The MAYRON COLE PIANO METHOD

Sonata in C Major, K. 545

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756 – 1791

Mozart, a child prodigy born in Salzburg, Austria, was one of the smartest people who ever lived. His music is considered a pillar of the Classical Period.

His sister, Nannerl, was seven when she began taking harpsichord lessons from their father, Leopold. When she completed her music lesson, little three-year old Wolfgang would then sit at the keyboard and play thirds. Nannerl later said that Wolfgang could play thirds on the keyboard for hours. He loved the pleasant sounds the thirds made. And by stacking thirds atop each other, he formed chords.



Since the young boy obviously enjoyed music, Leopold decided to teach young Wolfgang some small minuets that Leopold had written. The three-year old played them perfectly with correct notes and rhythm.

By the time Wolfgang was five years old, he was already accomplished at playing harpsichord, organ, and violin, and at that young age he began composing music. His ink-splattered compositions amazed his father who quickly realized that Wolfgang was a better composer than he.

Leopold knew that his young children were rare talents and decided to take them on tour to the royal courts of Europe. One of these concert tours lasted three and a half years.

These long trips were difficult during that period of history. To pay their expenses, Leopold had to depend on donations and reimbursements from the nobility for whom they were performing. Regretfully, the nobility lived in their own world and often gifted the Mozart family with clothes or other useless objects instead of the much needed money.

Near-fatal illnesses struck during one of their tours. Leopold became deathly sick while in London and then both his small children became ill with small pox while performing in The Hague. One wonders what would have happened to Wolfgang and Nannerl if their father had died while all three were far from home.

In 1773, a seventeen-year old Mozart struck out on his own and found employment as a court musician for the ruler of Salzburg. But soon, Mozart became discontented with that job and began traveling around Germany looking for better employment elsewhere. One reason for his unhappiness was his low salary. He was quickly running out of money and began pawning his possessions.

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Four years later Mozart resigned his Salzburg position and once again traveled to various royal courts seeking employment. He journeyed to Mannheim but found little there. A year later he was in Paris.

Mozart wrote two great compositions while in Paris: A minor piano sonata, and the Paris Symphony. While he was in Paris, his father Leopold was back in Salzburg trying to obtain a job for Wolfgang as court organist and concertmaster. Wolfgang finally journeyed back to Salzburg and took the positions that Leopold had secured for him, but Wolfgang was still unhappy to be back working in Salzburg.

It all came to a head when he journeyed to Vienna to be part of the celebrations for Emperor Joseph II's ascension to the Austrian throne. The powerful archbishop Colloredo, who was in charge of the celebrations, told Wolfgang that he could not charge a fee for playing the harpsichord for the emperor. They quarreled, and Mozart was eventually dismissed by the archbishop for such insubordination!

Leopold wrote to his son begging Wolfgang to reconcile with the angry archbishop. But Mozart wanted to pursue a life as an independent composer and performer.

During this tumultuous time in his life, Wolfgang moved in with the Weber family. He had met the family several years earlier when he was infatuated with one of their daughters, Aloysia. Now that he was living in the Weber household, Wolfgang directed his amorous attention to the third Weber daughter, Constanze.

The couple married and eventually had six children, but only two of them survived infancy.

In 1784, Mozart met Joseph Haydn in Vienna and the two became close friends. Haydn told Leopold, "Your son is the greatest composer known to me." Often when Haydn was visiting Vienna, he and Wolfgang would play together in an improvised string duo.

During this time Mozart wrote several new piano concertos and was presenting concerts with himself as the soloist. Concert halls were difficult to find, so Mozart rented a room in an apartment building and also a ballroom that was part of a restaurant. These concerts were very popular and were attended by a delighted audience of "common" people; up until that time, most music was for royalty only or for church services.

Mozart was finally earning some substantial money from those concerts, and he and his immature wife began living a plush lifestyle. They lived in an expensive apartment for which Mozart purchased a fine pianoforte and a pool table. They had servants and sent their son to a private boarding school. Regretfully, they were not saving any money.

Even though Wolfgang was enjoying the high-life that he had always pursued, he did write some great music during this time, especially operas.

In 1787, Emperor Joseph II offered Mozart the position of "chamber composer." This was a part-time appointment, and the only requirement was that Mozart write music for the Emperor's royal dances.

