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Still Life in Four Movements

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Sam Hoyland

Still Life
in
Four Movements

for solo piano

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Still Life in Four Movements

for solo piano

The title of the work comes from the piece's overall aesthetic attitude which treats musical ideas as "objects" to be repeated, varied, juxtaposed, and developed.

The four movements are:

I. Improvisation
II. Cantus firmus
III. Intermezzo
IV. Spiral

The first movement juxtaposes two main thematic areas, each made up of distinct musical objects. My initial inspiration for these objects came to me while attending a concert of Morton Feldman's music. It uses idiosyncratic musical techniques, like uneven note lengths and irregular phrasing, as well as note clusters to create a rough, even brutal, character. The movement has a feeling of 'playing around' with the ideas (hence the title), starting by primarily focusing on one area before moving on to the second, until finally going back to the first area at the very end.

The second movement is based on a long cantus firmus (G–D♭–F–A–G♯–D♯–A–…), played rubato, meant to contrast with the forceful rhythmic character of the first movement. After an initial statement, the cantus firmus is played again, this time embellished, with an expressionist melody in the right hand. This melody is written spacially and marked *a piacere* to indicate that the embellished canbus firmus should be played as a fixed melodic line—though still somewhat rubato—with the right-hand melody playing *against* it. During this time, the hands are not coordinated.

The third movement is based on a technical idea: I wanted to create a harmonic system, analogous to the tonal system, that uses the pitch set (0, 1, 6) (e.g. F–C–G♭), rather than major and minor triads, as the basic harmonic material. This led me to create a "circle of fifths" of sorts for the octatonic scale, relating "triads" to one another in a "circle of fifths" based on shared common tones. The form is highly repetitive and in an unusual meter, giving it a strange, quasi-dance character.

The fourth movement, in ABCBA form, uses the diminished triad as the basis for all three sections. The A section evokes a feeling of "spiraling" as more and more notes are gradually added to the arpeggio, thus gradually increasing its density.

—Sam Hoyland, 07-27-2019

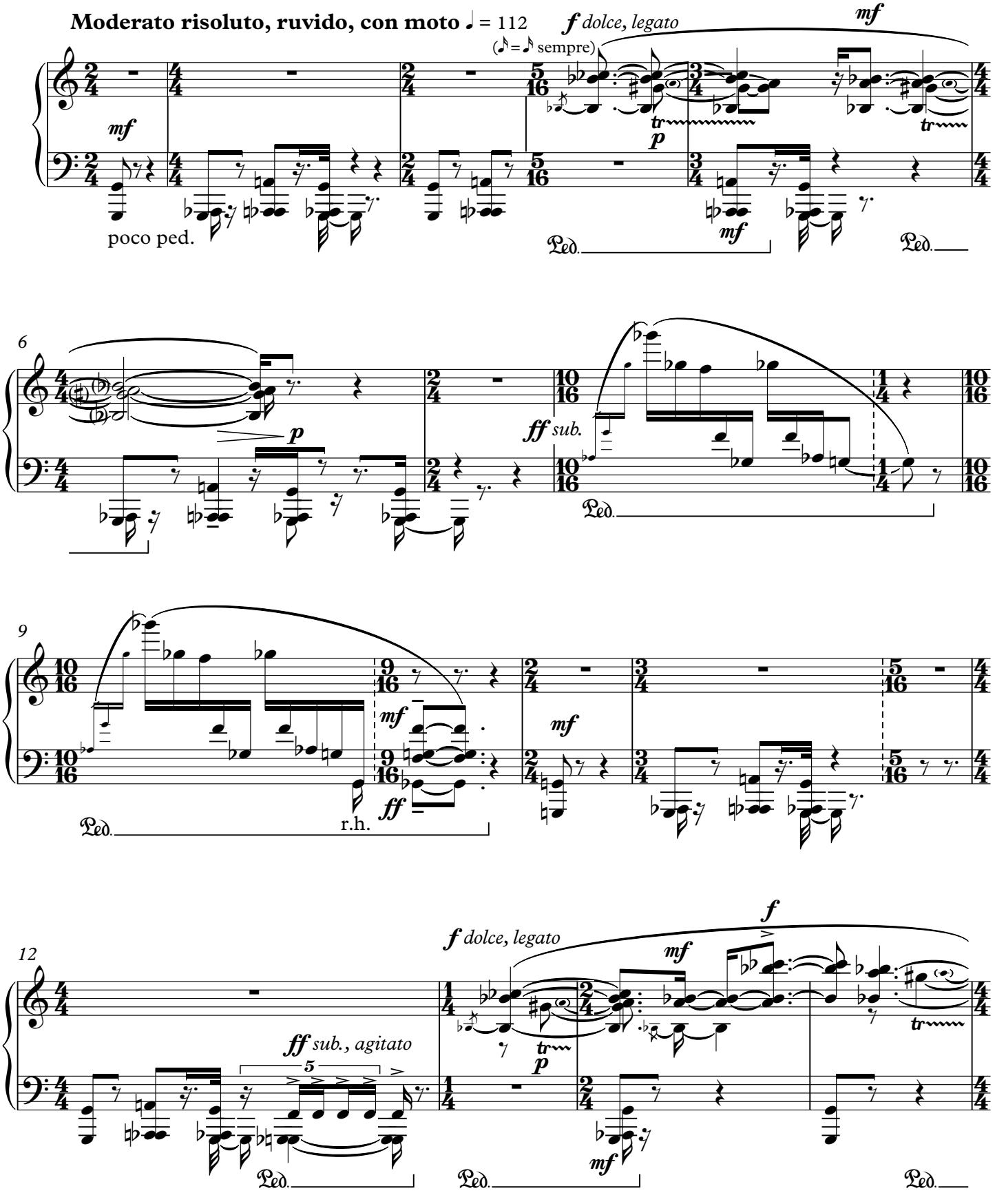
Note: Accidentals typically apply only to the note the precede. In the case of repetition or repeated figures (e.g. tremolos), accidentals are valid throughout. In some parts of movement IV, accidentals apply throughout the measure.

