Street Smartzy

for Alto Sax and Jazz Rhythm Section

by
Vanessa McClintock

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This short jazzy work for alto saxophone, drums, piano, and acoustic bass has two points of inspiration. One stems from the "Second Saturday ArtWalks" in Sacramento—with its contagious festive ambience. The other from an amazing man and alto saxophonist, Boyd Phelps.

Boyd and I were among a small group of students returning to college for our Master of Arts degree in music who all were just about the same age, 38—give or take.

He had had a stellar career playing with top notch jazz ensembles and was redirecting this point in his life toward not just a masters, but a doctorate as well, which he eventually achieved.

His relationship with his instrument was akin to a spiritual bonding. One did not watch or hear him perform: one imbibed and absorbed a spiritual conversation to which we were privy to enjoy. One of our mentors, the great arranger Herb Harrison wrote many works just for him, including "Fly Like a Boyd," in which he partly accompanied himself on a pre-recorded tape. It was a moment not forgotten.

This work is a small tribute to Boyd, but certainly not in his caliber or league. It is a minor homage to a classic musician of the age. The last I heard of him he had suffered a series of strokes that had stifled his ability to perform. With great determination and perseverance, he relearned his fingerings and returned to the stage, only to have to repeat the process again. Here is a link to one of his come-back performances in 2011: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dX2yv6EbTU

I mostly finished this piece somewhen about 2010 but continued to tweak it for about another nine or ten years.

Performance time: approximately 3'00"

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2'56"

Fond Memories of a Flying Boyd

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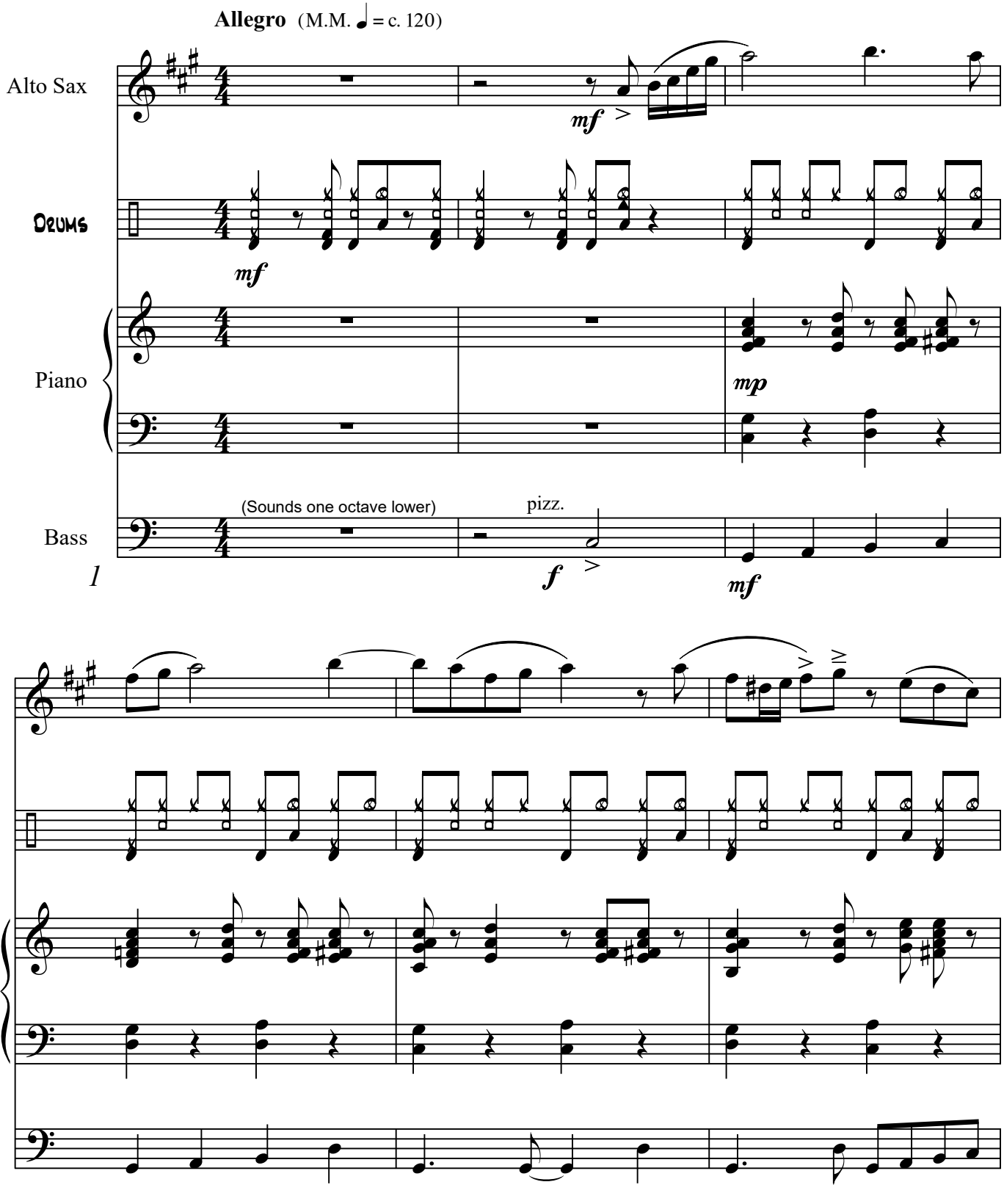

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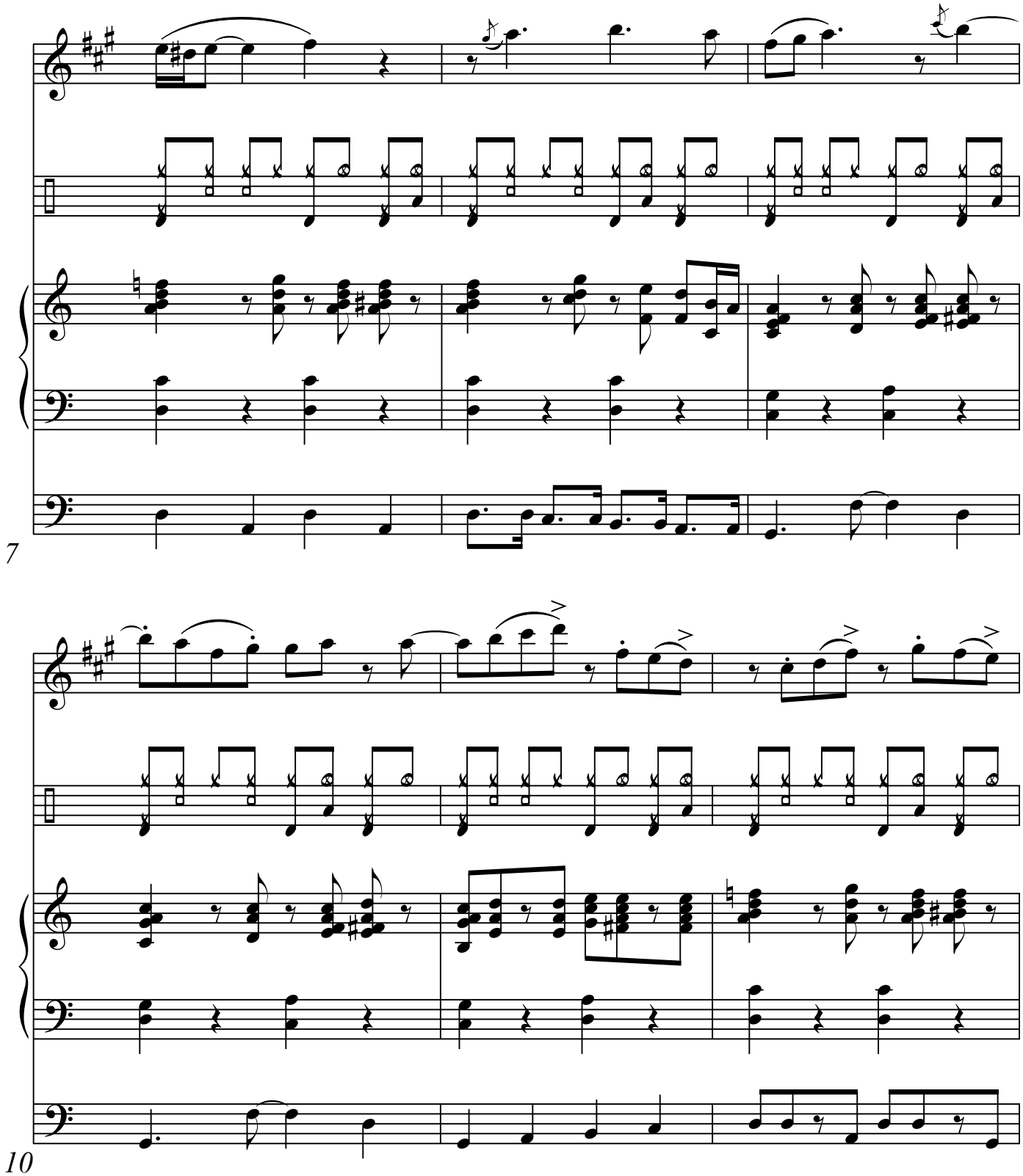