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The salary was not very high, but the income was important when Mozart fell upon difficult financial times. And times did indeed become difficult when audiences thinned at his concerts due to the Austro-Turkish war which was drawing money out of the Austrian economy.

Mozart began making long trips to Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin, Frankfurt, and other German cities. The trips and concerts he gave in those cities produced little success and the family's financial distress was growing more desperate. Mozart began borrowing money from friends. Several wealthy patrons in Hungary and Amsterdam pledged yearly money to be given to Mozart to ease his financial distress.

1791 was Mozart's last year, and it was a time of great creativity. He finished writing *The Magic Flute* opera, string quartets, a piano concerto, and a clarinet concerto. Then his health became bad and he was quickly becoming weaker. On September 30, Mozart conducted the premiere of *The Magic Flute*. By November 20 his health had deteriorated to the point that he was bedridden. He died in his home on December 5 at the age of thirty-five.

Mozart's funeral was modest, but memorial services held in Vienna and Prague were well attended. Mozart was buried in an unmarked "common" grave somewhere in Vienna's Saint Marx cemetery. The cause of his death has never been determined. Many people continue to speculate about his symptoms which suggest mercury poisoning among other diagnoses.

ANSWER:

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE PORTRAIT OF YOUNG MOZART ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE. DO YOU NOTICE ANYTHING WRONG WITH IT?



The title of this Mozart Sonata is **Sonata in C Major, K. 545.** What does the "**K. 545**" stand for? The "**K**" is for Kochel (pronounced KUR-shel), the last name of Ludwig von Kochel. Kochel was Austrian, like Mozart, and lived from 1800-1877. Kochel was a highly educated man with a PhD in law. He was also an expert in botany, geology, mineralogy, and music.

Because of his love of music he worked for many years on his *Kochel Catalogue* which registered the chronology of the music that Mozart composed. Often Mozart's compositions are referred to by their Kochel number.

Musicians owe a lot to the industrious Kochel. Now when you play the **Sonata in C Major** you will know that it was the **545**th composition that Mozart wrote.

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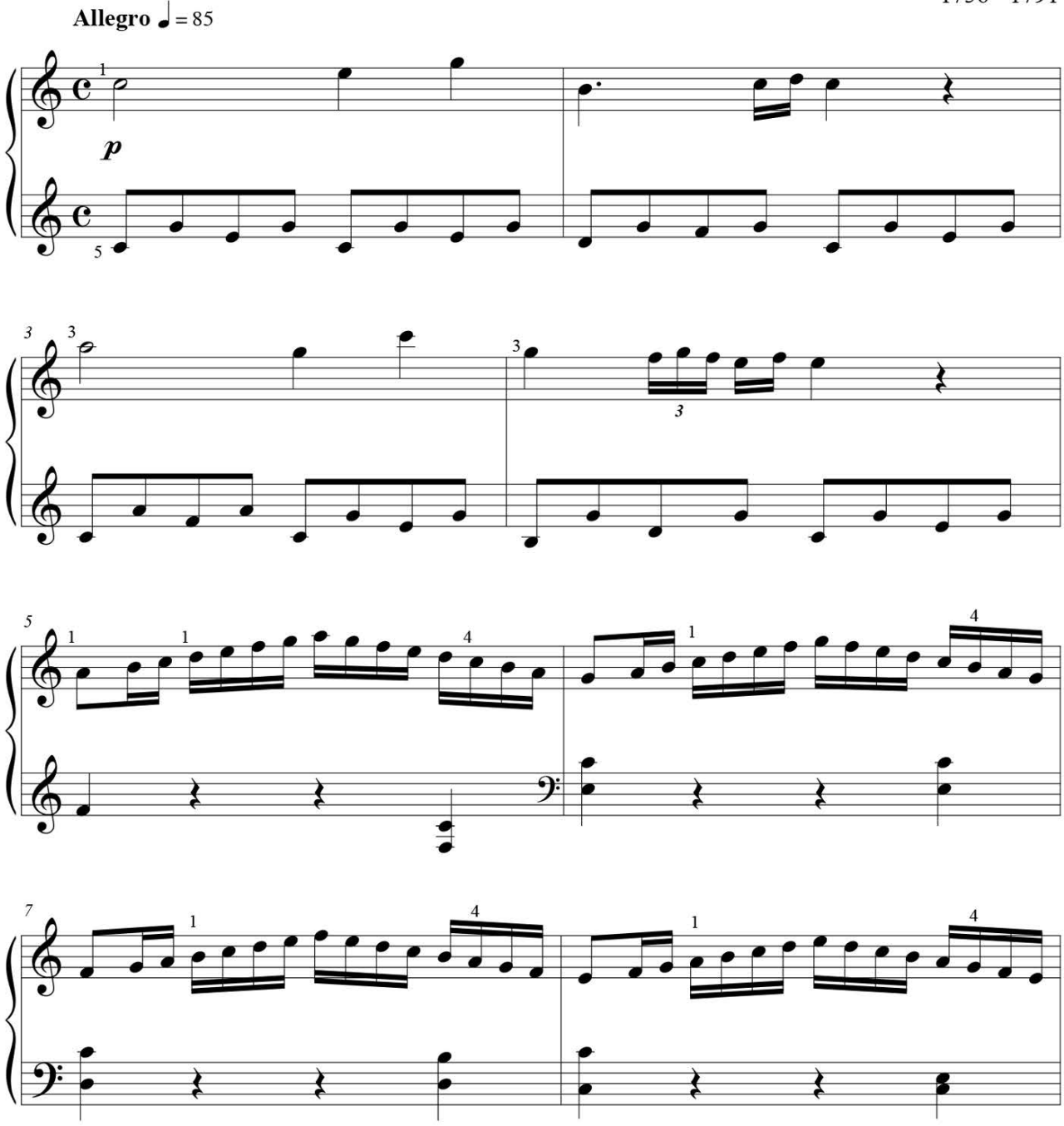
Sonata in C Major, K.545

