A Celebration of **Andraé Crouch**
for the Solo Pianist

Through It All

MARK HAYES

SAMPLE

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Notes from the Arranger

I was a piano performance major at Baylor University when I first heard the music of Andraé Crouch, songs like "My Tribute" and "Jesus Is the Answer," and I was drawn to it right away. His gospel style—with its syncopations, jazz-influenced harmonies, improvisational embellishments, and emotional energy—was everything I wasn't studying in classical music, and it connected with me immediately. Instead of practicing Bach and unbeknownst to my piano professor, I spent my practice time picking apart what made Andraé's music so appealing to me.

I was inspired to write a two-piano arrangement of "My Tribute" for me and my friend, Sandy, who was another music major. To me, it was the coolest song in the world. It was one of my first notated arrangements and I was quite proud of it. So much so, that I submitted it for publication to WORD Music, which at the time was in Waco, Texas, where I was living. I remember walking into the office of Charles F. Brown, who was the decision maker about new manuscripts.

With my fingers crossed, I showed him my arrangement. God bless Charlie Brown! (That's what he preferred to be called.) You see, my arrangement had more black notes than white space on the paper. I had massively over-written to impress, and did just the opposite. Charlie graciously talked about the concept of "less is more" with me for several minutes. Ultimately, this became my first of many rejections, but more importantly it was my first lesson in the value of writing just the right notes and nothing more. I'm still learning that lesson!

Since then, I've worked hard to learn what makes Black gospel sound like it does. As you play these arrangements of favorite Andraé Crouch songs, here's what you can do to play this style authentically:

- Pay attention to articulation. You'll find a great example of this in m. 3 of "Soon and Very Soon." If you hold the damper pedal down while trying to articulate those chords correctly, it will ruin the effect.
- Play the correct accidentals in chords with jazz harmonies. One wrong note will sabotage the sound. In mm. 33–34 of "I Don't Know Why," you'll find examples of slide chords, where a rather juicy jazz chord "slides" down a half step to the next chord. If what you're playing doesn't sound right, you're probably missing a key accidental.
- Observe the rests. With such a highly rhythmic style, breaths and silences are important. Don't overpedal.
- When playing grace notes, as in m. 6 of "Bless His Holy Name," minimize the grace note. I "slap" the grace note, meaning that I slide quickly to the stronger note that comes after the grace note. If this feels unplayable to you, feel free to eliminate the grace note all together rather than fumble through it.
- Play syncopated rhythms accurately. This would appear to be a no-brainer, but we all can get overwhelmed with complicated rhythms. They simply look scary on the page. It's all math, people! Write in where the strong beats are above the right hand.
- Play rolled chords correctly. For example, in m. 45 of "Bless His Holy Name," that chord is rolled down instead of up. This is a stylistic feature of gospel piano music.

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- Play single-note left-hand passages with a detached feel and little or no pedal. I often write the left hand like a bass guitar line. If you overpedal, or play too legato, it will have no energy. You can see this throughout "Bringin' Back the Sunshine." For example, in m. 7, you will need no pedal. Hold the right-hand whole note and play the left hand almost staccato or with a bouncy feel. Whenever I have not practiced enough, or don't know a passage well, my default is to hold down the damper pedal as if to disguise my lack of skill or preparation. That's exactly what *not* to do in places like this.
- Play with a steady tempo. As a church pianist, I love to play rubato and speed up or slow down the tempo for effect. But that's exactly what *not* to do here. So much of Black gospel music has an inherent beat to it, which does not fluctuate. Syncopations by their very nature happen on the off beat. If the strong beat is always wandering, how will you know where to place the off-beat? I like to imagine I'm playing with a rhythm section: They will not slow down to accommodate you. One practical solution is to practice with a metronome. (I can hear you groaning, but it will help.)
- Lean into accents for added energy. In m. 2 and throughout "I Don't Know Why," play the accented chord strongly. Imagine you are singing the phrase, "Oh, but I'm glad, I'm glad He did!" If you can sing along silently as you play, you bring an added emotion and energy to your piano solos as you know which notes should have more weight and which ones are not as important.

I hope that *Through It All* will bring hours of enjoyment and inspiration to your congregation when used in worship. I love writing piano books for you. Thanks for your loyalty and support for all these years.

—Mark Hayes

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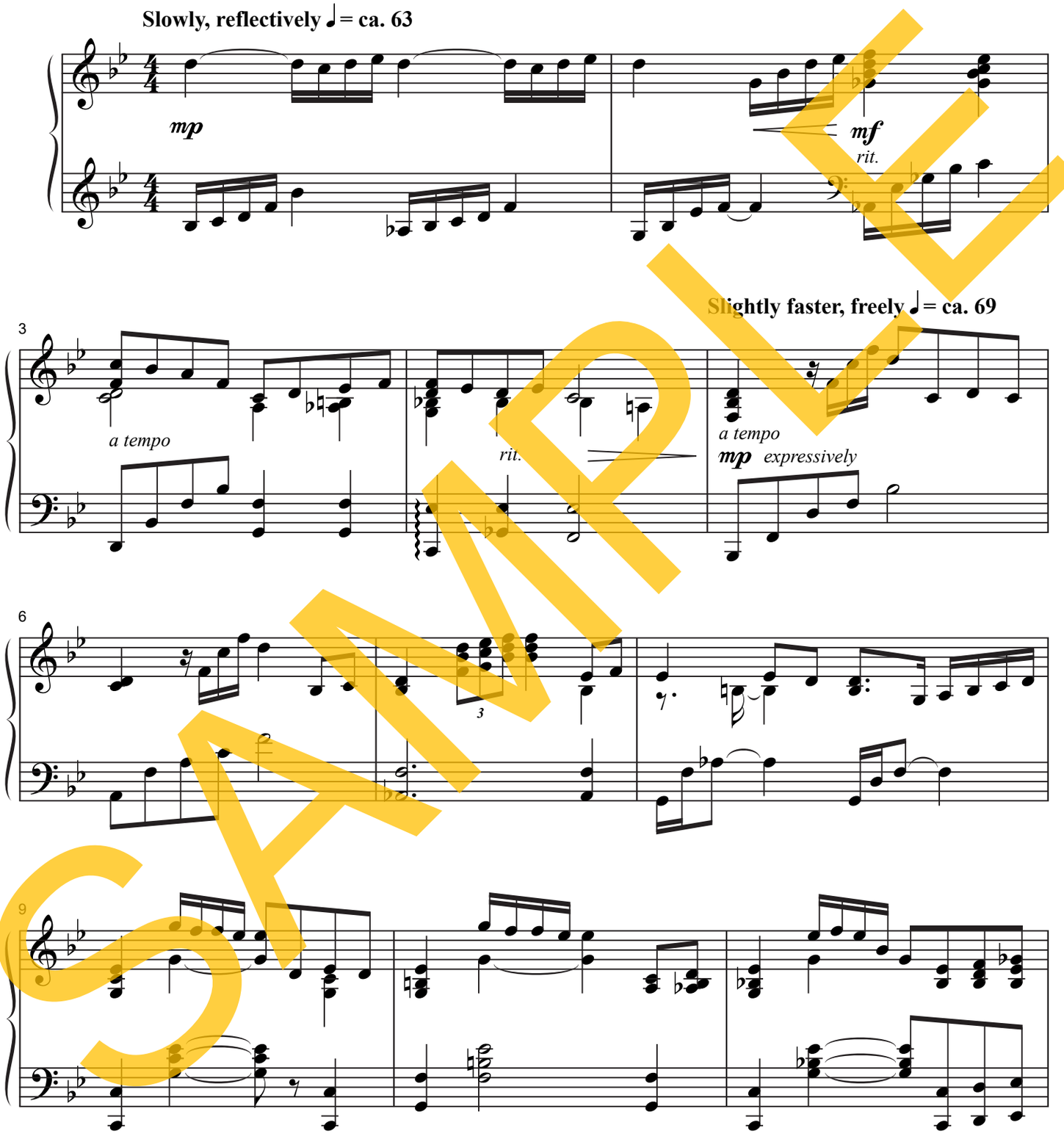
for my Kansas City colleague and friend, Isaac Cates, a bright star in Black gospel music and a superb pianist

My Tribute
(To God Be the Glory)

Music by **Andraé Crouch**
Arranged by **Mark Hayes**



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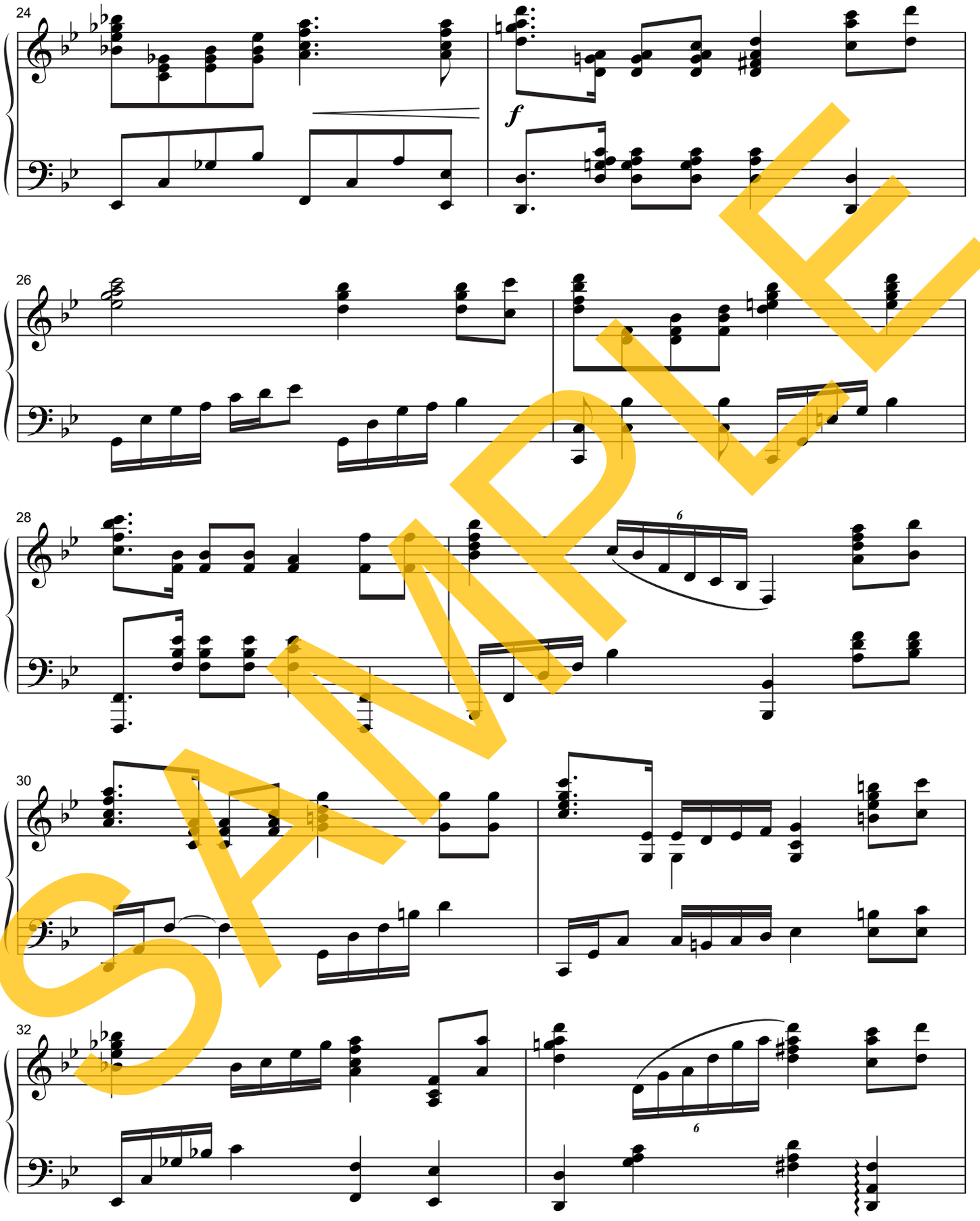

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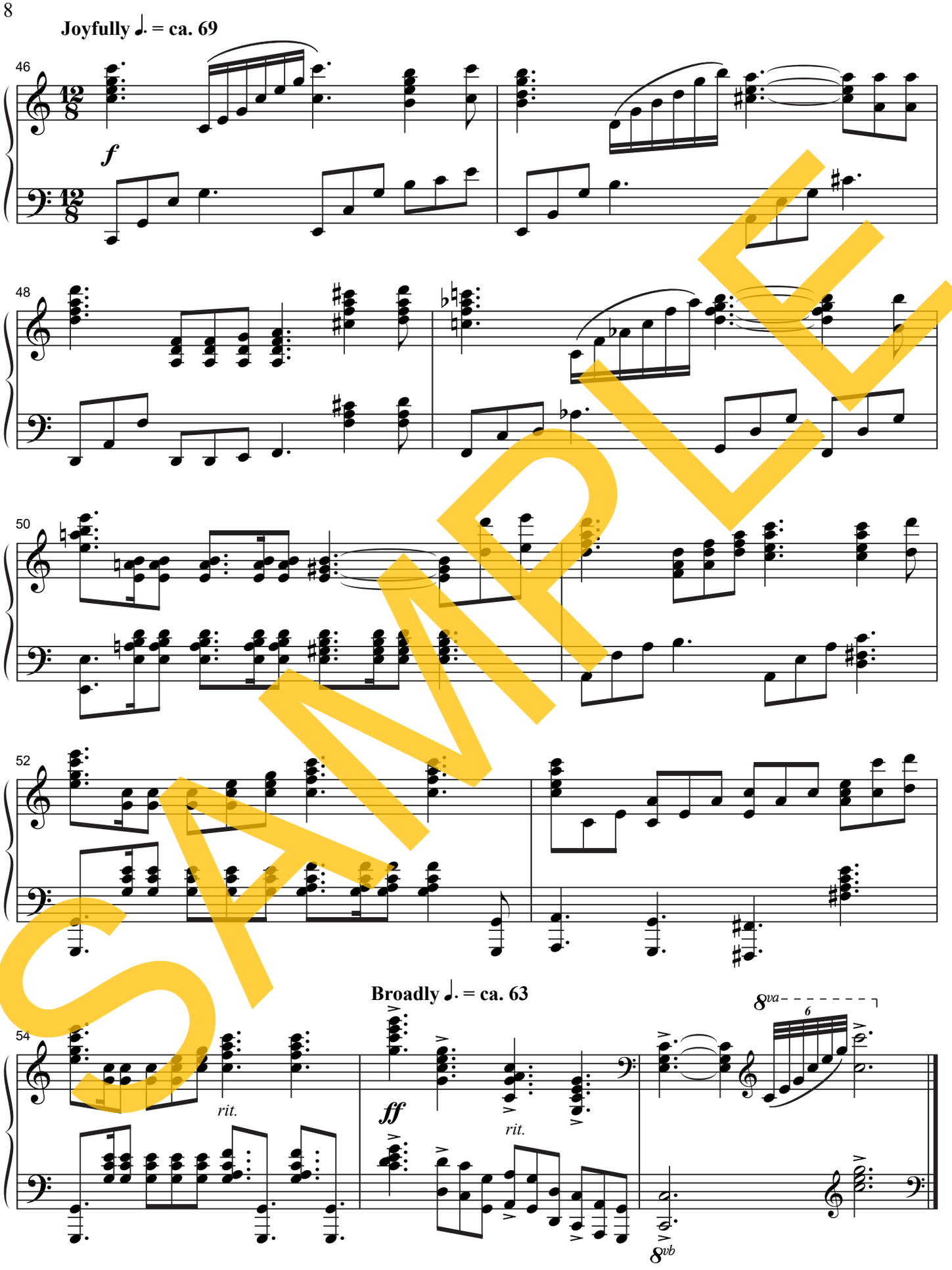

