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An Evocation of *Urbs beata Jerusalem*

Gerre Hancock

for Organ

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Gerre Hancock
(1934 – 2012)

Gerre Hancock, one of America's most highly acclaimed concert organists and choral directors, was Professor of Organ and Sacred Music at The University of Texas at Austin, where he and Dr. Judith Hancock directed the Organ Performance and Sacred Music Center programs; together, they taught organ and developed a curriculum for the study of Sacred Music. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Hancock held the position of Organist and Master of Choristers at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue in New York City, where for more than thirty years he set a new standard for church music in America.

Dr. Hancock's consummate skill was clearly apparent in his concert appearances. Possessing a masterly interpretive ability, he was an artist of taste, warmth, perception, and style. Considered the finest organ improviser in America, Dr. Hancock was heard in recital in many cities throughout the United States, Europe, South Africa, and Japan. On occasion he performed in duo recitals with his wife, Judith Hancock.

Gerre Hancock served on the faculty of The Juilliard School in New York City and taught improvisation on a visiting basis at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University in New Haven, CT, and The Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. In 1981 he was appointed a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music and in 1995 was appointed a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

Gerre Hancock received honorary Doctor of Music degrees from the Nashotah House Seminary, Westminster Choir College/Rider University, and The University of the South at Sewanee, TN. In May 2004 he was awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree (Honoris causa) from The General Theological Seminary in New York. He was listed in "Who's Who in America," and his biography appears in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition. In 2004 he was honored in a ceremony at Lambeth Palace in London, England, where he was presented the Medal of the Cross of St. Augustine by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Compositions by Dr. Hancock are published by Oxford University Press, E.C. Schirmer Music, and Paraclete Press. His compositions for organ and chorus are widely performed, and his textbook, *Improvising: How to Master the Art*, is used by musicians throughout the USA. He recorded for Gothic Records, Decca/Argo, Koch International, and Priory Records, both as a conductor of The St. Thomas Choir and as a soloist.

On January 21, 2012, Dr. Hancock passed away peacefully in Austin, TX, surrounded by his family. A giant figure in twentieth- to twenty-first-century American sacred music, he left a lasting legacy, not only for his artistry, but also for his energy, optimism, and love of the people he taught and for whom he performed.

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Commissioned by the Choir of Christ and Saint Luke's Episcopal Church, Norfolk, Virginia
in honor of Dr. Allen Shaffer's 20th anniversary as Organist and Director of Music

An Evocation of *Urbs beata Jerusalem*

for Organ

III Foundation stops 8', *p*
II Foundation stops 8', *mp*
I Foundation stops 16', 8 ', *mf*
Ped. Foundation stops 16', 8', *mf*
Sw. to Pos., Sw. to Ped.

