

Keystones

Two Pianos

LUKE CARLSON MUSIC

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(2026)

Duration: c. 4 minutes

Commissioned by MTNA in celebration of their 150th Anniversary and supported by the MTNA Foundation Fund 150th Anniversary Affiliate Enrichment Grant.

LUKE CARLSON MUSIC

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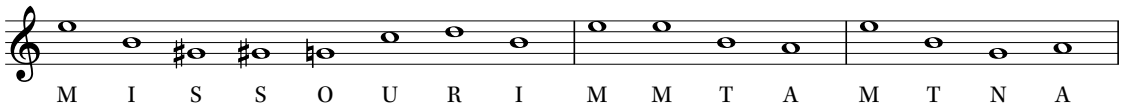
Program Notes

This celebratory music is structured around the idea of support and symbiosis between two entities. The two pianists trade roles, gestures, and musical material throughout, in service to the listening experience. This mimics the relationship between MMTA and MTNA, as well as the various roles, activities, and hard work in which they engage to serve our teachers and students in their musical endeavors.

To highlight these concepts, I've used three musical cryptograms to represent MISSOURI, MMTA, and MTNA, respectively. There are several ways in which pitches can be used to represent letters. I've chosen a blend of systems that serves my musical needs while keeping the identity of each word and abbreviation distinct.



The piece begins with simple antiphonal statements of MTNA and MMTA, the last letter/note held to frame and stabilize the music. Various iterations of MISSOURI, both forward and backward, are used throughout the piece as melodic figures. Chords, though, are the main feature of the piece and dominate the texture after the subtly conversational beginning. MMTA and MTNA feature prominently as the melodic notes of the chords.

I chose the title *Keystones* because it serves as a visual reminder of how cooperation between entities results in supportive strength and mutual success. It also represents the structural interplay and interlocking gestures of the two pianists' strong and celebratory music.

Composed for the 150th anniversary of the Music Teachers National Association.

for Hye-Jung Hong and Christopher Madden

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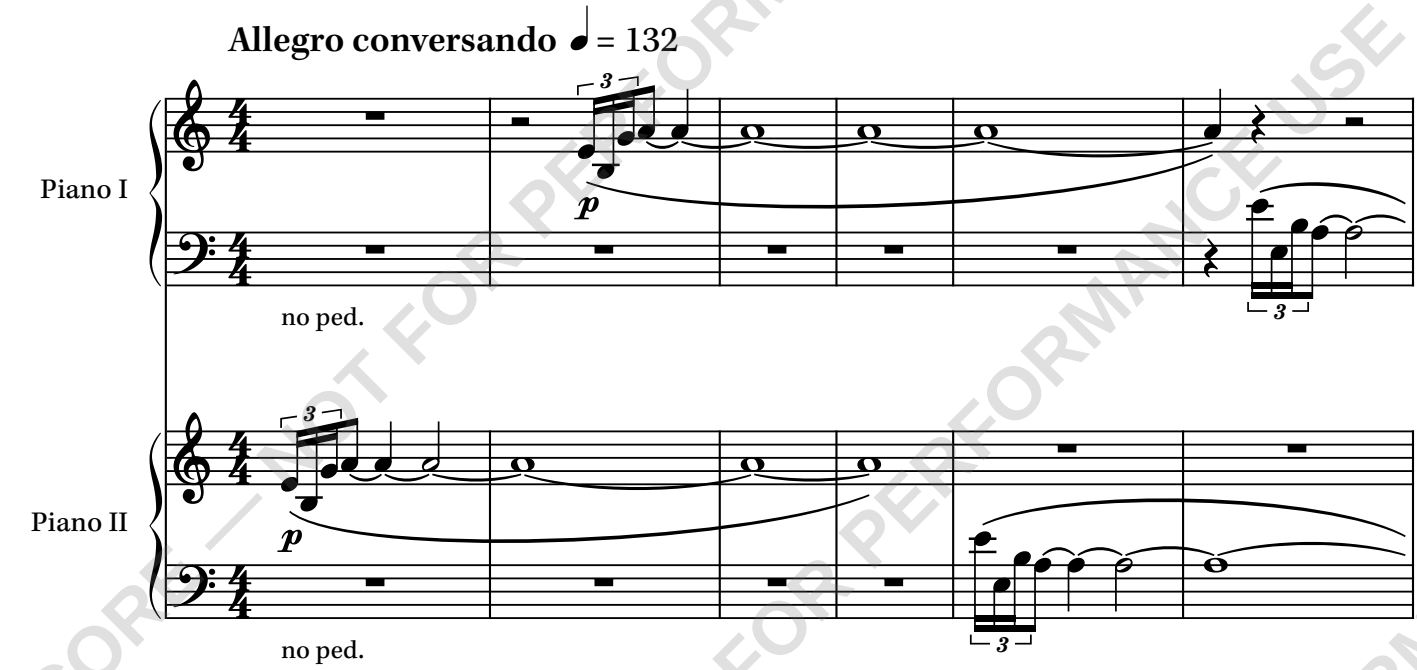

