UPSIDE DANCES

ERIC SHANFIELD

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ENS.23 | 8’

for Timo Andres

1. Stumbling Dance
2. Running Dance

Solo Piano

Timo thought the movement order was *Running Dance* and then *Stumbling Dance*, which is a lot funnier, and maybe it says something about our respective personalities and outlooks on life?

Structurally this was my first essay in what I’ve taken to calling (not at all pretentiously) “symmetrical variation form,” in which rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic cells are arranged in a system of nested musical boxes revolving around one another like a Calder mobile, changing their relationship to each other over the course of the work.

The two movements mirror one another but also interlock, sharing musical ideas, so that the conclusion of *Stumbling Dance* reappears transformed at the opening of *Running Dance*, and the piece returns in the end to where it began. One of my favorite things about this variation form is how there’s no fundamental version of each little theme; everything is a variation of a variation, like different translations of a poem originally written in a language you can’t read.

Whatever the processes humming underneath the hood, hopefully the musical language of *Upside Dances* isn’t too hard to understand and enjoy—it’s intended to be more what Graham Greene called an “entertainment” than some dark rumbling from the chthonic deeps of the pianistic repertoire.

As for the title, it means whatever you think it means.

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UPSIDE DANCES

1. Stumbling Dance

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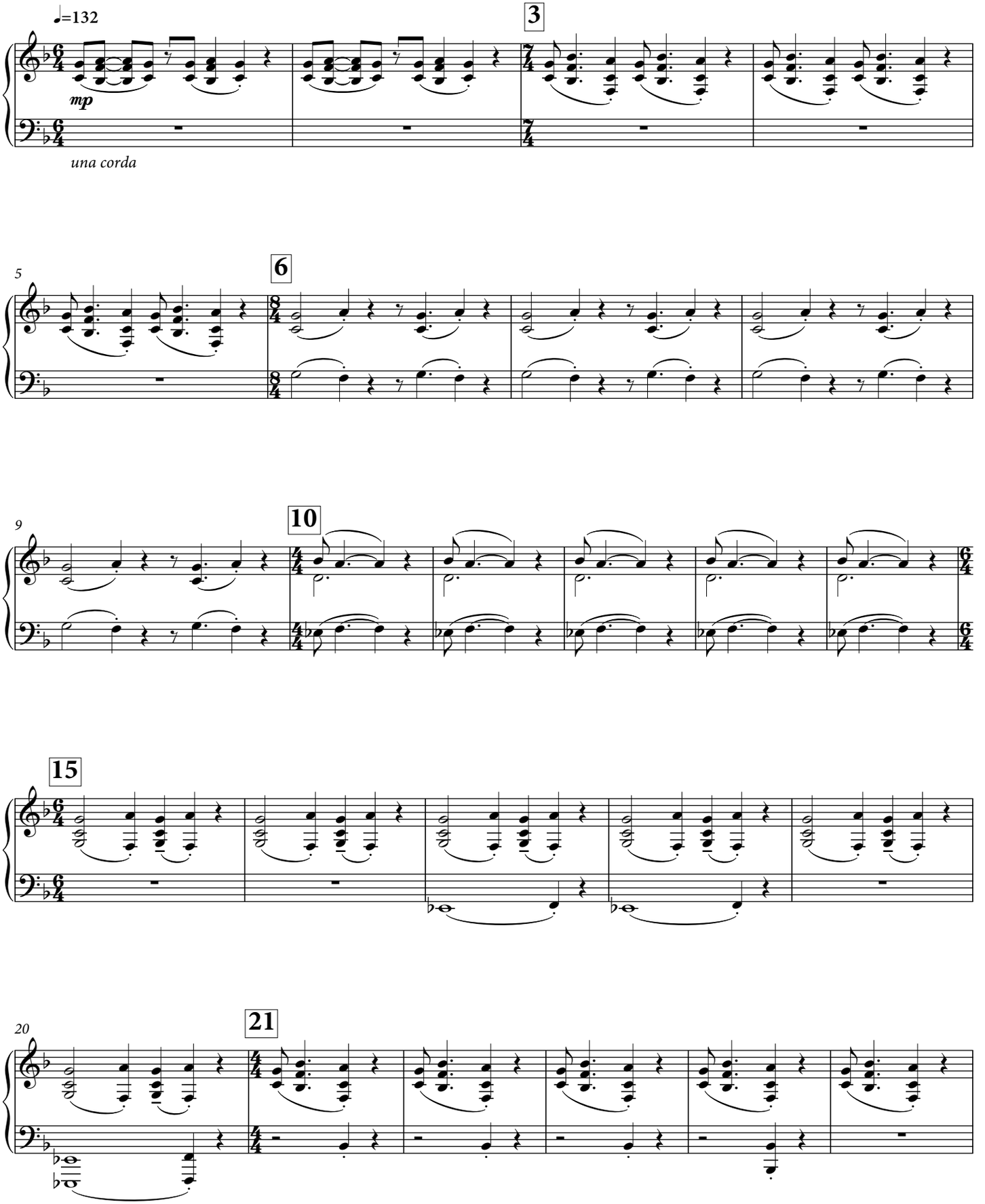

