Ecstasis: Prelude and Variations for Piano

Lawrence Kramer

2007

lkramer@fordham.edu

"Ecstasis," the Greek word from which the English "ecstasy" derives, literally means to be moved out of place. It refers to a passage beyond the given, a movement outside the place of one's known or familiar self. In his *Being and Time,* Martin Heidegger proposes that the most "authentic" form of ecstasis is a rapture, a being carried away, that we do not simply yield to but actively resolve on. We step away from stasis onto a plane of continuous dynamism. We become ourselves by leaving ourselves behind, yet without forgetting that who (and what) we become is a reply we make to all we have been before.

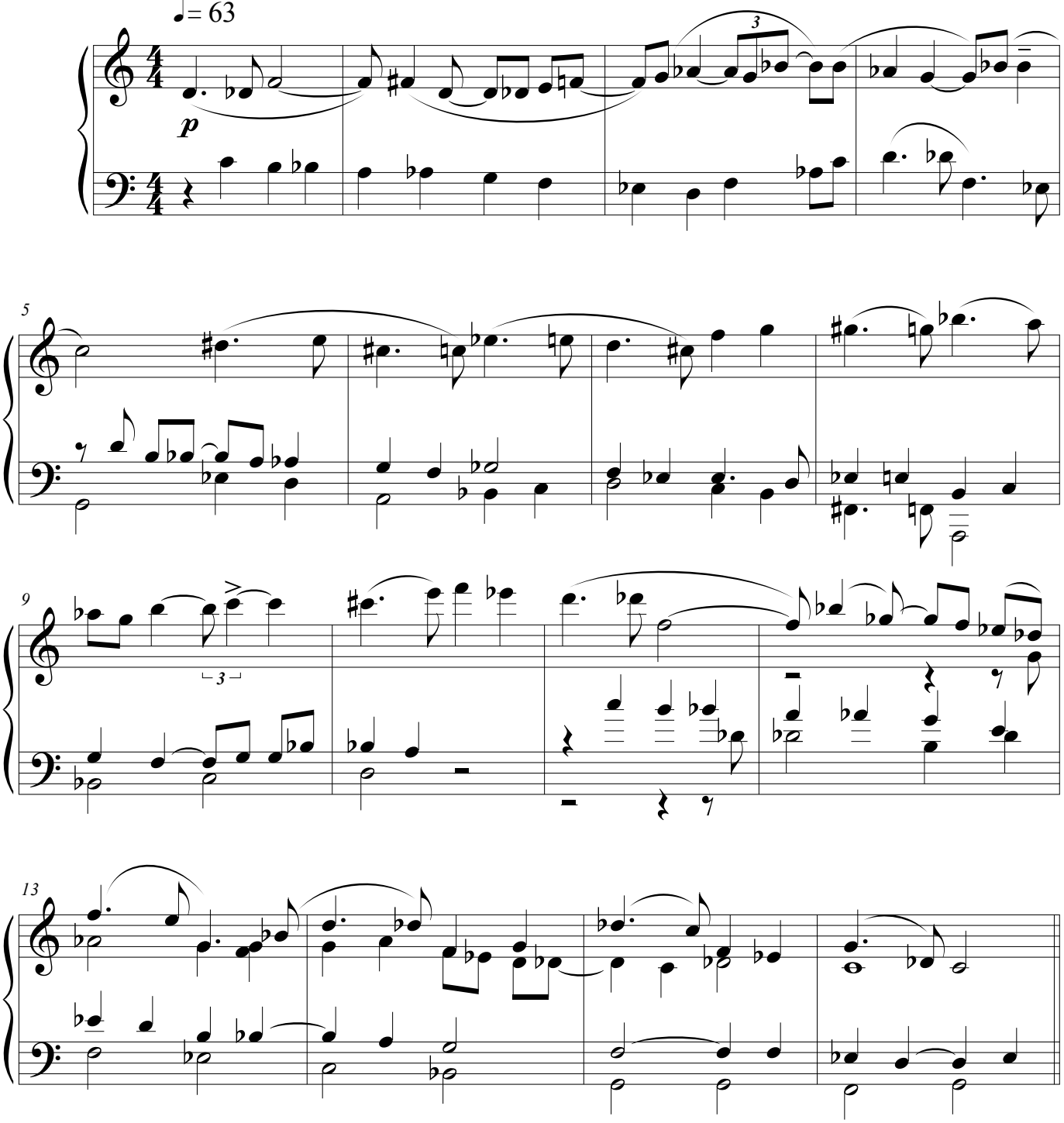
The two parts of "Ecstasis: Prelude and Variations for Piano" refer respectively to the allure of stasis and the allure of ec-stasis. The Prelude is both static and cyclical; its slow revolutions present a single extended melody without alteration but from different points of view. The Variations seek an "ecstatic" dynamism that proliferates at many levels. The variations take flight from two musical ideas, a theme and a chord progression stated at the outset, but it is not just these ideas that are varied; so are the expressive episodes formed from the variation process and so are the larger sections formed from the episodes in turn. The work as as a whole reaches its "ecstatic"conclusion when the highest-order variation has happend three times, a process clearly marked by reprises of the initial theme and chord progression. This formal pattern, however, is not the point of the music but merely the medium in which the risks, rewards, forces, and feelings of ecstasis can best proliferate.

"Ecstasis" was composed in 2007. The Prelude is about five and a half minutes long, the Variations a little over fourteen. Either may be performed independently.

Ecstasis

Lawrence Kramer

Prelude



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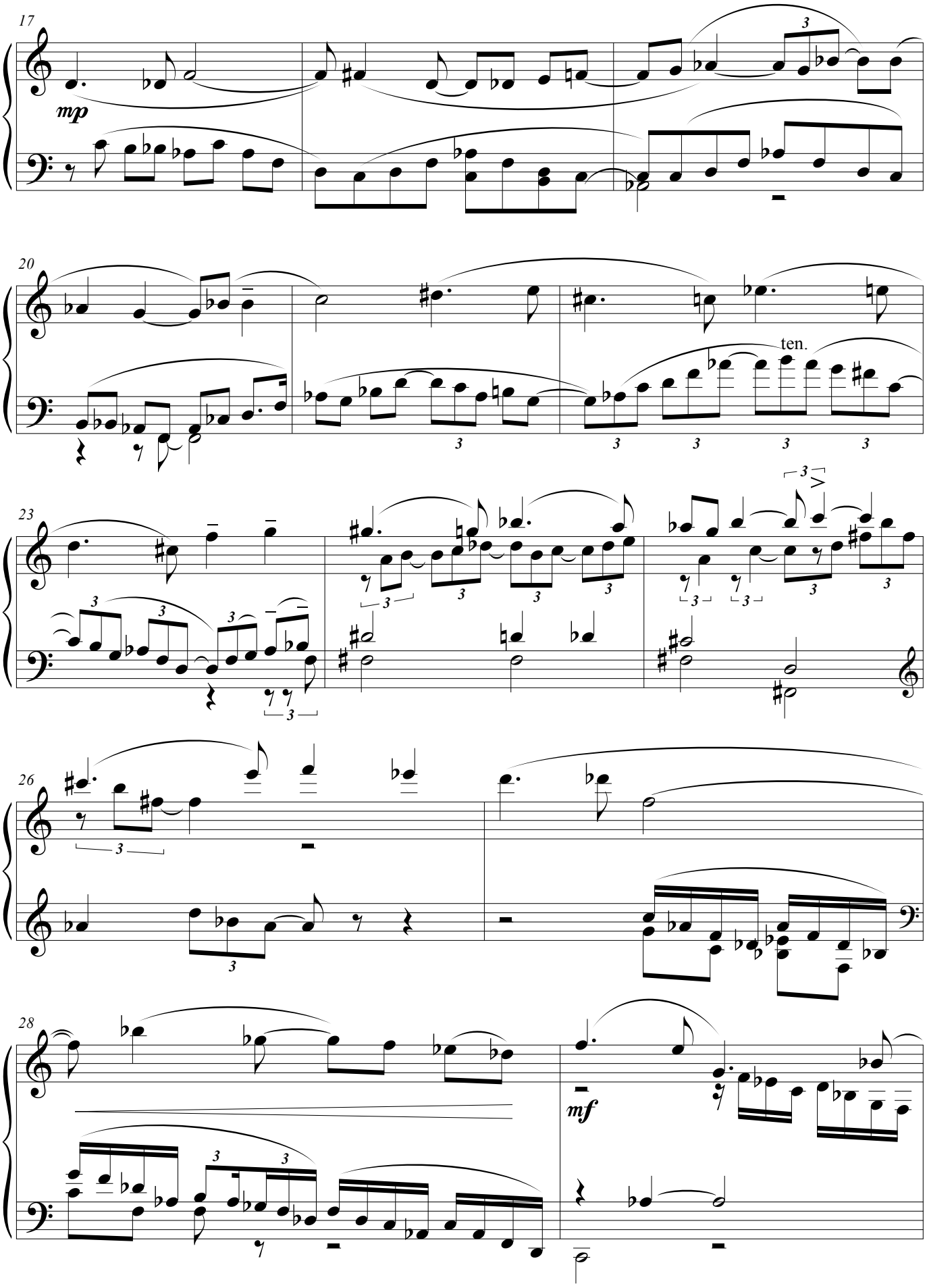
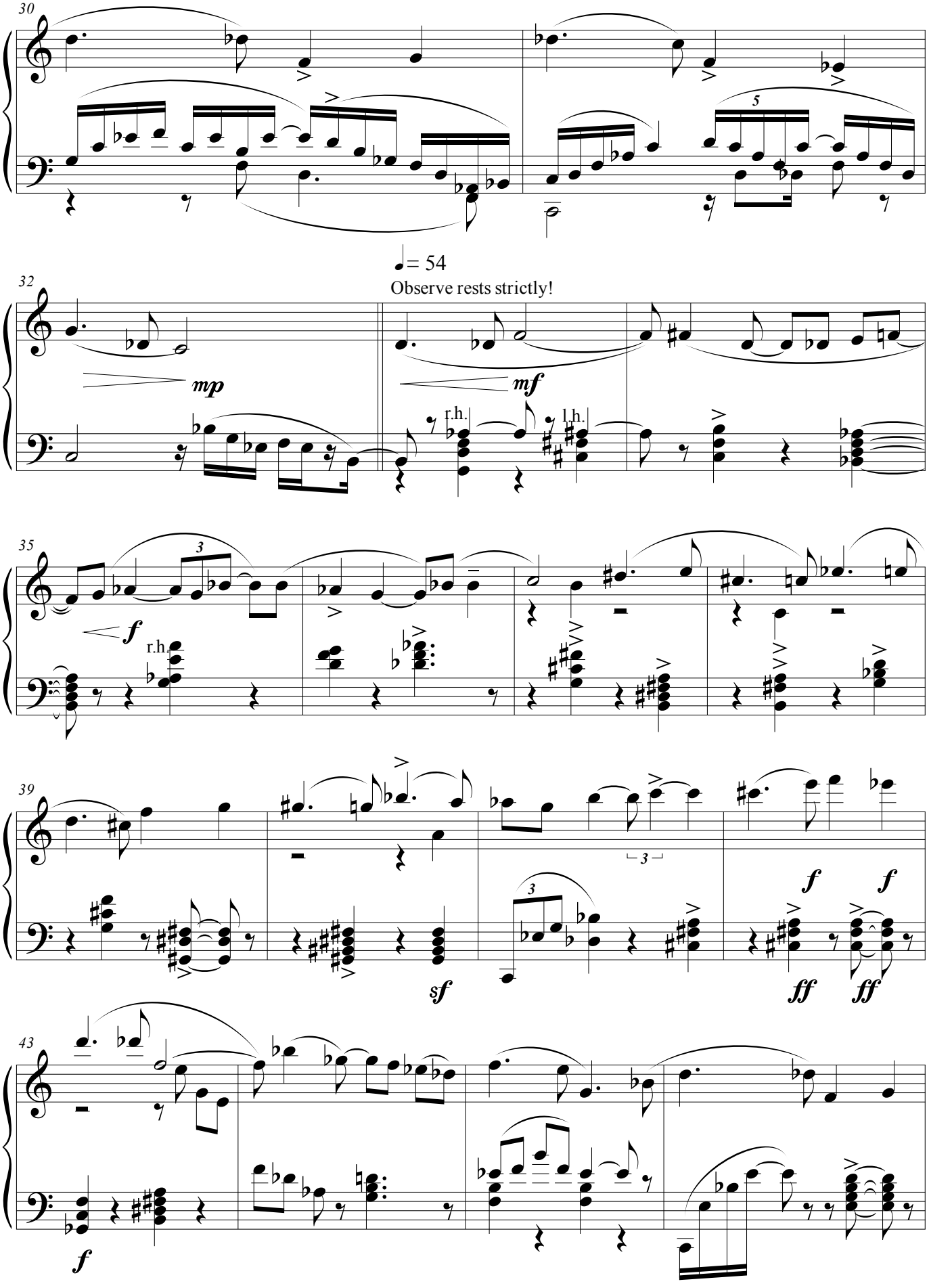
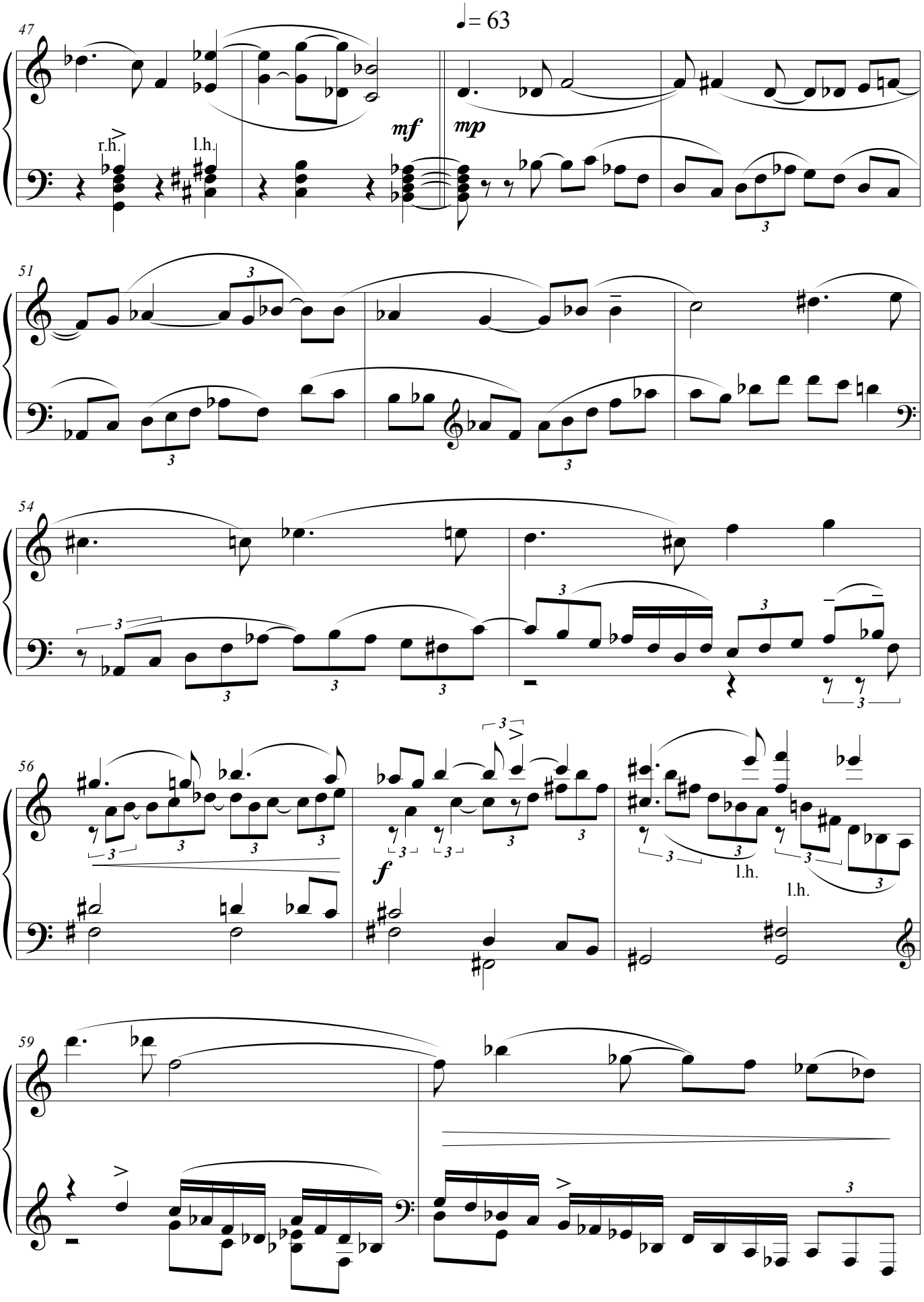
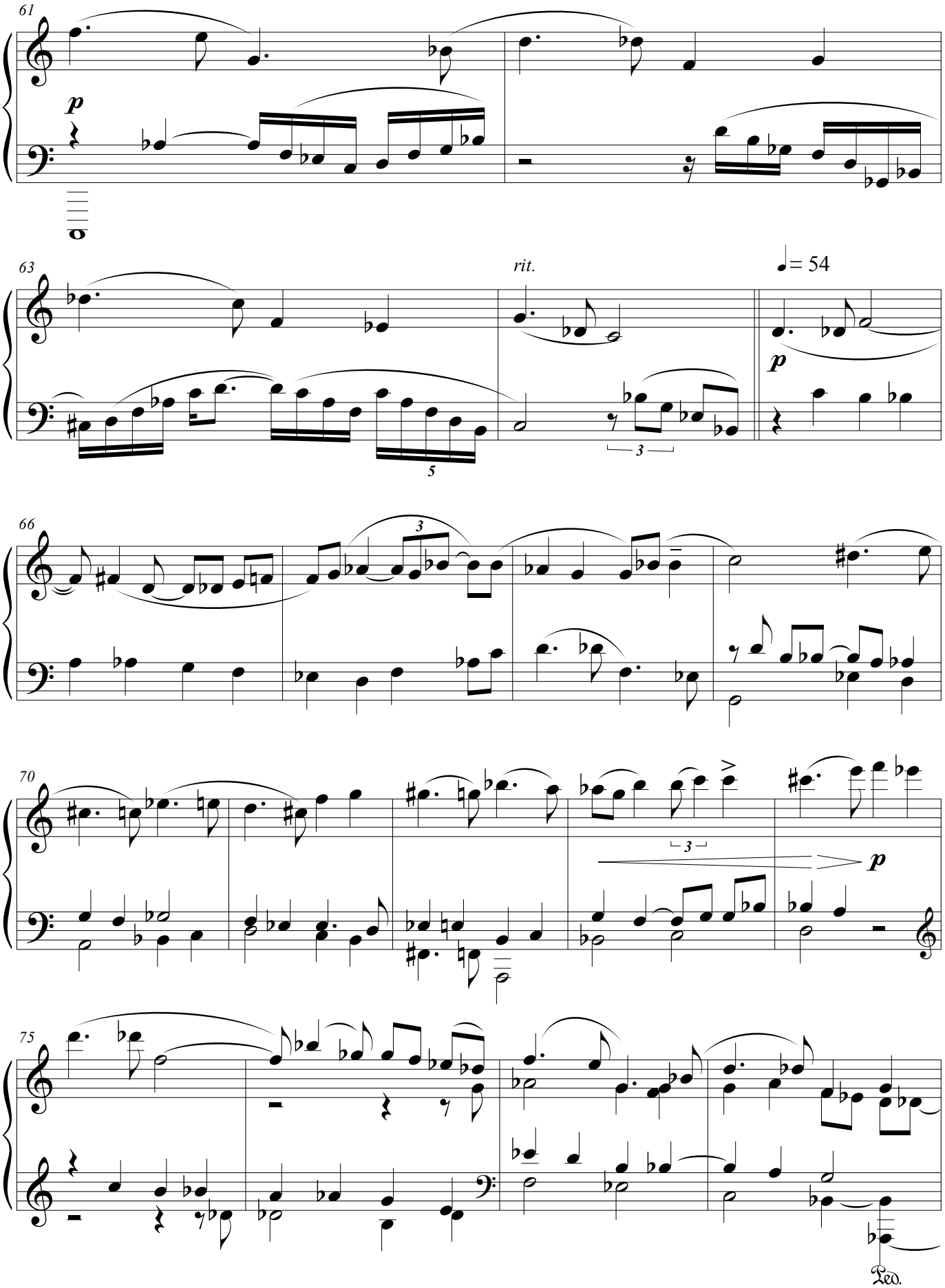
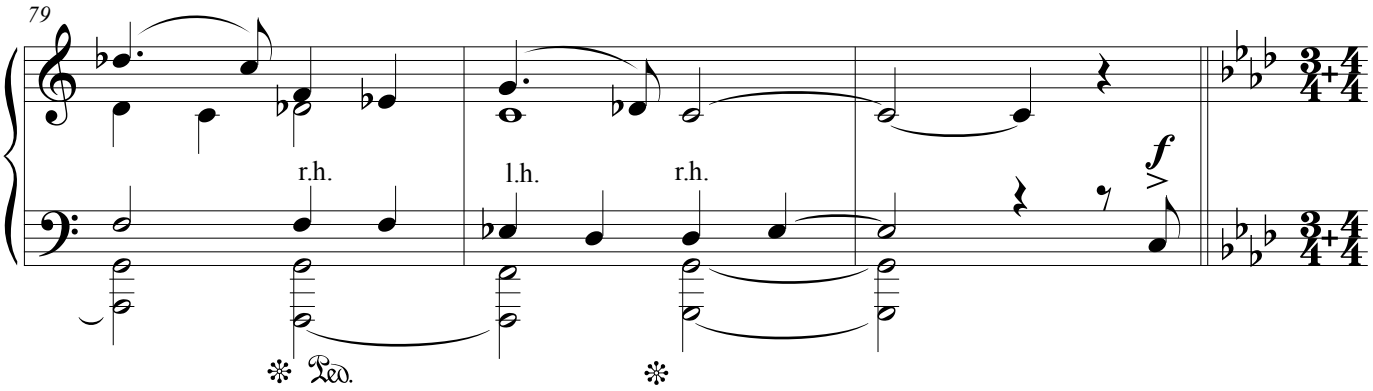

