Paris Portraits:

Seasons

for piano solo

Vanessa McClintock

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by Vanessa McClintock

The genesis of this set of piano music was a short piano piece from my earliest years of formal music education—circa 1970.

I was enrolled in a group piano class, as was required by the department, and found myself introduced to several short pieces by composers with whom I had not been acquainted. Those pieces often were deceptively simple—not by difficulty, but by depth of expressions waiting to be brought out in performance. I felt inspired to compose my own piece and showed it to the instructor. It was simple and innocuous. The teacher was a pragmatist and without ego and recognized my Opus Pre-X for what it was. But he also saw an opportunity to encourage not only me, the very nascent composer, but also to use me as an inspiration to the class.

He was right on track on both counts. His support and encouragement did marvelous things to me by way of building my confidence as a music student as well as a potential composer.

Shortly later on, in the more dreary part of the winter season, I produced another short piece titled *For Someone*, or something akin to that. It was quite dissimilar from the first piece, but my confidence had grown as I began to mature. This is likely one of the first pieces I liked and in which I saw greater potential developing within myself.

A few months later, as the seasons found rebirth, I composed yet another short piece. It bade me think of the winter piece, though it was not a dreary time of the year. The opening notes reminded me of freshly resurrected plants sprouting up and breaking through the now moist soil. *Paris Spring* was born and so named. I never knew why it received that name. I had never been to Paris and had neither particular fondness nor antipathy for that great city: I knew only what I may have gleaned from movies. Although different, it had a character that seemed to match the wintery piece, not unlike disparate children of the same parents, different from each other yet sharing DNA. Thus, I renamed that piece to *Paris Winter.*

With the two, I recognized a pattern and finished the other two seasons.

Paris Fall is reminiscent of the beginning of apparent decay, of necessary—but temporary—change and the falling away of buoyant life. It is about steadfast change, contrasted with swirls of energy clinging to life. *Paris Summer* is robust and vigorous and festive, and the least like the other three.

Eventually the order of the seasons began with fall and followed sequentially. All but for *Paris Spring* I have greatly enhanced, developed, or expanded. *Paris Spring* stands alone as true to its initial inspiration.

This set should be easily accessible to the intermediate player, with *Paris Summer* offering the greater technical challenge, and *Paris Spring* demanding the greatest interpretive skills.

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Paris Portraits

for piano solo

I – Paris Fall

II – Paris Winter

III – Paris Spring

IV – Paris Summer

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Paris Fall

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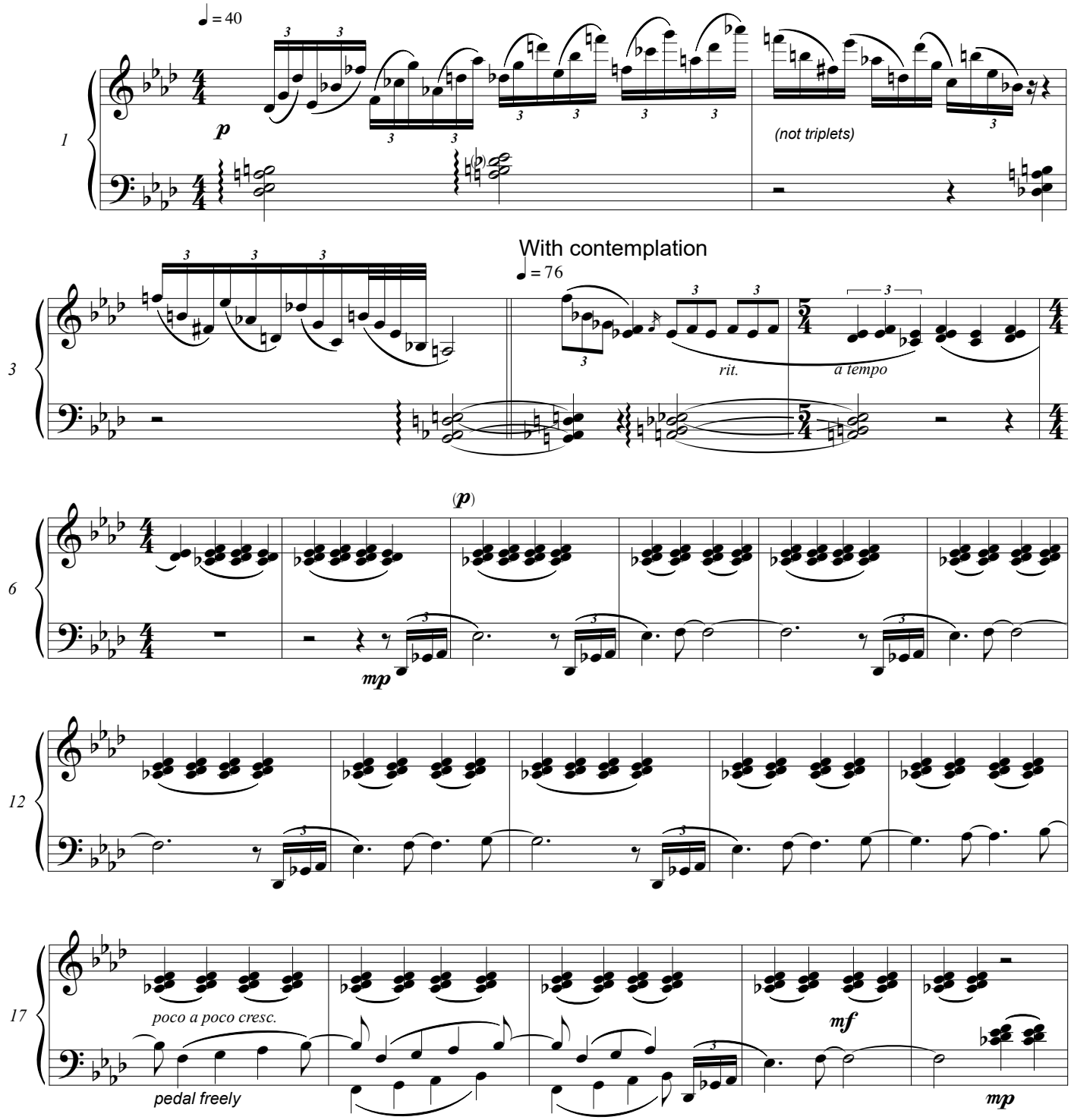

Performance note: *dynamics placed in between staves apply to both. When placed above or below, they apply to the upper or lower staves respectively.*

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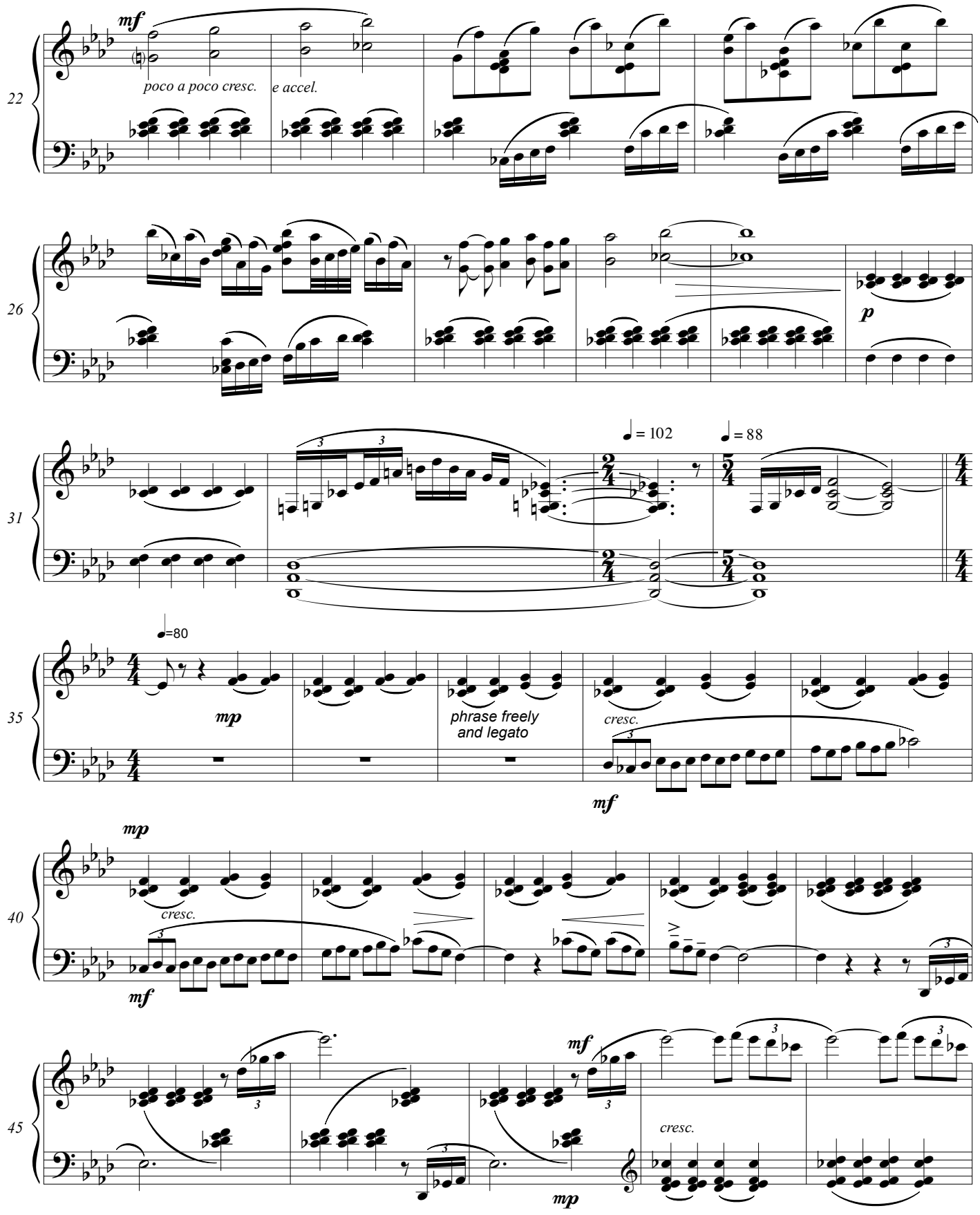

