The MAYRON COLE PIANO METHOD

Waltz in D-Flat

Frederic Chopin

Pronounced "Show-pan"
1810-1849

The Polish Composer with the French Name

The story goes that Chopin's French father, Nickolas, did not want to be drafted into the French army so he became a French expatriate and fled to Poland where he had relatives. While living in Poland, he was drafted into the Polish army! Later, Chopin's father married a Polish woman and they had four children. Frederic was their second child and their only son.

From the beginning Frederic showed great musical talent. He was often compared to the genius of Mozart! As a young man, he made his way to Paris, France, which was the cultural center of Europe at that time. In Paris, he met and became romantically attracted to Polish Countess Delfina Potocka. For her, he wrote the Waltz in D-Flat Major - The Minute Waltz. It is said that Chopin was inspired to write the composition while watching a small dog chase its tail. In fact, the original title of Waltz in D-Flat Major was Little Dog Waltz. He later changed the title to The Minute Waltz (pronounced "**my-newt**"... as in very small). Chopin never intended for The Minute Waltz to be performed in sixty seconds!



A few years later, while at a party, Chopin met a famous French author and feminist, Baroness Dudevant. She is better known by her pseudonym "George Sand". Chopin began a big romance with the Baroness and moved into her house. They presented themselves as a married couple to French society, but they never married. After ten years with George Sand, Chopin moved out and the love affair was over! At this same time in his life, Chopin's health began to plummet. He had always been frail, but he was quickly becoming deathly ill. Chopin's older sister came from Poland to take care of her ailing brother for Chopin had been diagnosed with tuberculosis. He died in 1849 at the age of thirty-nine. Before he died, Chopin asked that his heart be removed from his body and returned to a church in Poland where it is buried today. His body was buried in France. He asked that Polish soil be sprinkled over his grave. This was done according to his wishes.

As you study more of Chopin's music, you will notice that Chopin wrote many polonaises and mazurkas (a mazurka is a Polish dance). This was his tribute to Poland, his beloved birth country.

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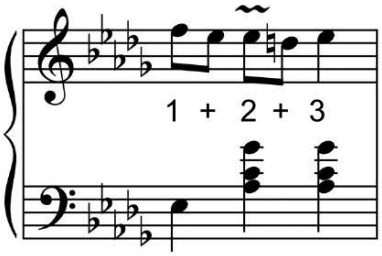
Ornamentation

You will encounter some "ornamentation" in Waltz in D-Flat. Ornamentation means "decoration" or musical flourishes added to embellish the music. Ornamentation does not have any numeric count and does not add to the overall count of the measure.

Mordents

There are several places where a mordent is indicated (see M. 10, 12, 18, 20, etc.). But what is a mordent? A mordent is the rapid alternation of the note indicated in the music with the note **above** it in the key's scale. Example: in M. 10, the mordent notes are E♭ to F back to E♭, but played very rapidly so as not to lose the rhythm counts of the eighth notes seen in the measure.



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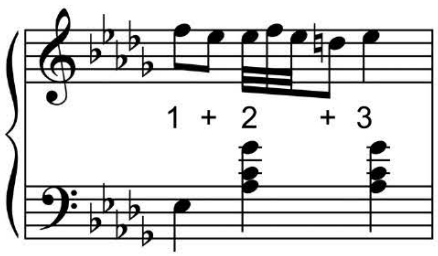
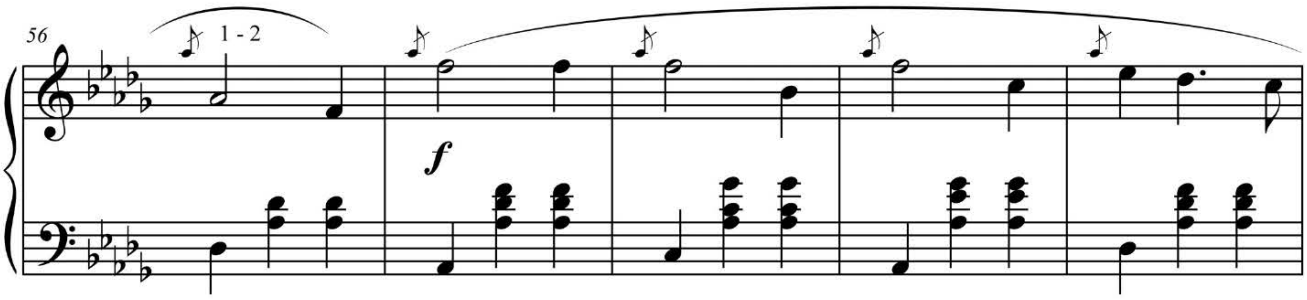


as played

Practice playing the above measures with your class.

