Sonata
for B♭ Clarinet
and Piano
(1965)
for Kenneth Diehl
PAUL MACK SOMERS

Sonata for B♭ Clarinet and Piano

PROGRAM NOTE

In the summer of 1965 I was living in Ithaca, NY, in a sublet second from the end of Glen Place right next to a waterfall in Cascadilla Glen. It didn't get better than that as a place to work. So it was fortuitous that it was there that I received the very first commission of my career. Ken Diehl and I were student colleagues at the Ithaca College School of Music. He was a fine clarinetist who paid me $100, in 1965 about a week's wages for someone our ages, to compose a sonata for clarinet.

Ken never played the piece during his senior year. Upon his graduation we went our separate ways and I have never heard from him to see if he ever played it in public.

It has subsequently been played by several clarinetists, the first being Ithaca College clarinet teacher Edward Marks, who by the fall of 1966 was principal clarinetist with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia. There followed several performances by other players, most notably Elizabeth Fogle, all in the late 1960s in Ithaca. Then it was revived in the 2010s quite successfully by both Andrew Lamy of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Christopher Di Santo of the Bay Atlantic Symphony.

Clearly Neoclassical in style, the Sonata also has some touches of jazz in that it uses doubly inflected thirds, which come off like blue notes. At the time of its composition I was both a traditional jazz pianist and a non-jazz composer, so I suppose it should be no surprise that the two worlds crossed paths in this piece. However, I find far more F. J. Haydn than W. C. Handy in the music.

The Sonata has been recorded by Christopner DiSanto, clarinet, and Norma Meyer, piano on the CD "Sonatas and More" by Maurice River Press (MRP1501) distributed world wide by Theodore Presser Company.

PAUL MACK SOMERS (b. 1942) studied composition with Warren Benson and George Andrix at Ithaca College School of Music, and participated in master classes with Norman Dello Joio under a Ford Foundation Grant. Somers has composed theatric, vocal, choral, chamber, and orchestral music. His music has been performed in Lincoln Center, Weill Hall in Carnegie Hall, and Ars Vitalis.

Commissioners include the Bay Atlantic Symphony, Colonial Symphony, Summit Chorale, Palisades Virtuosi, Jorge Ávila, Brett Deubner, Ellen Hassman, Ron Levy, Michiko Otaki, and the Jacques Cousteau Center for Estuarine Research. He has also composed various solo instrumental works over the years, also available on the CD "Sonatas and More". He and his wife Janet live along the Maurice River near Mauricetown, New Jersey.

