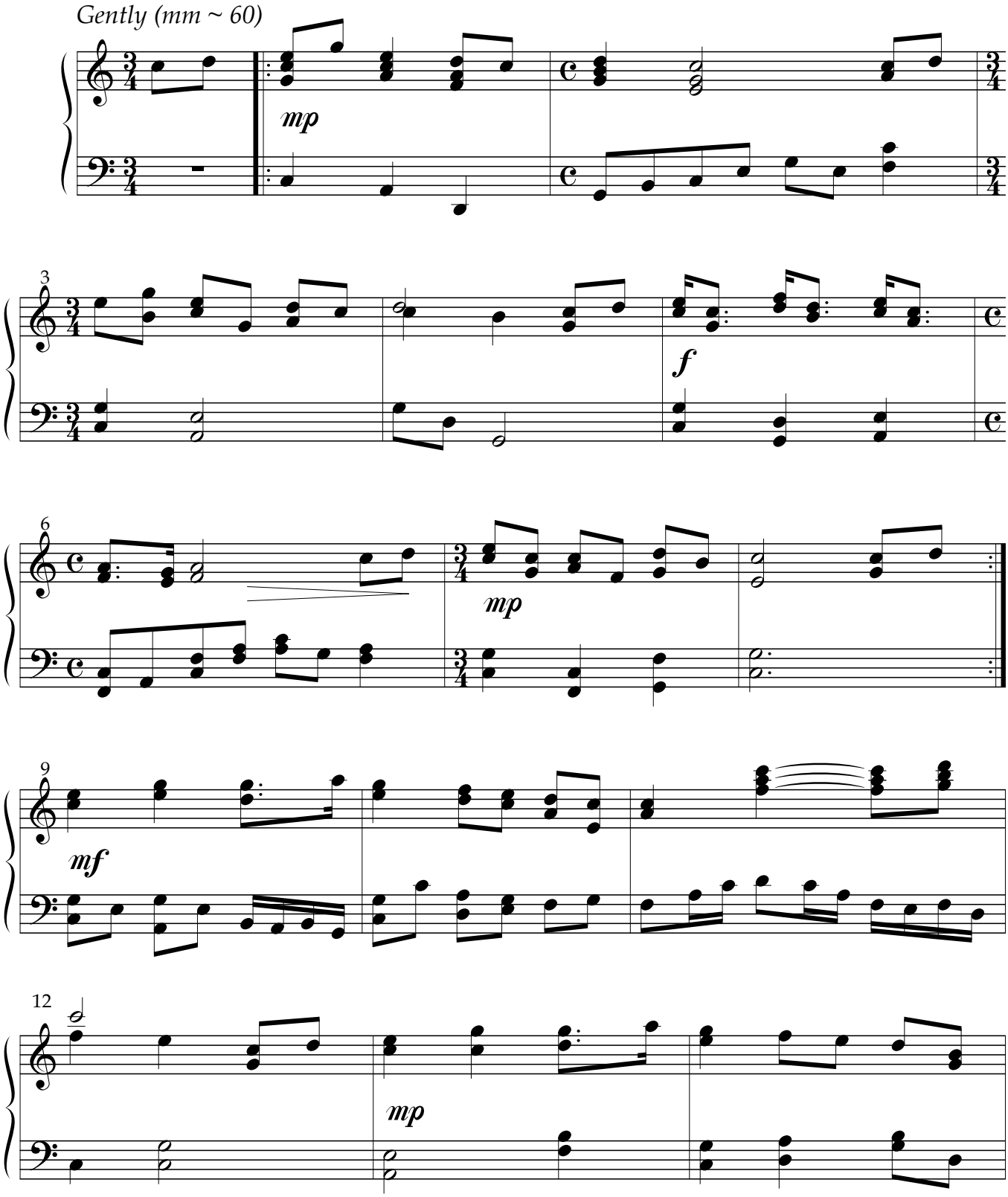
LIMERICK'S LAMENTATION

? Myles O'Reilly (c.1636 - ?)



