David Biedenbender

# River of Time

concerto for trumpet (piano reduction)

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bent space music

Commissioned by and written for my friend Neil Mueller
and the Lansing Symphony Orchestra, Timothy Muffitt, music director.

The wind ensemble version was premiered at Carnegie Hall on June 2, 2024
by Caleb Hudson and the University of Texas Wind Ensemble, Jerry Junkin, director.

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Performance materials available from Bent Space Music (Publisher):
www.davidbiedenbender.com

Contact the Composer:
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**First Printing of piano reduction version September 2024.**

I am profoundly grateful to my friend Viet Cuong and my wife Angela
for their invaluable support, keen insights, and critical ears during the creation of this piece
and to my sons, Izaak and Declan, for reminding me of what's truly important.
This music could not exist without them.

# VERSIONS

In addition to this version with piano there are versions with orchestra (original) and wind ensemble.
C and B♭ solo trumpet parts are available as well.
All performance materials are available directly from the composer:
www.davidbiedenbender.com

# PROGRAM NOTE

*River of Time* was commissioned by and written for my friend and trumpeter Neil Mueller, conductor Timothy Muffitt, and the Lansing Symphony Orchestra. In the spring of 2023, I was studying conducting with my friend Kevin Noe when he used the phrase "river of time" to describe the flow of music through time. I also happened to be reading two books that examined time from different perspectives: Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* and Carlo Rovelli's *The Order of Time*. Rovelli's book explores the mysteries of time through the lens of physics, woven together with poetry, philosophy, art, and history, while *Meditations*, although not directly about time per se, certainly grapples with life's ephemerality. I remember this passage from *Meditations* Book Five jumping right off the page:

> Keep in mind how fast things pass by and are gone—those that are now, and those to come. Existence flows past us like a river: the "what" is in constant flux, the "why" has a thousand variations. Nothing is stable, not even what's right here. The infinity of past and future gapes before us—a chasm whose depths we cannot see…
>
> (translation by Gregory Hays)

The "river of time" became the conceptual thread that pulled together the musical and philosophical ideas that I had not yet been able to pull together into a coherent whole—it's as if this piece became my own personal way of exploring, knowing, and communicating these ideas.

The first movement is called *Becoming*. I imagine a kind of primordial clock from which time flows—swirling—becoming an infinity of matter and moments. The second movement, *Flowing*, is a meditation on being *part* of the river of time—being *present*. Imagine a beautiful moment that you simply don't want to end. For me, I remember holding my infant son, listening to his slow, relaxed breathing as he slept peacefully on my chest. I'm reminded of a poignant passage from Matthew Zapruder's *Story of a Poem*: "That night the boy slept all night on his father's chest. It was the only time in his life the father had felt his body was perfect, and not one time did he wish anything were different, or that he were elsewhere." Of course, moments like this are often also shaded with a tinge of melancholy, as thoughts slip toward the past or the future, wondering whether a moment just like this might ever occur again. The third movement is called *Crossing*. Our perception of time is often linear, but what if it was circular or it could be bent? What if we could exist outside of it? What if we could traverse the river of time?

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# PERFORMANCE NOTES

## Dynamics

A common gesture in this piece is a crescendo that swells sharply near the end of its duration, indicated by a flared hairpin (see below). The shape of this crescendo should be dramatic, balanced, and, where appropriate, consistent across sections and the ensemble. It is critical that the release is abrupt though still resonant (not an "articulated" release) and that the duration of the note last until the (down)beat indicated.

Some hairpins also start or end at "*niente*" (nothing), indicated by a circle. The goal is to hide the attack/release, fading from/into one textural element to another.

## Grace Notes

Grace notes should be light and quick and placed *before* the beat.

## Piano pedaling

Please adhere closely to what is written. The resonance of the piano is an integral part of the piece, and the harmony, textures, and formal structure is often sustained and clarified with this resonance.

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**Total duration: *ca.* 18:00**

*for my friend Neil Mueller and the Lansing Symphony Orchestra, Timothy Muffitt, music director*

# River of Time

concerto for trumpet and orchestra

David Biedenbender
piano reduction with Liz Ames

## 1. Becoming

**Pulsing, dreamily** ♩ = 88

**Solo Trumpet**

**Piano (reduction)**

*p swirling*

Ped.

(very lightly feather damper pedal *ad lib.*, but mostly sustained through m. 39)

5

*p gently, floating*

3

(Ped.)

9

11

(Ped.)

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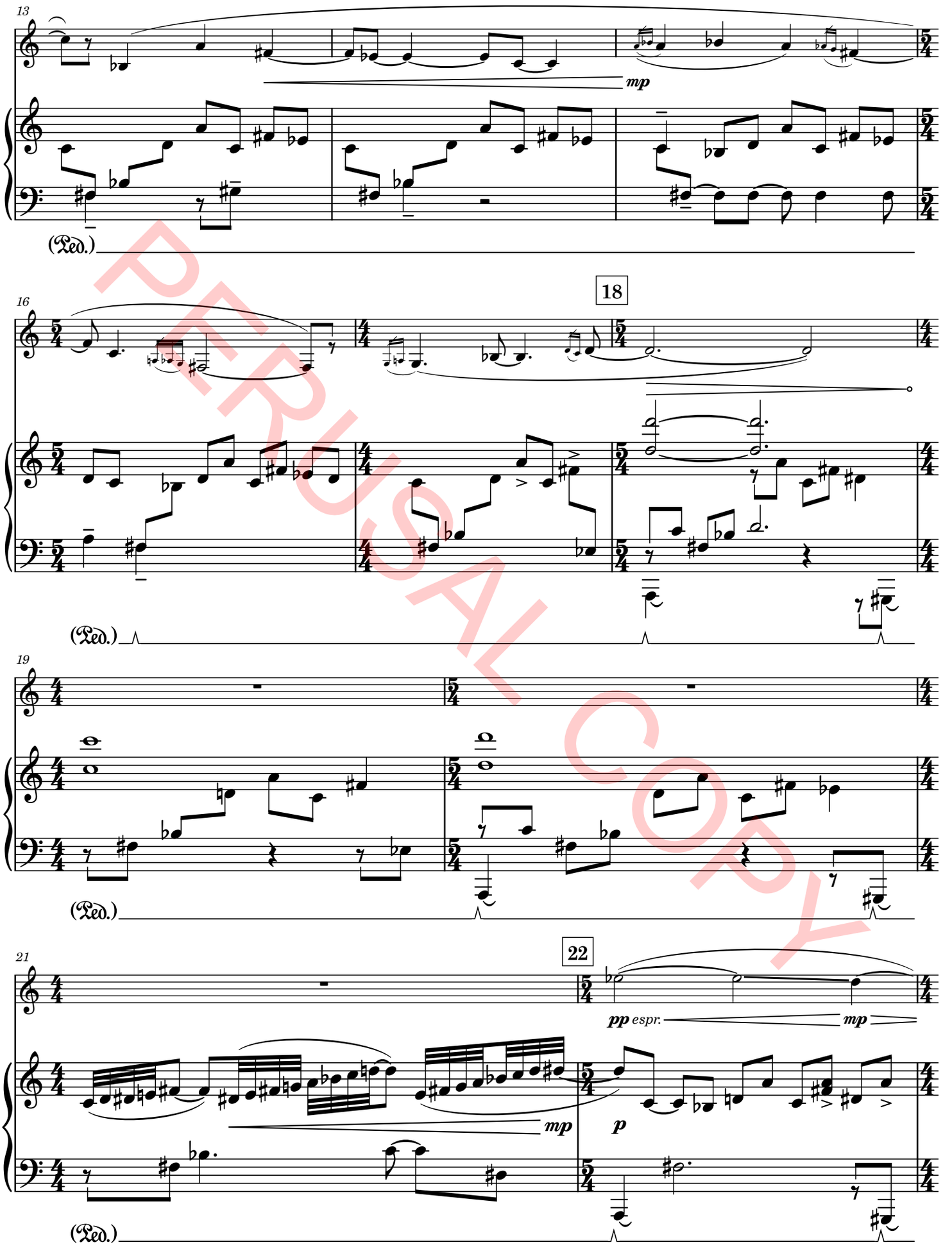


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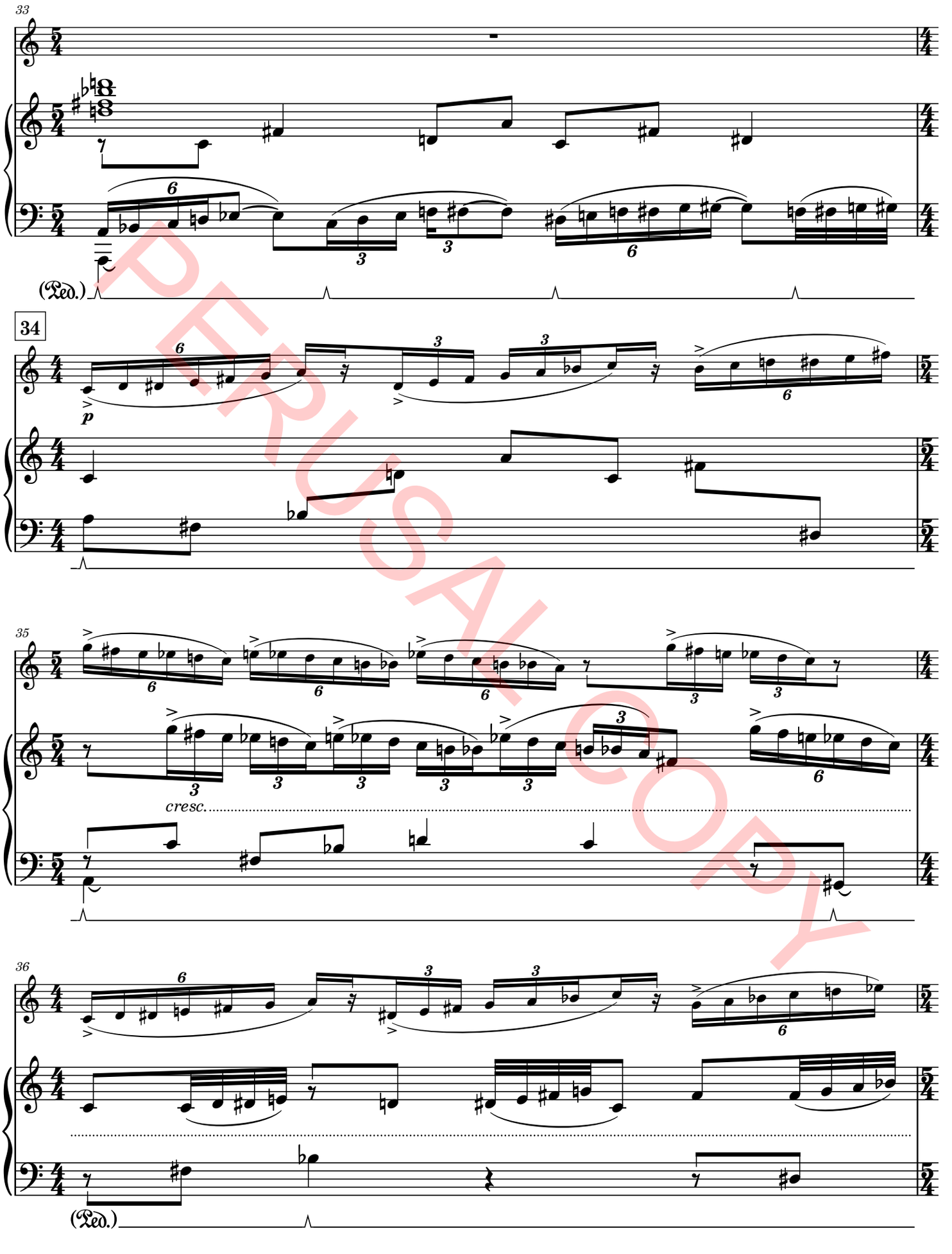


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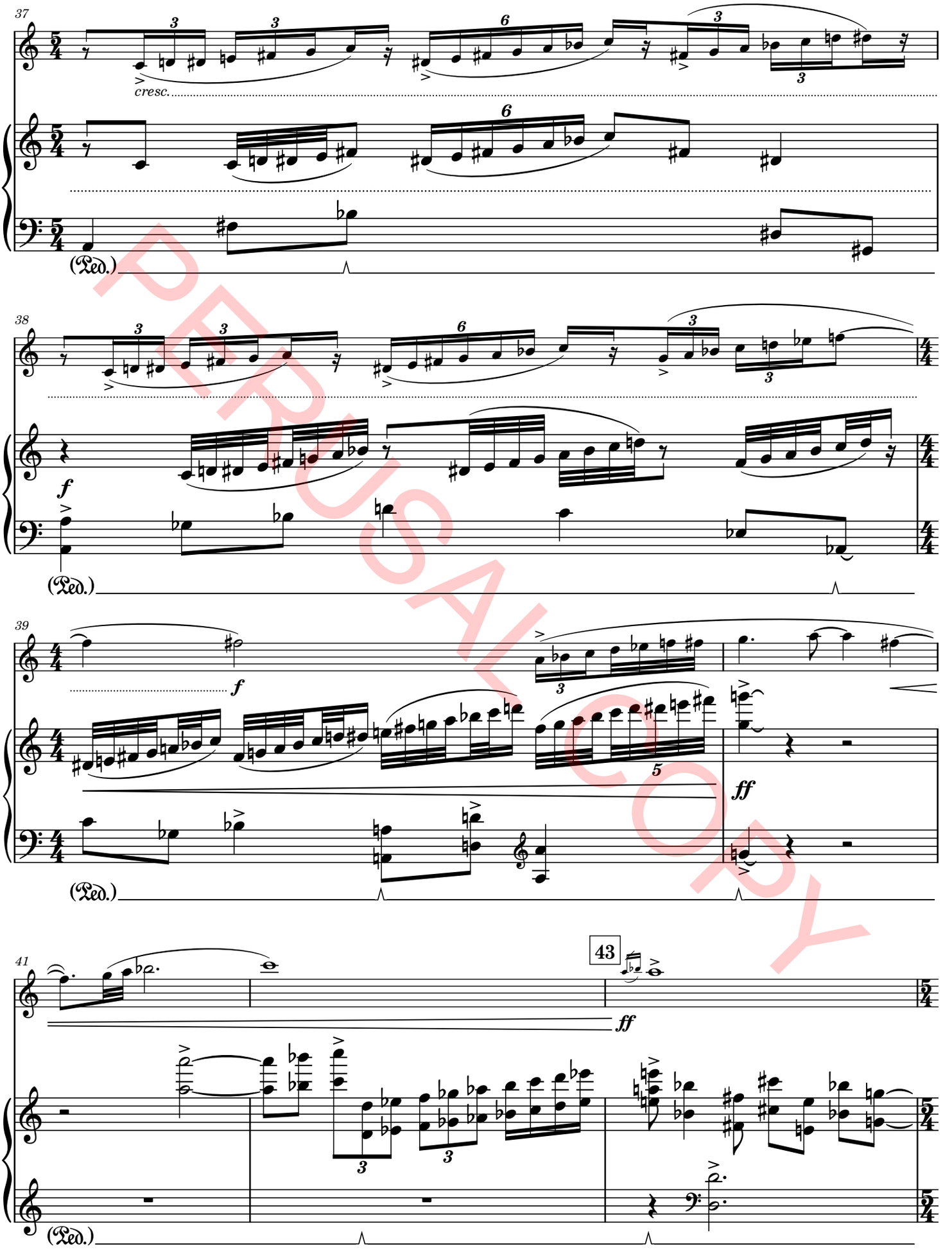


