Petar Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite": Explorations of Asymmetry, Modality, and Metrical Dissonances

Kalin Kirilov

BULGARIAN traditional music is perhaps best known for its frequent use of fast-tempo, asymmetrical meters, which Béla Bartók dubbed "Bulgarian rhythms," and for the timbral "mysteries" of its choral singers. The music of Bulgaria is an excellent example of a complex musical tradition that combines Middle Eastern *makams* (modes), regional microtonal structures, pentatonics, diatonic modes, and major/minor scales.

One of the ways of studying Bulgarian music is to look at a single representative piece. This article analyzes "Bulgarian Suite," a composition for solo accordion written by the living Bulgarian composer Petar Ralchev. "Bulgarian Suite" is a trend-setting piece incorporating mixed asymmetrical meters, modal harmony, dense ornamentation, improvisation, and folk motives from various regions of Bulgaria, as well as influences from Western music styles. Stylistically, "Bulgarian Suite" exemplifies Bulgarian concert wedding music from the 1990s that became popular worldwide through the performances of Ivo Papazov and his *Trakiya* (Thrace) orchestra.[1]

Petar Ralchev was born in 1961 and studied classical accordion at the High School of Music in the city of Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Besides being widely recognized by many Bulgarian musicians as the best living Bulgarian accordion player, Ralchev has been awarded the first prize at multiple accordion competitions in Western Europe for classical music. Amongst the Bulgarian musicians, Ralchev is known as one of the innovators of Bulgarian wedding music.

In the early 1980s, shortly after graduating from high school, Ralchev became a member of Papazov's Trakiya wedding band. The collaborations between Ralchev and Papazov set high standards for wedding-style compositions, improvisations, and arrangements which have been imitated by several generations of Bulgarian musicians.

"Bulgarian Suite" is, in my view, the most musically complex piece created in the Bulgarian wedding-style tradition. Ralchev has taken a pre-existing model created by Papazov and subjected it to many complicated musical manipulations. It is my goal to explain this complexity in this article. My analysis focuses on Ralchev's compositional techniques and his innovative approaches to combined metric groups (several asymmetrical meters recurring periodically), heterometric rows (meters which do not follow a particular pattern), and modal/makam-based harmony.[2] The analysis will demonstrate several themes of Ralchev's

1. Ivo Papazov is a renowned clarinetist, master of Bulgarian wedding music, and founder of the modern wedding music style. In 2005, Papazov became the recipient of the BBC audience award in the "world music" category.
2. For more information on combined metric groups and heterometric rows, refer to Dzhudzhev (1970) and Kirilov (2015).

compositional process: multiple forms of symmetry and asymmetry, metrical dissonances (grouping dissonances and vertical displacements), and Ralchev's innovative approaches to modal harmony.[3] As part of the comprehensive analysis of a complex piece, I will examine Ralchev's approach to form, transferring motivic ideas from one phrase to the next, and transitions between sections involving elision, truncation, and grouping dissonances. The metric complexity of "Bulgarian Suite" suggests a thorough examination of hypermeter. This article is the first scholarly study of Bulgarian music to examine and systematize hypermeter formation in the asymmetrical meters associated with Bulgarian dances.

The article pays closest attention to the opening sections of "Bulgarian Suite," where Ralchev has achieved levels of rhythmic complexity surpassing all other pieces in the wedding music repertoire. The analysis relies on the author's experience as a performer in the Bulgarian tradition, engages the most recent scholarship, and uses as a foundation the analytical approaches to Bulgarian music established in the book *Bulgarian Harmony* (Kirilov 2015). Besides the analytical methods suggested in the book, this article tests and recalibrates two additional Western analytical tools adapted to the specifics of Bulgarian music. This combination of analytical tools constitutes a new, comprehensive model of inquiry which could be applied to repertoire from other Eastern European countries exhibiting levels of metric and harmonic complexity similar to the ones found in Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite."

Characteristics of Bulgarian Music

Bulgarian folk music exhibits a vast variety of meters, rhythms, and scales paired with a unique harmonic system. Prior to proceeding with the analysis of "Bulgarian Suite," it is crucial to first contextualize the piece by providing a brief overview of Bulgarian music fundamentals.

Meters

In addition to the simple and compound meters found in the Western musical traditions, Bulgarians have exploited many possible combinations of twos and threes organized in a system of asymmetrical meters ranging from $\frac{5}{8}$ to $\frac{15}{8}$.[4] A significant portion of these asymmetrical meters have corresponding dances. Some of the most common dances in asymmetrical meters are listed in Table 1.

3. In "Bulgarian Suite," grouping dissonance results from the superimposition of different meters in melody and accompaniment. Grouping dissonance also occurs any time when grouping in the melody or accompaniment does not fit an already established grouping pattern.

4. From the perspective of Bulgarian folk music, the term "asymmetrical meters" is rather problematic particularly when referring to meters illustrating perfect symmetry, such as $\frac{11}{8}$ (2+2+3+2+2) and $\frac{8}{8}$ (3+2+3). However, in order to be consistent with the terminology adopted by Western music theory, I will use the term asymmetrical meters throughout this article. Bulgarian scholars consider meters longer than $\frac{15}{8}$ to be impractical for transcribing and learning. Typically, meters longer than $\frac{15}{8}$ are illustrated as combinations of less complex meters or combined metric groups, e.g., $\frac{7}{8}+\frac{11}{8}$. For more information, refer to Dzhudzhev (1970, 1975) and Litova-Nikolova (1982).

Dance Name	Meter	Grouping
Paydushko Horo (Paydushko Dance)	$\frac{5}{8}$	2+3
Ruchenitsa (Dance of the Hands)	$\frac{7}{8}$	2+2+3
Muzhka Ruchenitsa (Men's Dance of the Hands)	$\frac{7}{8}$	3+2+2
Daychovo Horo (Daycho's Dance)	$\frac{9}{8}$	2+2+2+3
Gruncharsko Horo (Potters' Dance)	$\frac{9}{8}$	2+3+2+2
Kopanitsa (Kopanitsa Dance)	$\frac{11}{8}$	2+2+3+2+2
Krivo Horo (Crooked Dance)	$\frac{13}{8}$	2+2+2+3+2+2
Elenino Horo (Elena's Dance)	$\frac{13}{16}$	2+2+2+2+2+3
Buchimish (Buchimish Dance)	$\frac{15}{8}$	2+2+2+2+3+2+2

Table 1. Common Bulgarian dances in asymmetrical meters.

There is no theory explaining the perception of groupings in asymmetrical meters. My observations have led me to the conclusions that accent placement in melodies assists in the perception of groupings of twos and threes along with accompaniment patterns, melodic contour, placement of drop notes, and reoccurring rhythmic or melodic motives.[5]

Mixed Meters

The use of mixed meters is a defining characteristic of Bulgarian folk music. Prominent Bulgarian scholars, such as Stoyan Dzhudzhev, define mixed meters arranged in a regular pattern as "combined metric groups." Mixed meters that do not illustrate a regular pattern are referred to as "heterometric rows" (Dzhudzhev 1970, 222; Litova-Nikolova 1982, 118). This article adopts Dzhudzhev's definitions of mixed meters as this is the terminology shared by all Bulgarian performers including Petar Ralchev.

Hypermeter

This article adopts the approach to hypermeter in asymmetrical meters outlined in *Bulgarian Harmony* and further expands on it. In contrast to Western music and the common Schenkerian definitions of hypermeter, hyperbeats in Bulgarian music can be of different lengths. Hyperbeats within asymmetrical meters do not occur only on a downbeat at the beginning of a measure. Rather, as will be become evident from the discussion of hypermeter level 1, hyperbeats emphasize changes of grouping.

In most asymmetrical meters, adjacent groups of twos merge into hyperbeats while groups of three remain unaltered at hypermeter level. Example 1 illustrates hypermeter formation in the most common Bulgarian asymmetrical meter, $\frac{7}{8}$ (2+2+3), associated with the dance Ruchenitsa. As seen in Example 1, $\frac{7}{8}$ has three beats (2+2+3). At a hypermetric level 1, $\frac{7}{8}$ changes its grouping to 4+3. The two groupings (4+3) become hyperbeats. In moderate tempos,

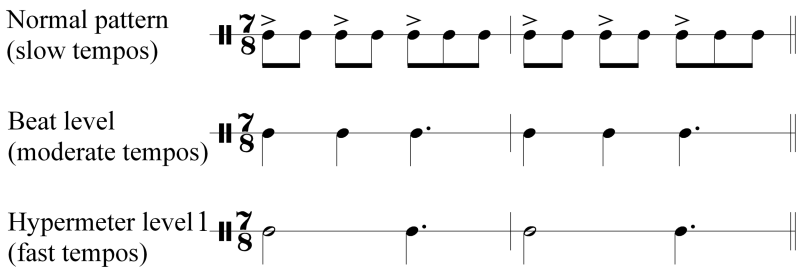
5. Drop notes are downwards leaps in the melody referencing the same lower pitch, scale degree 1 or 5. The placement of drop notes assists listeners with the perception of meter, measure length, and groupings of twos or threes. Drop notes also contribute to the establishment of tonic as scale degrees 1 and 5 outline the tonic triad.

accompanists and drummers emphasize all three beats in a measure. As tempo increases, accompaniment shifts to the hypermeter 1 level. For listeners, the shift to hypermeter presents an interesting perceptual change. While at a beat level groups of twos are perceived as "short" and groups of threes as "long," at a hypermeter level 1, groups of threes are perceived as "short" with a following hyperbeat indicating exactly how "short" they are (Kirilov 2015, 36). Similar to $\frac{7}{8}$, at a hypermeter level 1 the asymmetrical $\frac{15}{8}$ (2+2+2+2+3+2+2) is grouped as 4+4+3+4 and has four hyperbeats.

Meters without successive groups of two do not form a hypermeter level which could account for the proper placement of groups of twos and threes. For example, the asymmetrical $\frac{8}{8}$ (3+2+3) at a hypermeter level has only one hyperbeat per measure. Although theoretically possible and accurate from a Western theoretical perspective, all examples of hypermeter illustrating one hyperbeat per measure have little relevance in the context of asymmetrical meters as they provide no information regarding beat length, change of groupings, and where the precise places of the groups of three are.

The book *Bulgarian Harmony* highlights two additional characteristics of hypermeter explaining the formation of hypermeter level 1 in asymmetrical meters. A group of two following a group of three is always rhythmically emphasized, i.e., it becomes a hyperbeat on hypermeter level 1. This unwritten rule, which is followed by all Bulgarian drummers and accompanists, reinforces the perception of grouping changes. Due to the metric complexity of "Bulgarian Suite," this article goes beyond the findings in the aforementioned book in order to examine and systematize hypermeter formation in all asymmetrical meters currently in operation in Bulgarian music.

Certain types of asymmetrical meters involve groups of two that cannot be combined with adjacent two groups. Analysis of accompaniment patterns illustrates that these groups of two transform into hyperbeats at hypermeter level 1. For example, $\frac{9}{8}$ of the type 2+2+2+3 (Daychovo Horo) transforms into 4+2+3 and contains three hyperbeats of different lengths. So far, hyperbeats may have the duration of 3, 4 (2+2), or 2. The asymmetrical $\frac{9}{8}$ (2+2+2+3), however, exhibits a second, different version of hypermeter that contains a hyperbeat combining a group of two with a group of three. In faster tempos, $\frac{9}{8}$ (2+2+2+3) is often grouped also as 4+5, i.e., the last two beats of the meter (2+2+2+3) group in a hyperbeat with the value



Example 1. Hypermeter level 1 in $\frac{7}{8}$.

of 5. Fast $\frac{9}{8}$ (2+2+2+3), Daychovo Horo, is the only asymmetrical meter in Bulgarian music which includes a hyperbeat with the value of 5.

The above discussion of hypermeter in asymmetrical meters can be summarized in the following list of practical rules for the formation of a hypermetric level 1 with durations shorter than one measure:[6]

- The first beat in each measure always becomes a hyperbeat.
- Every beat of every measure becomes part of a hyperbeat or an entire hyperbeat.
- As seen in Table 2, hyperbeats could have the duration of 2, 3, and 4.
- First hyperbeats in Bulgarian asymmetrical meters never combine with the last beat of the previous measure to form a hyperbeat that would span the downbeat.
- All groups of 3 become hyperbeats at hypermeter 1 level.
- A group of 3 never combines with the beat that precedes it or follows it (except in fast $\frac{9}{8}$).
- Beats following a group of 3 always transform into hyperbeats.
- When a group of 3 is followed by two successive groups of 2, the two groups of 2 always combine to form a hyperbeat with the duration of 4.
- When a group of 3 is followed by a single group of 2, the group of 2 becomes a hyperbeat by itself.
- Adjacent groups of 2 combine into one hyperbeat with the duration of 4.
- Single groups of 2 transform into hyperbeats (fast $\frac{9}{8}$ [2+2+2+3] is the only exception).[7]
- Hyperbeats have the duration of 2, 3, 4, and only in fast $\frac{9}{8}$ (2+2+2+3), the duration of 5.
- Not all asymmetrical meters have hypermeter level 1 illustrating grouping change, e.g., $\frac{8}{8}$ (3+2+3) and $\frac{5}{8}$ (2+3).

Table 2 illustrates hypermeter level 1 as found in the most commonly used Bulgarian asymmetrical meters associated with dances.

Level 2 of hypermeter in asymmetrical meters, as used in Bulgaria, contains one hyperbeat per measure while level 3 involves one hyperbeat every two measures. It is noteworthy that at these higher levels, the observed hypermeter is regular. Despite the regularity, however, hypermeter levels 2 and 3 seem to "miss" all elements taking place at the lower levels that fascinate Bulgarian musicians, dancers, and audiences. I speculate that higher levels of hypermeter (levels 2, 3, and beyond) are utilized only by the most experienced performers, such as Papazov and Ralchev, as Bulgarian melodies, rhythmic accompaniment,

6. Although the hypermeter formation rules outlined in this article seem related to Lerdahl and Jackendoff's (1983) rule-based system, the rules above are derived from musical practice and analysis of accompaniment and drumming patterns.
7. This rule applies when a group of 2 does not have an adjacent group of 2 to combine with and form a hyperbeat with the value of 4.

Dance Name	Meter	Grouping	Hypermeter
Paydushko Horo	$\frac{5}{8}$	2+3	N/A
Ruchenitsa	$\frac{7}{8}$	2+2+3	4+3
Muzhka Ruchenitsa	$\frac{7}{8}$	3+2+2	3+4
Daychovo Horo	$\frac{9}{8}$	2+2+2+3	4+2+3 and 4+5
Gruncharsko Horo	$\frac{9}{8}$	2+3+2+2	2+3+4
Kopanitsa	$\frac{11}{8}$	2+2+3+2+2	4+3+4
Krivo Horo	$\frac{13}{8}$	2+2+2+3+2+2	4+2+3+4
Elenino Horo	$\frac{13}{16}$	2+2+2+2+2+3	4+4+2+3
Buchimish	$\frac{15}{8}$	2+2+2+2+3+2+2	4+4+3+4

Table 2. Hypermeter level 1 in asymmetrical meters.

and dance steps operate only at pulse level, beat level, and hypermeter level 1, as illustrated in Table 2.

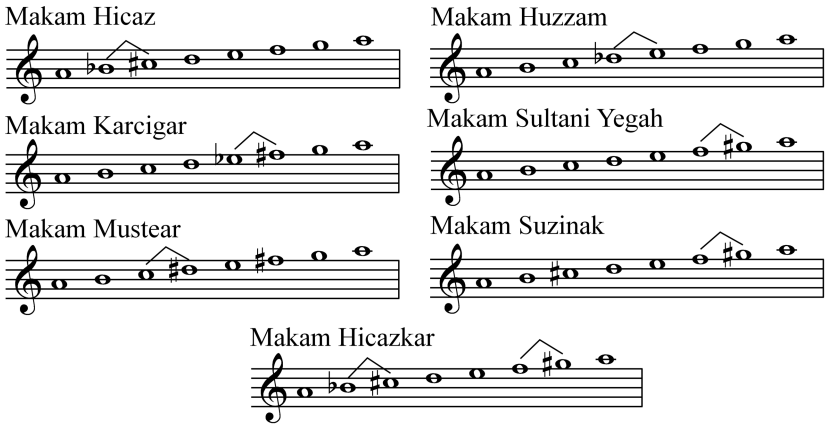
My choices of hyperbeats for the analysis of "Bulgarian Suite" are based on the rules outlined above, Ralchev's accompaniment patterns, standard drumming patterns described in the book *Bulgarian Harmony*, and my own experience with Bulgarian meters, rhythms, and hypermeter as the guitar player in Ivo Papazov's band.[8]

Scales

Bulgaria is a country on the crossroad between East and West, a geographic location where three scalar systems collided: the microtonal makam (mode) system coming from the southeast, the Greek diatonic modes found in Eastern Orthodox chants coming from the south, and the Western major and minor scalar system coming from the northwest. The amalgamation of these three systems gave birth to new hybrid scales, polymodes,[9] and non-microtonal makams mapped over equal temperament.[10]

Bulgarian makams are non-microtonal, hybrid scales that have retained some of the modal characteristics of the Middle Eastern microtonal makams. This article utilizes the Bulgarian makam classification system as established by Bulgarian scholarship[11] and

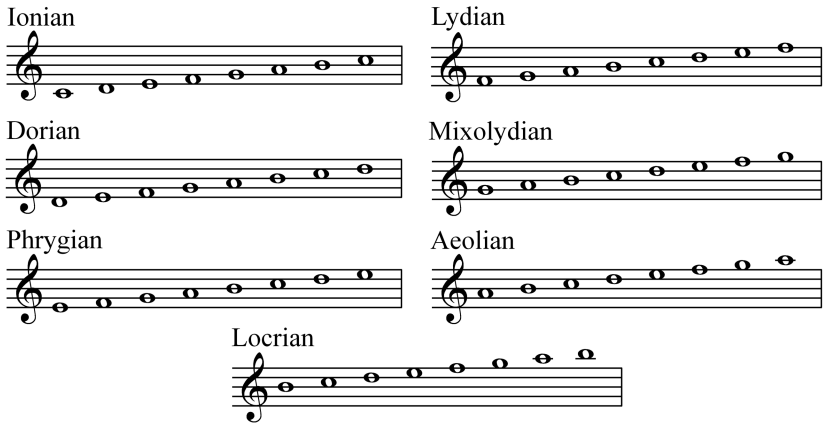
8. I was the guitar player in Ivo Papazov's band for his US national tours in 2003 and 2005. Each tour included more than 25 concerts in large concert halls and residencies at major universities.
9. Polymodes in Bulgarian music combine two or more diatonic modes which interchange in ascending and descending motions as outlined in Kirilov (2015, 34). The polymode terminology was first suggested by Bartók (1976, 370).
10. This article follows the makam classification system established by Dzhudzhev (1970) and Litova-Nikolova (1982). In terms of chordal vocabularies associated with Bulgarian non-microtonal makams, this article adopts the chord derivations principles outlined in *Bulgarian Harmony*, the most recent comprehensive analytical study of the scales found in Bulgarian folk music.
11. A detailed side-by-side comparison between the Turkish (microtonal) and Bulgarian (non-microtonal) makams reveals naming errors reminiscent of Boethius's misinterpretation of the Greek mode names.



Example 2. Non-microtonal makams in Bulgarian folk music. The Λ symbols in this diagram mark intervals of an augmented second.

illustrated in Example 2. As discussed in the book *Bulgarian Harmony*, certain Bulgarian non-microtonal makams exhibit variable scale degrees which interchange in ascending and descending motions. I hypothesize that by employing variable scale degrees, Bulgarian musicians "keep searching" for the missing microtones in the Bulgarian makams which cannot be found in equal temperament.

All diatonic modes, including Locrian, are present in the Bulgarian musical traditions.[12] Contemporary Bulgarian scholarship follows the classification system of diatonic modes after Glarean (Example 3).[13]

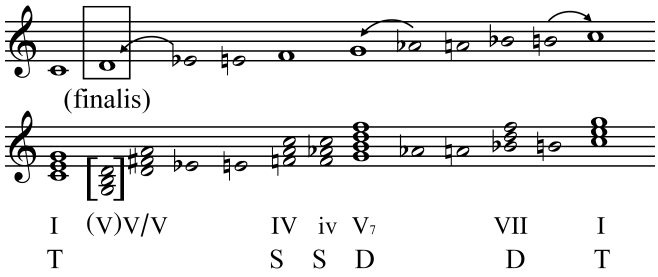


Example 3. Diatonic modes in Bulgarian music.

12. As stated in multiple Bulgarian and Western music theory fundamentals textbooks, Locrian is a rare mode which has been excluded from music practice. However, in the summer of 2015, I recorded a song in Locrian performed by a singing group at a folk festival in the town of Belogradchik, Northwestern Bulgaria.
13. Studies of Bulgarian folk music prior to the 1970s utilize the Greek mode classification system.

Polymodality is another essential characteristic of Bulgarian music. "Bulgarian Suite" features a number of polymodes that combine diatonic modes and makams. The most commonly used polymodes combine two diatonic modes which alternate in ascending and descending motion. In more complex polymodes, a third mode or a partial non-microtonal makam may be introduced in the upper tetrachord.[14]

In the last sections of "Bulgarian Suite," Ralchev utilizes scales which do not have scale degree 1 as the finalis, such as the Shope major scale illustrated in Example 4. Shope major is a scale associated with the folk music traditions of the Shope region in Western Bulgaria around the Bulgarian capital of Sofia (Map 1). Melodies in Shope major and Shope major-based polymodes end on scale degree 2, the fifth of the dominant triad, which implies V as the final harmonic vertical, constructed downwards.[15] The unusual finalis of these modes can be traced back to the melody-and-drone traditional polyphony, the bagpipe drones, and the recitation tones in Eastern Orthodox chants.[16]



Example 4. Shope major scale.

Map 1. The Shope region in western Bulgaria.

14. For more information on Bulgarian polymodes, refer to Kirilov (2015).
15. For more information on Shope major and Shope-major-based polymodes, refer to Kirilov (2015).
16. For more information on traditional Bulgarian polyphony and different drone types, refer to Karastoyanov (1950), Kaufman (1958a, 1958b, 1968), Kaufman and Todorov (1967), Rice (1977) and Kirilov (2015).

Harmony

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Bulgarian musicians began to harmonize folk tunes and songs by adapting triads by ear and attempting to incorporate Western tonal harmony within local oral traditions. Gradually this process led to the formation of a unique harmonic system. Bulgarian bagpipes played a very interesting role in the formation of this harmonic system. There is a popular Bulgarian saying stating that: "[t]here cannot be a Bulgarian wedding without a *gaida* (bagpipe)." The presence of the steady bagpipe drones at weddings forced several generations of accompanists to choose primarily chords which could work alongside steady drones.[17] This particular historical role of bagpipe drones explains the Bulgarian preferences for plagal cadences in most minor modes/polymodes and the weak dominant function observed in harmonized repertoire. My analysis of "Bulgarian Suite" pays close attention to Ralchev's chord progressions, which depart from the established harmonic models for wedding music described in the book *Bulgarian Harmony*.

Structure of Dance Pieces

The primary building block of melodic organization in Bulgarian folk music is the *kolyano* (lit. "knee" or "generation"). Buchanan defines kolyano in the following way: "In nonmusical contexts, kolyano denotes several things: (1) the knee, (2) lineage or parentage, (3) family or genus, and (4) a plant's node" (2006, 127). From a Western theoretical perspective, kolyano is a periodic structure with antecedent and consequent phrases.[18] The phrasing of kolyanos is predominately symmetrical, 4+4 or 8+8 measures. Kolyanos are often motivically related. According to Buchanan:

> The motivic substance of a horo's [instrumental danceable piece] first kolyano was developed in the second, that of the second in the third, and so forth, such that the piece grew organically. In this respect every kolyano in a horo functioned like a knee joint; it was the hinge or pivot connecting preceding phrases with those that followed, the node in a musical line of descent that could be traced from the beginning of a piece to its conclusion. (2006, 128)

As described by Buchanan, ideas (motives) transfer from one kolyano to the next. As a result, a kolyano-based dance tune may extend endlessly as a plant growing from nodes. The

17. During the first half of the twentieth century, the main instruments capable of providing chordal accompaniment in Bulgarian music were the accordion and the Bulgarian *tambura* (a traditional lute with varying number of strings). In the 1950s, the tambura tuning became standardized to E-B-G-D, which is identical to the top four strings of a guitar. After the standardization of the tambura tuning, tamburas became the main accompaniment instruments in village-style Bulgarian music. In the second half of the twentieth century, bass, guitar, and keyboards also became instruments providing harmonic accompaniment. In the 1970s, electric guitars became the preferred accompaniment instruments in wedding bands. For more information, refer to Kirilov (2015).

18. Bulgarian musicians use the terms kolyano and number interchangeably. When referring to notation, they prefer the term number as kolyanos in scores are labeled with Arabic numbers. When there is no notation present, Bulgarian musicians use verbal phrases, such as "this kolyano" or "next kolyano." Following the practice of the Bulgarian musicians, I will use the term number while referring to my transcription of "Bulgarian Suite."

creation of long kolyano chains is the oldest style of improvising observed in Bulgarian music.

The wedding-style dance repertoire highlights a structure which differs from the kolyano chains. Dance tunes begin with sets of precomposed kolyanos referred to as *tema* (theme) or a medley of temas. The tema is followed by improvisations in the same meter in which musicians take turns for improvised solos.[19] In dances which are particularly popular, such as *Pravo Horo* (Straight Dance) in $\frac{6}{8}$ or Ruchenitsa in the asymmetrical $\frac{7}{8}$ (2+2+3), musicians may introduce a new tema or a set of songs in the middle of a long performance. Wedding musicians end their dance tunes with a short tema performed tutti or a single kolyano based on short phrasing.

From a broad perspective, Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite" follows the basic structural models outlined above. Kolyano chains become evident in several of the sections of the suite. The overall framework of the suite also fits the basic structure of wedding-style dance tunes: the suite starts with precomposed melodies (essentially, an expanded tema encompassing several kolyanos) followed by improvisations and new temas at the end of the piece.

BULGARIAN WEDDING MUSIC

Bulgarian wedding music stems from the village music traditions. Wedding music gradually developed its distinct features, such as the use of Western instruments (clarinet, saxophone, violin, drum set, accordion, trumpet, keyboard, and electric guitars), emphasis on improvisation, and influences from Western music styles. The wedding style evolved at actual wedding celebrations where musicians had the freedom to experiment and innovate.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Bulgarian weddings were festive events involving hundreds of guests. Weddings lasted up to three days and included processions, indoor activities, and dance events in the village or town squares (Kirilov 2003, 78). In the mid-1980s, wedding bands first appeared on Bulgarian national TV, began performing in concert halls, and competed in state-regulated wedding band competitions called *nadsvirvaniya*.[20] The recontextualization of wedding music from the actual weddings to the concert stage gradually formed a new style of wedding music, one which was free of the formulas and structures found in wedding dance repertoire.

Concert Wedding Repertoire

Stylistically, wedding concert music places a heavy emphasis on mixed meters (combined metric groups and heterometric rows), innovative tonal plans and progressions, non-danceable fast tempos, improvisations within larger metric frameworks, and expansions

19. Wedding-style improvisations do not have the symmetrical structures of kolyanos and do not follow the idea generating principles observed in the kolyano chain improvisations in village style.
20. For more information on wedding music, the state-regulated competitions, and the tensions between the socialist state and the wedding musicians, refer to Rice (1994, 1996), Silverman (2012), and Buchanan (1996, 2006).

of traditional kolyano structures. Wedding concert music also embraced versatile source material (Indian music, music of countries neighboring Bulgaria, Russian music, Arabic/ Middle Eastern music, and Western classical music) and incorporated Western jazz and rock elements.

Petar Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite" illustrates some of the major features of the Bulgarian concert wedding style and follows the models established by Papazov's Trakiya concert pieces analyzed in the book *Bulgarian Harmony*. I find it important to explain the characteristics of the wedding concert pieces which served as models for Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite."

Wedding-Style Otkrivane (Opening) Pieces

The first examples of wedding concert repertoire were non-danceable pieces performed at the beginning of weddings which had the role of showcasing the skills of all band members as composers, arrangers, and improvisers. These showcase pieces are referred to by Bulgarian wedding musicians as otkrivanes. Otkrivanes have the following structure: they start with precomposed non-danceable sections featuring mixed meters in incredibly fast tempos, setting the stage for even faster solo improvisations. After the virtuosic fast solos, otkrivanes suddenly slow down to a danceable tempo of a Pravo Horo in $\frac{6}{8}$ while the wedding guests begin forming a long dance line.

A concert performance of the same piece would maintain the non-danceable fast tempos and the momentum of high intensity until the very end of the piece. Typically, such concert performances conclude with a fast kolyano played tutti or with a well-rehearsed ending often featuring extended tertian chords.

Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite" Compared to the Models Established by Papazov's Trakiya Band

"Bulgarian Suite" resembles many of the features observed in Papazov's "First Otkrivane" (First Opening Piece) analyzed in *Bulgarian Harmony*. I speculate that large portions of "First Otkrivane" could have been composed by Ralchev himself, as he was a member of Trakiya at the time "First Otkrivane" was regularly performed as the opening piece at weddings.

According to Neshko Neshev, the accordion player who succeeded Ralchev as a member of Papazov's Trakiya band, it was Neshev, not Papazov, who composed most of Trakiya's concert repertoire performed on stages in the 1990s and the 2000s. Moreover, in our conversations Neshev stated that Papazov did not compose any of the Trakiya pieces. However, Neshev acknowledged Papazov's masterful arranging skills, and specifically his sense of reorganizing pieces in ways which will be most impressive for Trakiya's audience.[21] If

21. In this particular context, arranging means the organizing of melodies in a piece rather than creating harmonizations.

Neshev's claims are accurate, I hypothesize that Trakiya's "First Otkrivane" was composed by Ralchev and arranged by Papazov.

The resemblance between Papazov's "First Otkrivane" and "Bulgarian Suite" is too obvious to be easily disregarded.[22] The opening sections of both pieces elaborate on the concept of mixed meters in fast tempos. However, "Bulgarian Suite" far surpasses "First Otkrivane" in terms of rhythmic and metric complexity by combining complex asymmetrical meters such as $\frac{9}{8}+\frac{13}{8}$, $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{11}{8}$, and $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{15}{8}$. From my perspective as a performer of Bulgarian wedding music, I consider such intensified metric successions to be musical puzzles composed by Ralchev for a selected knowledgeable audience of performers rather than inexperienced listeners.

After the opening sections exploring mixed meters and fast improvisations, all wedding concert pieces subordinate to only one law, "faster." In "Bulgarian Suite," however, Ralchev abandons this model by creating a piece illustrating dances in different meters, thematic contrasts, tempo changes, dynamic contrasts, and even a free-rhythm melody inserted in the middle of the suite.

Analytical Methods

Western scholarship defines meter as regularly occurring, evenly spaced pulses observed at beat, division, and subdivision, as well as hypermeter levels. In asymmetrical meters, however, there is irregularity observed at two levels: at the beat level (e.g., $\frac{7}{8}$ [3+2+2]), and at hypermeter level 1 (e.g., $\frac{7}{8}$ [3+4]). Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983, 97) were among the first Western scholars to note that the common Western definition of meter is challenged by the asymmetric meters found in Eastern Europe. Therefore any Western analytical tools adapted for analysis of meter and rhythms in Bulgarian music need to be properly recalibrated in order to fit the irregularities in asymmetrical meters observed at beat and hypermeter 1 levels.

As mentioned in the introduction, this article follows the analytical approach to Bulgarian wedding-style concert repertoire established by the book *Bulgarian Harmony*. In addition to the standard Western analytical methods of Roman numerals and formal analysis, this article adapts two additional analytical methods.[23] I incorporate the hierarchical approach to meter introduced by Lerdahl and Jackendoff in the book *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1983) and adapt it to asymmetrical and mixed meters. In addition, I found Harald Krebs's theory of metrical dissonance particularly useful to address the grouping dissonances observed in Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite." According to Krebs (1999, 31), the interaction of layers of motion creates two basic types of dissonance (non-alignment): grouping dissonance and displacement dissonance. Both types of dissonance become evident in my analysis of

22. For a complete analysis of "First Otkrivane," refer to Kirilov (2015).
23. The adaptation of these analytical methods was suggested by Steve Larson at the University of Oregon, the place where I first began to transcribe and analyze the opening sections of Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite."

"Bulgarian Suite." This article also aims to adapt Krebs's theory to the context of asymmetrical meters in order to accommodate interpretive layers with unequal beats.

In my attempt to explain Ralchev's compositional and improvisational technique of creating rhythmic dissonances, I have taken the liberty in several of my analytical examples to regroup the notes. According to Krebs, Hugo Riemann also suggests "renotation when it clarifies metrical conflicts that are likely to remain undiscovered by performers" (1999, 10). In my view, the renotation (a regrouping of twos and threes) could provide a better illustration of Ralchev's thinking than the marking of perceived grouping dissonances.

The Process of Transcribing "Bulgarian Suite"

The following analysis refers to an extensive transcription of "Bulgarian Suite" that is provided as an appendix to this article.[24] My transcription of "Bulgarian Suite" is informed by the experience I have gained performing Bulgarian folk music for over thirty years. In order to assure the accurateness of my transcription, I employed a "reverse engineering" approach: if my own performance from the transcription matched the source recording in terms of accent placement and choice of meters, then I considered my transcription to be accurate.

