UCLA

Contemporary Music Score Collection

Title

The Way North

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9tv9m8kz

Author

Moya, Reinaldo

Publication Date

2020

For Matthew McCright

The Way North (2017)

A Cycle for Solo Piano

in 13 Sections

Duration: 40 minutes

The Way North

A Cycle for Solo Piano

- 1. Prelude (Hopes and Premonitions)
- 2. First Crossing
- 3. In Transit 1 (Anxiety as the Train Approaches)
- 4. La Bestia
- 5 Nocturne Atop a Train
- 6. In Transit 2 (Waking Up)
- 7. Fuga
- 8. Rain Outside the Church
- 9. Running
- 10. Las Chepas: Ghost Town
- 11. Second Crossing
- 12. Elegy for the Nameless
- 13. Dreams of Flight

The Way North depicts the journey of a Central American migrant through Mexico and his eventual arrival in the United States. The work consists of a series of short vignettes that capture the emotional, physical and psychological struggles of the unnammed narrator as he makes his way north in search of a better life.

The journey is flanked by two crossings: the first one is crossing the Southern border of Mexico. The second is into the United States, near Laredo, Texas. The first crossing is easier, as though the migrant is unaware of the perils to come. The second crossing is treacherous, as he makes his way across the dangerously strong waters of the Rio Grande.

Shortly after crossing into Mexico, he boards La Bestia (The Beast), one of a network of trains that migrants take to make the journey. Many people fall, are pushed off, or are dismembered trying to climb on or off the train. Our migrant rides this train, falls asleep (which is when we hear the Nocturne), and is then awoken and has to run to avoid getting caught by immigration officials.

Fuga is a play on words: in Latin fuga means to flee. Also, a fugue is of course one of the main musical metaphors for struggle and conflict. However, since life is weirder than musical exercises and metaphors, the fugue keeps getting interrupted. My thinking is that the fugue metaphor breaks, because the reality of immigration is darker and grimmer than what an academic fugue can portray. As the fugue eventually runs out of steam and evaporates, it becomes clear that metaphors (even musical ones) cannot grasp this reality.

Rain Outside the Church refers to a quiet stop at a sanctuary church. Las Chepas: Ghost Town refers to one of many towns along the U.S./Mexico border that have become deserted because migrants no longer choose to cross there (usually because the U.S. government or the drug cartels have closed off that particular spot). The economy of these towns depends upon migrants crossing, and when migrants

go elsewhere, people leave and the migrants become virtually uninhabited. This movement quotes from the song José Pérez León by the norteño group Los Tigres del Norte, a ballad about the story of a migrant making his way across Mexico. He dies aboard La Bestia as he runs out of oxygen inside a container on the train. As I was composing this movement, I had a vision of our protagonist walking around the deserted town, hearing this song on an old distant radio. As he gets closer, the song becomes louder before it disappears again. This ballad also shares a motive from the opening of Mahler's Lieder eines fahrender Gesellen, an elegiac song cycle about a wanderer seeking meaning in a convoluted world. Thus, Las Chepas: Ghost Town brings together three converging stories of journeymen and the pathos associated with their difficult travels.

The Elegy for the Nameless refers to a passage from one of the books that I read in my research, "The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail" by Óscar Martínez; which describes the tracks along La Bestia as a "cemetery for the nameless" because of all the people who have fallen and perished along the tracks. I thought that honoring these nameless victims would be a suitable ending for the cycle. Dreams of Flight finds the elegy taking flight. I wanted the ending to provide a ray of hope: to allow our migrant to fly away like a bird, free, easily eclipsing the political borders that cause grief and struggle.

The Way North

I. Prelude Hopes and Premonitions

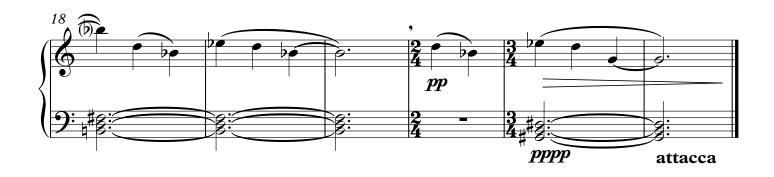
Reinaldo Moya (2017)