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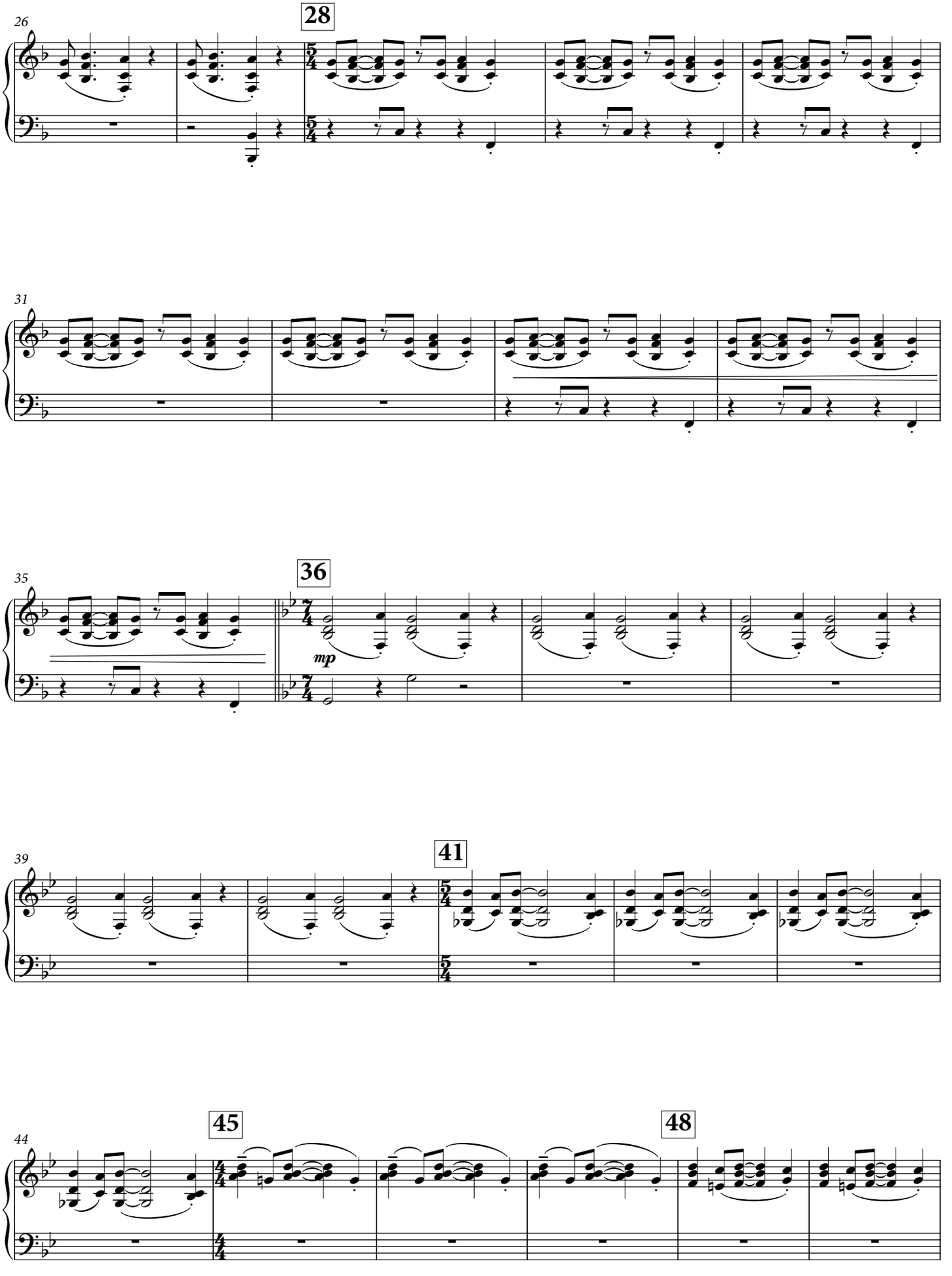
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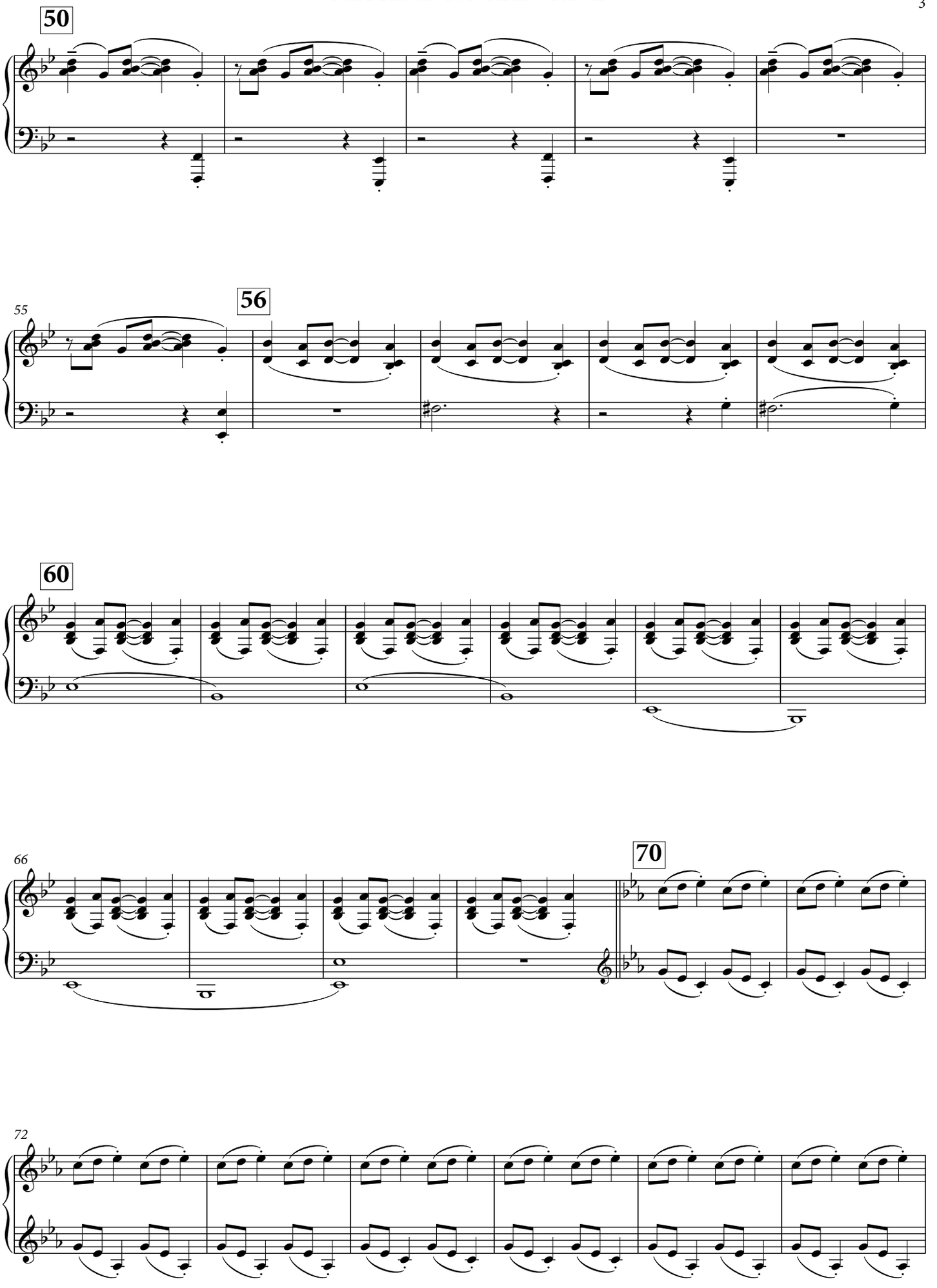
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