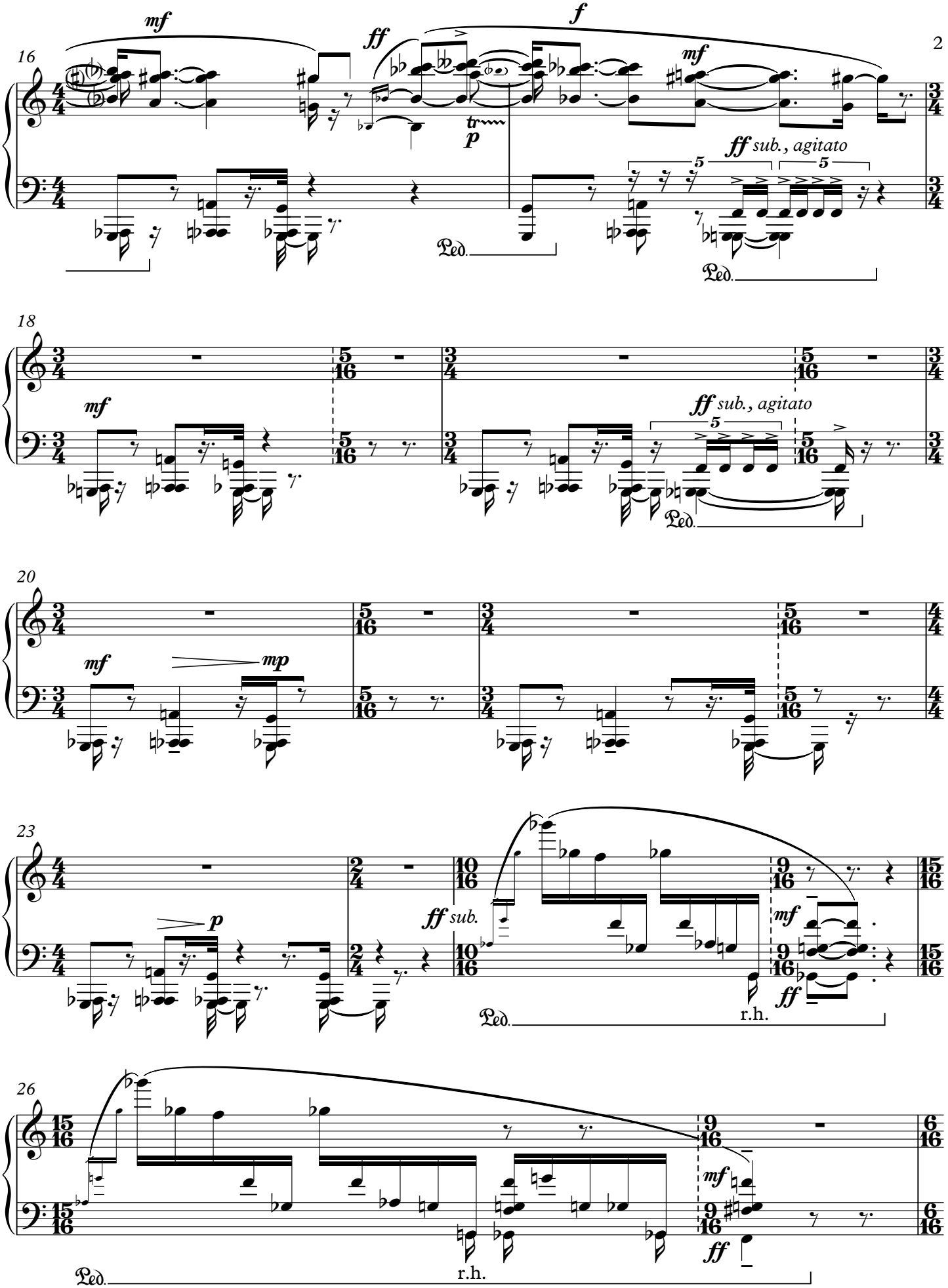
Still Life in Four Movements

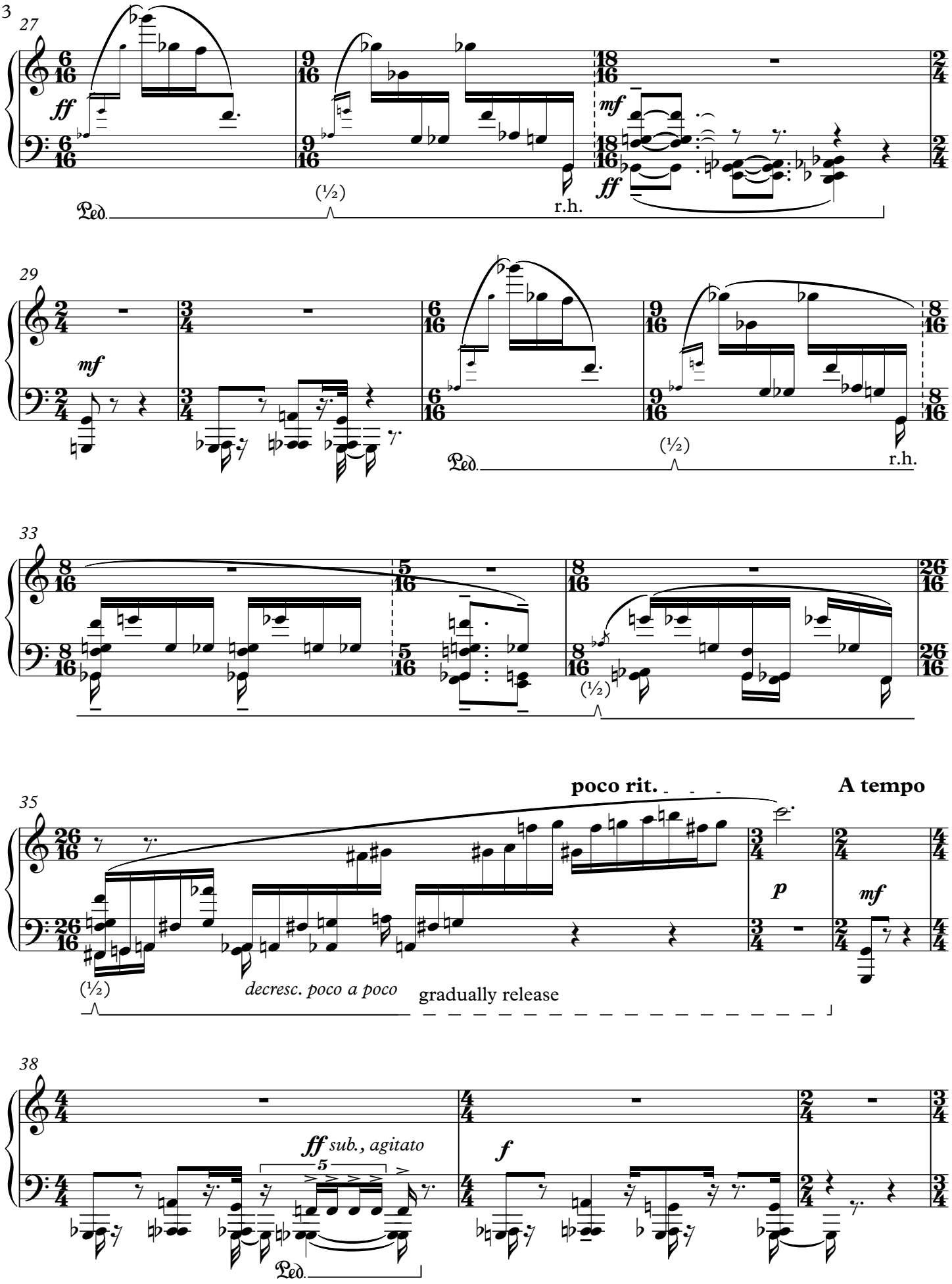
for solo piano

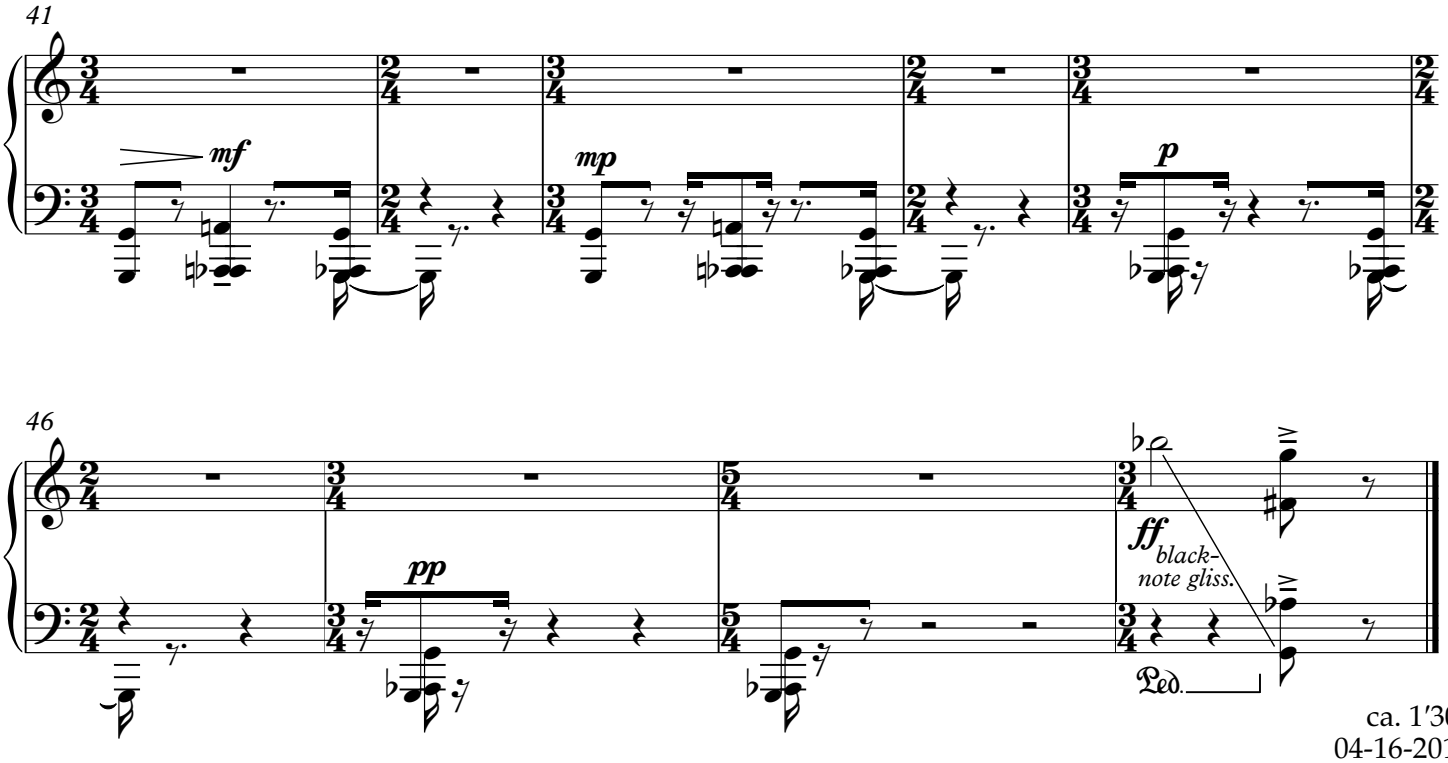
Sam Hoyland

I. Improvisation



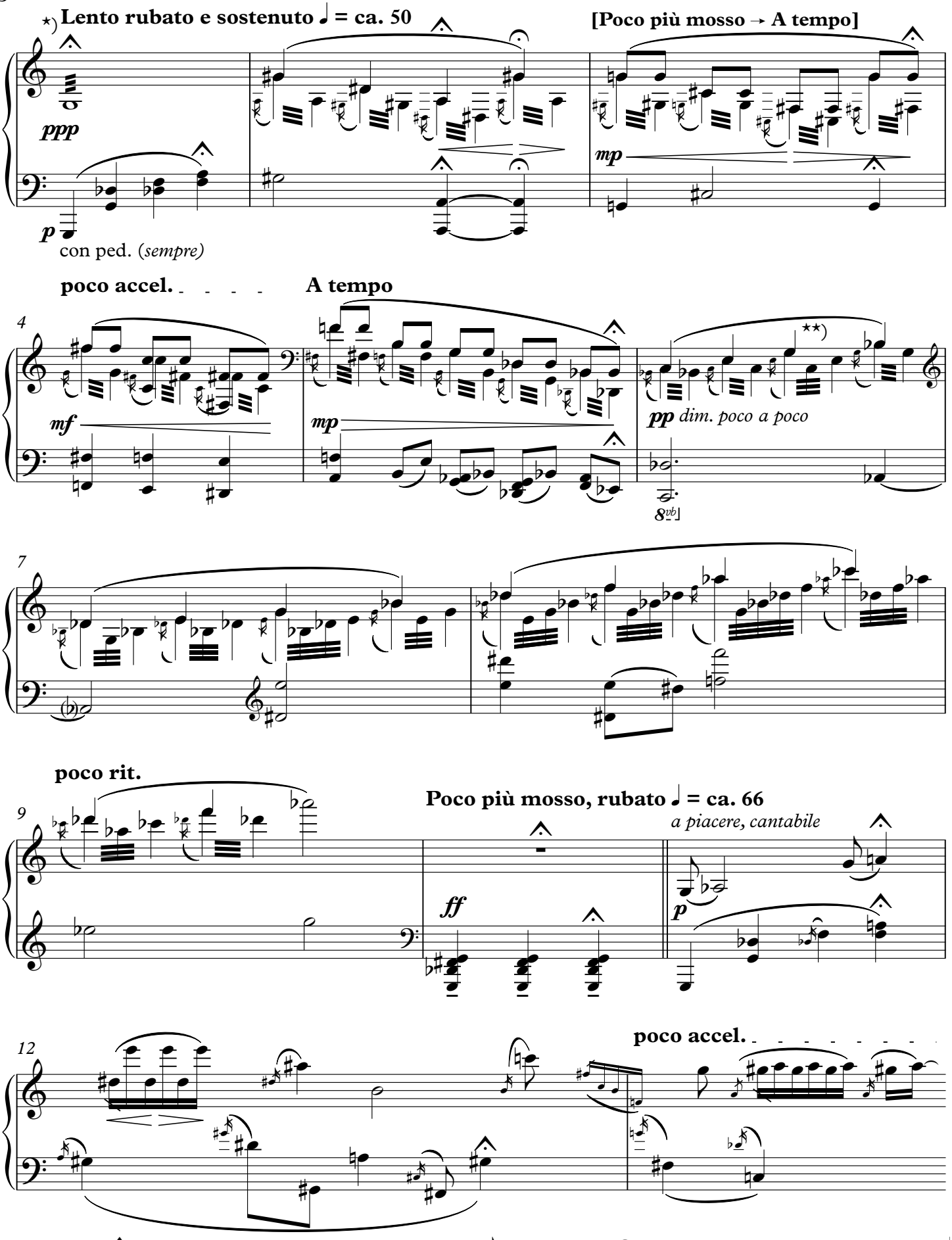

16
mf
ff
f
mf
tr
p
ff sub., agitato
Ped.
Ped.
18
mf
ff sub., agitato
Ped.
20
mf
mp
23
p
ff sub.
mf
ff
Ped.
r.h.
26
mf
ff
Ped.
r.h.


