Steven Snowden

Walking With Spring

Solo Harp

Walking With Spring

Commissioned by Astral Artists and Rachel O'Brien

Premiered by Rachel O'Brien on April 10, 2022
in Philadelphia, PA

1. Dragon's Tooth
2. Tinker Cliffs
3. McAfee Knob

Approximate duration: 10 min.

Program Notes

In 1948 Earl Shaffer became the first person to hike the entire 2,200 miles of the Appalachian Trail. A veteran of WWII, he carried only minor provisions and was driven by the desire to "walk the war out of my system". He timed the start of his journey so that he would follow the onset of Spring from Georgia to Maine and kept a diary detailing his journey, which included several poems. He later published a compilation of his poetry titled ***Walking With Spring***.

One of the most dramatic and scenic parts of his trek was along the Blue Ridge Mountains near Roanoke, Virginia. One relatively short stretch of the trail features three striking geological features commonly referred to as the Triple Crown. **Dragon's Tooth** is a mysterious stone spire jutting through the edge of the forest. The trail to **Tinker Cliffs** is an arduous one that winds through the forest along steep switchbacks before opening up to steep cliffs overlooking Catawba Creek. **McAfee Knob** juts out over Catawba Valley with spectacular views making it the most photographed spot along the Appalachian Trail.

Shaffer once said, "Carry as little as possible, but choose that little with care". Although this quote was in reference to long distance hiking (and perhaps life in general), I was inspired to apply his advice to my compositional process for this piece. Each movement strives to utilize simple musical ideas in unexpected ways, reflecting the ingenuity and efficiency exemplified by Shaffer's journey.

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Harp

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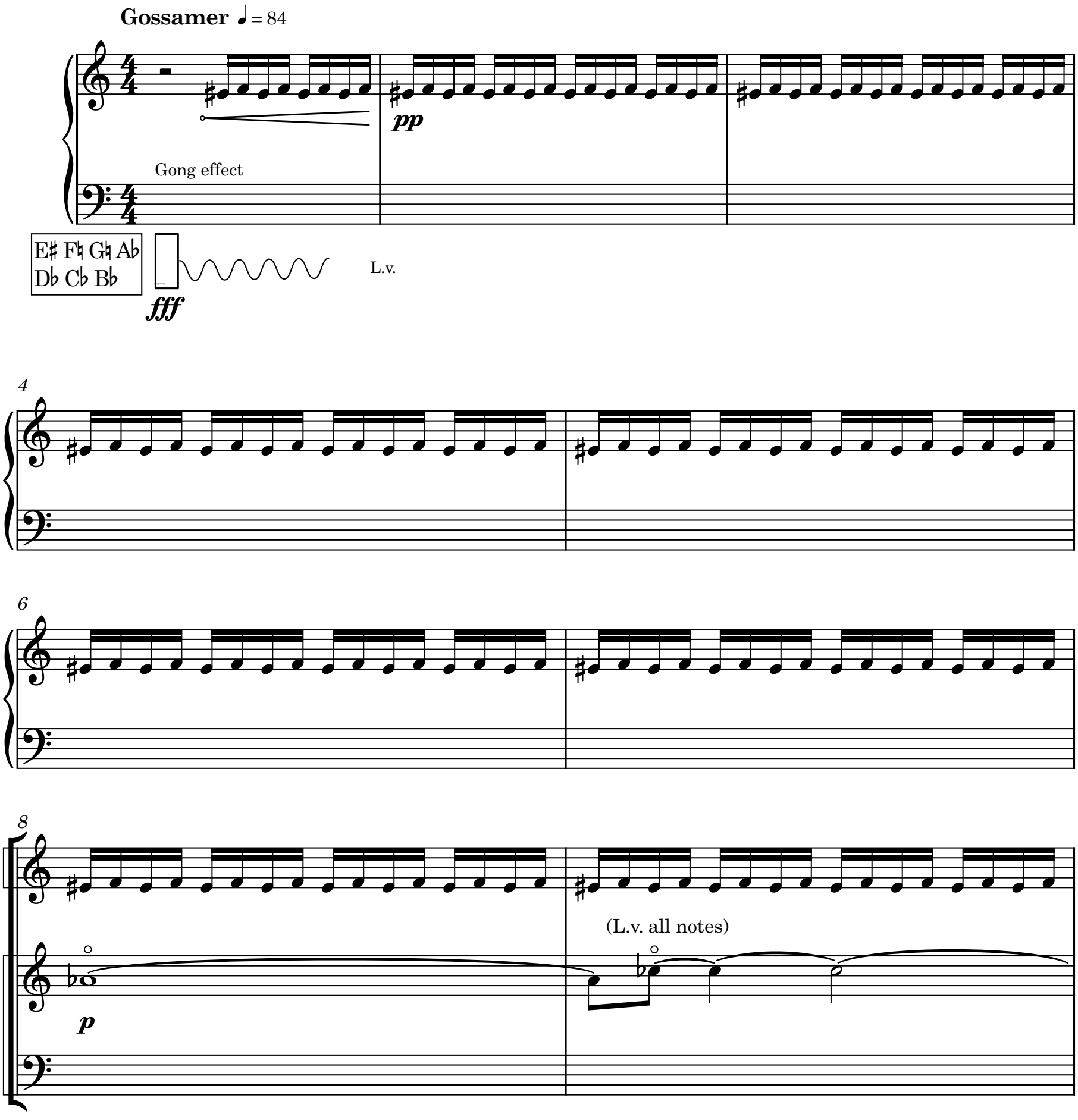
1. Dragon's Tooth