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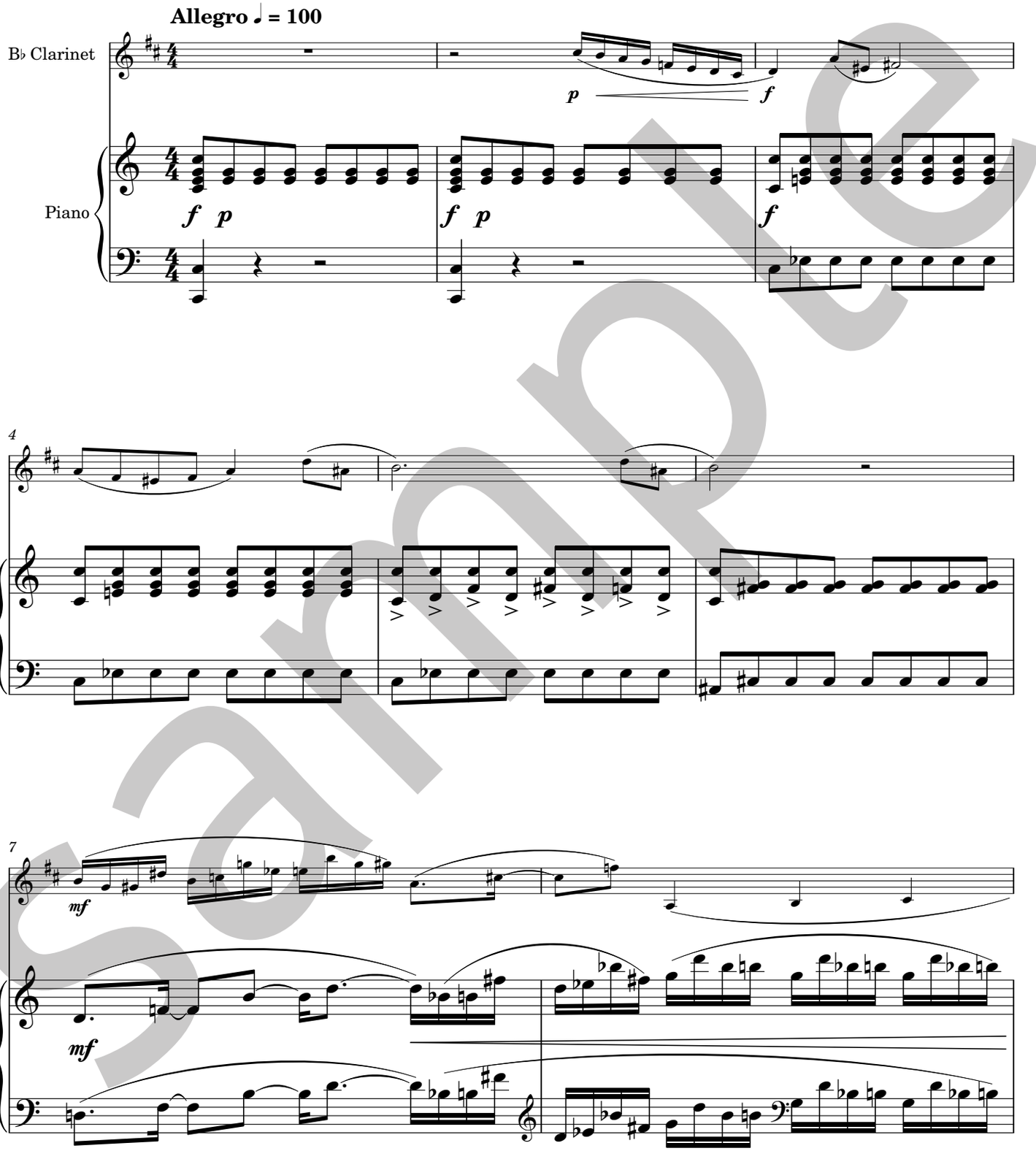
Sonata
for B♭ Clarinet and Piano

