12 x 11

Piano Music in Twentieth Century America

Compiled and Edited by

MAURICE HINSON

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FOREWORD

This collection contains twelve original compositions written by eleven contemporary composers of the United States. The pianistic styles and devices reflected provide many varied opportunities in keyboard technique and interpretation. Stylistically, the pieces range from the romantic heritage to post-serial techniques. All of these works are based on musical tradition even though some are more avant-garde than others. A brief paragraph about each piece throws some light on the work but only intensive study will unlock its secrets. Purposeful study of contemporary music will bring one into closer contact with more traditional music. A prelude and fugue of J.S. Bach juxtaposed with the David Diamond *Prelude and Fugue* in C Minor provides a provocative and exciting comparison. The warm chromatic lines of Halsey Stevens's *Notturno – Bellagio Adagio* are etched from the same inspiration that gave us many beautiful nineteenth century character pieces. The George Crumb piece *Dream Images* quotes directly from the Chopin *Fantaisie-Impromptu.* Other threads to the past could also be drawn from the theme in Fred Coulter's *Variations for Agnes.* This is the same theme used by Mozart, James Hewitt and other eighteenth-century composers. These influences from the past lead both performer and audience to the knowledge that today's music can be just as enjoyable as yesterday's music.

Fingerings and pedal markings are included sparingly and should be understood only as suggestions or small assistance to performance.

I hope this collection will provide challenging and exciting new piano repertoire for students, teachers and performers alike. It demonstrates many of the varied creative skills and styles present today in our composers of the United States.

Since the pieces are of varied difficulty, a freely suggestive order (from easier to more difficult) is listed below.

Maurice Hinson

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Milton Babbit
Playing for Time 44

NOTES

Milton Babbit (born 1916) has given us a work that employs characteristically unfamiliar rhythmic notation in a simple context (3/4 meter).

A strong rhythmic consciousness is absolutely necessary to achieve a fine performance of *Playing For Time.* The technique of proportional rhythmic relationships is frequently used. This is indicated, for example, as in bar two, but the sign ┌──────4=♪.──┐ i.e., four sixteenth notes are to be played in the time value of a dotted eighth note. The underlying "set" finally evolves and appears explicitly in (and among other places) the final four measures as: a flat, a, e, d, b flat, e flat, f sharp, g, d flat, b, d and f. Dynamics serve to distinguish and differentiate foreground set segments, and foreground from more backgound, more explicit segments, although, of course, functions evolve, alter, and interreact as the composition proceeds. the dynamics also not only differentiate segments of different set forms but associate those of the same set forms, or of "combinationally" related forms. Dynamics and phrasing both serve as means of reference between, for instance, registrally presented pitch-class successions and temporally presented pitch-class successions.

The musical syntax of the piece is highly organized and uses such pointillistic techniques as fragmented voices, disjunct melodic lines, frequent rests, emphasis on dynamics, accent and tone color. *Playing for Time* falls into place remarkably fast when read through even a few times and it contains some unique pianistic sonorities.

Leslie Bassett (born 1923) has given us in *Mobile* a piece that is lyrical yet intense, constantly unfolding, rich in color and range. Its chromatic language is enhanced by several varied repetitions that, as it were, assume new perspectives as they turn in the wind. An effective, expressionistic work.

Fred Coulter (born 1934), in his *Variations for Agnes,* provides fresh approaches to this durable and delightful folk tune. In addition, they are offered as an excellent example of principles of Gestalt techniques, (rhythmic scansion and Schenkerian pitch organization). Their style is intentionally simple orally and technically. Careful attention should be paid to cross-phrasing between the voices. There should be no break between variations.

Dream Images (Love-Death Music) Gemini by George Crumb (born 1929) is from his larger work *Makrokosmos,* Vol. 1. A microphone should be suspended over the bass-strings inside the piano. The level of amplification should be set rather high. Accidentals apply only to the notes they precede except in case(s) of immediate repetition of pitch or pattern of pitches. PI=right (damper) pedal; PII=middle (sostenuto) pedal; PIII=left (una corda) pedal. PIII sempre=keep una corda pedal depressed throughout. 3=3 seconds approximately. All boxed notes=harmonics (depress keys silently and catch dampers off strings). f.t.=fingertip to be used for glissando on strings (fourth score). l.v.=let vibrate.

Long pedals and electric amplification add effectively to Crumb's highly eclectic style. The elegant sonorities are created with varied vertical and horizontal densities. Chopin's *Fantaisie-Impromptu* excerpts must enter and leave as the character directions at the beginning of *Dream Images* states: "Musingly, like the gentle caress of a faintly remembered music."

David Diamond (born 1915) has given us a clearly structured, tightly knit, neo-classic *Prelude and Fugue* in C Minor. The cantando lyric lines of the Prelude go their graceful individual way and finally arrive at a colorful cadence. The three-voiced Fugue is basically tonal but uses chromaticism freely and builds to a strong emotional climax. A rhythmic subject with strong off-beat accents adds excitement to this forceful work that is constantly idiomatic for the piano.

Richard Faith (born 1926) uses a strong craft and expressive imagination in his piece *Souvenir.* The title suggests a rememberance. The piece itself may suggest that the memory is of a sad and tender nature, a recollection of something in the distant past. Bitonal shifting from A minor to F major is colored with chromatics that add interest to the flowing melodic lines. Rich sonorities coupled with upper register textures make for a beautiful original work.

Ross Lee Finney (born 1906) has dipped into American folk tunes for his *Medley*. The medley is an honored American musical form. *Medley* develops naturally and a charm of sheer sound is enhanced with a harmonic translucency. When melodies are combined (measures 41 forward), the performer must be sure to bring out both of them. Other performance problems encountered include passing melodies from one hand to another and making fast adjustments to sudden tempo changes. Strong tonal functions support this brightly colored piece.

Lou Harrison (born 1917) studied with Henry Cowell (1934-35) and the *Reel – Homage to Henry Cowell* shows this influence. Sumptuous black key hand and arm clusters in the right hand are interspersed with an active single line melody over ostinati-like figures in the left hand. In playing octave clusters the two outer tones ought to be slightly louder than the interior ones. In the half-arm clusters, the little finger of the fist ought to bring out strongly the lowest tone, which in all instances is that melody tone when the cluster is in the right arm. When the cluster (half arm, two octave one) is in the left, then the top note, again the little finger, of the fist should bring out its melody tones. Cowell's family was Irish and the reel and modal influences draw inspiration from that culture.

Harrison has at times immersed himself in the works of Frescobaldi, Rameau, Couperin and Handel. The *Homage to Milhaud* stems from music of the past. A musette-like left hand part supports and interacts with a flexible archaic melodic line that produces a charming medieval polyphony.

Nelson Keyes (born 1928) composed the *Three Love Songs* as a birthday gift for his pianist wife. They are settings of American folk tunes, imaginatively conceived for solo piano. The first and third employ canons in both hands that require careful tonal balancing. Legato sixths in the left hand part of "Shenandoah" must flow with great ease.

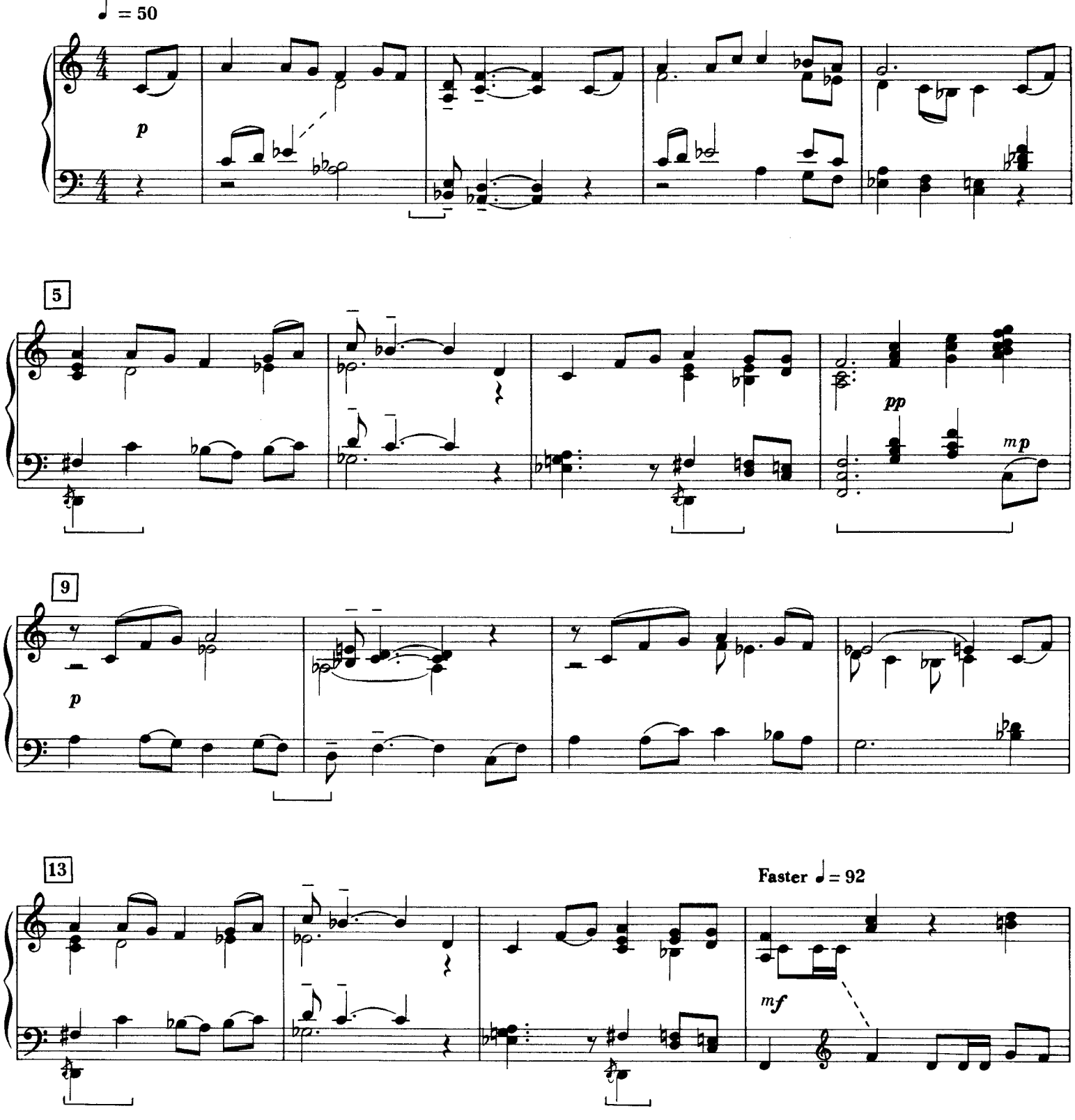
Halsey Stevens (born 1908) writes in a personal style that displays a firm discipline and stern self-criticism. *Notturno – Bellagio Adagio* is characterized by beautiful singing lines, concise and clear form (ABA), eloquent chromatic motifs, and logical transfer of the line between the hands. Dynamic indications are sparse but the "natural" dyanmic fluctuation is highly expressive. The piece was written while Dr. Stevens was a Resident Scholar at the Cultural Center of the Rockefeller Foundation in the Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy.

In the *Four Piano Pieces,* Bruce Wise (born 1929) uses a four note motive as the basis of the work: G, F sharp, E, and F. Each piece has its own tempo and mood as well as it's own treatment of the basic musical idea. As the music unfolds a twelve-tone series is arrived at in the fourth piece: D, A, B, C, sharp, E, G flat, A flat, E flat, B flat, C, F, and G. Every voice participates in the texture of these short and pointillistically conceived pieces.

MEDLEY

(Campfire on the Ice)

ROSS LEE FINNEY



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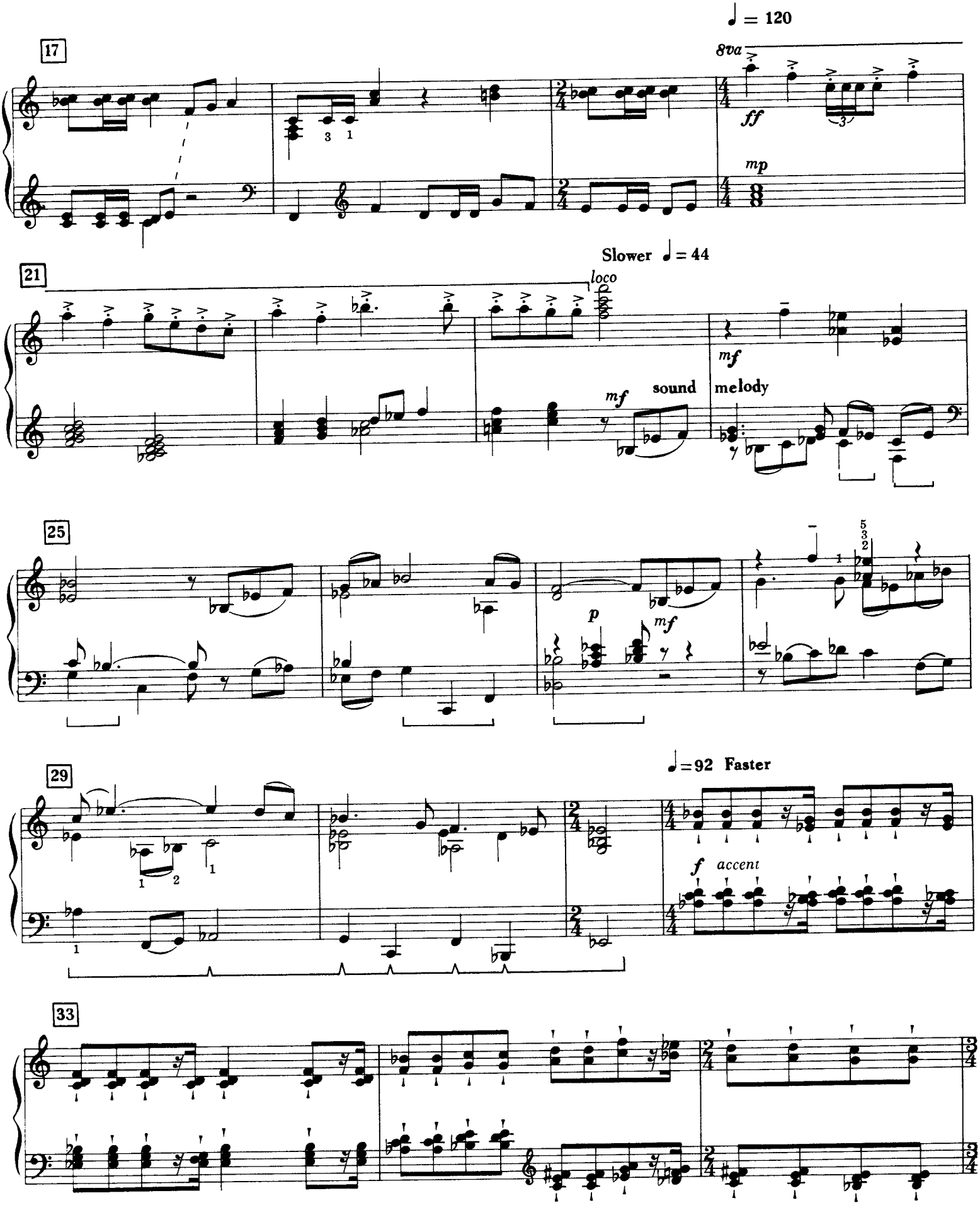
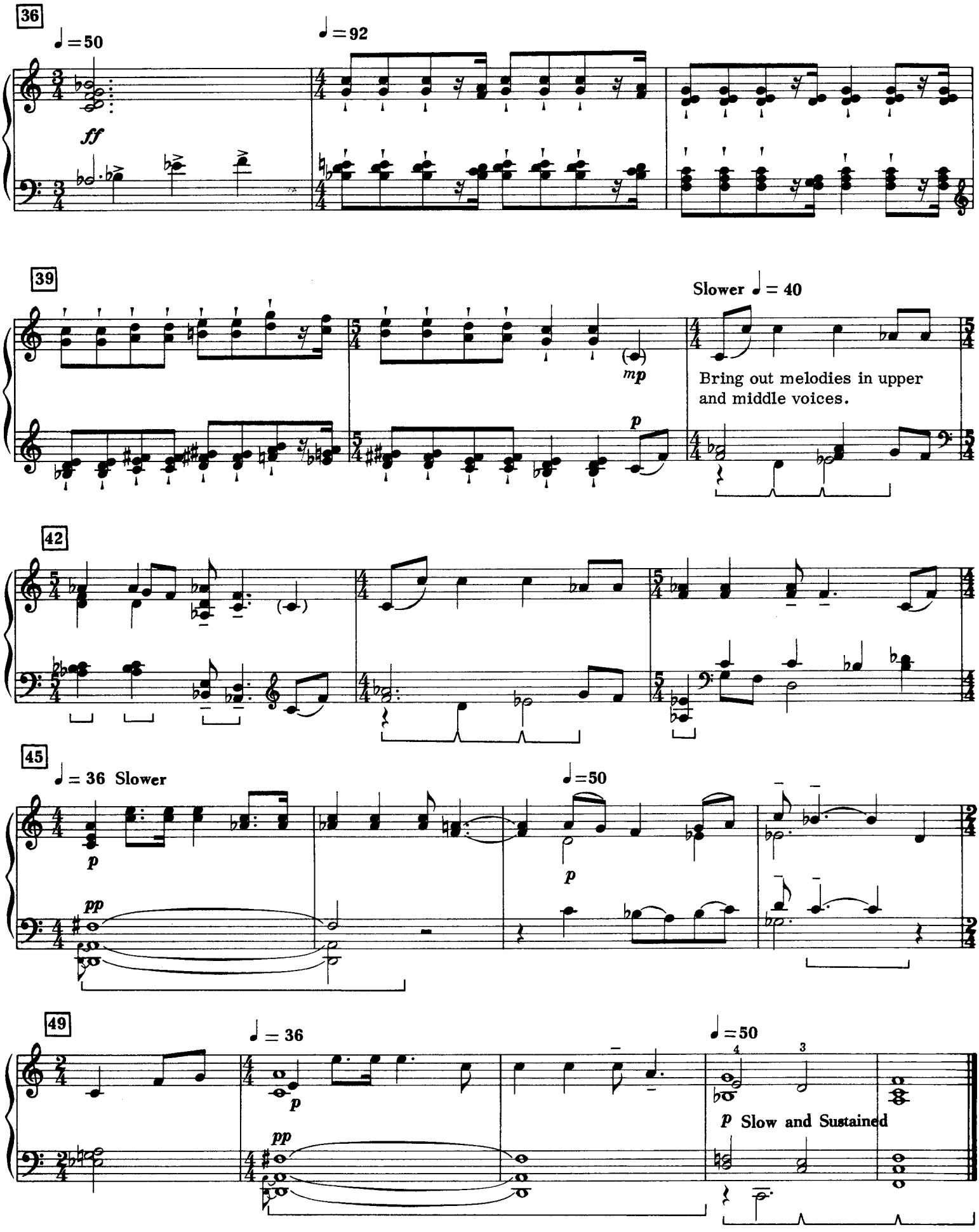

17
♩ = 120
8va
ff
mp
21
Slower ♩ = 44
loco
mf
mf
sound
melody
25
p
mf
29
♩ = 92 Faster
f
accent
33

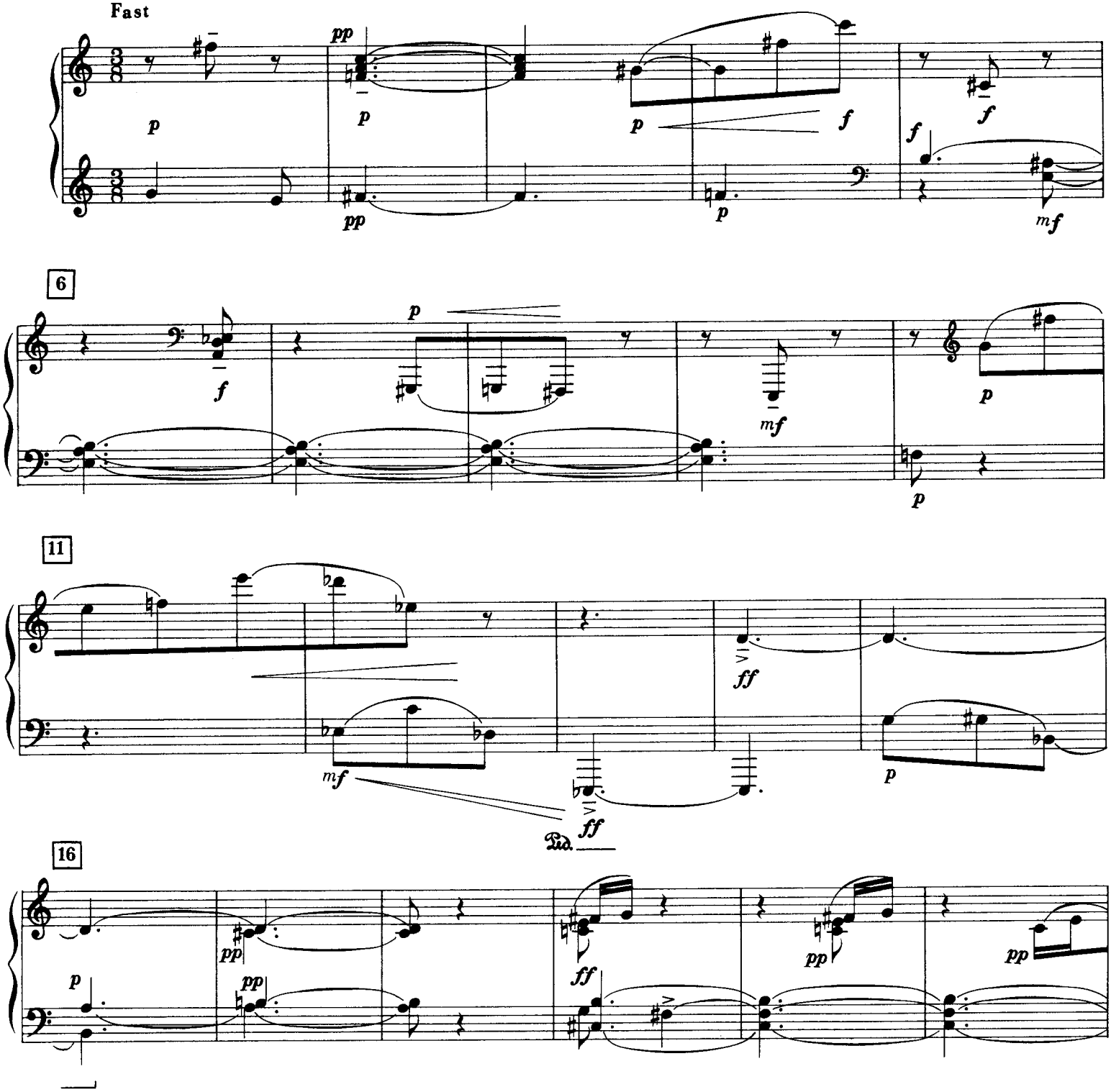

36
♩=50
ff
♩=92
39
mp
p
Slower ♩= 40
Bring out melodies in upper and middle voices.
42
45
♩= 36 Slower
p
pp
♩=50
p
49
♩= 36
p
pp
♩=50
p Slow and Sustained

