The MAYRON COLE PIANO METHOD

Opus 6, No. 10 Balladenmassig

Robert Schumann 1810 – 1856



Robert Schumann was born in Zwickau, Germany and was the youngest of five children. Robert's father was a bookseller, publisher, and novelist. Robert, at an early age, showed a keen interest in music – particularly composing music. According to his music teacher, he showed a great ability to portray feelings in his music.

Robert's father died when Robert was sixteen years old, leaving enough money for Robert's education. The father was proud of Robert's musical abilities and encouraged them. But after his death, Robert's mother and his guardian decided that Robert needed to study law in order to obtain his inheritance.

Some people scorned the mother and guardian for forcing Robert to study in a field where he showed little talent, but both his mother and guardian decided that Robert would earn a better living as a lawyer than as a musician. And they seemed to want the best for Robert.

Robert "studied" law in Heidelburg and later in Leipzig. The word "studied" is almost a joke since Robert rarely attended law school classes but spent most of his time attending operas and ballets and absorbing all the great music that Leipzig, Germany offered.

He finally wrote to his mother and confessed that music had won his heart and that he could no longer pretend to be interested in law. He had decided to study piano with a well-known teacher in Leipzig: Friedrich Wieck.



Robert's mother wrote to Friedrich of her son's desire to study piano with him. In her letter she said that she would pay Robert's lesson expenses plus room and board. Robert moved into Wieck's house and began his piano lessons. He practiced his piano lessons early each morning and then took an hour lesson from Friedrich.

But Friedrich's main interest was his young daughter, Clara. She was a musical prodigy by the time she was ten and was causing quite a stir in the Leipzig music world. Friedrich became Clara's manager and soon she was traveling all over Germany giving concerts to sold-out crowds. Her ability to earn large sums of money was staggering. Soon Clara's income was building a large fortune for Friedrich Wieck.

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When she was but thirteen, Clara performed in a Zwackau, Germany concert that Friedrich had arranged. She performed the piano part of Robert's *Symphony in G minor.* Since both Clara and Robert were his students, Friedrich was thrilled at the newspaper coverage of the event.

At this concert, Robert's mother finally realized that Robert was meant to be a composer and not a lawyer. After the performance, backstage, Frau Schumann met Clara Wieck and told her: *"You must marry my Robert some day!"*

Friedrich Wieck's home was a magnet for music lovers in Leipzig. Performing in one of Friedrich's weekly musicales were famous musicians, average musicians, and ordinary people who simply appreciated good music. At one of these musicales, Robert met Felix Mendelssohn who had just been hired to conduct the Leipzig orchestra. Robert and Felix became best friends and remained best friends for the rest of their lives.

During the time that Robert was taking piano lessons from Friedrich Wieck, Robert injured the fourth finger of his left hand. Robert had placed some-sort of metal contraption on that finger to pull it back and, he hoped, give it strength. (That finger is normally weak on every person's hand!) Regretfully, that finger was so badly injured by Schumann's contraption that the finger was paralyzed and brought Robert's piano playing dreams to an end.

But composition was Robert's main love, plus he realized that he would never have been a great pianist. He had waited too late to begin a serious study of piano.

At about that same time, Friedrich Wieck assigned a young female student to Robert so Robert could learn the skills of piano teaching. She had journeyed to Leipzig to take piano from Friedrich, but Friedrich had no time to teach her.



The young girl was the daughter of a wealthy Bohemian baron, and her name was Ernestine von Fricken. Robert, who fell in love easily, was quickly smitten! He and Ernestine were close to announcing their engagement when Ernestine's father came to Leipzig to collect his eighteen year-old daughter and take her home.

The baron and Robert needed to have a serious little discussion about the almost-engagement. Robert was told by the baron that Ernestine would *not* be coming into their marriage with any dowry (money) because she was illegitimate. And under German law at that time, illegitimate children could not inherit. So earning any money on which the couple could live would be completely up to Robert.

