Maria Kallionpää

She

An opera of imagination
Libretto by Stefano Simone Pintor

2017





She

An opera of imagination

Loosely inspired by H. Rider Haggard's book of the same name

She

A history of adventure

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Music by Maria Kallionpää Libretto by Stefano Simone Pintor

(2017)



CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

PROF. GEOFFREY TRUCE/ AN EGYPTIAN SCRIBE/ PROF. L. HORACE HOLLY [Tenor]

THE MEMORY OF A GREEK CREW (scene 2)/ THE MEMORY OF LITTLE LEO'S FRIENDS (scene 3) – [SSA or SST, voices behind the stage]

LEO/KALLIKRATES [Baritone]

USTANE/AMENARTAS [Soprano]

AYESHA – [Soprano]

TWO GUARDS at the service of Ayesha – [Two extras/actors]

further on THE MEMORY OF LEO'S FATHER AND MOTHER

and, later, again TWO GUARDS at the service of Ayesha

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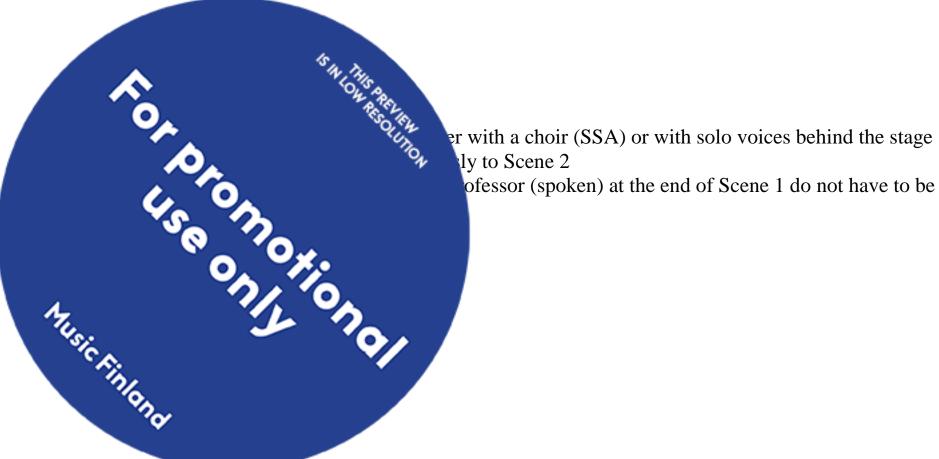
The action takes place throughout history, or rather through the course of the millennial love story between Ayesha and her lover Kallikrates or his reincarnations.



She

Commissioned by Fabbrica Young Artists Development Program, Opera di Roma, 2017

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1 Flute (doubling piccolo)
 1 Oboe
1 Clarinet (B flat) (doubling bass clarinet in B flat)
 1 Bassoon
1 Horn (F)
1 Trumpet (B flat)
1 Trombone
Percussion (2)
    Timpani
    Vibraphone
    Tubular bells
    Tam-tam
    Gran Cassa (2)
    Crotales
    Piatti
Strings
Soloists (4)
Soprano, Soprano, Baritone, Tenor
Choir (or solo voices behind the stage): SSA or SST
Additional instruments (2)
Theremin, Magnetic resonator piano
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OUTSIDE THE BOX

Rome, Italy – Today

A crowded theatre in the centre of Rome. The audience is waiting for the show to start. While the house lights are still on, a man enters the space, reaching the proscenium in front of the closed red curtain.

PROF. GEOFFREY TRUCE

(testing his microphone by tapping into it)

One, two, check one, two. Can you hear me? Good. Thank you everyone. First and foremost I would like to thank the organisation for having me here to talk about my favourite author, H. Rider Haggard. Since my first years as Professor of Literature and Archeology at the University of Cambridge, I have dedicated a big part of my studies to his books, even though during the last decades he gradually lost appeal to the big audience, especially outside Britain. That's why I was positively surprised to know that there was somebody who intended to write an opera based on one of his masterpieces. Of course, I am referring to "She", that, for the ones who may not know it, it is the story of a stunningly beautiful millennial woman who refused to die until his beloved Kallikrates had made his return by reincarnating as another man, a young English university student called Leo Vincey. So, as soon as I accepted this invitation, another exceptional event occurred to me. A few weeks ago, one of my scholars got to know this book for the first time during one of my masterclasses. After that lesson, he started developing a real obsession for the argument of the book itself. He simply could not believe that the imaginary protagonist of the story has never really existed. You should know that this author is one of those writers who built his fortune around the ability to imagine mythical worlds and characters. "What is imagination?", is one of the most important questions of the book, whose Haggard's answer is:

(now quoting from a book in his hands)

"Perhaps it is the shadow of the intangible truth, perhaps it is the soul's thought."

waving the book to the audience)

his book represents nothing else but the author's inner worlds, which s exactly the opposite of what my scholar believed. According to him, Haggard's composition was too detailed to be a completely fictional



story. Of course Haggard wrote about cultures that he had the chance to get acquainted with during his early years at the service of the colonies of the British Empire in South Africa; but apart from some anecdotes, all the rest is just imagination. Nevertheless, my scholar's only interest was to demonstrate that She existed for real and he wanted to prove it at all costs. I think this is the perfect example of what Haggard was talking about: a strong obsession for possessing and ruling which, by the way, is still present both in micro and macro levels of the Western culture. All this was clear to me, until he came back after some weeks, bringing along something that made me reconsider my positions about the real existence of She, and what we need to consider "imagination".

(taking out a little wooden box from a pocket and showing it to the audience)

This. He said he found this little ancient wooden box buried in the garden of an old mansion in Ditchingham, South Norfolk, where Haggard lived for sometime. At first I was sure it had nothing to do with all of the supposed adventures of Haggard, but – for God's sake! – the radiocarbon says this box dates back to 2400 years ago! Exactly as Haggard wrote in his book, it was wrapped up in yellow linen, and reposing upon another layer of a fibrous material that I have never seen anywhere else in my long career as Archaeologist...

(while opening the box a strange, but very feeble sound starts to break into the space, unheard)

This box contained another metal little box with a potsherd inside, exactly like the famous Sherd of Amenartas told in the book.

(after taking a big breath, hesitating)

So, I know... I know it's crazy, but what if... What if it is all true? I mean... Look at this sherd: there are some writings on it that I cannot compare to any other language I have seen so far. It seems to be an ancient dialect of Arabic, at least for the sound it has...

(starting to read out loud the writings on the potsherd)

"Hufa Leunma 'ila al'adab ralujrla, hanna'il al yastie 'an ya..."

