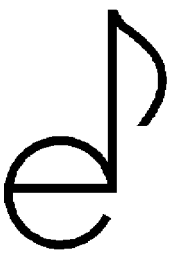
Matthew Guilford

17 Advanced Etudes for Bass Trombone

SAMPLE SCORE



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Composer's Annotations

Etude #1: Wait! What?

This etude predates all others in this collection by a dozen years. At that time, the idea of an advanced semester of bass trombone studies was just forming in my head. It took a global pandemic to end my procrastination and finally complete the book. "Wait! What?" very well could be the reaction to the demands of range and flexibility for Etude #1.

Etude #2: Ben Tenuto Meets Le Gato

Clear execution of the juxtaposed tenuto and legato articulations are the goal here. The symmetry and balance of each two-bar grouping, dynamics and ascending scale are the big picture elements.

Etude #3: Hey, Ride!

The word play of this title may become more obvious once the performer plays through the first two measures. This cornerstone rhythm from a familiar orchestra passage by Richard Wagner offers the performer a different context in which to fine-tune skills.

Etude #4: Bass Boogie Wonderland

I grew up listening to Earth, Wind & Fire. While this etude is not the bass line from their Boogie Wonderland, the style and groove very much is. The opening rock passage gives way to a jazz waltz section, followed by a rock power chord multi-phonic section before the D.C. brings you back to the boogie.

Multi-phonics notes: Play the bottom notes and sing the top notes. If your vocal range is higher, sing one octave higher then the written note.

Etude #5: Breakfast Serial

The randomness of this melody is intentional. With a magic marker, I wrote 12 different notes on 12 ping pong balls, then picked them out of a bag to create the sequence of tones for this serial etude. Constantly changing rhythms, articulations and extremes of range add to the challenge.

Etude #6: Sing It, Don't Wing It

A melodic etude primarily in the bass clef staff and below, this etude should be performed in bel canto style a-la Bordogni. The performer is encouraged to use valves for notes below the staff in whatever configuration they deem appropriate.

Etude #7: Wotan Clan Takes 5

In another riff on a familiar orchestral passage by Richard Wagner, this etude adds an extra beat and a few extra octaves to the original while retaining some of the essence of Valhalla.

Etude #8: Buckle up, Buckle Down

Staccato. Marcato. Loud. Louder. Vroom, vroom. Go!

Etude #9: Mean Joe Green

This is not an homage to the Pittsburgh Steelers Hall of Famer. Translate "Joe Green" into Italian and you arrive at a significant composer of 19th century opera. Multiple tongueing and soft pedal note control are just a few of the challenges found here.

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Etude #10: Clef Bars
Imagine Vladislav Blazhevich and George Clinton/Parliament Funkadelic teaming up to write a bass trombone etude. I did.
P.S.: Bass trombone players need to know tenor and alto clefs, too.

Etude #11: Ein Lippenbleedin'
Please do not injure yourself playing this etude. That is not the intent. What is the intent? Clarity, accuracy and rhythmic integrity; the kind that Richard Strauss demands of bass trombonists in his orchestral and operatic compositions.

Etude #12: Natural Bridge
To quote the Blood, Sweat & Tears song, Spinning Wheel: "What goes up, must come down." This etude is full of arches as well as ample opportunity for valve usage below the staff.

Etude #13: Blissful Gliss
The glissando is featured in solo compositions as well as chamber and large ensemble compositions. I have often questioned why there are so few etudes that feature the glissando, so I decided to do something about that. This etude is intentionally short and simple. The performer should concentrate on each glissando and decide the best means of execution.

Etude #14: Thanks, Jimmy!
James Pankow of the rock group Chicago has been my trombone inspiration since I began playing the instrument. This etude pays tribute to him with a familiar arpeggio ostinato before wandering into other realms of keys and registers. The lack of articulation marks is intentional, and the performer is encouraged to color this etude with articulation(s) of their choice.

Etude #15: Swing Low
Essentially a jazz waltz, this etude combines elements of swing/straight playing, syncopation, flexibility and (of course) range.

Etude #16: It Ain't Over 'til It's Over
I love a good Yogi Berra quote. I also love the exciting passages written for bass trombone near the end of so many orchestral compositions, so I rolled some of my favorites into 80 measures of fun.

Etude #17: Tidying Up the Basement
Clean and clear articulations in all registers, including the extreme low range, should be a goal for all bass trombonists. Consistency comes first, so adjust tempos as needed in order to achieve success. Who doesn't like a clean basement?