17
mp
20
ten.
23
26
28
mf

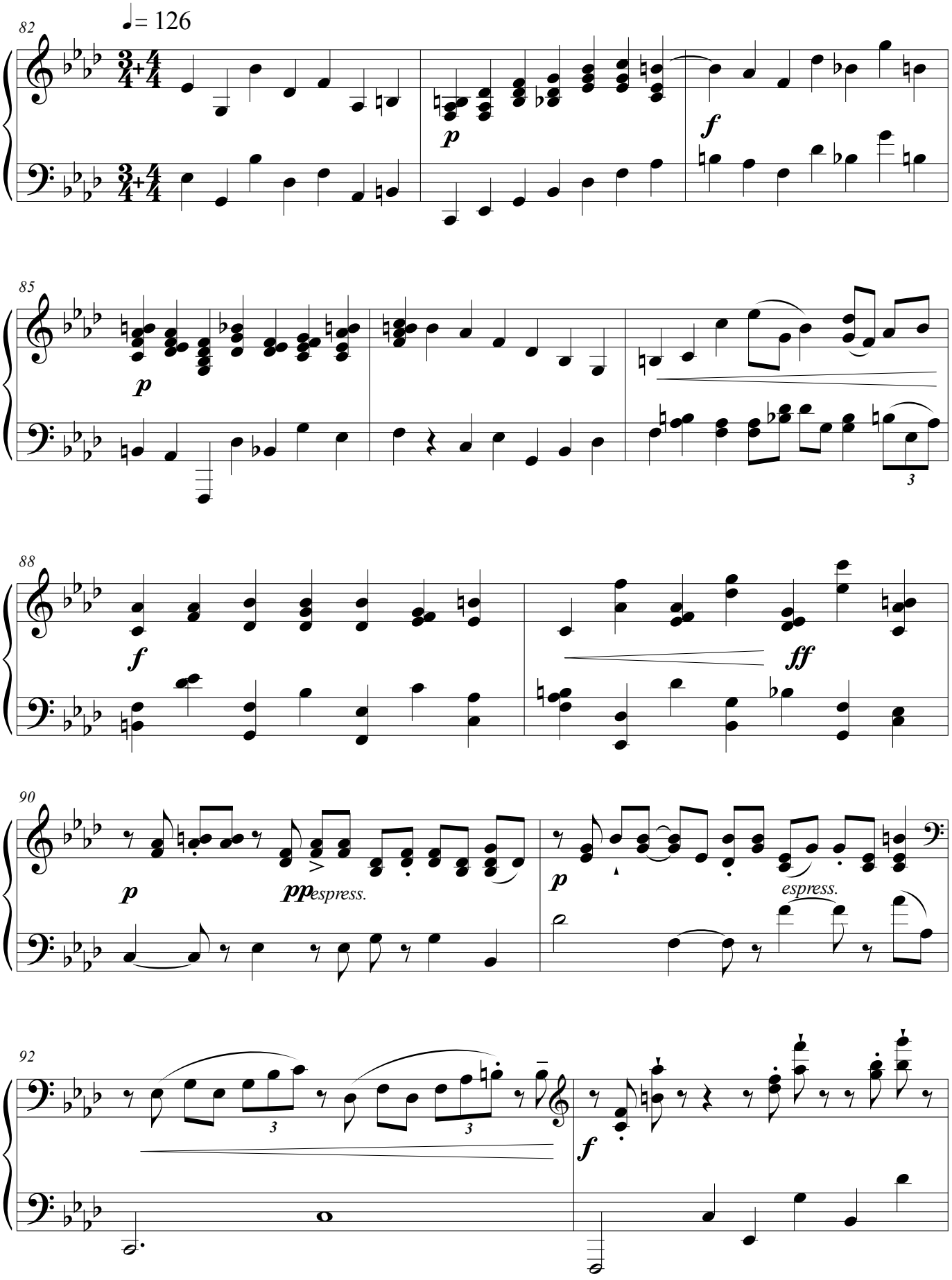

30
32
♩= 54
Observe rests strictly!
mp
mf
r.h.
l.h.
35
f
r.h.
39
sf
f
f
ff
ff
43
f

