"Untitled Chicago" Notes

By Albert Ammons
Transcribed and arranged by Kristian Olsen
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The purpose of this document is to help distribute this wonderful piece to the world. But if you find this of use and would like to buy me a coffee (or chip in for boring website hosting fees), you can do so at buymeacoffee.com/kolsen.

General Notes

What follows is sheet music for a mashup of two remarkable Albert Ammons pieces: "Untitled Chicago" and "Chicago in Mind." Both were recorded in 1939 during a historic session with Meade Lux Lewis—recordings that would become the foundation of the very first album released by the legendary Blue Note label, aptly titled "The First Day."

On their own, these pieces can be less compelling to perform—at least if one stays strictly faithful to Ammons' original recordings. The final choruses of "Untitled Chicago" showcase Ammons' dazzling virtuosity, which seems almost entirely improvised. As impressive as this is, it's not the sort of material most pianists would want to reproduce note-for-note. Meanwhile, the second half of "Chicago in Mind" becomes somewhat repetitive; its core musical ideas are introduced early and then cycled through in a way that can feel monotonous.

These shortcomings, however, can be avoided by merging the two works—pulling the most engaging elements from each to create a single, more cohesive and dynamic piece. The two are natural companions: they share the same key (C major), feature similar introductions, and at one point in "Untitled Chicago," Ammons even plays a few bars that closely resemble passages from "Chicago in Mind." It's almost as if he briefly entertained the idea of transitioning into "Chicago in Mind" before moving in another direction. What follows, then, is my own attempt to bring the two pieces together—drawing on their shared elements to craft a mashup that highlights the strengths of both.

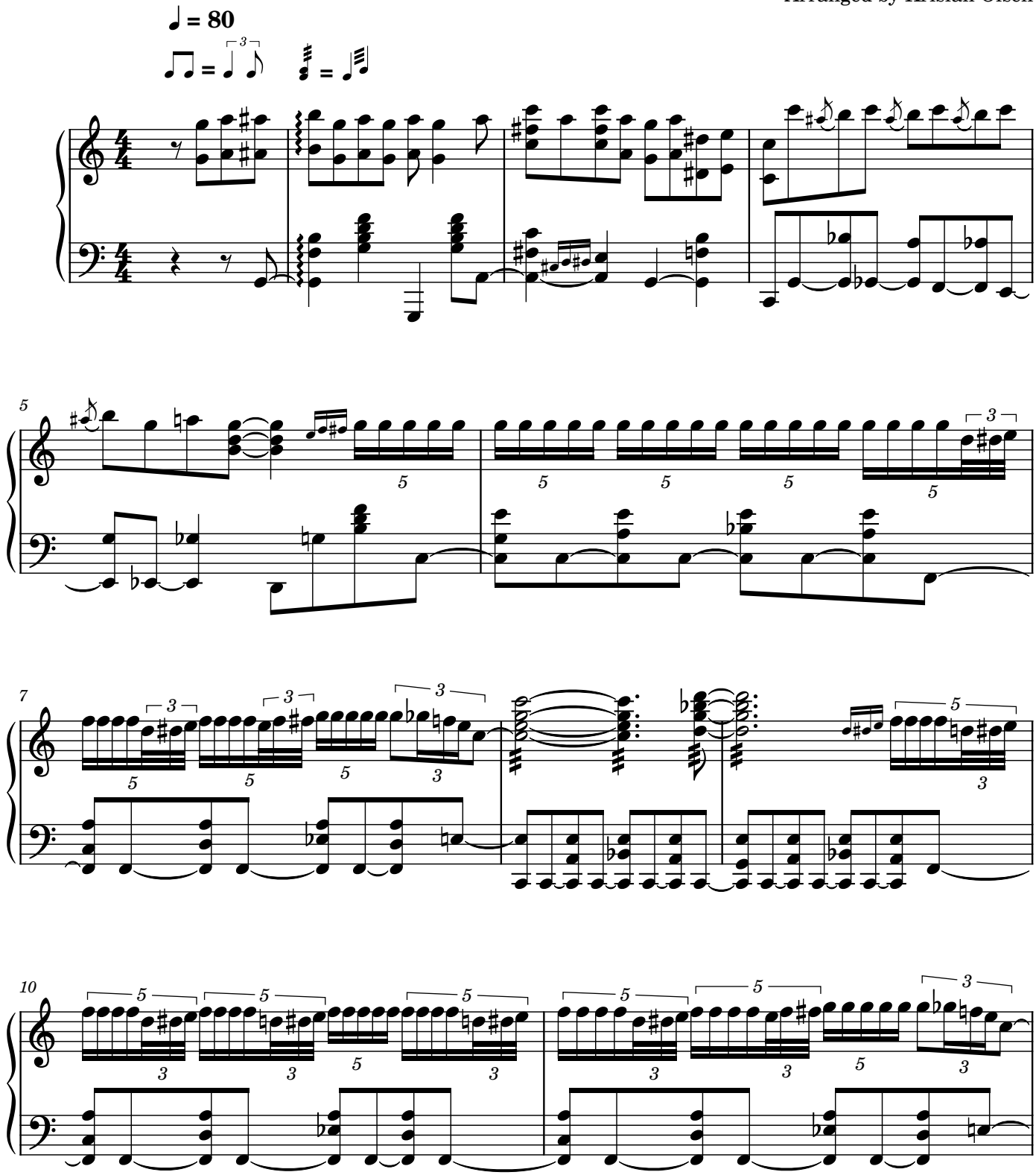
You can find my recording of the following sheet music on my YouTube channel.

