Joanna Marsh

Four Musical Clocks

organ

sample copy

JOANNA MARSH

Four Musical Clocks

Four Musical Clocks are inspired by stories about clocks in well-known children's literature. They were written for Stephen Farr, to be programmed alongside some of Haydn's organ transcriptions *Pieces for Musical Clocks* in his programme at Jesus College Chapel in the Cantat 800 music festival celebrating 800 years of Cambridge University. The pieces may be played in any order and with any choice of the Haydn pieces or they may be played as a complete set independently. They are intended to be highly flexible for organists playing recitals on potentially very small chamber instruments without pedals or they may be played on a piano.

1. The White Rabbit's Pocket Watch
The white rabbit is a vividly depicted character in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland". In this piece the off-centre triplets and metrical ambiguity gives a sense of his lolloping gait and twitching nose as the piece scurries along. The white rabbit, rushing about and very late, occasionally stops to look at his pocket watch. It is heard ticking in the music.

2. The Ticking Croc
This piece is based on the crocodile from J.M. Barrie's "Peter Pan" which swallowed Hook, the pirate's hand and wants more. However, as it also swallowed a clock, Hook knows when it's terrifying presence is nearby. Alongside the humorous character of the music there is a sense of menace. The ticking clock is heard amidst increasingly dissonant harmonies as the crocodile approaches.

3. Midnight Sunshine
In Philippa Pearce's book "Tom's Midnight Garden", the young boy awake in bed hears the grandfather clock strangely strike 13. When he goes to investigate, he finds that the backyard has been transformed into a sunlit garden. This piece finds him at the suspense filled moment of creeping down the stairs unsure of what he will find. There is a ghostly quality to the smooth angular melody with the rhythmic repetition building a sense of apprehension.

4. At The Twelfth Strike
A clock is central to the well known story of Cinderella. At the twelfth strike her clothes will turn back to rags and her carriage back to a pumpkin, so this galloping dash of a piece has a driving rhythm to remind you of the horses' hoofs as she makes her escape.

Joanna Marsh, March 2009

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Four Musical Clocks (March 2009)

organ

Total duration c.8'20''

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This is the second edition of the music which was revised by the composer on 26 October 2021.

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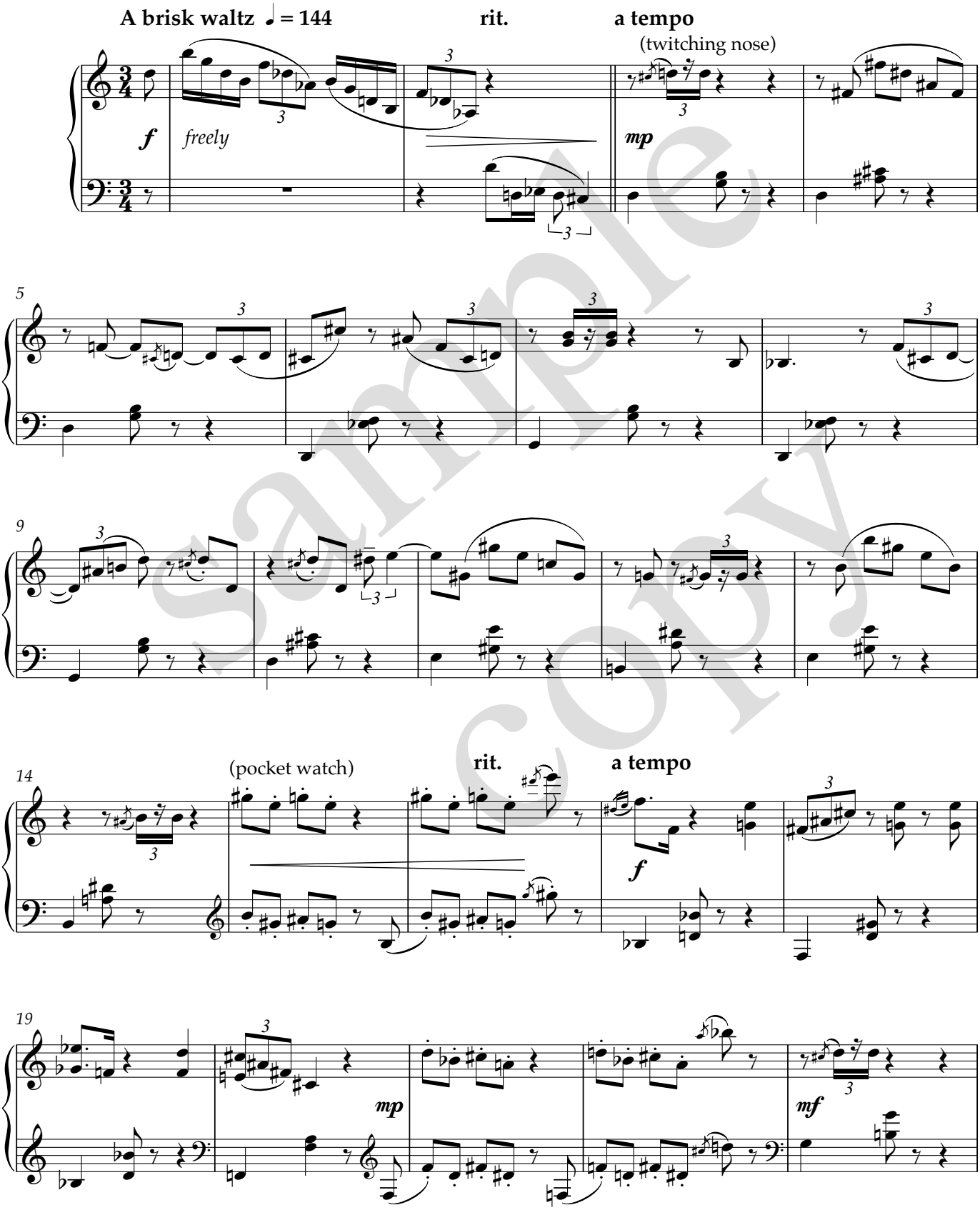
FOUR MUSICAL CLOCKS