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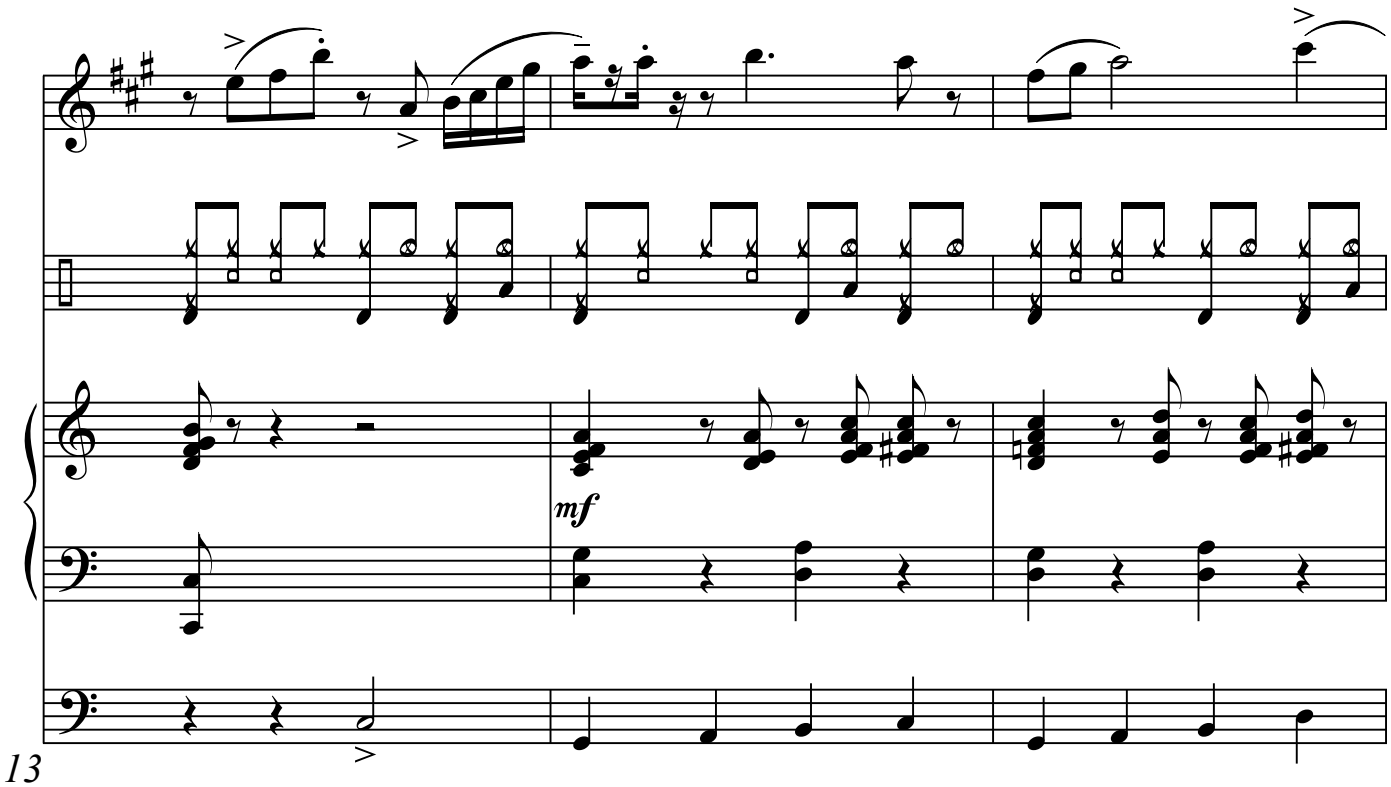

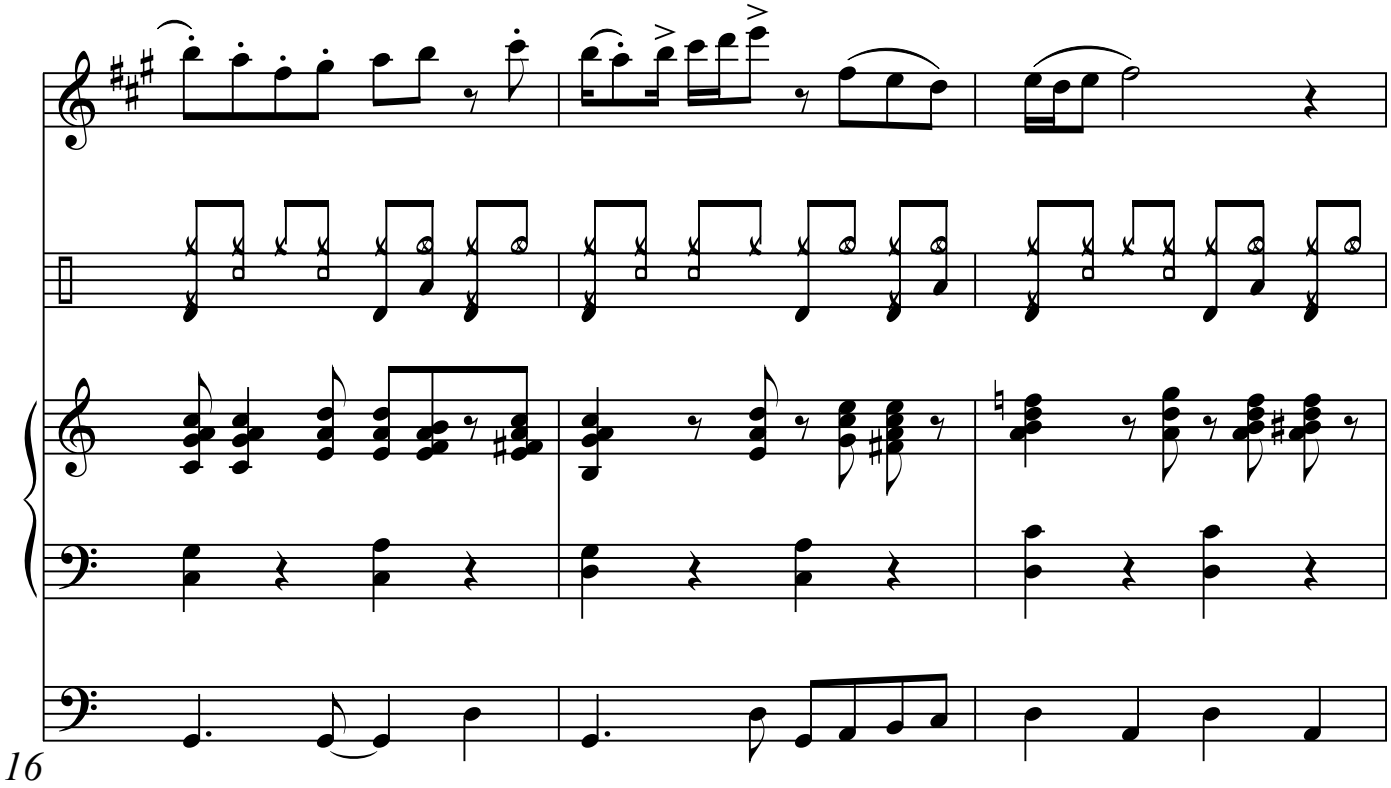

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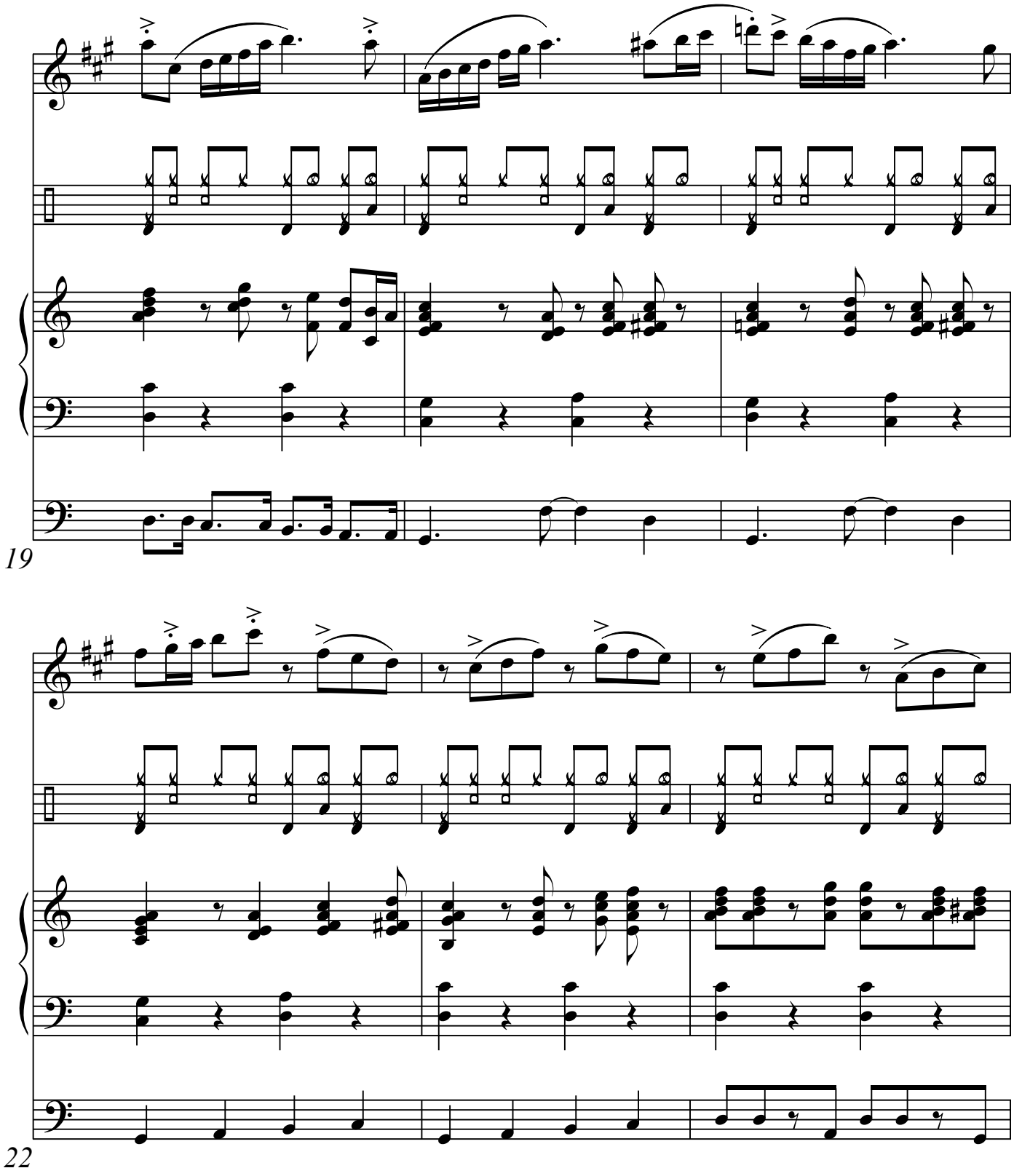