Robert was devastated and was fearful that because of Ernestine's limited money he would have to earn a living as a common day laborer. Robert was horrified at that thought! So the almost-engagement to Ernestine was immediately called off, and Ernestine went back to Bohemia with her father.

Robert received a letter from her two years later in which Ernestine told him that she had married a wealthy baron and was supremely happy. Robert was thrilled for her and relieved that he had not married her.

Robert loved to write about the music scene in Leipzig and started editing and publishing a well-respected music magazine that he owned. He had inherited his writing abilities from his father, it seems. Plus, the magazine's subscriptions were bringing in much-needed money for Robert.

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He often wrote essays in which two imaginary characters, Florestan and Eusebius, would discuss the pros and cons about various musical subjects in Leipzig. They also debated the compositions of various composers and sometimes tore through others' compositions in a mean-spirited fashion. But the magazine's readers thoroughly enjoyed the musings of those two made-up characters.

Almost immediately after his break with Ernestine, Robert began to realize that he was falling in love with Wieck's daughter, Clara. Clara was nine years younger than Robert and was only sixteen when Robert first realized his attraction to her. Naturally, Friedrich Wieck would have none of it! No one, especially a low-income composer such as Robert, could come close to his Clara! Clara was Friedrich's creation, and he was not about to part with her or the large amount of money that her sold-out concerts earned. Robert was warned to back-off!



Robert and Clara began to meet secretly, and when Friedrich realized that the two were going behind his back to meet, Friedrich exploded! He wrote Robert and told him that he could no longer come into the Wieck's home under any condition. Then Friedrich told Clara that he would shoot Robert on sight if he should try to court her. And finally, Friedrich threatened to take Robert to court if he came anywhere close to Clara.

Robert was aghast! Friedrich had been like a second father to him! Surely all of this was one big misunderstanding and could easily be cleared up if only Friedrich would allow Robert an audience.

But Friedrich held his ground, and the couple was kept apart for one and a half years. Finally, Robert managed to write to Clara through a mutual friend to tell her that he still loved her, and he was going to ask permission from her father to marry her on her eighteenth birthday.

Sure enough, a well-dressed Robert knocked on Friedrich's door on Clara's birthday and requested that Friedrich hear him out. (Clara was not allowed to see him at that meeting!) Robert knew that, according to German law, a young girl could not marry before she was twenty-one without her father's permission. Surely Friedrich could see that Robert loved Clara and that Clara loved Robert, and permission would happily be given.

But a rabid Friedrich started screaming at Robert and threw him out of the house. Robert was completely humiliated. But he was not defeated!

He would travel to the cities where Clara was concertizing and wait in cafés after the concerts to meet with her for a few minutes. Finally, his persistence paid off, and Clara and Robert were married in a small civil ceremony two days before she became twenty-one.



Friedrich said so many untrue and vile remarks about Robert Schumann and spread so many scandalous rumors around Leipzig regarding the man, that Robert sued Friedrich for libel and won the suit!

Immediately after her marriage to Robert, Clara had to also go to court and sue Friedrich in order to receive any of the money that she had earned during her childhood. Friedrich threw fits about giving up control of the money. But facing a stiff prison sentence if he did not comply made Friedrich finally give in, and a large sum of money was transferred to Clara's bank account.

Clara and Robert were married for thirteen years and eventually had ten children, but two of them died during infancy. Clara continued earning the

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money for the family through her concerts so that Robert could spend his days writing music and editing his music magazine.

Their love story had a sad ending, however. Robert, who feared mental illness all of his life because several of his relatives suffered from it, slowly went insane. After a suicide attempt in which he tried to drown himself in the Rhine River, he asked to be placed in an insane asylum. He was deathly afraid that he might become so deranged that he would physically hurt his beloved Clara.

