Sheet Music for Solo Piano

mira

Seven Melodies / 七律

Composed by Mari-Louise du Plessis

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About Seven Melodies

Mira's Seven Melodies is an engrossing and thought-provoking audio-visual performance comprising seven piano compositions accompanied by seven video pieces. Each composition is set in a different key signature, with each signature representing a specific colour. In the videos which accompany the compositions, Mira alludes to seven unique elements in nature, with every element also conveying an emotional state. In this manner, each particular key signature, colour, visual imagery, and emotion becomes a unity, forming a harmonious whole.

Of interest to Mira, and one of the elements which make an intermedial video-music artwork such as this particularly exciting, is the nuanced manner in which horizons of meaning are transferred and exchanged not only between music and video, but also between performer and music, and performance and audience.

I have been in the fortunate position to experience the evolution and development of the Seven Melodies, from a first early and still-in-the-experimental-phase-of-the-project performance at the Downstage venue in Bloemfontein in July 2016, to two home concerts of the fully realised project in quick succession in July 2018.

With the first performance of the piece in 2016 it was already apparent that Mira had grown as a musician, composer and video artist since moving to Taiwan. The two performances in 2018 simply confirmed this fact. The musical compositions perfectly match the projected visual imagery in tone and tempo, complimented by the chosen colour and accentuated by the emotional state depicted.

Mira cleverly utilises imagery of a train moving past scenery to give structure to the entire performance and in doing so she weaves the different melodies together. She also employs moments of silence between the various melodies, in this manner creating a sense of expectation and anticipation.

A second component which connects all seven of the videos is the sense of movement evoked – movement becomes a central underlying theme to the Seven Melodies. As Mira moves through Taiwan and through its natural beauty, she also moves through various, progressing and evolving, human emotional states. The sequence of key signatures, colours, visual imagery and emotions take the spectator on a similar journey – visually through the natural beauty of Taiwan and emotionally, as one goes on Mira's journey of self-discovery with her.

The opening melody is Trees, depicting the graceful and majestic nature of trees in the visuals and through a slow-paced melody evoking the pace of the life of trees. Throughout this melody, one experiences the reverence Mira feels for trees. The second melody is titled Rain. Here, the movement of the rain against the train window in the beginning of the video is particularly striking, whereas the play of colours in the rain, later in the video, evokes a sense of water as life-giver. Movement and play are also key in the third melody, Flowers, where butterflies work in collaboration with beautifully coloured flowers in an energetic to-and-fro display. Flowers expresses a splendid and magnificent nature, in a play of wind, colour and random movement.

The fourth melody shows the Mountains of Taiwan and Mira compliments the austere and commanding presence of the magnificent mountains with a deep bass tone that keeps the rhythm throughout the melody. The imagery portrays not only the mountains, but man-made tunnels and roads traversing them as well, evoking a sense of anticipation, of a journey heading towards completion, of the future arriving. Mountains is beautifully contrasted with the fifth melody, Late Afternoons, both in melody and emotional state. Late afternoon evokes feelings of a calm and peaceful afternoon leisurely spent on introspection.

The melancholy sixth melody, Autumn, shows fallen autumn leaves laying on the ground and/or rustling in the wind. In this melody, play and movement are once more of central concern, yet in contrast to Flowers, here the movements of the fallen leaves evoke a sadness, announcing an ending and the need to let go. As with the rain, the trees, and the butterflies and flowers, Mira displays a keen observation of the natural world around her in this video. The closing melody, titled After the rain, calls to mind a sense of relief, similarly to the emotional state represented by the melody. In another portrayal of a play, or perhaps a dance, of colour, the imagery shows a natural world cleansed and purified, fresh and revitalised.

Mira makes the coordination of projected video imagery and musical performance, the coordination of all the various elements comprising an audio-visual performance in a live setting, appear easy – a testament to her virtuoso technique behind the piano.

Seven melodies is a subtly nuanced, multidisciplinary and intermedial performance art piece which combines music, projected visual imagery, and progressions of colours and emotional states, which I would recommend without hesitation.

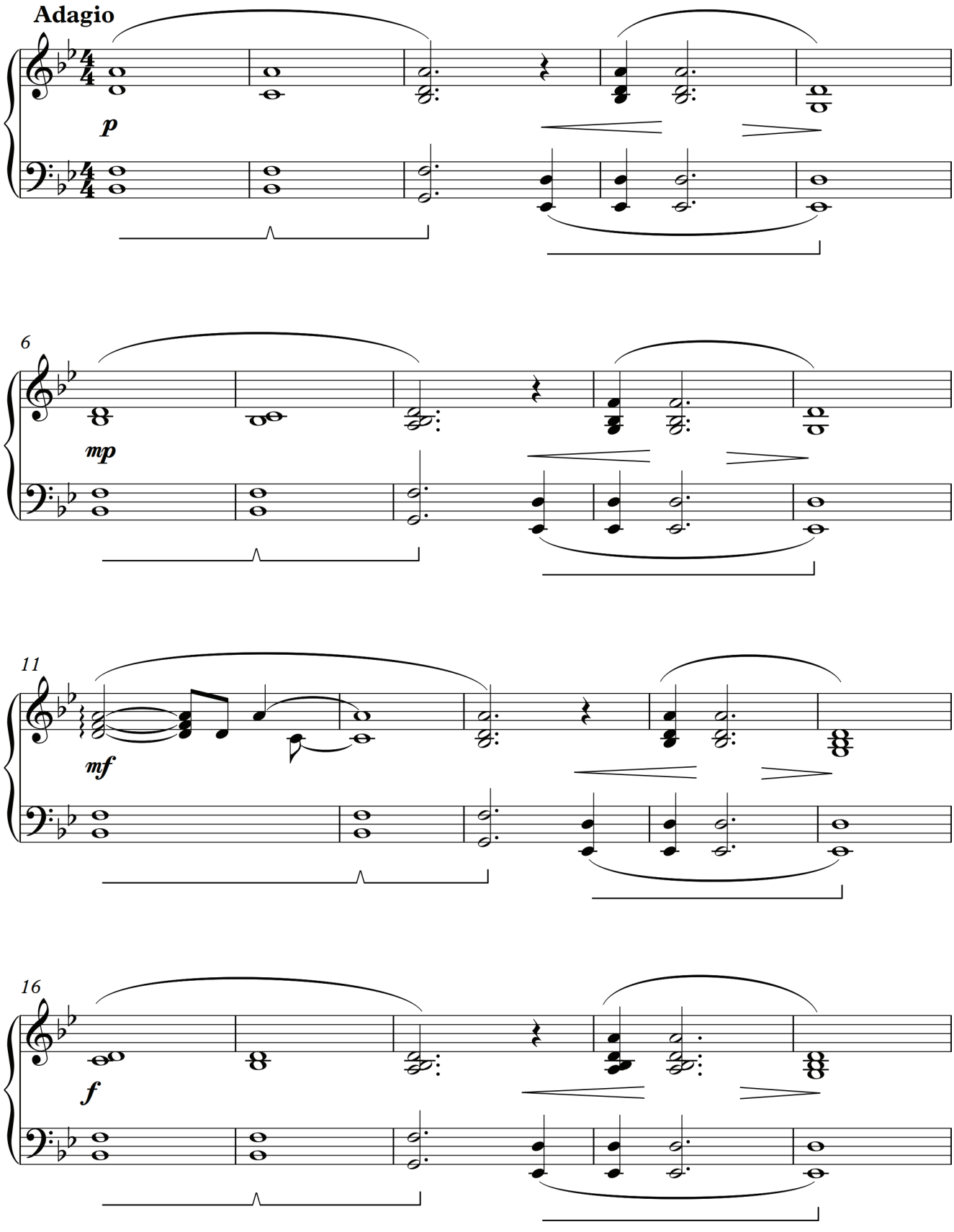
- Corneli Van Den Berg

Seven Melodies

1.
Trees

By
Mari-Louise Du Plessis

View on Youtube



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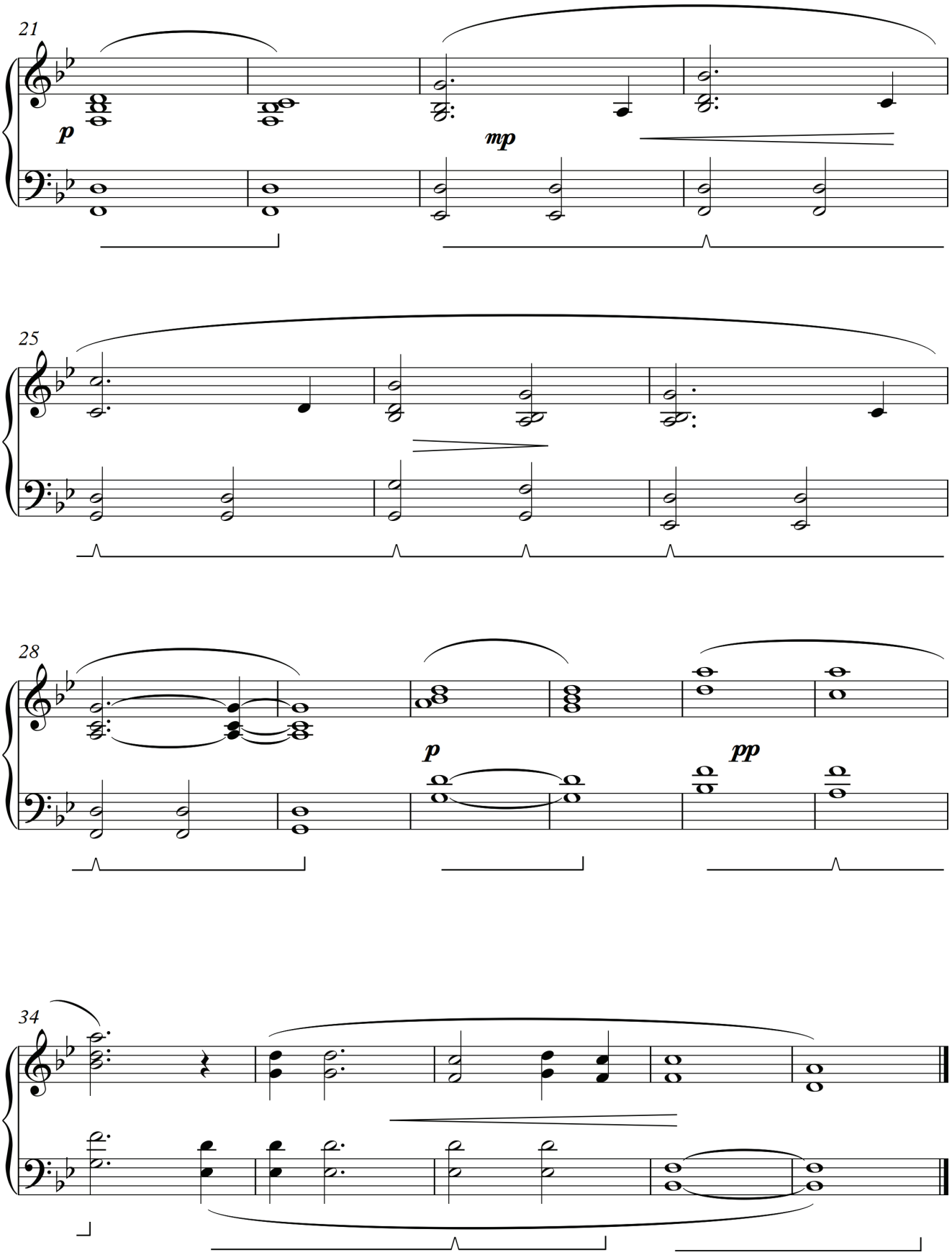