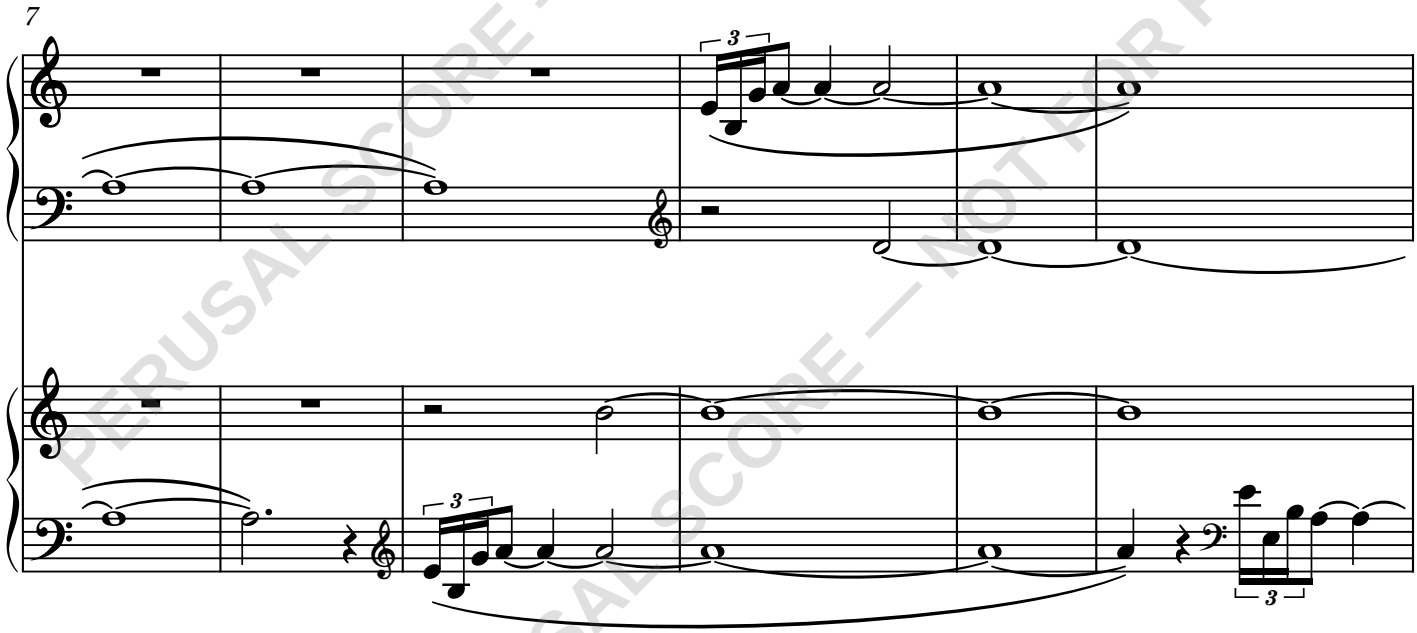