Moderato, gentle =80









2. First Crossing



3. In Transit I Anxiety as the Train Approaches







4. La Bestia The Beast



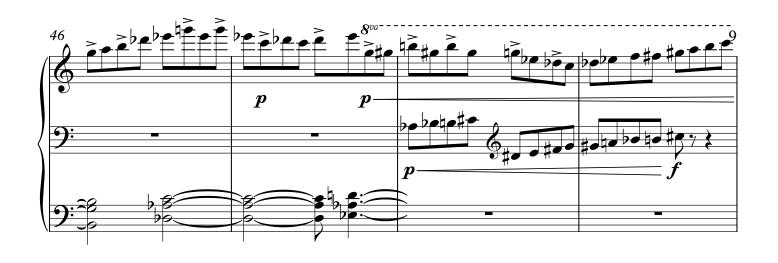






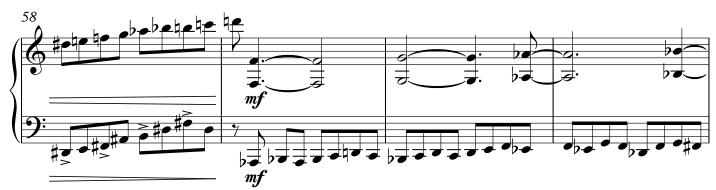














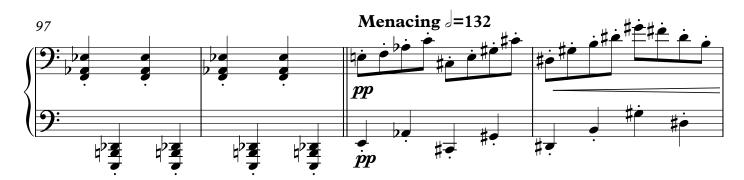










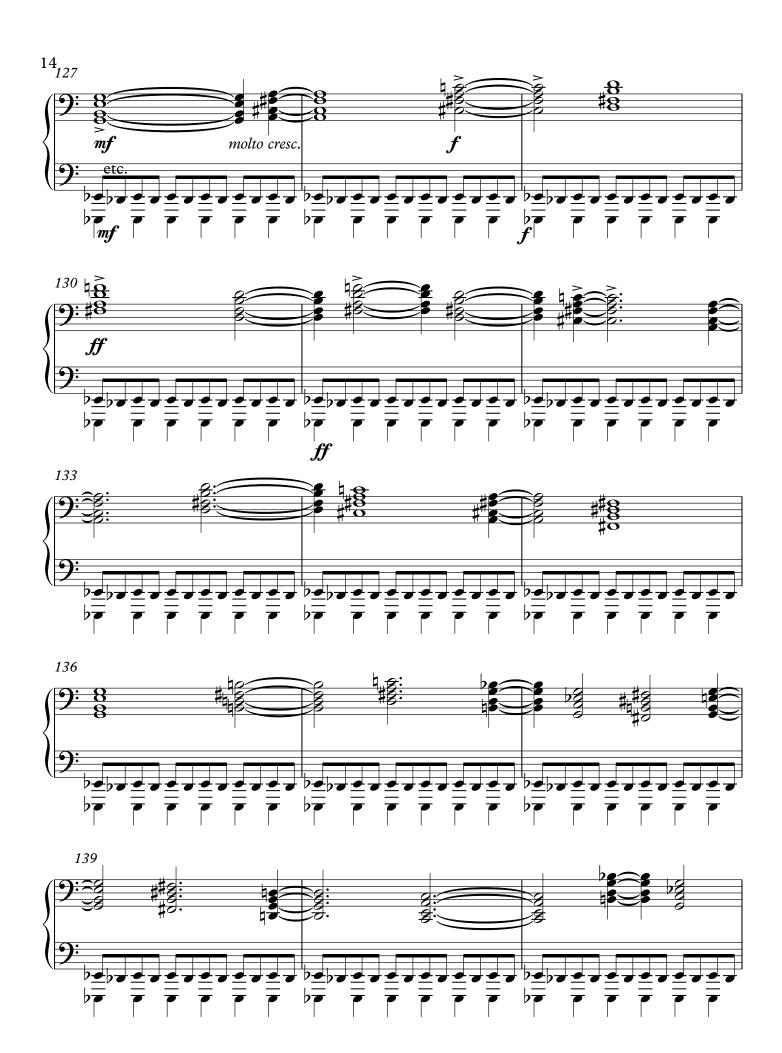


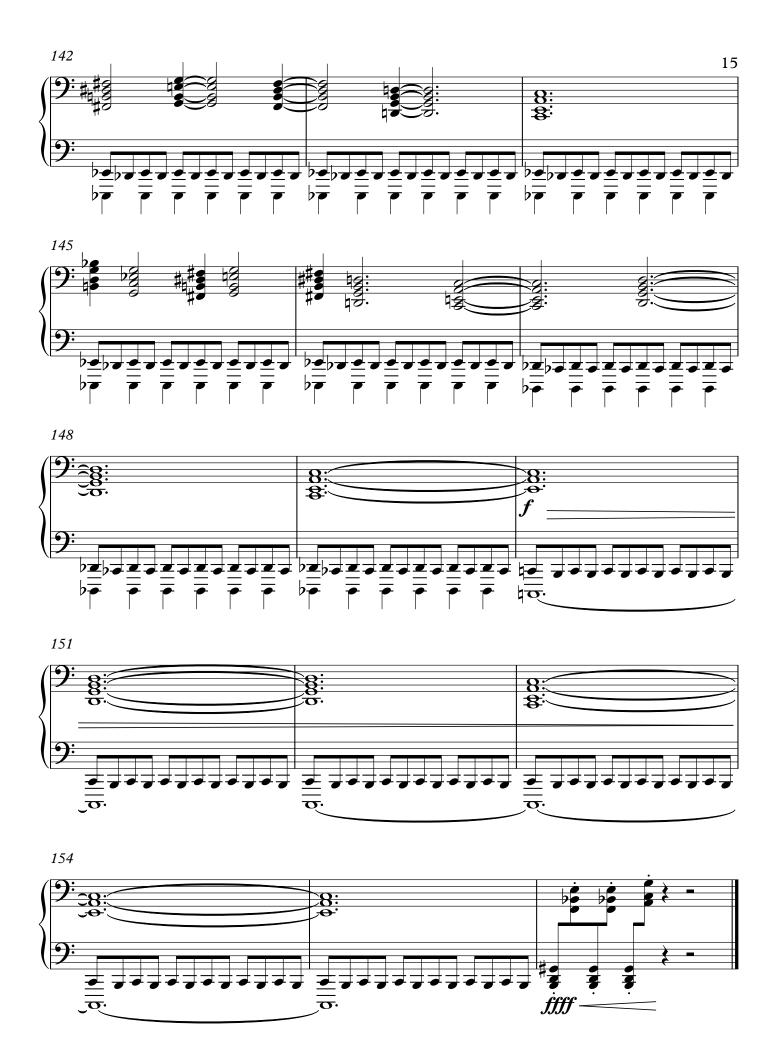


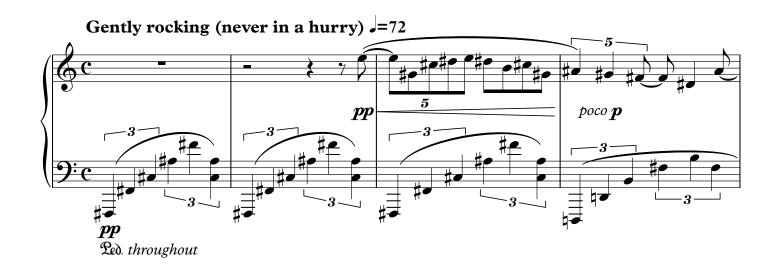