1. The White Rabbit's Pocket Watch

Joanna Marsh

Performing note
The dynamics can be observed 'in spirit' if the organ is a small chamber without many stops.



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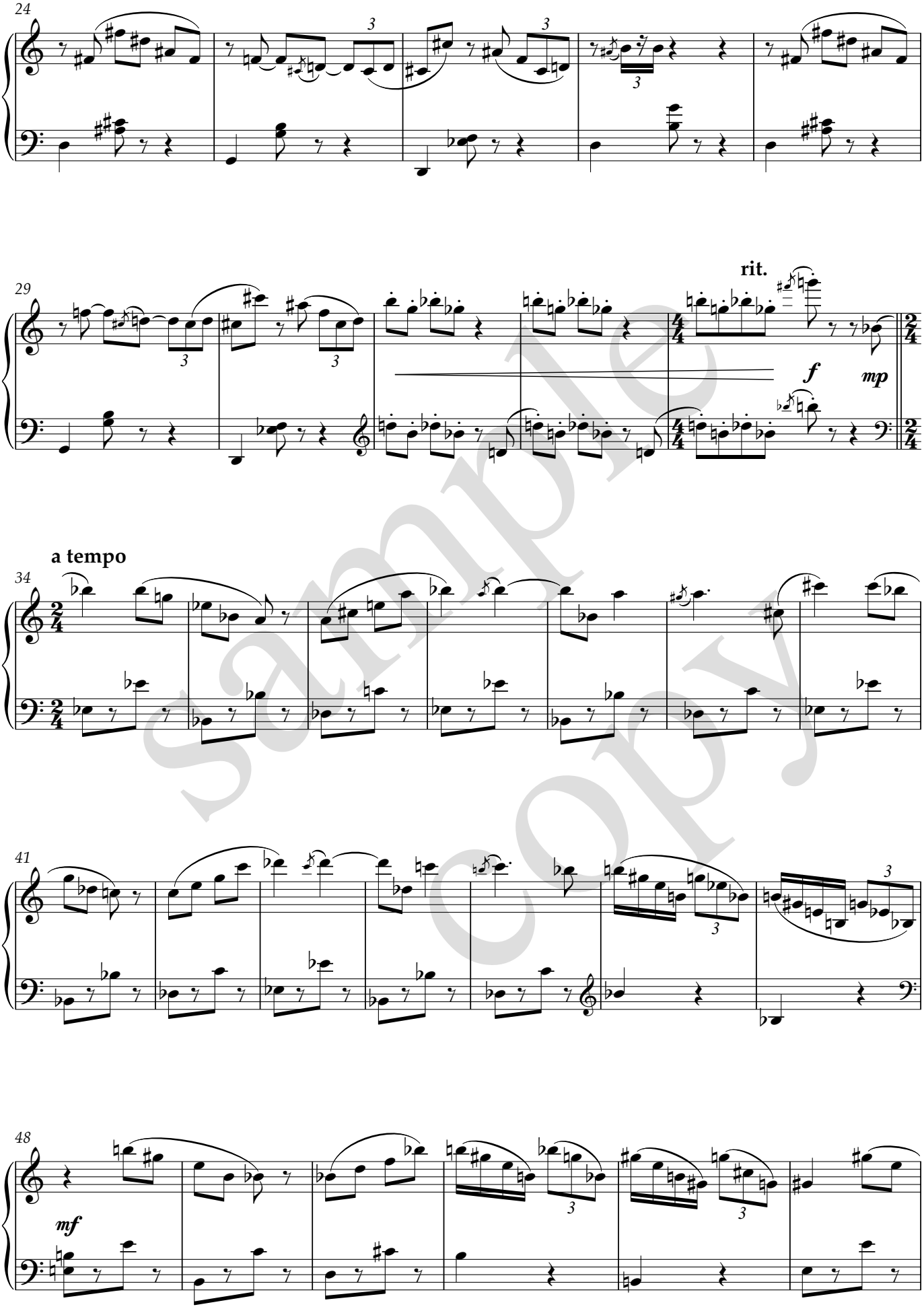

