THE MATA HARI SUITE

for Solo Piano

by **JOHN BURGE**

The Mata Hari Suite

The Mata Hari Suite, for solo piano, is a set of six pieces that were written to provide background music during the opening run of **One Last Night With Mata Hari**. This one-woman show, with a male pianist also taking on a number of roles, was composed by John Burge with Craig Walker providing the book and lyrics. During the final preparations for the January 2017 opening of this cabaret style show, John Burge decided that it would be ideal to have some prerecorded solo piano music playing while the audience waited for each of the two acts to begin. As often happens in composing music for the stage, John Burge found that he had cut quite a bit of music from earlier drafts of the show that could be easily adapted into solo piano pieces. For example, the opening movement of this suite ("Overture: The tale of Mata Hari") begins with a different version of the opening number from the show. In most cases though, John Burge came up with new musical ideas composed in the style of parlour piano music from the same period of Mata's life and then combined these with reworked versions of tunes from the actual show. The end result is a set of six contrasting movements all having a strong element of nostalgia.

One Last Night With Mata Hari

Mata Hari (1876-1917) was renowned as an exotic dancer and courtesan throughout Europe in the early 20th century. Her conviction and execution by France on charges of spying for Germany during World War I is one of the many aspects of her life that add to her ongoing notoriety. This show is best described as a kind of cabaret in which Mata Hari recounts her life in story and song on the evening of October 14th, 1917, the night before she faces the firing squad. The setting is a room within the Saint Lazare Prison in Paris, where prisoners, the Sisters of Marie-Joseph and other prison staff are gathered. The pianist, acting the role of the prison's physician, Dr. Bizard, comes out, sits down at the keyboard and prepares the audience for the upcoming performance. Mata Hari, dressed conservatively, eventually enters and through song and narrative, tells her side of the story. The first act covers Mata's schooling in Holland, unhappy marriage to Dutch Colonial Army Captain Rudolph McLeod, her time and sickness in Indonesia, the death of her son and the abandonment of her husband as she makes a new life for herself in Paris by creating the persona of Mata Hari. Act Two begins with a recreation of one of Mata's dances (using a pre-filmed shadow dance), the unraveling of Europe during the First World War, her recruitment to spy for France, her love of Vadime, and the eventual arrest, interrogation, trial, imprisonment and execution. The ending though, leaves the audience questioning the validity of the crimes and sentence.

Development of the Show

John Burge and Craig Walker, colleagues at Queen's University in the Dan School of Drama and Music, began discussing this project in 2012. Craig Walker was drawn to the material in large part because of new information that had become available about Mata Hari through the release of previously classified files. With the support of a grant from the Queen's University Fund for Support of Artistic Projects, they held a two-day workshop of Act One at Queen's University in December 2014 with soprano, Patricia O'Callaghan and John Burge at the keyboard. A project grant from the City of Kingston Arts Fund supported a second workshop at Queen's in August 2015 with Patricia O'Callaghan and John Burge still at the piano. This workshop culminated in a public reading of the complete work. A final workshop took place in July 2016 with pianist Gregory Oh joining Patricia in preparation of the January 2017 premiere at Kingston's Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts.

John Burge, Gregory Oh, Patricia O'Callaghan, Craig Walker

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Duration: approximately 24 minutes

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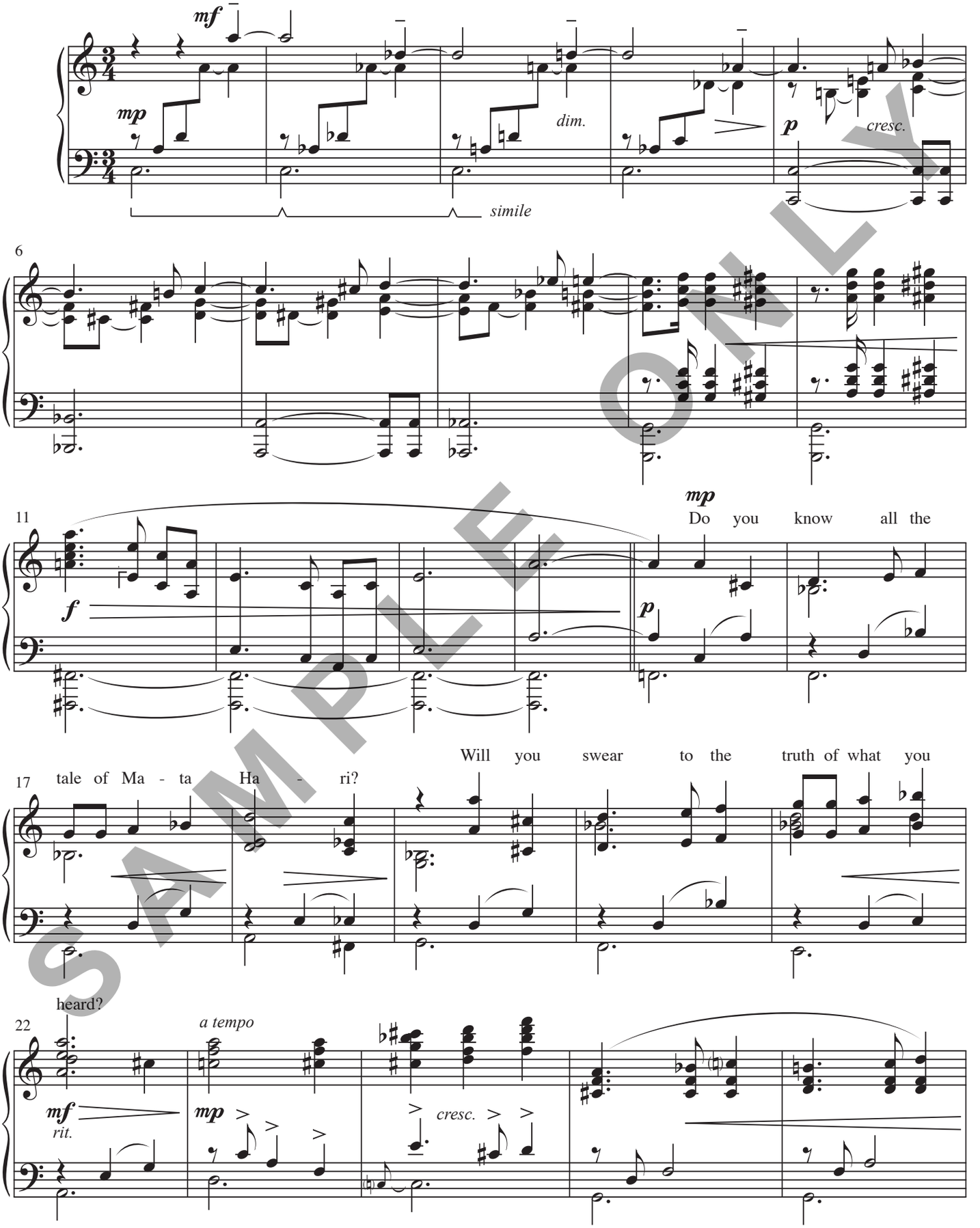
ONE LAST NIGHT with
MATA HARI
VOL 27.
AUGUST 14 1917
WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCES:
PWYC Preview Jan. 11, 8pm
Jan. 12-14, 8pm
Jan. 15, 2pm
Jan. 17-21, 8pm
Jan. 22, 2pm
starring:
Patricia O'Callaghan as 'Mata Hari'
SEDUCTRESS ?
ENEMY SPY ?
SCAPEGOAT ?
with:
GREGORY OH
on piano
as
DR. BIZARD
music by
JOHN BURGE
book and lyrics
CRAIG WALKER
set, costumes, poster
ANDREA ROBERTSON
directed by
CRAIG WALKER
A Music Drama in 2 Acts
in the Studio Theatre at
The Isabel,
Kingston, Ontario
tickets: www.theisabel.ca
info: MataHariNight
kingston arts council

The Mata Hari Suite

No. 1 - Overture: The Tale of Mata Hari

A very flexible waltz (♩ = c. 132)

John Burge



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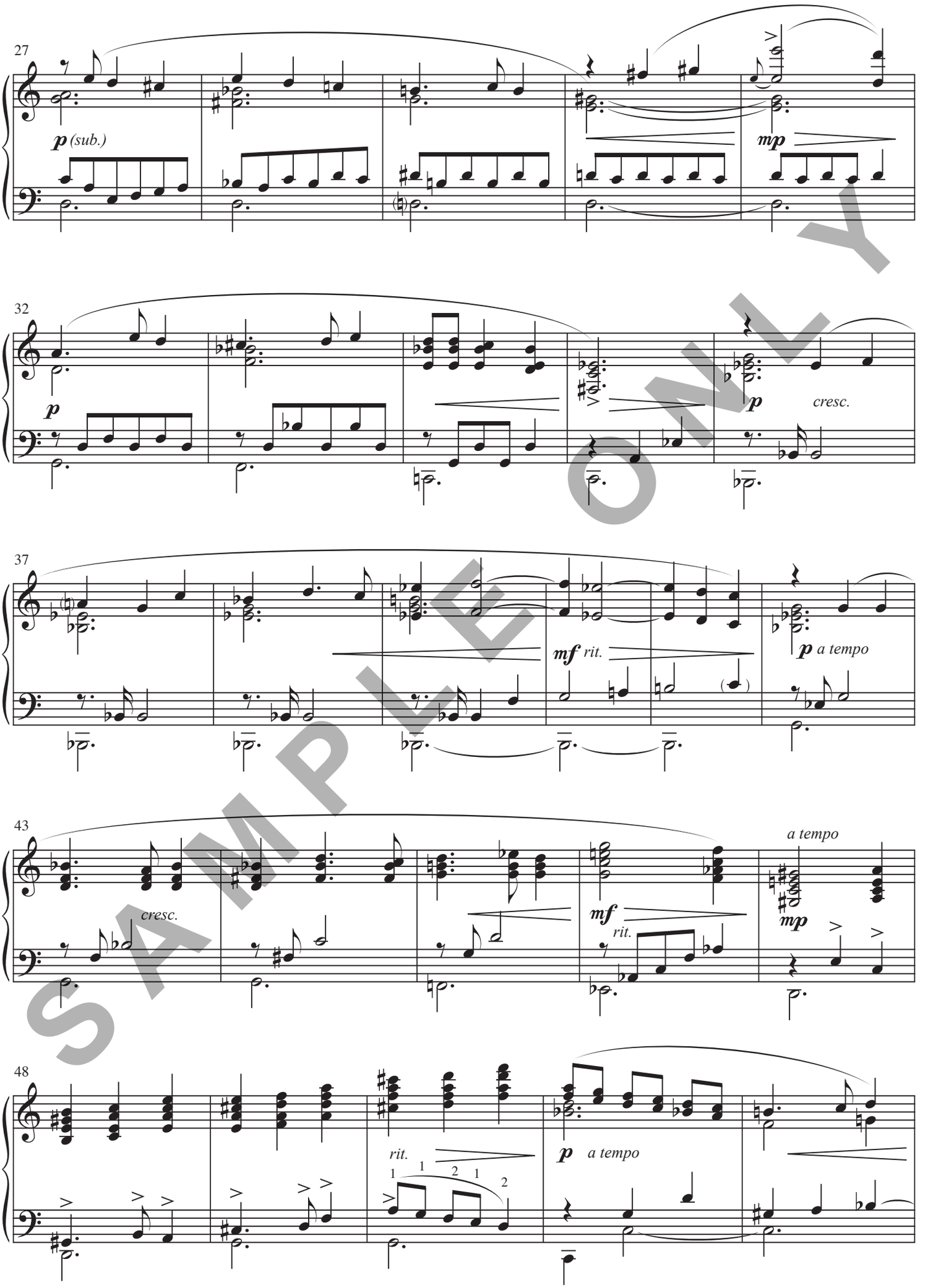
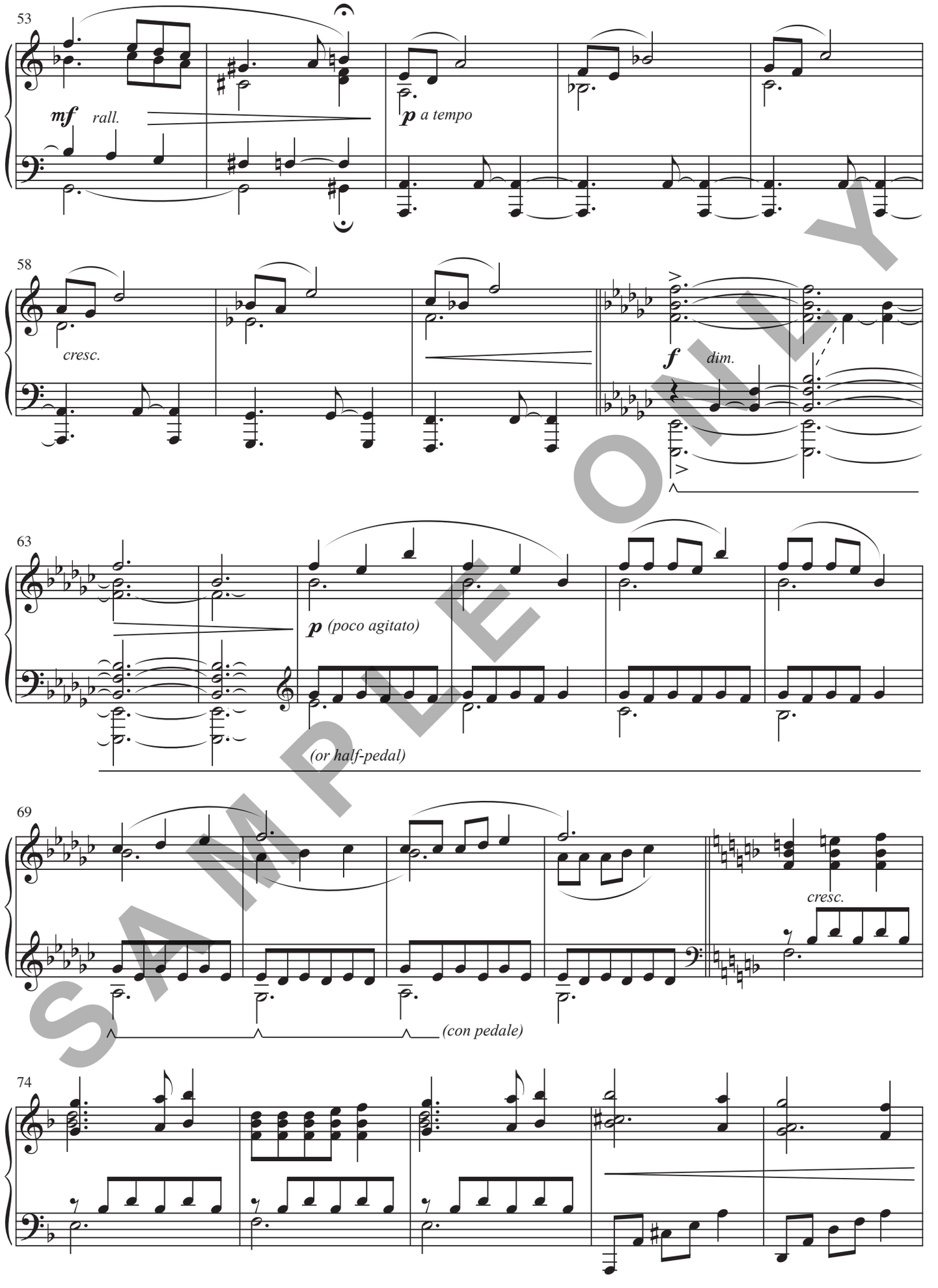
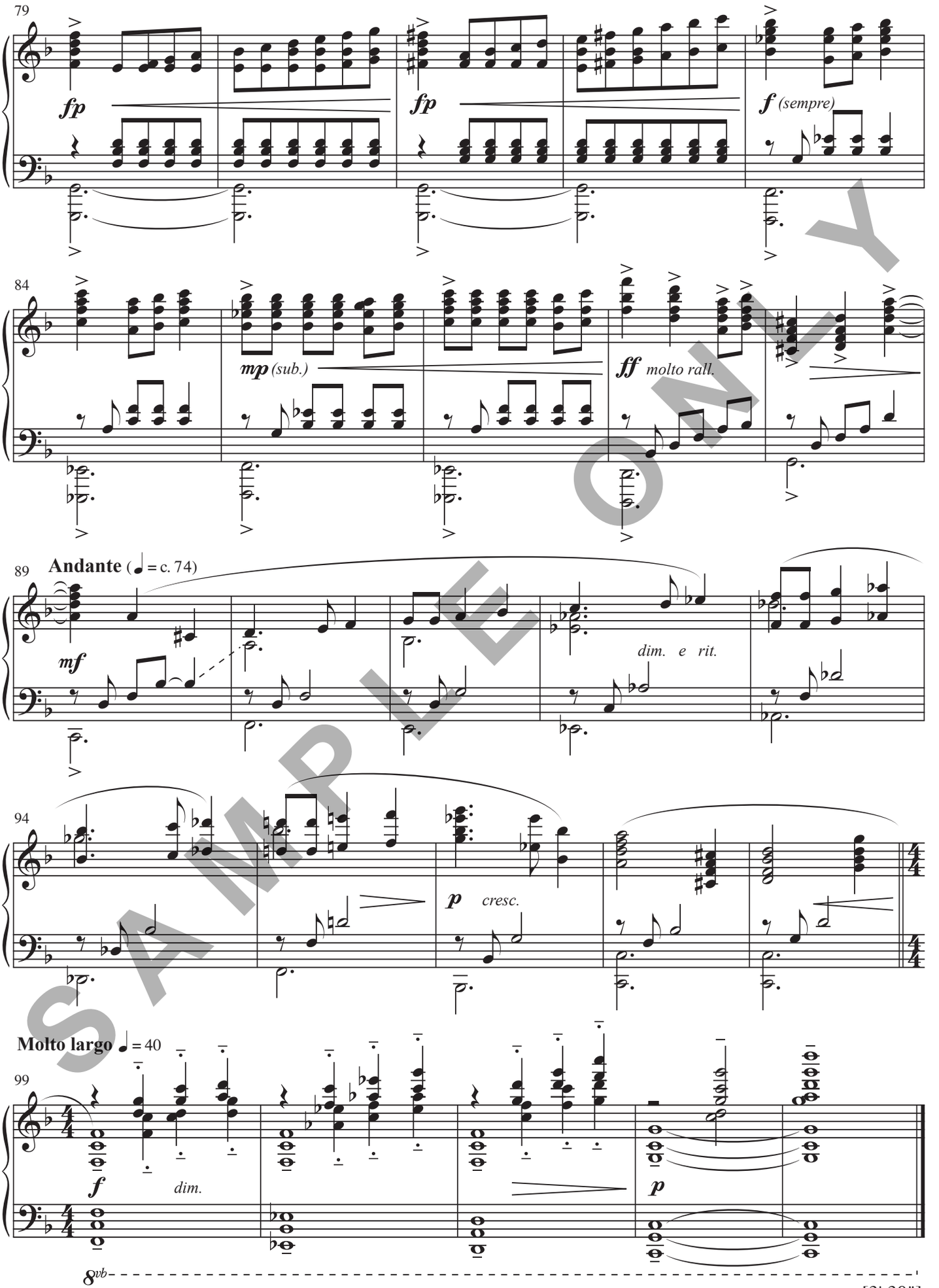