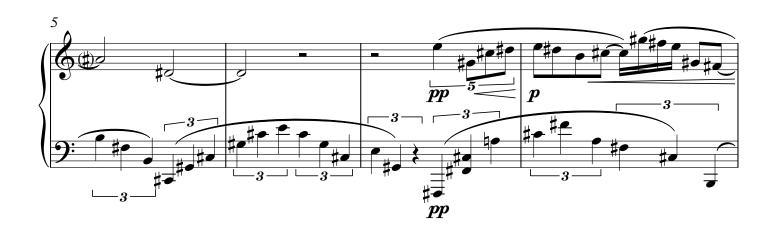


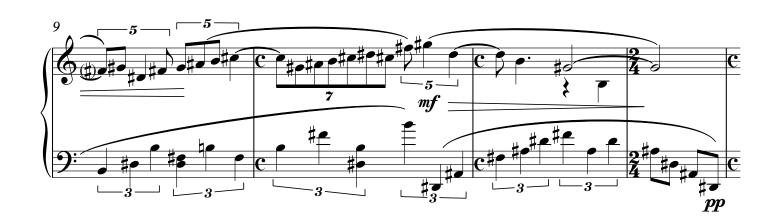


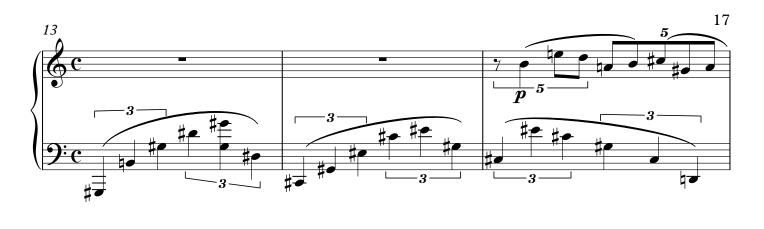


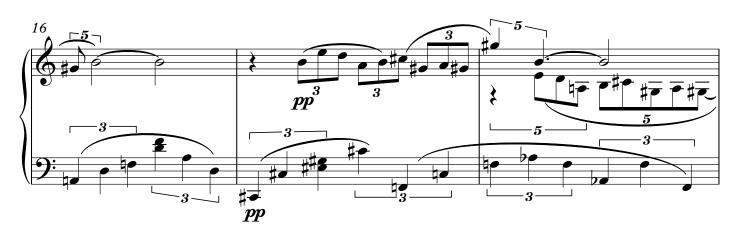


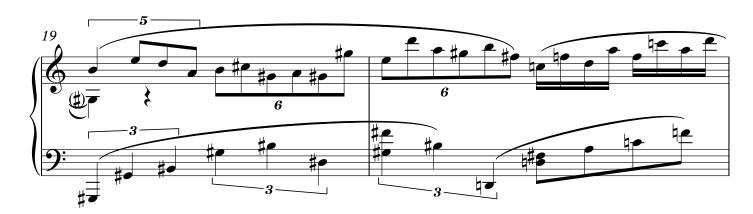


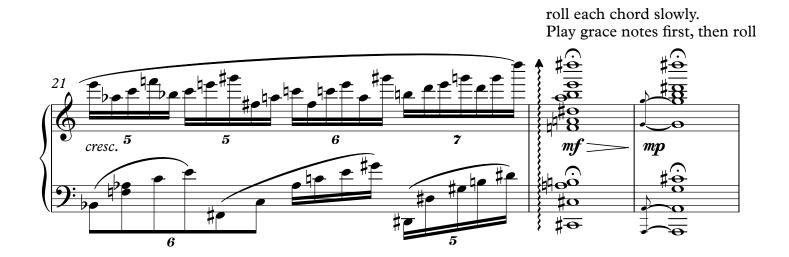


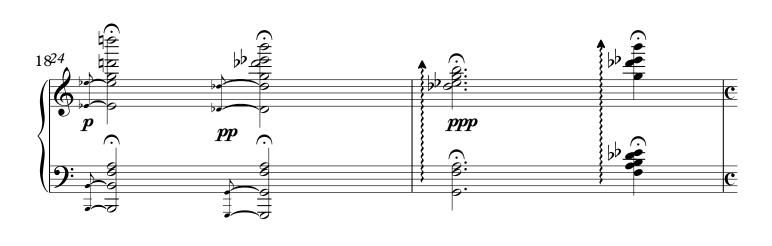


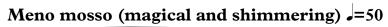


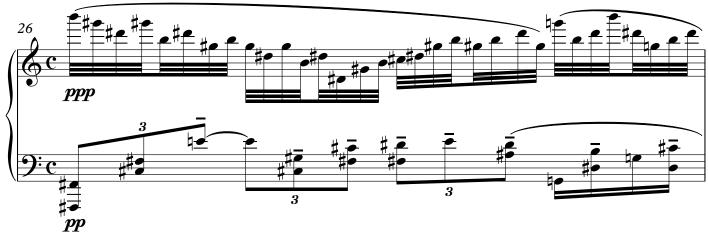


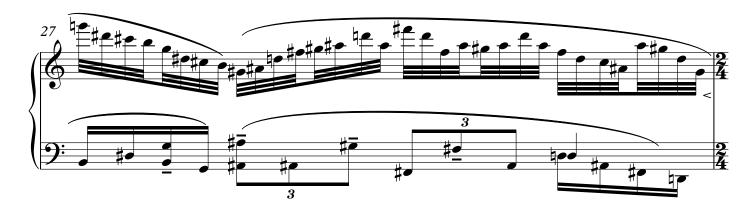


