AG23059 RINGCRAFT
MARTELLATO & MARTELLATO LIFT
Michael Mazzatenta
Scored for Handbells (2-3 Octaves)
2-3
L 1

RingCraft

Building Technique through Music

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and

Martellato and Martellato Lift

by Michael Mazzatenta

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RingCraft

Building Technique through Music

Martellato and Martellato Lift (Mart and Mart Lift)

By Michael Mazzatenta

Table of Contents

Instructional Guidelines 4
"Opening March" 6
"Spiritual Song" 8
"Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella" 10
"Right-Left Etude" 12
"Blues in G" 14

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Titles can be learned in any order. They are offered here in the suggested progression.

To accommodate 2- and 3-octave groups, the pieces have been written so that you simply play the bells you have in your ensemble. 2-octave choirs will be playing a satisfying musical piece without the higher or lower notes that 3-octave groups add.

Recommended Bell Assignments

2 Octaves (8 ringers). From low to high, each ringer is assigned 2 consecutive notes; except for the highest ringer, who is assigned only 1 note (G6)

3 Octaves (11 ringers). From low to high, each ringer is assigned 2 consecutive notes.

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General Instructional Guidelines for RingCraft: Martellato & Martellato Lift

Music in this collection is rated Level 1, indicating no division of the beat. Counting is of paramount importance in bell ringing. Count and clap every piece before playing. Use 1-1-1-1 for four quarter notes, 1-2 for half notes, 1-2-3 for dotted half notes, and 1-2-3-4 for whole notes. Once this is secure, move to 1-2-3-4 counting in each measure.

Rests are equally important. Damp bells precisely on the rest. It is recommended to begin with slow practice, under the marked tempo, and to count out loud. If there are areas that need extra rehearsal, isolate and drill those measures separately.

An elementary level of pitch recognition is essential for ringing handbells. If needed, spend time teaching note names on the music staff. Good ringing begins with music literacy.

This collection introduces voicing: two voices may be placed on the same staff and rung simultaneously. The duration of each voice is determined by stem direction. Durations are not additive, but simultaneous. When specific techniques are indicated above or below a note, the technique applies only to the notes with the same stem direction. Notes with the opposite stem direction are unaffected unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Primary Technique: Martellato

Martellato, or "mart" for short, is indicated by the symbol ▼. From the 2025 *HMA Handbell & Handchime Notation Guide*: "...the handbell is sounded by holding it by the handle and gently striking the full body of the handle horizontally on a properly padded table." It is considered a stopped technique for handbells, creating a more percussive sound.

Secondary Technique: Martellato Lift

Martellato Lift, or "mart lift," is indicated by the symbol ▼↑. Mart lift "indicates a martellato followed by immediately lifting the handbell to allow the sound to continue. Handbells struck in this manner are not damped unless indicated."

With both mart techniques, care must be taken to strike gently on the table. Striking too forcefully could damage the bell, the table, or your hand. The bell should be raised only a few inches above the table to execute a safe, effective, and musical mart. This also ensures the bell is played on time. Directors should emphasize that marts be practiced across the full range of dynamic levels. The mart and mart lift may be played on single notes or on all notes of a chord. The mart and mart lift symbols apply to all notes connected to the same stem.

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"Opening March"

This piece focuses on playing chords together as precisely as possible. Most of the mart chords fall on beat 3, followed by a rest on beat 4. This allows ringers to hear the effect of the mart and prepare their notes for the next measure. Measures 9, 11, and 27 are exceptions to this pattern. In these measures, chords are first rung and then marted consecutively without rests. Consider ringing these chords closer to the table to keep notes in rhythm and to guard against slamming bells into the table.

"Spiritual Song"

This spiritual helps ringers use marts in a rhythmic accompaniment role. The melody is accompanied by marted chords in measures 1-3 and 17-19. In addition, measures 7 and 23 feature four full chords that are consecutively marted; remember to keep bells close to the table in these measures.

"Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella"

This traditional French Christmas carol focuses on leading ringers to mart as part of a waltz rhythm pattern. This pattern appears in measures 5-10 and measure 13, with marts on beats 2 and 3. These marts apply only to the stems-down notes in the treble clef and the stems-up notes in the bass clef. The voice-leading line from measure 18 to 19 shows that the melody is soloed in the bass clef through measure 20.

"Right-Left Etude"

This Etude guides ringers to mart with alternating hands while introducing the mart lift technique. Measures 11-12 and 17-20 develop coordination with alternating hands; isolate and drill these as exercises. Measures 22-23 introduce the mart lift technique. After the lift, these bells continue to ring (LV) and are not damped until the downbeat of measure 24 unless the note re-rings (A4, A5, D6). Consecutive mart lifts with notes moving across the table add an interesting visual element to the piece.

"Blues in G"

This blues number provides space to learn how to mart for rhythmic emphasis, like a drummer or bass player in a jazz band. Voice-leading lines outline a typical bass line for a blues song. An optional repeat may be added if desired—from the end of measure 28 back to measure 5. This is the final piece of the collection. Have fun with it.

You can listen to "Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella" and "Blues in G" by following the QR codes or URL.

"Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella"
bit.ly/ringcraft-torch

Blues in G
bit.ly/ringcraft-blues

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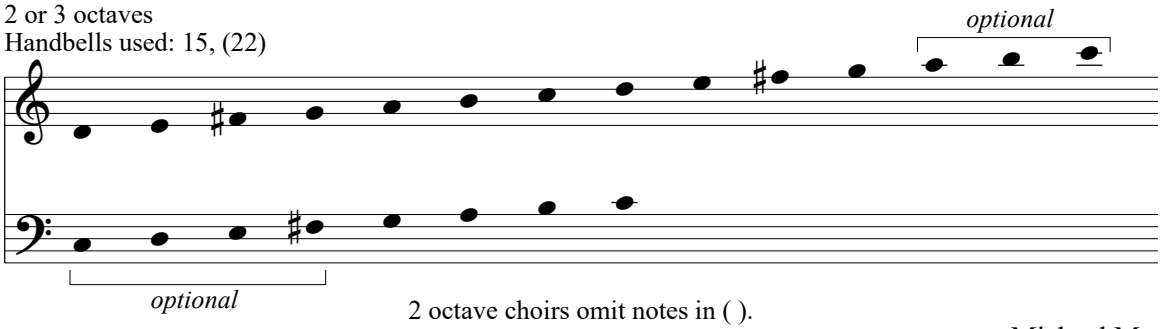
Opening March

for Handbells (2 or 3 Octaves)

Focus: Marting chords together as precisely as possible, followed primarily by rests.



