JEFFREY RATHBUN

THRENODY

Oboe and Piano

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A SI 005

Jeffrey Rathbun

(1959-)

Jeffrey Rathbun was born in Lockwood, Missouri, USA, in 1959. After initially learning the piano with his parents, he began to play the oboe when he was ten. He attended the University of North Texas (Bachelor of Music) and the Cleveland Institute of Music (Master of Music), where he also studied composition with Eugene O'Brien. Rathbun has been awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from both institutions.

He has held oboe positions with the Honolulu, Oakland, San Francisco, and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras and, since 1990, has been assistant Principal Oboe of The Cleveland Orchestra (serving as Principal from 2001-2003). In 1988, he was awarded First Prize in the Lucarelli International Competition for Solo Oboe Players. Rathbun gave his New York debut recital in 1990 performing his *3 Diversions for 2 Oboes* with his former teacher, John Mack. They recorded and also performed this piece together upon numerous occasions.

Jeffrey Rathbun has taught at Kent State University and is a member of the woodwind faculty at the Kent-Blossom Chamber Music Festival (Ohio). Since 2006, he has been Professor of Oboe at the Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Rathbun has given master classes across the United States and has been a frequent visiting professor at Indiana University.

He is an active composer. The Cleveland Orchestra gave the world premières of *Daredevil* (1995), *Three Psalms of Jerusalem* (1998) and *Motions for 'Cellos* (2000). Many orchestras including, notably, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Ohio Chamber Orchestra, and Ensemble Opera Nova, in addition to The Cleveland Orchestra, have performed his compositions. Rathbun has written several chamber works for the oboe(s). In 2007, the ensemble CO5 premiered *Phases* for woodwind quintet.

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Threnody

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It is unusual for a composer to say this about one of his works, but this is a piece I wish I had never written, or rather, had never had the reason to write. Not long after my friend Lisa Pruett's death, I started formulating ideas for *Threnody*. For months I played these developing ideas on the piano and, finally, in the spring of 1991, I began to actually write down the notes. When another friend and orchestra colleague, Tony Knight, passed away, I felt strongly about dedicating *Threnody* to both their memories.

Threnody begins with a sombre piano statement. By the time the oboe enters much of the piece's melodic and harmonic ideas are established. The mood of *Threnody* is often solemn as well as anguished - even angry. About halfway through, the piano starts a nostalgic section in B major. This more peaceful material alternates with the tragic themes for much of the rest of the composition. After a short oboe cadenza, the opening harmonies are once more stated by the piano before the final peaceful resolution, again in B major.

The dictionary definition of a threnody is 'a poem, speech, or song of lamentation, especially for the dead'. My *Threnody* has its share of sorrow, but I wrote it so that I would never forget the good qualities and happy memories of those we have lost.

Jeffrey Rathbun
1996

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Dedicated to the memory of
Lisa Pruett and Anthony Knight

THRENODY

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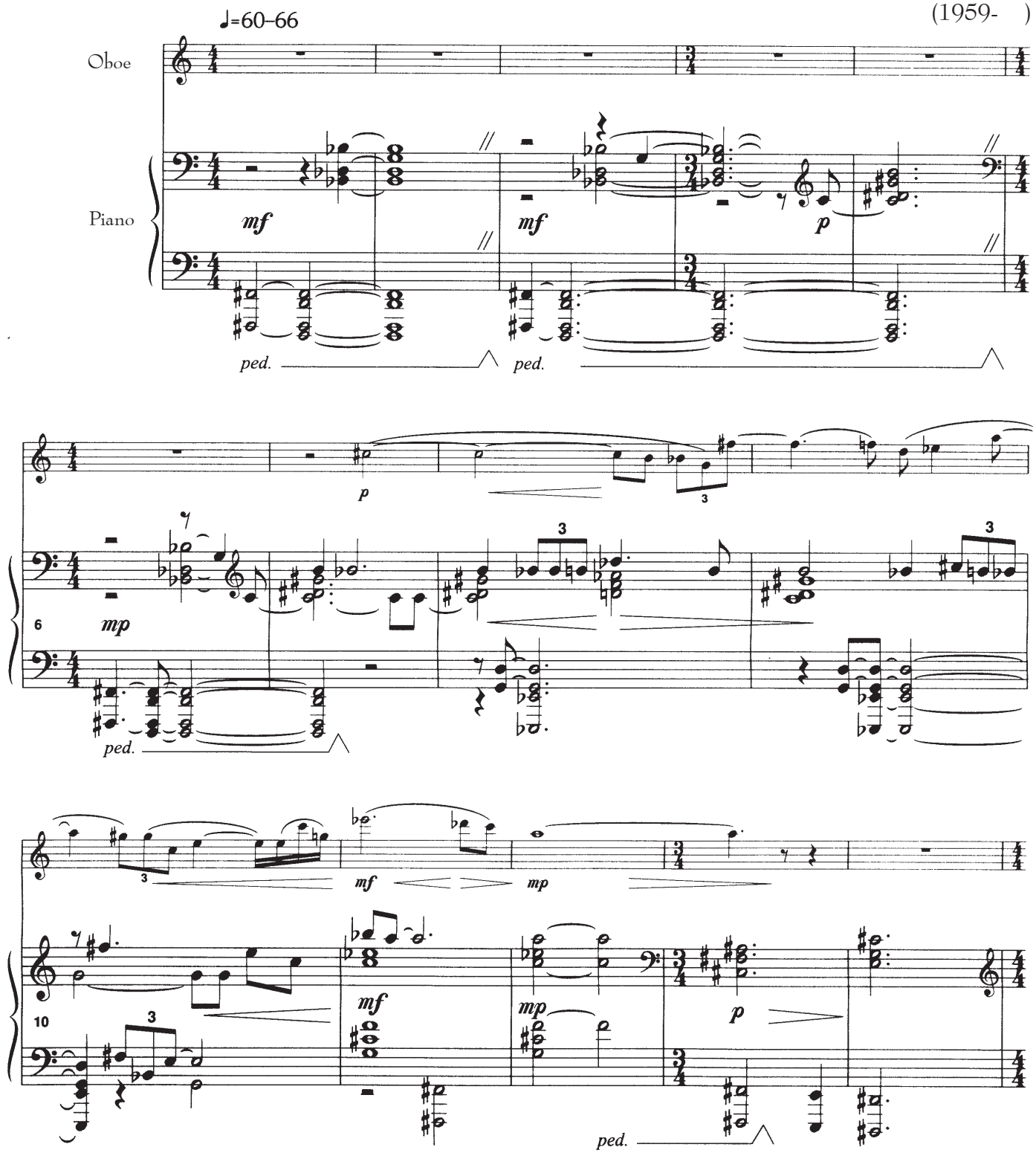