27
p (sub.)
mp
32
p
p
cresc.
37
mf rit.
p a tempo
43
cresc.
mf
rit.
a tempo
mp
48
rit.
1 1 2 1 2
p a tempo

SAMPLE ONLY


53
mf rall.
p a tempo
58
cresc.
f dim.
63
p (poco agitato)
(or half-pedal)
69
cresc.
(con pedale)
74

SAMPLE ONLY

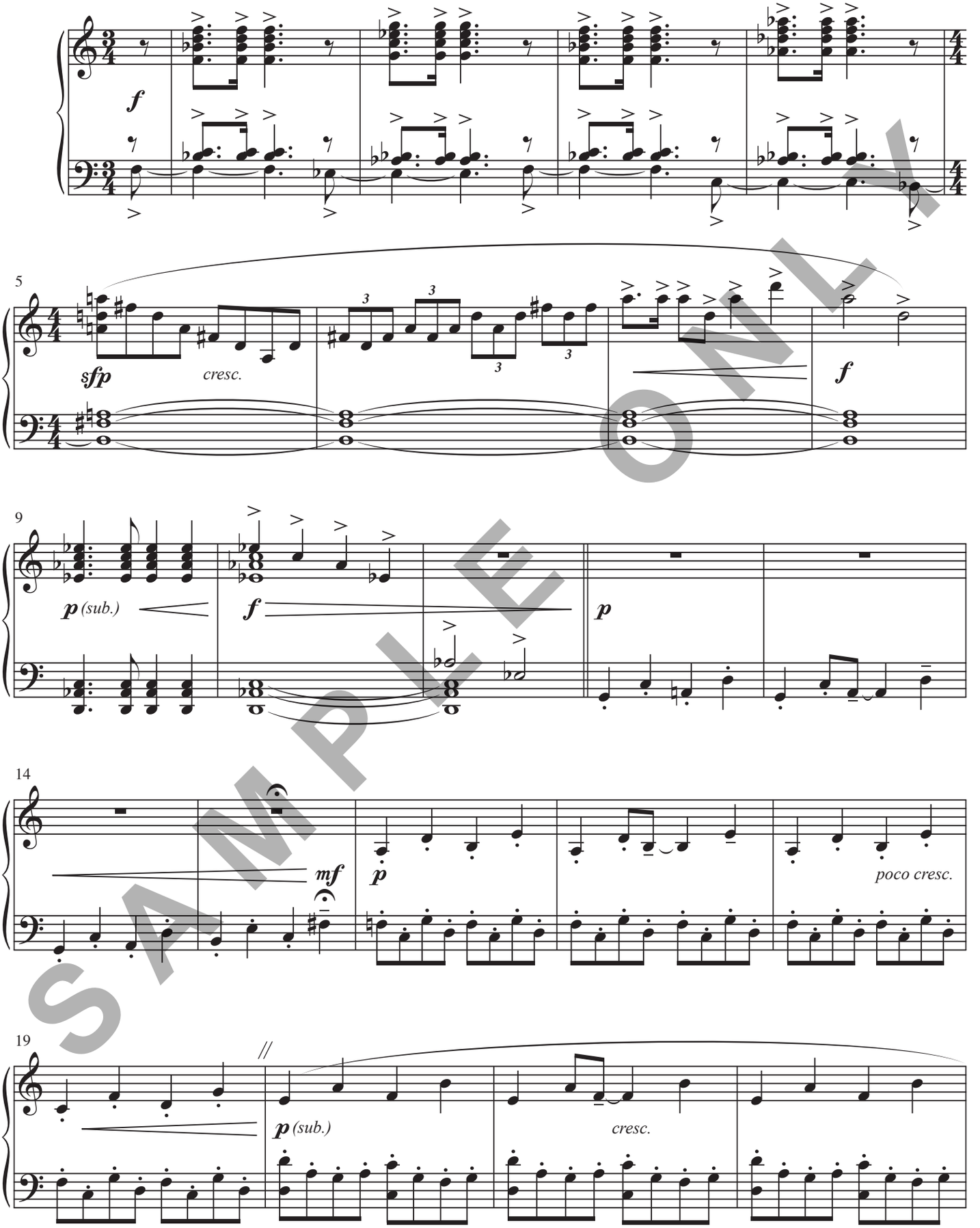

79
fp
fp
f (sempre)
84
mp (sub.)
ff molto rall.
89
Andante (♩ = c. 74)
mf
dim. e rit.
94
p cresc.
Molto largo ♩ = 40
99
f dim.
p
8vb
[3' 30"]

SAMPLE ONLY

No. 2 - March

Allegro (♩ = c. 138)

John Burge



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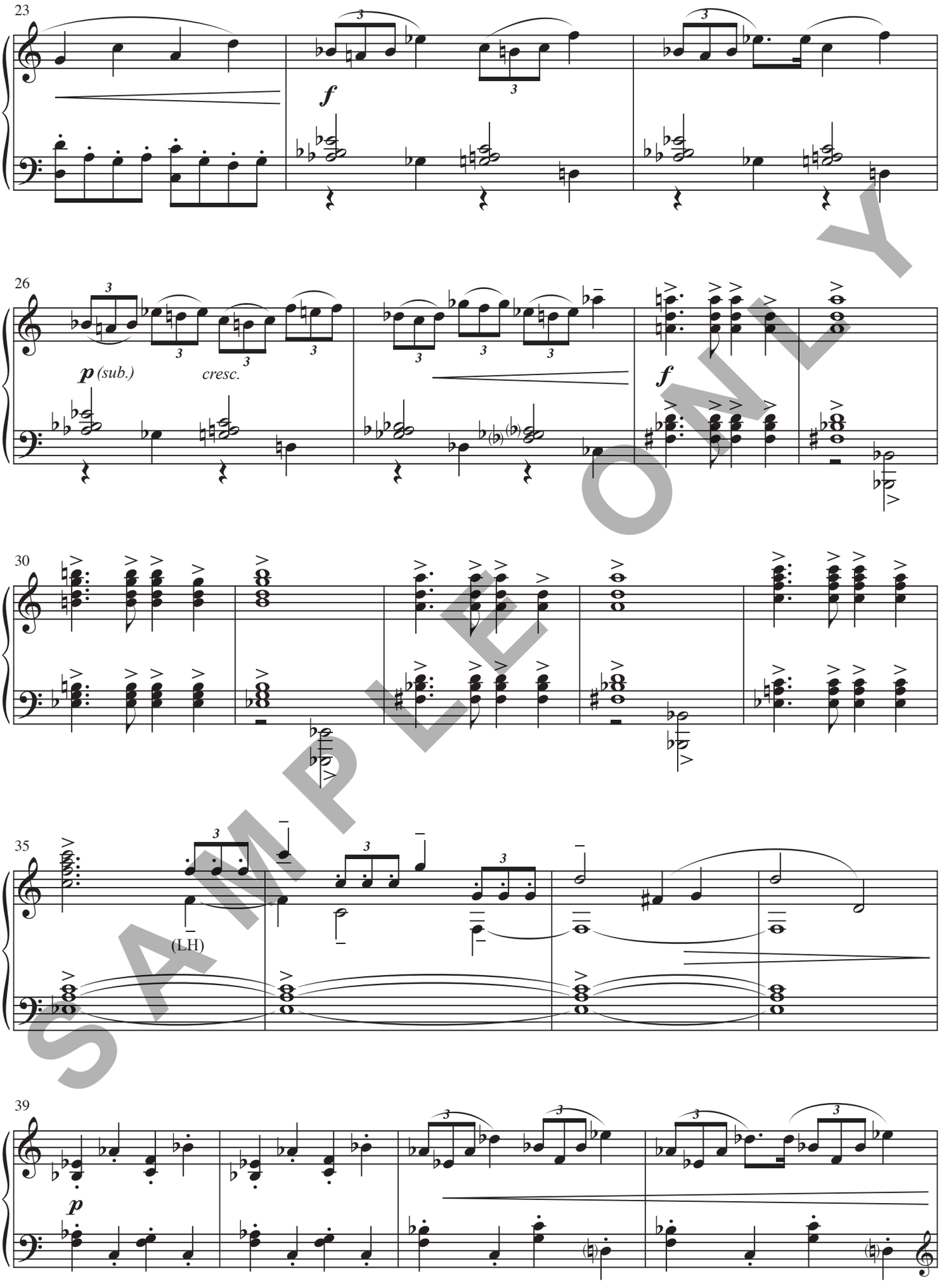

