VOL.2

LYRICAL REPERTOIRE
FOR THE HORN
FROM
The Romantic Era

EDITED BY
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& STEVEN VANDE MOORTELE

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QUINTESSENTIALLY POETIC
hidden gems from the flourishing era of the Ghentian School 1880-1930
Music for horn and piano

golden river music

BRAVE BELGIANS!

Edited by Jeroen Billiet
In collaboration with Jan Huylebroeck
and Steven Vande Moortele

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Volume 2: Quintessentially Poetic (Ghent)

Preface	Page 4
Léopold Wallner:	Romance (Ghent Version, 1890) Page 22
Charles De Waele:	A Travers Bois (1889) Page 30
Jenny Van Rysselberghe:	Rêverie (1904) Page 40
Robert Guillemyn:	Chant d'Automne (1928) Page 50
Léo Vanderhaegen:	Le Passant-Sérénade Nocturne (1913) Page 60
Désiré Boehme:	l'Attente (1914) Page 66
Joseph Vandermeulen:	L'Adieu (1912) Page 74
Emile Hullebroeck:	Sur les Montagnes (c. 1897) Page 84
Maurice Henderik:	Nocturne (c. 1907) Page 96

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Brave Belgians!

Belgian Romantic Repertoire for the Horn

Julius Caesar's backhanded compliment from *De bello gallico* might never have been quoted more ironically as in a letter written in 1924 by British musicologist Walter Fielding Holloway Blandford. Commenting on the capacities of Raymond Meert, the Belgian principal horn of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester at the time, he wrote: "The first horn is one Meert, a Belgian—quite good and with a fine command of the high register, though like other *braves Belges* he is overfond of the B-flat alto crook."[1] The "brave Belgians" Blandford referred to were the well-trained musicians who graduated from the Royal Conservatories of Brussels, Liège, and Ghent in the *Belle époque* (1870–1914) and spread to the musical scenes of France, England and the United States.[2] While many Belgian-trained players seem to have assimilated to the local fashions very rapidly, their playing skills apparently made them stand out from their contemporaries.[3] They have undoubtedly influenced the generations after them through their performances as well as their teaching practices.

A substantial part of this heritage consists of the music written for (and by) these players. As one will notice while perusing the five volumes of the *Brave Belgians* Horn Albums, the output of solo works coming from a small country is impressive. The wonderful *Guide to the Solo Horn Repertoire* that lists significant and available works for the horn mentions around 70 works by Belgian composers, an impressive number when one takes the size of the country into account.[4] Still, the number of Belgian pieces for the horn that have found their way into the international repertoire is very short. Jane Vignery's Sonata, op. 7 (1942), Prosper Van Eechautte's *Night Poem* (1938), and Arthur Mortelmans's *Lyrical Pastoral* (1904) are some of the few hauntingly beautiful Belgian works that are played in horn studios around the world. But there is much more to discover.[5]

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[1] Letter to R. Morley Pegge of 29/11/1924 (private collection John Humphries). Raymond Meert (Ghent, 1884–Pwheli [UK] 1967) graduated with honors form Charles Heylbroeck's class at the Ghent Royal Conservatory in 1903 and obtained a *Premier Prix* in chamber music in 1904. From 1905 he played as third horn with the Scottish Orchestra in Glasgow and became principal in 1913, after which he became principal of the Hallé Orchestra in 1917. He was a much-asked soloist in the north of England and played in several BBC live performances (e.g., Mozart concerto, Brahms trio at the end of the 1920s). He retired from the orchestra in 1938 but returned at the Hallé during World War II at the explicit request of Sir John Barbiroli.

[2] The *Belle époque* (literally, "Beautiful Era") was a time of general improvement—cultural, social, and scientific—between 1870 and 1914. The high level of artistic migration to other countries was a result of the large output of highly skilled workers from the Belgian musical education system in combination with poor domestic working conditions.

[3] Both Meert and Louis Dufrasne, for instance, would change the horn they played within the first year after arriving in their new homelands. Dufrasne is shown in a picture of the Barrere Ensemble of New York on the front page of the May 1915 edition of *Musical America*, with a German-style horn. Meert figures on the 1919 picture of the Hallé orchestra in Manchester with a Raoux-Millereau/Boosey & Hawkes piston horn which was the most common instrument in the UK at that time.

[4] Dempf /Seraphinoff 2016.

[5] A list of recommended horn works available through other publishers is provided at the back of this volume.

Energy and Brightness, Poetry and Lyricism from 1890 to 1930

As described in the preface to Volume 1, players in Belgium developed a particular lyrical and expressive playing style towards the end of the nineteenth century. The highly esteemed horn tradition founded in Liège under Hubert Massart (Liège, 1793–1858) and Toussaint Radoux spread to the classes of Brussels and Ghent and mixed with new stylistic currents inspired by the ideas of F.A. Gevaert. Ghent underwent many urban changes between 1890 and 1914, and gained much of its current beauty in those years. The linen industry that had developed strongly in the middle of the century was gradually pushed towards the northern and eastern suburbs, and ambitious urbanization projects created a cosmopolitan "little Paris," with a "historical" city center and flamboyant yet eclectic architectural developments in the newly built districts. The general ambience was one of optimism and brightness, and the city's cultural life flourished in the years leading up the World Fair of 1913, with painters like Théo Van Rysselberghe and writers like Maurice Maeterlinck.

Ghent also gained much of its musical identity in those years. The population grew rapidly during the nineteenth century, mainly due to the industrialization process. The number of music and drama students at the Ghent Conservatory exploded in the first decade of the *Belle époque*, from 148 in 1870 to 603 in 1880.[1] Housing apparently became the biggest problem not only of the city, but also of its Conservatory. On top of that, the upgrade to the status of Royal Conservatory put forward specific requirements in terms of course offerings and infrastructure, with which the old school simply could not comply.

Fig 1: Ghent Royal Conservatory in 1900, painted by A. Heins. (author's collection)

[1] Archives of Ghent Conservatory, *Régistres de matricule* 1870–1880.

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Romance - Léopold Wallner

Original Title: *Romance pour cor en Fa*
Composition: 1892
Source: transcription held at the library of the Antwerp Royal Conservatory nr. 83049BH
Original instrumentation: valve horn in F
Notes: presumably written by Wallner for the 1892 exam, around the time he taught as a harmony teacher at the Ghent conservatory. The work features the typical lyrical musicality of the Ghentian horn school, without posing particular technical difficulties. The current edition is based on a transcription by Leo De Barse (Ostend, 1911–1989), who graduated from the class of Charles Heybroeck in 1931 and became teacher of horn at the Antwerp Royal conservatory in 1958.
Bio: Léopold Wallner (Kiev, 1847–Brussels, 1913) was the son of an Austrian music publisher. He briefly studied composition with Fétis and Henry van Synghel in Brussels but had to interrupt his studies when his father died in 1867. From then onwards, he taught at the Brussels and Ghent conservatories and at several music schools. He wrote mainly chamber music works.

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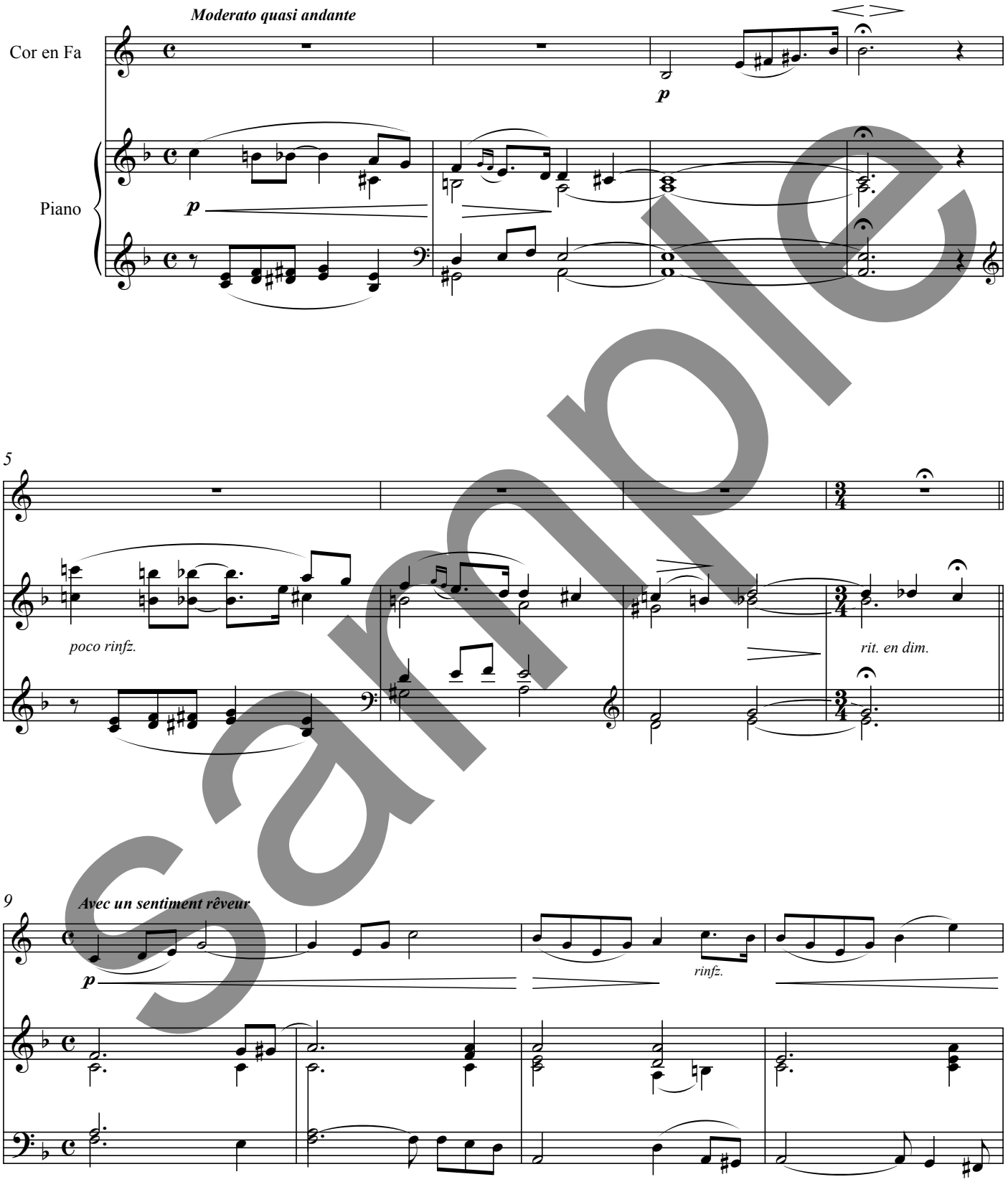
Romance