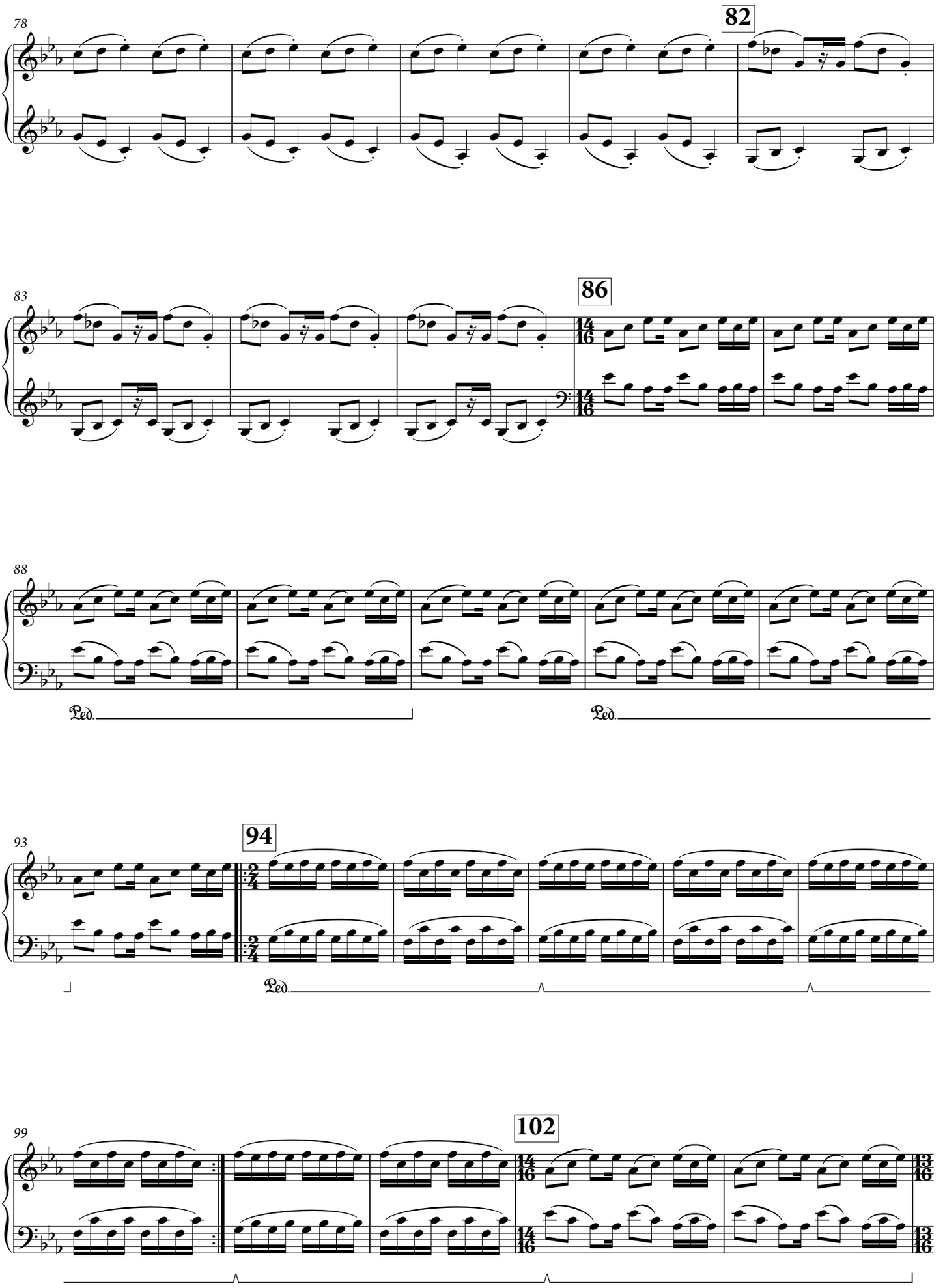
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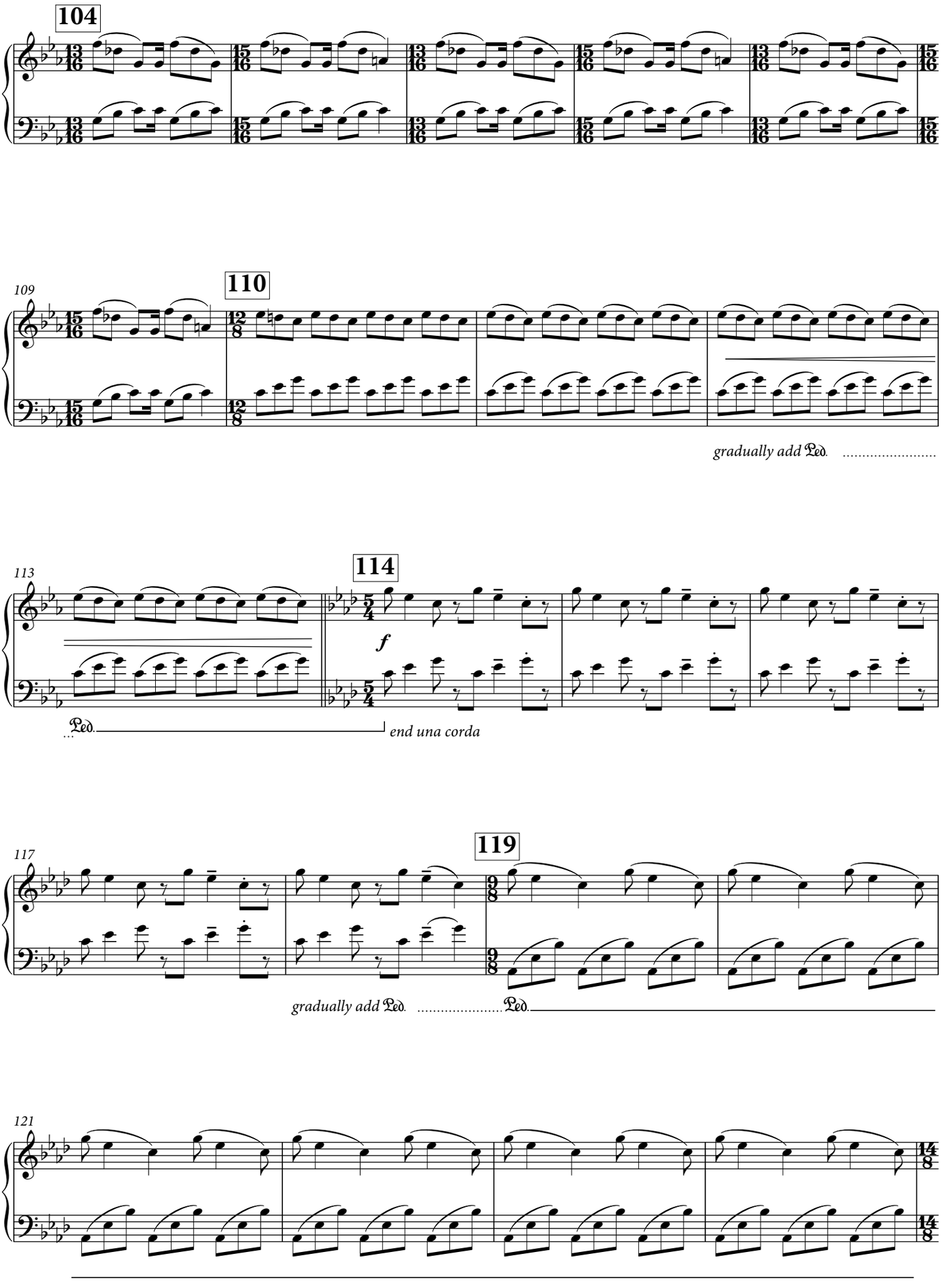
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110
gradually add Ped.