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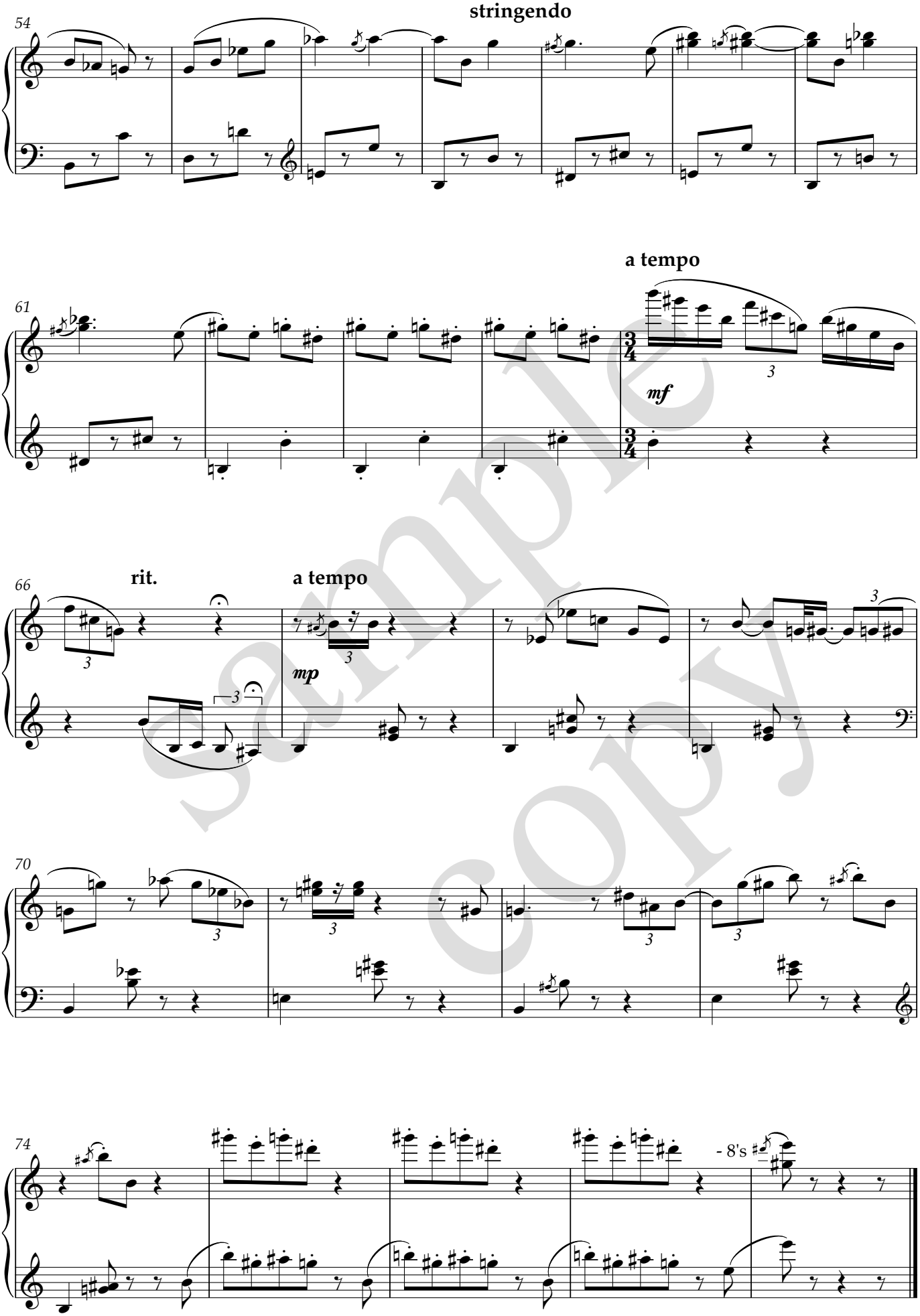

