The Snake Charmer

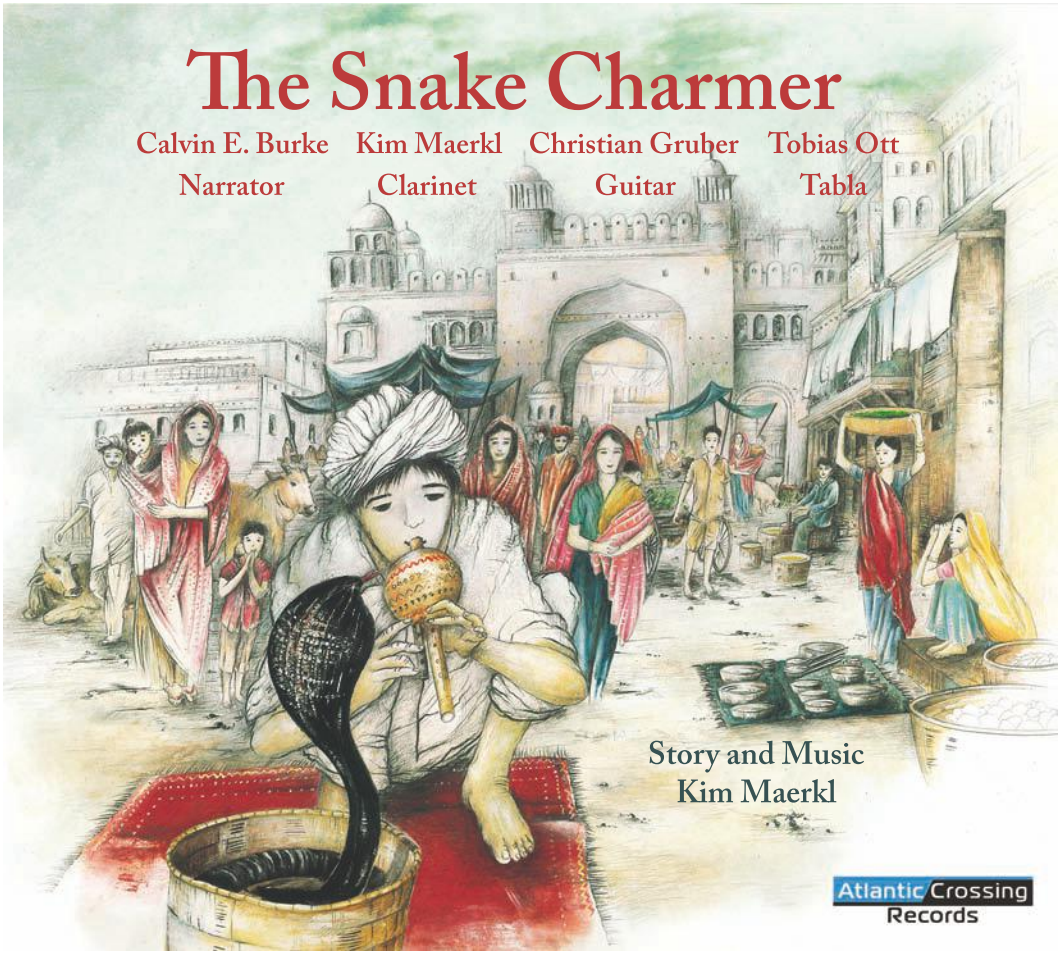
for

Narrator, Clarinet, Guitar and Tabla

Story and Music

Kim Maerkl

I The Snake Charmer
II Bonji
III Marketplace
IV Moonlit Forest
V Shiba and the Serpent
VI Shiba´s Song
VII Taj Mahal
Narration Text
Teacher´s Guide



Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

Atlantic Crossing
Records

The Snake Charmer

Clarinet

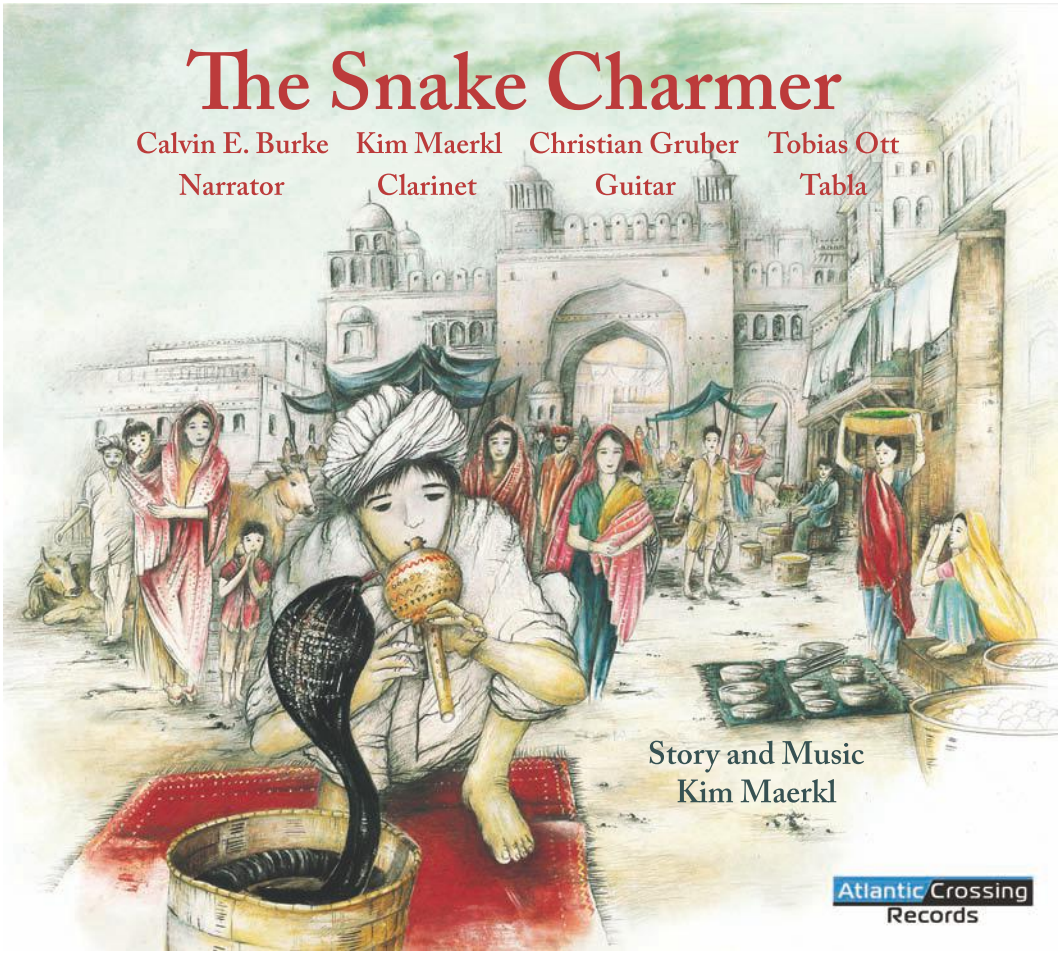
for

Narrator, Clarinet, Guitar and Tabla

Story and Music

Kim Maerkl

I The Snake Charmer
II Bonji
III Marketplace
IV Moonlit Forest
V Shiba and the Serpent
VI Shiba´s Song
VII Taj Mahal
Narration Text
Teacher´s Guide



Atlantic Crossing Records

www.atlantic-crossing.com

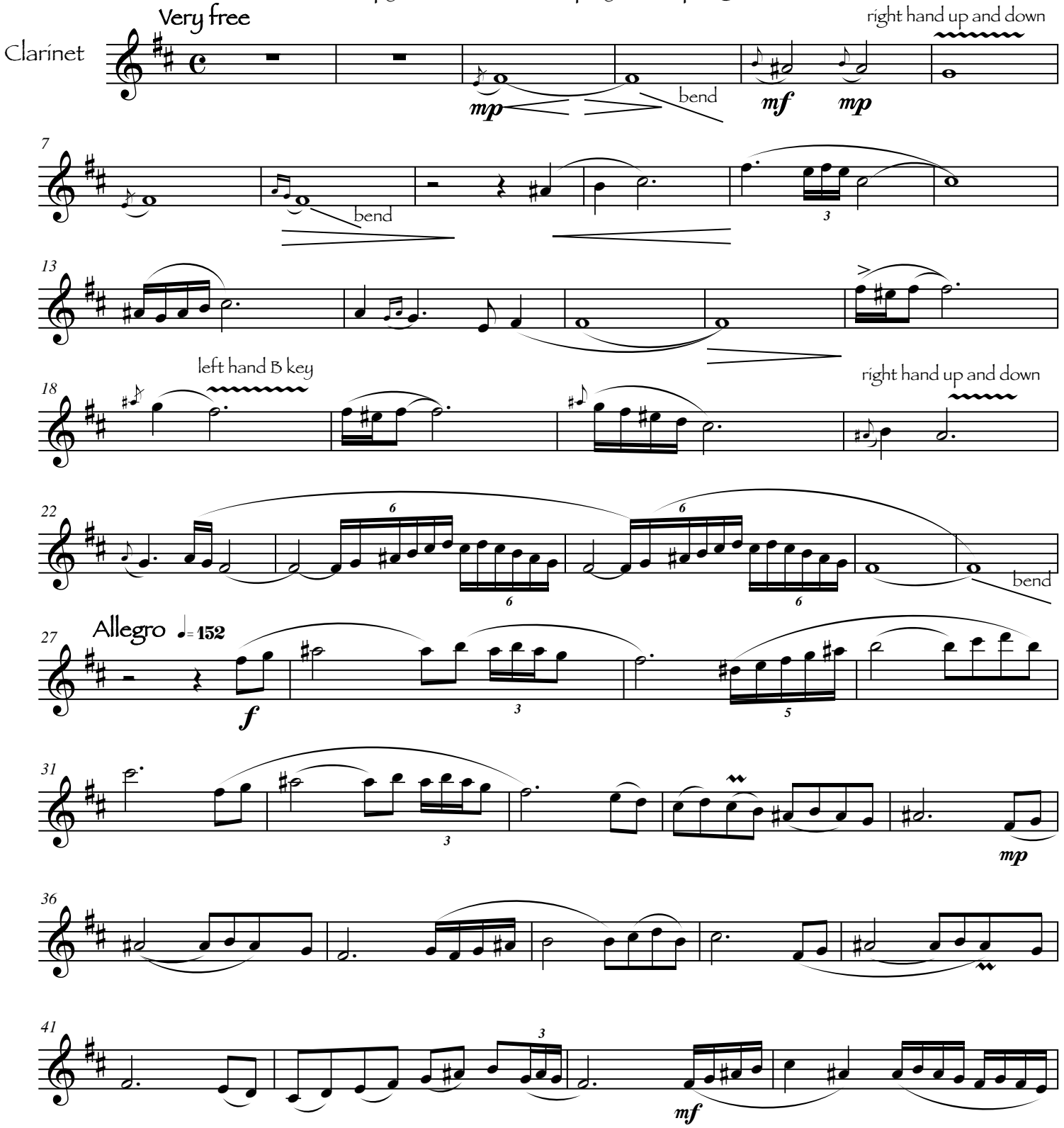
Atlantic Crossing Records

The Snake Charmer

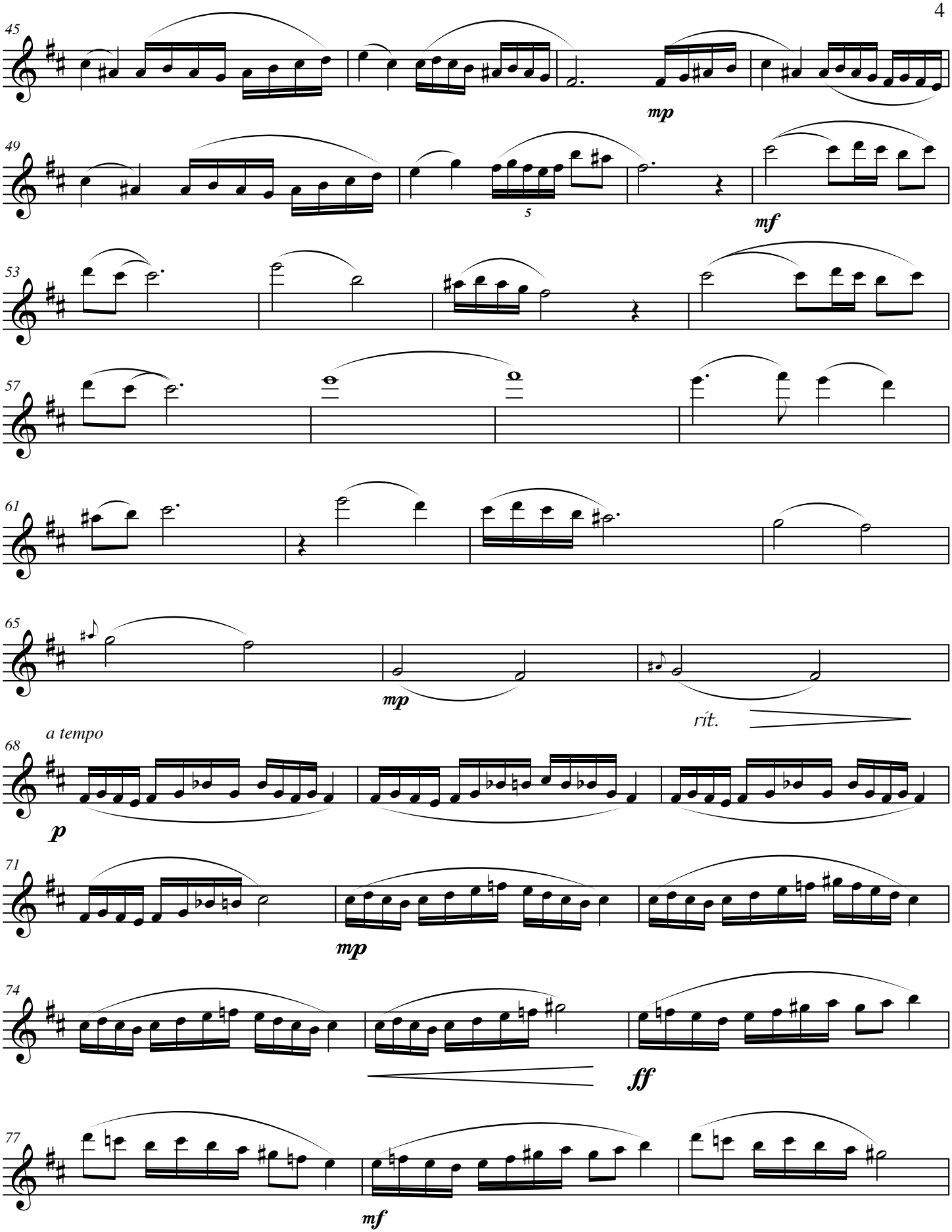
I

Kim Maerkl

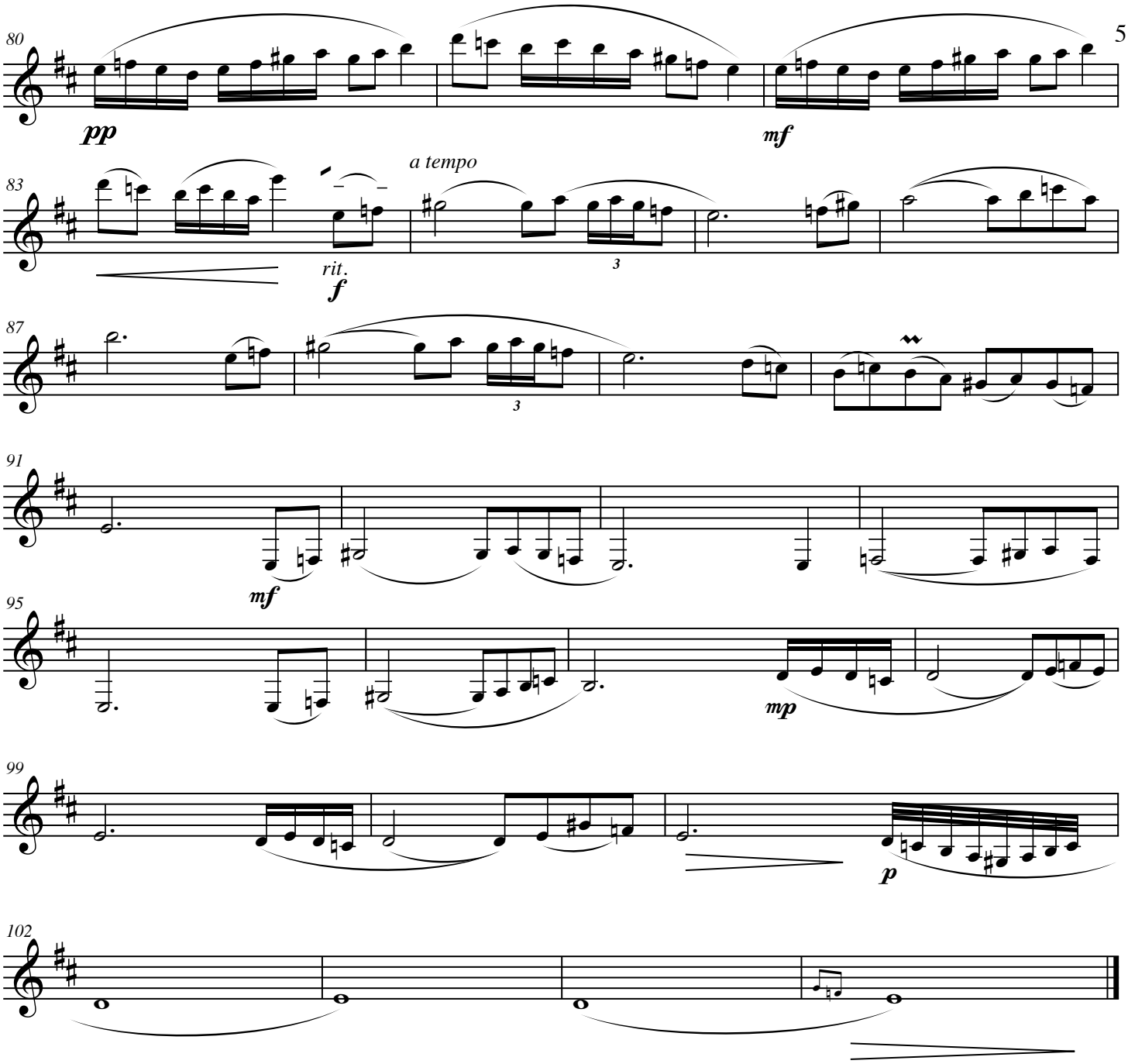
Shiba sat under the canopy of branches and played his pungi. The forest listened.



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

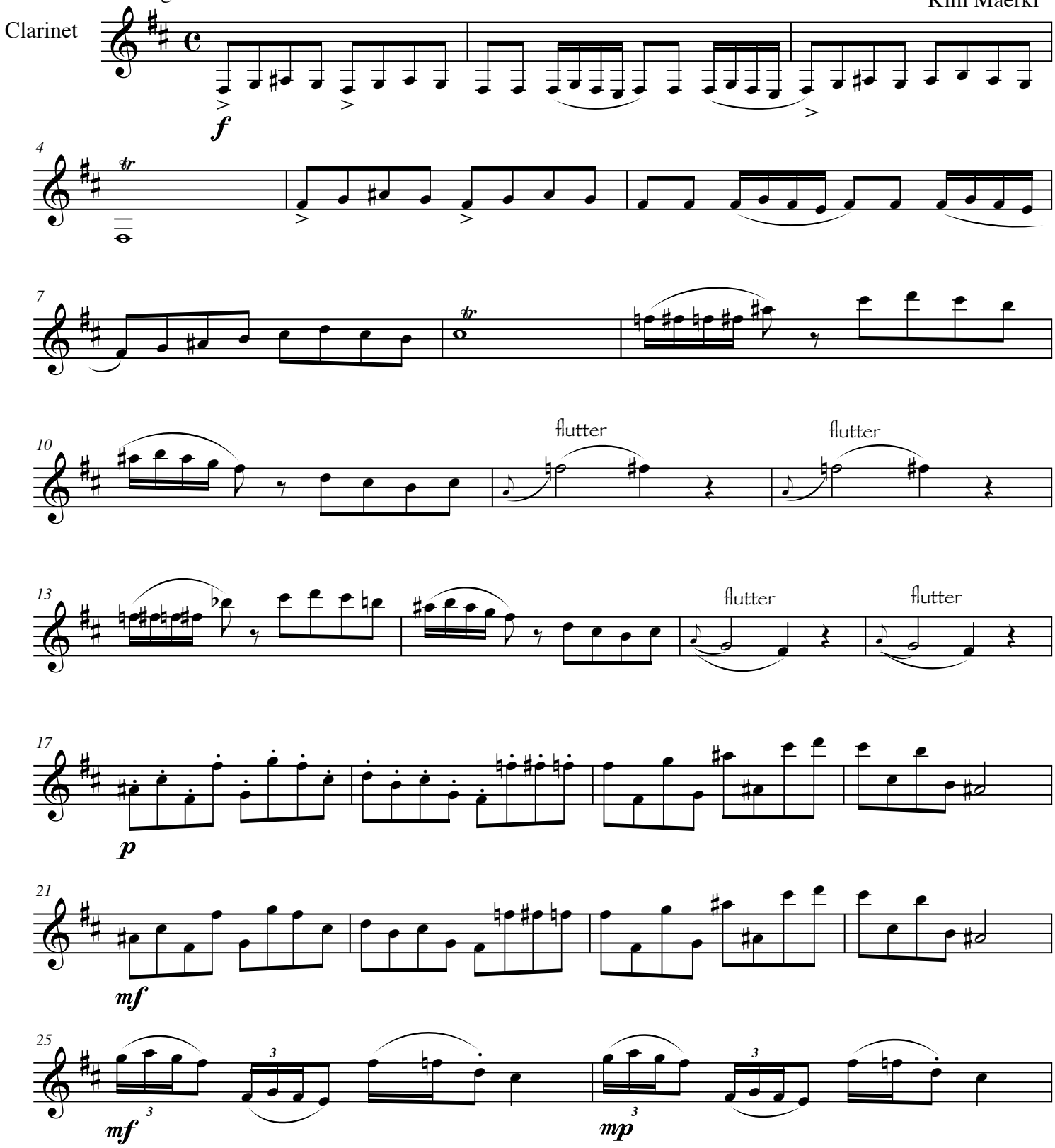
BONJI

II

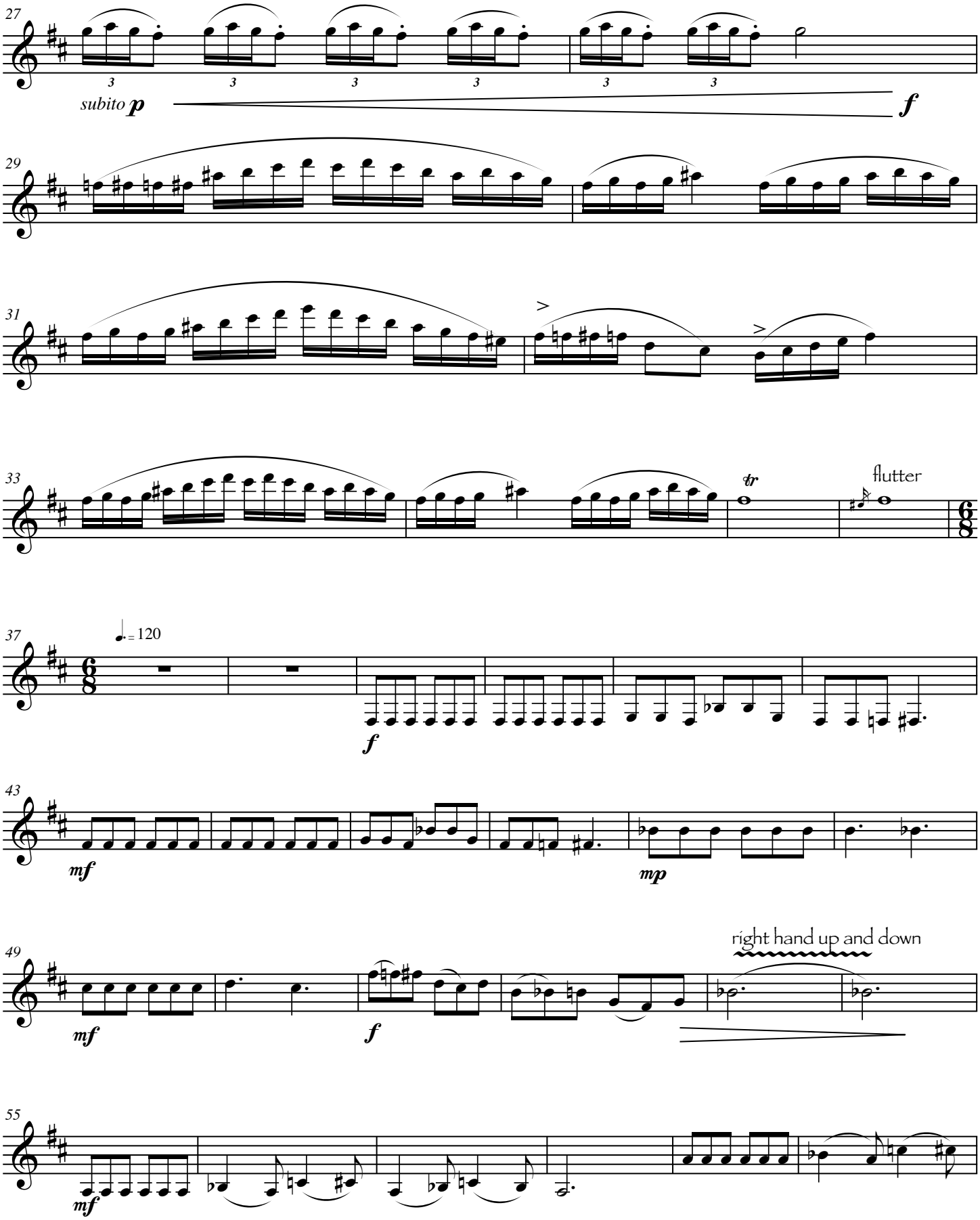
The boy loved playing the pungi and he adored his snake Bonji, a stunning black and white cobra.

Allegro con fuoco ♩= 160

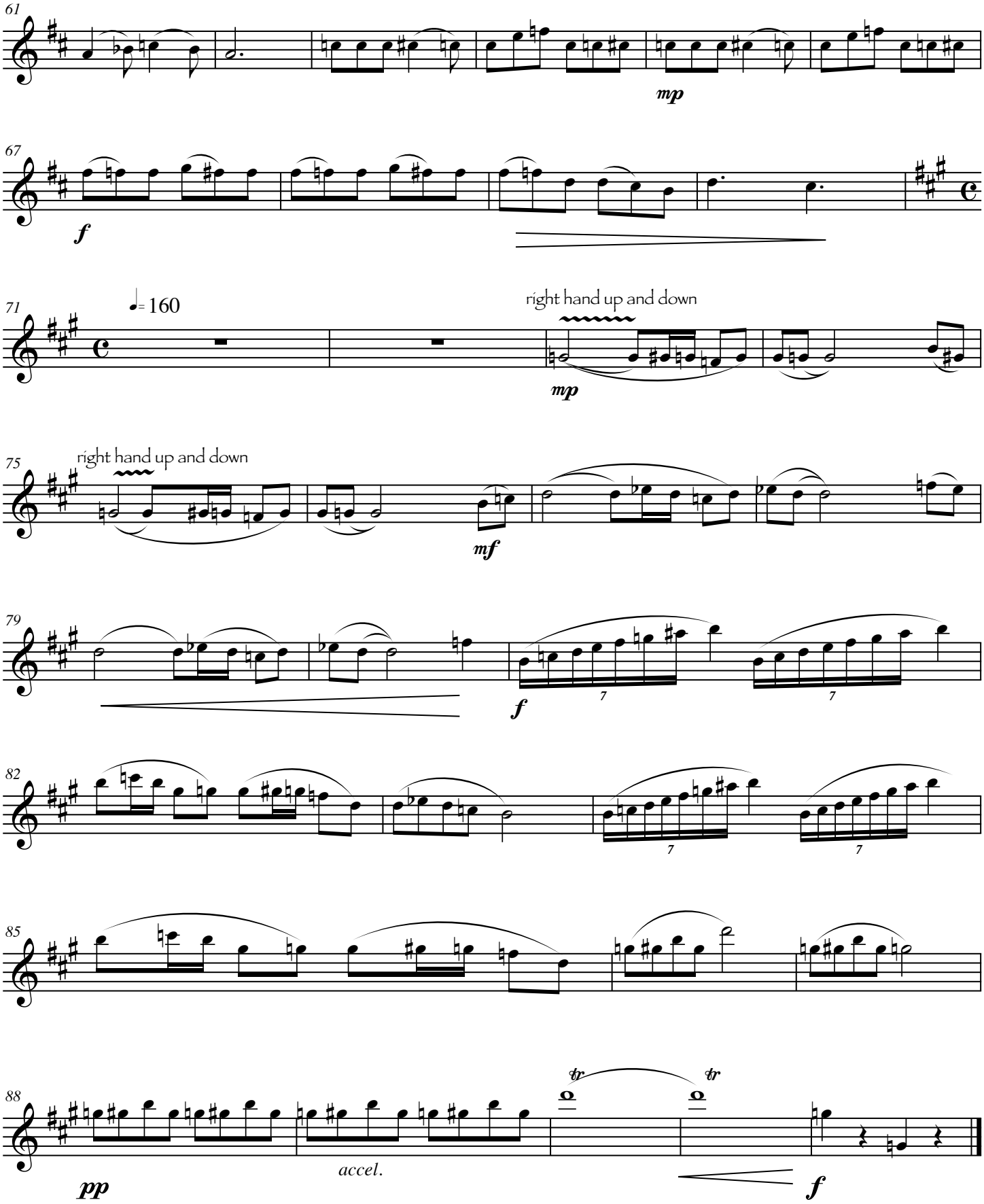
Kim Maerkl



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer
Marketplace
III

A few curious shoppers gathered around him as he stretched out his arms and circled above the dark opening with his pungi.