Grace Notes

Grace notes are notes that are printed smaller than regular notes (see M. 55, 56, 57 etc.). Quite often the grace note will have a slash mark through its flag. Play the grace note on the beat and quickly change to the larger printed note that follows it. Grace notes have no count in the measure. They are purely decoration notes.



Practice playing the above measures with your class.



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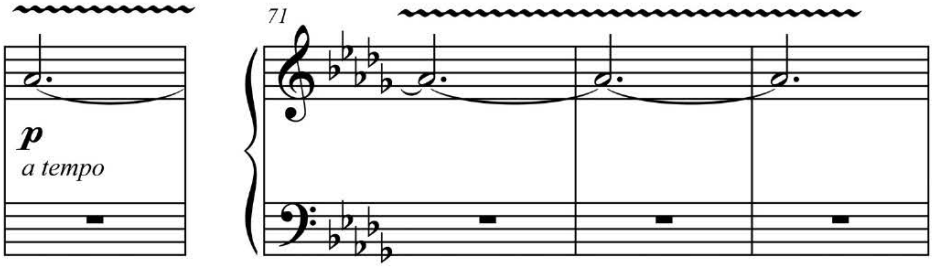
Trills

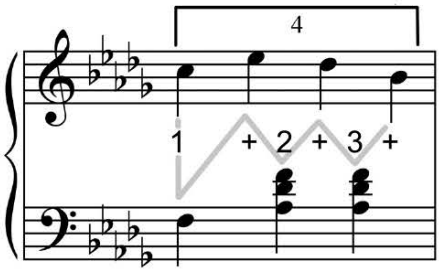
A trill is the rapid alternation between two adjacent notes. (See M. 70.) You will quickly alternated between the A♭ that is written and the B♭ above it. You are supposed to trill for twelve beats! This will take some practice and finger endurance. If you can't make the trill last for twelve beats, you may shorten it to nine, six, or even three beats, but try for twelve as written.



Four Against Three

Look at measure 45 written below. The RH is playing 4 quarter notes against the LH's three quarter note beats. The bracket above the measure tells you that the RH rhythm has been altered and that the treble measure 45 will contain four beats instead of three.

How to play this measure: Always strike beat notes for the first beat (RH and LH) at the same time. Then, **the hand that has the most beats** starts the "see-saw". In this case, the RH has the most beats, so it starts the see-saw. The measure's counts have been written for you. There are still 3 beats per measure, but you must squeeze in the four quarter notes in the RH while keeping a steady waltz beat with the LH. Practice playing this measure by yourself; then play M. 45 aloud with your class.





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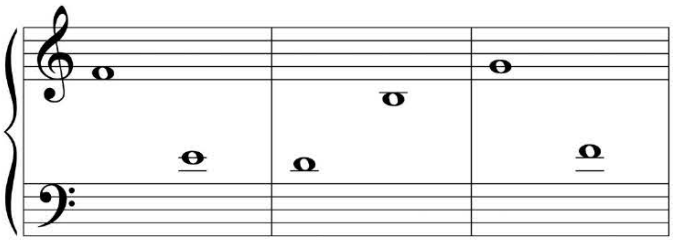
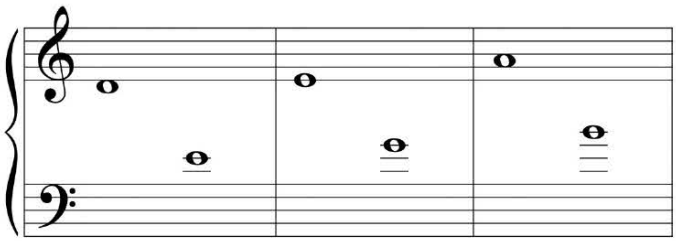
Inner Ledger Notes

