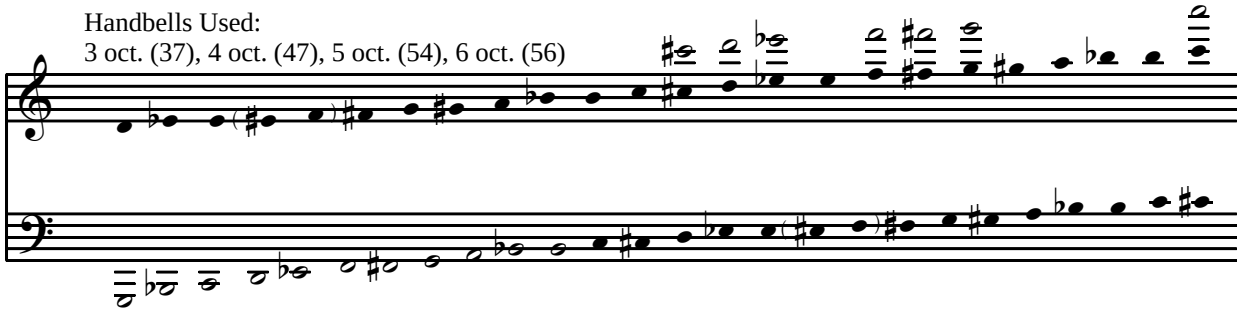
Rondo a Tarantelle

by Larry Sue

Performance Notes



This piece is a combination of two classical forms. "Rondo" is Italian for "round" - in classical music, that means it has a recurring theme that's interspersed with other secondary melodies. Usually it's of the form ABACADA... where each different letter represents one of the melodies.

A "tarantella" is a dance in 6/8, and yes, it means exactly what it sounds like: "tarantula" (the Italian word literally means "little spider". A proper tarantella has a melody that is largely scalar - that makes it crawl around like a spider would.

Make the music fly! It's supposed to be fast and fun, so play it with a light feel. When you get to the stopped sounds, keep the motions tight and crisp (martellati close to the table, mallet heads close to the castings, circles on thumb damps tight and close to the shoulder) - that will make it possible to maintain tempo.

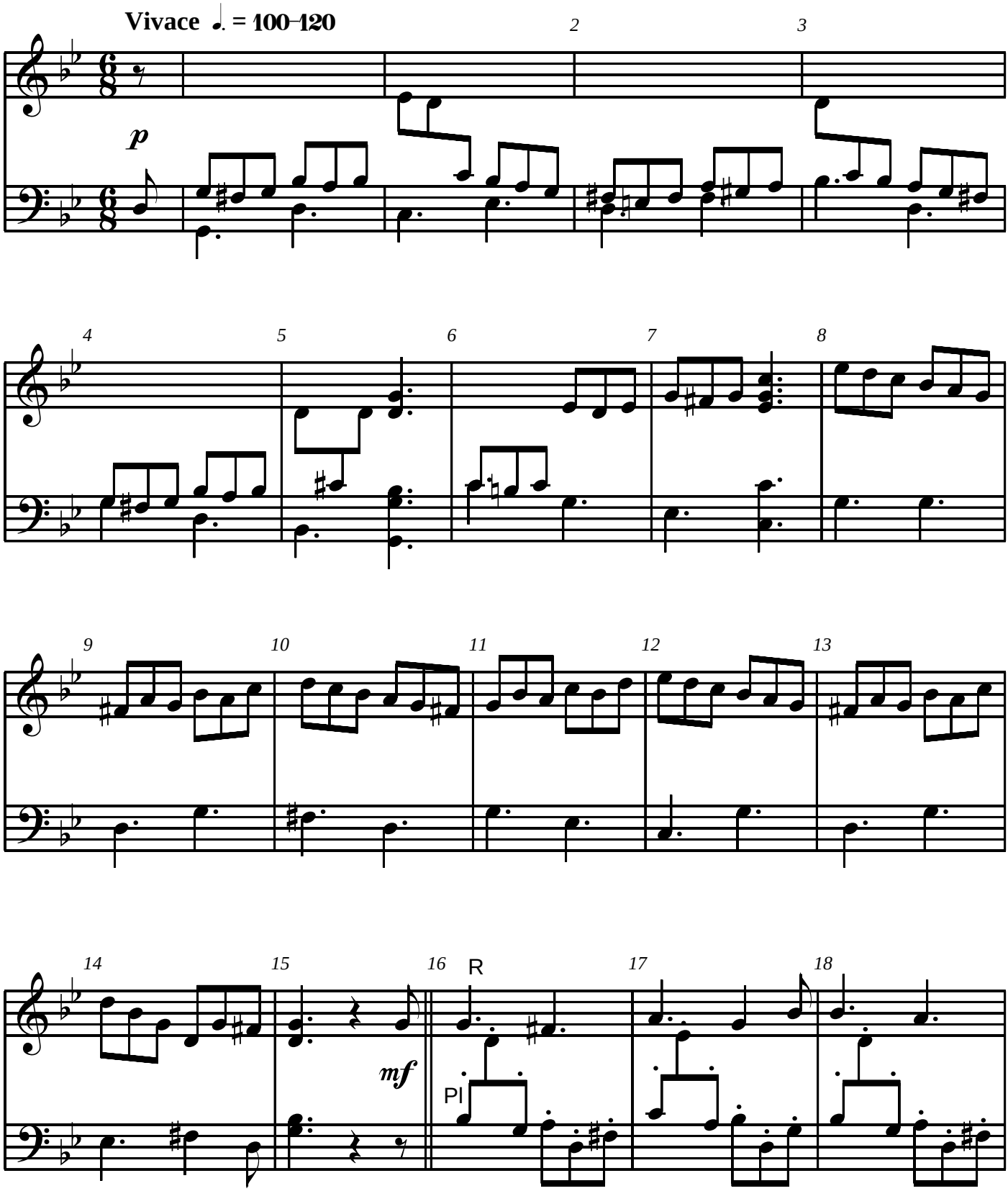
Be sure to listen for rhythm and balance. The melody should be readily apparent. This will especially true in parallel octave sections - the more precise you are as you play, the better this will sound.