I find it important to address some of the most problematic aspects of the process of transcribing "Bulgarian Suite," namely the choice of meters, bar line placement, and the grouping in asymmetrical meters in the context of metrical dissonances. Similarly to Western music, in Bulgarian music hyperbeats on beat one always carry more emphasis if compared to the other hyperbeats in a given measure. For example, a transcription of $\frac{4}{8}$ (2+2) + $\frac{7}{8}$ (3+2+2) will be performed slightly differently than $\frac{11}{8}$ (2+2+3+2+2), even though the sum of eighth notes and groupings are identical. If a transcriber chooses the combined metric group $\frac{4}{8}$ (2+2) + $\frac{7}{8}$ (3+2+2), the hyperbeats at the beginning of each measure will be equally emphasized. In a single measure of $\frac{11}{8}$, there will be only one hyperbeat with a stronger emphasis, the one found immediately after the bar line.

As mentioned in the section discussing the perception of groupings in asymmetrical meters, drop notes assist in the perception of groupings of twos and threes. Ralchev was the first performer from the Bulgarian wedding music tradition to begin experimenting with the placement of drop notes, thereby making the perception of meters more difficult from a listener's perspective. Ralchev's innovations probably stemmed from experimentations with meter superimposition, such as $\frac{6}{8}$ over $\frac{7}{8}$, or from wedding-style improvisations within large megameasure structures.[25] These two metric manipulations, which Ralchev mastered, raise

24. The recording of Ralchev's suite contains a slow melody which I have left out of the transcription. This is due to the fact that Western notation cannot accurately represent the pulse of Bulgarian slow melodies on paper. Despite the fact that the structure and pulse of Bulgarian slow melodies are very interesting and understudied topics, I have intentionally left this section of the suite out of the transcription as it has little relevance to the primary focus of this article.

25. Bulgarian wedding musicians experiment with larger metric structures or megameasures. A measure of $\frac{7}{8}$ can expand to $\frac{14}{8}$ and to an even larger structure encompassing 28 eighth notes. The resulting large megameasure

the logical question, If the drop notes are not where they are supposed to be, how could a transcriber decide what the actual meters are? The answer to this question is found in the accompaniment structure, which typically supplies a steady rhythm at beat or hyperbeat levels while groupings (along with the drop notes) may be altered or displaced in the melody. The disagreement between accompaniment and groupings in melody becomes the primary source of metrical dissonances observed in Bulgarian wedding music repertoire and Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite."

In "Bulgarian Suite," Ralchev's ideas develop organically and gradually over time. Often, Ralchev's metric riddles become clarified in successive kolyanos of the piece. These observations, which I made during the actual transcription process, suggested a linear analysis as the most suitable approach to analyzing this piece.

"Bulgarian Suite": Composition, Improvised Piece, or "Repackaging" of Preexisting Repertoire

For the LP *Petar Ralchev – Accordion* (1988), released by Balkanton (the Bulgarian state record company during the socialist period, 1944–1989), Ralchev recorded the piece "Shopska Syuita" (Shope Suite).[26] "Shopska Syuita" contains sections very similar to the last sections of "Bulgarian Suite," which are also based on folk motives from the Shope region. I hypothesize that the opening sections of Bulgarian Suite were initially composed by Ralchev as an otkrivane piece. This otkrivane was later expanded to a concert suite through the incorporation of improvised and contrasting sections in the middle and the addition of precomposed sections from "Shopska Syuita" as heard on the Balkanton LP recording.

As a member of Papazov's band for two US national tours, I was an eyewitness to the process of "repackaging" an old repertoire by the masters of wedding music in order to create "new" arrangements. This "repackaging" took place before concerts or even on the concert stage without any prior discussion.

As seen from a different recording of "Bulgarian Suite," released on the CD *Petar Ralchev – Bulgaria* (2002), "Bulgarian Suite" also appears to have undergone a similar "repackaging" process. The version of "Bulgarian Suite" heard on the CD appears under a different title, "Ot Nyakade iz Trakiya" (From Somewhere in Thrace), and has a completely different structure. On the CD recording, the sections similar to "Shopska Syuita" have been removed and replaced by improvisations in $\frac{11}{8}$, followed by a Pravo Horo and wedding-style improvisations in $\frac{6}{8}$.[27] Therefore, I suggest that the live recording of "Bulgarian Suite" that served as the basis

creates space for the reorganizing of groupings which break away from the basic grouping pattern 2+2+3. This process can be also perceived as "leaving the primary meter, playing in a different meter for a while, and returning to the main meter just before the next hyperbeat," as described by Kirilov (2015, 41).

26. The recording of "Shopska Syuita" is available on YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dT45seT_2U

27. The recording of "Ot Nyakade iz Trakiya" is available on YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWNxX5Lrxbs

for my transcription should be perceived as a unique snapshot in time of a piece assembled by Ralchev for a particular stage performance.

"Bulgarian Suite": A Musical Journey

"Bulgarian Suite" illustrates a musical journey which travels from East to West. The journey originates in Thrace (Map 2), the region where wedding music flourished, and gradually progresses west towards Western Bulgaria and the Shope region (see Map 1 above), which is easily defined by its limited melodic and harmonic vocabulary but faster tempos.

Stylistically, it is possible to trace the journey through the musical elements utilized by Ralchev. Compositions featuring mixed meters were created primarily by wedding musicians from Thrace who followed the model of Papazov's otkrivanes. The ornamentation observed in Ralchev's melody in the opening sections of the "Bulgarian Suite" is also typical for the wedding music from Thrace. Another clue can be traced in Ralchev's harmony. As discussed in the book *Bulgarian Harmony*, harmonizations of Thracian music illustrate final triads built upwards from the finalis. This approach contrasts the later sections of "Bulgarian Suite" where the final chordal verticals are constructed downwards implying final half cadences and Shope major (see Example 4 above).

In "Bulgarian Suite," Ralchev has also paid significant attention to detail in the ornamentation of the last sections of the suite by ornamenting all his melodies in Shope style.[28] Bulgarian wedding musicians tend to embellish melodies from all regions of Bulgaria with Thracian, wedding style ornamentation. Since the 1980s, this fact has become the source for major criticisms of wedding music by Bulgarian scholars and village-style performers. In "Bulgarian Suite," Ralchev showcases his excellent knowledge of regional ornamentation styles and his ability to keep such ornamentation styles distinctly separate within the performance of a single piece.

Map 2. The Region of Thrace.

28. For more information on ornamentation, refer to Kirilov (2015).

Ralchev's primary compositional idea in "Bulgarian Suite" is to establish balanced asymmetry at the beginning of the suite and gradually progress towards more traditional and symmetrical structures.[29] Due to the improvisatory nature of Bulgarian wedding music, "Bulgarian Suite" should not be considered a fixed composition. Rather, as seen from other recordings of the same piece, Ralchev uses the suite structure as a flexible framework that is varied to a great extent in different performances. The term "suite" in Bulgarian music does not imply the structure of standard Western suites. Rather, suite is used in its broad meaning as a combination of contrasting dances.

"Bulgarian Suite" Structure

The first public performance of "Bulgarian Suite" in North America was in 1991 at the International Accordion Festival of Montmagny in Montreal, Canada. The present analysis is based on a transcription of this performance as recorded by Canadian radio stations.[30]

"Bulgarian Suite" in its 1991 performance consists of six major sections, outlined in Table 3. The first section elaborates on the concept of mixed asymmetrical meters. Section 2 combines precomposed melodies and improvisations in duple meter. Section 3 returns to the idea of mixed asymmetrical meters and further expands it by combining complex asymmetrical meters, such as $\frac{11}{8}$ (2+2+3+2+2), $\frac{13}{8}$ (2+2+2+3+2+2), and $\frac{15}{8}$ (2+2+2+2+3+2+2). The fourth section, in $\frac{7}{8}$ (3+2+2), is predominantly improvisatory and establishes a plateau of metric and structural stability. Stylistically, Section 4 moves away from the previous material by building on folk motives from the Shope region. The fifth section is also separated stylistically, in that it includes an improvised slow melody in Shope style (based on folk motives from the region of Sofia) followed by two Shope dances, *Graovsko Horo* (Graovo Dance) and *Sitno Shopsko* (Fast Shope Dance), that progress toward intensification of melodic motion. The last, sixth section of "Bulgarian Suite" has the function of recapitulation and restates a shortened version of the beginning of the piece.

The sections of "Bulgarian Suite" differ by size and number of kolyanos. Section 1, which is the most metrically intricate, is the longest. Section 3 is very similar to section one in terms of ideas and compositional techniques. Section 4 and Section 5 are built on traditional symmetrical kolyano structures. I limit more detailed analysis to the first three sections.

29. As will become evident from the analysis of the suite, the opening sections of the piece explore ideas of asymmetry in terms of meters, groupings, and phrase lengths. Despite the asymmetry being a main compositional goal, Ralchev intentionally balances asymmetrical structures with some regularity on phrase or hypermeter levels. The term balanced asymmetry was suggested by Steve Larson.
30. A transcription is included in Appendix A.

Section	Subsection	Numbers[31]	Measures	Time
Section 1		1–16	1–181	
	A	1–5	1–82	0:00
	B	6–10	83–129	0:52
	C	11–16	130–181	1:41
Section 2		17–24	182–327	
	A	17–21	182–283	2:49
	B	22–24	284–327 (Short improvisation and repetition of #16 as #24)	4:08
Section 3		25–31	329–380	
	A	25–31	329–380	4:40
Section 4		32–38	381–500	5:43
	Alternation between improvised and precomposed/ memorized phrases			
Section 5		39–51	502–704	
	A	A slow melody based on motives from the Shope region (not transcribed)		
	B	39–42	502–566	7:49
	C	43–51	567–684	8:36
Section 6		52–54	685–720	
	A	52–54	685–720	9:41

Table 3. Structure of "Bulgarian Suite."

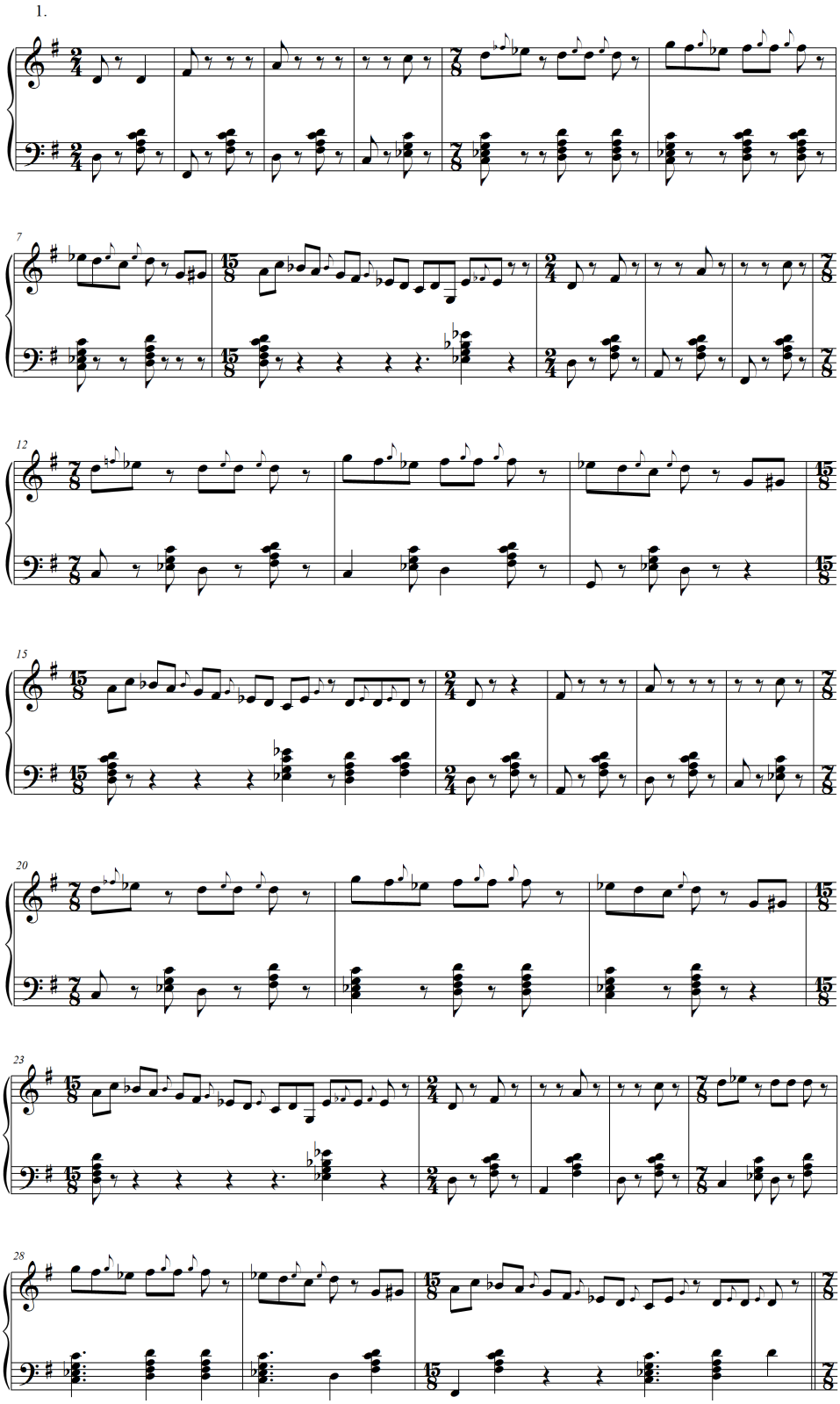
Analysis of Section 1

The first section of "Bulgarian Suite" (#1–16) elaborates on the idea of juxtaposing asymmetrical structures. From a structural point of view, section one has three subsections, **A** (#1–5), **B** (#6–10), and **C** (#11–16), which are differentiated by tempo changes, insertion of new musical ideas, and metric contrasts. Ralchev gives preference to parenthetical insertions[32] and elision as a transitional technique between subsections, i.e., he avoids concluding a subsection with a final cadence, which would satisfy the listener's expectations, transitioning instead into a new subsection through the introduction of new melodic ideas combined with a change of tempo. Analysis of each number of the first section reveals a predominance of antecedent–consequent phrasing. Despite phrasing being asymmetrical in most cases, at a higher level, there is symmetry, established by melodic contour and motivic repetition.

Section 1, Subsection A

Prior to examining in detail the subtlety and metric complexity of the opening number of Subsection **A**, I will provide a broad overview of the musical elements in #1. Example 5 illustrates Section 1, **A**, #1, mm. 1–30.

31. The terms number and kolyano will be used interchangeably throughout the analysis of "Bulgarian Suite."
32. Parenthetical insertions delay closure by extending phrases and postponing cadences. For more information about parenthetical insertions, refer to Beach (2012).



Example 5. Section I, subsection **A**, #1, mm. 1–30.

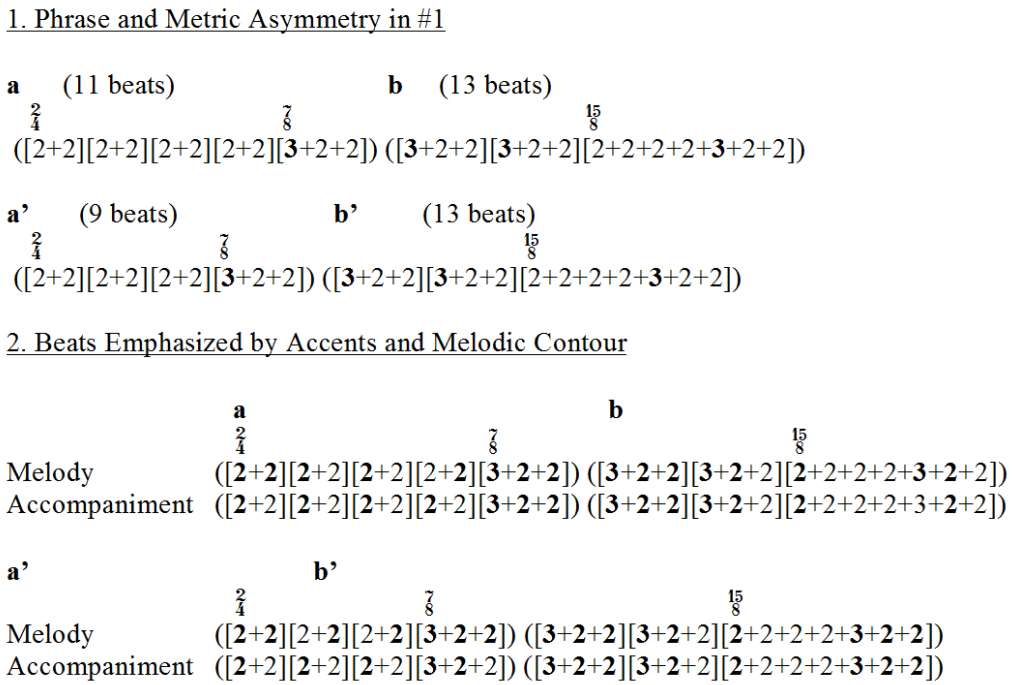
The opening kolyano of "Bulgarian Suite" is performed at an incredibly fast tempo used by the player to showcase his virtuosity. The basic texture observed in #1 and throughout the suite is melody accompanied by alternating bass notes and chords. Number 1 has the structure of a parallel period followed by a varied repetition of the same period as phrases 3 and 4 (mm. 16–30). Varied repetitions become evident throughout the suite. In most cases, varied repetitions have no structurally significant changes.[33] However, in order to create an accurate transcription, I have transcribed all varied repetitions in detail.

The meters chosen by Ralchev for #1 of "Bulgarian Suite" are $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{7}{8}$ (3+2+2), and $\frac{15}{8}$ (2+2+2+2+3+2+2) combined in a heterometric row. In terms of rhythm, in the measures in duple meter Ralchev alternates bass note and chord in the left hand with an ascending arpeggio in the melody. The $\frac{7}{8}$ and $\frac{15}{8}$ measures feature melodies that move in even pulses. In terms of mode, #1 is in makam Hicaz from D (D-E♭-F♯-G-A-B♭-C-D). As seen in the example, the Hicaz melody, which extends to a two-octave range, has been highly embellished regardless of the fast tempo.[34]

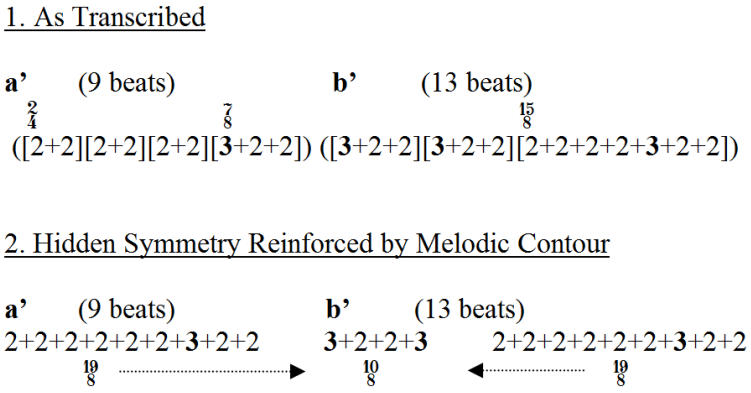
At the beginning of the piece (#1), the listener is confronted by register transfers, uneven phrasing, and a multidimensional metric and rhythmic asymmetry, as illustrated in Example 6. The asymmetry in #1 (mm. 1–15), although balanced to a certain extent (24 beats for **a** and **b** and 22 beats for **a'** and **b'**), combined with an extremely fast performance tempo leave little opportunity for even the most experienced listeners of wedding concert music to feel the precise pulse, define the meters, or predict phrase lengths. Regardless, the phrases, although asymmetrical, are still perceived as antecedent–consequent due to melodic contour. A more detailed view reveals a hidden symmetry within the asymmetrically balanced **a'** and **b'** (illustrated in Example 7) which contributes to the perception of **a'** and **b'** as more symmetrical compared to **ab**.

What is remarkable about Ralchev's compositional style is that he does not assemble random symmetrical and asymmetrical meters. Rather, he guides his listeners by repeating the same meter for several measures, i.e., Ralchev builds up listener's expectations and plays with them. In #1 (see Example 5 above), Ralchev establishes a duple meter (mm. 1–4), followed by $\frac{7}{8}$ (mm. 5–7) grouped as 3+2+2. Measures 5 to 7 comprise an area of metric stability where chords and melodic contour assist the listener's understanding of the pulsation of $\frac{7}{8}$. As soon as the pulse of 7 is established, a long asymmetrical meter $\frac{15}{8}$ (grouped as 2+2+2+2+3+2+2) interrupts the pulse perception of $\frac{7}{8}$. I believe that, here, Ralchev is intentionally playing with

33. Typically, Ralchev changes the rhythm of his accompaniment or slightly alters his chord progressions by inverting triads or substituting chords belonging to the same functional category.
34. The primary ornaments in Bulgarian folk music are mordents. Upper mordents involve upper neighbor notes. Lower mordents (referred to by Bulgarian musicians as crossed or slashed mordents) involve lower neighbors. Both mordent types occur between repeated notes of the same pitch. Auxiliary notes inserted between notes of different pitch are classified as grace notes. Ralchev's ornamentation is provided in the first sections of the transcription only. Repeated notes in the later sections of the suite suggest the places where Ralchev applies mordents. For more information on ornamentation in Bulgarian folk music, refer to Motsev (1961) and Kirilov (2015).



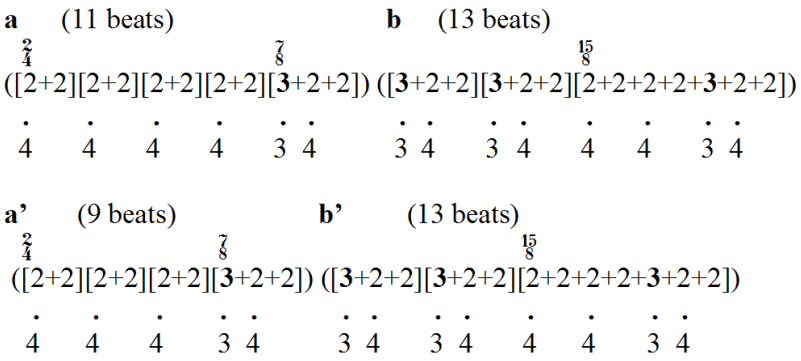
Example 6. Rhythmic and melodic structure in #1, mm. 1–15.



Example 7. Hidden symmetry in #1, mm. 1–15.

the listener's expectations. Moreover, the transcription suggests a dual interpretation of the $\frac{15}{8}$ measure. On one hand, taken by inertia (established rhythmic perception of $\frac{7}{8}$ in mm. 7–9), a listener can perceive the $\frac{15}{8}$ as two measures of $\frac{7}{8}$ plus one added eighth note. On the other hand, $\frac{15}{8}$ can be perceived as a new meter, which is hard to define in **b**, since the group of three is not emphasized by harmony and easier to define at the end of **b'** where harmony underlines the groupings. The ending of **b** and **b'**, a measure in $\frac{15}{8}$, becomes a tool incorporated by Ralchev to obscure the perception of rhythm, used as a preferred ending for numbers which involve combined metric groups or heterometric rows.

Example 8 illustrates hypermeter level 1 in #1. As previously stated, at the hypermetrical

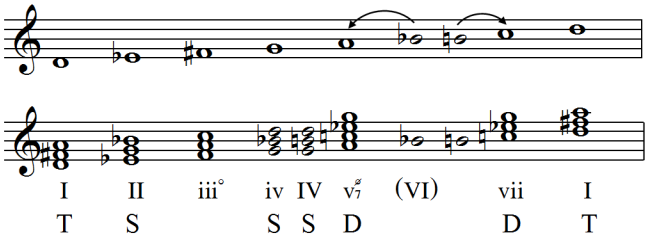


Example 8. Hypermeter level 1 in #1, mm. 1–15.

level 1, the hyperbeat after a group of three eighth notes is always emphasized in order to assist the listener with the perception of a grouping change, from a group of three eighth notes to groups of two. In the context of mixed meters and heterometric rows, hyperbeats follow the hypermeter structure of the individual meters comprising the row.

In order to underline the hypermeter, Ralchev places his bass notes on the hyperbeats. In the measures illustrating block chord accompaniment, Ralchev uses block chords on each beat (mm. 5–7), assisting his listeners in perceiving the meter change.

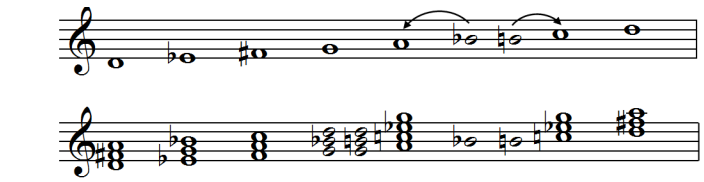
Example 9 illustrates the chordal vocabulary in makam Hicaz and the typical cadences for this non-microtonal makam.[35] From a jazz studies perspective, Hicaz may be classified as the "fifth mode harmonic minor." From a Western music theory perspective, Hicaz can be also perceived as a permanent dominant pedal in harmonic minor starting on the 5th scale degree. Example 10 compares Hicaz to harmonic minor.



Preferred cadences:	vii-I, $v_7^{\sharp}$-I
Preferred tonicization:	vii and iv (IV)
Standard progressions:	I-iv-vii-I
Finalis:	$\hat{1}$ or $\hat{3}$

Example 9. Harmonic vocabulary in non-microtonal makam Hicaz.

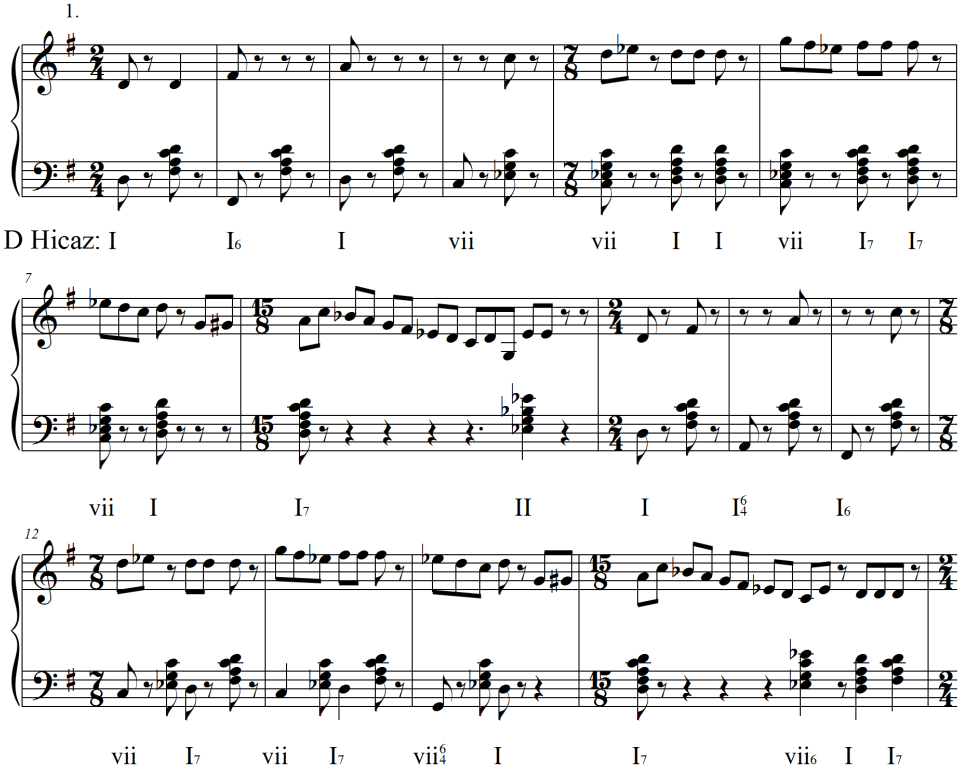
35. In Example 10, T, S, and D illustrate whether a chord functions as a Tonic, Subdominant, or Dominant. For more information about chord derivations, chordal vocabularies, and harmonic functions in Bulgarian music, refer to Kirilov (2015).



	Hicaz	Harm. Minor
Preferred cadences:	vii-I, v♯7-I	iv-V, ii♯7-V
Preferred tonicization:	vii and iv (IV)	iv and i (I)
Standard progressions:	I-iv-vii-I, I-vii-I	V-i-iv-V, V-iv-V
Finalis:	$\hat{1}$ (or) $\hat{3}$	$\hat{5}$ (or) $\hat{7}$

Example 10. Harmonic vocabulary in makam Hicaz compared to harmonic minor.

Ralchev's Hicaz harmonic vocabulary in #1 (Example 11) is limited to tonic and the standard dominant for Hicaz, vii.[36] The only predominant chord in Hicaz, II, is used by Ralchev as a neighbor chord in m. 8. As stated in the book *Bulgarian Harmony*, the I-II-I chord



Example 11. Harmony in #1, mm. 1–15.

36. A v♯7 chord is generally avoided in accordion accompaniment (LH). This is due to the fact that v♯7 (LH) is located several horizontal rows below the tonic and its incorporation in final cadences can lead to inappropriate resolutions. This is why Ralchev and other Bulgarian accordionists limit their dominants in Hicaz to vii.

progression in Hicaz is one of the most avoided progressions in Bulgarian harmony due to its association with harmony in Spanish music, the Spanish version of Hicaz,[37] and the music of the Bulgarian and Macedonian Roma. In my opinion, in mm. 8–9, Ralchev applies the I-II-I progression as an effect (exploring an atypical chord progression) rather than as a reference to harmonic practices of different musical cultures.

If #1 is analyzed from the perspective of Western tonal harmony and as a chord progression in G harmonic minor,[38] m. 8 illustrates a deceptive cadence (I-II for Hicaz) while the final cadence in m. 15 may be classified as a Phrygian half cadence (vii^{6}-I for Hicaz). I hypothesize that Ralchev's substantial knowledge of classical accordion repertoire, a fact setting him apart from all other Bulgarian wedding musicians, might have influenced the adaptation of a I-II cadence at the end of the first phrase of #1.

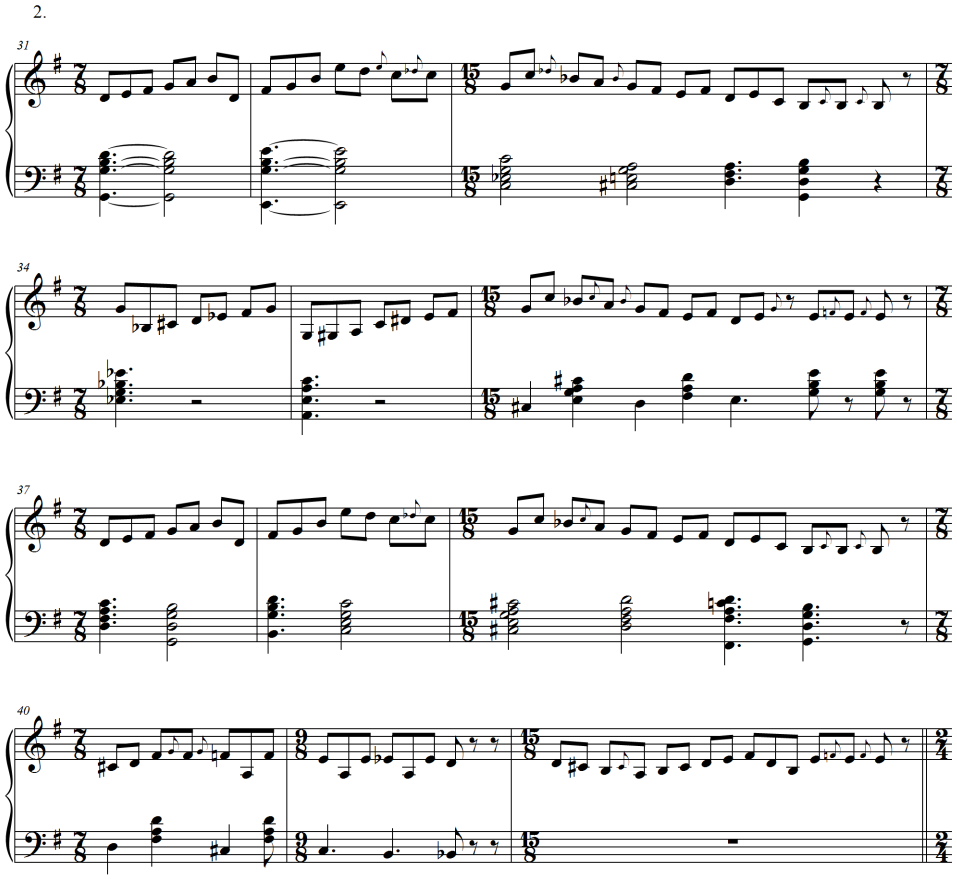
Many of the ideas introduced in #1 transfer to #2, such as the alternation of meters $\frac{7}{8}$ and $\frac{15}{8}$ (Example 12). Idea transfers of this type are typical for the opening phrases of pieces in the wedding style. As previously stated, they are rooted in the kolyano chains discussed earlier in this article. In "Bulgarian Suite," Ralchev develops the idea transfer concept on higher levels of complexity and often carries compositional thoughts across a number line, i.e., an idea which is difficult to perceive in the previous number is clarified in a successive number. Metaphorically, paired structures of this type can be compared to "riddles" in which the answer is provided in the second statement. Numbers 1 and 2 are an example of such paired relationship where the ambiguous metric succession of $\frac{7}{8}+\frac{15}{8}$ (in #1) is made more comprehensible in #2. The last is accomplished through metric, agogic, and dynamic accents in the chordal accompaniment.

