THE JAZZ M

A collection of famous piano rolls by Billy Mayerl

All of a Twist, Autumn Crocus, Beetle in the
Evening Primrose, The Harp of the Winds,
Honkytonk, Hop-O-My-Thumb, The Jazz
Look Lively, Loose Elbows, Marigold,
Nimble Fingered Gentleman, Shallow W
Virginia Creeper, White Heather,

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BILLY MAYERL

A Foreword by Johnny Pearson.

Whilst studying at the London Academy of Music, I had the pleasure of listening to broadcasts and recordings of Billy Mayerl and took a great interest in his piano music. I used to revel over such pieces as "Marigold", "Bats in the Belfry", "Four Aces Suite" etc . . . .

I found his writing to have wonderful form and inventiveness, which always gave the performer a strong feeling of achievement.

As a pianist, Billy had great sensitivity, laced with a most formidable technique.

For the listener his interpretations are full of magic; one can always recognise his impeccable and unmistakable style.

He is indeed a legend.

Johnny Pearson

Stadtbücherei Erlangen
81 / 3977
- 7. MAI 1981

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BILLY MAYERL

Billy Mayerl was born in 1902 in very humble circumstances. Whilst still at school he played in the evenings in a cinema in Shepherd's Bush for the silent films and, after leaving school, he played in the same cinema all day and sold chocolates in the intervals to pick up a little extra money on commission.

After studying with a private tutor, he won a Scholarship to the Trinity College of Music and, in 1918, he launched himself on a career as a professional pianist.

In about 1920 he secured a job in an orchestra at an hotel in Southampton and was playing there when the late Bert Ralton arrived by liner at Southampton and, unable to get to London that night, Ralton stayed the night at the same hotel. Bert Ralton had been engaged by the Savoy Hotel, London to appear with his Savoy Havana Band, but at the last moment before leaving America his pianist had been prevented from travelling owing to an attack of jaundice, and Ralton was in urgent need of a pianist to appear at the Savoy. During his enforced stay in Southampton he heard Billy Mayerl playing in the hotel orchestra, he offered Bill the job which he immediately accepted.

The band opened at the Savoy (which, incidentally, also included Rudy Valee), and at the end of the first week of the engagement Bill was handed his pay packet. Opening it, he found it contained £30 (in 1920 !) and he promptly took it back to Ralton and told him that there must be some mistake. Ralton very anxiously asked him if he wasn't satisfied, because if he wasn't, it could be increased a little. Bill said far from it, but when he had been discussing terms he had thought that Bert had said £13 and not £30 !

The Savoy Havana started broadcasting for the B.B.C. from 2LO and piano features were always included in the programme. Billy Mayerl's fame was established immediately.

He regularly featured his own compositions, such as "THE JAZZ MASTER", "THE JAZZ MISTRESS", "HOLLYHOCK", "WHITE HEATHER", etc., and his outstanding composition "MARIGOLD" became a best seller and was the number he used as his signature tune from then onwards.

It was whilst playing with the Savoy Havana that he appeared at a Sunday concert at the Queen's Hall with a full orchestra, and was the soloist in Gershwin's "RHAPSODY IN BLUE". This was the first performance in England and Bill was the first person to play it. George Gershwin was present.

On leaving the Savoy as one of the most famous pianists in the world, Bill went on to the stage, playing all the major halls in the country. A feature of his act was to play two pianos at once and any request from the audience ! Never once was he stumped he had a prodigious memory.

At the same time he started the Billy Mayerl School of Music, one of the most successful ventures of its kind ever launched. The number of pupils going through his school ran into tens of thousands, with branches in the major capitals throughout the world.

During the war, Billy Mayerl became the musical director of Grosvenor House, Park Lane. Despite all these activities, he still continued to produce a constant stream of compositions for piano, piano and orchestra and scores for musical comedies such as "OVER SHE GOES", "THE LONDON REVUE" and many others. After the war, Billy Mayerl became a member of the B.B.C. Light Music Unit, broadcasting several times a week, recording and, of course still composing.

Unlike so many pianists today Bill had a distinctive style which could be recognised immediately. It was this distinctive playing which resulted in his being in demand throughout the world, as proved by his many tours of the U.S.A., South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Europe (particularly Scandinavia), and the sales of his recordings were astronomical.

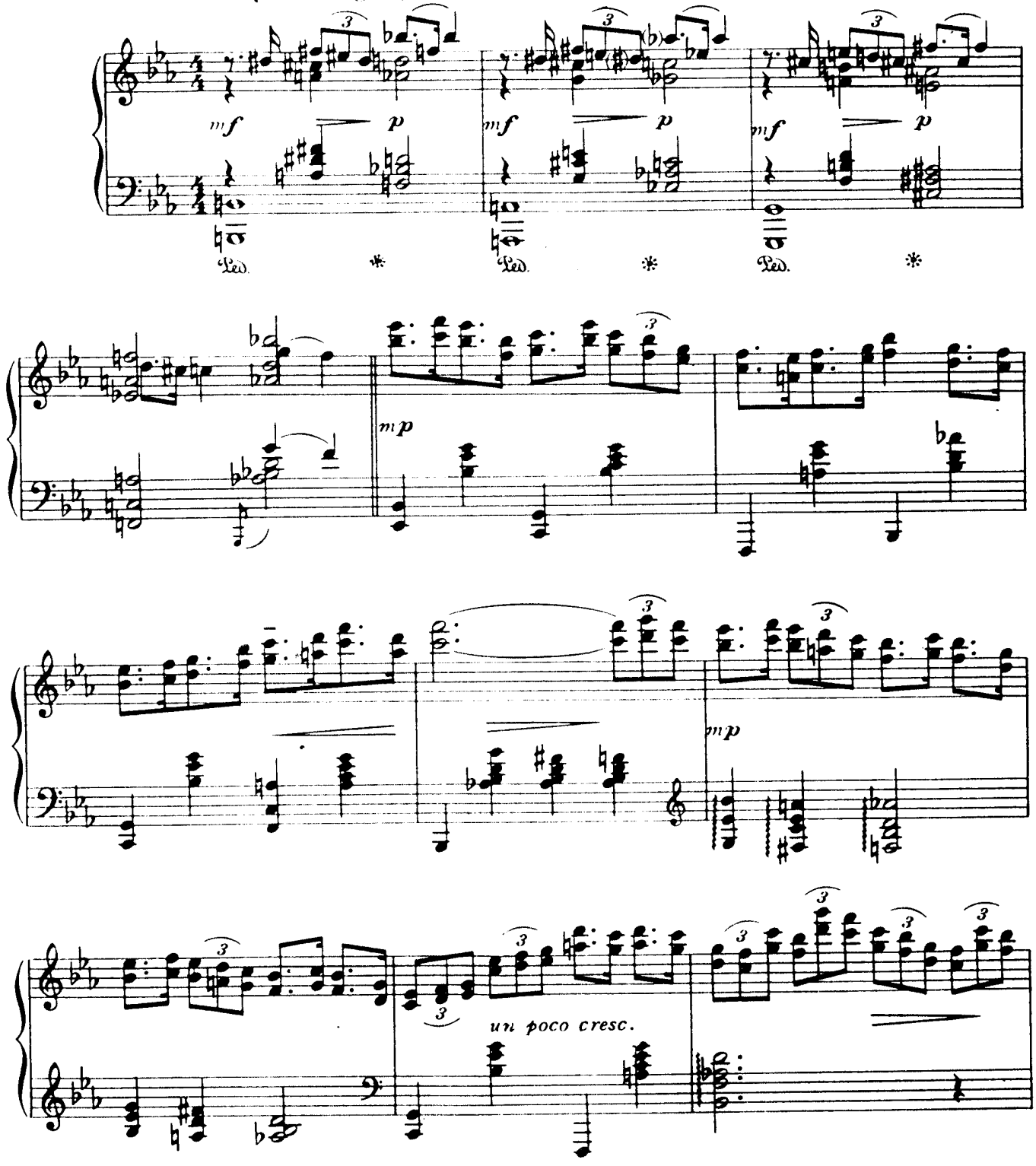
His death from a heart attack on the 25th March, 1959 was a bitter blow to all his many friends, admirers and music business associates. There are many fine dance pianists and many great classical pianists, but for sheer all round ability it will be a long time before we meet another Billy Mayerl.

From the large number of his printed works the publishers have selected the following as a representative collection of his rhythmic piano solos for inclusion in this first comprehensive album of compositions by this important composer whose influence on the modern Jazz scene is only just beginning to be appreciated.