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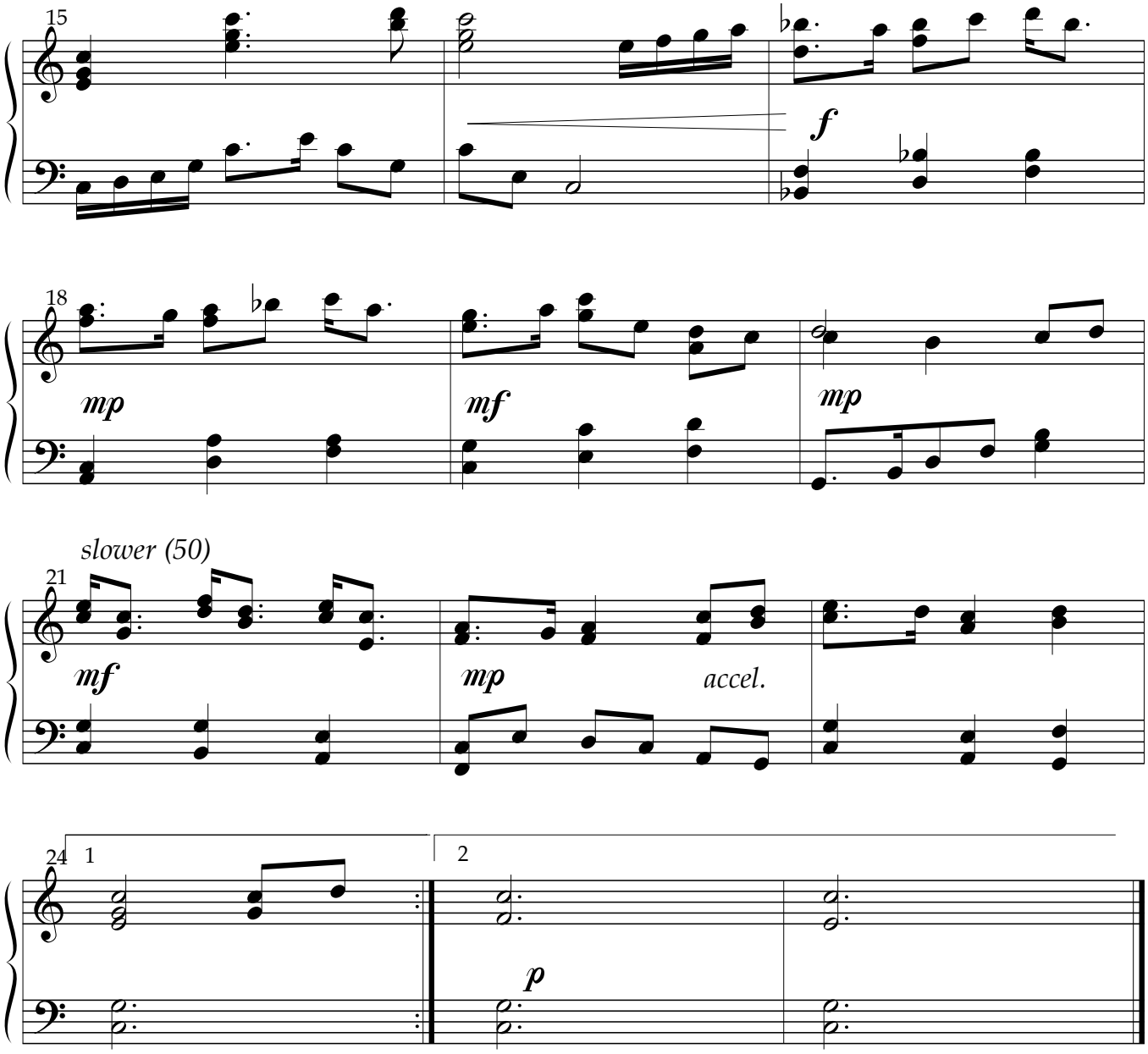

Unfortunately the beauty of this piece is in direct proportion to the amount of confusion surrounding its exact origins. That there is a close relationship of some sort to the Scots tune "Lochaber No More" seems not to be in dispute, but the origin of the work that is the common source for "Lochaber" and "Lamentation" is not clear.

Bunting states that "Lochaber" derives from a piece composed by the Irish harper Myles O'Reilly (born c.1635/6), while O'Neill says that the harper Thomas Connellan of Cloonmahon, County Sligo, added introductory and concluding phrases and re-named it "The Breach of Aughrim", and that it was introduced to Scotland after his death in 1698 by his brother Laurence Connellan, who was also a harper.

The references to Limerick and to Aughrim connect this moving piece with the unsuccessful 1691 attempt by Sarsfield's Irish troops to remove the English occupation forces from Connacht (western Ireland), providing a context if not an exact date for this piece.