Duration: c. 12'30"

PAUL MACK SOMERS

I.



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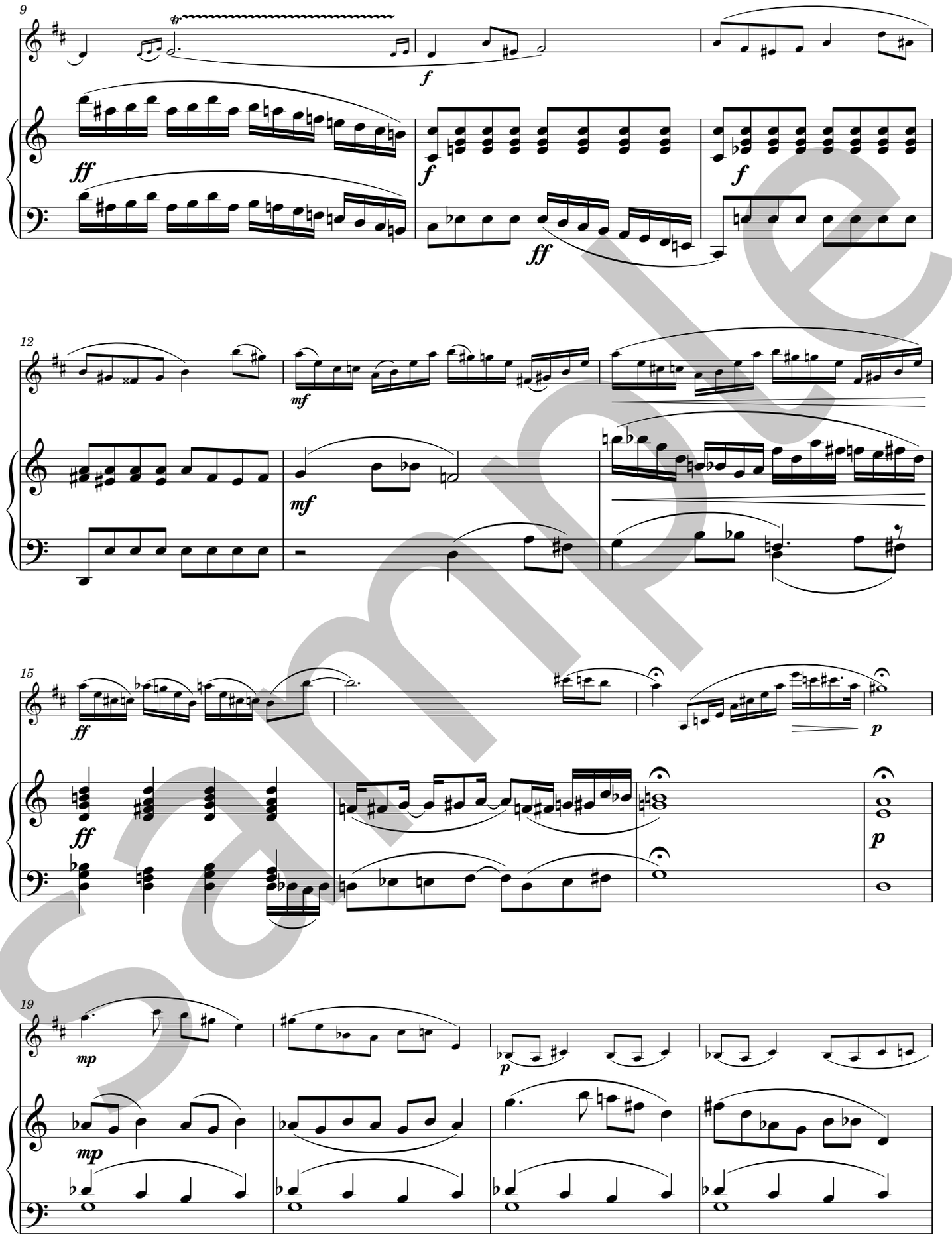