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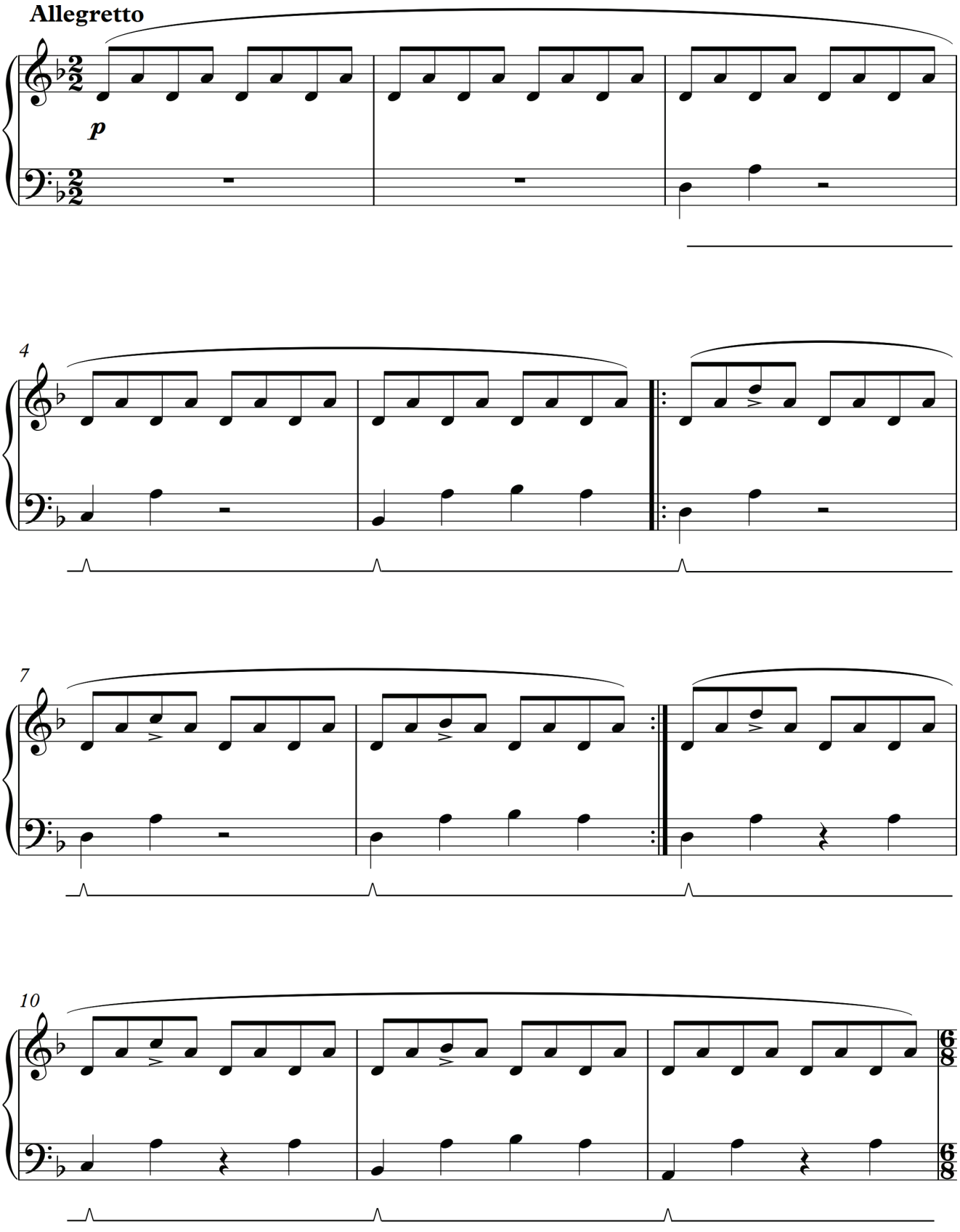
2.
Rain

By
Mari-Louise Du Plessis

View on Youtube



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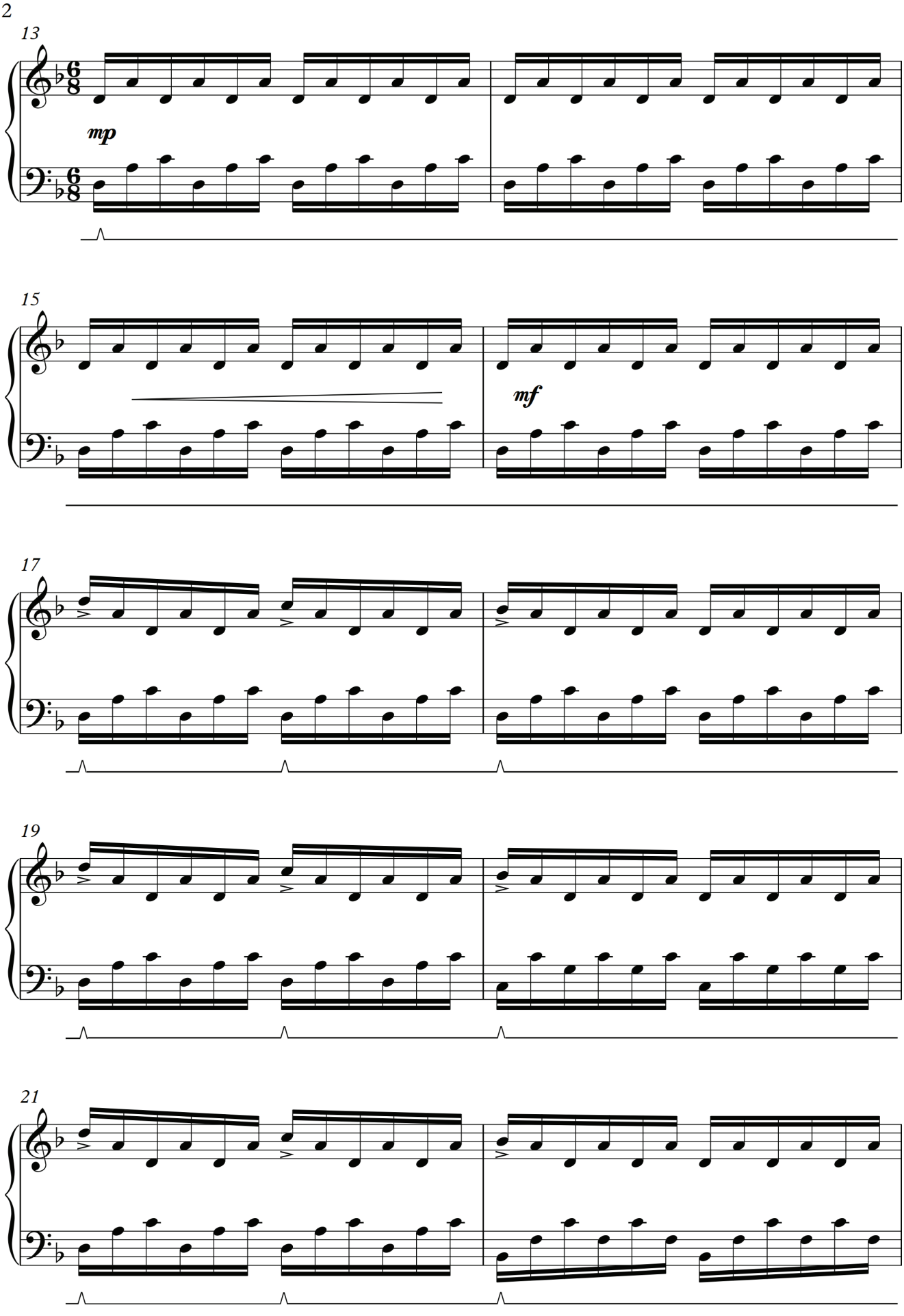

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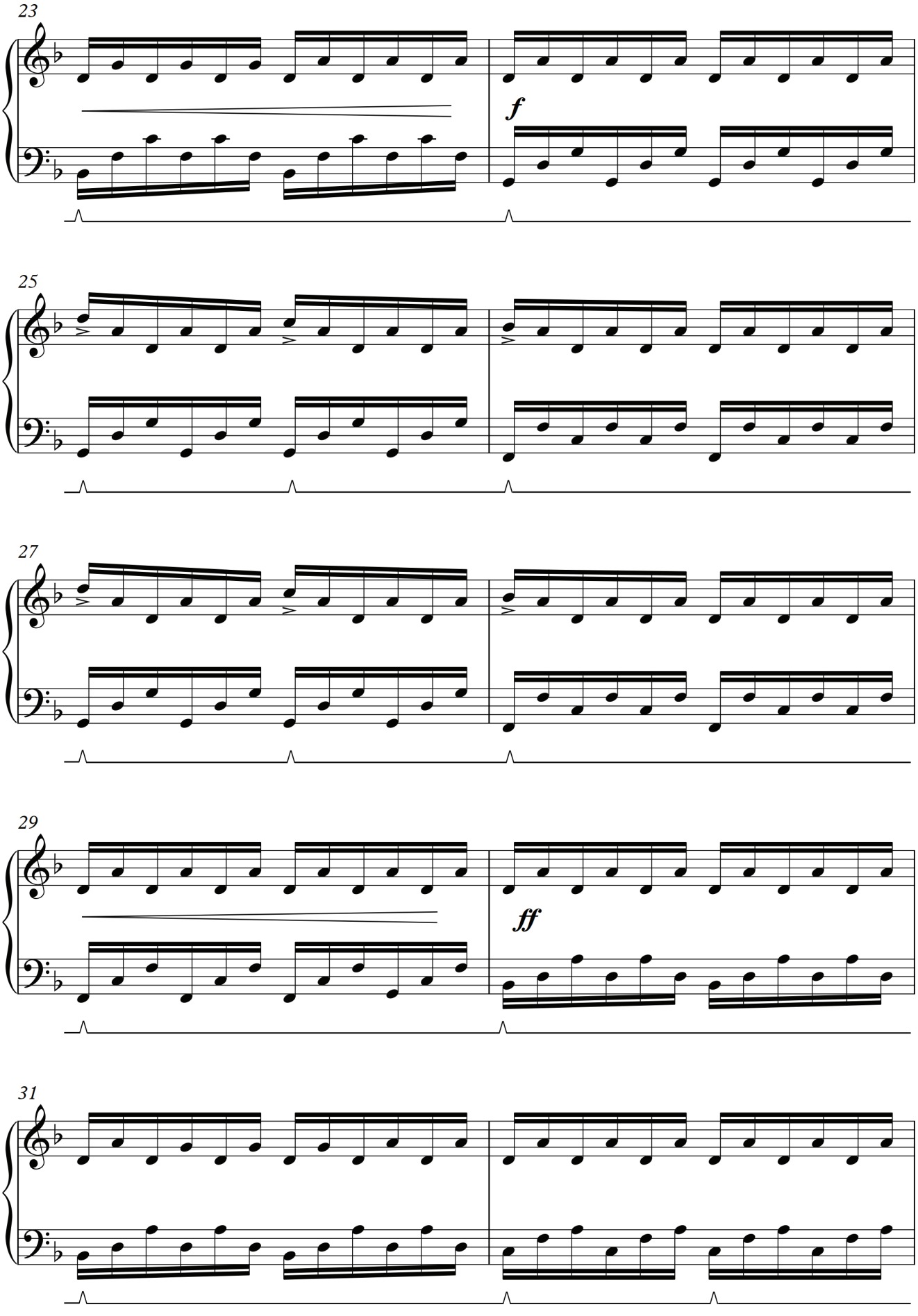