27
ff
mf
ff
Ped.
(½)
r.h.
29
mf
Ped.
(½)
r.h.
33
(½)
35
poco rit.
A tempo
p
mf
(½)
decresc. poco a poco
gradually release
38
ff sub., agitato
5
f
Ped.

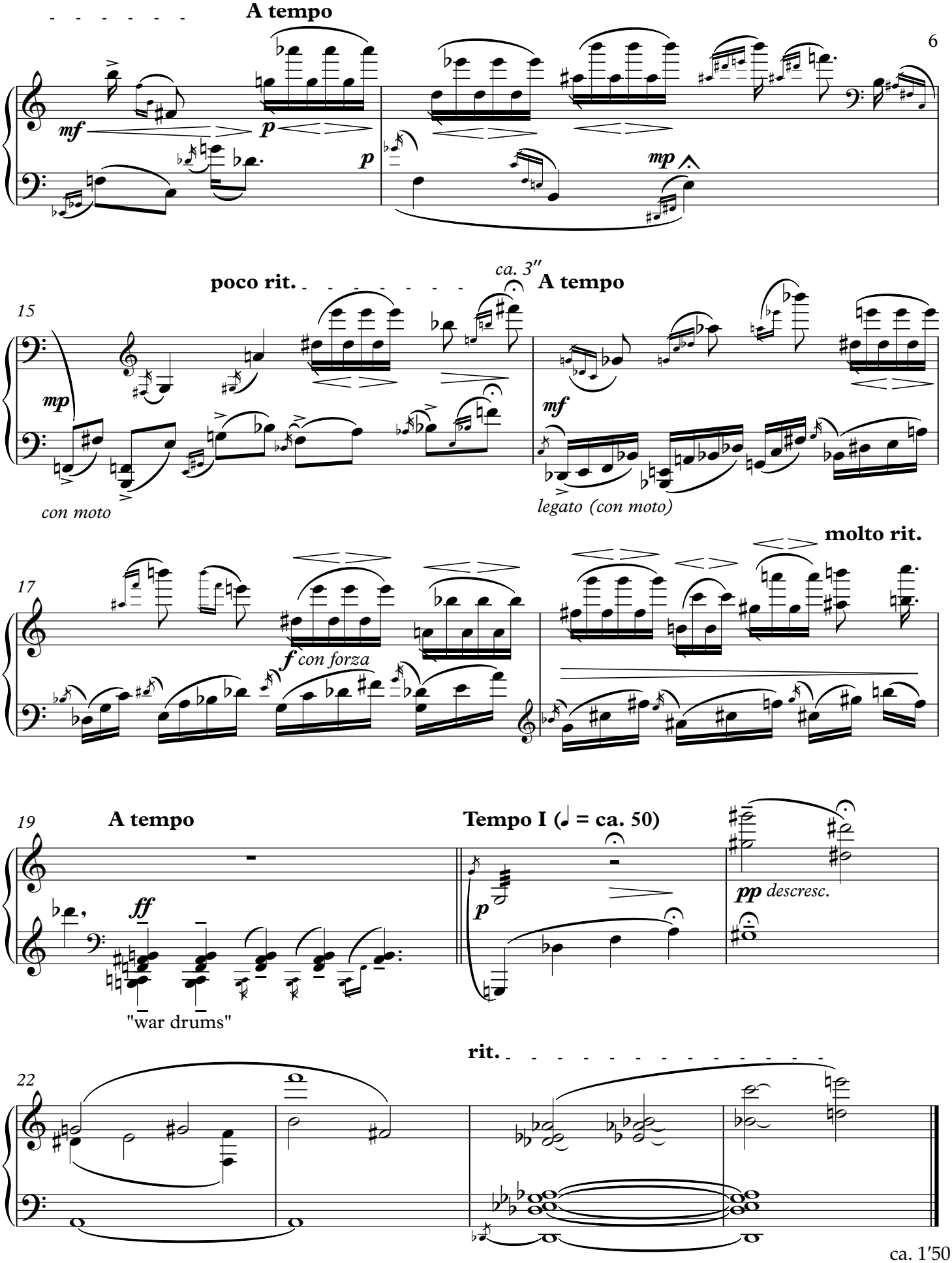


ca. 1′30″
04-16-2019

II. Cantus firmus



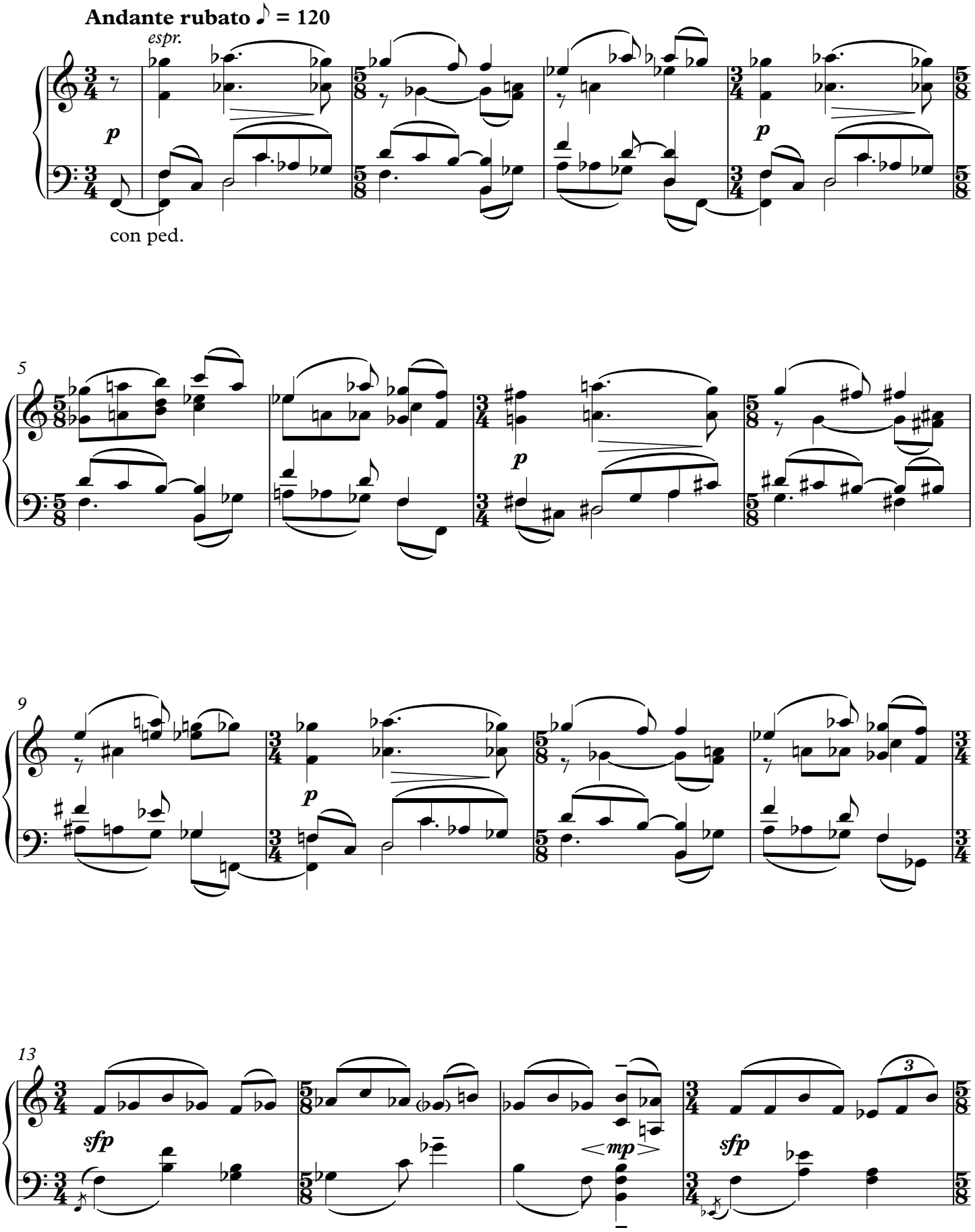
*) The symbol 𝄐 indicates a note is held slightly longer (about 𝅘𝅥𝅯 longer), while 𝄐 indicates a longer prolongation (about 𝅗𝅥).
**) This indicates a tremolo with more than two notes. The notes should be played quickly and in the order that they appear.

