Catalog # 20697 5 or 6 Octaves Level 3

BETHENA

SCOTT JOPLIN

ARRANGED BY

PAUL W. ALLEN

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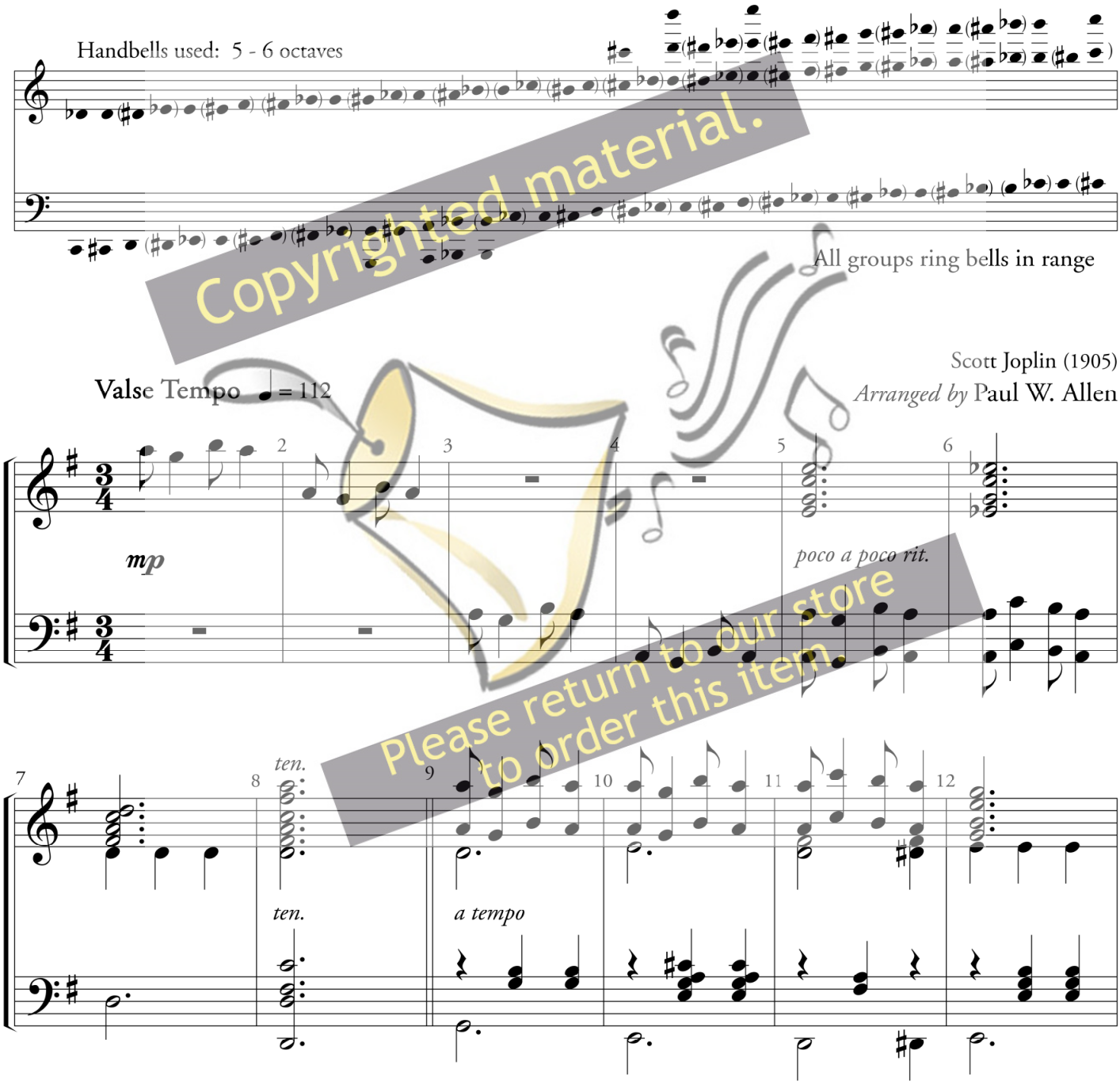
for RiverBells