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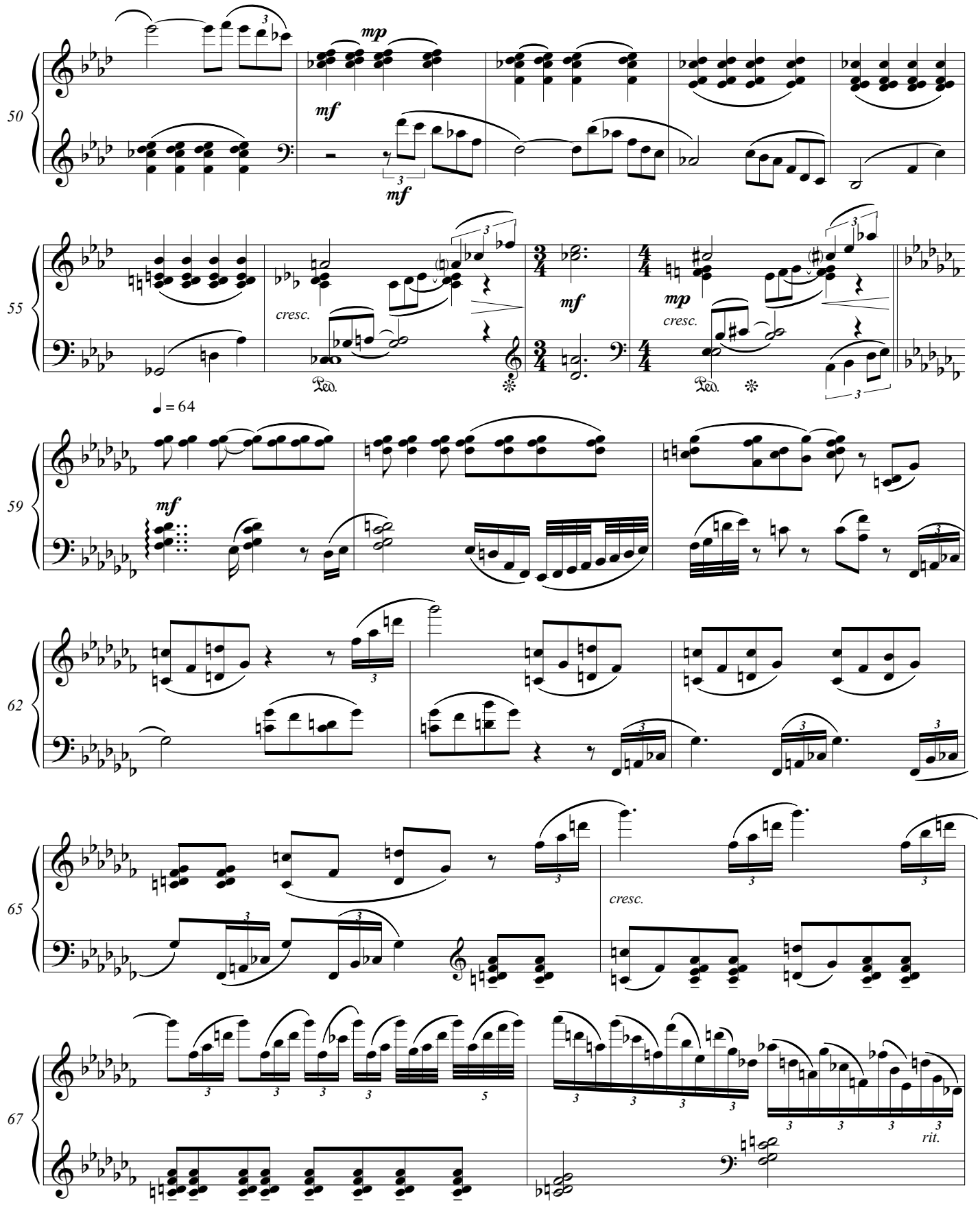

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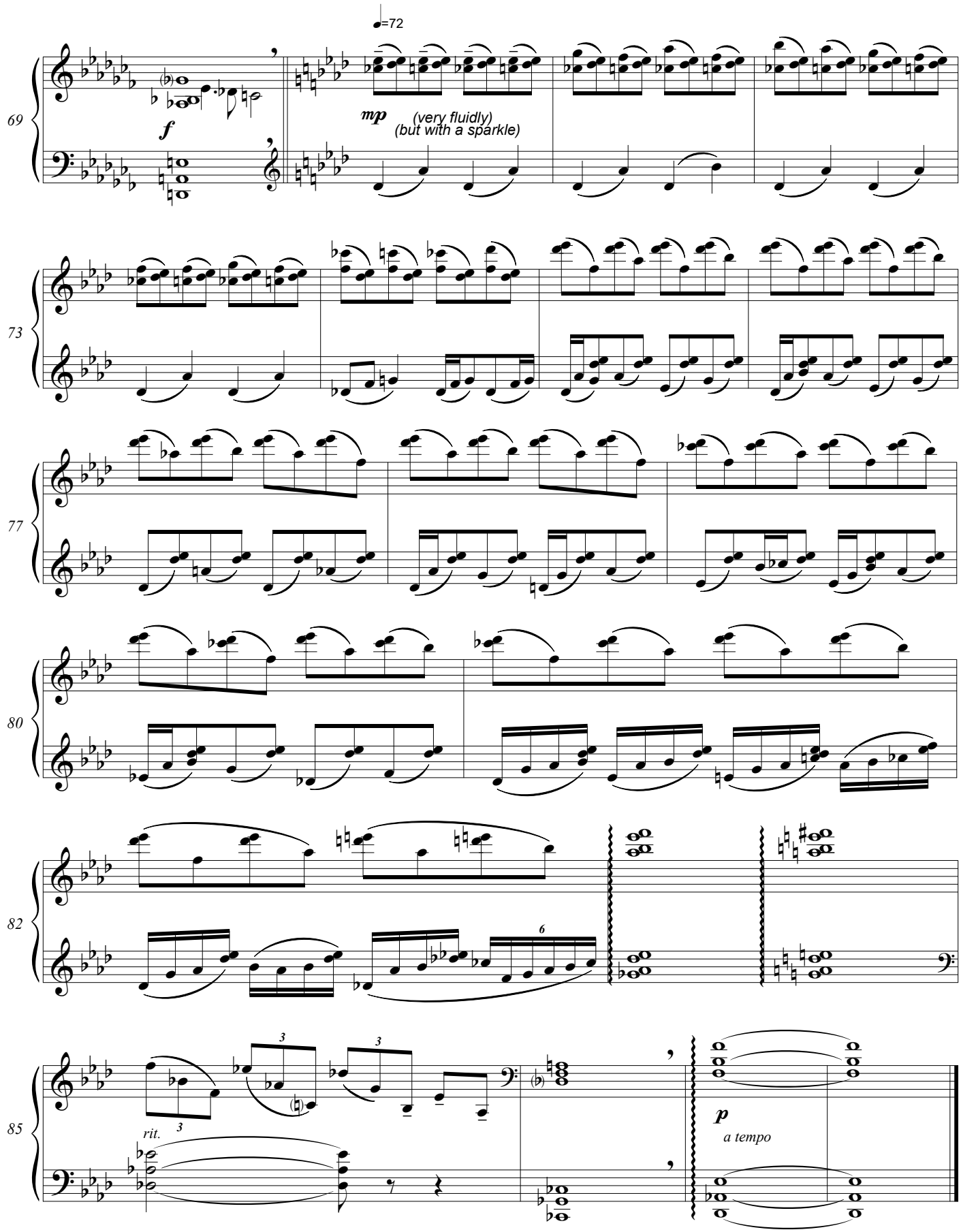

