INTRODUCTION

By LEONARD FEATHER

(Author of The Encyclopedia Of Jazz In The '60s)

For the student of modern jazz piano there are two main steps that can lead to a genuine knowledge of and interest in the essential technical requirements.

First you have to acquire the good taste (aided perhaps by the guidance of older hands) to determine who are the artists worthy of study. Such valued judgments are not easily determined; taste, you might say, is an infinite capacity for research, sifting and examination. You eventually select men of the caliber of Bernard Peiffer and Billy Taylor.

Second, you need the visual evidence of what these men are doing. Critical niceties and delicacy of perception may evolve simply from listening to records, but in the final analysis the practice of music in any idiom normally requires such frames of reference as can be found in this invaluable folio.

Billy Taylor is precisely the kind of musician to whom the aspiring pianist should turn for guidance. His music is at once intelligent and intelligible.

Biographers have tended to characterize Billy as scholarly, intellectual, urbane, etc. True, he graduated from Virginia State College with a Bachelor of Music degree. It is nevertheless beyond dispute that while leading his own combo for the past 20 years, or while embellishing the performances of groups led by Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge, Gerry Mulligan, Artie Shaw and countless others, he has created compositions and solos that were the product of emotion, albeit facilitated by his formidable scholarly knowledge.

Because he is among the most articulate of jazzmen, Billy has been in constant demand during the past decade or so as lecturer, panelist, writer, disc jockey and all-around spokesman-activist. His biggest coup in terms of mass acceptance was the assignment in 1969 as musical director on the daily David Frost television series.

As the titles indicate, Taylor-made music can be cool and caressing, wild and lively. The manuscripts that follow will show you just how and where and why these objectives were attained.

Bernard Peiffer's background may seem on the surface to be entirely different from Taylor's, since he was born in France and had to acquire most of his knowledge of American jazz from records. There are common elements, however. They are about the same age; both are college graduates with thorough classical training; both idolized Art Tatum, and both use their schooling and technique as a means, rather than as ends in themselves.

Peiffer, who came to the U.S. in 1954 and settled in Philadelphia, has made numerous albums and appeared at jazz festivals and college concerts. Though praised elaborately by critics and fellow pianists, he has never quite achieved the eminence he has long deserved.

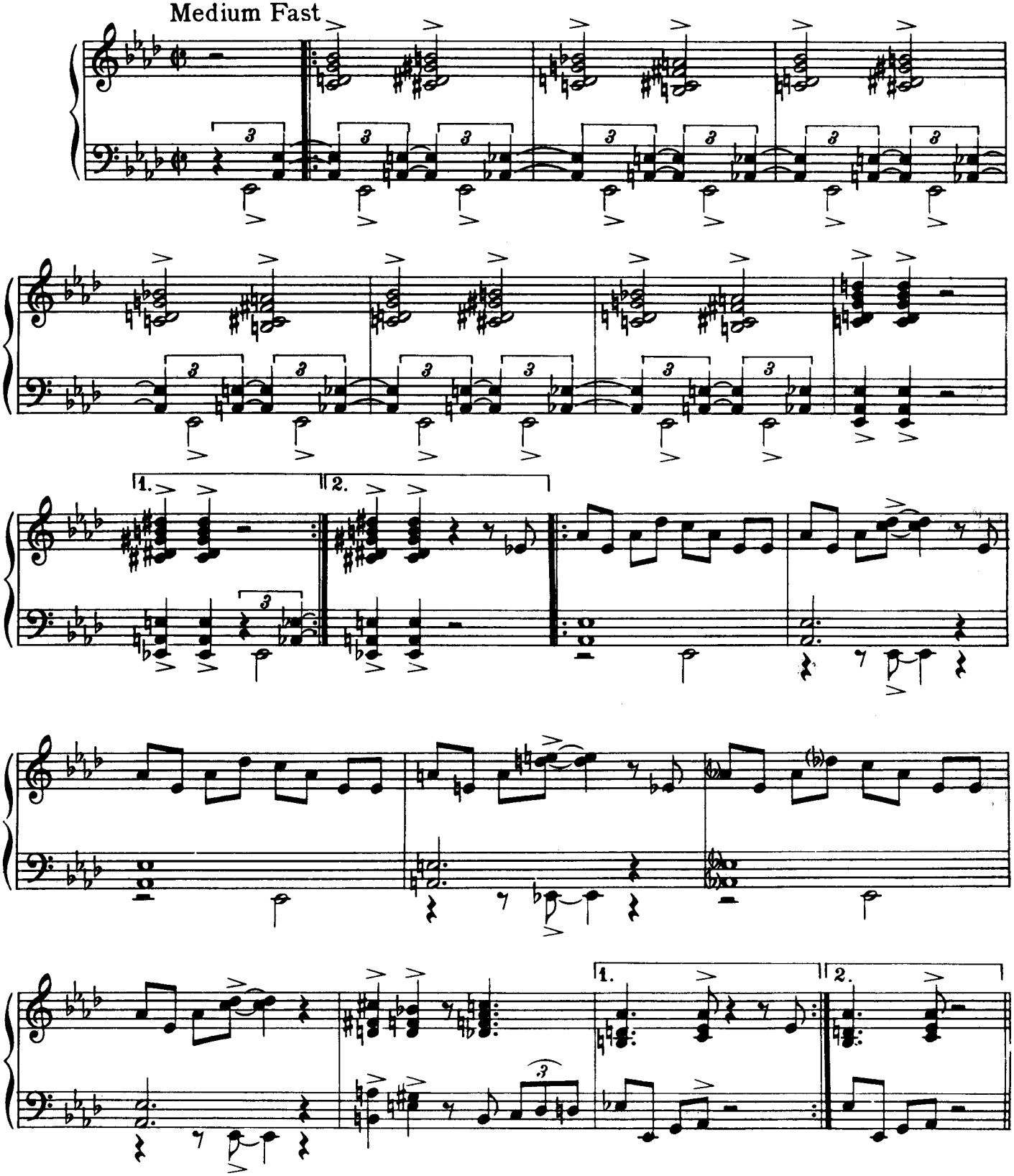
When it comes to dues, Peiffer has paid more than his share, but personal tragedy and professional reversals seem only to have implanted in him an even firmer resolve to strive toward perfection.

Of the four typical works that represent him here, two may be particularly familiar: *Tired Blues* and *Strip Tease* were recorded some years ago in an album of original works. The former shows the ingenuity with which Peiffer can restructure the traditional harmony of the blues pattern. Of the title, he says: "I didn't really know the meaning of the word tired. What I should have called it was *Relaxed Blues." Strip Tease* is an ingenious melodic line, spiked with humor and calling for dexterity and concentration on the part of whoever attempts to reproduce its undulant lines.

As a pianist who is not only turned on, but also turned green with envy, by the likes of Peiffer and Taylor, I can study in a spirit of particular admiration the contents of these pages. It is good to see that countless pianophiles can now recreate the works of these two giants, and encouraging to observe that they have been accurately documented for posterity.

STRIP TEASE

BERNARD PEIFFER



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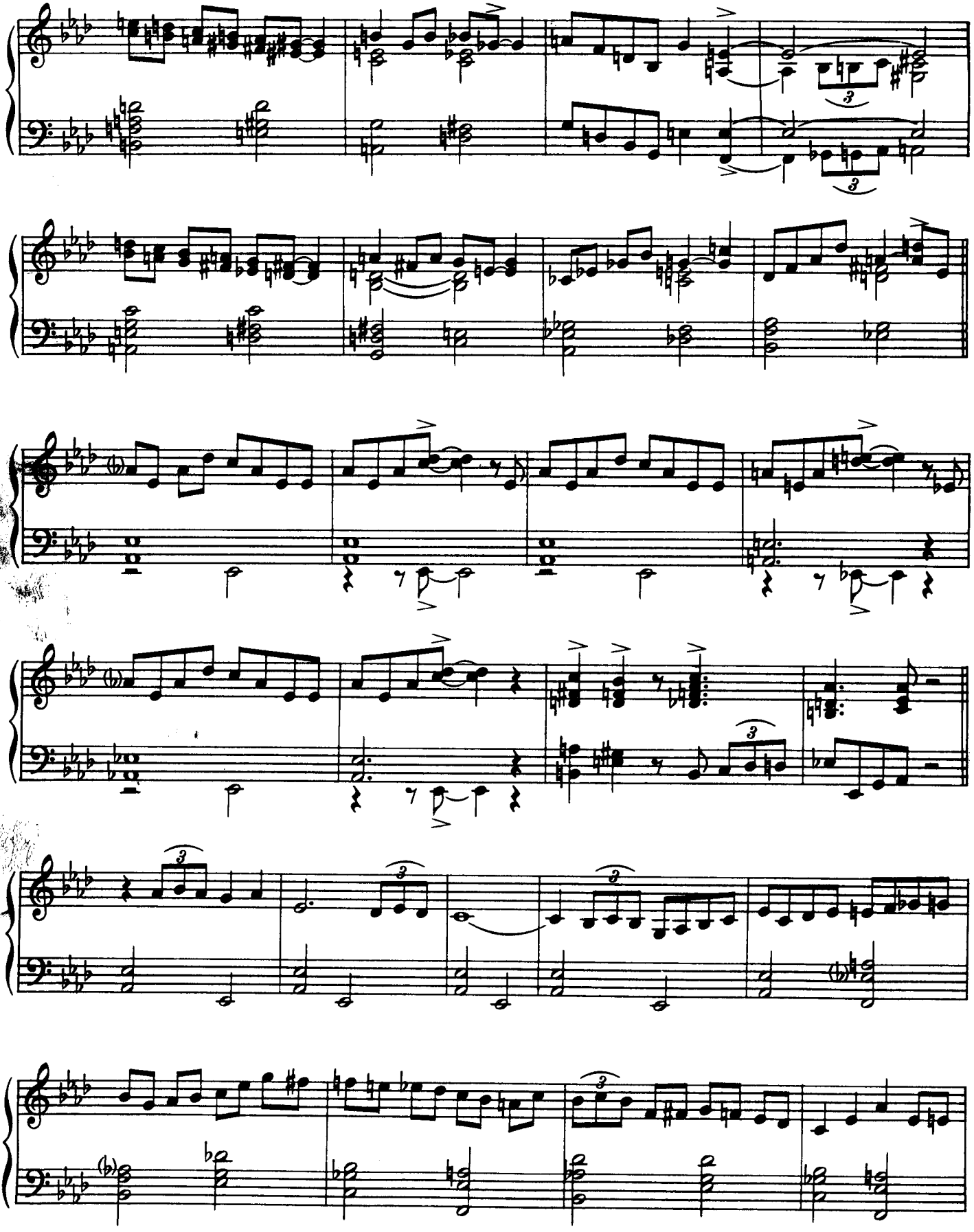
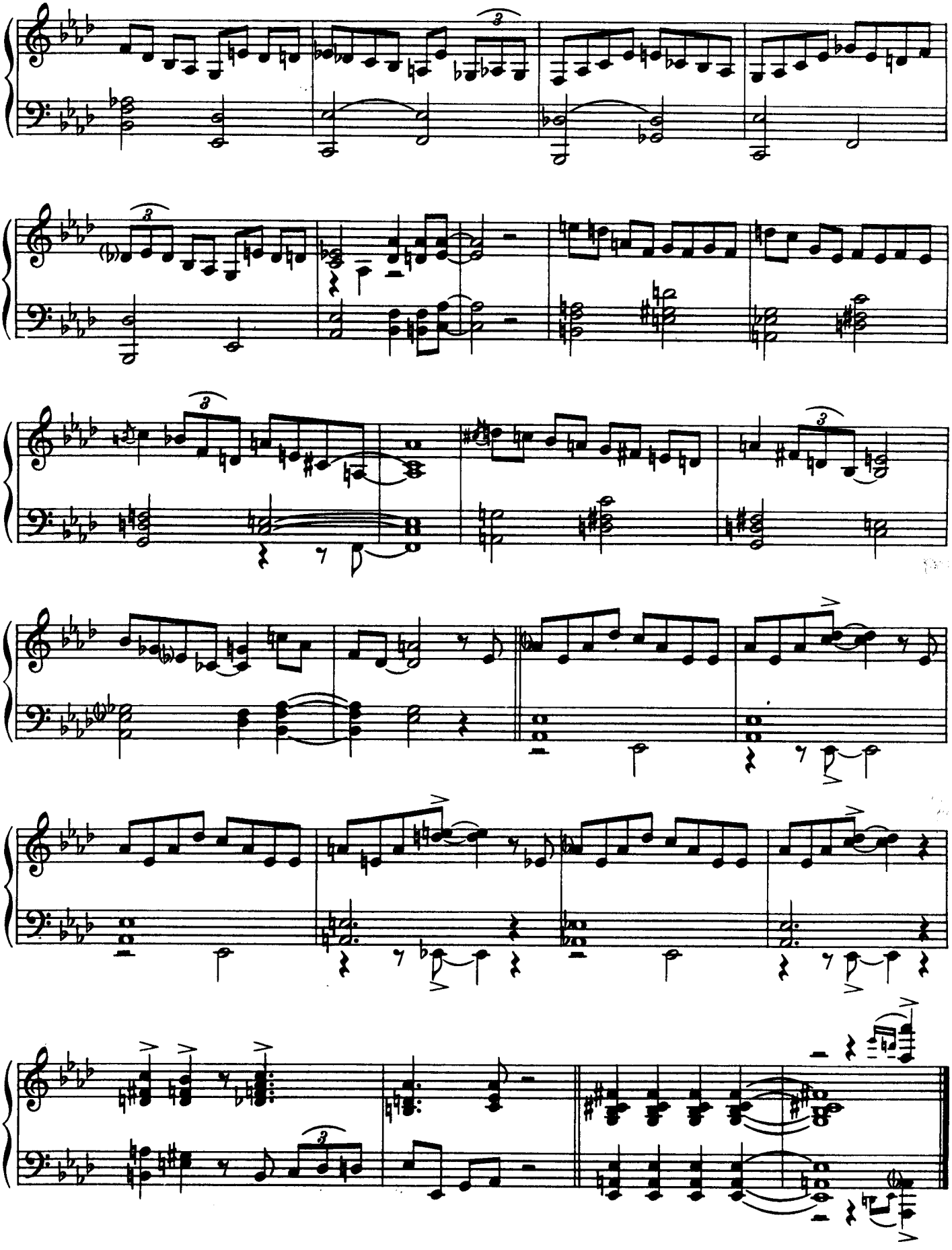
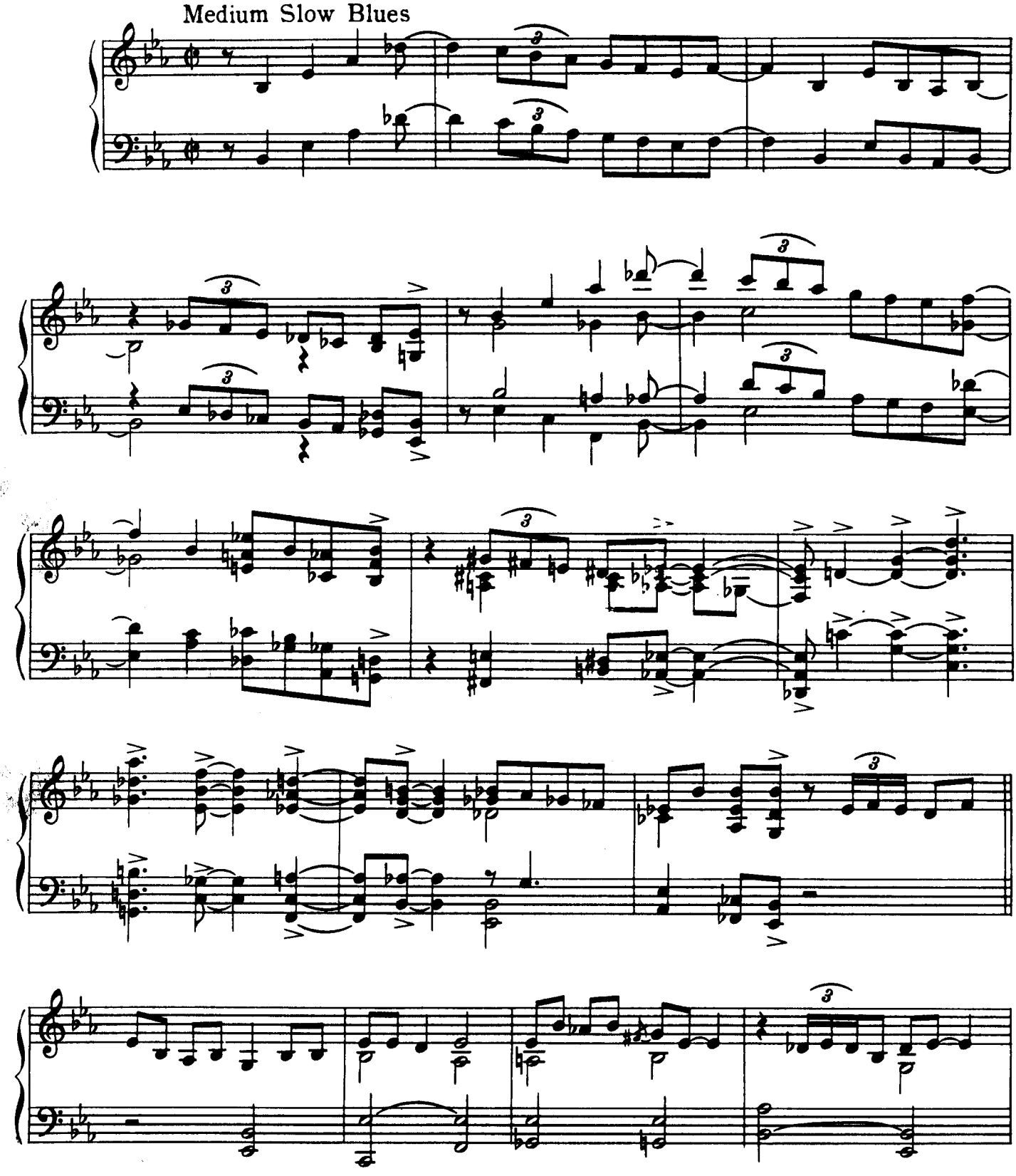




TIRED BLUES

BERNARD PEIFFER

Medium Slow Blues



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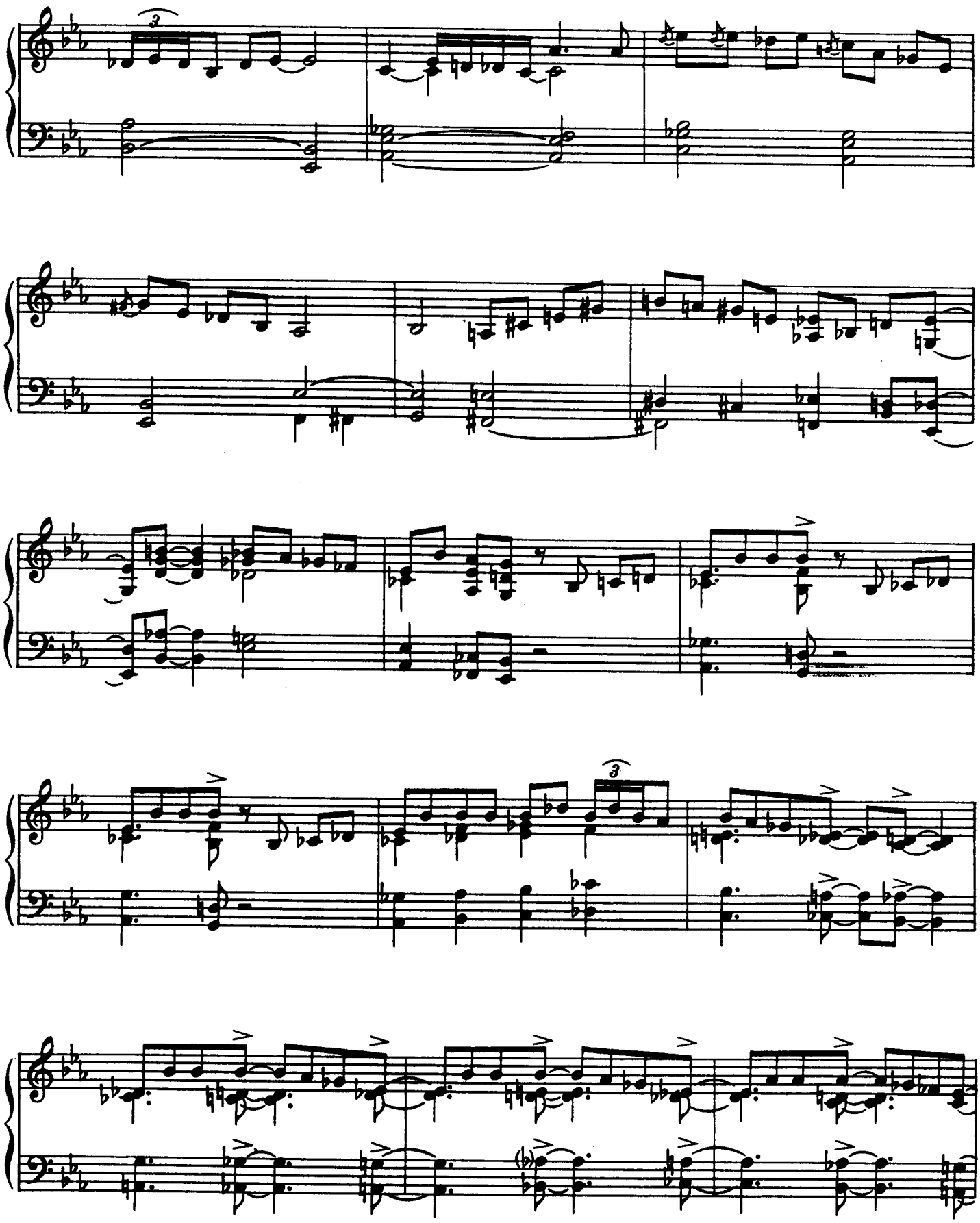