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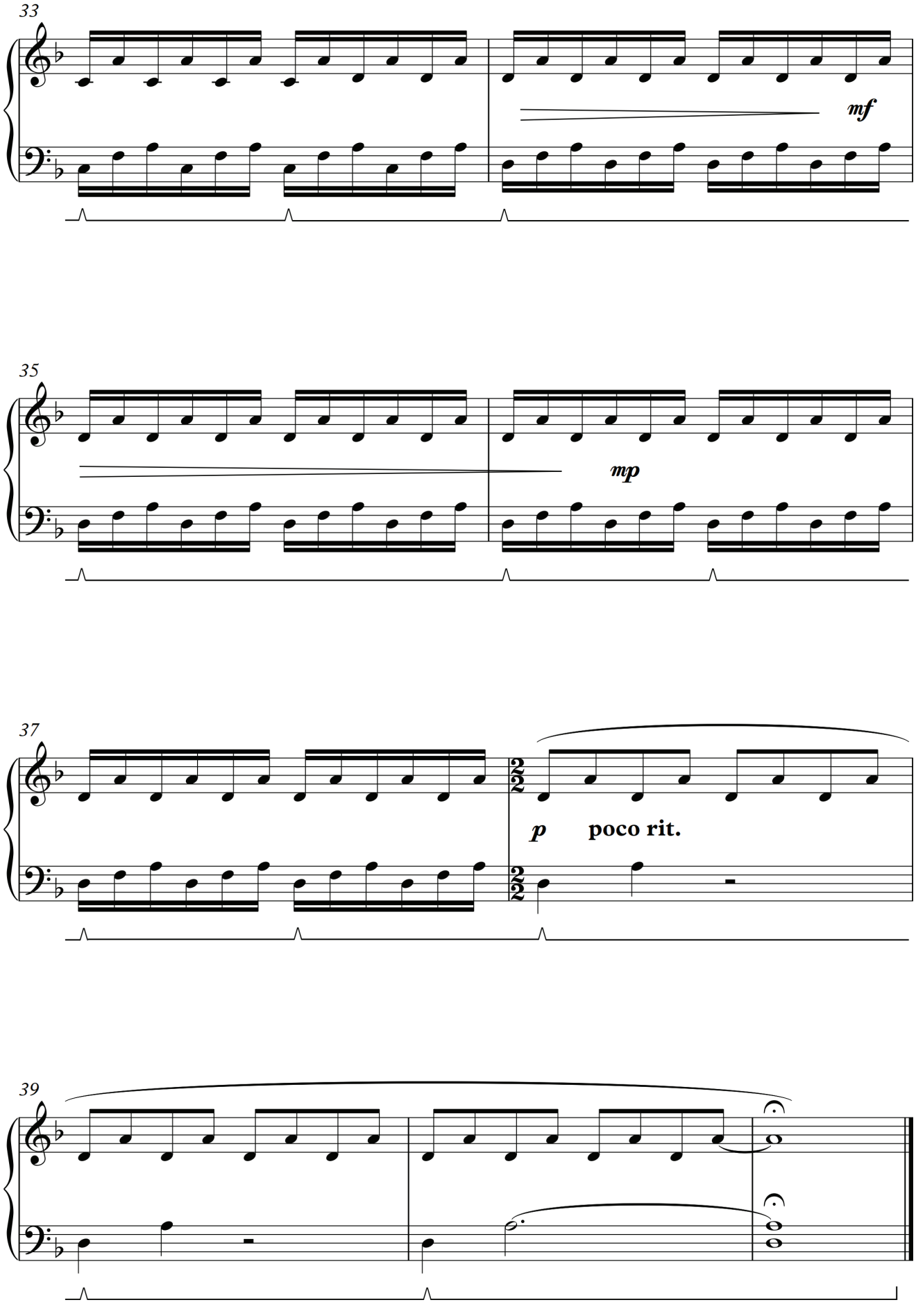

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Seven Melodies

3.
Flowers

By
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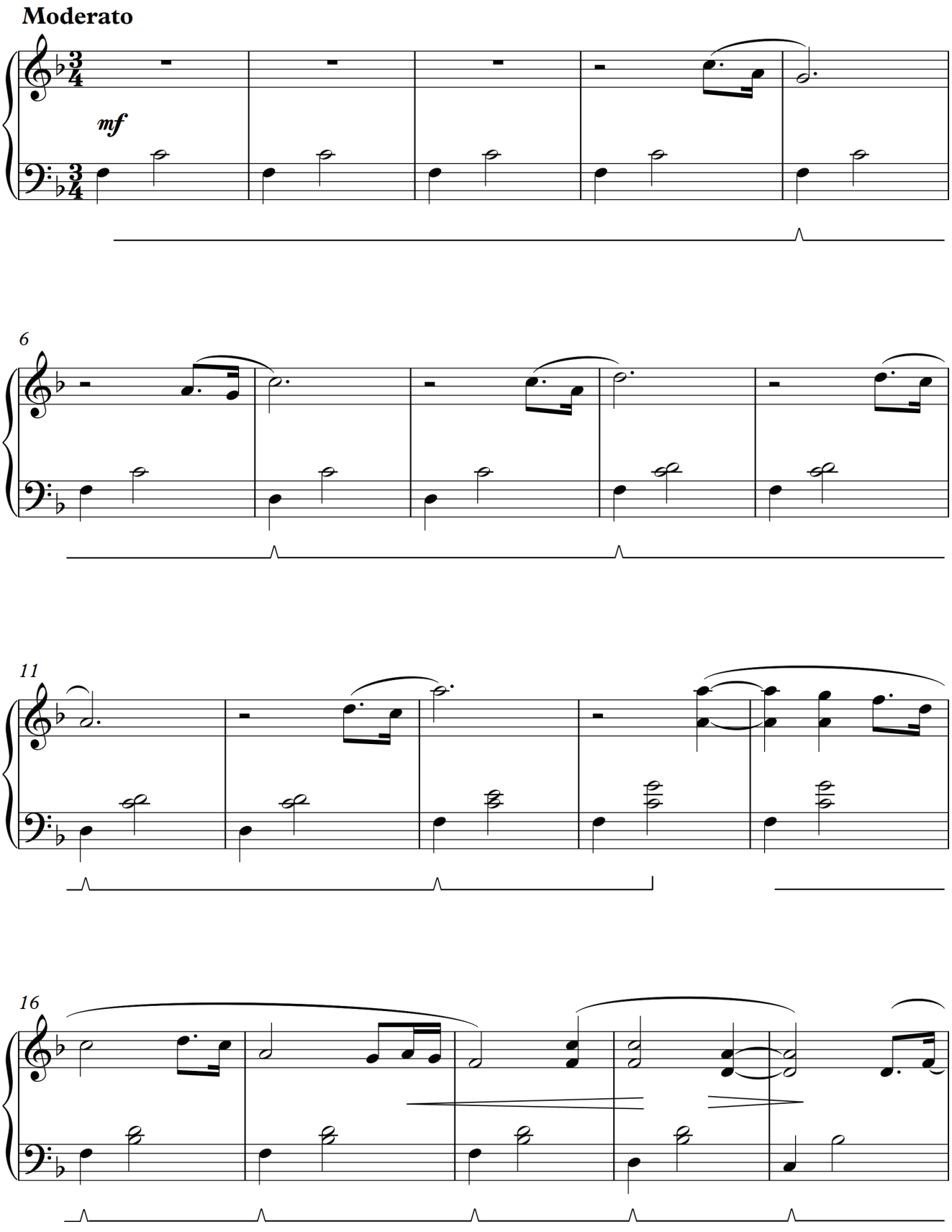
View on Youtube



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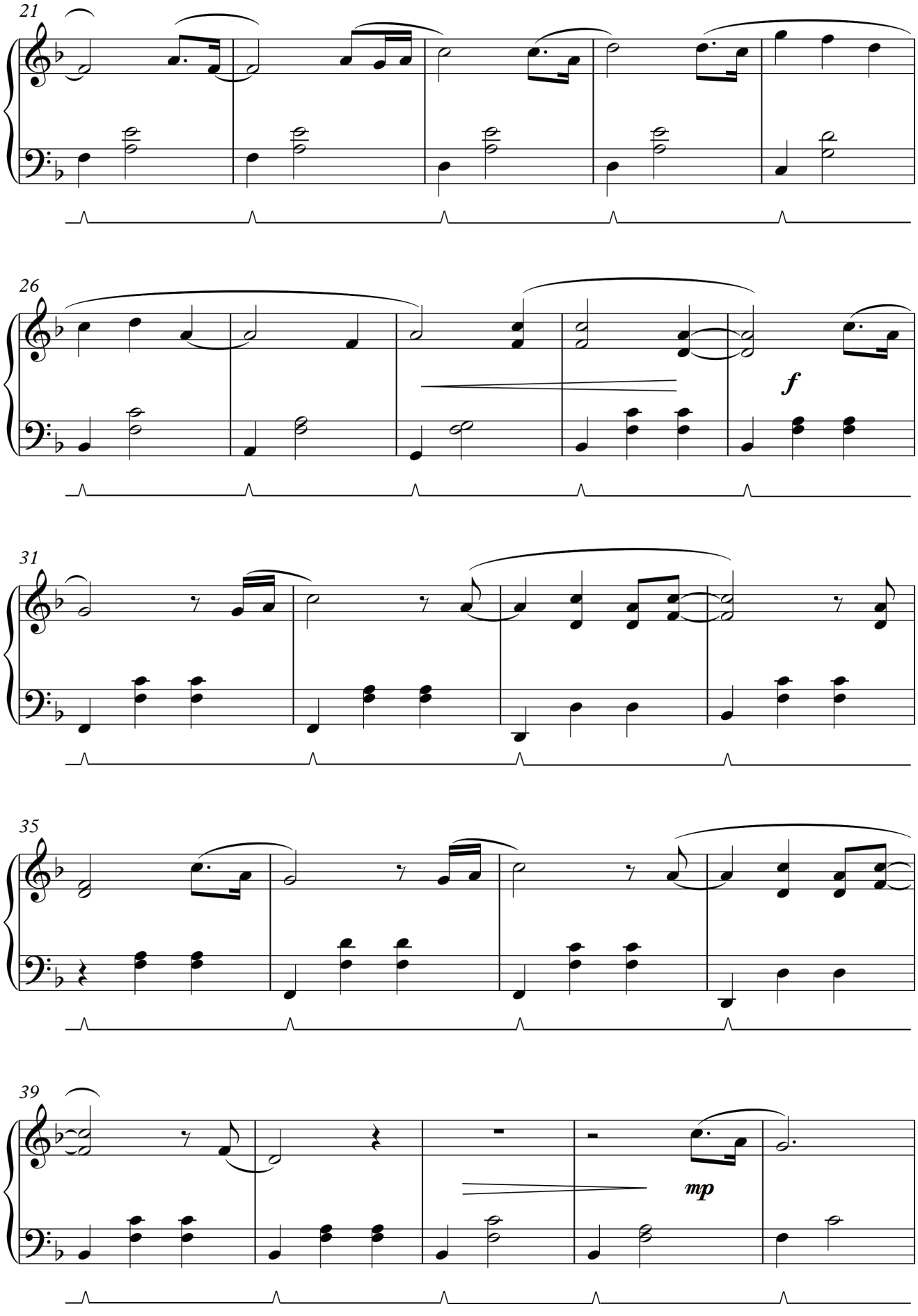

