John Carbon

Madeleines

for piano

JCcollections

PERFORMANCE NOTES

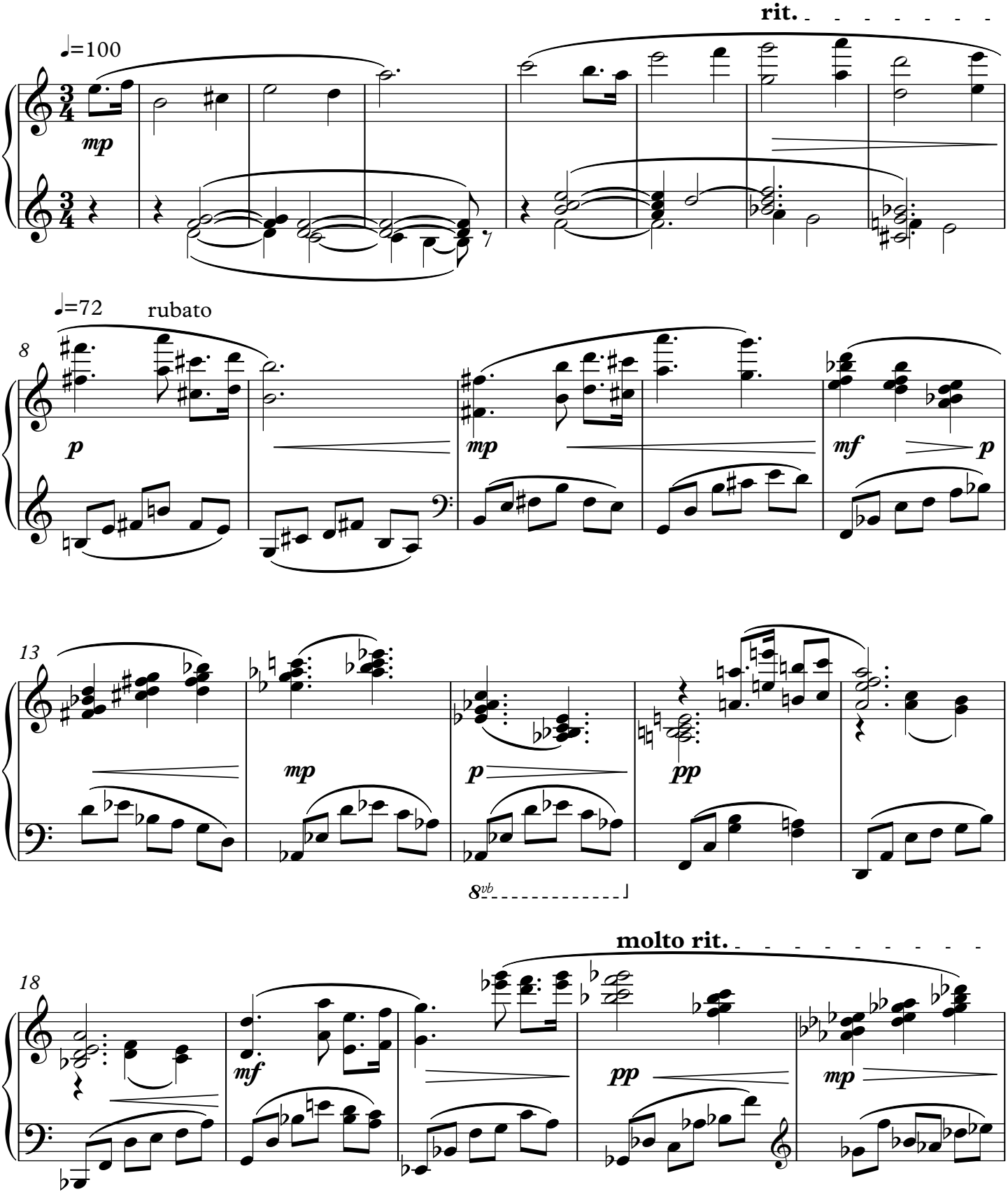
Madeleines (2016)
I Mémoire triste dans un café
II Il pleut à Brest
III François et ses yeux dangereux
IV Promenade dans la ménagerie de Versailles
V Madeleine déteste les devoirs

Composed in 2016, *Madeleines* is similar to my two sets of *Spanish Lessons* (1988 and 2001) which are both suites of character pieces for piano inspired by my admittedly limited travel in Spain. *Madeleines* is inspired by a much earlier hairbrained trip I took to France (and the rest of the Grand Tour) with my sister when I was in college. The title refers to Proust's "episode of the madeleine," in which involuntary memory overwhelms the protagonist when he bites into one of these small cakes. I also sometimes experience poignant memories from our fondly remembered trip triggered by various catalysts. The five episodes in this set of pieces attempt to capture the essence of some of these memories. The first piece, *Mémoire triste dans un café* (sad memory in a café), serves the purpose of a prélude. One might conclude that the madeleine is sampled in this location. *Il pleut á Brest* (It is raining in Brest) evokes memories of the wet weather in Brest, a city in Brittany near the coast. I was curious about this area because, during our travels, we met a boy in Paris with dark and dangerous eyes named *François (François et ses yeux dangereux)* who was from that area. In *Il pleut* the sound of rain alternates with church bells and fog horns (one of the poetic sensations I remember vividly about Brest). The third piece (*François*) is a blend of a barcarolle and a funeral march. I continued to send one-way letters to François after we returned and one day the French police called to tell me that he was dead and that they had found one of my letters on his body, which had been tossed into the Seine. They wanted more information, and they revealed that he had been smuggling drugs out of Turkey. I think the next piece, *Promenade dans la ménagerie de Versailles* (Walk in the zoo at Versailles), is tempered by later memories of a trip I took to the zoo at Schönbrunn palace near Vienna, the oldest Baroque zoo, which was in a terrible state of decay when I saw it, hence the wistful air. The finale of the set, *Madeleine déteste les devoirs* (Madeleine hates homework) is a bow to the French primer I grew up with, which had as one of its main characters a little girl who I *think* may have been named Madeleine. I know her father was named François. My memories are mixed up, the actual *François Thibaud* is remembered as the inventor of the fast-track method of learning French, which was in vogue when I first studied it in 6th grade. The idea here is that Madeleine, the daughter of *François,* is having a tantrum and playing with her hoops or a bike rather than doing her English homework.