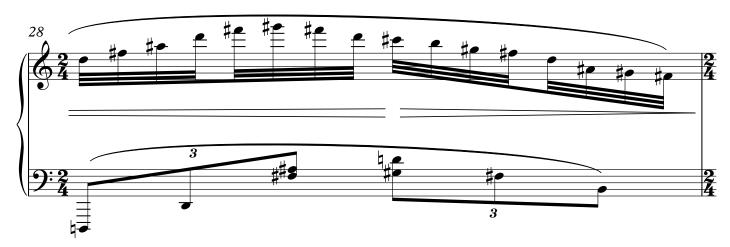


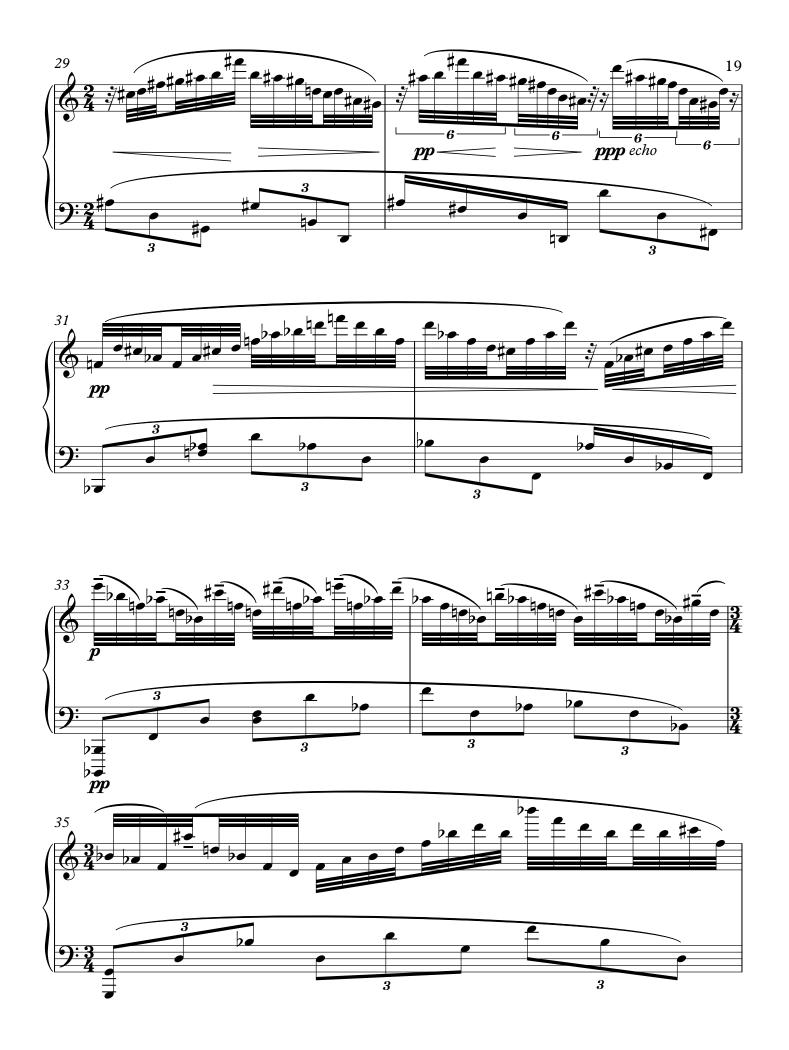


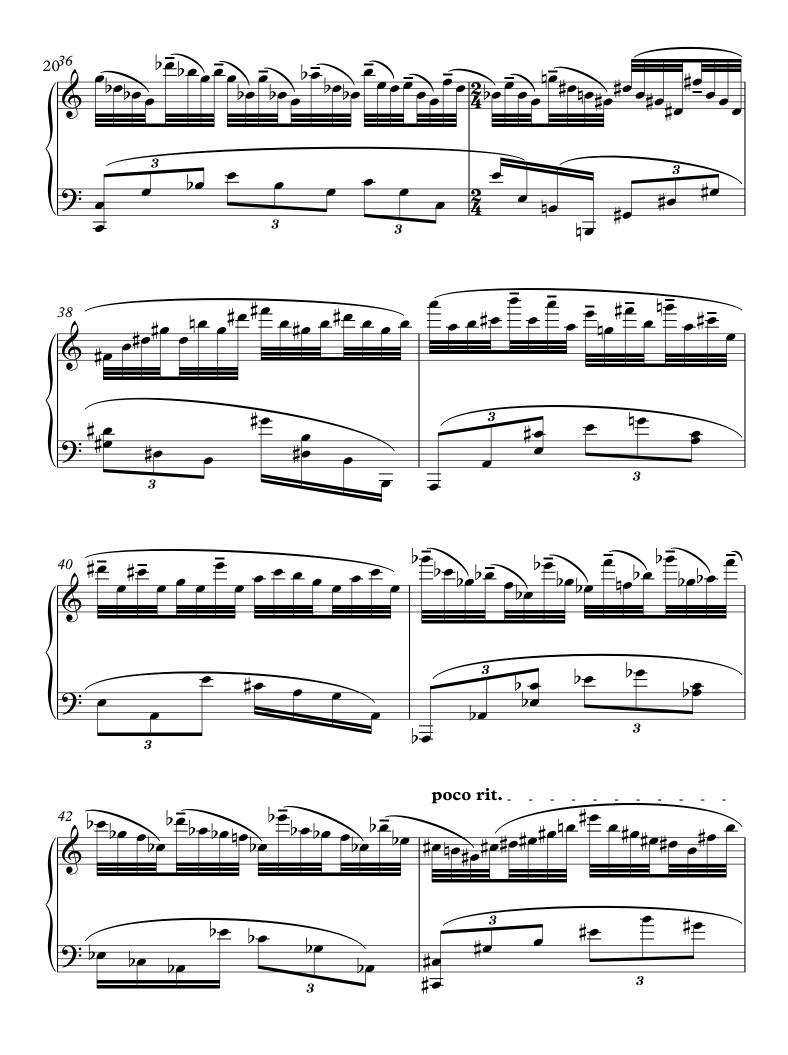


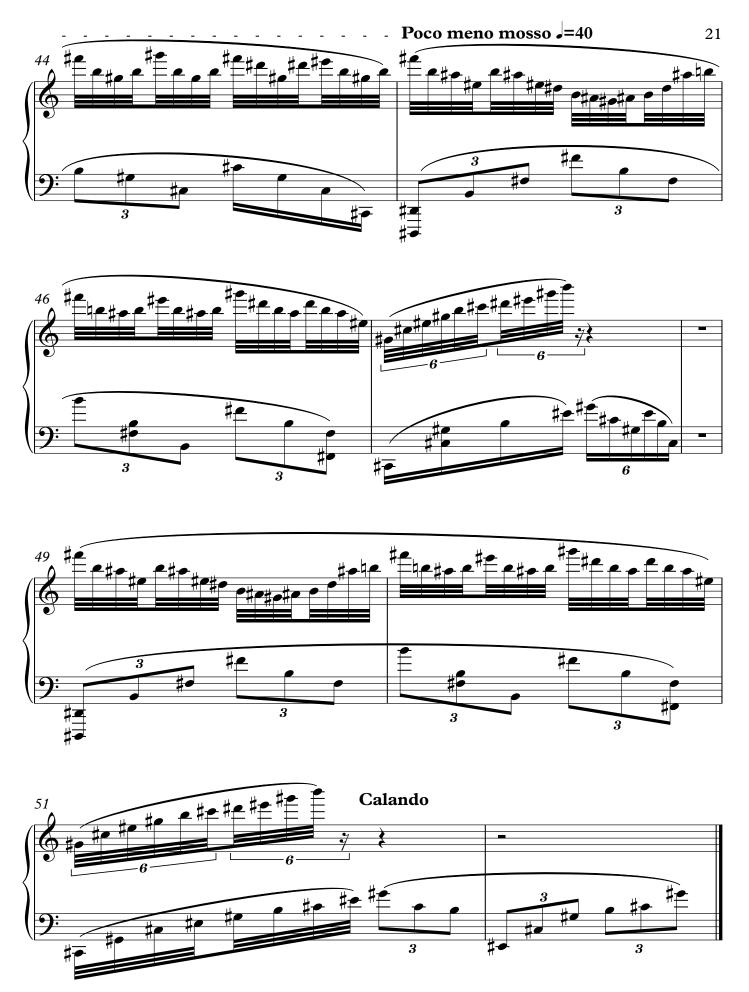








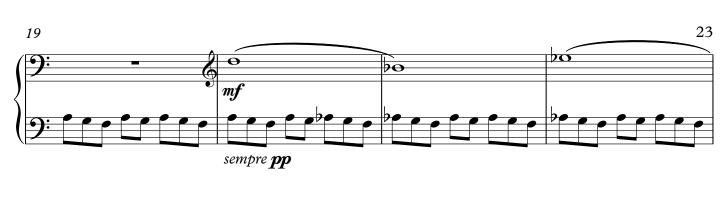




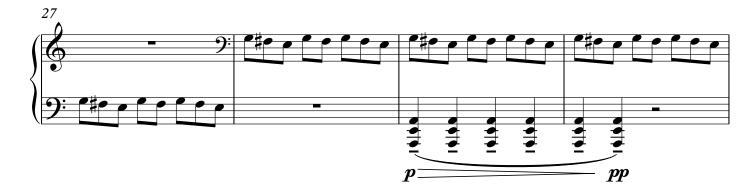
Brush Creek Ranch, WY July 3rd. 2017

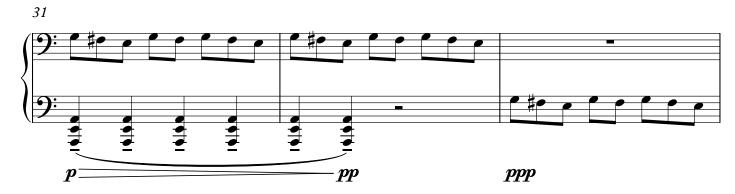
6. In Transit II Waking Up























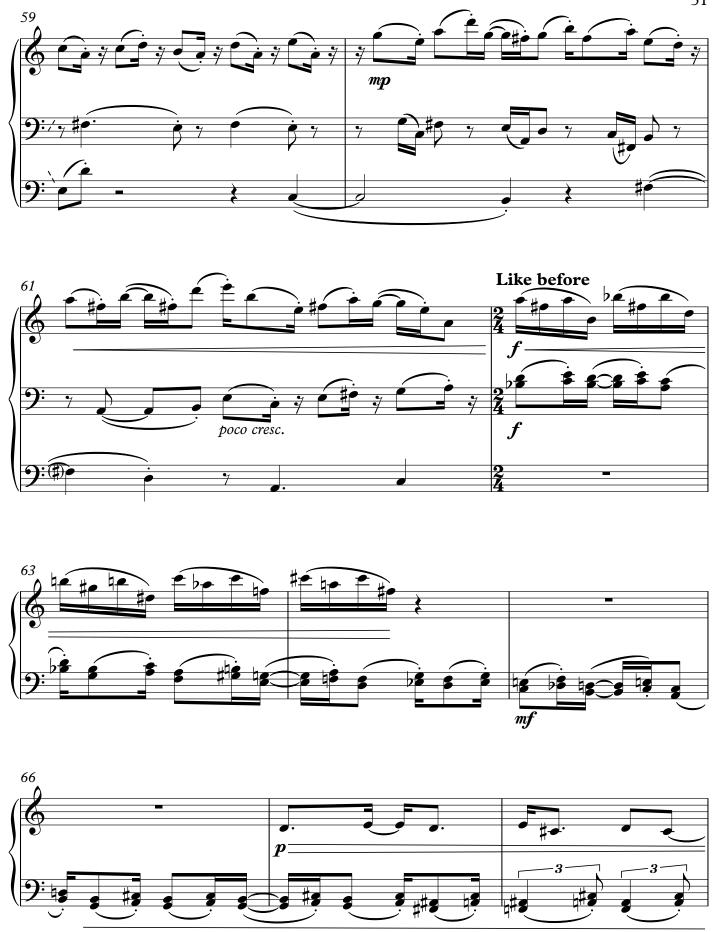




