36 402

Eetu Ranta-aho

Middens

for Japanese instruments

2026

Music Finland

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Middens

Eetu Ranta-aho
2026

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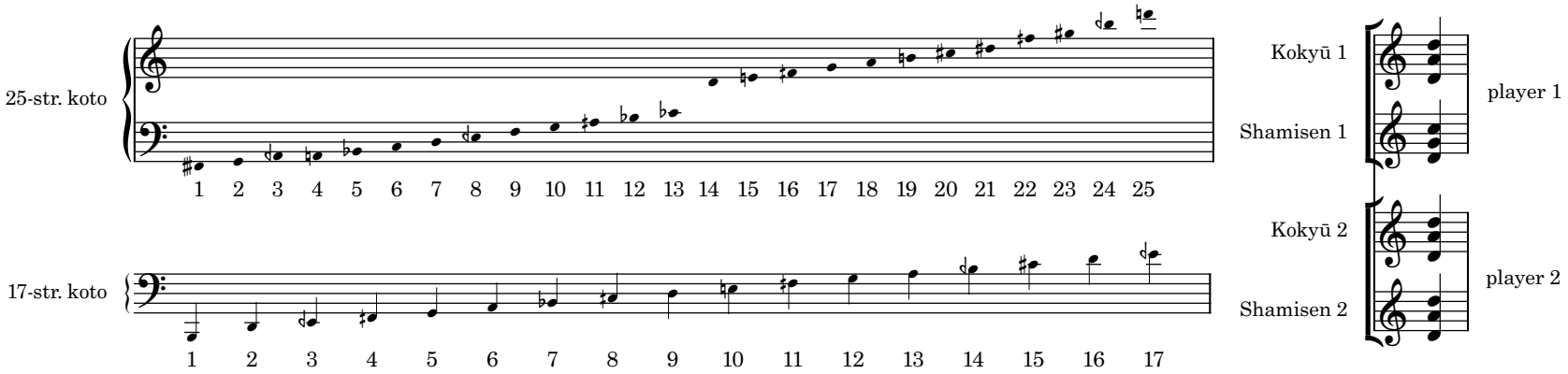
Performance instructions

Tuning



Percussion:
-kodzutsumi
-orugōru (4-5 different sizes)
-1 taiko or similar low pitched drum, with mallets and brush.
-uchiwa-ame (rain sound)

ntals apply. For intervals smaller than 1/4-tone, explanations are written in score and parts.

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Program note
A midden is an archeological dump of domestic waste. Often they are composed of leftover shells that have accumulated over centuries - or even millennia - forming mounds of formidable proportions in places where there is or once was access to the sea and suitable conditions for shell foraging. Such shell mounds are found all over the world, and some of them are among the earliest pieces of evidence of human presence and possible habitat in the area.

I feel that a midden has palpable, mysterious energy. It is an ancient formation, many of them millennia older than the pyramids of Egypt, and they are not built as monuments for gods, but rather they have been created unintenionally, leaving us hints of what life was like in the earlier stages of humanity's existence.

One should never touch or dig a midden, as it will be then forever altered or destroyed, and this I find adds to the odd energy and draw I feel in them: if I were to dig and look inside, I could see and touch something that was previously seen and touched by a prehistoric person, and nothing will be between us except a vast amount of time. The connection feels much more personal than say - admiring or entering the pyramids. The midden is like a sealed envelope, it conceals something much more personal.

In movement I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers), I imagined a place yet unvisited by homo sapiens. Nothing happes, until something does.

In movement II - hommage à BAZ I attempt to tap into the mysterious energy of a midden. When thinking of musical ways of expressing such palpable, almost pulsating energy, I found myself thinking a lot of *Stille und Umkehr* by Bernd Alois Zimmermann. It has a static tension that inspired me when writing this movement.

Movement III - future furious is an expression of the present world. While shell middens are extremely long lasting, they are formed with natural materials, and nature can thrive around and on them. Our moderns middens on the other hand: huge waist dumps filled with plastic and other non-degra[illegible]ll outlive the ancienct middens of early humans and leave permanent damage to where they are set. I do not intend to ch[illegible]dern way of life, as I very much participate in it myself. Rather I feel the fumes and fuels of factories producing to-be-[illegible]nevitability in the music. We realize where our way of life leads us, and many of us feel we have to do something about [illegible]e very little in their power to achieve meaningful change.

[illegible]ated to J-TRAD Ensemble Mahoroba (below). Premiere was on May 18th 2026 in Tokyo.

[illegible]bass koto

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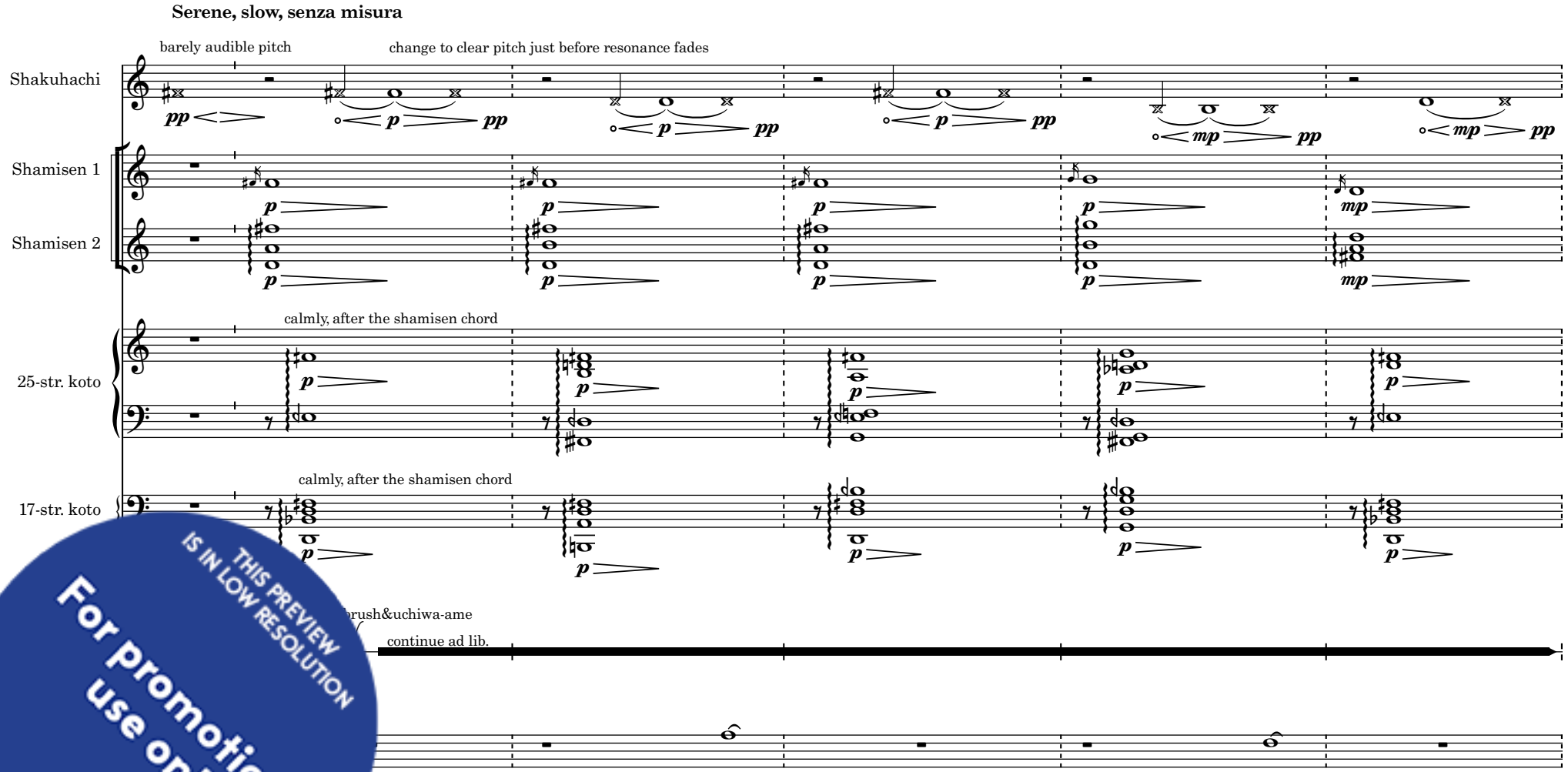
Middens

Eetu Ranta-aho

I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)



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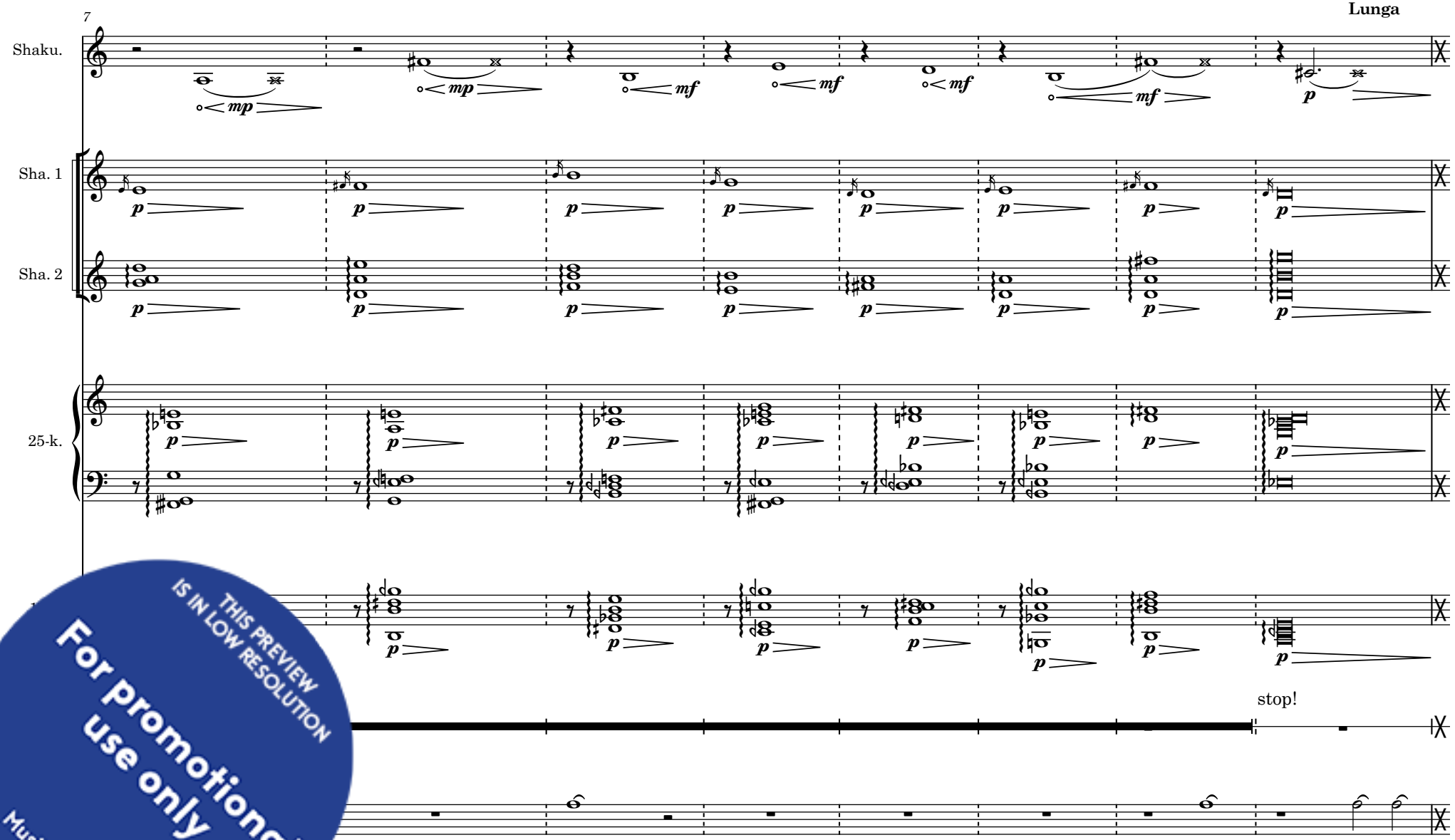