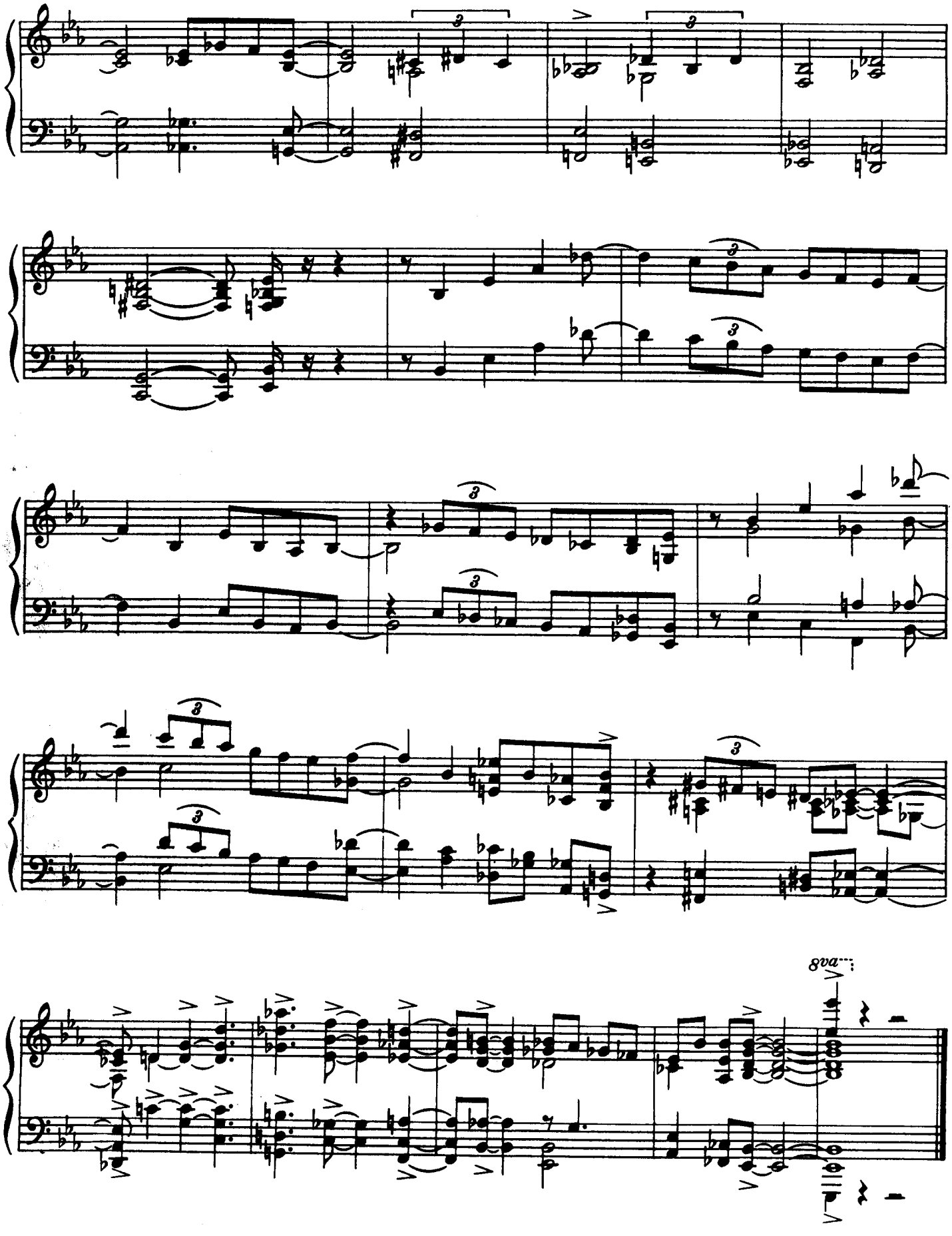
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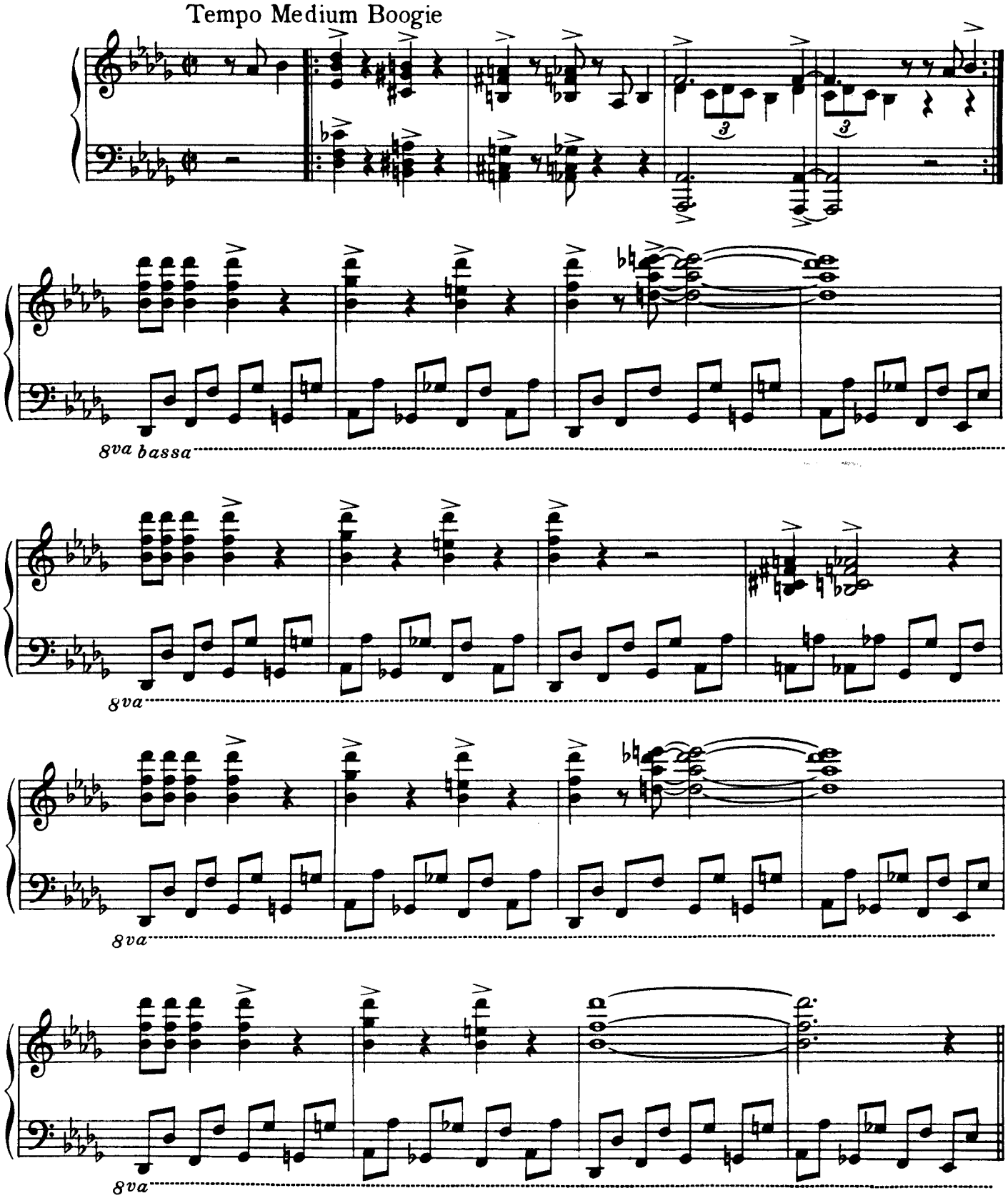
BERNARD PEIFFER



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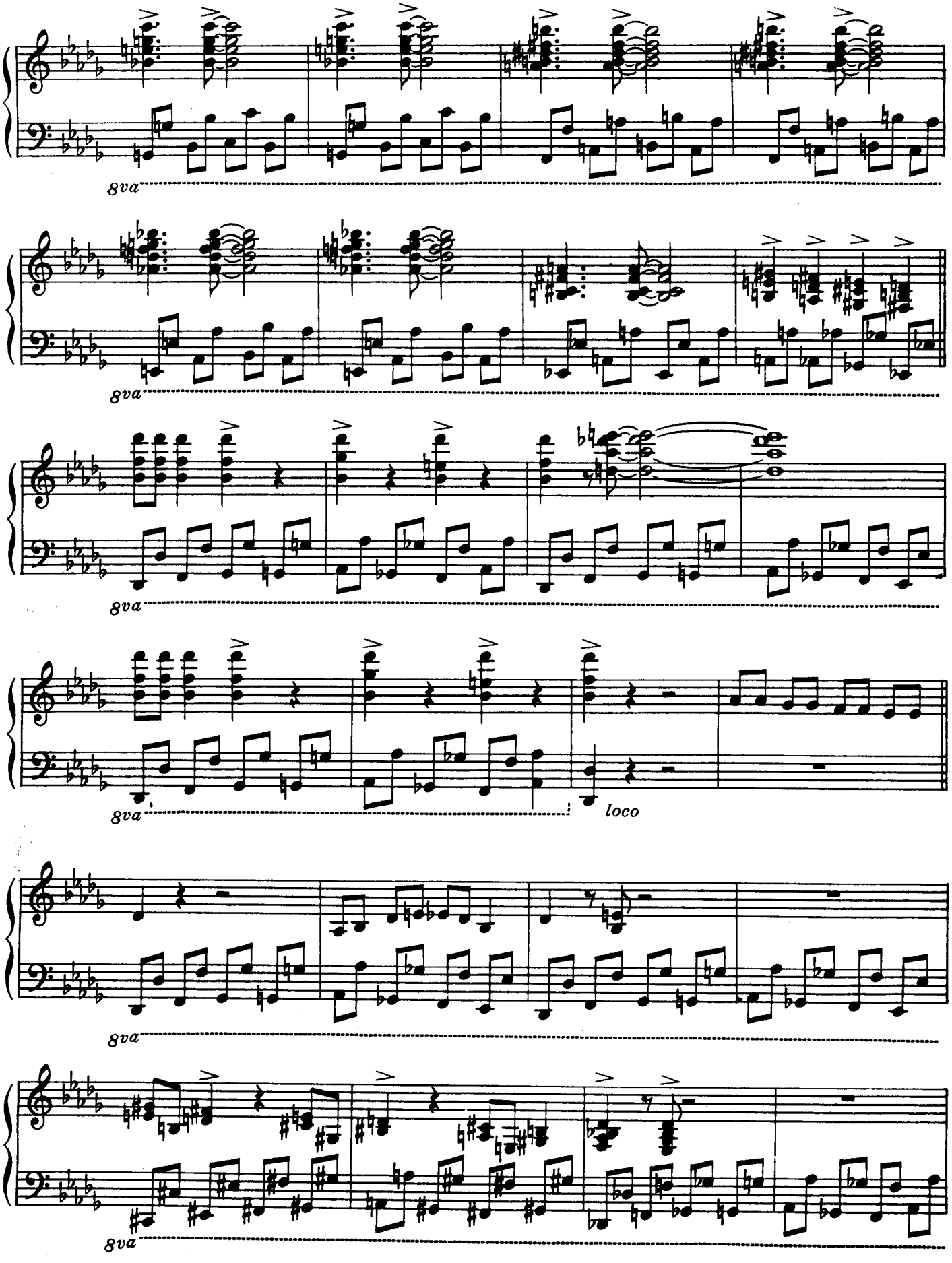
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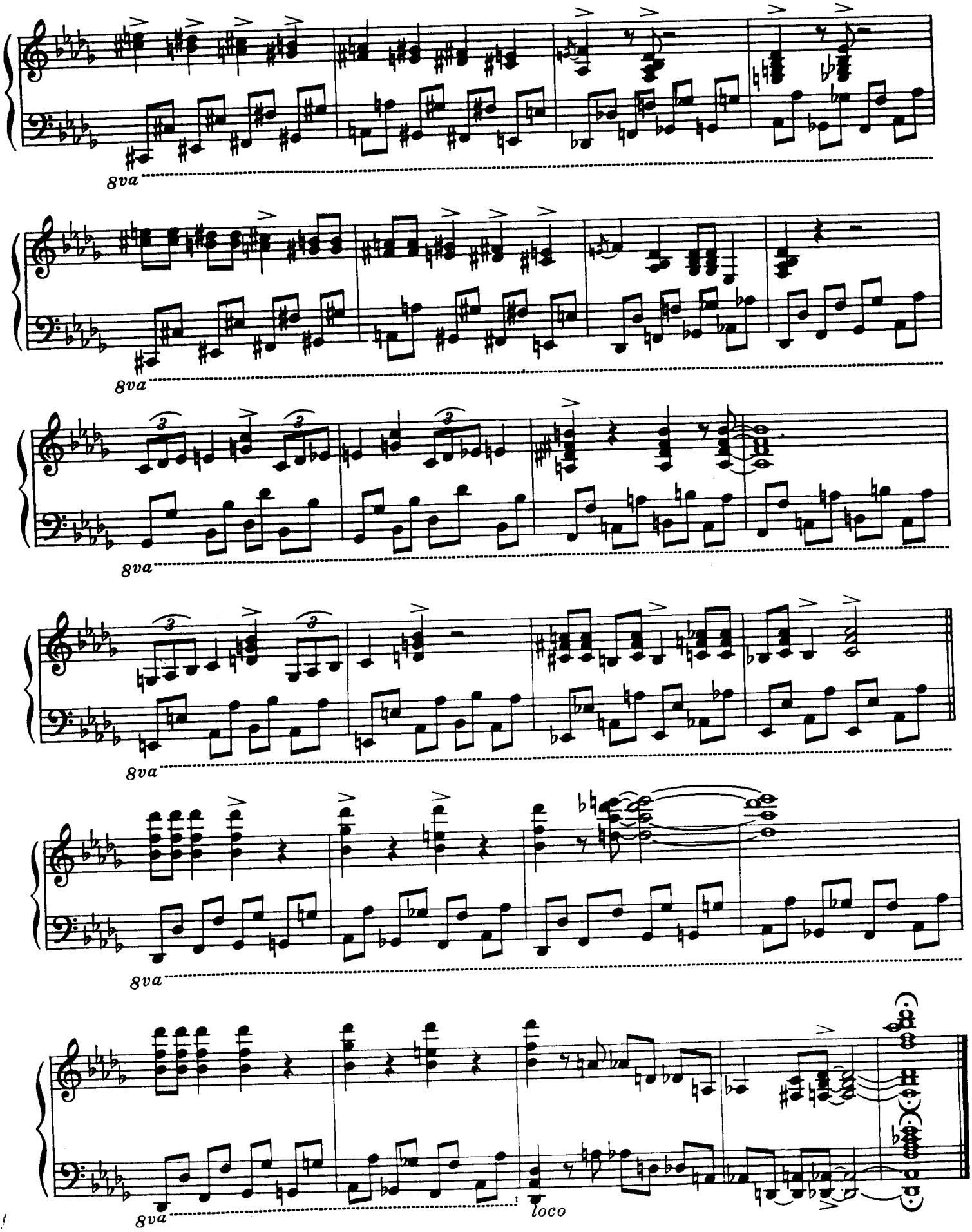
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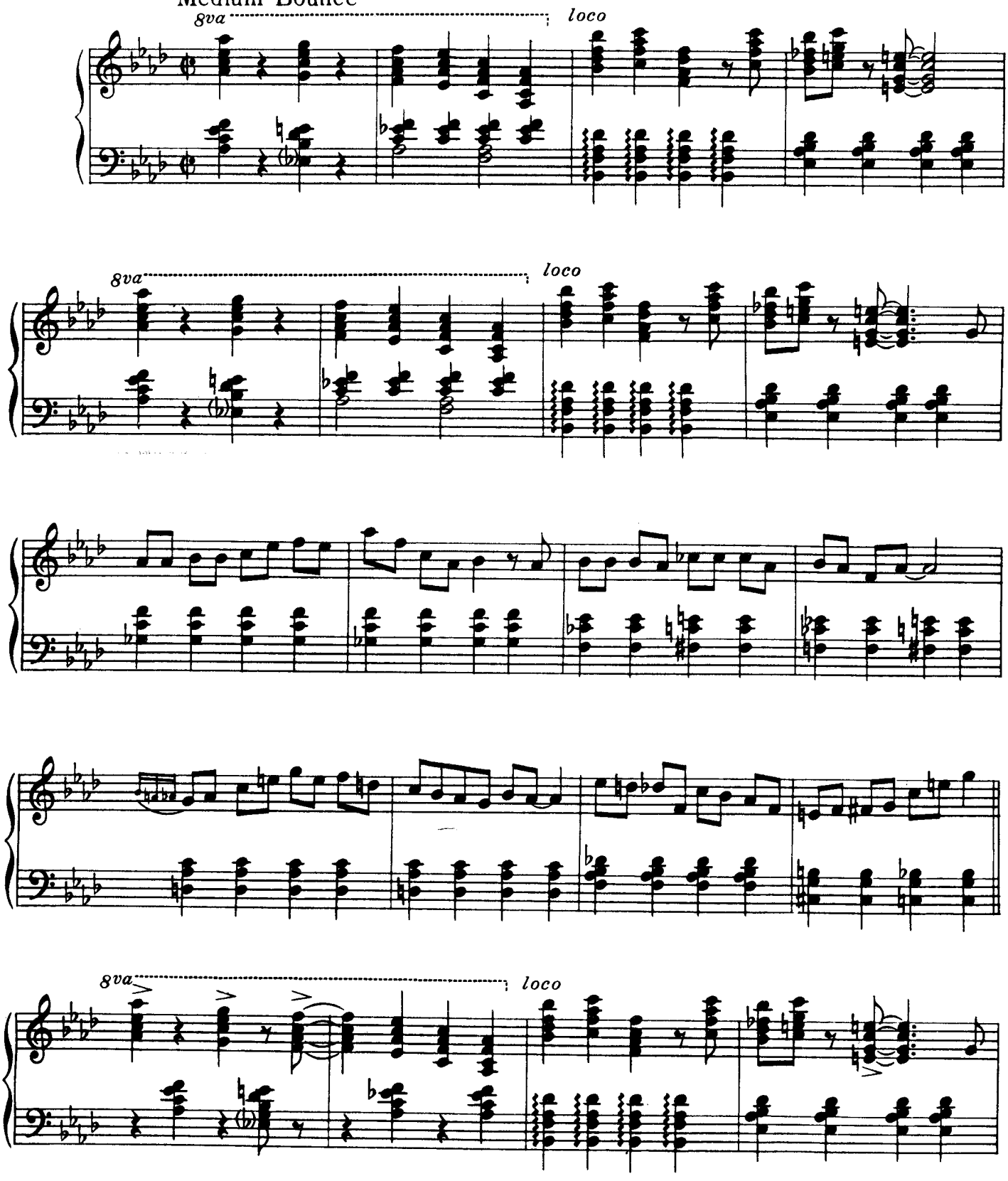
BALLADE IN PARIS