2 octave choirs omit notes in ( ).

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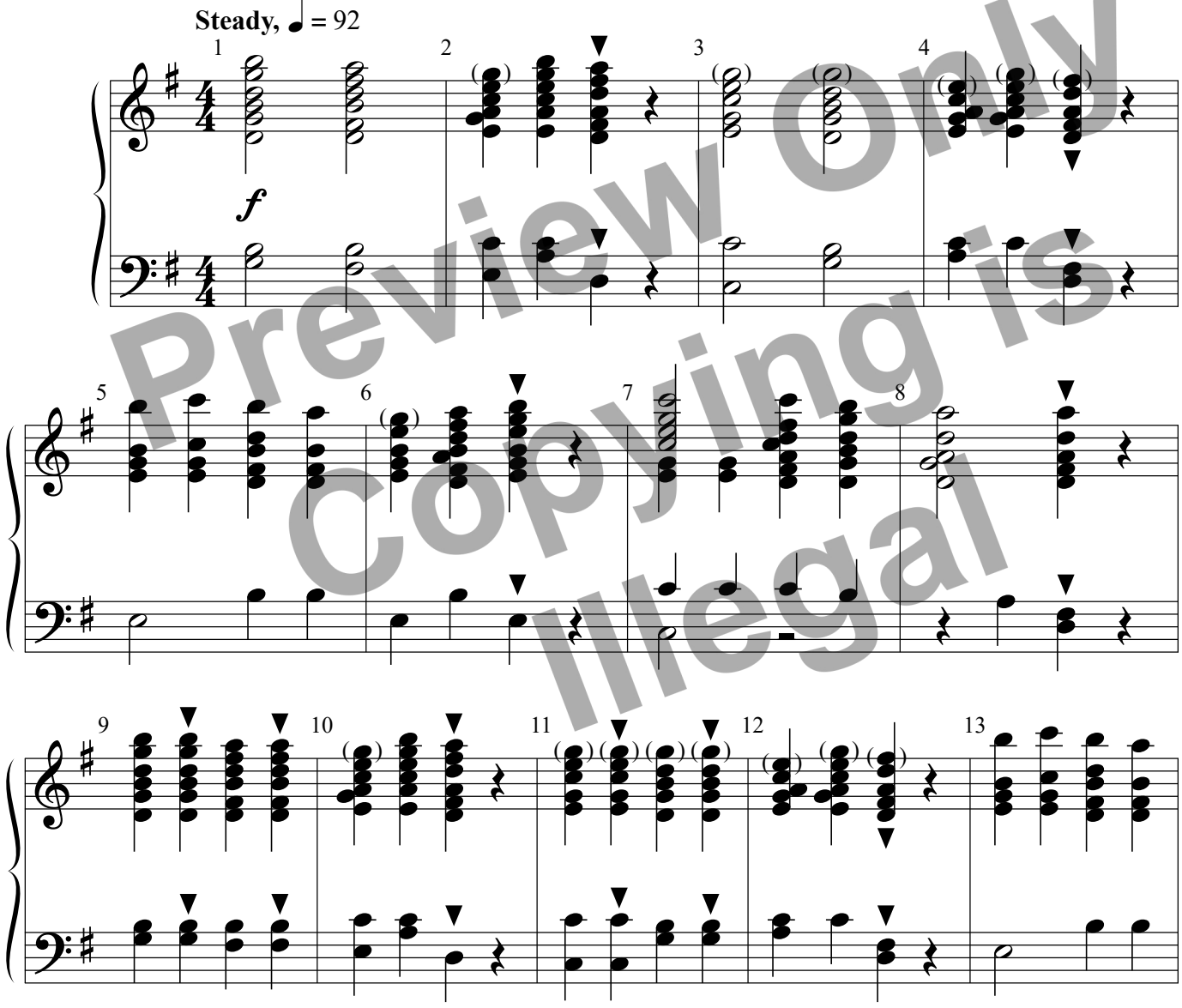

