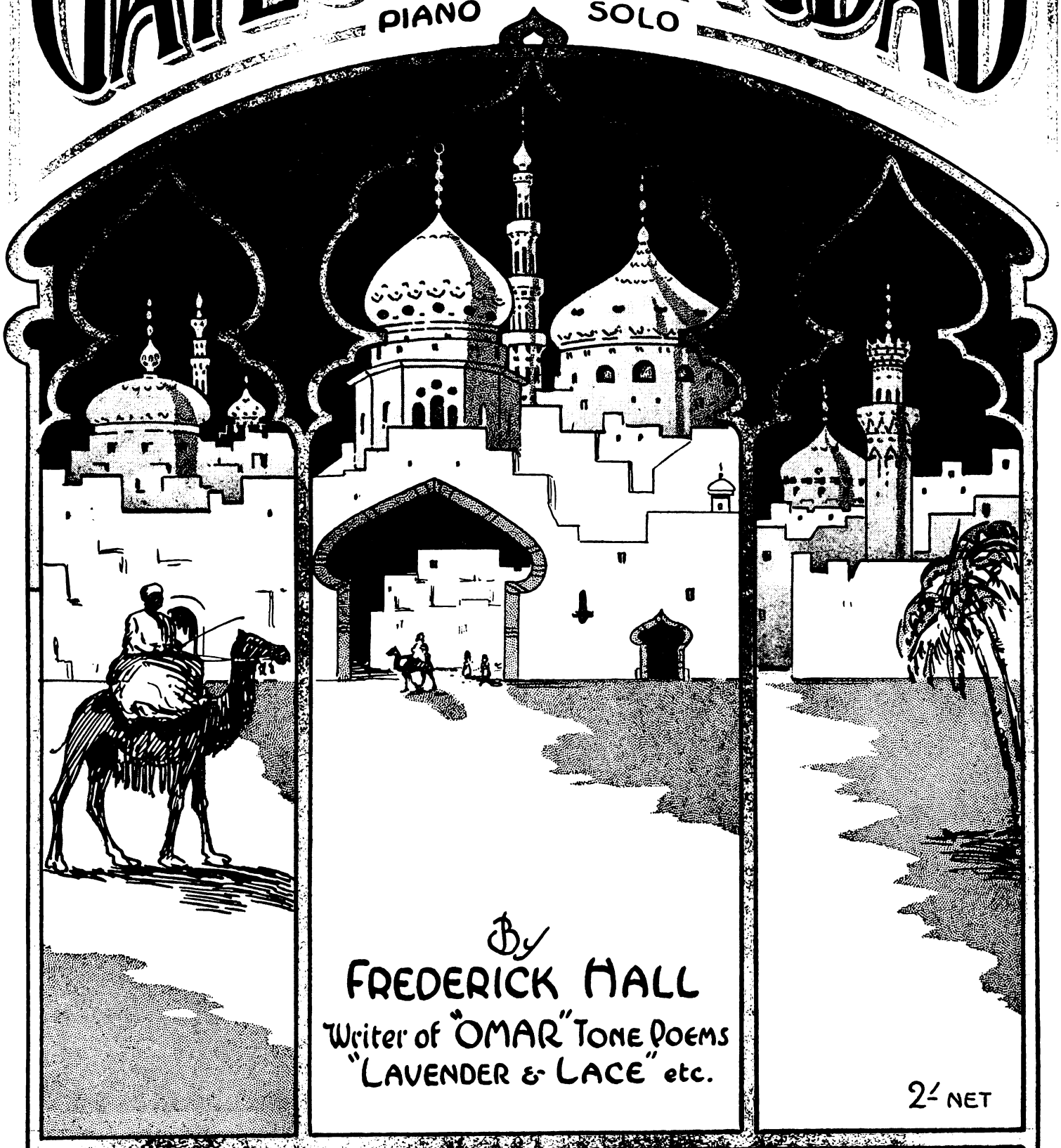
GATES OF BAGDAD

PIANO SOLO



By

FREDERICK HALL

Writer of "OMAR" Tone Poems

"LAVENDER & LACE" etc.

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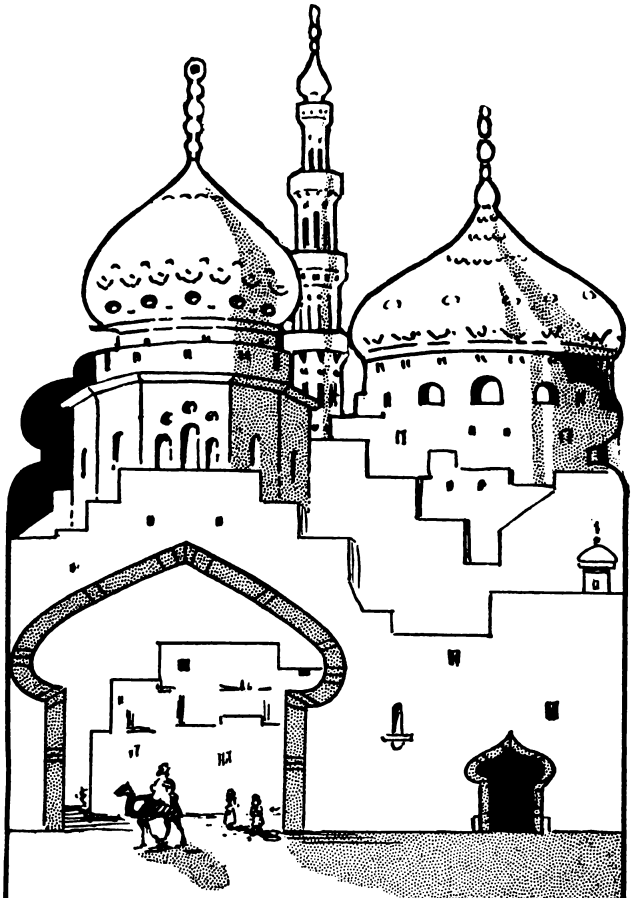

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BAGDAD, city of ancient wisdom, that throbbed into our childhood fairy tales, and etched itself into our memories as deep and as lasting as the river Tigris, which flows, quiet and still, in the shadows of its thousand minarets. Where thieves and the spawn of a thousand races walk the streets; where women with kohl tinted eyes and the langorous grace of the Orient hide their tragedies behind the plaintive echoes of an Eastern song.