Kim Maerkl

Clarinet

Freely, very expressive

A rainbow of sound captivated his listeners, and the movement of the pungi intrigued the snake.

4

f

Bonji peeked his head out of the hole
and his tongue jutted out of his mouth.

Although poison was in the snake's fangs,
it was the slithering tongue that was terrifying.

9

p

Bonjhi uncoiled himself

and rose up ever so slowly.

The boy, and his snake swayed from side to side.

14

dance like

16

mf

p

19

mf

People flocked to see the spectacle. Like an ancient dragon Bonji surged forward and the skin behind his head flared.

22

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

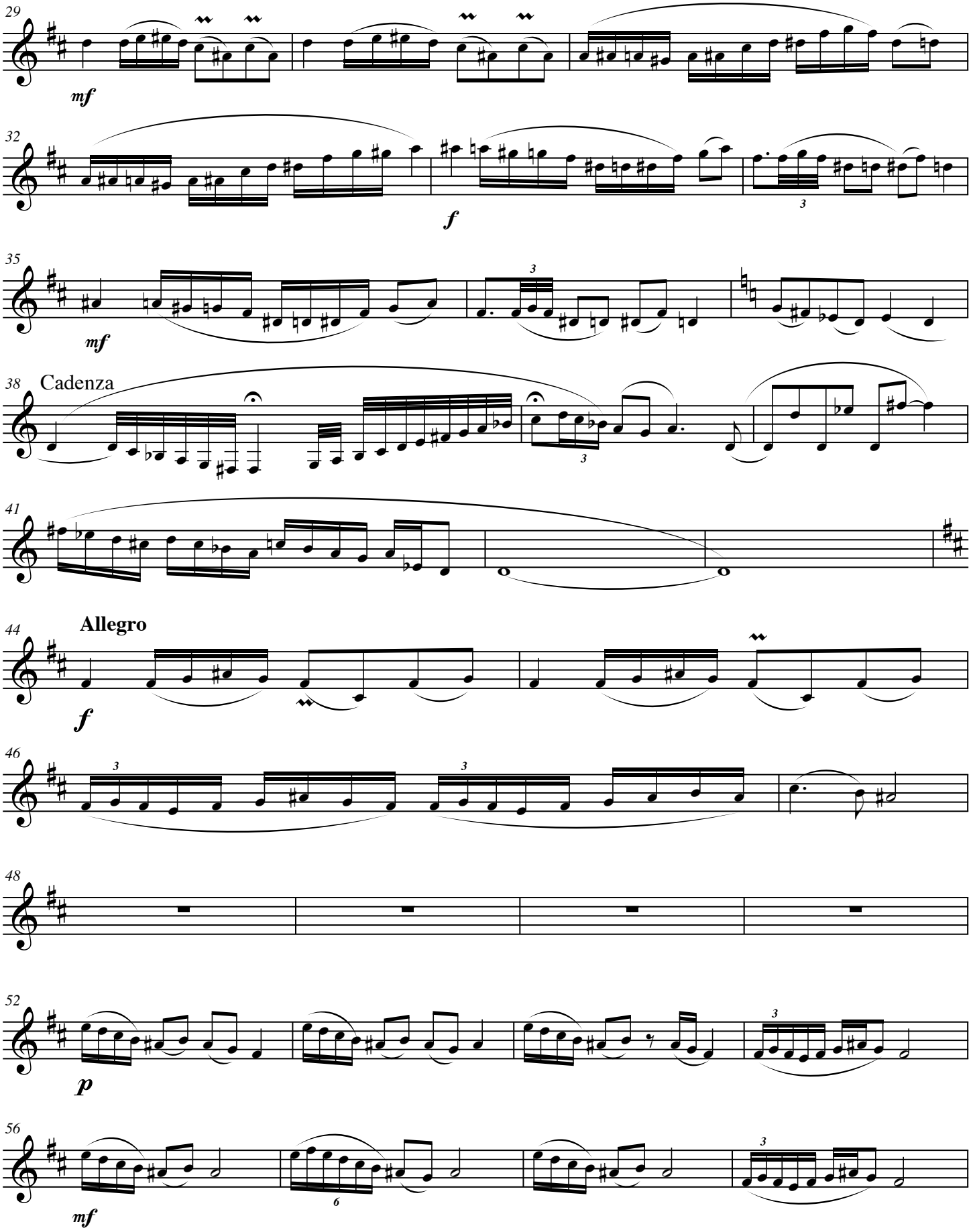
The serpent twisted and turned as he lunged at the sun.

f

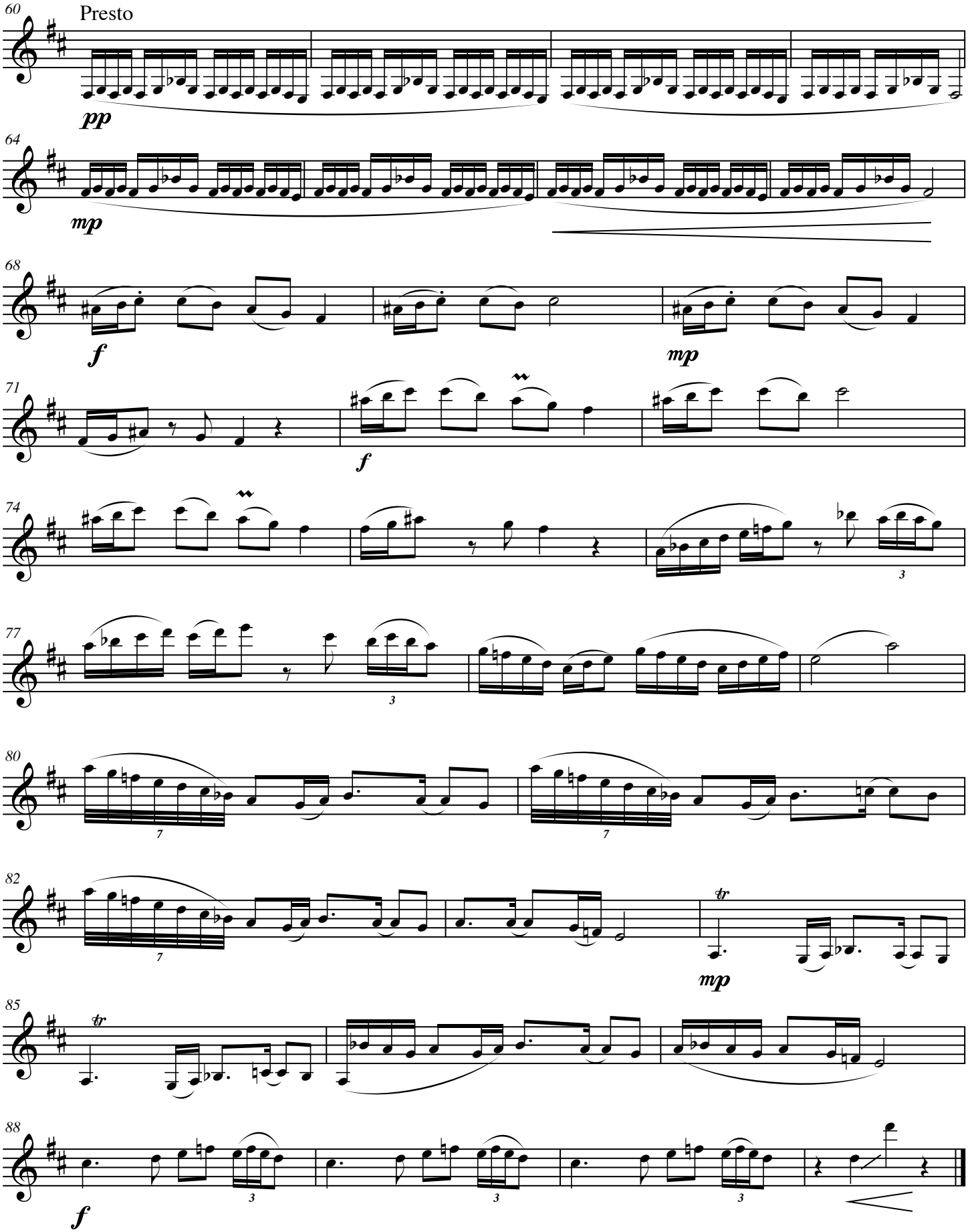
26

mp

©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

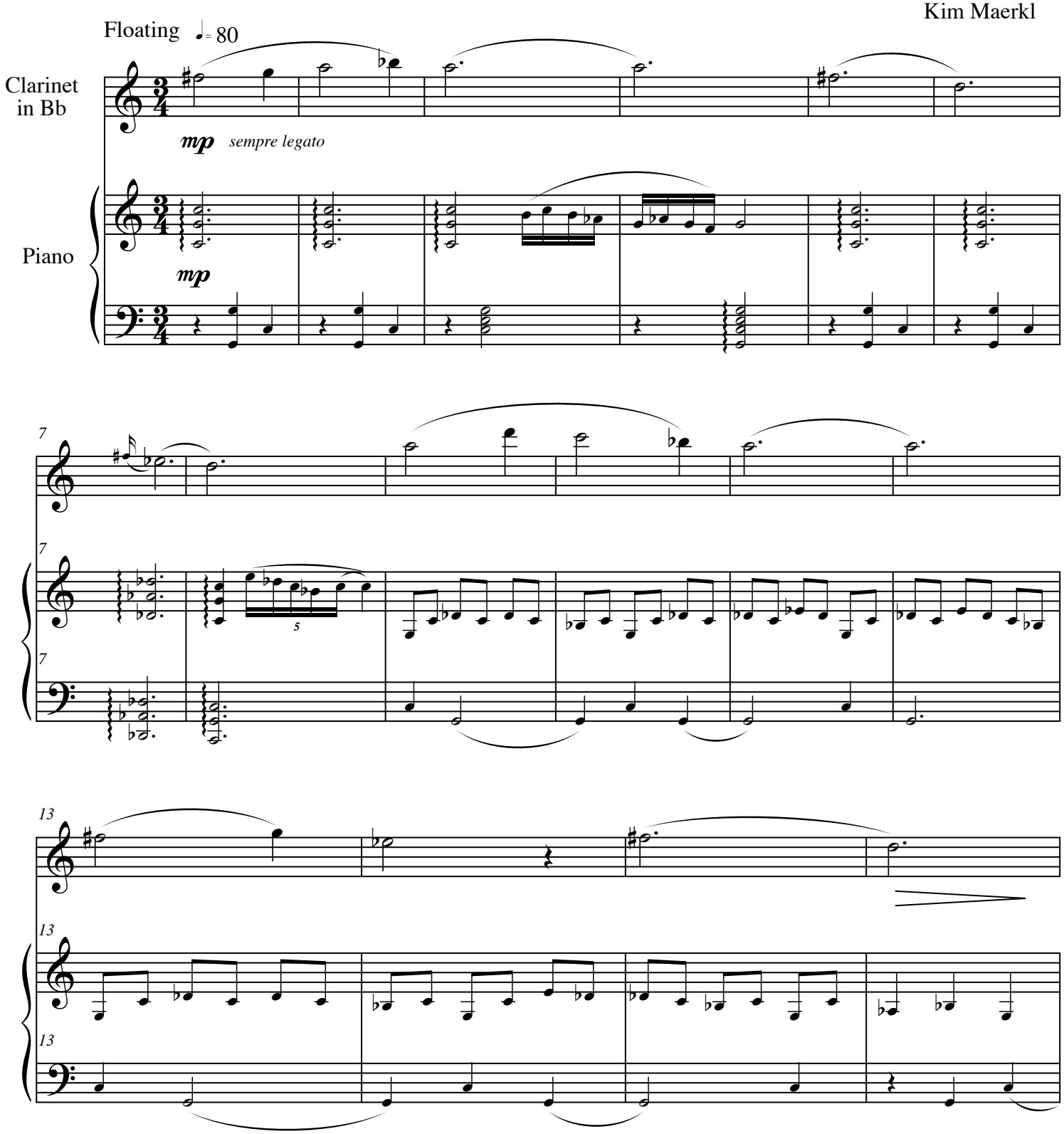
The Snake Charmer

Moonlit Forest

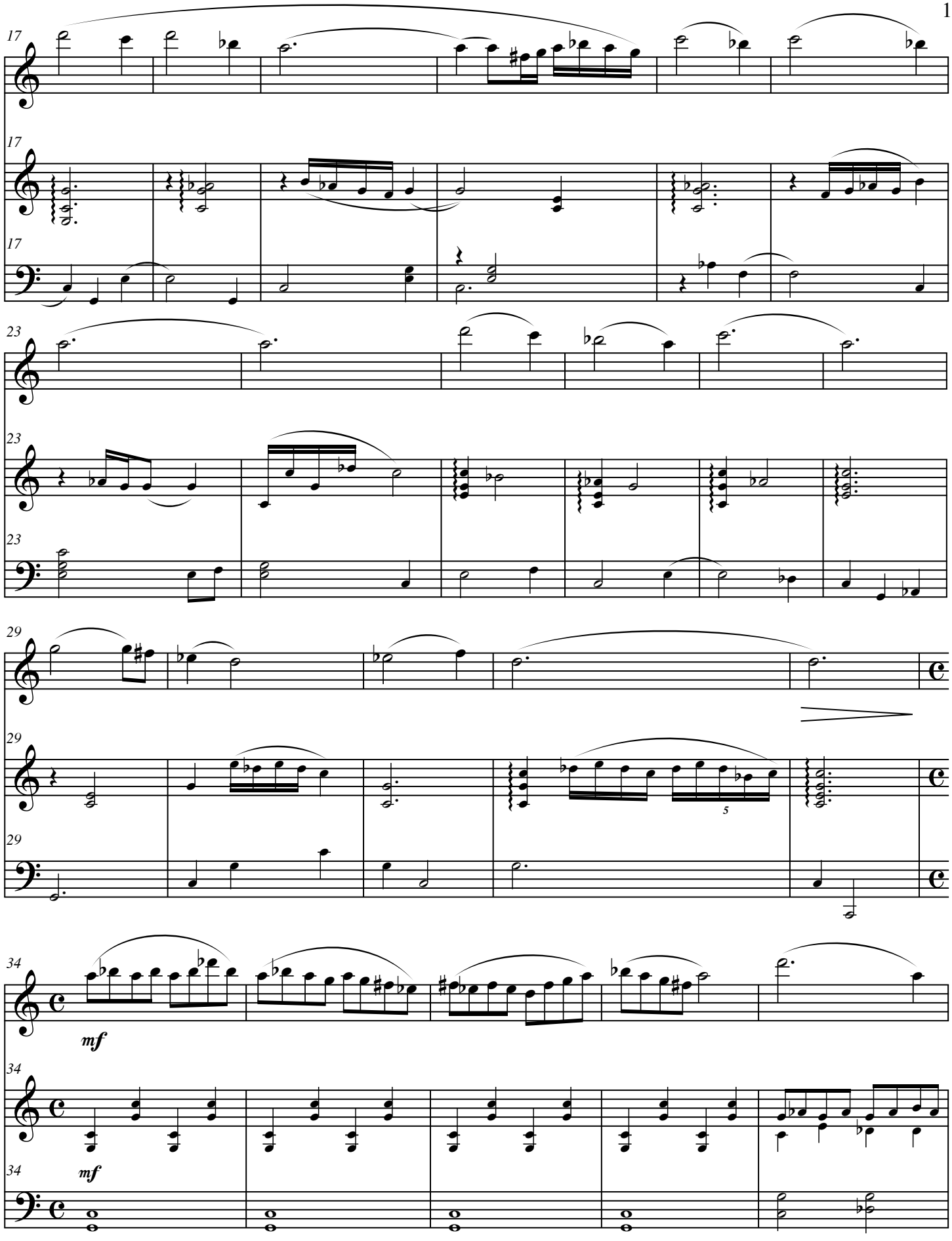
IV

Then, too excited to sleep he strolled through the moonlit forest, sat under his favorite tree and played his pungi.

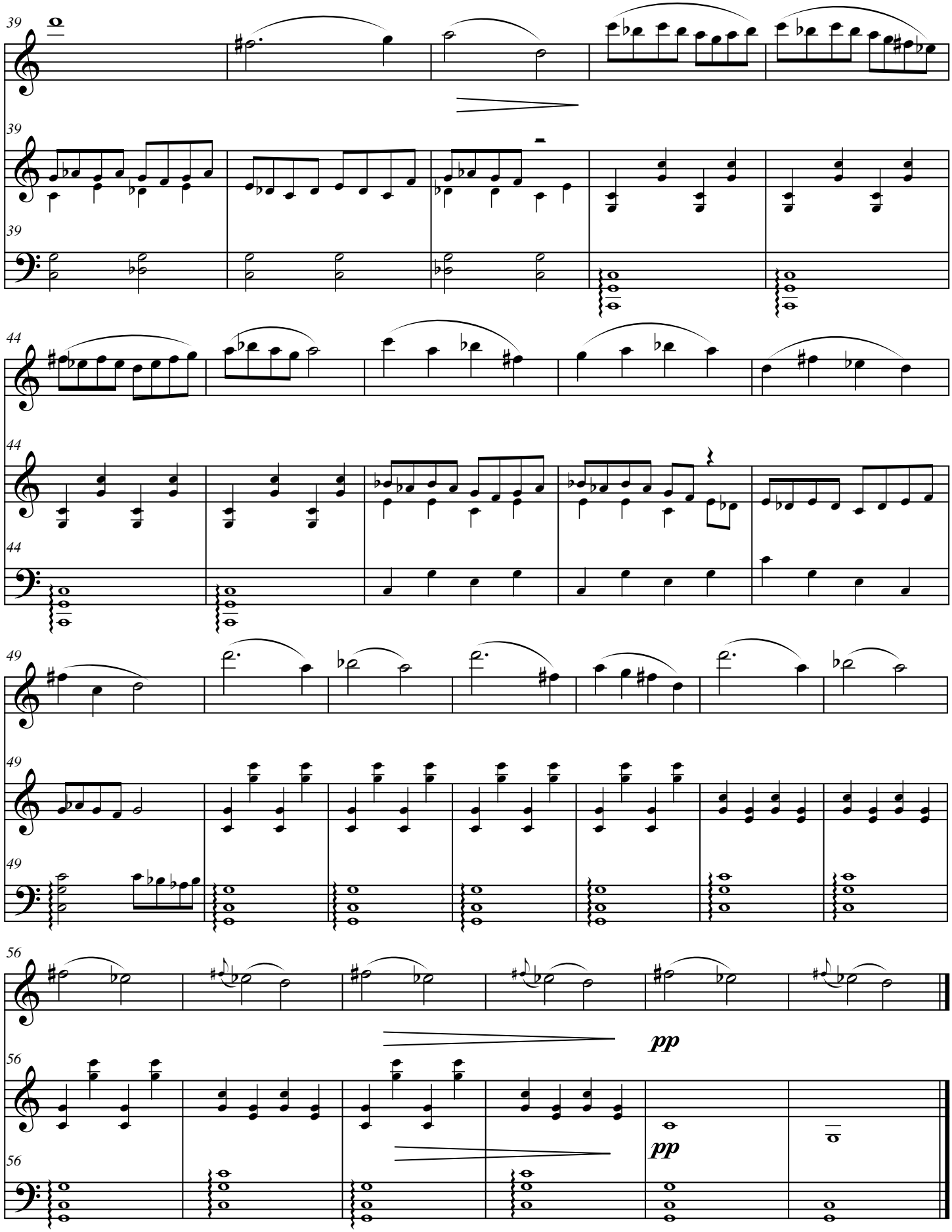
Kim Maerkl



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

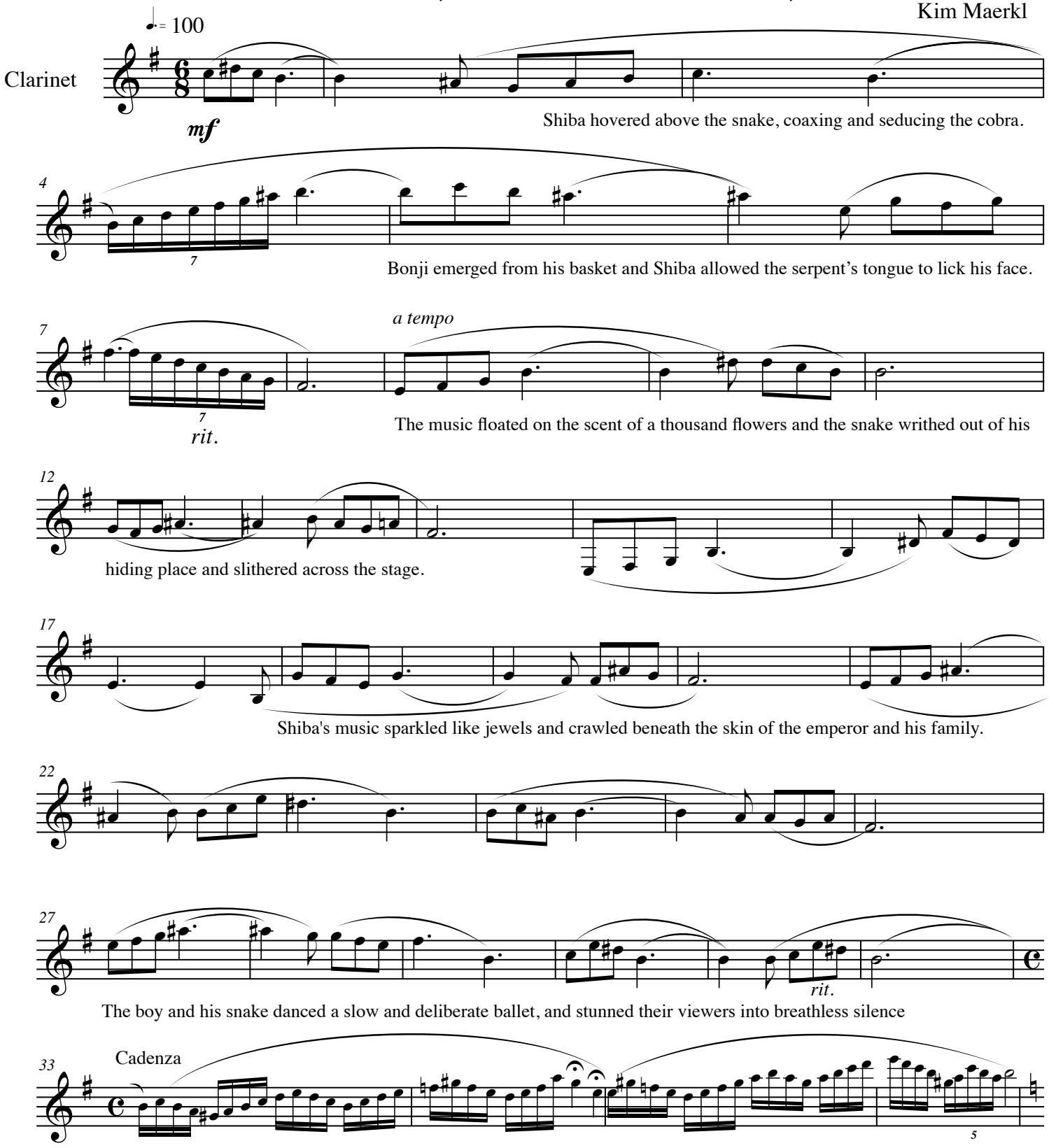
The Snake Charmer

Shiba and the Serpent

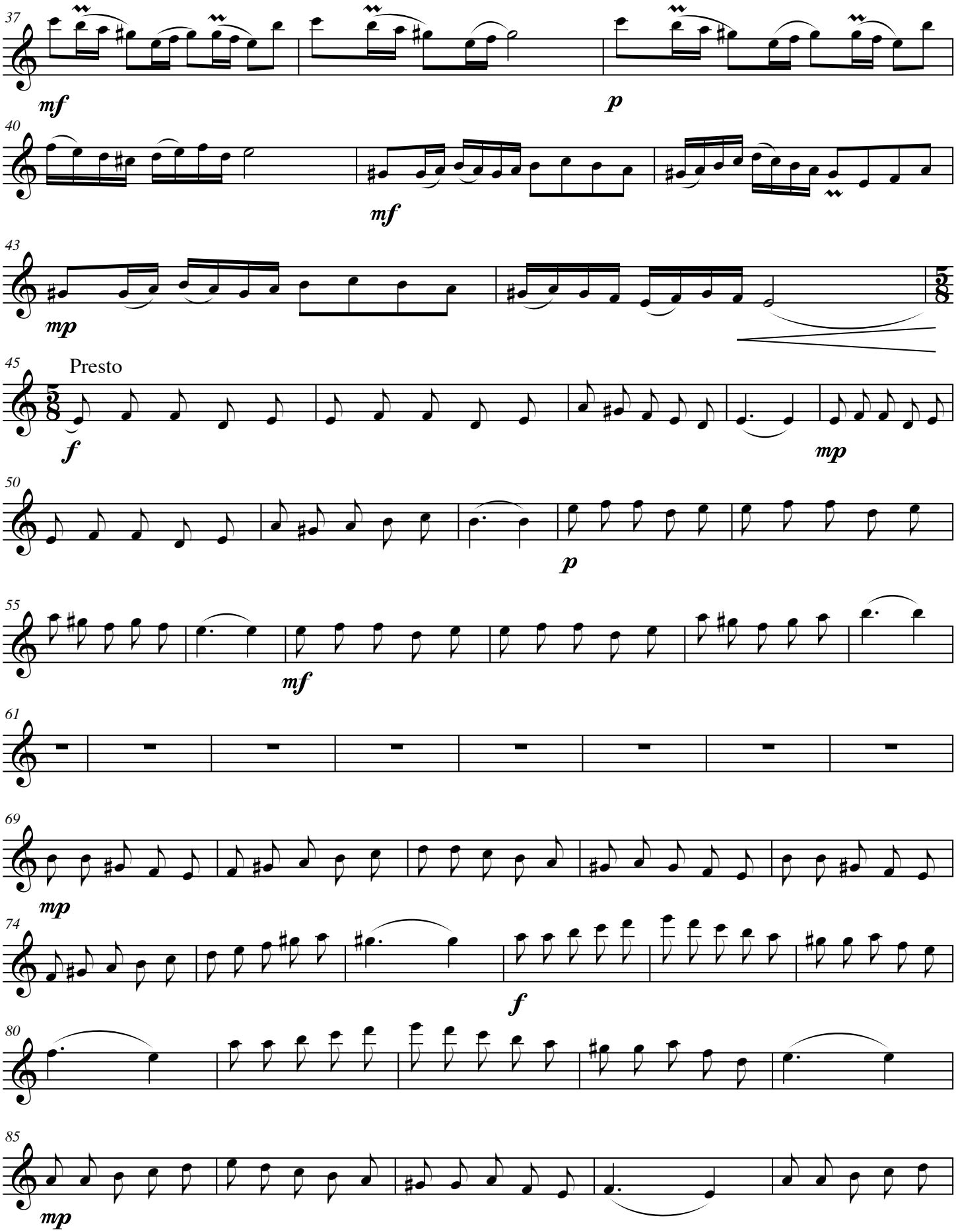
V

...he swallowed his fear and gave a performance that had been waiting patiently in his soul.

