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.

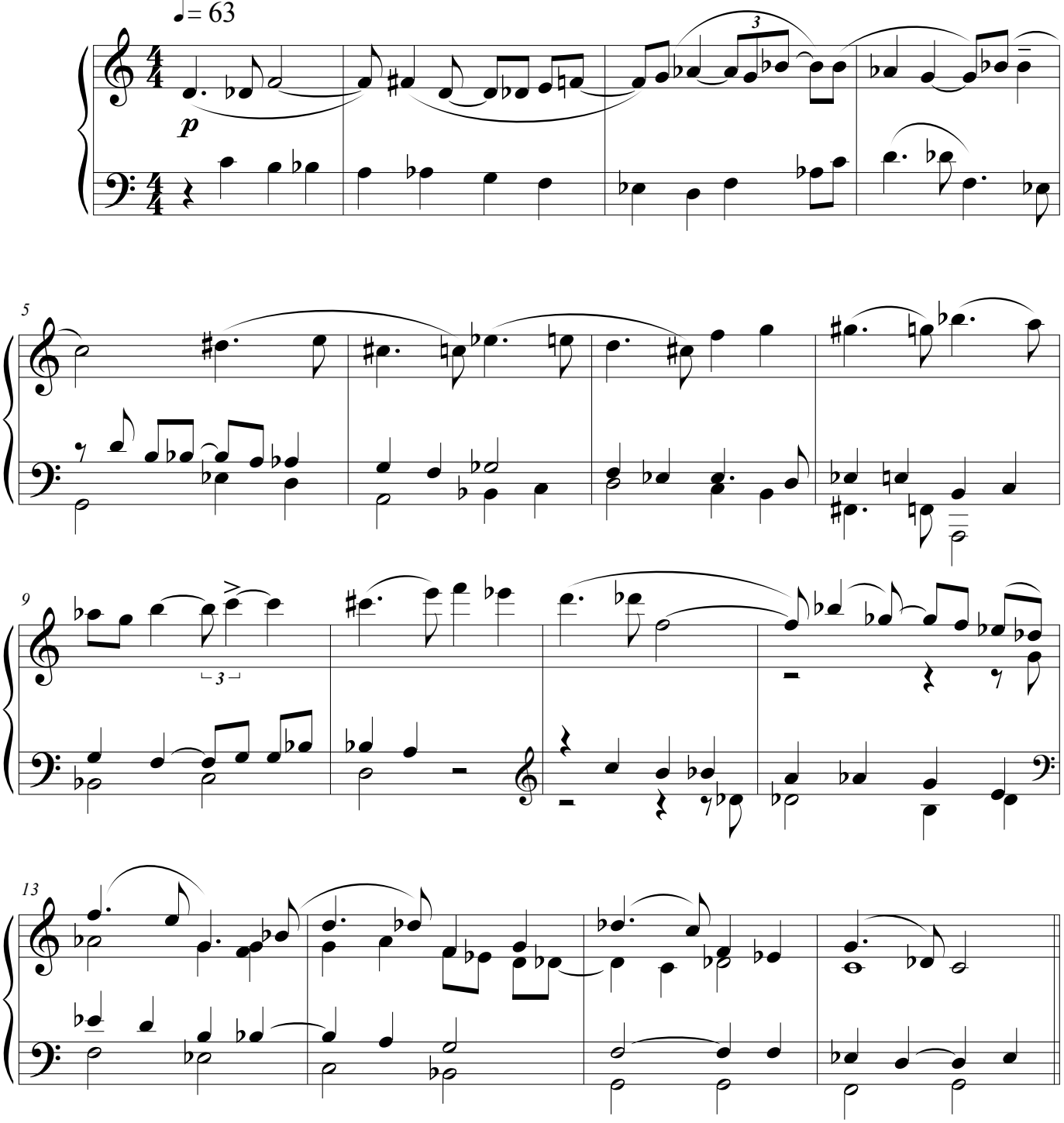
The two parts of "Ecstasis: Prelude and Variations for Piano" refer respectively to the allure of stasis and the allure of ec-stasis. The Prelude is both static and cyclical; its slow revolutions present a single extended melody without alteration but from different points of view. The Variations seek 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.