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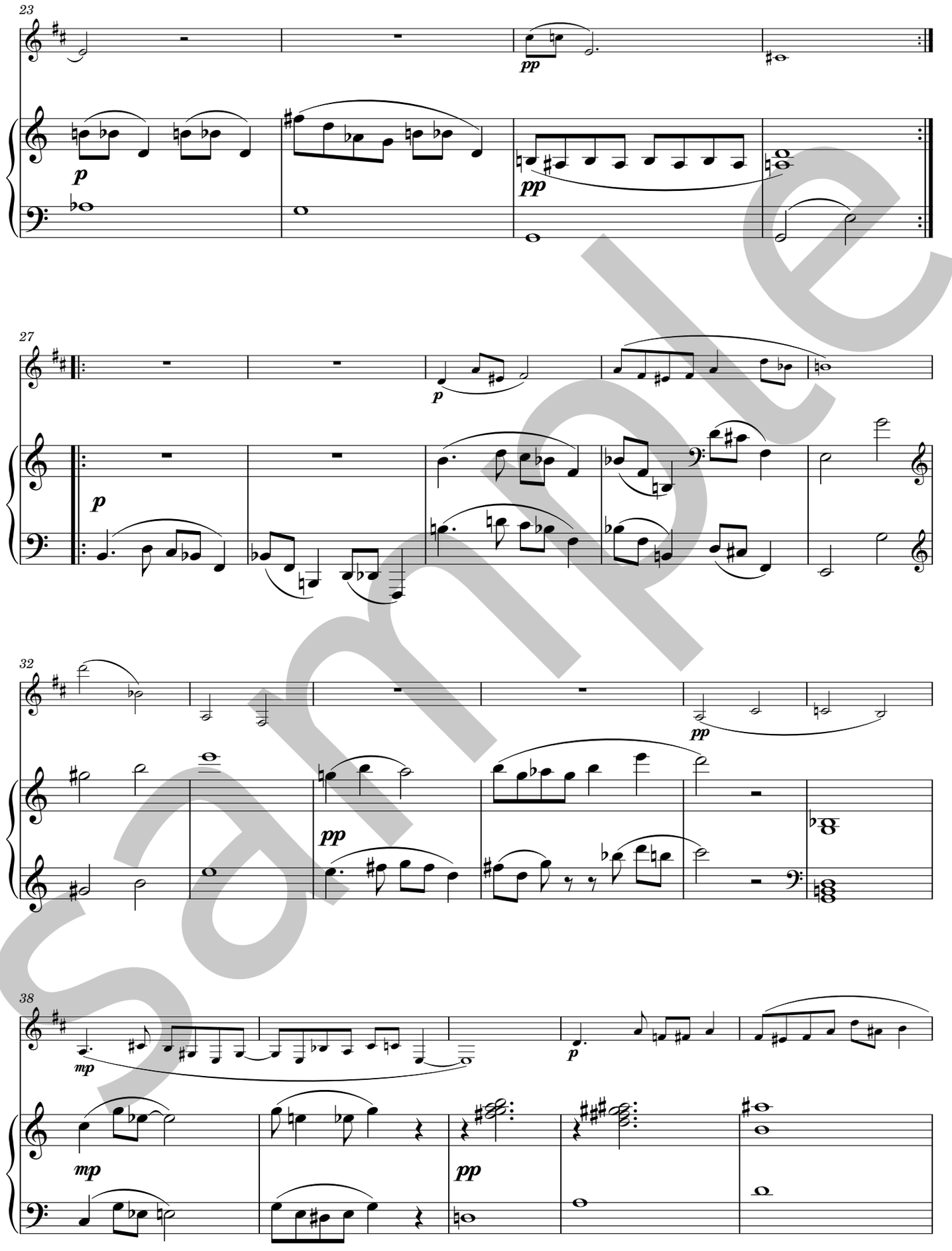