113
114
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end una corda
117
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gradually add Ped.
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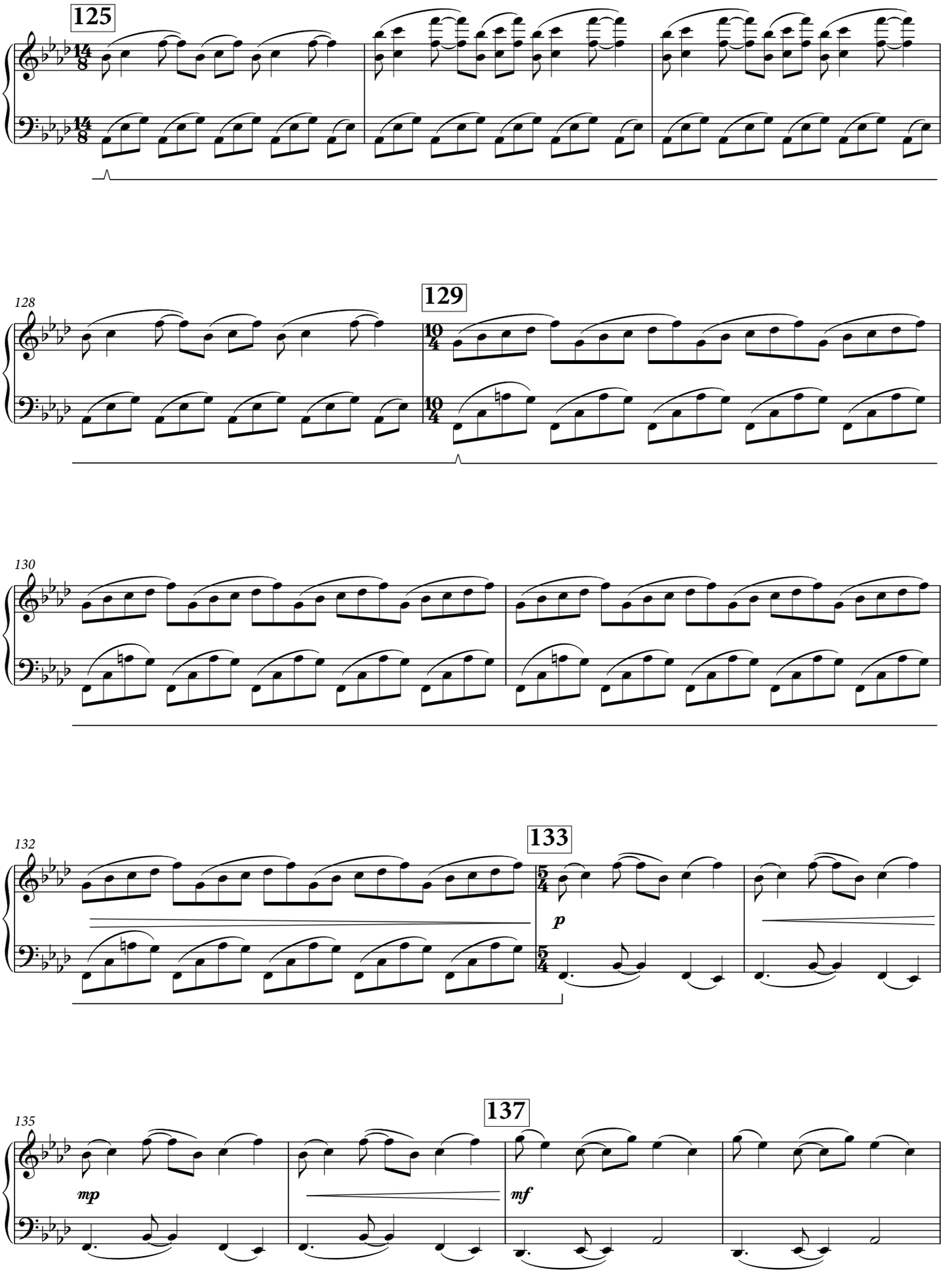