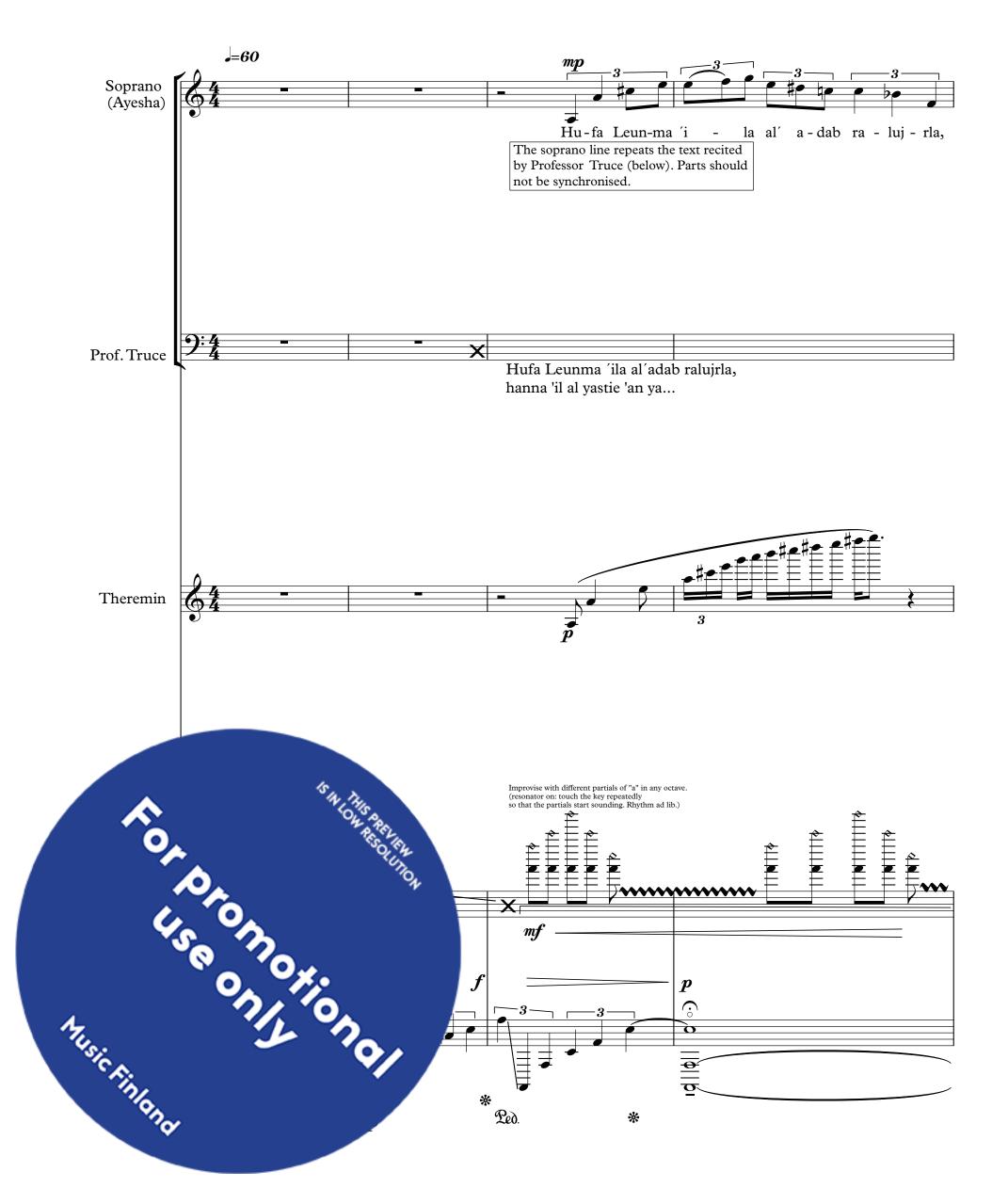
ancestral voice starts to break ence of the Professor:

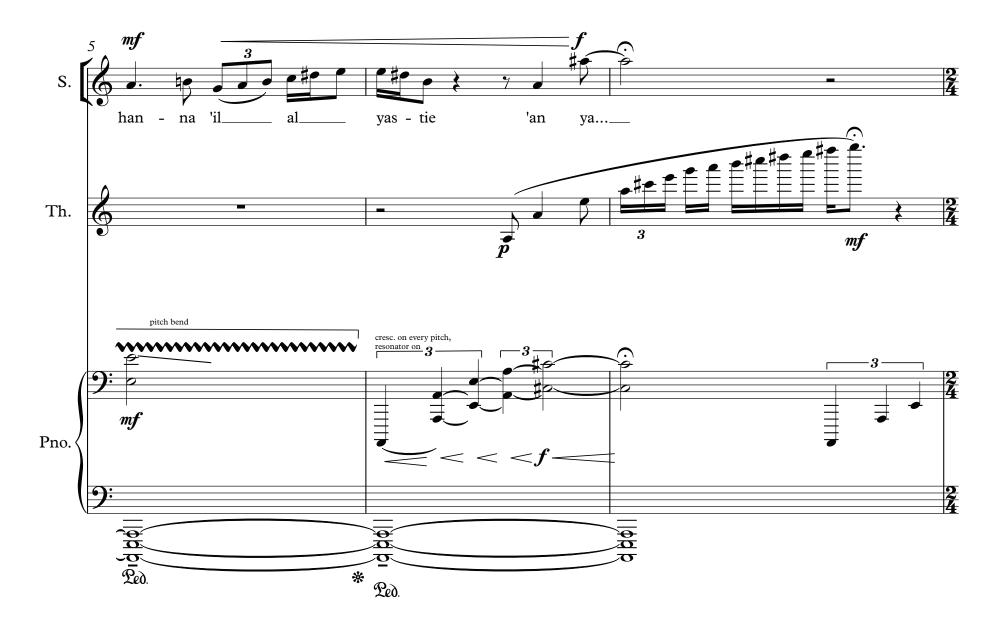


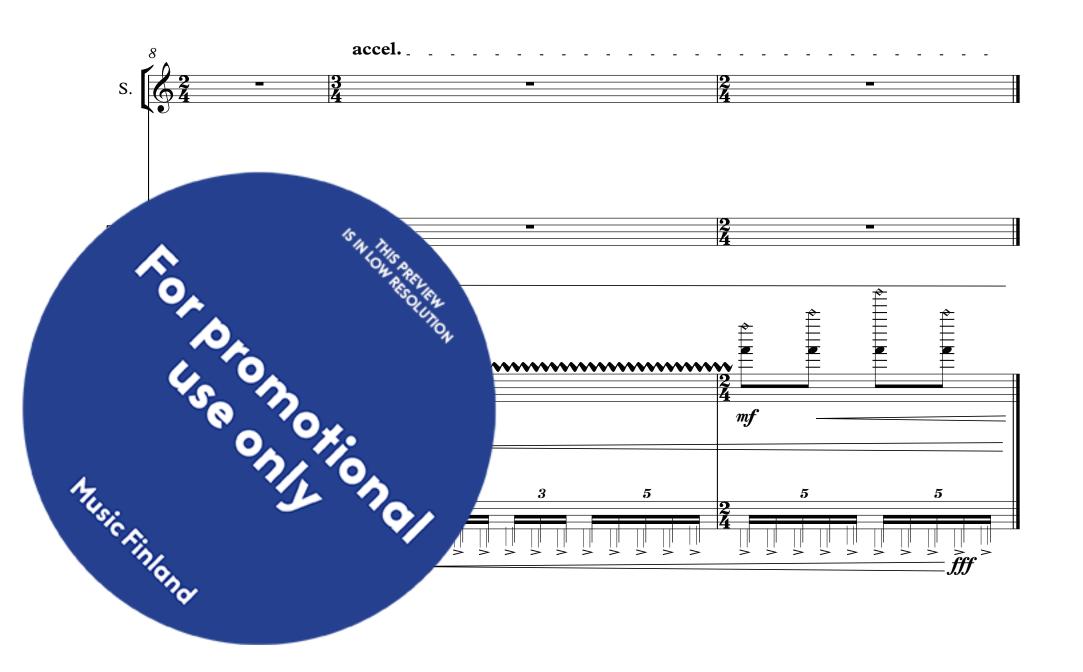


She

Outside the Box

















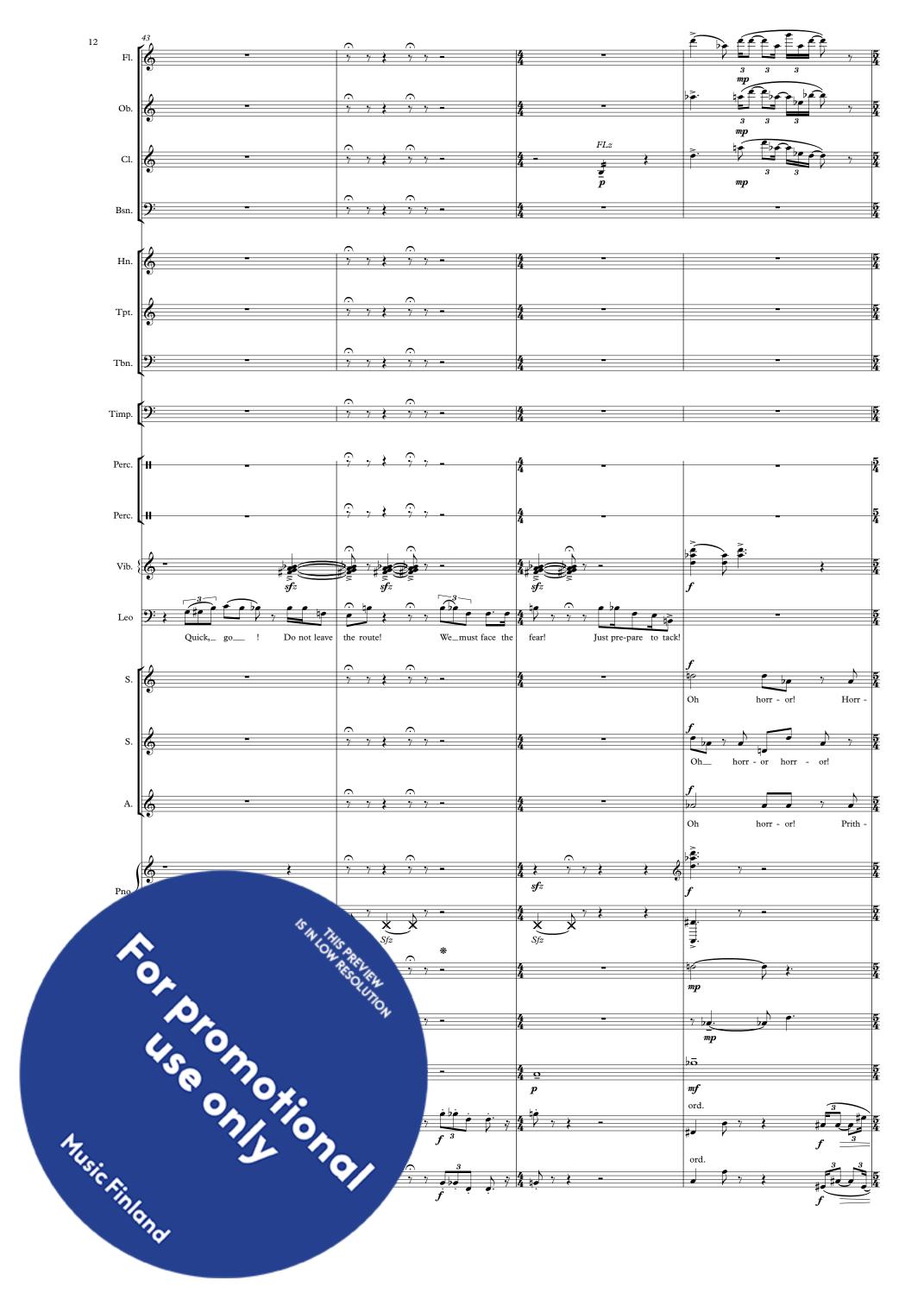






































