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Fughetta
on a *Soggetto Cavato*

in 4 voices for organ

Lindsay Lafford

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Dr. Lindsay Arthur Lafford

Dr. Lindsay Arthur Lafford, Professor Emeritus, was born in Gloucester, England, in 1912 and served as chorister in Hereford Cathedral from 1922 to 1929. He then became an organ scholar there and assistant of Sir Percy Hull, D. Mus., until 1935. In that year he left England to assume the positions of Organist and Choirmaster of St. John's Cathedral, Hong Kong, and conductor of the HK Philharmonic and Chorus.

In 1939 he was invited to the U.S.A. to teach at Haverford, Swarthmore, and Bryn Mawr Colleges, serving also as University Organist and Director of Music in the Chapel at Princeton. Following service in the United States Navy during World War II, Lafford was a member of the faculties of several colleges and universities —and organist of St. John's Cathedral, Jacksonville, Florida—until retiring from the University of Miami in 1994.

His extensive conducting career has included eight significant premières of works by Harold Darke, Gordon Jacob, Sir George Dyson, Gustav Holst, and Sir Edward Elgar ("Coronation Ode"). In 1954 he conducted the American première of Vaughan Williams' *Hodie*, the composer's last choral composition.

He holds the degree *Doctoris in Litteris Humanoribus* and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (plus the Choirmaster's Diploma), a Fellow of Trinity College, London, and of the American Guild of Organists, and a Diplomate of both the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music.

He is the current Lord of the Manor of Ridley, Northumberland, England, a Title created by King Henry III in the year 1230. Lafford has held the Title since 1998, when it passed to him from the family of the late Queen Mother Elizabeth, of England.

Soggetto Cavato

Throughout the history of music it has not been uncommon for composers to derive a theme from the letters of a name, thereby producing what is known as a *soggetto cavato*, an 'extracted subject'. A famous example is Josquin Desprez's 15th–16th century *Missa 'Ercole dux Ferrarie'*, a salute to the composer's aristocratic patron, the Duke Hercules of Ferrara. The solmization of the duke's title yielded the phrase D-C-D-C-D-F-E-D, a tune of scant promise on which to base an extended composition. Schumann wrote several pieces based on the names of people and places—ABEGG, ASCH, GADE, for example—and no fewer than six fugues on the name B-A-C-H. (The fortunate accident that in Germany the letter B stands for our B-flat, and H for B-natural permits the countless musical tributes to the great German master—though B-flat–A–C–B-natural yields a tight little tune even less promising than that of Josquin's *Ercole*). Brahms, we should add, was also not above borrowing from alphabetical mottoes.

In the present piece—a tribute to Dr. Joseph Wytko, the professor of saxophone at Arizona State University—I've used the numerical location of the appopriate letters in the alphabet as the scale intervals above Tenor C, with gratitude that the resulting *soggettto cavato* presents the composer with something to play with.

