The MAYRON COLE PIANO METHOD

Song of India

1. Turn to the music of Song of India and look at the first note in every measure in the bass staff. The first note in every measure in the bass clef is _____. (A or G). Song of India is written in G major. That is why the LH is playing a repetitious pattern that is based on "G".

2. But the other notes in the bass clef measures form other chords that harmonize with G. What creative writing! Look at measures 6, 9, and 11 on page 104:

The bass clef notes in M. 6 are the tones found in the _____Major chord. (A or G)

The first four bass clef tones in M. 9 are found in the _____minor chord. (E or D)

The bass clef notes in M. 11 are found in the _____chord. (F or C)

answers: G major; e minor; C major

4. When you practice Song of India, be sure to practice the LH notes many times. What finger is used to play the 2nd note of each bass clef measure?_____(1 or 2).

5. Song of India is a love song. What is the tempo marking? _____ Hint: Look above the time signature at the beginning of the composition. What does mm stand for? _____ (My Metronome or Mazel's Metronome).

6. Complete the following chords that have Gs:

G Major ____ ____ ____		G_7 ____ ____ ____ ____	
Am_7 ____ ____ ____ ____		E minor ____ ____ ____	
C Major ____ ____ ____		Gm ____ ____ ____	
A_7 ____ ____ ____ ____		C_7 ____ ____ ____ ____	

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About the Composer...

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

Rimsky-Korsakov was born in Russia to an aristocratic family with a long history of military and naval service. At a young age he was especially impressed with his older brother, Voin, twenty-two years his senior. Voin was a well-known navigator and explorer. At age six, Nikolai began a few piano lessons with local teachers, but he did not display much talent. He later wrote that he played "badly, carelessly, (and was) poor at keeping time (rhythm)." Rimsky-Korsakov did try his hand at composing music at age ten, but realized he preferred reading books over music. He especially liked reading of older brother Voin's naval adventures. Because of Voin, Nikolai later reported that he had developed a love of the sea "without ever having seen it".

At the age of twelve, brother Voin encouraged young Nikolai to join the Imperial Russian Navy and study mathematics and navigational science at a school in Saint Petersburg. Brother Voin had become director of the school. While at the school, Nikolai took piano lessons because Voin encouraged him to take the lessons. Voin thought learning to play the piano would help Nikolai with his shyness and would help him develop social skills. Nikolai wrote that he was indifferent to the piano lessons but that they had helped him develop a love for music, for the opera, for orchestral concerts. Nikolai's piano teacher perceived that Nikolai had a serious talent for music and recommended another piano teacher, Feodor Kanille.

Beginning in 1859, Rimsky-Korsakov took lessons in piano and composition from Kanille. Nikolai later credited this great piano teacher as the inspiration for his devoting his life to musical composition. Through Kanille, Nikolai became exposed to the music of great composers. But oddly, older brother Voin decided at that time to cancel Nikolai's piano lessons just when Nikolai's creative genius was about to take flight! Voin decided that the piano lessons were no longer necessary for his young brother's social development. But Kanille told young Nikolai to continue coming to him every Sunday; not for formal lessons but to play duets and discuss music.



In 1861, Kanille introduced Rimsky-Korsakov to Mily Balakirev. Balakiriv then introduced Nikolai to Cesar Cui and Modest Mussorgsky. All three of these men were known composers in Russia despite still being in their twenties. Weekly meetings with such talented people propelled Rimsky-Korsakov into the world of serious music composition. Alexander Borodin joined the group that was later dubbed "The Five". The Five wanted to further a

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Russian style of music. They did not want to copy the European style of writing using Sonata Form. And they did not want to be trained at European Conservatories. They wanted to celebrate Russia! They wanted to incorporate music heard in village songs, in Cossak dances, in church chants. The Five's music became filled with imitative sounds of Russian life.

Still in the Russian Navy, Rimsky-Korsakov set sail for a two year, eight month trip aboard a clipper ship. Balakirev encouraged Nikolai to compose while at sea. Balakirev also prompted Nikolai to enrich himself in history and literature. Rimsky-Korsakov had little knowledge of composition, but completed and orchestrated three movements of a symphony while at sea. He would mail portions of his work to Balakirev when the clipper ship docked at various ports. He purchased a piano and put it on the clipper ship.