Robert's doctor would not allow Clara to visit Robert in the asylum for the last two years of Robert's life. Why? No one is sure, but the doctor was convinced that it was for the best. However, being away from Clara made Robert's mental condition deteriorate even faster. When Clara was finally summoned to come quickly to the asylum, she found Robert incoherent. He didn't recognize Clara at all. His brain with all of his genius was gone! Robert died two days later.

He is buried in a cemetery in Bonn, Germany. When Clara died years later she was buried beside her precious Robert.



A Closer Look at
Opus 6, No. 10, Balladenmassig

A quick glance at **Opus 6, No. 10** might indicate that the RH is playing triplets. But a closer examination tells you, the ever observant student, that the RH is actually playing "fake triplets". As you know, fake triplets are simply a series of eighth notes with a stress on the *first* and *fourth* eighth notes of the series. You probably remember **William's Waltz** found in Level 7A. **William's Waltz** also used fake triplets. Here's the rhythm that the RH will be playing in **Opus 6, No. 10**:

RH: **1** + 2 **+** 3 +

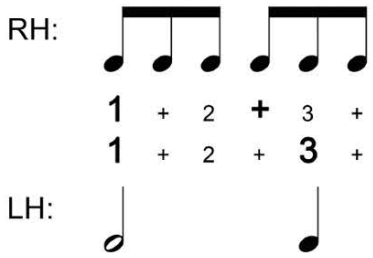
What makes the above rhythm fun to play is that the LH is usually playing on beats 1 and 3. So both hands will be playing rhythms like this in many measures:

RH: **1** + 2 **+** 3 +

LH: **1** + 2 + **3** +

The above rhythms are shown here using notes:

Tap these rhythm several times with your classmates while counting aloud. After a few taps, the emphasis of the rhythms should become easier for you.



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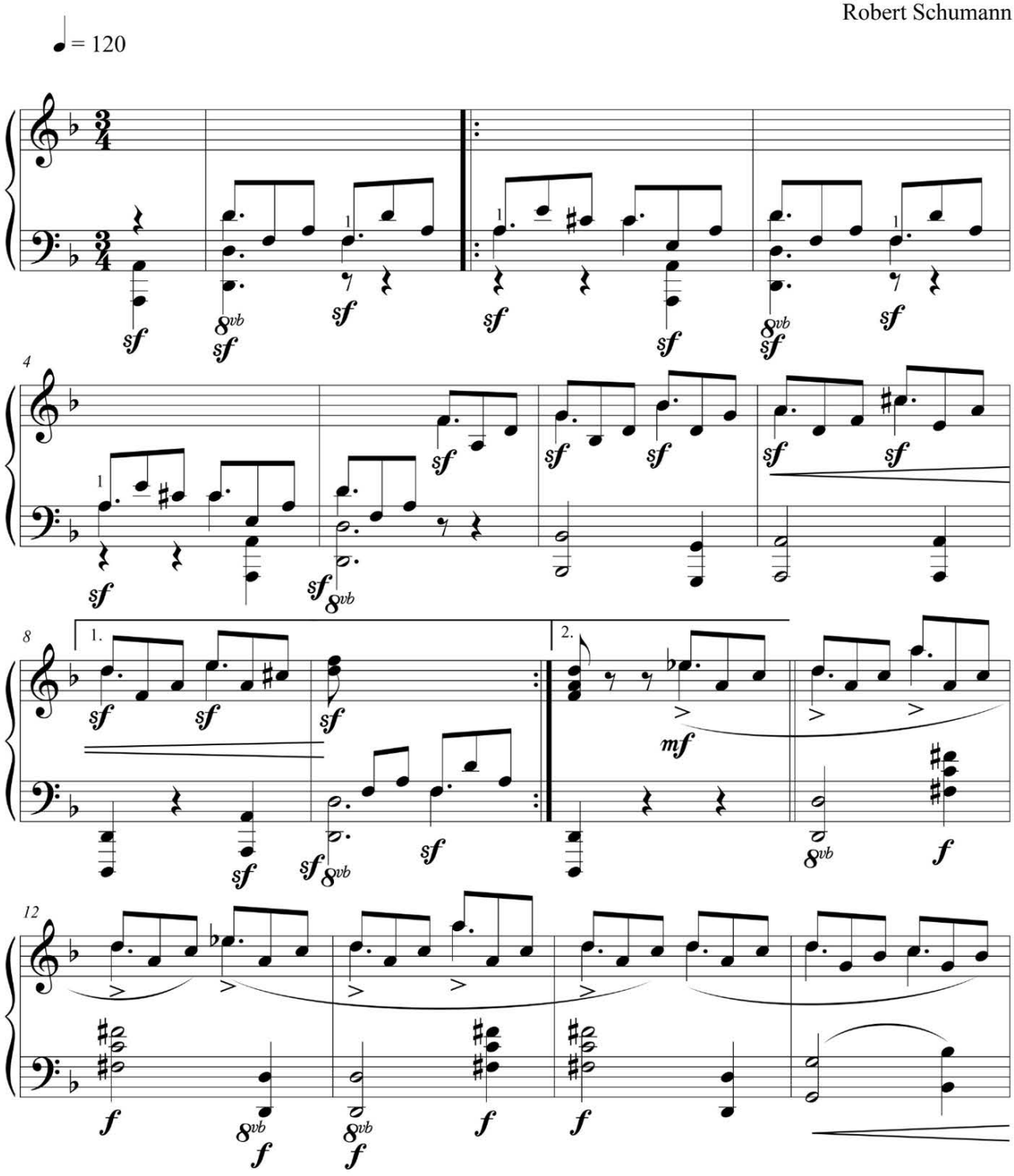
Opus 6, No. 10