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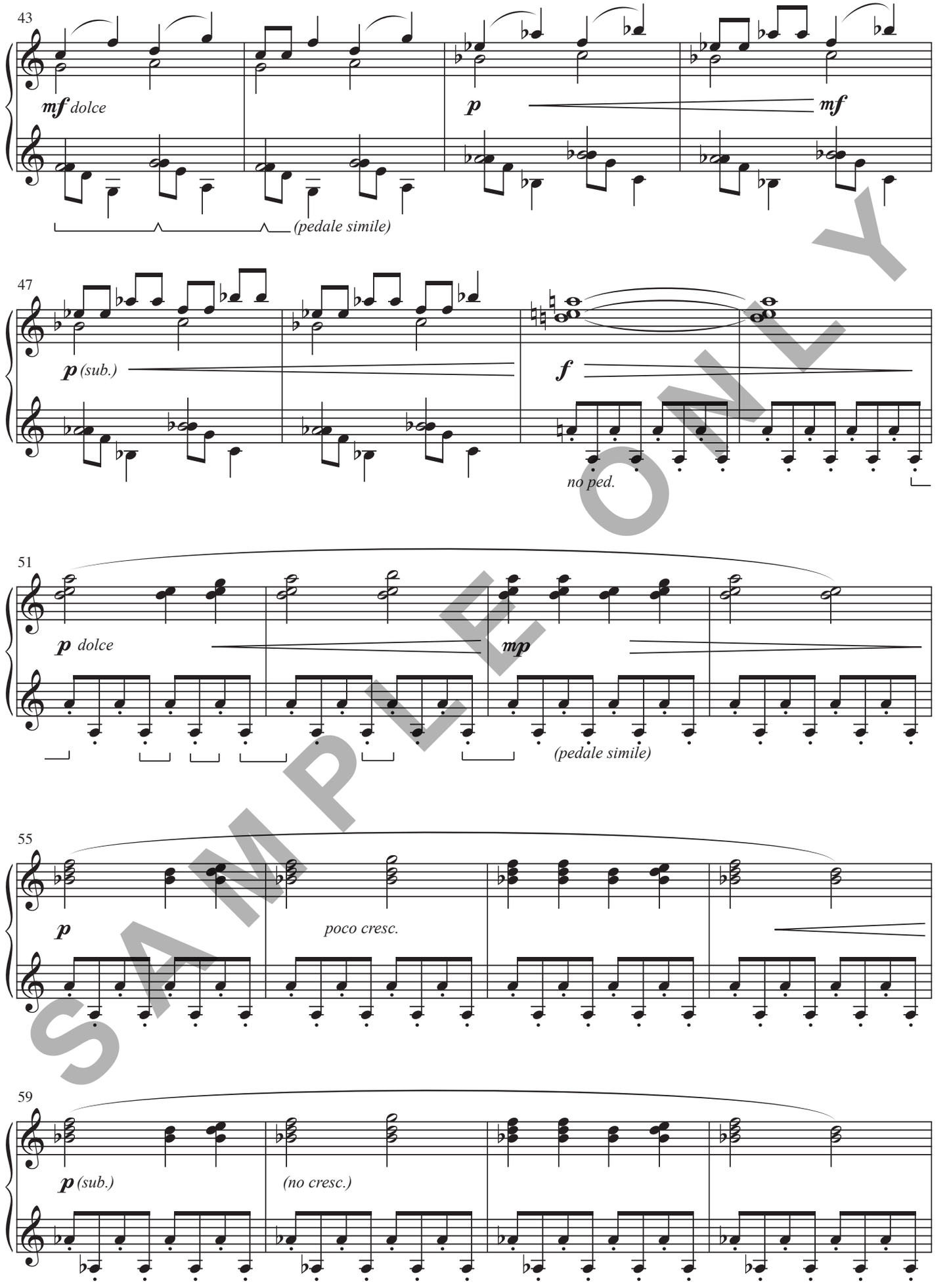
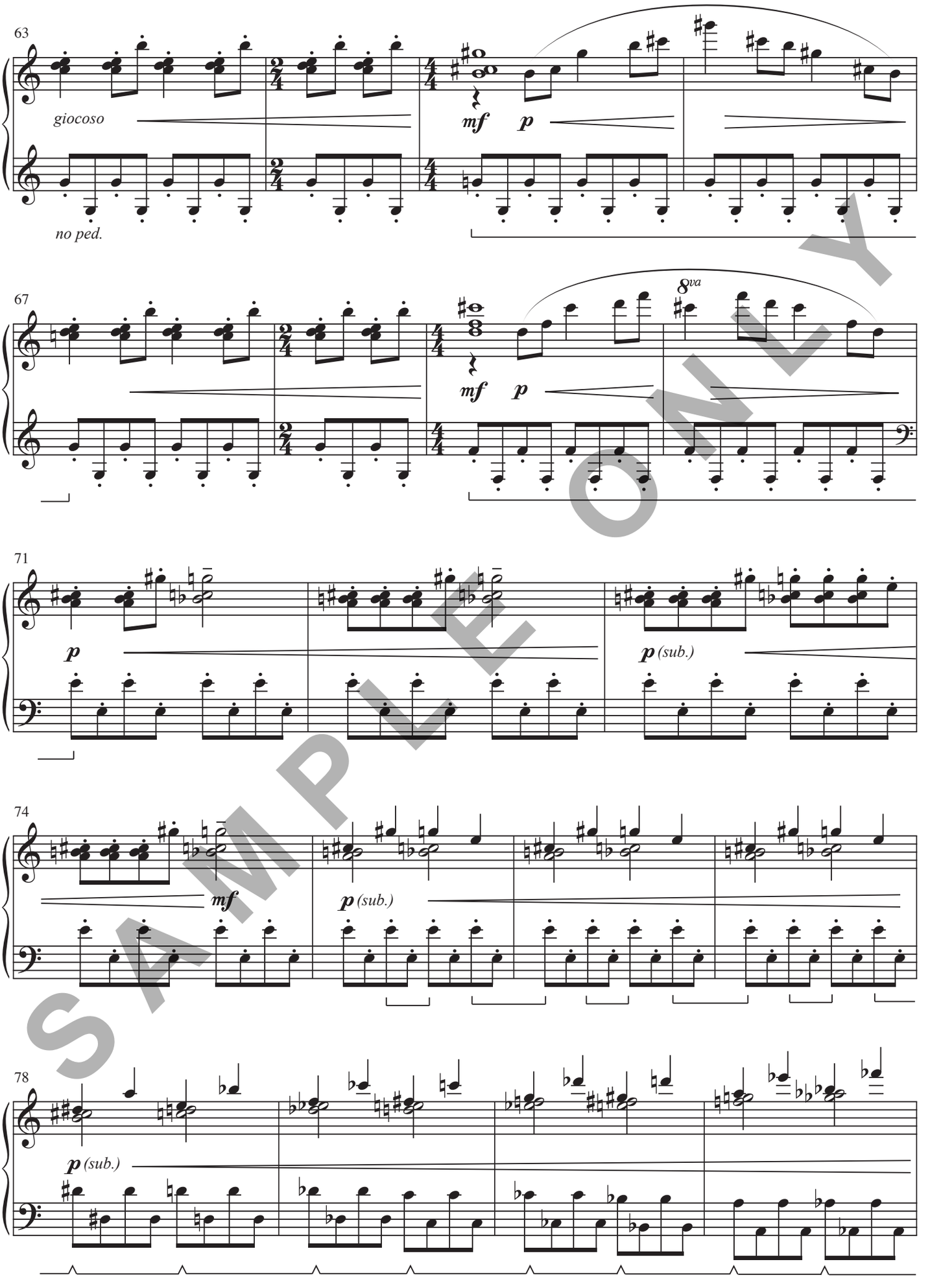

43
mf dolce
p
mf
(pedale simile)
47
p (sub.)
f
no ped.
51
p dolce
mp
(pedale simile)
55
p
poco cresc.
59
p (sub.)
(no cresc.)

SAMPLE ONLY



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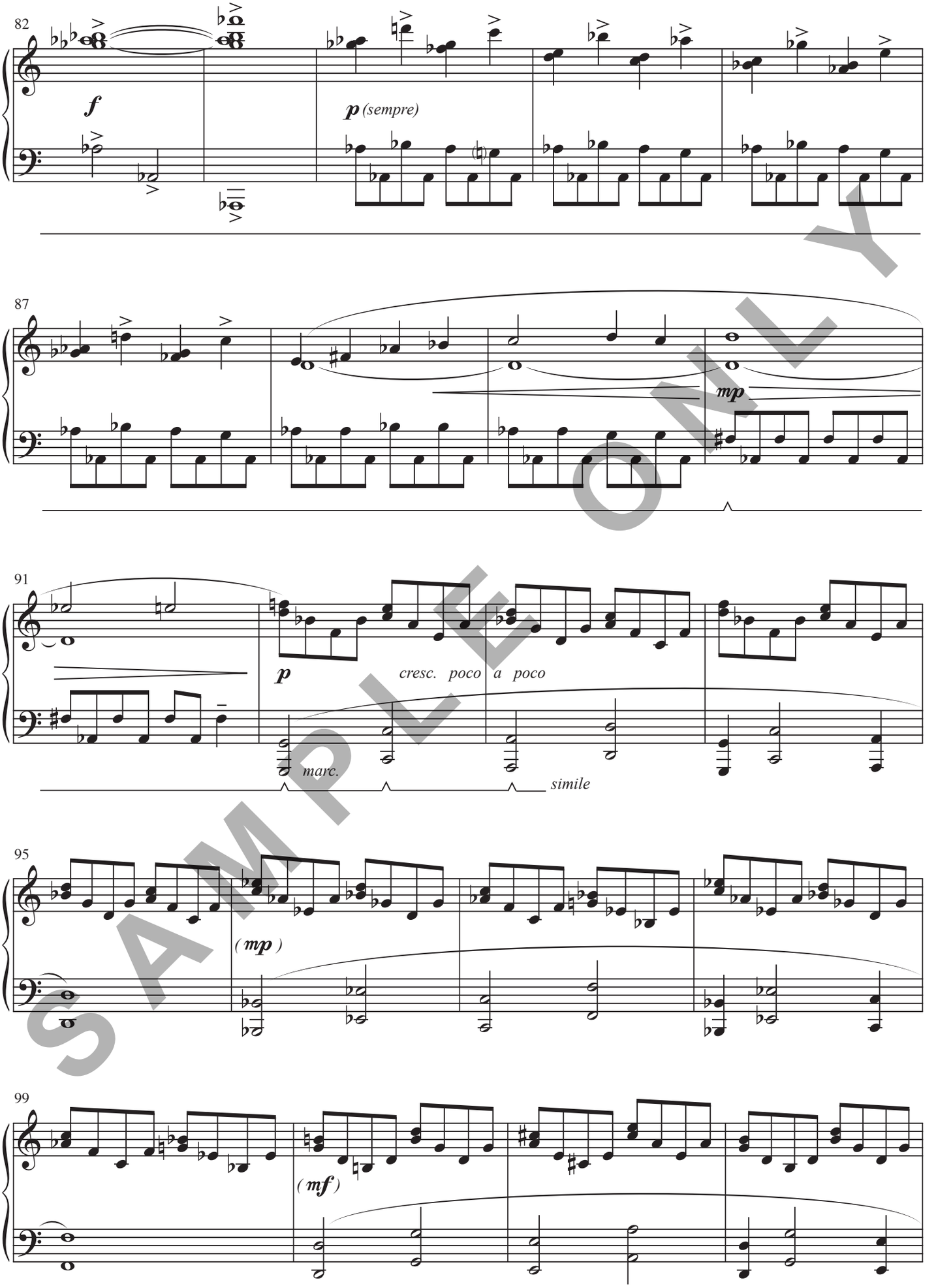

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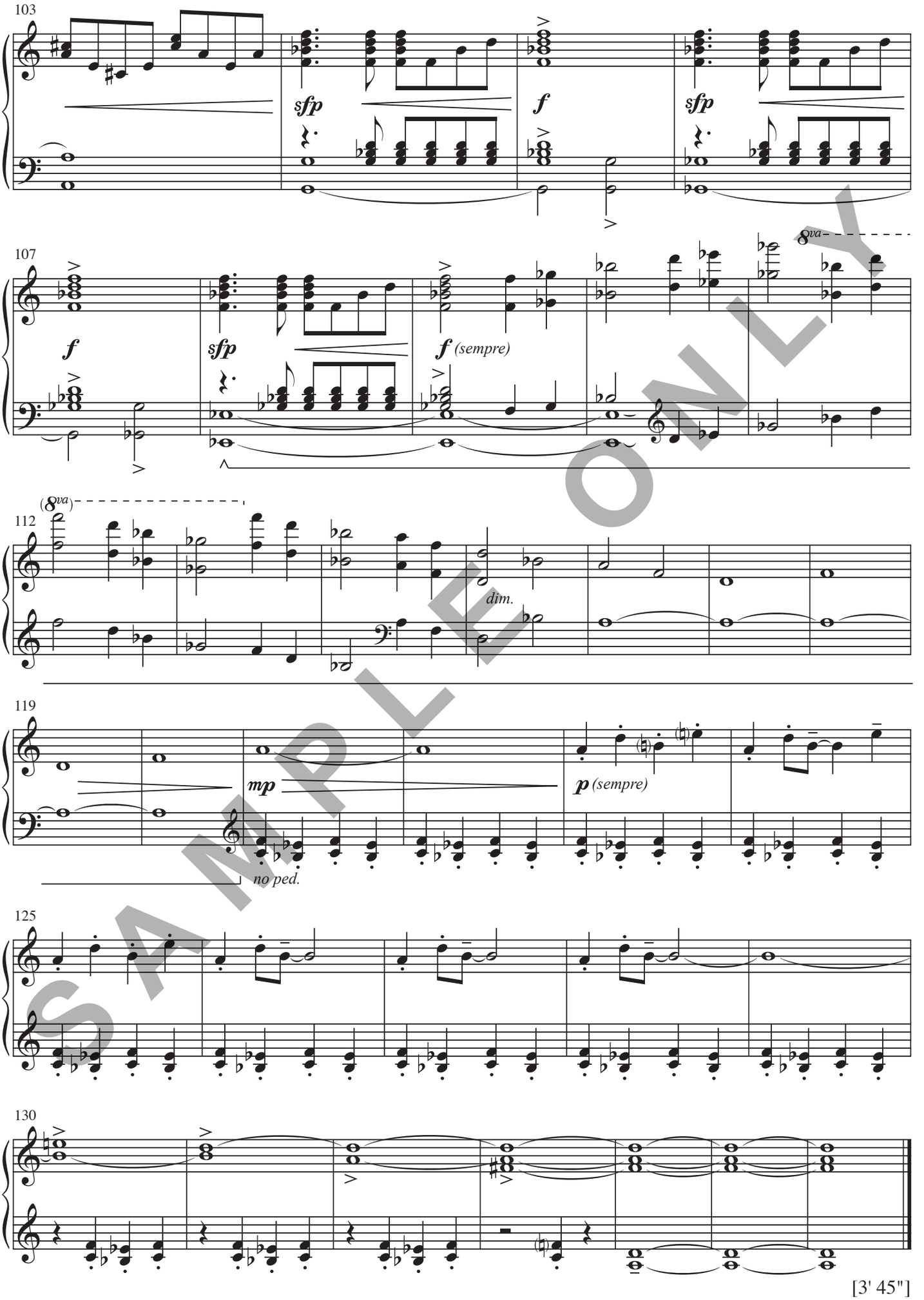


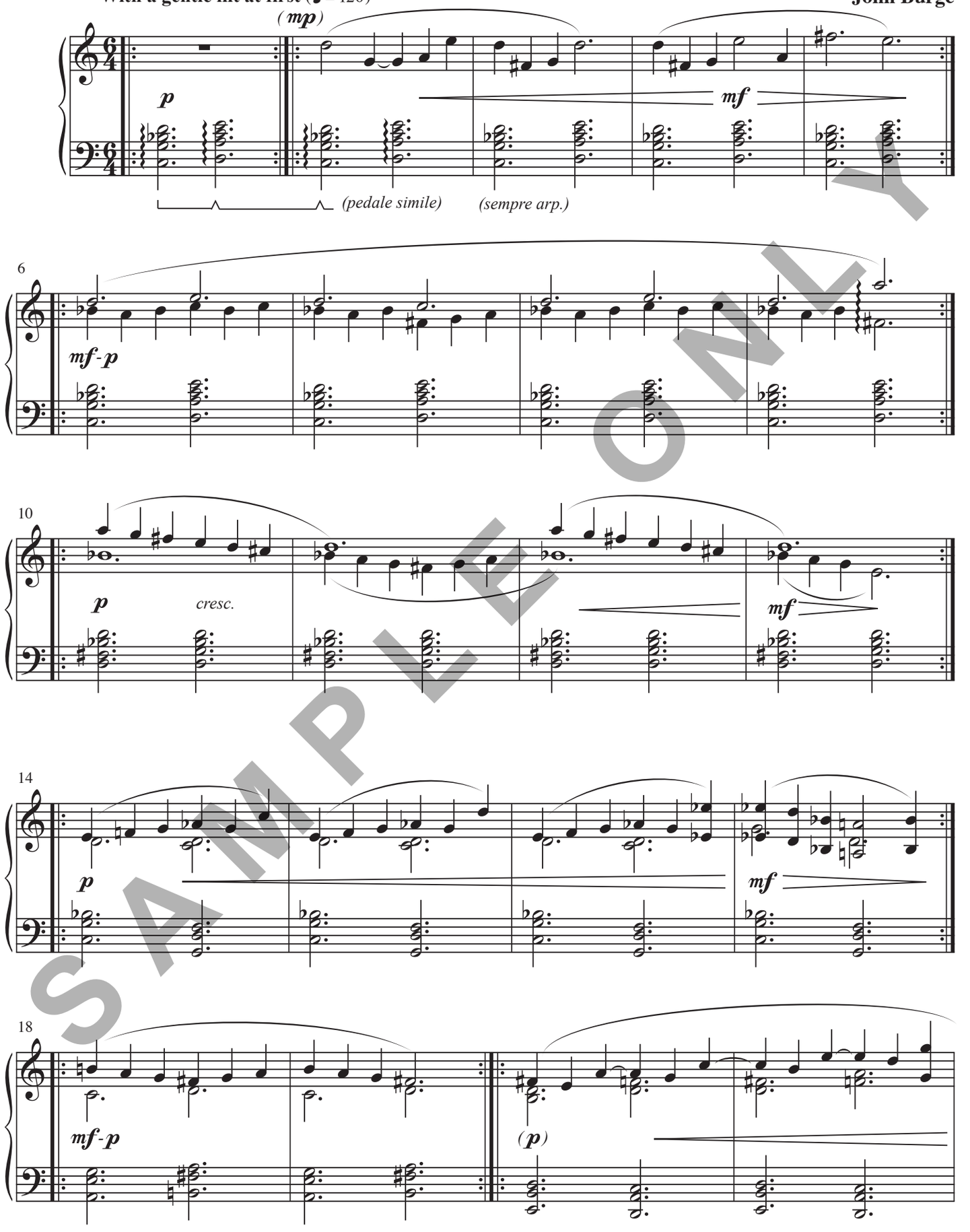
SAMPLE ONLY

[3' 45"]