The mode in #2 changes to E Aeolian. The kolyano has four phrases and establishes expectations for a contrasting period with varied repetition as phrases 3 and 4.[39] Rather than concluding phrase 4 and satisfying his listener's expectation of a symmetrical kolyano structure, Ralchev delays closure by incorporating a parenthetical insertion that introduces a new "metric riddle" at the end of the phrase which he elaborates later in the piece. The new "riddle" involves a descending sequence of three notes placed at the middle of the last phrase reinforced by chromatic descending major thirds in melody and bass (Example 13). The descending chromatic sequence has the potential of unlimited extension and can be applied as a tool for modulation or phrase expansion/truncation.

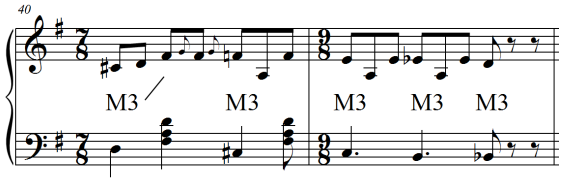
37. According to Peter Manuel (1989, 78), in Andalusian harmony, the major triad on the flat second degree in Hicaz functions as a dominant at cadences. According to Kirilov (2015, 60), II in Bulgarian non-microtonal Hicaz functions as a subdominant. In all Hicaz progressions analyzed in the book, II is followed by one of the two Hicaz dominants, vii or v$^{\sharp}_{7}$.

38. D Hicaz is identical to the fifth mode of G harmonic minor. Refer to Example 10.

39. The varied repetitions of phrases 3 and 4 can suggest a double period structure. However, in contrast to Western music, in Bulgarian kolyanos, the cadence at the end of the second phrases is strong. If this structural difference is taken into consideration, #2 may be classified as a double period as well.

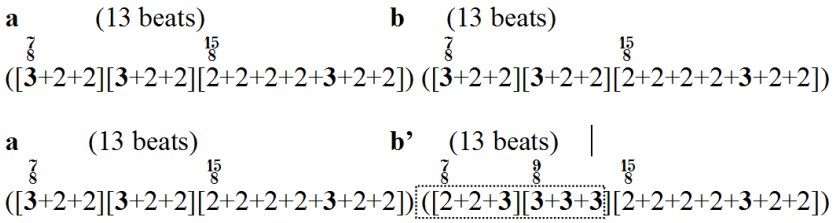


Example 12. Section I, subsection **A**, #2, mm. 31–42.



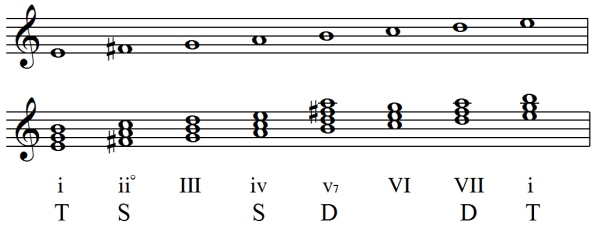
Example 13. Section I, subsection **A**, #2, mm. 40–41.

In terms of the phrase structure of #2, Example 14 continues the asymmetry and visually illustrates an internal expansion in **b'** where the grouping of a $\frac{7}{8}$ measure is inverted and carried on sequentially, as illustrated in Example 13. The inserted measure of $\frac{9}{8}$ (3+3+3) exemplifies a meter which is atypical for Bulgarian folk music. Instead of the triple compound $\frac{9}{8}$, Bulgarians prefer two asymmetrical version of $\frac{9}{8}$ grouped as 2+2+2+3 (Daychovo Horo) or 2+3+2+2 (Gruncharsko Horo). The adaptation of the unusual triple compound meter has enabled Ralchev to create a chromatic sequence based on a group of three.



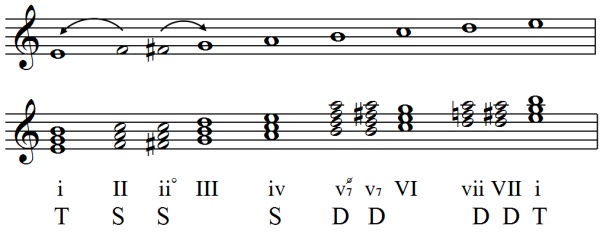
Example 14. Phrase asymmetry and meter changes in #2, mm. 31–42.

The harmony in #2 explores a juxtaposition of III-i, which is a standard harmonic gesture in the Aeolian mode (Example 15), and an Aeolian/Phrygian polymode with variable second scale degree (Example 16).[40] In both Aeolian and the Aeolian/Phrygian polymode, the raised second scale degree acts as a leading tone in the tonicization of the relative major.



Preferred cadences:	iv-i, IV-iv-i, v-i
Preferred tonicization:	III and VII
Standard progressions:	i-VI-iv-i
Finalis:	$\hat{1}$

Example 15. Harmonic vocabulary in E Aeolian mode.



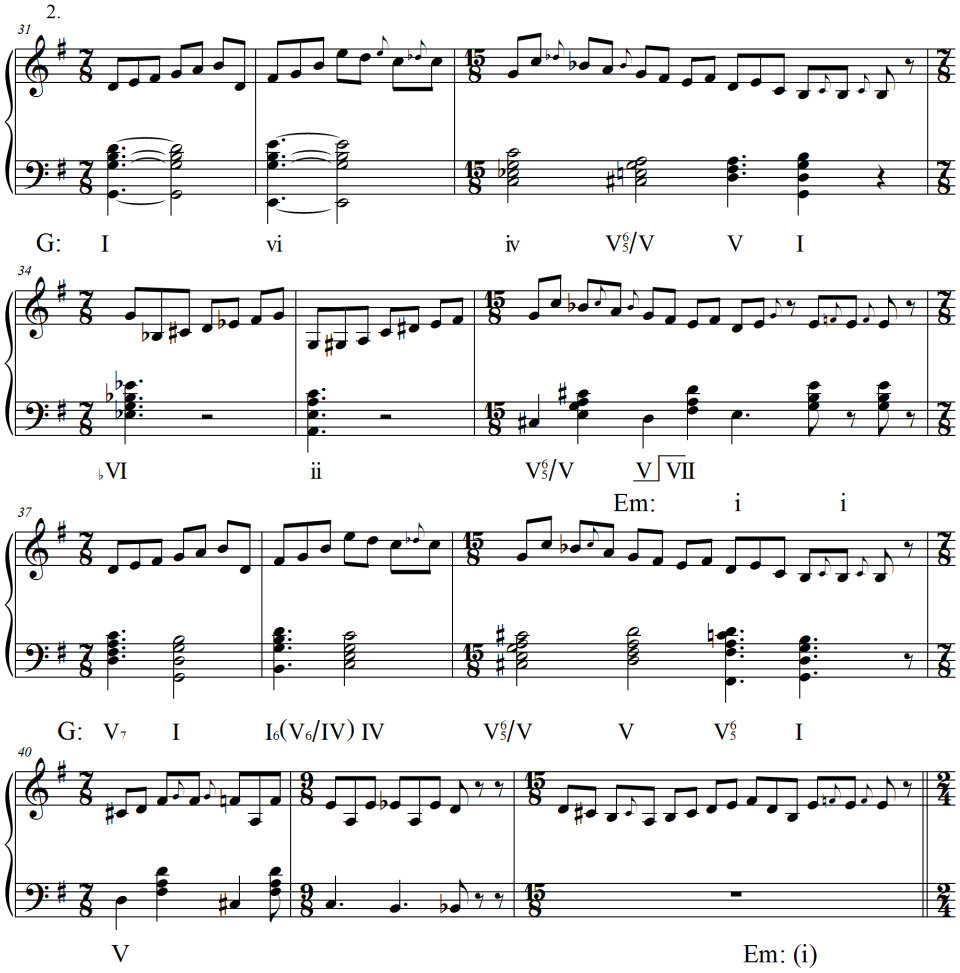
Preferred cadences:	iv-i, IV-iv-i, v-i, vii-i
Preferred tonicization:	III and VII
Standard progressions:	i-V/III-III-iv-i
Finalis:	$\hat{1}$

Example 16. Harmonic vocabulary in E Aeolian/Phrygian polymode.

40. Aeolian/Phrygian polymode with a variable second scale degree is one of the most widely distributed minor polymodes in Bulgaria. The variable degree could be a remnant of a microtonal inflection between a major and minor second (Kirilov 2015, 65).

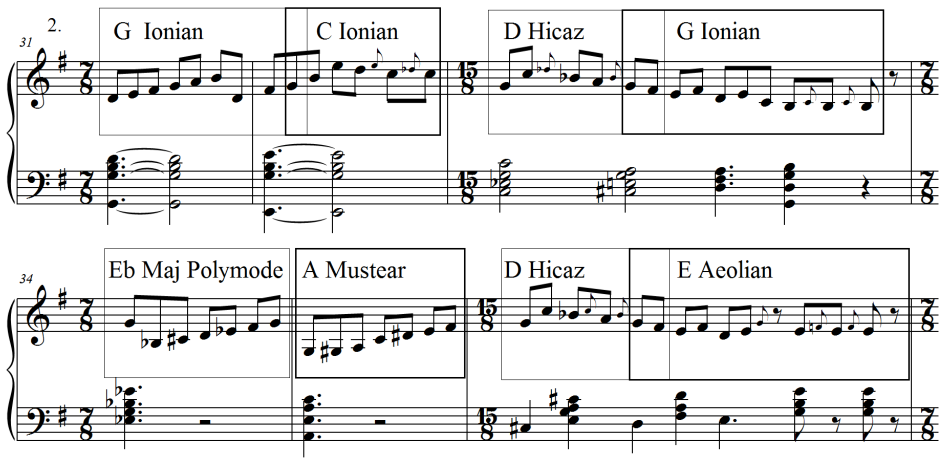
As illustrated in Example 17, the harmonic vocabulary chosen by Ralchev for #2 differs considerably from the standard III-i juxtapositions observed in Bulgarian wedding music.[41] Ralchev uses falling thirds (mm. 31–33), a chain of secondary dominants (mm. 37–39), and a descending chromatic sequence (mm. 40–41). Moreover, his final cadence in m. 42 is completely omitted and delayed until the repetition of #2 as #4.

In wedding music repertoire, kolyanos often integrate two or three modes combined into polymodes. In certain numbers of "Bulgarian Suite," however, modes (and the corresponding key centers) change almost every measure. In Example 18 I have provided a detailed look at the modes suggested by the melody in mm. 31–36 of #2. At this foreground level, the first two modal areas suggest placement of secondary dominants at the beginning of m. 31 and m. 32. Ralchev essentially incorporates secondary dominants in his reharmonization of the same measures (mm. 37–38). The C Ionian mode in m. 32 suggests a C triad or a



Example 17. Harmony in #2, mm. 31–42.

41. For analysis of wedding-style repertoire, refer to Kirilov (2015).



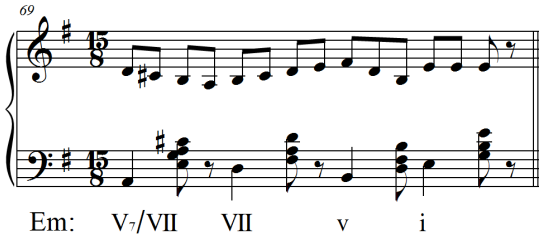
Example 18. Modes in #2, mm. 31–36.

tonicization of C. Rather than playing a C triad, Ralchev substitutes the C chord with E♭ major. In the repetition of the measure (as m. 38), this "mistake" is corrected.

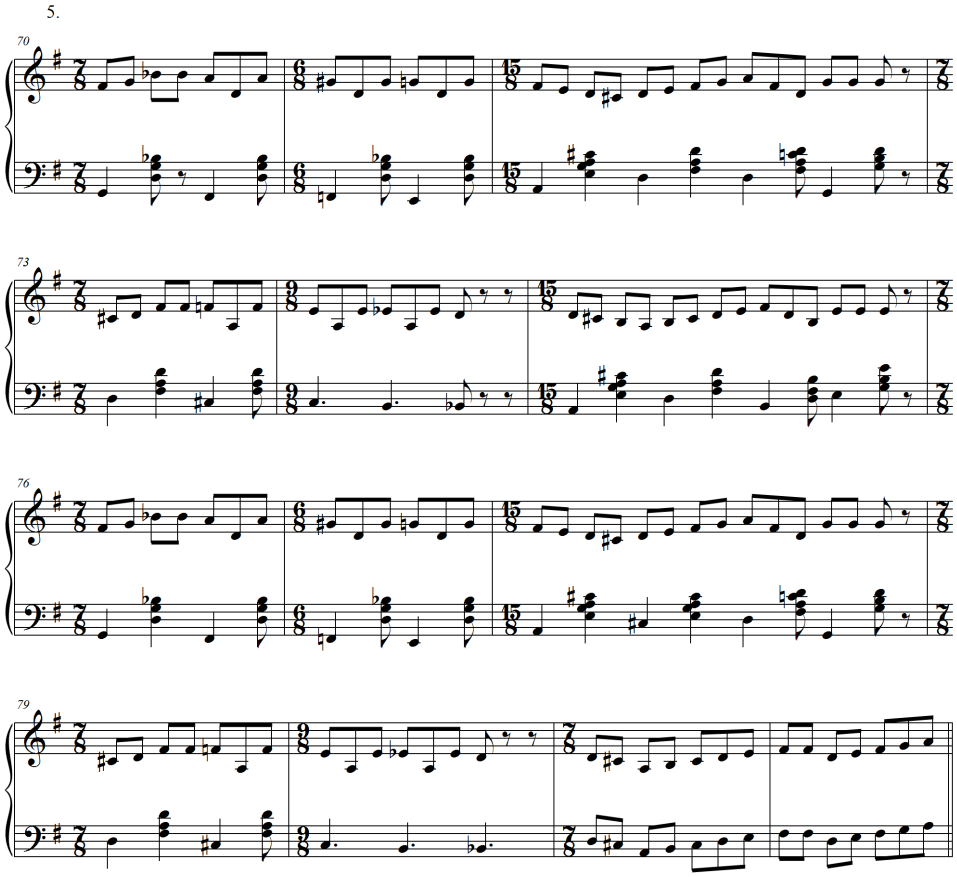
The following numbers, #3 and #4, are shortened repetitions of #1 and #2. Shortened repetitions are a feature of Bulgarian folk music in general and particularly the late wedding style. At the end of #4, Ralchev supplies the omitted final cadence of #2 (Example 19).

Number 5 continues the development of the ideas introduced in **b'** of #2 and its varied repetition as #4 (Example 20). More specifically, #5 elaborates on the descending chromatic sequence previously illustrated in Example 13. If compared with Example 13, however, the chromatic descent in **a** of #5 (Example 21a) is shortened while **b** (Example 21b) is kept the same as **b'** of #2. The first phrase of #5, **a** (Example 21a), has 12 beats grouped as 2+2+3+3+3+2+2+2+2+3+2+2, while the second phrase, **b** (Example 21b), has an added group of three eighth notes 2+2+3+3+3+3+2+2+2+2+3+2+2. Therefore, #5 carries on the idea of balanced asymmetry embedded in numbers 1 and 2 and their varied repetitions.

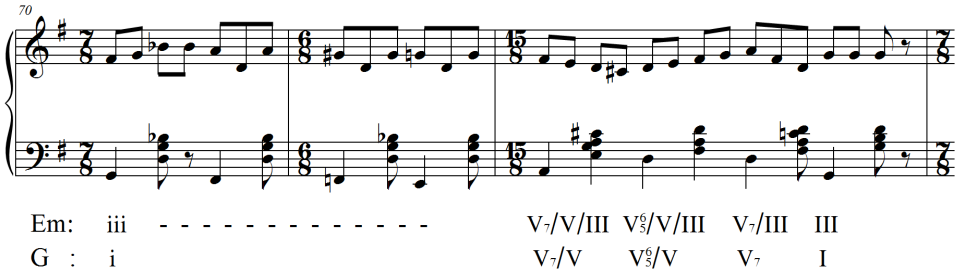
The repetition of **a**, as the third phrase in #5, guides the experienced listener's expectations toward an exact repetition of **b** or a double period structure. Rather than supplying the expected repetition of phrase **b**, Ralchev introduces a **b'**. Measures 81–82 are played in octaves and assume the role of a transition toward the **B** subsection (Example 22).



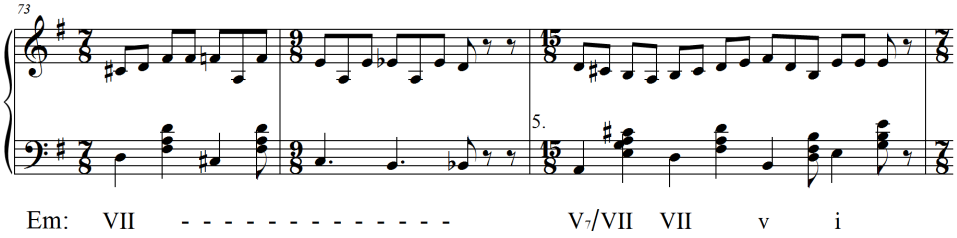
Example 19. Section 1, subsection **A**, #4, m. 69.



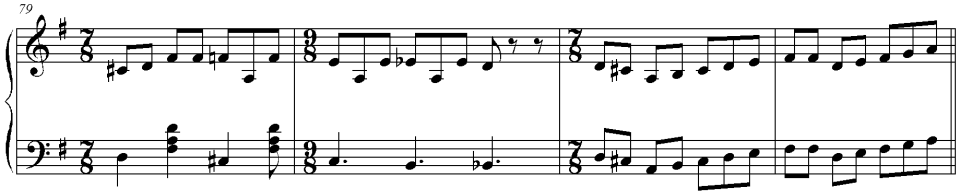
Example 20. Section I, subsection **A**, #5, mm. 70–82.



Example 21a. Section I, subsection **A**, #5, mm. 70–72.



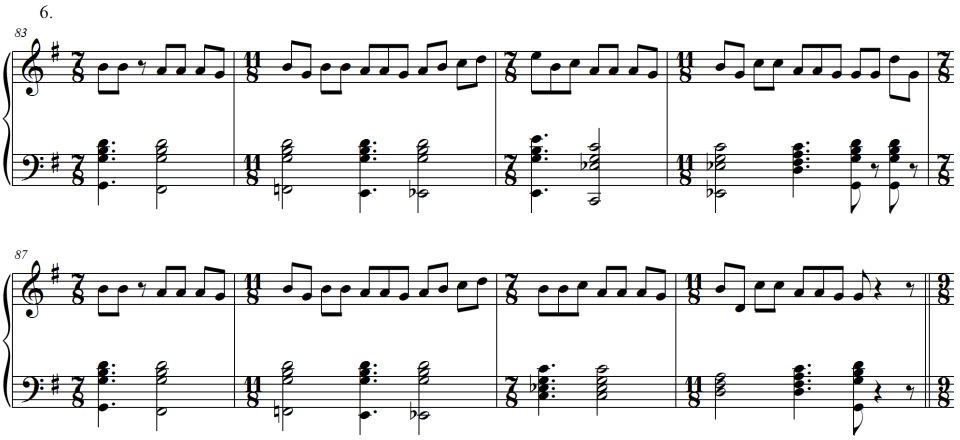
Example 21b. Section I, subsection **A**, #5, mm. 73–75.



Example 22. Section I, subsection **A**, #5, mm. 79–82.

Section I, Subsection B

The beginning of **B** is marked by a tempo change (a significant decrease of tempo), symmetrical phrasing, and the application of a metric pattern familiar to experienced listeners. For the first time in "Bulgarian Suite," Ralchev incorporates a combined metric group ($\frac{7}{8}+\frac{11}{8}$) grouped as 3+2+2+2+2+3+2+2 (Example 23).[42] Table 4 highlights the contrast between subsection **A** and the opening number of subsection **B**.



Example 23. Section I, subsection **B**, #6, mm. 83–90.

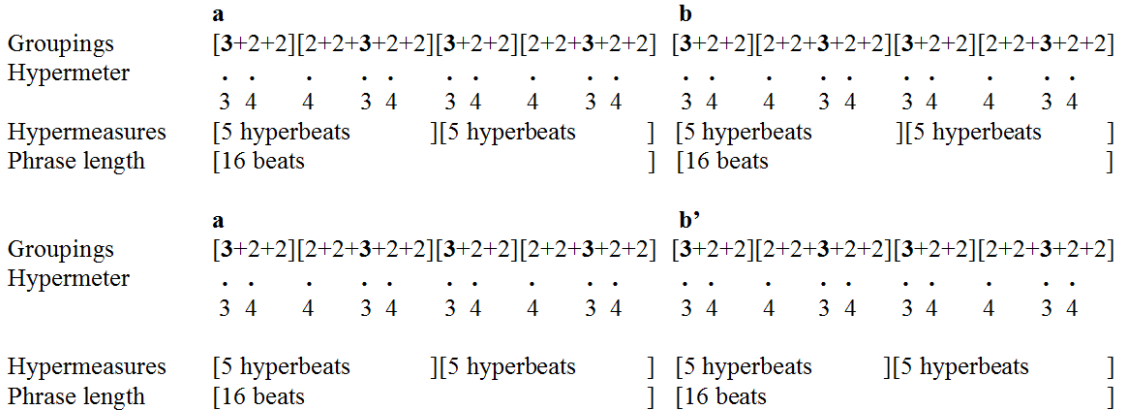
A (#1–5)	**B** (#6)
Asymmetrical phrasing	Symmetrical phrasing
Heterometric rows	Combined metric group
Fast tempo	Slow tempo

Table 4. Contrasting characteristics of subsection **A** and the first number of subsection **B**.

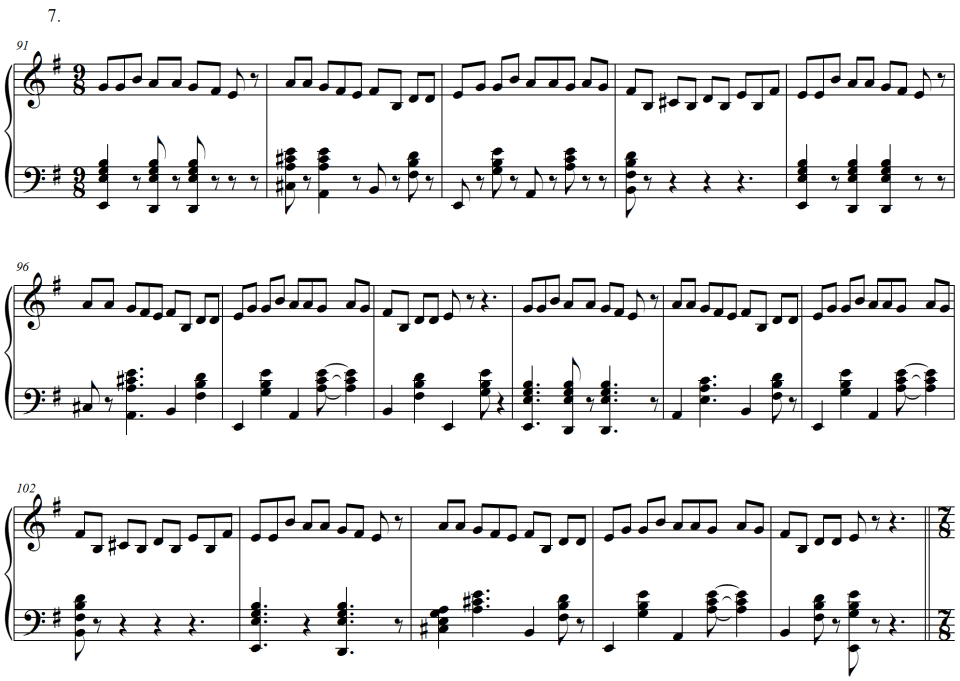
42. The combined metric group $\frac{7}{8}+\frac{11}{8}$ is associated with the dance *Yovino Horo* (Yova's Dance), one of the few Bulgarian dances in mixed asymmetrical meters.

Example 24 illustrates the phrase structure of #6, a completely symmetrical phrasing which was not encountered prior to this point. Other elements of the musical texture also contribute to the establishment of #6 as the first center of symmetry and stability in the suite. These include harmony (G: I-I^4_2($\sharp_7$)-I^4_2-iii-iv_6-iv-iv_6-V-V_7-I), narrow melodic range (a major 6th, if one excludes the drop note D in m. 90), an almost repetitive melodic structure (a descending B-A-G), slow tempo, and block chords underlining the hypermeter. One possible interpretation of the symmetrical #6 is that it could be Ralchev's way of saying, "here is something you can easily comprehend." From a harmonic perspective, #6 explores the III as the first key area of a III-i Aeolian/Phrygian polymode juxtaposition. However, in section **B**, the III-i tonal juxtaposition of #6 and #7 expands to the rhythmic, dynamic, melodic, and timbral realms.

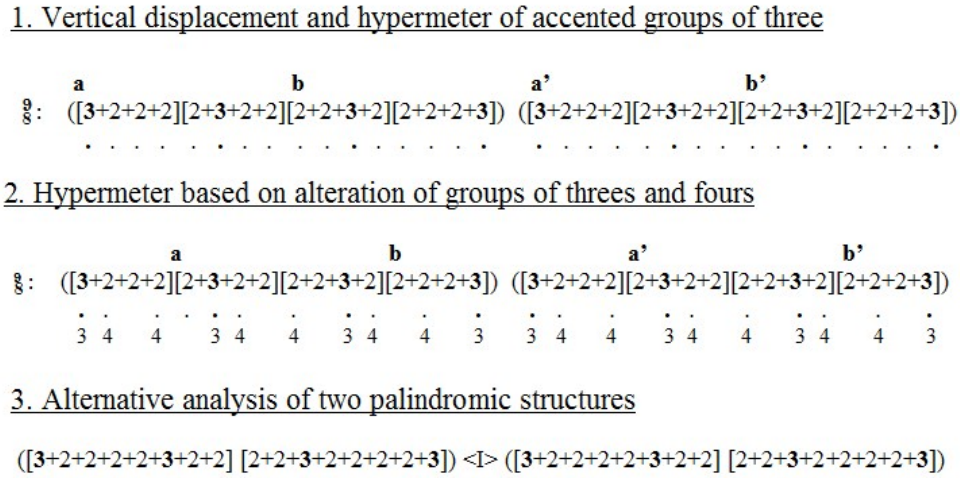
Number 7, although symmetrical in terms of phrase structure, contains a new metric manipulation which is even harder to perceive in comparison with the heterometric rows encountered in numbers 1 through 5 (Example 25). For the first time in the piece, Ralchev uses symmetrical four-bar phrases and a single asymmetrical meter. Despite the easily perceived phrase symmetry, the grouping of twos and threes in #7 is extremely difficult to comprehend due to Ralchev's new compositional idea of "a group of three on the move." As seen in Example 26, the group of three progresses systematically through various possible positions in the measure. The asymmetrical $\frac{9}{8}$ contains one group of three eighth notes. Traditionally, the group of three is placed either second, as 2+3+2+2 (Gruncharsko Horo), or last, 2+2+2+3 (Daychovo Horo). In #7, Ralchev exploits all four theoretical variations of $\frac{9}{8}$ containing one group of three. Starting at the beginning of the kolyano, Ralchev moves the group of three from left to right in each successive measure, making it impossible (even for the most experienced listeners) to perceive the grouping alternation in real time. The produced result is a series of asymmetrical $\frac{9}{8}$ meters combined with two hypermeters and two palindromic metric structures (Example 26).



Example 24. Phrase structure of #6.



Example 25. Section I, subsection **B**, #7, mm. 91–106.



Example 26. Metric structure of #7.

The first analytical interpretation in Example 26, which takes into account the vertical displacements, reveals a hidden level of steady hypermeter created by the offset groups of three. Specifically, most groups of three are separated by four groups of two, such that hypermeter level I includes a reoccurring pattern of 3-4-4. Palindromic structures are atypical for Bulgarian wedding music, and in a fast tempo, such as the one chosen by Ralchev, rhythmic palindromes are hardly perceivable. I suggest that in #7 Ralchev aims for a metrical ambiguity within symmetry. More specifically, the idea of symmetrical phrasing in #7, which

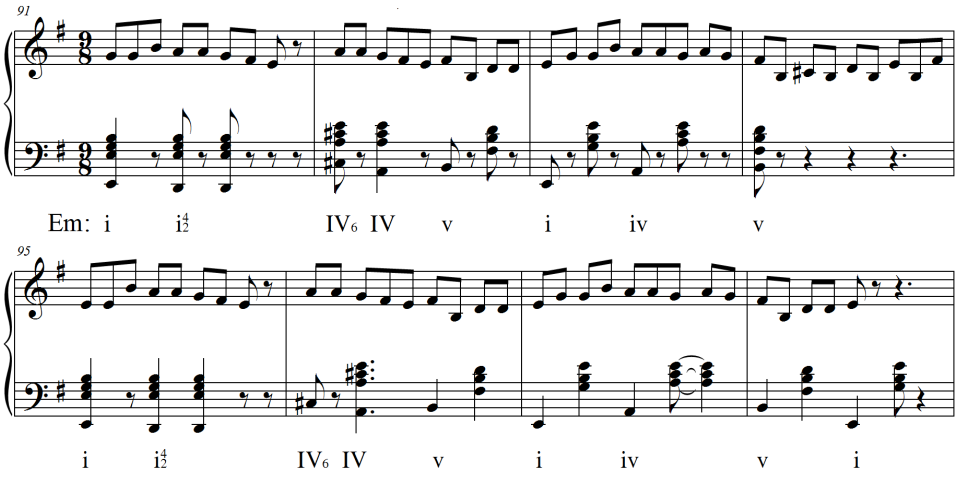
continues from #6, allows the listener to perceive an antecedent–consequent relationship, while the non-correspondence of melodic contour, hypermeter, and the contracted ending work against the perception of symmetry.

Ralchev's choice of chordal vocabulary for #7 matches the expected cadences for E Aeolian mode, iv-v-i, as shown in Example 27. The only chord succession, which deviates from the harmonic standards established in wedding music, is the IV-v succession. As illustrated previously in Example 15, IV is typically followed by minor iv as part of a plagal cadence, a standard for Aeolian mode. I suggest that Ralchev once again plays with the established expectations of experienced listeners by modifying the IV-iv-i progression into IV-v-i despite the fact that there is no C♯ in the melody to suggest a IV chordal vertical.

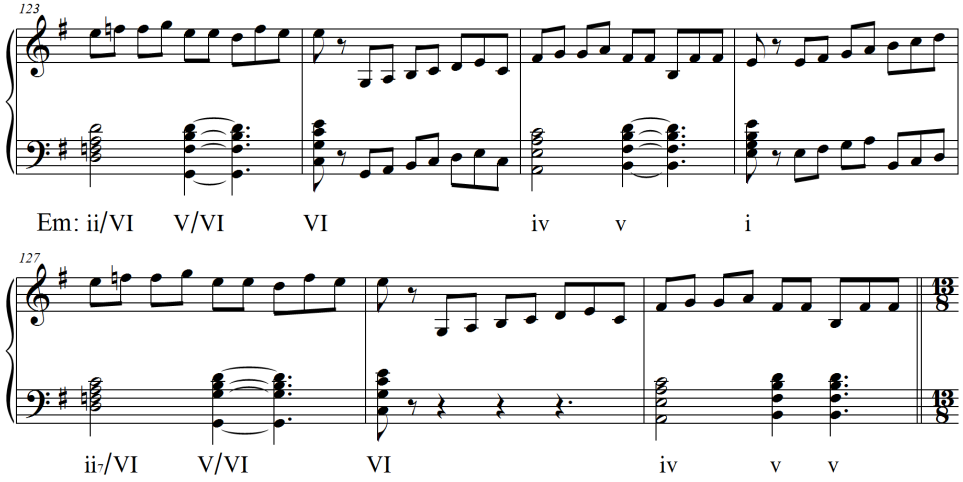
From a listener's perspective, the overall perception of #7 is as "the answer" to #6. Number 6 is in the relative major, G, harmonized with standard chordal vocabulary for Ionian (iv-V-I), reinforced by slow tempo. Number 7 brings back the fast tempo observed in the opening kolyanos of the suite paired with a chord progression in E Aeolian. For a first time in the wedding music repertoire, the standard III-i tonal juxtaposition (relative major–main minor key) is expanded to two kolyanos and reinforced by contrasting tempos, dynamics, and the juxtaposition of different types of metric structures.

After #7, Ralchev chooses to repeat #6–7 as #8–9 with reharmonizations by exploiting again the contrast between the slow, symmetrical #6 and the fast, metrically ambiguous #7. An interpretation of #8–9 could be that Ralchev provides his listeners with a second chance to understand the metric riddle in #7.

The last number of subsection **B**, #10, has a concluding role and can be classified as relatively stable from structural and metrical points of view. Number 10 carries over the asymmetrical $\frac{9}{8}$ meter from the previous number in its most typical form, 2+2+2+3, as illustrated in Example 28.



Example 27. Section 1, subsection **B**, #7, mm. 91–98.



