The Raymond Variations For Piano (Set: 1)

By: Stephen. G. Potts

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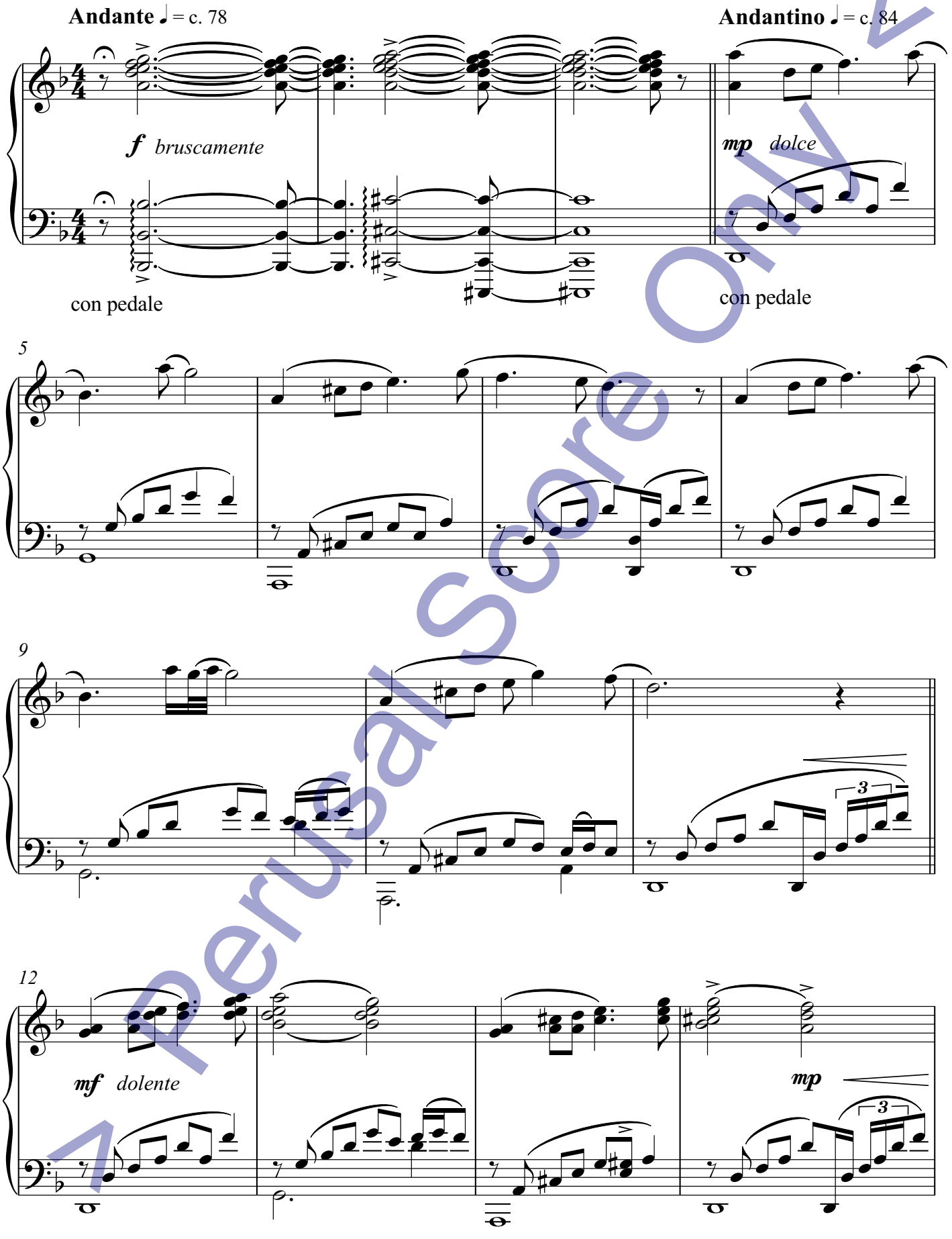
Variations for Piano (Set: 1) Based on the Andantino Themes from the Raymond Overture by Ambroise Thomas: 1811 - 1896

The Raymond Variations **by: S. G. Potts (2015)**



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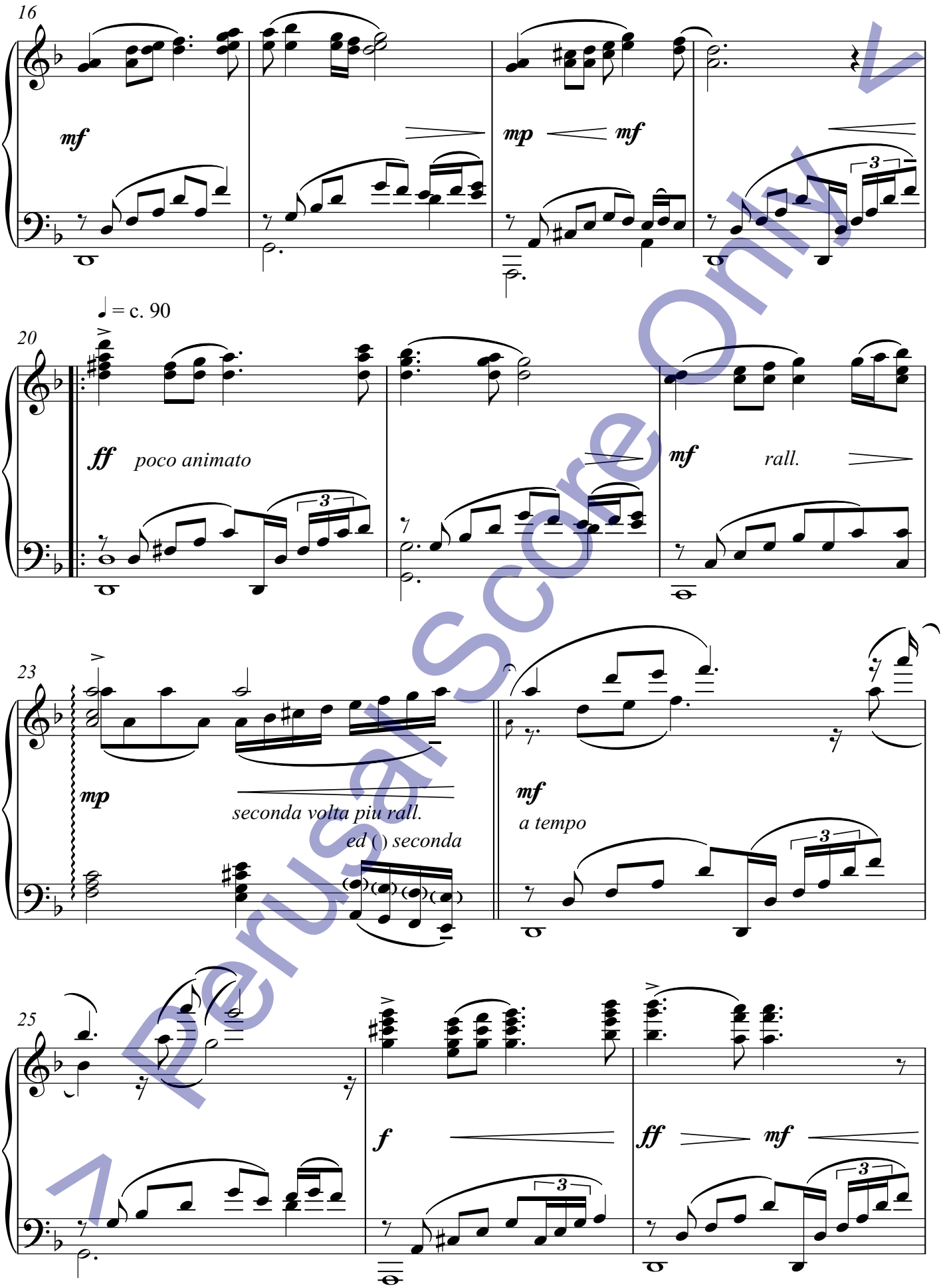