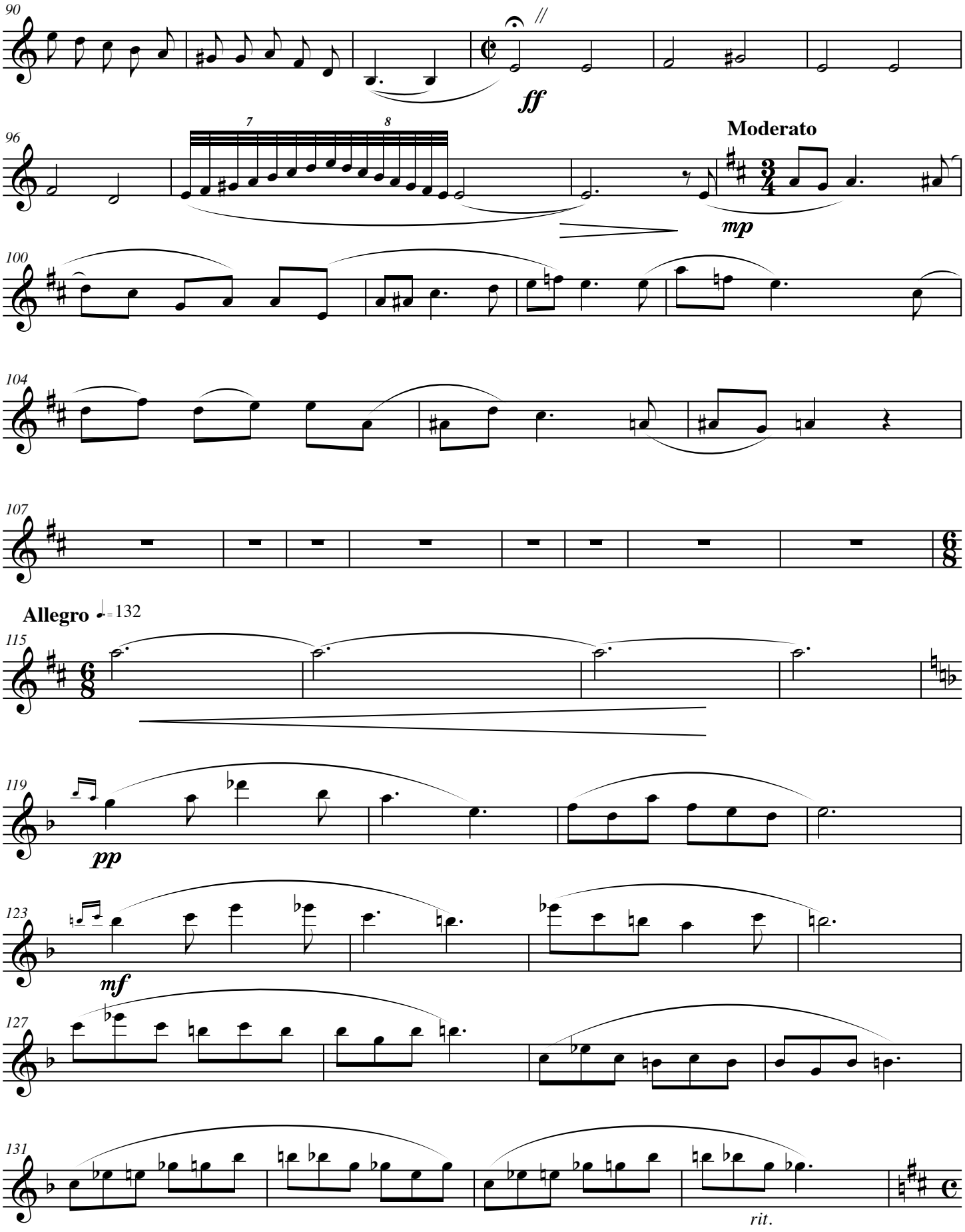
Kim Maerkl



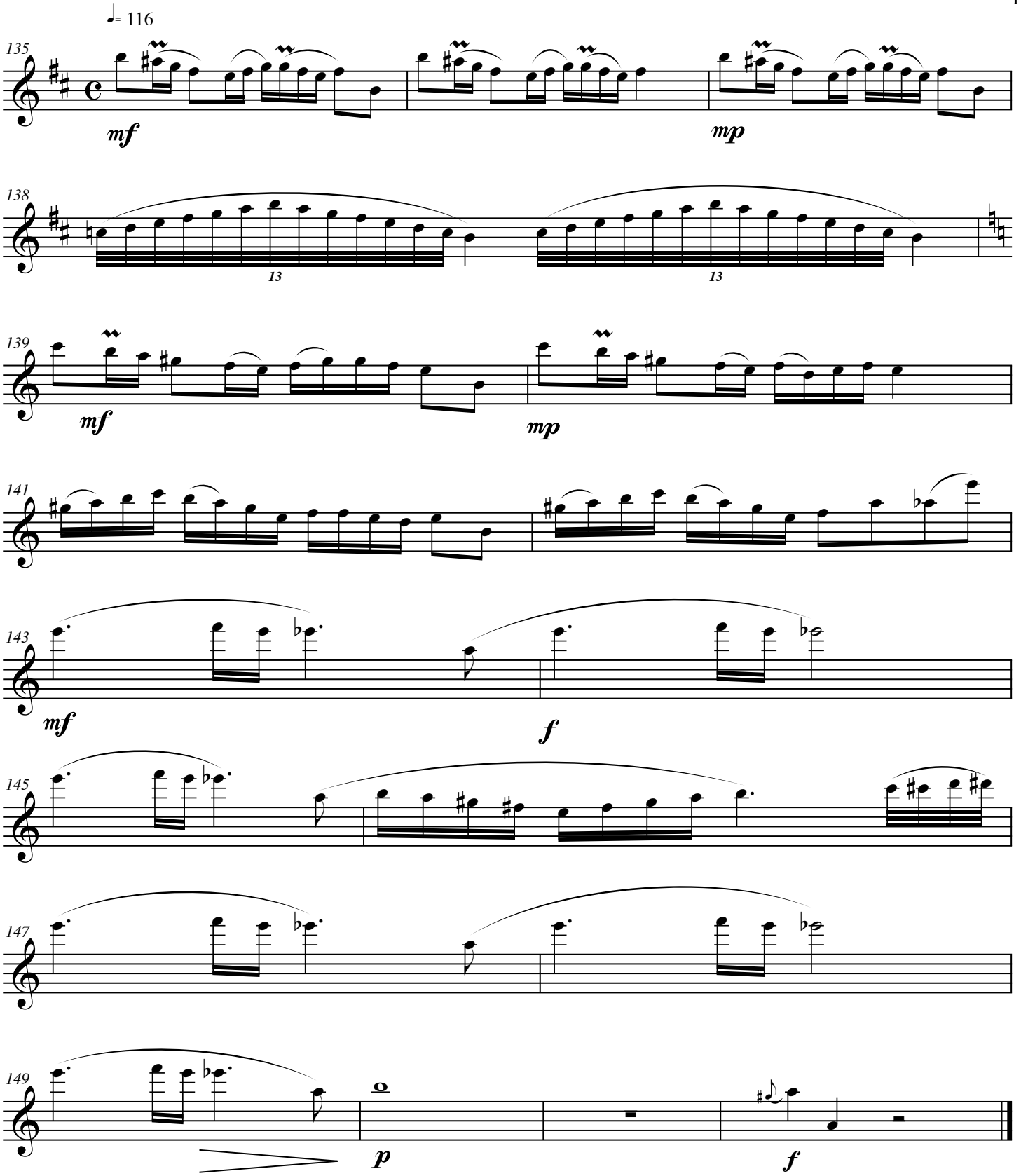
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

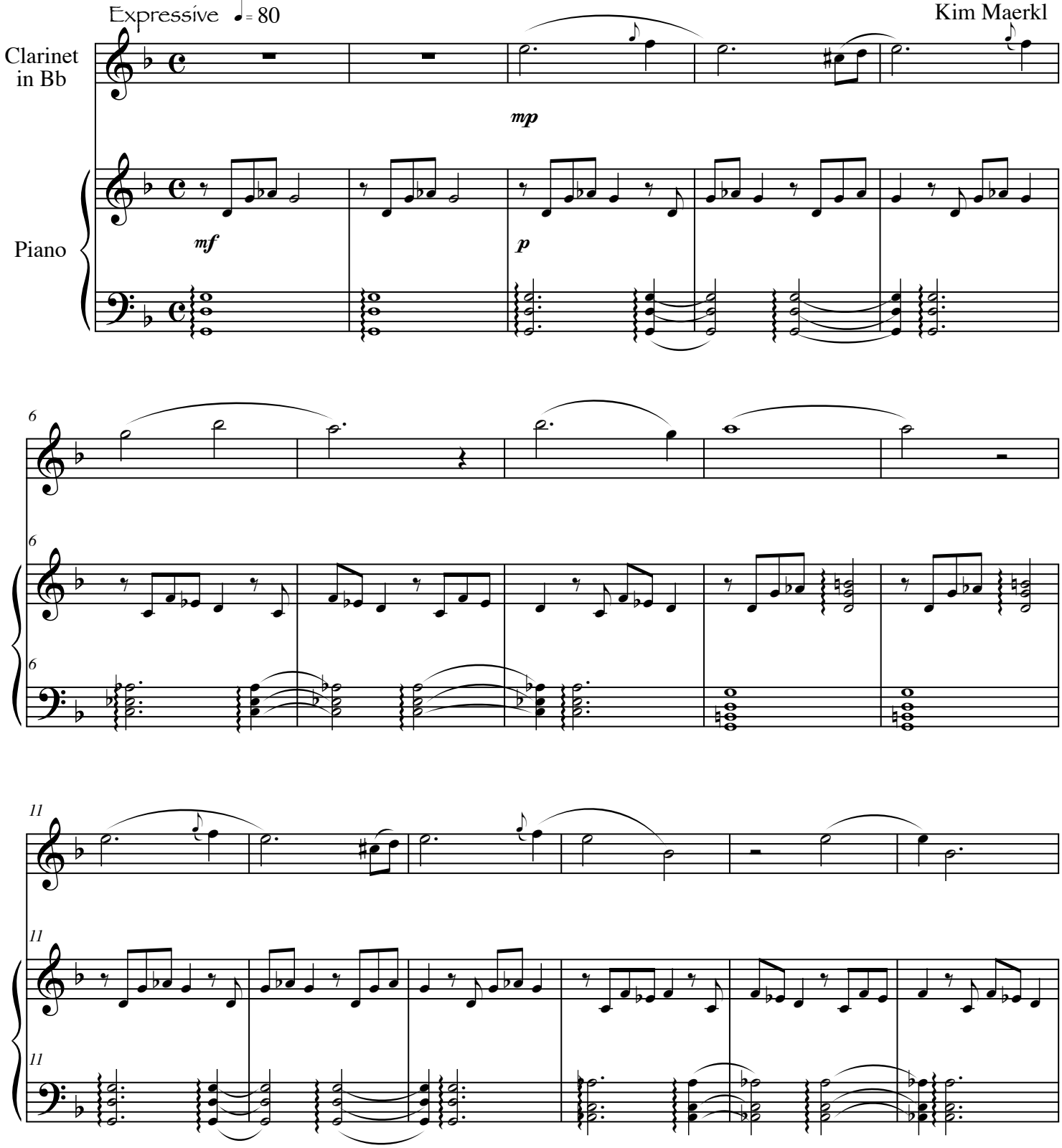
Shiba's Song

VI

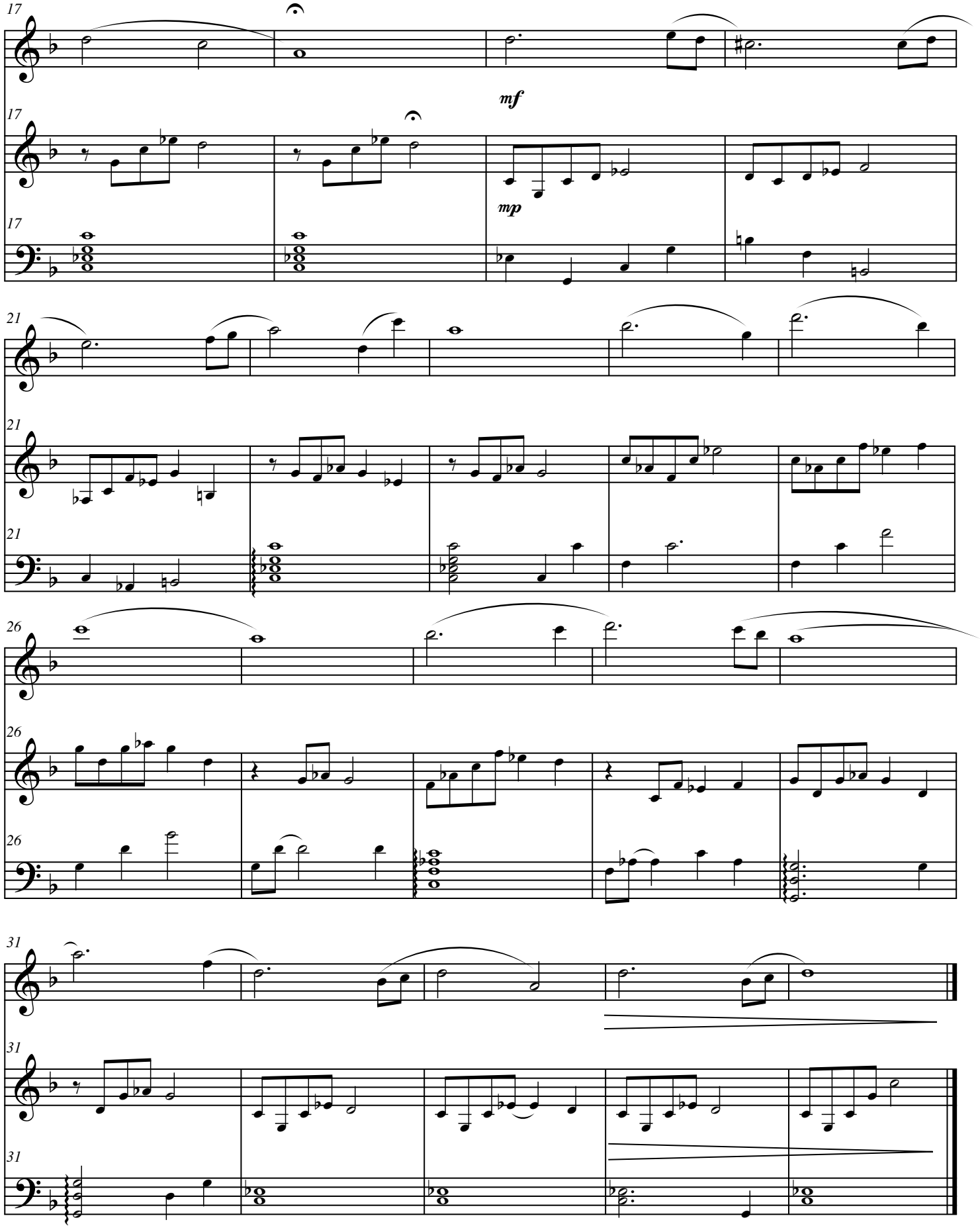
The boy played his pungi, and the song was so full of sorrow that even the guards hung their heads.

Expressive ♩= 80

Kim Maerkl



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

Taj Mahal

VII

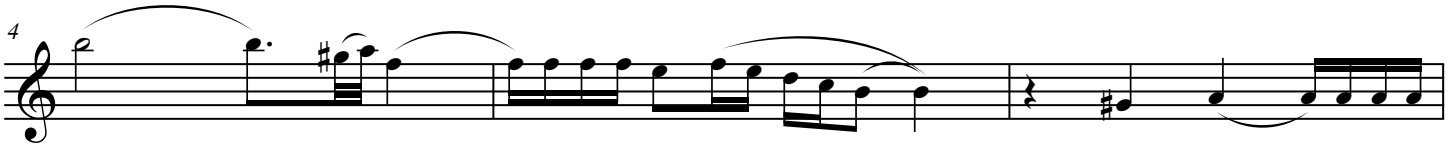
"I would be honored, your majesty."

Kim Maerkl

Cadenza

Clarinet

Shiba played his pungi weaving the brilliant colors of India, and the sorrow and joy of life into the music.

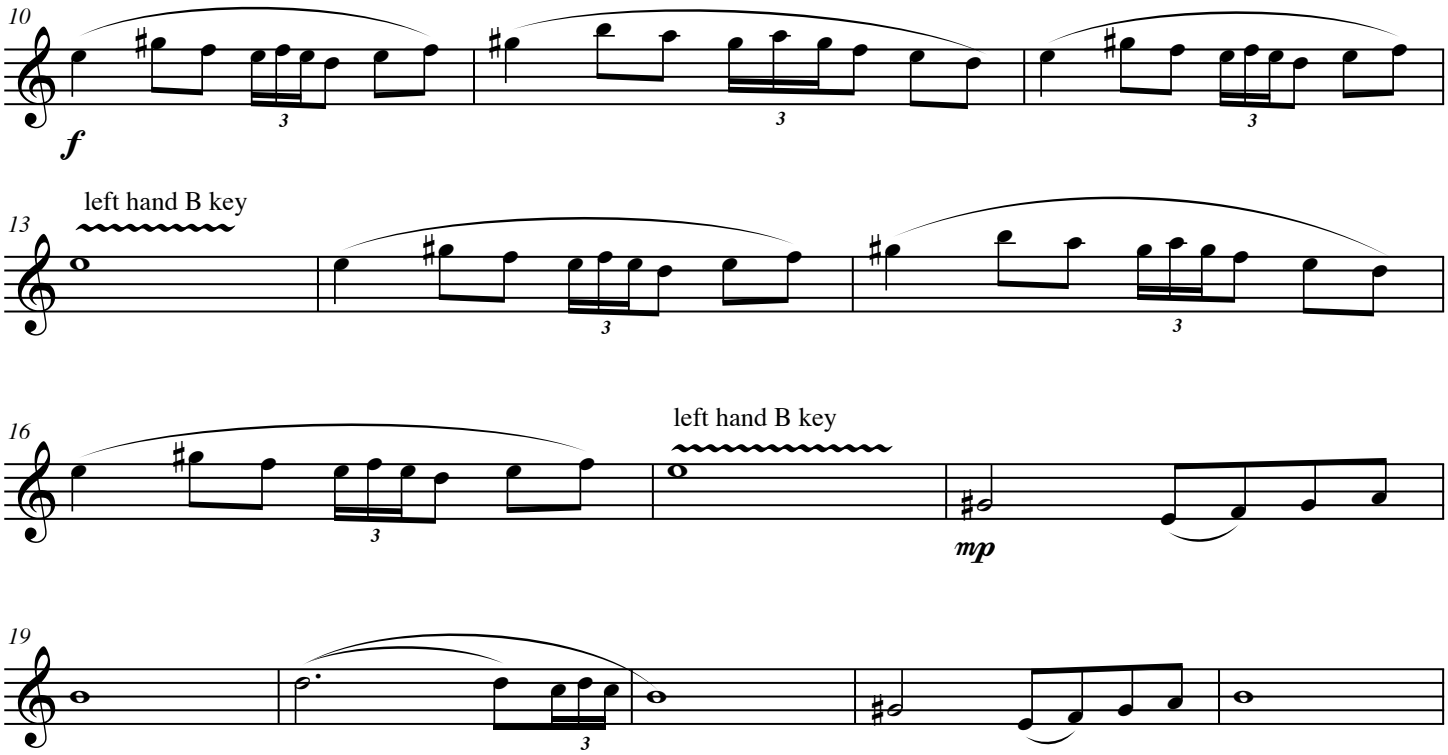


Years later, when the Emperor's beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal passed away, her beauty and wisdom i nspired him to create one of the most magnificent buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal

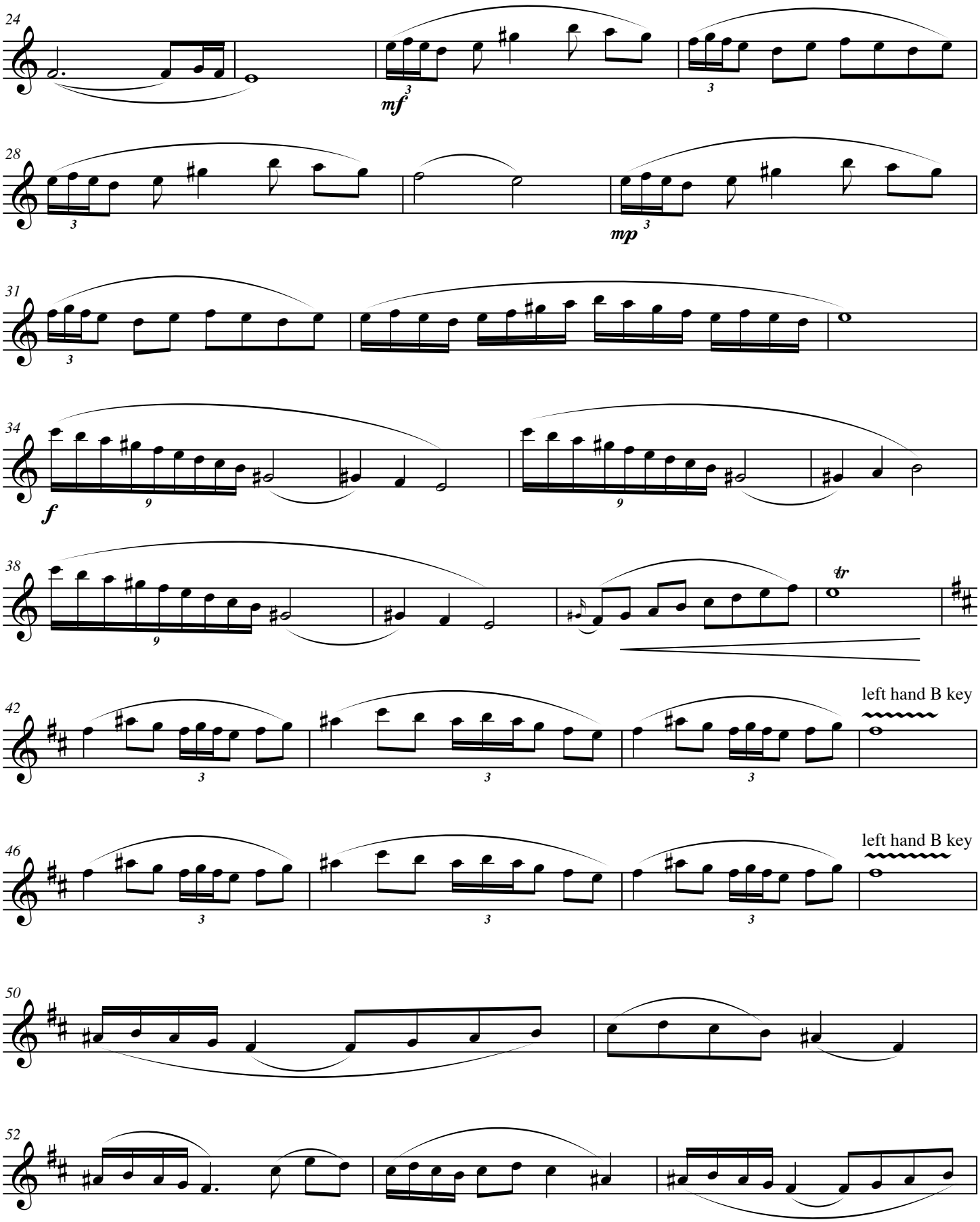
This magical place would be a monument to her life, and a tomb for her final rest. In the year 1666, Emperor Shah Jahan joined her inside the Taj Mahal, where they could be together for eternity.

The Taj Mahal shimmers like a pearl in the light of the setting sun. Every evening Shiba climbs the hilltop to enjoy its beauty. Then, he plays his pungi for Emperor Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal who remain alive in his heart.

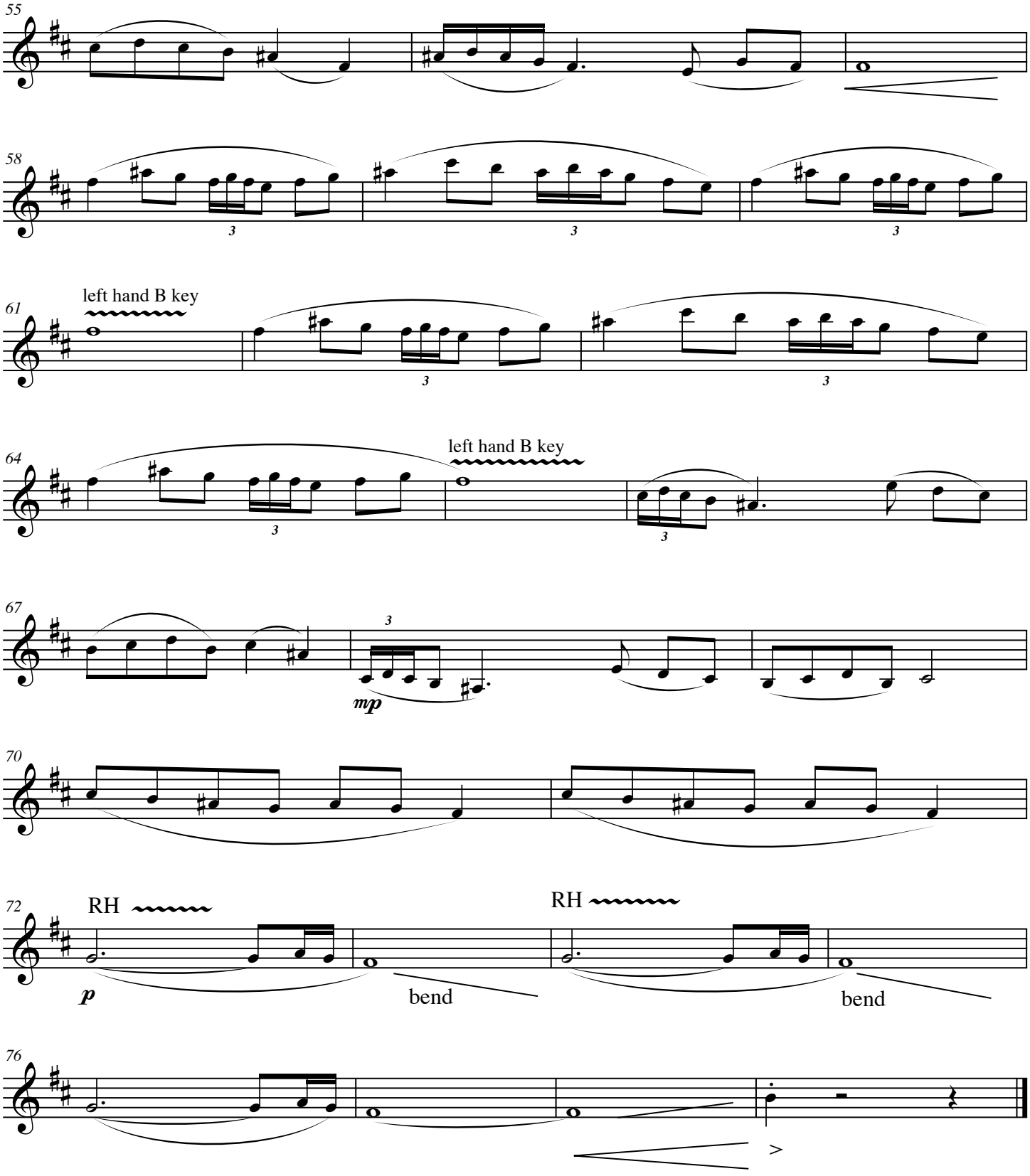
Allegro halbe=92



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

Piano

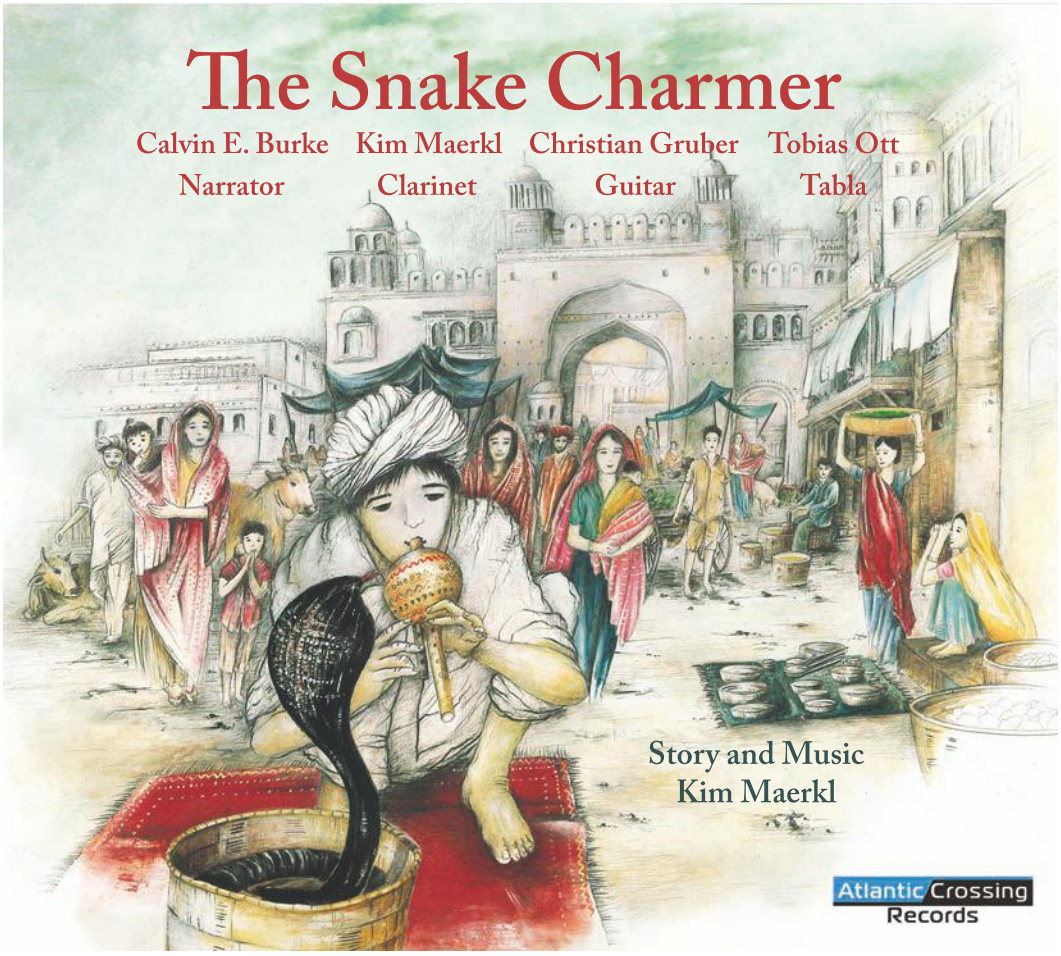
for

Narrator, Clarinet, Guitar and Tabla

Story and Music

Kim Maerkl

I The Snake Charmer
II Bonji
III Marketplace
IV Moonlit Forest
V Shiba and the Serpent
VI Shiba´s Song
VII Taj Mahal
Narration Text
Teacher´s Guide