BAGDAD, the cradle of the Arabian Nights, where swaggering Turco men gaze eagerly up at latticed casements where dark eyes are agleam; where huge coal black Nubians await the sounding gong of beaten gold which tells that the Caliph has taken a new favourite.

BAGDAD, city of the great gates, the gateways into the citadel of Persian romance under which, all through the long hot hours of daylight, loaded caravans pass wearily; through which camels loaded with treasure and loot from cities buried in the sand plod ceaselessly . . . the gates of Bagdad in whose shadows the faithful find rest.

THIS is the song they sing, and the story they tell of the love of Sadi for Yasmin, who passed daily in and out of those great gates until one day, when they passed out together, the ancient heavily studded gates of iron and wood closed upon them for ever.

PRECEDING the dawn came swinging into Bagdad a grunting camel loaded with spices and silks in two great baskets, and riding high above the sand, almost lulled to sleep by the camel's tinkling bells, was Sadi, the bringer of spices; his heart aflame with a thousand dreams, for were not his thoughts of Yasmin, loveliest of the lovely, who, softly veiled, was waiting, he knew, behind her casement, eager for the coming of her lover.

SO Sadi spurred his camel on impatiently until the breathing of its great nostrils awakened the Keeper of the Gate. After a moment the gate swung open, and Sadi was in the city of a thousand enchantments . . . the city of his love. Dismounting inside the gate, he set off quickly to the bazaar with his camel lumbering behind him, but this morning his thoughts were not on trade and barter, but of Yasmin's eyes, and as he strode along his eyes searched every veil he passed with the hope that the love in her eyes would gleam brightly into his.

BUT he saw her not, and soon he was in the bazaar. He staked his camel, and entered, to be met by Mustapha, the merchant, who greeted him, "Long have I awaited thee, my son. Yasmin has spent many weary hours of tribulation until her heart, hungry for Sadi, has become as a crushed rose."

"MY soul is aflame for a glimpse of she whose memory has attended my every dream," answered Sadi. "I am even now restless to fly to where she awaits me, O Father of Goodness."

THE old merchant came nearer and whispered, "She awaits thee, my Son, not ten paces from here," and he waved his hand toward the back of the bazaar where rich carpets and tapestries hung heavy.

SADI hurriedly pushed aside the tapestries, and in a breathing space, Yasmin, loveliest of the lovely, was before him.

"YASMIN, Moon of my eyes," murmured Sadi. He was spellbound by her beauty. Months of weary desert travel were forgotten in their embrace.

"HOW come thee to be hidden here in the bazaar of Mustapha?" he asked, and in her reply he knew that the city of a thousand enchantments would again hold no moon for him, and that the star of his love would soon be waning in the seraglio of the Caliph.

FOR her voice, as she answered him, was heavy and quick with fear, and she said, "To-night, O Sadi, am I lost to thee, for the Caliph has decreed that I, of all women in Bagdad, shall be his new favourite. O. Sadi, the breeze of thy coming has played upon the sands of my heart."

"YASMIN," he said, "beloved of a thousand dreams, Allah has decreed long since thee for me. The hour has come. Inshallah, to-night we pass through the great gate on our pilgrimage of dreams that know no awakening."

"BUT, Sadi, I fear for thee," she answered. "Even now the eunuch of the Caliph seeks me."

"HE shall find thee not Yasmin. Faithful Mustapha will hide thee here until I return, and at dusk, once inside the basket which even now is being milked of its burden of spices, thee and I, Yasmin, pass for ever from Bagdad."

AND so it was, that when the last gleams of the dying sun glistened on the tall towers and minarets of Bagdad, and dusk thickened about the streets and quiet bazaars, a camel, with heavily laden basket and a beautiful burden, lumbered grotesquely under the great gates, as Sadi, from his high place cried to the keeper, "Salaam Aleikoum." As the gates closed upon the camel and its burden, the cry of the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer trailed through the city, and Sadi and Yasmin, loveliest of the lovely, passed out on their pilgrimage of love from Bagdad, whose shadows were lit with a silver shower of stars.