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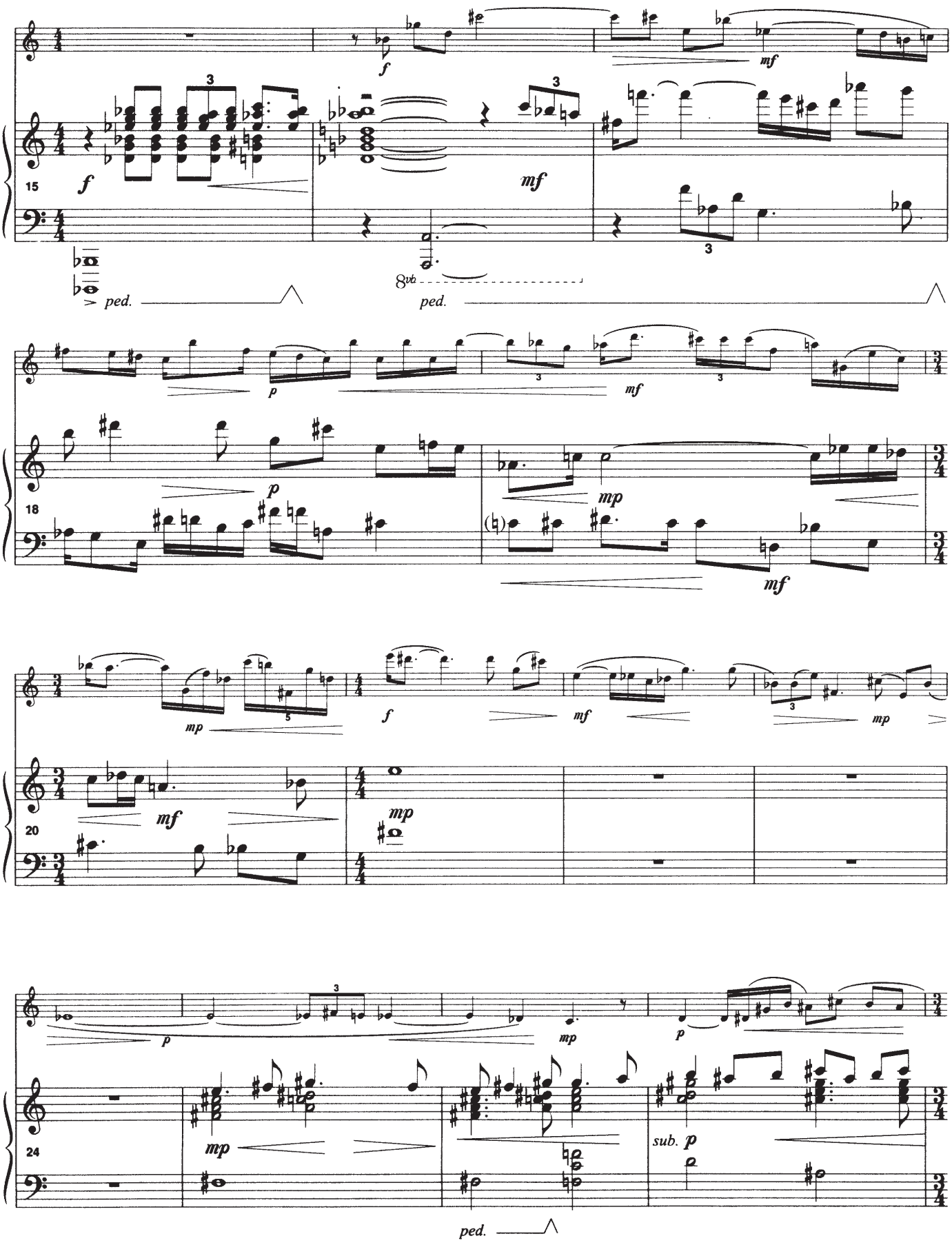

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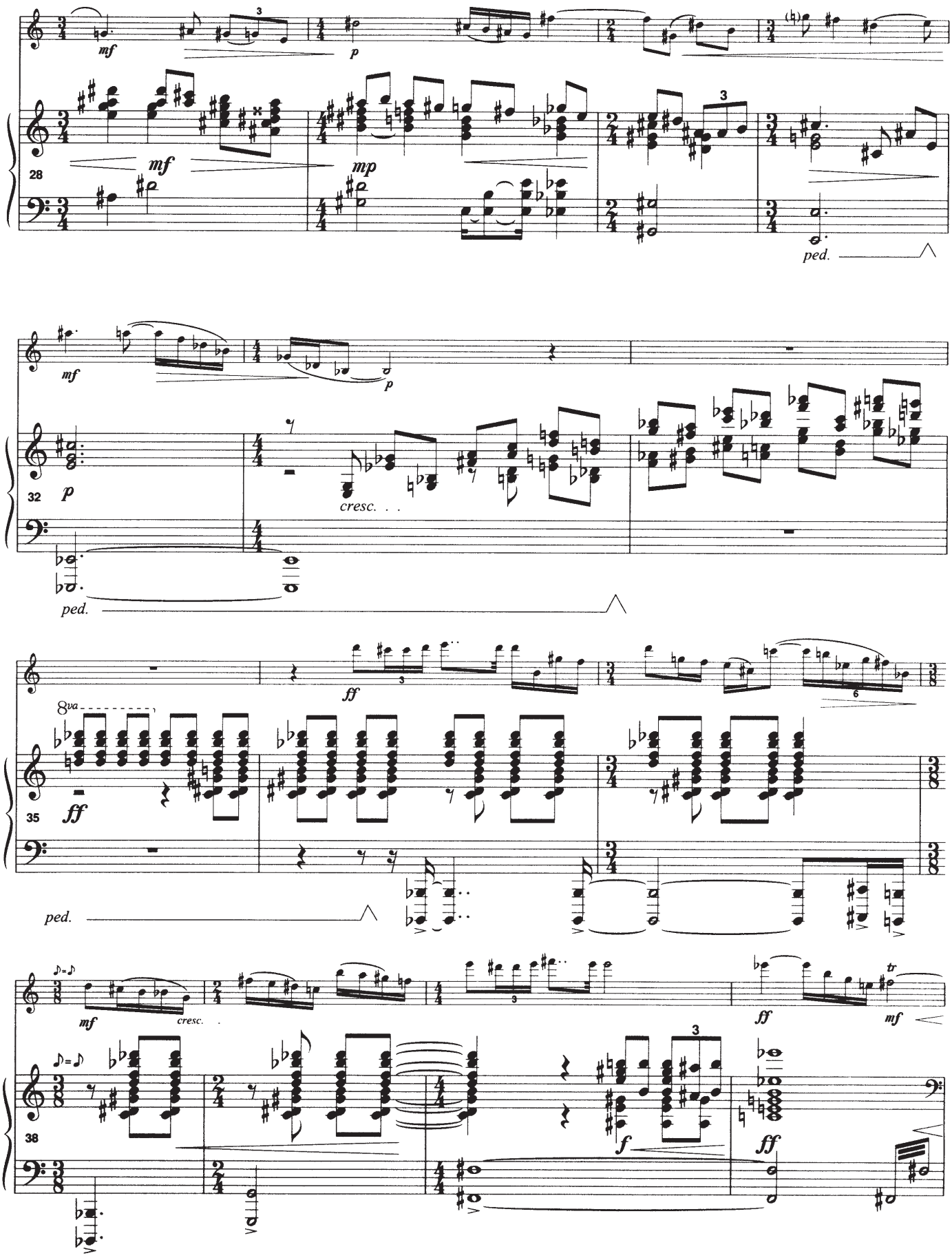