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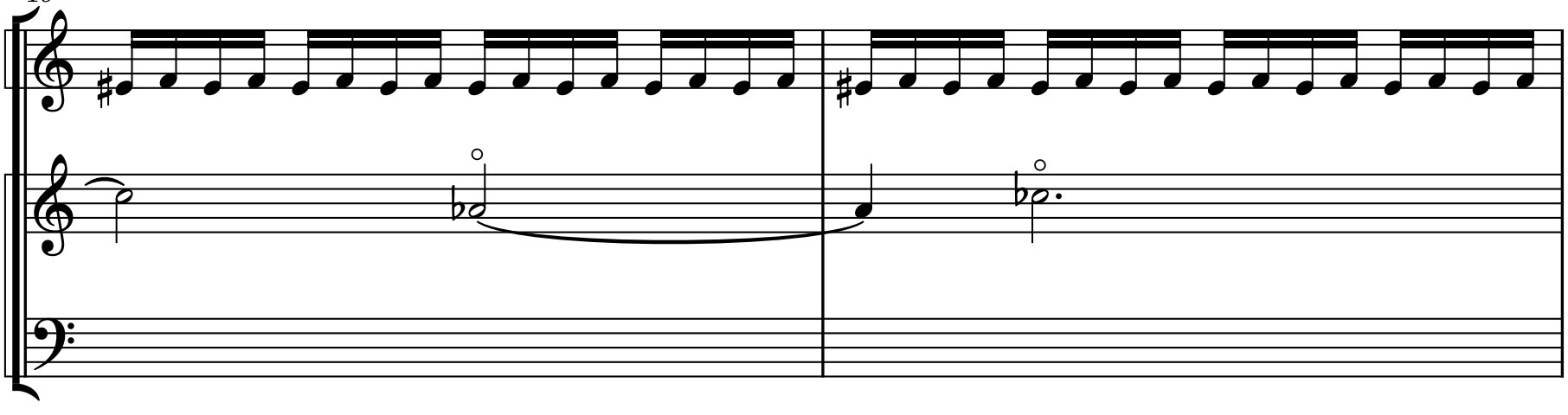

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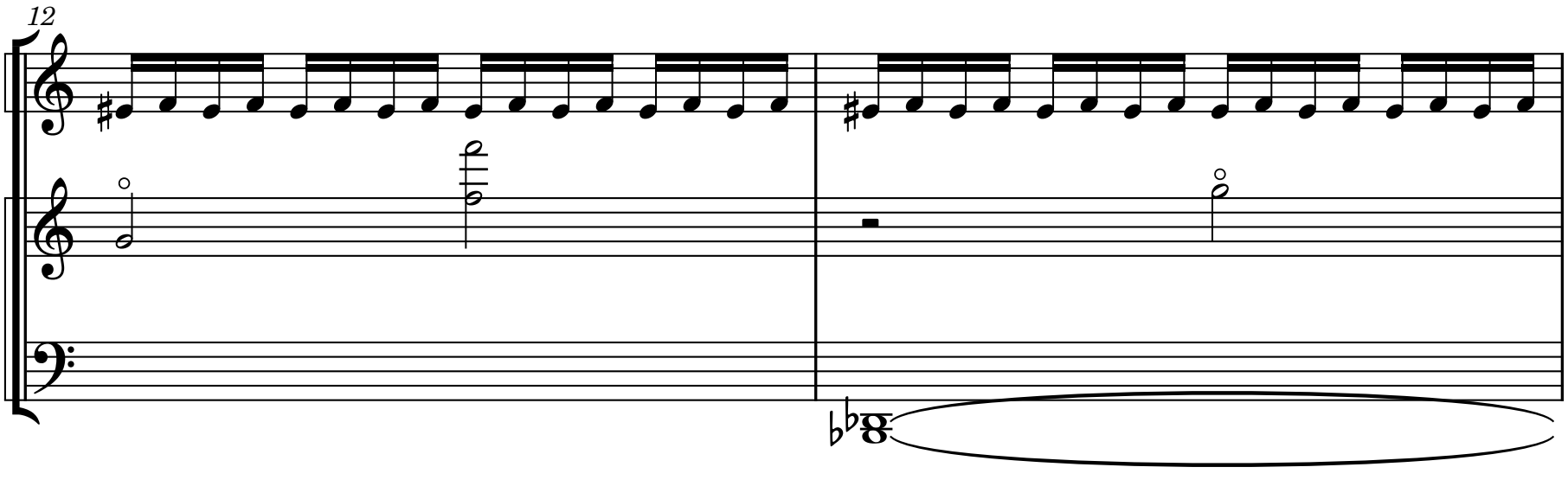