BERNARD PEIFFER

Medium Bounce



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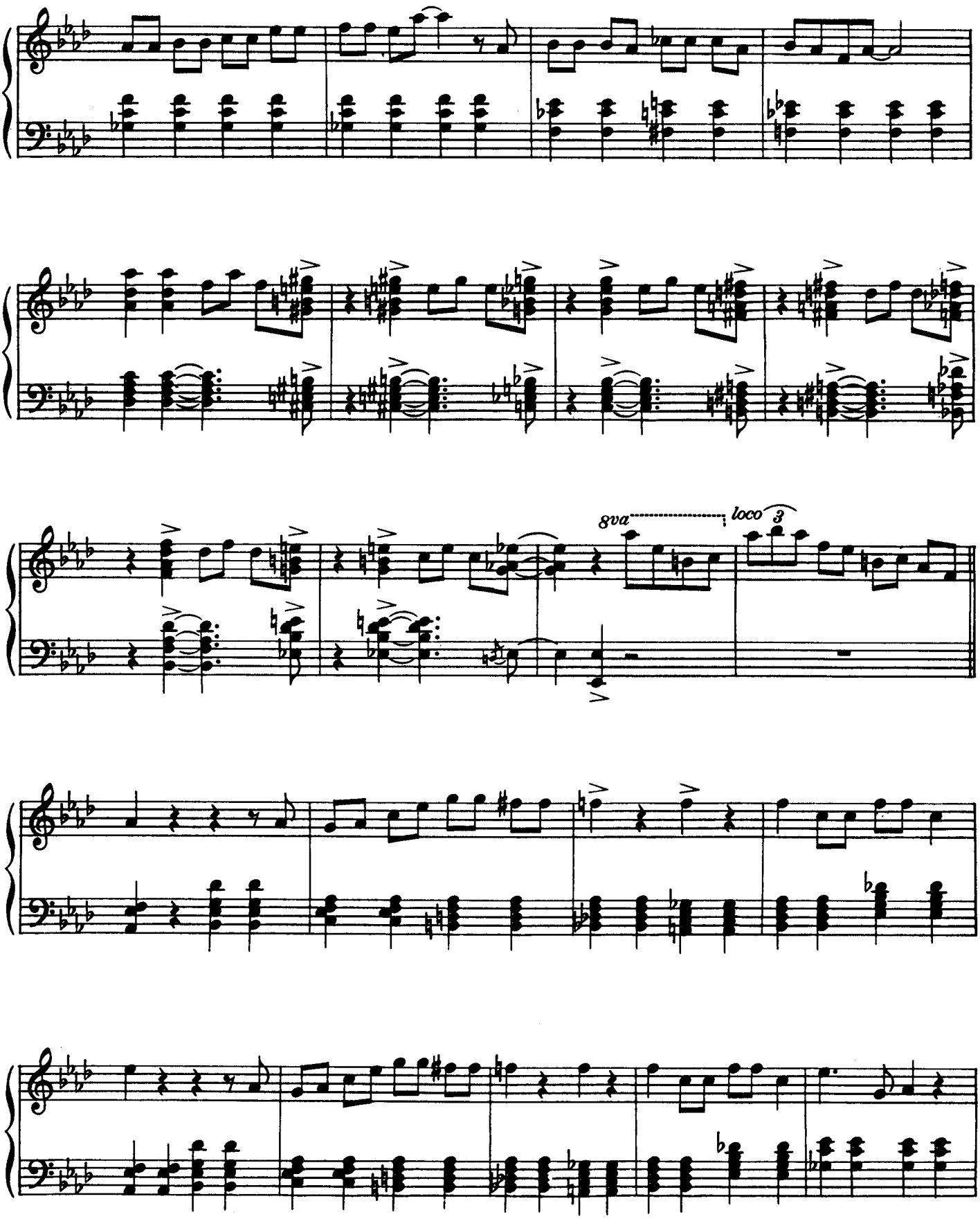
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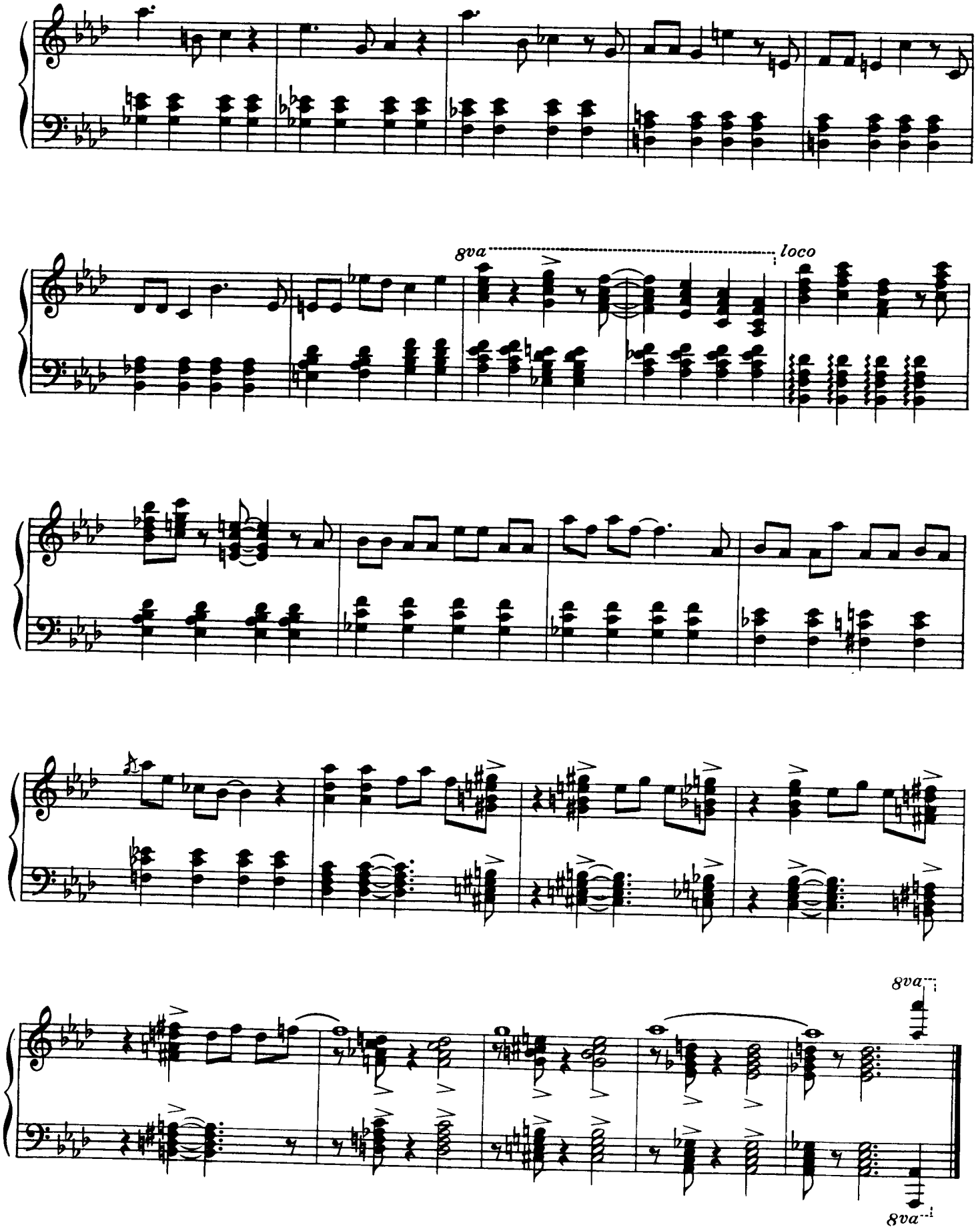
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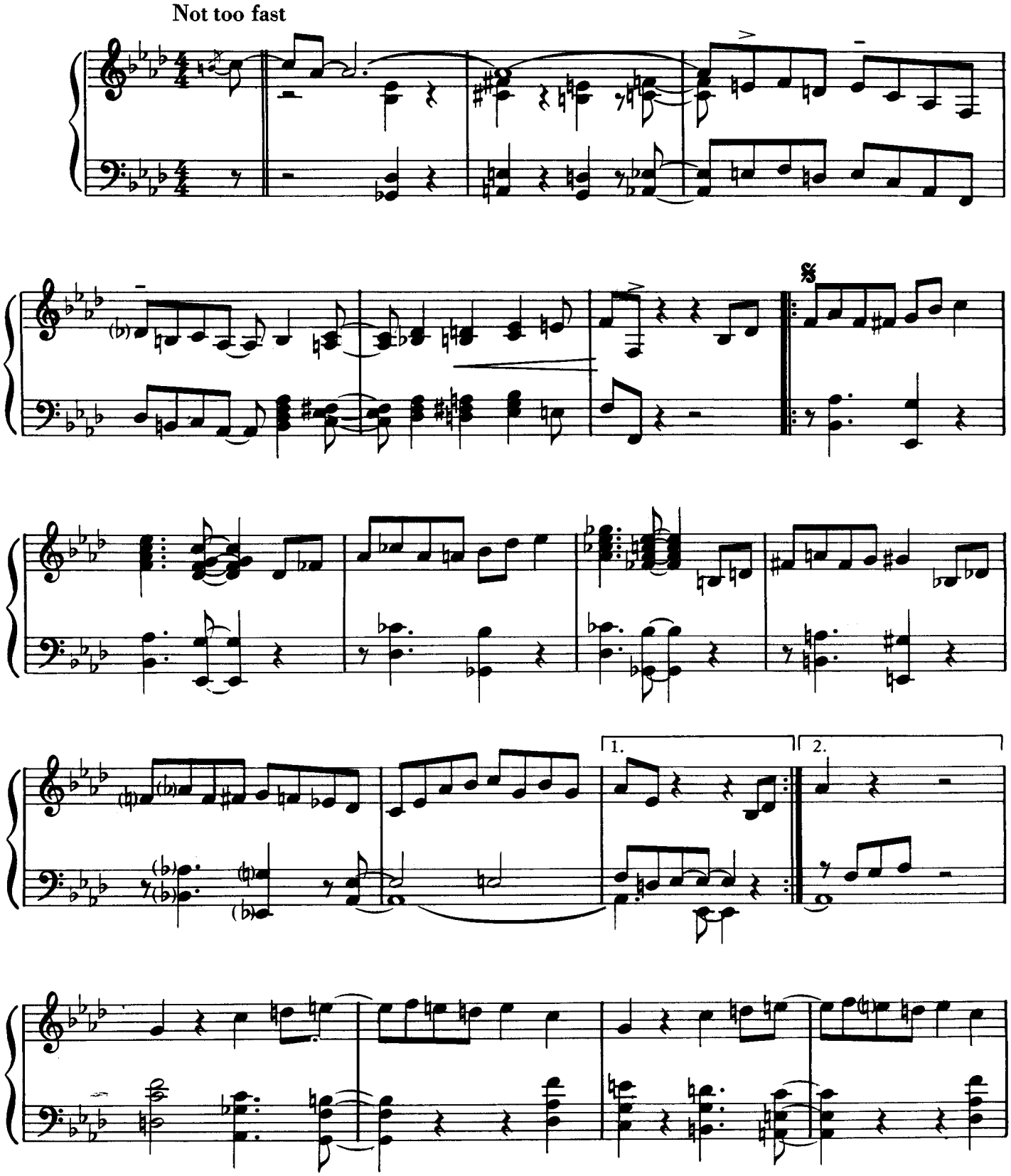
RADIOACTIVITY

BILLY TAYLOR



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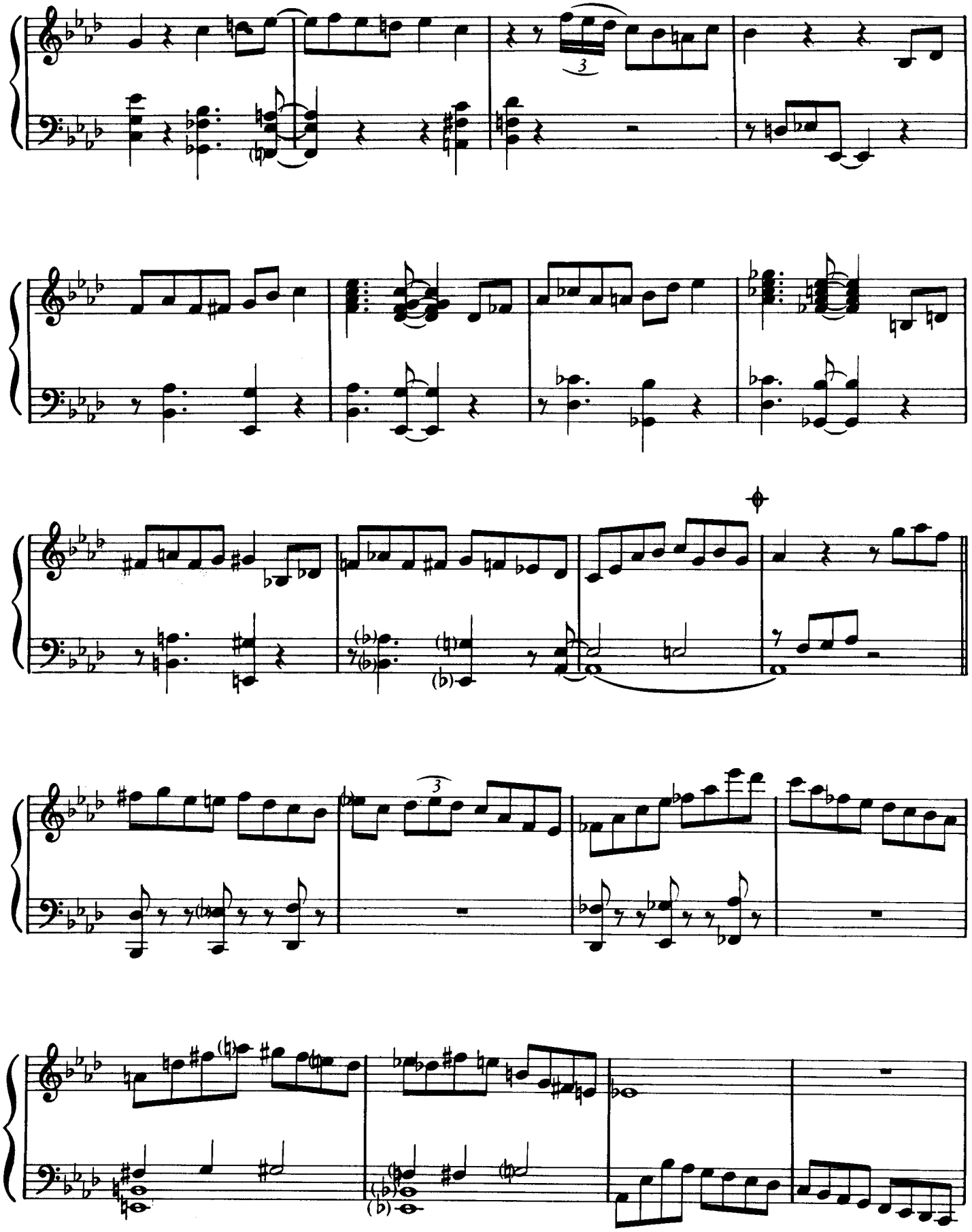

