# 3 Nintendo Fugues

Fugues whose subjects are derived from
melodies from various video games

Composed for the piano (or harpsichord)
by Andrew Tessman

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Game: Banjo-Kazooie (Nintendo 64)
Subject: Theme of "Gruntilda's Lair"
Theme composer: Grant Kirkhope
Copyright 1996/1997 Rareware, Nintendo

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Game: The Legend of Zelda - Ocarina of Time (Nintendo 64)
Subject: "The Song of Storms"
Theme composer: Koji Kondo
Copyright 1998 Nintendo

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Game: Pokémon Gold/Silver/Crystal (Nintendo Gameboy)
Subject: Theme of "Goldenrod City"
Theme composer: Junichi Masuda
Copyright 1999 Nintendo, Game Freak



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Each work is composed in neo-Baroque fashion, inspired by the compositional style of J.S. Bach, namely that of fugue. Albeit quite distant from "textbook" form, they serve as material for music theory analysis, as musical literature to encourage keyboard playing, and as my personal statement of admiration to the great composers of the themes, which I find musical gems of the video game industry.

I hope that these works bring a level of nostalgia to those musicians who, like me, have fond memories of gaming in their youth. I hope that these pieces encourage the important art of composition and arrangement and that they promote the wonderful games and composers, from whom these works were inspired.

To my knowledge, all of the copyright information listed for each game is correct. Should there be an error, any information missing, or should any of the copyright holders object to the distribution of this collection, they may contact me directly at the following email address: Tessmanmusic@gmail.com

## About the works

Being musically inclined, certain melodies have always resonated with me, even when I was very young. As I grew older and more mature in my musical abilities, the concept of writing fugal works on beloved melodies was on my to-do list for many, many years. Certainly the idea itself is not new: One can find countless classical pieces based on themes in pop culture: Daniel Pi's immortal fugue on *Oops! ... I did it Again* (Britney Spears), several fugues based on the theme to *Angry Birds* (Rovio Entertainment), the Nokia ringtone (taken from *Gran Vals* by Francisco Tárrega), even several based on other melodies from *The Legend of Zelda* games, especially the very modal sounding *Song of Time*. The three chosen melodies in this collection are near and dear to my heart, and I present them now in a manner combining my musical intellect and nostalgia.

These pieces bridge a very strange gap. They resemble the contrapuntal style of J.S. Bach and follow the majority of period practice (most passages fit the hands well, harpsichord keyboards seldom go beyond high C), but these were in fact composed for the piano, and certain unstylistic moments show throughout (bass octaves in *Grunty's Fugue*, large stretches in *Goldenfugue City*).

Because the pieces are written in neo-Baroque style, articulation indications are rarely present. Perhaps overly generalized, but when in doubt: detach (a great example of this are measures 15 - 16 of *Grunty's Fugue*, which are impossible to play legato). The sustain pedal is welcome, especially in *Fugue of Storms*, where the arpeggiated harmony is almost lost without the sustain. But like with any contrapuntal work, the pedal should be used with caution and care.

With few exceptions, the majority of indications given are for thematic analysis. That which is stated under a solid slur is important (entry of a subject, or another quoted theme from the respective game), and that under a dashed slur is motivic material (motif, false entry, or countersubject). The word *(etc.)* is used when a motif being developed is from that point onward unambiguous. Relevent information is given, either as a footnote or in the Appendices.

Although the idea to write these fugues had been in the back of my mind (and at the bottom of my composition folder) for a long while, *Grunty's Fugue* was the first completed. It took me a while to find a countersubject with which I was truly content, as well as finding proper flow to continue the work. As stated in the Appendix (page 6), it had not originally occured to me to use multiple themes from the game. Once finally on the creative path, I introduced the theme to *Click Clock Wood* as an extra reference to the game. Later I had the idea to quote the entire 2nd half of the main theme into the fugue and reharmonize it (measures 30 - 33). There's no denying that Grant Kirkhope himself utilized beautiful thematic devices such as augmentation (used in 4/4 time in-game) and stretto entries, which are perfect for a contrapuntal work. The theme also works well against itself in inversion (measures 48 - 49), and his own use of the subdominant (F minor) and Neapolitan chord (D-flat major) aided in harmonic material. The soprano line in measures 34 - 35 is actually remnants of a countersubject from an earlier draft.

*Fugue of Storms* was started more by accident. I always loved the theme in itself, especially the key change and *accelerando* that happens in-game. It was only after playing around a bit out of boredom in March 2020 that I came up with the idea to use it as a fugue subject. Honestly, who in their right mind would use such an awkward, modal theme as a (neo-)Baroque fugue subject? With *Grunty's Fugue* already completed, the idea of mixing a 2nd theme was already planted; what other melody would be more fitting and more recognizable than *Zelda's Lullaby*?, accompanied by none other than a bass reminiscent of the fugue subject itself. What a coincidence that this melody appears at measure number 64...