(orchestrated accompaniment has a 2 measure count-in)

Wolfgang Mozart
1756 - 1791



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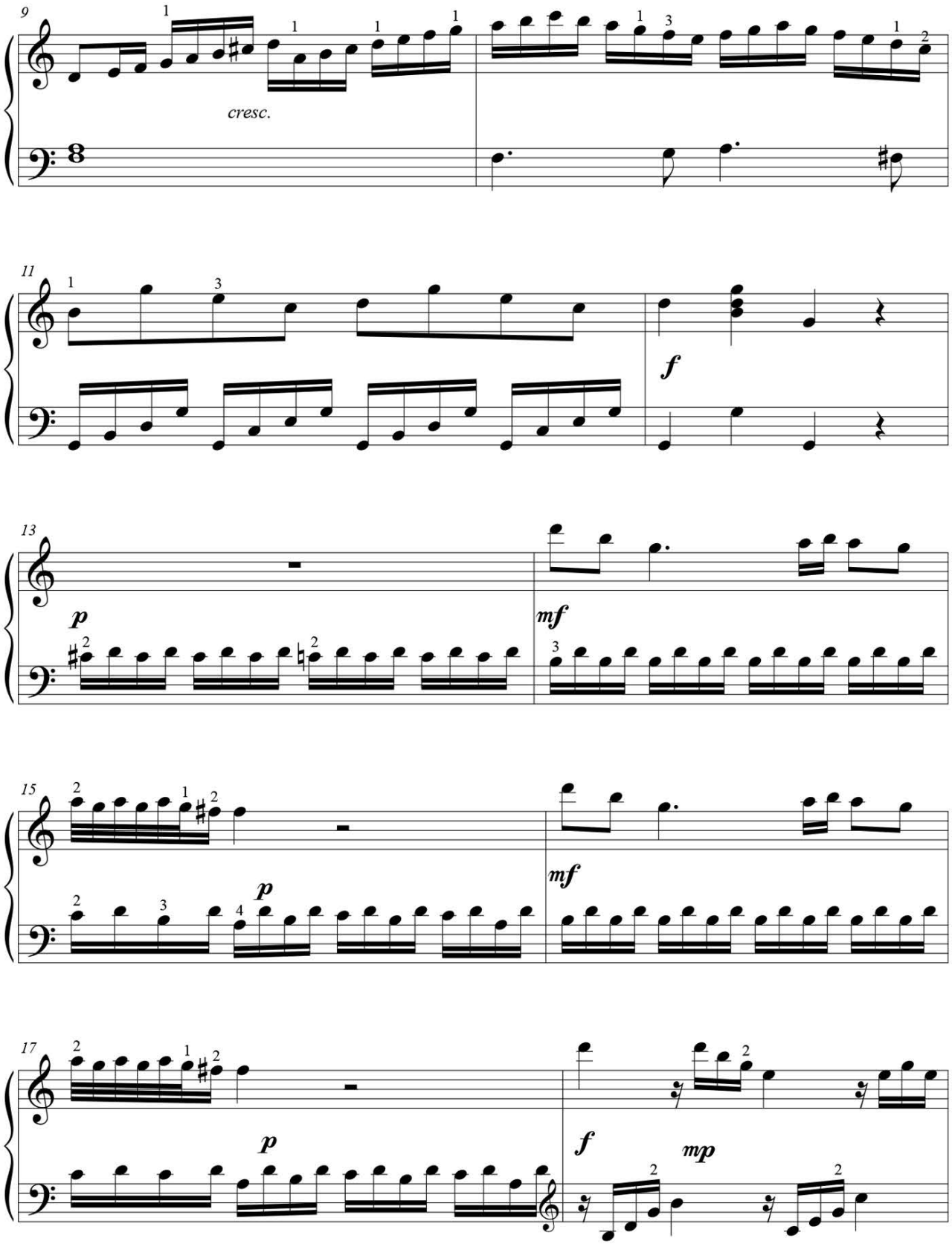