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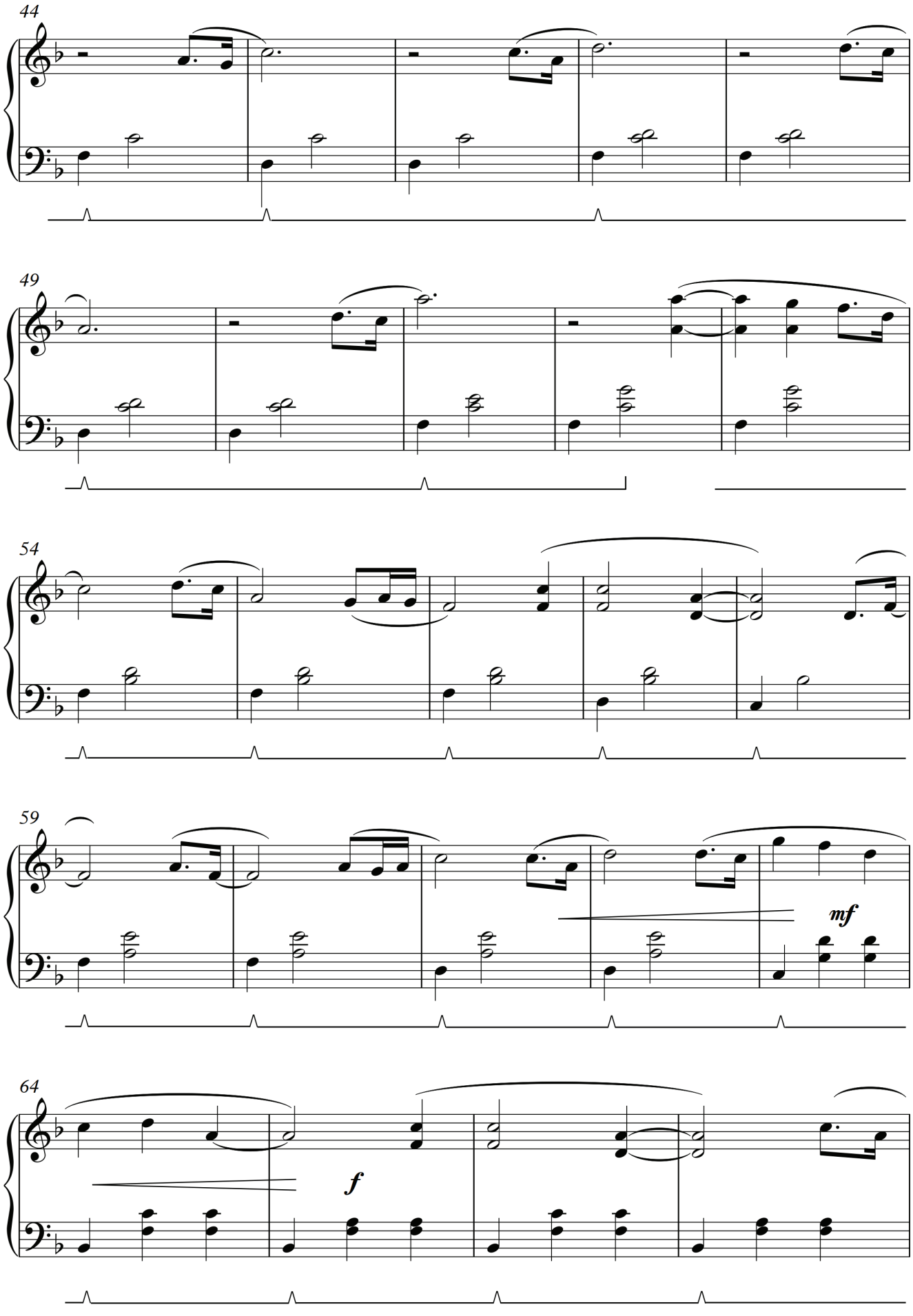

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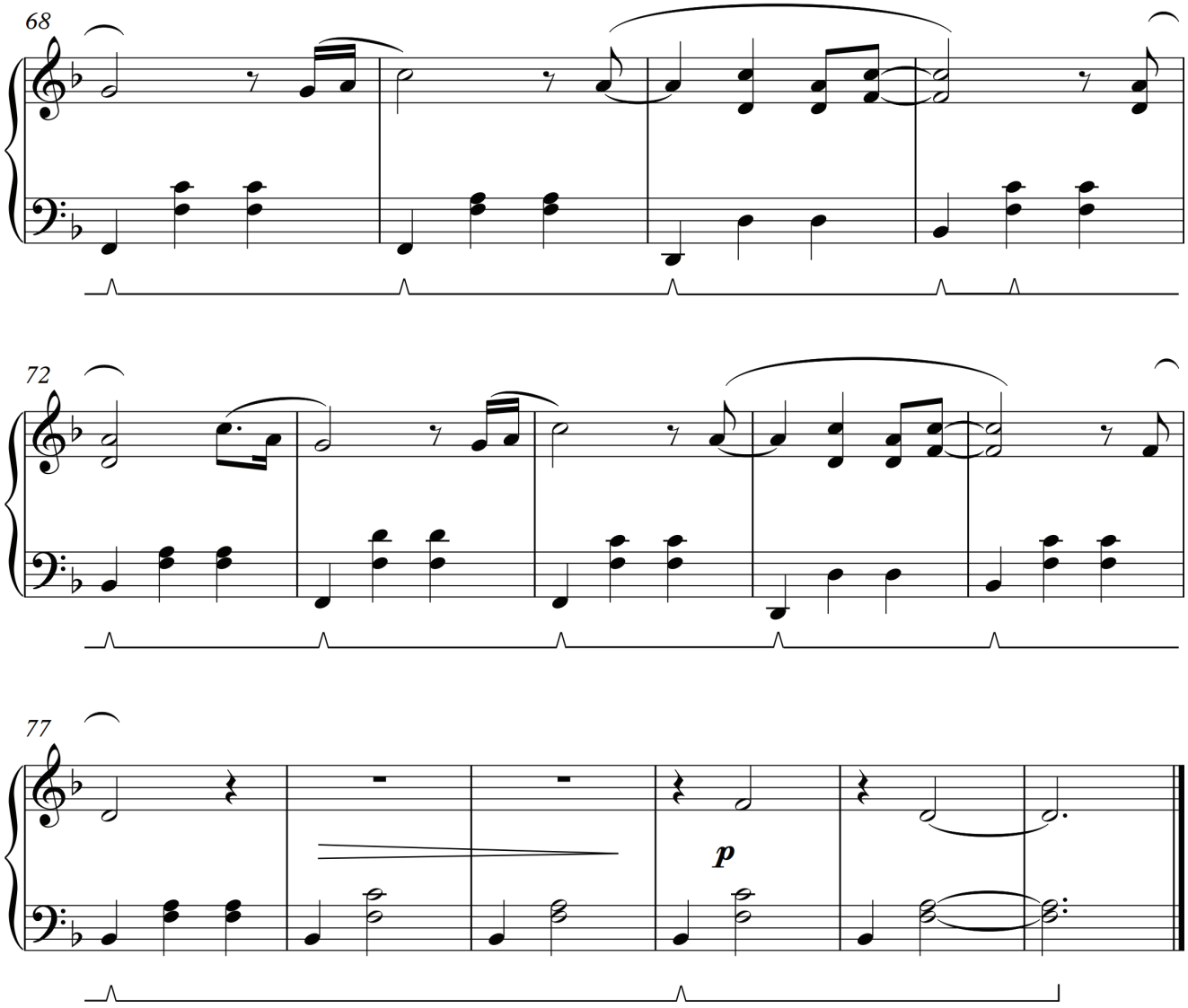

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4.
Mountains

By
Mari-Louise Du Plessis

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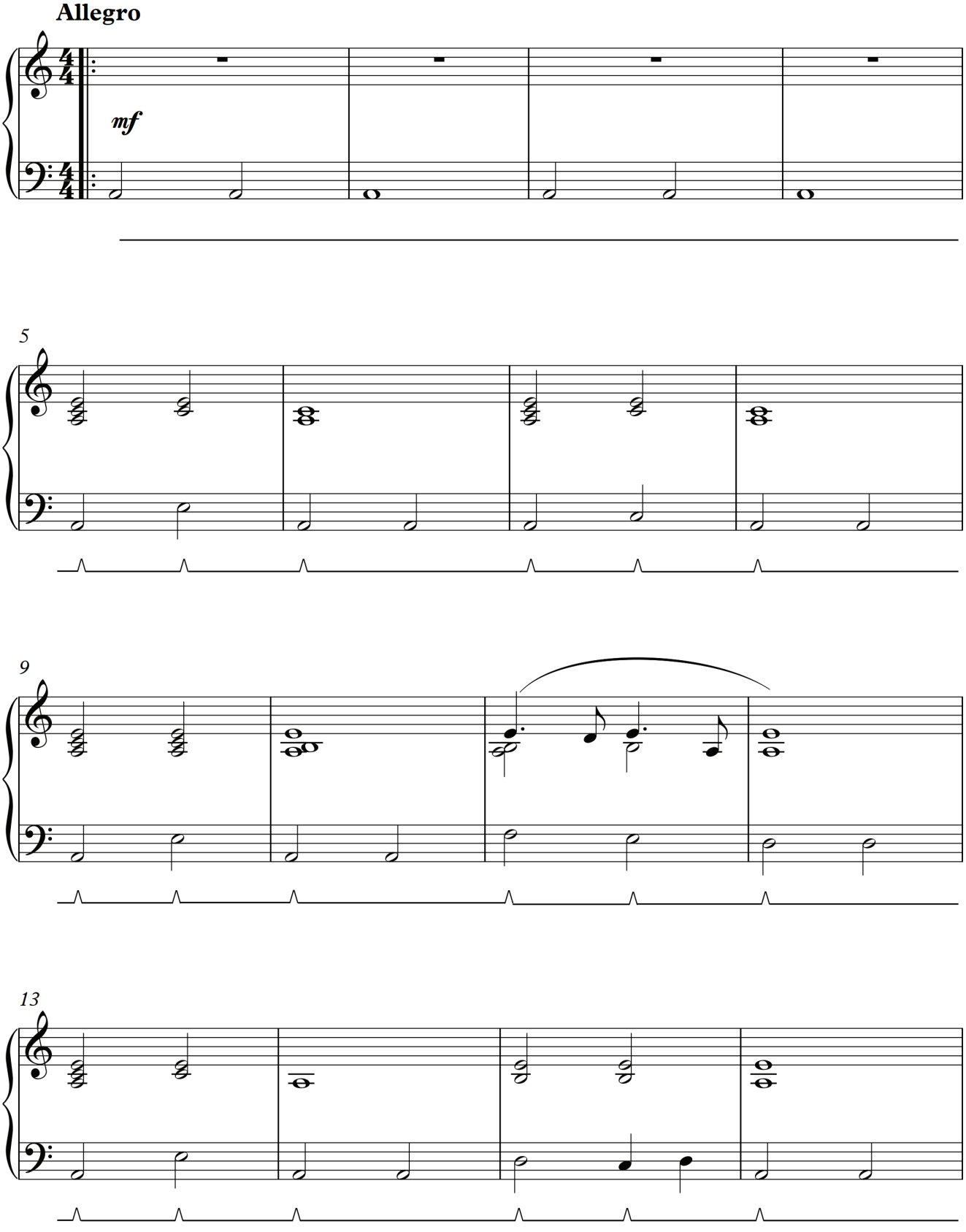