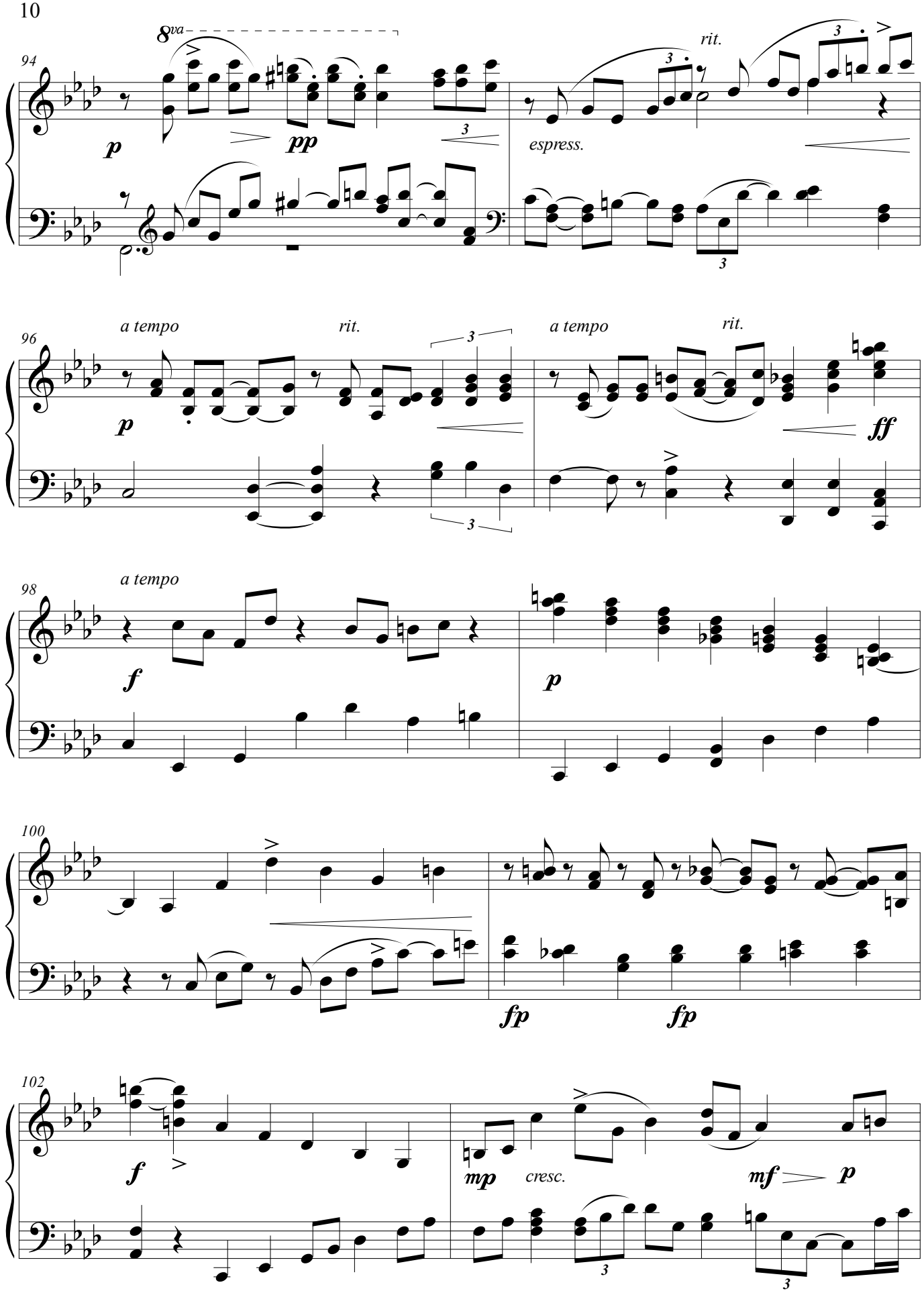

47
♩= 63
mf
mp
r.h.
l.h.
51
54
56
f
l.h.
l.h.
59

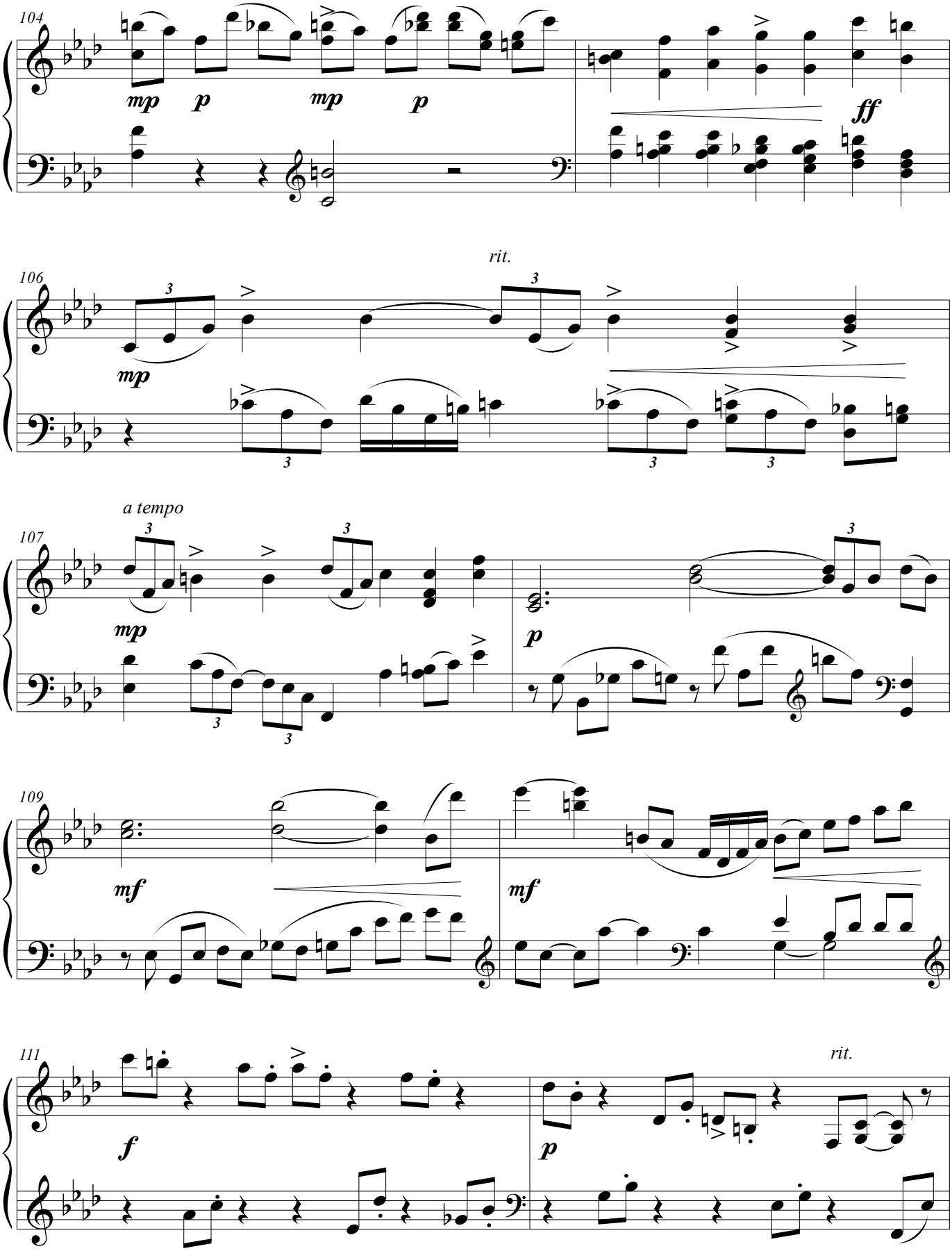

61
p
63
rit.
♩= 54
p
66
70
p
75
Ped.

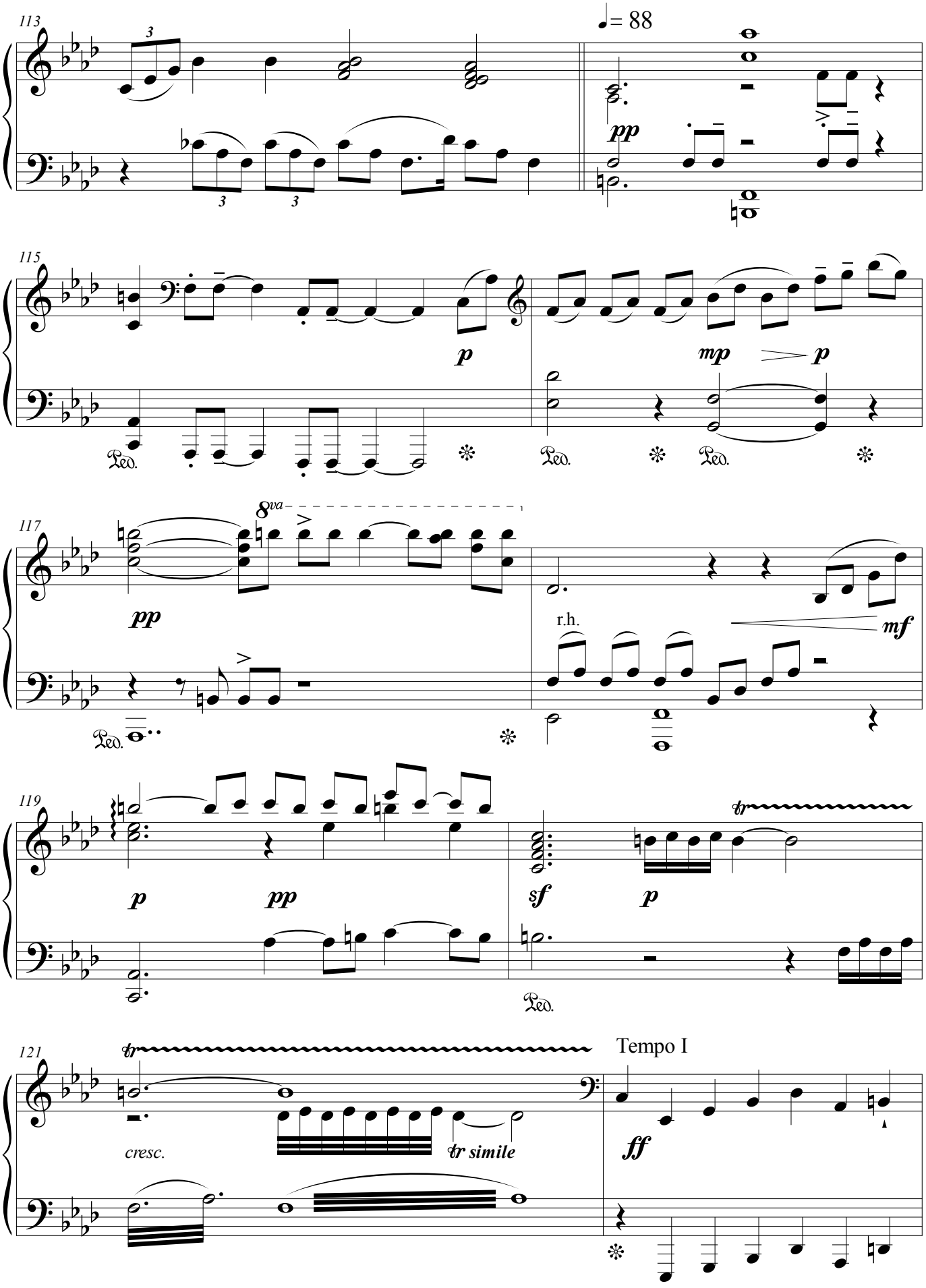

79
r.h.
l.h.
r.h.
f
Ped.