Finally, just a word from the choral world. Weston Noble, who directed choirs at Luther College in Decora, Iowa) for over half a century, possibly said it best: "All musc must dance." As you play "Rondo a Tarantelle", remember that it's a dance, and cause the audience to have fun with you!

Rondo a Tarantelle

for Handbells

Larry Sue (ASCAP)



Three-octave choirs omit notes in (), four-octave choirs omit notes in <>, five-octave choirs omit notes in [].

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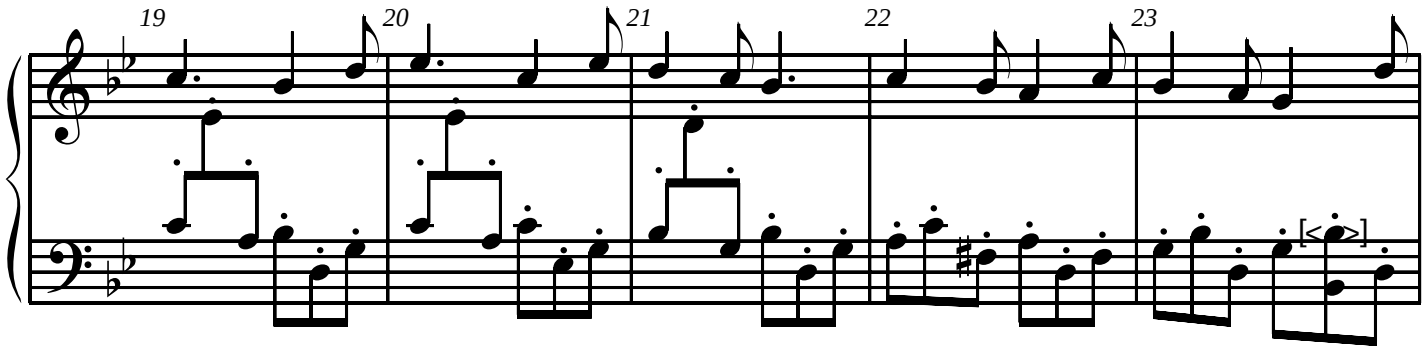