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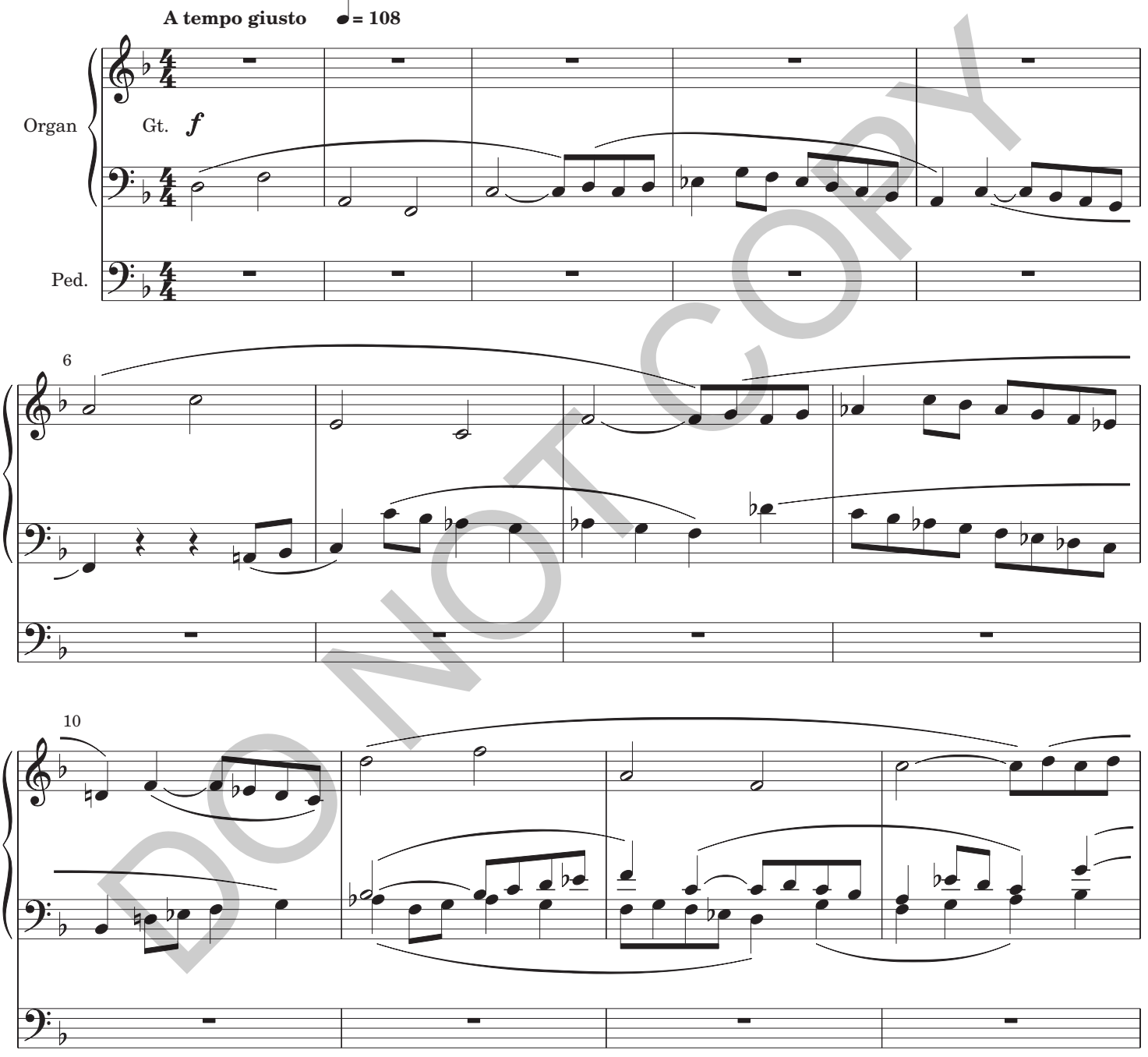
To Mark Venning