SACRAMENTO

BETHENA

a concert waltz

Cat. 20697
Level 3



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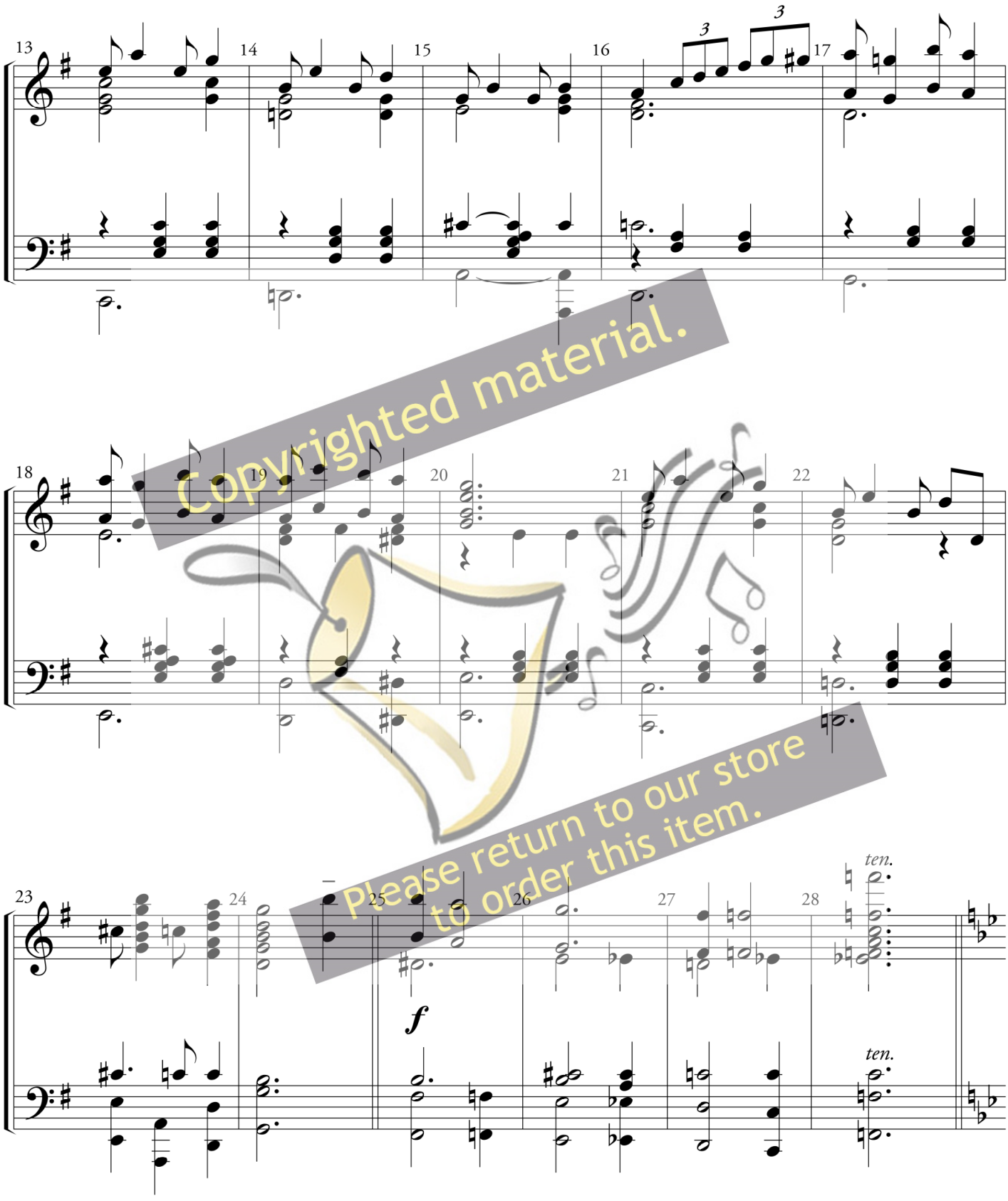