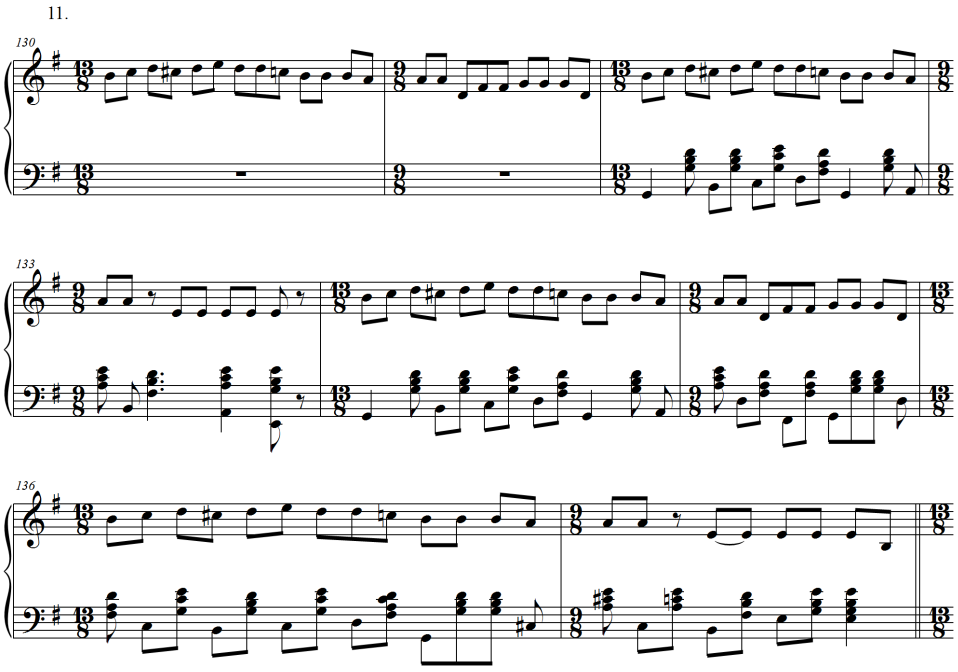
Example 28. Section I, subsection **B**, #10, mm. 123–129.

The phrasing of #10 is easily perceivable due to its motives, register transfers, and motivic transposition, as well as its harmonic structure (a ii-V-I type of a tonicization of VI followed by a iv-v-i cadence in E minor). In m. 124 and m. 126, Ralchev also uses the left hand of the accordion in octave doubling with the melody, a feature which was encountered earlier in #5. Similar to its function in #5, the octave doubling in #10 anticipates the end of **B** and prepares a transition to a new subsection, **C**. Following his established compositional patterns, Ralchev does not complete #10, although a single eighth note (on the downbeat of m. 130) would satisfy the listener's expectations of a completed phrase. Rather, Ralchev truncates the last measure (m. 130) of #10 and initiates the most metrically intricate subsection of the whole suite.

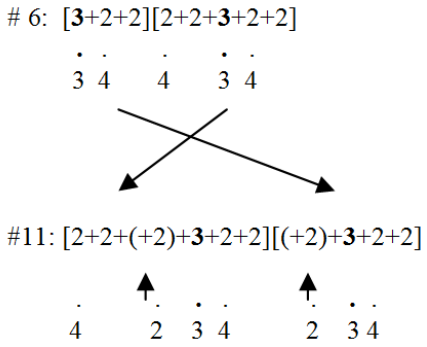
Section I, Subsection C

The beginning of subsection **C** (#11) strongly recalls the beginning of subsection **B,** with its antecedent–consequent relationship, a symmetrical double period (**abab'**), and a combined metric group of the type $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{9}{8}$ (Example 29). The opening two measures of the kolyano establish a combined metric group $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{9}{8}$ in the melody without accompaniment. The asymmetrical $\frac{13}{8}$ is grouped 2+2+2+3+2+2 while the $\frac{9}{8}$ is of the type 2+3+2+2. Ralchev's choice of meters for #11 can be interpreted as an internally expanded inversion of the meters used in #6, as illustrated in Example 30. The hypermeter level I of #11 involves groups of twos in addition to groupings of threes and fours. That makes the hypermeter level I of #11 more difficult to perceive in comparison with the hypermeter level I in previous numbers.

The parallels between numbers 6 and 11 are not limited to the metrical structure only. The melody of #11 is also constructed of symmetrical phrases and involves repetition implying stability. However, in the accompaniment, after two measures of rest, in #11 Ralchev introduces his most complicated metric riddle, superimposing different meters or groupings in each hand (Example 31).



Example 29. Section I, subsection C, #11, mm. 130–137.



Example 30. Inversion and internal expansion of meter in numbers 6 and 11.

130 131 132 133
RH [2+2+2+3 +2+2][2+3 +2+2][2+2+2+3 +2+2][2+3 +2+2]
LH 3 +2+2+2+3 +2+2+2+2+2

134 135 136 137
RH [2+2+2+3 +2+2][2+3 +2+2][2+2+2+3 +2+2][2+3 +2+2]
LH 3 +2+2+2+3 +2+2+2+3 +2+2+2+2+2+3 +2+2+2+2+2

Example 31. Analysis of groupings in #11, mm. 130–137.

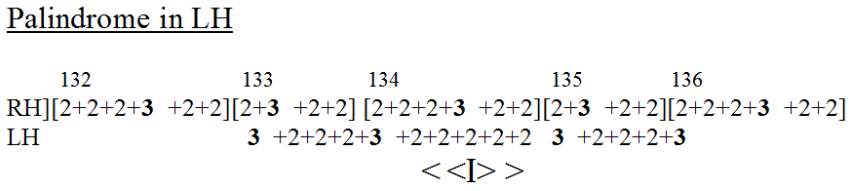
The vertical misalignment and grouping dissonance observed in Example 31 can be interpreted in several ways. The first possible explanation for mm. 132–133 is the existence of

metrical dissonance and meter exchange, i.e., the right hand plays in $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{9}{8}$ while the left hand plays in $\frac{9}{8}+\frac{13}{8}$. Another explanation is rooted in the rhythmic palindrome in the left hand starting at the beginning of m. 133 and ending at the beginning of m. 136 (Example 32). A third explanation is based on vertical displacement, i.e., the rhythm of the left hand is delayed by 16 eighth notes. Example 33 straightens the displacement and shifts the left hand 16 eighth notes earlier. As seen in Example 33, the resulting alignment is almost perfect with the exception of the beginning of m. 134 (RH).

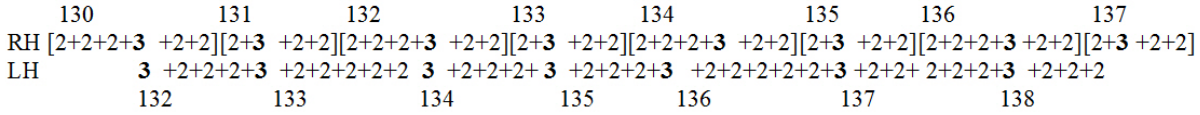
A different, performance-related explanation can account for the vertical misalignment as an improvisatory technique. According to this approach, in a semi-improvised piece such as "Bulgarian Suite" there is little opportunity for a performer to create palindromes in real time. Rather, a skilled improviser can exchange the placement of twos and threes (i.e., start with a group of three instead of a group of two) in the accompaniment in order to avoid vertical alignment. The transcription reveals that the harmonic progression is delayed for the most part and that vertical alignment (of harmony and melody) is sought at final cadences, such as m. 133 and m. 137.

Measures 134 to 136 and halfway through m. 137 reveal a different displacement process. This becomes evident when we take into consideration the performer's tendency to misalign at the beginning (juxtapose 3 against 2) and align at the end (cadential verticalization). Example 34 illustrates a hypothetical example. It attempts to reverse the performance process of mm. 134–135 and illustrate the creation of a vertical displacement which is relatively easy for experienced accordion players to improvise. A simplified summary of the process illustrated in the example can be that the left hand or the chordal accompaniment is delayed by three eighth notes.

From a harmonic perspective, #11 juxtaposes the relative major, G, to the main minor tonic Em (Example 35). Ralchev harmonizes most of the kolyano in the relative major and



Example 32. Hidden palindromic structure in #11.



Example 33. Straightened vertical displacement in #11.

1. The grouping as performed

```
    134                 135             136                 137
RH [2+2+2+3  +2+2][2+3  +2+2][2+2+2+3  +2+2][2+3  +2+2]
LH  3  +2+2+2+3  +2+2+2+3   +2+2+2+2+2+3  +2+2+2+2+2
```

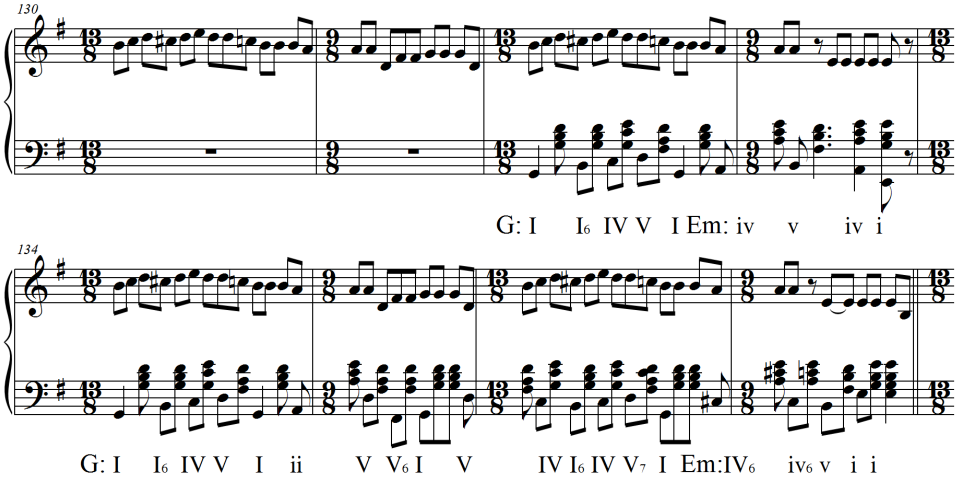
2. The beginning (three against two) and the aligned ending removed.

```
    134                 135             136                 137
RH [2+2+2+3  +2+2][2+3  +2+2][2+2+2+3  +2+2][2+3  +2+2]
LH       2+2+2+3  +2+2+2+3   +2+2+2+2+2+3   +2+2+2
```

3. The LH is pulled 3 beats to the left which results in a perfect alignment of both rhythm and harmony

```
                134                 135             136                 137
RH [2+2+2+3  +2+2][2+3  +2+2][2+2+2+3  +2+2][2+3  +2+2]
LH  2+2+2+3  +2+2+2+3  +2+2+2+2+2+3  +2+2+2
```

Example 34. The process of creating vertical displacements.

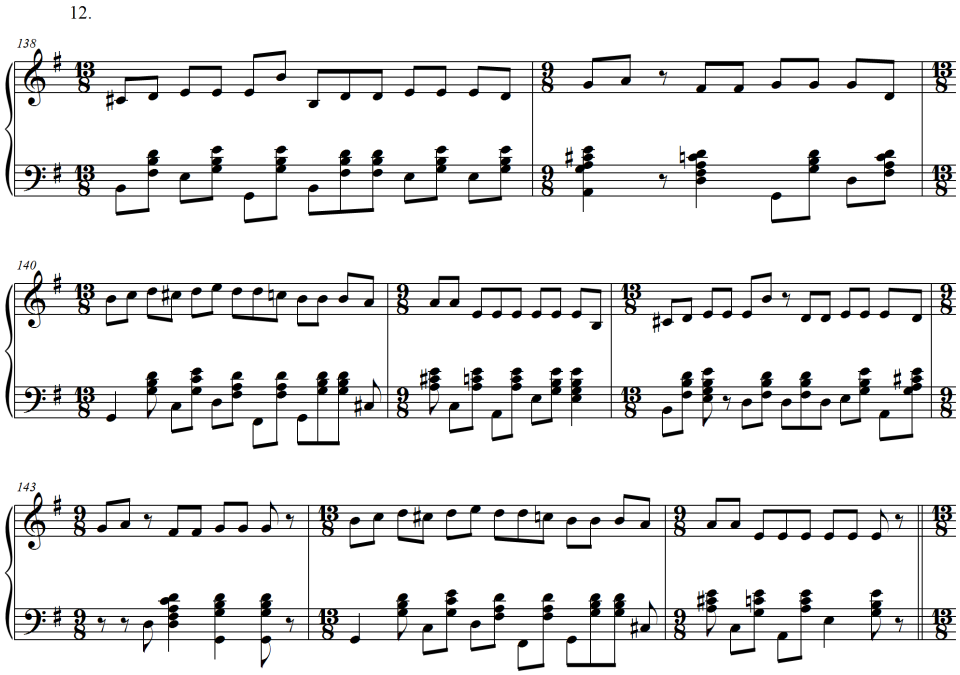


Example 35. Harmony in #11, mm. 130–137.

cadences in the main key in the last measure of the kolyano. The harmonic juxtaposition of relative major to the minor tonic (Em) continues in the successive number, #12, which further elaborates on the vertical displacement and grouping dissonance introduced in #11 (Example 36). In contrast to #11, in #12 Ralchev establishes E minor at the beginning of the phrase and tonicizes the relative major at the end of the first and third phrases (m. 140 and m. 143).

Example 37 is a catalogue of all types of vertical displacement observed in subsection C. While most of these displacements imply a delayed accompaniment, two (mm. 152–153 and mm. 156–157) anticipate the melodic groupings.[43] On these two occasions, a bidirectional

43. Please refer to Appendix A for the varied repetitions of numbers 11–12 as numbers 13–14, including these two passages.



Example 36. Section I, subsection **C**, #12, mm. 138–145.

	RH[2+2+2+**3** +2+2][2+**3** +2+2]	
(1) mm132-133	LH **3** +2+2+2+**3** +2+2+2+2+2	Vertical alignment is avoided until the very end of the second measure (cadential vertical alignment).
(2) mm133-134	LH **3** +2+2+2+**3** +2+2+2+**3** +2	Starts with a group of 3 and the following 2s and 3s are played 3 beats after RH.
(3) mm135-136	LH +2+2+2+2+**3** +2+2+2+2+2	The phrase starts with a chord or carries on a two-motion from the previous measure. Aligns by vertical at the end.
(4) mm152-153	LH **3** +2+**3** +2+2+2+2+2+2+2	Groups of threes precede the RH. Aligns at the end
(5) mm154-155	LH 2+2+2+**3** +**3** +**3** +**3** +2+2	Groups of three predominate. Once a 3 group is played, it is repeated several times. Aligns at the end.
(6) mm156-157	LH 2+**3** +2+2+2+**3** +2+2+2+2	A group of 3 after a group of two and another group of 3 carries across a bar line.

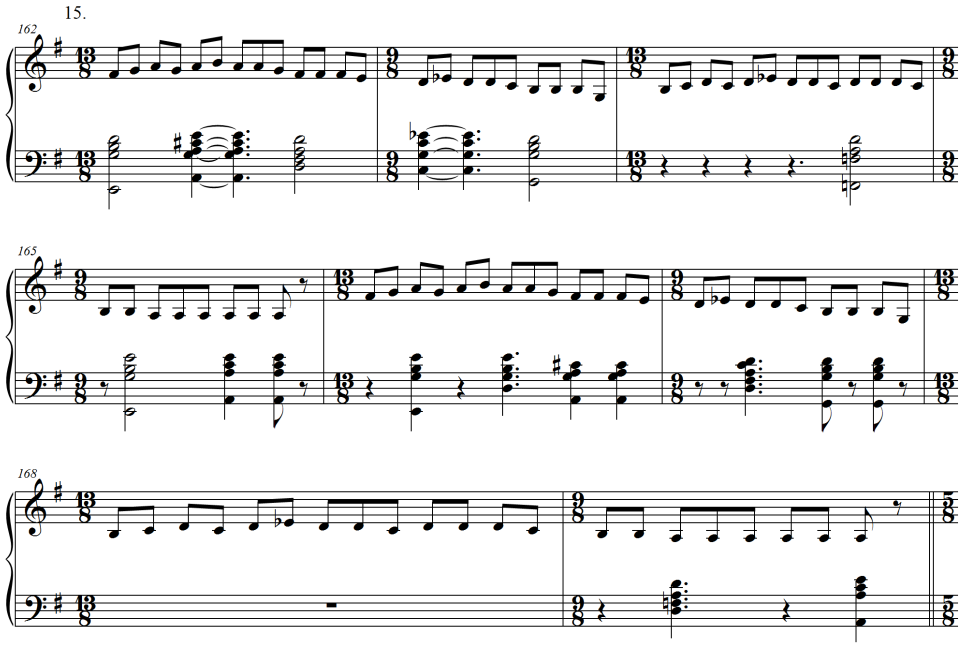
Example 37. Vertical displacements in section I, subsection **C**.

displacement can be observed, an anticipated grouping (moved to the left), and a delayed chord progression (moved to the right).

After exploring several variations and combinations of multidimensional vertical displacement and the resulting metric and grouping dissonances (#11–14), in #15 Ralchev slows

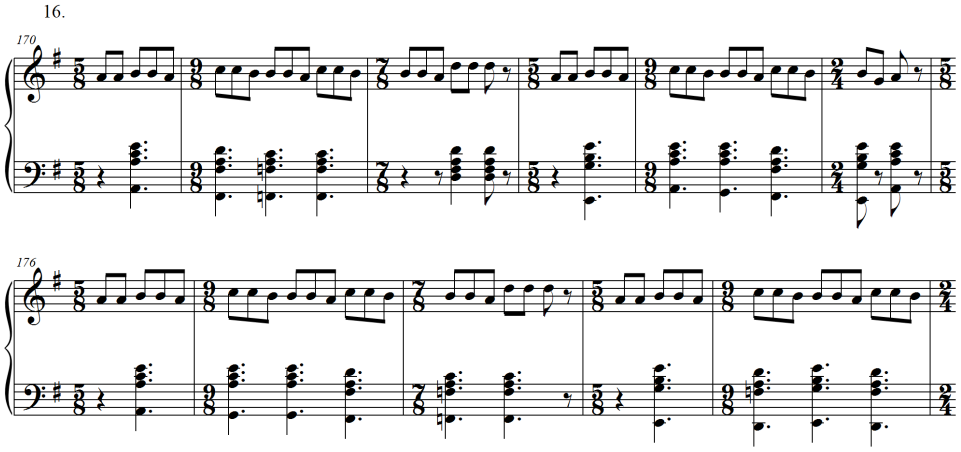
the tempo and changes the key to A minor (Example 38). In terms of meter, #15 continues the combined metric group $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{9}{8}$, but the accompaniment accents for the most part align with the pulsation of the melody. Measures 163 to 165 illustrate a rare makam, A-B-C-D-E♭-F♯-G-A, which Bulgarian scholars define as a non-microtonal makam Karcigar. Karcigar may be perceived as a partial Hicaz starting on the fourth scale degree in A Aeolian and suggesting a major IV chord (D major). Rather than harmonizing the entire kolyano in Karcigar, Ralchev reverts to the idea of micromodality by harmonizing each measure in a different mode, as previously observed in #2.[44] Ralchev treats the first measure of #15 (m. 162) in D major by harmonizing it with a ii_7-V_7-I progression. The second measure (m. 163) is harmonized in G major with a iv-I progression. The second phrase (mm. 164–165) is harmonized in A minor (or A Karcigar) with a VI-v-i progression, a cadential gesture for Aeolian mode replacing the standard Aeolian cadence IV-iv-i. Measures 166–169 illustrate a reharmonization of the two phases. Here Ralchev departs from the idea of micromodality and inserts a chain of dominants (Em-A7-D7-G) followed by a typical Aeolian cadence, iv-i.

The last number of the first section of "Bulgarian Suite," #16, is a condensed summary of Ralchev's metric operations to this point. The metric succession of #16, $\frac{5}{8}+\frac{9}{8}+\frac{7}{8}+\frac{5}{8}+\frac{9}{8}+\frac{2}{4}$, contains a concentration of alternating twos and threes that implies either the end of the piece or end of a section (Example 39). In terms of groupings of twos and threes, the following



Example 38. Section 1, subsection **C**, #15, mm. 162–169.

44. I suggest the term micromodality for describing a rapid interchange of modes and scales within one kolyano. Micromodality is an innovative compositional approach rather than a reference to the Bulgarian folk traditions. For an example of micromodality, refer to Example 18.

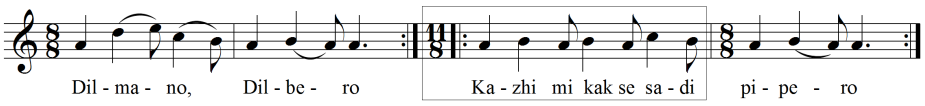


Example 39. Section I, subsection **C**, #16, mm. 170–180.

successions represent the structure: 2+3+3+3+3+3+2+2 and 2+3+3+3+3+2+2.[45] In this particular excerpt, the groups of threes are easily distinguishable due to the melodic pattern of a repeated note followed by a descent by step. The groups of threes are also supported by accented block chords in the left-hand accompaniment. The alteration between the pitch groups B-B-A and C-C-A plays an important role for internal development and creates a looping effect, thus obscuring the listener's expectations regarding phrase length, loop duration, and final cadence placement.

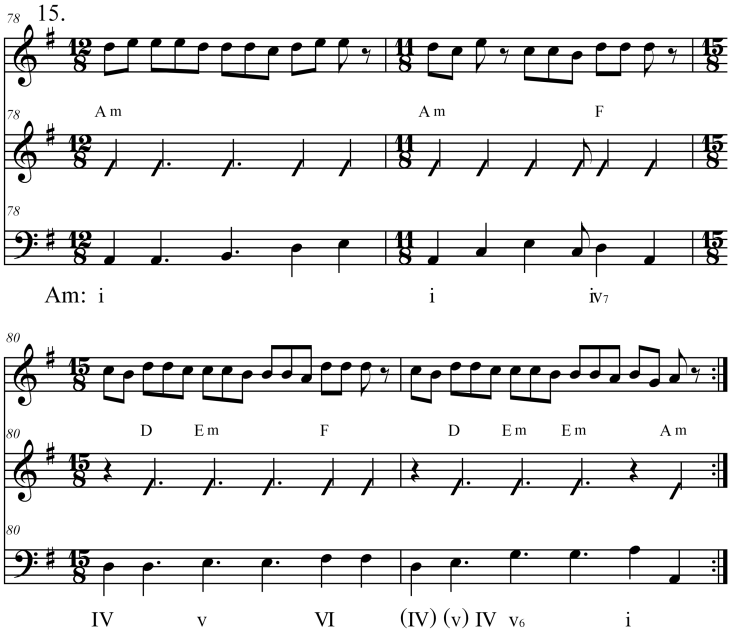
I hypothesize that Ralchev has borrowed the idea of a reoccurring group of three (a repeated note followed by a descent by step) from the Bulgarian folk song "Dilmano, Dilbero," which contains a measure in a rare form of $\frac{11}{8}$ grouped as 2+3+3+3. As illustrated in Example 40, if the folk song is performed in A minor, the groups of three seen in the $\frac{11}{8}$ measure of the song closely match Ralchev's compositional idea for #16.

Number 16 of "Bulgarian Suite" can be also compared to a kolyano found in Papazov's "Kopanitsa"[46] analyzed in *Bulgarian Harmony* (Example 41). In both "Bulgarian Suite" and



Example 40. Bulgarian folk song "Dilmano, Dilbero."

45. This is one instance in the transcription where I consider my choices of meters to be arbitrary. Ralchev performs most of the groups of three with heavy accents which suggests multiple possibilities for bar line placement. Since the idea of a recurring group of three governs the entire phrase, it would not be incorrect to suggest even a very long meter, $\frac{24}{8}$. In my transcription, however, I have chosen meters which are easy to comprehend and count from a performer's perspective.
46. Papazov's "Kopanitsa" is track 6 on the CD *Orpheus Ascending* (1989).

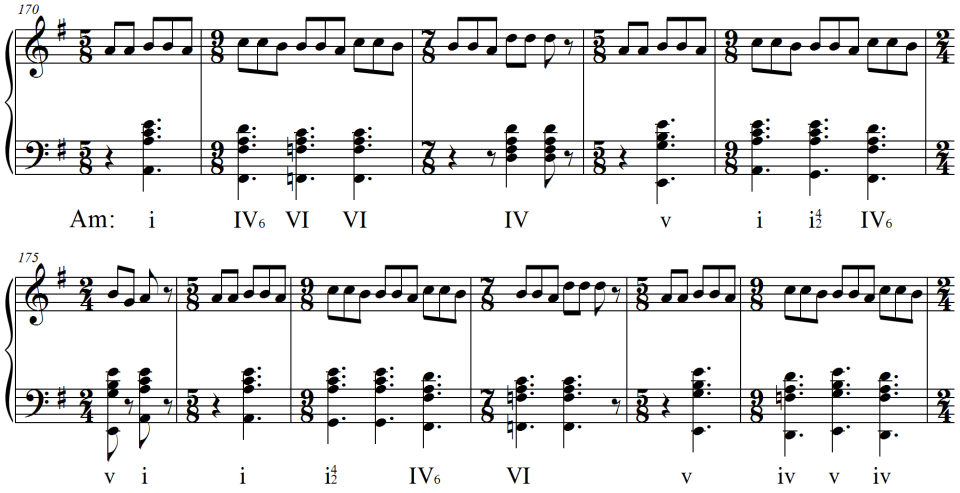


Example 41. Ivo Papazov's "Kopanitsa," #15, mm. 78–81.

Papazov's "Kopanitsa," the kolyanos containing repetitive groups of three have a summarizing character. In "Bulgarian Suite," #16 signifies the end of the Section 1. In Papazov's "Kopanitsa," #15 (shown in Example 41) is used first to indicate the end of the precomposed sections and the beginning of the improvisations and once again at the very end of the piece.

If we compare all three examples, "Dilmano, Dilbero," #15 of "Kopanitsa," and #16 of "Bulgarian Suite," an interesting correspondence emerges. "Dilmano Dilbero" contains a group of three repeated three times as 2+3+3+3. "Kopanitsa" extends this idea by adding two groups of twos at the end of the pattern, 2+3+3+3+(2+2). Ralchev further expands Papazov's pattern by inserting two extra groups of three in the middle, 2+3+3+(3+3)+3+2+2.

The harmonic vocabulary in #16 fits the formulas and cadential patterns for Aeolian (Example 42). The kolyano has four phrases. The first phrase establishes D major at the end of the phrase (m. 173). The second phrase cadences on tonic (A minor) with a v-i cadence in m. 175. The third phrase features a reharmonization of the first phrase. Ralchev uses a stepwise descending bass line and a chord progression i-i^{4}_{2}-IV_{6}-VI which establishes VI (F major) as the last harmonic vertical at the end of the third phrase. According to the expectations built by Ralchev to this point, the last phrase of #16 should cadence on tonic with one of the typical cadences for the mode (A Aeolian). Rather than supplying a cadence in m. 181 and concluding the kolyano, Ralchev truncates the last measure, evades the final cadence, and starts the next section of the suite after a measure of rest. As a result of the truncation, #16 illustrates asymmetrical phrasing. After the measure of rest, however, Ralchev supplies the missing final chord (A minor) as an arpeggio in the first measure of Section 2 (m. 182).



Example 42. Harmony in #16, mm. 170–180.

Analysis of Section 2

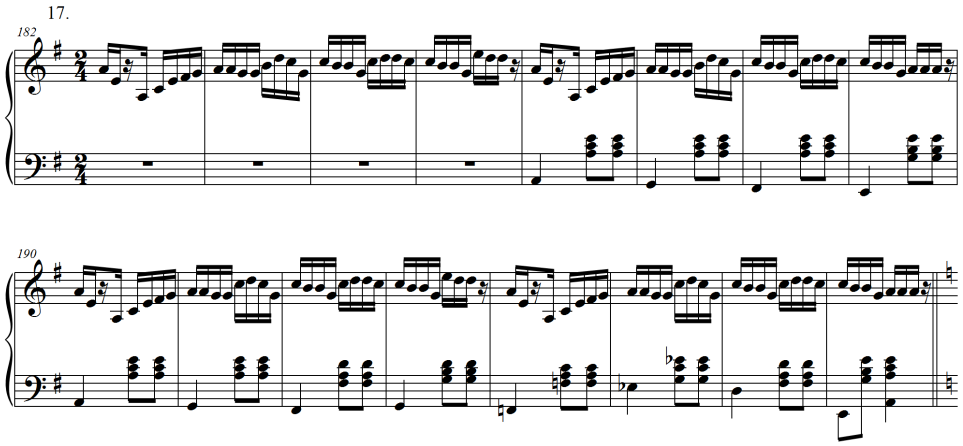
Numbers 17 through 24 comprise the second section of "Bulgarian Suite." Numbers 17–23 are based on a dance in duple meter. In contrast to the first section, which is not danceable, Section 2 features a dance in a fast tempo.[47] There is also a structural contrast between the two sections. Section 1 emphasizes asymmetrical phrases and mixed asymmetrical meters while Section 2 is based on four-bar antecedent–consequent phrasing as illustrated in Example 43.

Number 17 is in A Dorian, a mode that has not been encountered in the suite up to this point. Following the unwritten standards for wedding-style harmonizations, as described in *Bulgarian Harmony*, Ralchev harmonizes Dorian, Aeolian, or the Aeolian/Phrygian polymode with a similar, often identical harmonic vocabulary.

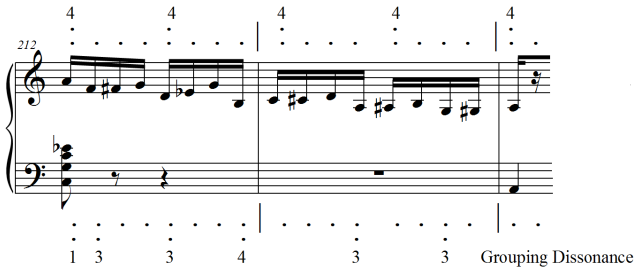
Throughout Section 2, Ralchev's cadences to the relative major (III) or VII in Aeolian and Aeolian/Phrygian polymode become analogous to half cadences in Western classical tradition. This is another departure from the typical use of III and VII as temporary tonicizations within phrases.[48] For his final cadences in the Aeolian/Phrygian polymode, Ralchev uses v-i or plagal cadences following established harmonic conventions.

The rhythmic groupings in the melody (numbers 17–23) comprise sets of four sixteenth notes with a regular hypermeter maintained in all improvised phrases (see Appendix A). The only place where a grouping dissonance is observed is in #18, mm. 212–213 (Example 44). The

47. Some of the Bulgarian traditional dances in simple duple meter are *Trite Pati* (The Three Times Dance), *Tropanka* (A Dance with Stomping), Graovsko Horo, and *Sborenka* (The Gathering Dance). All these dances have characteristic rhythms or tempos which do not match Ralchev's improvisation. I suggest that in this particular section of the suite, Ralchev's music should be perceived as free improvisation in a duple meter rather than a reference to a particular traditional folk dance.
48. Preferred tonicizations and standard cadences in Aeolian Aeolian/Phrygian polymode are illustrated in Example 15 and Example 16.



Example 43. Section 2, subsection **A**, #17, mm. 182–197.

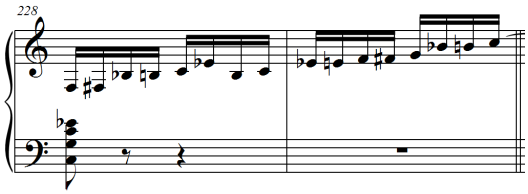


Example 44. Section 2, subsection **A**, #18, mm. 212–214.

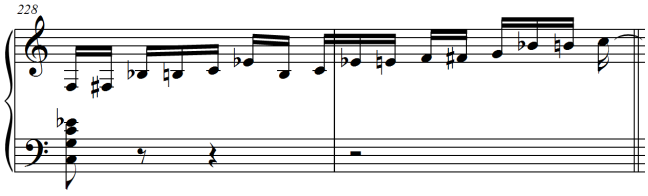
segment illustrated in the Example 44 also serves as an evaded cadence, an idea repeated at the end of the number in mm. 228–229 which also serves as a transition to the next kolyano (Example 45).

Bulgarian wedding musicians admire Ralchev's ability to improvise chromatic transitions or *prehodi* that obscure both the perception of the main meter and the primary mode.[49] Regardless of the perceived temporary rhythmic ambiguity, Ralchev's improvised prehodi always end on the right beat. However, the indication and labeling of grouping dissonances in Ralchev's prehodi provides little insight into Ralchev's approach to their construction in fast improvisations. As an accordion player myself, I hypothesize that a possible way to improvise the excerpt illustrated in Example 45 would be to regroup the sixteenth notes as 2+3 and think temporarily in the meter of $\frac{5}{16}$ as shown in the Example 46. If Ralchev was indeed thinking temporarily in $\frac{5}{16}$, he would arrive at his destination (C5, the starting note of #19) one sixteenth note earlier. The transcription illustrates precisely that; the C5 arrives early and it is tied across the bar line.

49. Many Bulgarian musicians have attempted to imitate Ralchev's prehodi combining chromaticism with grouping dissonances. With the exception of the accordion player Plamen Dimitrov from the town of Ruse, Northern Bulgaria, most wedding musicians have found that to be impossible.



Example 45. Section 2, subsection **A**, #18, mm. 228–229.

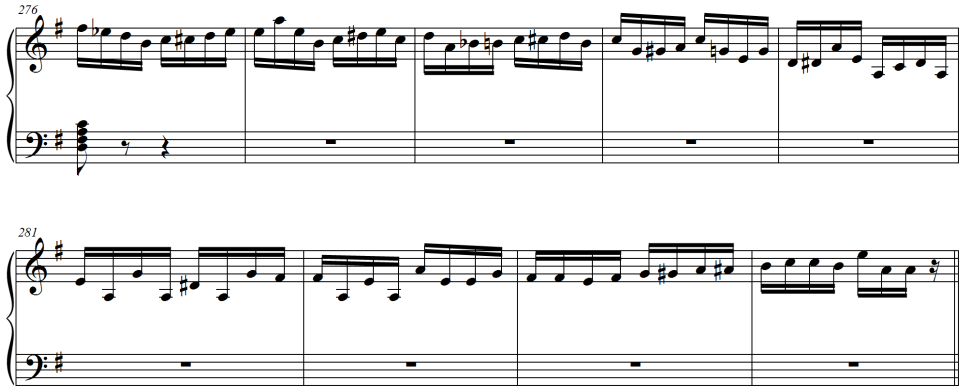


Example 46. Section 2, subsection **A**, #18, mm. 228–229, regrouped in $\frac{5}{16}$.