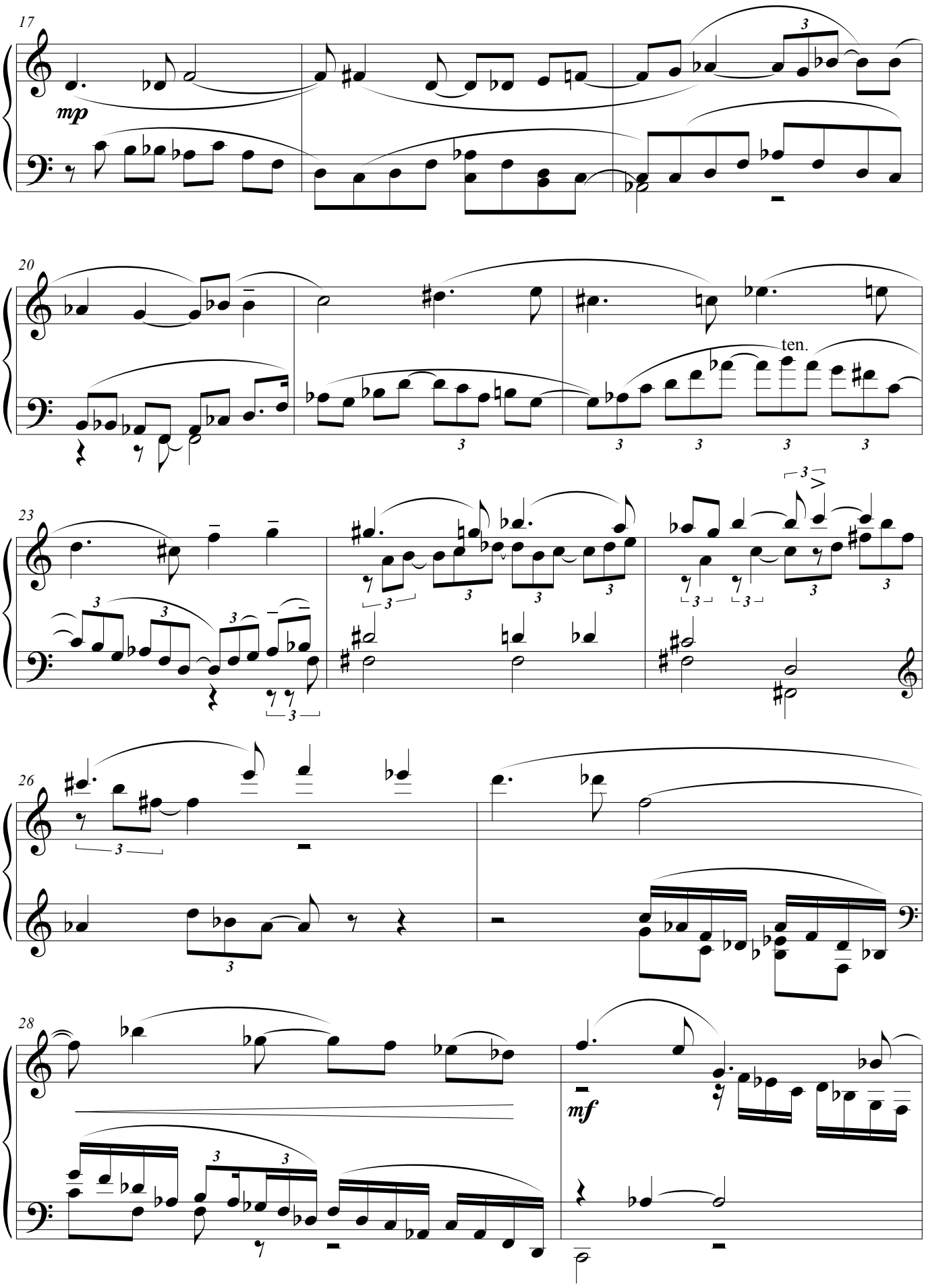
Ecstasis

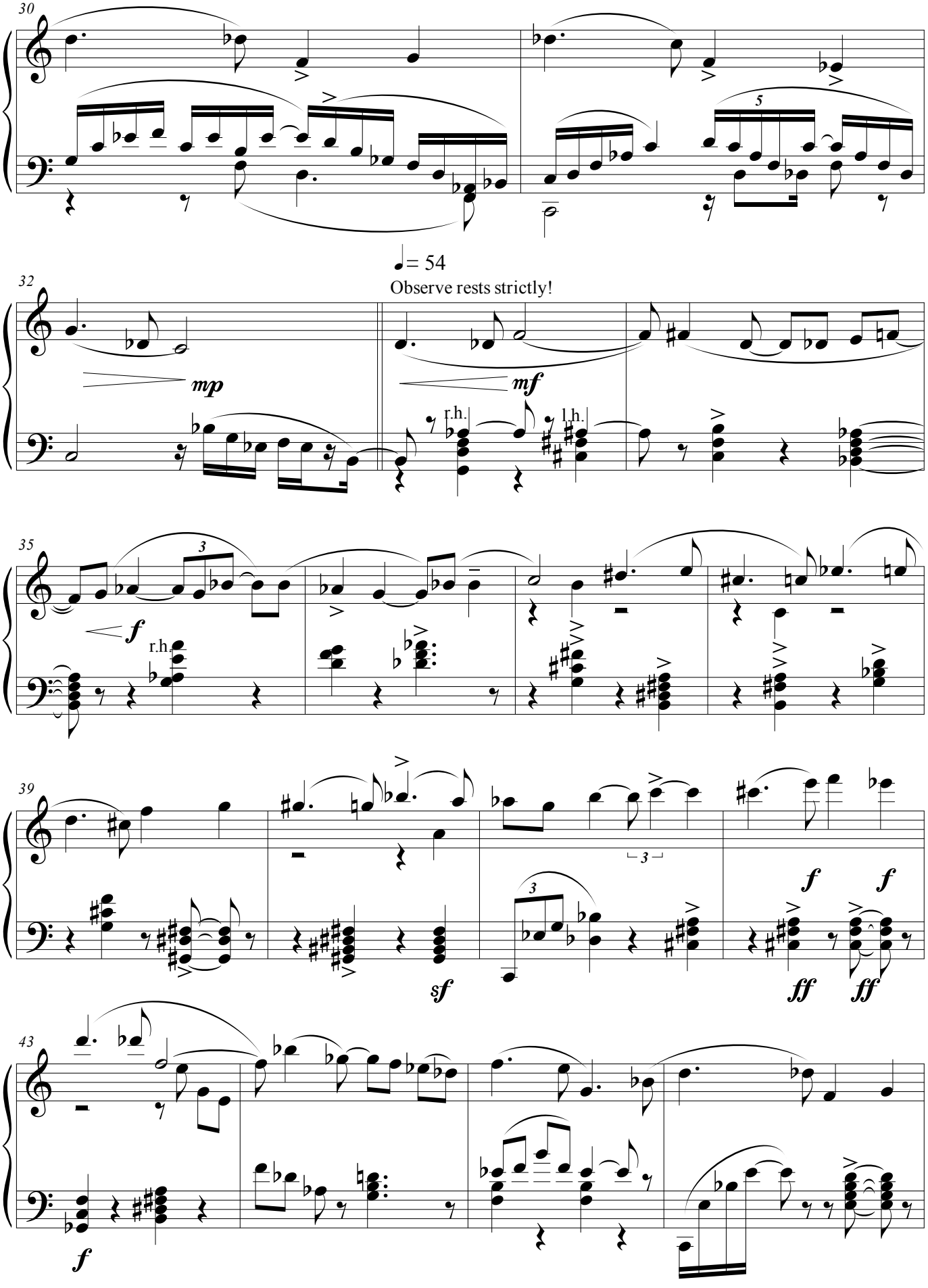
Lawrence Kramer

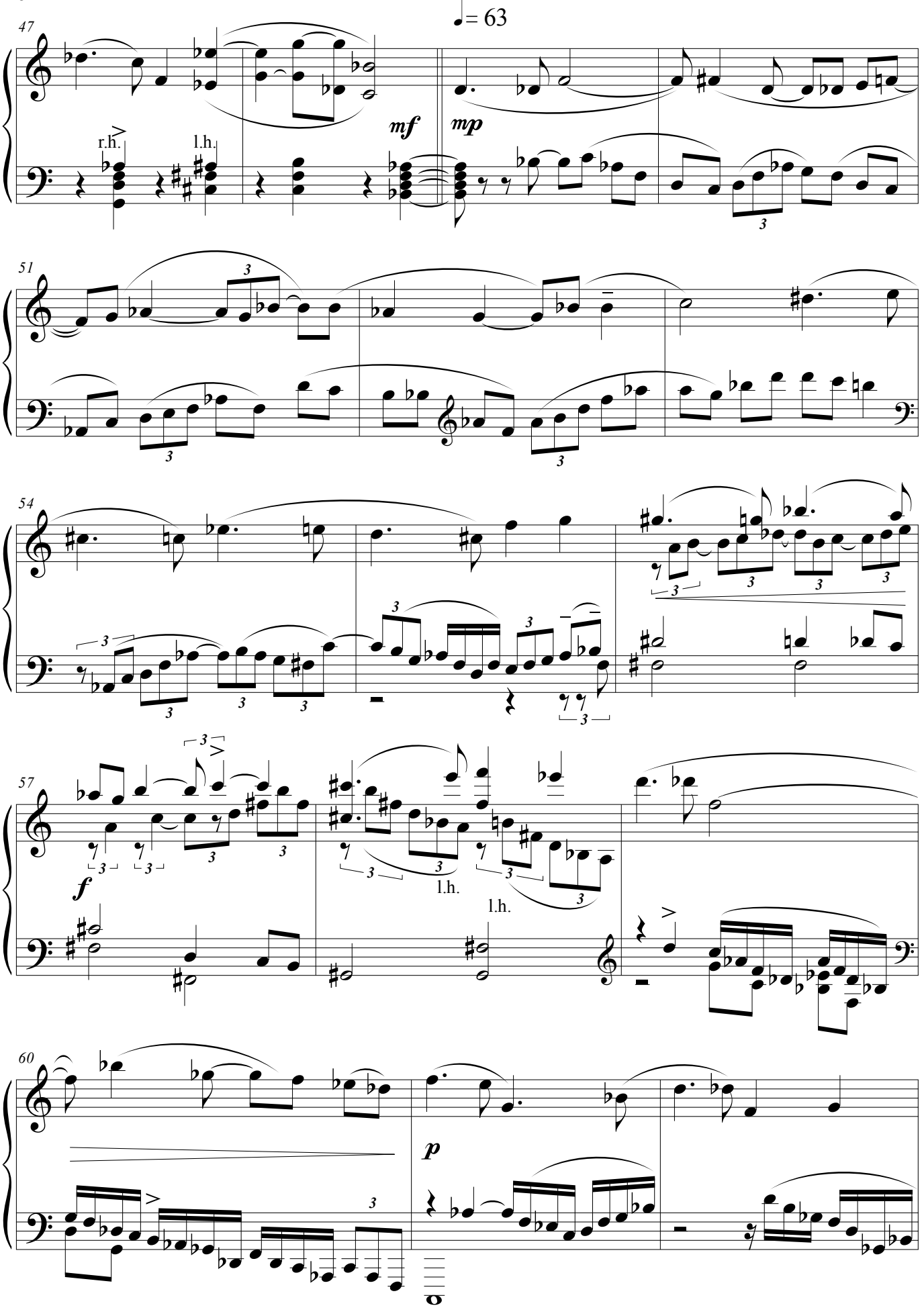
Prelude

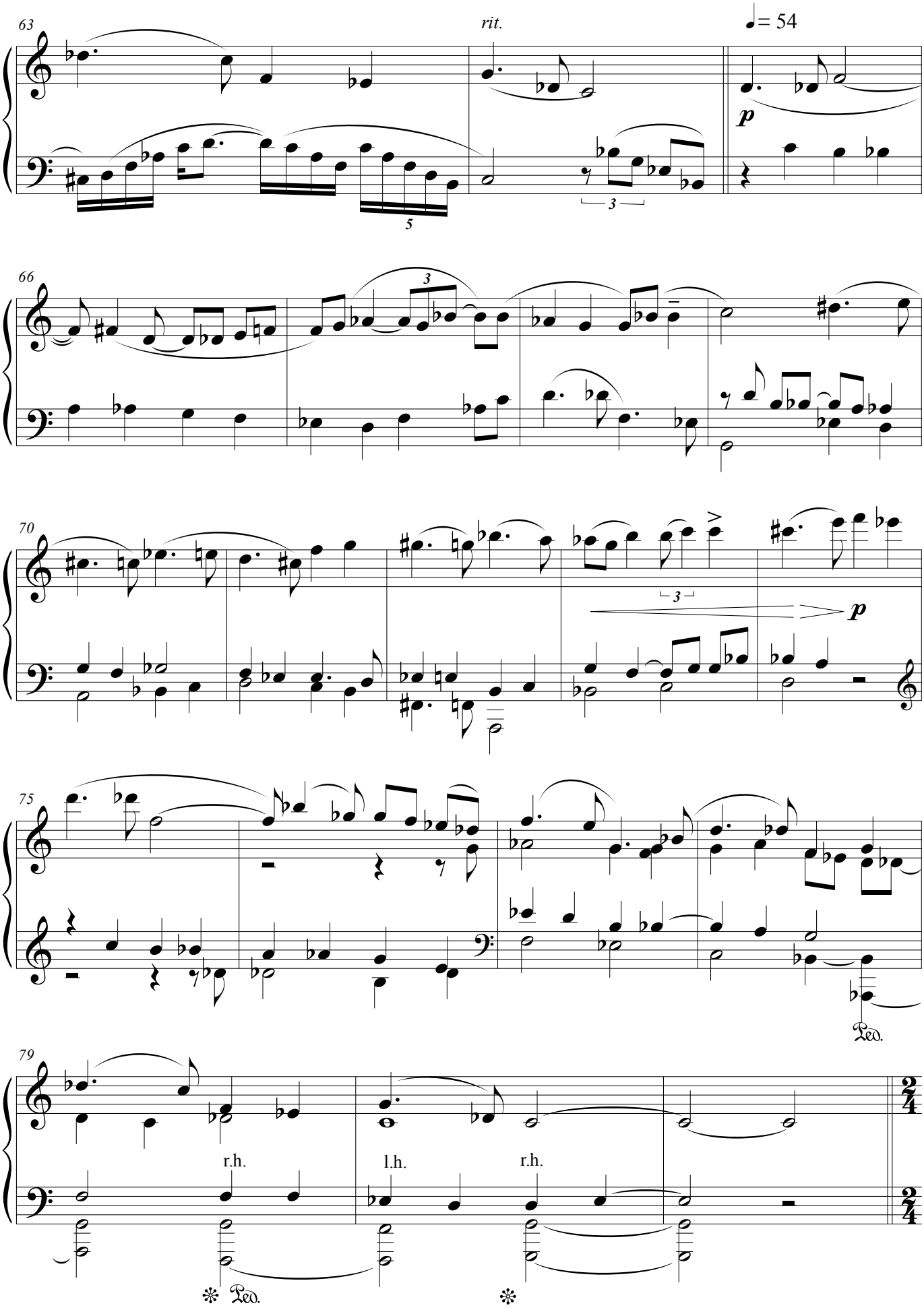


© 2007

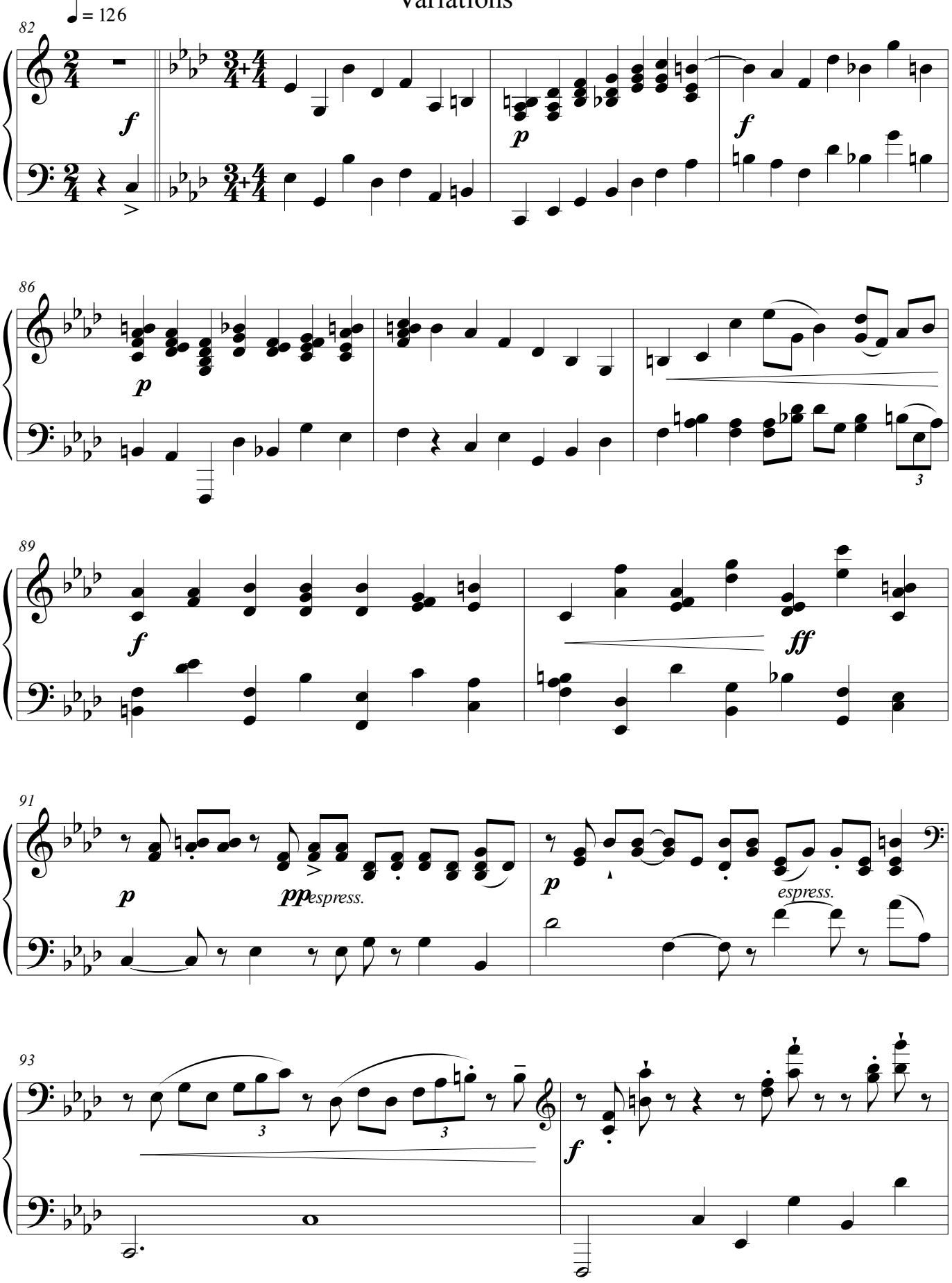

17
mp
20
ten.
23
26
28
mf

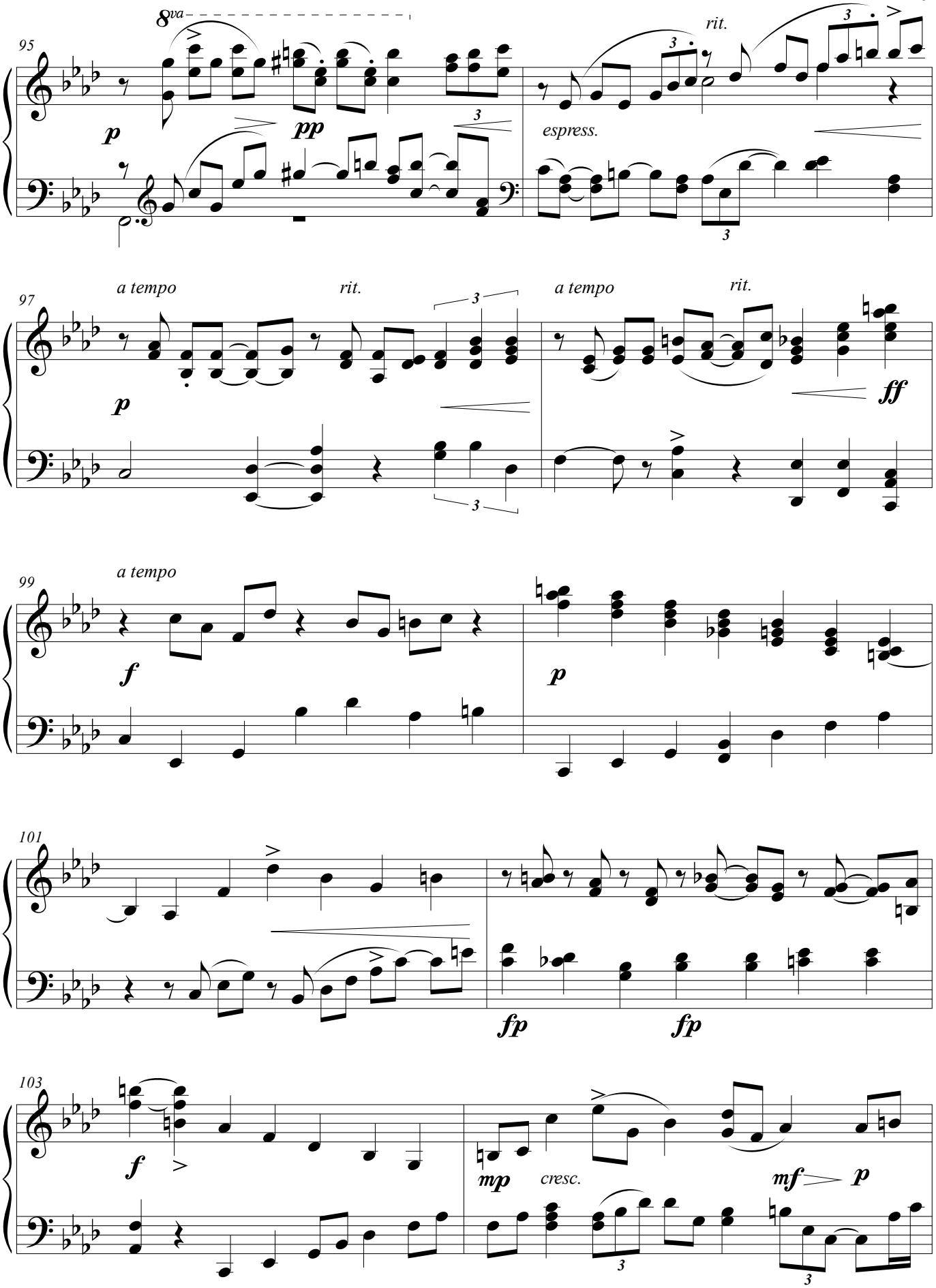

30
32
♩= 54
Observe rests strictly!
mp
mf
r.h.
l.h.
35
f
r.h.
39
sf
f
f
ff
ff
43
f