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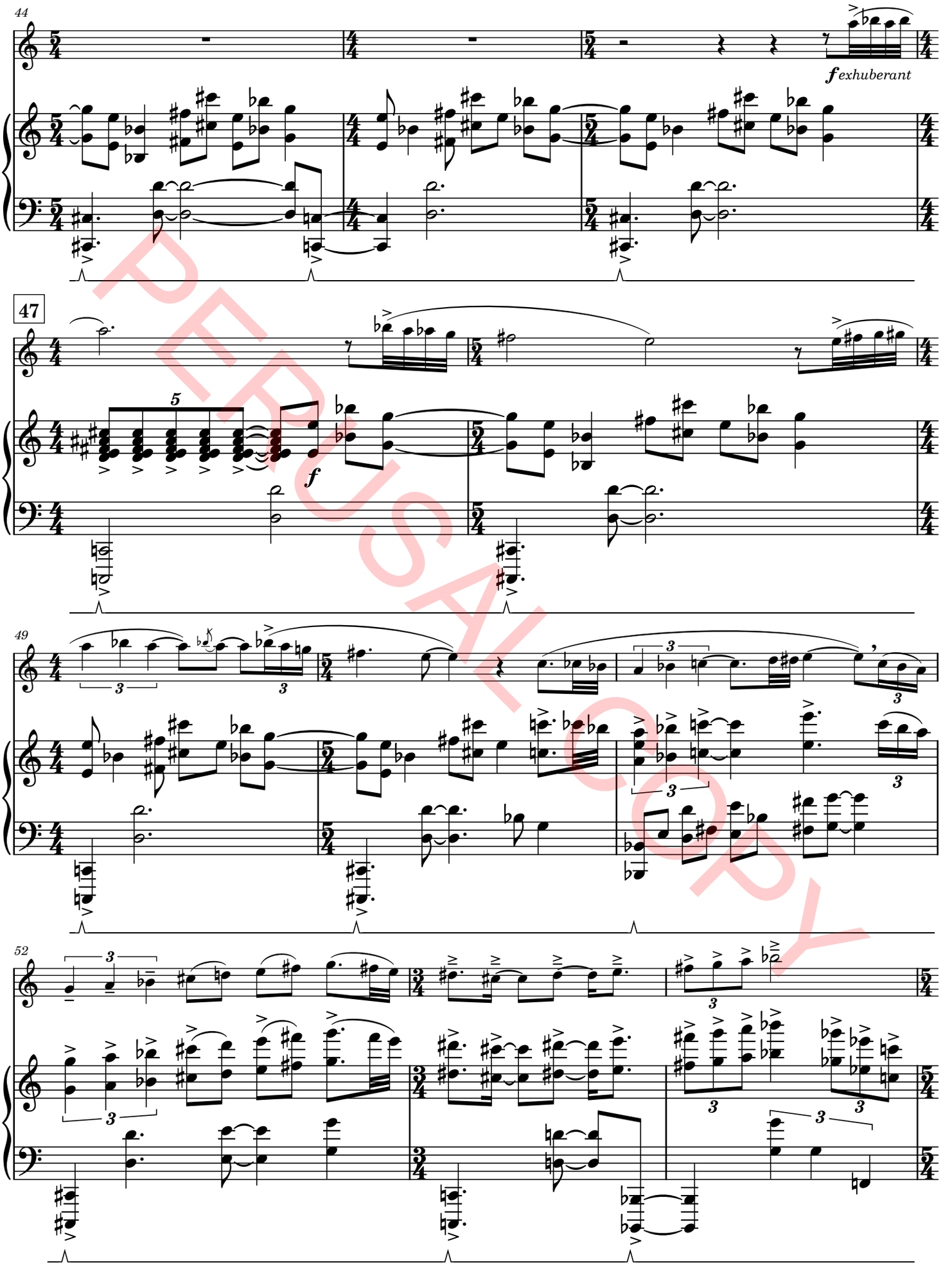


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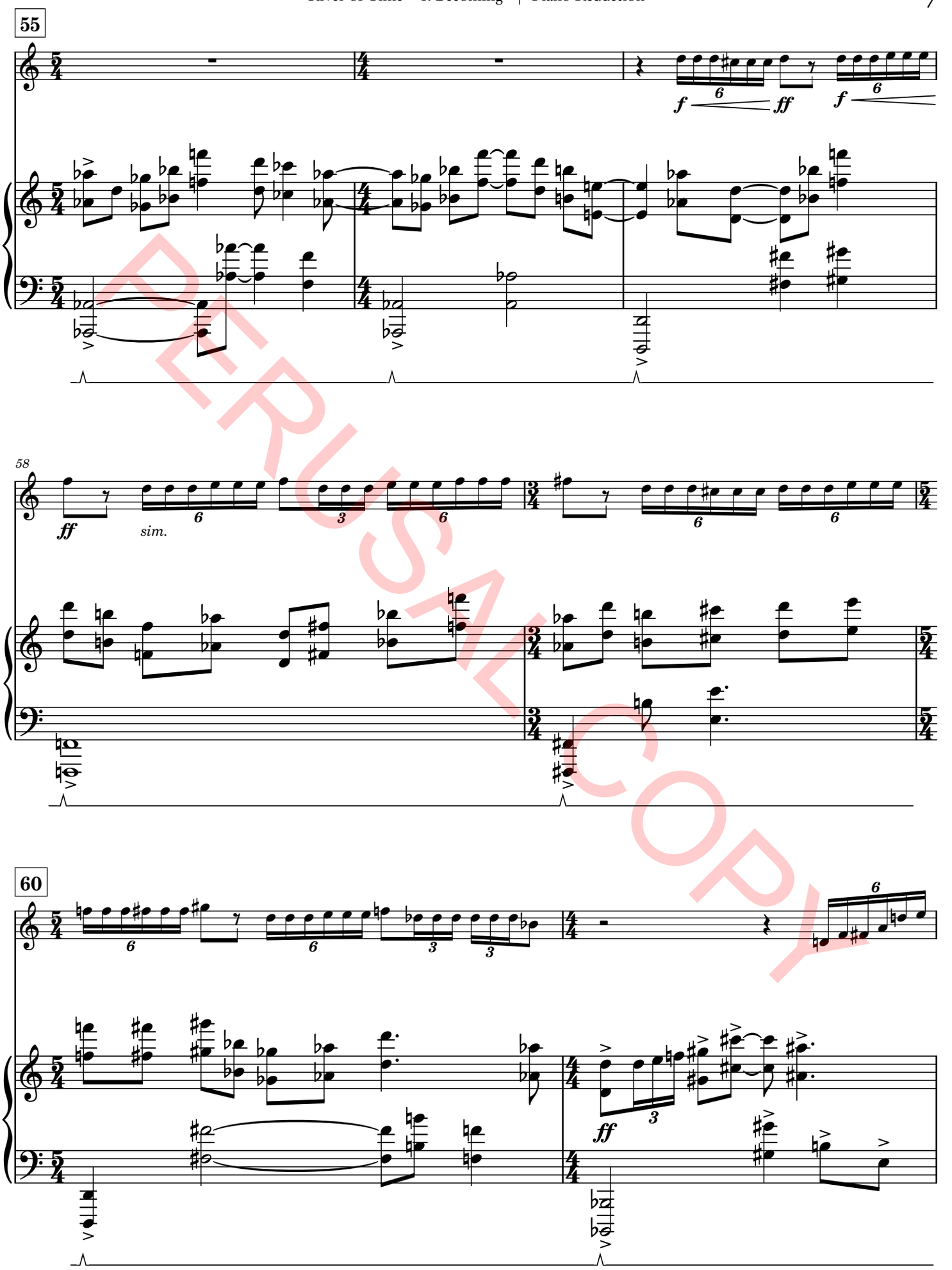


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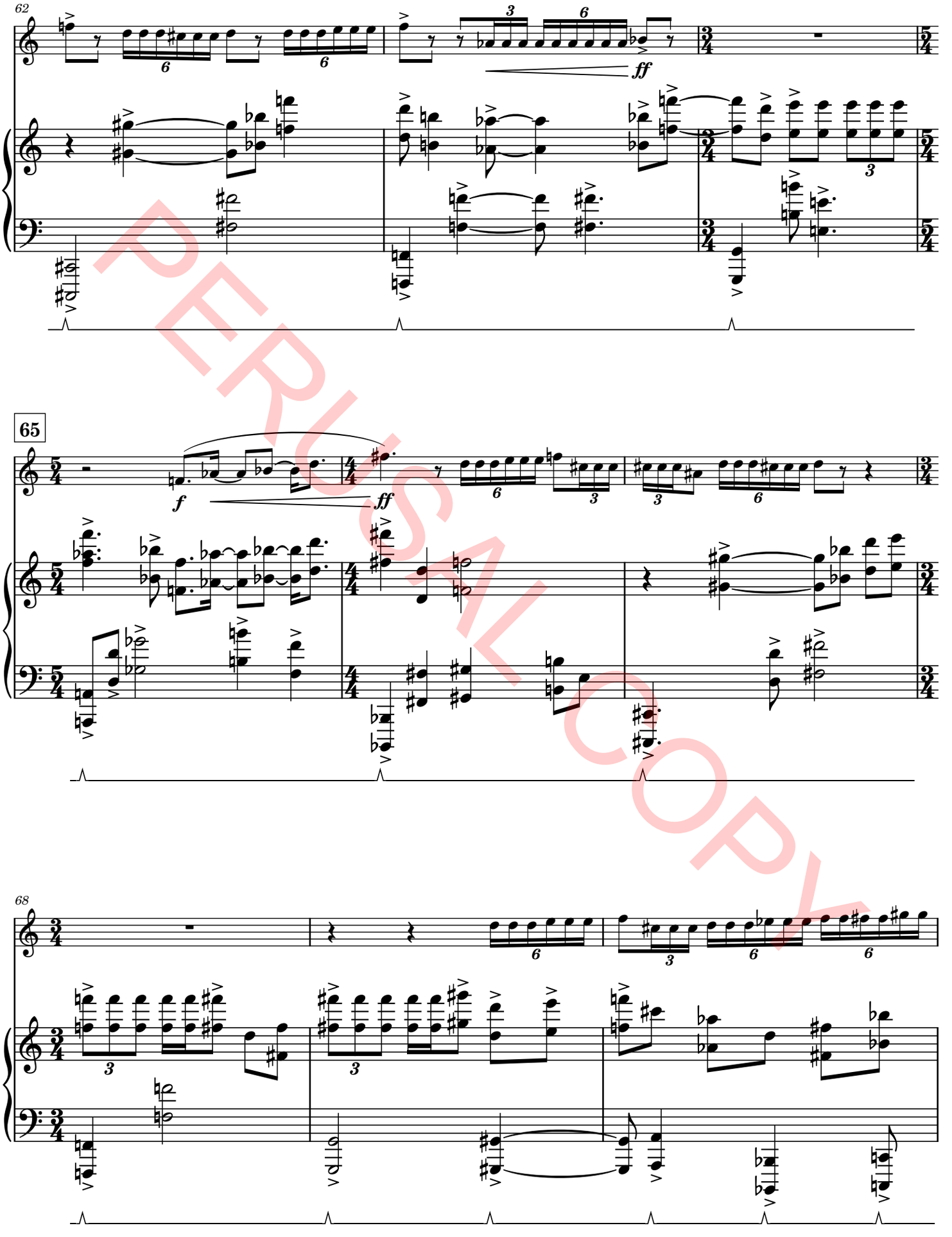