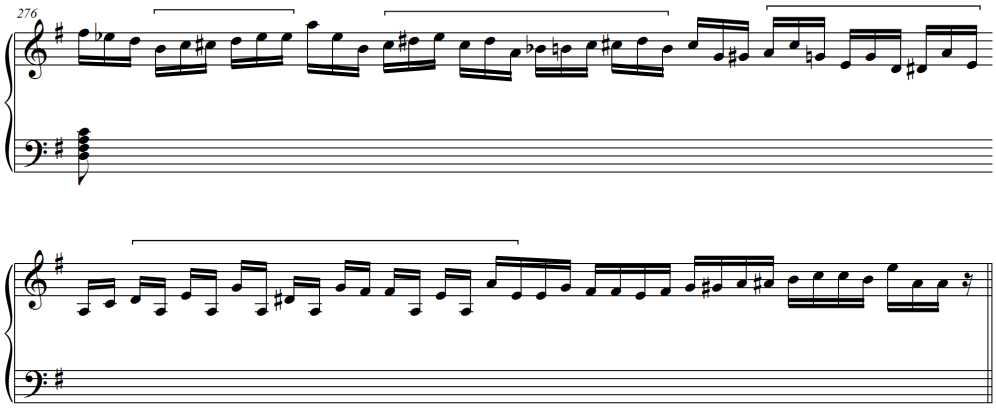
The following number, #19, is based on makam Karcigar from A (A-B-C-D-E♭-F♯-G-A), a mode which was briefly explored in Section 1. As previously stated, makam Karcigar is rarely encountered in Bulgarian folk music. However, in #19 Ralchev not only provides a full harmonization in Karcigar, but also uses the iii chord suggested by the makam to create a iii-i tonal juxtaposition in #20 (see Appendix A). As a tonal plan, a iii-i juxtaposition is typical for the traditional music of the neighboring country of Romania. The ascending bass line used by Ralchev in the left hand (mm. 230–233) is also atypical for Bulgarian wedding music but very common for Romanian bass lines. I hypothesize that Ralchev has borrowed both ideas, the iii-i juxtaposition and the ascending bass line, from his Romanian colleagues.

At the end of number 21, Ralchev brings back the concept of asymmetrical phrasing. Rather than closing the kolyano (#21), he truncates this last phrase with two measures and inserts one of his rhythmically complex prehodi which, in this particular case, extends to nine measures (Example 47). In this transitional segment, the grouping in four sixteenths is not clearly perceived from the recording. In addition to the chromaticism, Ralchev intentionally accents with his accordion bellows random notes which do not match the place of beats or hyperbeats. This performance technique further obscures the perception of the main meter and enhances the metrical dissonance.

My analytical interpretation of this segment (mm. 276–284) is based on the idea of regrouping. While in the previously analyzed example of a chromatic transition (Example 46), a regrouping of the sixteen notes as 3+2 illustrated a clear pattern and a probable analytical explanation, a regrouping of the notes in Example 47 cannot illustrate a clear pattern outlining a different meter. However, a regrouping of the notes as groups of three followed by groups of two and finally as groups of four may reveal Ralchev's advanced improvisatory technique applied to his long chromatic prehodi. In my view, Ralchev treats the entire



Example 47. Section 2, subsection **A**, #21, mm. 276–284.



Example 48. Section 2, subsection **A**, #21, mm. 276–284, regrouped.

segment (mm. 276–284) as one megameasure which he internally reorganizes in terms of groupings while he keeps track of the hypermeter in his mind. In order to illustrate the megameasure, I have removed the bar lines in Example 48 and regrouped the sixteenth notes. As seen in Example 48, a number of reoccurring patterns with similar melodic contour (bracketed in the example) suggest this particular type of regrouping. My interpretation, however, does not provide possible answers to two important questions: (1) How does Ralchev keep track of the hypermeter of the duple meter while performing accented rhythmic dissonances not matching the hyperbeats? and (2) How did he develop the advanced technique allowing him to improvise long and rhythmically complex chromatic prehodi which can span nine measures?

When wedding musicians explore grouping dissonances in megameasure structures, rhythmic patterns in the accompaniment provide important cues throughout the span of the megameasure.[50] These rhythmic cues help improvisers to "re-enter" the grouping of the primary meter before the beginning of the next megameasure cycle. As described in *Bulgarian*

50. For illustrations of typical rhythmic patterns in megameasures, refer to Kirilov (2015).

Harmony, megameasures combine two, four, or eight measures of the primary meter, i.e., the megameasures always comprise an even number of measures. In the absence of accompaniment, it is relatively easy for a soloist to lose track of the measure count and, therefore, the proper length of the megameasure. This is because there are too many mental processes taking place at the same time. While keeping track of the primary hypermeter, a wedding musician has to improvise chromatic melodies, create grouping dissonances (regrouping), and ignore the sequential inertia produced by reoccurring groups of three or two. As I have observed in Papazov's chromatic prehodi without accompaniment, which contain far fewer grouping dissonances as compared to Ralchev's, counting measures seems to be a low priority for Papazov. I hypothesize that in #21 of "Bulgarian Suite," Ralchev aimed for an eight-measure-long transition, but he overshot his point of arrival with one extra measure.

Ralchev marks the end of Section 2 of "Bulgarian Suite" with a restatement of #16 (as #24), which, as previously stated, has an important dividing role. In its previous occurrence, #16 had a conclusive and summarizing character while the restatement of the number in #24 anticipates the main idea of the third section of the suite, a return to the concept of mixed long asymmetrical meters. The following #25 (part of Section 3) also functions as a transition. It assimilates the divider role of #16 (#24) and recurs at the end of Section 3 as a transition to Section 4.

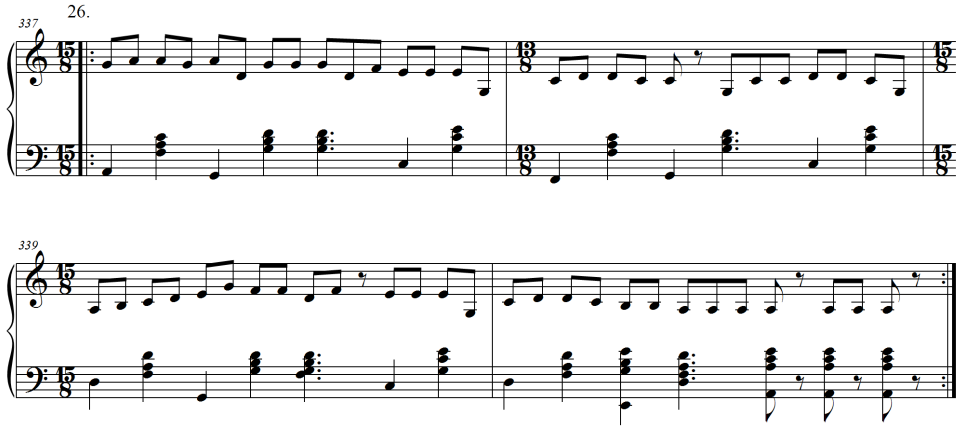
Analysis of Section 3

The third section of "Bulgarian Suite" (numbers 25–31 in the transcription) is relatively short, since it recapitulates ideas which have already been elaborated. Conceptually, Section 3 emphasizes symmetry. I will limit my analysis only to numbers which elaborate on concepts and compositional approaches which have not been observed prior to this point.

Example 49 summarizes Ralchev's metric choices in Section 3 of his suite. Number 26 of Section 3 illustrates an unusual heterometric row comprised of long meters. As seen in Example 50, #26 explores the idea of asymmetrical phrasing stemming from the heterometric row $\frac{15}{8}+\frac{13}{8}+\frac{15}{8}+\frac{15}{8}$. The last measure of the kolyano has an unusually grouped $\frac{15}{8}$ of the type 2+2+3+2+2+2. In my opinion, after #26, Ralchev intentionally avoids asymmetrical phrasing

#26: heterometric $\frac{15}{8}+\frac{13}{8}+\frac{15}{8}+\frac{15}{8}$
#27: combined metric group $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{11}{8}$
#28: asymmetrical meter $\frac{11}{8}$
#29: combined metric group $\frac{15}{8}+\frac{13}{8}$
#30 = 27 (combined metric group $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{11}{8}$)
#31 = 26 (heterometric; concludes section and transitions)

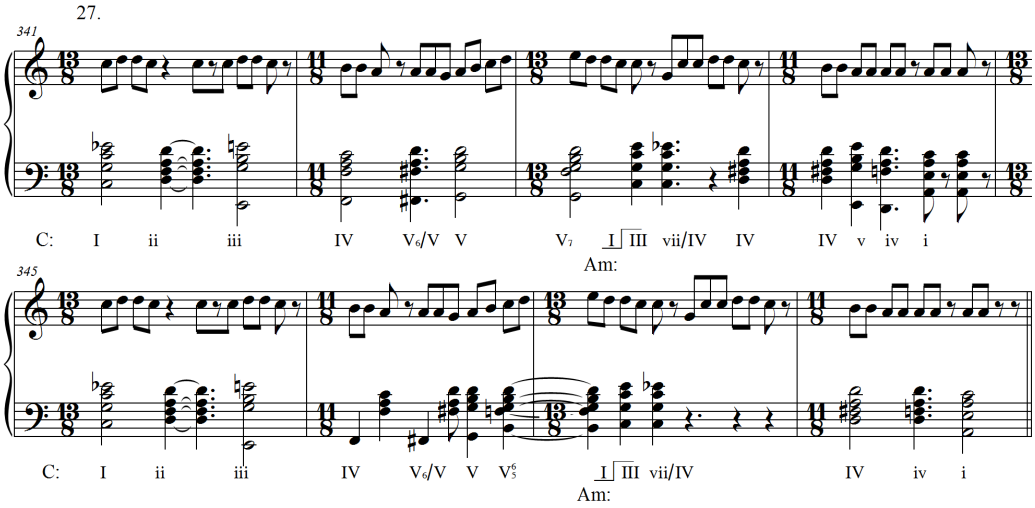
Example 49. Summary of meters used in Section 3.



Example 50. Section 3, #26, mm. 337–340.

and gradually progresses toward more symmetrical and clearly defined four-bar phrases, which become the norm for the following sections of the suite. In terms of harmony, the chord progression observed in #26 illustrates a standard III-i juxtaposition typical for the Aeolian mode.

The following number, #27, is based on a combined metric group of $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{11}{8}$. This kolyano is one of the few instances in "Bulgarian Suite" where Ralchev's chordal accompaniment is based on block chords (Example 51). Number 27 is in A Aeolian. The first measure of the kolyano does not contain scale degree 1. Its omission presents two possibilities for harmonization: a progression establishing A Aeolian or a progression starting in the relative major. A tonicization of the relative major is strongly suggested by the melody in the third measure of the kolyano (m. 343). Rather than delaying the tonicization to the third measure,



Example 51. Section 3, #27, mm. 341–348.

Ralchev incorporates an ascending bass line (C-D-E-F-F♯) which leads to the dominant of the relative major, G. The bass line is "echoed" by a standard cadence for Aeolian embellished with a tonicization of IV, an idea borrowed from makam Karcigar. Ralchev was the first wedding musician to modify the standard plagal cadence IV-iv-i to vii/IV-iv-i by offering a "taste" of a Hicaz cadence (vii-I) in the middle of Aeolian.

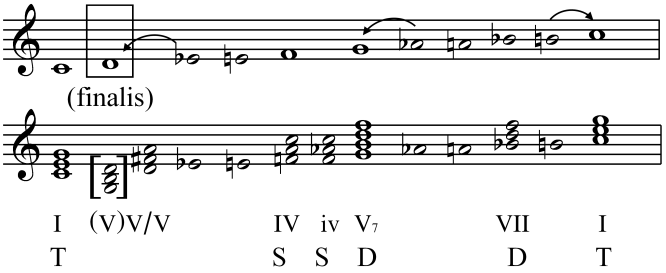
Analysis of Section 4

The fourth section of the suite incorporates folk motives from the Shope region, precomposed kolyanos, and wedding-style improvisations. In this section, Ralchev moves away from the ideas of grouping dissonance, asymmetrical phrasing, and explorations of combined metric groups or heterometric rows. Section 4 is based on a single asymmetrical meter, $\frac{7}{8}$, grouped as 3+2+2.

Shope Major

In Section 4, Ralchev introduces a different type of asymmetry found in his harmonizations and rooted in the inconclusive cadences of traditional music from the Shope region. The asymmetry becomes clearly visible in the chord derivation of Shope major illustrated in the example below (Example 52). In all other scales found in Bulgarian music, triads are constructed upwards. In Shope major, the last chord is thought of and constructed downwards.[51]

The first atypical characteristic of Shope major is its finalis (the second scale degree) which implies dominant harmony and half cadences. As shown in the Example 52, the typical



Preferred cadences:	V_7/V-V
Preferred tonicization:	IV (or iv)
Standard progressions:	I-IV-V_7/V-V or I-iv-V_7/V-V
Finalis:	$\hat{2}$ (or $\hat{7}$)

Example 52. Harmonic vocabulary in Shope major.

51. Shope major and the polymodes based on Shope major are the only scales found in Bulgarian music which include triads built downwards. For more information, refer to Kirilov (2015).

final cadences in Shope major are of the type V/V-V. In ascending motion, Shope major melodies are harmonized with triads built upwards. In descending motion, however, the second scale degree supports two triads, V_7/V built upwards and V built downwards. Another unusual characteristic of Shope major is the location of the harmony voice in parallel thirds. In contrast to all other scales, modes, and makams found in Bulgarian traditional music, the parallel voice in Shope major is located a third below the main melody. Moreover, the parallel melody would have the unthinkable, from a Western music theory perspective, seventh scale degree (the leading tone) as the finalis.

From a harmonic point of view, harmonizations of melodies and songs in Shope major seem to have a "tipping point." Shope major progressions start with typical chords successions for Ionian. Once a "tipping point" is reached, the harmony "flips" and builds a half cadence.[52] I consider the chordal vocabulary of Shope major a type of harmonic asymmetry which has no analog in the Western musical traditions.

In its most basic form (without variable scale degrees), a Shope major scale from C has the pitch content of C-D-E-F-G-A-B♭-C (see Example 52). C is perceived as tonic as a result of steady drones on G found in traditional Bulgarian polyphony and harmonizations in Shope major with half cadences. If the harmony and the drones are completely removed, the pitch content of the basic version of Shope major matches the pitch content of D Aeolian with D as the finalis and C as subtonic (C)-D-E-F-G-A-B♭-C-(D). As previously stated, Bulgarian melodies in Aeolian are typically harmonized with tonicizations of the relative major V/III-III. For D Aeolian this would involve a C chord tonicizing the relative major F. To this point, the chord succession in D Aeolian completely matches the beginning of the standard chord progression in Shope major from C (I-IV or C-F). After the relative major in Aeolian is reached (the tipping point), the harmonic progressions in Aeolian and Shope major continue in opposite directions. Aeolian chord progressions involve cadences of the types IV-iv-i or iv-v-i which establish D minor as the tonic. Shope major progressions build half cadences of the type V/V-V and establish G as the final chordal vertical. The finalis for both modes remains the same, D.

The origins of the half cadences in Shope major could be traced back to traditional polyphony and the steady drones of Bulgarian bagpipes. The bagpipe drones limit the number of scales which can be played against a steady drone. I hypothesize that through experimentation, bagpipers discovered that that they could perform minor melodies in Aeolian with a finalis a fifth above the drone. In harmonized repertoire, the fifth between the drone and the finalis outlines the dominant triad constructed downwards from the finalis.

A second possible explanation for the origins of Shope major scales may be related to the construction of early accordions, *dvuredki* (with two bass rows), which were capable of

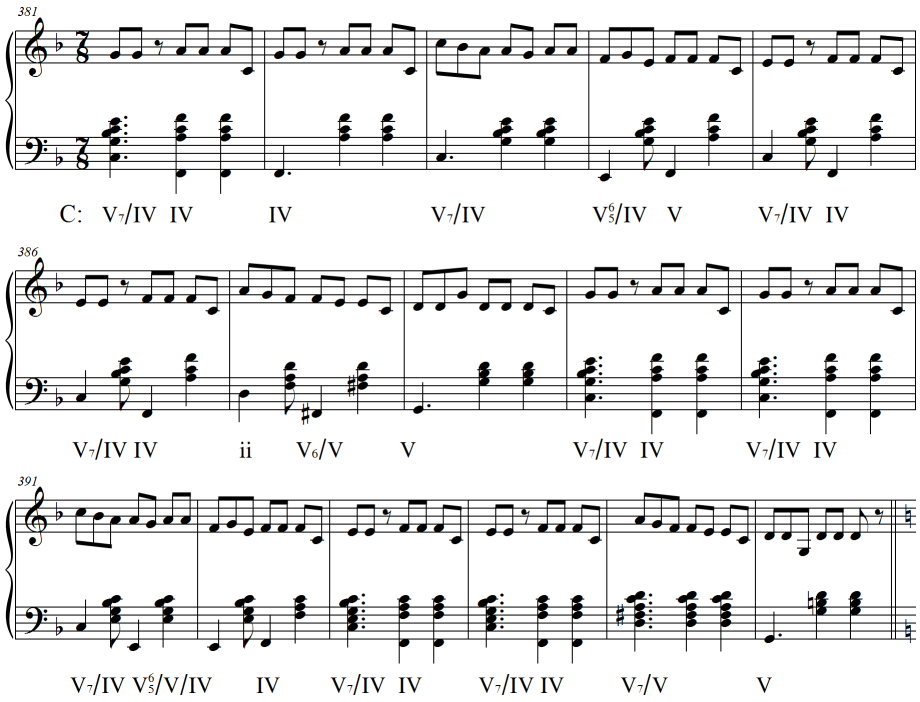
52. The "tipping point" in Shope major progressions is a subdominant chord, IV or iv.

harmonizing melodies with major triads only.[53] The harmonic reinterpretation of Aeolian as Shope major allowed the dvuredki players to accompany minor songs and melodies with major triads only. This becomes evident from the basic harmonic progression in Shope major, I-IV-V/V-V, which includes only major triads.[54] Once the harmonic aesthetics of Shope major became established, musicians began to apply the Shope final half cadences to other minor modes, polymodes, and makams, such as makam Mustear (D-E-F-G♯-A-B-C-D). The harmonic interpretation of Mustear as Shope major would outline a basic harmonic progression of I-iv-V/V-V. Since this particular chord progression cannot be performed on dvuredki-type accordions, I hypothesize that Shope major interpretations of Mustear and minor polymodes belong to recent layers of the Bulgarian harmonic tradition.

Ralchev's Harmonizations in Shope Major

Section 4 of "Bulgarian Suite" begins with a kolyano (#32) in C major (Example 53). The presence of the B♭ in the scale alludes to Mixolydian as the mode in #32. However, the finalis of the scale, the second scale degree, suggests a classification of the scale as Shope major.

Most of Ralchev's harmonizations in Shope major have a looping effect of the type I-

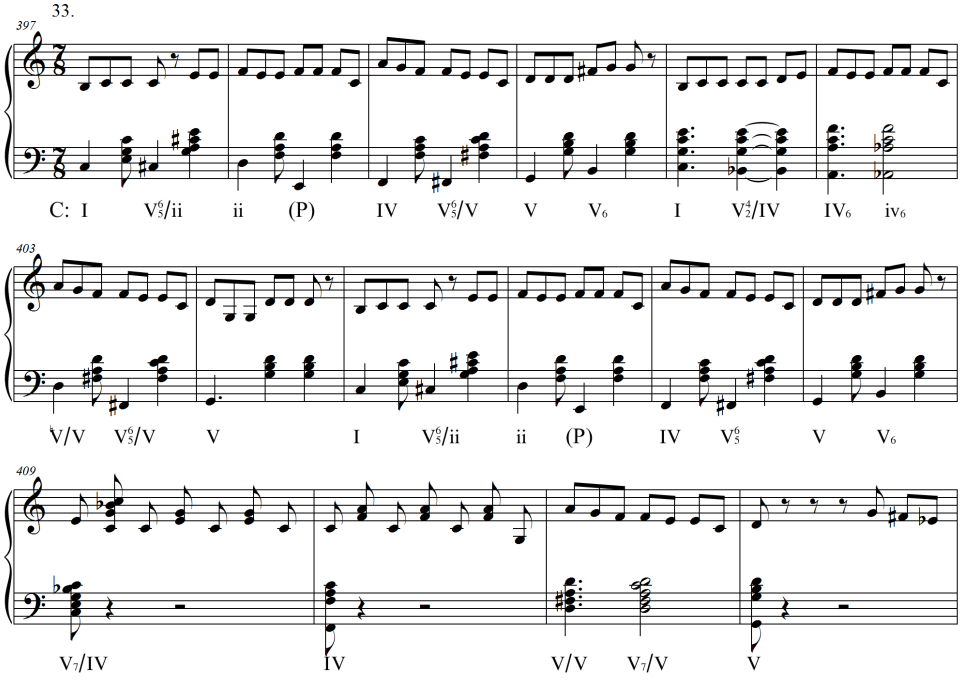


Example 53. Section 4, #32, mm. 381–396.

53. The bass side of dvuredki had two vertical rows, one for bass notes and a second row with major triads.
54. Bulgarian musicians refer to the basic harmonic progression in Shope major as *Shopska harmonia* (Shope harmony) which involves constructing chords downwards. It is noteworthy that both professionally trained musicians and those from the oral tradition do not think of the Shope final cadences as half cadences.

IV(iv)-V$_7$/V-V.[55] As illustrated in Example 53, Ralchev embellishes the standard Shope major progression I-IV(iv)-V$_7$/V-V by modifying I as V$_7$/IV. The transformation of I as a secondary dominant (V$_7$/IV) further weakens the perception of tonic and intensifies the looping effect of the harmonic progression. In such a harmonic context, IV and V are perceived as resolutions while the real tonic, C, is never established with a cadence. From a listener's perspective, tonicizations of IV and the final half cadences propel the music forward in search of clearer harmonic closure.

Example 54 illustrates one of Ralchev's masterful elaborations on the standard Shope major chord progression. As seen in Example 54, Ralchev incorporates a chromatic ascending bass line connecting I to V (mm. 397–400). Ralchev's chord progression includes I-V$^6_5$/ii-ii-ii (Dm/E)-IV-V$^6_5$/V-V and his bass line outlines the ascent, C-C♯-D-E-F-F♯-G. The second phrase (mm. 400–404) is harmonized with a descending bass line (C-B♭-A-A♭) and chord progression I-V$^4_2$/IV-IV$_6$-iv$_6$ followed by a typical half cadence for Shope major of the type V/V-V$^6_5$/V-V. The last phrase of #33 serves as a transition to #34 (refer to Example 54). Following his patterns for prehodi, Ralchev once more employs the technique of rhythmic dissonances by regrouping the groups of twos and threes in mm. 409–410. The standard grouping pattern for $\frac{7}{8}$ (Muzhka Ruchenitsa) is 3+2+2. As seen in Example 54, however, Ralchev regroups the $\frac{7}{8}$ meter in series of groups of two. His technique of regrouping in twos becomes particularly clear in m. 410.

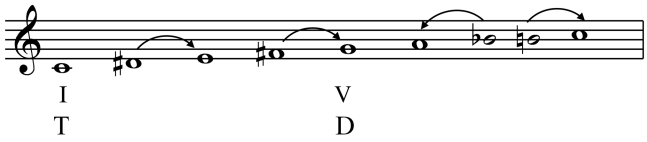


Example 54. Section 4, #33, mm. 397–412.

55. The Shope half cadences sound inconclusive. The resolution of the final V chord to I chord at the beginning of the next phrase propels the harmonic progression forward. This harmonic motion creates an endless loop of the type "the end is a new beginning."

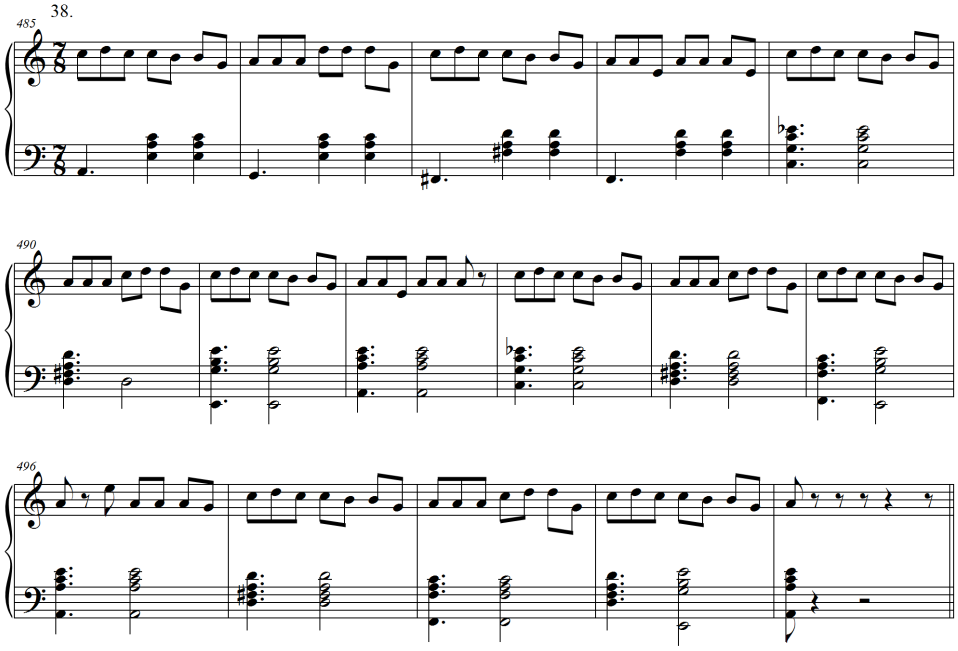
Numbers 34–37 are improvised and follow the melodic and harmonic conventions observed in other pieces of the wedding music repertoire. Ralchev improvises in D Hicaz (#34), C Hicaz (#36), and the C major polymode (#37) illustrated in Example 55.[56]

The last kolyano of the section (#38) brings back A Aeolian and builds up listeners' expectations for closure and the end of a section (Example 56). As seen from the example, Ralchev's phrases are only two measures long. Short-phrased kolyanos are typically utilized at the ends of dance pieces where a melodic idea is repeated multiple times, building listeners' expectations for a forthcoming end. Ralchev's kolyano (#38) has eight phrases. He reinforces the expectations for section closure by changing his accompaniment pattern from bass and



Preferred cadences:	V-I
Preferred tonicization:	none
Standard progressions:	I-IV-vii°/V-V_7-I
Finalis:	$\hat{1}$

Example 55. C major polymode.



Example 56. Section 4, #38, mm. 485–500.

56. For more information on wedding-style repertoire and analyzed pieces, and on major polymodes used for improvisations in wedding music, refer to Kirilov (2015).

chords, which outline the beat level for phrases 1 and 2, to block chords underlining hyperbeats as 3-4. Working against harmonic expectations, Ralchev incorporates asymmetrical phrasing and truncates the last measure of #38 (Example 56), a technique he uses throughout the suite.

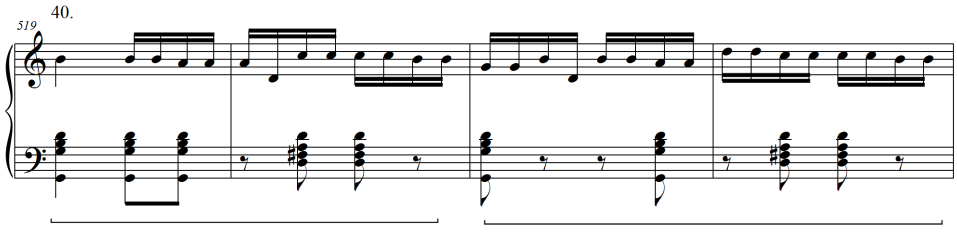
Analysis of Section 5

In Section 5, Ralchev further elaborates on the possibilities offered by Shope major harmonic progressions. The opening phrases of the free-rhythm melody (subsection **A**) illustrate harmonizations in Aeolian. Gradually, as the melody descends to the lower register and approaches the second scale degree, Ralchev's harmonizations transition to Shope major progressions with their typical final half cadences and dominant triads constructed downwards.

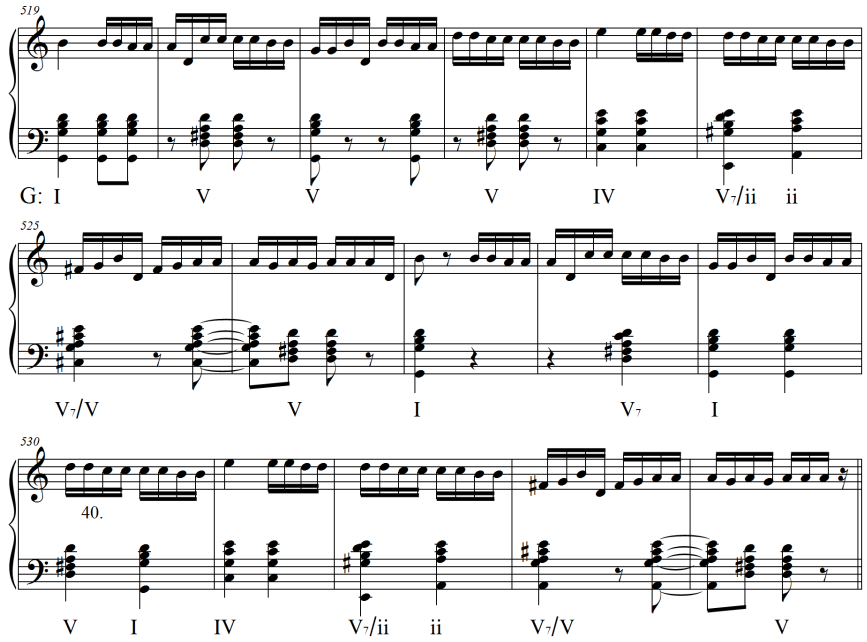
Subsection **B** is in a duple meter and illustrates typical rhythmic accompaniment patterns for the dance from the Shope region Graovsko Horo, bracketed in Example 57. Throughout subsection **B**, Ralchev experiments with expansions of the standard Shope major progression I-IV(iv)-V_7/V-V. As seen in Example 58, Ralchev incorporates a tonicization of ii which allows him to create a root motion by fifths V_7/ii-ii-V_7/V-V.

Subsection **C** of Section 5 is based on the fast dance Sitno Shopsko in a compound duple meter. It is noteworthy that Bulgarian scholars and performers consider this dance to be in a simple duple meter with two triplets per measure. In order to be consistent with American scholarship, I have transcribed this section in compound duple meter. From the viewpoint of rhythmic accompaniment in Sitno Shopsko and Pravo Horo, a dance also based on two groups of three per measure, the accompaniment could be organized in four eighth notes per measure (simple duple), six eighth notes per measure (compound duple), or in between (impossible to notate correctly with Western notation).

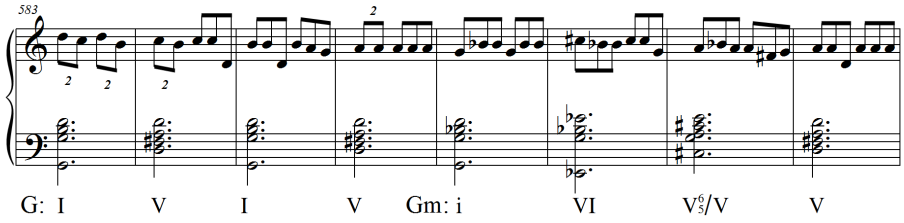
In Subsection **C** of Section 5, Ralchev introduces several polymodes based on Shope major. Example 59 illustrates a polymode that blends the basic form of Shope major (G-A-B-C-D-E-F-G) and makam Mustear (G-A-B♭-C♯-D-E-F-G). Melodies using this polymodal collection develop in Shope major first, accompanied by the standard chordal vocabulary for Shope major, and transition to makam Mustear, which is a minor makam. There are two



Example 57. Typical rhythmic accompaniment patterns in Graovsko Horo.



Example 58. Harmony in #40, mm. 519–534.

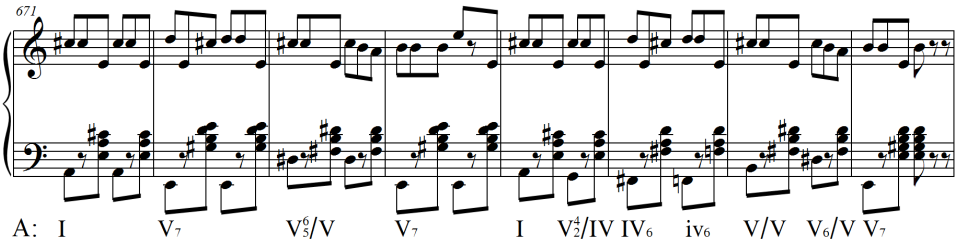


Example 59. Section 5, subsection **C**, #44, mm. 583–590.

possible tonics, major and minor respectively, which never appear as part of harmonic resolutions in a Western sense. As seen from Example 59, both G major and G minor triads can be considered tonics.

The last numbers of Section 5 are in A and B Hicaz. These kolyanos establish a plateau of harmonic and structural stability by moving away from the inconclusive Shope cadences. The kolyanos in Hicaz (#48–50) are performed in very fast tempos and create a local climax for subsection **C**.

