SIMON EMMERSON

SHADES

(OF NIGHT AND DAY)

(1989)

Preview File Only

(piano and electronics)

(commissioned by Philip Mead

with funds made available by Eastern Arts)

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(piano and electronics)

Notation

Accidentals usually apply only to the pitch they precede without octave displacement with the following modifications: in sections 8 and 10 for the obvious trill, tremolo and fast repetition motifs an accidental applies to the motif as long as it is repeated (although 'reminder' accidentals are usually added at the start of each rhythmic or metric unit even in this case).

Be aware of the treble clef octave up and the bass clef octave down signs which sometimes pervade whole sections!

Occasionally, chords of up to one octave and a major third are specified. If this cannot be stretched a short appegiation upwards should be used.

Rests have been minimised and are usually applied as in a monody ie. the sum musical flow of the two staves is accurately lined up and accidentals are only used to clarify polyphony.

Time signatures have no interpretative significance and are for accounting only! The meter does not alter at time signature changes.

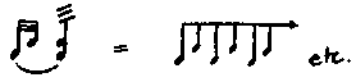
Proportional time notation is used in two sections (7 and 11). It is to be interpreted very freely. The grid of markers are notional 1" units but this is intended to be for visual guidance only. For groups of pitches the first should be interpreted from the time grid, the subsequent pitches being interpreted to give musical identity to the group. Resonances should be allowed to speak, depending on the piano, hall acoustics etc.

(a) (b) (c)

In general, a small slur appended to a note (a) indicates 'let ring out' usually through a surrounding texture. In section 7, a longer slur (b) means 'hold the note for the time indicated' but (c) is a traditional tie ie. the note is held and released (not restruck) with the second chord. Traditional ties are used elsewhere without differences.

Bars are numbered sequentially throughout the piece with each line being given a 'bar' number in sections 7 and 11.

The tremolos in section 3 and 11 are 'as fast as possible' but in section 5 are measured demi-semi-quavers. For tremolos the initial direction of the repetition is given by a preceding pair of notes which are written in the correct time values and accounted for within the rhythmic units. These are slurred to the notated chord (no special emphasis should be given to the initial notes): eg.



◇ - depress without sounding. This is used in two ways: within a texture held by the pedal, notes are depressed silently, the pedal then released leaving a chord sounding; or with the third pedal (section 7) to elicit sympathetic resonances.

The sustain pedal on/off symbols are traditional although much is left to the intrepretation of the performer. At a few points a horizontal line is used to indicated detail such as half pedal releases (to leave limited resonance) and slow raising of the pedal. The third (sostenuto) pedal is used only in section 7.

A document giving details of the sound projection and live electronic requirements is available separately. The effects are available on a Yamaha DMP7 or SPX90 processor.

Brief notes on interpretation

Toccata 1 : vigourous and exuberant, it combines the percussive and the fluid images of piano music.

Lyric 1 and Recitative : development of 'flowing motifs' into melodic fragments contrasted starkly with percussive/resonant interruptions. The Recitative must be quite free and non-metric in tempo, the chords colouring the accented pitches. The articulation of the chords should be accurate and clear (slower than the demi-semiquavers indicated where necessary).

Nocturne (disturbed) : rocking motion free (slower than indicated if anything) later disturbances frenetic, pushing forward. The 'notated accelerandos' should ideally be evened out. Final part (♩ = 120) ethereal and unreal (dream-like).

Percussion 1 : shades of Bartok, Stravinsky and the percussive Beethoven - don't let up! Let the resonances speak at the pause points : note the exact relation of pedal releases and depressions to silent depressed notes here also.

Lyric 2 (papillons) : not really a reference to Schumann (though the form of the work as a whole might be) more Ravel. The butterfly hovers, darts and settles. The most impressionistic music in the piece, the meter should never be felt; always delicate and reserved.

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Lyric 3 (lontano) : two completely independent lines could be detached *a la* Chopin performances of the twenties and before. I didn't have Ives as consciously in mind as you might think. Yes, I wish it were longer, too. Even slower tempo if it can be sustained. (Absolutely not to be played like Stockhausen's Tierkreis !)

Percussion 2 (resonances) : let the resonances of the sustained notes speak for as long as possible ('notes faster, gaps longer') but also contrast dynamics as much as possible.

Toccata 2 (fanfare and alarm) : nervous feel, accentuate the fanfare calls by dynamic differentiation (as if replying 'from afar'). The alarm bursts forth into flow and a final frenetic outburst.

Etude : this was too difficult to phrase mark with slurs - as the note says, phrase ideally into melodic motifs defined by the beaming (which is from units of two to five).

Toccata 3 : flowing material should appear to come out of the resonances of the percussive outbursts, in fact the two blur at times.

Percussion 3 (final resonances) : bell-like sonority, sharp and bright. Accentuate the top E flat in the octave chords (even within the quieter dynamics). The CGE trichord (it is *not* a C major chord!) at 394/395 and its EBGsharp equivalent at 400 should be barely audible and recognisable as 'familiar' within the resonances of their preceding dissonant groups. Although there are fewer events towards the end, try to hold the energy and 'cut it off' with the last pp chord.

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Programme Note

Shades (of night and day)

And as the air, when it is full of rain, becomes adorned with various colours through another's beams that are reflected in it, so the neighbouring air sets itself into that form which the soul that stopped there stamps upon it by its power, and then, like the flame that follows the fire wherever it shifts, its new form follows the spirit. Since it has by this semblance henceforth, it is called a shade, and by this it then makes organs for every sense ...

(Dante : Purgatorio *Canto XXV*)

Shades was written between June and December 1989 and thus concludes the composer's works of the 1980's. It quite consciously looks back to 'shades' of the piano repertory from Beethoven to Stockhausen essentially to superpose the two traditions of lyric and percussive which have sometimes had an uneasy relationship.

I want, too, to rescue consonant harmonies in a non-tonal context - and to be able to combine them retaining their identities; the work is 'tonical', strictly speaking: the harmony is based on a field derived from the harmonic series (nature/lyricism/consonance) and its inversion (artefact/percussion/dissonance) - although the stark nature of these opposites is challenged through their juxta- and super-position throughout the eleven short sections of the work.

The eleven sections are titled: Toccata 1, Lyric 1 and Recitative, Nocturne (disturbed), Percussion 1 (echoes), Lyric 2 (papillons), Lyric 3 (lontano), Percussion 2 (resonances), Toccata 2 (fanfare and alarm), Etude, Toccata 3, Percussion 3 (final resonances). They are played essentially without a break and last somewhat over 20 minutes.

The role of the live sound projection and electronics is to underpin the ideas and to 'project' them into a landscape where details of resonance and response are more clearly perceived.

Some shades come by day, others by night, some welcome, some unwanted guests. They are an inspiration and a burden and come what may demand our attention. The 1980s made a mess of the relation between tradition and renewal, the 1990s must see a somewhat more creative balance.

Shades (of night and day) was commissioned by Philip Mead with funds made available by Eastern Arts.

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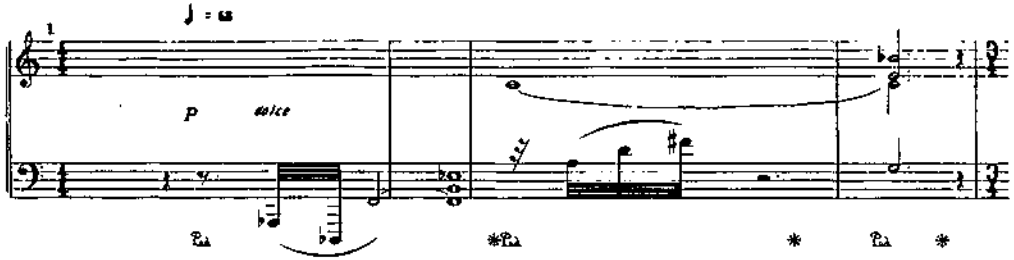
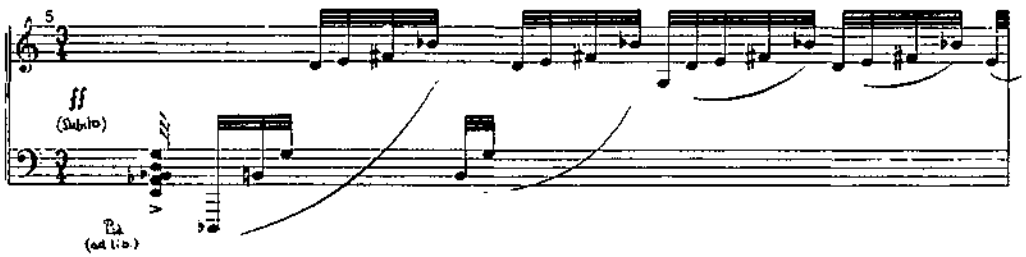
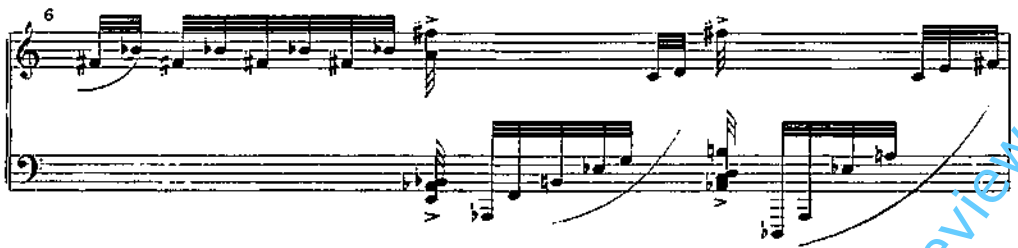
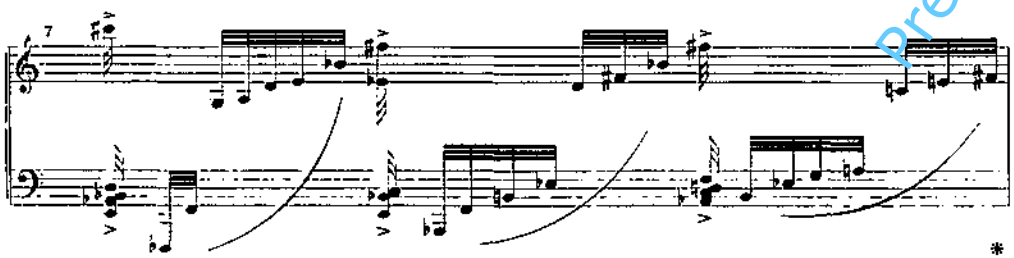
EDITION : 1.0

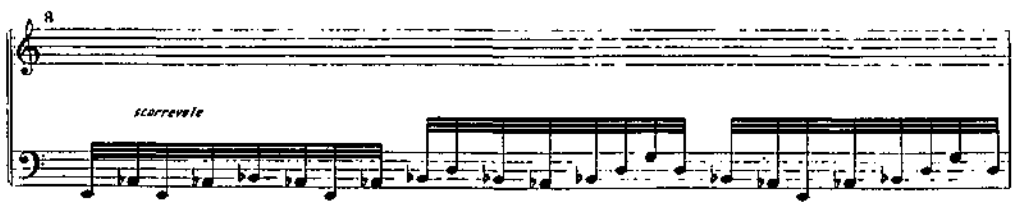
1 : Toccata 1

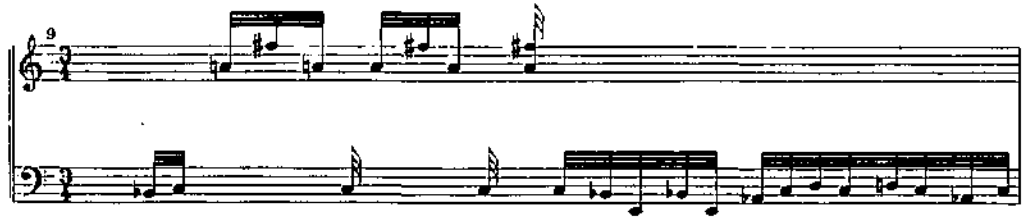


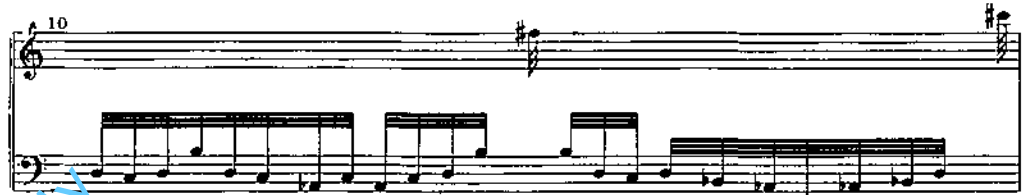


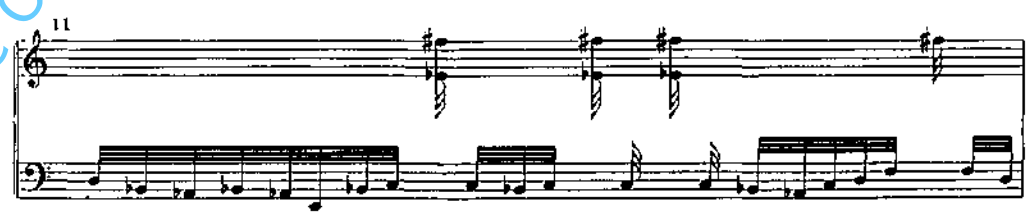


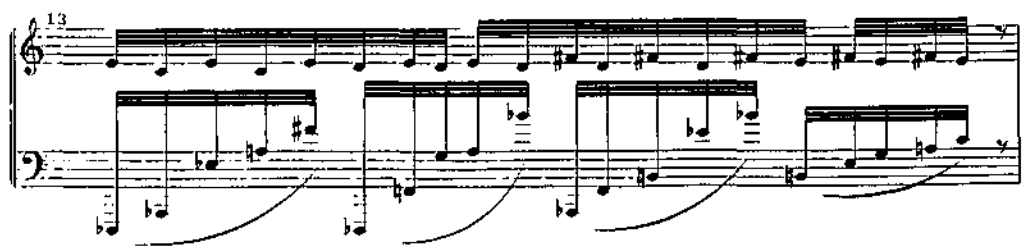












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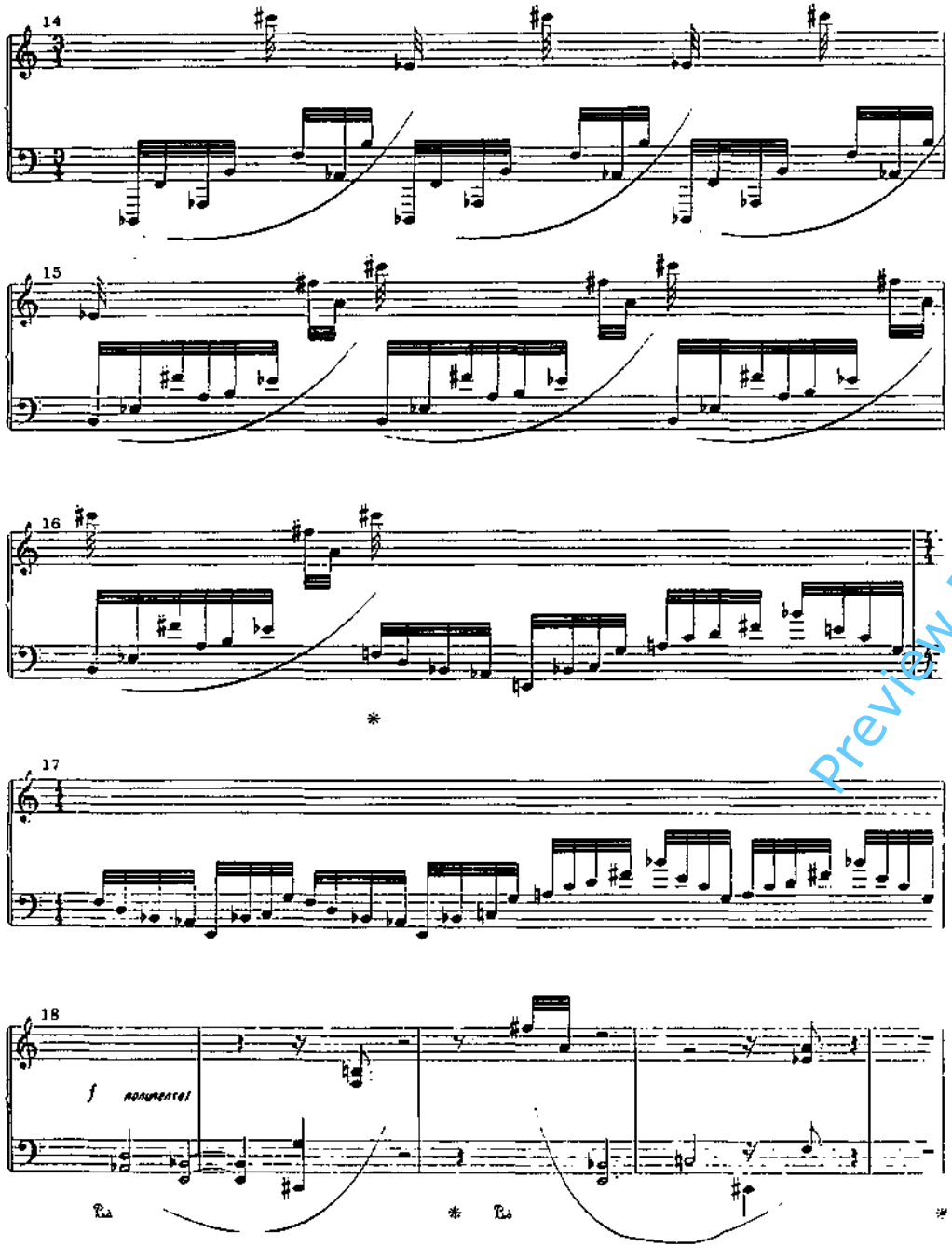

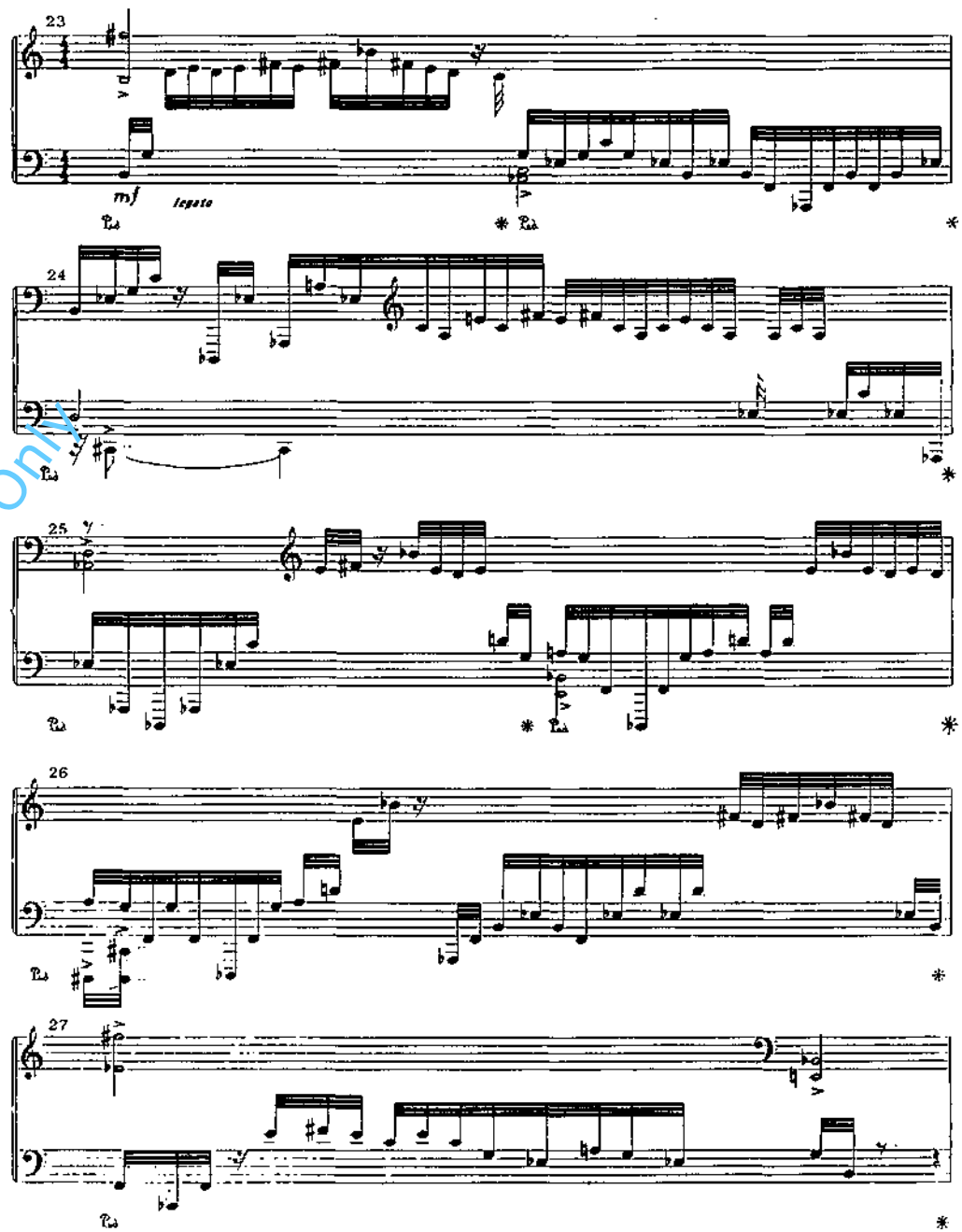

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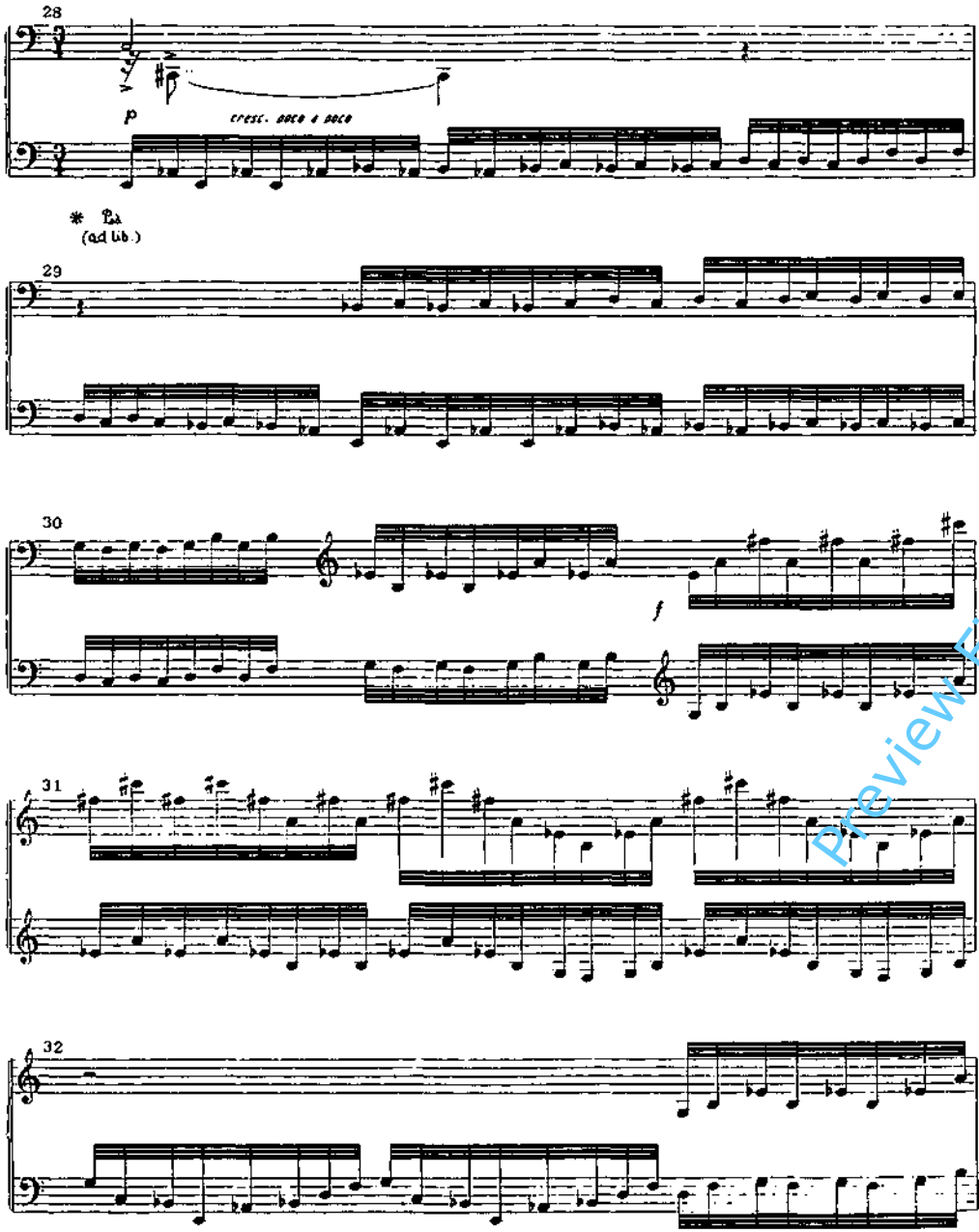