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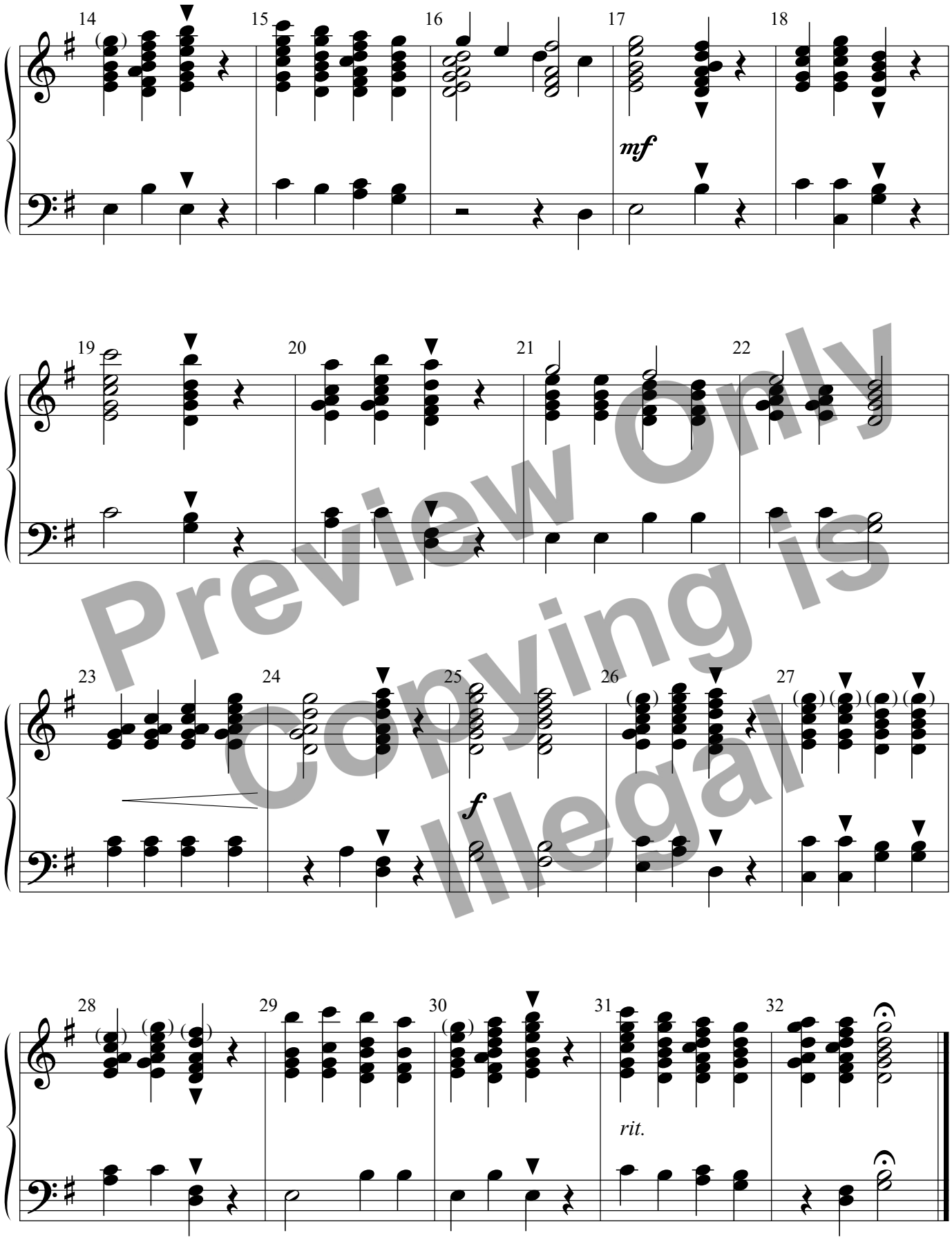

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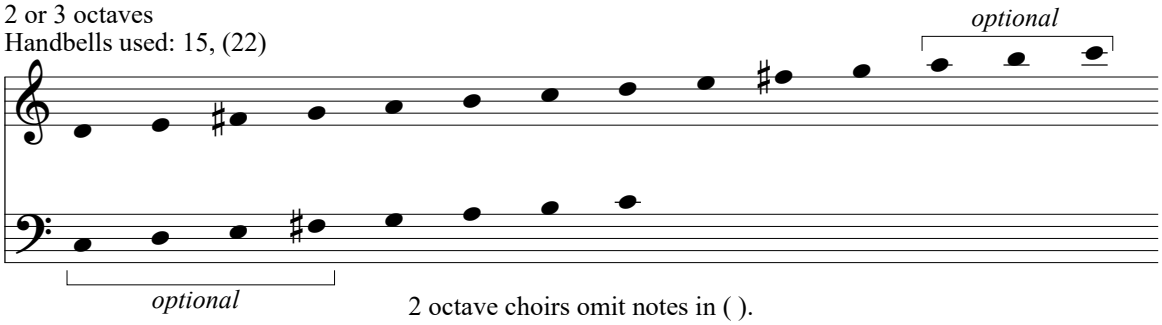
Spiritual Song

for Handbells (2 or 3 Octaves)

Focus: Marting in a rhythmic accompaniment role, as well as marting full chords together.