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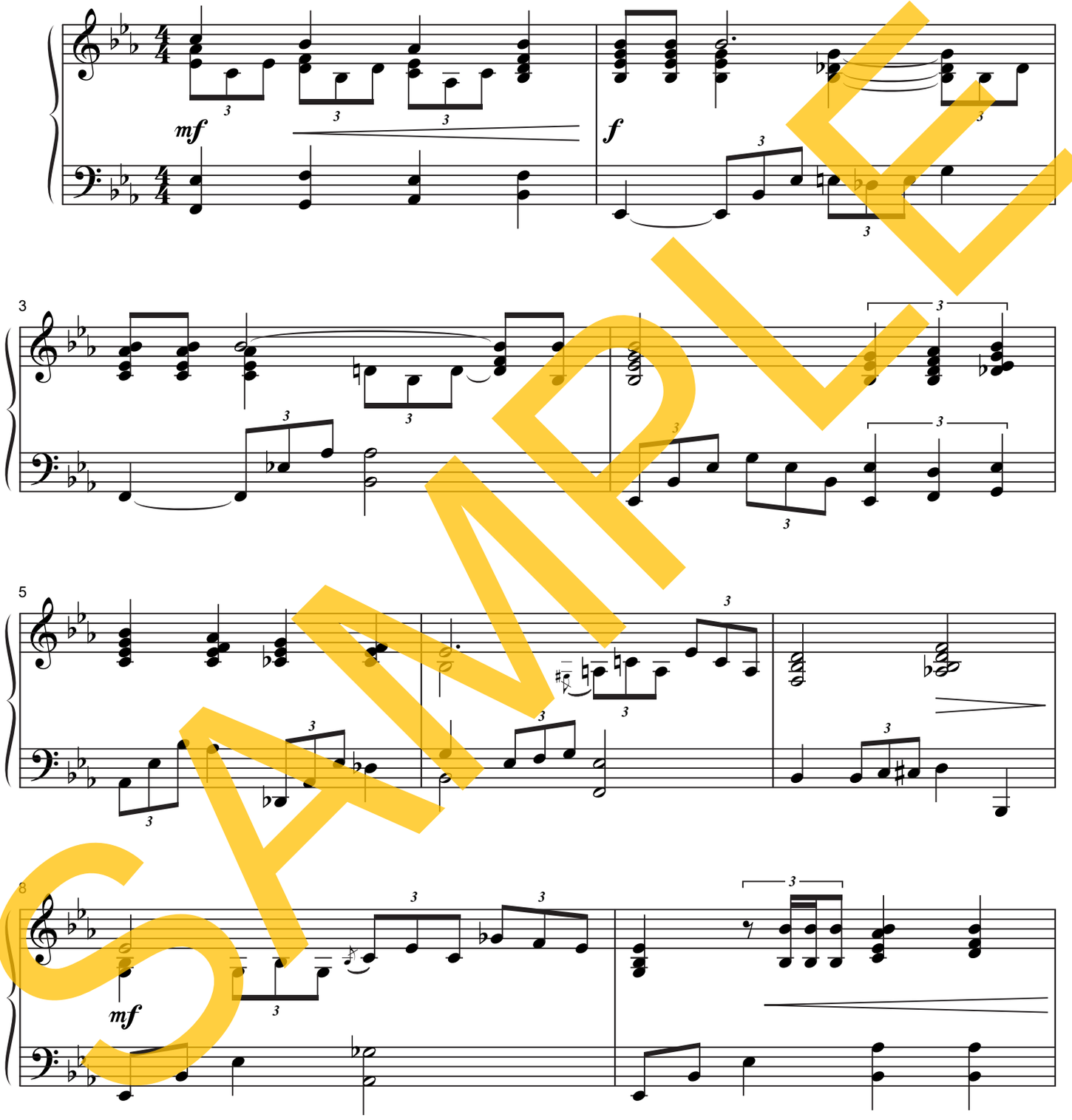
Bless His Holy Name
(Bless the Lord)

Music by **Andraé Crouch**
Arranged by **Mark Hayes**

Gospel shuffle feel ♩ = ca. 76 ♫ = ♩ ♪



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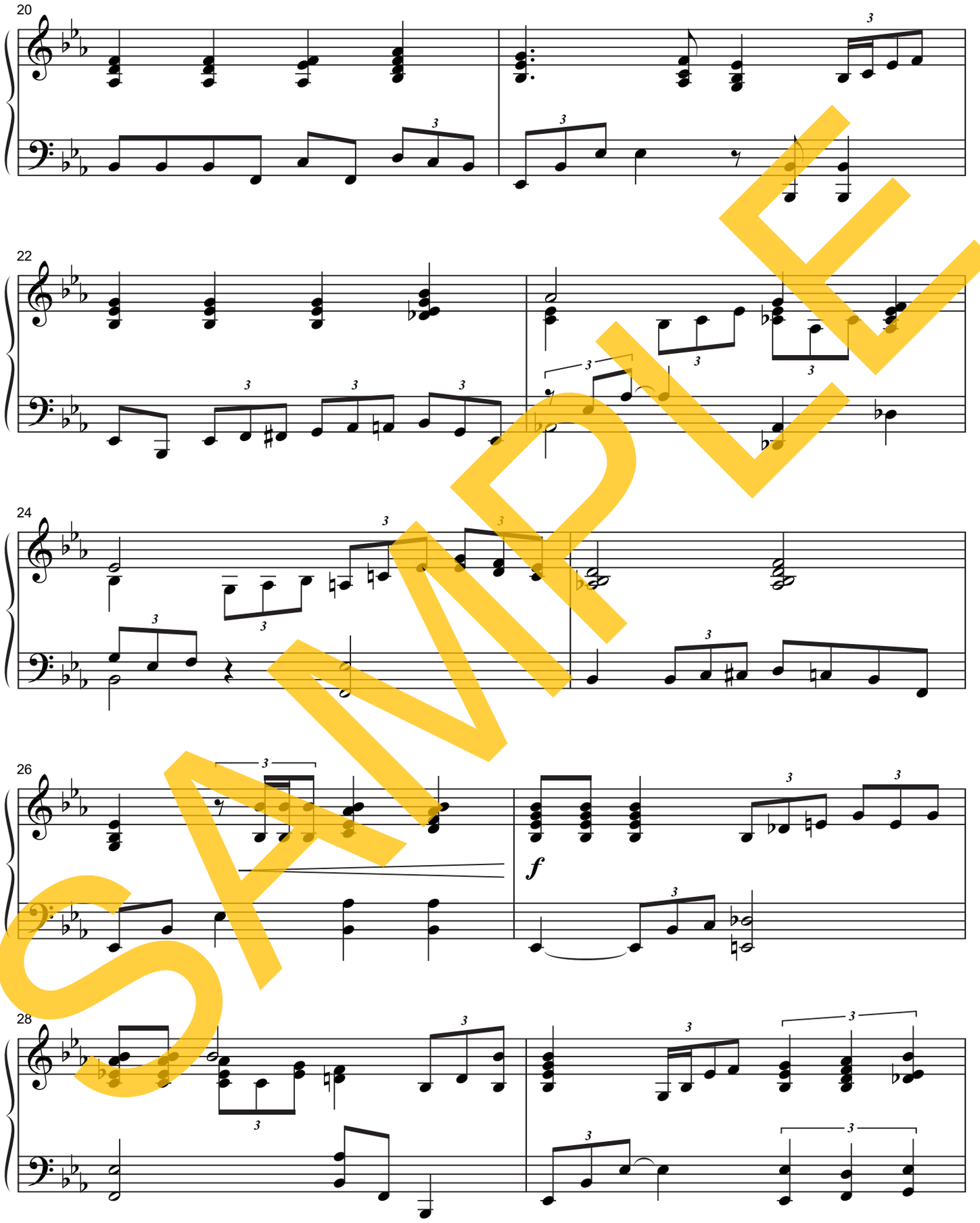

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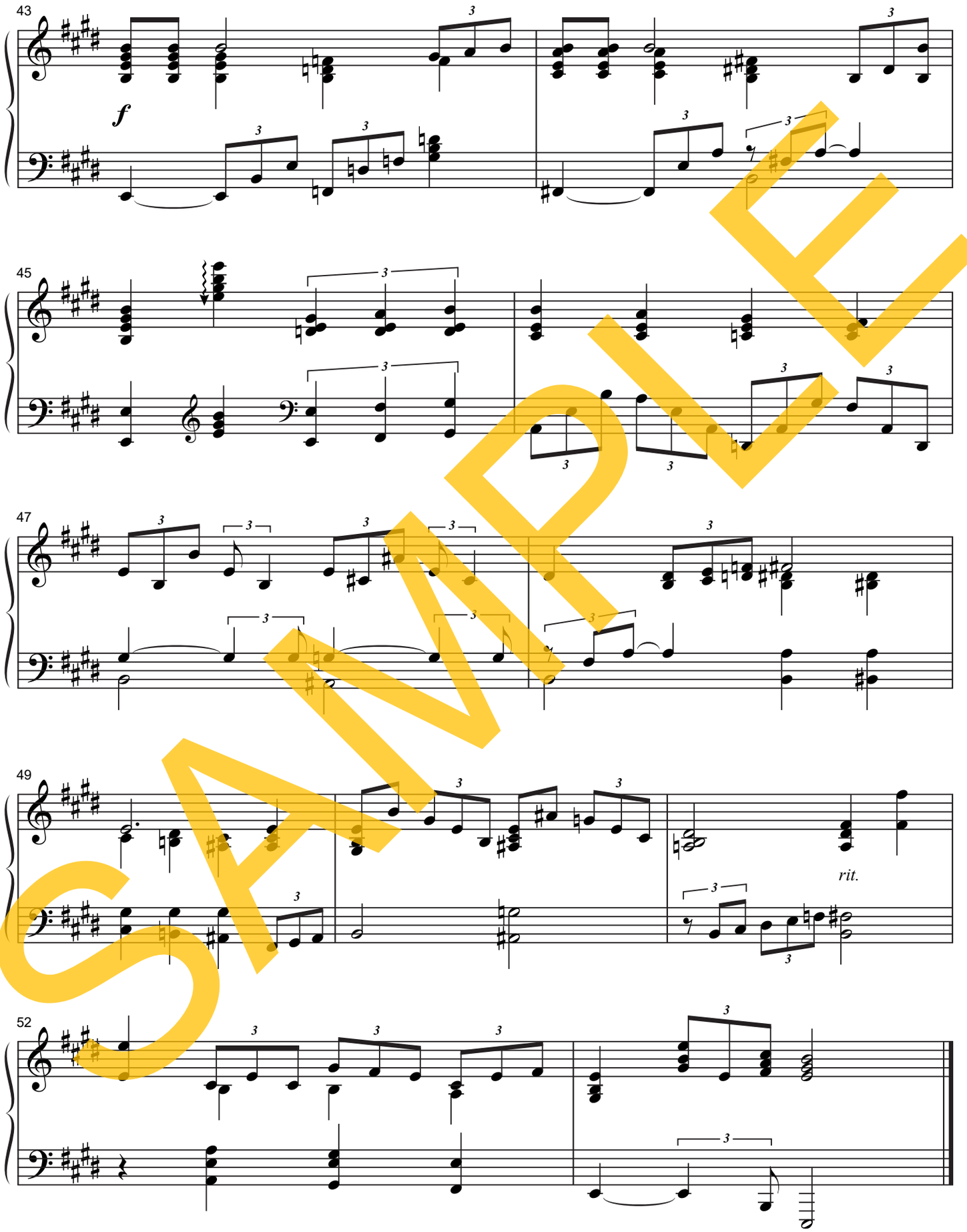