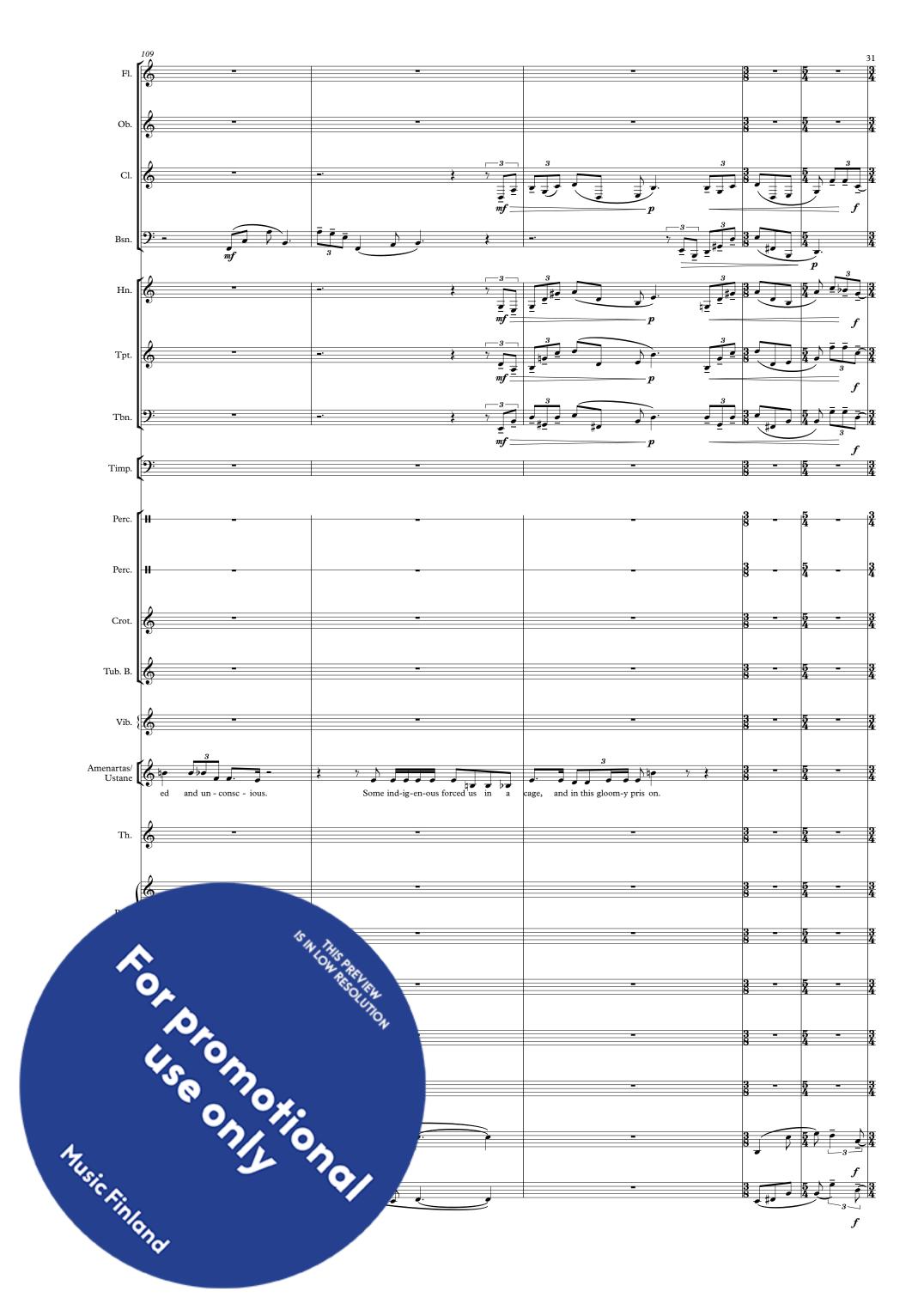


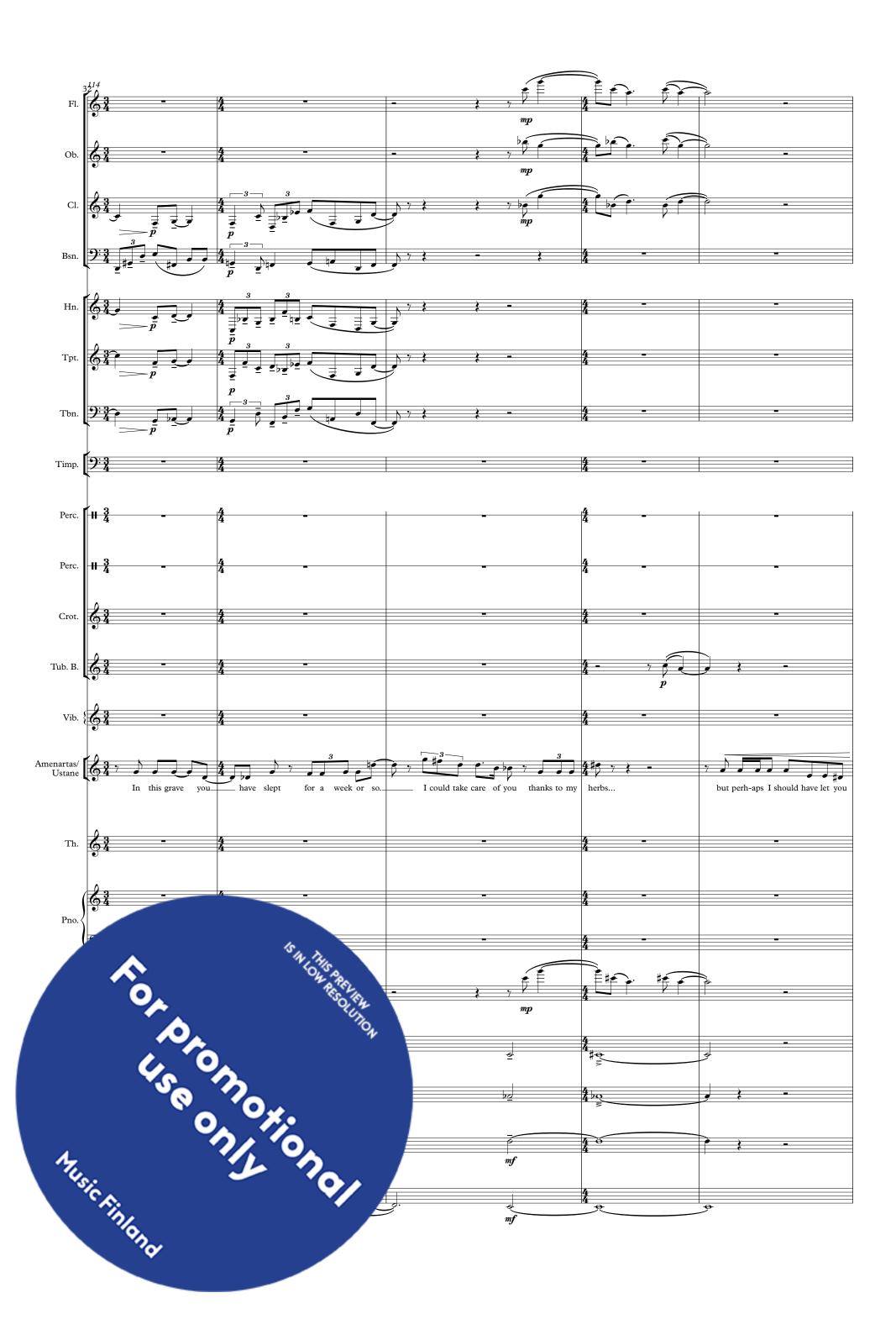






















J = 80









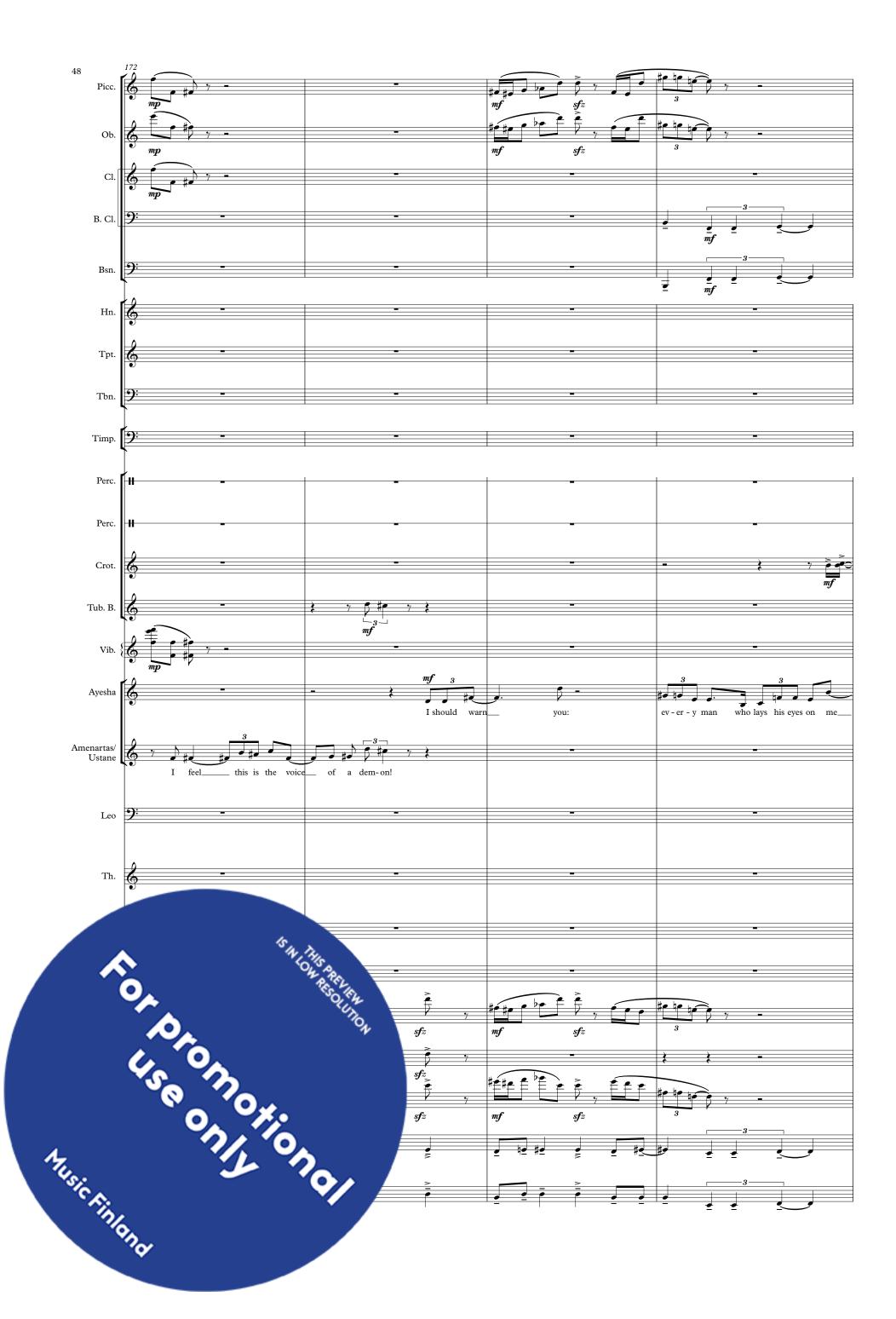