John Carbon

Madeleines

I. Mémoire triste dans un café



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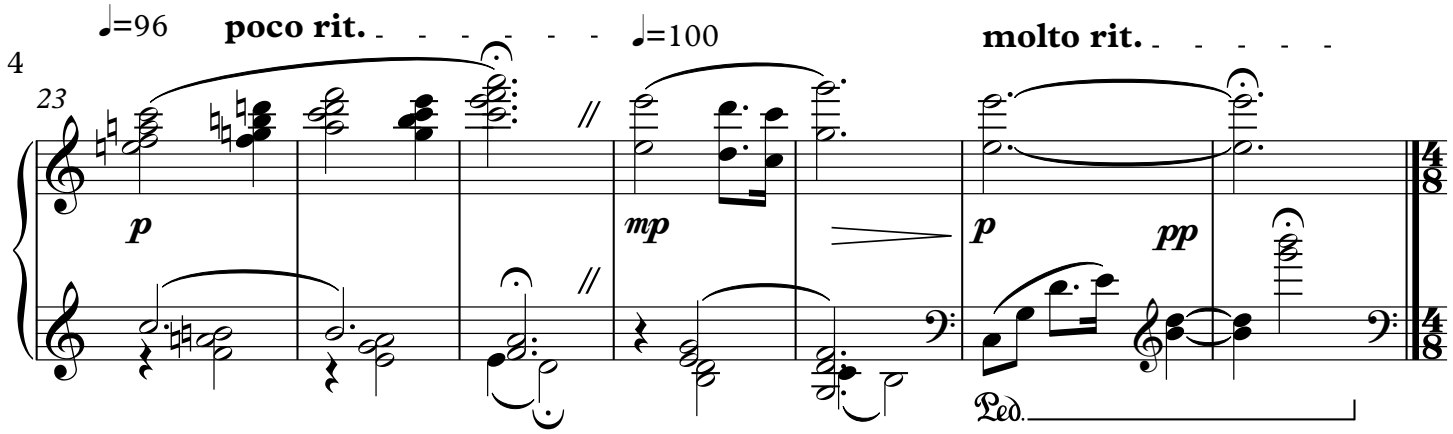
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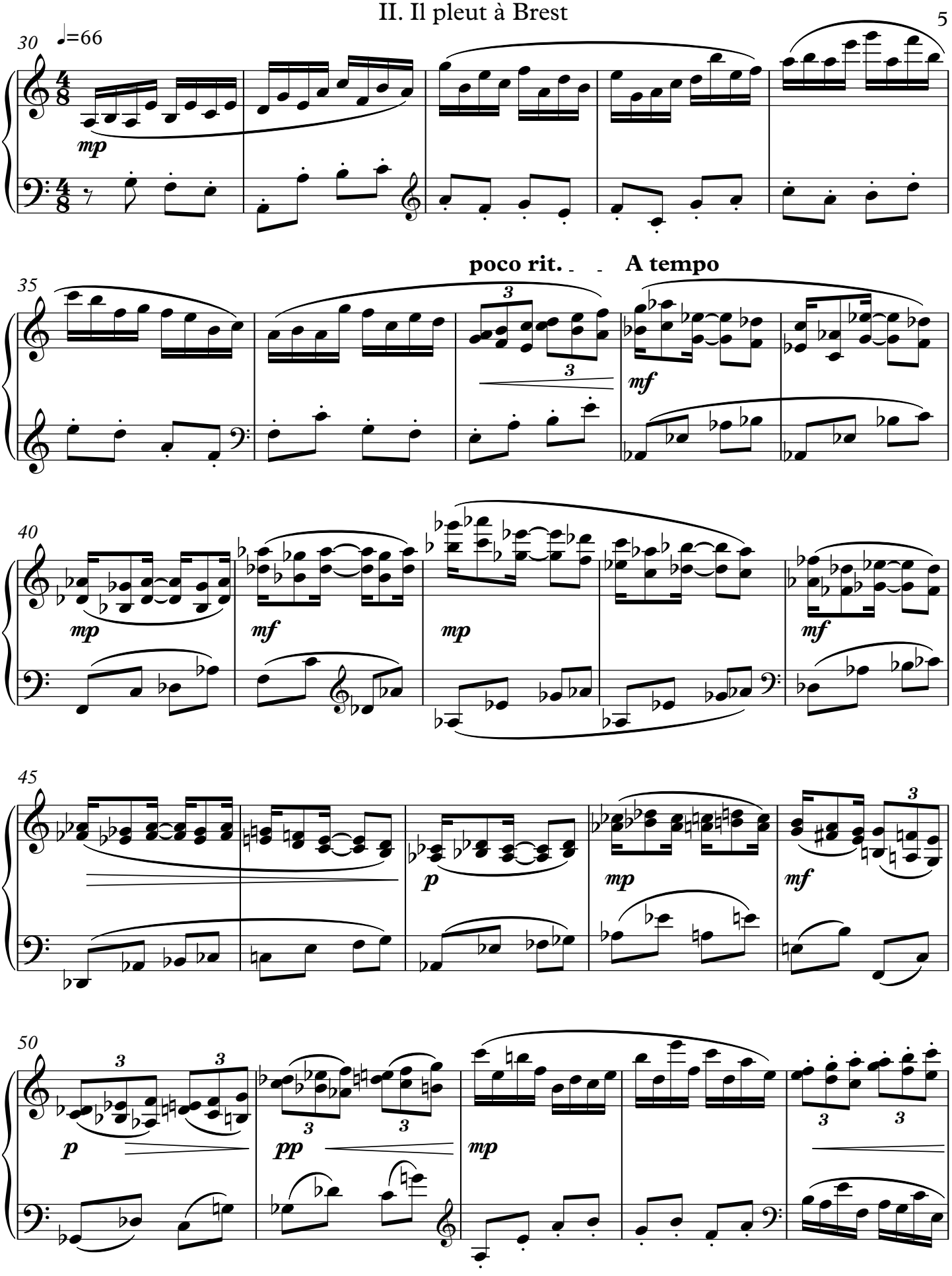
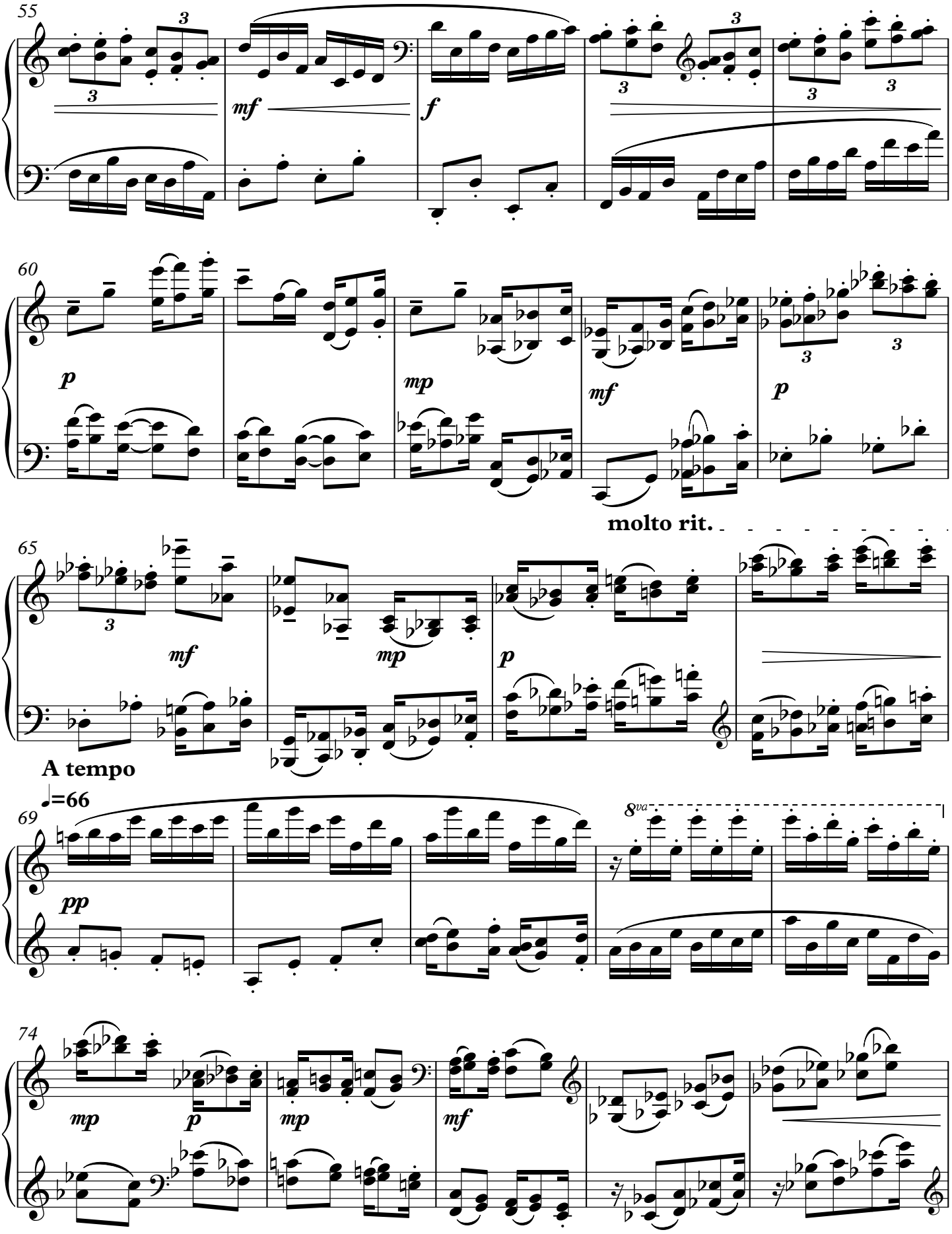
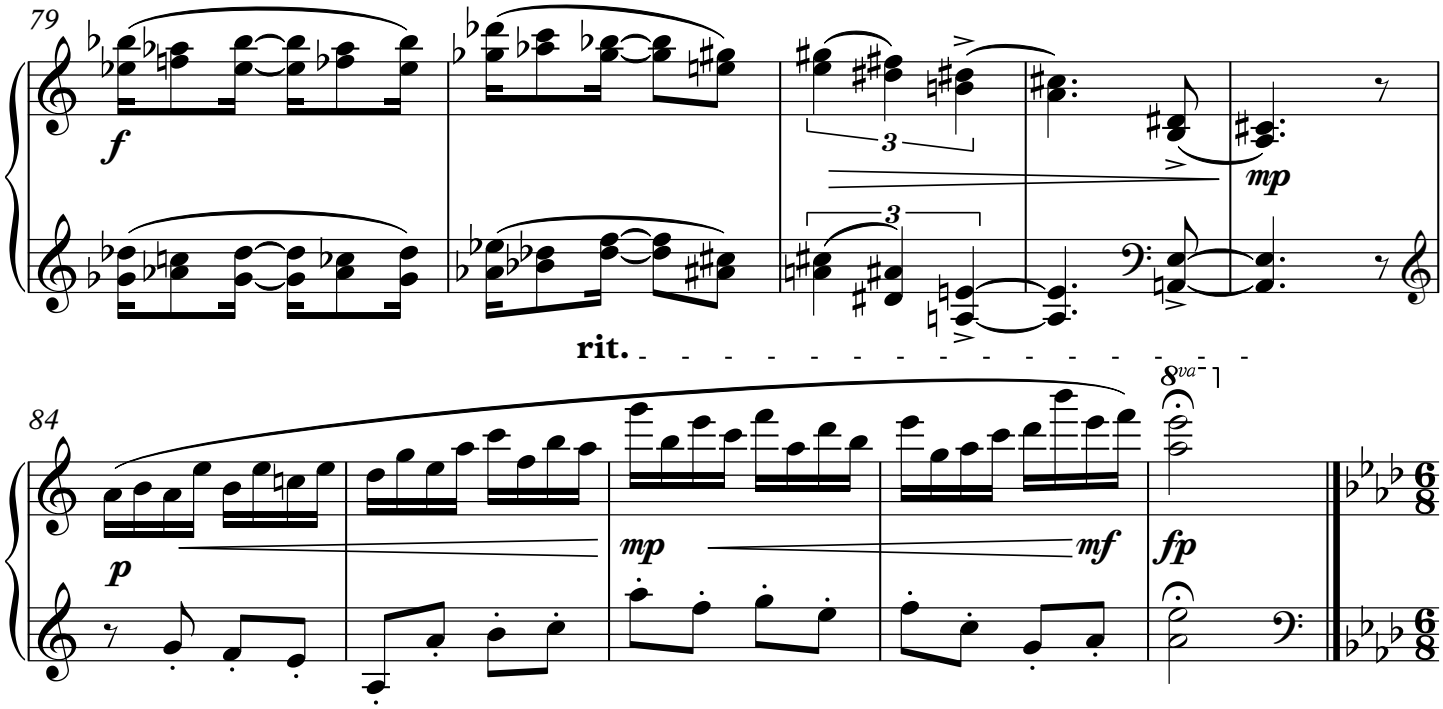
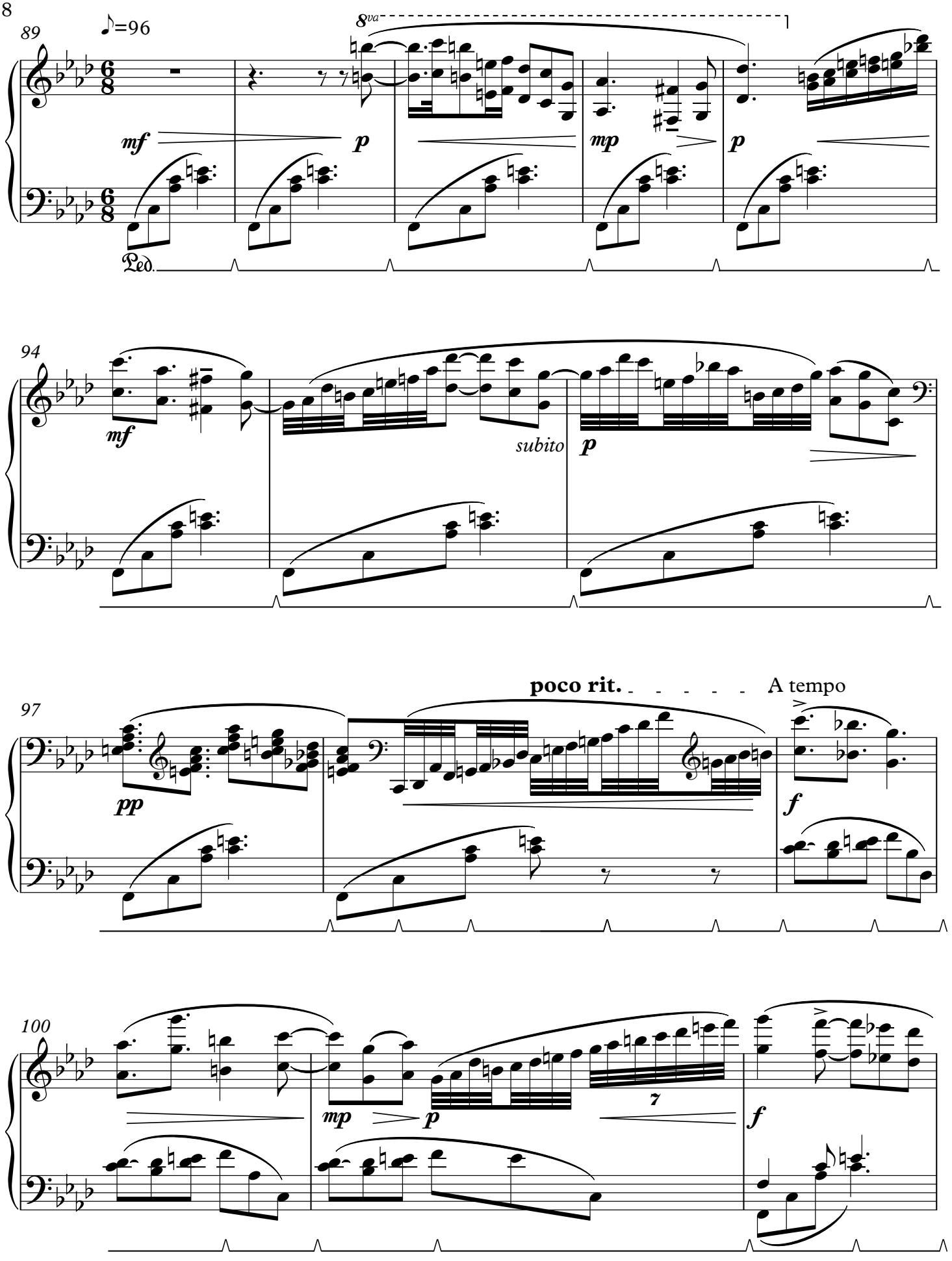
poco rit.
♩=100
molto rit.
23
p
mp
p
pp
Ped.