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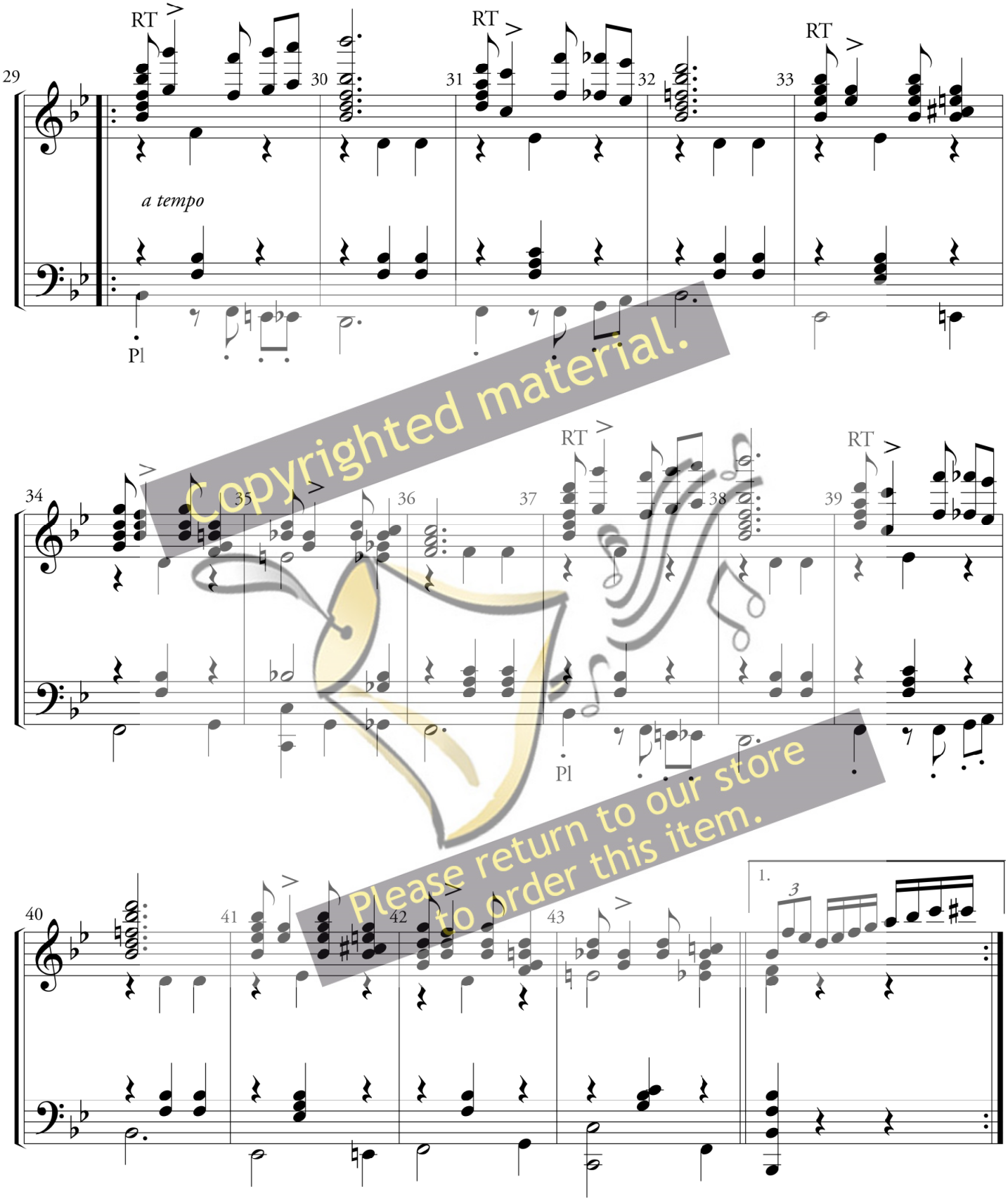