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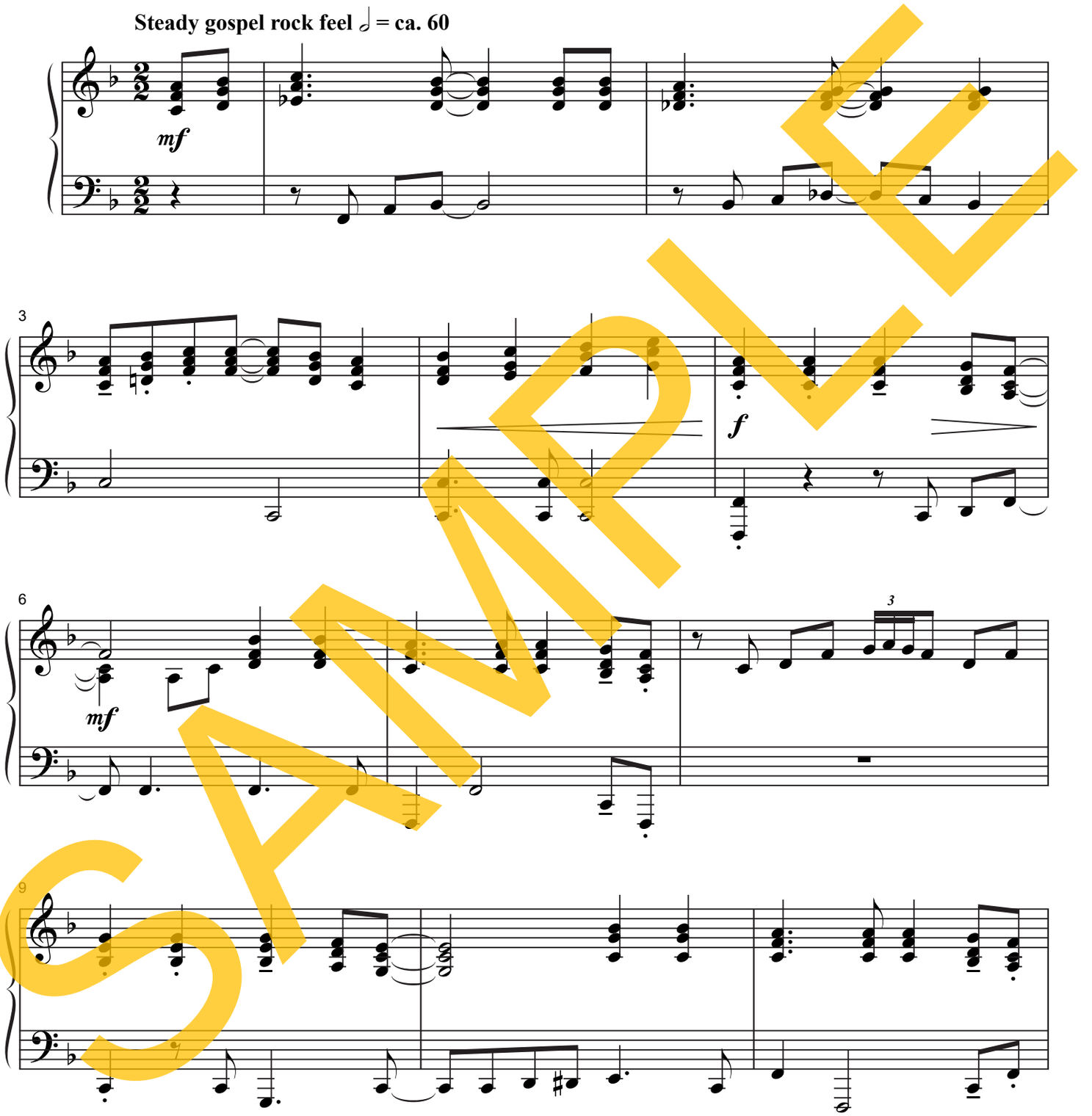
Soon and Very Soon

Music by **Andraé Crouch**
Arranged by **Mark Hayes**



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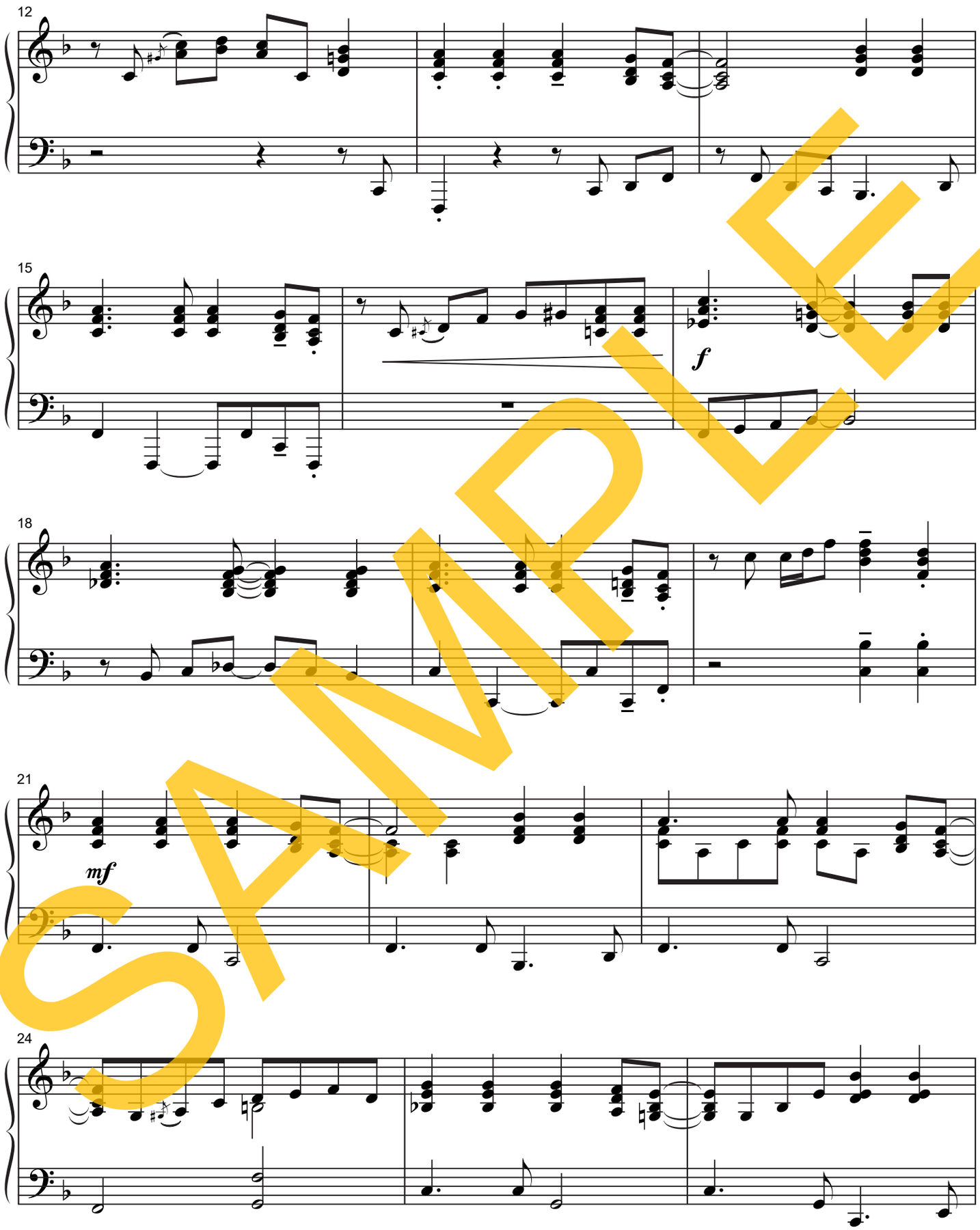

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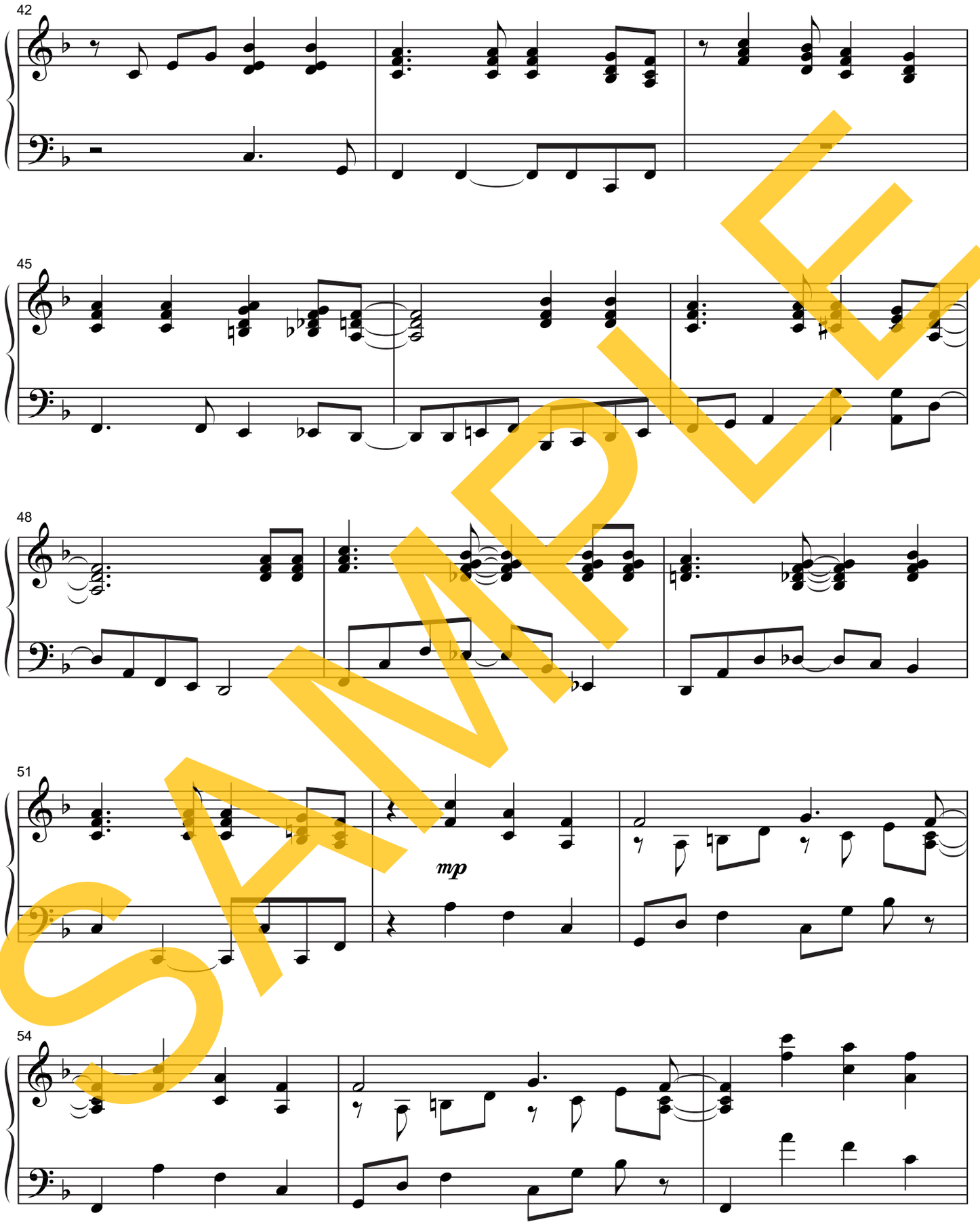

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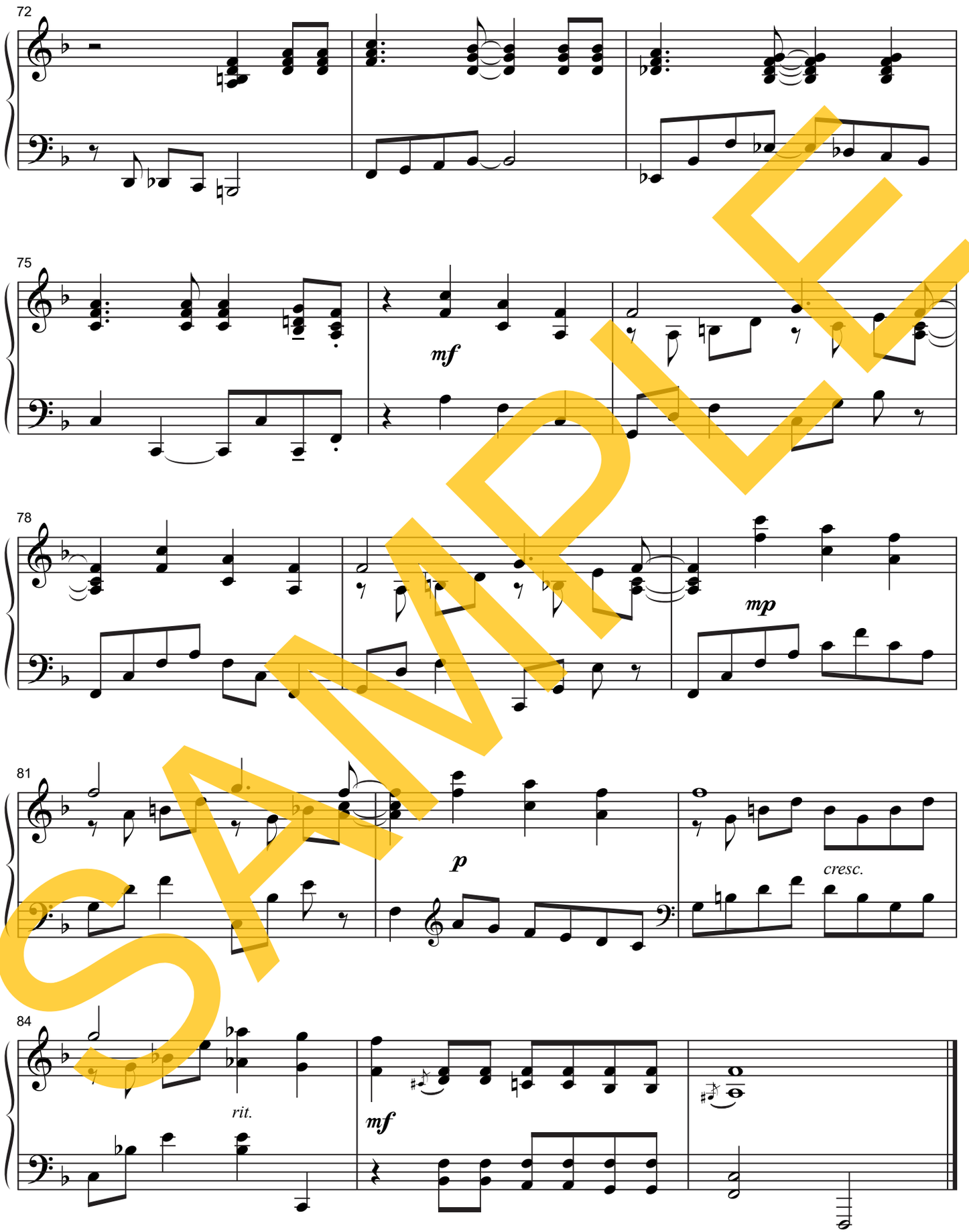

