The Wild Swans

for piano

Lawrence Kramer

2009

"The Wild Swans " is a series of musical impressions based loosely on the imagery of Yeats's poem "The Wild Swans at Coole." The music evokes the swans calmly reflected on the water, the clamorous bell-beat of their wings in passion or conquest, the heart-soreness of the speaker, and the mystery (perhaps consoling, perhaps not) associated with the swans' disappearance. The music makes no attempt to recreate the poem's narrative but it is framed by intimations of the first and last stanzas.

"The Wild Swans" was composed in 2009 and lasts about eleven and a half minutes.

The Wild Swans at Coole

Thee trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine-and-fifty Swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water,
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

--W. B. Yeats (1919)

The Wild Swans

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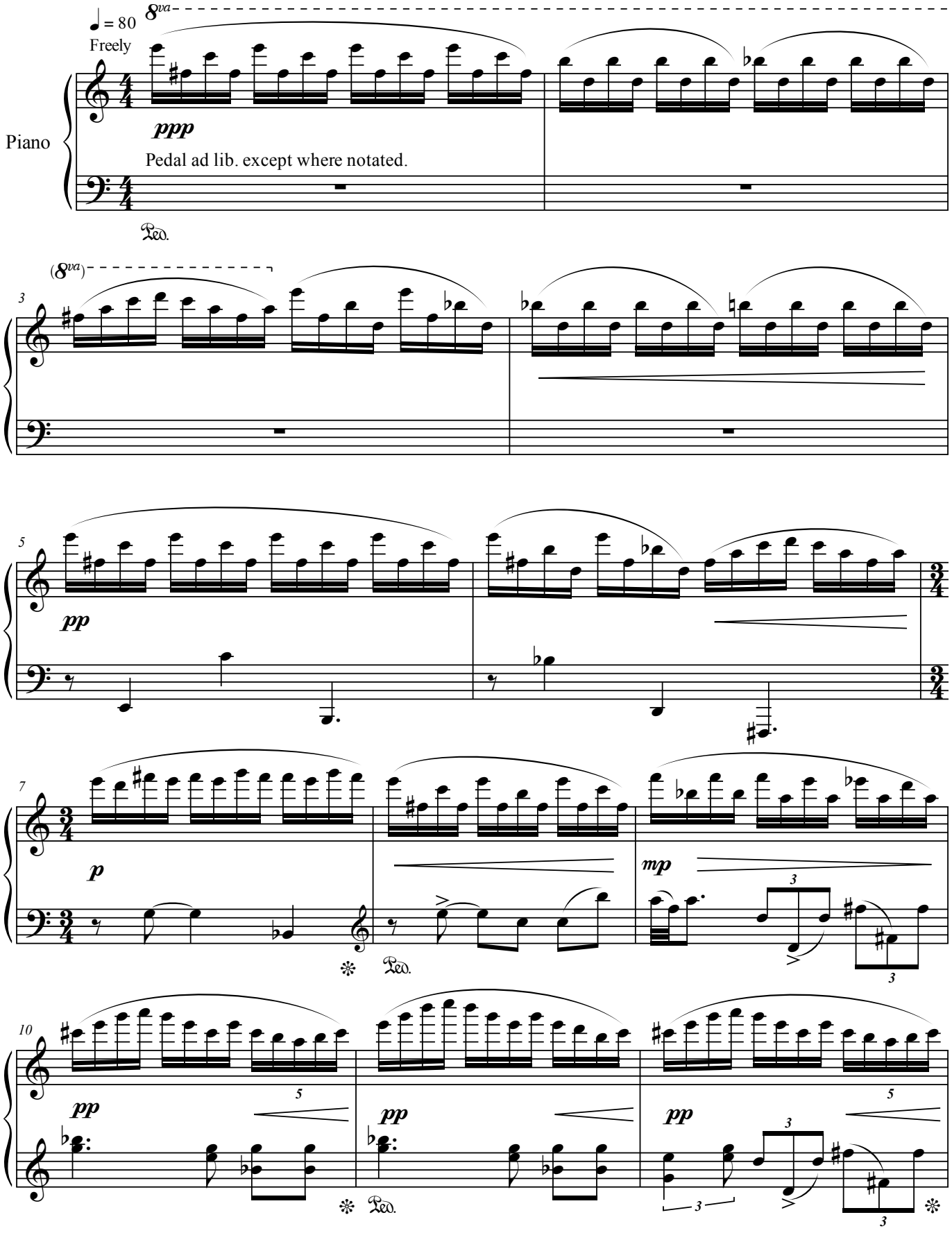
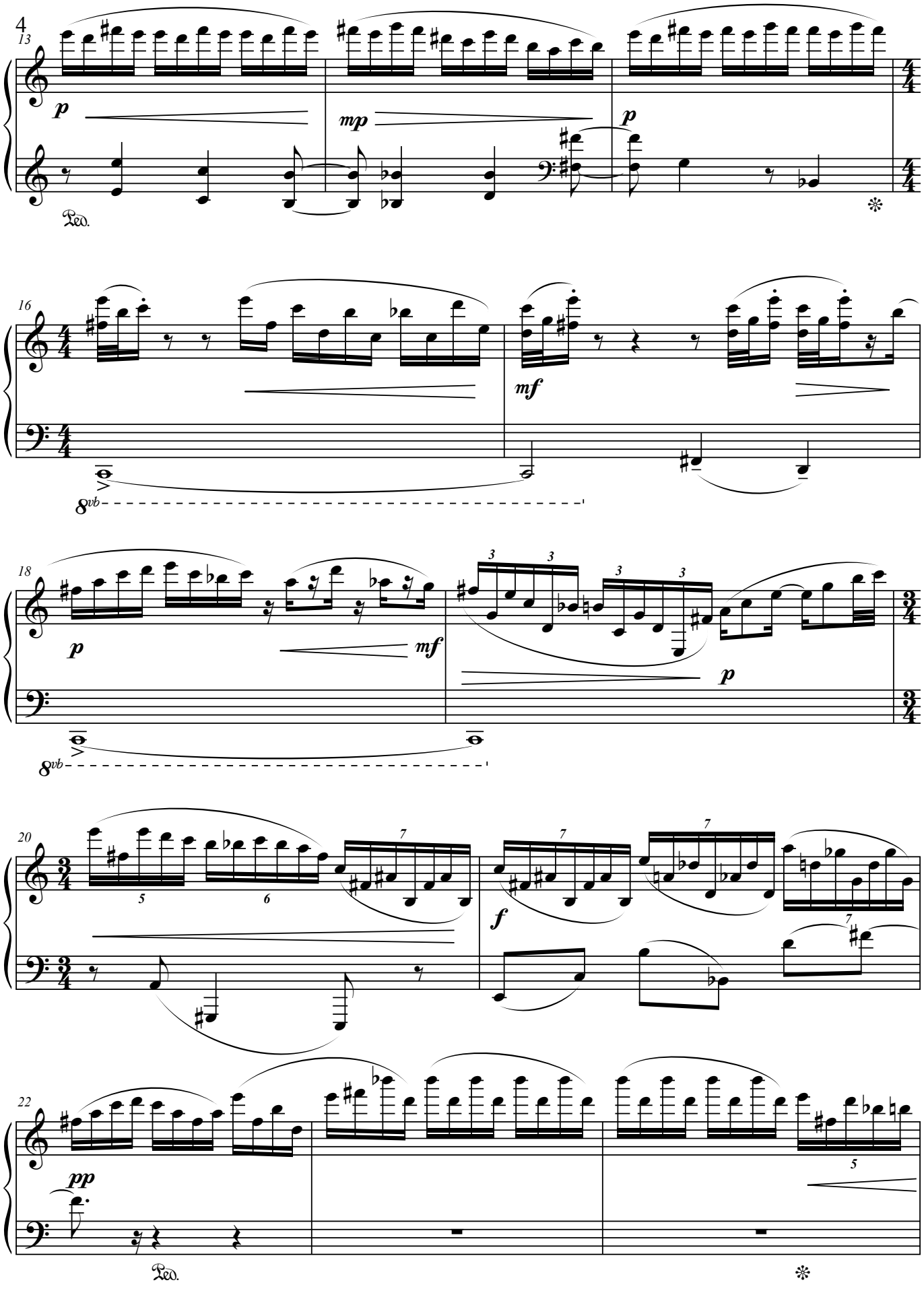
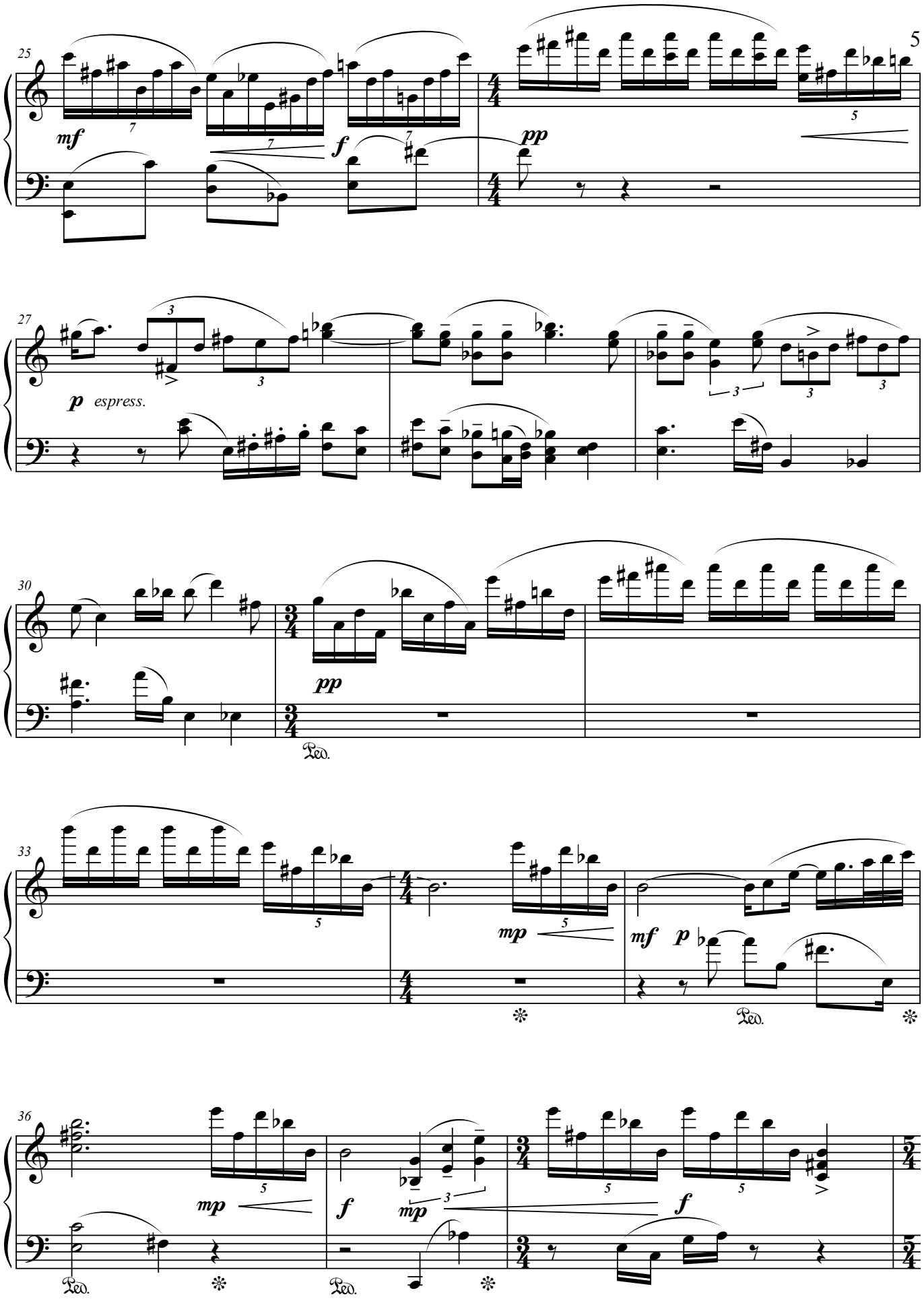
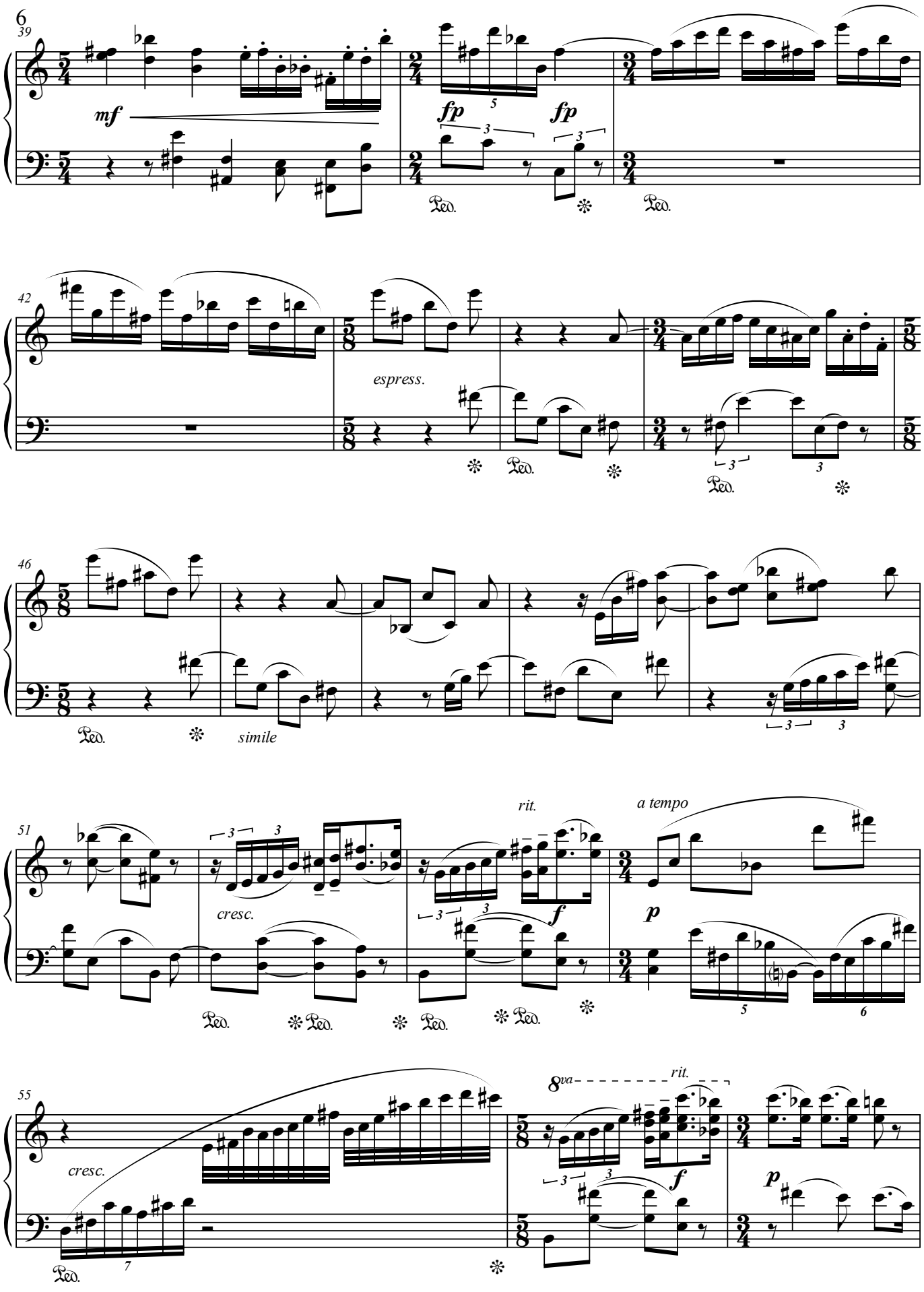
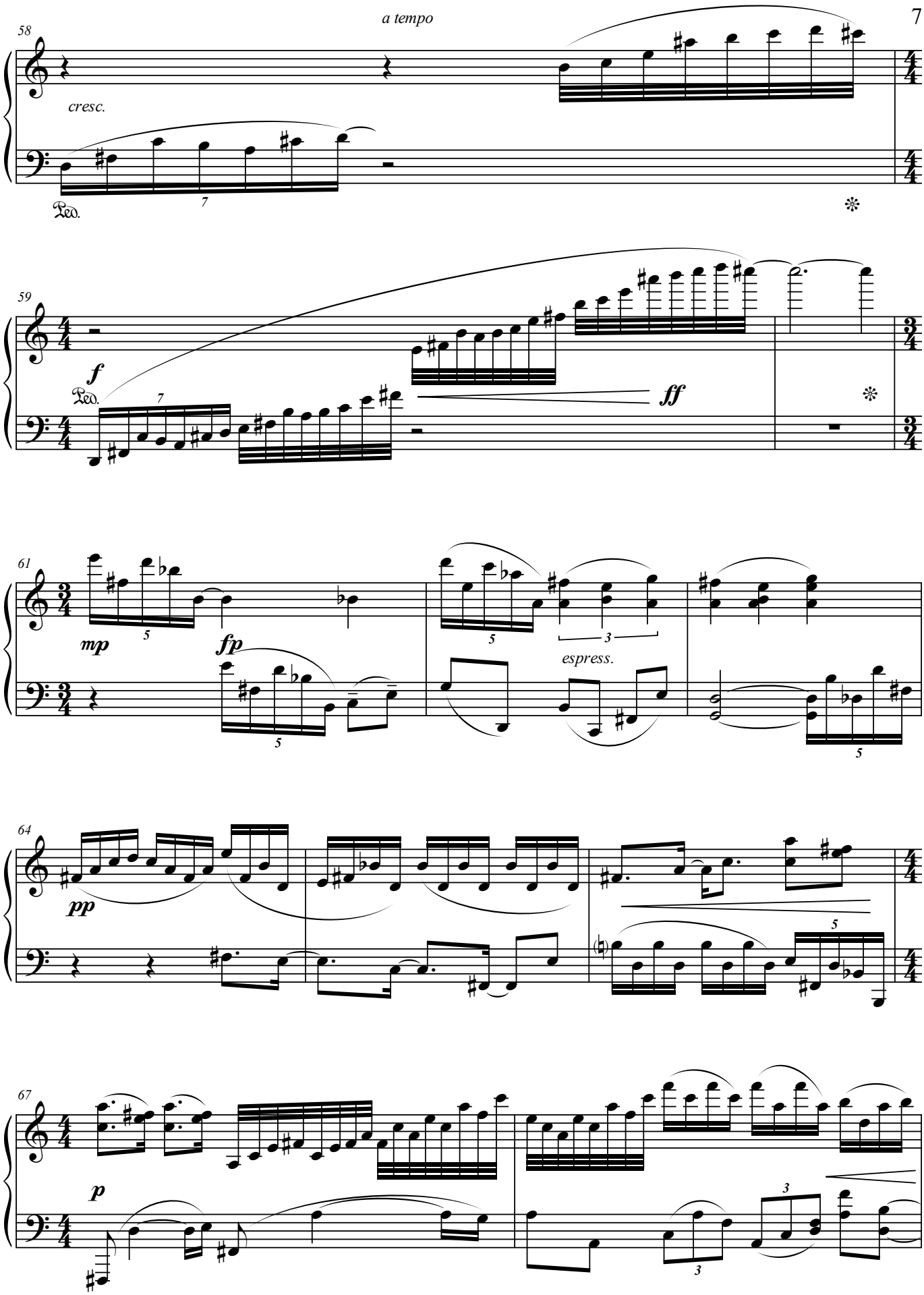
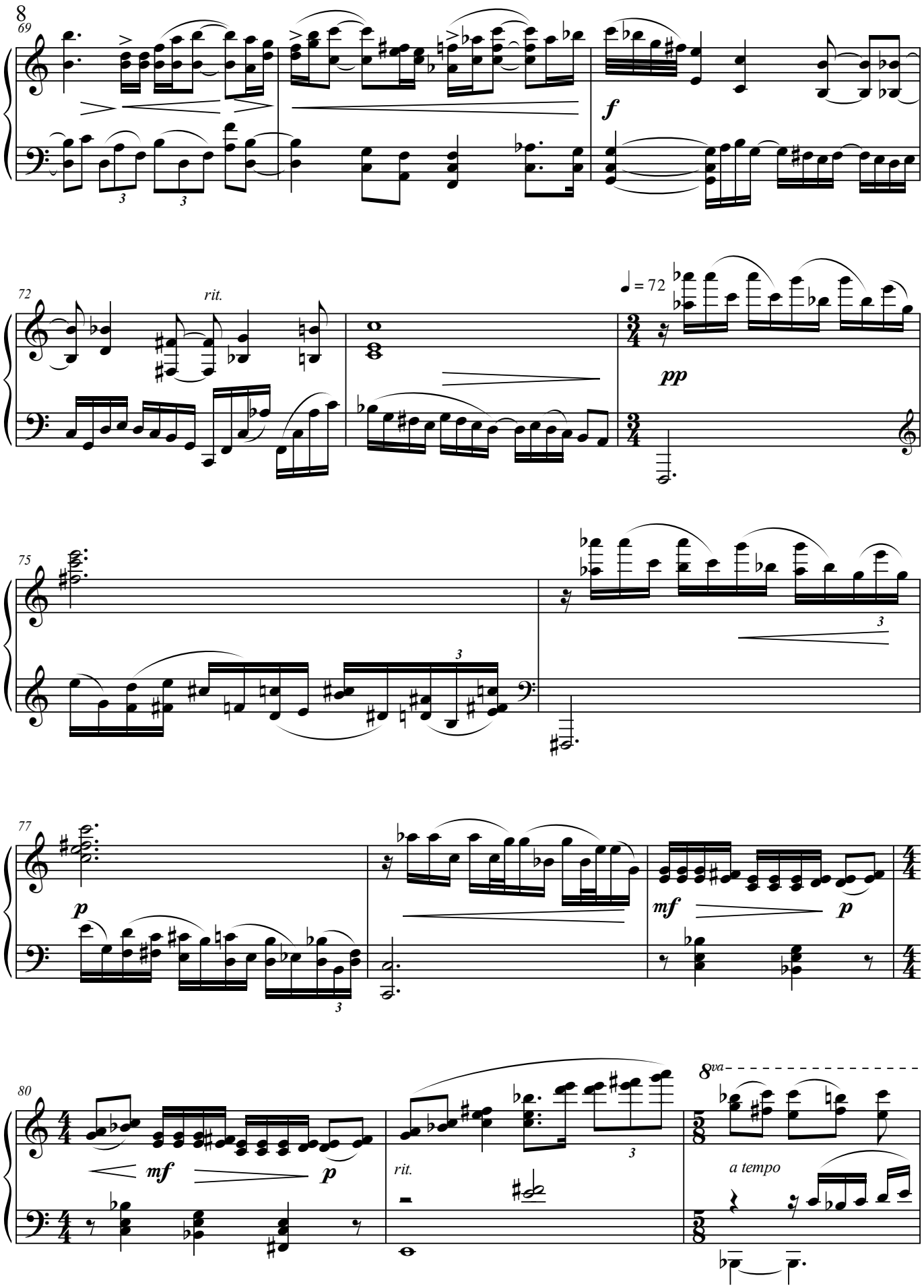