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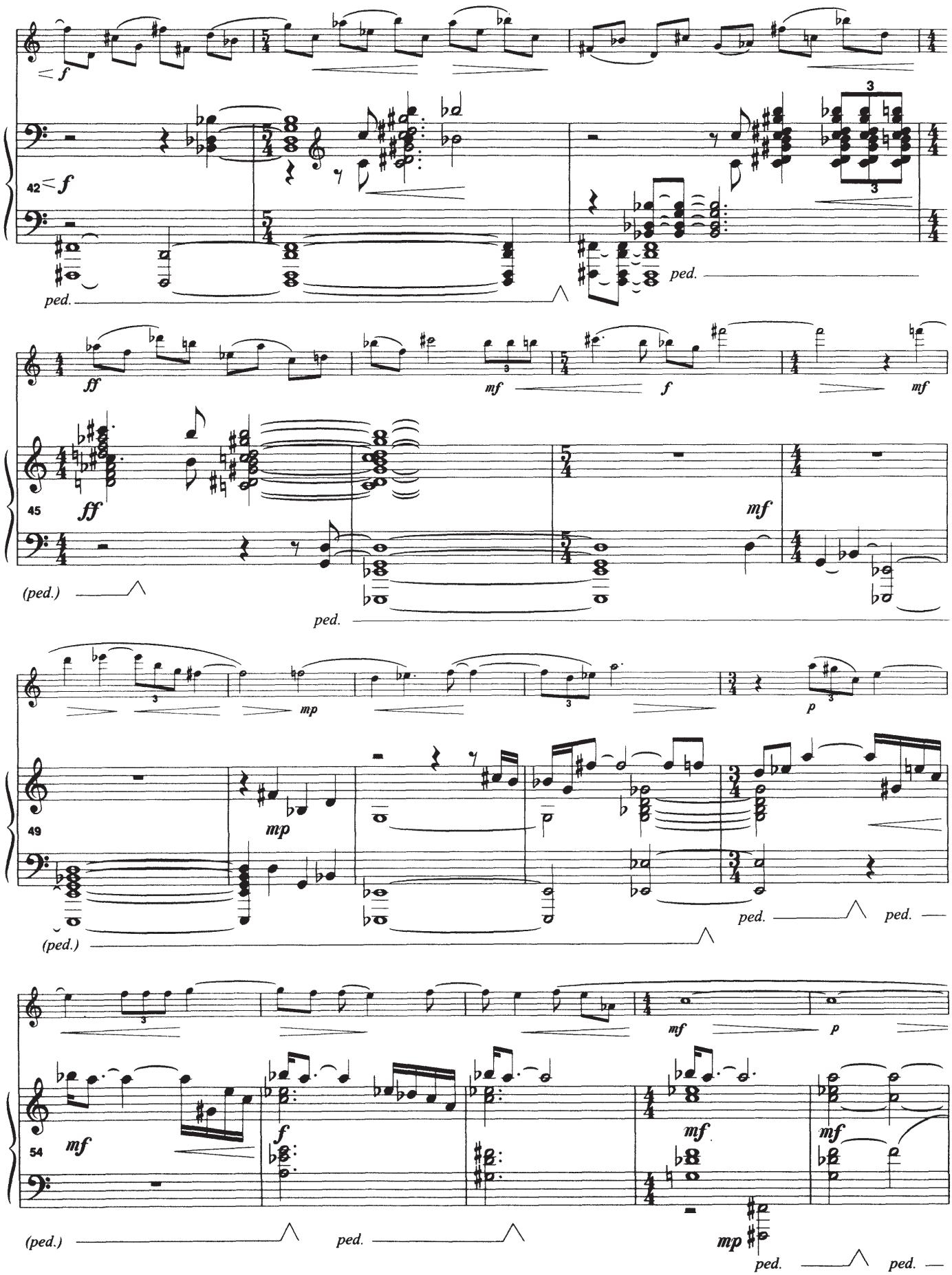

