An Invention for Mr. K

For Keyboard Instrument

Nigel Morgan

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About the Music

In 1988 I made my first visit to Japan at the invitation of the Roland Corporation. During this visit I had the opportunity to meet the chief executive and founder of Roland, Mr. Ikutaro Kakehashi. Mr. K, as he is affectionately known to his employees, is a truly inspirational figure who has brought together a love of music with a flair and imagination for micro electronics and business development. This short invention was composed as a gift for Mr. K at the suggestion of Alistair Jones, the head of Roland's Education Division in the UK. Just prior to my Japanese visit Mr. K had personally initiated the research and development of an electronic continuo instrument, the Roland C-50. Some 500 of these unique instruments were made. Ideal for the rigours of touring, many are still regularly used by professional ensembles.

Here is a description of the C-50 instrument from Gordon Reid's *History of Roland* published in Sound on Sound in 2005:

> *Roland took a sideways step that took everybody else by surprise; they released two digital harpsichords which, in addition to a wide range of authentic harpsichord sounds, produced the tones of a lute, strings, and two pipe organs, all programmed to suit the baroque music at which the instruments were aimed. The difference between the C20 and C50 was in the number of legs (the C20 had one more) and the number of speakers (the C50 had one more, with five speakers driven by four separate amplifiers). Designed to look and feel as authentic as possible, both models offered a selection of medieval and baroque temperaments that allowed players to perform early music with the correct tuning, and also added coupling, bi-timbrality (you could mix the harpsichord or lute with either the strings or one of the organs) and a modern digital reverb. Beautiful to play, these instruments were only ever going to appeal to a limited market, but their quality meant that some very highbrow music institutions eventually accepted them.*

An Invention for Mr. K was composed for this Roland C-50 and received its first performance in Japan in 1989. The original score contained instructions for registrations only possible on this electronic instrument (and may only be acquired from the composer by request). The revised version of 2007 presented here is simply for 'a keyboard instrument': a chamber organ, harpsichord, clavichord, electric piano, or acoustic piano. The work has also been performed successfully in versions for mallet instruments (vibraphone and marimba).