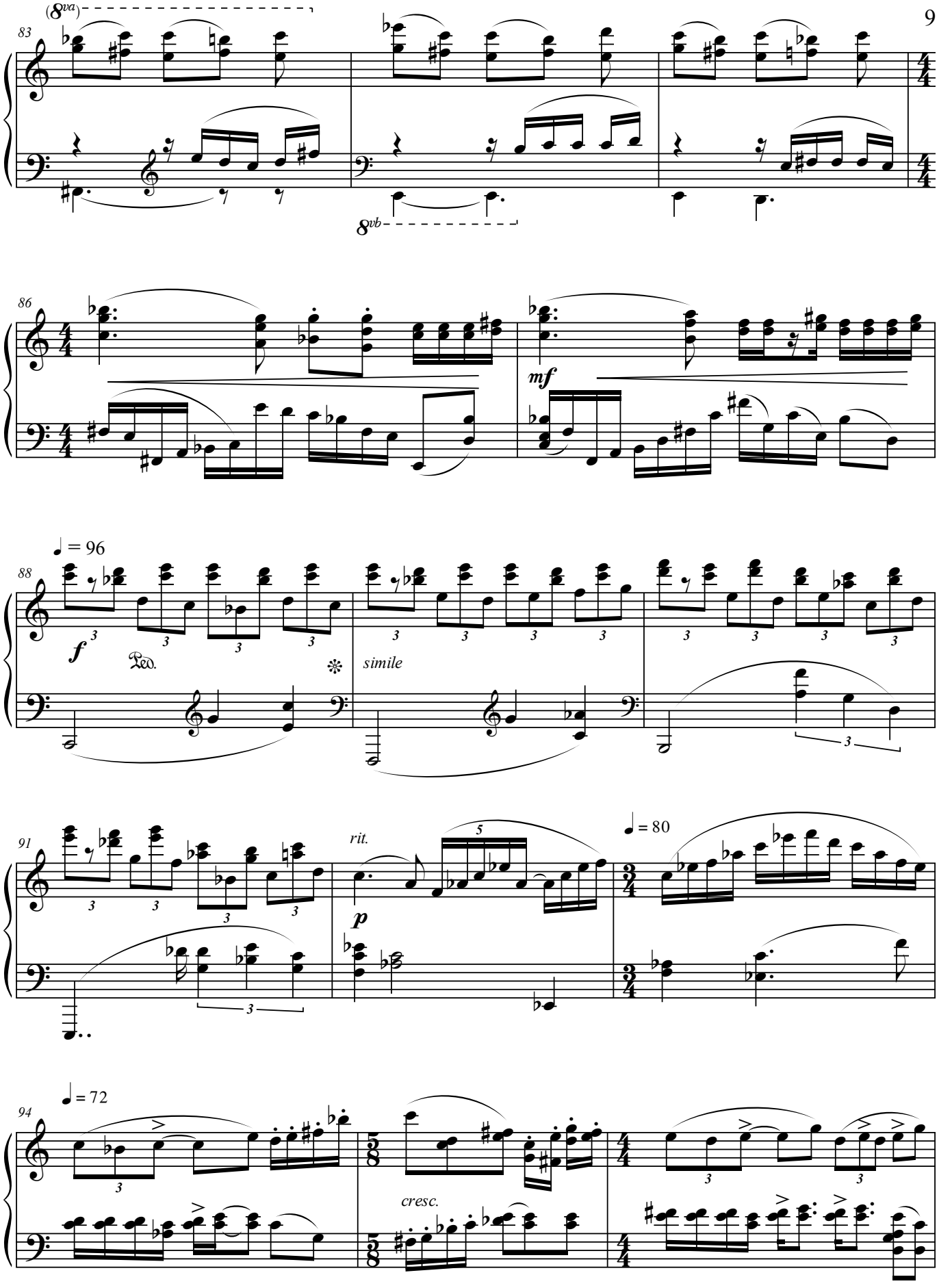

13
p
mp
p
Ped.
16
mf
8vb
18
p
mf
p
8vb
20
5
6
7
f
22
pp
Ped.