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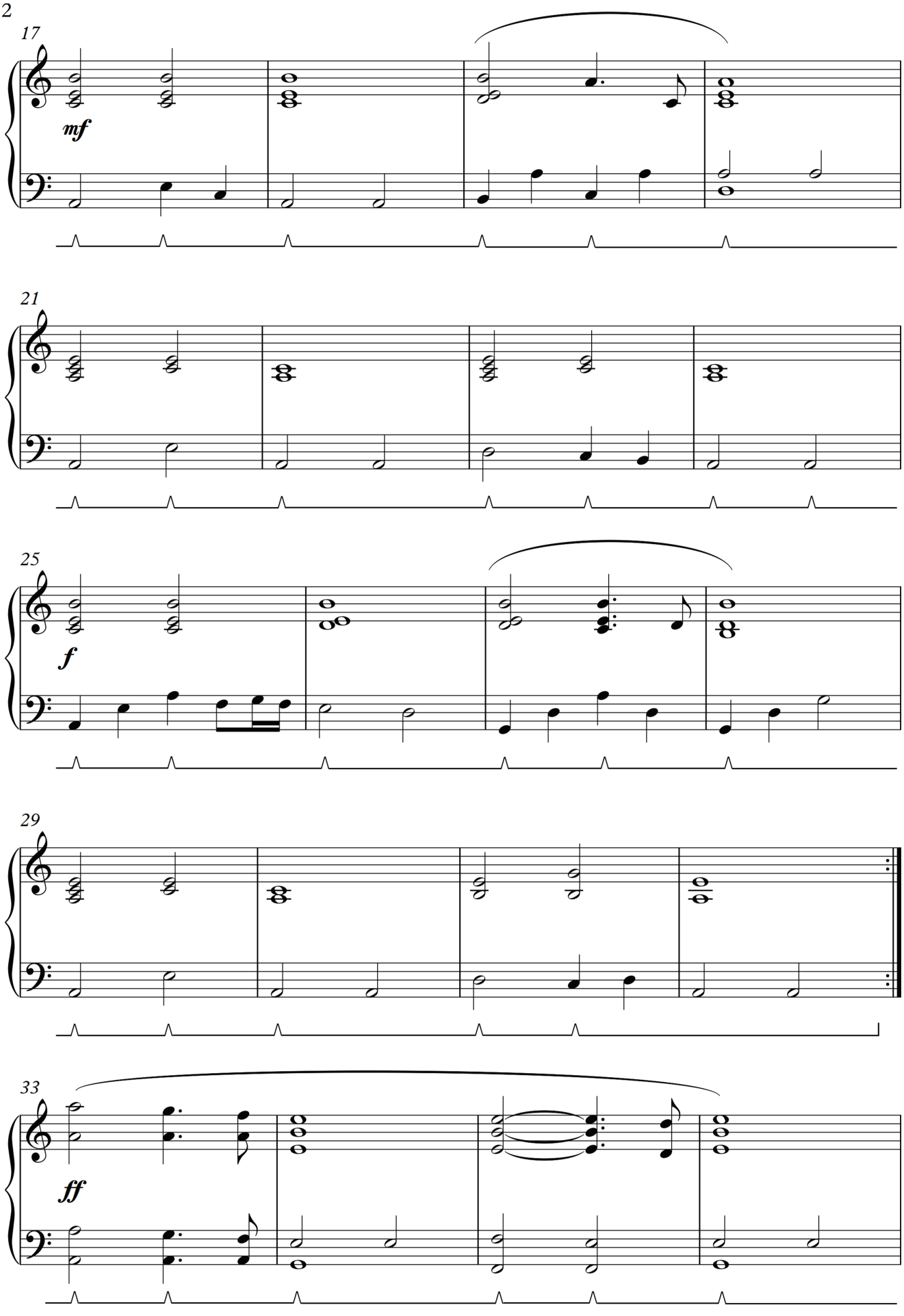

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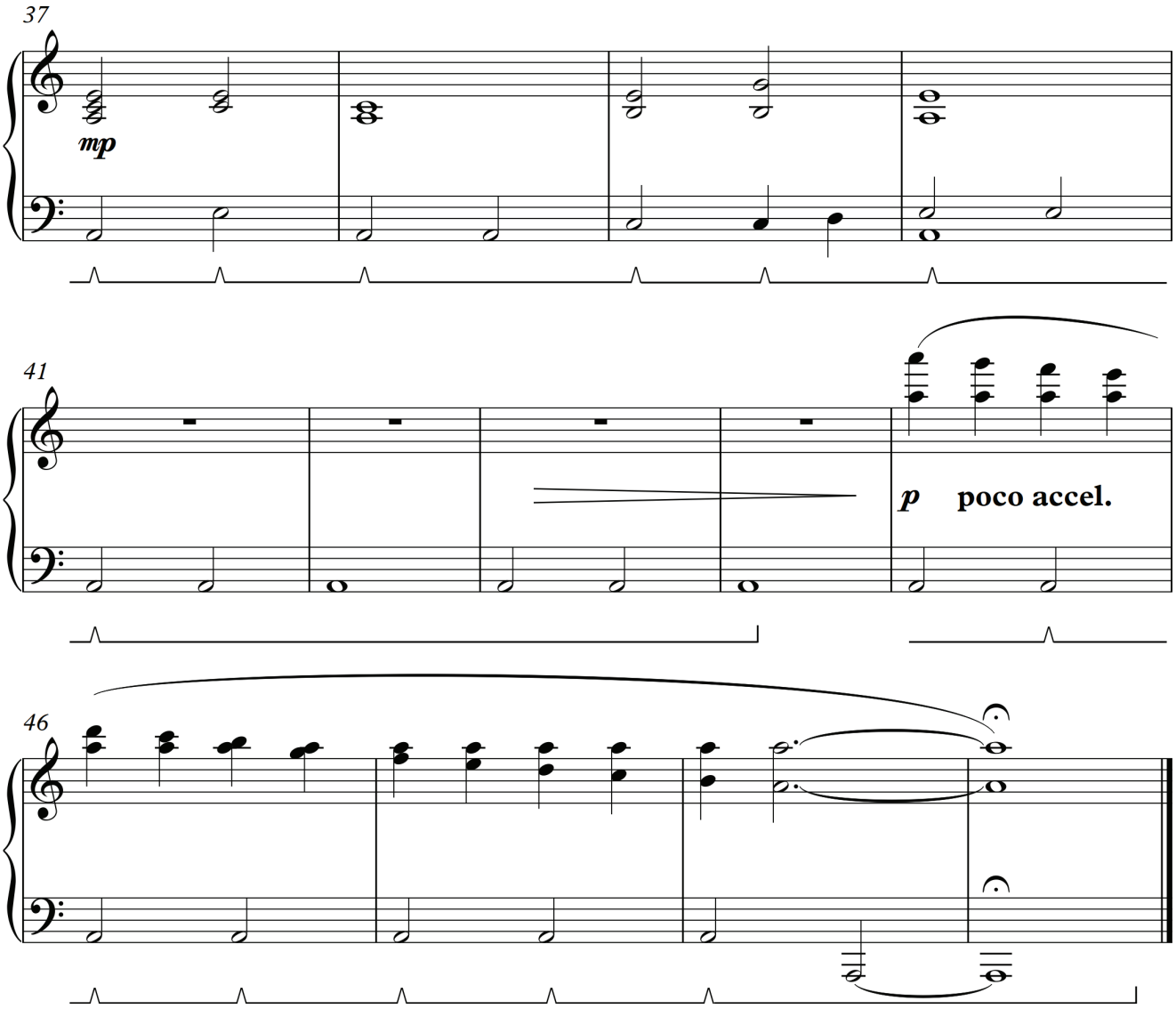

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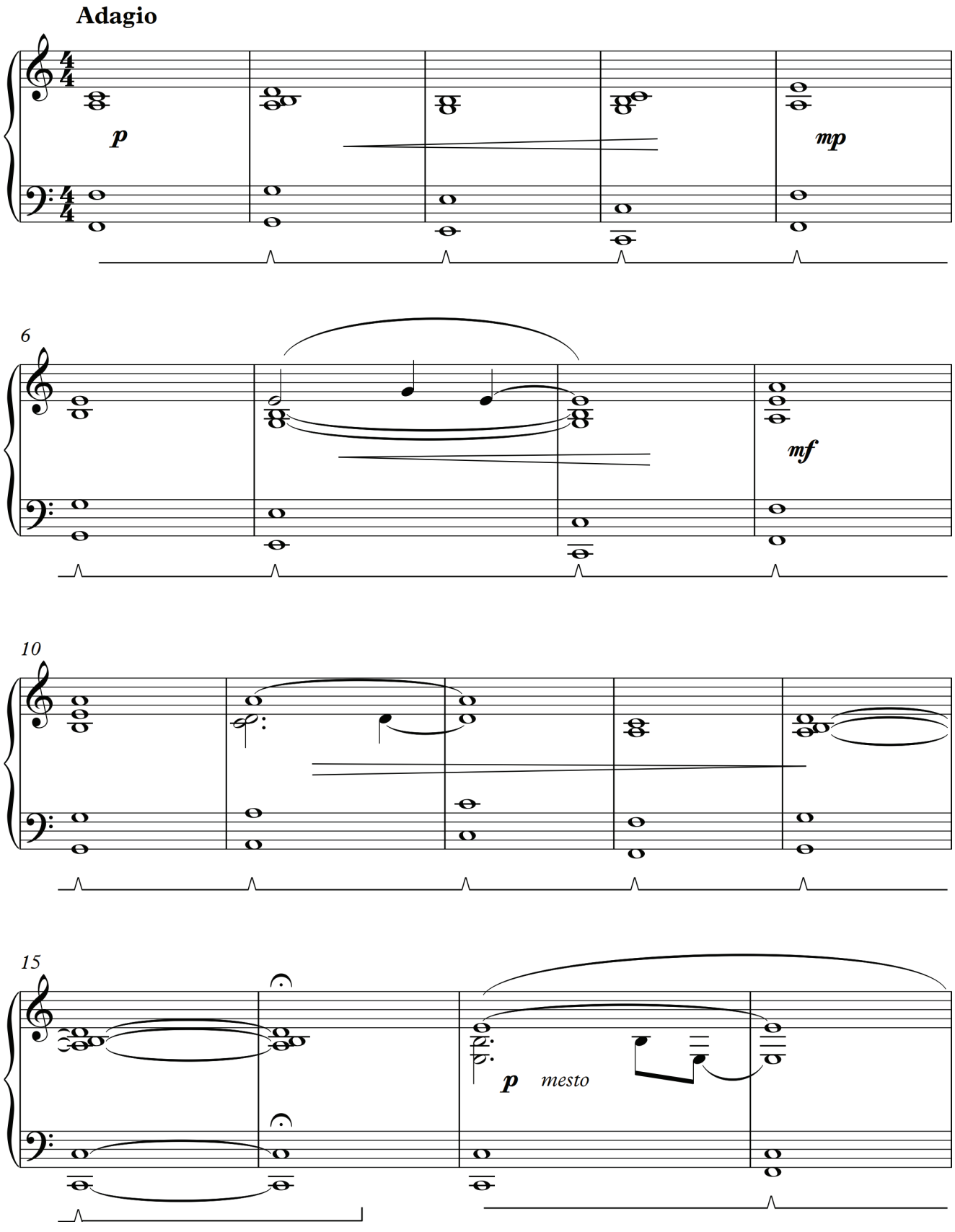
5.
Late Afternoon