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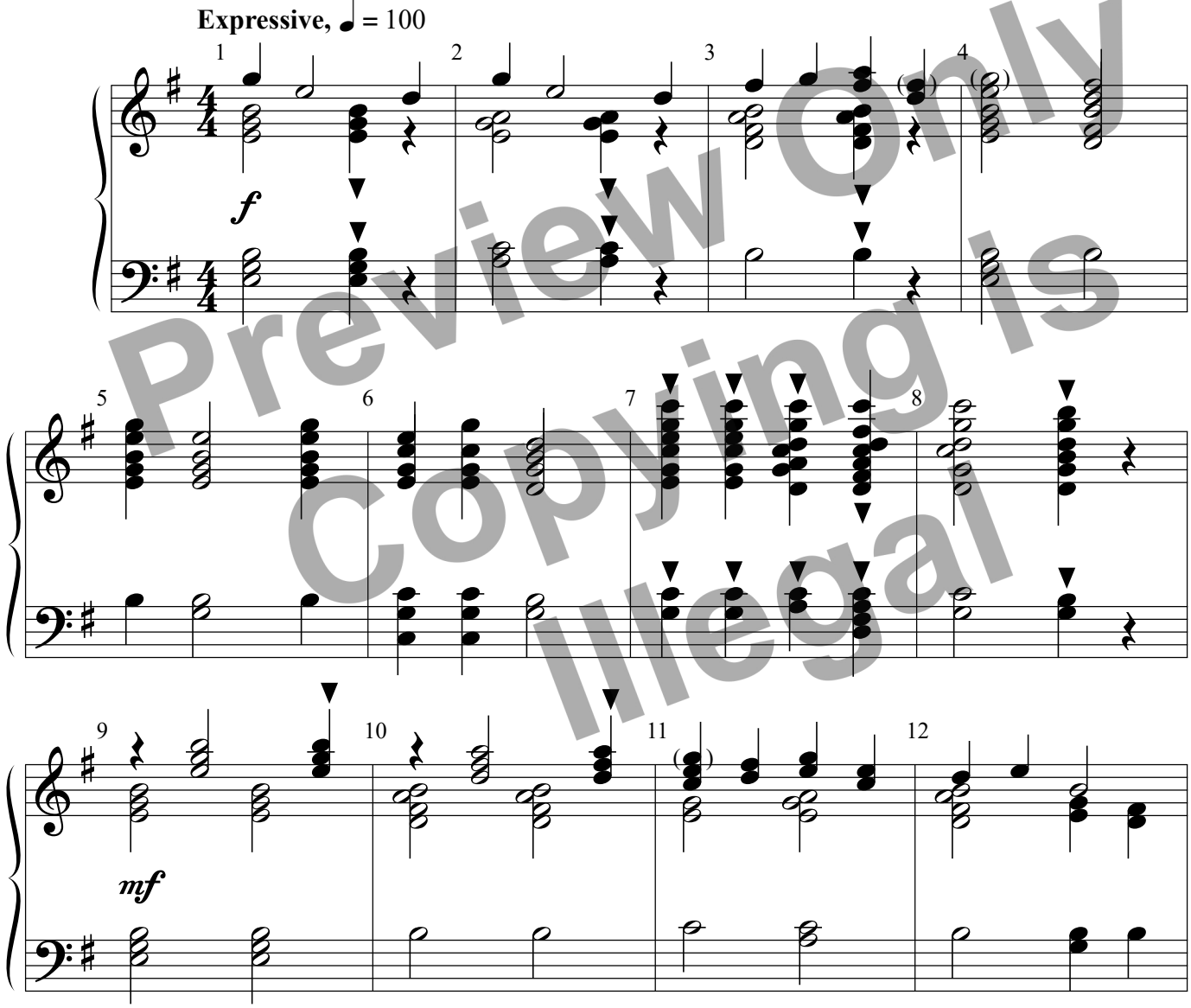

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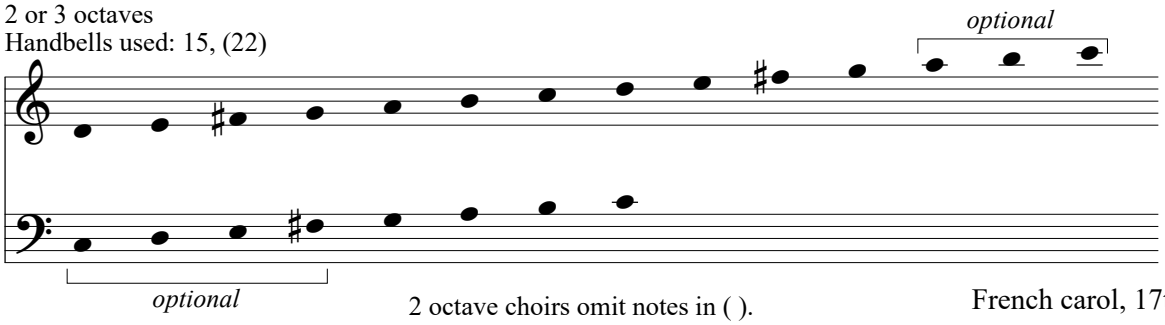
Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella

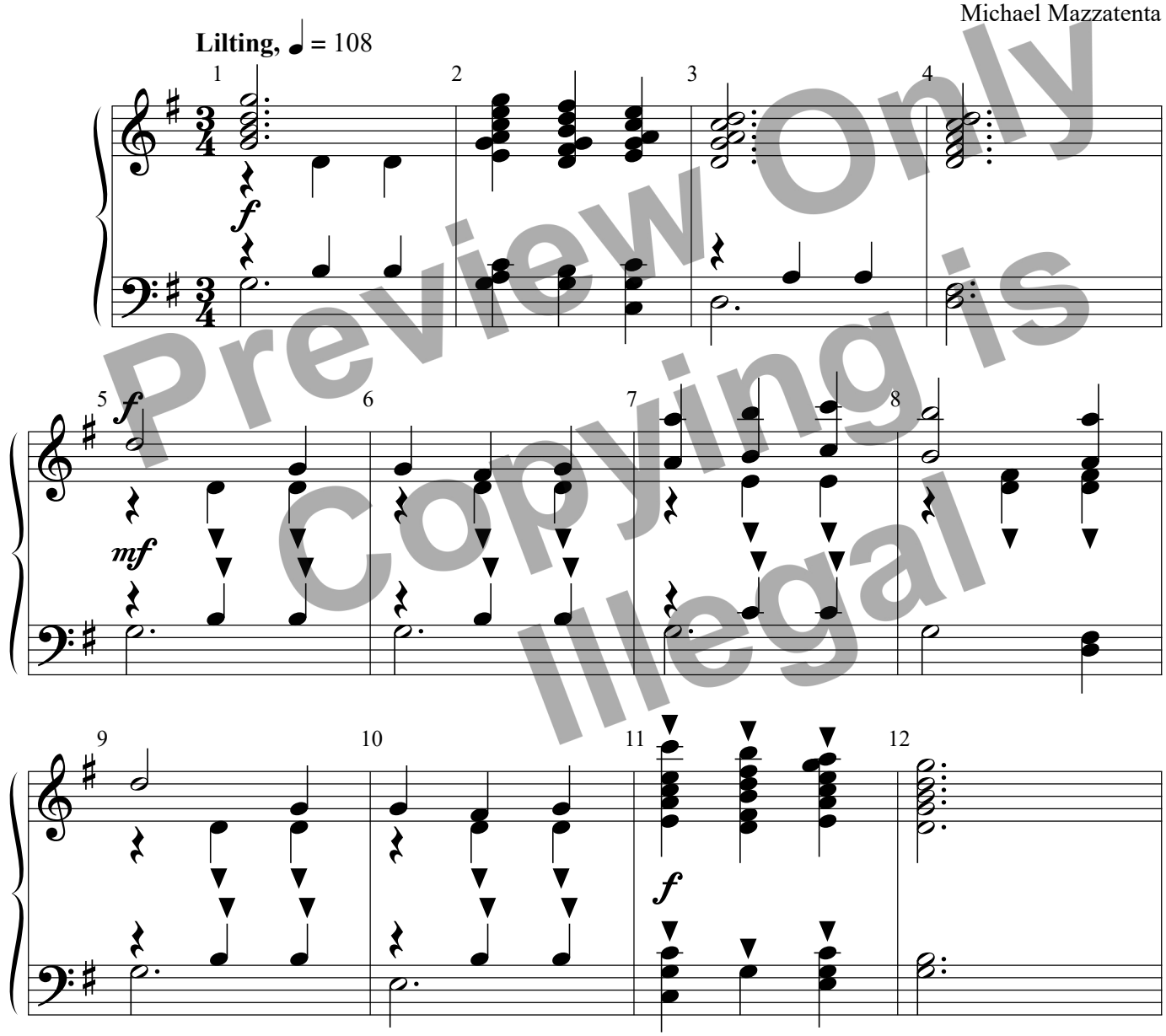
for Handbells (2 or 3 Octaves)