When he was back at Saint Petersburg in 1865, he admitted to Balakirev that his desire to composed music had been stifled while aboard his ship. The solution, according to Balakirev, was to get busy composing again! So Nikolai did! Plus, he once again began spending lots of time with his talented friends, The Five. They would play each other's compositions and offer critiques to make the music better. In the fall of 1871, Nikolai moved into brother Voin's apartment and invited Mussorgsky to be his roommate. They had one piano and had to work out a "you use it in the morning and I'll use it in the evening" arrangement.

At twenty-seven, Nikolai became Professor of Practical Composition at The Saint Petersburg Conservatory, as well as the leader of the Orchestra Class. There was some debate as to how he got this job since his training in music composition was so scant. He was still active in the Russian naval service and so taught his classes each day wearing his navy uniform. Rimsky-Korsakov had the reputation of being a master or orchestration but that was really a farce! He had written his music mainly by intuition—he had a "good ear". His knowledge of music theory was at the elementary level; he admitted that he did not know the names of intervals and musical chords. Nikolai was very insecure about his lack of knowledge of music theory and consulted Peter Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky advised Nikolai to study!



Rimsky-Korsakov took three years off from composing and taught himself composition and theory from textbooks. He continued to lecture at the Conservatory during the day while he was getting his own music education at home every night.

Rimsky-Korsakov later met and married Nadezhda Purgold, a beautiful young woman who was also musically trained. She was the perfect partner for Nikolai. Mussorgsky was best man at the wedding.

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Rimsky-Korsakov's music has influenced many other composers, Russian and European! In 1907, Rimsky-Korsakov conducted two concerts in Paris which featured Russian nationalist music. Many of the compositions were by Rimsky-Korsakov. The concerts were highly successful! Today, many musicians believe that Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestrations are the best there are! Just before Rimsky-Korsakov died in 1908, his mystical opera, Sadko, was performed. Song of India is from that opera.



Poster from a 1953 production of *Sadko*

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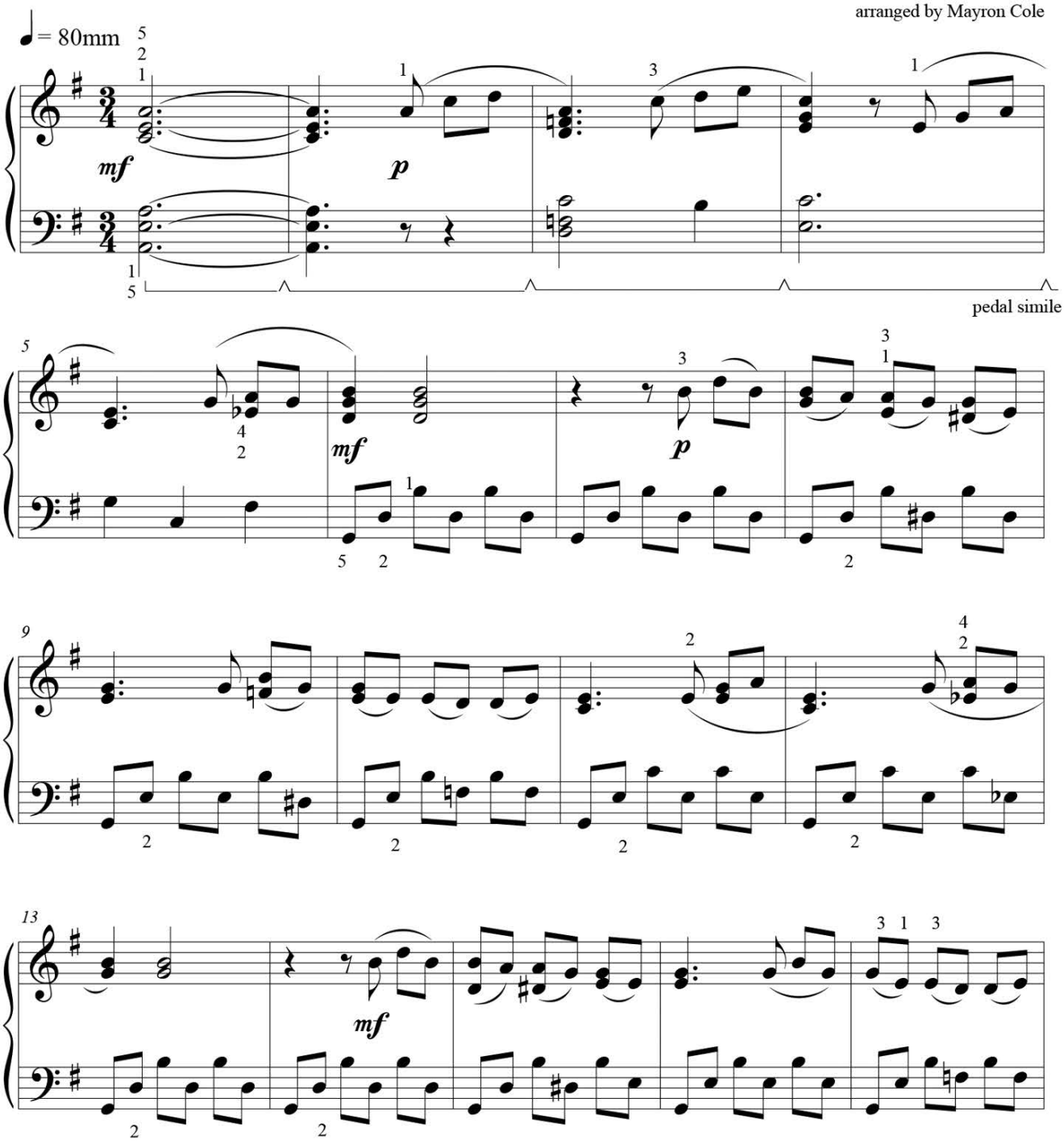
Song of India
(from the opera Sadko)



Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

arranged by Mayron Cole



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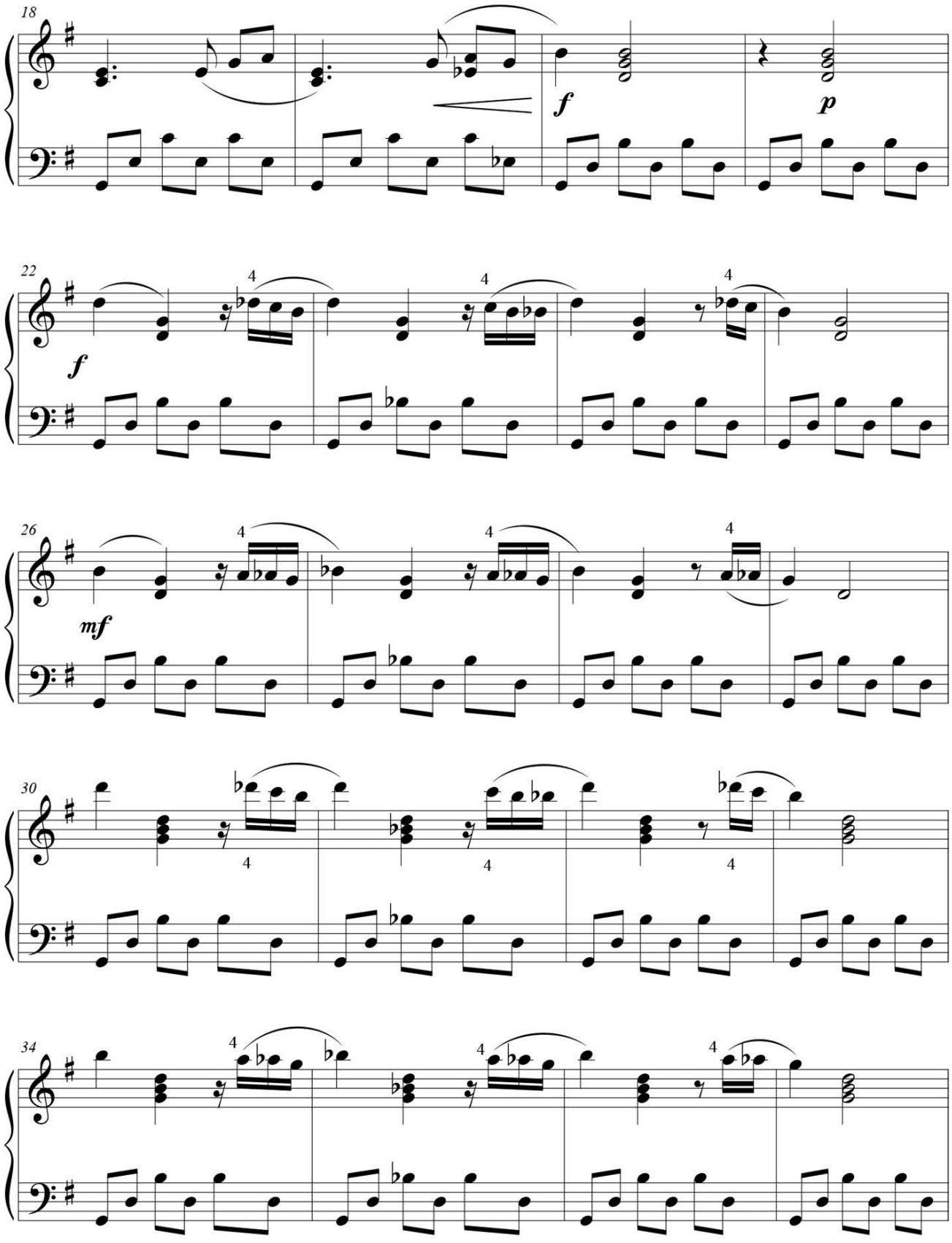