Gerre Hancock

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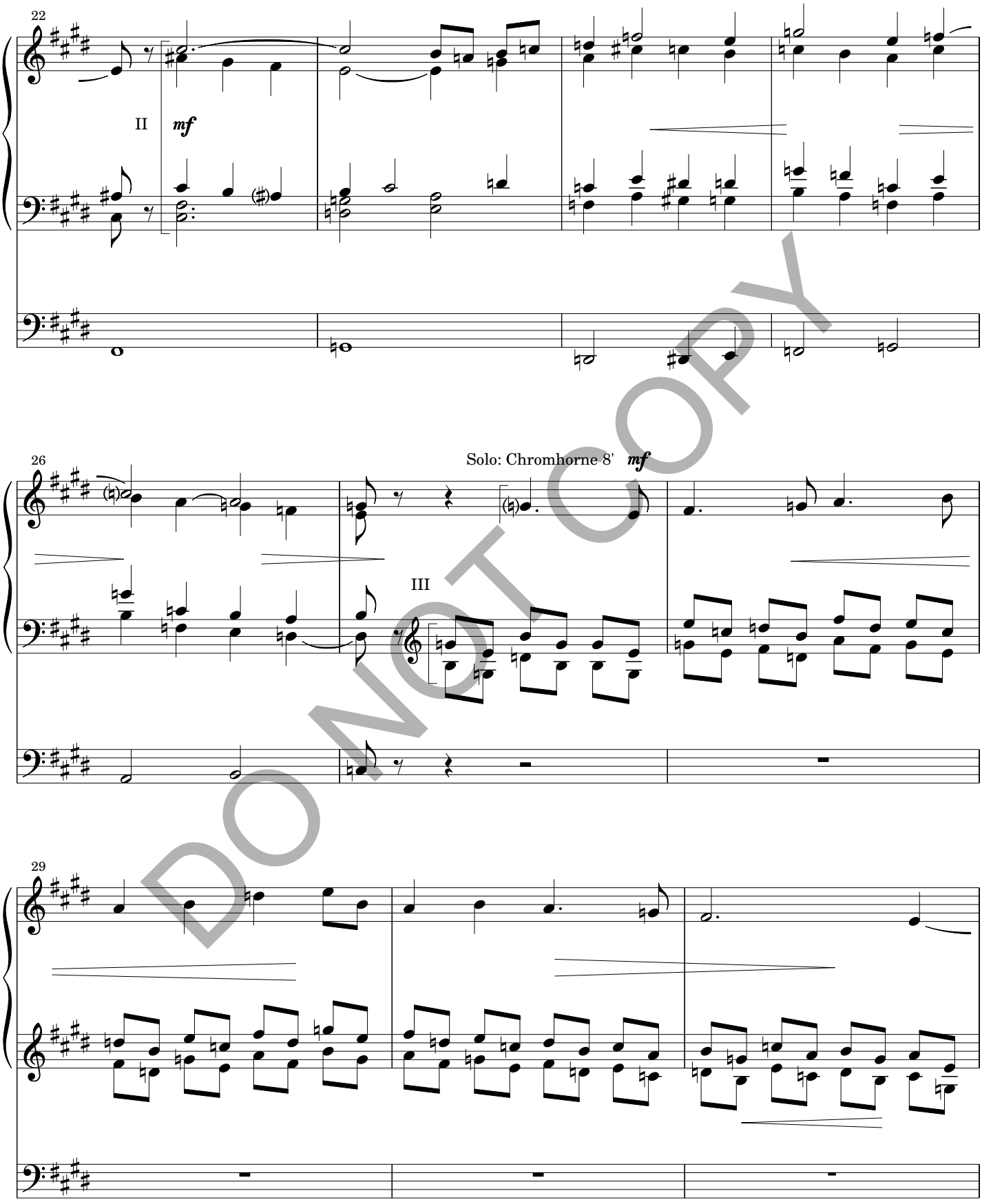

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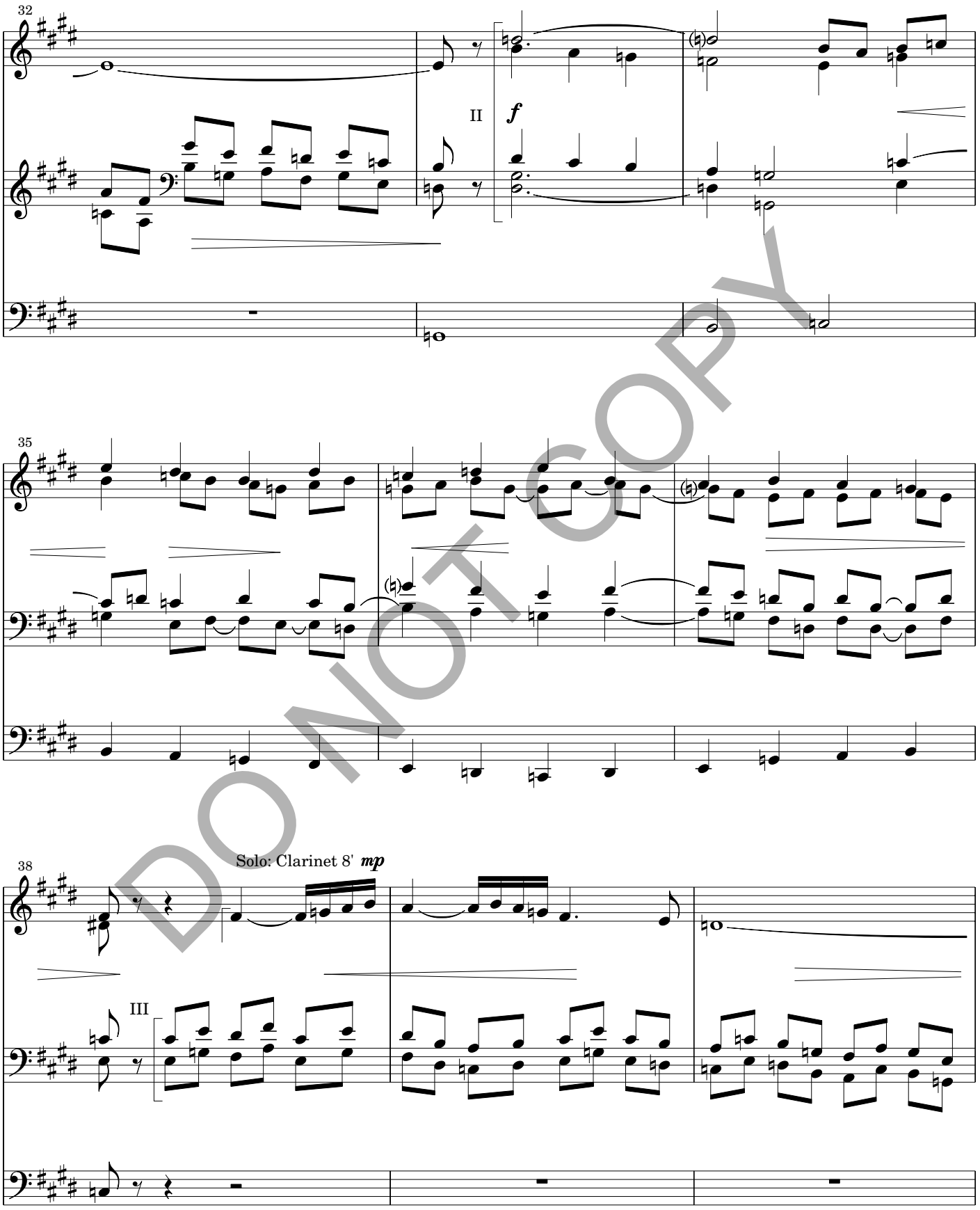