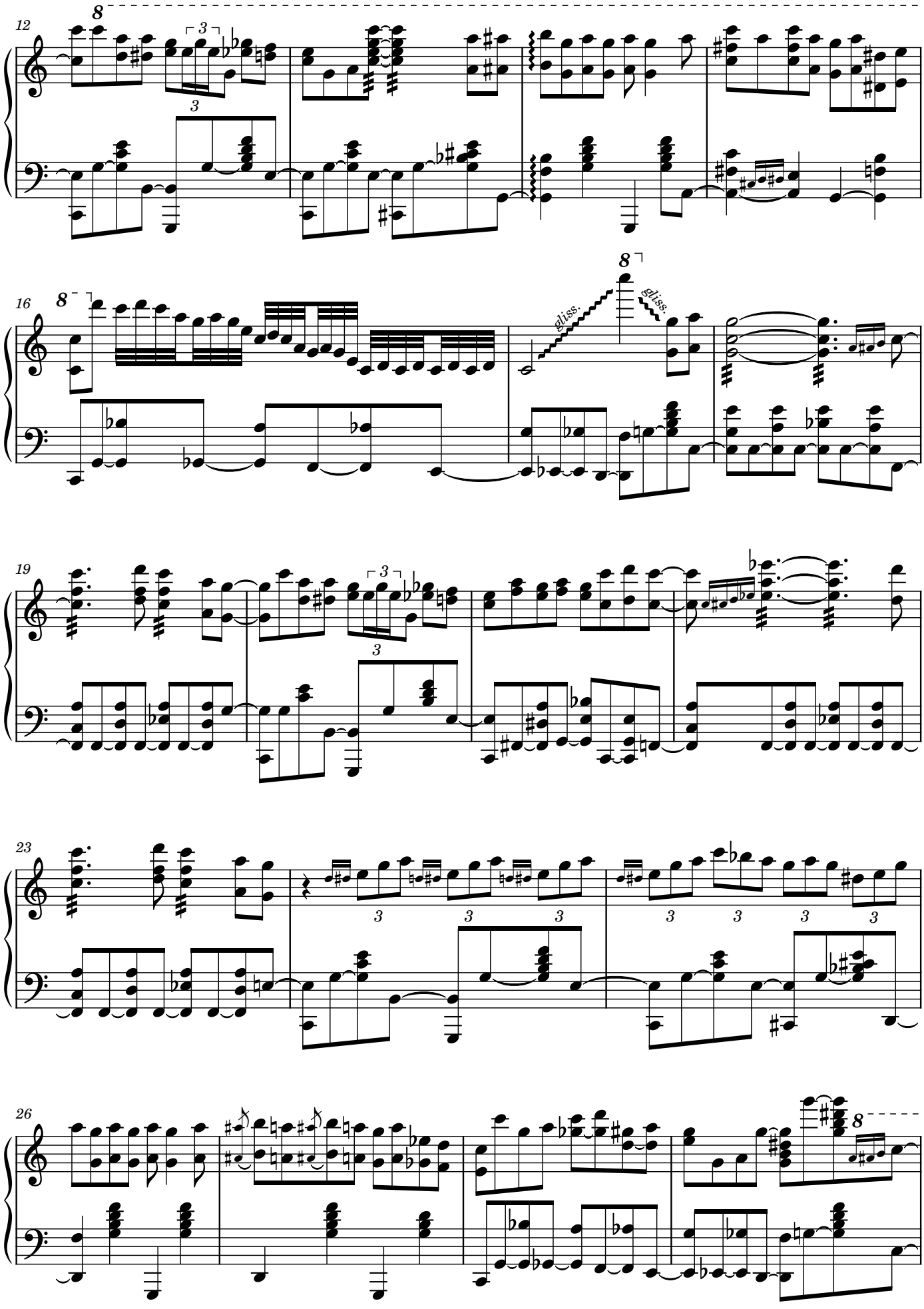
Note: I have mostly left out articulation and pedaling in these scores. Listen to the recordings and copy, or use whatever sounds good to you.

