12 Duets For Al Gallodoro

By Ralph Martino

12 Duets For Al Gallodoro

By
Ralph Martino

Duets 1-11 for Alto Saxophones
Duet 12 for Clarinets

Dorn Publications, Inc
P.O. Box 206
Medfield, Massachusetts 02052 USA

© Copyright 1995, Dorn Publications, Inc.

12 Duets For Al Gallodoro

By Ralph Martino

By David J. Gibson

In the spring of 1994 we decided to approach the great Al Gallodoro about doing a *Saxophone Journal* CD masterclass. I wrote Alfred a letter to present our proposal and followed that up with a phone call weeks later. Al answered the phone with his characteristic laugh and we had a good conversation reminiscing about old times.

Some of you may remember that we published a feature, front-cover interview with Al in the September / October, 1989, issue of *Saxophone Journal*, which I personally conducted. Since that time, we have become good friends and have shared phone calls on occasion. It seemed a logical choice to invite Al for this project which, in the end, turned out to be a real pleasure for Alfred's family, Dale Underwood, and me.

We decided to commission Ralph Martino, chief arranger for the United States Navy Band in Washington, D.C., to write a book of alto duets tailored to Al's playing style, titled simply, *12 Duets For Al Gallodoro*. Ralph was recommended to us by Dale Underwood, a member of the United States Navy Band, who also happens to be a big fan of Al Gallodoro. Ralph completed the duets in early June. Dale Underwood was to be a part of this masterclass, which served to heighten everyone's expectations even more. How could you miss with a legend from earlier days (Al Gallodoro) combined with one of today's greatest, classical saxophonists (Dale Underwood)?

Marice Stith, recording engineer

Dale Underwood, recording engineer Marice Stith, and I, arrived in Oneonta, New York, at the Holiday Inn, on August 28th. Marice, our recording engineer, did a splendid job of finding a suitable location for our recording session. Dale drove from Washington, D.C. in his Ford pick-up, which contained his alto, several boxes of reeds strewn about the floor, a well used ashtray, and a small suitcase. Dale travels light. We met Al and his family that first evening for dinner and discussed the following day's events. Everyone was in good spirits. The next morning we met at the recording site and went at it for two days.

One might ask how an eighty-one year old fared in such an environment. I can tell you that he fared very well

indeed! In fact, I think Al had more energy and enthusiasm than all of us combined. He was at the peak of his prowess and seemed to enjoy himself immensely. Al remarked several times, "It's like the good old days!"

For those of you under the age of (?!?), who don't really know much about Al Gallodoro, let me introduce him to you. Al was born in Chicago, on June 20th, 1913. His musical family relocated to New Orleans briefly, before moving to Alabama. Al's father played clarinet with the Birmingham Municipal Band and also worked in the local steel mill. Al's fabulous career began at age thirteen (1926) in Birmingham, Alabama, with the Romeo Brother's band called "Romeo and His Juliets." One year later, in 1927, George Evans asked Al's parent's permission for him to join his band and head to Florida for gigs.

When he was fifteen, Al's family moved back to New Orleans. It was there , in 1928, that Al played first alto and clarinet in local vaudeville clubs for performers such as Bob Hope, Milton Berle, Edgar Bergen, Joan Davis, and many other touring stars. RKO radio came into vogue then and Al gravitated toward that medium as well. Vaudeville declined in the 1930s. At age twenty, on July 3rd, 1933, Al Gallodoro left New Orleans and headed for New York City. Along the way he worked jobs in Washington, D.C., Atlantic City, and Philadelphia. Al even worked with the greatest entertainer of the day, Rudy Vallee. Al's big break came in 1936, when he joined the great Paul Whiteman band for $235 a week. Al played with Paul Whiteman from the spring of 1936 until just a couple of days before Whiteman died in 1965. On countless occasions, Al was the featured soloist with Whiteman. He was also a member of the famed "Sax Soctette" (nine saxophones, doubling).

Al was known as the "triple threat" instrumentalist because of his abilities on clarinet, bass clarinet, and saxophone. It is, perhaps, his double and triple tonguing techniques, that captured the ear of most saxophonists of the day. In the late 1940s, and most particularly the 1950s, Al Gallodoro and Marcel Mule were the top artists for Selmer. Al still plays a 1958, vintage, gold-plated, Selmer Mark VI alto which he picked out at the factory in Elkhart, Indiana, and he stills uses the original, Dick Stabile model, woodwind mouthpiece which he purchased years ago. The reed that Al brought along this day (for Al and Dale's masterclass), was a twenty-year old, special reed reserved for only the most ostentatious occasions.