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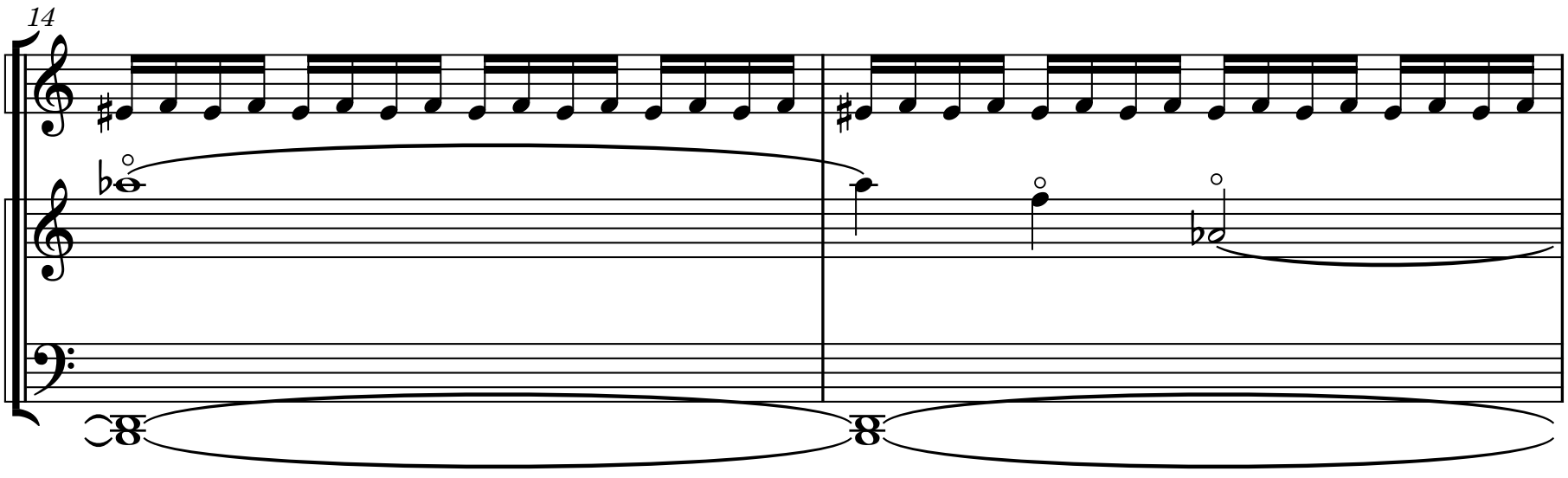