To Wesley True

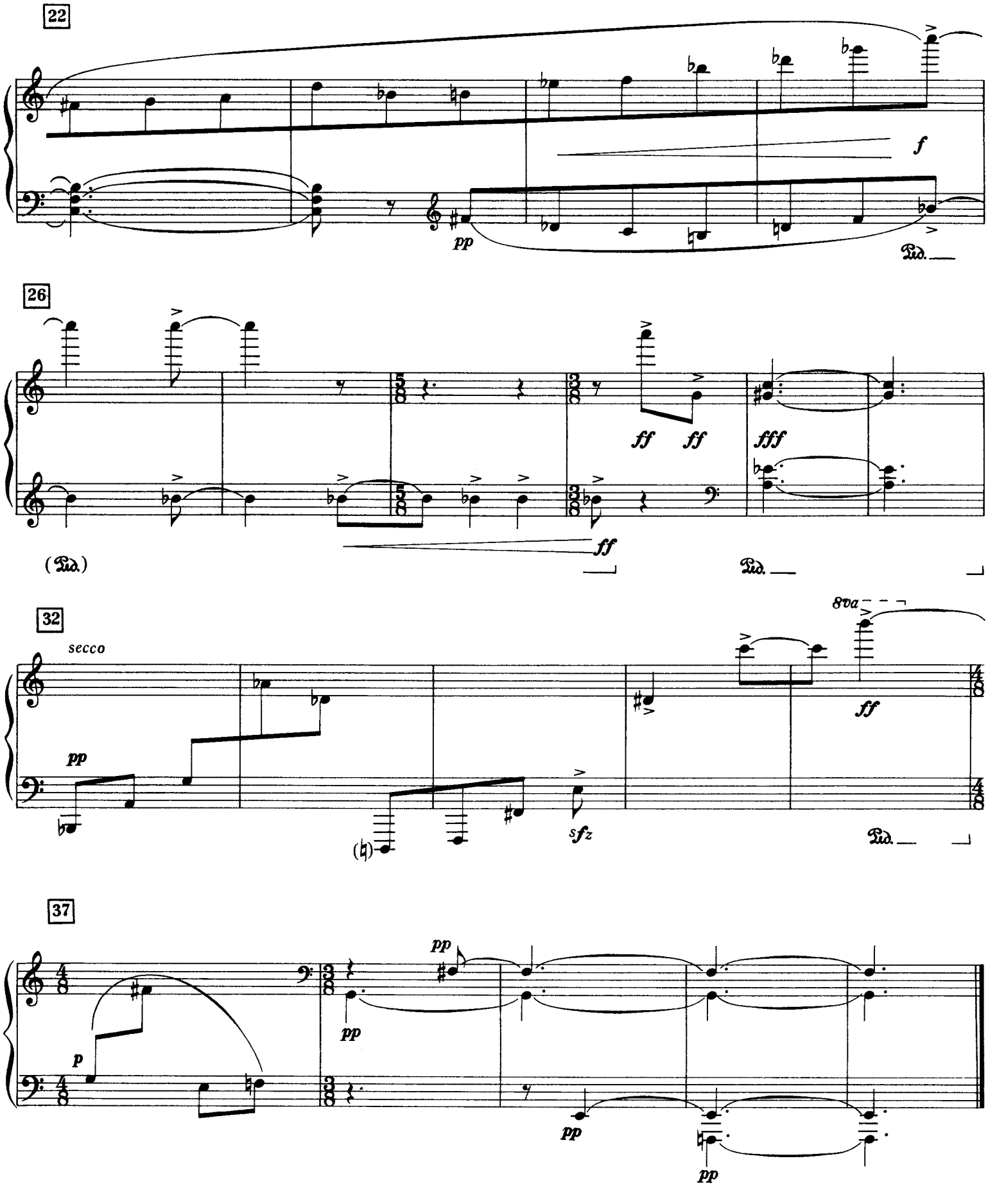
FOUR PIANO PIECES

I

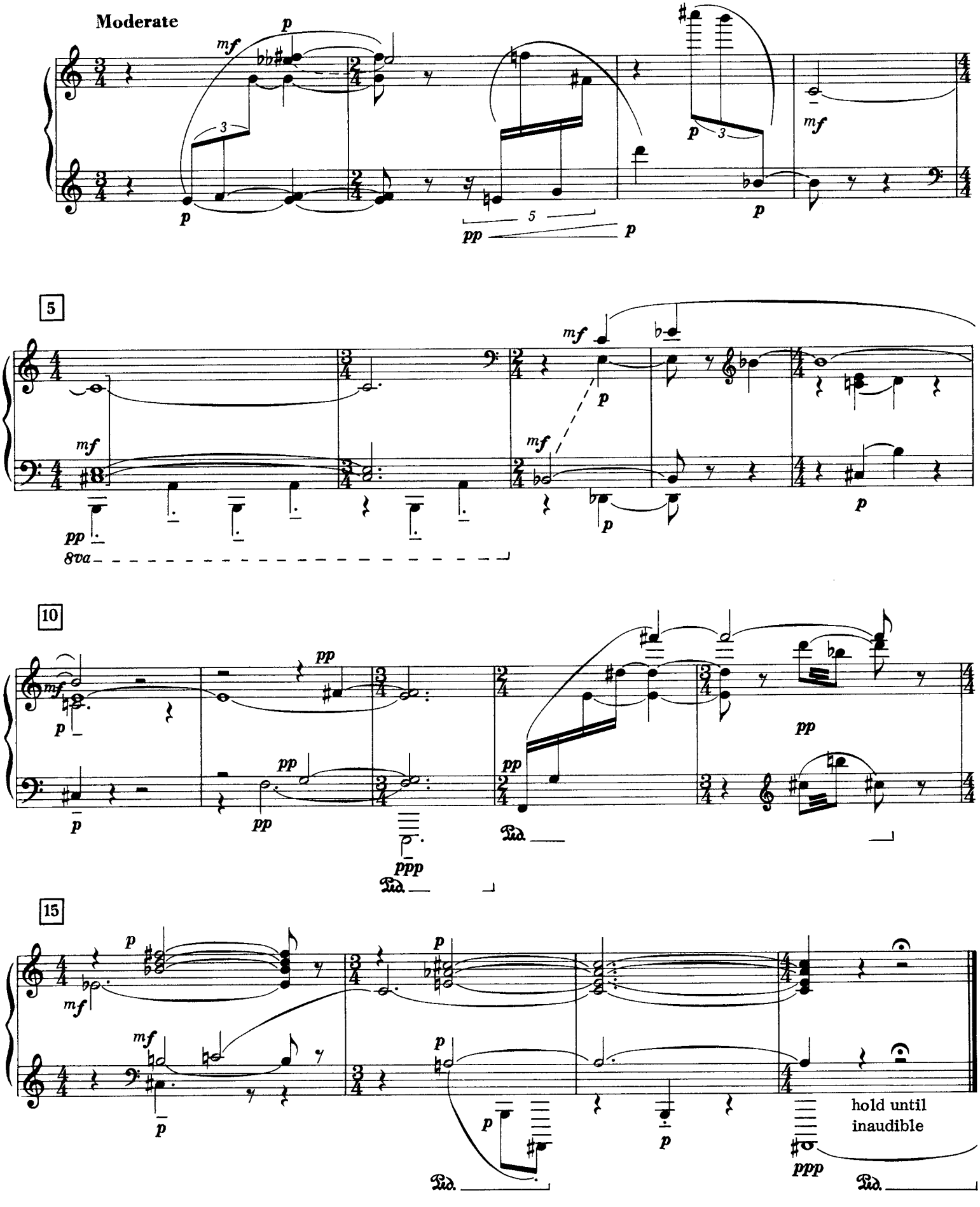
BRUCE WISE



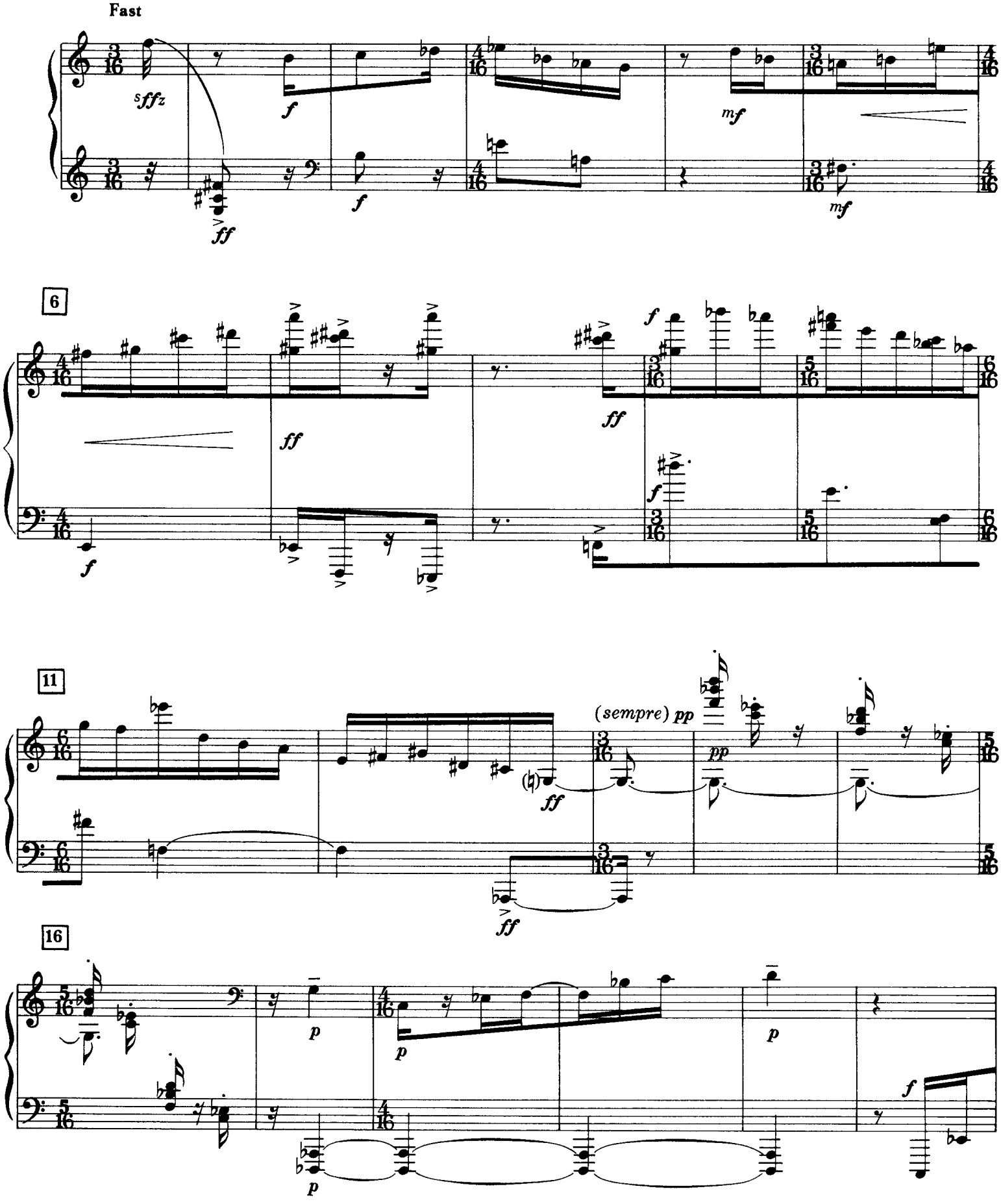
© 1977 by Bruce Wise

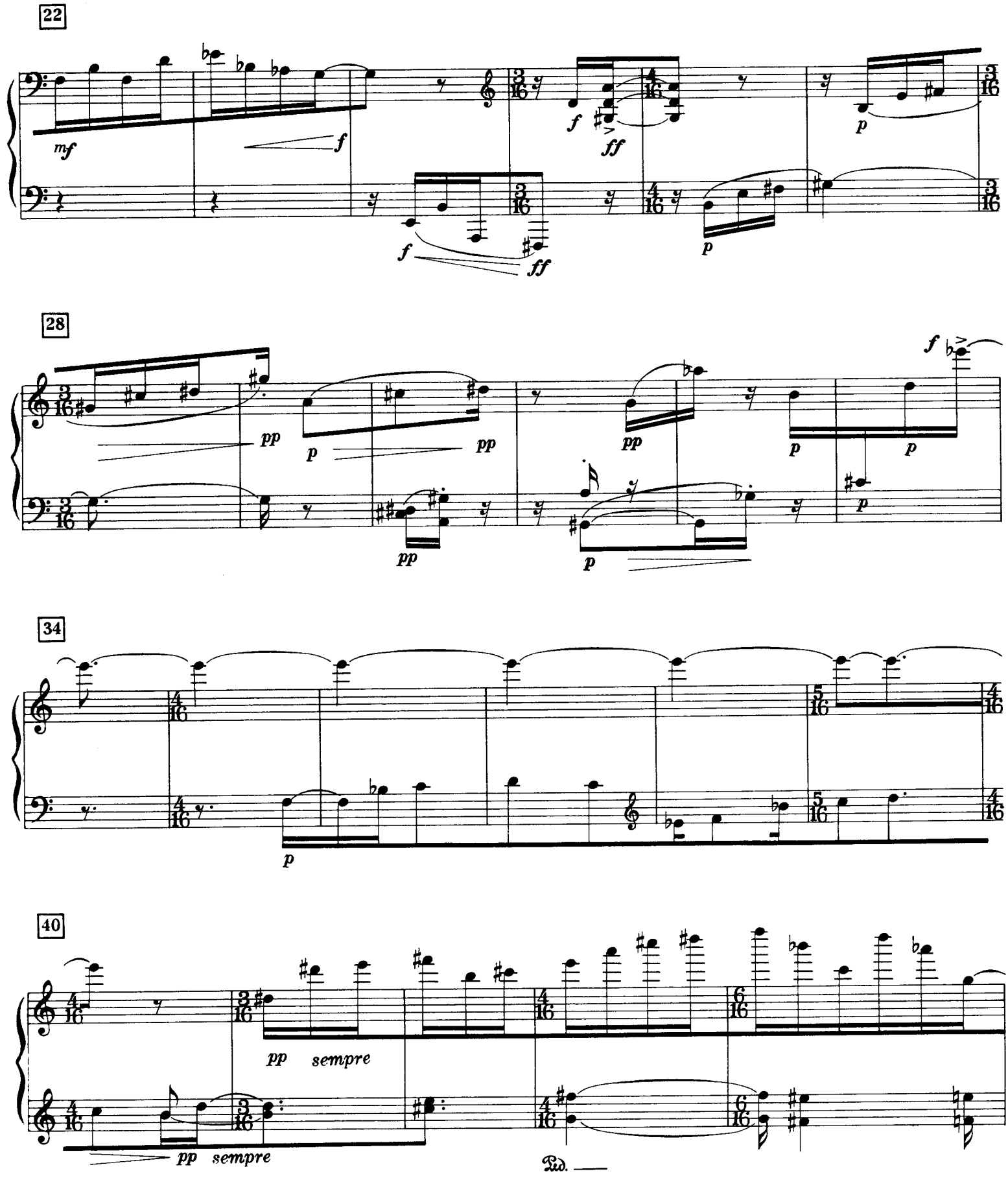

22
f
pp
Ped.
26
ff
ff
fff
ff
(Ped.)
Ped.
32
secco
pp
8va
ff
sfz
(♮)
Ped.
37
p
pp
pp
pp
pp

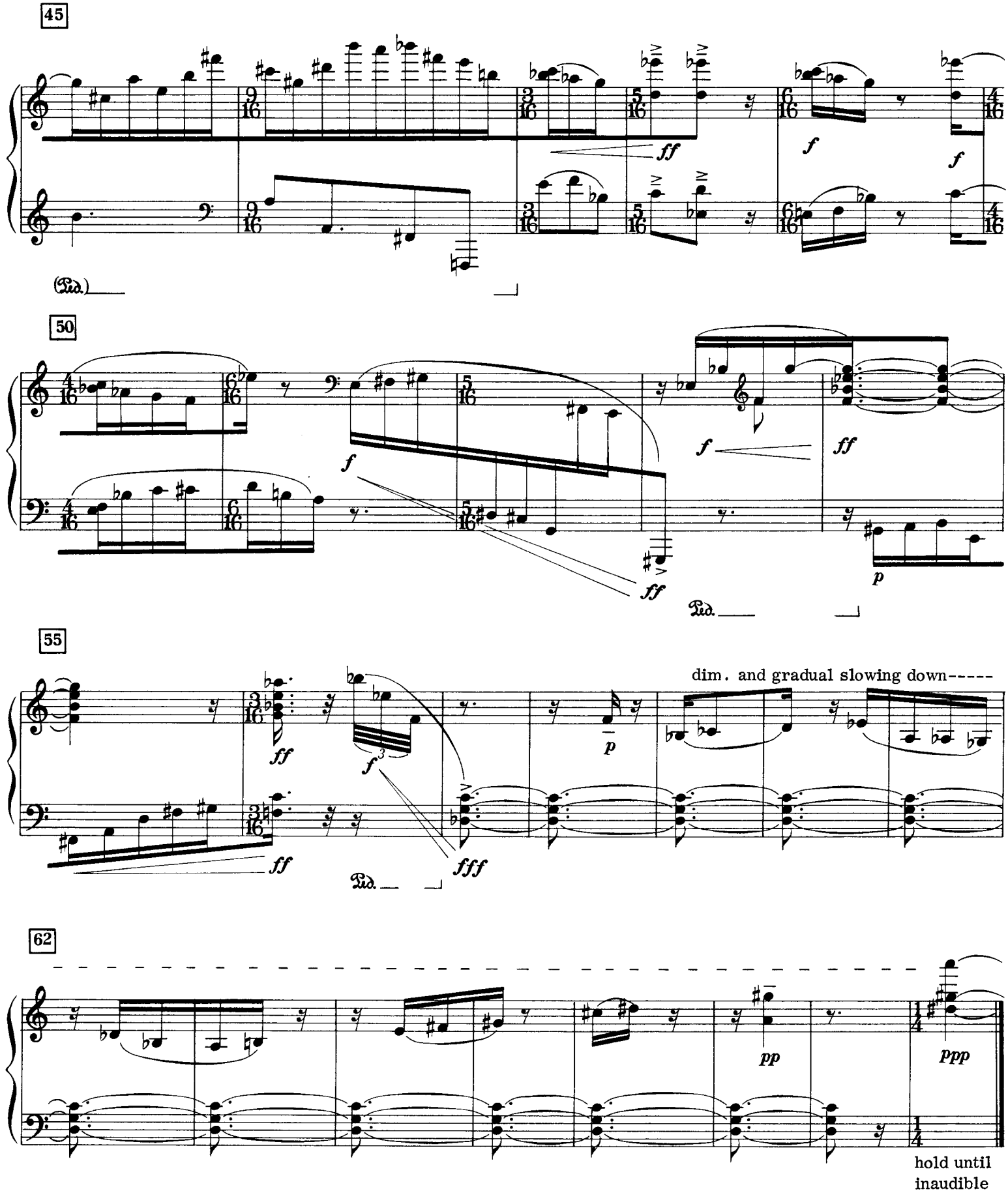
II



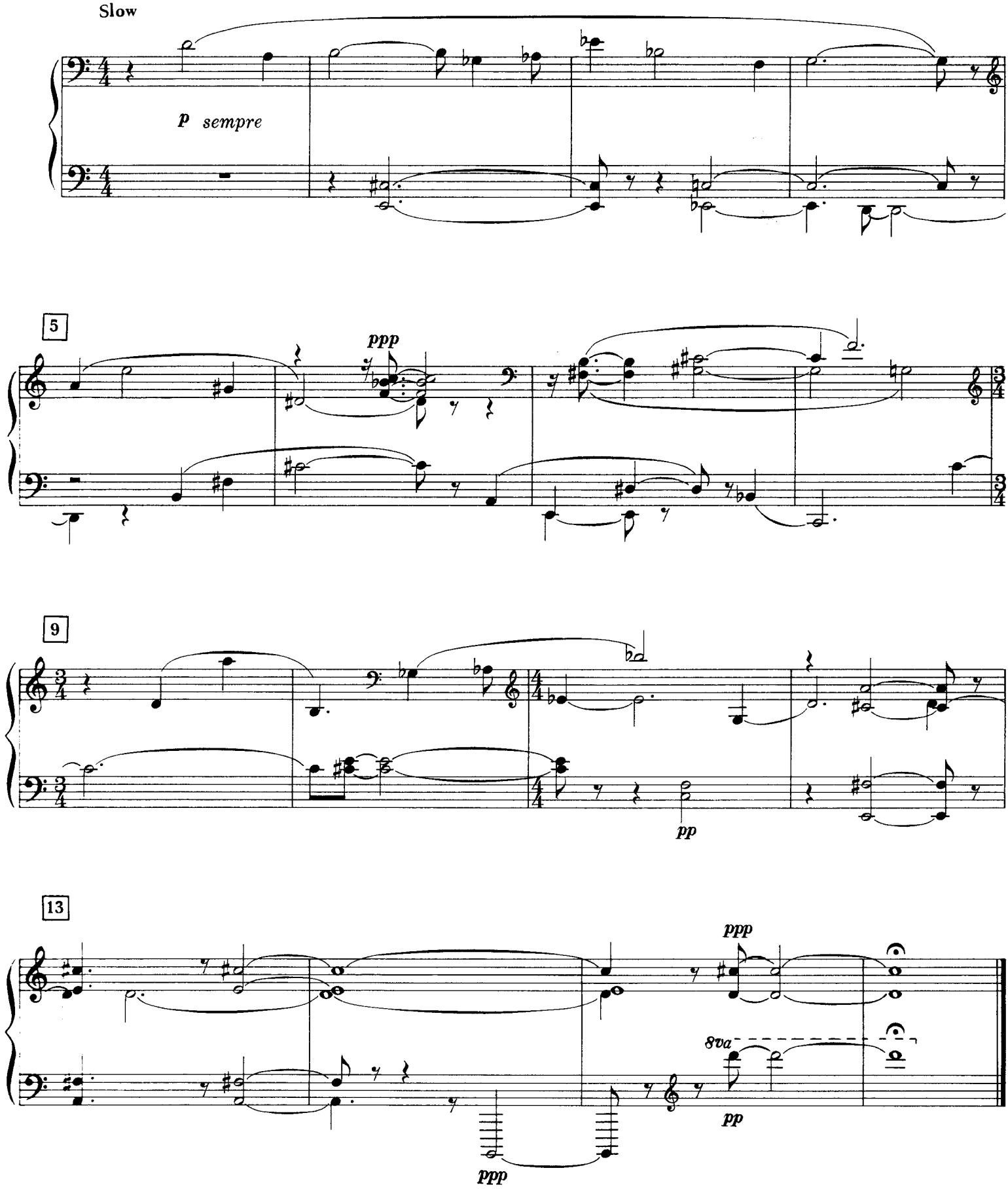
III




22
mf
f
f
ff
f
ff
p
p
28
pp
p
pp
pp
pp
p
p
p
f
34
p
40
pp sempre
pp sempre
Ped.


45
ff
f
f
(Ped.)
50
f
ff
f
ff
p
Ped.
55
dim. and gradual slowing down-----
ff
f
p
ff
fff
Ped.
62
pp
ppp
hold until
inaudible

