The
MAYRON COLE
PIANO METHOD

Moonlight Sonata

Sitting in the Moonlight



The first 5¾ measures of Moonlight Sonata are a restful introduction and are setting the mood of moonlight. On the last beat of M.5, the beautiful melody begins in the RH. The RH melody is written with "stem up" notes most of the time. Sometimes, the melody notes are written with "stem down" notes because of the placement of the notes on the staff. This melody is to be gently brought out by you, the pianist, while you subdue the other notes the RH and LH are playing. This takes a bit of finger-pressure control on your part. With practice, you will begin to understand what Beethoven's music is trying to say to the listener.

Look at M. 21 and 22 in Moonlight Sonata. Do not be confused by the way these measures are presented. The LH plays only the "stem down" notes in the bass clef. The RH plays all the other notes. Play these two measures three times.

At M. 32, it is tempting to move out of triplets and start playing the rhythm of "fake duplets" which is the rhythmic feel of a series of two-eighths. This is due to the sound of the intervals used. To avoid playing what sounds like repetitious two-eighths, slightly stress the first note

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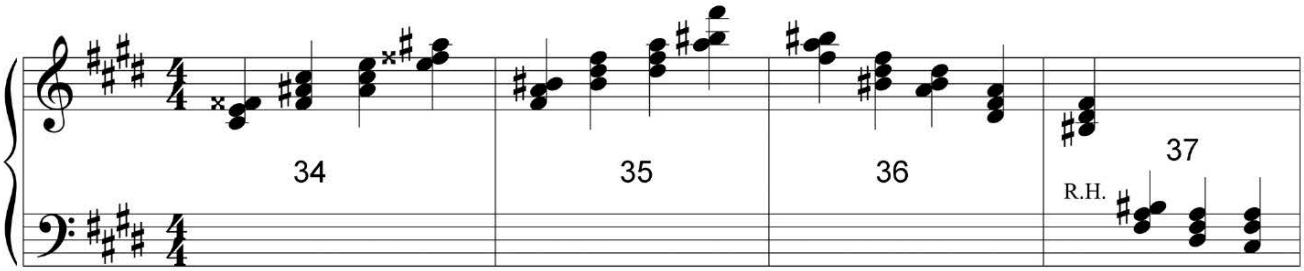
of each triplet which is indicated with an accent mark in your music. Turn to M. 32 in your music and observe the accent marks. These “fake duplets” continue through M. 37 but if you stress the first note of each of the triplets your rhythm will flow smoothly. At M. 38, the feel of playing triplets is re-established. Hooray!

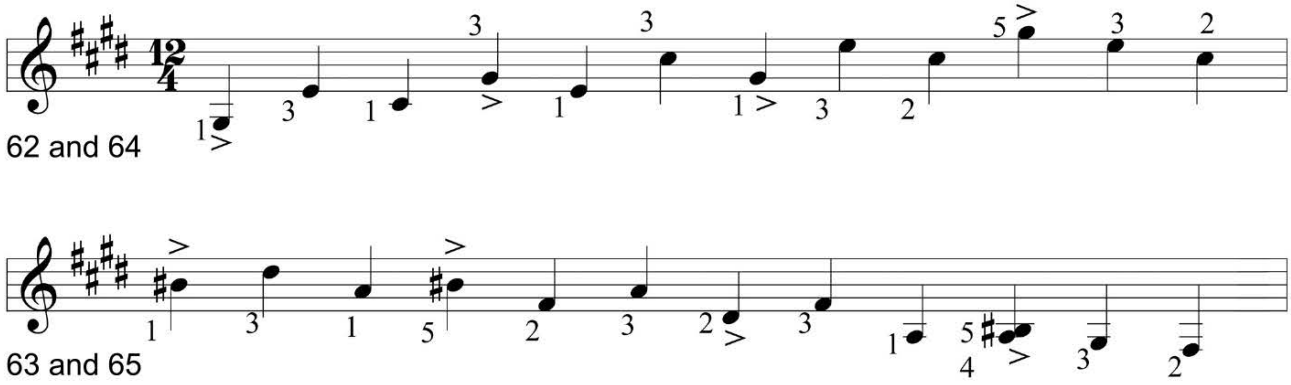
Moonlight Sonata is filled with root position chords and inverted chords. Understanding the chords will make learning this composition a breeze! So let’s get going!

Shown below is the right hand in measures 34 through 37 with the triplets written as blocked chords. Practice playing the measures using blocked chords, then turn to M. 34 through 37 in Moonlight Sonata and play the measures again as written with broken chords and counting with triplets.



Beginning in M. 60, the LH plays the melody. Subdue the RH and slightly bring out the LH notes.

To help you to correctly finger M. 62-65, the notes are written below in quarter notes:



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More Important Facts!

1. Moonlight Sonata's time signature is 4/4. Another time signature that could have been used is 12/8. _____(True or False)

2. Moonlight Sonata's key signature is four sharps. What two scales use four sharps for a key signature? _____Major and _____minor.

3. You can tell from the notes played in the first measure of Moonlight Sonata, that the composition is written in _____.

4. The stem-up notes throughout this composition are denoting the melody. The other notes are filler notes and are to be played softer than the melody notes. This skill of playing some RH notes softer than other RH notes takes concentration and practice from the performer. Practice this skill until you can easily do it.