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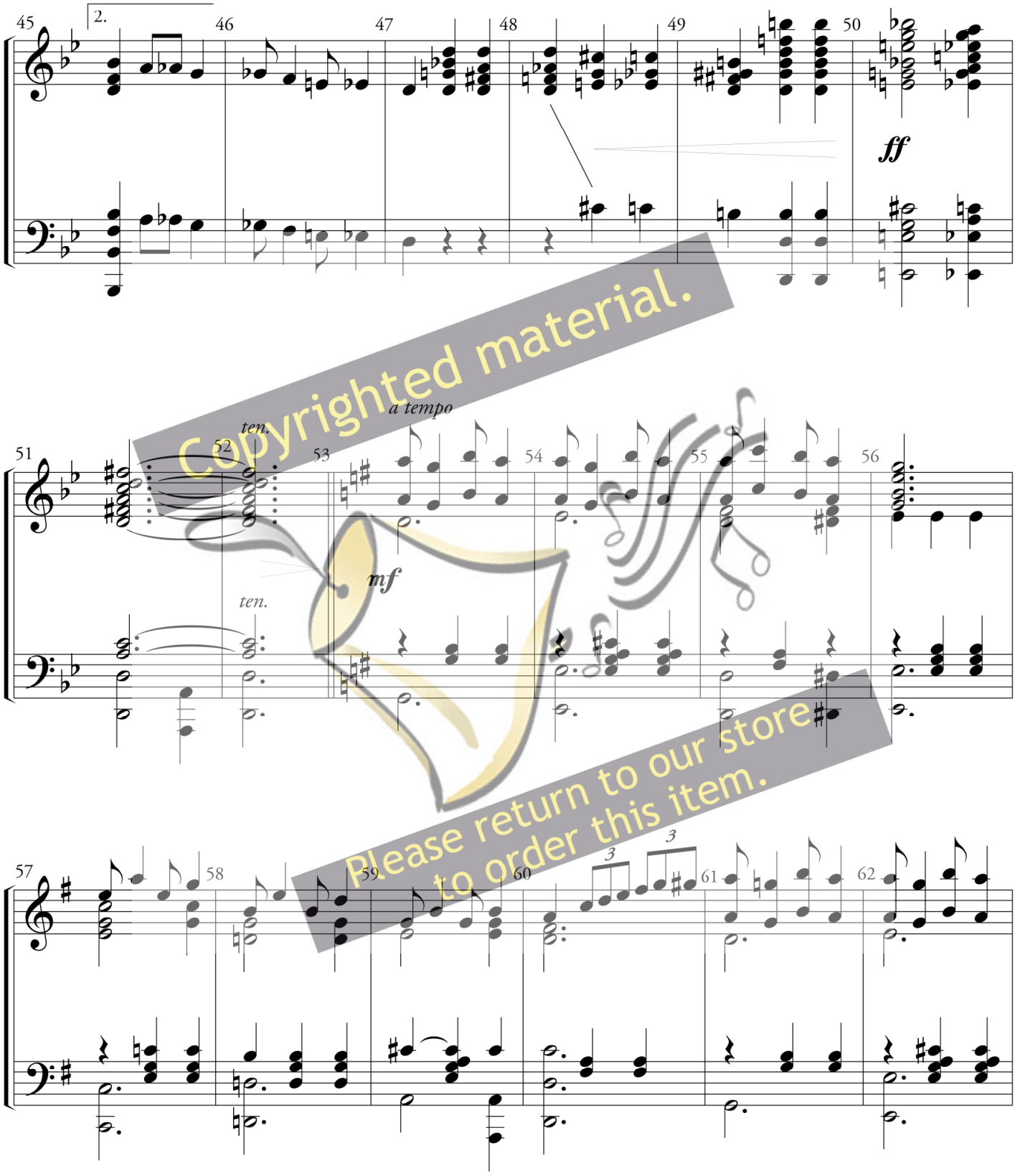