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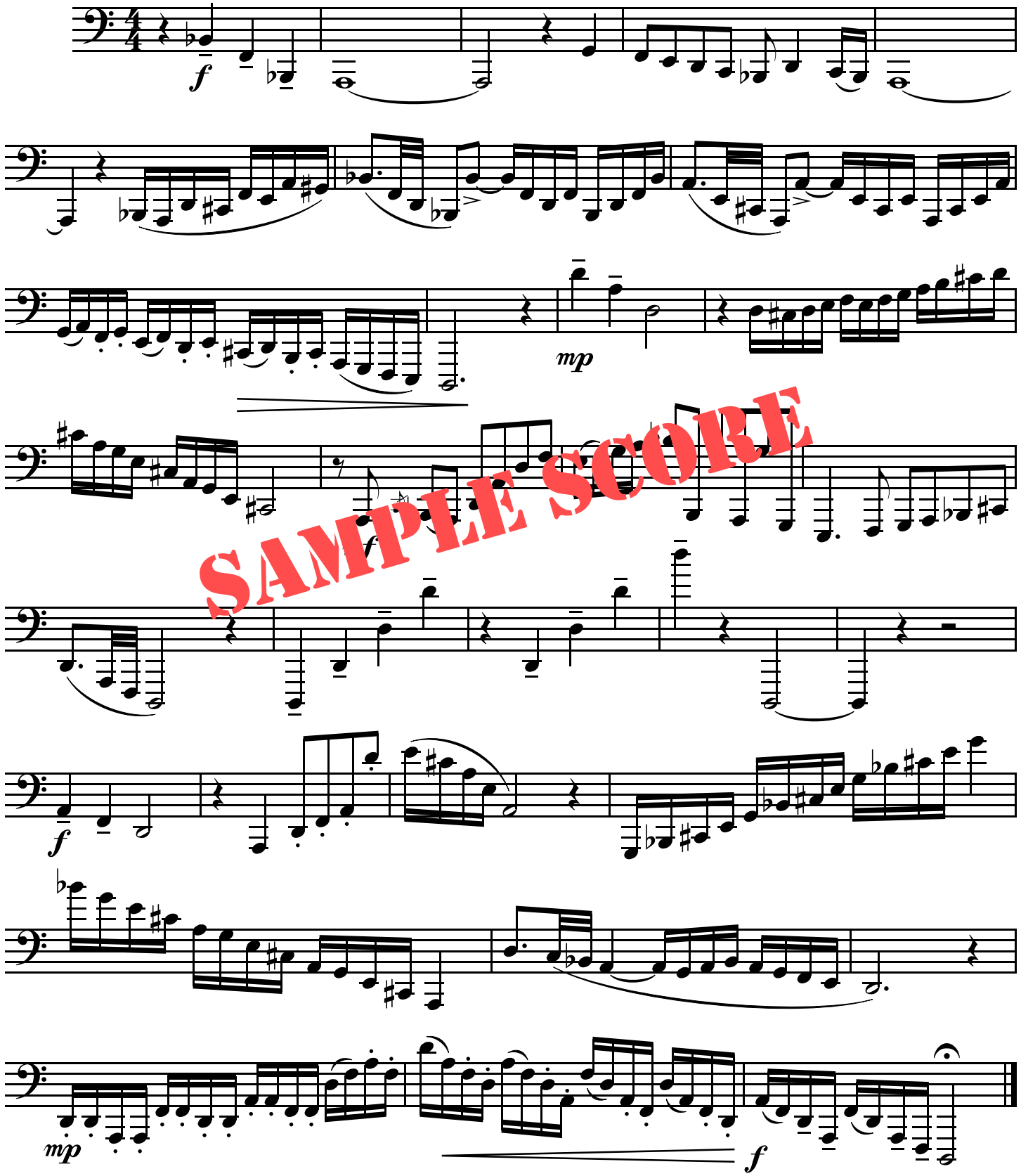
1. Wait! What?