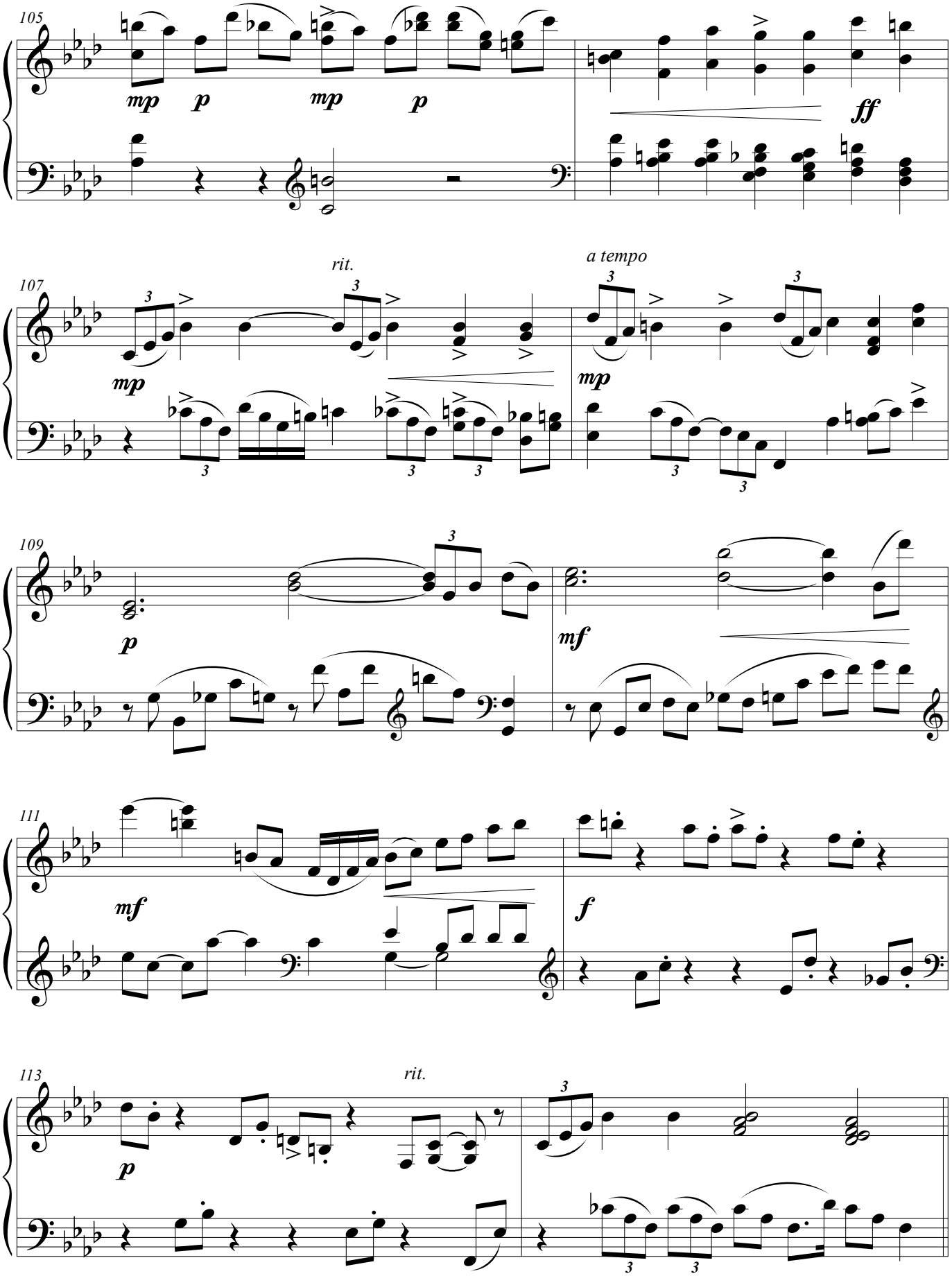

♩= 63
47
mf
mp
r.h.
l.h.
51
54
57
f
l.h.
l.h.
60
p

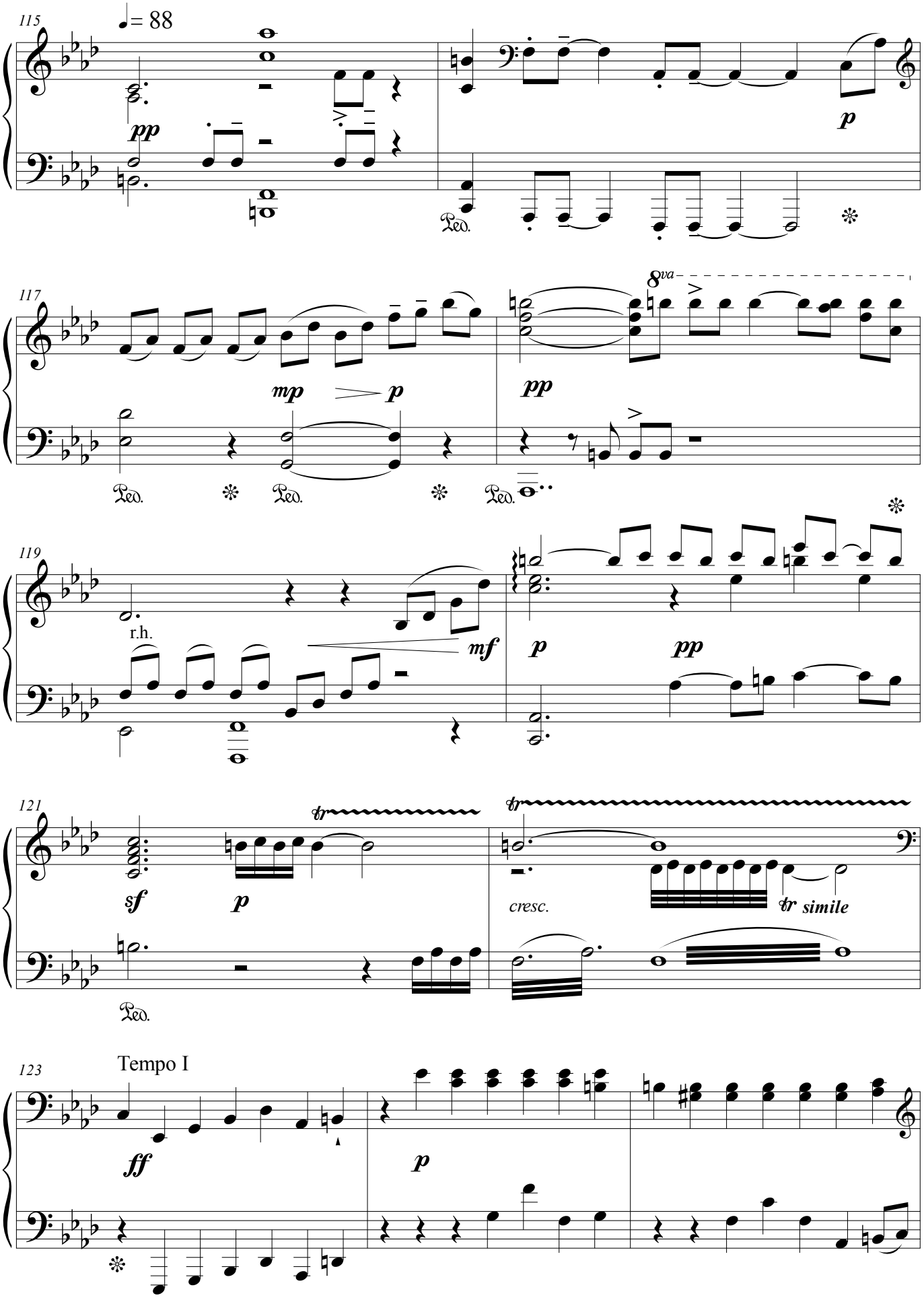

63
rit.
♩= 54
p
66
3
70
3
p
75
Ped.
79
r.h.
l.h.
r.h.
Ped.

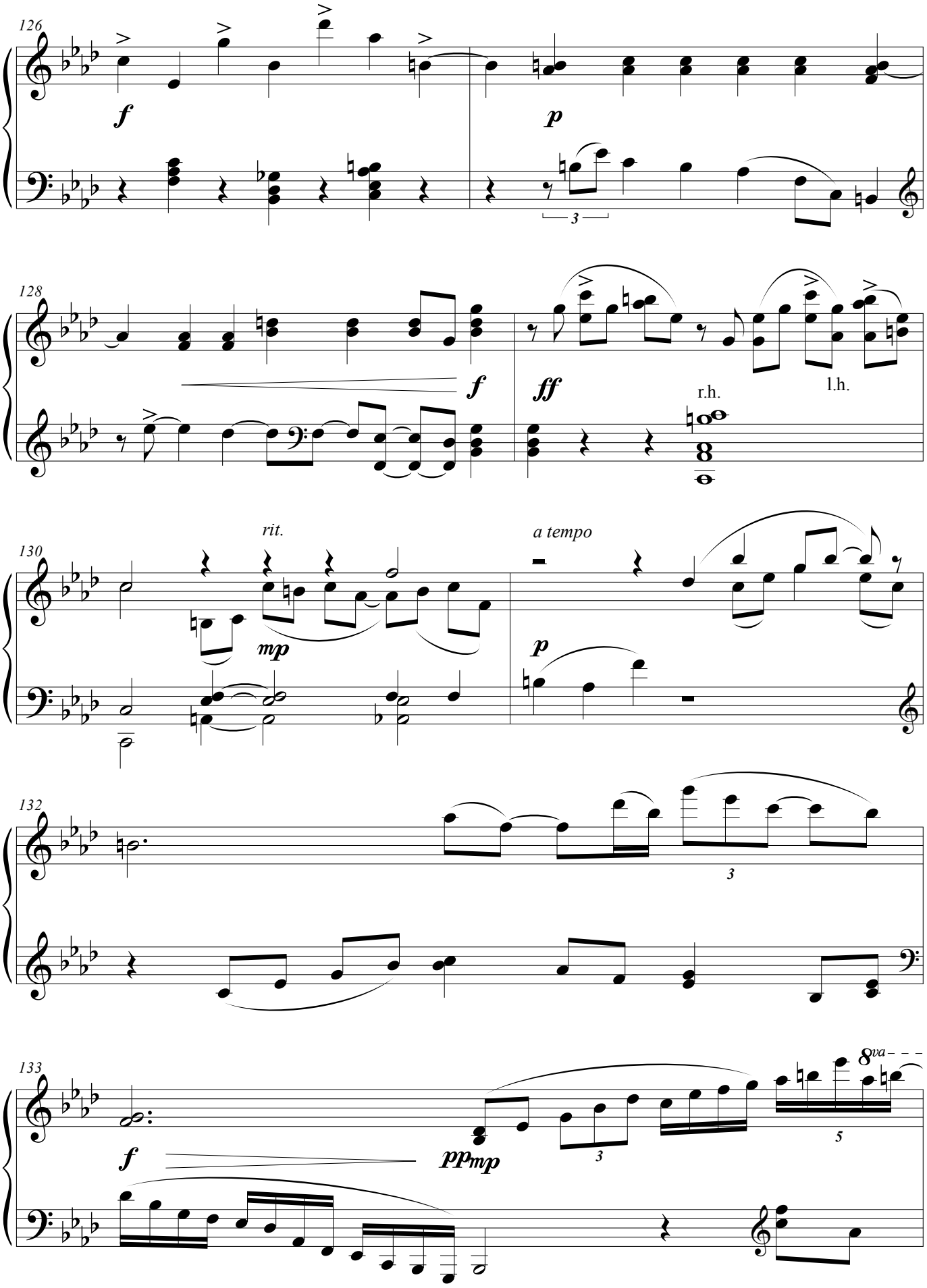
Variations

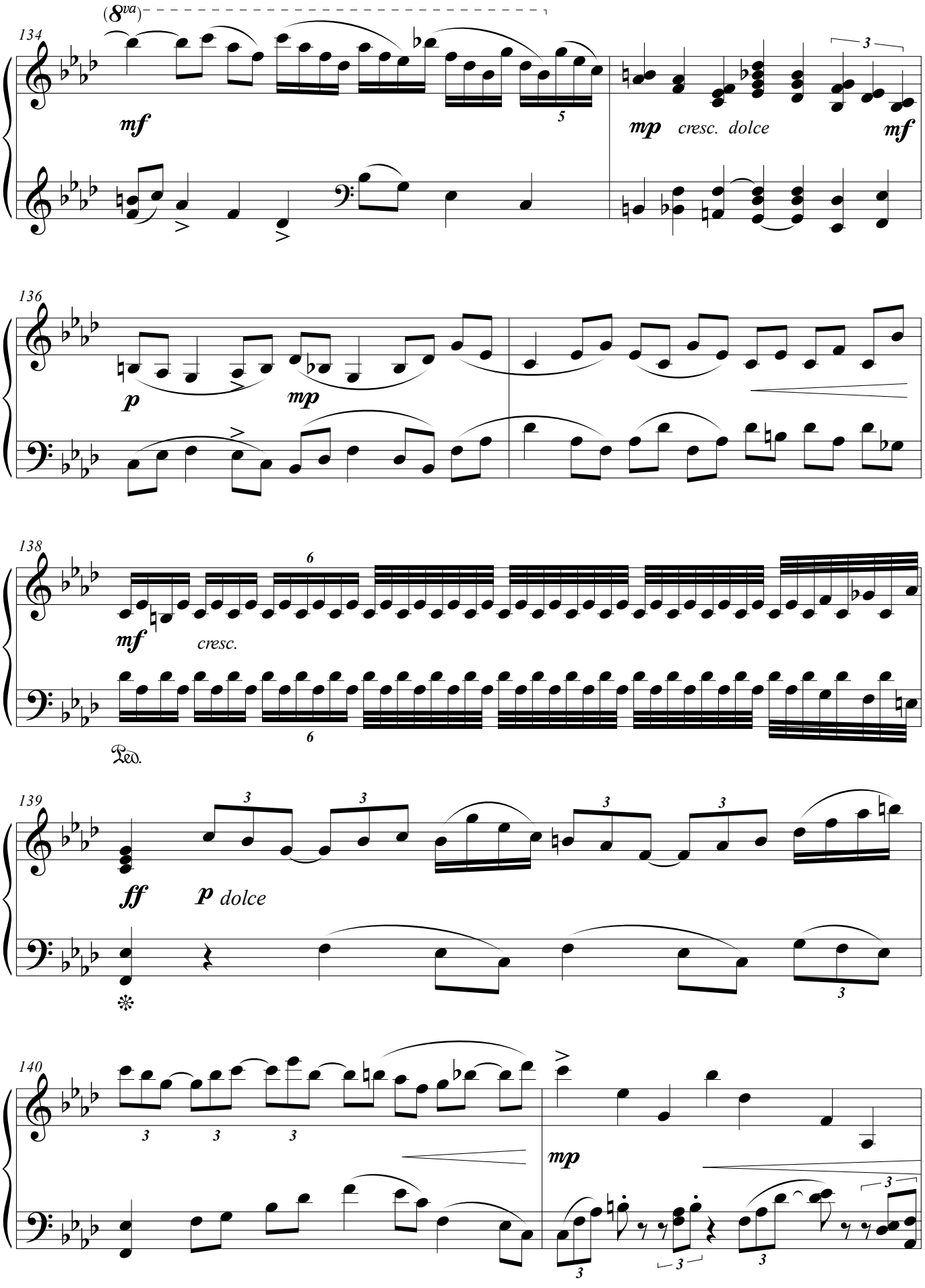


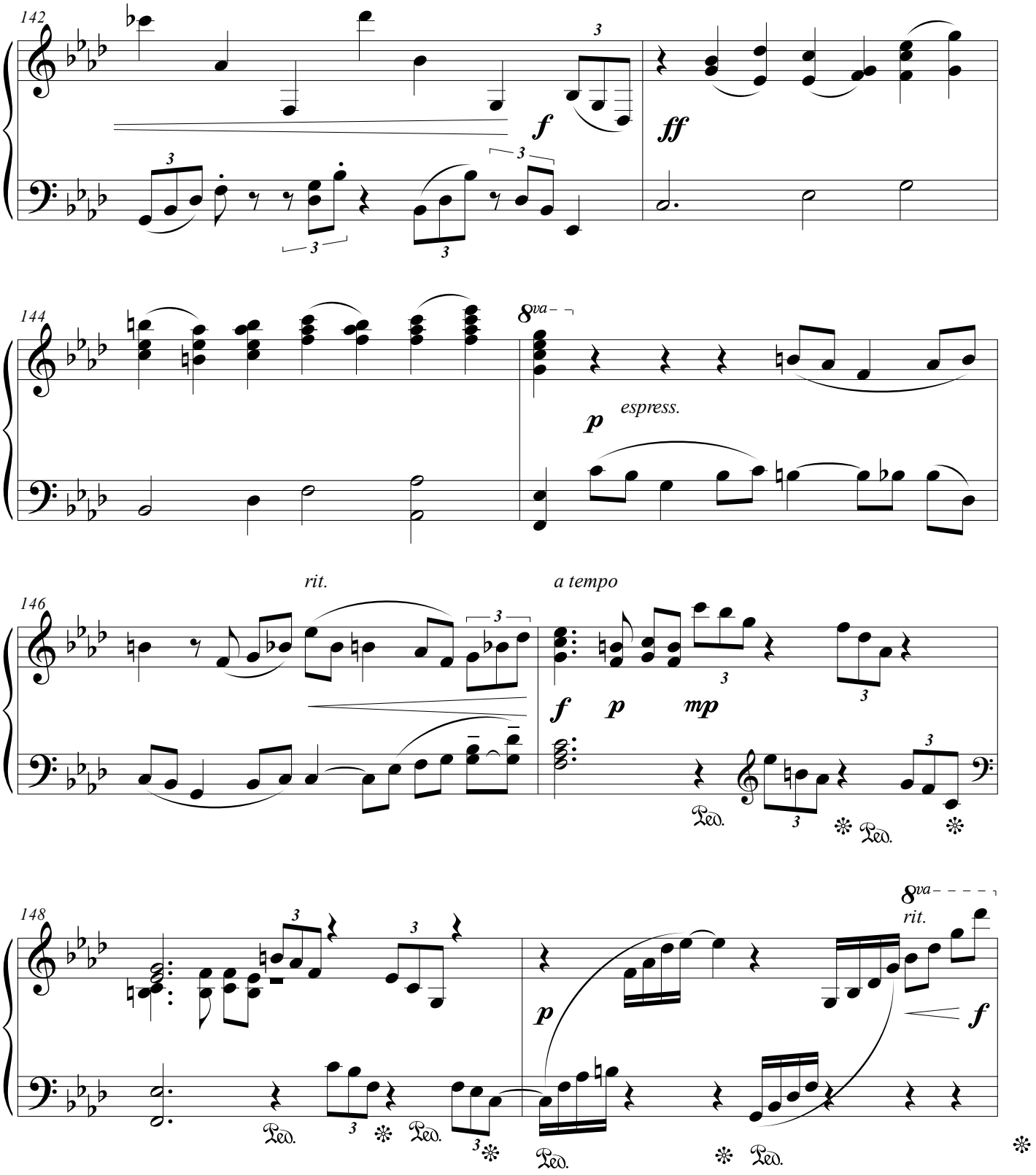

95
8va
p
pp
rit.
espress.
97
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
rit.
p
ff
99
a tempo
f
p
101
fp
fp
103
f
mp
cresc.
mf
p