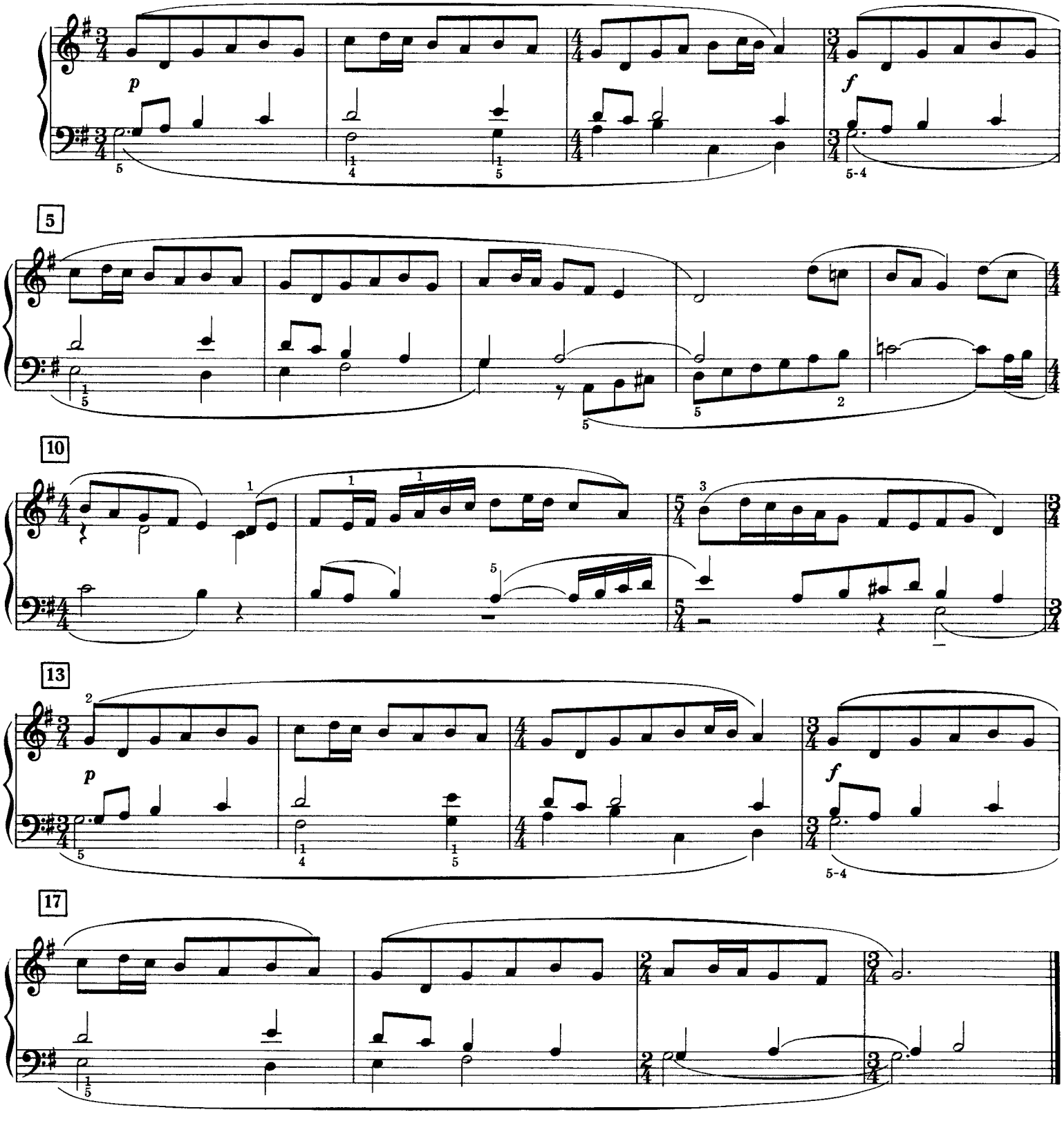
IV



HOMAGE TO MILHAUD

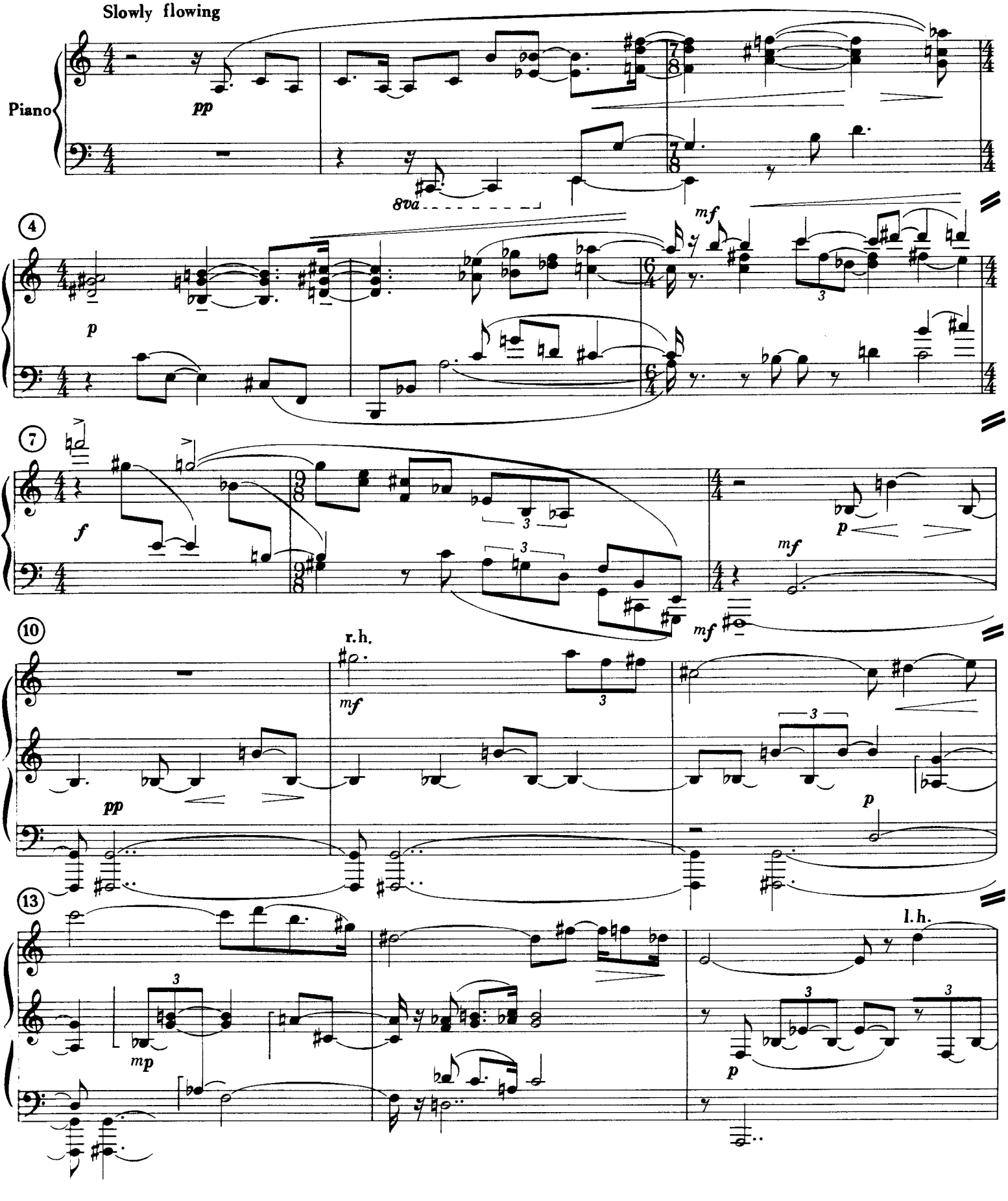
Allegro moderato

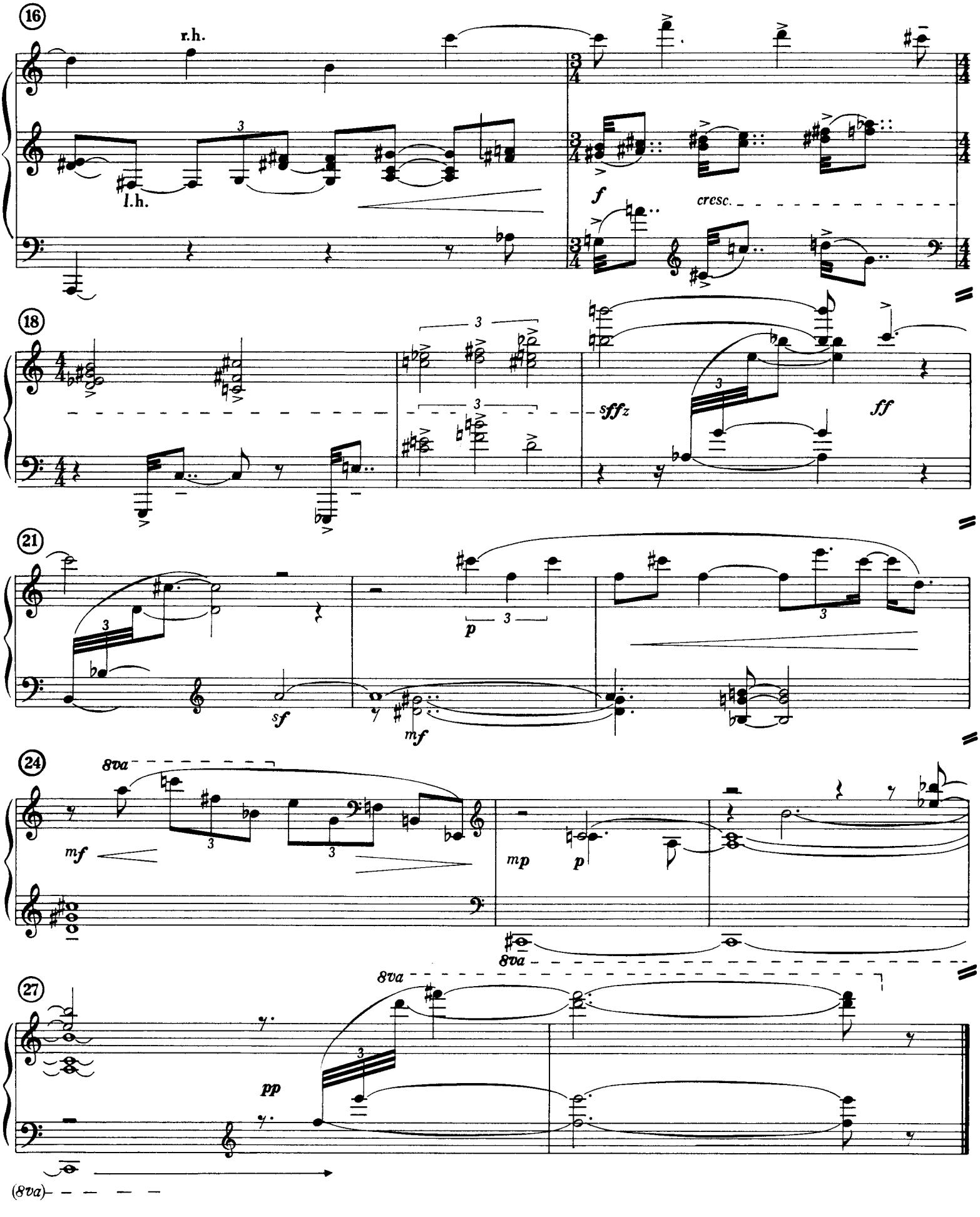
LOU HARRISON



MOBILE

LESLIE BASSETT

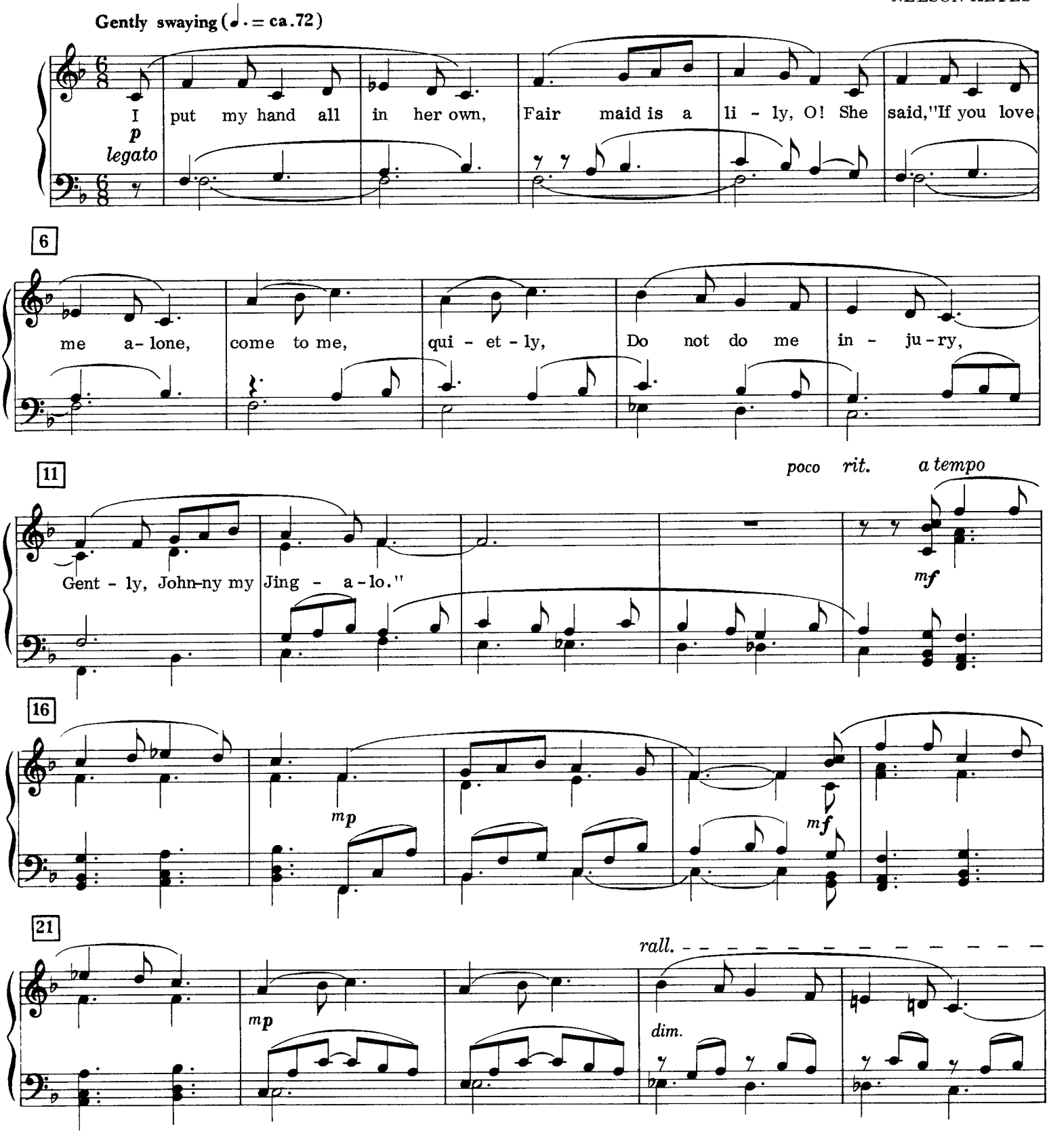


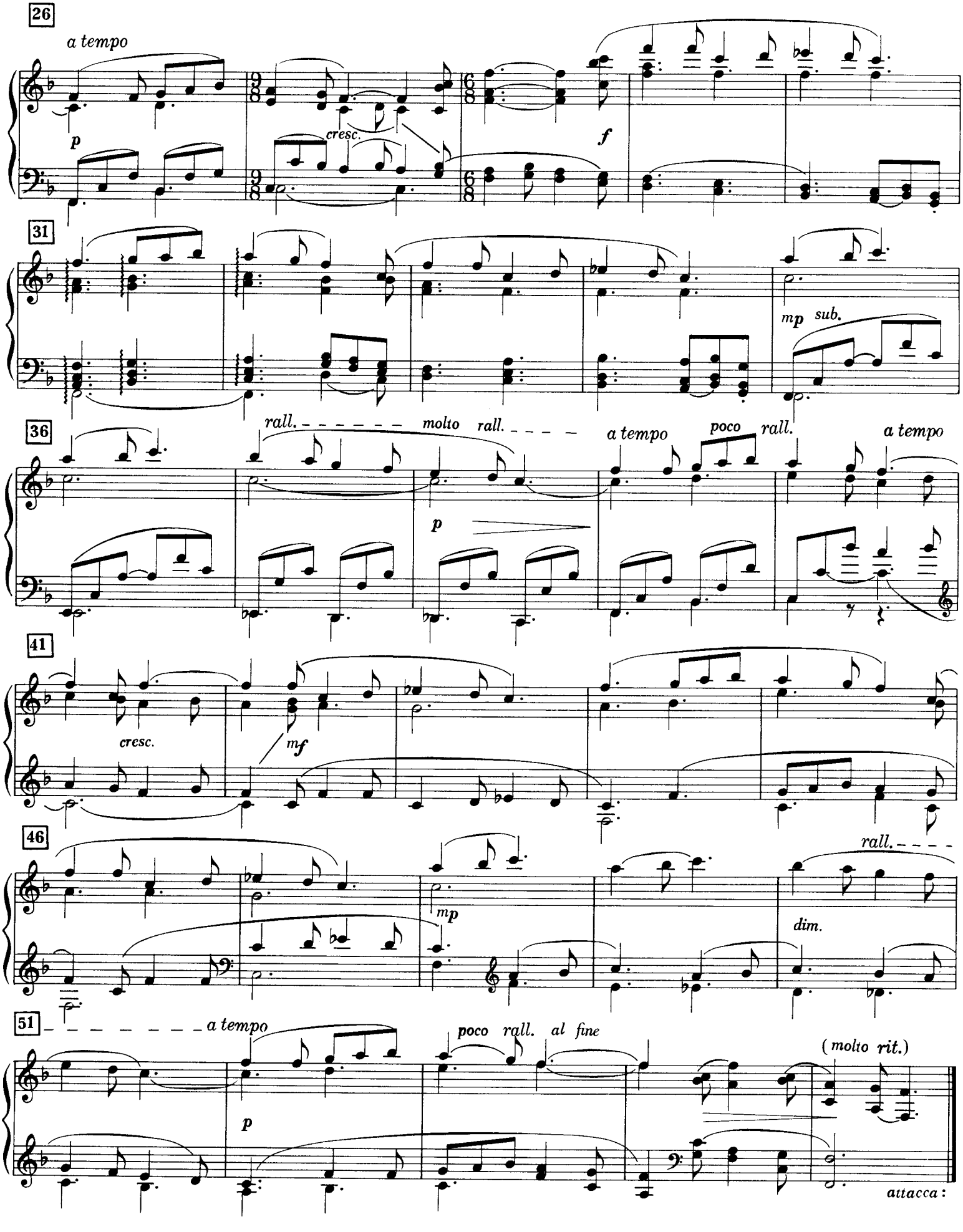

16
r.h.
l.h.
f
cresc.
18
sffz
ff
21
p
sf
mf
24
8va
mf
mp
p
8va
27
8va
pp
(8va)

THREE LOVE SONGS

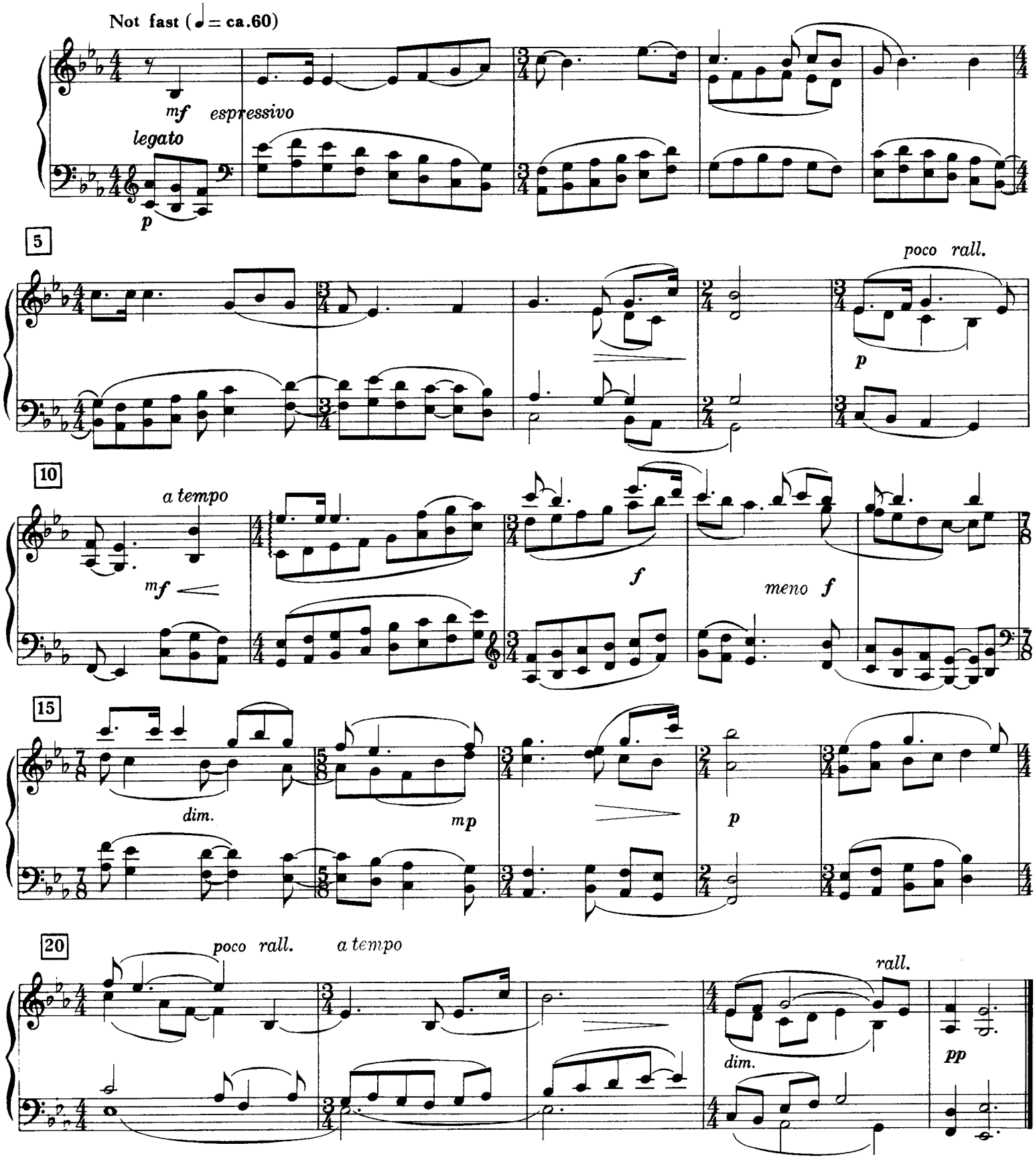
I. GENTLY, JOHNNY, MY JINGALO

NELSON KEYES

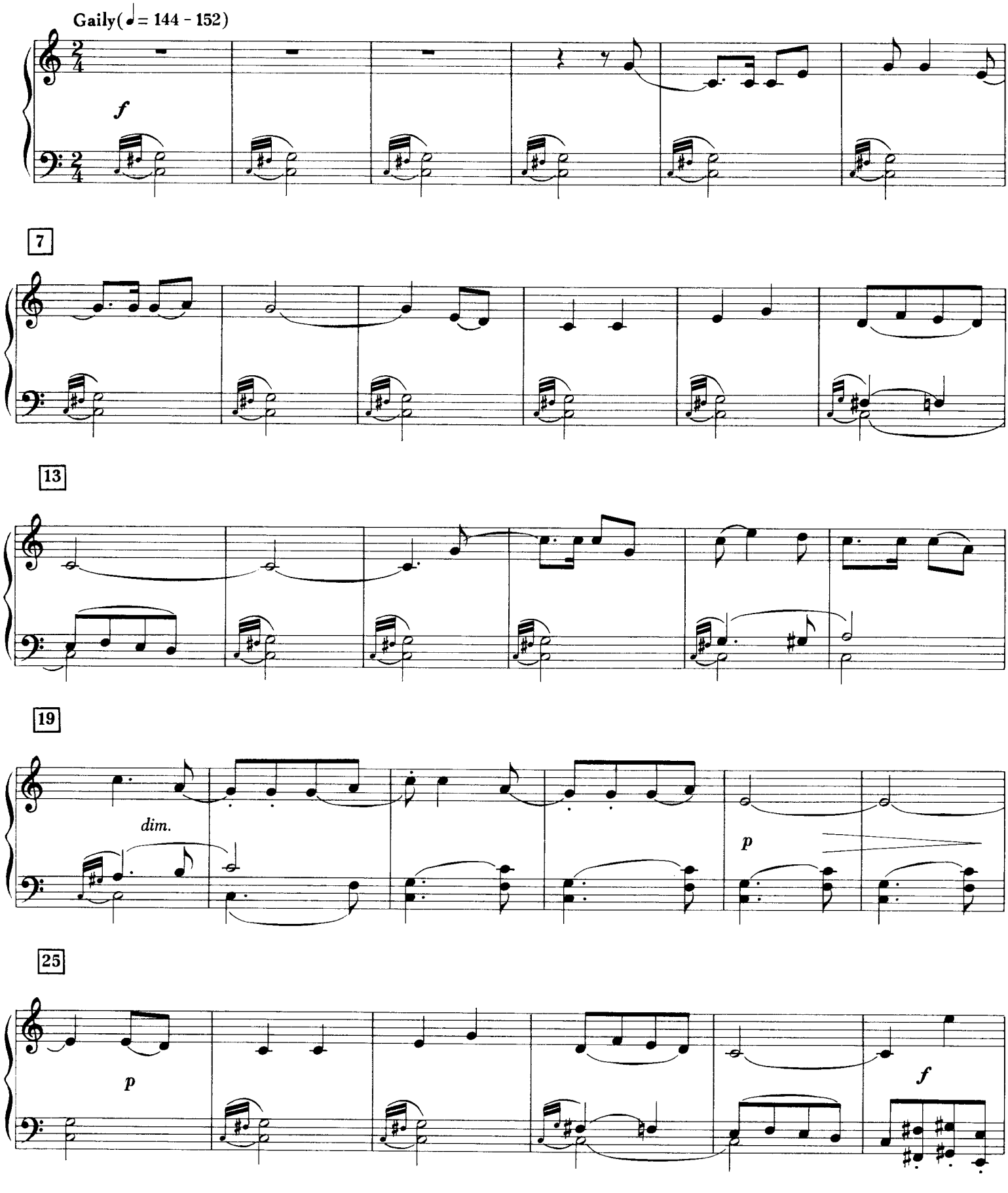


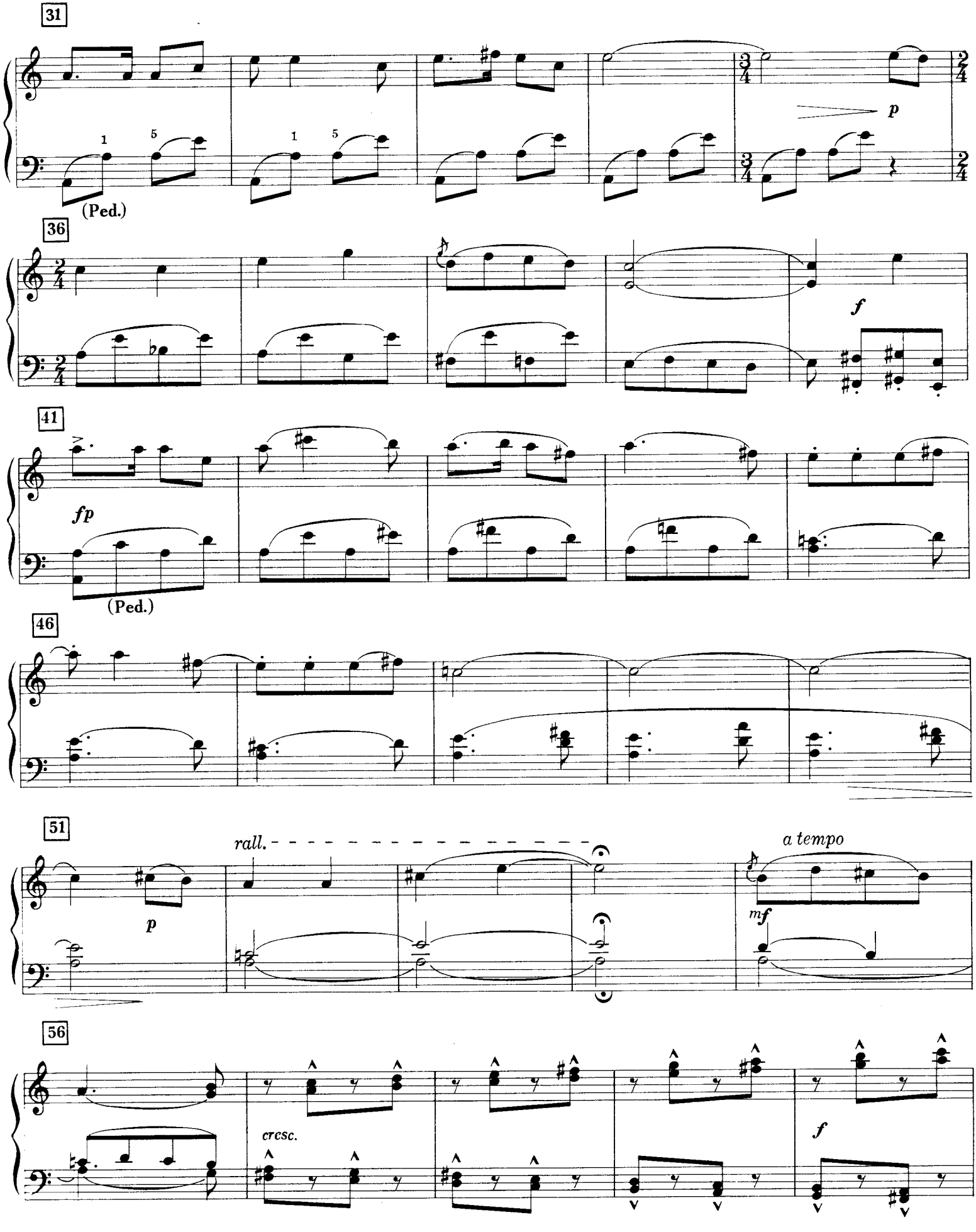

26
a tempo
p
cresc.
f
31
mp sub.
36
rall.
molto rall.
a tempo
poco rall.
a tempo
p
41
cresc.
mf
46
mp
rall.
dim.
51
a tempo
poco rall. al fine
(molto rit.)
p
attacca :

