AUSTIN ALI

BOSS BATTLE SONATA

For Clarinet and Piano

Full Score

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Ninth Planet
Editions

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(2023)

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Version 24.8.28

For Darren Liou and Austin Ho

PROGRAM NOTES

When editing and engraving my scores, I enjoy listening to music. When not listening to classical or jazz, I gravitate toward the great repertoire of video game music. And if a deadline looms near, I choose the rich sub-genre of boss battle music.

Boss battle music in video games invokes a heightened sense of urgency, allowing the composer to incorporate fast tempos, syncopated rhythms, mixed-meter, disorienting harmonies, and extreme melodic range into the score. For example, "Battle with Ganon" by Koji Kondo from *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* features the insane time signature of 23/16 (or 13/16+5/8). (I highly recommend giving that one a listen.) Some personal favorite canonical composers include Koji Kondo (*Super Mario Bros.*, *The Legend of Zelda*), Junichi Masuda (*Pokémon*), Gō Ichinose (*Pokémon*), Hirokazu Ando (*Super Smash Bros.*), Mahito Yokota (*Super Mario Galaxy*), and several others.

Additionally, the boss battle sub-genre features many common musical tropes such as fifth-heavy power chords, quasi-Alberti bass writing, and arpeggiated ostinatos. In summary, the style is unendingly fun to listen to and to write.

When presented with the opportunity to compose a piece for virtuosic duo Darren Liou (clarinet) and Austin Ho (piano), I jumped on the chance to write *Boss Battle Sonata*. The piece is a love letter to the video game repertoire, presented in full acoustic form featuring all the fun genre tropes and Liou and Ho's impressive technical skill.

Duration: 6 min.

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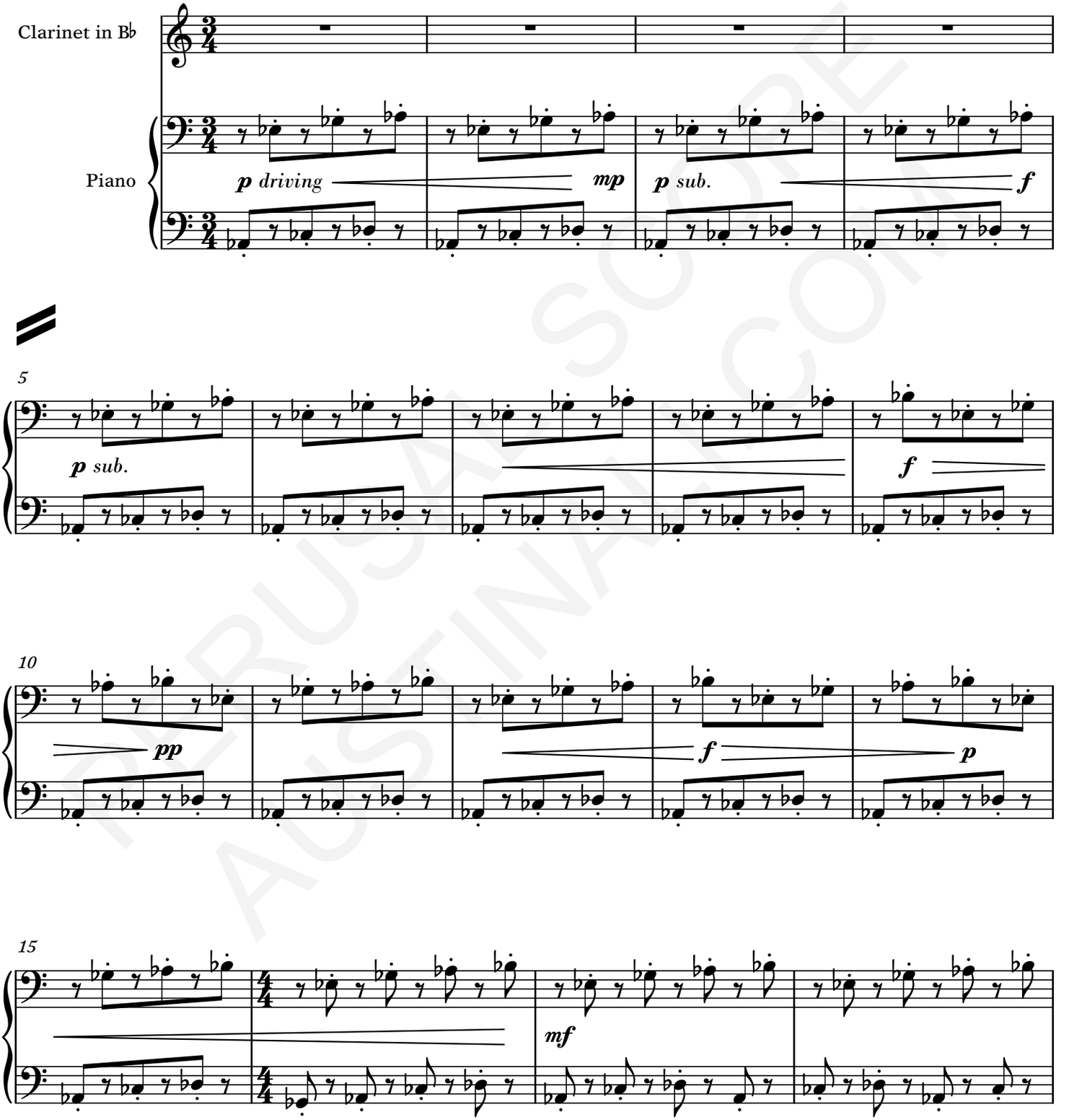
(Transposed score)

BOSS BATTLE SONATA

Austin Ali
(2023)

Very fast ♩ = 234 (𝅗𝅥. = 78)



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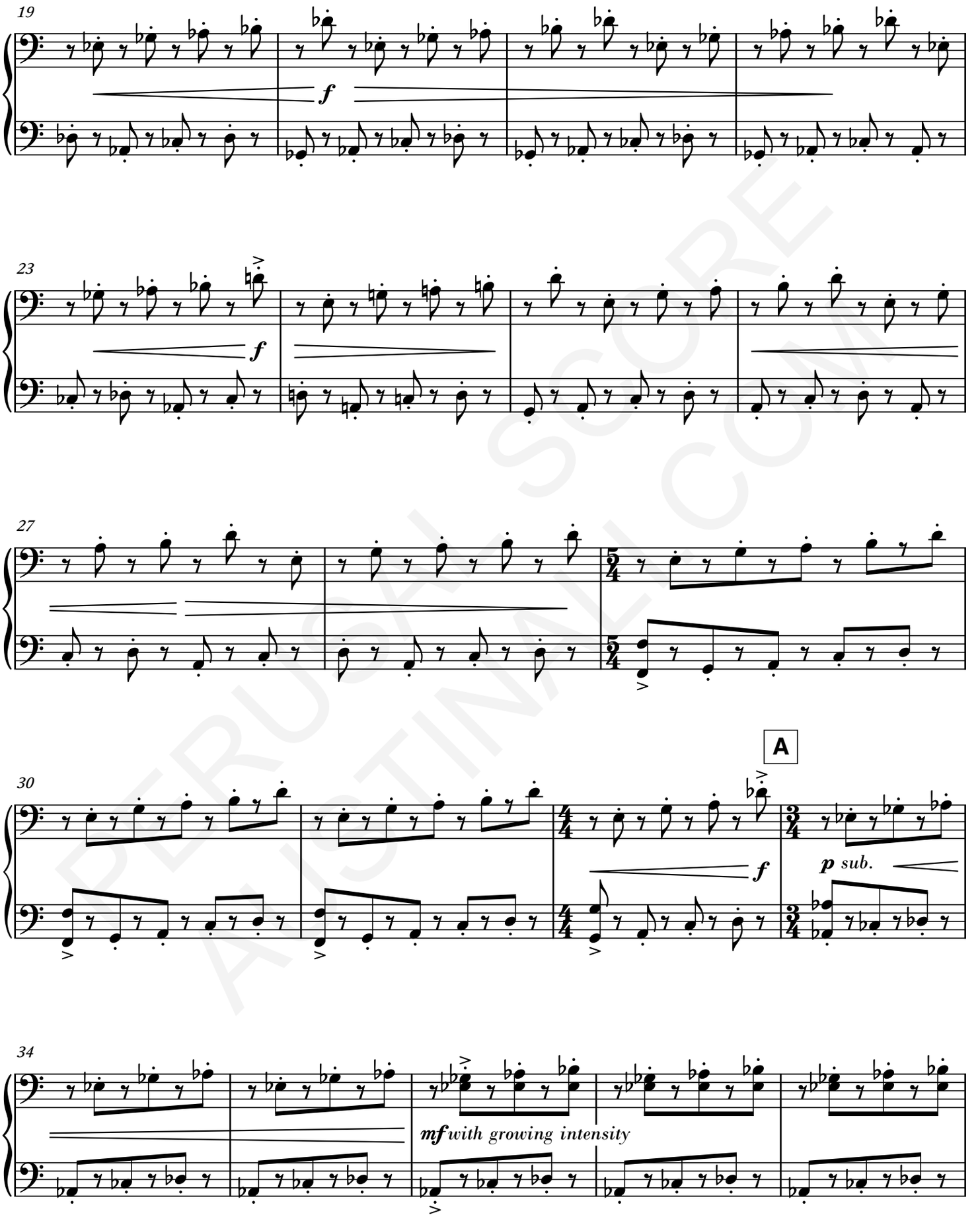

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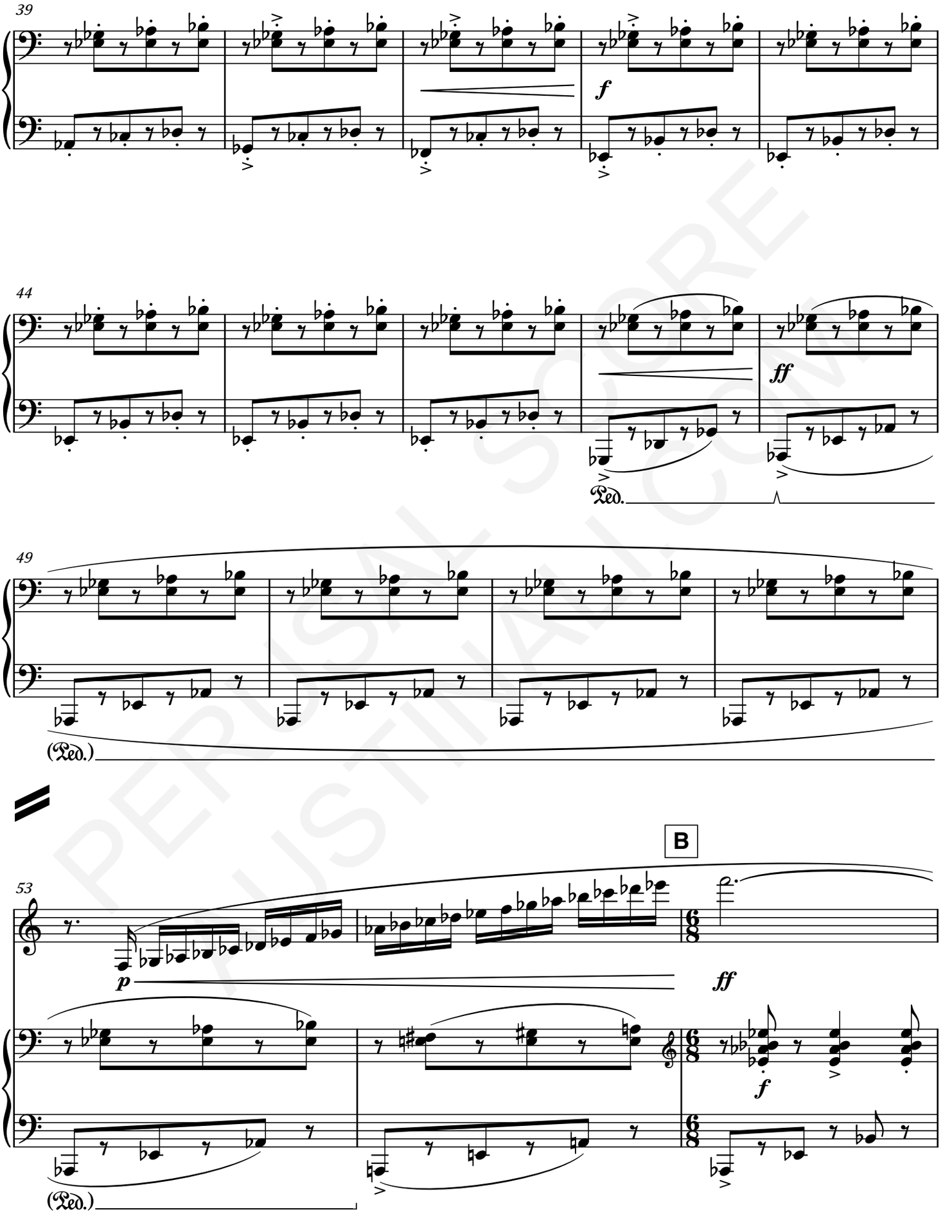