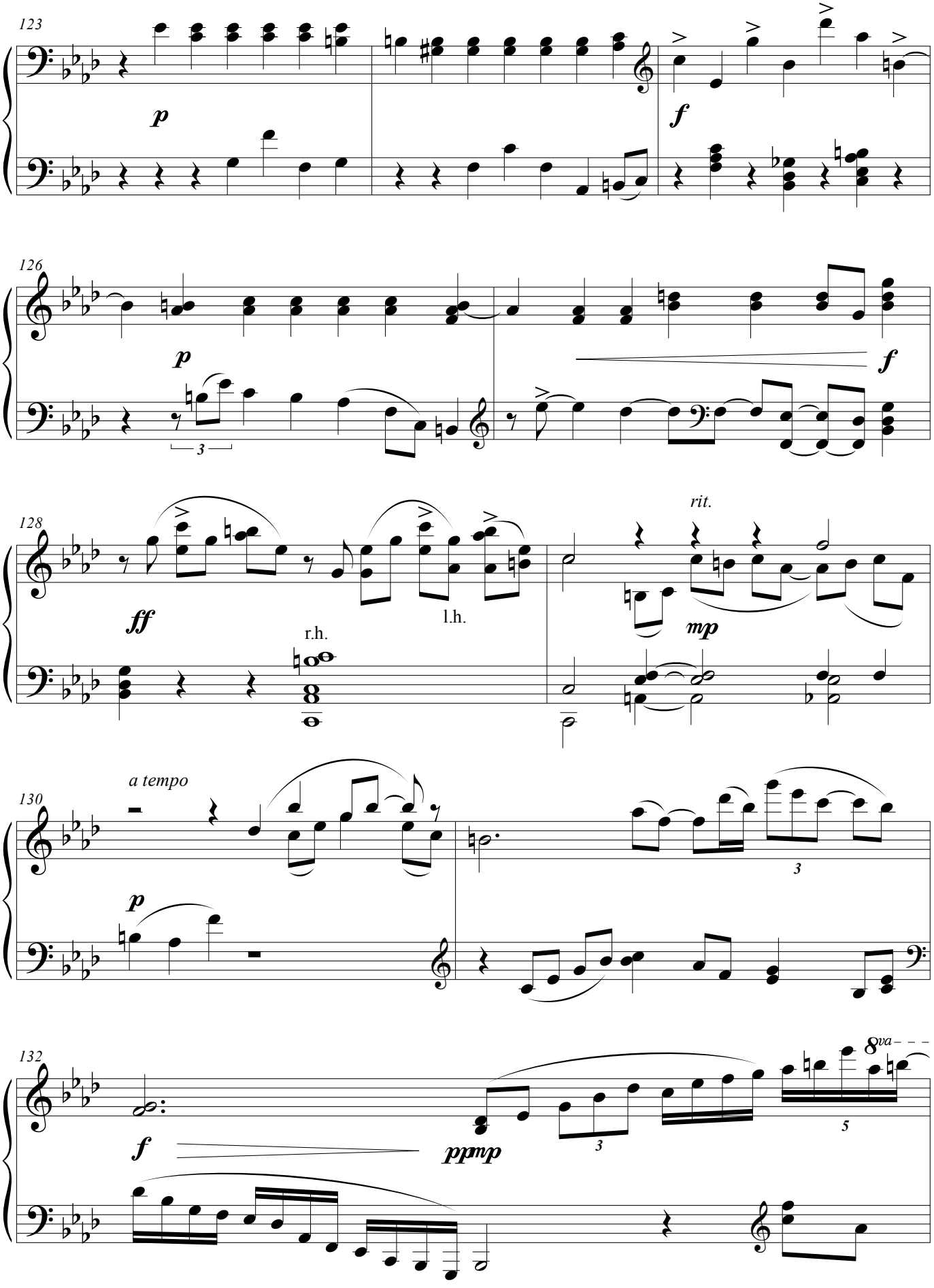
Variations

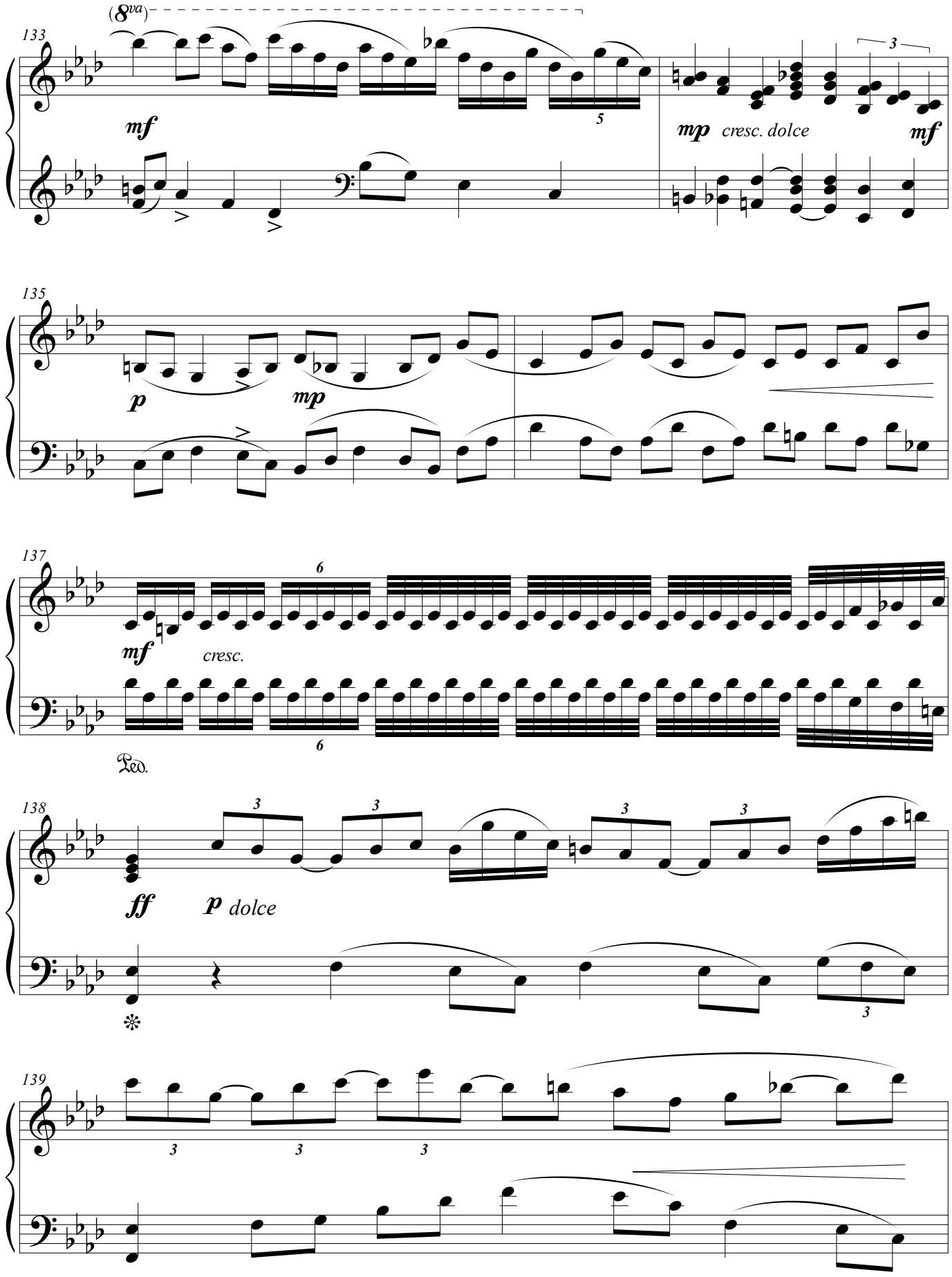


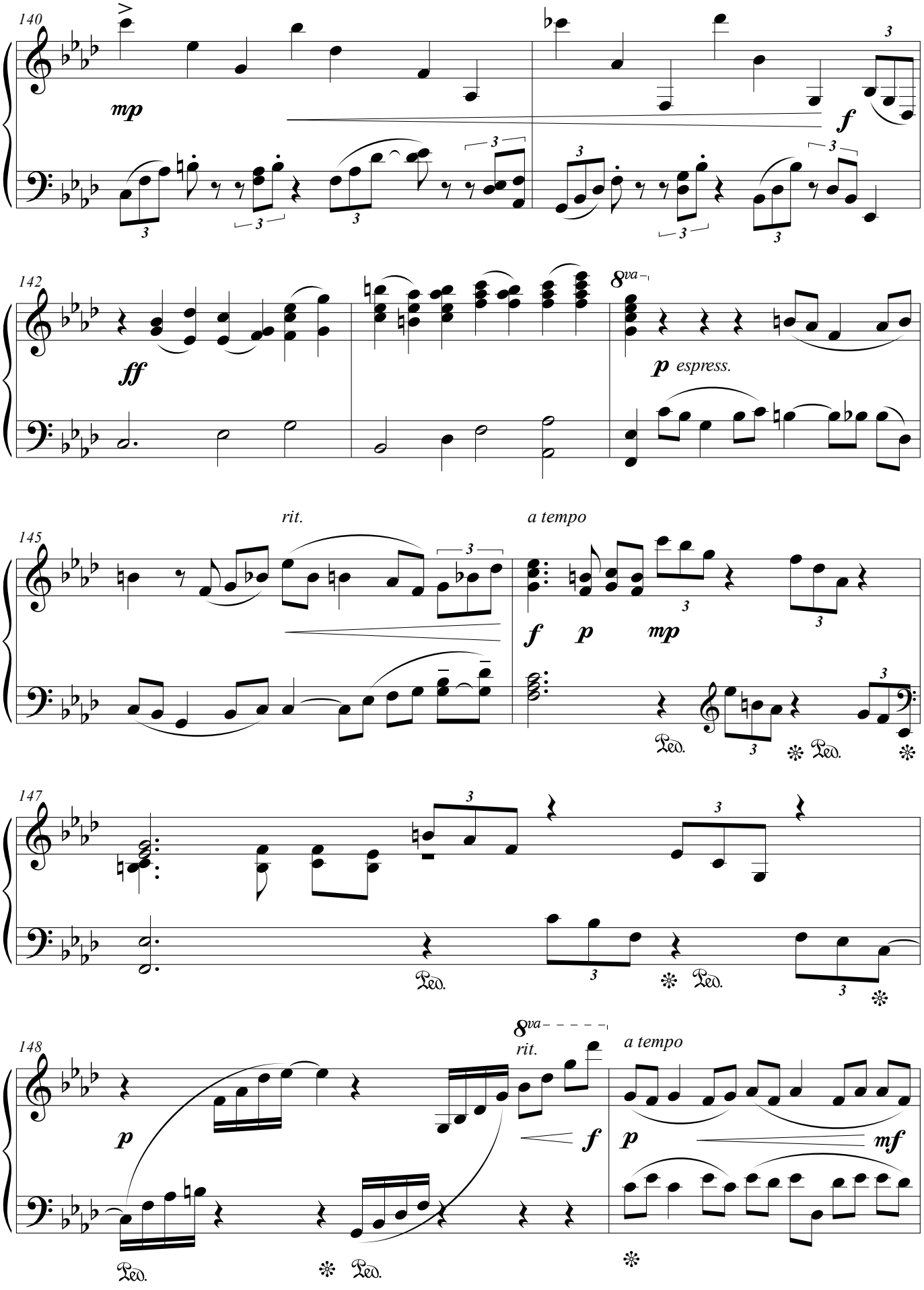

94
8va
p
pp
rit.
espress.
96
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
rit.
p
ff
98
a tempo
f
p
100
fp
fp
102
f
mp
cresc.
mf
p

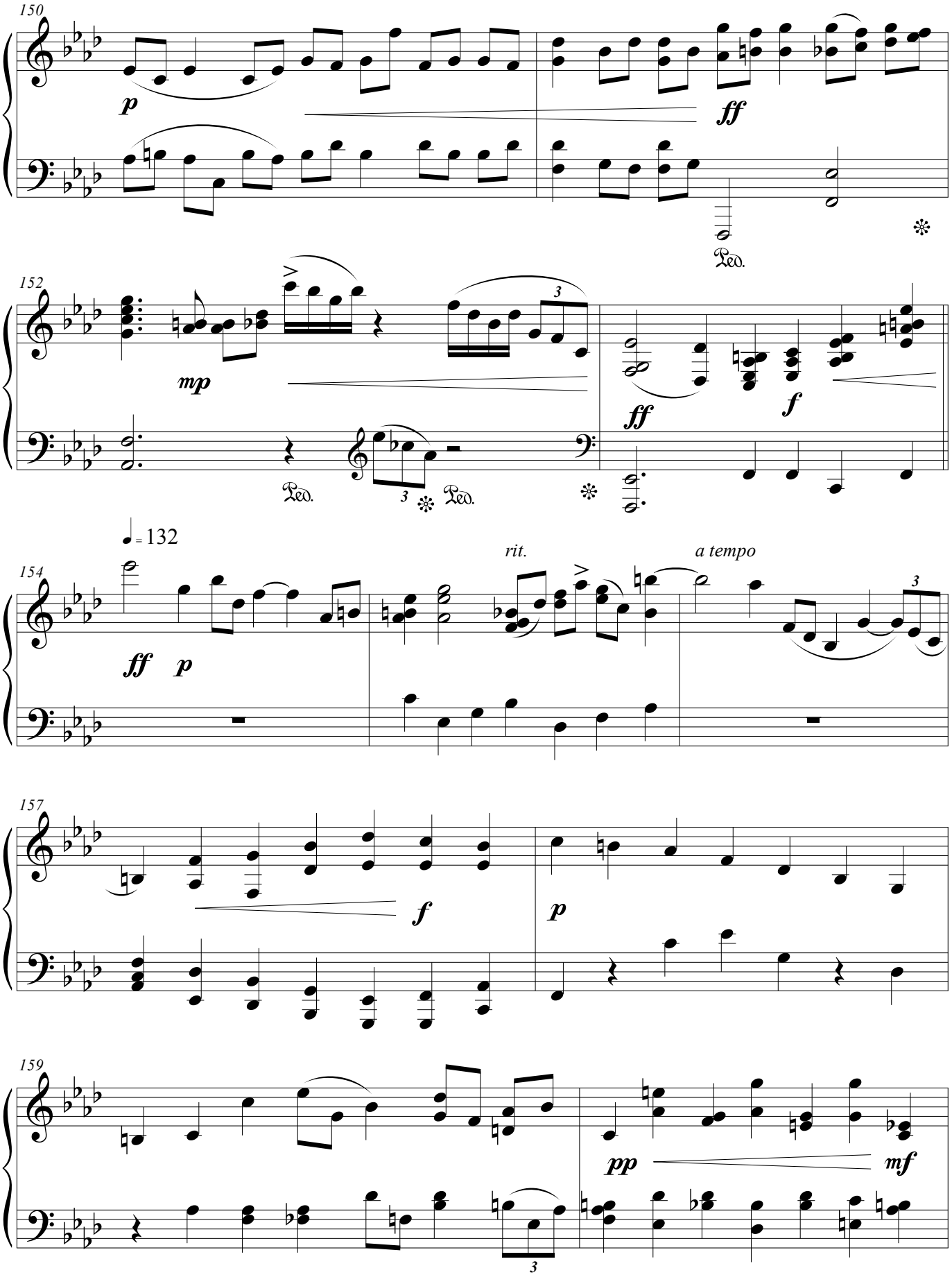

104
mp
p
mp
p
ff
rit.
106
mp
a tempo
107
mp
p
109
mf
mf
111
f
p
rit.

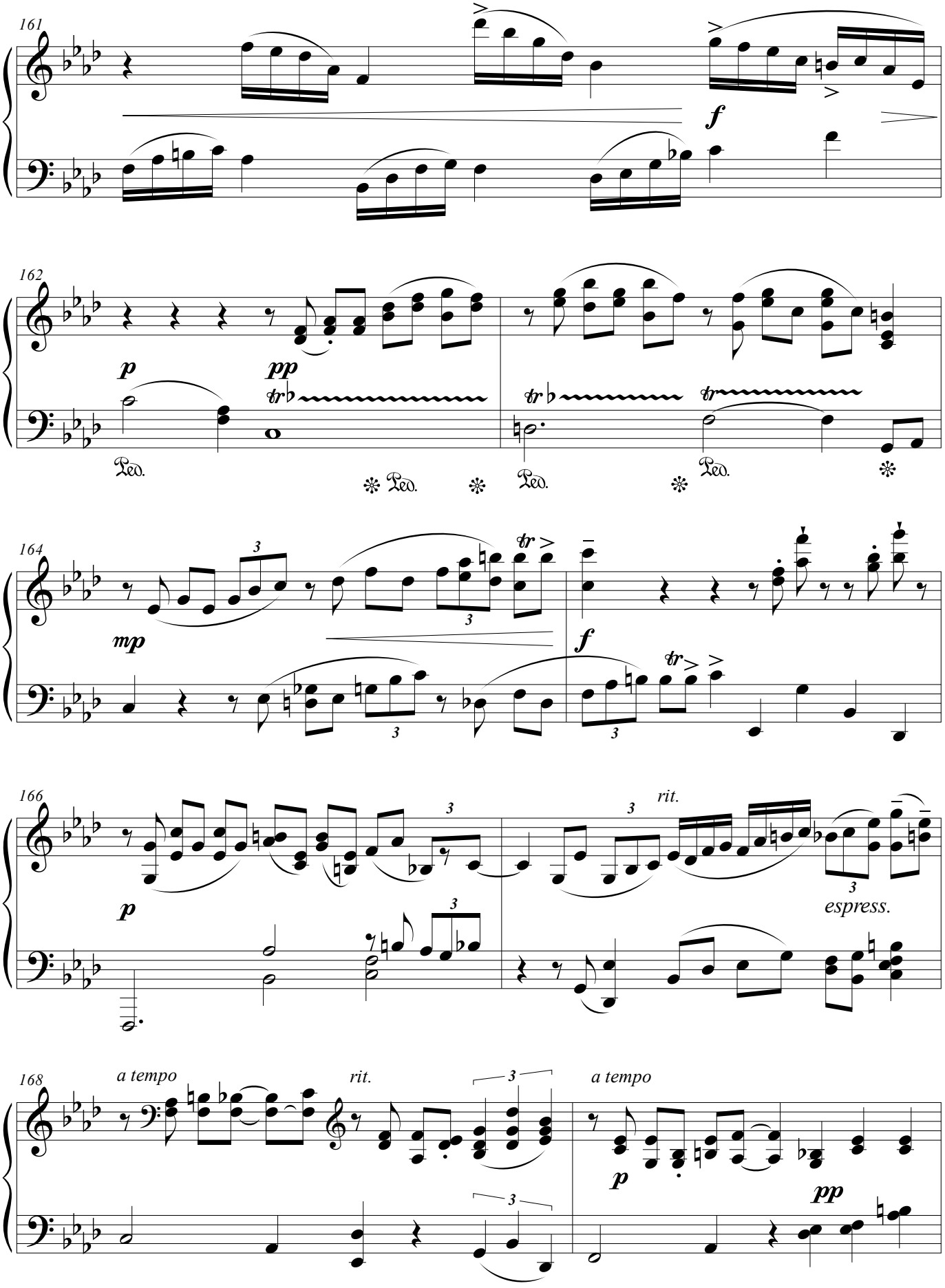

113
♩= 88
pp
115
p
mp
p
Ped.
117
8va
pp
r.h.
mf
119
p
pp
sf
p
tr
121
tr
cresc.
tr simile
Tempo I
ff