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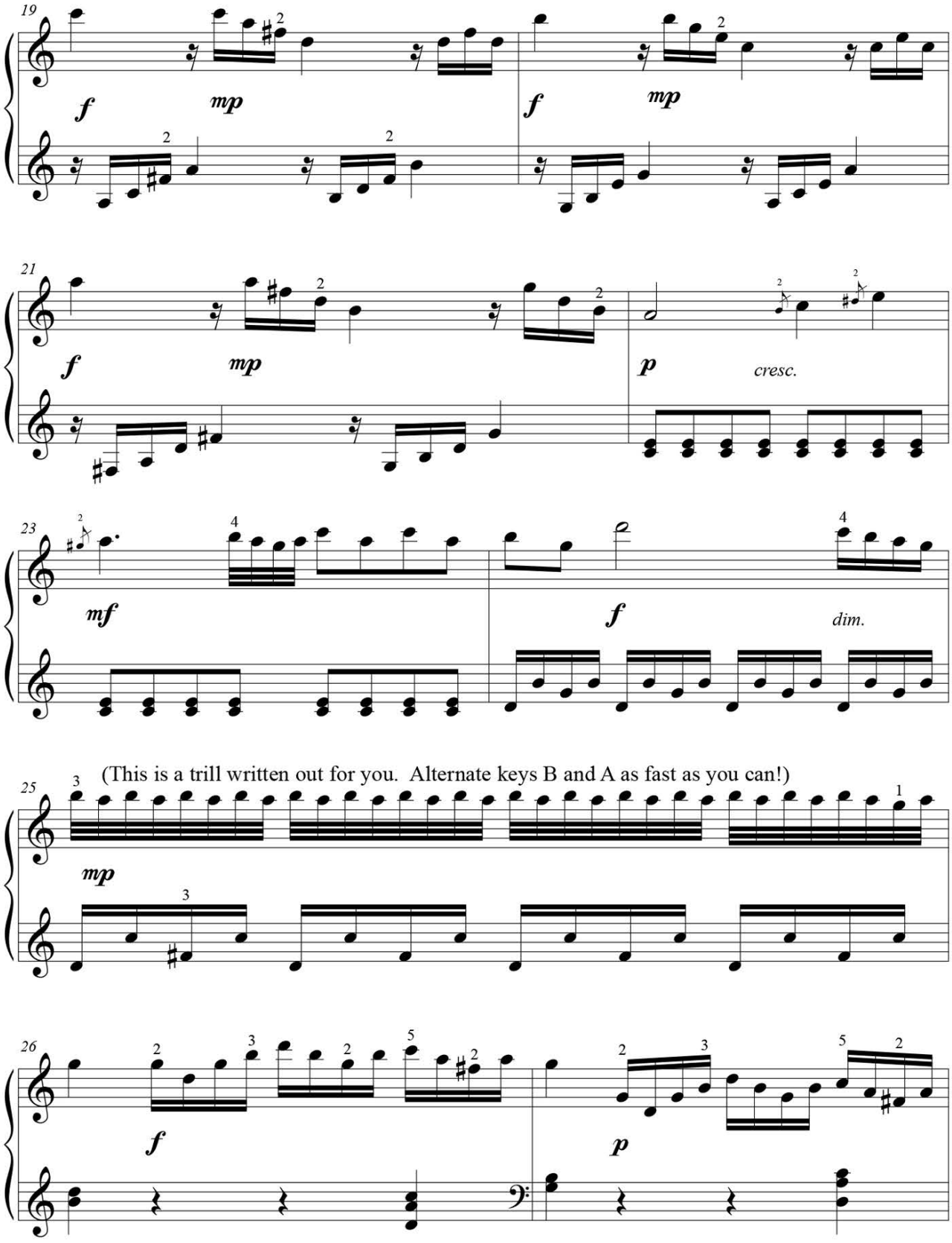