5. Look again at M. 5. The last beat of the measure is interesting. The last 1/3 of the triplet has been broken into two equal parts. You should be able to feel the correct rhythm if you will count that last triplet as: 1 2 3 + instead of the usual triplet counts of 1 + a. When the last 1/3 of the triplet has been broken into two equal parts elsewhere in the composition, count the rhythm in the same 1 2 3 + manner.

6. In M. 27 you see a double sharp sign in the bass clef. F^{x} is enharmonic (same sound) as _____.(A or G)

7. Turn to M. 28. The notes with double stems are the melody notes. These double-stemmed notes are quarter notes and should be held for the duration of the entire triplet. Practice this skill hands separately until you can easily do it.

8. Look at the last triplet in M. 63. What notes will the RH be playing? ____&_____ _____ _____. A and $B^{\#}$ are an augmented second, but has the same sound as a _____third. (Major or minor)

9. Look at M. 68. Even though the rhythm in M. 68 is simple, it is often counted incorrectly! Be sure to count 1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a

13. Moonlight Sonata ends with a dynamic marking of ***ppp***. One rarely sees ***ppp*** used in music. To celebrate this rare occasion, please play very, very softly.

Answers: True; E Major and $C^{\#}$ minor; $C^{\#}$ minor; G; $B^{\#}$ & A, G, F; minor

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Ludwig van Beethoven 1770-1827

Beethoven is one of the most famous and influential composers of all time! His music formed a "bridge" from the classical period to the romantic period.

Though his family name carried the Dutch title "van," Ludwig van Beethoven was not of nobility. He was born in Bonn, Germany, to a working class family. His father, Johann van Beethoven, was a tenor at the court of the Elector of Cologne. Later the father became music director of the court. To supplement his income, Johann also gave piano and violin lessons. Beethoven's mother, Maria Magdalena Keverich, was the daughter of the head chef at the court of the Arch Bishop of Trier.



Ludwig and two younger brothers, Carl and Johann, were the only children (out of seven) to survive infancy. Beethoven's first music teacher was his father. From an early age, it was obvious that Ludwig was an exceptional child. But his talent was soon being exploited by his father! Influenced by the success of Leopold Mozart's exploitation of Wolfgang, Ludwig's father dictated that the young Ludwig was to give his first public piano recital when he was seven. (Portrait to the left: Ludwig van Beethoven age 13 in 1783)

It's interesting to note that Beethoven's goal was to be an accomplished pianist long before he started composing his great music. In 1787, Beethoven traveled to Vienna, Austria, to study with Wolfgang Mozart. But barely two weeks into his Austrian visit, Beethoven received notification that his mother was dying back in Bonn, Germany. He rushed back home, but his gravely ill mother died a short time later. At that same time, his father, who had always had a drinking problem, lapsed deeper into alcoholism. Beethoven was only seventeen, but he was pushed into the role of caring for his two younger brothers. For the next five years, Beethoven lived in Bonn and cared for his family as best he could.

When Beethoven was nineteen, he obtained a legal order that directed half of his father's salary be paid directly to him (Ludwig) so that he could support the family. Beethoven also supplemented the family's income by playing viola in the court orchestra. From that experience, Beethoven became familiar with a variety of operas, including some by Mozart.

In 1792, when Beethoven was twenty-two, he moved to Vienna. Joseph Haydn was also in Vienna at that time, and arrangements were made for Beethoven to study with the aging master. Shortly after Beethoven arrived in Vienna, he received word that his father had died.

He did not return home for his father's funeral.

Working with Haydn, Beethoven sought to master the skill of composing counterpoint. He also took occasional instruction from Antonio Salieri. In 1793, some of his compositions were published by his friend Nikolaus Simrock. That same year, Beethoven had established a reputation in Vienna as a

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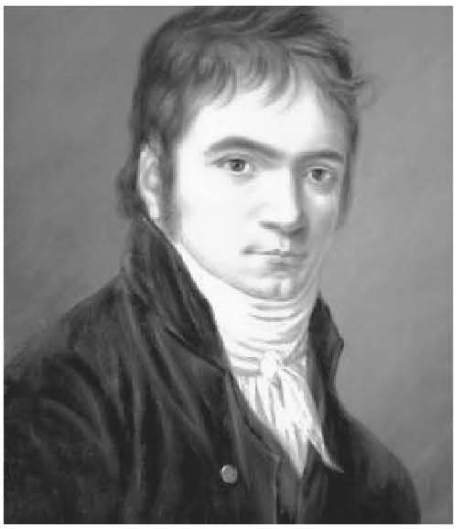
piano virtuoso. When Haydn departed for England in 1794, Beethoven decided to stay in Vienna and continue his music studies.

Around 1796, Beethoven began to notice that he was gradually losing his hearing. There has always been much debate as to the cause of the hearing loss, and no firm answer has been found. But one can imagine the mental pain that the loss of hearing was causing Beethoven. But, thankfully, Beethoven decided to continue with life as best he could and to continue composing. Writing music without accurate hearing was easy for him at this time, but concertizing at the piano was becoming extremely difficult. It was at this point in his life that Beethoven became a full-time composer and gave up his highly successful piano concerts.

Beethoven's published compositions were financial successes, and the profits were nearly sufficient to cover his living expenses for a year. By 1798, when Beethoven was twenty-eight, he began writing the most complex of compositions: the symphony. He was now considered one of the most important composers of his generation. It was during this period that he wrote one of his most beautiful piano sonatas: the *Pathetique Sonata*. *(The Adagio Movement from this sonata is in Level 9B).* By the end of 1800, Beethoven and his music were in demand from rich patrons and music publishers.