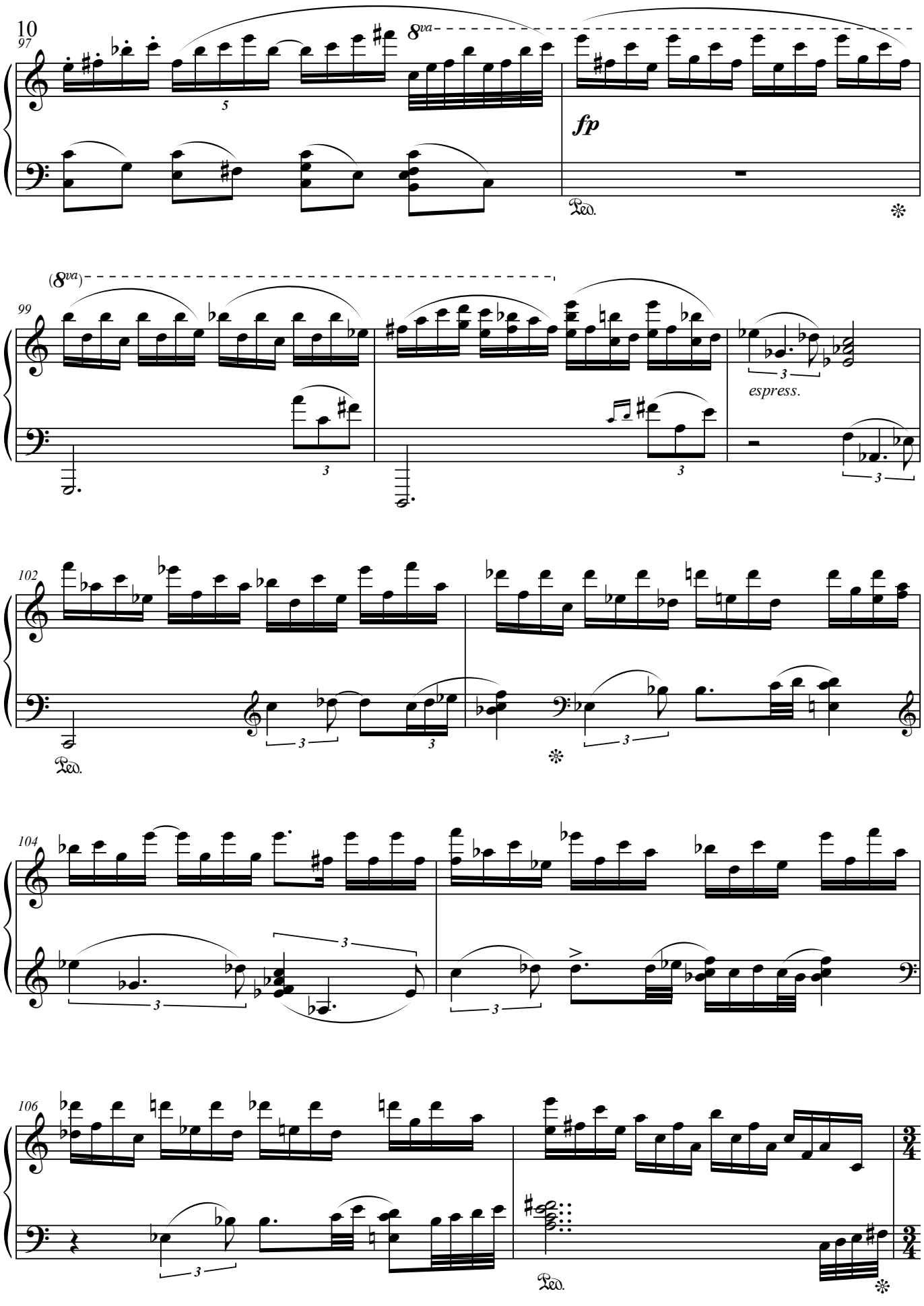

25
mf
f
pp
27
p espress.
30
pp
Ped.
33
mp
mf p
Ped.
Ped.
36
mp
f
mp
f
Ped.
Ped.

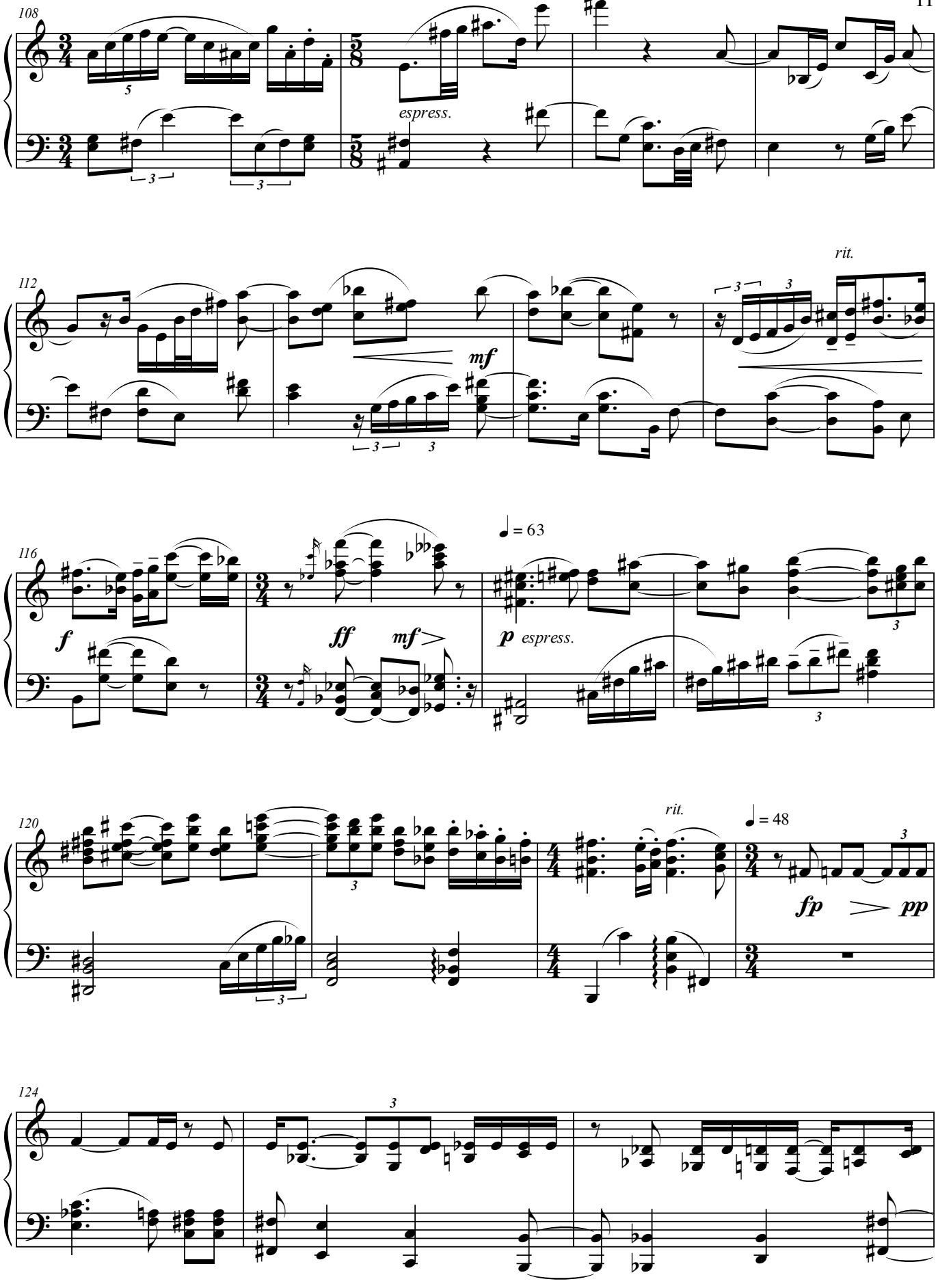

39
mf
fp
fp
42
espress.
46
simile
51
cresc.
rit.
a tempo
f
p
55
cresc.
8va
rit.
f
p