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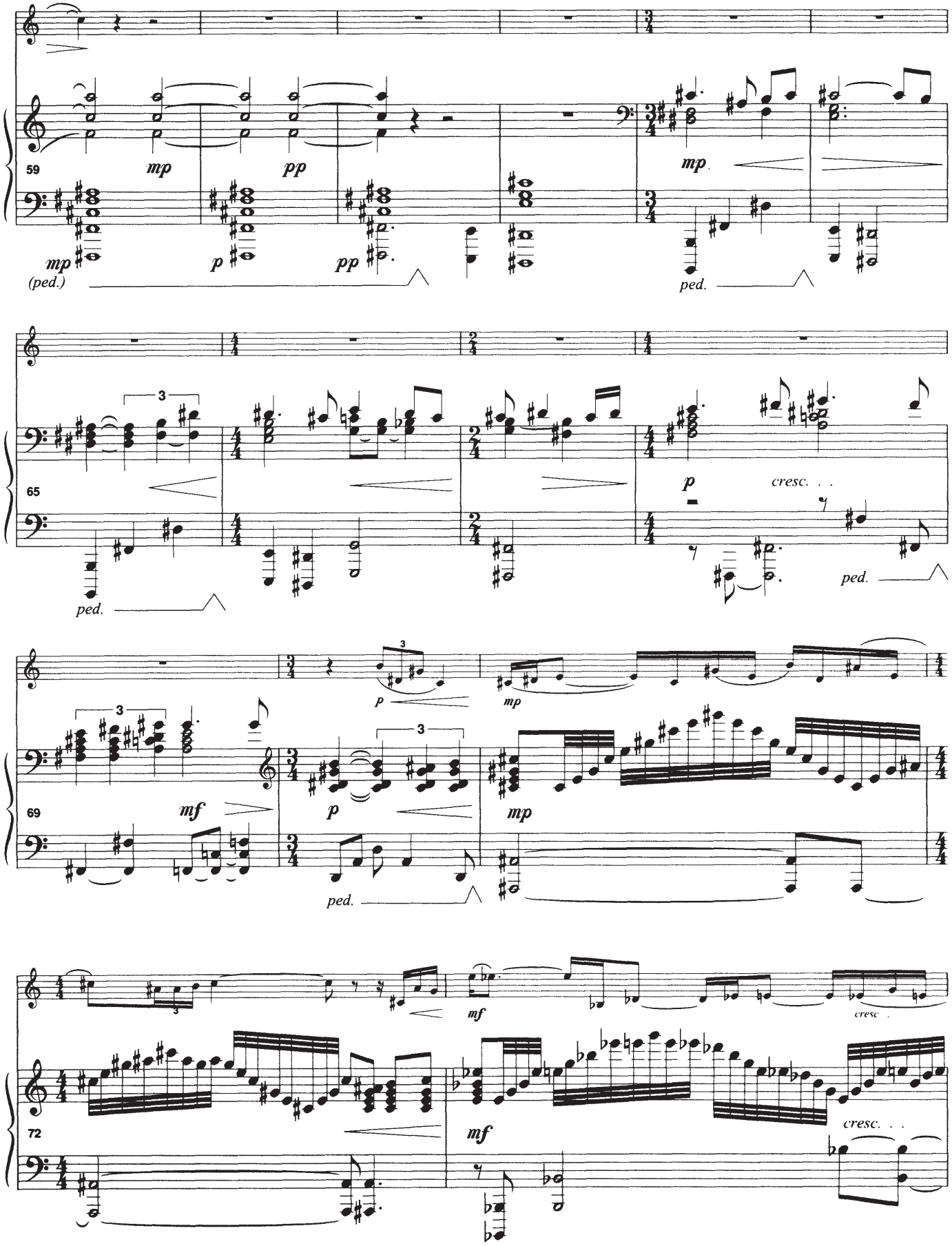

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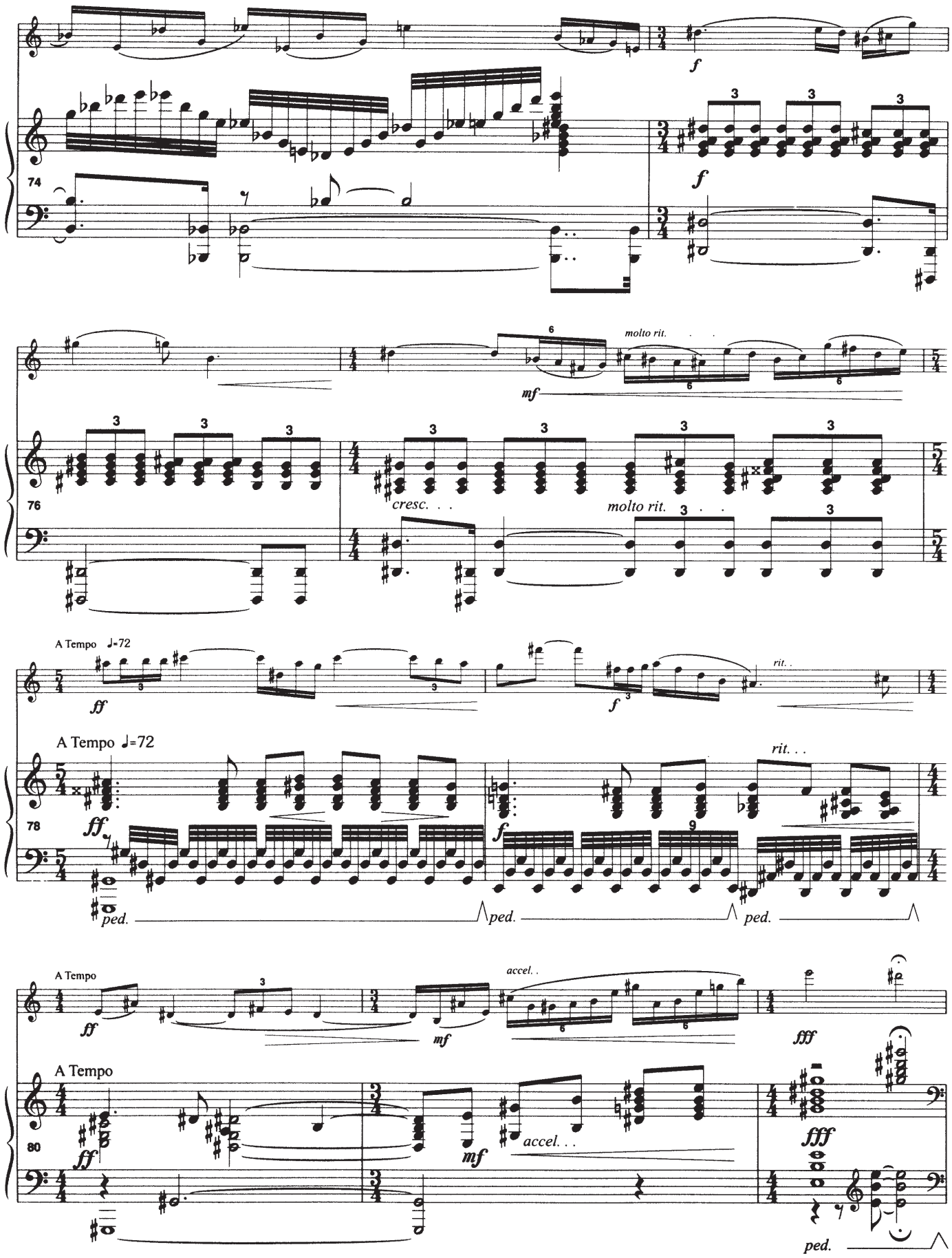