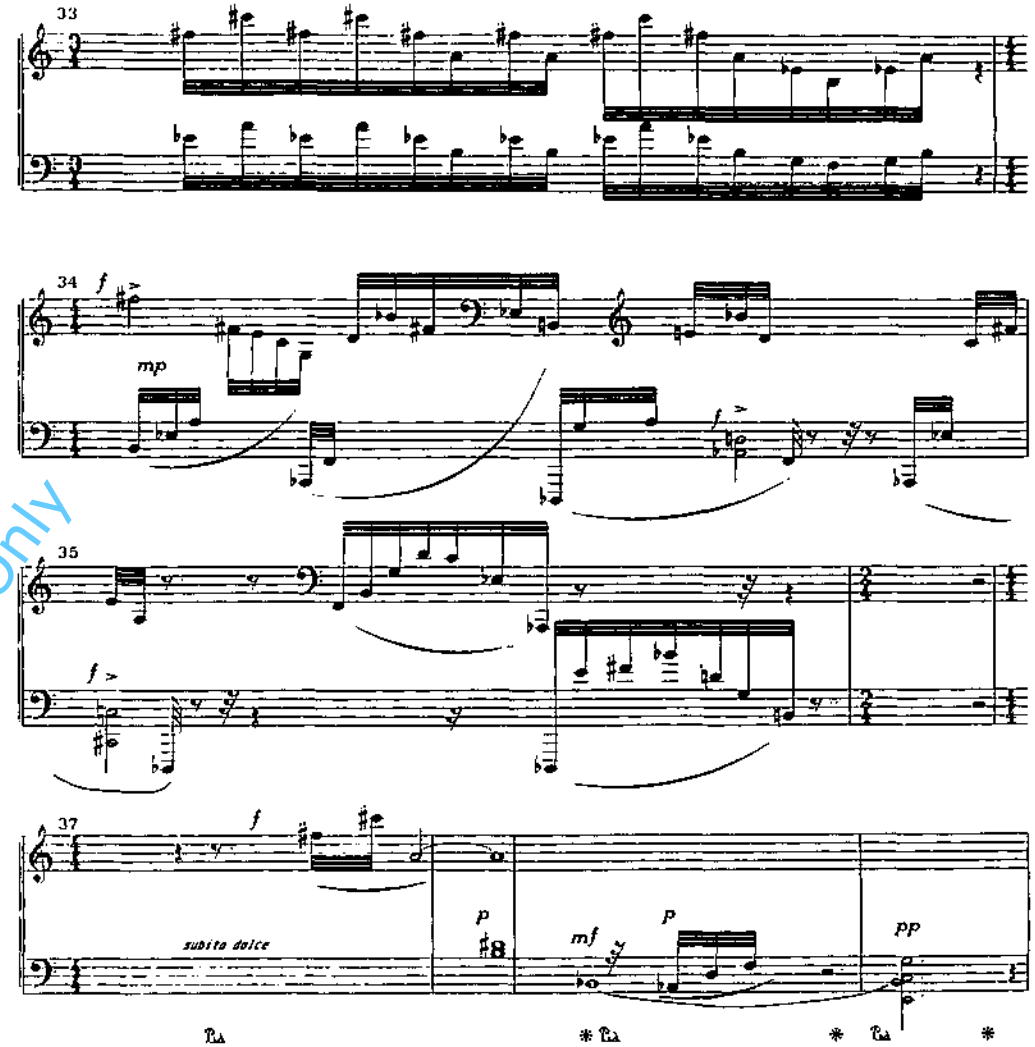

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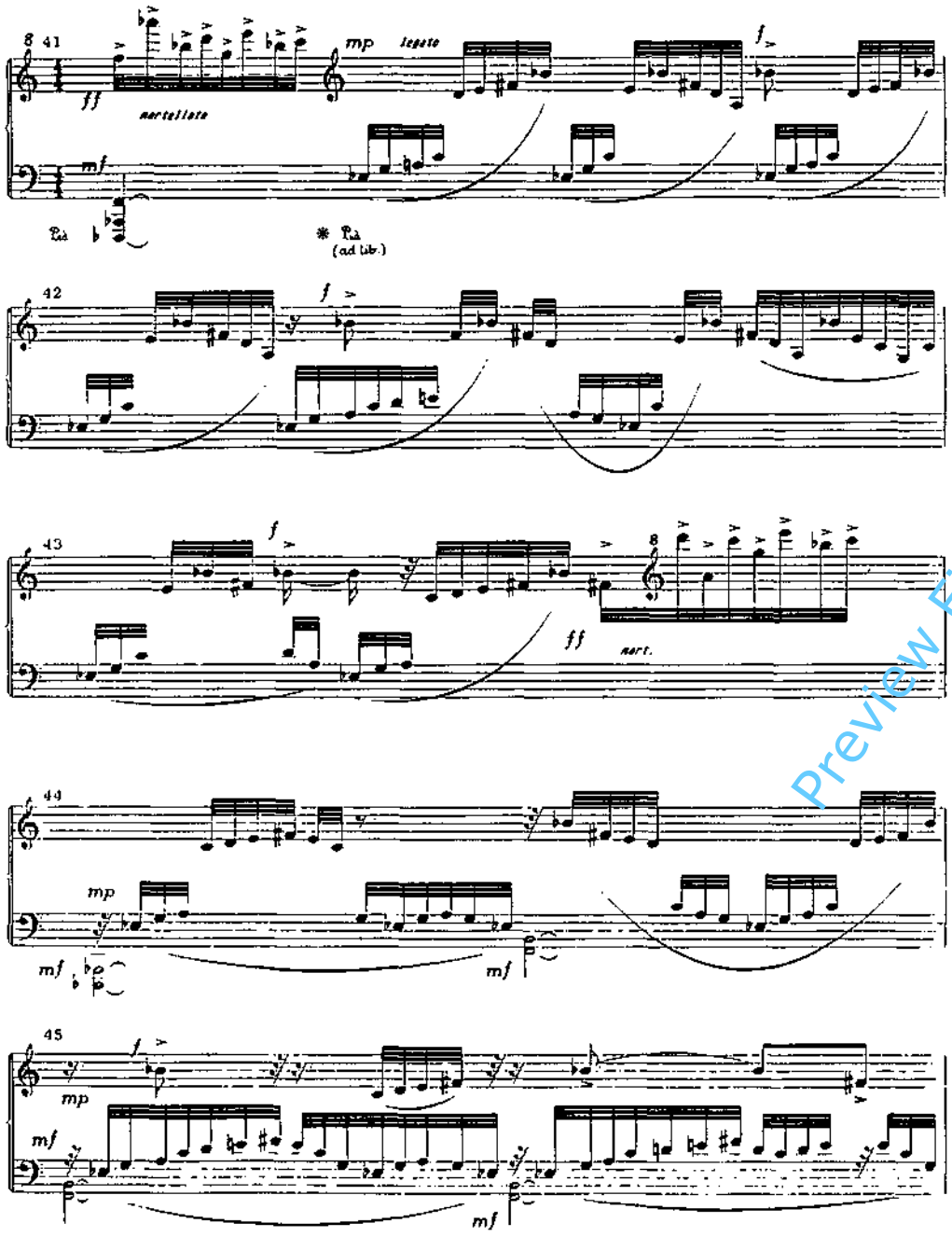

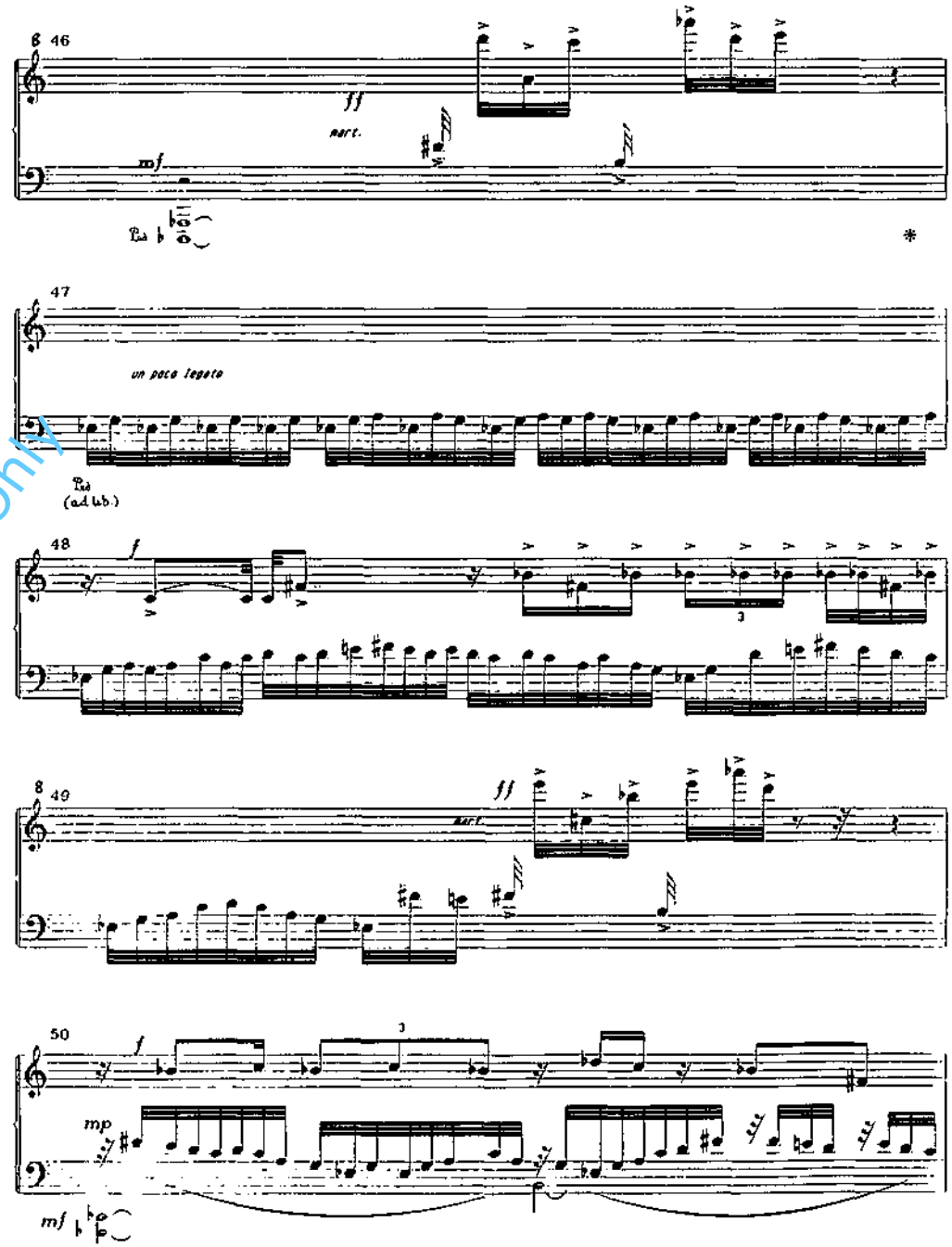

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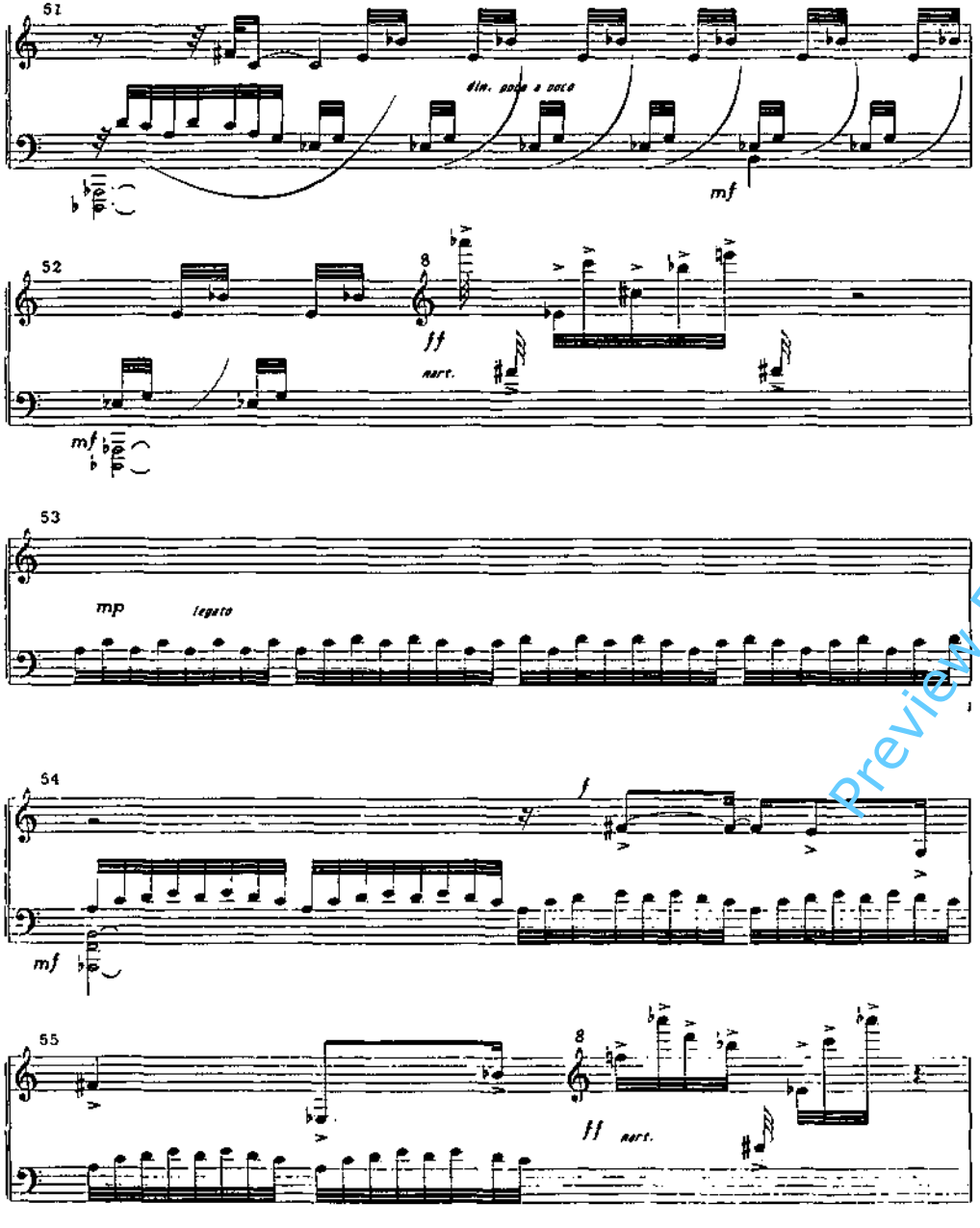

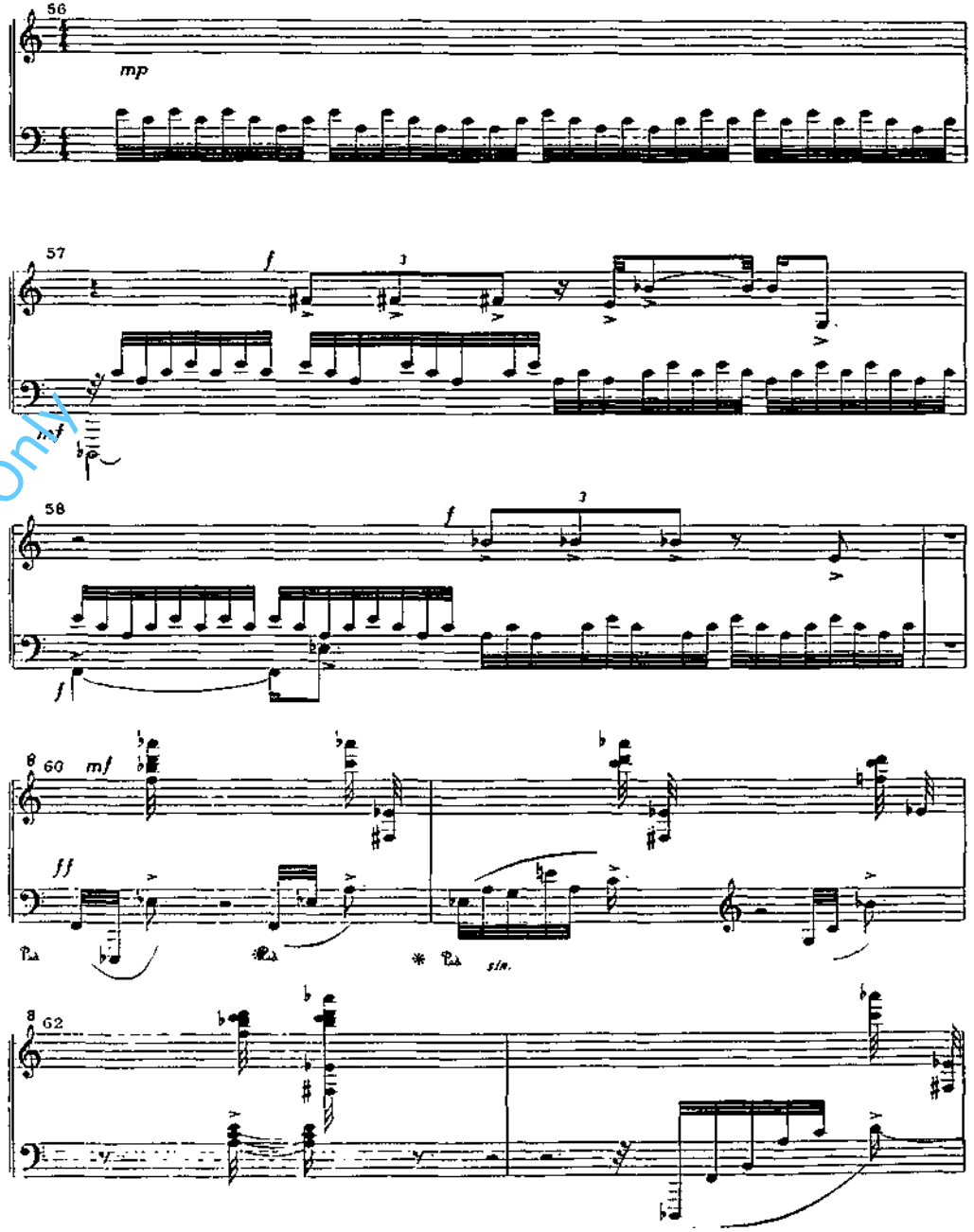

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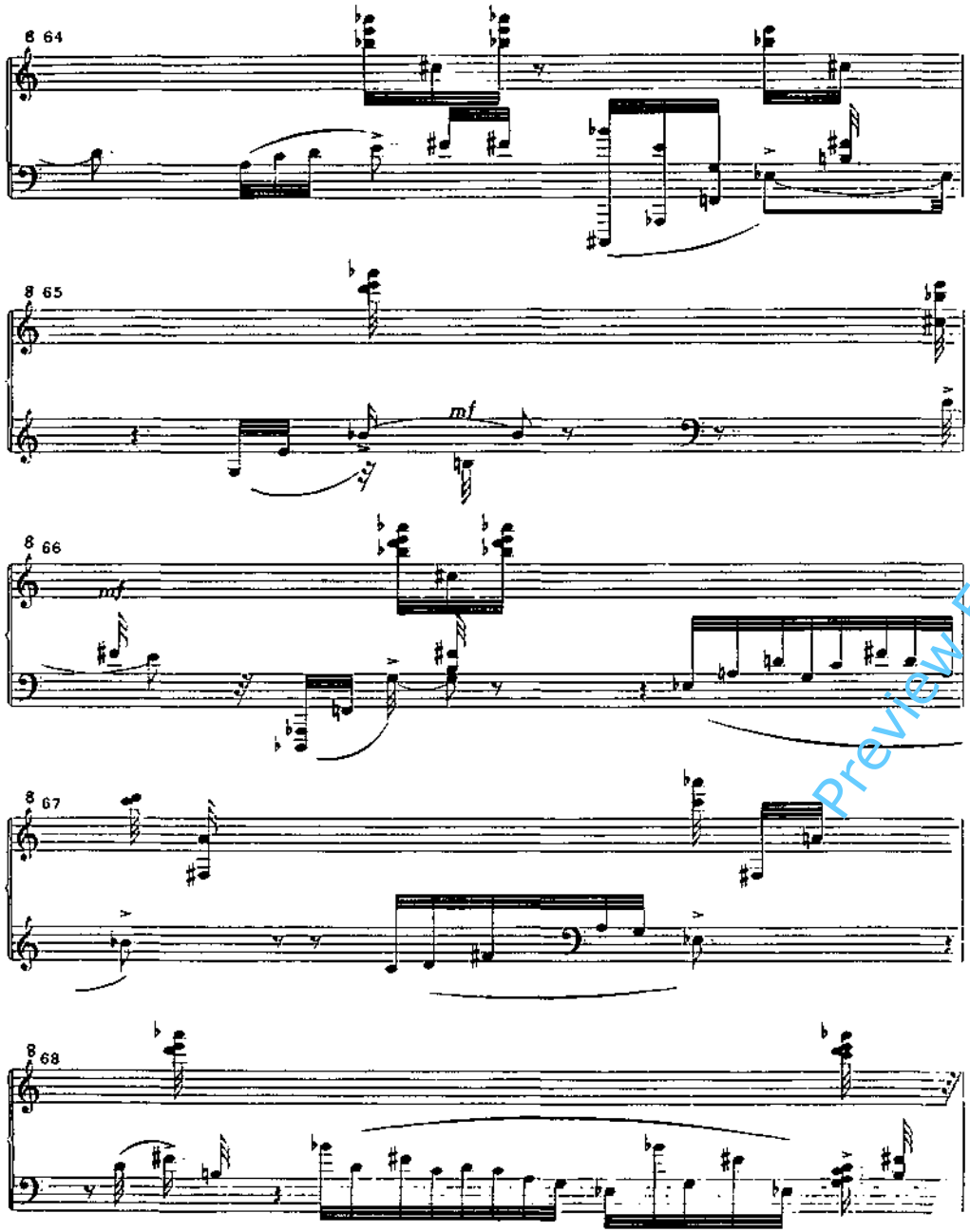