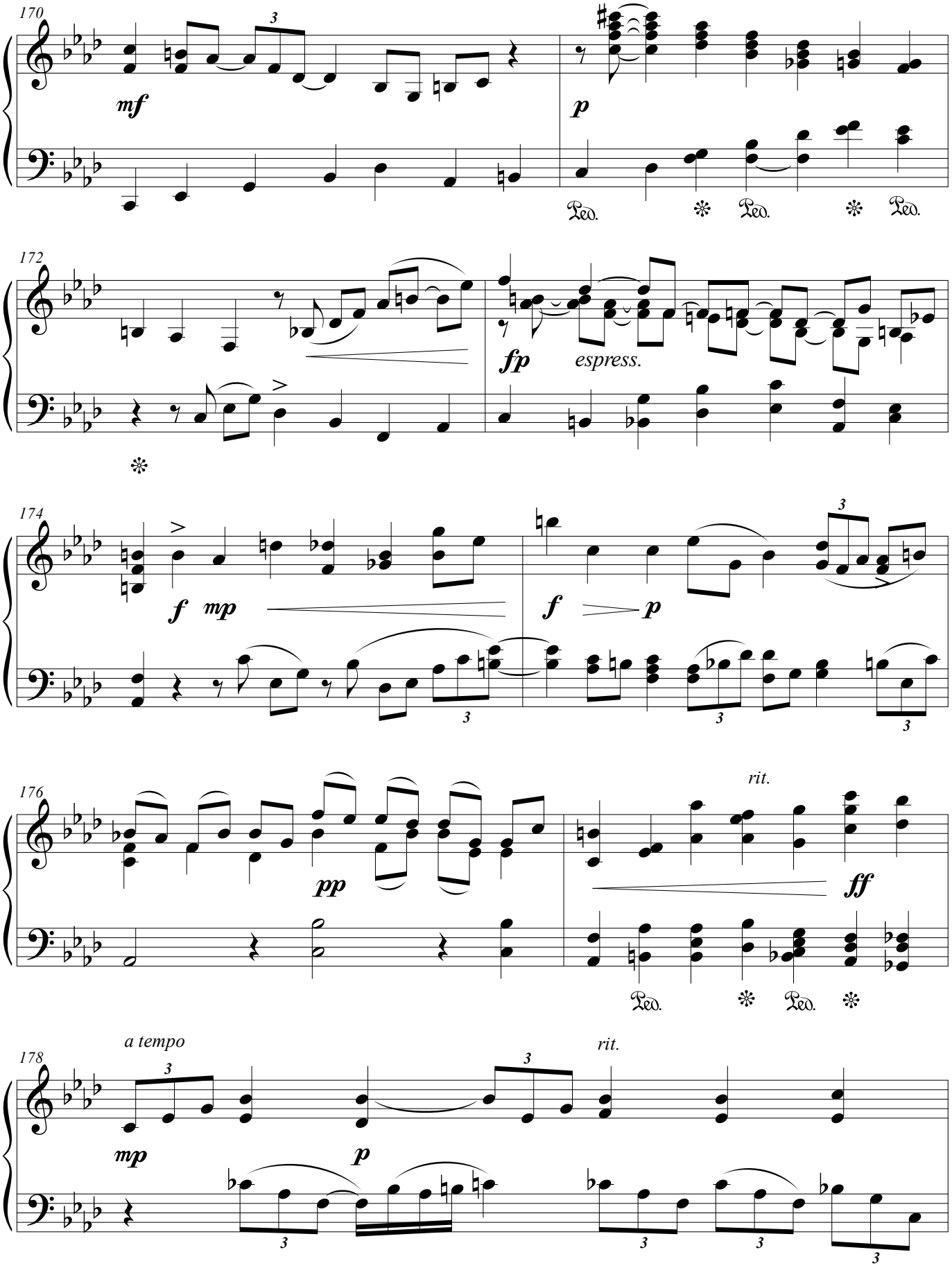

123
p
f
126
p
3
f
128
ff
r.h.
l.h.
rit.
mp
a tempo
130
p
3
132
f
ppmp
3
8va
5

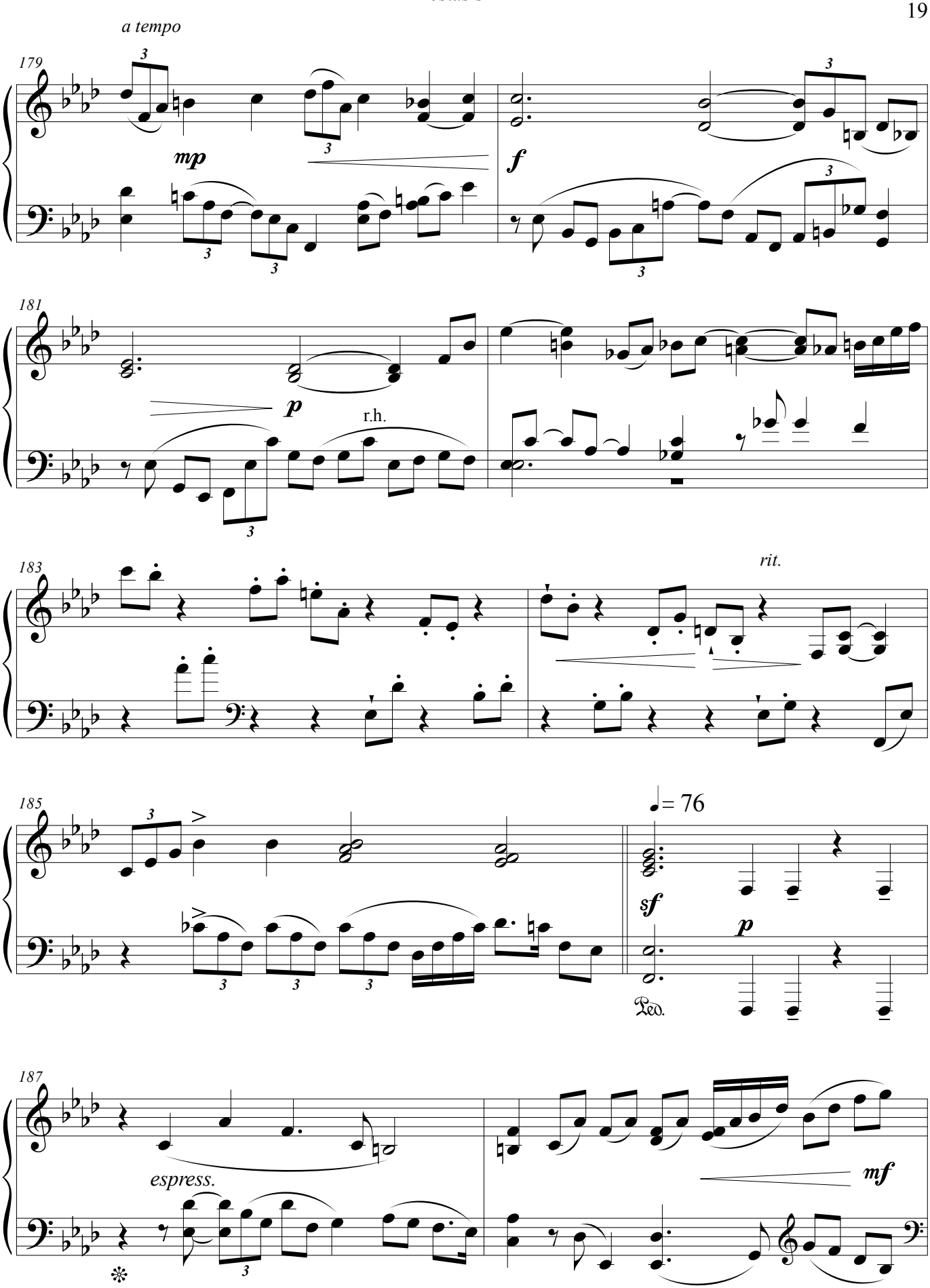

(8va)
133
mf
5
3
mp cresc. dolce
mf
135
p
mp
137
6
mf
cresc.
6
Ped.
138
3
3
3
3
ff
p dolce
3
139
3
3
3

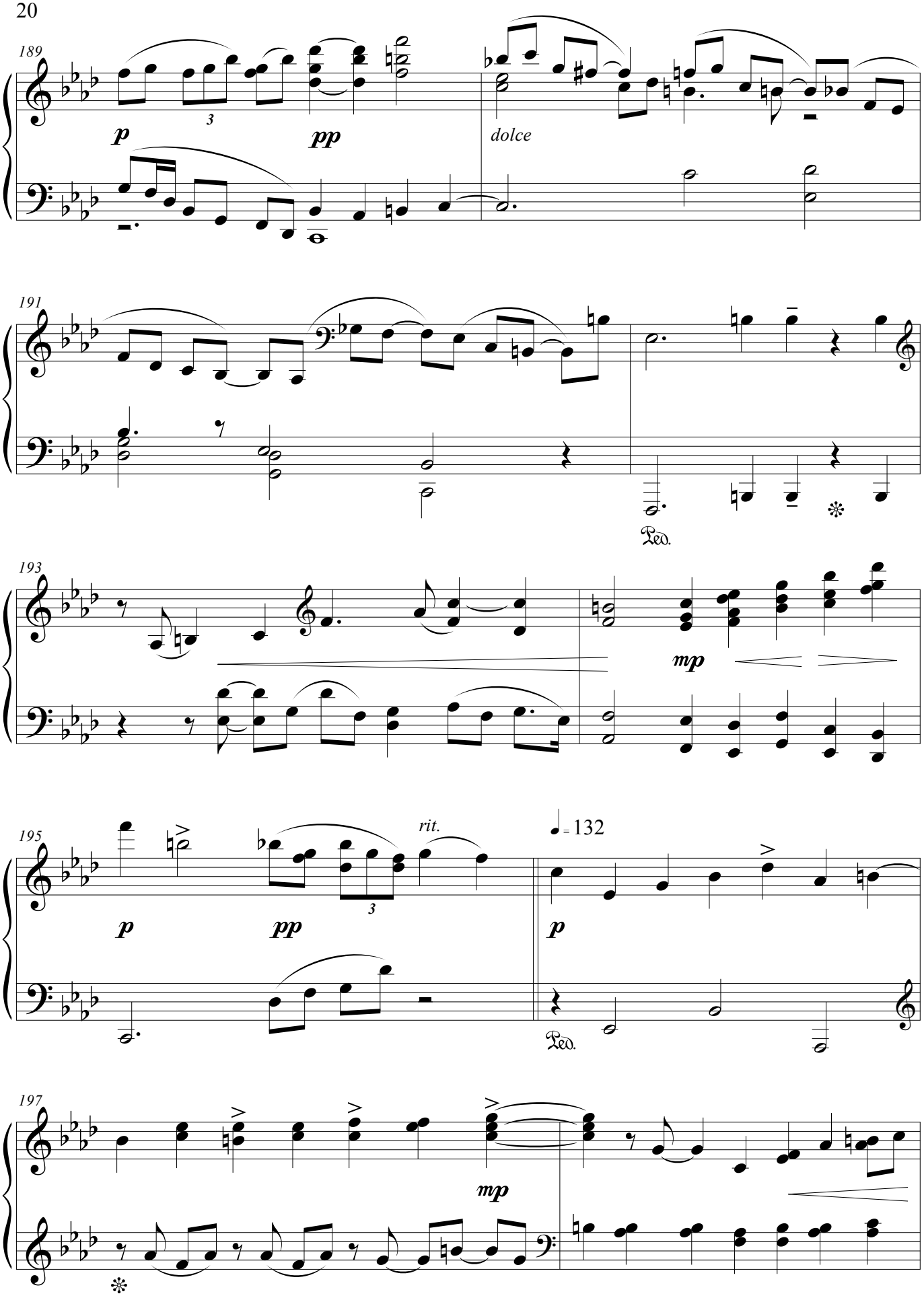

140
mp
f
142
ff
8va
p espress.
rit.
a tempo
145
f
p
mp
Ped.
147
Ped.
148
8va
rit.
a tempo
p
f
p
mf
Ped.
Ped.

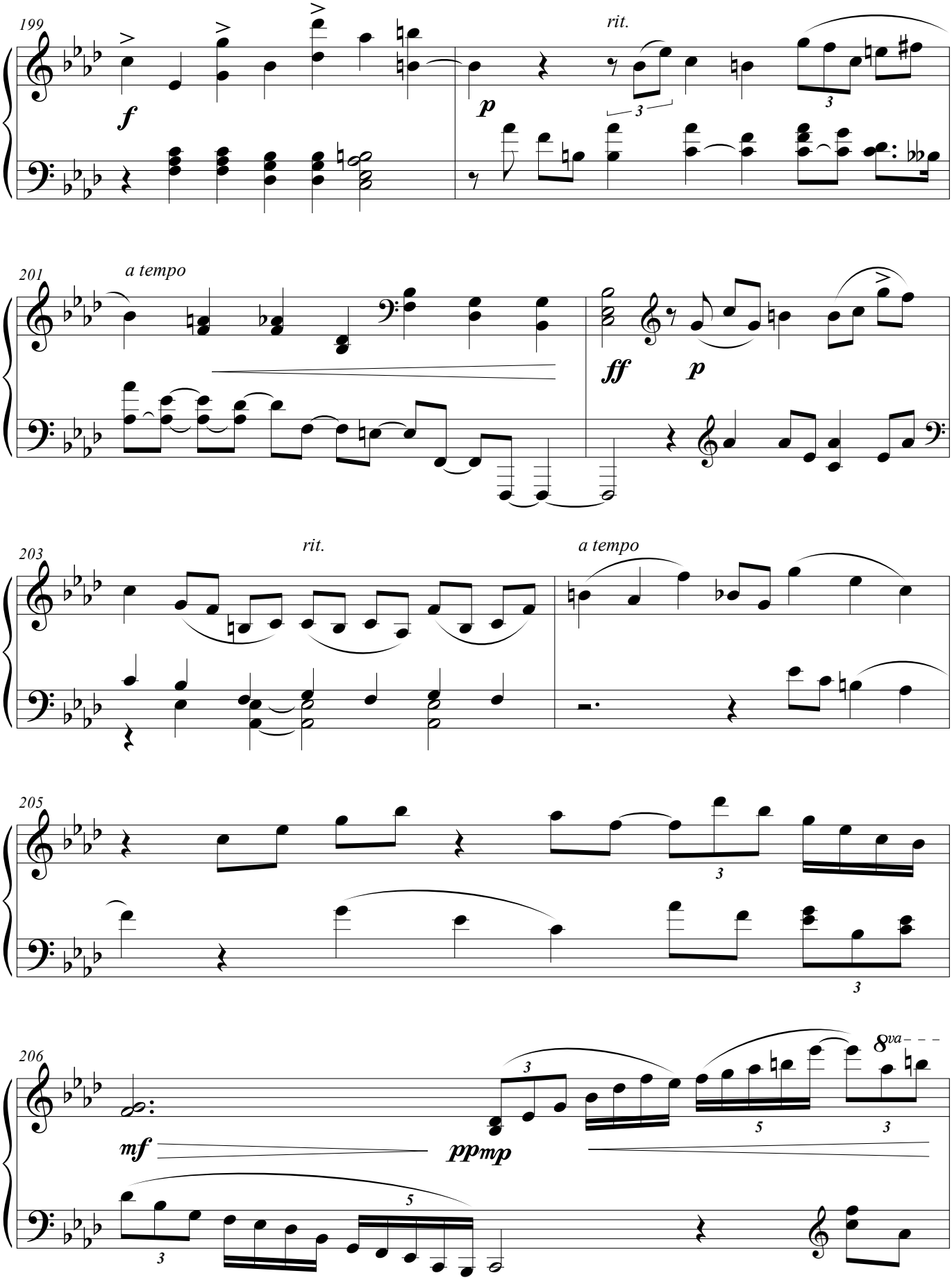

150
p
ff
Ped.
152
mp
ff
f
Ped.
Ped.
♩ = 132
154
ff
p
rit.
a tempo
157
f
p
159
pp
mf

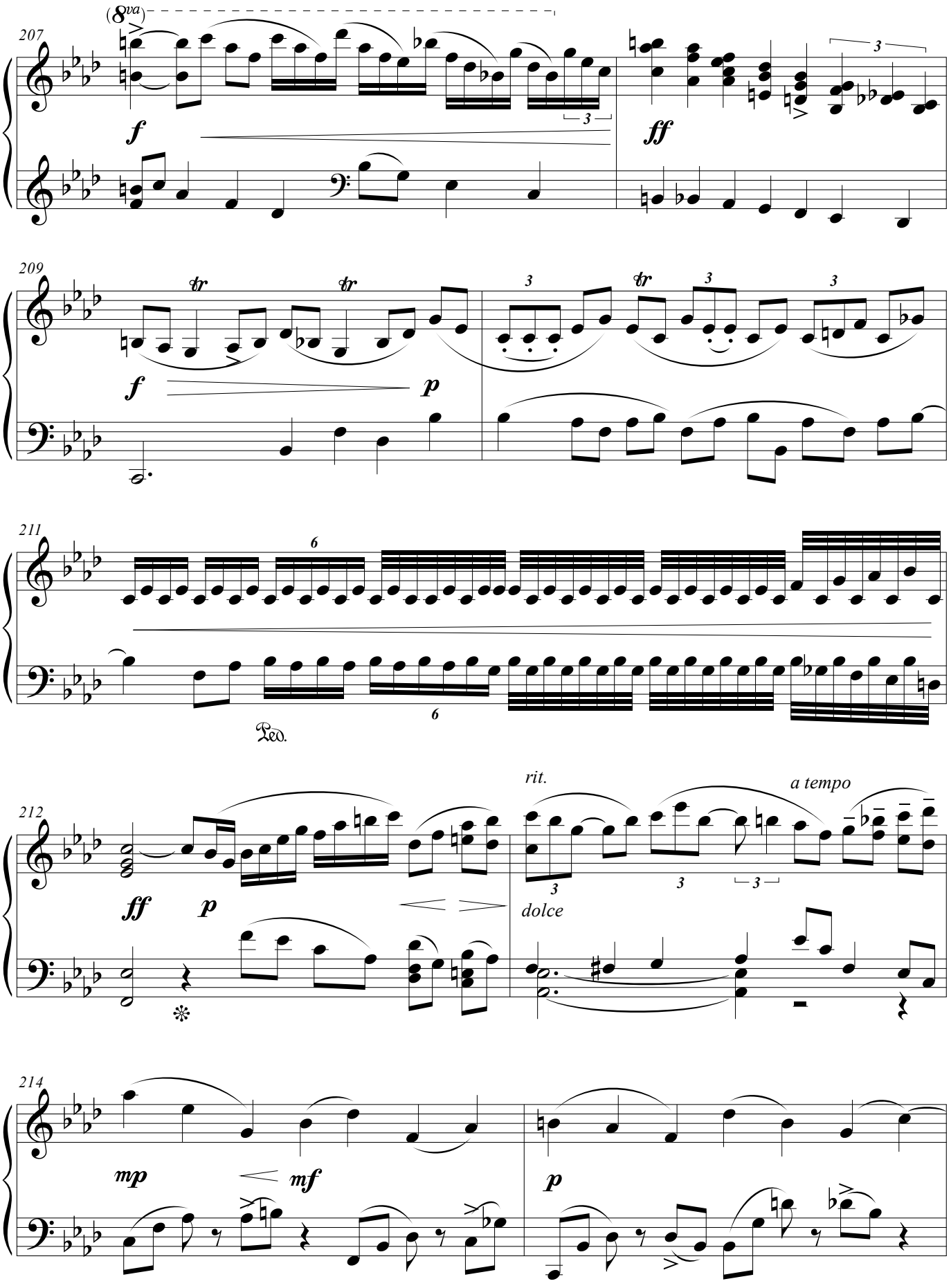

161
f
162
p
pp
Ped.
164
mp
f
166
p
rit.
espress.
168
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
p
pp