pour Cor en Fa et piano

Léopold Wallner



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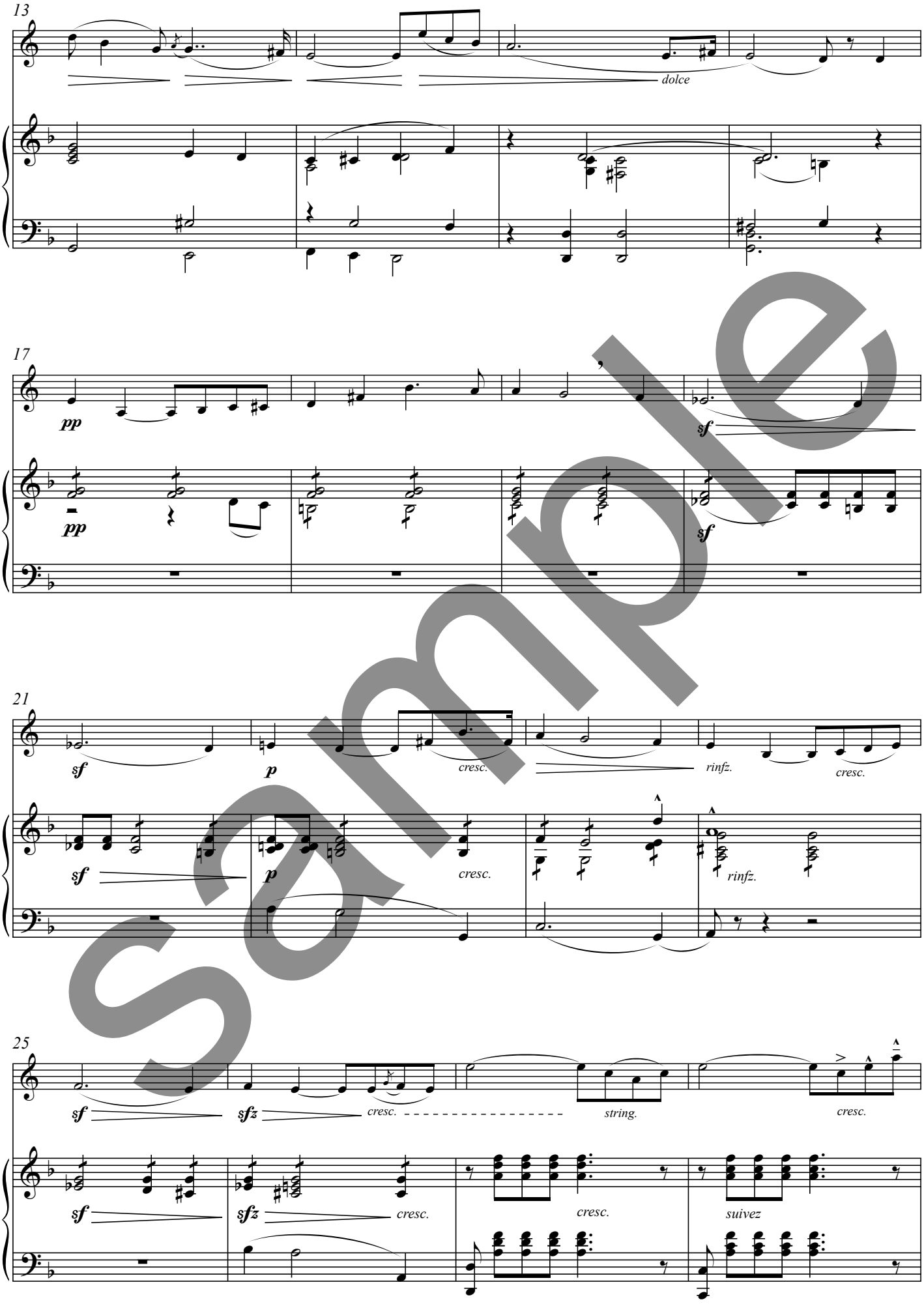
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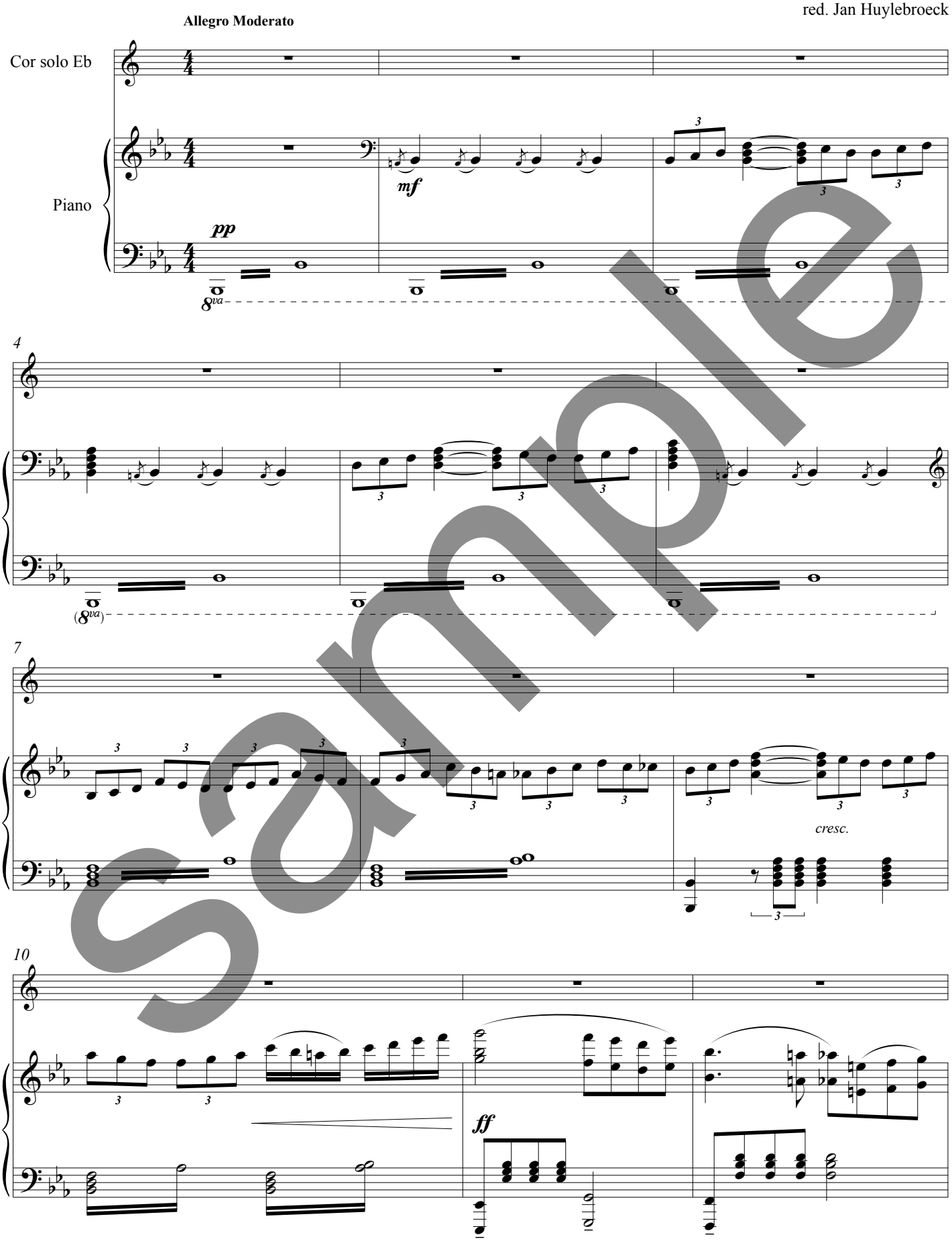
A travers Bois

