Ostinato Obbligato

Dean Rosenthal

Piano

2017

Ostinato Obbligato employs a straightforward counting logic in the right-hand melody, while maintaining the obligatory ostinato in the left hand from beginning to end. The logic is as follows: a five-note melody, B-C#-D#-F#-A, is counted: 12345 // 12 34 51 23 45 // 123 451 234 512 345 // etc. until the cycle is complete. The cycle continues to count in reverse from the fives, fours, threes, until it reaches the ones again and the piece concludes.

The ostinato seems to provide the appropriate anchor for this process-based counting, perhaps reflecting to the listener moments of Erik Satie's *Vexations* and other works of a similar repetitive manner. This detail of my *ostinato obbligato* maintains the musical work among many works that use this kind of gentle, elusive repetition to elicit a simple, satisfying interpretation.

In my own interpretations I keep the pedal down throughout, and since the piano is a non-sustaining instrument this seems essential to maintain the integrity of the music. But I could also imagine interpretations where the pedal is used to phrase each measure or each level of counting, as they increase and decrease.

A performance should take about six minutes and the piece should always be played at tempo to be heard correctly.

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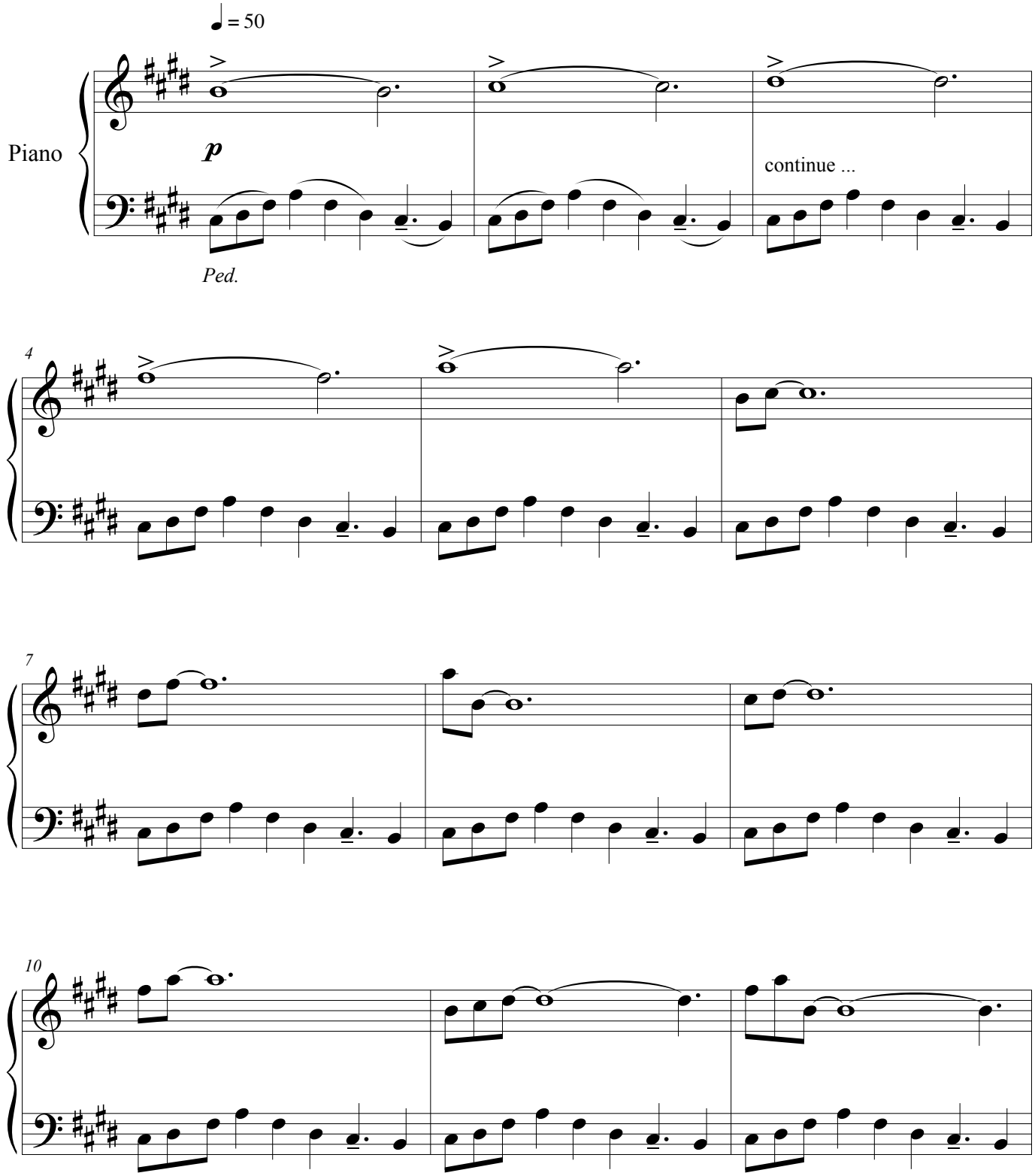