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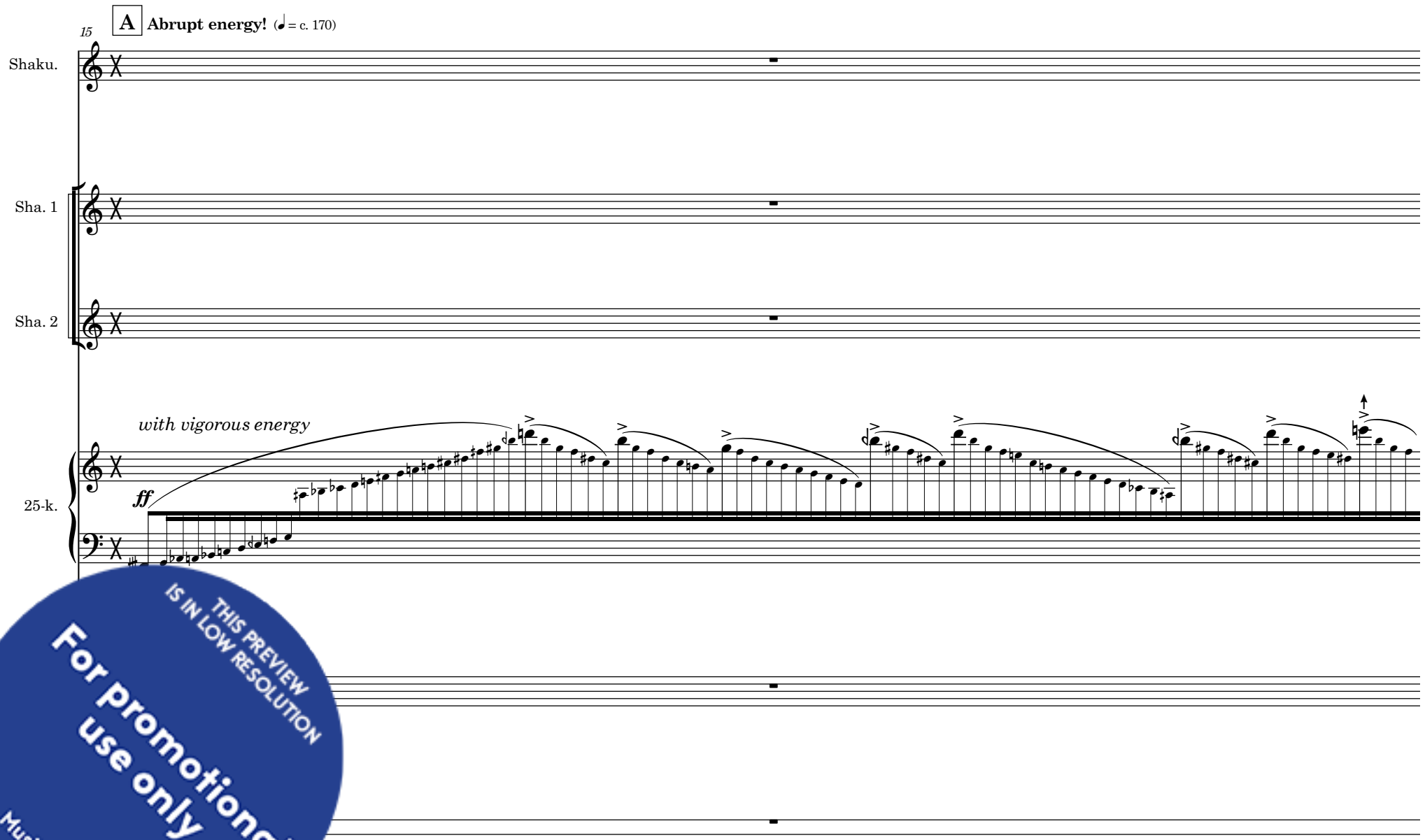

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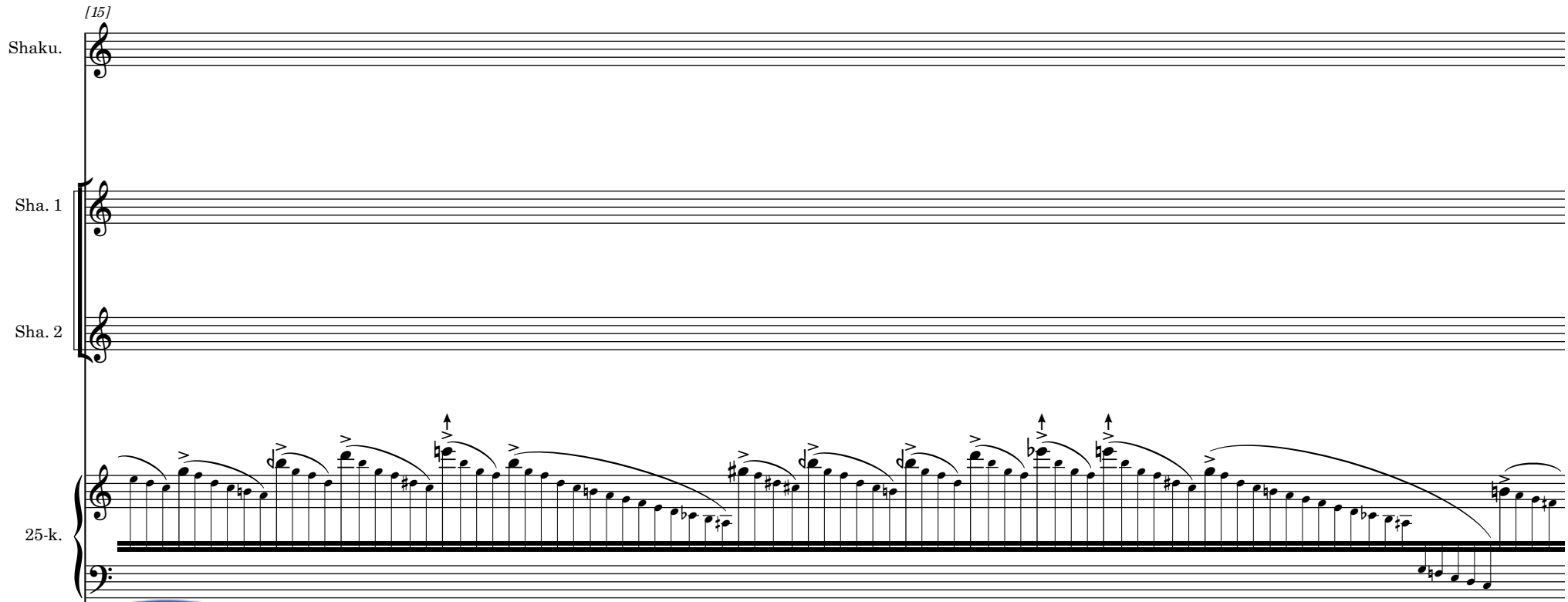

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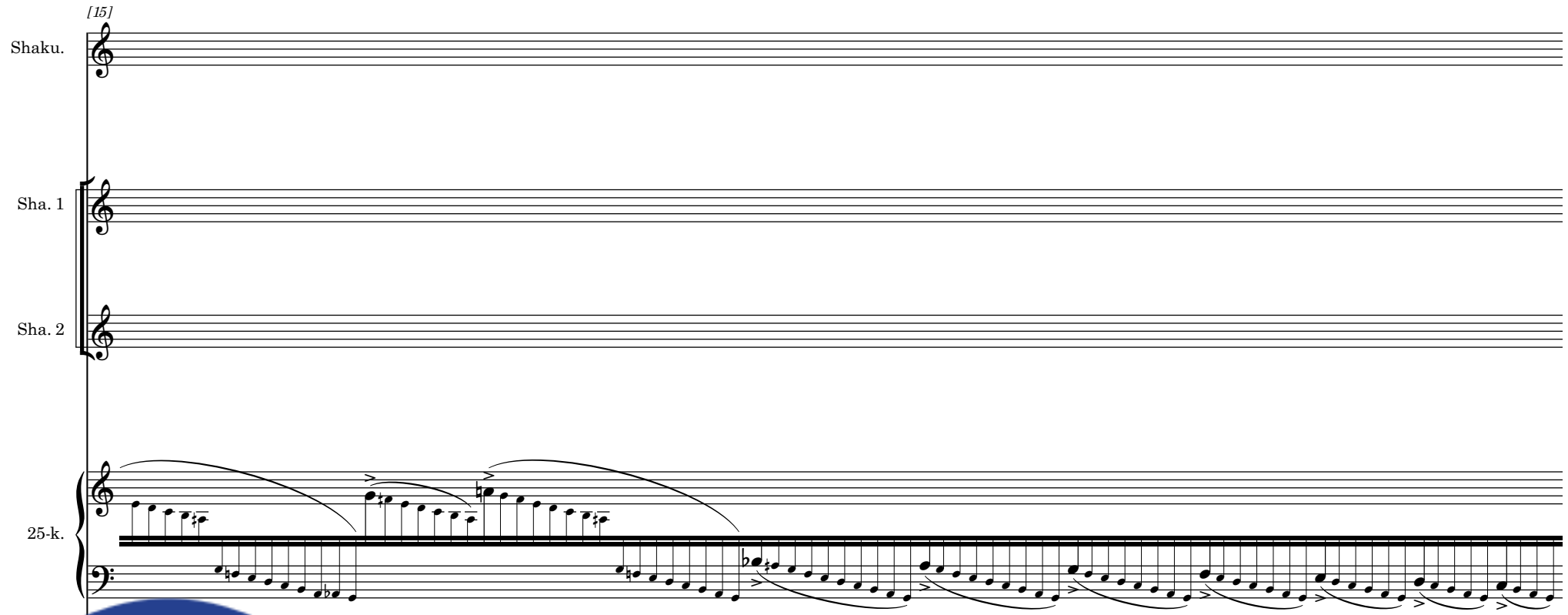