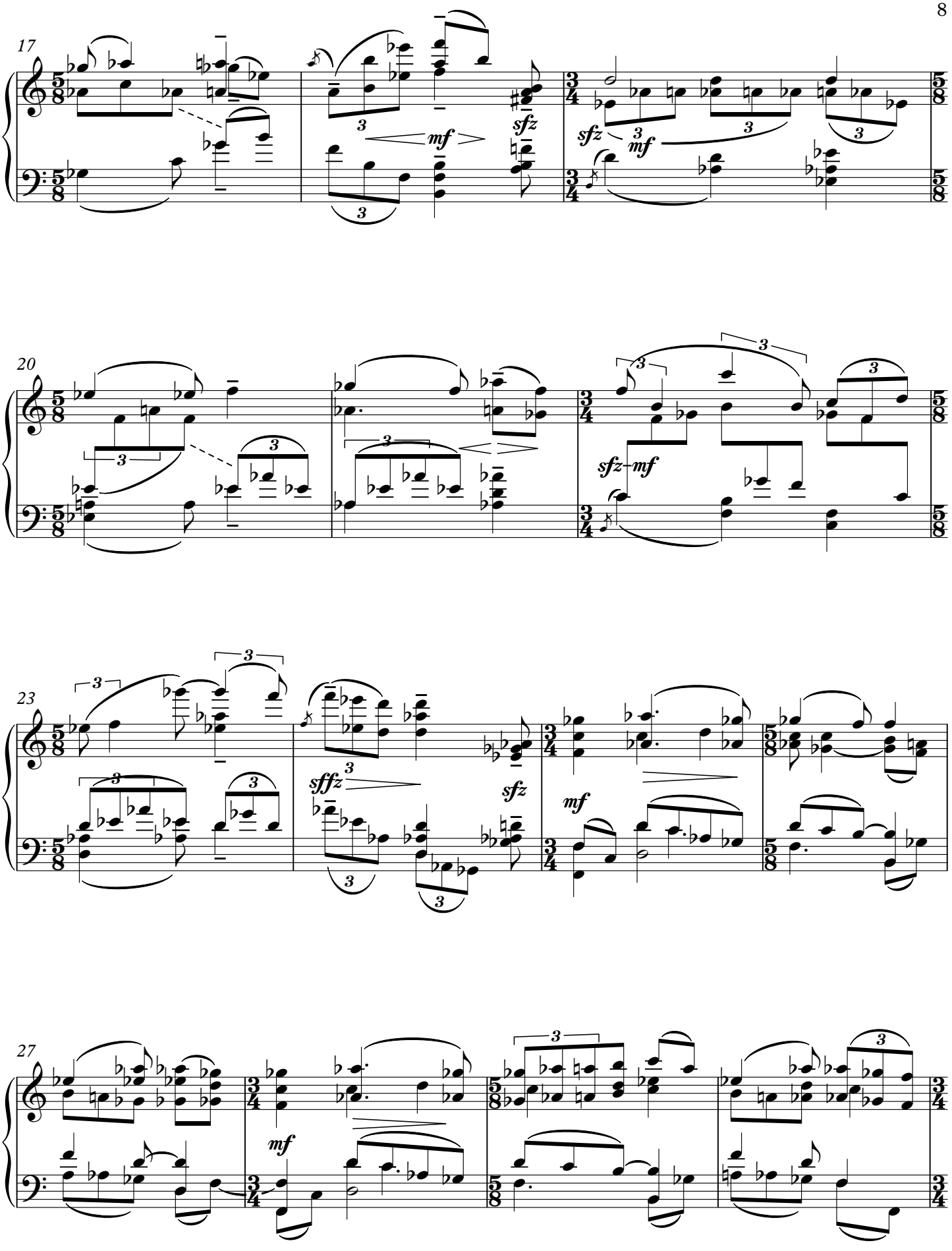


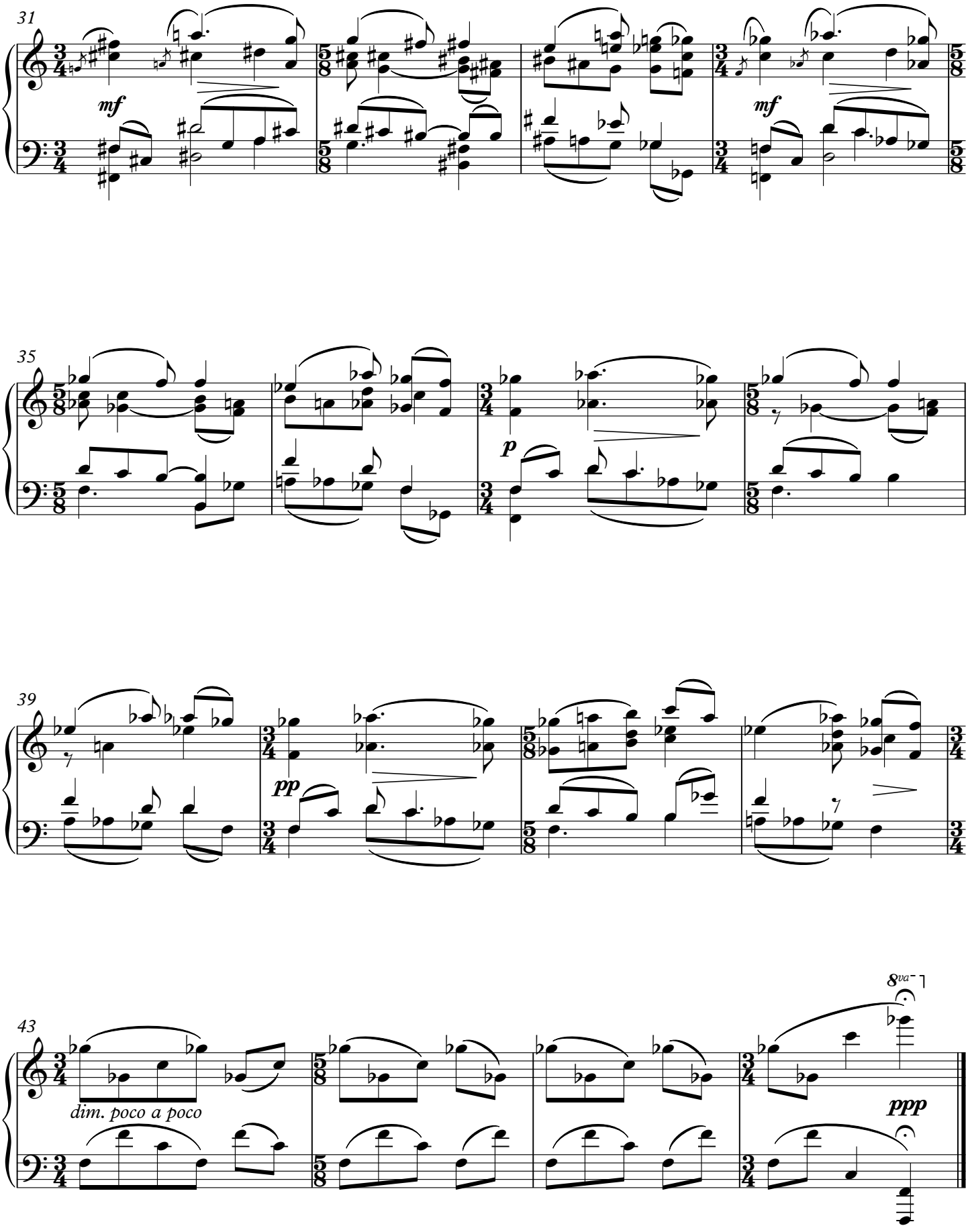
ca. 1′50″

05-14 / 08-20-2019

III. Intermezzo

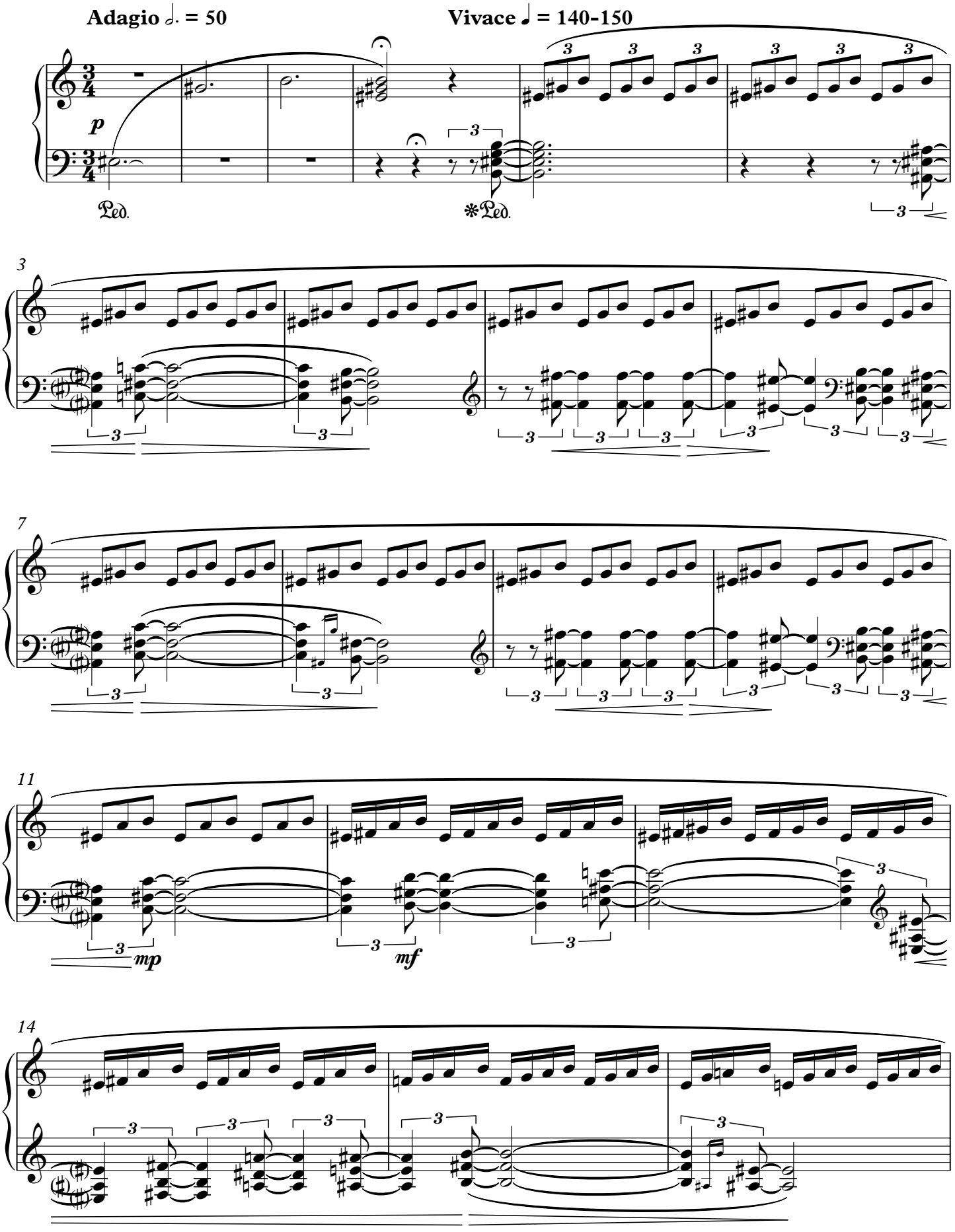


