Level
3

THE ALEX GUEBERT
HANDBELL SERIES

HOPE Publishing Company
Since 1892

Softly and Tenderly

Will L. Thompson

Arranged for 3-7 octave handbells
with optional 2 octave handchimes by

Alex Guebert

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Program Notes

This Will L. Thompson hymn is about response – the invitation for us to respond to Jesus calling us to him. This arrangement starts with harmonic tension – a hesitant soul, unsure. Then the first verse begins and a rhythm is established – the soul begins to listen to the call. In verse 3, a turn toward a minor key and an urgency to the music begins to paint these words: "time is now fleeting… shadows are gathering, deathbeds are coming…." Verse 4 breaks forth in glorious light, the promise of Jesus's love, and his "mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me." Instead of modulating back to the original G major, we stay in the key of E: the soul has accepted the call. The refrain finally sounds: "Come home, come home!" The opening material comes back, but this time in a more confident way. The final strains of the words "softly and tenderly" are heard as the soul prepares for its rest. In the very last few measures, the words "Jesus is calling" are played on chimes, while the bells float up to heaven.

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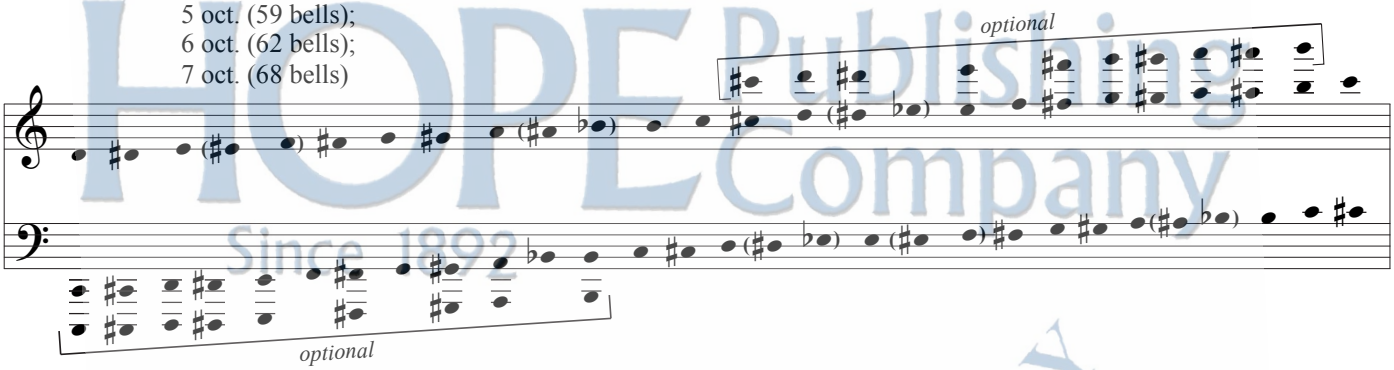
for the Cathedral Bells of St. John's Lutheran Church, Orange, California

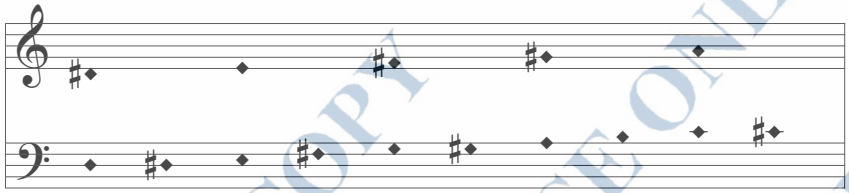
Softly and Tenderly

For 3-7 Octave Handbells and Optional 2 Octave Handchimes

Handbells used: 3 oct. (37 bells);
4 oct. (48 bells);
5 oct. (59 bells);
6 oct. (62 bells);
7 oct. (68 bells)



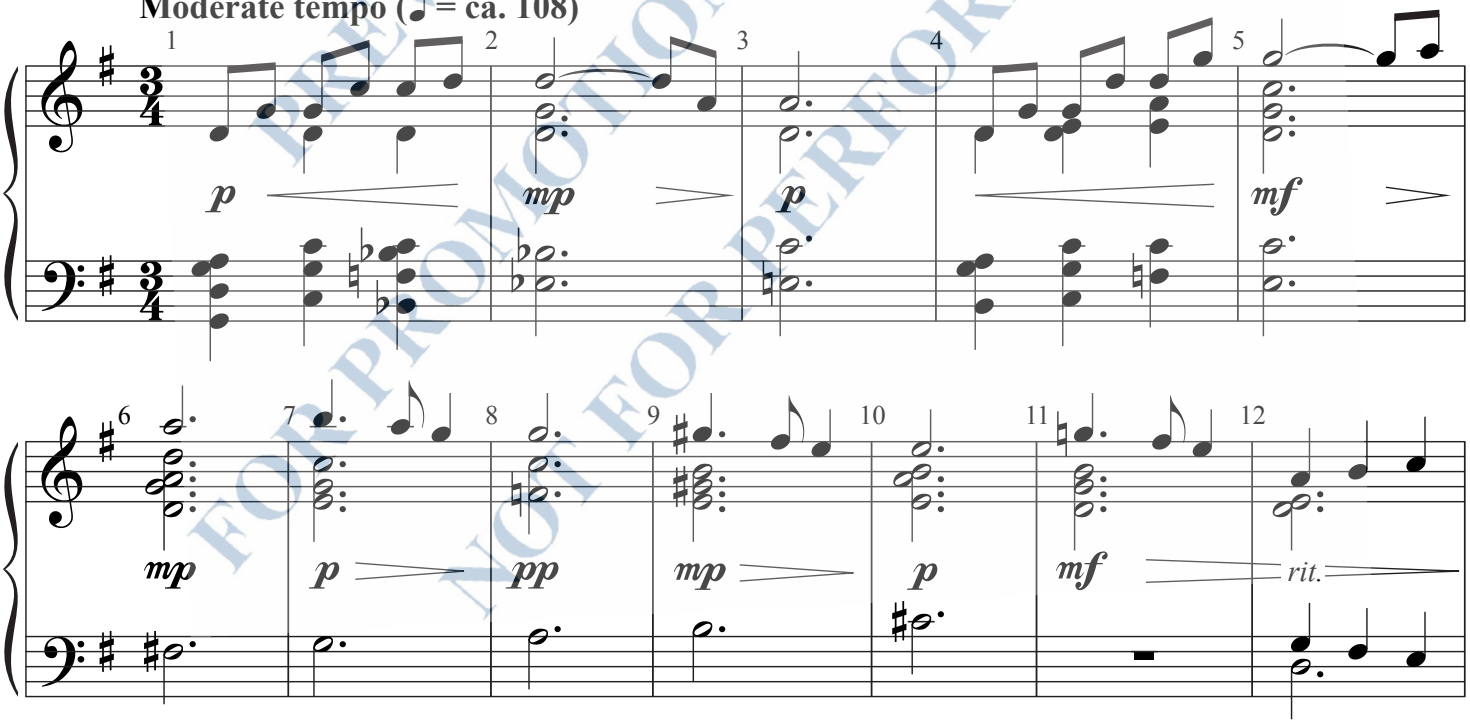
Optional Handchimes used: 2 oct. (15 chimes)