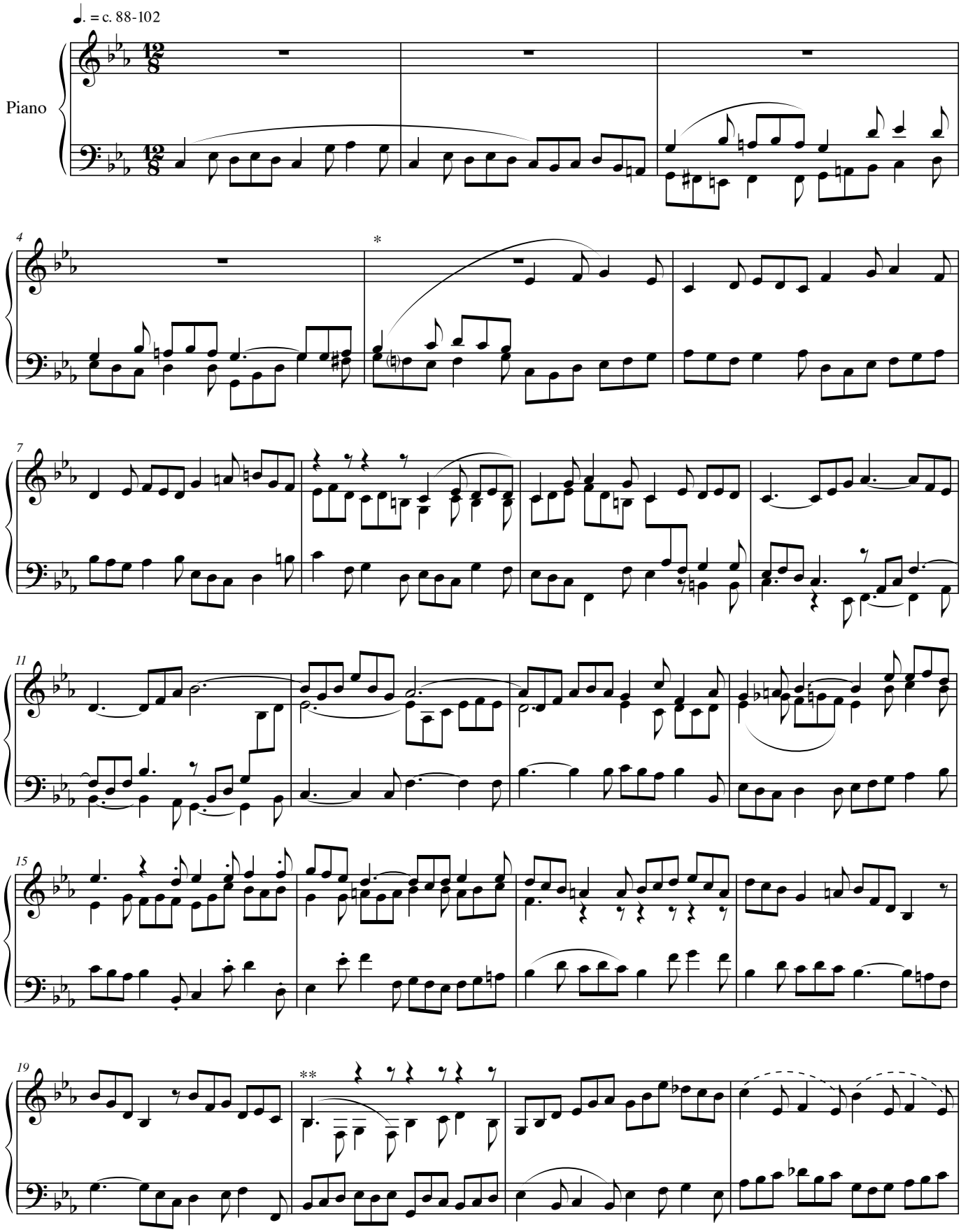
*Goldenfugue City* was actually the 2nd theme I had in mind for fugal development, but the last completed. Much of the matieral is derived solely from the subject(s) or countersubject. Having already embedded multiple themes in previous fugues, here I chose the iconic theme from *Route 1* from the Kanto region (*Pokémon R/B/Y*). A former professor of mine, Dr. Shersten Johnson, inquired as to why I indicated a Coda. There had been several motivic ideas that I had planned to use, but didn't end up utilizing them before the climactic fermata in measure 92. My response: "There were leftover motifs... so the last 20 measures or so became a jumble of motif-ADD, mixing and mashing subject fragments, stretto, and whatnot ... also... the subject never appears again in its entirety."