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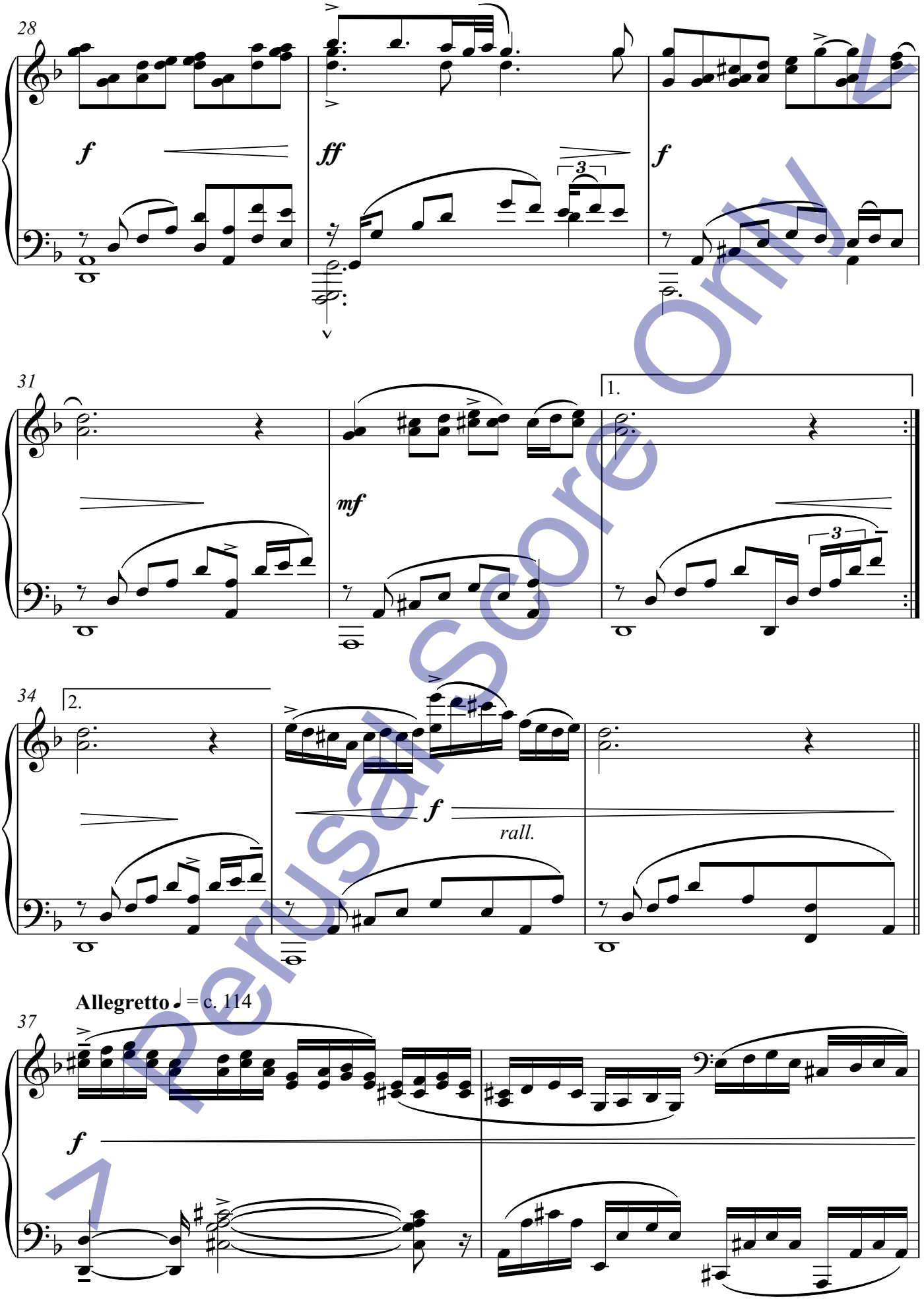

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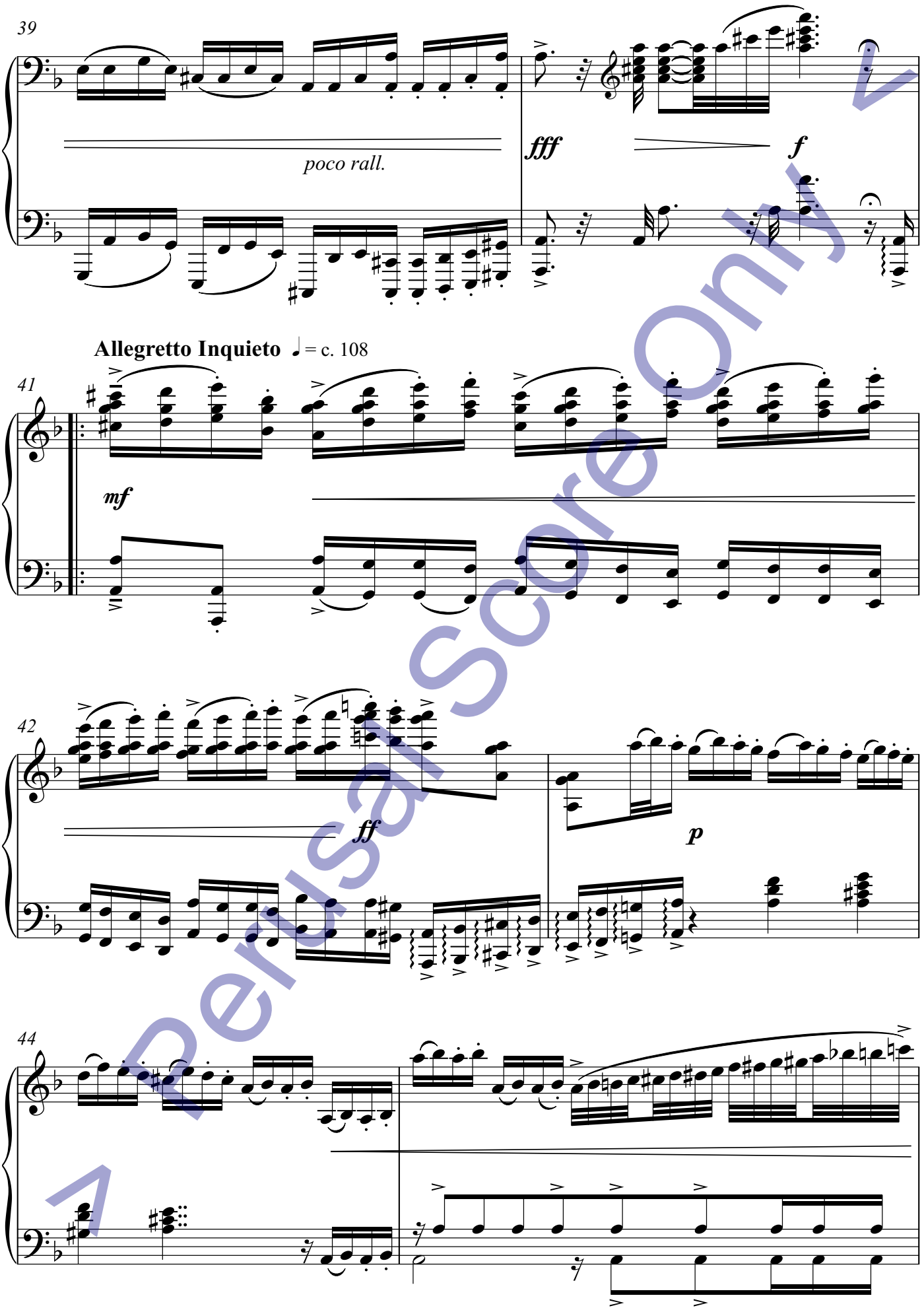