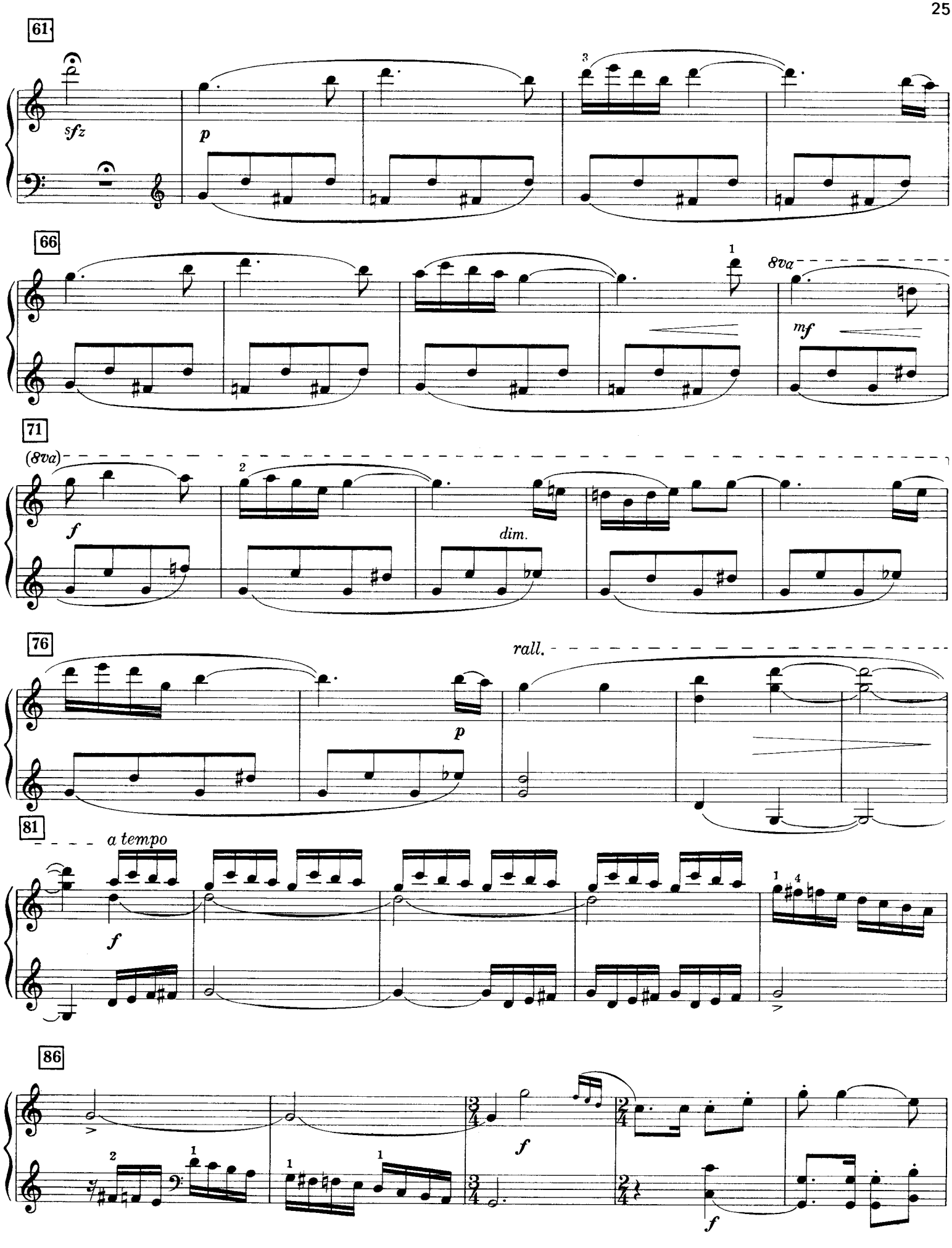
II. SHENANDOAH

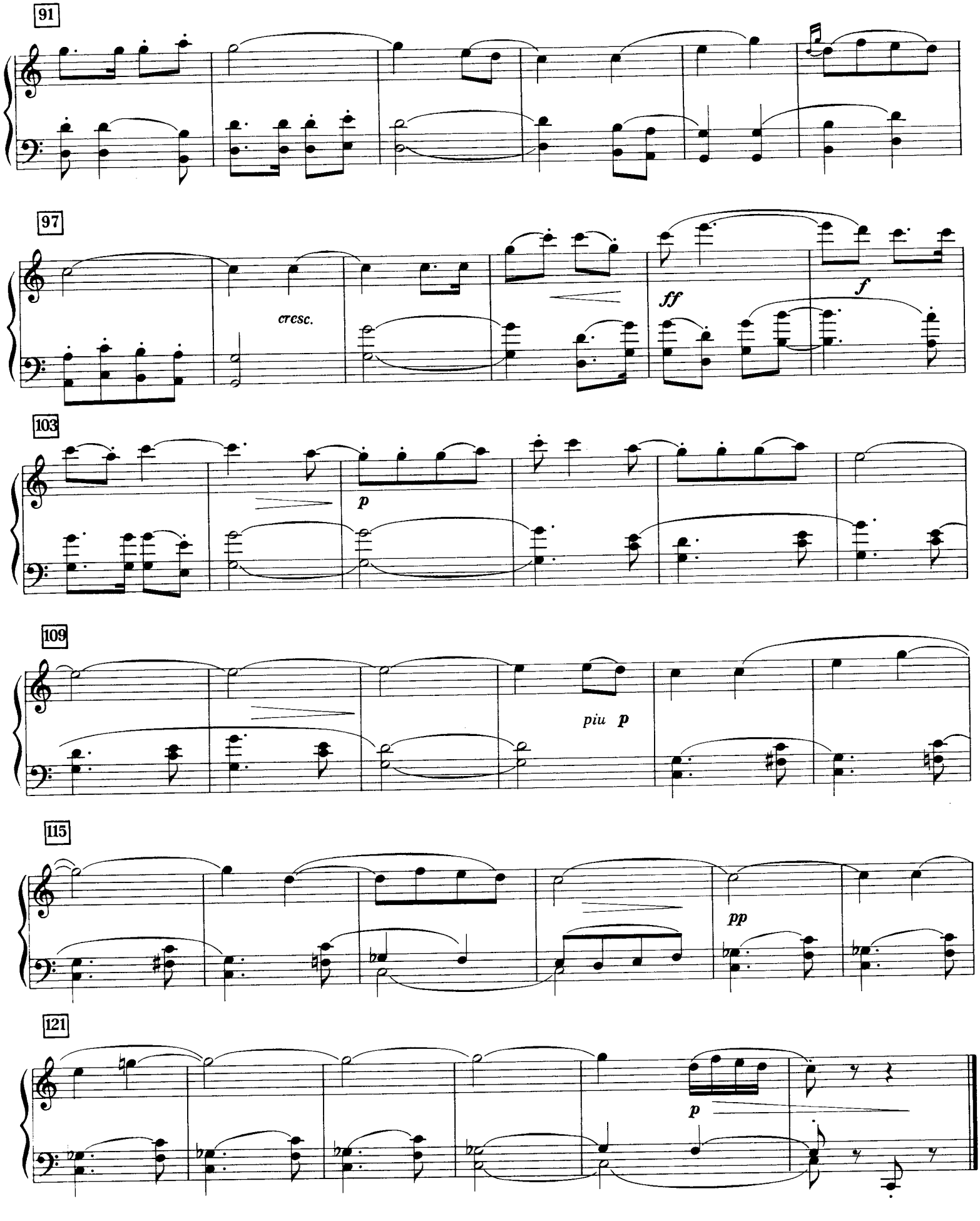


III. LOLLY. TOO. DUM




31
(Ped.)
p
36
f
41
fp
(Ped.)
46
51
rall.
a tempo
p
mf
56
cresc.
f


61
sfz
p
66
8va
mf
71
(8va)
f
dim.
76
rall.
p
81
a tempo
f
86
f
f

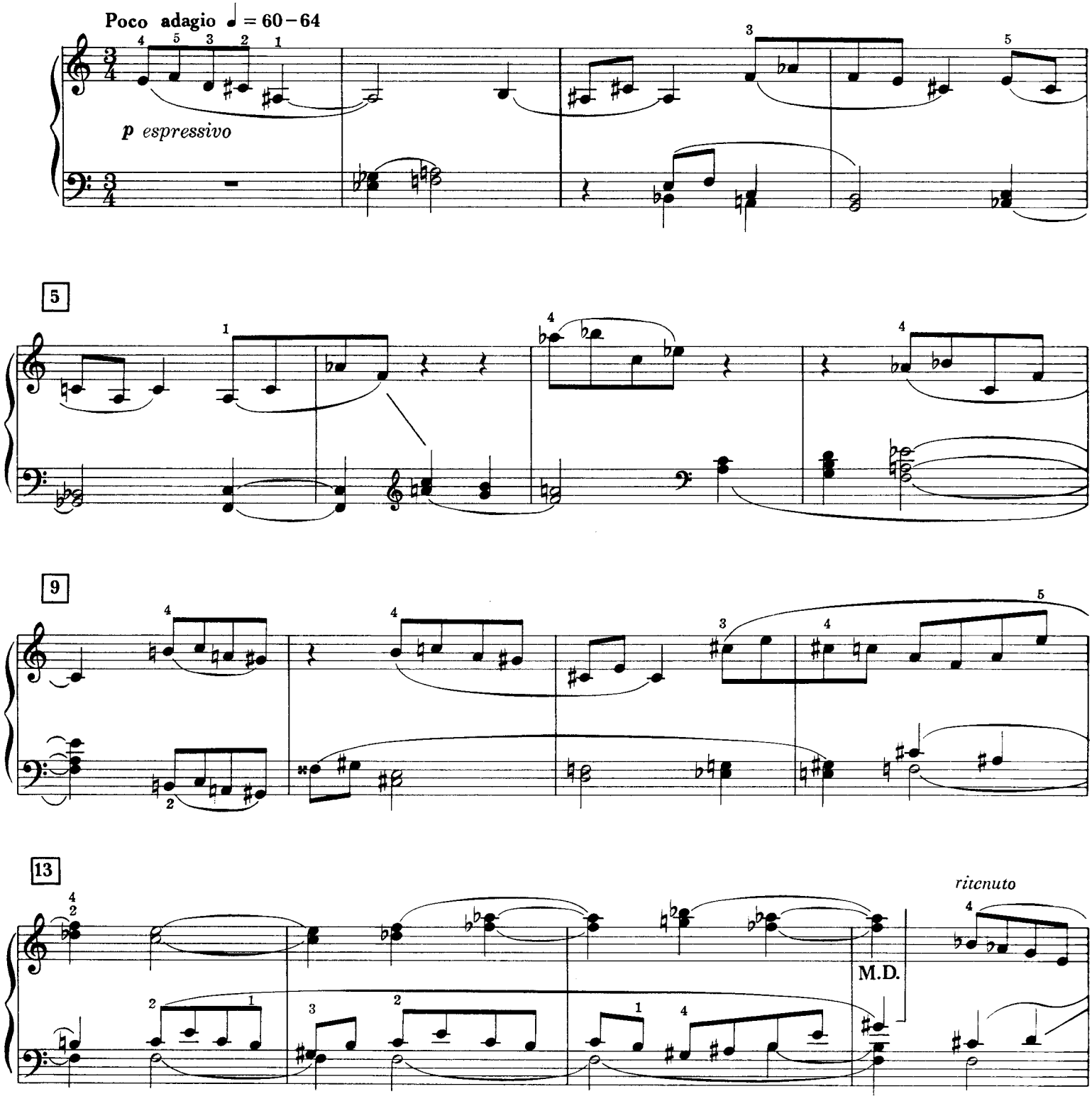

91
97
cresc.
ff
f
103
p
109
piu p
115
pp
121
p

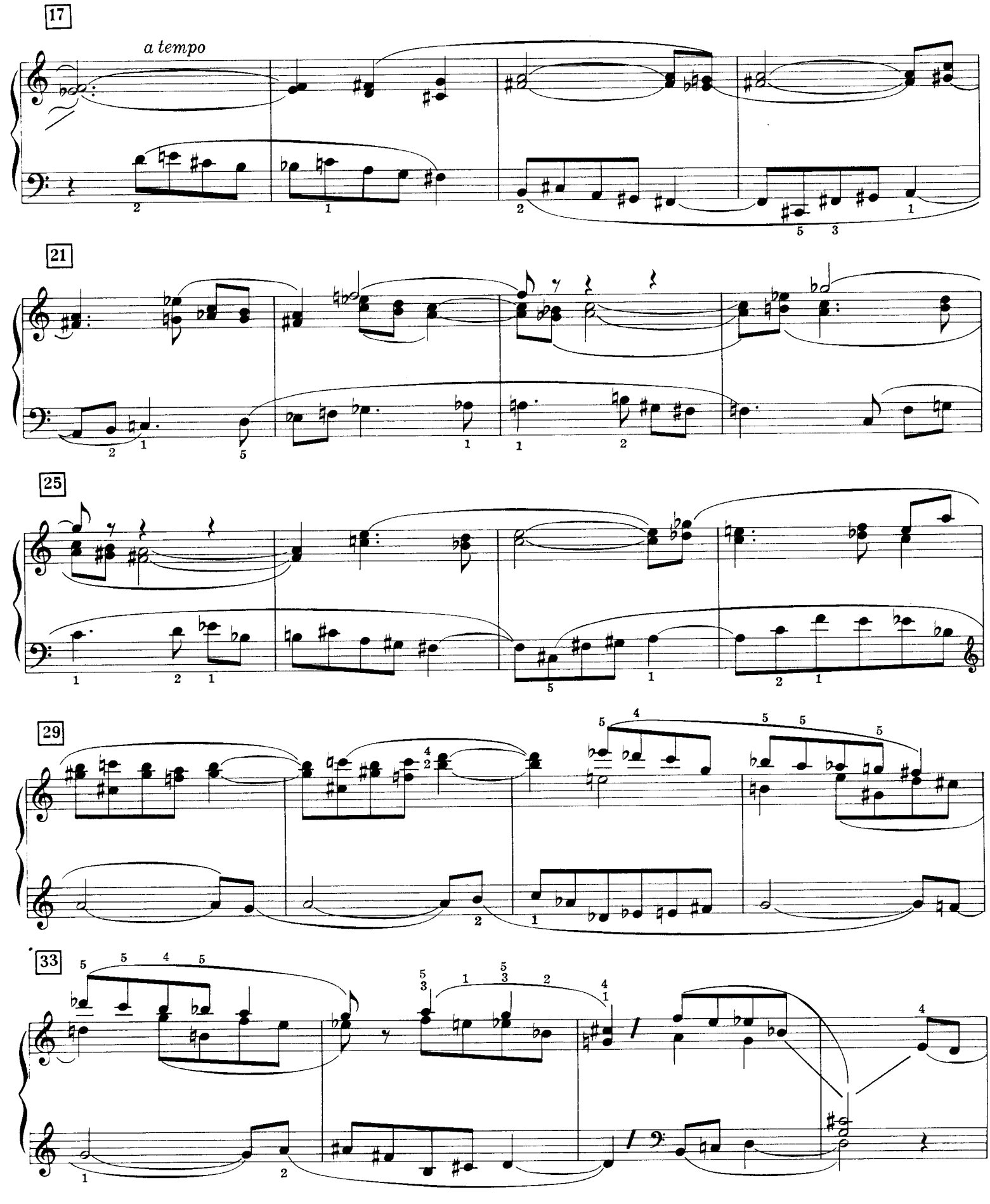
For William C. and Betsy Olson

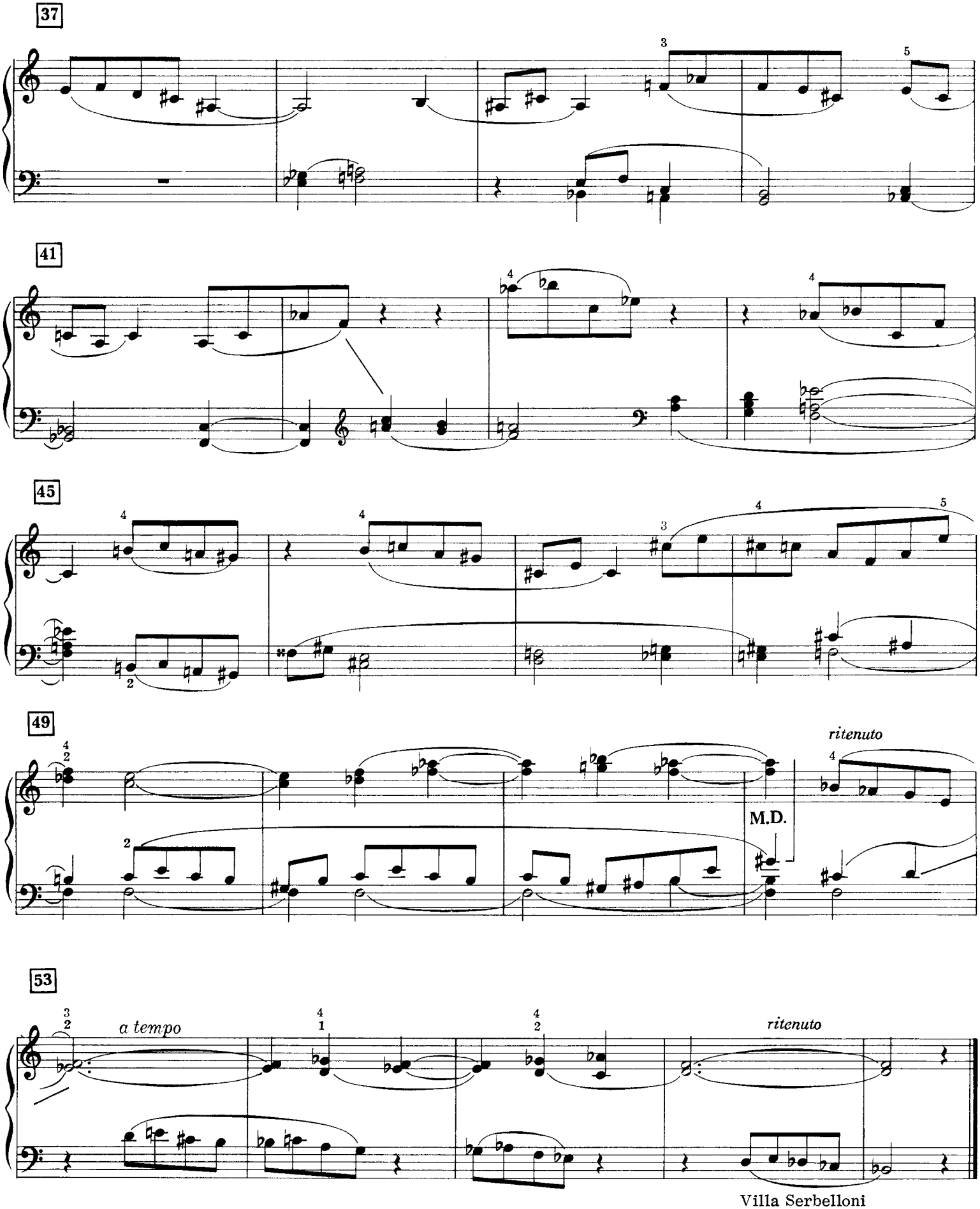
NOTTURNO

("Bellagio Adagio")

HALSEY STEVENS



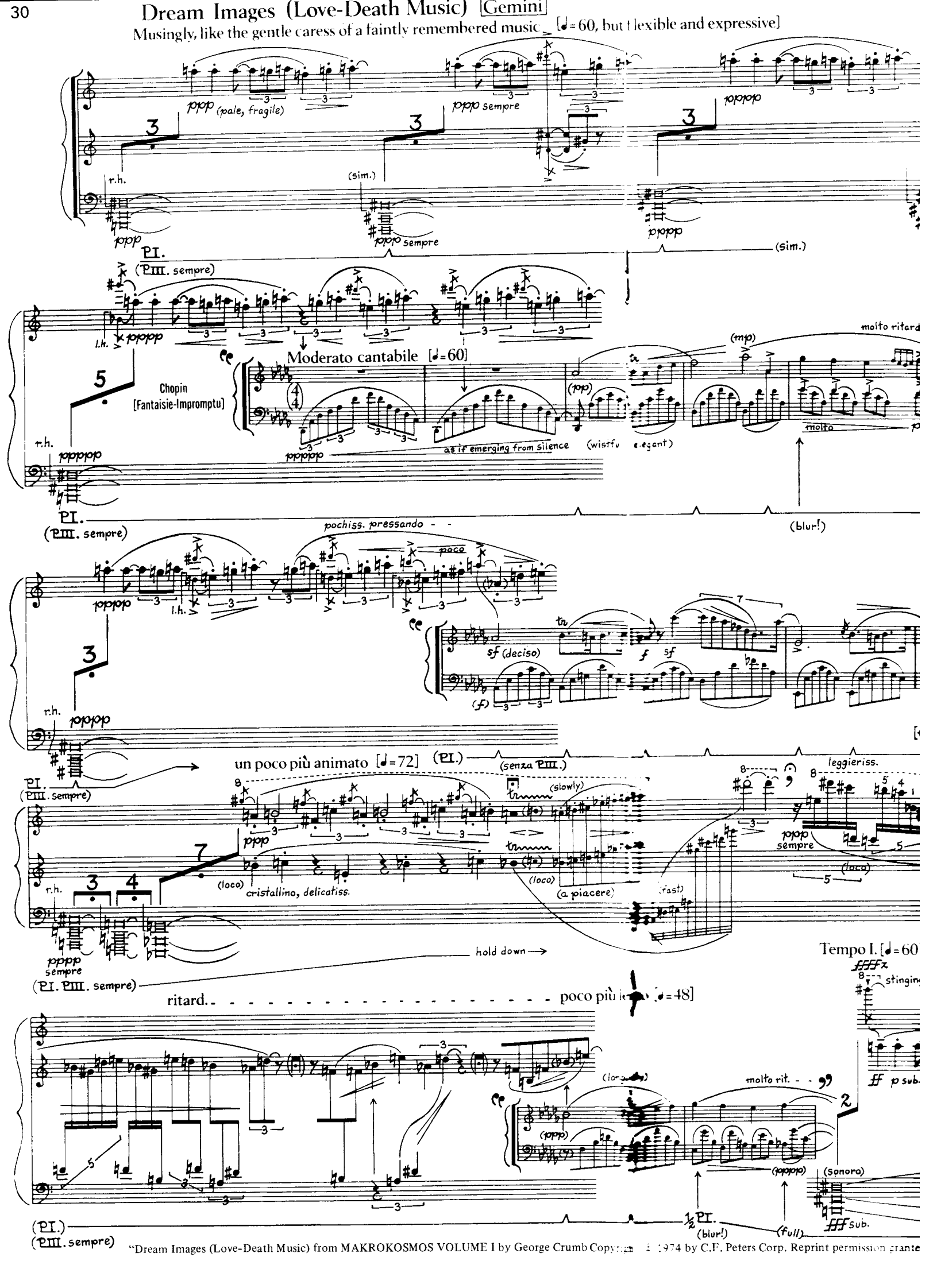

17
a tempo
21
25
29
33



Villa Serbelloni
19-20 Nov. 1971(ca. 2'45")

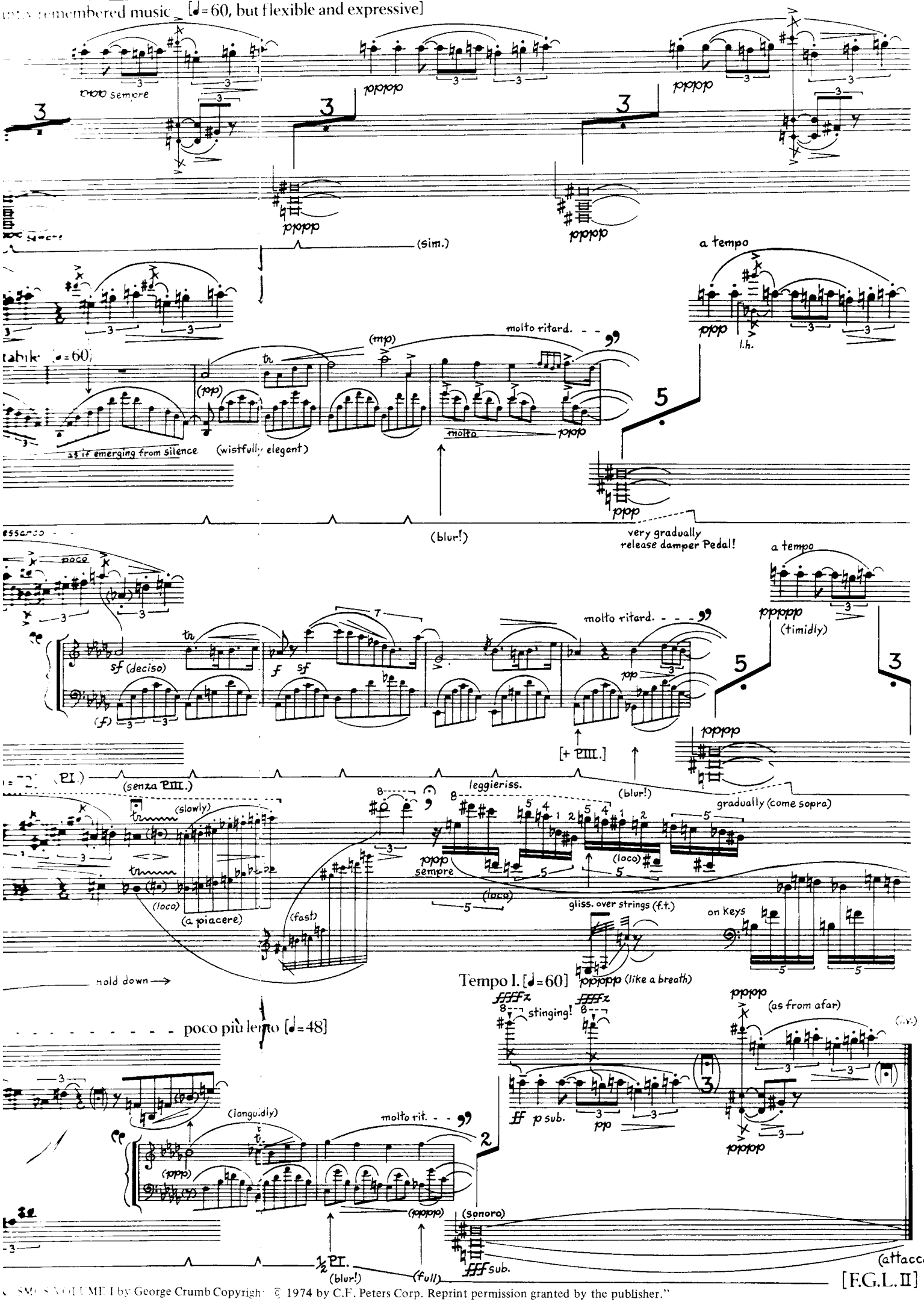
Dream Images (Love-Death Music) [Gemini]

Musingly, like the gentle caress of a faintly remembered music [♩= 60, but flexible and expressive]



"Dream Images (Love-Death Music) from MAKROKOSMOS VOLUME I by George Crumb Copyright © 1974 by C.F. Peters Corp. Reprint permission granted

remembered music [♩=60, but flexible and expressive]

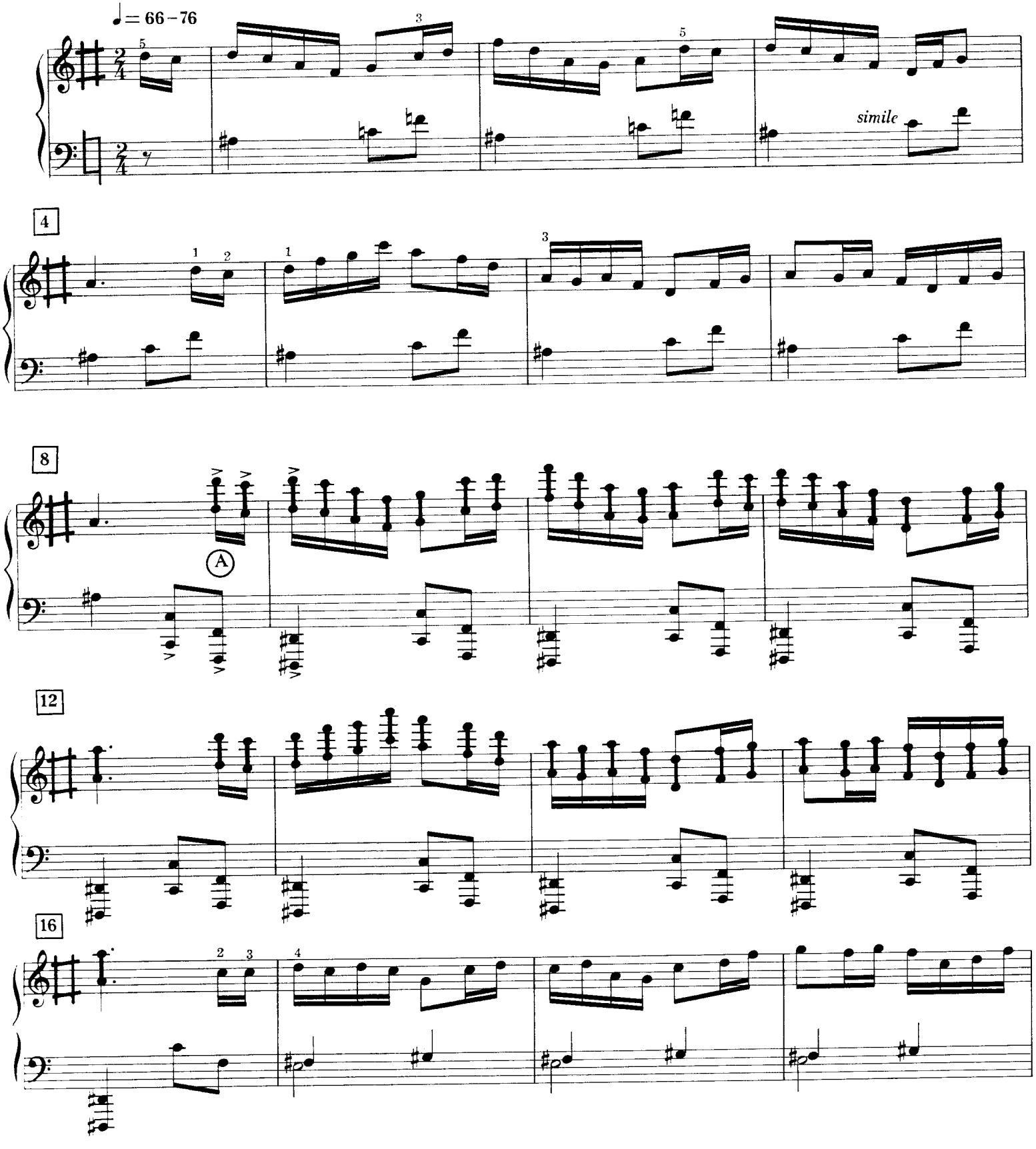


SMOKE MUSIC I by George Crumb Copyright © 1974 by C.F. Peters Corp. Reprint permission granted by the publisher."