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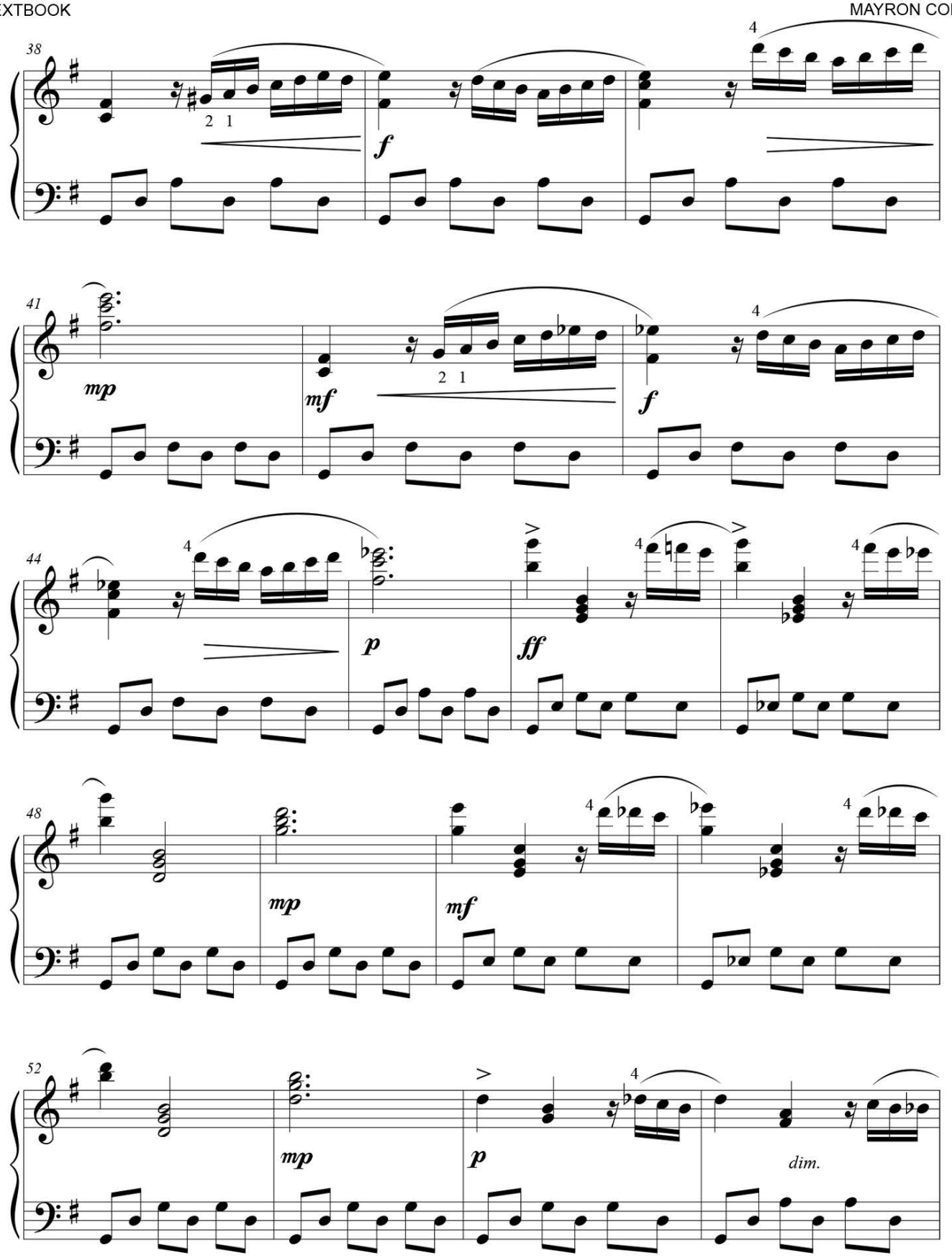