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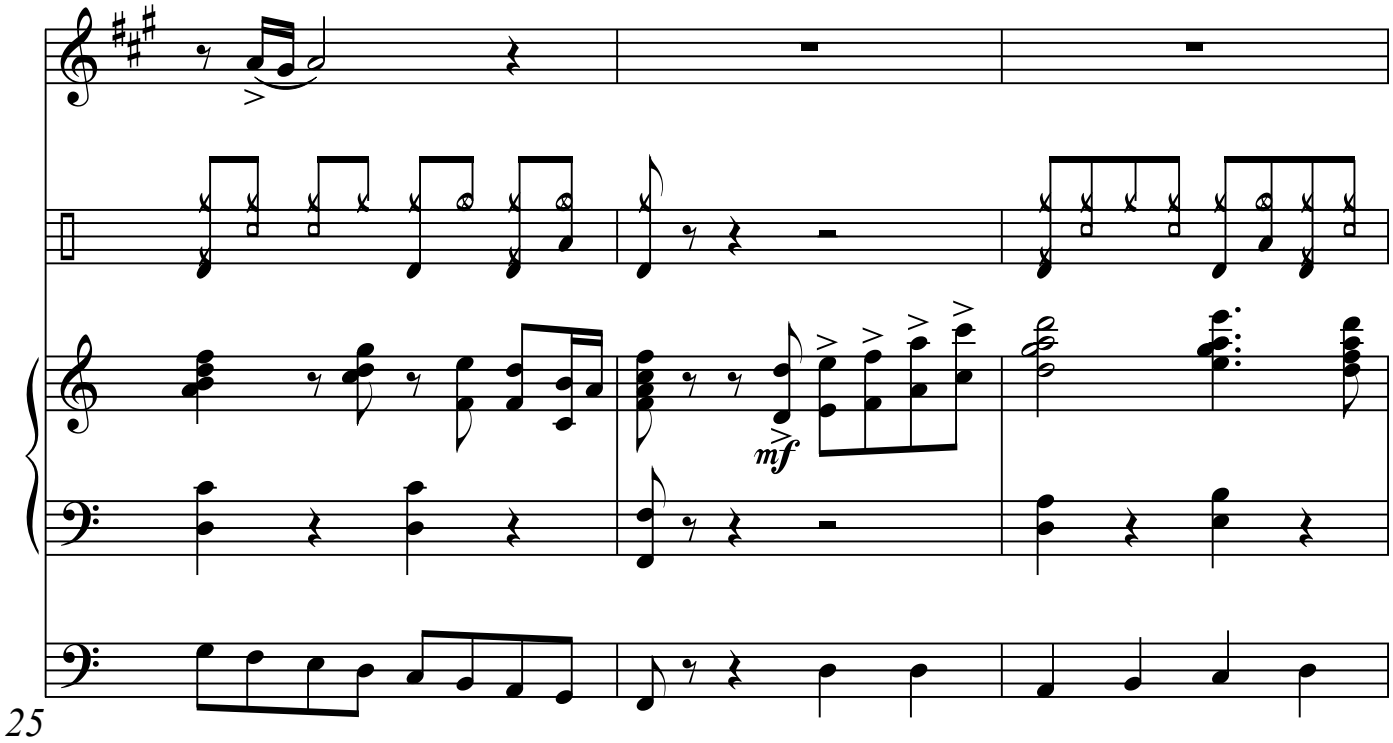

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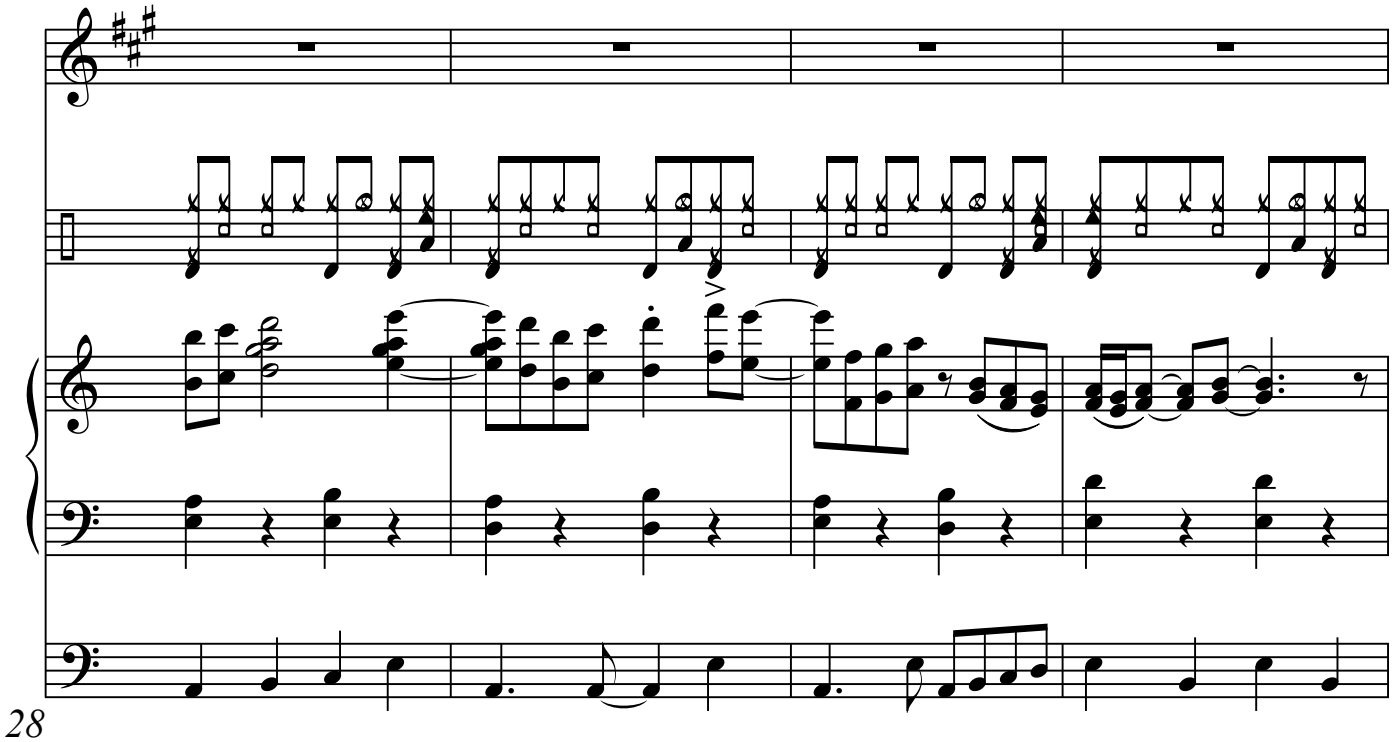

28

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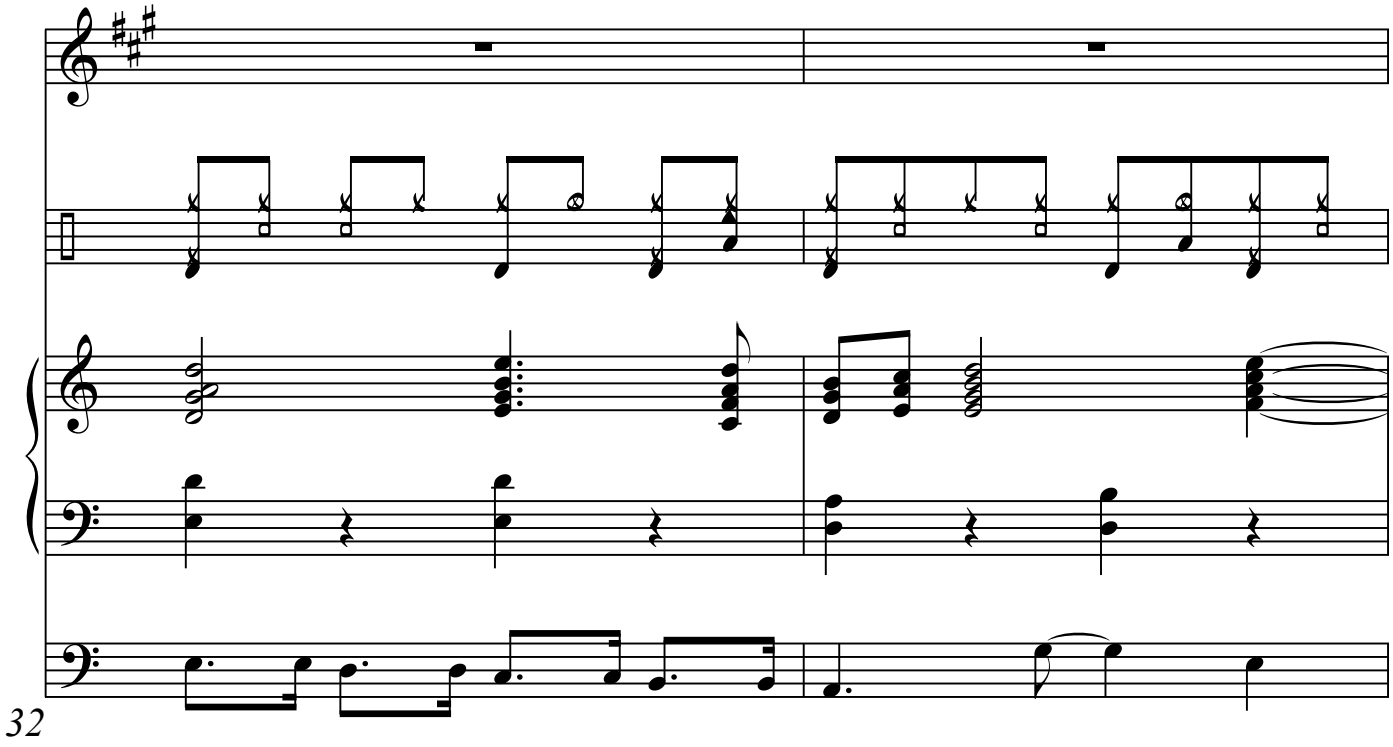