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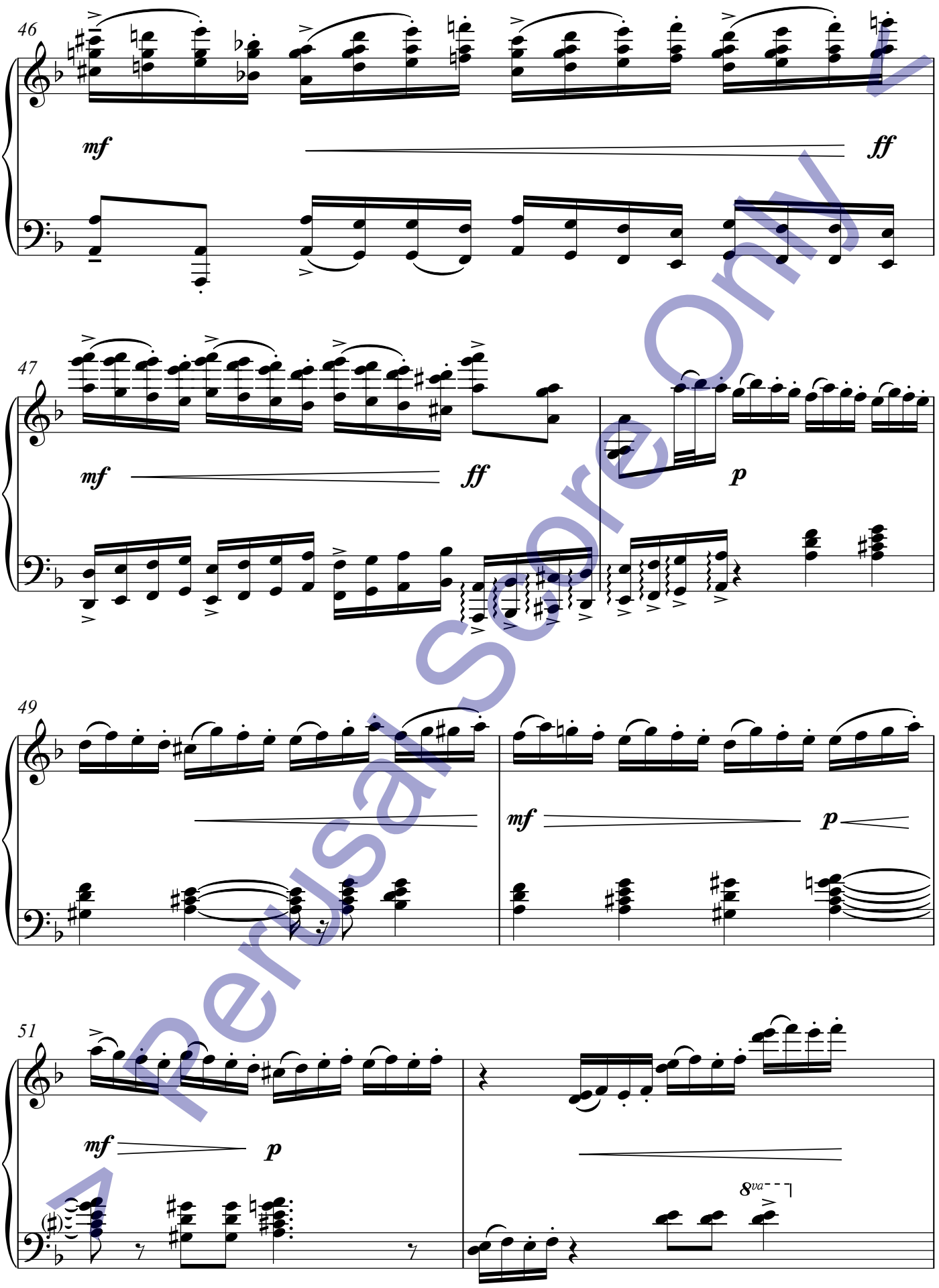

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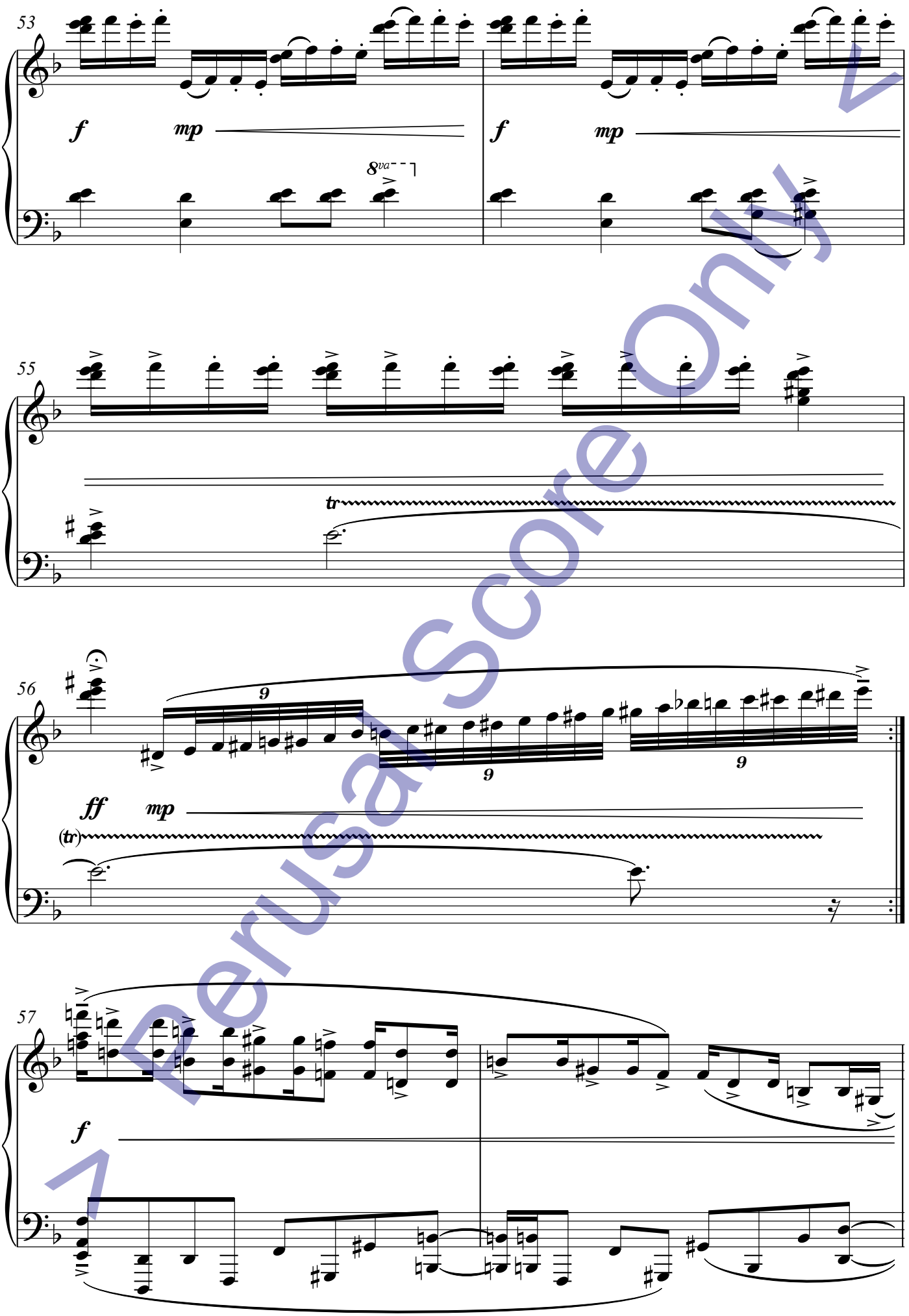