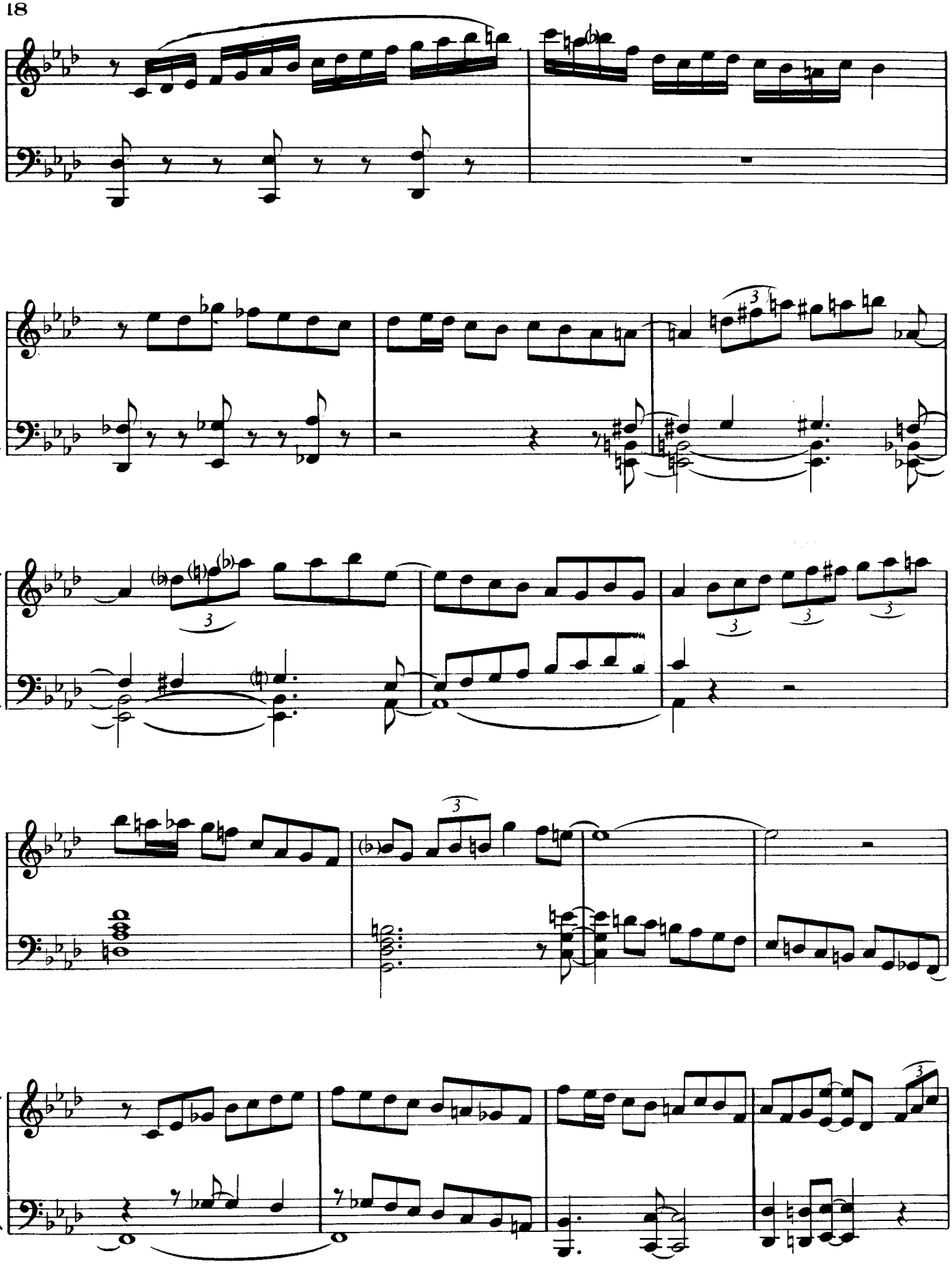

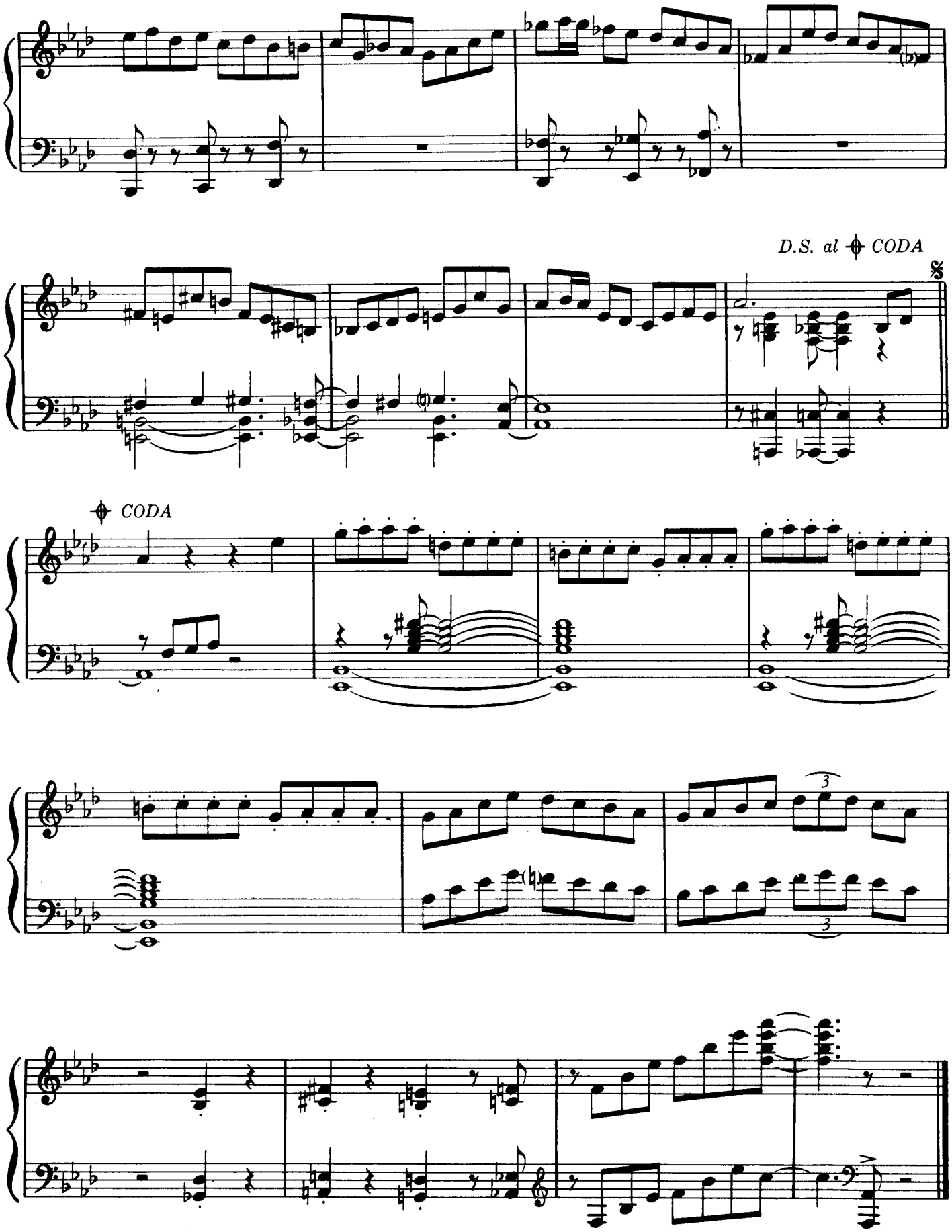
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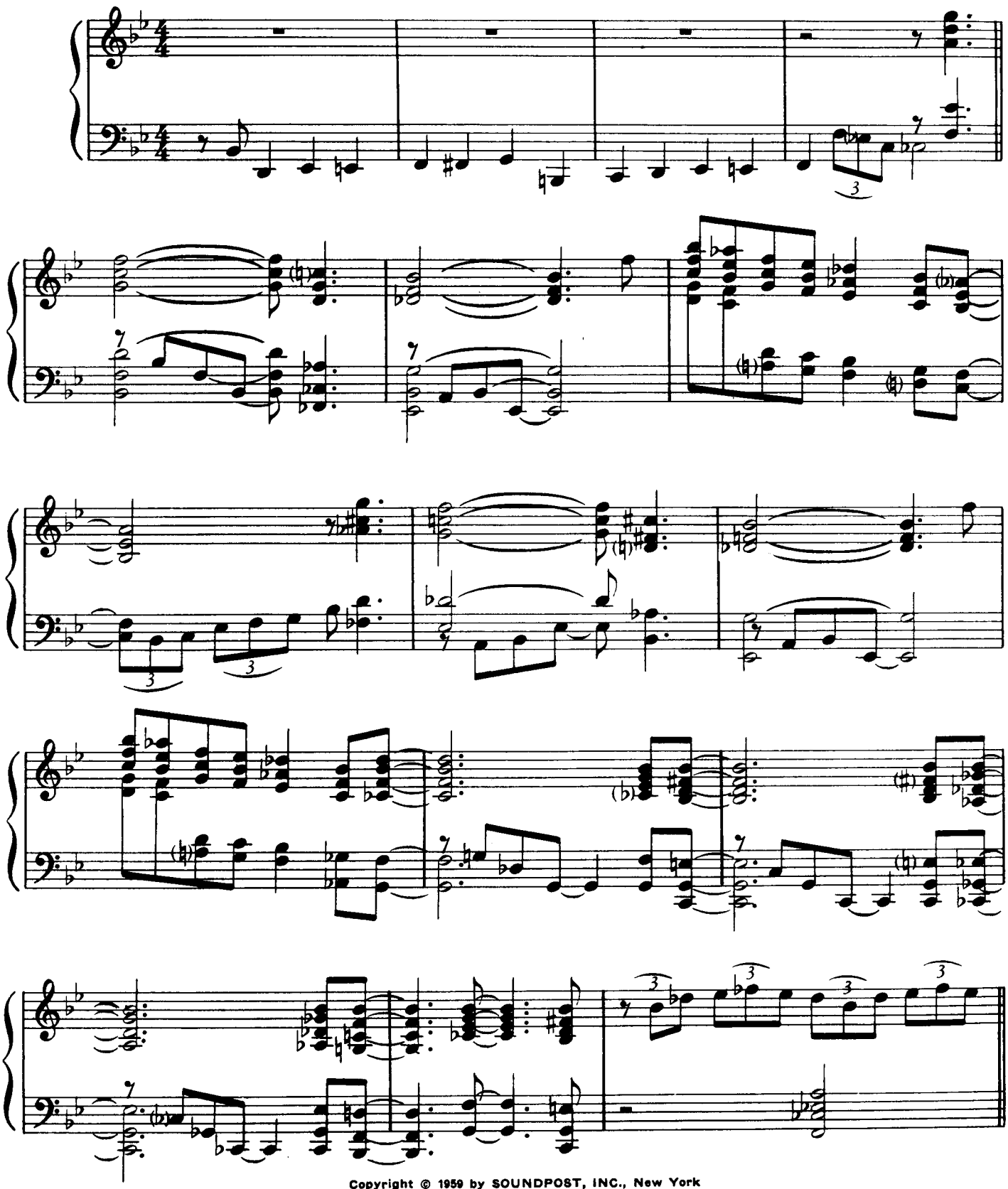
MIDNIGHT PIANO

BILLY TAYLOR



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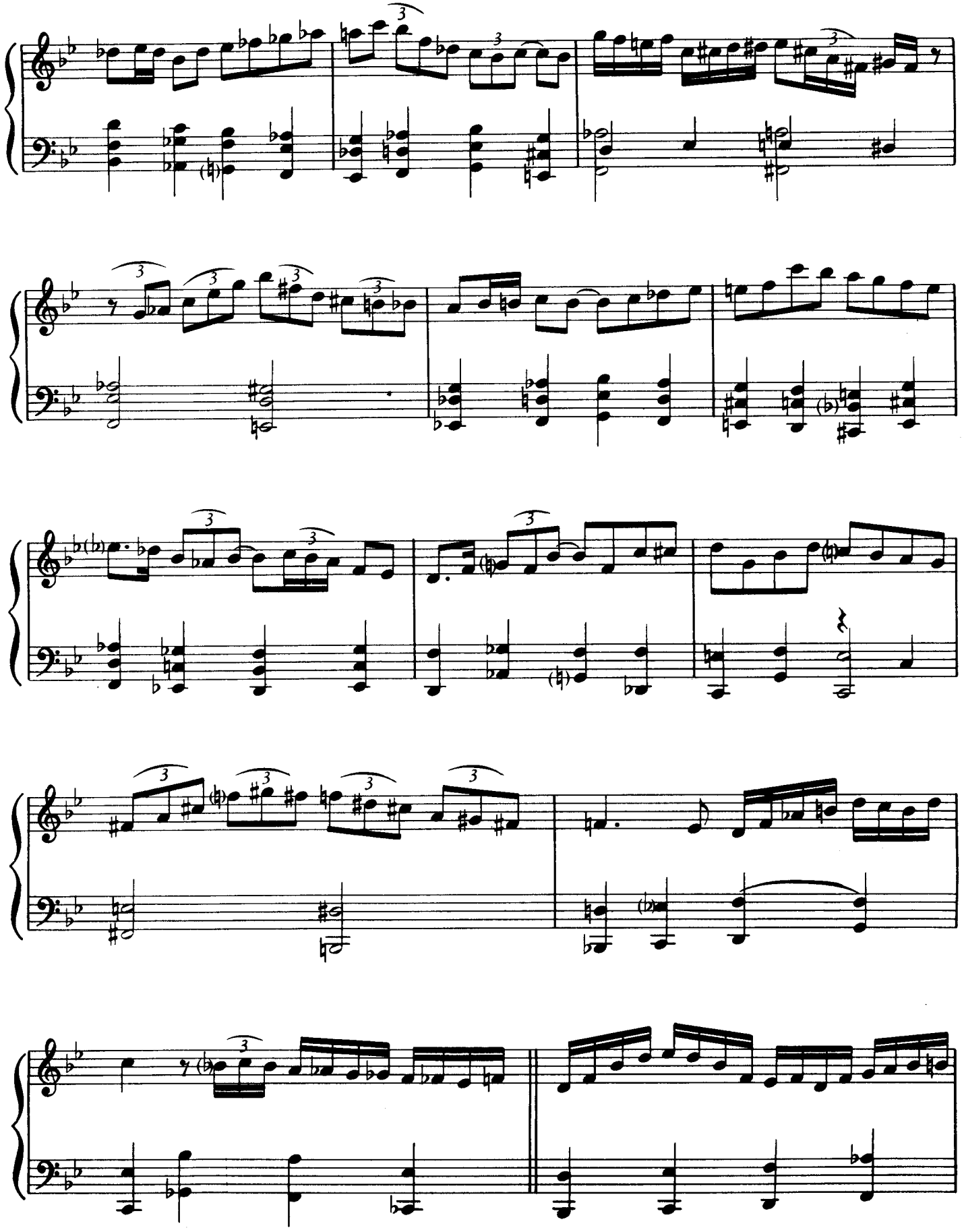
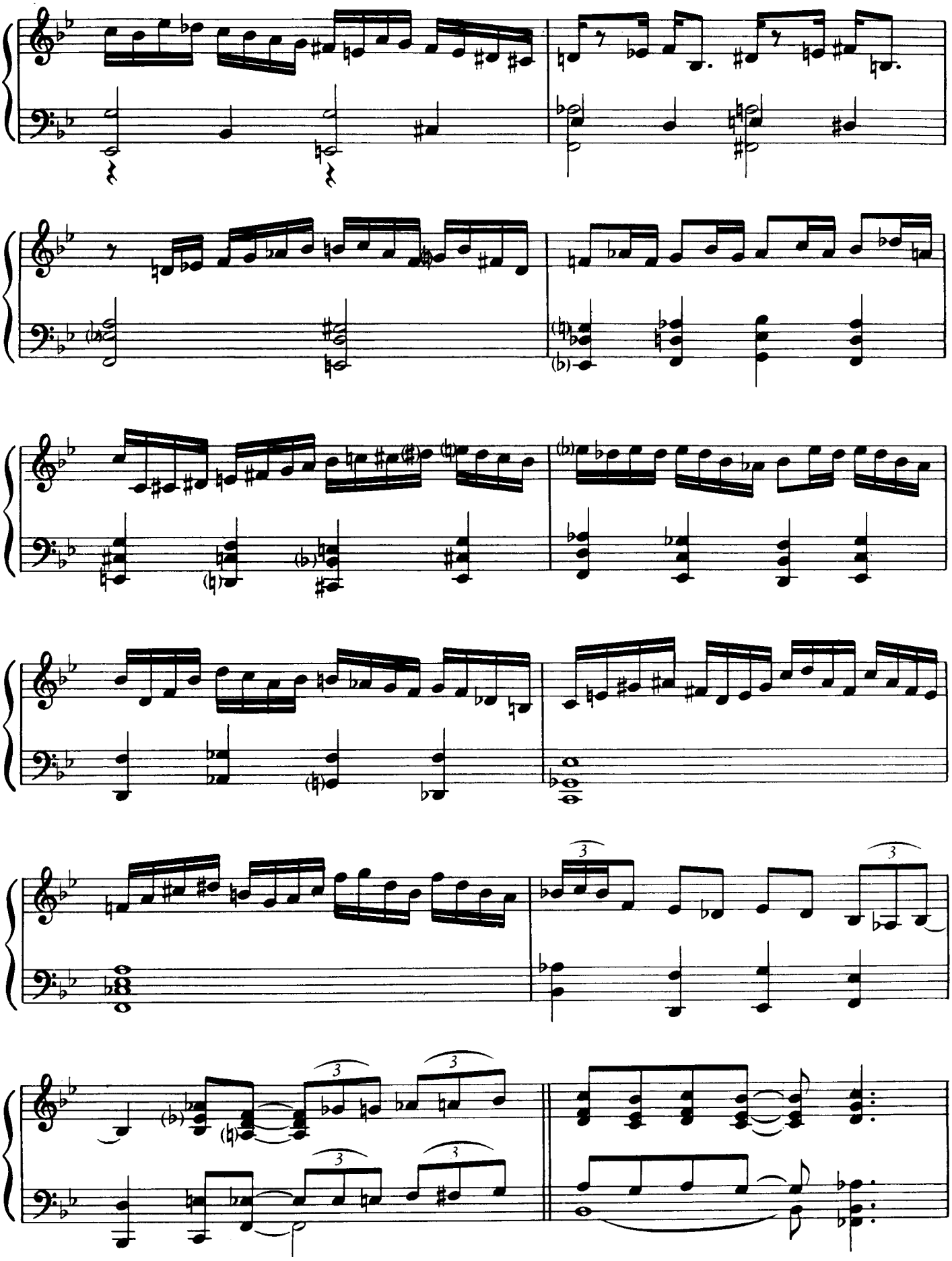
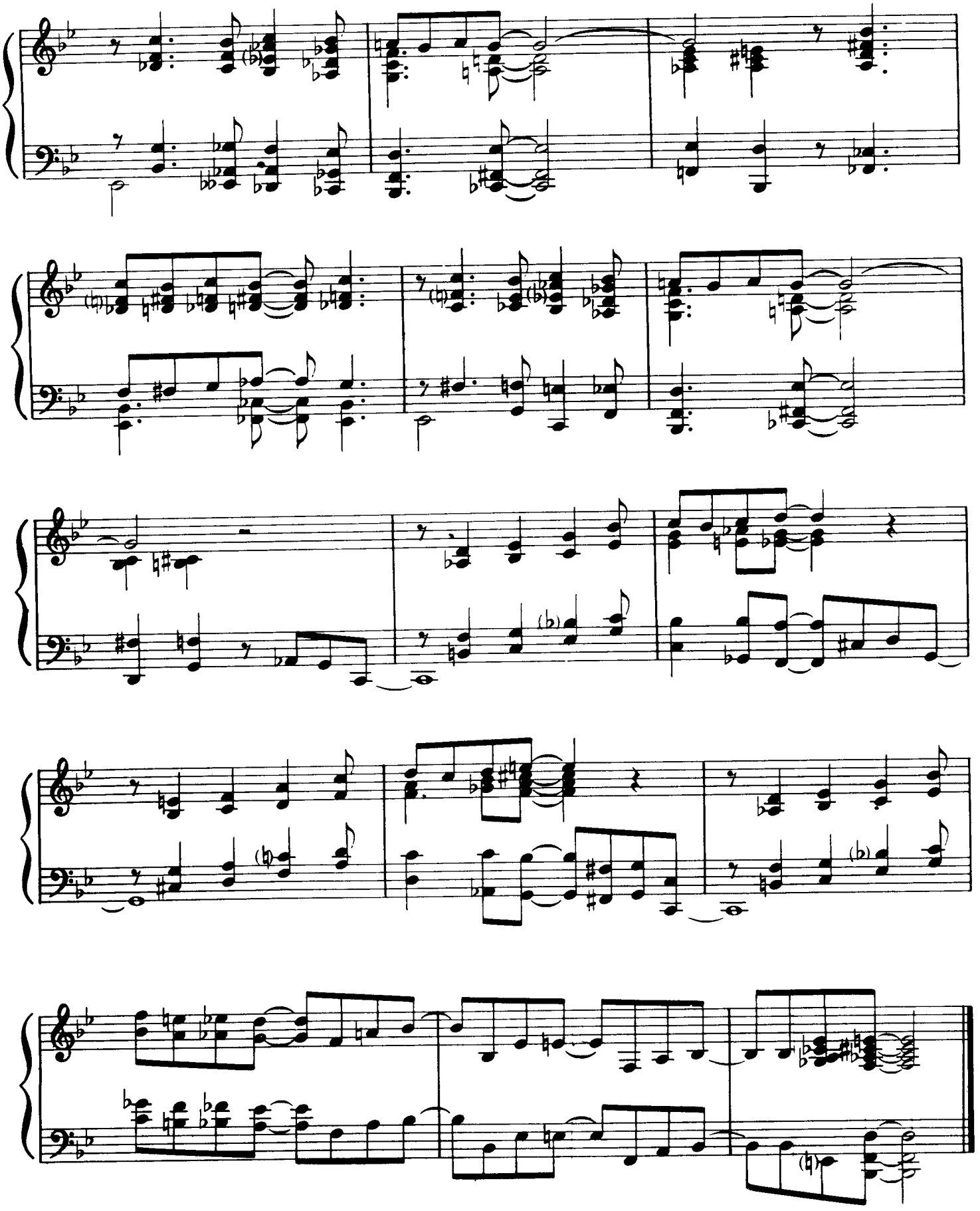