No. 3 - Mata Embraces the New Day

With a gentle lilt at first (♩ = 120)

John Burge



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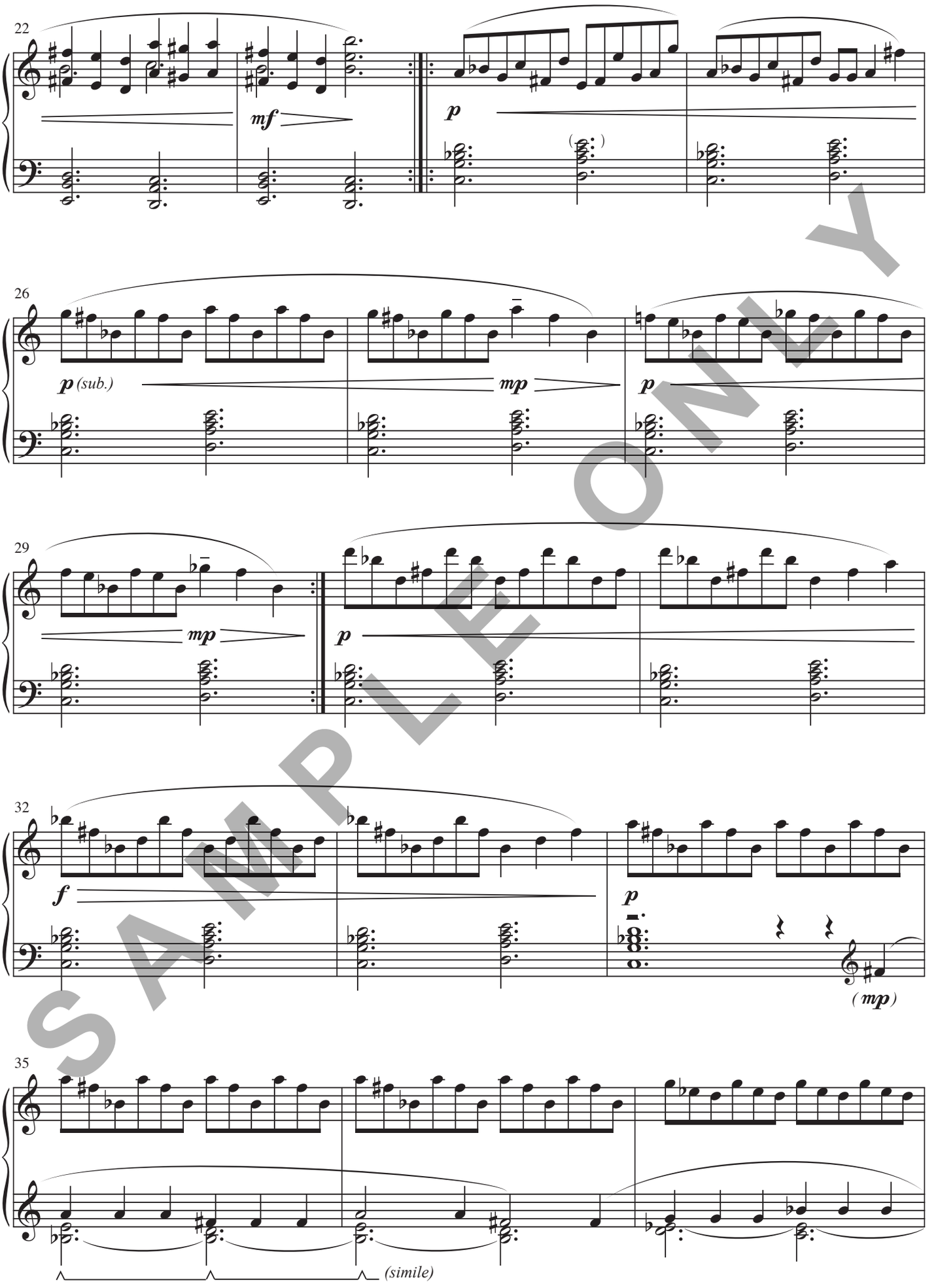

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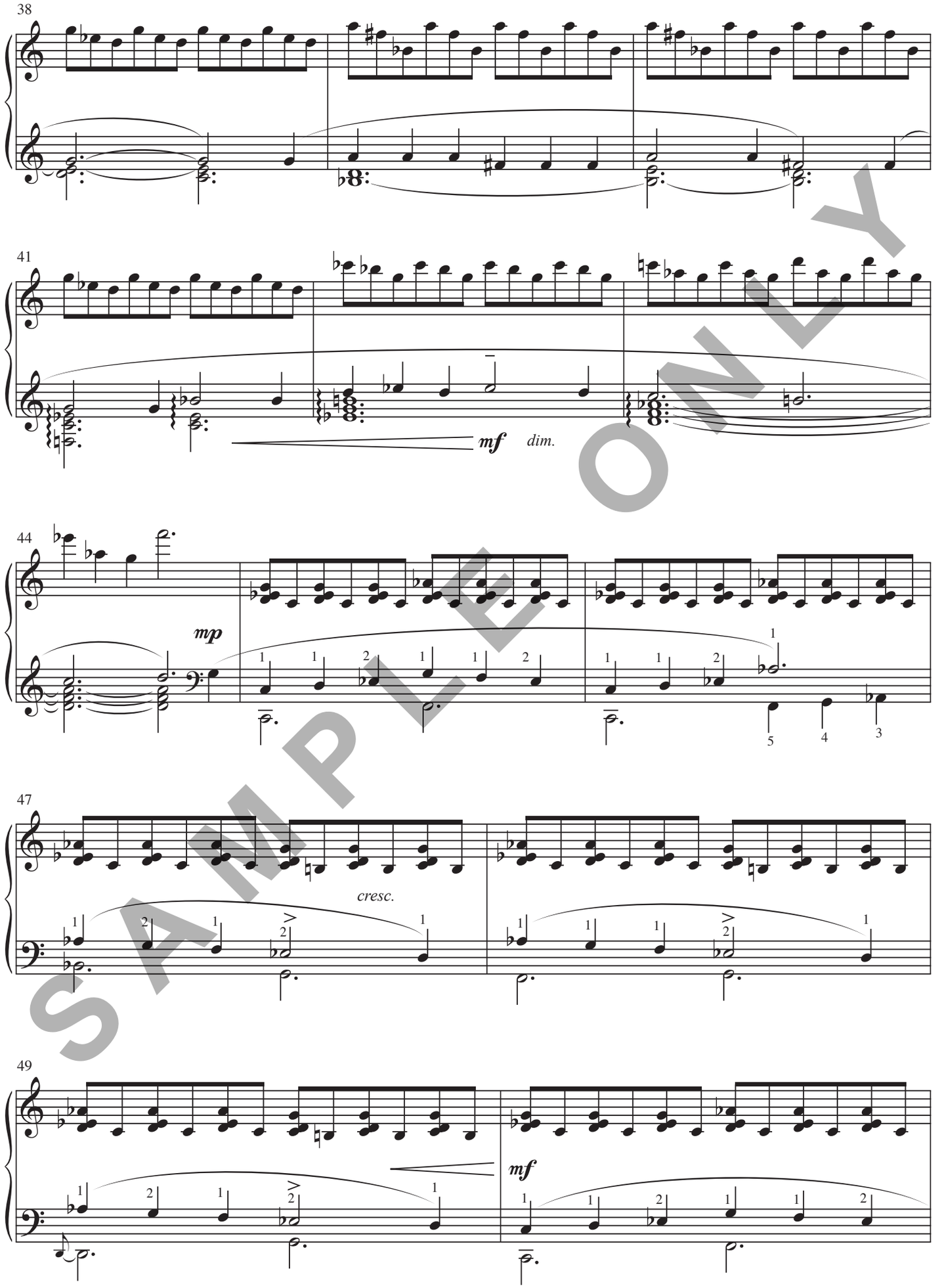

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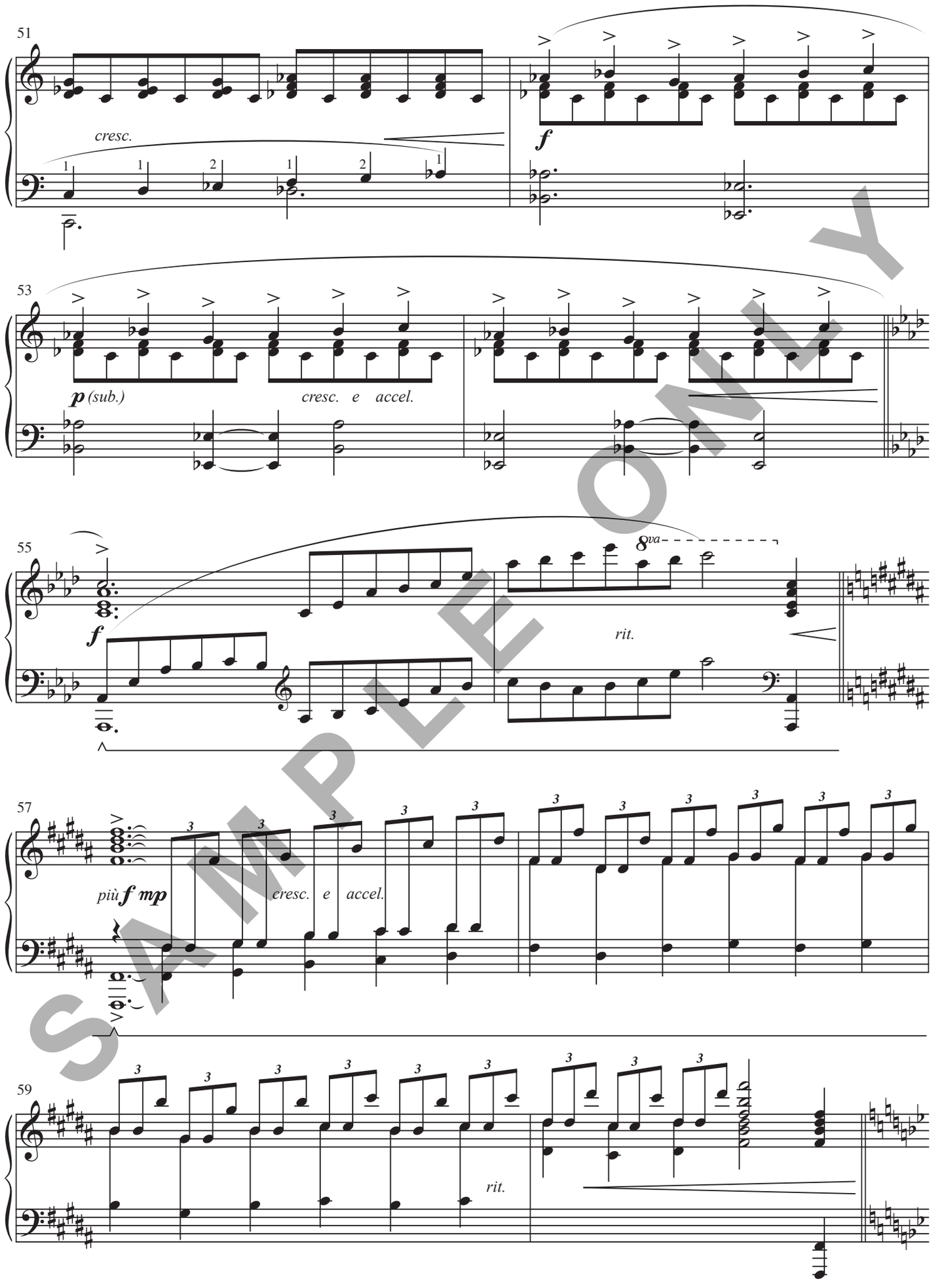
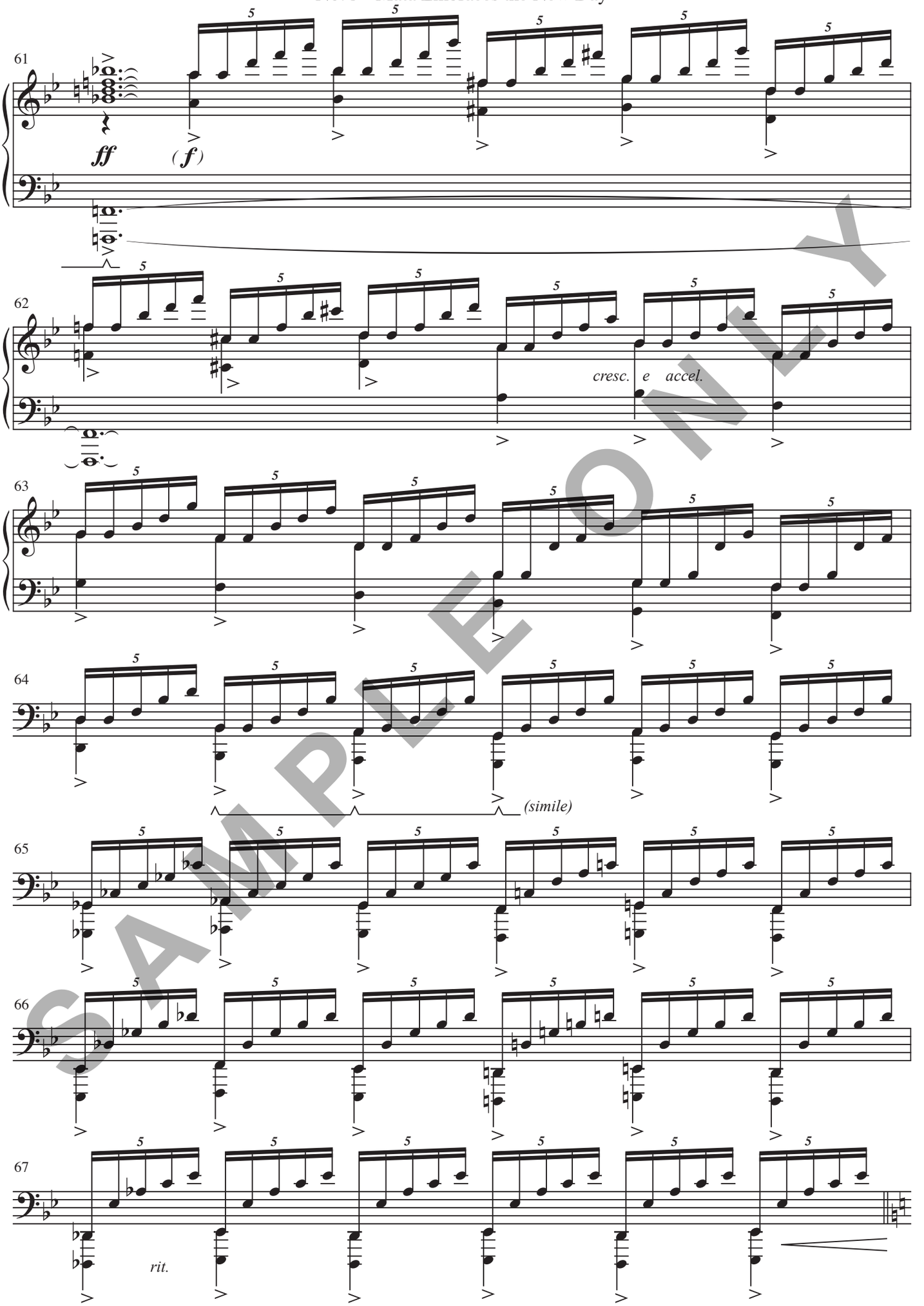

51
cresc.
f
53
p (sub.)
cresc. e accel.
55
8va
rit.
57
più f mp
cresc. e accel.
59
rit.