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Paris Winter

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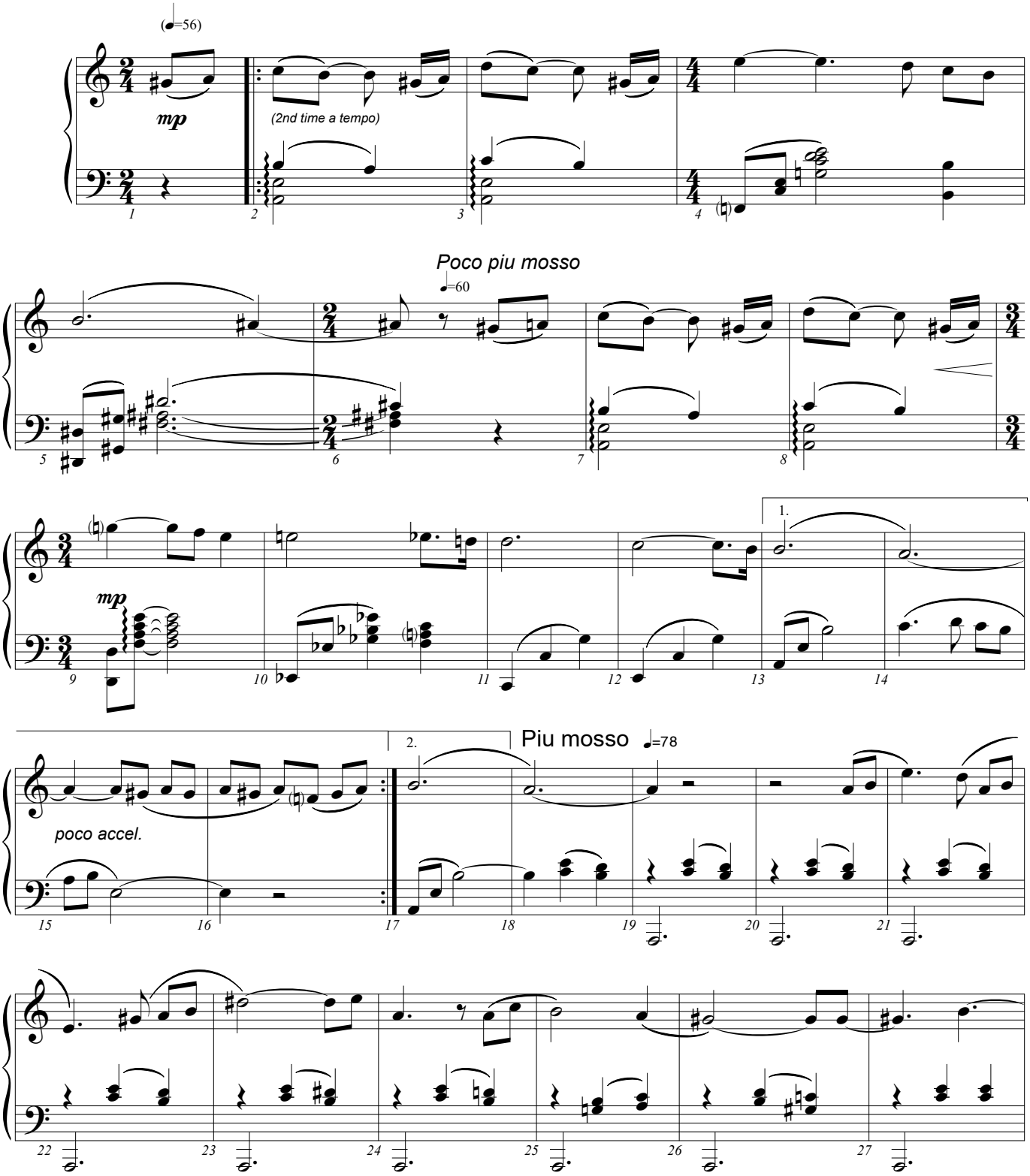

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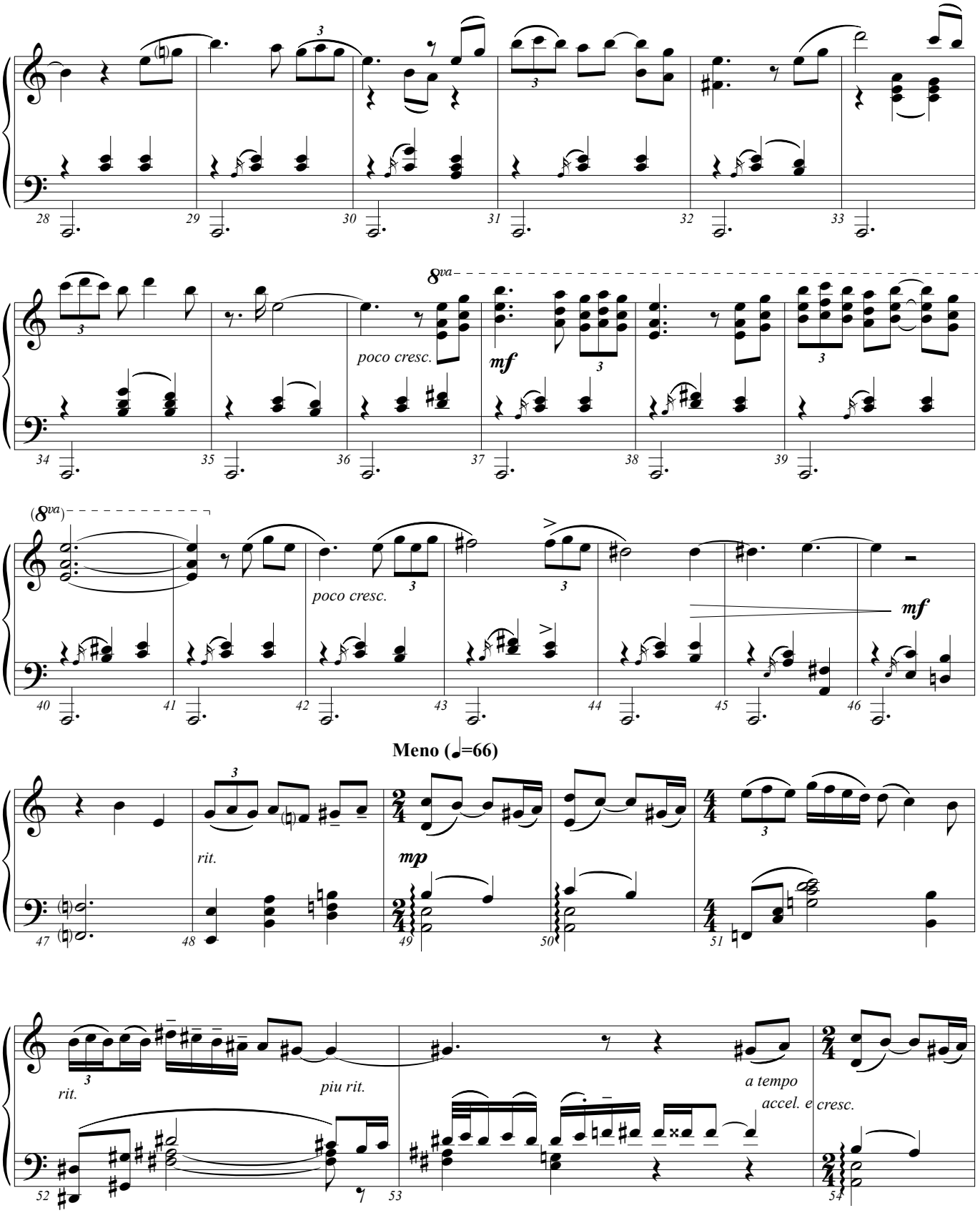

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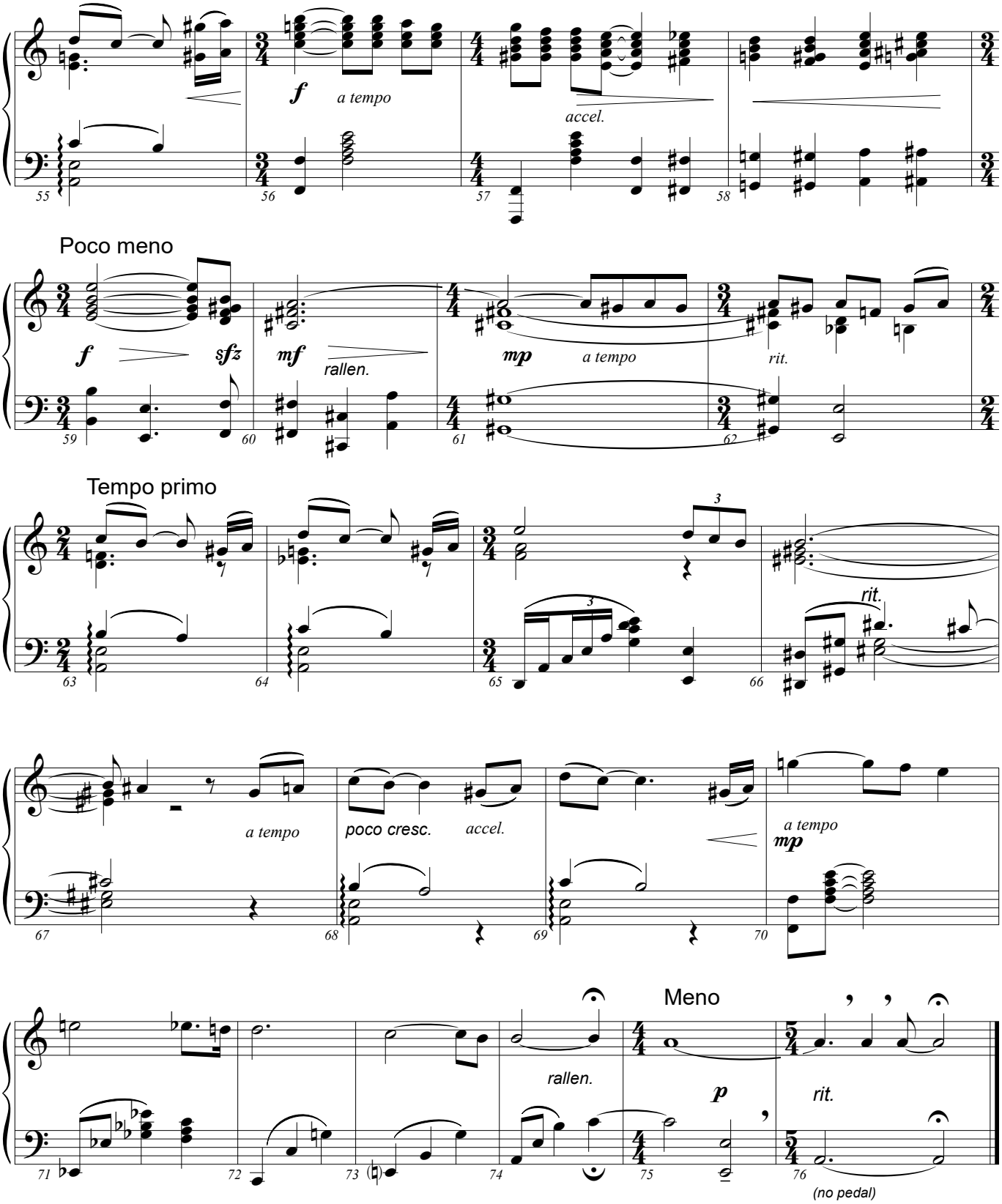