Focus: Marting as part of a waltz rhythm pattern, as well as marting full chords together.



2 octave choirs omit notes in ( ).

French carol, 17th cent.
Michael Mazzatenta



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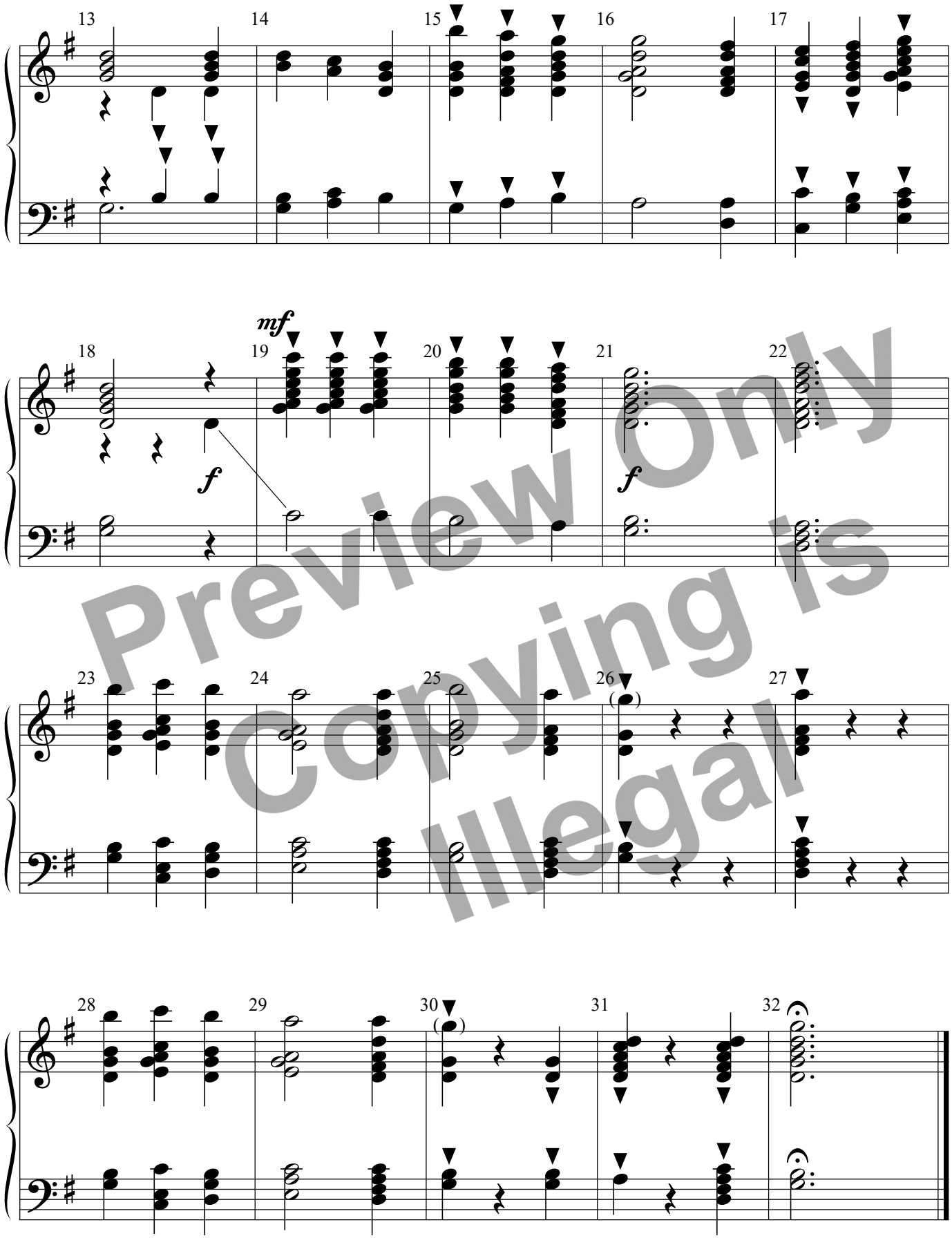

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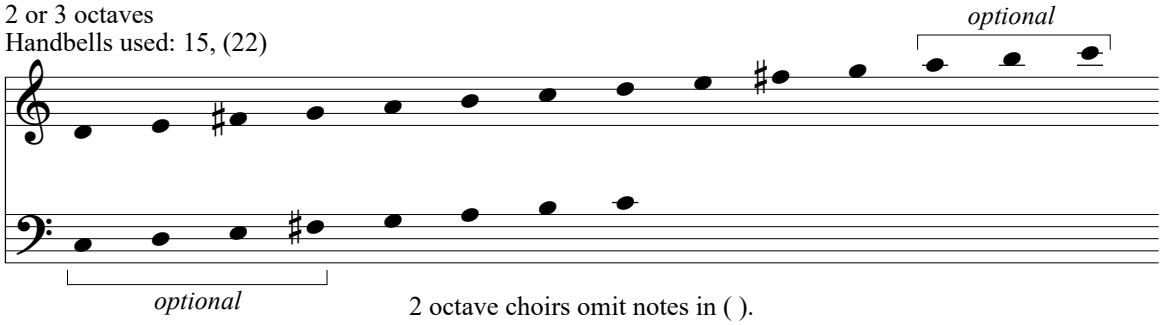
Right-Left Etude (Welcome the Day)

for Handbells (2 or 3 Octaves)

Focus: Alternating right hand and left hand marts, as well as introducing the mart lift technique.