pour cor en Eb et piano

Charles De Waele

red. Jan Huylebroeck



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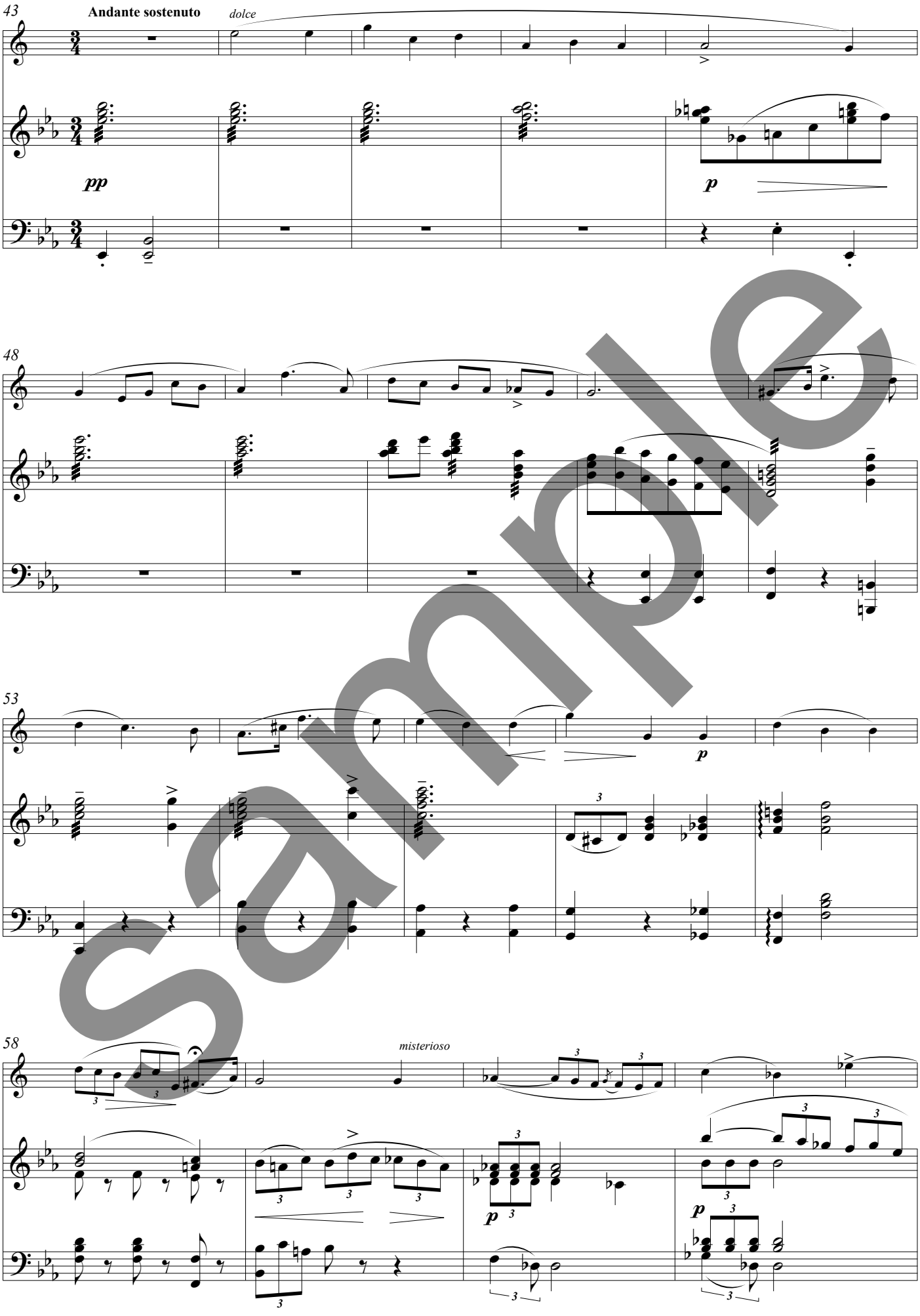

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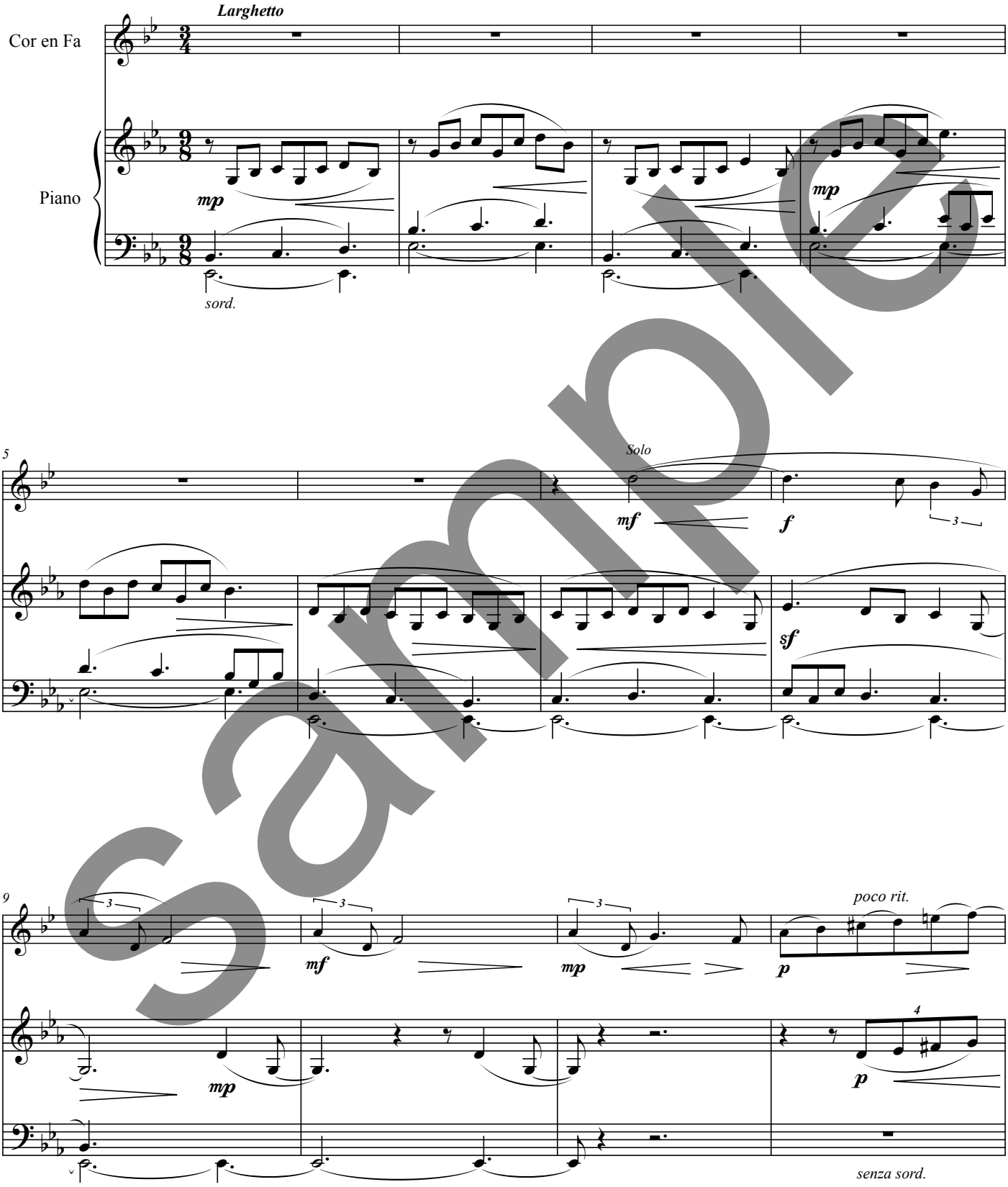
Rêverie