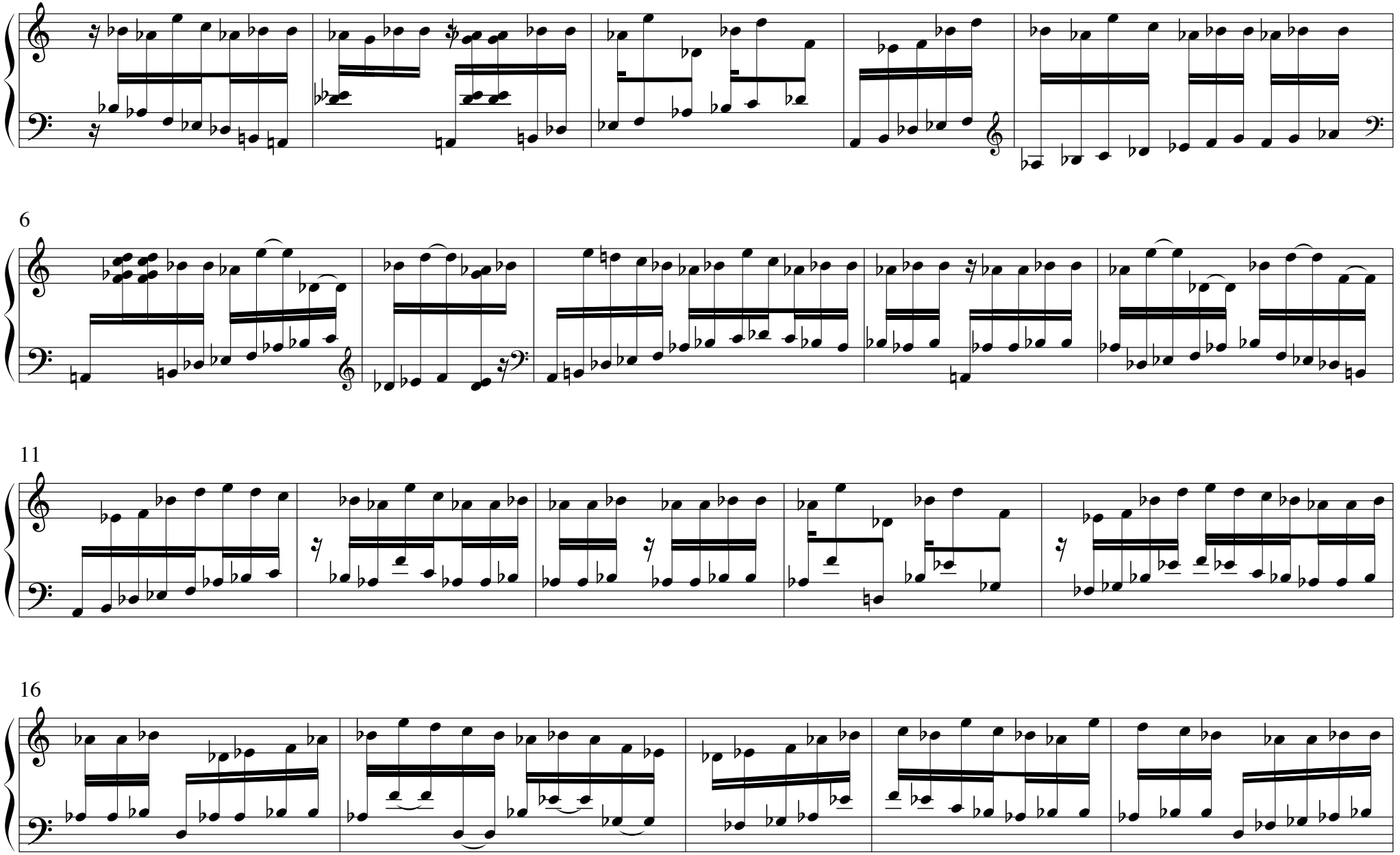
Instructions for performance

Like several other works by the composer for variable instrumentation, octave transpositions may be freely made in either direction. Octave doubling is not recommended. Tempo, dynamics, articulation and registration are free. There are opportunities in the work for employing more than one keyboard or manual. In the latter half of the invention there are many indications for a percussive effect. This may be a low note or cluster, a hand-struck percussive instrument or set of instruments, a finger click or the hand striking the case of the instrument itself.

Imagined as music for intimate performance, *An Invention for Mr. K* is a gentle tribute to an inspired inventor whose vision for new music technology continues to provide composers and performers with practical instruments for computer-assisted music-making.

An Invention for Mr. K

no faster than ♪ = 252



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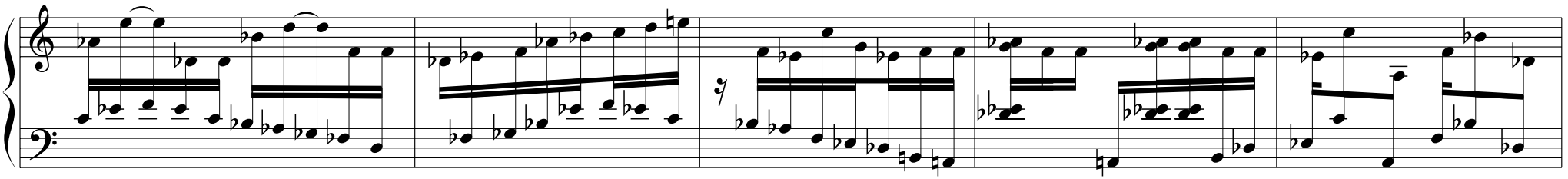

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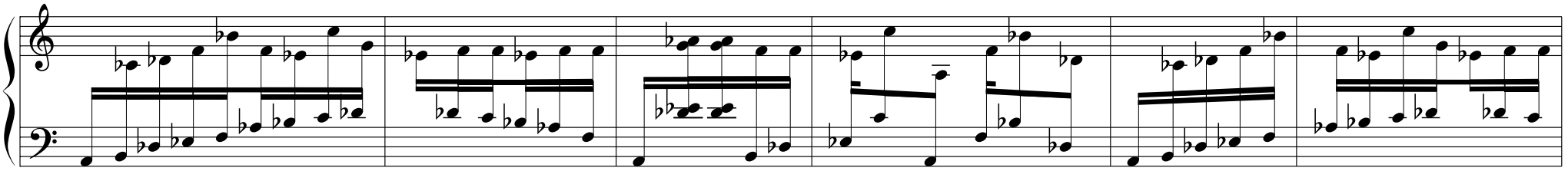