Marigold

BILLY MAYERL
Op. 78

Slowly and lightly



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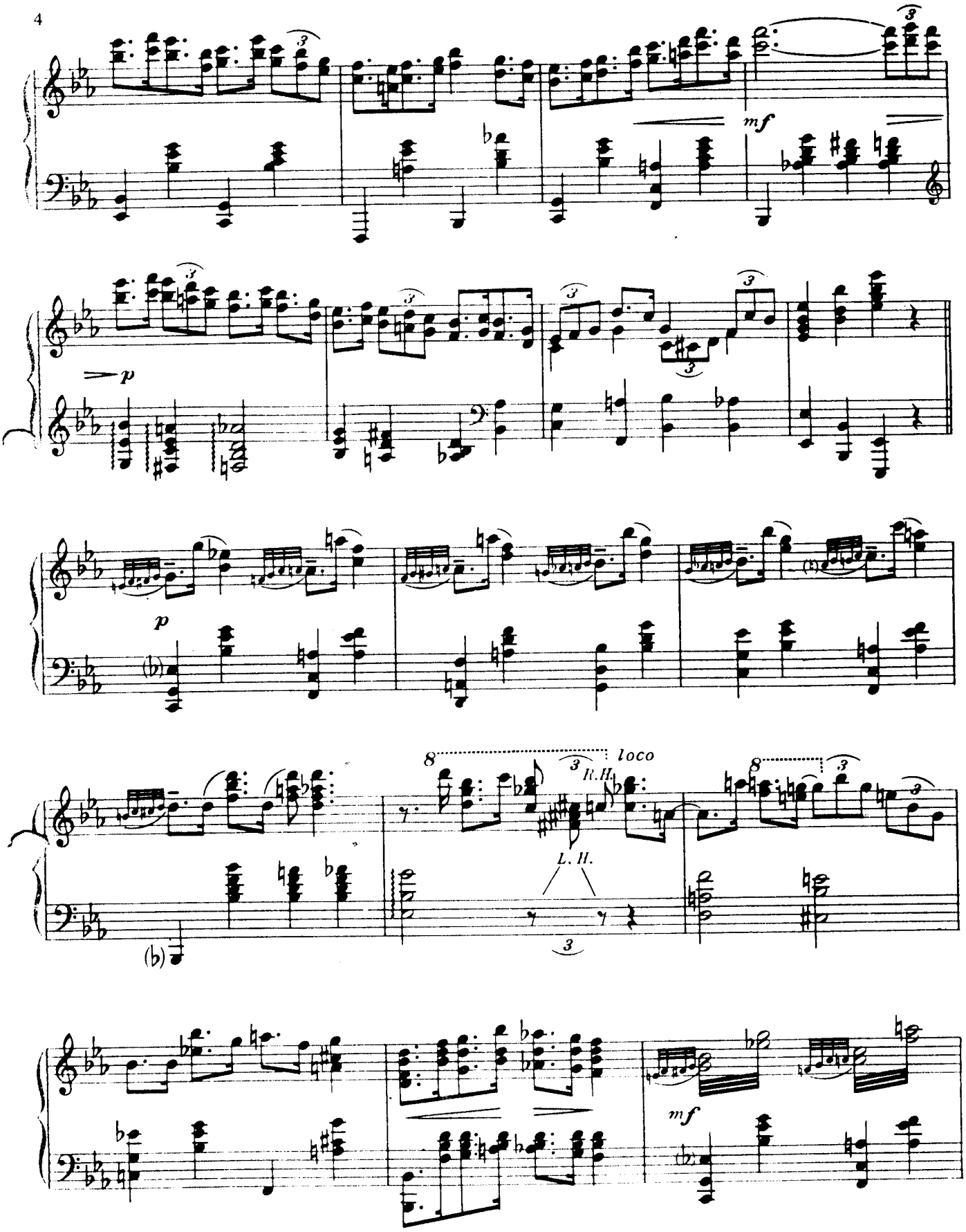