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Paris Spring

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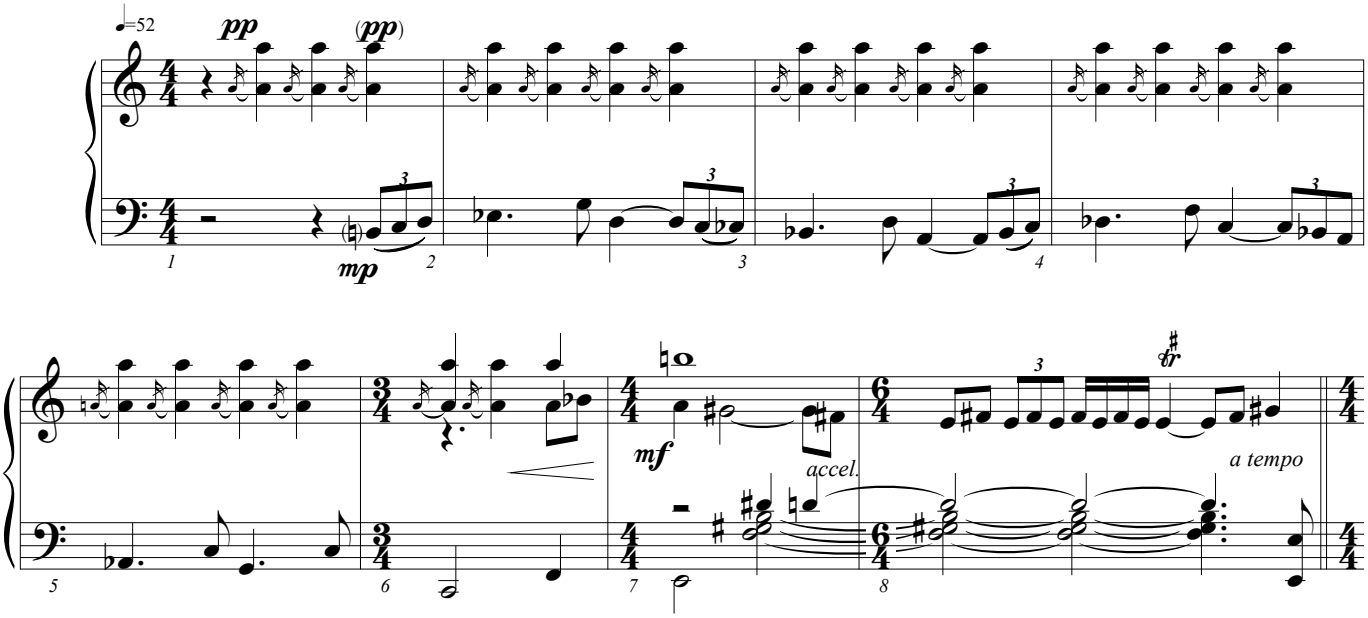
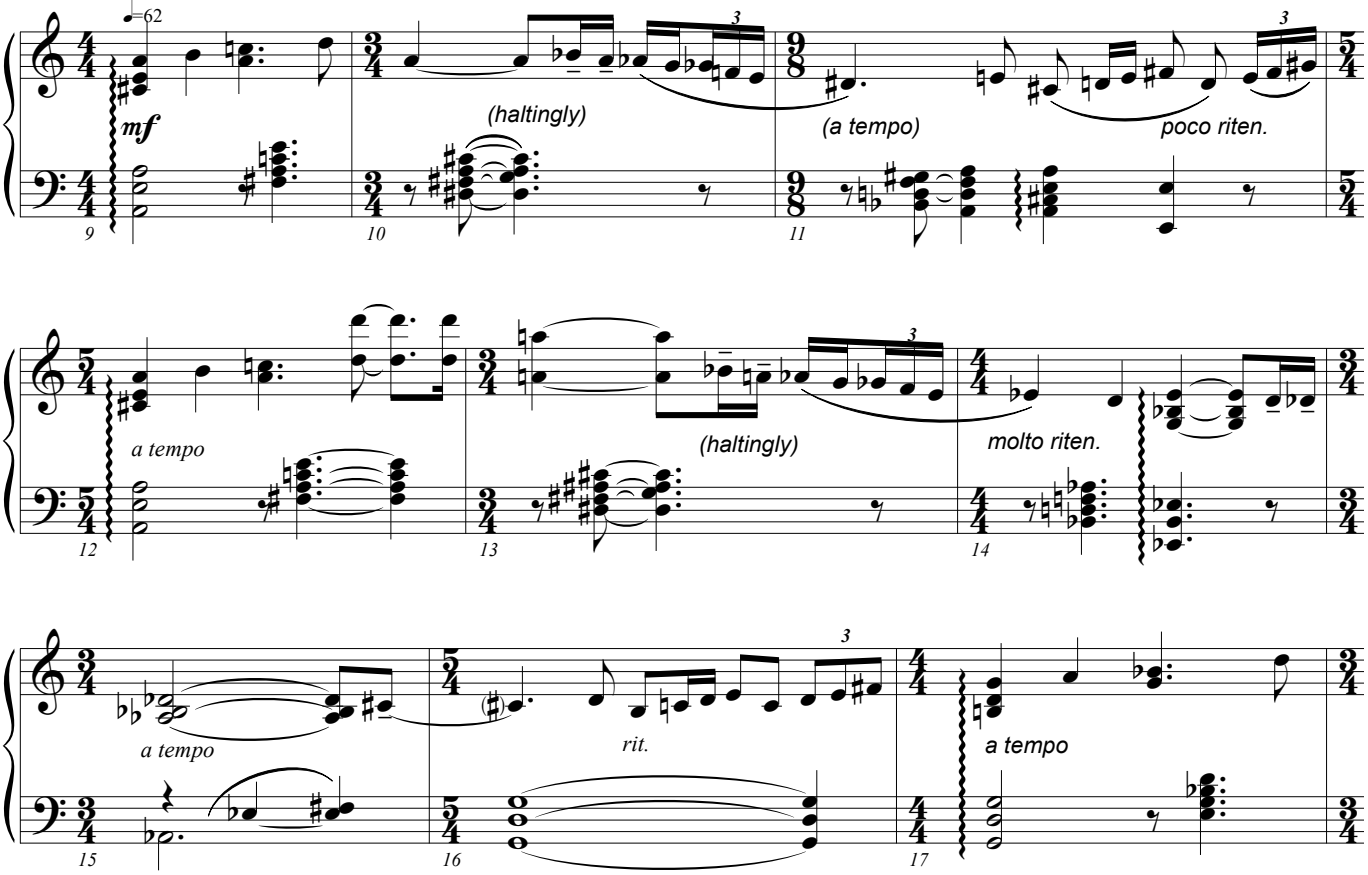
Slowly and delicately