For historians and fans of Al, there are seven vintage recordings which feature his considerable talents. All are long since out of print, but collectors have them, as do his many hard-core fans. These recordings include his Manor double album titled *An Alfred Gallodoro Concert*; the Columbia *Contrasts* album featuring Al on eight saxophone solos; the Johannes Brahms *Quintet in B Minor, Op., 115 for Clarinet and Strings* (with the Stuyvesant String Quartet on International Records); a Concert Hall Society recording featuring Al, again, on clarinet playing the Brahms *Clarinet and Strings Quintet*; the Merri Records *For Your Listening Pleasure* album recorded December 20th, 1958, at Los Angeles High School in Burbank, California (which features tunes such as *Carnival of Venice, Hora Staccato, Romance, Stardust, Caprice, Czardas*), referred to as his "California album." An earlier 1945 recording, features Al on Armonia records playing Italian music, polkas, waltzes, and mazurkas on 78 rpm stock. The most talked about recordings by fans are the Columbia album and the Manor album.

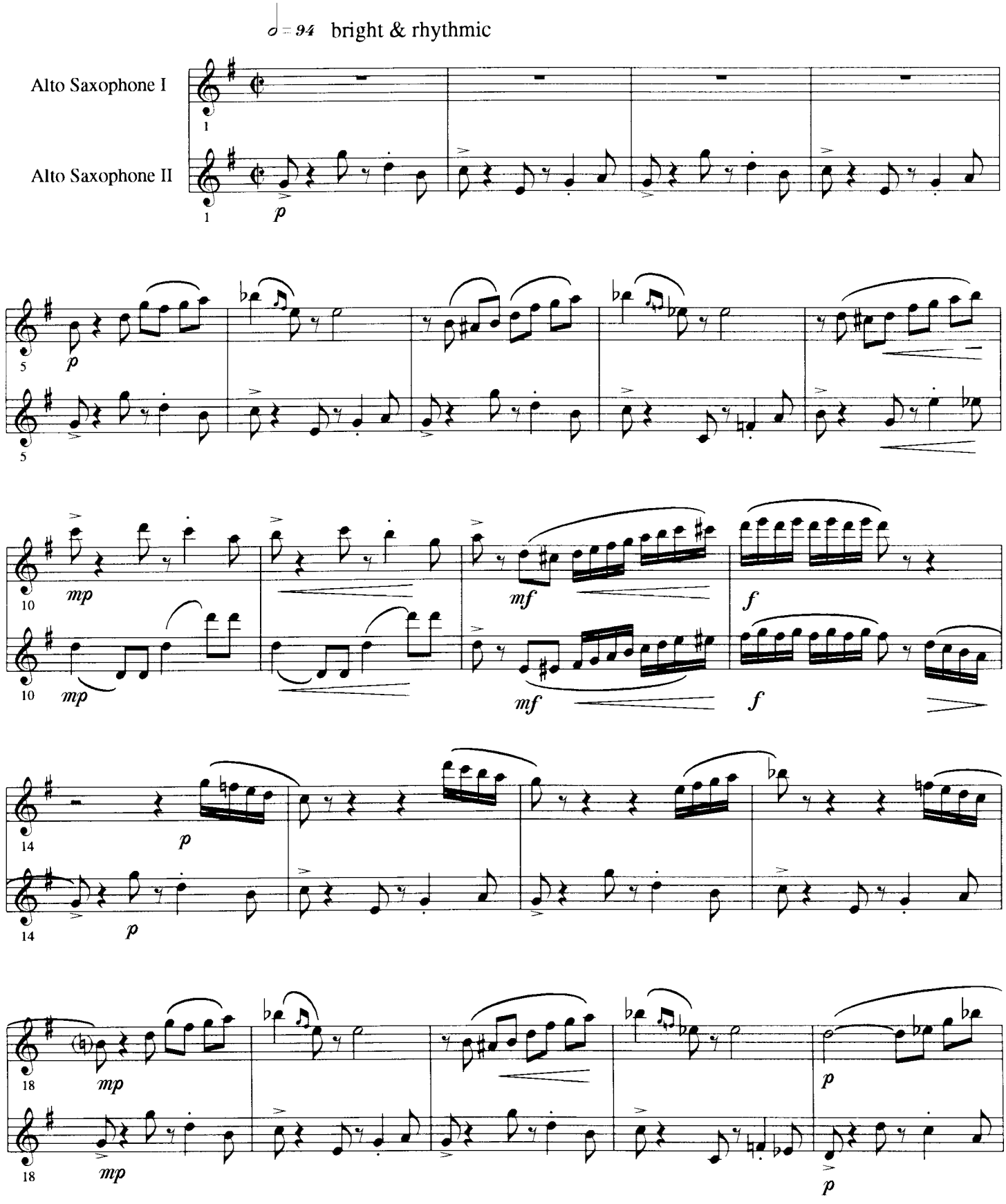
It was a pleasure working with Al, who showed grace under pressure and lively leadership skills. The focus on the original *Saxophone Journal* CD masterclass recording was on Al, but we'd like to thank Dale Underwood for being such a gracious host and "subordinate." Dale's kindness and gentlemanly manner was the glue that held it all together and made Al Gallodoro's words, and playing, stand out all the more. Enough thanks cannot be extended to Dale for his contribution.