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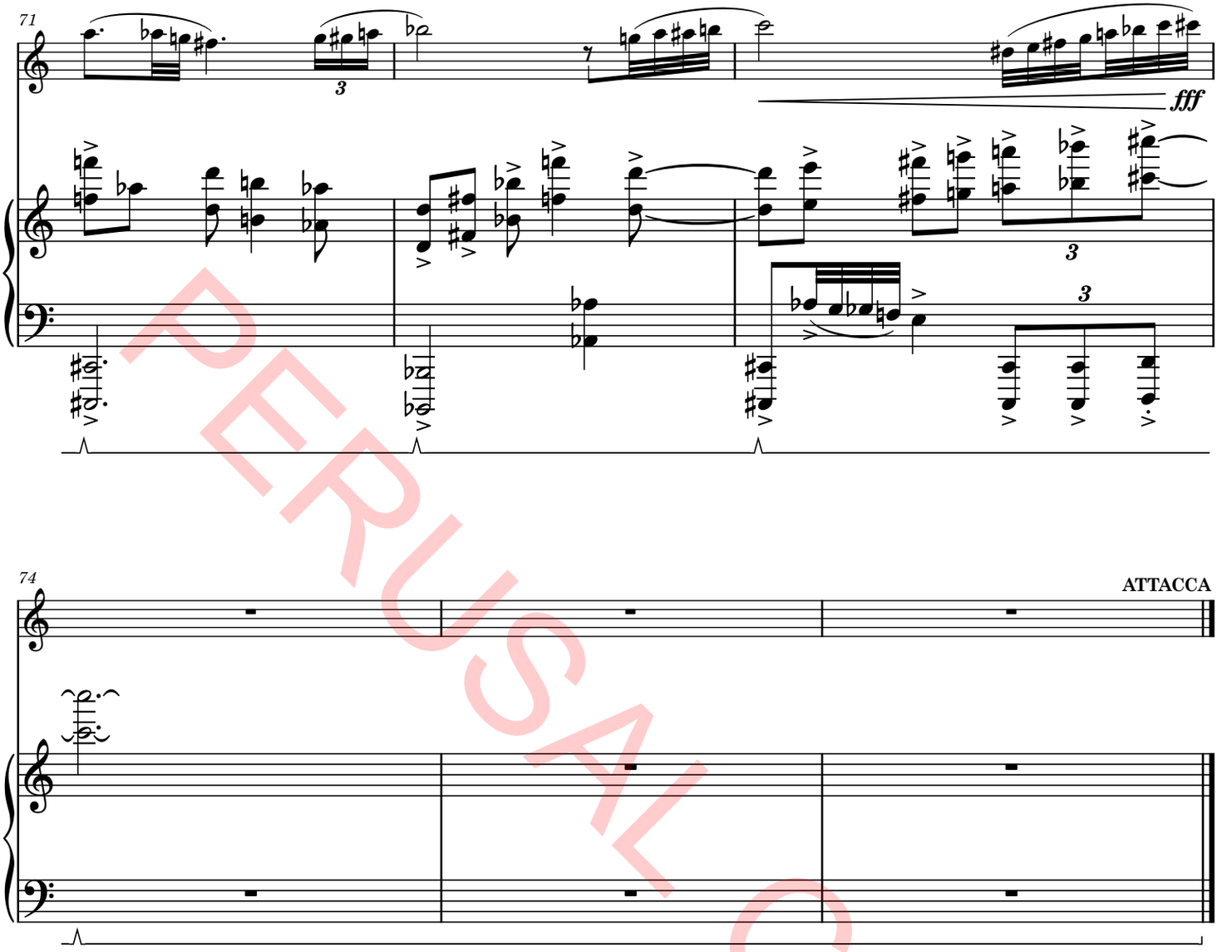


**Extra measures of resonance and the first measure of mvt. 2 included to match orchestra and band versions. Shorten duration of this pause as needed/appropriate in performance.**

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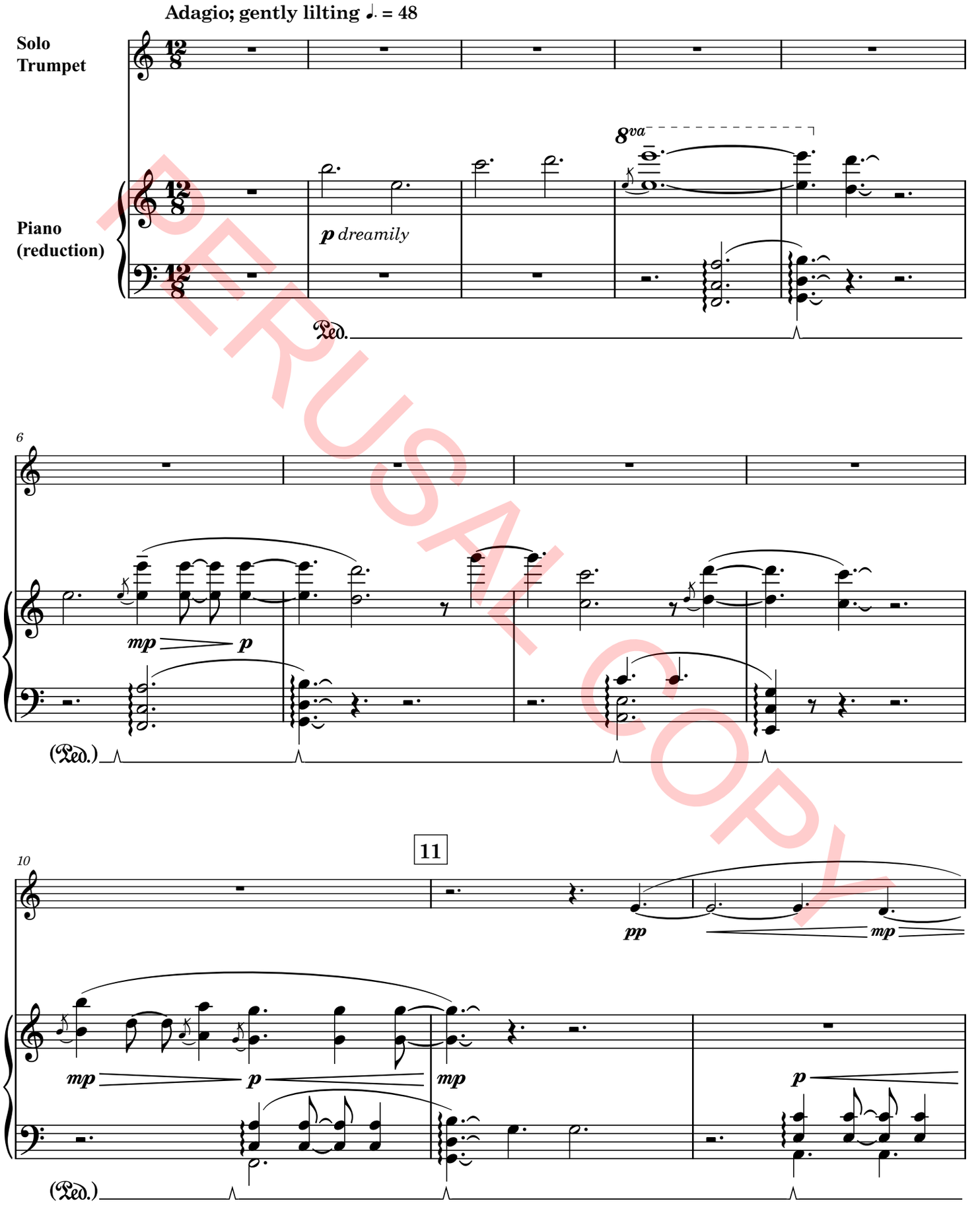
# 2. Flowing

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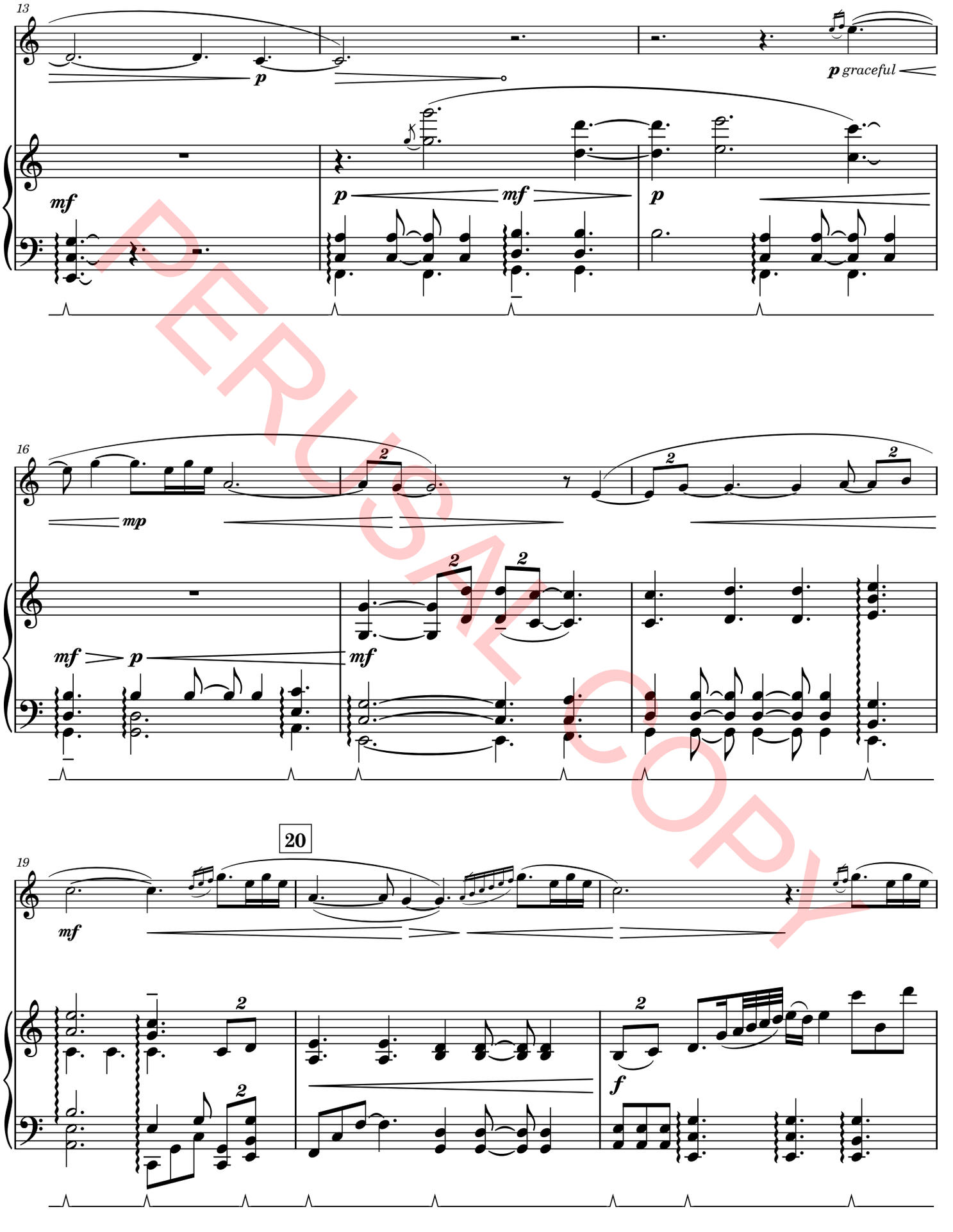


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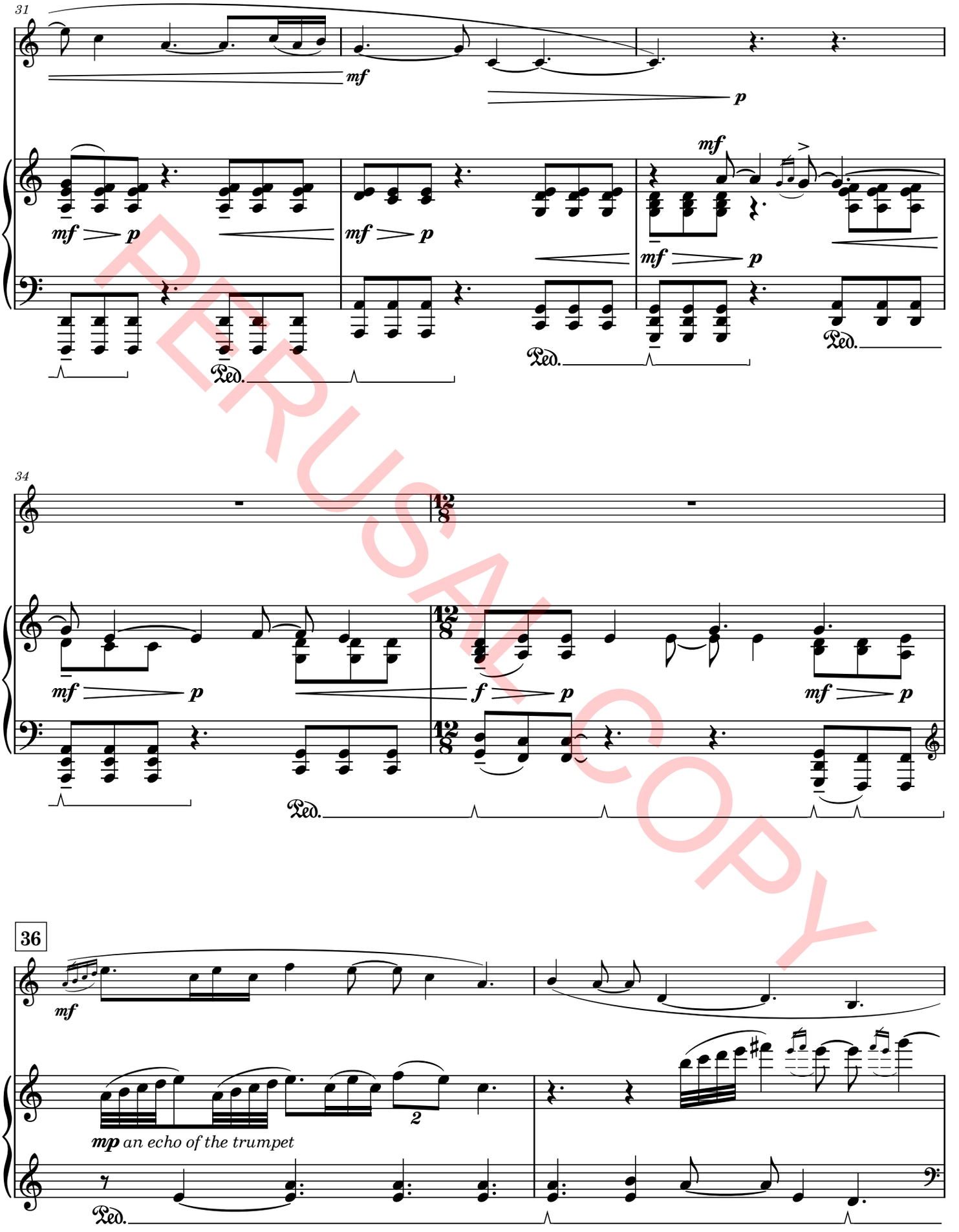