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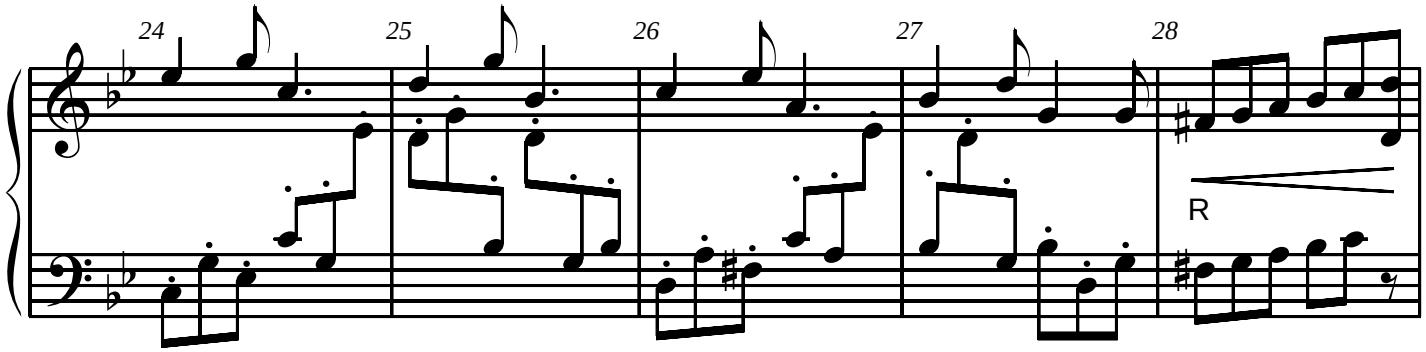
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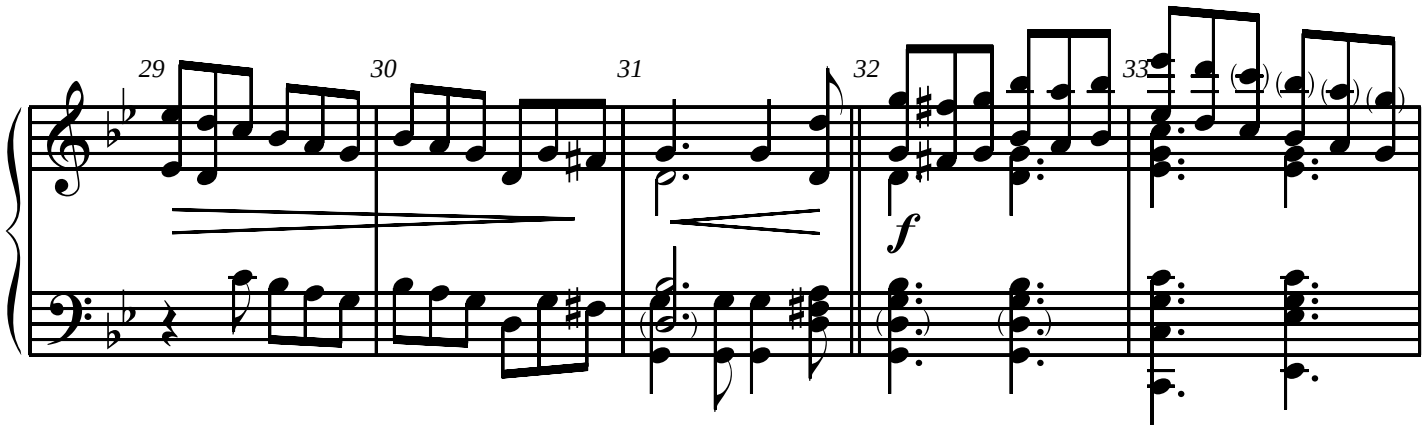
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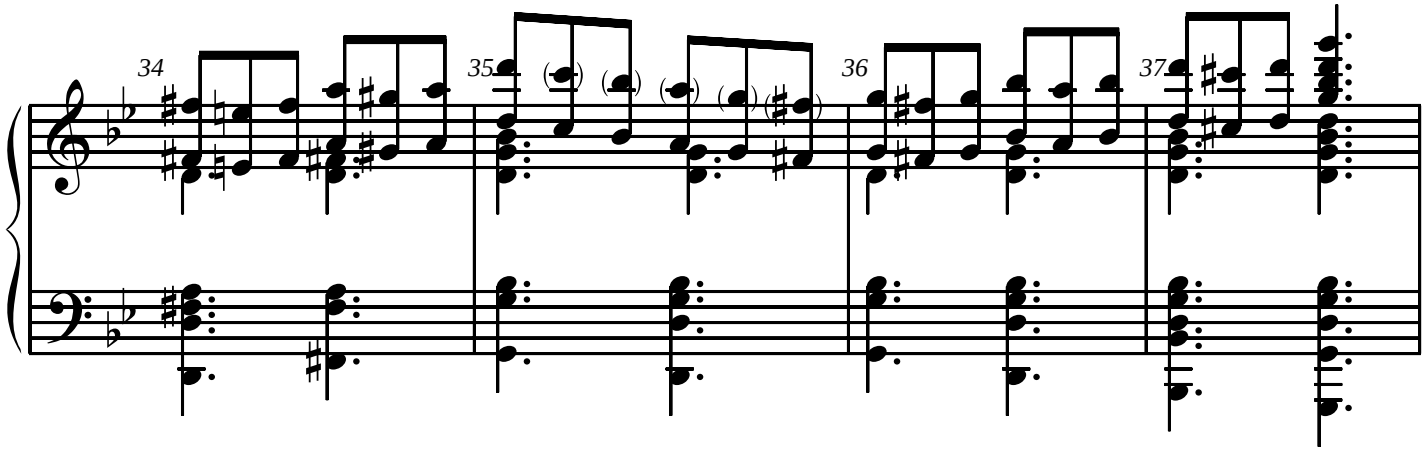
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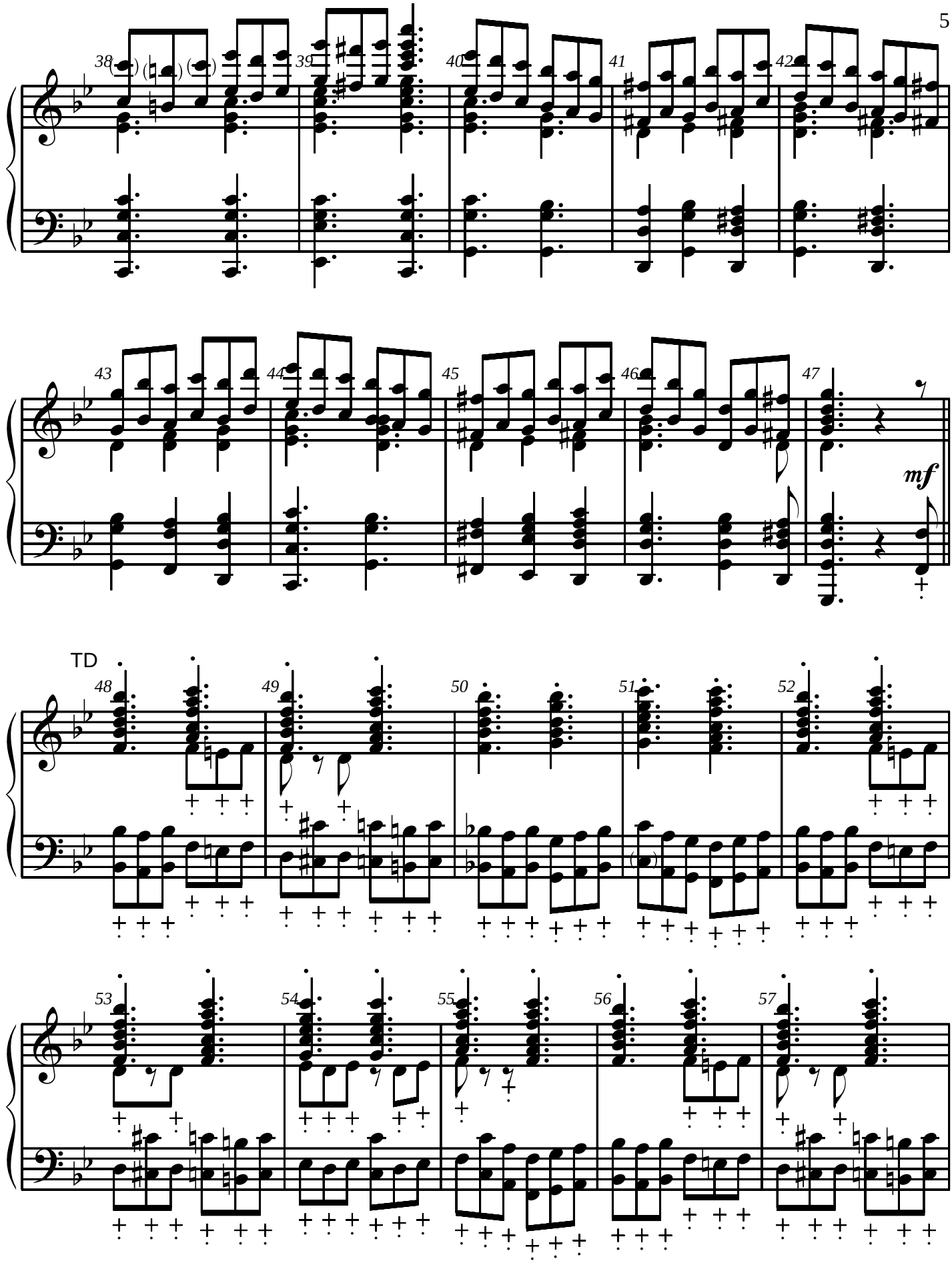