2 octave choirs omit notes in ( ).

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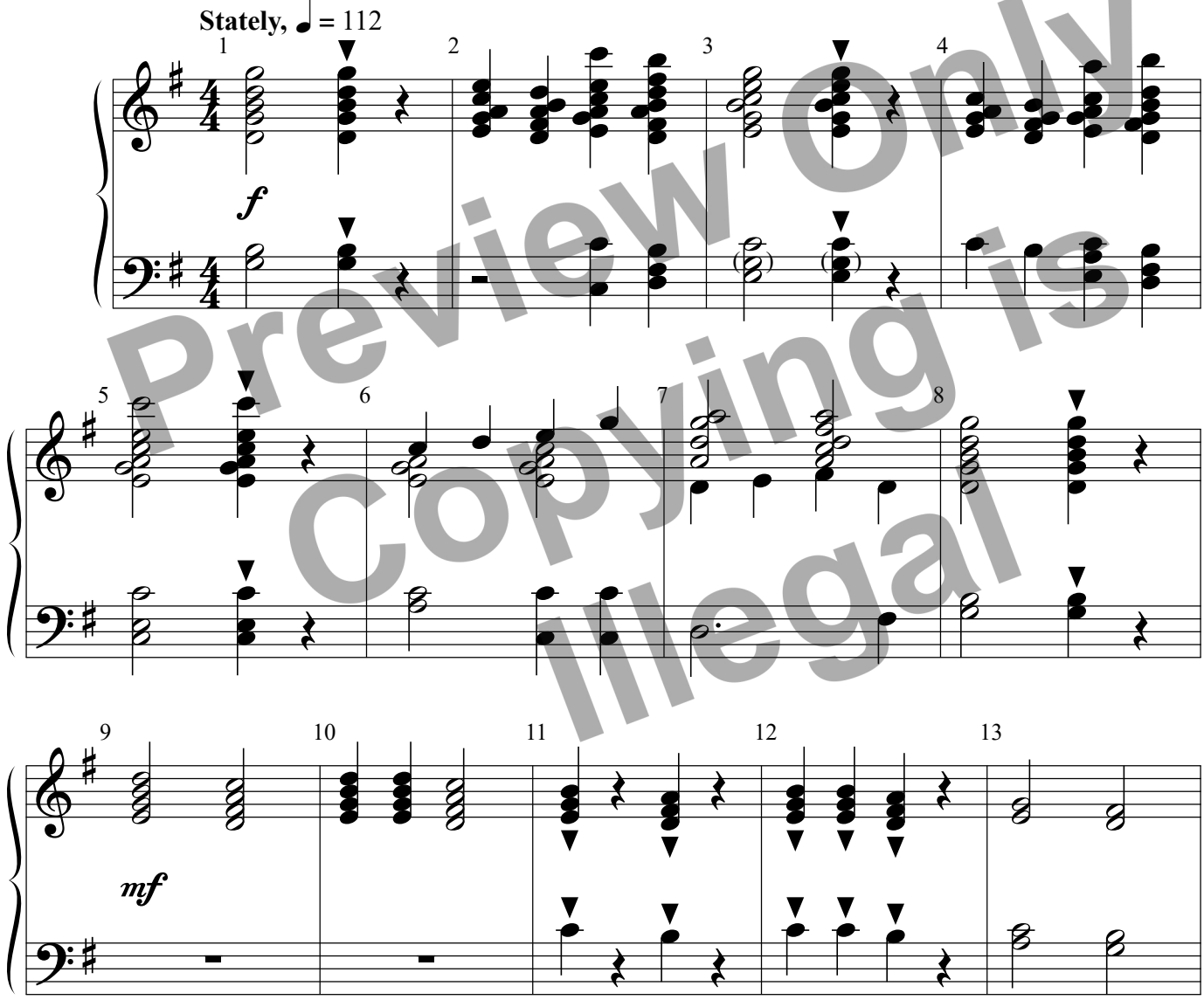