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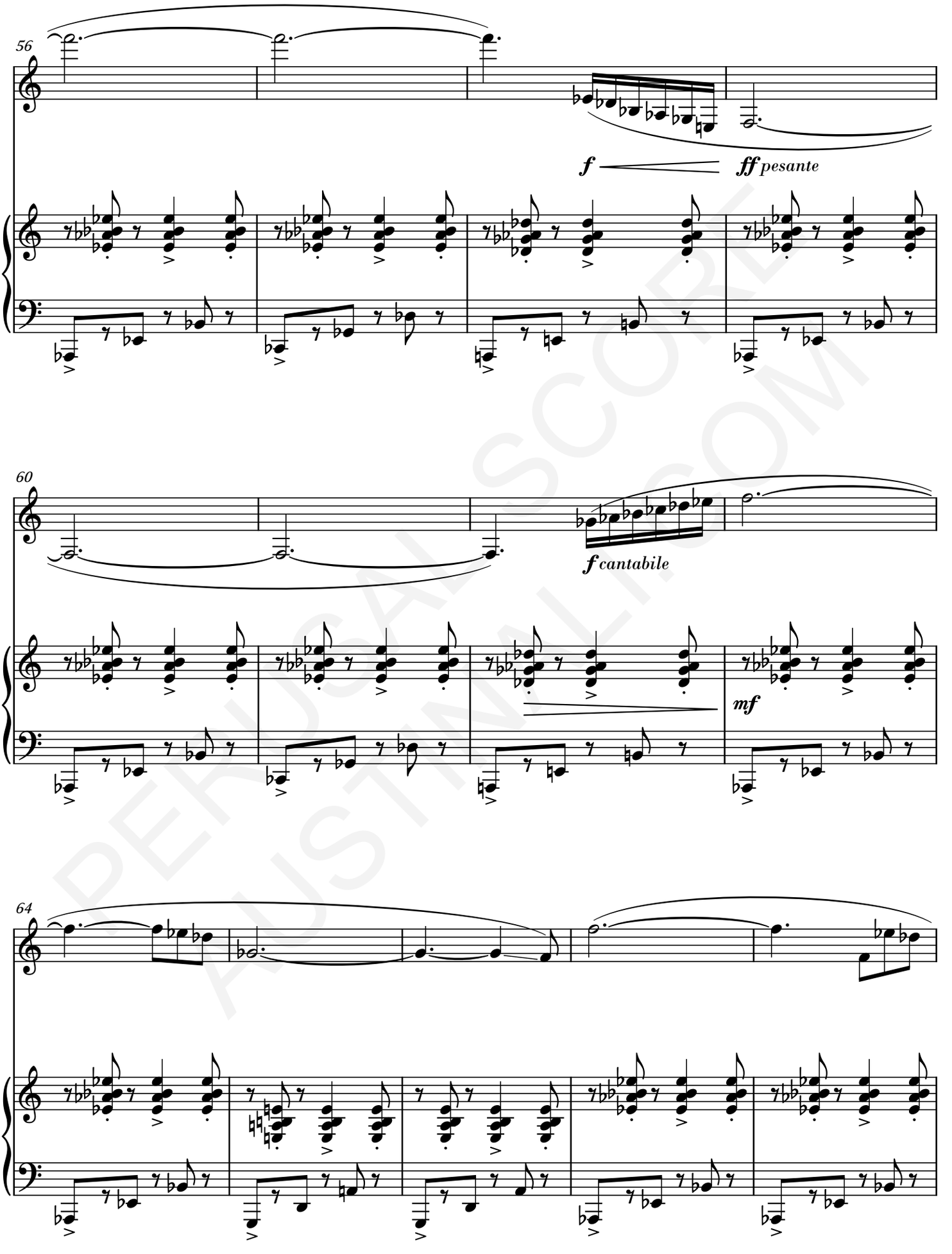

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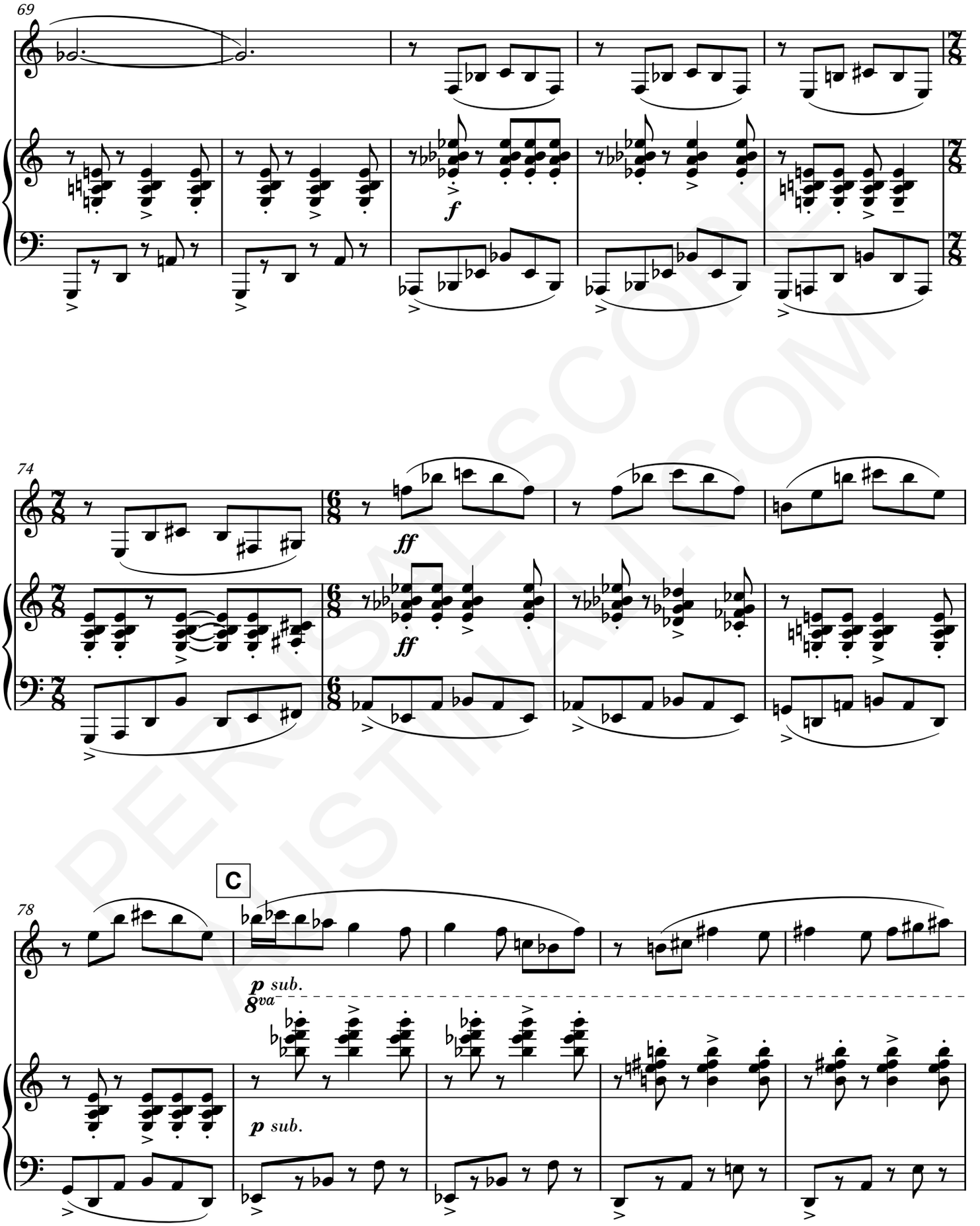

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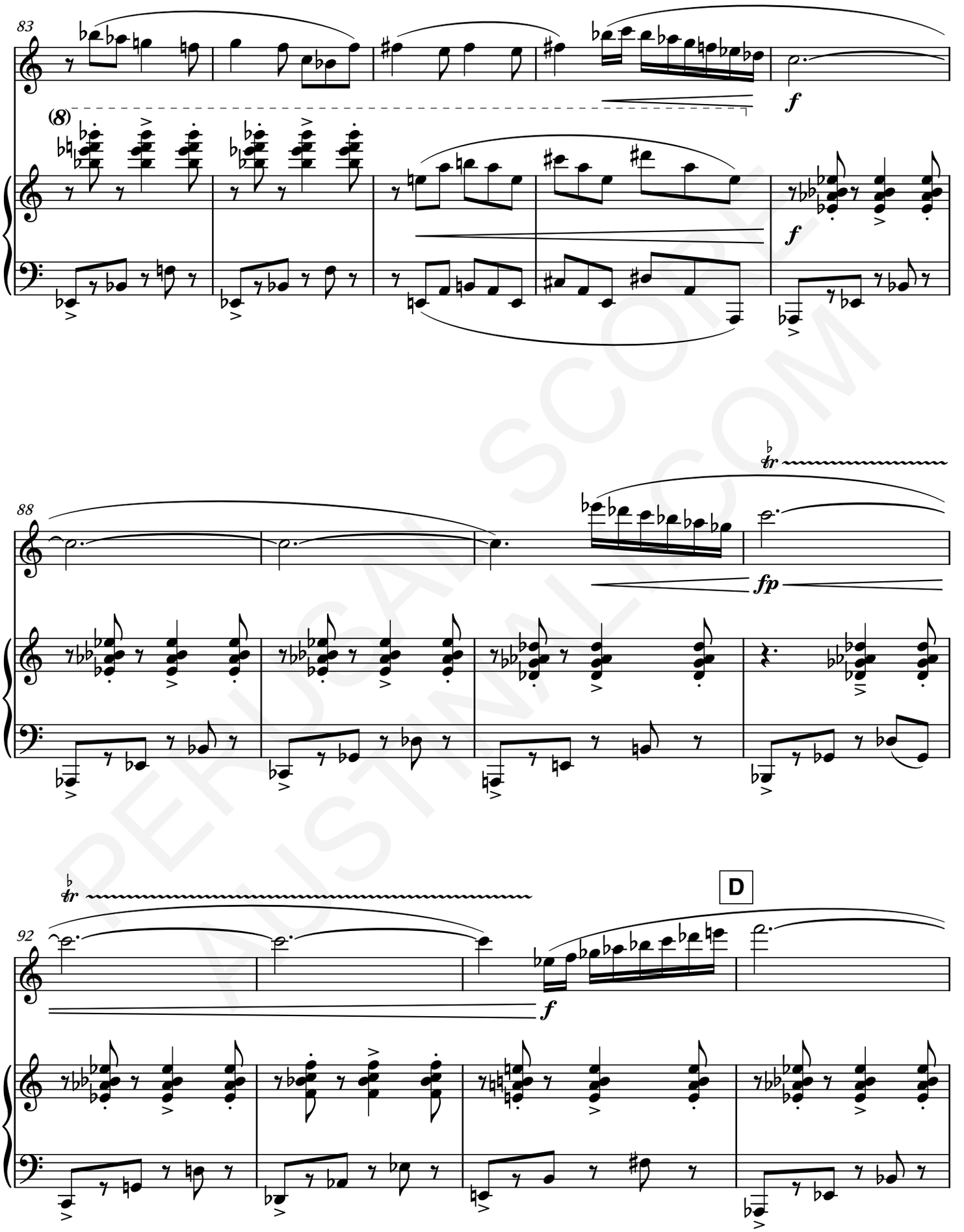