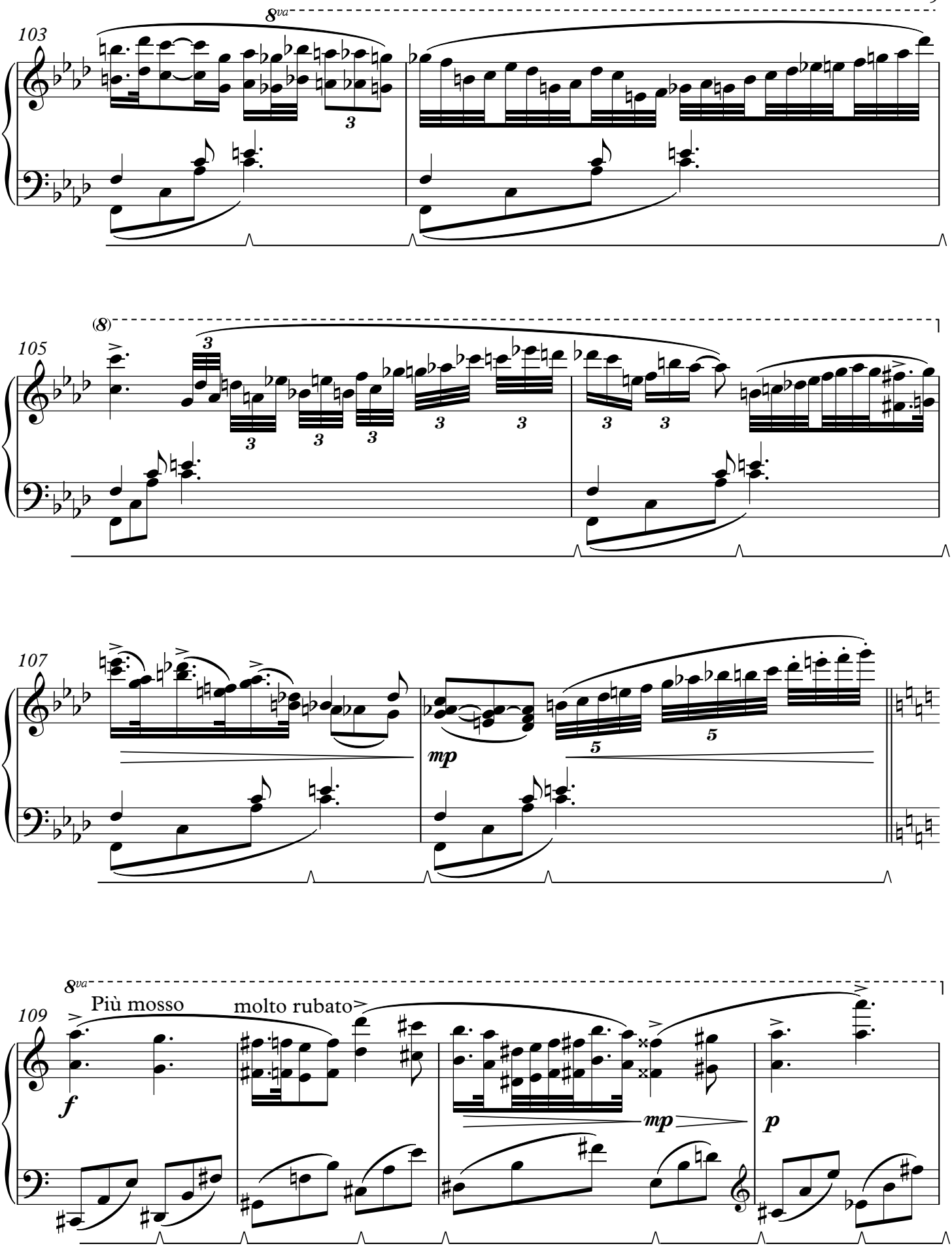

30
♩=66
mp
35
poco rit.
A tempo
mf
40
mp
mf
mp
mf
45
p
mp
mf
50
p
pp
mp

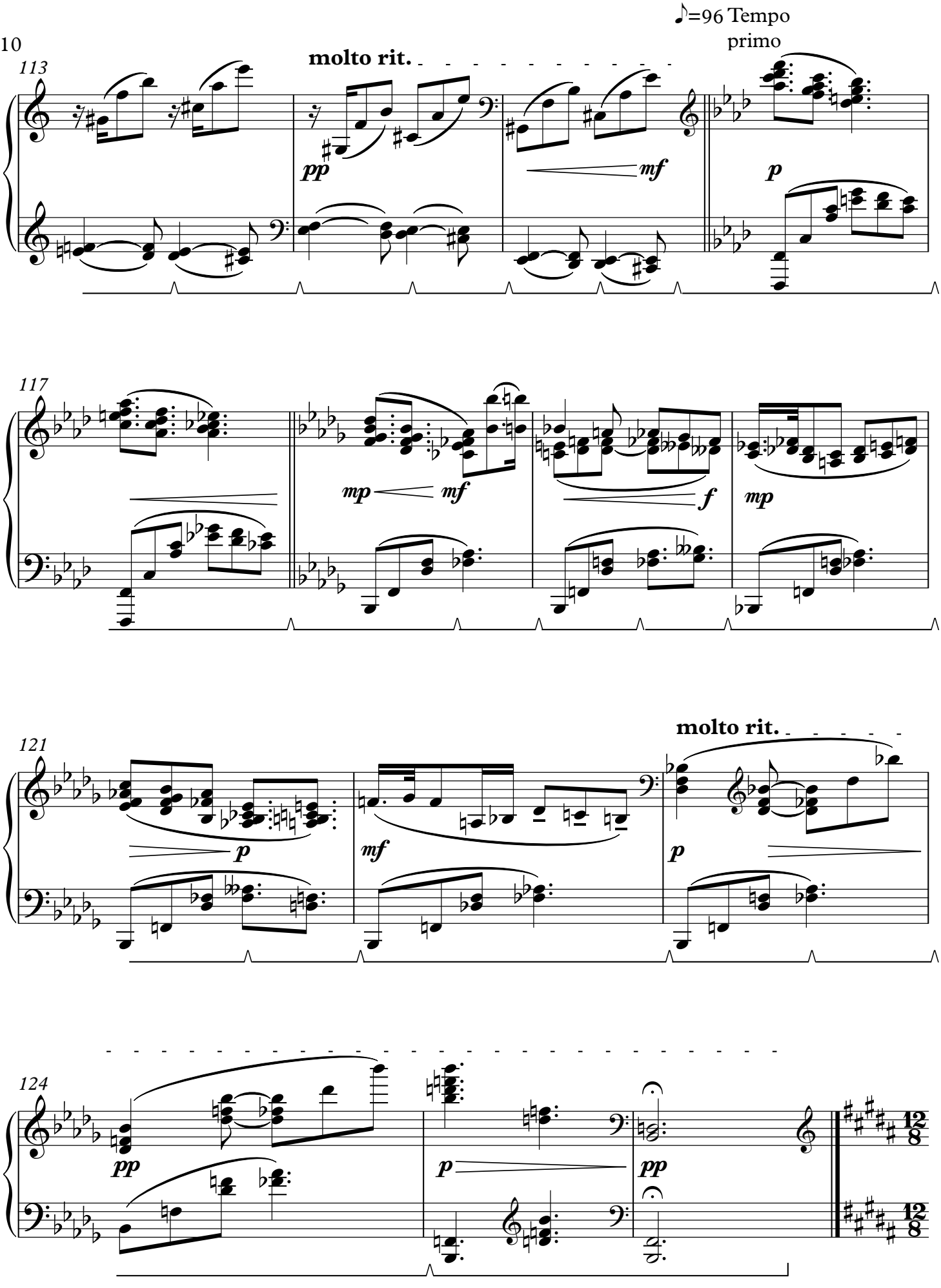

55
mf
f
60
p
mp
mf
p
molto rit.
65
mf
mp
p
A tempo
♩=66
69
pp
8va
74
mp
p
mp
mf


79
f
3
3
mp
rit.
84
p
mp
mf
fp
8va

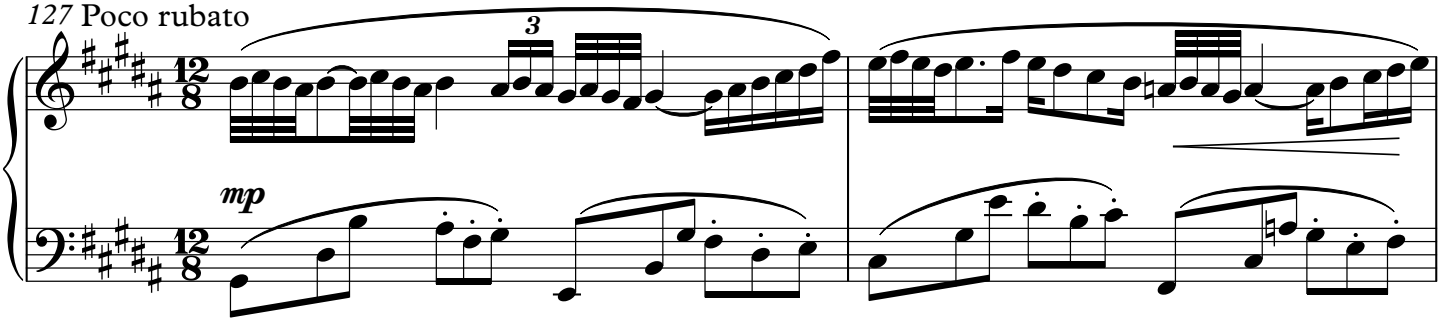
III. François et ses yeux dangereux




8va
103
(8)
105
107
8va
109
Più mosso
molto rubato
mp
mp
p
f


♪=96 Tempo primo
113
molto rit.
pp
mf
p
117
mp
mf
f
mp
121
molto rit.
p
mf
p
124
pp
p
pp
12/8
12/8