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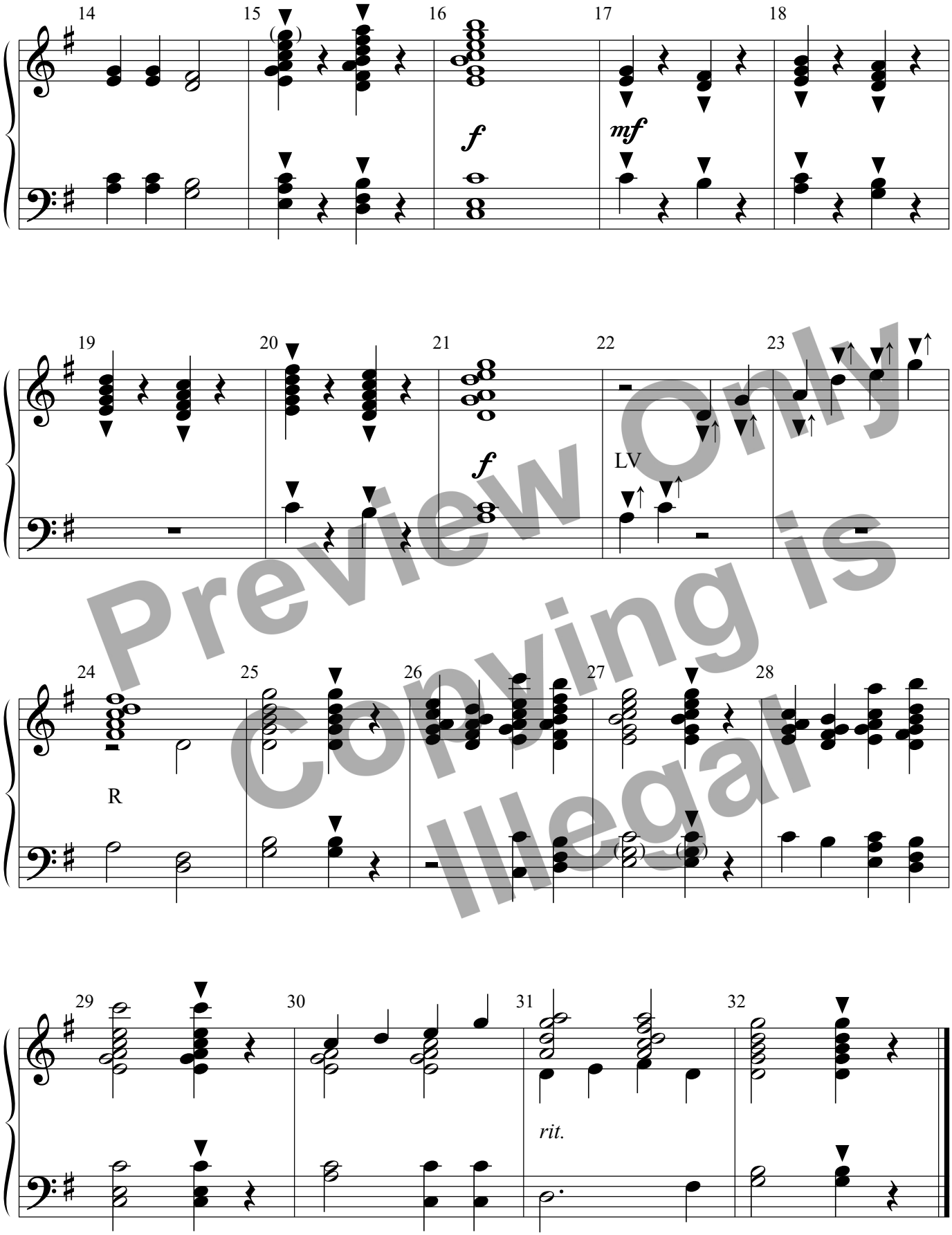

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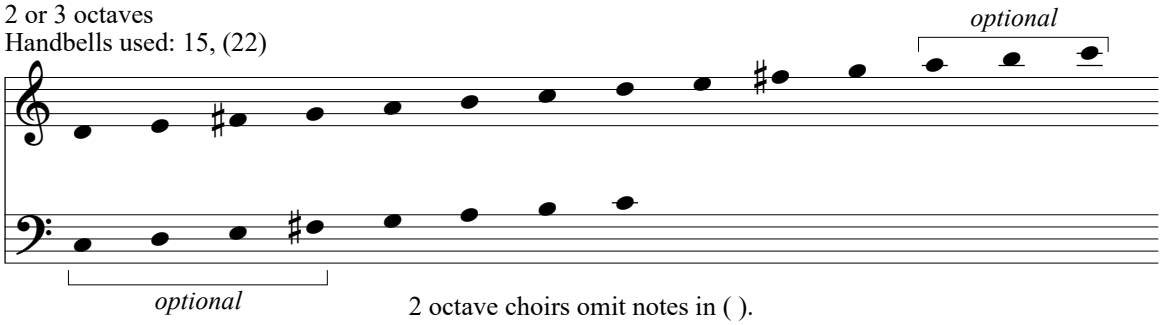
Blues in G

for Handbells (2 or 3 Octaves)

Focus: Marting for rhythmic emphasis; like a drummer or bassist in a jazz band.