In 1801, Beethoven wrote the haunting *Moonlight Sonata*. In 1802, Beethoven's brother, Carl, began to manage Beethoven's finances. Carl negotiated with publishers for the highest royalty fees and began selling some of Beethoven's earlier unpublished works. Thank goodness for Carl because Beethoven was not known for his organizational abilities. He often forgot to bathe or change clothes. Every few days, Carl would go to Beethoven's house, gather up soiled clothes, and put clean clothes on the bed. Beethoven was always pleasantly surprised by the "clothes fairy" who had brought him clean clothes. Carl also put Beethoven's publishing royalties in the bank for him. All of this helped free Beethoven to do what he did best: compose! (portrait to the right: Ludwig van Beethoven age 33 in 1803)



While Beethoven did earn sufficient income from the publications of his works, he also depended on the generosity of patrons to supplement his income. Some of those wealthy patrons were aristocrats such as Archduke Rudolph, the youngest son of Emperor Leopold II. Rudolph and Ludwig became friends, and Rudolph took piano and composition lessons with Beethoven until 1824.

Although he was becoming more deaf with each passing year, Beethoven kept an active social life and was often falling in love. Regretfully, many of the women who won his affection were already married. It is thought that he may have proposed to several of the single ladies but was turned down since they were of nobility, and he was born a commoner.

By 1814, Beethoven was completely deaf. But some of the treasures that we still have from Beethoven's life are his "conversation books." He used diaries to write his thoughts to his friends—and his friends answered in writings to him. These books give tremendous insight into Beethoven's thinking during a traumatic time in his life.

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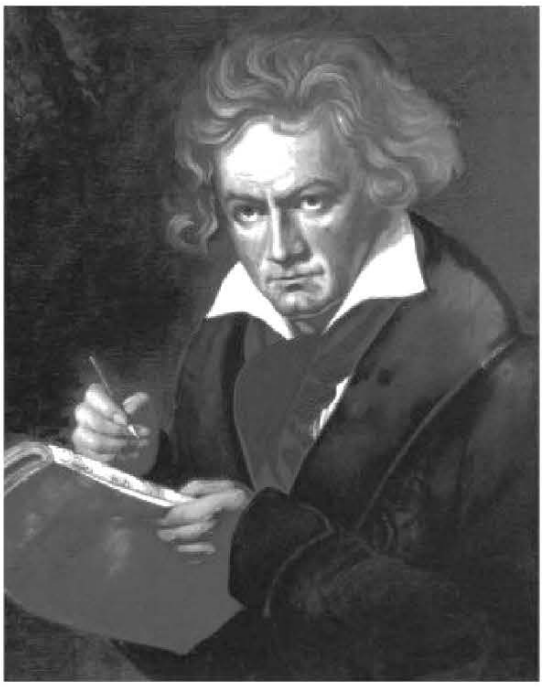
At this time in Beethoven's life, helpful brother Carl was becoming ill. By the time of Carl's death in 1815, Beethoven had spent a small fortune on Carl's medical care. Almost immediately after Carl's death, Beethoven became embroiled in a legal battle with Carl's widow, Johanna, over his nephew, Karl. Ludwig considered his sister-in-law to be an unfit parent for nephew Karl because she had borne a child out of wedlock before her marriage to Beethoven's brother. Plus, Johanna had been arrested at one time for stealing. The custody fight over the nine-year-old child went to court and brought out the very worst in Beethoven. At this time in his life, Beethoven's creative output dropped to almost zero. (portrait to the left: Beethoven's nephew Karl)

The Austrian court system at that time had one court for nobility and one court for commoners. Beethoven disguised the fact that the "van" title in his name was Dutch and did not denote nobility as the German title "von" does. Therefore, his case against his sister-in-law was tried in the court for nobles, and Beethoven (because he was famous) briefly won custody of young Karl. But regretfully, when giving further evidence in the court for nobles, Beethoven inadvertently let it slip that he was *not* of noble birth. The case was immediately transferred to the court for commoners, and Beethoven lost sole guardianship.

Beethoven appealed the decision and again regained custody of the nephew, Karl. Johanna appealed to the Emperor of Austria but was not successful. Beethoven immediately placed the young child in a boarding school, but gave him little spending money. Beethoven reasoned that Karl would spend his money on improper things if he had a few extra coins. Beethoven kept Karl so destitute and was so overbearing and insulting to Karl's mother that, when Karl was a teenager, he tried to commit suicide. Thankfully, he was not successful. Karl later saw Beethoven for the last time in 1827 when Karl left to join the army. (portrait to the right: Ludwig van Beethoven age 50 in 1820)



Beethoven wrote his last compositions in failing health. In 1825 he was bedridden, but regained his health briefly. He rejoiced in this "miracle" and decided he had been made well by God in order to allow him to complete some unfinished works—which he did! But in 1827, Beethoven became bedridden again. Beethoven had many friends, and they daily gathered around his sick bed to comfort him. But on Monday, March 26, 1827, there was a fierce thunderstorm raging. A witness claimed that there was a loud peal of thunder as Beethoven raised his fist to Heaven—and at that moment died. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 30,000 people attended his funeral. Franz Schubert was one of the pall bearers. Beethoven is buried in Vienna, Austria.