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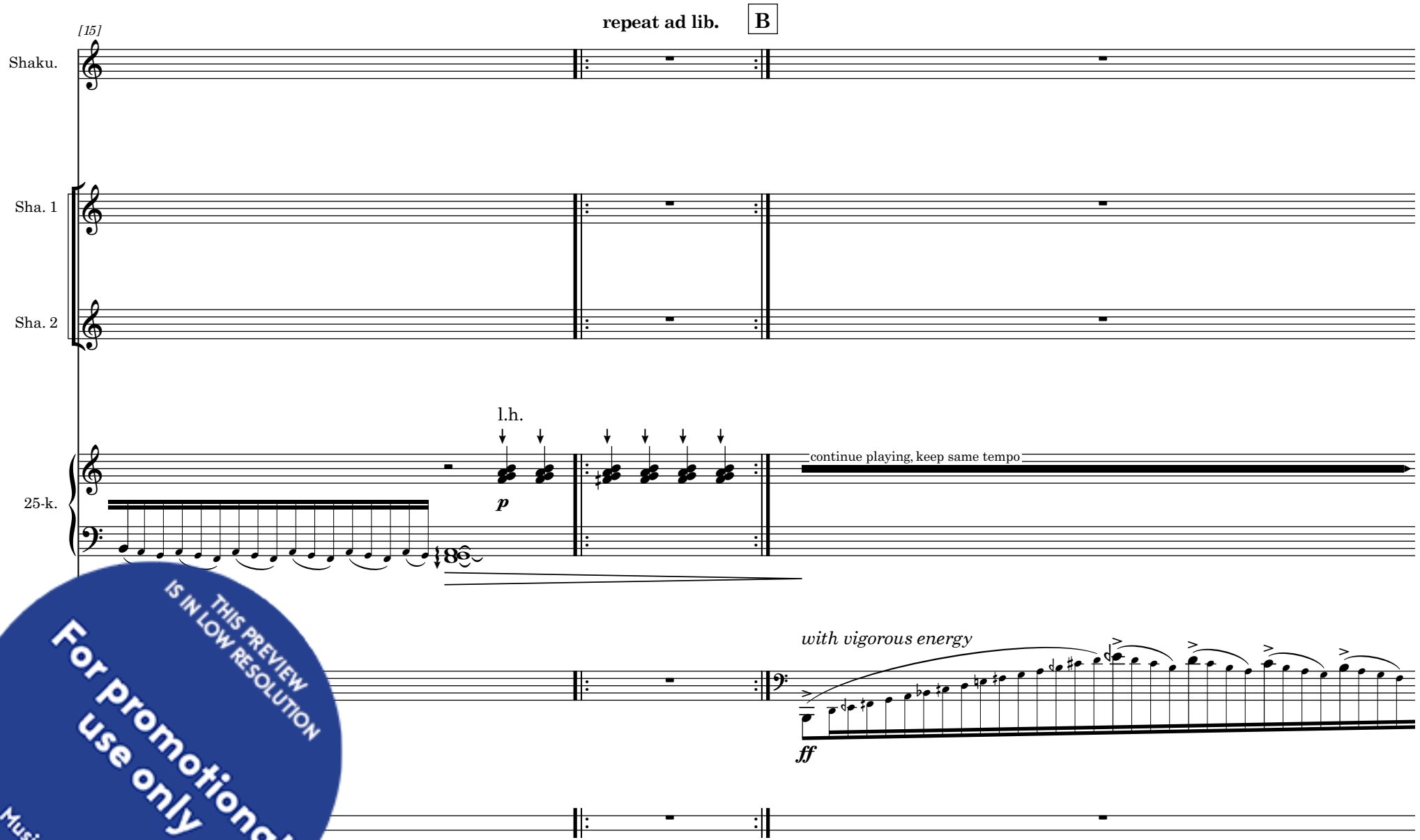

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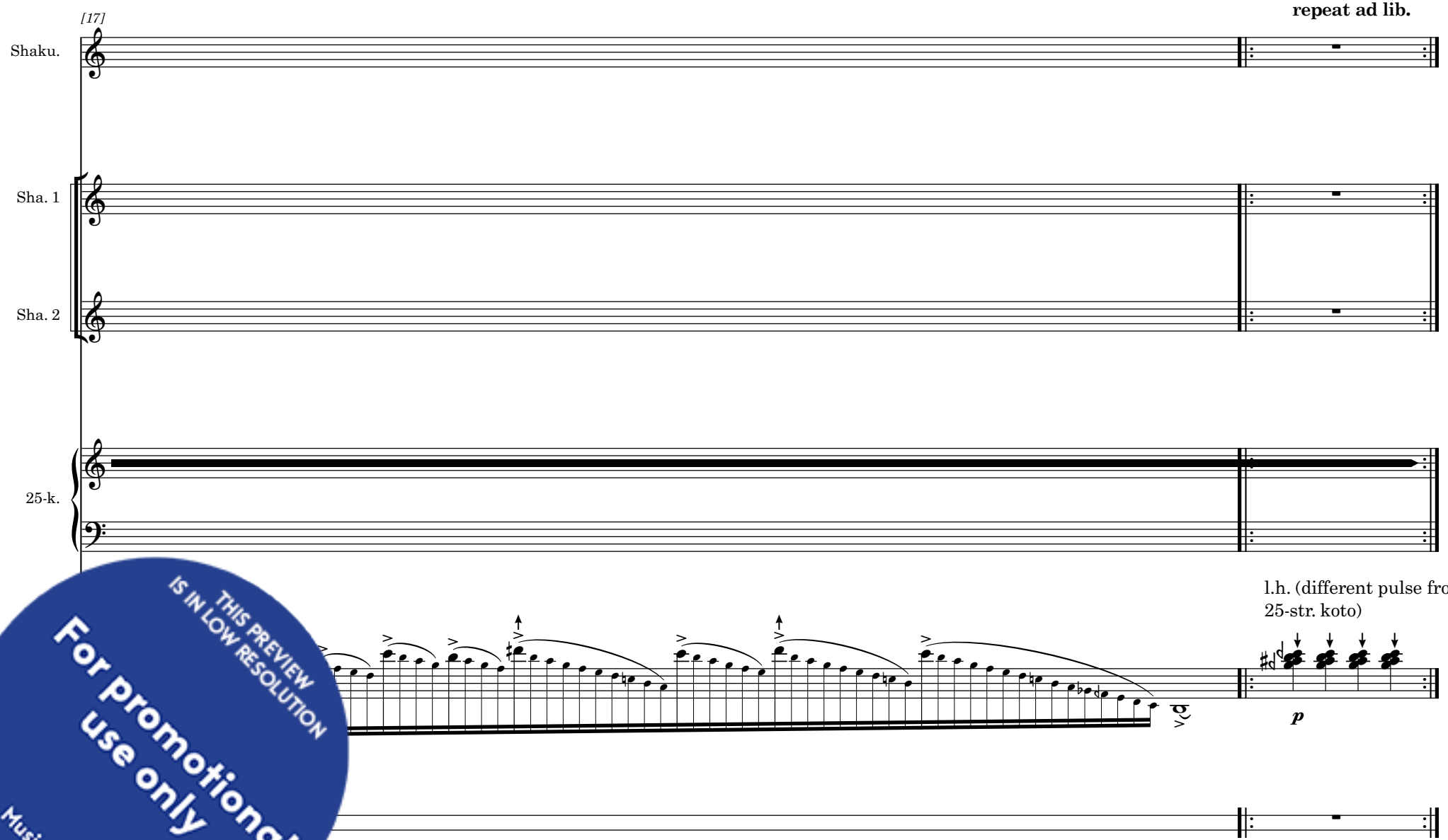

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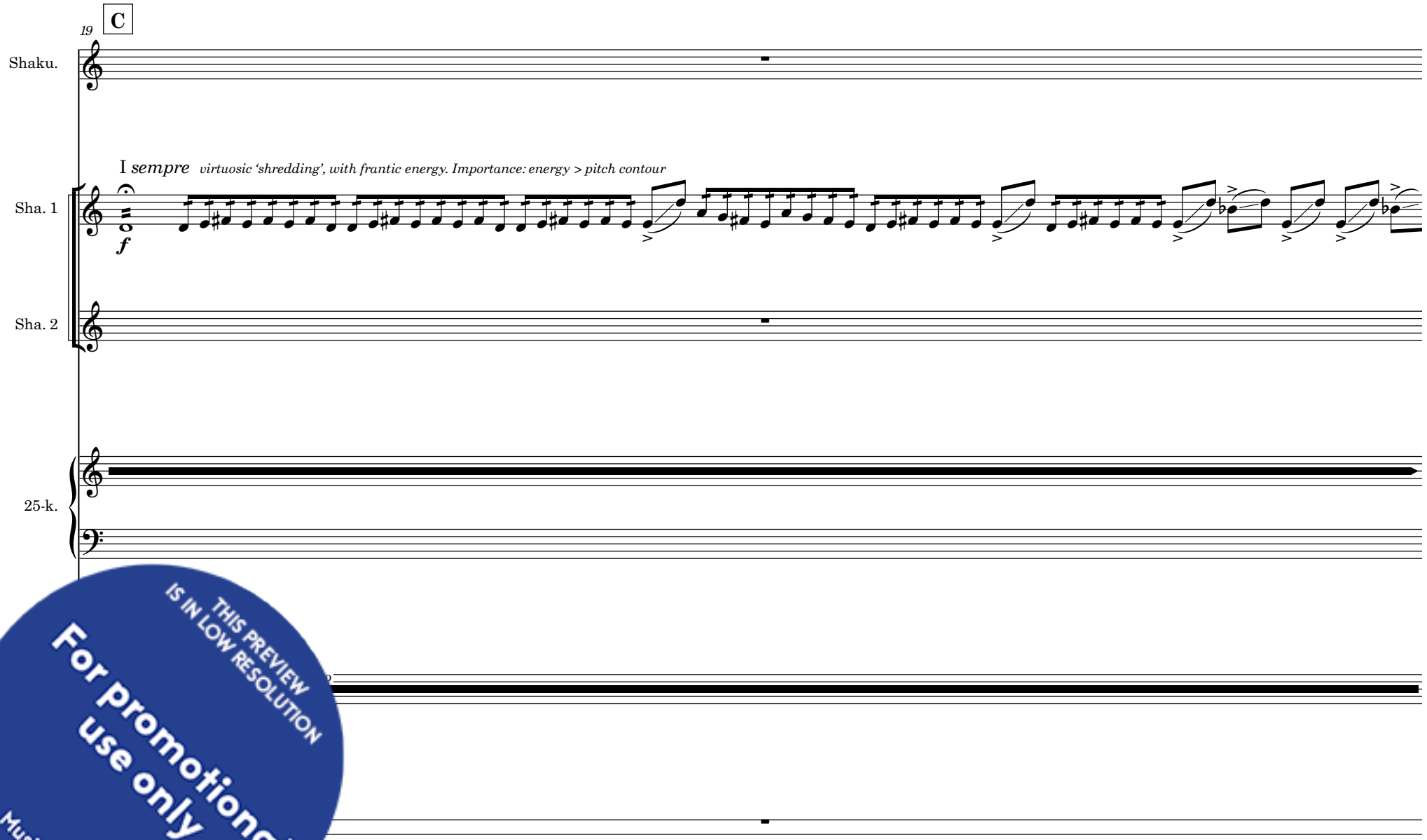