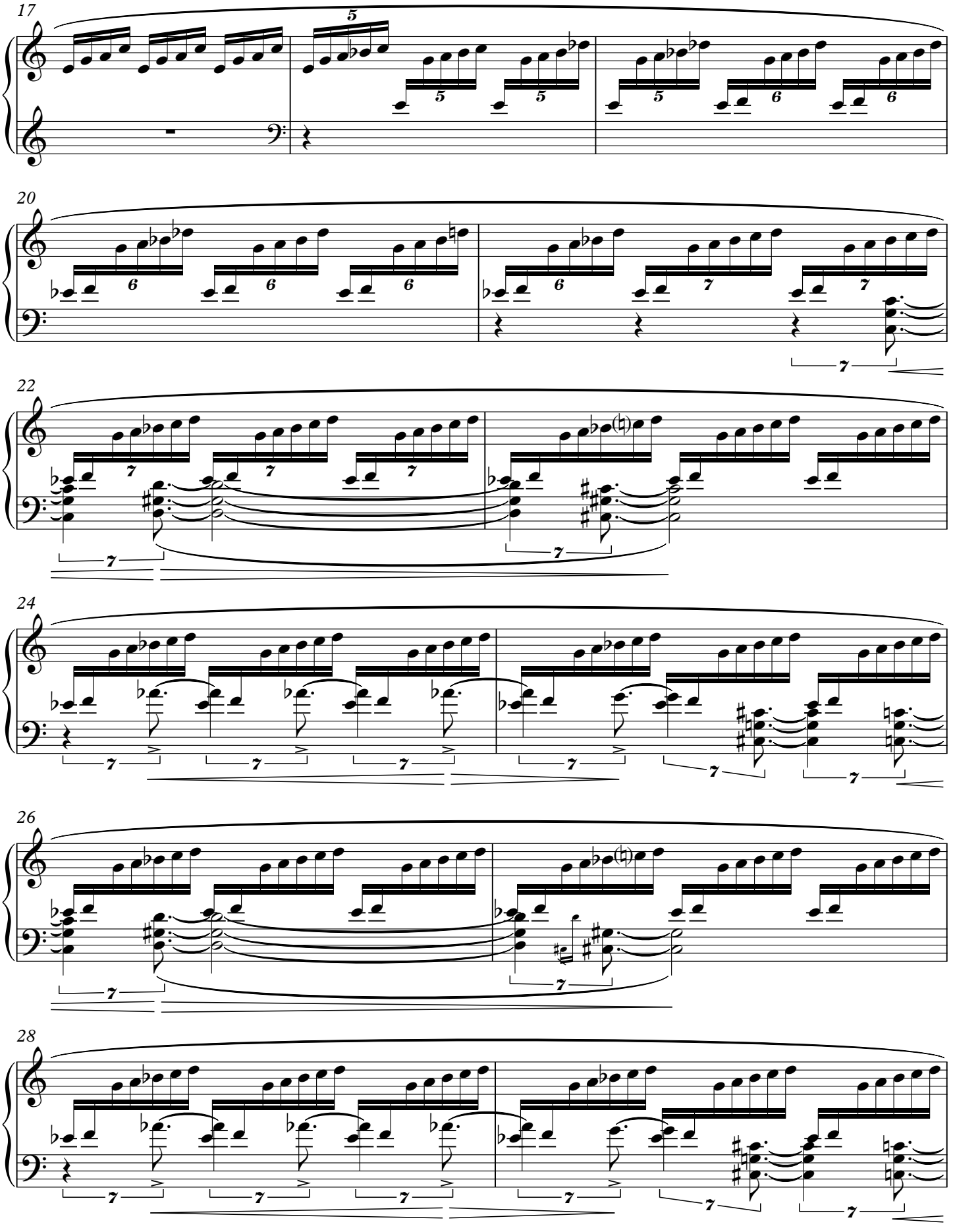

17
mf
sfz
sfz
mf
20
sfz
mf
23
sfz
sffz
sfz
mf
27
mf

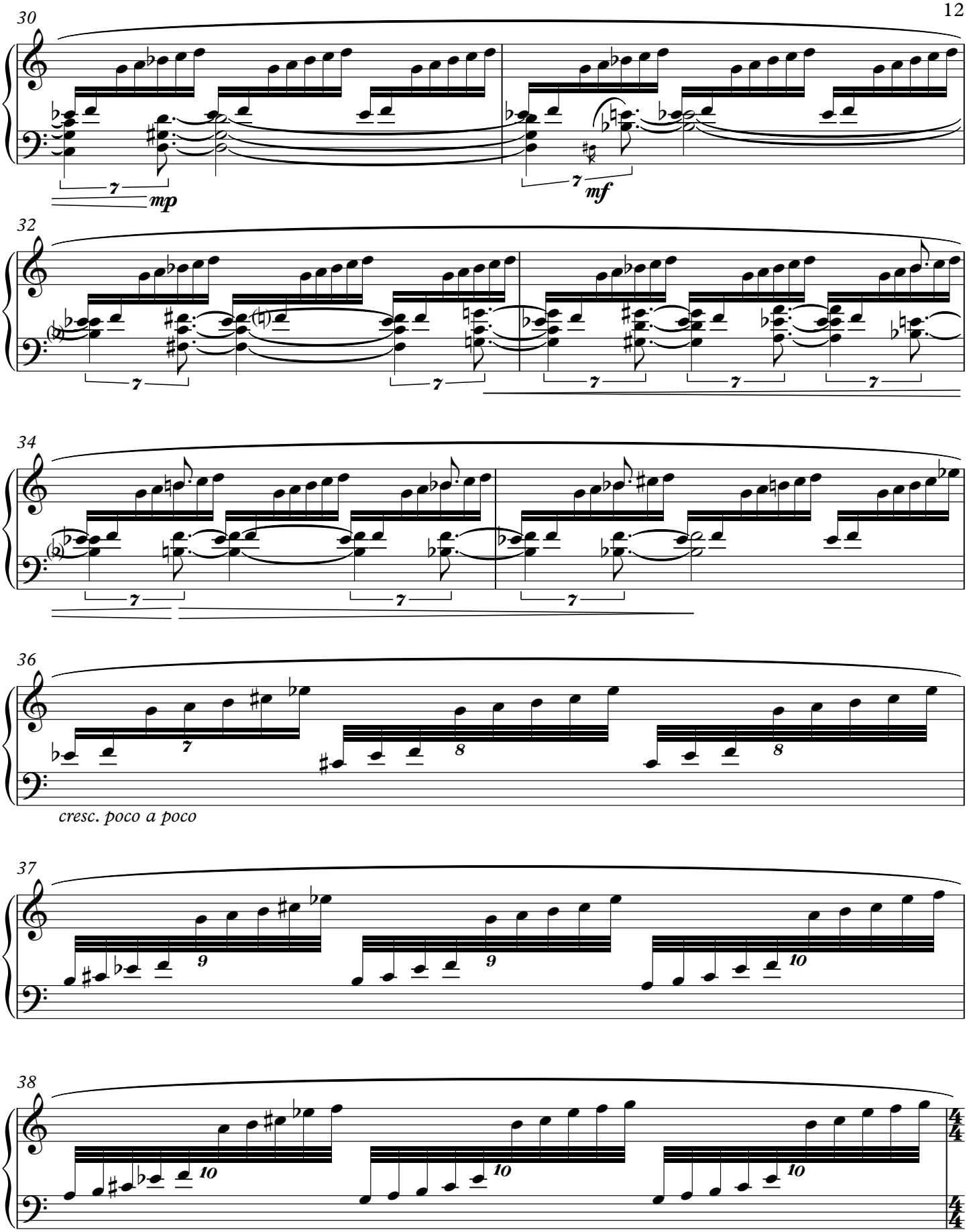


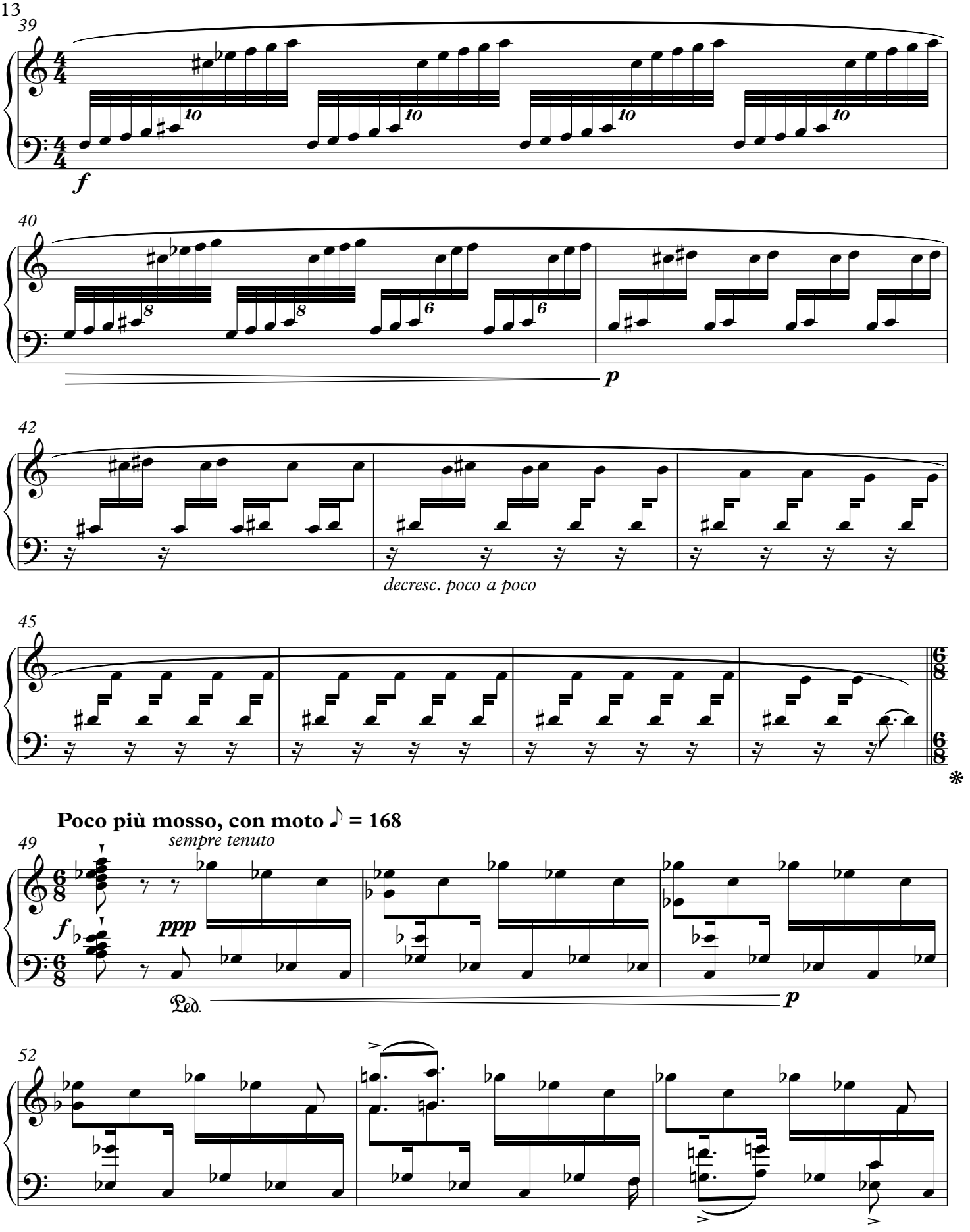
ca. 2′00″