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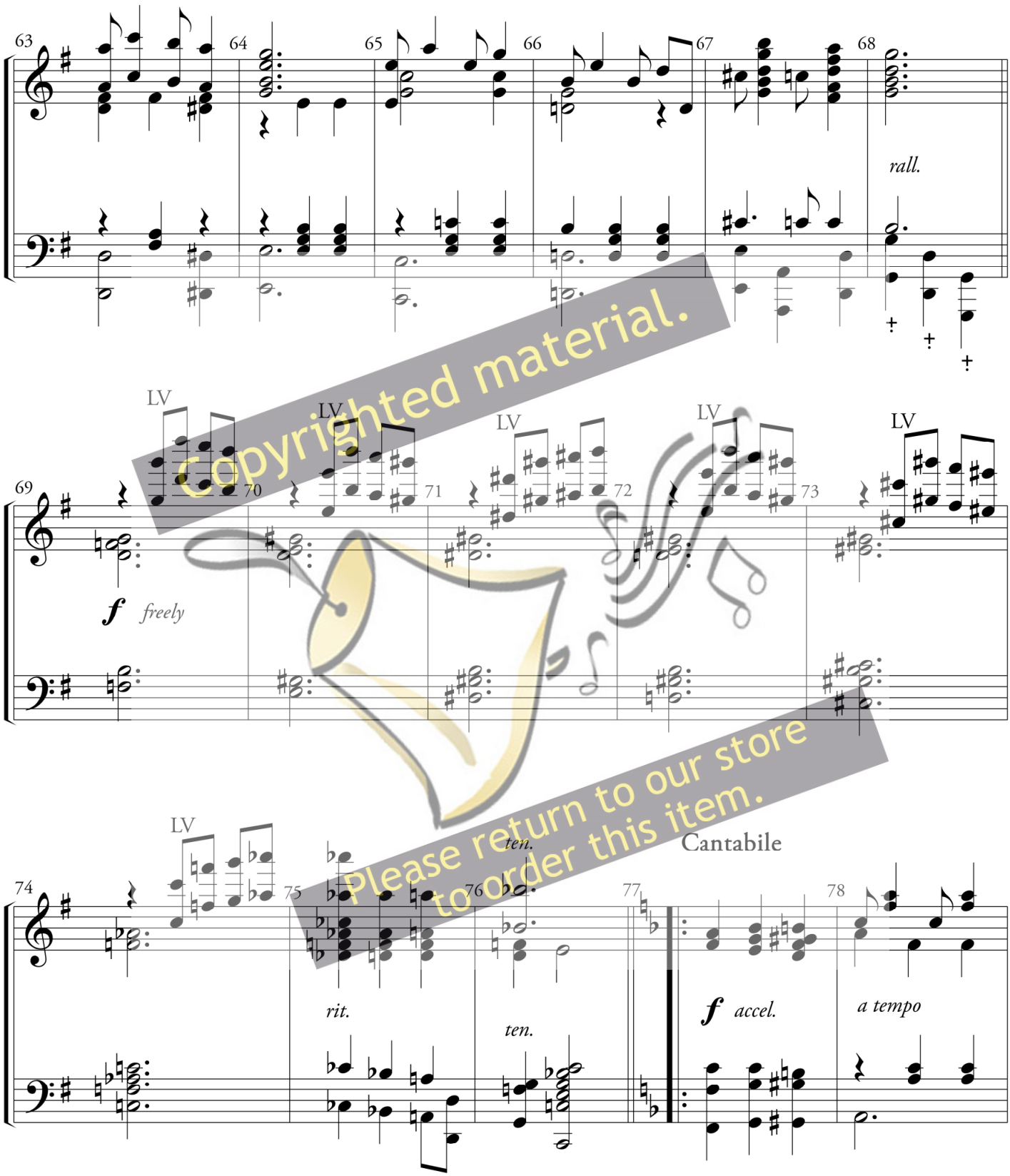