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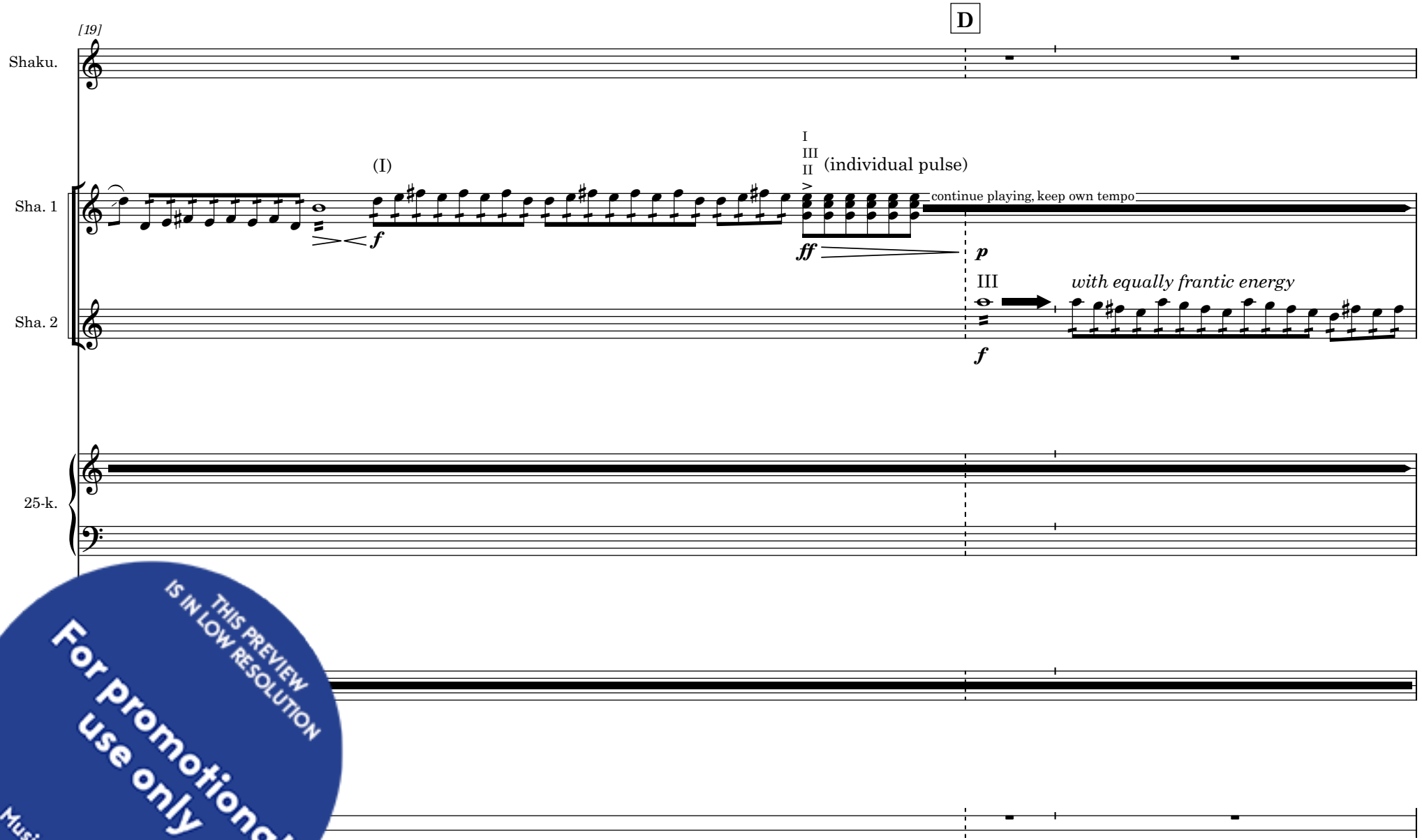

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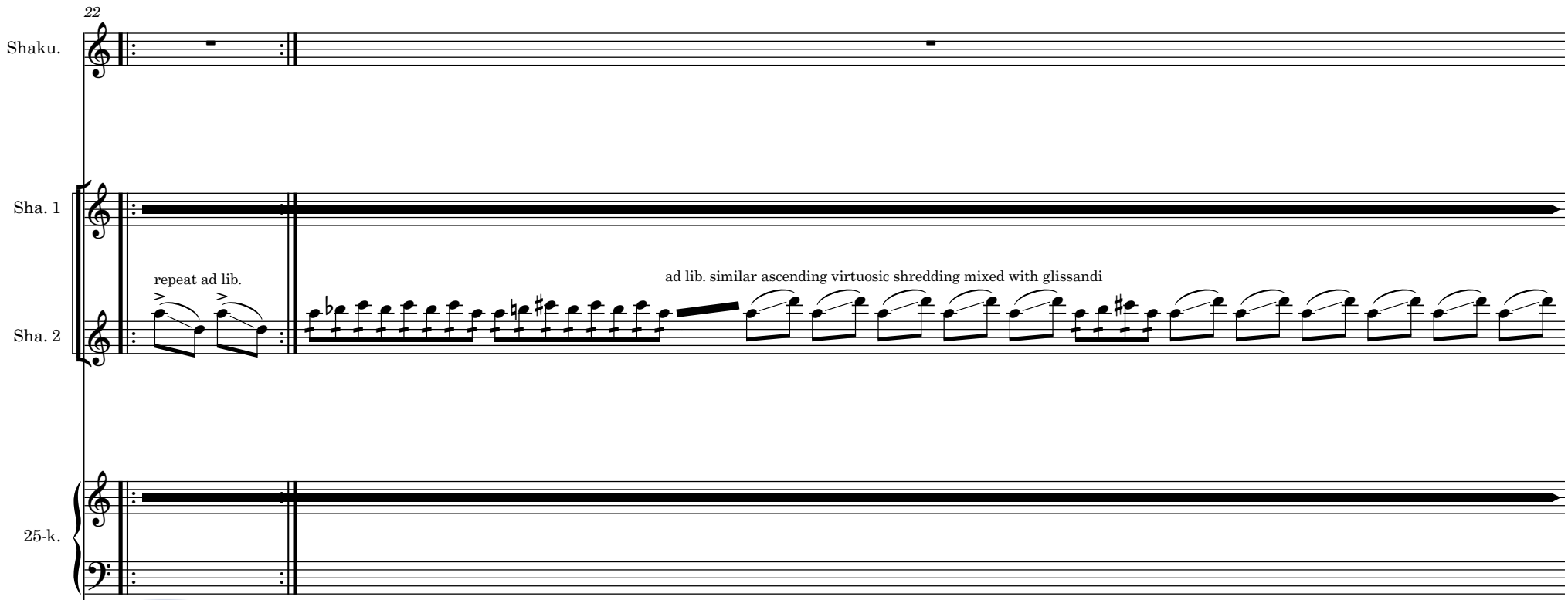

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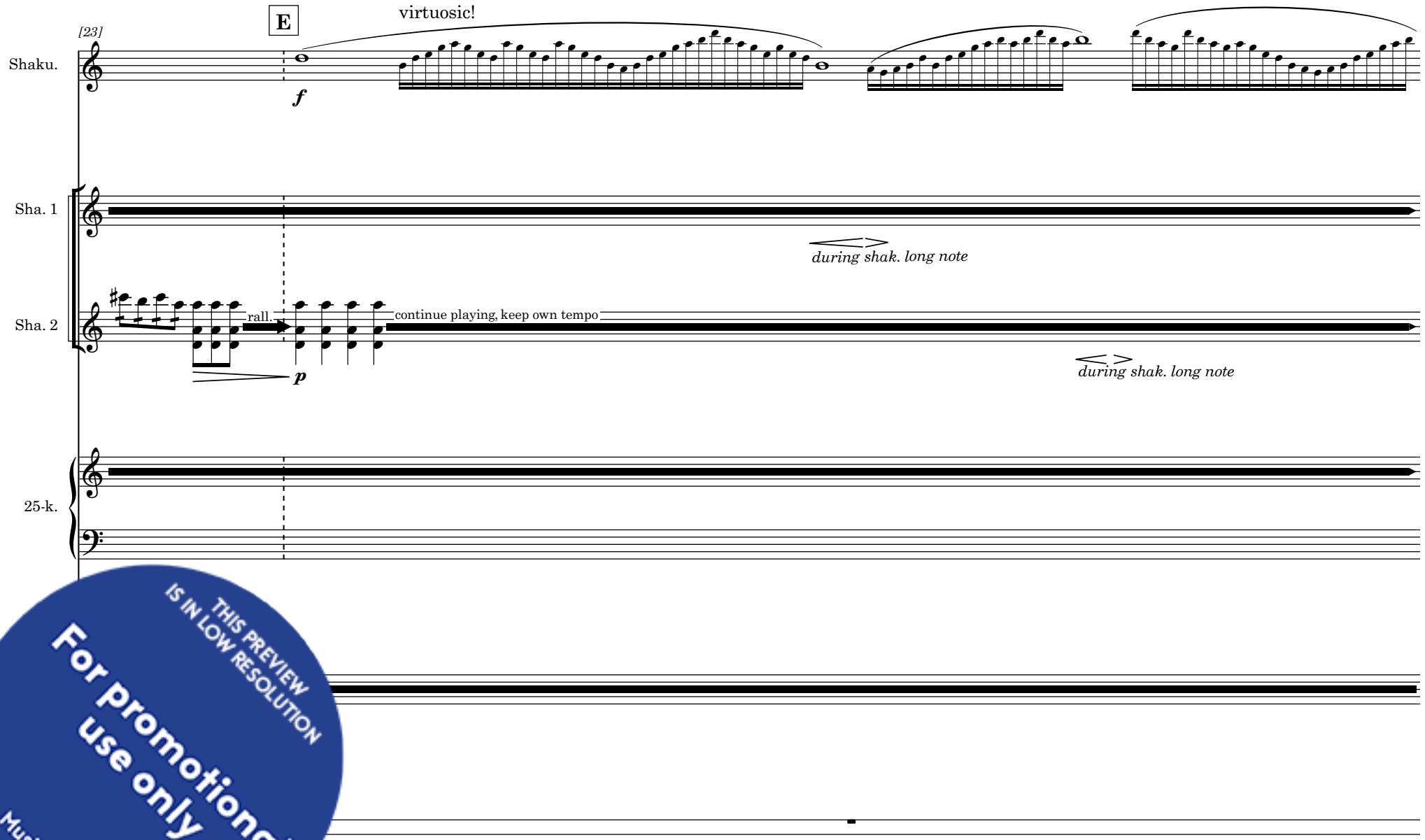

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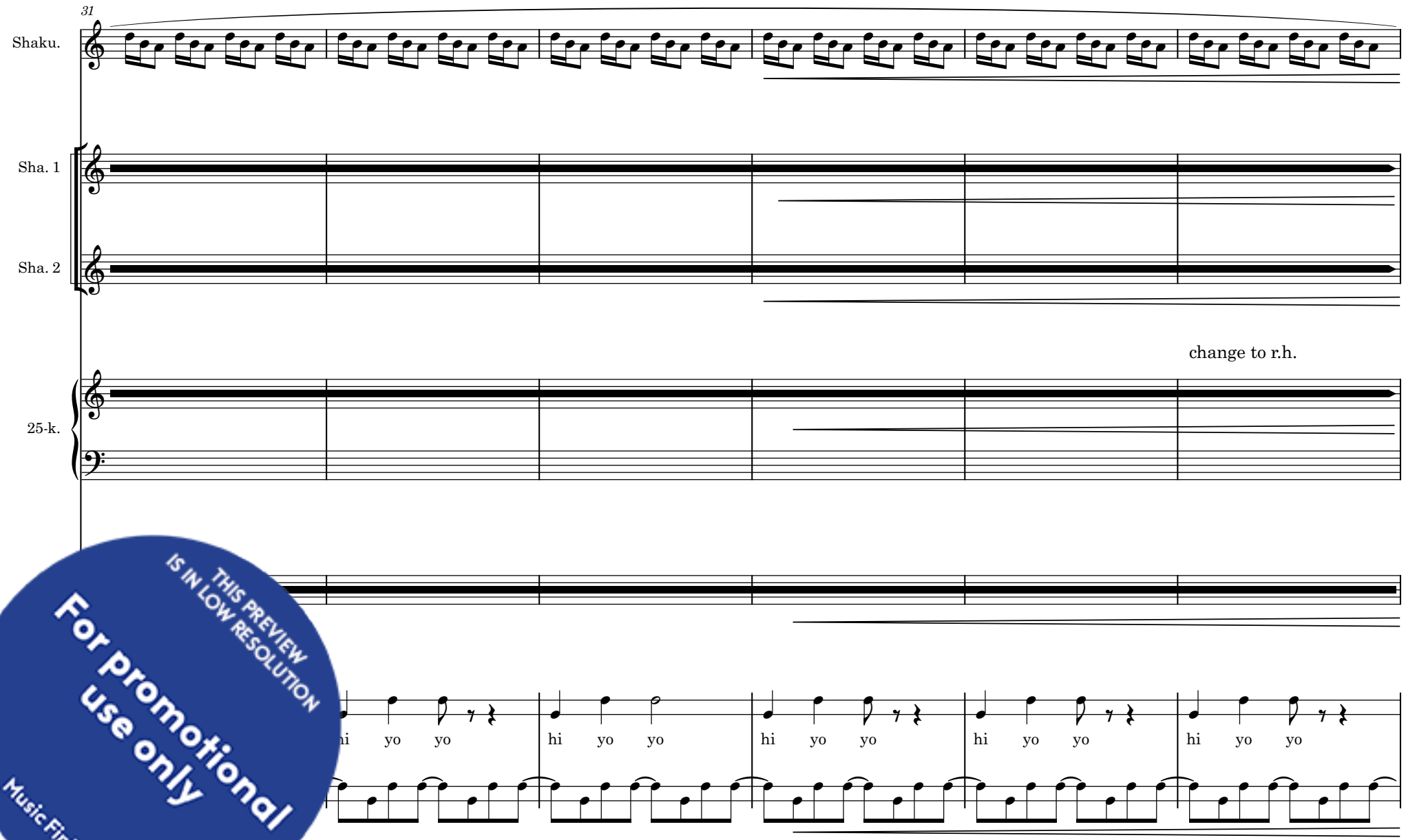