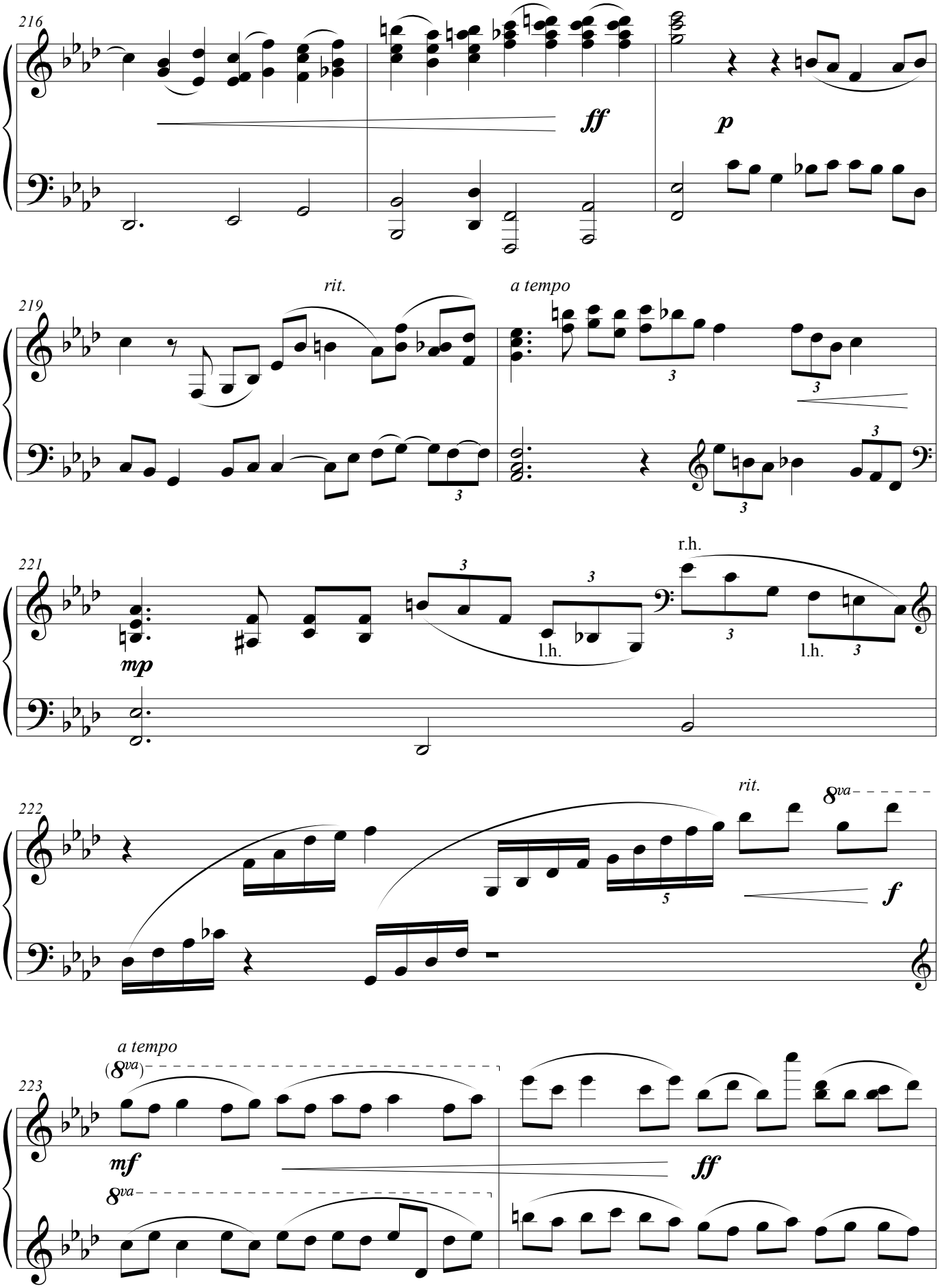

170
mf
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
172
fp
espress.
174
f
mp
f
p
176
pp
rit.
ff
Ped.
Ped.
178
a tempo
mp
p
rit.

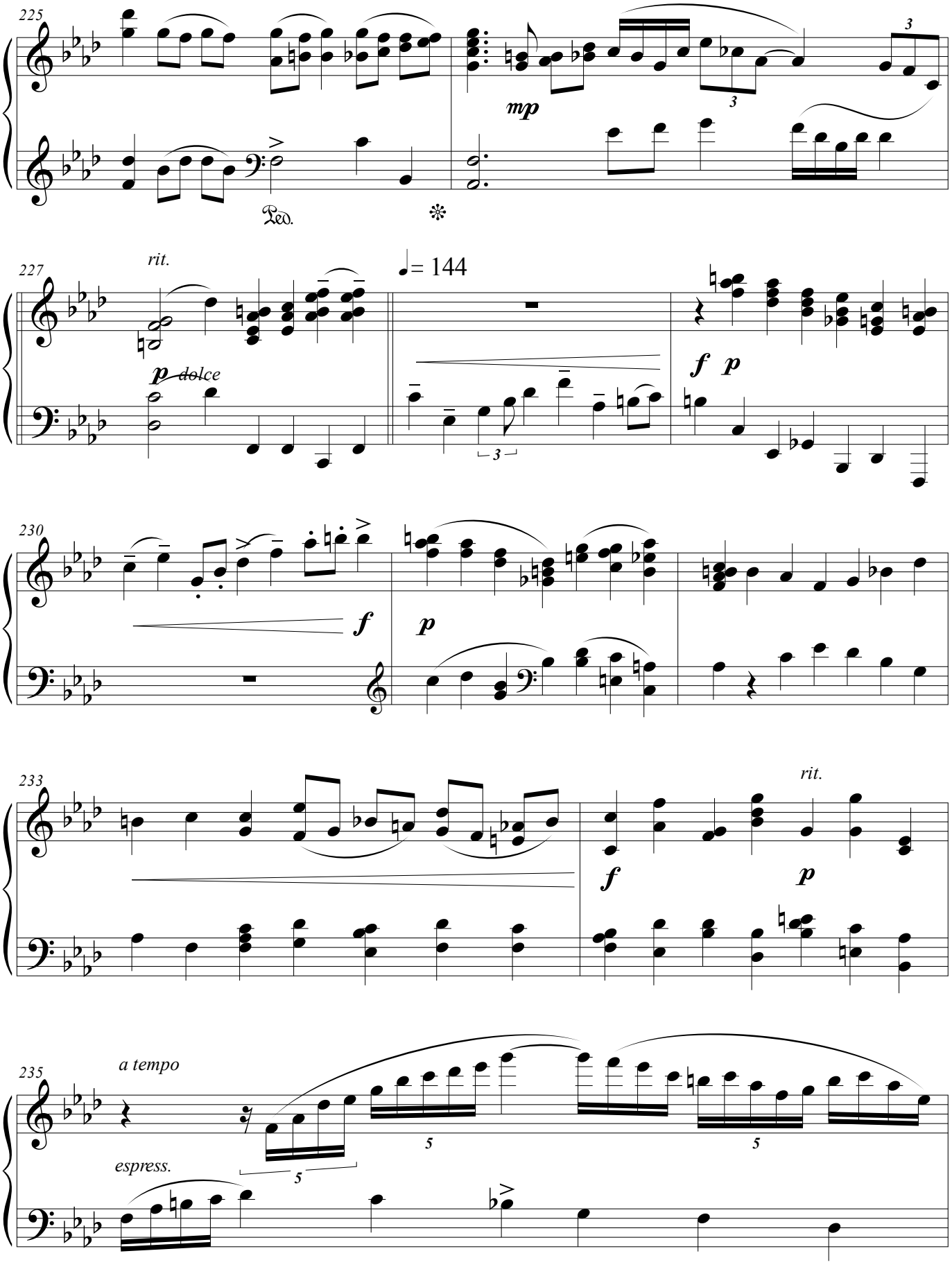

a tempo
179
mp
f
181
p
r.h.
183
rit.
185
= 76
sf
p
Ped.
187
espress.
mf

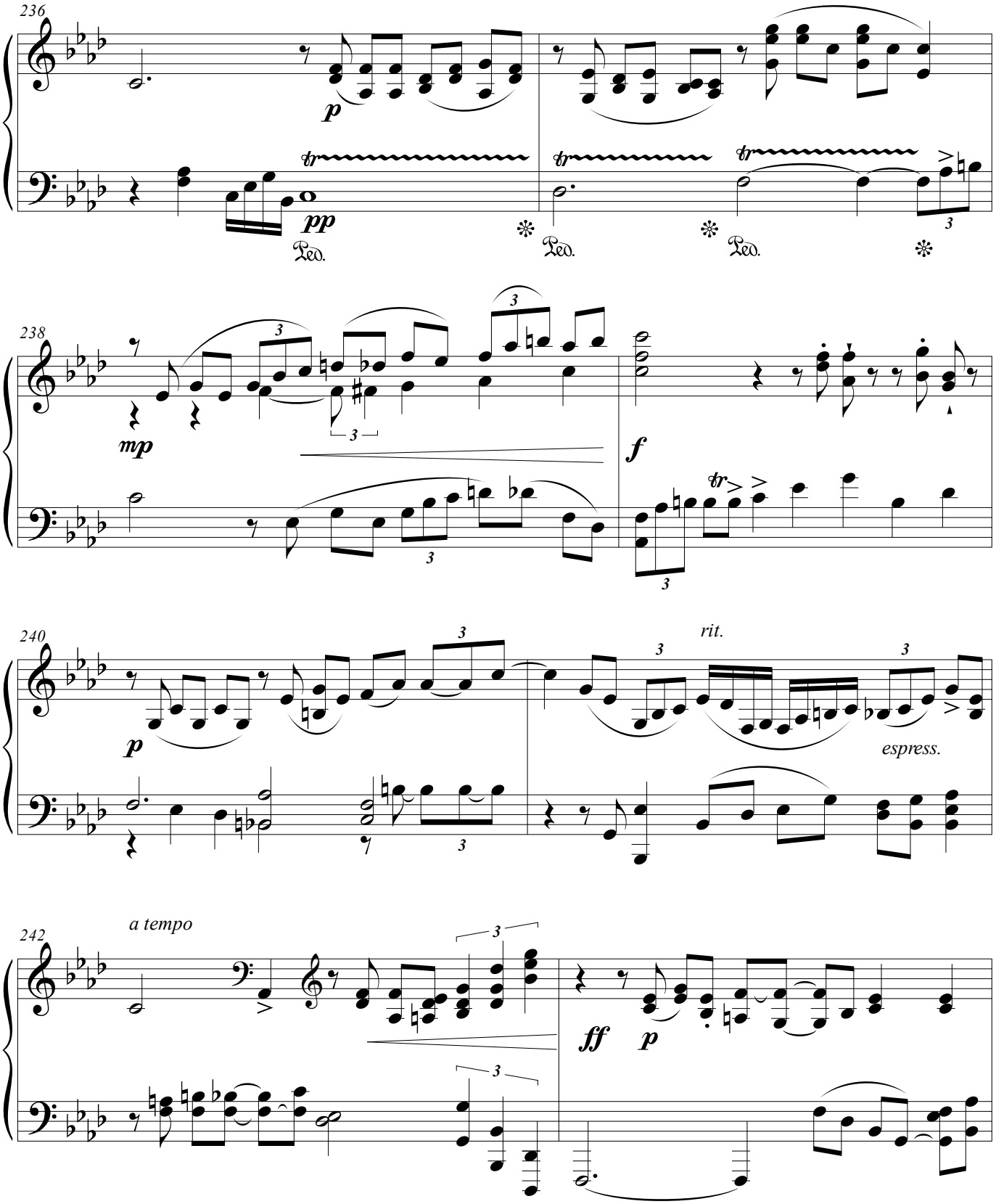

189
p
3
pp
dolce
191
Ped.
193
mp
195
rit.
♩= 132
p
pp
3
p
Ped.
197
mp

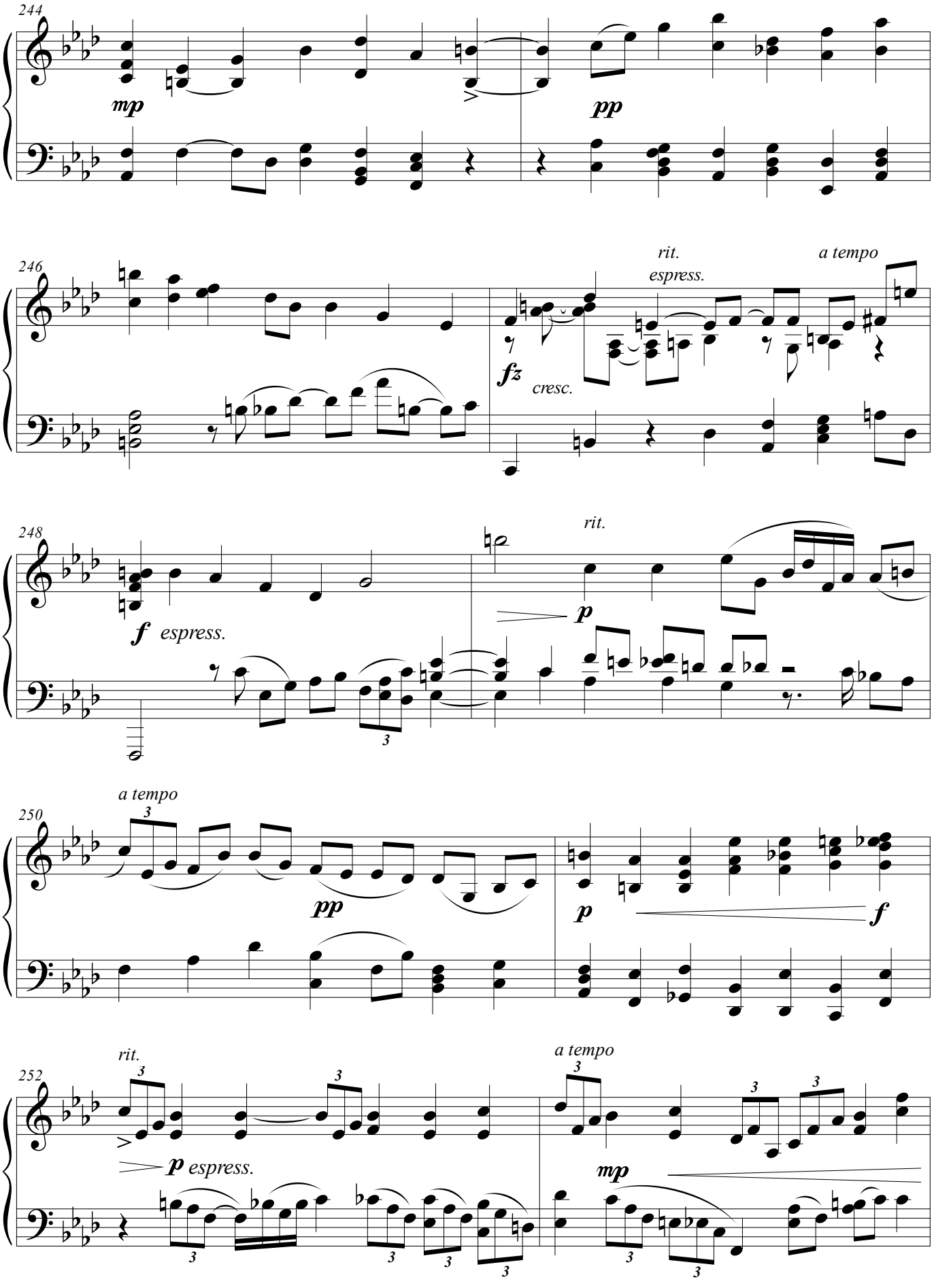

199
f
p
rit.
3
3
201
a tempo
ff
p
203
rit.
a tempo
205
3
3
206
mf
ppmp
3
5
3
8va
3
5