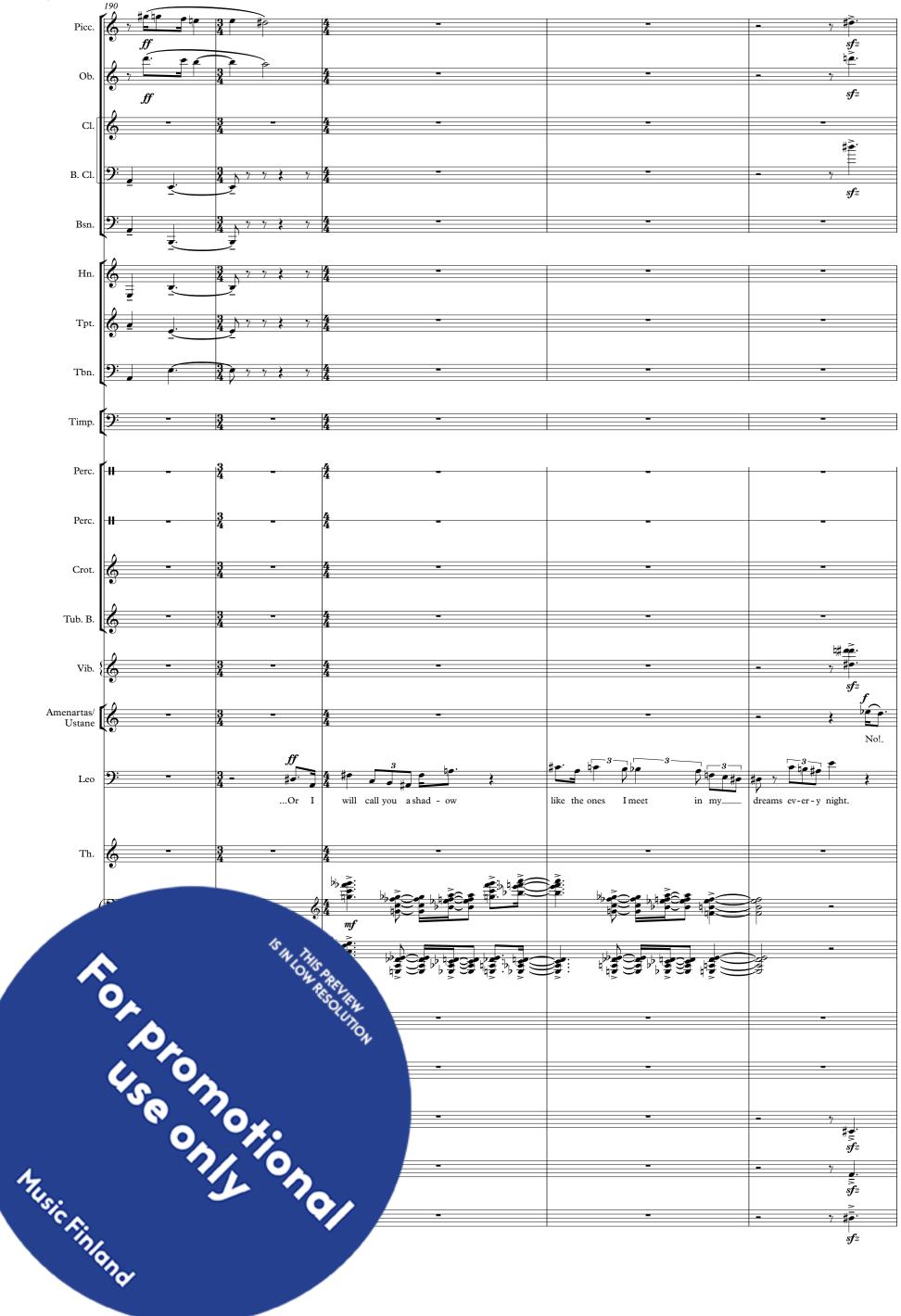






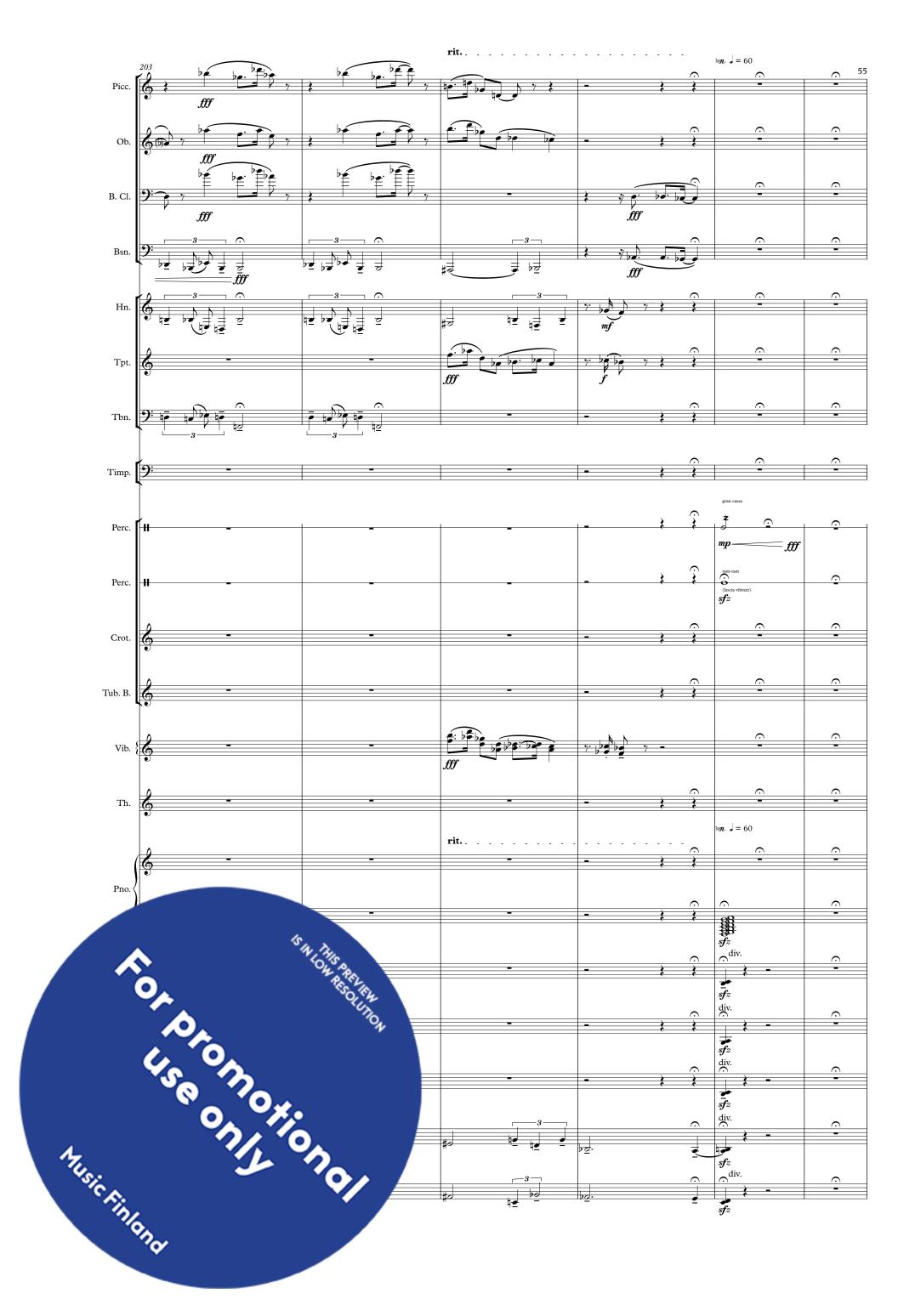












J = 60

209

56

























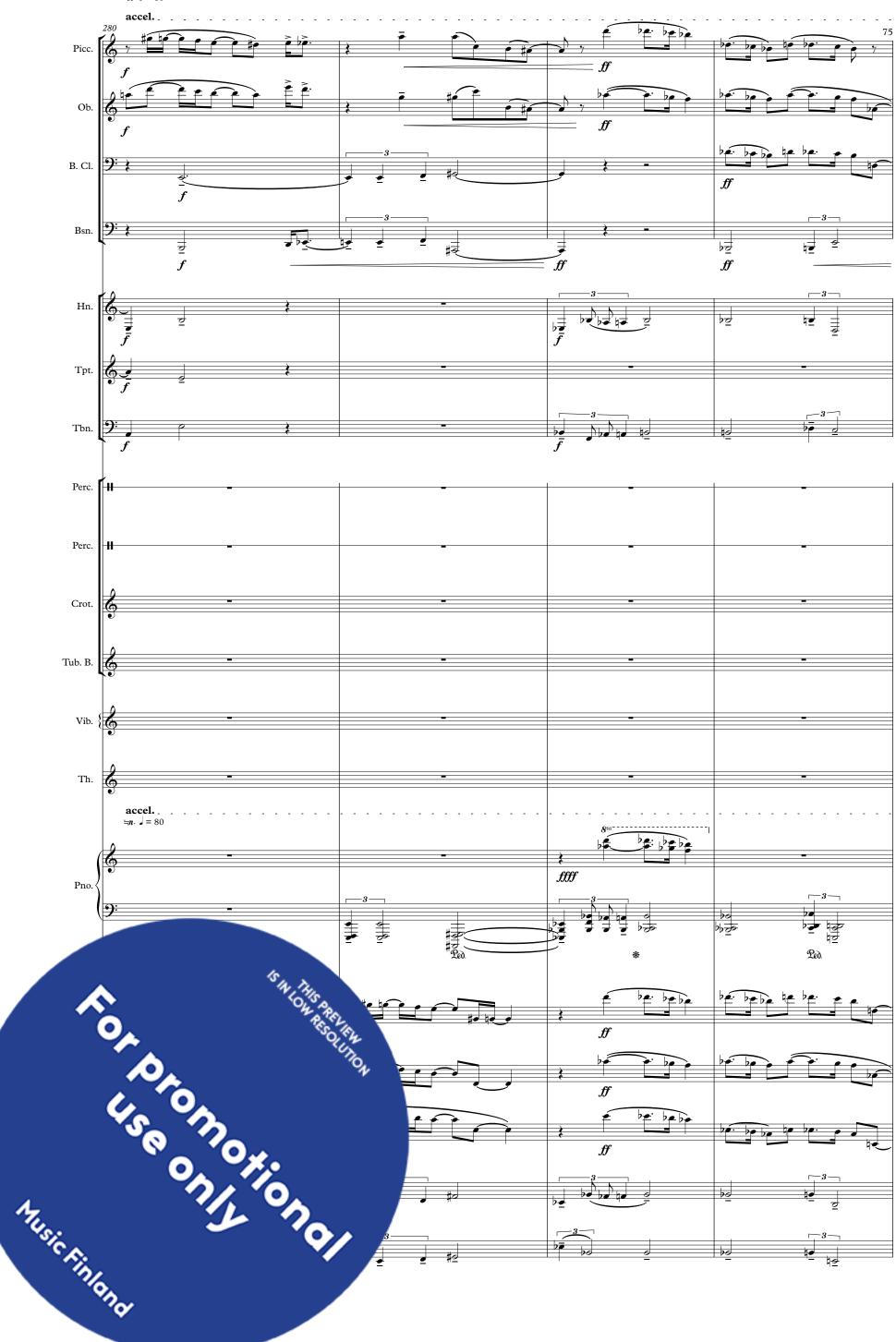


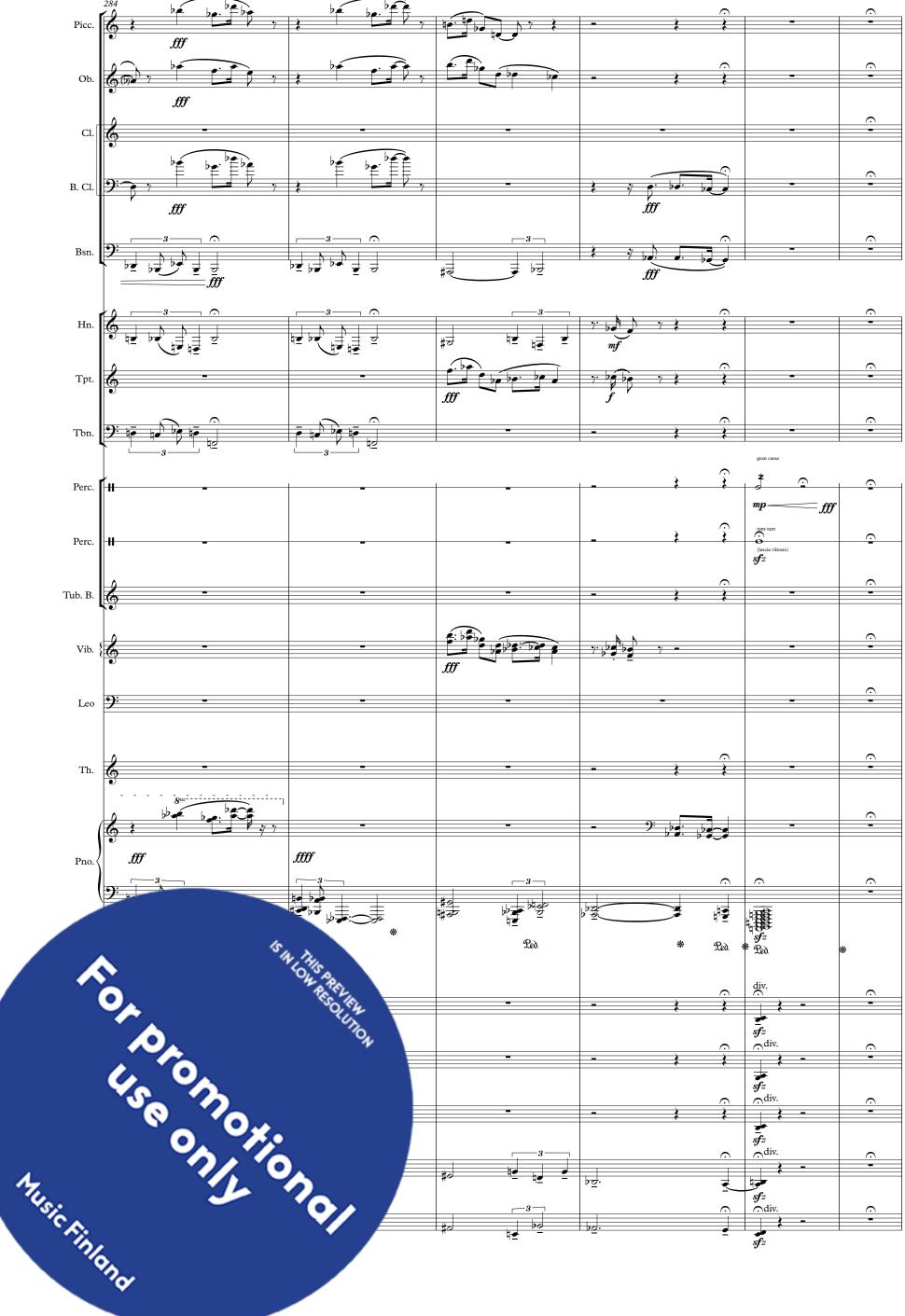