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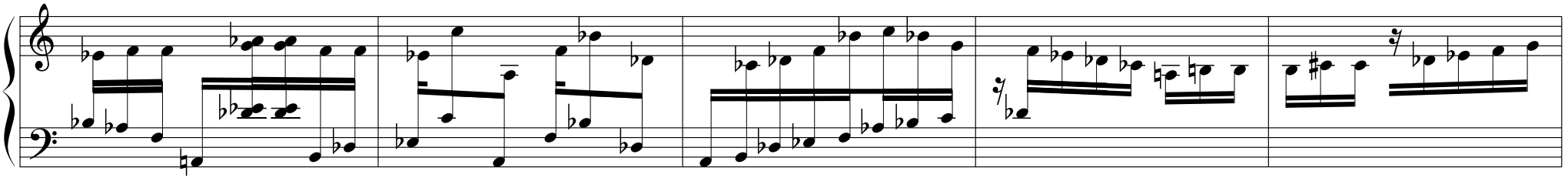

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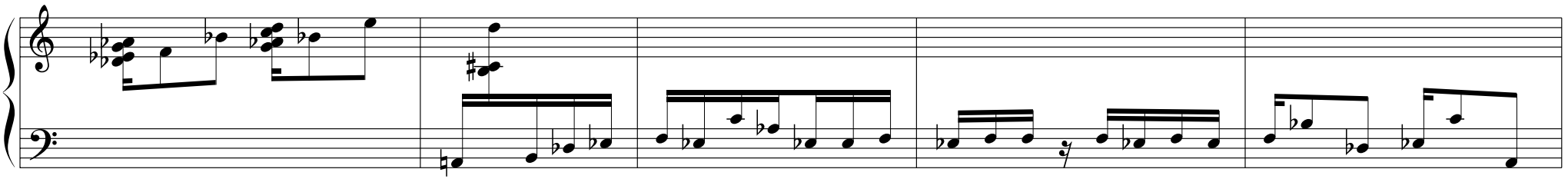