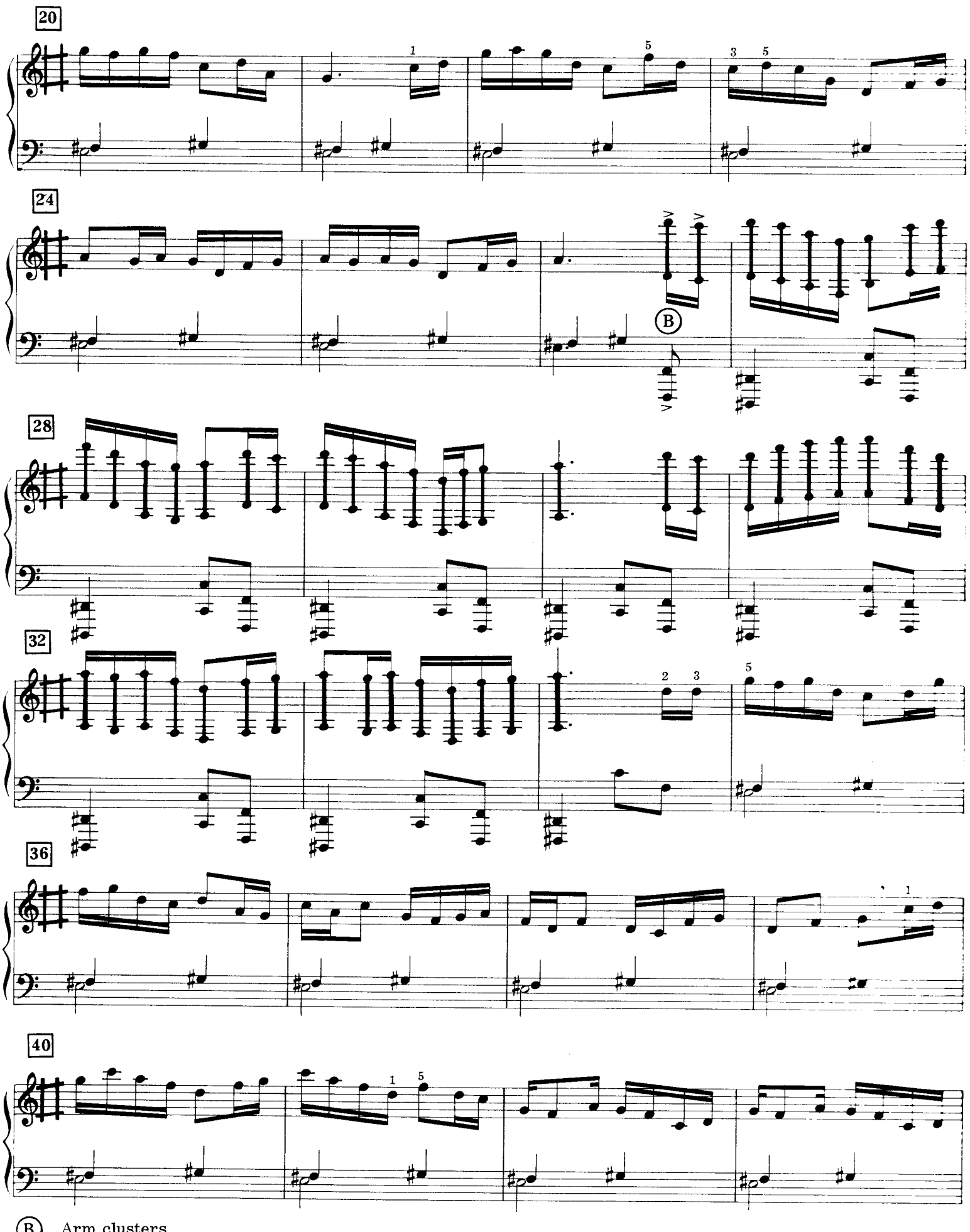
REEL

HOMAGE TO HENRY COWELL

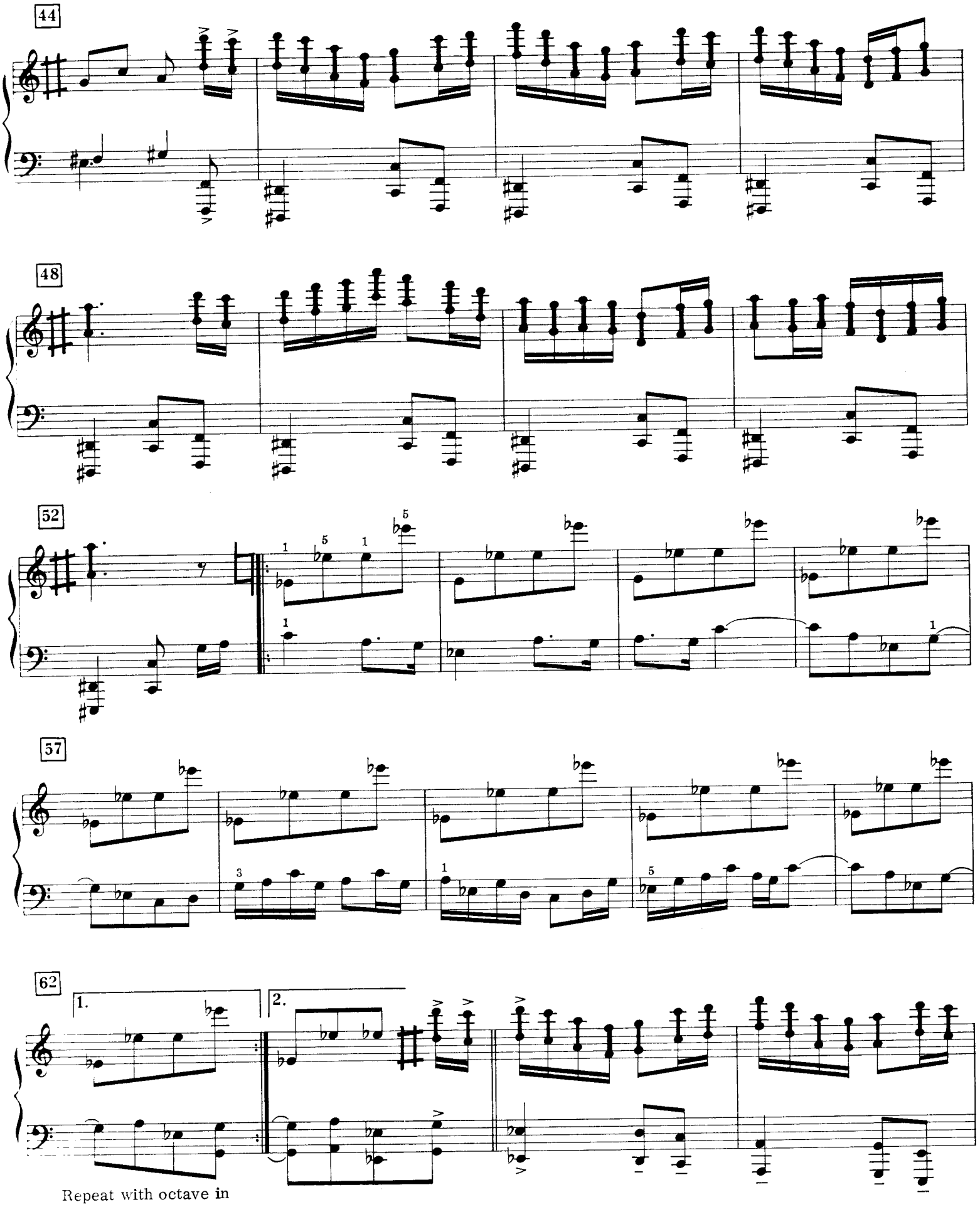
LOU HARRISON

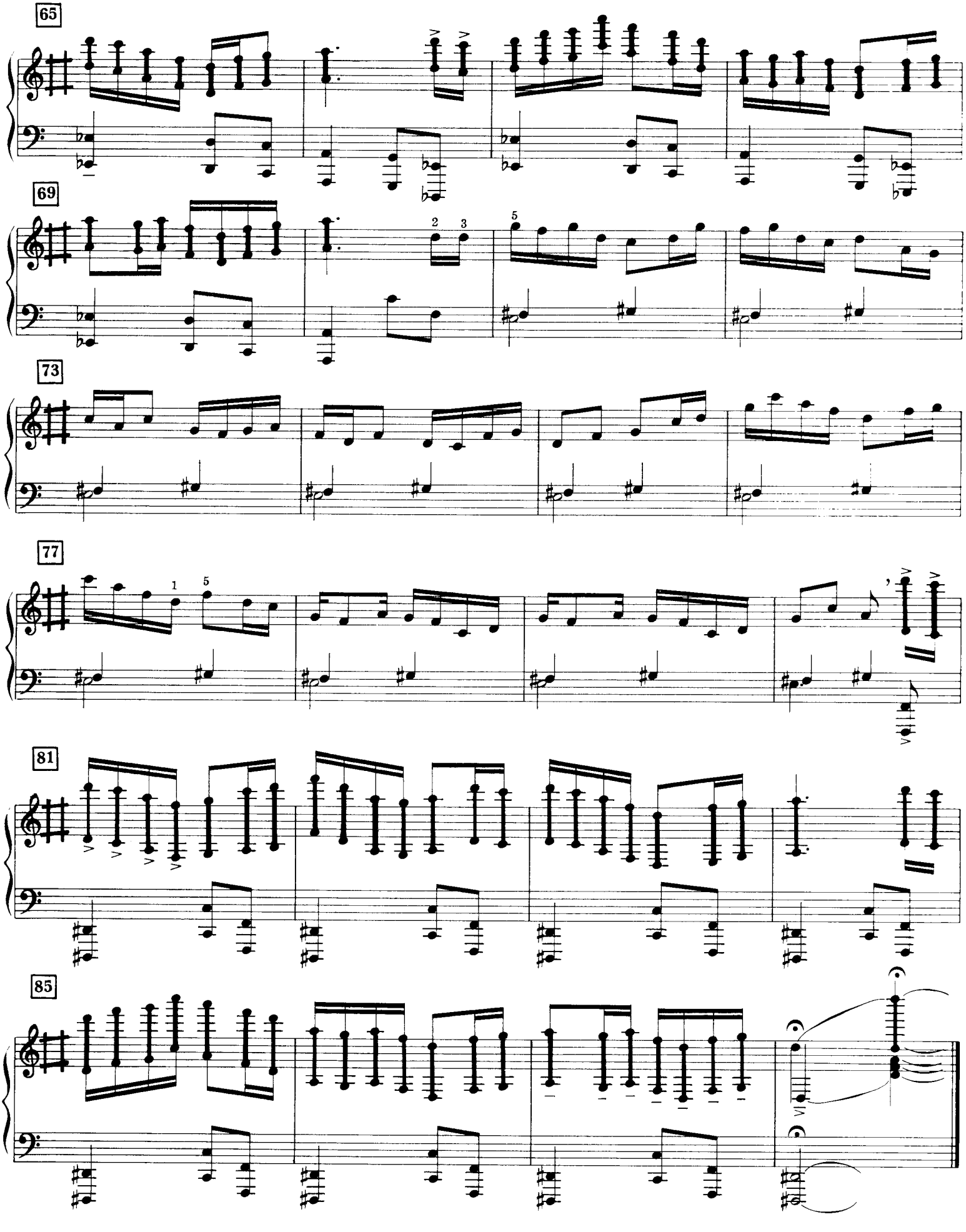


(A) Palm clusters



(B) Arm clusters


44
48
52
57
62
1.
2.
Repeat with octave in
bass tune

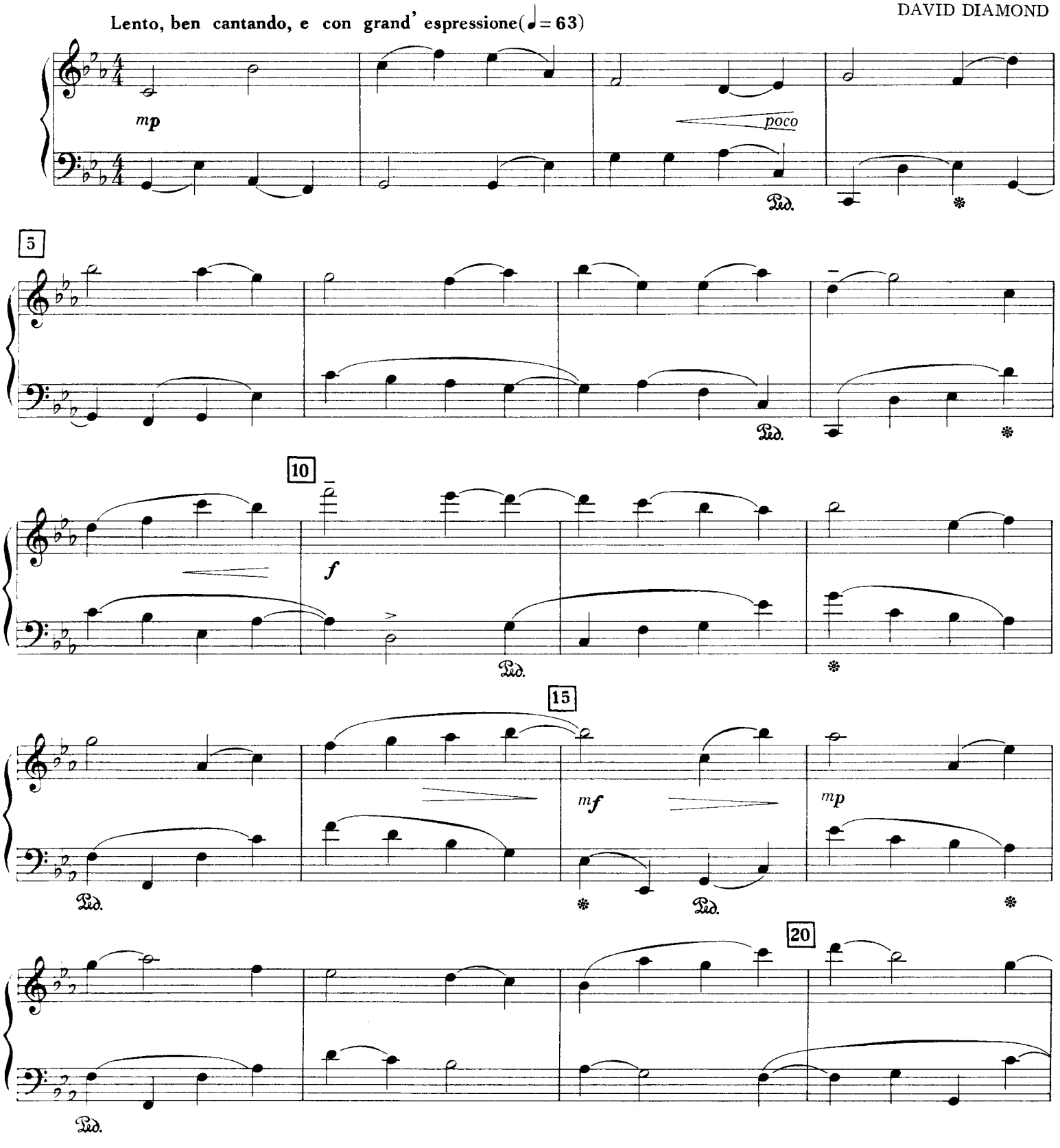

65
69
73
77
81
85

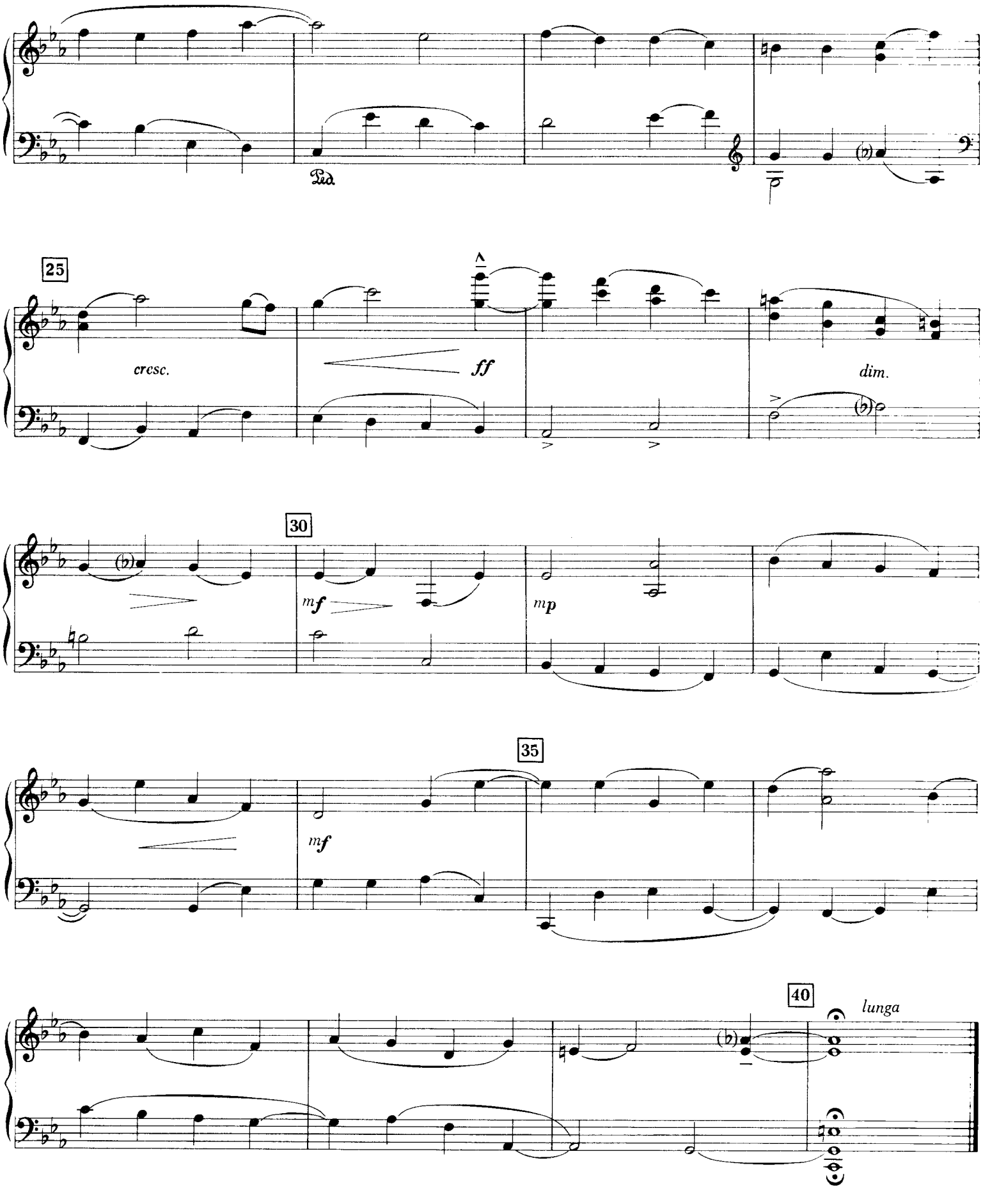
PRELUDE AND FUGUE II

(C Minor)

PRELUDE

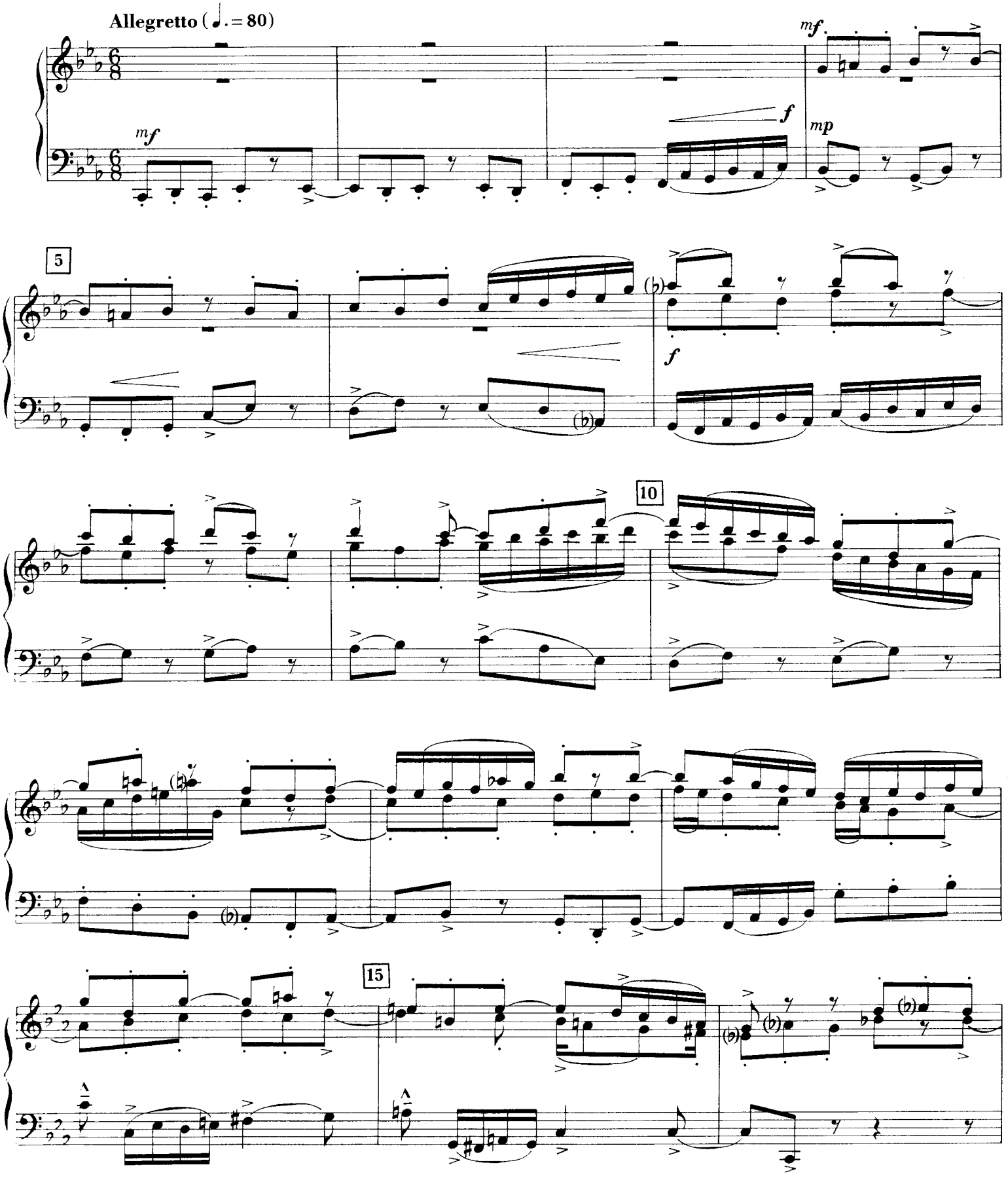
DAVID DIAMOND

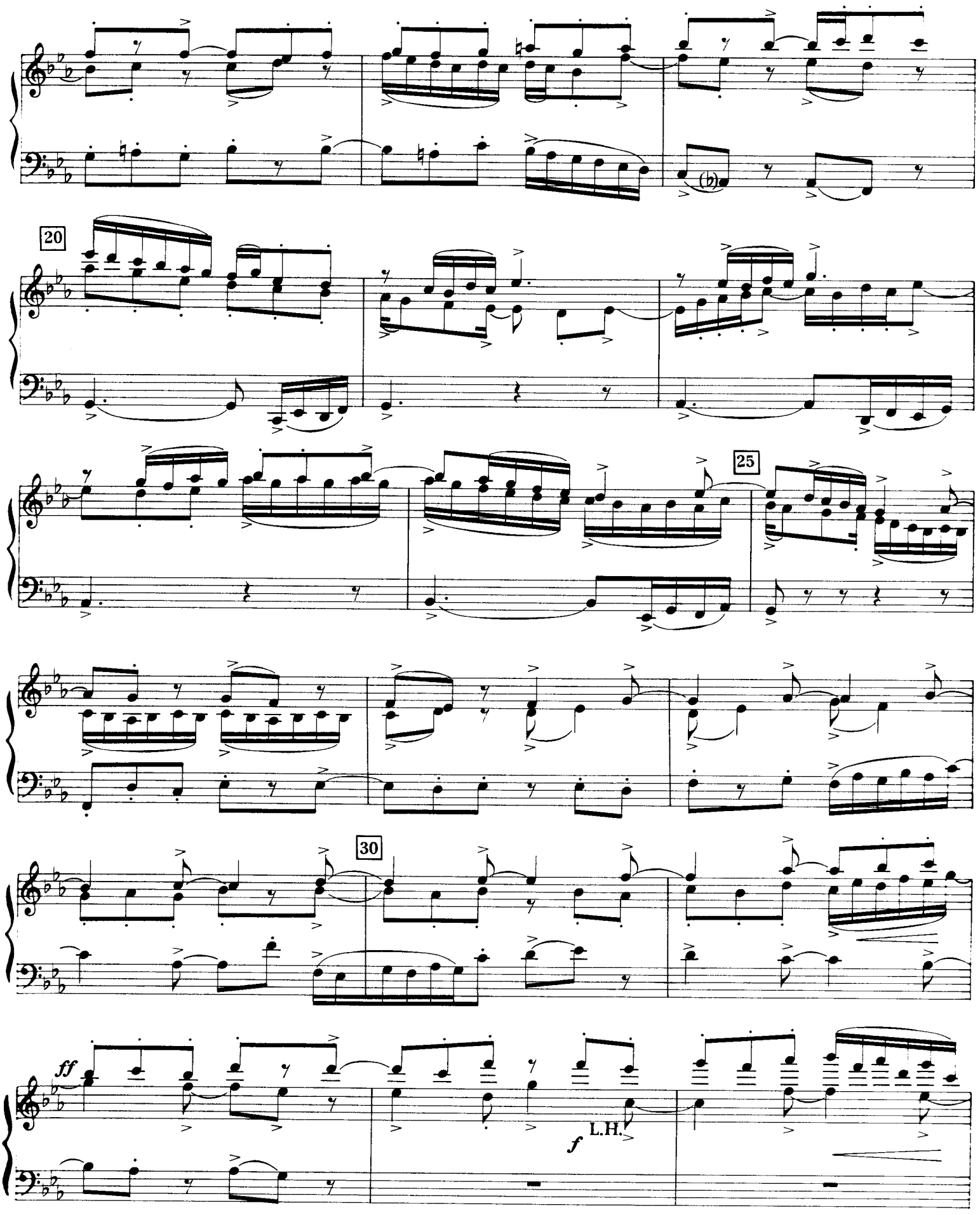


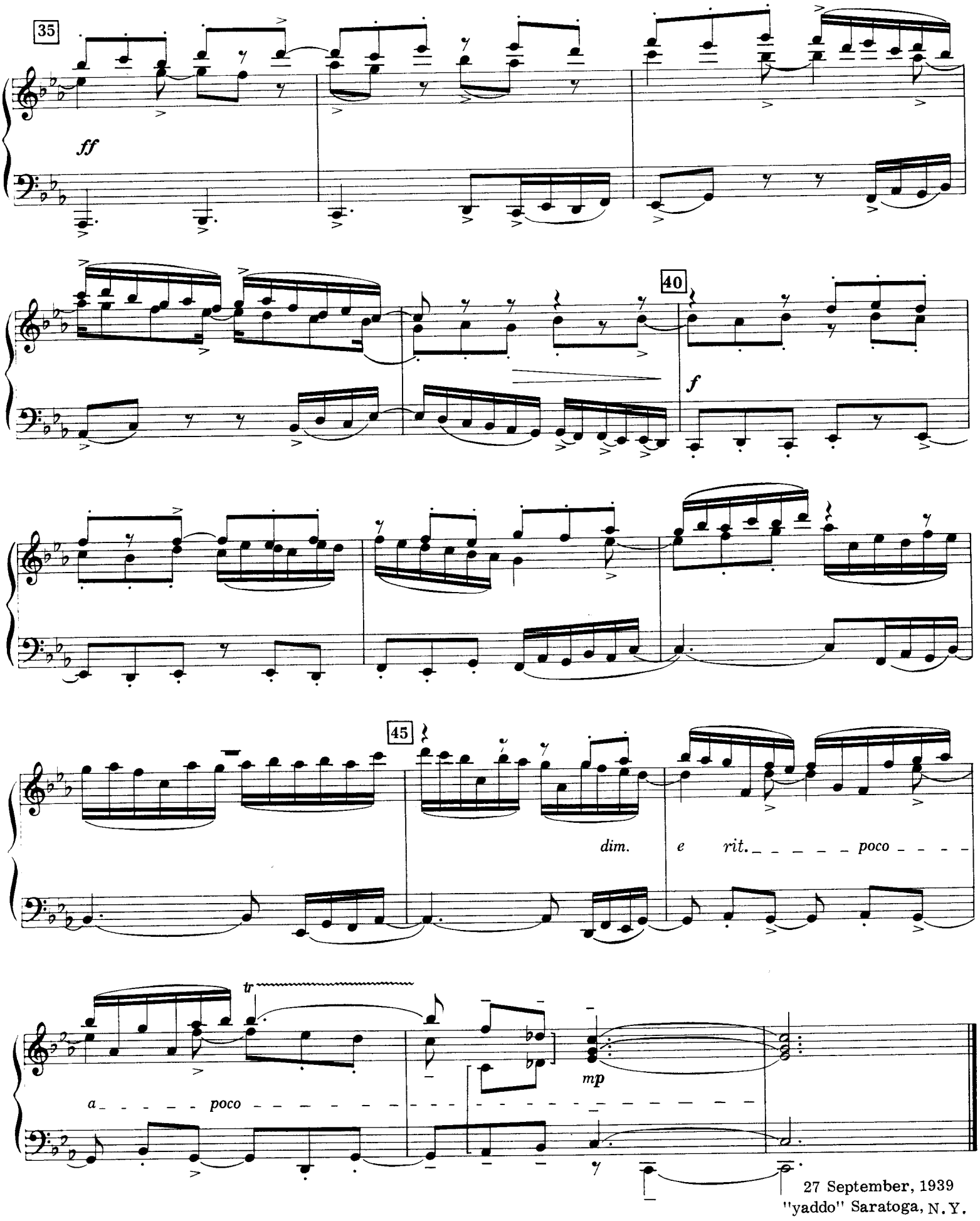

Ped.
25
cresc.
ff
dim.
30
mf
mp
35
mf
40
lunga

FUGUE

(3 Voices)