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Moonlight Sonata

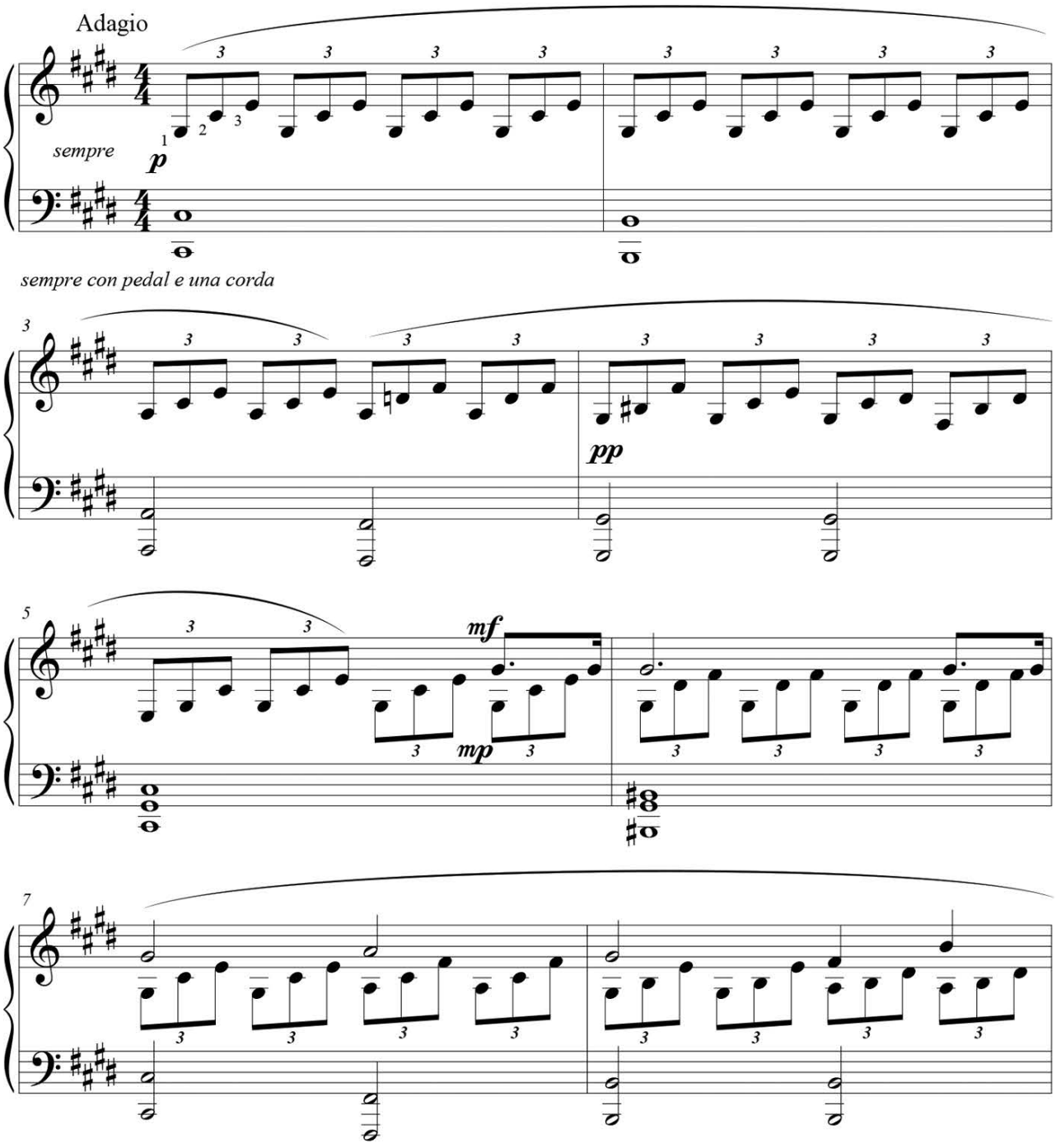
First Movement, Op. 27, No. 2

(orchestrated accompaniment has a 2 measure count-in)



(wedding music)