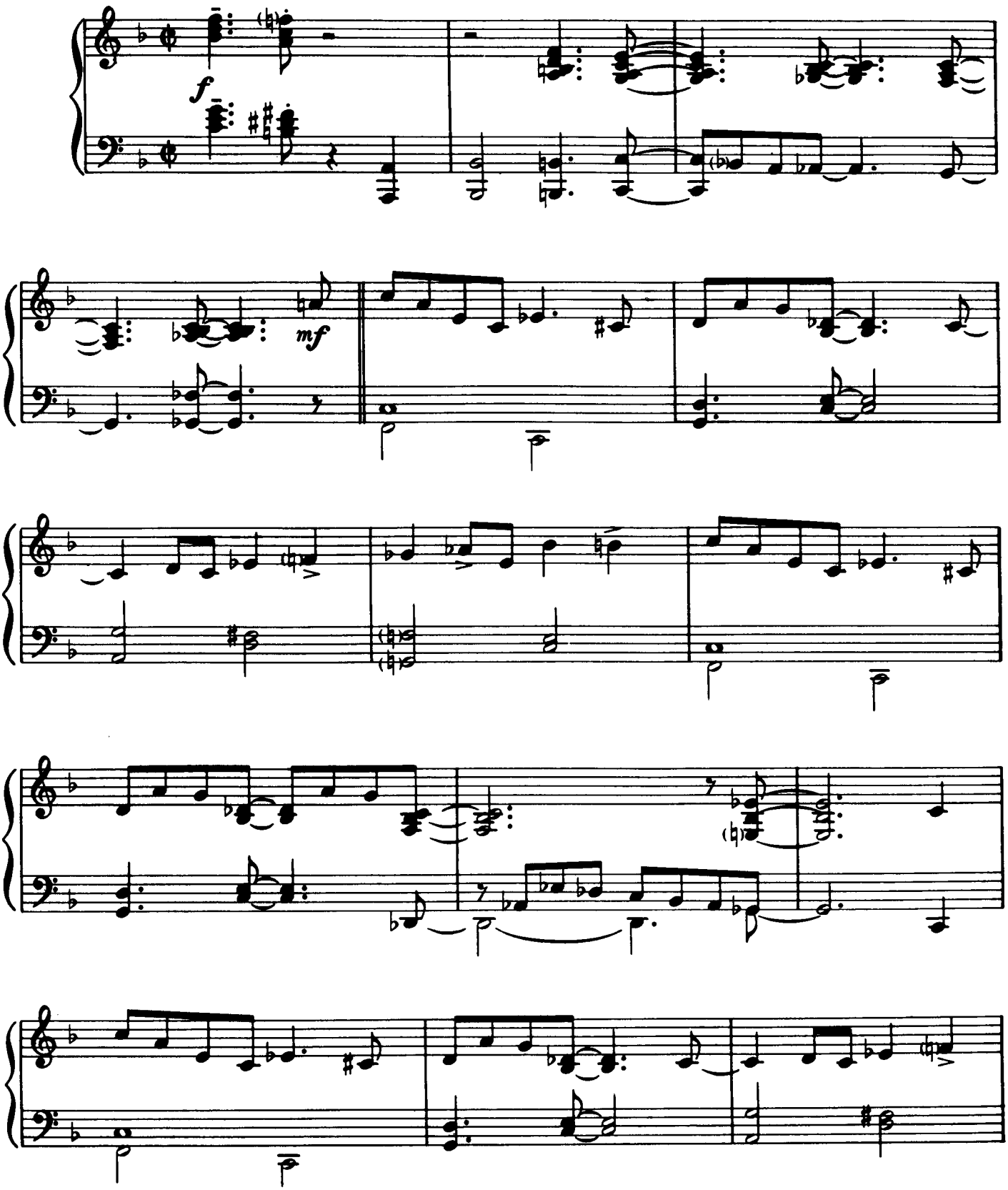




BIT OF BEDLAM

BILLY TAYLOR

Easy bounce



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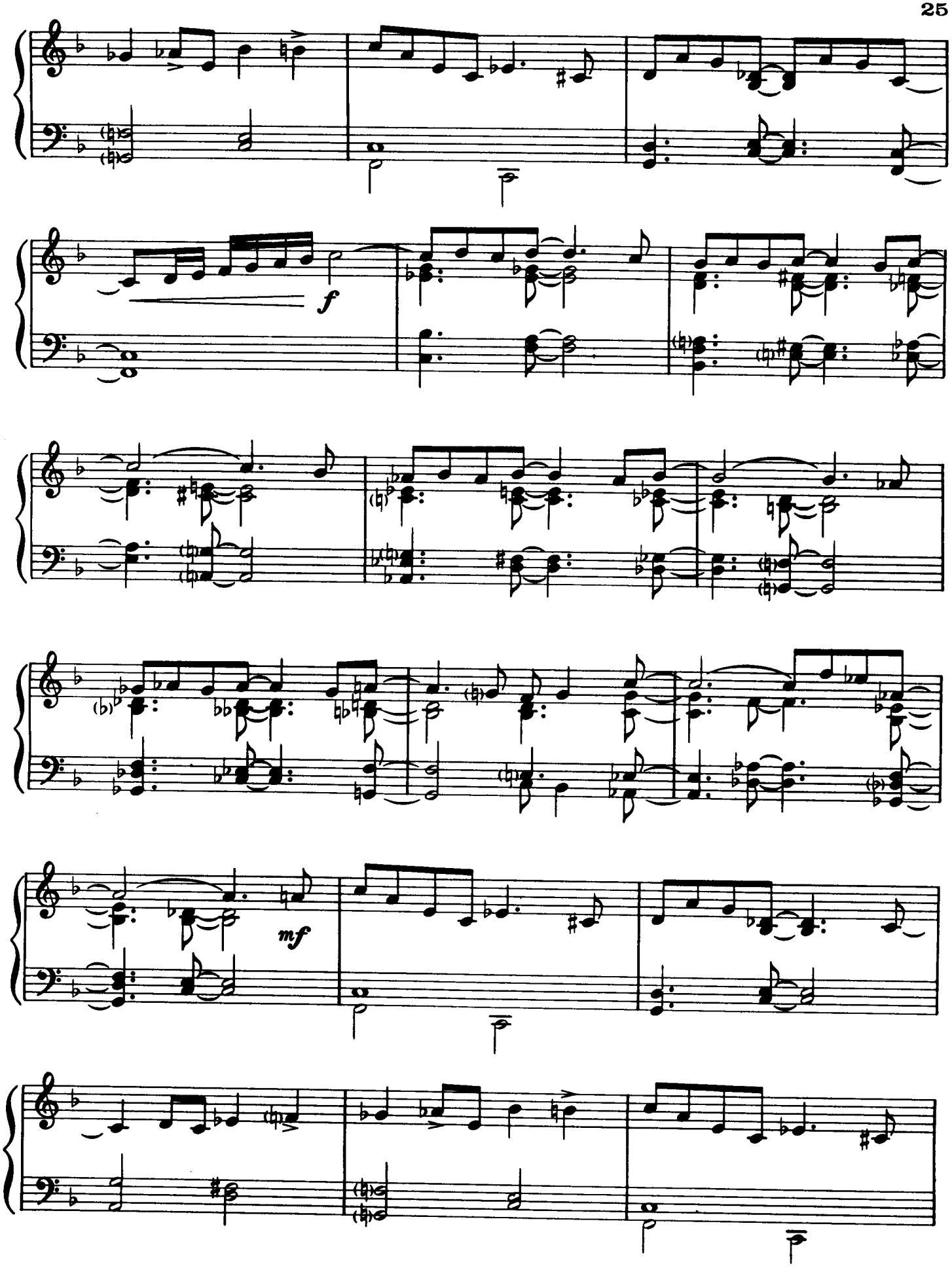
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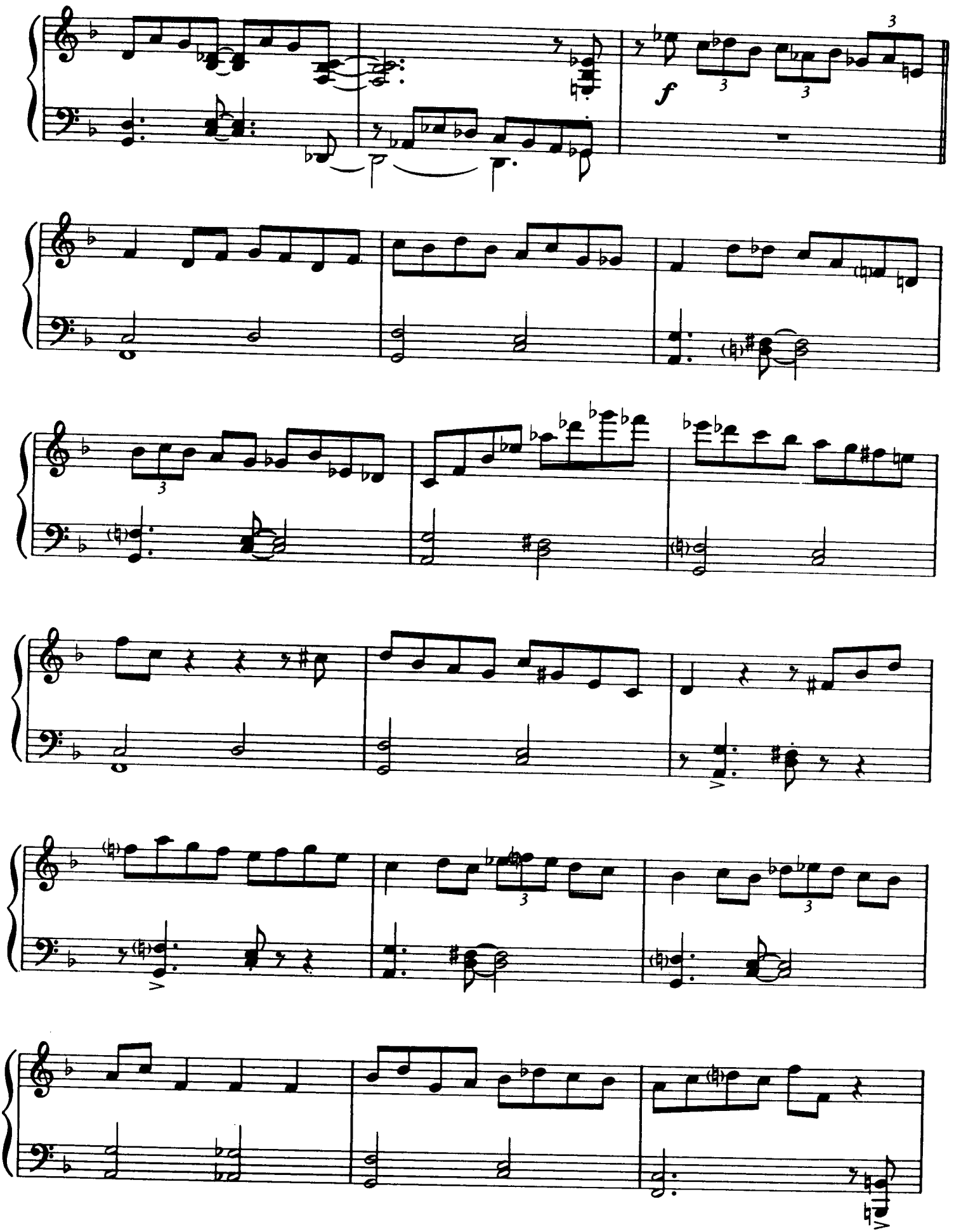
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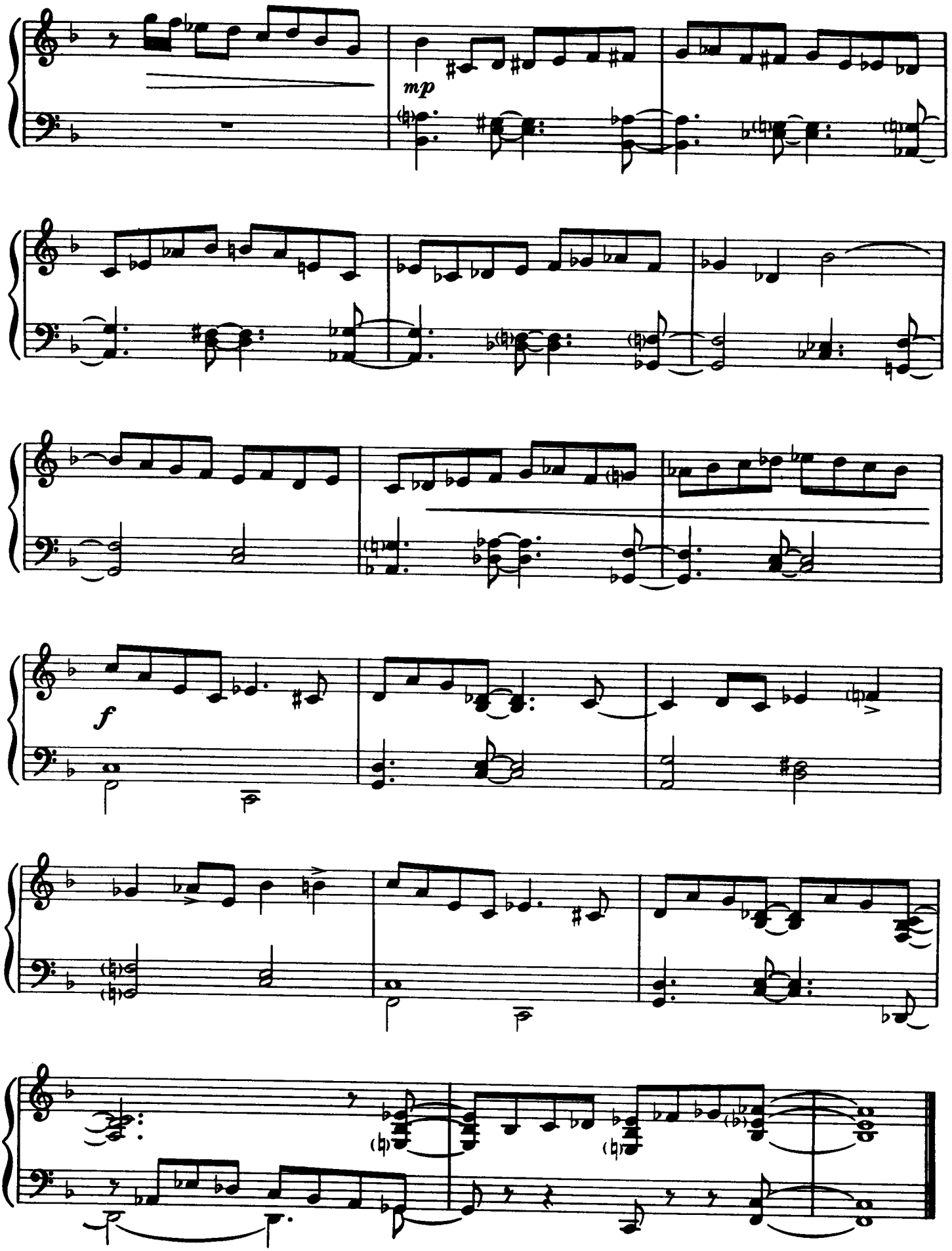
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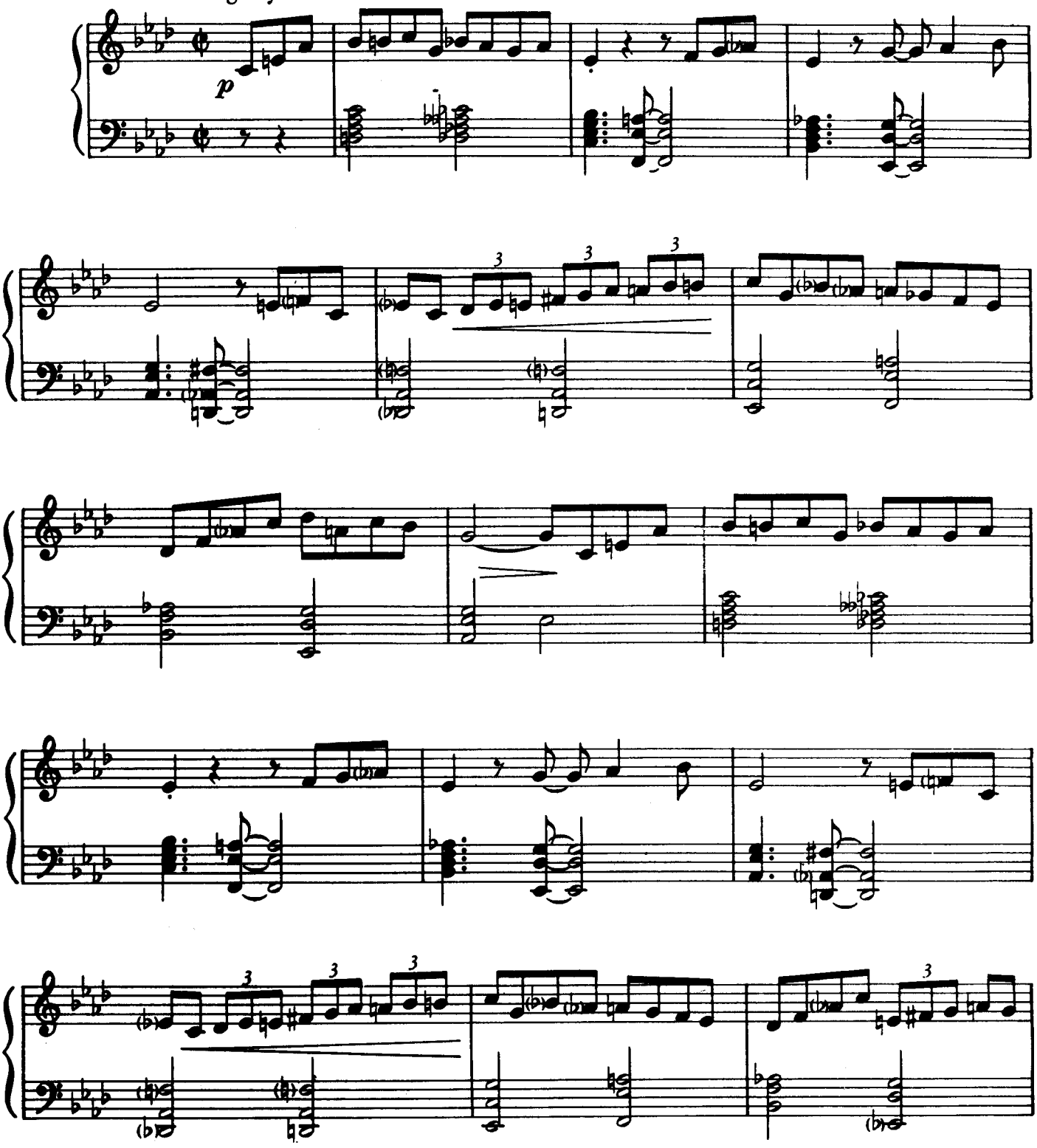
A LIVE ONE

BILLY TAYLOR

Brightly



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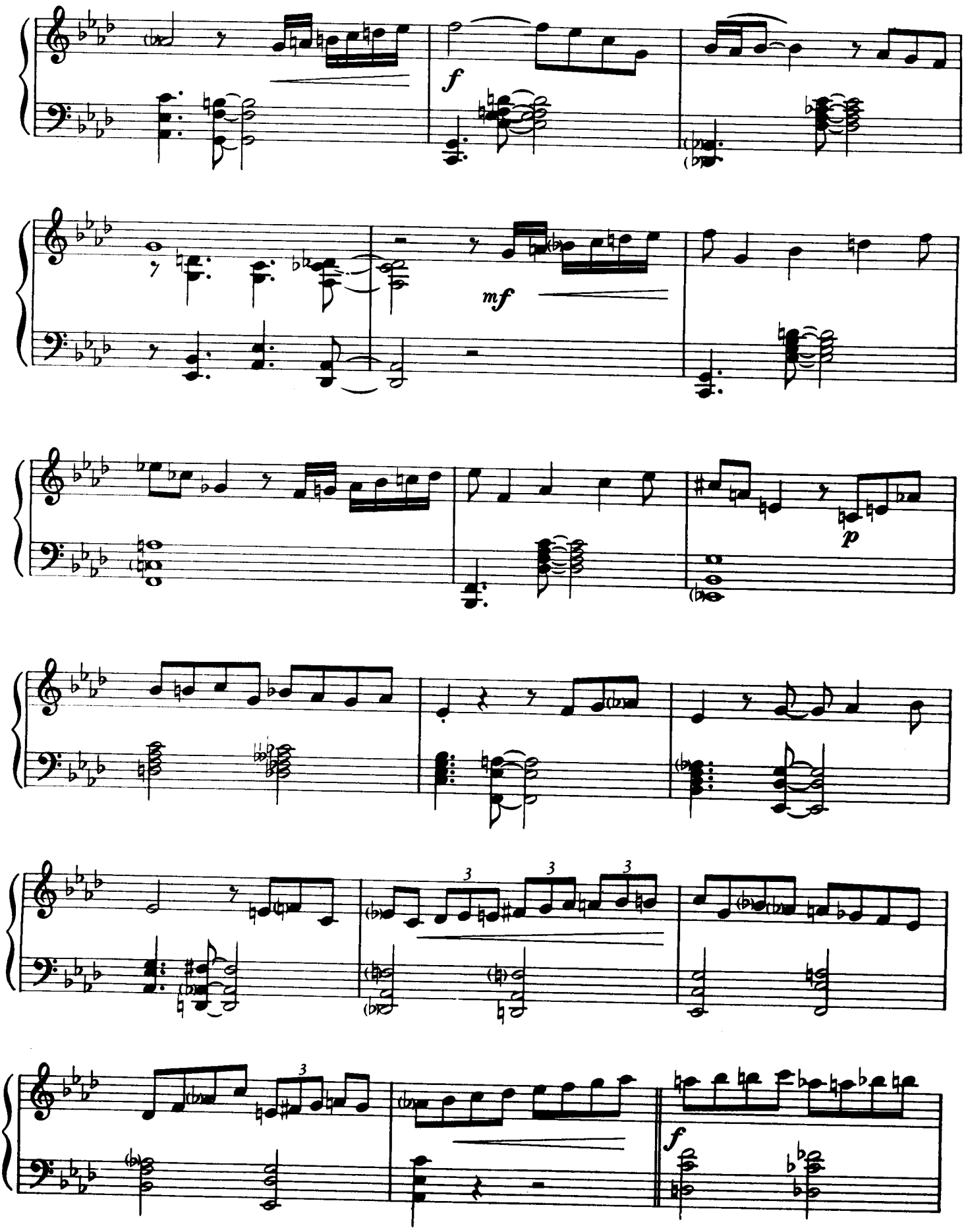
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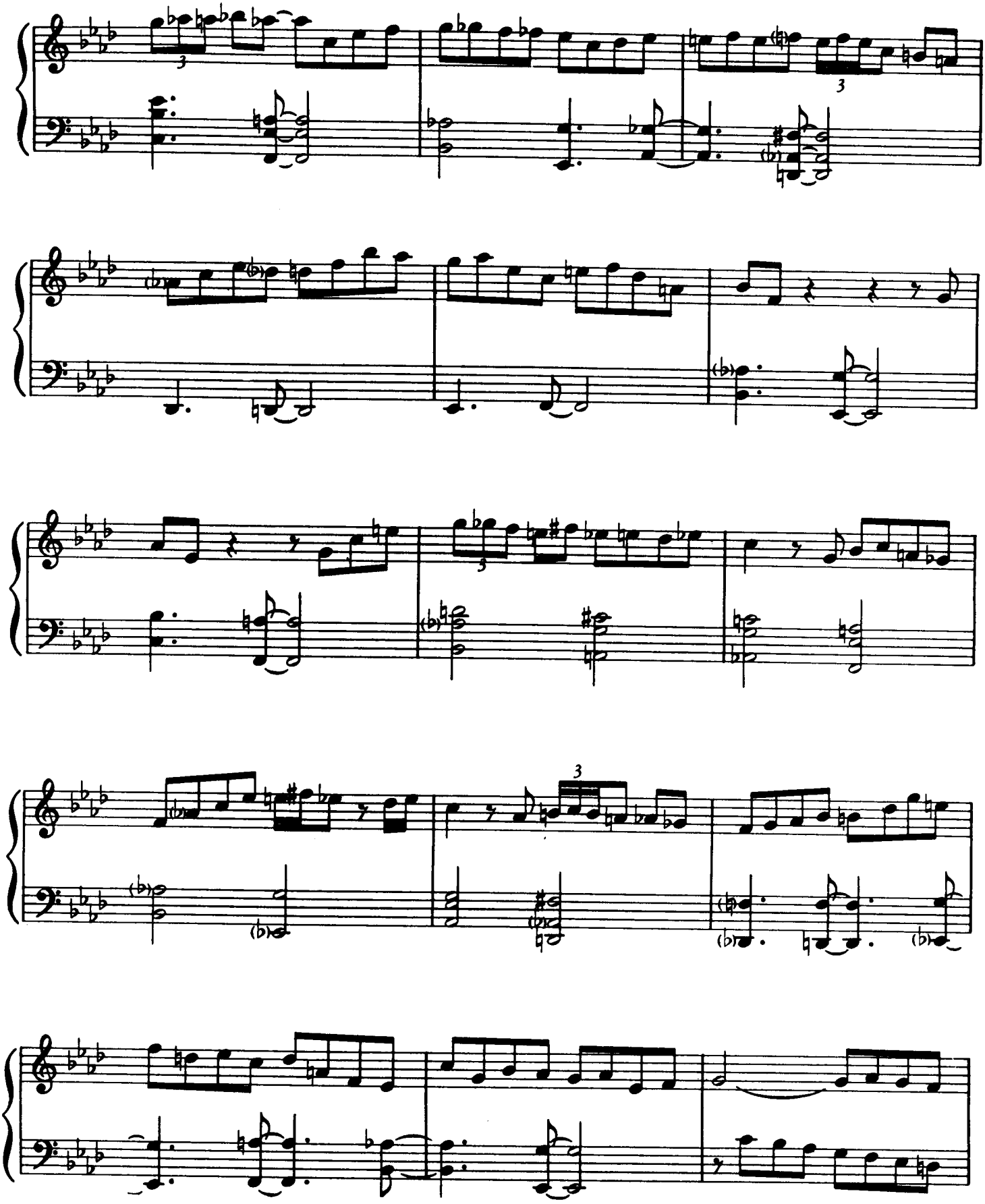