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2. The Ticking Croc

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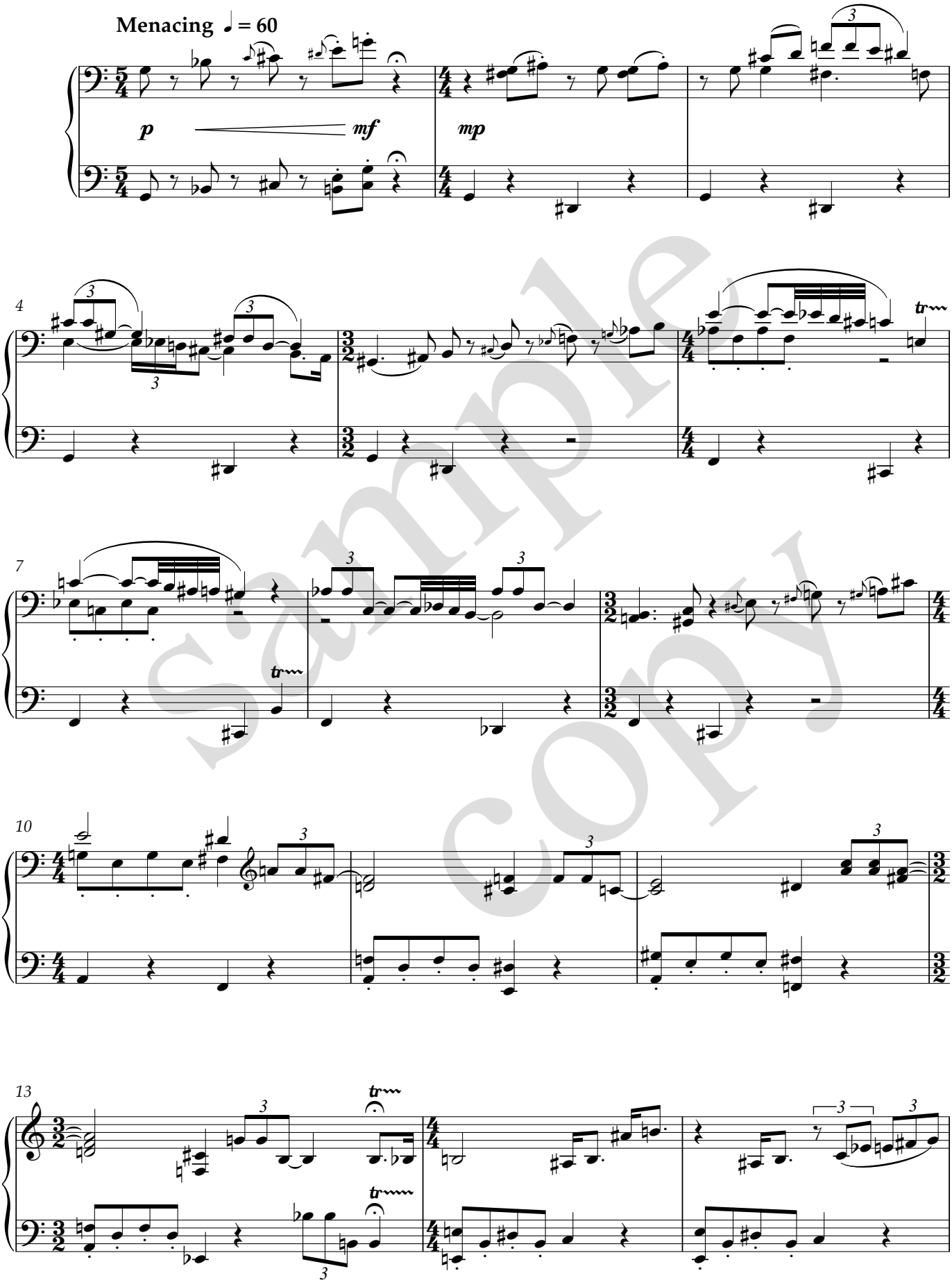