Mélodie pour Cor en Fa et piano

Jenny Van Rysselberghe

accomp. rev. par Jan Huylebroeck



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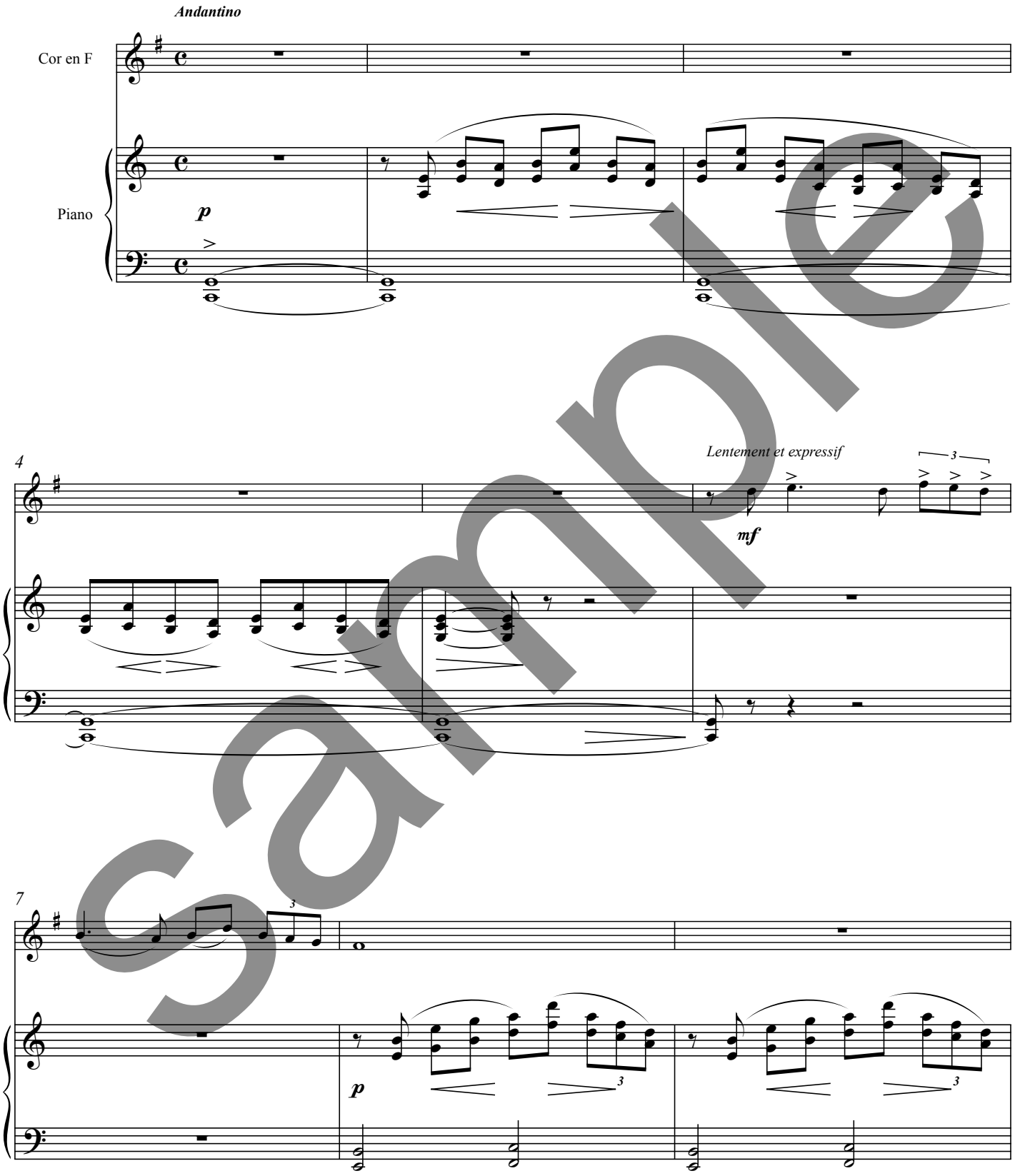
Chant d'automne

"L'automne est triste comme un adieu"

pour Cor en Fa et piano

Robert Guillemyn



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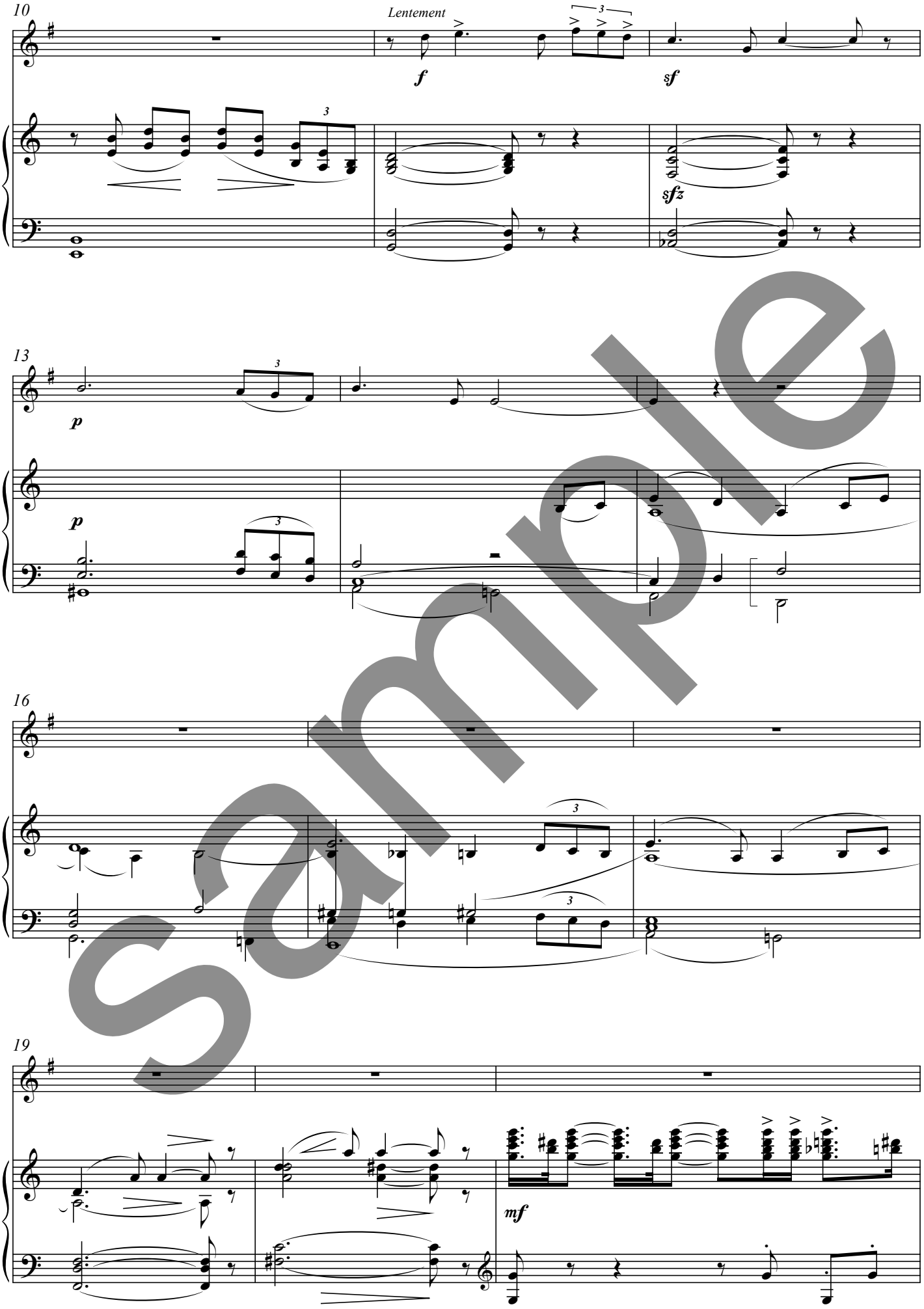

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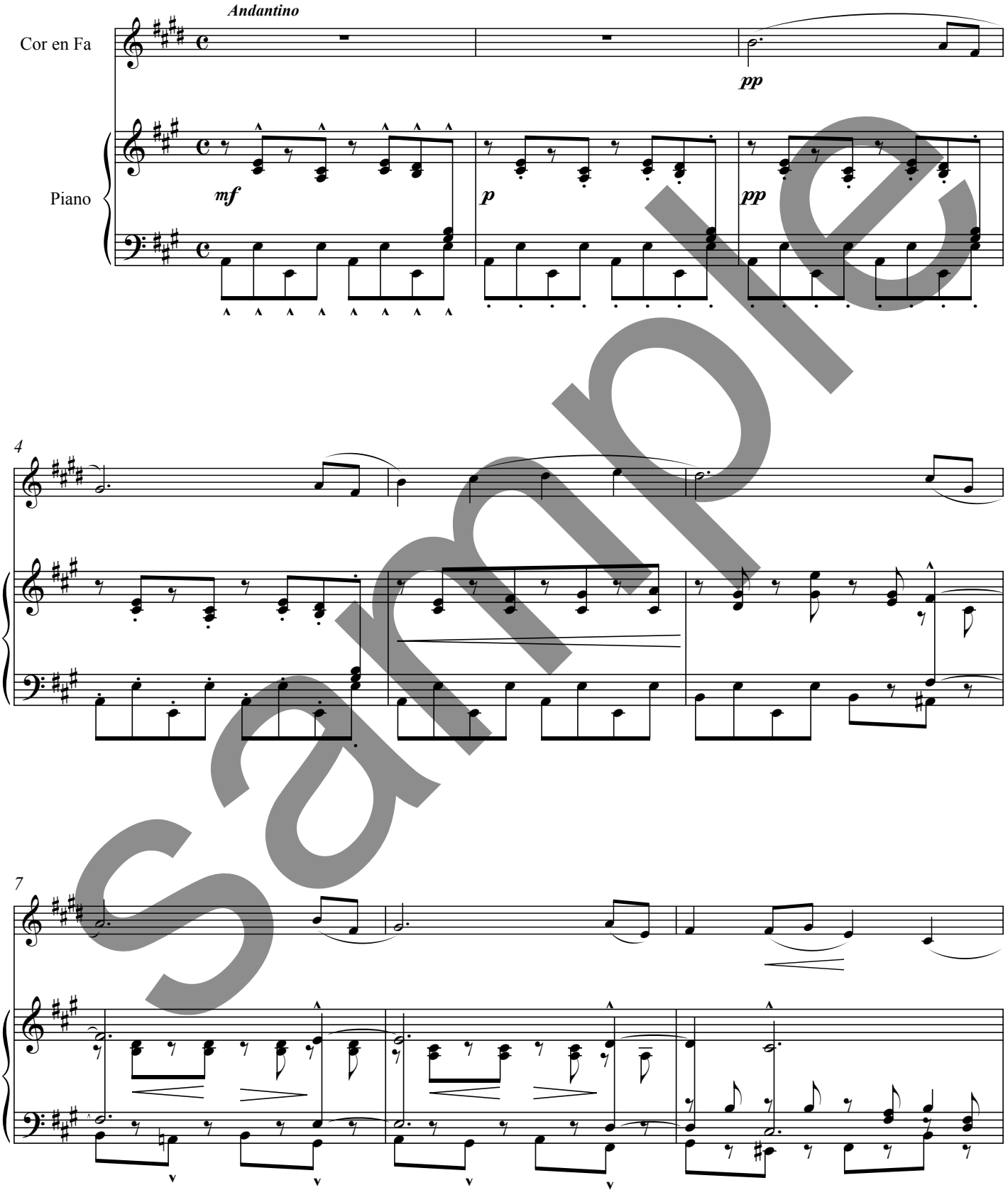
Le Passant - Sérénade Nocturne