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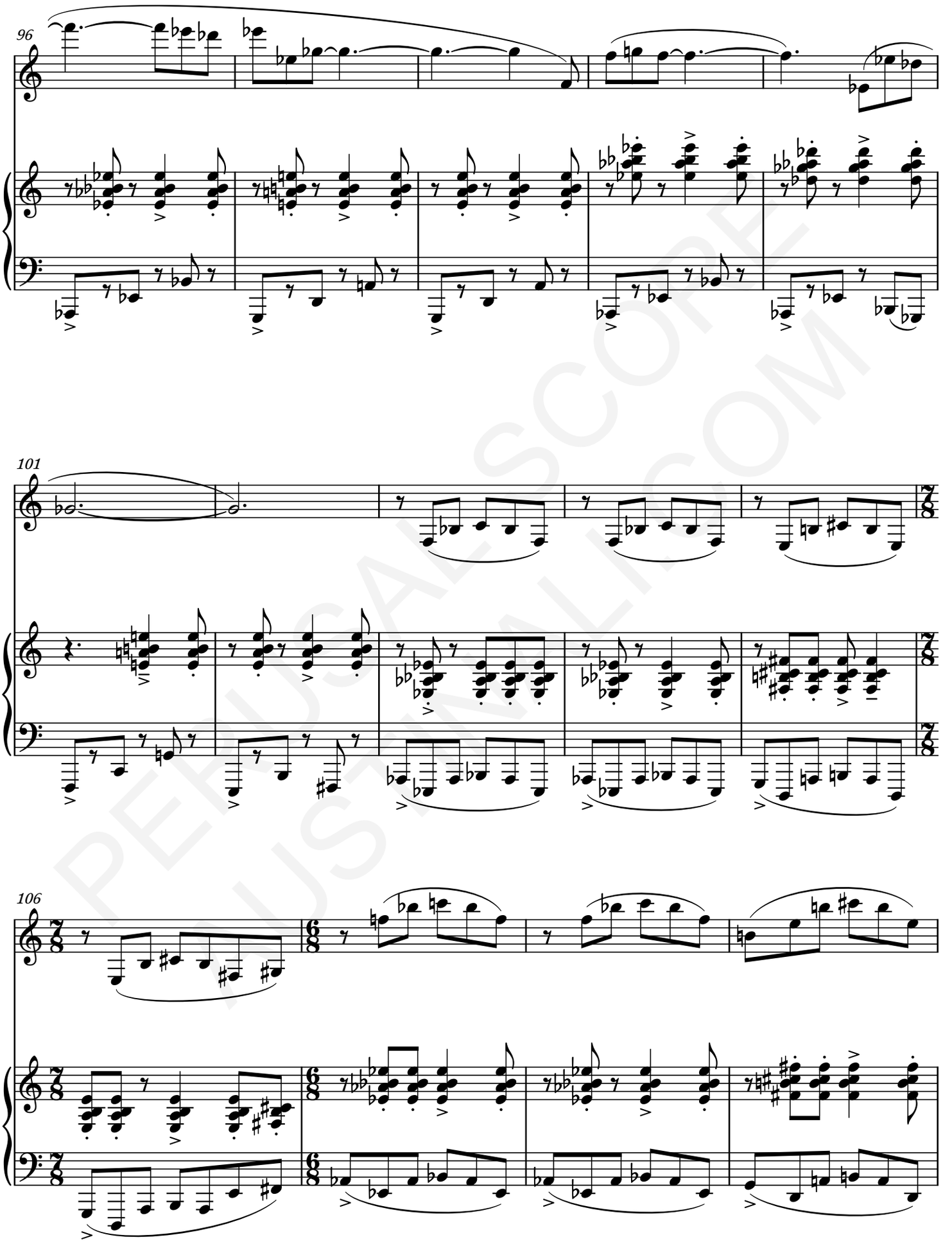

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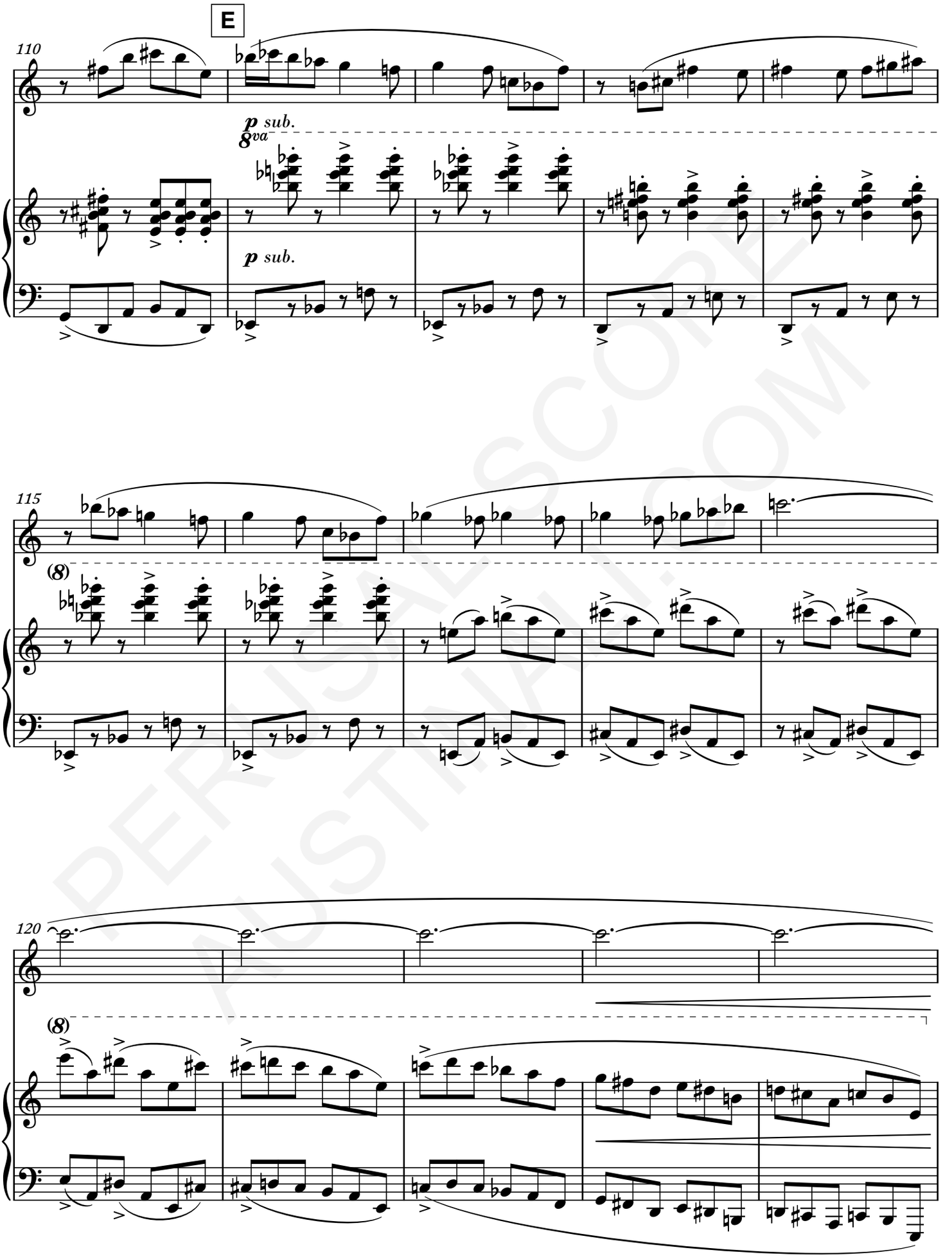

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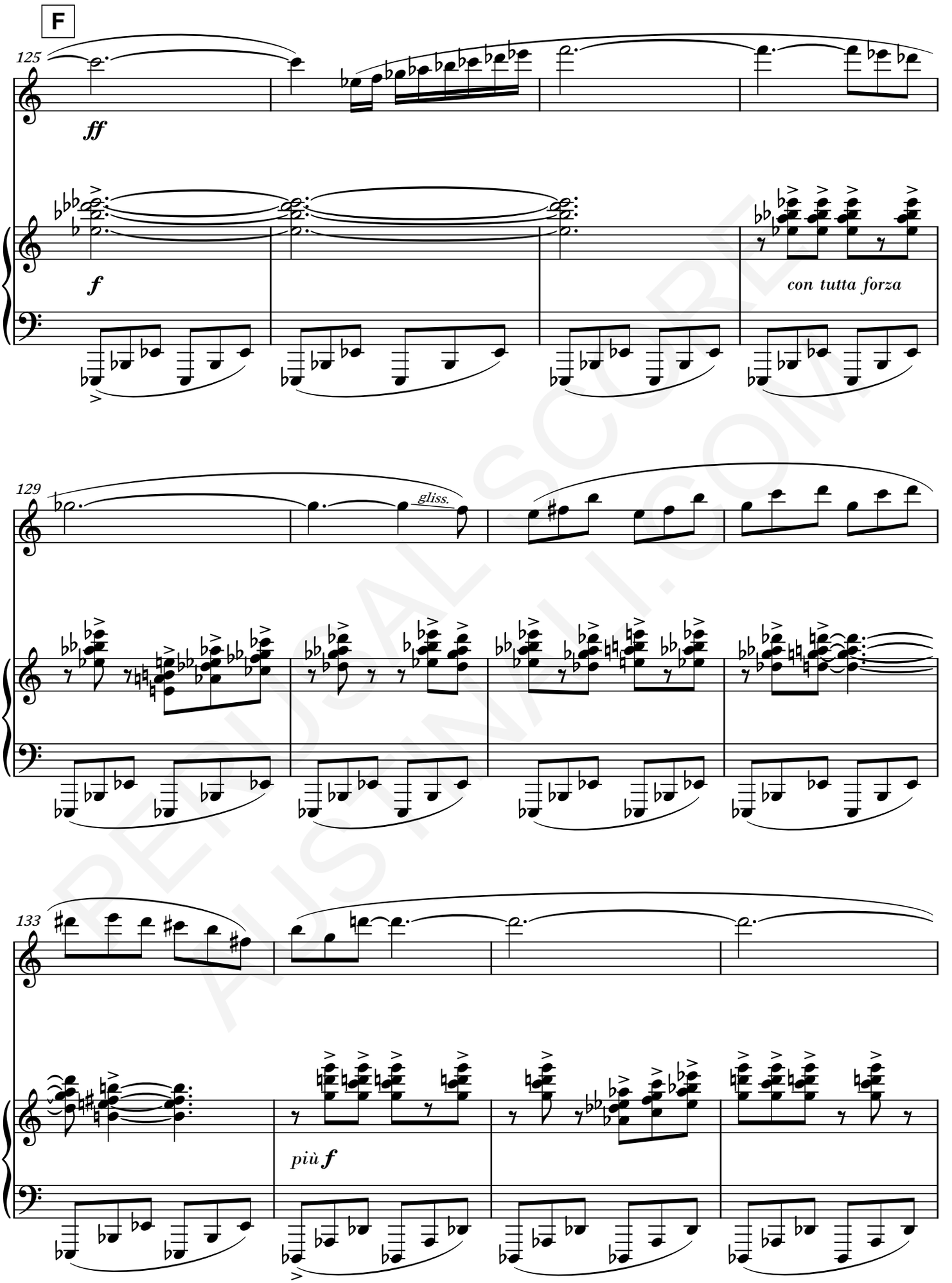