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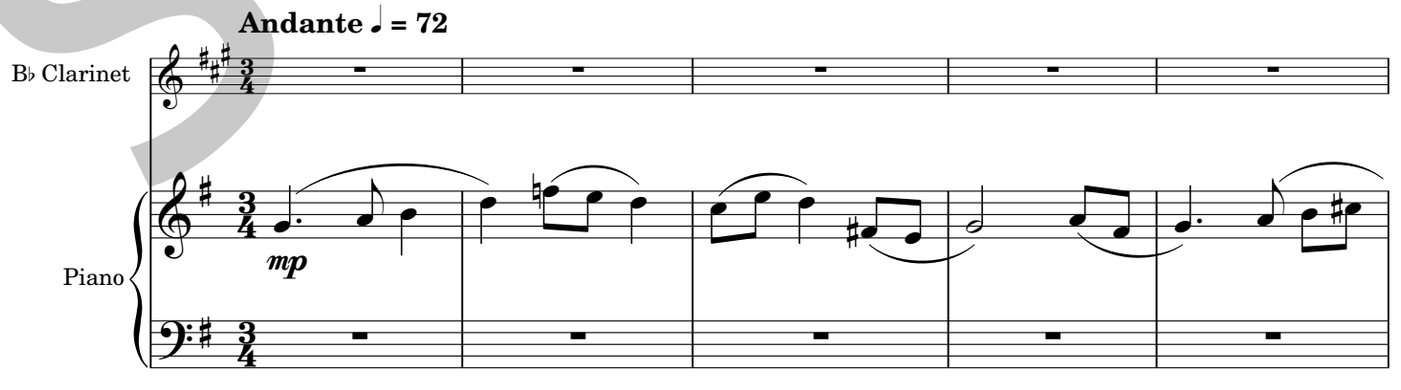