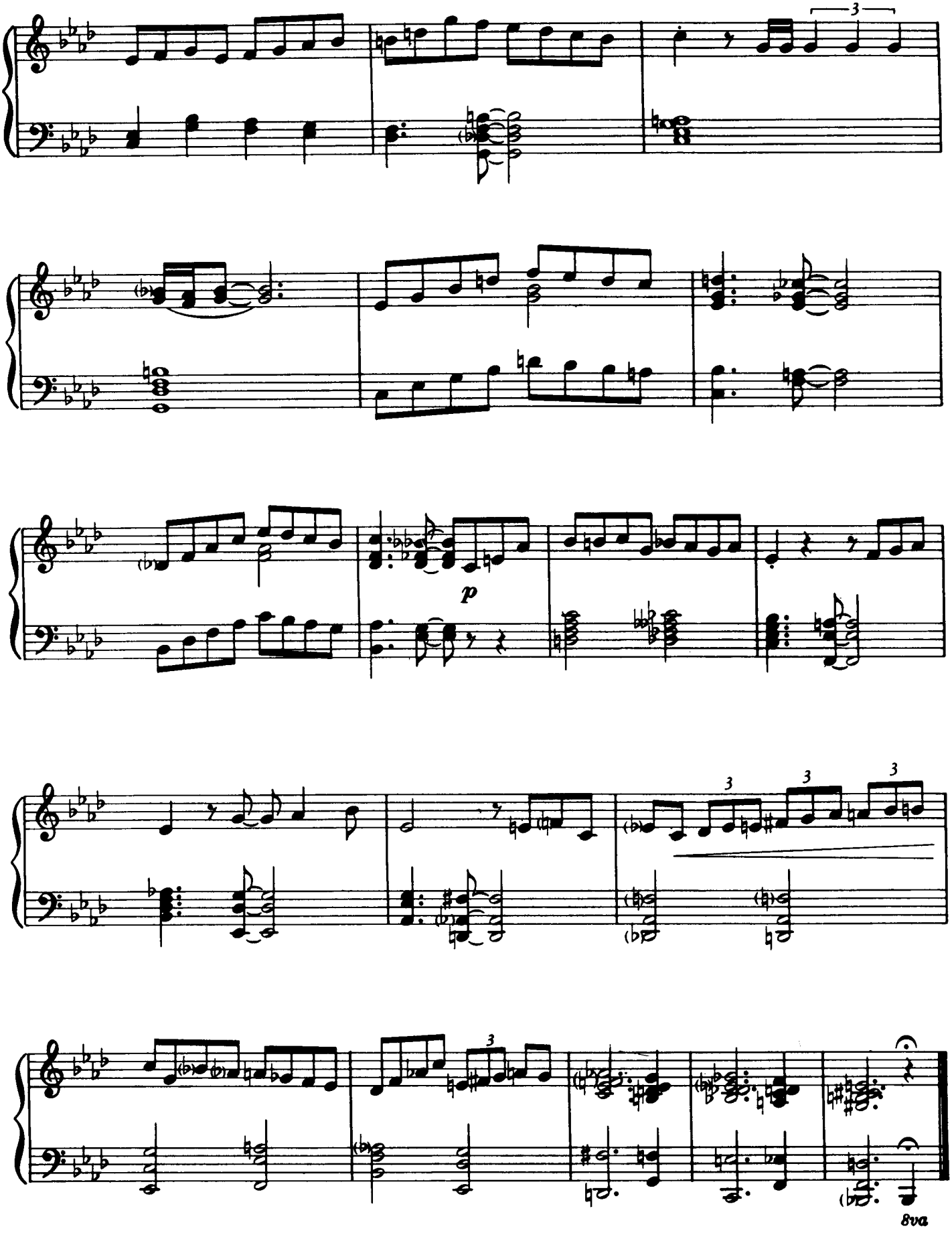
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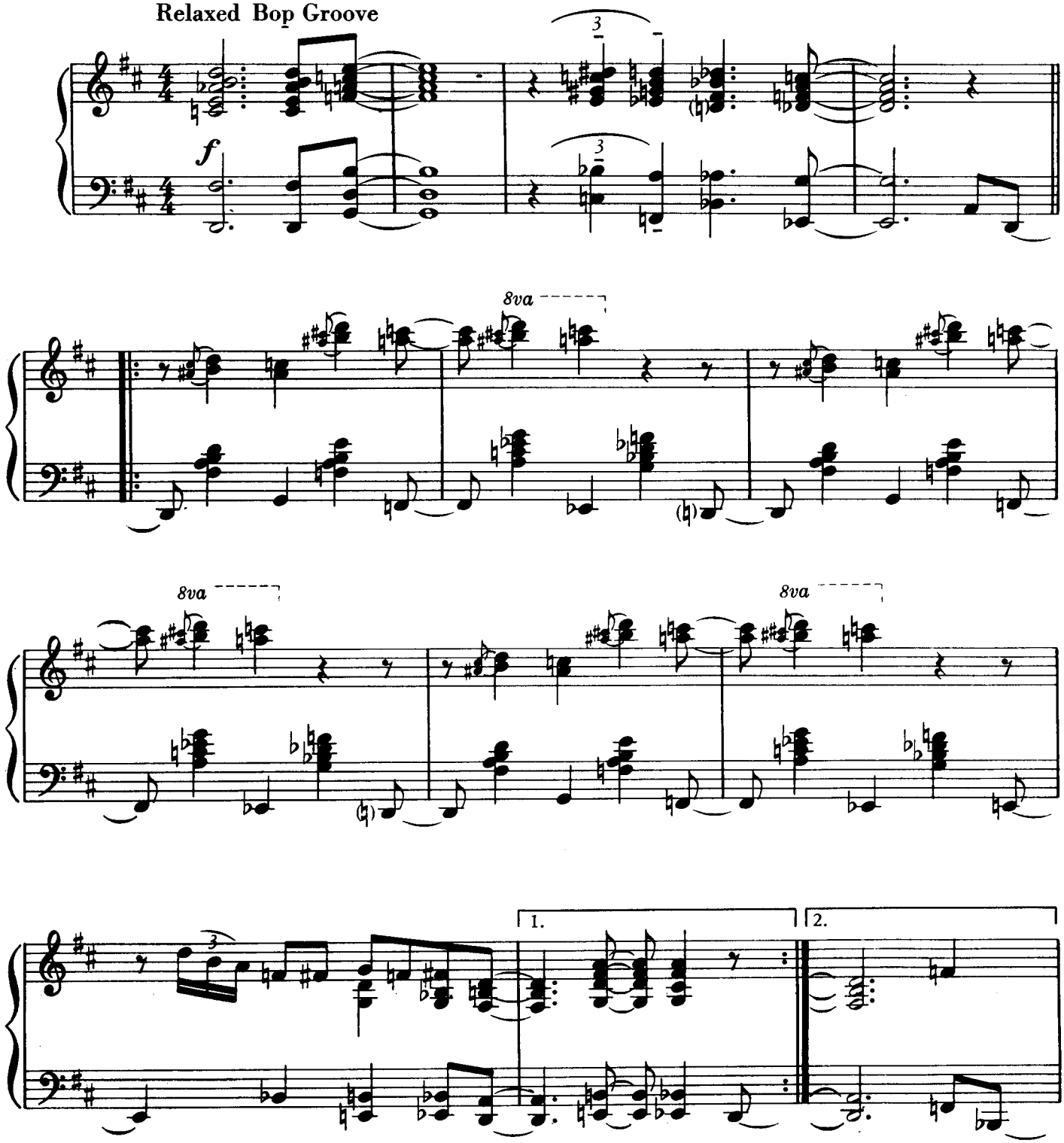
GOOD GROOVE

By BILLY TAYLOR



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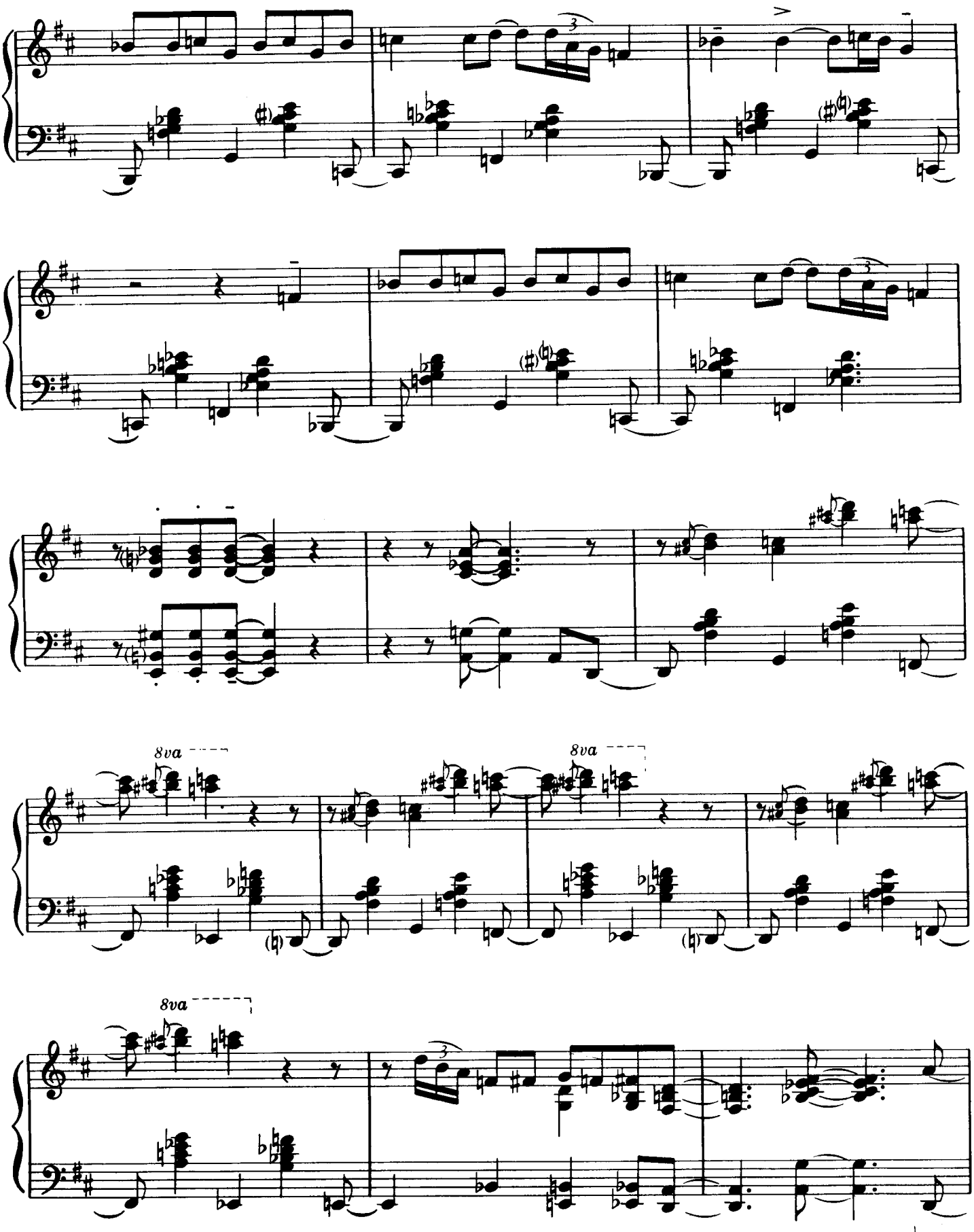
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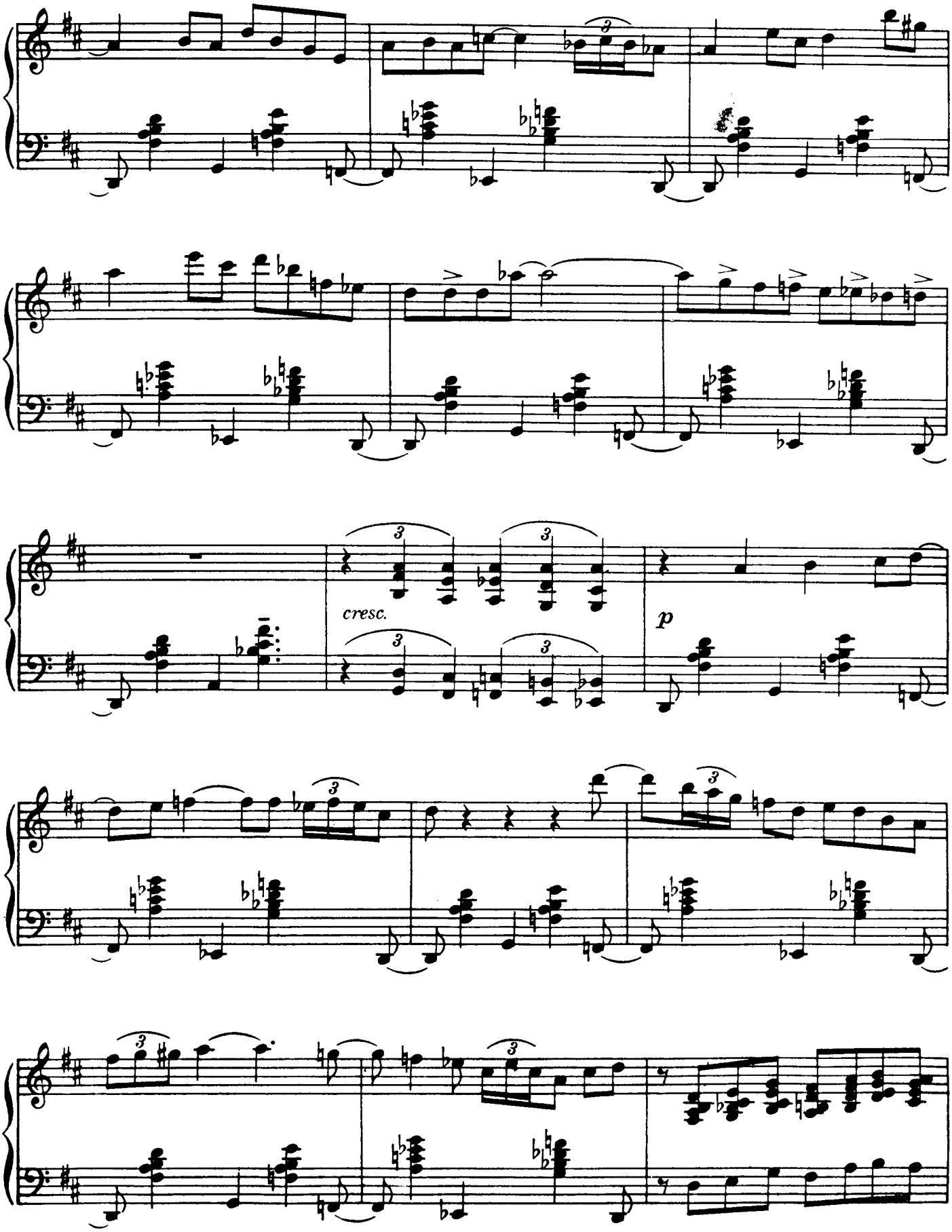
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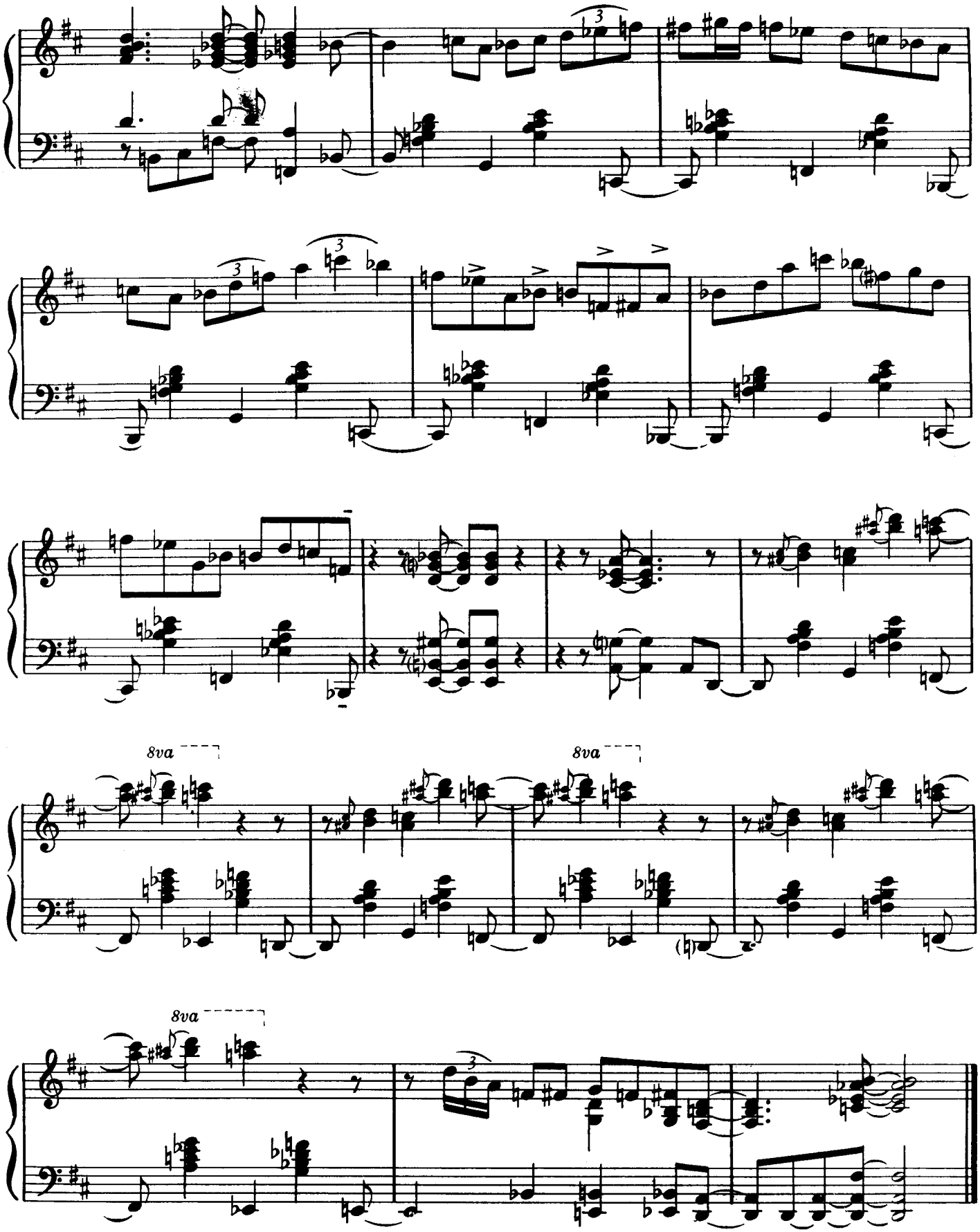
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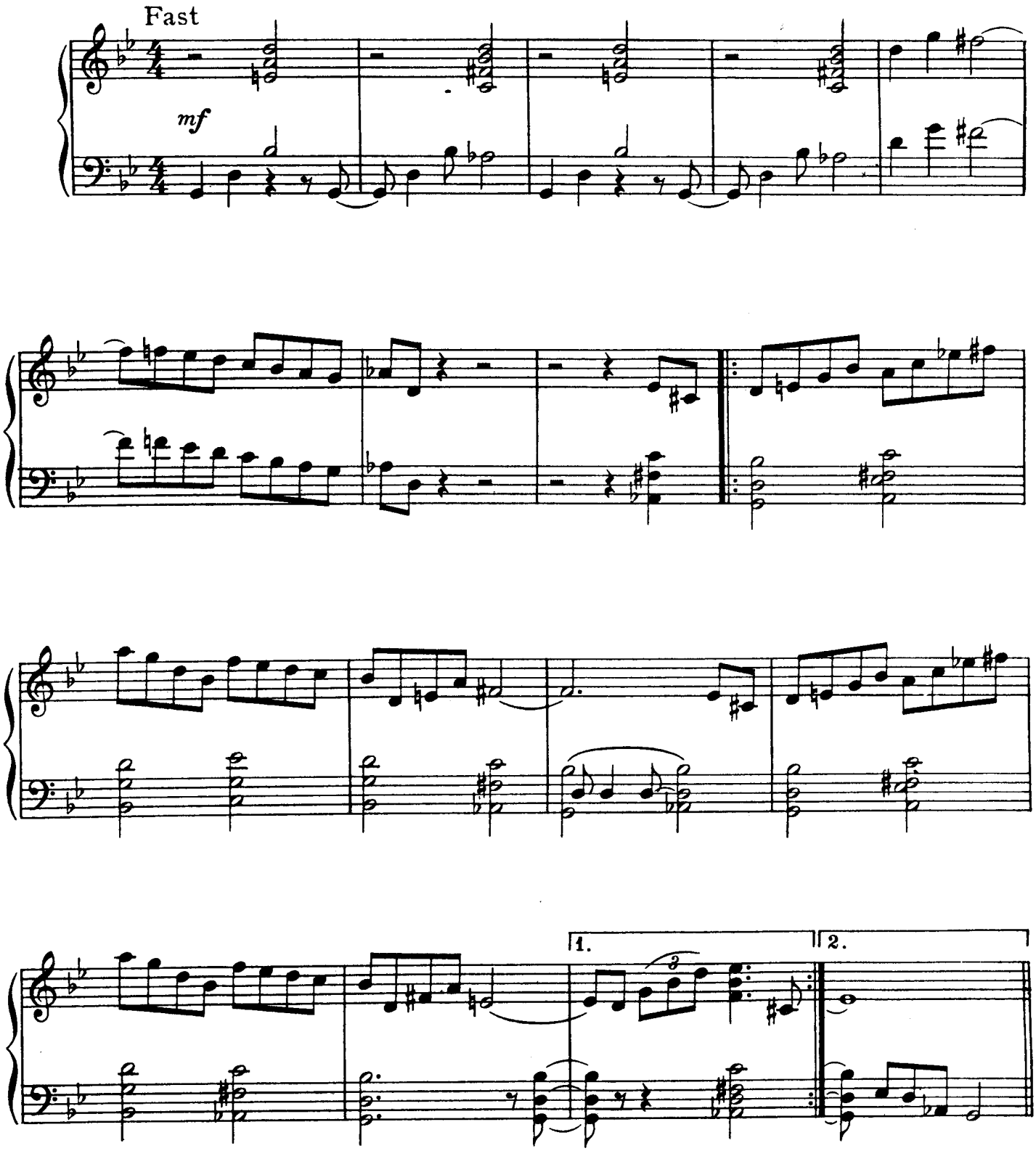
B. T's - D. T's