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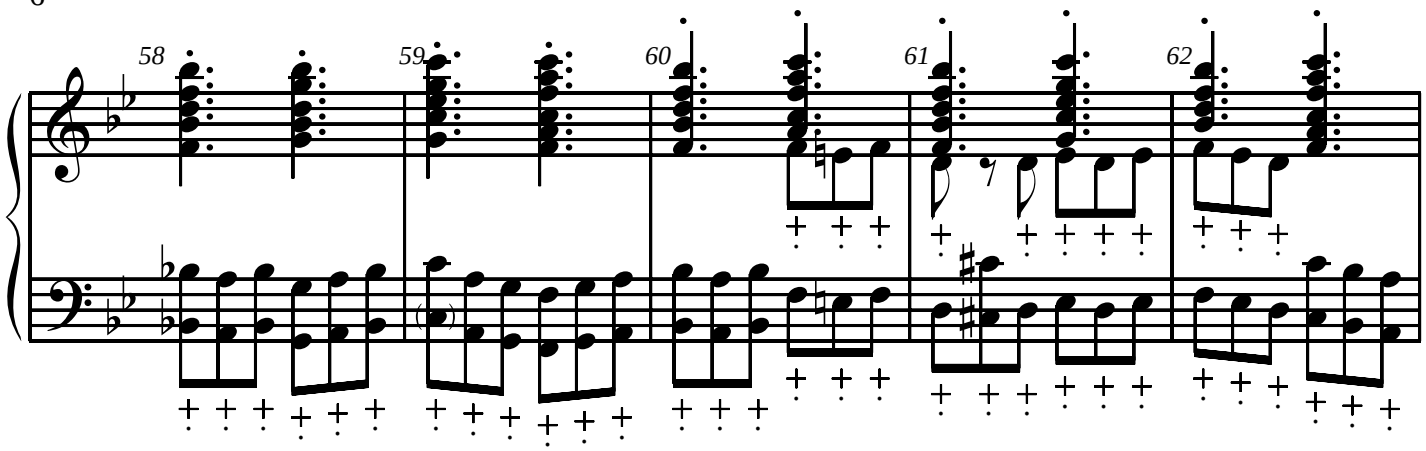
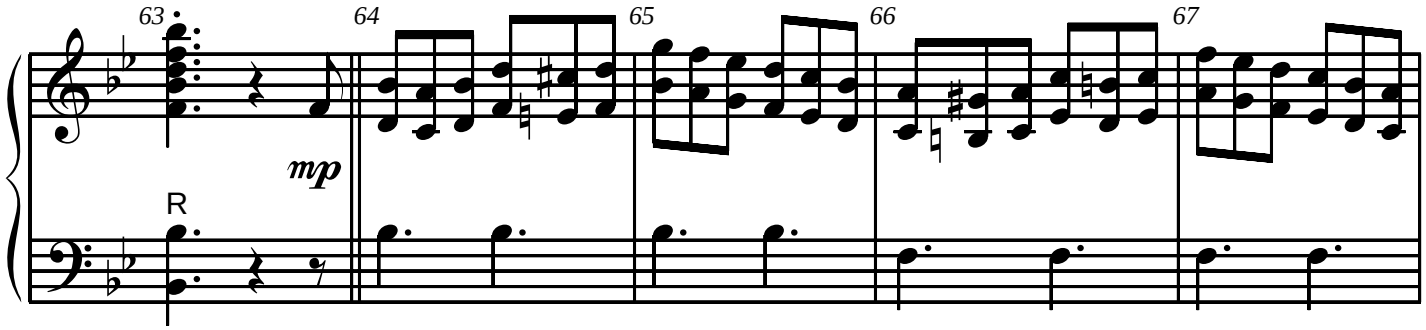
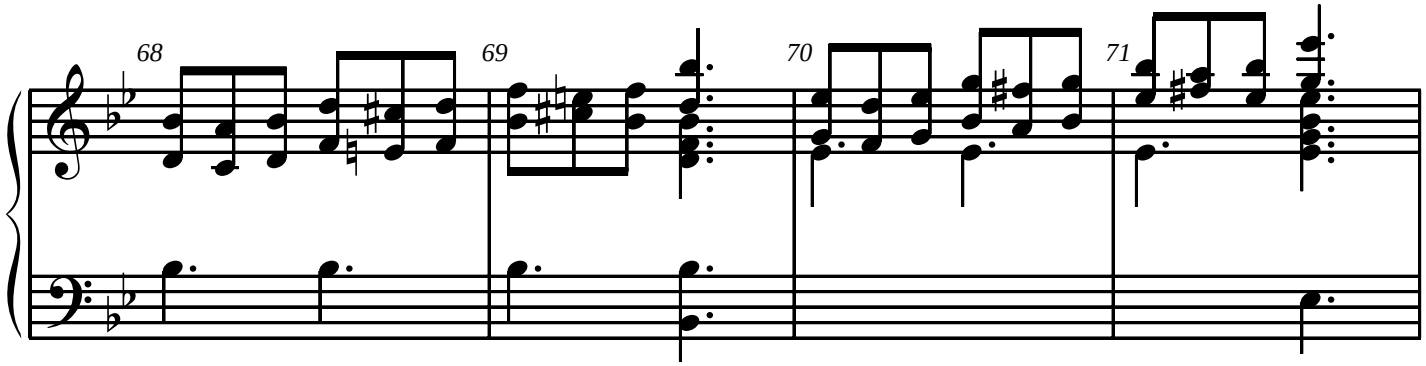
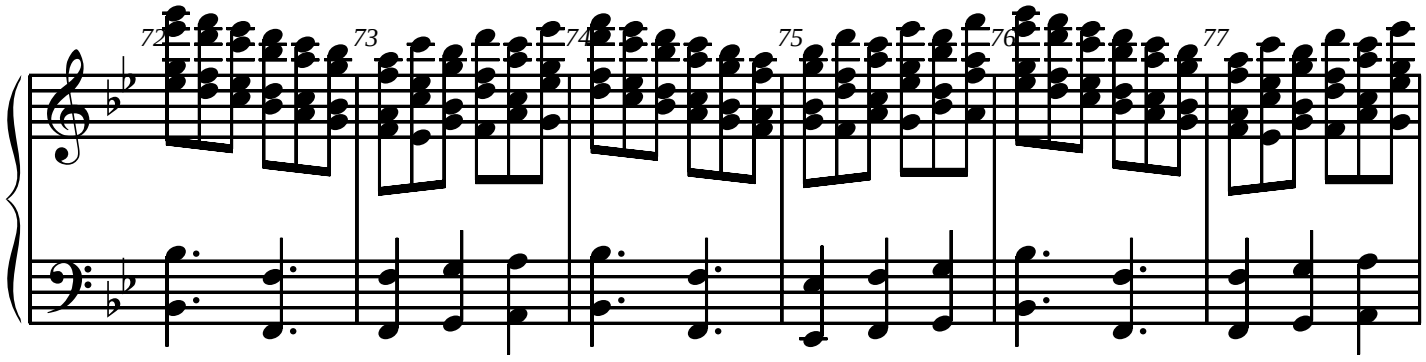
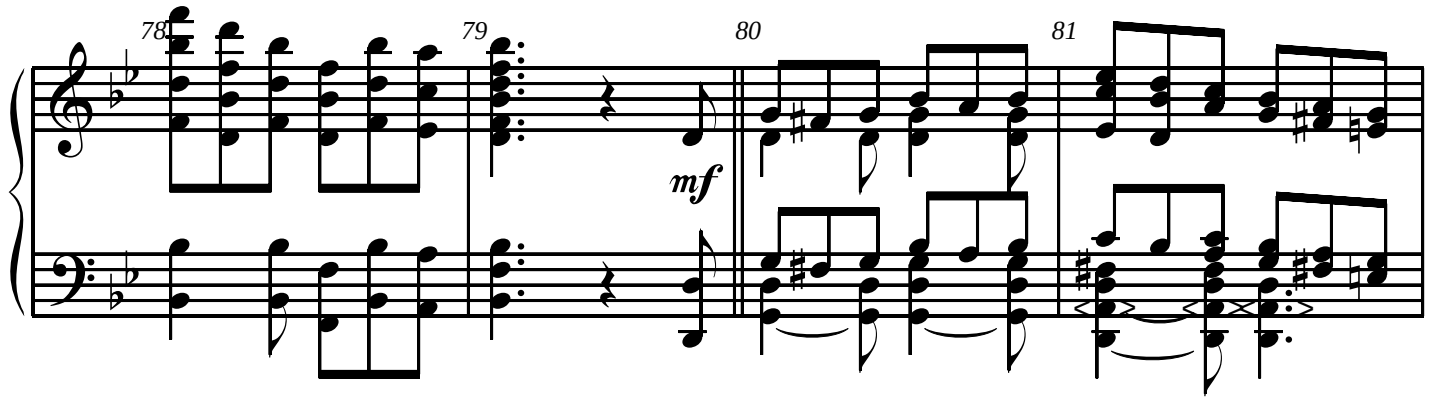