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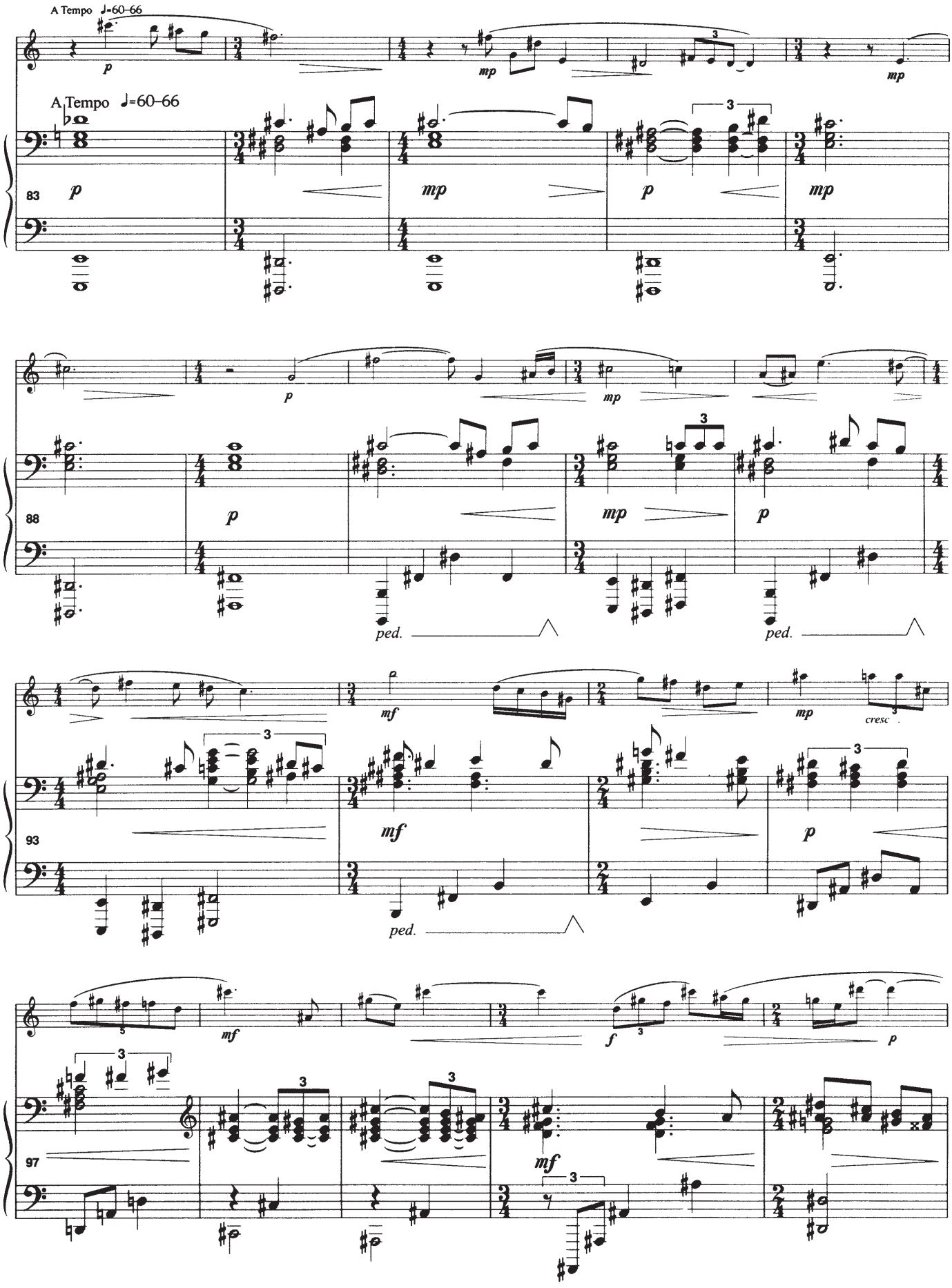

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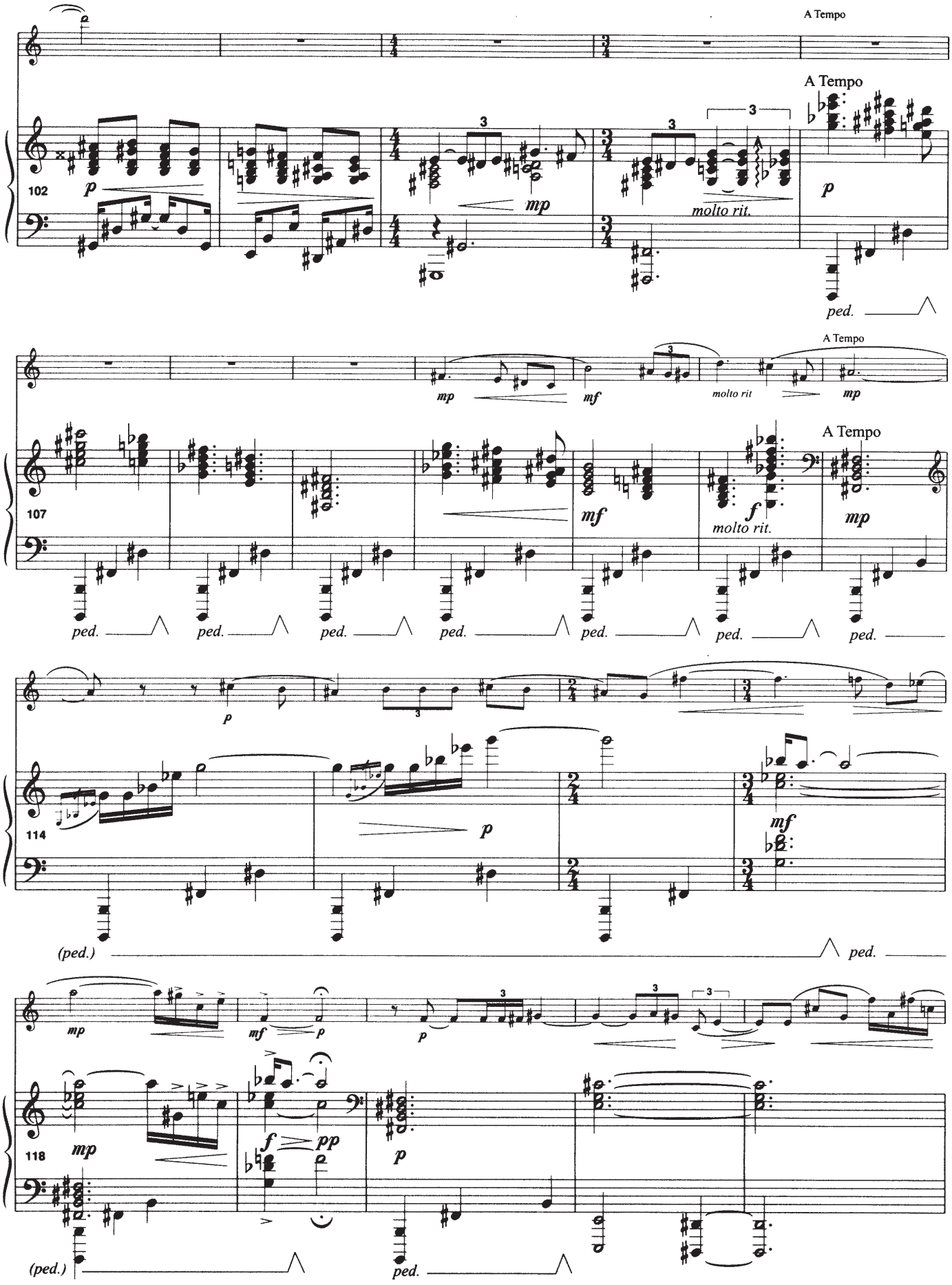