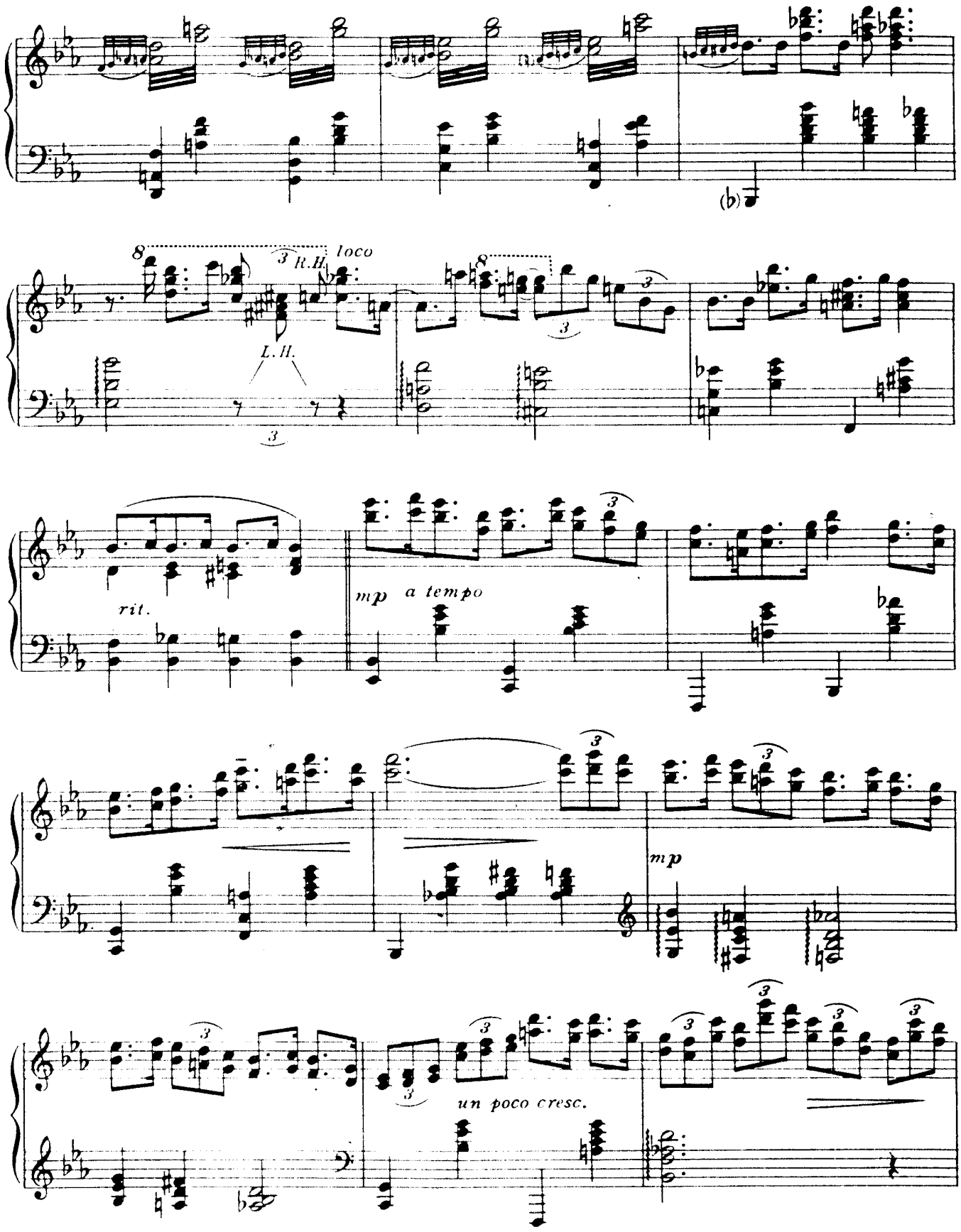
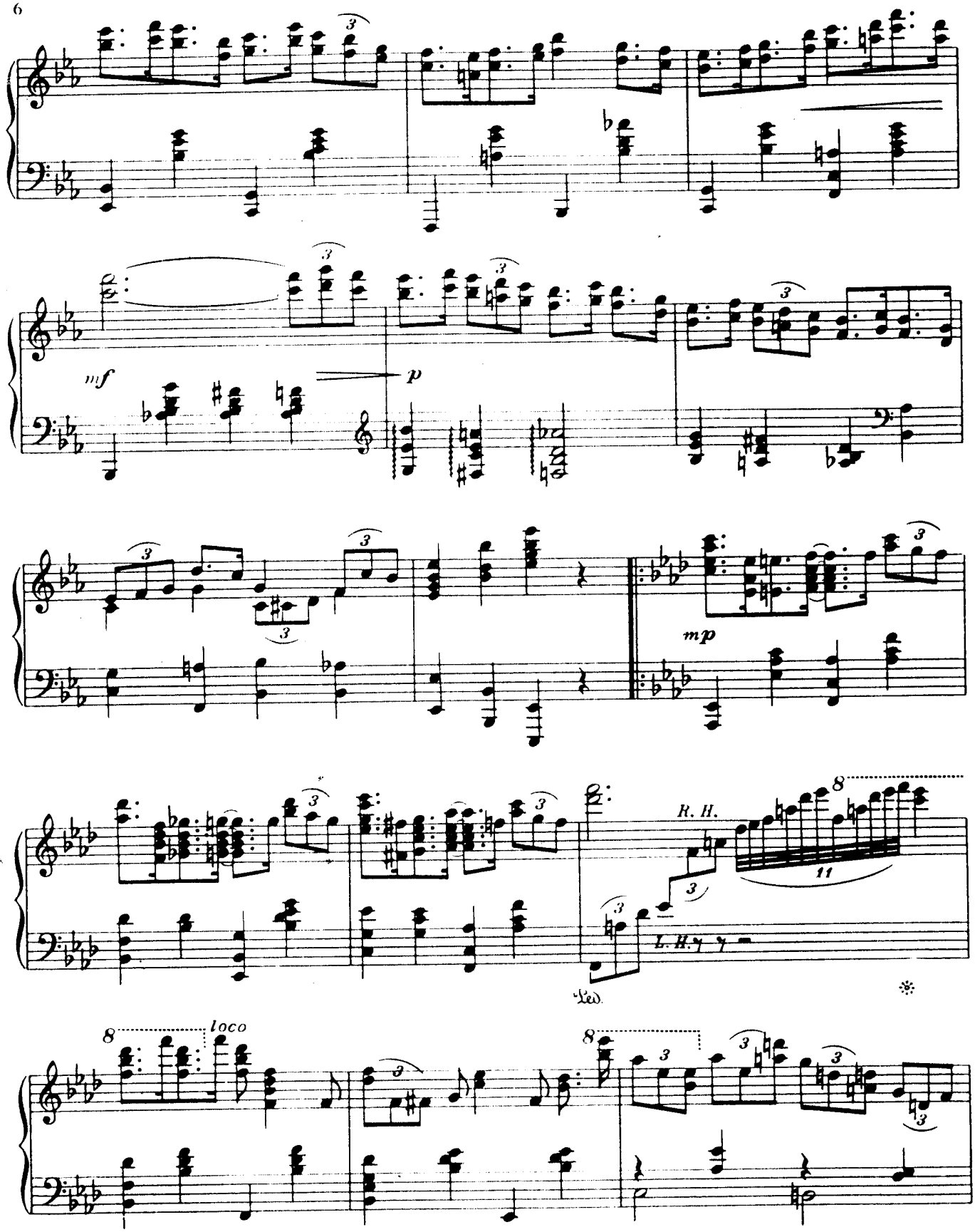
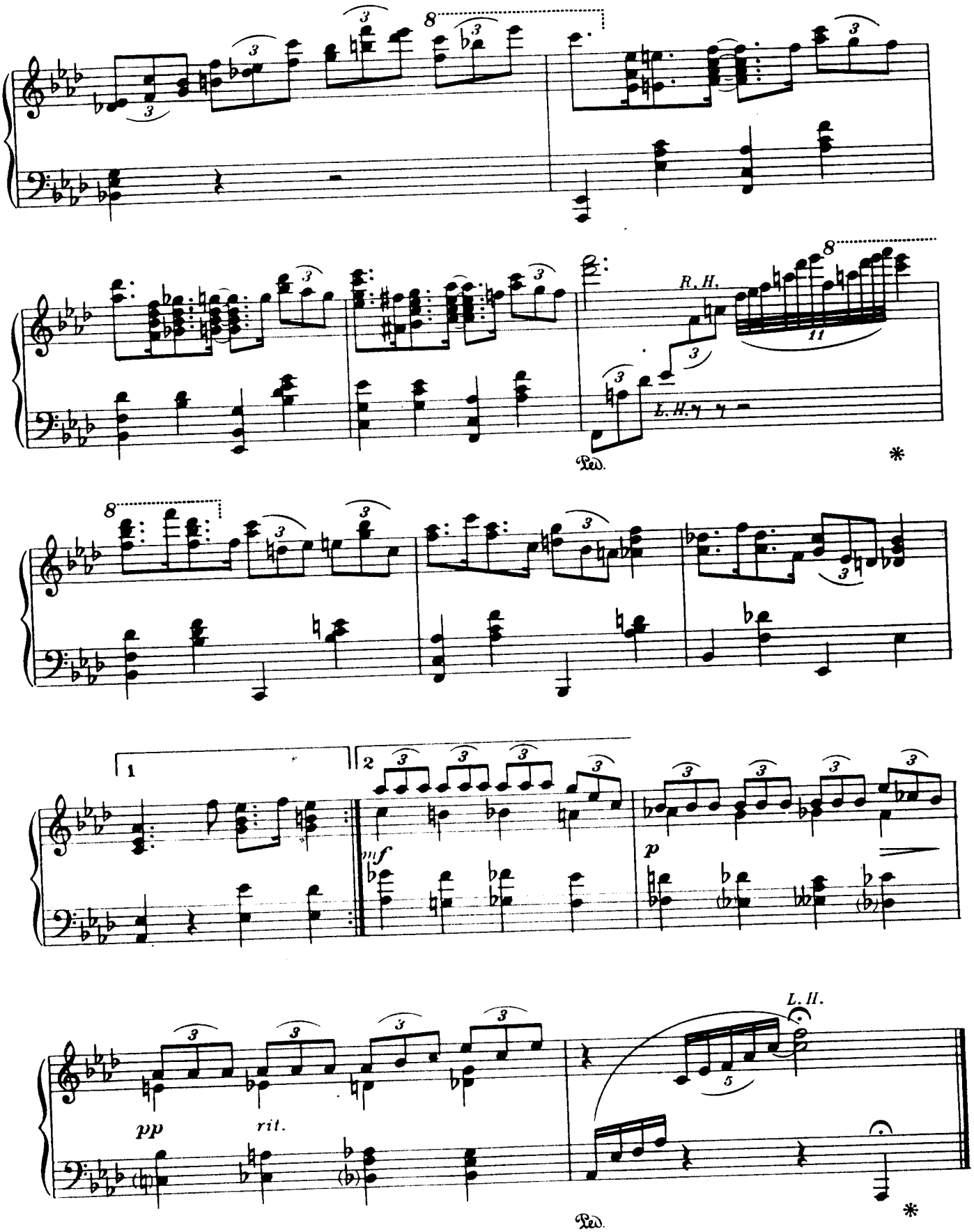