Ludwig van Beethoven



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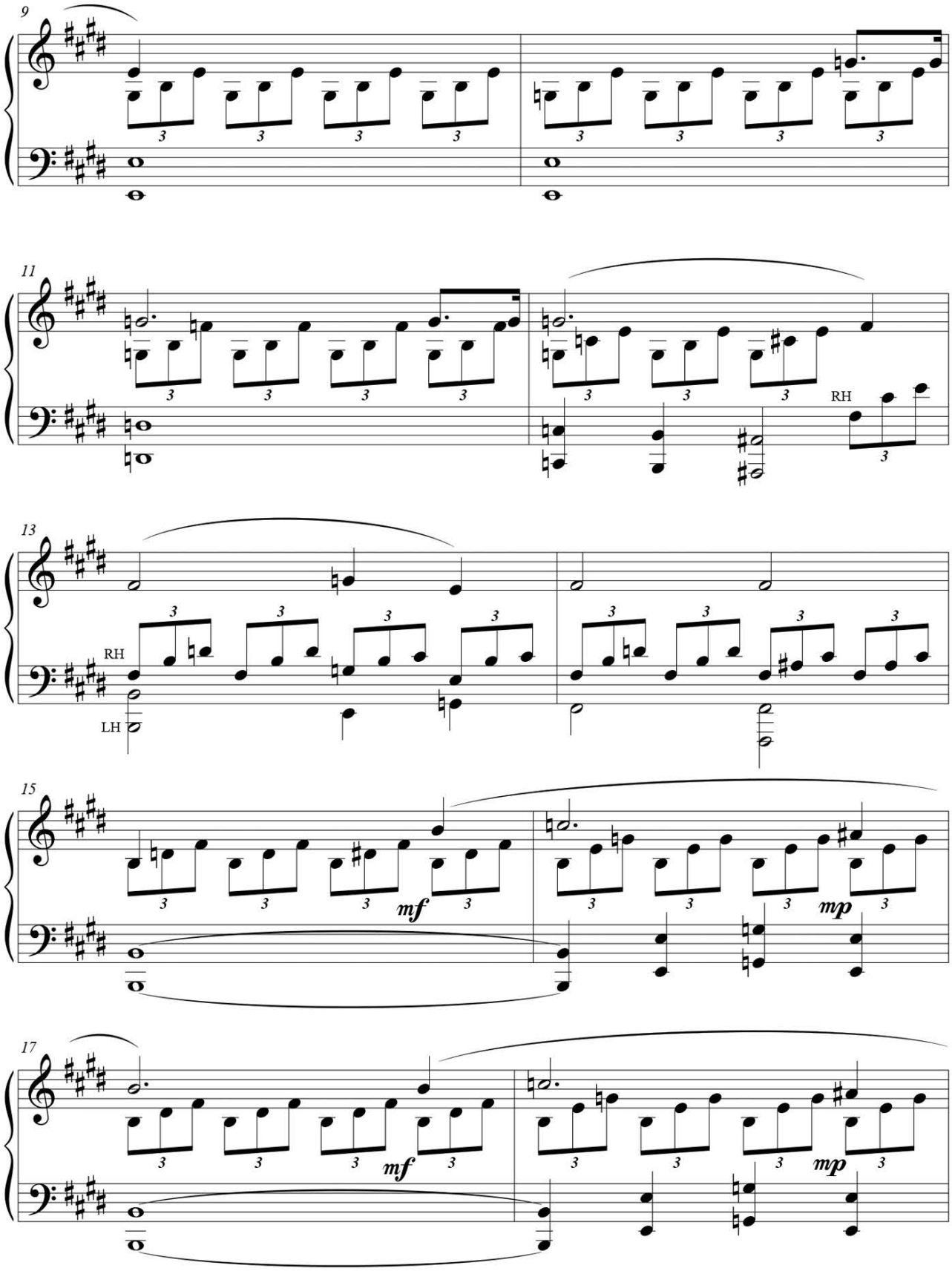

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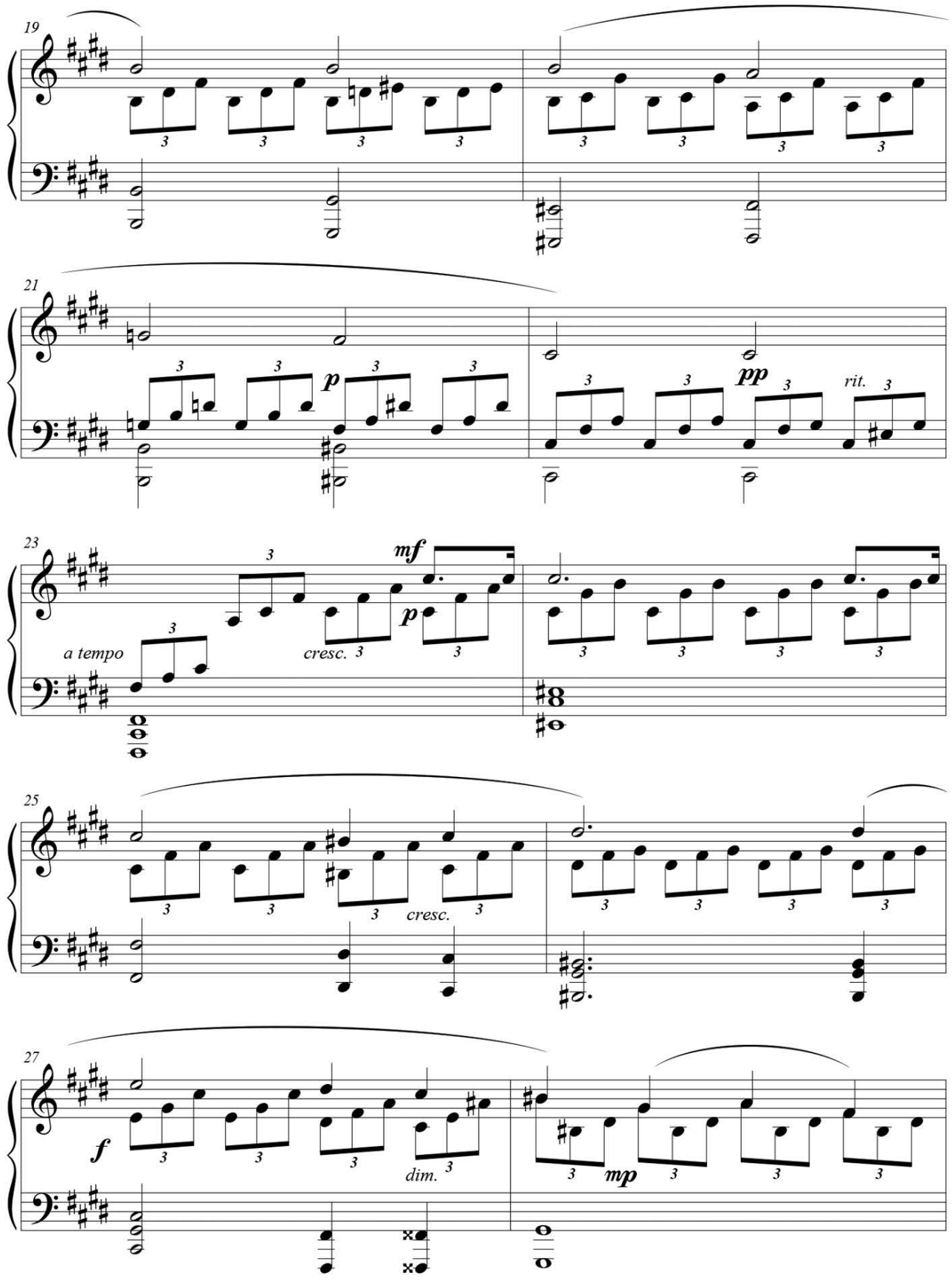