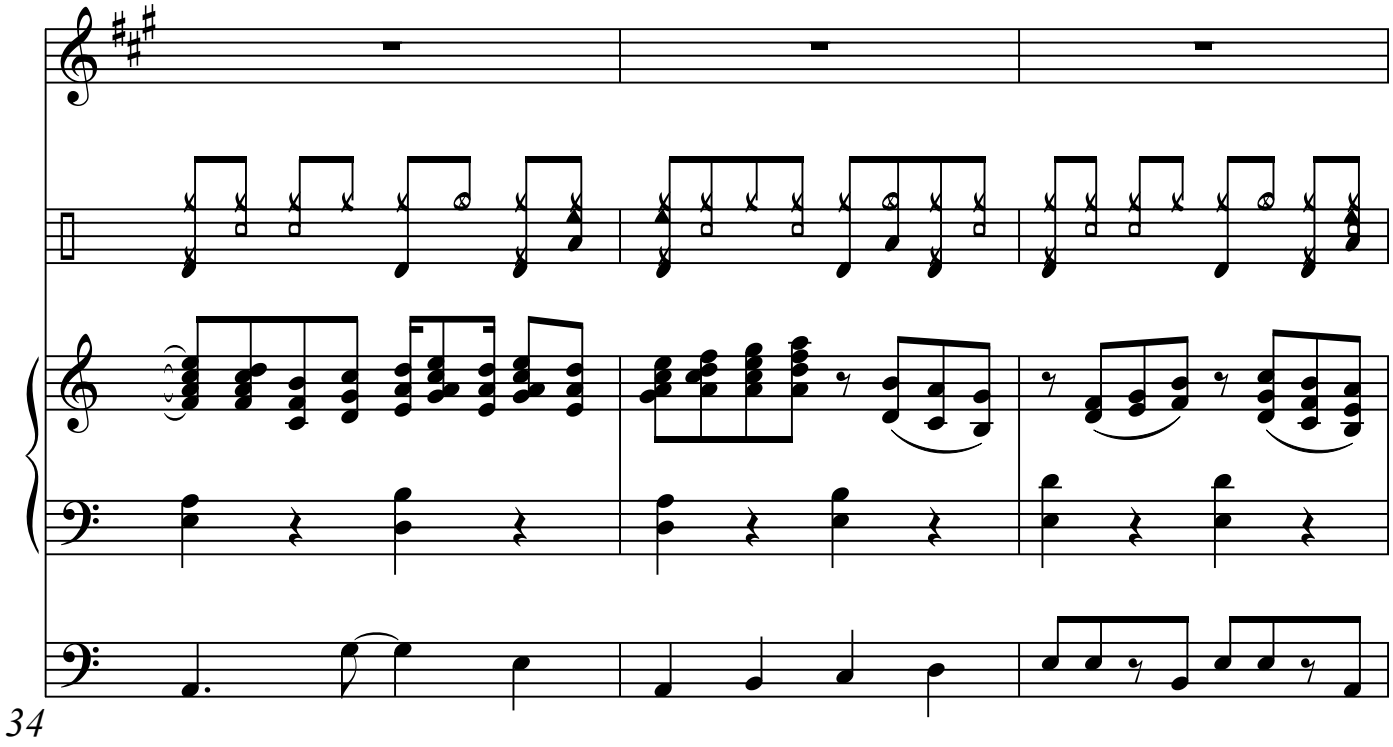

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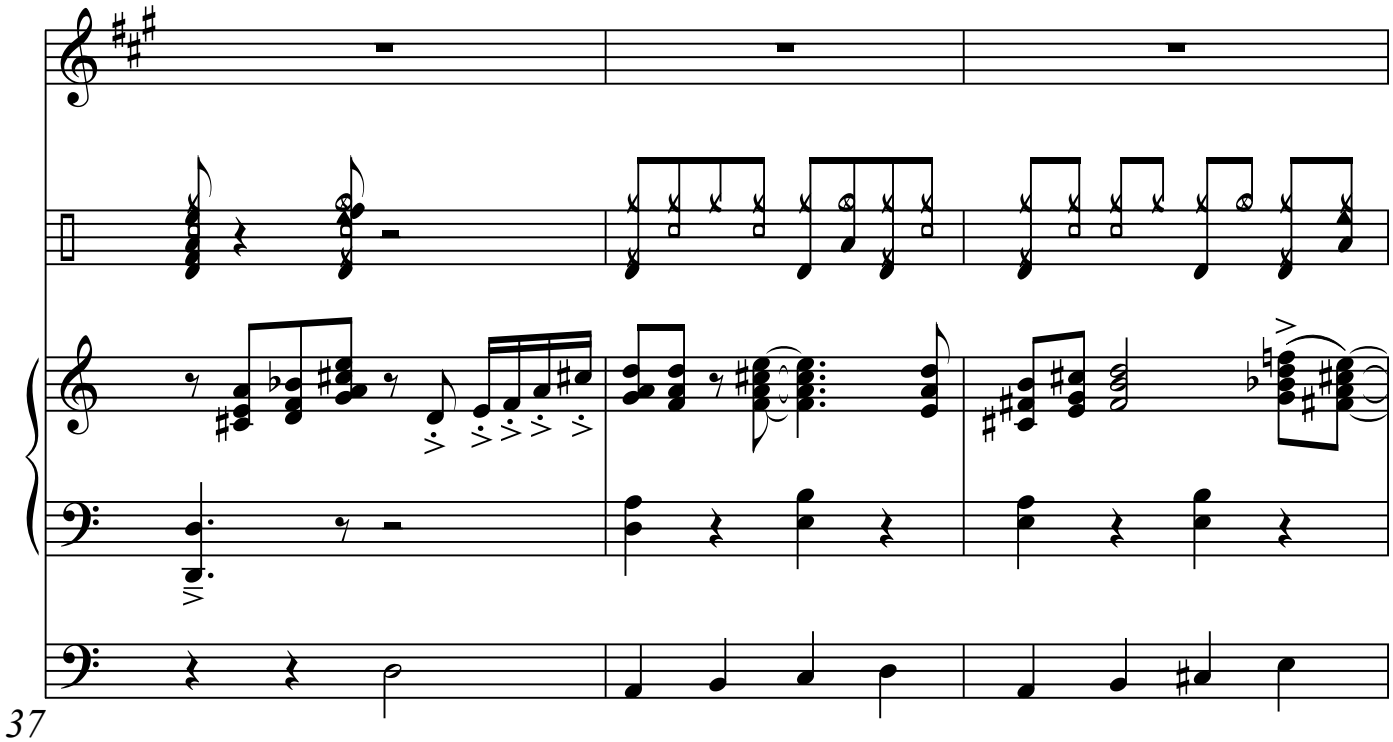

