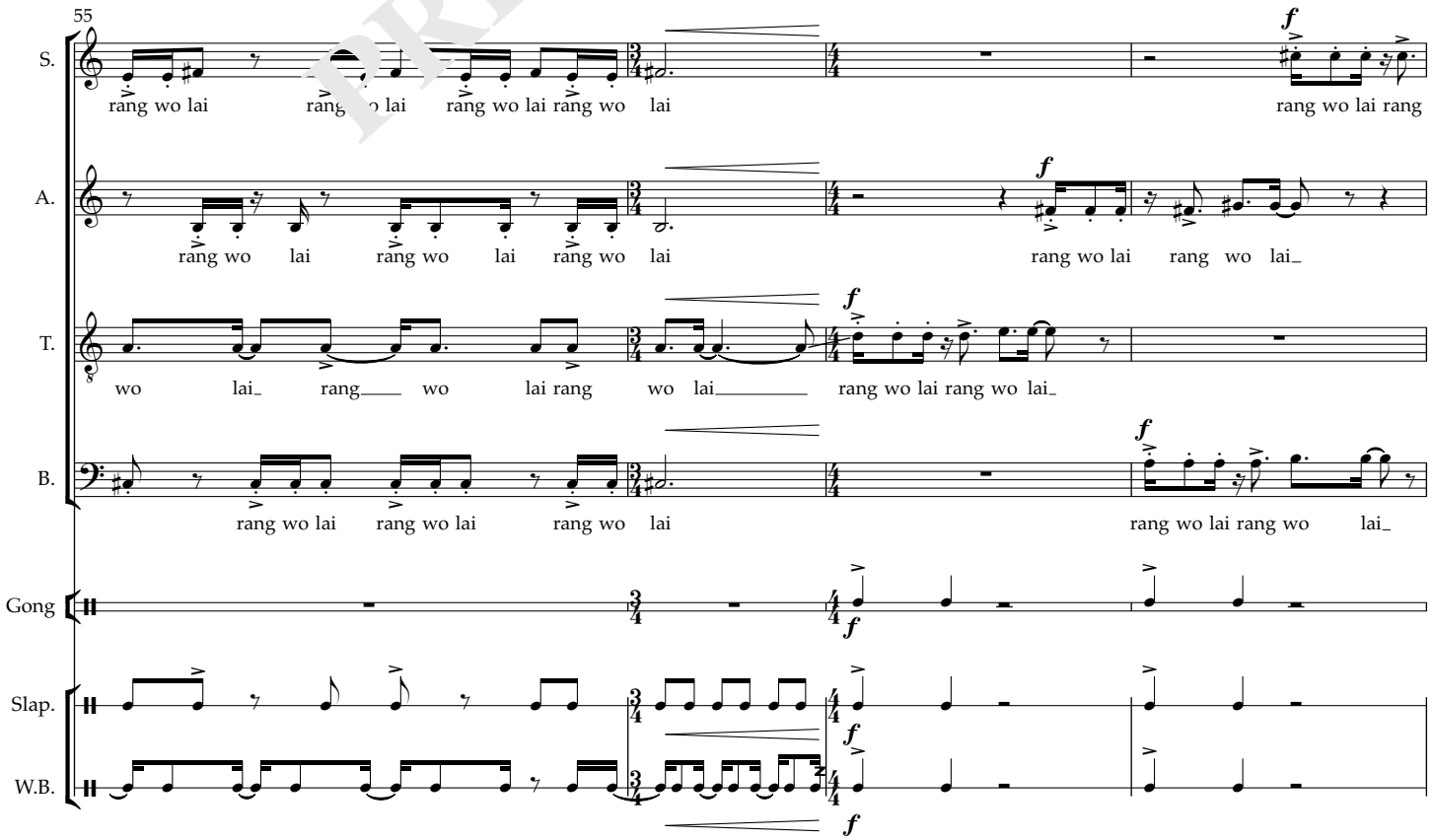