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G

Slightly faster (♩= c. 180) **Everyone same tempo!**

37

Shaku.

ff

voice

hee! hee! hee! hee! hee!

Sha. 1

f

voice

hee! hee! hee! hee! hee!

Sha. 2

f

voice

hei! hoo! hei! hei! hoo! hei! hei! hoo!

f

25-k.

f

voice

hei! hoo! hei! hei! hoo! hei! hei! hoo!

o r.h.

f

hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo

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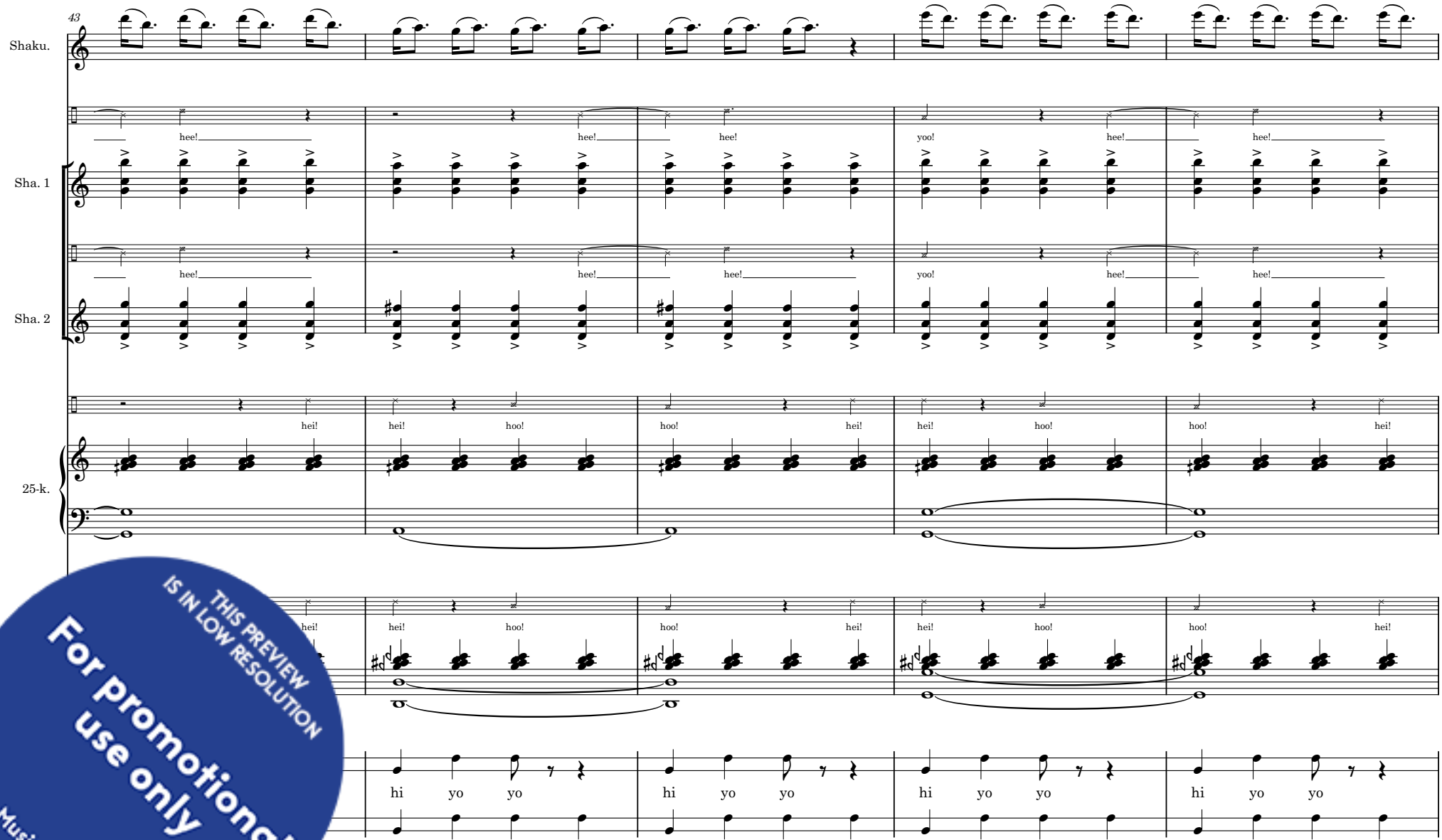

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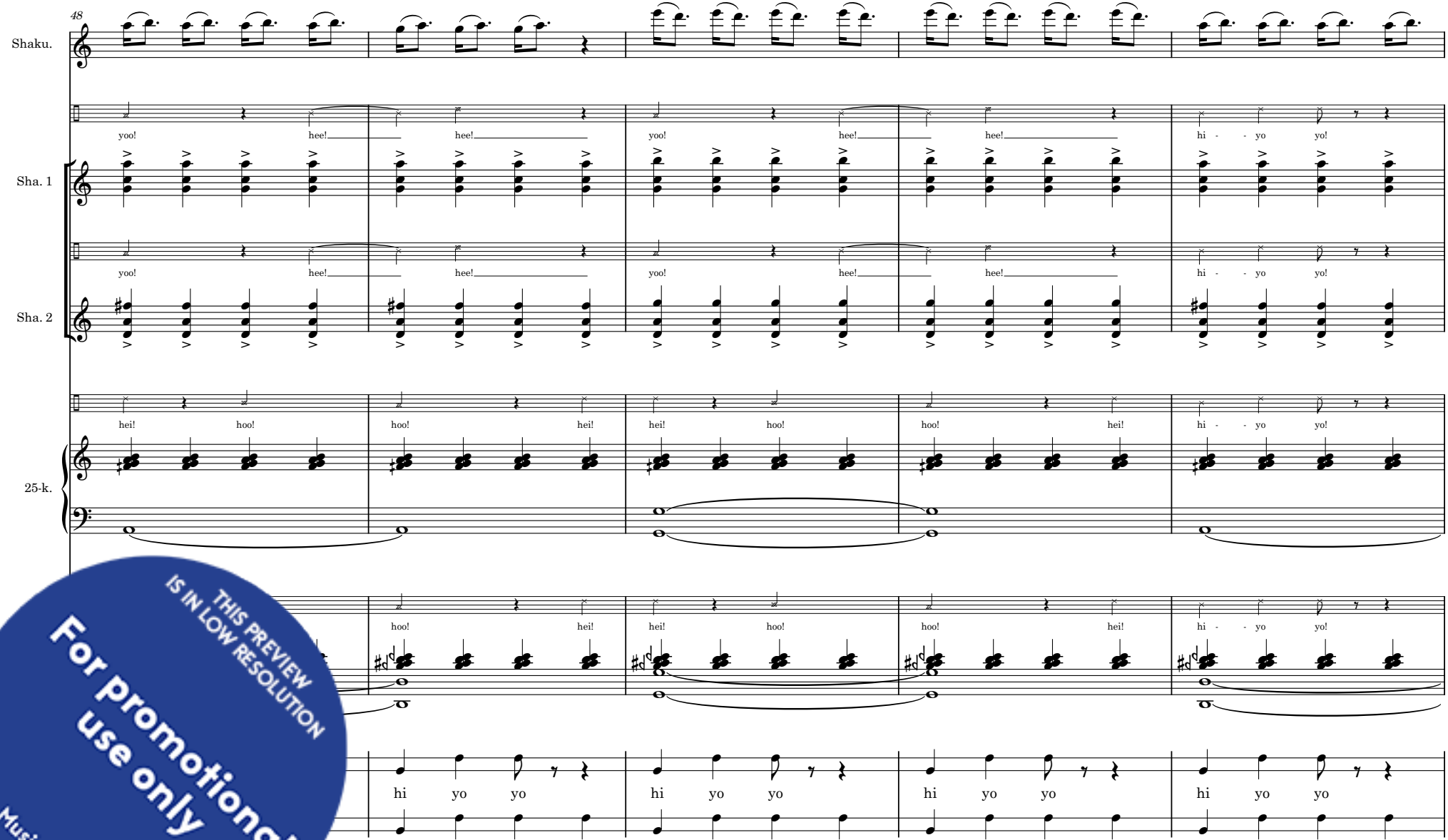