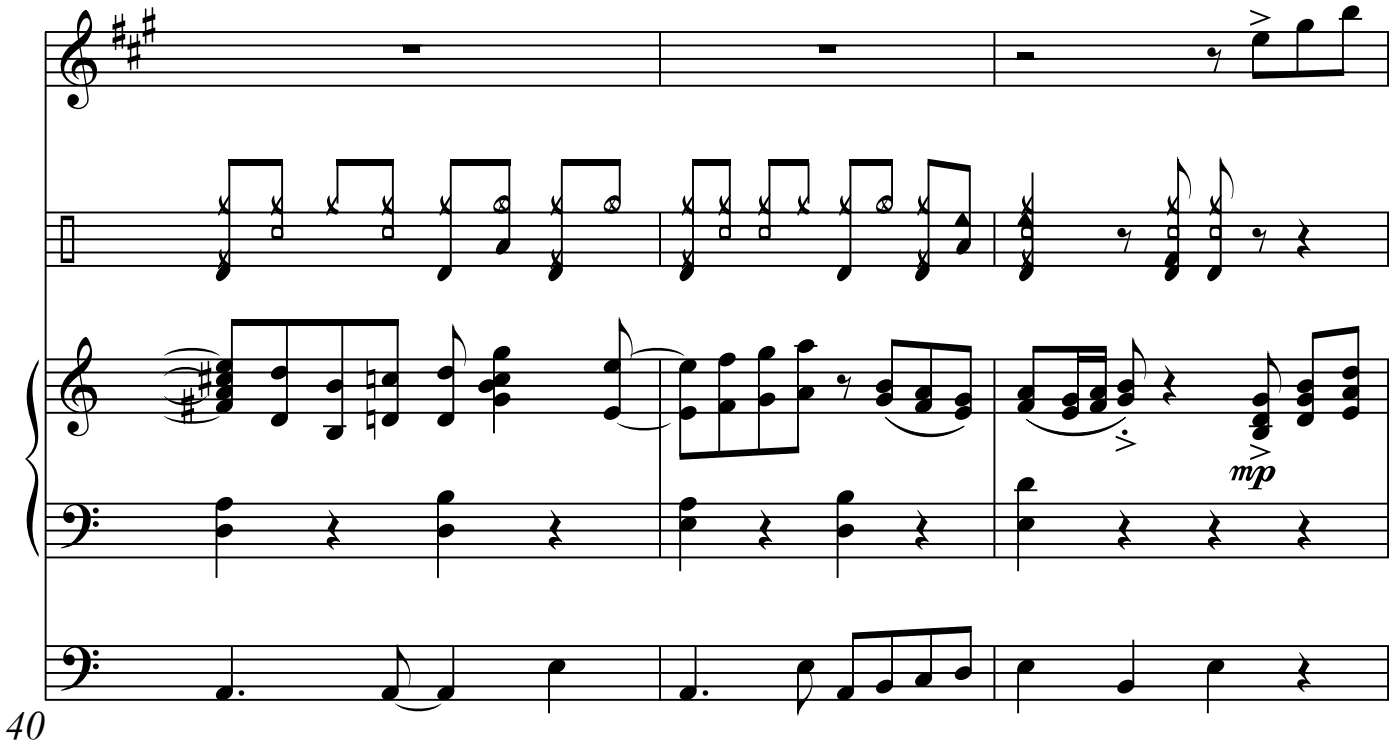

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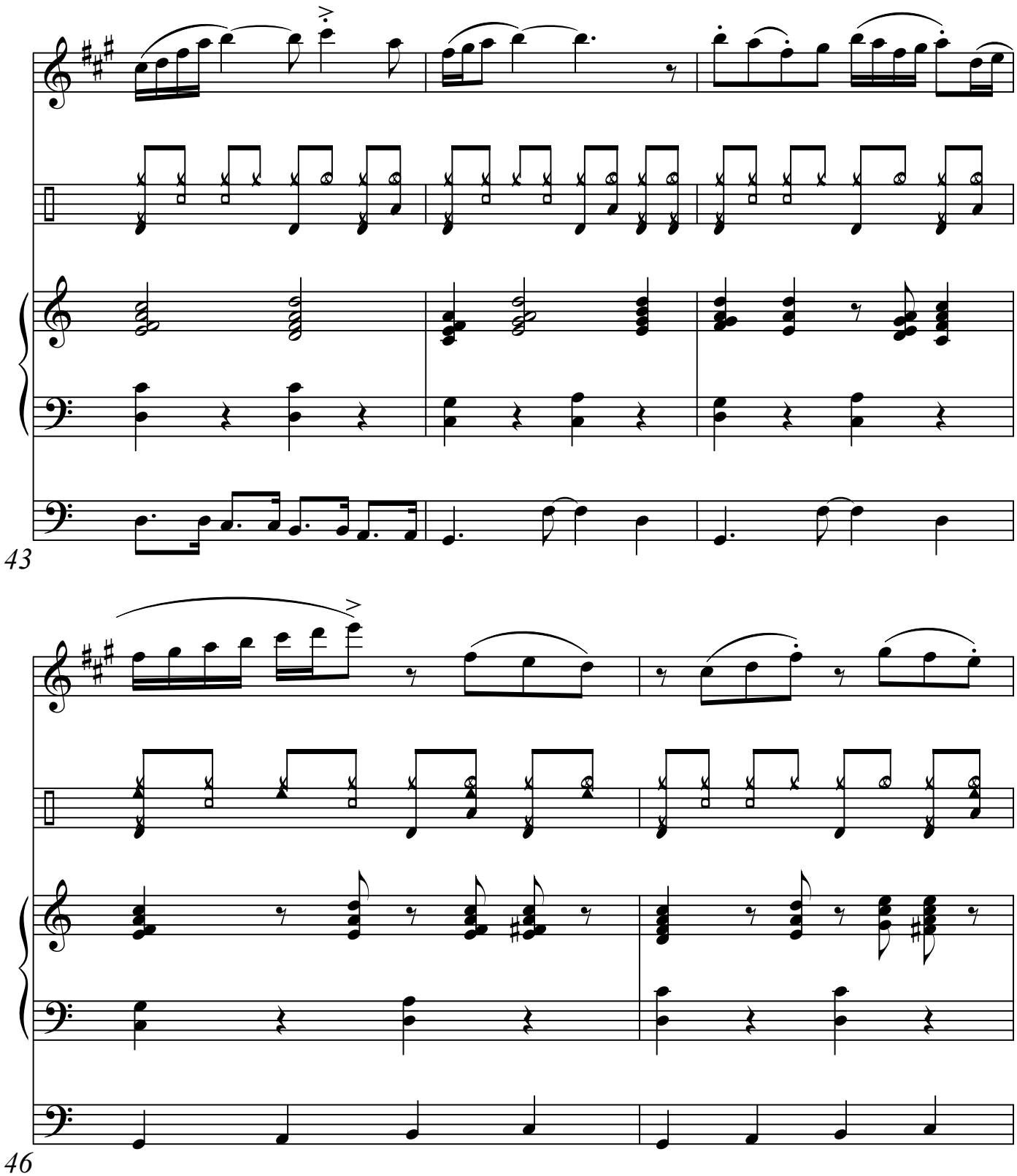

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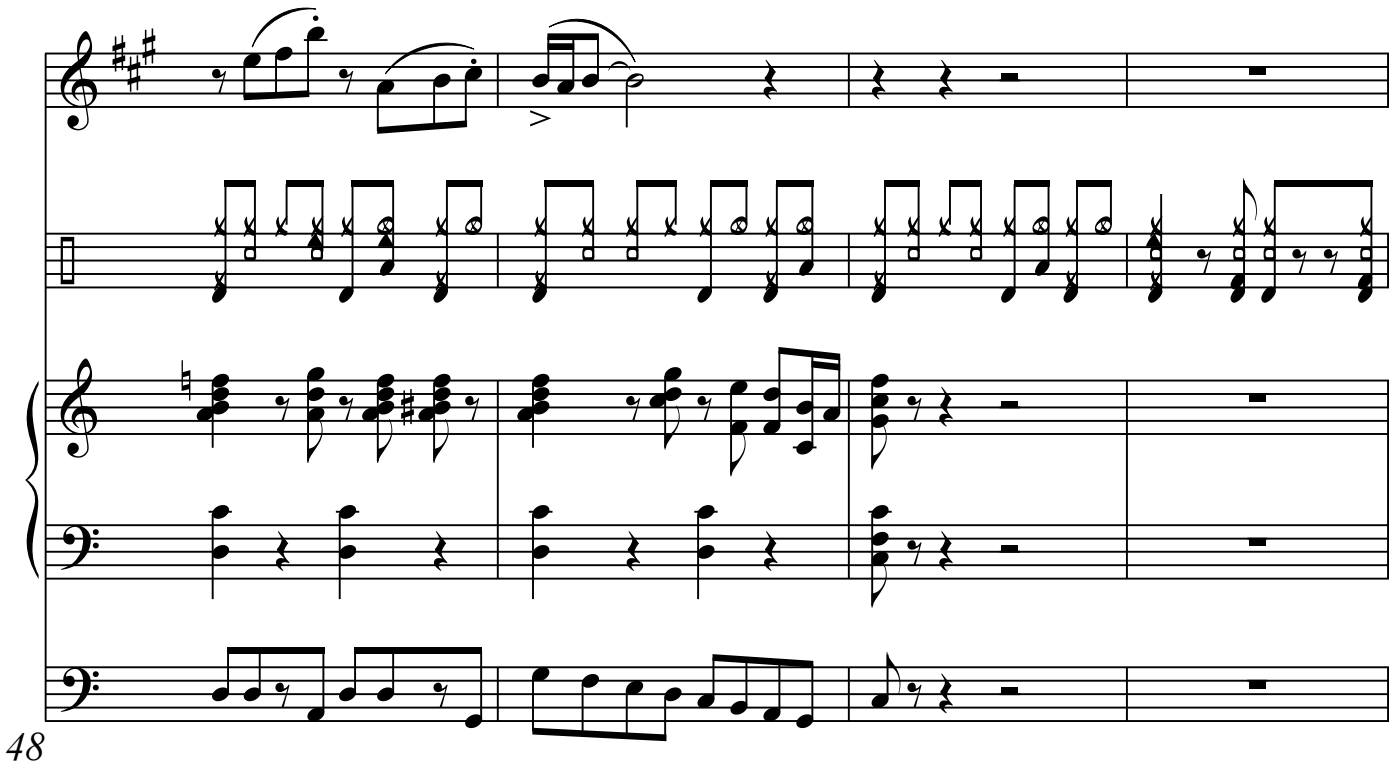