SAMPLE ONLY



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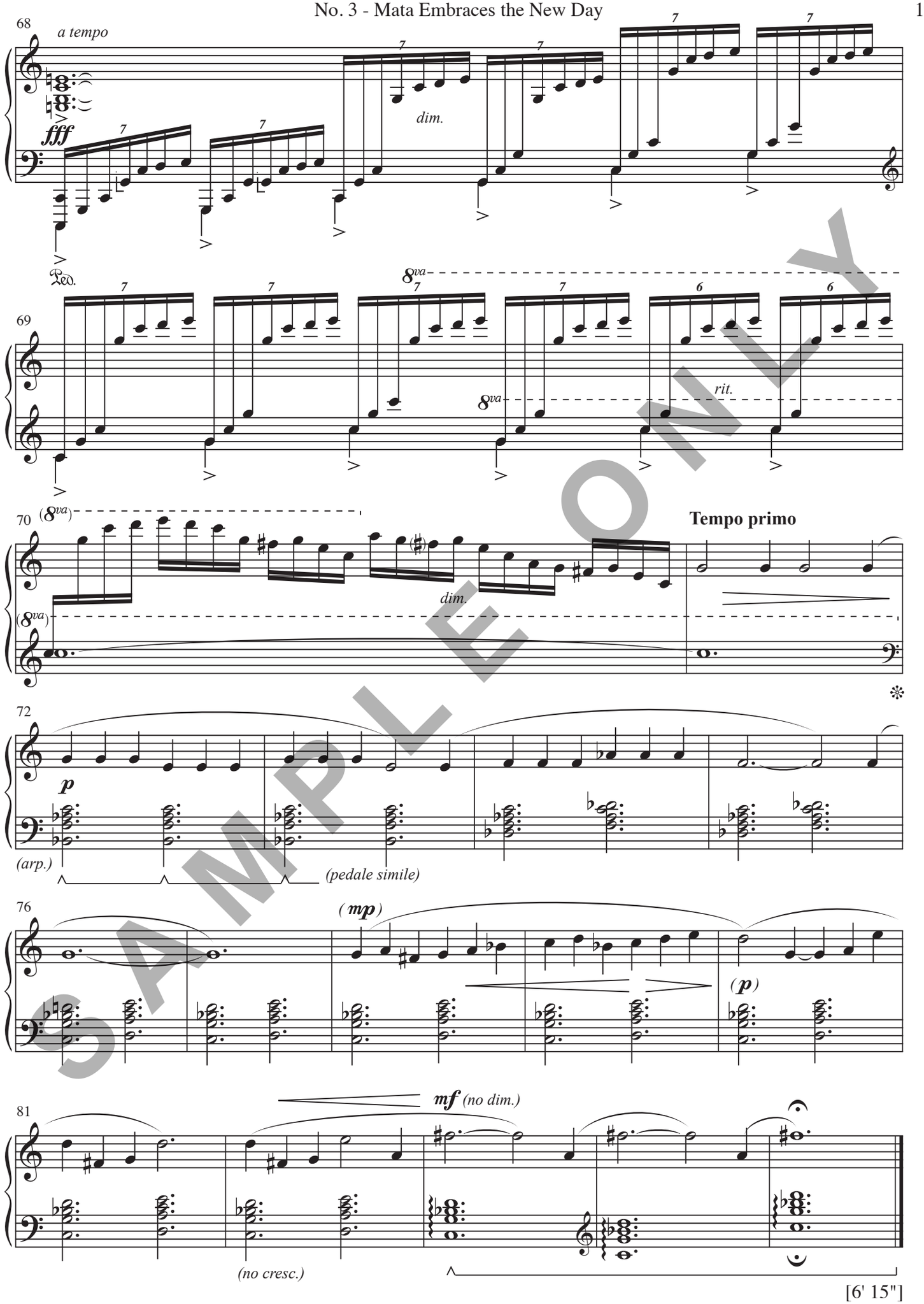
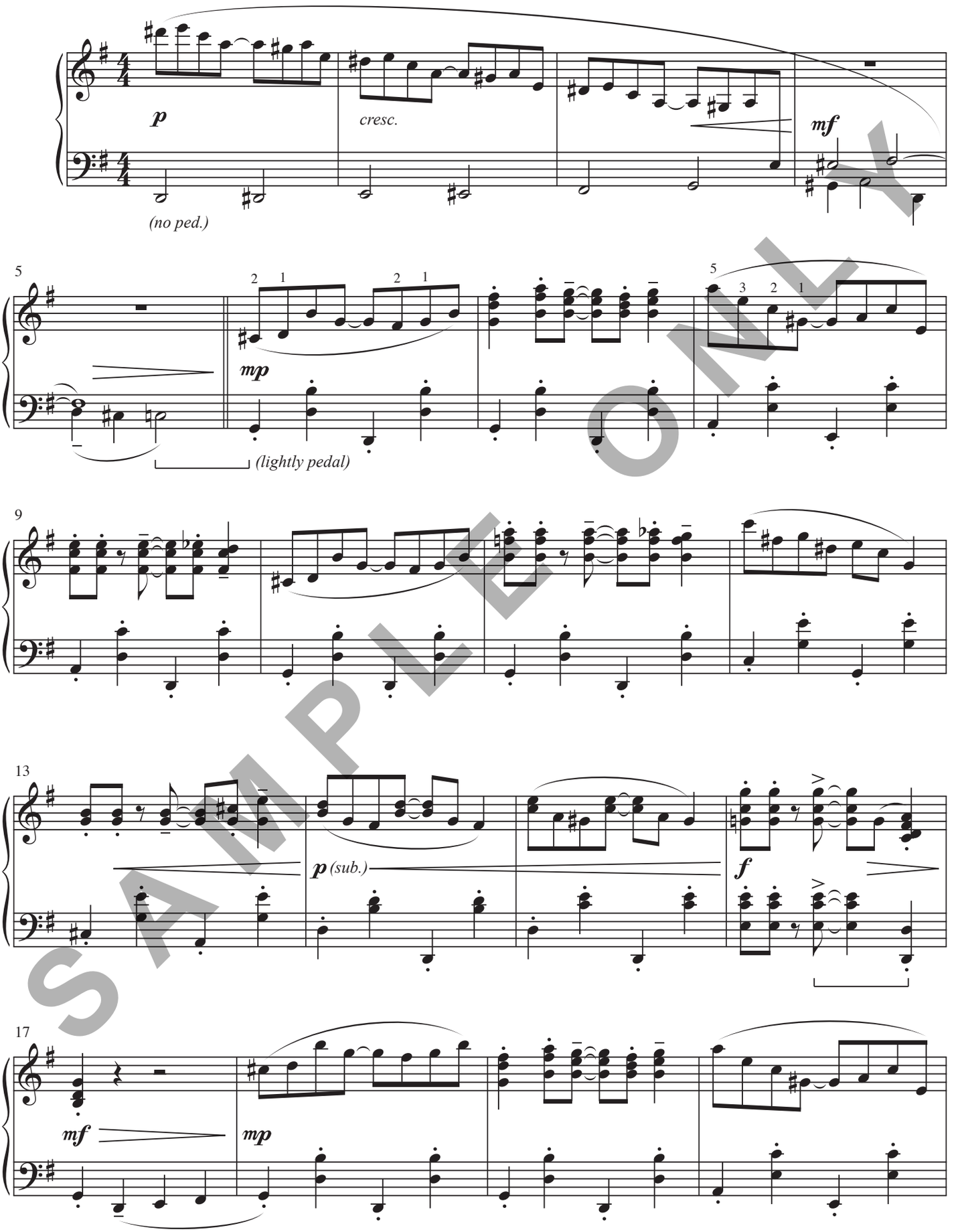

68
a tempo
fff
dim.
Ped.
69
8va
rit.
70
(8va)
dim.
Tempo primo
72
p
(arp.)
(pedale simile)
76
(mp)
(p)
81
mf (no dim.)
(no cresc.)
[6' 15"]

SAMPLE ONLY

No. 4 - The Incognito Rag

A slow rag (♩ = c. 116)

John Burge



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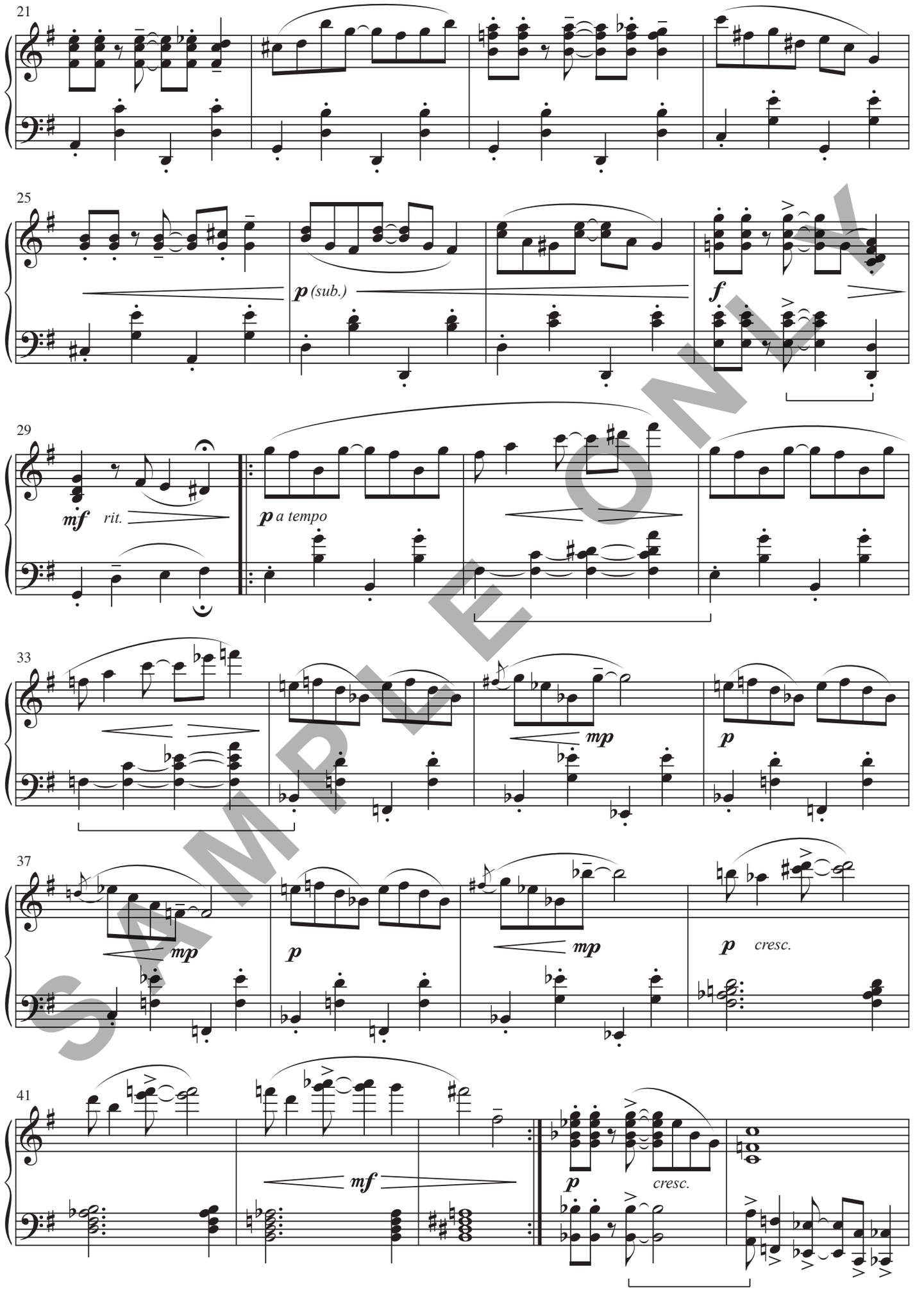
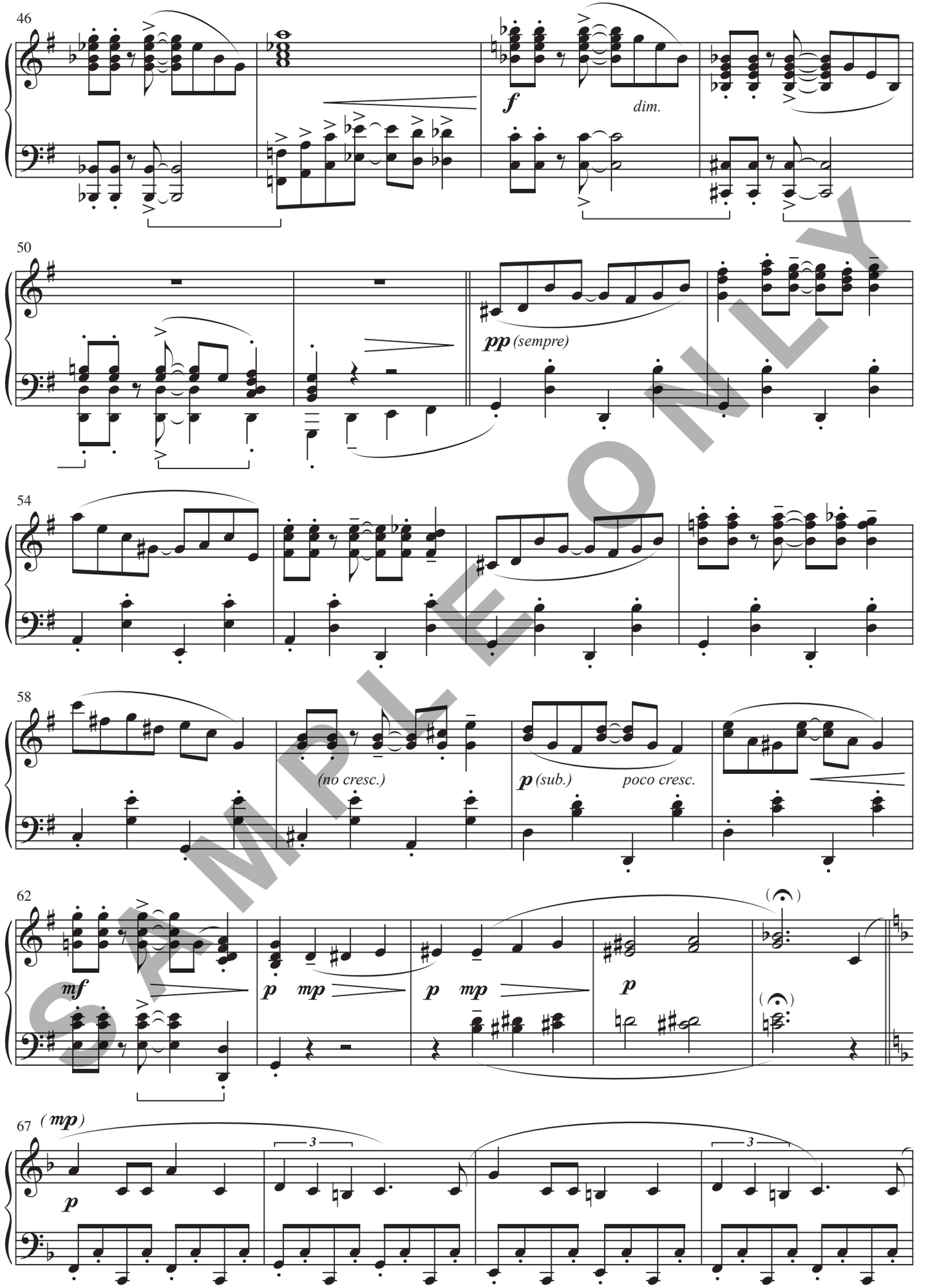
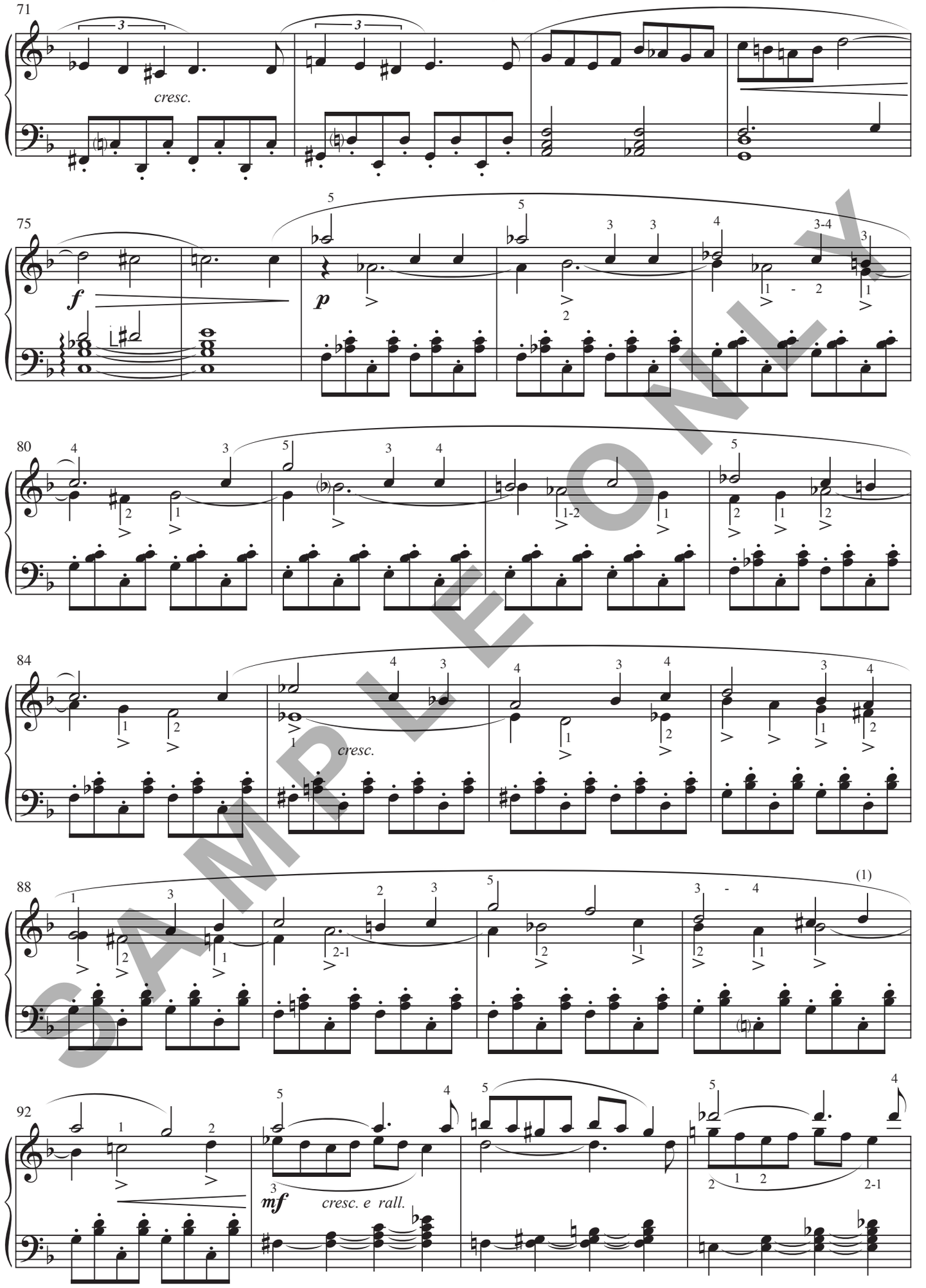