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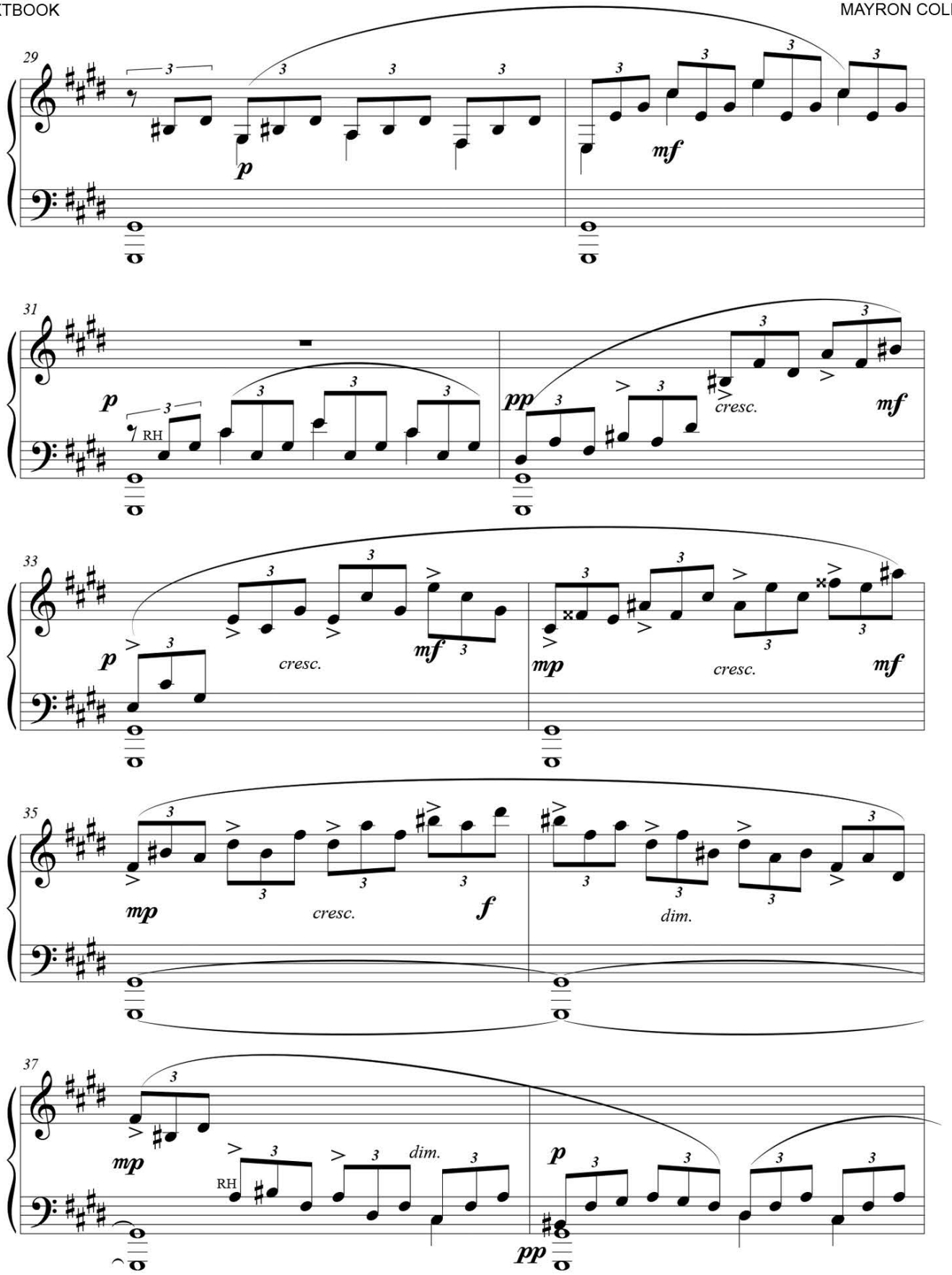