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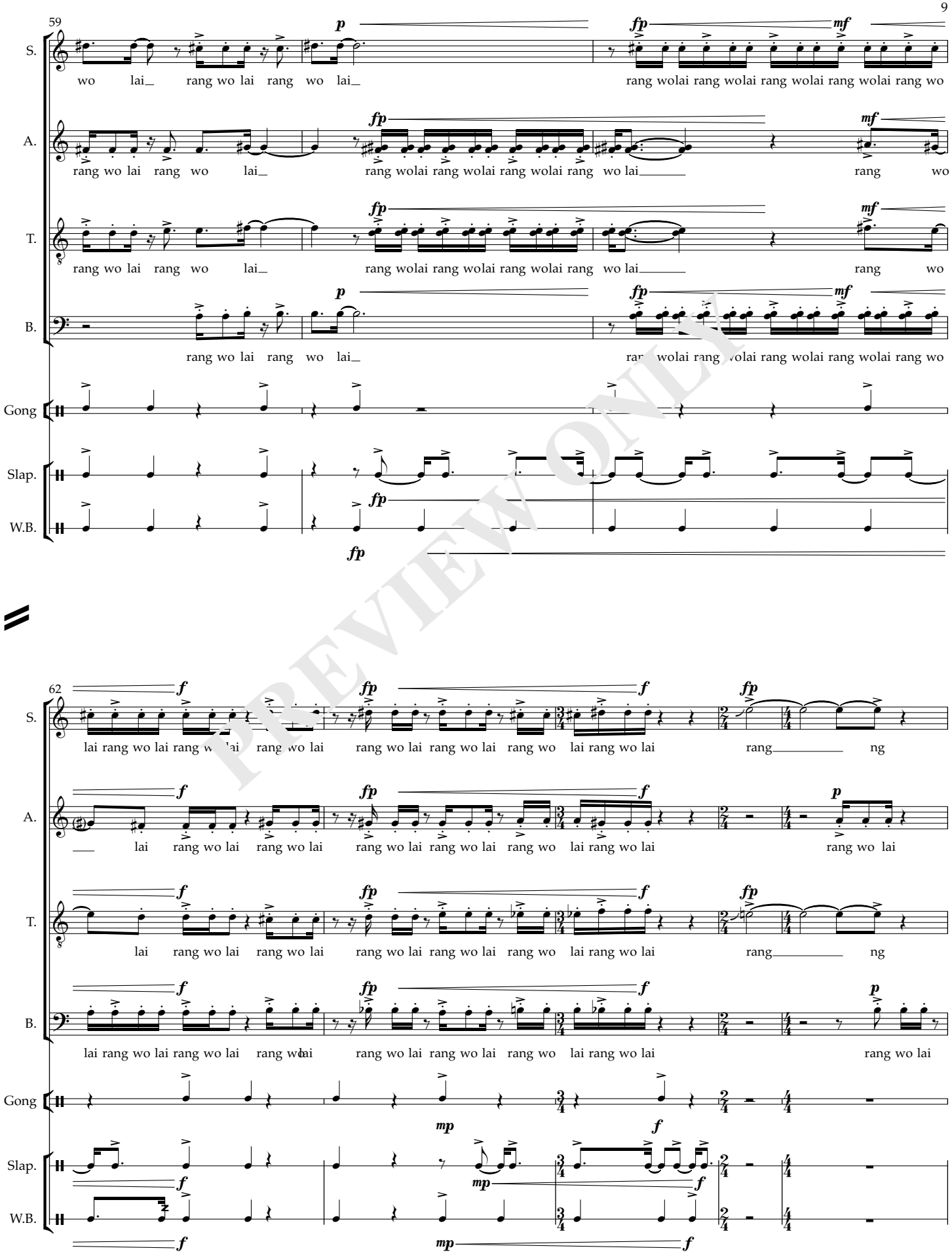