4
mf
p
p
8
loco
R.H.
L.H.
mf


(b)
8
3 R.H.
loco
L.H.
3
rit.
mp a tempo
mp
un poco cresc.

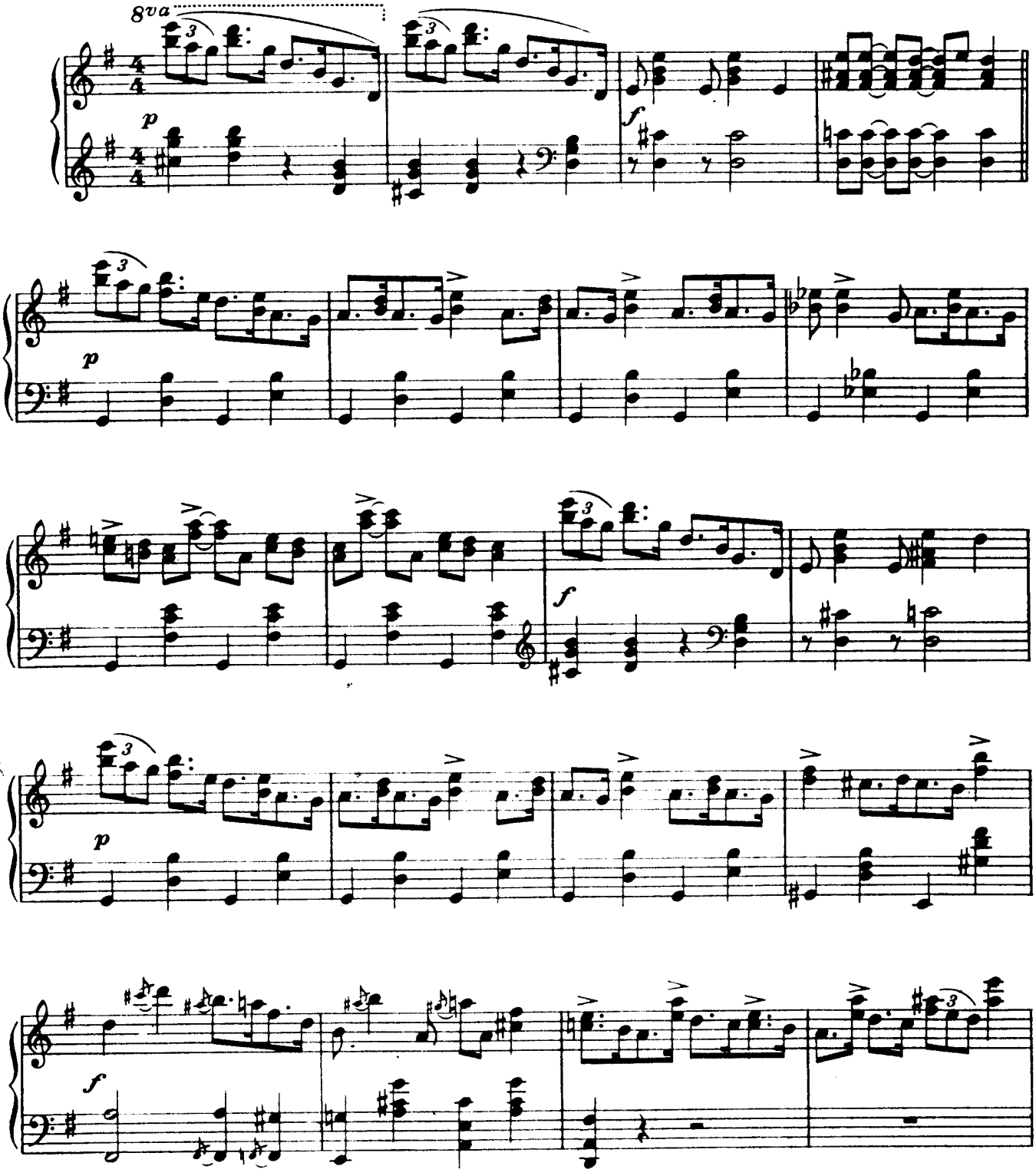
6




R. H.
L. H.
Ped.
*
1
2
mf
p
pp
rit.
L. H.
Ped.
*

All-of-a-Twist.

BILLY MAYERL.