Andante Moderato (♩=88)

Matthew Guilford



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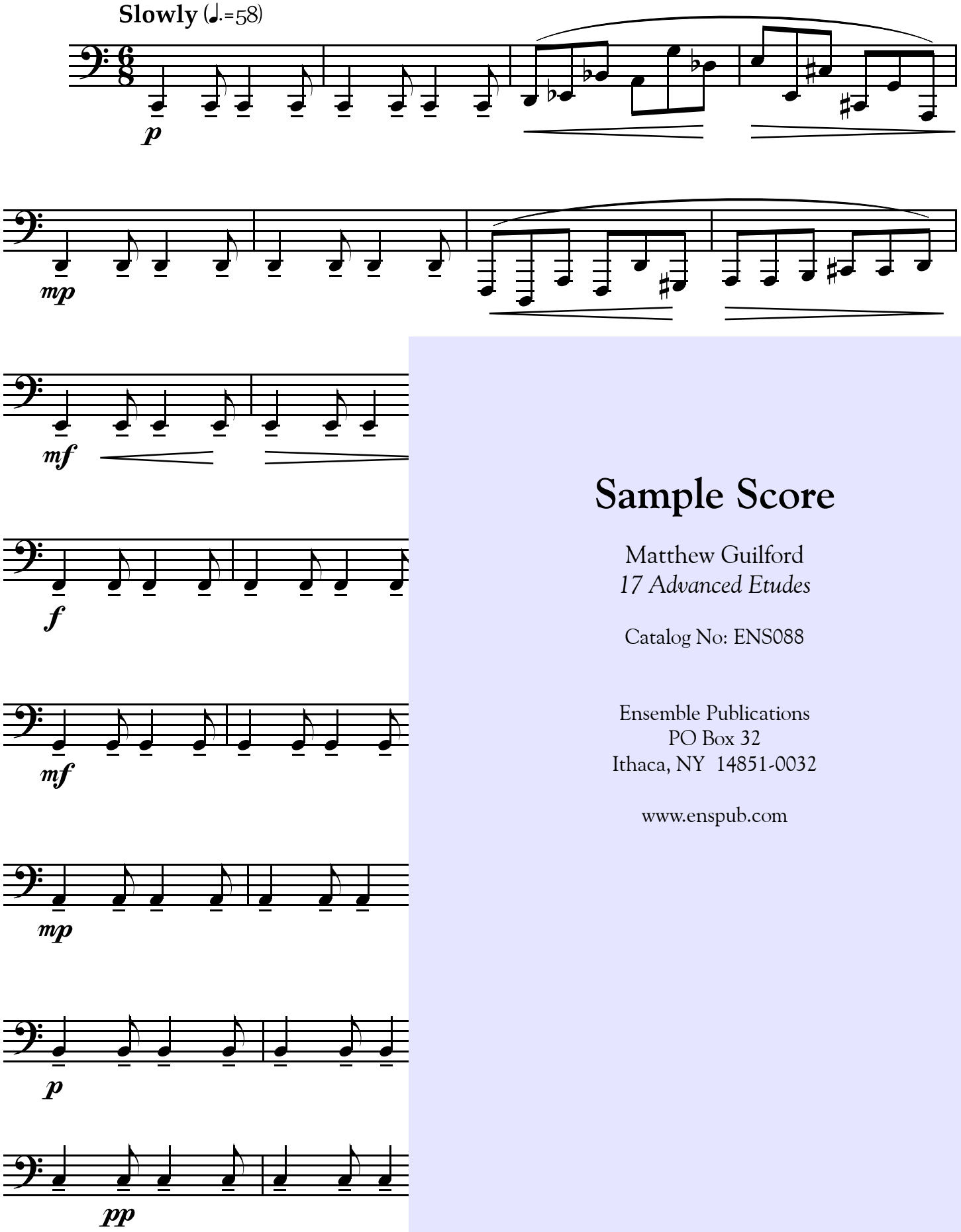