16

18

20

mf

22

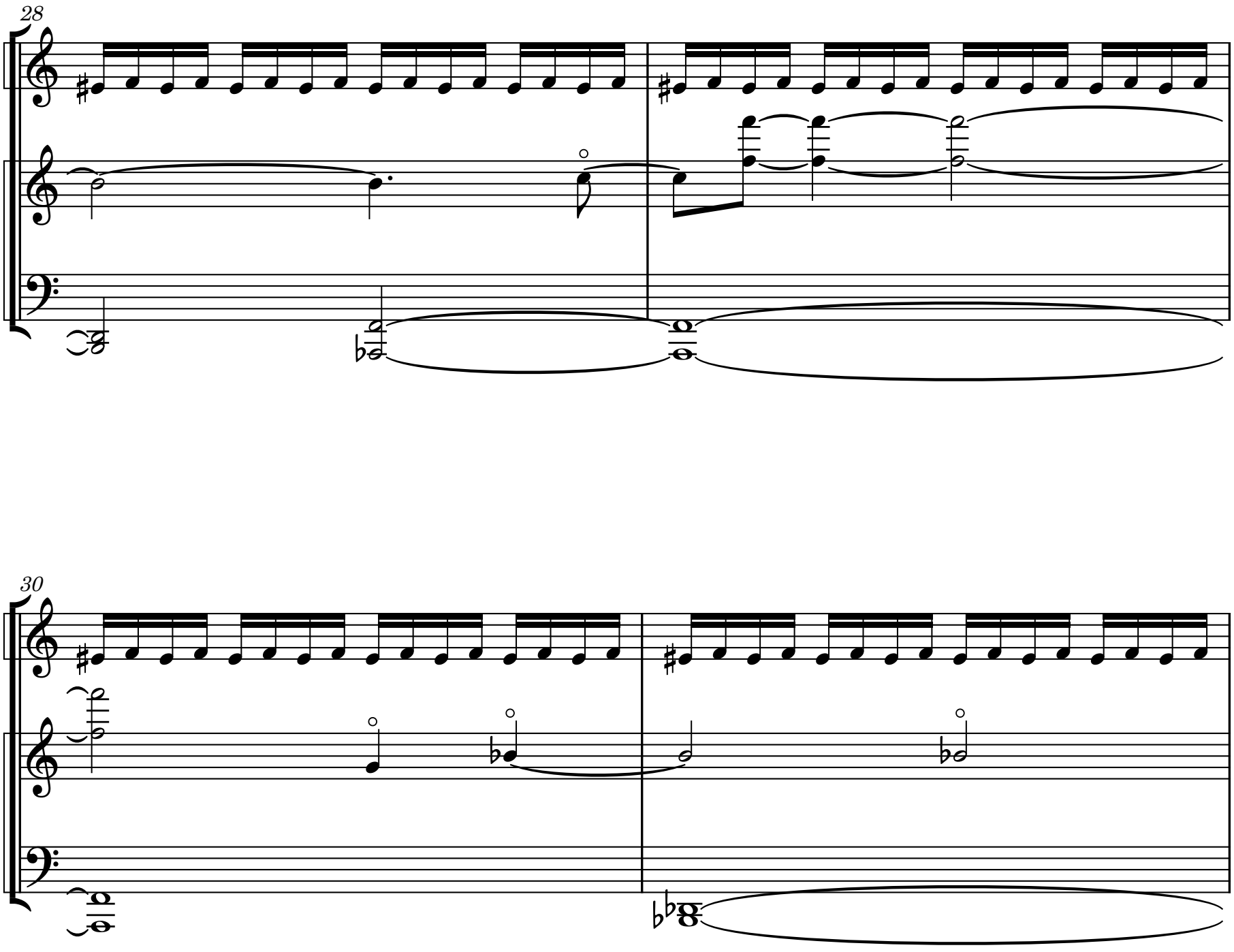
pp

24

p

C♮

26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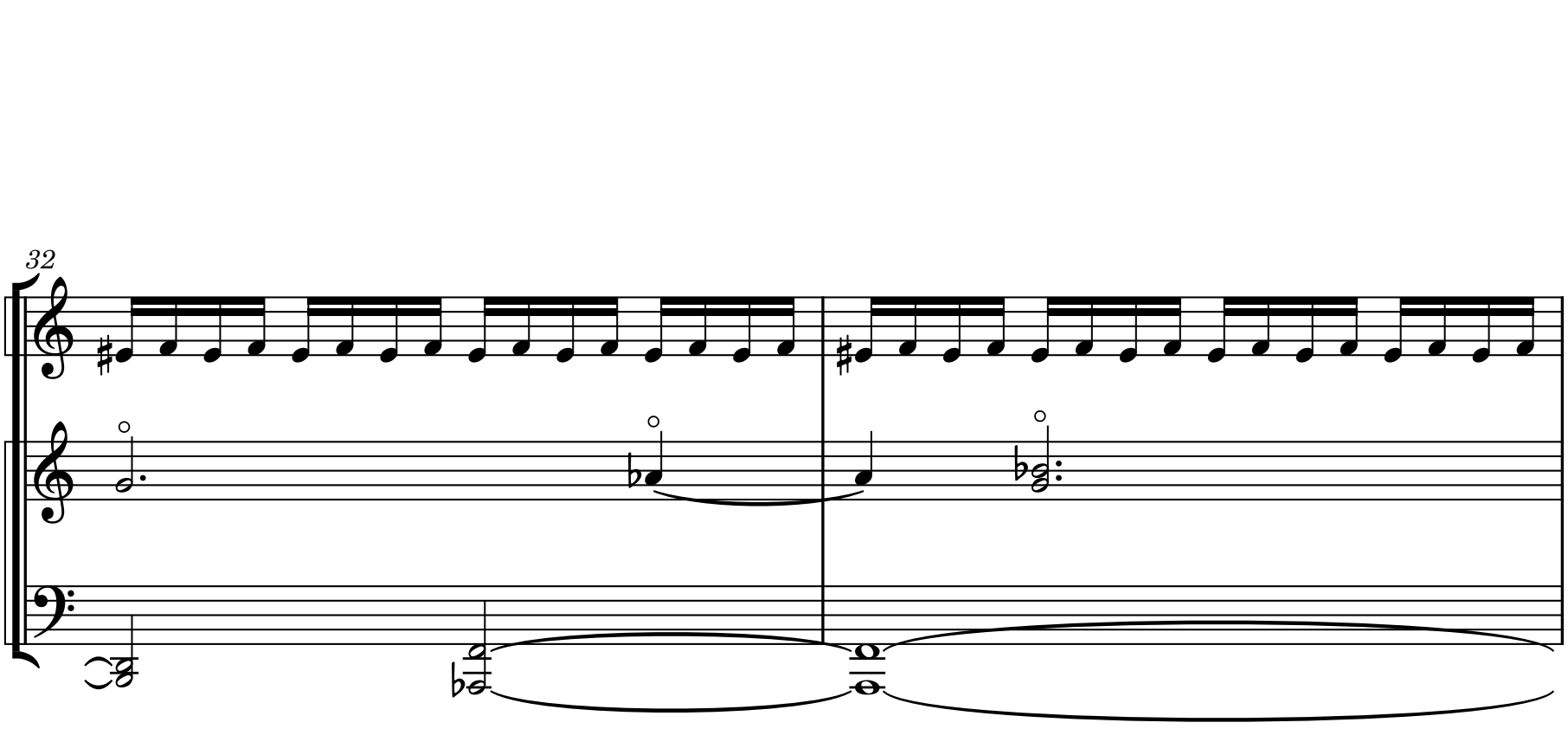