Atlantic Crossing Records

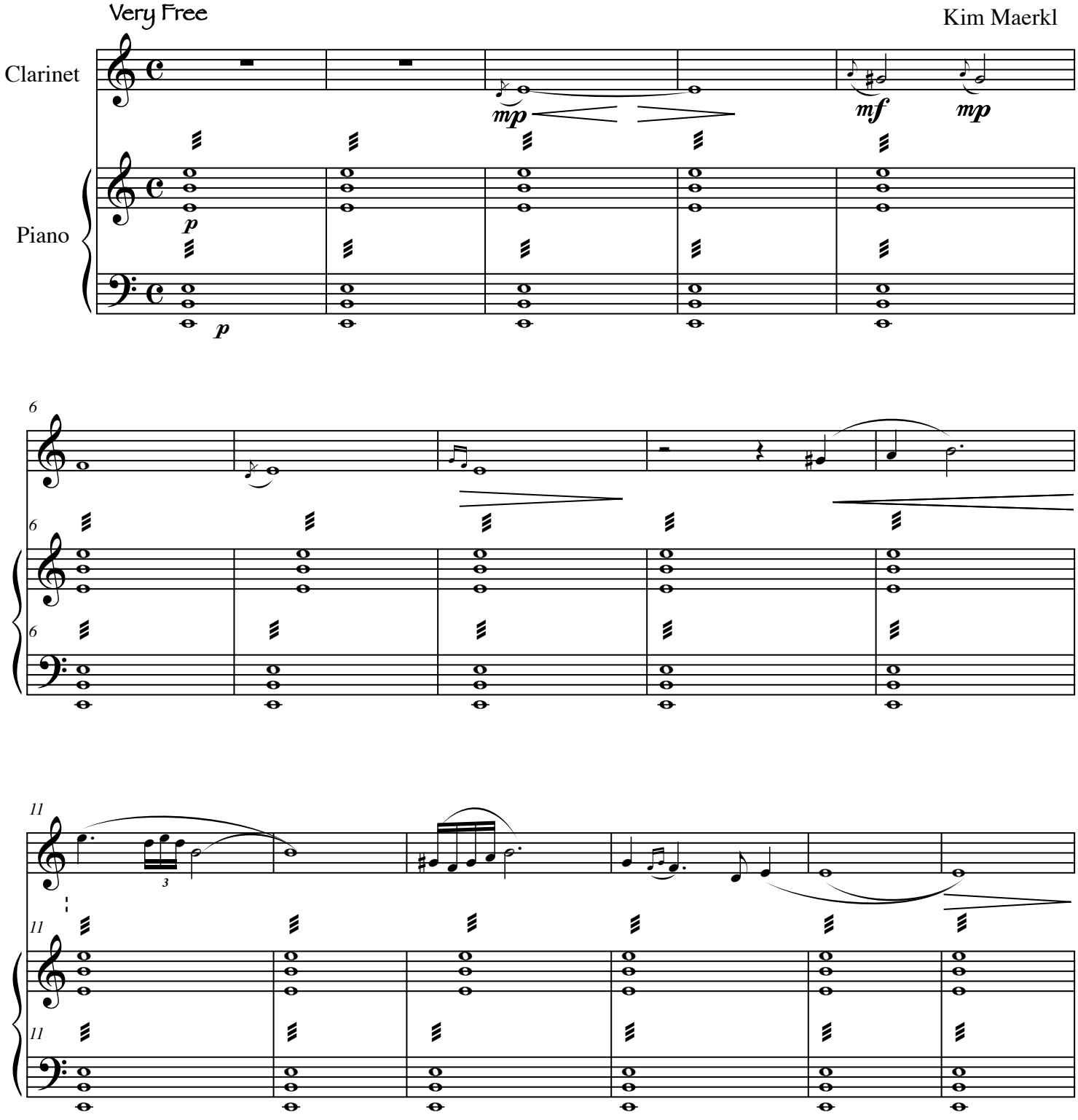
www.atlantic-crossing.com

Atlantic Crossing Records

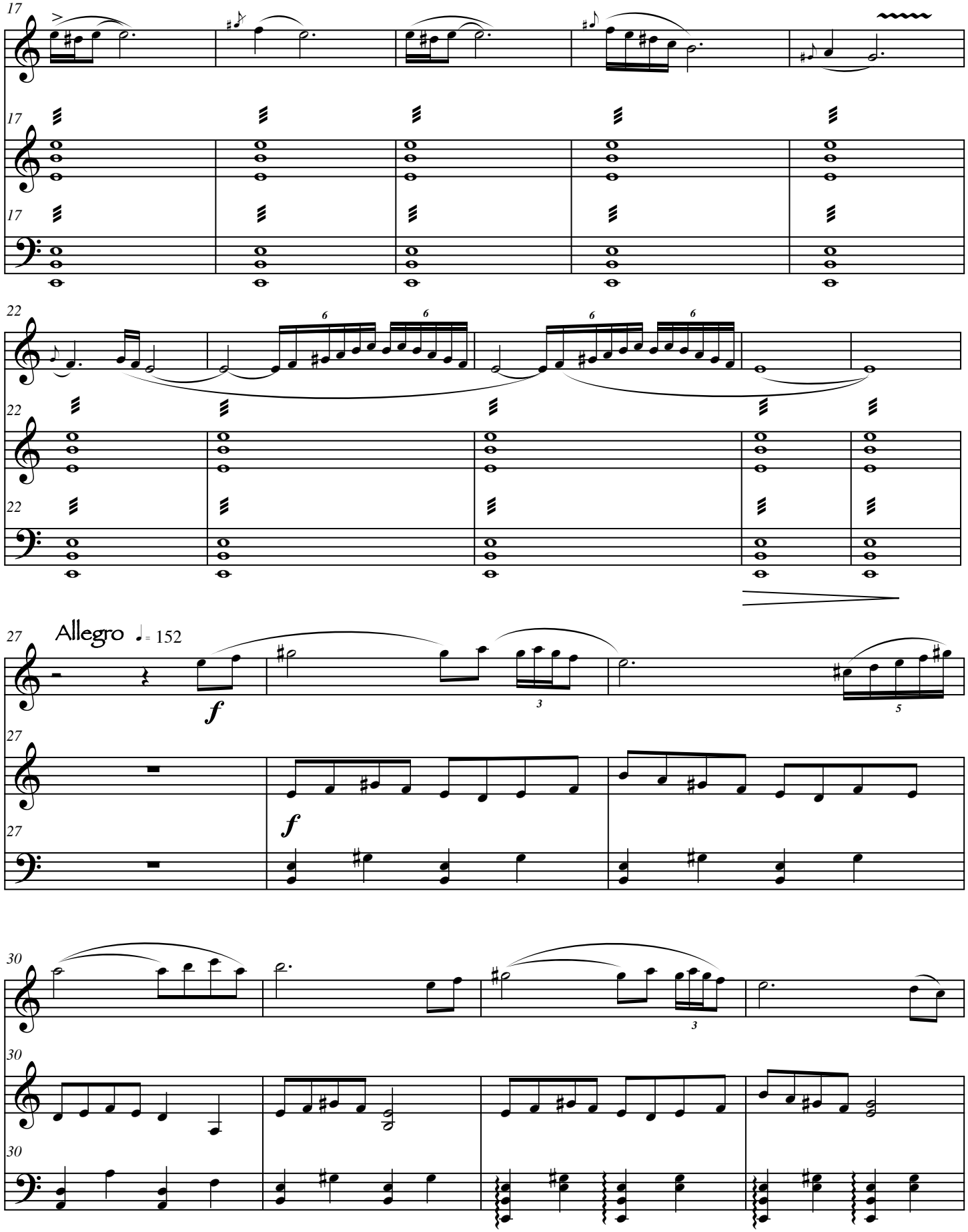
The Snake Charmer

I

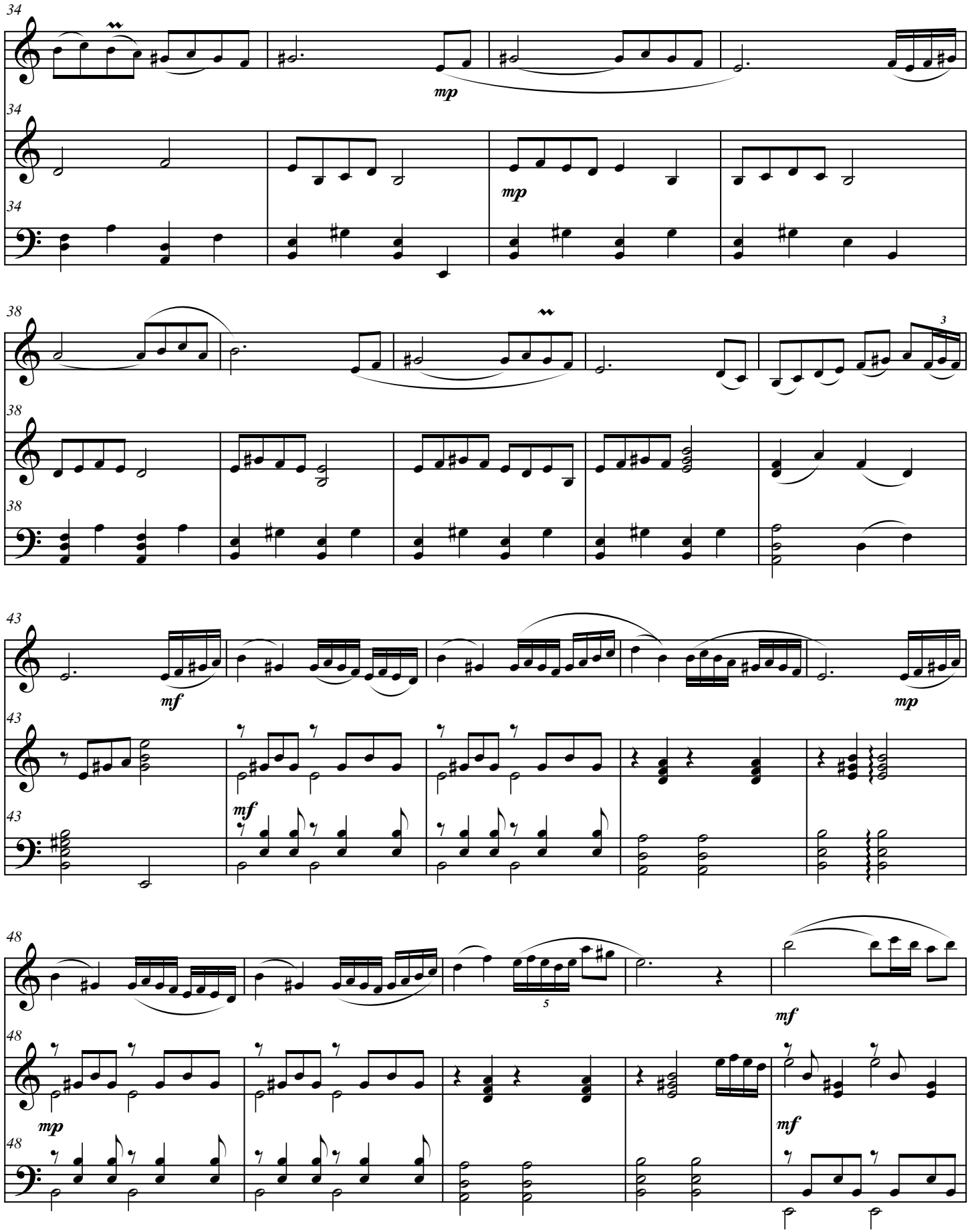
Shiba sat under the canopy of branches and played his pungi. The forest listened.



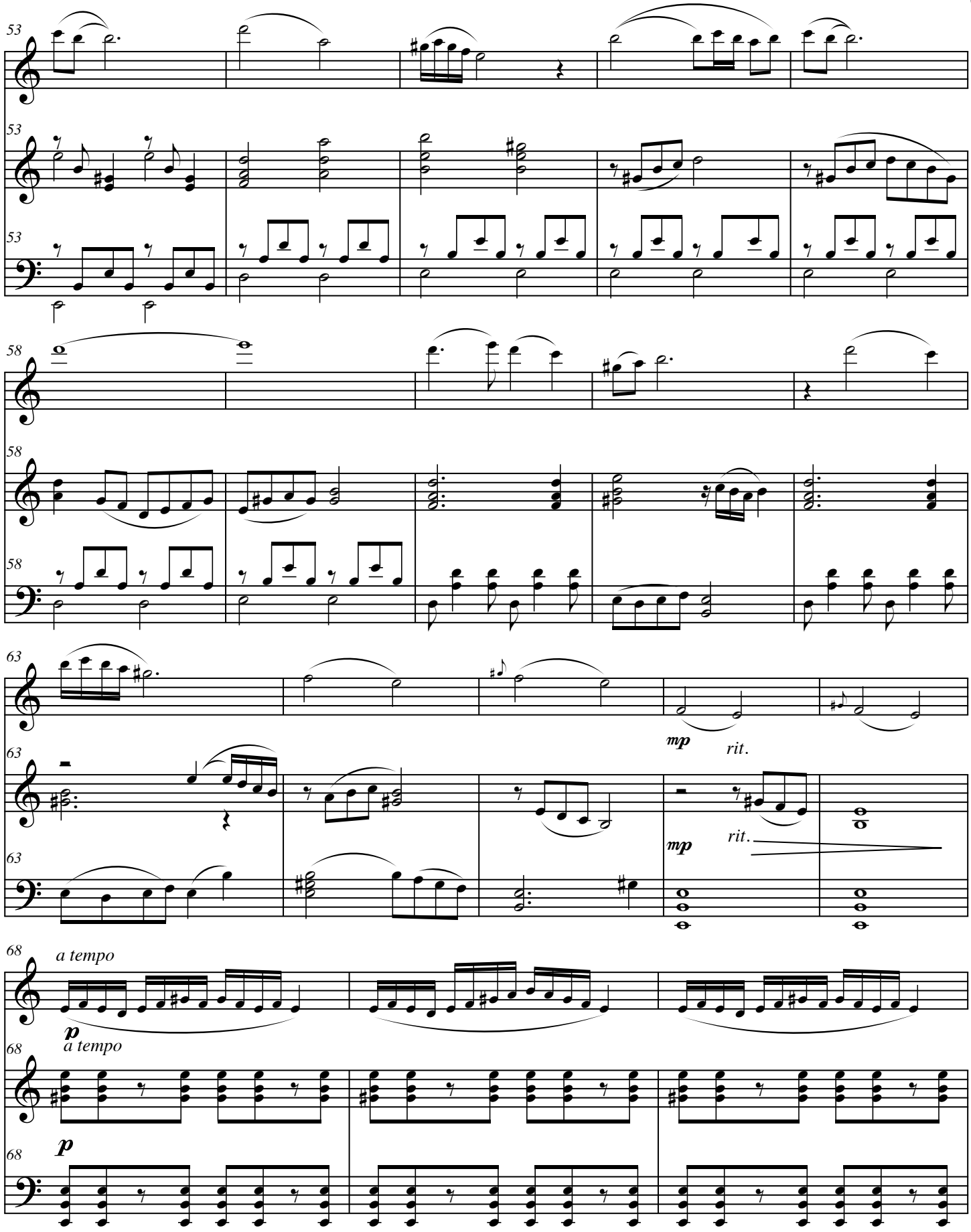
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



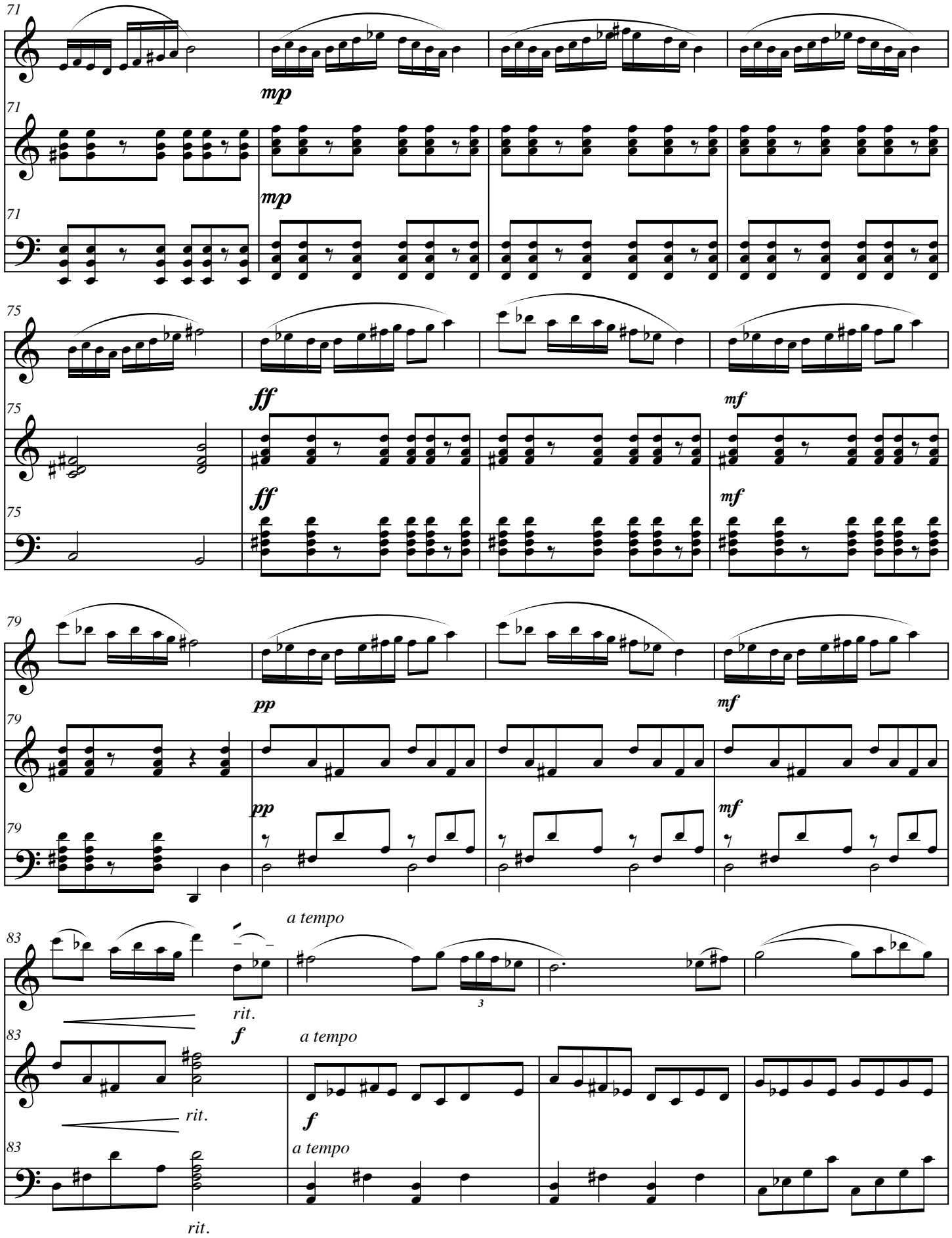
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



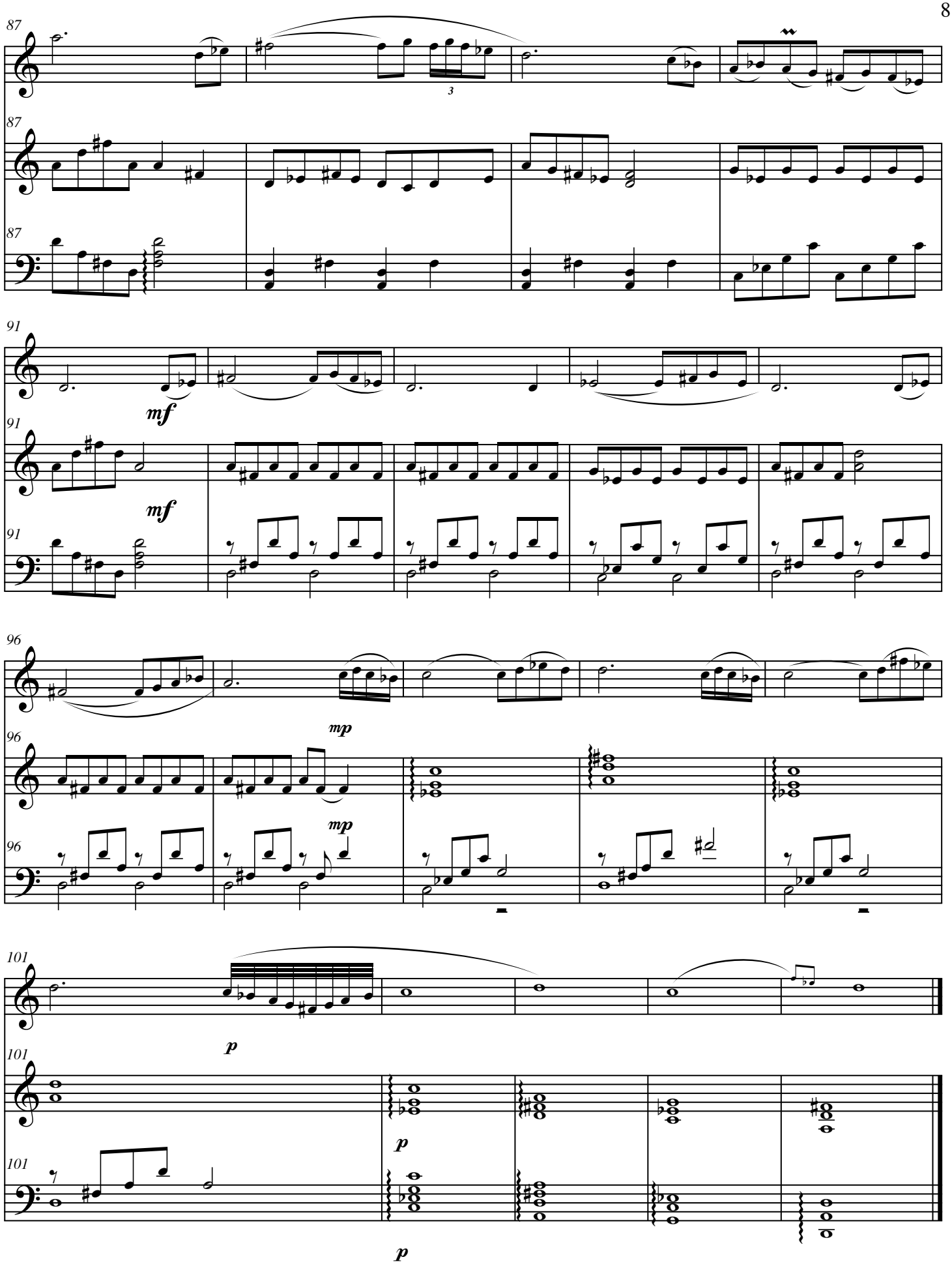
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

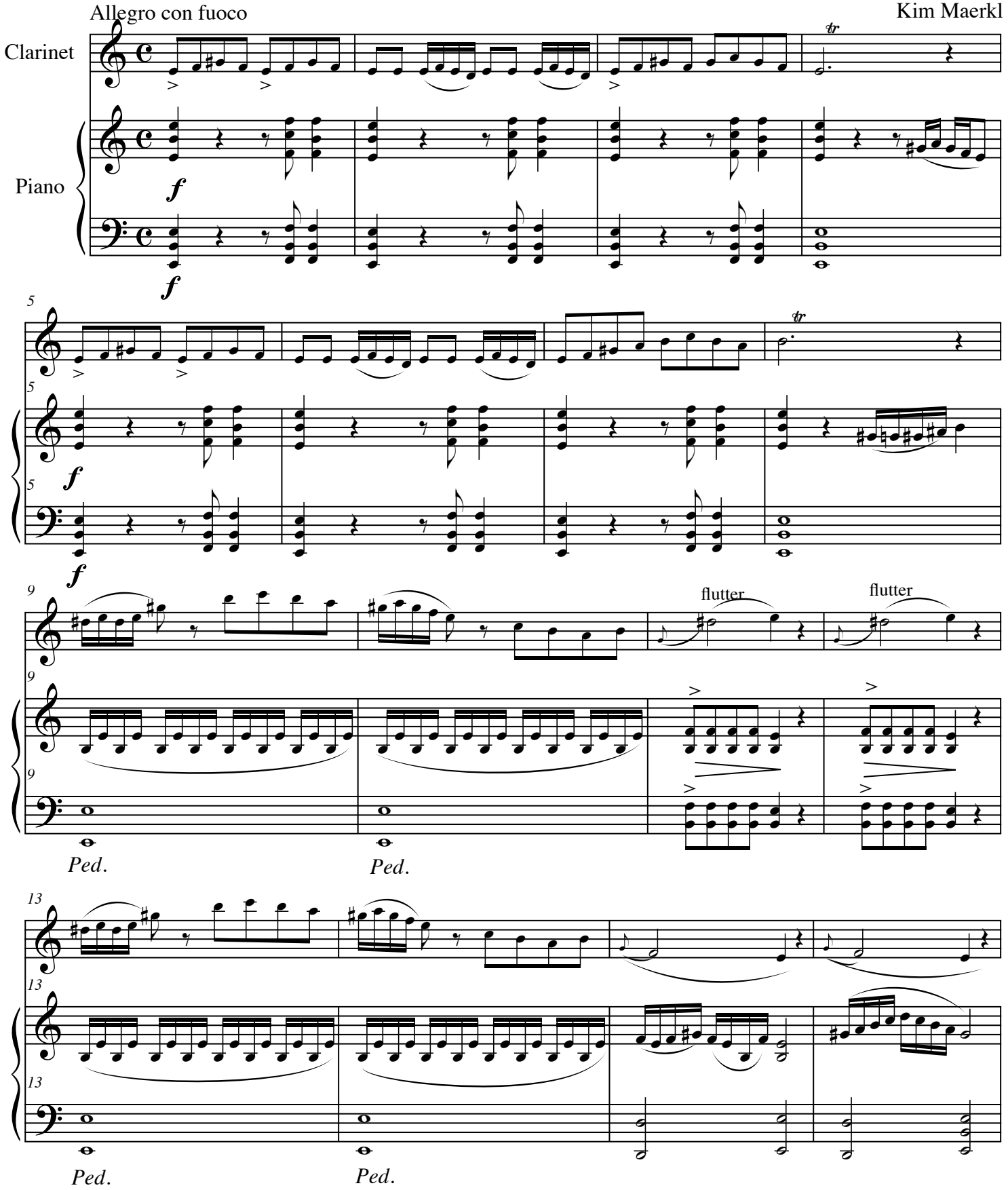
BONJI

II

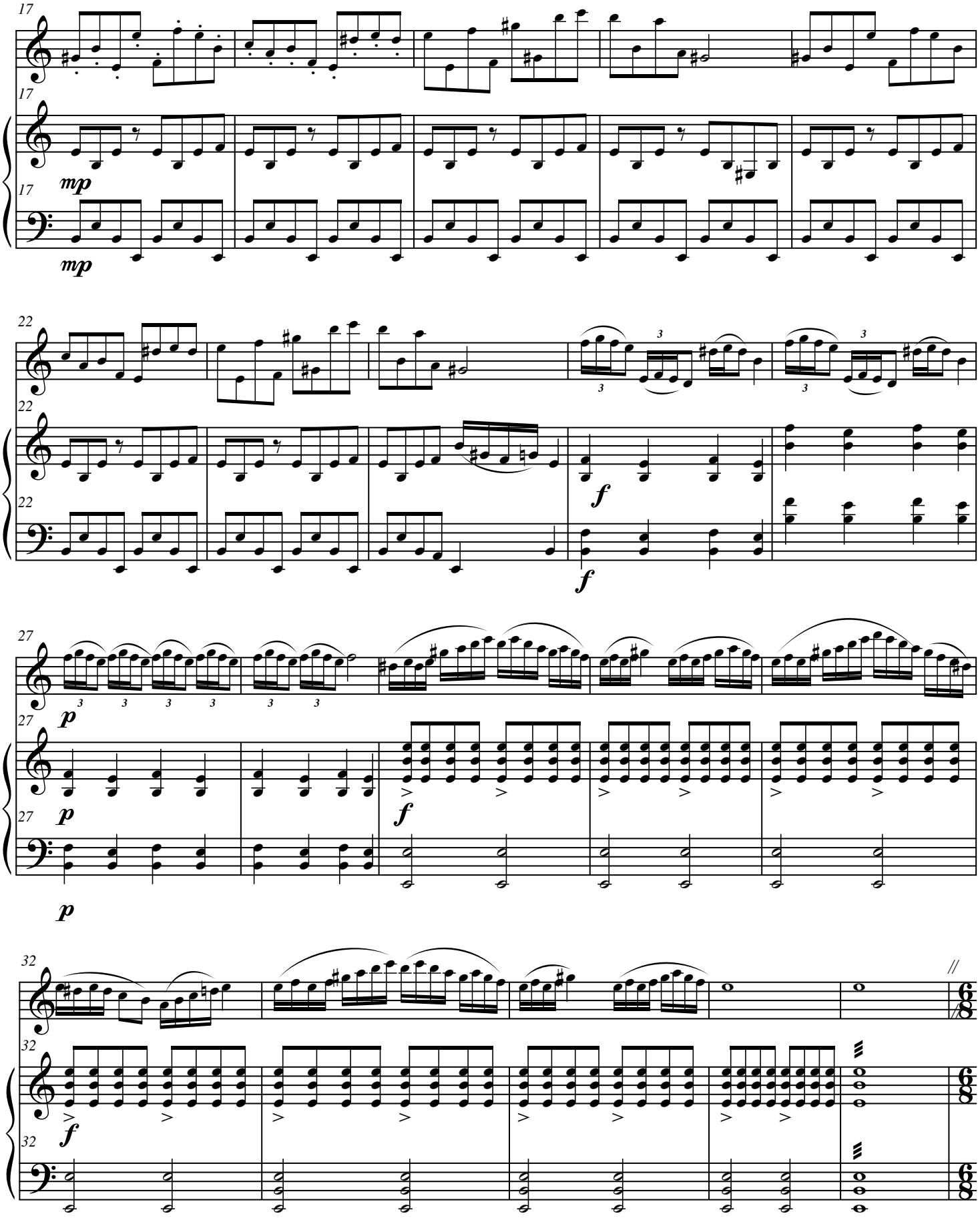
The boy loved playing the pungi and he adored his snake Bonji, a stunning black and white cobra.