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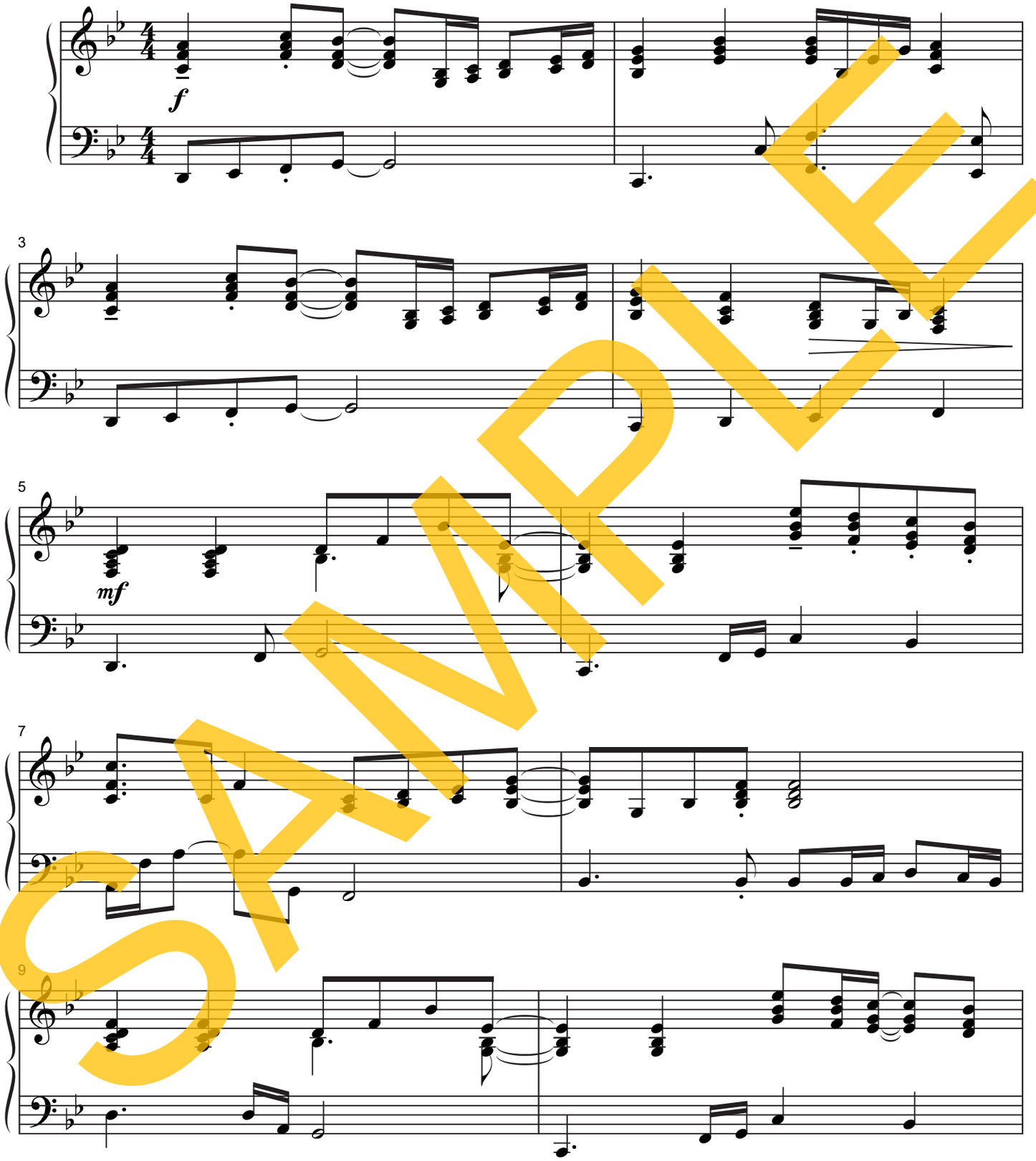
It Won't Be Long

Music by **Andraé Crouch**
Arranged by **Mark Hayes**

Soulful ballad feel ♩ = ca. 72



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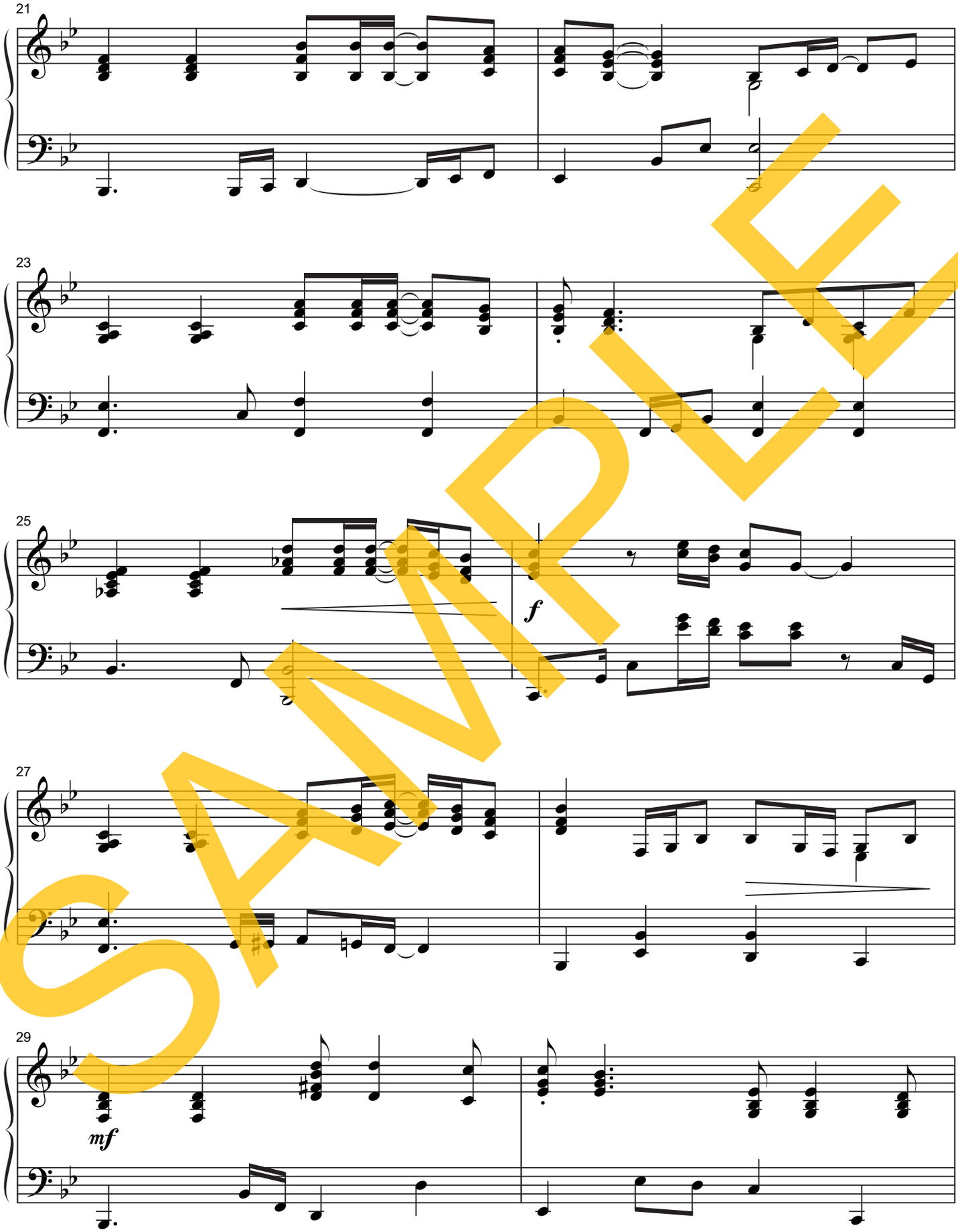

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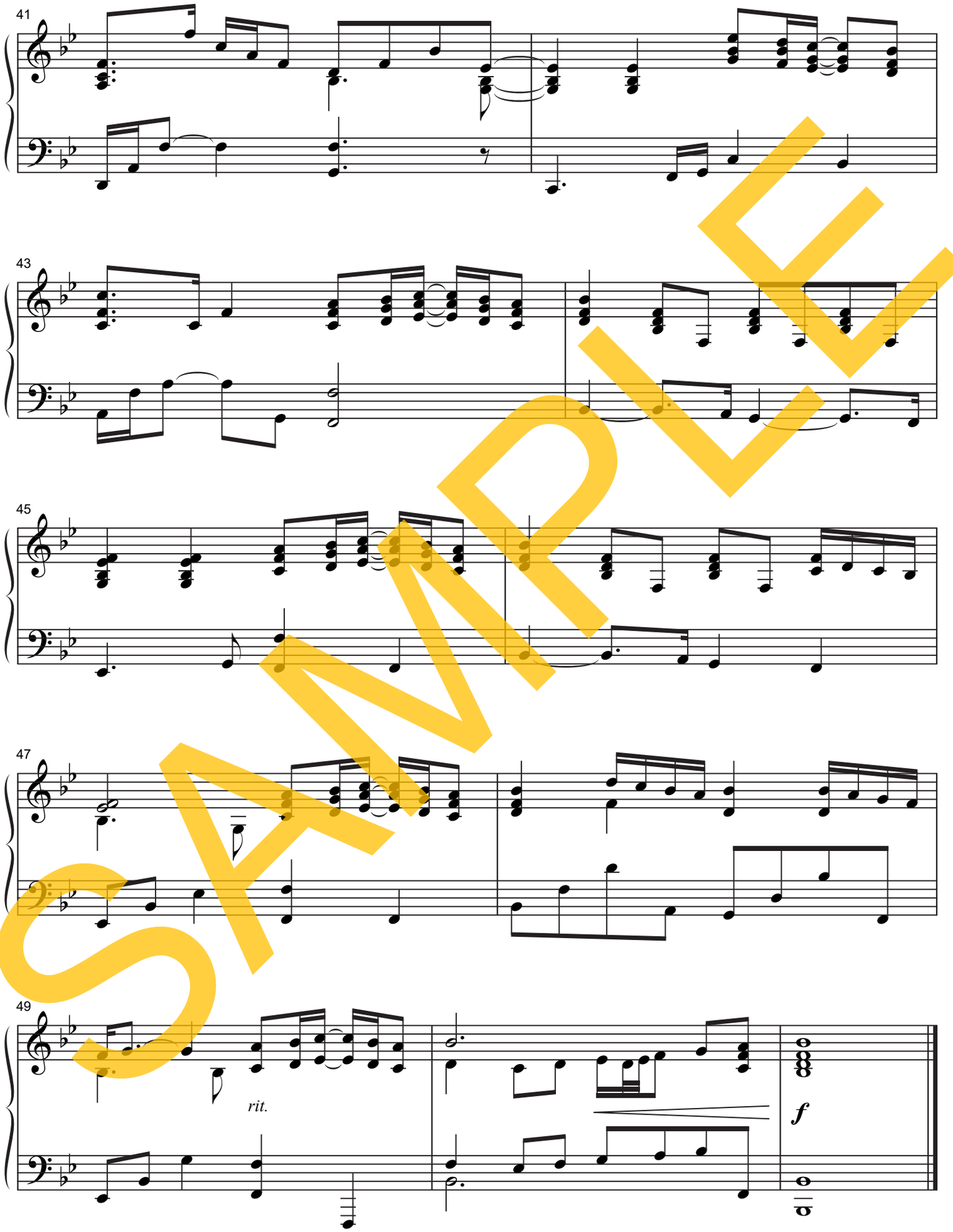