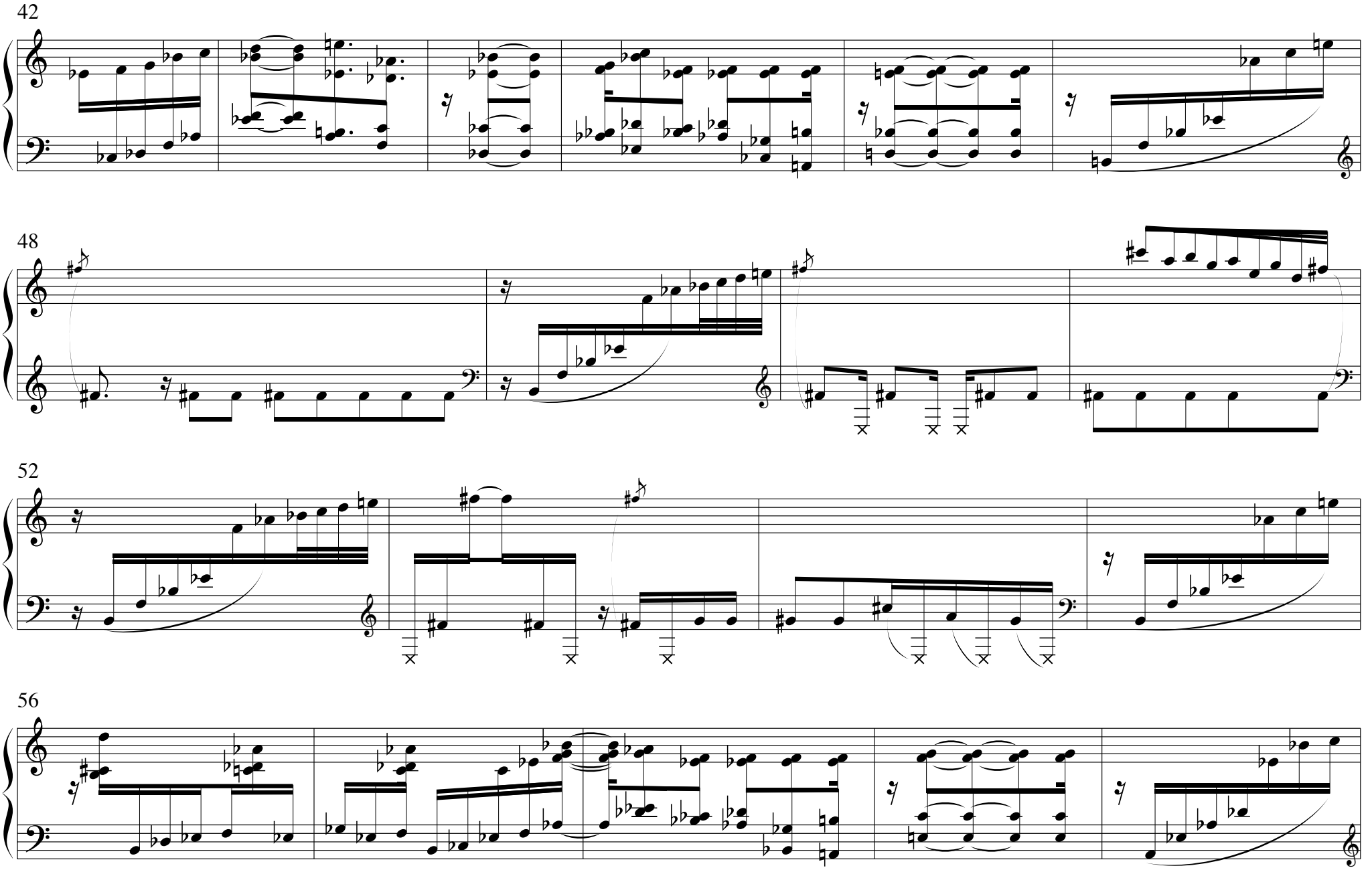
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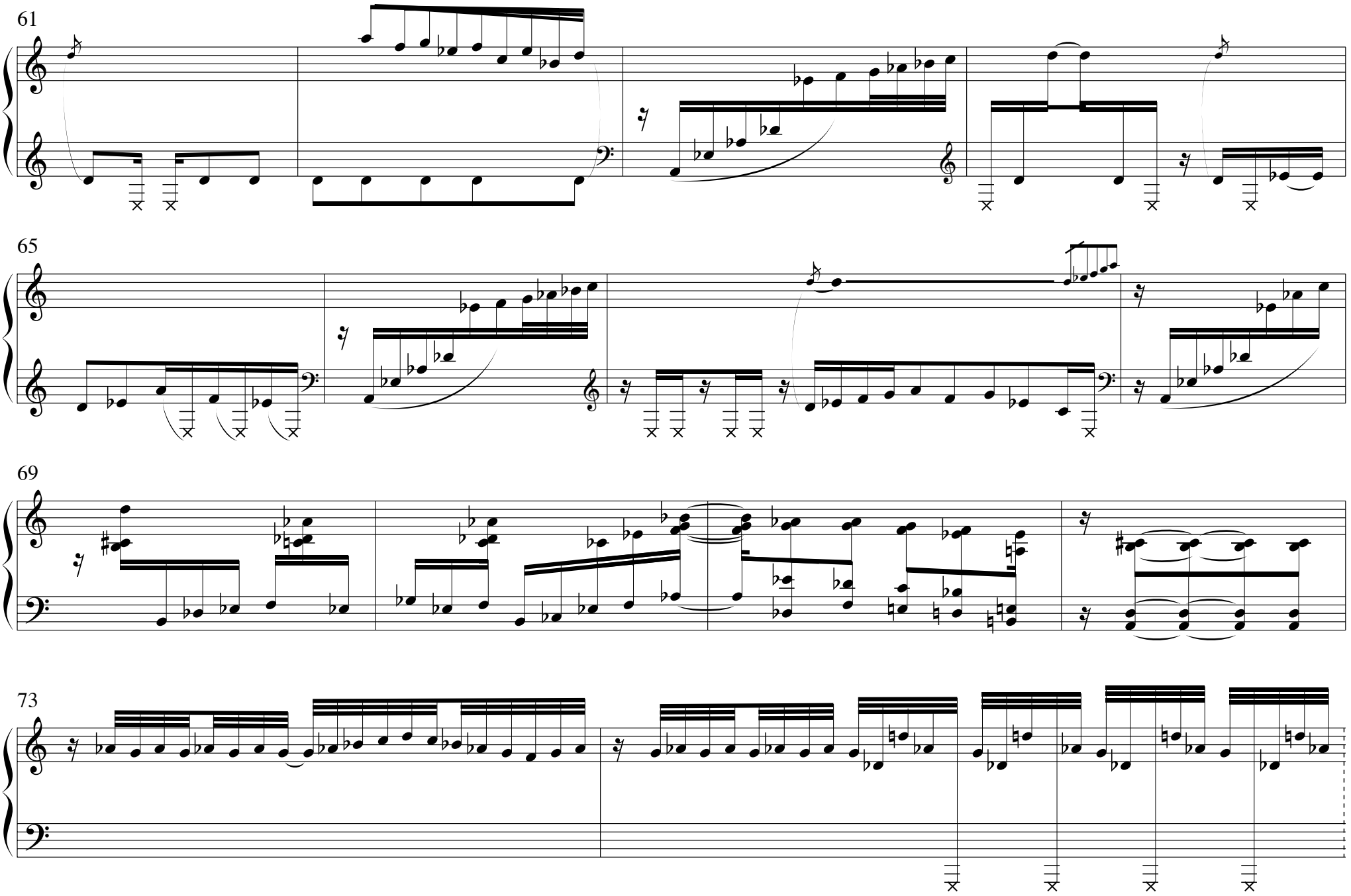