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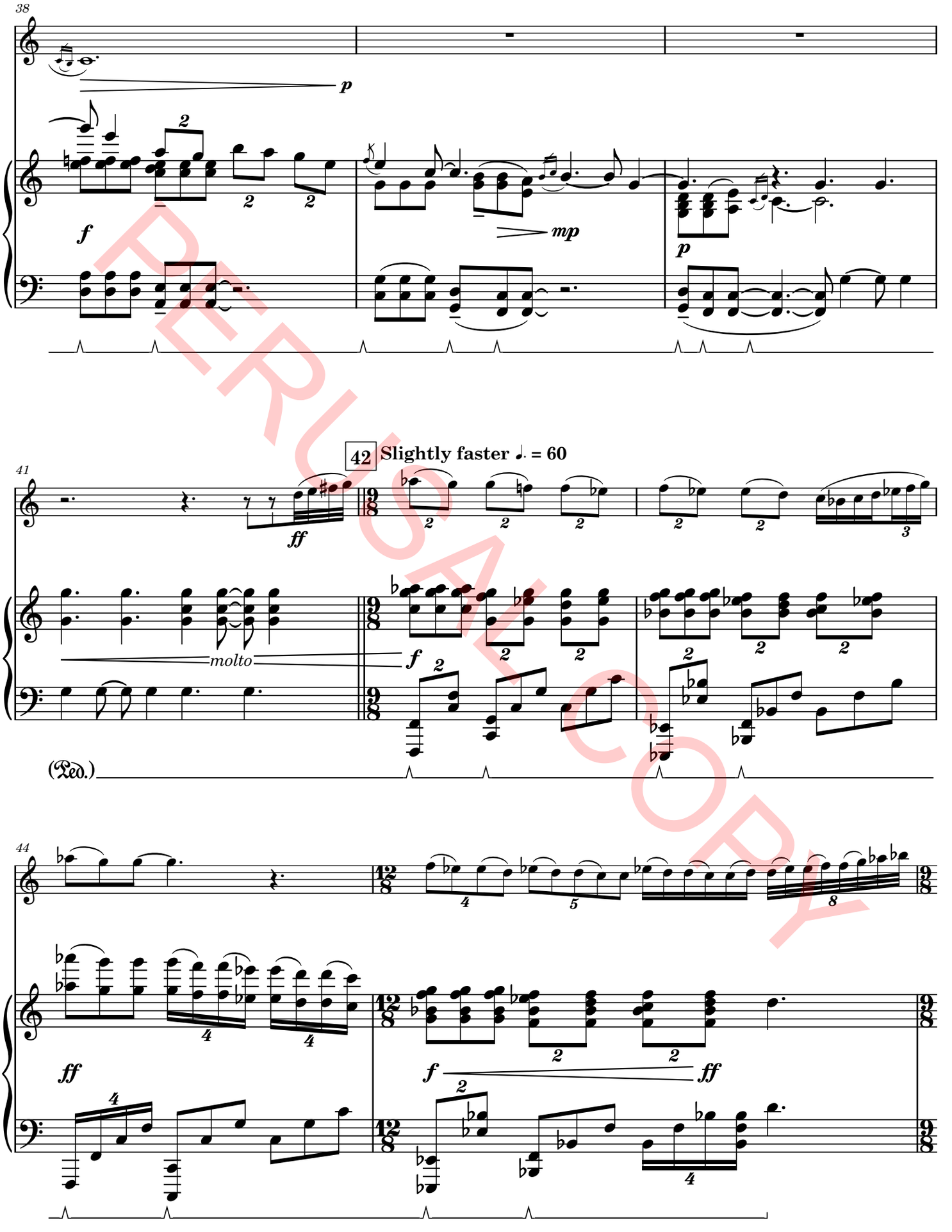


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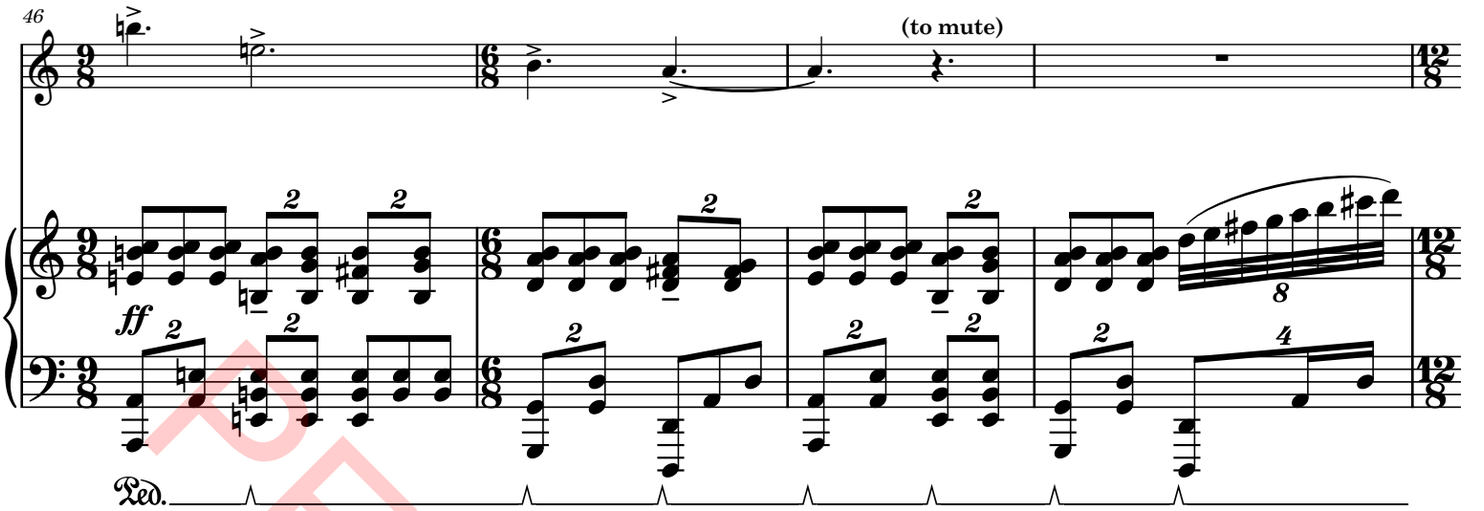