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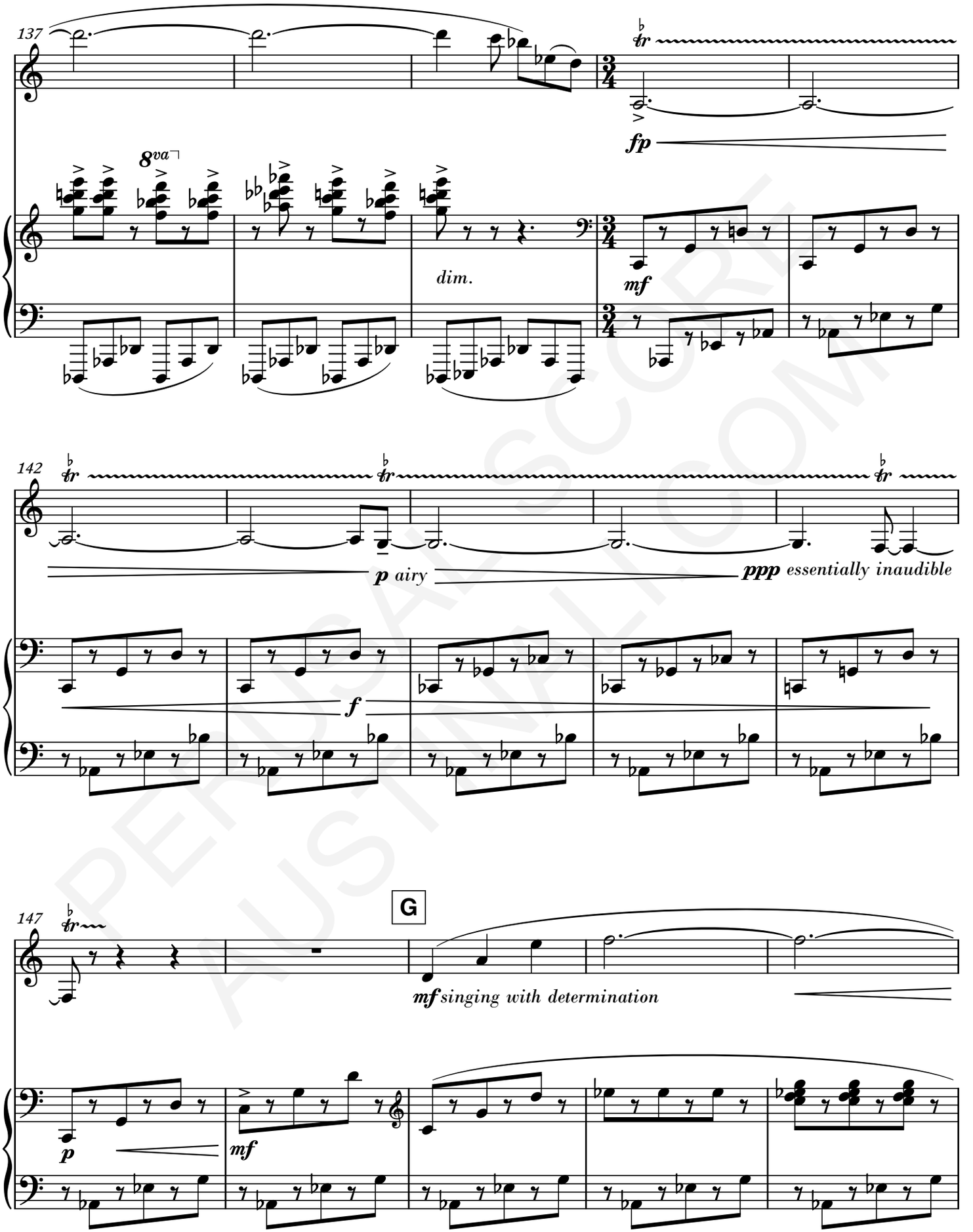

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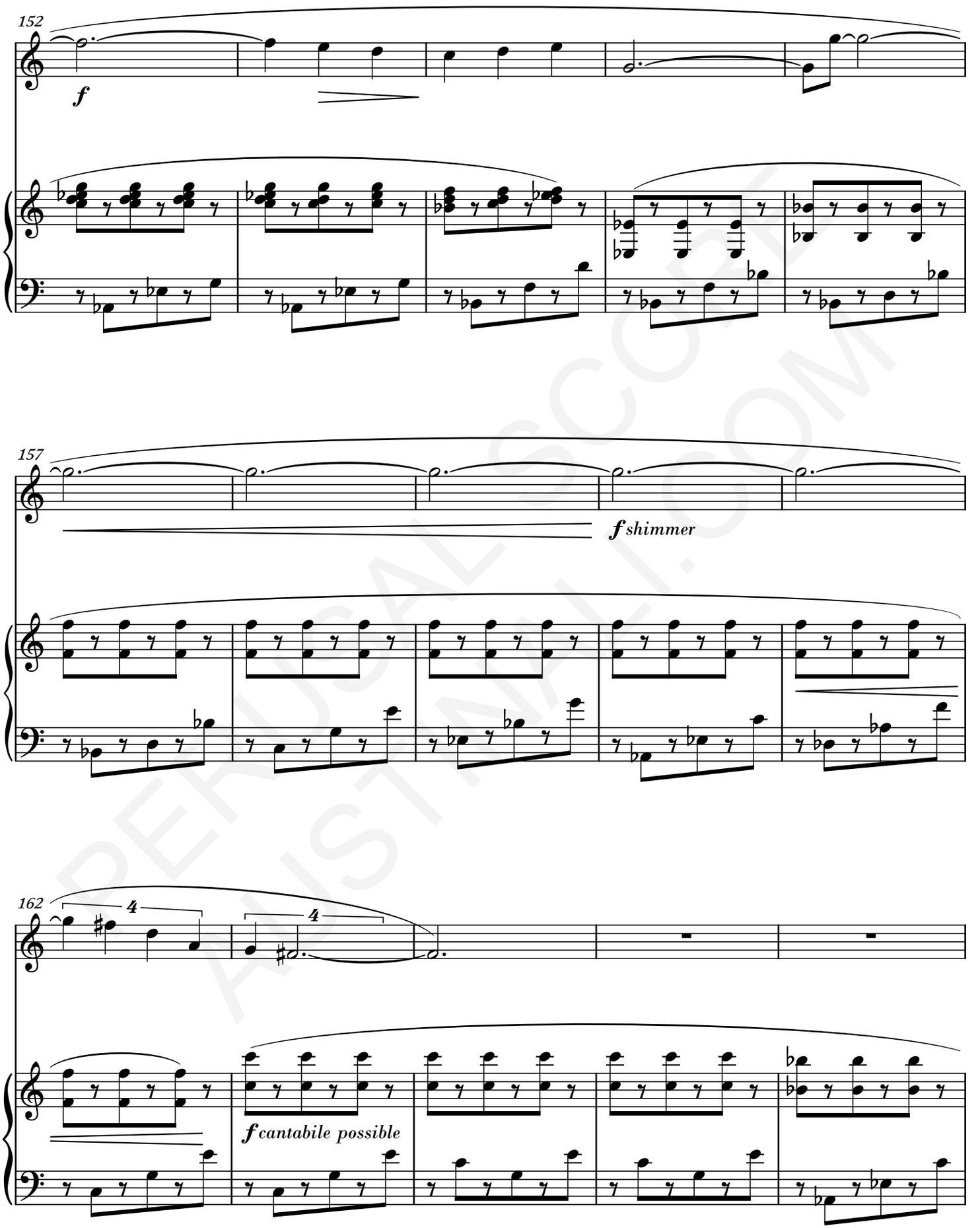

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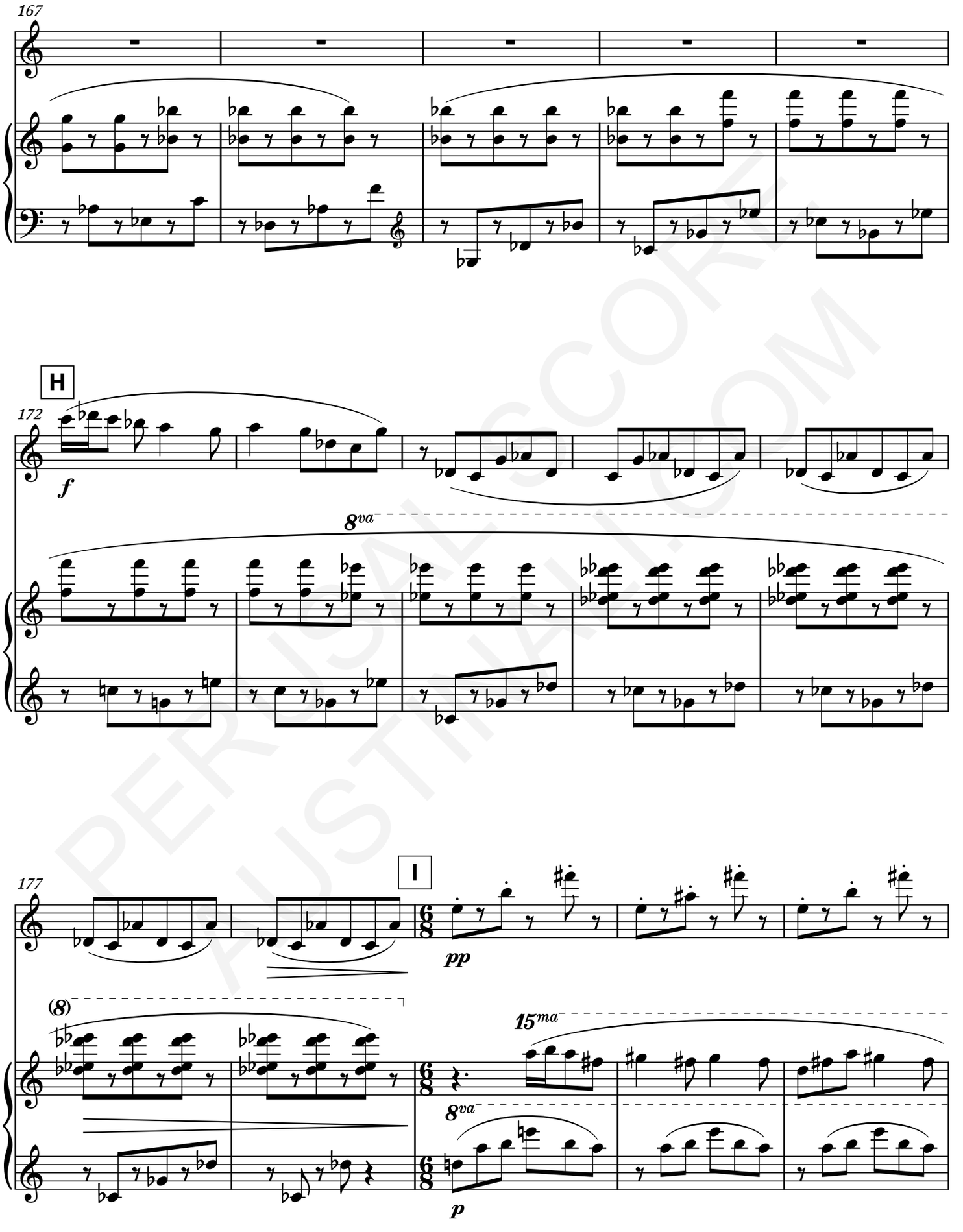

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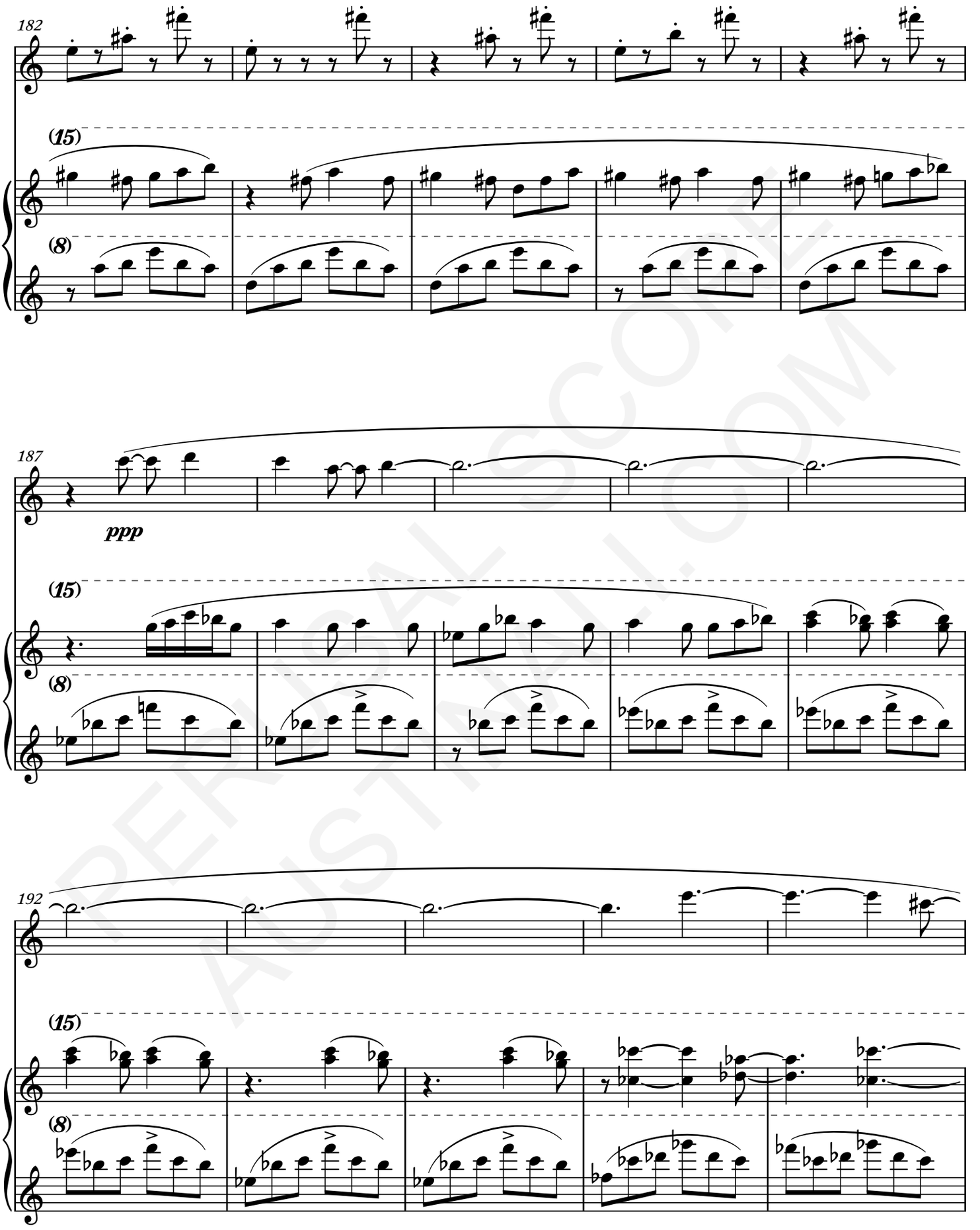