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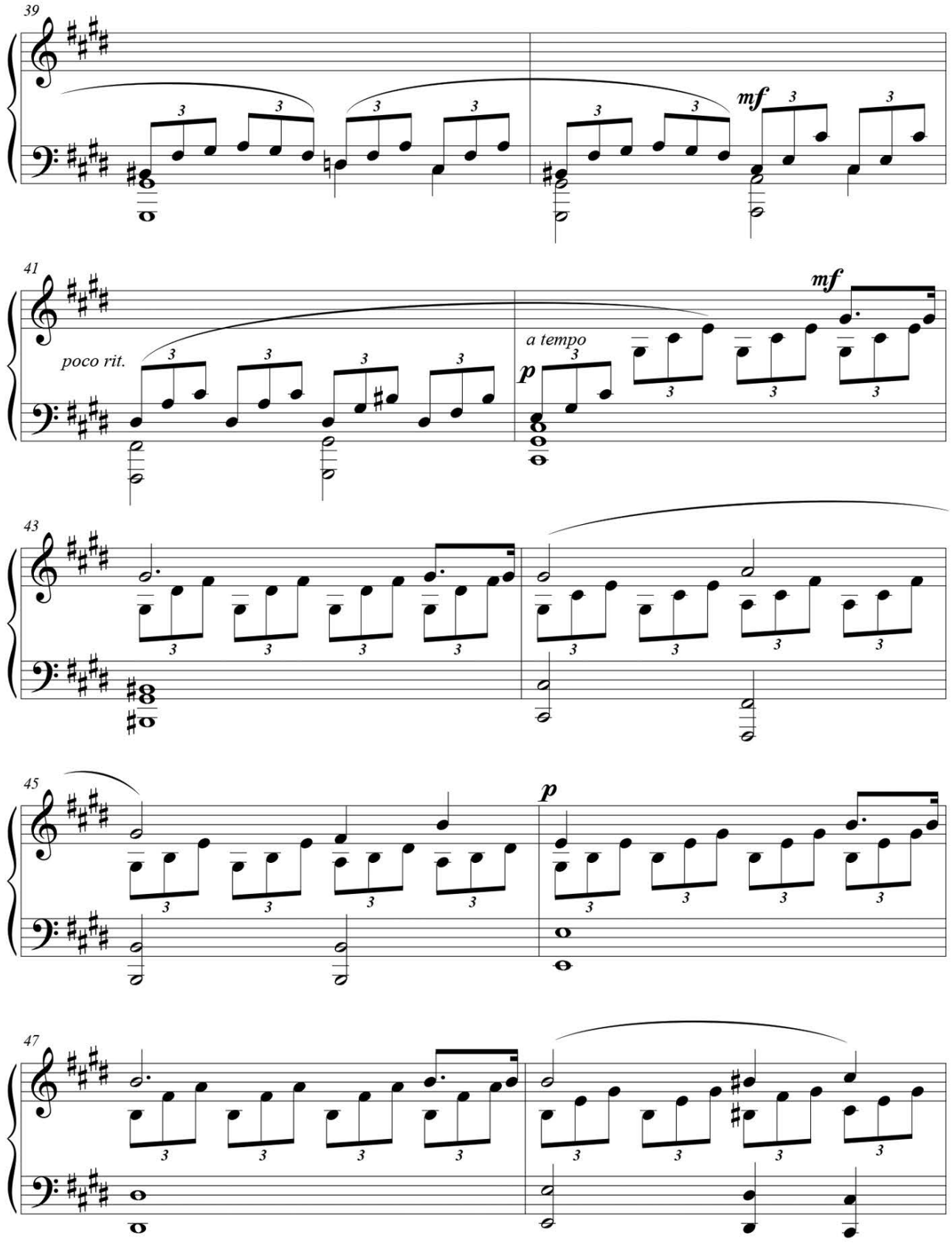

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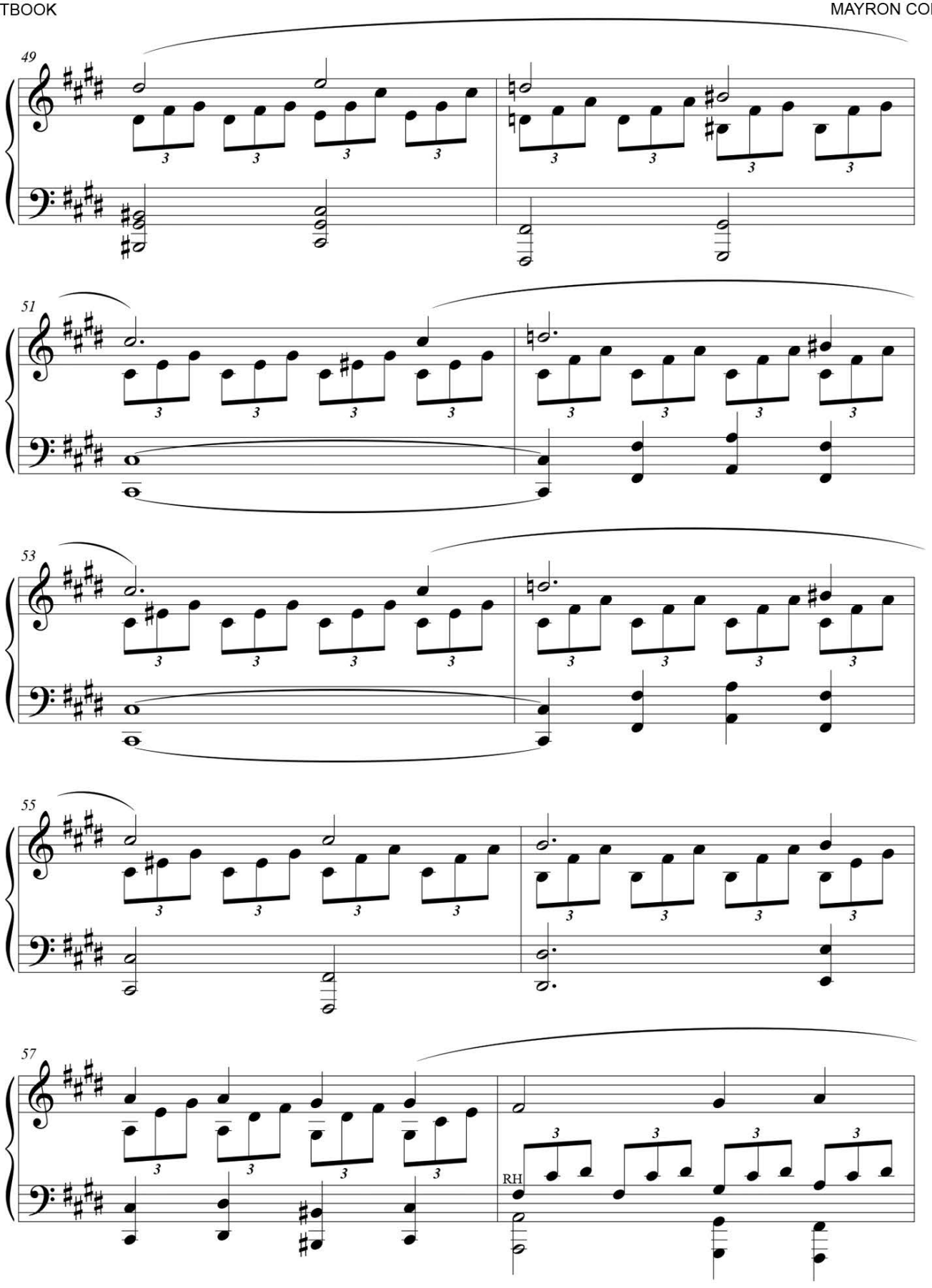