3 octave choirs omit notes in ( ).
4 octave choirs omit notes in [ ].
5 octave choirs omit notes in < >.
4 and 5 octave choirs omit notes in { }.
6 and 7 octave choirs play all notes.

Will L. Thompson
Arranged by Alex Guebert

Moderate tempo (♩ = ca. 108)



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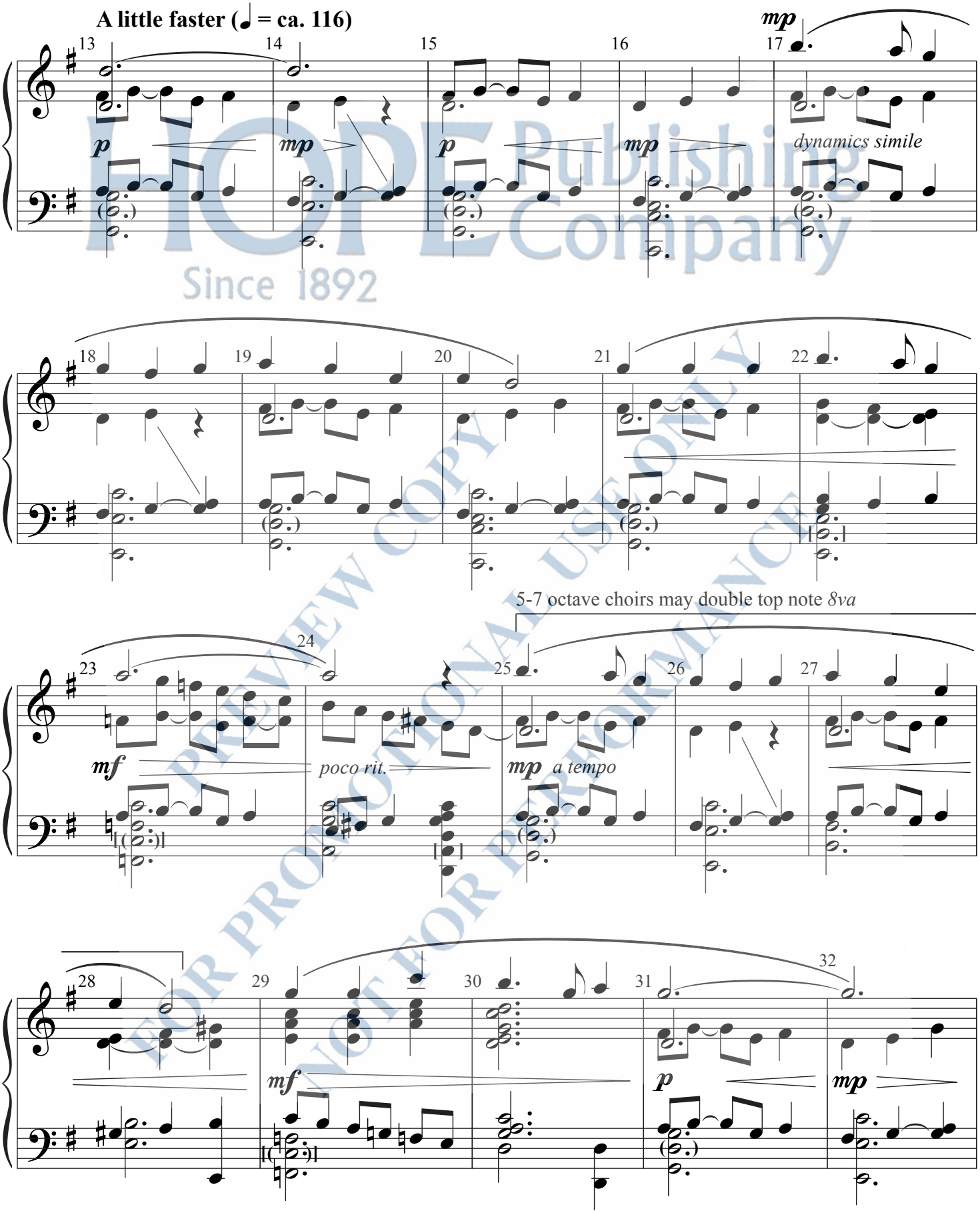