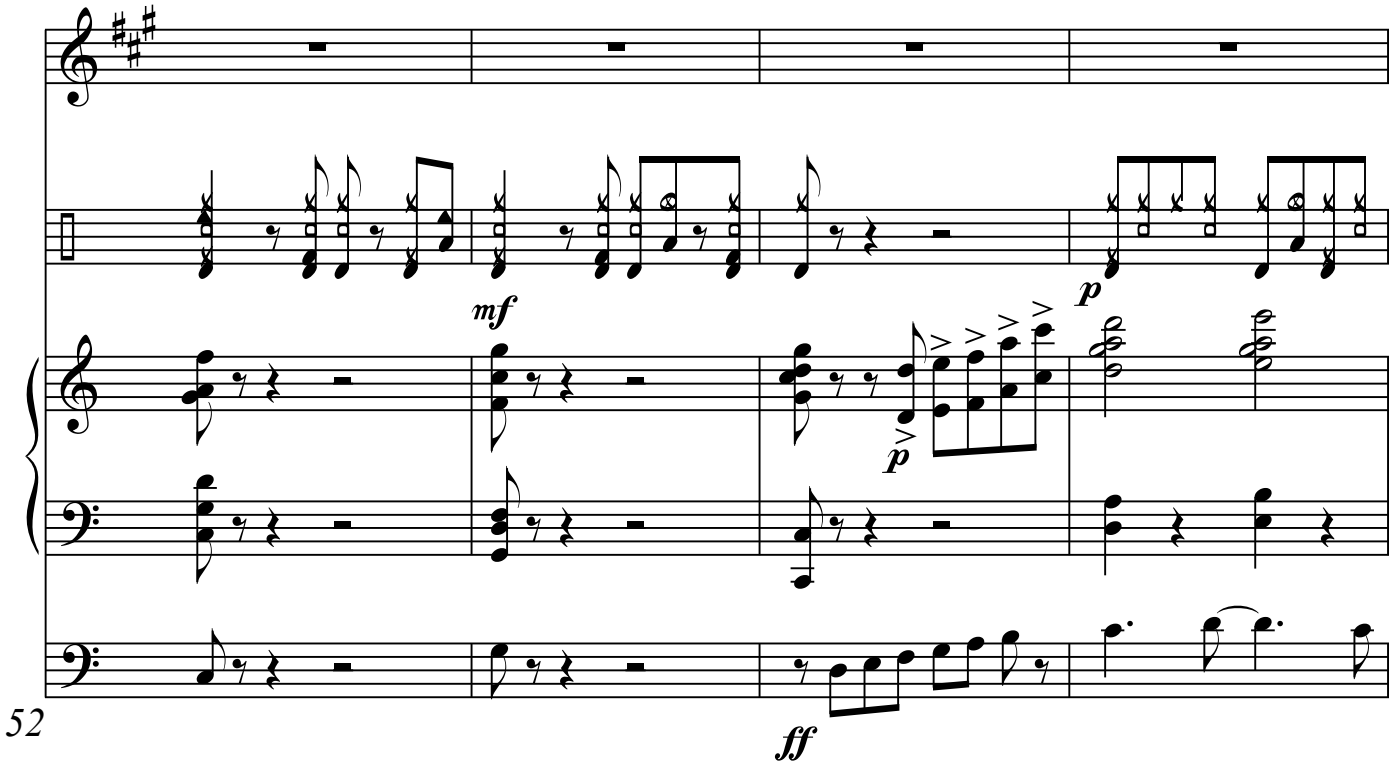

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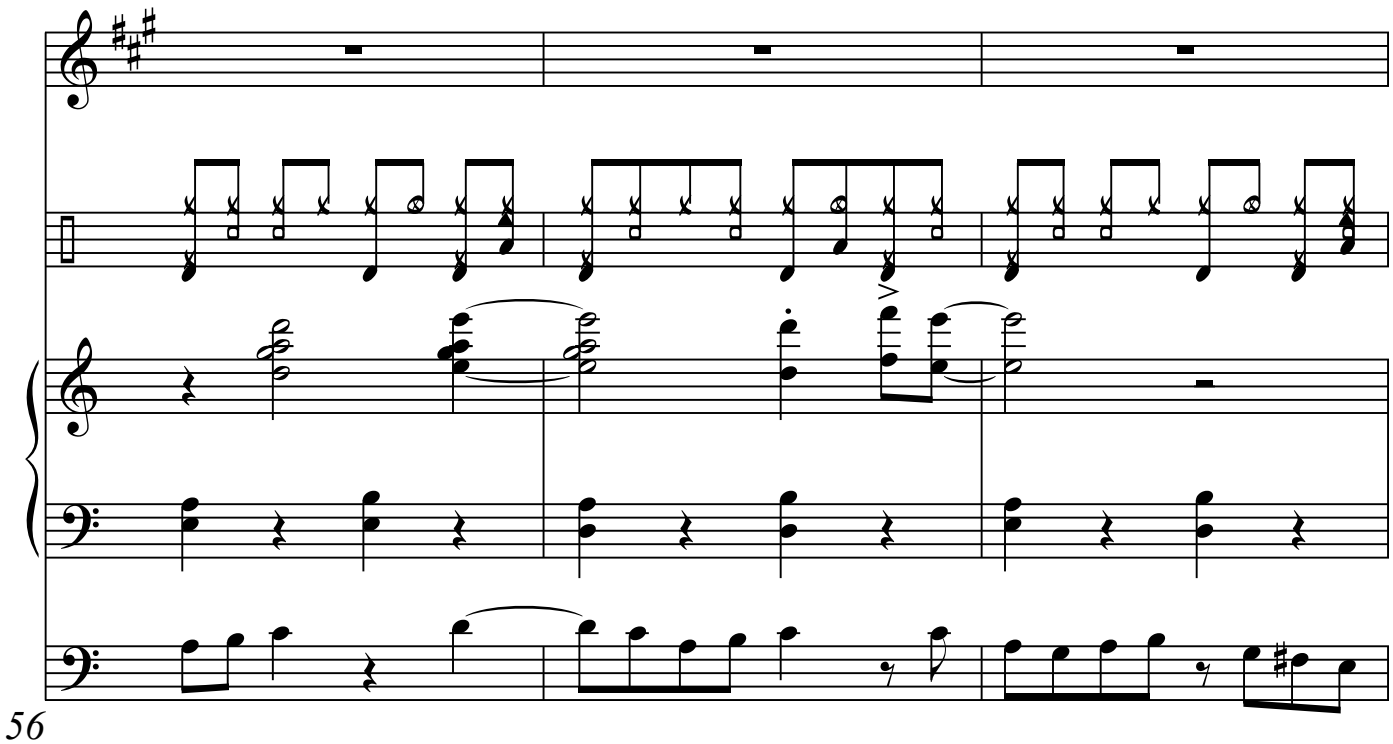