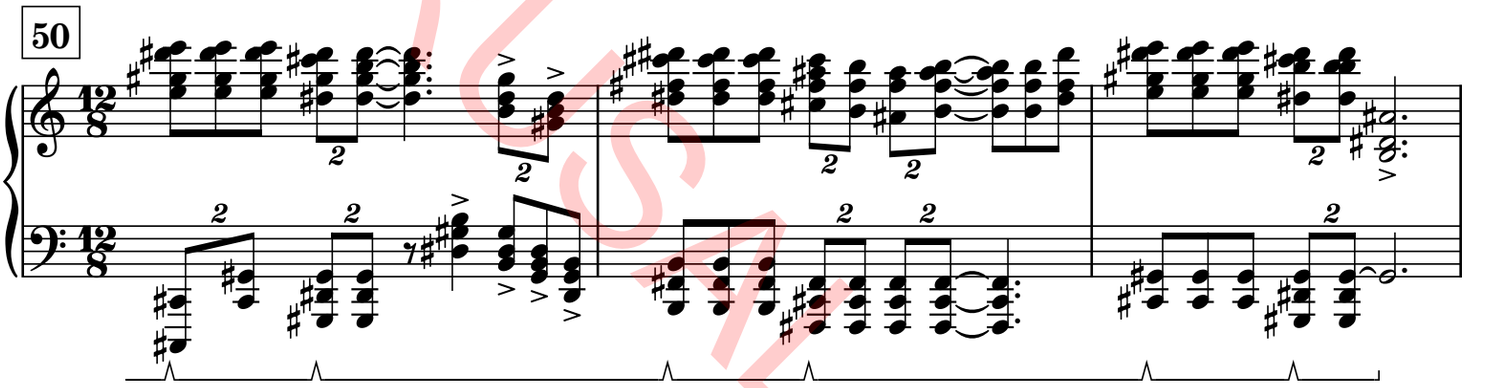


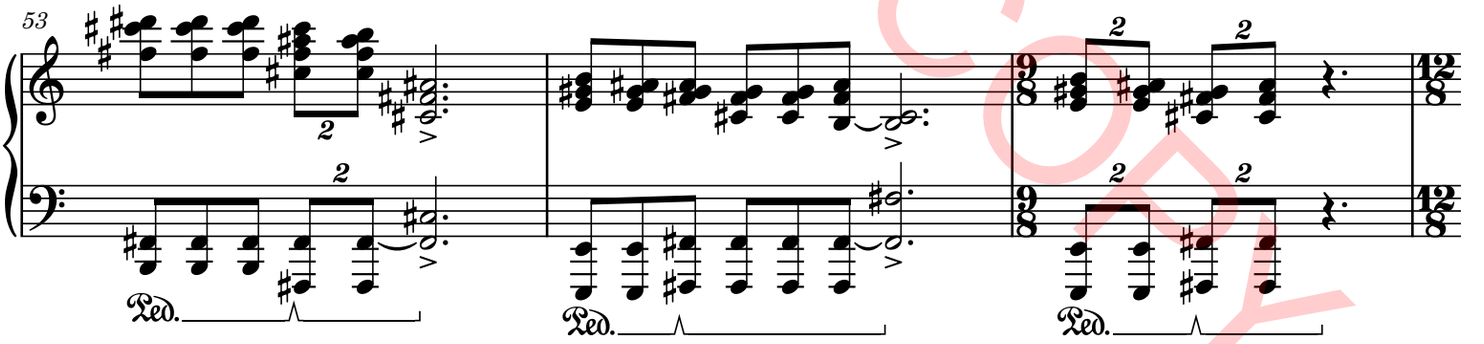


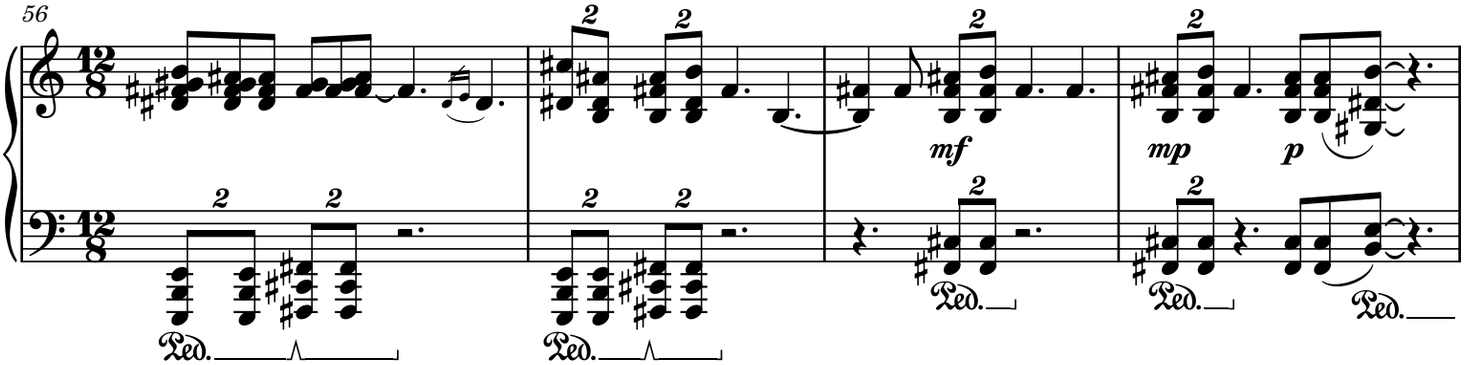


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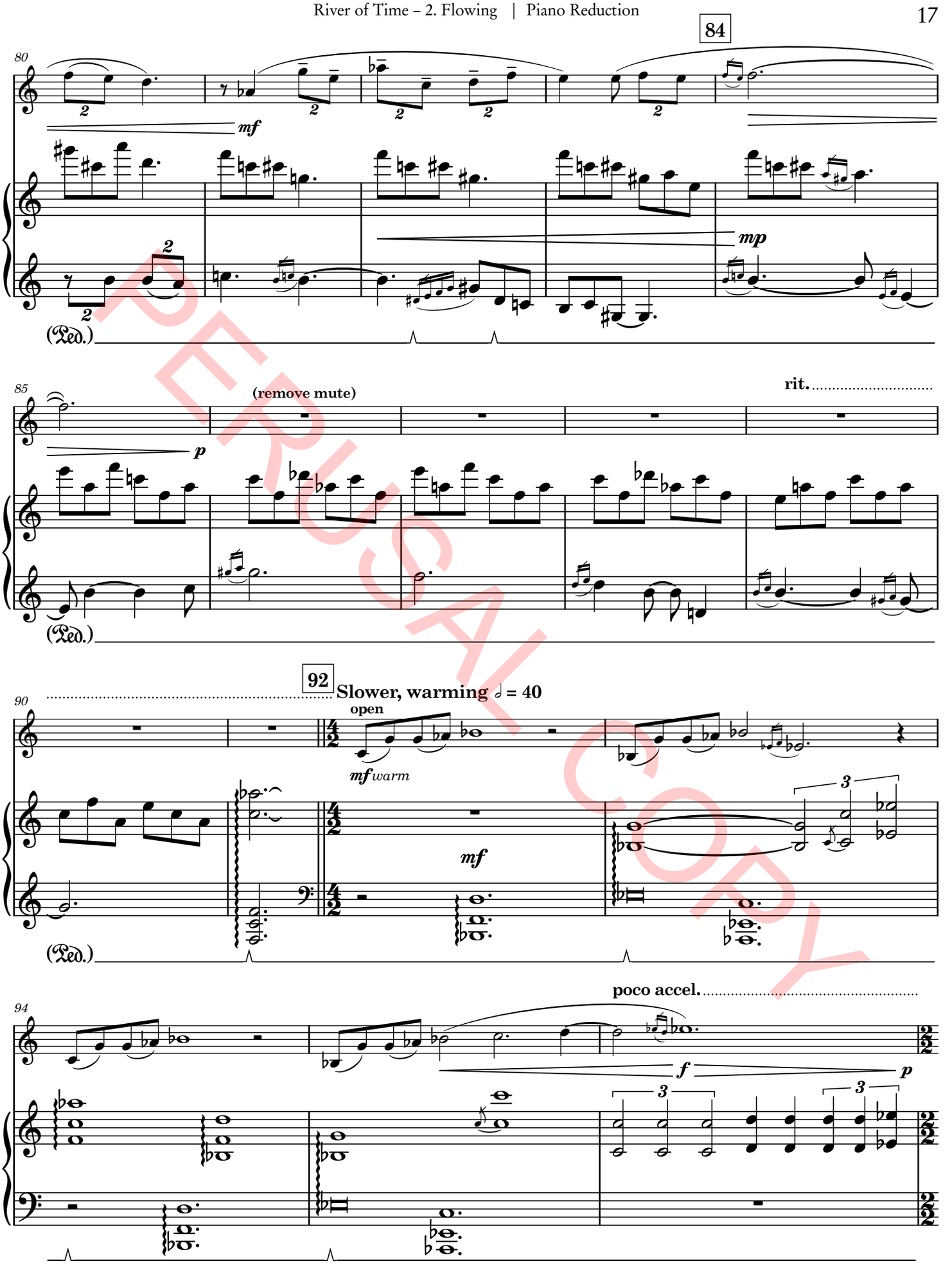


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97 **A little faster** ♩ = 48

*mf espr.*

101

8va

104

*f*

108

(♪ = ♪)

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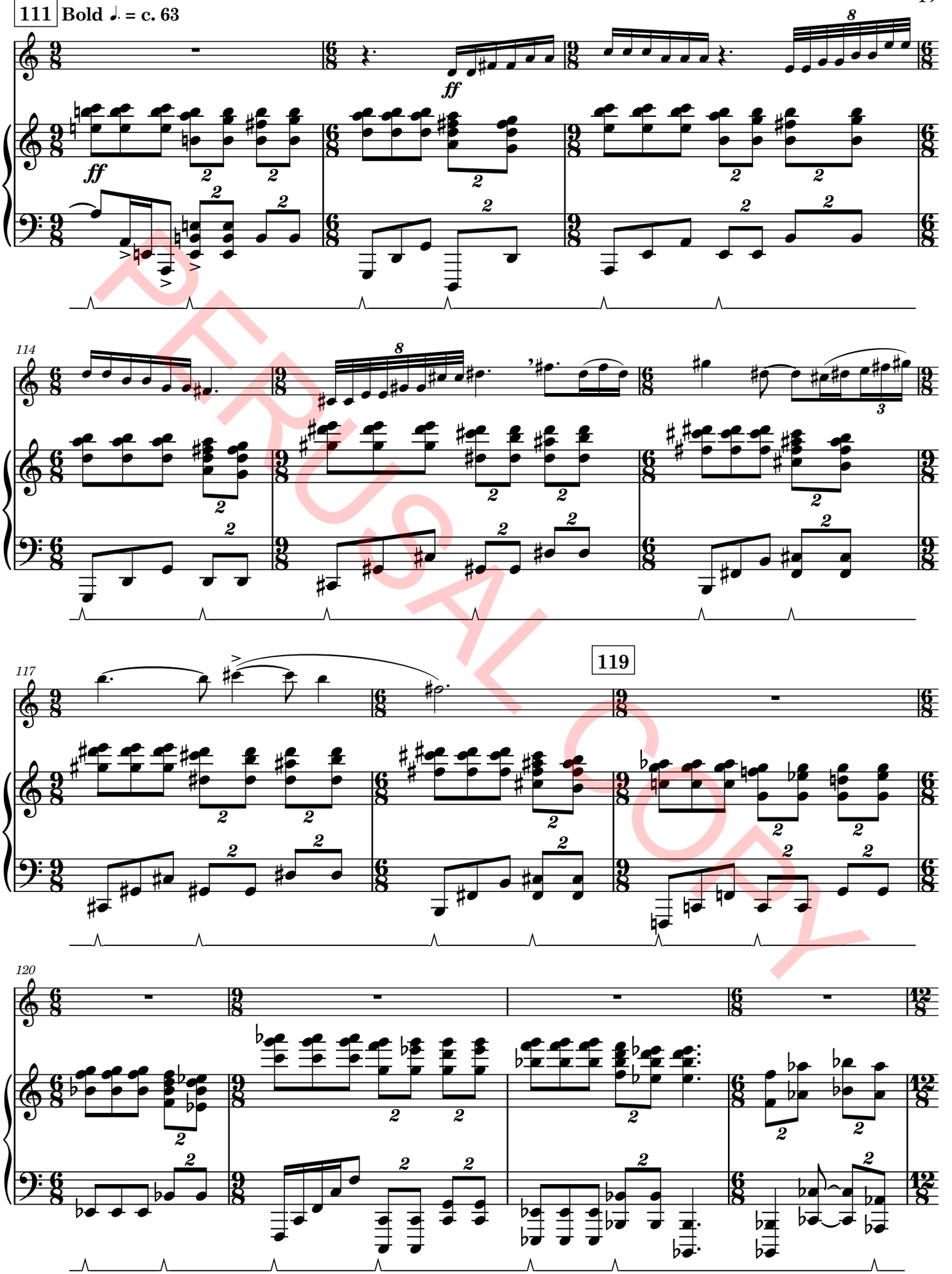


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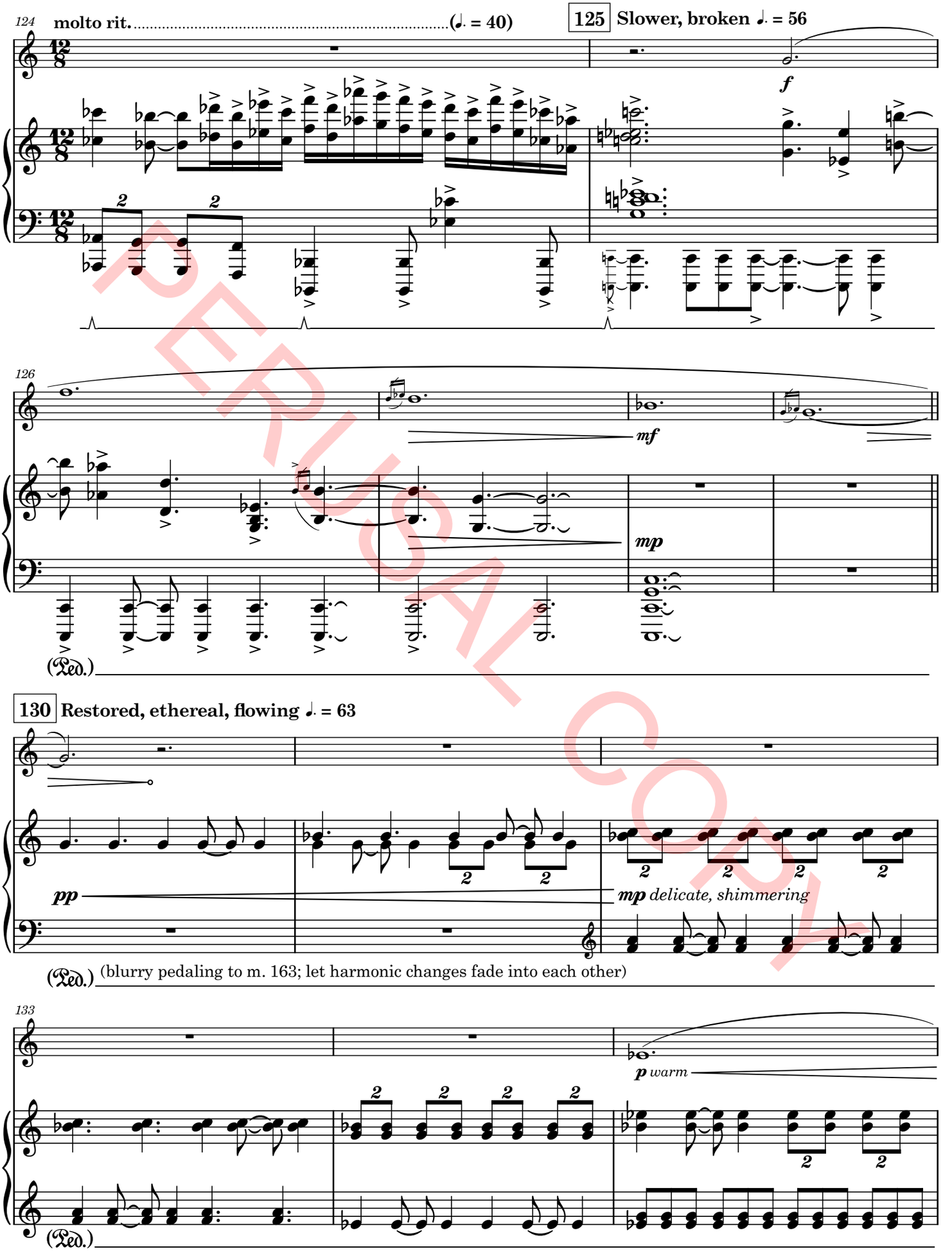


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147

stretch time a little

pp mf pp

(Ped.)

(♩= ♪) 151 Faster ♩. = 84

150

mf pp mf

(Ped.)

153

(mf)

pp mf pp

(Ped.)

156

mf pp

(Ped.)

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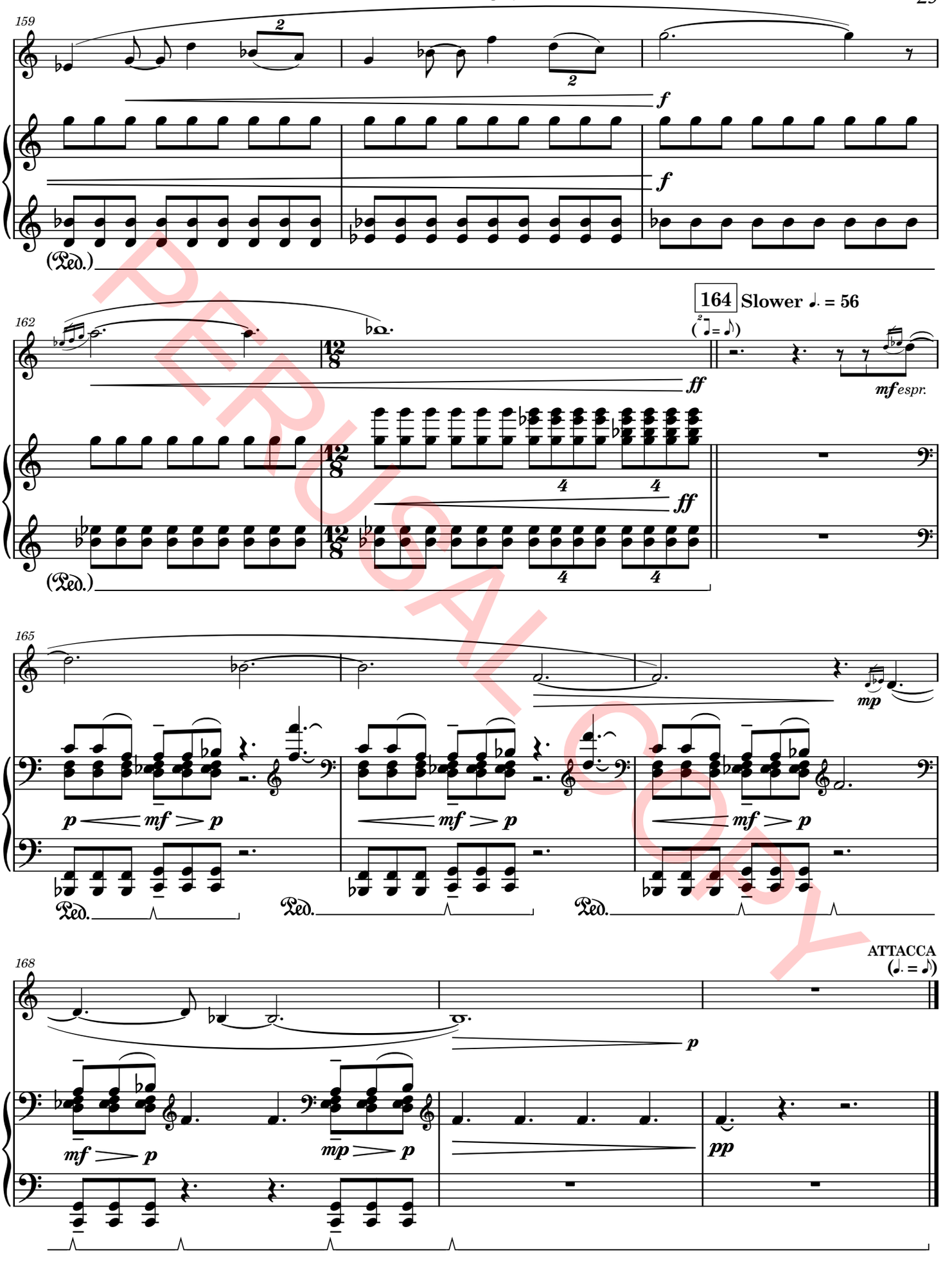