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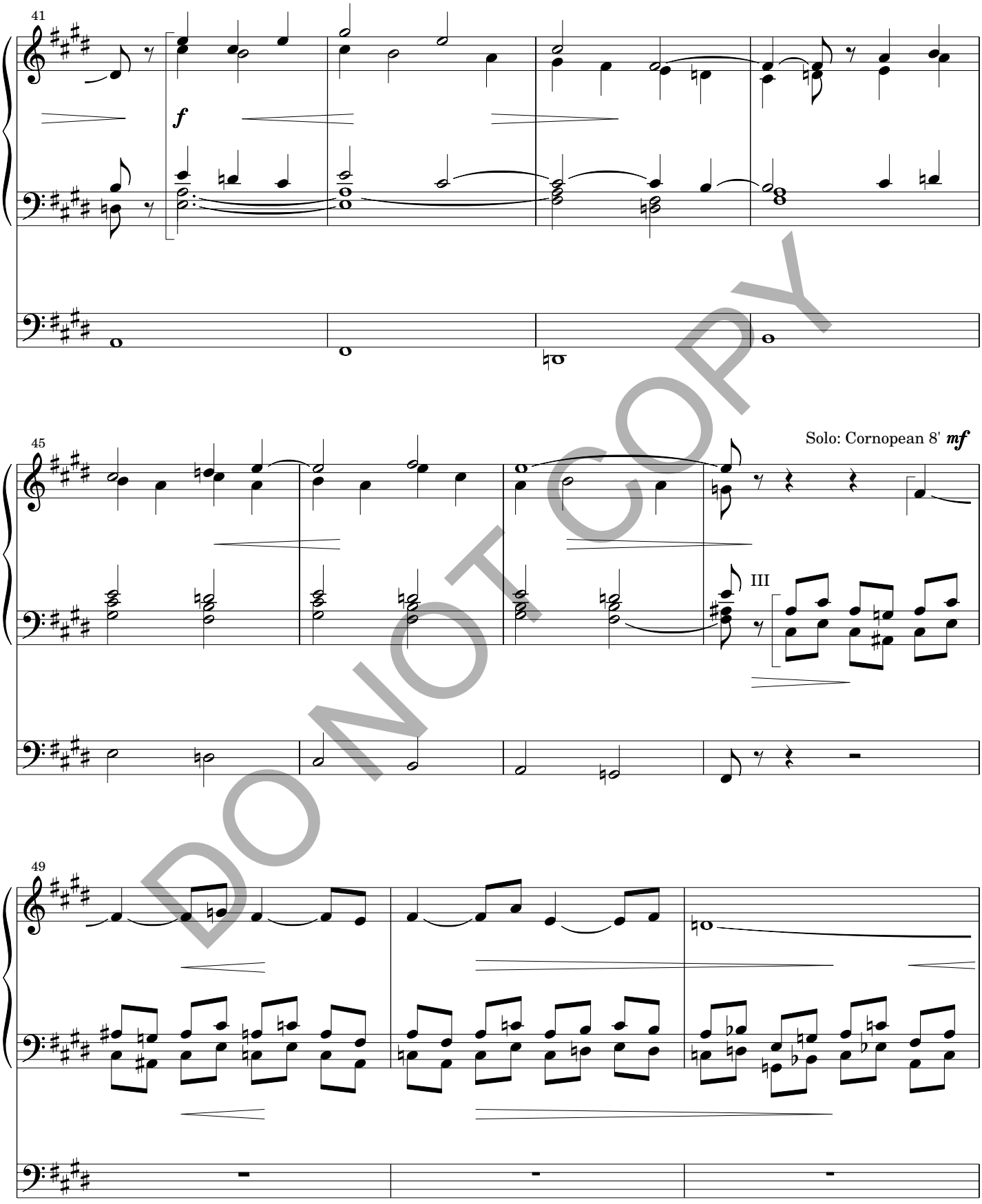