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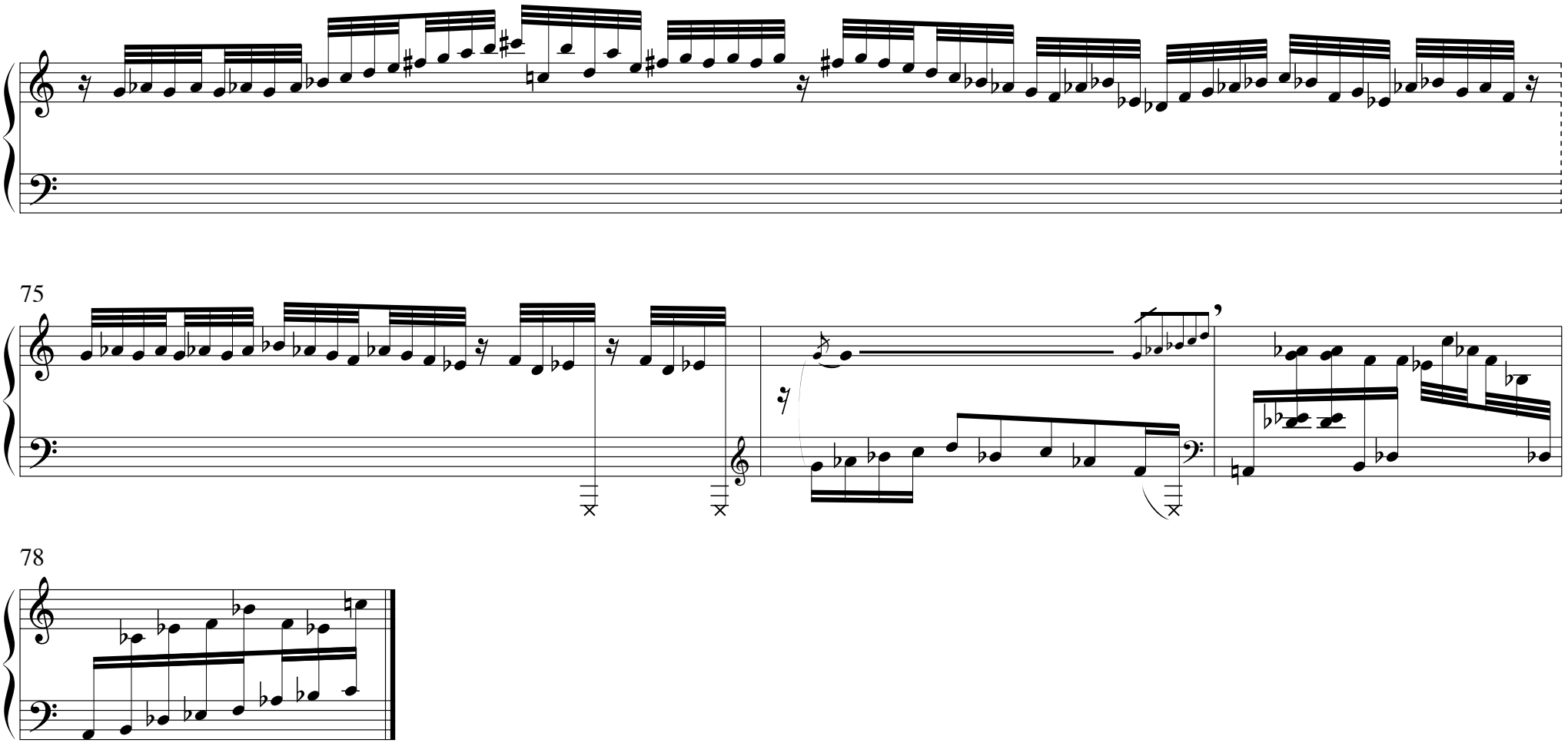
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