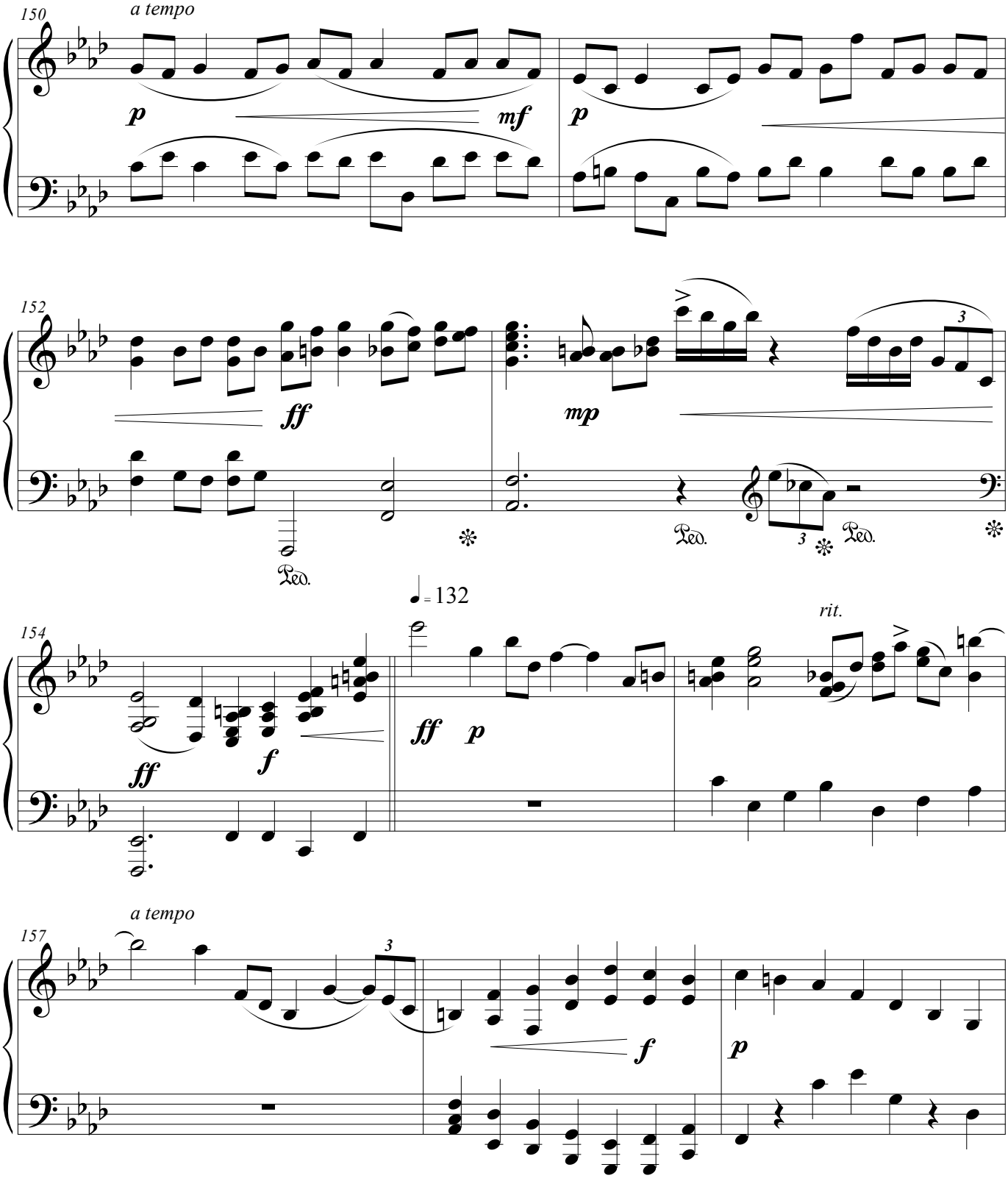

105
mp
p
mp
p
ff
107
rit.
a tempo
mp
mp
109
p
mf
111
mf
f
113
rit.
p

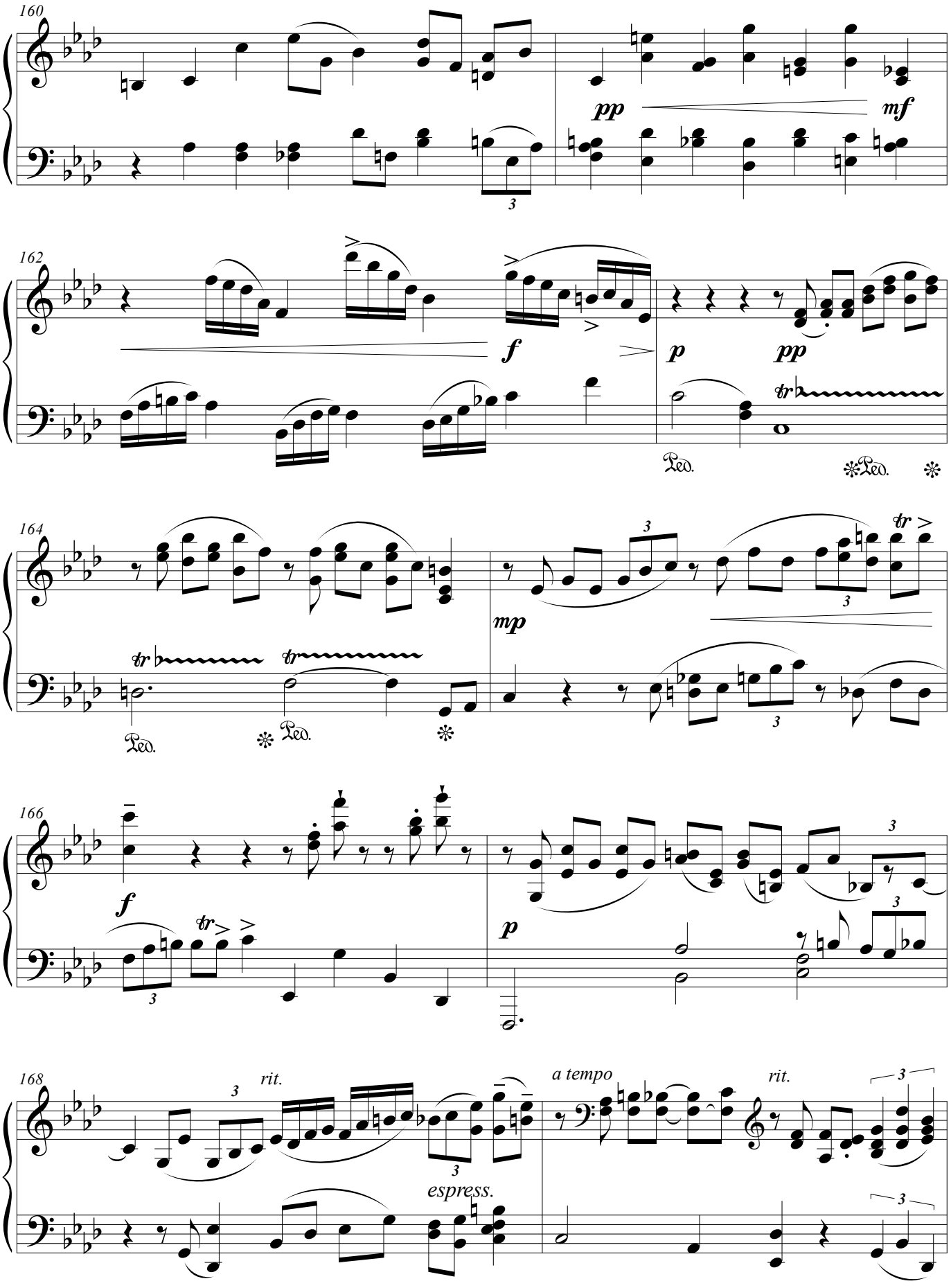

115
♩= 88
pp
p
Ped.
117
8va
mp
p
pp
Ped.
119
r.h.
mf
p
pp
121
sf
p
tr
cresc.
tr simile
Ped.
123
Tempo I
ff
p

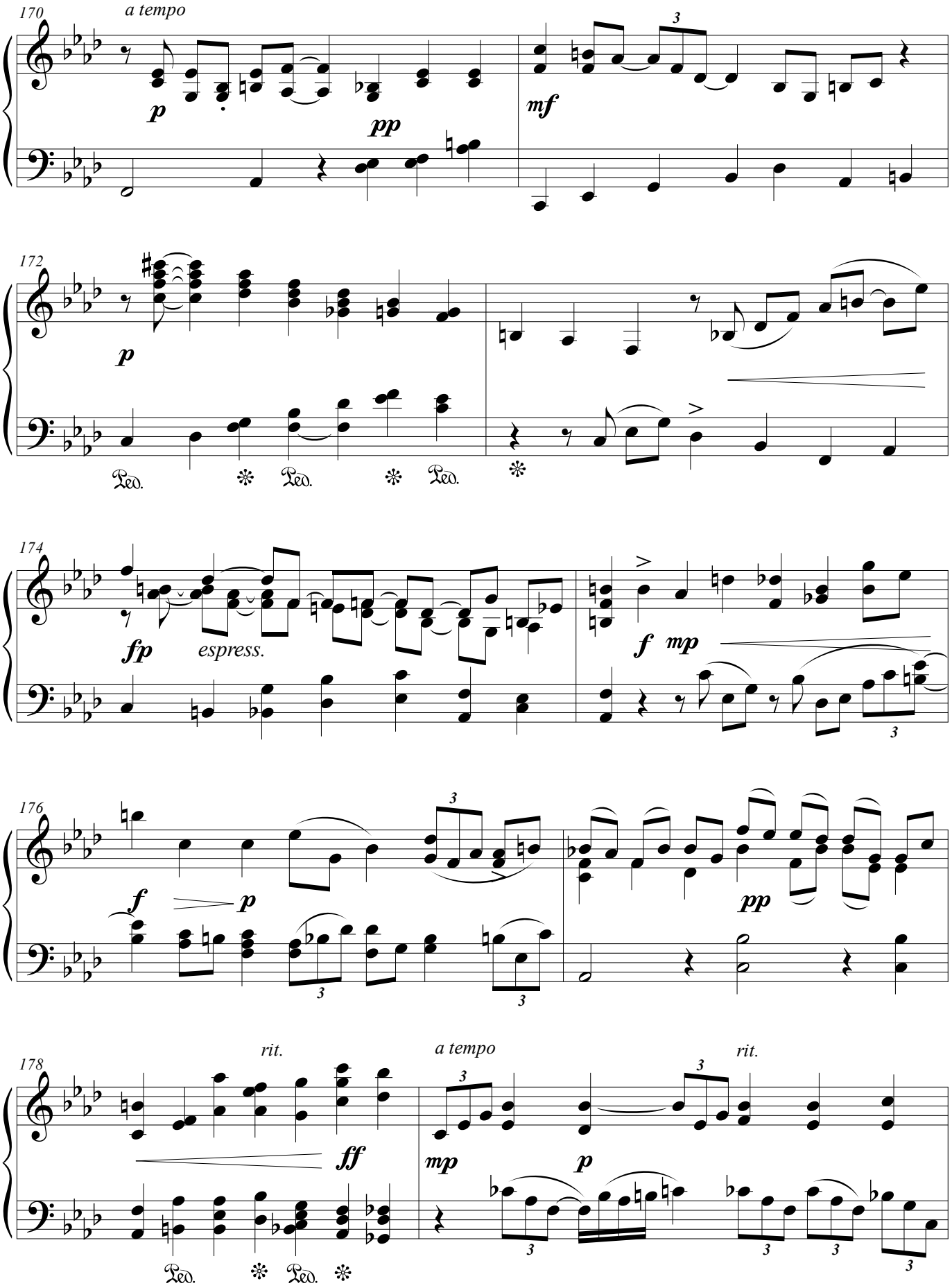

126
f
p
3
128
f
ff
r.h.
l.h.
130
rit.
mp
a tempo
p
132
3
133
f
pp
mp
3
8va
5

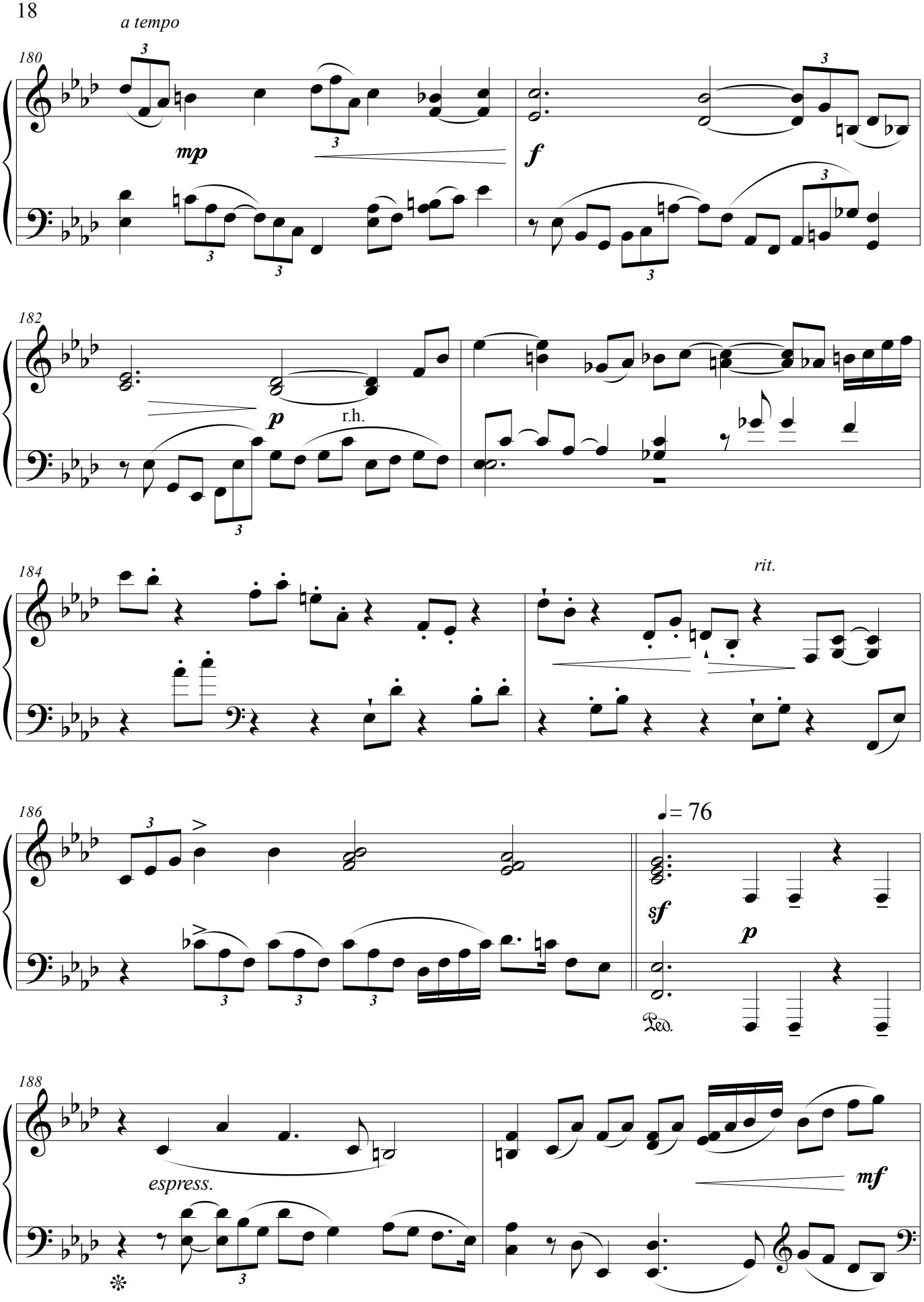

(8va)
134
mf
mp cresc. dolce
mf
136
p
mp
138
mf cresc.
Ped.
139
ff
p dolce
140
mp