21
25
p (sub.)
f
29
mf rit.
p a tempo
33
mp
p
37
mp
p
mp
p cresc.
41
mf
p
cresc.

SAMPLE ONLY


46
f
dim.
50
pp (sempre)
54
58
(no cresc.)
p (sub.)
poco cresc.
62
mf
p
mp
p
mp
p
67
(mp)
p
3
3

SAMPLE ONLY



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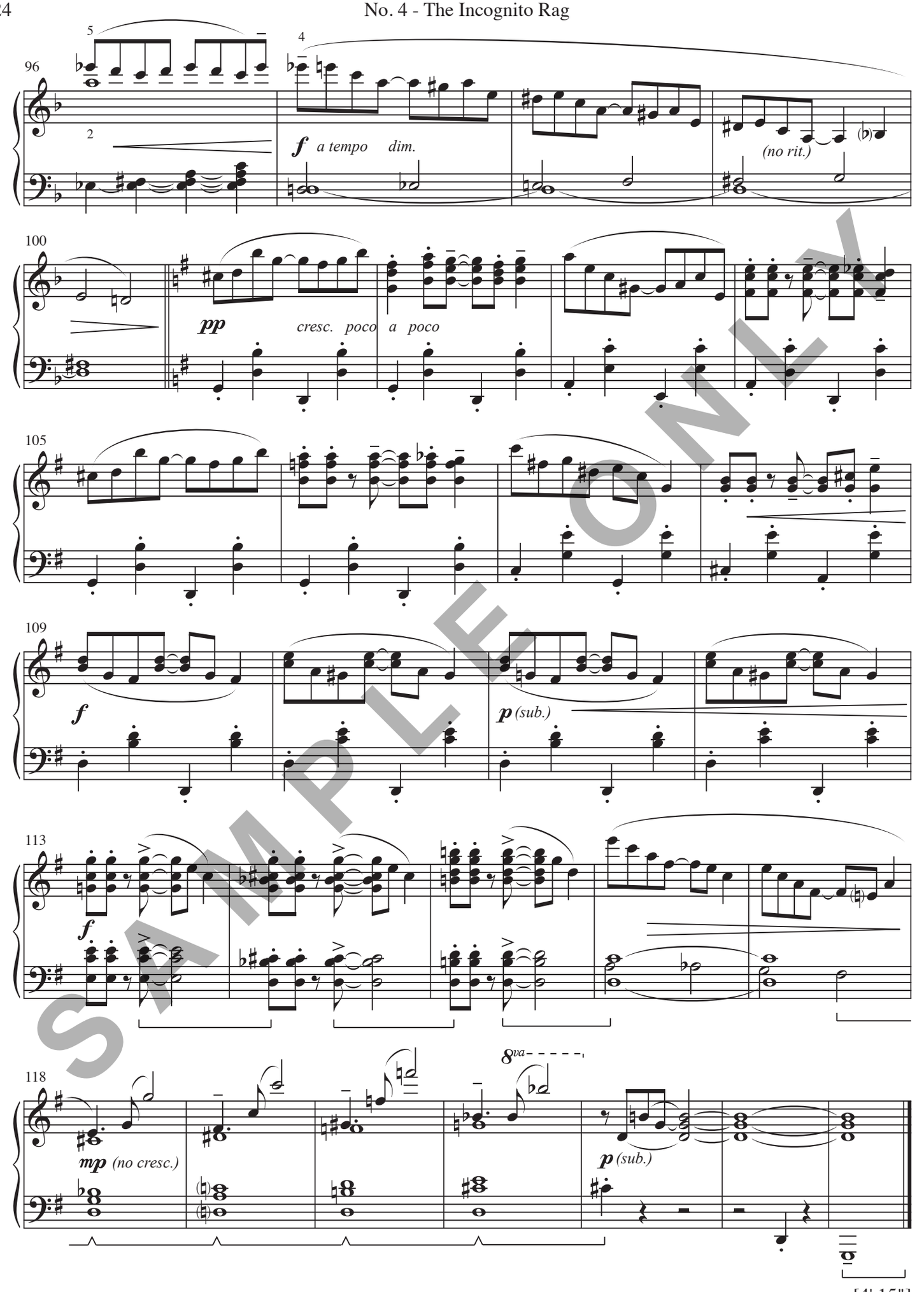
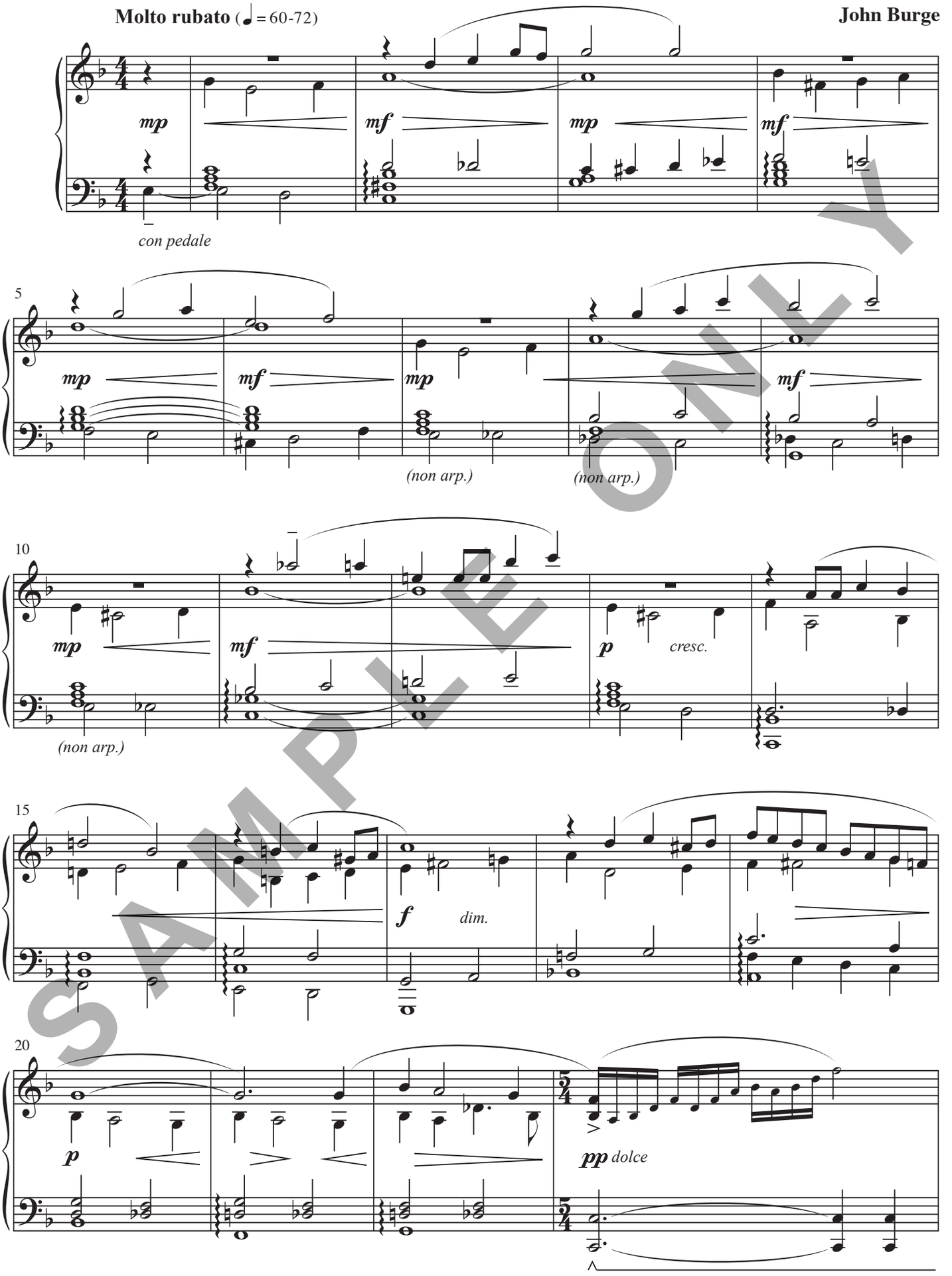

96
5
4
2
f a tempo dim.
(no rit.)
100
pp
cresc. poco a poco
105
109
f
p (sub.)
113
f
118
mp (no cresc.)
8va
p (sub.)
[4' 15"]

SAMPLE ONLY

No. 5 - Avec Amour

Molto rubato (♩ = 60-72)

John Burge



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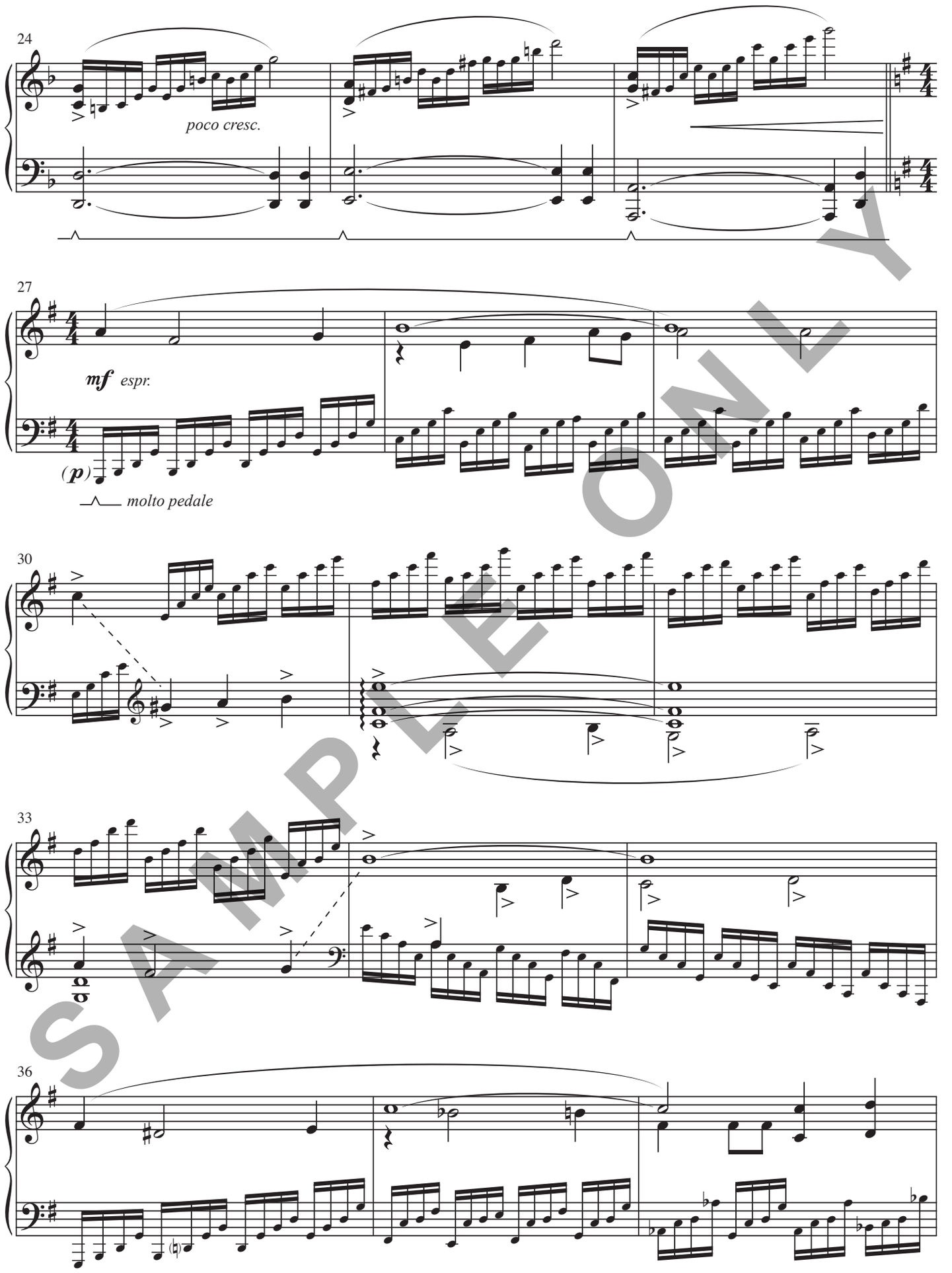