Andante & Very Freely



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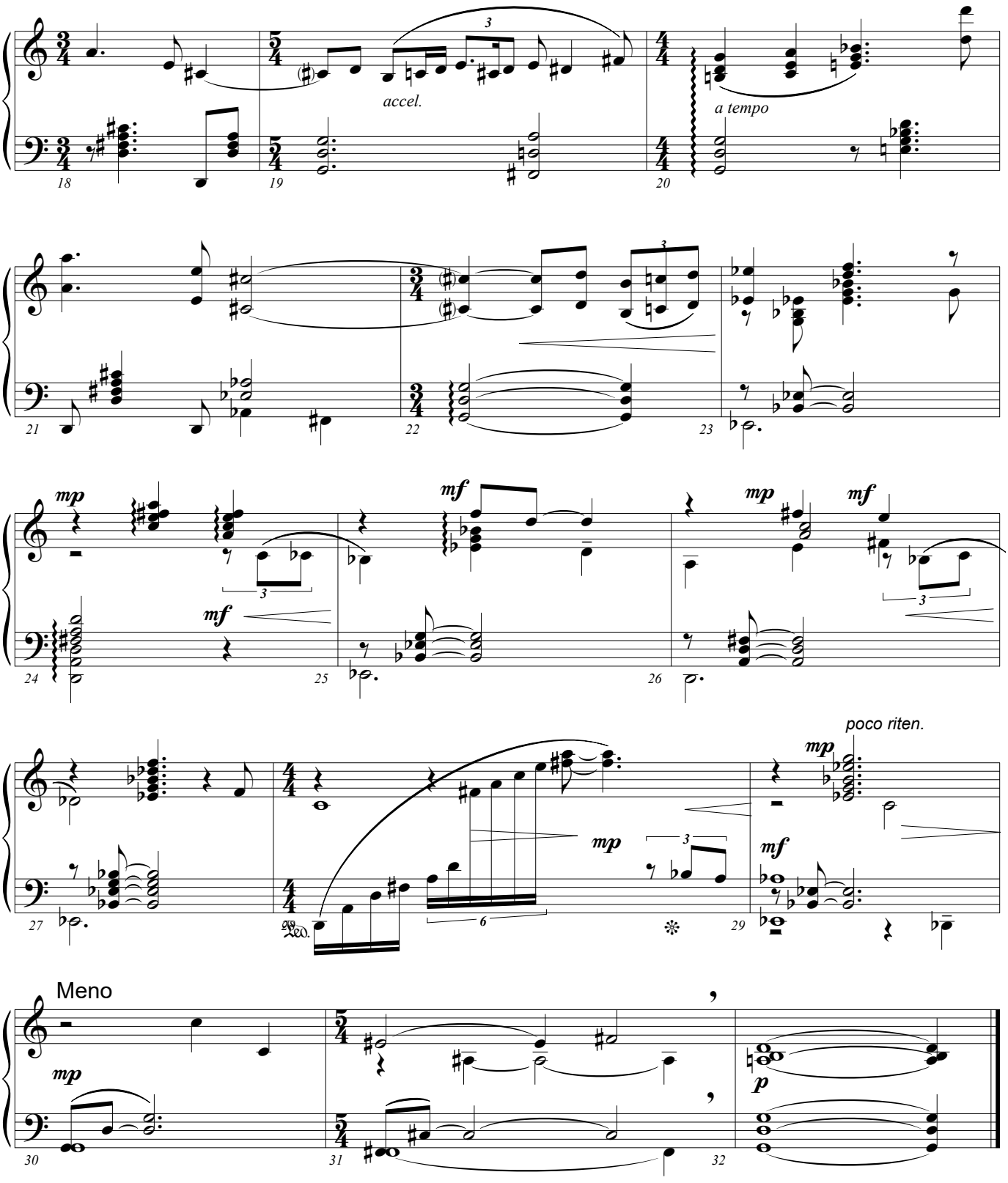

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Paris Summer

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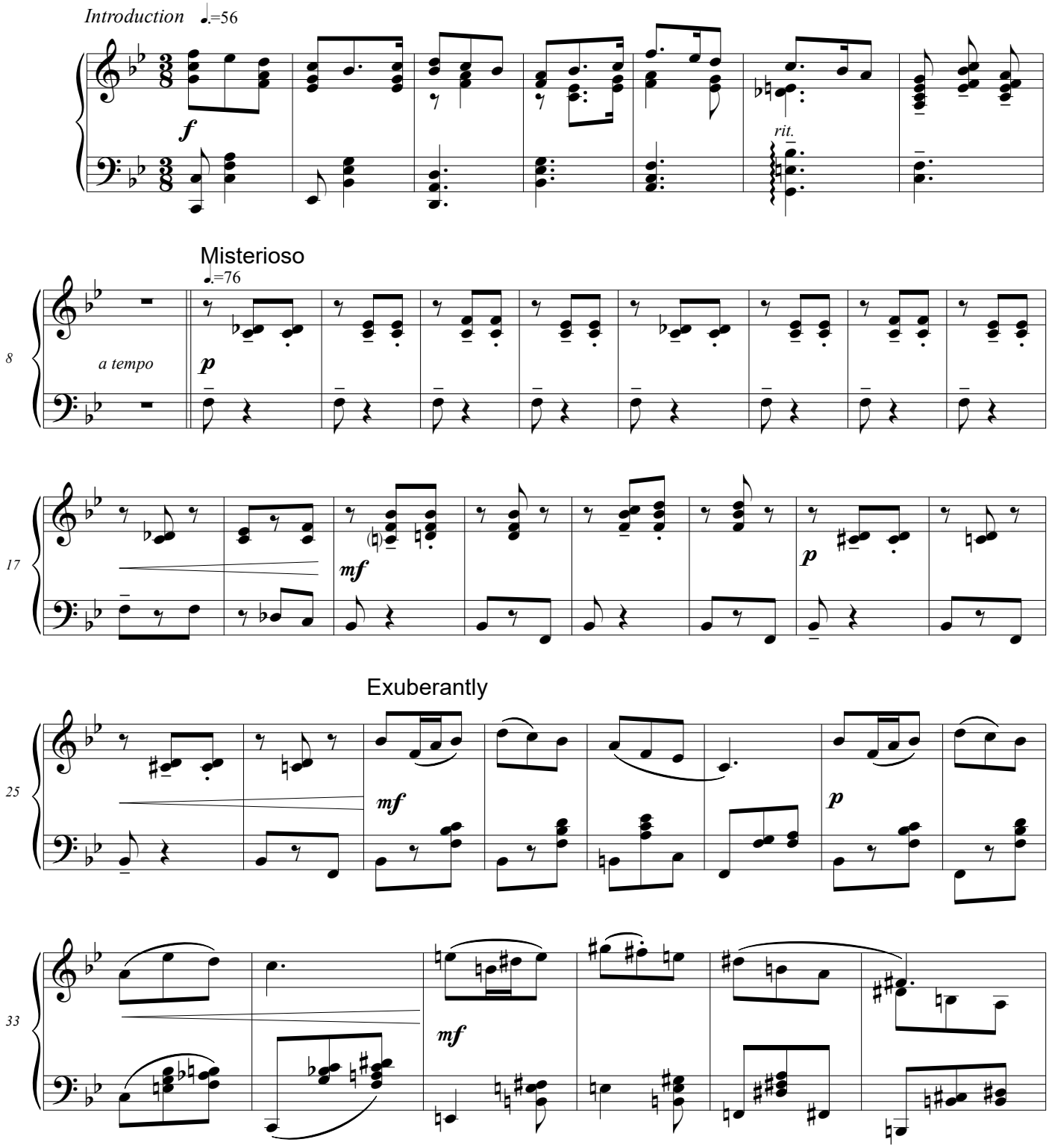

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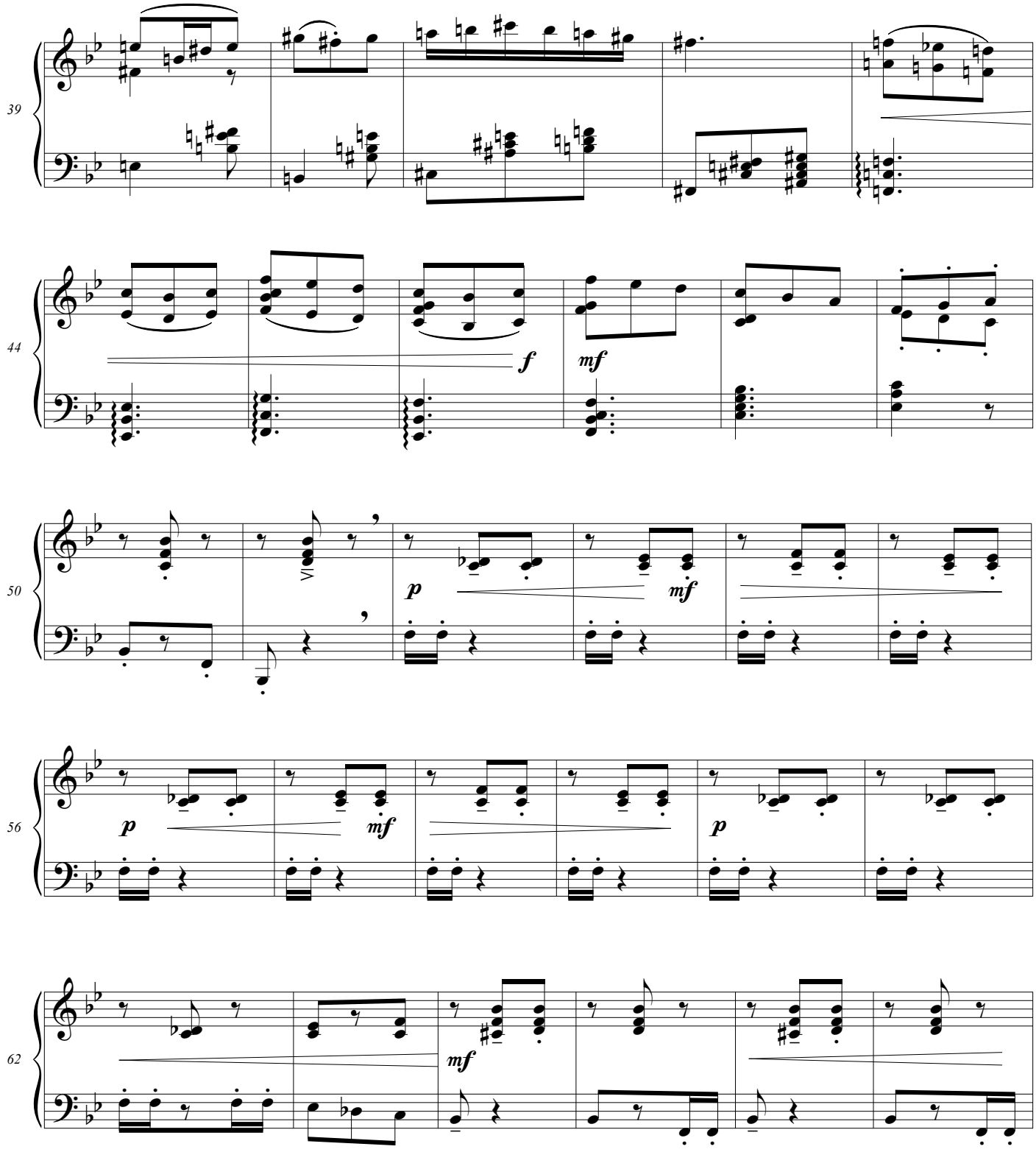