Bulgarian musicians often employ Hicaz kolyanos in fast tempos as the final kolyanos of pieces. The expectation of a forthcoming end is established when a kolyano in Hicaz modulates a whole step up (from A Hicaz to B Hicaz) and the tempo increases along with the modulation. Ralchev skillfully establishes this expectation. Rather than ending the suite with #49 or #50, however, Ralchev adds an extra kolyano at the end of Section 5 which brings back the inconclusive Shope major harmonizations (Example 60). The added kolyano (#51) suggests

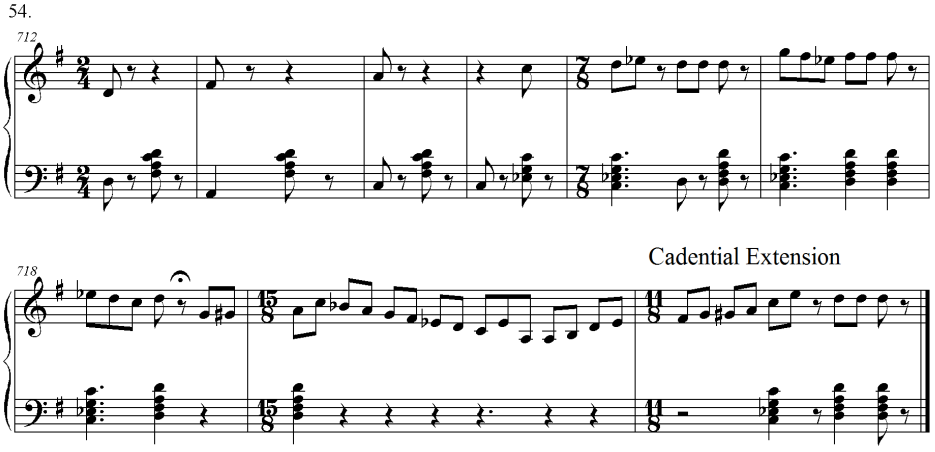


Example 60. Half cadences in #51.

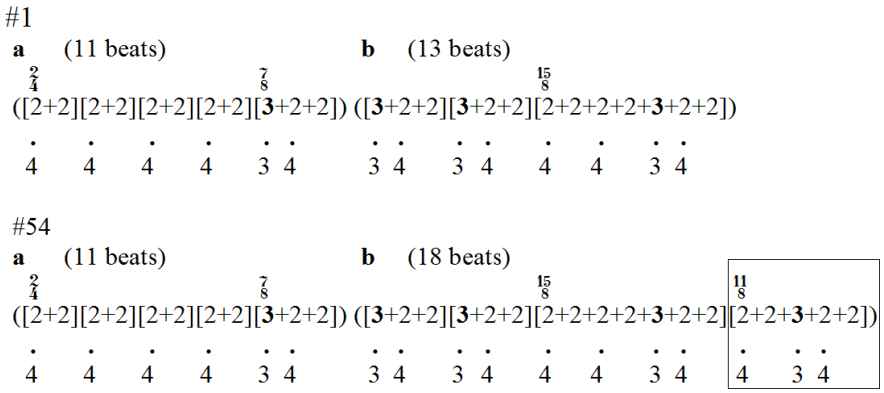
that Ralchev intends to build a different culmination before the end of his "Bulgarian Suite." As seen in Example 60, in #51 Ralchev pushes the harmonic instability of the Shope half cadences even further by adopting V^6_5/V-V_7 and V_6/V-V_7 as his final half cadences.

Analysis of Section 6

The last section of the suite, Section 6, serves as a recapitulation that restates the opening kolyanos of Section 1 and echoes the initial ideas of asymmetrical phrasing, heterometric rows, and rhythmic dissonances. A detailed comparison between Section 1 and Section 6 highlights some differences in Ralchev's accompaniment. As seen in the transcription, in the last section of the suite, Ralchev reharmonizes several phrases and gives preferences to perpetual bass–chord accompaniment rather than the accents with block chords observed in Section 1. The most obvious difference emerges from the last kolyano of "Bulgarian Suite" (#54), where Ralchev introduces a cadential extension through a new heterometric row (Example 61). As Example 61 illustrates, Ralchev inserts an additional measure of $\frac{11}{8}$ which postpones the final cadence of the suite with five beats. Example 62 compares the groupings and hypermeter in the first number of the suite, #1, and the last number, #54.



Example 61. Cadential extension in #54.



Example 62. Hypermeter level 1 of #1 compared to #54.

Besides the incorporation of a new heterometric row ($\frac{2}{4}+\frac{7}{8}+\frac{15}{8}+\frac{11}{8}$), Ralchev's final statement in "Bulgarian Suite" (mm. 719–720) is reinforced by an unexpected rest in m. 718 and a V-shaped melodic gesture, a descent in Hicaz to the lower register followed by a chromatic ascent to the upper tonic, D. Through this V-shaped melodic gesture, Ralchev explores the range of his accordion for one last time at the end his "Bulgarian Suite."

Conclusion

While being a highly praised piece, "Bulgarian Suite," and Petar Ralchev's compositional techniques in general, are often considered by Bulgarian traditional musicians to be difficult to analyze. The present analysis, however, reveals that a great portion of Ralchev's compositional processes involve balanced asymmetry, heterometric rows, combined metric groups, vertical displacement, internal expansion, elision, truncation, and grouping dissonance. Ralchev's harmonic approach is innovative if compared to most wedding concert repertoire from the same time period. In Ralchev's harmonic accompaniment, tonal juxtapositions expand to structural contrasts while standard tonal plans are often obscured by metric manipulations. His expanded harmonic vocabulary features an increased number of tonicizations and the incorporation of uncommon progressions. The last sections of the suite illustrate Ralchev's ability to exploit the inherent harmonic instability of Shope major progressions, and his use of faster tempos in search of structural closure.

The analysis shows that in "Bulgarian Suite" Ralchev masterfully demonstrates many of the characteristic features of Bulgarian music along with many of the innovations developed by musicians from the wedding-style tradition. The opening sections of the suite contains complex heterometric rows and combined metric groups involving combining long meters, such as $\frac{13}{8}+\frac{9}{8}$. Ralchev masterfully juxtaposes combined metric groups with heterometric rows in combination with the juxtaposition of harmonic, registral, dynamic, and tempo contrasts. My analysis highlights Ralchev's ability to compose and improvise summarizing kolyanos at the ends of sections, build listeners' expectations for closure, and

play with these expectations by avoiding final cadences. This article also demonstrates Ralchev's ability to employ metrical dissonances in both pre-composed, improvised sections, and chromatic prehodi.

Many wedding style performers have attempted to compose pieces similar in style and difficulty to Ralchev's "Bulgarian Suite." However, most of these musicians lacked Ralchev's performing experience and knowledge of older repertoires, which he acquired through years of performing with Papazov and the renowned wedding-style violin player Georgi Yanev. Further studies should pay particular attention to the concert pieces in wedding style composed by Ivan Milev, Neshko Neshev, Georgi Yanev, Peyo Peev, Nedyalko Nedyalkov, Plamen Dimitrov, and other innovators of contemporary Bulgarian wedding music.

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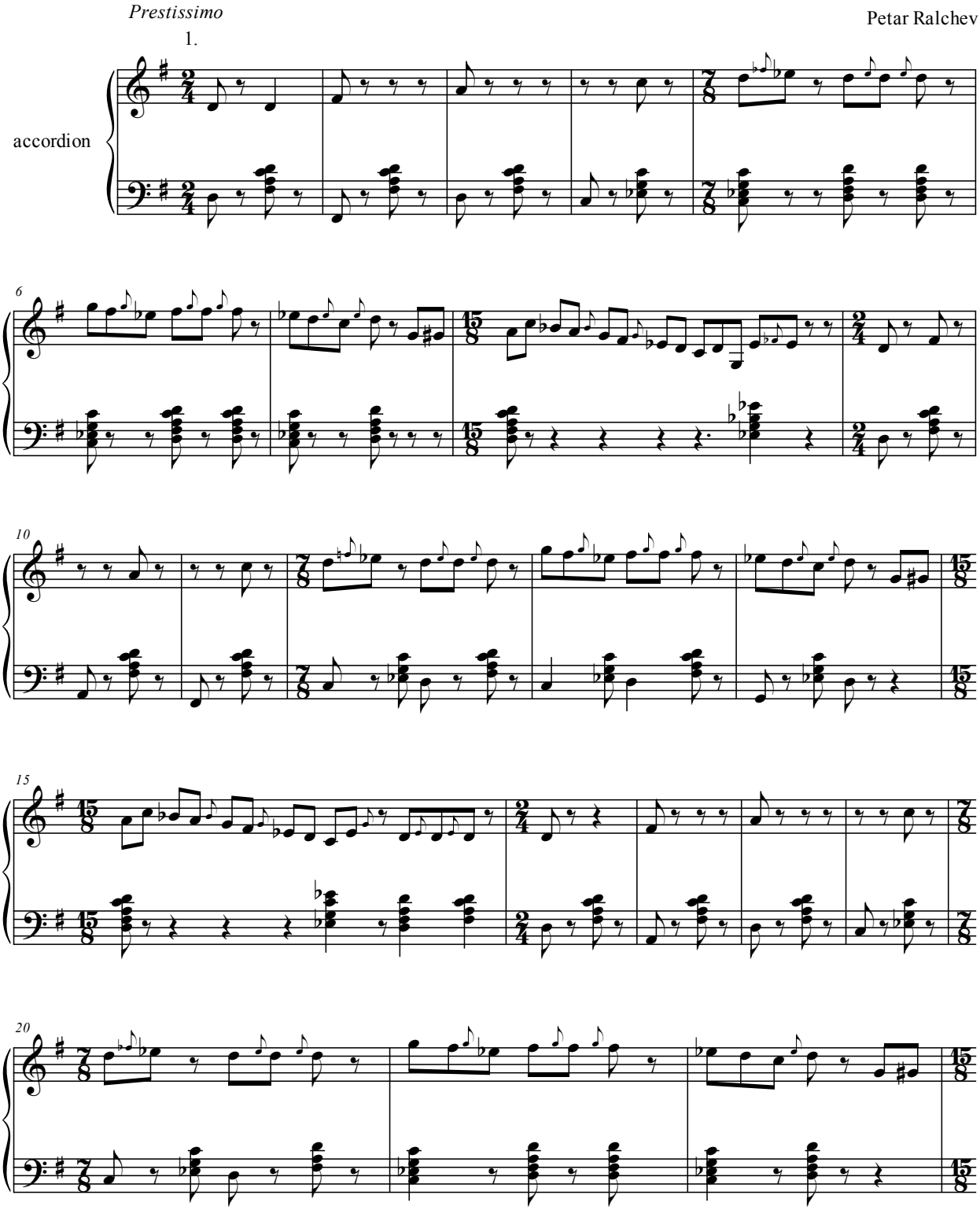
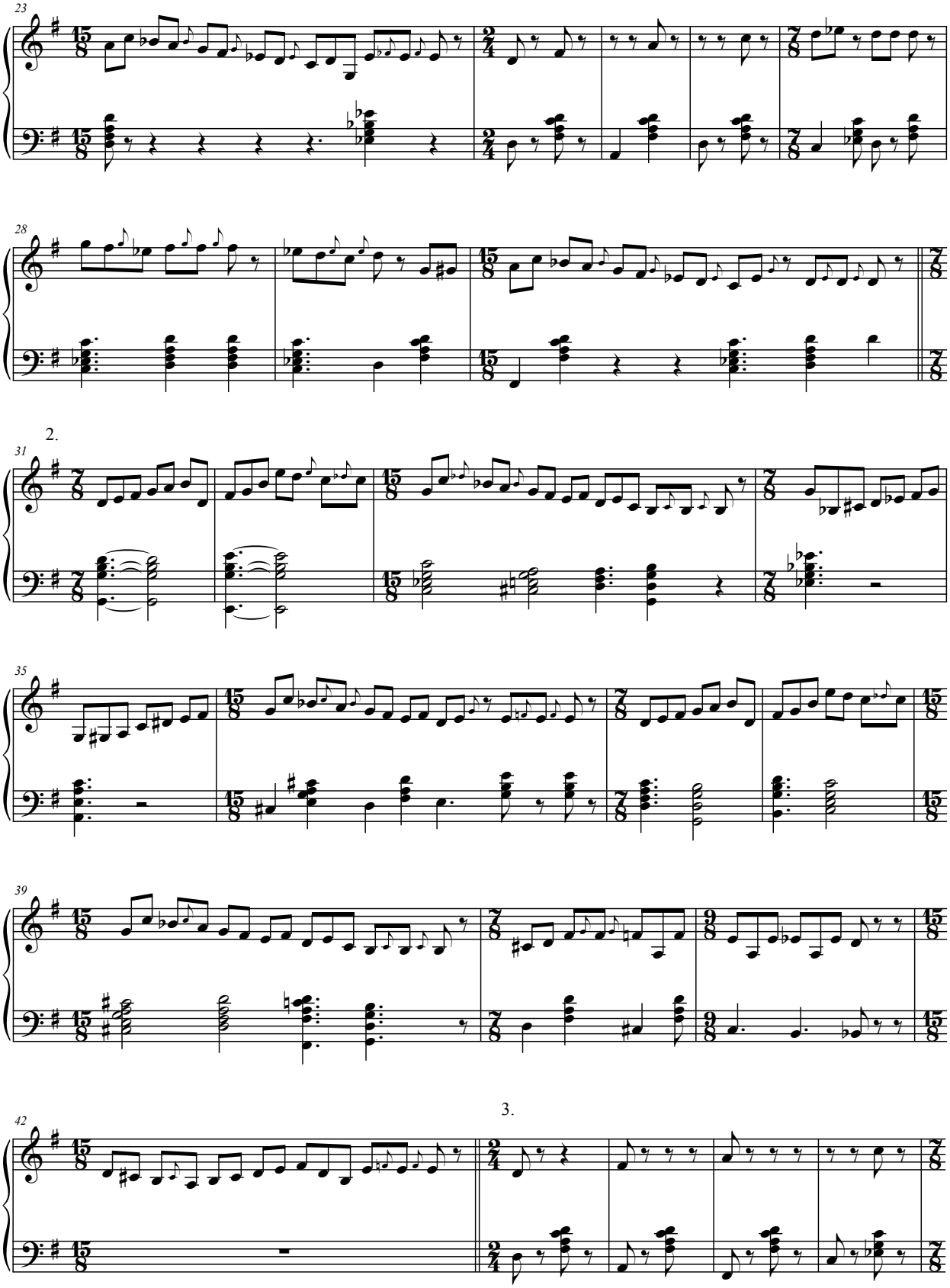
APPENDIX A

Transcription of "Bulgarian Suite"

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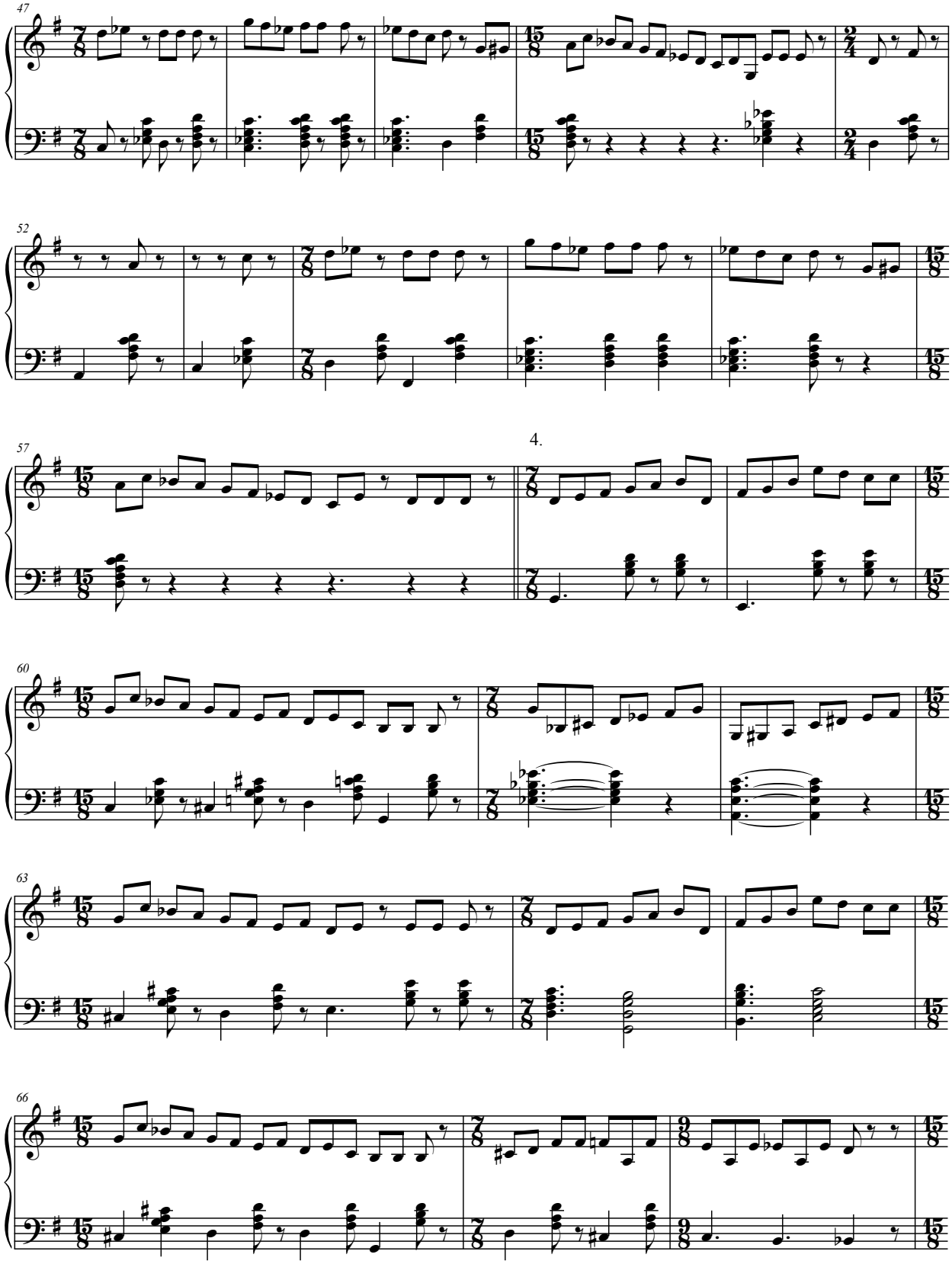
28
2.
31
35
39
3.
42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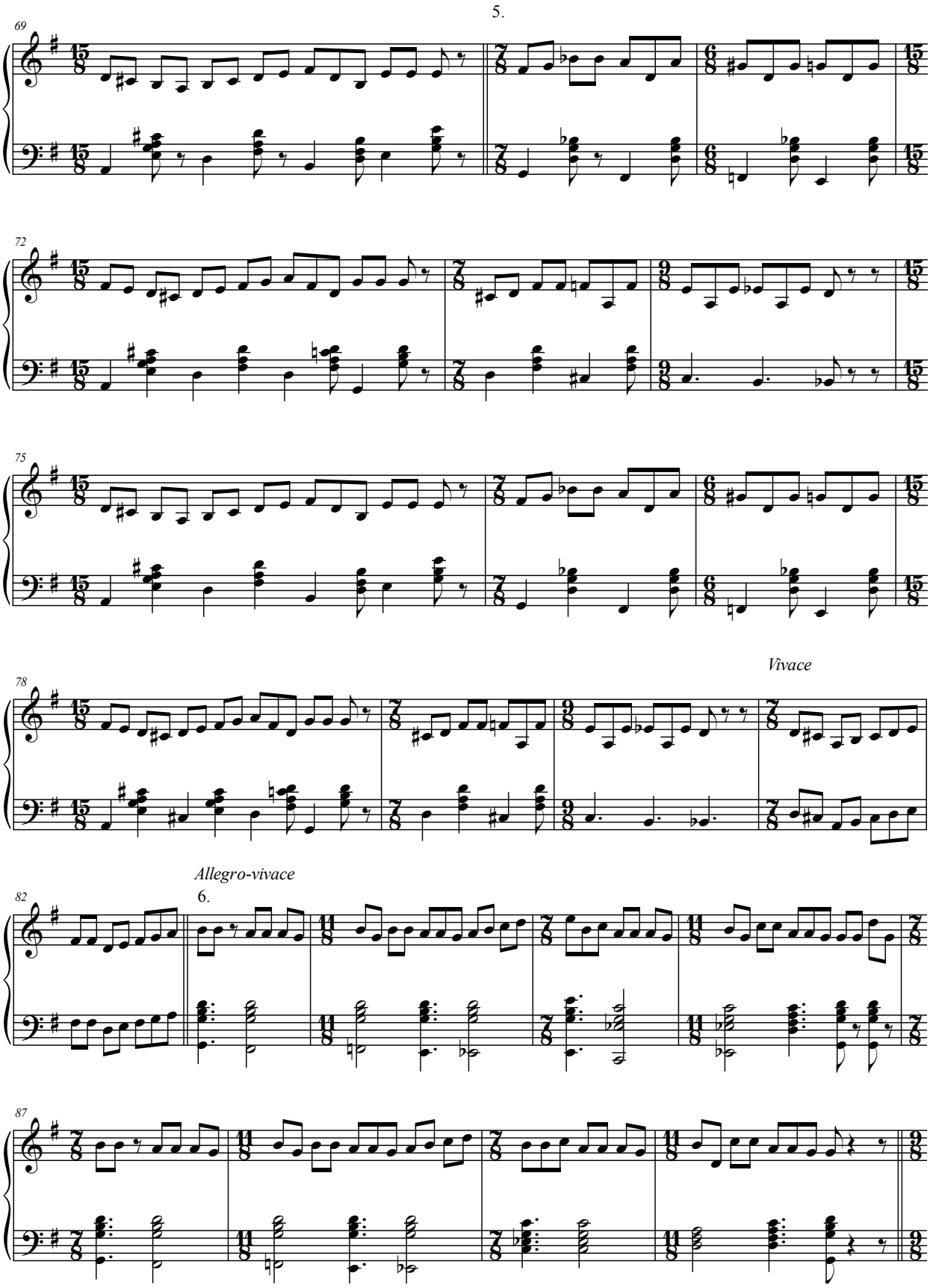
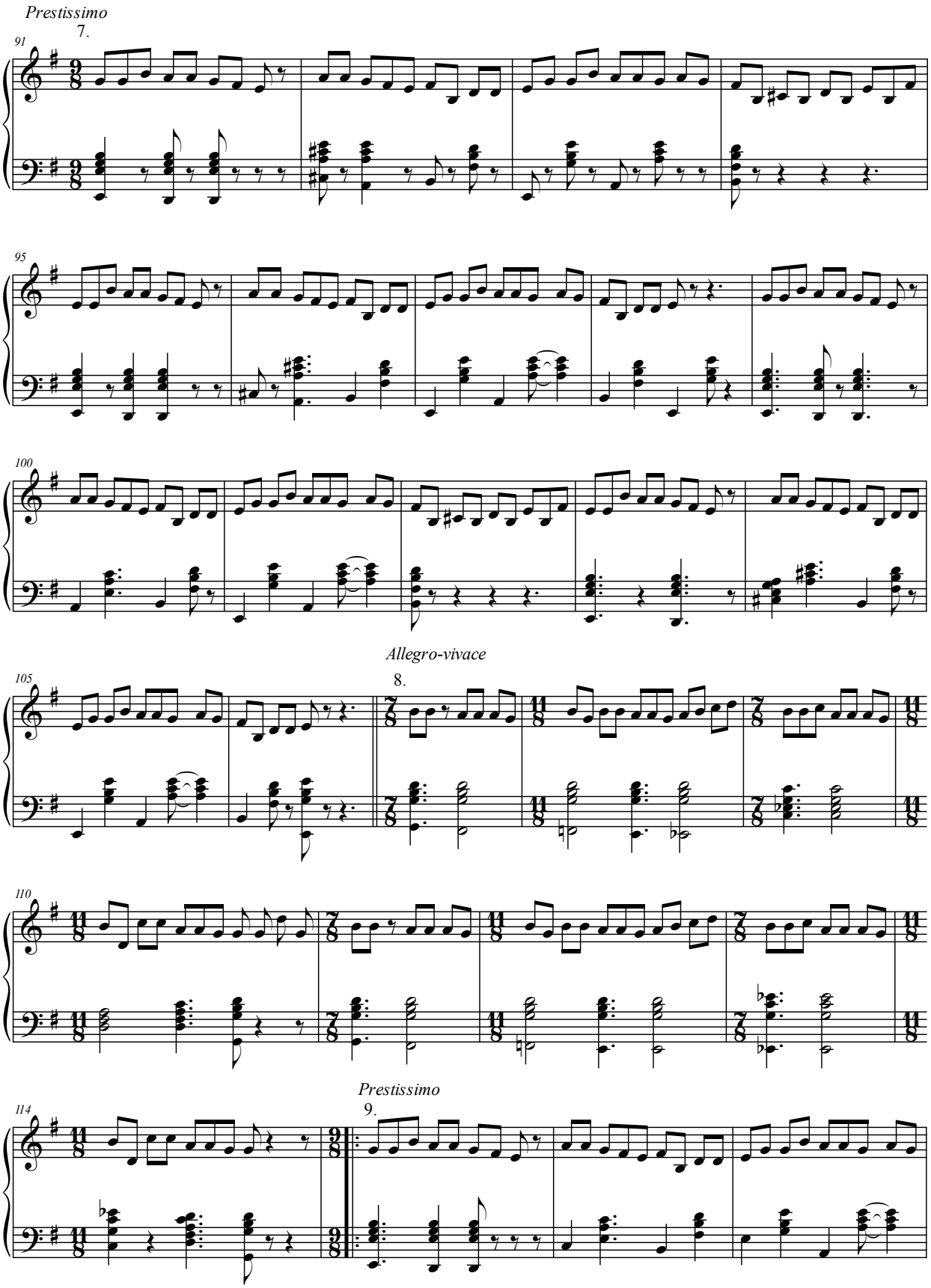
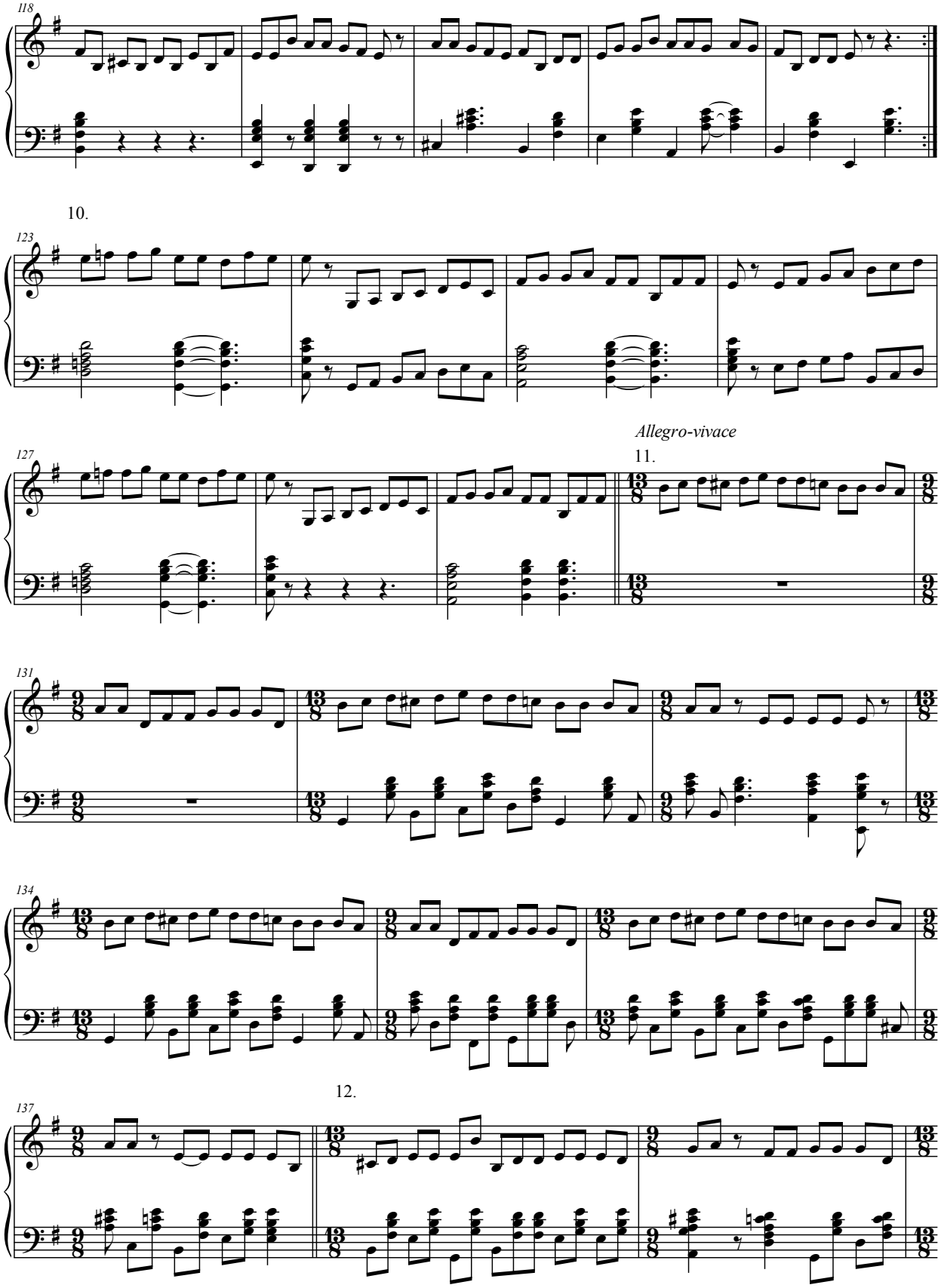
52
57
4.
60
63
66