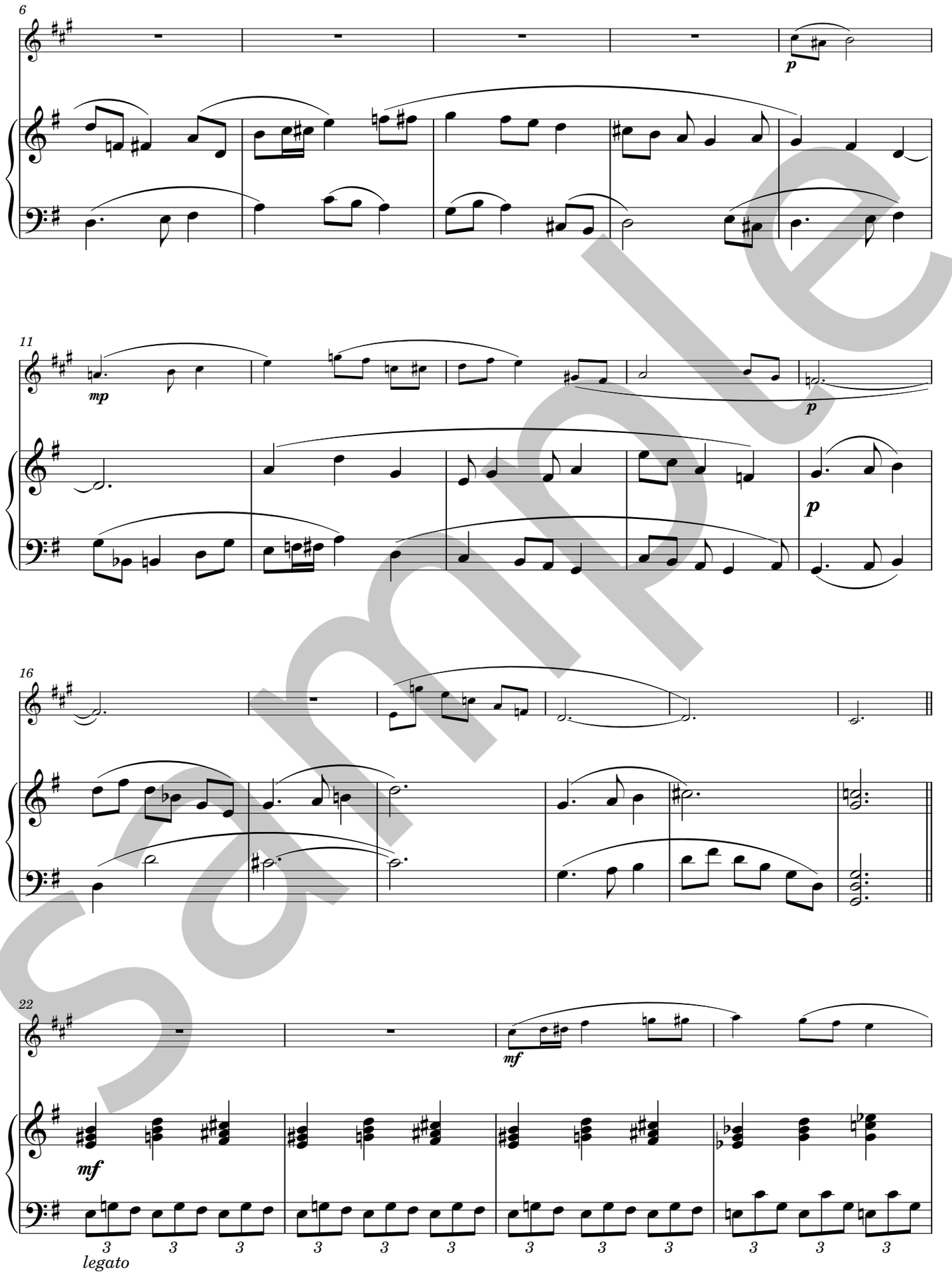

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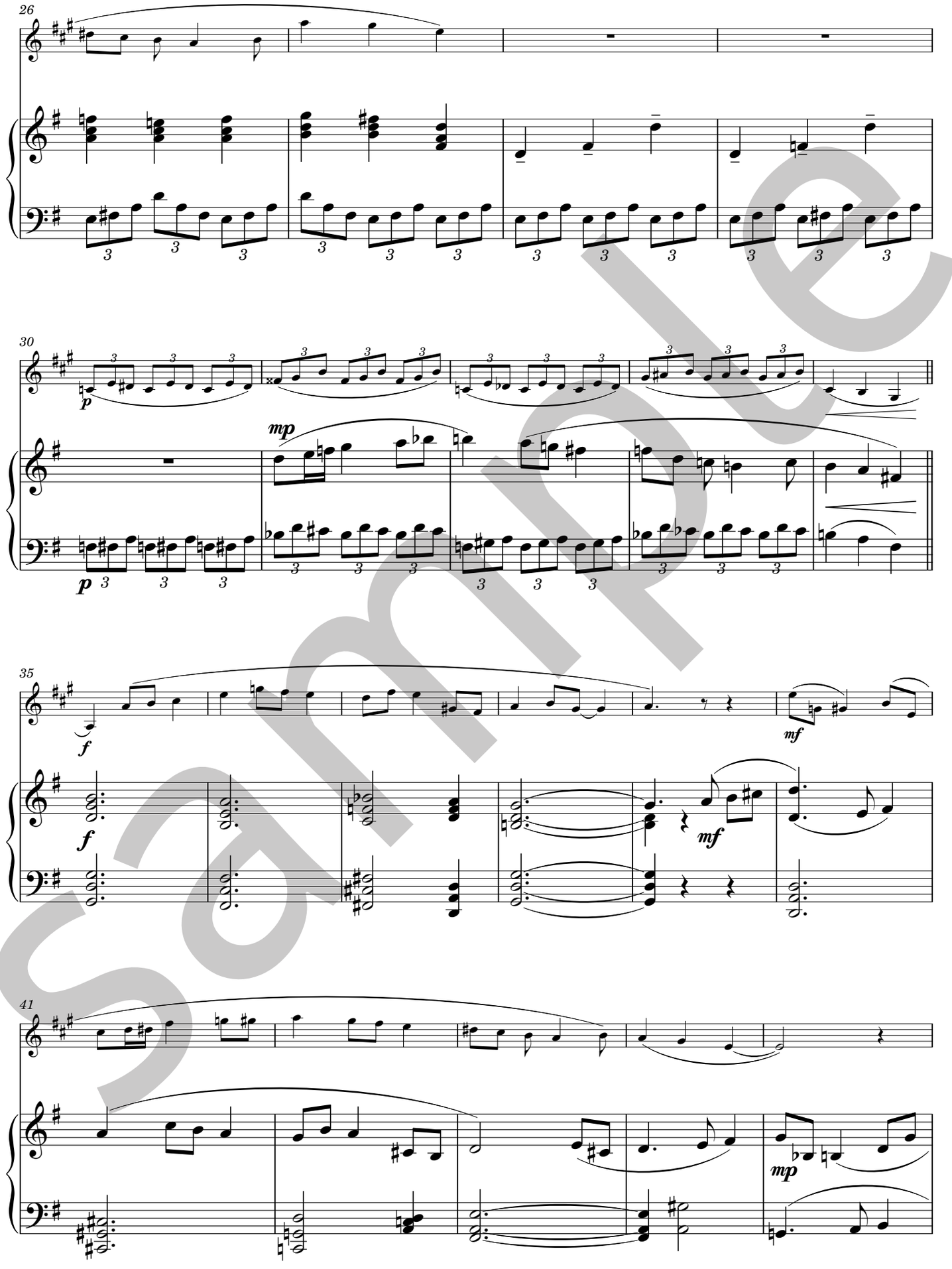