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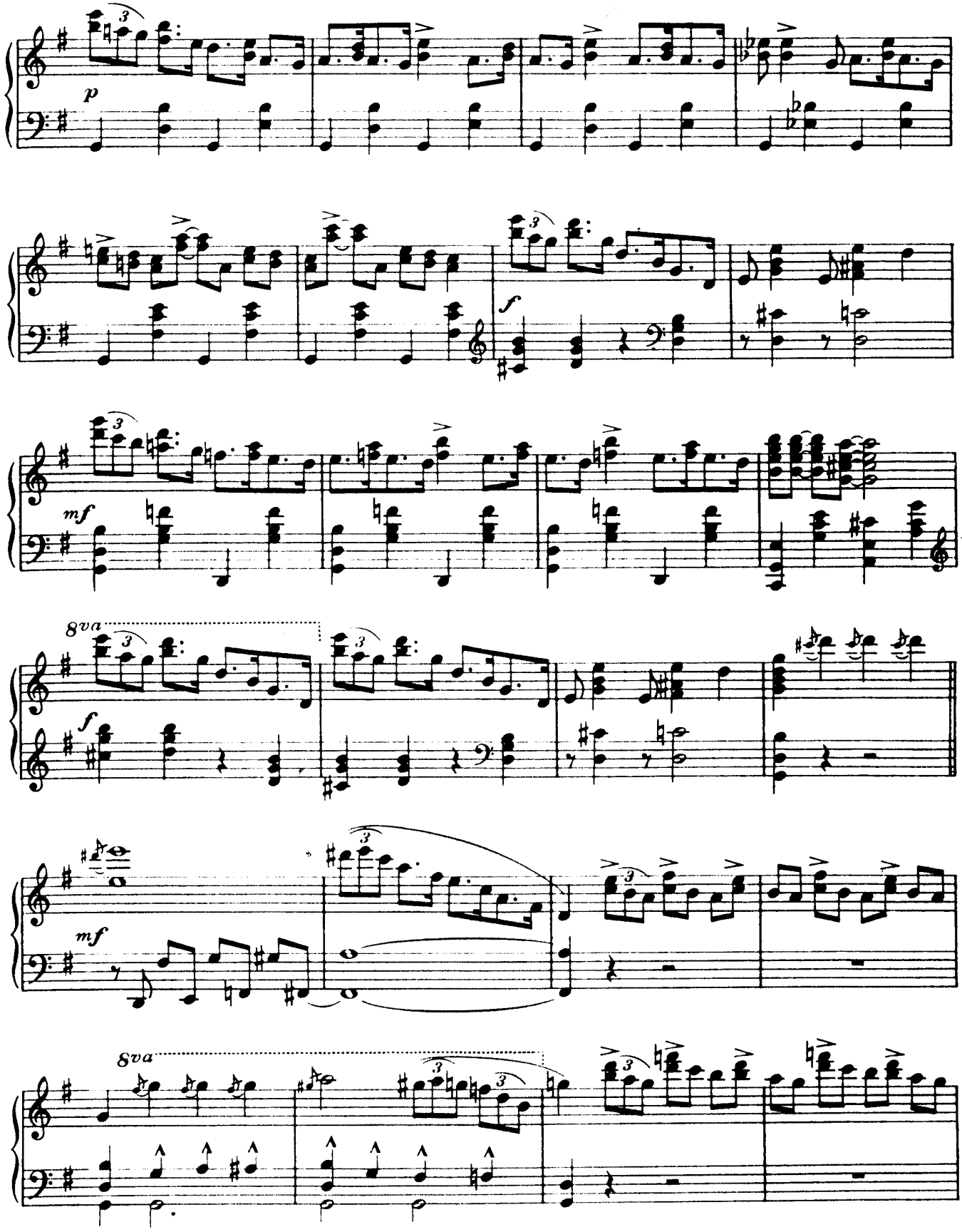
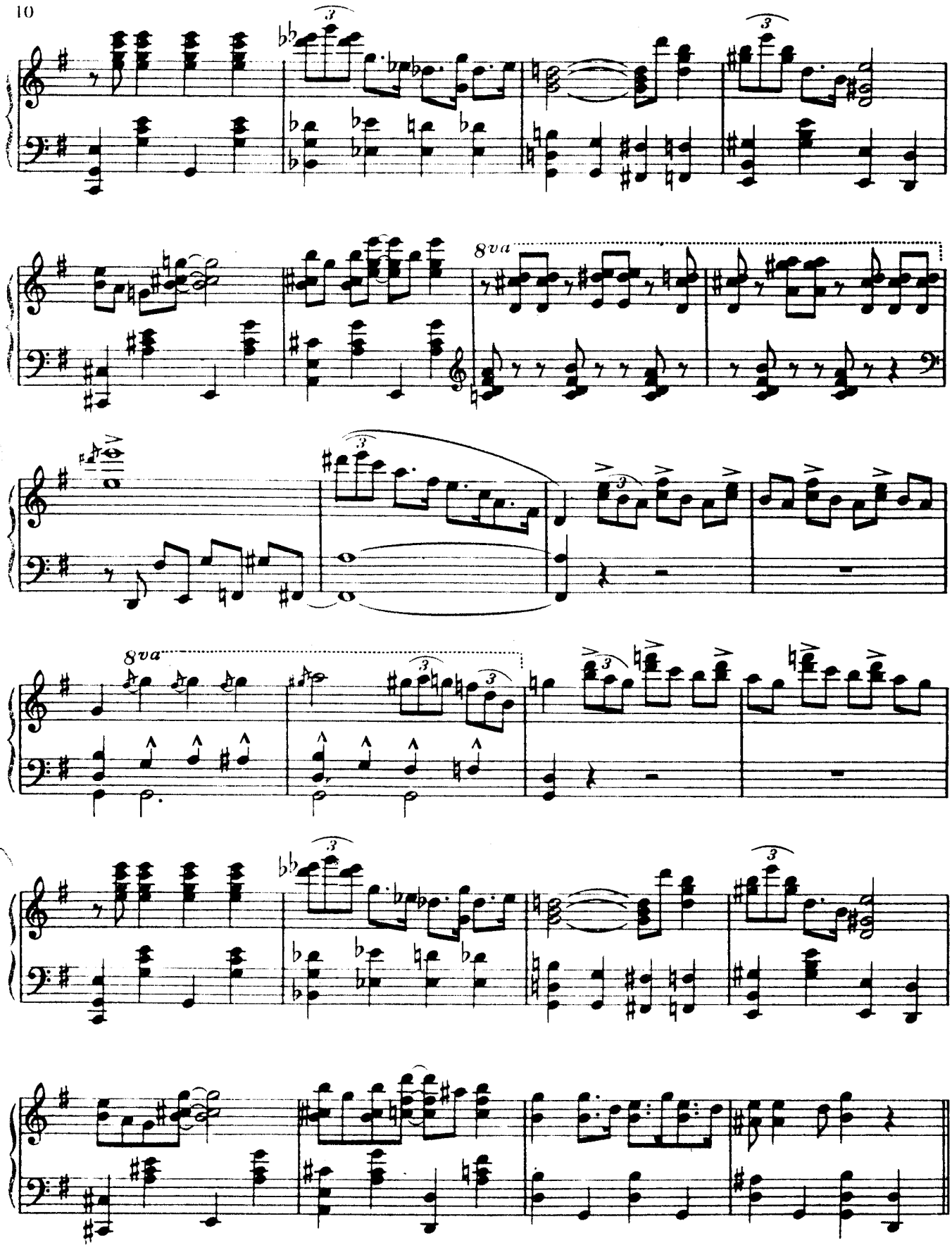