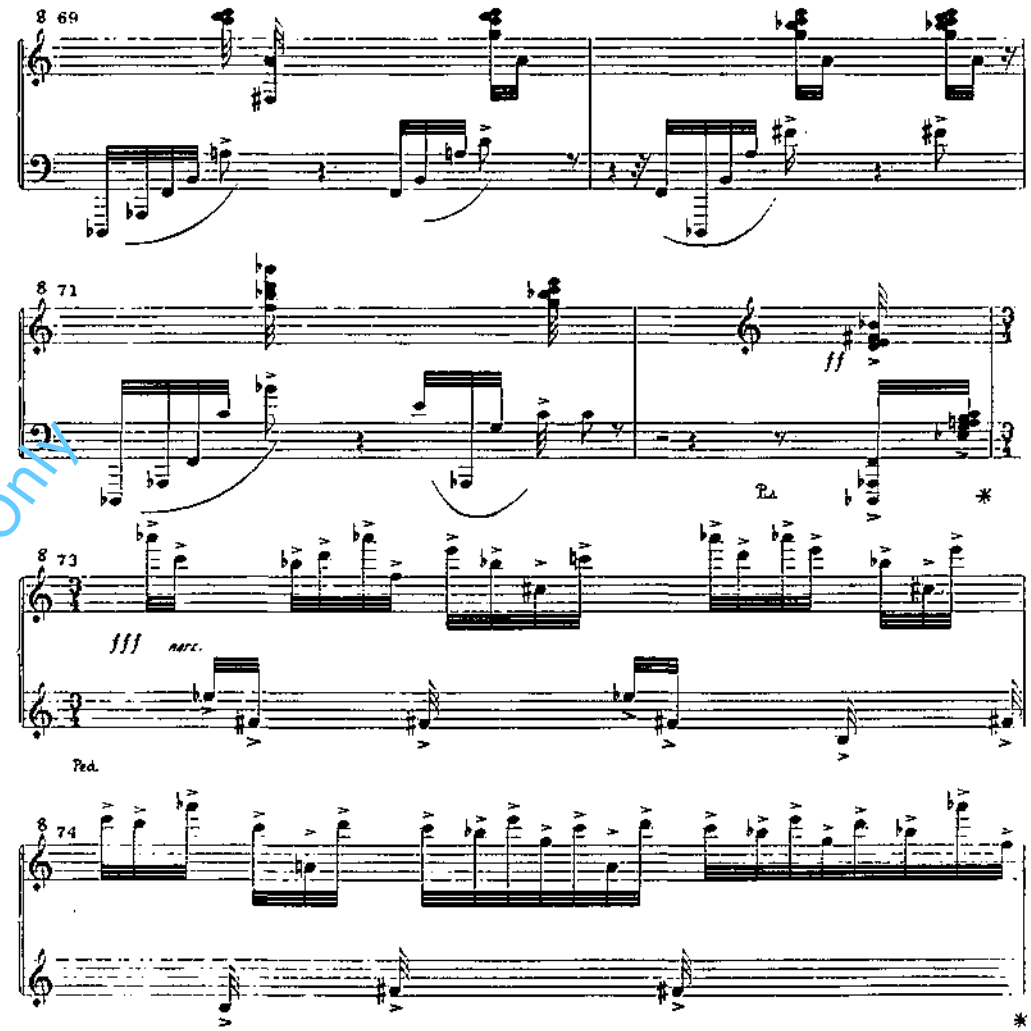

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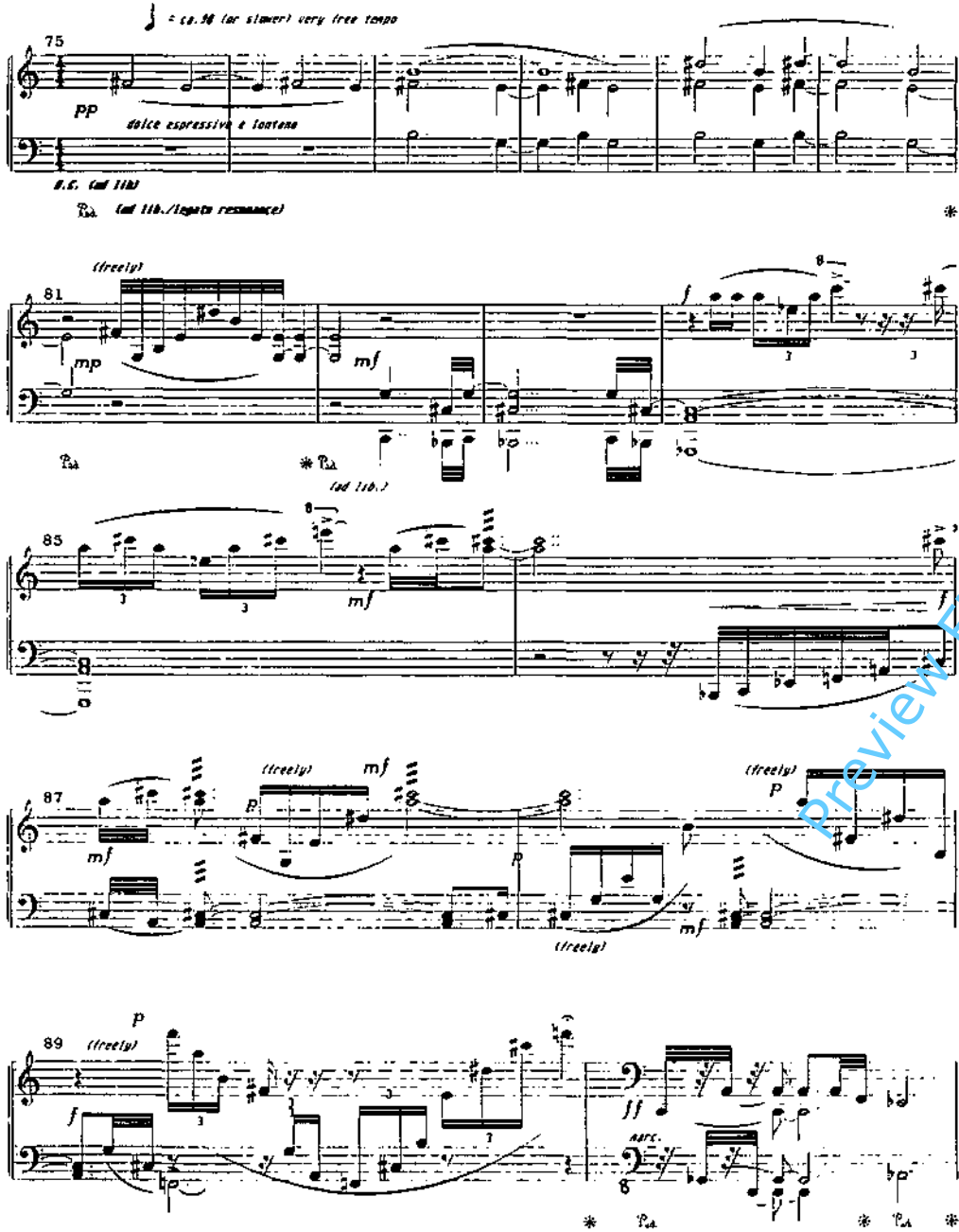

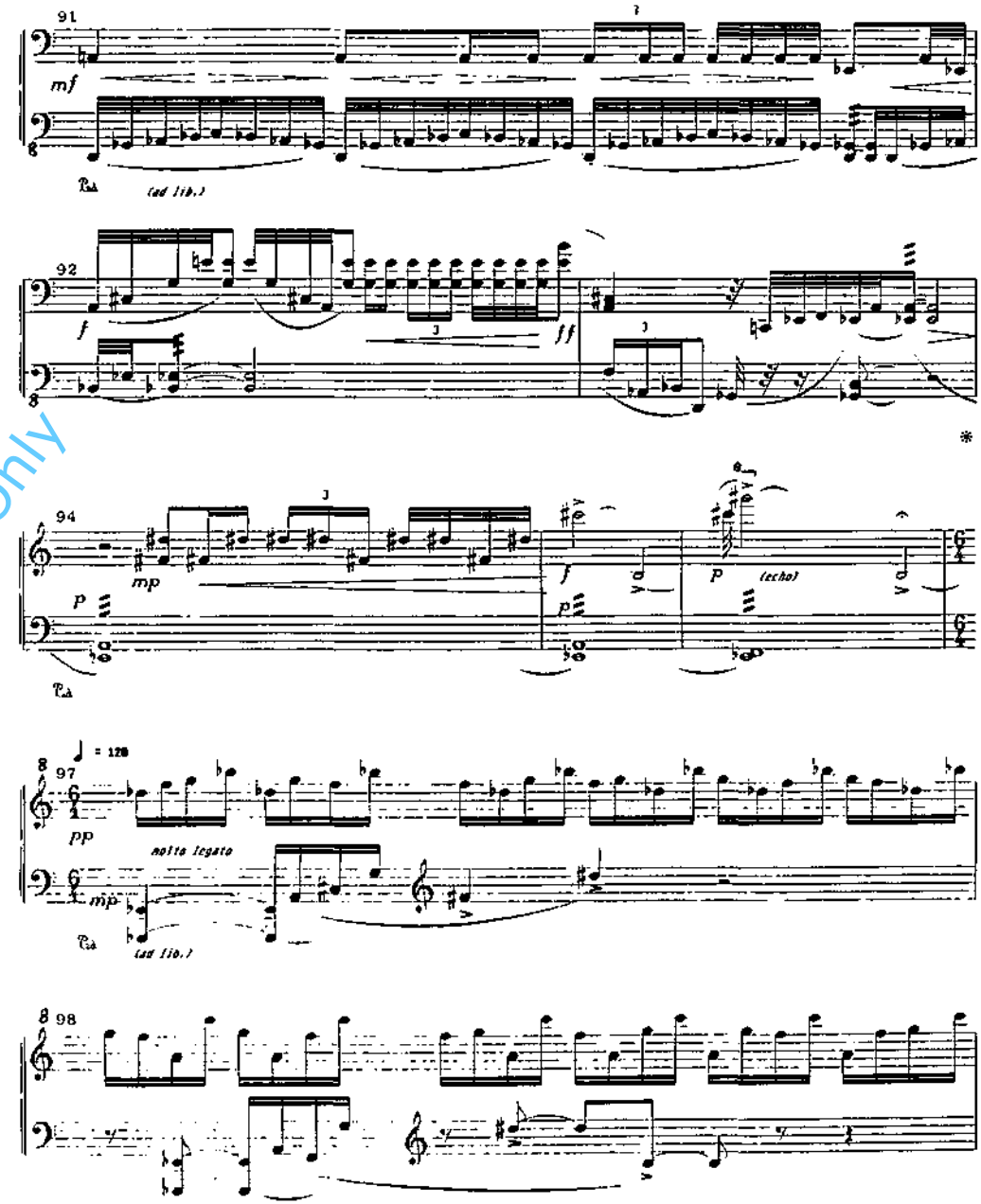

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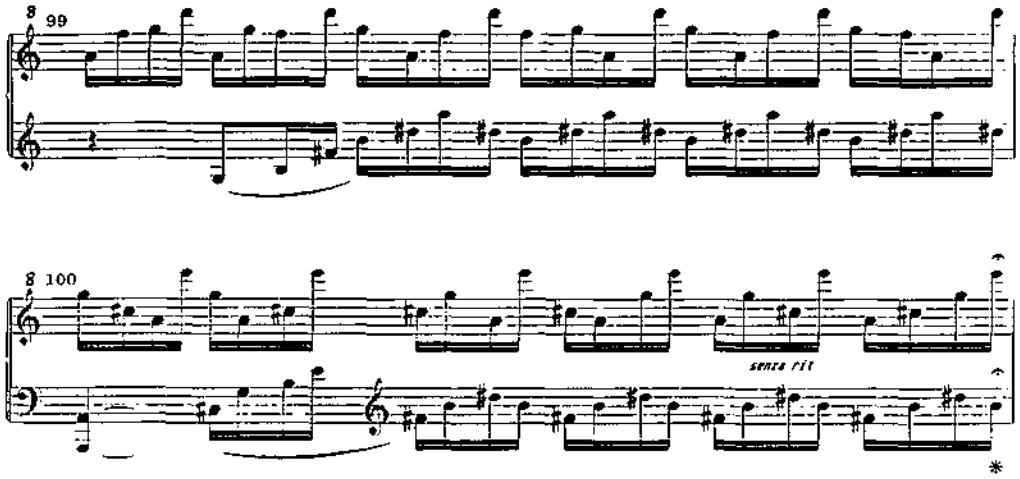

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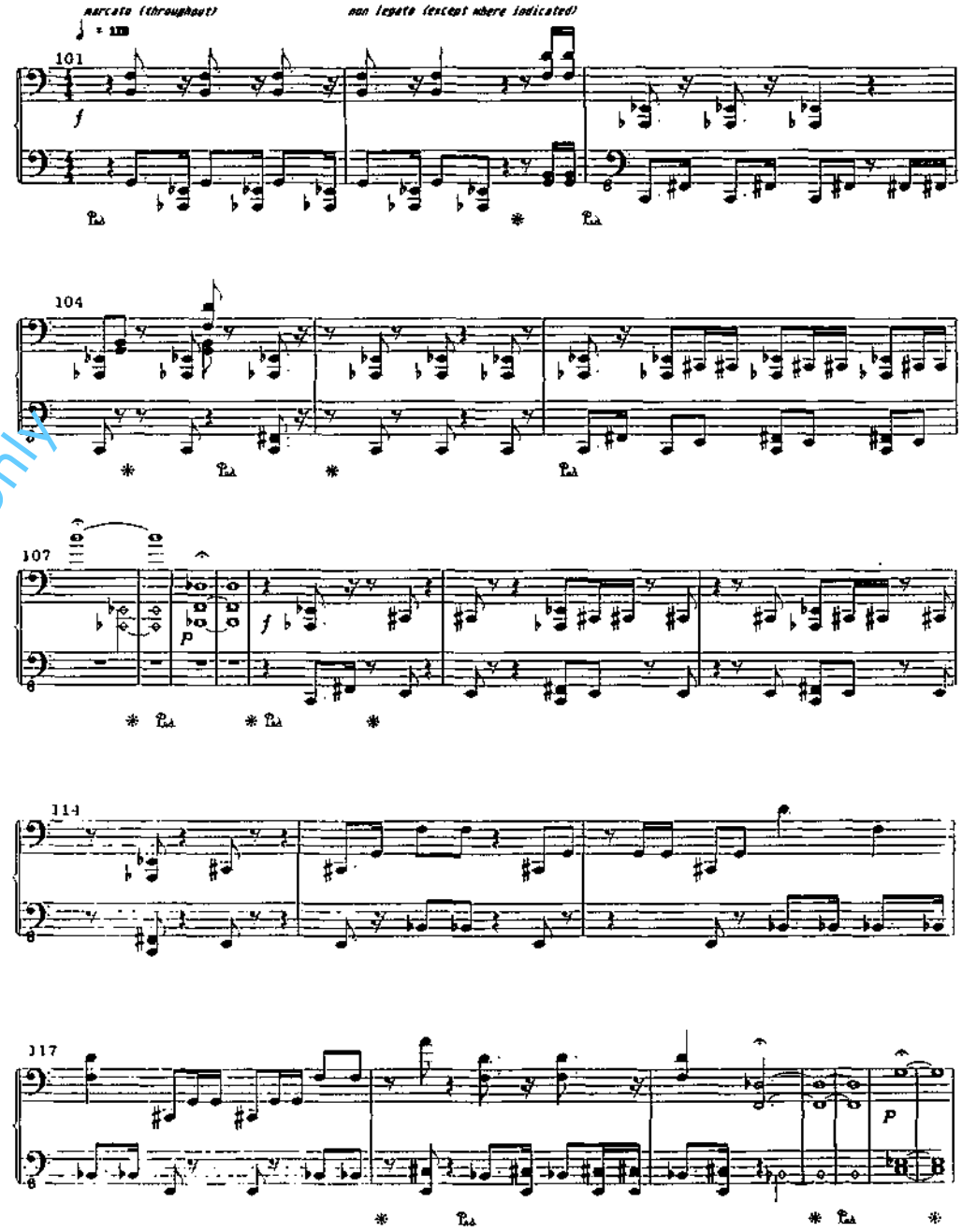

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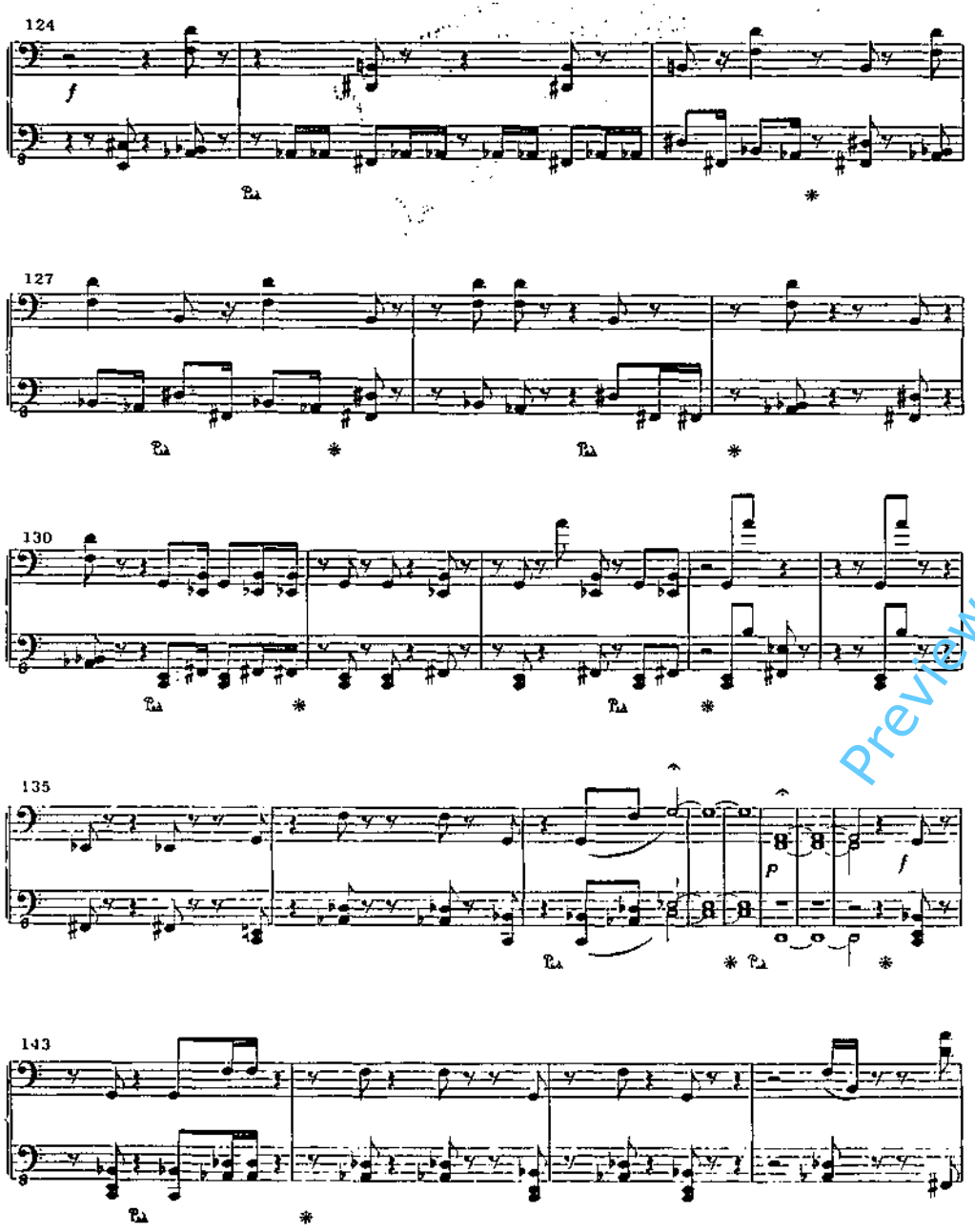

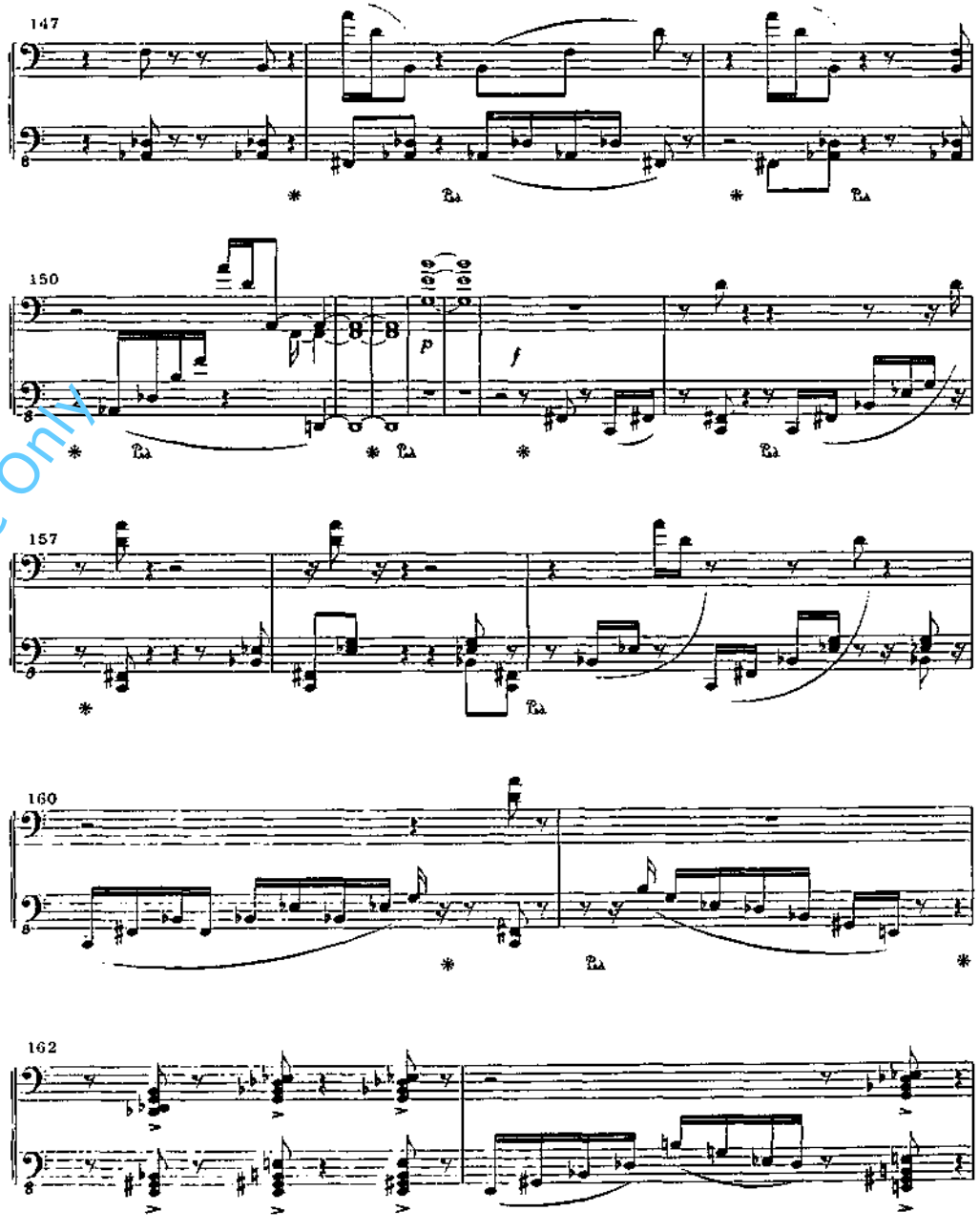

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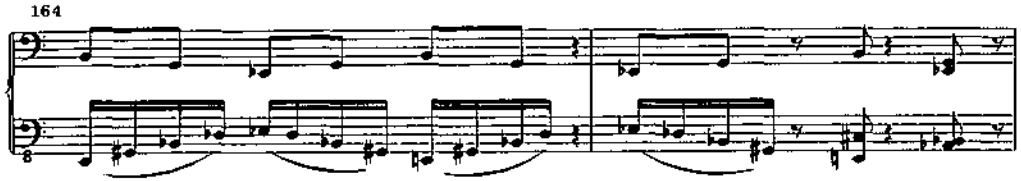