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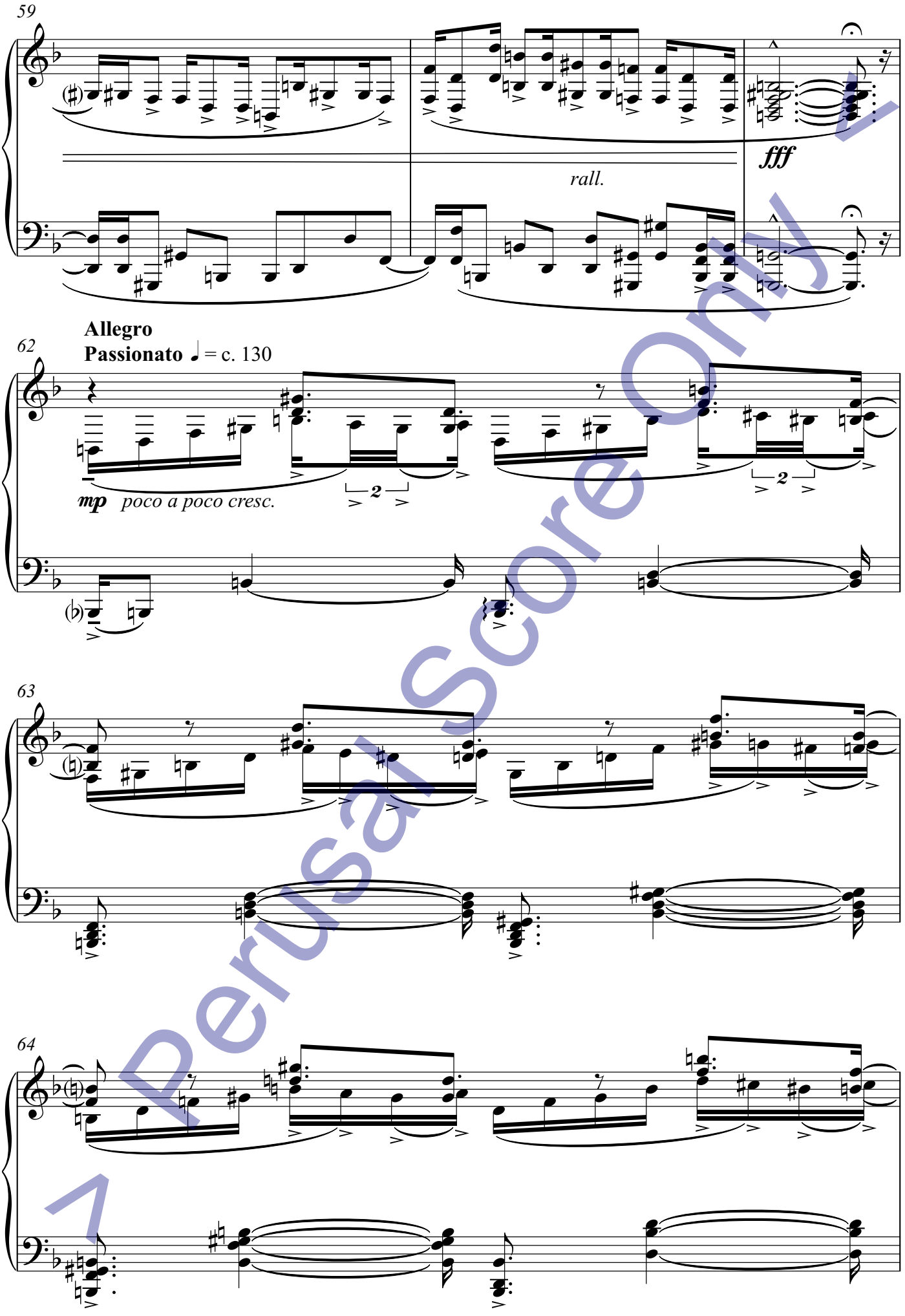

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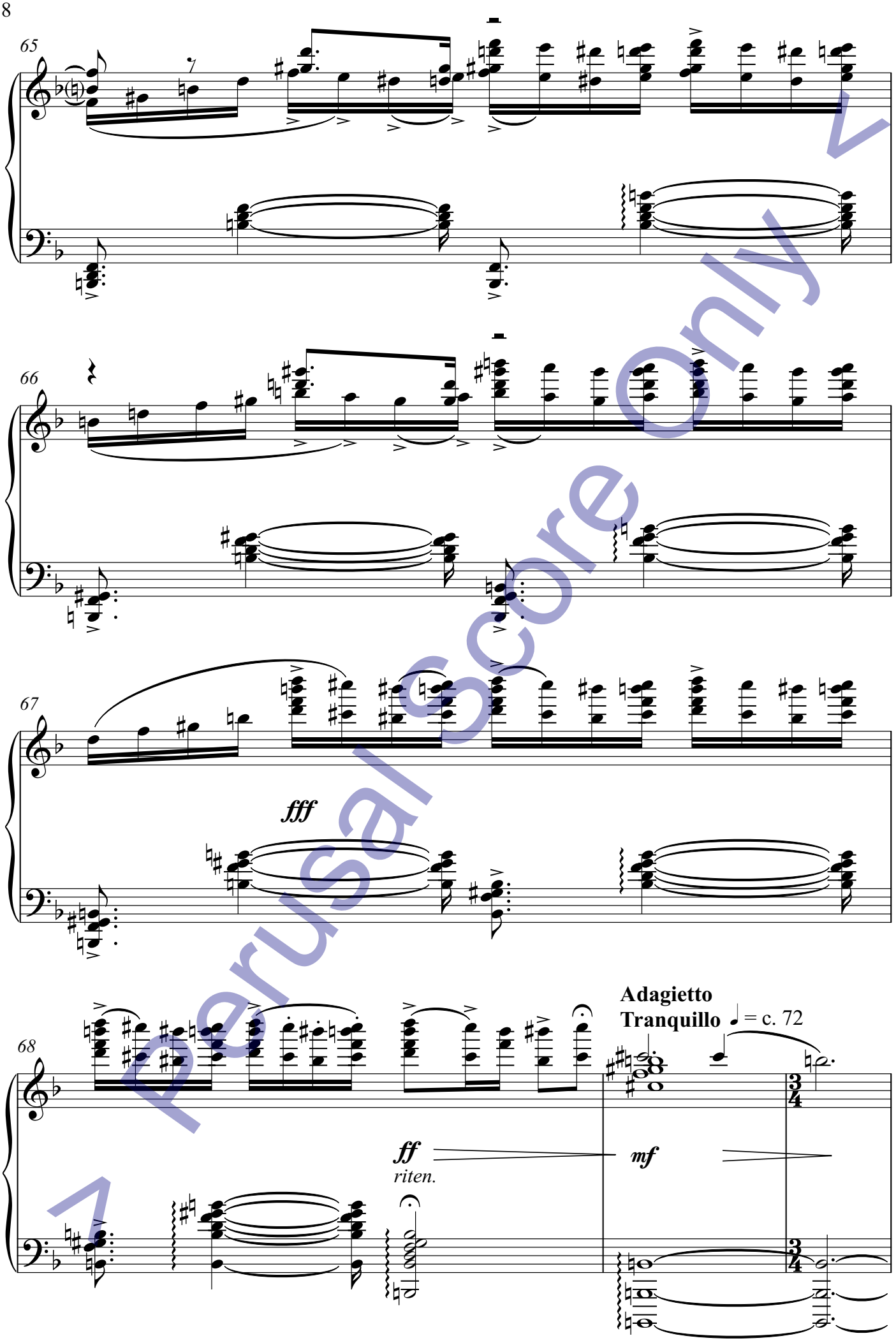