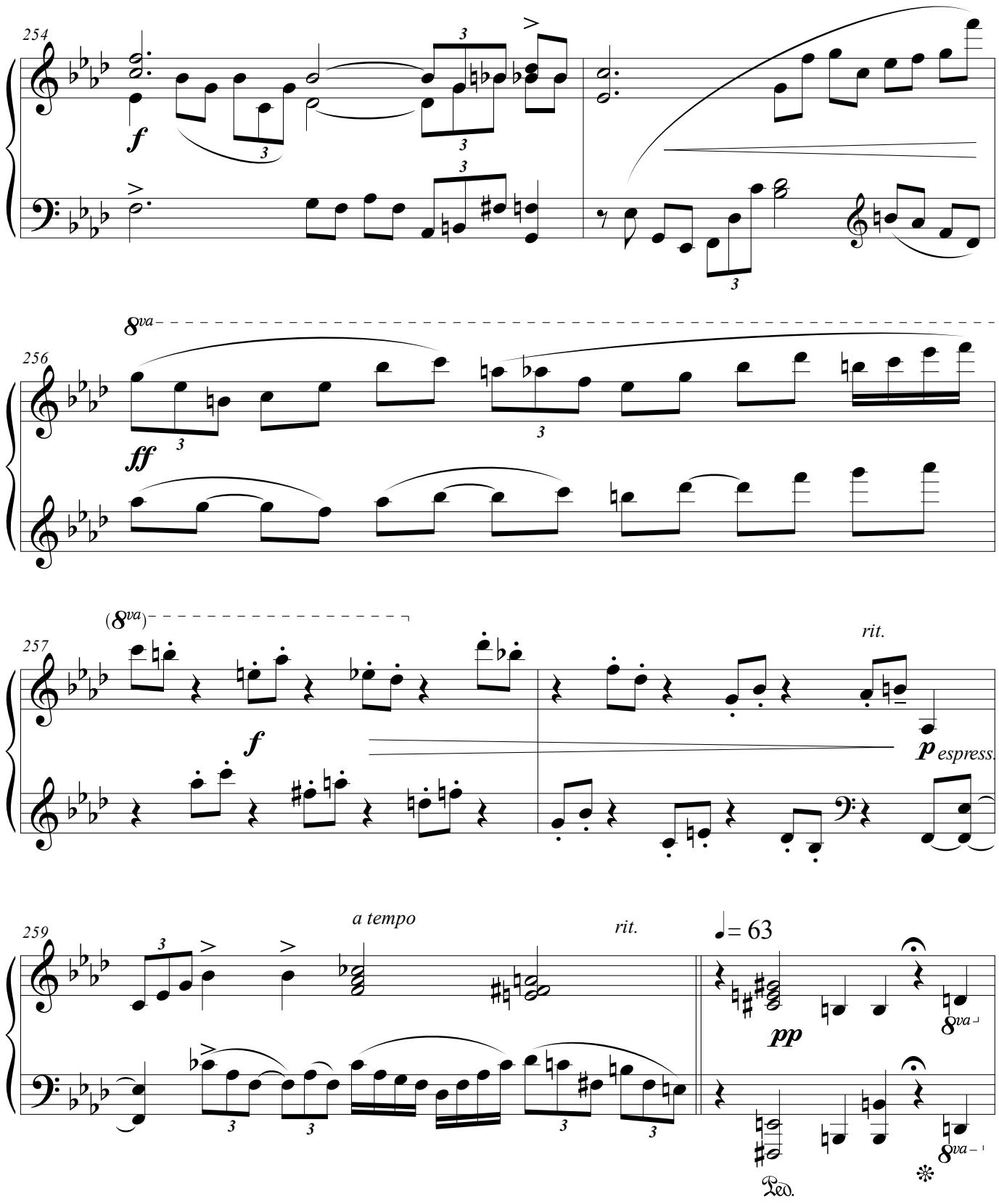

(8va)
207
f
ff
209
tr
tr
f
p
211
6
6
Ped.
212
rit.
a tempo
ff
p
dolce
214
mp
mf
p

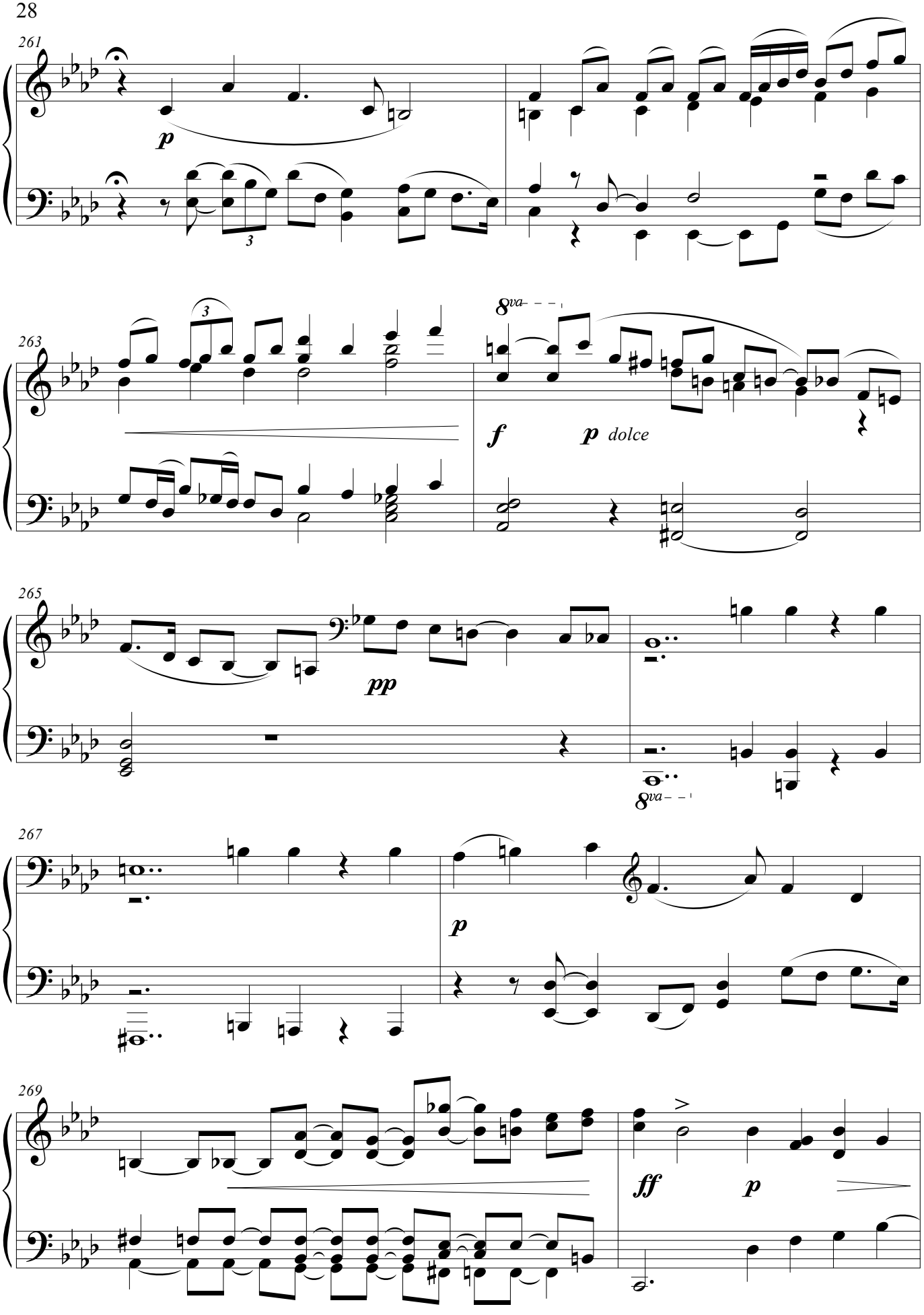

216
ff
p
219
rit.
a tempo
3
221
mp
r.h.
l.h.
l.h.
222
rit.
8va
f
5
223
a tempo
(8va)
mf
ff
8va

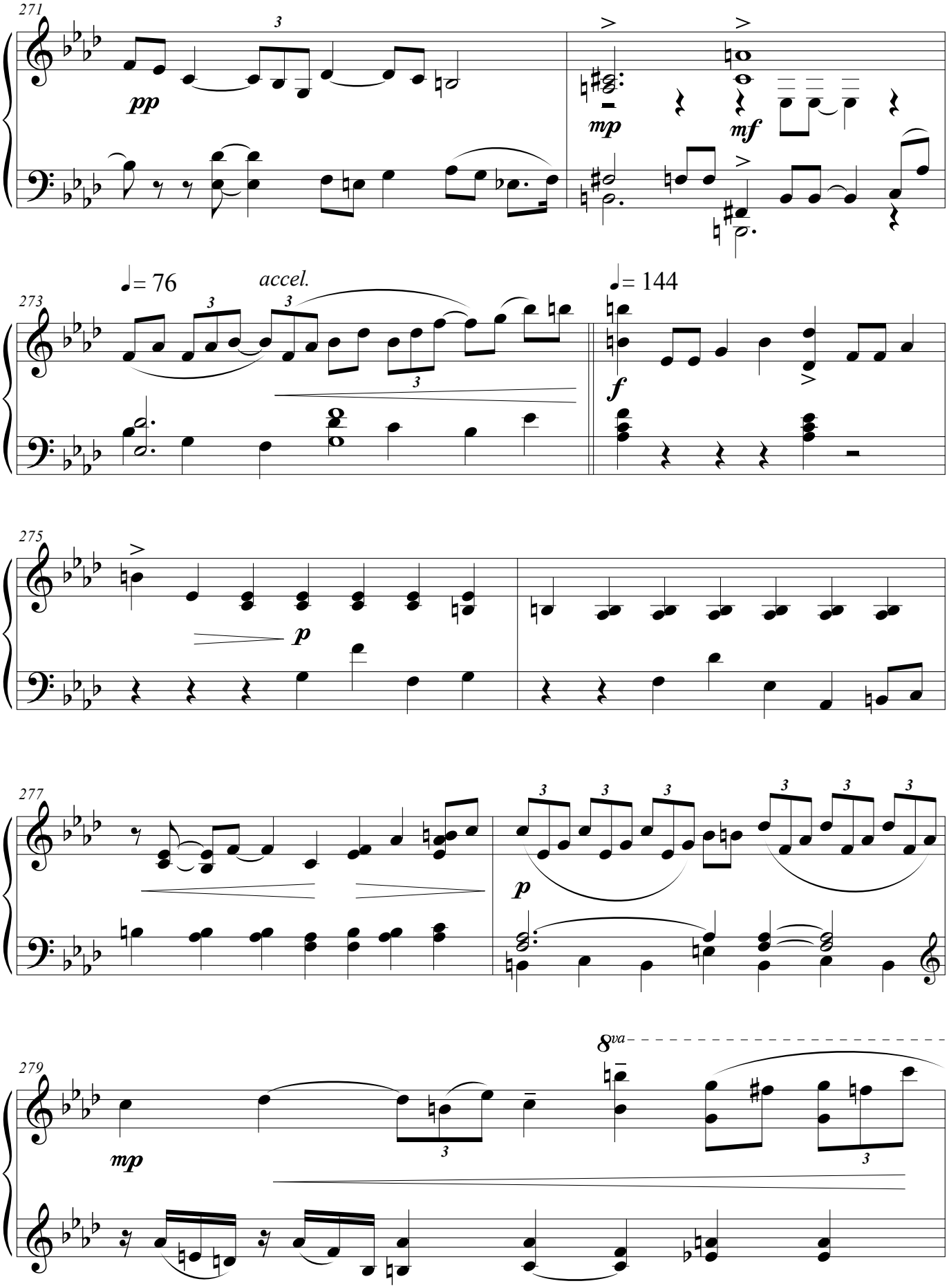

225
mp
Ped.
227
rit.
♩= 144
p dolce
f p
230
f
p
233
rit.
f
p
235
a tempo
espress.