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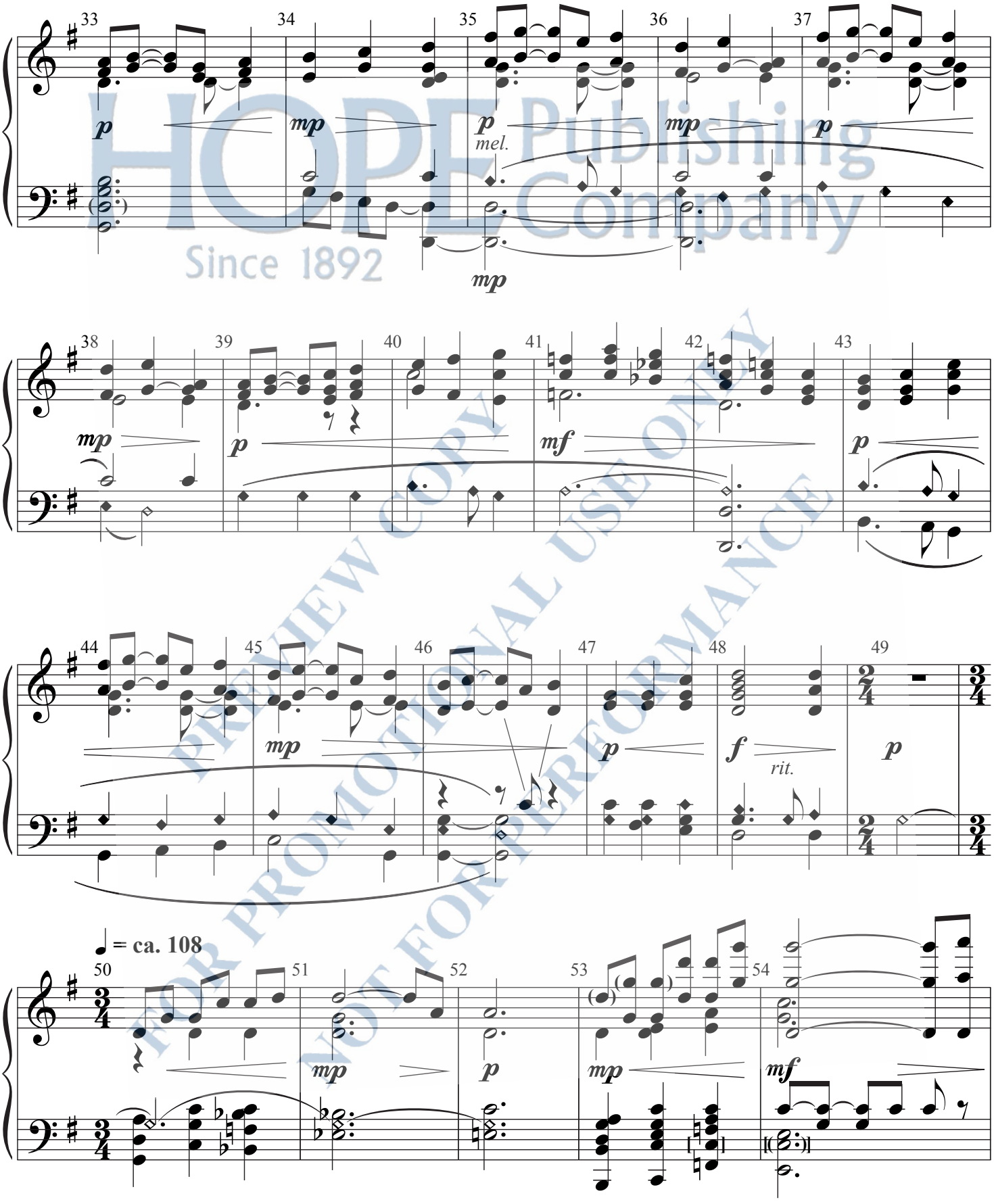

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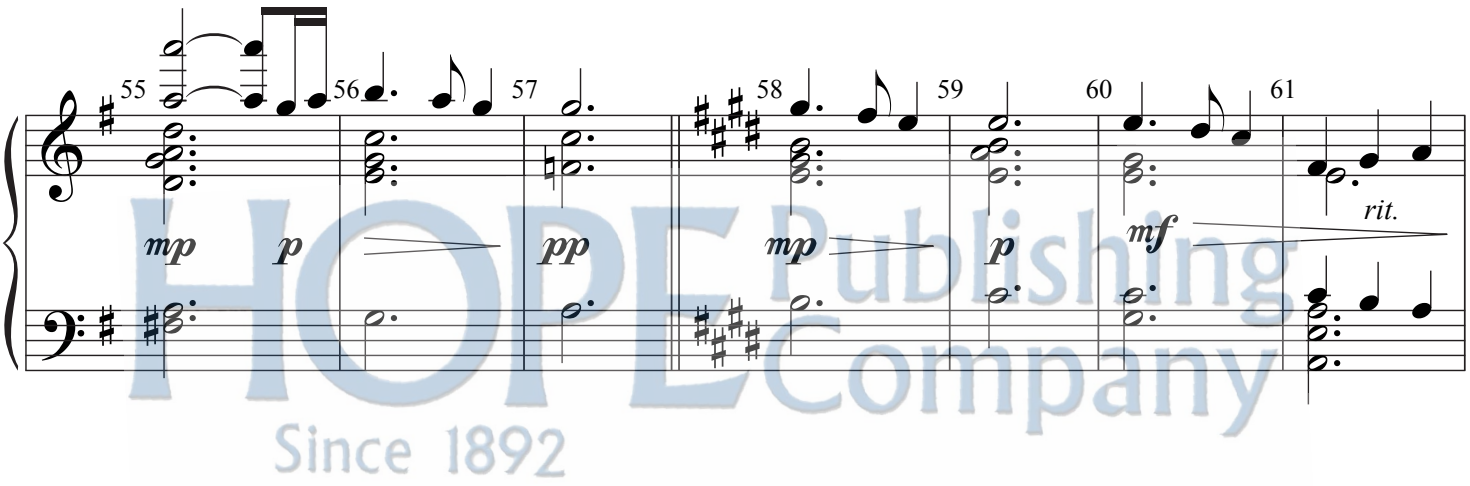