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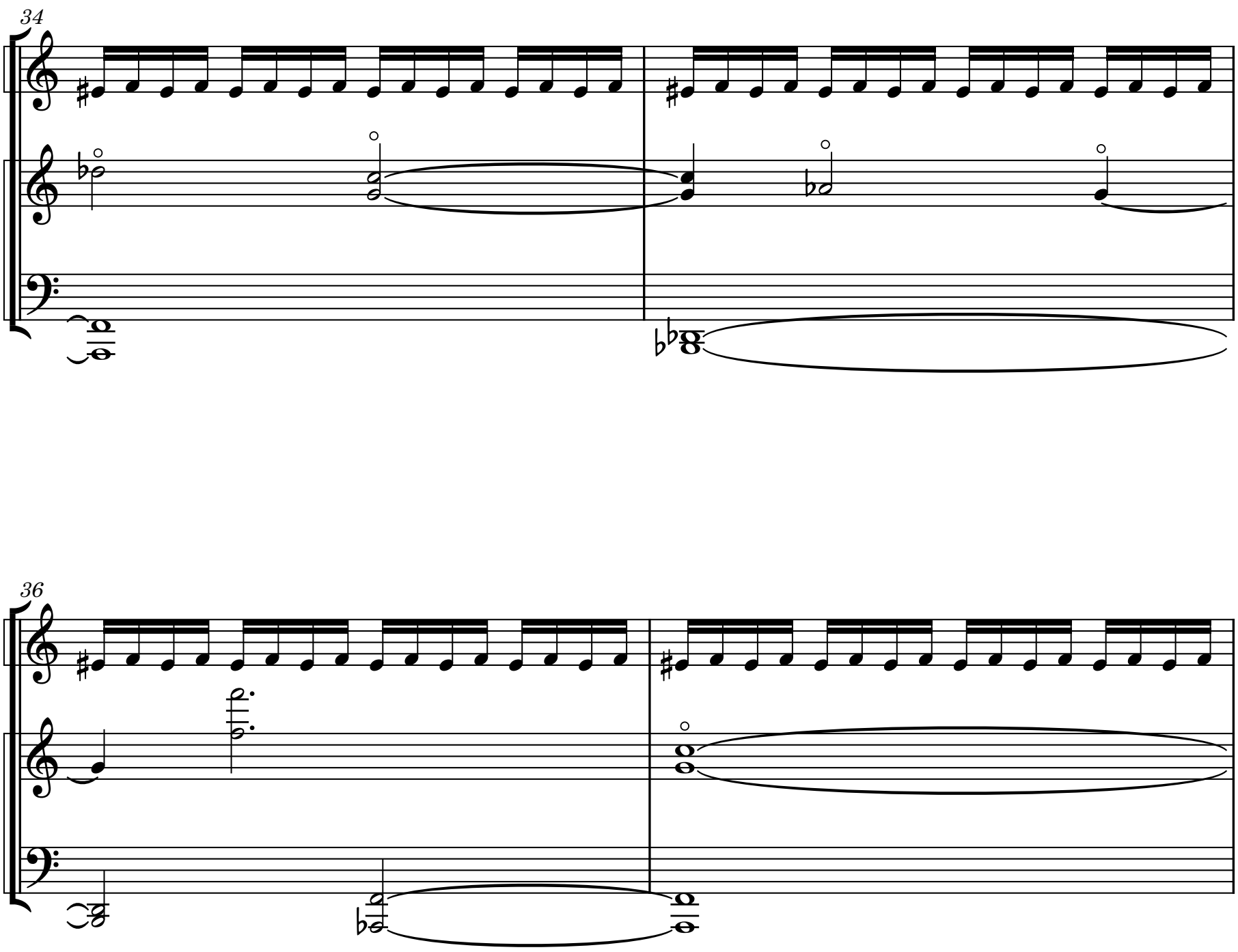
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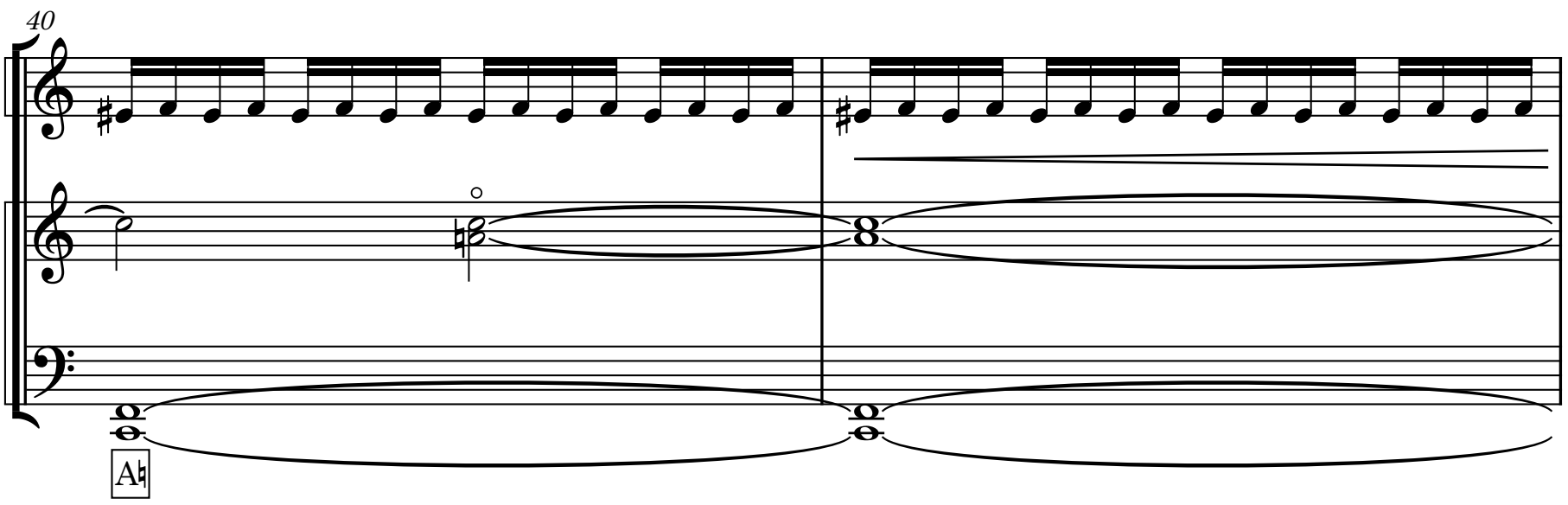