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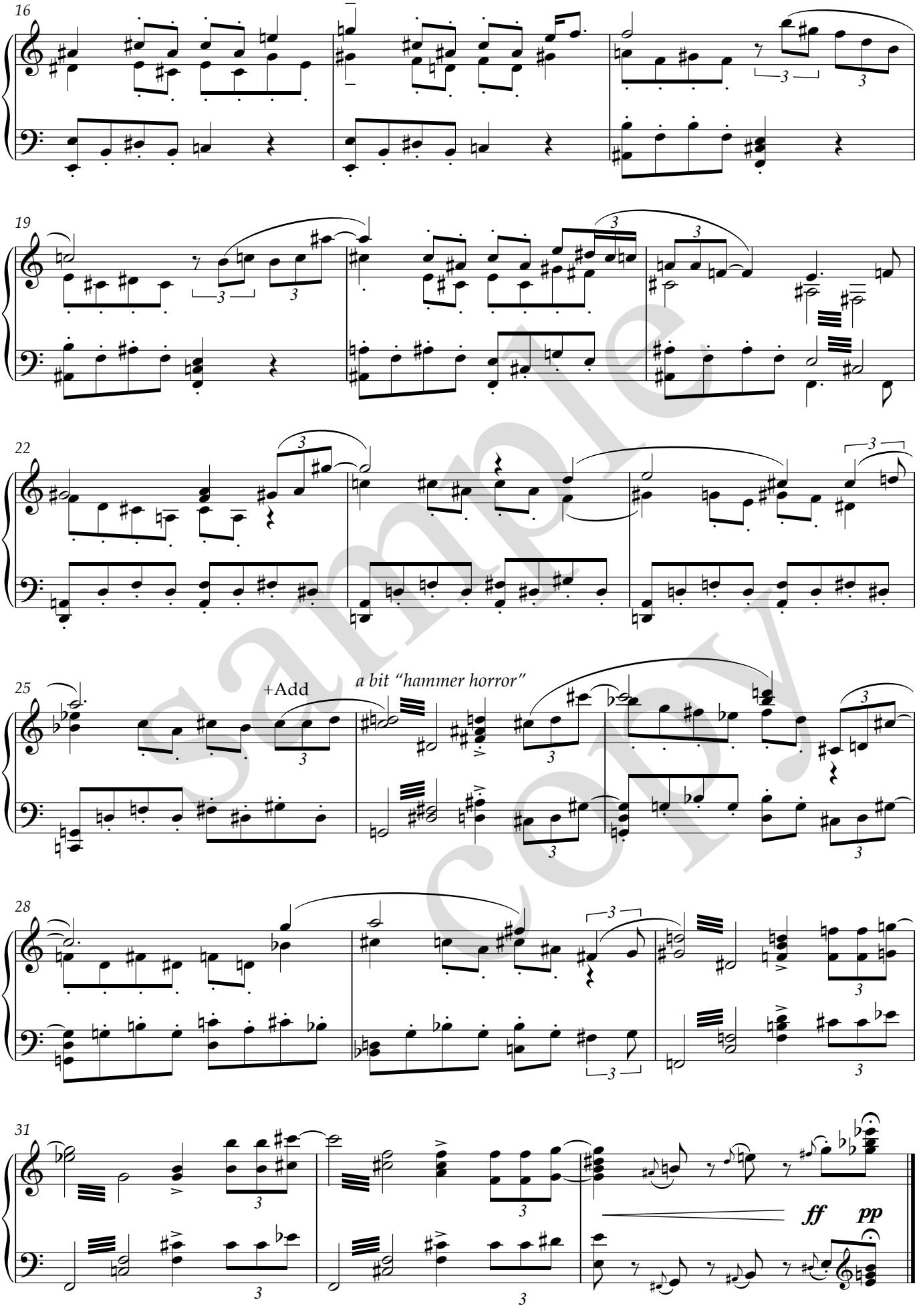