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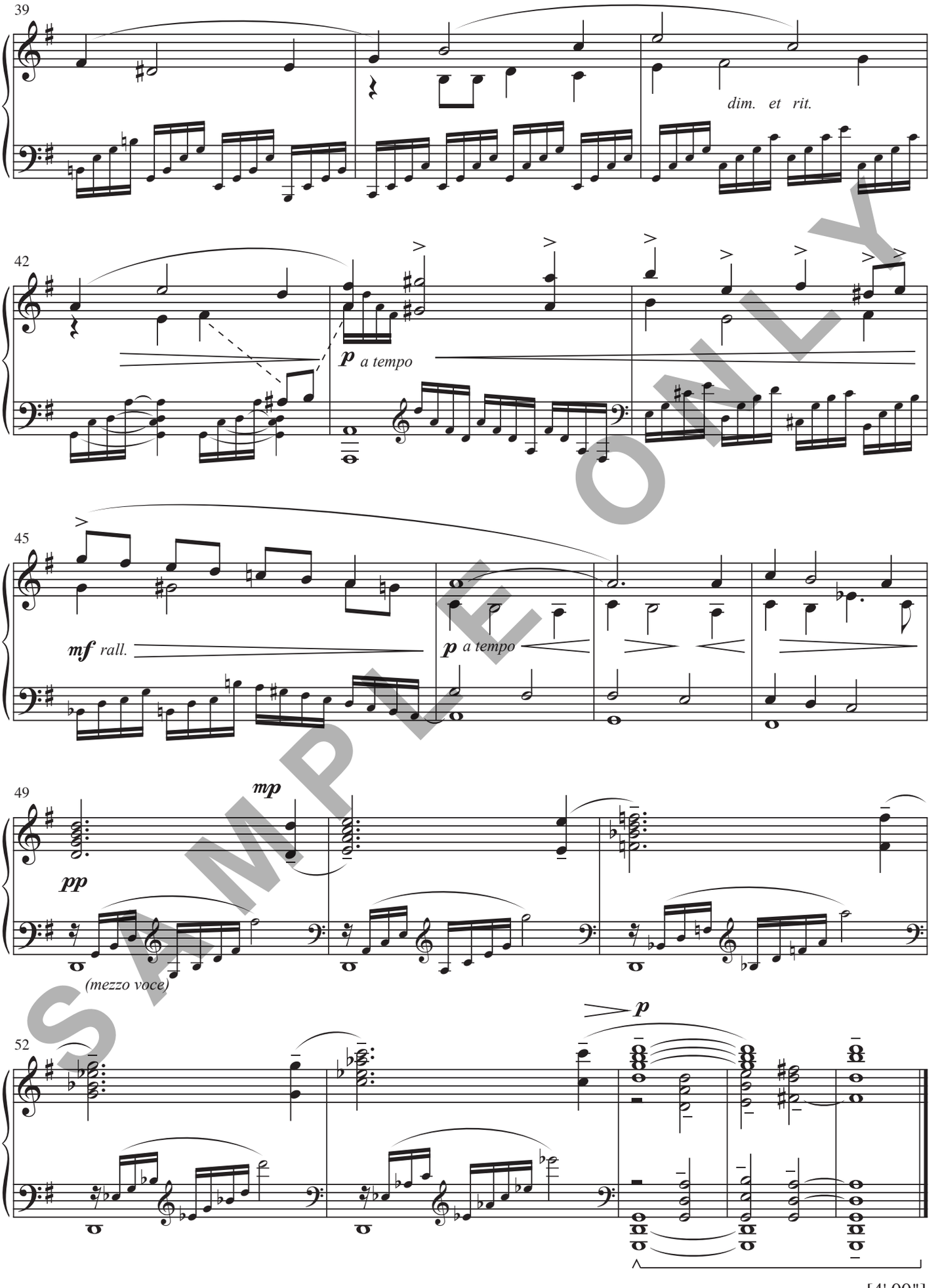
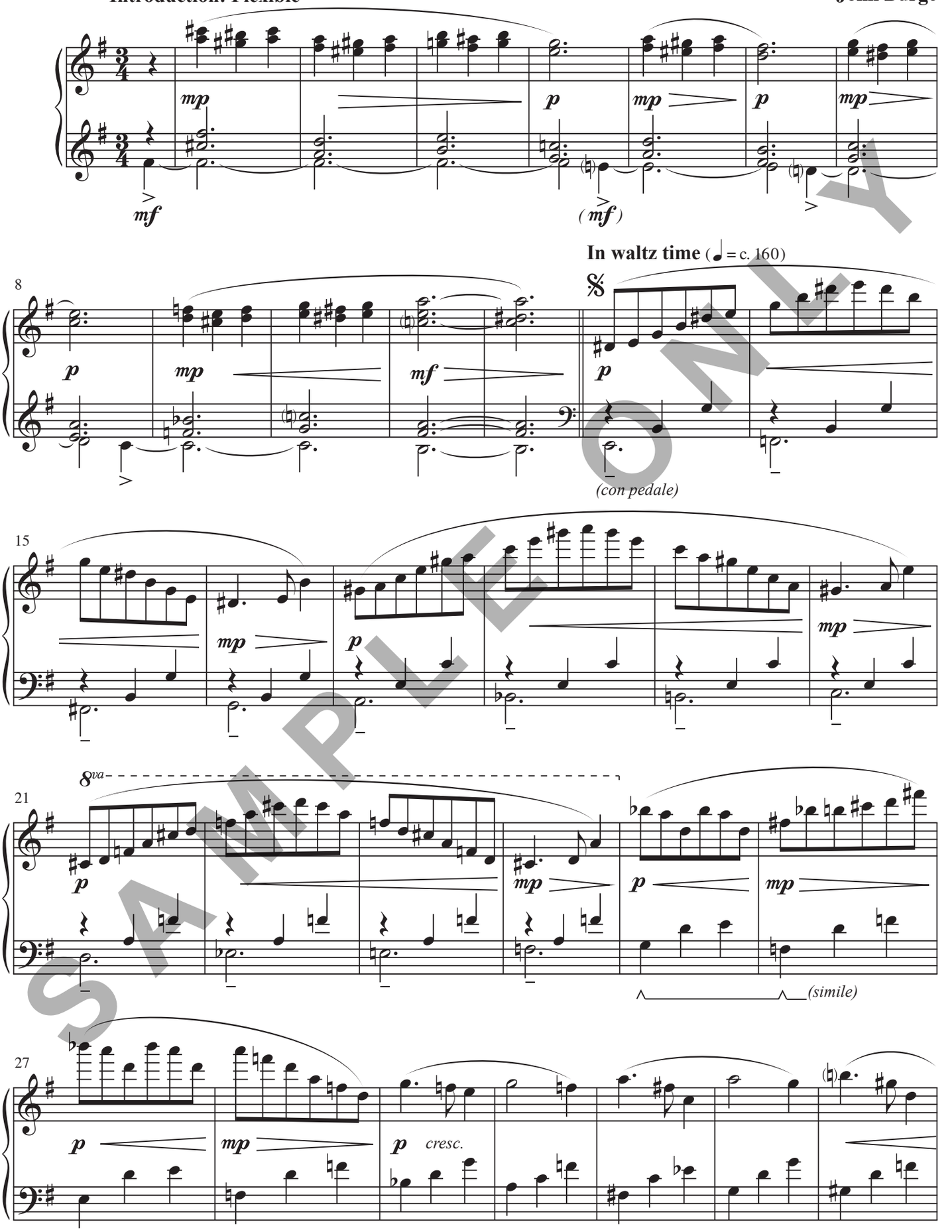

39
dim. et rit.
42
p a tempo
45
mf rall.
p a tempo
49
mp
pp
(mezzo voce)
52
p
[4' 00"]

SAMPLE ONLY

No. 6 - The Abandoned Waltz

Introduction: Flexible

John Burge



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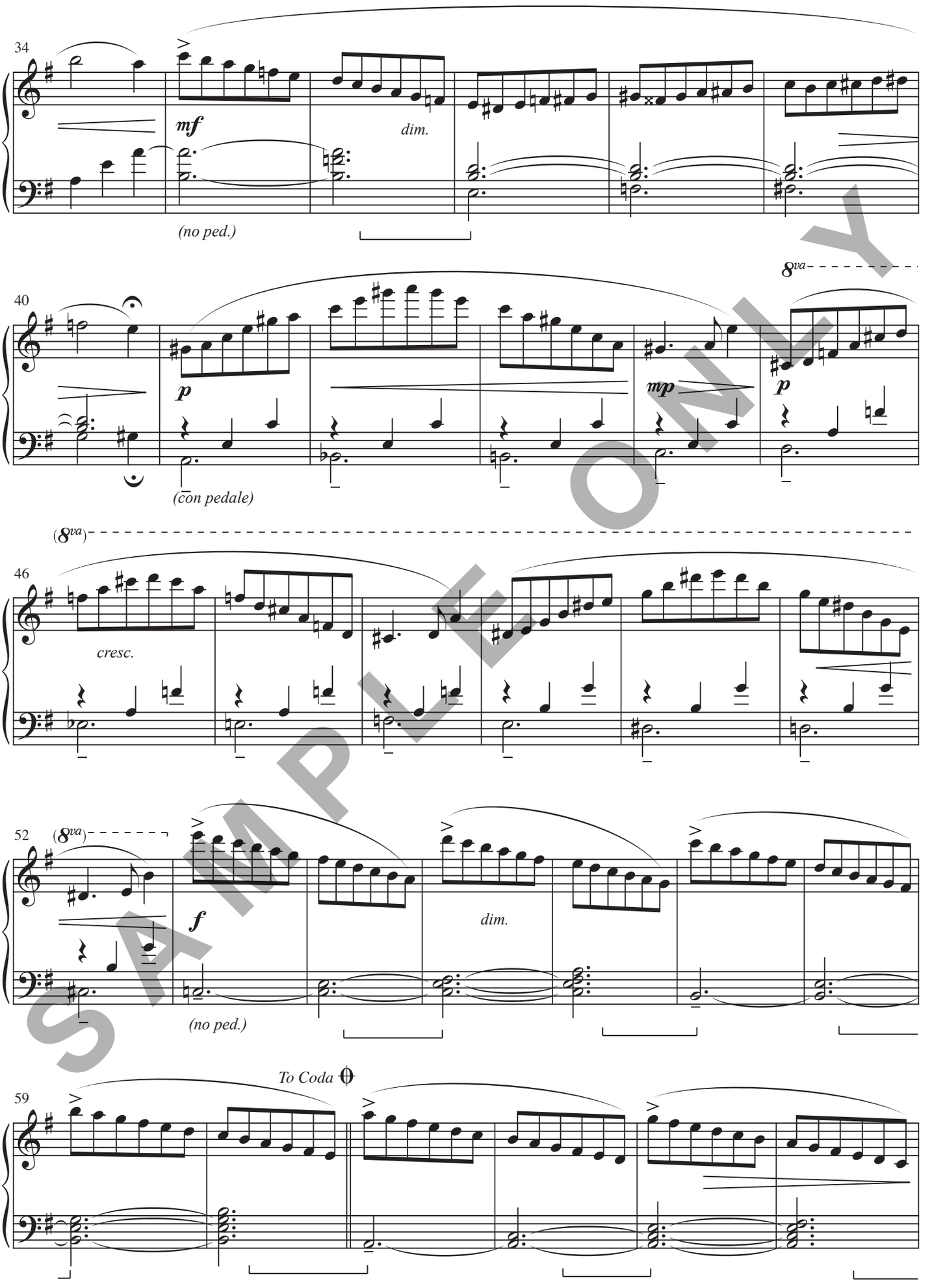
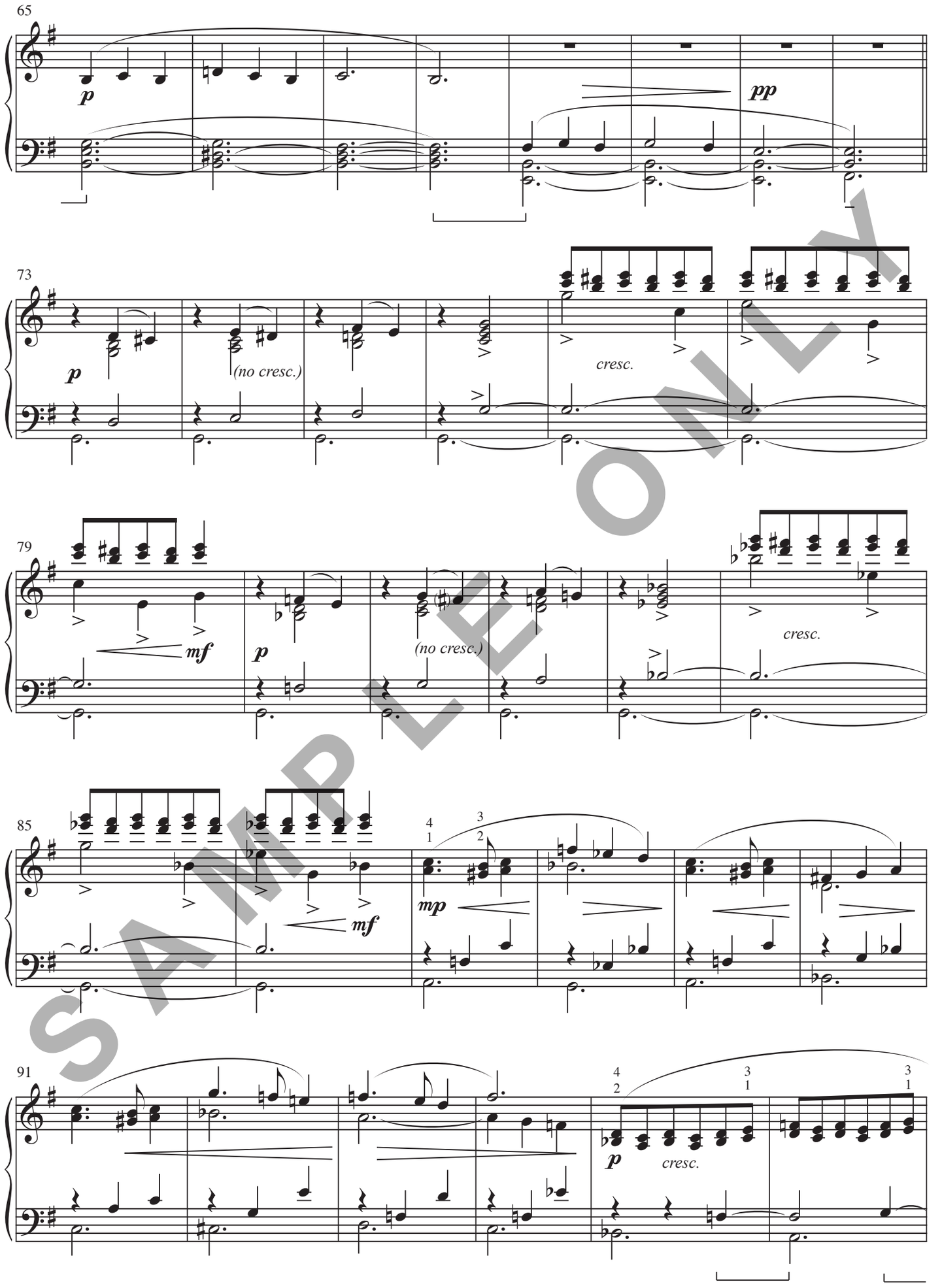
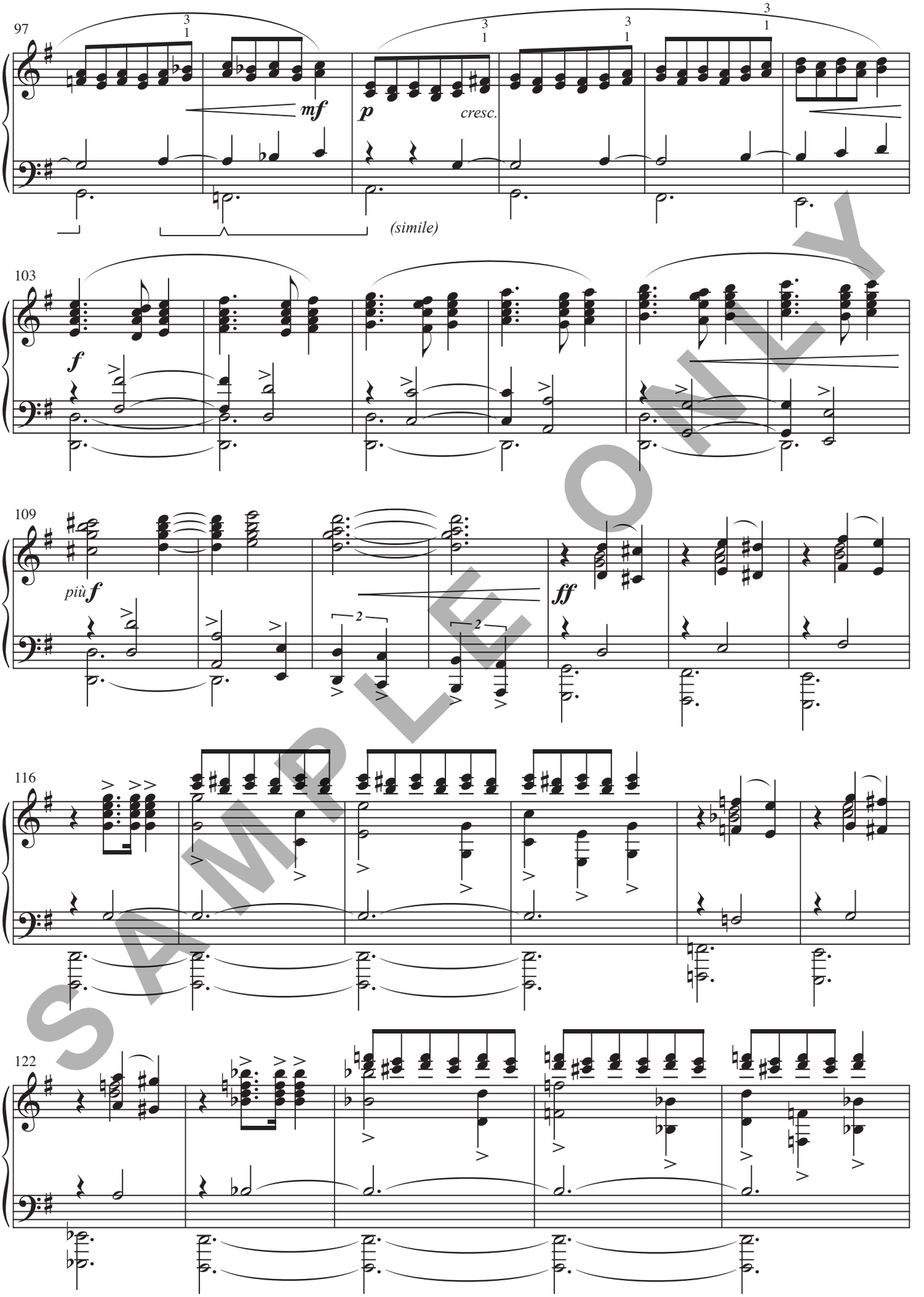