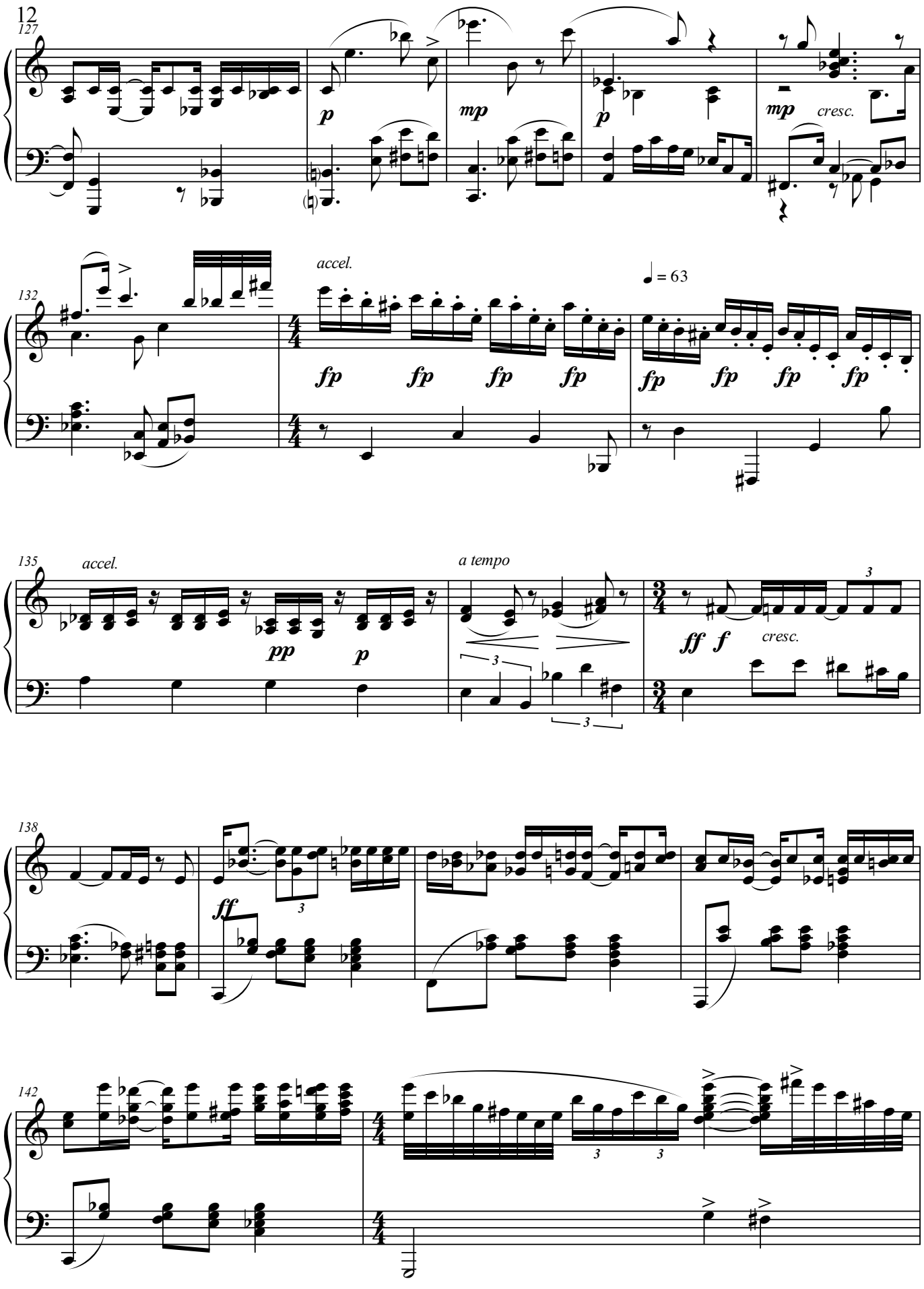

a tempo
58
cresc.
Ped.
59
f
ff
61
mp
fp
espress.
64
pp
67
p

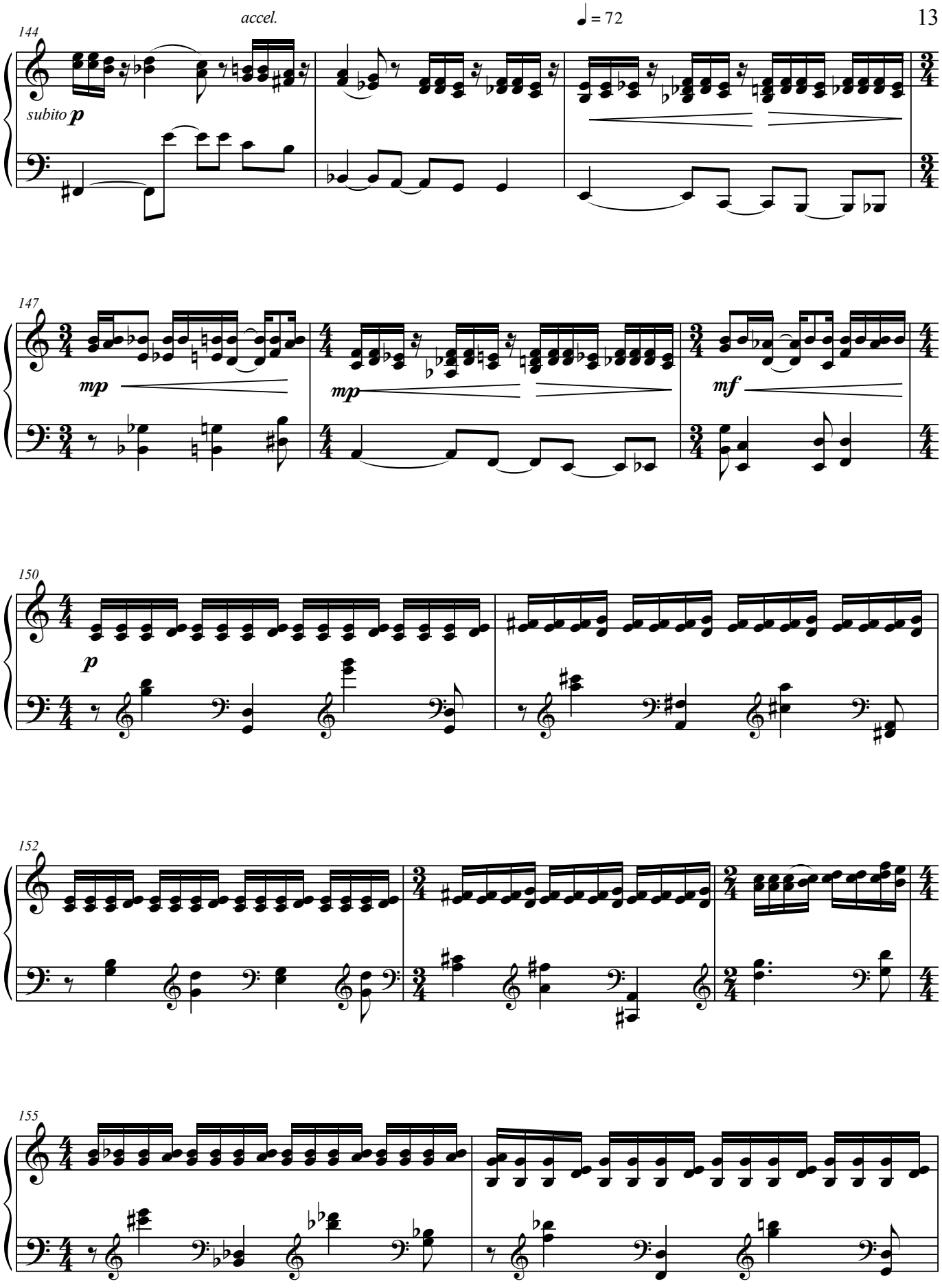

8
69
f
72
rit.
♩ = 72
pp
75
3
77
p
mf
p
80
mf
p
rit.
8va
a tempo

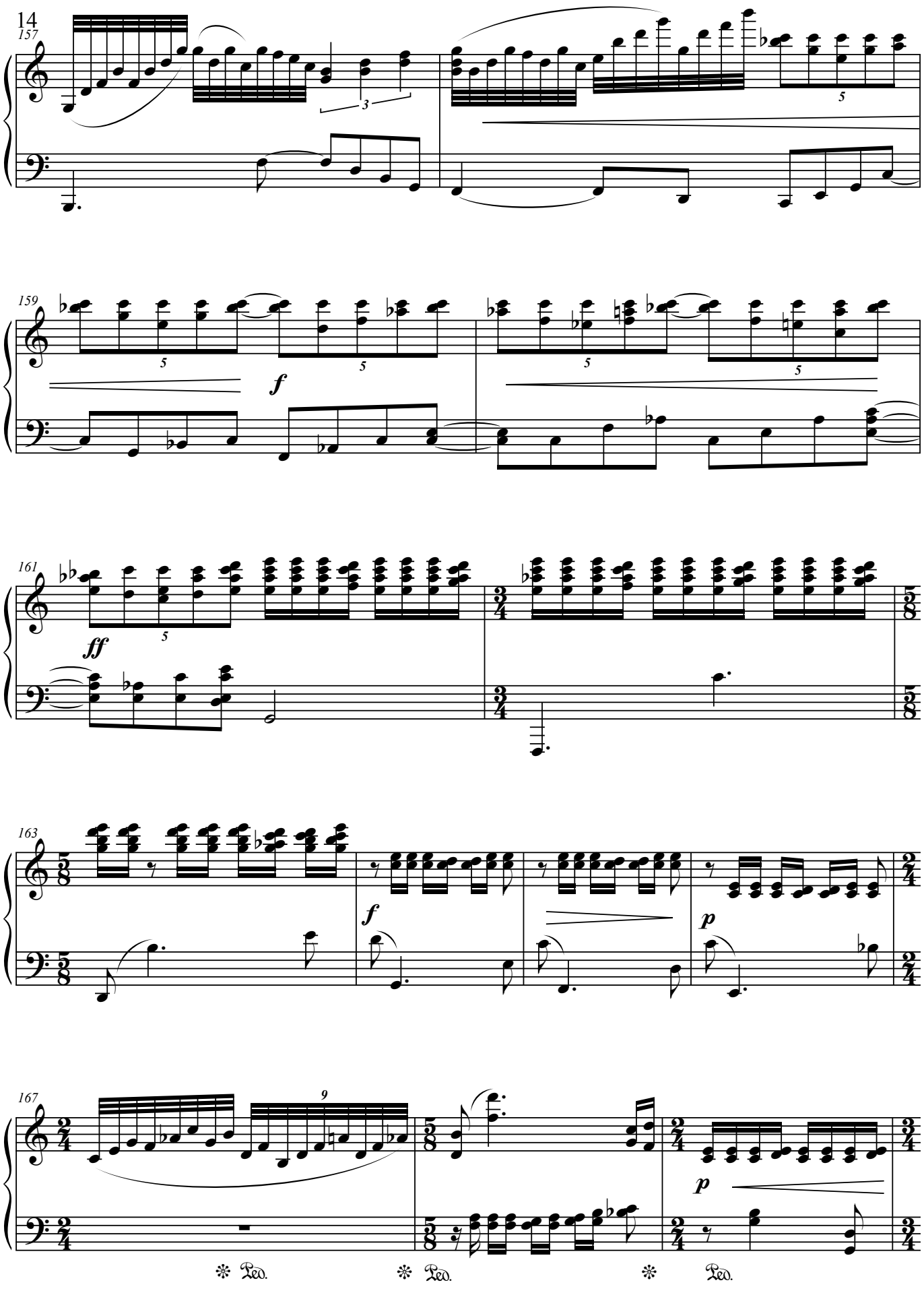

(8va)
83
8vb
86
mf
88
♩ = 96
f
Ped.
simile
91
rit.
p
♩ = 80
94
♩ = 72
cresc.