pour Cor en Fa

Léo Vanderhaeghen



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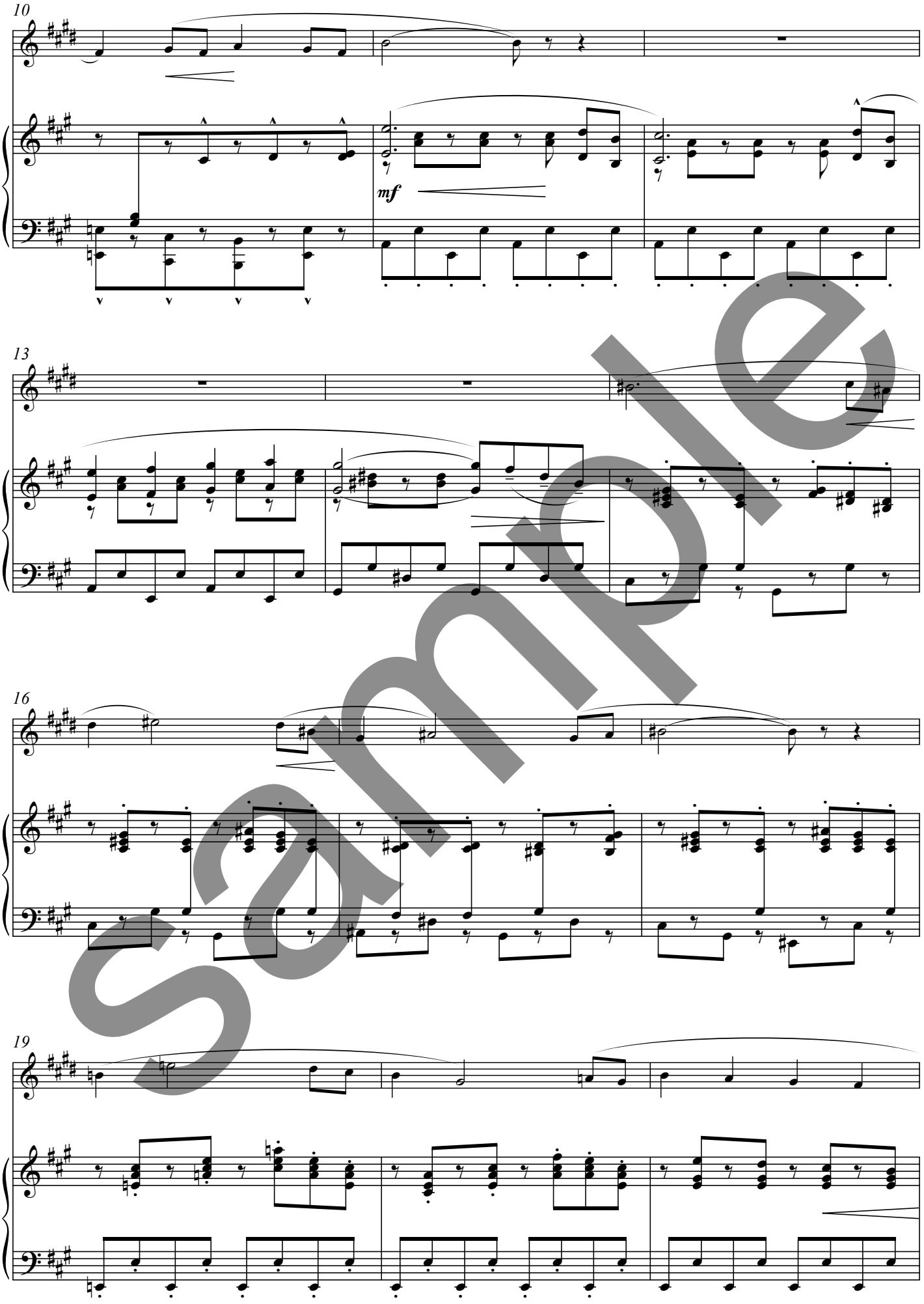
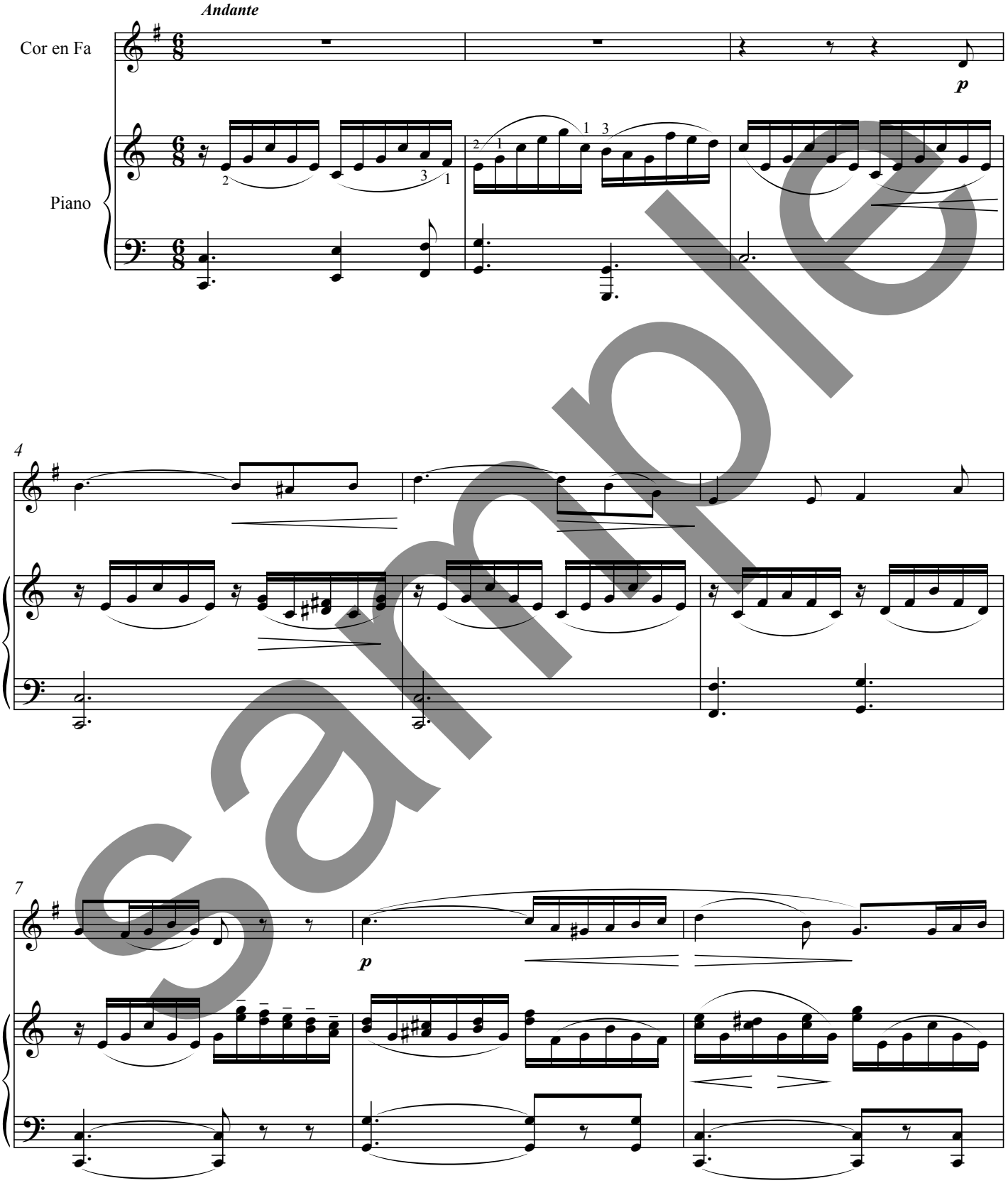