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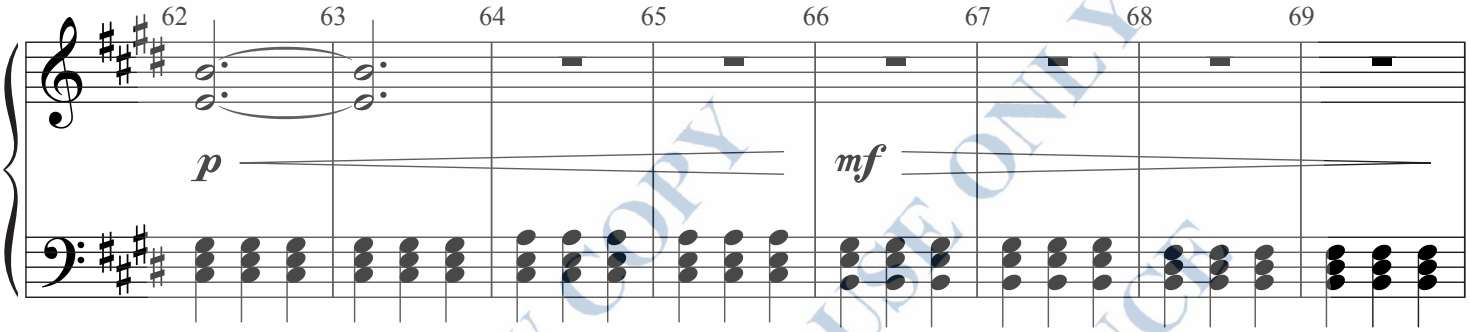
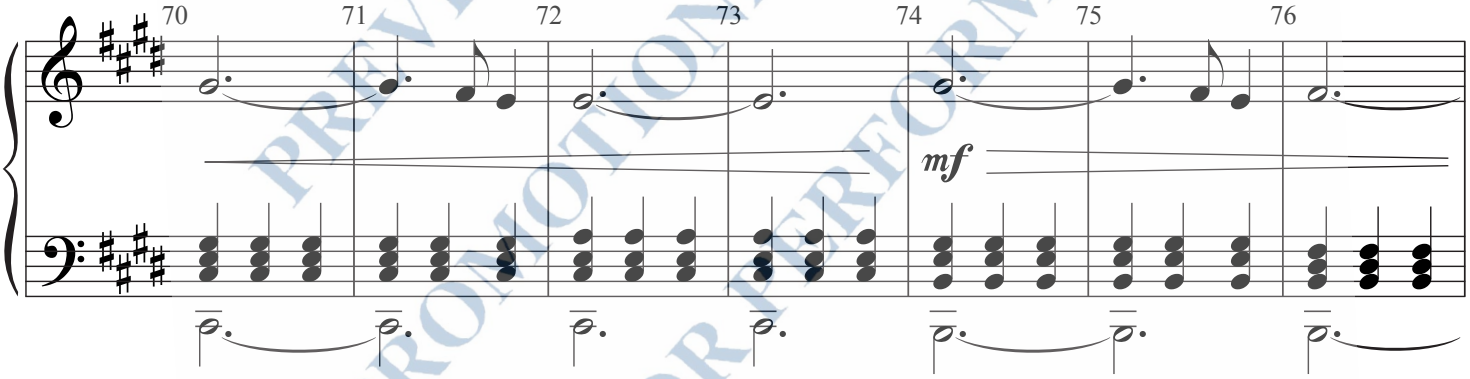
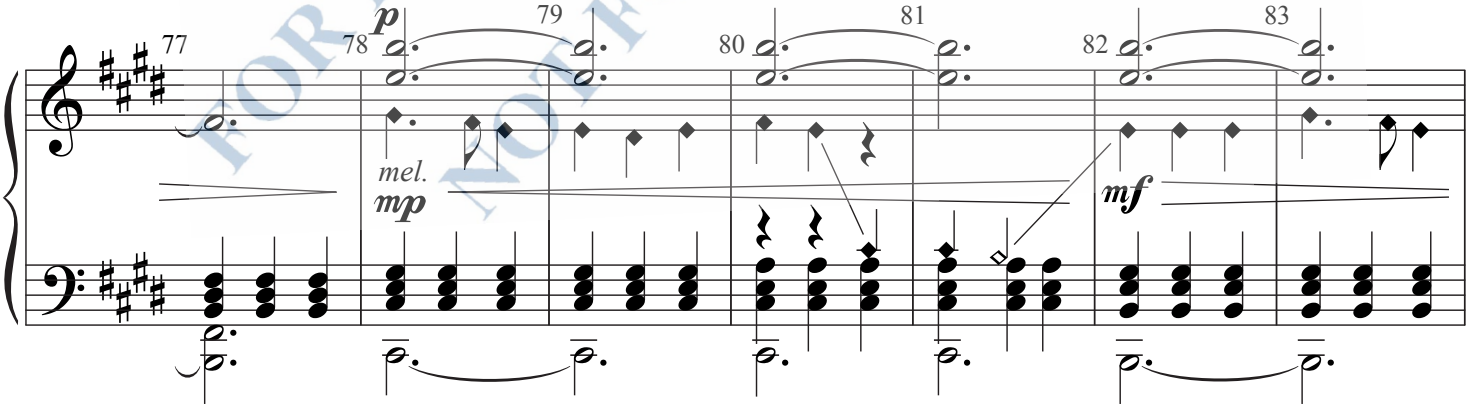
Pushing forward (♩ = 160; 𝅗𝅥. = 53)