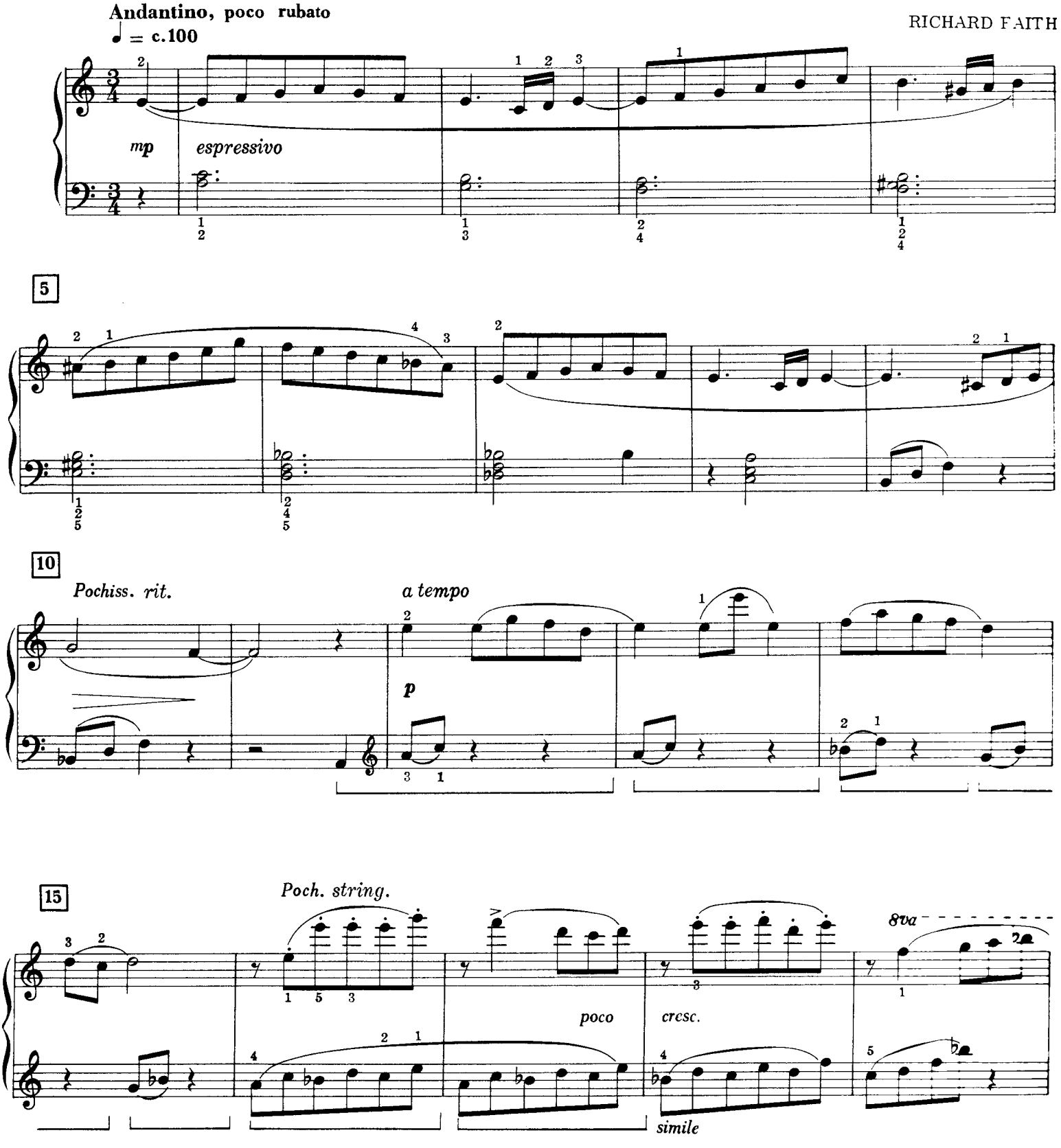


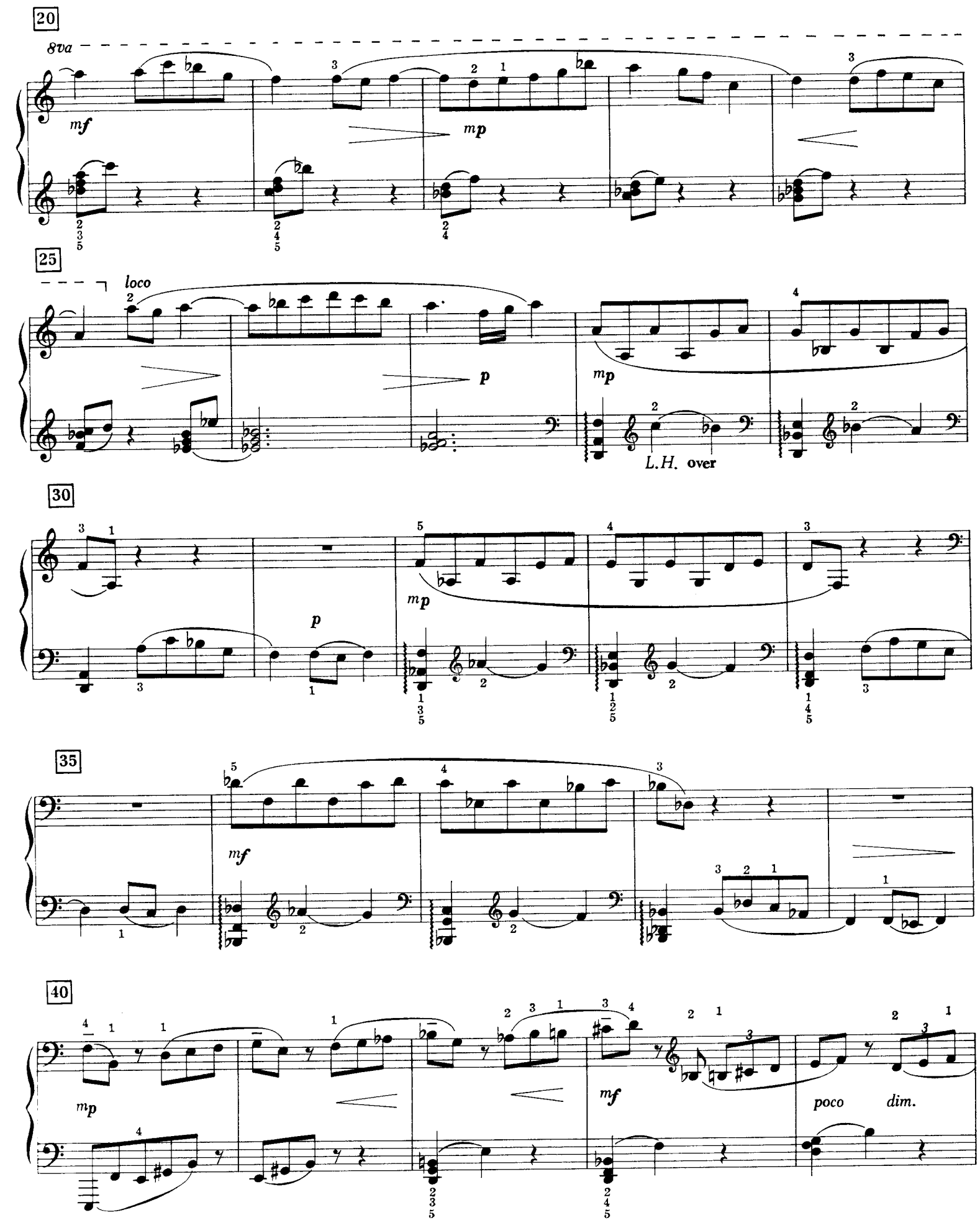

20
25
30
ff
f
L.H.

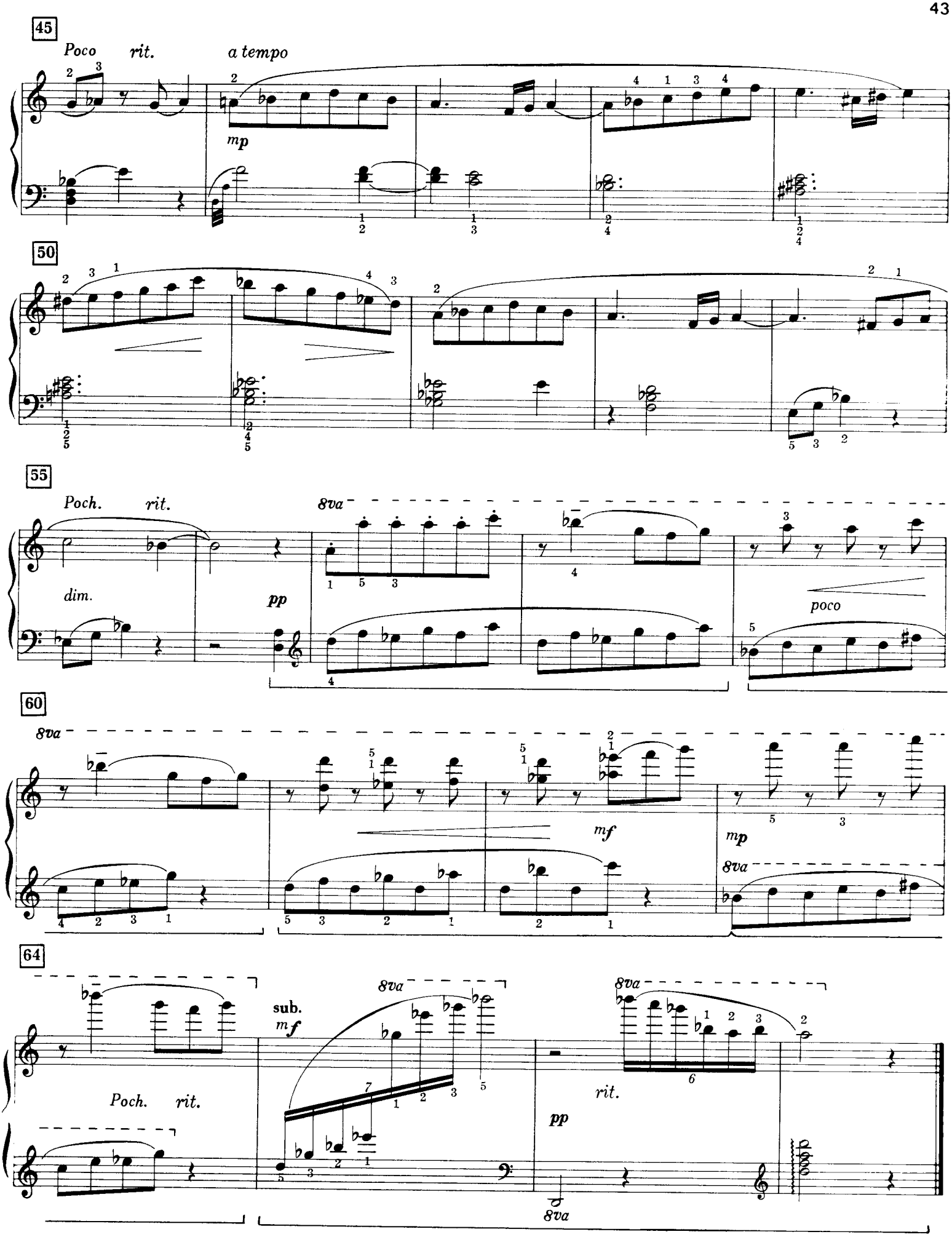

35
ff
40
f
45
dim.
e rit. poco
tr
a poco
mp
27 September, 1939
"yaddo" Saratoga, N.Y.

SOUVENIR

RICHARD FAITH

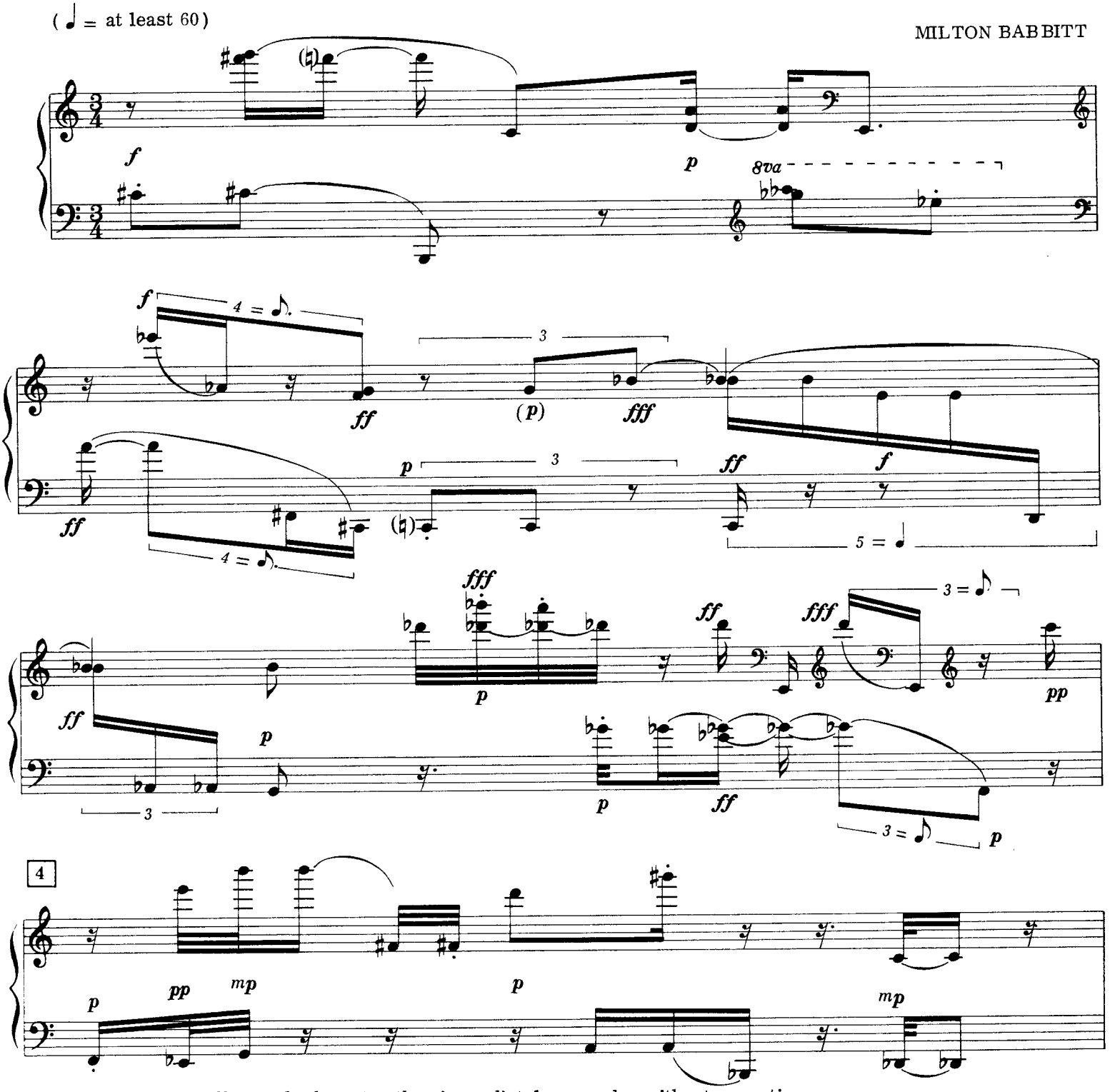



20
8va
mf
mp
25
loco
p
mp
L.H. over
30
p
mp
35
mf
40
mp
mf
poco
dim.

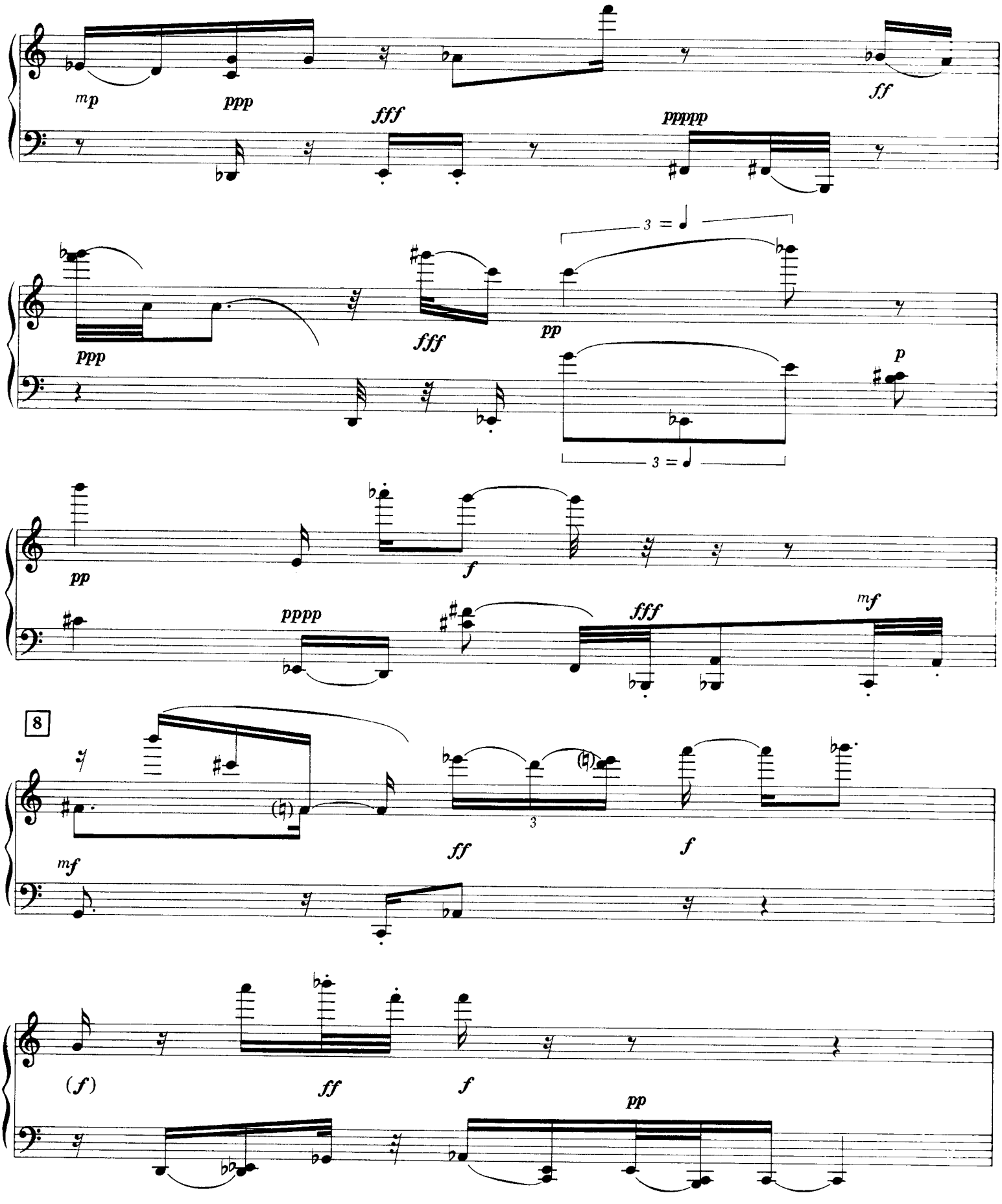

45
Poco rit.
a tempo
mp
50
55
Poch. rit.
8va
dim.
pp
poco
60
8va
mf
mp
64
sub.
mf
Poch. rit.
8va
rit.
pp

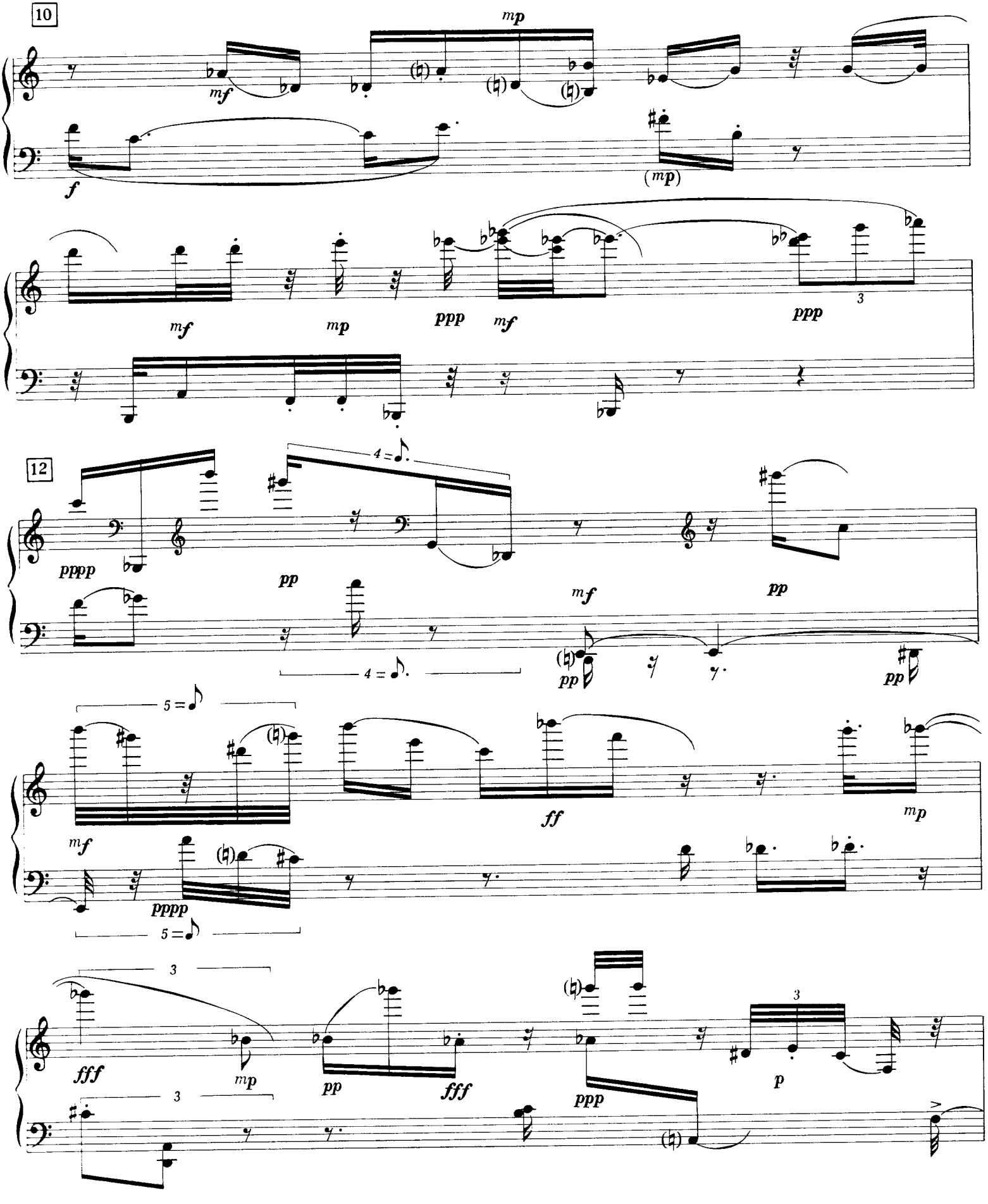
PLAYING FOR TIME

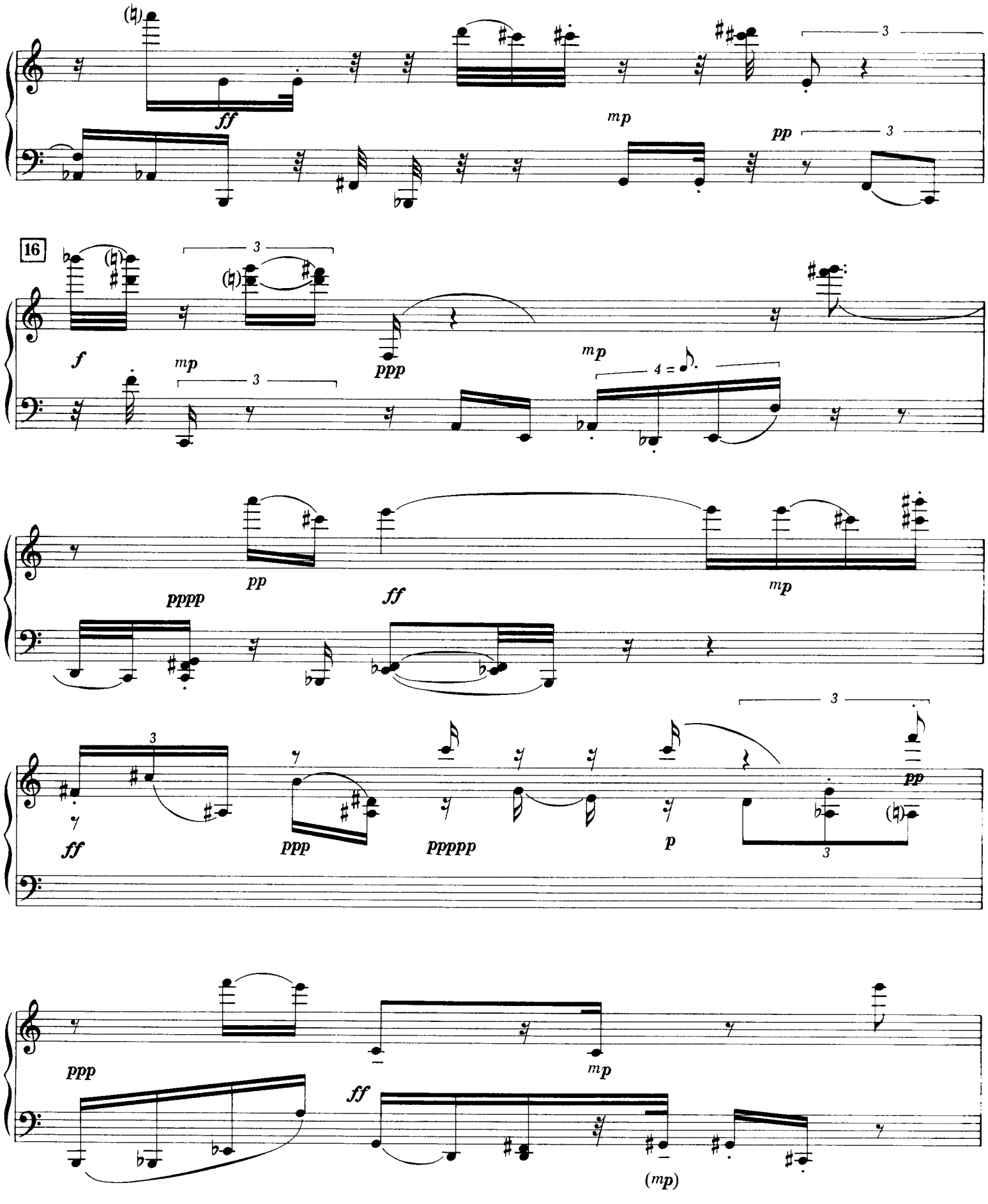
MILTON BABBITT

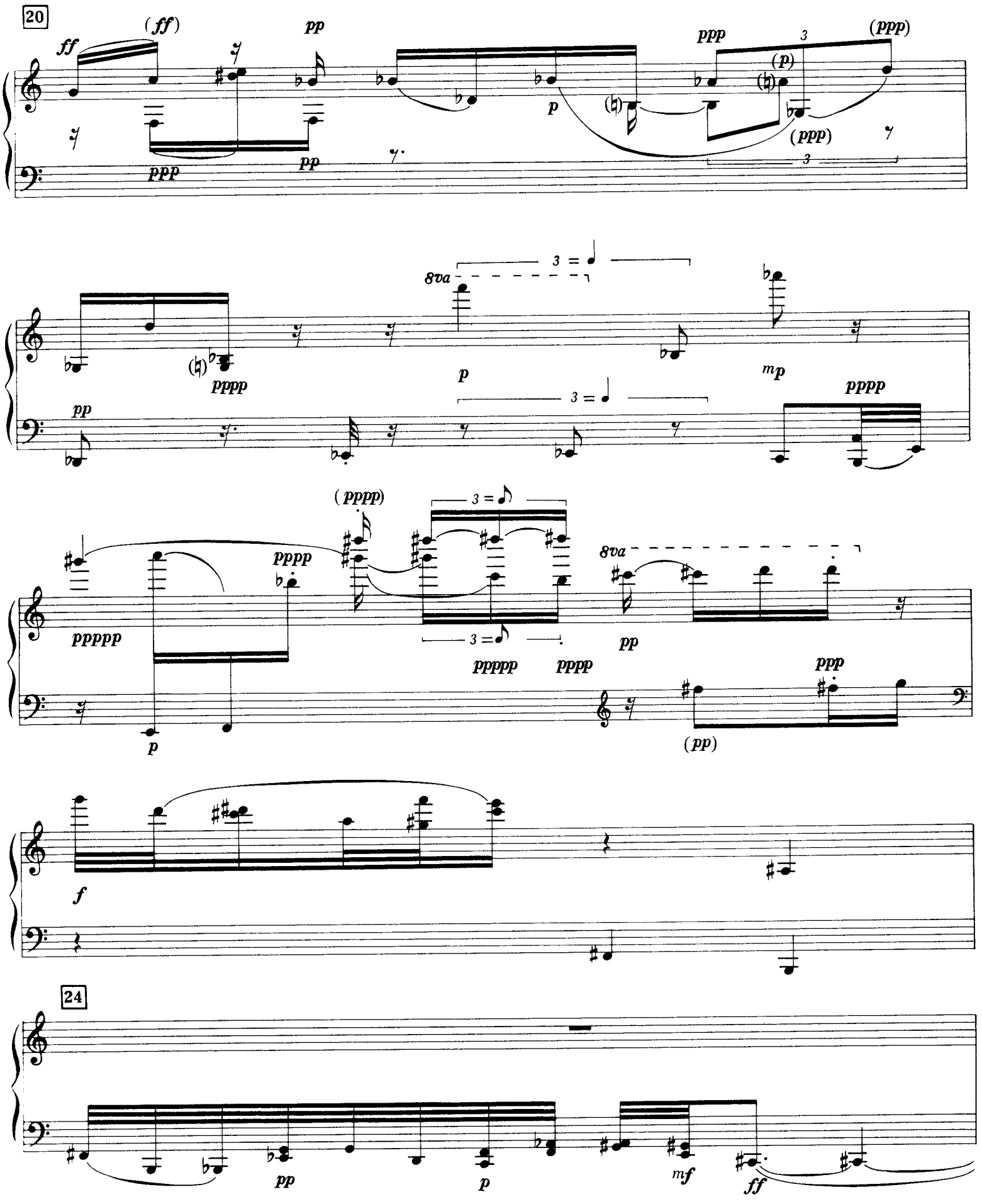


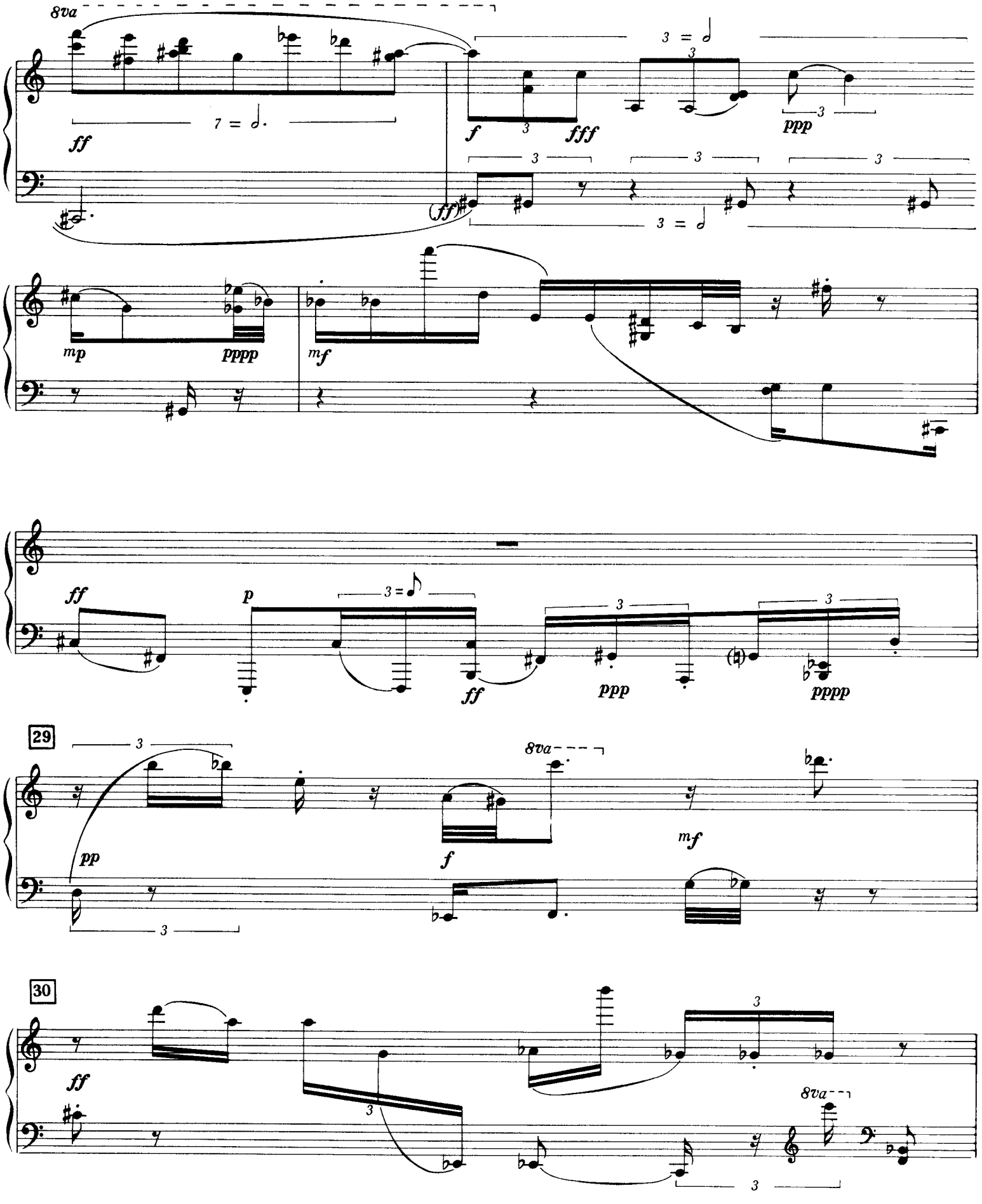
NOTE: Accidentals affect only the notes they immediately precede, without exception.