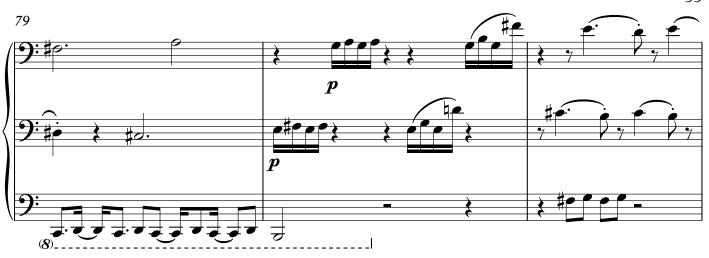


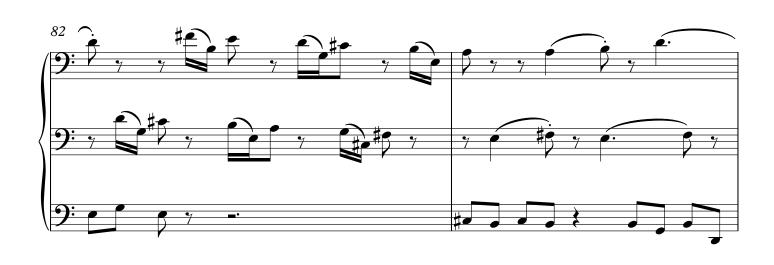






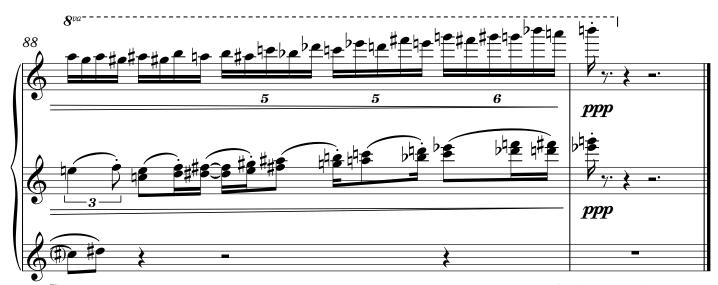




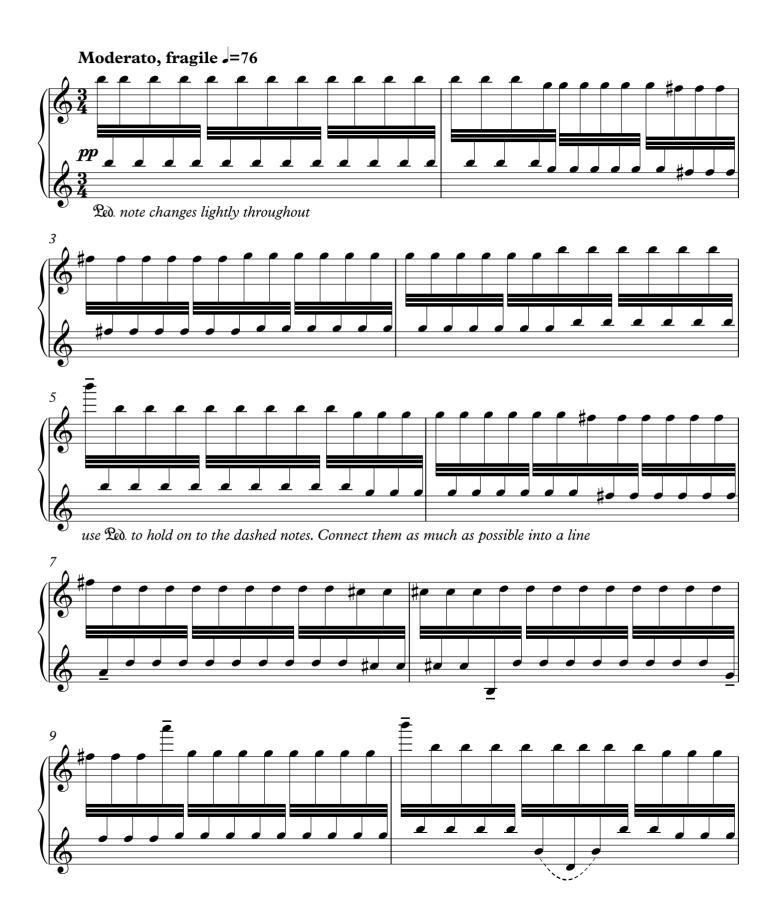


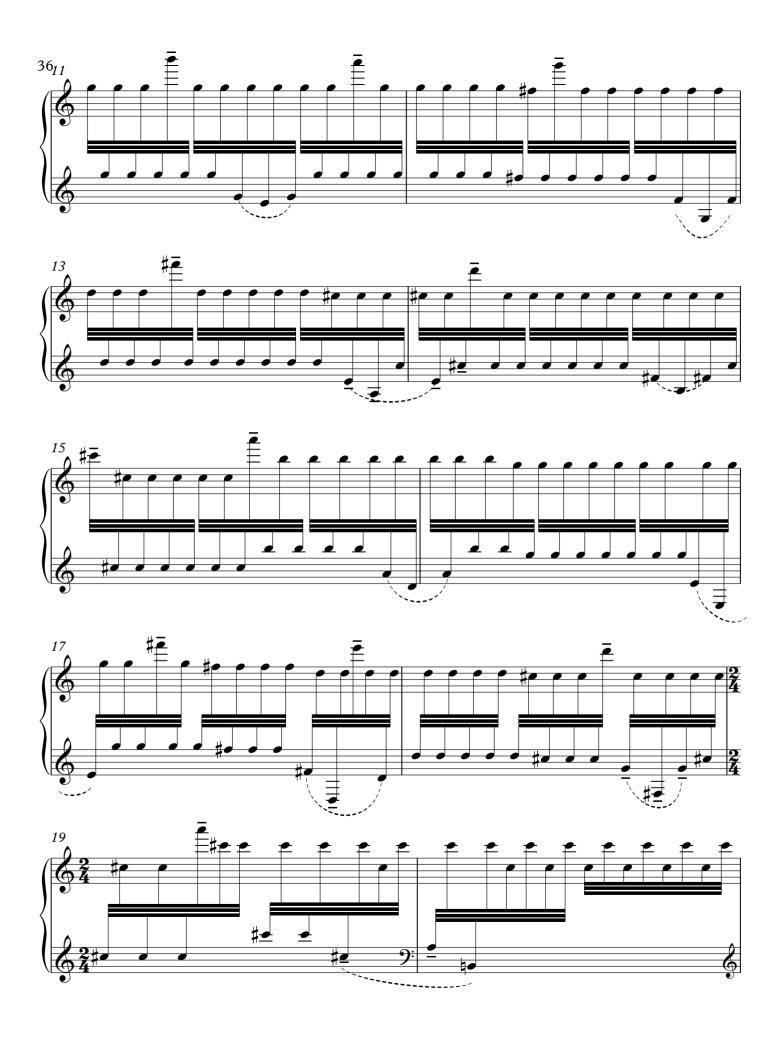






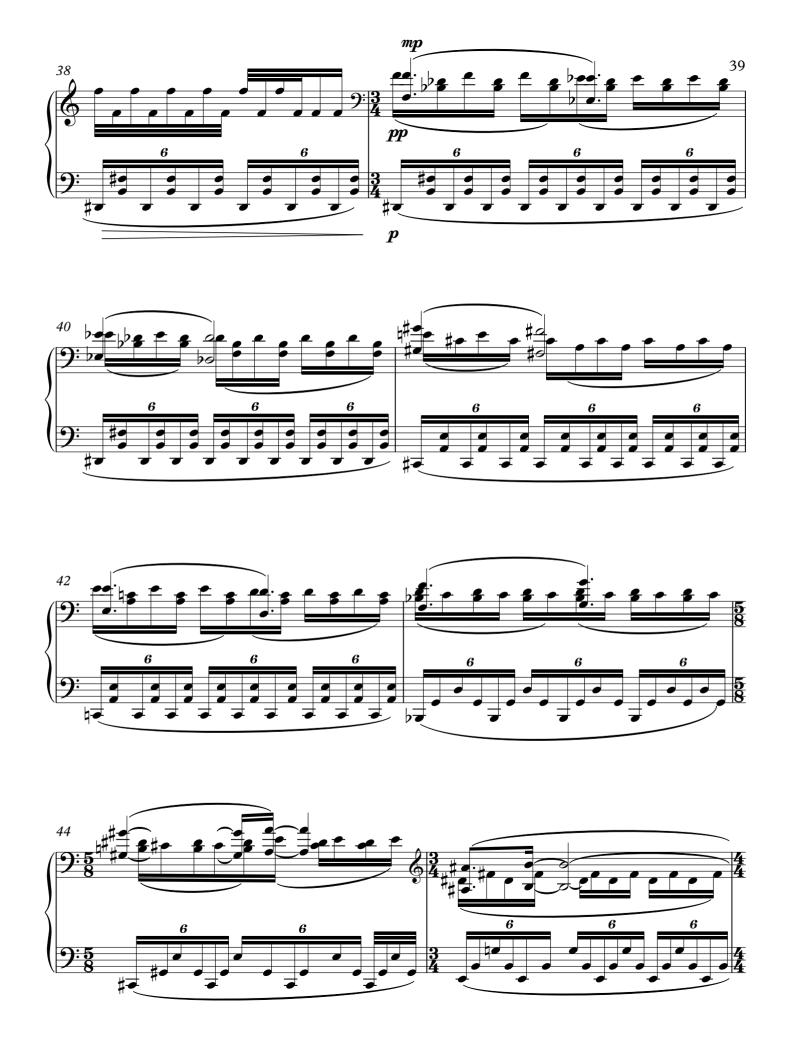
Northfield, MN. July 17th, 2017

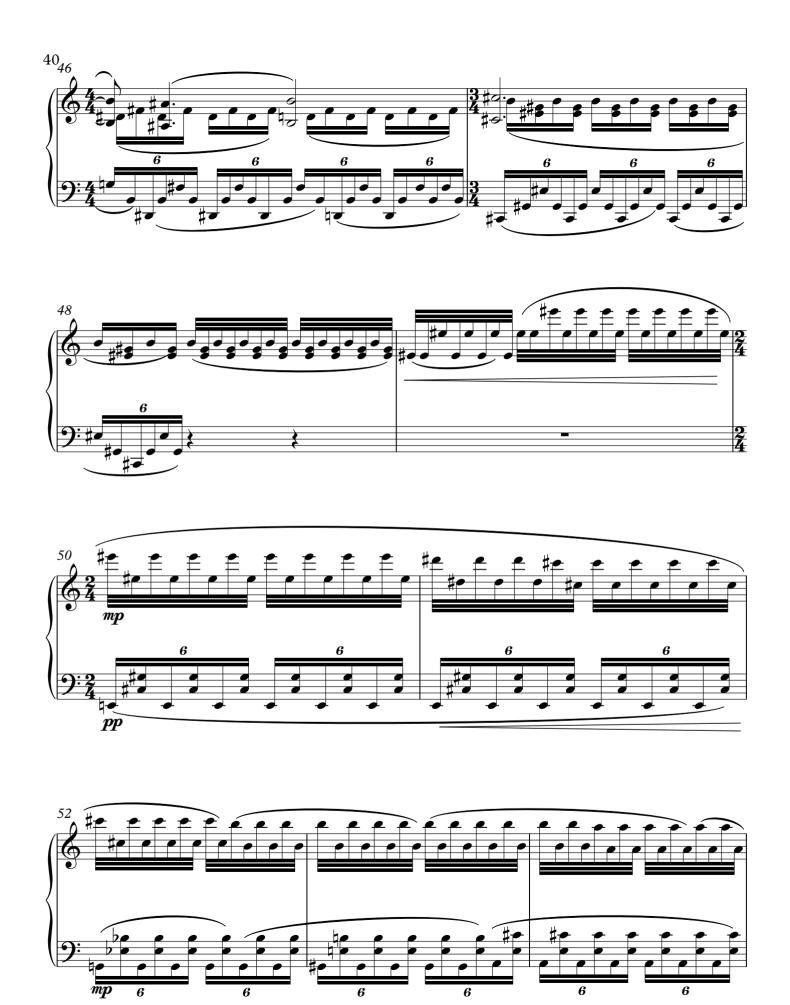


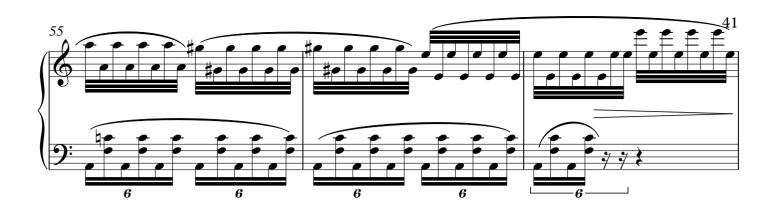


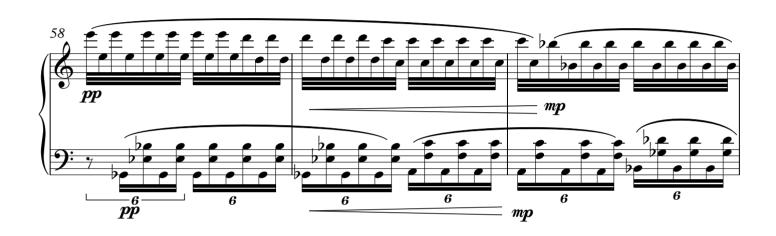