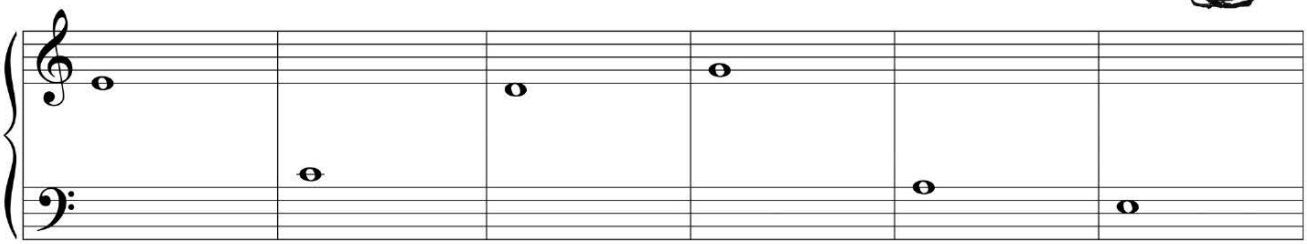
1. Sometimes, your music will direct your LH to play keys that your RH usually plays and vice versa. The composer uses inner ledger notes to tell you this information. Inner ledger notes are written in the wide space between the bass and treble staffs. Draw a circle around the LOWER sounding note of each pair of notes:







2. Rewrite the given note on the other staff. Your note must be the same pitch as the given note. Use inner ledger lines where needed.



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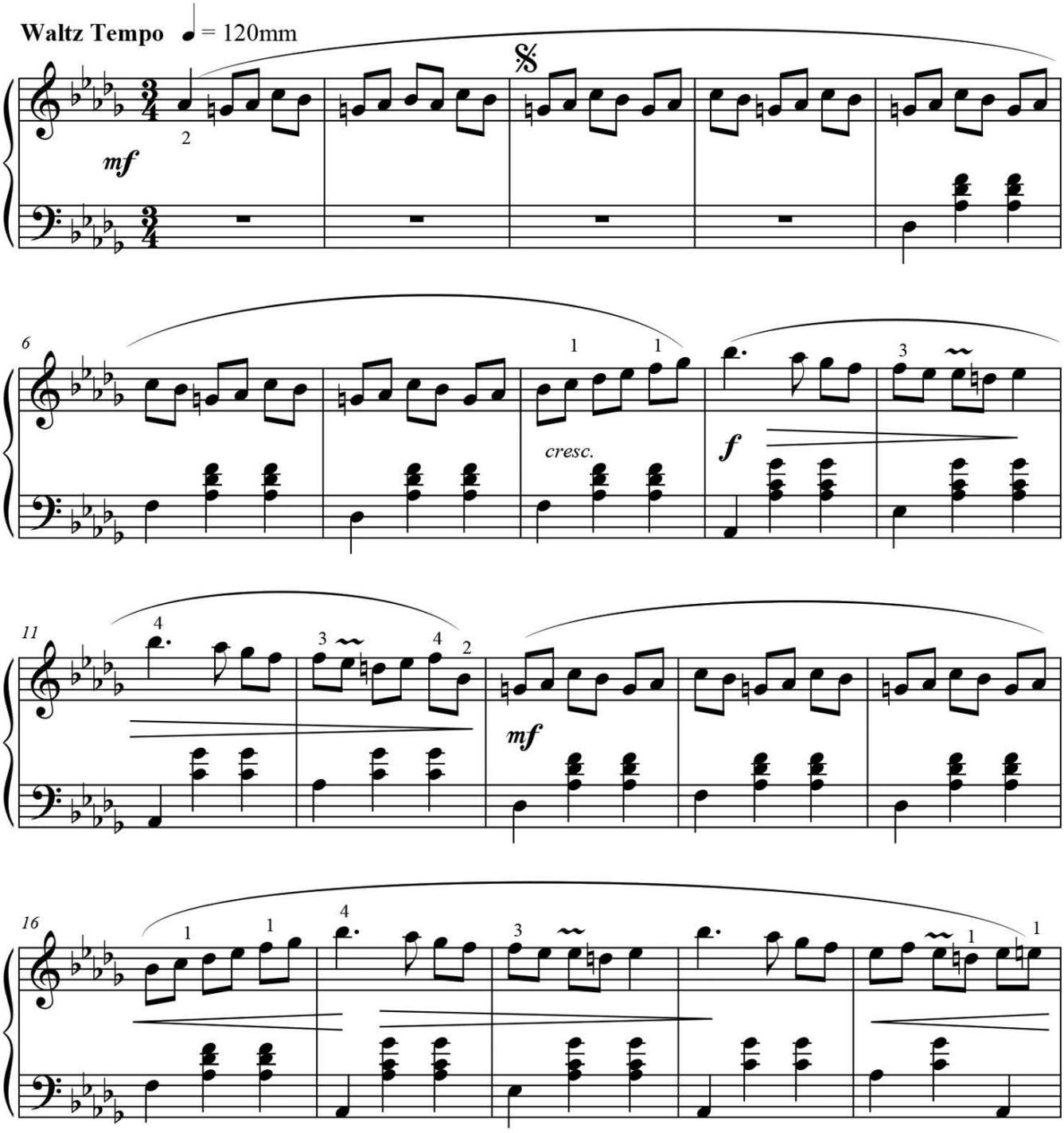
Waltz in D-Flat