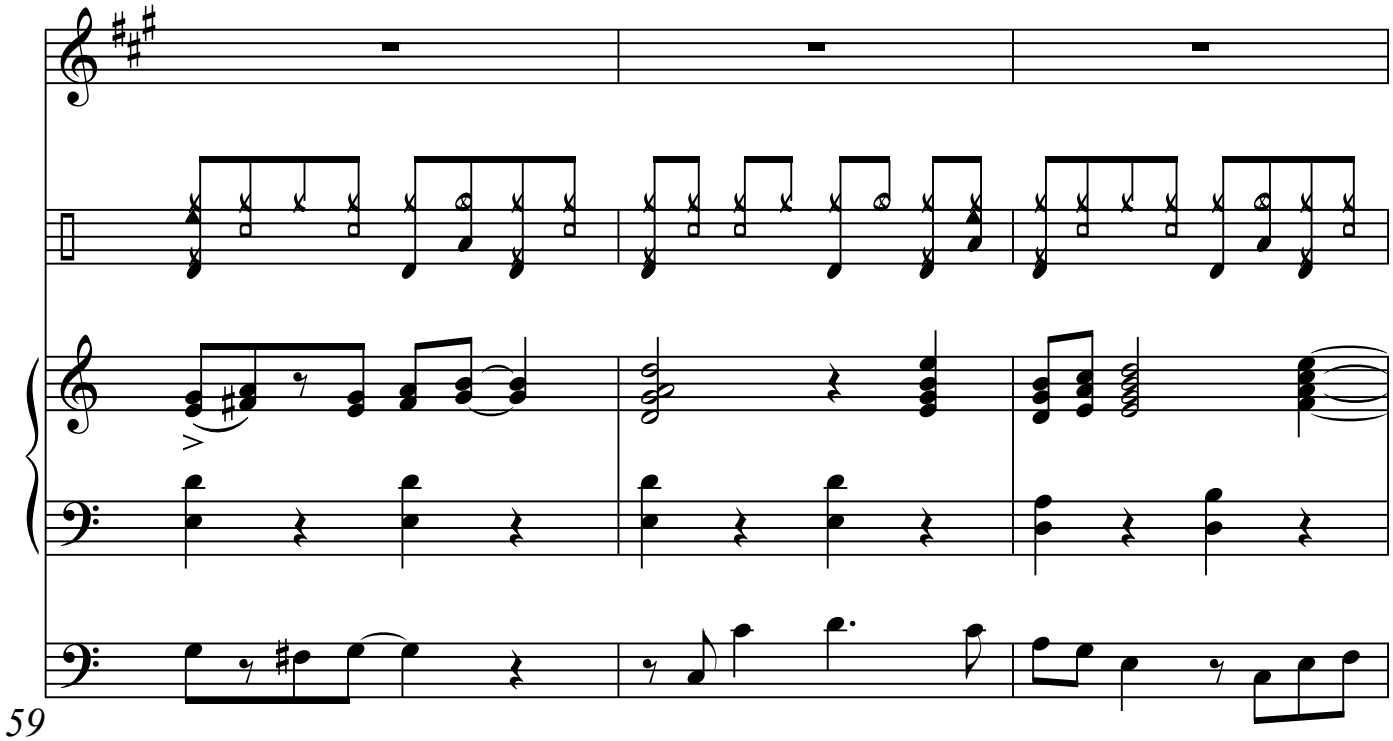

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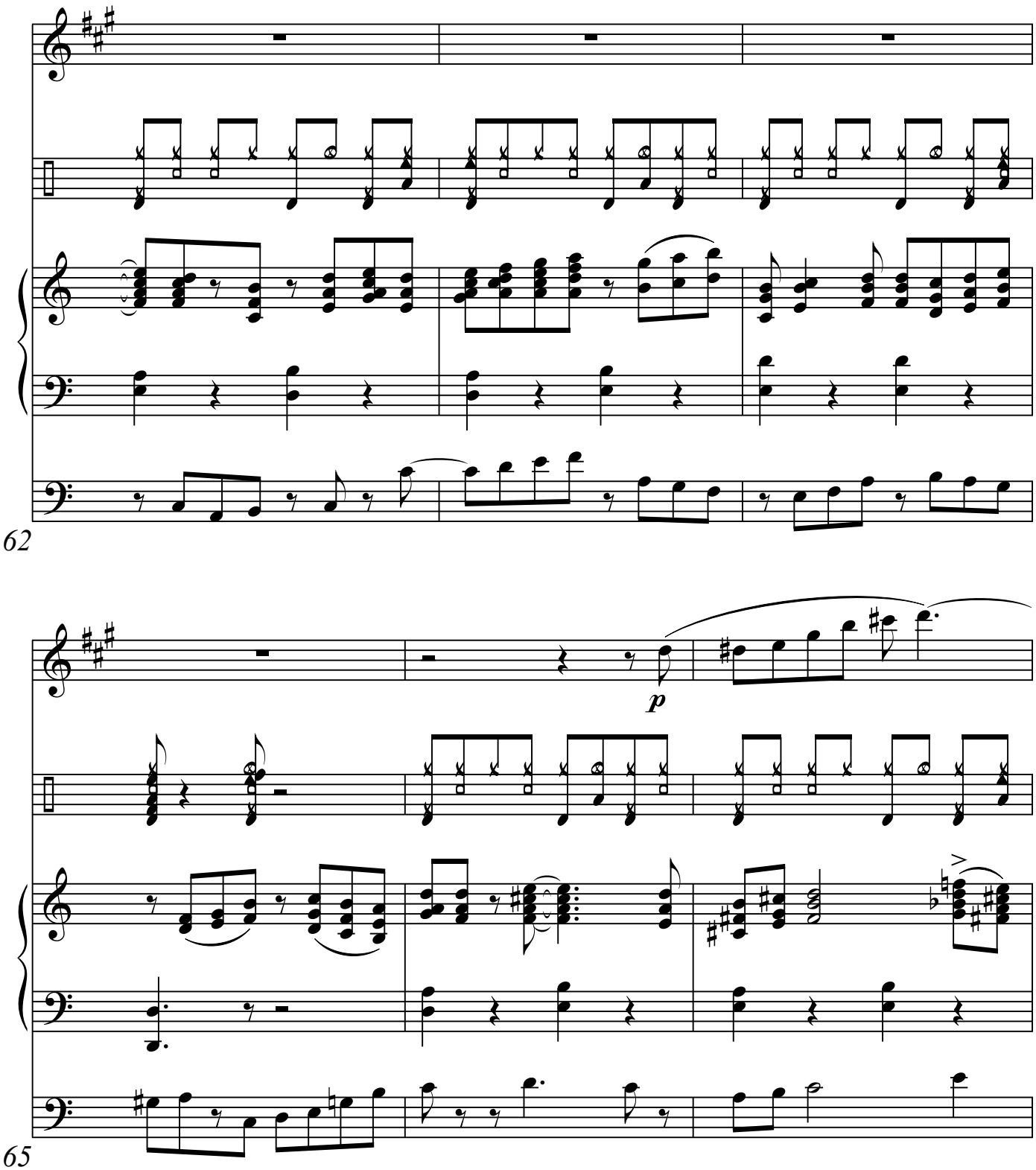

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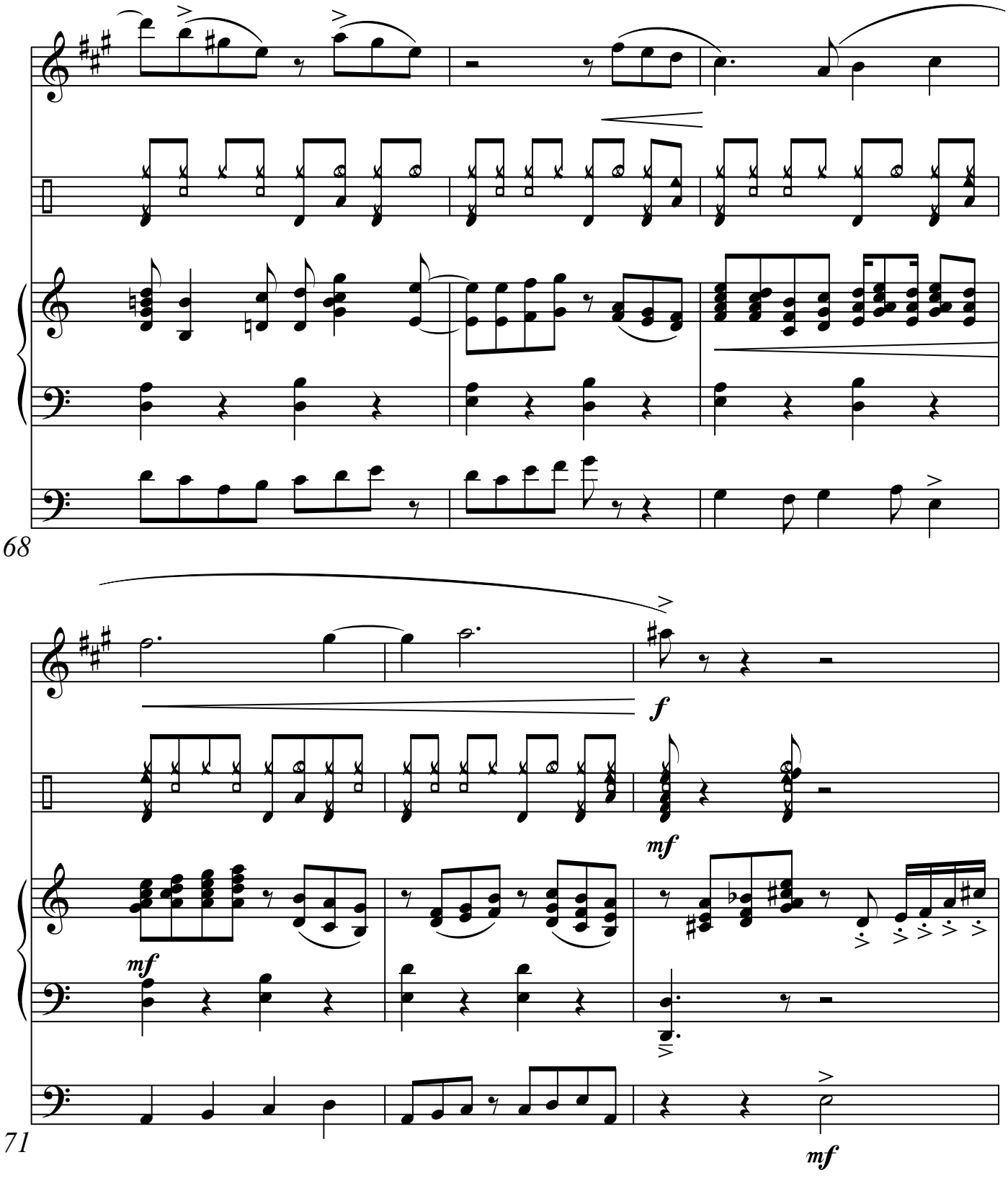