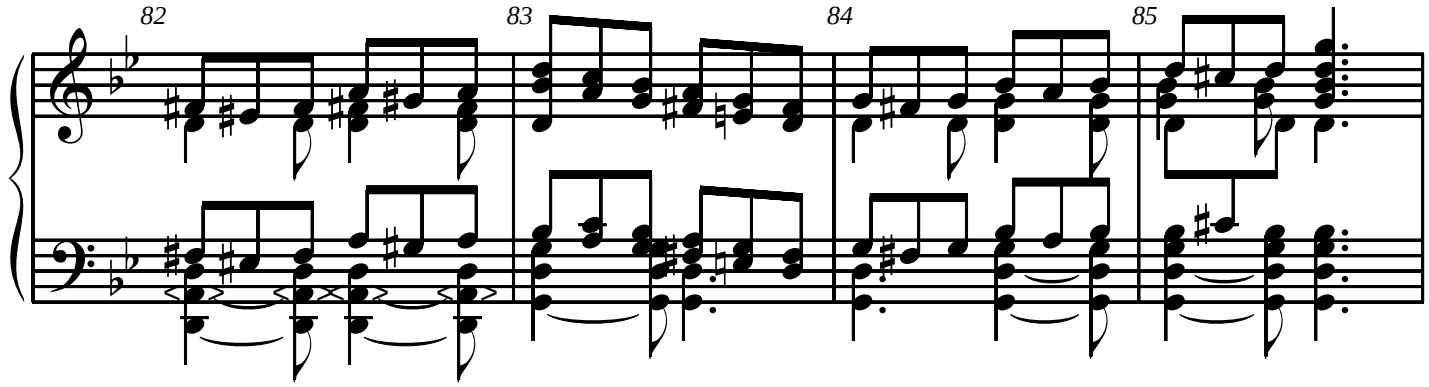




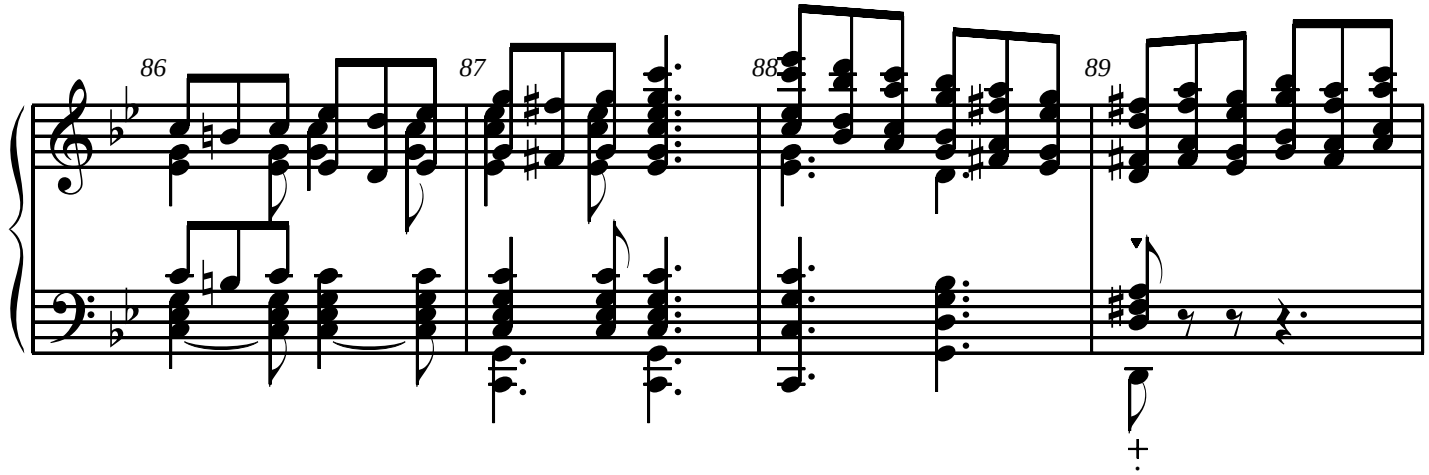
(Three-octave choirs play only lower octaves in m.73-78)