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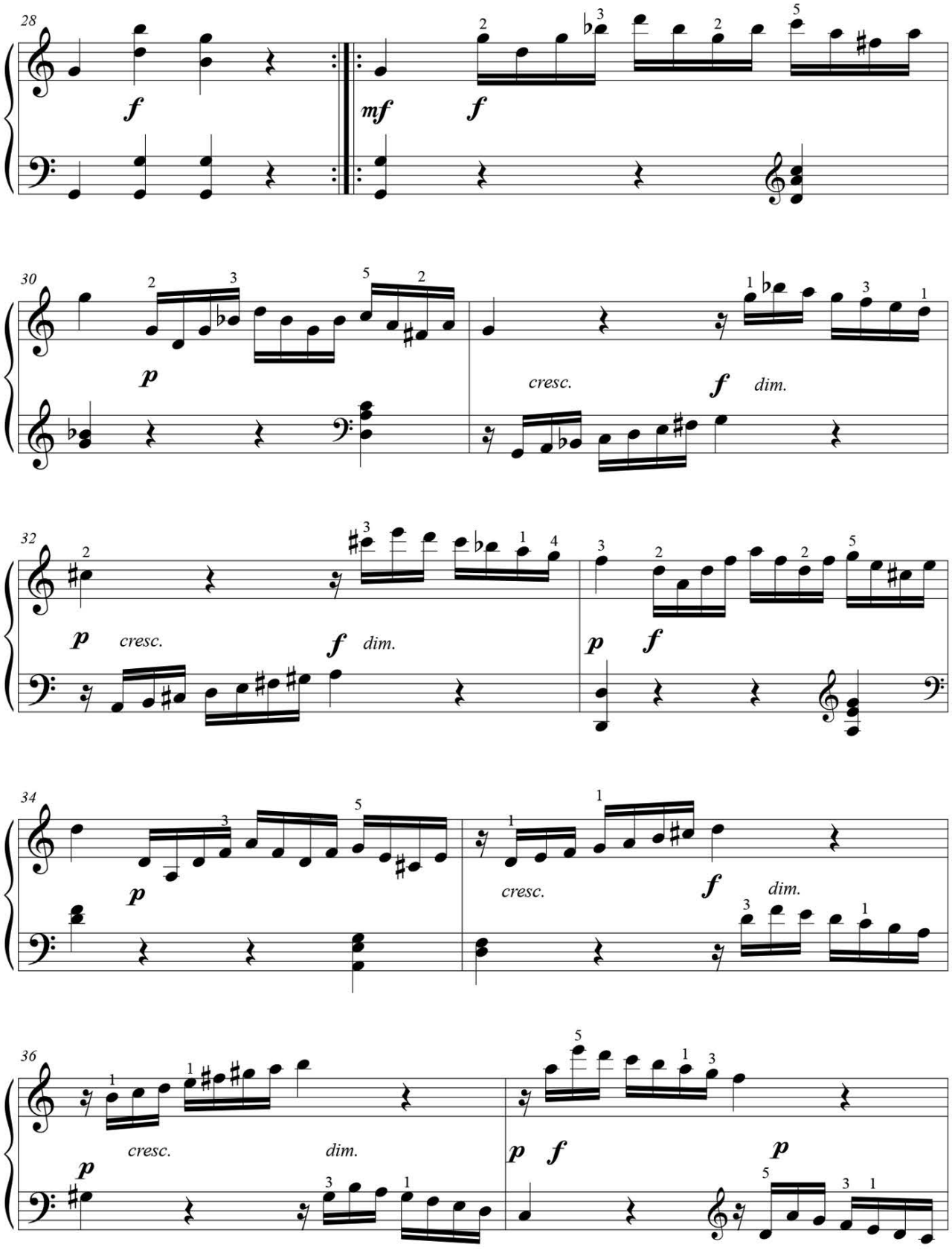