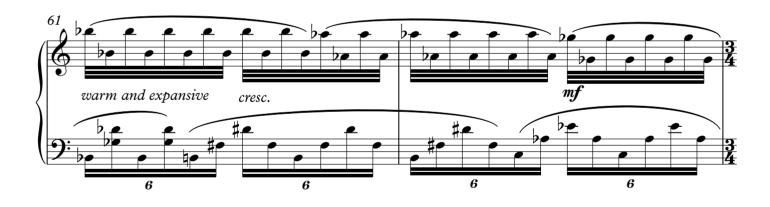


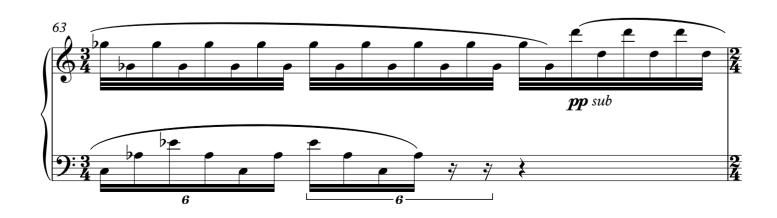


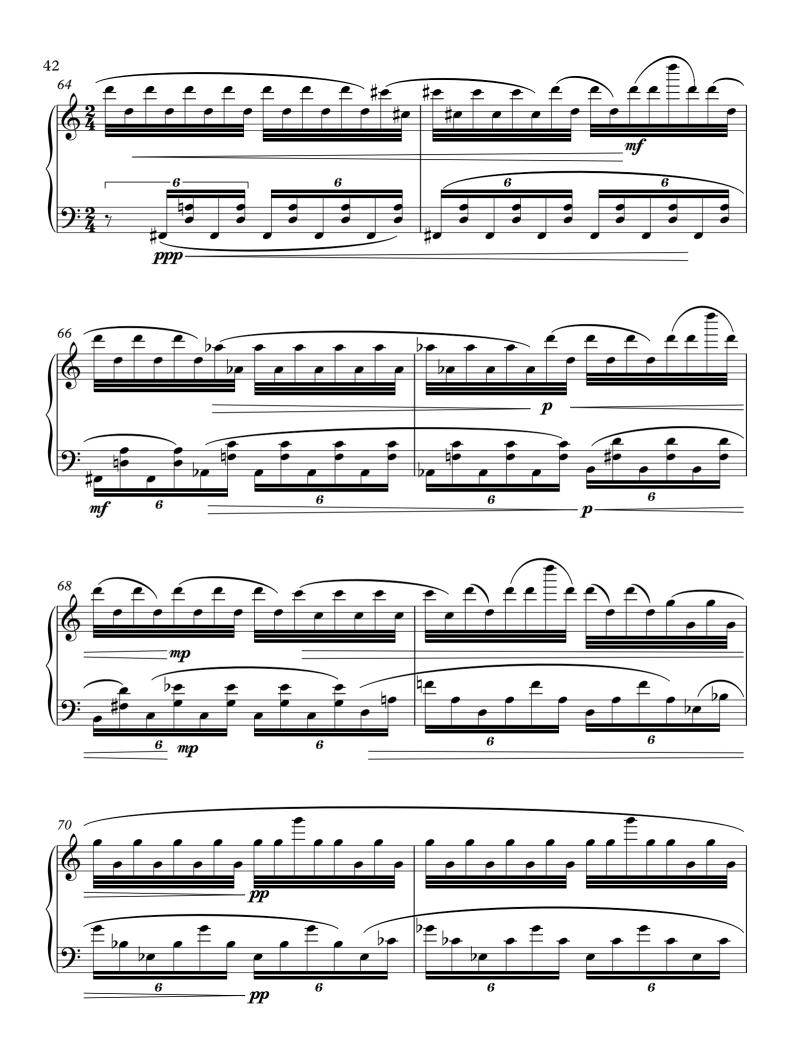


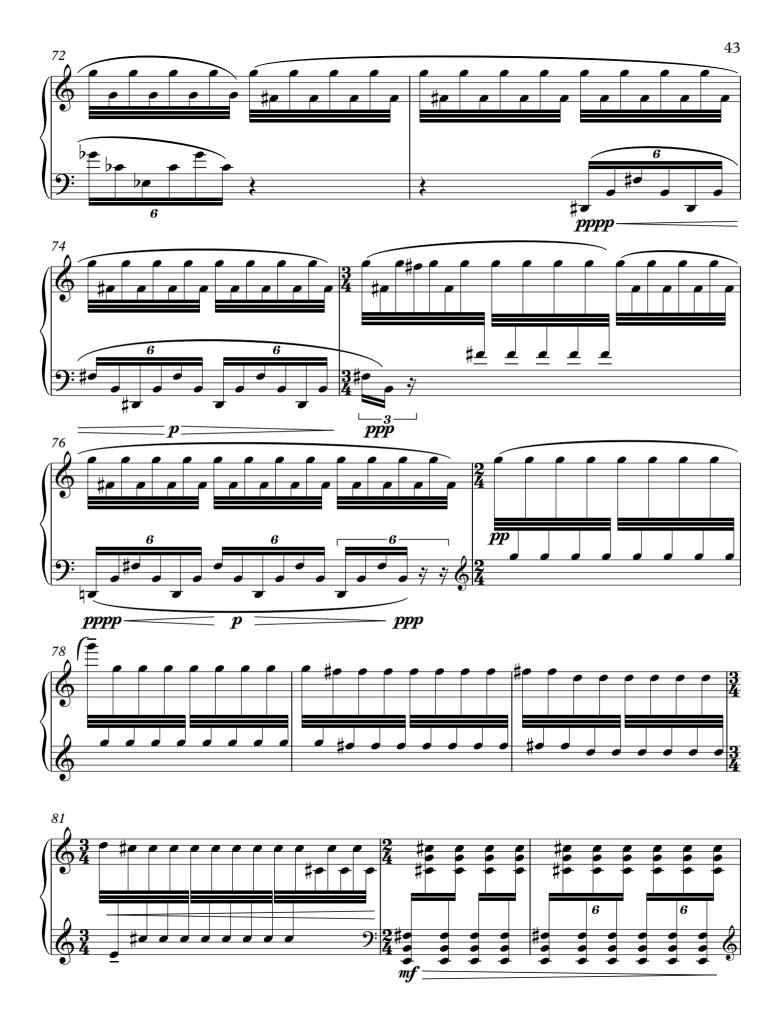


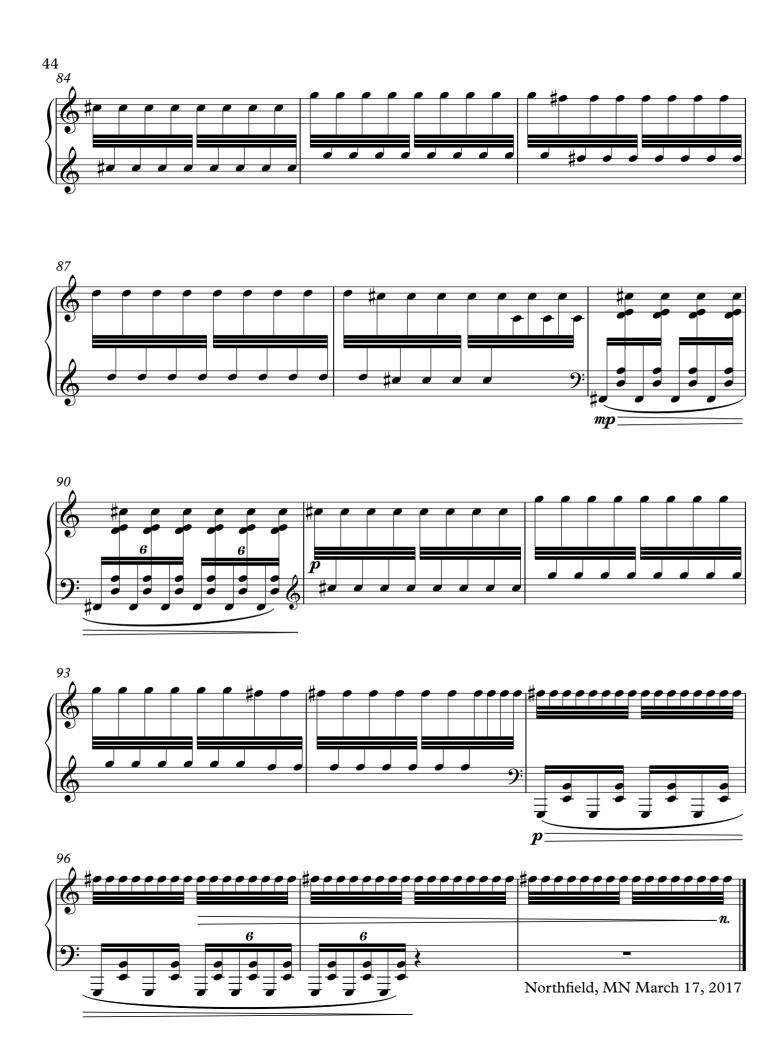




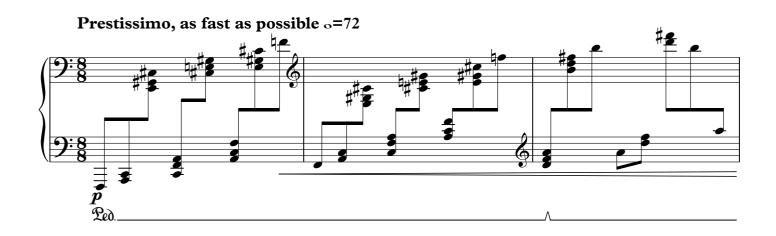




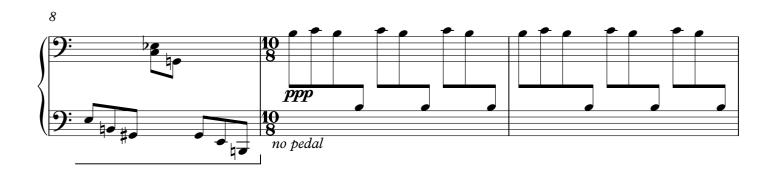




9. Running















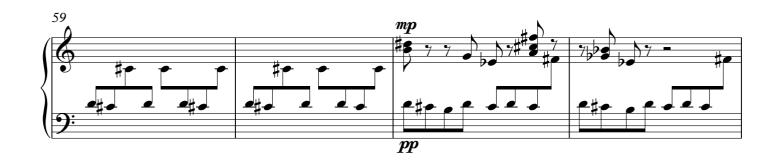




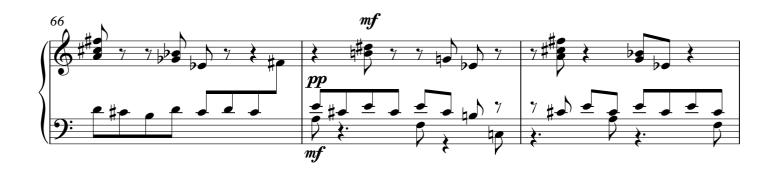