"The Minute Waltz"

(orchestrated accompaniment has a 2 measure count-in)

Frederic Chopin



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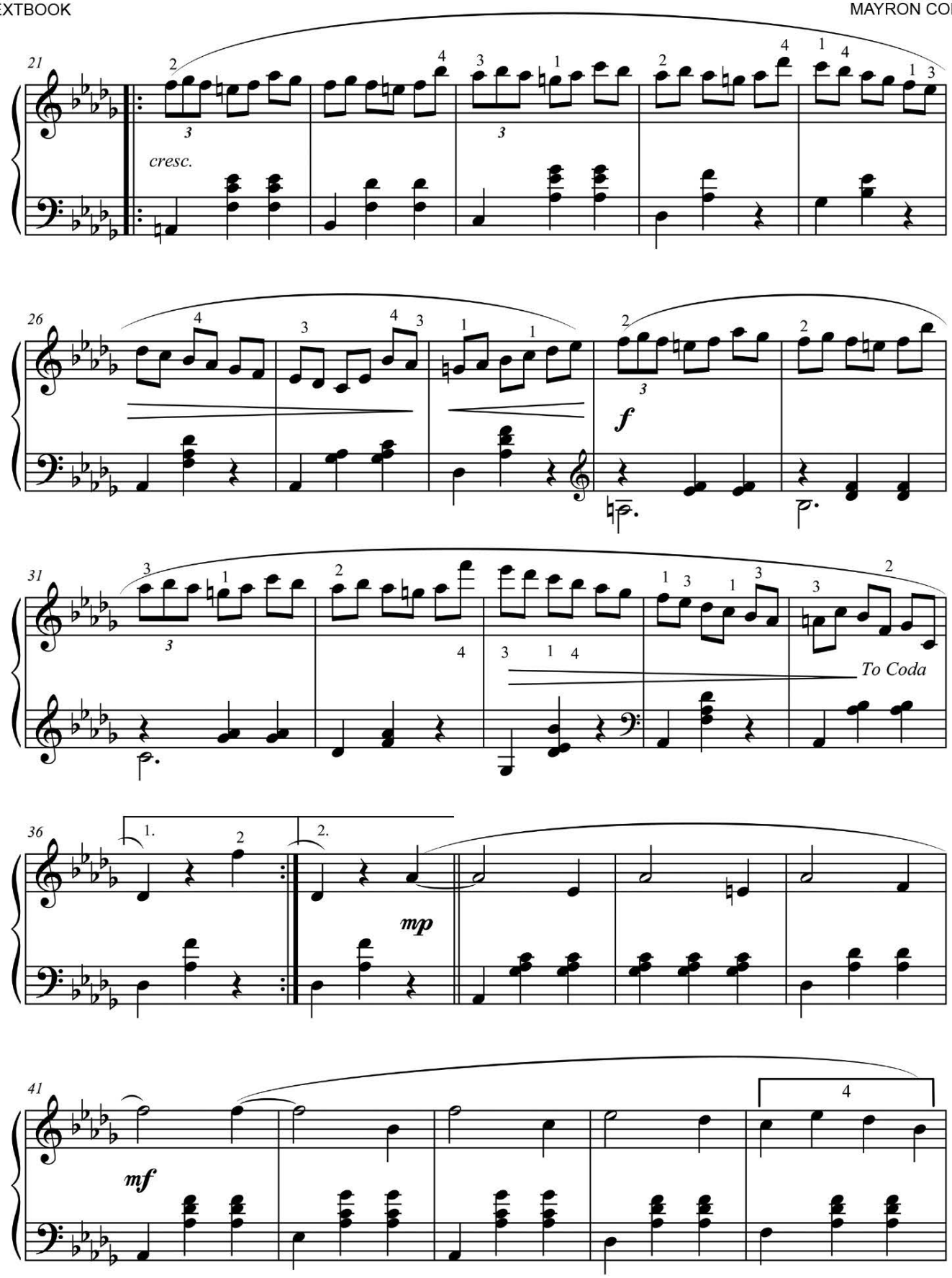