127 Poco rubato



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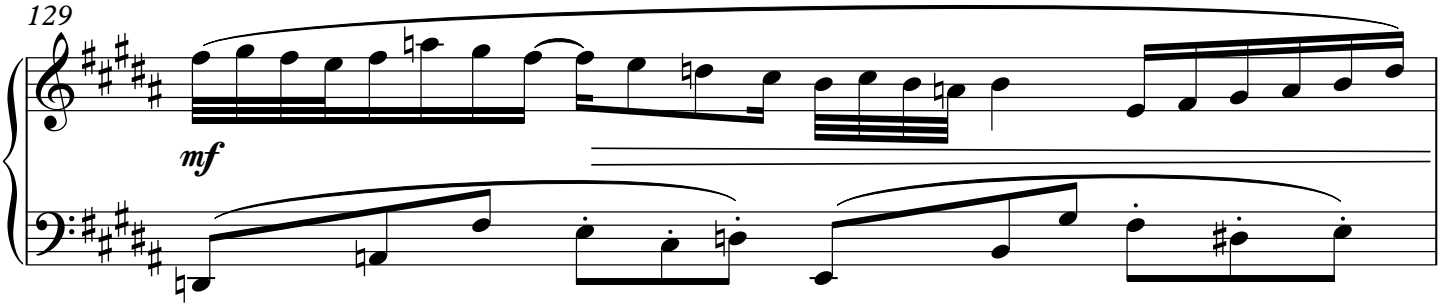

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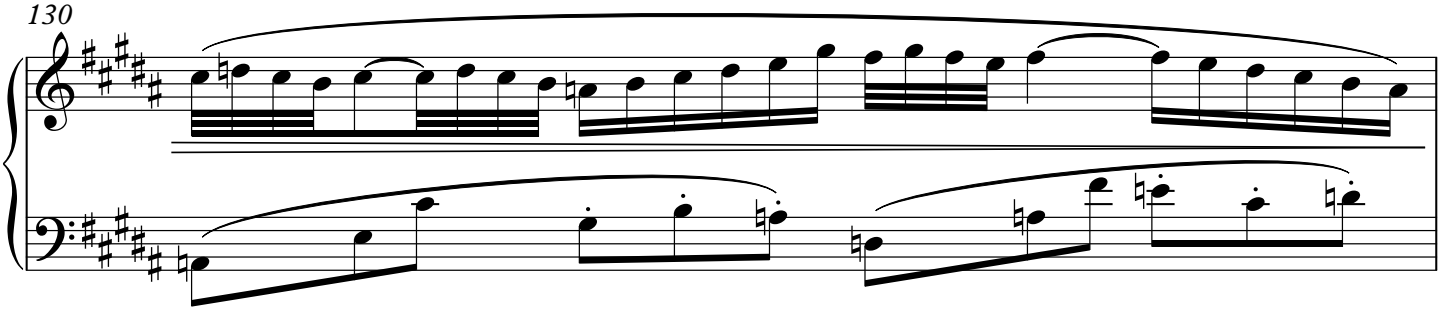

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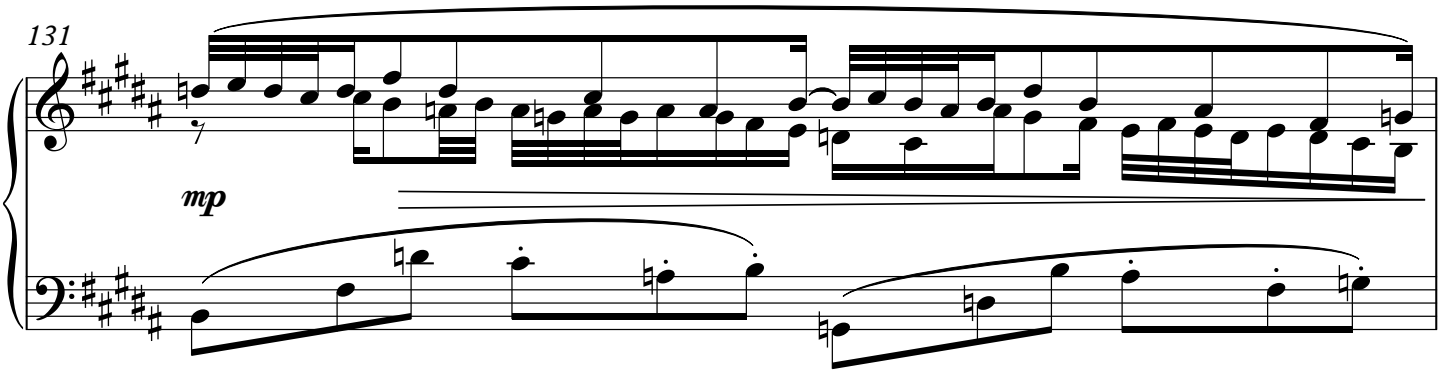