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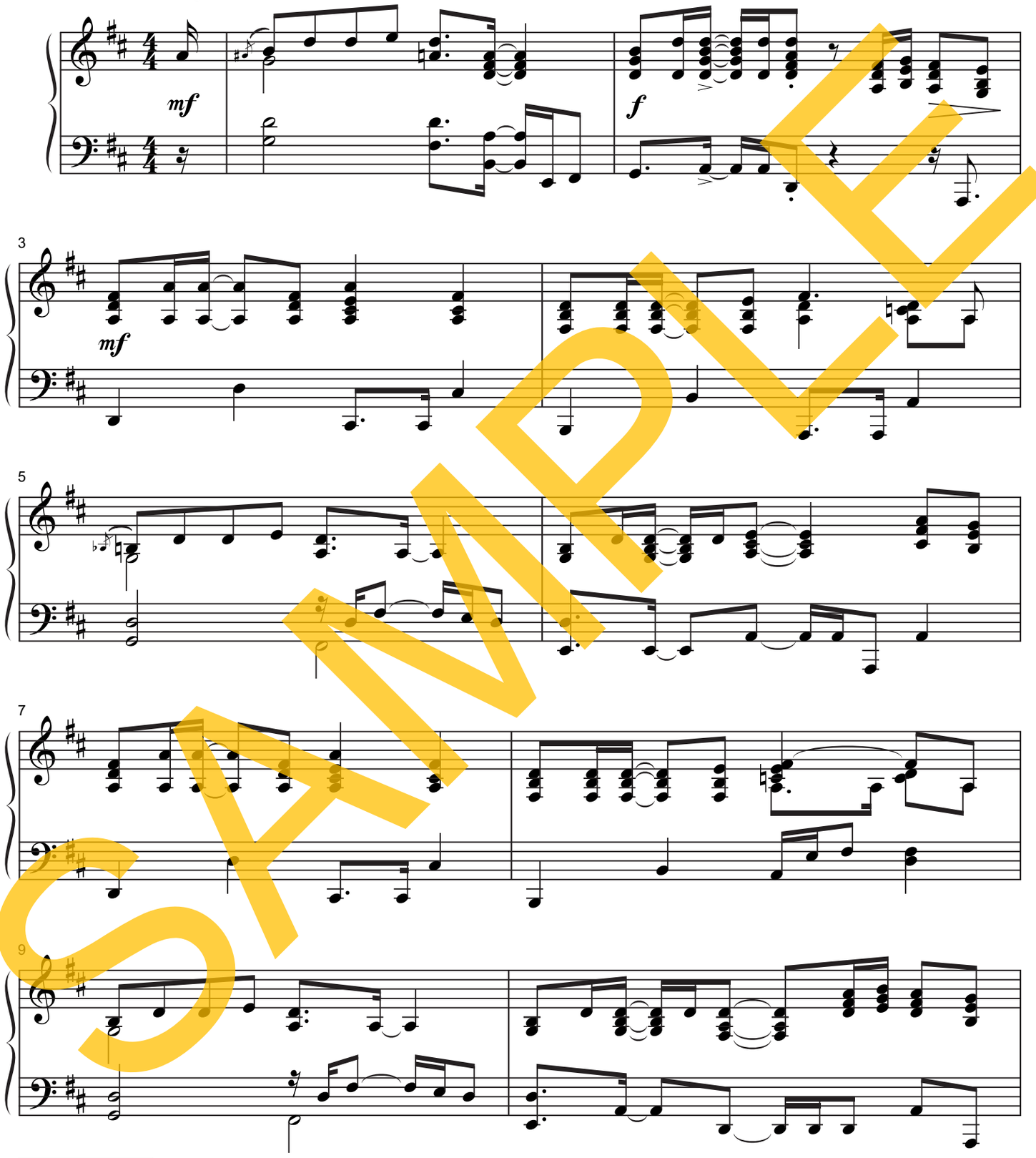
Jesus Is the Answer

Music by **Andraé Crouch**
and **Sandra Crouch**
Arranged by **Mark Hayes**

Steady ballad feel ♩ = ca. 66



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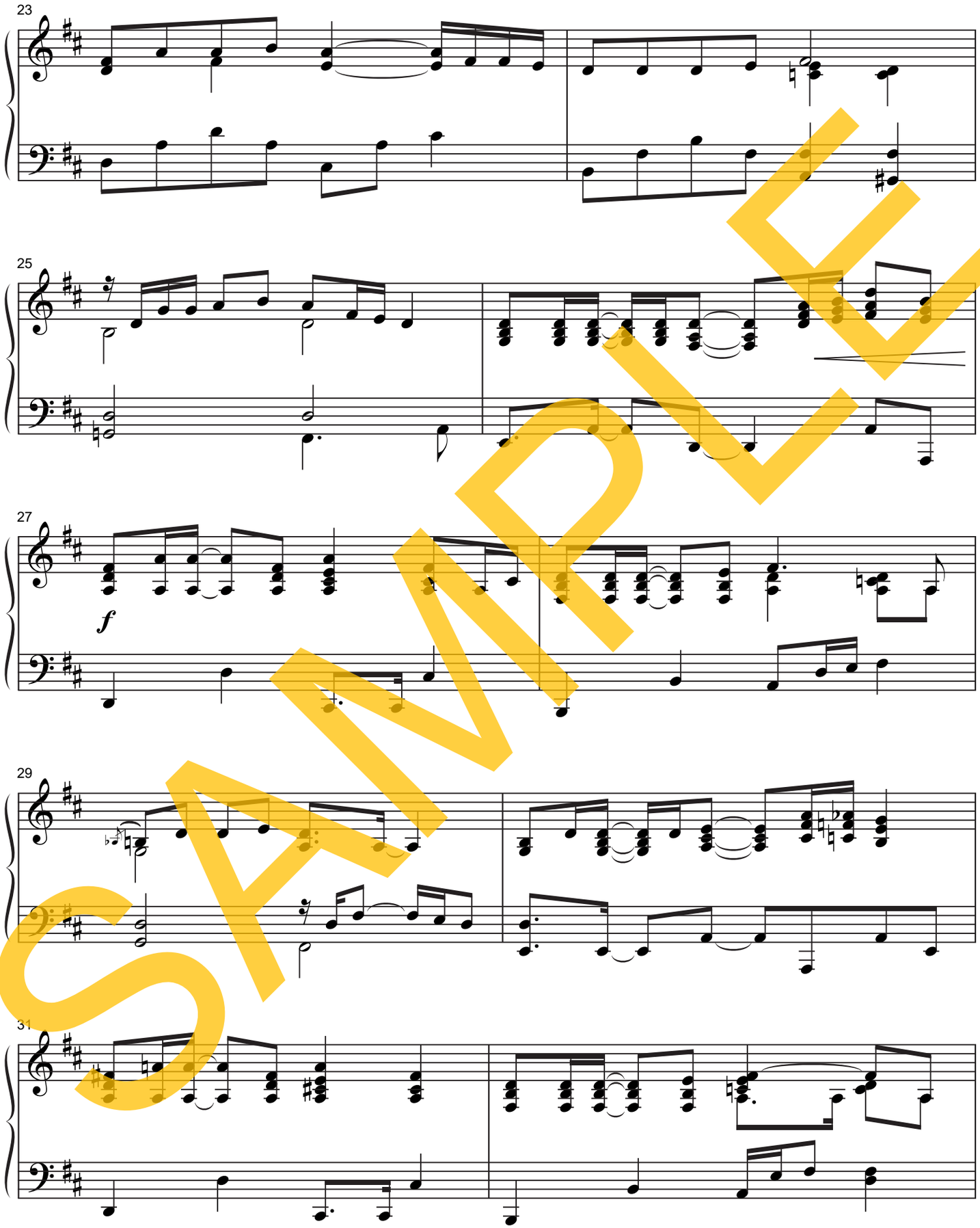

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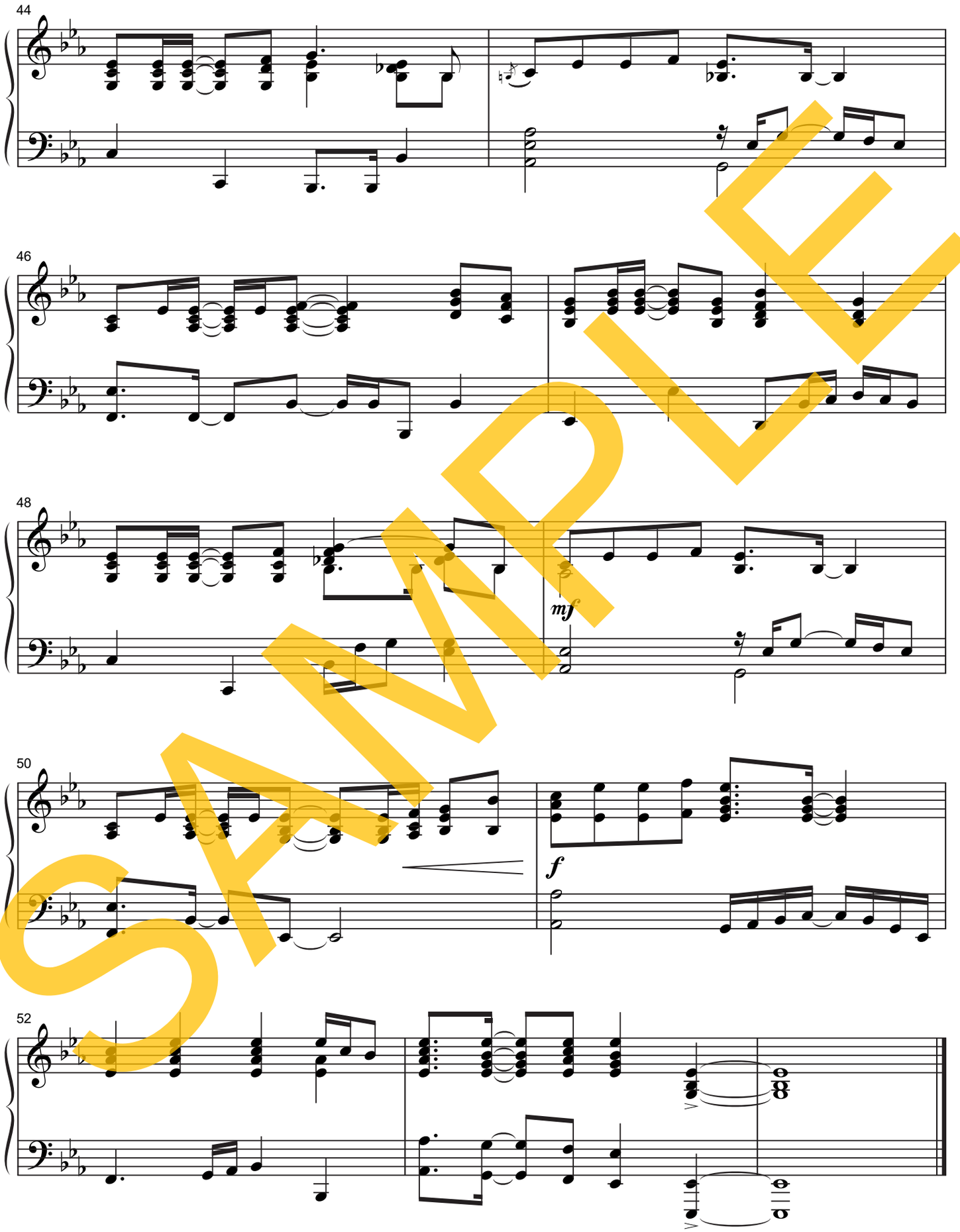

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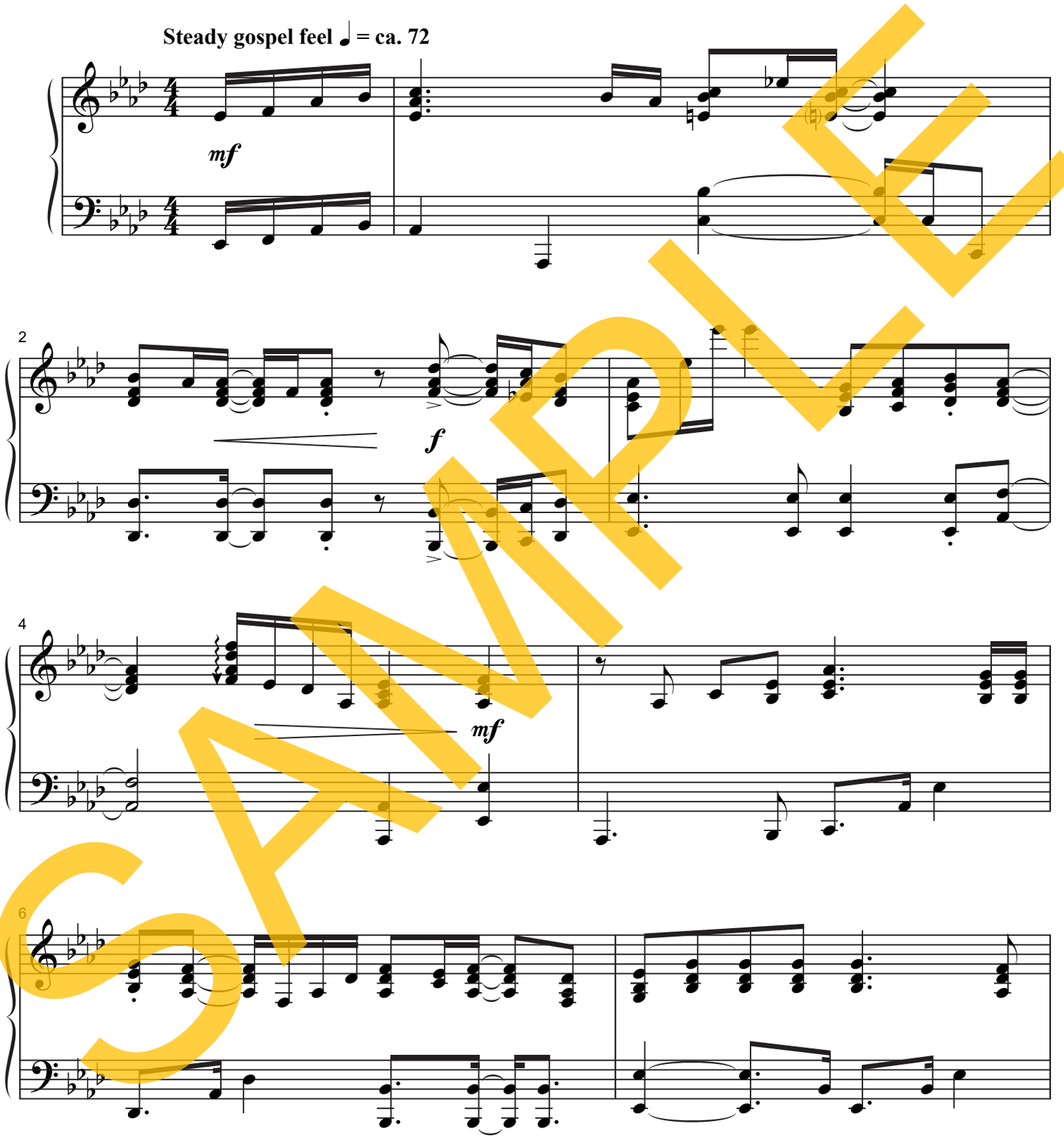
I Don't Know Why
(Jesus Loves Me)