Andrew Tessman
19 August, 2020

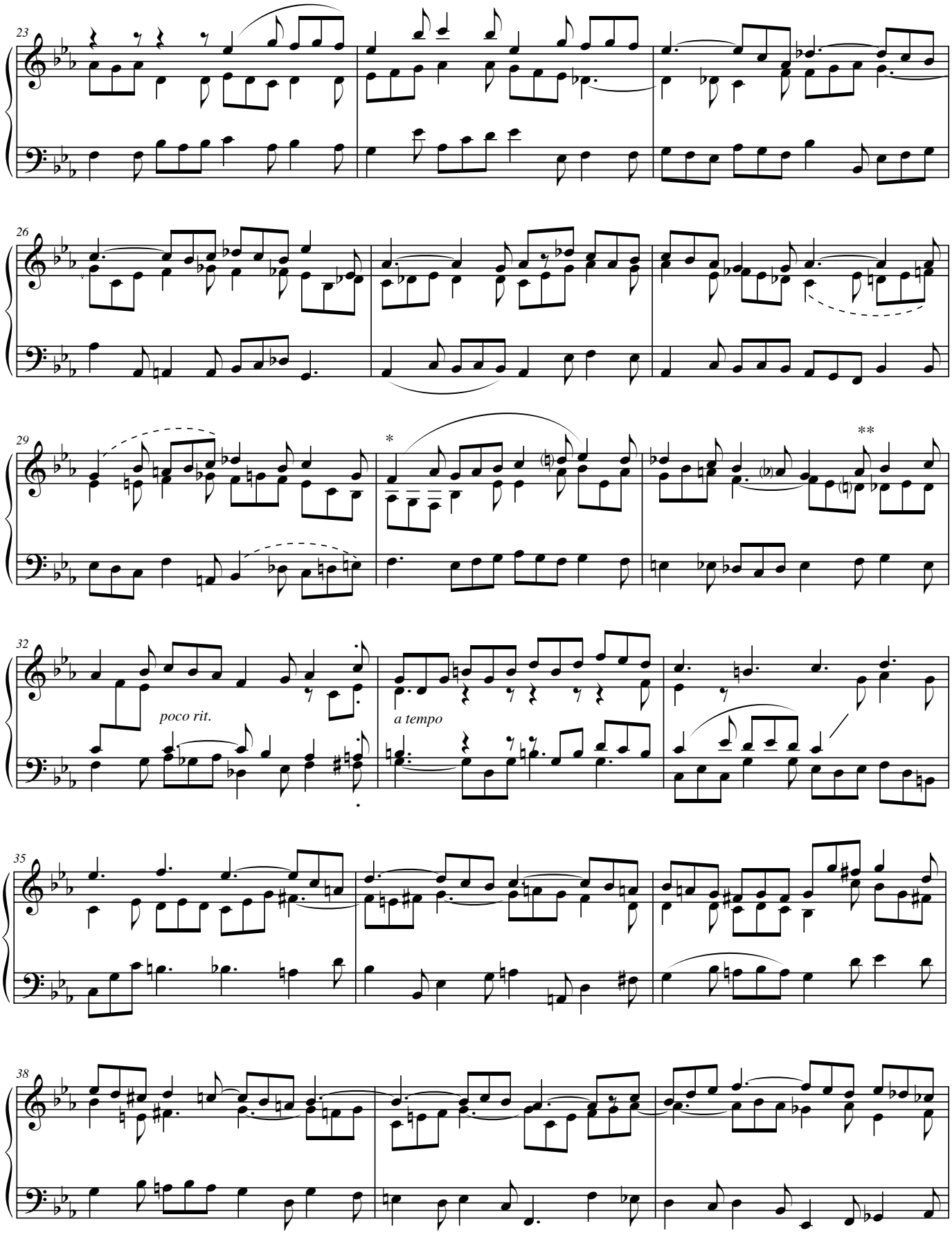
# Grunty's Fugue

Theme:
Grant Kirkhope

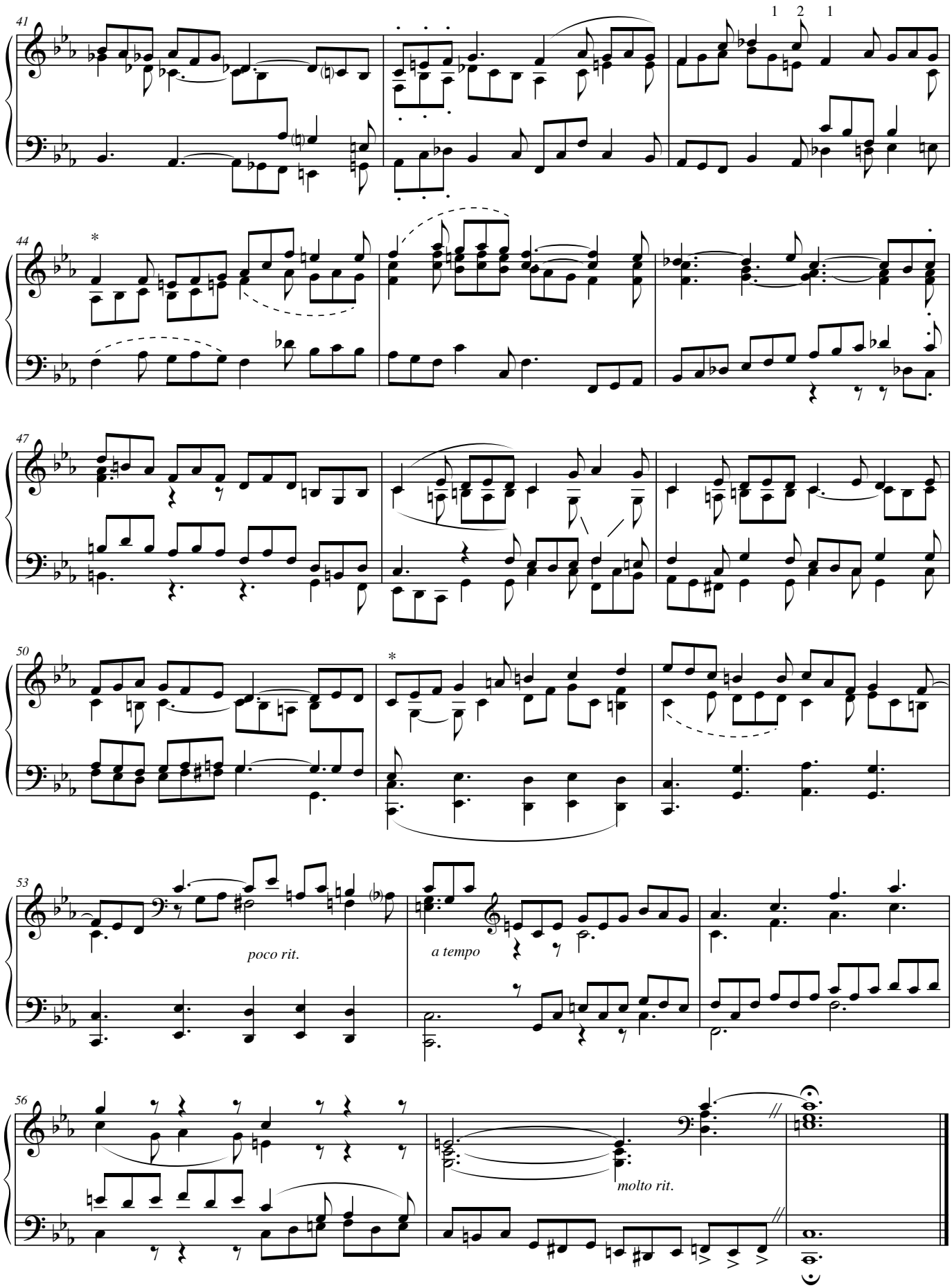
Fugal handling:
Andrew Tessman




*See Appendix (page 6)
**Quoted theme: *Click Clock Wood*




*See Appendix (page 6)
**Notes altered from original melody (page 6)

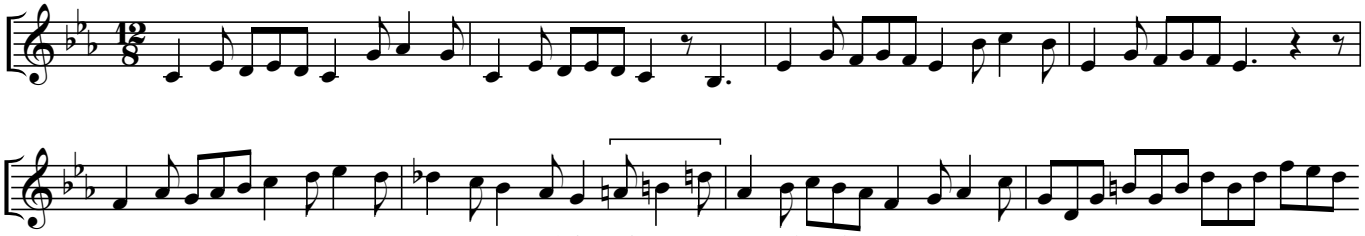



*Stretto and augmentation originally used in-game by Grant Kirkhope

Fugue completed
16 February, 2019

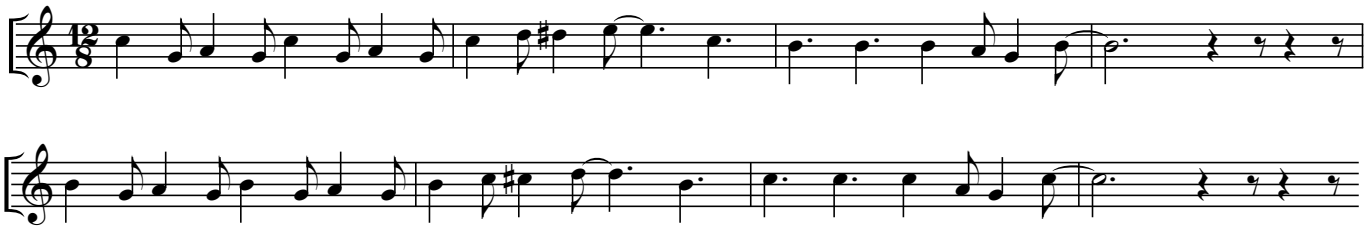
# APPENDIX (to *Grunty's Fugue*)