H. STUART BRIDGMAN.

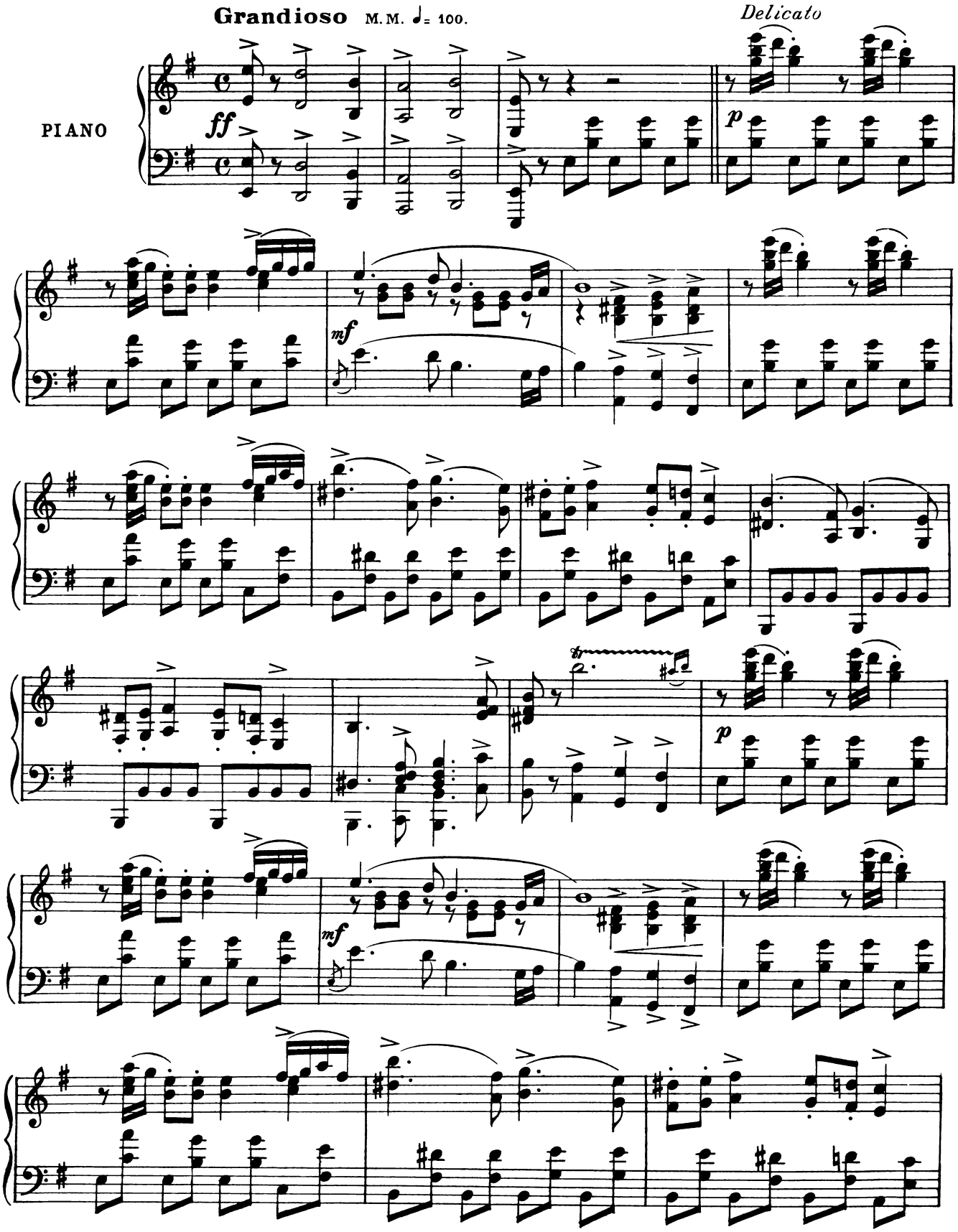
Gates Of Bagdad

By FREDERICK HALL
(Composer of Omar Tone Poems)

Grandioso M.M. ♩= 100.