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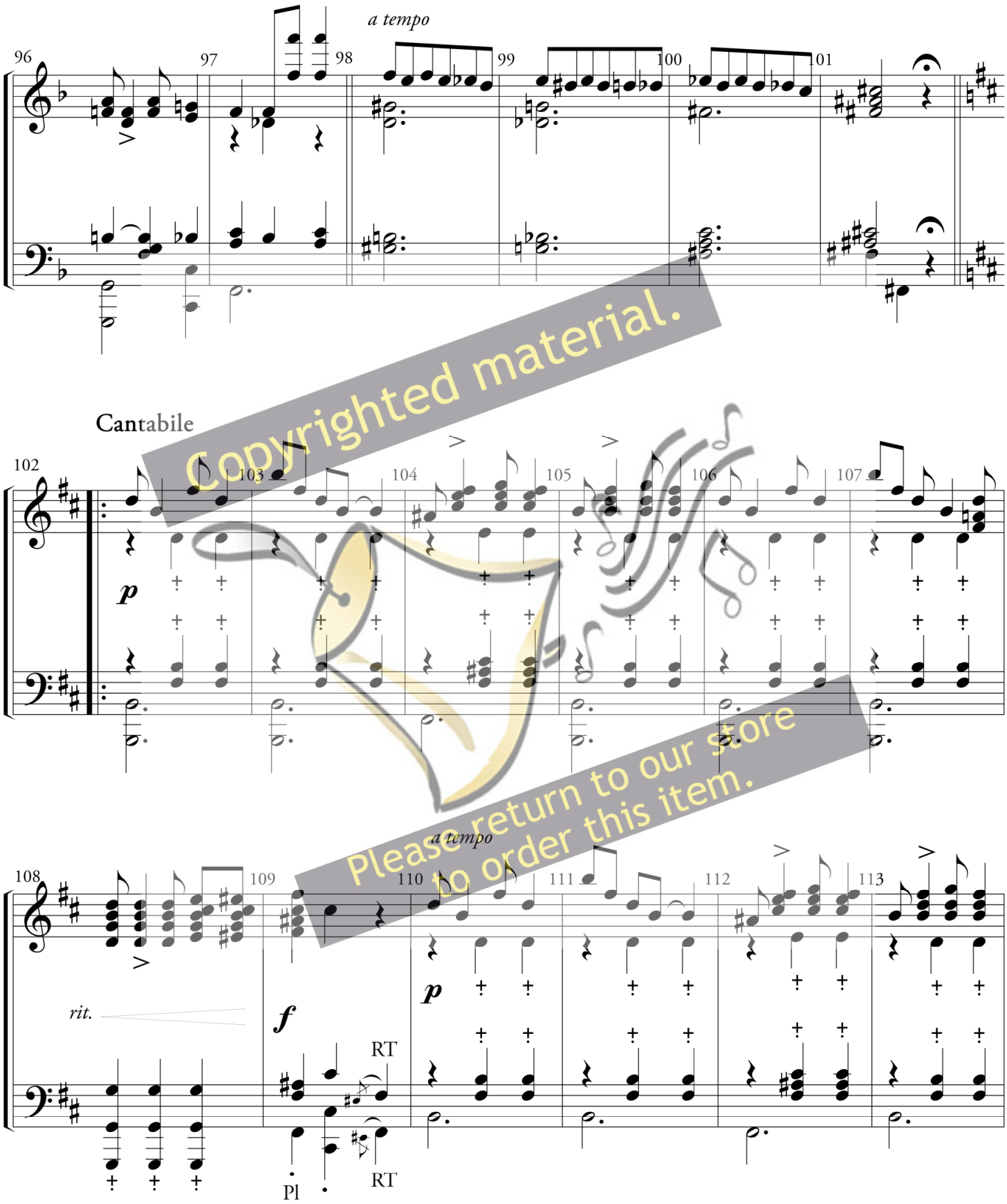

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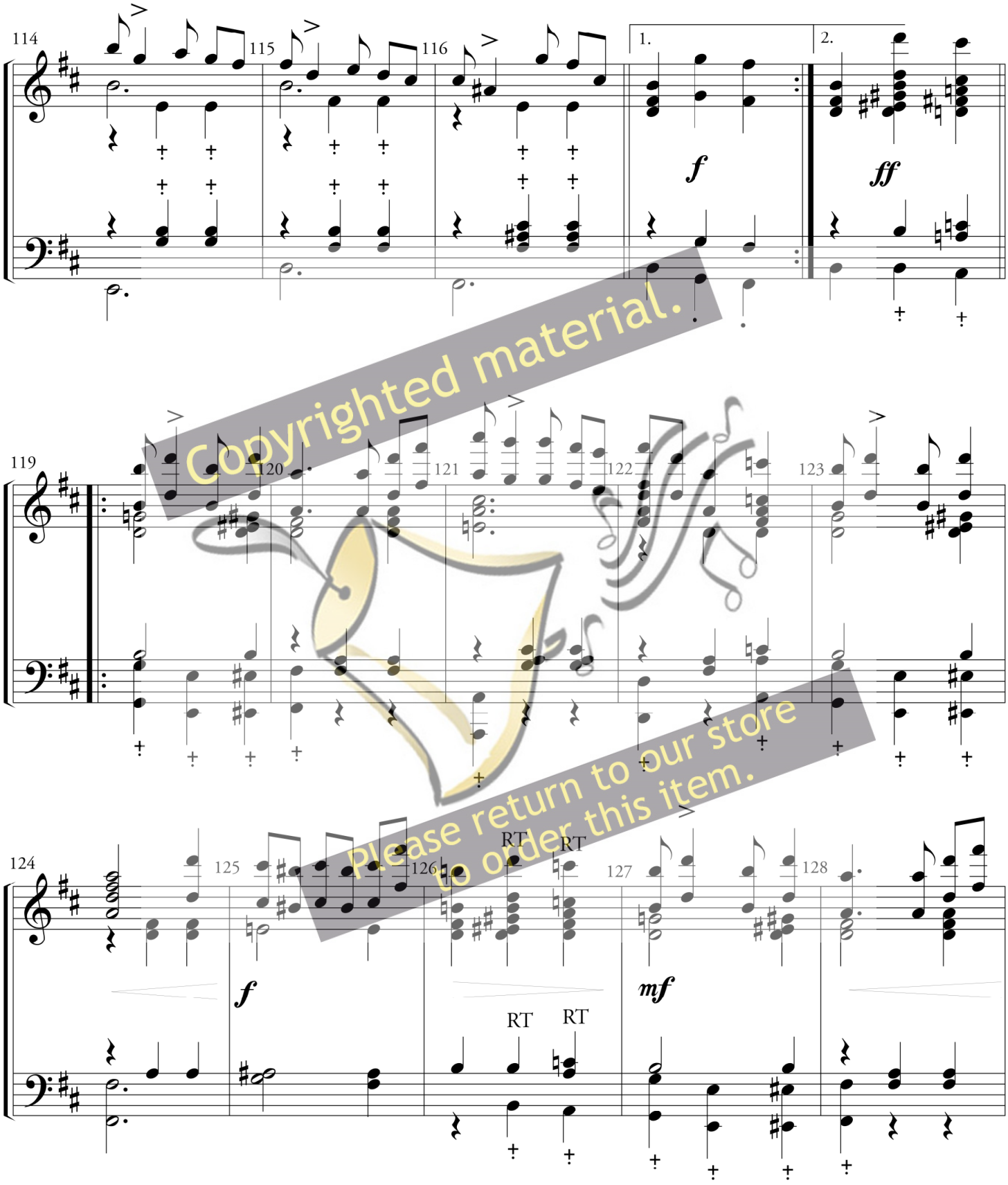