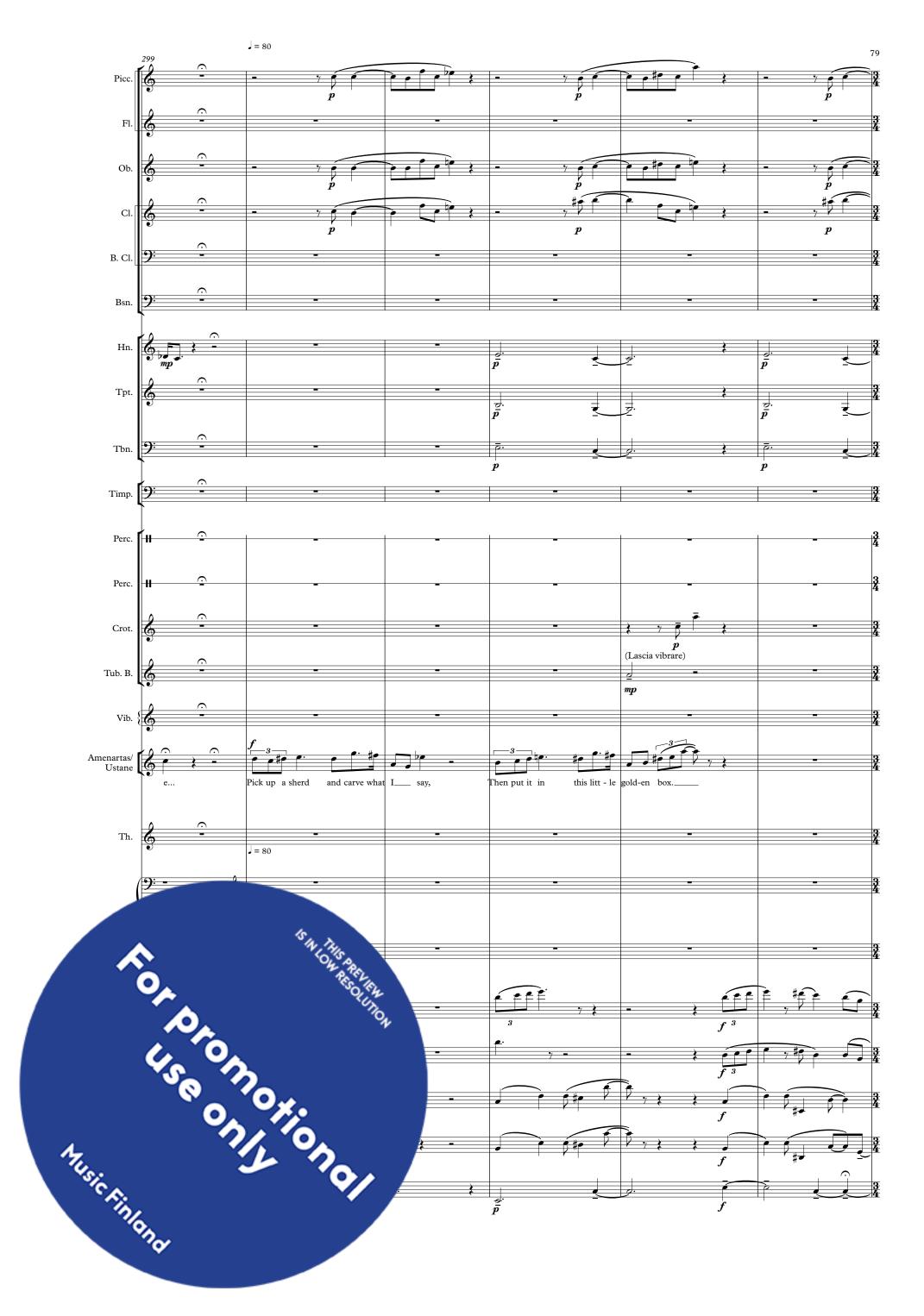
































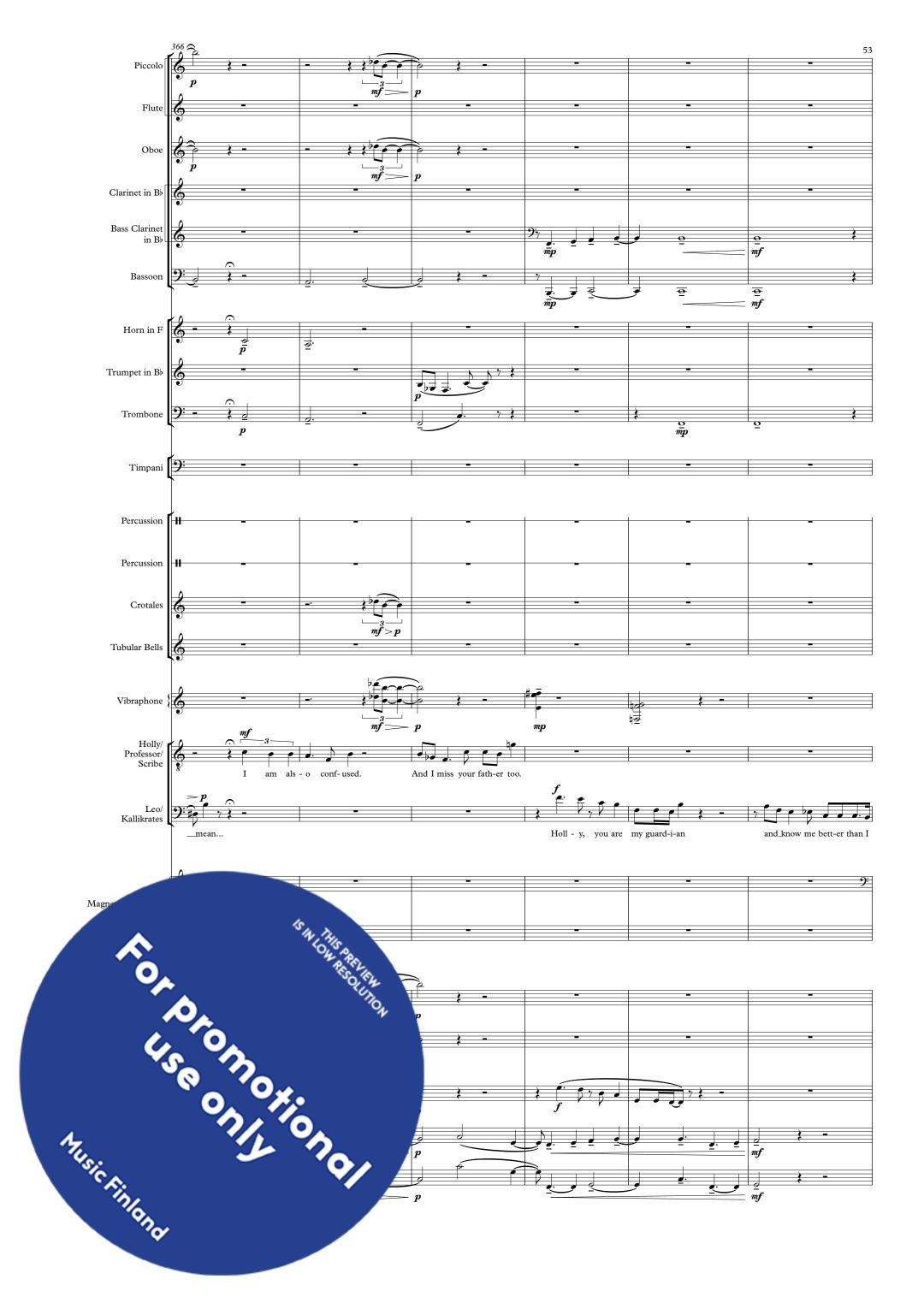


















