Delicato

PIANO



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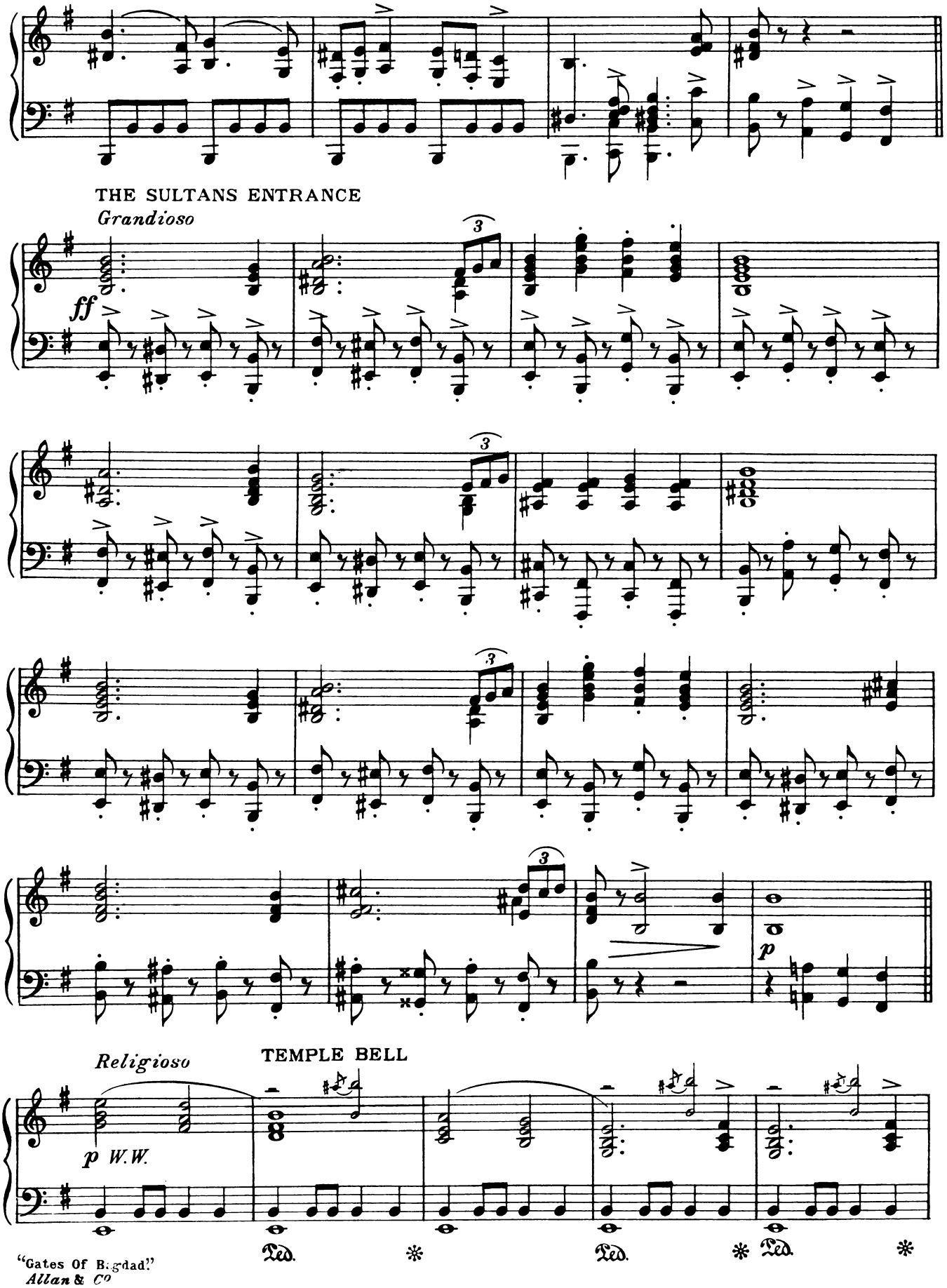
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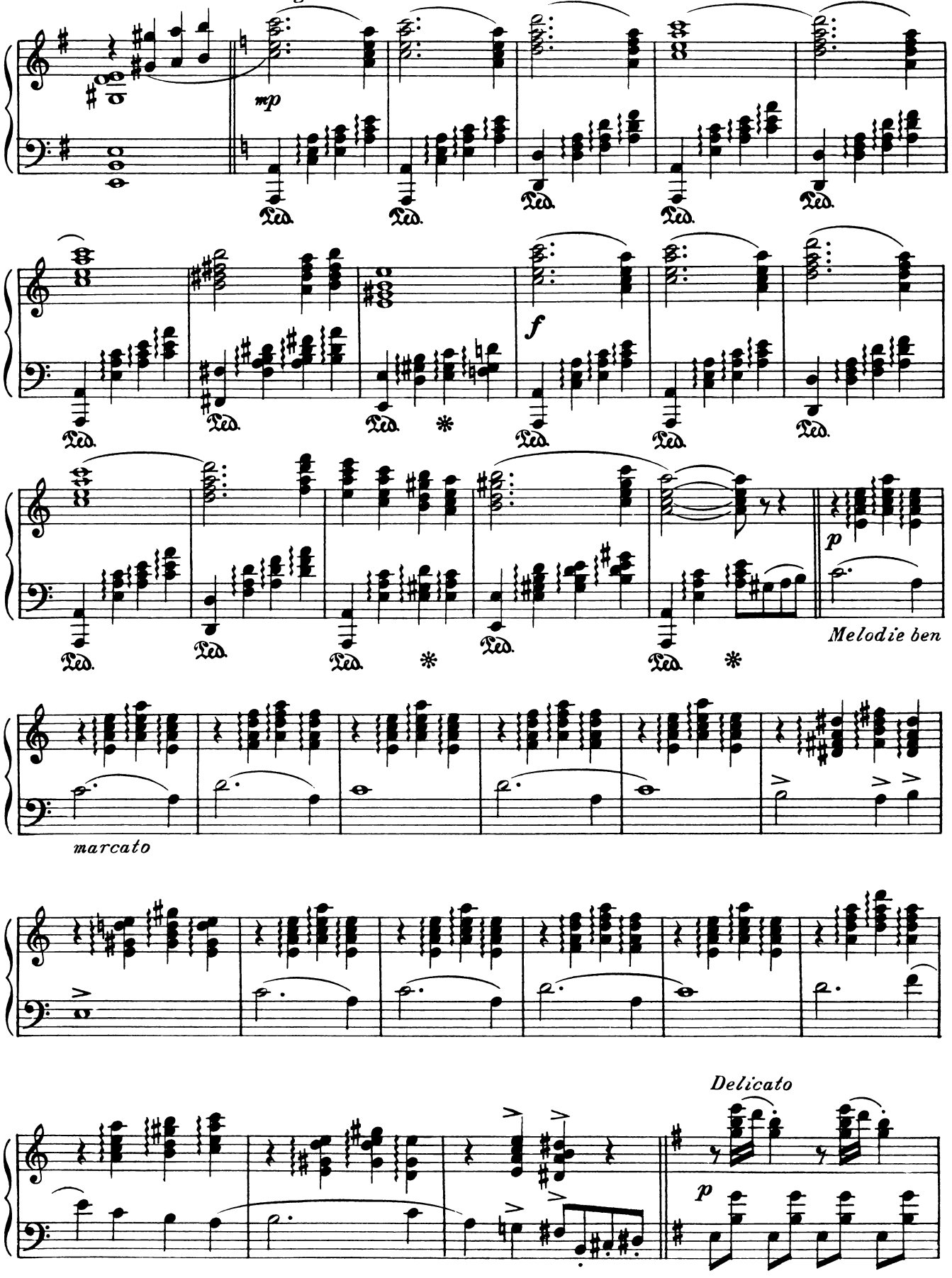