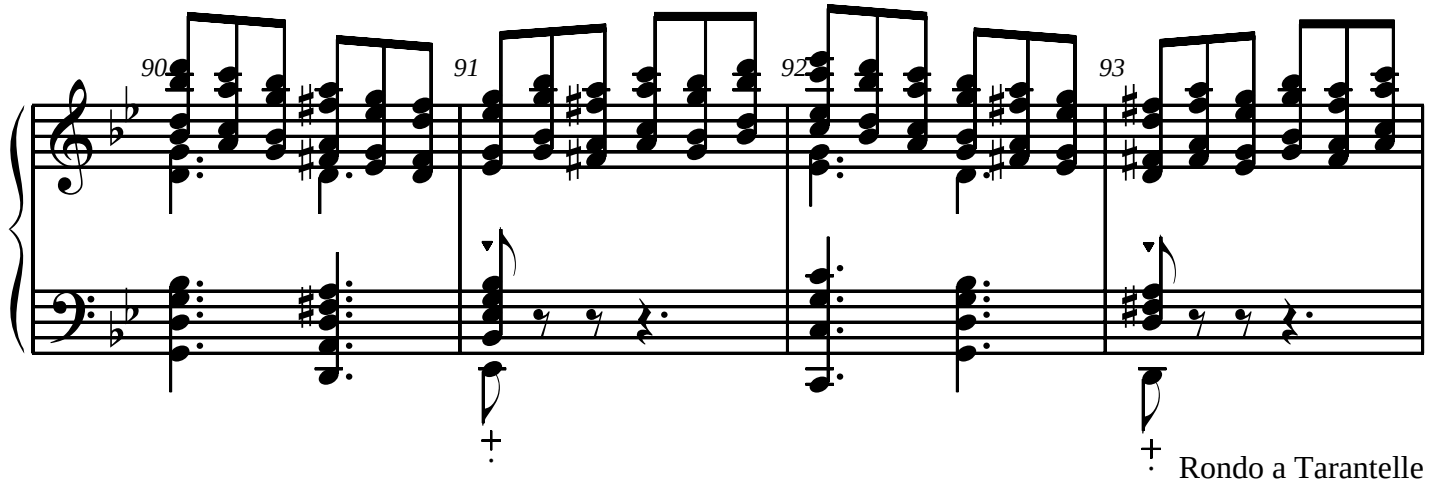


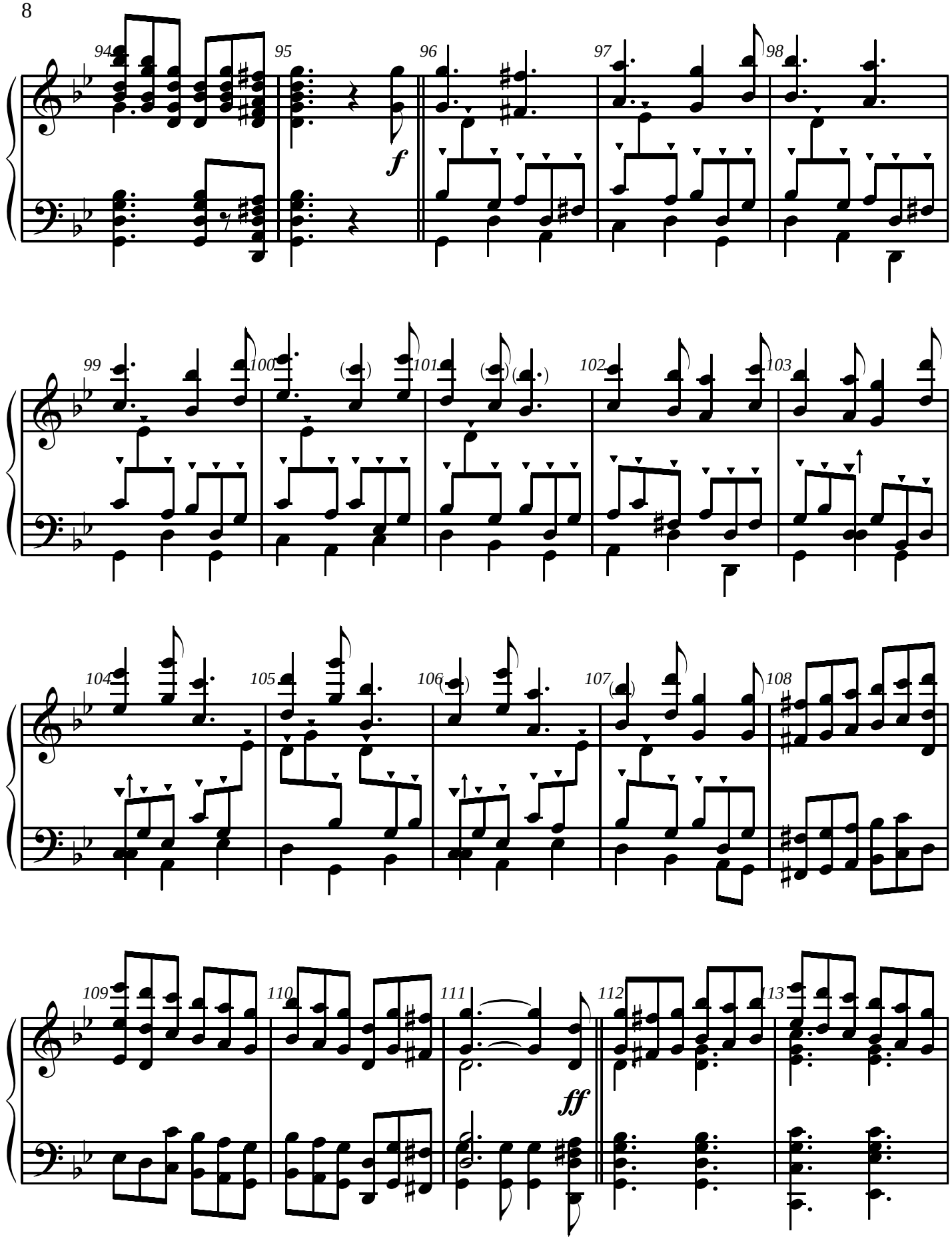




(Three-octave choirs play only lower octaves in m. 89-94)