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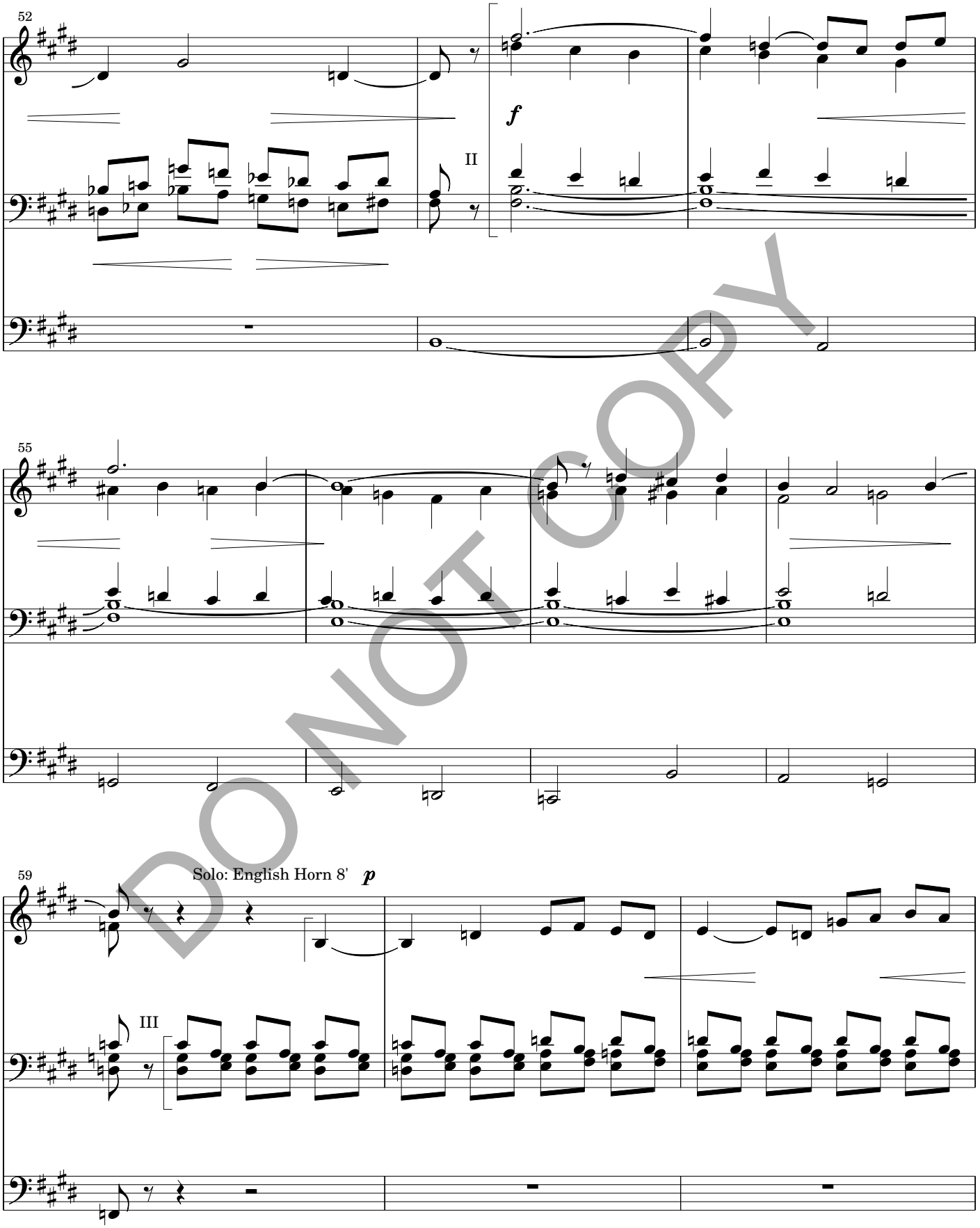