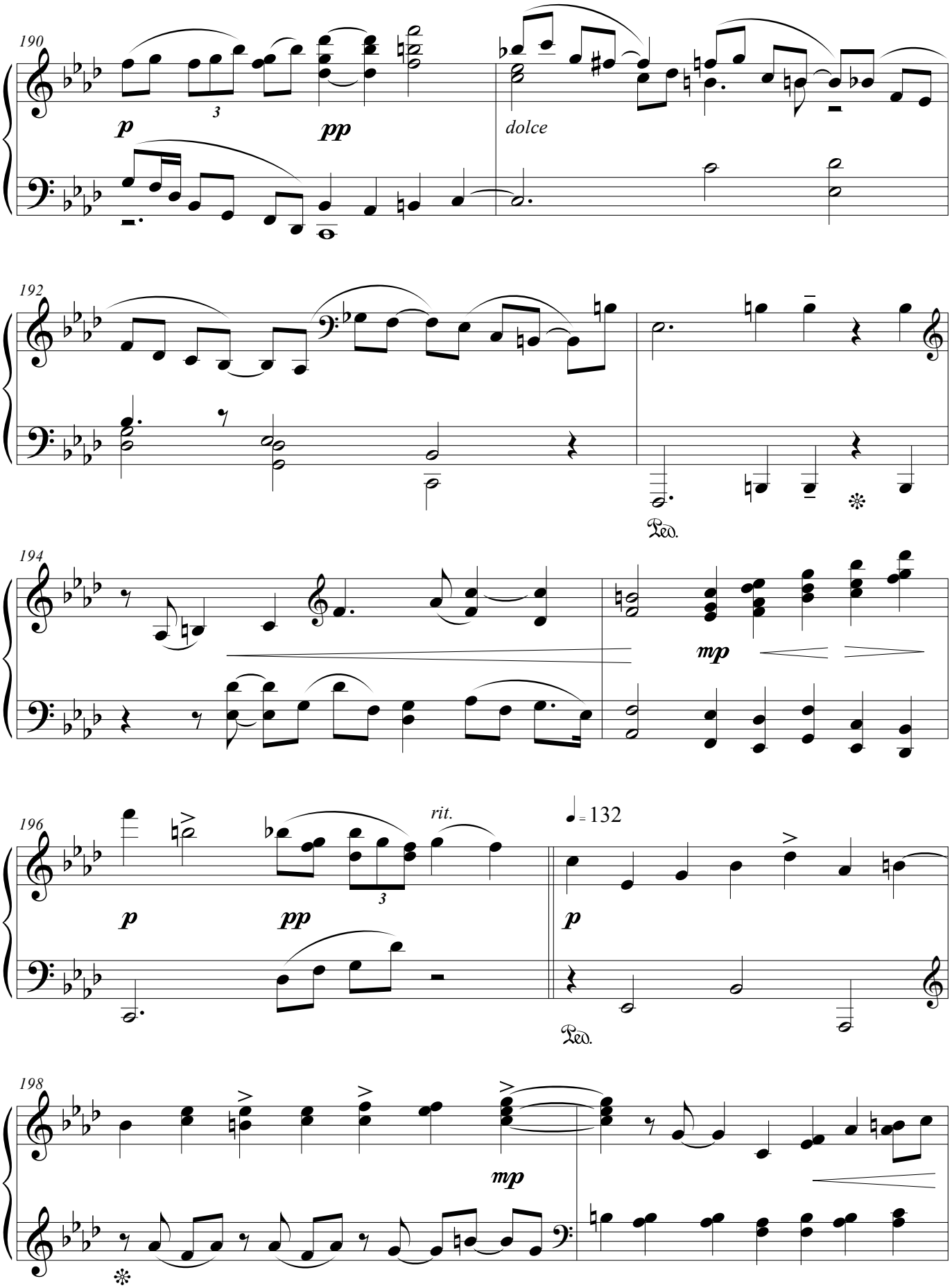

142
f
ff
144
8va
p
espress.
146
rit.
a tempo
f
p
mp
Ped.
148
8va
rit.
p
f
Ped.

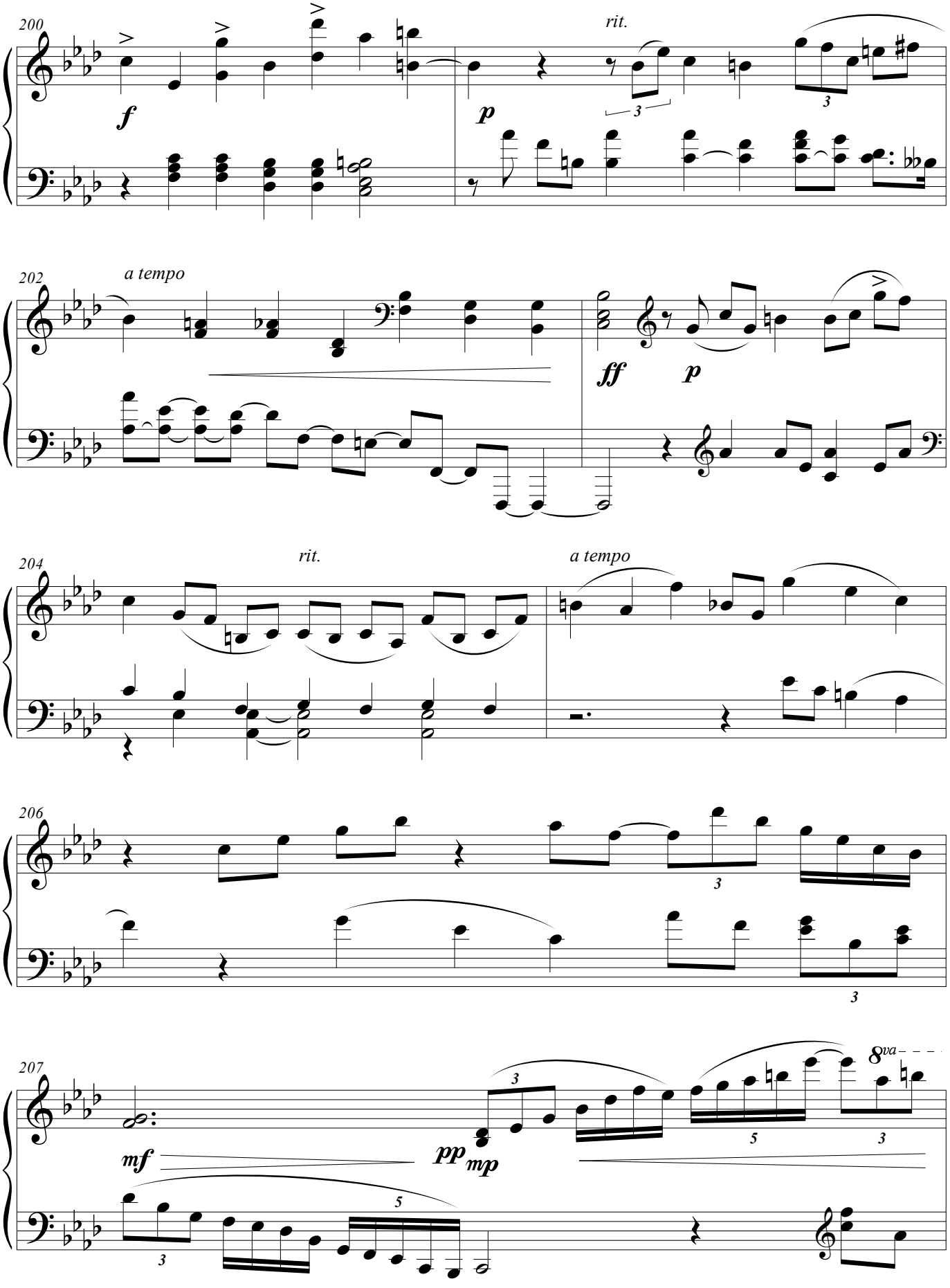

150
a tempo
p
mf
p
152
ff
mp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
154
♩= 132
ff
f
ff
p
rit.
157
a tempo
f
p

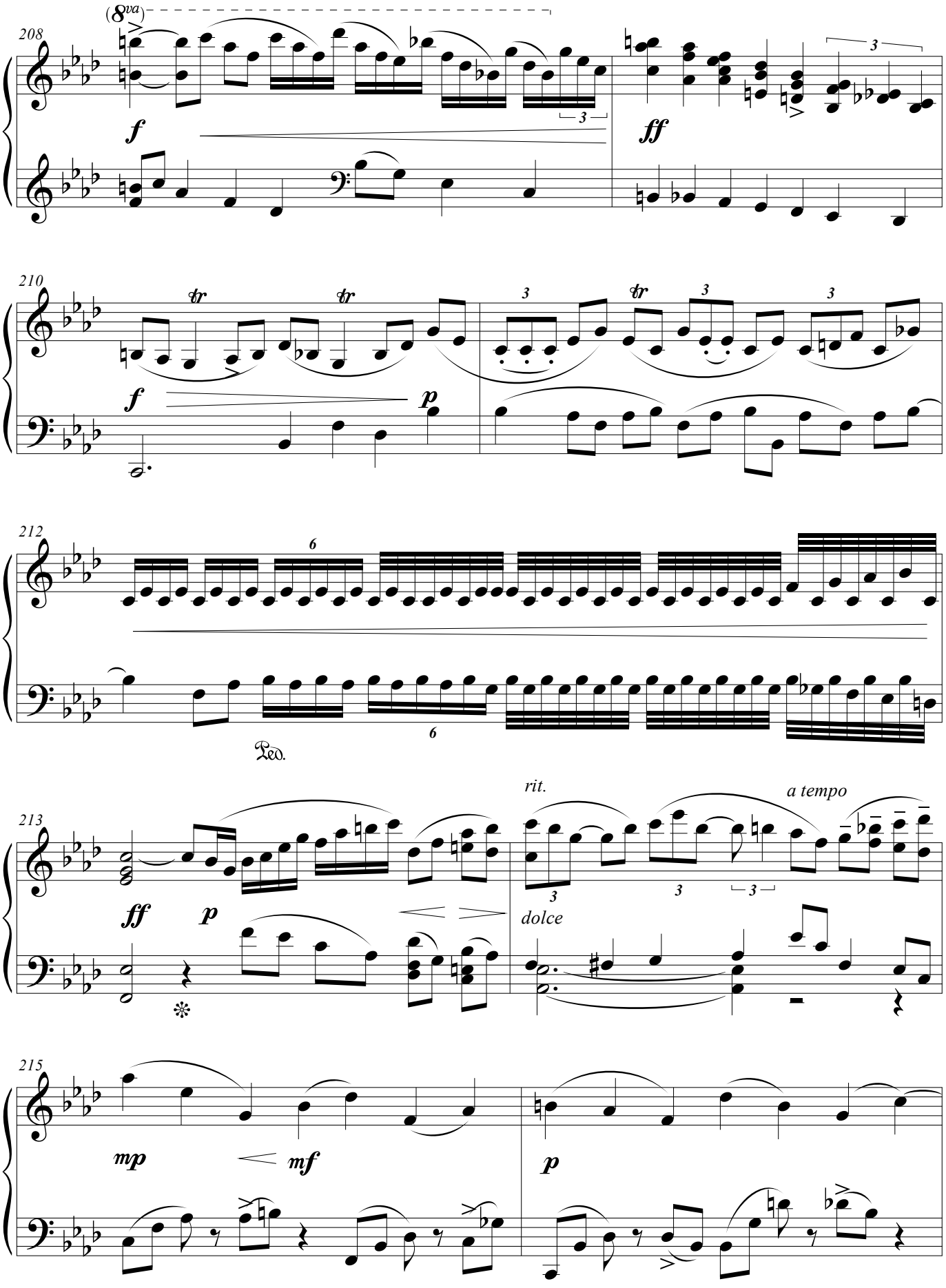

160
pp
mf
162
f
p
pp
Ped.
164
mp
166
168
rit.
espress.
a tempo
rit.

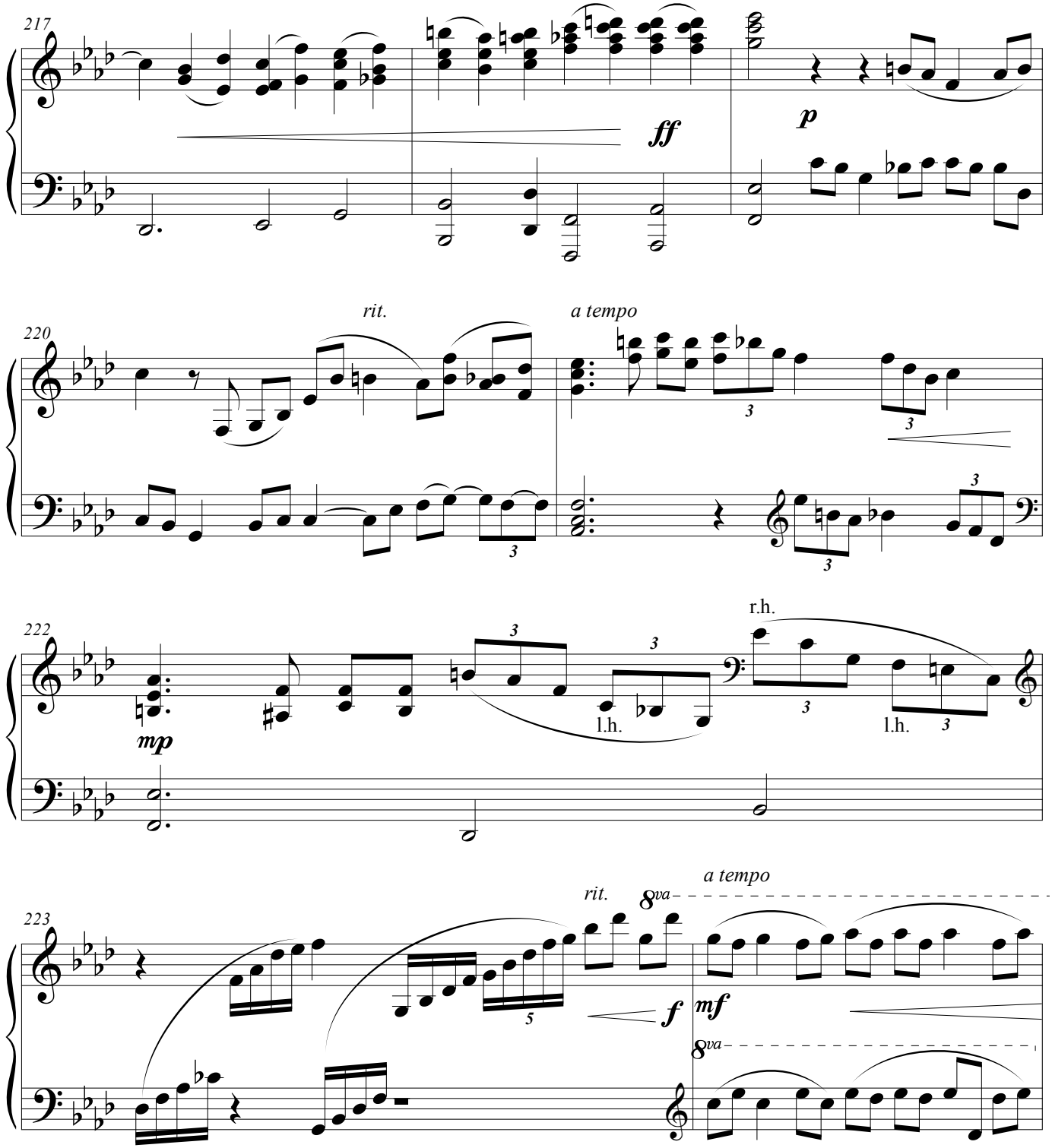

170
a tempo
p
pp
mf
172
p
Ped.
174
fp
espress.
f
mp
176
f
p
pp
178
rit.
ff
a tempo
mp
p
rit.