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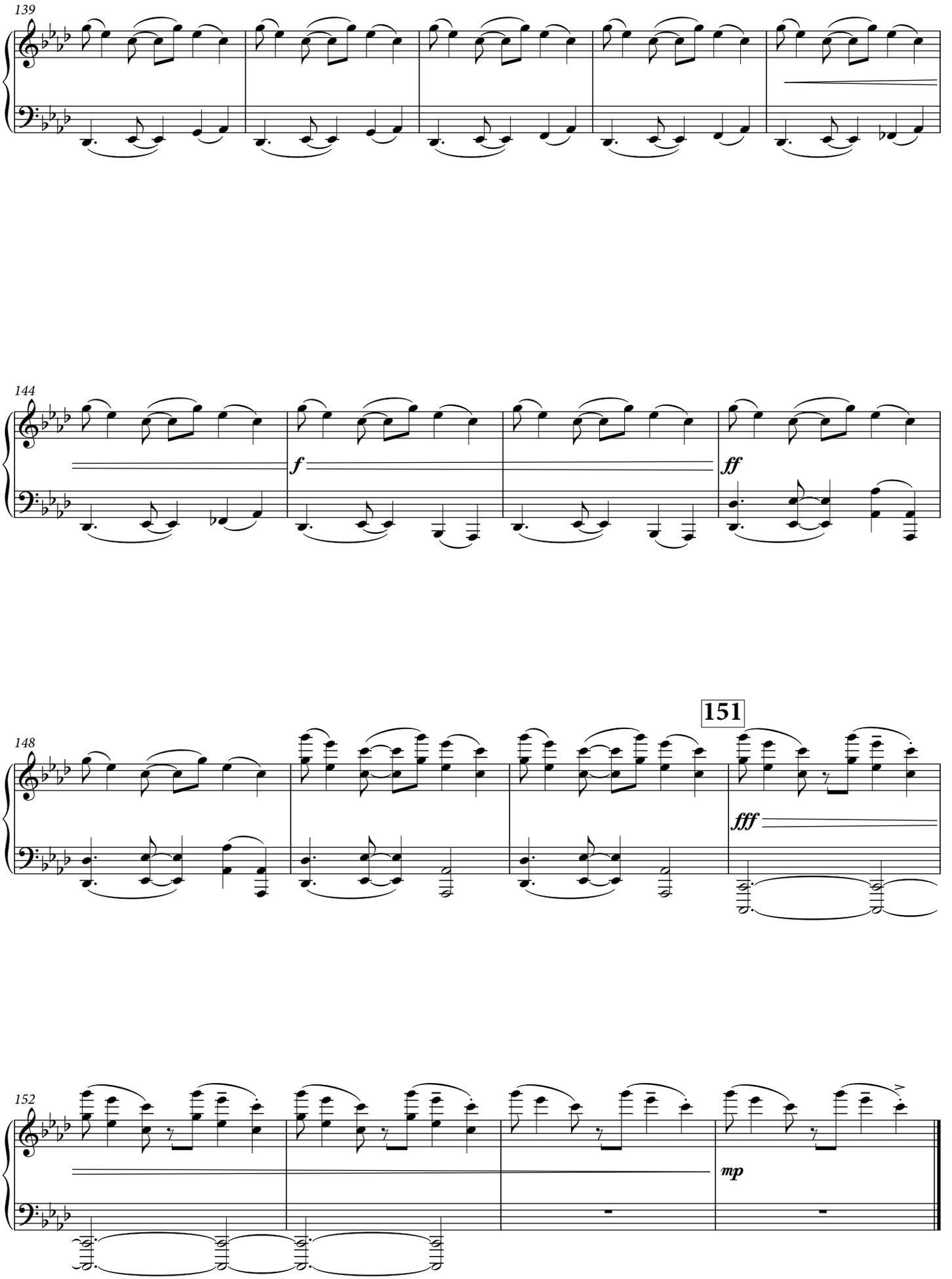
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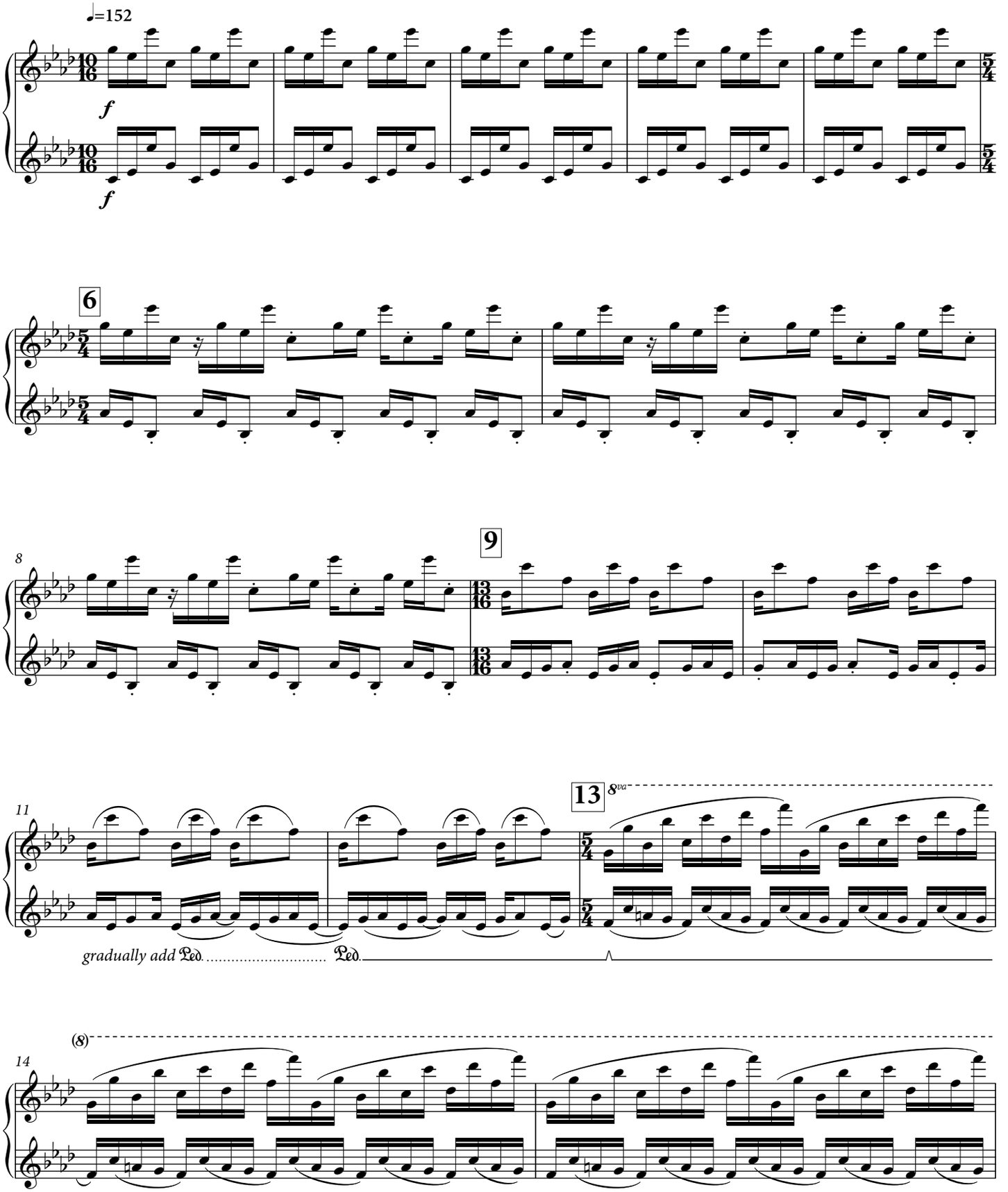
UPSIDE DANCES