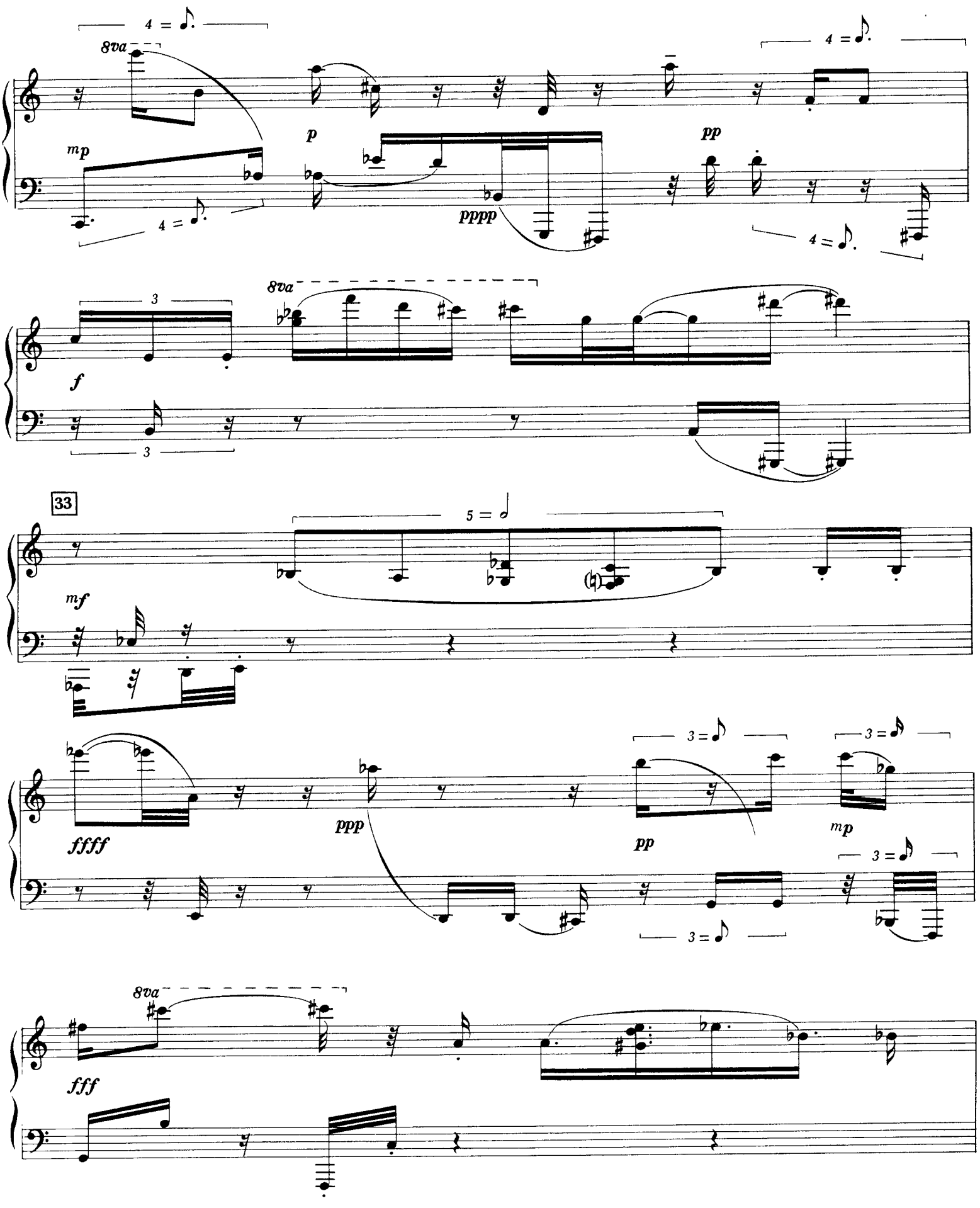

mp
ppp
fff
ppppp
ff
3 = ♩
ppp
fff
pp
p
3 = ♩
pp
f
pppp
fff
mf
8
mf
ff
3
f
(f)
ff
f
pp

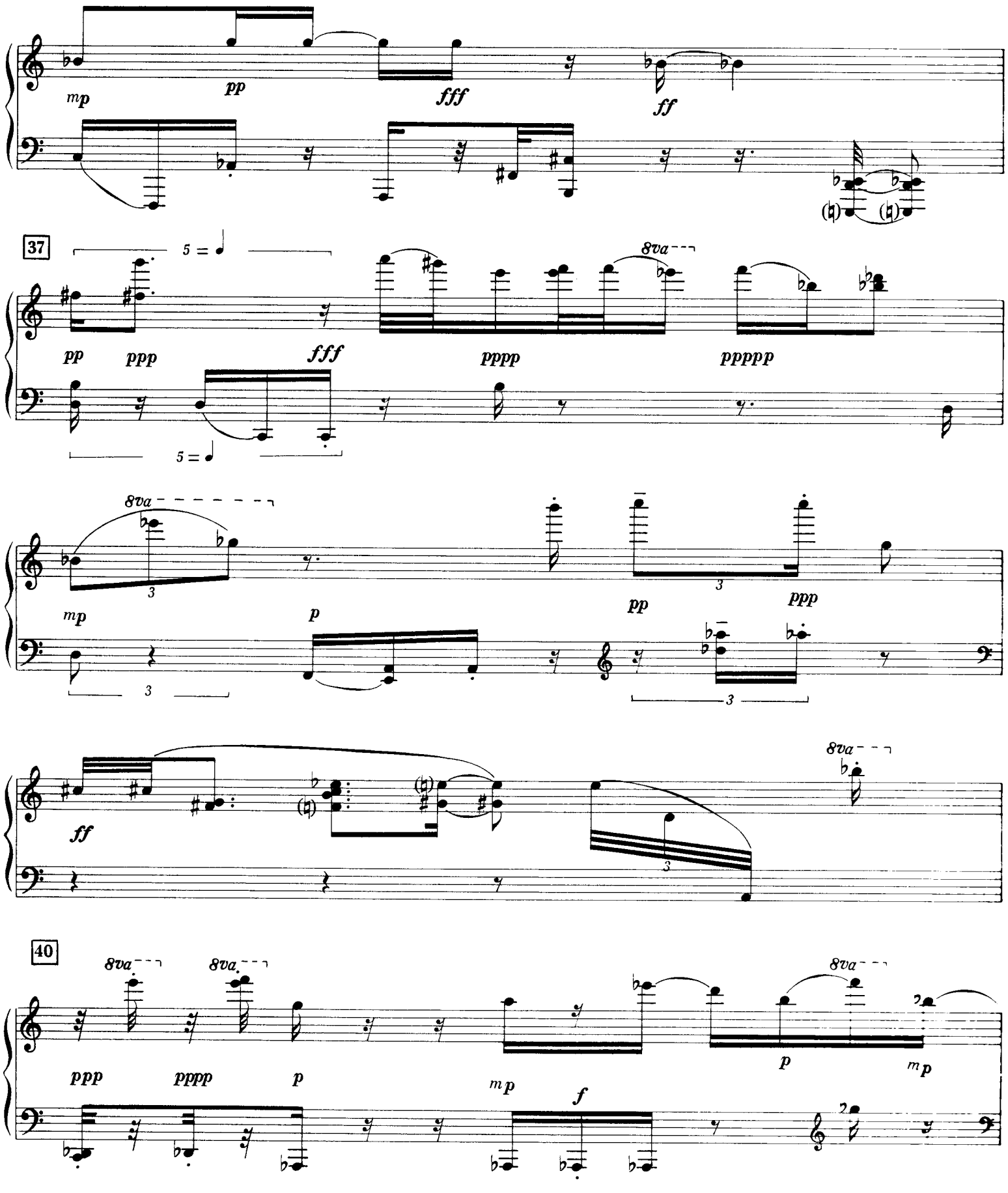

10
mp
mf
f
(mp)
mf
mp
ppp
mf
ppp
3
12
4 = ♪.
pppp
pp
mf
pp
4 = ♪.
pp
pp
5 = ♪
mf
ff
mp
pppp
5 = ♪
3
fff
mp
pp
fff
3
ppp
3
p

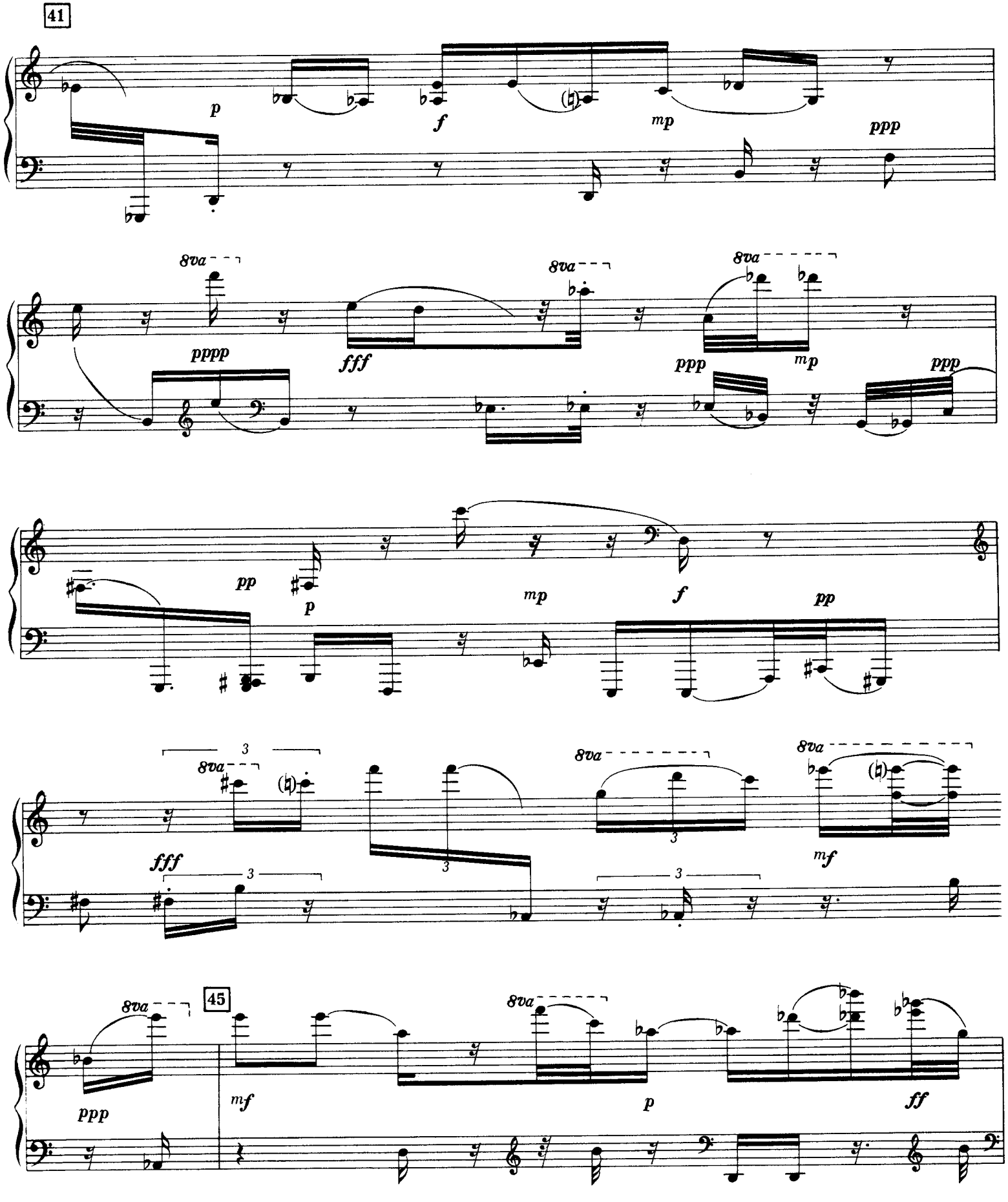

16
ff
mp
pp
f
ppp
pppp
ff
mp
ff
ppp
ppppp
p
pp
ppp
ff
mp
(mp)

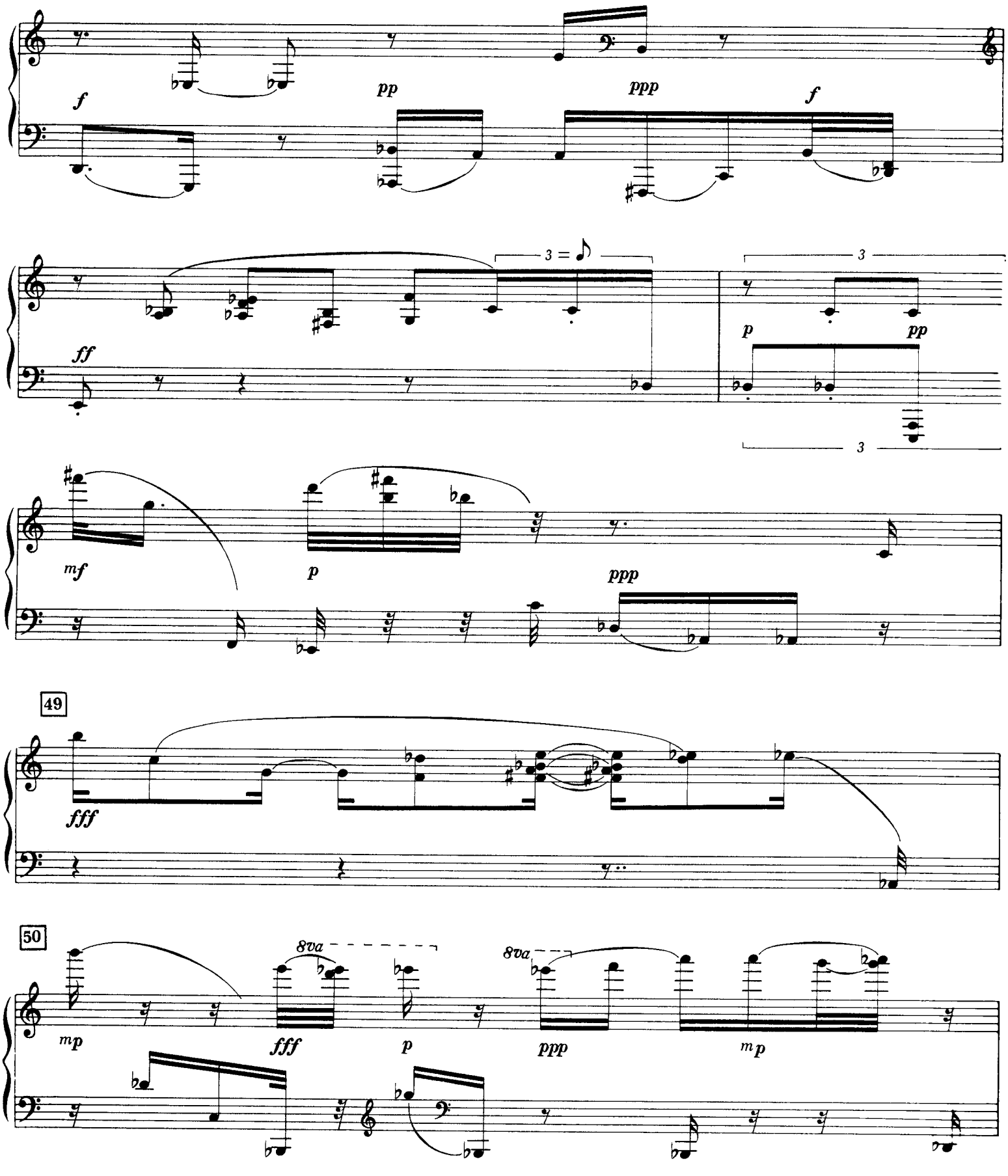

20
ff
(ff)
pp
ppp
pp
p
ppp
(p)
(ppp)
(ppp)
3
8va
3 = ♩
pppp
p
mp
pp
pppp
(pppp)
3 = ♪
pppp
pppp
pppp
pp
ppp
(pp)
p
f
24
pp
p
mf
ff

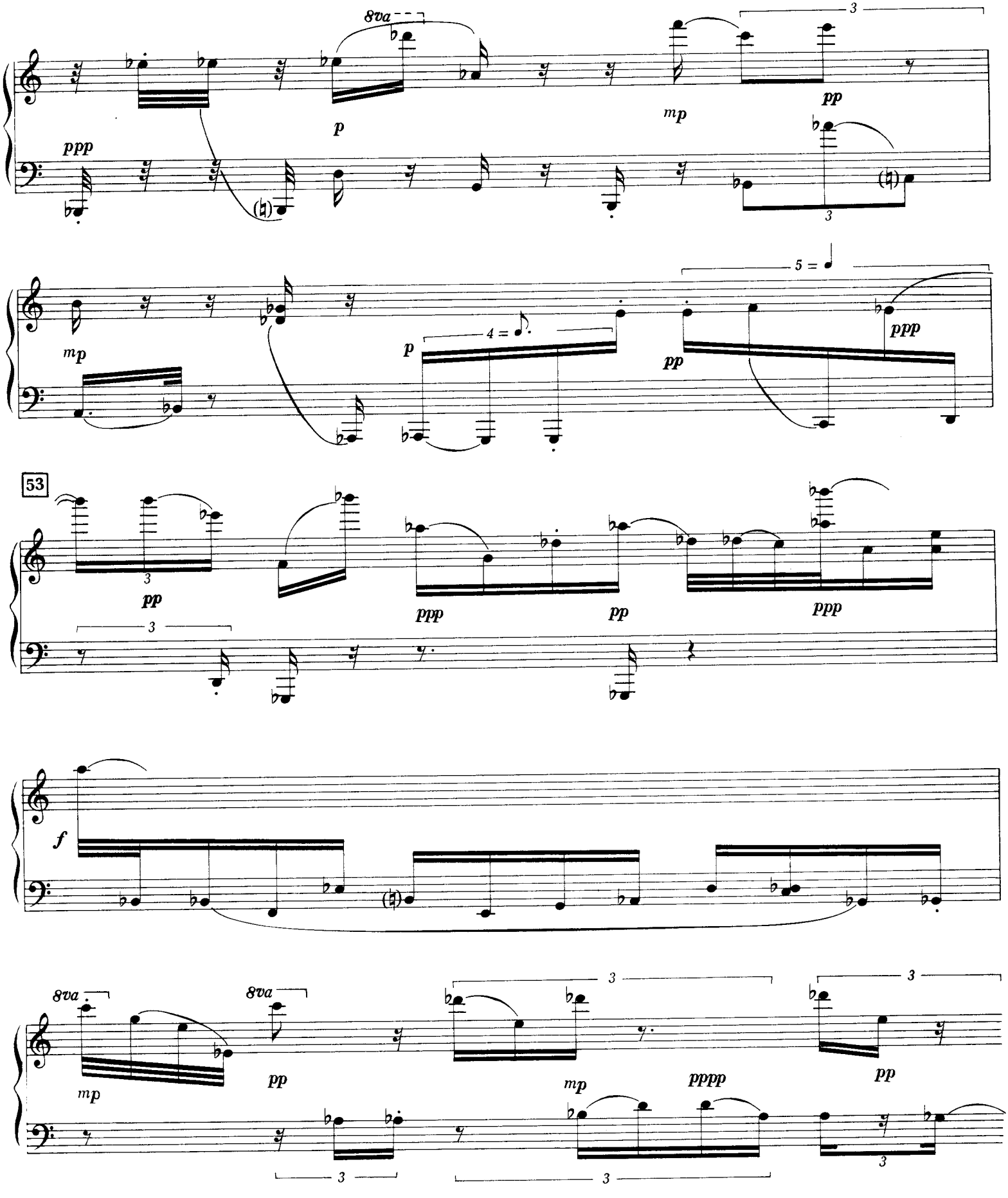

8va
ff
7 = 𝅗𝅥.
f
fff
3 = 𝅗𝅥
ppp
(ff)
mp
pppp
mf
ff
p
3 = 𝅘𝅥𝅮
ppp
pppp
29
pp
8va
mf
30
8va

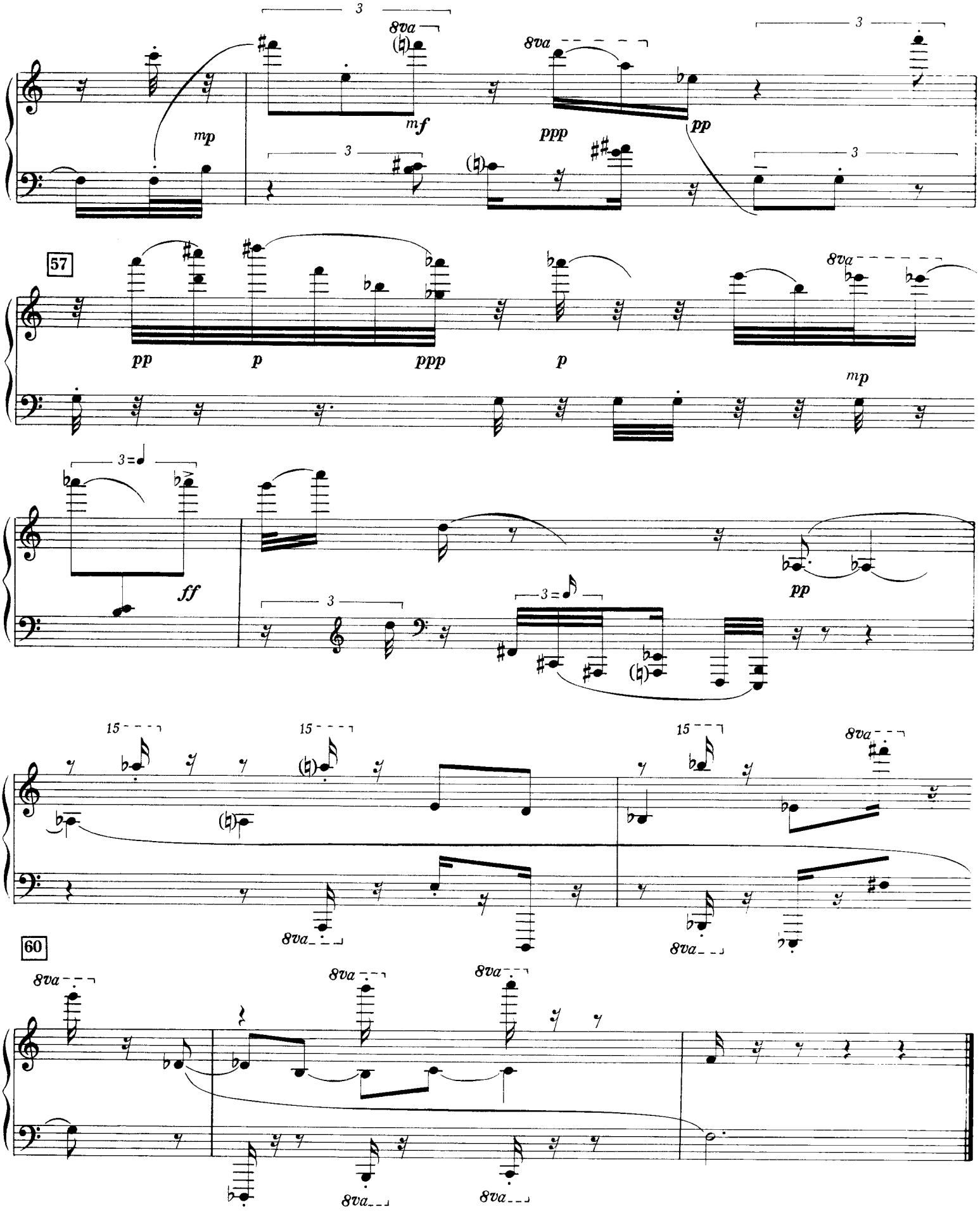

8va
mp
p
pppp
pp
8va
f
33
mf
ffff
ppp
pp
mp
8va
fff


mp
pp
fff
ff
37
5 = ♩
pp
ppp
fff
pppp
ppppp
8va
5 = ♩
8va
mp
3
p
pp
3
ppp
3
3
ff
8va
3
40
8va
8va
ppp
pppp
p
mp
f
p
8va
mp