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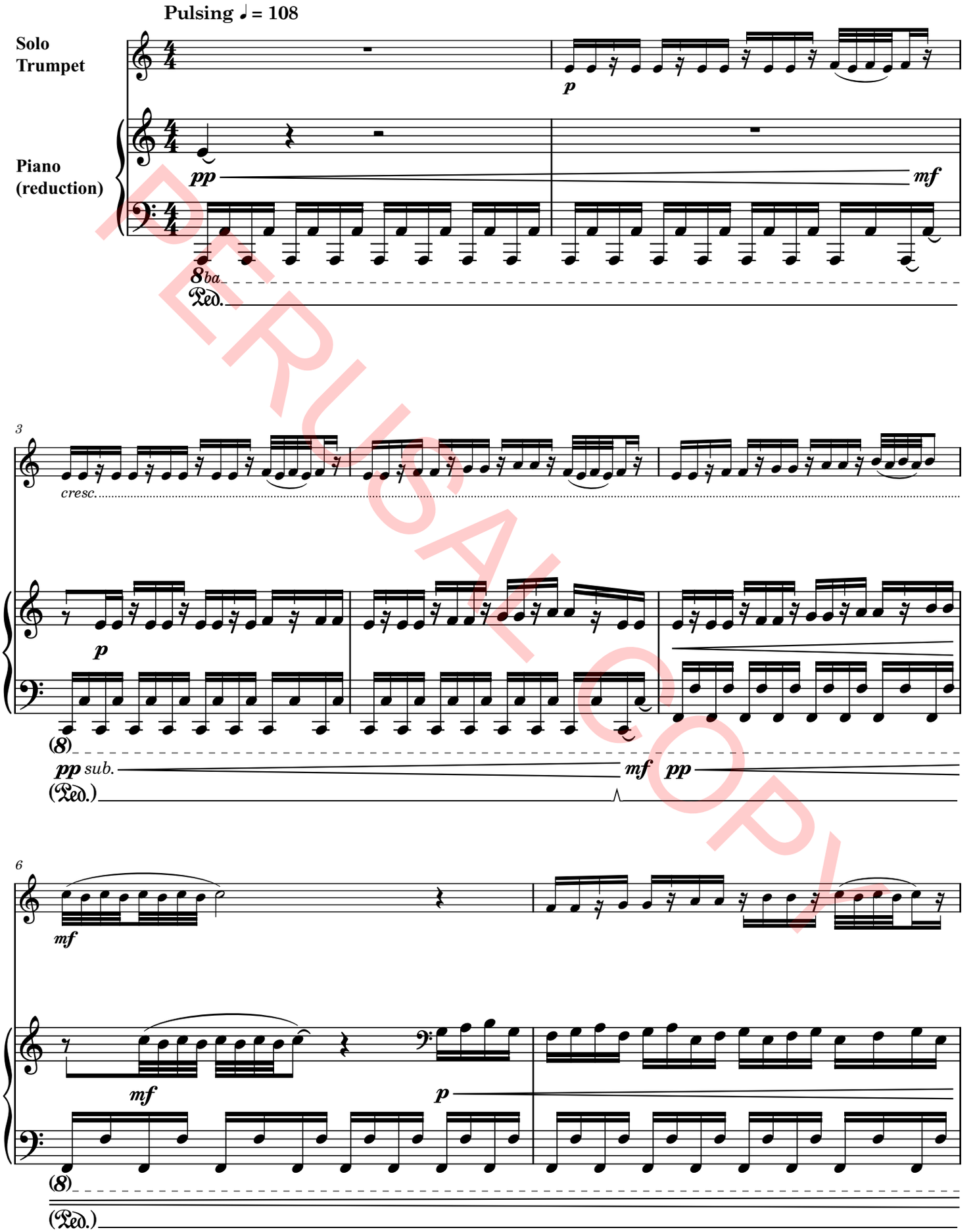
# 3. Crossing

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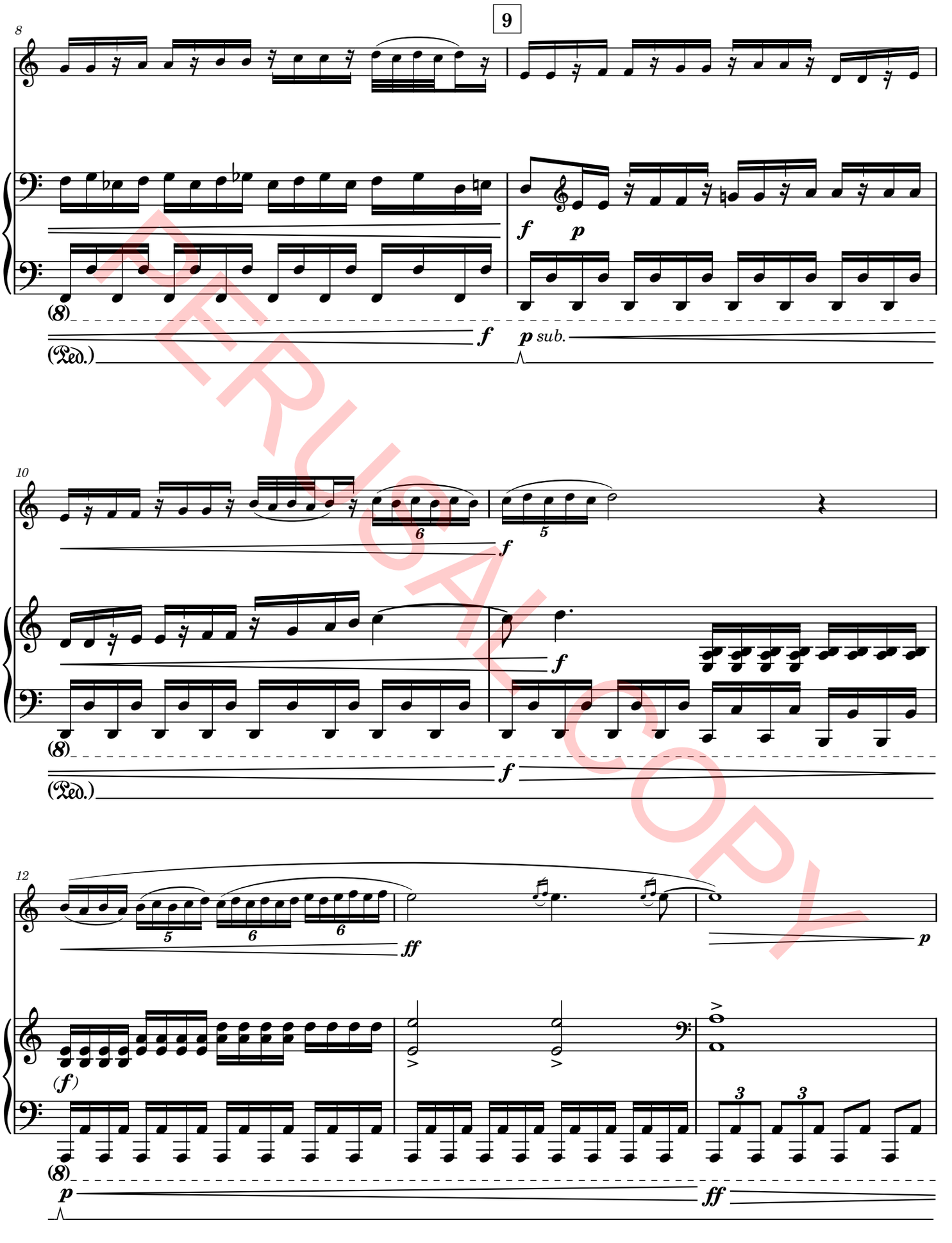


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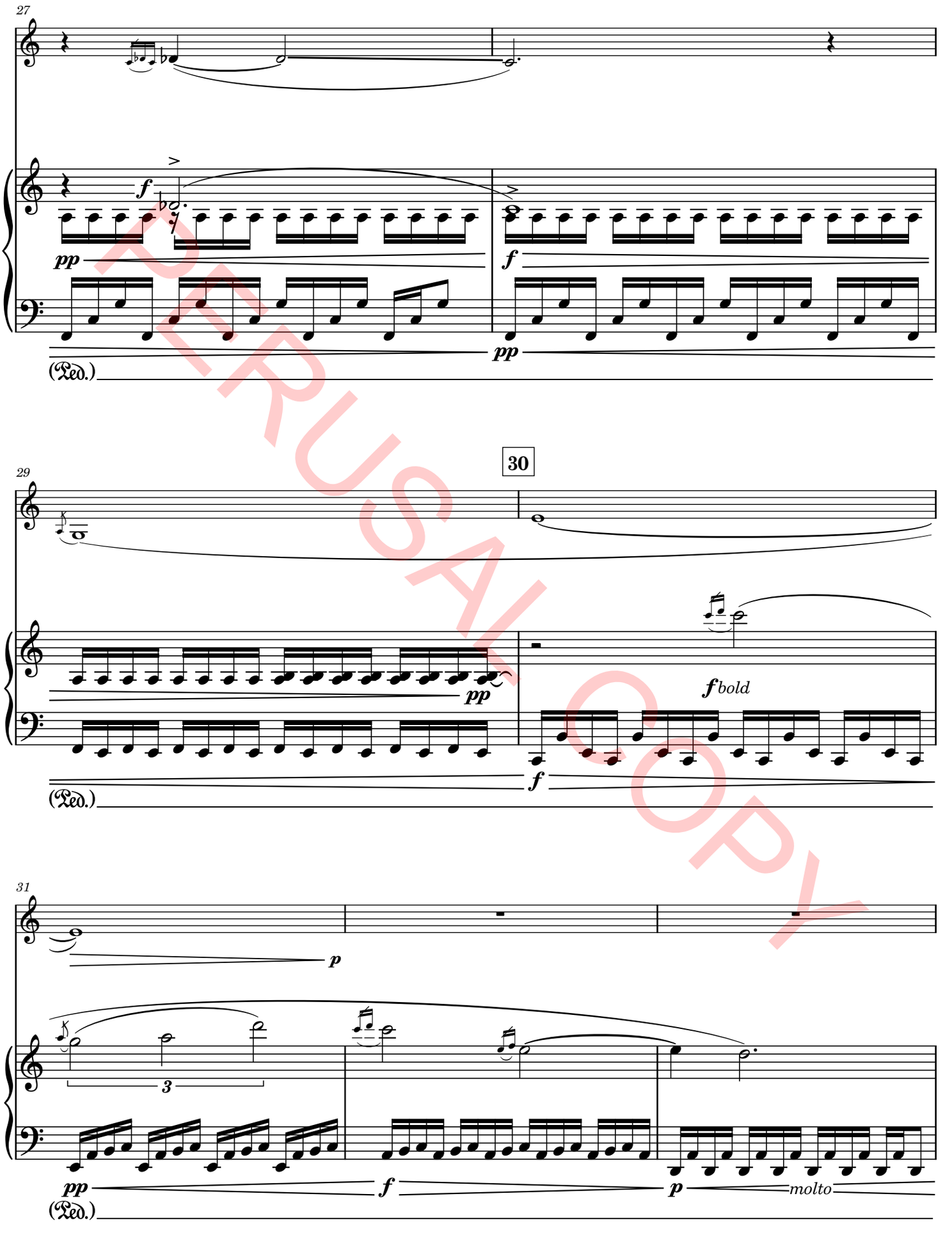


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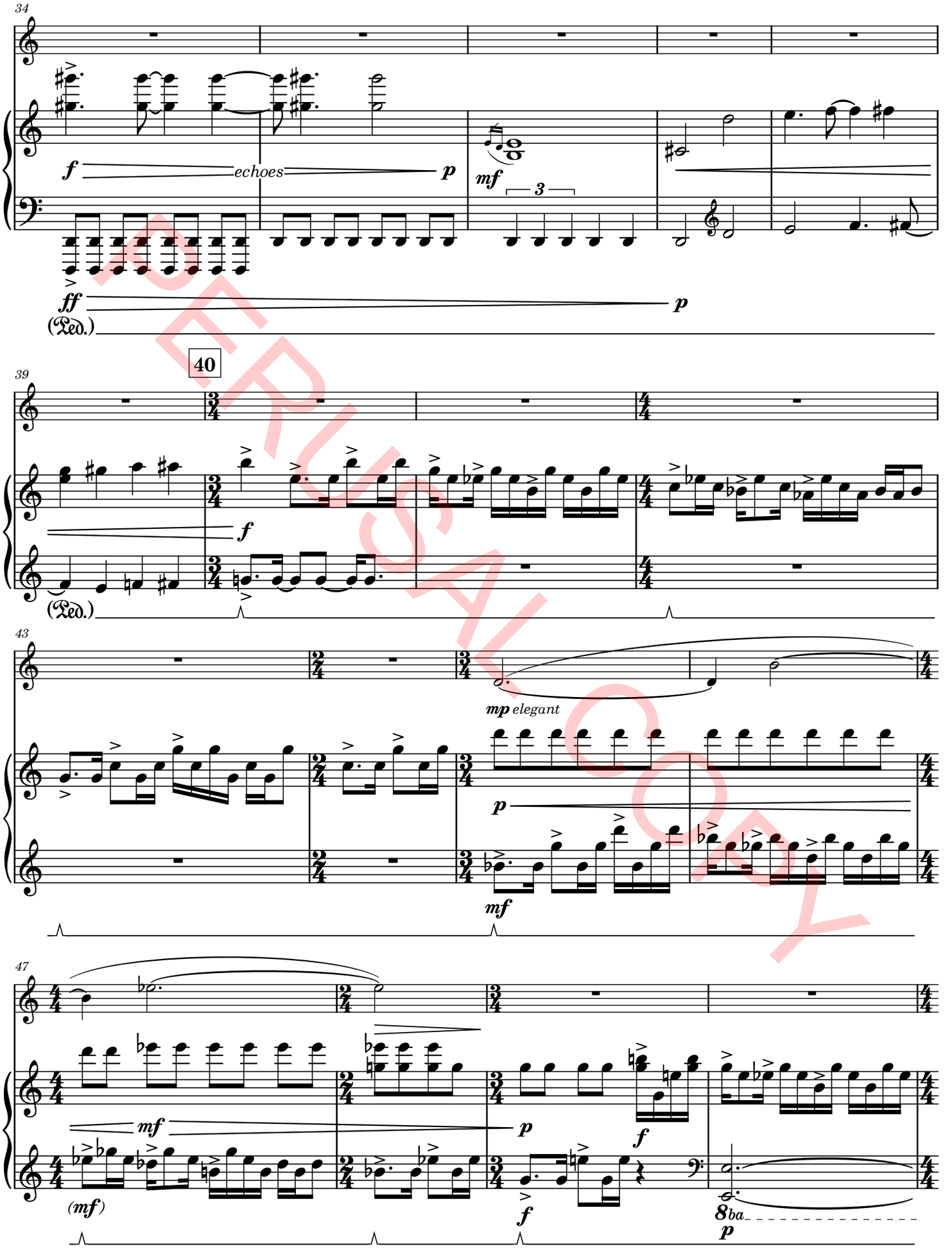