Fughetta on a *Soggetto Cavato*

(the name W-Y-T-K-O)
in 4 voices
for organ

Lindsay Lafford, Lord of Ridley



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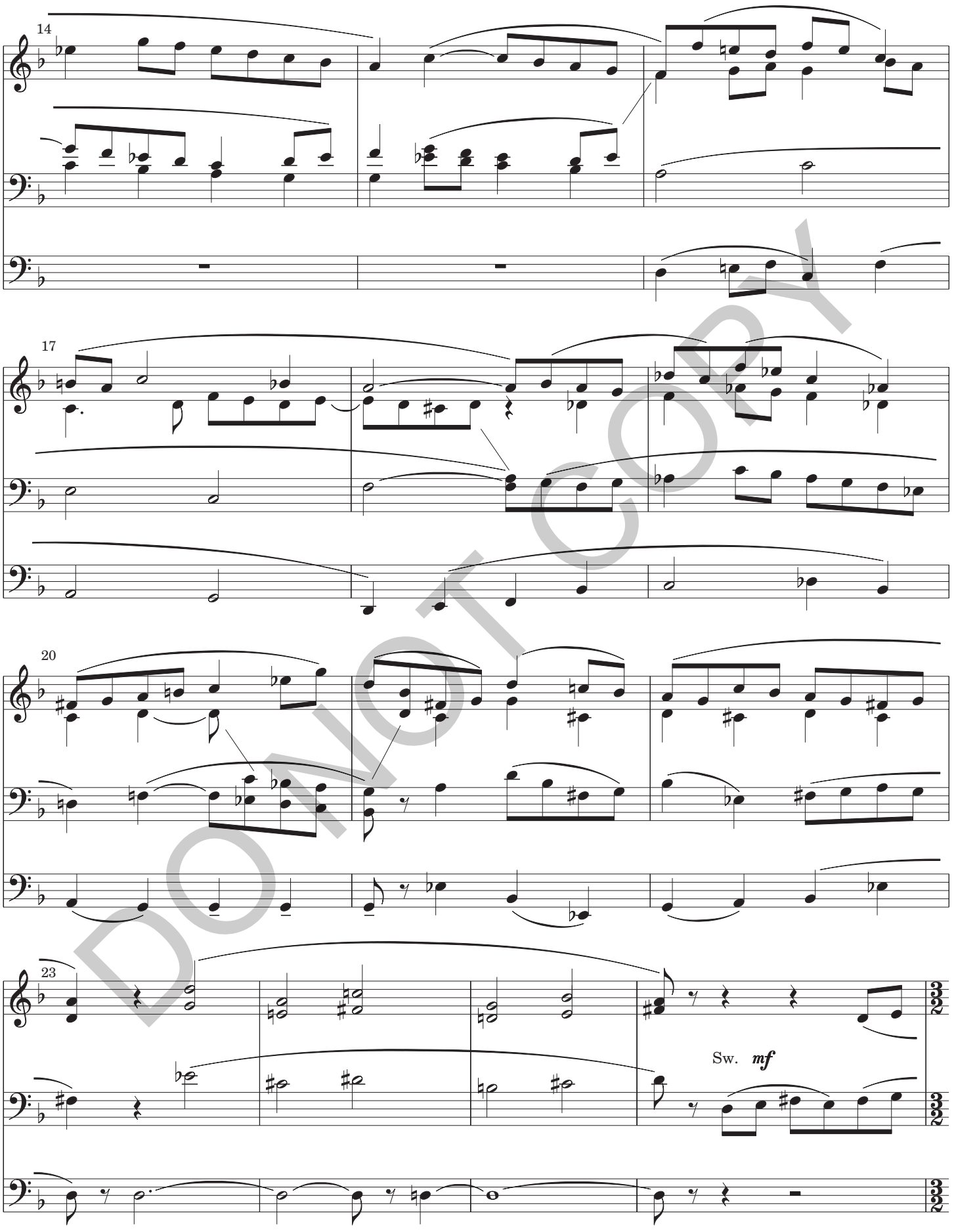

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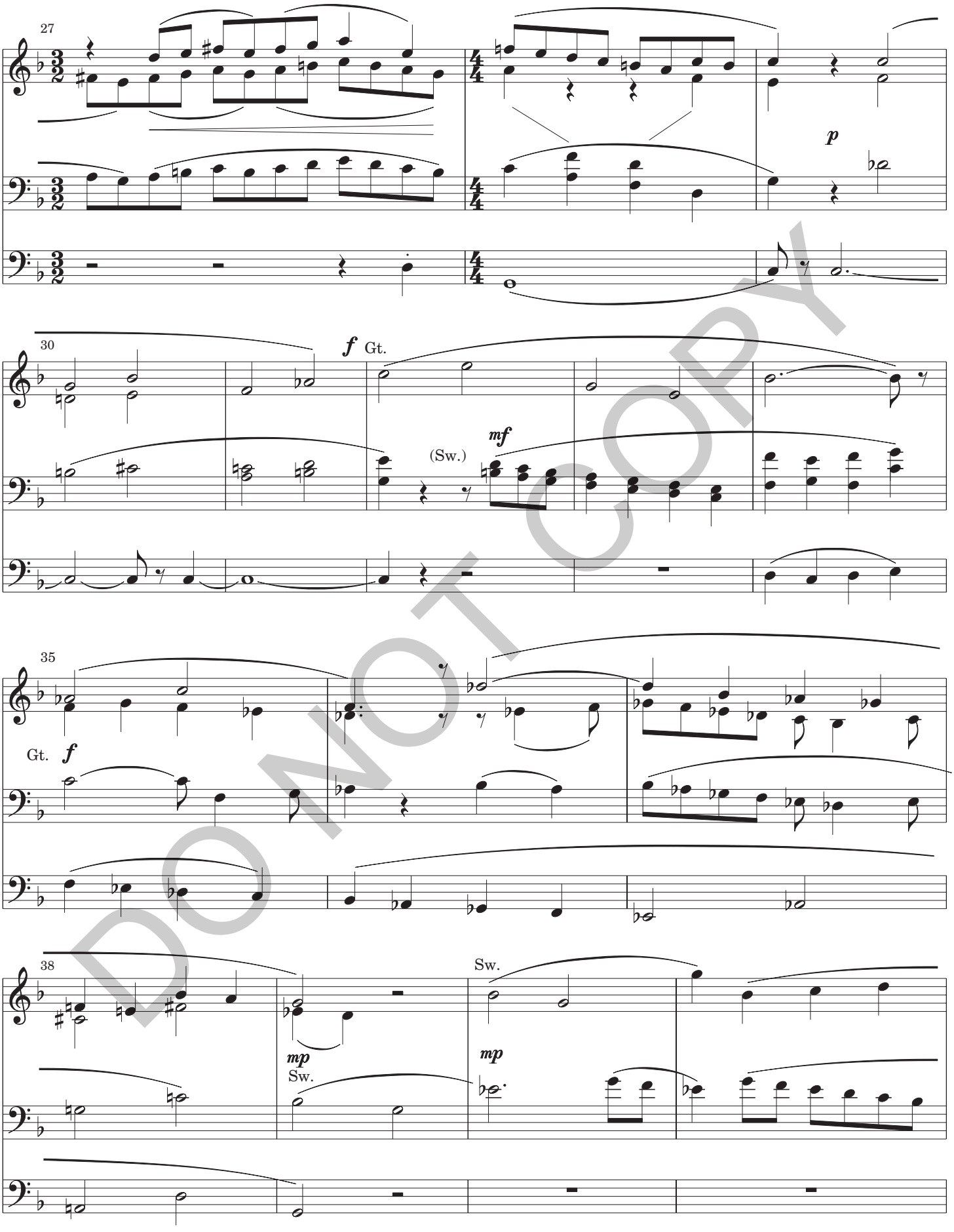