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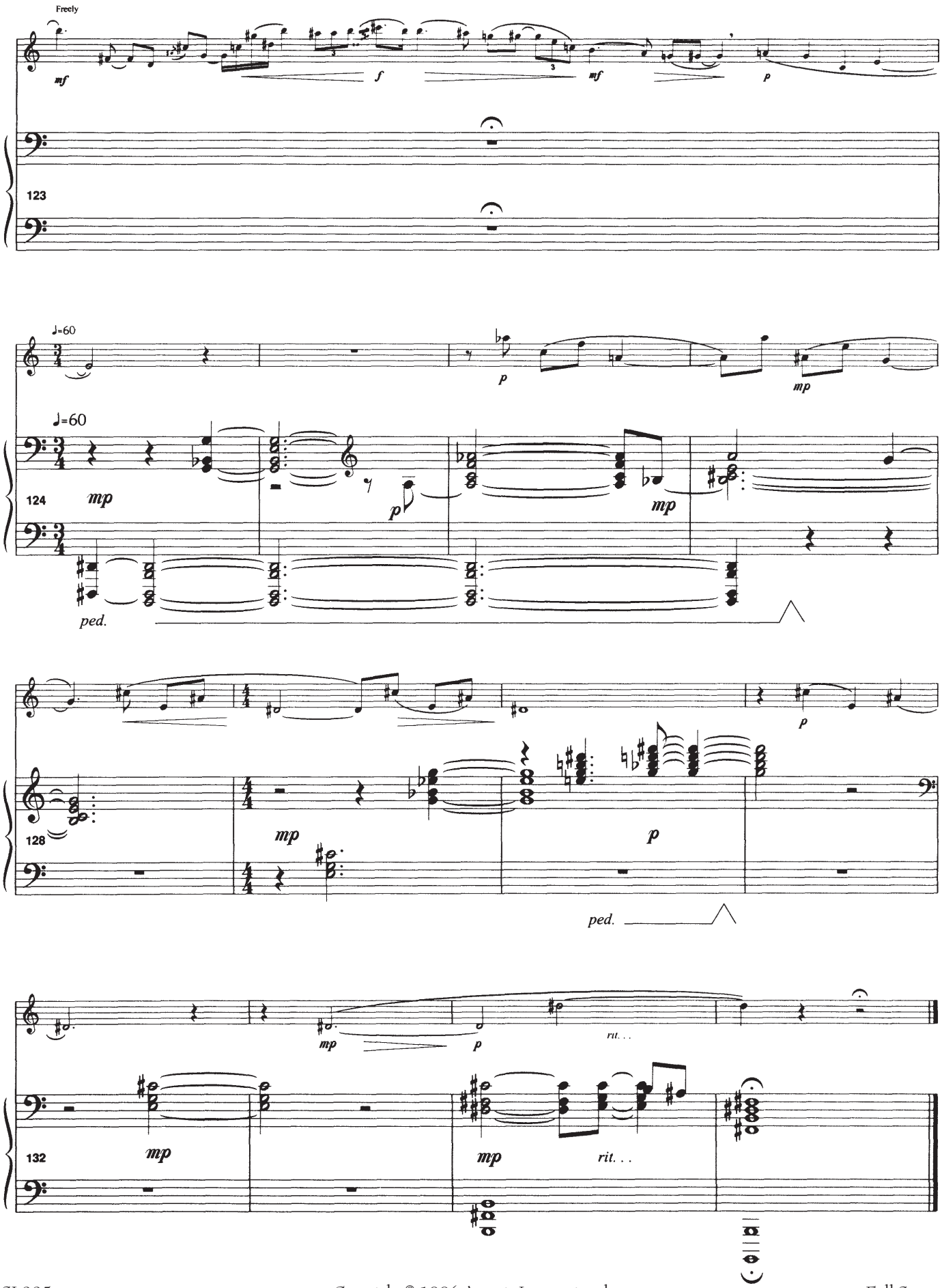

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Oboe

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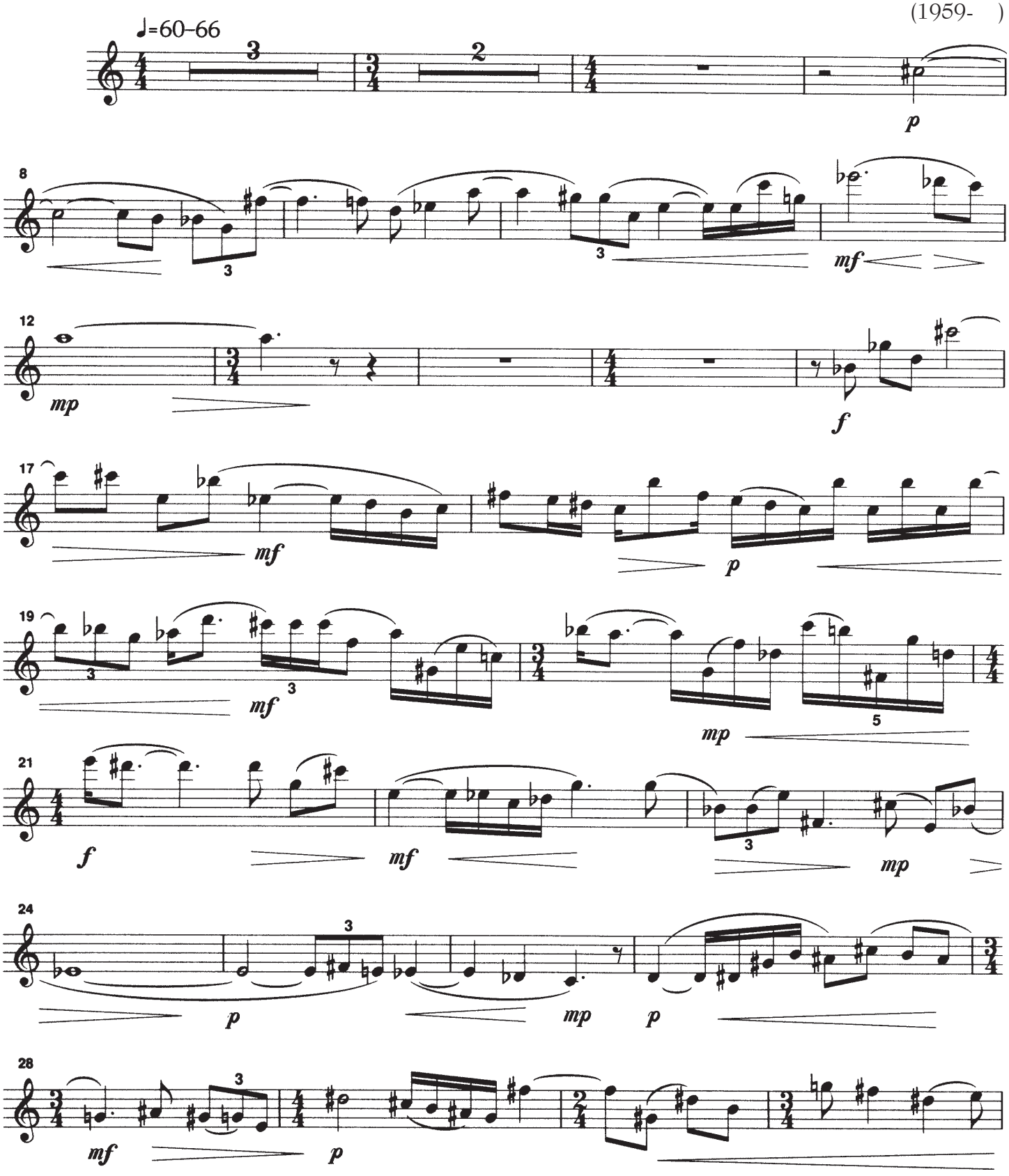