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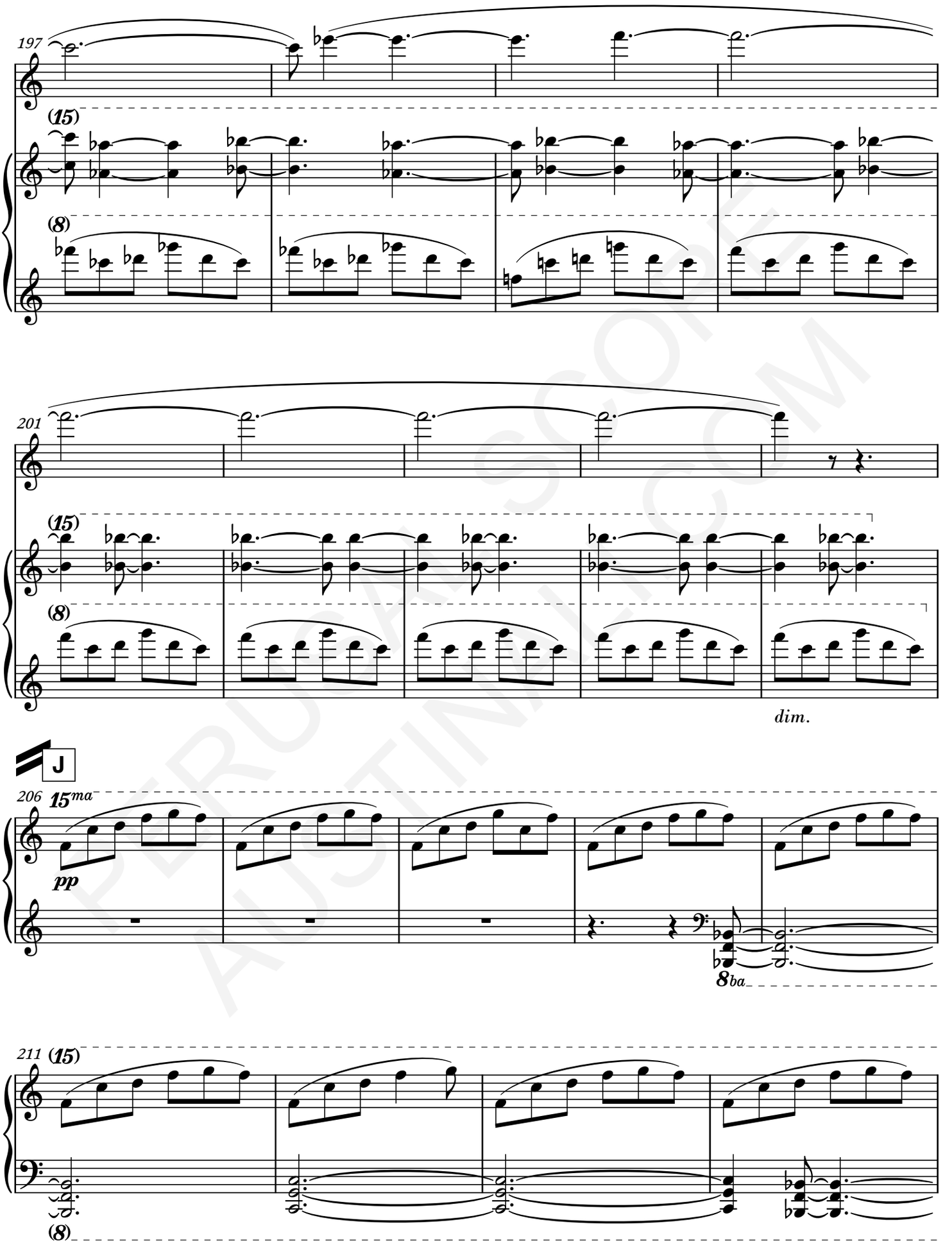

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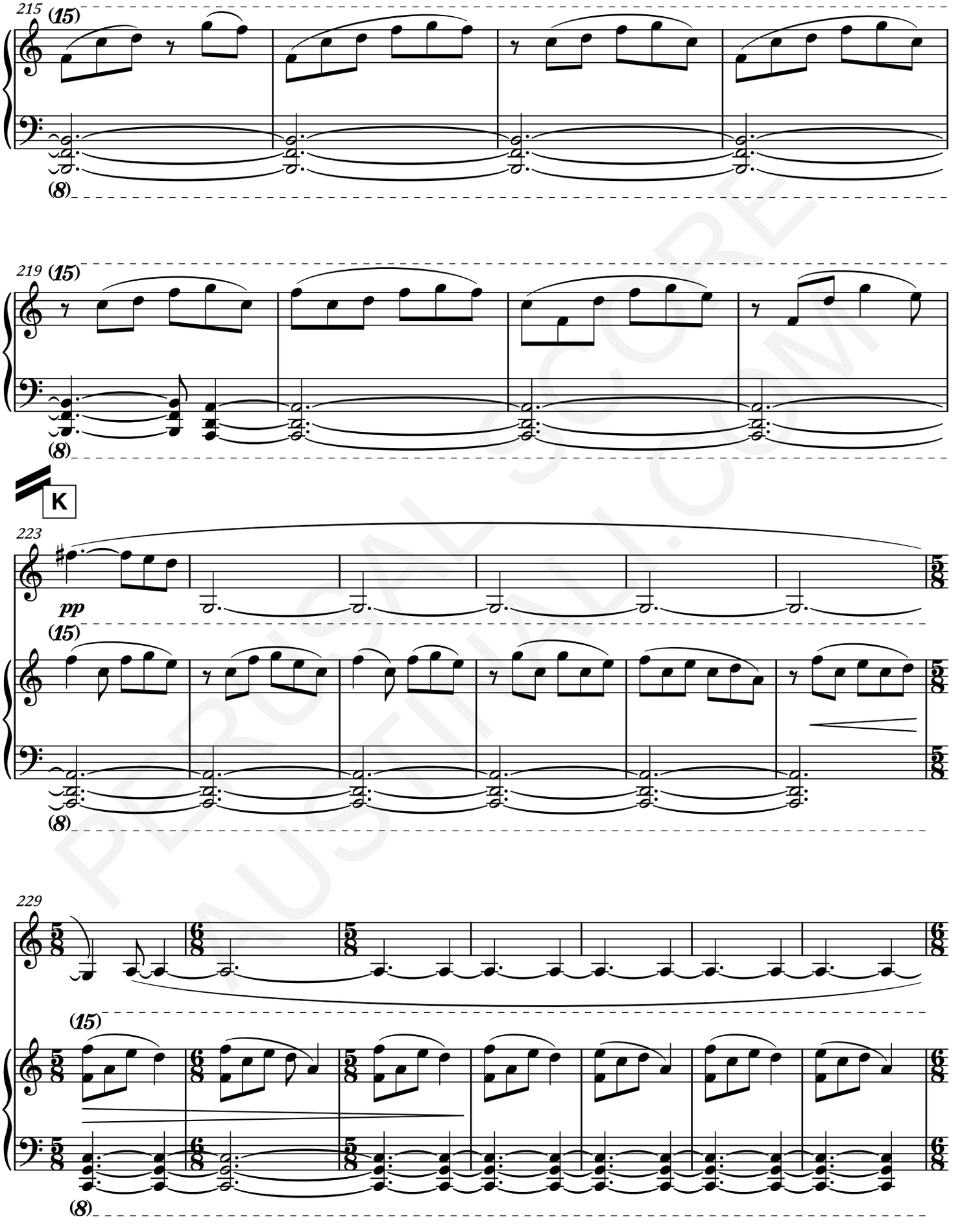

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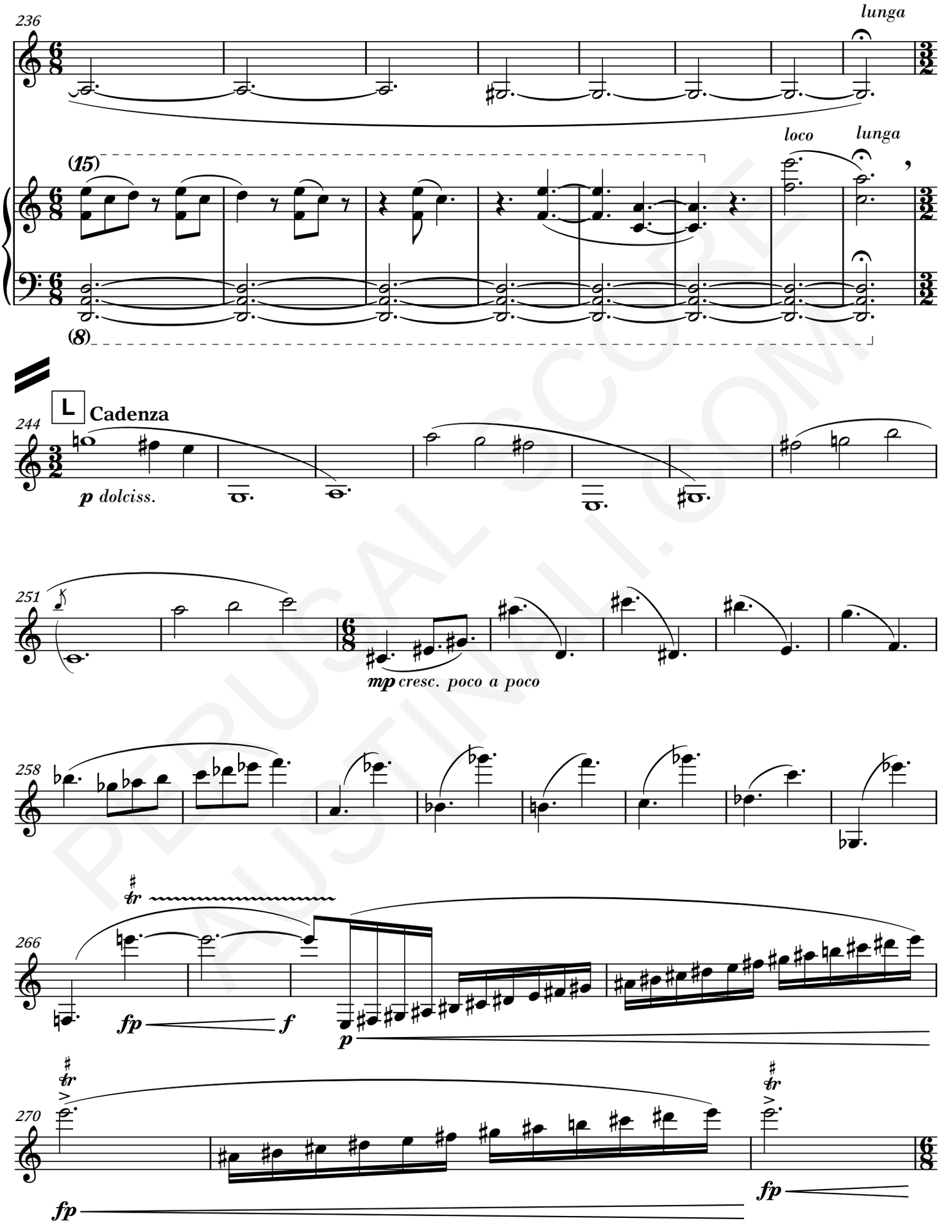