Balladenmassig

(orchestrated accompaniment has a 2 measure count-in)

Robert Schumann



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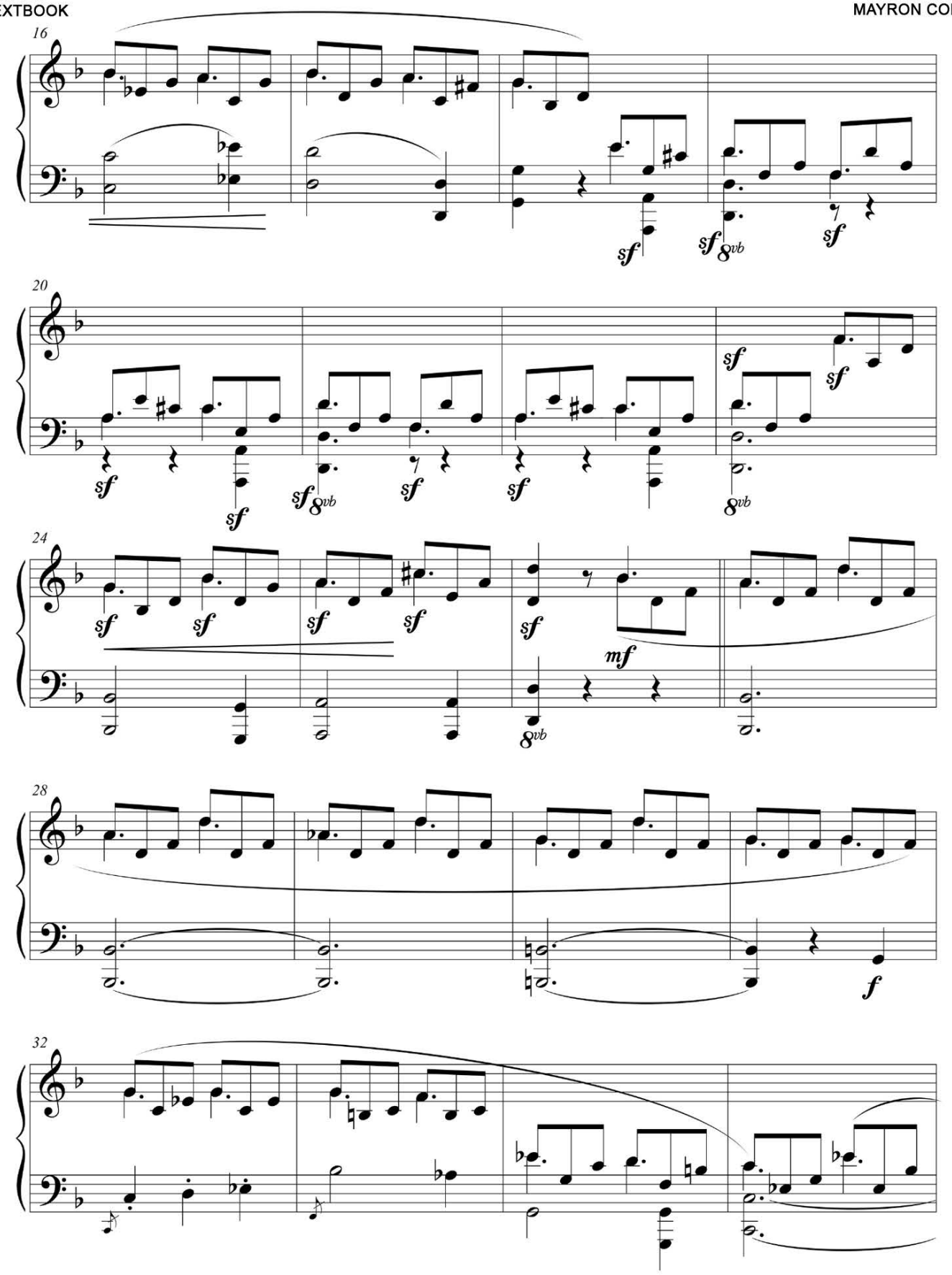