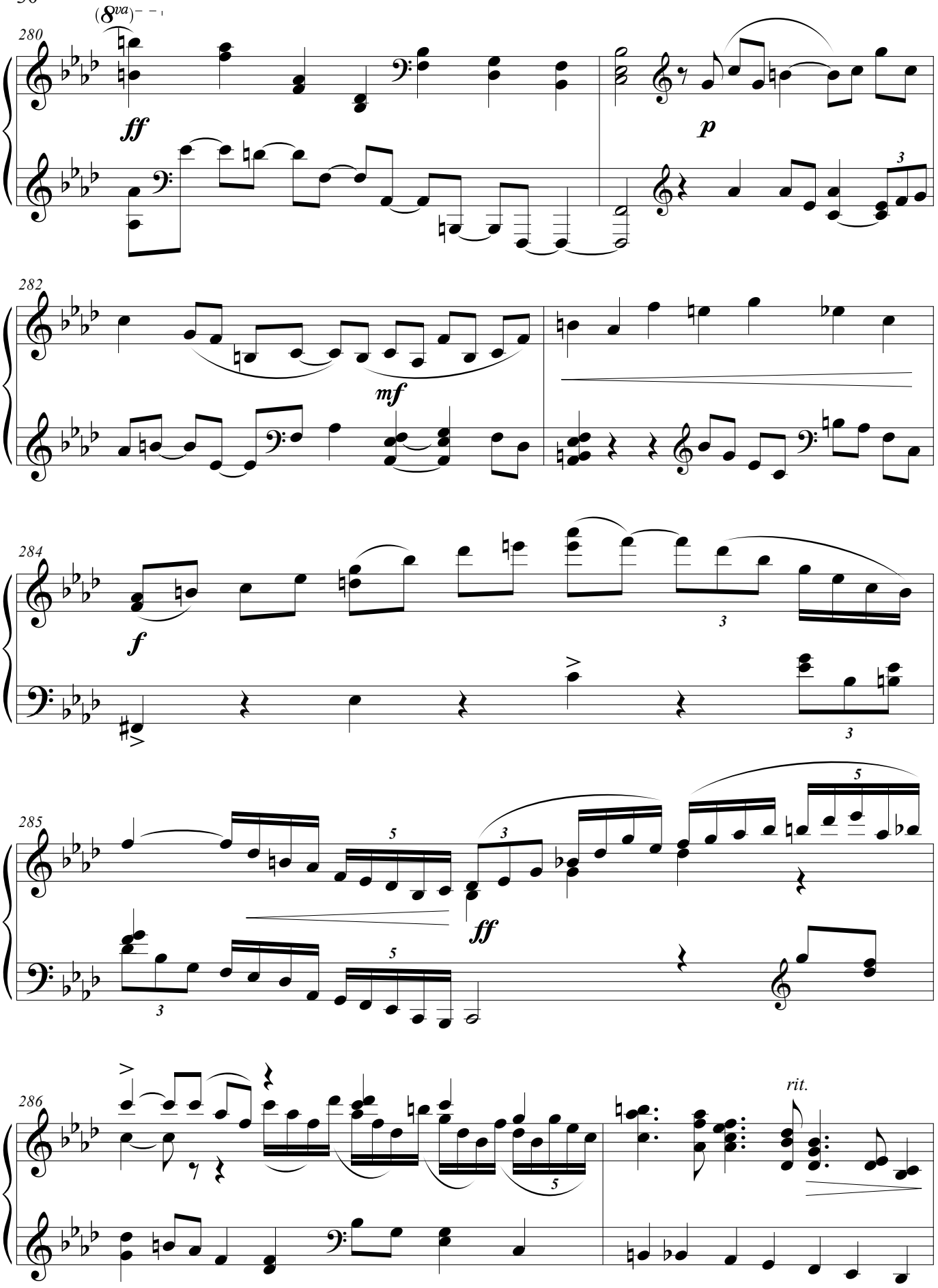

236
p
pp
tr
Ped.
238
mp
f
240
rit.
espress.
242
a tempo
ff
p

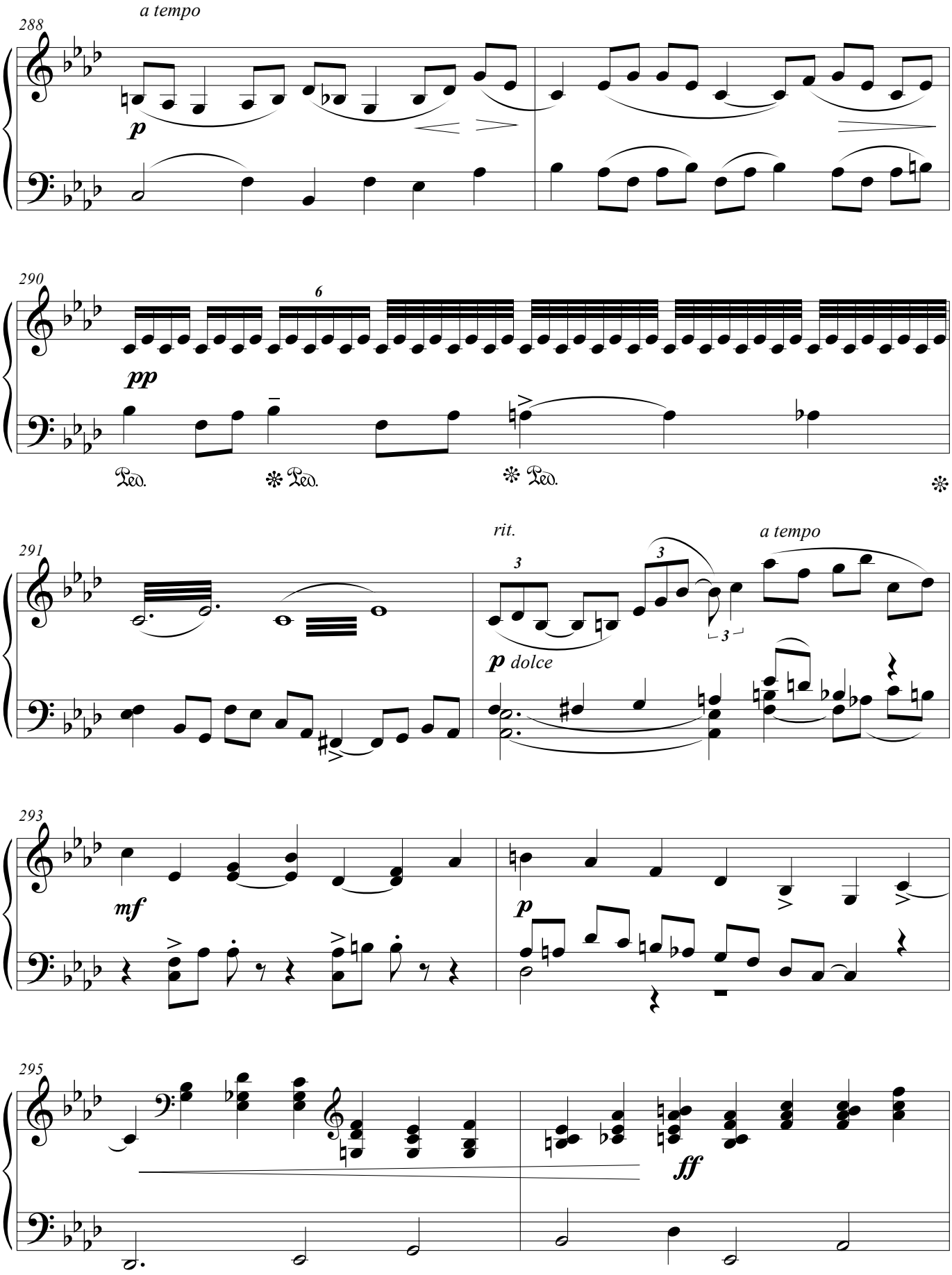

244
mp
pp
246
rit.
espress.
a tempo
fz
cresc.
248
rit.
f espress.
p
250
a tempo
pp
p
f
252
rit.
p espress.
a tempo
mp

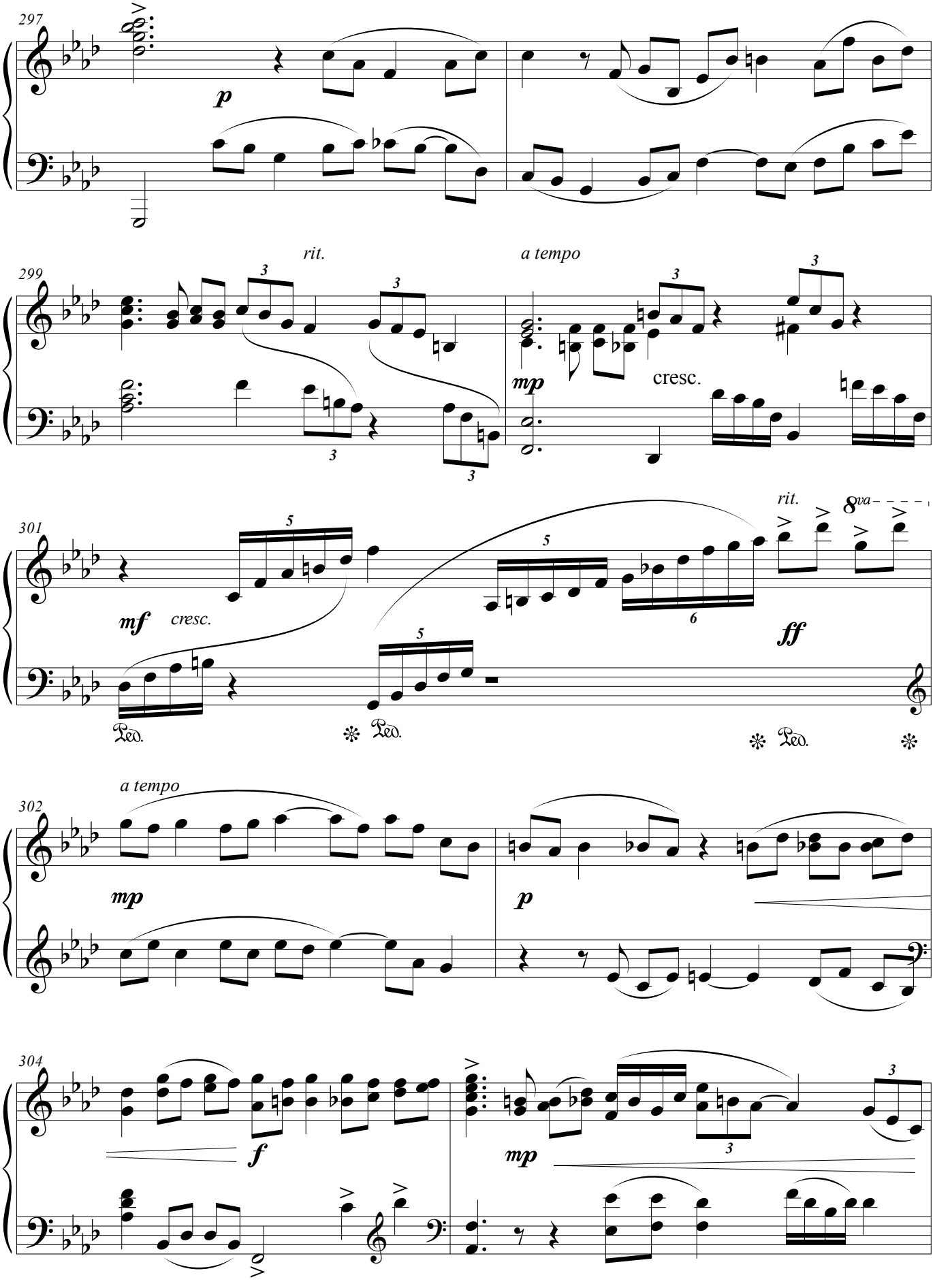

254
f
8va
256
ff
(8va)
257
f
rit.
p espress.
259
a tempo
rit.
♩= 63
pp
8va
Ped.
8va

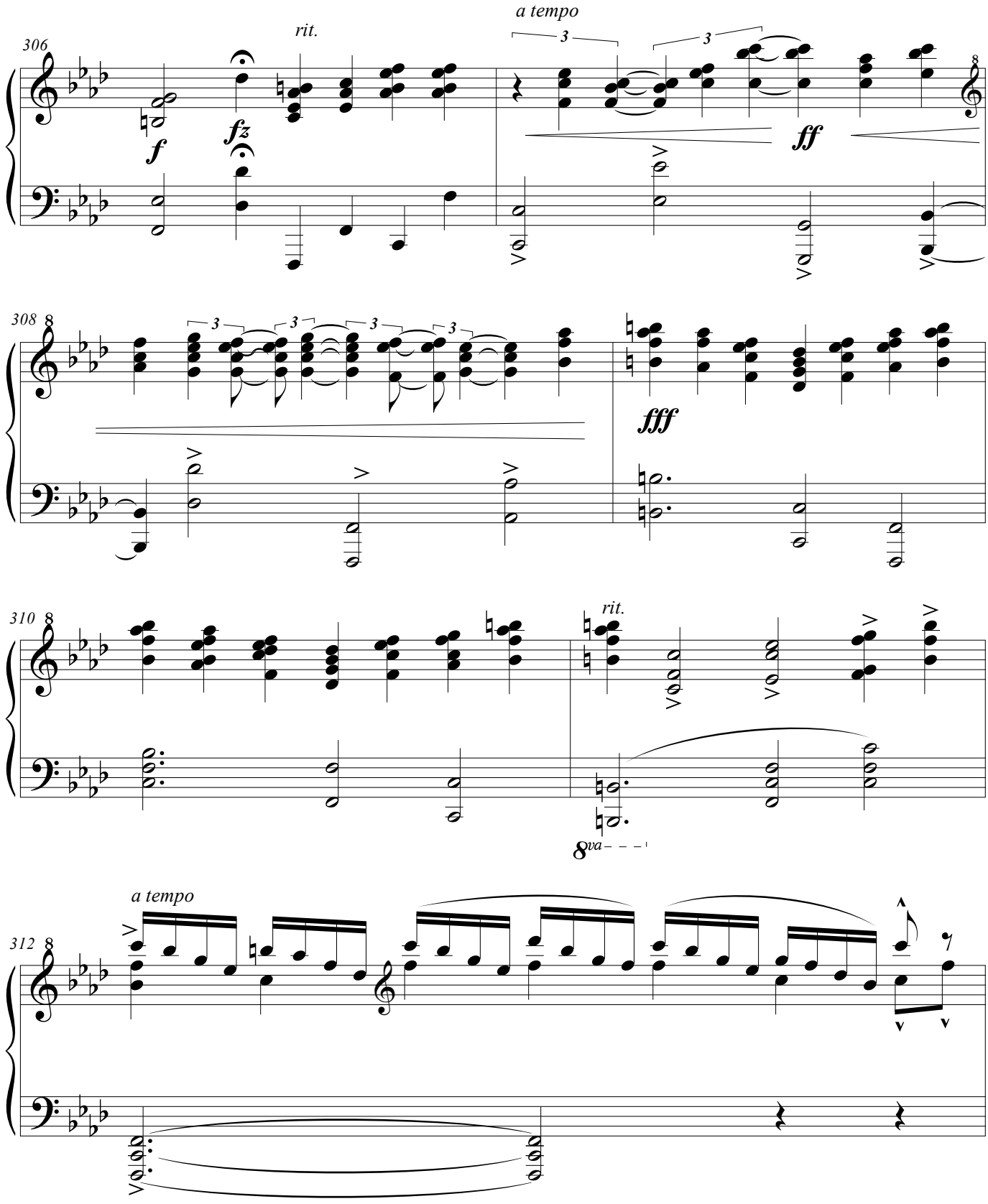

261
p
3
263
3
8va
f
p dolce
265
pp
8va
267
p
269
ff
p

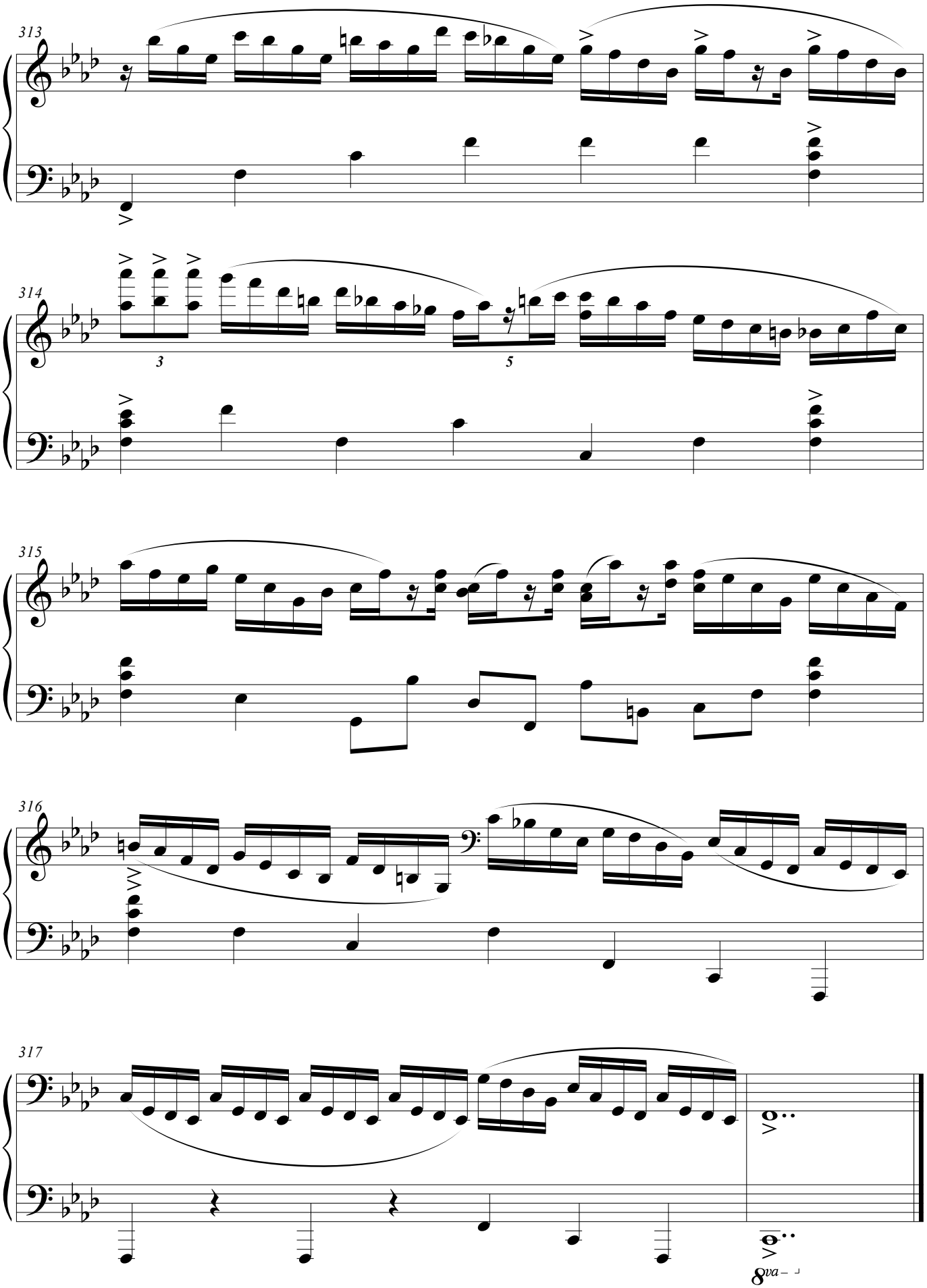

271
pp
mp
mf
273
♩= 76
accel.
♩= 144
f
275
p
277
p
279
mp
8va


(8va)
280
ff
p
3
282
mf
284
f
3
3
285
5
3
ff
5
5
3
286
rit.
5


a tempo
288
p
290
6
pp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
291
rit.
3
3
3
a tempo
p dolce
293
mf
p
295
ff


297
p
299
rit.
a tempo
mp
cresc.
301
mf
cresc.
rit.
8va
ff
Ped.
302
a tempo
mp
p
304
f
mp


306
rit.
a tempo
f
fz
ff
308
fff
310
rit.
8va
312
a tempo


313
314
3
5
315
316
317
8va