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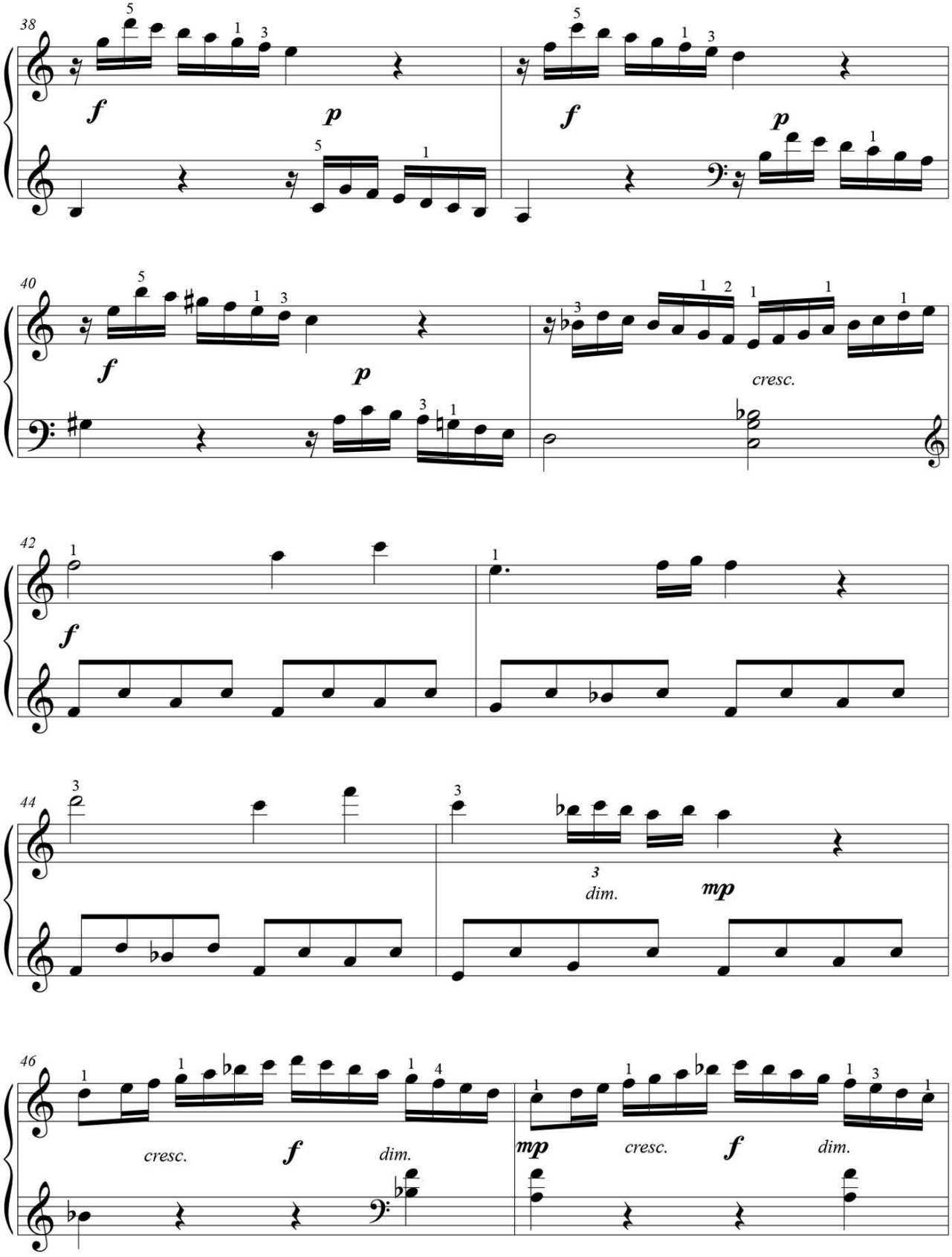