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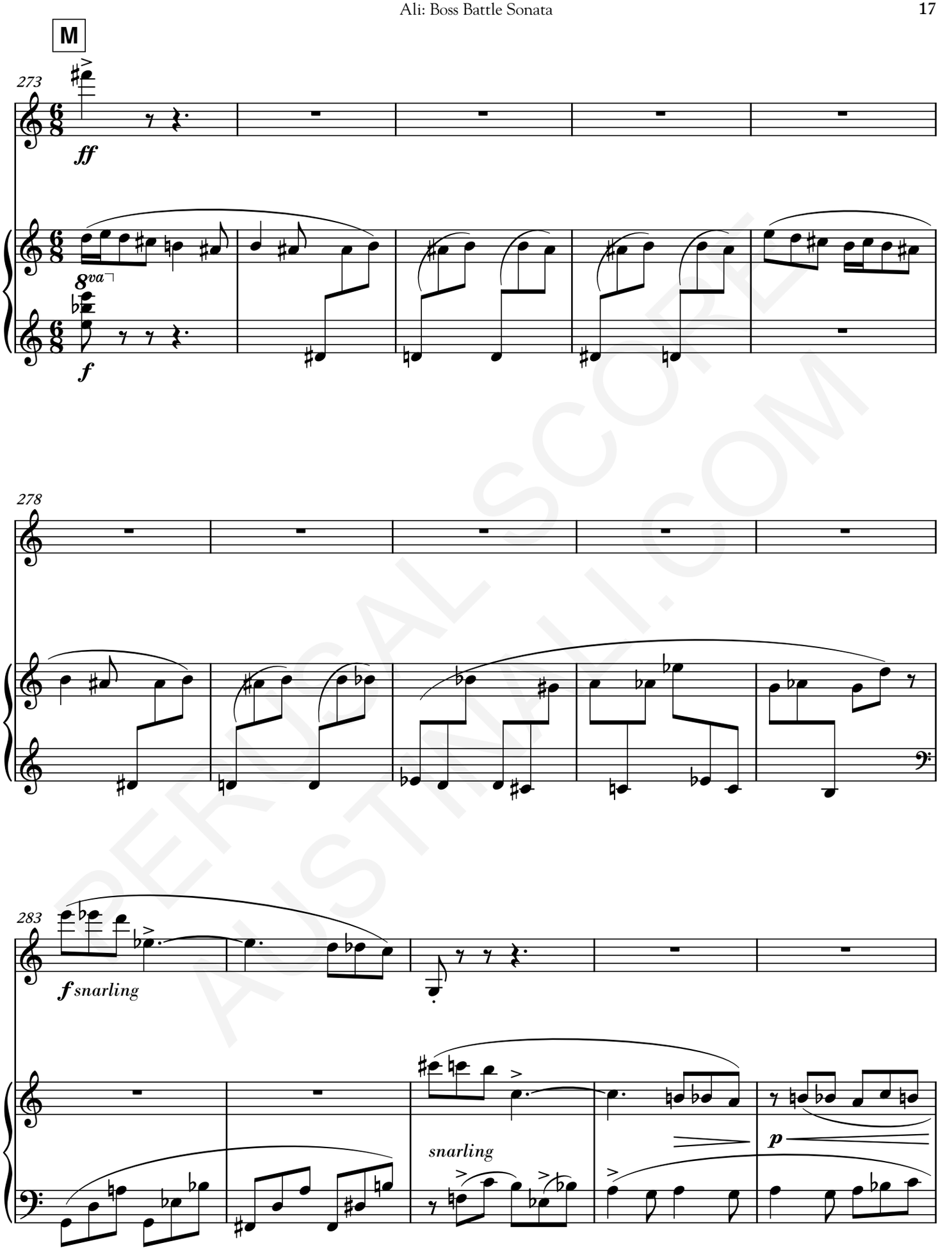

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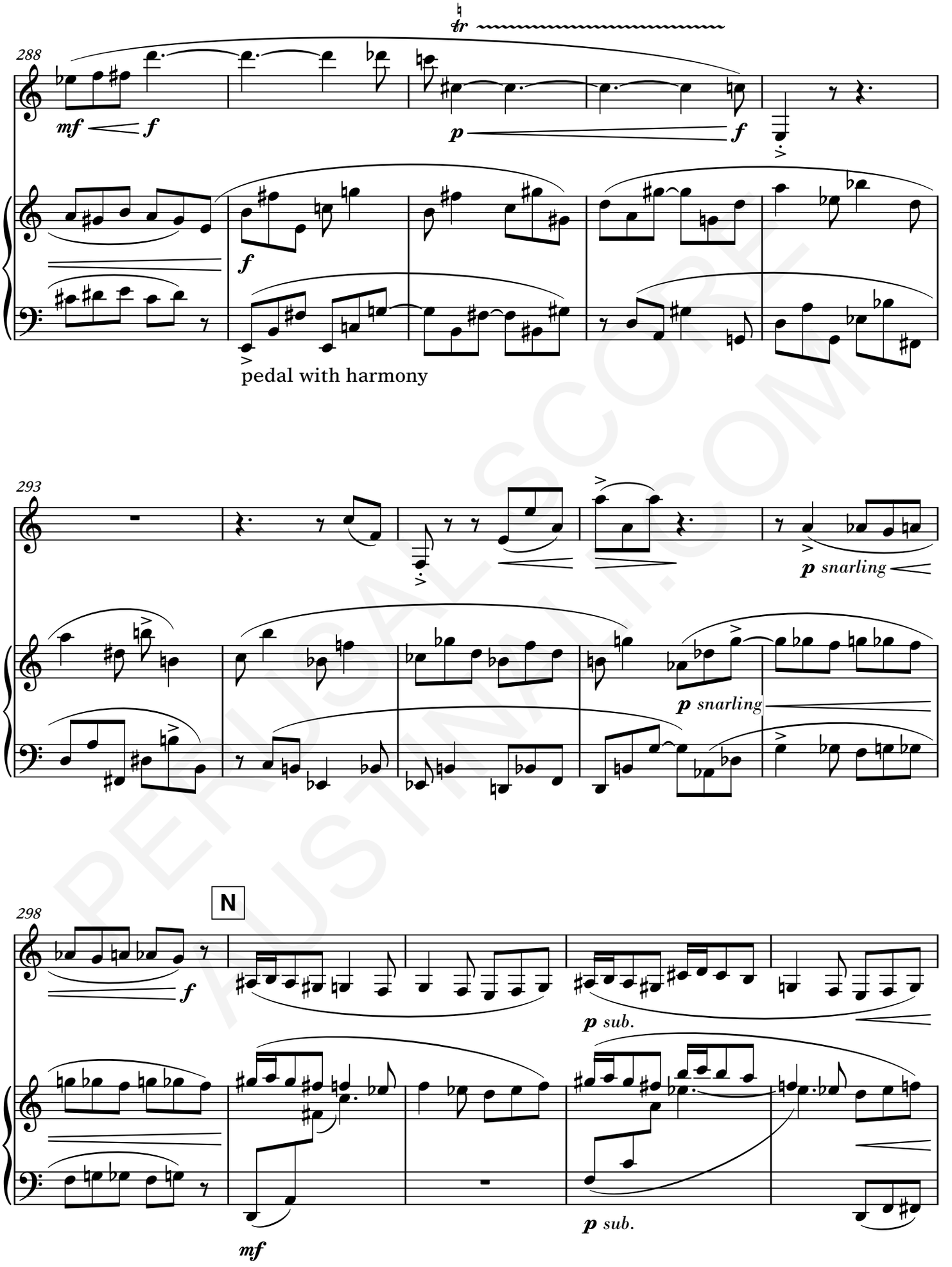

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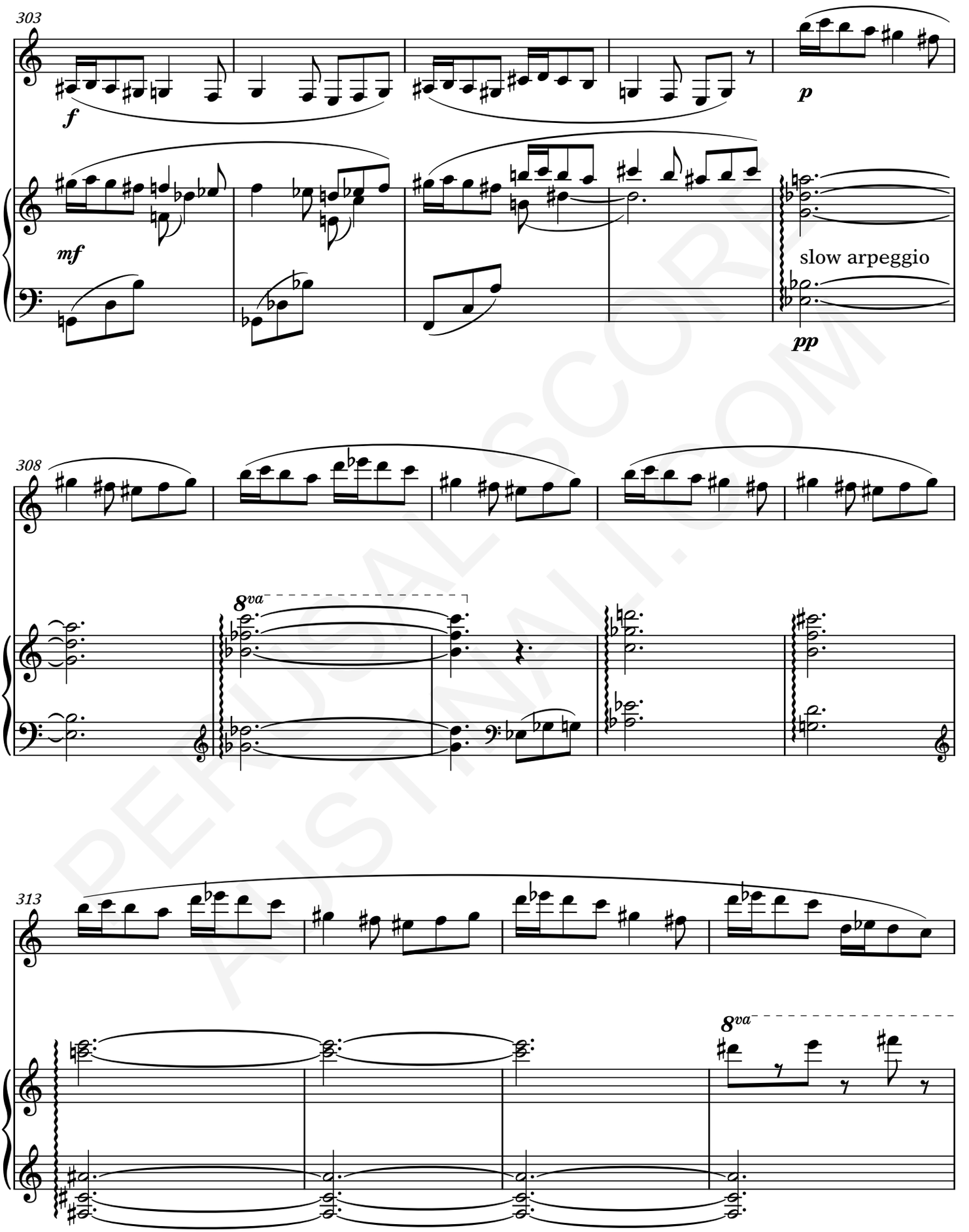