Complete excerpt of measures 1 - 8 of the melody to
*Gruntilda's Lair*

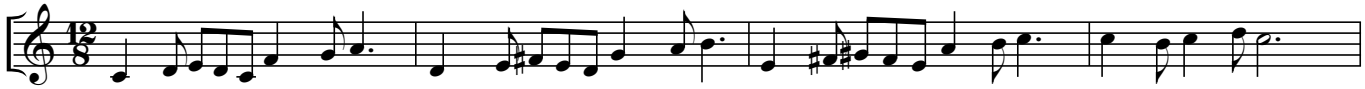


*(These three notes were altered in the quoted excerpt, M. 31)*

Complete excerpt of measures 1 - 8 of the melody to
*Click Clock Wood*



Complete excerpt of measures 1 - 4 of the melody to
*Jolly Roger's Lagoon*
(from the sequel game *Banjo-Tooie*)
Composer: Grant Kirkhope Copyright 2000 Rareware/Nintendo



In measures 5 - 7 there is a sequence in the right hand that strongly resembles the melody from *Jolly Roger's Lagoon*. When I first began the composition, I had no intention of using other melodies or themes from the game(s). It was only after I reached measure 20 where I thought the idea might be fun to use a second theme as a little "Easter Egg" for nerdy listeners. It was at that point I chose the four-note motif that opens the melody to *Click Clock Wood*, later an additional excerpt of *Gruntilda's Lair* (see above). While replaying *Banjo-Tooie* after I had completed the fugue, I then realized the accidental resemblance between that melody and my sequence. Although unintentional, I find it a happy coincidence. Who's to say that I didn't subconsciously remember the melody?

