THE DARKEST MIDNIGHT IN DECEMBER
Main

TTBB divisi, accompanied

145112

HL00126745
WW1527
$2.25

# THE DARKEST MIDNIGHT IN DECEMBER

TTBB Chorus, Divisi, with Celesta or Piano

Music by
Stephen Main

*50 years of timeless choral music*

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## About the Work

*The Darkest Midnight in December* is set to a text published in 1728 by William Devereux, an Irish priest. The text is remarkable for its sensuality. Fr. Devereux makes his point with striking images: cold wind on a starry night, offerings of incense, the dazzling glory of the Christ child, and the softness of Mary's arms.

The tune is presented by different sections of the choir throughout the work, while other sections remain wordless in the background, evoking nighttime stillness and the rustling wind. By alternating between major and minor modes, the melody brings out the contrasting themes of the shepherds' great joy and the shivering infant. From a compositional point-of-view, the assignment of writing for celesta provided a palette of unusual musical colors. The sparkling pure tones of the instrument are especially adept at evoking mystery, innocense, and vulnerability all at the same time.

*-Stephen Main*

## About the Composer

Stephen Main (b. 1963) got his start in music as a choirboy at St. Thomas Church, New York City, under Gerre Hancock. He went on to study organ, theory, and composition at the Choate School and then at Oberlin Conservatory, where he earned a B. Mus. While at Oberlin he also pursued his parallel interest in religious studies, ultimately earning a B.A. and later a Ph.D. in religious philosophy from the University of Chicago. He is currently the Music Director at Piedmont Community Church in the Bay Area.

Since 2004, Stephen has turned full-time to his lifelong passion of composing, leading to the recent publication of several choral and orchestral pieces, multiple commissions, and the completion of the scores for four films. The *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* has hailed Stephen's work as "evocative" music that "captures mystery." His music has won several awards, including the John Ness Beck Foundation competition for new American choral music, as well as a commission-prize from the American Composers Forum. He lives in San Francisco.

**Walton Choral Works by Stephen Main**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *The Darkest Midnight in December* | SATB div., accompanied | WW1416/HL08501696 |
| *The Darkest Midnight in December* | SSAA div., accompanied | WW1504/HL00117450 |
| *Rejoice, Ye Heavenly Powers* | SATB div., accompanied | WW1433/HL08501742 |
| *Blessed Be That Maid Mary* | SATB, accompanied | WW1531/HL00126214 |
| *The Holly and the Ivy* | SATB, accompanied | WW1532/HL00126215 |