5.
69
72
75
Vivace
78
Allegro-vivace
6.
82
87


Prestissimo
7.
91
95
100
Allegro-vivace
8.
105
110
Prestissimo
9.
114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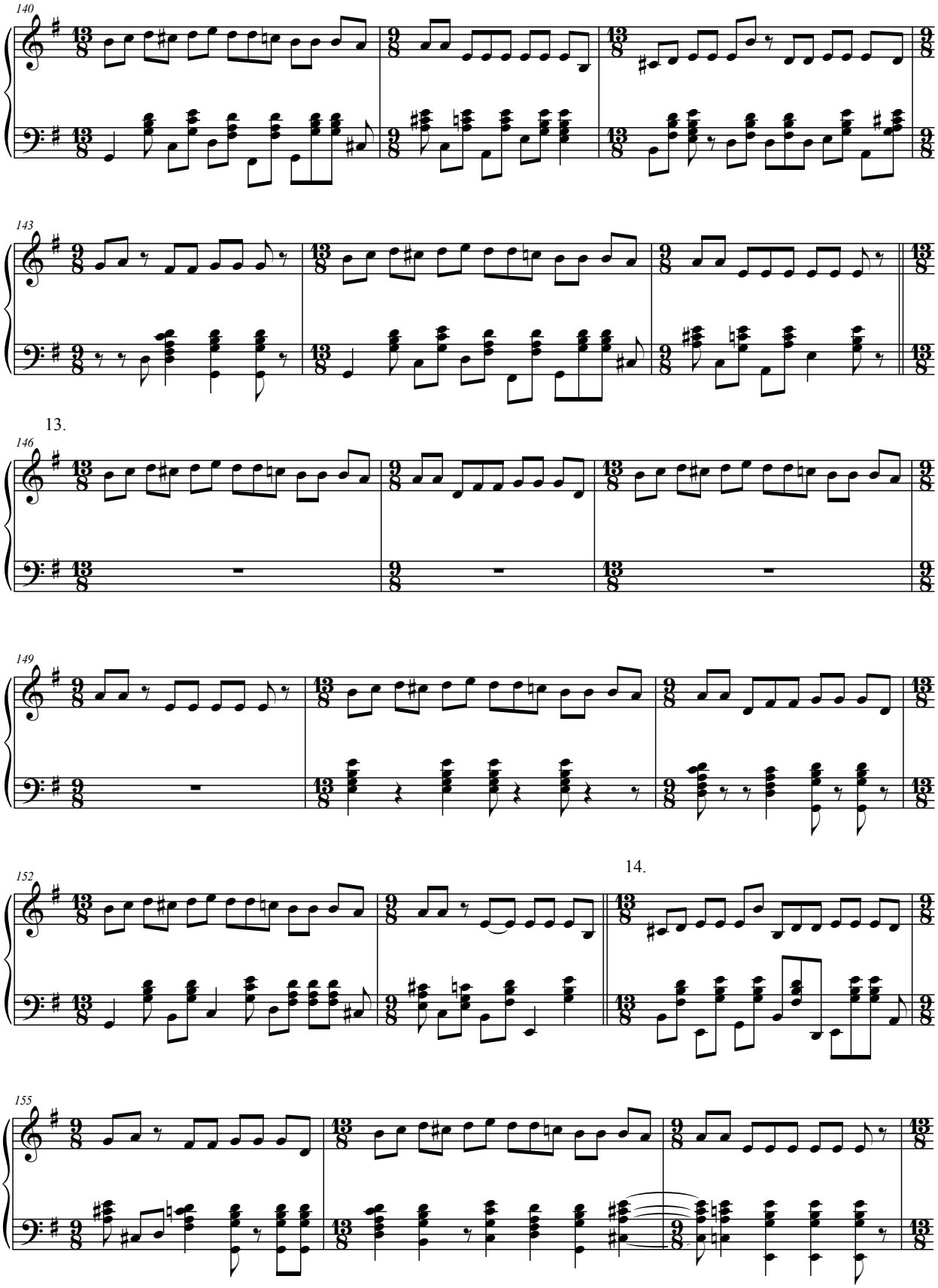
10.
123
Allegro-vivace
11.
127
131
134
12.
137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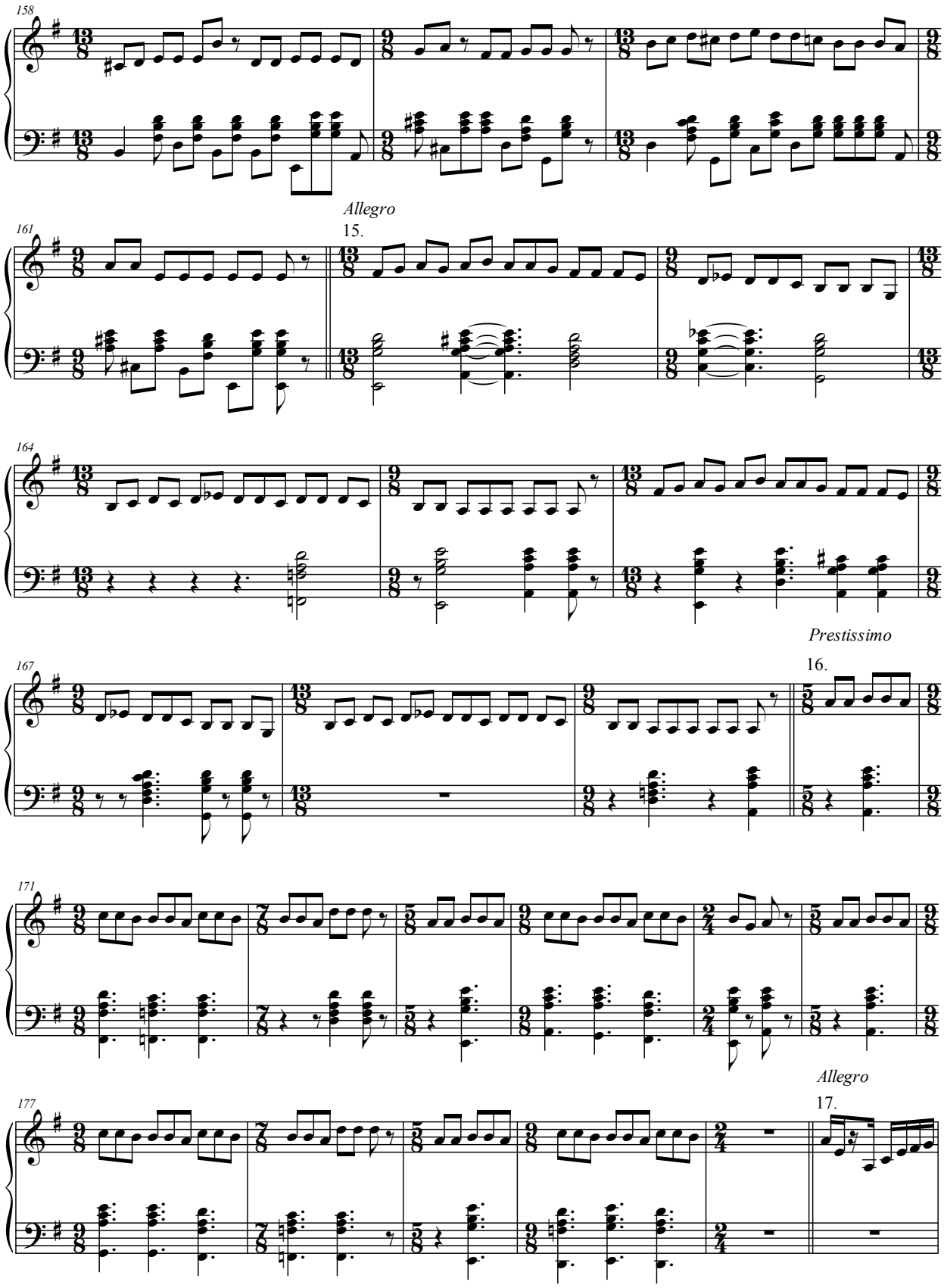
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Allegro
15.
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164
Prestissimo
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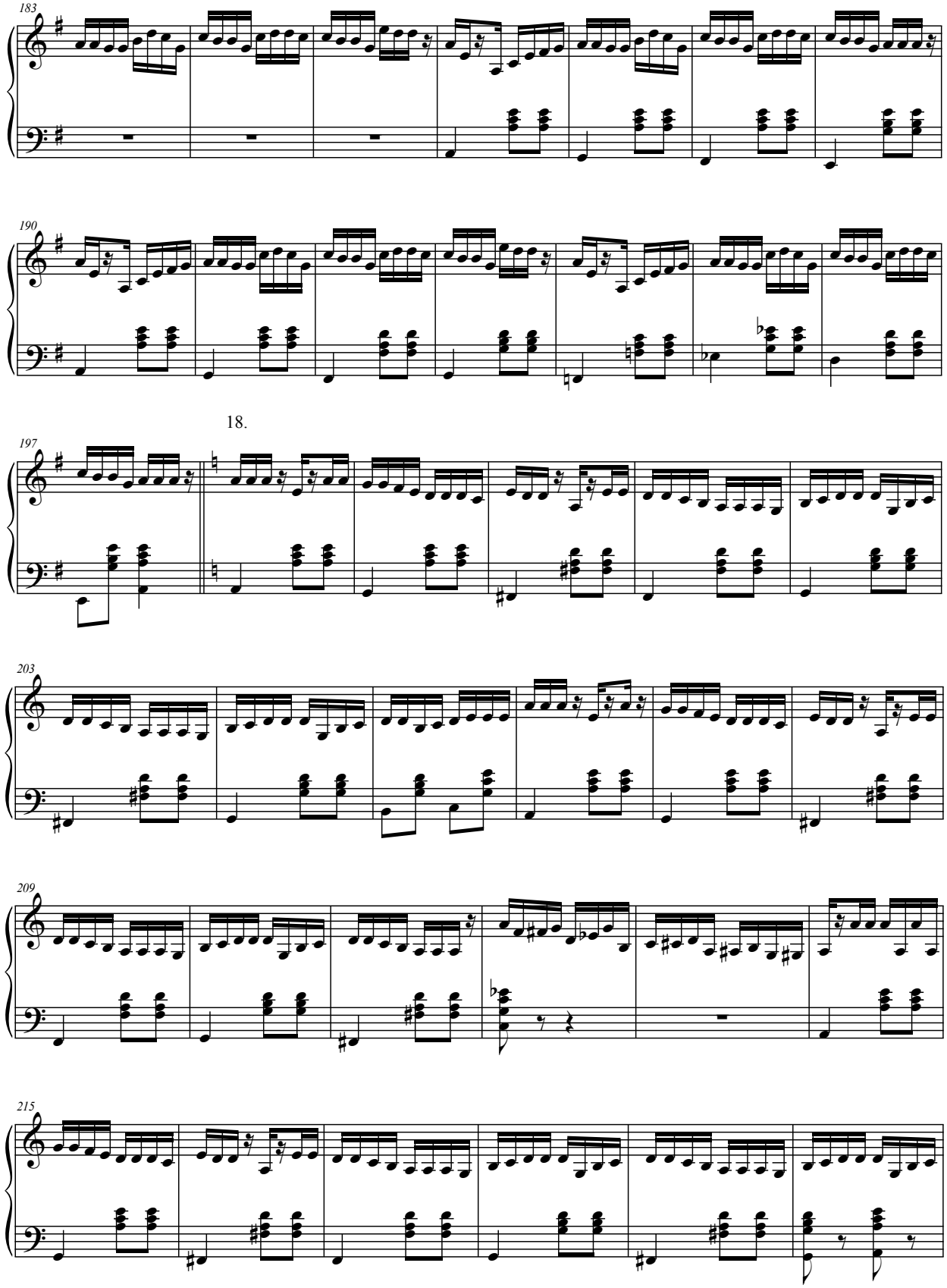
Allegro
17.
177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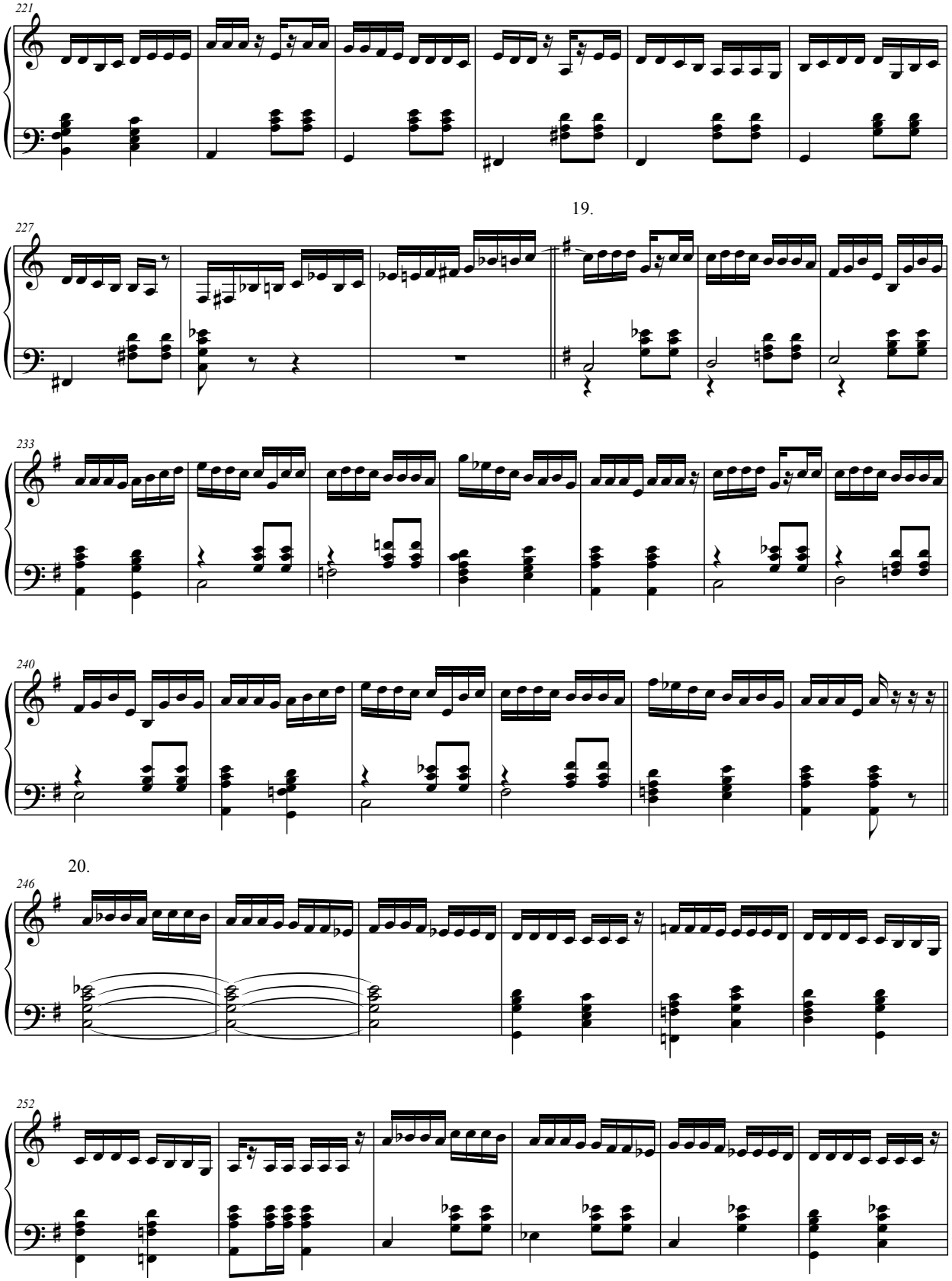
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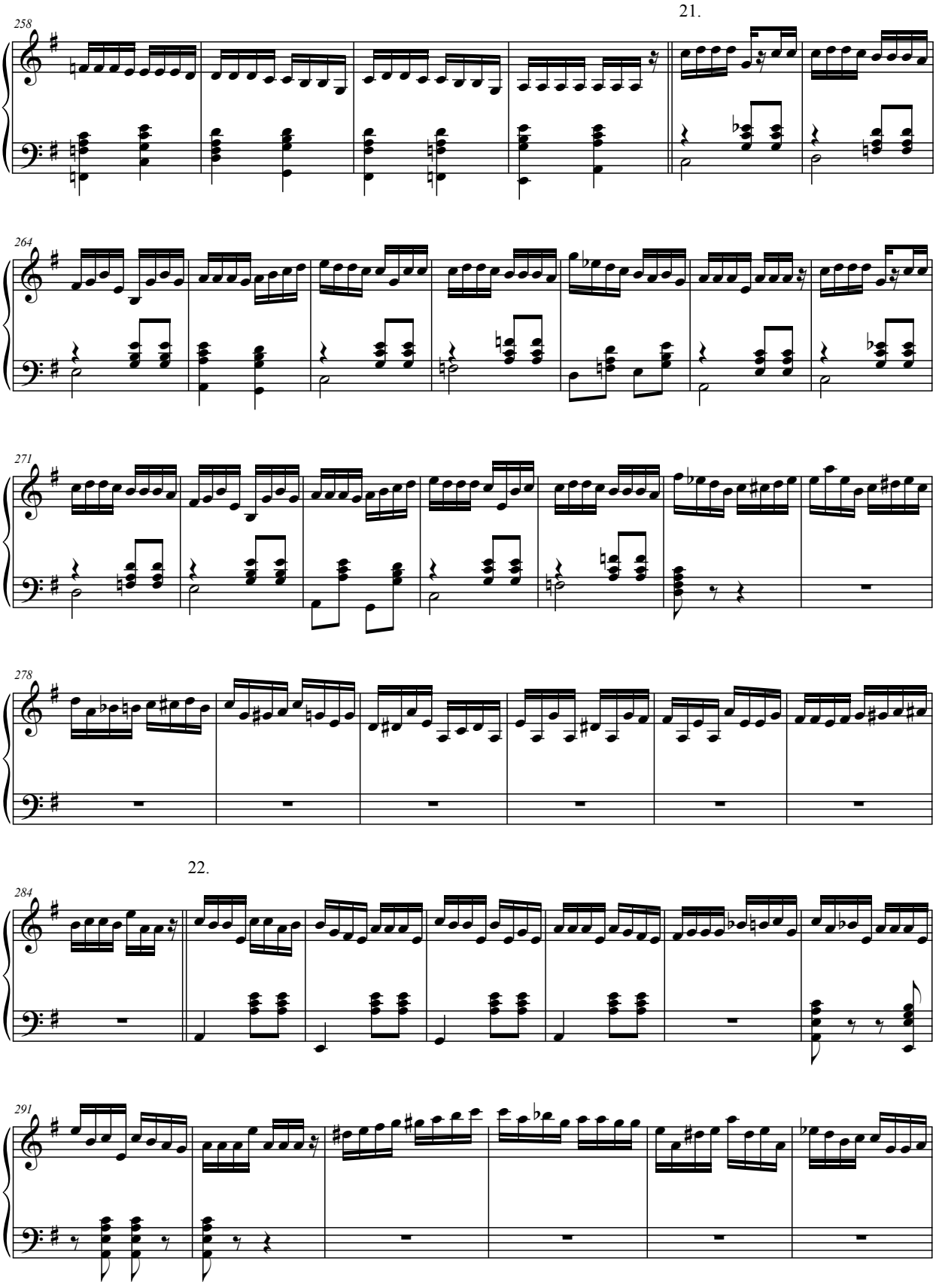
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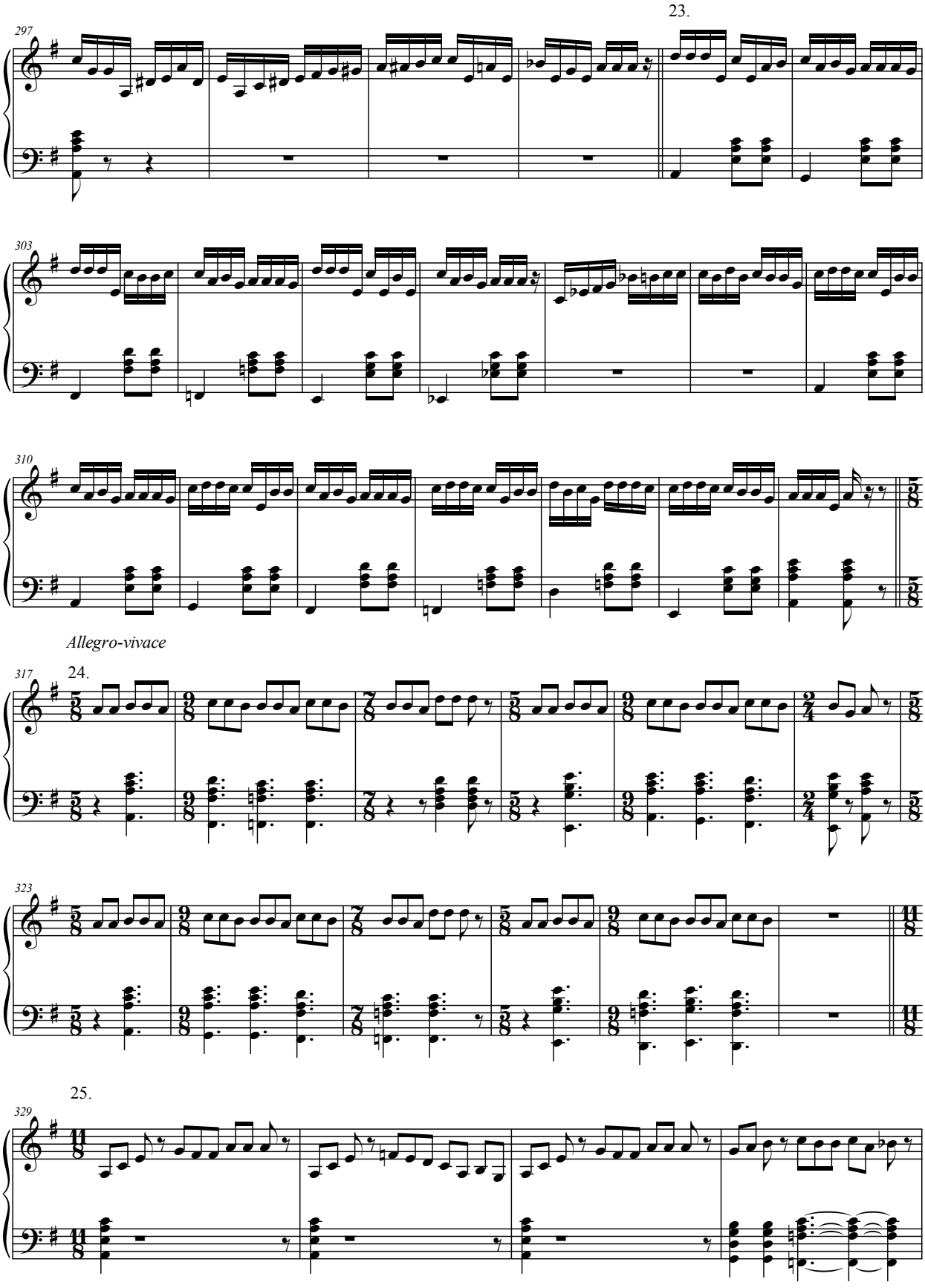
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Allegro-vivace
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25.
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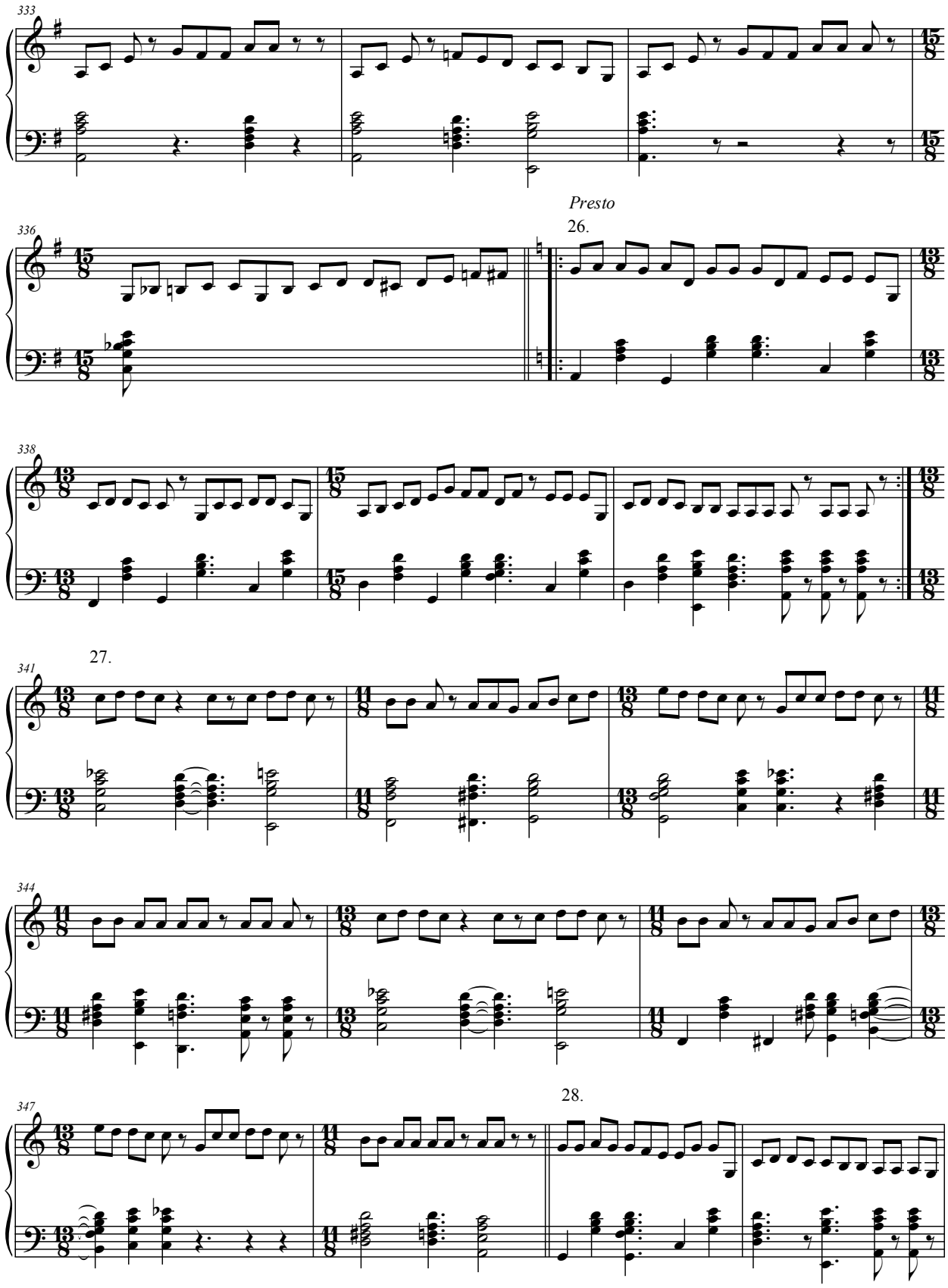
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Presto
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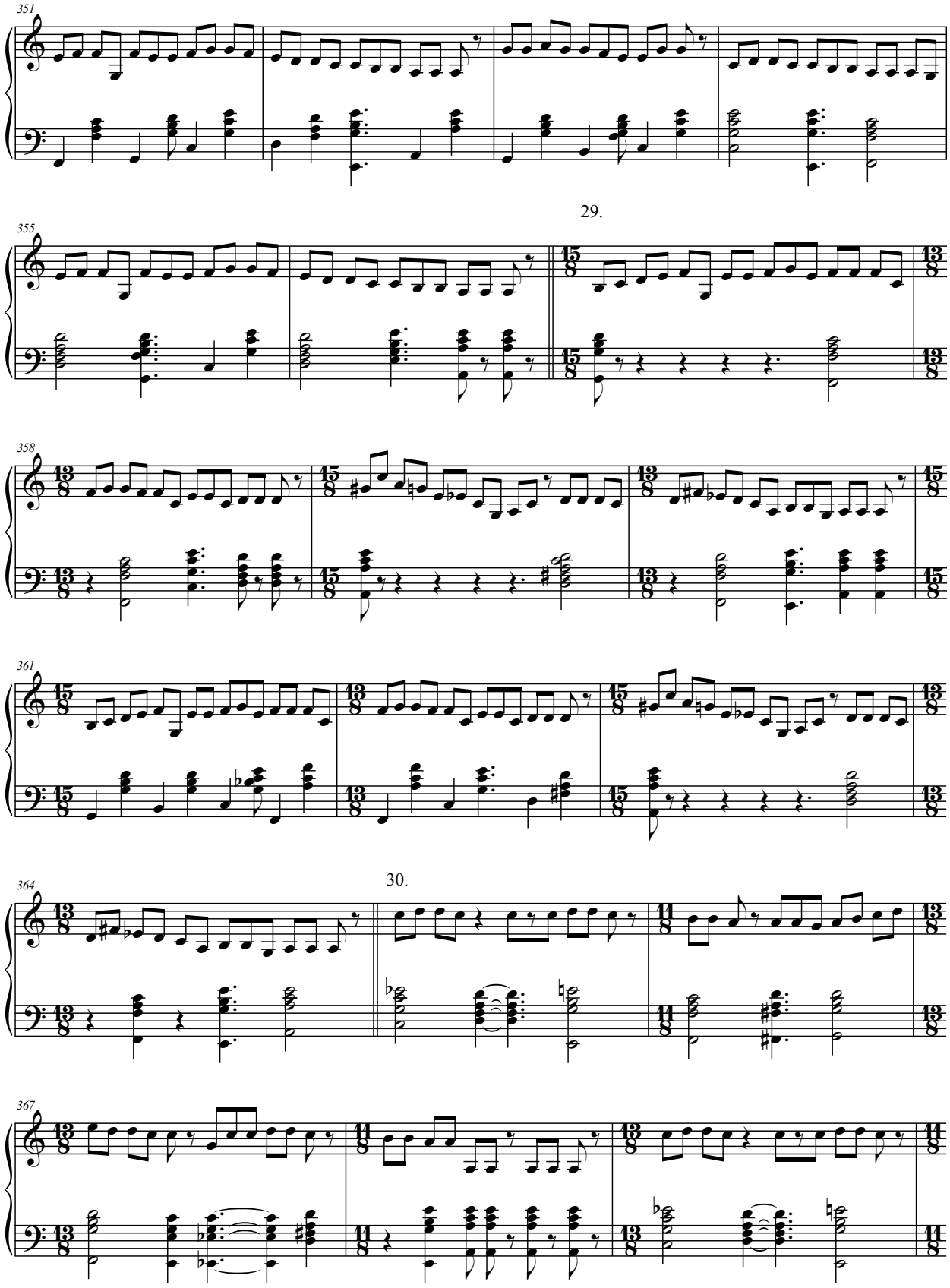
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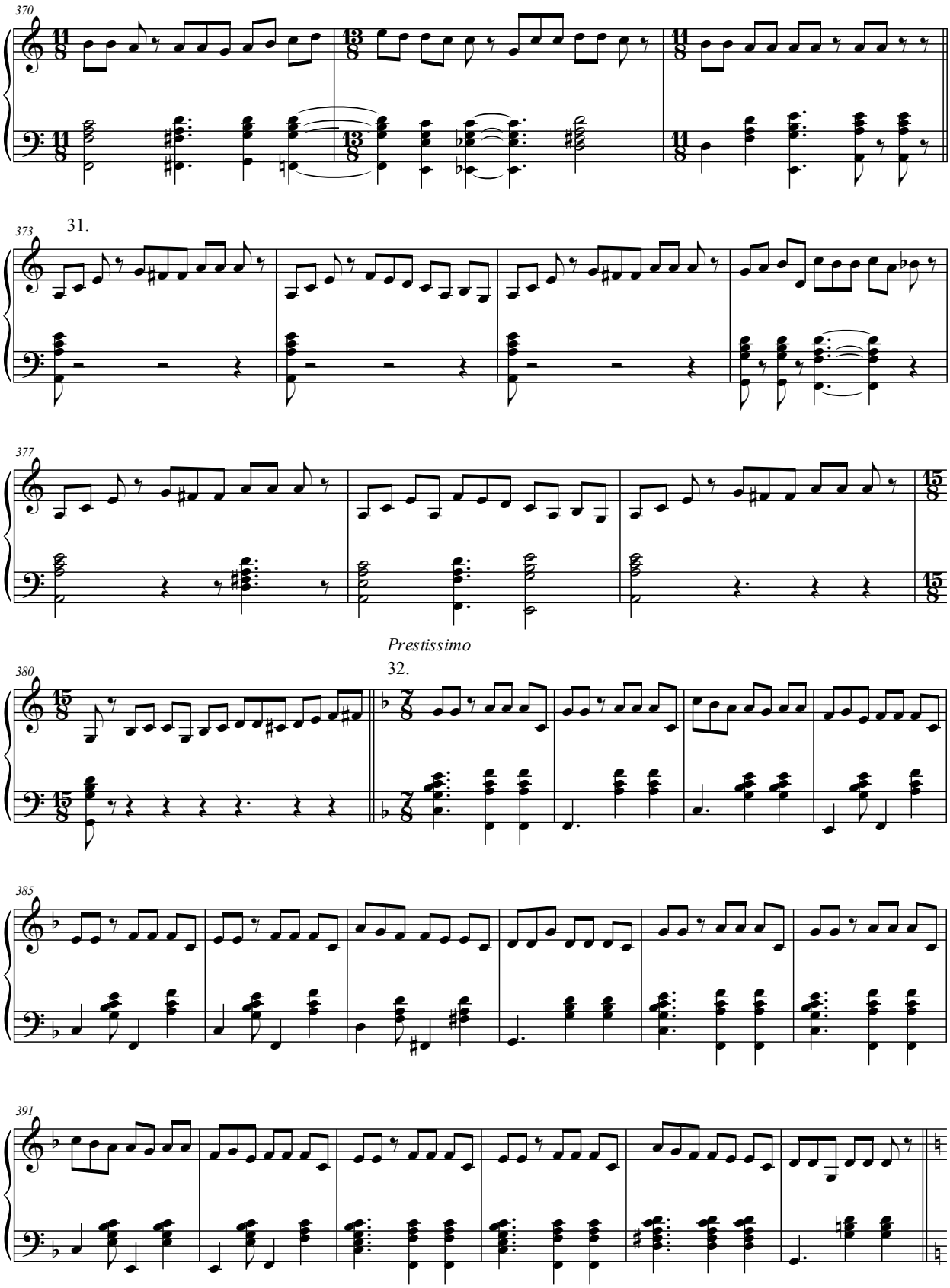
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373
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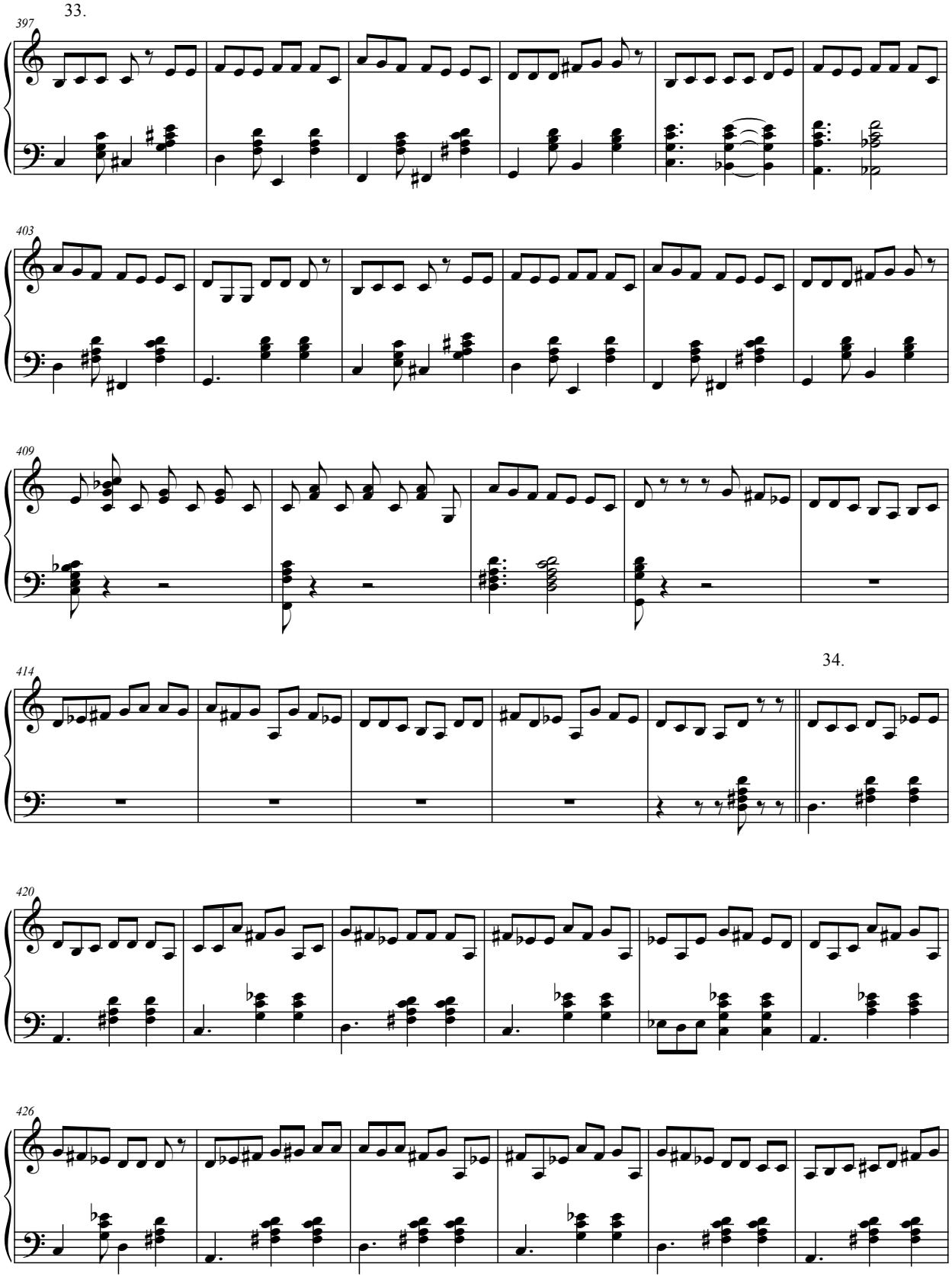
Prestissimo
32.
380
385
391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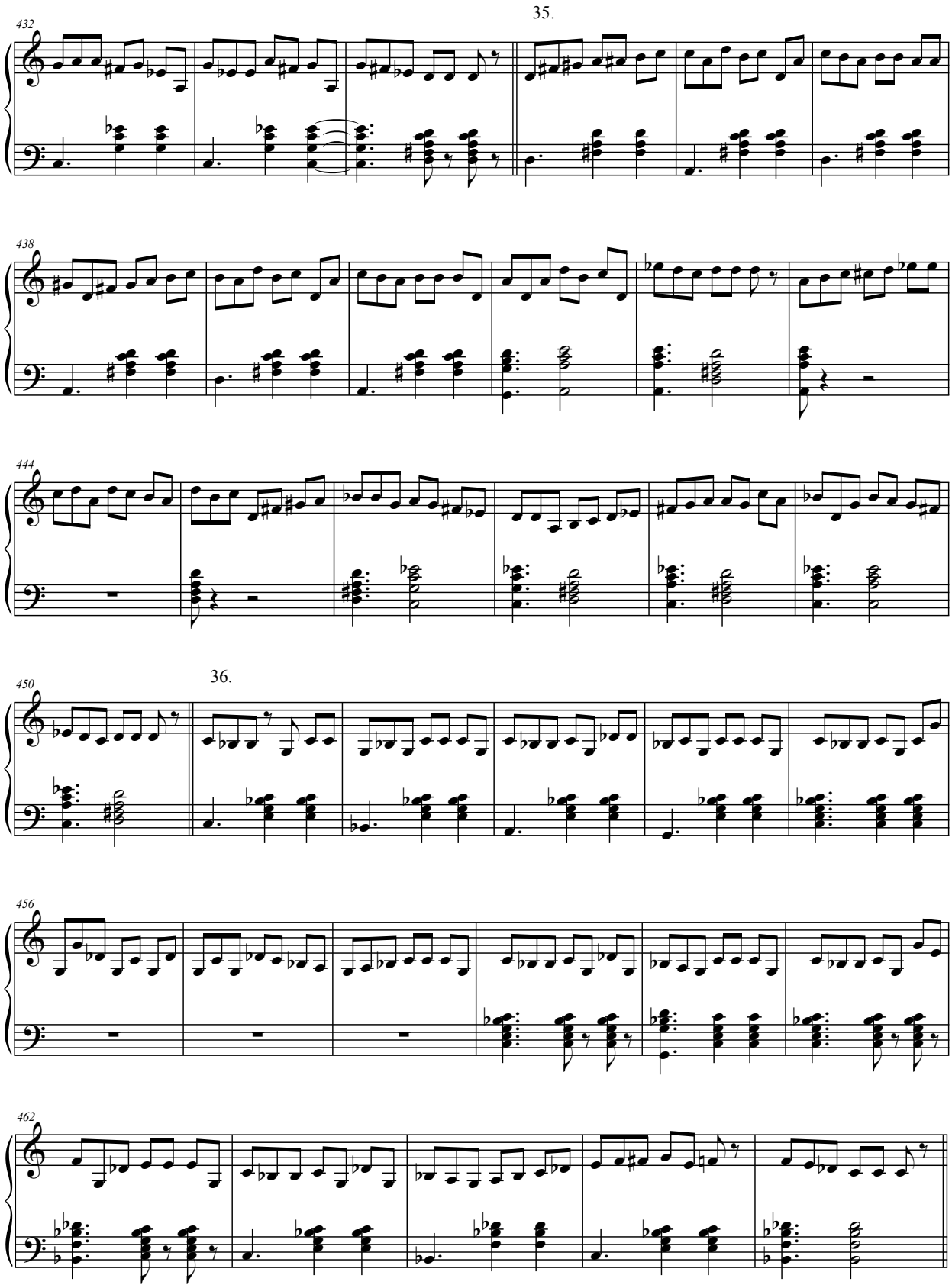
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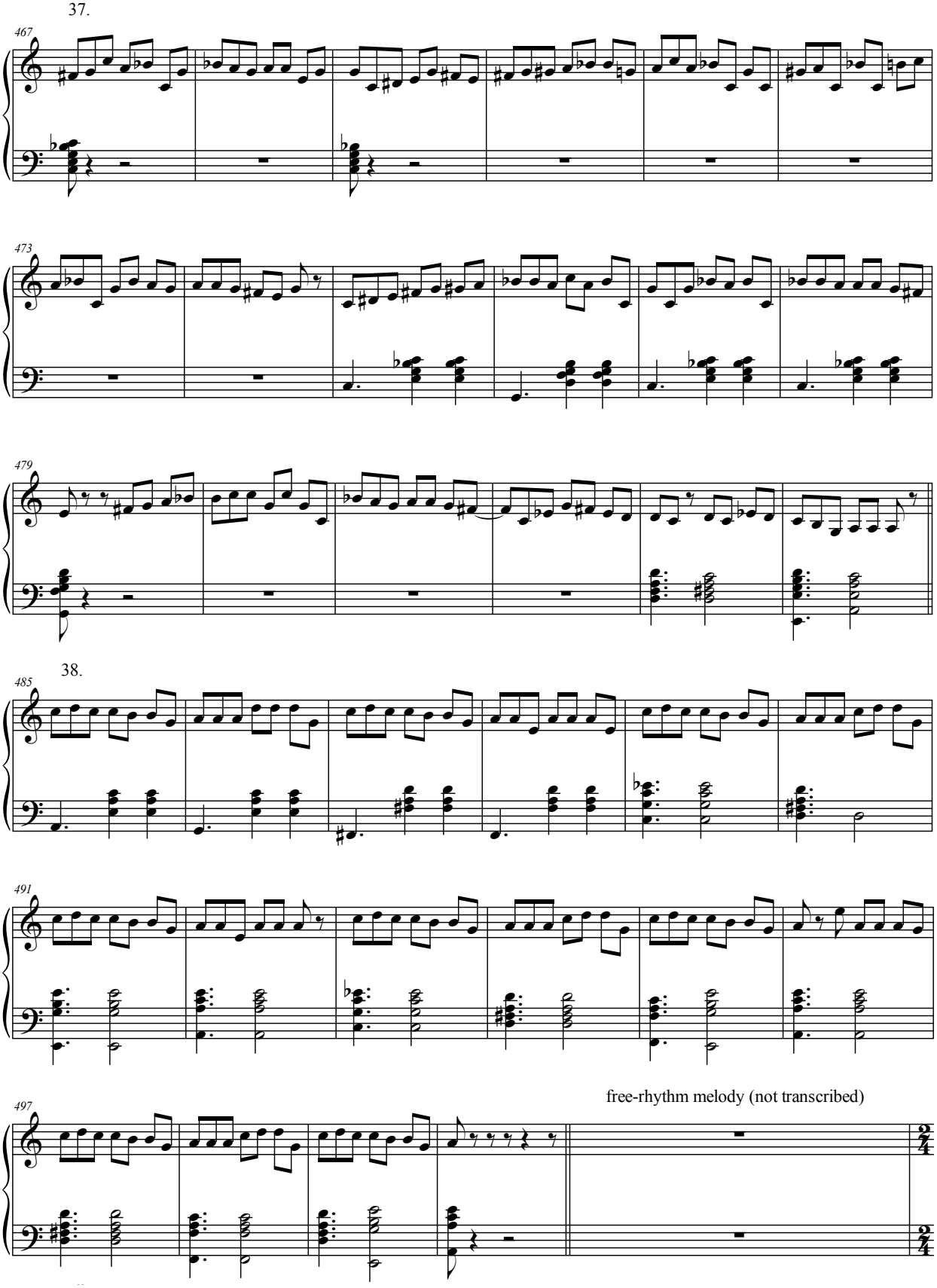
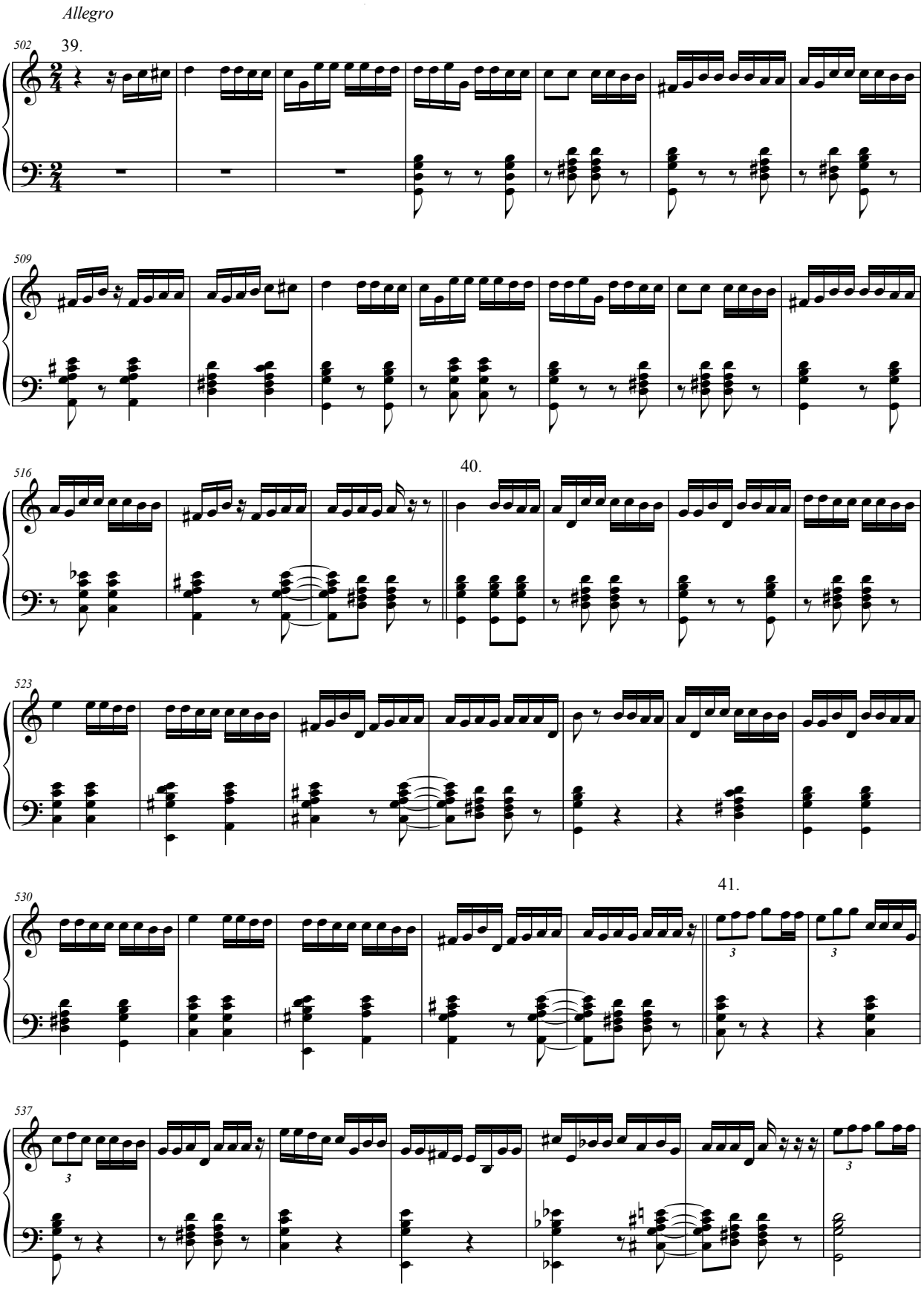
36.
450
456
462