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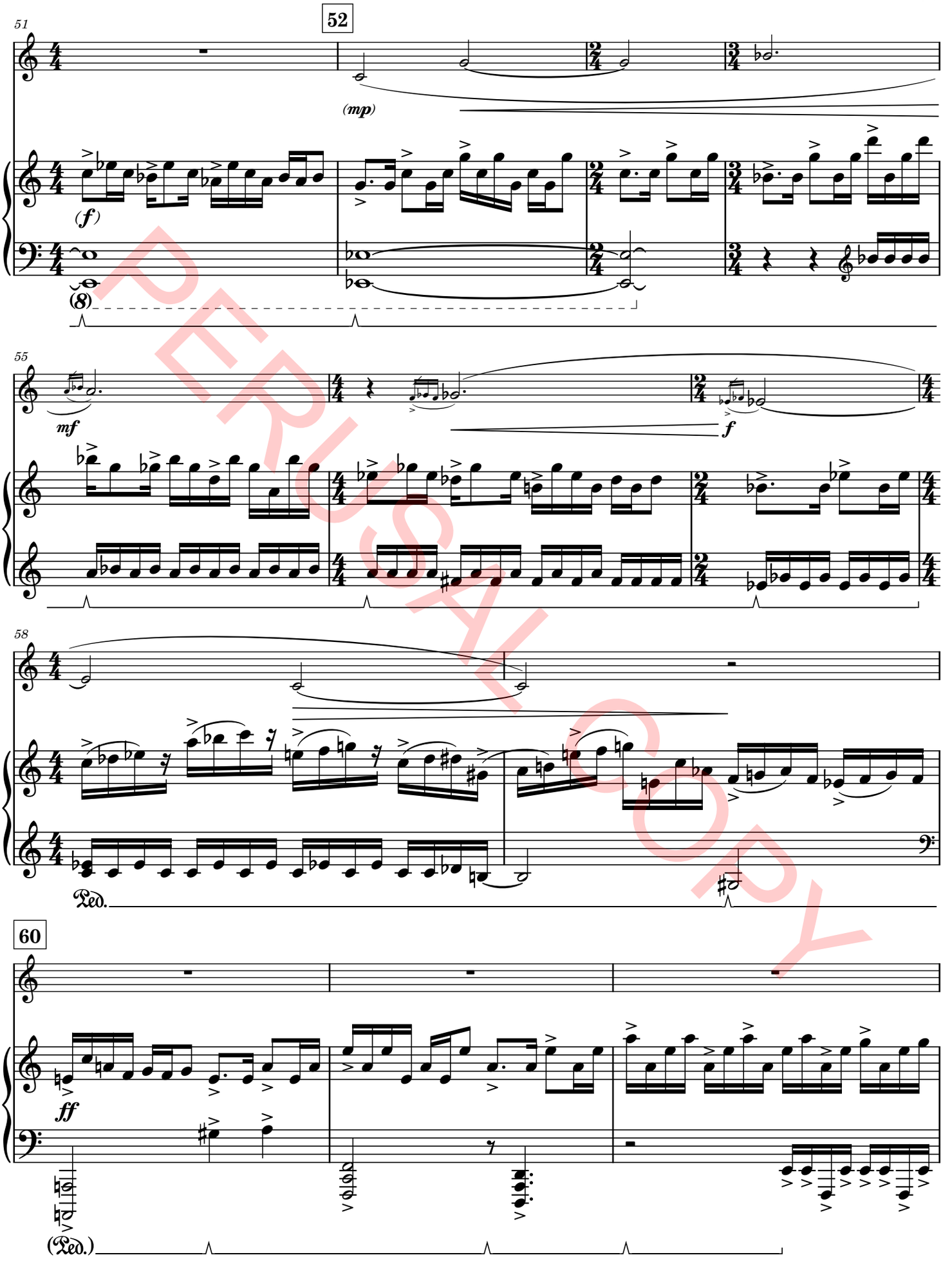


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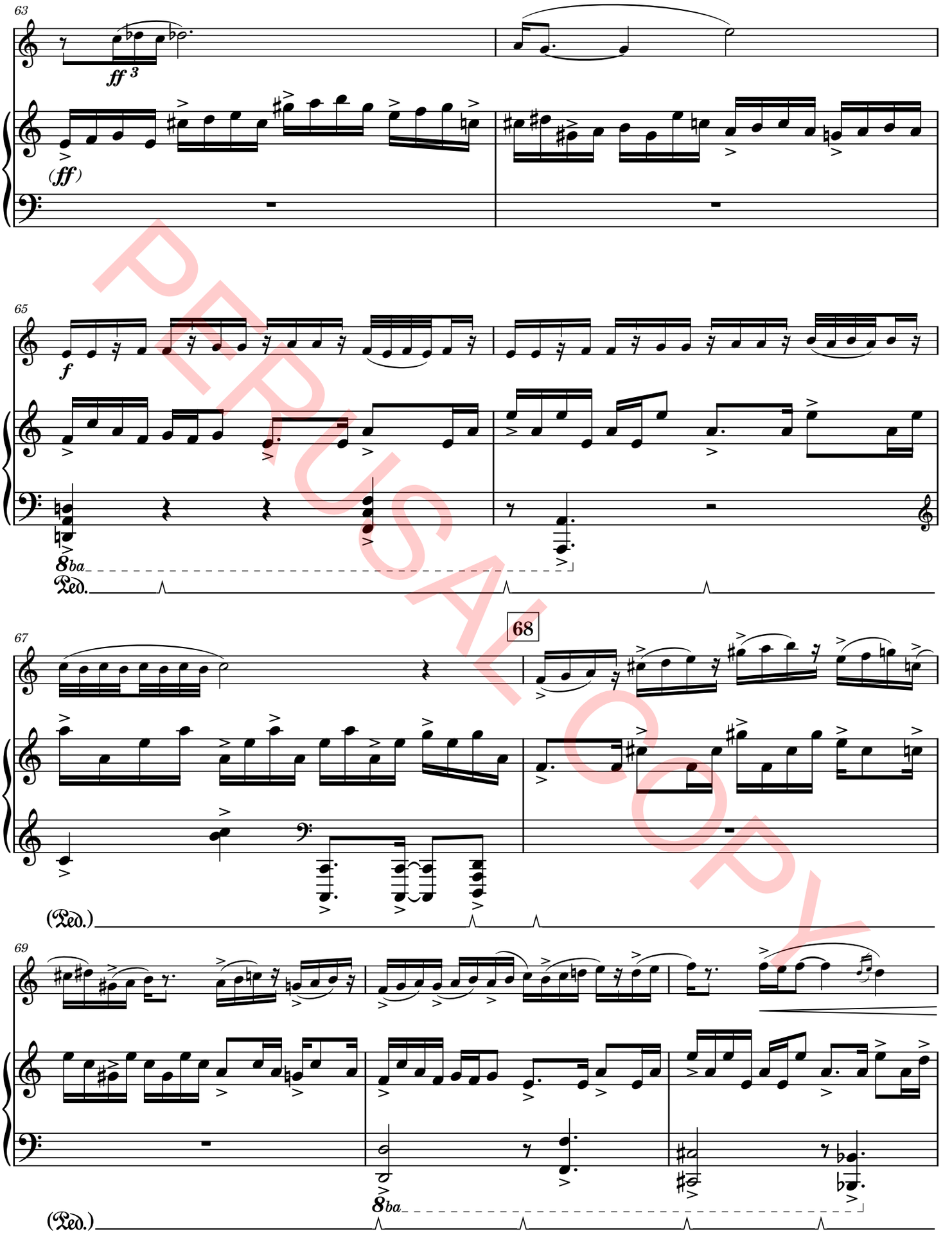


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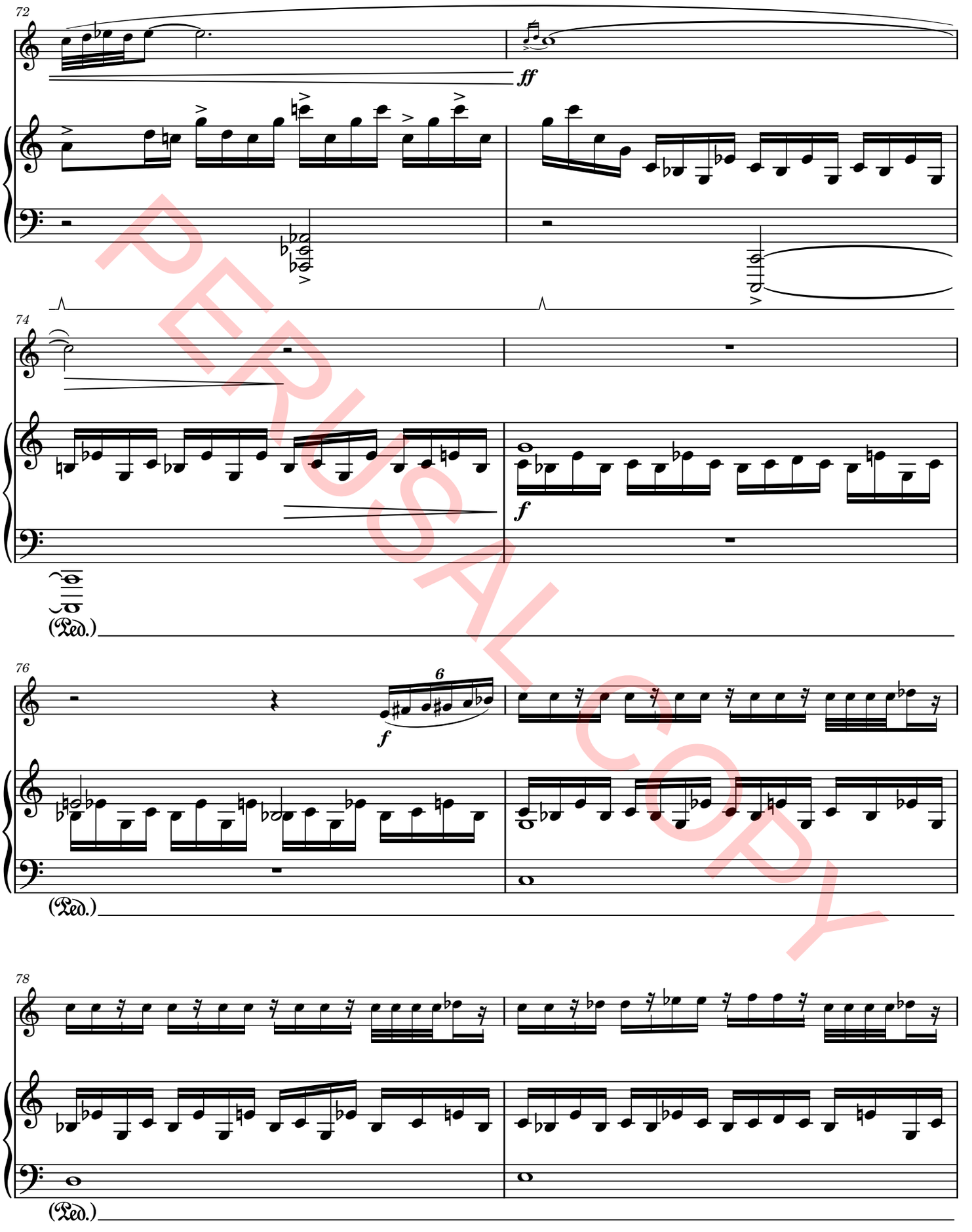