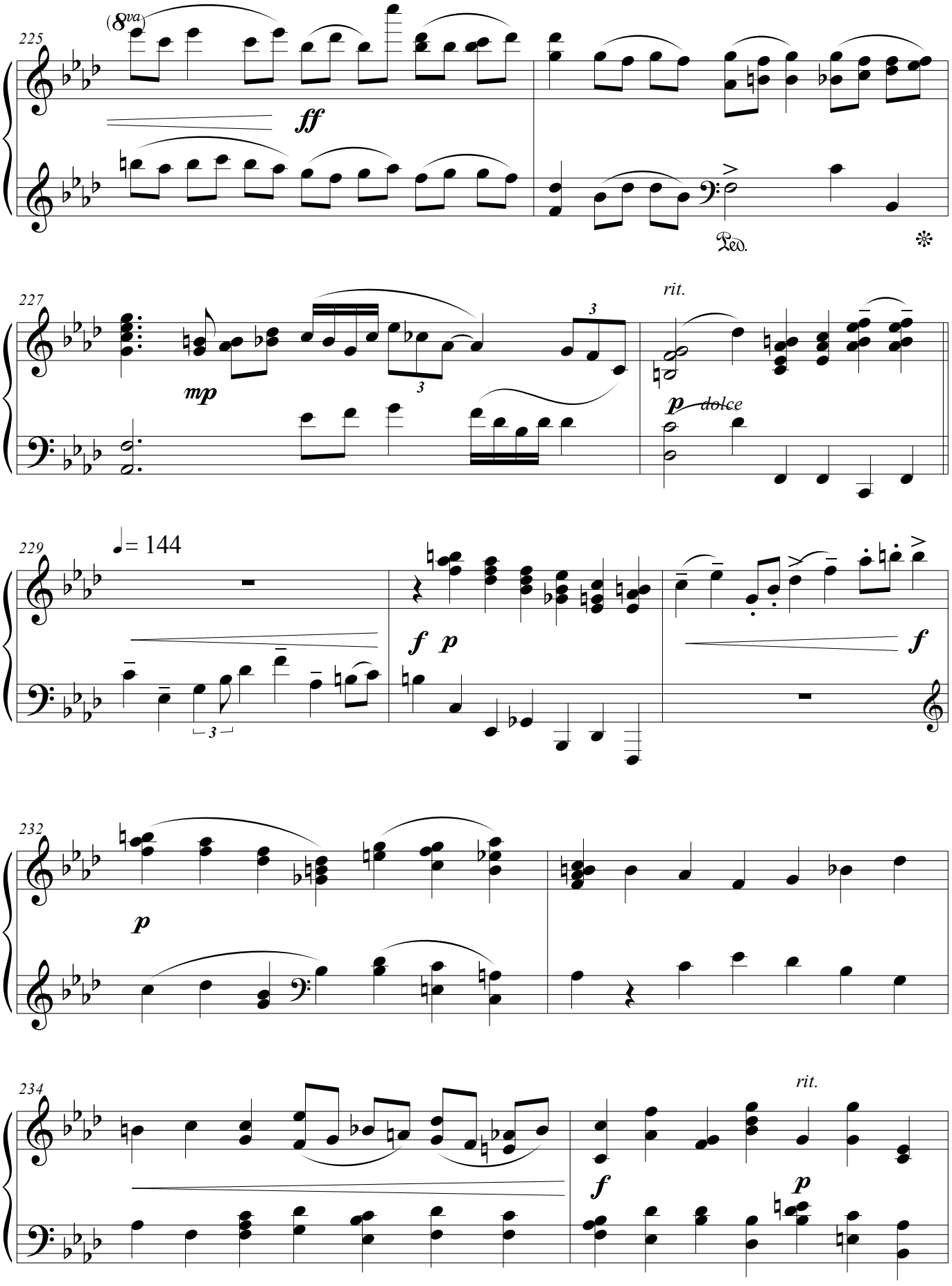

a tempo
180
mp
f
182
p
r.h.
184
rit.
186
= 76
sf
p
Ped.
188
espress.
mf

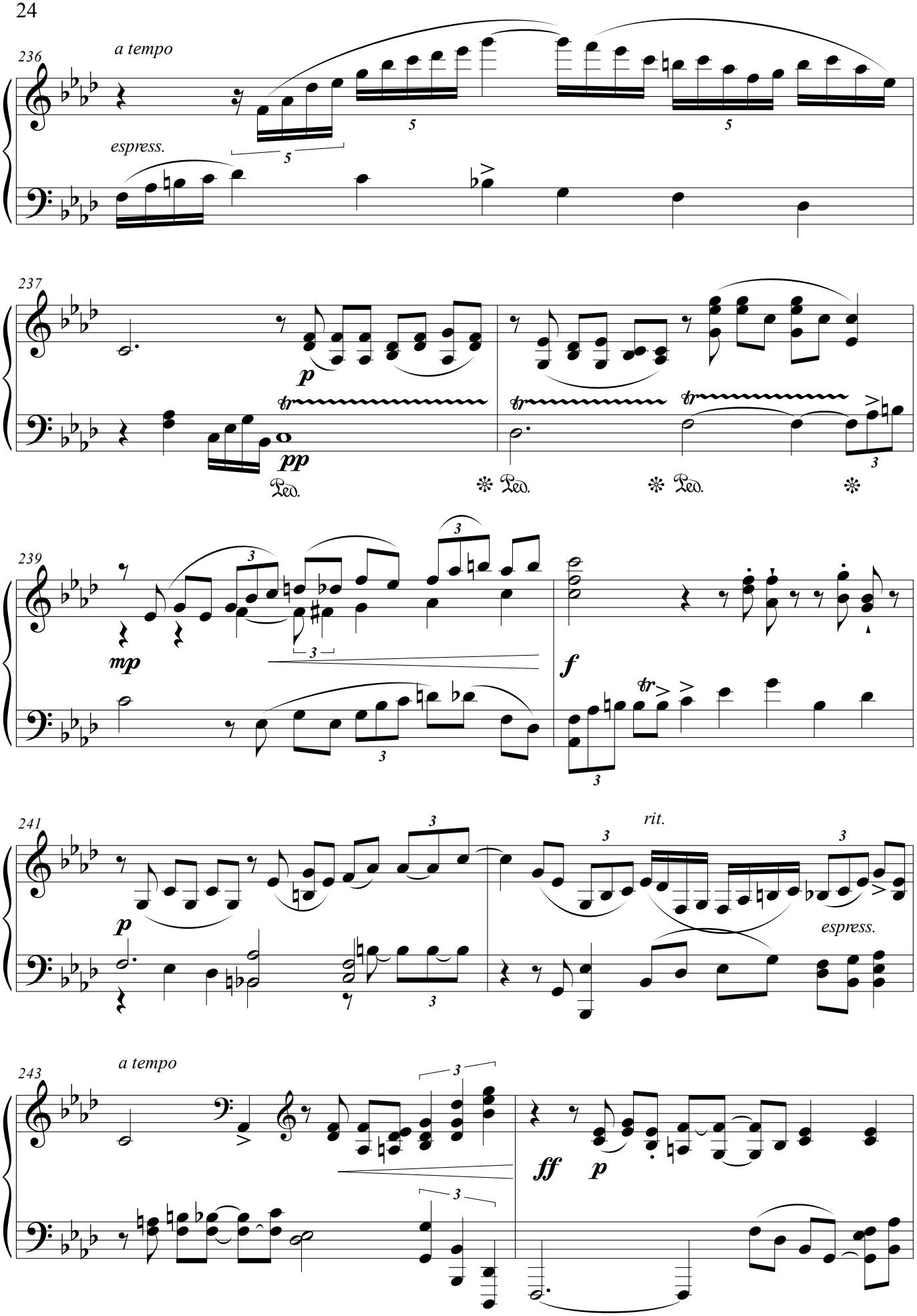

190
p
3
pp
dolce
192
Ped.
194
mp
196
rit.
♩= 132
p
pp
3
p
Ped.
198
mp

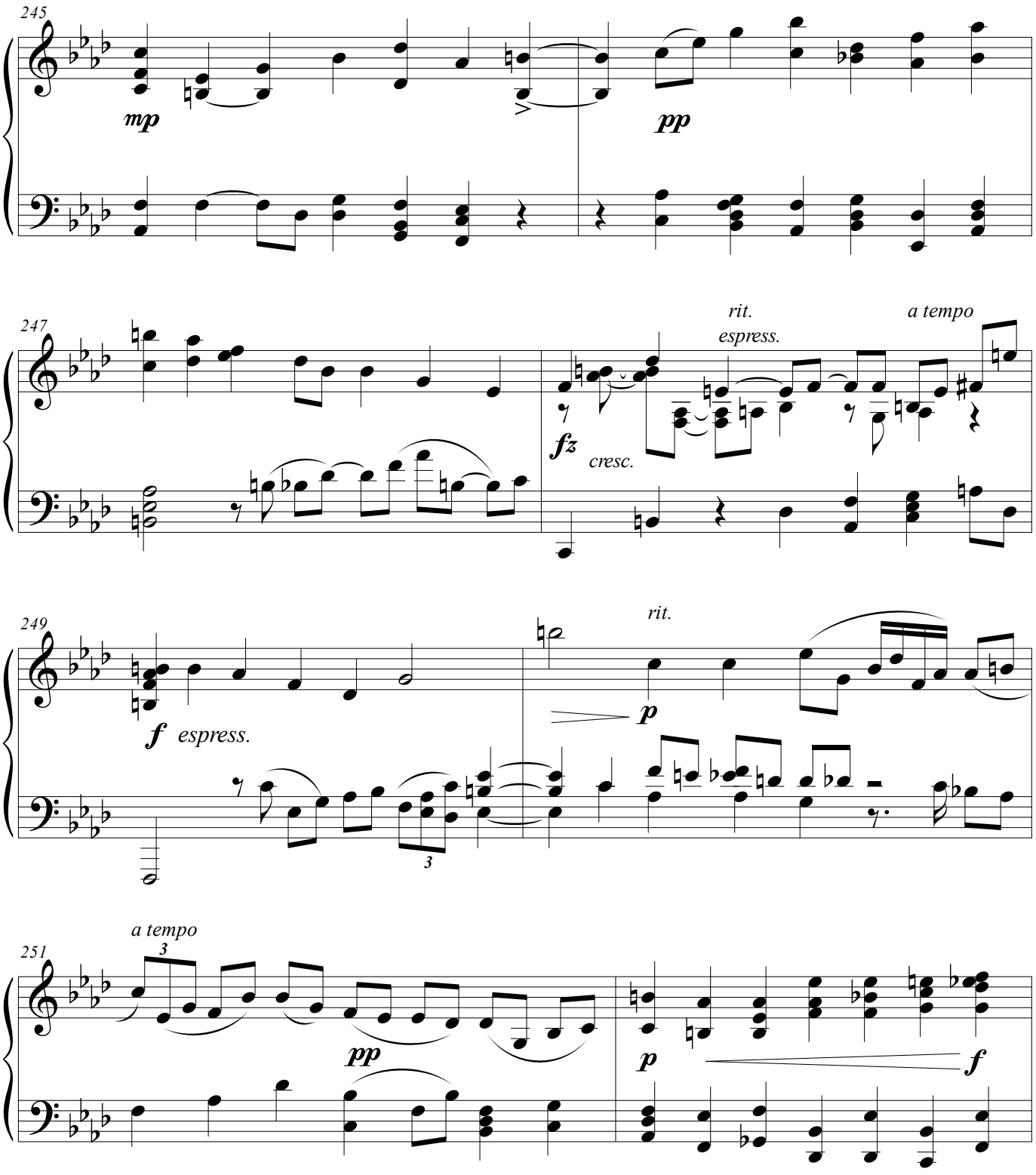

200
f
p
rit.
202
a tempo
ff
p
204
rit.
a tempo
206
207
mf
pp
mp
8va

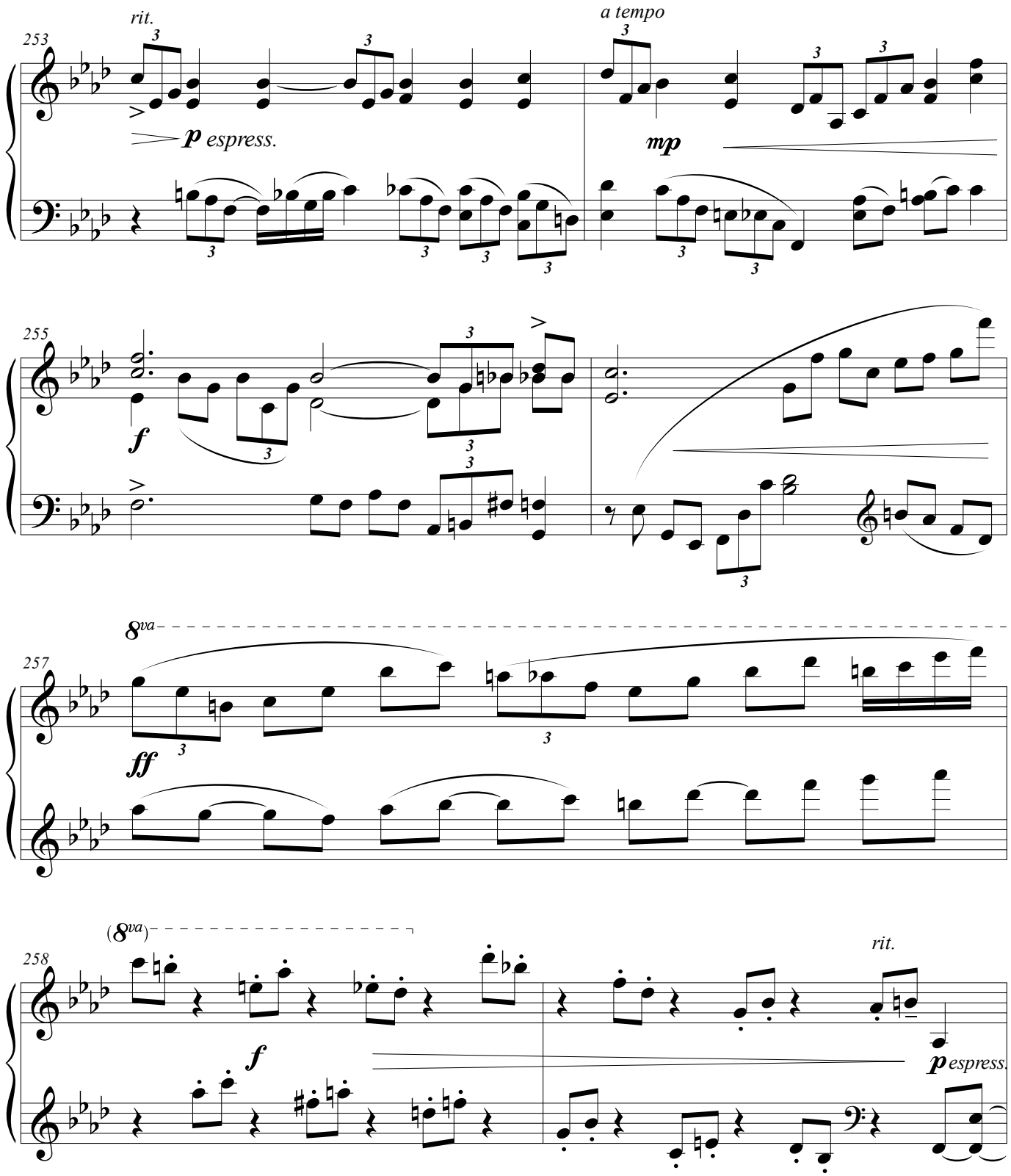

(8va)
208
f
ff
3
210
tr
tr
3
3
3
f
p
212
6
6
Ped.
213
rit.
a tempo
ff
p
dolce
3
3
3
215
mp
mf
p