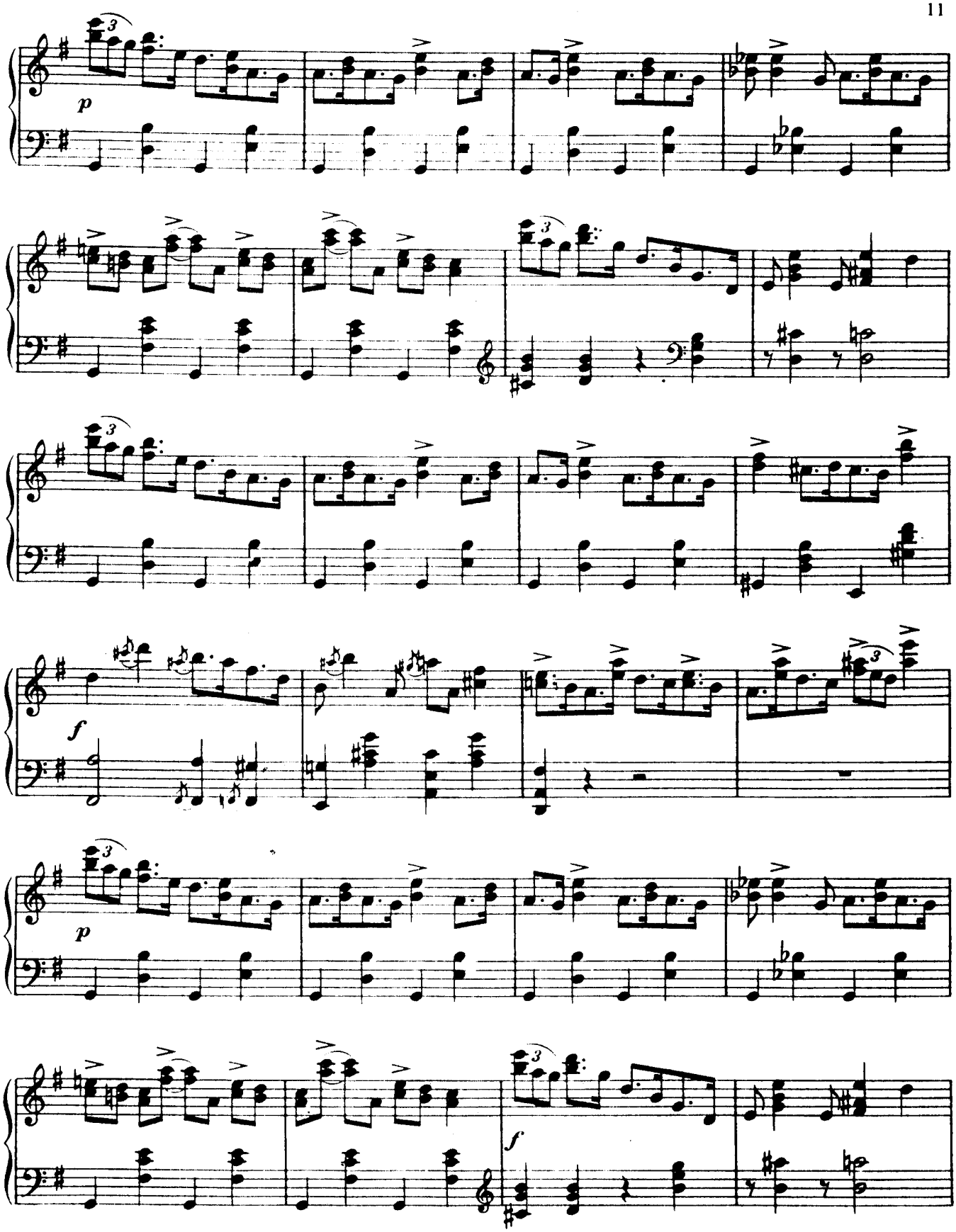
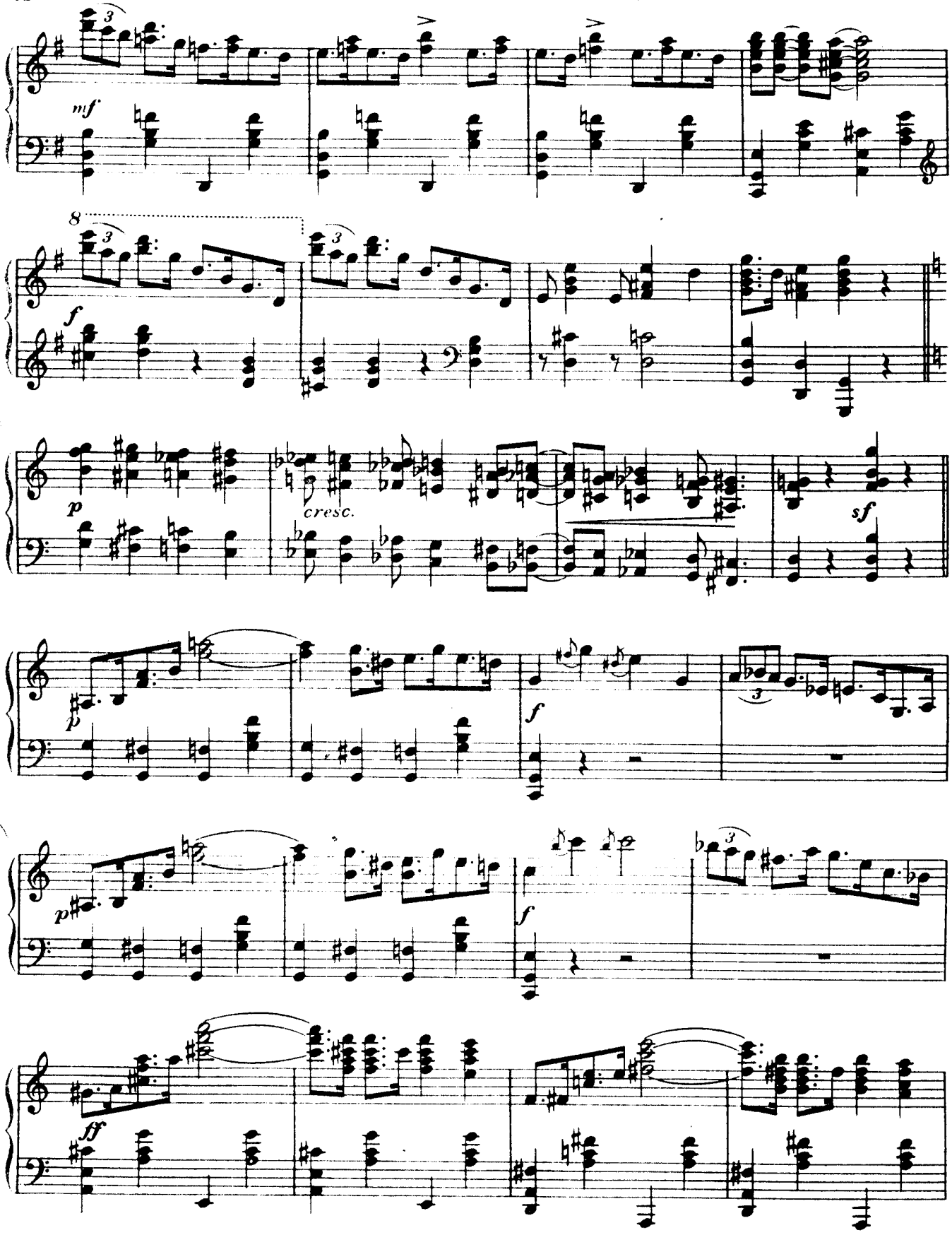
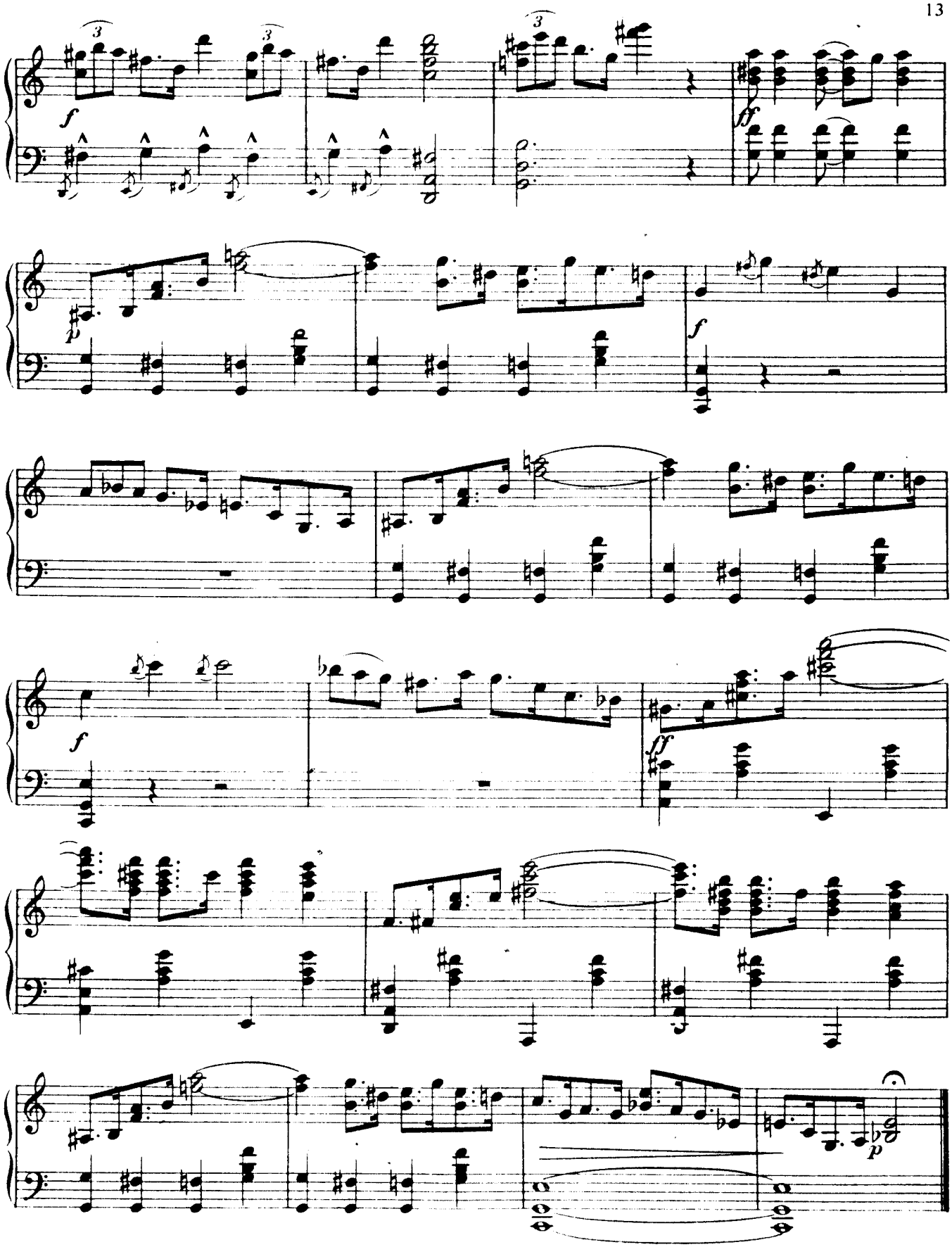
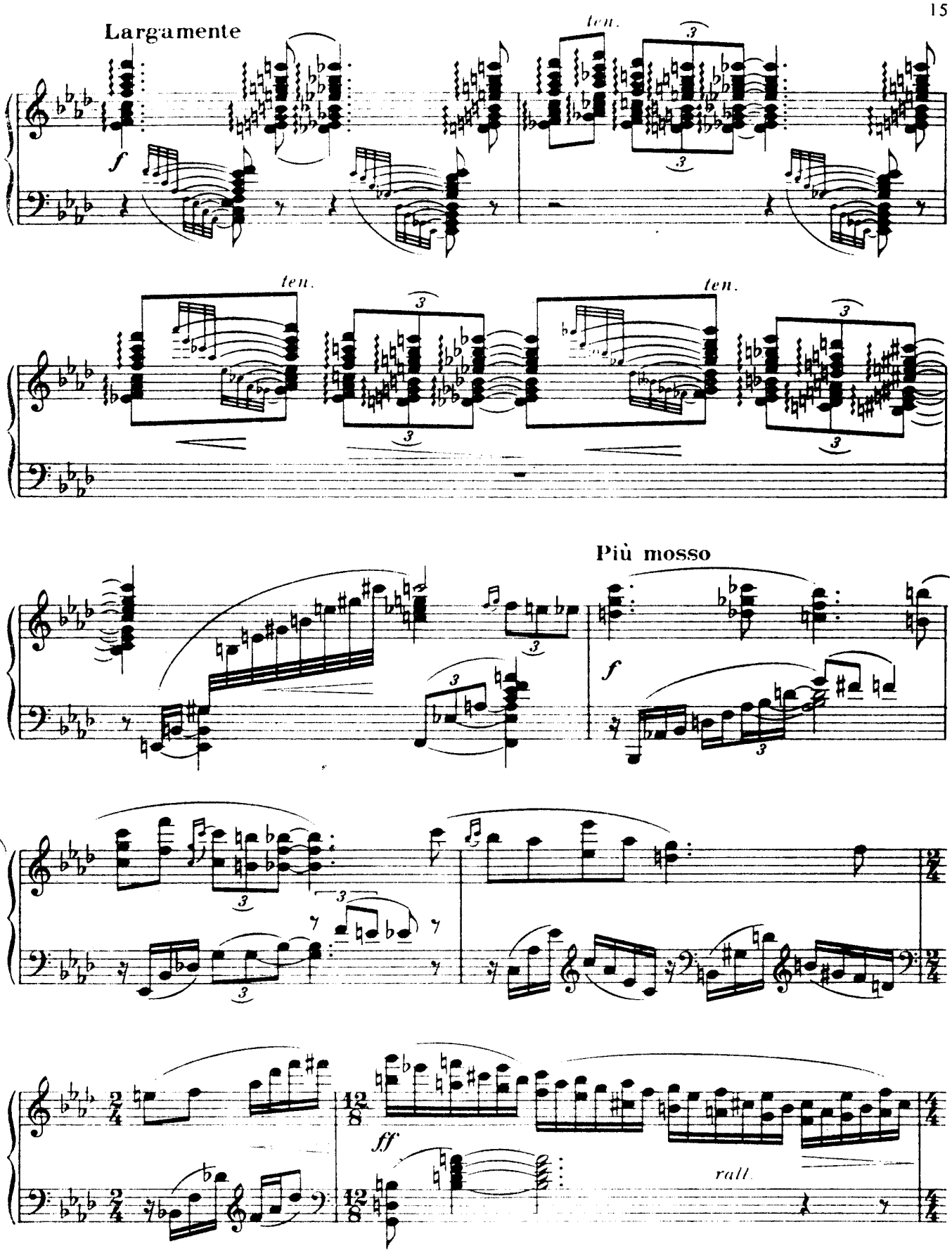