*To my friend, Donald Davis*

# Fugue of Storms

Theme:
Koji Kondo

Fugal handling:
Andrew Tessman

**Allegro** (M.M. ♩ = 148-160)

Piano

*(sim.)*

8

14

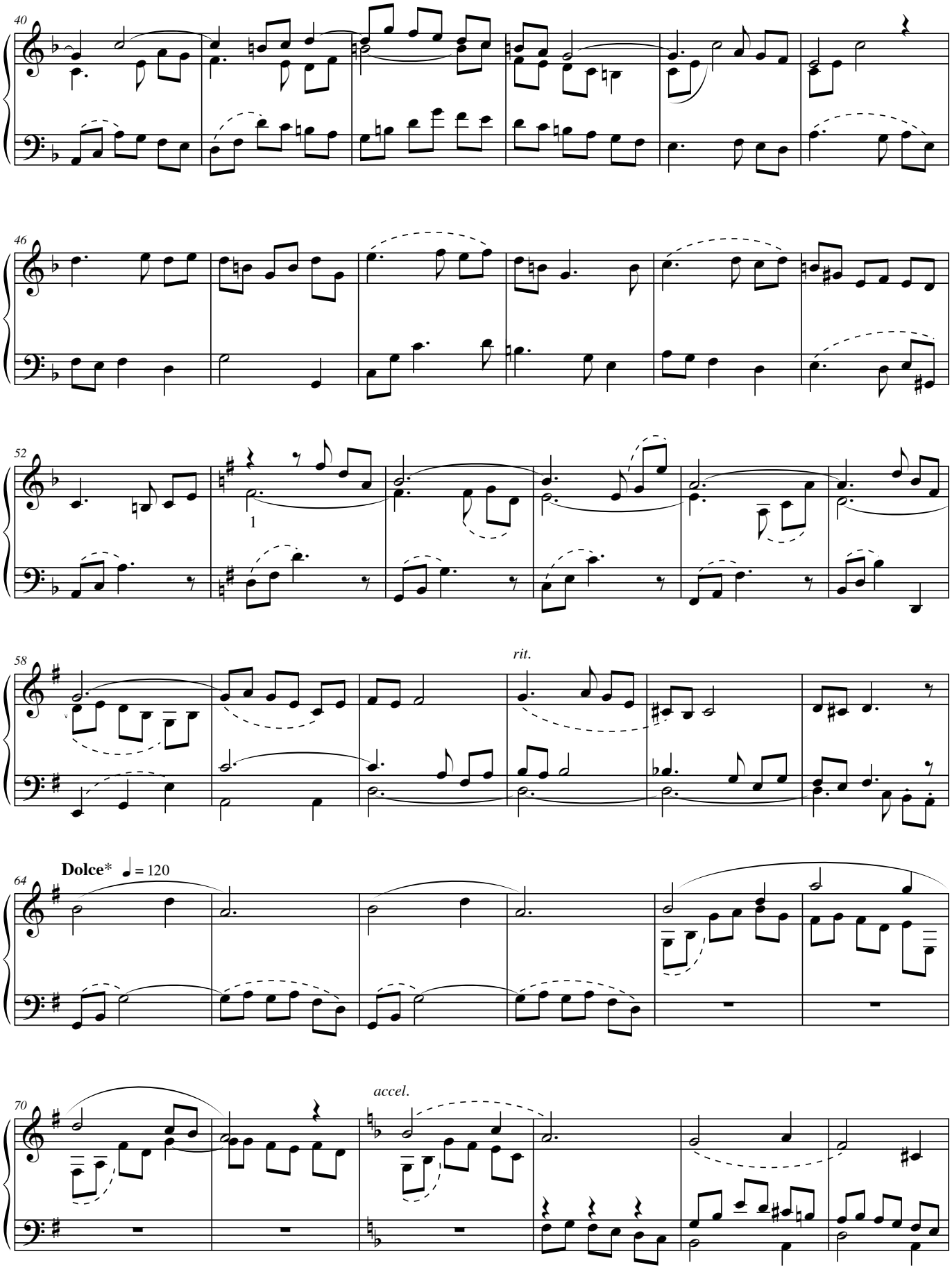
*

20

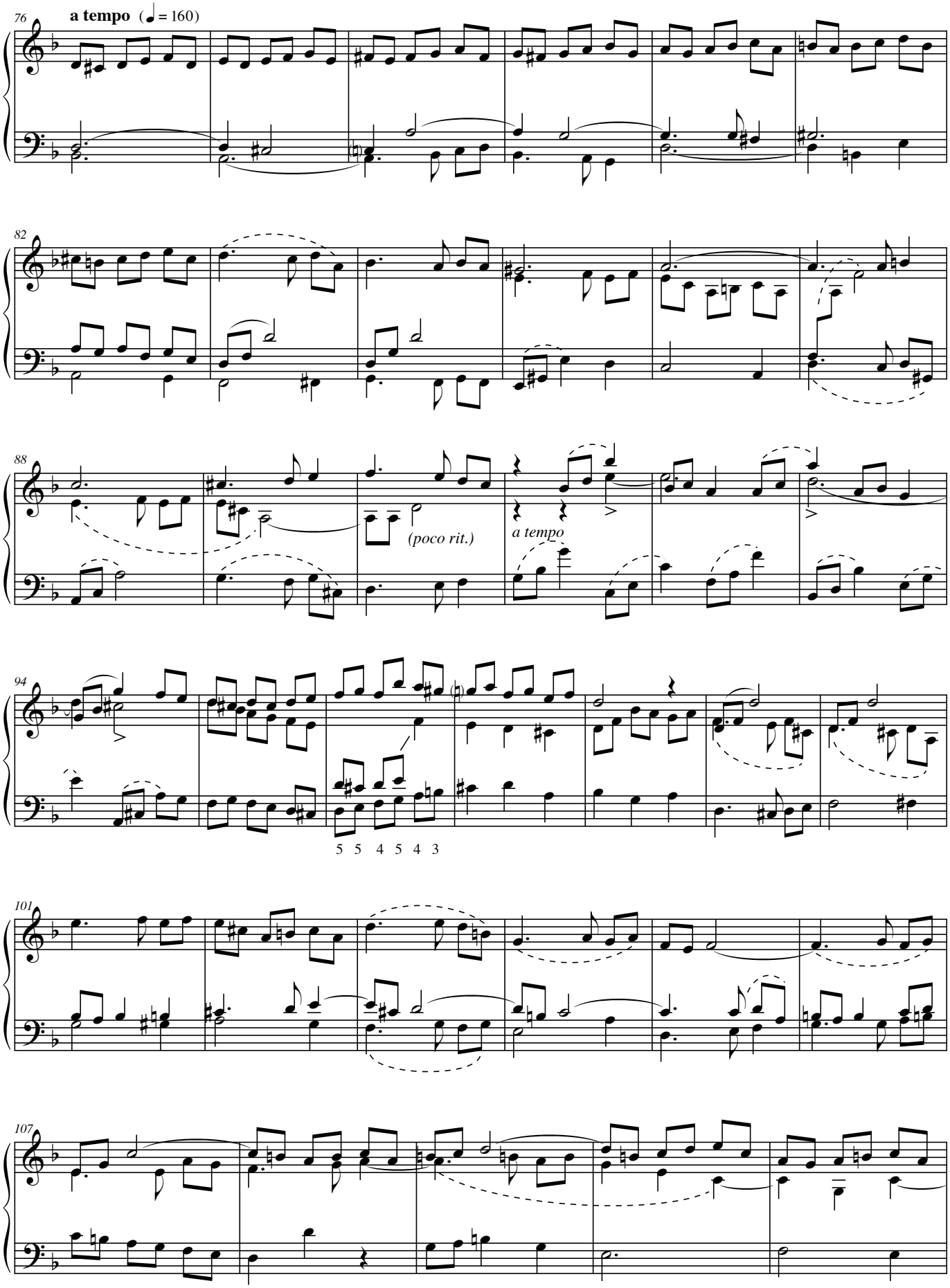
26

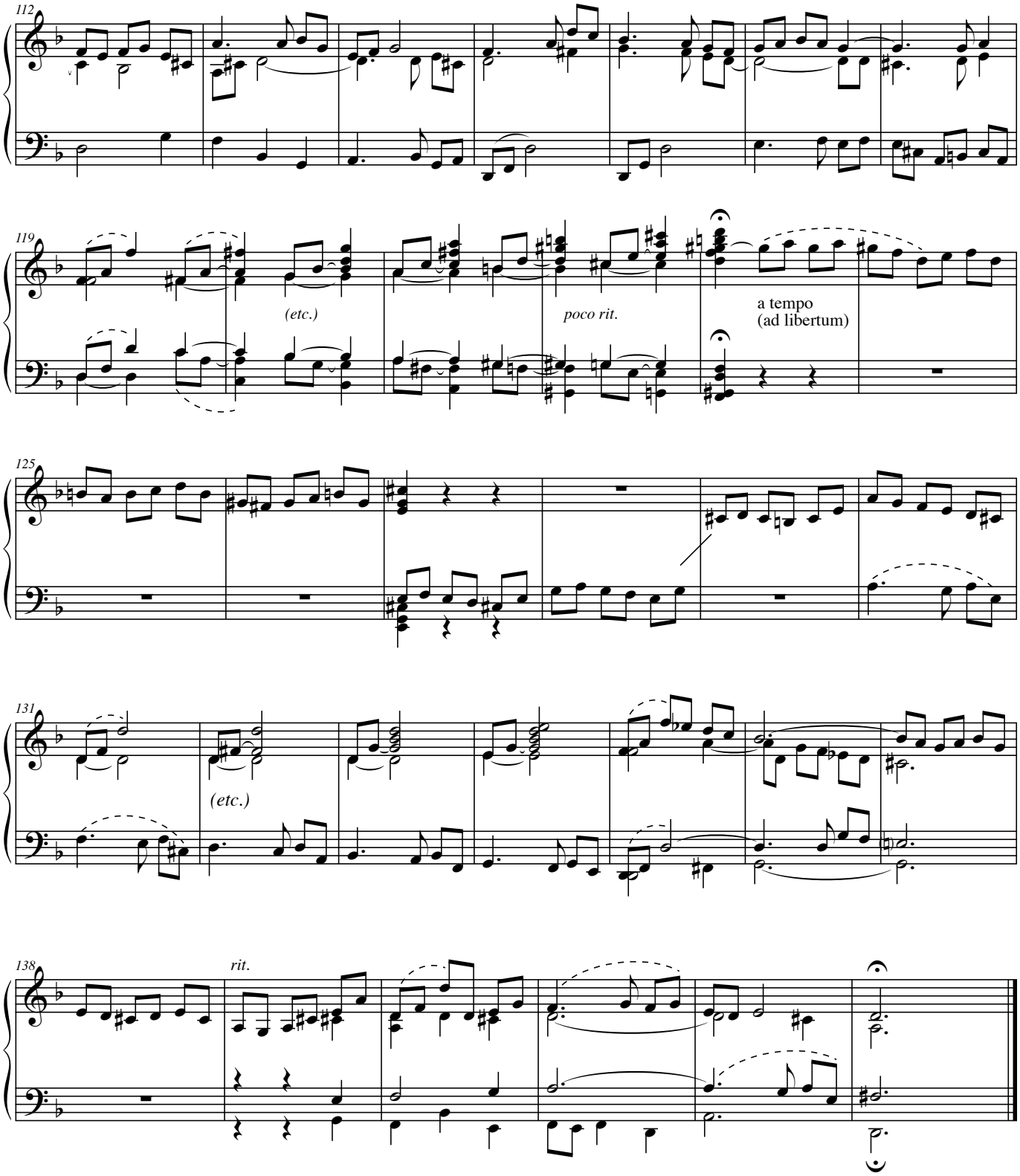
33

*These motific, upward leaps to the 6th are no doubt derived from the subject with its iconic span of an octave. Due to the high frequency that these 6ths appear, this is the only one that is indicated under a dashed slur.