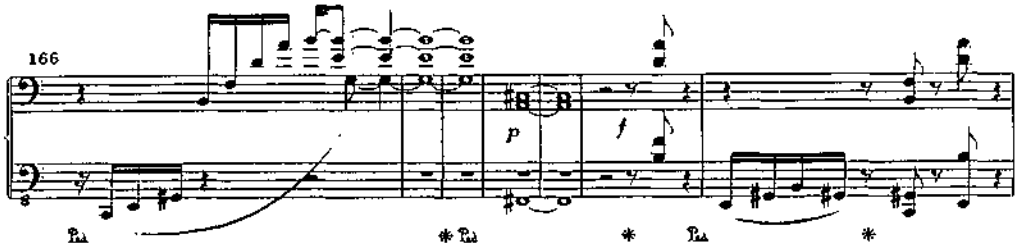

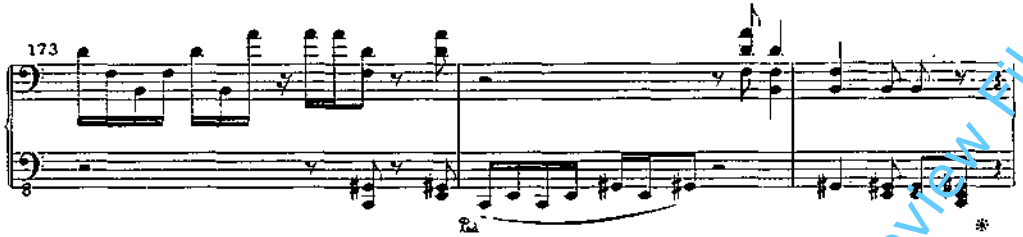

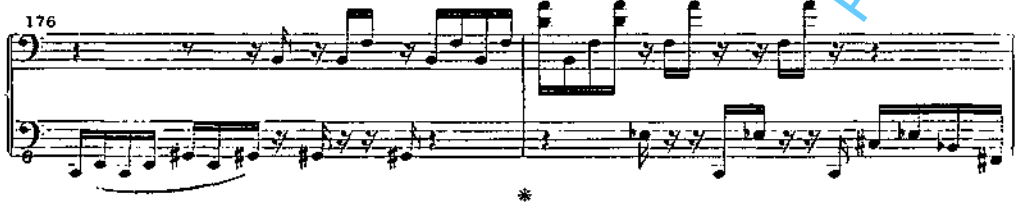

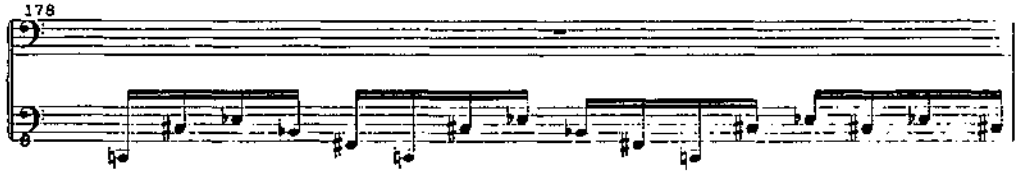

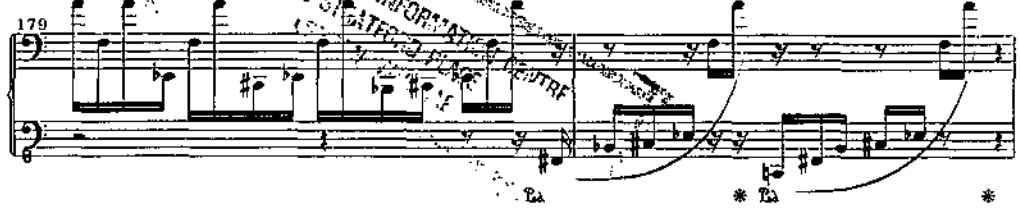

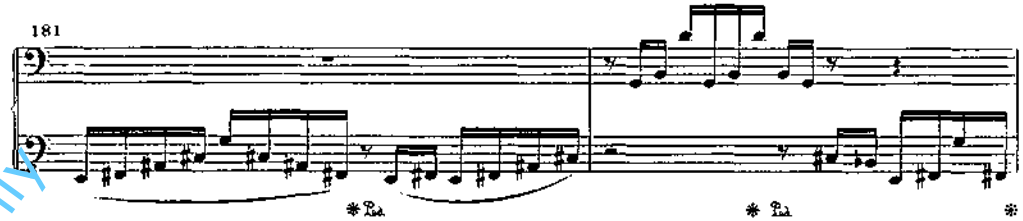

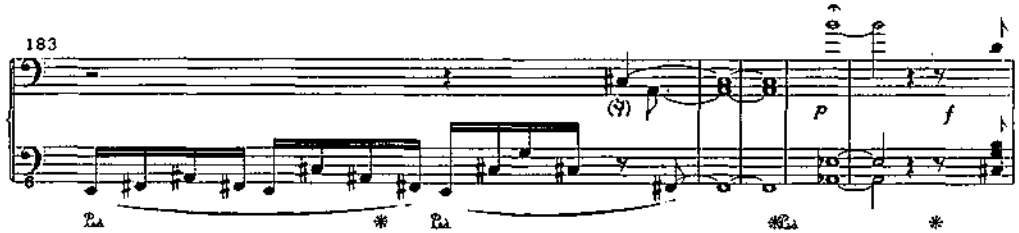

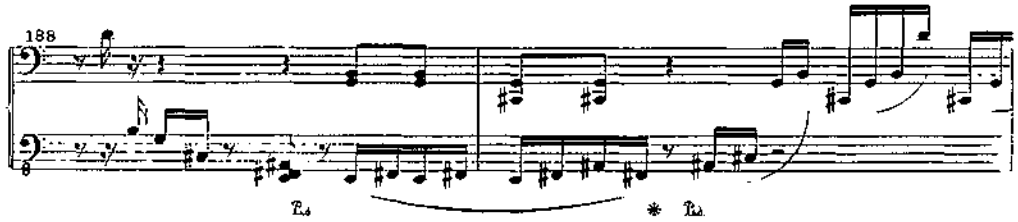

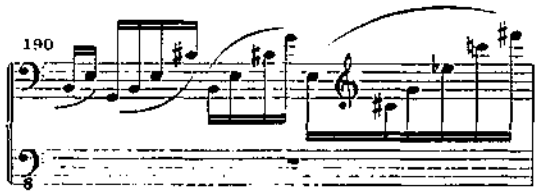

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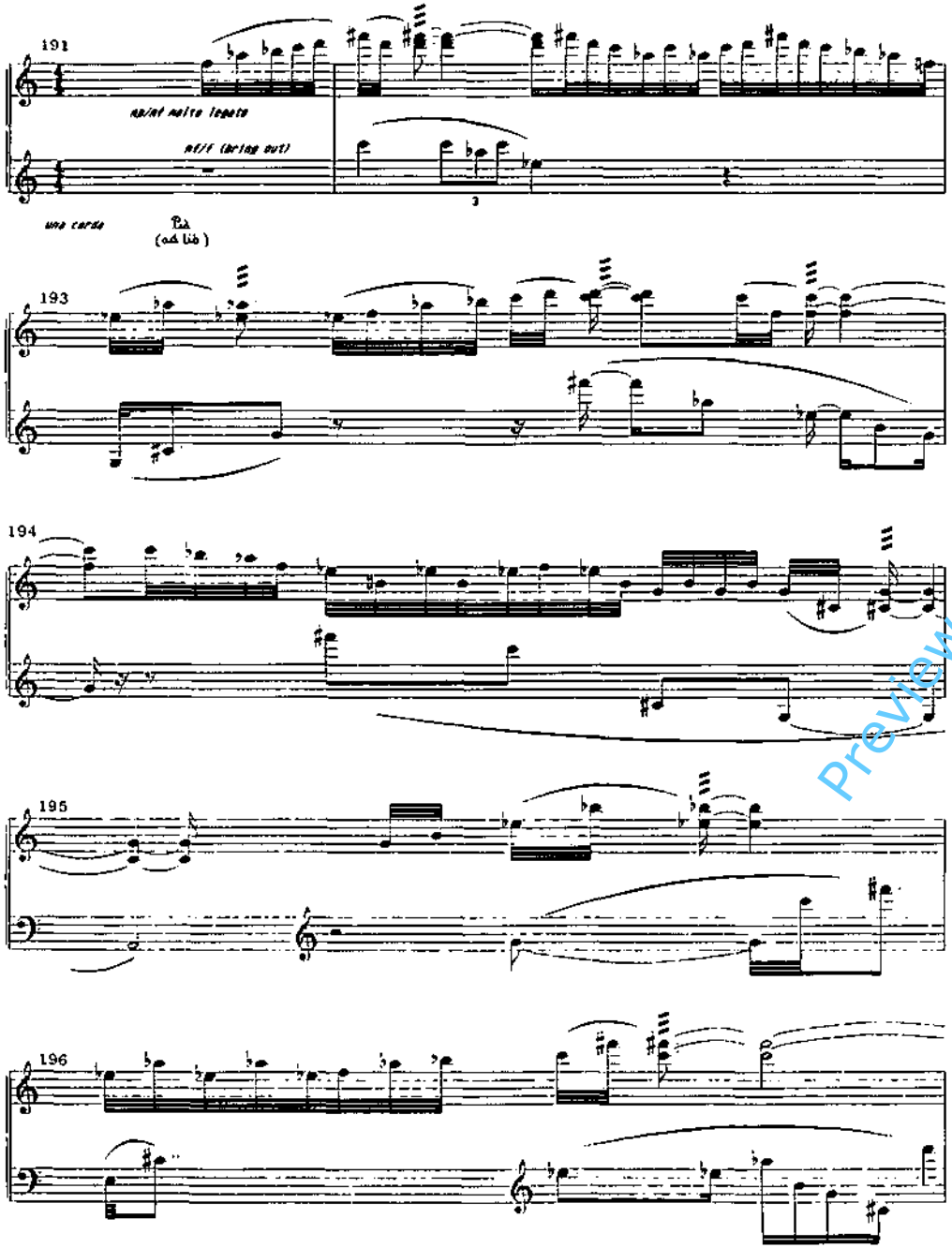

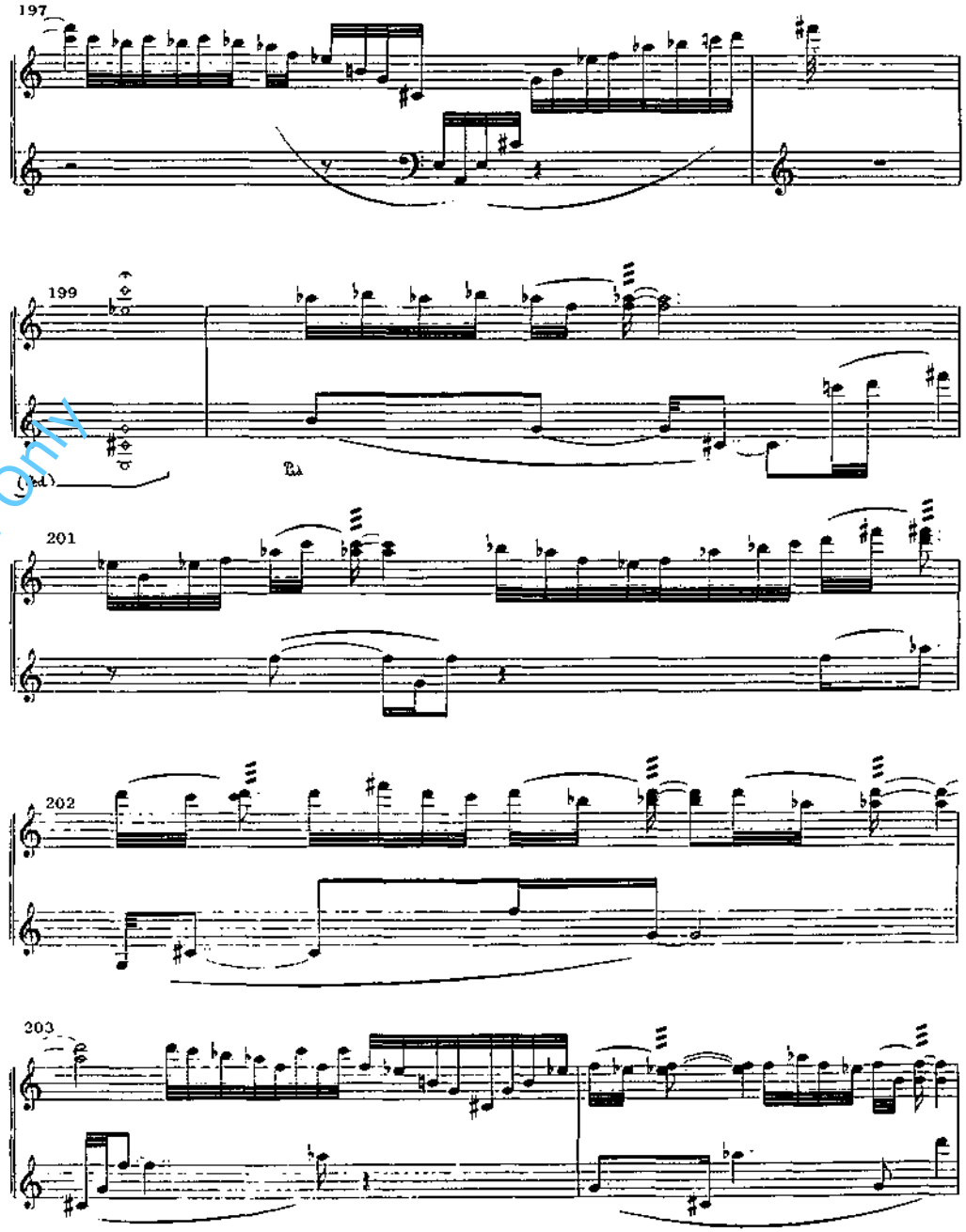

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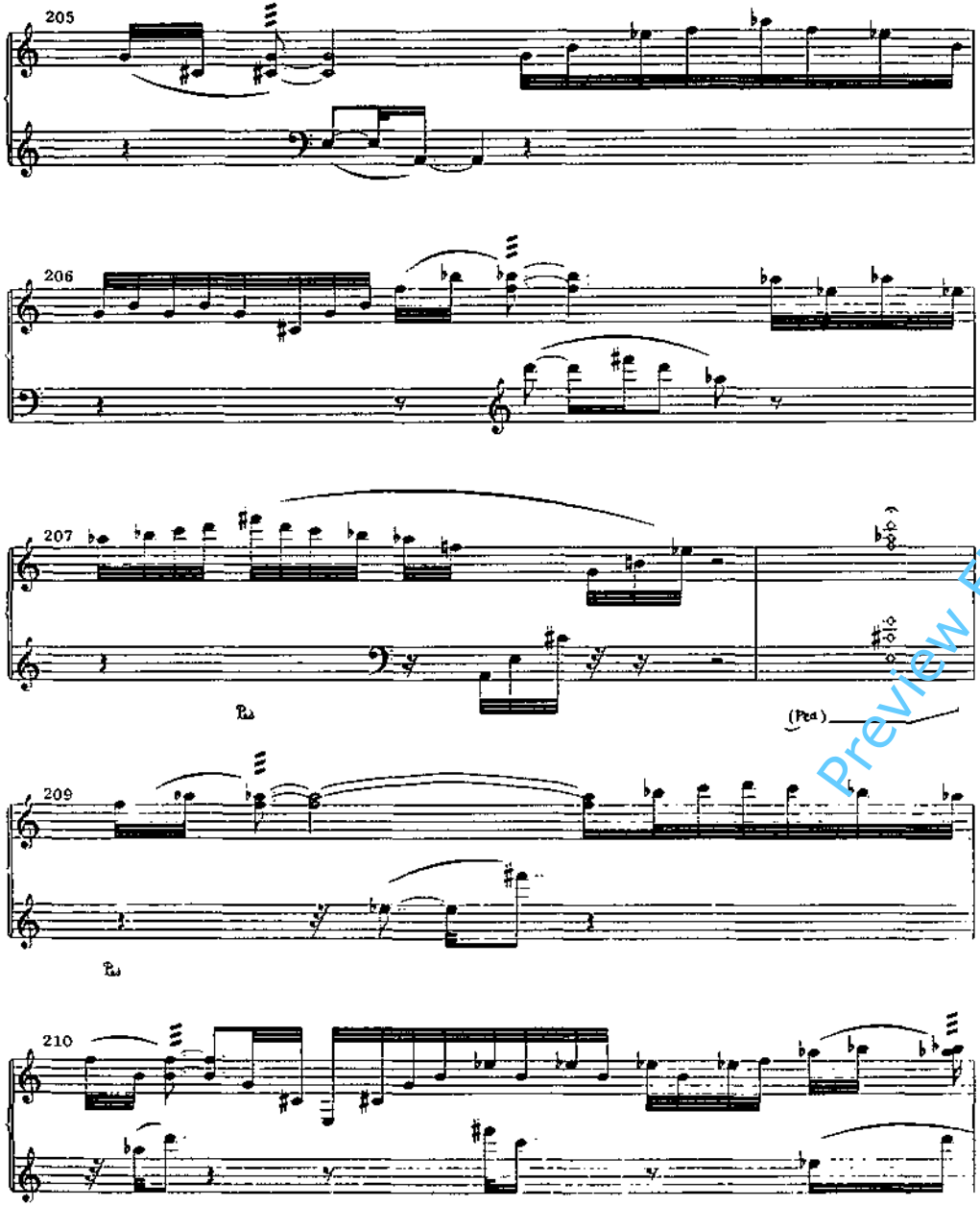

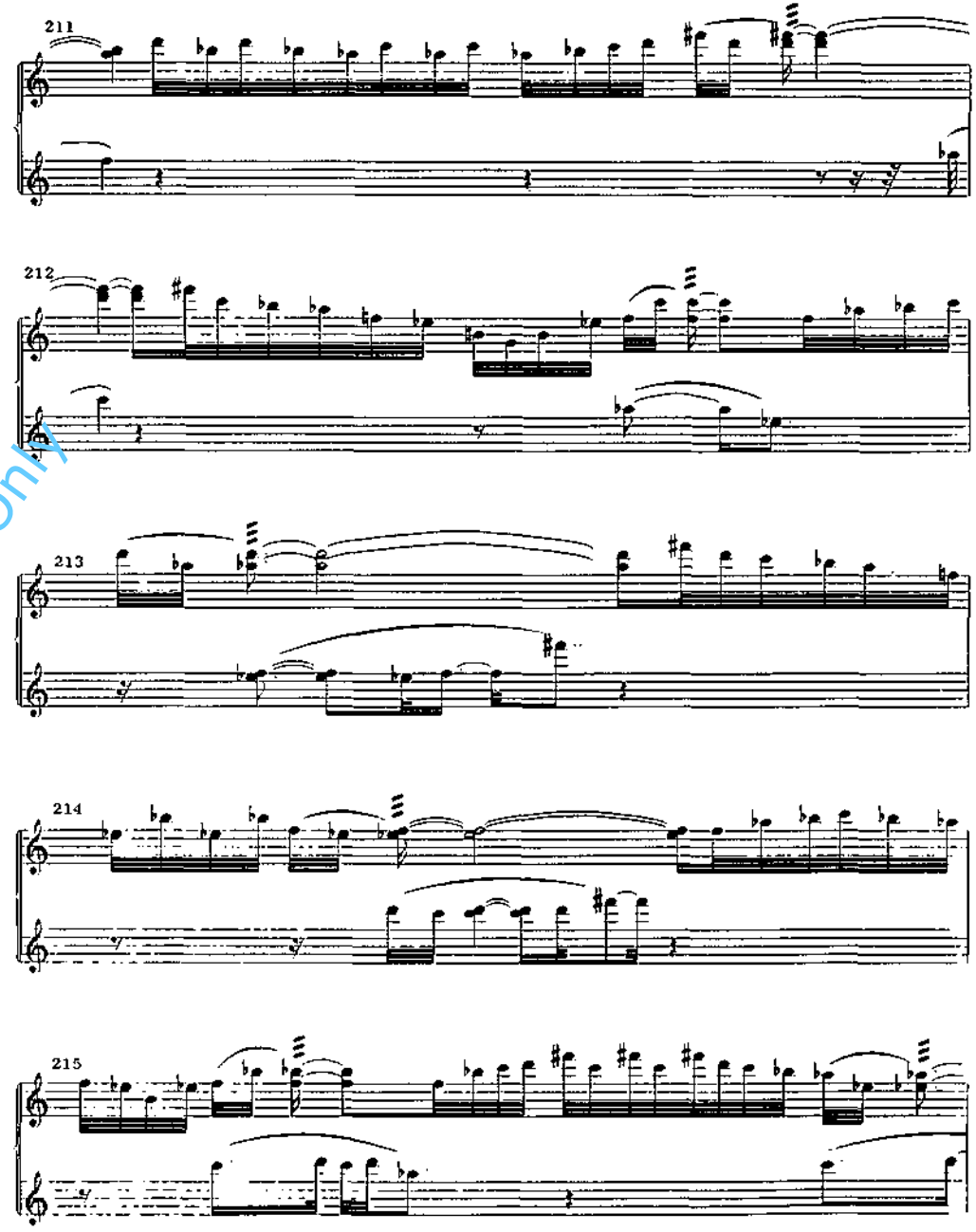

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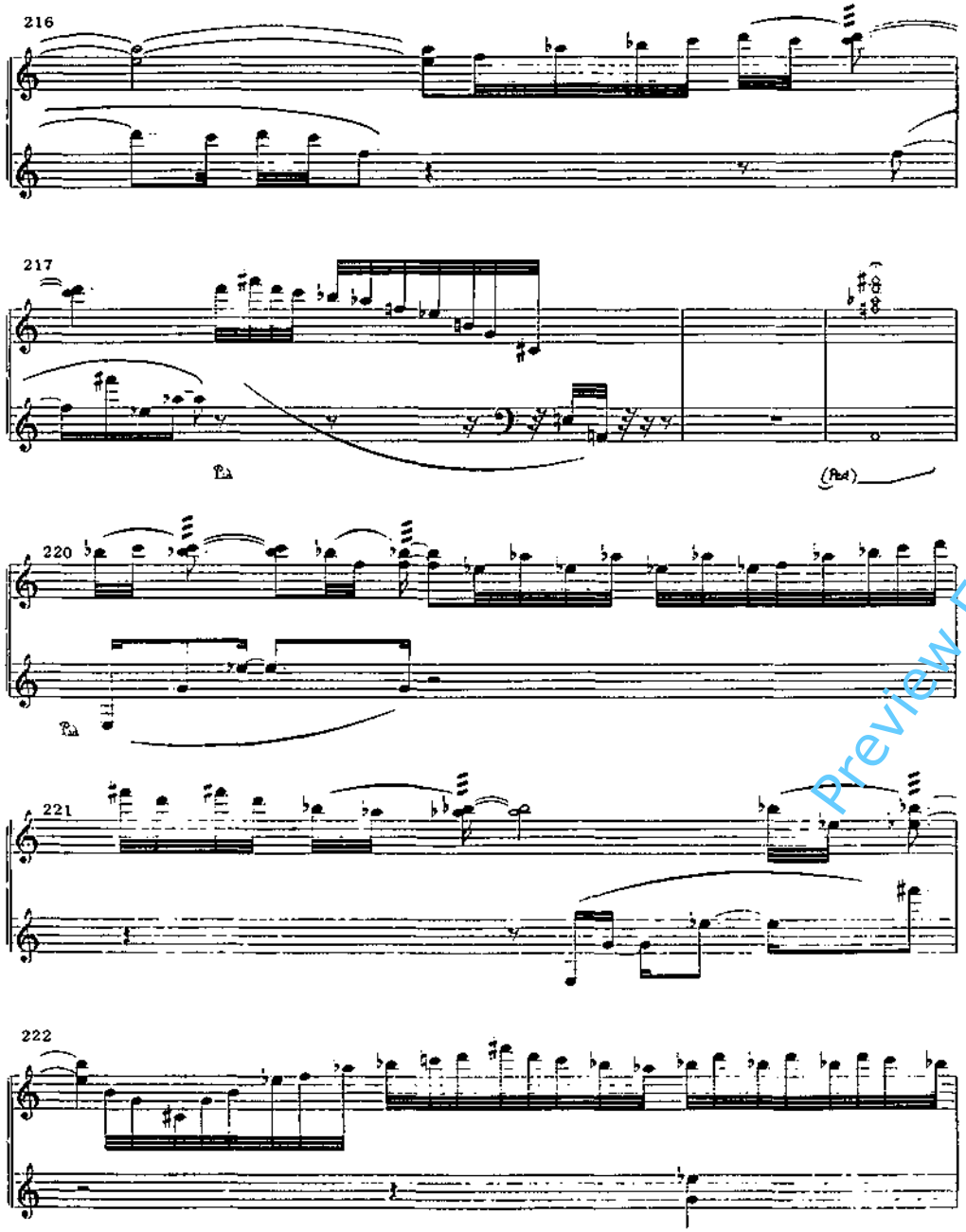