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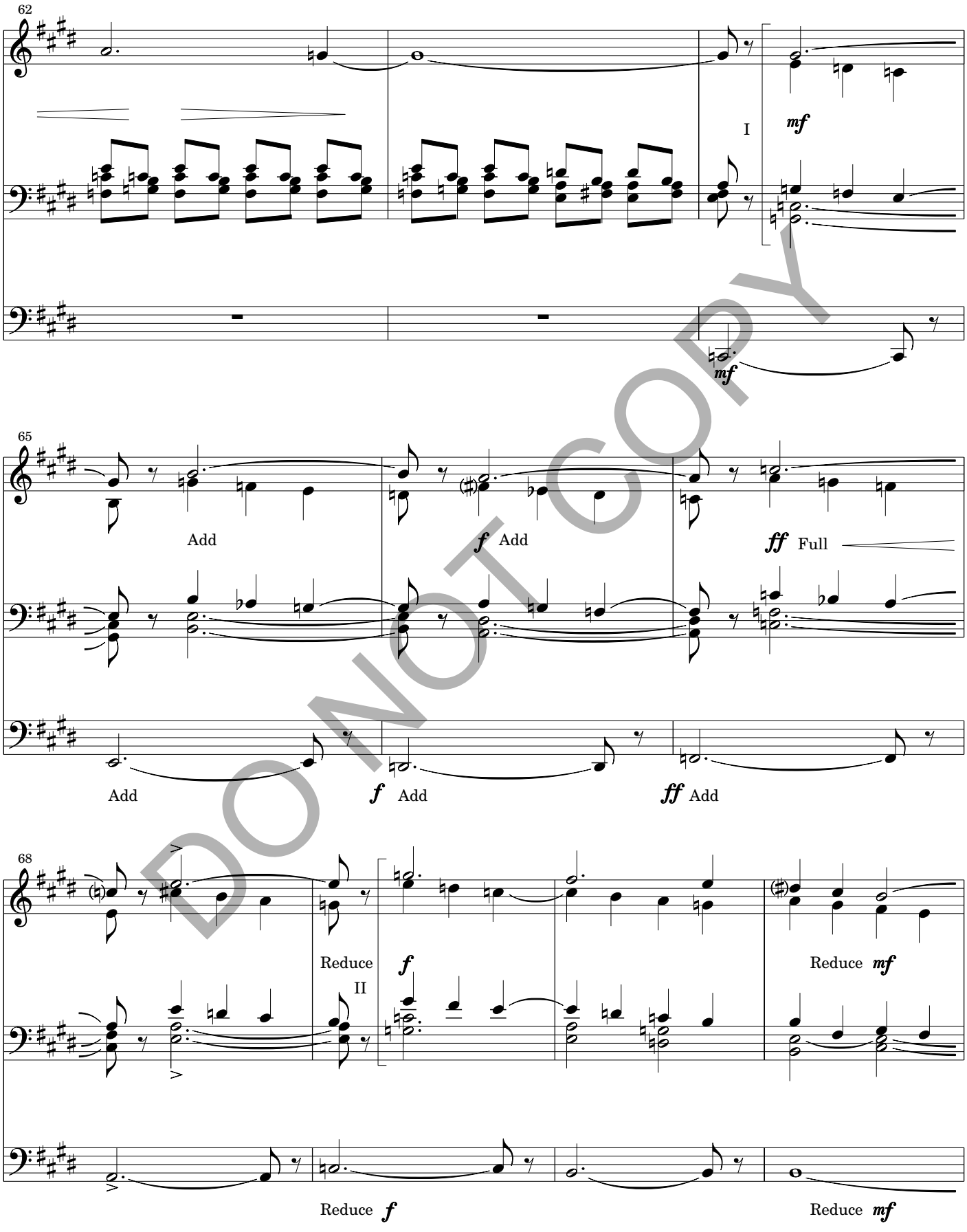
62
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