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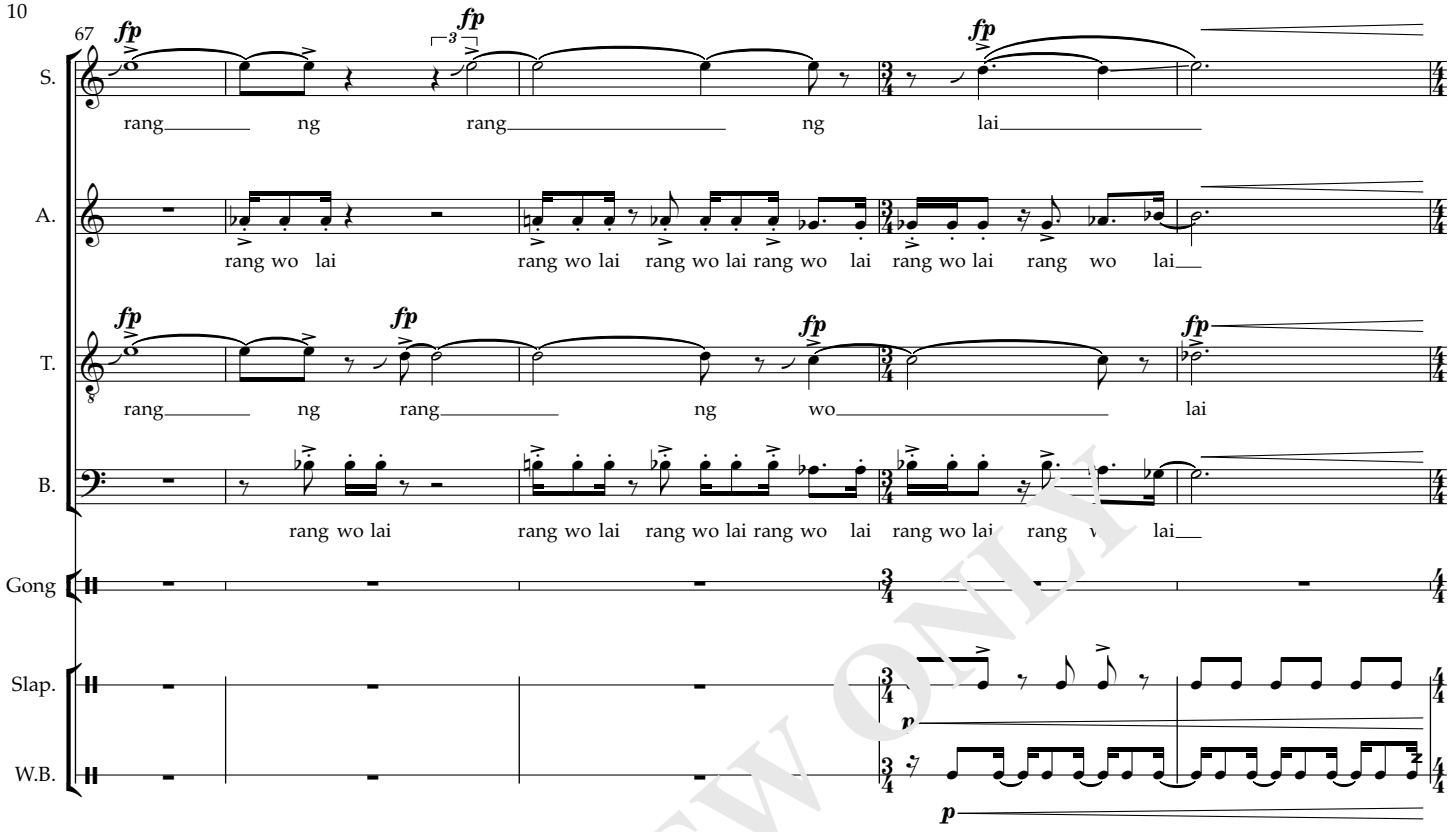