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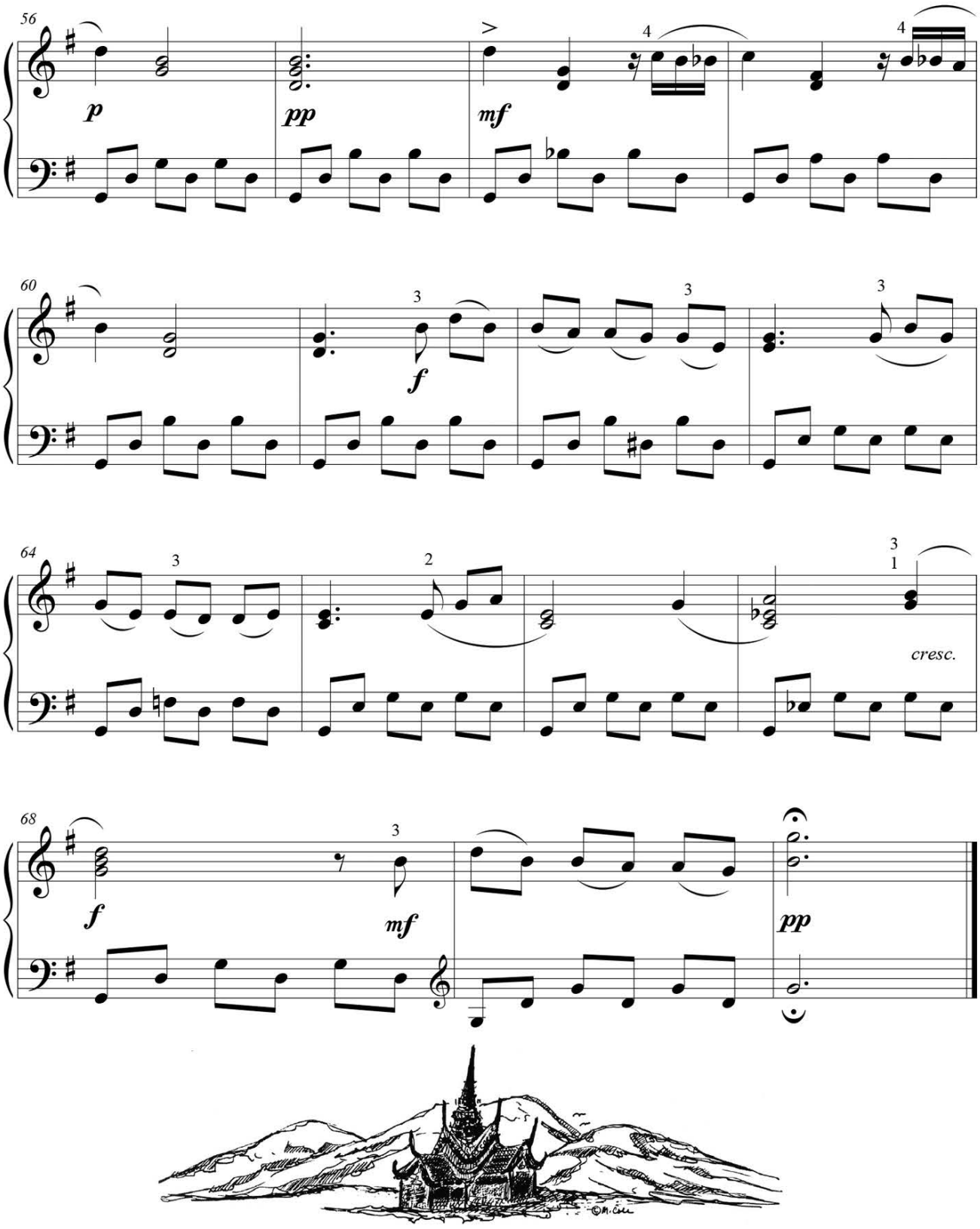

To you, the student: Song of India is one of the most beautiful compositions ever written! Go to your computer and search for "Song of India, Rimsky-Korsakov." Listen to the music and let your mind travel to that exotic land far away. - Mayron Cole

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