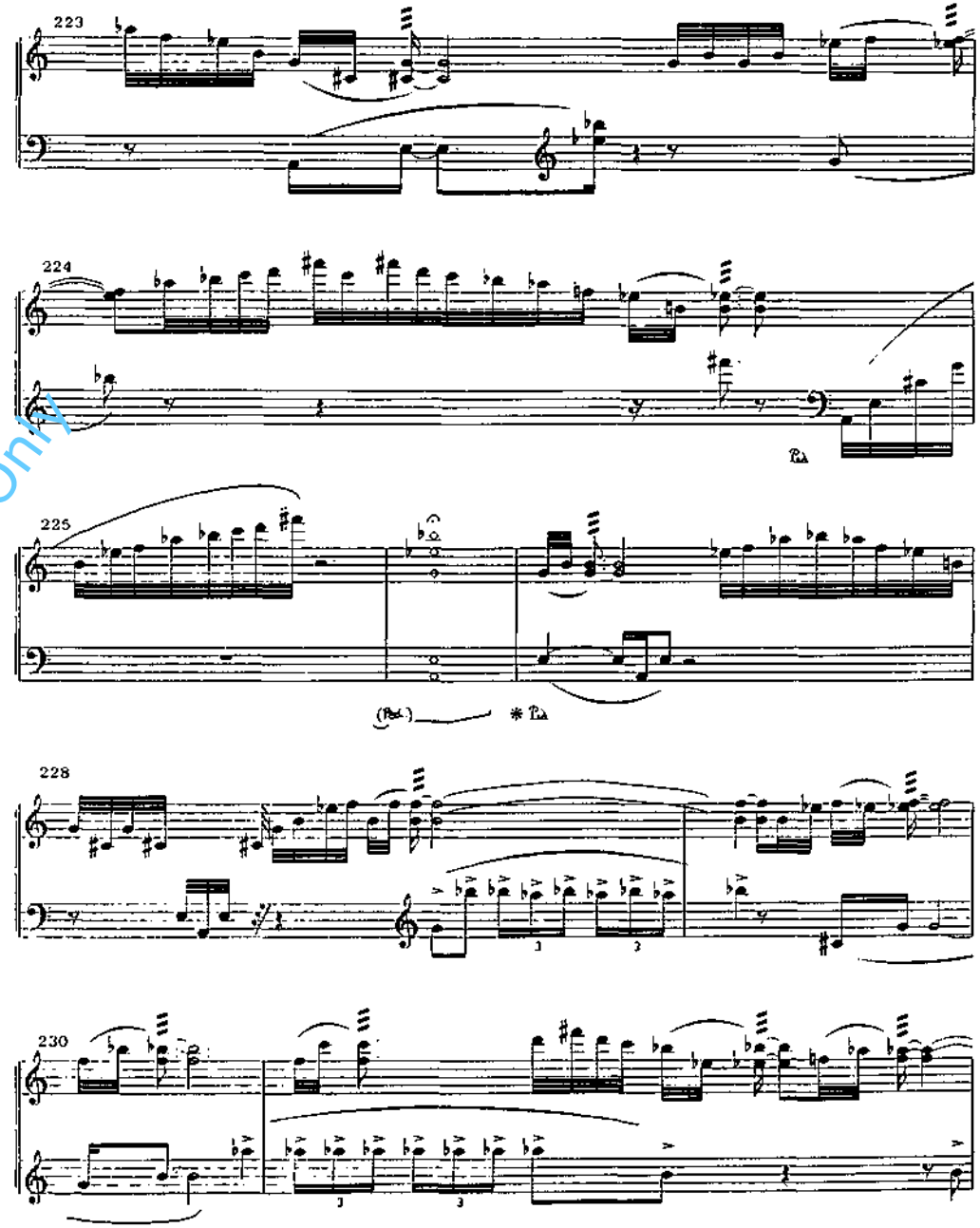

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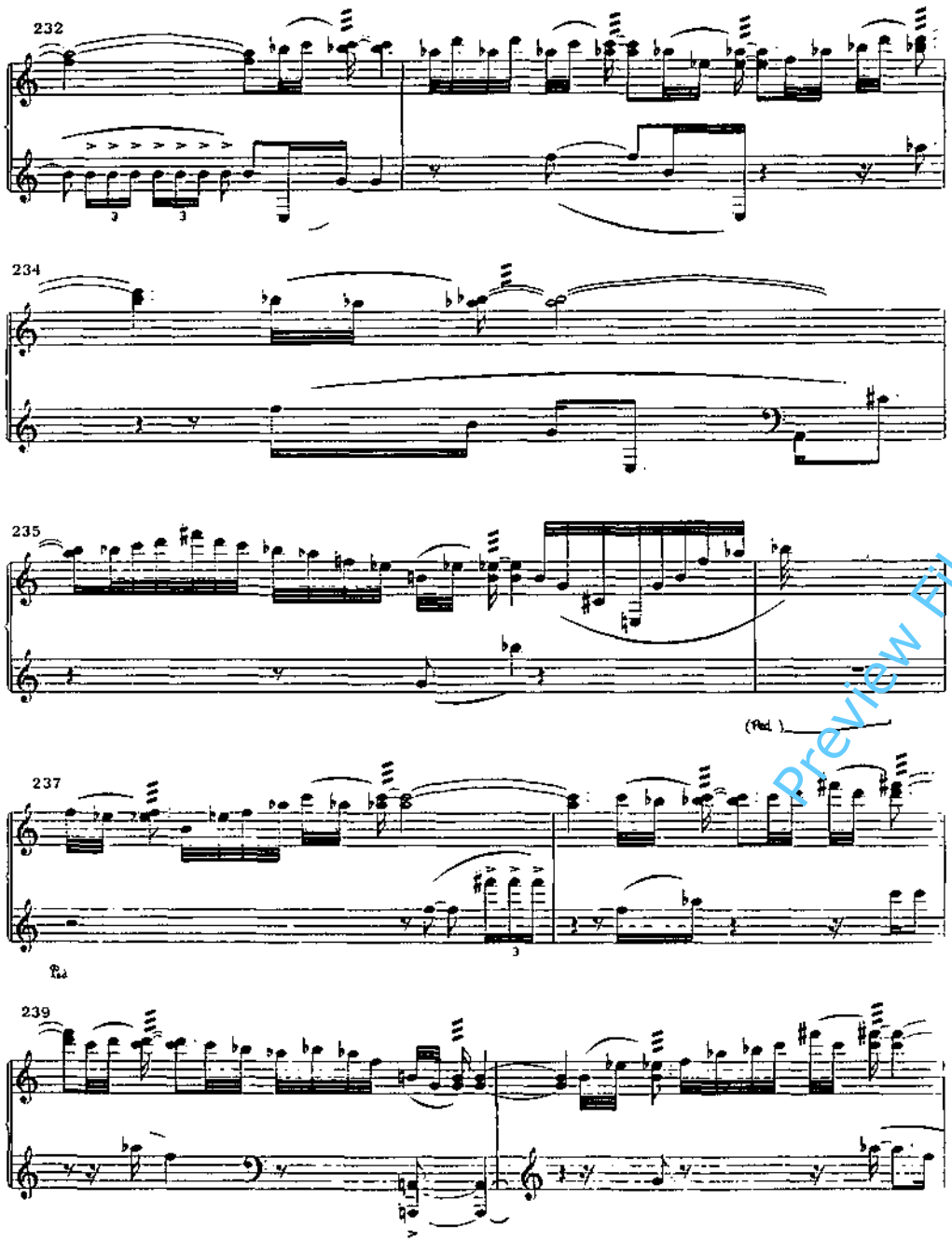

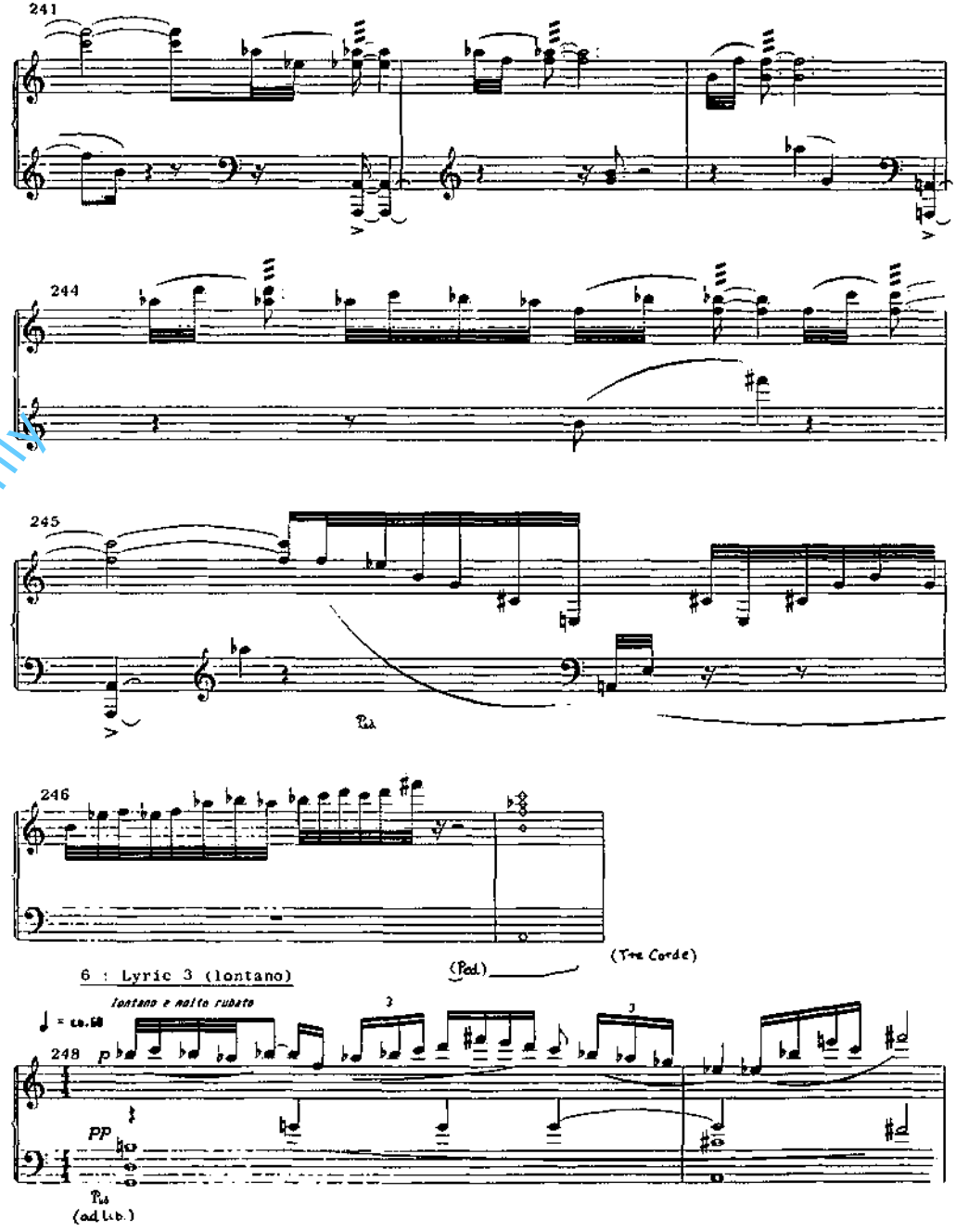

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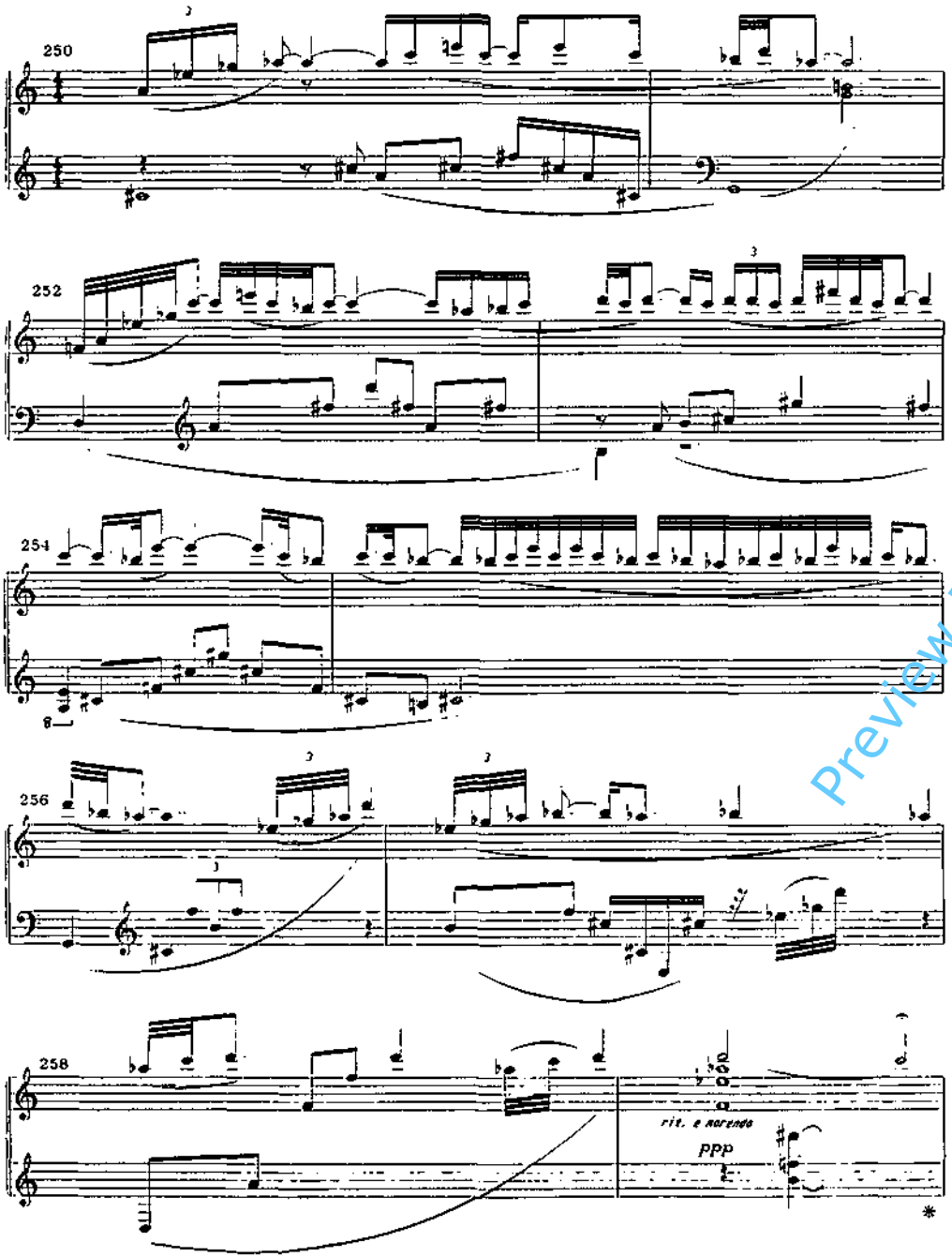

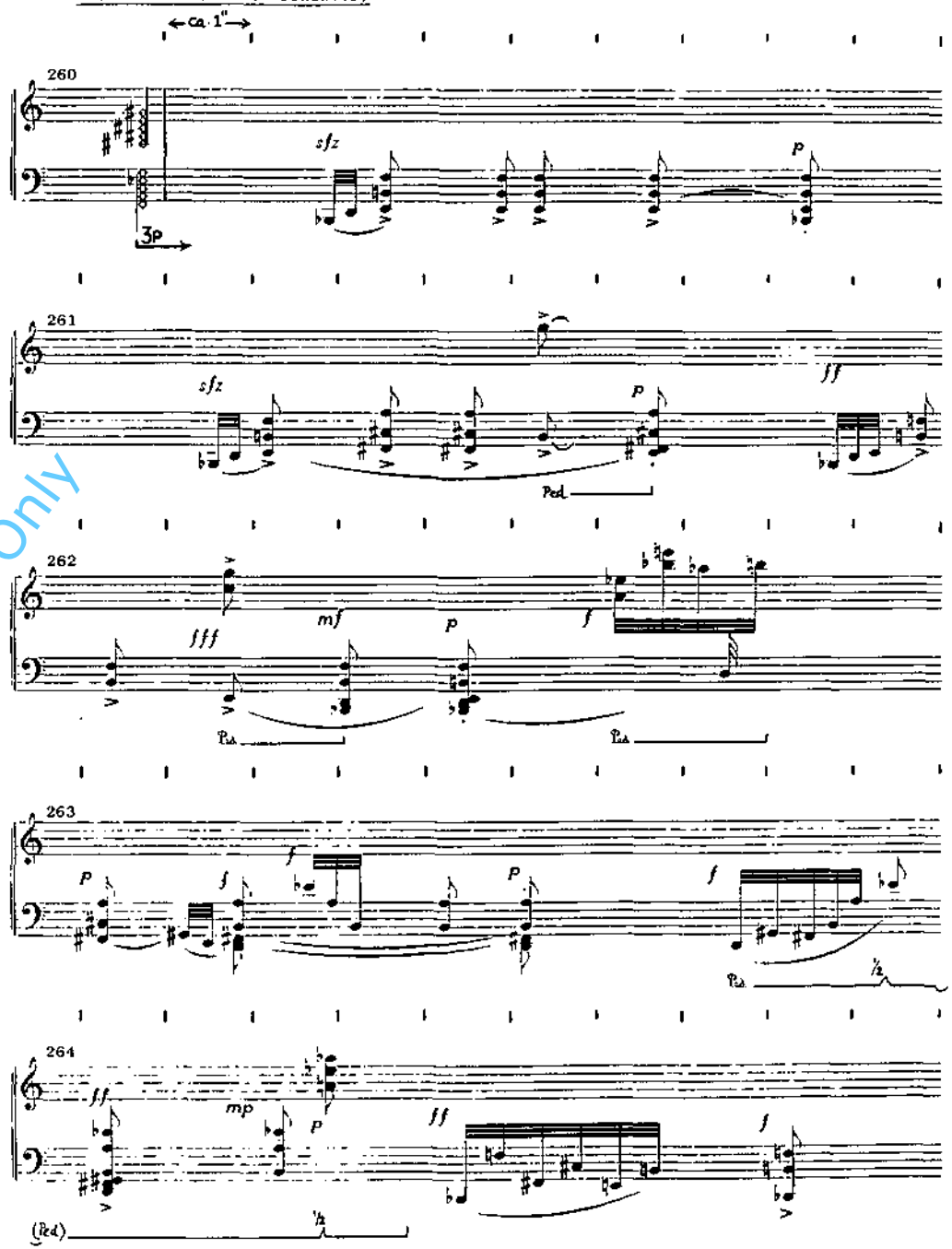

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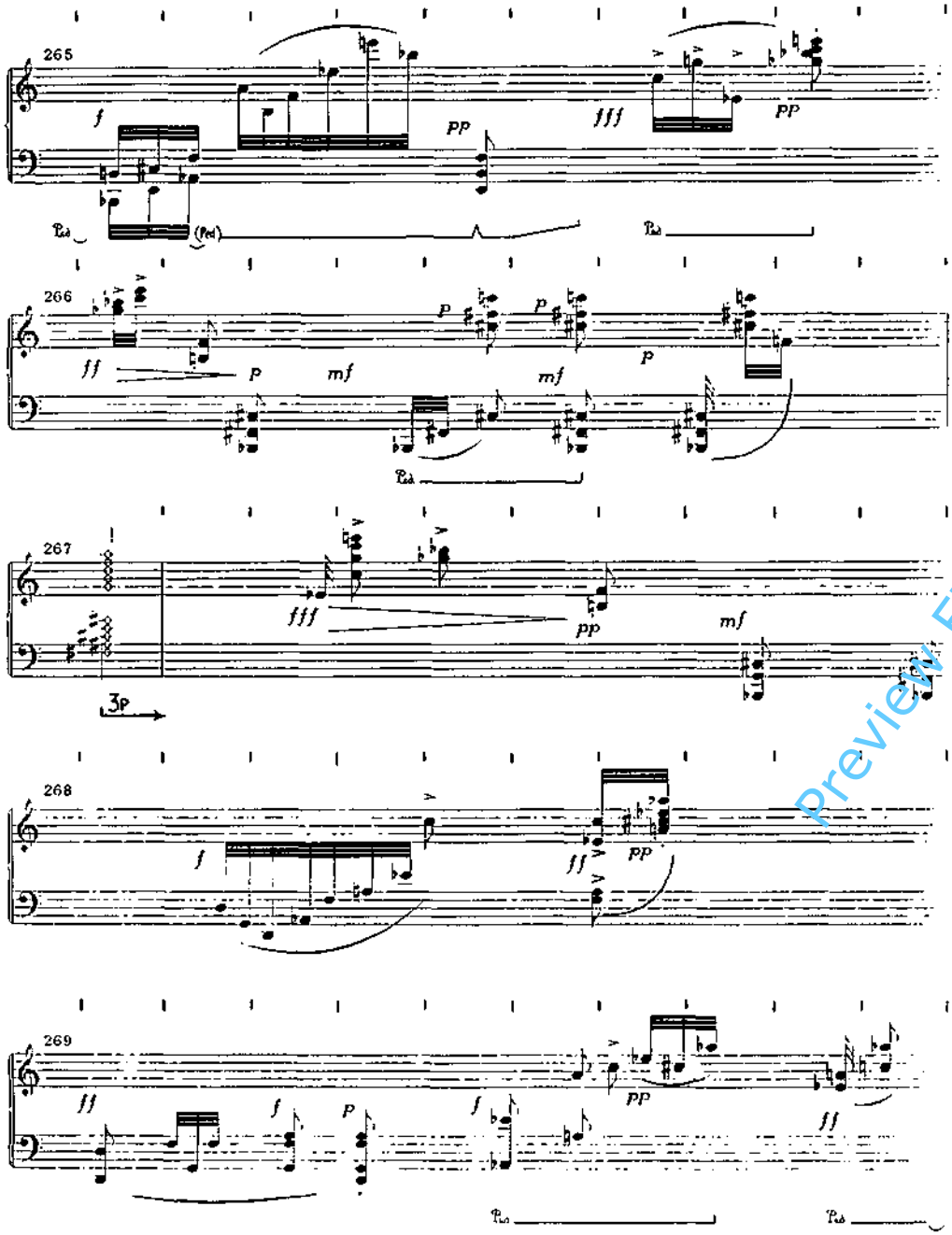