Allegro con fuoco

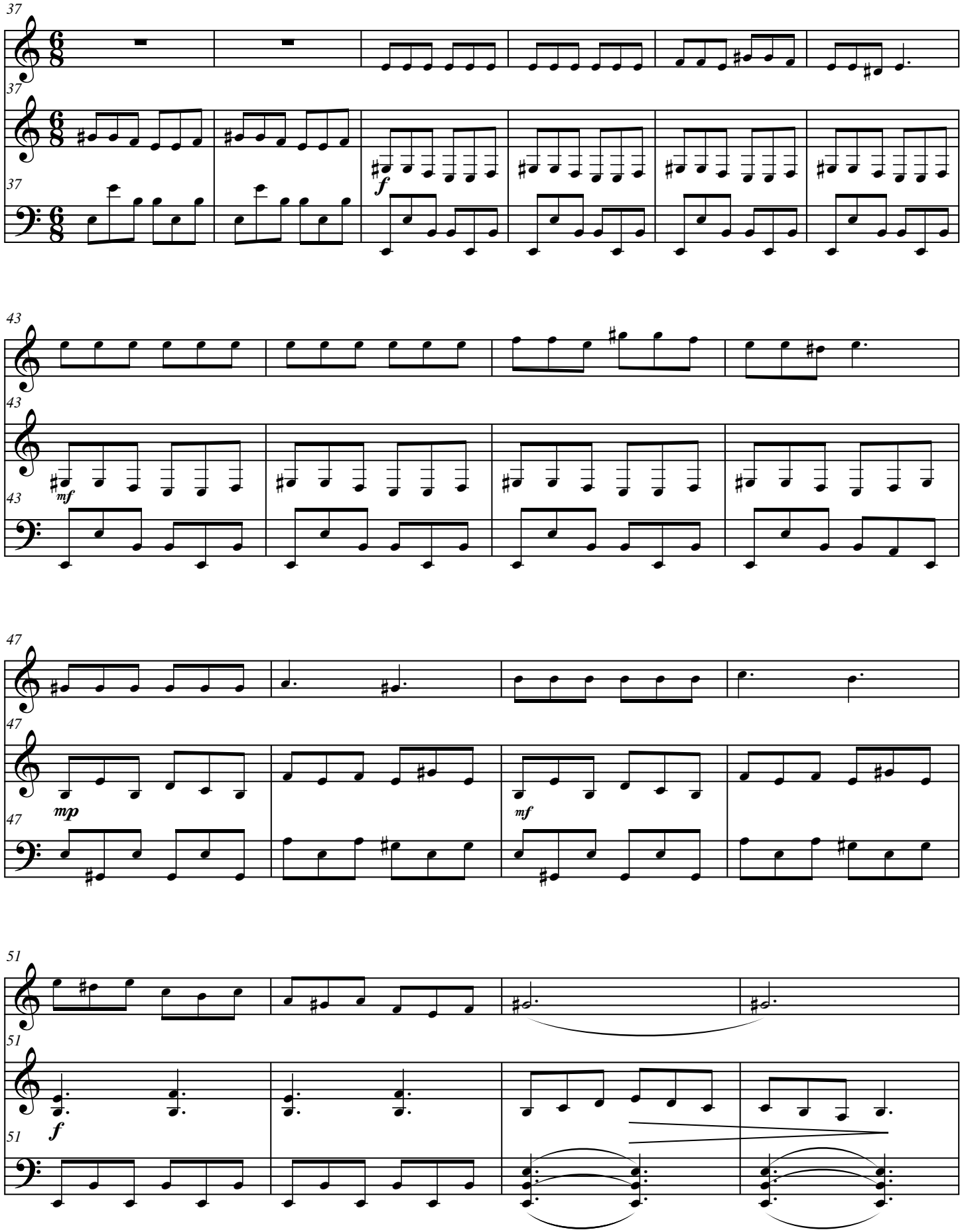
Kim Maerkl



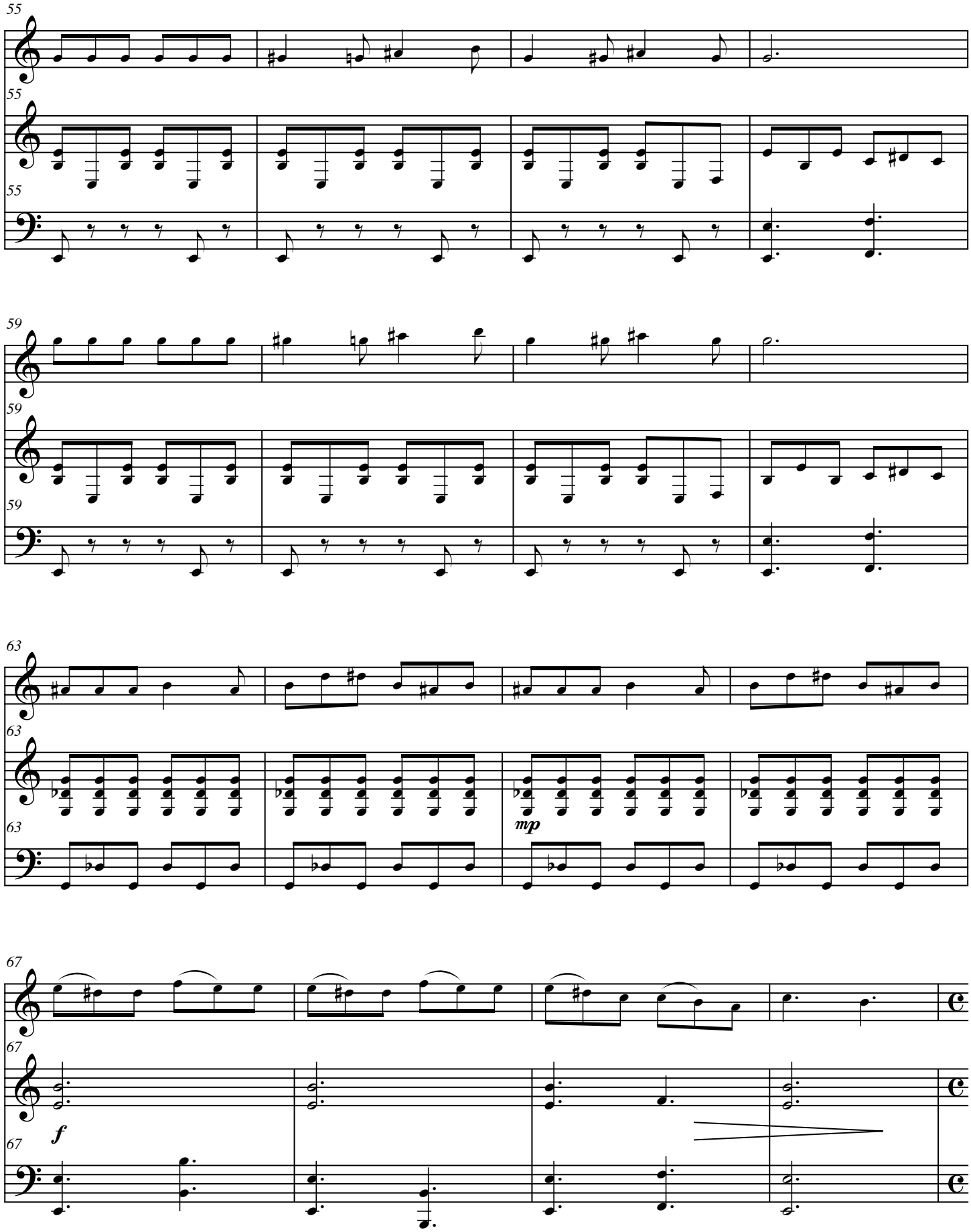
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



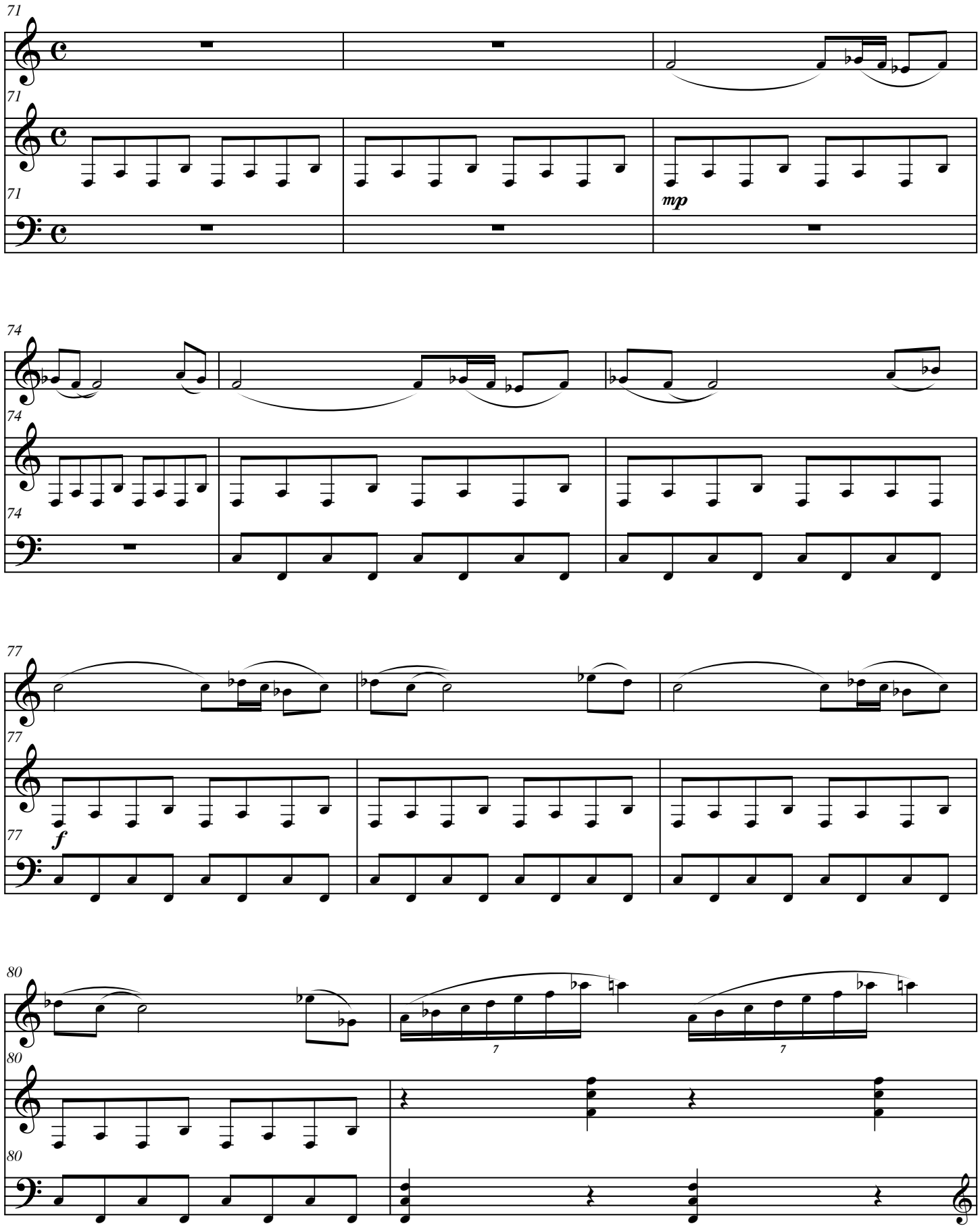
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



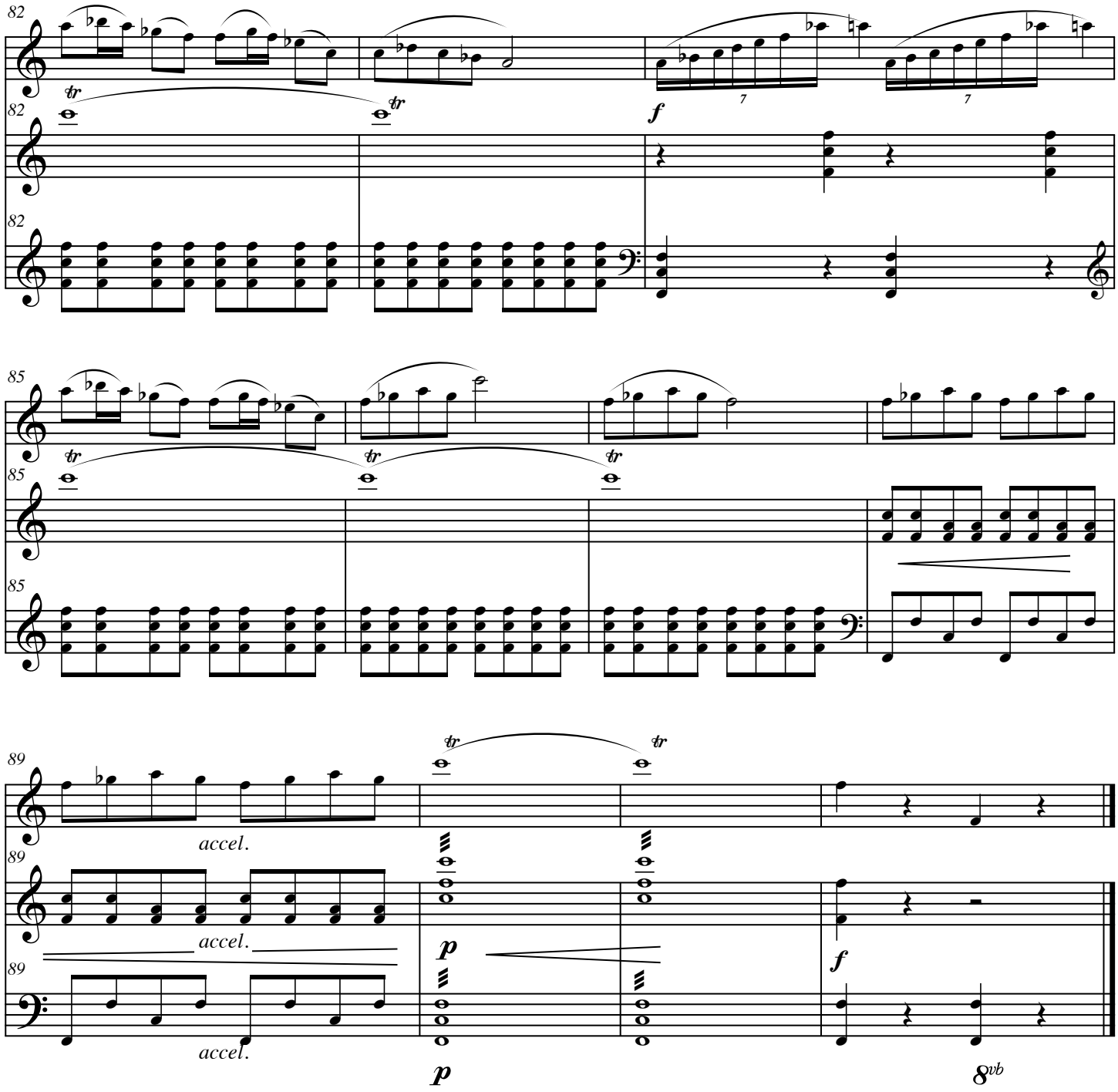
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer
Marketplace
III

A few curious shoppers gathered around him as he stretched out his arms and circled above the dark opening with his pungi.

Freely, very expressive

Kim Maerkl

Clarinet

A rainbow of sound captivated his listeners, and the movement of the pungi intrigued the snake.

Piano

p

5

Bonji peeked his head out of the hole
and his tongue jutted out of his mouth.

Although poison was in the snake's fangs,
it was the slithering tongue that was terrifying.

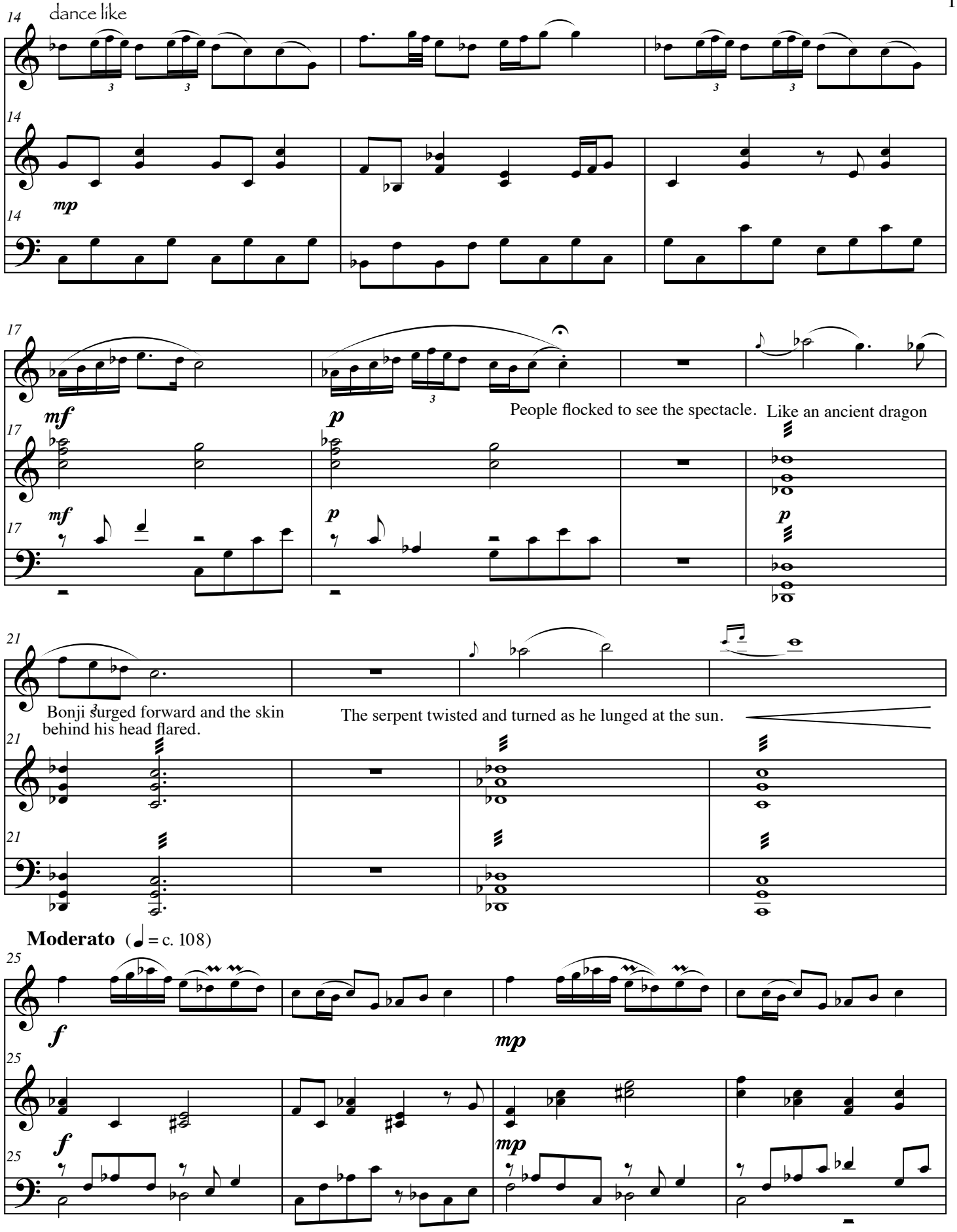
Bonjhi uncoiled himself

10

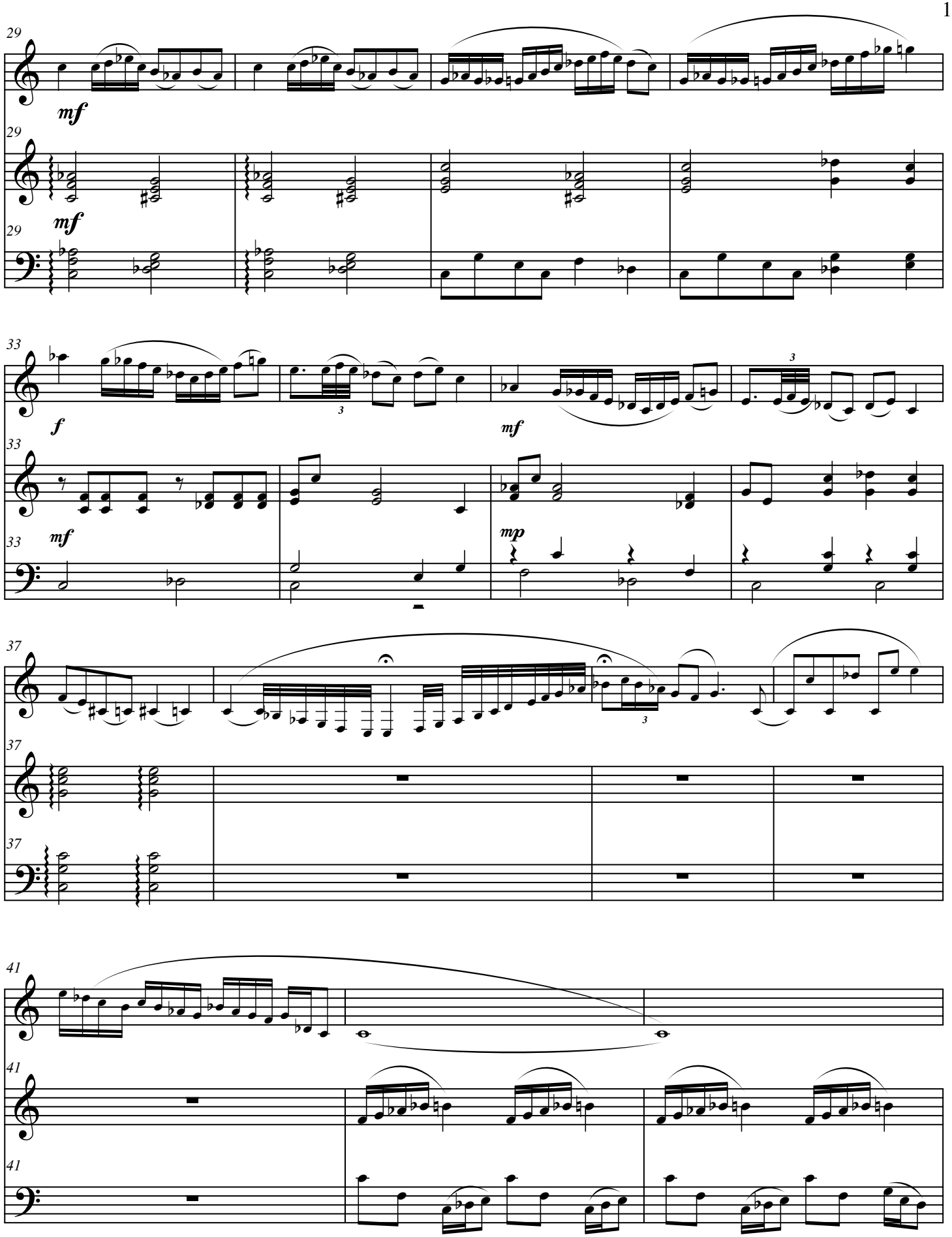
and rose up ever so slowly.

The boy, and his snake swayed from side to side.

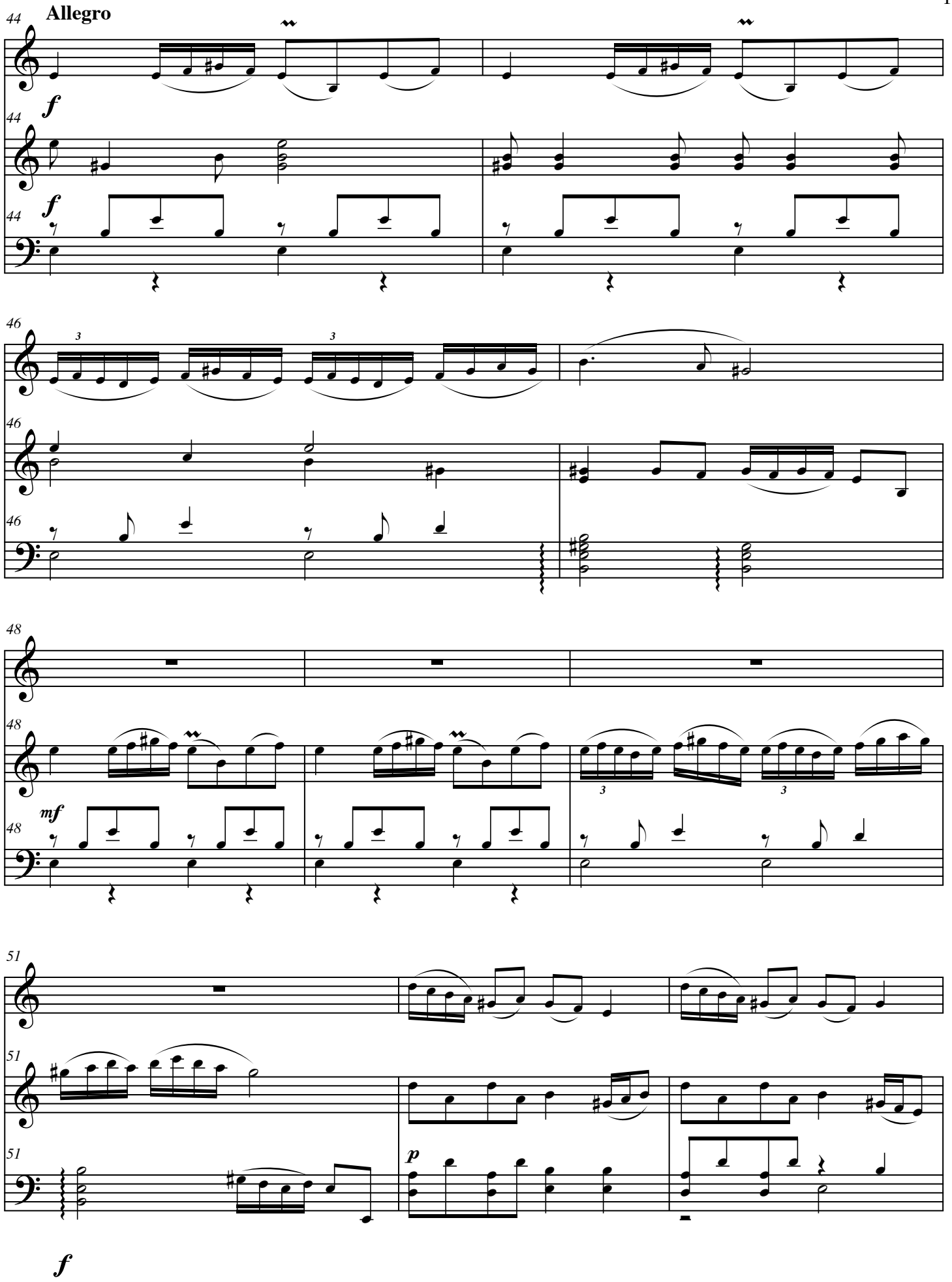
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