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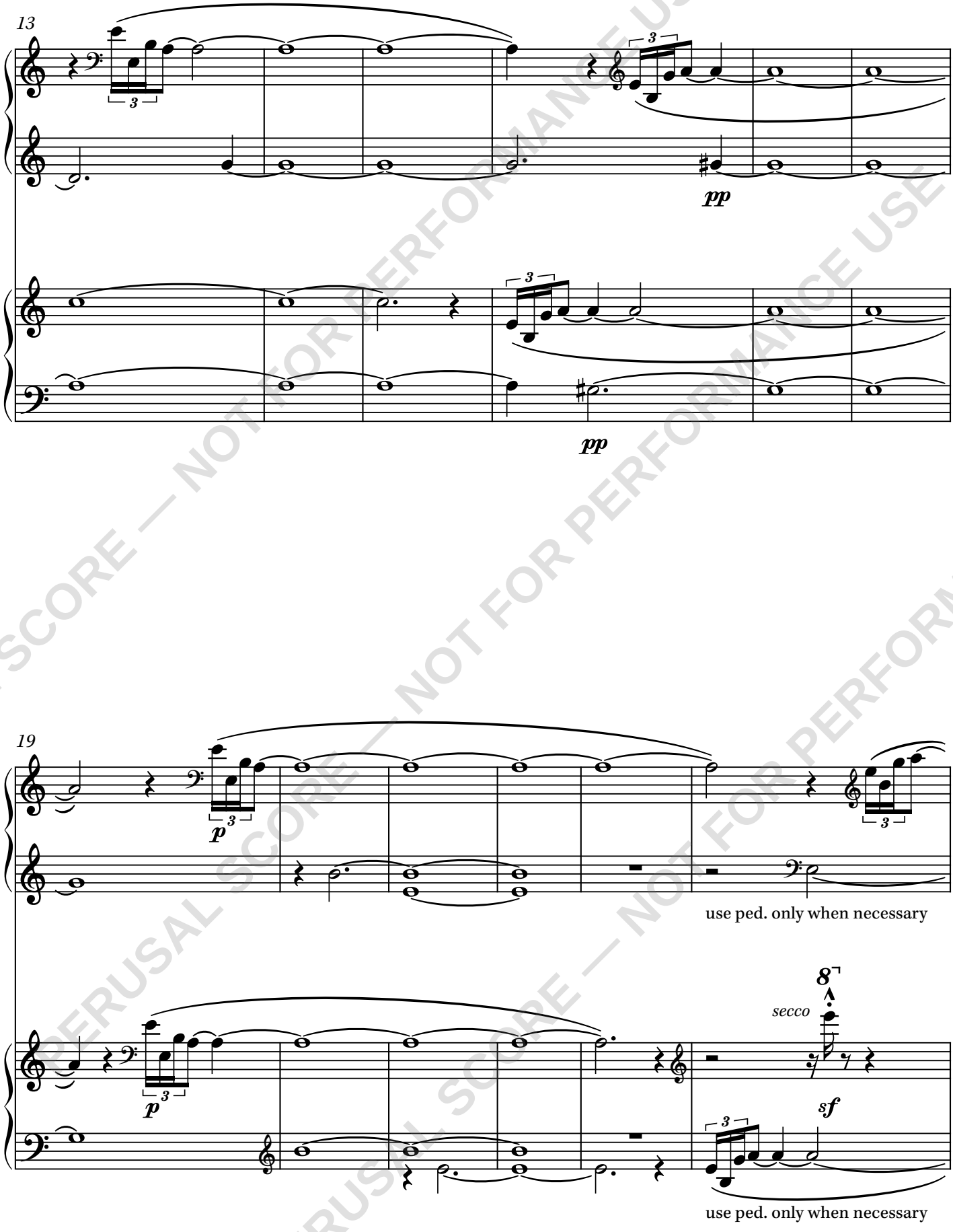