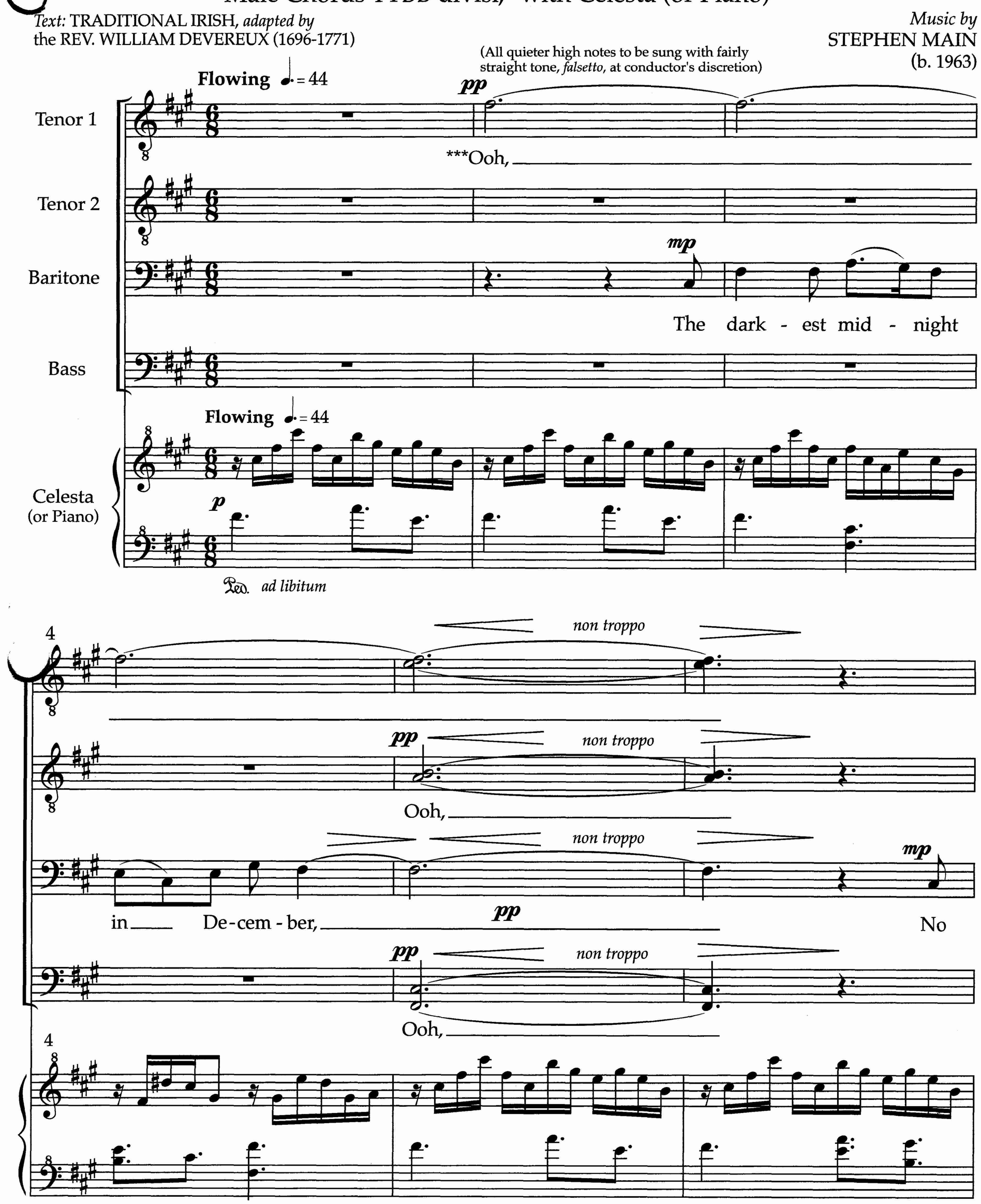
Full-length recording available at waltonmusic.com.
Duration: Approx. 2:50

# The Darkest Midnight in December

## Male Chorus TTBB divisi,* with Celesta (or Piano)**

*Text:* TRADITIONAL IRISH, *adapted by* the REV. WILLIAM DEVEREUX (1696-1771)

*Music by* STEPHEN MAIN (b. 1963)




* Also available for SATB and SSAA voices (harp part available for SSAA version).

** Separate celesta part is found on pages 13-16. *If no celesta is available, this part should be played on piano or synthesizer using the celesta sound an octave lower than written.*

*** Vowels used throughout (ooh, oh, ah, etc.) are intentional and are meant to indicate lips slightly wider apart for more sound.

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7

Ooh,

Ooh, *mf* shall

snow nor hail nor win - ter's storm,

Ooh,

7

10

*mp* Oh,

hin - der us to re - mem - ber,

*mp* Oh, *mp* The

*mp* Oh,

10

12

*p*

Oh.

*p*

Oh.

Babe that on this night was born.

*p*

Oh.

12

15

*mf*

'Twas pure love that from a-bove Brought

*mf*

'Twas but pure love that from a-bove Brought

*mf*

'Twas but pure love that from a-bove Brought

*mf*

'Twas pure love that from a-bove Brought

15

*mf*

18

Him to save us from all harms;

Him to save us from all harms;

Him to save us from all harms;

Him to save us from all harms;

18

*f*

21

*p*

— Then let us sing and wel - come Him, The

*p*

— Then let us sing and wel - come Him, The

*p*

— Then let us sing and wel - come Him, The

*p*

— Then let us sing and wel - come Him, The

21

*mp*

*mp*

God of Love in Ma - ry's arms.

God of Love in Ma - ry's arms.

God of Love in Ma - ry's arms.

God of Love in Ma - ry's arms.

24

27

*pp*

Ooh,

*pp*

Ooh,

*mp* *dolce*

No cost - ly gifts can we pre - sent Him,

27

Oh, Oh,

*p*

Oh,

No gold nor myrrh nor

*pp*

Oh,

30

33

*p*

Oh,

*pp* *p* *mp*

Oh, Oh, But if with our

o - dors sweet; Oh,

*p*

Oh,

33

*p*

35

Ah, Oh.

hearts we can con - tent Him, Oh.