Sample

L'Attente

pour Cor en Fa et piano

Désiré Boehme



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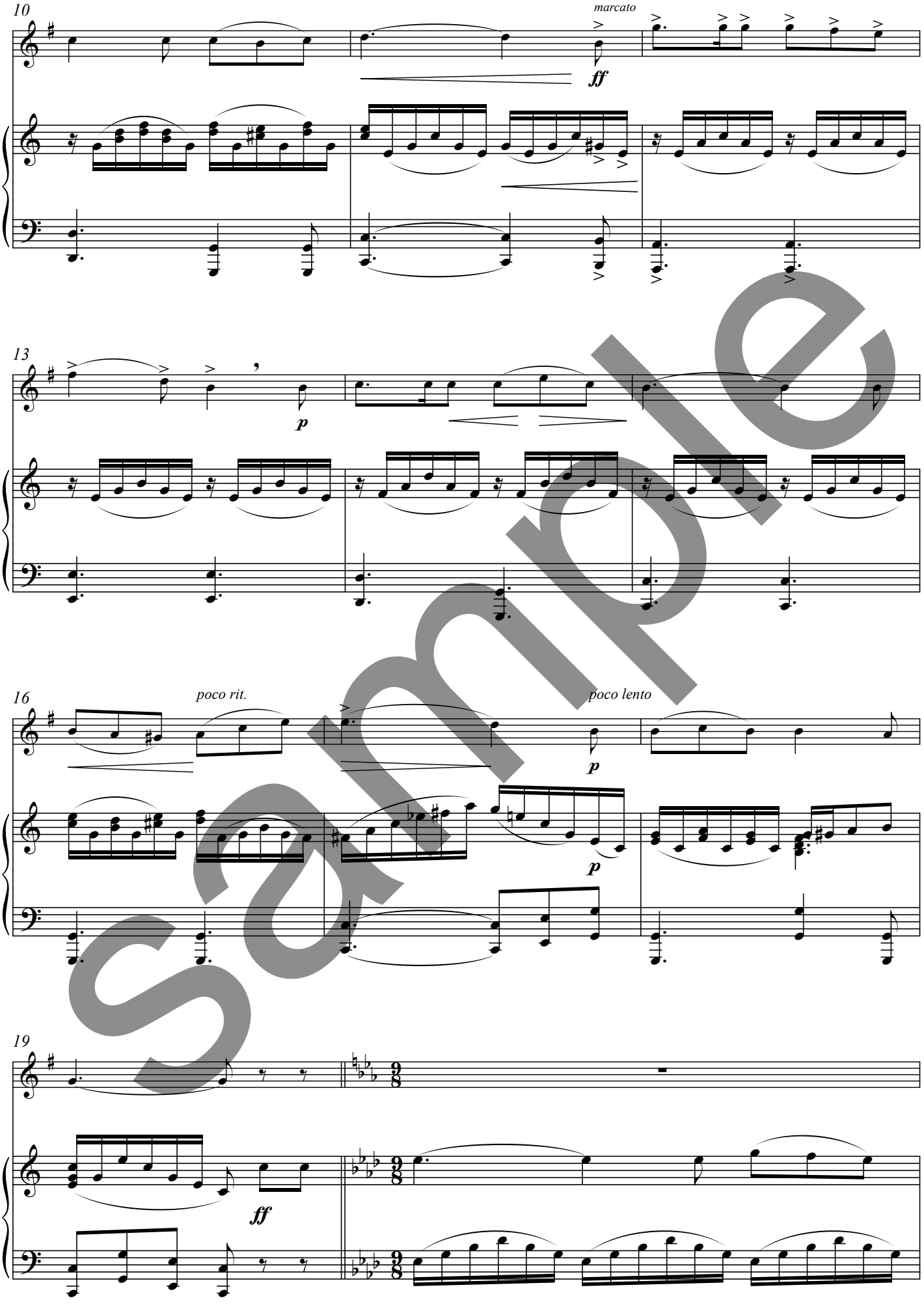

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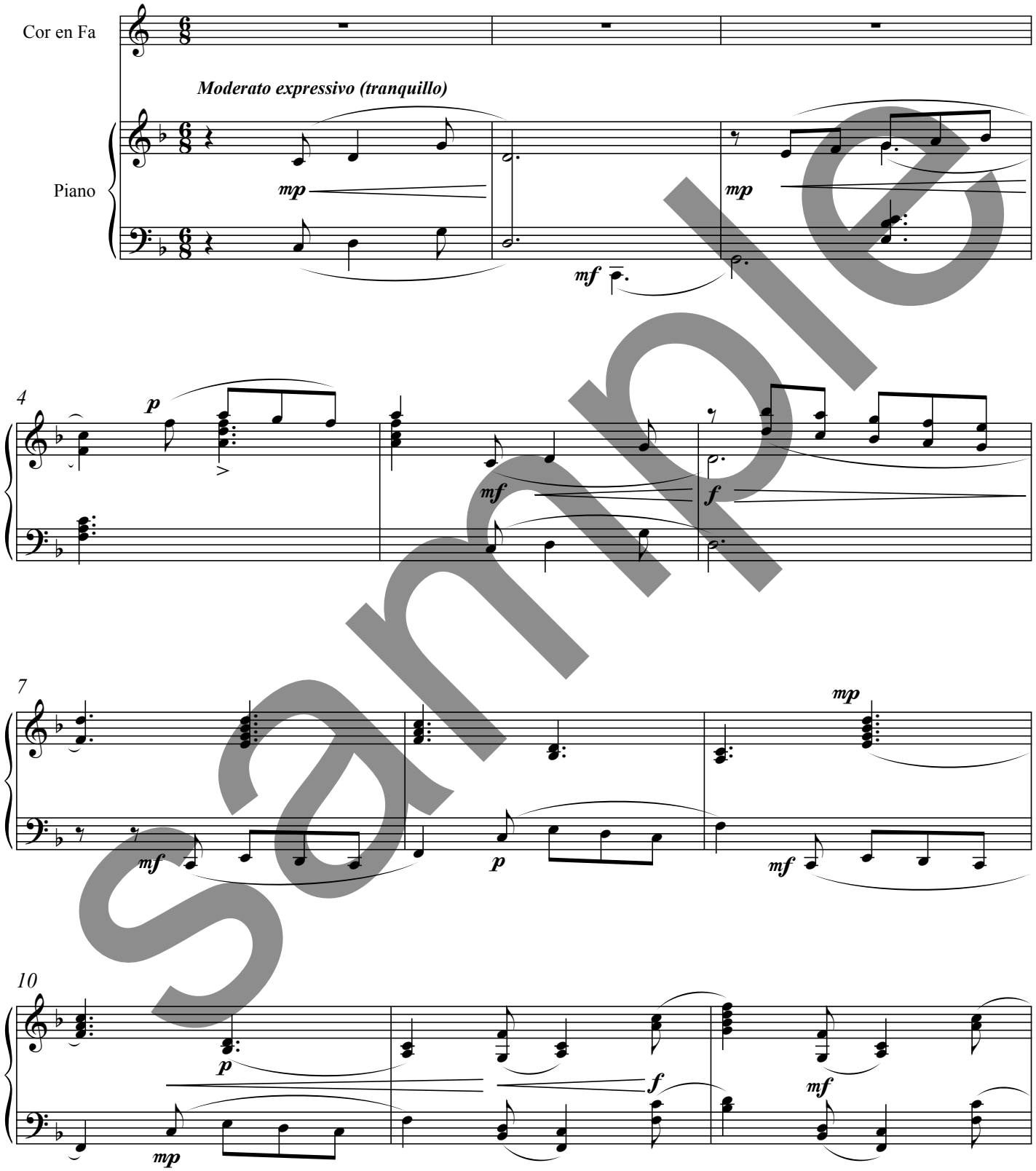
L'adieu