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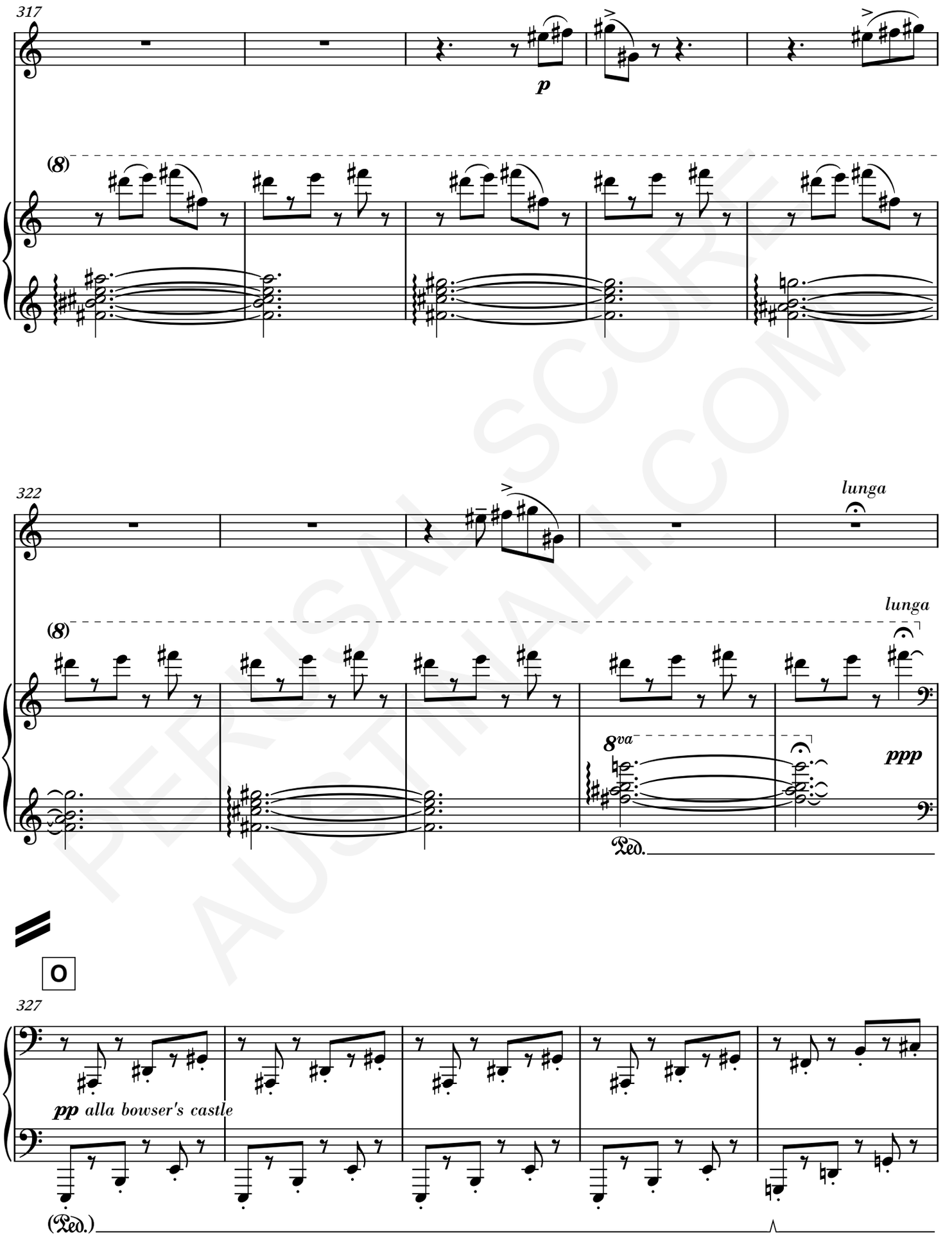

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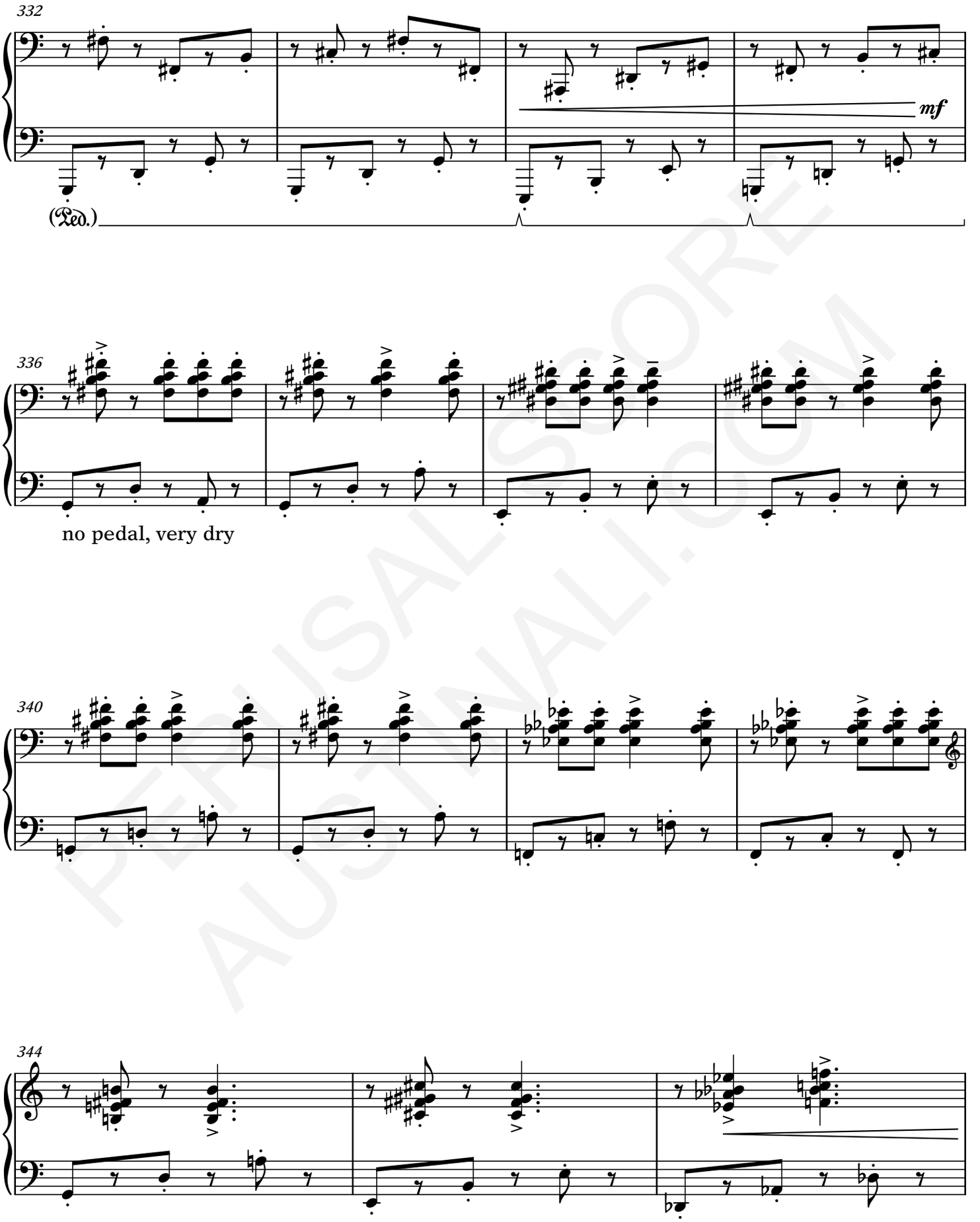

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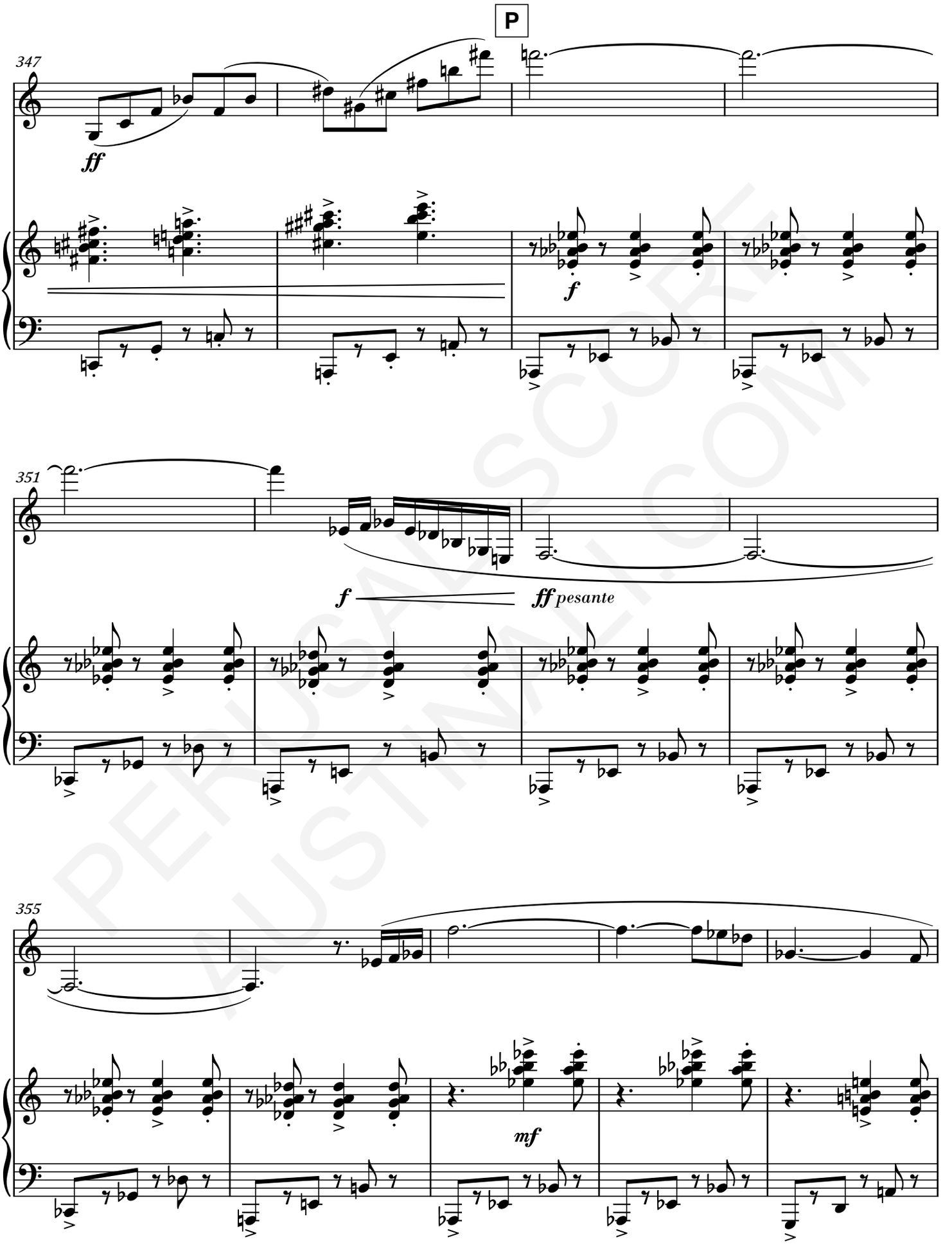

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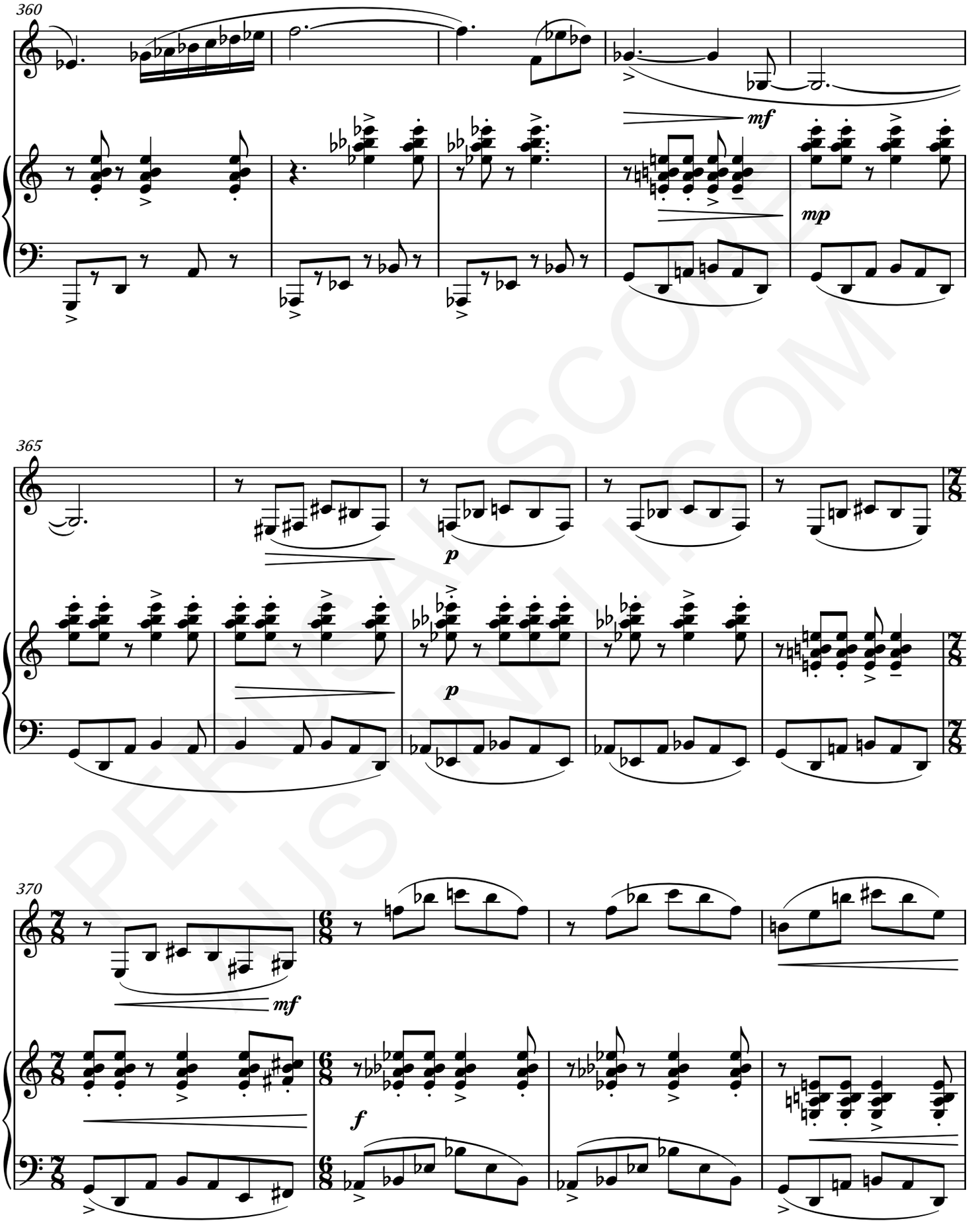