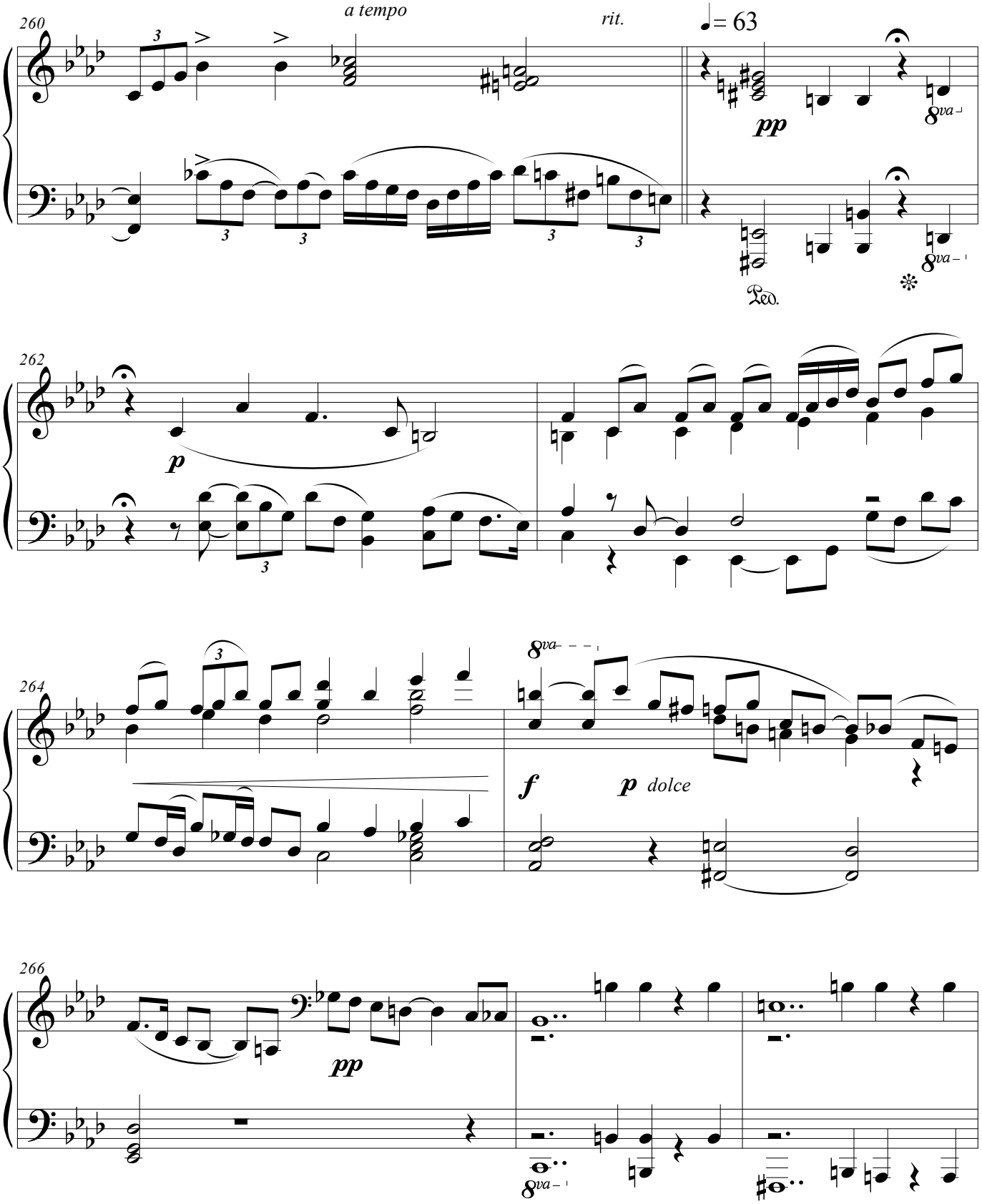

217
ff
p
220
rit.
a tempo
3
222
mp
r.h.
l.h.
l.h.
223
rit.
8va
a tempo
f
mf
5

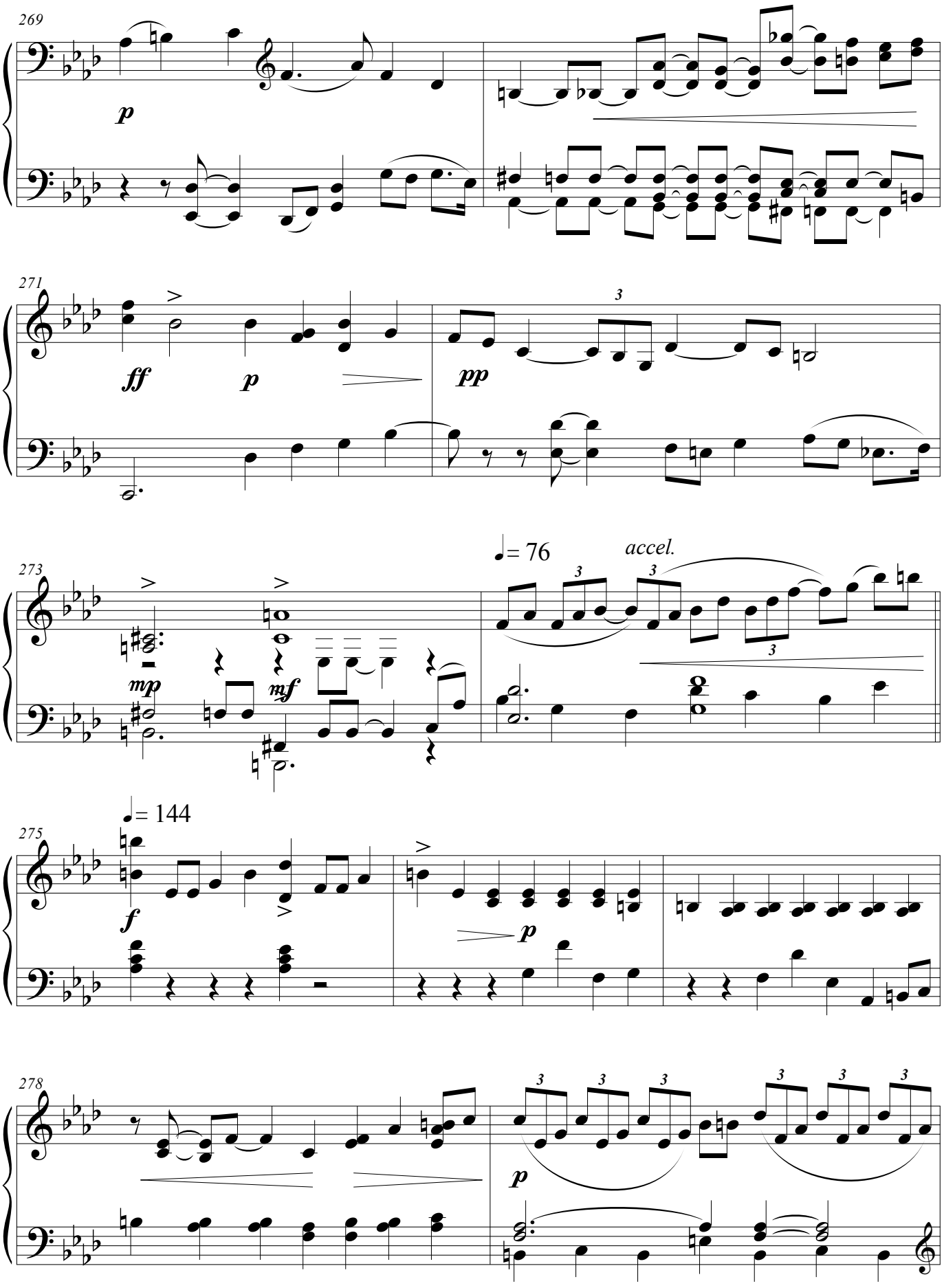

225
(8va)
ff
Ped.
227
mp
3
rit.
p dolce
229
♩= 144
f p
f
232
p
234
f
rit.
p

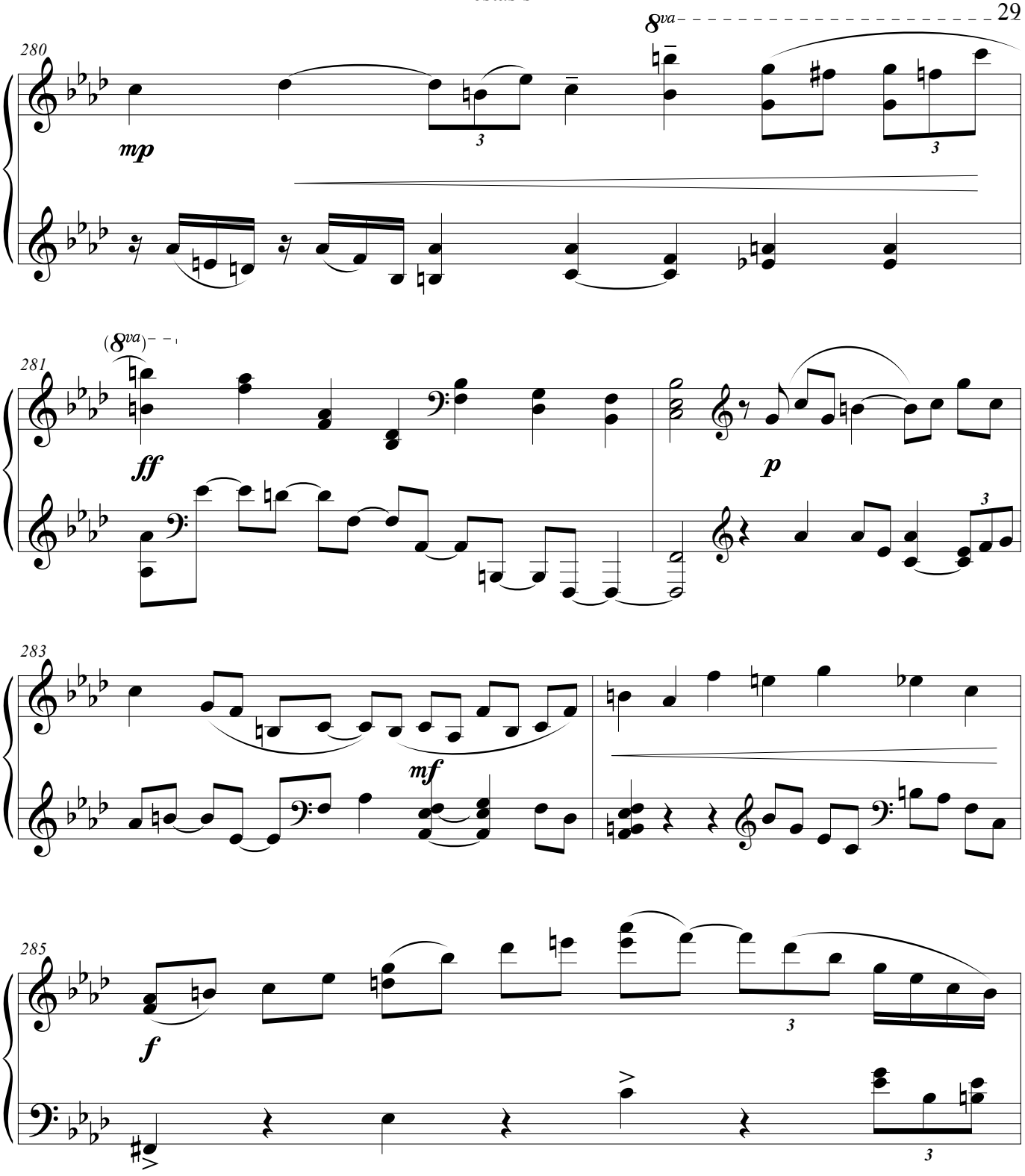

236
a tempo
espress.
237
p
pp
tr
Ped.
239
mp
f
241
rit.
espress.
243
a tempo
ff
p

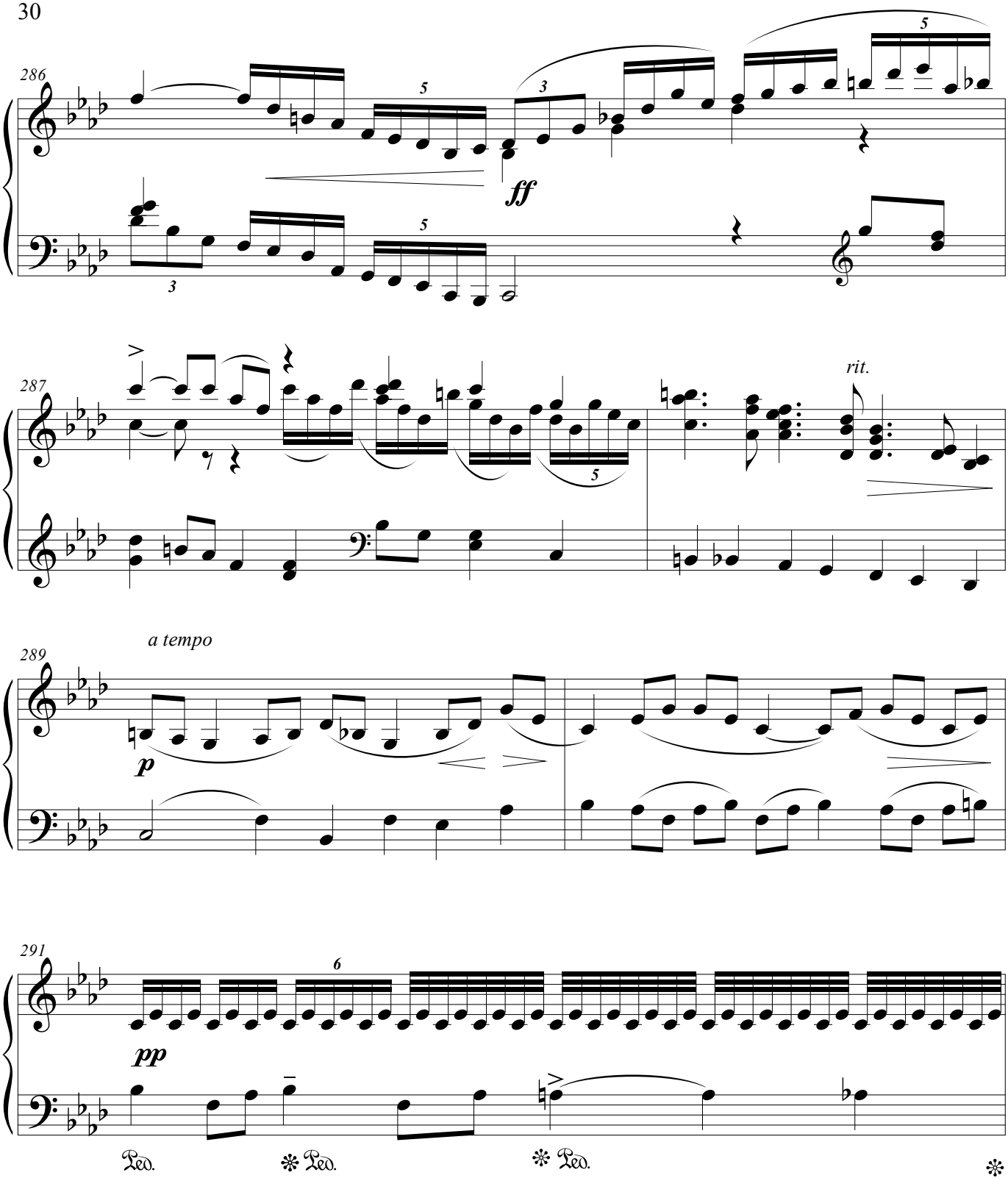

245
mp
pp
247
rit.
espress.
a tempo
fz
cresc.
249
f espress.
rit.
p
3
a tempo
251
3
pp
p
f