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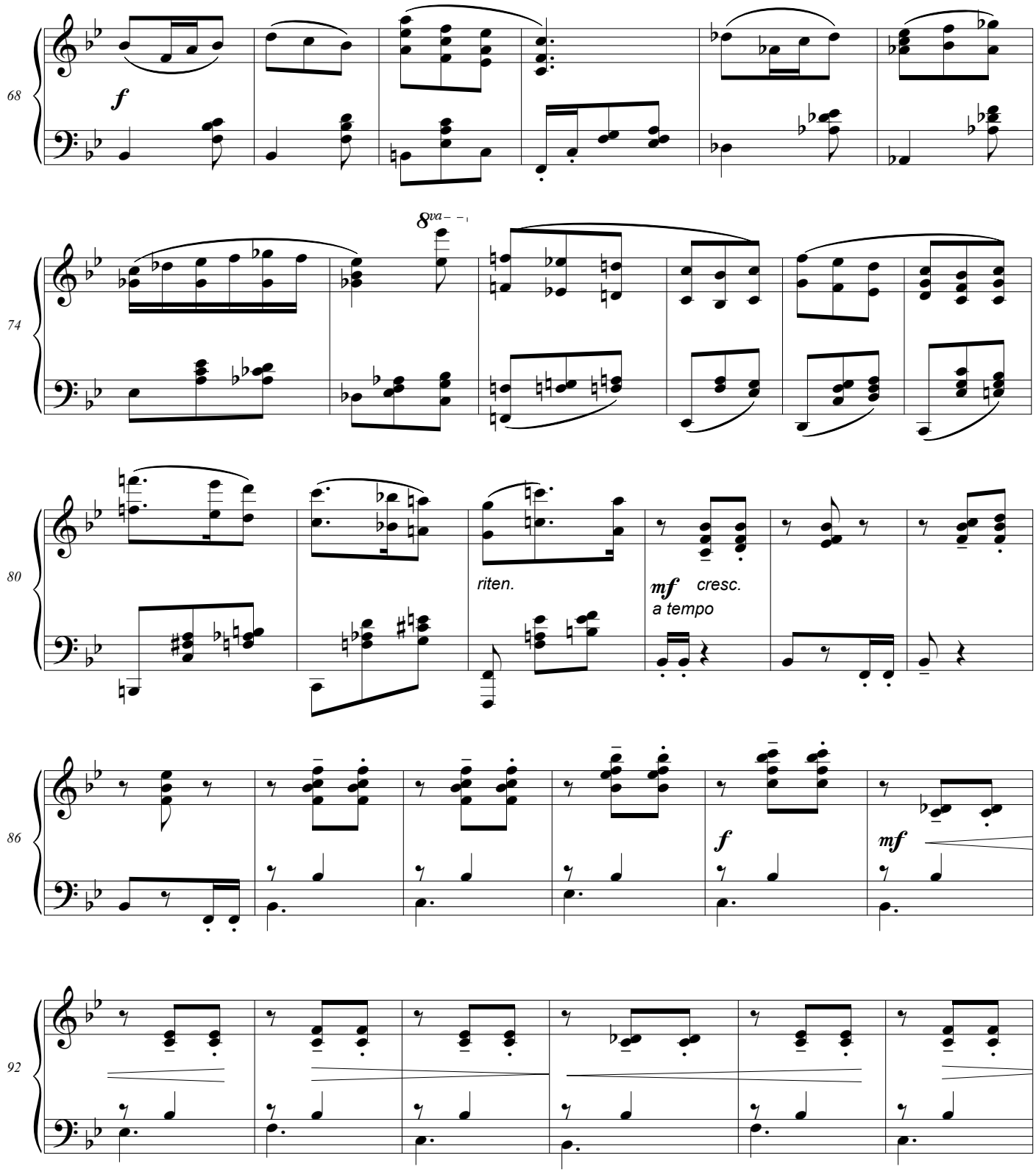

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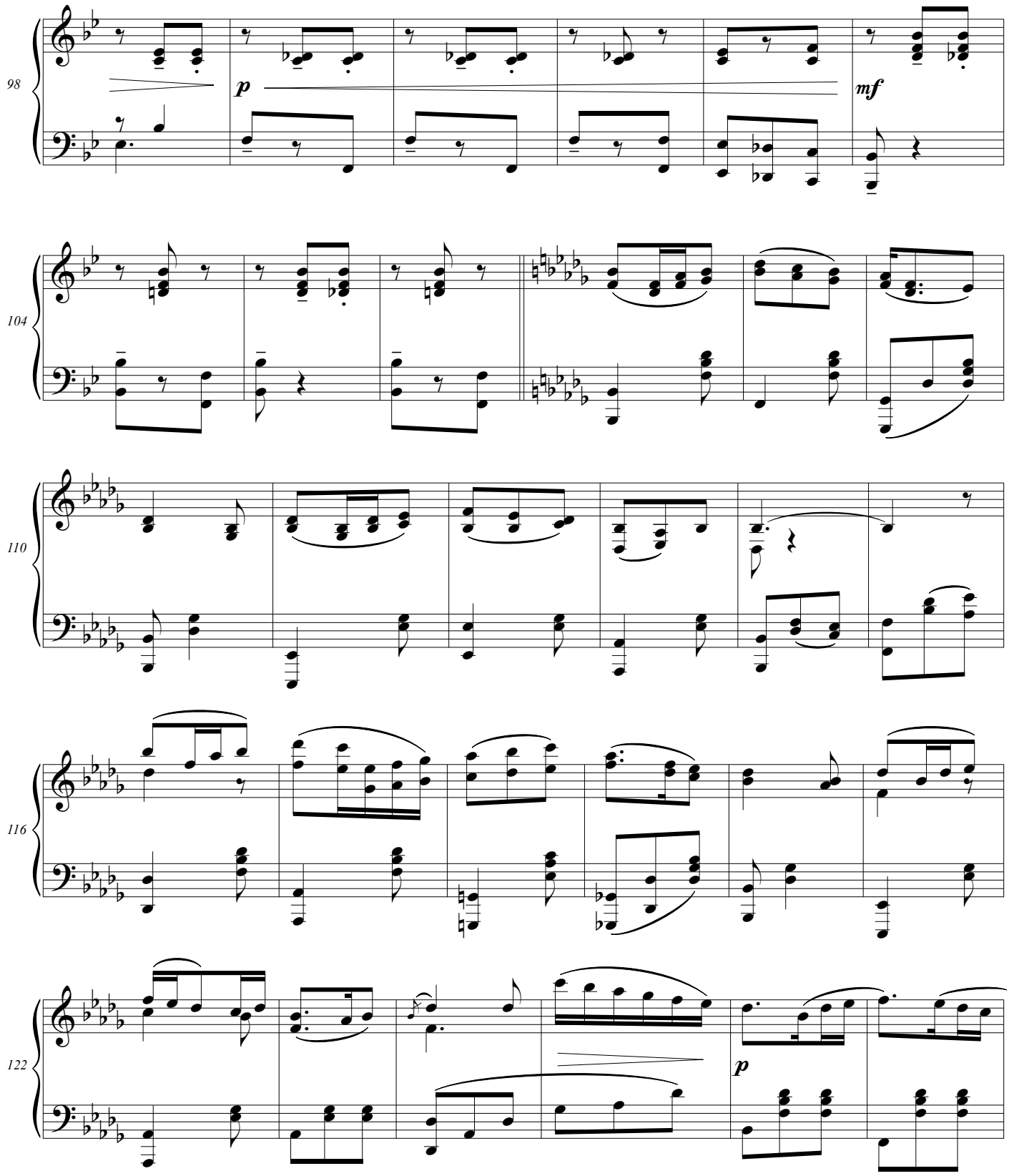