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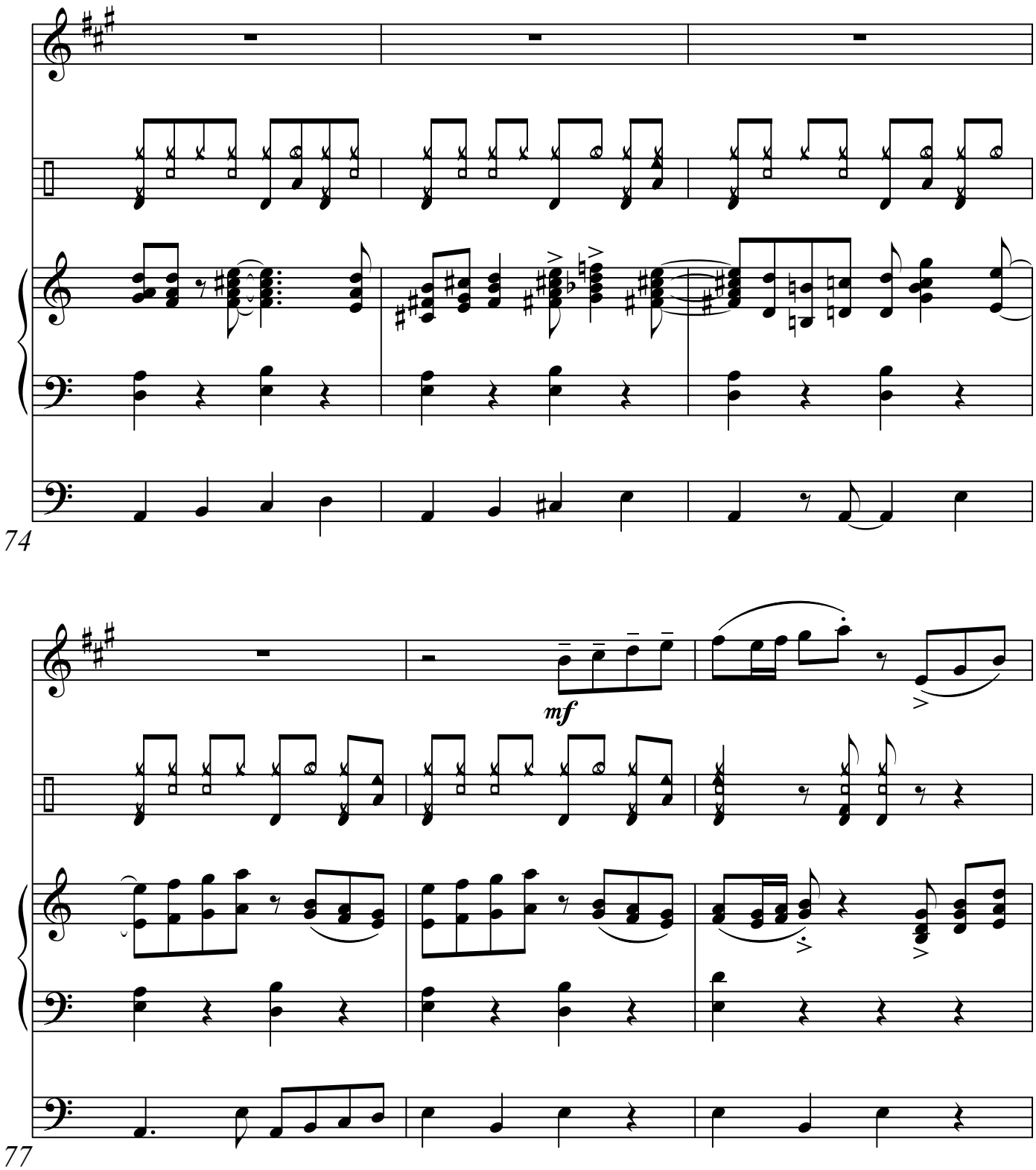

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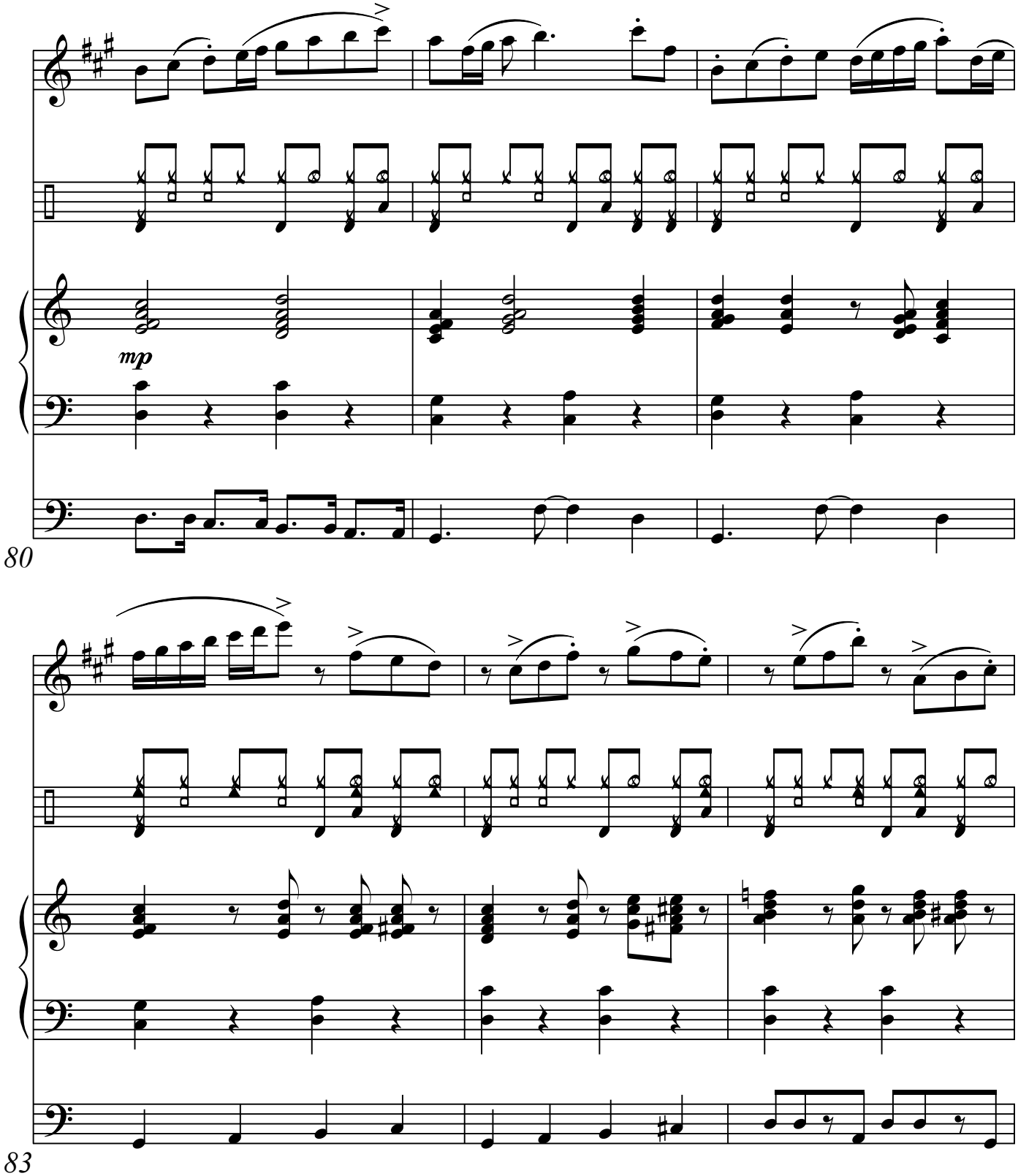

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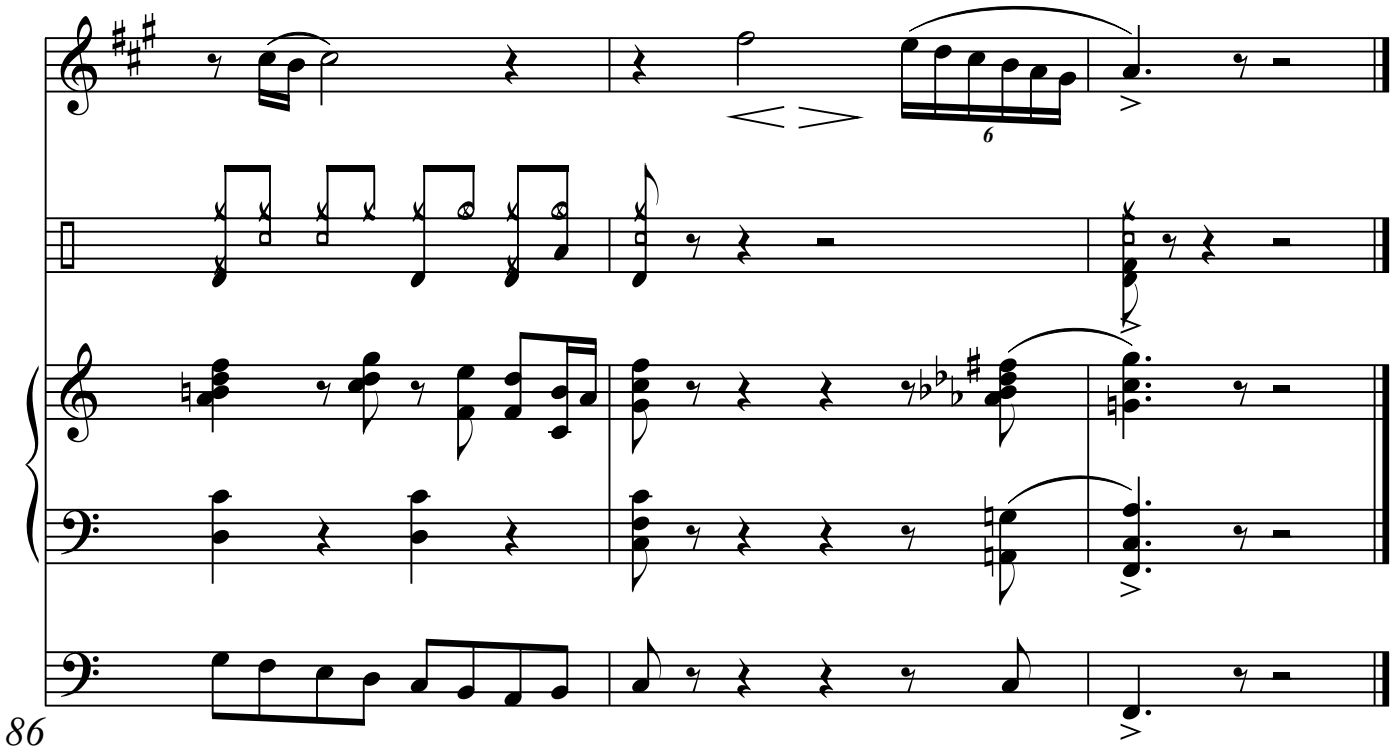

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