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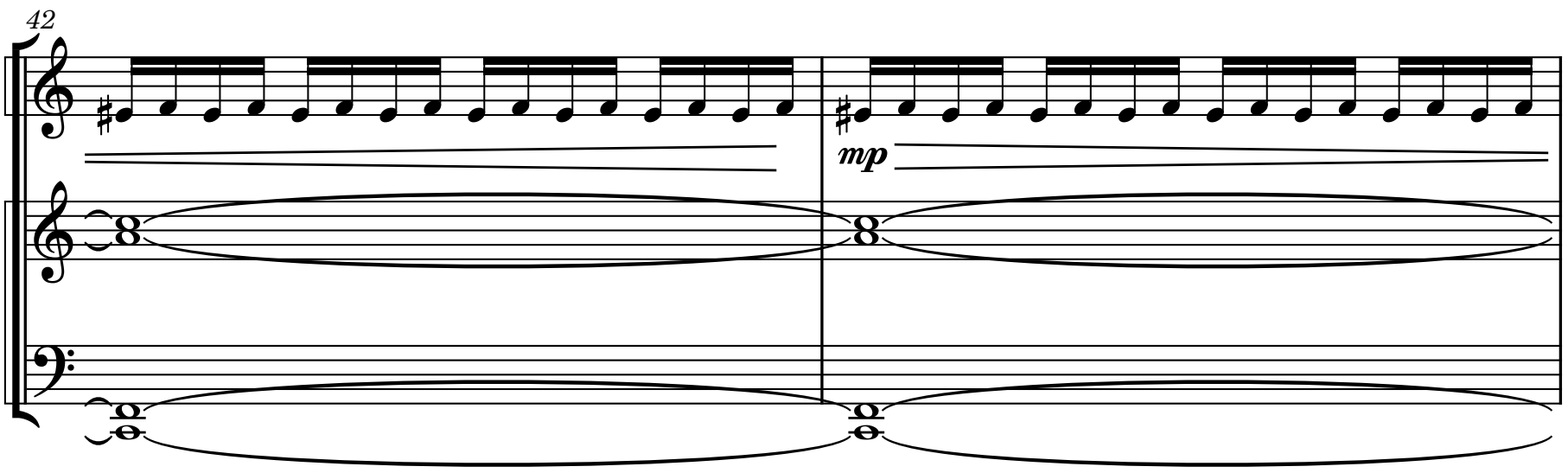
A♮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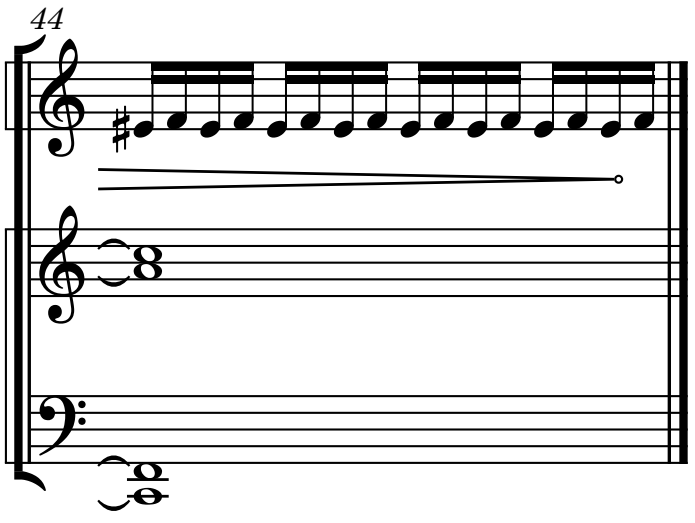
mp