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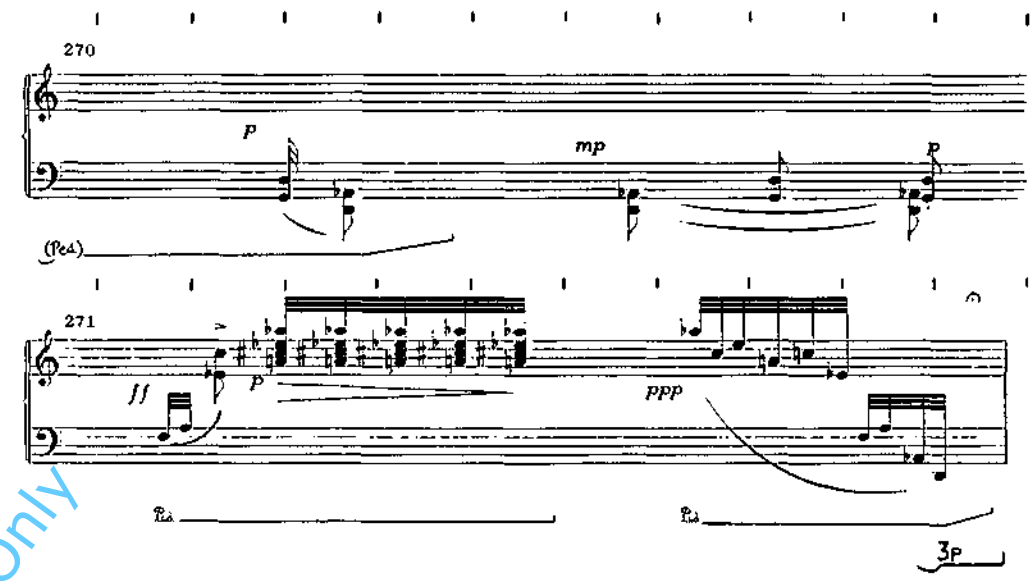
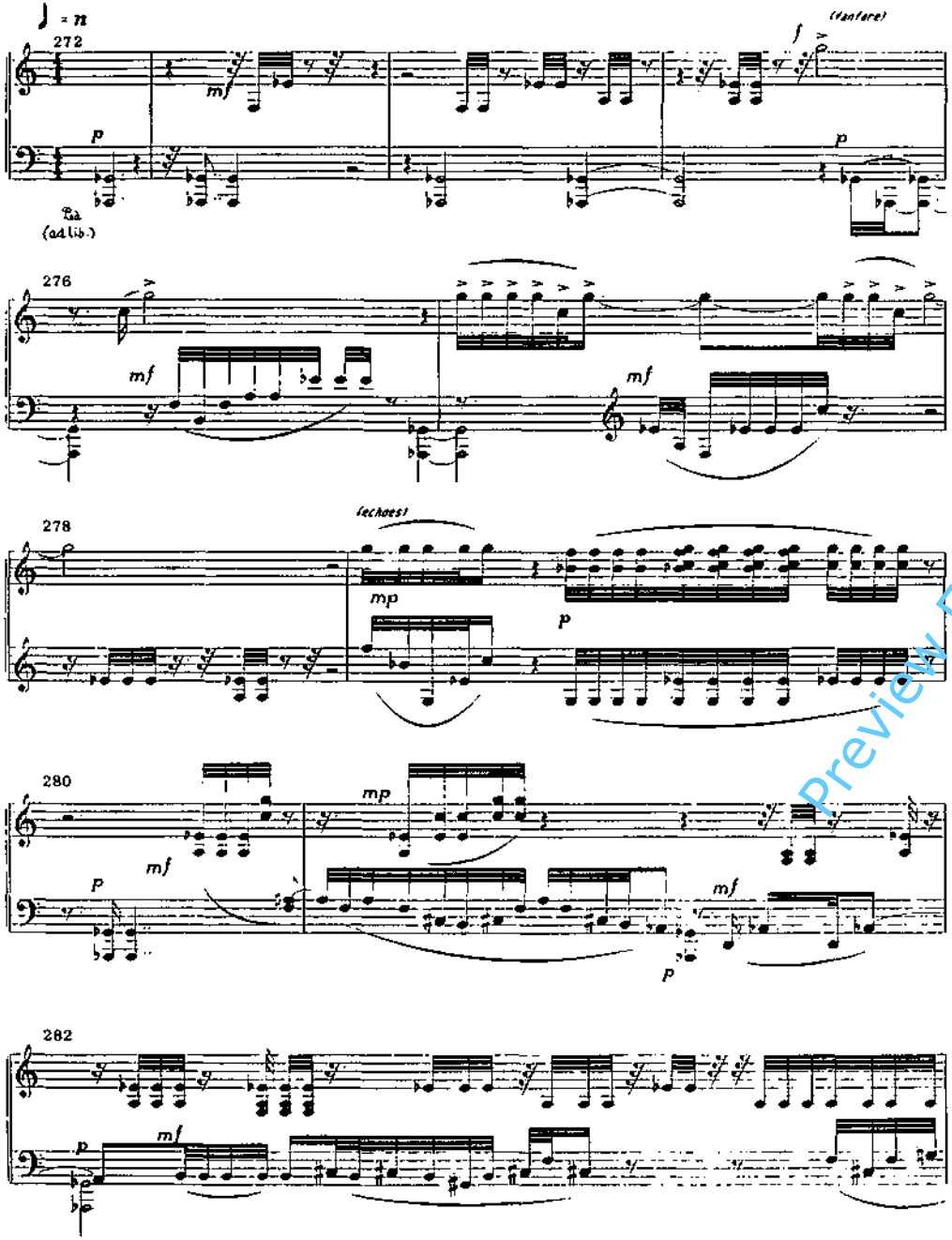
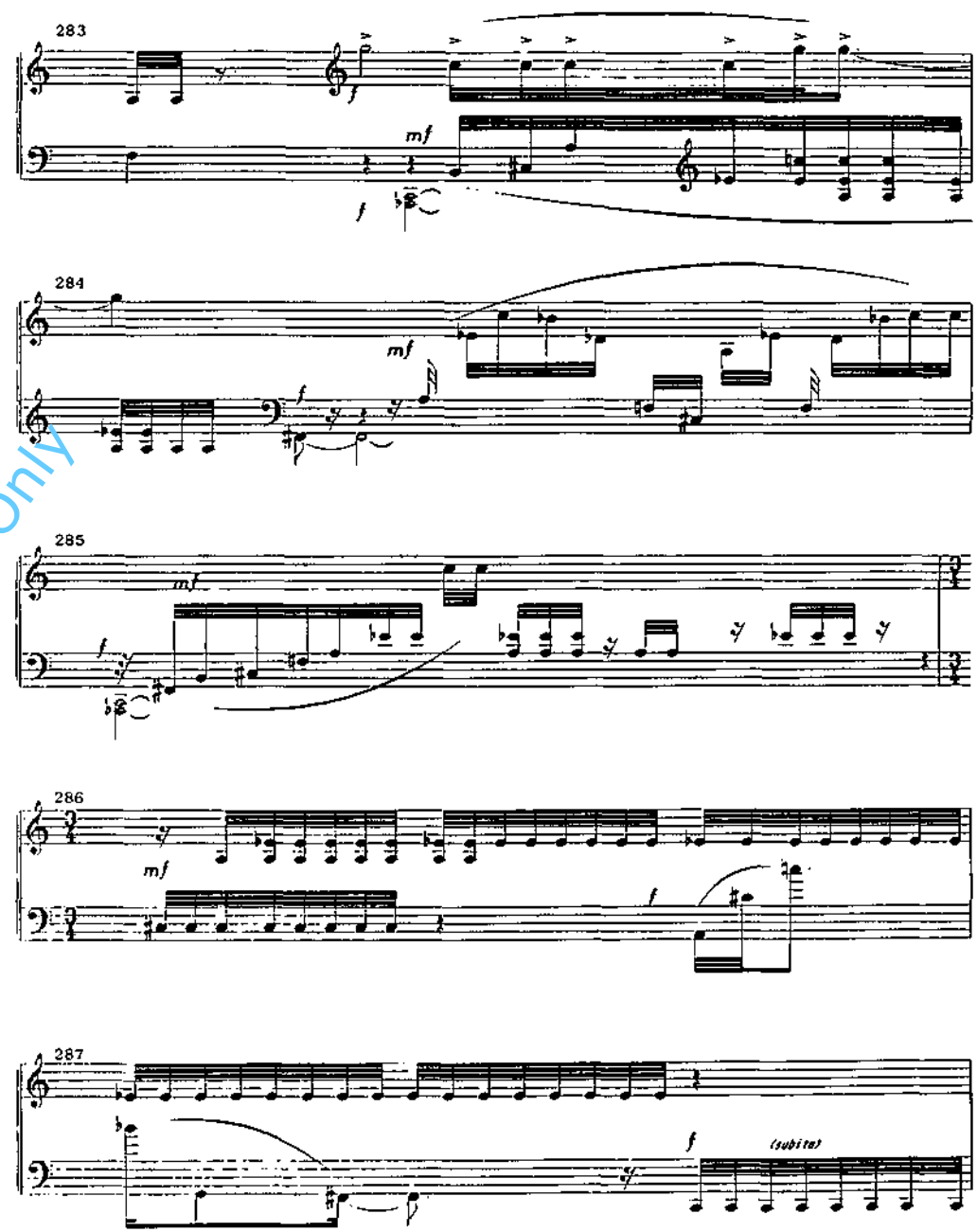


8 : Toccata 2 (fanfare and alarm)





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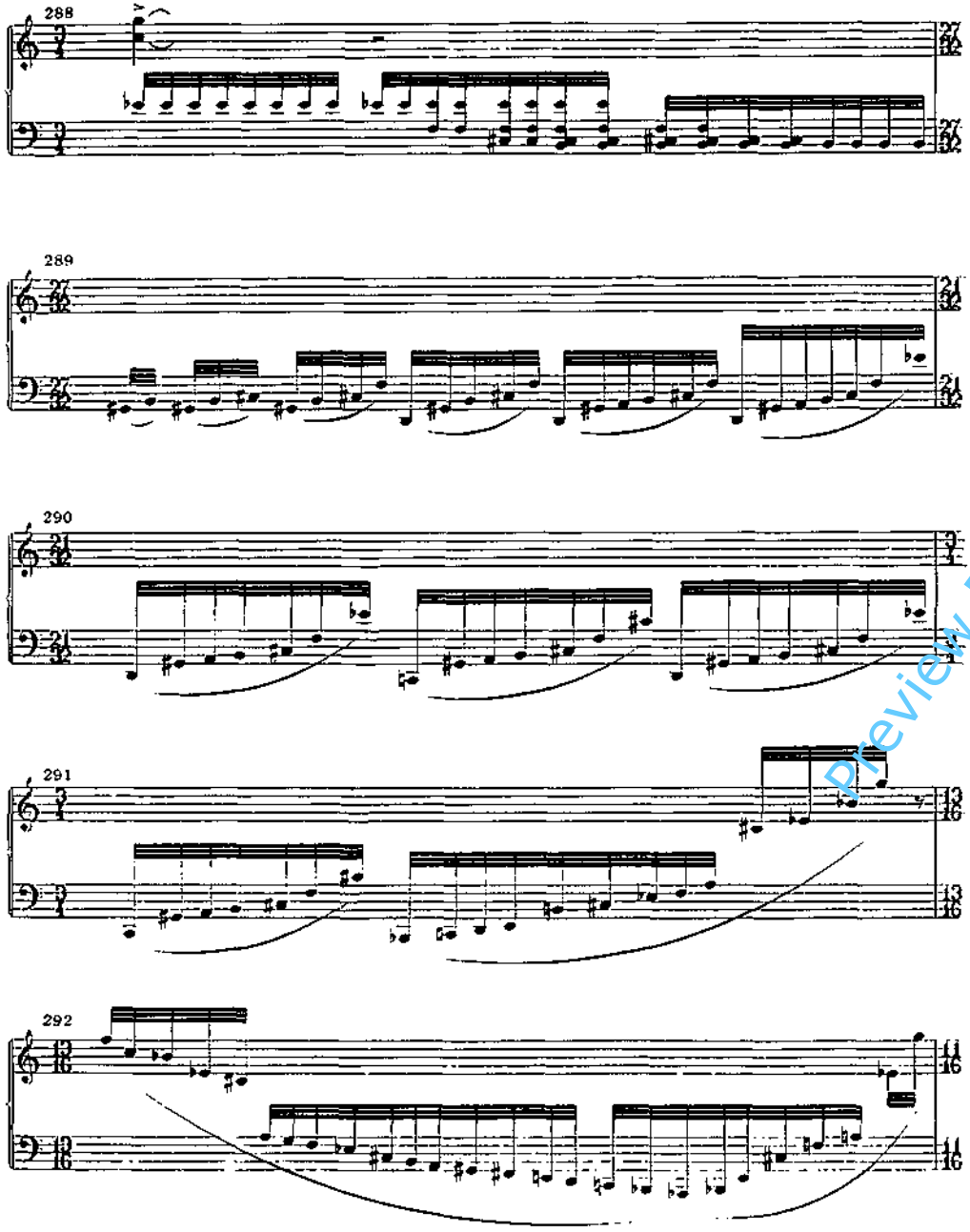

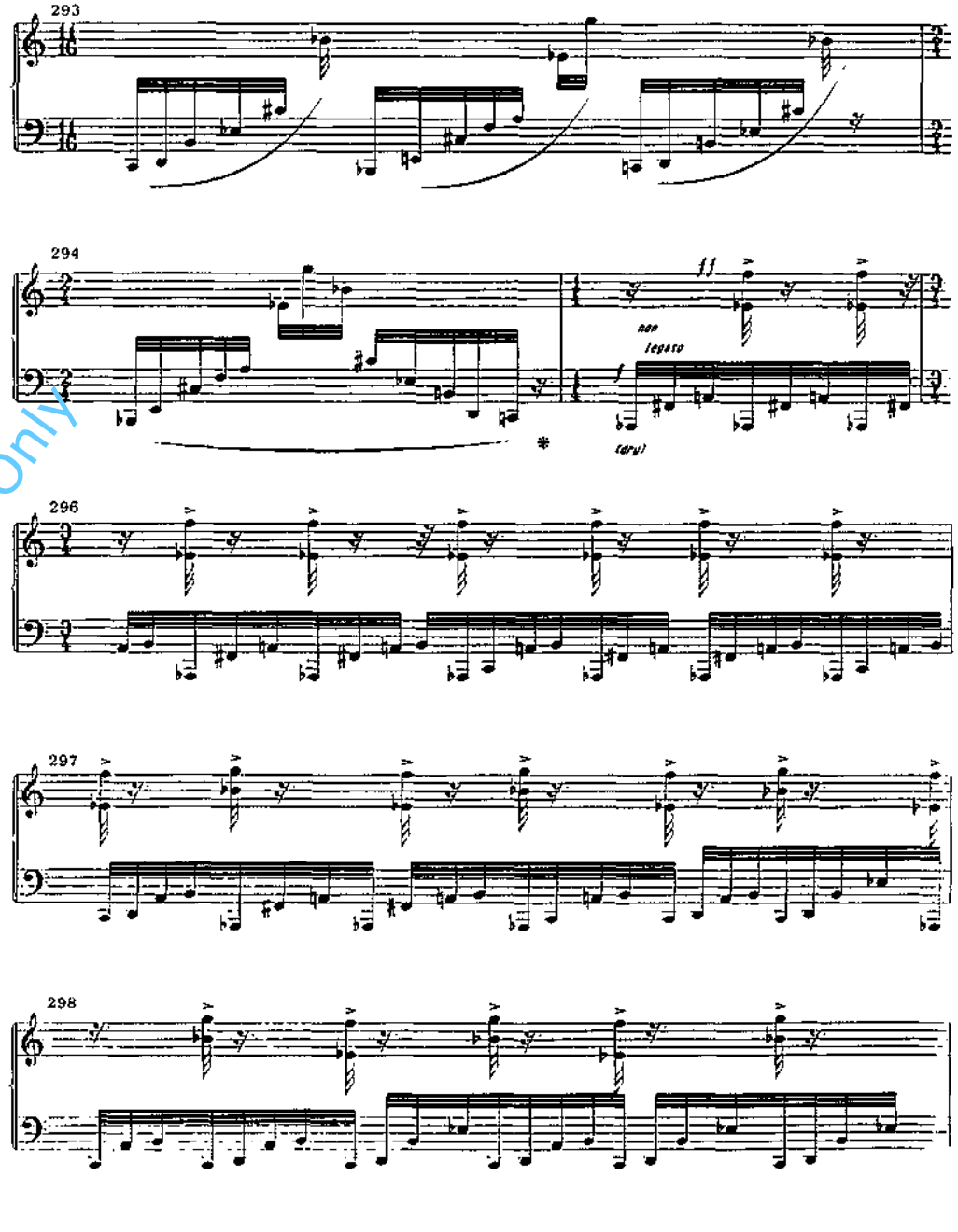

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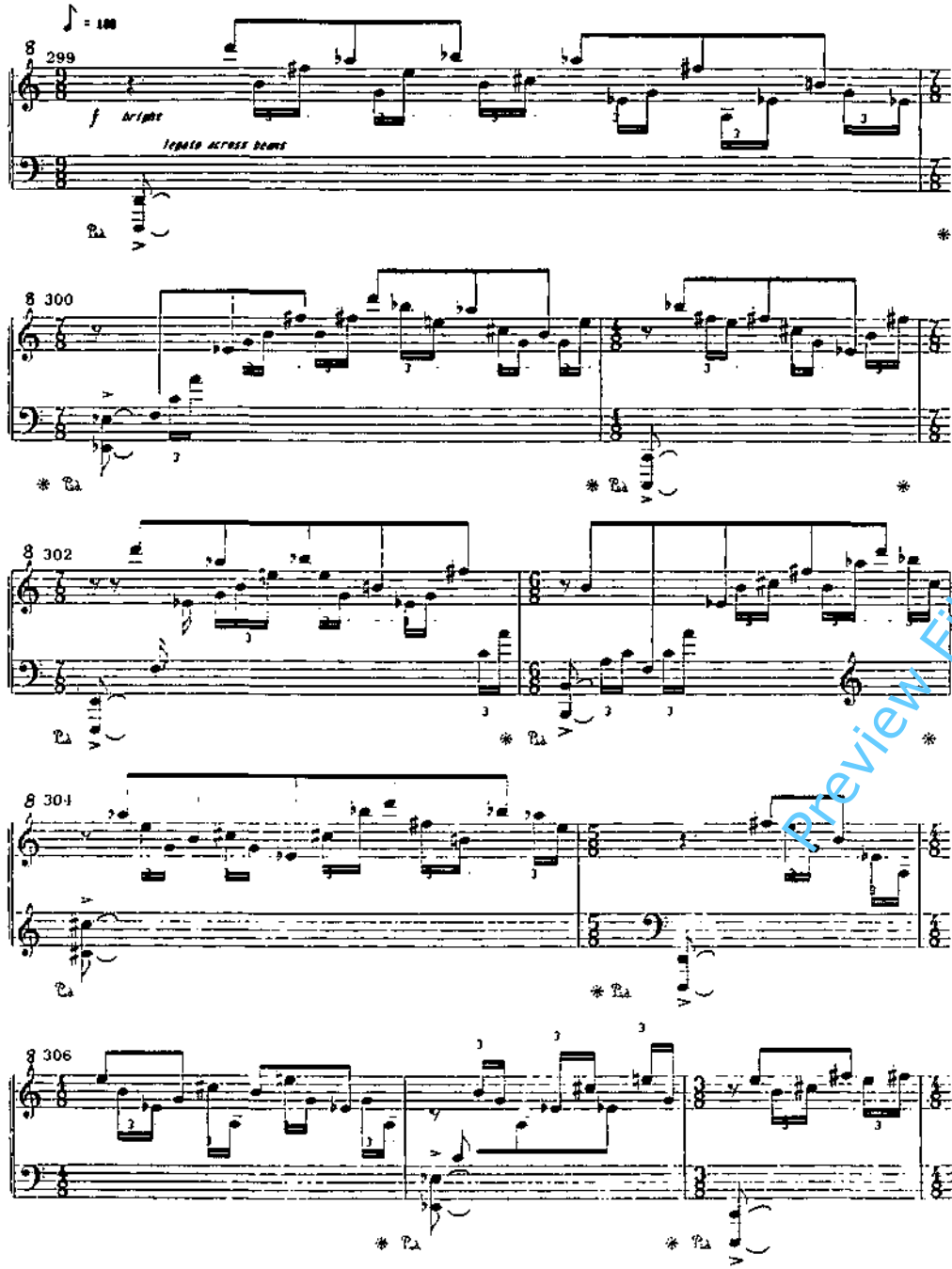

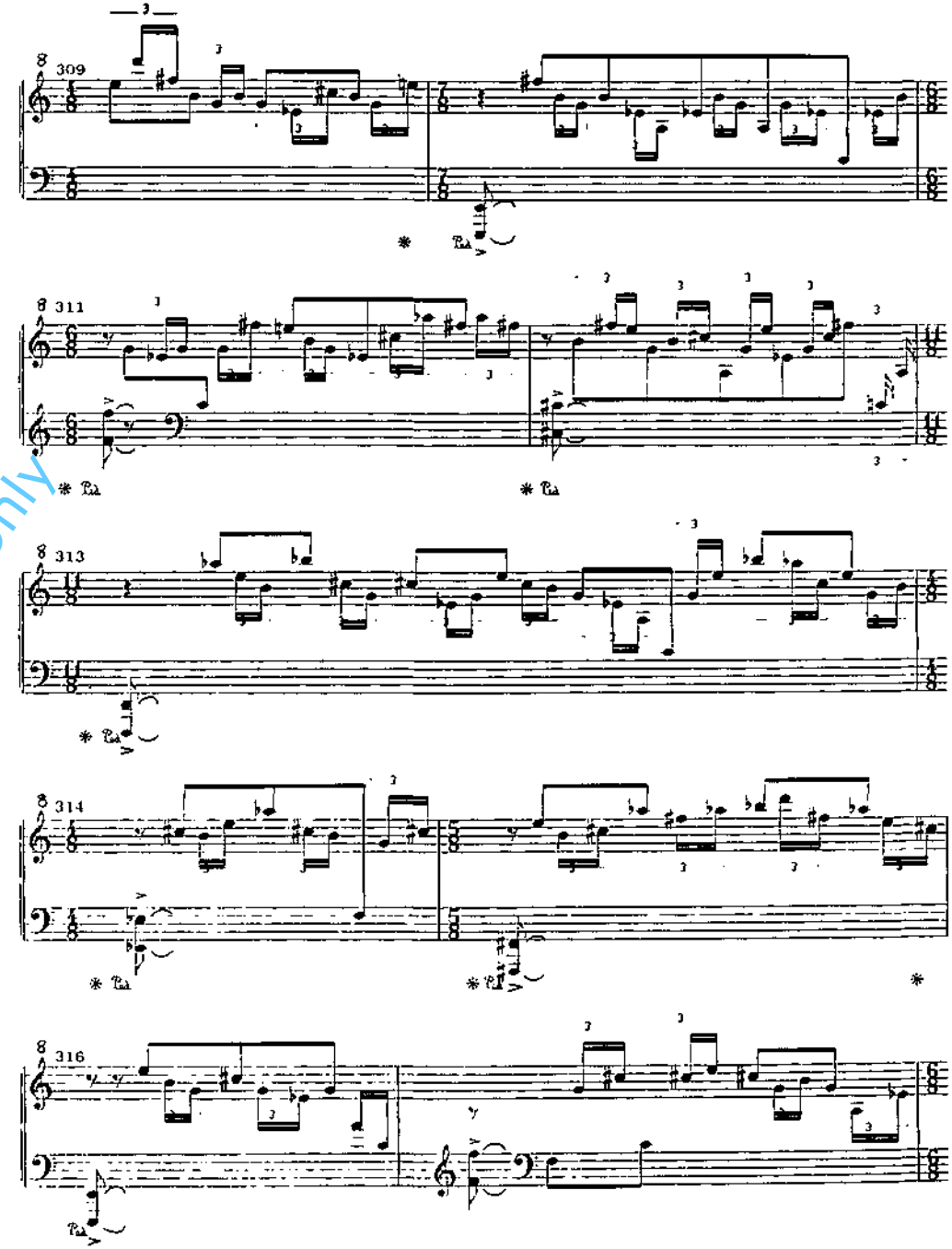

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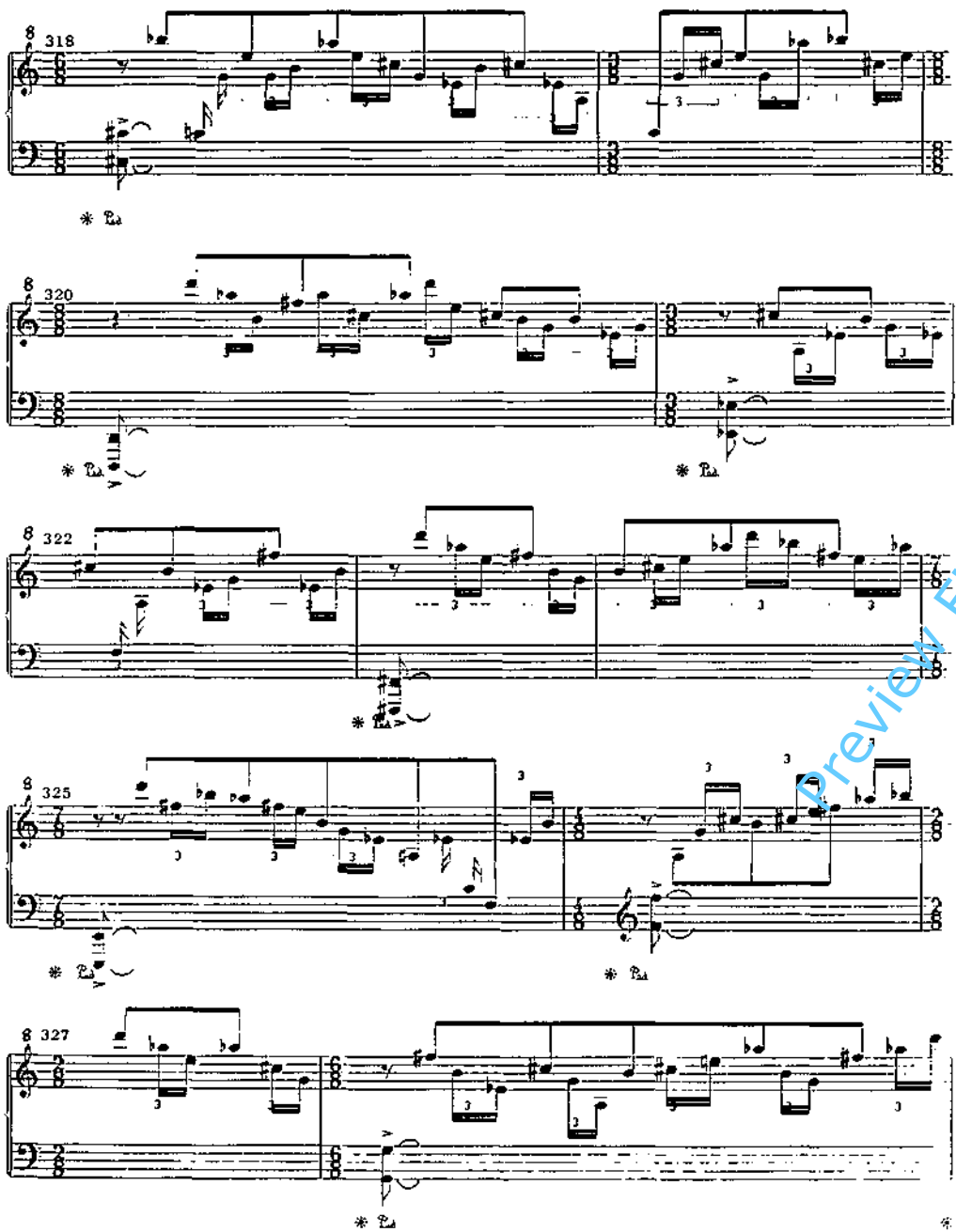