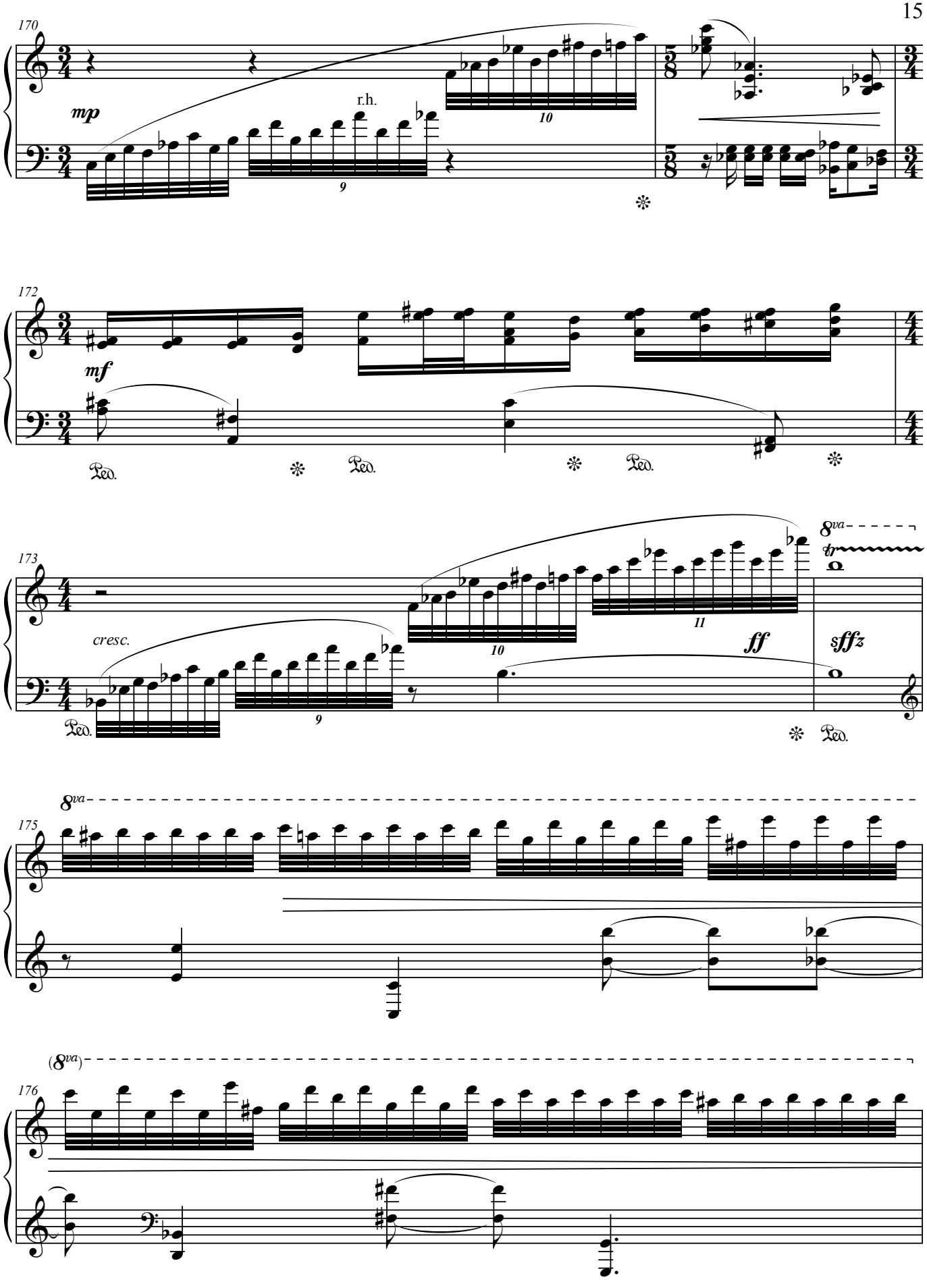

97
8va
fp
Ped.
(8va)
99
espress.
102
Ped.
104
106
Ped.


108
espress.
112
rit.
mf
116
f
ff
mf
♩ = 63
p espress.
120
rit.
♩ = 48
fp pp
124


127
p
mp
p
mp
cresc.
132
accel.
♩ = 63
fp fp fp fp
fp fp fp fp
135
accel.
pp
p
a tempo
ff f
cresc.
138
ff
142


accel.
♩ = 72
144
subito p
147
mp
mp
mf
150
p
152
155


157
159
161
163
167
f
ff
p
Ped.