37.
467
473
479
38.
485
491
497
free-rhythm melody (not transcribed)


Allegro
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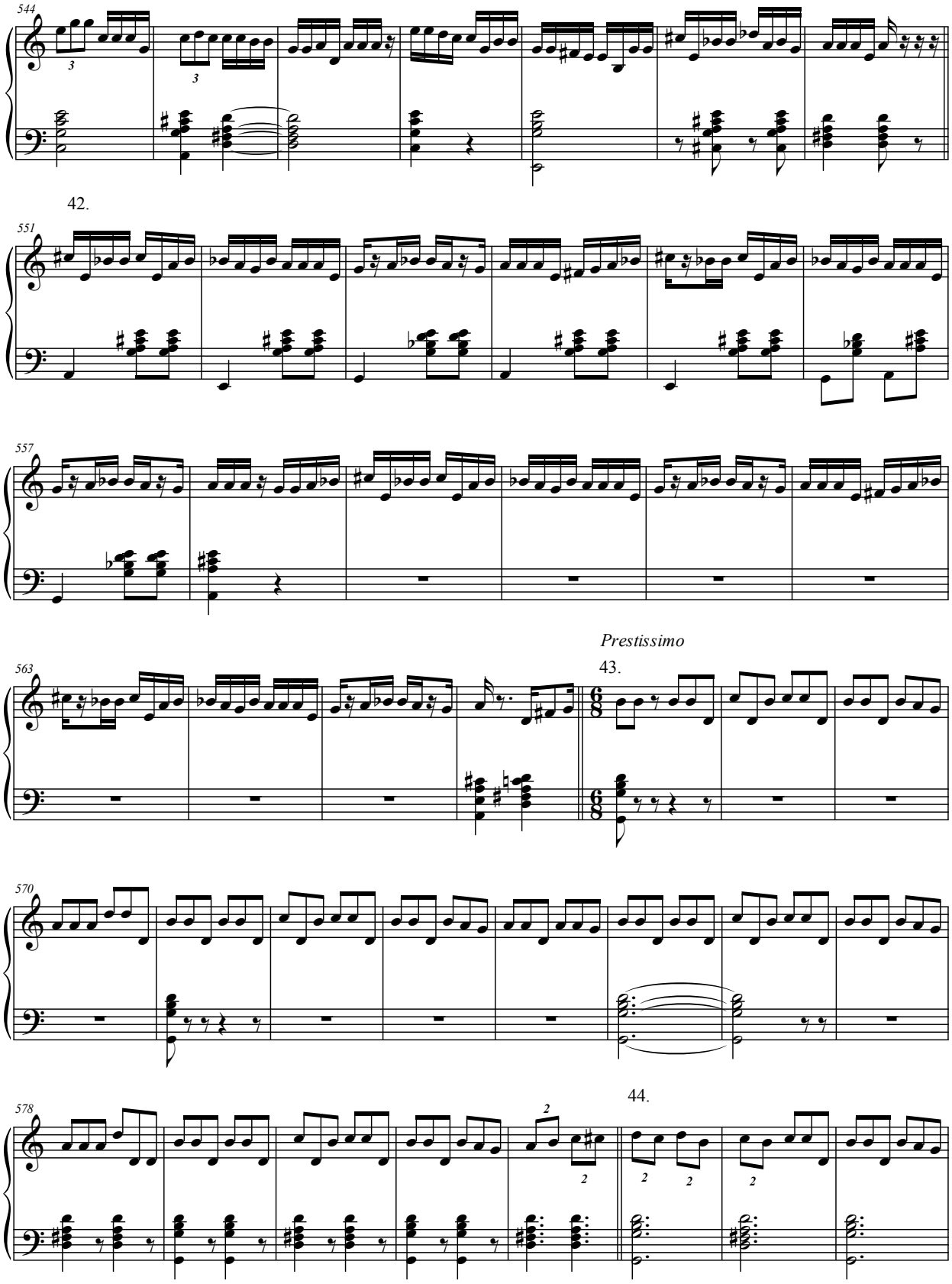
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42.
551
557
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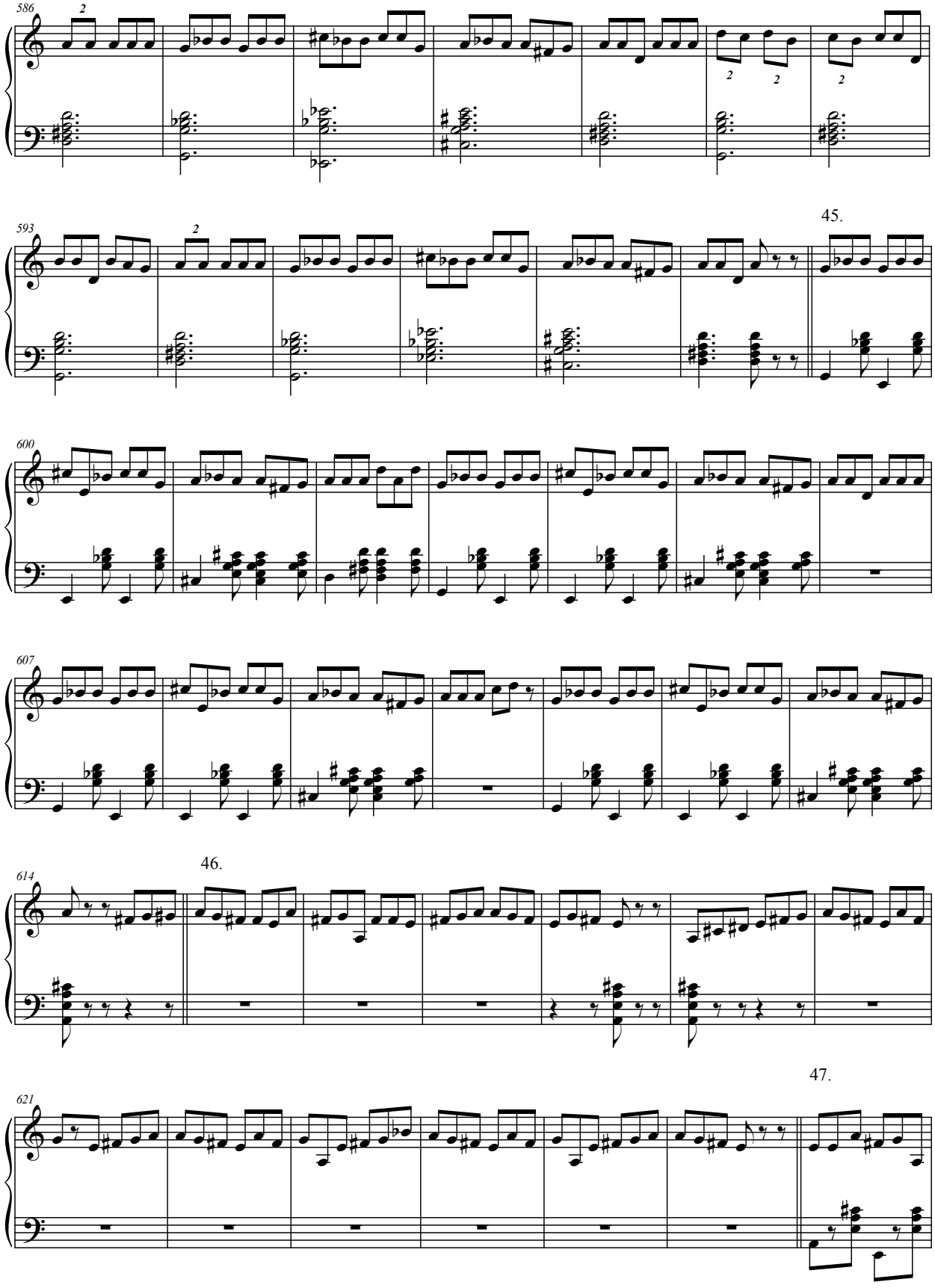
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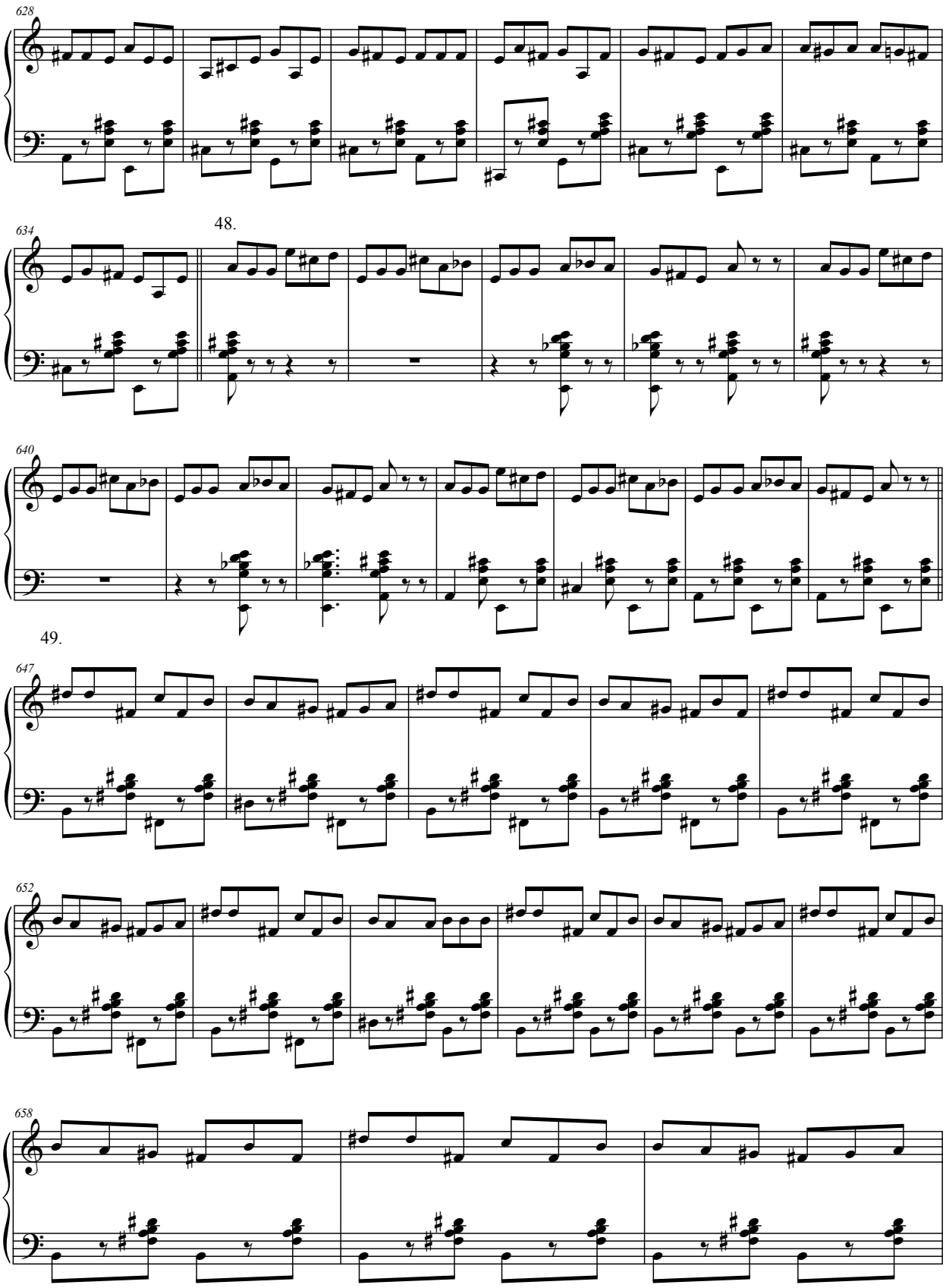
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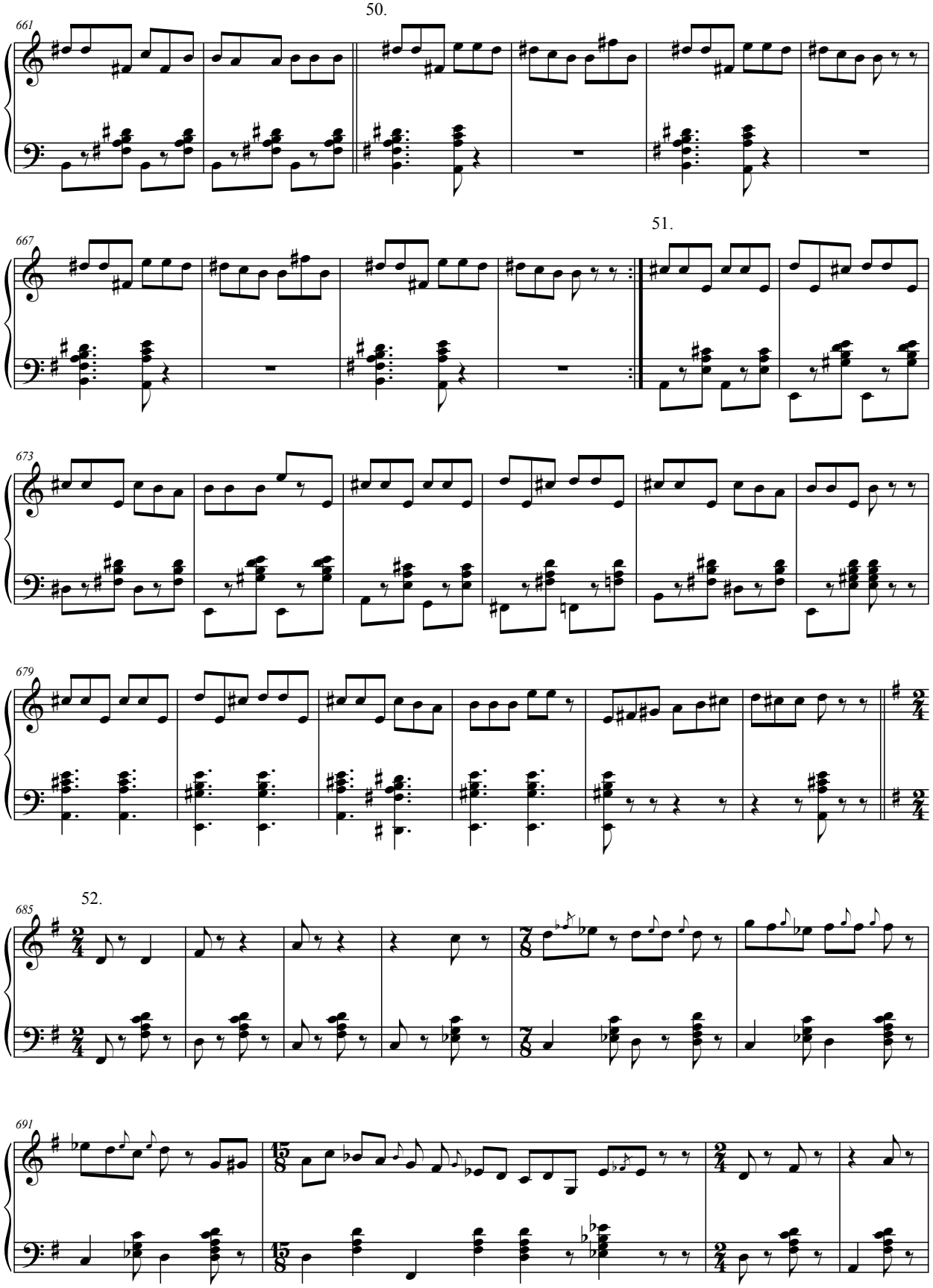
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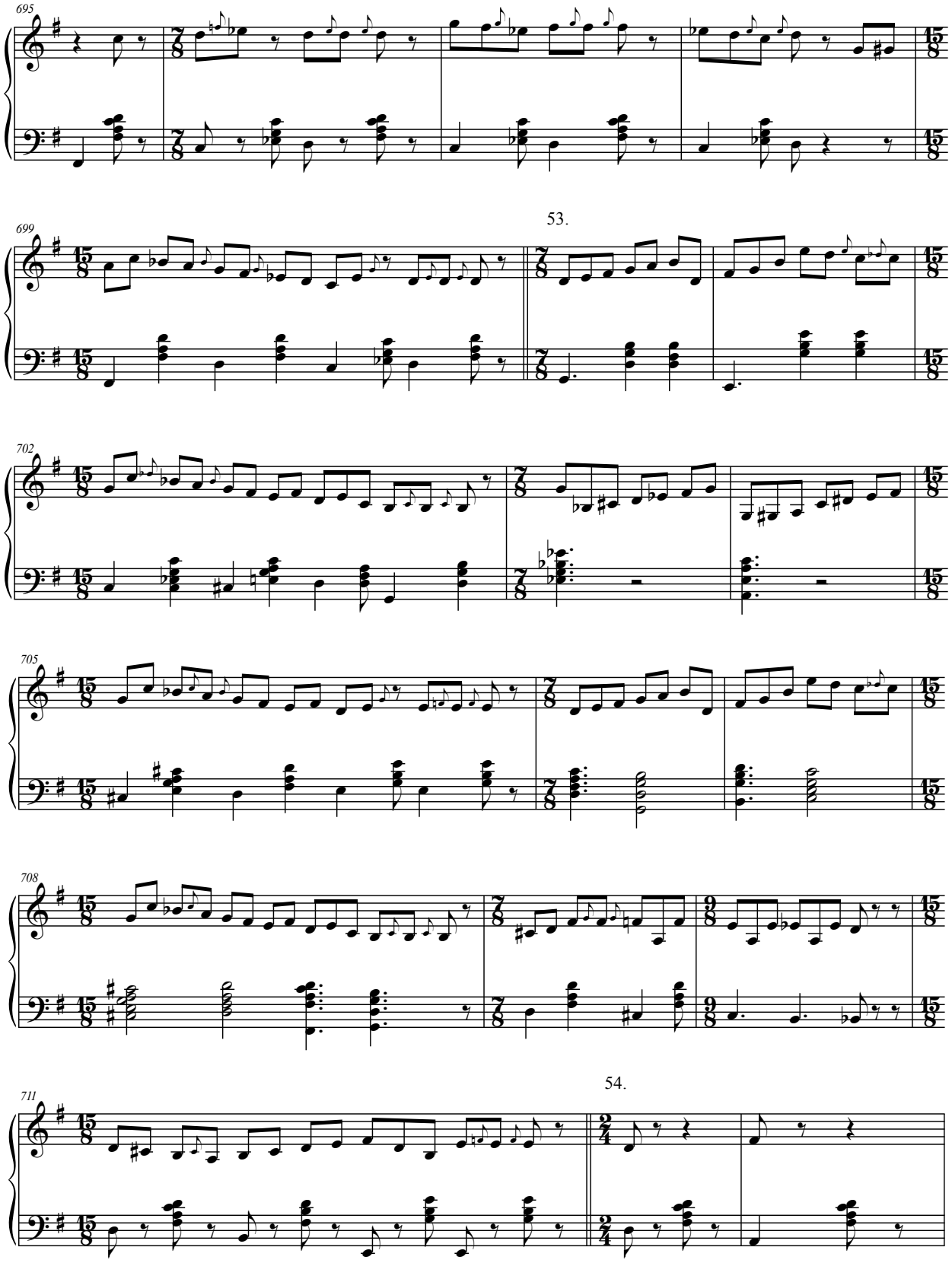
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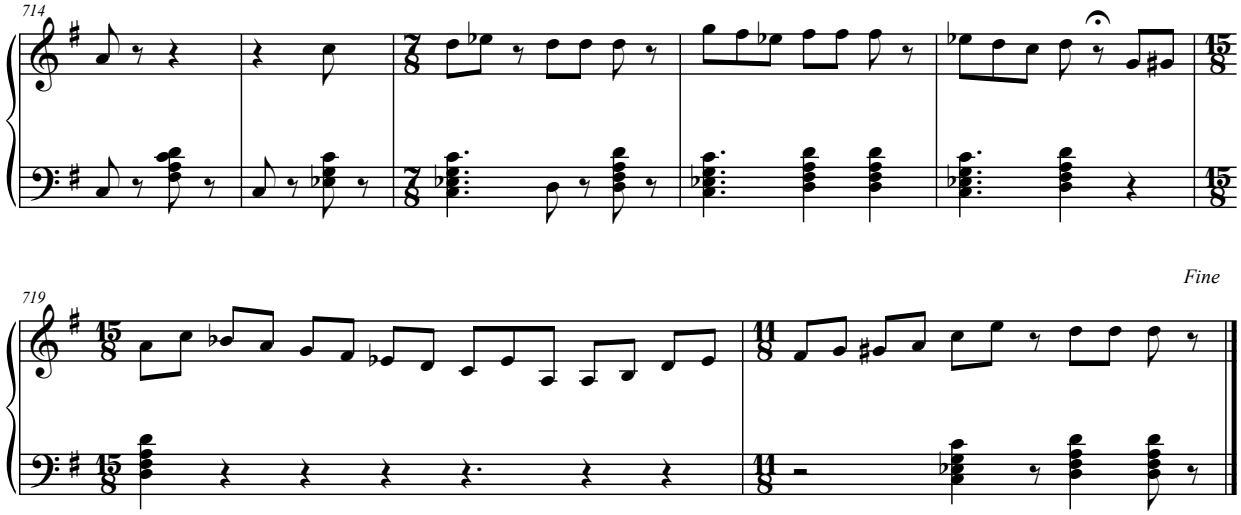
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