pour Cor en Fa et accompagnement de piano

J. Van der Meulen



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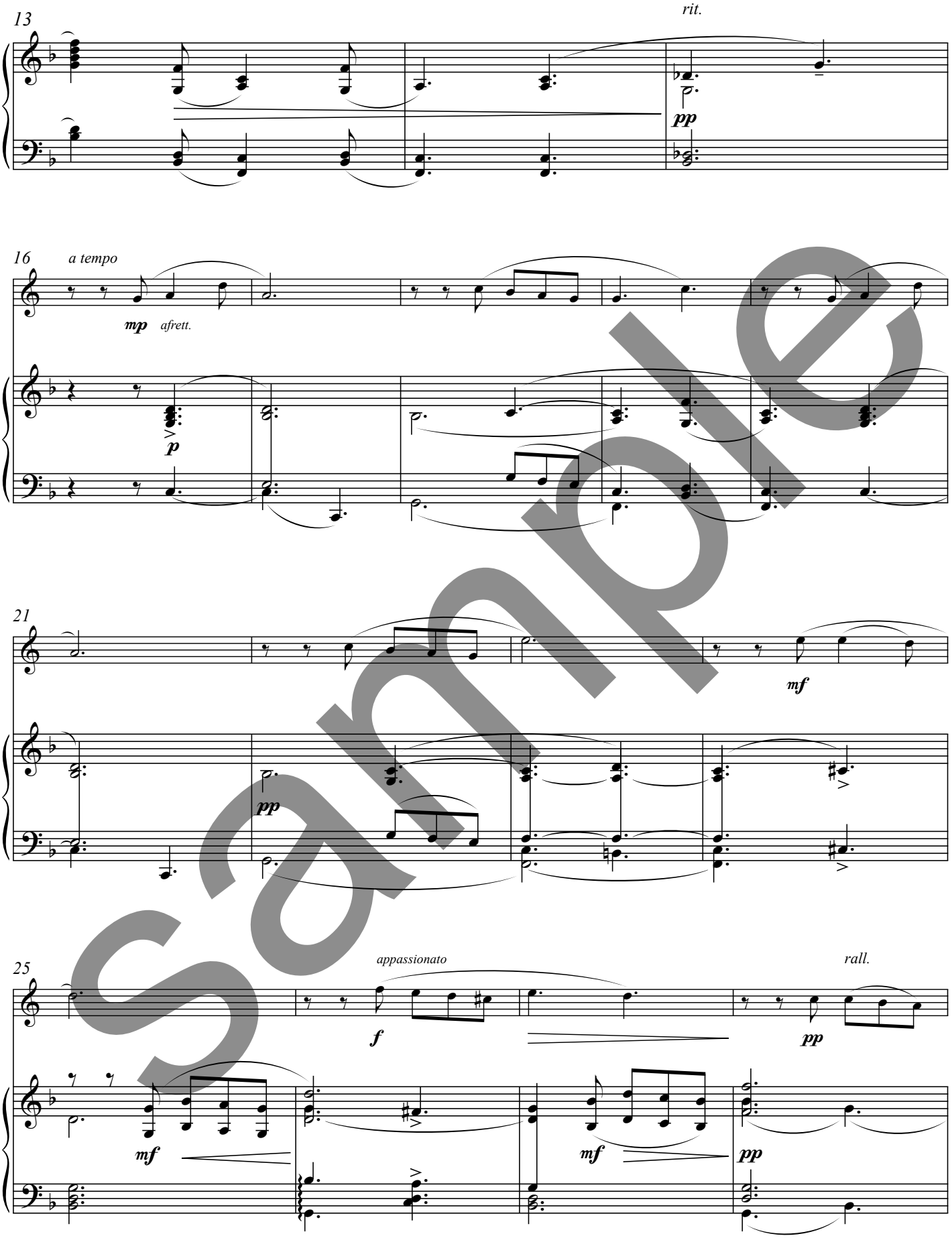
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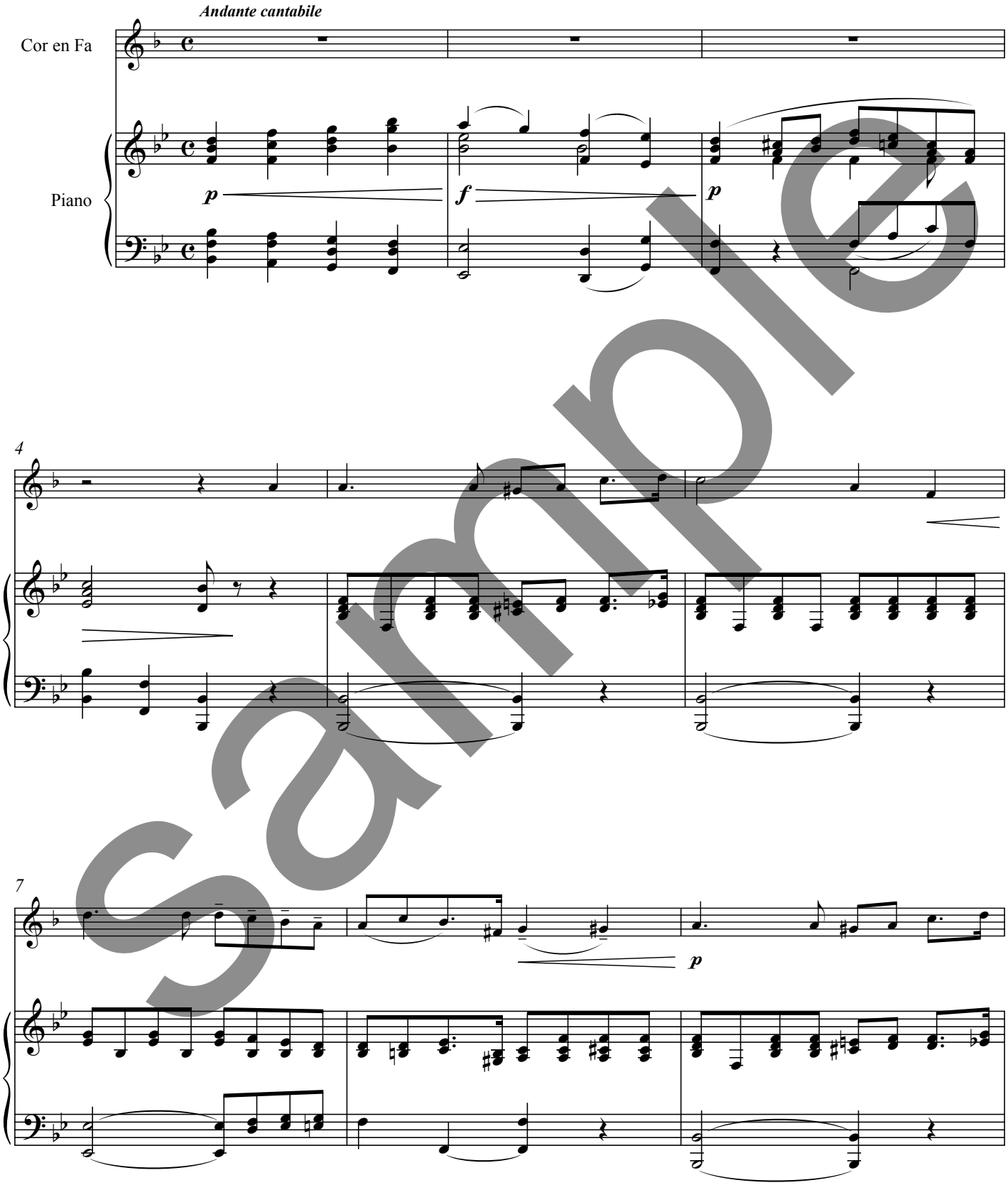
Sur les Montagnes

pour Cor en Fa et piano

Emile Hullebroeck



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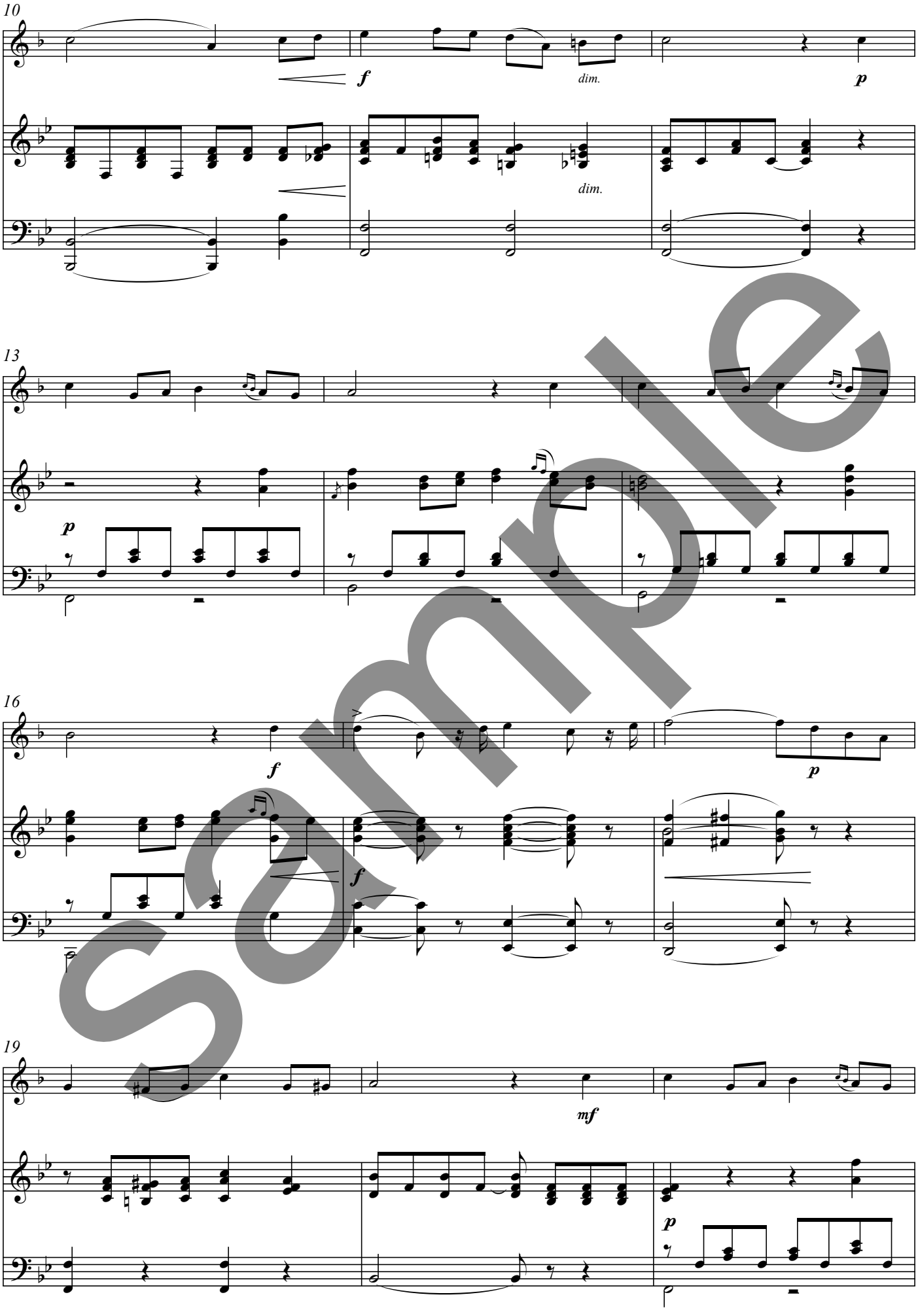