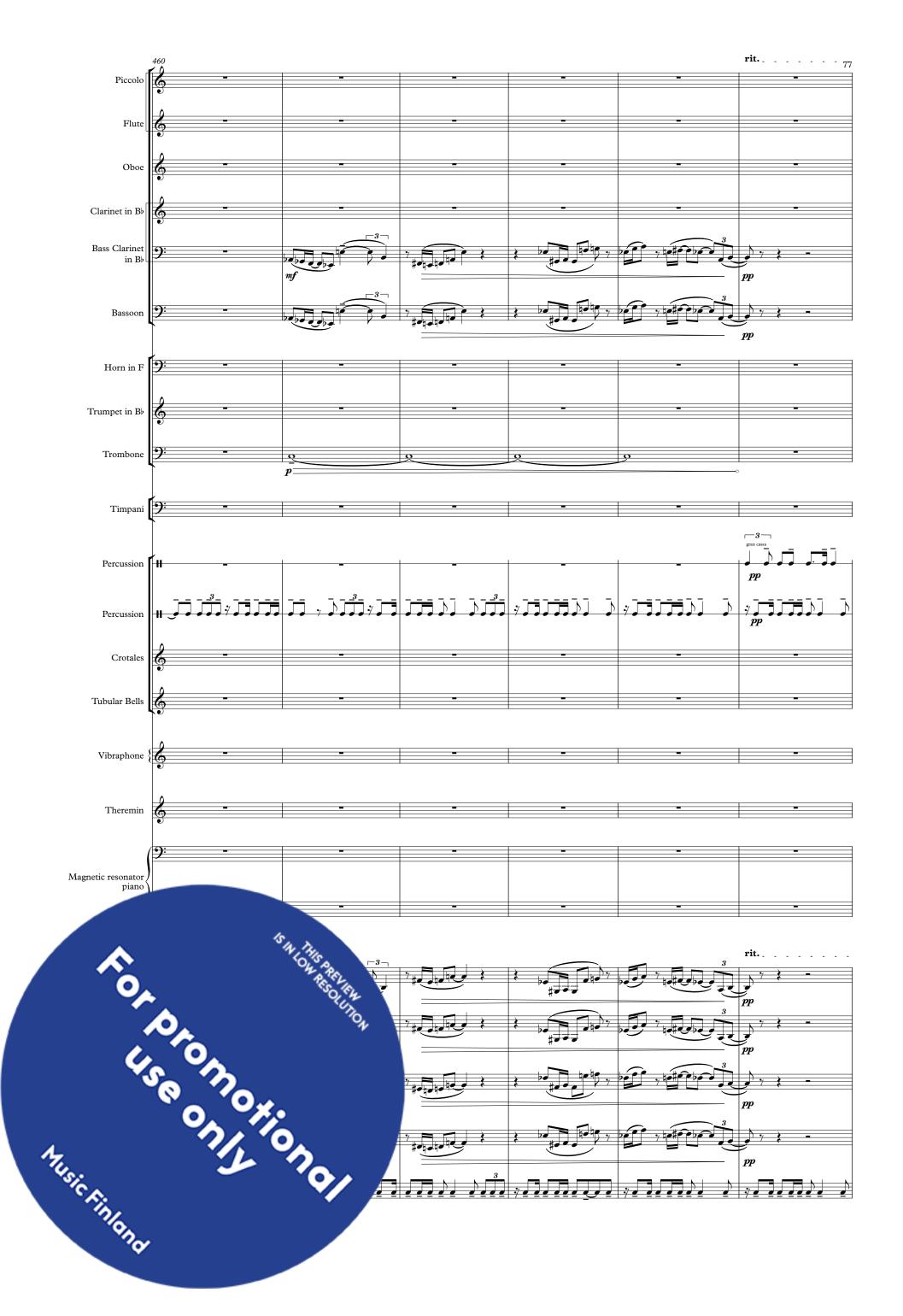




































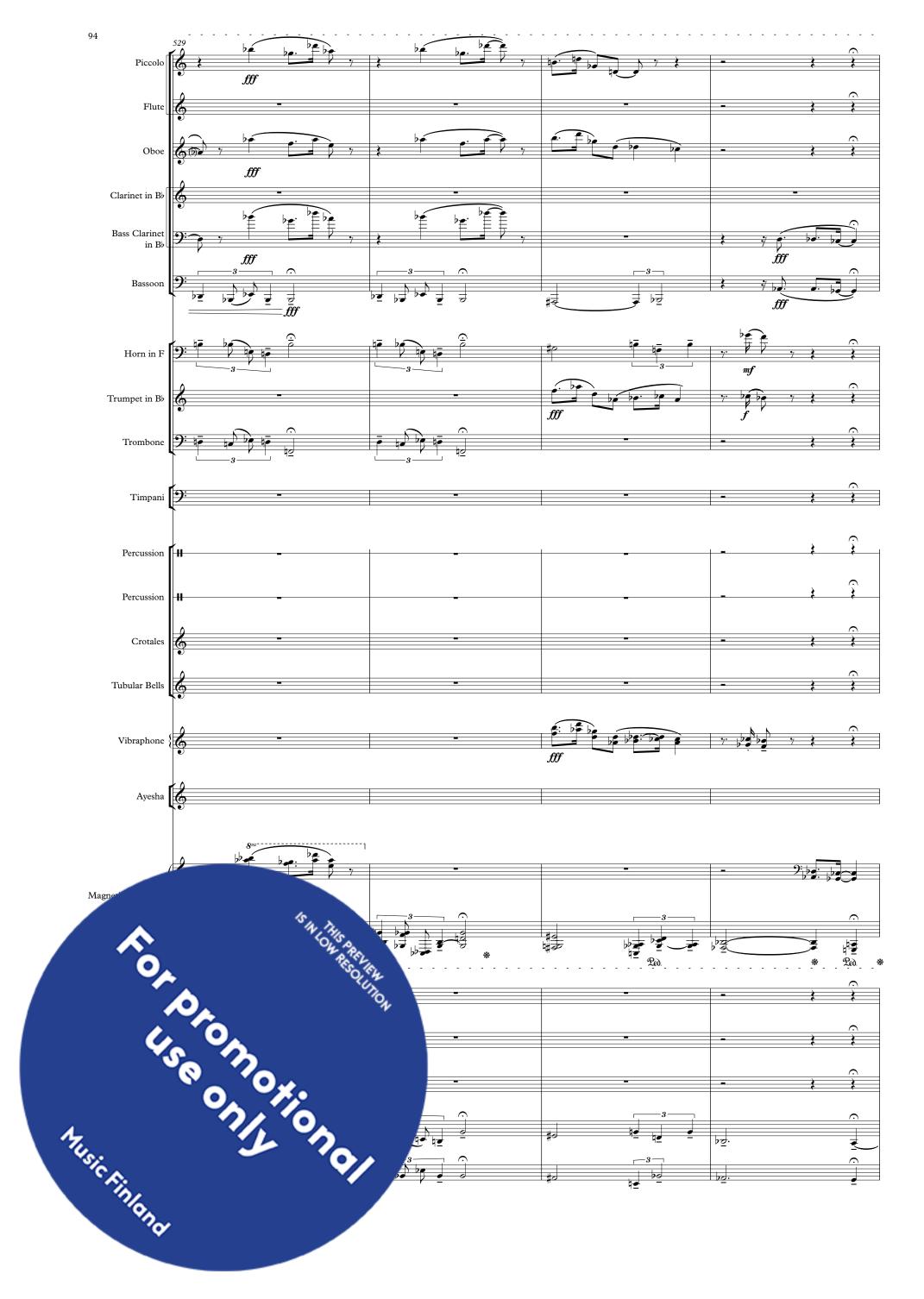




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Piccolo







96