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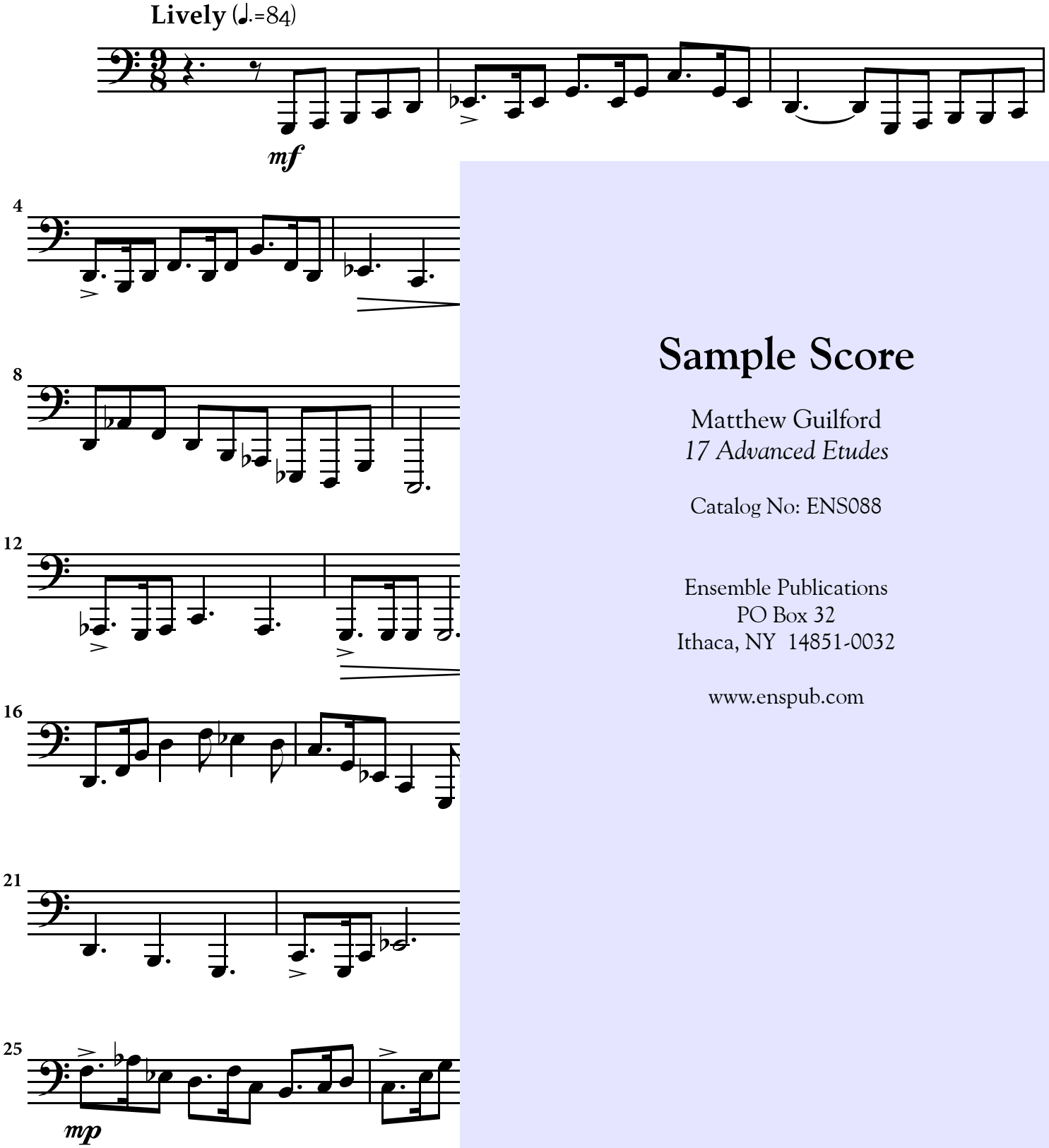
3. Hey, Ride!