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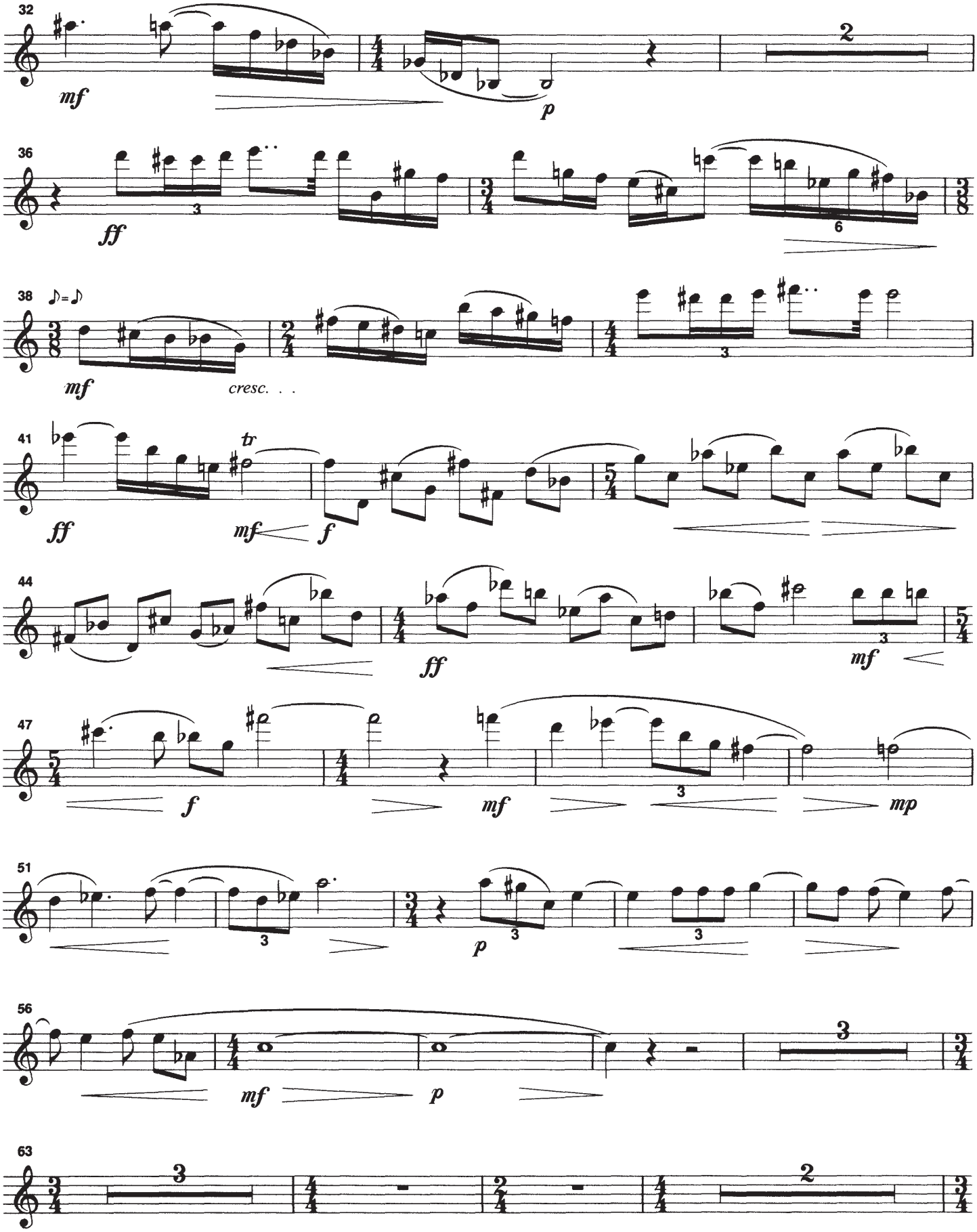