170
mp
r.h.
9
10
172
mf
Ped.
173
cresc.
9
10
11
ff
sffz
8va
tr
175
(8va)
176

177

p *pp*

8vb

179 *accel.*

p *pp*

181 ♩ = 80

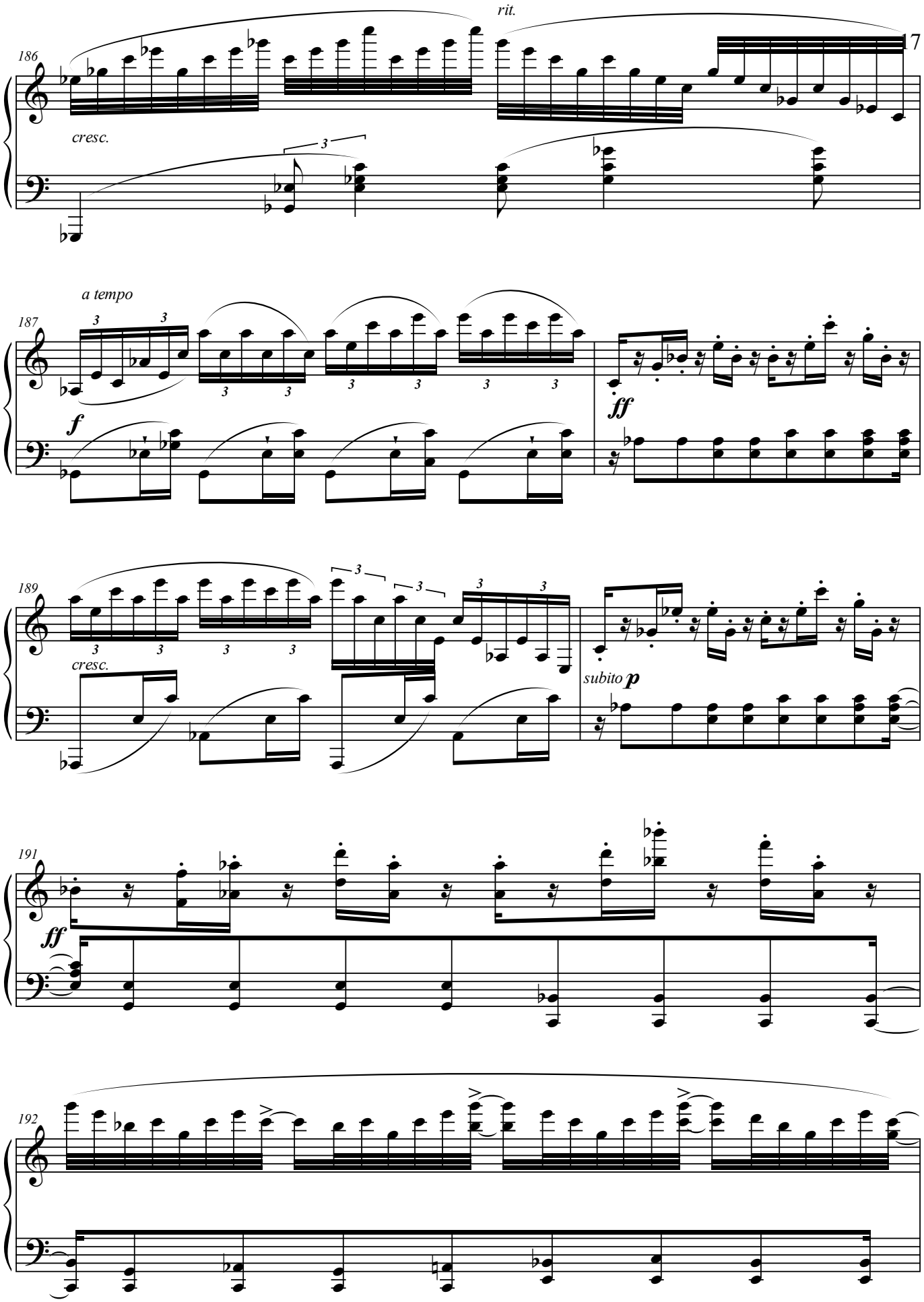
p *cresc.* *p* *cresc.*

183

mp *cresc.* *mf*

185

mf


rit.
186
cresc.
3
a tempo
187
3
f
ff
189
cresc.
subito p
191
ff
192

193

194

195

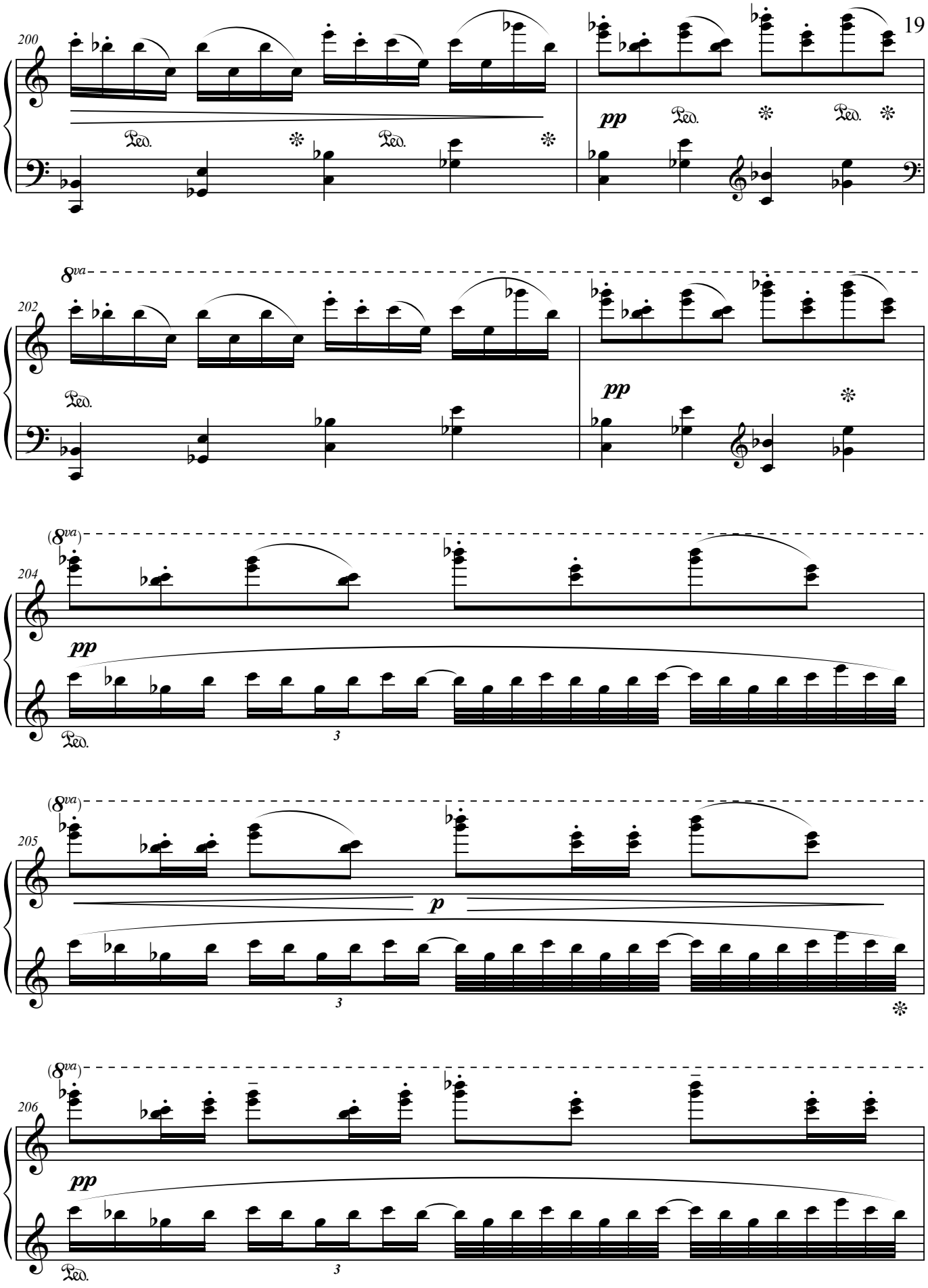
rit.