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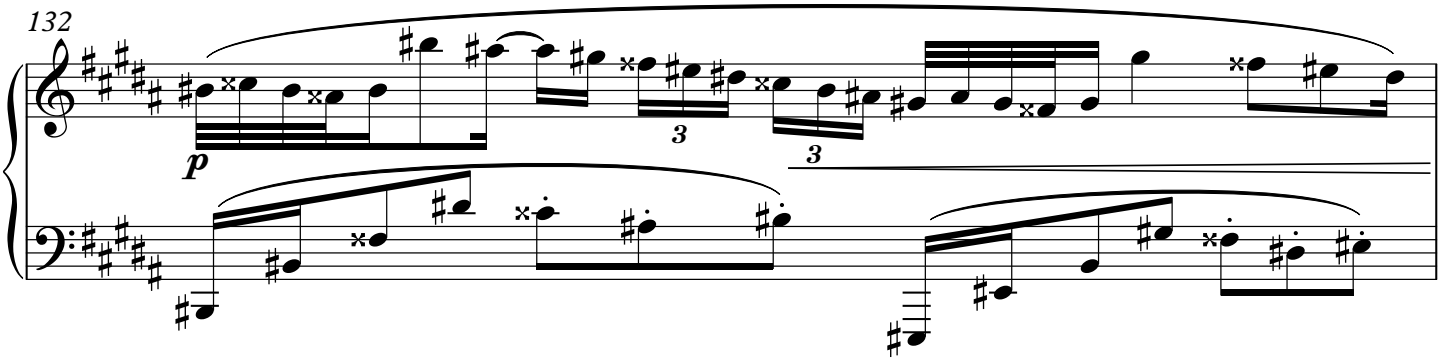
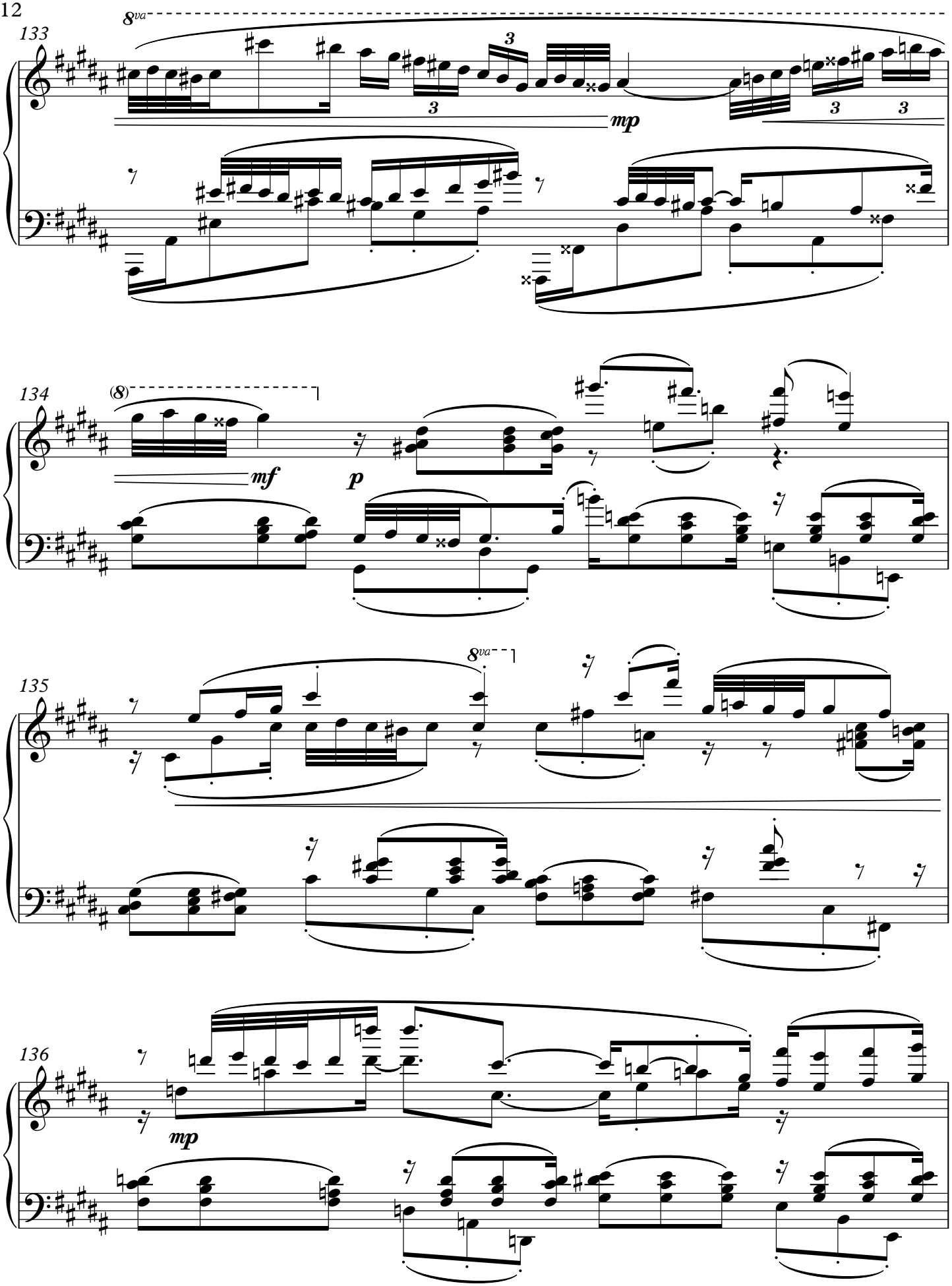
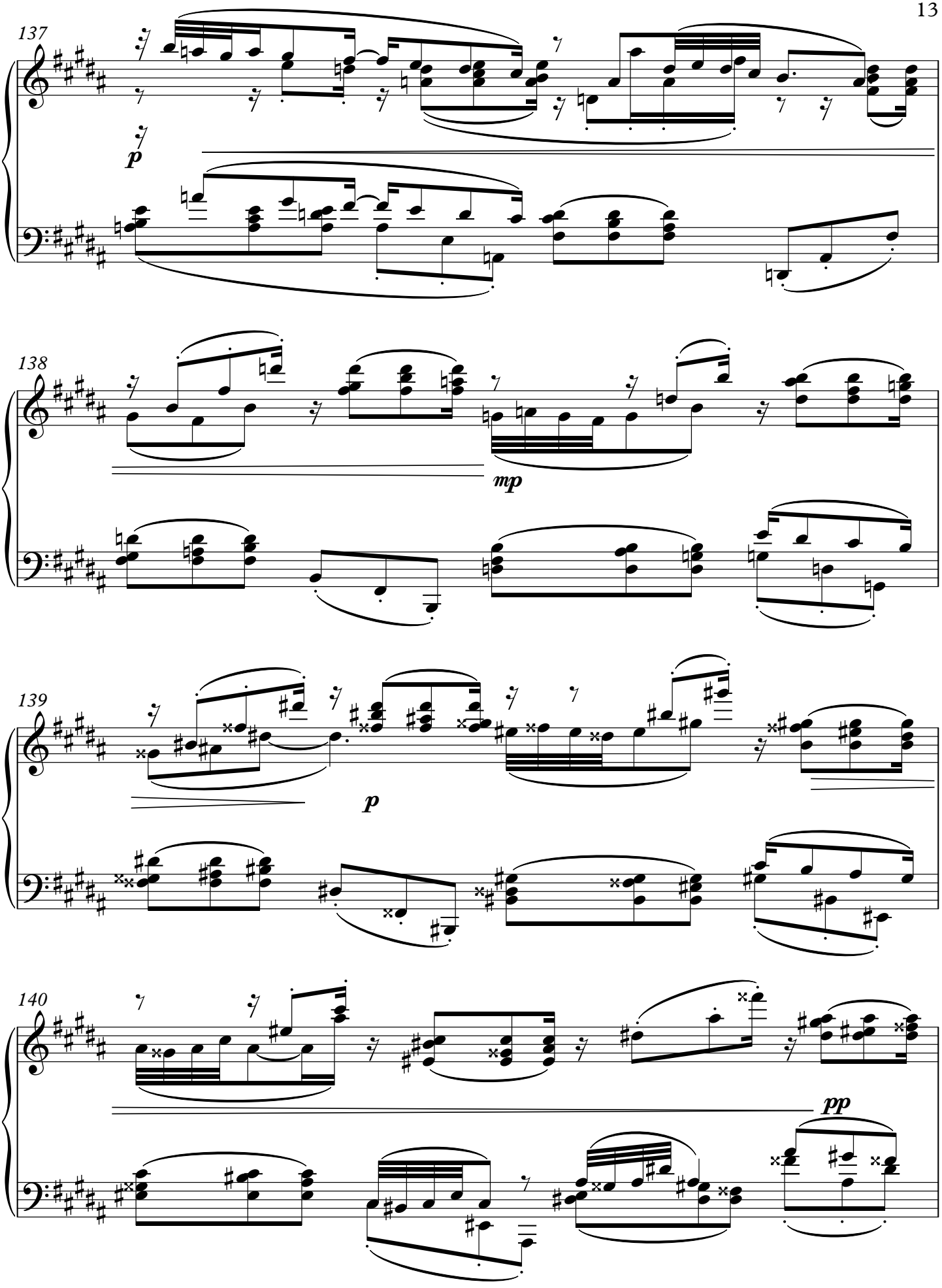
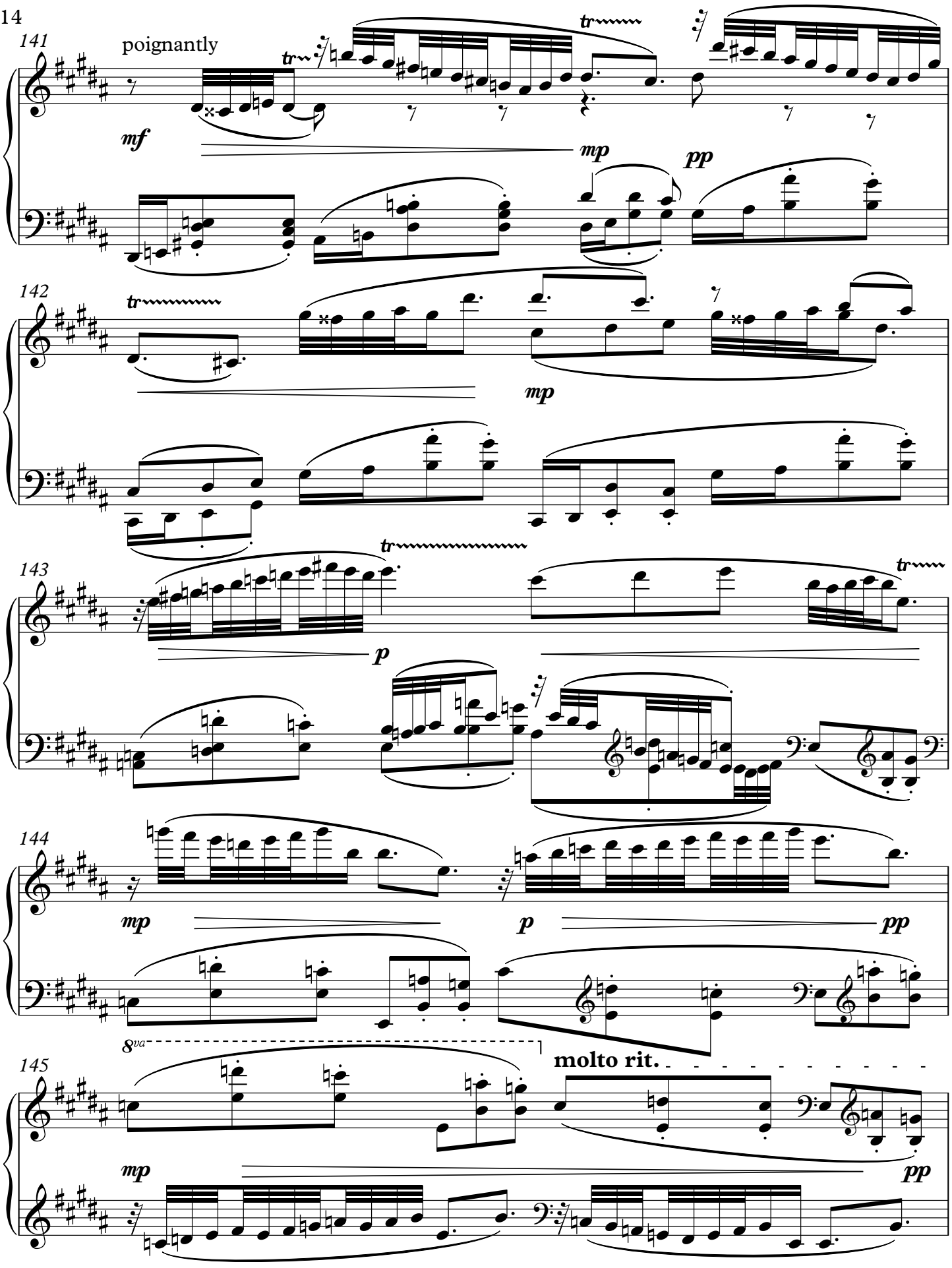


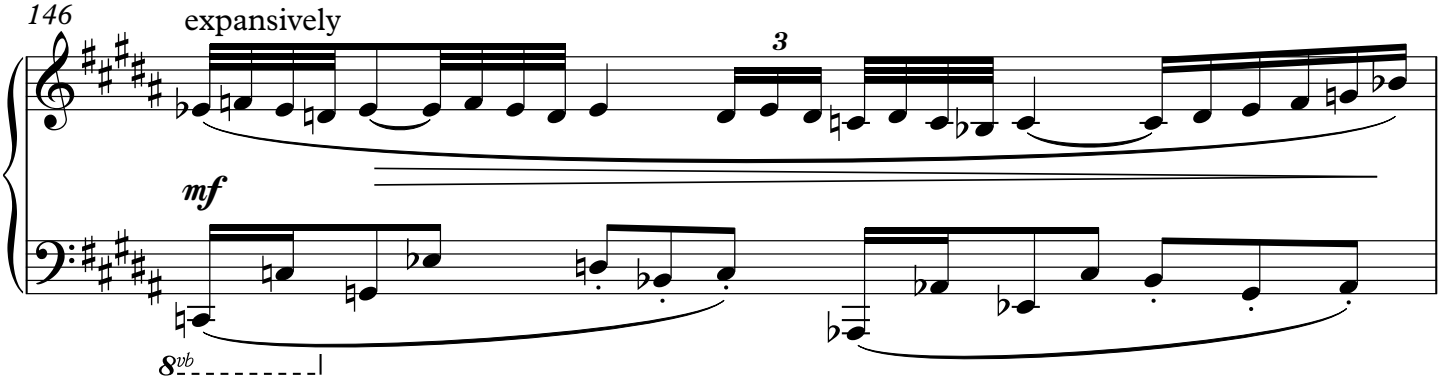

133
8va
mp
134
(8)
mf
p
135
8va
136
mp


137
p
138
mp
139
p
140
pp


141
poignantly
mf
mp
pp
142
mp
143
p
144
mp
p
pp
8va
145
molto rit.
mp
pp

♪=76
A tempo

146 expansively



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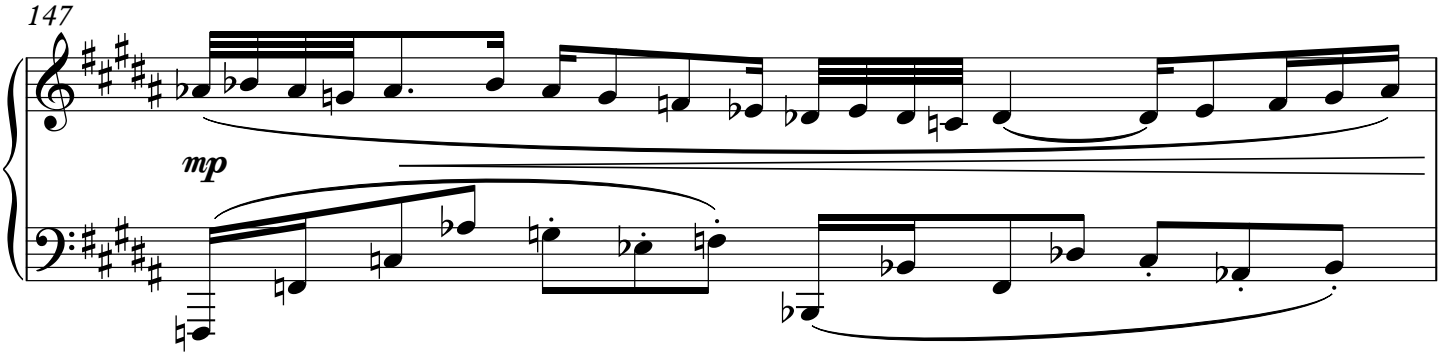