As always, this sheet music is meant only as a guide to your own exploration of the piece. Make changes freely and play it in whatever way moves you.

Untitled Chicago

Albert Ammons
Arranged by Krisian Olsen

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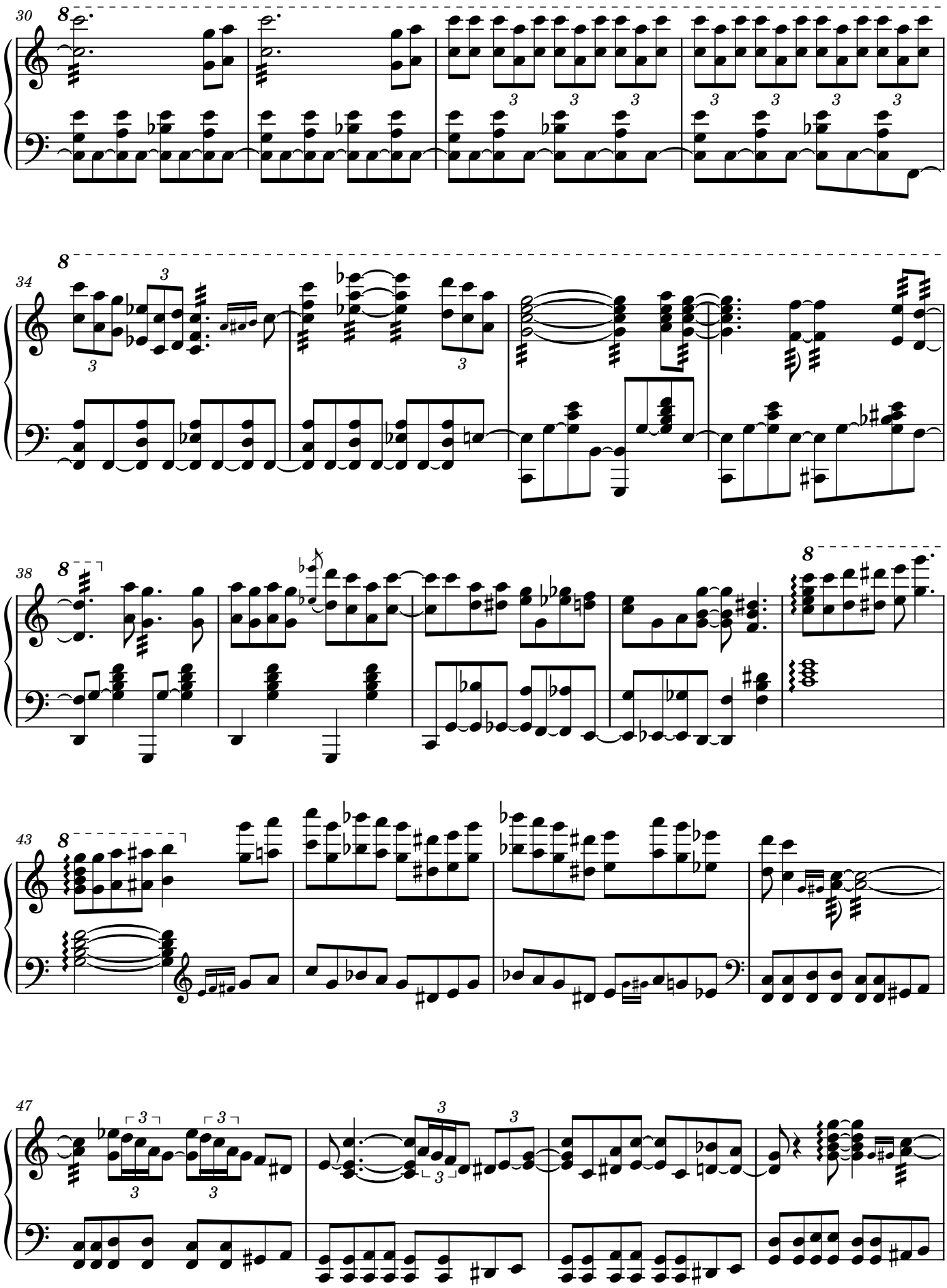
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