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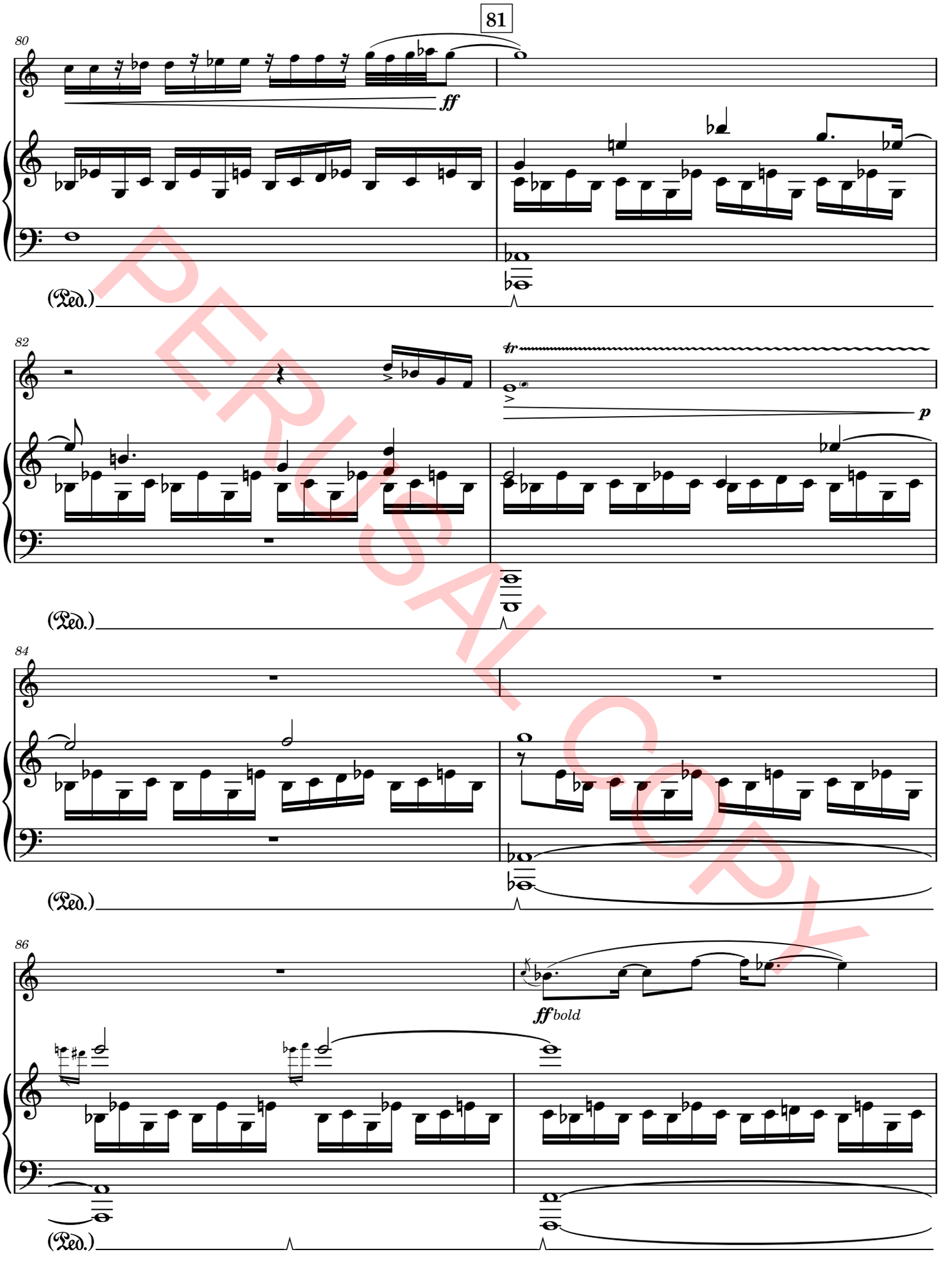


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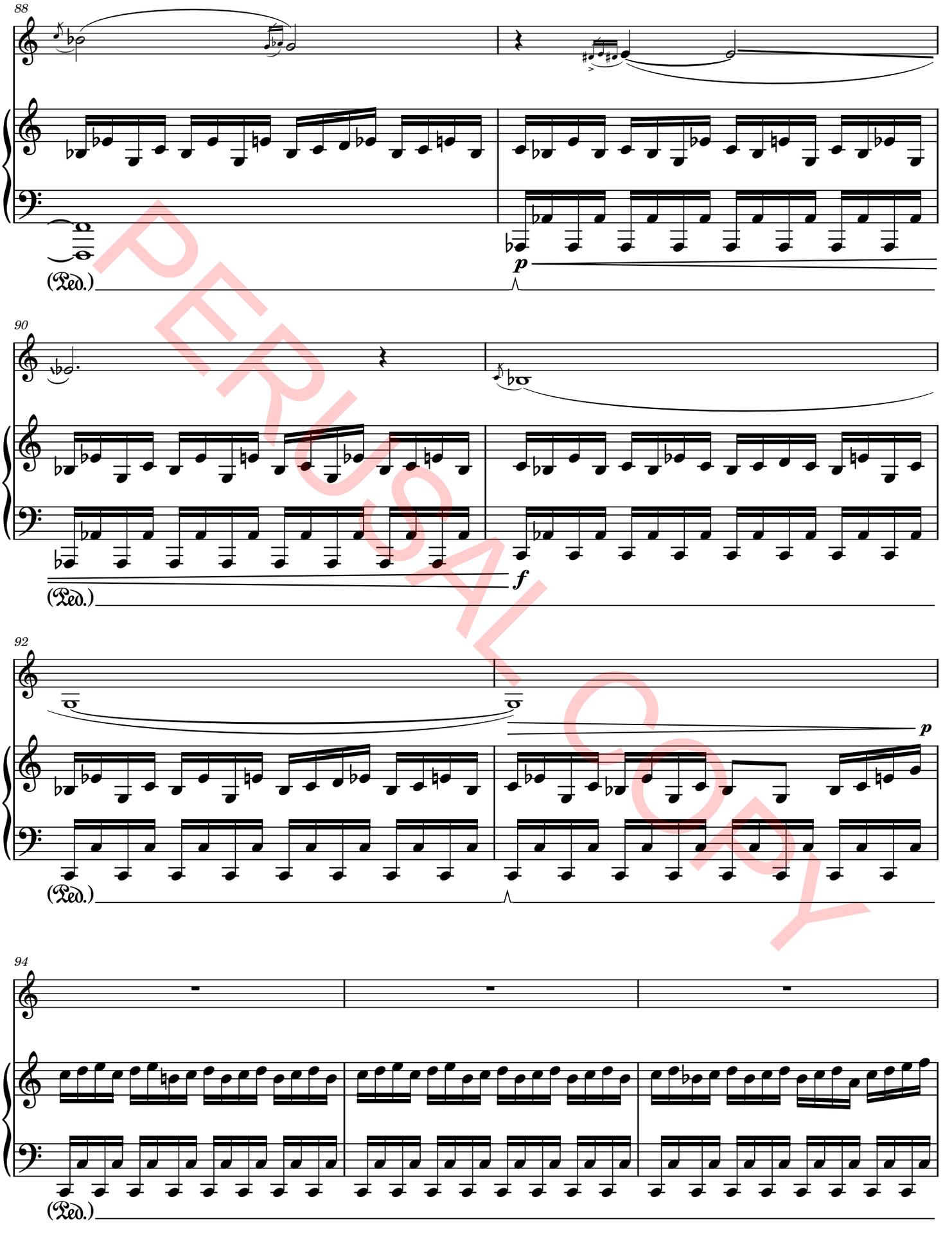


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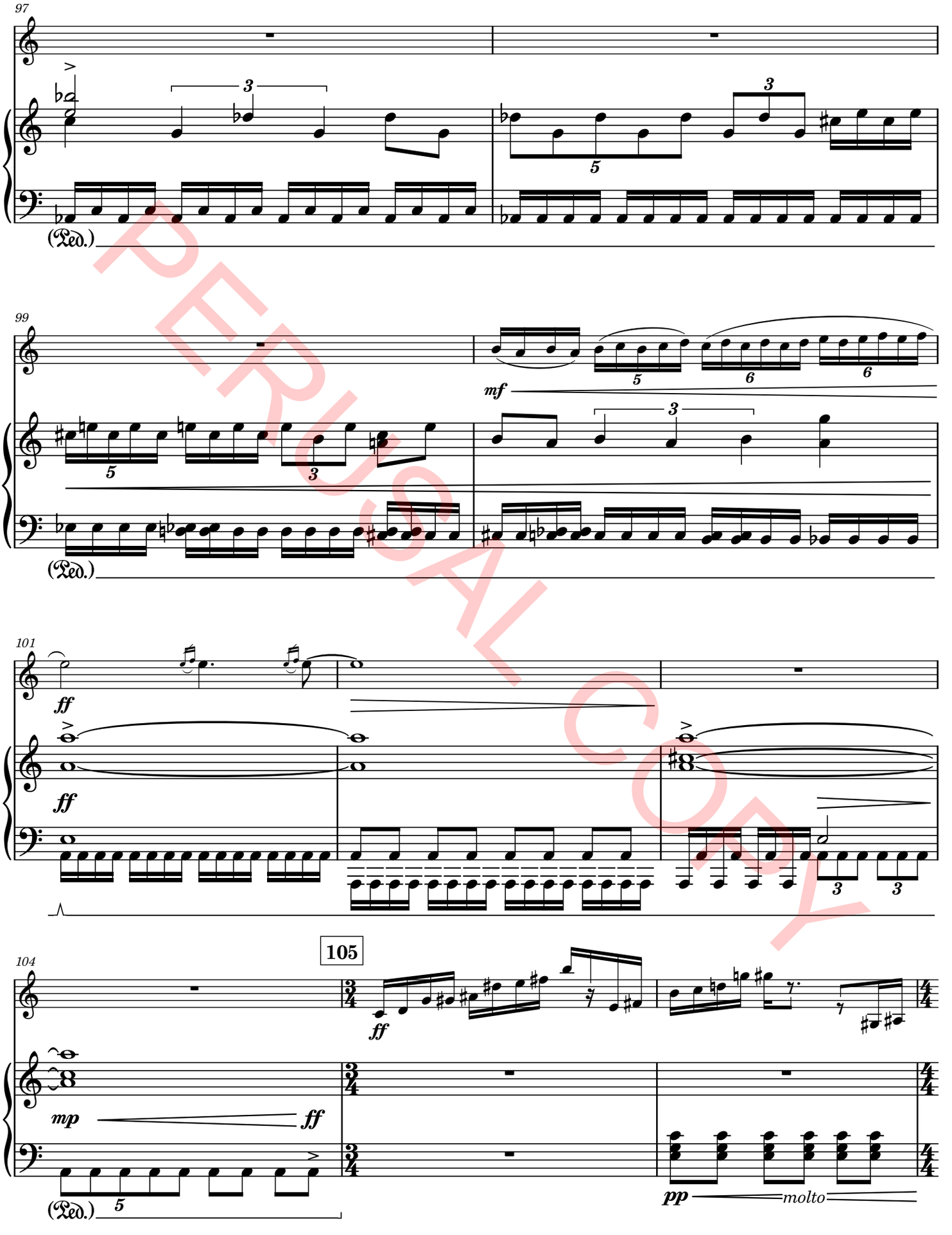


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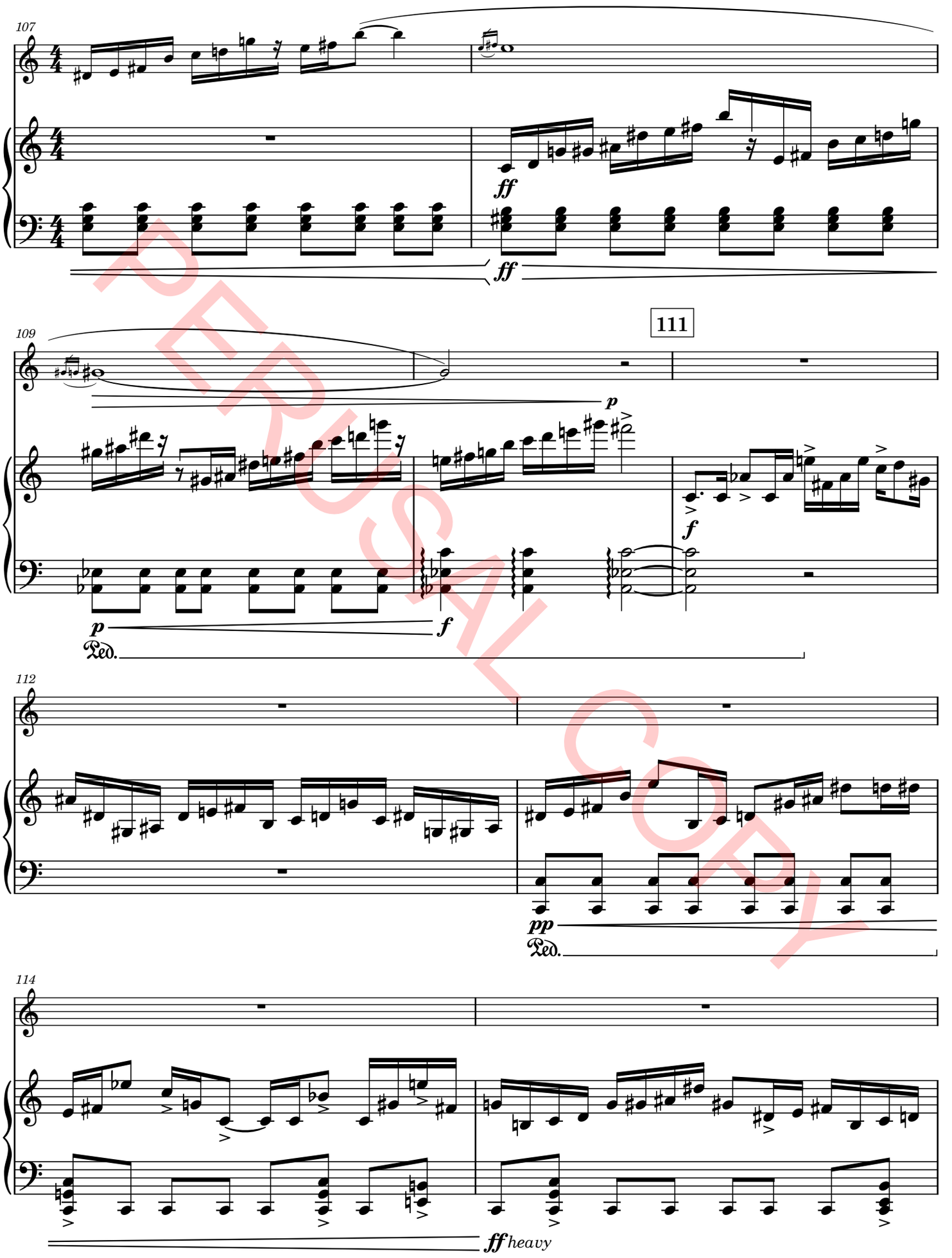


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117

116

*f*

118

120

*ff*

122

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