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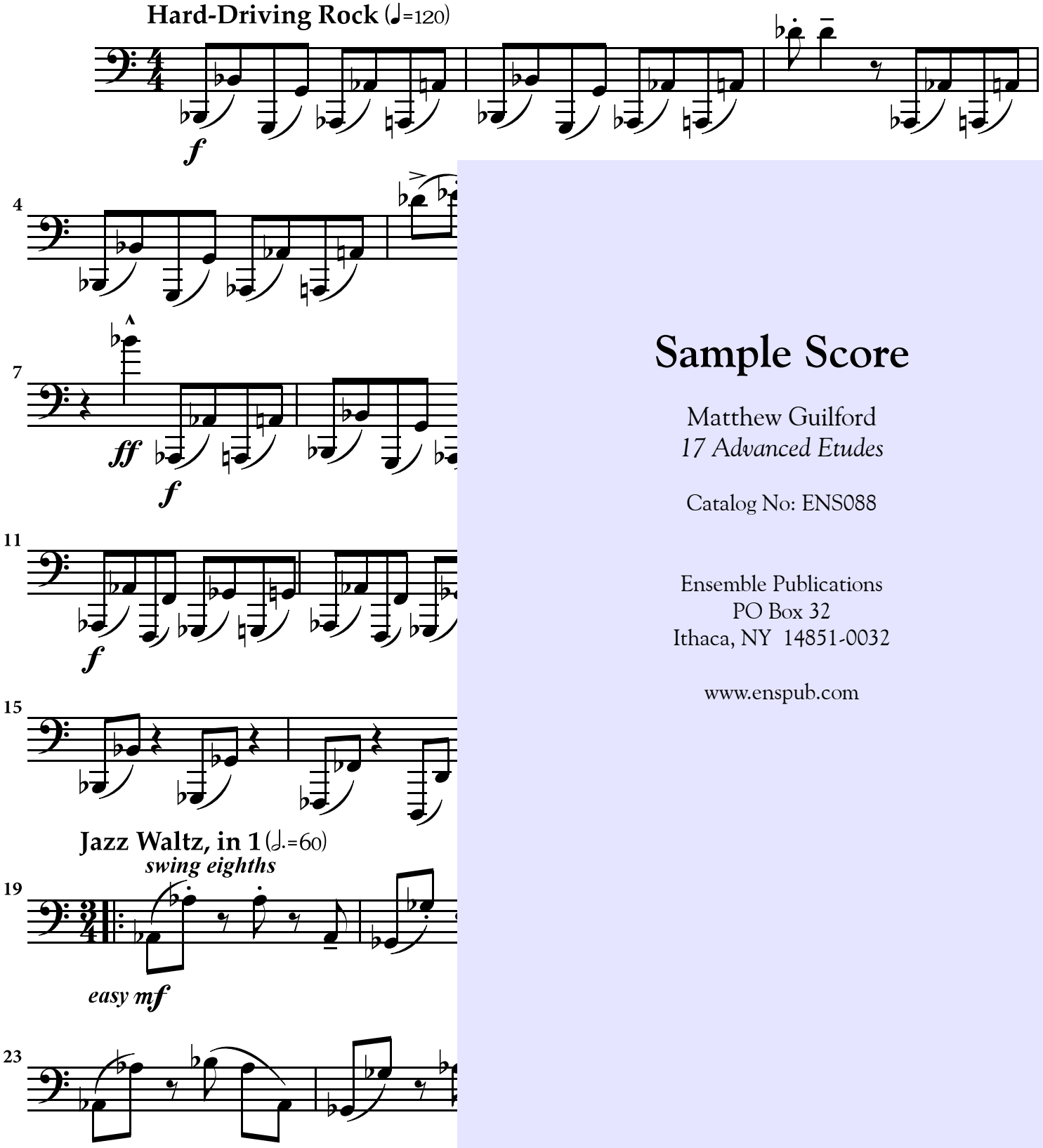
4. Bass Boogie Wonderland



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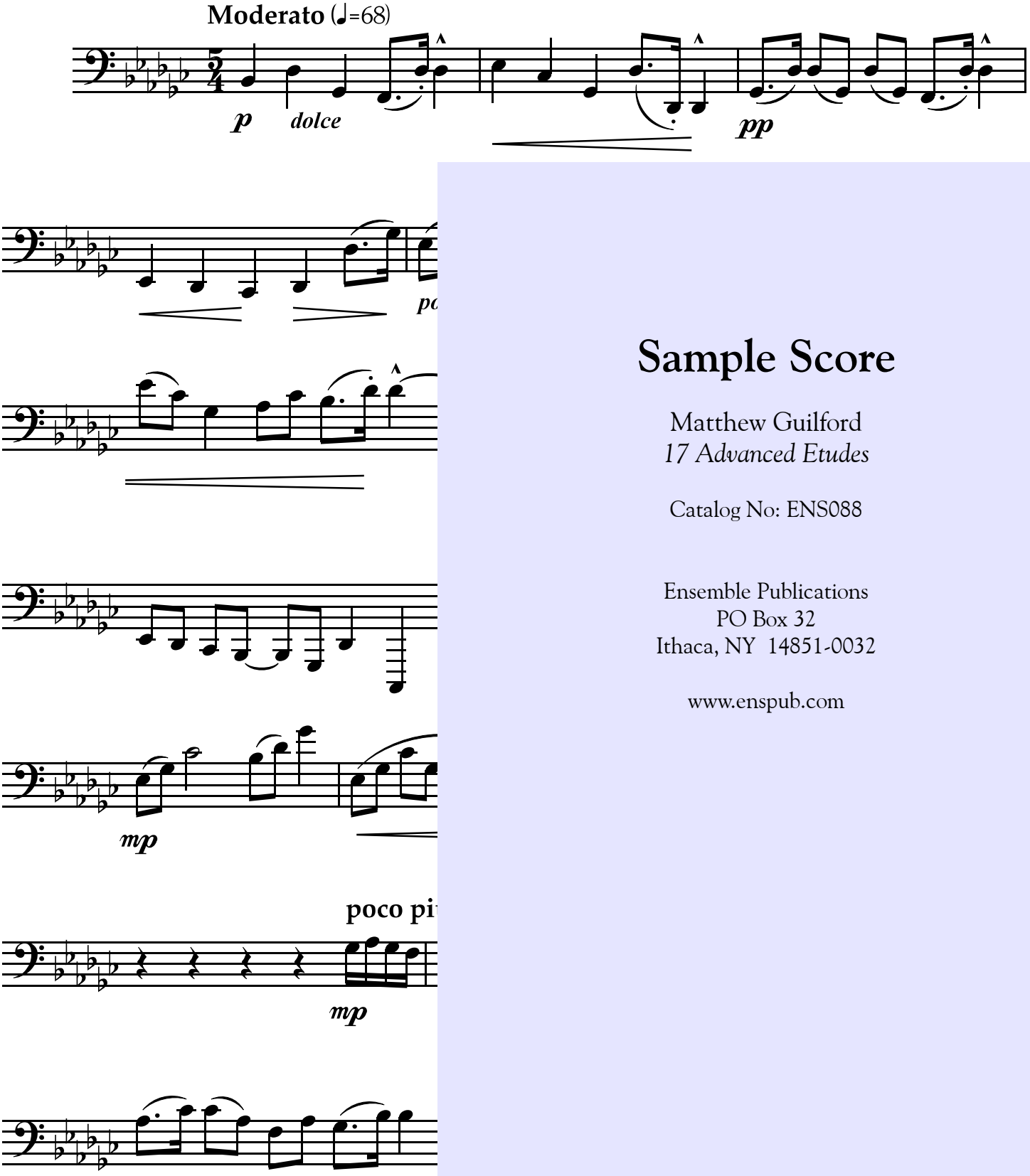
7. Wotan Clan Takes Five