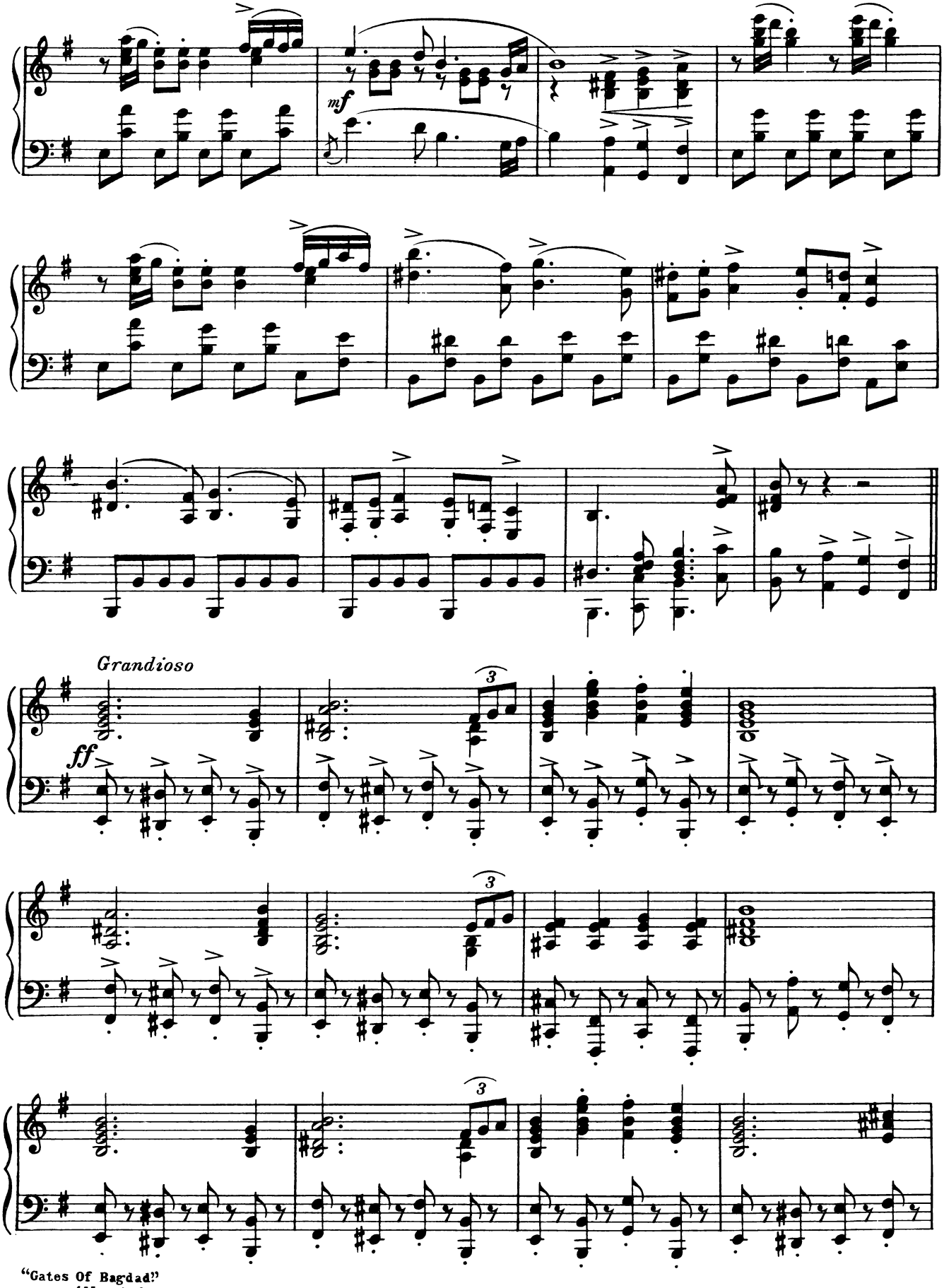
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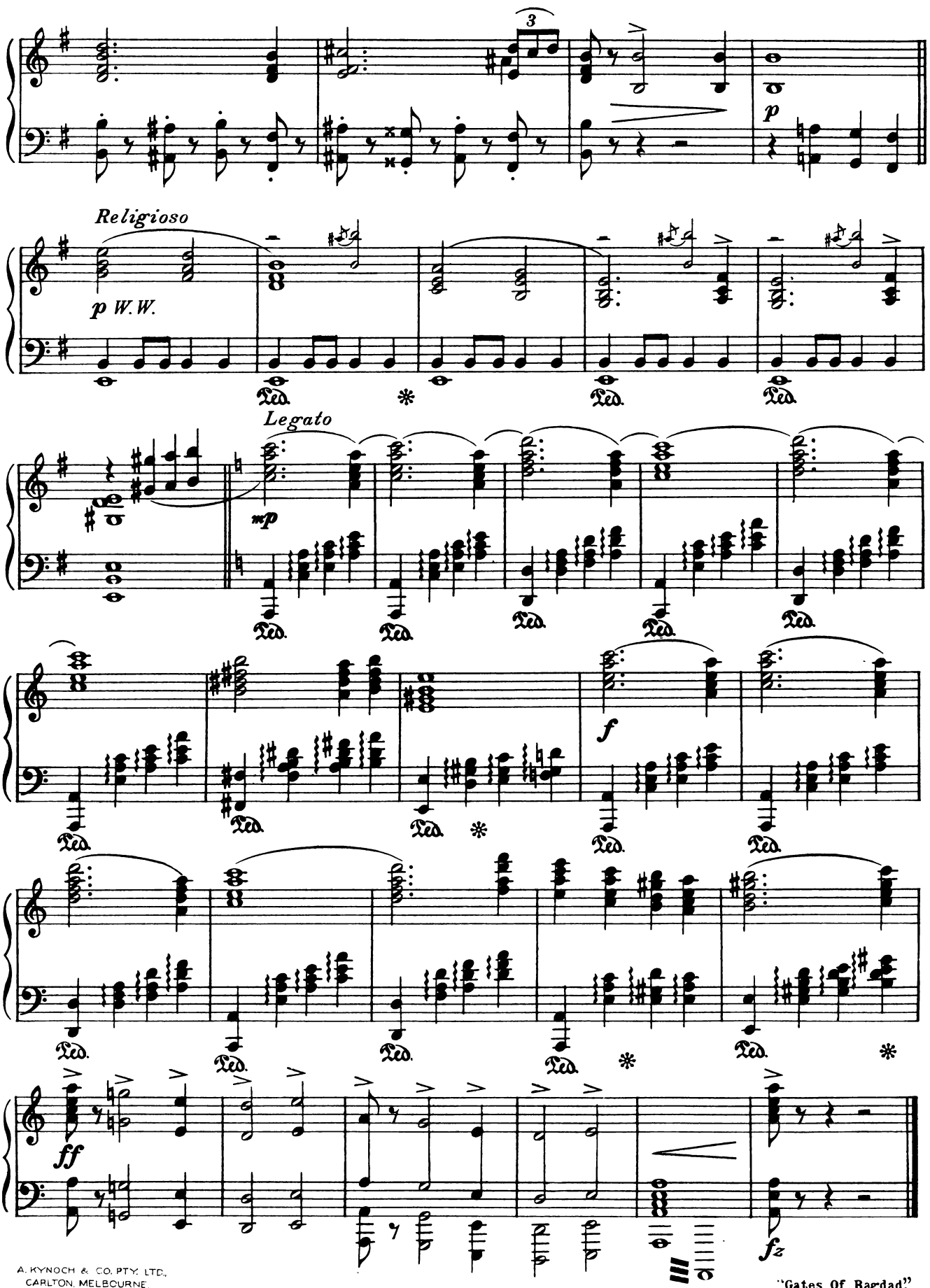