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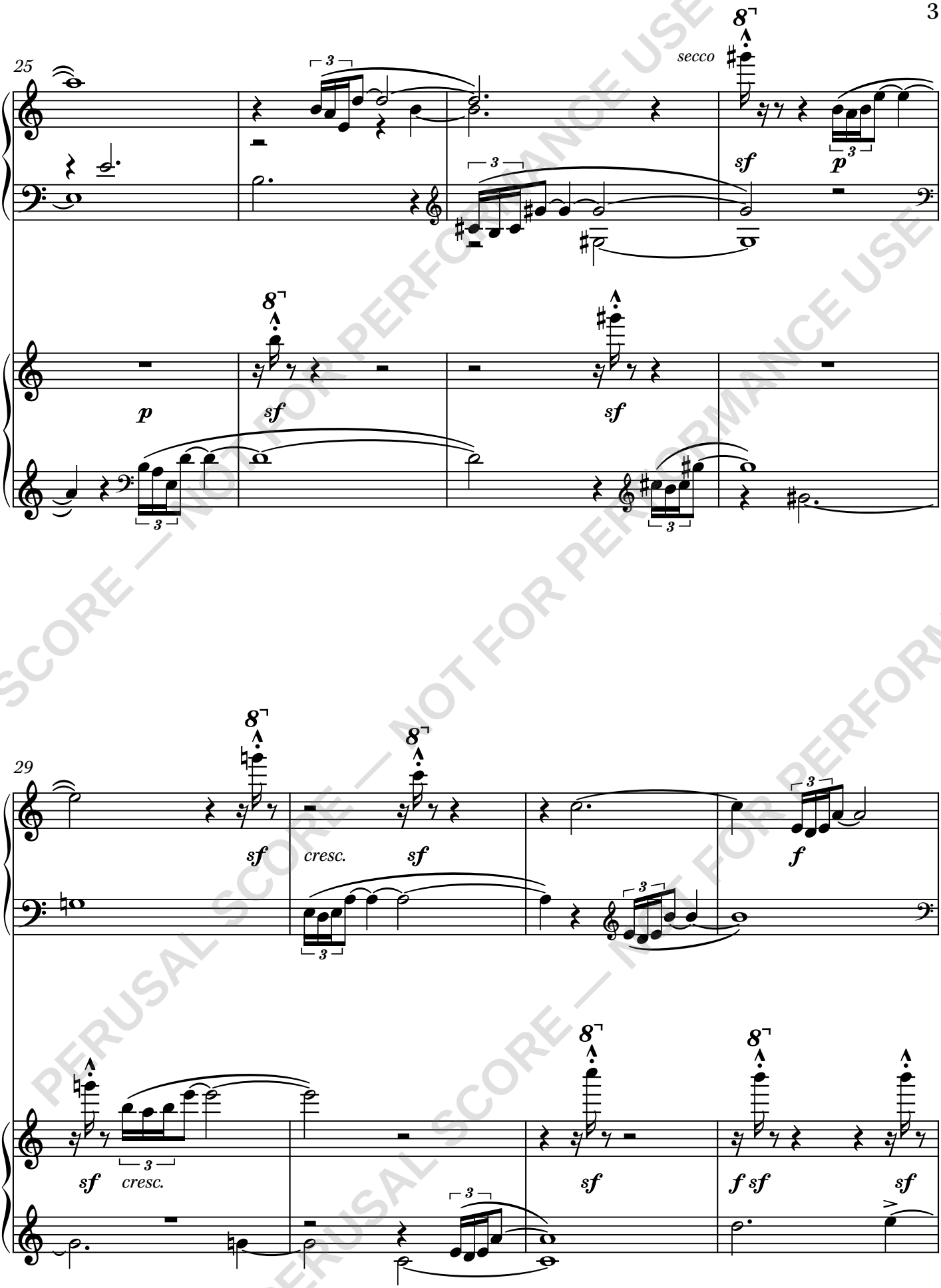