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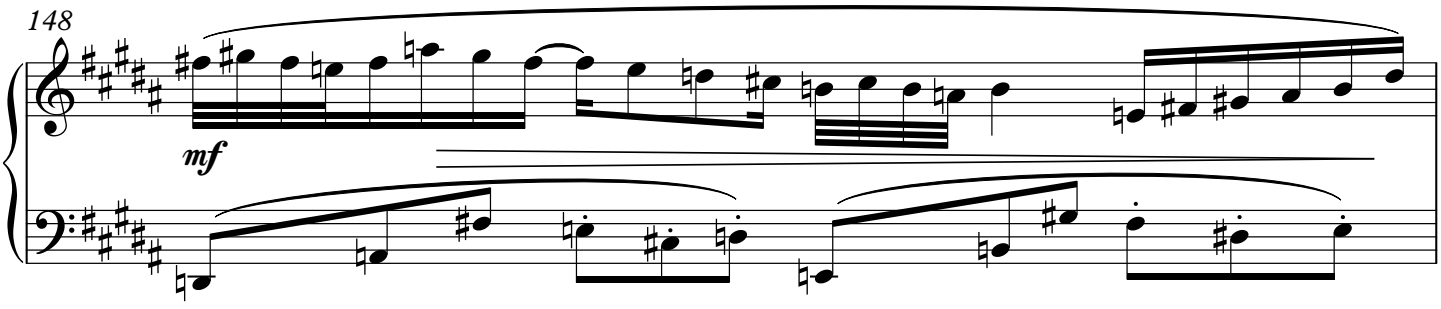
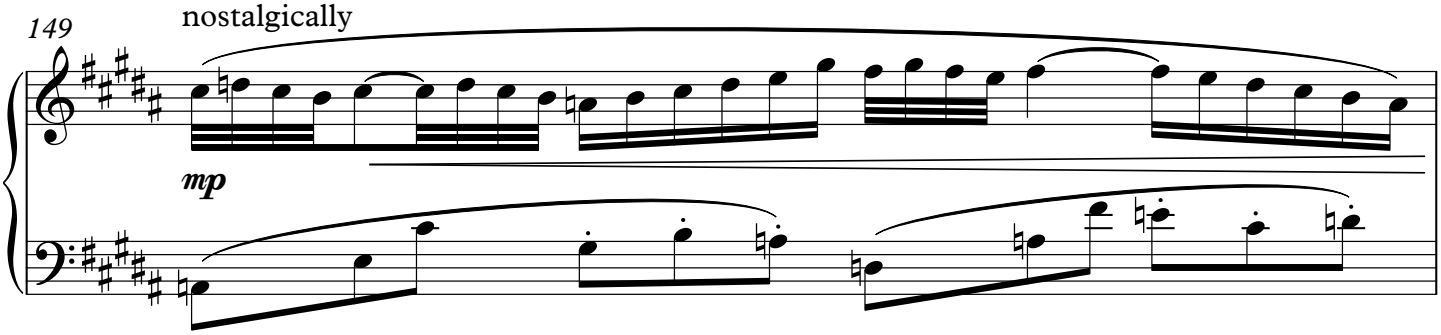