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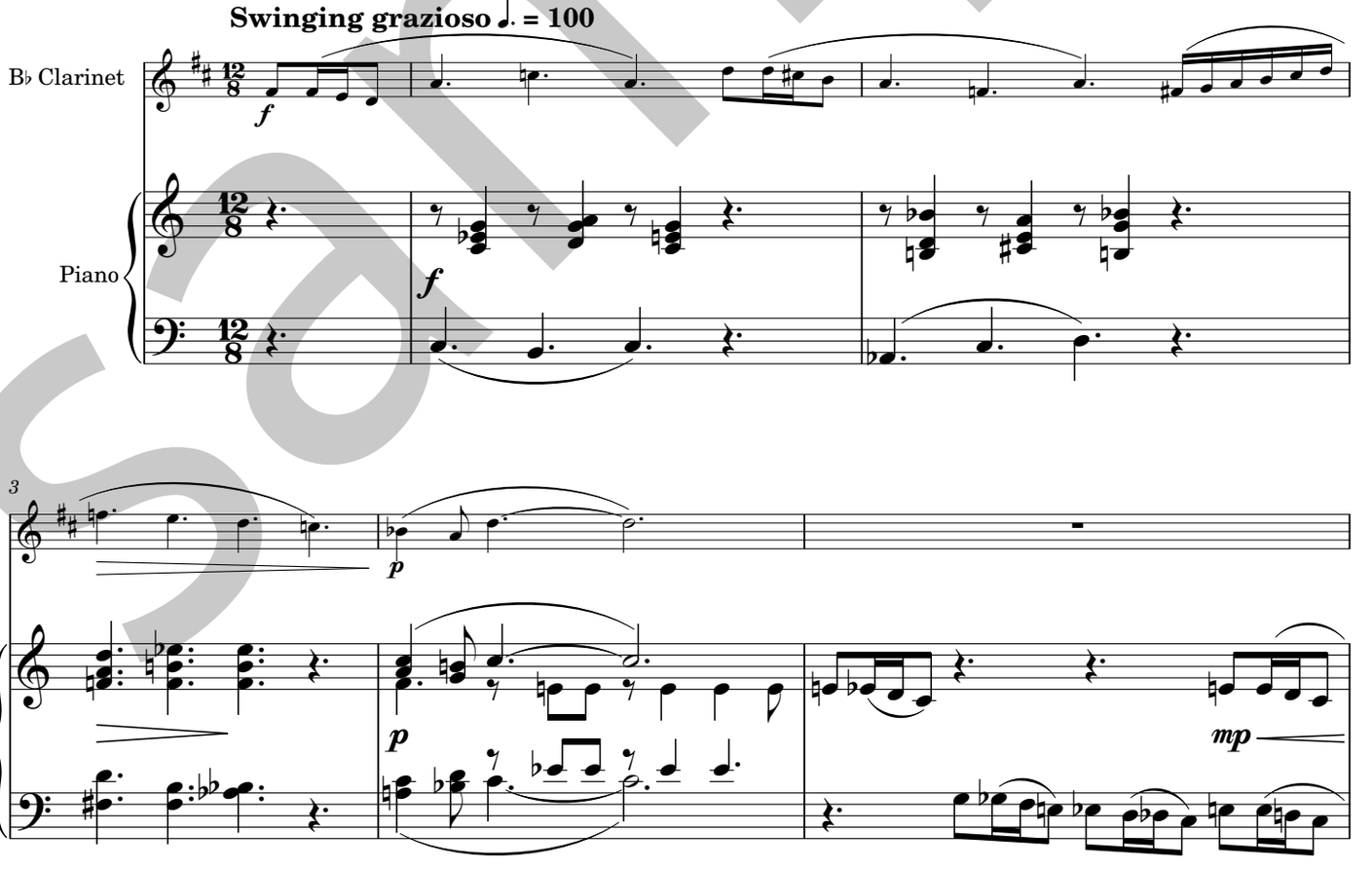