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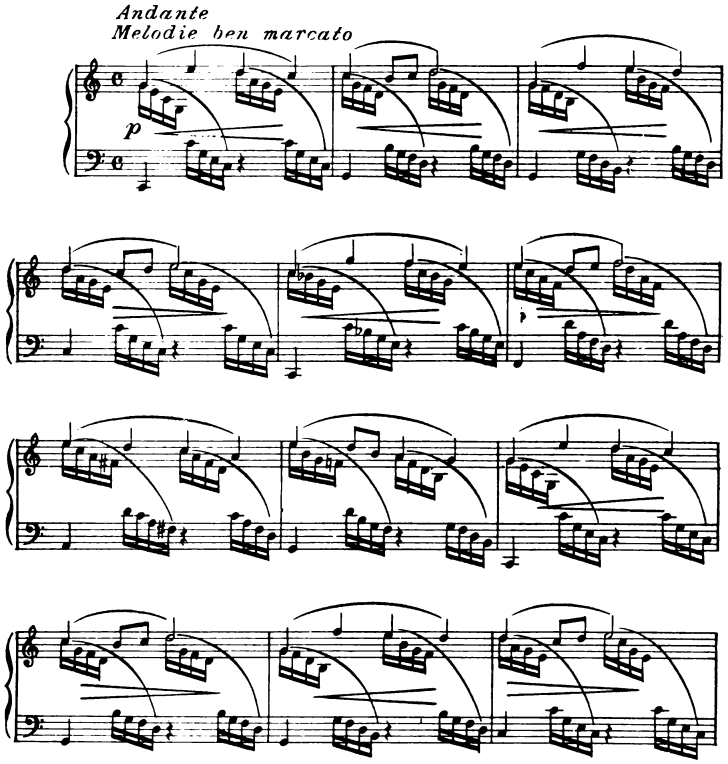

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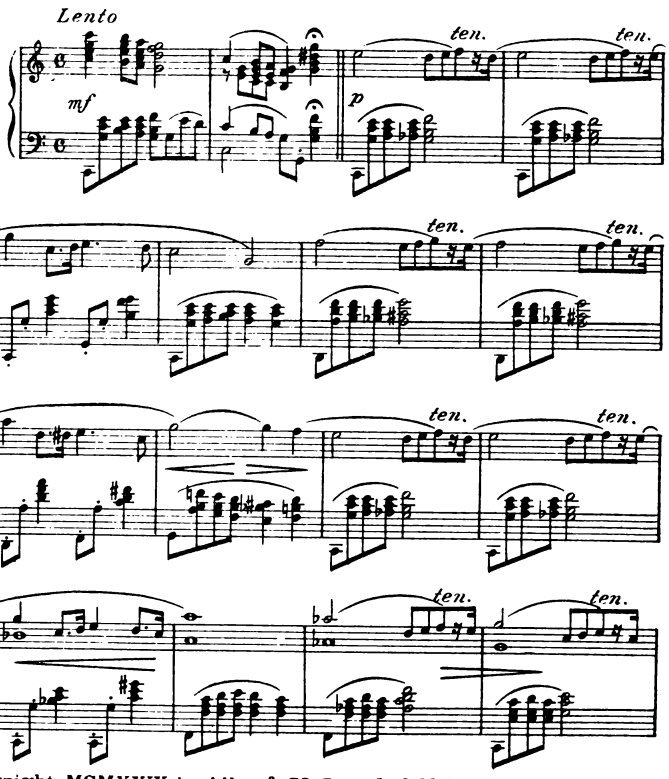