149 nostalgically



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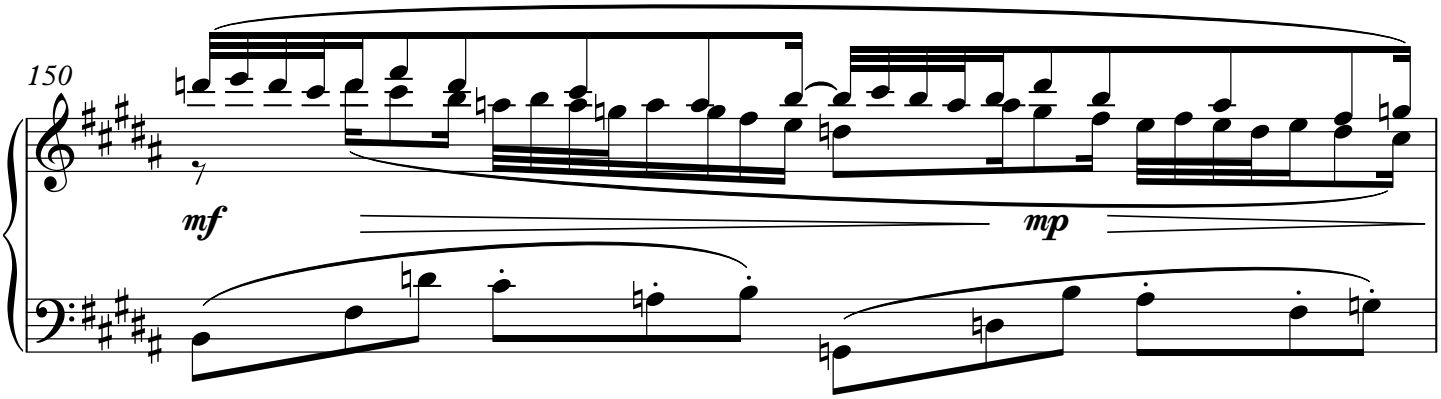
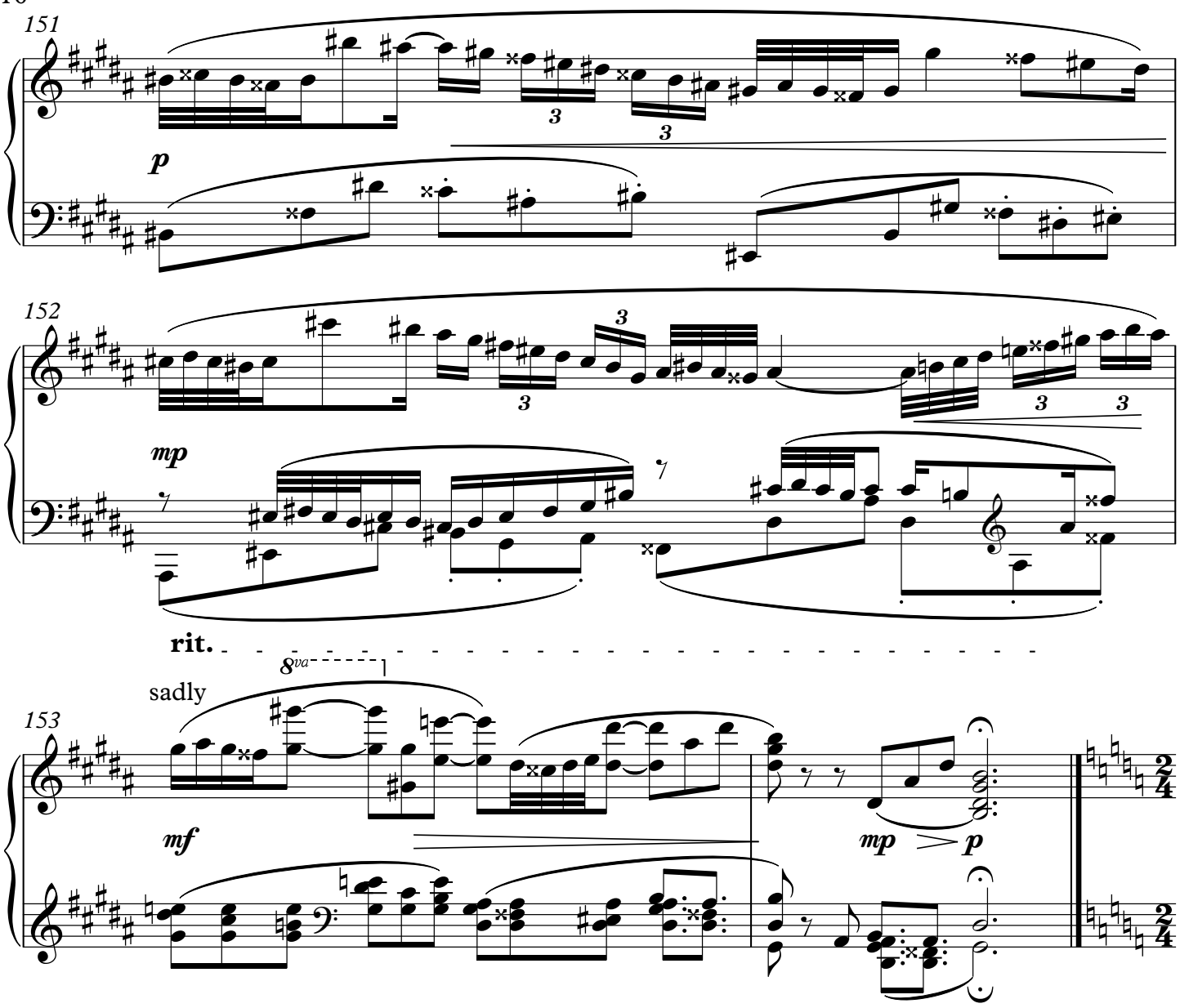
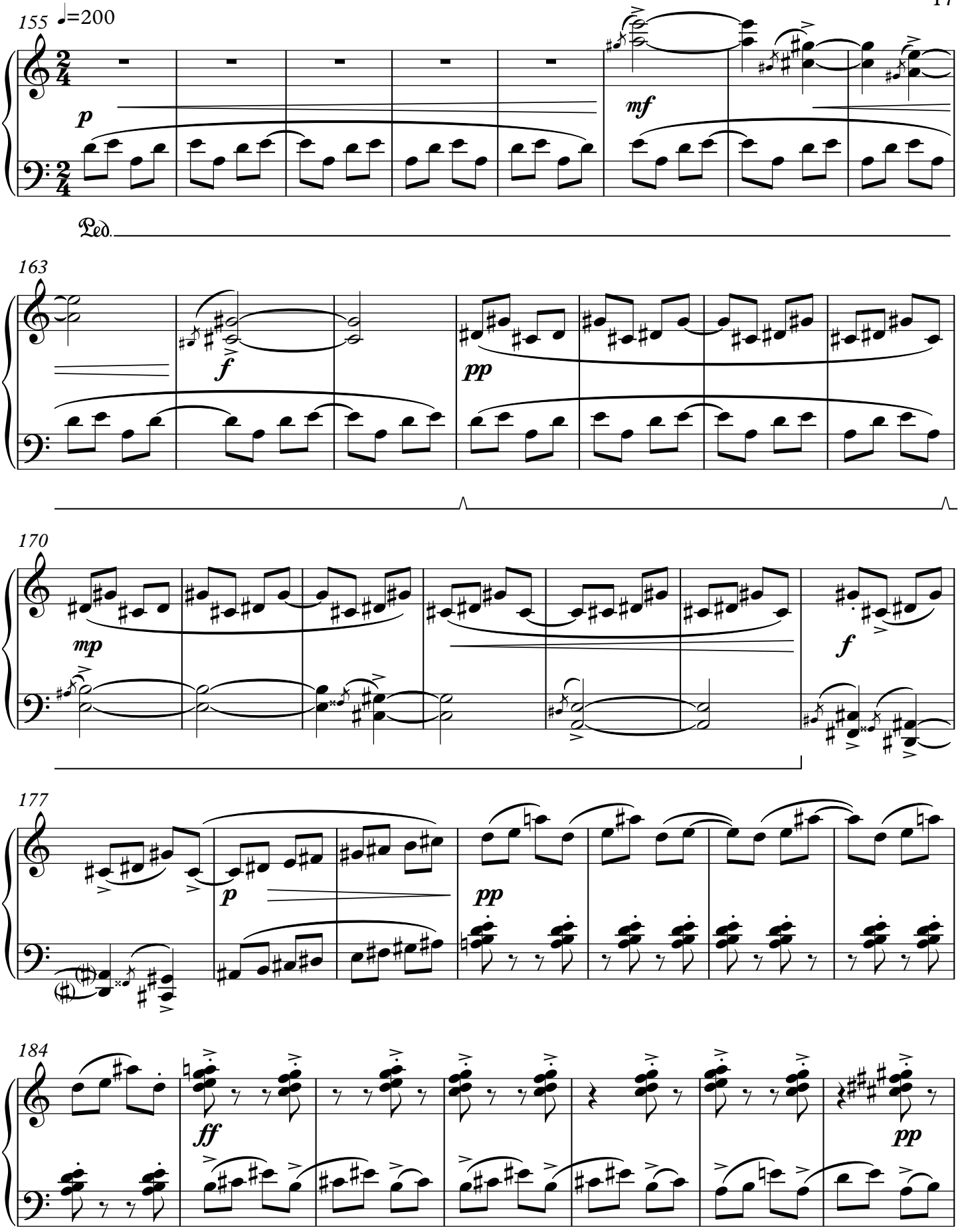
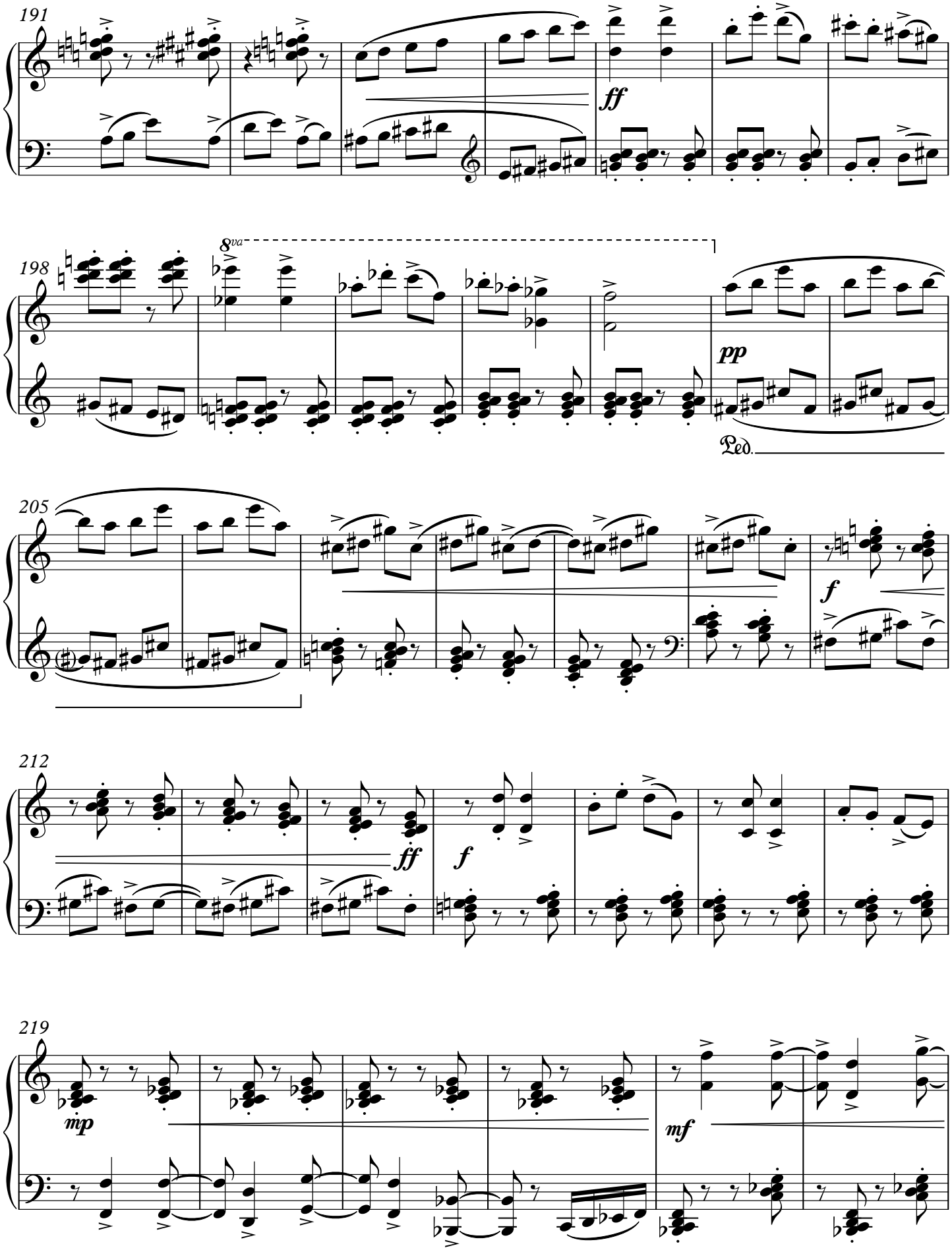
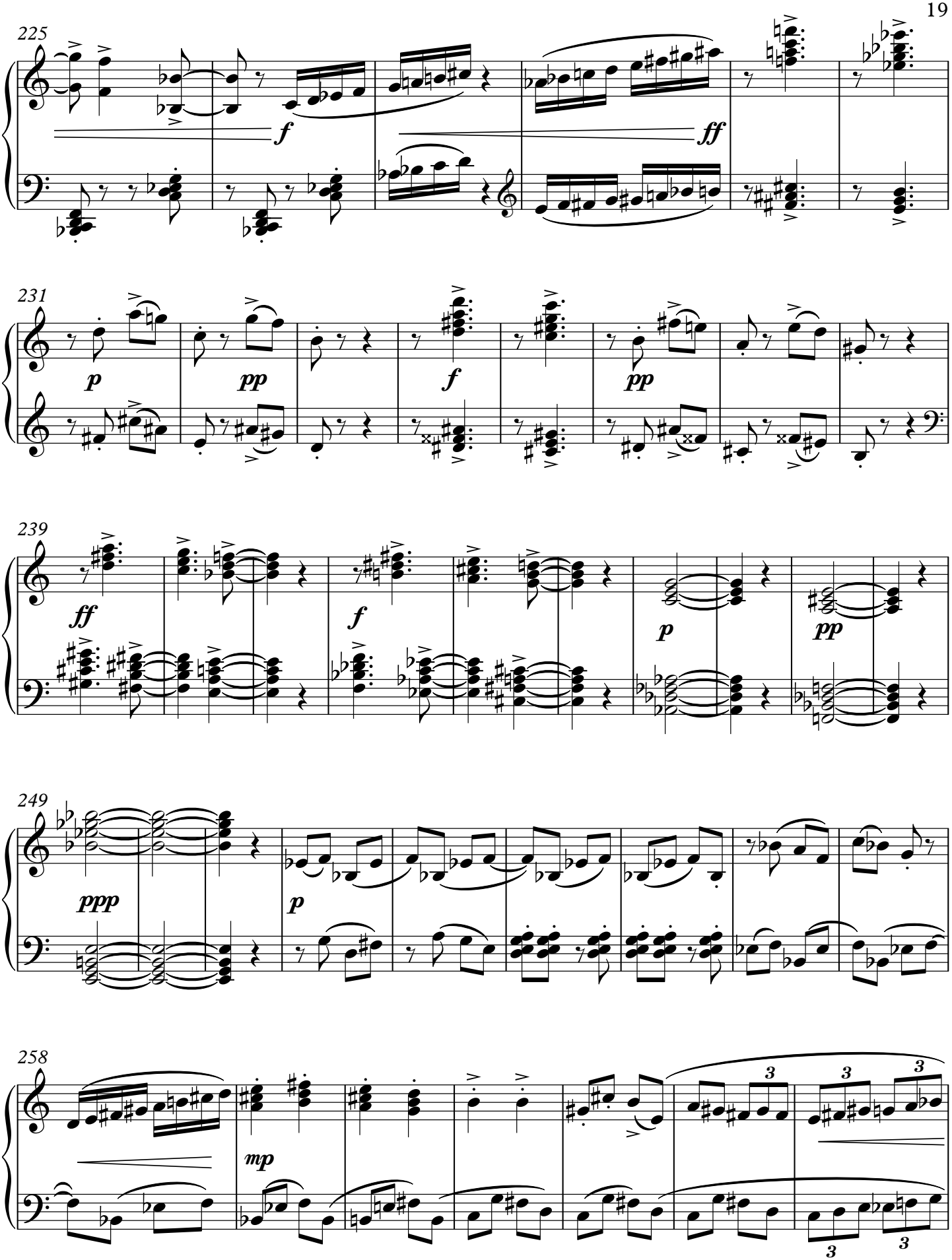