09-04-2019

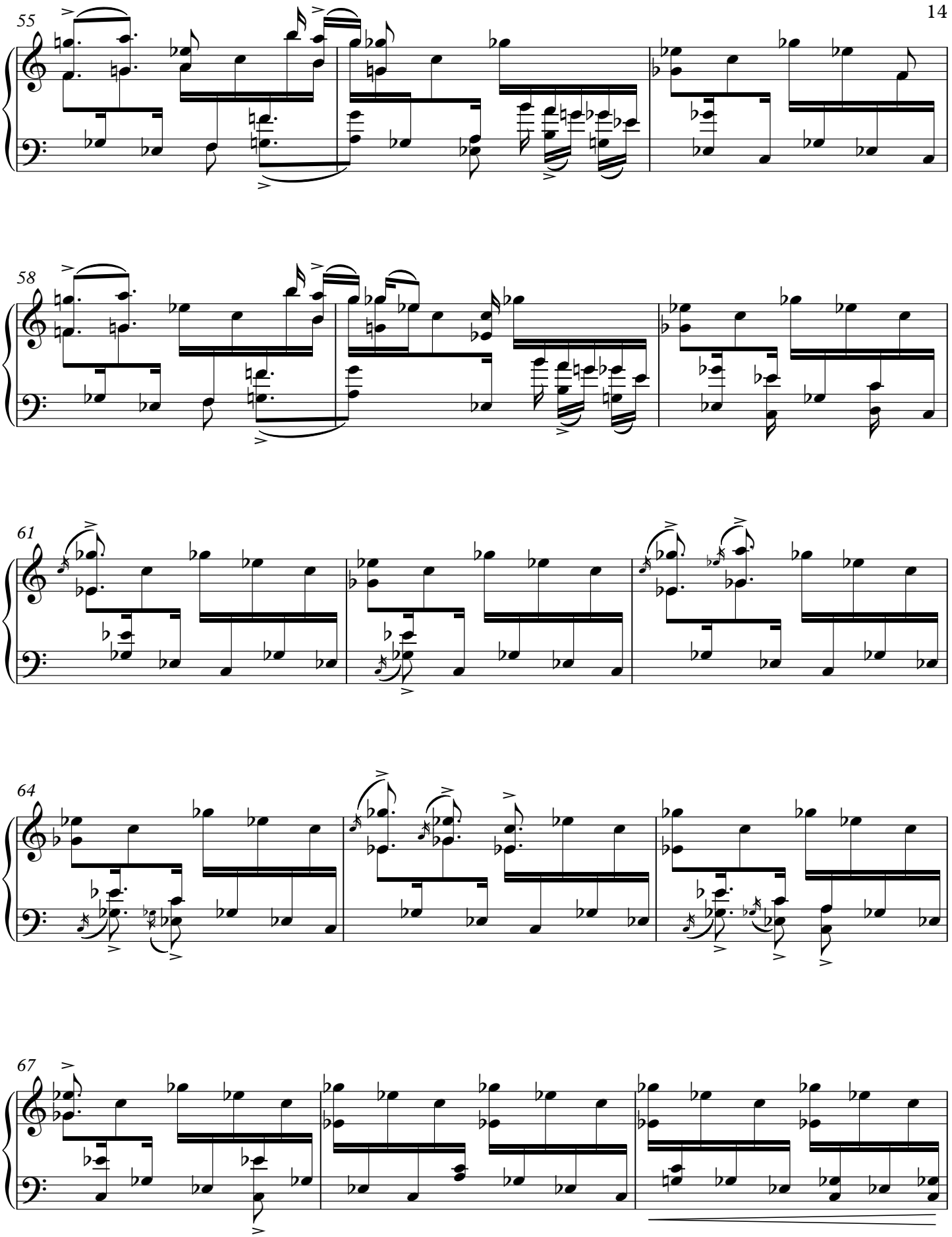
IV. Spiral

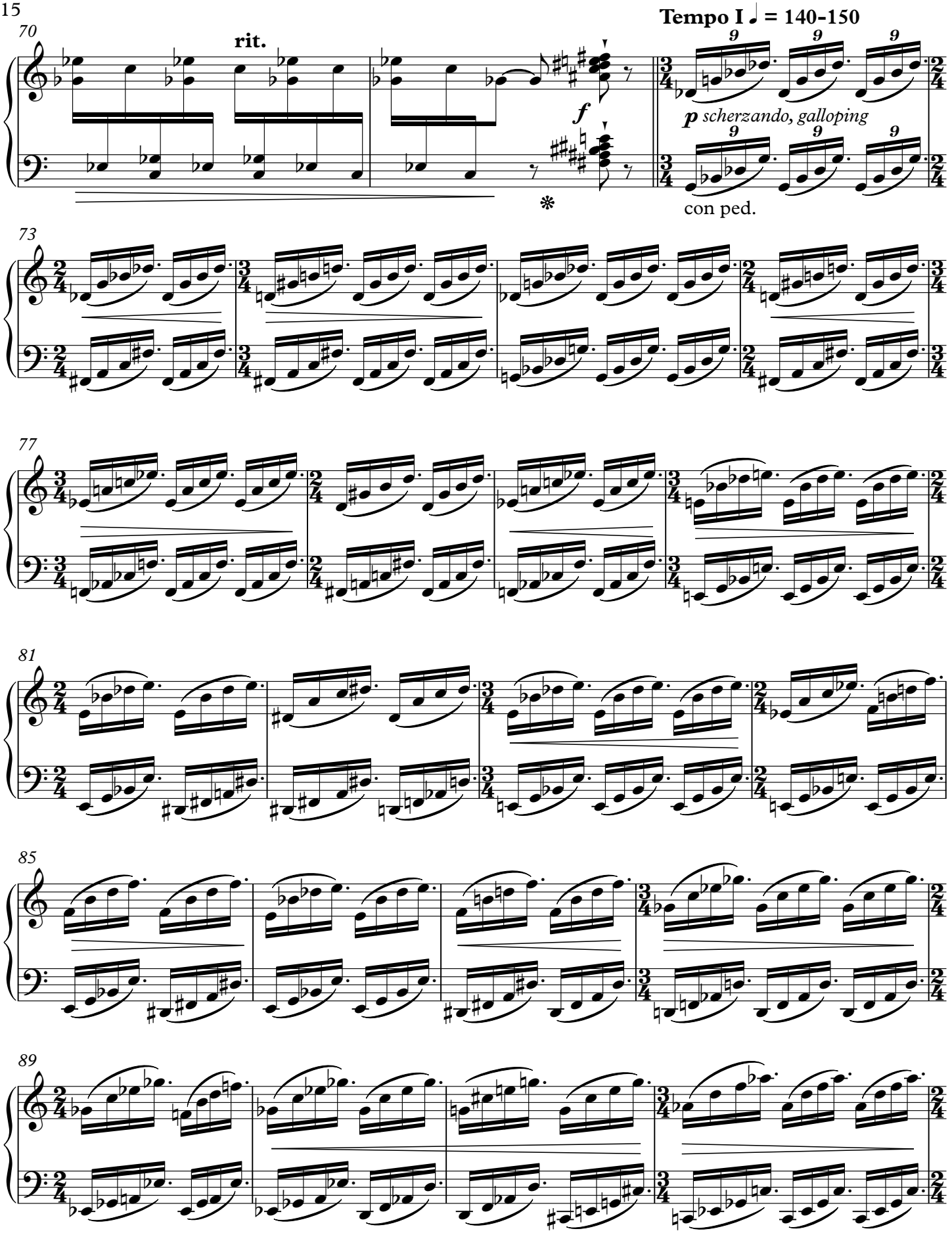


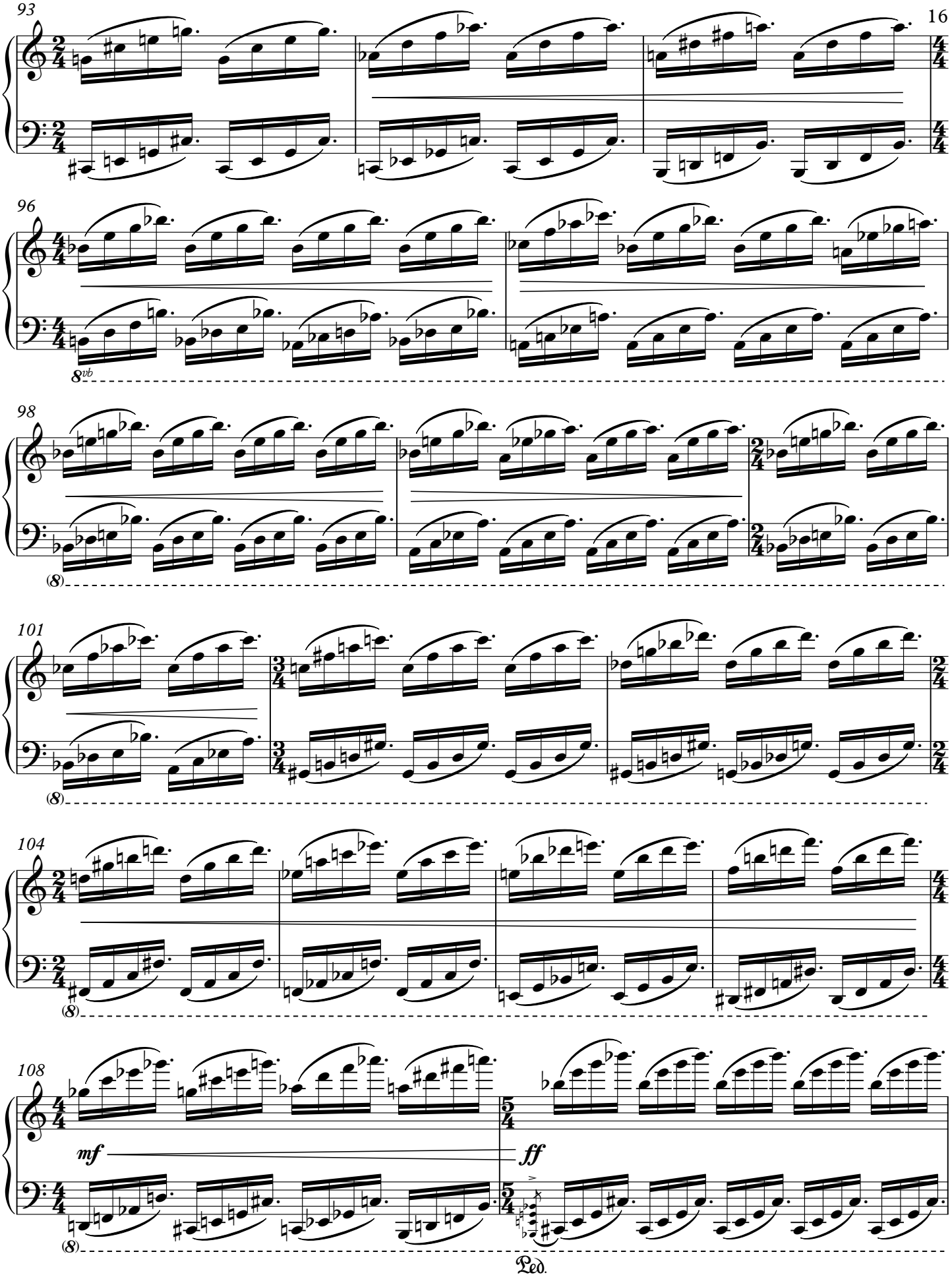

17
20
22
24
26
28