By BILLY TAYLOR



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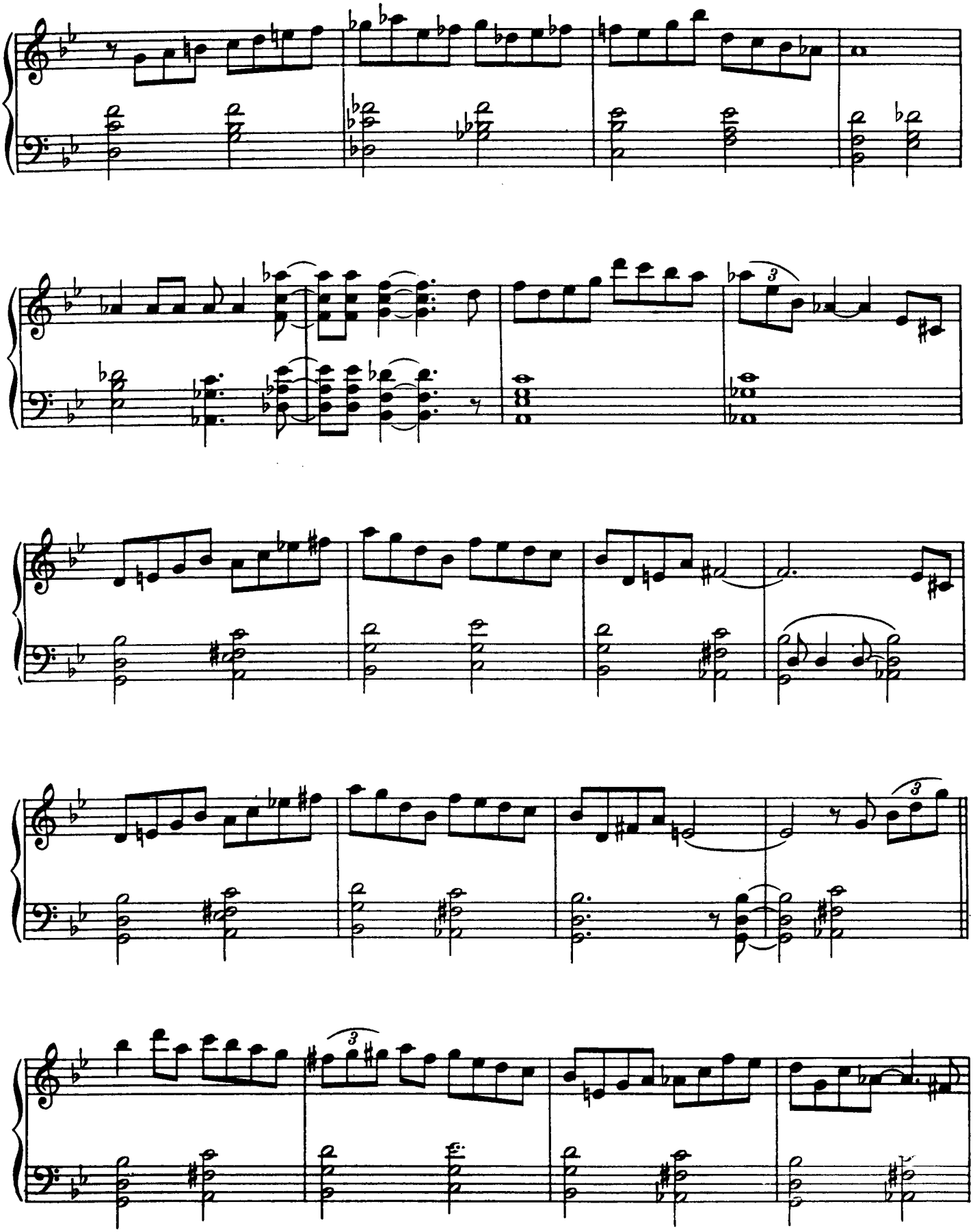
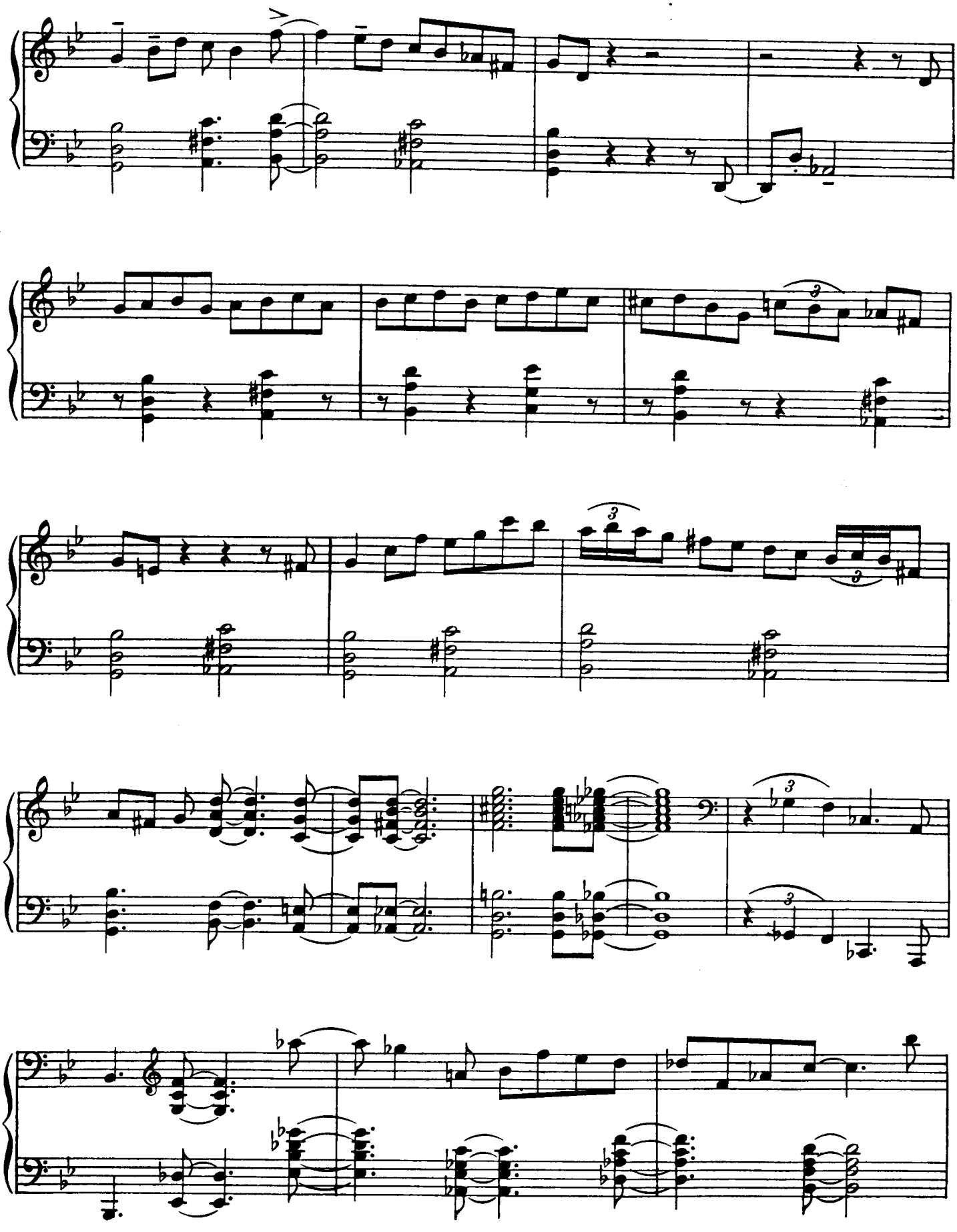
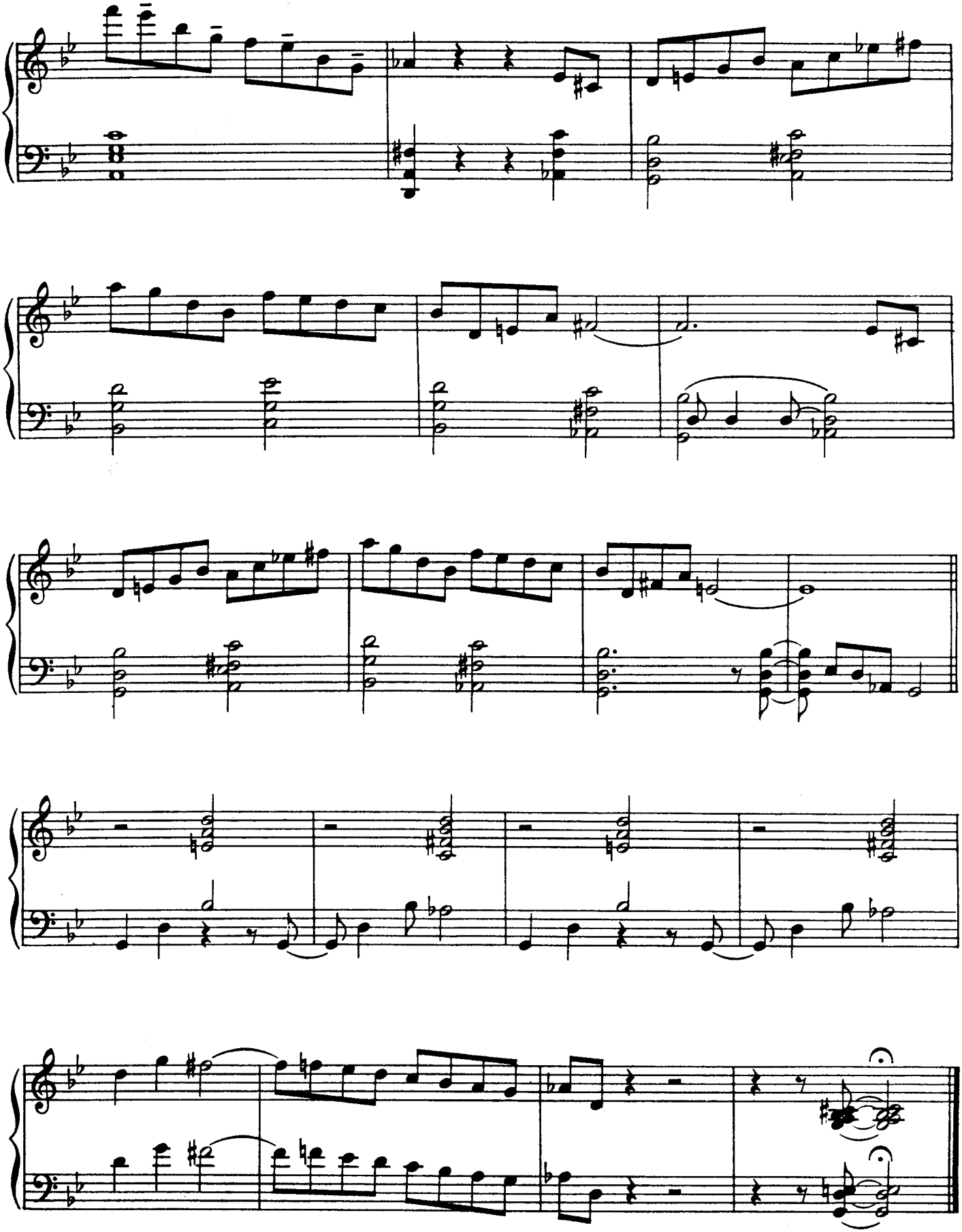