Music by **Andraé Crouch**
Arranged by **Mark Hayes**



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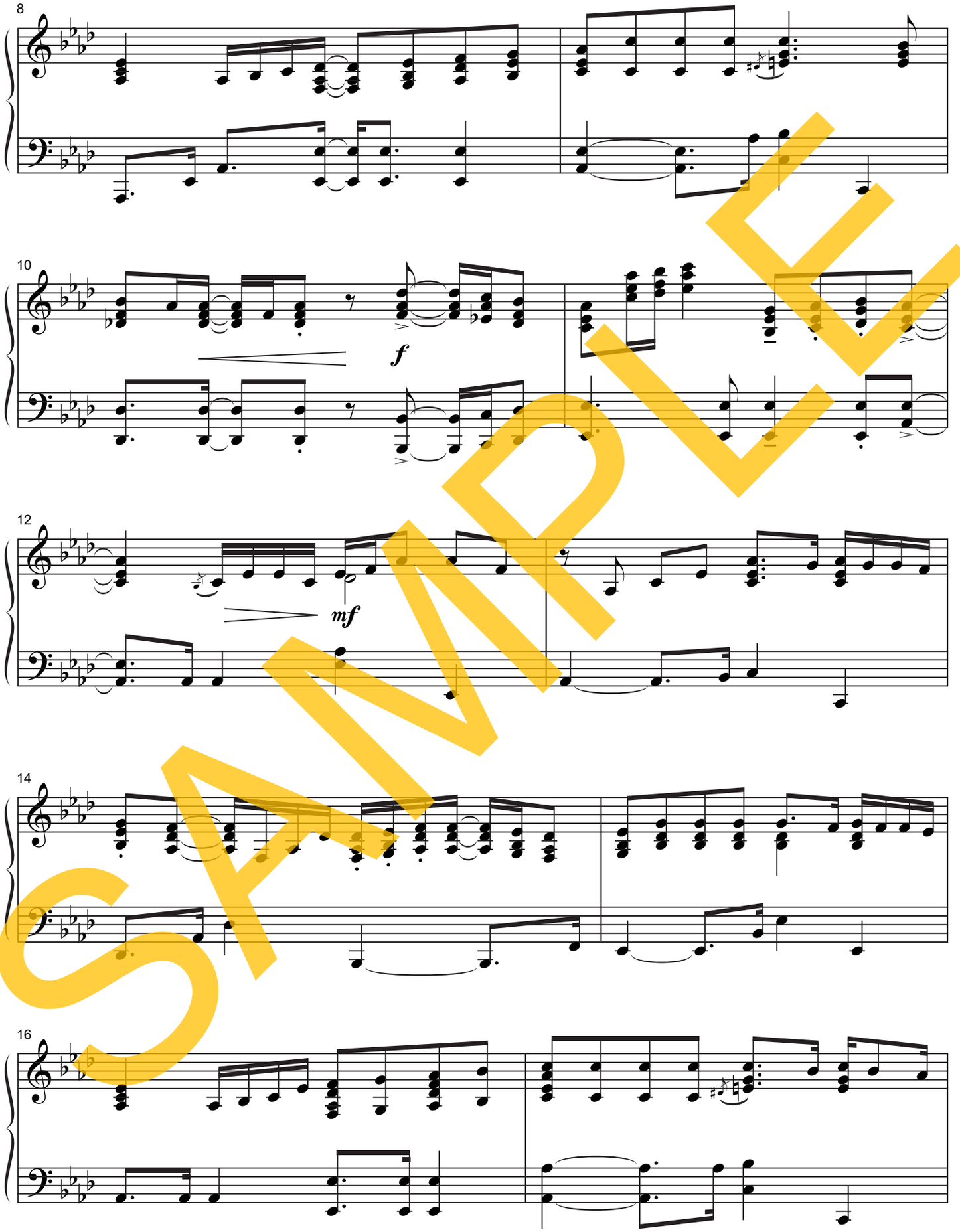

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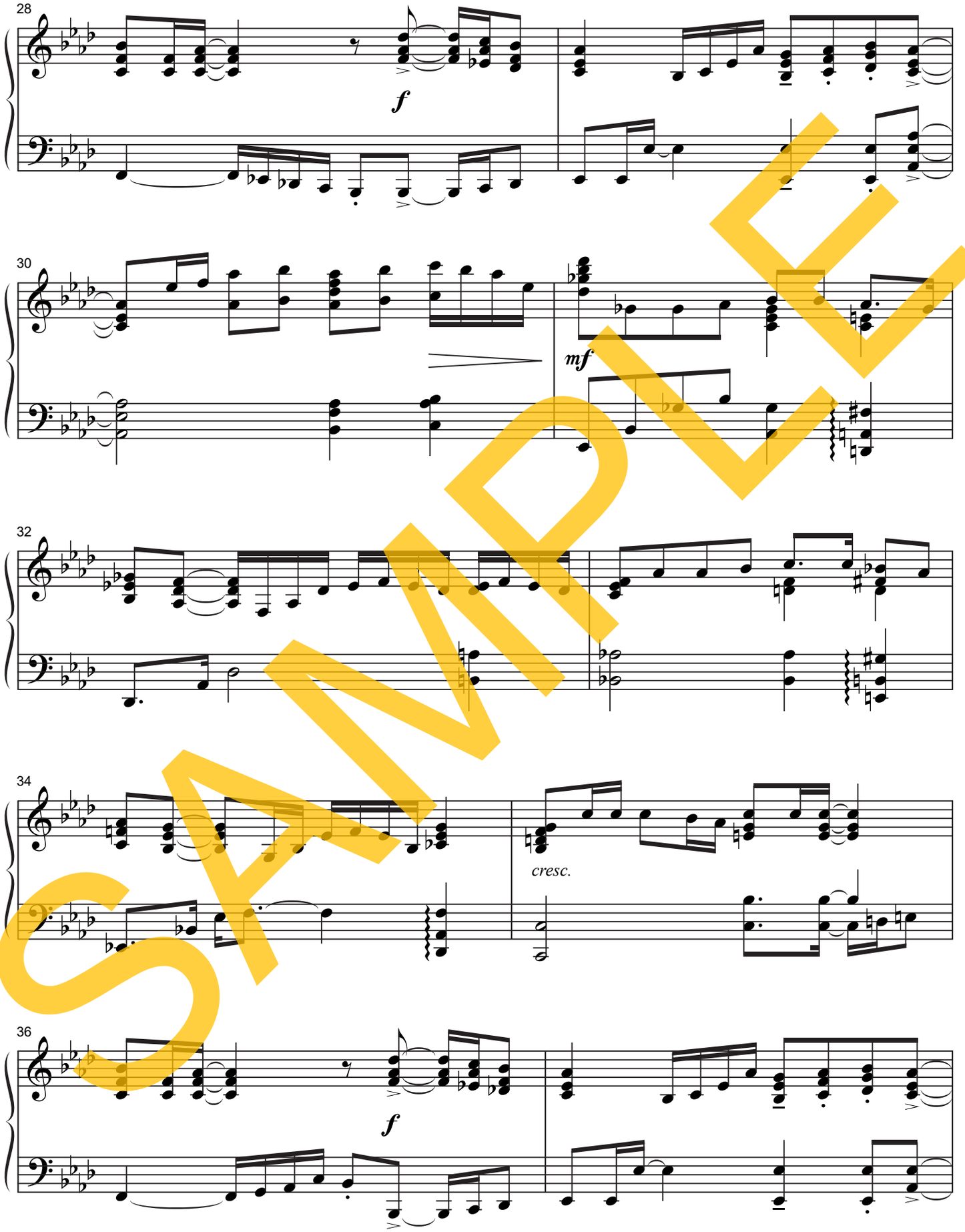

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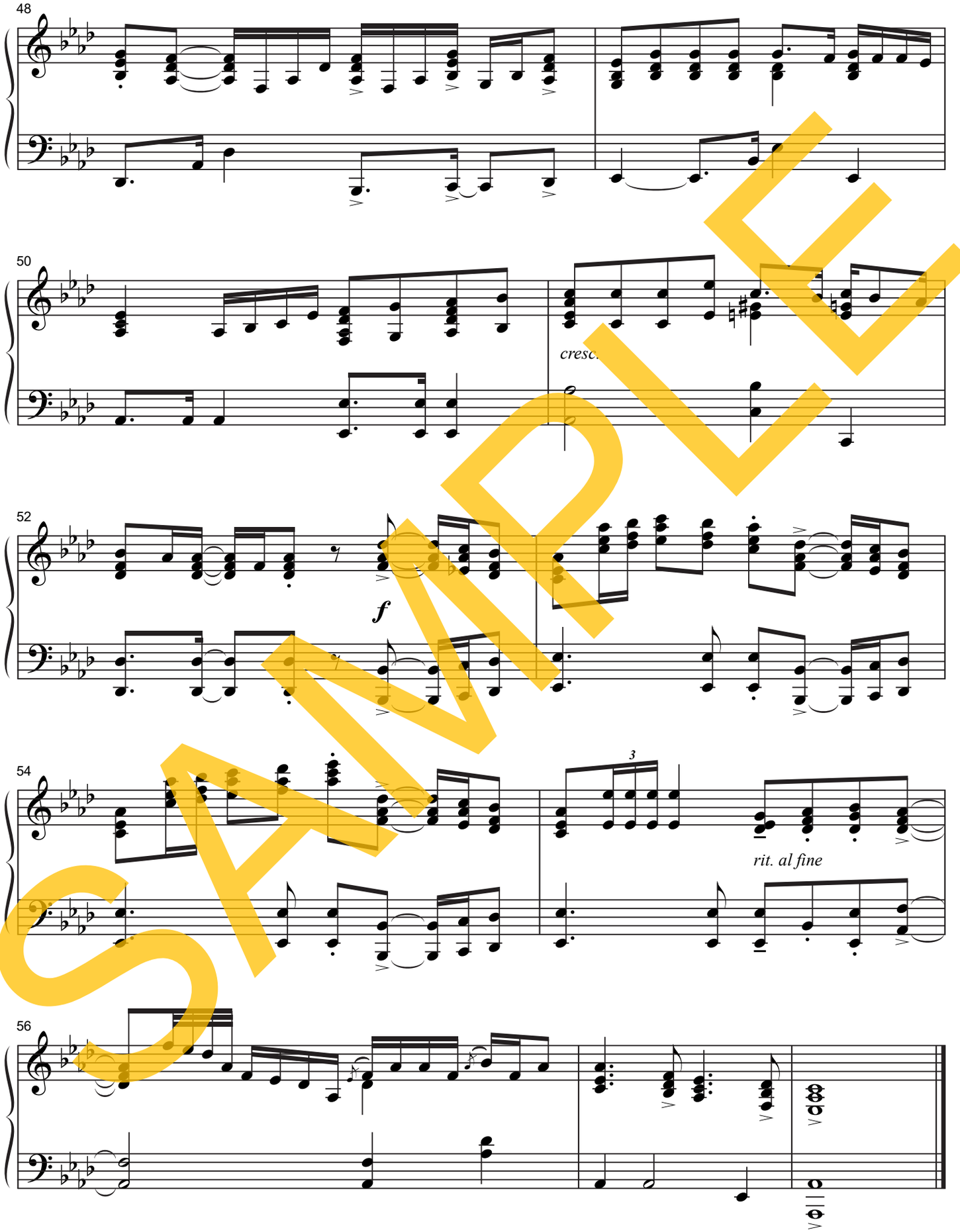

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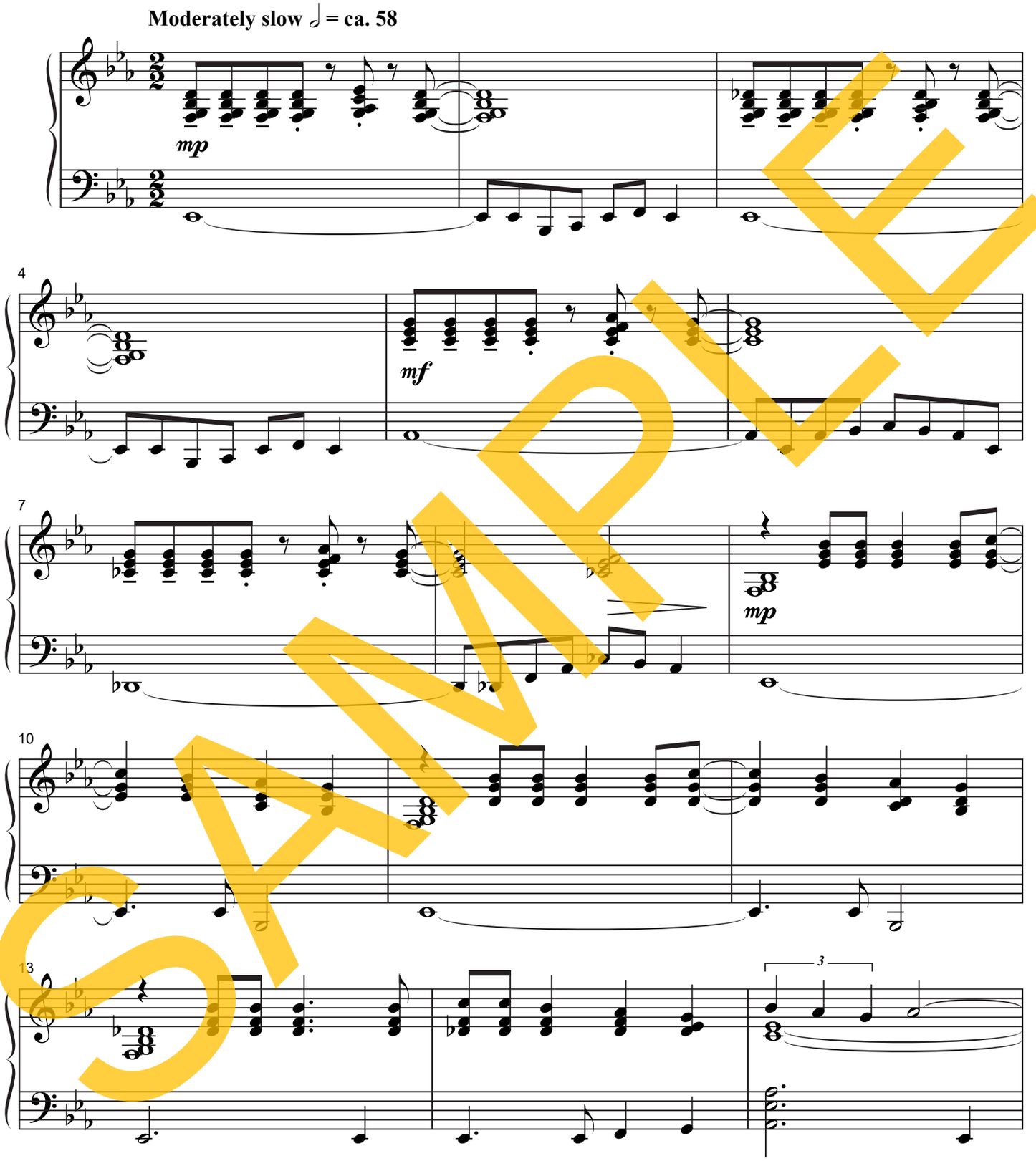
Through It All