2. Running Dance

Eric Shanfield



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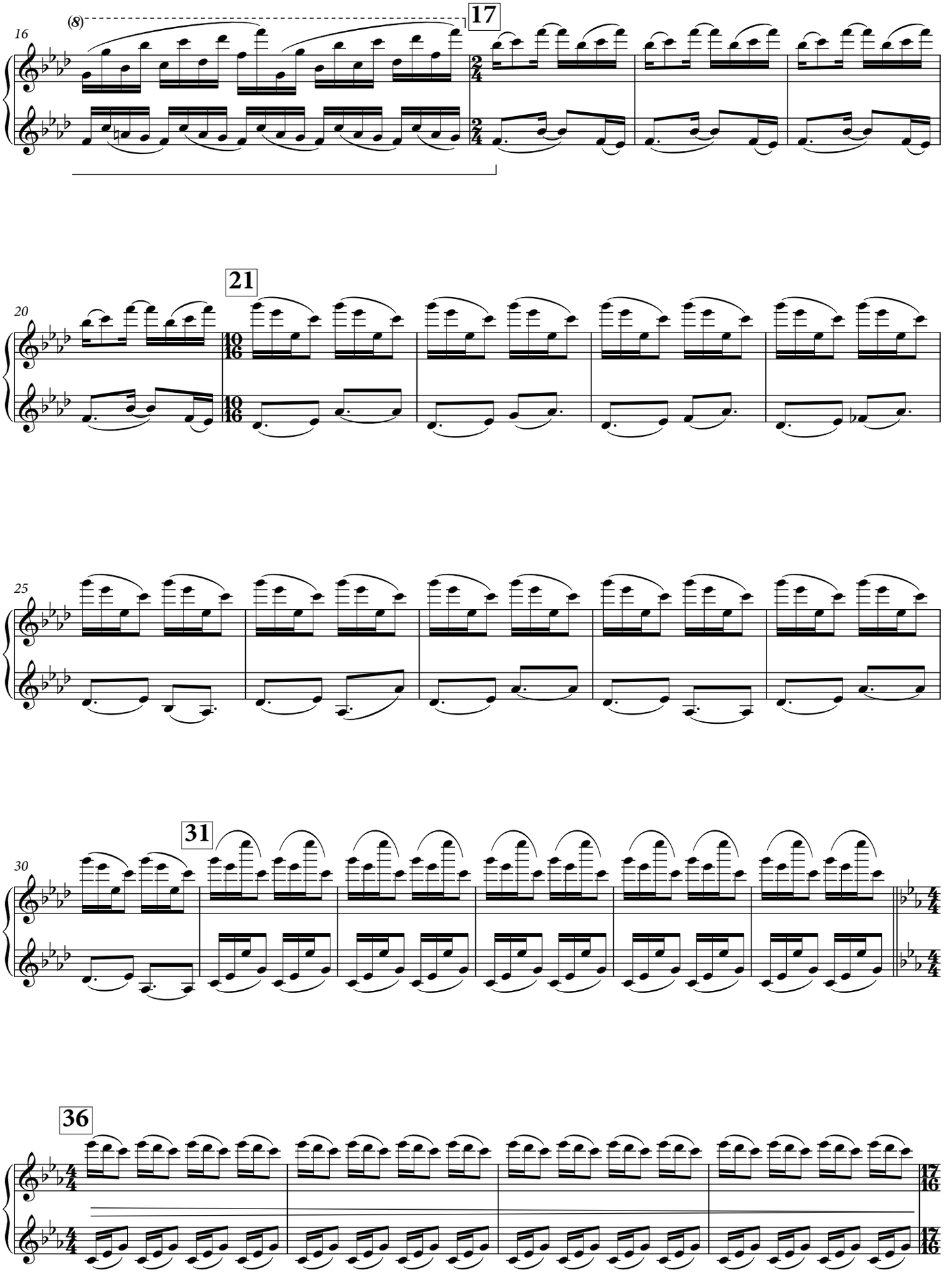
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