We hum - bly lay them

Oh.

35

38

at His feet.

*mf* With

*mf* With

38

41

*mf*

Shep - herds we are come to see This love - ly In - fant's

Shep - herds we are come to see This love - ly In - fant's

Shep - herds we are come to see This love - ly In - fant's

*mf*

Shep - herds we are come to see This love - ly In - fant's

41

*f*

44

*straight tone*

(head voice only)

glo - - - rious charms;

*straight tone*

glo - - - rious charms;

*straight tone*

glo - - - rious charms;

*straight tone*

glo - - - rious charms;

44

*f*

Born of a maid as pro - phets said, The

*p*

Born of a maid as pro - phets said, The

*p*

Born of a maid as pro - phets said, The

*p*

Born of a maid as pro - phets said, The

46

*mp*

*p*

49

God of Love in Ma - ry's

God of Love in Ma - ry's

God of Love in Ma - ry's

God of Love in Ma - ry's

49

*p*

arms.

*pp*

arms.

*pp*

arms.

*pp*

*(upper note more quietly)*

arms.

52

55

**molto rit.**

*pp*

Hmm.

*pp*

Hmm.

*pp*

Hmm.

*pp*

Hmm.

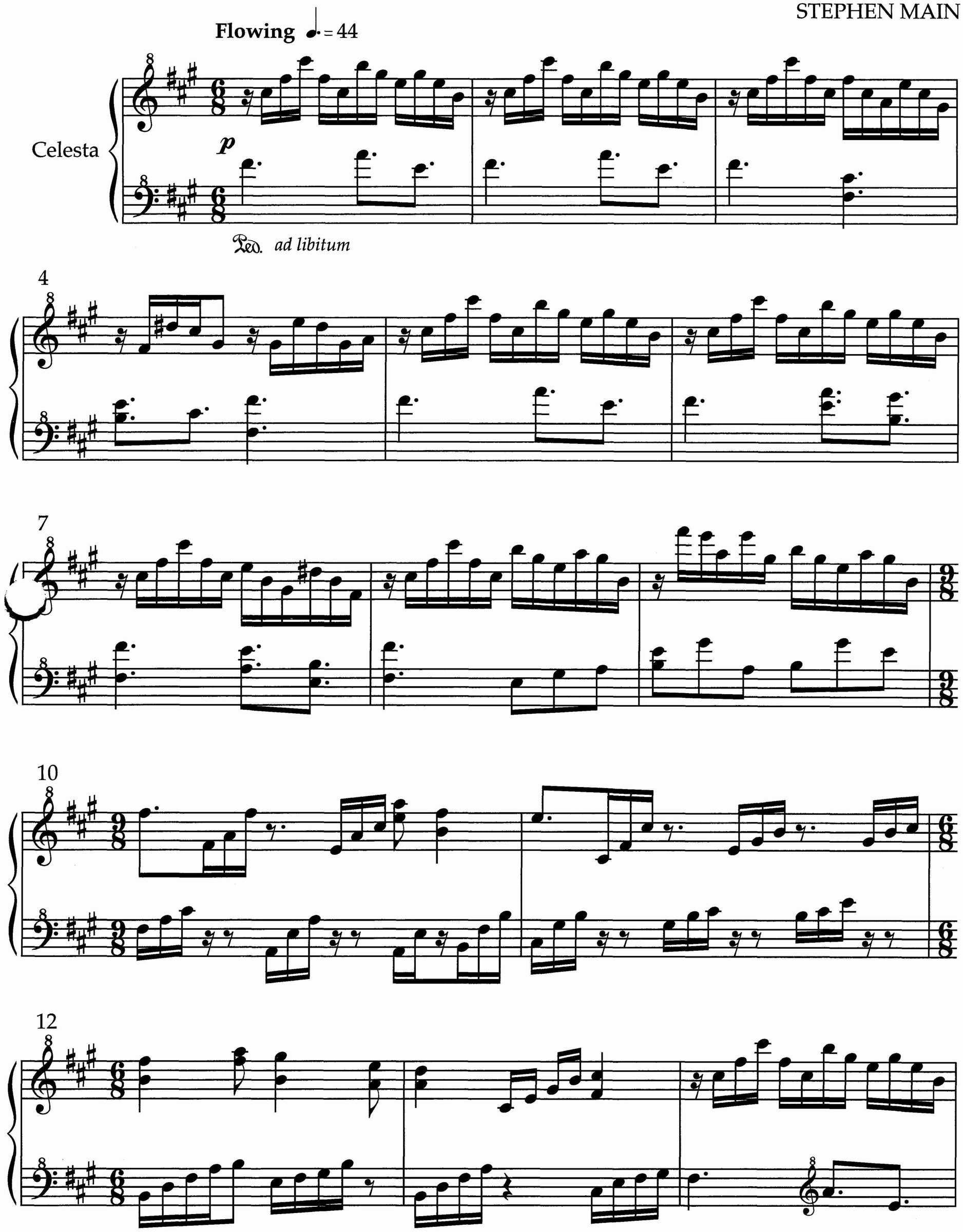
**molto rit.**

55

*p*

# The Darkest Midnight in December

STEPHEN MAIN

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15

*mf*

18

*f*

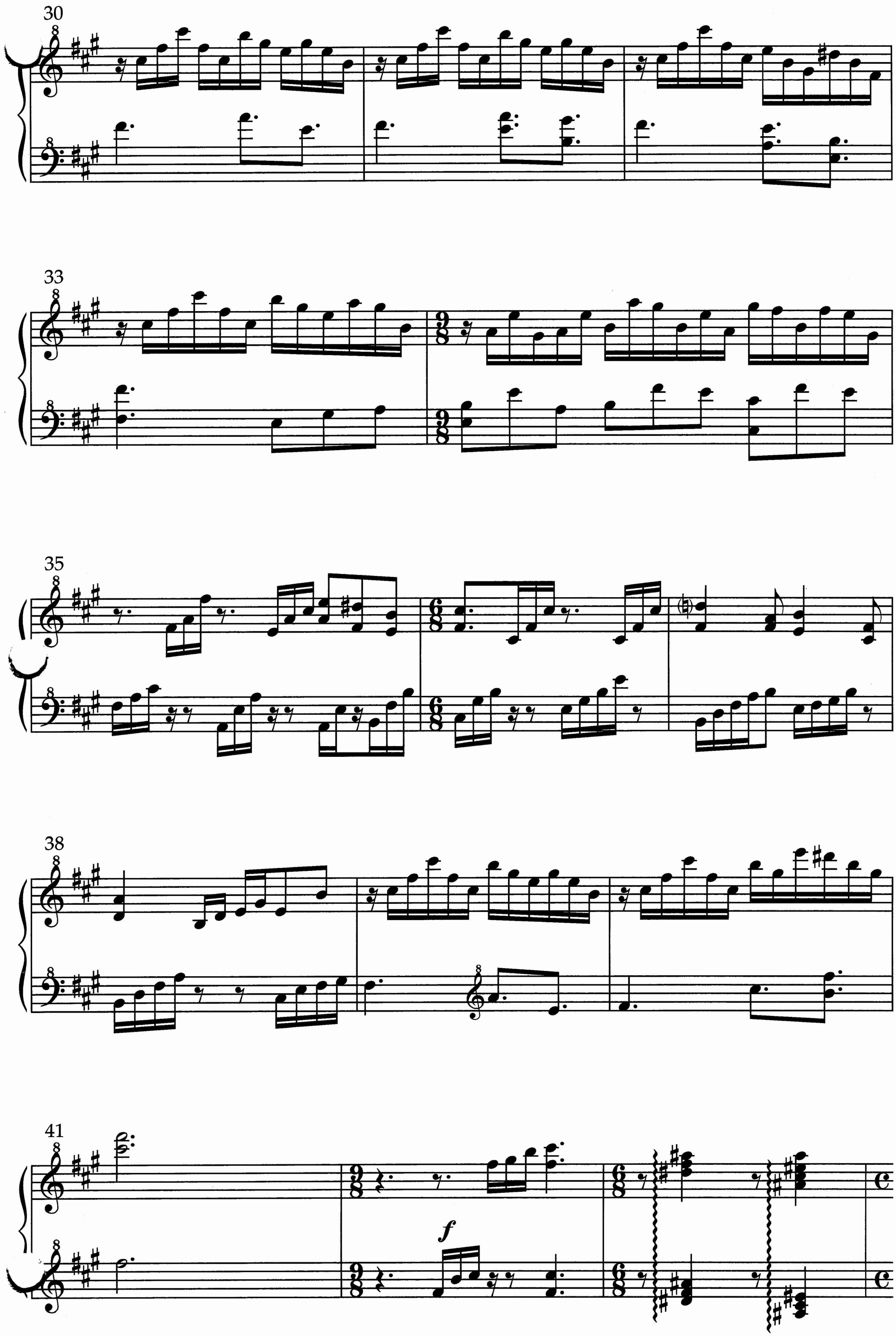
21

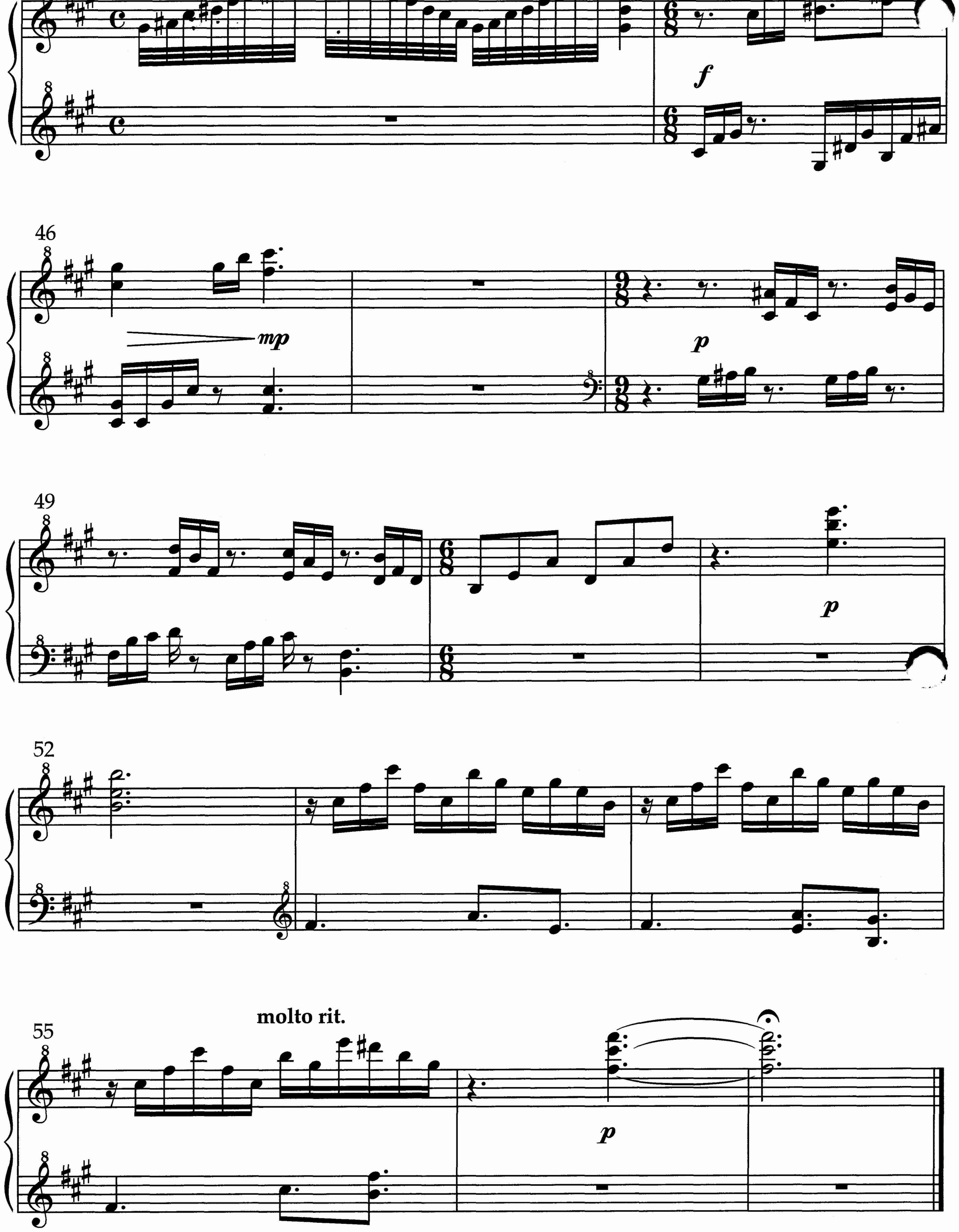
*mp*

*mp*

24

27


30
33
35
38
41
f

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