34
mf
dim.
(no ped.)
40
8va
p
mp
p
(con pedale)
(8va)
46
cresc.
52
(8va)
f
dim.
(no ped.)
To Coda
59

SAMPLE ONLY


65
p
pp
73
p
(no cresc.)
cresc.
79
mf
p
(no cresc.)
cresc.
85
mf
mp
91
p
cresc.

SAMPLE ONLY



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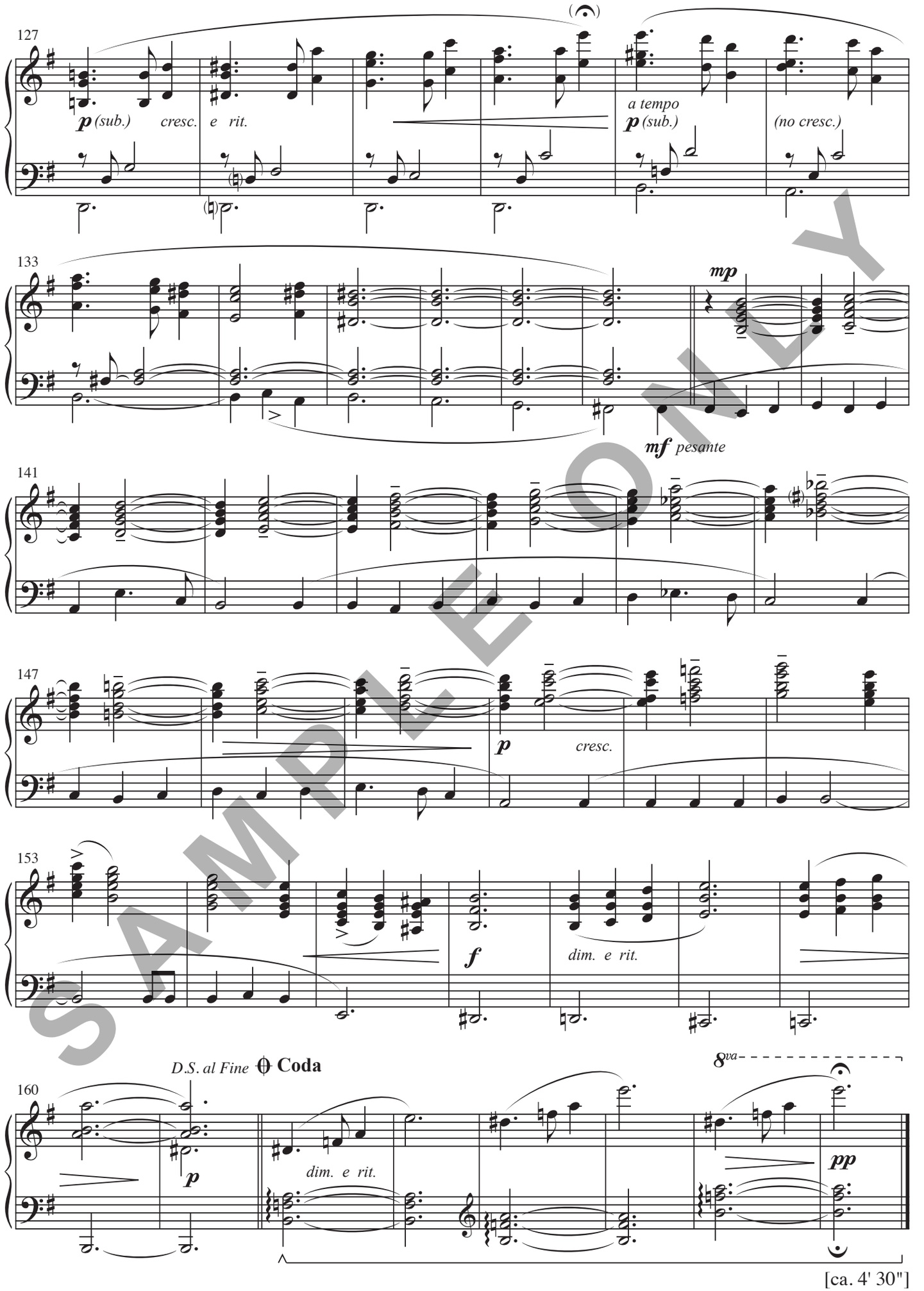

127
p (sub.) cresc. e rit.
a tempo
p (sub.)
(no cresc.)
133
mp
mf pesante
141
147
p
cresc.
153
f
dim. e rit.
160
D.S. al Fine
Coda
p
dim. e rit.
8va
pp
[ca. 4' 30"]

SAMPLE ONLY

No. 1 – Overture "The Tale of Mata Hari"

After a brief introduction, this movement opens with the melody that serves as the leitmotif of the show. Dr. Bizzard first sings this melody to the words, "Do you know all the tale of Mata Hari? Will you swear to the truth of what you heard?" This overture is really one of many waltz-like settings that permeate through the entire musical. Indeed, the prevalence of the waltz in **One Last Night With Mata Hari** is akin to the similar way that the waltz in its many guises, underlies a great deal of the music that was created and performed in Europe during Mata Hari's life.

No. 2 – March

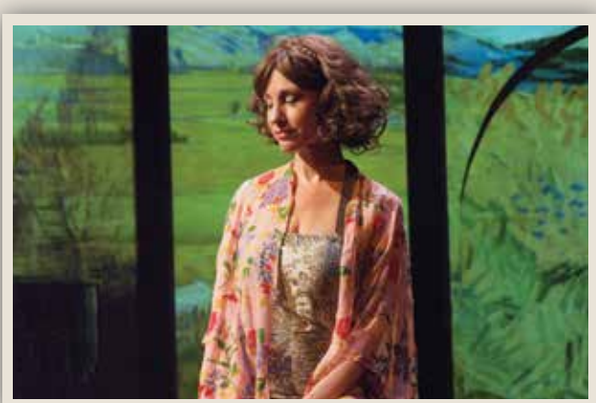
This movement is a pastiche of a number of militaristic musical clichés including punchy fanfares and strident march-like patterns. Although a number of themes from the actual show make an appearance in this solo piano movement, the main tune of this march is borrowed from the song, "An Officer to Marry," and is first treated here in a kind of mock fugue immediately following the boisterous introduction.

No. 3 – Mata Hari Embraces the New Day

"Mati Hari" is often translated as "Eye of the Day" and this movement captures the languidness of an improvised dance that builds in volume to match the dawning of the sun. The music draws heavily upon Eastern Asian influences filtered through the melodic and harmonic vocabulary of the European tonal system around 1900. The melody characterized by many repeated notes comes from the moment in the show when Mata is imagining how her exotically improvised dance will unfold using the words, "A touch here of Buddha and Krishna too, A dollop of temples Siamese."

No. 4 – The Incognito Rag

This movement is a moderately paced bit of ragtime piano with a syncopated main theme that repeats three times in an ABACA design. Mata Hari was recruited to spy for France during the First World War by George Ladoux, and although Mata Hari was convicted and shot for being a double agent, George Ladoux was himself tried twice on similar charges after the war and aquitted both times. Still, it seems likely that Mata Hari could have been framed by Ladoux. There are three meetings between Mata Hari and Ladoux in the show. These meetings are entirely sung and set in a very humorous rhyming dialogue underscored by a fast polka rhythm. The main melody of these meetings forms the basis of the C section of this rag.

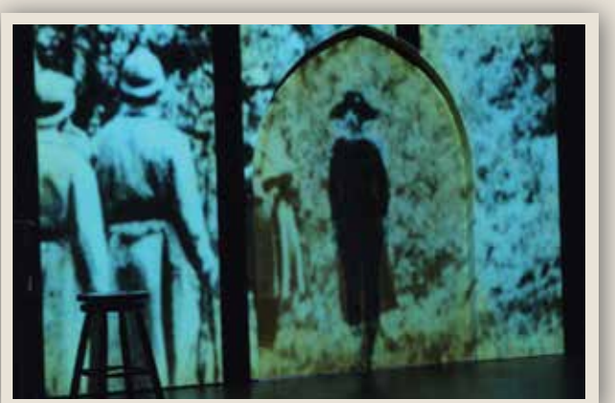


No. 5 – Avec Amour

Mata Hari's one true love in the show is a Russian cavalryman named Vadime. She sings of this romance in the show's only ballad, "No More New Beginnings." In the show this song is structured like a duet with the piano providing the second melody in a call and response pattern to Mata's vocal part. In the suite's solo piano treatment, both melodies are placed in the piano part, first set very simply and then repeated in a more emotionally charged fashion with a florid pattern of faster moving sixteenth notes surrounding the two melodies. As in the show, this setting modulates with the first verse starting in F major and the second verse sliding upwards to G major as a way of increasing the intensity in both an emotional and tonal fashion.

No. 6 – The Abandoned Waltz

The principal melody of this piano piece was one of the many tunes that didn't make it into the show and it seemed fitting to actually use it in the piano suite with the rather appropriate title of, "The Abandoned Waltz." The ending of this piano piece is very incomplete as it drifts ambiguously up the keyboard, implying perhaps that the waltz was left incomplete to also strongly suggest the questioning of Mata Hari's guilt. The very noticeable melodic bass line supported by offbeat chords in the right hand is a direct quote from Mata Hari's song, "The Wild Ride." The photograph shown at the side here is taken from the end of the show and is the actual photograph of Mata Hari before she was shot.



JOHN BURGE (b. 1961, Dryden, Ontario) is a Canadian composer who has been teaching at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario since 1987. A Juno-winning composer, he has produced a large body of instrumental and vocal music including a number of symphonies and concertos as well as a chamber opera. Like many composers he has a close affinity to the piano and as a solo performer, he still tries to find time to present concerts or performance lectures of his own music on the piano. In 2013 he joined the Red Leaf Pianoworks collective and began releasing new editions of his solo piano music starting with **PARKING AN OCTATONIC TRUCK** (JBComps-001). This earlier set consisted of piano solos ranging from grades 1-8, a number of which had been composed as quick-study compositions for use at music festivals where Burge had adjudicated.

THE MATA HARI SUITE, for solo piano, consists of six pieces that were written to provide background music during the opening run of **ONE LAST NIGHT WITH MATA HARI**. This one-woman show requires a male pianist with acting abilities and was created by John Burge (music) and Craig Walker (book and lyrics). Mata Hari (1876-1917) was renowned as an exotic dancer and courtesan in the early 20th century but it is her conviction and execution by France on charges of spying for Germany during World War I that accounts for much of her ongoing infamy. Her final days were spent in the Saint Lazure Prison in Paris and this show uses the prison setting to give her one last time to tell her side of the story in a kind of cabaret performance. The musical language employed in the show draws heavily upon the styles of many composers of the period including Claude Debussy, Kurt Weill and even Arthur Sullivan, but Strauss waltzes are often percolating near the surface. More specifically, the six movements of this collection were composed to provide incidental music to aurally engage the audience before each of the two acts by combining melodies taken directly from the show with original melodies coloured in the same stylistic vein. Each movement is designed to be performed separately and has the suggested difficulty level of Grade Ten repertoire. Playing two or more contrasting movements would be an ideal performance presentation.

Patricia O'Callaghan as Mata Hari from
ONE LAST NIGHT WITH MATA HARI

CONTENTS:

No. 1 – Overture: The Tale of Mata Hari
No. 2 – March
No. 3 – Mata Embraces the New Day
No. 4 – The Incognito Rag
No. 5 – Avec Amour
No. 6 – The Abandoned Waltz

Duration: approximately 24 minutes

Cover Design: Yesim Tosuner
John Burge Photo: Josh Lyon
Performace Photos: Tim Fort
Premiere Poster: Andrea Robertson

JBComps-005
979-0-9001530-0-5

Do check out the websites listed below for other publications and recorded performances of John Burge's solo piano music.

www.johnburge.ca

www.redleafpianoworks.com