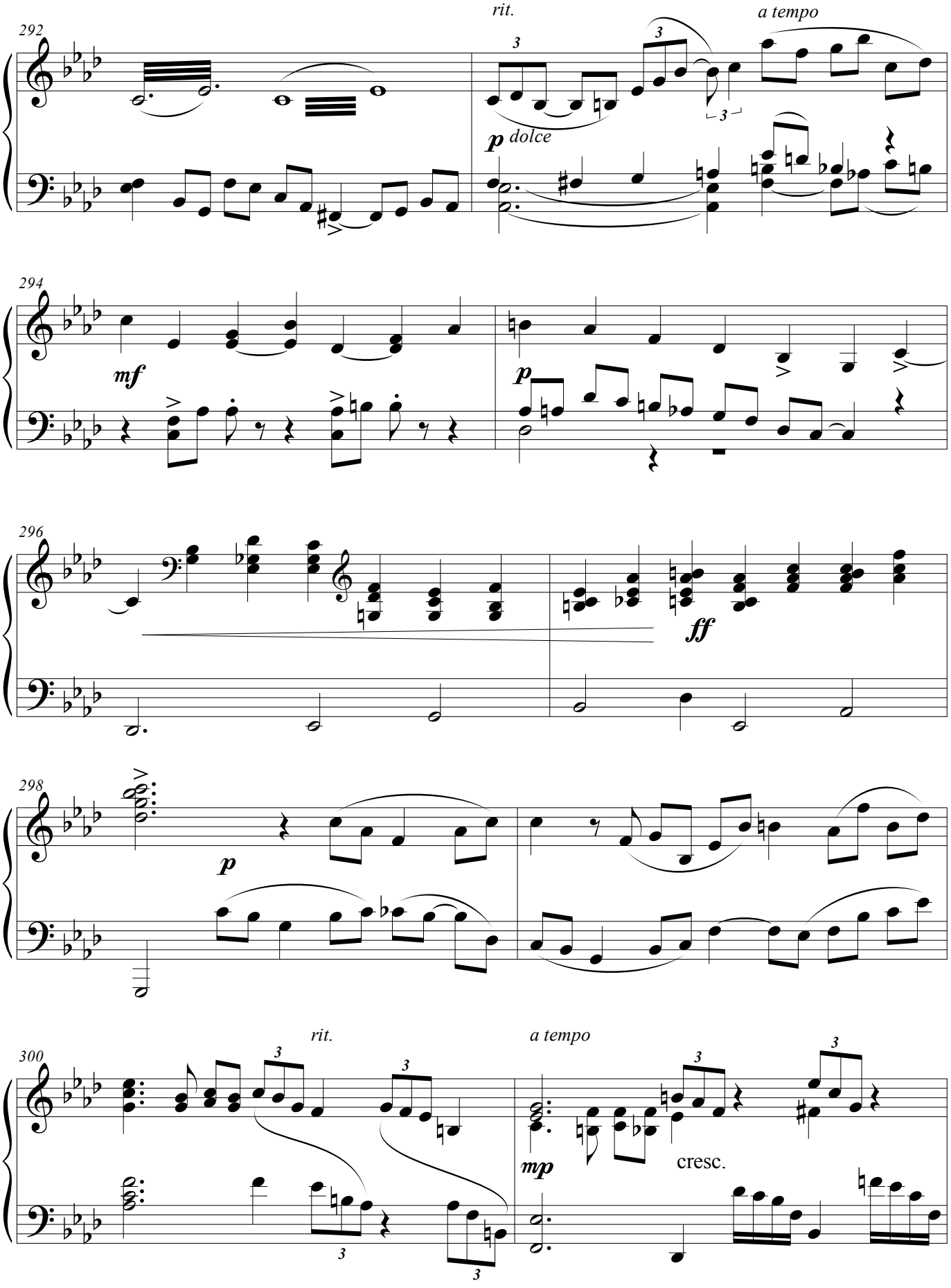

253
rit.
a tempo
p espress.
mp
255
f
257
8va
ff
(8va)
258
rit.
f
p espress.

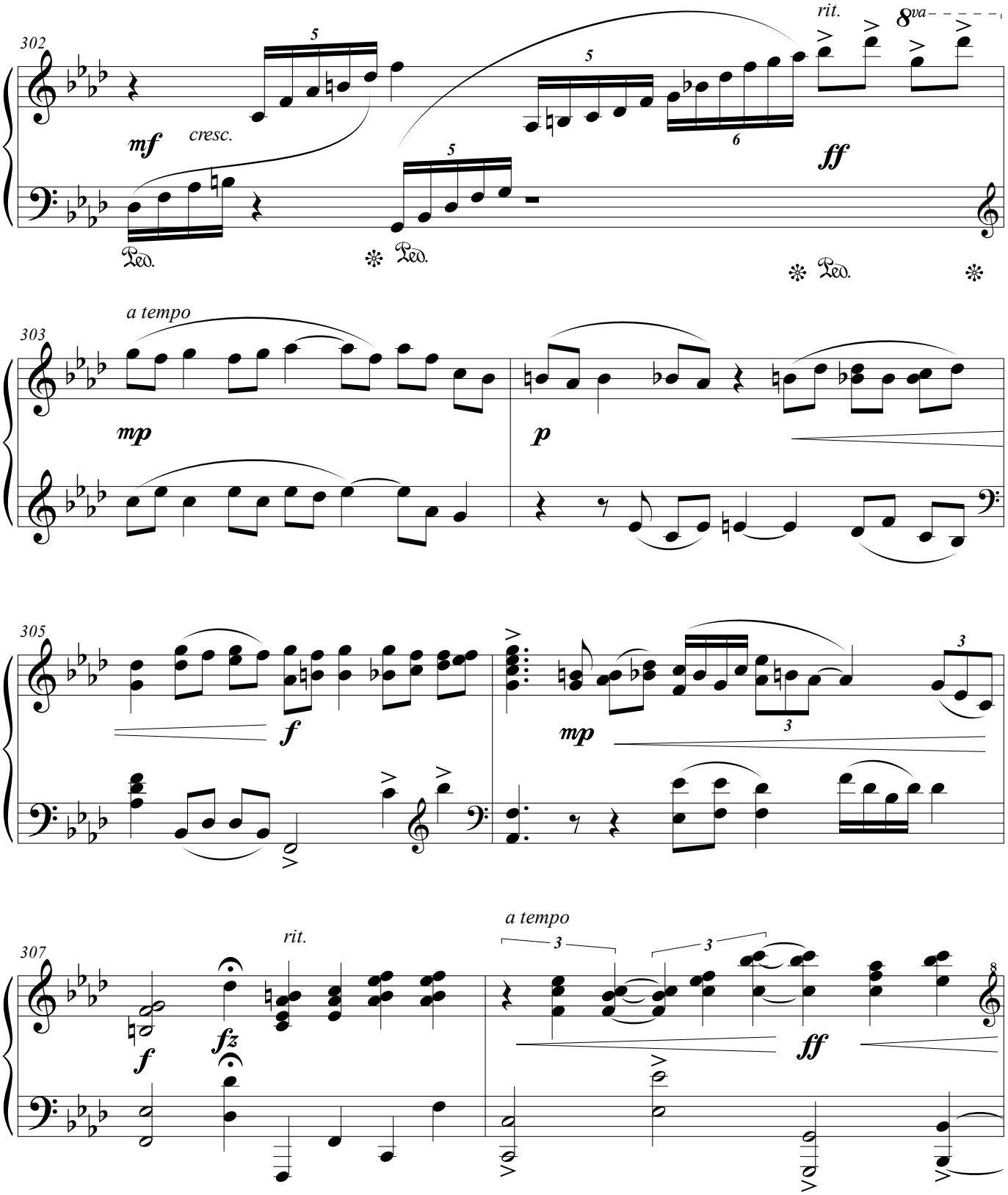

260
a tempo
rit.
♩= 63
pp
8va
Ped.
262
p
264
8va
f
p dolce
266
pp
8va

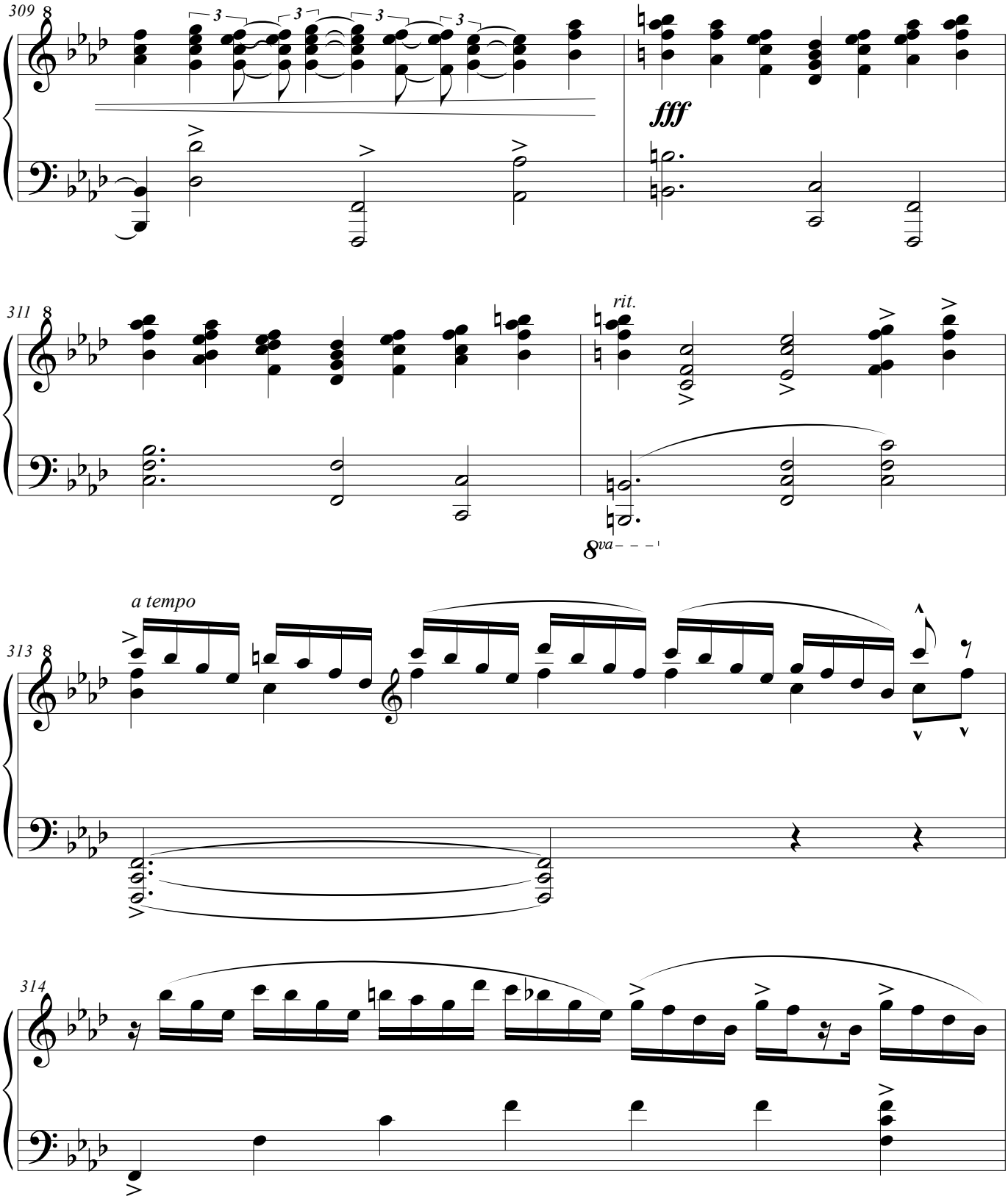

269
p
271
ff
p
pp
3
273
mp
mf
♩= 76
accel.
3
275
♩= 144
f
p
278
p
3

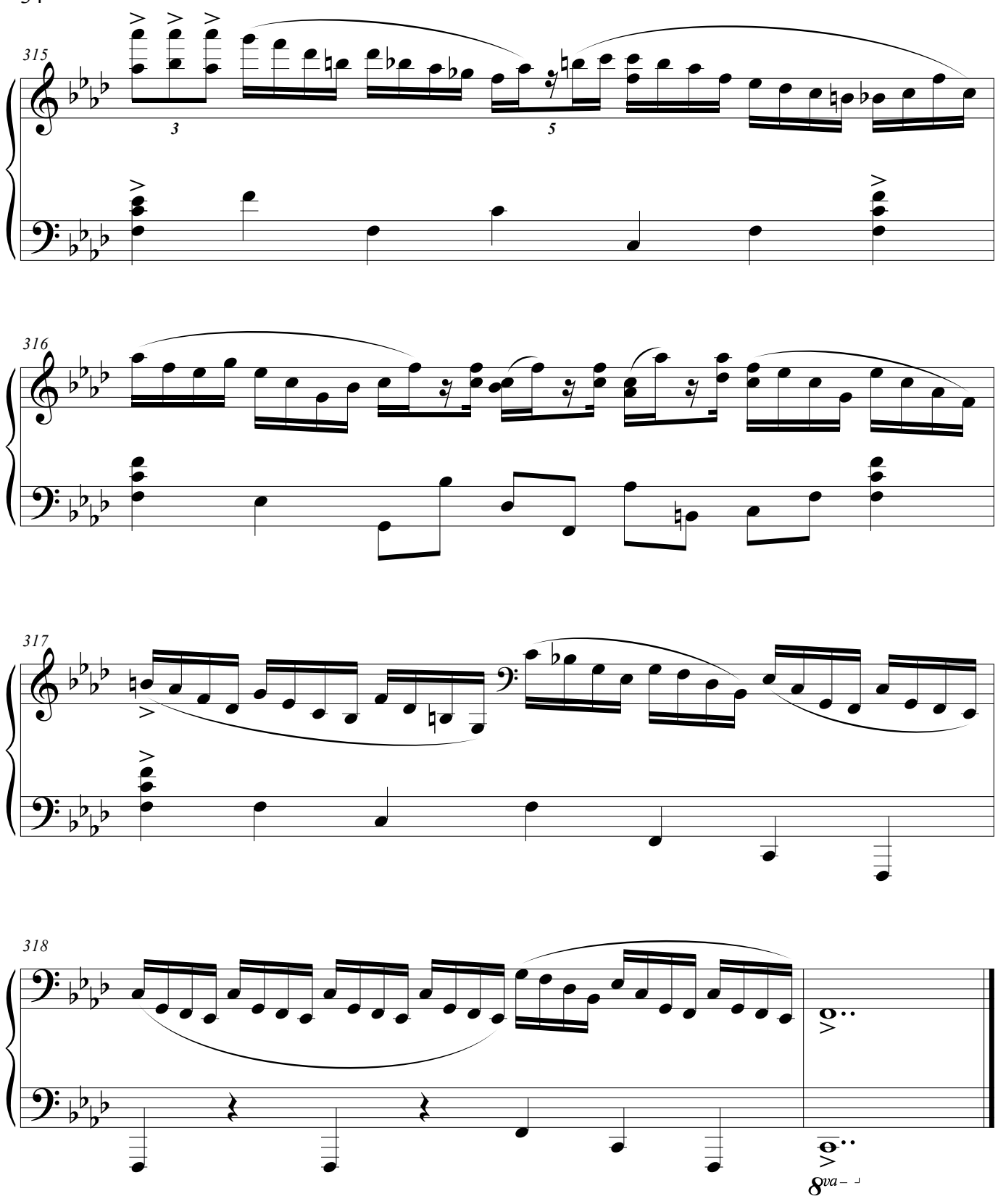

280
8va
mp
3
3
281
(8va)
ff
p
3
283
mf
285
f
3
3


286
ff
287
rit.
289
a tempo
p
291
pp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.


292
rit.
a tempo
p dolce
294
mf
p
296
ff
298
p
300
rit.
a tempo
mp
cresc.


302
mf
cresc.
rit.
8va
ff
Ped.
303
a tempo
mp
p
305
f
mp
307
rit.
a tempo
f
fz
ff


309
fff
311
rit.
8va
a tempo
313
314


315
316
317
318
8va