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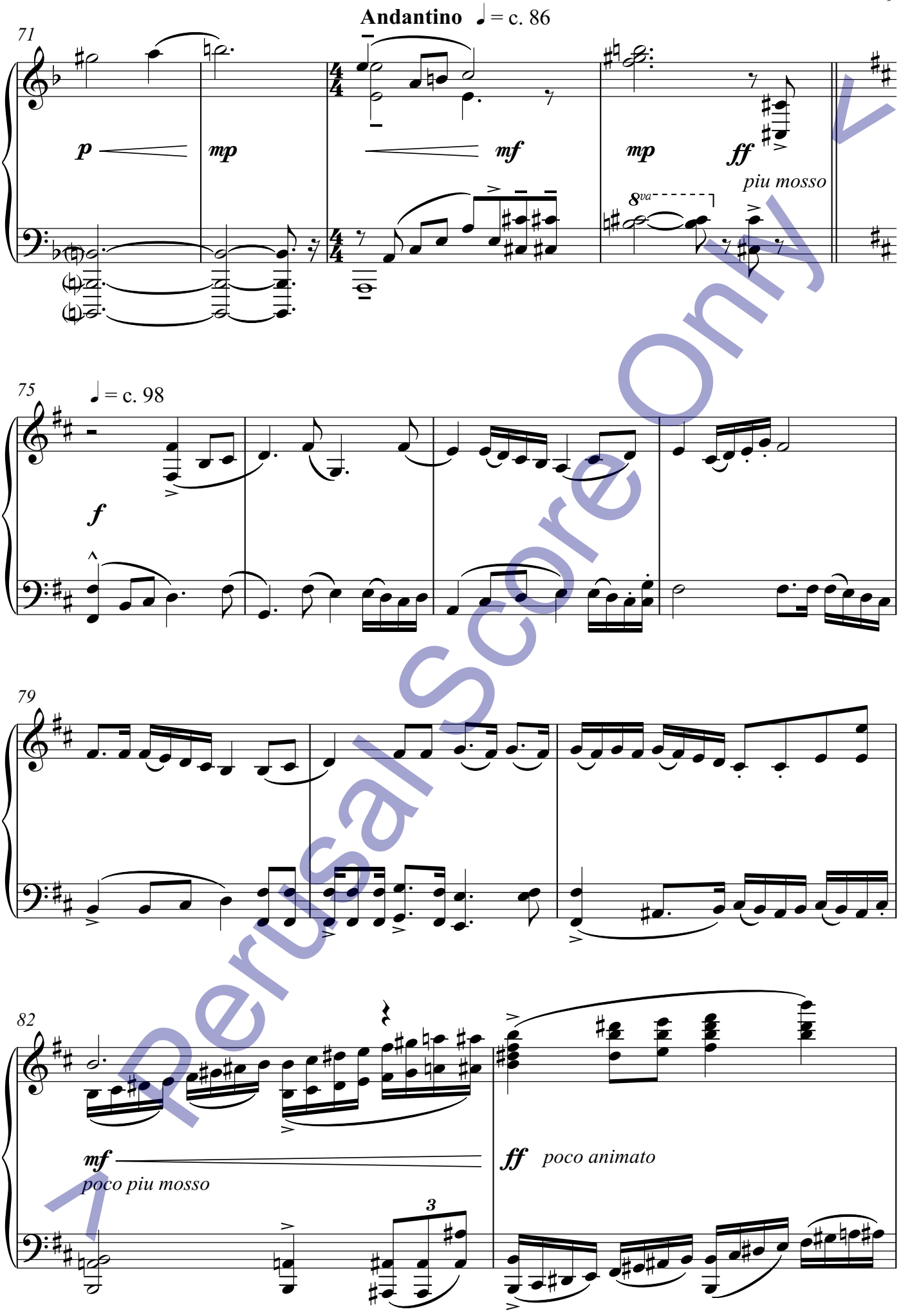

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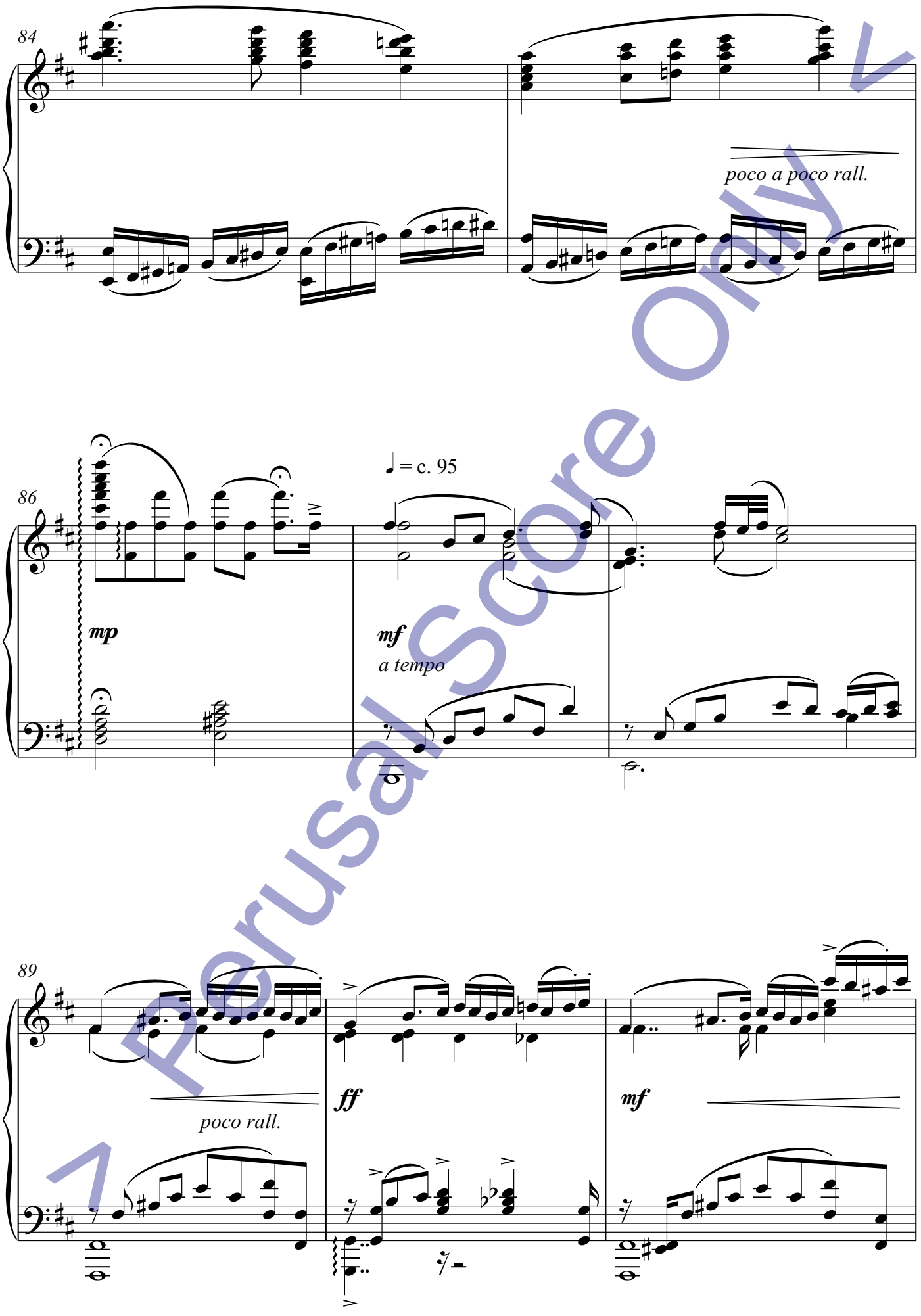