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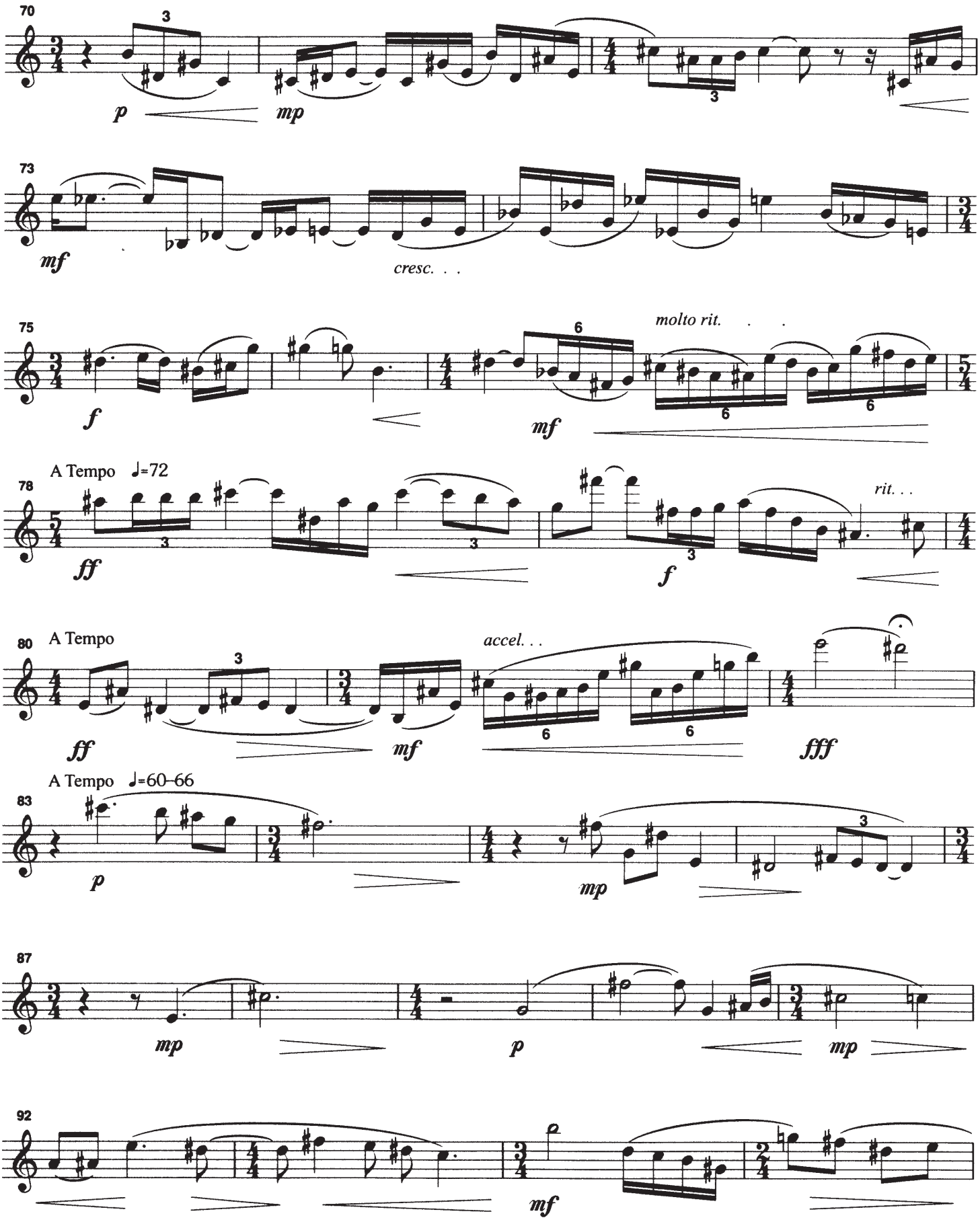

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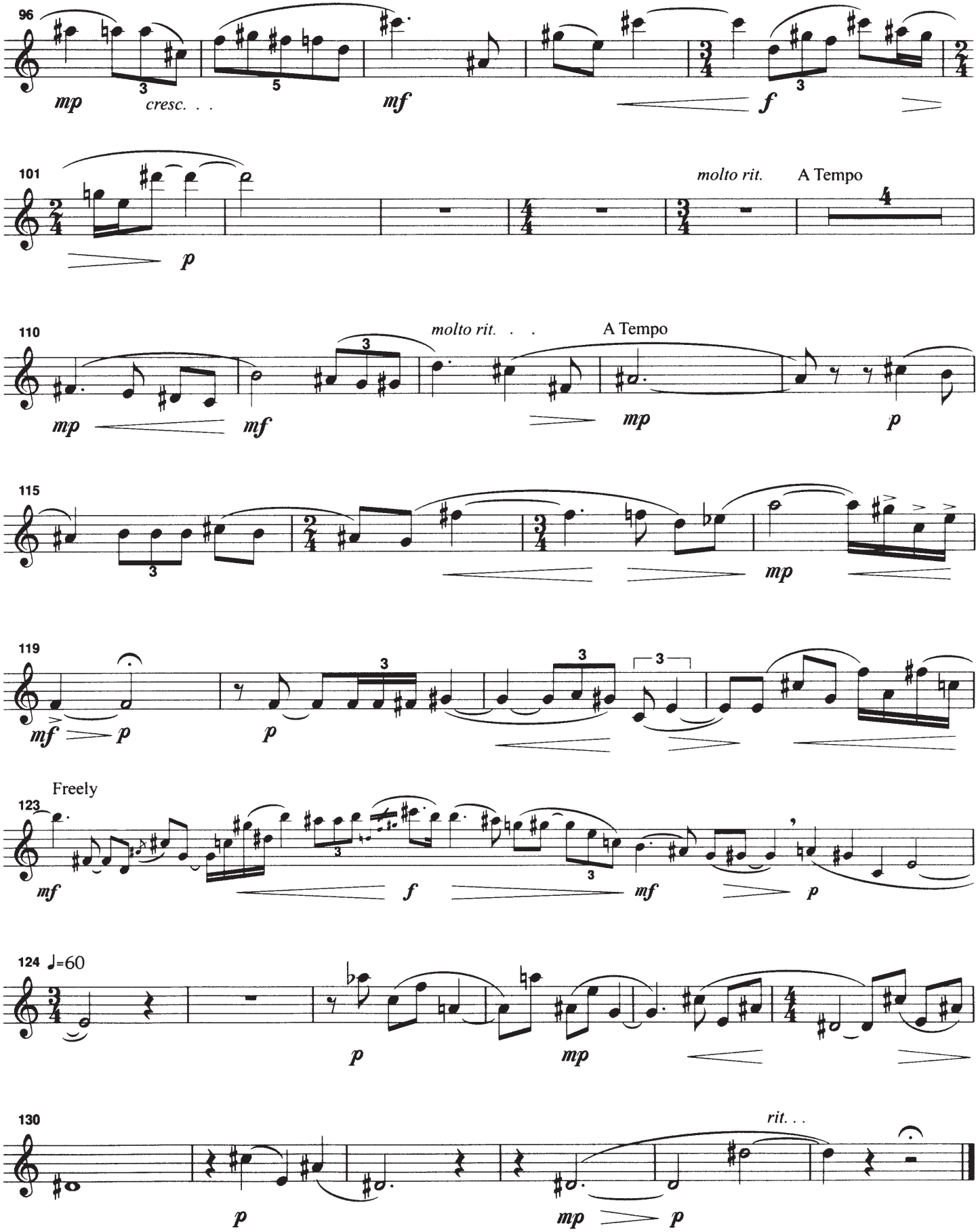

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