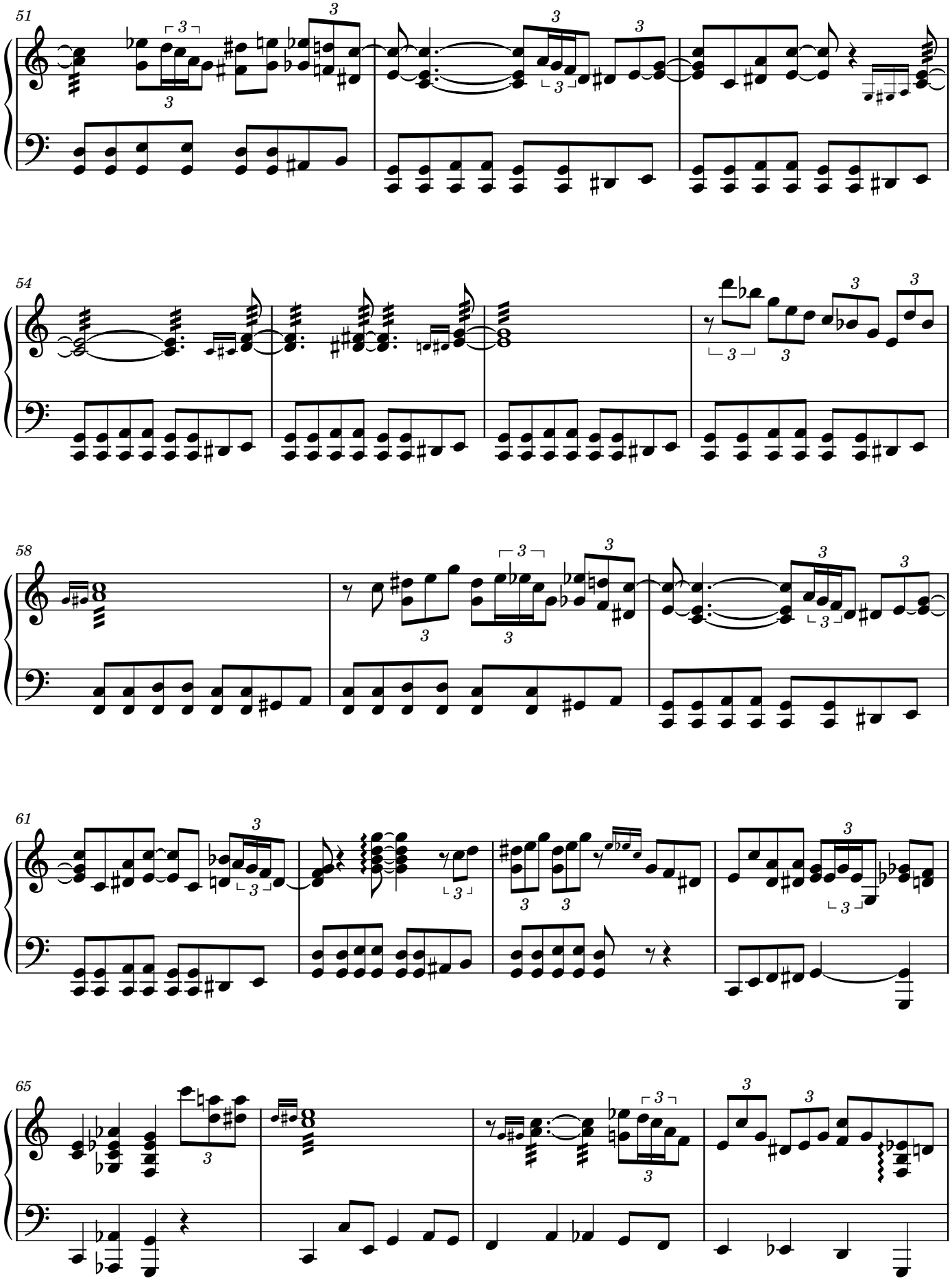
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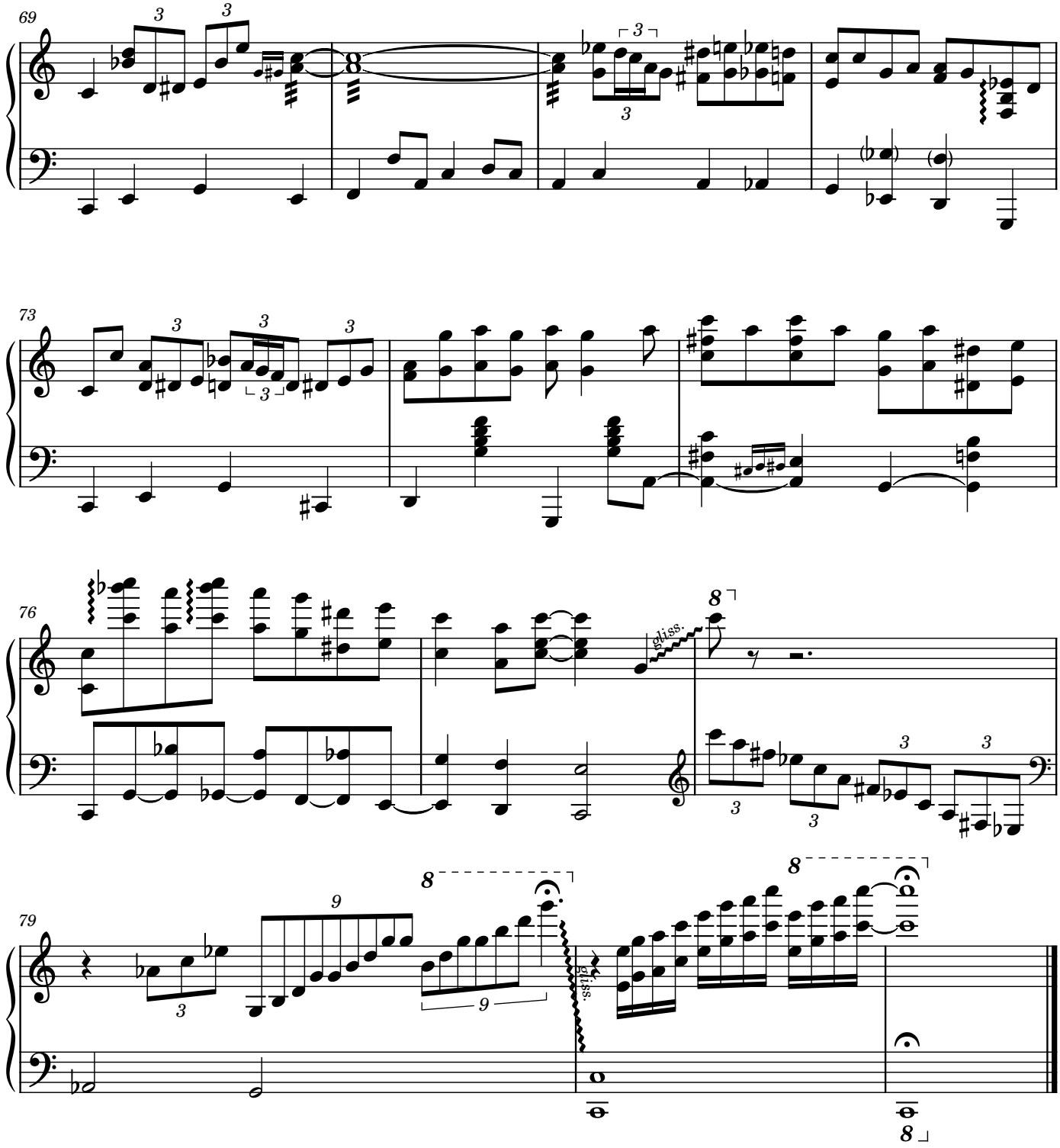
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