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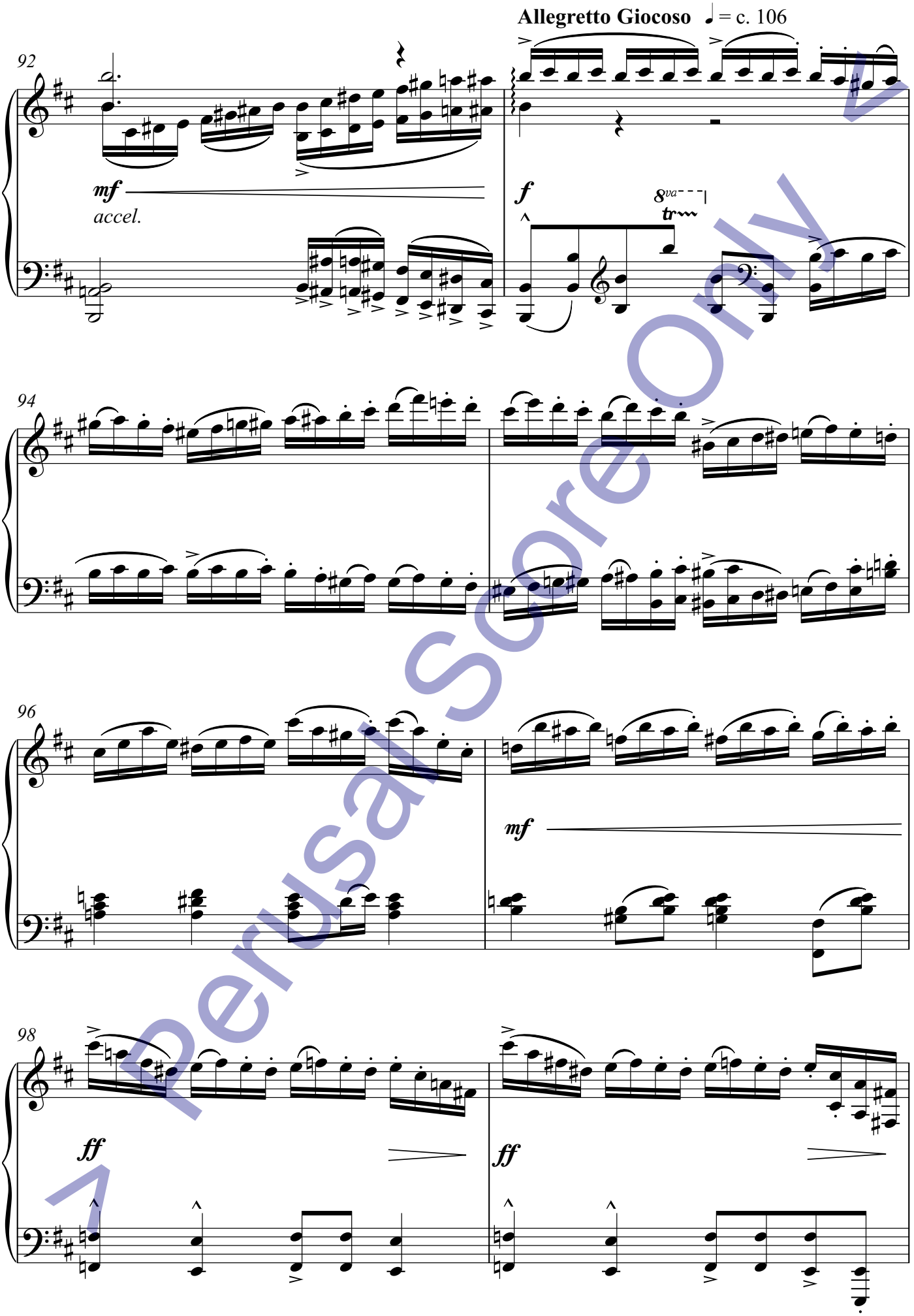

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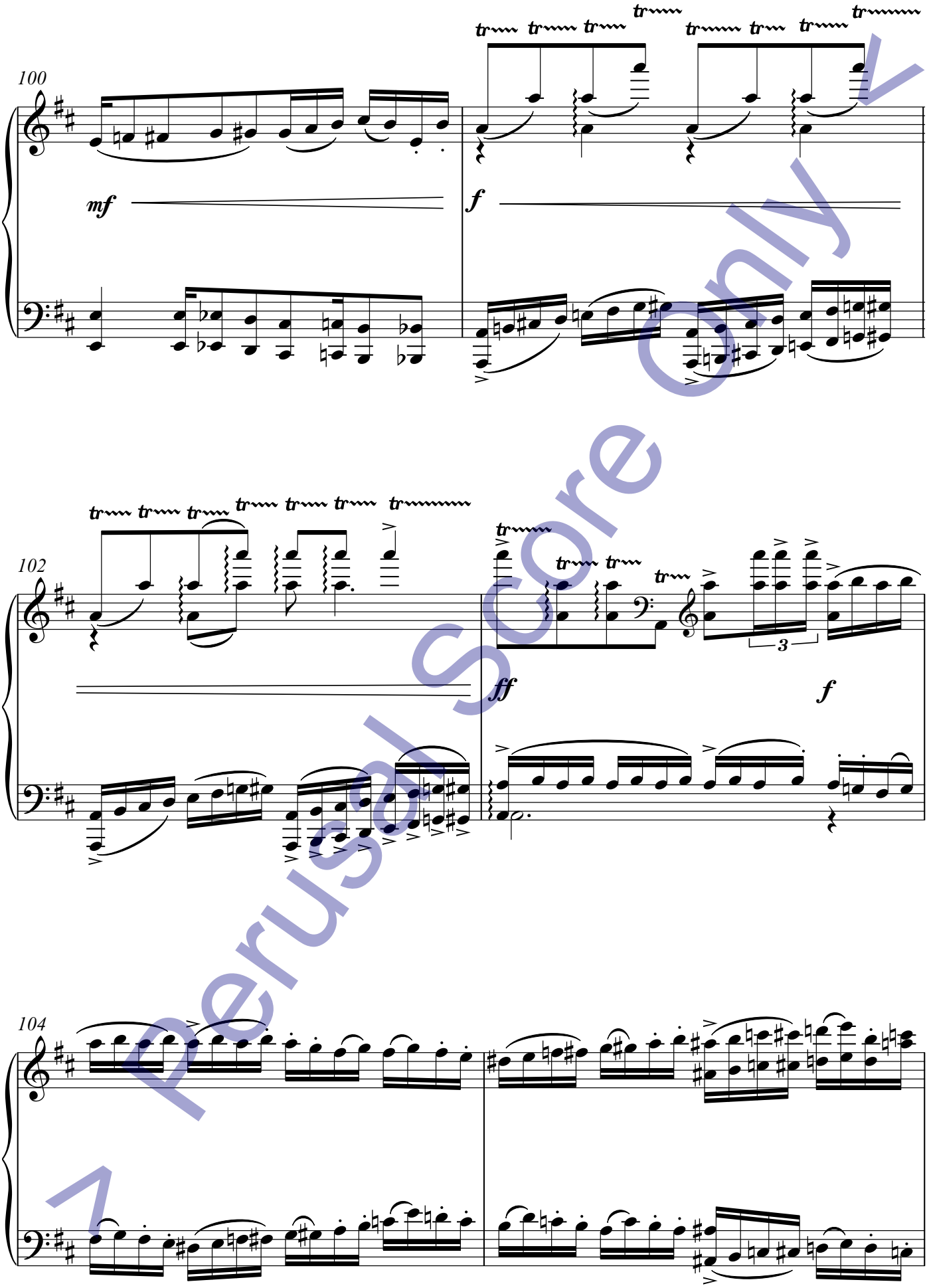

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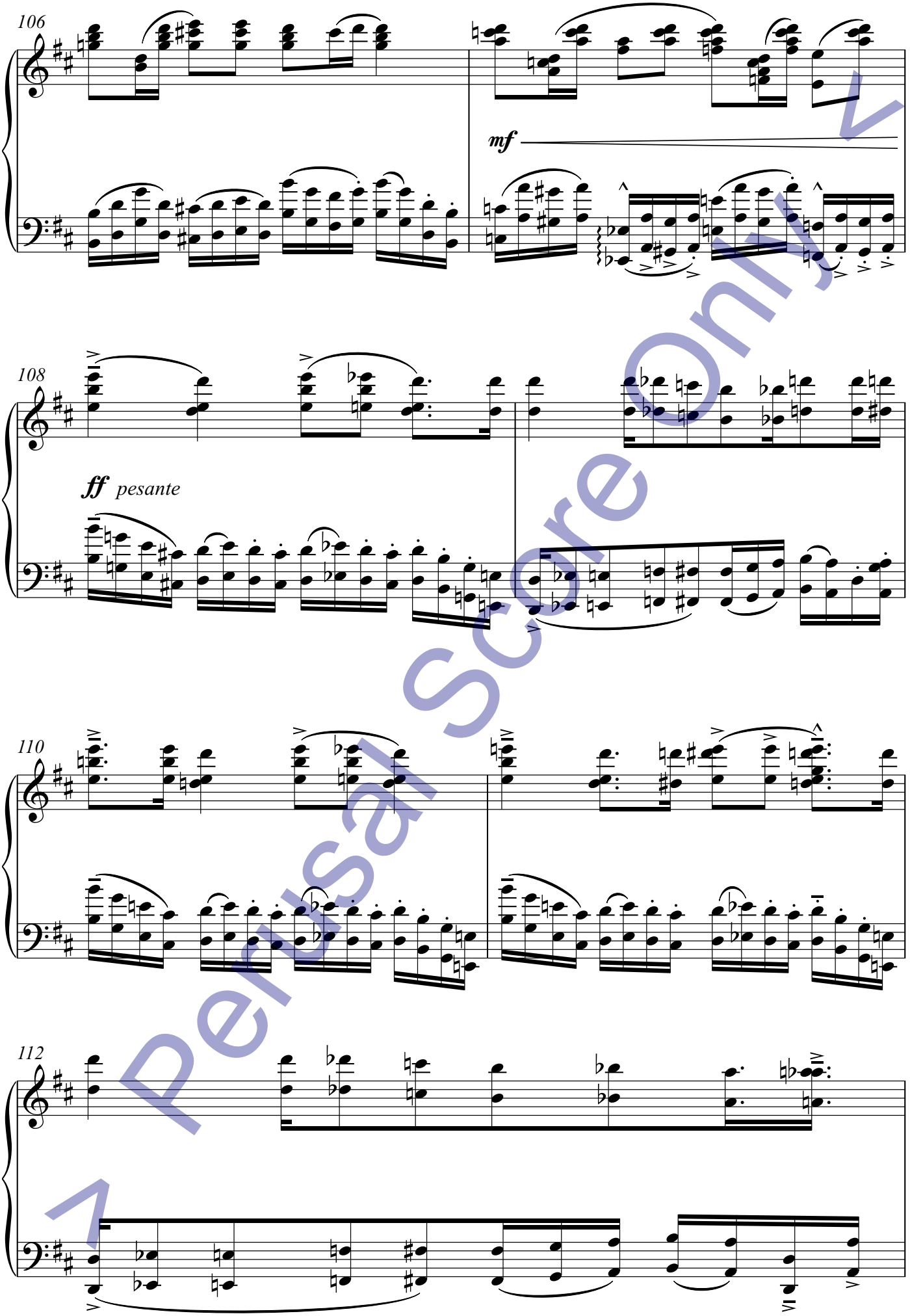