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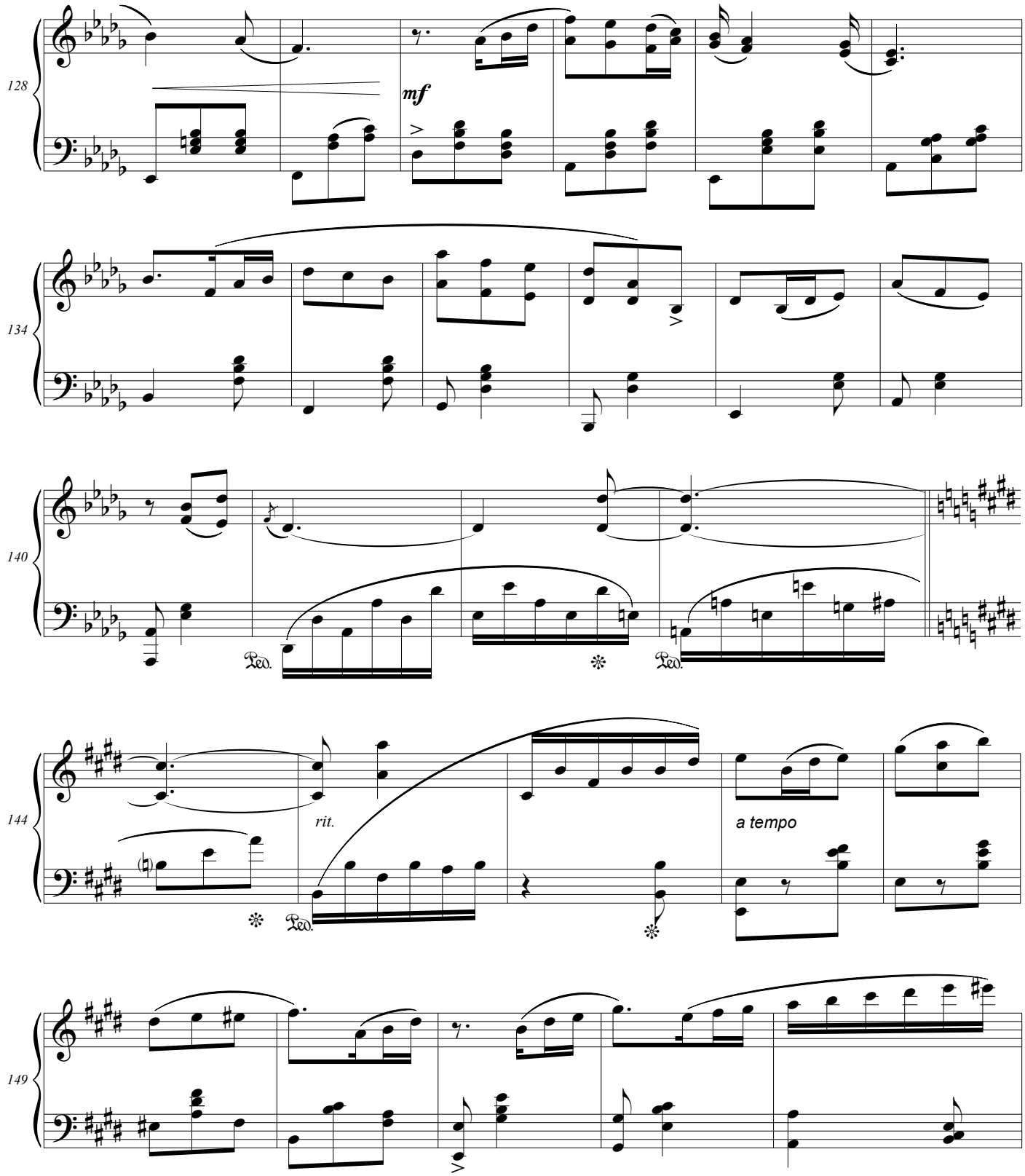

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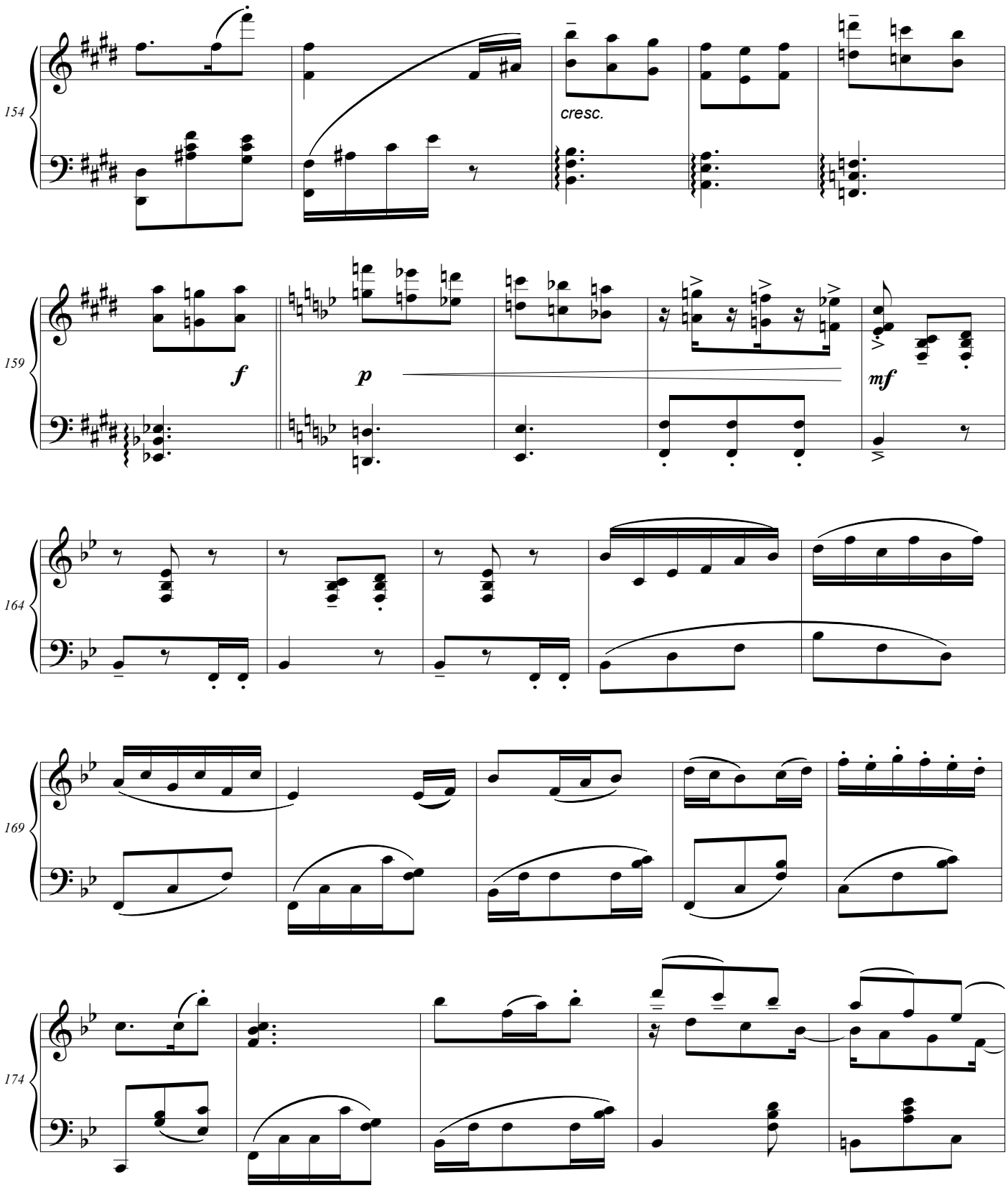

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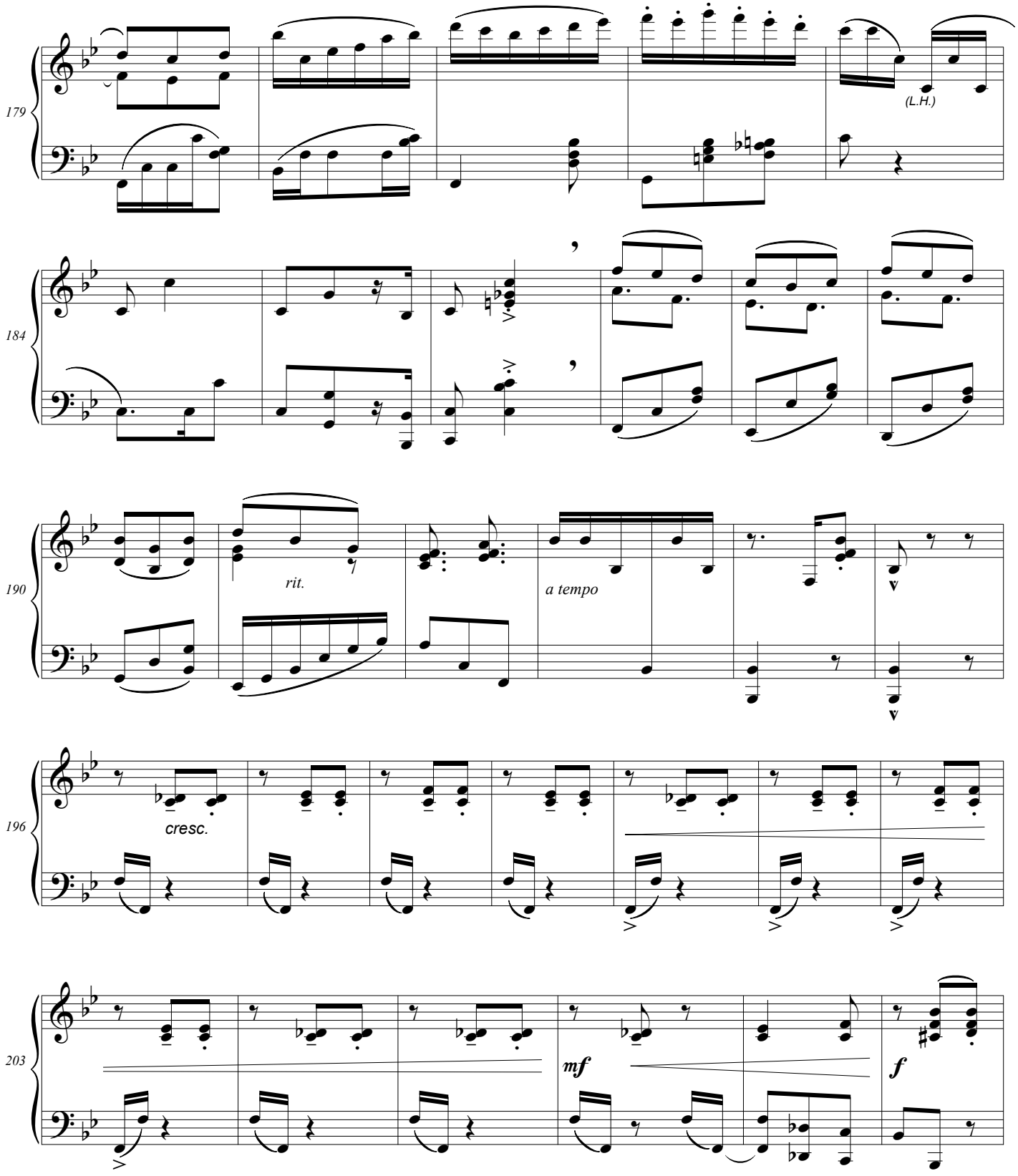