p
f
mf
8va
f
mf
8va

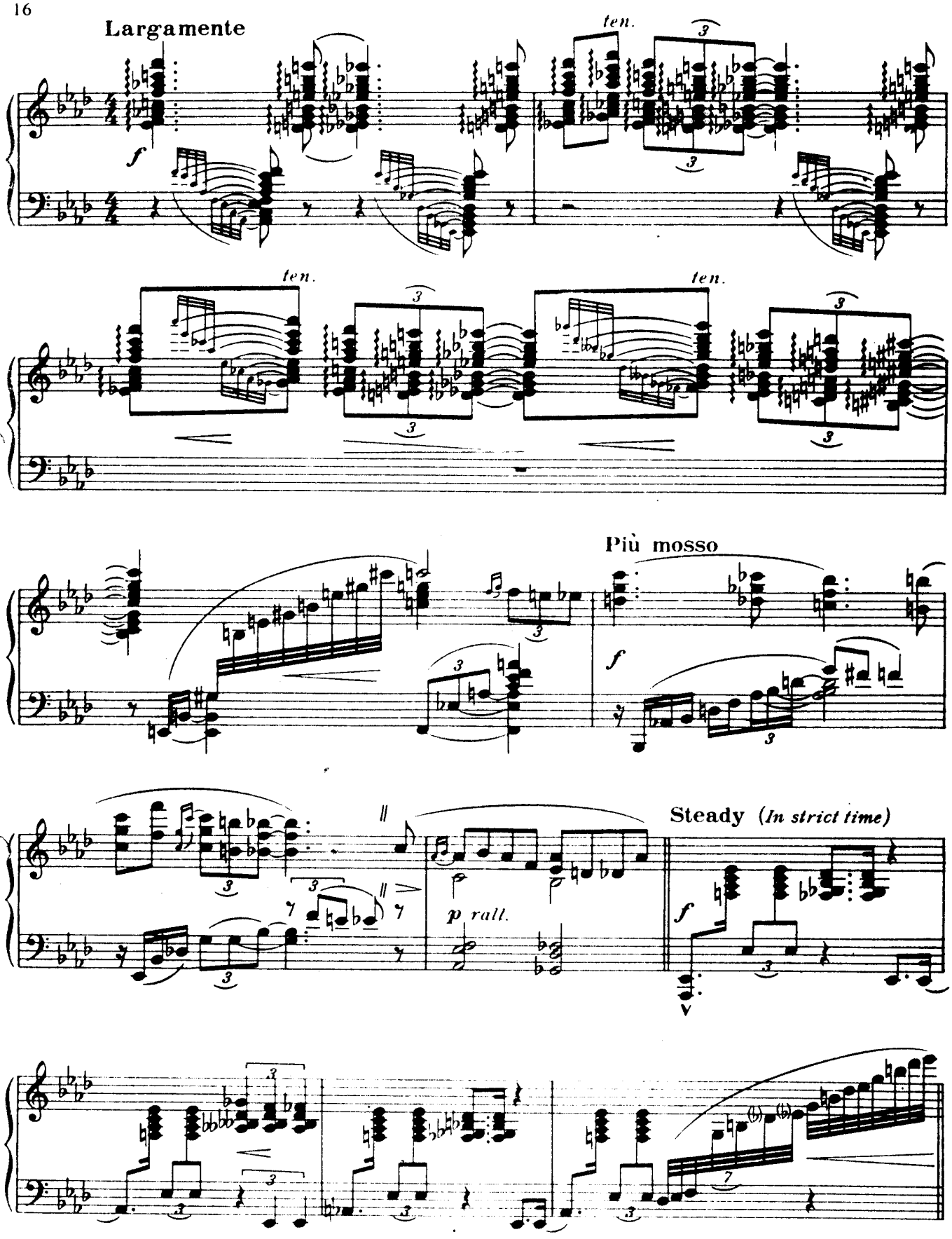

8va
8va

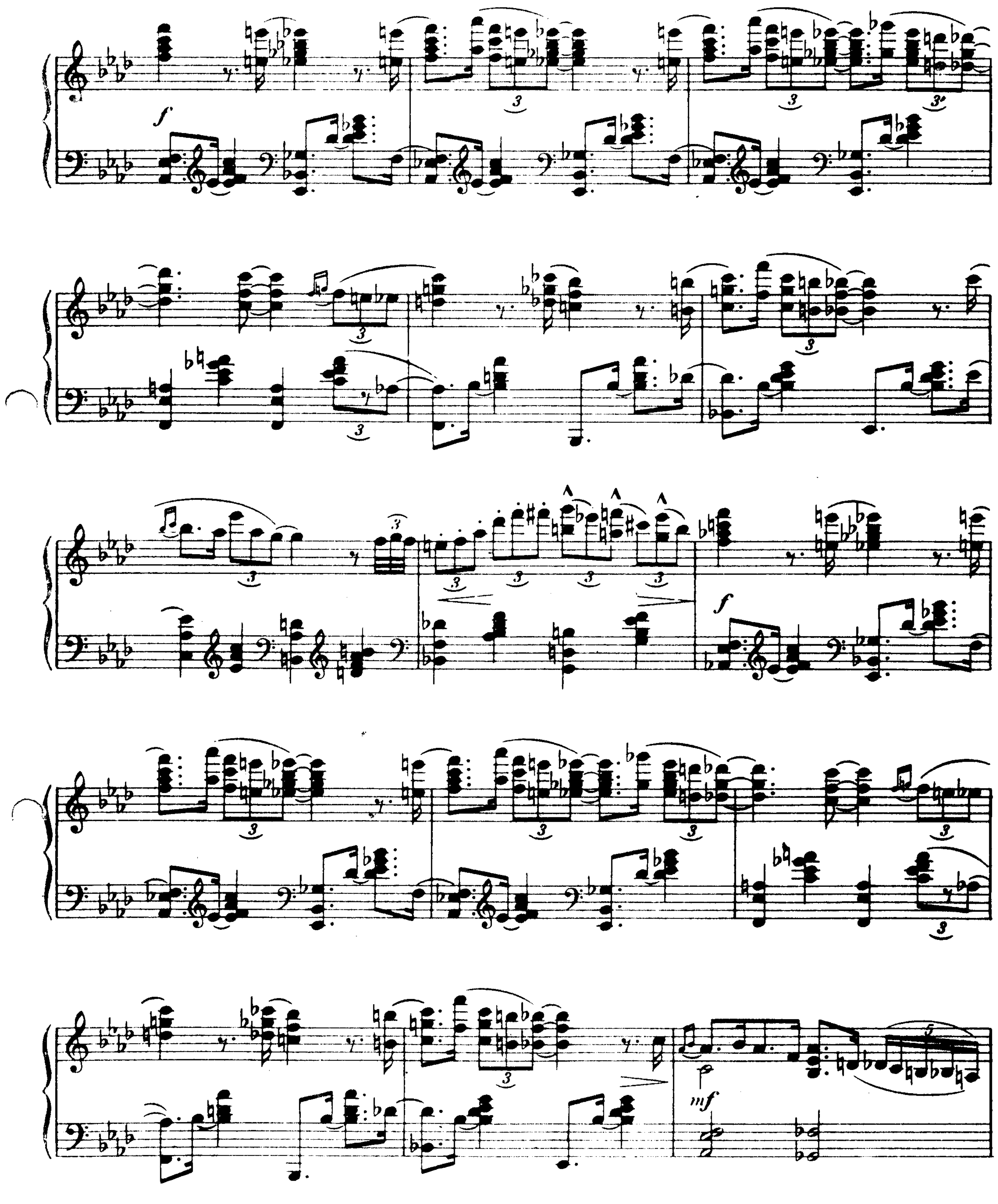

p
f
p
f

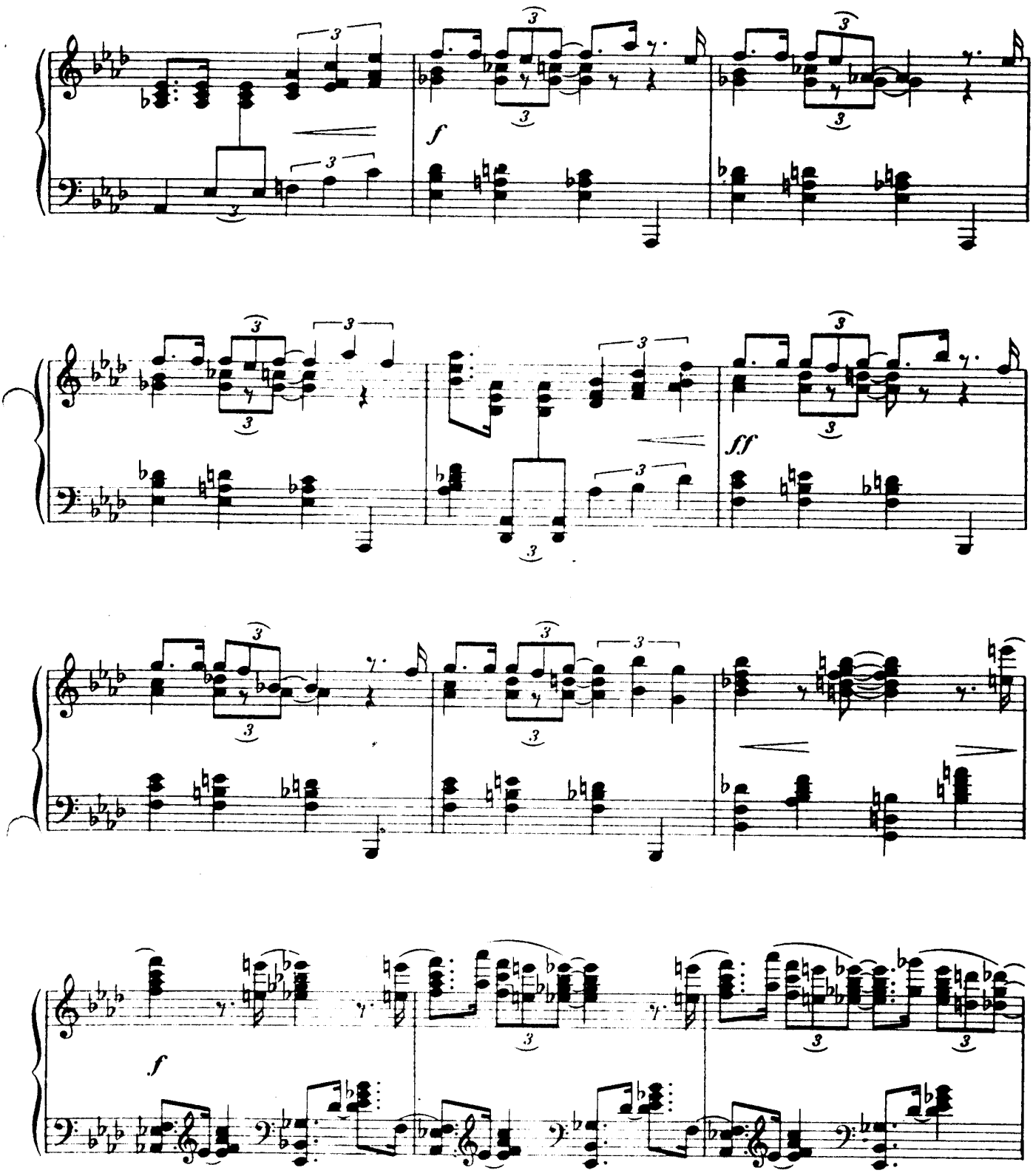

mf
8
f
p
cresc.
sf
p
f
p
f
ff

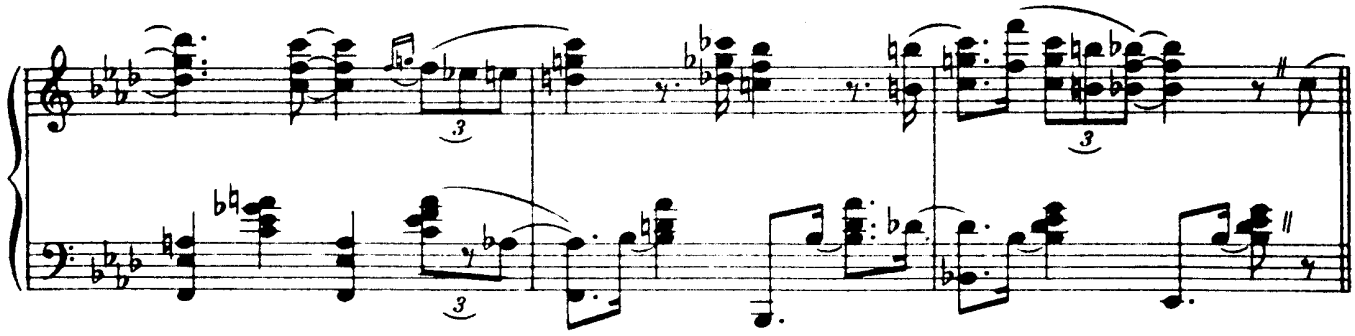

f
ff
p
f
f
ff
p

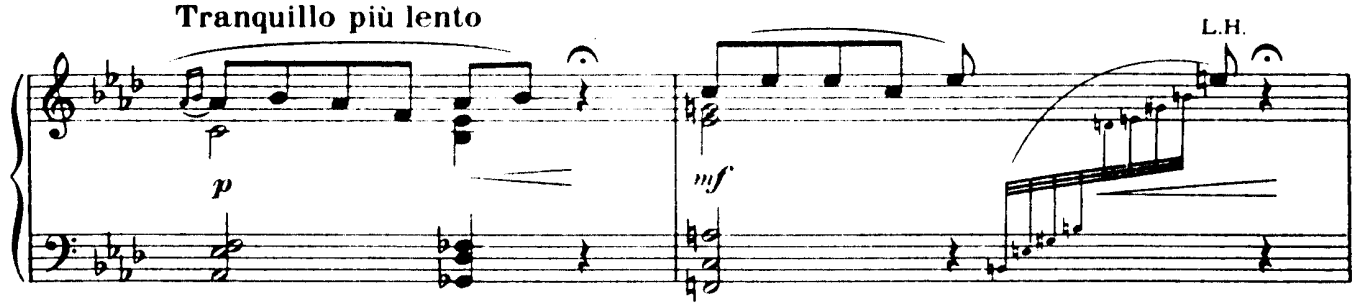