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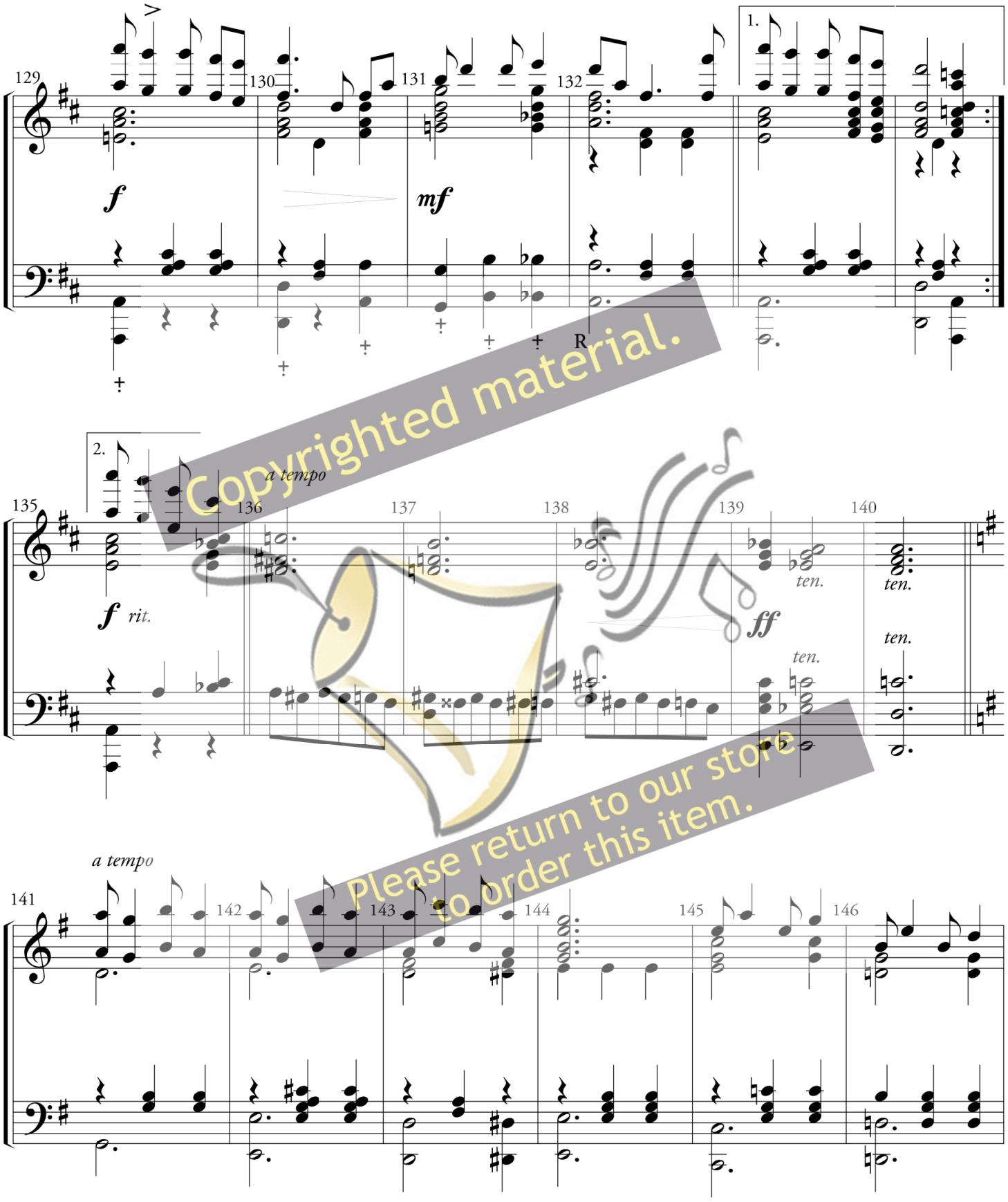