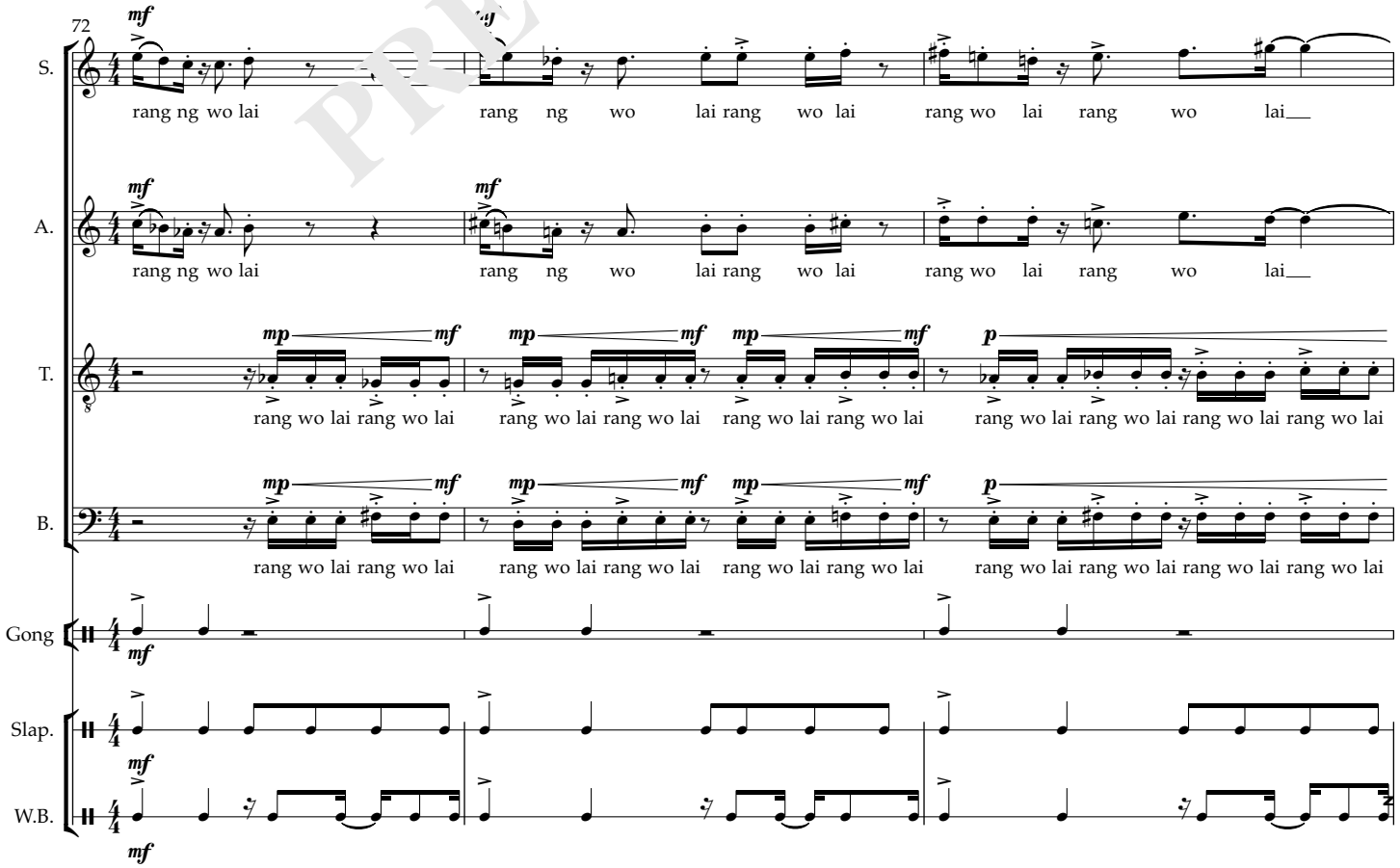