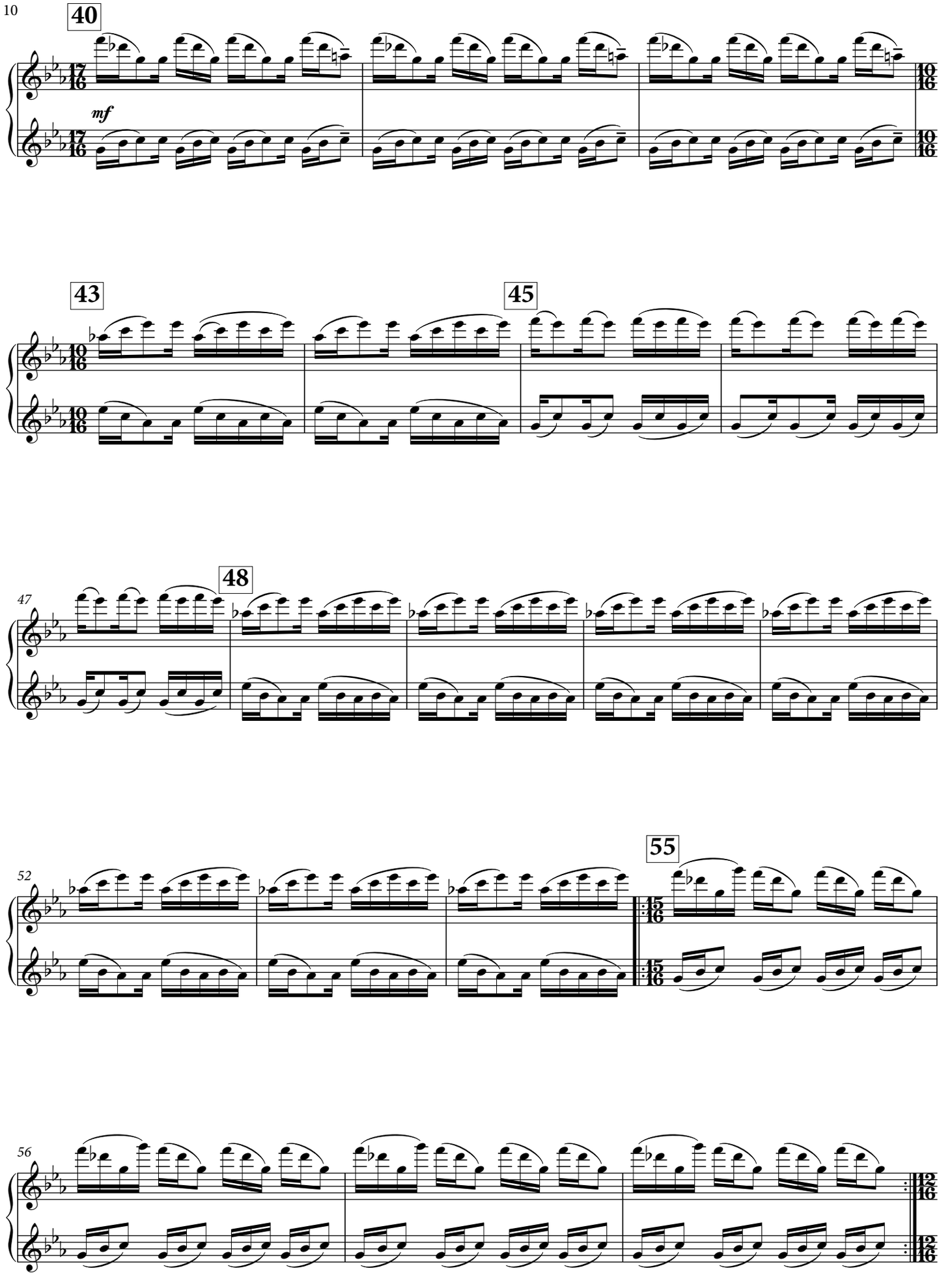
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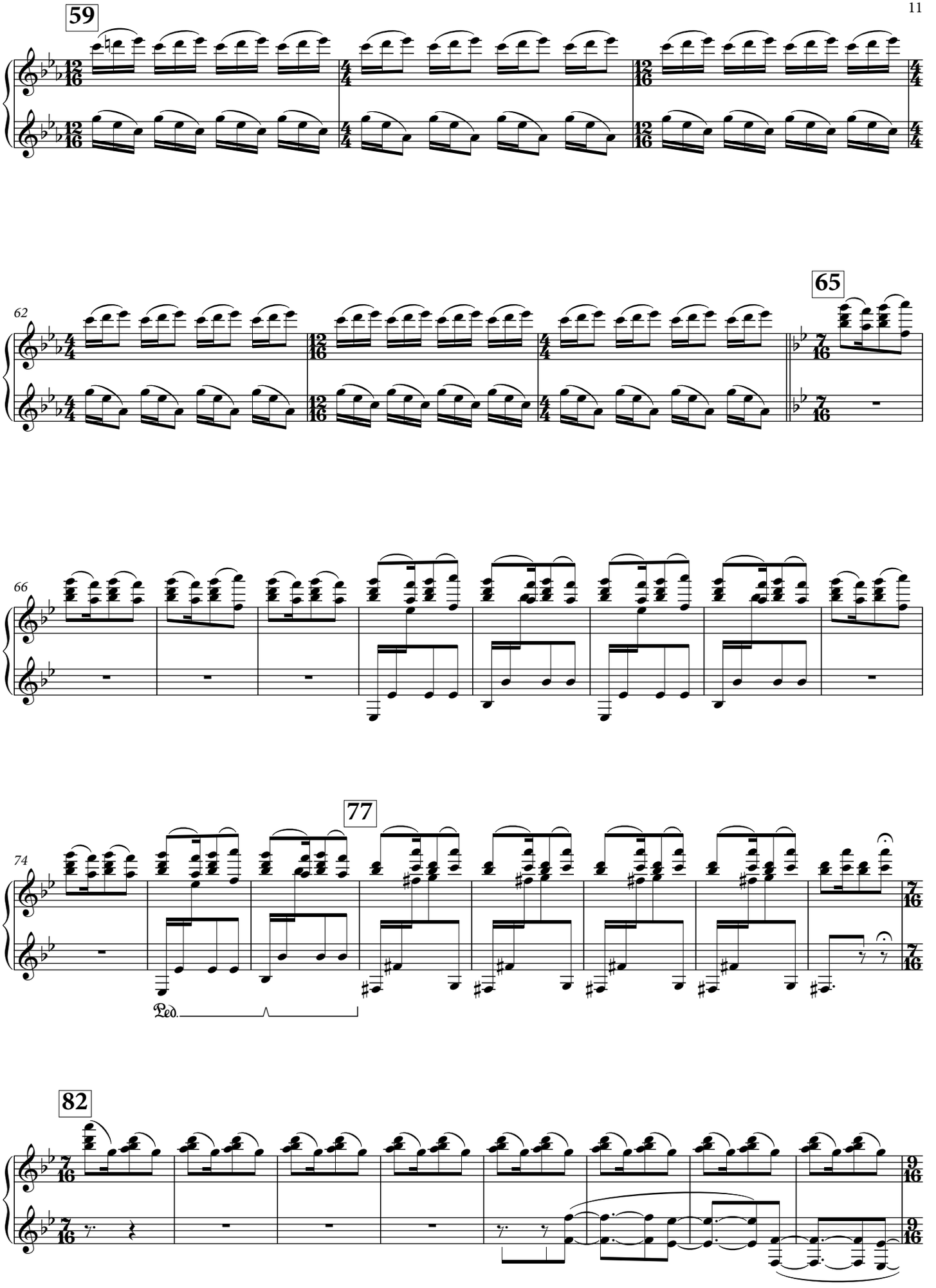
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