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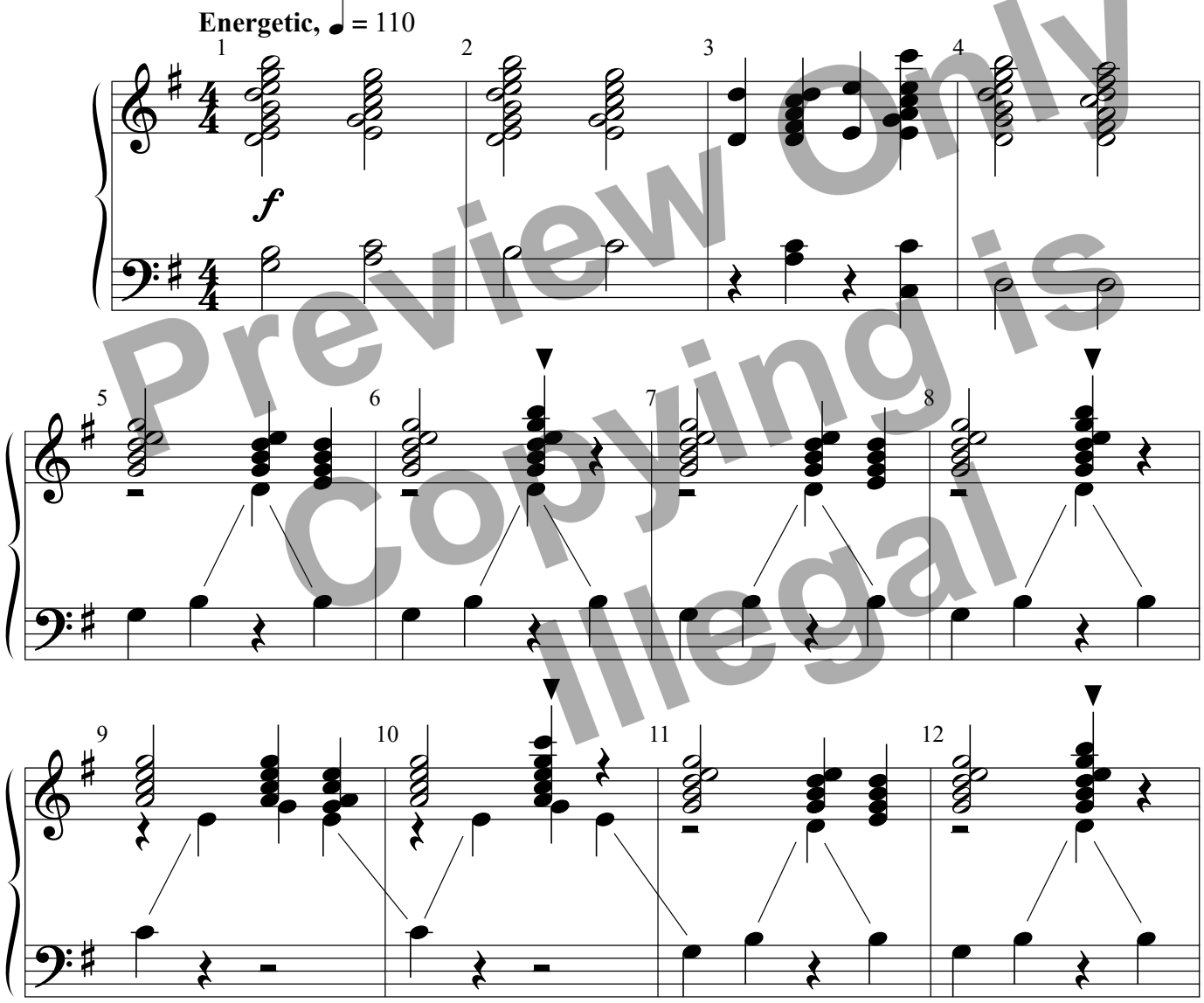

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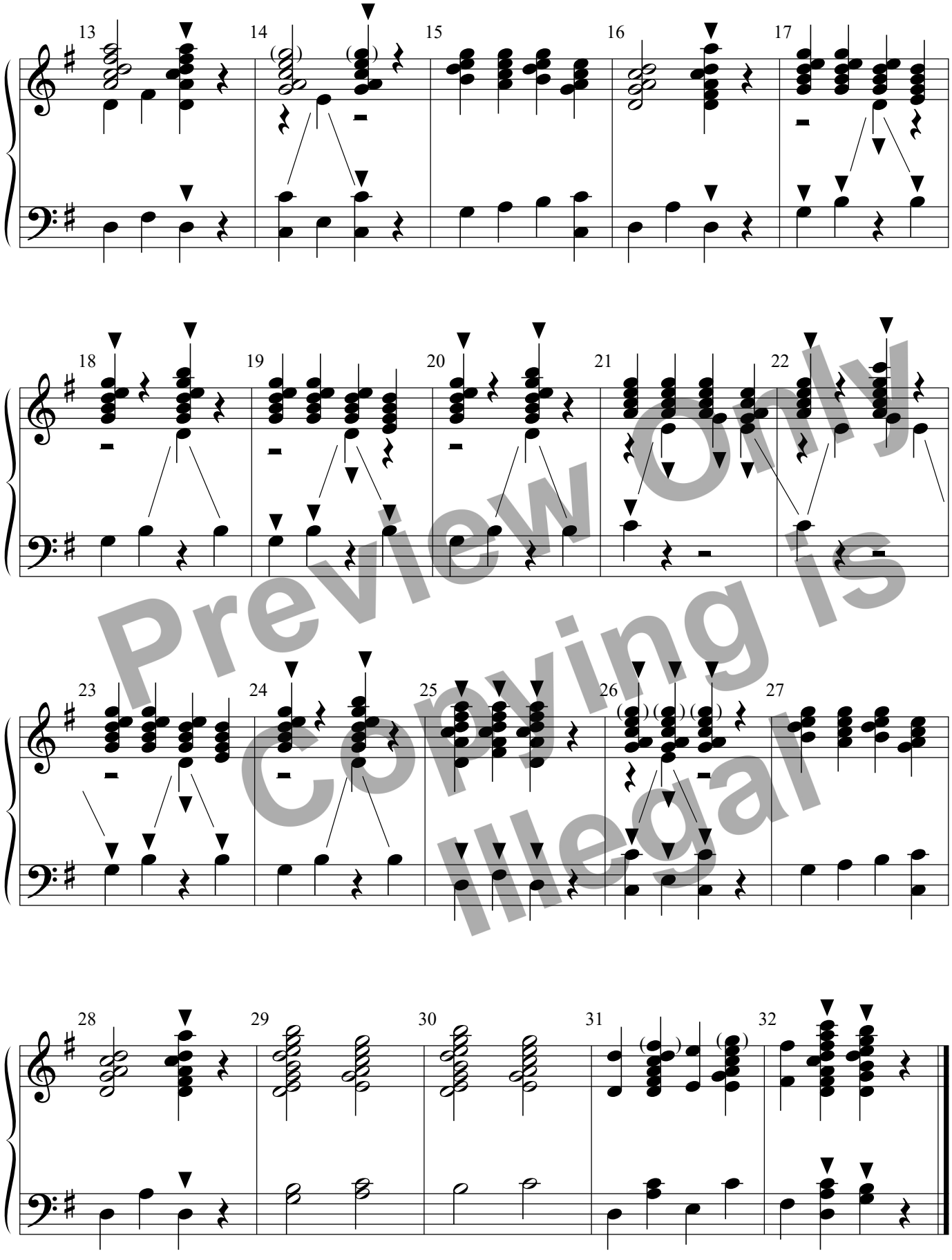

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