44

Harp

2. Tinker Cliffs

With hushed anticipation ♩ = 92

pp

Touch at octave node

E♭ F♮ G♭ A♯
D♮ C♯ B♮

3

p

5

mp

7

9

11

13

15

17

19

mf

mp

20

A♮

22

A♯

24

A♮

26

A♯

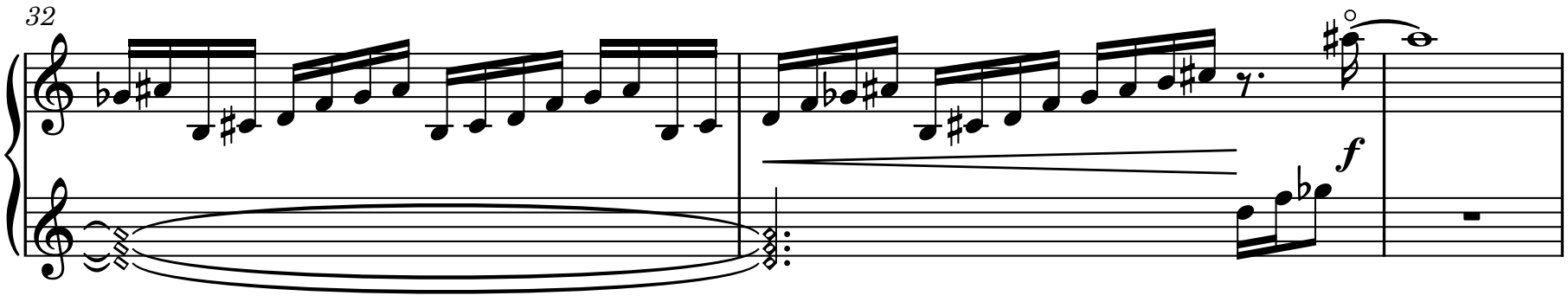
28

A♮

30

A♯

32



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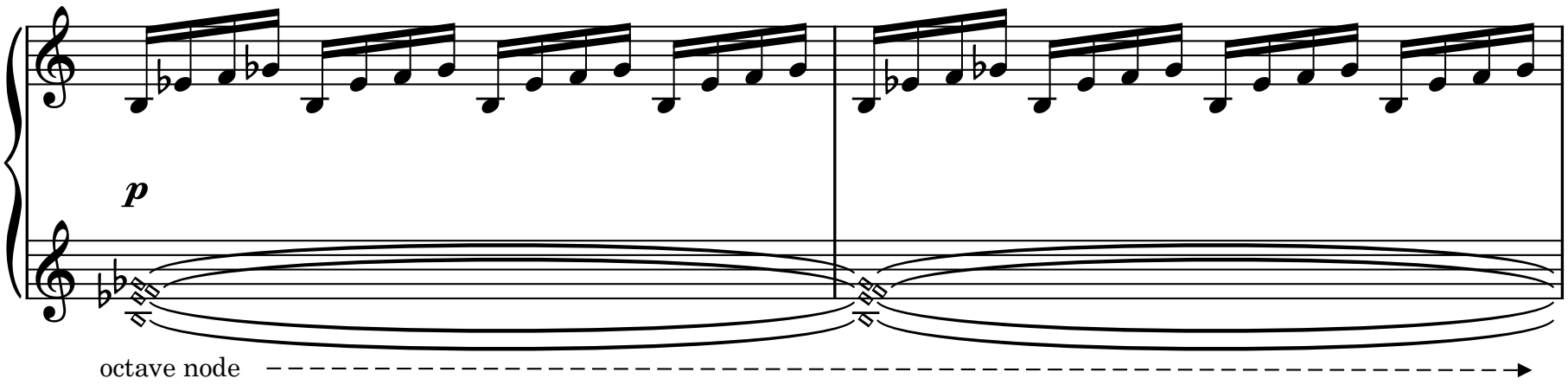