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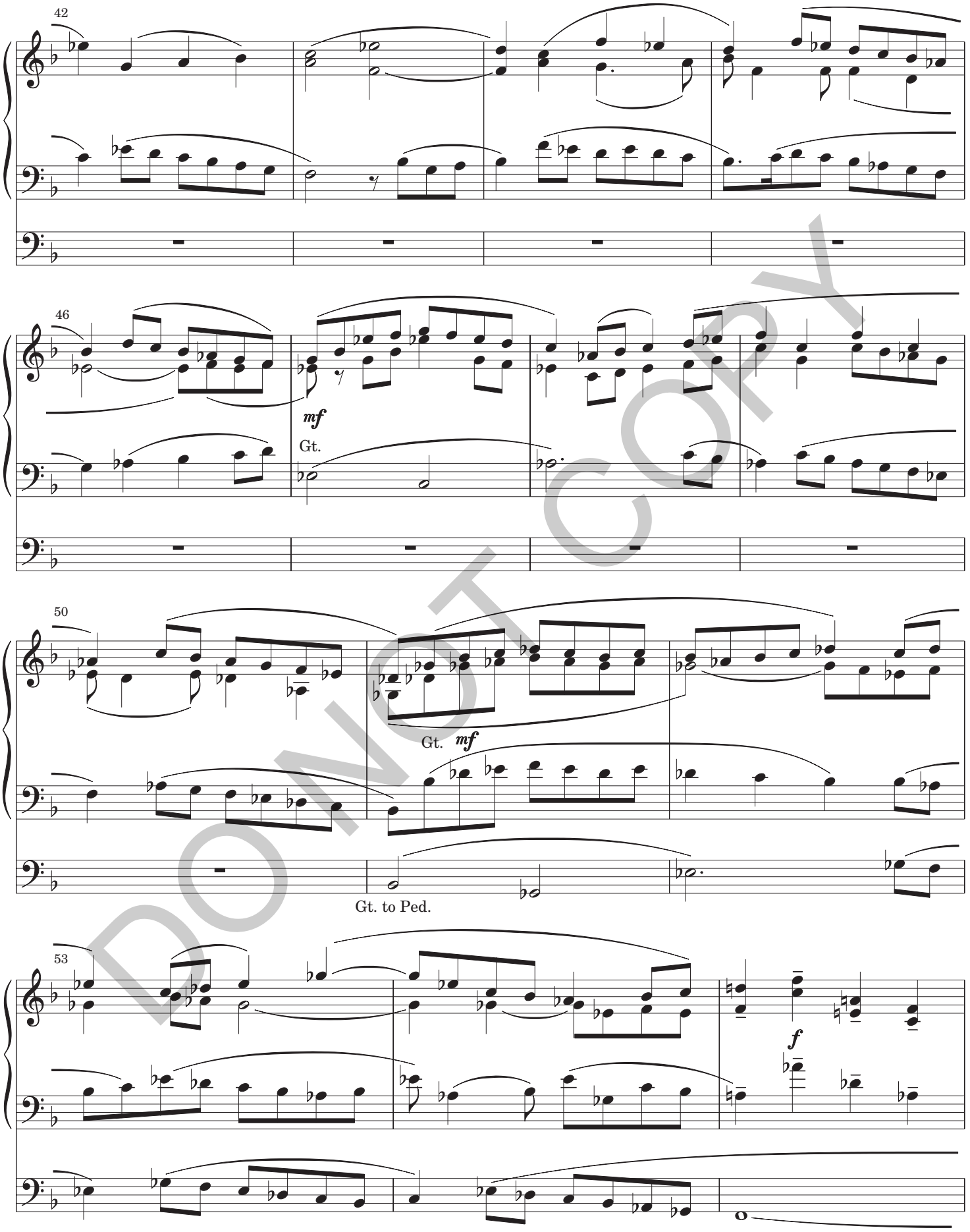