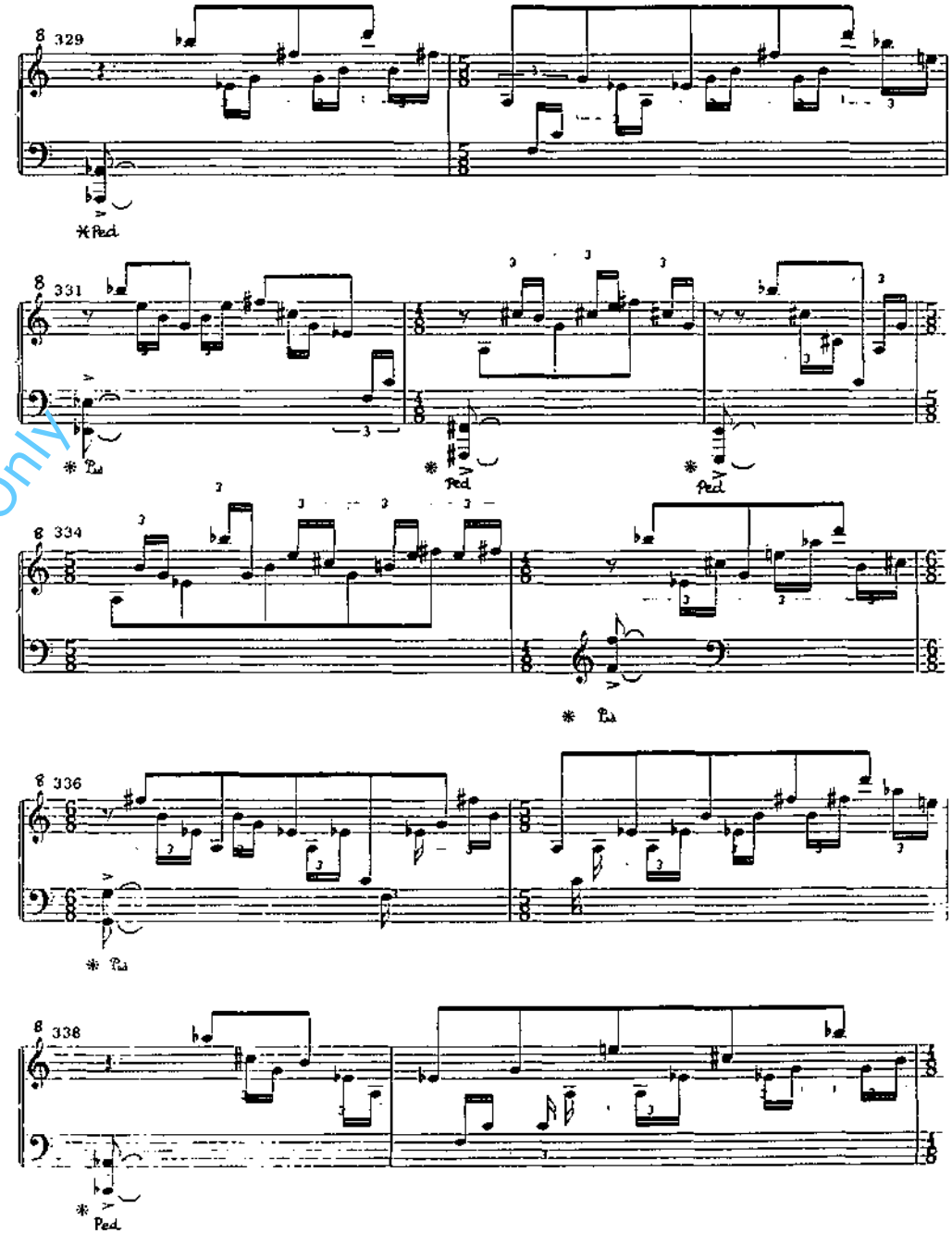

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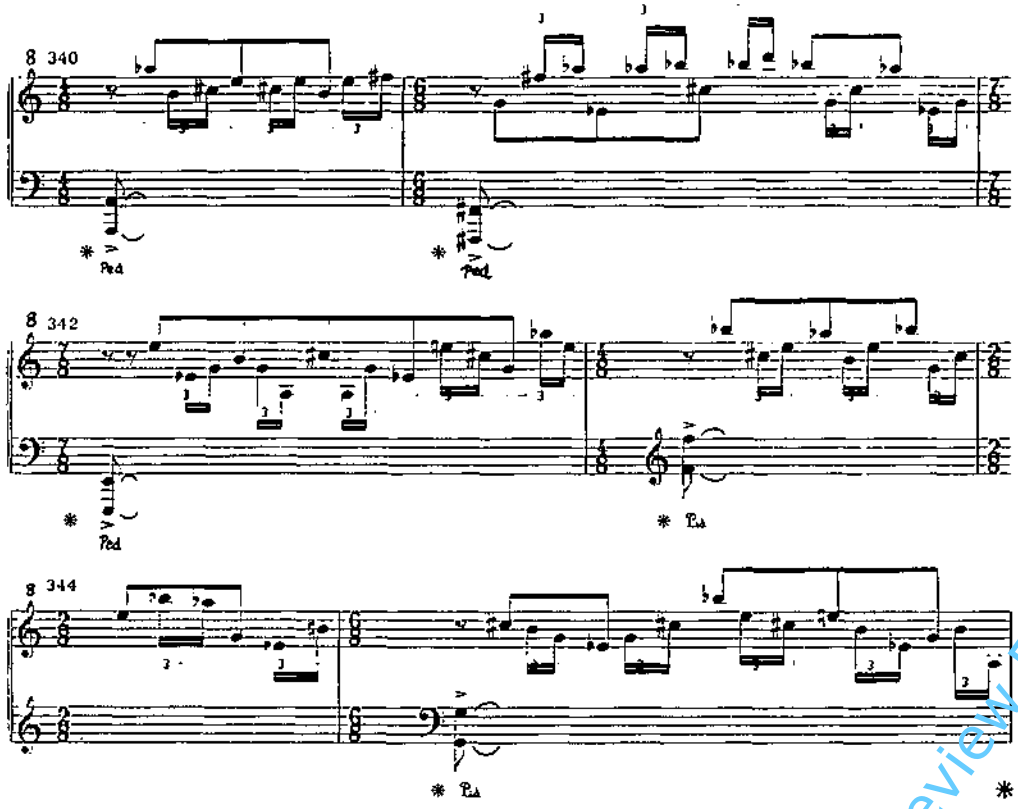

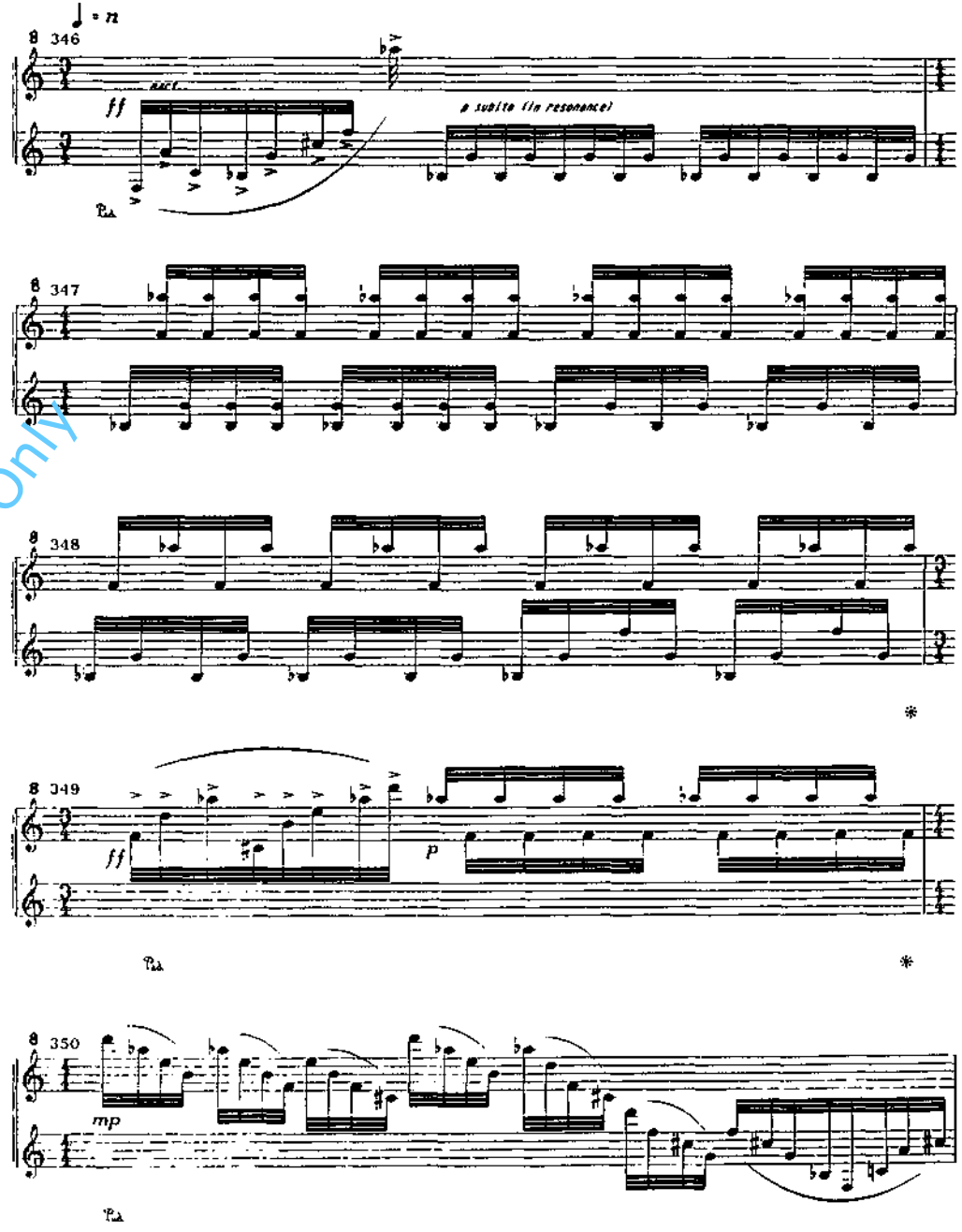

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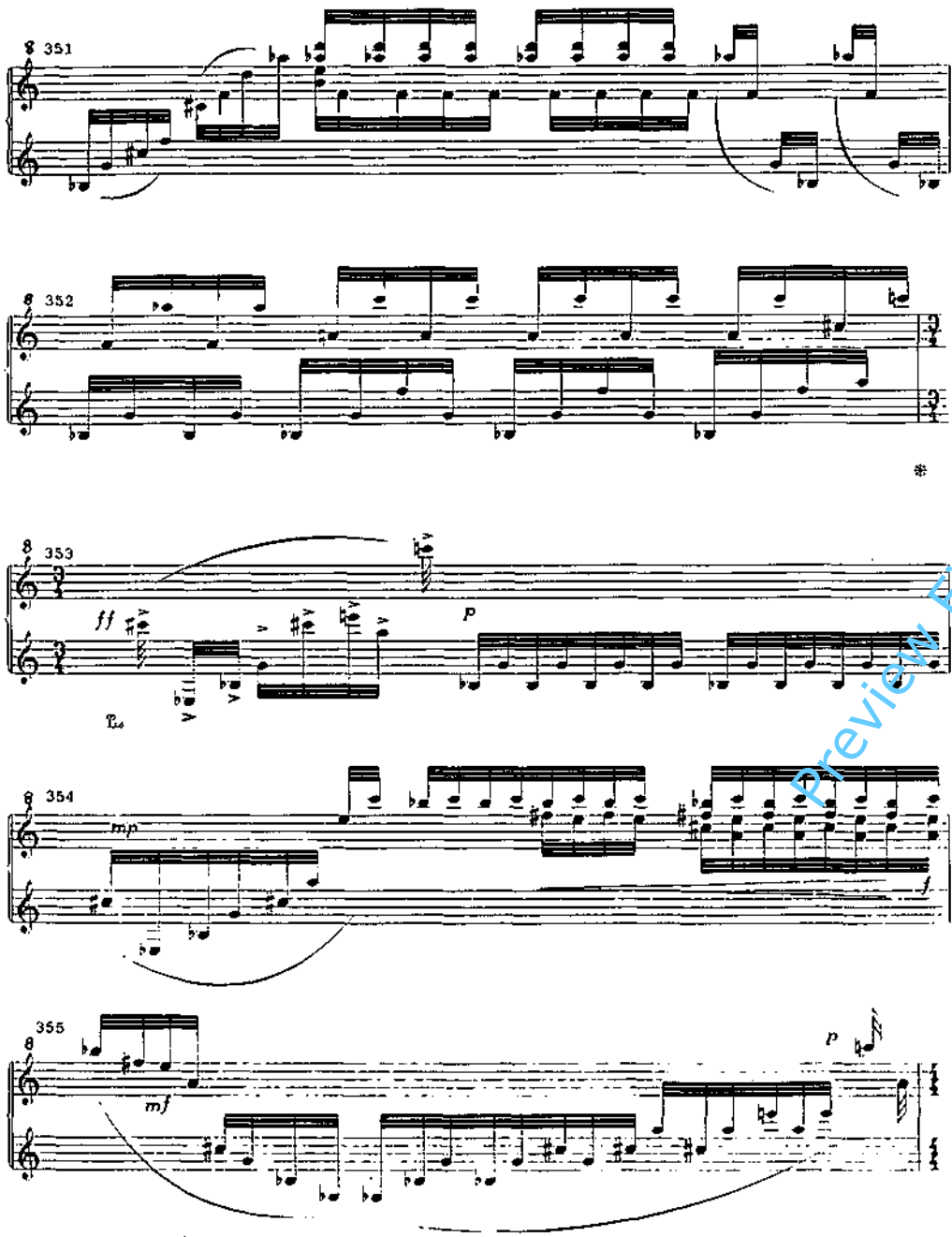

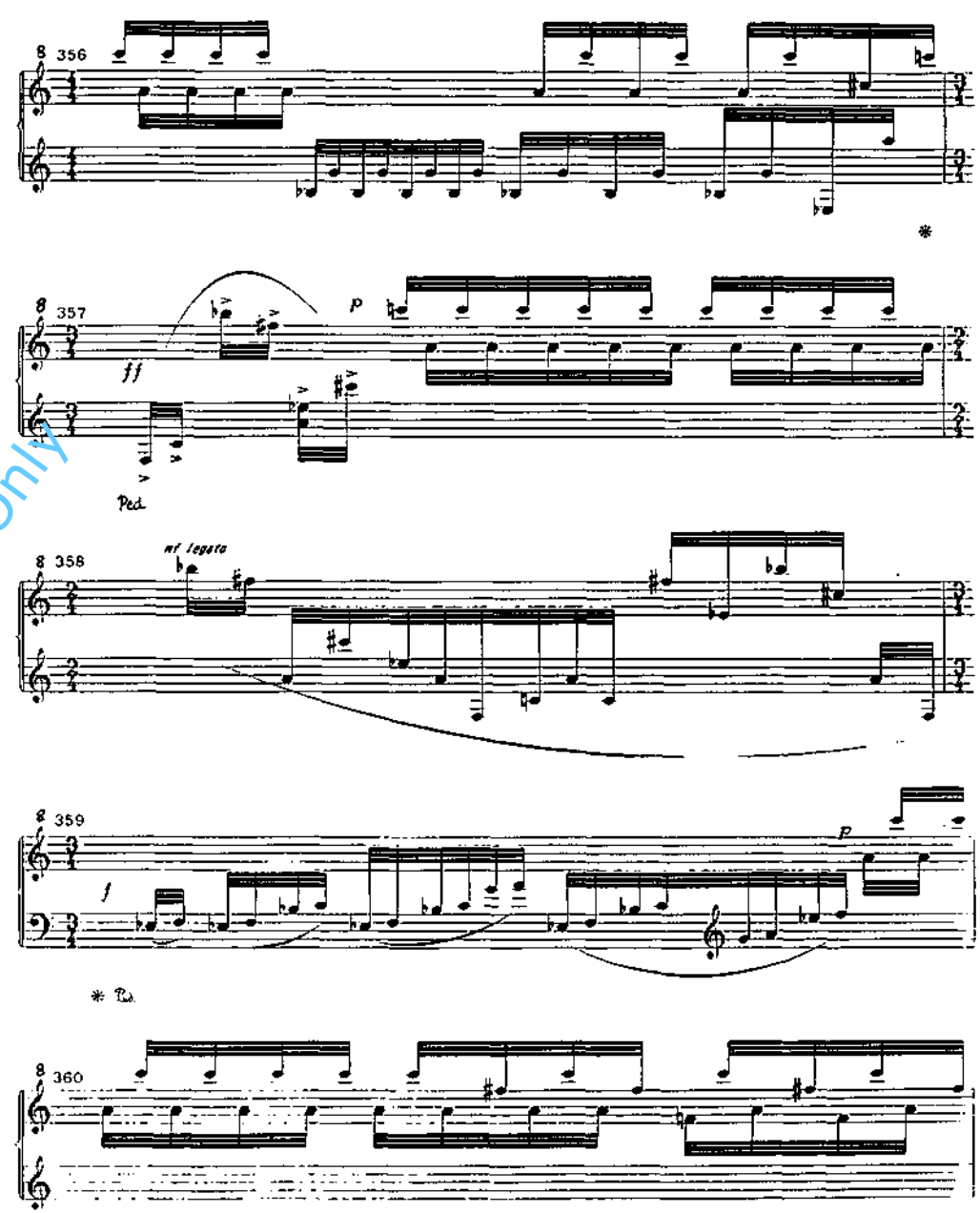

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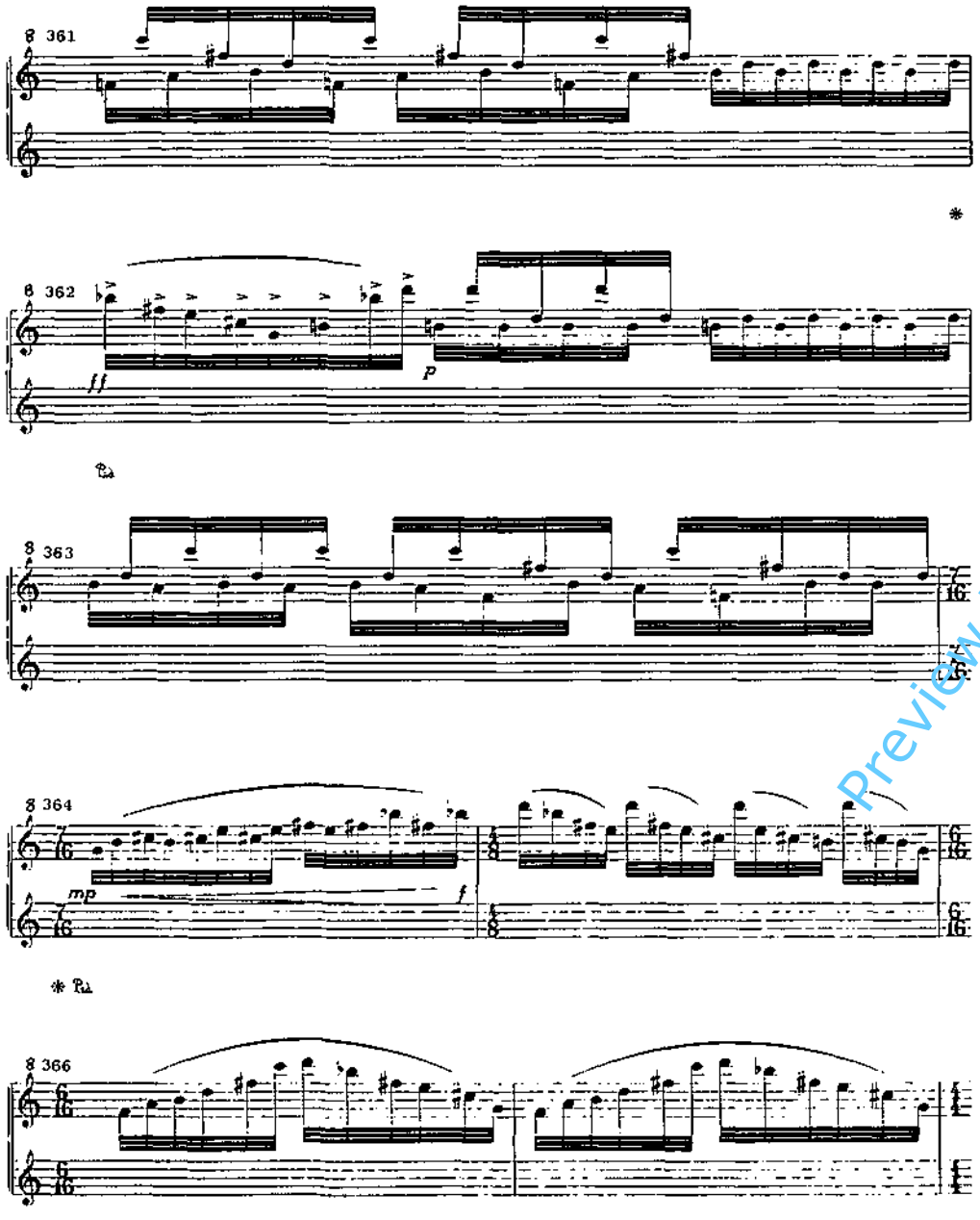