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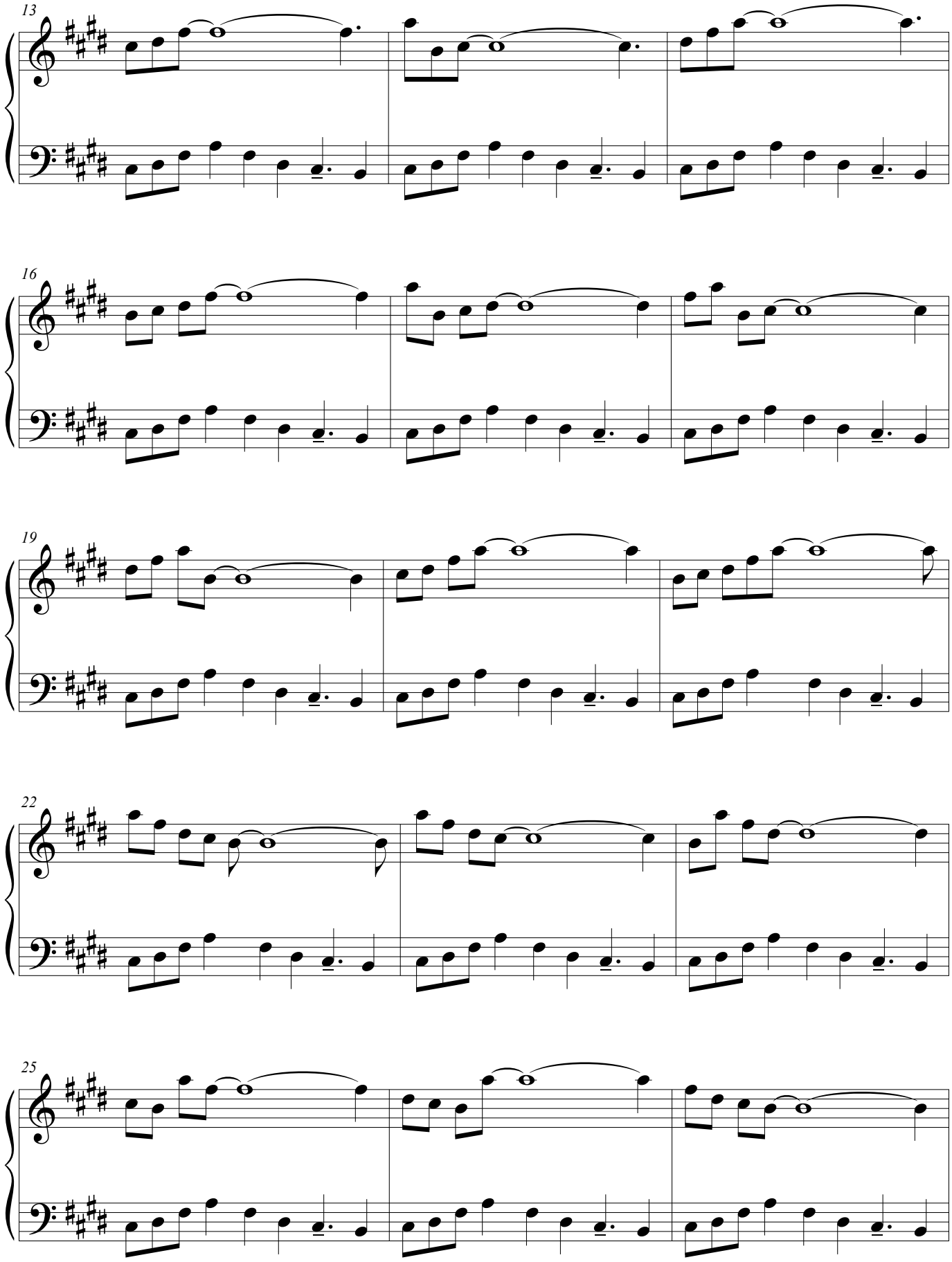