*Measures 64 - 71
Quoted theme: *Zelda's Lulluby*


76
a tempo (♩ = 160)
82
88
(poco rit.)
a tempo
94
5 5 4 5 4 3
101
107




Both excerpts of the first bars of the melodies to

*Song of Storms*, measures 1 - 4,
and
*Zelda's Lulluby*, measures 64 - 71,

have been quoted exactly as they appear in the game, including rhythm and original pitches. The copyright information is the same for both, therefore an appendix for *Fugue of Storms* is not included.

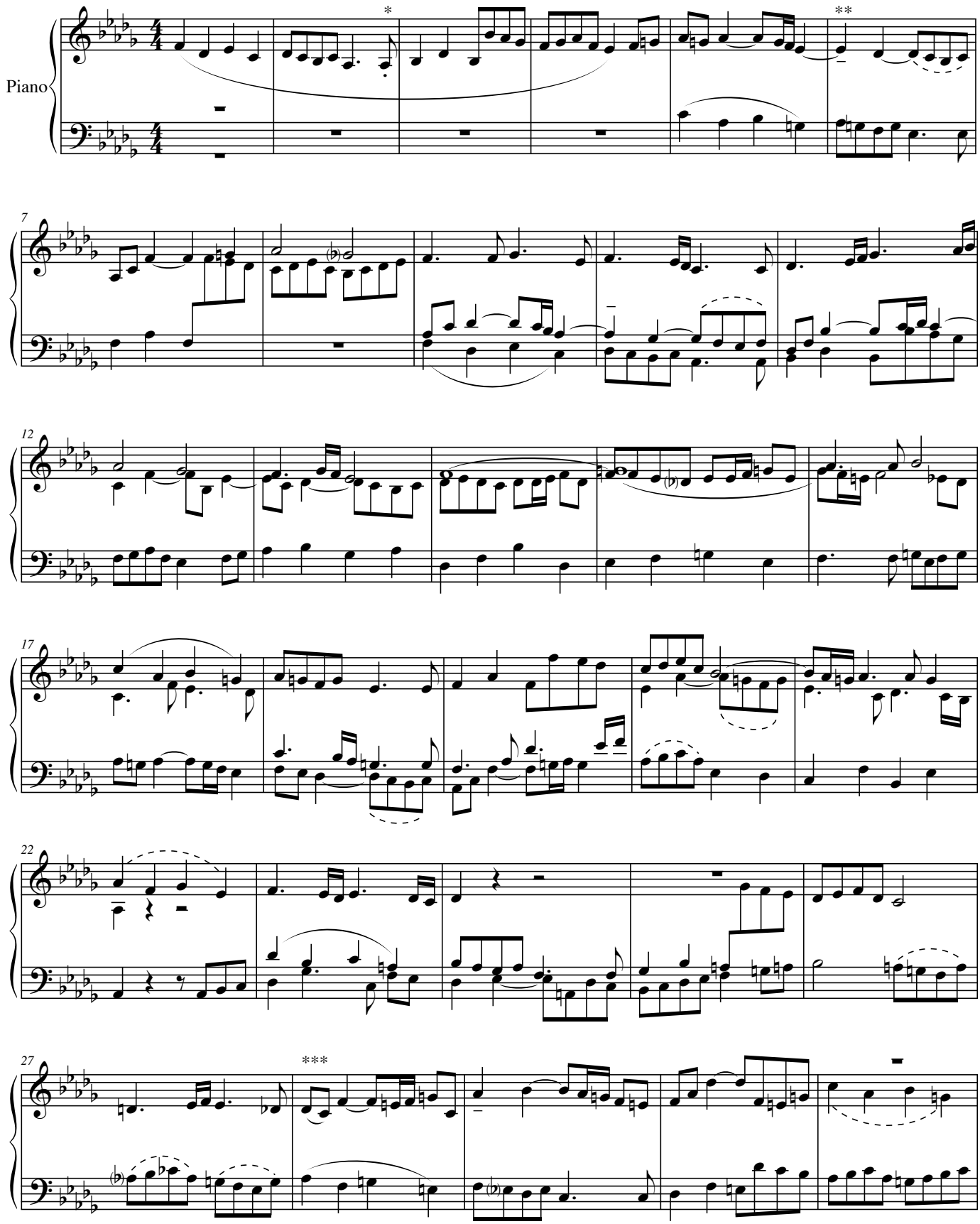
Fugue completed
19 March, 2020

# Goldenfugue City

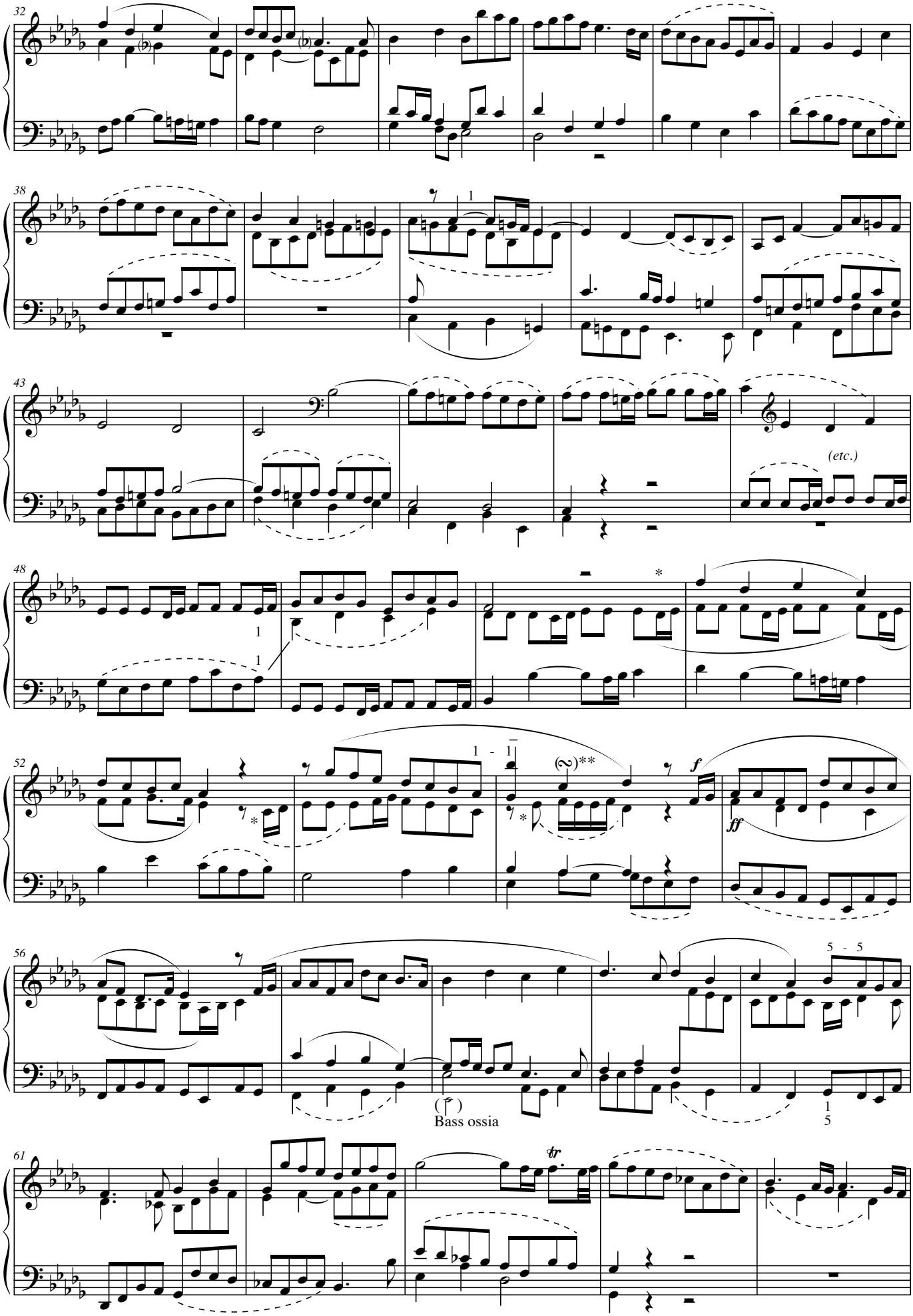
Theme:
Junichi Masuda

Fugal handling:
Andrew Tessman

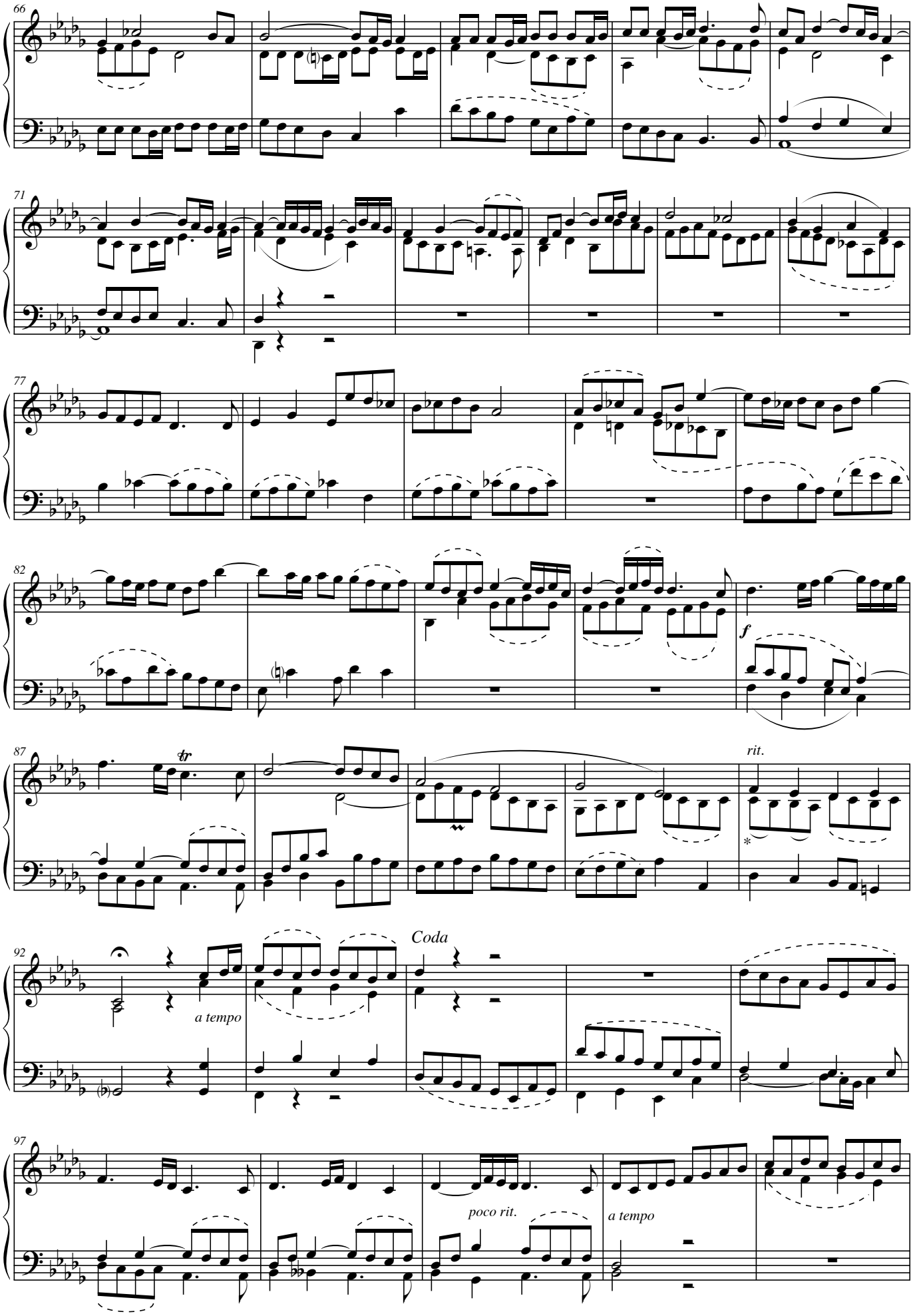
**Andante** ♩ = 96-104 *(almost as if in a slow 2)*