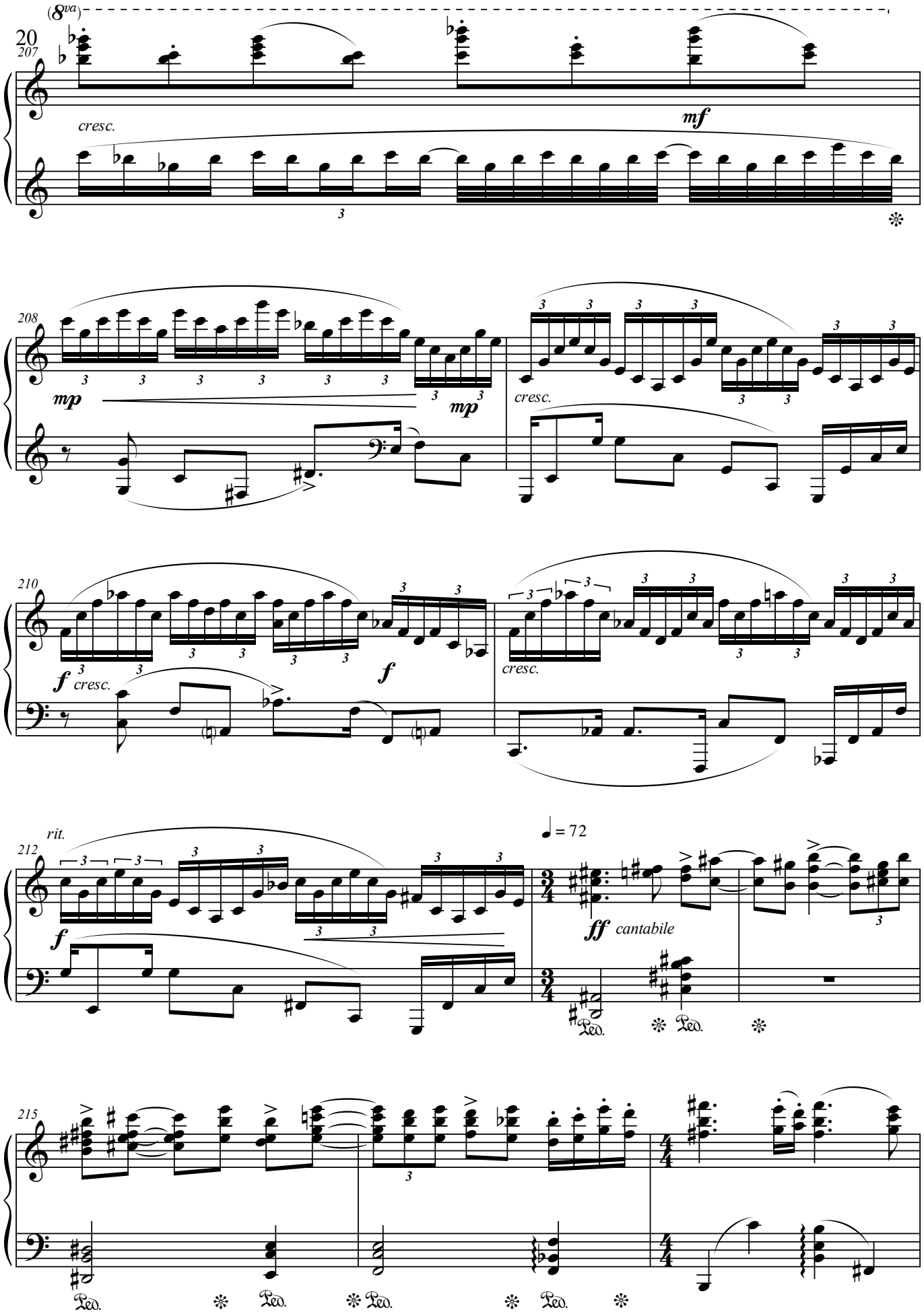
196

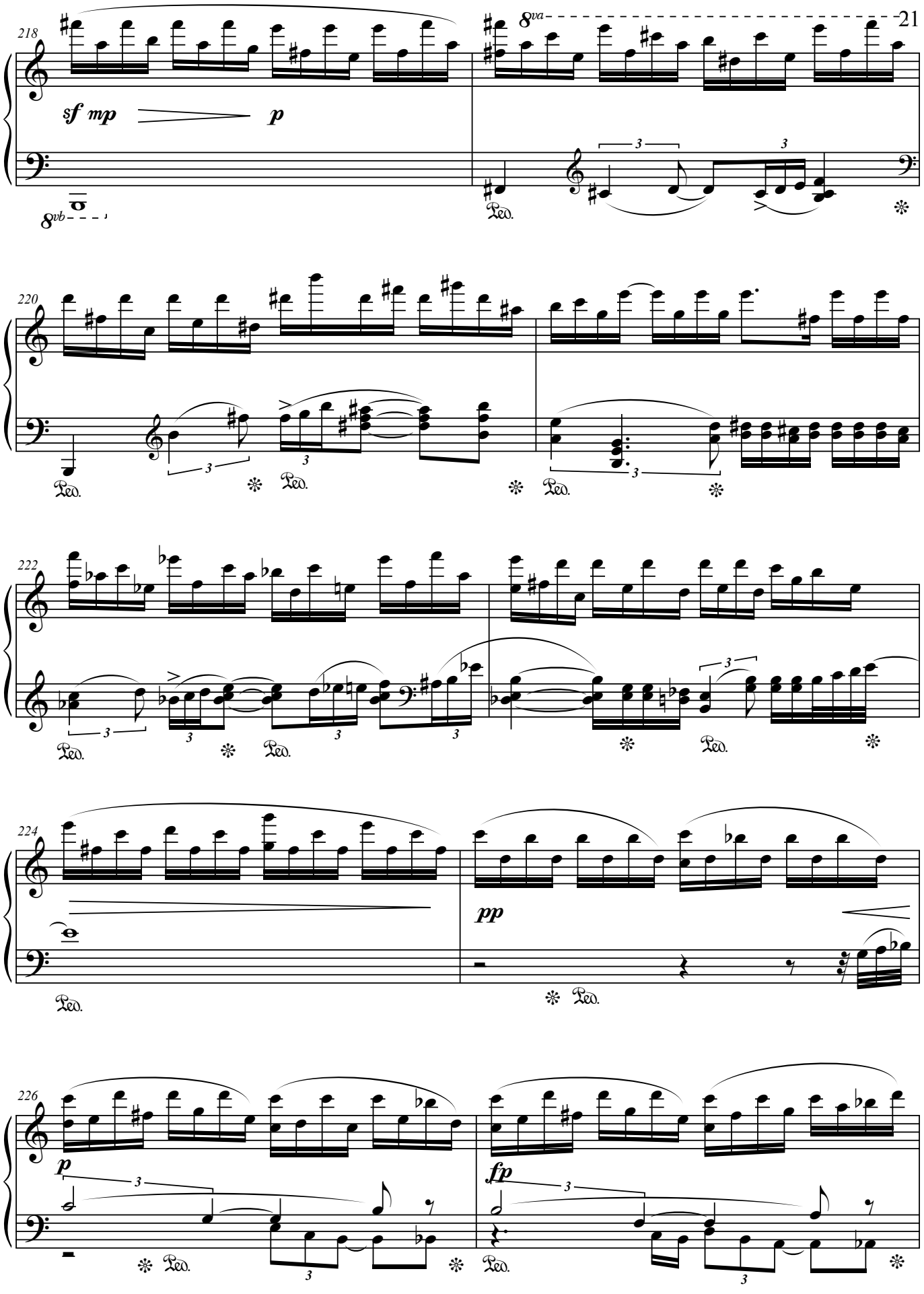
a tempo

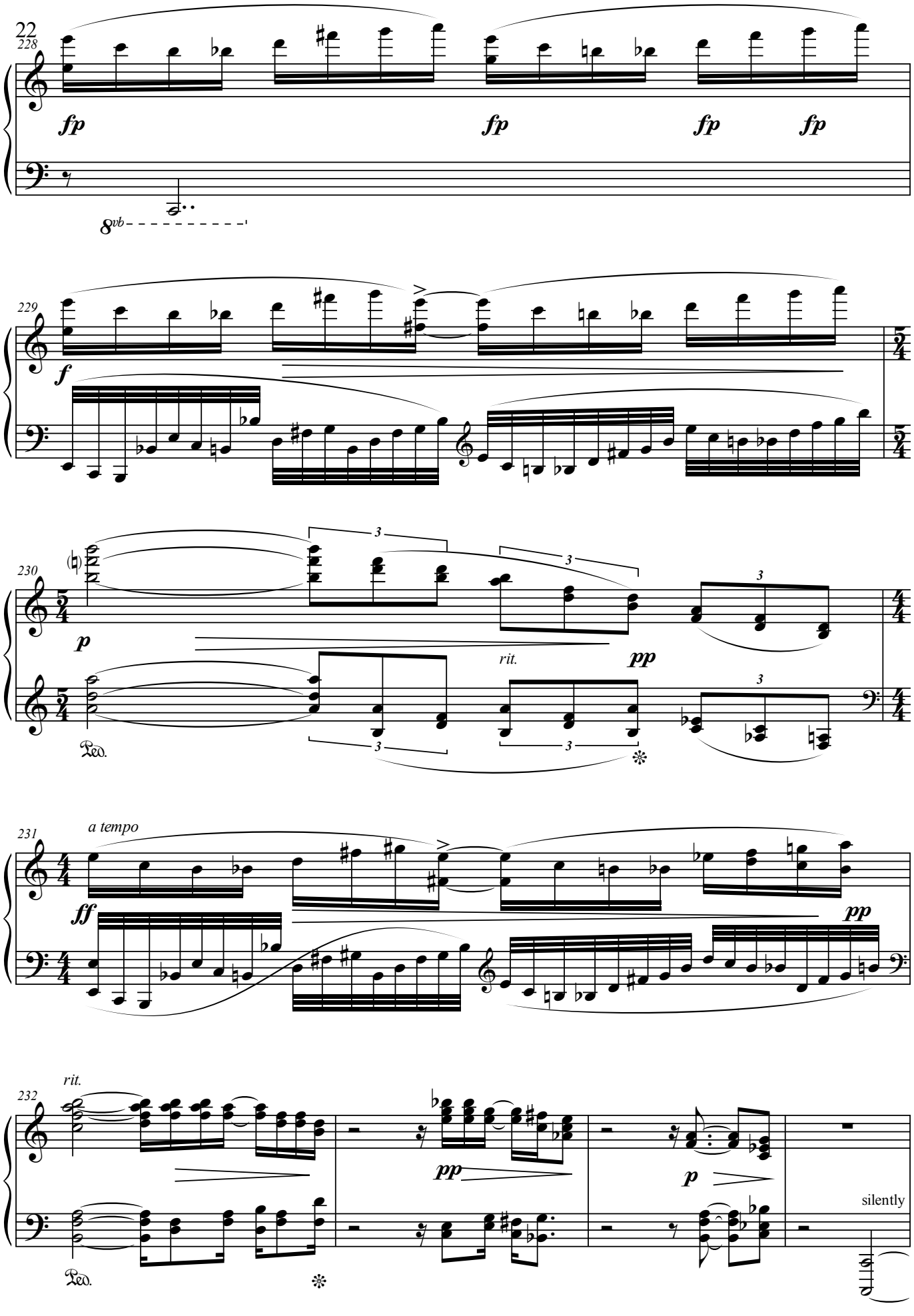
subito *p*

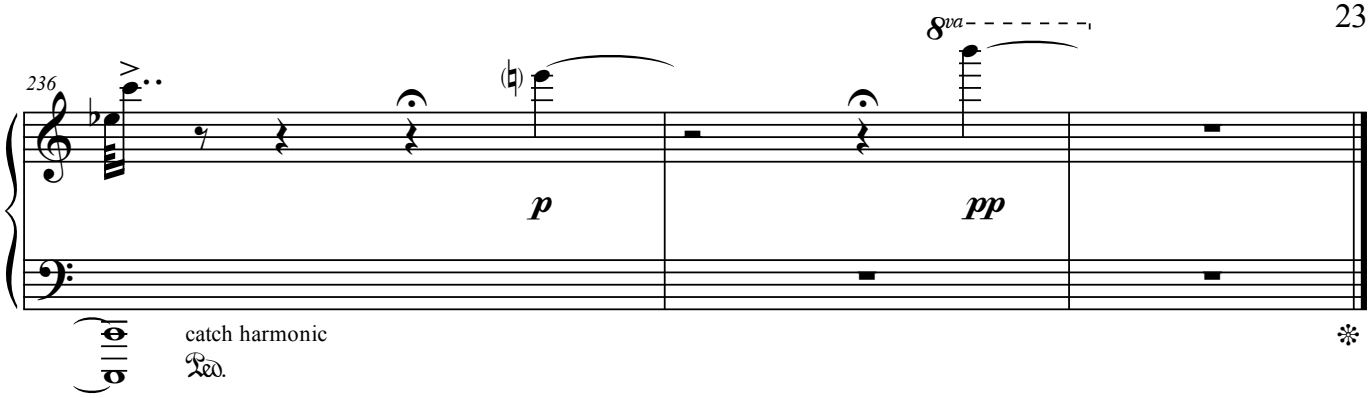
198


200
pp
Ped.
202
8va
204
(8va)
205
p
206


(8va)
207
cresc.
mf
208
mp
mp
cresc.
210
f cresc.
f
cresc.
212
rit.
f
♩ = 72
ff cantabile
Ped.
215
Ped.


218
8va
sf mp
p
8vb
Ped.
220
Ped.
222
Ped.
224
pp
Ped.
226
p
fp
Ped.


228
fp
fp
fp
fp
8vb
229
f
5/4
230
p
rit.
pp
Ped.
4/4
231
a tempo
ff
pp
232
rit.
pp
p
silently
Ped.


236
8va
p
pp
catch harmonic
Ped.