Music by **Andraé Crouch**
Arranged by **Mark Hayes**



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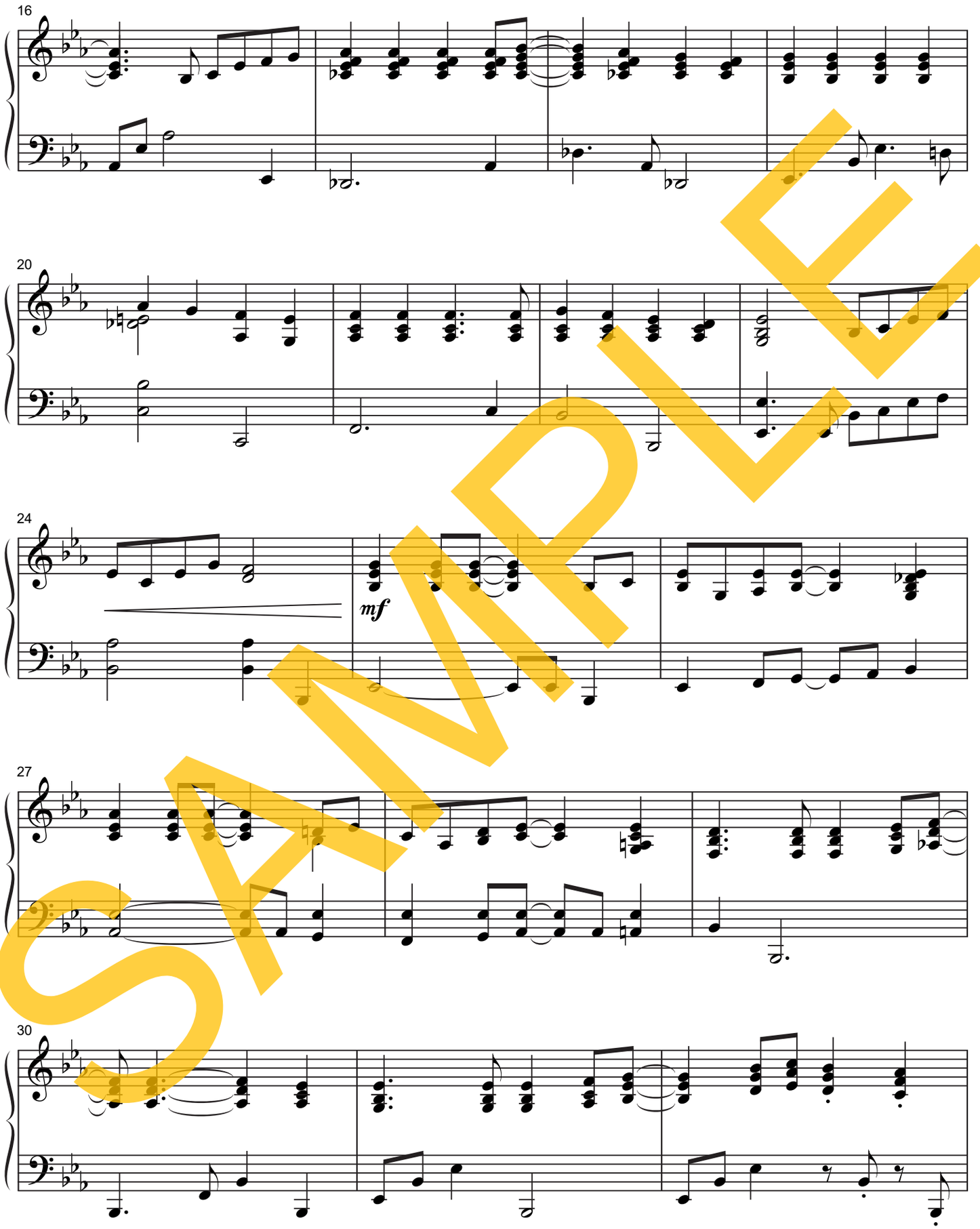

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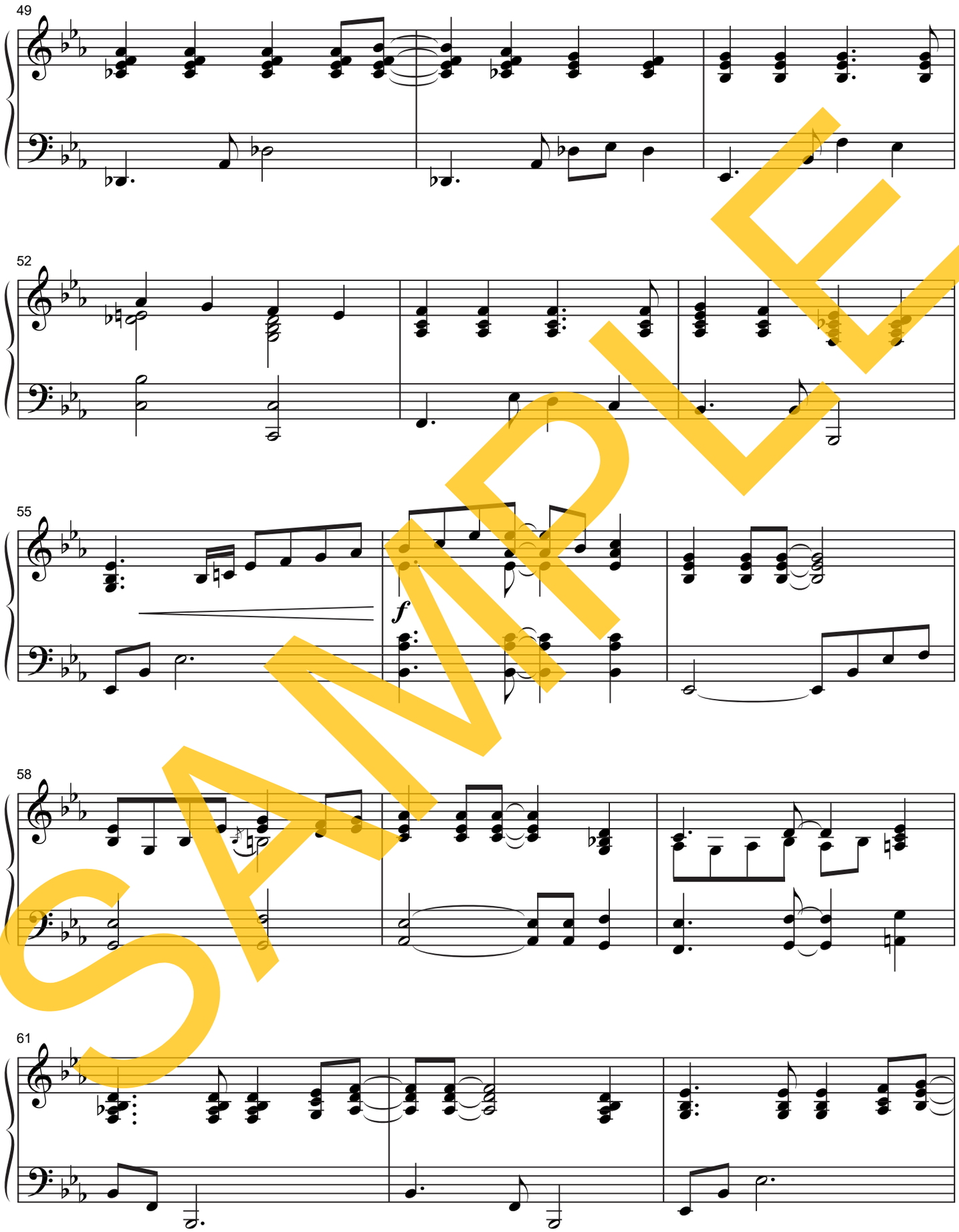

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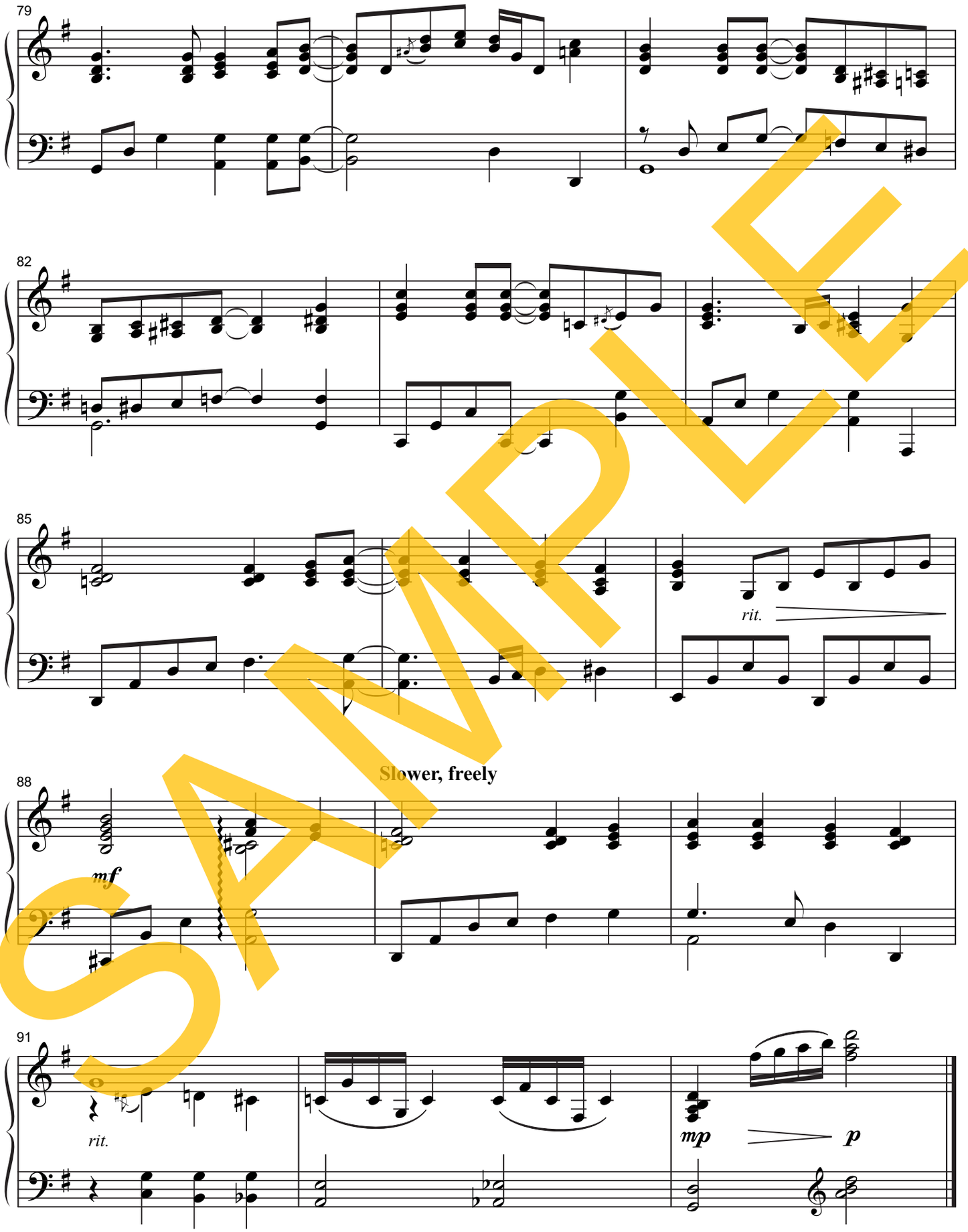