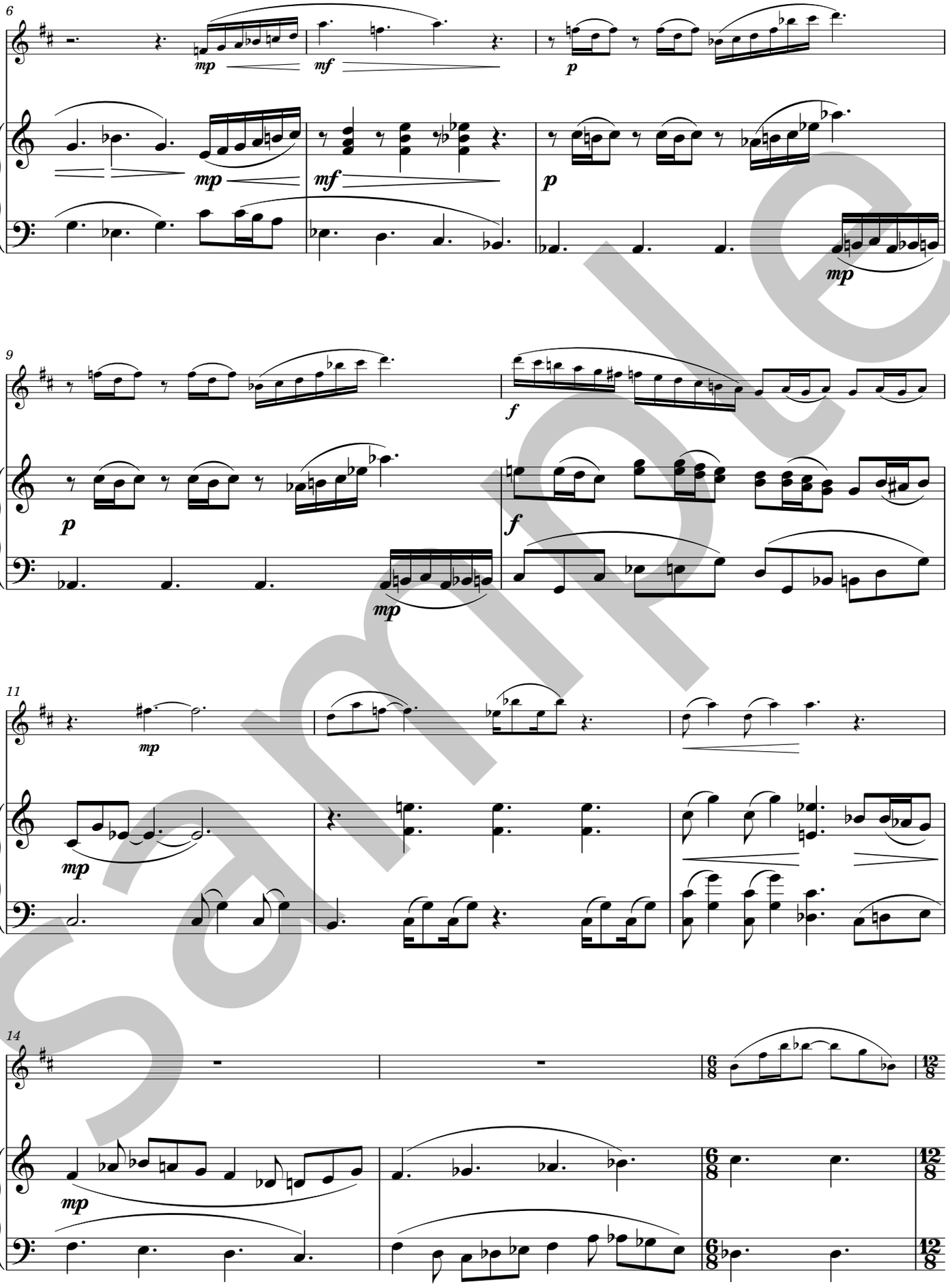

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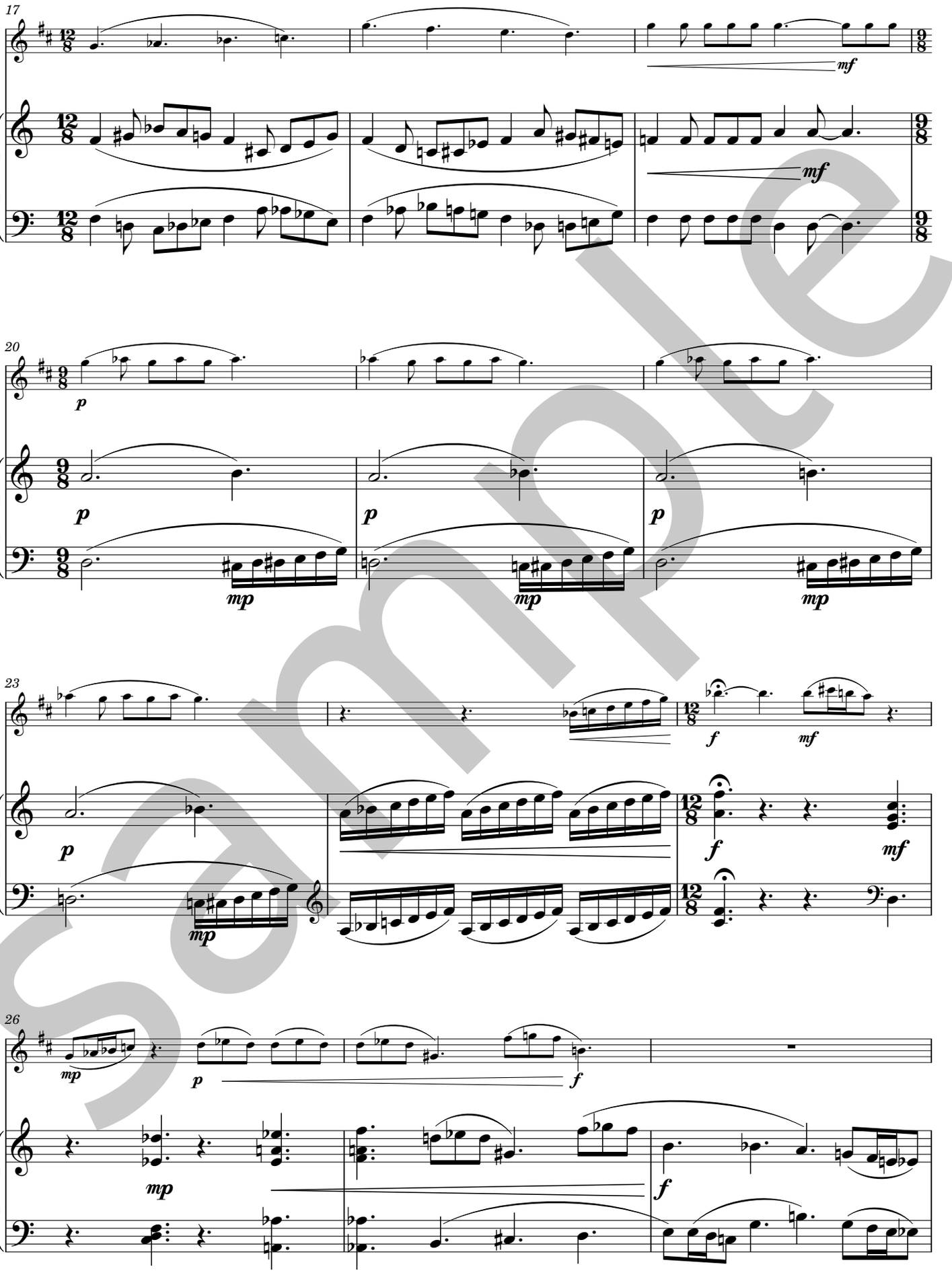

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