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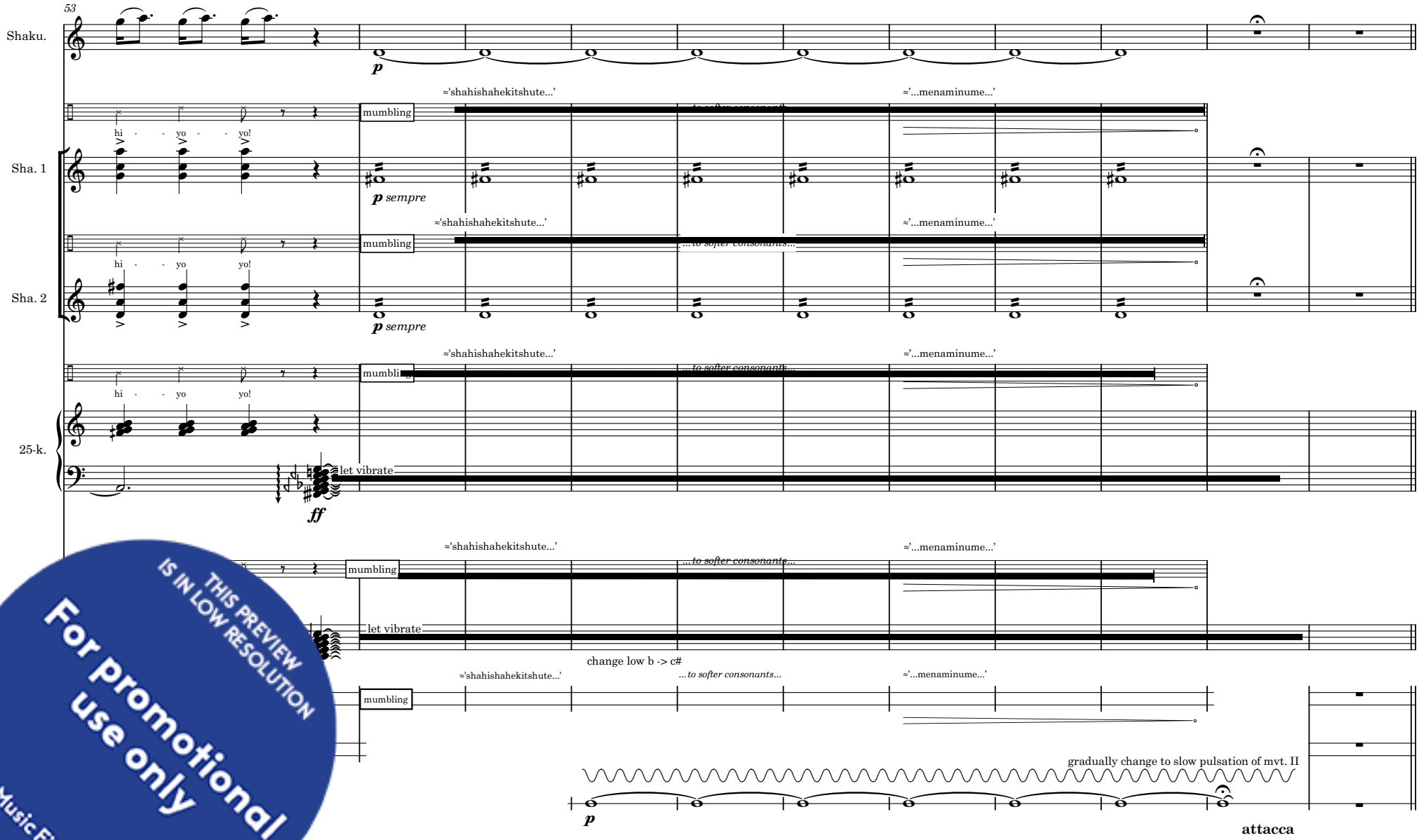

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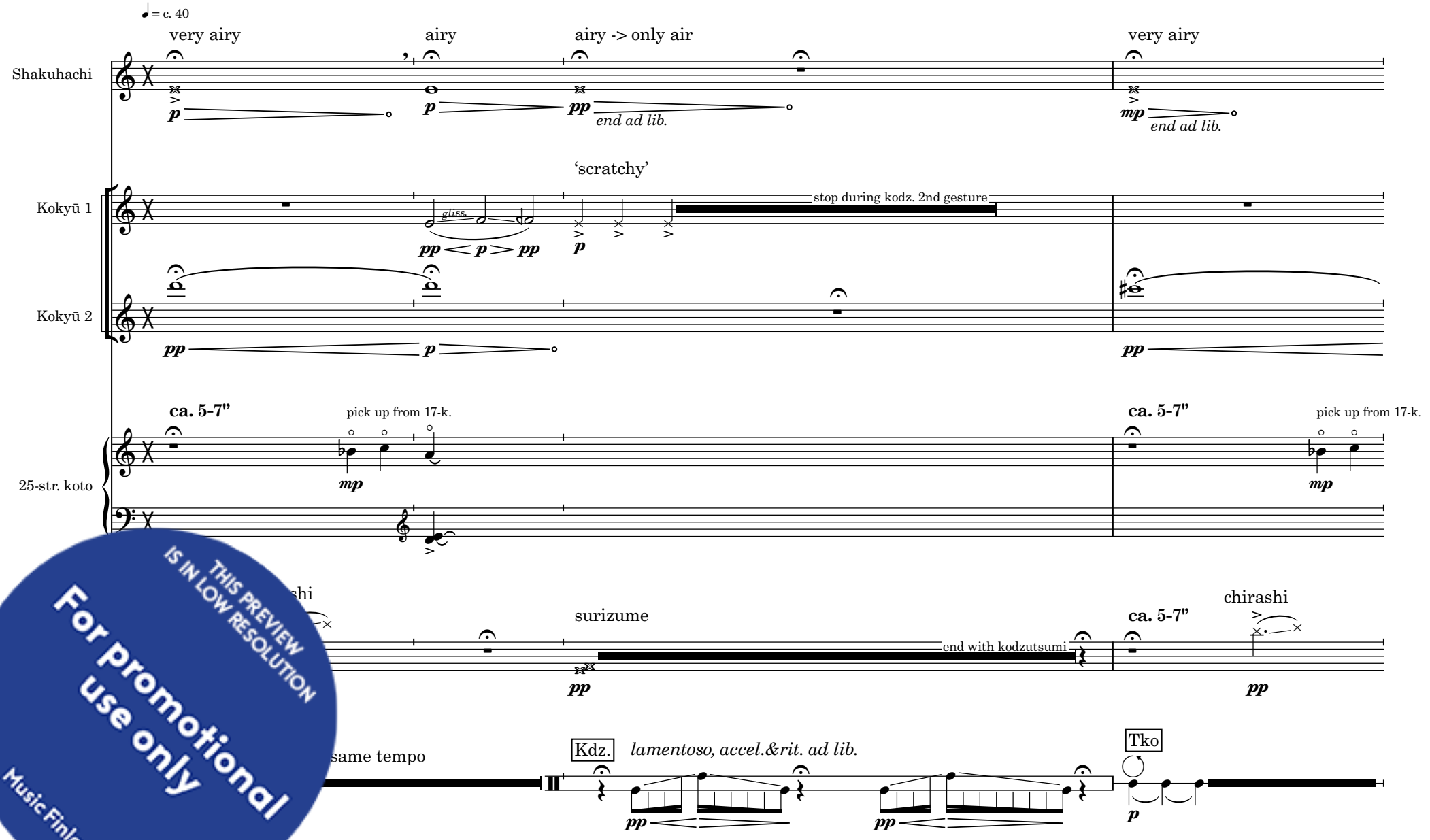

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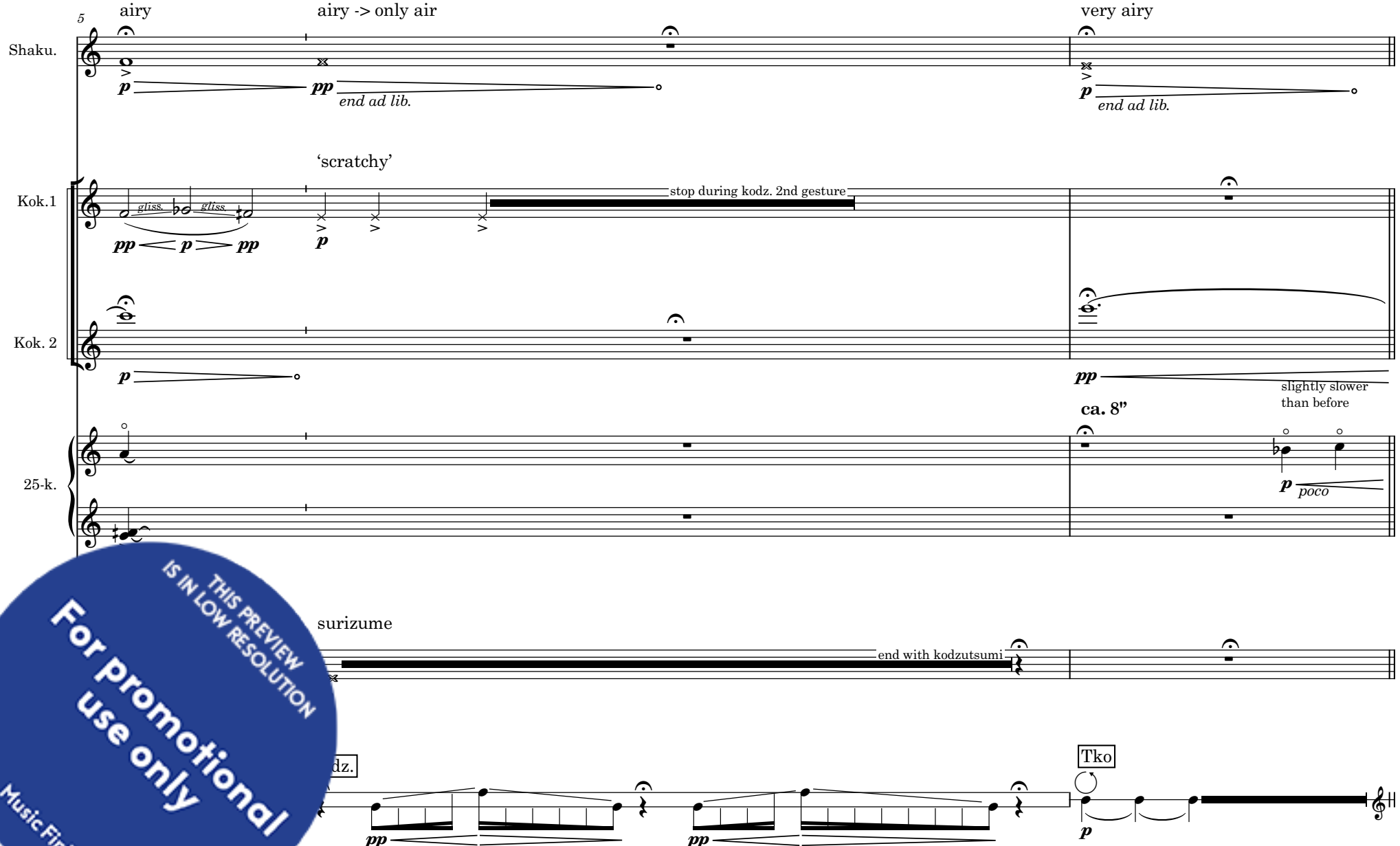