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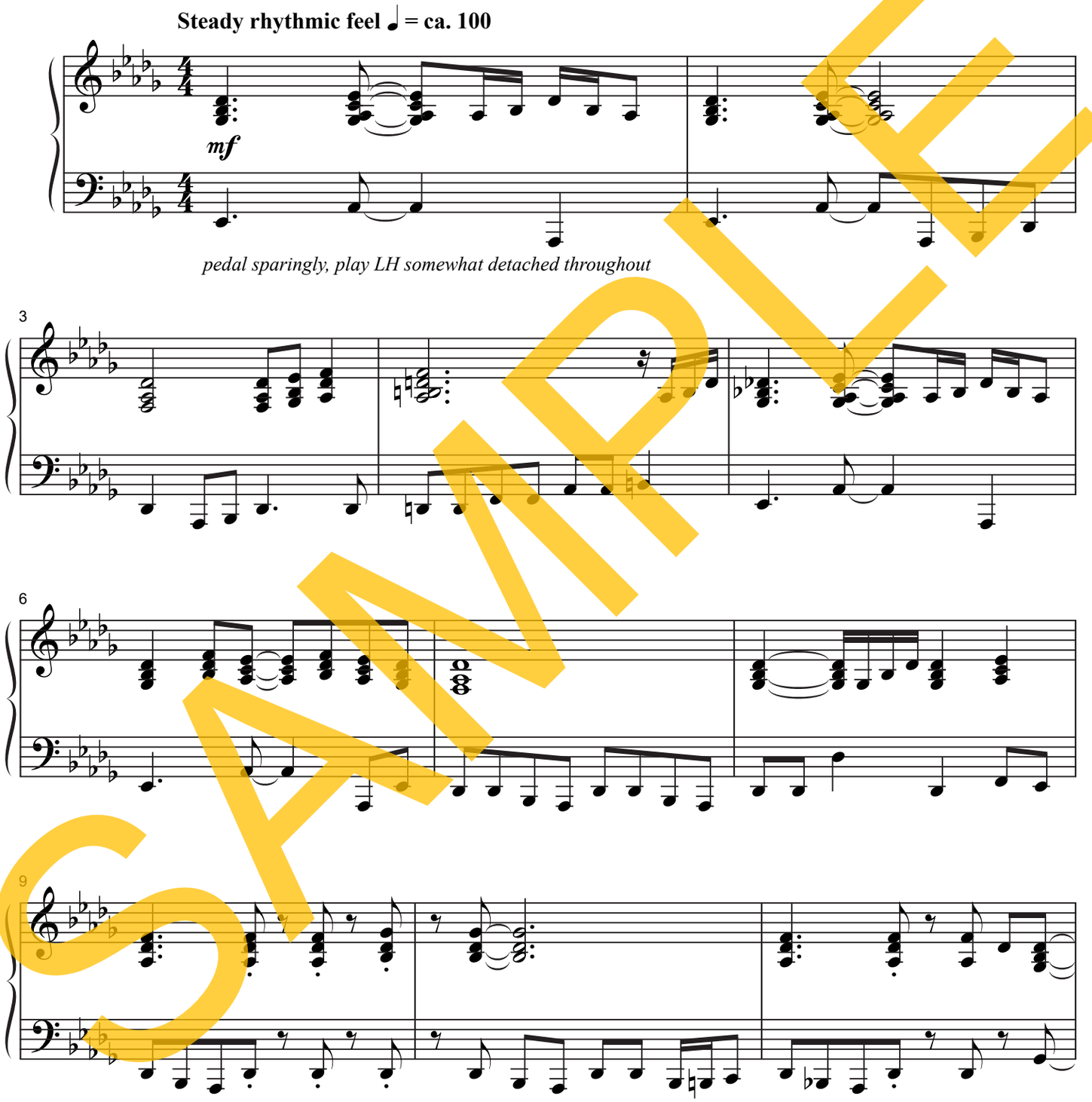
Bringin' Back the Sunshine

Music by **Andraé Crouch**
Arranged by **Mark Hayes**



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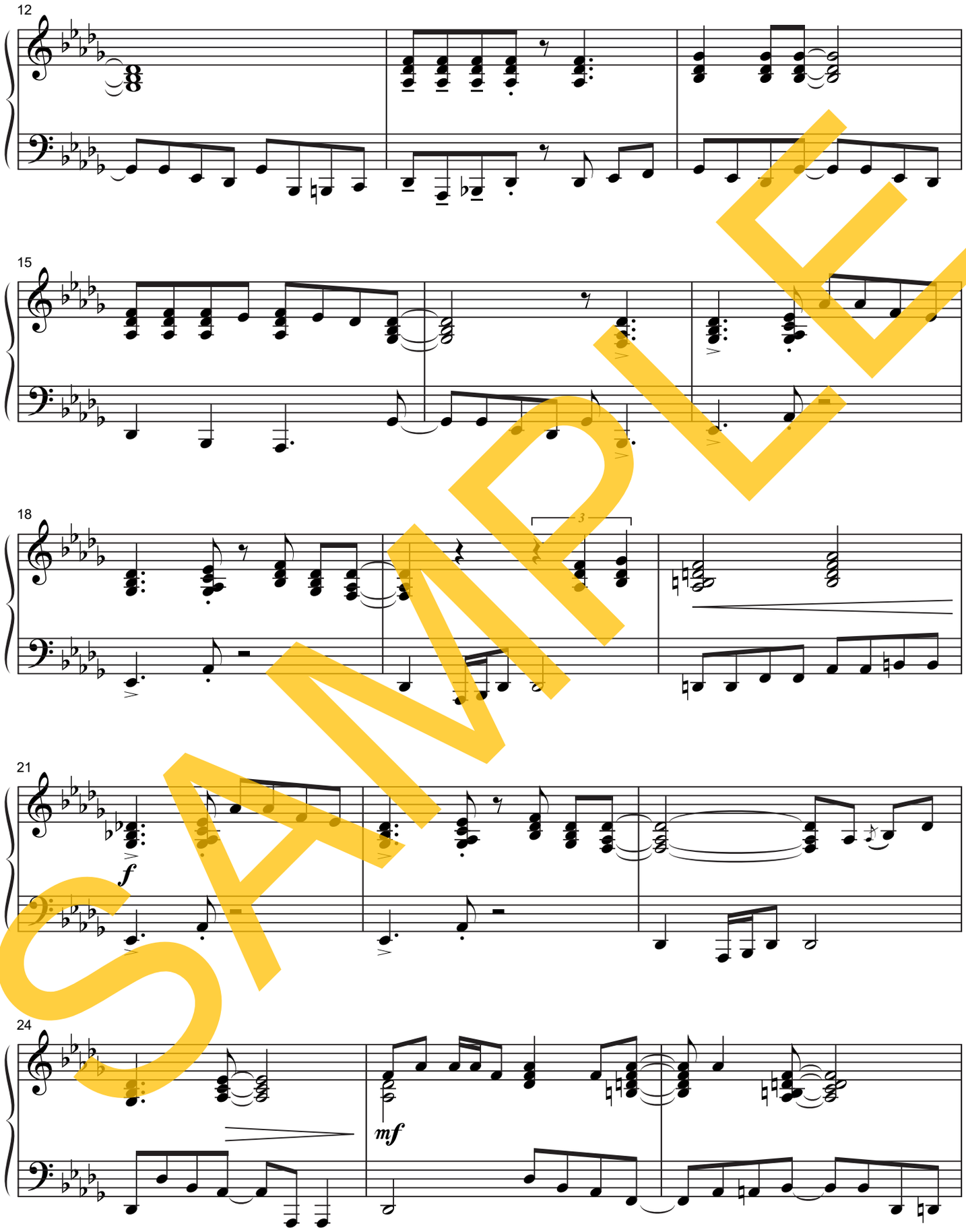

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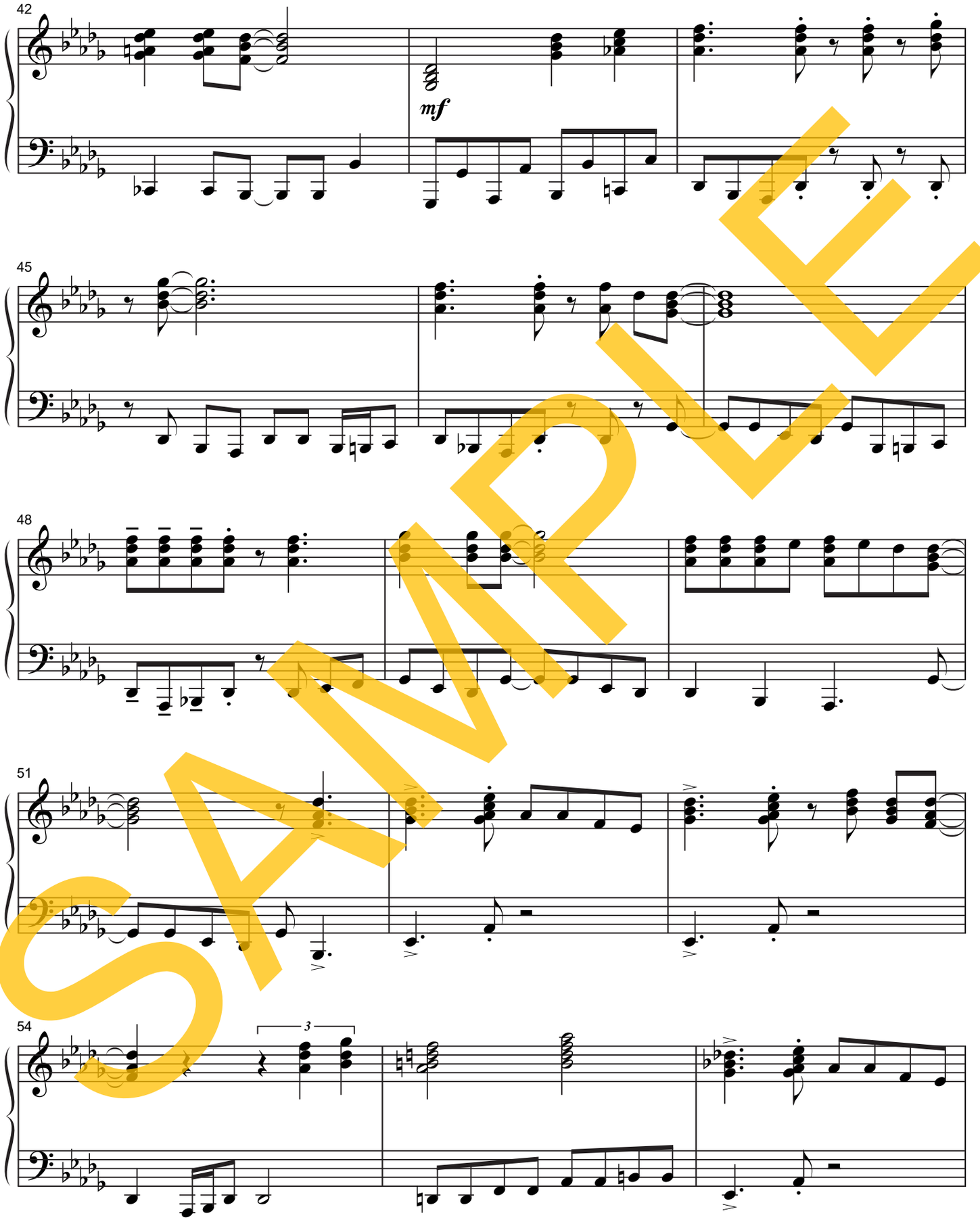

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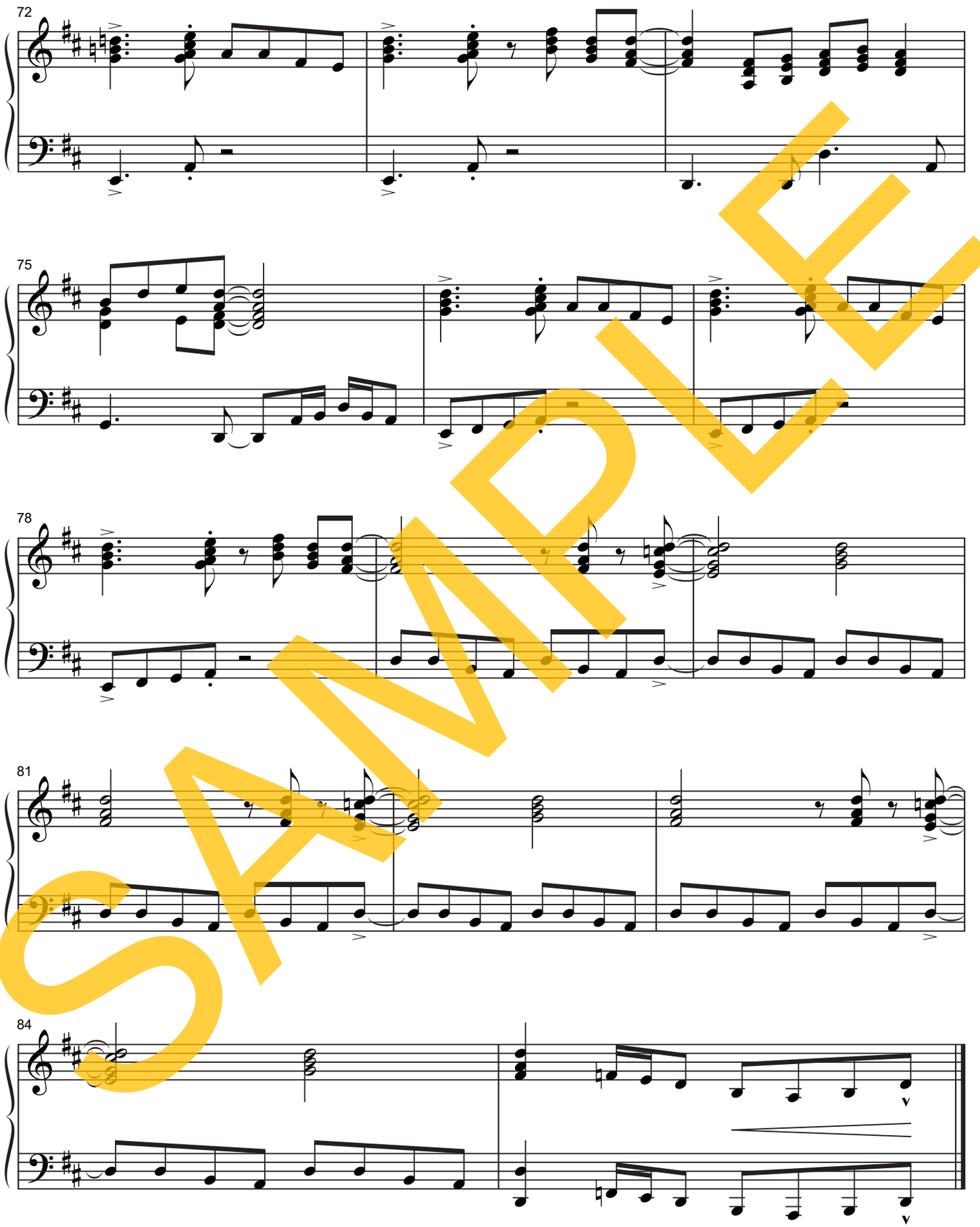

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