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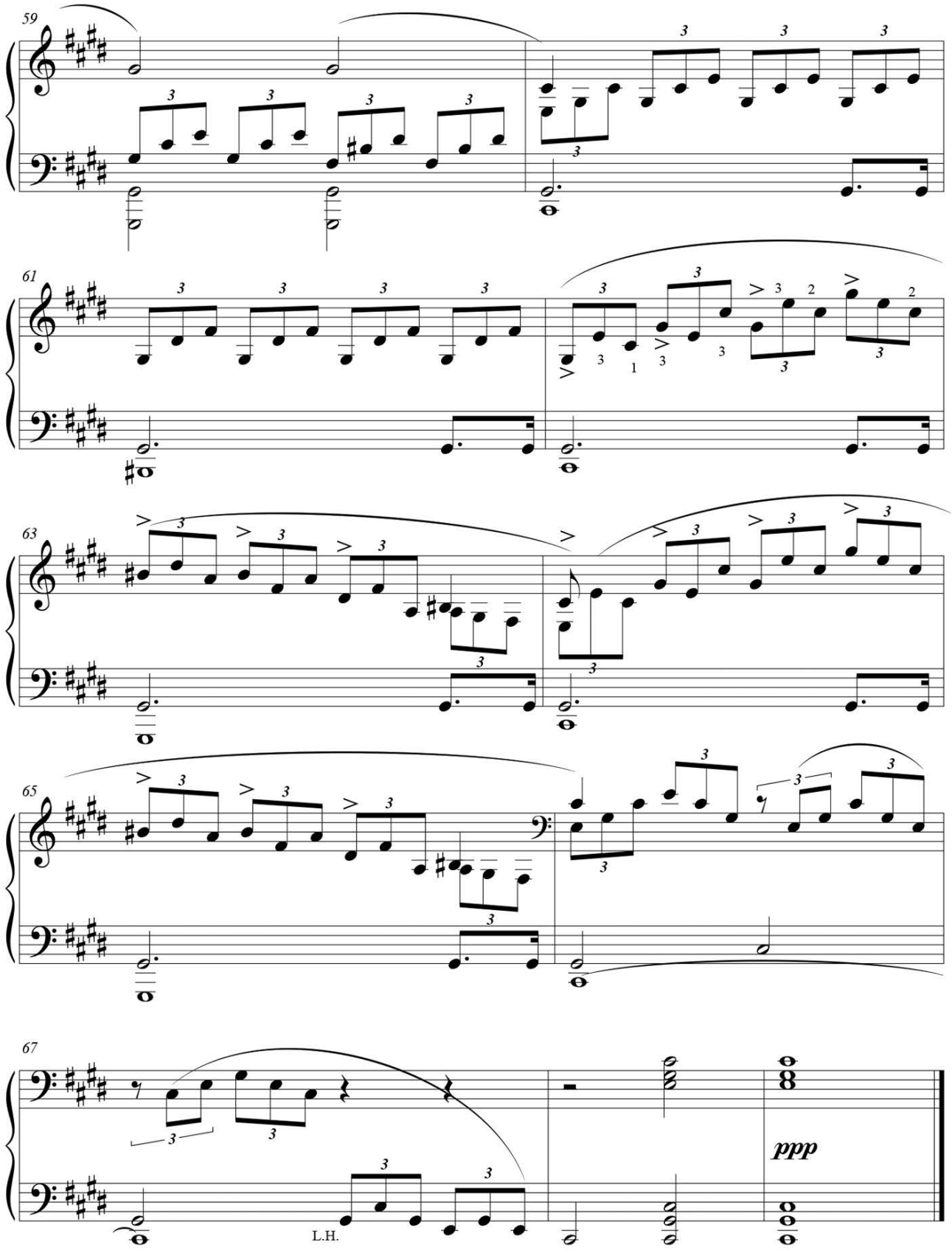

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