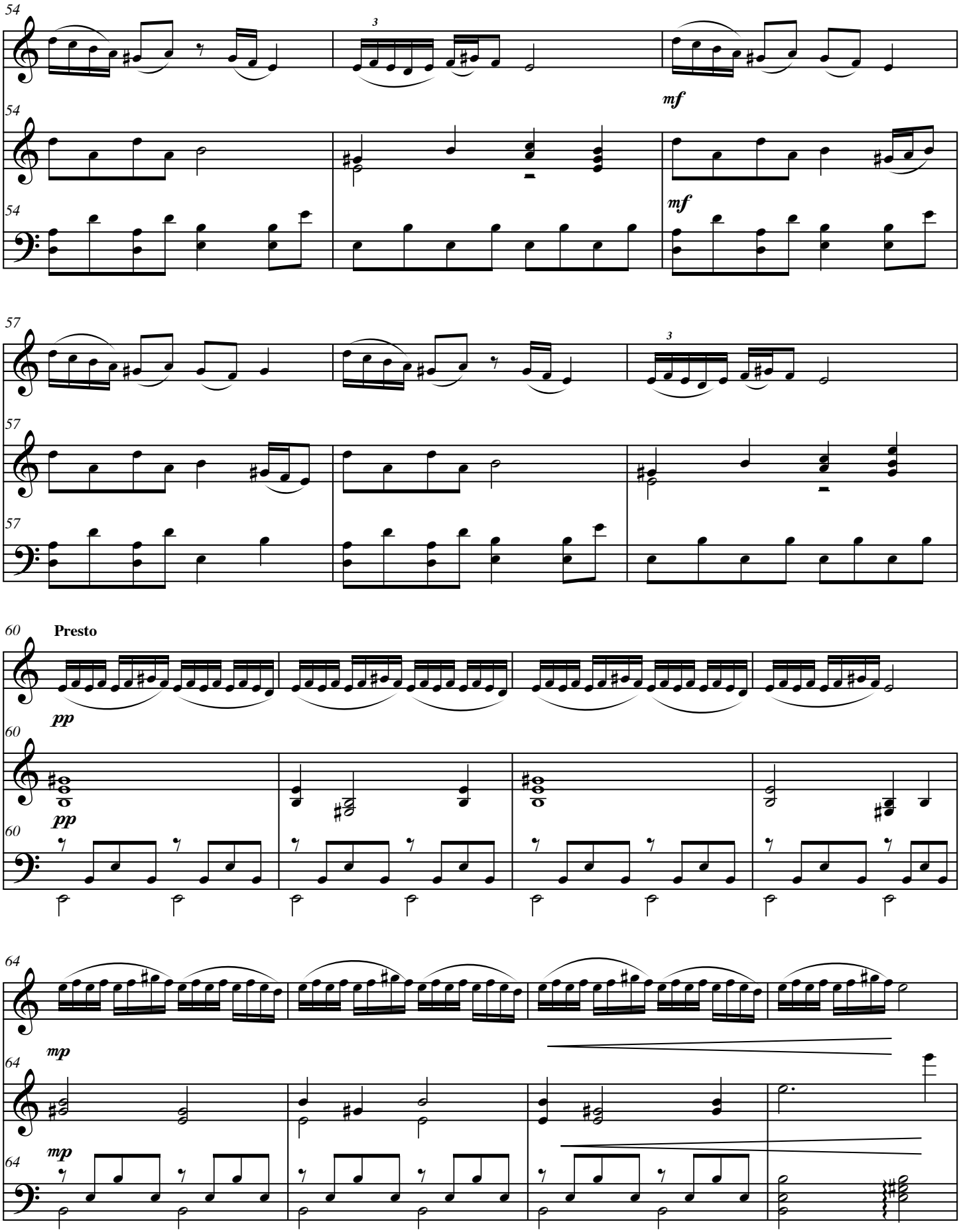
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



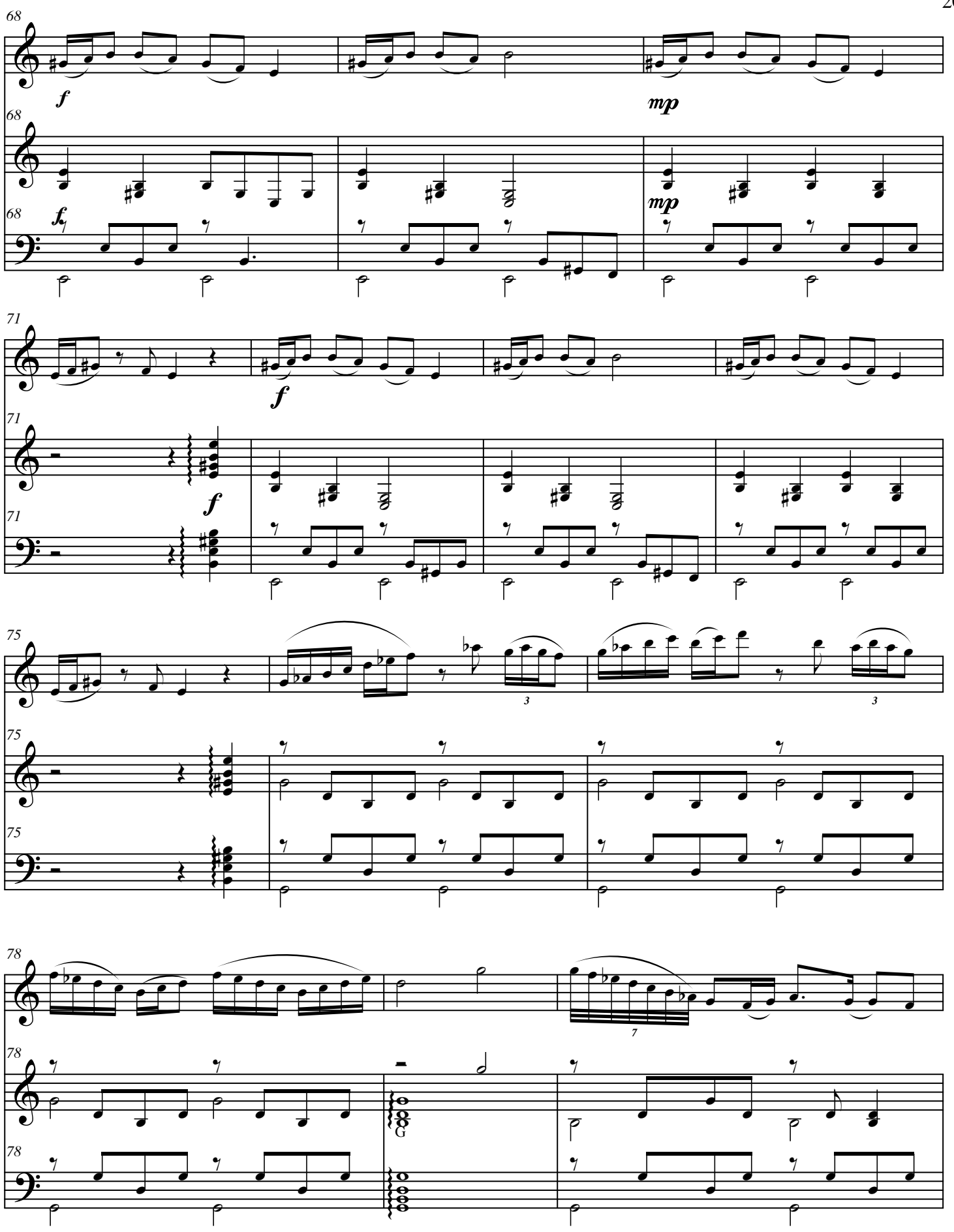
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



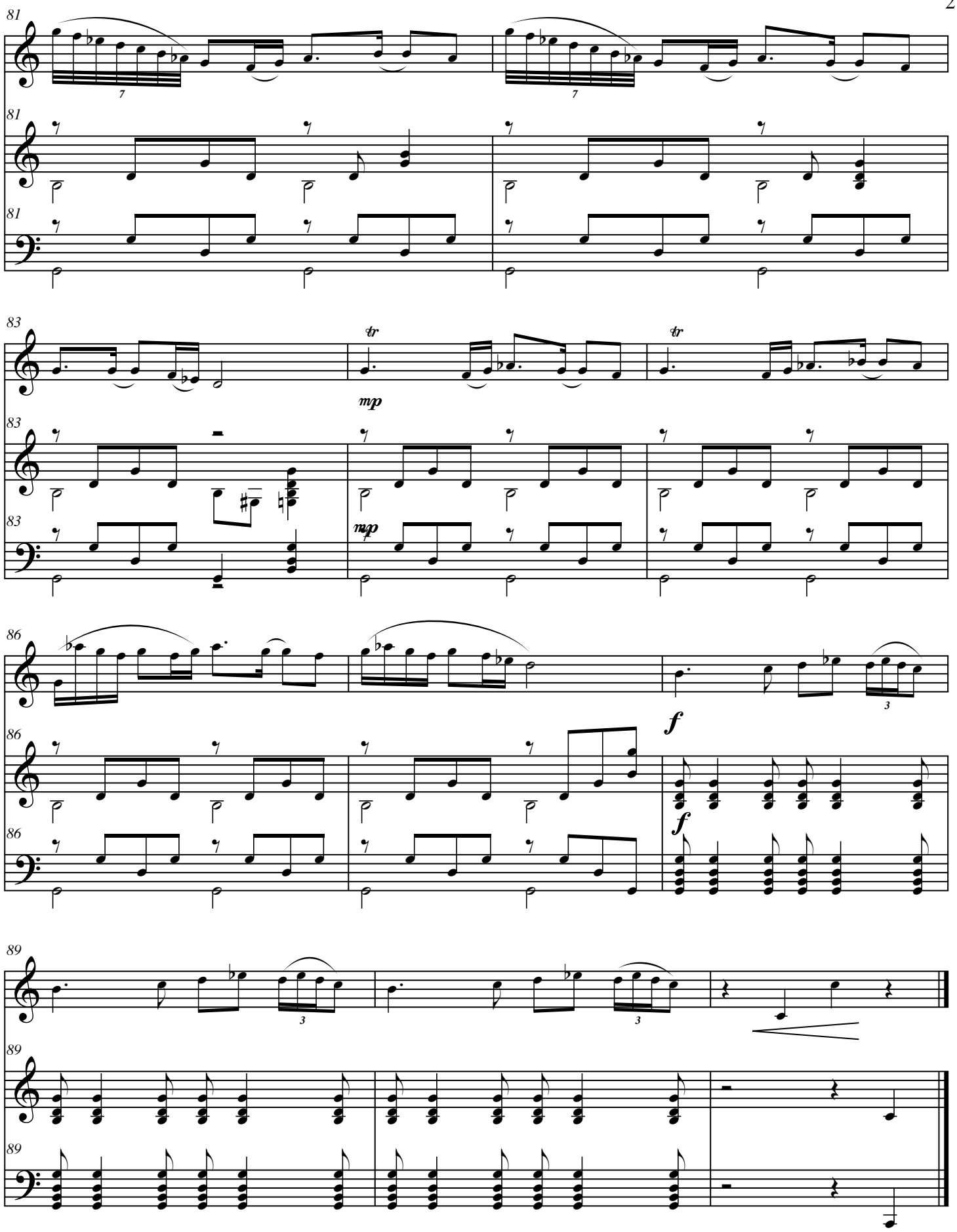
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



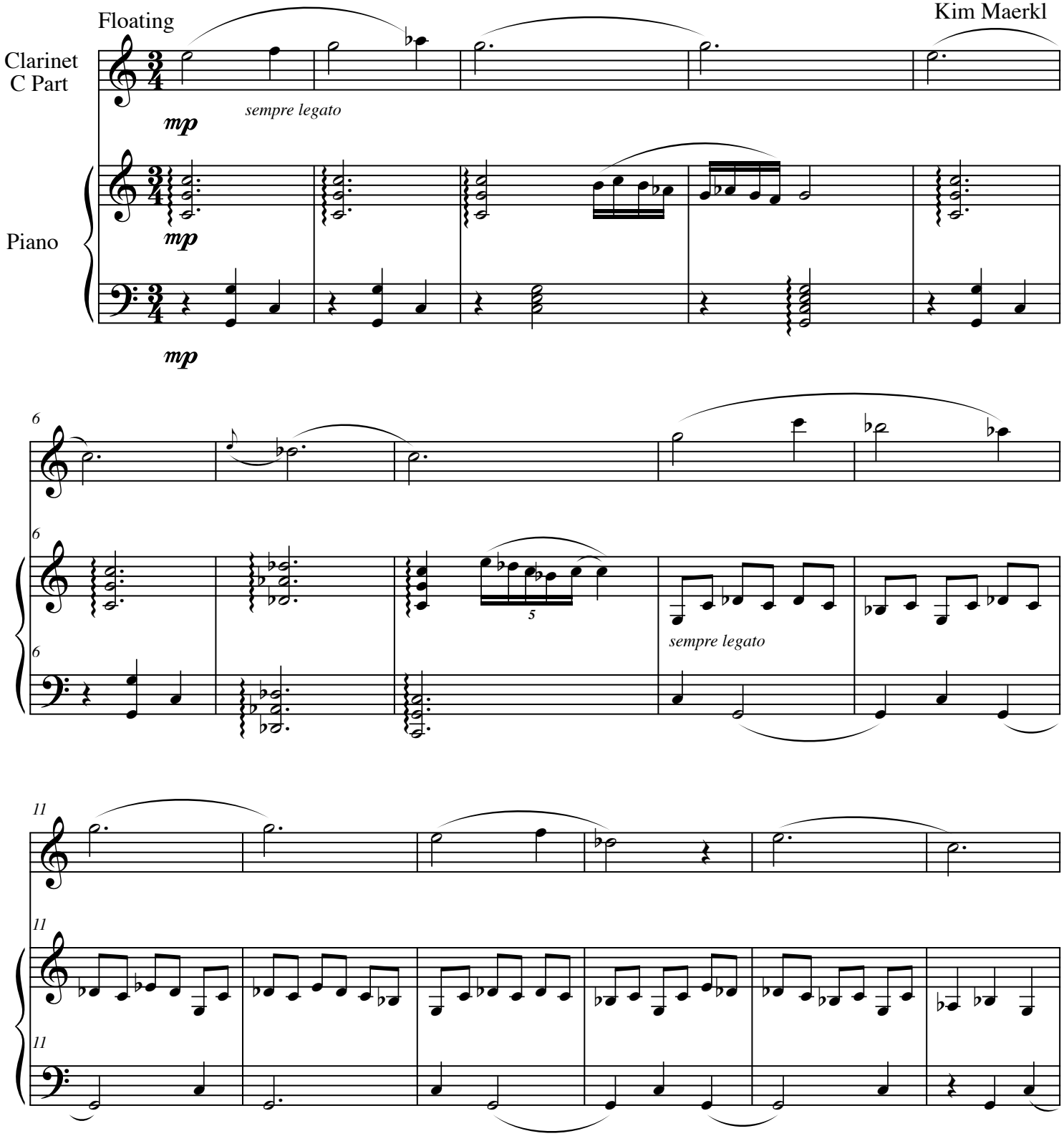
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

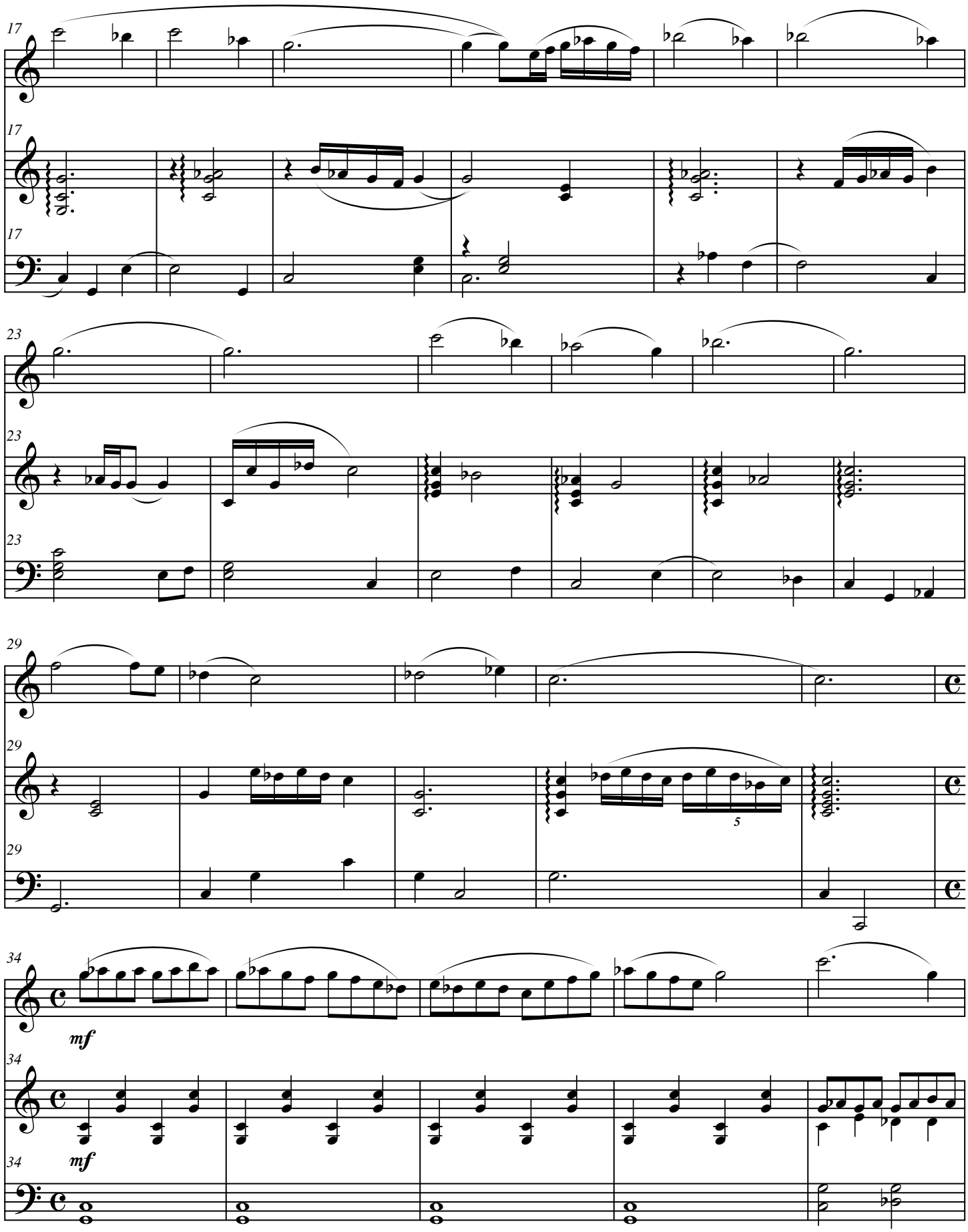
Moonlit Forest

IV

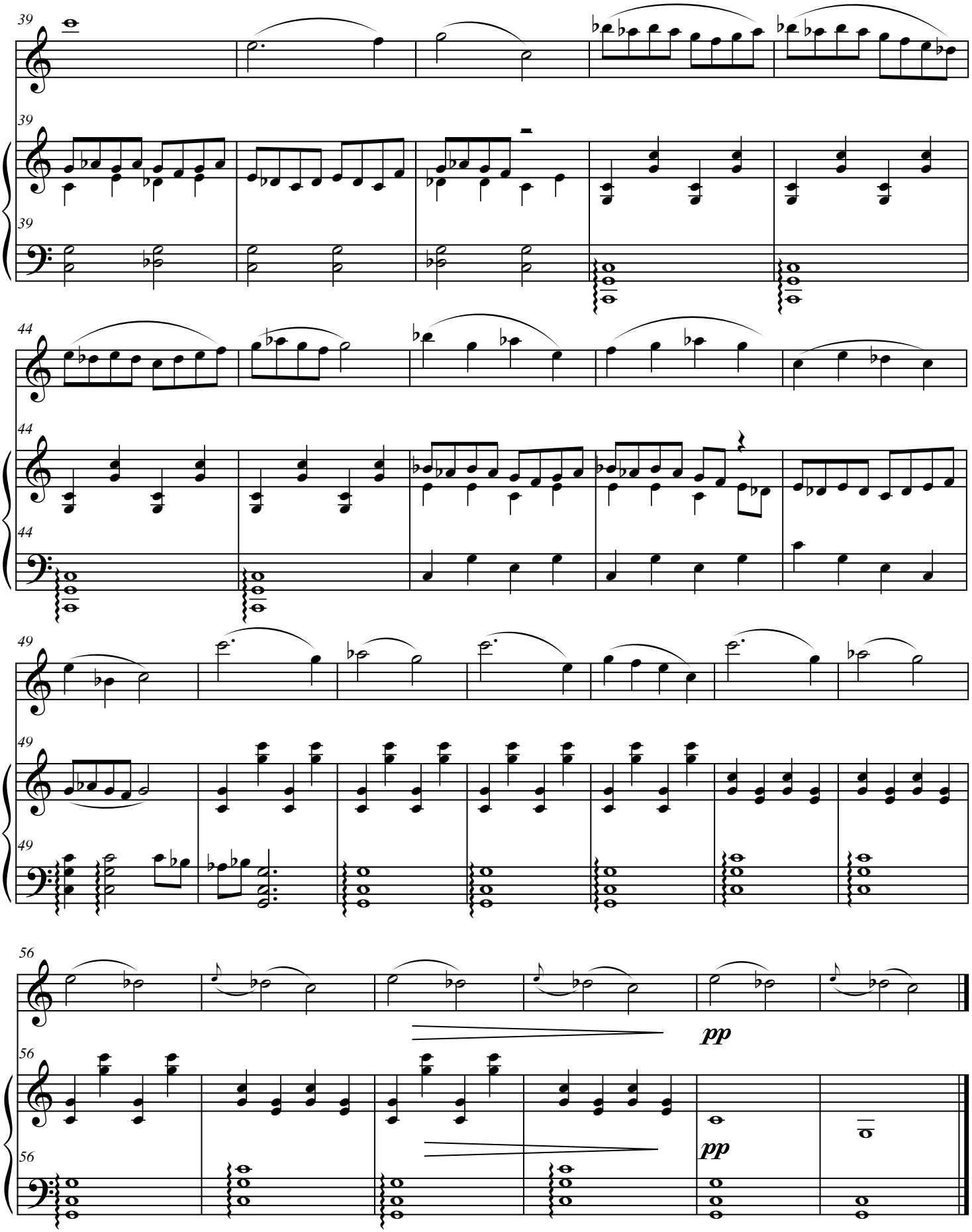
Then, too excited to sleep he strolled through the moonlit forest, sat under his favorite tree and played his pungi.



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

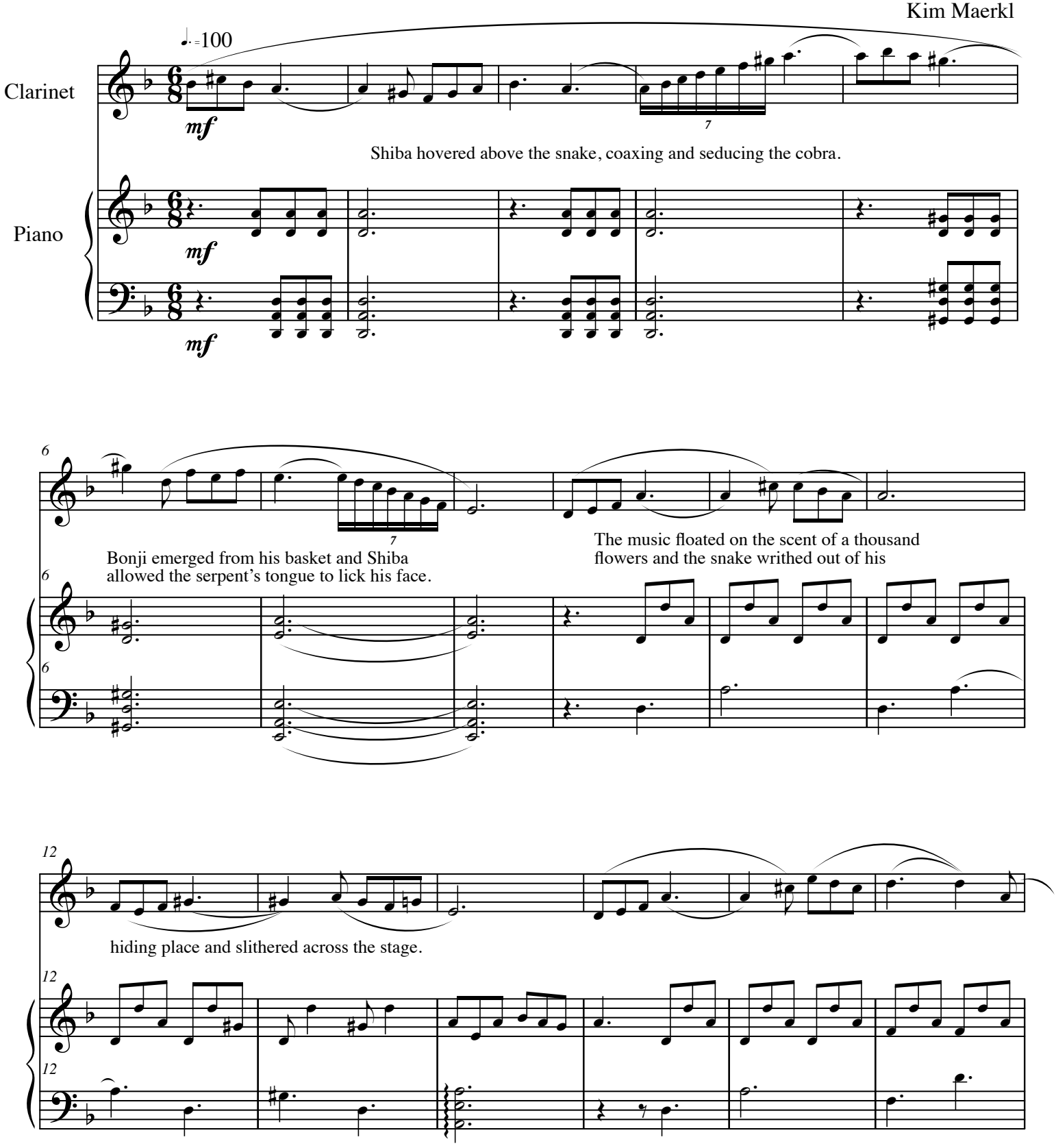
The Snake Charmer

Shiba and the Serpent

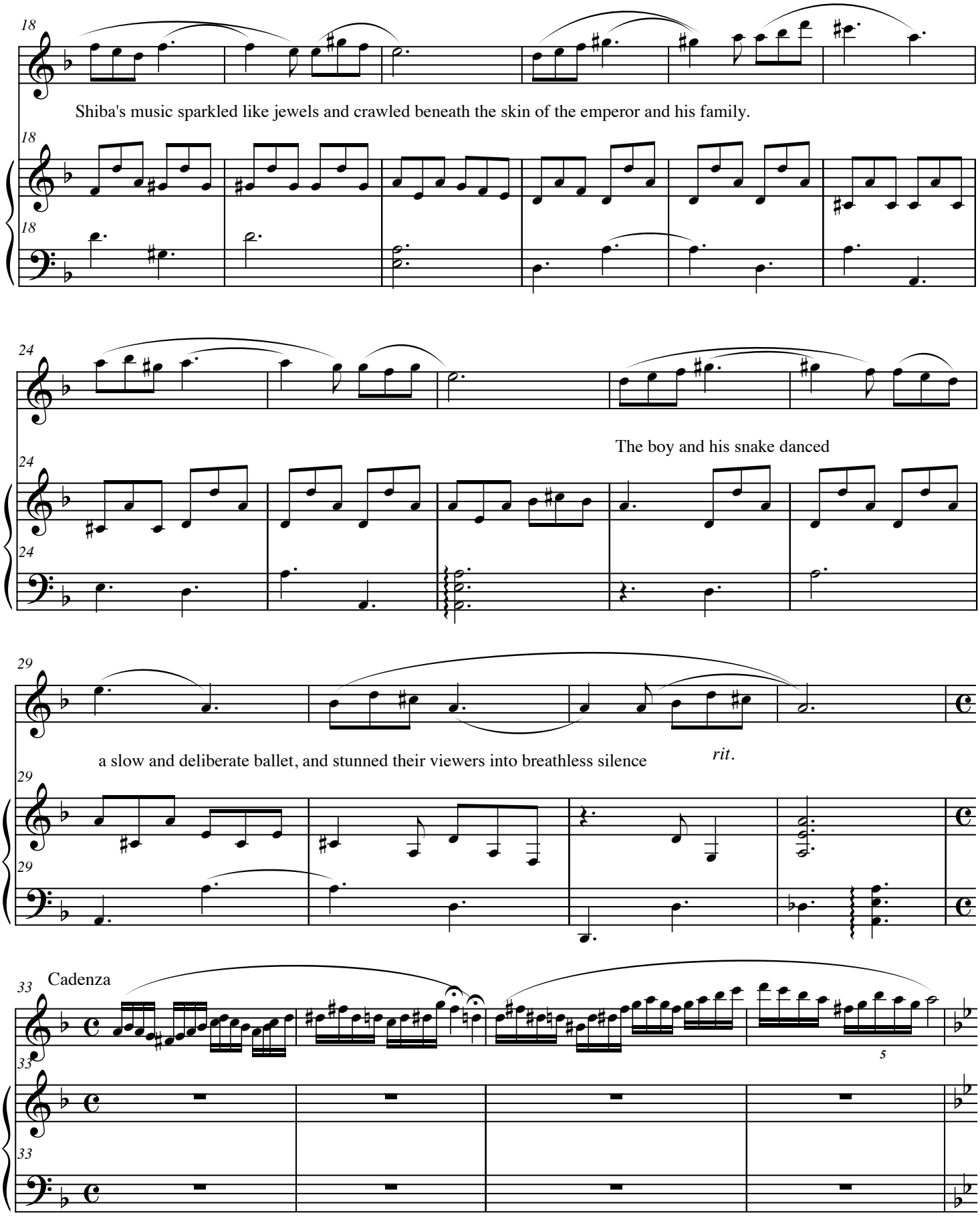
V

...he swallowed his fear and gave a performance that had been waiting patiently in his soul.