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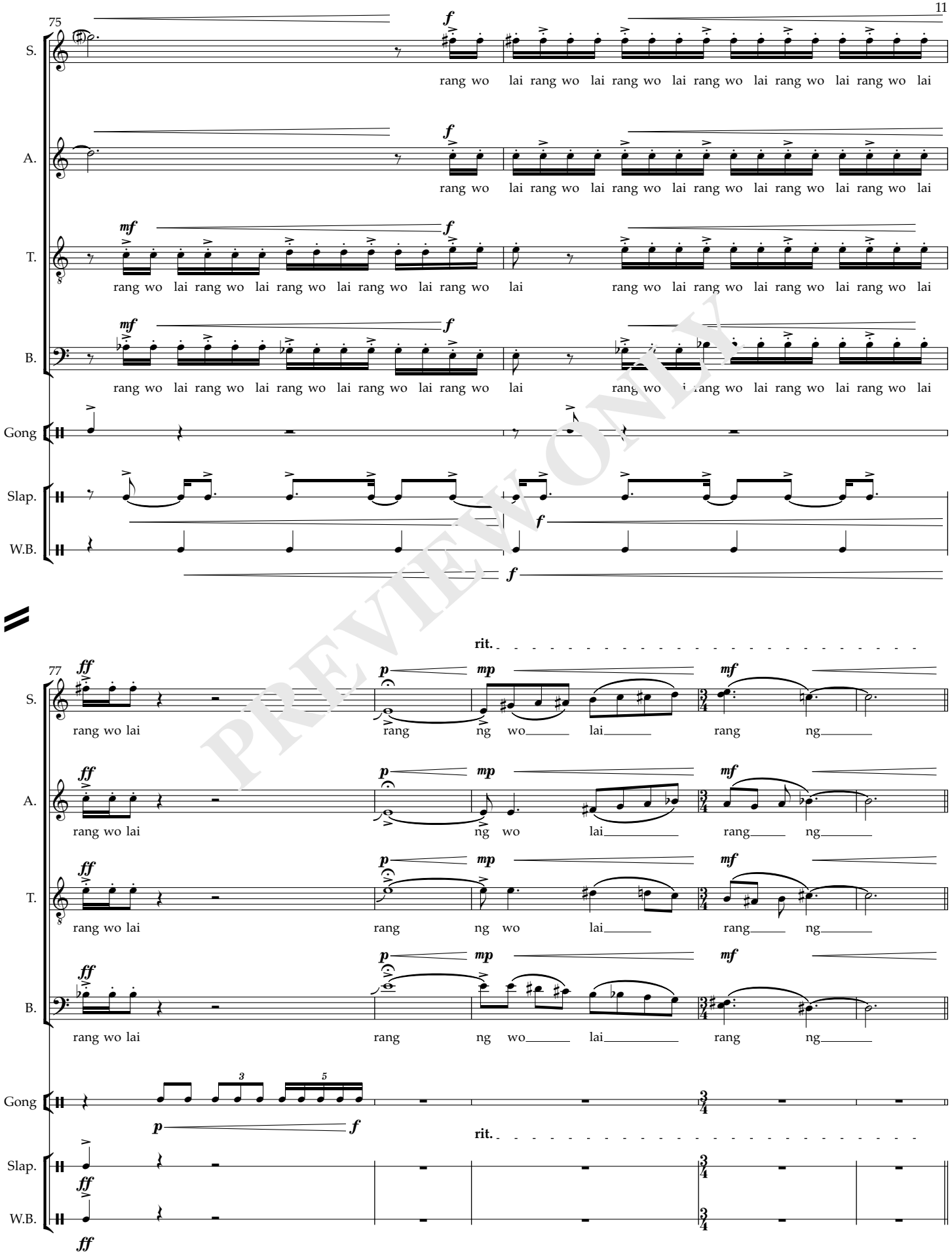