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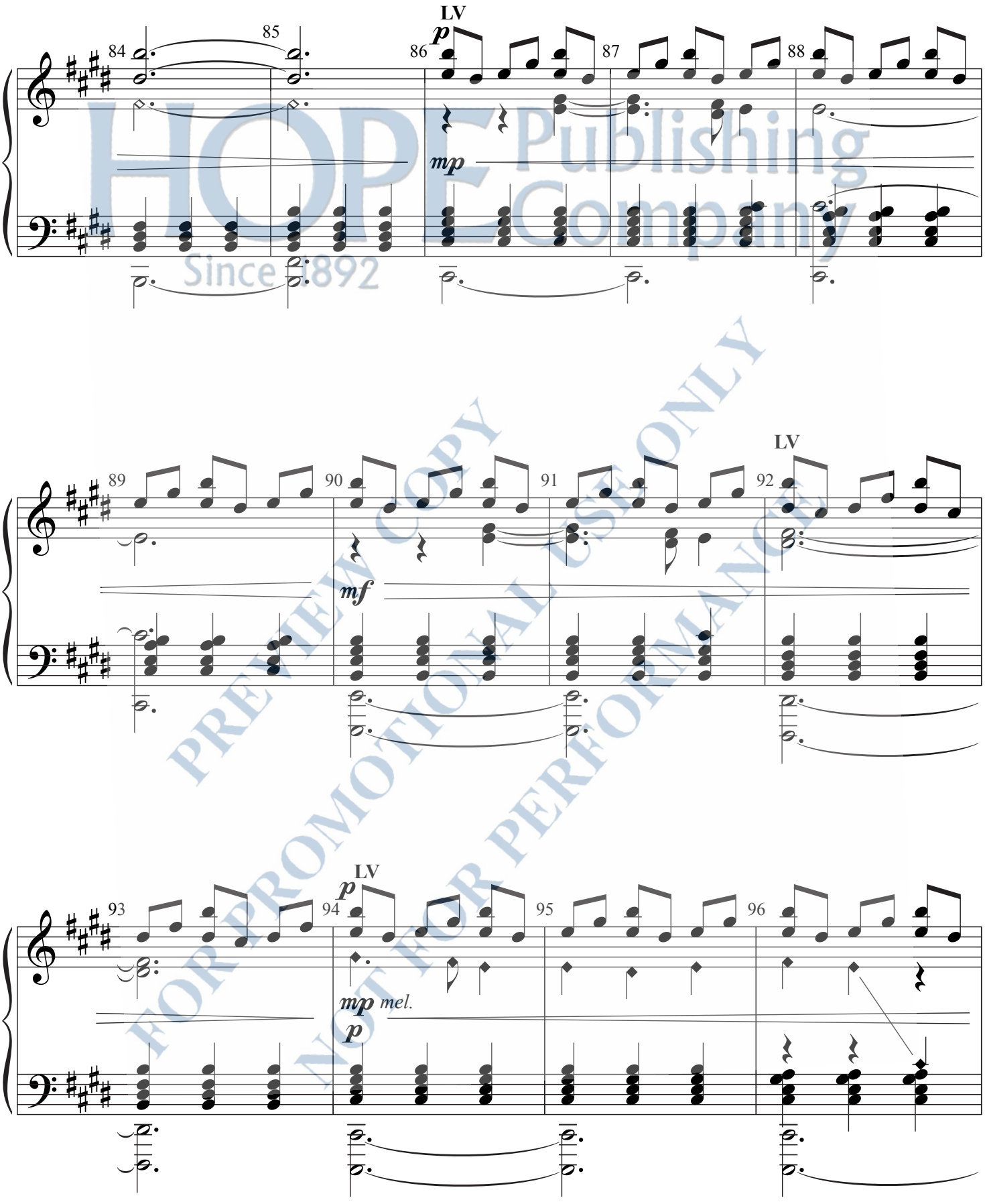