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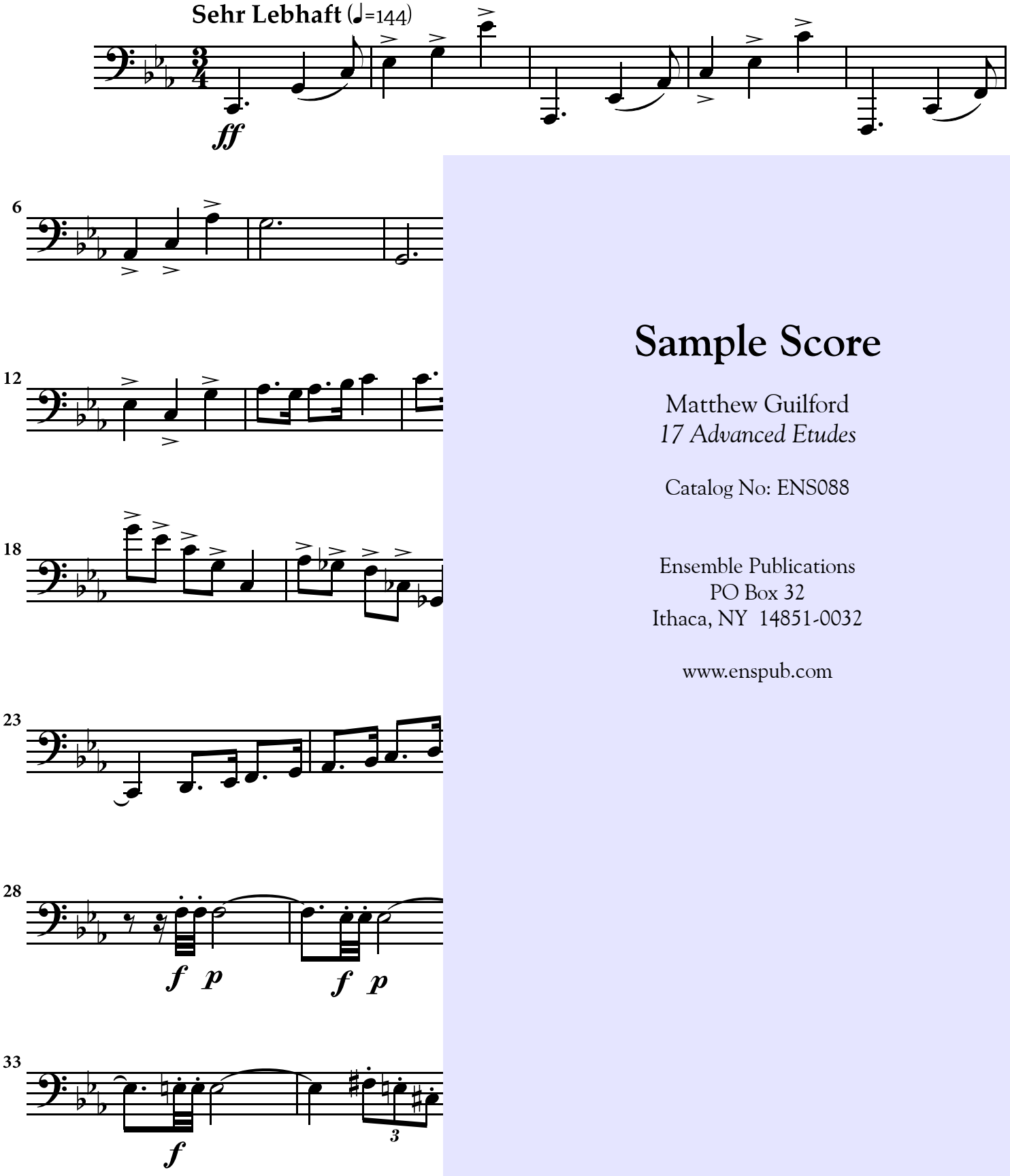
11. Ein Lippenbleedin'