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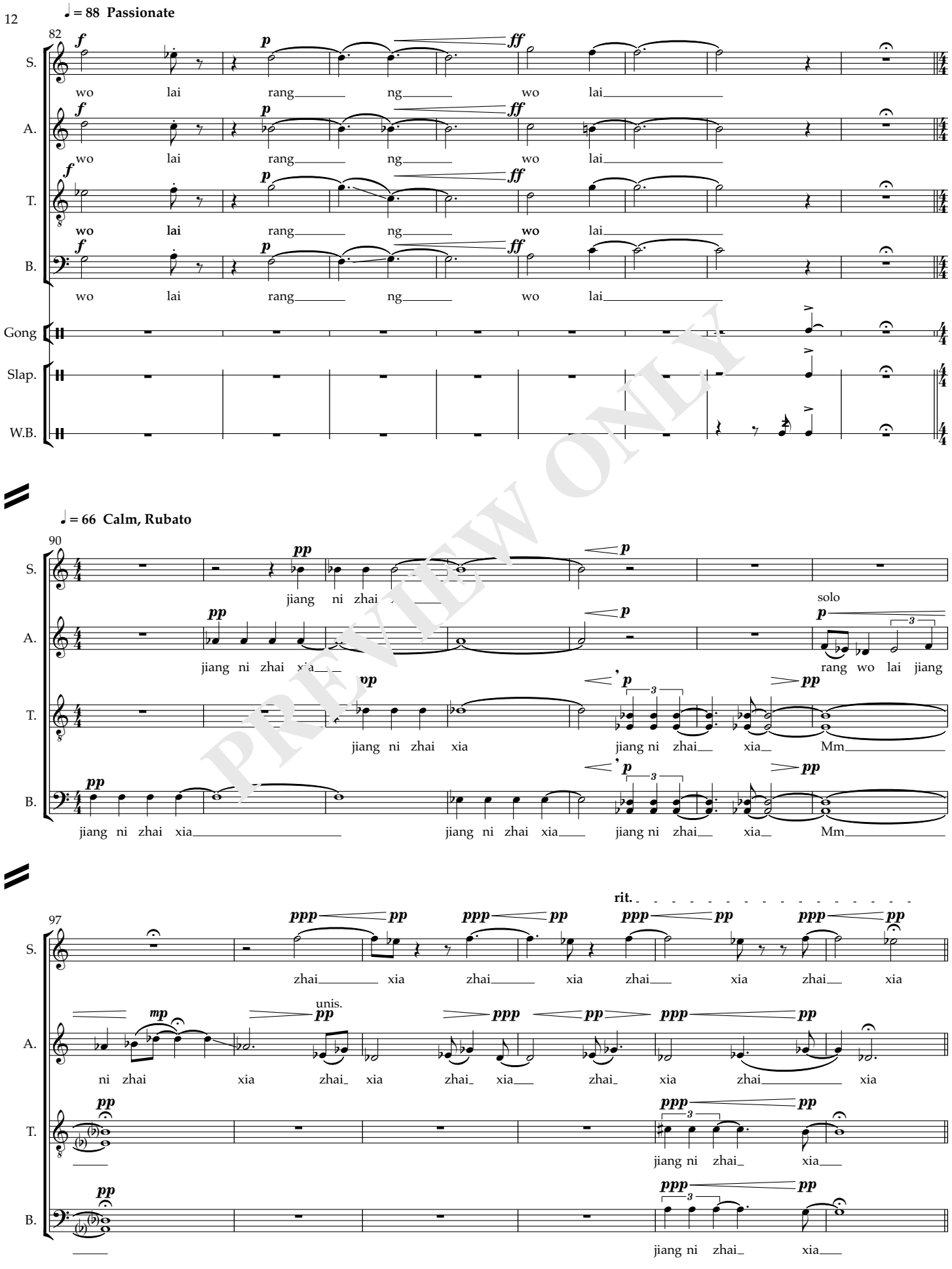

PREVIEW ONLY

♩ = 56 Warm

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S1 pp p f ff
gei Mm mo li hua mo li hua ya