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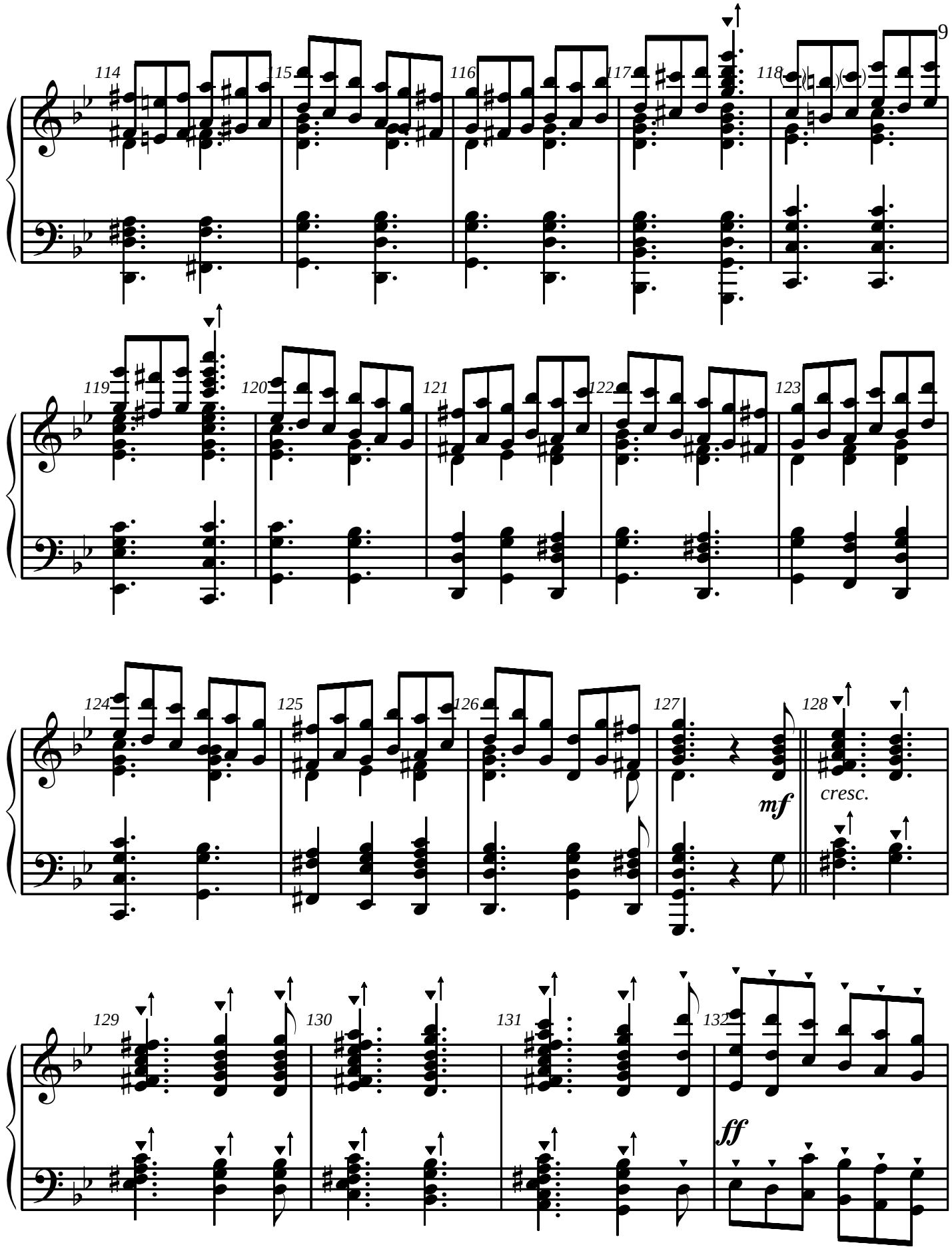
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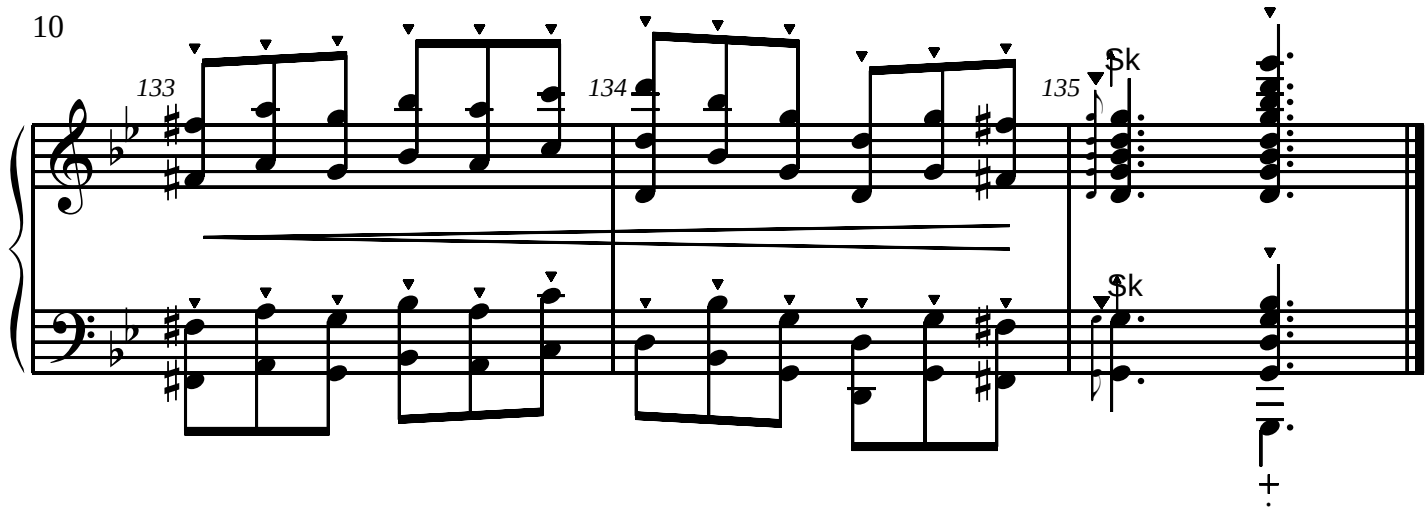
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