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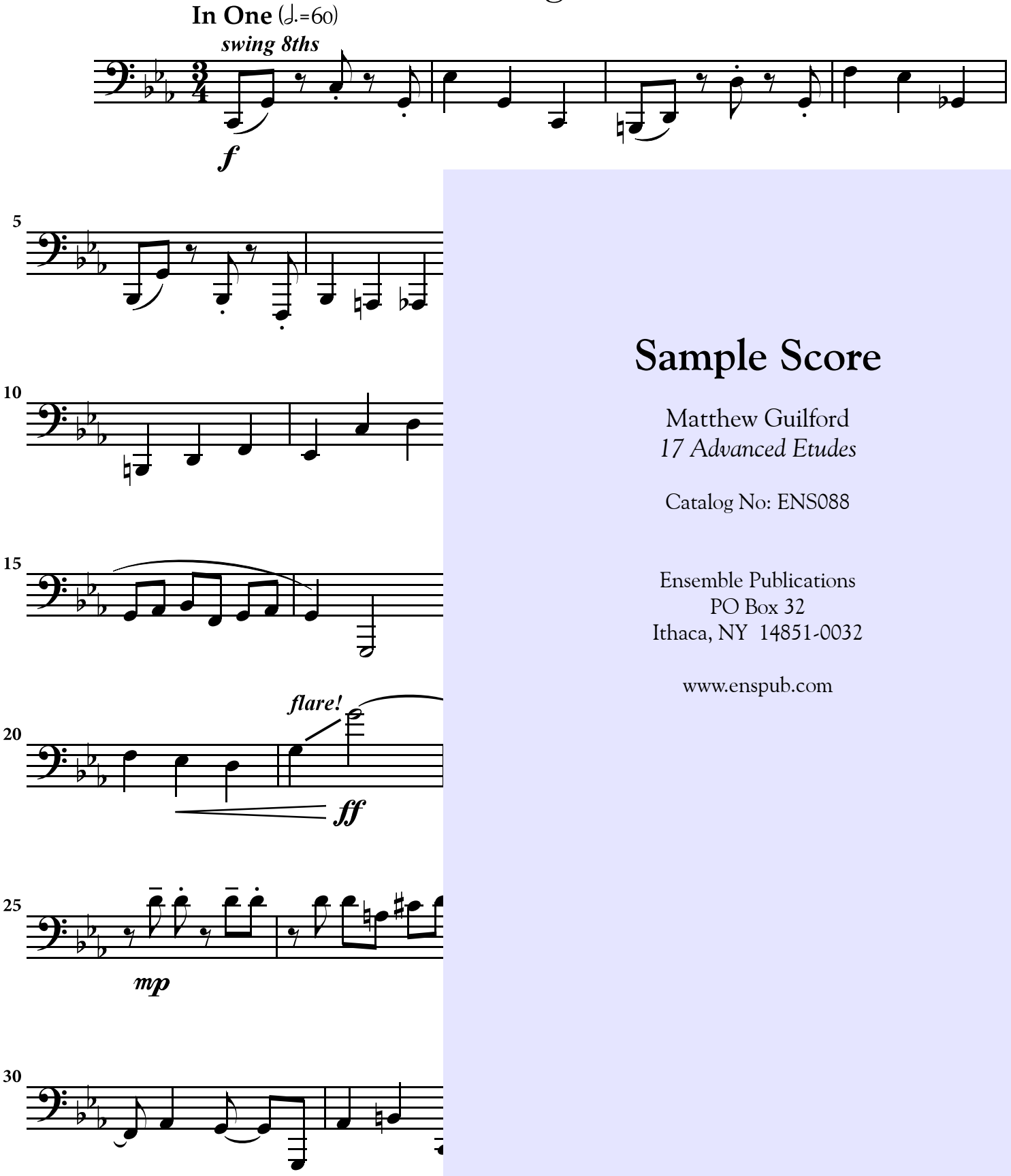
15. Swing Low