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3. Midnight Sunshine

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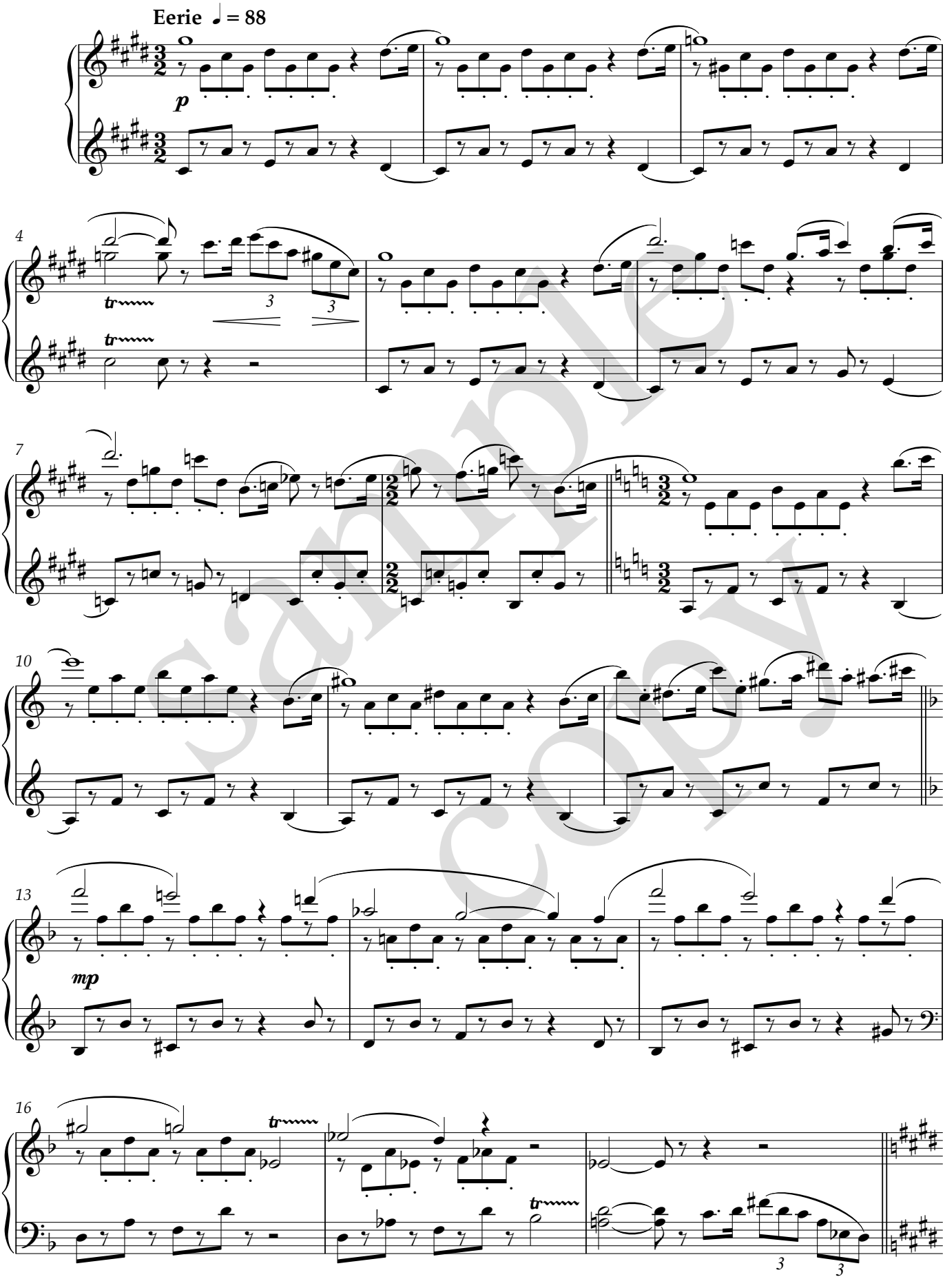