Largamente
ten.
ten.
ten.
Più mosso
f
ff
rall.

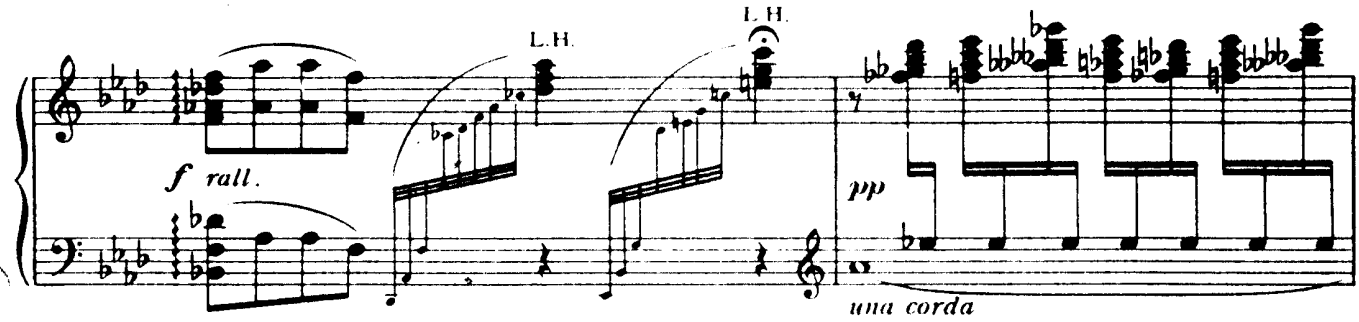

Largamente
ten.
ten.
ten.
Più mosso
Steady (In strict time)
p rall.

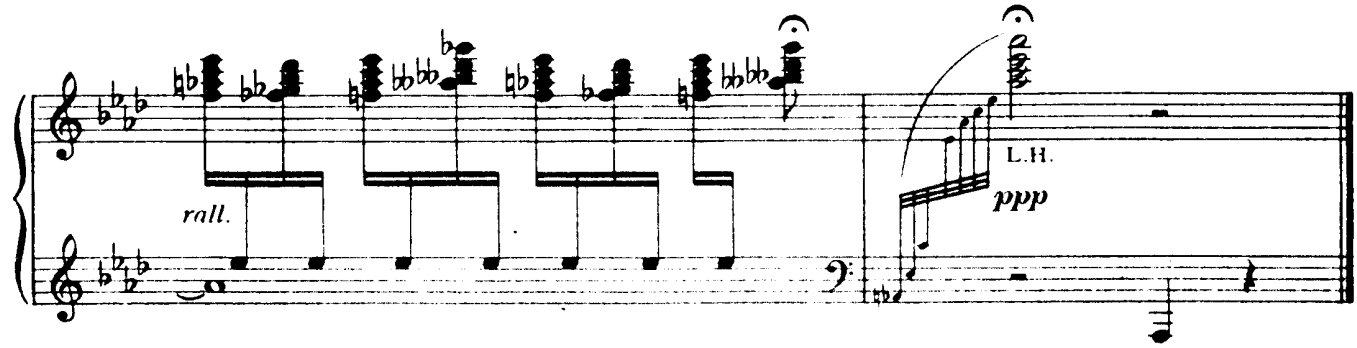

f
f
mf


f
ff
f




Tranquillo più lento
p
mf
L.H.


L.H.
L.H.
f rall.
pp
una corda


rall.
L.H.
ppp