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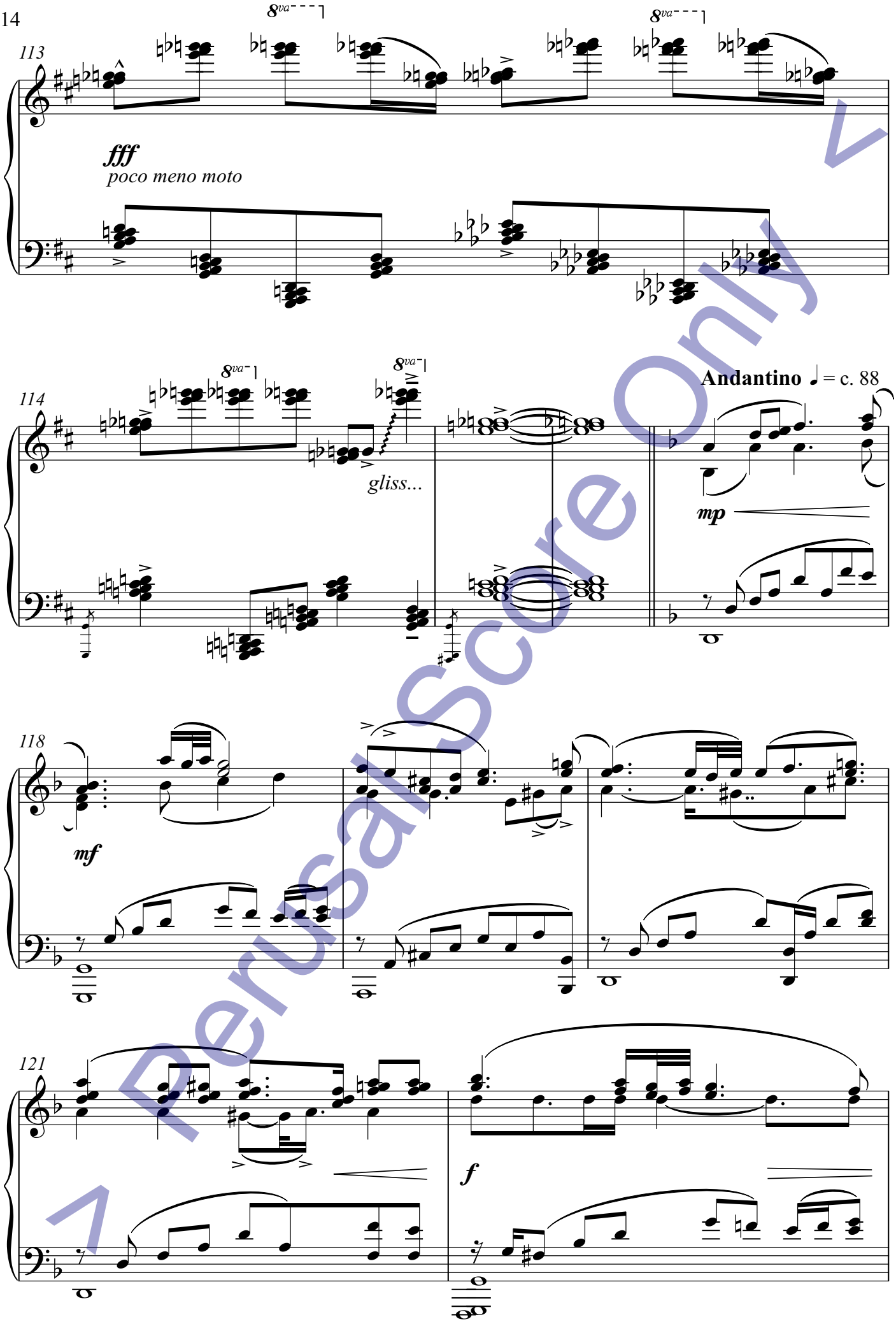

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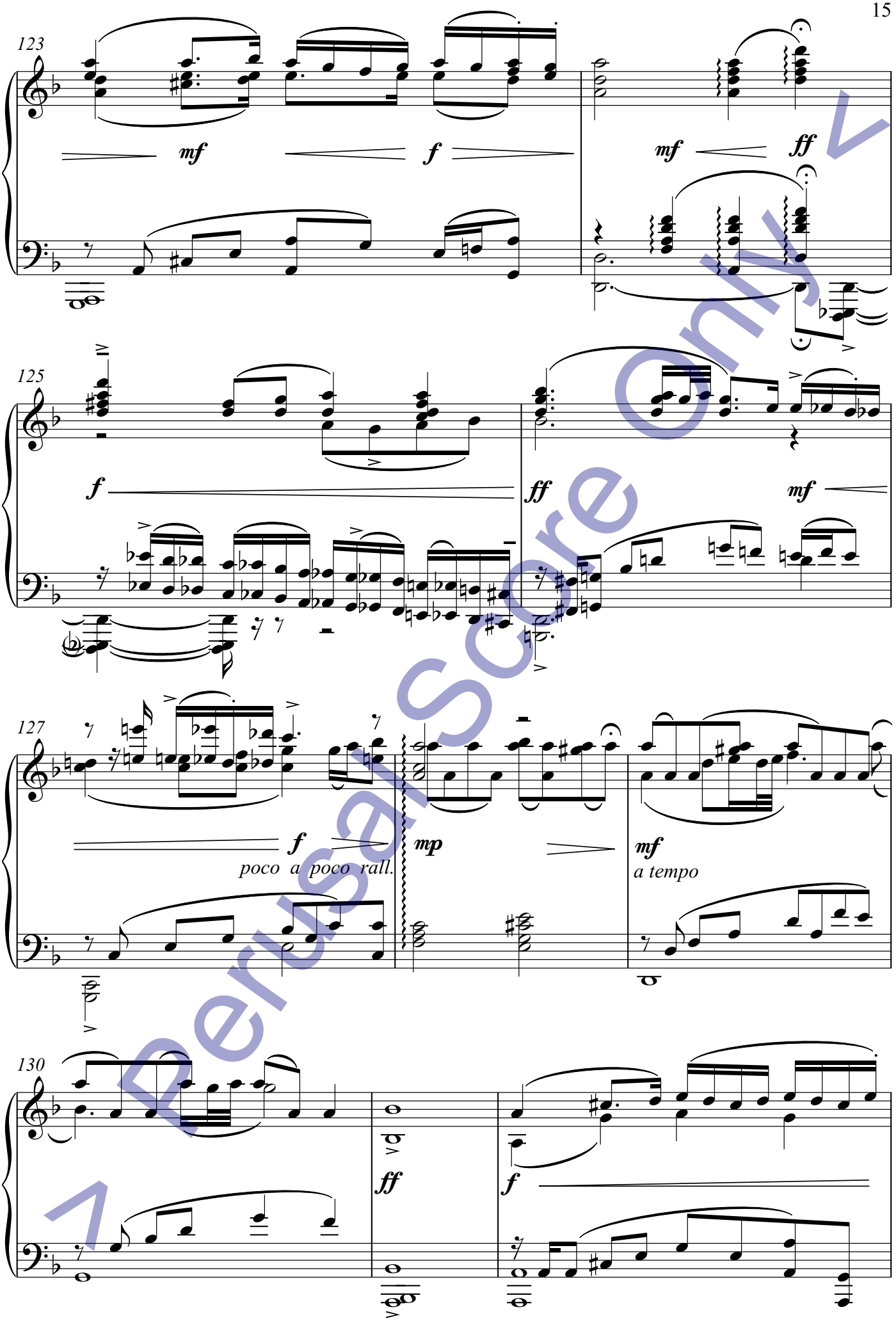