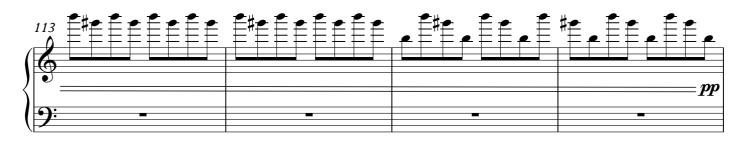




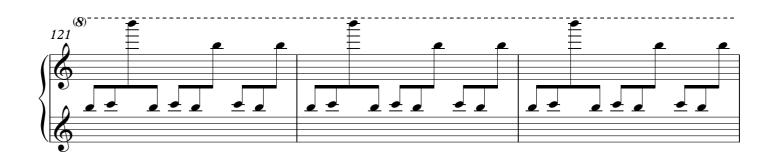


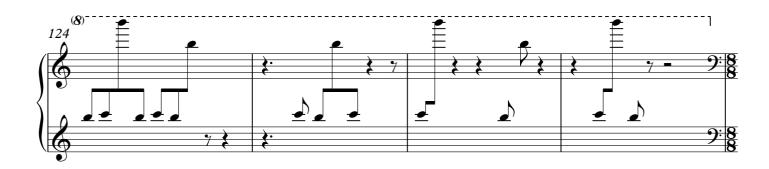


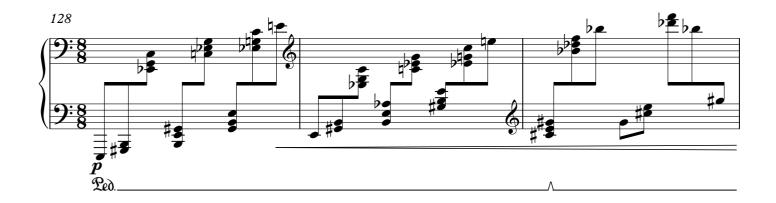










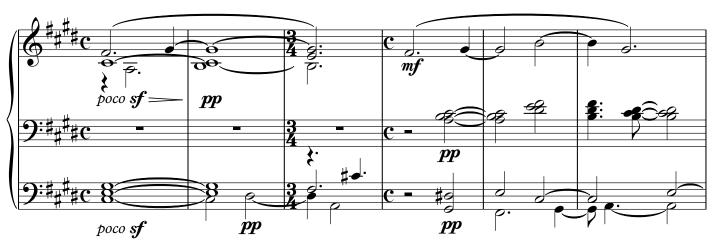






10. Las Chepas: Ghost Town

Slow, as though frozen in time =46

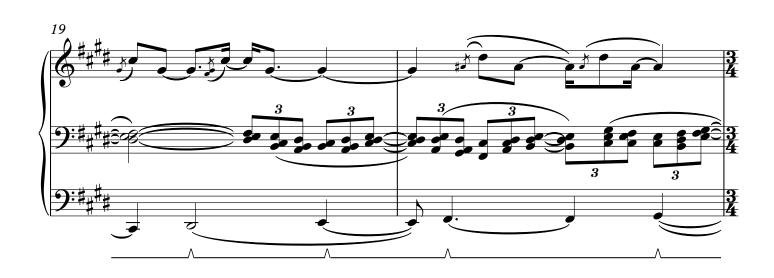


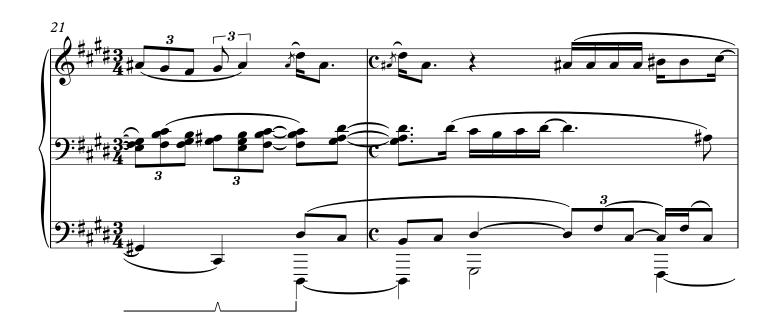




^{*} Roll any of the chords in this movement as necessary.