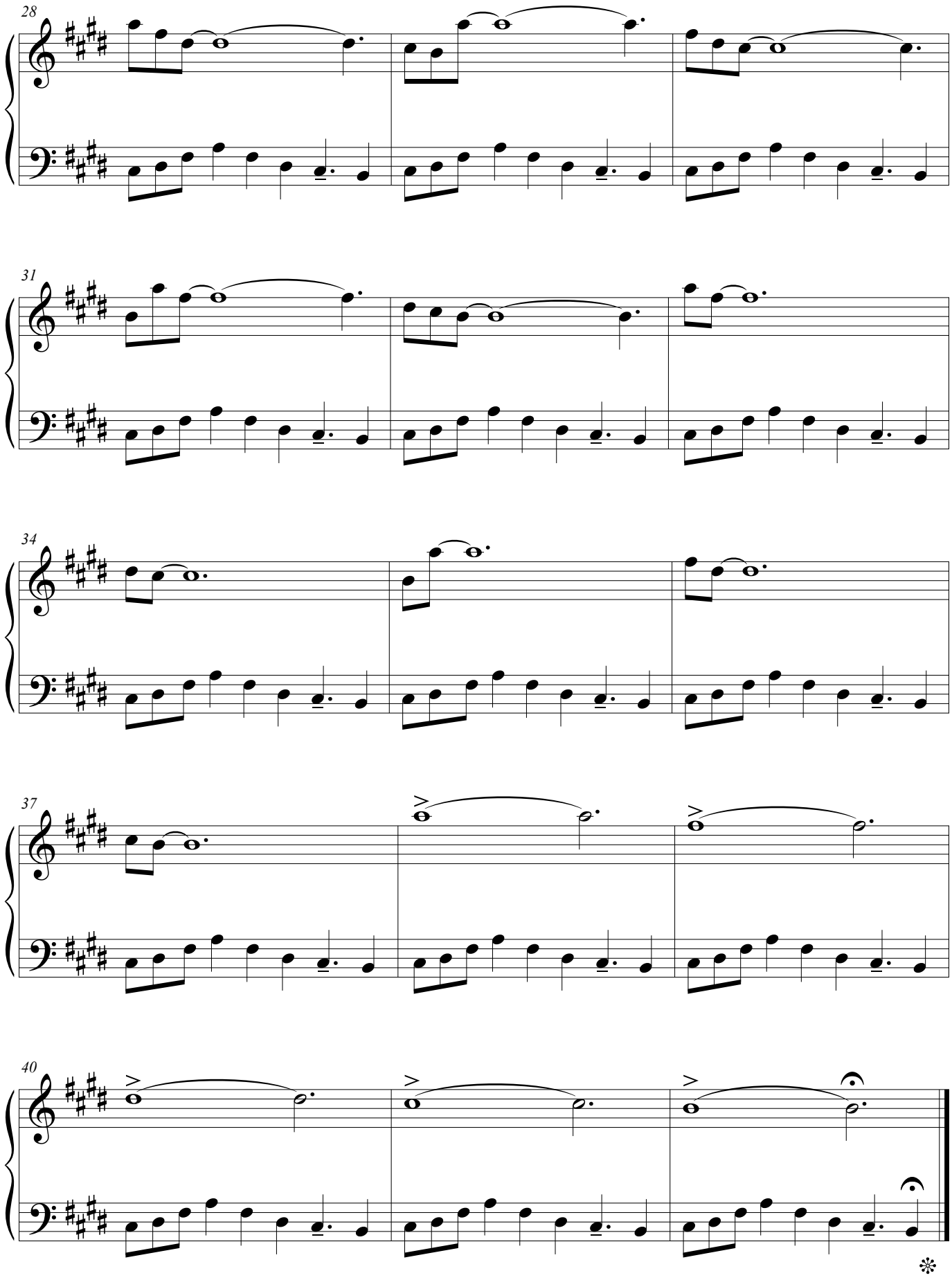
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