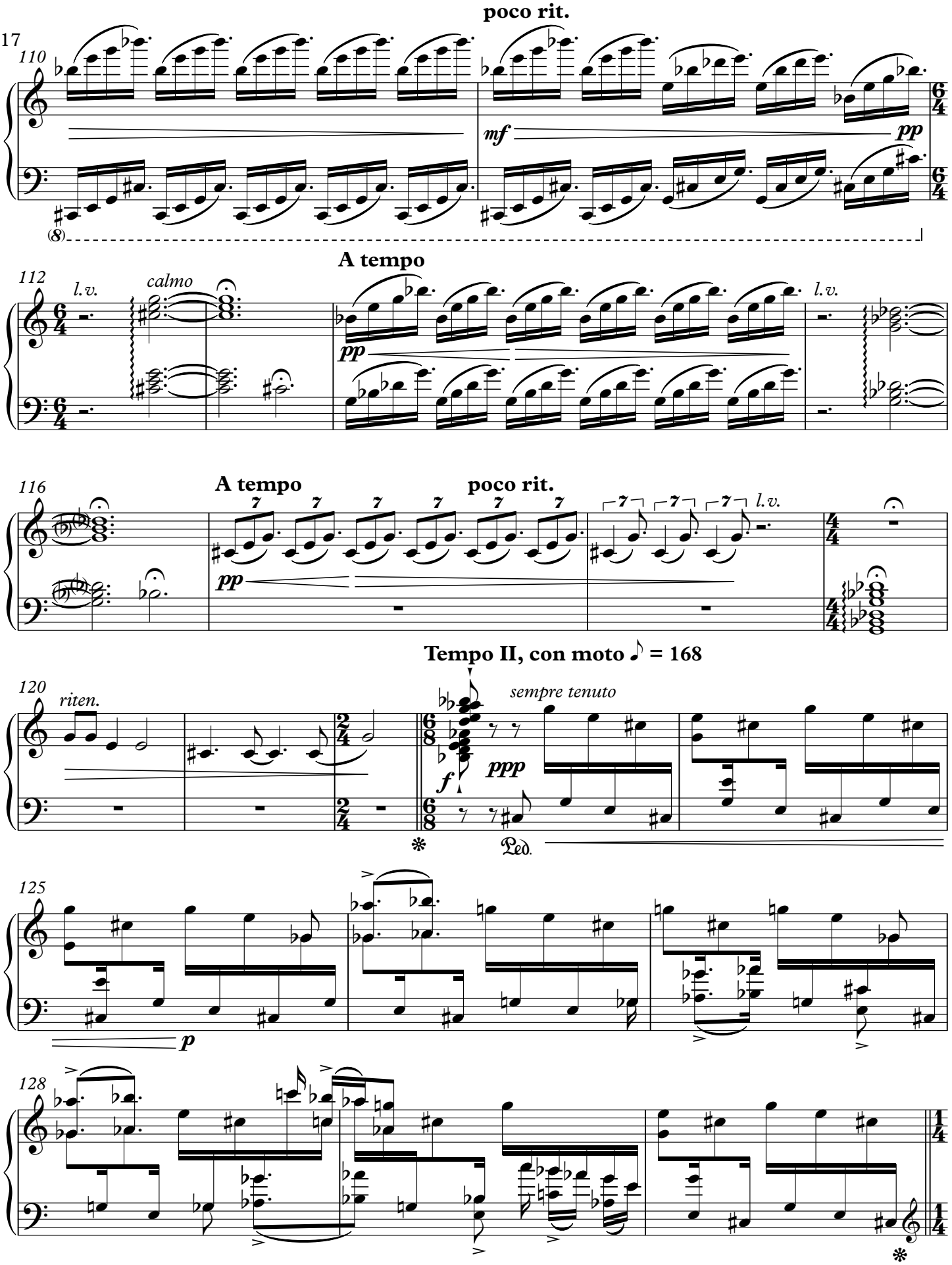

30
mp
mf
32
34
36
cresc. poco a poco
37
38


39
f
40
p
42
decresc. poco a poco
45
Poco più mosso, con moto ♪ = 168
49
sempre tenuto
f
ppp
Ped.
p
52