And finally, our thanks to Marice Stith for his dedication to perfection and making all the pieces of the original DAT puzzle fit together.

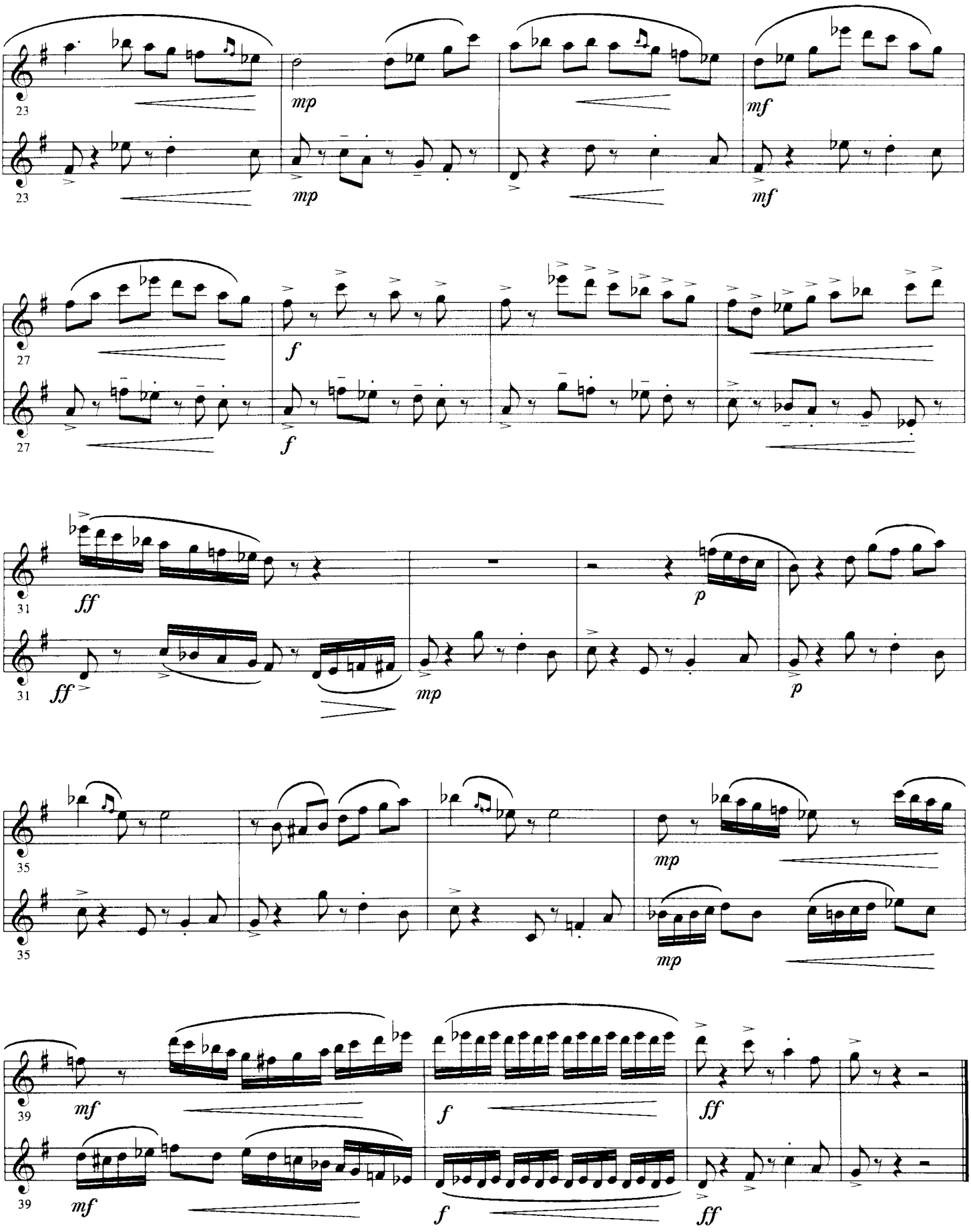
Those of you who want to witness first hand the genuis of Al Gallodoro's playing look no further than Ralph Martino's *12 Duets For Al Gallodoro*. Enjoy the challenge! §