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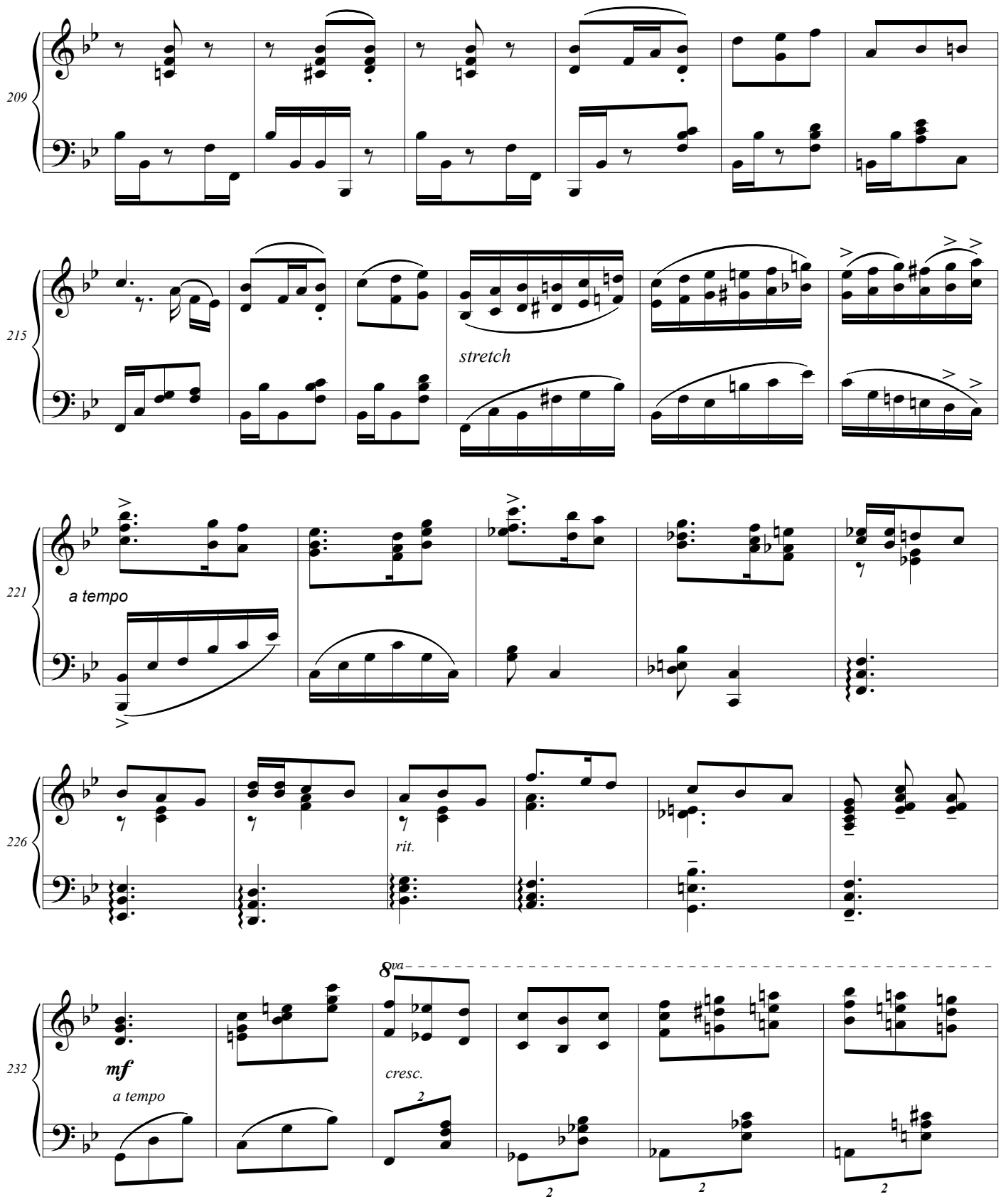

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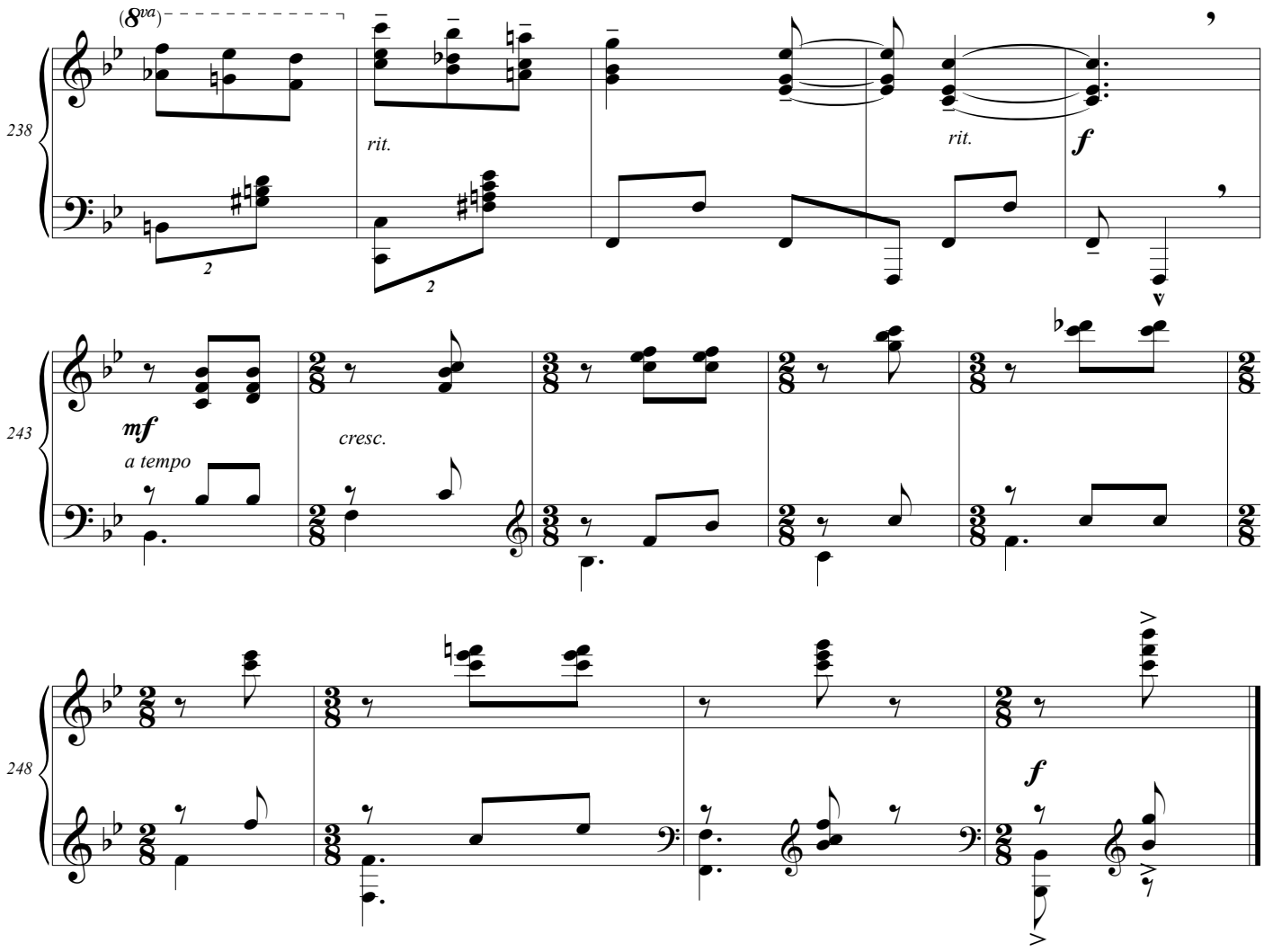

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