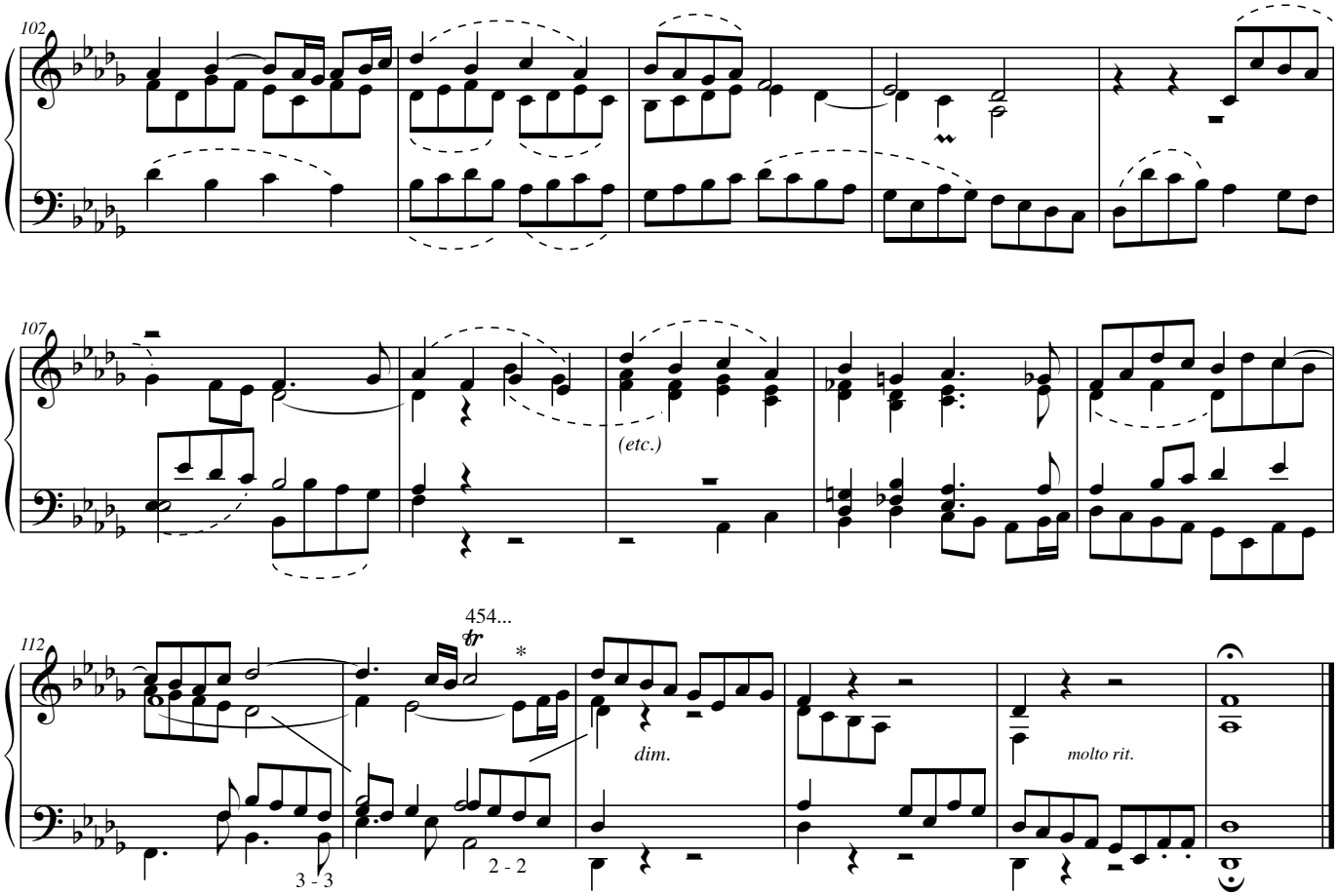

*In the original melody there are two sixteenth notes, A-flat and A-natural, instead of a single eighth note A-flat. (See Appendix, page 14)
**The tenuto symbol should be articulated thusly: The note should be held as long as possible, yet detached from the following note (non-legato). It is as if to "slide" the finger from one key to the next.
***Unlike previous slurs, the two-note slur here indicates 2-note phrasing




*Quoted theme: *Route 1* (See Appendix, page 14)
**The turn here indicates an ornament in the original melody. It may be willingly omitted.




*The two-note slurs here, like in M. 28, indicate 2-note phrasing

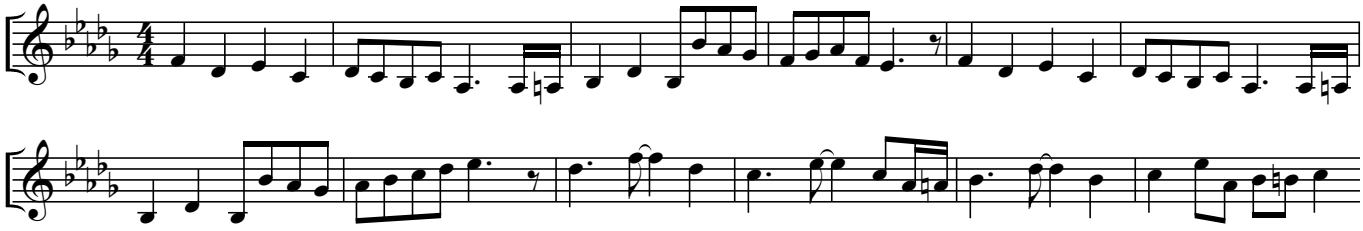



Fugue completed
24 July, 2020

*Alternatively the F and G-flat may played as eighths (omitting the tied E-flat eighth note).

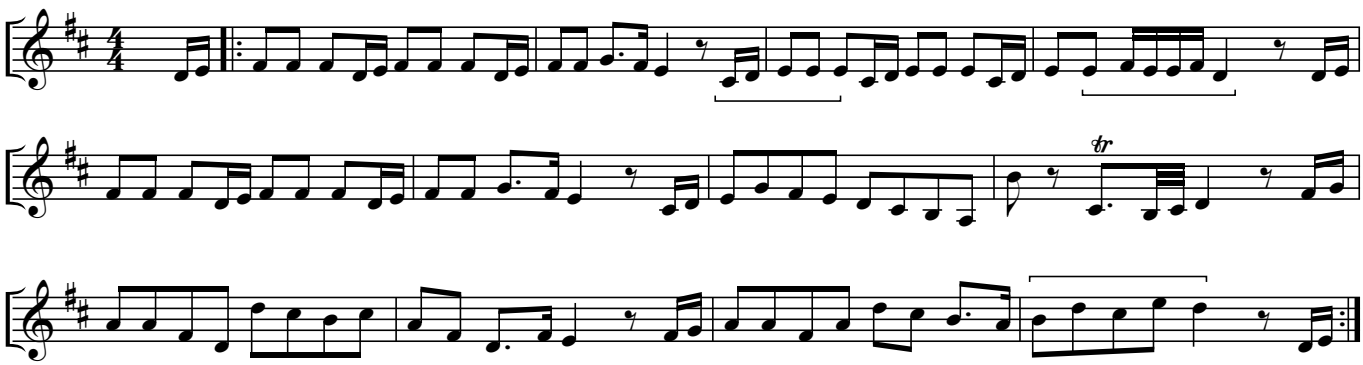
# APPENDIX (to *Goldenfugue City*)

Complete excerpt of measures 1 - 12 of the theme to
*Goldenrod City*



Complete excerpt of the theme to *Route 1*
(from the games *Pokémon Red* / *Blue* / *Yellow*)
Composer: Junichi Masuda
Copyright 1996 Nintendo, Game Freak

*(These were the fragments used in the alto in measures 53 - 54)*




*(These notes were augmented in measures 58 - 59)*