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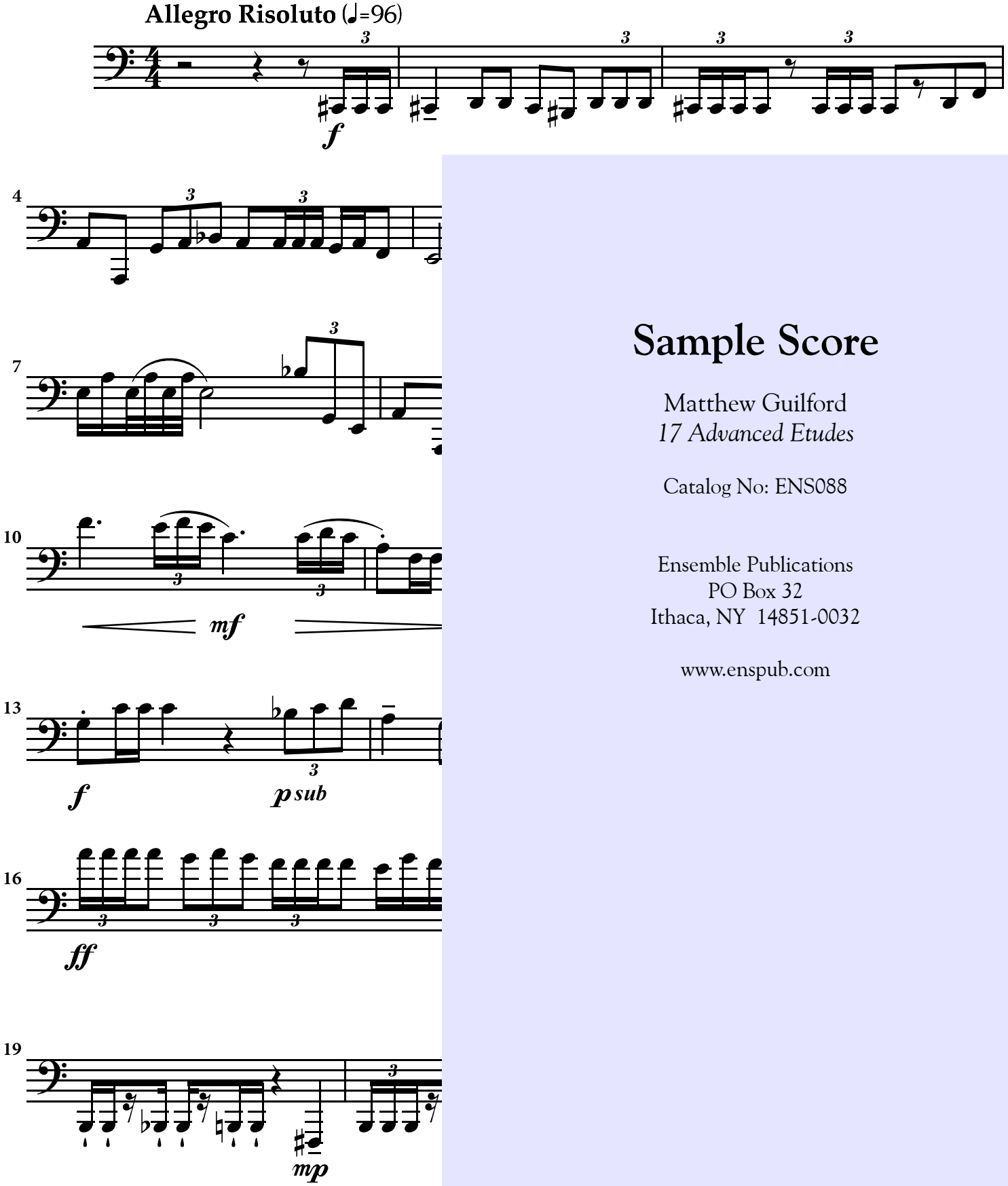
17. Tidying Up the Basement



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