151
p
152
mp
rit.
8va
sadly
153
mf
mp
p
2/4


155
♩=200
p
mf
Ped.
163
f
pp
170
mp
f
177
p
pp
184
ff
pp


191
ff
198
8va
pp
Ped.
205
f
212
ff
f
219
mp
mf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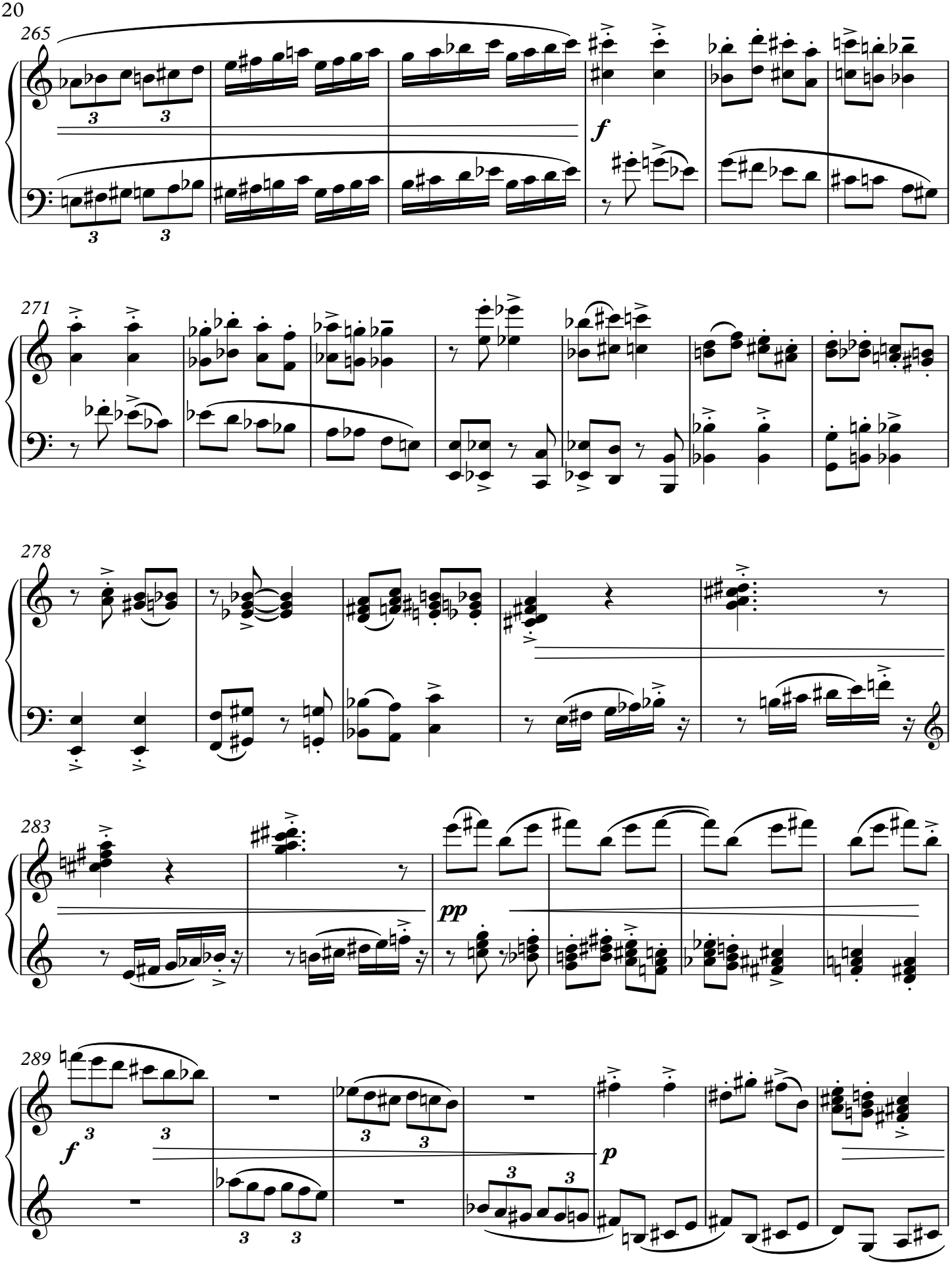
f
ff
231
p
pp
f
pp
239
ff
f
p
pp
249
ppp
p
258
mp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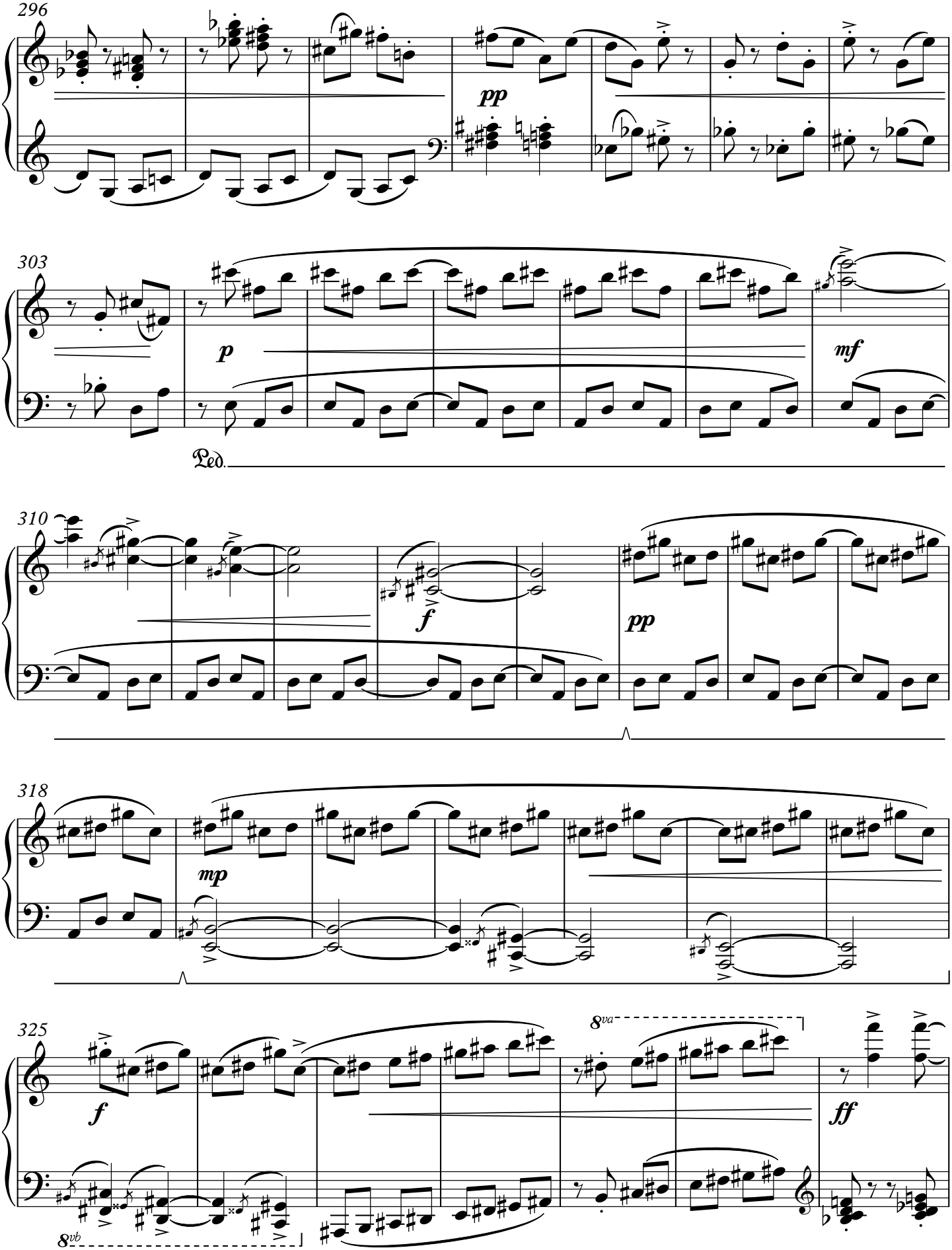
f
271
278
283
pp
289
f
p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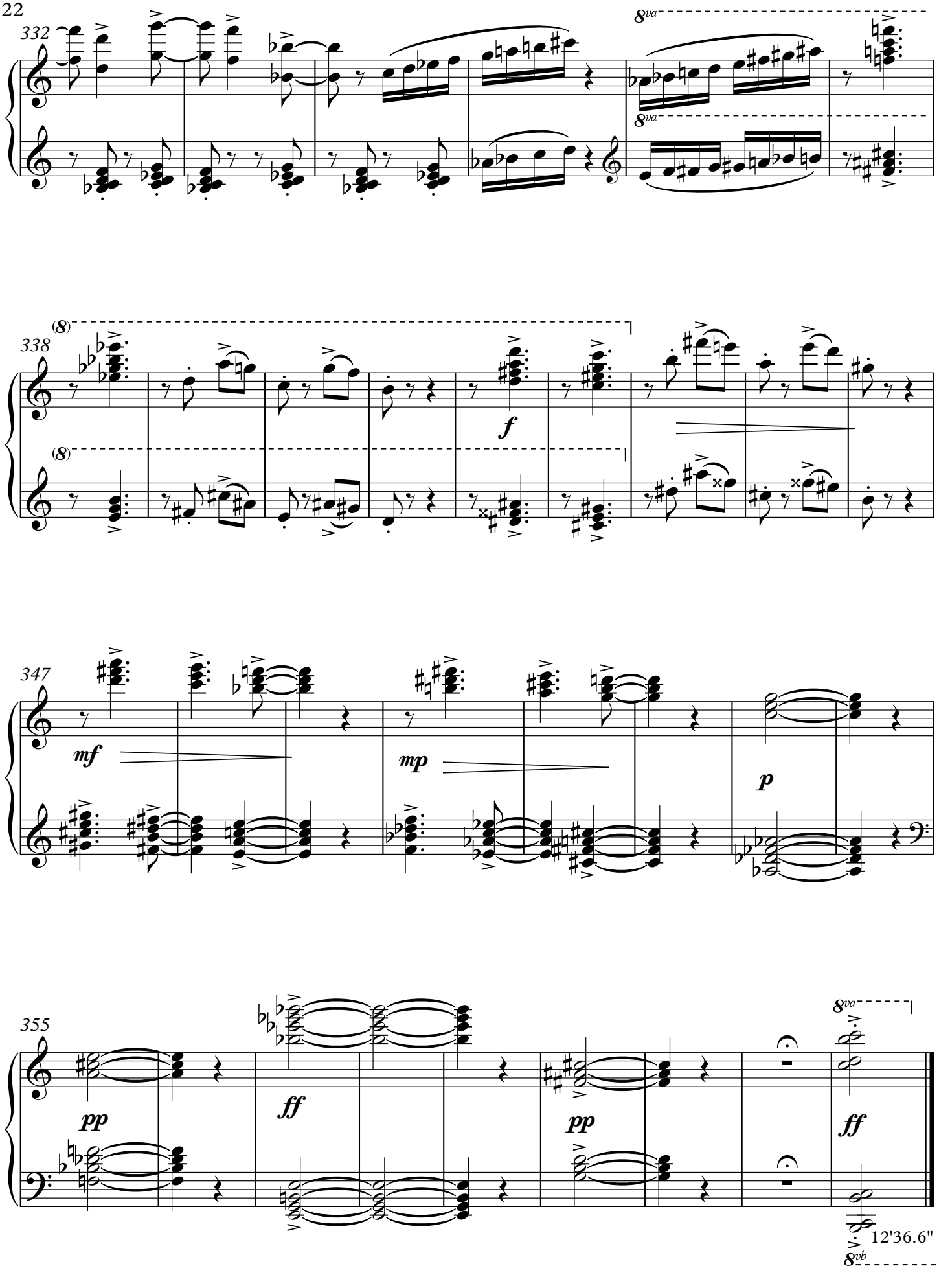
pp
303
p
mf
Ped.
310
f
pp
318
mp
325
f
8va
8vb
ff


332
8va
8va
338
(8)
(8)
f
347
mf
mp
p
355
pp
ff
pp
8va
ff
12'36.6"
8vb