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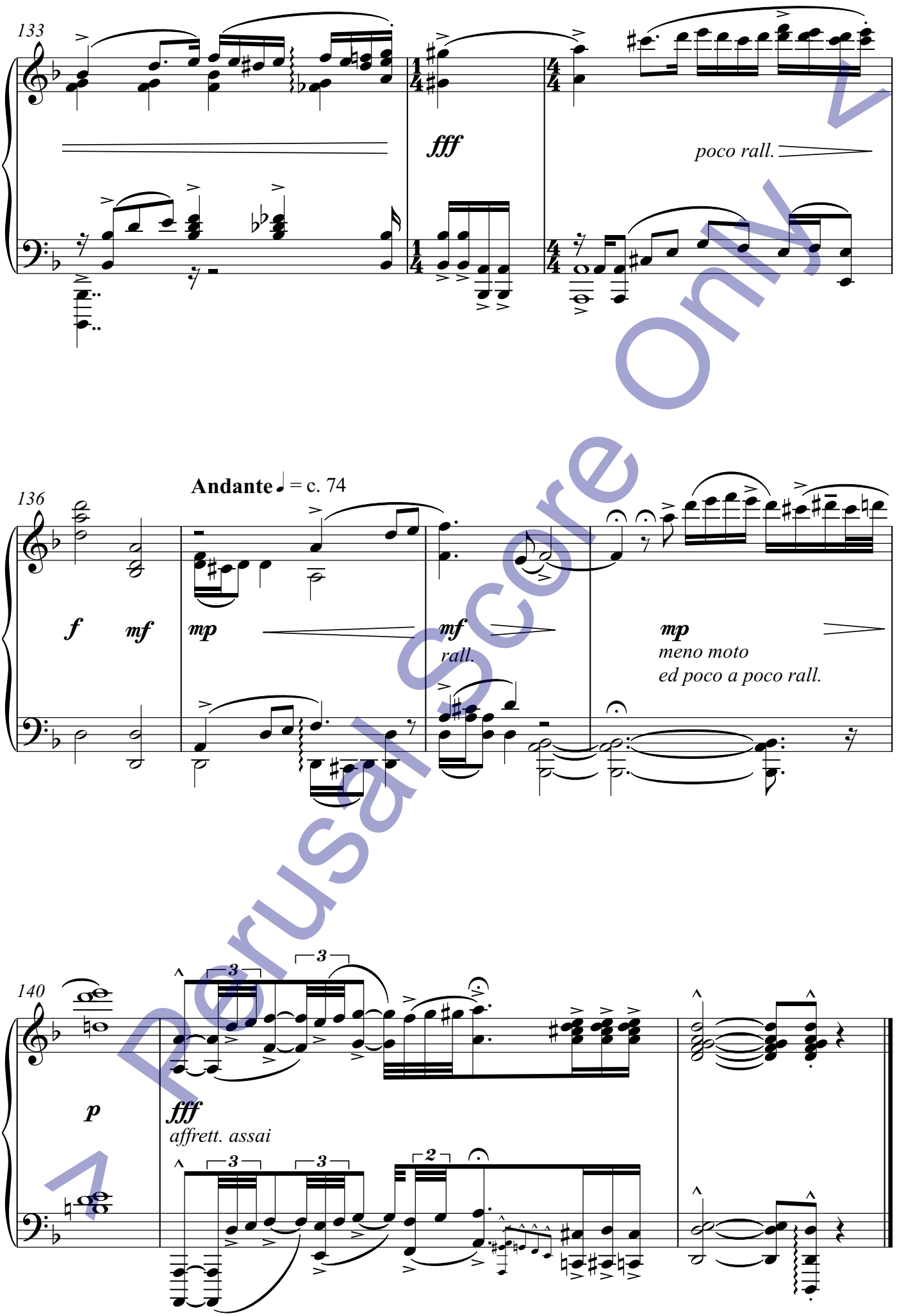

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The Raymond Variations for Piano (Set 1), received its world premiere on 2nd December 2015 at the 1901 Arts Club London, performed by Lorraine Womack-Banning as part of a memorial tribute concert to her late husband Raymond Banning (former professor of pianoforte at Trinity College London).

The Variations are based on the *three* Andantino themes which form a central part of the 'Raymond Overture' written in 1851 by French composer Ambroise Thomas: 1811-1896, (although the third andantino theme in the overture is in itself a variant of the second theme). There are nine piano variations in total; these include a mix of both full and short partial variations (including a very short declamatory two chord introductory variation). The variations are not numbered or set-apart in a conventional manner, rather they form part of a continuous whole, and are separated only by bridge passages and/or cadence points; they last a little under eight minutes in duration and strongly exploit the passionate elements of Thomas's themes. They have been written for the most part in an easily accessible tonal style (with a passing nod to Messrs. Beethoven and J.S. Bach) and are based predominately in the home key of D minor. However, they do also take advantage of many 20th and 21st century harmonic techniques where deemed appropriate: e.g. added note chords; cluster chords; percussive chords, and melodic deflection. In particular, the interval of the major 7th and its enharmonic equivalent(s) (the most distinctive interval in the main andantino theme from the overture) are heard in various different guises throughout the variations: this includes its inversion, the minor 2nd; this interval has a very distinctive sharp dissonant quality. Much play is made of these intervals – to somewhat humorous effect in variation 8 (the joker in the pack) heard some three quarters into the set, here the dissonant interval is pounded out double forte before hastily leading into some boisterous cluster harmonic instability; then quietly *begins* variation 9 which duly brings the set to a close.

The actual andantino themes from the overture in their original form are not heard directly in these variations, although the short eight bar 2nd variation heard immediately after the introduction is the most similar to the main andantino theme (and inspired by piano tutor William Artus). As such, these are very much 'Variations' and not 'Theme(s) and Variations'; they were some two and a half years in the making.

Performance Notes, the tempo markings in this score are intended as indicative only; wide variance from the markings may occasionally be deemed necessary during performance depending upon choice of: instrument; performance space, and acoustics. The Tenuto ‒ markings in the context of the score, are an indication of a slight lengthening of duration of the affected note(s), and not necessarily an indication of emphasis on sound; where emphasis of sound (dynamic) is required, then an Accent **>** or Marcato **^** marking has been used as appropriate. In keeping with a prevailing tempo, arpeggiations should be articulated in a slower style at a slower tempo, and in a faster style at a quicker tempo. Pedaling should be used freely and generously *throughout* the piece. However, you are the performer, so please interpret in your own individual style! The composer is particularly interested in an individual's interpretation of the score rather than any overly strict adherence 'note-for-note' to the *directions* in the written score.

S. G. Potts lives in the North East of England, he holds a Master's degree in Music and has studied: Traditional and 20th Century Harmony, Orchestration, and Advanced Composition.

Thank you for your interest in this music.