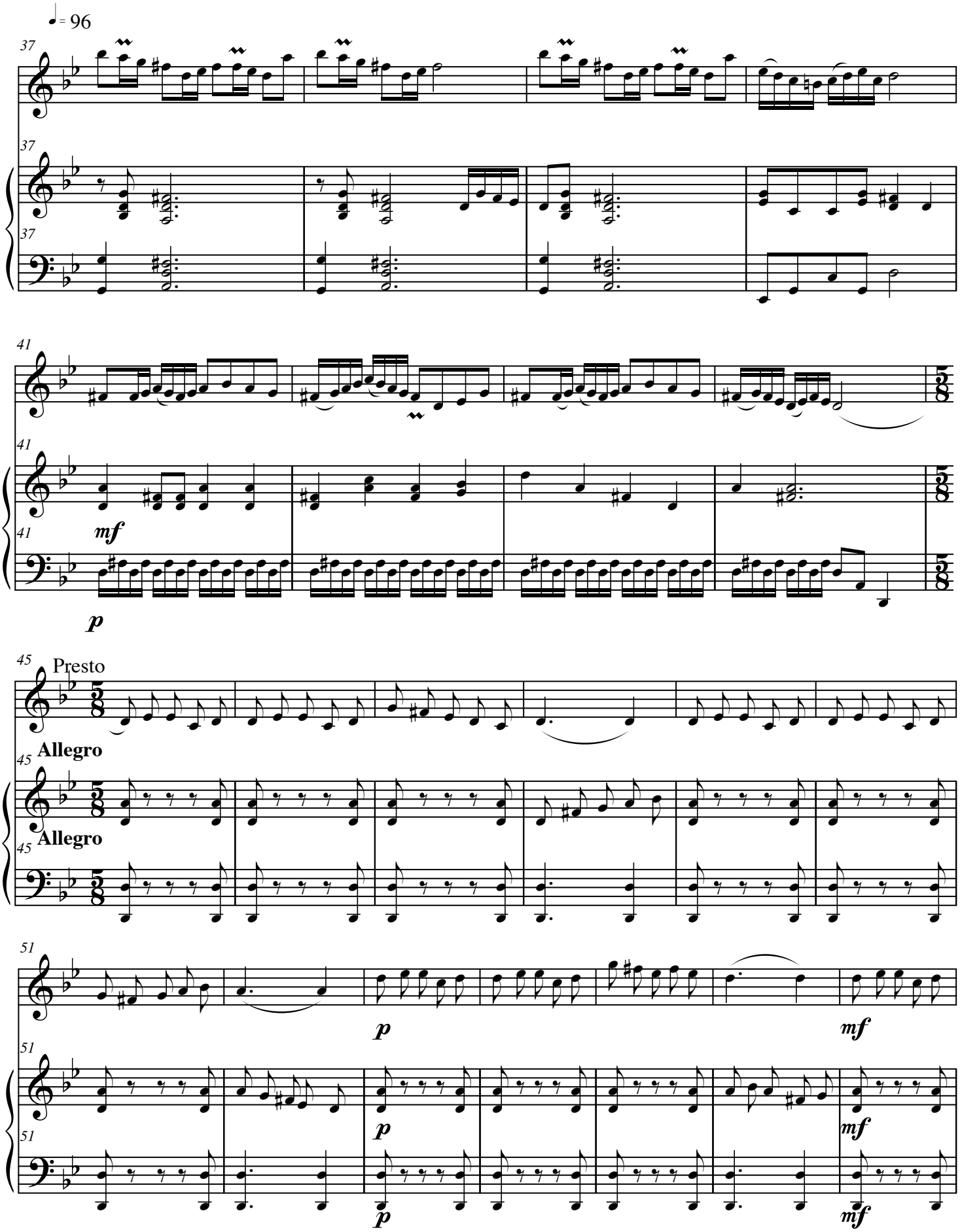
Kim Maerkl



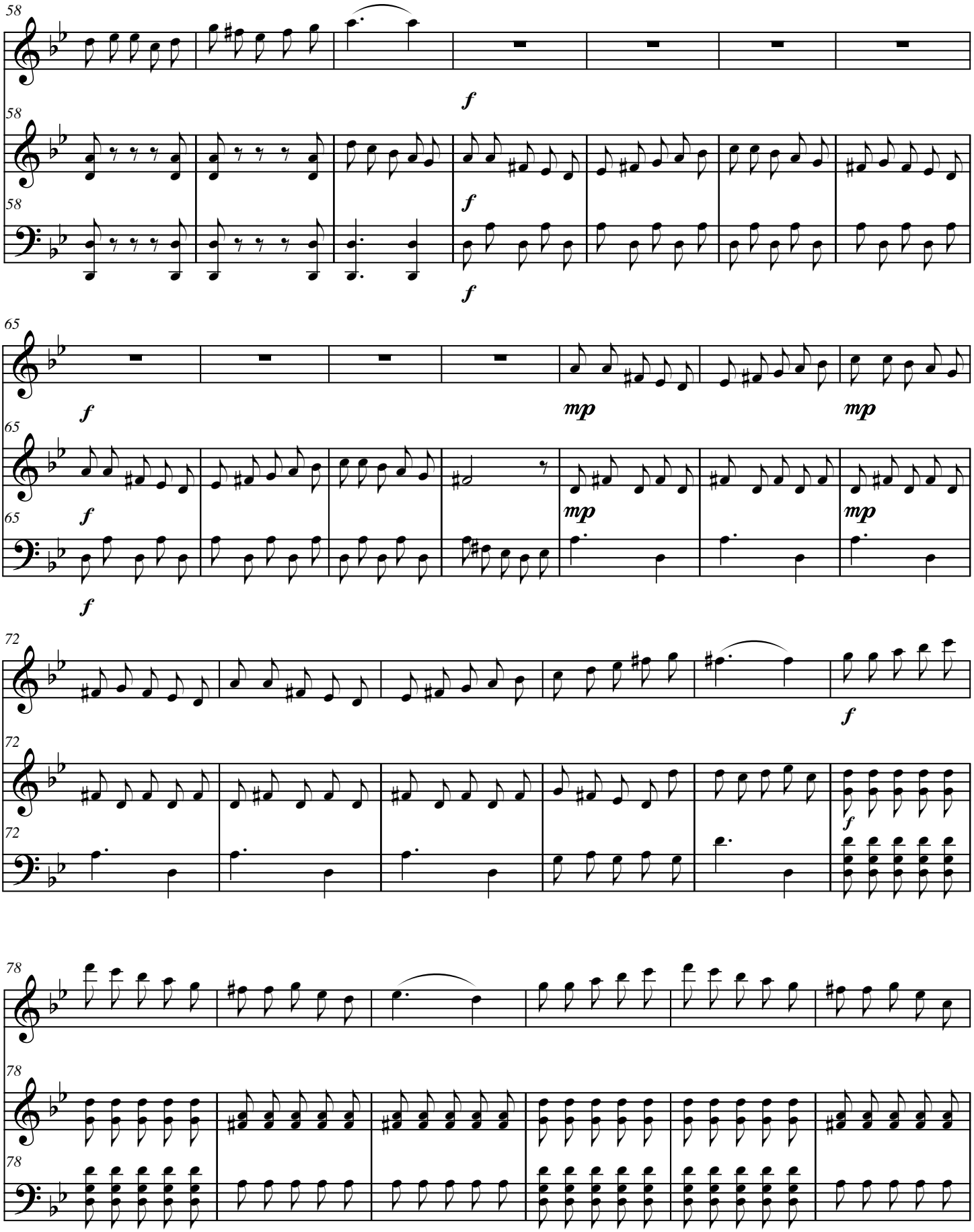
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



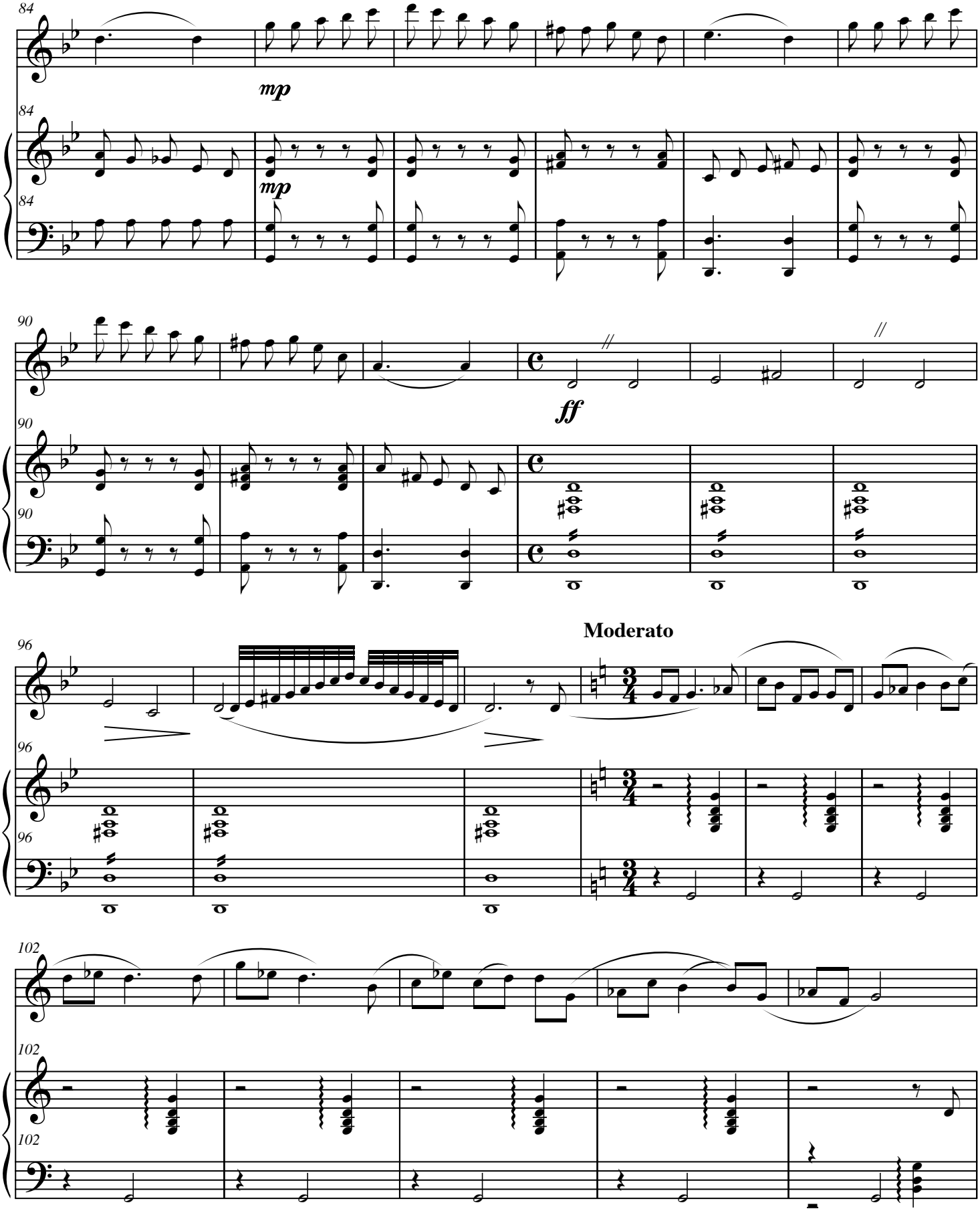
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



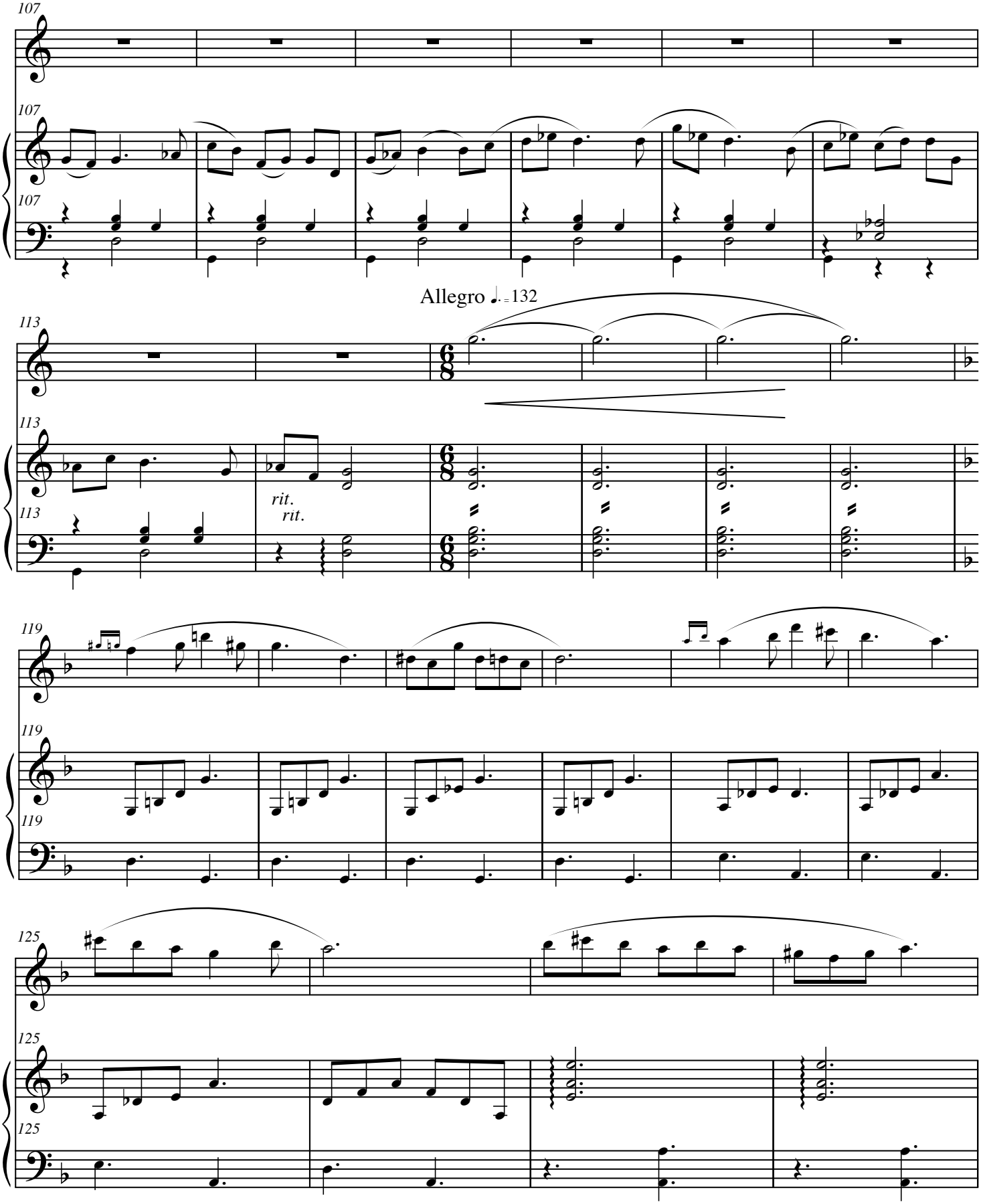
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



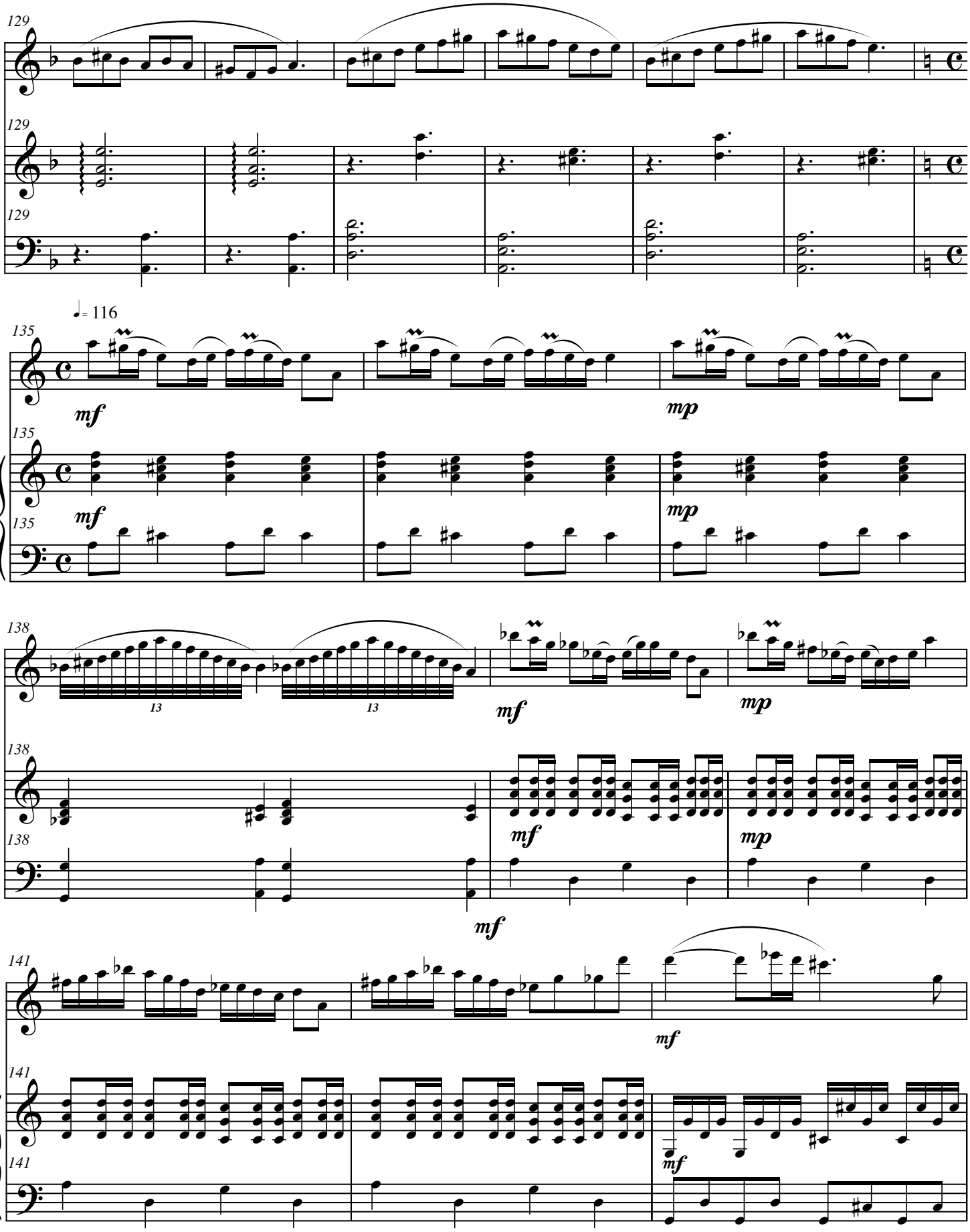
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



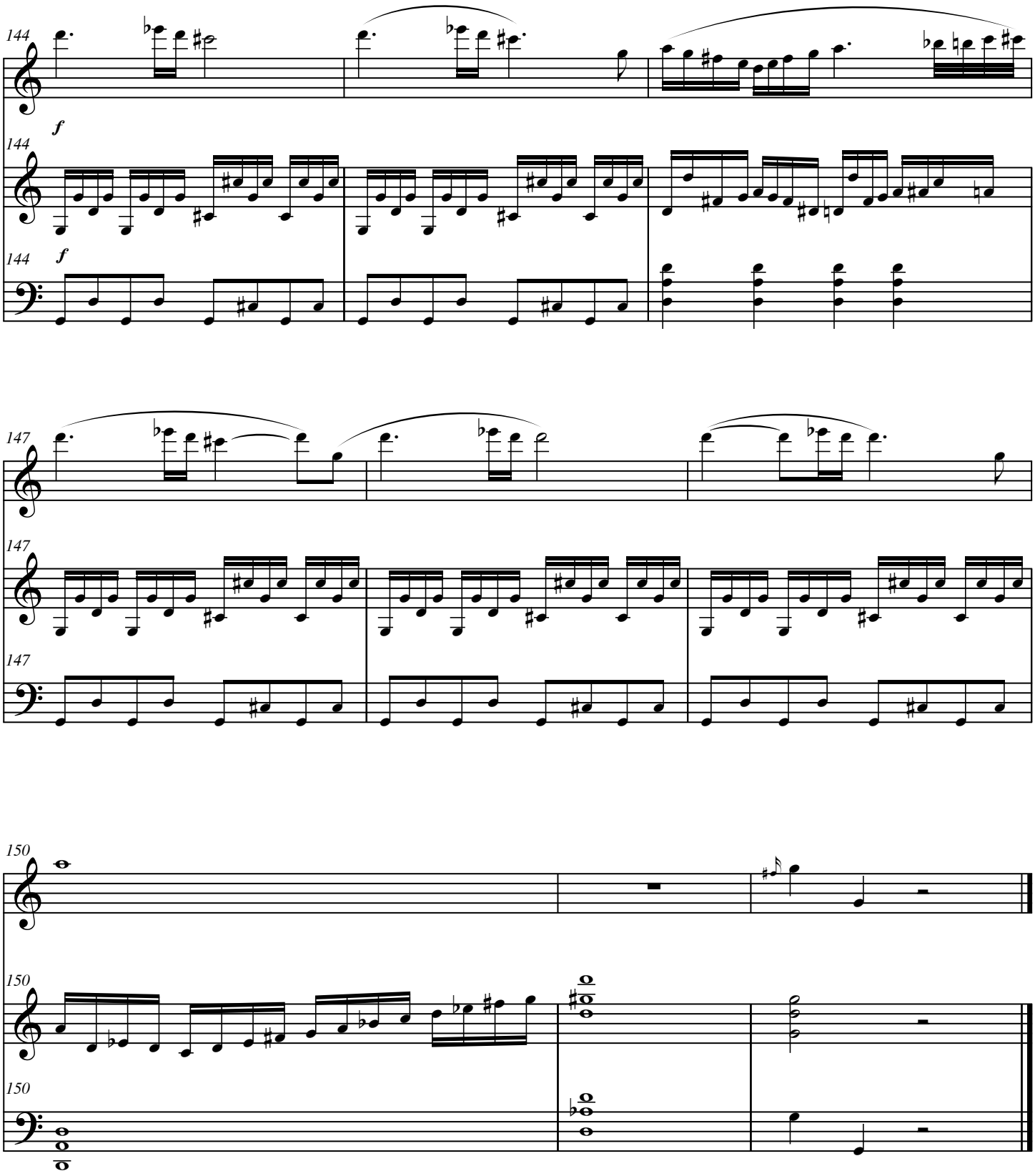
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

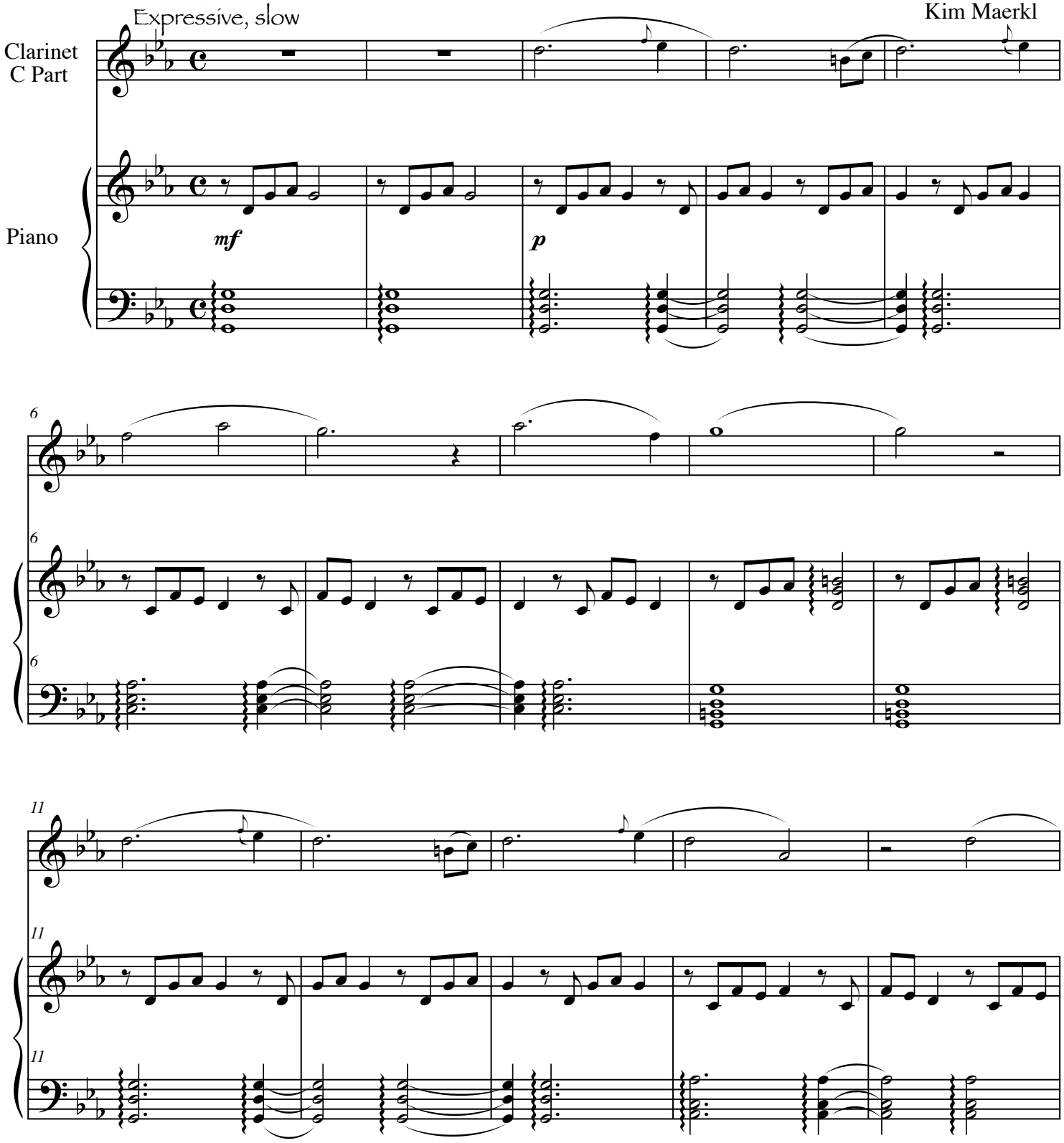
Shiba's Song

VI

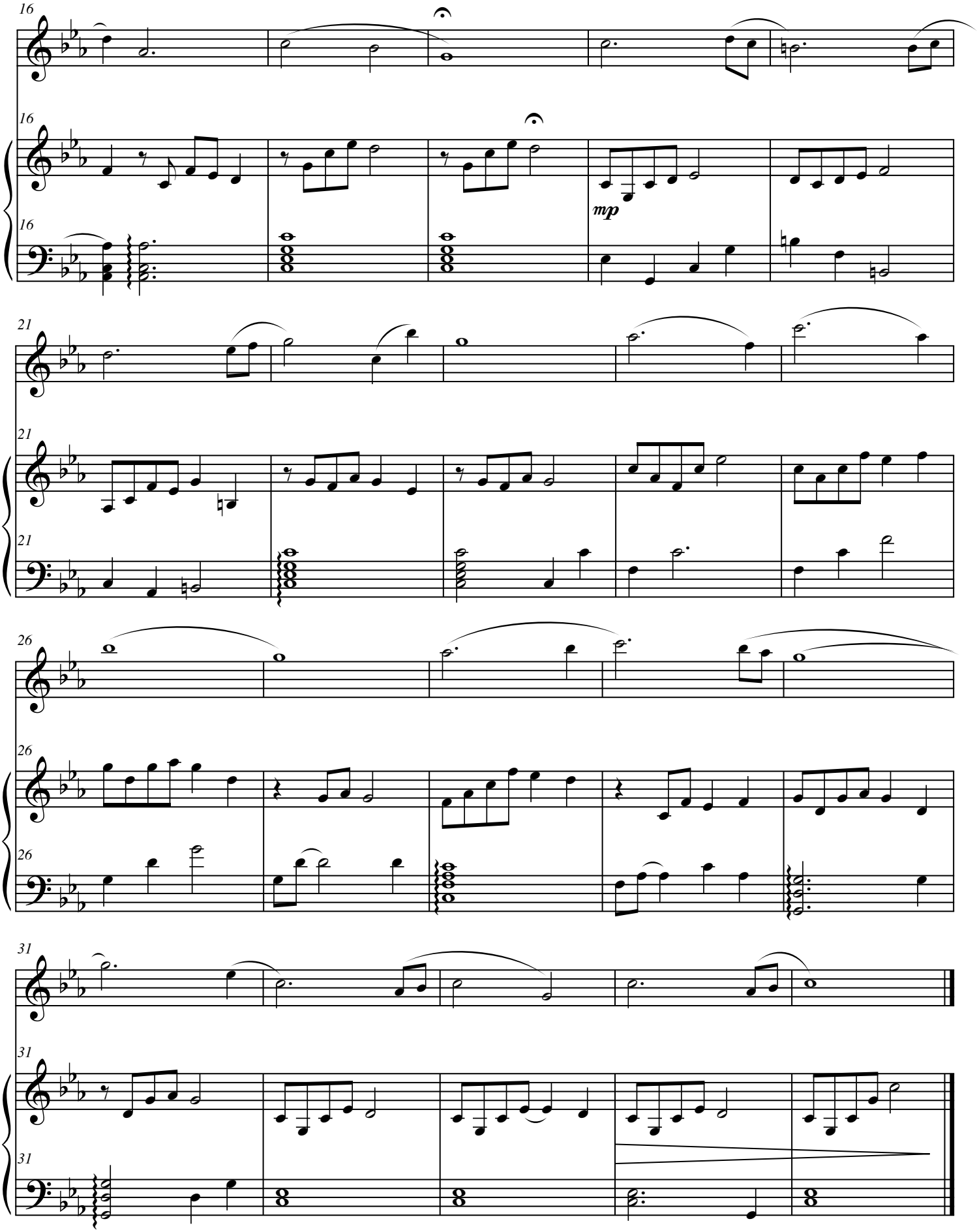
The boy played his pungi, and the song was so full of sorrow that even the guards hung their heads.