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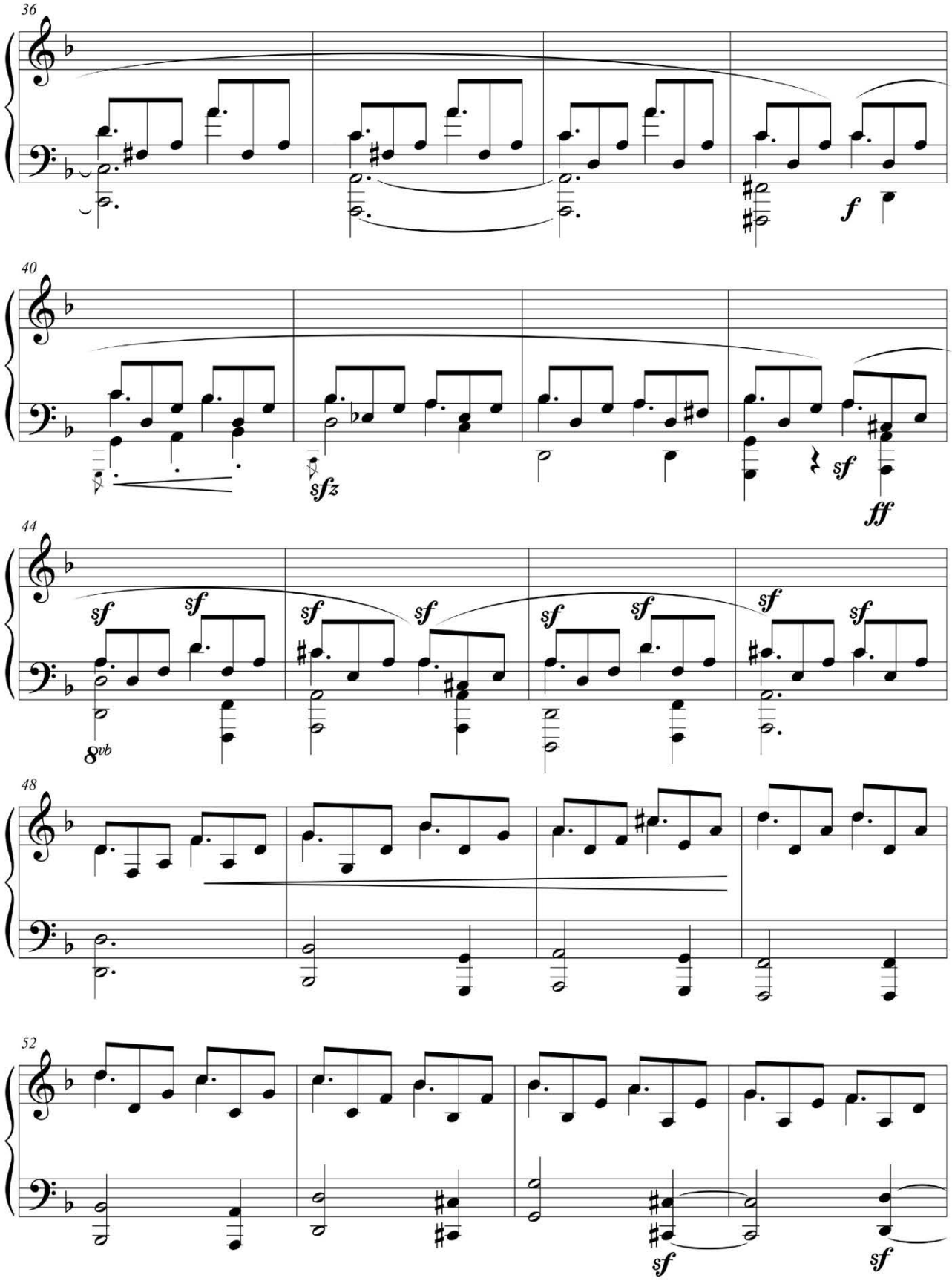