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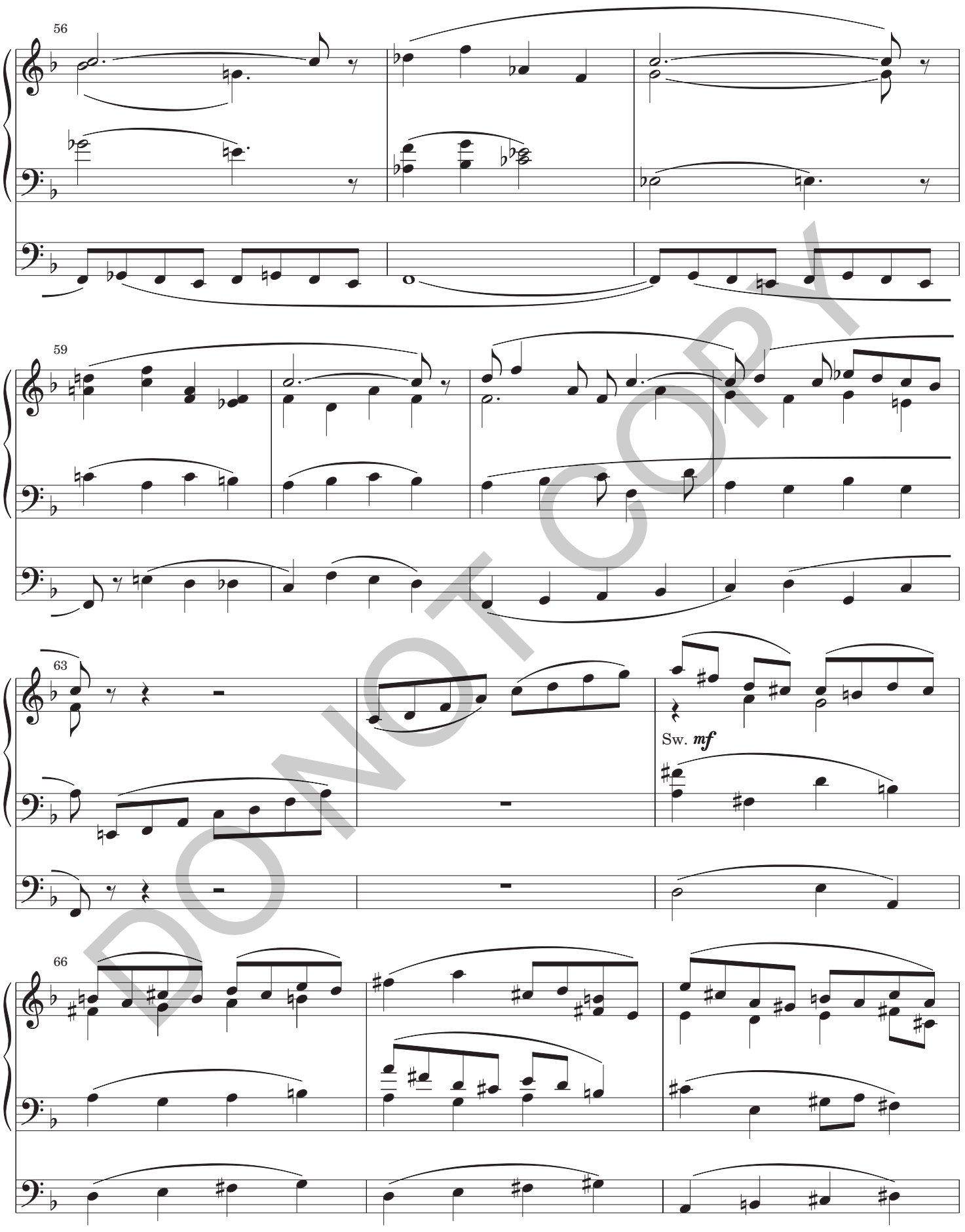