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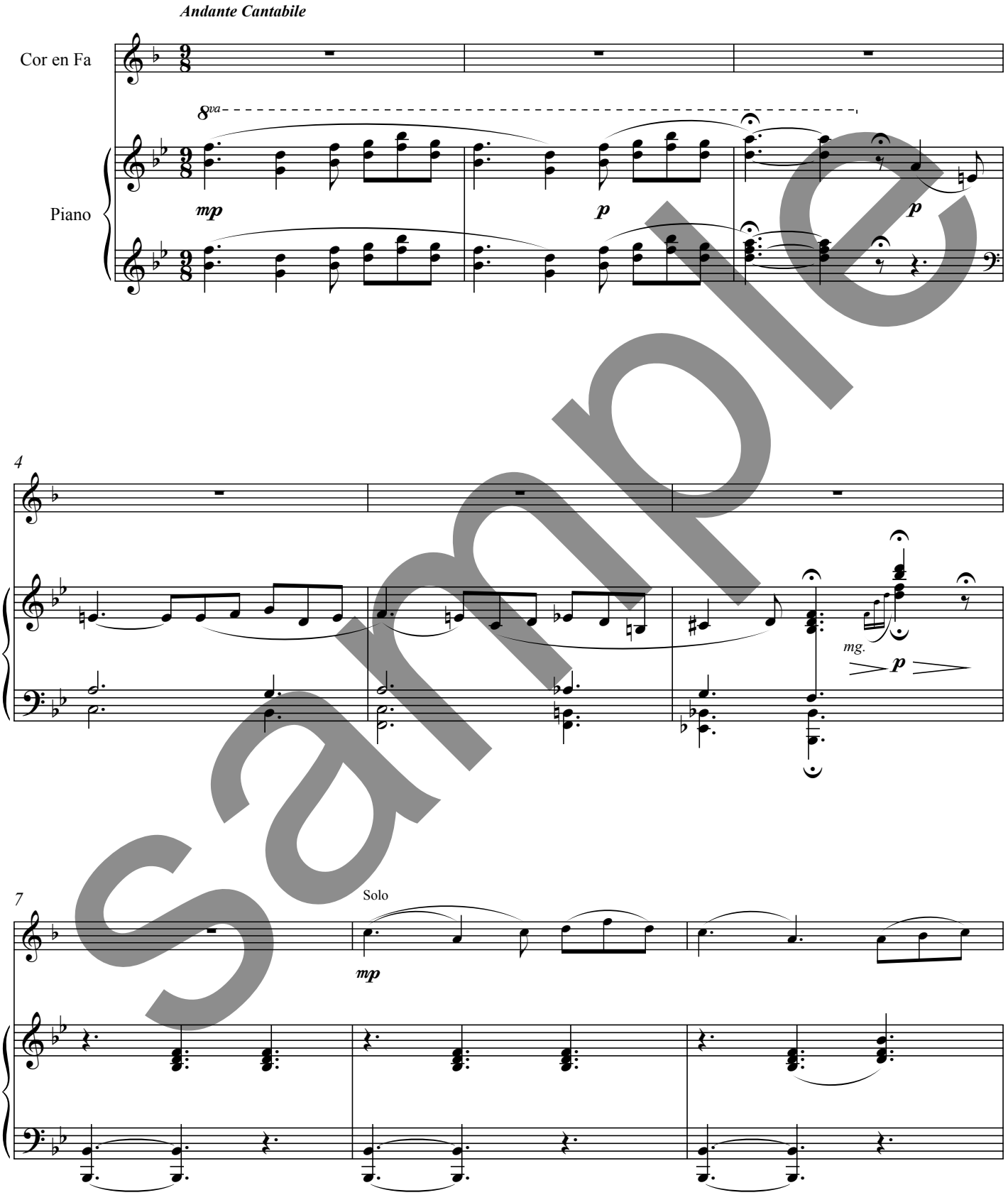
Nocturne

Cor en Fa et piano

Maurice Henderick



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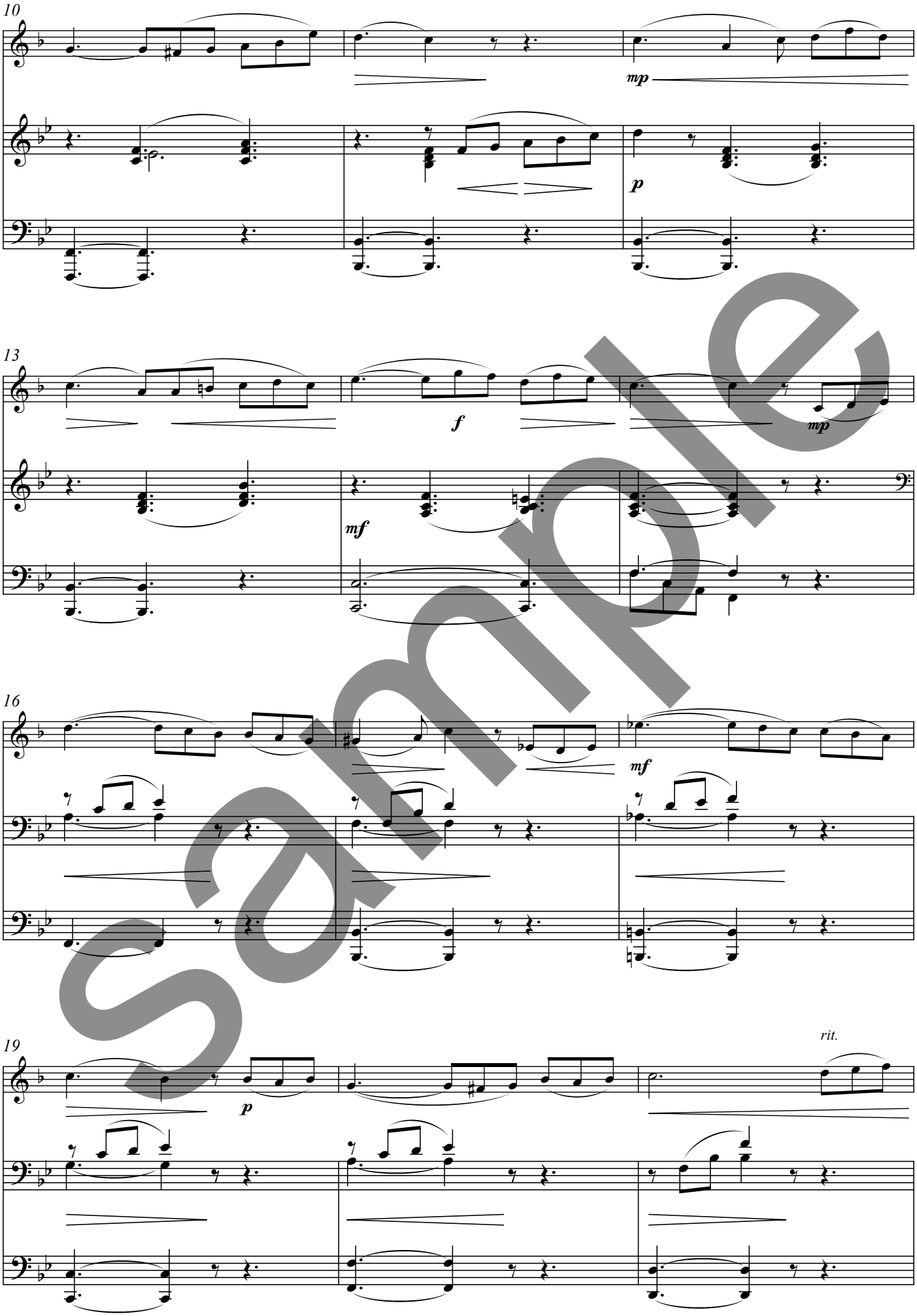

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