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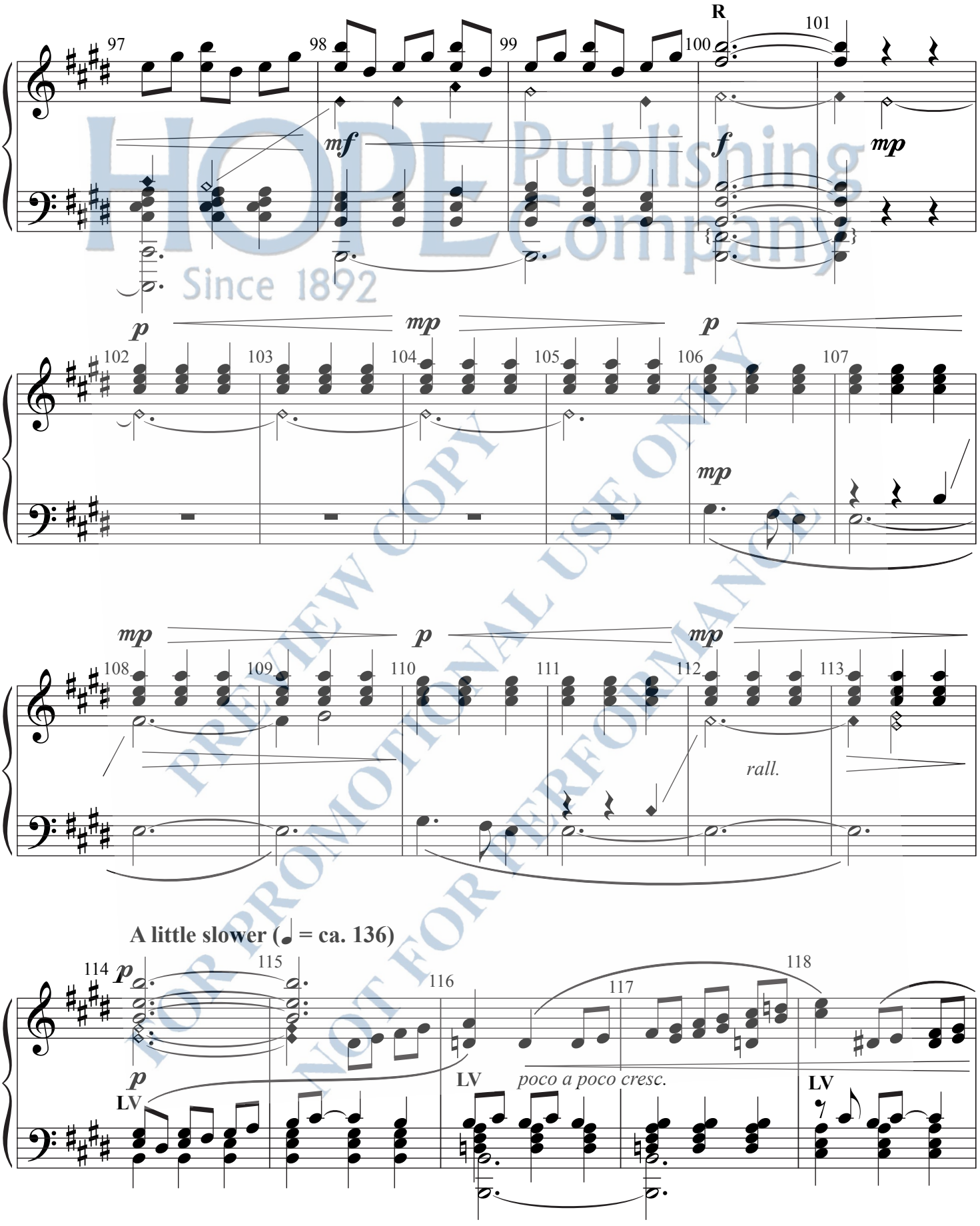

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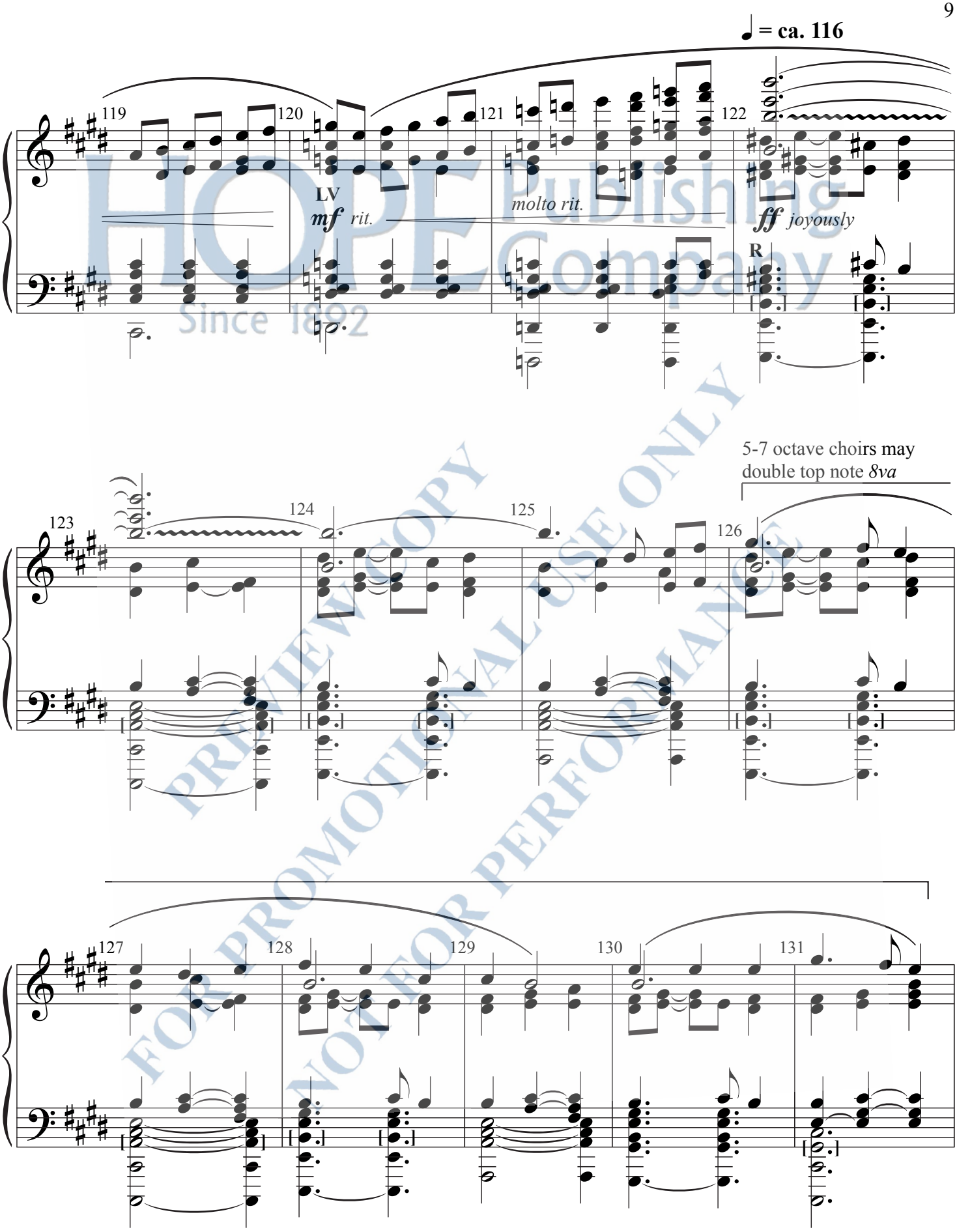