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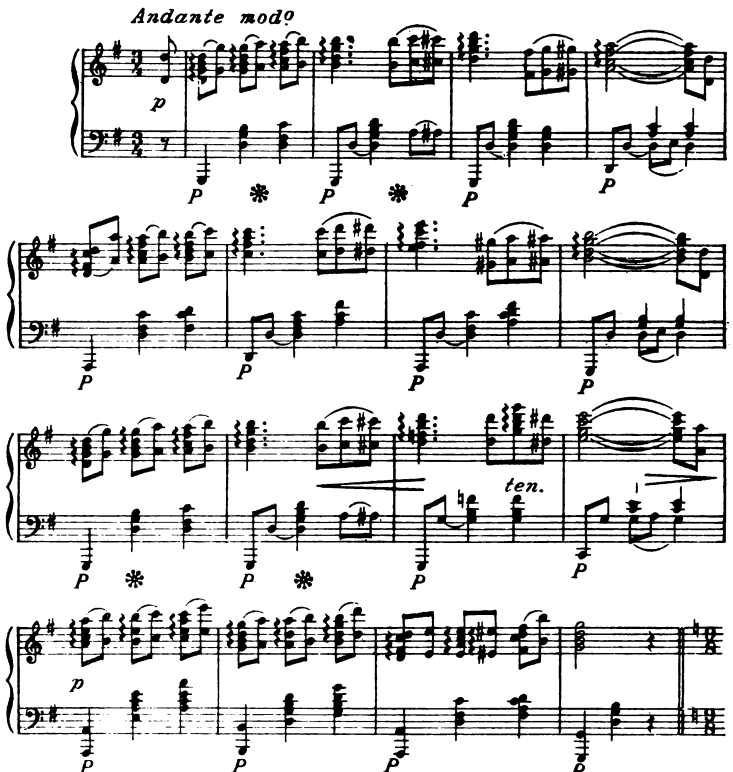

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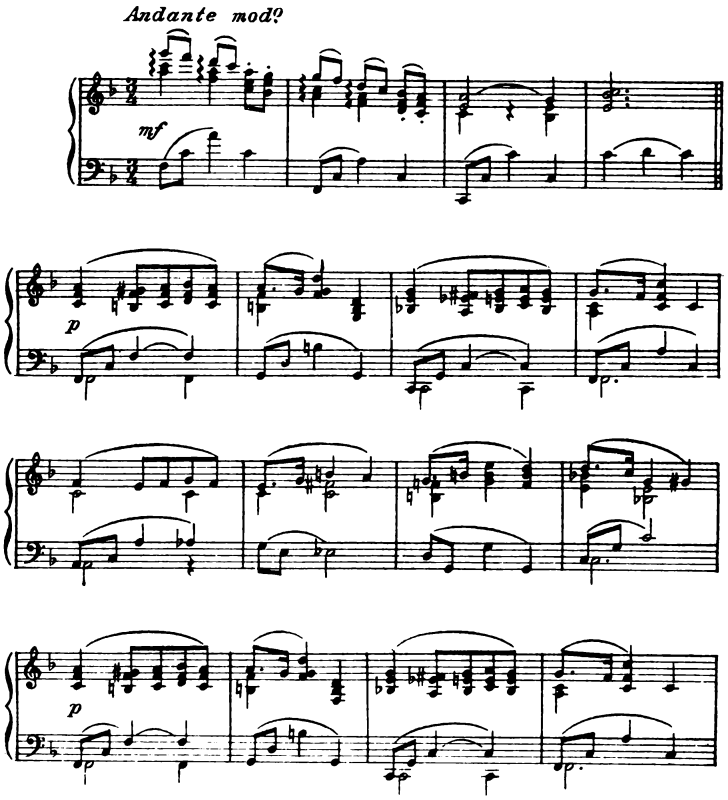

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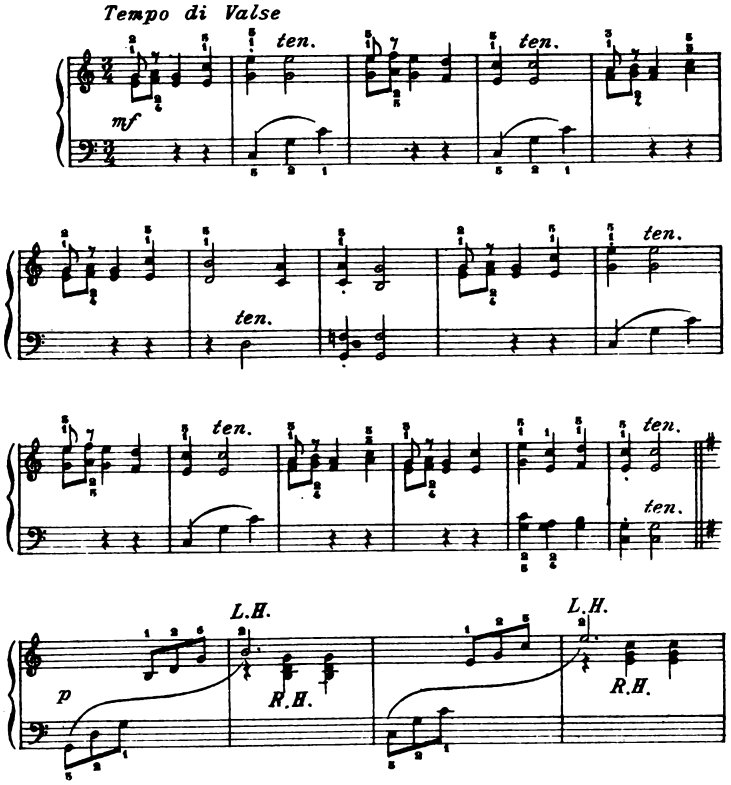