By
Mari-Louise Du Plessis

View on Youtube



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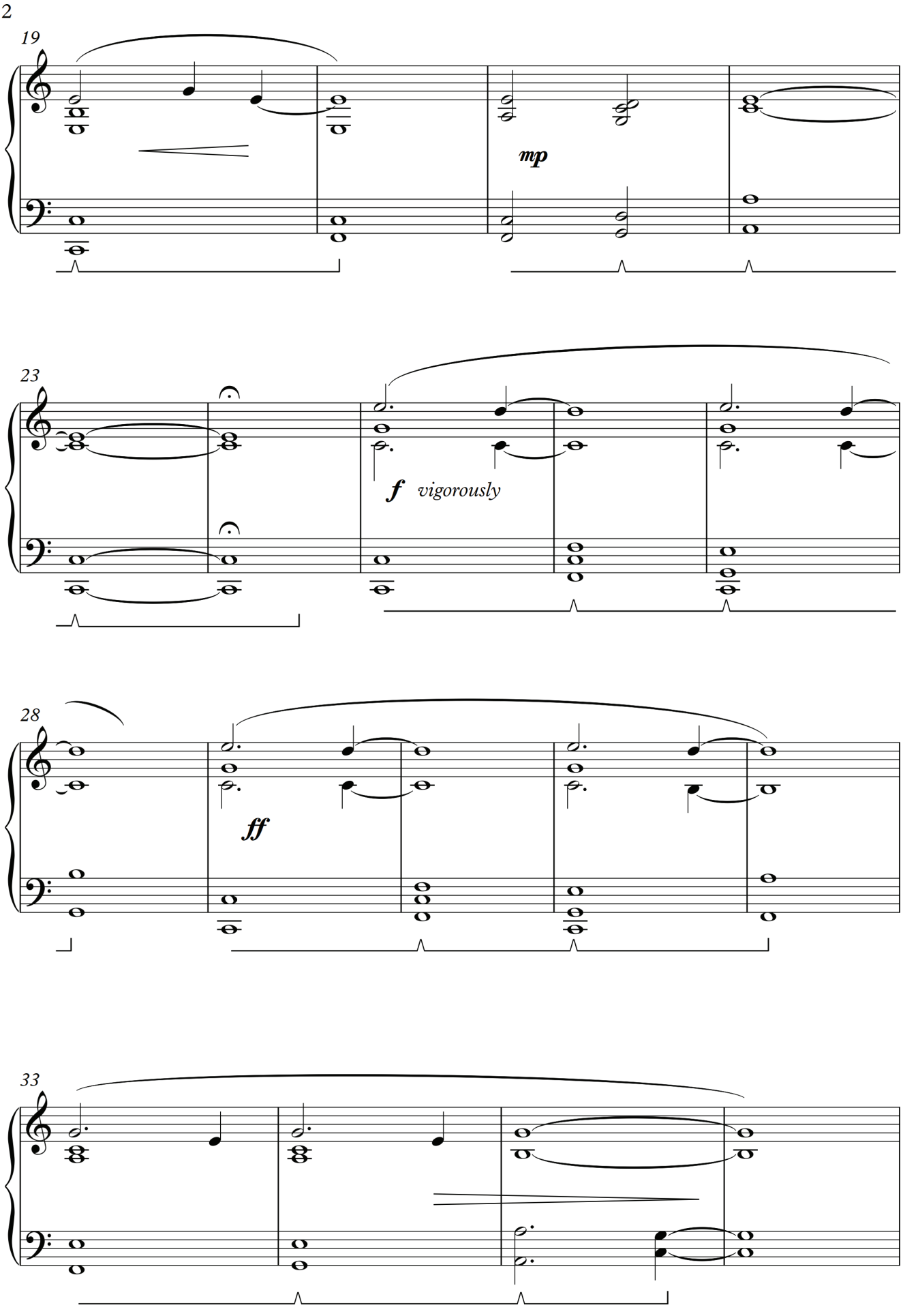

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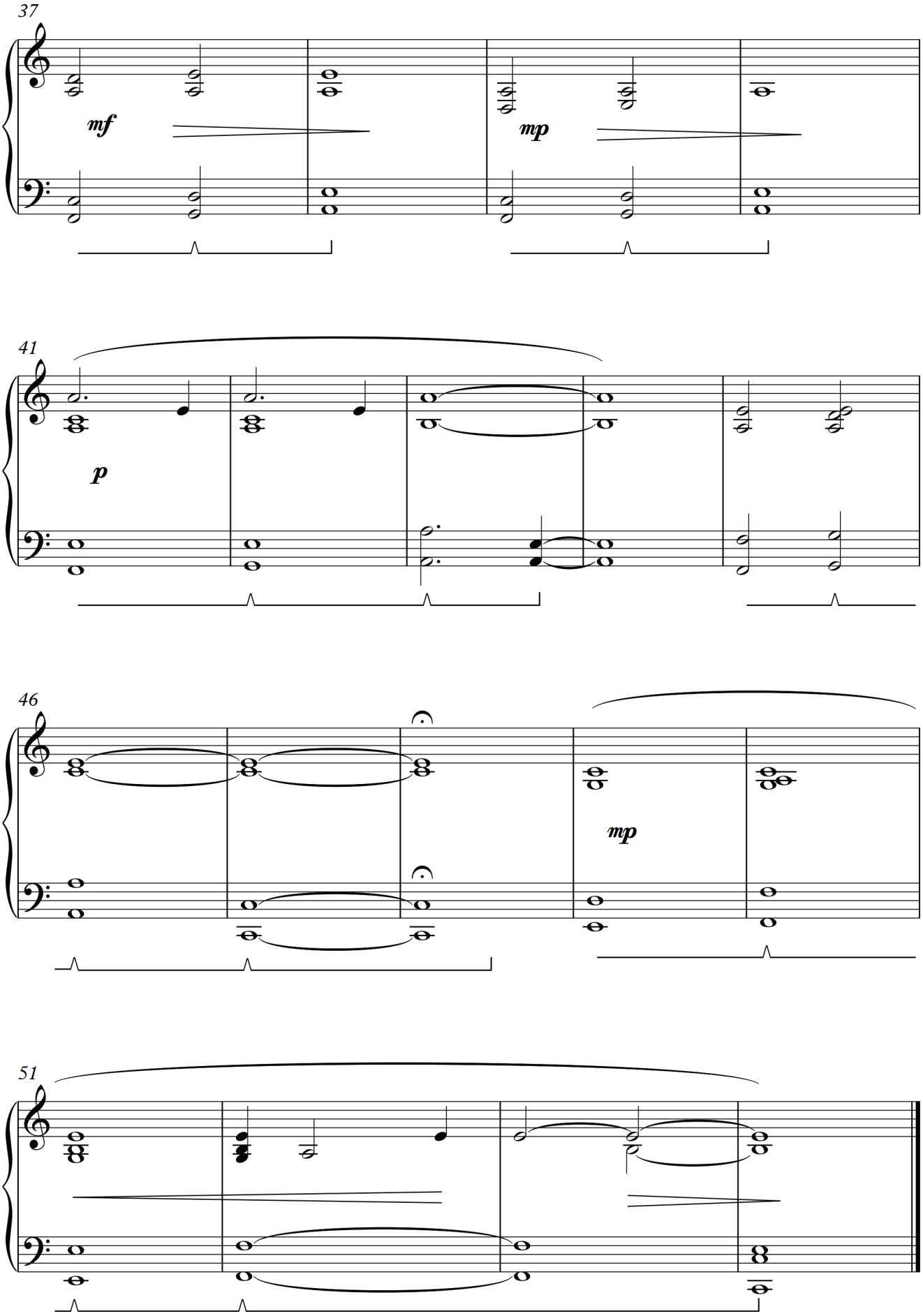

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6.
Autumn

By
Mari-Louise Du Plessis

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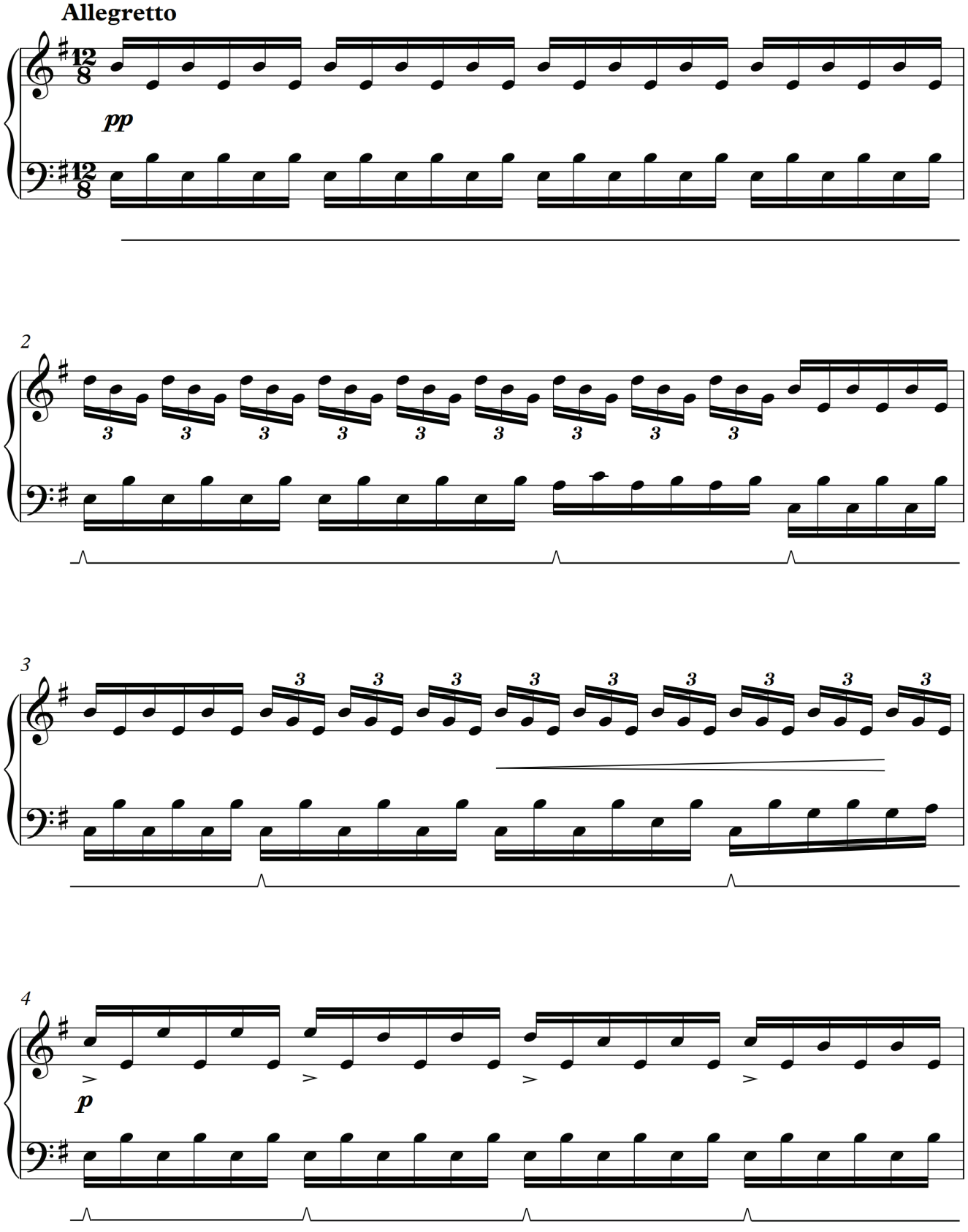