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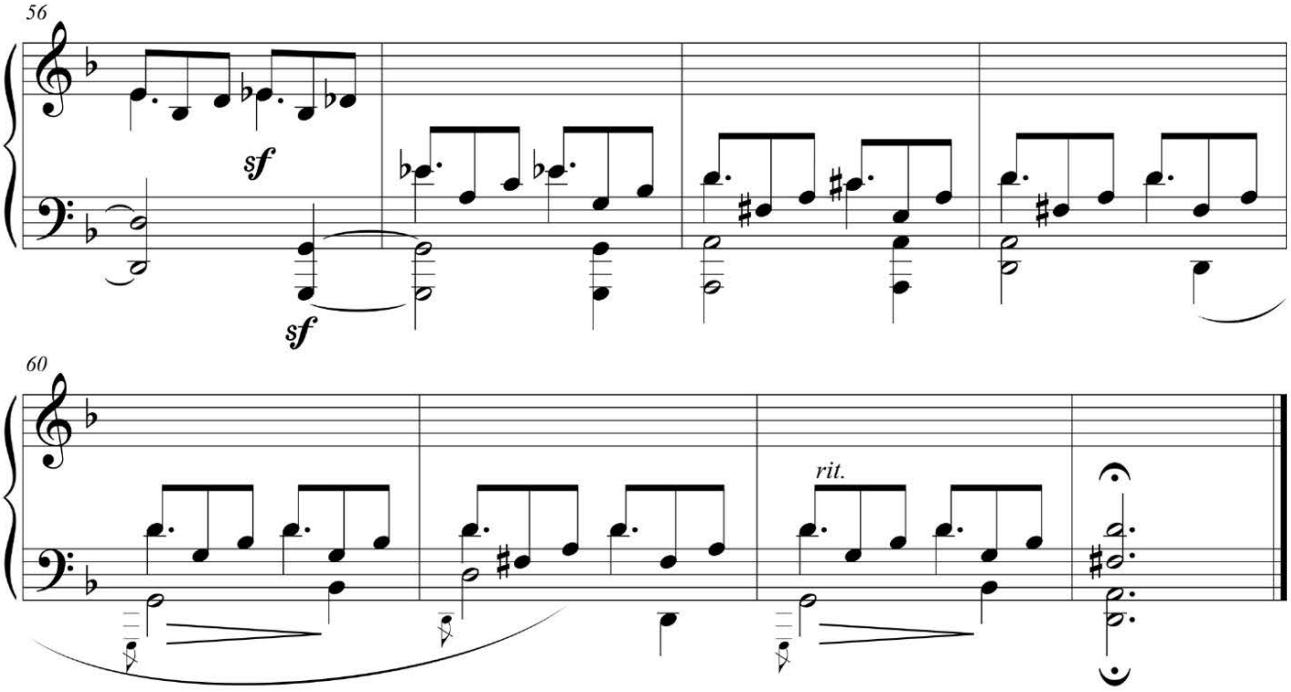