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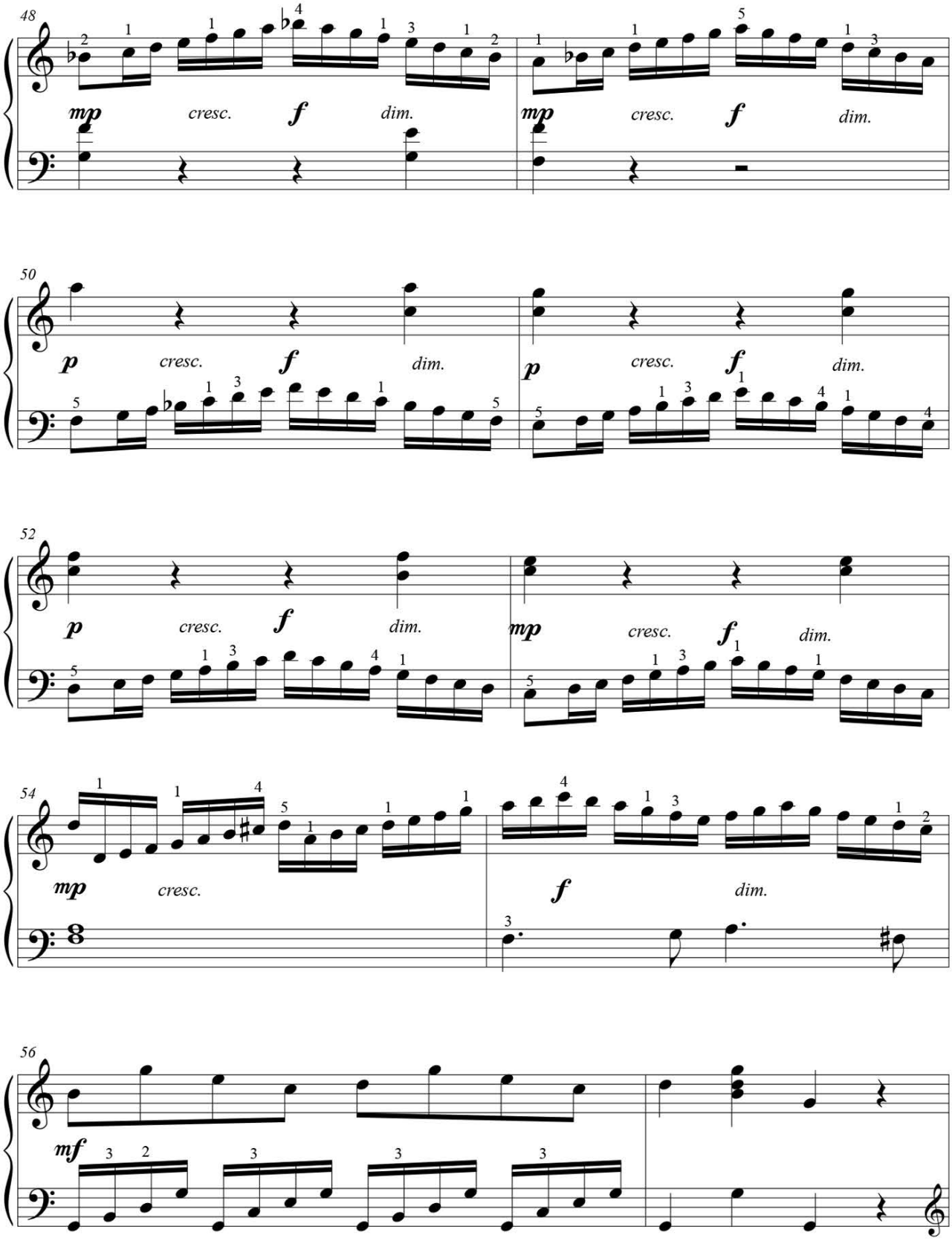