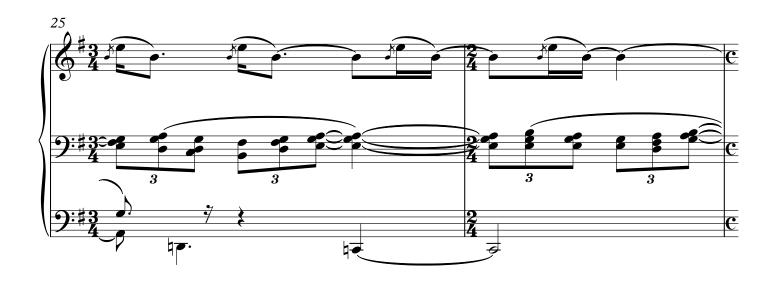


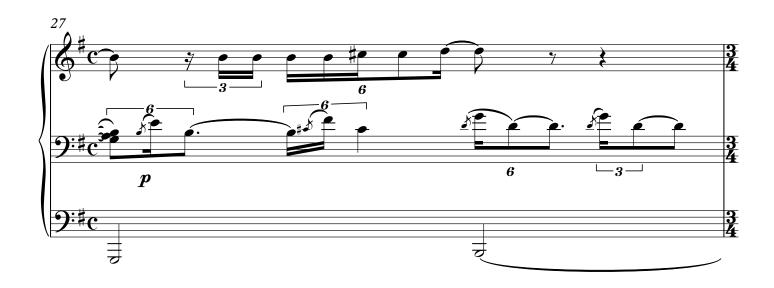


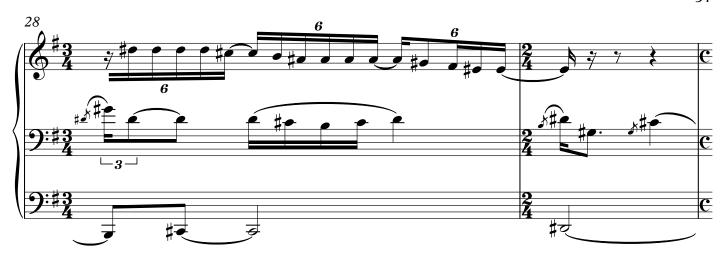


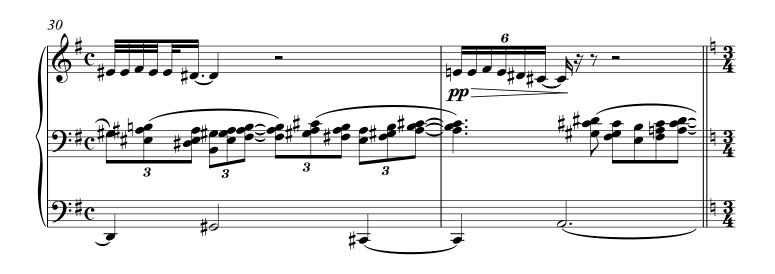






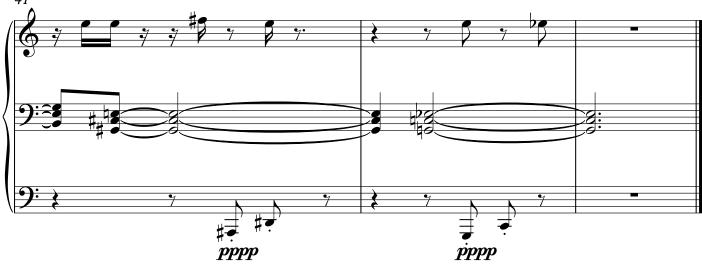








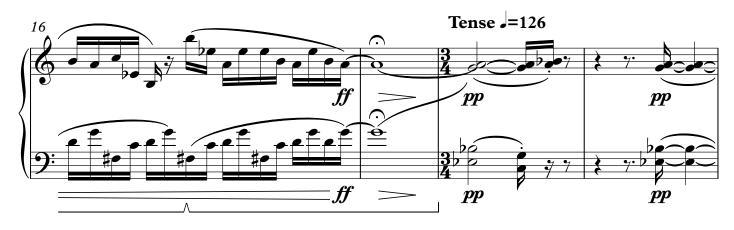


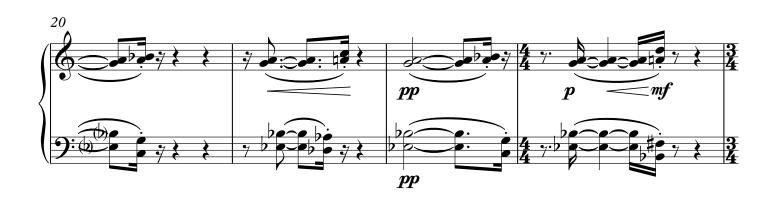


11. Second Crossing





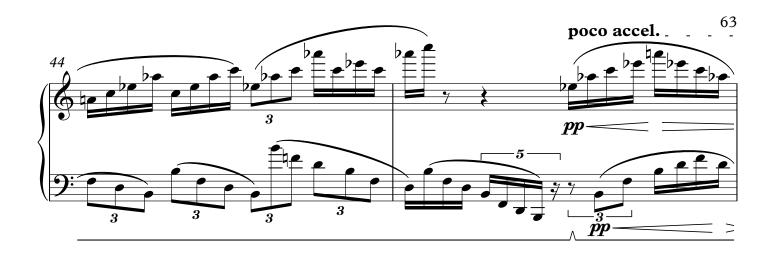


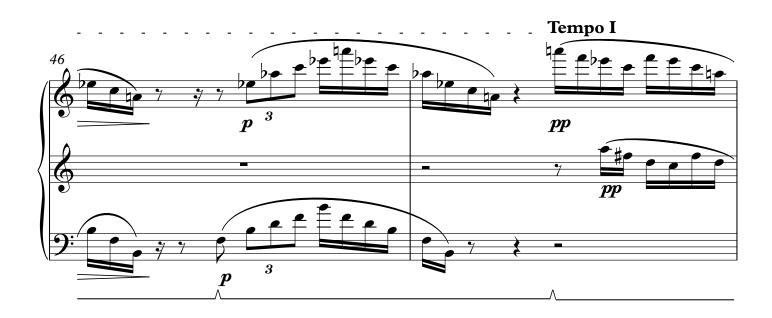


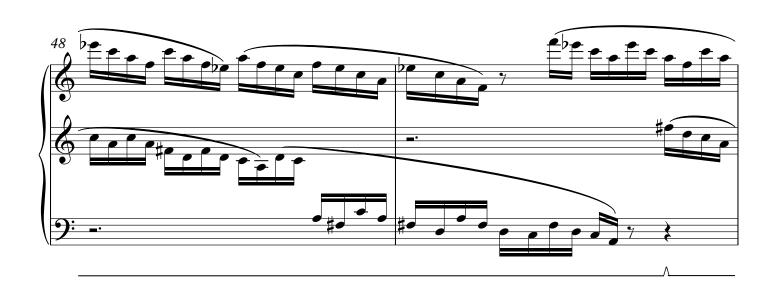
















12. Elegy for the Nameless