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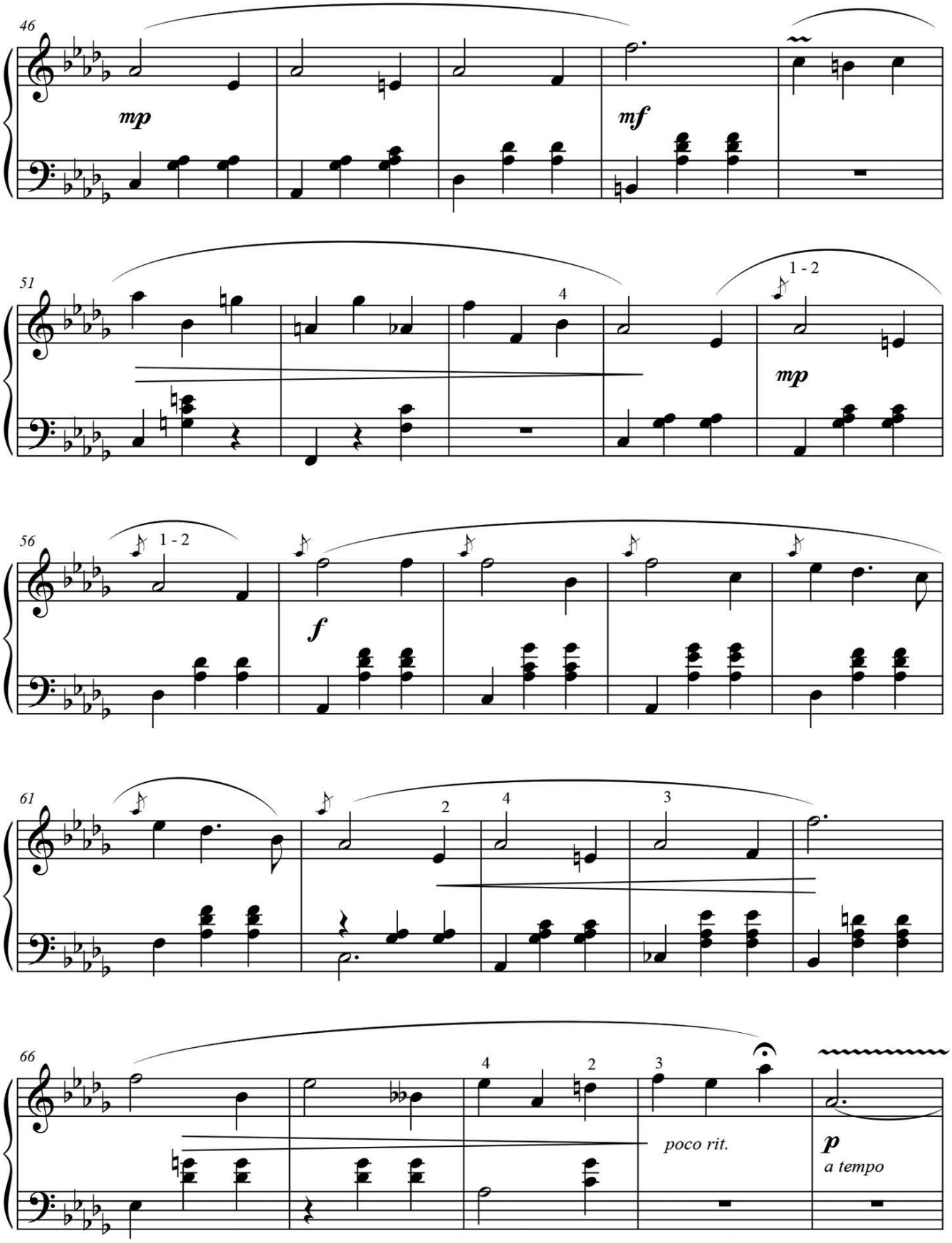