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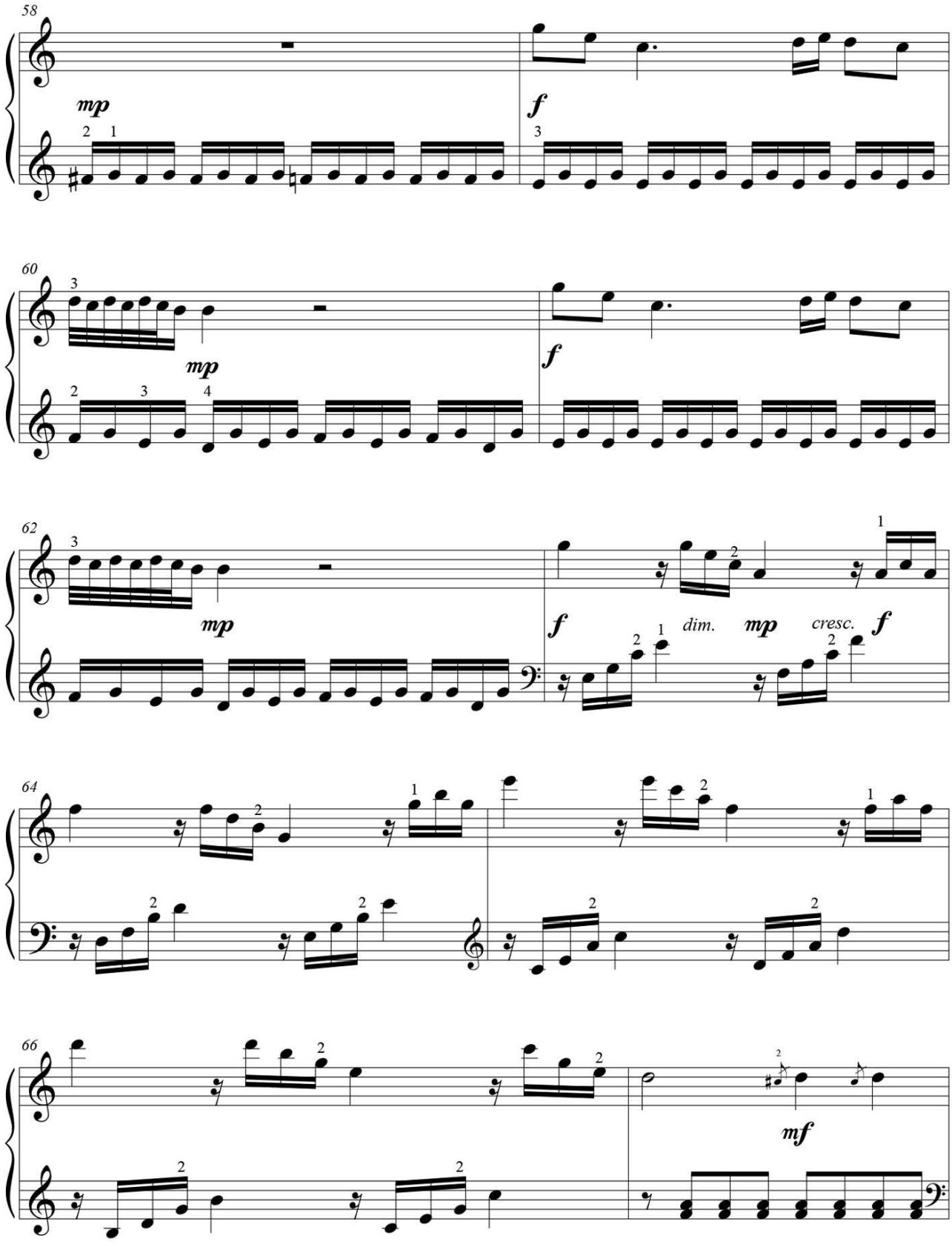

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68

cresc. *ff* dim.

70

mf *p*

72

pp *f*



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