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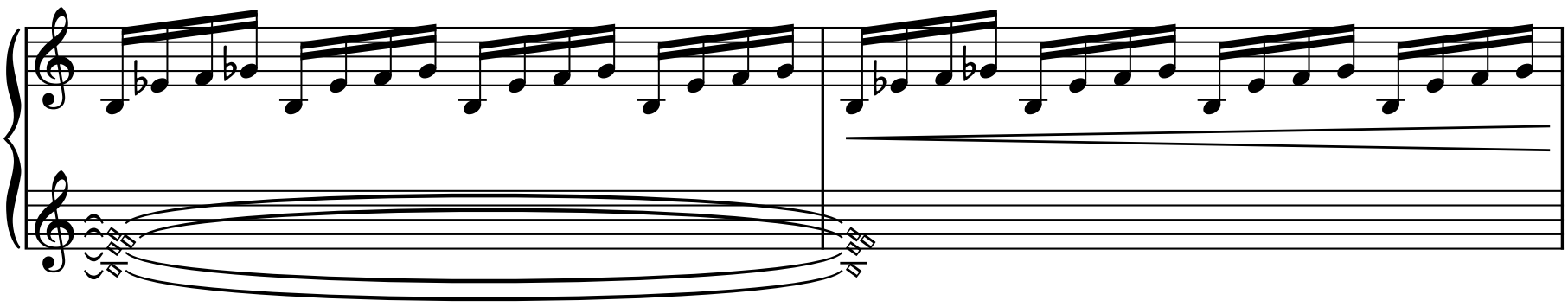

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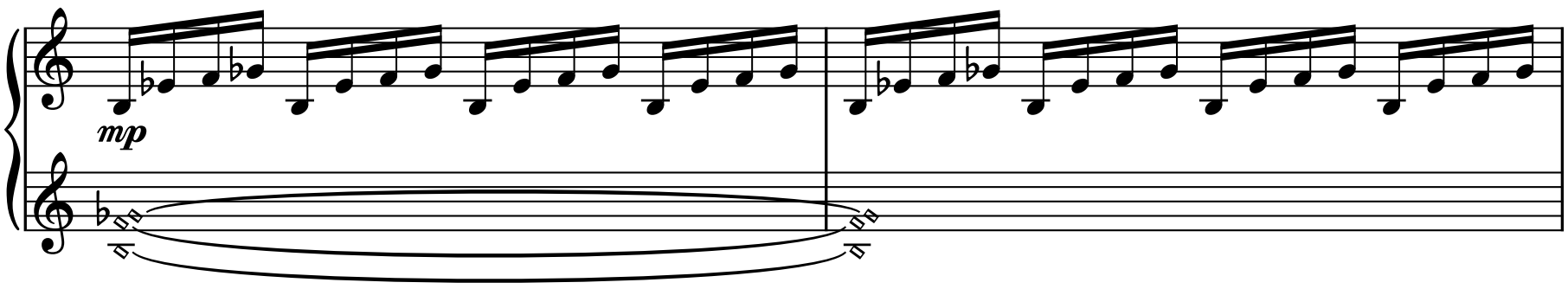

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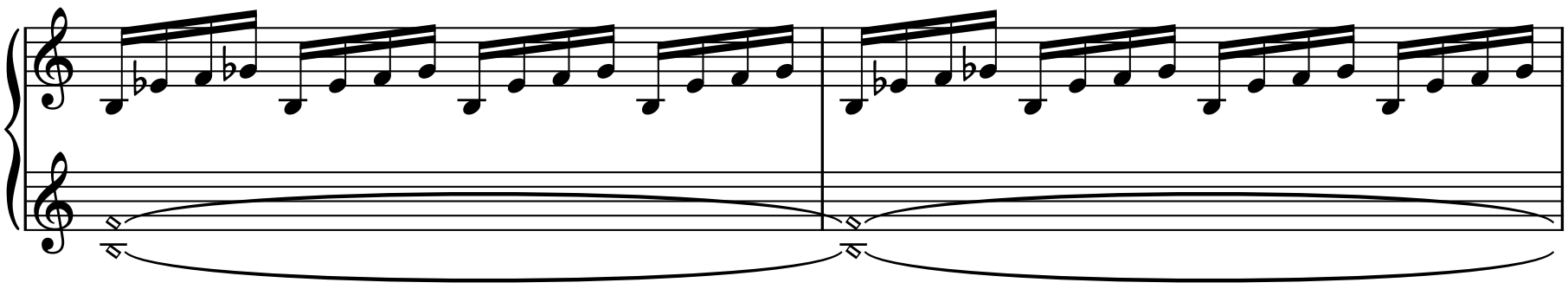

43

45

47

49

51

53

55 **Brilliant, gleaming** ♩ = 72

8va

f

57

(8)

59

(8)

ff

61

(8)

Harp

3. McAfee Knob

Reverberating into the distance ♩ = 64

f

E♮ F♮ G♮ A♮
D♮ C♮ B♭

All notes L.V. unless mute is indicated

3

f

6

f

9

12

f

mp

E♭

15

8va

f *mp*

18

3 3

21

f

3 3

24

f *pp*

mp

27

f *mp*

(mp)

30

f *p* *mf* *(mp)*

34

36 **Like gentle droplets**

p

37

40

42 **Murmuring**

mp p.d.l.t. (Right hand only)

43

45

47

49

51

53

Harp

55

ord.

57 **Expansive, majestic**

ff

58

f

mf

p

60

63