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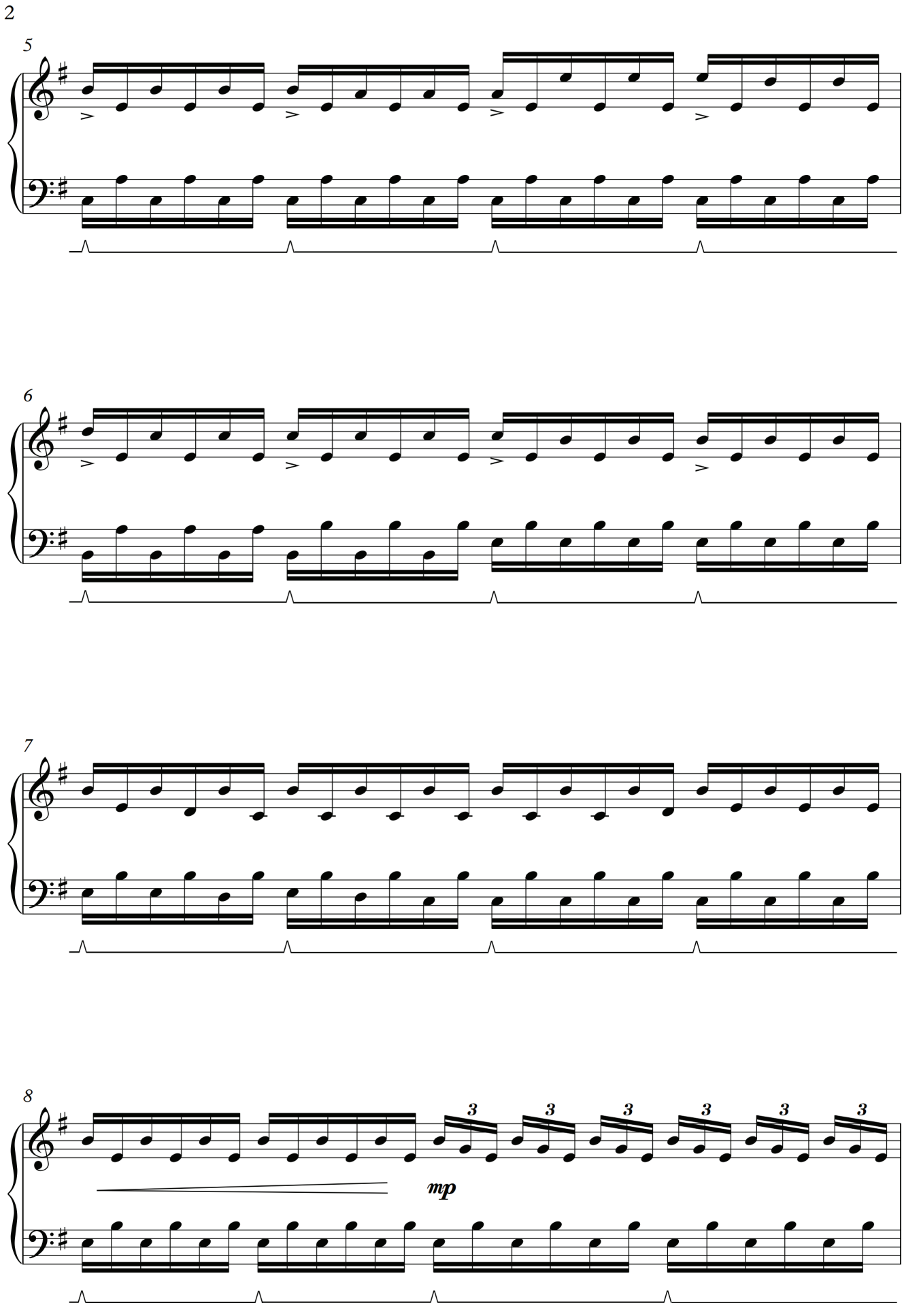

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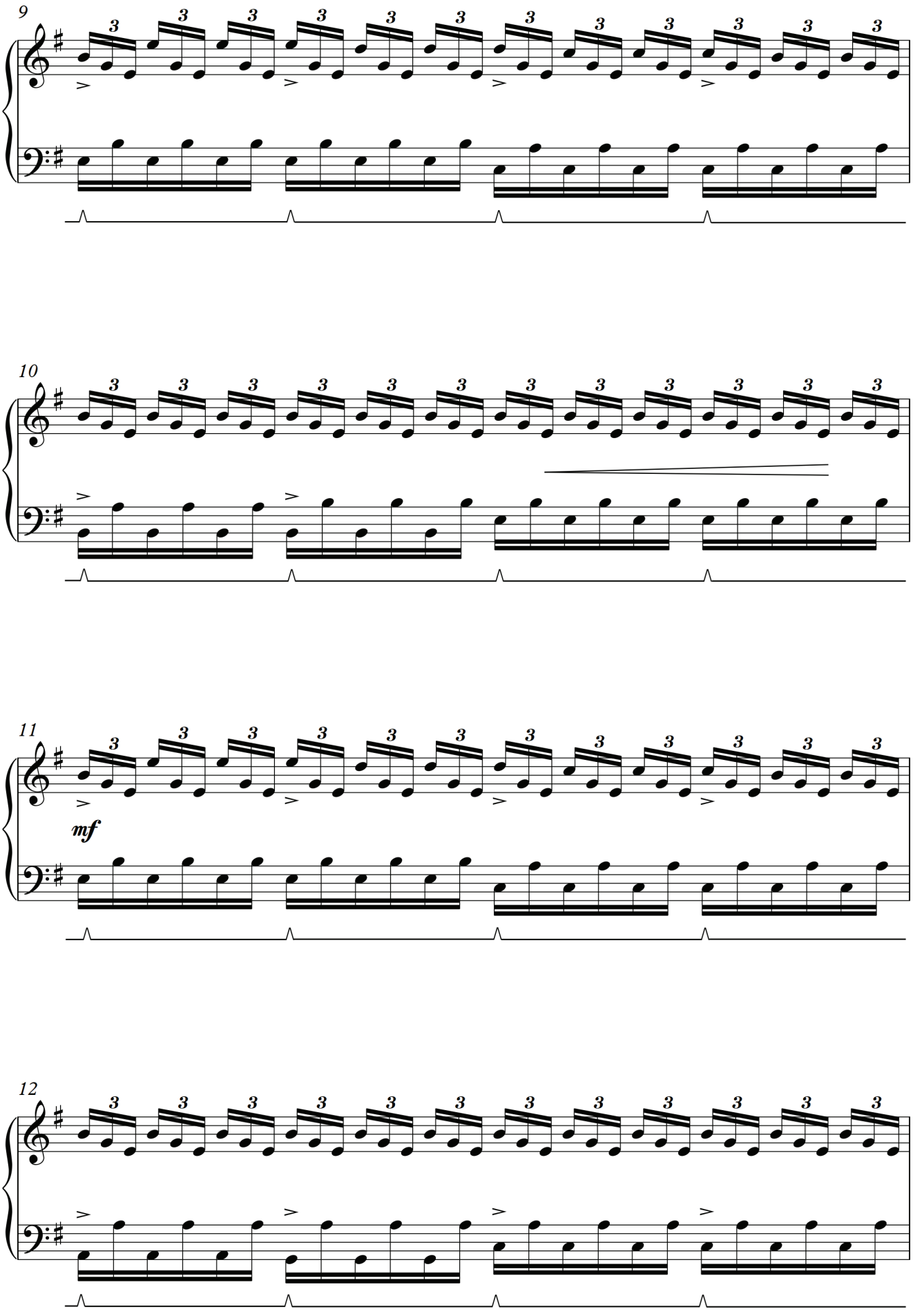

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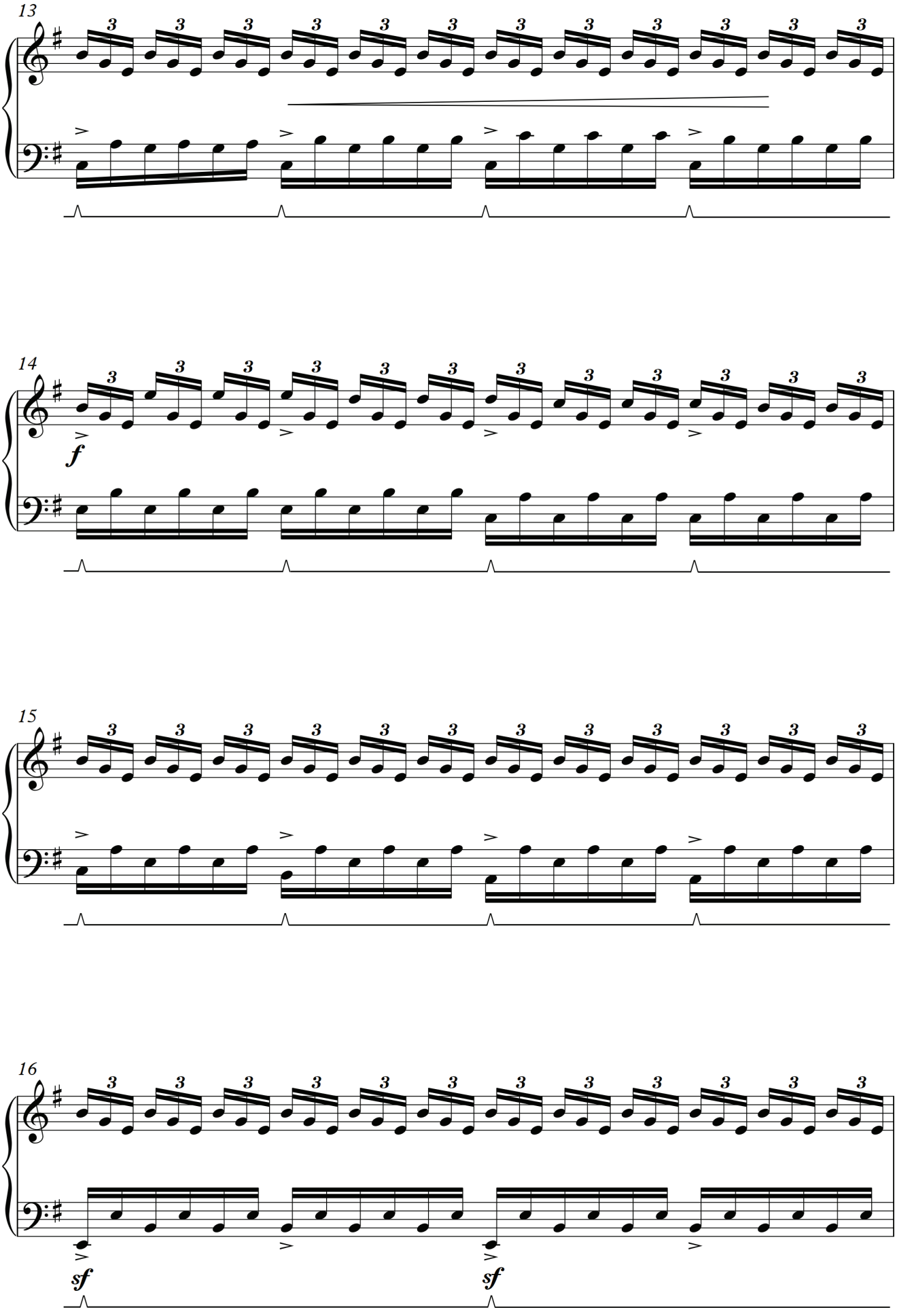