41
p
f
mp
ppp
8va
pppp
fff
ppp
mp
pp
mp
f
pp
3
fff
mf
45
ppp
mf
p
ff


f
pp
ppp
f
3 = ♪
3
ff
p
pp
3
mf
p
ppp
49
fff
50
8va
8va
mp
fff
p
ppp
mp

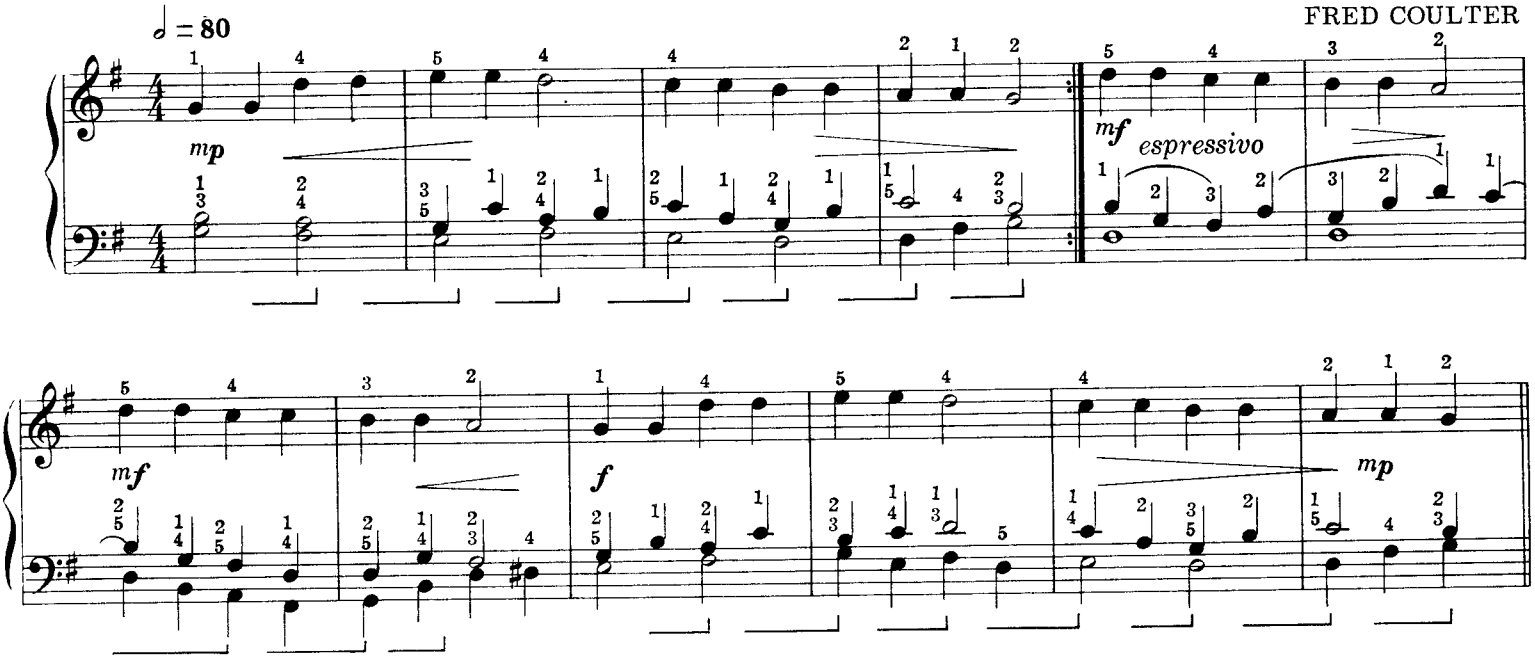

8va
3
ppp
p
mp
pp
5 =
4 =
mp
p
pp
ppp
53
3
pp
3
ppp
pp
ppp
f
8va
8va
3
3
mp
pp
mp
pppp
pp
3
3
3


3
8va
mp
mf
ppp
pp
57
pp
p
ppp
p
mp
3
ff
15
60

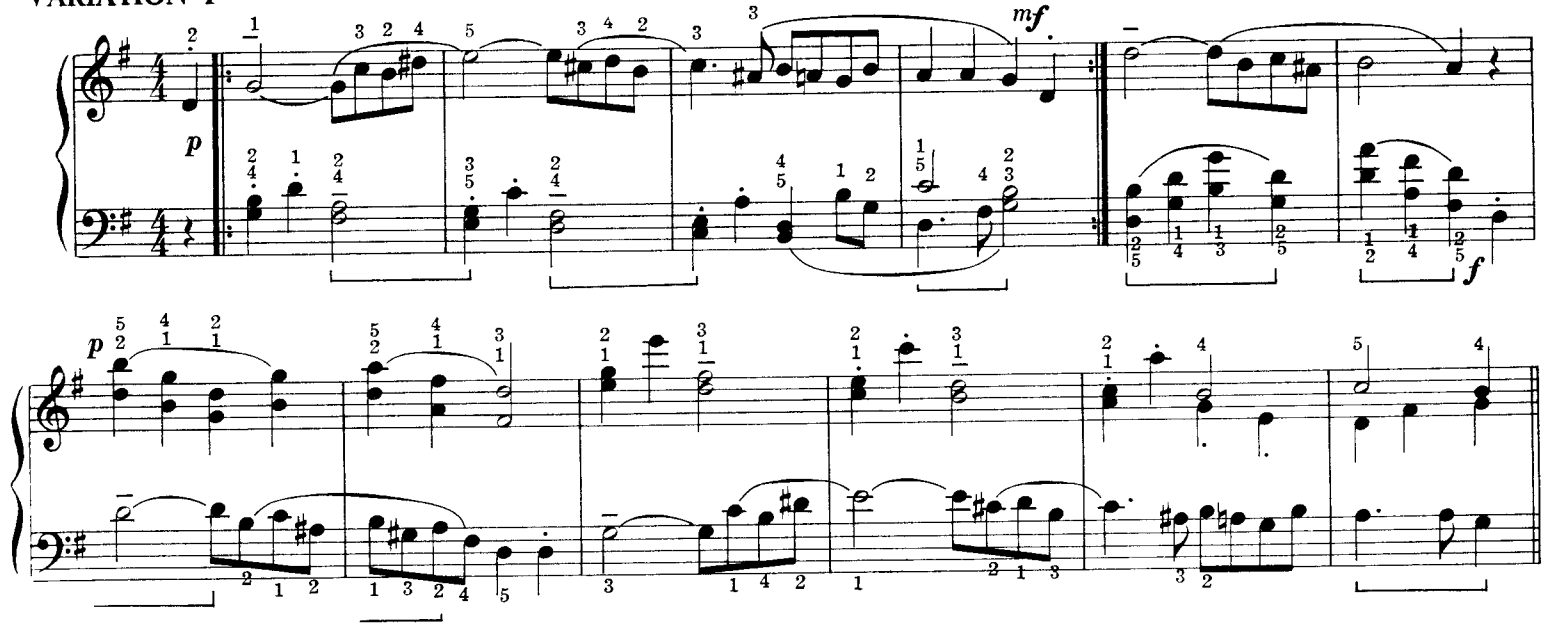
VARIATIONS FOR AGNES

THEME

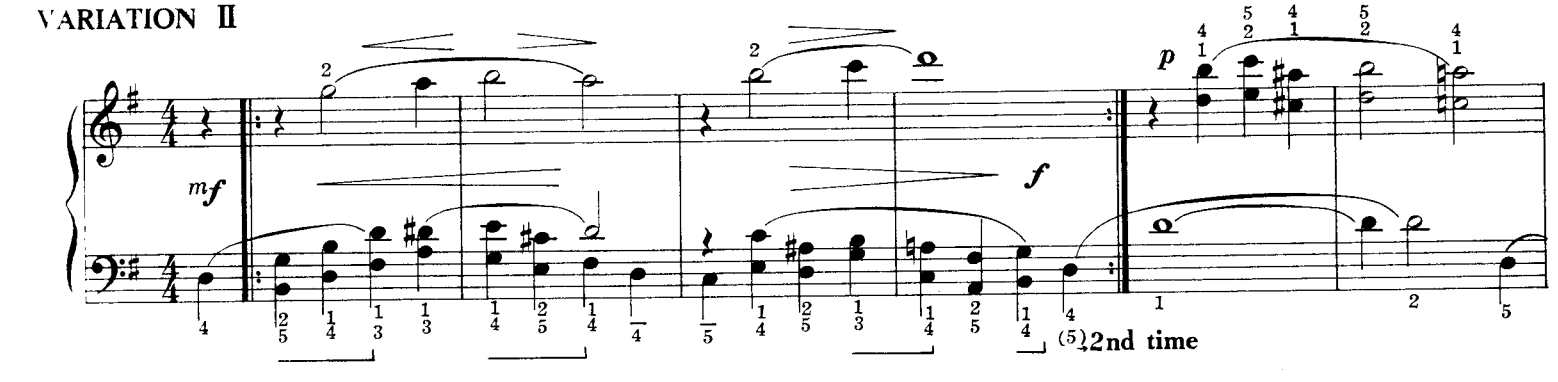
FRED COULTER

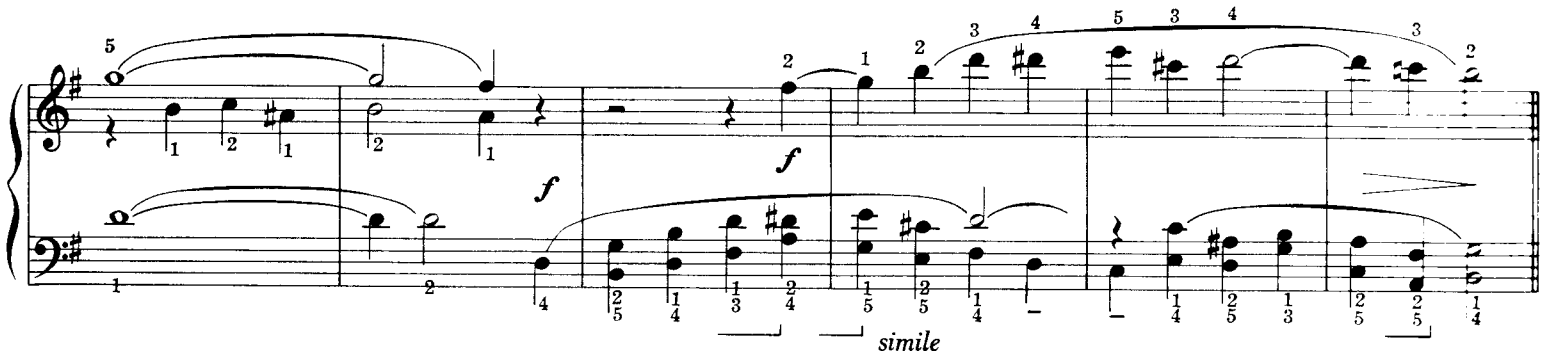


VARIATION I

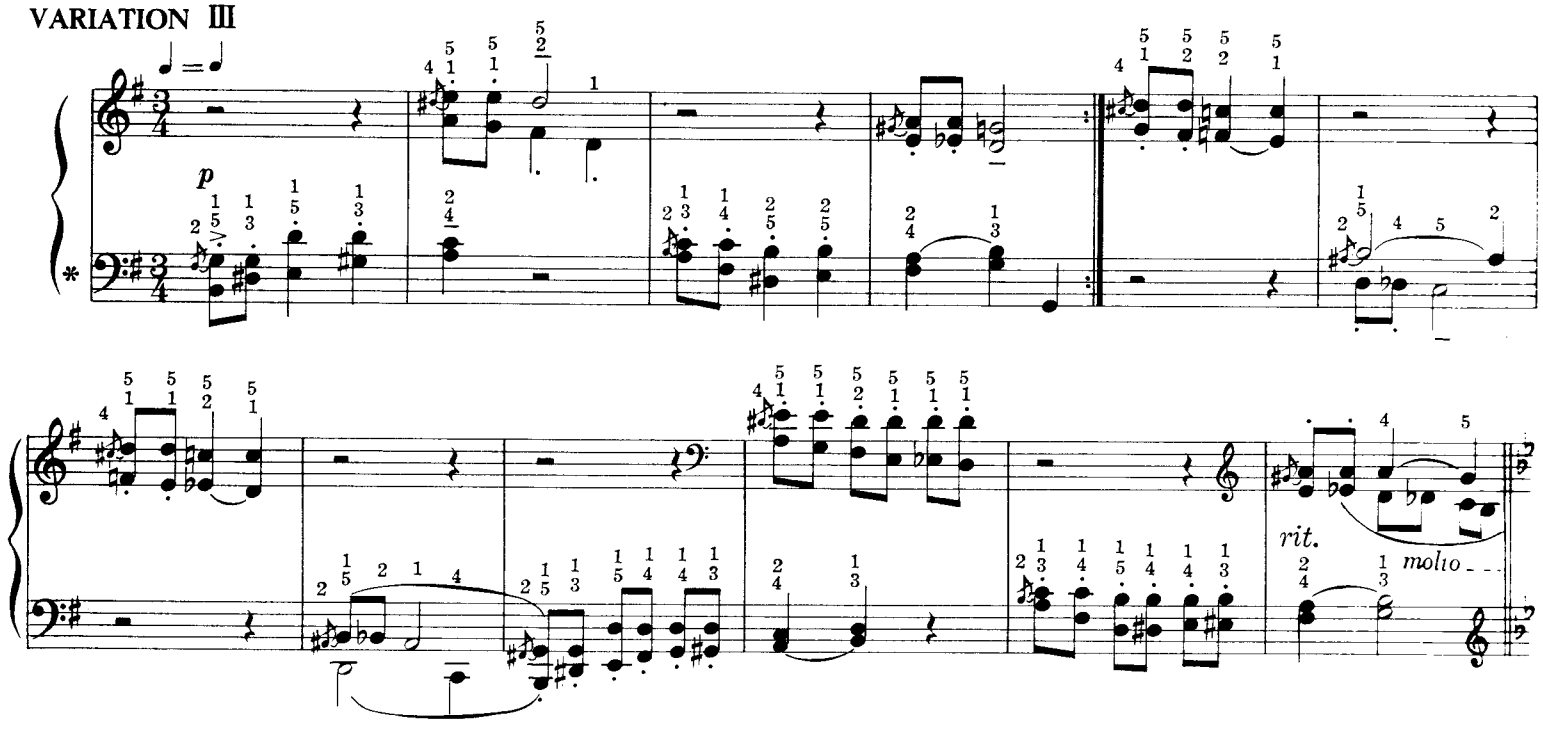


VARIATION II

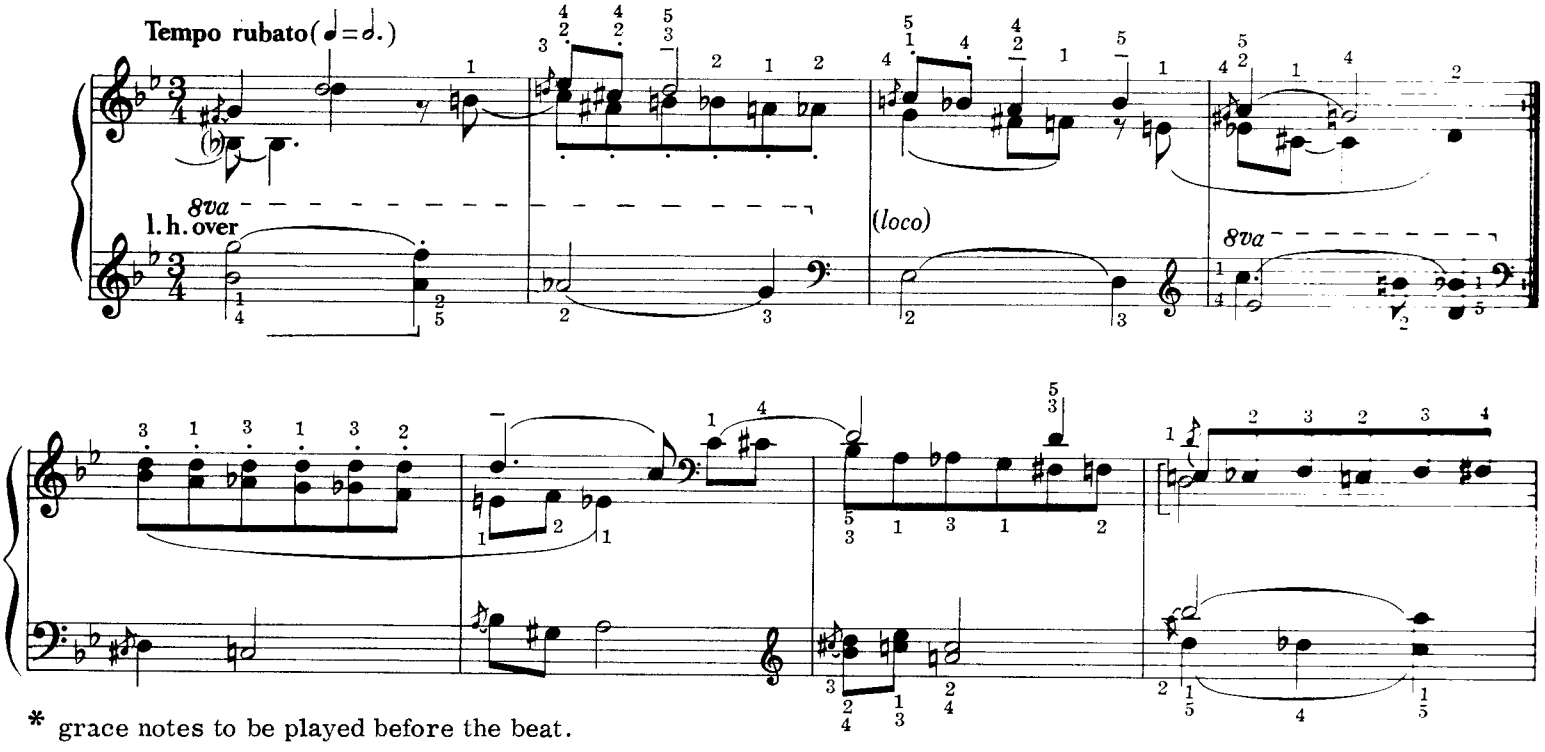




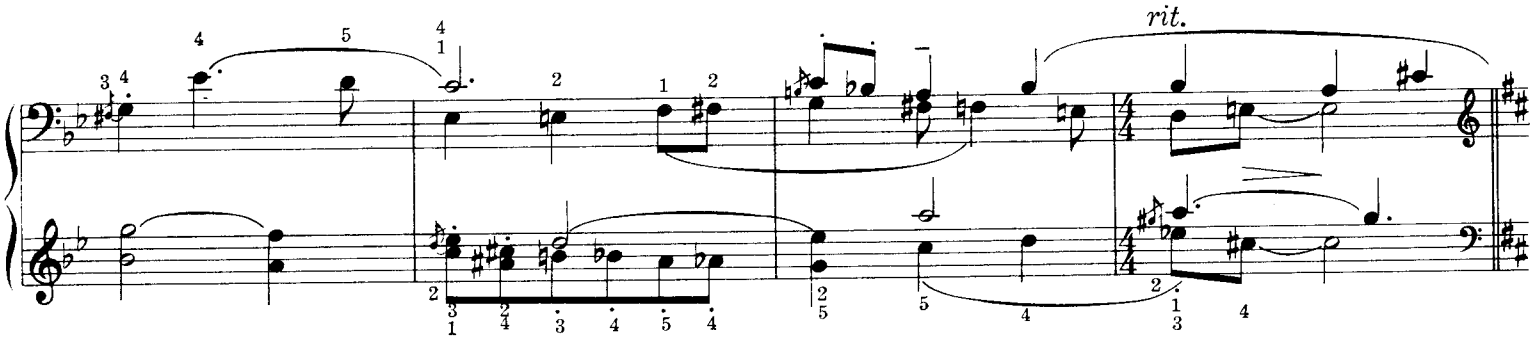
VARIATION III



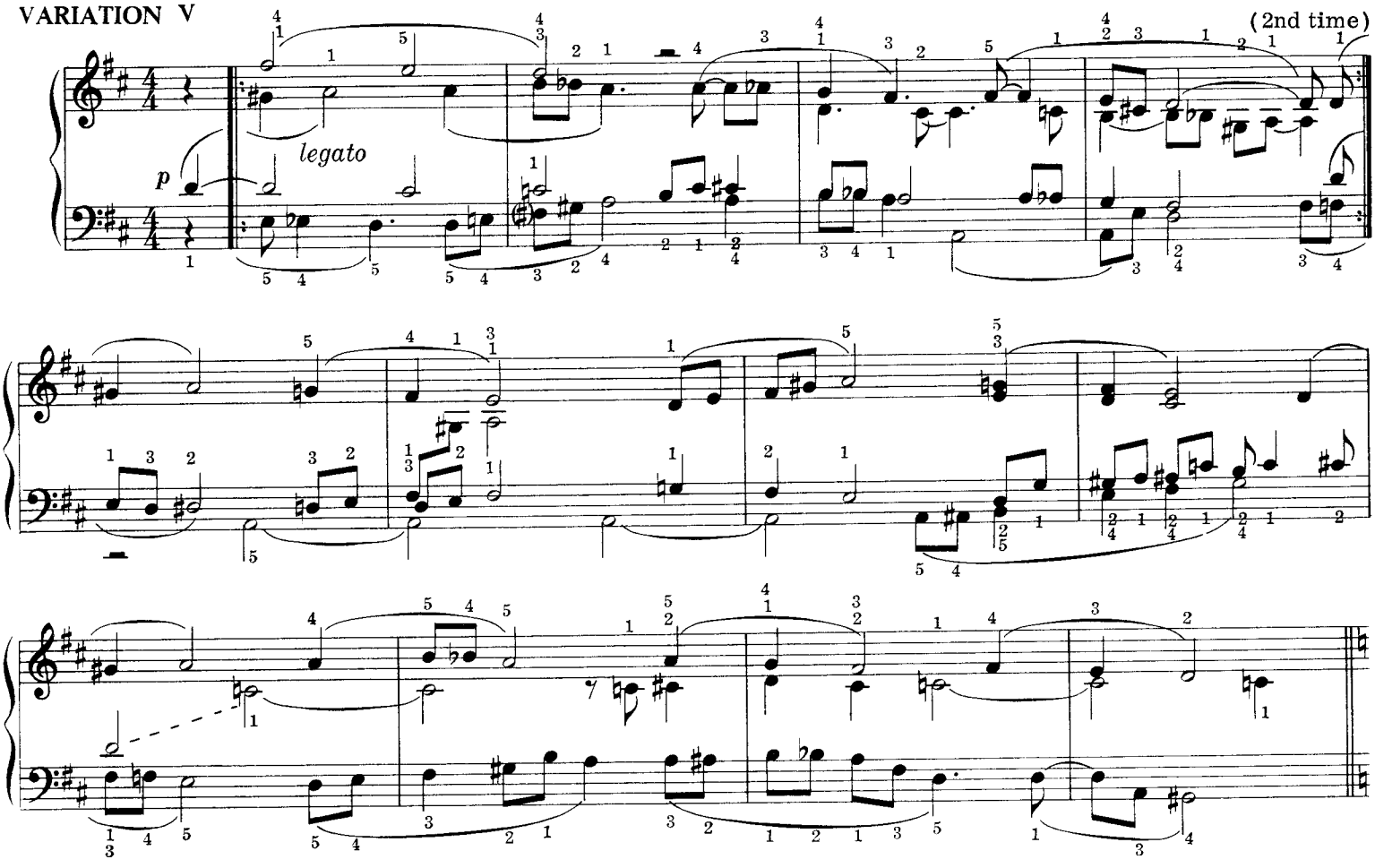
VARIATION IV



* grace notes to be played before the beat.

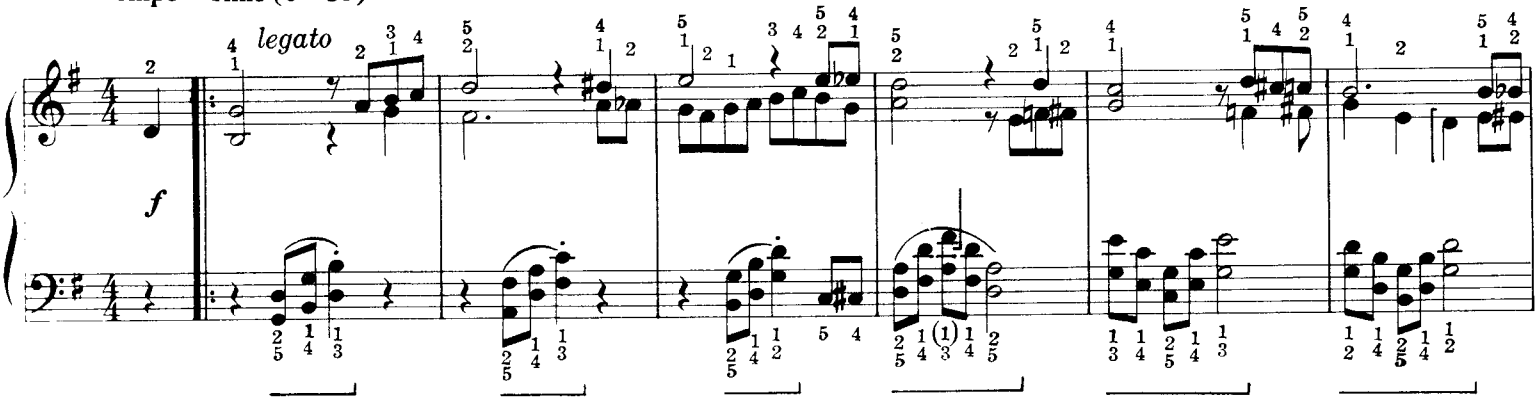


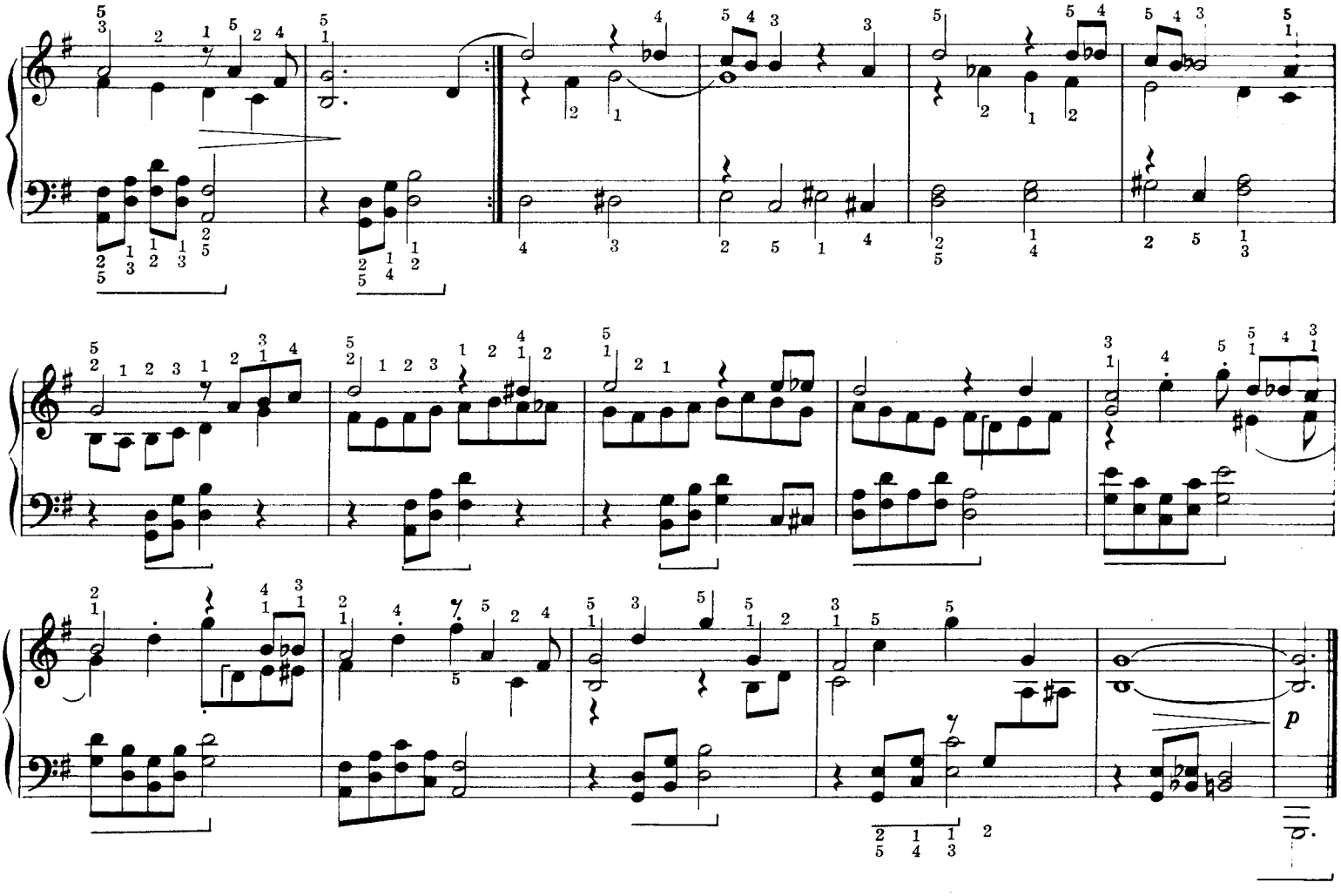
VARIATION V



CODA

Tempo Primo (♩= 80)

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