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SCOTT JOPLIN

Scott Joplin (c. 1868 – April 1, 1917) was an American composer and pianist. Dubbed the "King of Ragtime," he achieved fame for his style of piano playing, unique syncopated rhythms, and rules of ragtime performance. In his brief career, he wrote over 100 original ragtime pieces, one ragtime ballet, and two operas. One of his first and most popular pieces, the "Maple Leaf Rag", became ragtime's first and most influential hit, and has been recognized as the archetypal rag

Joplin grew up in a musical family of railway laborers in Texarkana, AK, and developed his own musical knowledge with the help of local teachers. He formed a vocal quartet and taught mandolin and guitar. During the late 1880s, he left his job as a railroad laborer and traveled the American South as an itinerant musician. He traveled to Chicago for the World's Fair of 1893, which played a major part in making ragtime a national craze by 1897.

Joplin moved to Sedalia, MO, in 1894 and earned a living as a piano teacher. There he taught future ragtime composers Arthur Marshall, Scott Hayden and Brun Campbell. He began publishing music in 1895 and publication of his "Maple Leaf Rag" in 1899 brought him fame. This piece had a profound influence on writers of ragtime. It also brought Joplin a steady income for life, though he did not reach this level of success again and frequently had financial problems. In 1901, Joplin moved to St. Louis, where he continued to compose and publish and regularly performed in the community. The score to his first opera, *A Guest of Honor*, was confiscated in 1903 with his belongings for non-payment of bills. It has been lost.

In 1907, Joplin moved to New York City to find a producer for a new opera. He attempted to go beyond the limitations of the musical form that had made him famous but did not find much monetary success. His second opera, *Treemonisha*, was never fully staged during his life.

In 1916, Joplin descended into dementia as a result of syphilis. He was admitted to Manhattan State Hospital in January, 1917 and died there three months later at the age of 48. Joplin's death is widely considered to mark the end of ragtime as a mainstream music format. Over the next several years, it evolved with other styles into stride, jazz and eventually big band swing.

Joplin's music was rediscovered and returned to popularity in the early 1970s with the release of a million-selling album recorded by Joshua Rifkin. This was followed by the Academy Award-winning 1973 film *The Sting*, which featured several of Joplin's compositions, most notably "The Entertainer", a piece performed by pianist Marvin Hamlisch that received wide airplay. *Treemonisha* was finally produced in full, to wide acclaim, in 1972. In 1976, Joplin was posthumously awarded a Pulitzer Prize.

Bethena -- a *Concert Waltz*, copyright 1905, was Joplin's nod to the classical style. It was the first Joplin work since his wife Freddie's death of pneumonia on September 10, 1904, ten weeks after their wedding. The work did not sell successfully at the time of publication and was soon neglected and forgotten. It was rediscovered and has received acclaim from Joplin's biographers and other critics.

The piece combines two different styles of music, the classical waltz and the rag, and has been seen as demonstrating Joplin's excellence as a classical composer. The work has been described as "an enchantingly beautiful piece that is among the greatest of Ragtime Waltzes", a "masterpiece", and "Joplin's finest waltz".

Paul. W. Allen