Expressive, slow

Kim Maerkl



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

Taj Mahal

VII

I would be honored, your majesty.

Kim Maerkl

Cadenza

Clarinet

Shiba played his pungi weaving the brilliant colors of India, and the sorrow and joy of life into the music.

Piano

p

5

Years later, when the Emperor's beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal passed away, her beauty and wisdom inspired him to create one of the most magnificent buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal

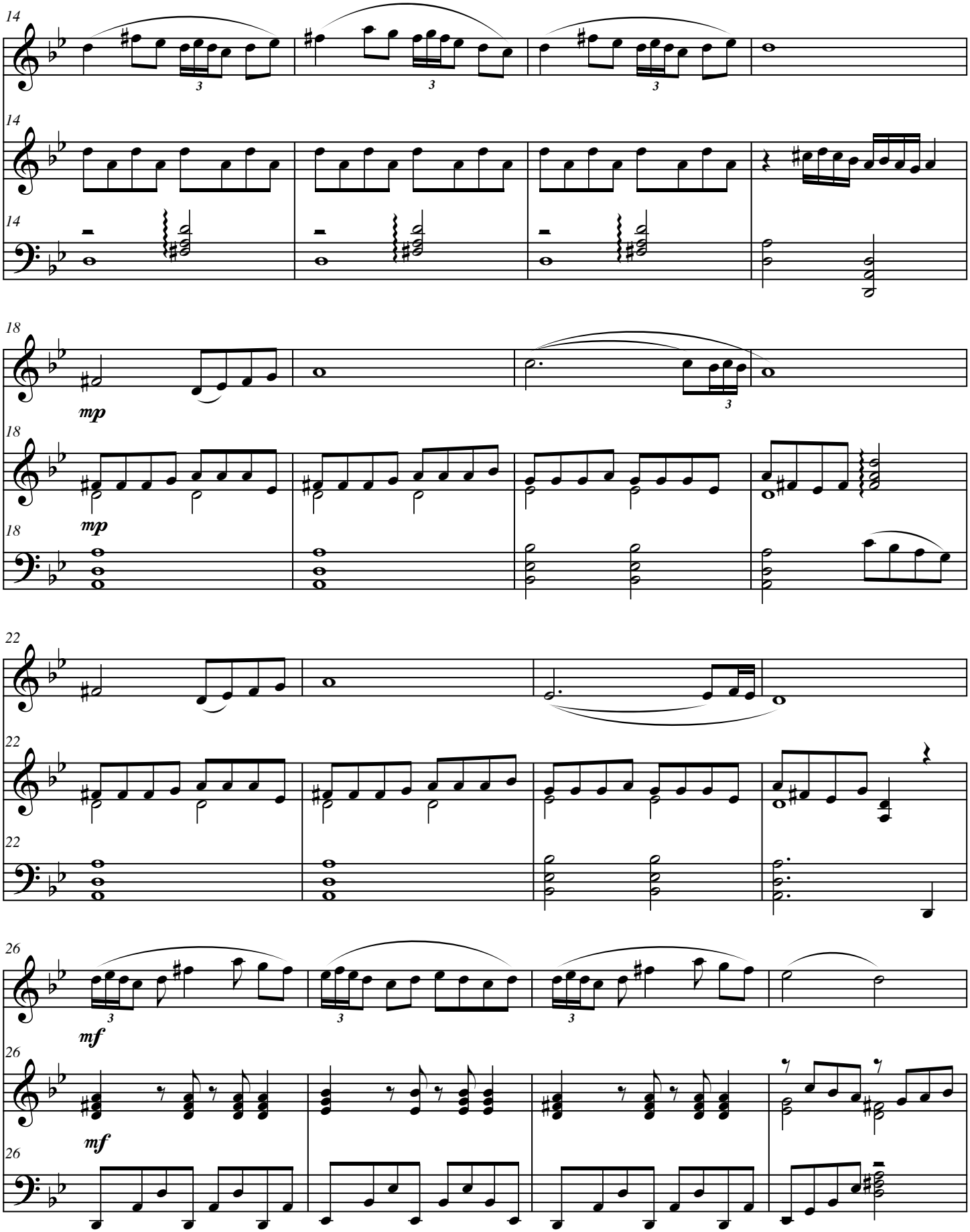
This magical place would be a monument to her life, and a tomb for her final rest. In the year 1666, Emperor Shah Jahan joined her inside the Taj Mahal, where they could be together for eternity.

The Taj Mahal shimmers like a pearl in the light of the setting sun. Every evening Shiba climbs the hilltop to enjoy its beauty. Then, he plays his pungi for Emperor Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal who remain alive in his heart.

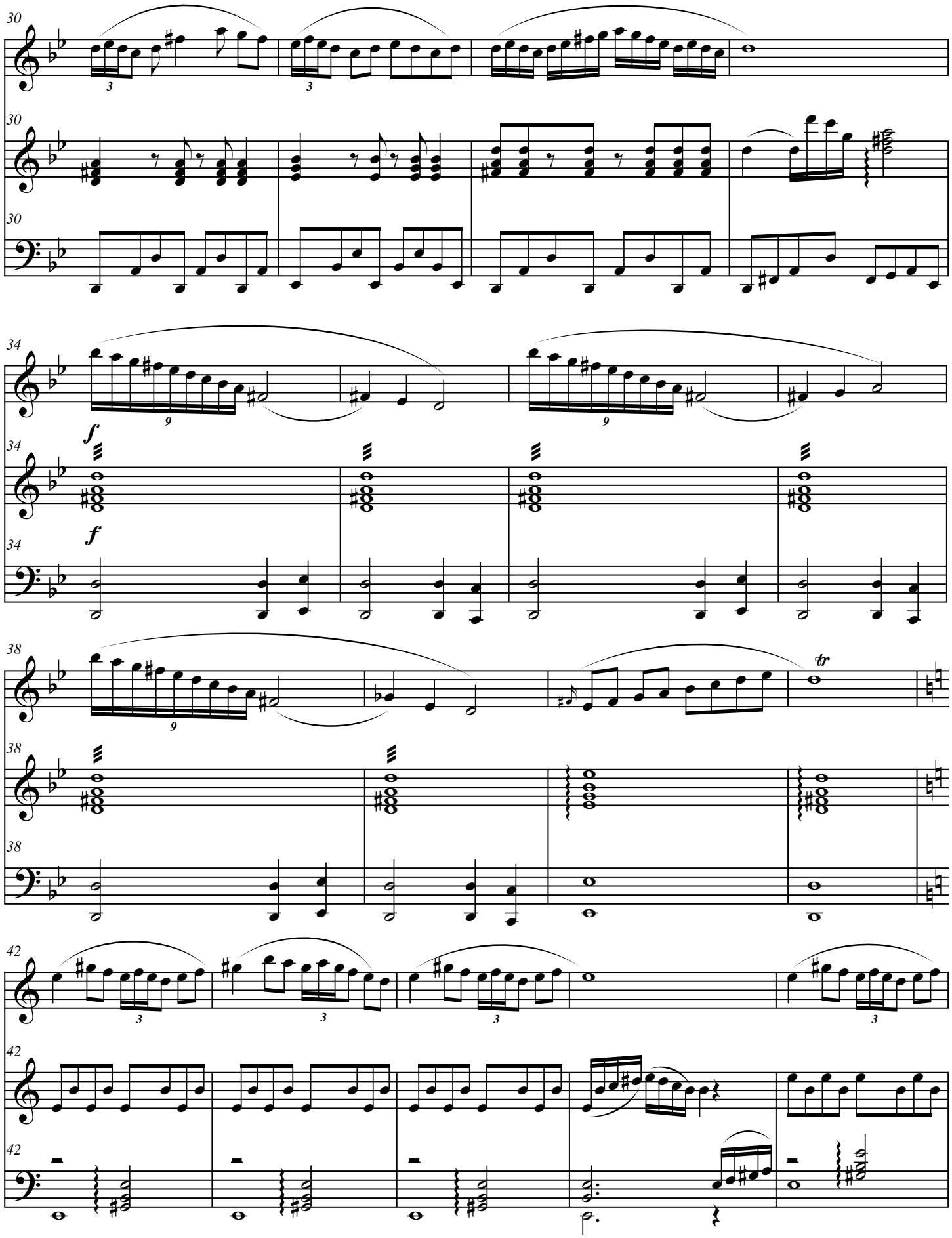
Allegro

10

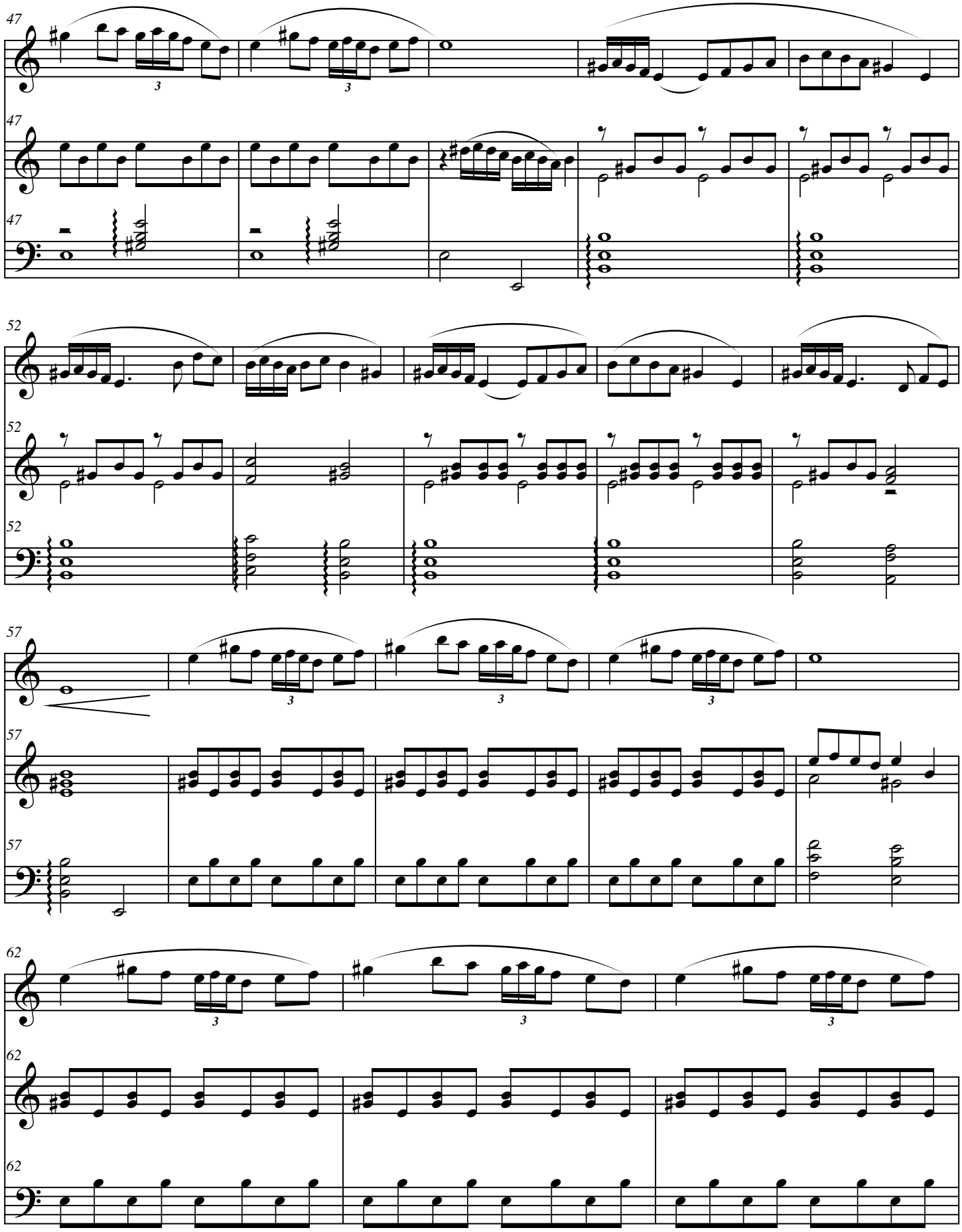
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



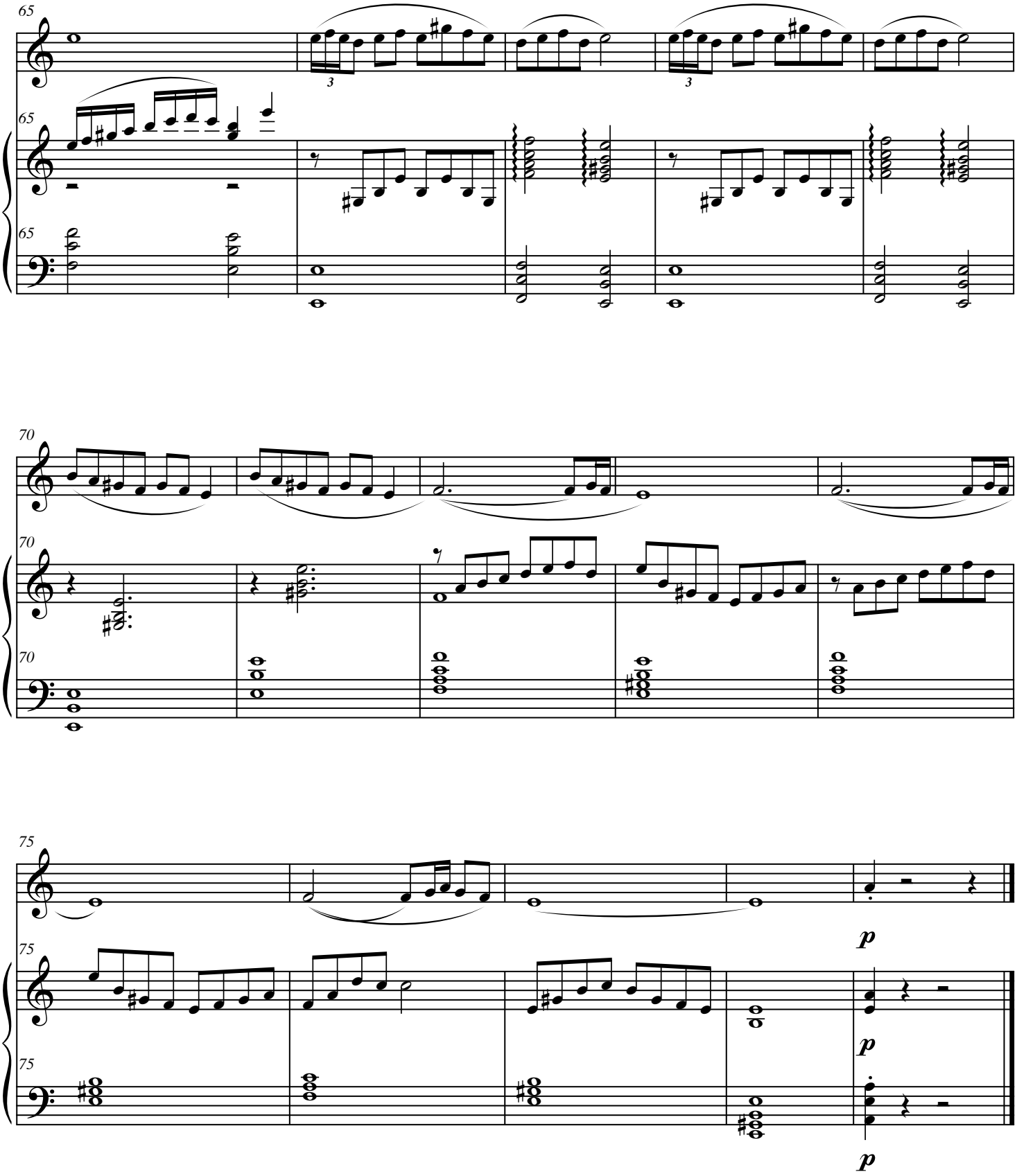
©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com



©2015 by Atlantic Crossing Records
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

Kim Maerkl

Agra, India in the year 1607

The golden light of the sun flooded through the trees on the hill. Shiba sat under the canopy of branches and played his pungi. The forest listened.

Music 1: The Snake Charmer

The song lingered in the hot still air as Shiba walked barefoot, back to the small grass-roofed hut where he lived with his mother. She was cooking dal, and the little red lentils simmered over an open fire. That night as they sat on the floor mats eating, Shiba said to her, "Tomorrow I will perform in the city of Agra.''

Her eyebrows lifted, ''Your father would have been very proud of you,'' she said softly.

''When I play his pungi, I feel that he is with me, drifting on the music.''

Shiba's father taught him the mysteries of snake charming, and he taught him to play the pungi, a wind instrument made from a gourd. The boy loved playing the pungi and he adored his snake Bonji, a stunning black and white cobra.

Music 2: Bonji

The next morning Shiba wrapped long strips of cloth around his head into a turban, and his mother placed a string of good-luck shells around his neck. The boy tied Bonji's basket to a bamboo pole and balanced it on his shoulder. He skipped down the hill, and the basket swung gently behind him.

The market place bustled with people. Shiba wound his way through the crowd and stopped at a spice vendor's booth.

''I am a snake charmer, may I perform in front of your stall?''

''If you can attract customers,'' he answered gruffly.

Shiba trembled as he sat down cross-legged on the dusty stones. The boy removed the lid of Bonji's basket, and the snake rustled inside. A few curious shoppers gathered around him as he stretched out his arms and circled above the dark opening with his pungi.

Music 3: Marketplace (Bars 1- 24 are played softly during the following text.)

A rainbow of sound captivated his listeners, and the movement of the pungi intrigued the snake.

Bonji peeked his head out of the hole and his tongue jutted out of his mouth. Although poison was in the snake's fangs, it was the slithering tongue that was terrifying. Bonji uncoiled himself and rose up, ever so slowly. The boy, and his snake swayed from side to side. People flocked to see the spectacle. Like an ancient dragon Bonji surged forward and the skin behind his head flared. The serpent twisted and turned as he lunged at the sun.

Music 3 (Continues at bar 25) **Dance of the Snake**

When Shiba finished playing he leaned over and kissed the top of the snake's head. The crowd cheered, and threw coins at the boy's feet. Bonji spiraled into his basket and Shiba replaced the lid. Children stared at the boy in admiration and disbelief as Shiba scooped up the coins. He ran home with Bonji bouncing wildly on the pole behind him.

His mother was gathering leaves on the hillside to sew into plates and sell at the market. Just as she was closing her sack, she noticed Shiba running up the path. He stopped in front of her gasping for breath, then he lifted her hand and filled it with coins. The money sprinkled to the ground as she hugged him tightly.

News of the snake charmer spread quickly, and the next morning when Shiba arrived at the market place dozens of onlookers clustered around him. Occasionally, the royalty and aristocracy of Agra would join in the fun at the bazaar, and today Empress Mumtaz Mahal waited quietly in the front row. Her daughter Princess Jahanara stood beside her in a colorfully woven sari.

Shiba played a bewitching melody, and Bonji rose majestically from his basket. His rippling body stretched upward, and he grew to an astonishing size. It looked as if he were suspended on invisible strings. Carefully, Shiba placed his hand around the animal's neck and the snake turned into pillar of stone. The boy flung out his arms and Bonji remained standing. Shiba tapped the top of the snake's head and the serpent swiftly curled into his basket.

Empress Mahal was fascinated by the performance and rewarded the snake charmer with a perfectly round, shimmering pearl. He bowed to her in thanks, his hands held up to his face as if in prayer.

The princess whispered to her mother, ‘‘We have dancers, musicians, and storytellers performing at the palace tomorrow, but we have never had a snake charmer, may he play for our celebration?’’

‘‘What a splendid idea,’’ the empress said. Then, she turned to Shiba, ‘‘Please come to the palace tomorrow afternoon, my family would certainly enjoy seeing you perform.’’

Shiba could not believe his luck. ‘‘I would be honored,’’he said bowing to the empress.

When night fell, Shiba pressed the beautiful pearl into his mother’s hand. Then, too excited to sleep he strolled through the moonlit forest, sat under his favorite tree and played his pungi.

Music 4: Moonlit Forest

The next afternoon, Shiba walked to the palace. As he approached the building, a halo of light radiated from its stones. The imperial guard opened the gate, and a servant led him to the entertainer’s room. Shiba noticed Princess Jahanara peeking around a marble column. He smiled nervously, then shyly looked away.

Shiba placed Bonji’s basket on the floor, and an older boy approached him.

‘‘My name is Kesu, I am a storyteller, and the emperor’s favorite performer.’’

The storytellers acted out the legends of the empire using poetry, dance and music. Kesu was a very gifted and very arrogant storyteller. He was not pleased to see the snake charmer.

‘‘Namaste,’’ answered Shiba with a bow.

Kesu kicked Bonji’s basket in reply, ‘‘Maybe you will not play so well tonight, snake boy, because I don’t want to see you here again. The Emperor likes me best, and it shall stay that way.’’

Shiba shuddered, and Princess Jahanara was shocked at Kesu’s behavior.

That evening, Emperor Shah Jahan, his wife Mumtaz Mahal, and their children were delighted by countless performances. Kesu danced the story of the great Mughal Akbar fearlessly slaying tigers in the forest.

Feverishly Kesu flew through the room fighting the beasts, and the children gasped in fright as his imaginary tigers sprung over their heads and out of the window. The royal family applauded excitedly, and the emperor handed the boy two silver coins. ‘‘You have outdone yourself Kesu,’’ said Shah Jahan with a smile.

Shiba was the final artist of the evening. Kesu’s words were ringing in his ears as he walked onto the stage; but when he saw the emperor and his family, he swallowed his fear, and gave a performance that had been waiting patiently in his soul.

Music 5: Shiba and the Serpent (Bars 1-32 are played softly during the following text.)

Shiba hovered above the snake, coaxing and seducing the cobra. Bonji emerged from his basket and Shiba allowed the serpent’s tongue to lick his face. The music floated on the scent of a thousand flowers and the snake writhed out of his hiding place and slithered across the stage. Shiba’s music sparkled like jewels and crawled beneath the skin of the emperor and his family. The boy and his snake danced a slow and deliberate ballet, and stunned their viewers into breathless silence.

Music 5: (Continues at bar 33**)**

When the performance was finished, the Emperor and his family sat dumbfounded. Shiba watched their faces change from awe to delight. ‘‘I have never seen anything so fascinating, you must come back and perform for us again.’’

He gave Shiba two silver coins, and the boy bowed in appreciation.

It was very late, and the performers were permitted to sleep in the artist’s room of the palace. Shiba tucked the coins into the folds of his turban and lay down on his mat. He fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Early the next morning Shiba awoke to the screams of Kesu. The imperial guards rushed into the room, and Kesu pointed at Shiba yelling, ‘‘Thief!’’

The rough hands of the guards grabbed the snake charmer. ‘‘What is going on?’’ they demanded.

‘‘That bandit took my coins while I was sleeping’’ screamed Kesu. ‘‘He and that dangerous snake were the only other ones here last night.’’

‘‘I did not take anything, look, the emperor also gave me two silver pieces,’’ he said, pulling the money from his turban.

‘‘I’m sure that he is hiding my coins, search his belongings,’’ yelled Kesu hysterically.

‘‘I have nothing with me except for Bonji,’’ answered Shiba, in a shaky voice.

One of the guards picked up Bonji’s basket, and the coins clinked together inside.

‘‘What do you have to say to this, it looks as if you are a thief after all. In one hour, the emperor will be holding public audience. You can tell him your story, but it does not look good for you. You know the punishment for stealing,’’ said the guard.

Shiba and Bonji were locked in a small cell. The boy played his pungi, and the song was so full of sorrow that even the guards hung their heads.

Music 6: Moonlit Forest

At the appointed time, Kesu and Shiba were escorted through the corridors of the palace. Shiba’s heart beat wildly as the massive doors to the Diwan-i-Am, the hall of public audience were opened. Emperor Shah Jahan sat atop a dazzling peacock throne inlaid with rubies, emeralds, sapphires and pearls. An enormous diamond, sparkled above his head. Mumtaz Mahal and their daughter Jahanara sat to the right of Shah Jahan.

Kesu and Shiba stepped meekly up to the throne. Shiba’s whole body was shaking as he stood before the emperor. The monarch was very angry, ‘‘I demand an explanation, ’’ cried the emperor indignantly.

“Your majesty, last night as I slept the snake charmer stole my silver coins and hid them in his serpent’s basket. They are there now, if you wish to see the evidence.’’

‘‘Is this true? ’’ demanded the Emperor.

Shiba hung his head. “The coins are in Bonji’s basket, but I did not take them from Kesu nor did I put them in the basket,’’ he said quietly. ‘‘I’m sorry, I don’t know what happened. When I awoke Kesu was screaming and the coins were with Bonji.’’

The emperor turned to Kesu. ‘‘The truth belongs to you. I must respect your word above a boy whom I have only met. Shiba, you will be punished for this crime.’’

Kesu glanced at Shiba and smirked. Then, Jahanara stood up, ‘‘Father, Shiba did not take the coins, please, let him go,’’ pleaded the girl.

The emperor stared at his daughter utterly perplexed.

Mumtaz Mahal turned to her husband and explained, ‘‘Yesterday, when our daughter went to welcome Shiba to the Palace, she heard Kesu threatening him. Kesu commanded him to perform poorly, so that he would never be welcome here again.

Since Shiba played brilliantly, I can assume that Kesu placed the coins in the basket to assure his own status as most favored performer.''

Kesu realized that contradicting the emperor's wife would mean certain death, but he was an impressive actor, and would use his skills to convince the emperor of his innocence. ''Your majesty, maybe as I slept, in the trance of a dream I placed the coins in the basket. The night plays such tricks on the mind....''

''Stop,'' cried the emperor. ''Save your acting for the stage, I am not a fool. I shall spare your life, but I never want to see you again. Leave, now!''

Kesu's arrogance turned to fear, and the boy scurried from the hall. Shiba stood motionless, his eyes staring at the floor.

''Shiba,'' the emperor said kindly. ''Perhaps you can ease this unpleasant experience with a beautiful melody.''

''I would be honored, your majesty.''

Music 7: Taj Mahal (Bars 1-9 are played softly during the following text.)

Shiba played his pungi weaving the brilliant colors of India, and the sorrow and joy of life into the music.

Years later, when the Emperor's beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal passed away, her beauty and wisdom inspired him to create one of the most magnificent buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal. This magical place would be a monument to her life, and a tomb for her final rest. In the year 1666, Emperor Shah Jahan joined her inside the Taj Mahal, where they could be together for eternity.

The Taj Mahal shimmers like a pearl in the light of the setting sun. Every evening Shiba climbs the hilltop to enjoy its beauty. Then, he plays his pungi for Emperor Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal who remain alive in his heart.

Music 7: Taj Mahal (Music continues at bar 10)

© 2015 Kim Maerkl
www.atlantic-crossing.com

The Snake Charmer

Teacher's Guide

Story and Music by Kim Maerkl

The Snake Charmer tells the story of Shiba, a boy who plays the pungi and charms his cobra in the year 1607 in Agra, India. One day while performing at the marketplace, Empress Mumtaz Mahal hears the snake charmer and invites him to play in the palace. Shiba's success inspires jealousy in another artist and almost costs Shiba his life.

The Snake Charmer weaves the music for clarinet, guitar, and tabla with the story of Shiba and the Emperor who built the Taj Mahal, taking the listener on a musical adventure to India**.**

Discuss the Story

Listen to the CD. Before you listen for the second time ask the students to listen for the answers to the following questions:

What is the name of the city in India where the Snake Charmer performs?
Agra

Can you find Agra, India on a map?

Shiba plays a pungi, what is a pungi?
A wind instrument made from a gourd.

What does Shiba wear on his head?
A turban.

What kind of snake is Bonji?
A cobra.

What color is Bonji?
Black and white.

Two very important people heard Shiba perform in the Agra marketplace. What were their names:
Empress Mumtaz Mahal and Princess Jahanara

Empress Mahal was known for her generosity. What did she give Shiba after his performance in the marketplace?
A Pearl.

Kesu was a storyteller. Indian storytellers act out the legends of the empire using poetry, dance and music. What was the story about that Kesu danced for the

Emperor?
Kesu danced the story of Mughal Akbar fearlessly slaying tigers in the forest.

Describe Emperor Shah Jahan's throne:

Emperor Shah Jahan sat atop a dazzling peacock throne inlaid with rubies, emeralds, sapphires and pearls. An enormous diamond, sparkled above his head.

What did the Emperor give to Shiba and Kesu after their performances?
Two silver pieces.

How did Kesu try to get Shiba in trouble?
He accused him of stealing his silver coins.

What famous building did Emperor Shah Jahan build?
The Taj Mahal

Can you draw a scene from the story?

Discuss the Music

What instruments do you hear performing on the CD?
Clarinet, Guitar and Indian tabla drums

The clarinet is a woodwind instrument that represents the pungi in the story. A pungi is an Indian instrument made from a gourd, you can see an illustration of a pungi on the CD cover. The pungi is still played by snake charmers in the streets of India today. Find a video of an Indian snake charmer on YouTtube and compare the sound of the pungi to the sound of the clarinet. Which instrument do you prefer? Can you describe the sound of each instrument?

Activities

Tablas are the drums used in traditional Indian music. They are made of wood and skin and produce a pitch when struck. They are played with the hand and finger tips. The tabla player performs while sitting on the floor. Have each student bring a container with a plastic lid. Play various parts of the CD and have them listen carefully to what the drums are doing and then let them play along.

Draw a picture of a clarinet, guitar, and tabla drums.

Pretend that you are a music reporter and write a review of the CD.