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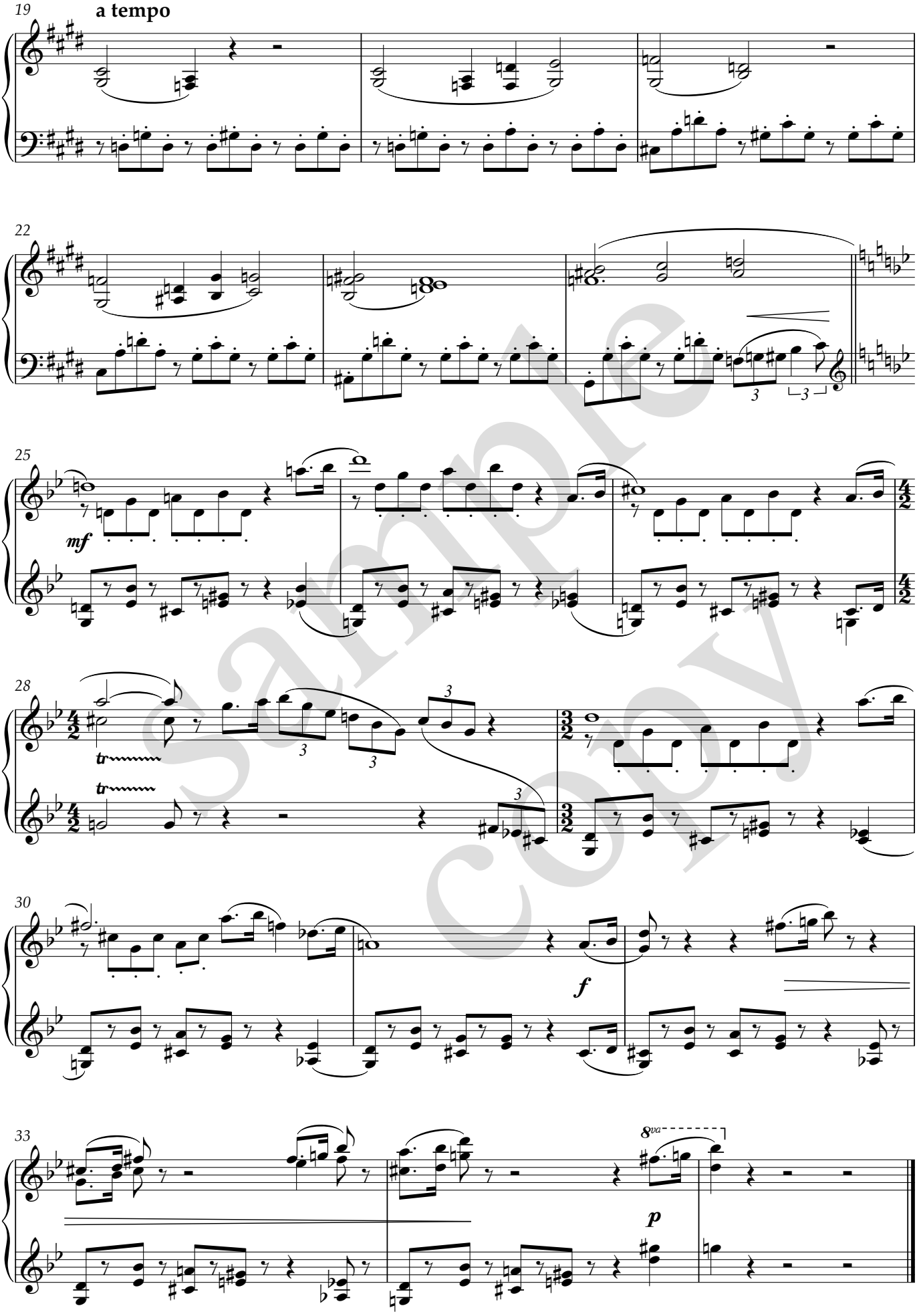