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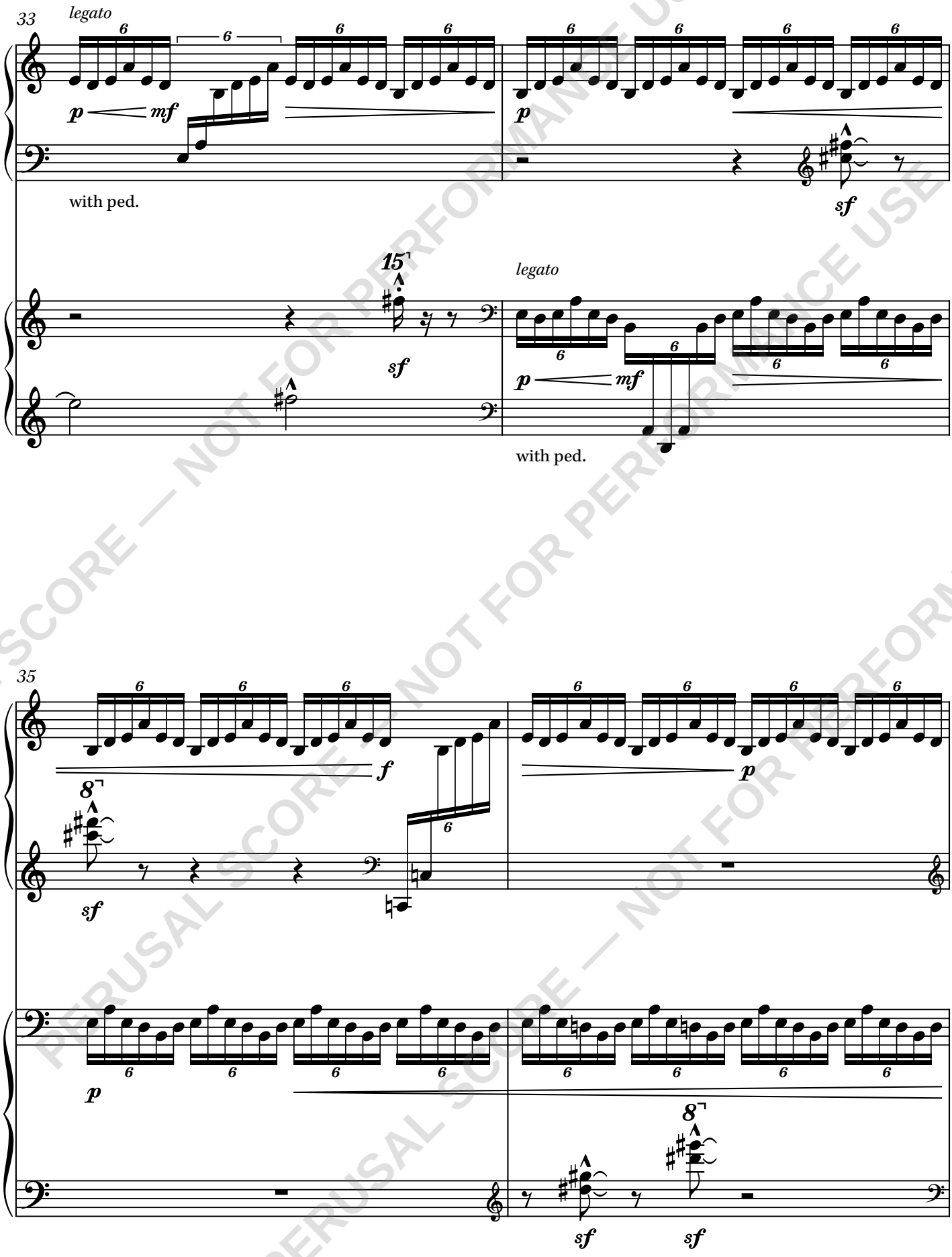

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