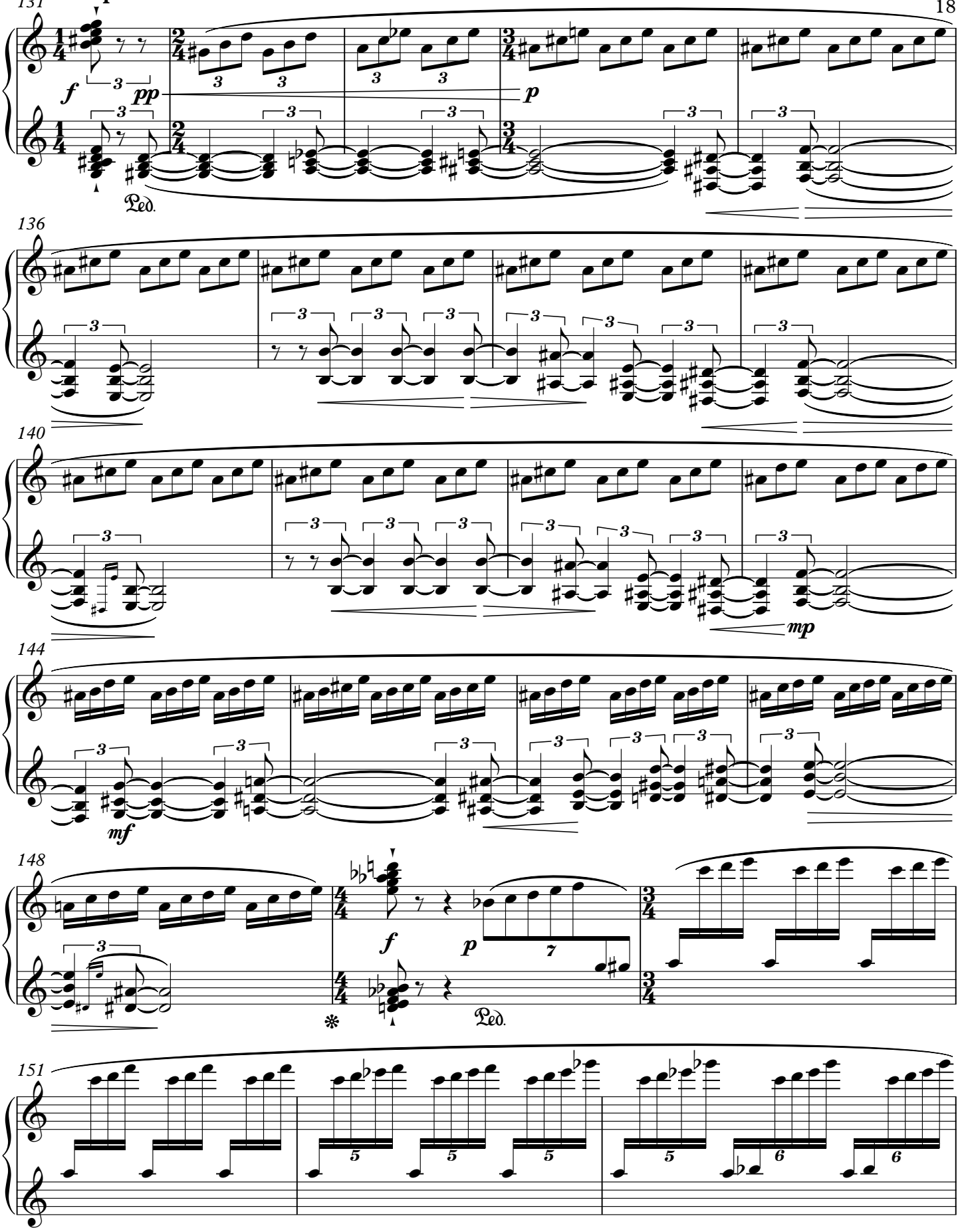

55
58
61
64
67

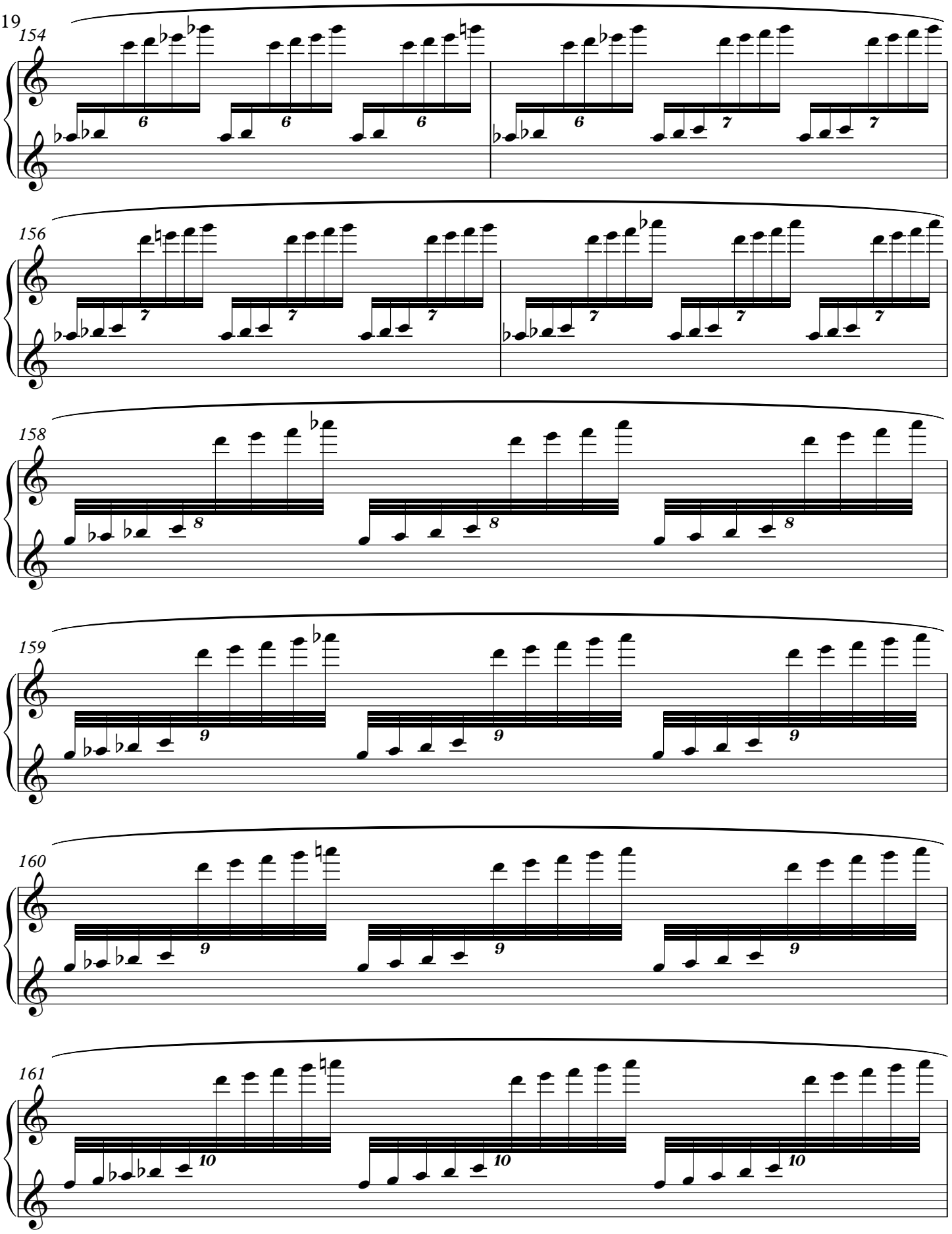

Tempo I ♩ = 140-150
70
rit.
f
p scherzando, galloping
con ped.
73
77
81
85
89

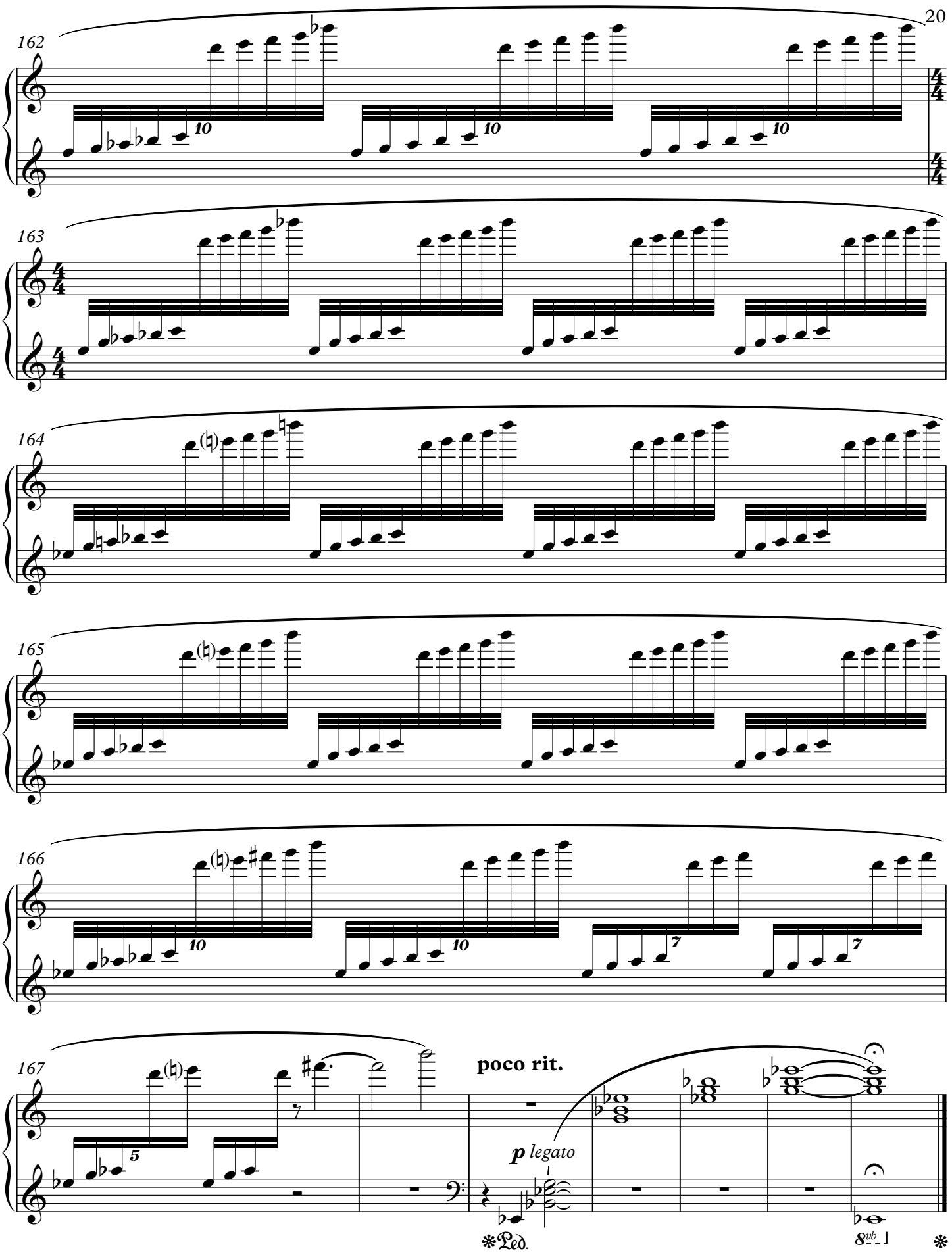

93
96
8vb
98
(8)
101
(8)
104
(8)
108
mf
ff
(8)
Ped.


poco rit.
17
110
mf
pp
(8)
A tempo
112
l.v.
calmo
pp
l.v.
116
A tempo
poco rit.
pp
l.v.
Tempo II, con moto ♪ = 168
120
riten.
sempre tenuto
f
ppp
Ped.
125
p
128

131 **Tempo I ♩ = 140-150**




154
156
158
159
160
161



ca. 4′45″
06-08 / 07-25-2019