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4. At The Twelfth Strike

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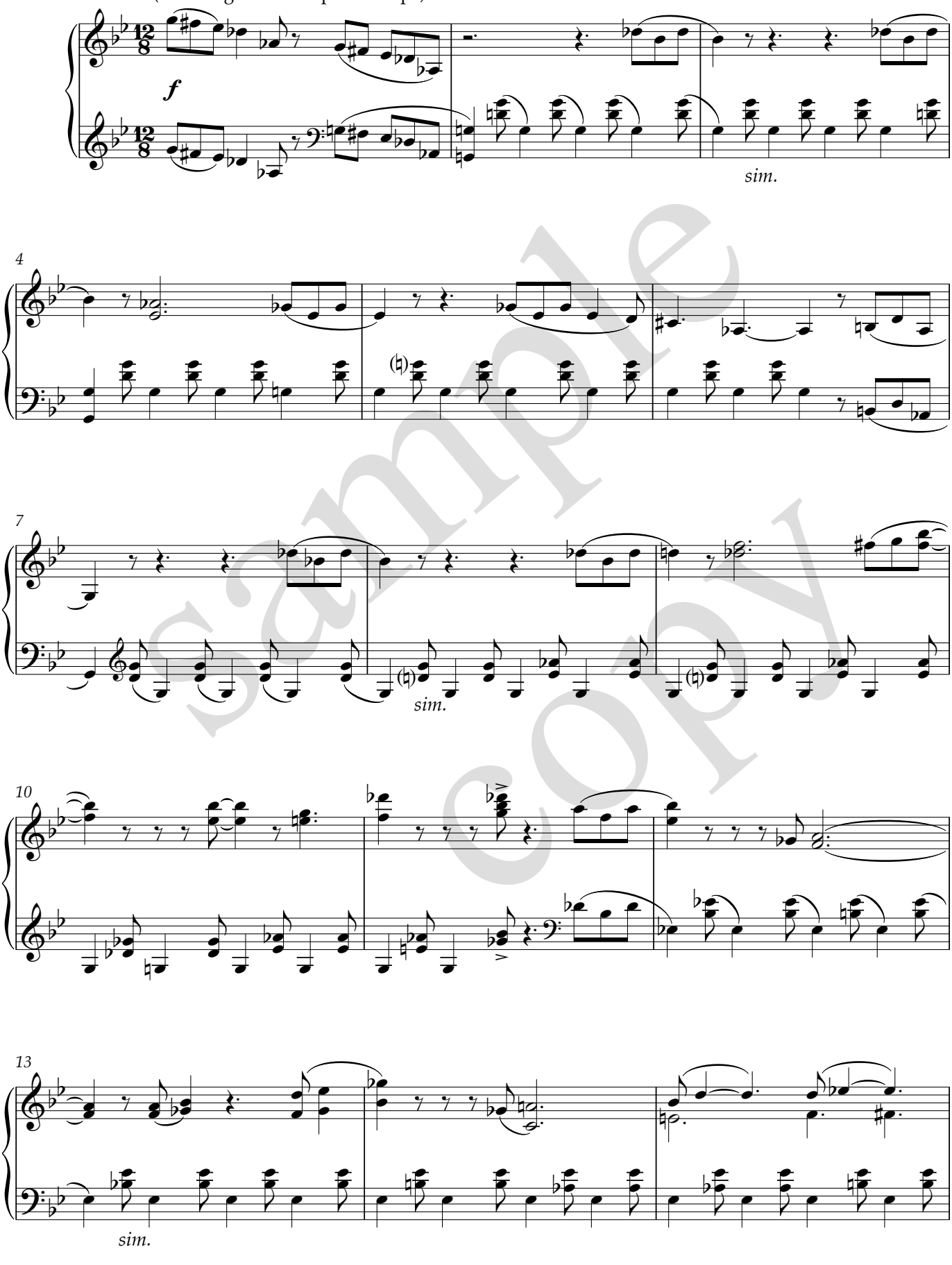
Fast
(tumbling down the palace steps)



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