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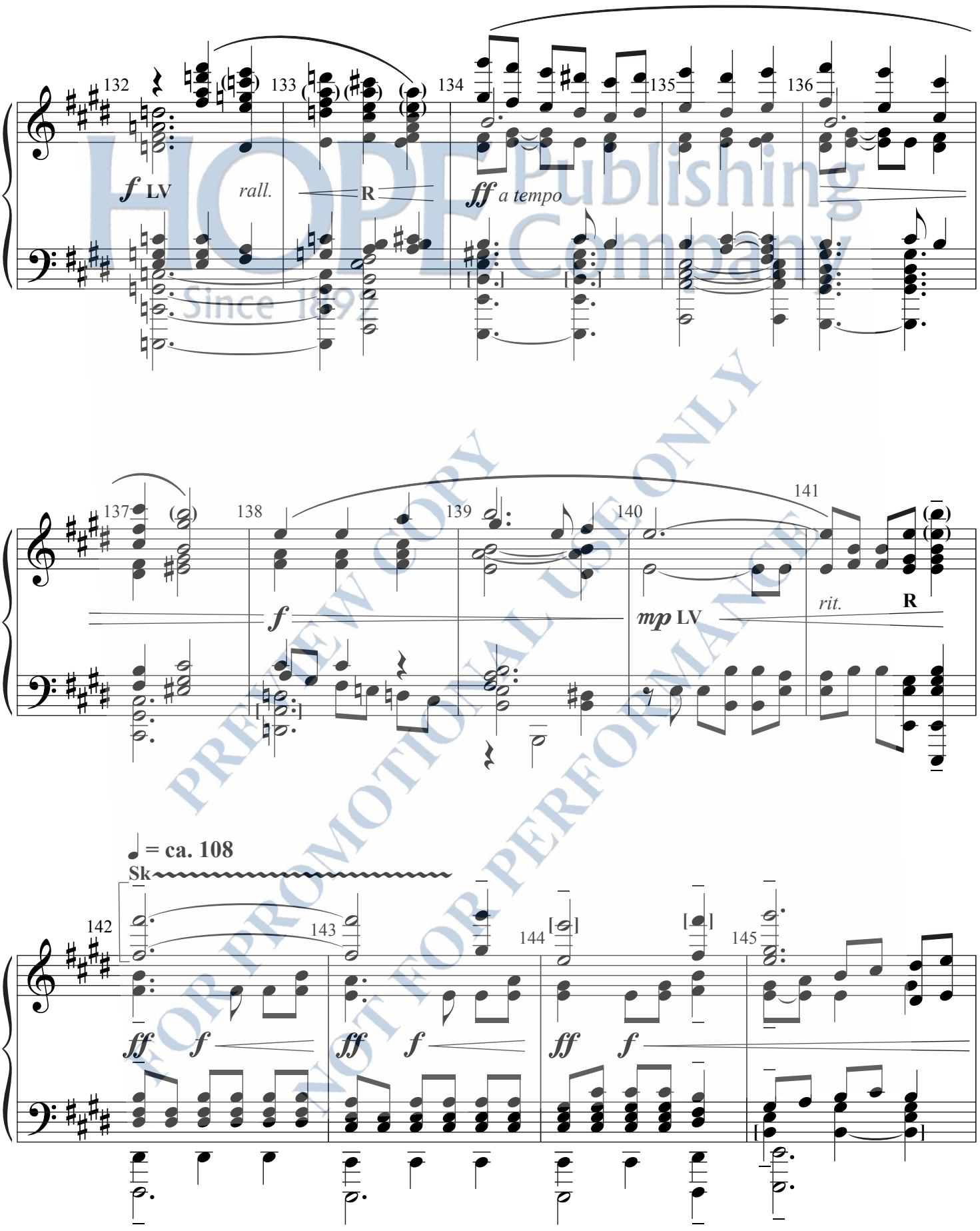