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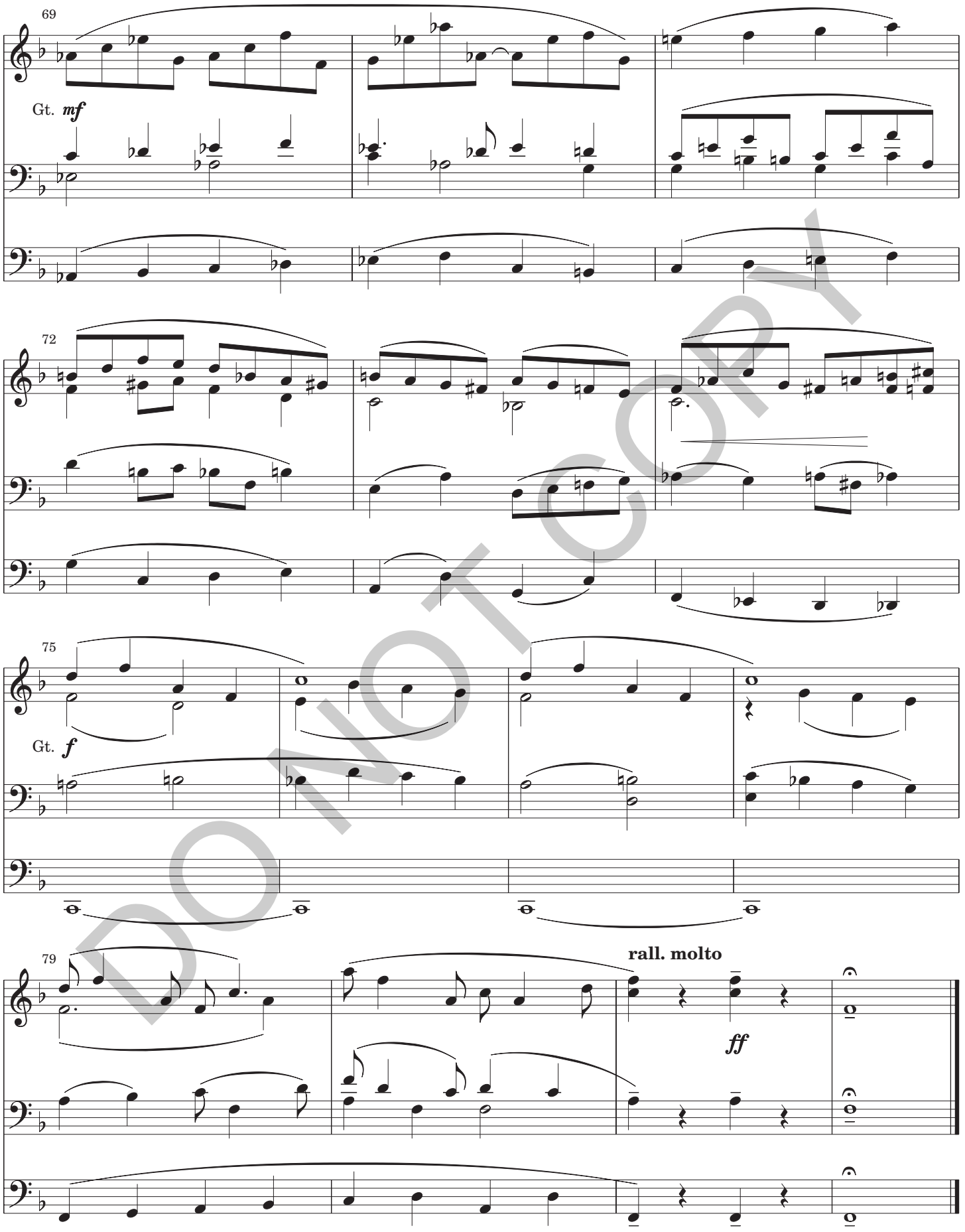

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