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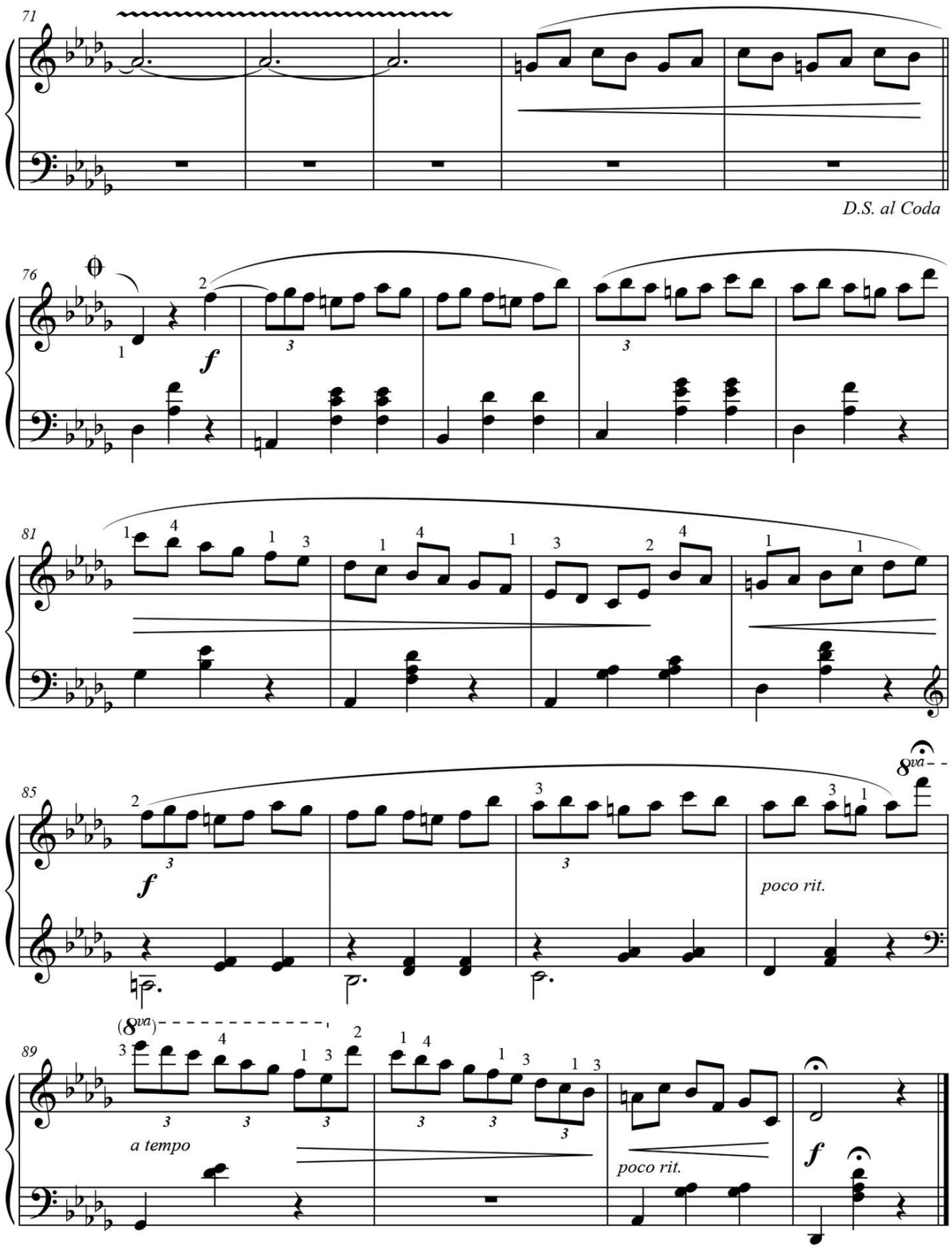

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