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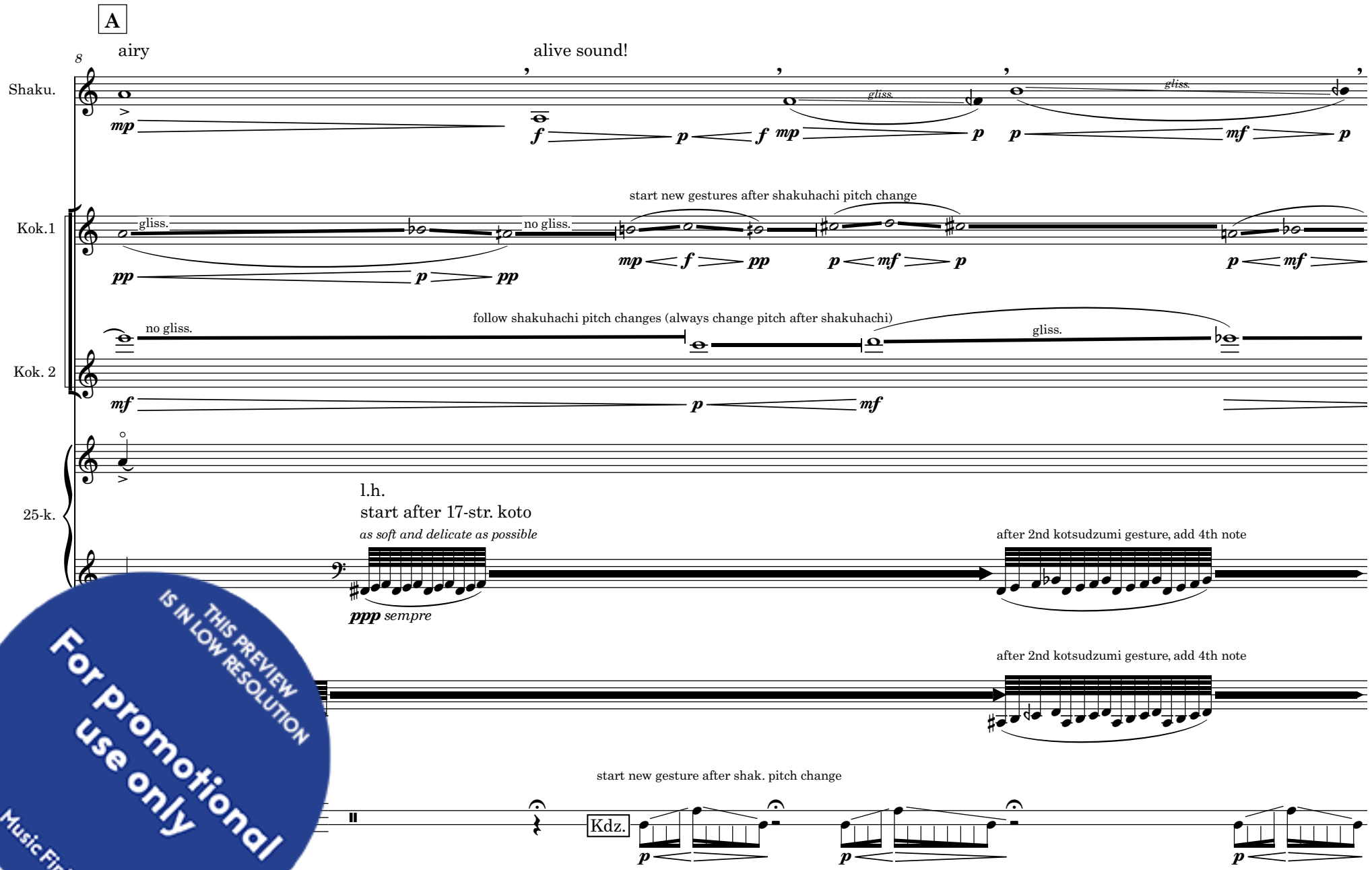

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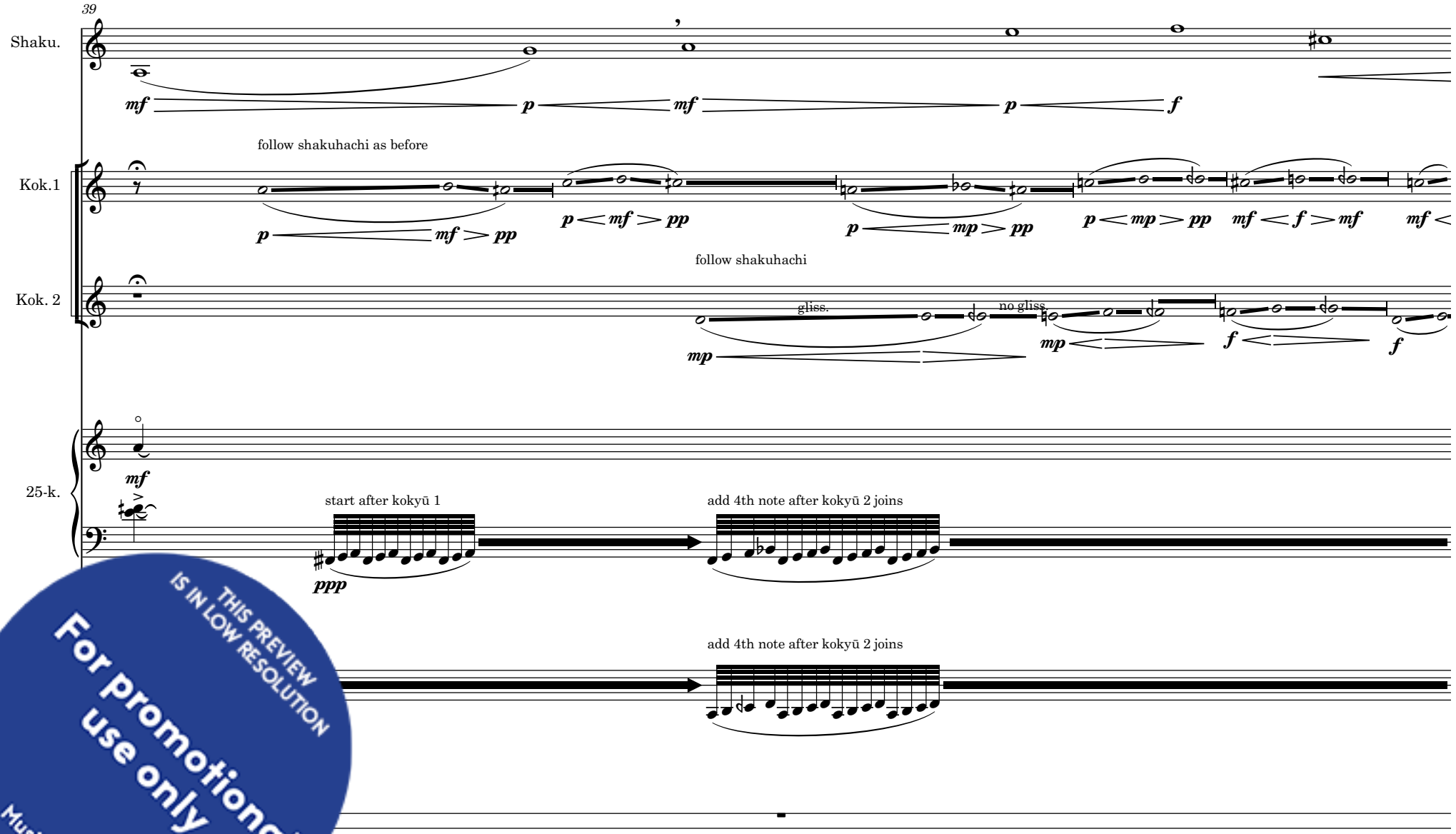

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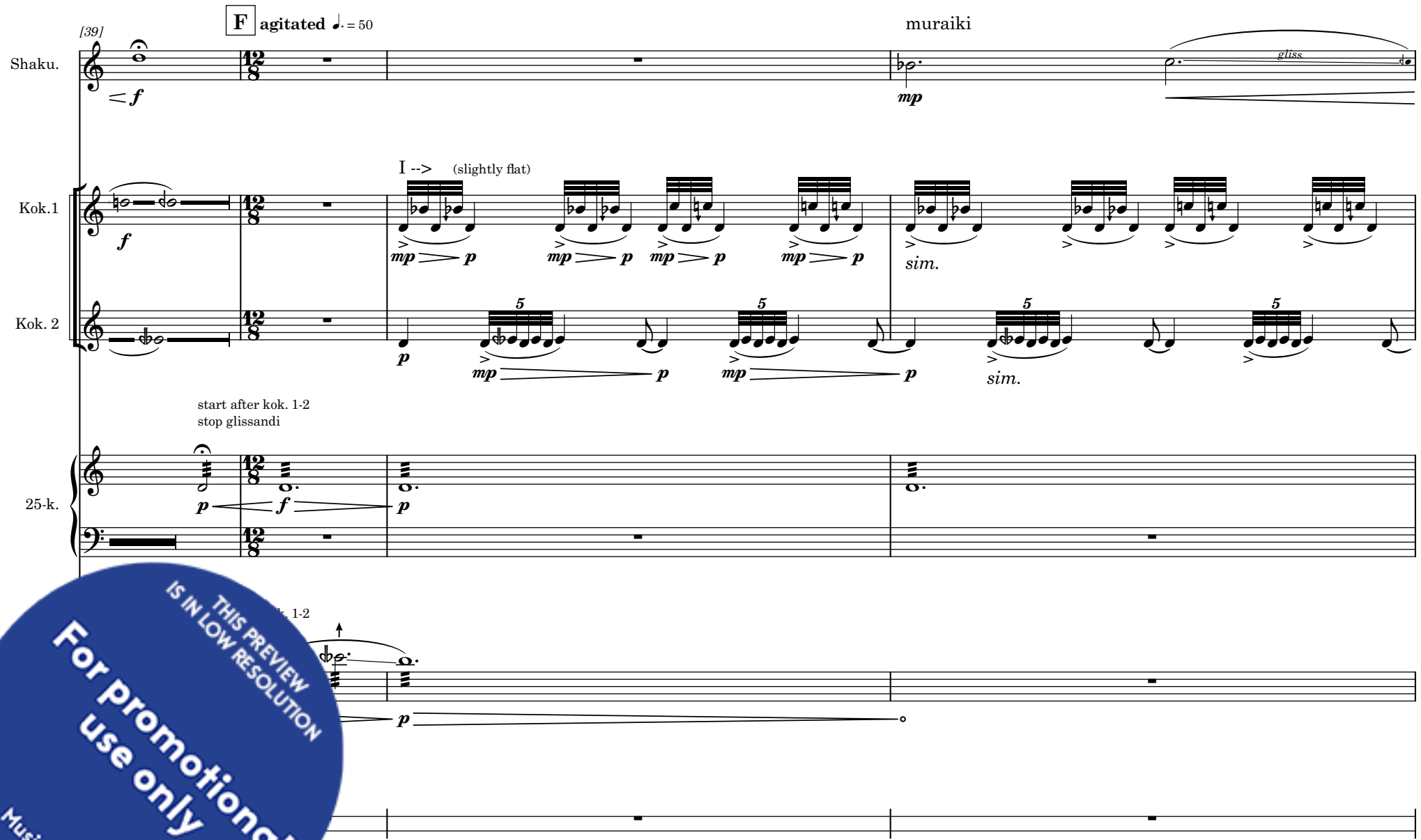

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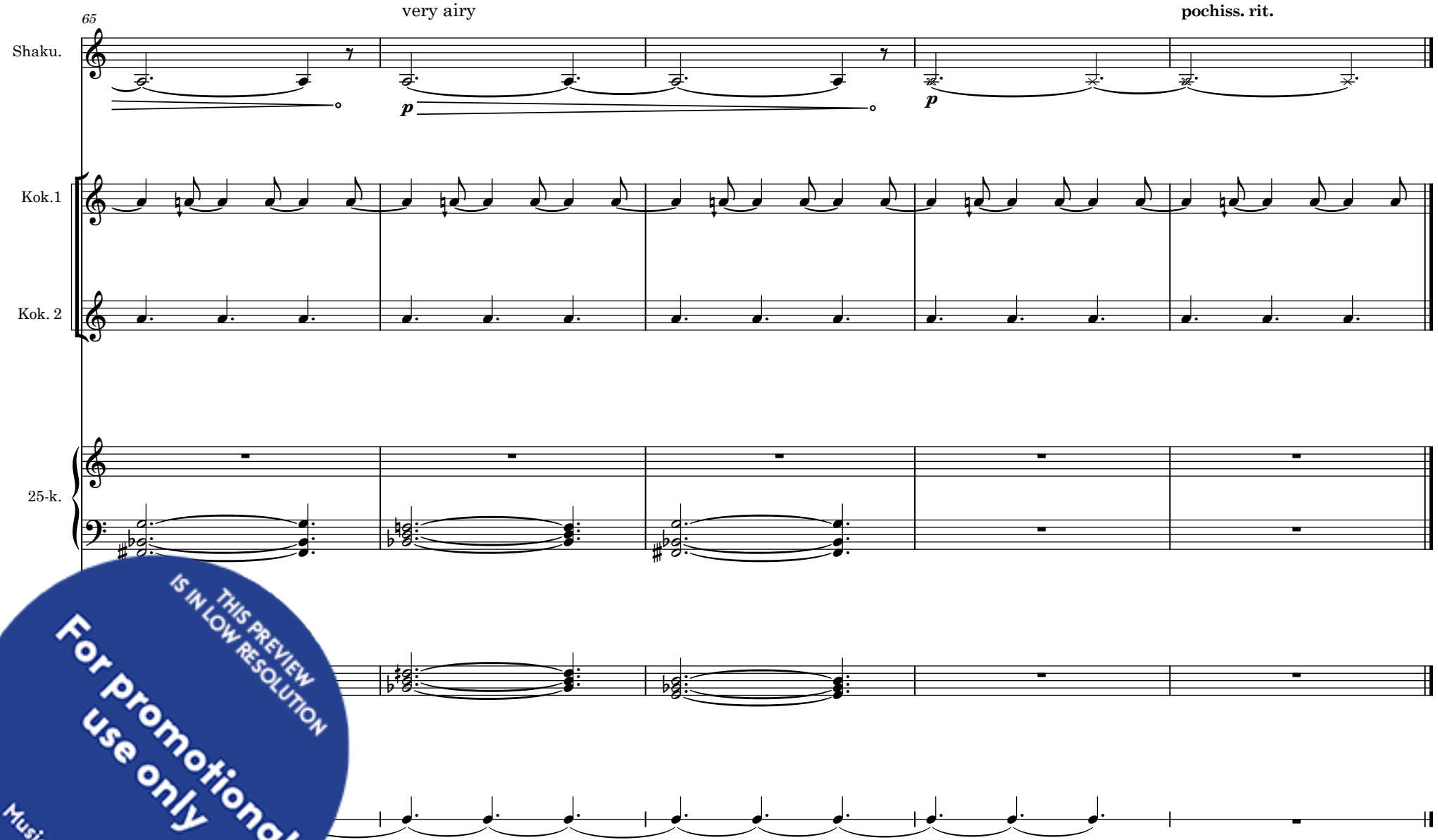