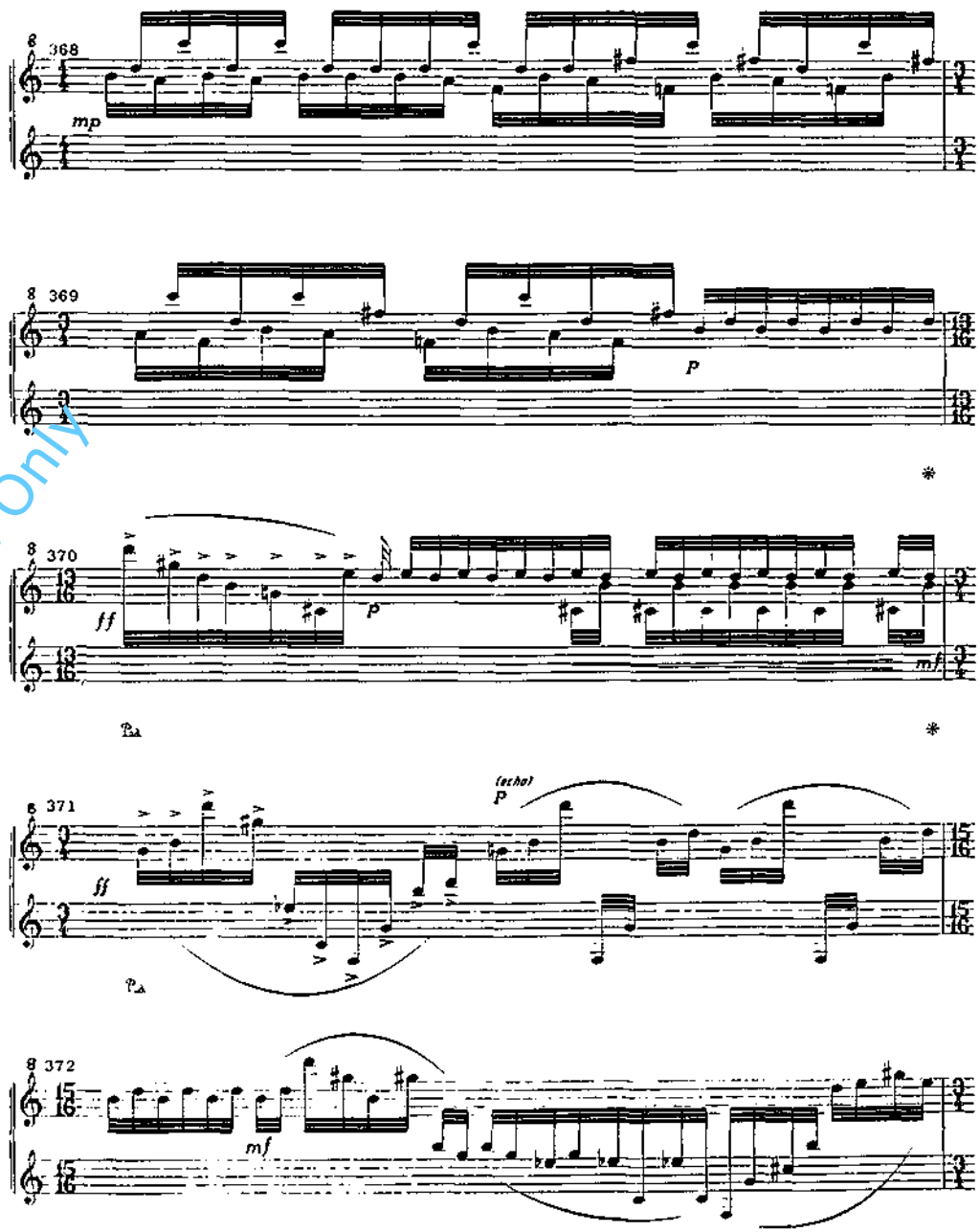

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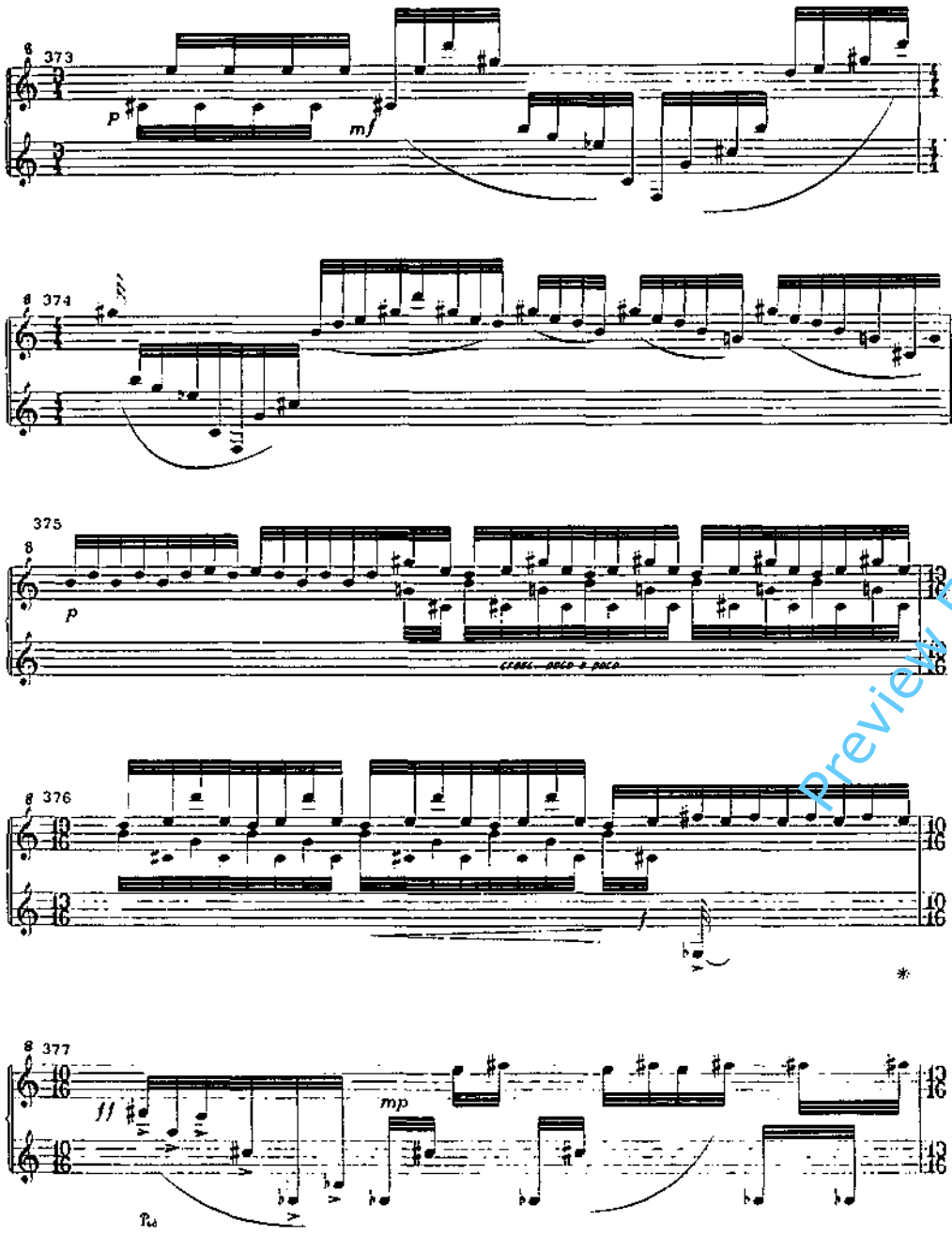

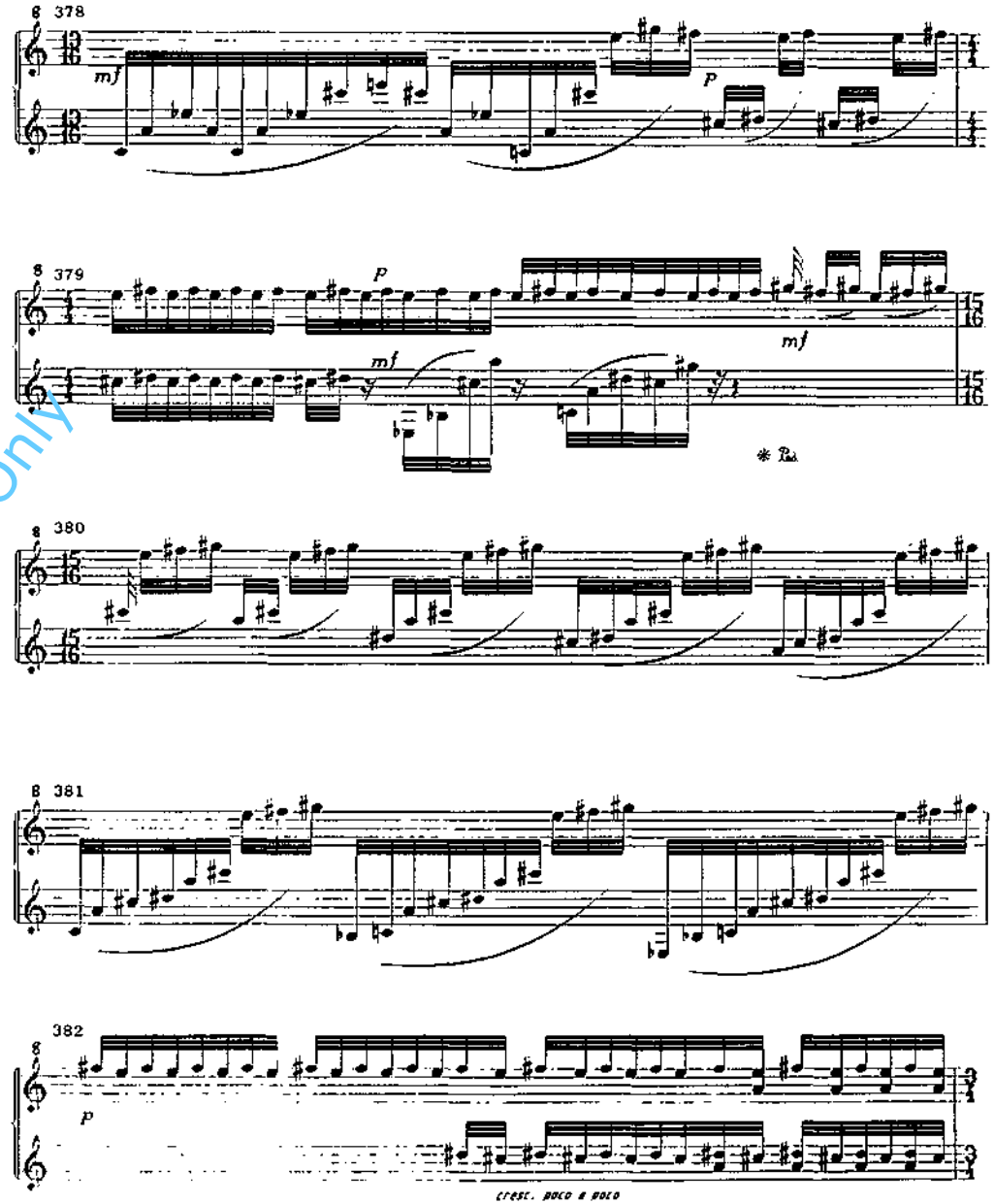

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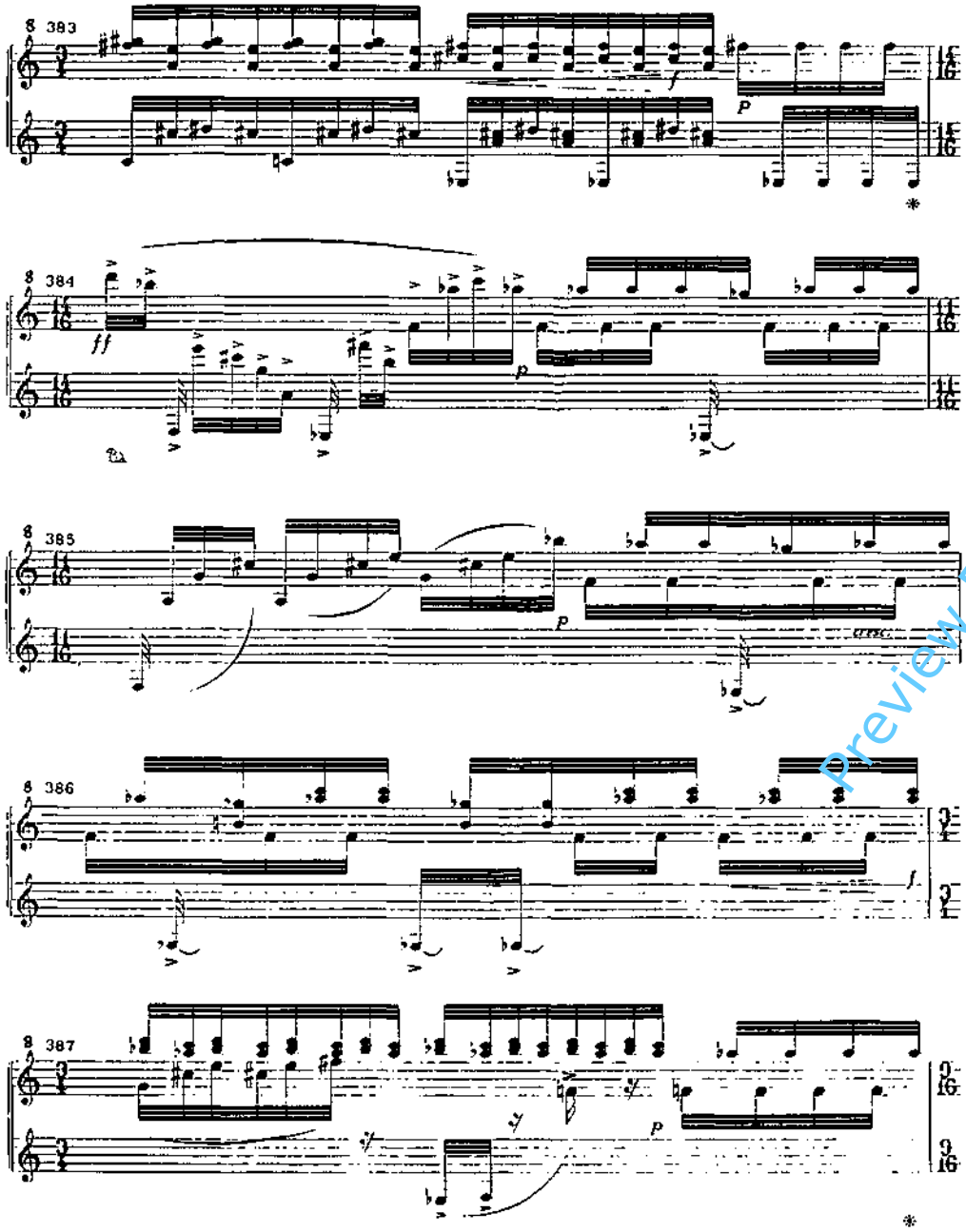

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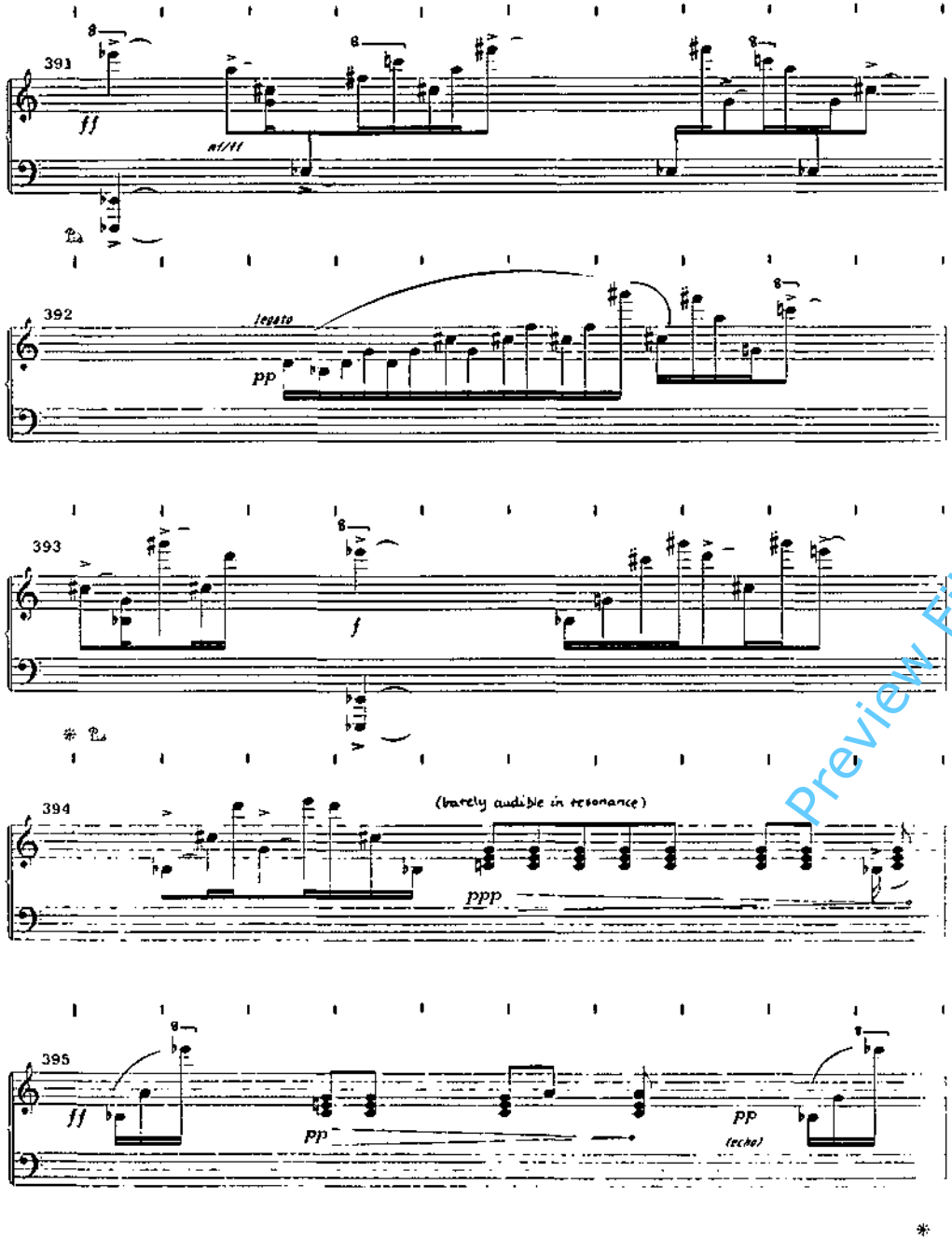
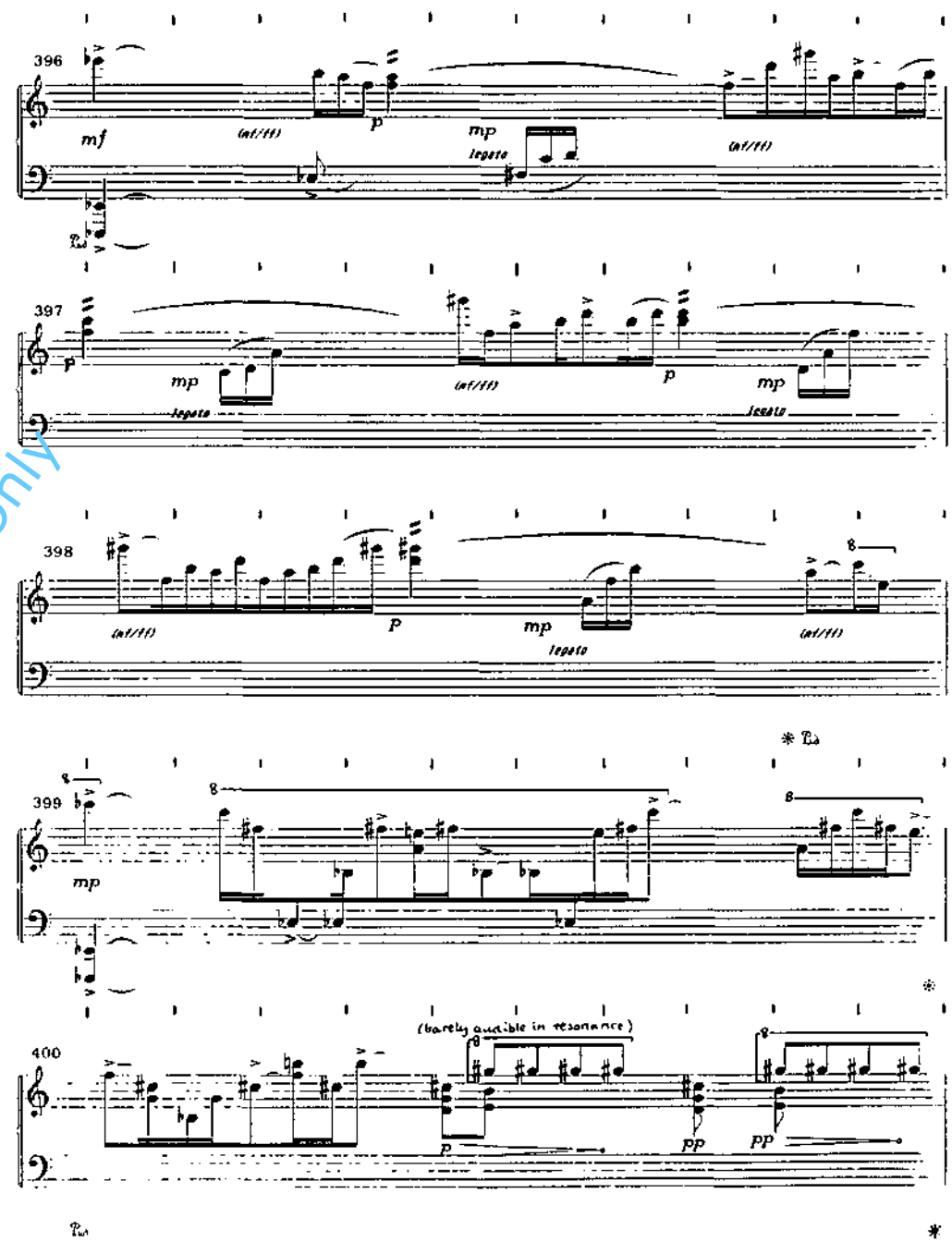
11 : Percussion 3 (final resonances)





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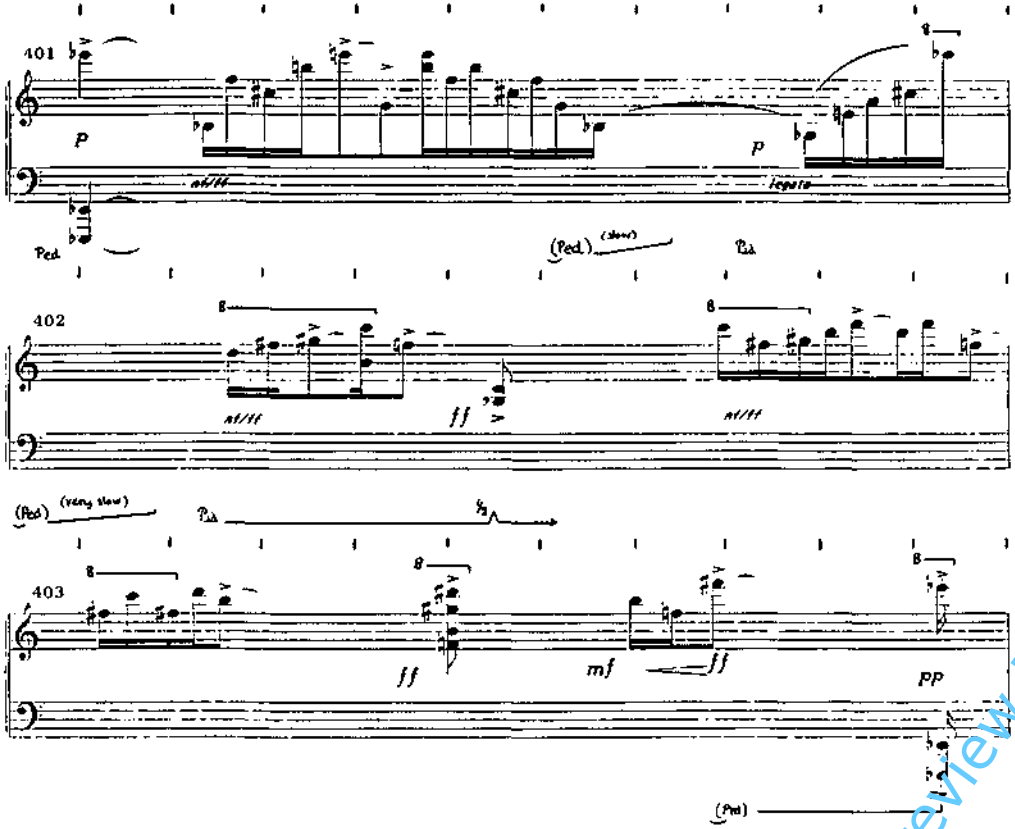

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