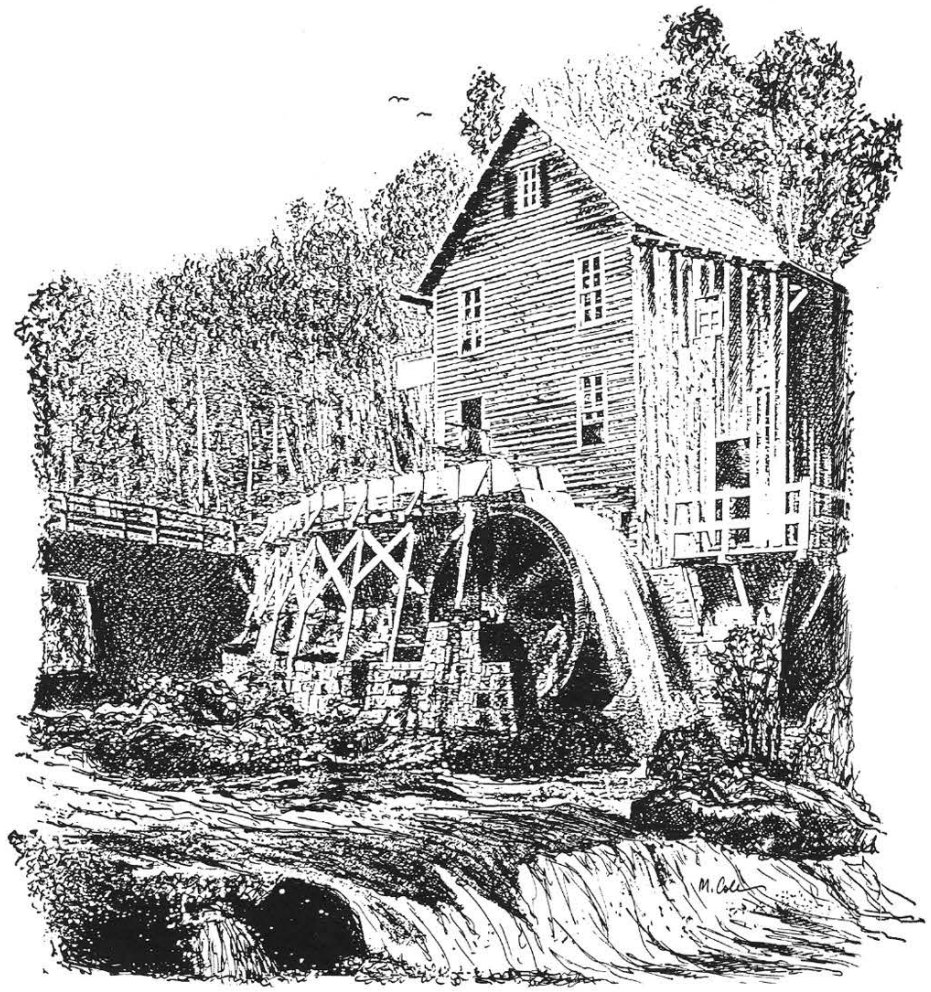

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