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3. III - future furious

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K
111
Shaku.
Sha. 1
Sha. 2
25-k.
e->
gliss
(p)
e->
d->
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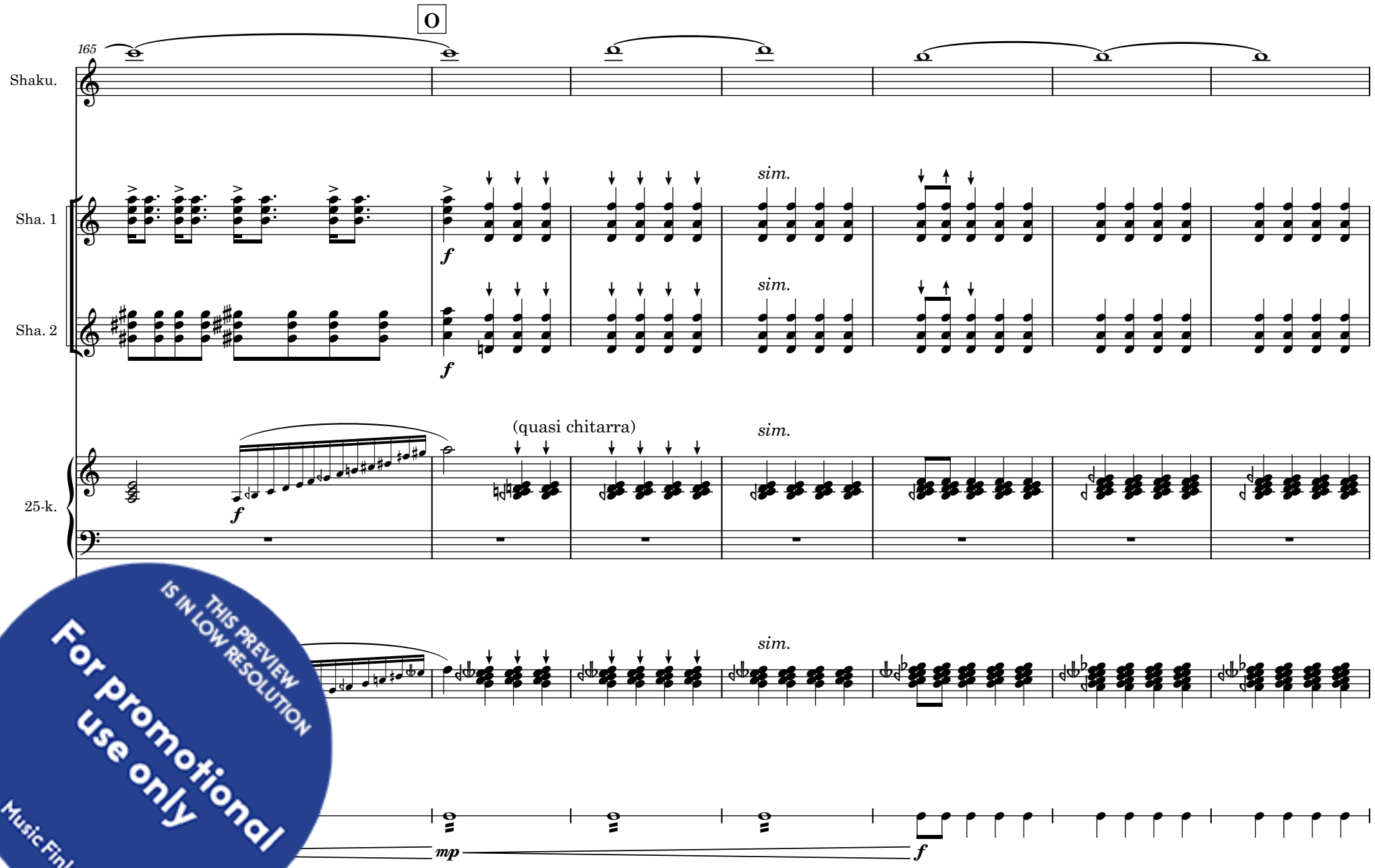

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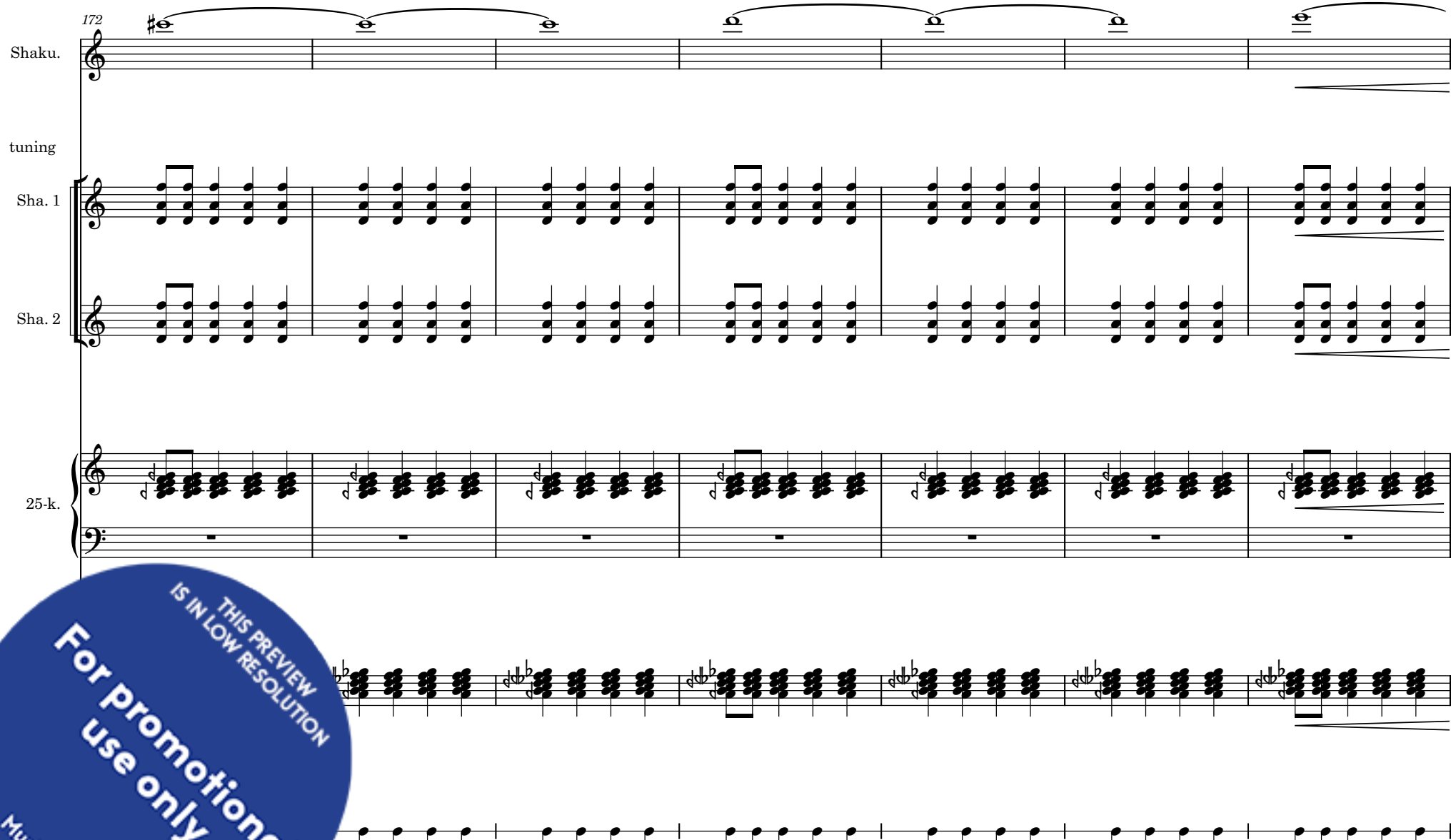

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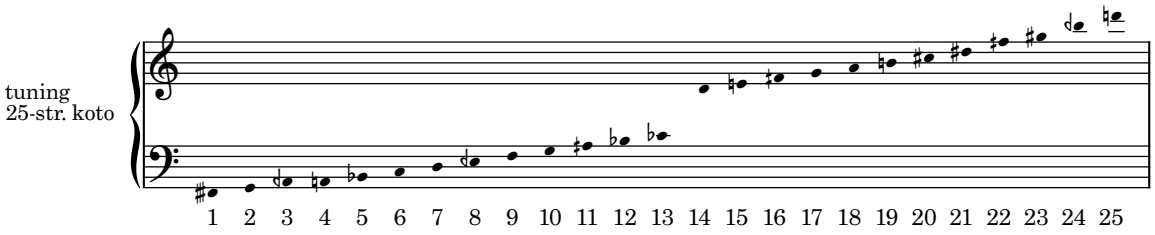

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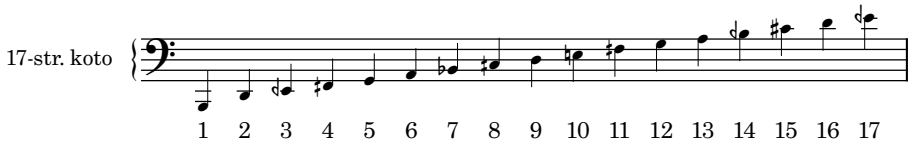
Kokyuu and shamisen tunings



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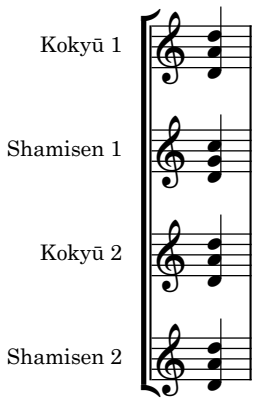
6. Flow 4



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