Duet 1

Ralph Martino



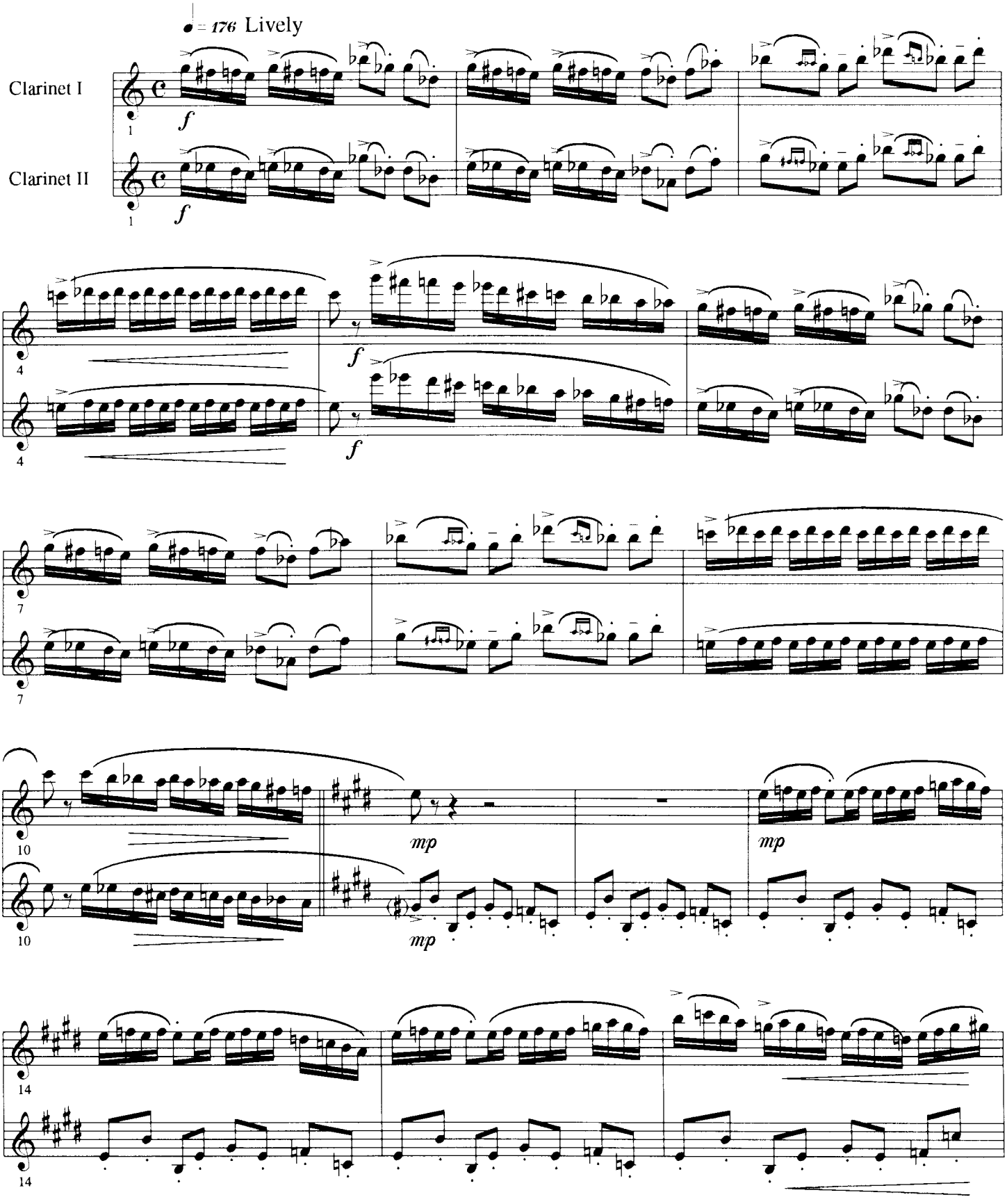
©1995 DORN PUBLICATIONS, INC., made in U.S.A.
all rights reserved, International copyright secured.