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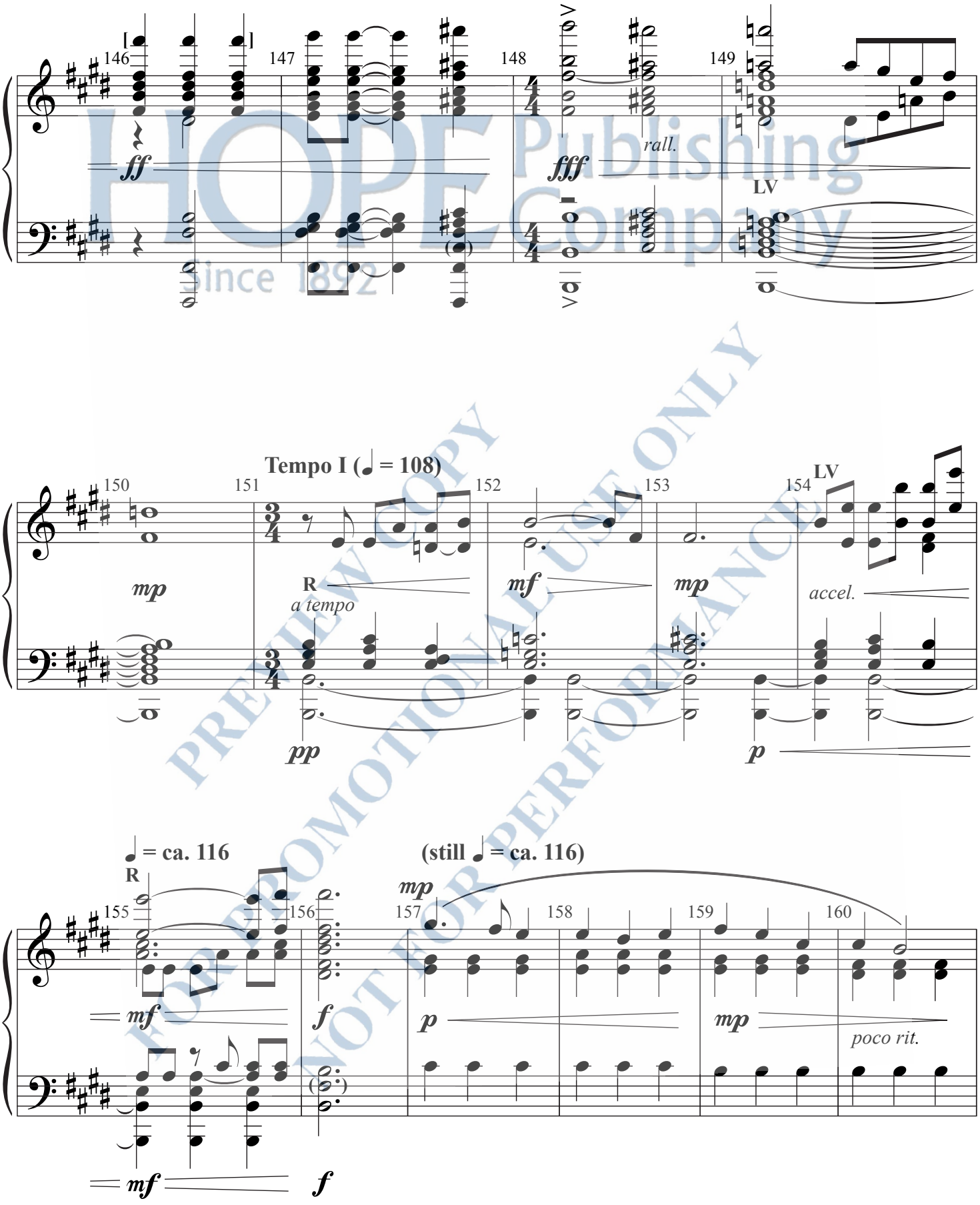

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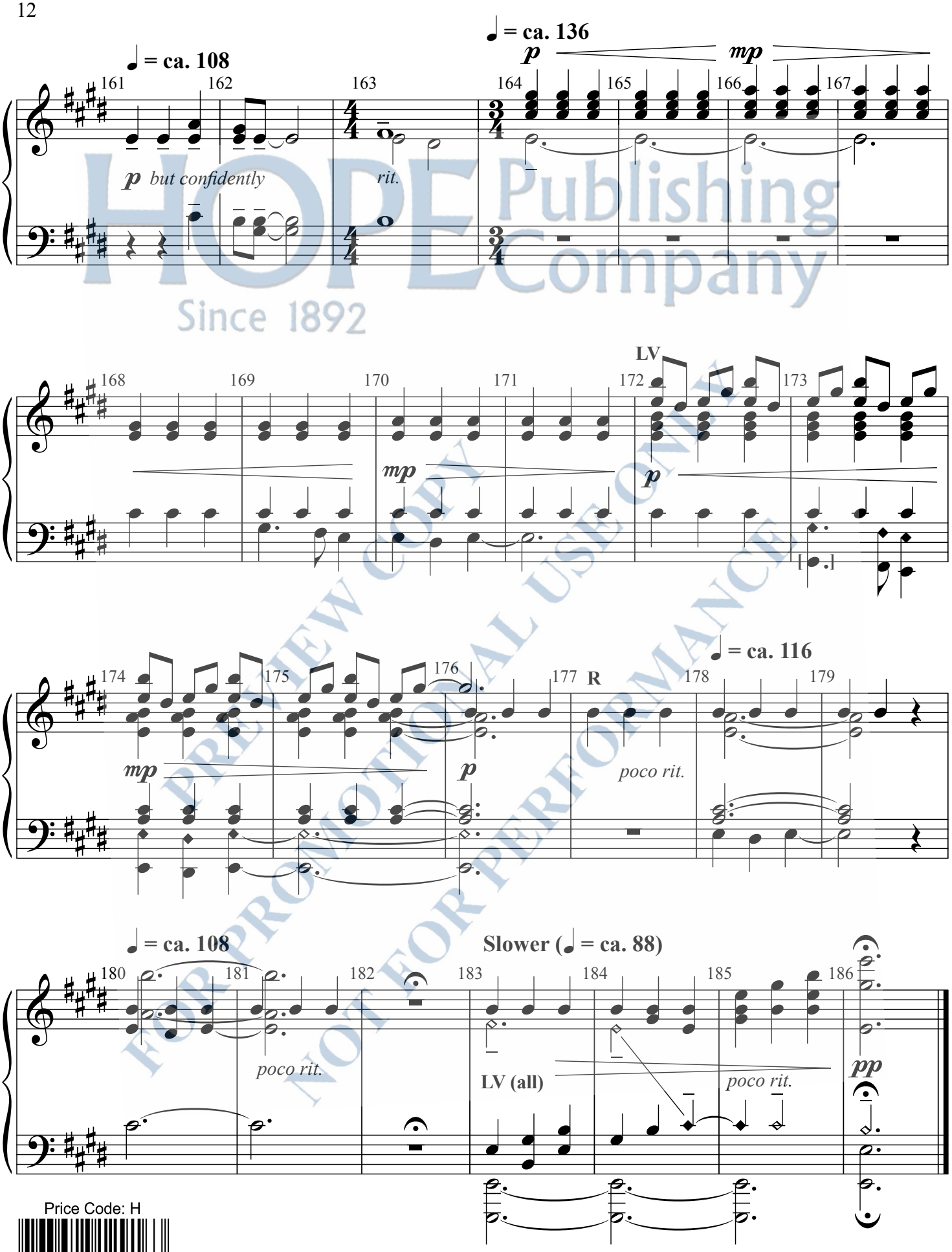

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