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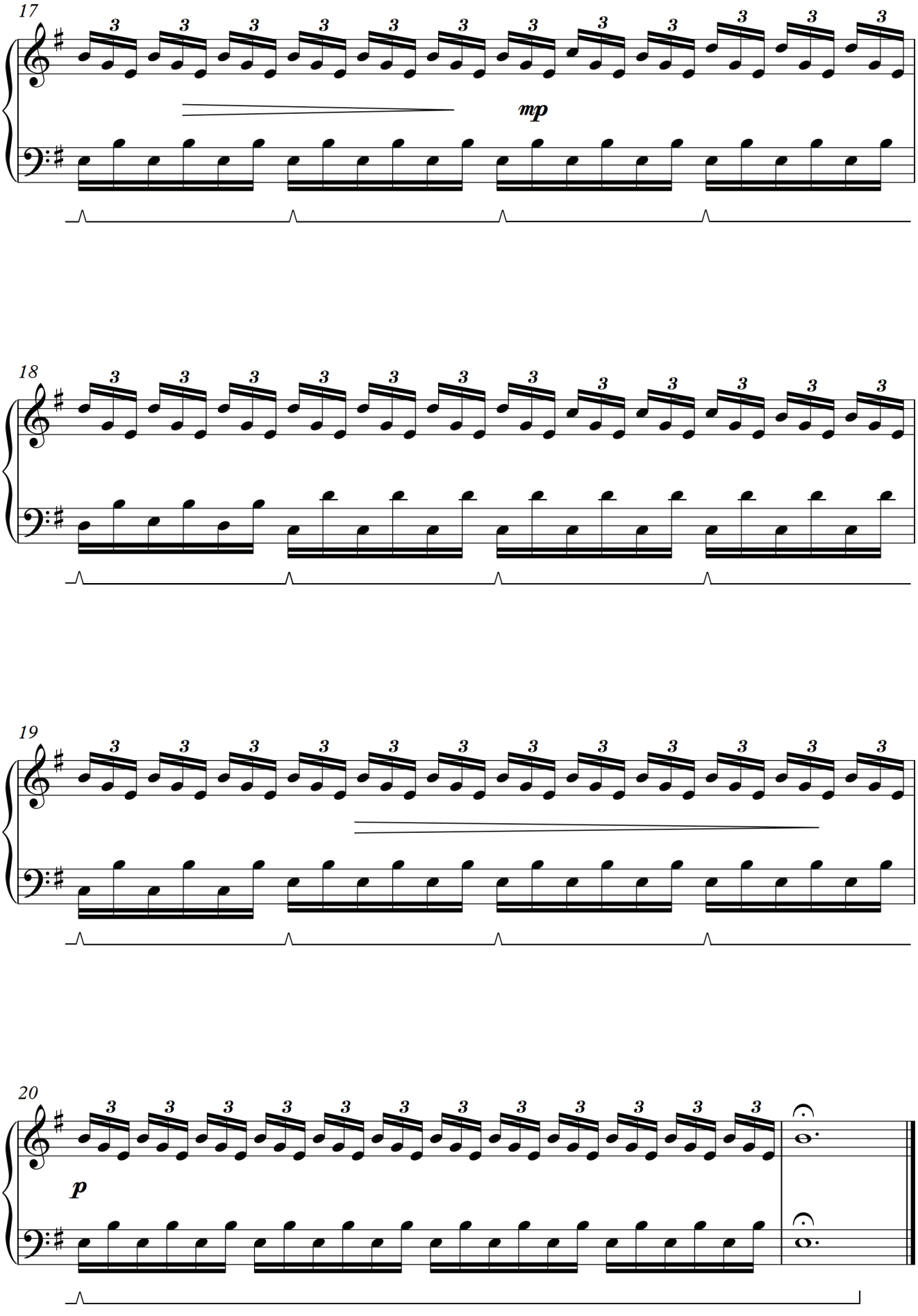

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7.
After the Rain

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Mari-Louise Du Plessis

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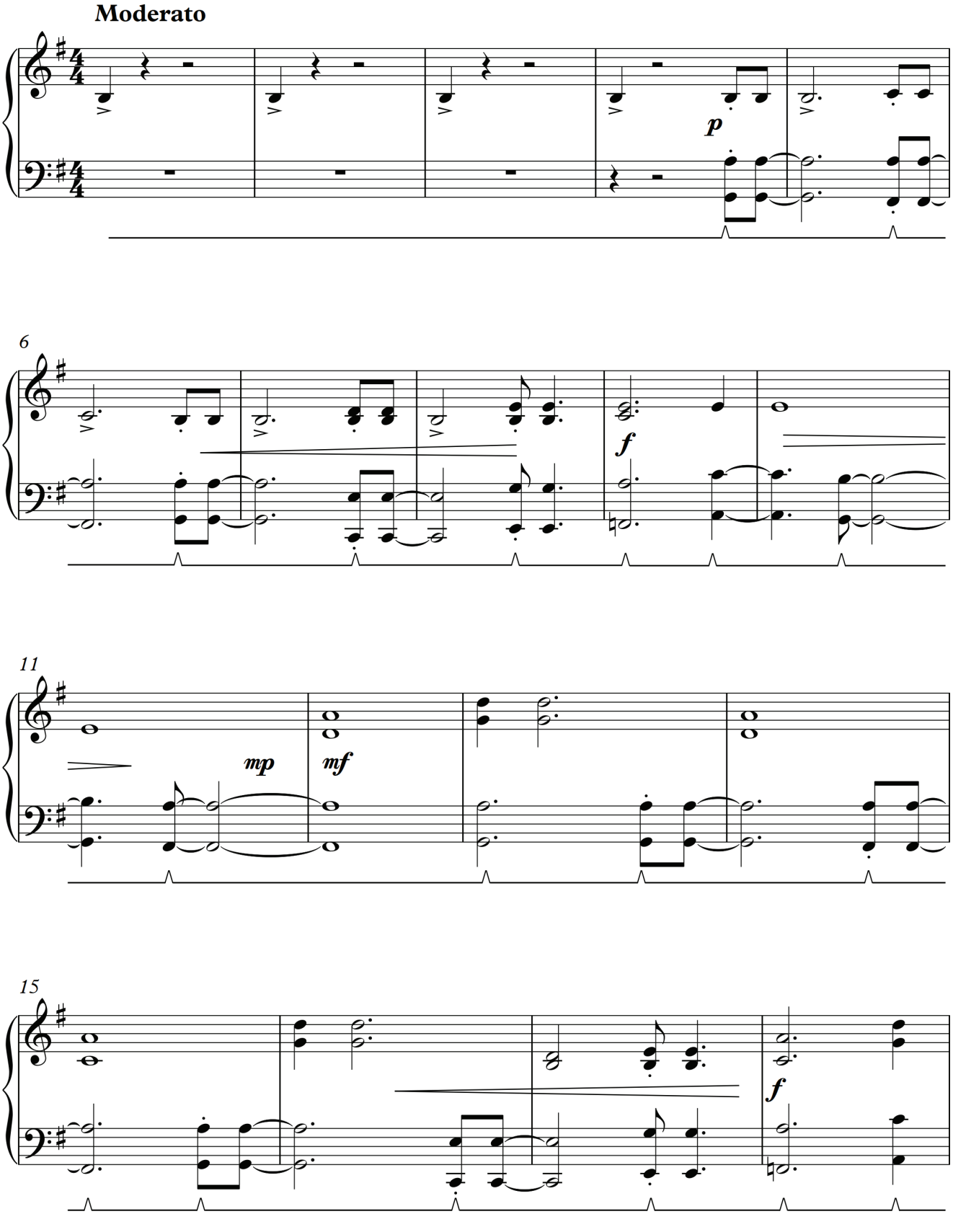

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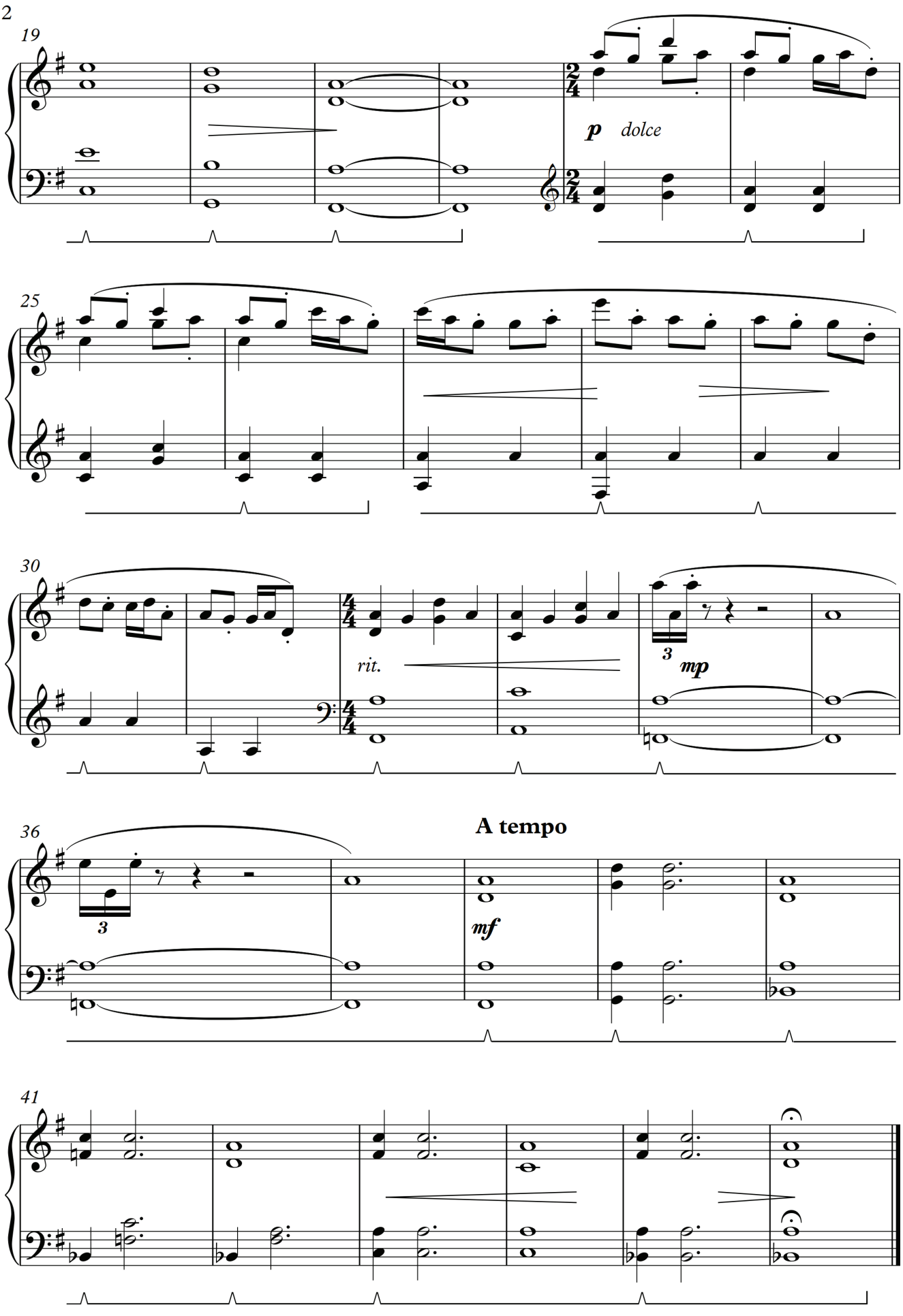

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