S2 pp p f ff
en Mm mo li hua mo li hua ya

A1 pp p f ff
ei Mm mei li mo li hua ya

A2 pp p f ff
song Mm mei li di mo li hua ya

T1 pp p f ff
ren Mm mo li hua mo li hua ya

T2 pp p f ff
ie Mm mo li hua mo li hua ya

B1 pp p f ff
bie Mm mo li hua mo li hua ya

B2 pp p f ff
jia Mm mo li hua mo li hua ya

Mar. p mp f ff

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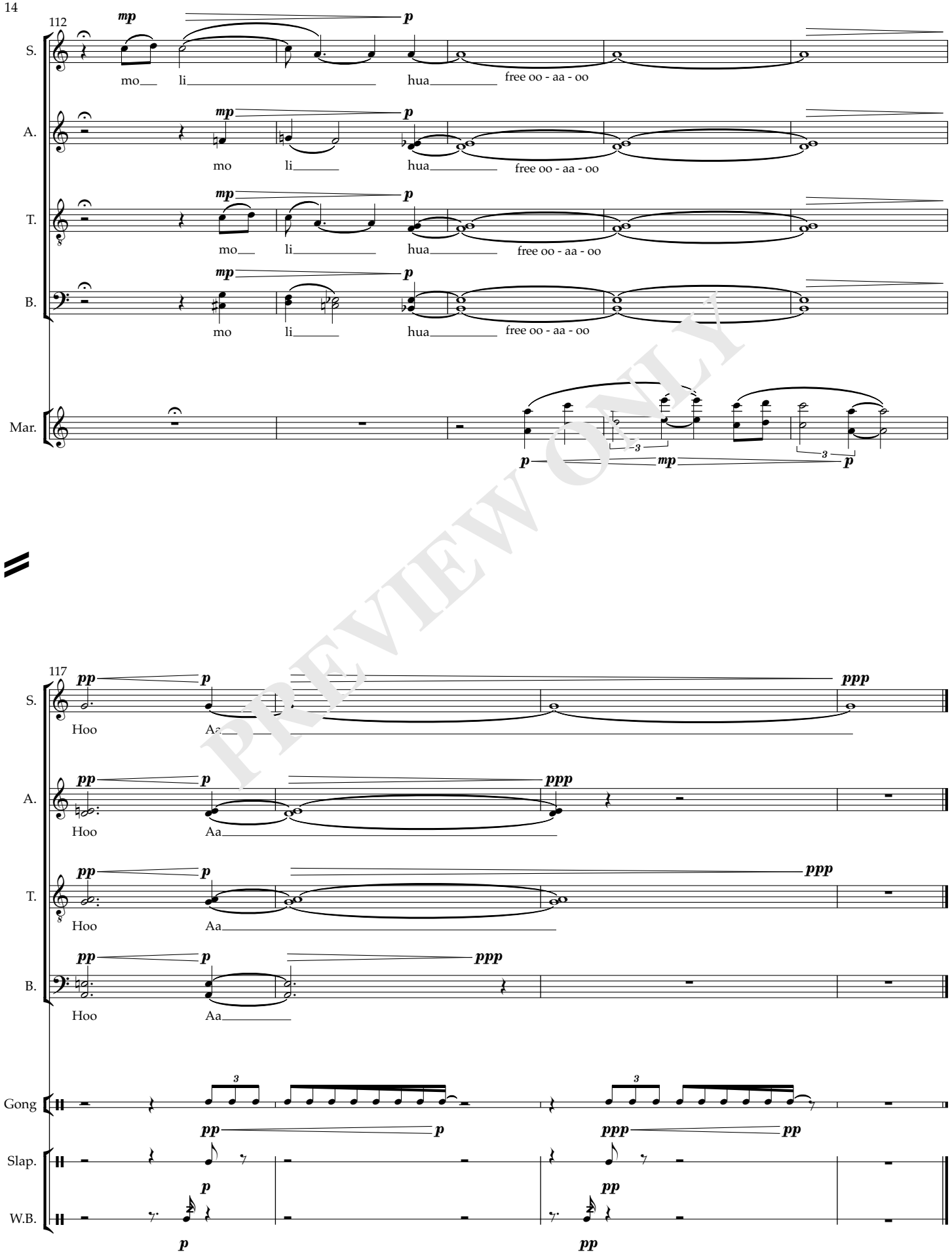

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