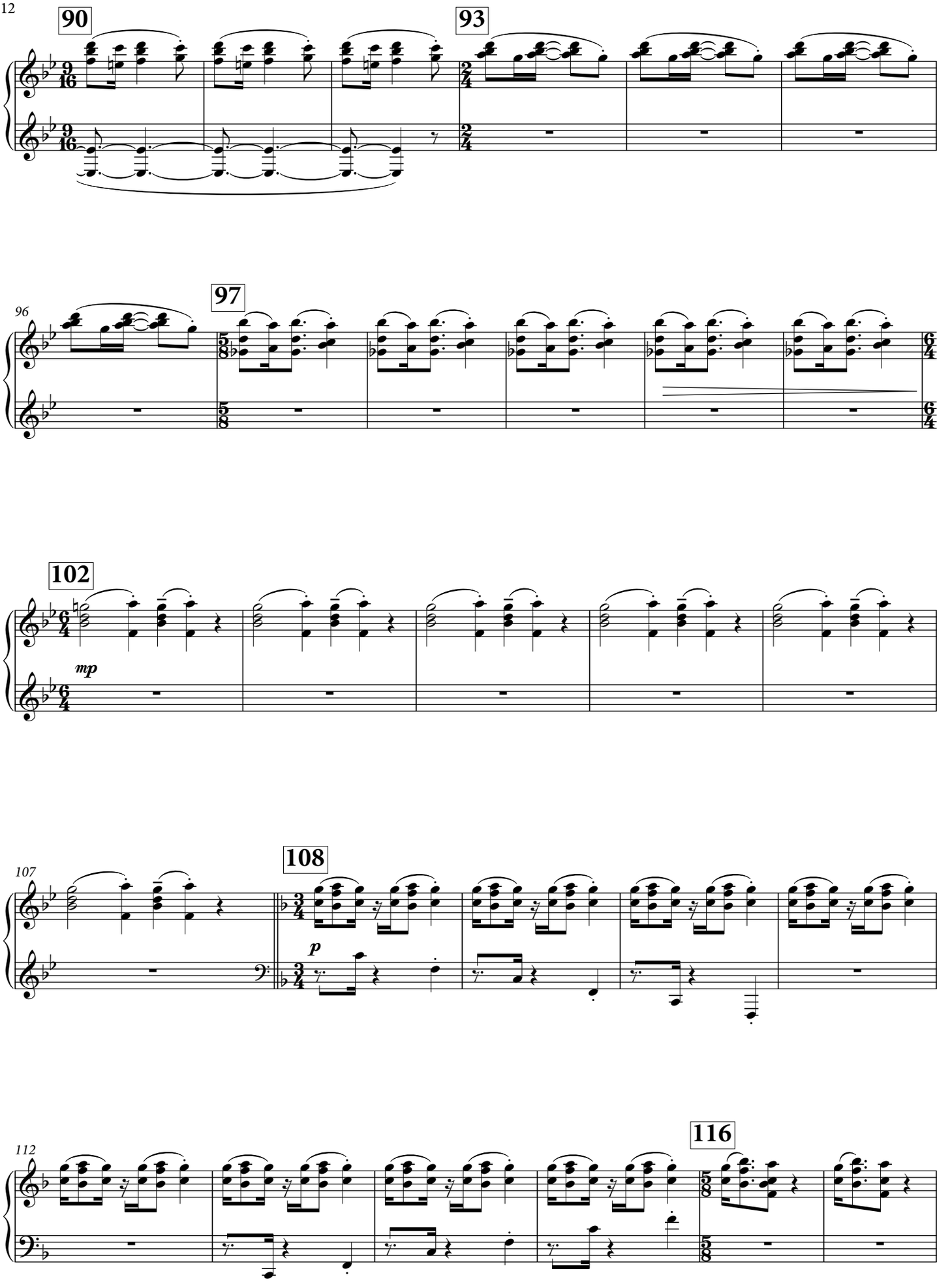
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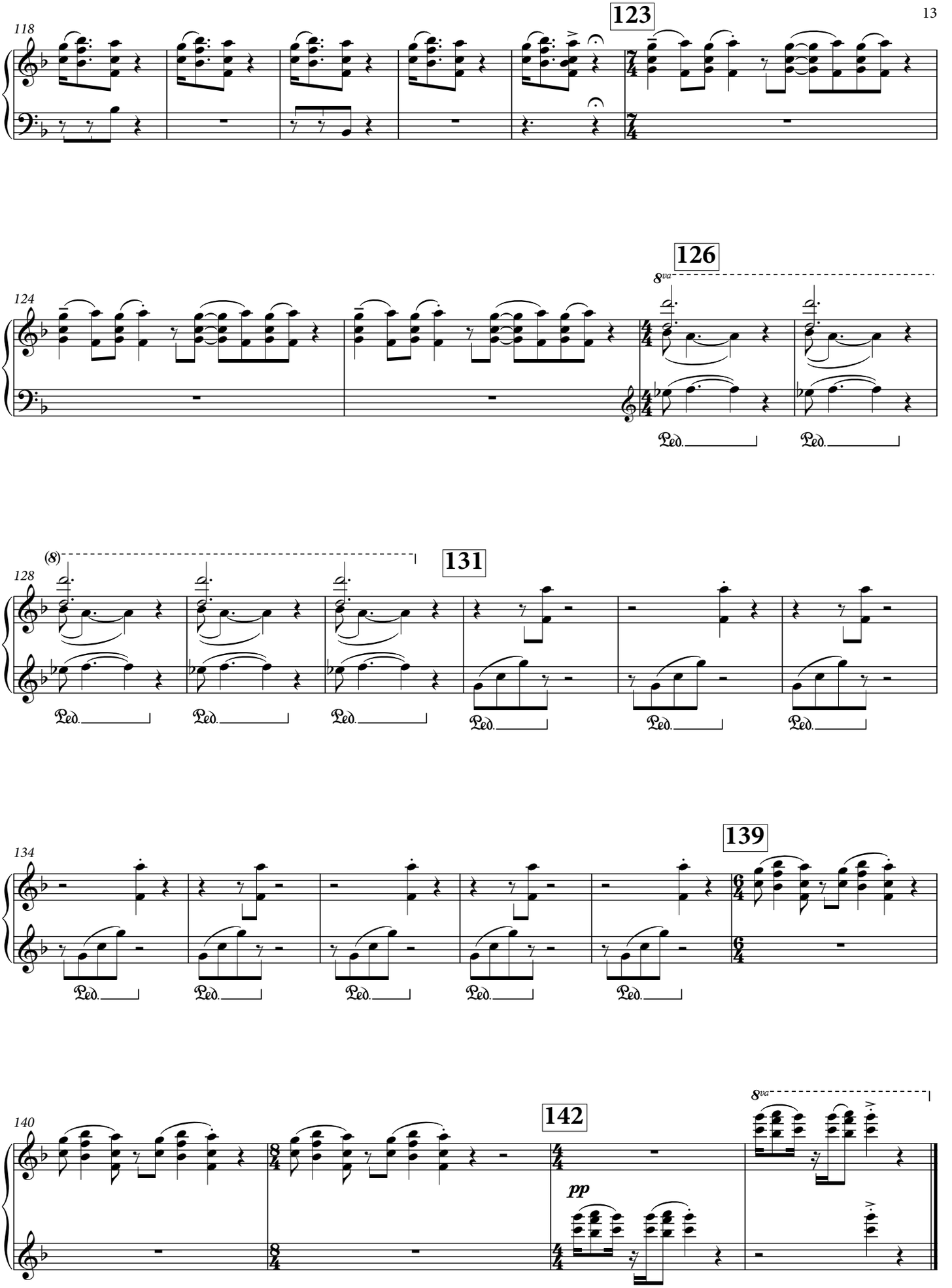
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