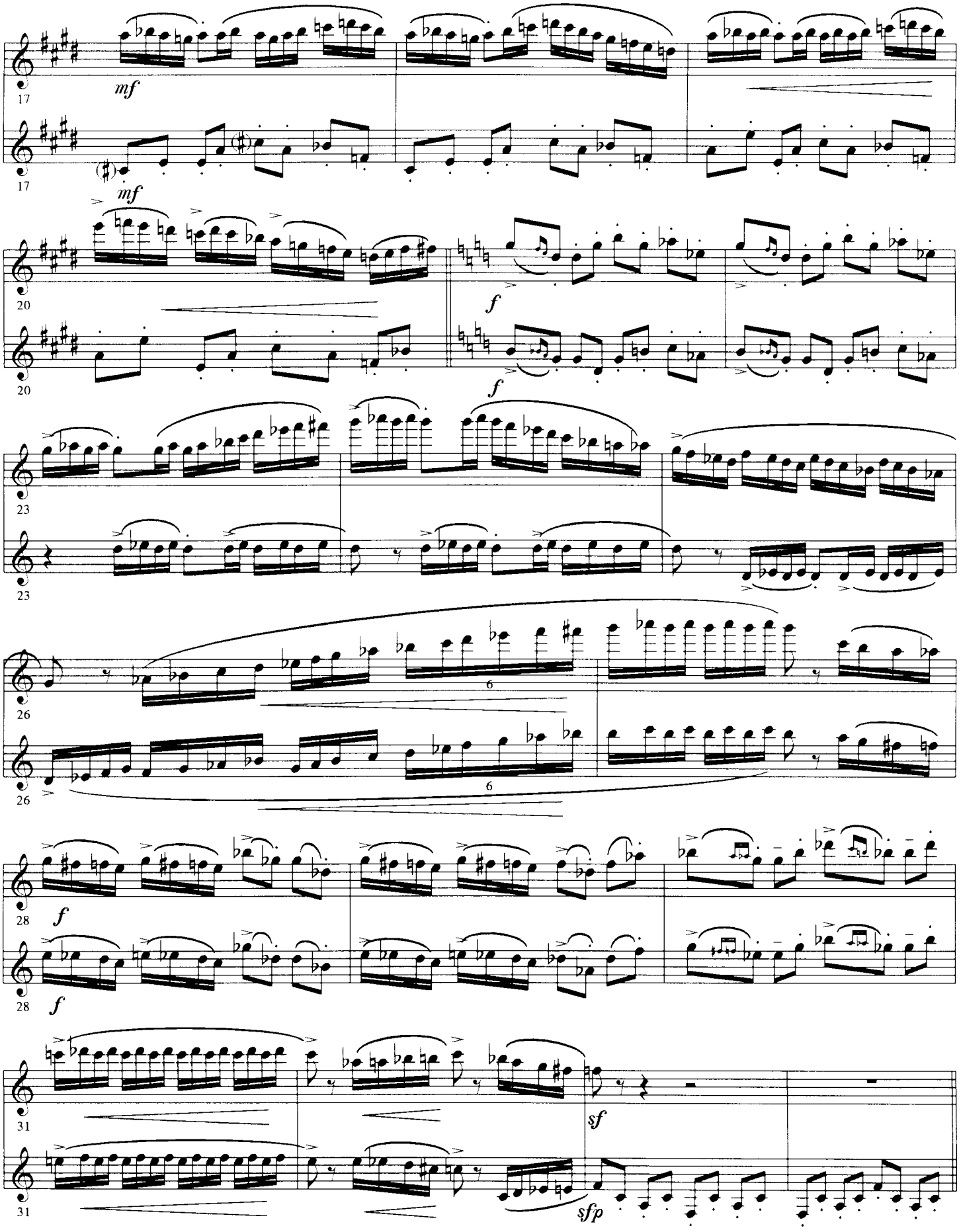

23
mp
mp
mf
mf
27
f
f
31
ff
ff
mp
p
p
35
mp
mp
39
mf
mf
f
f
ff
ff

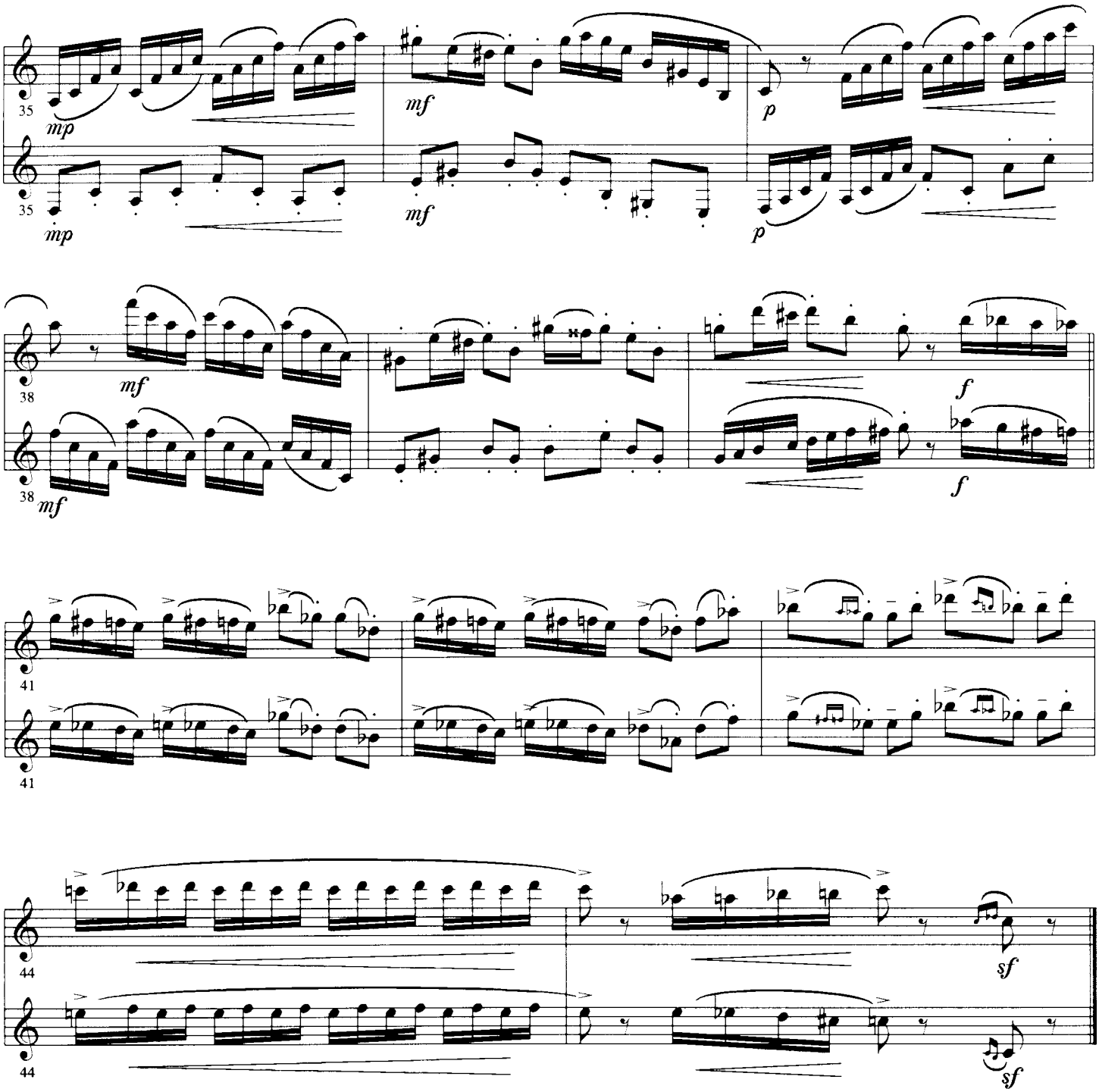
Duet 12

(for 2 clarinets)

Ralph Martino




17
mf
17
mf
20
20
f
f
23
23
26
6
26
6
28
f
28
f
31
sf
31
sfp


35
mp
mf
p
35
mp
mf
p
38
mf
f
38
mf
f
41
41
44
sf
44
sf