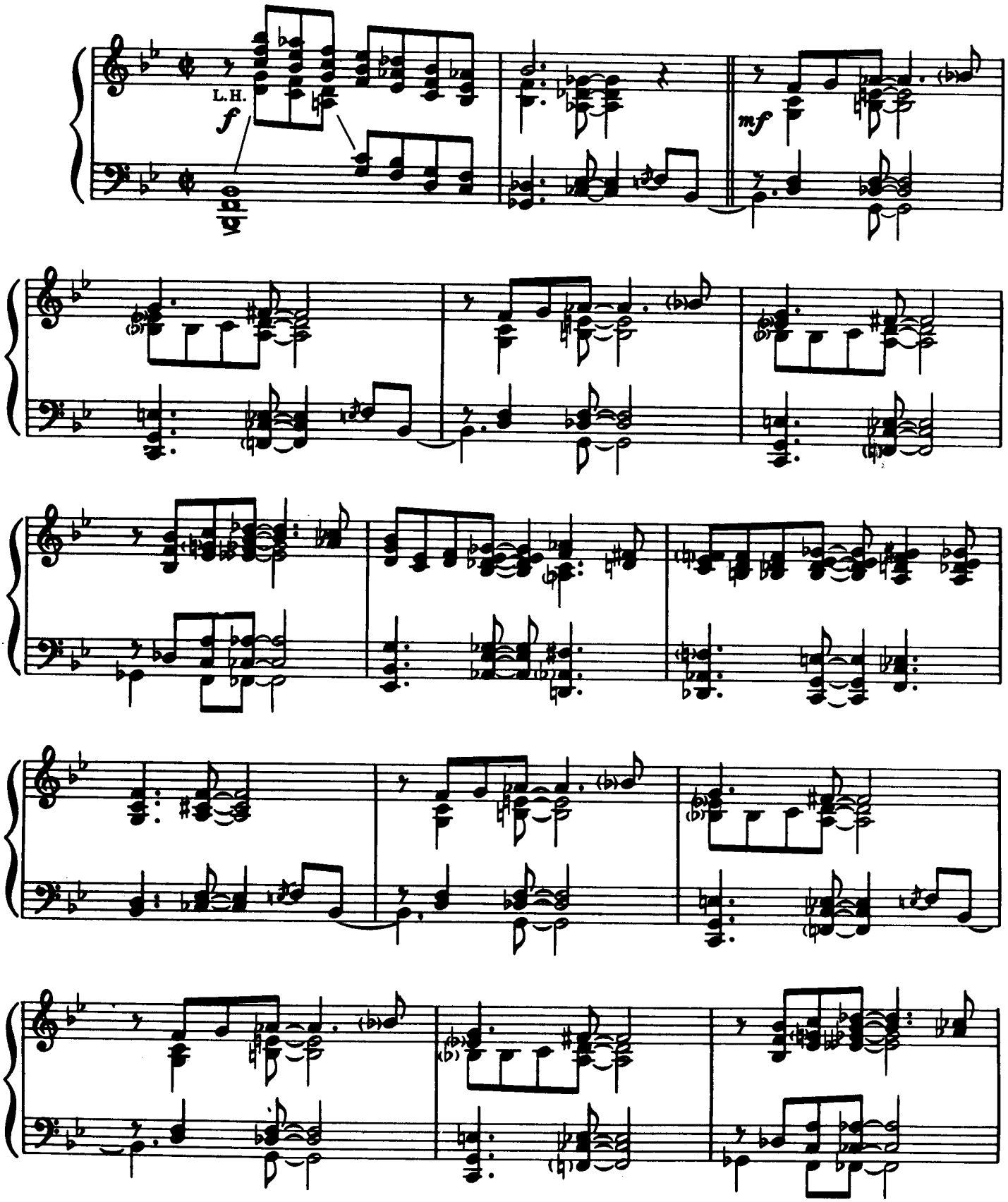




COOL AND CARESSING

Slow and moody

BILLY TAYLOR



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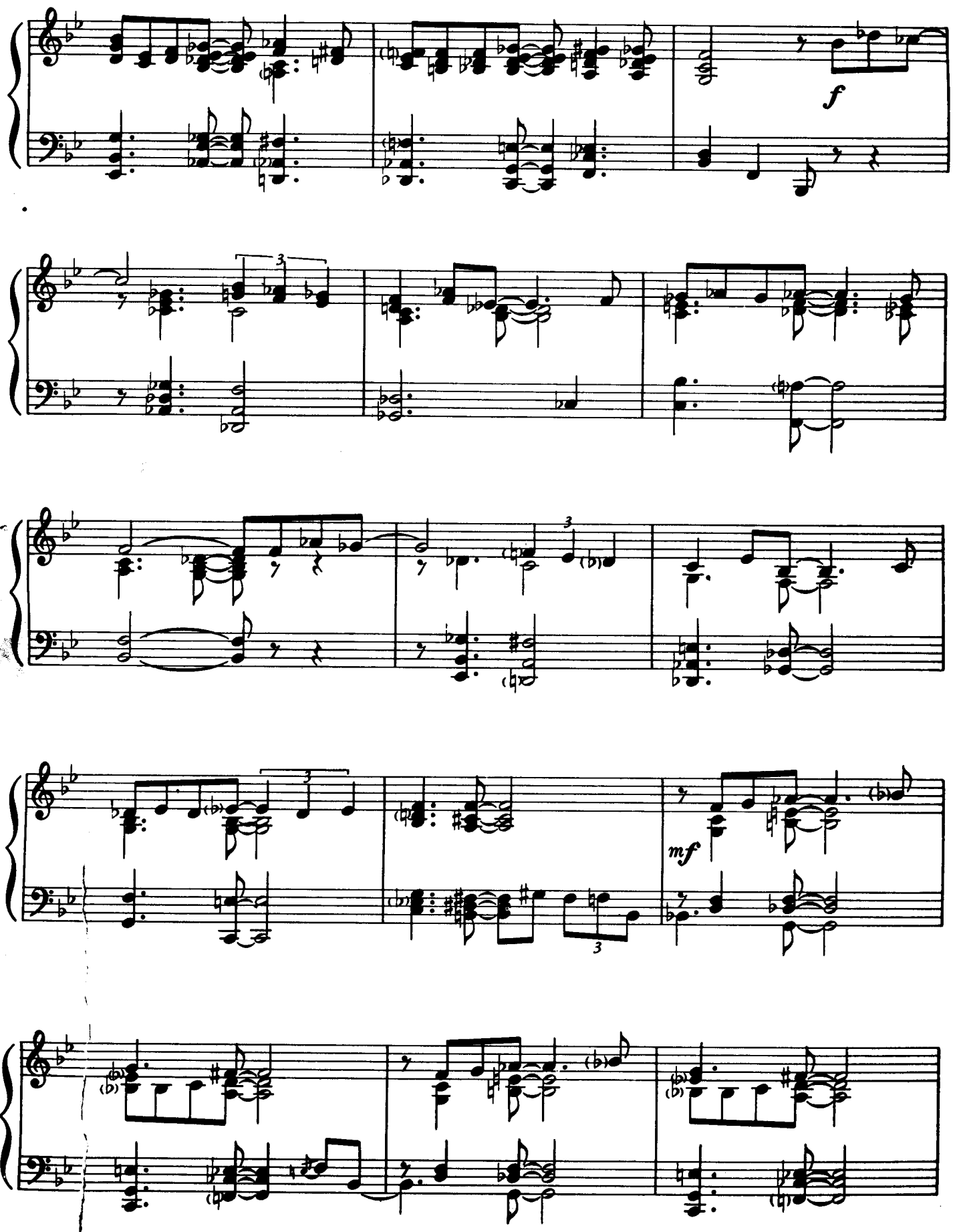
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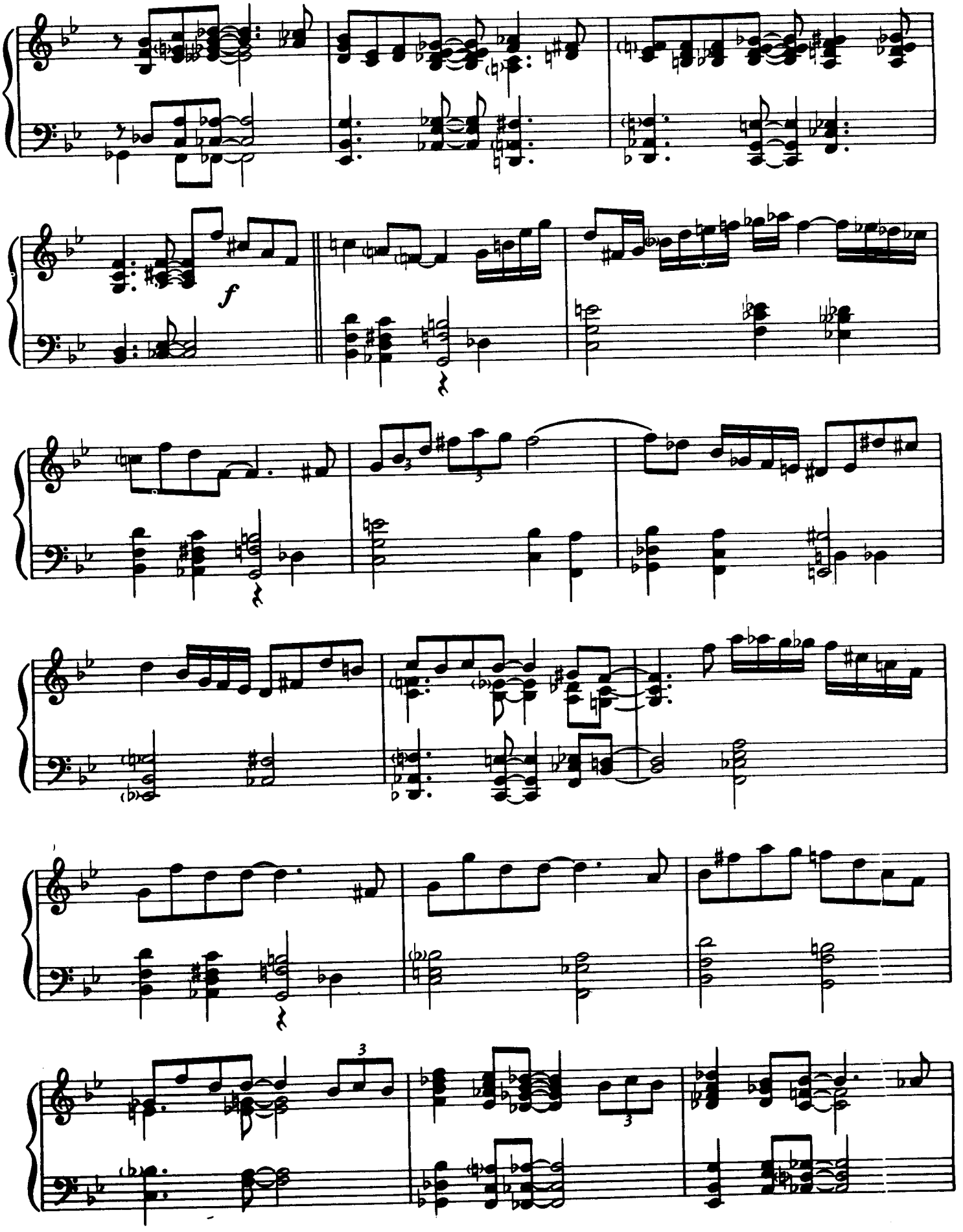
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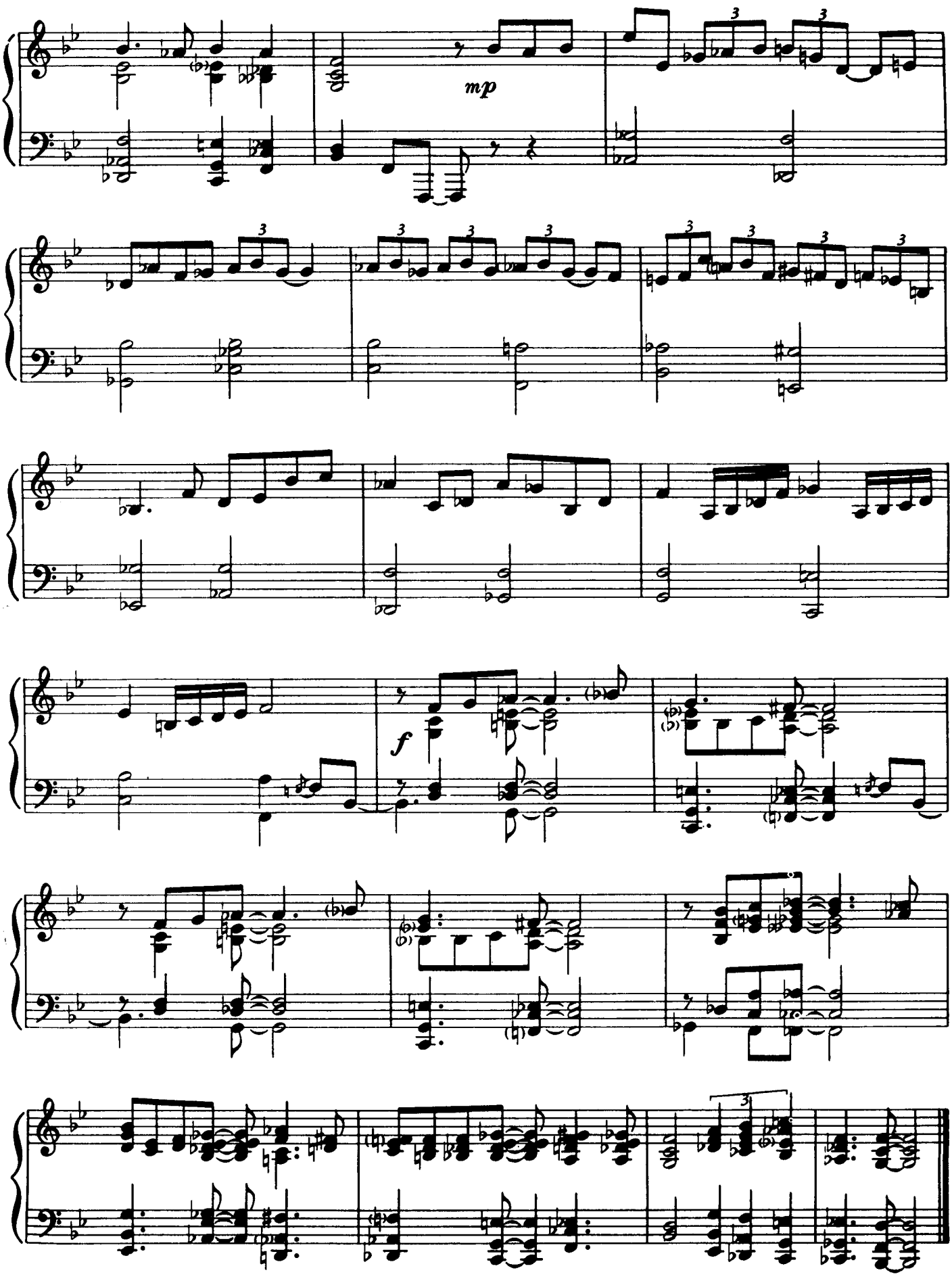
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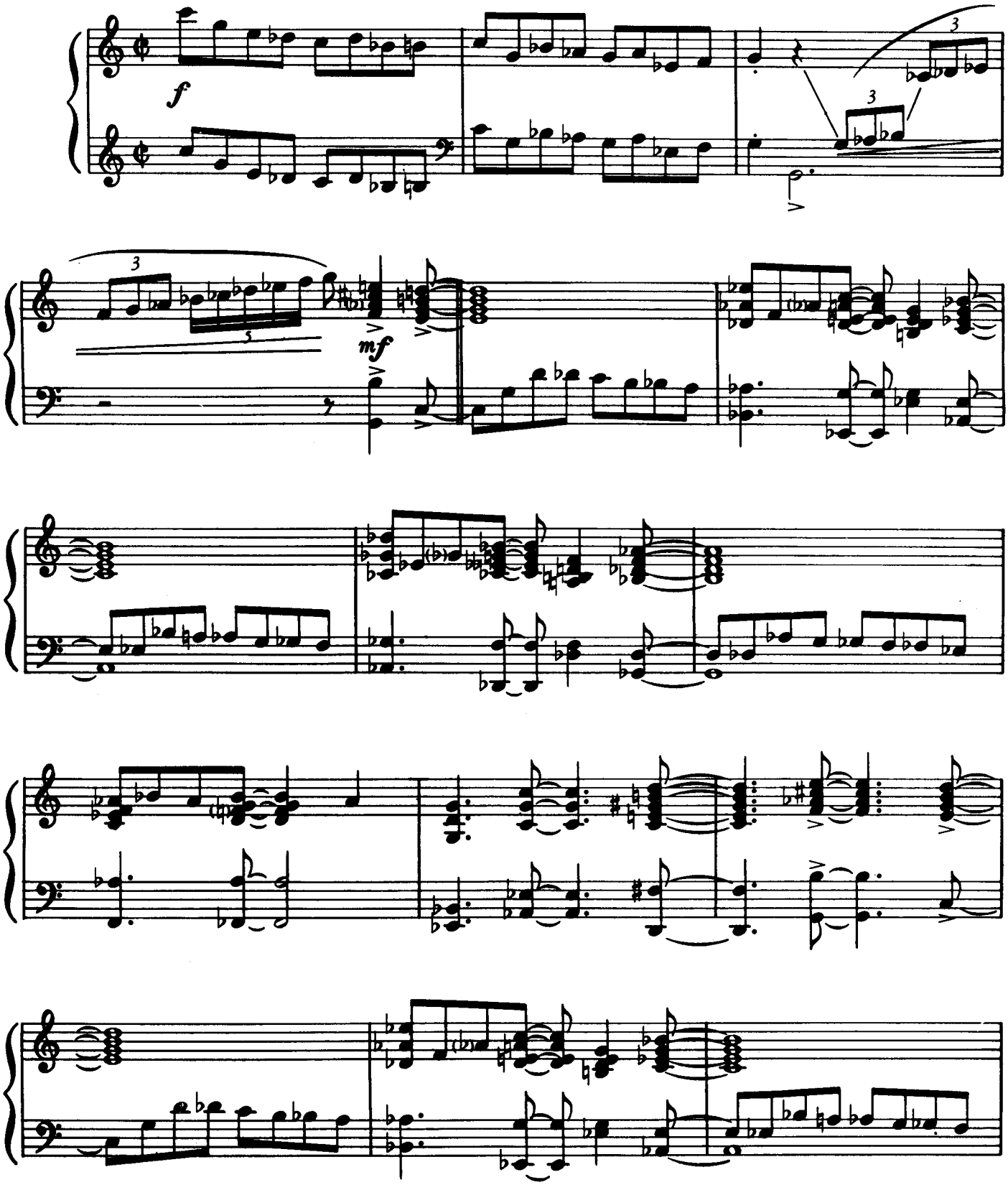
MUFFLE - GUFFLE

BILLY TAYLOR

Moderato



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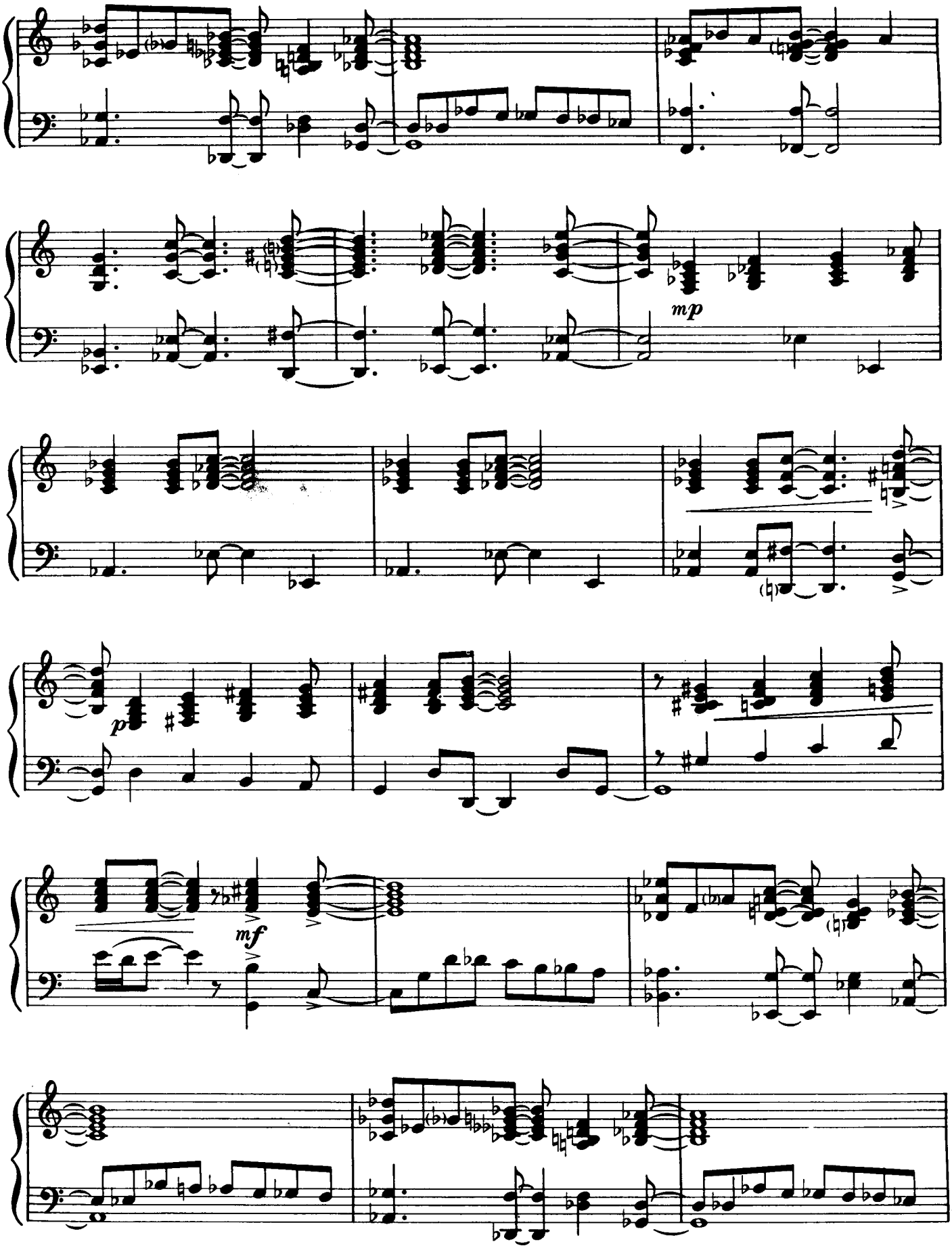
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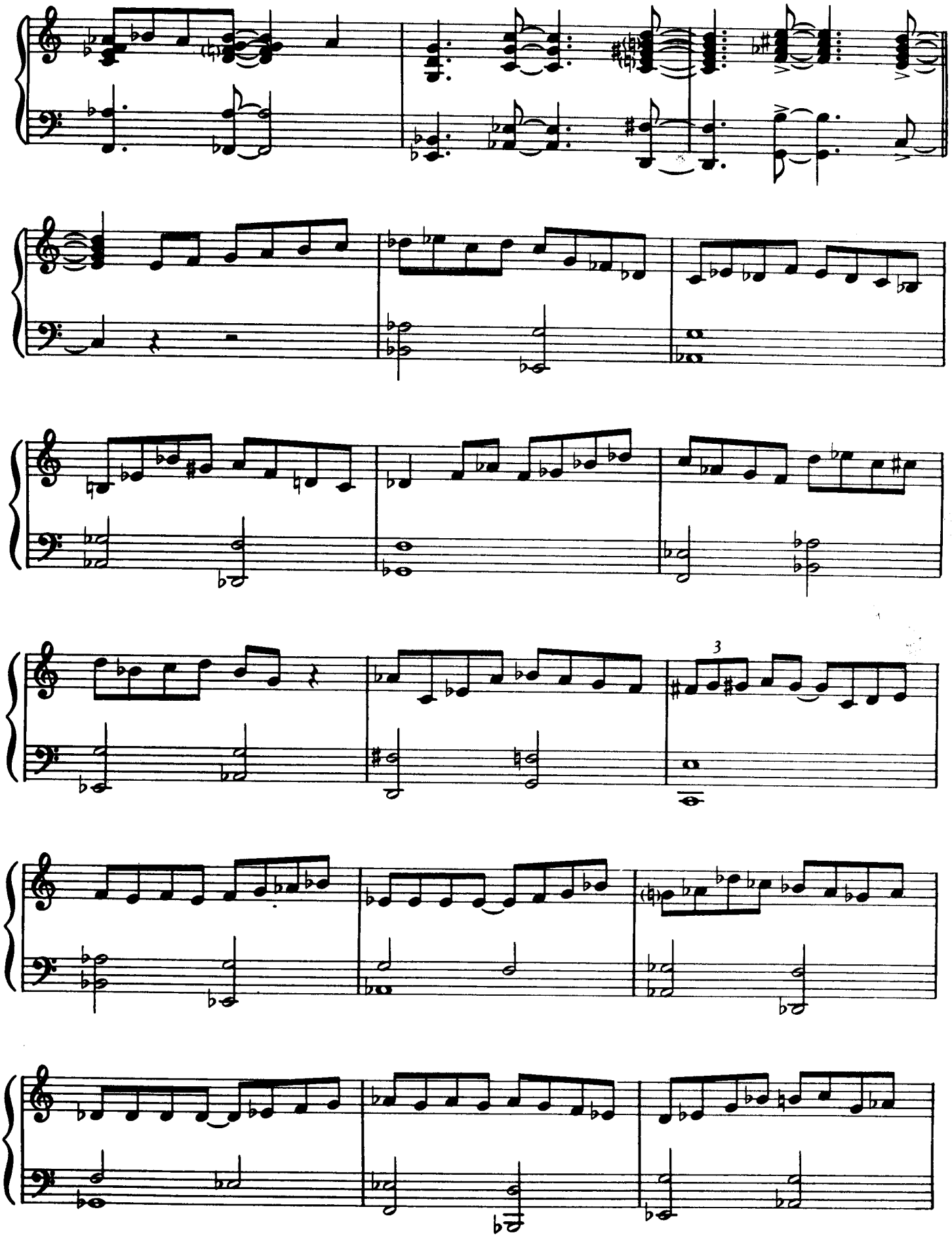
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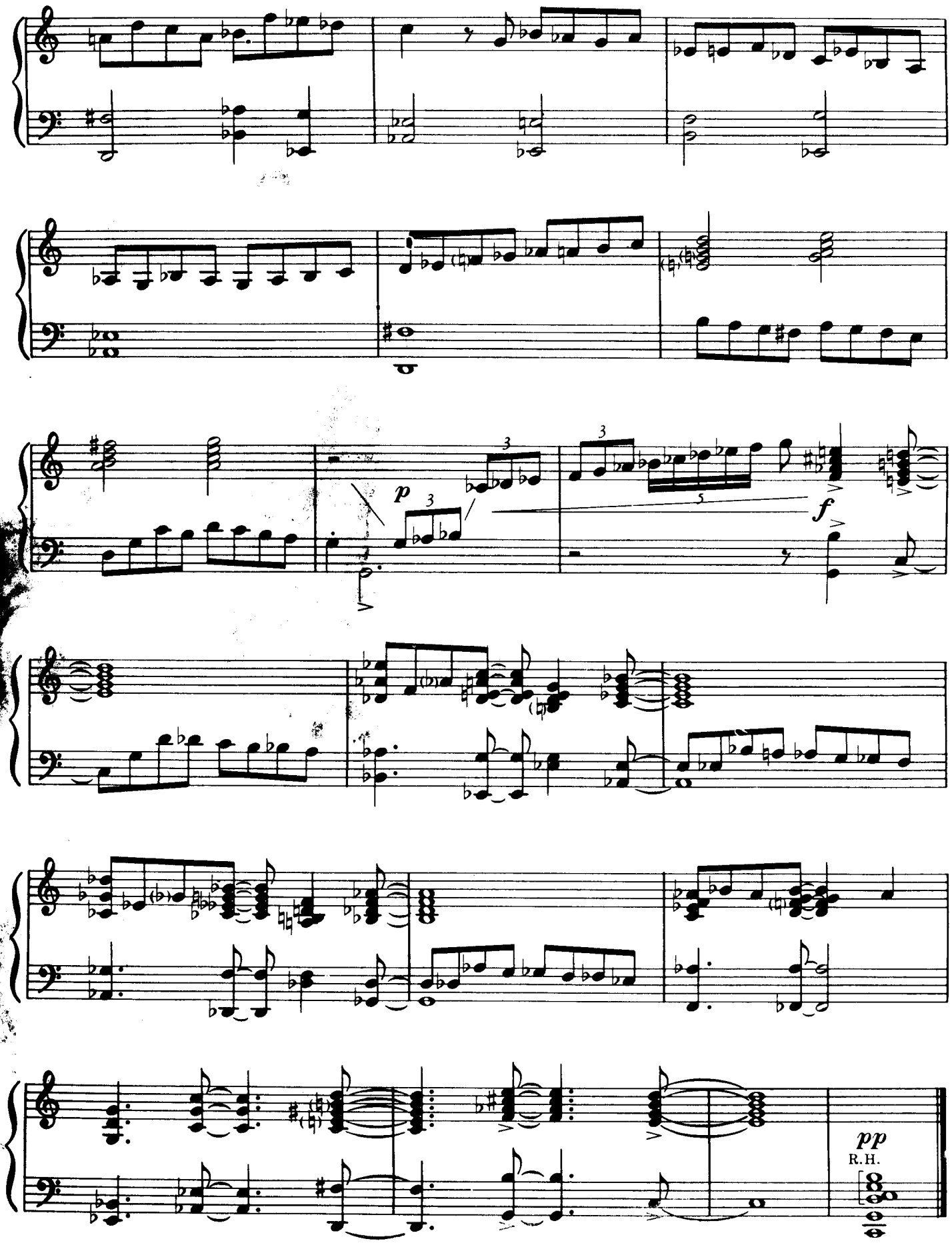
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