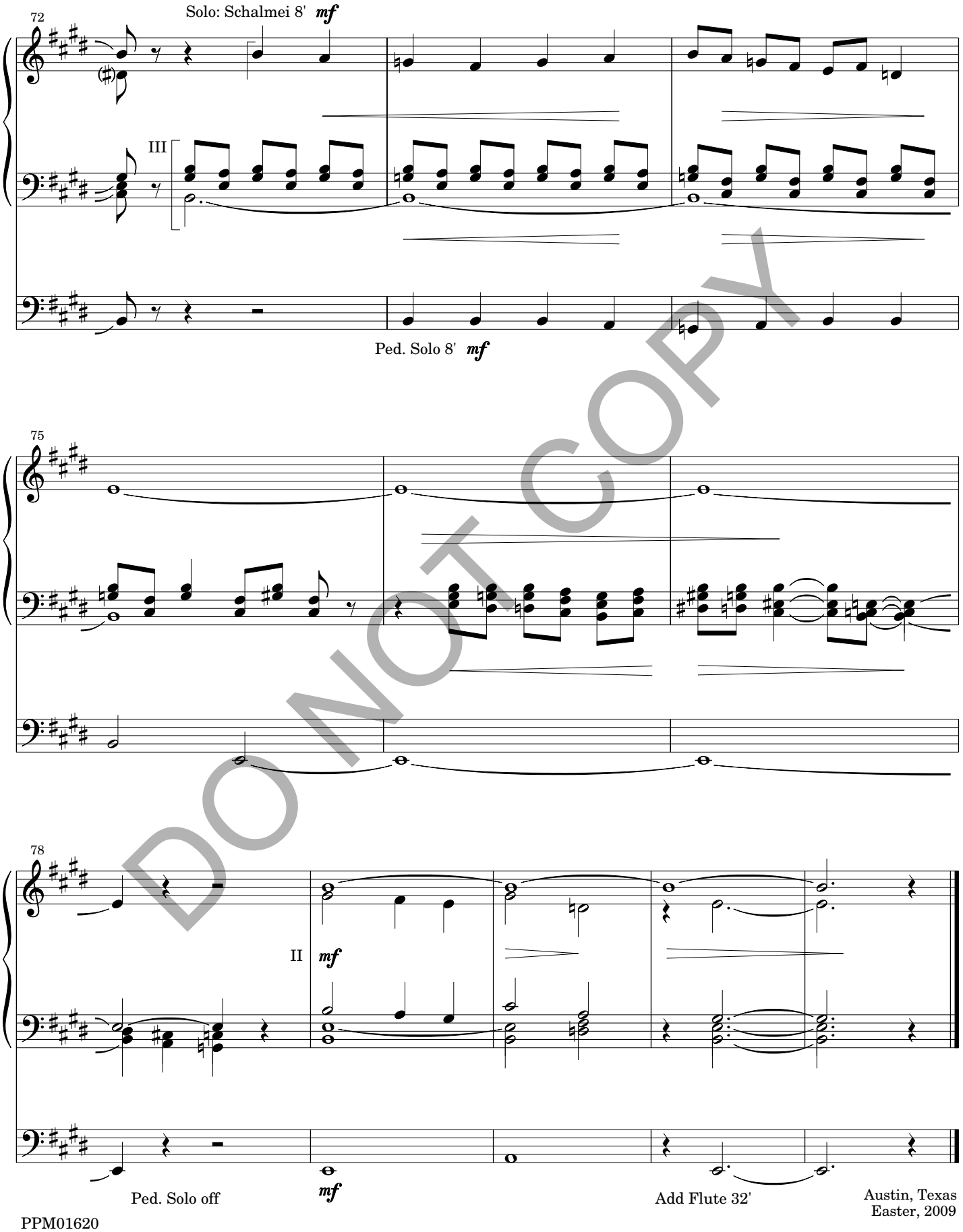

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Austin, Texas
Easter, 2009

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