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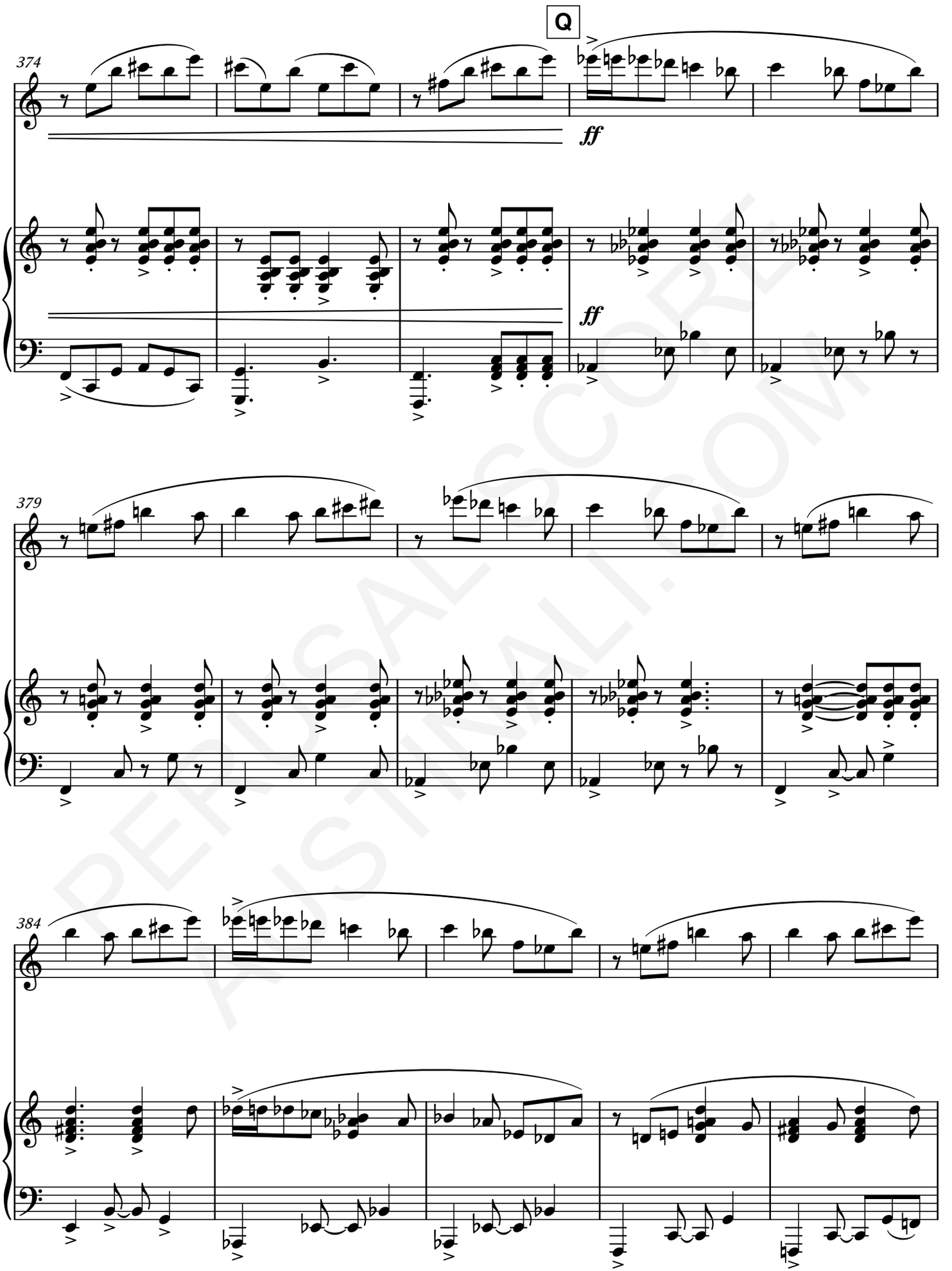

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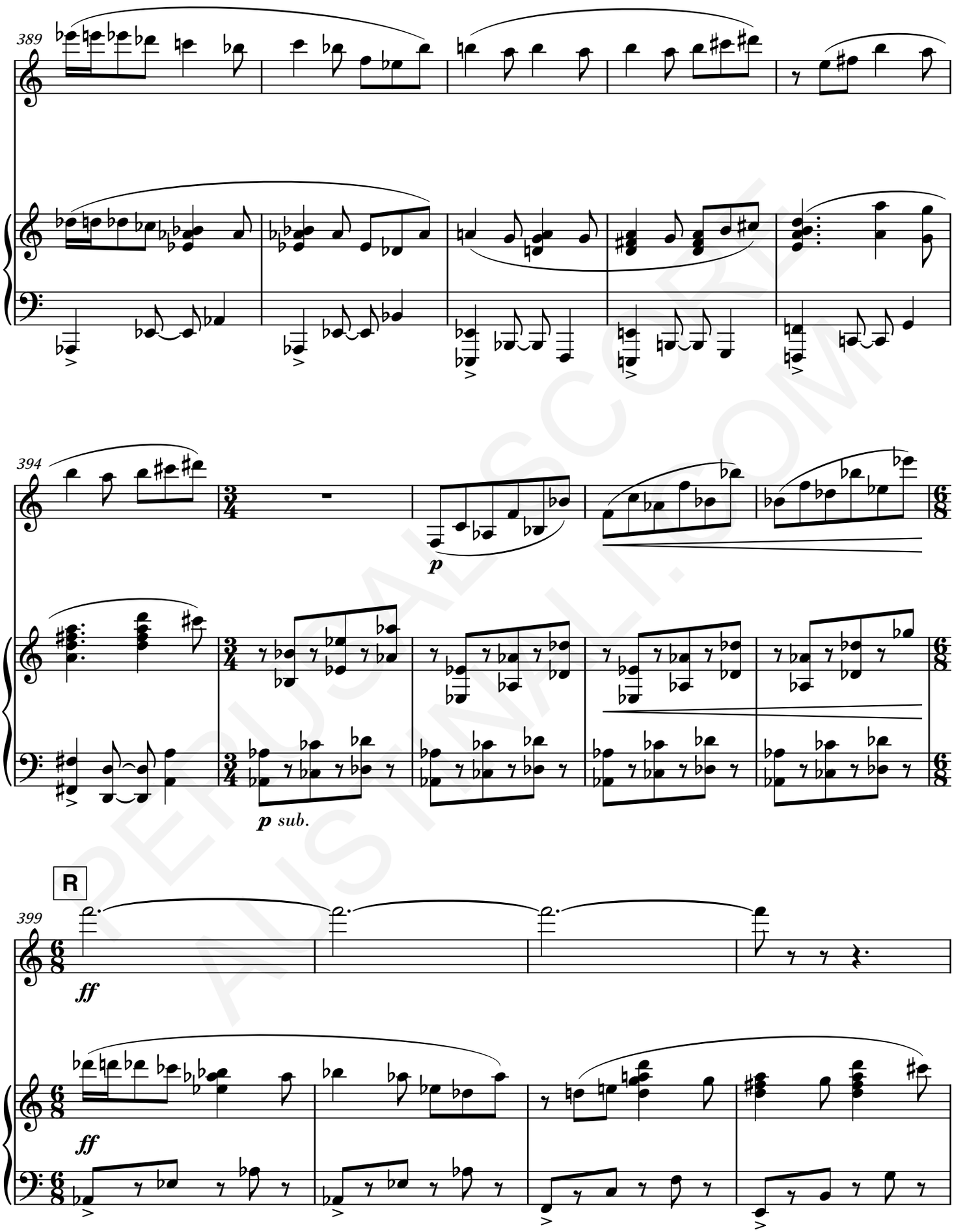

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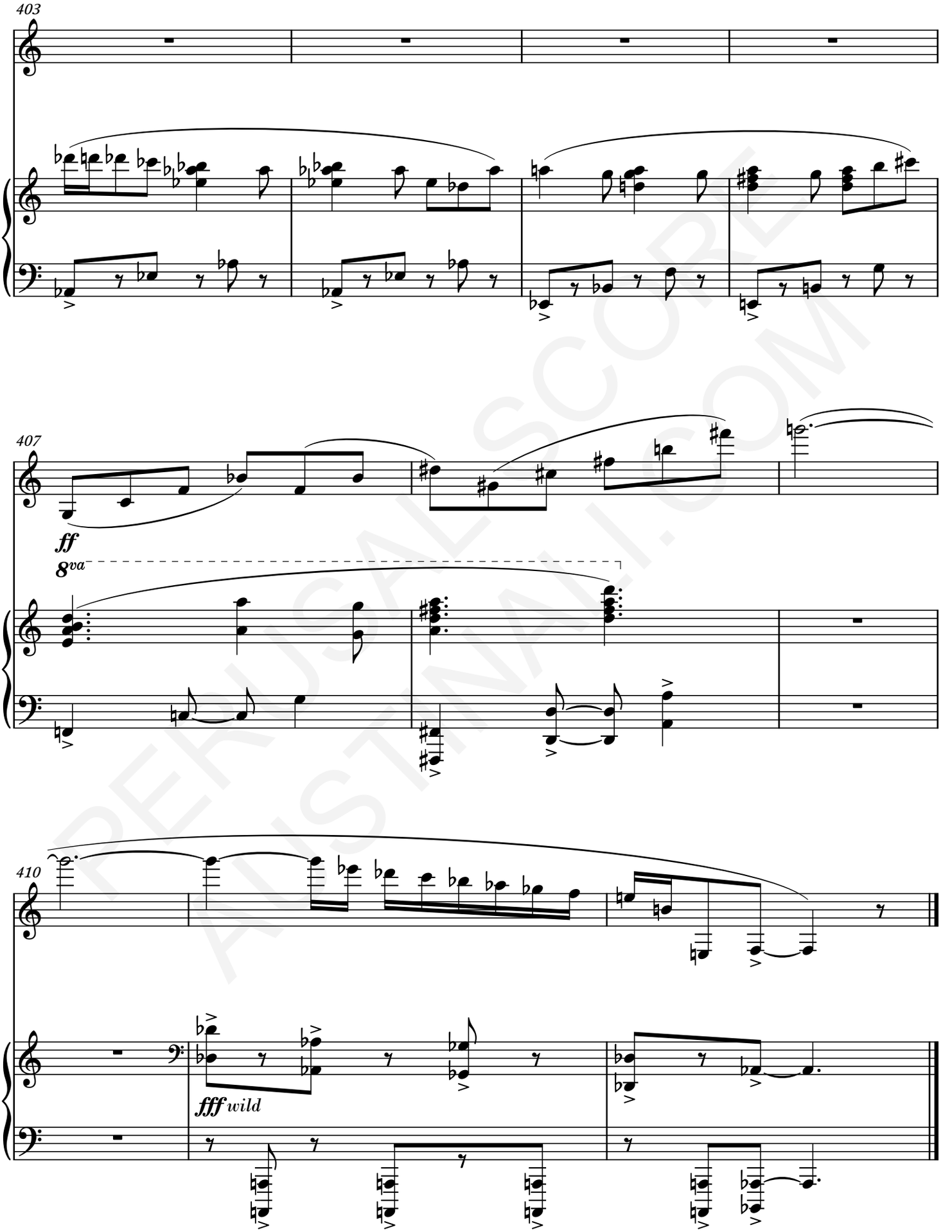

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