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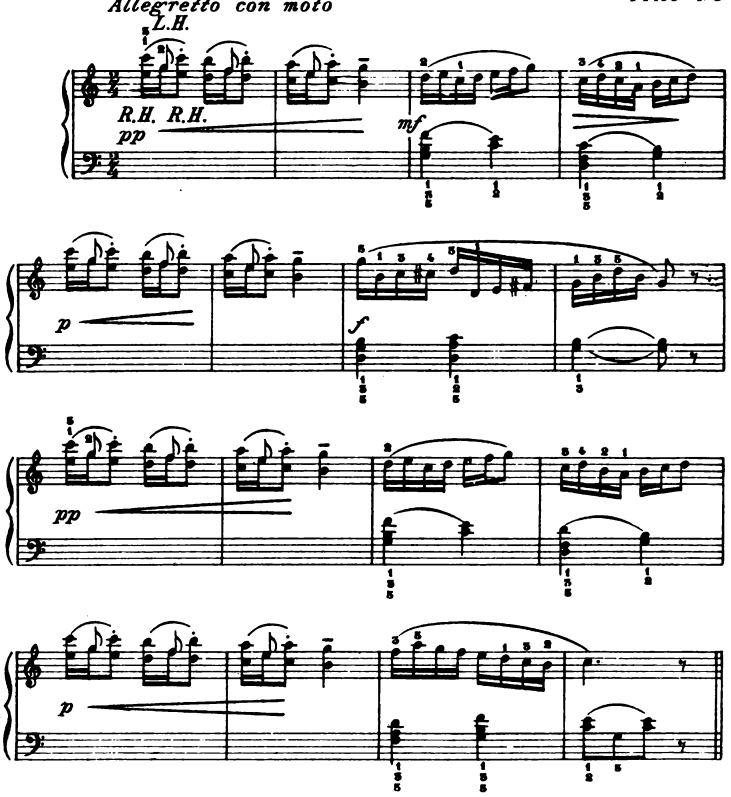

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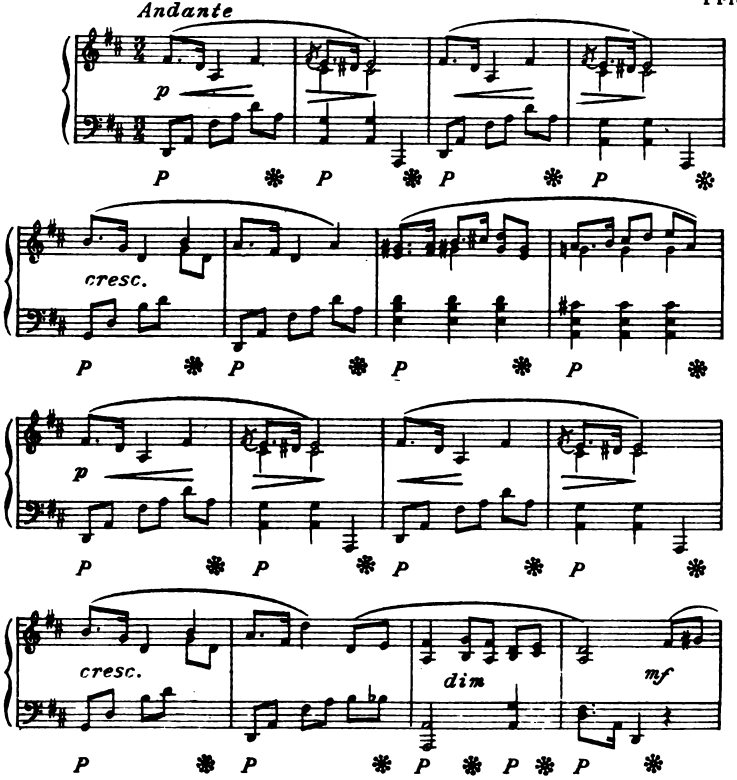

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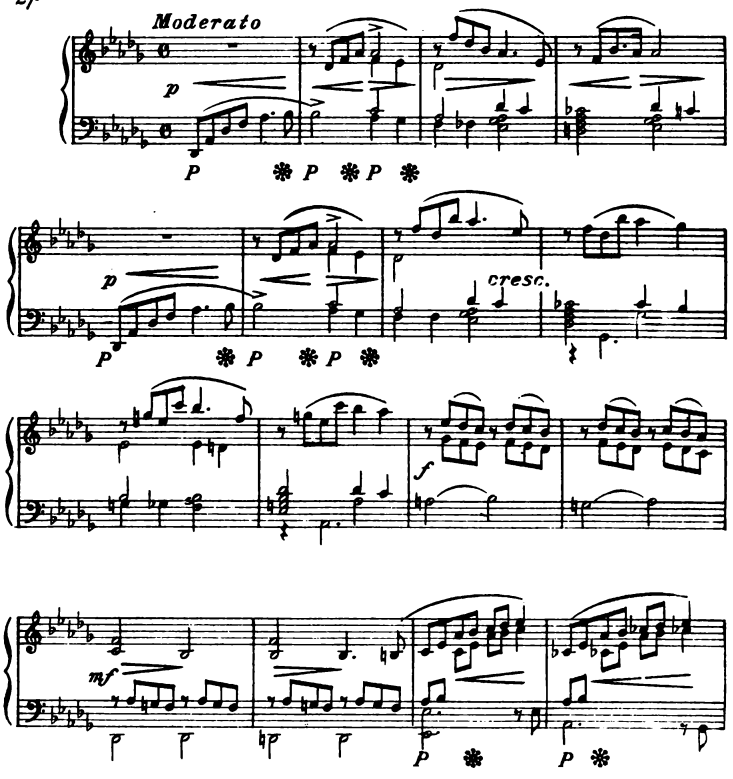

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