Piccolo















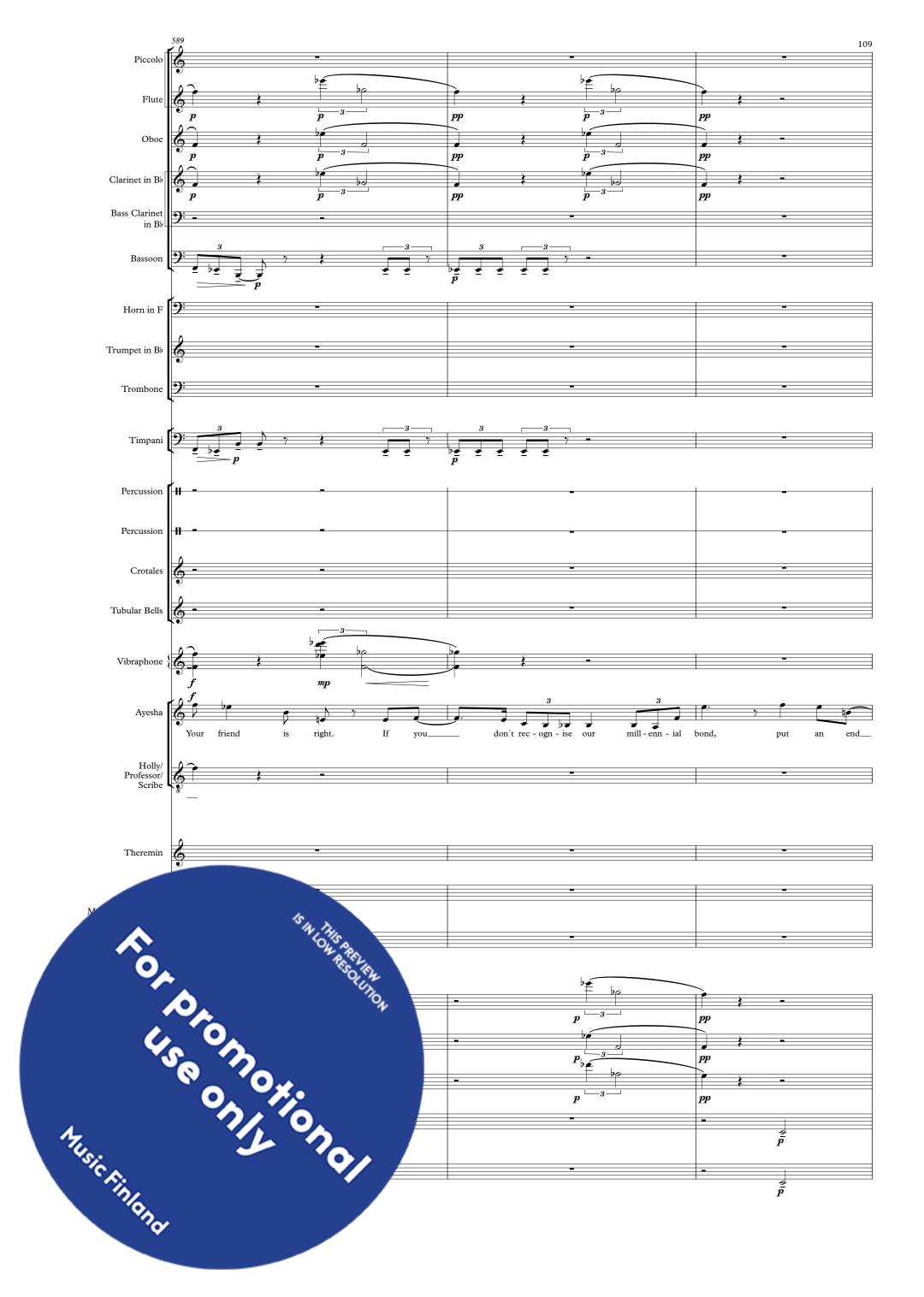
















































128

Piccolo



















138















146











fff



154 OUTSIDE THE BOX

