The Wild Swans

For Piano

2009

Lawrence Kramer

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"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 a little over 11 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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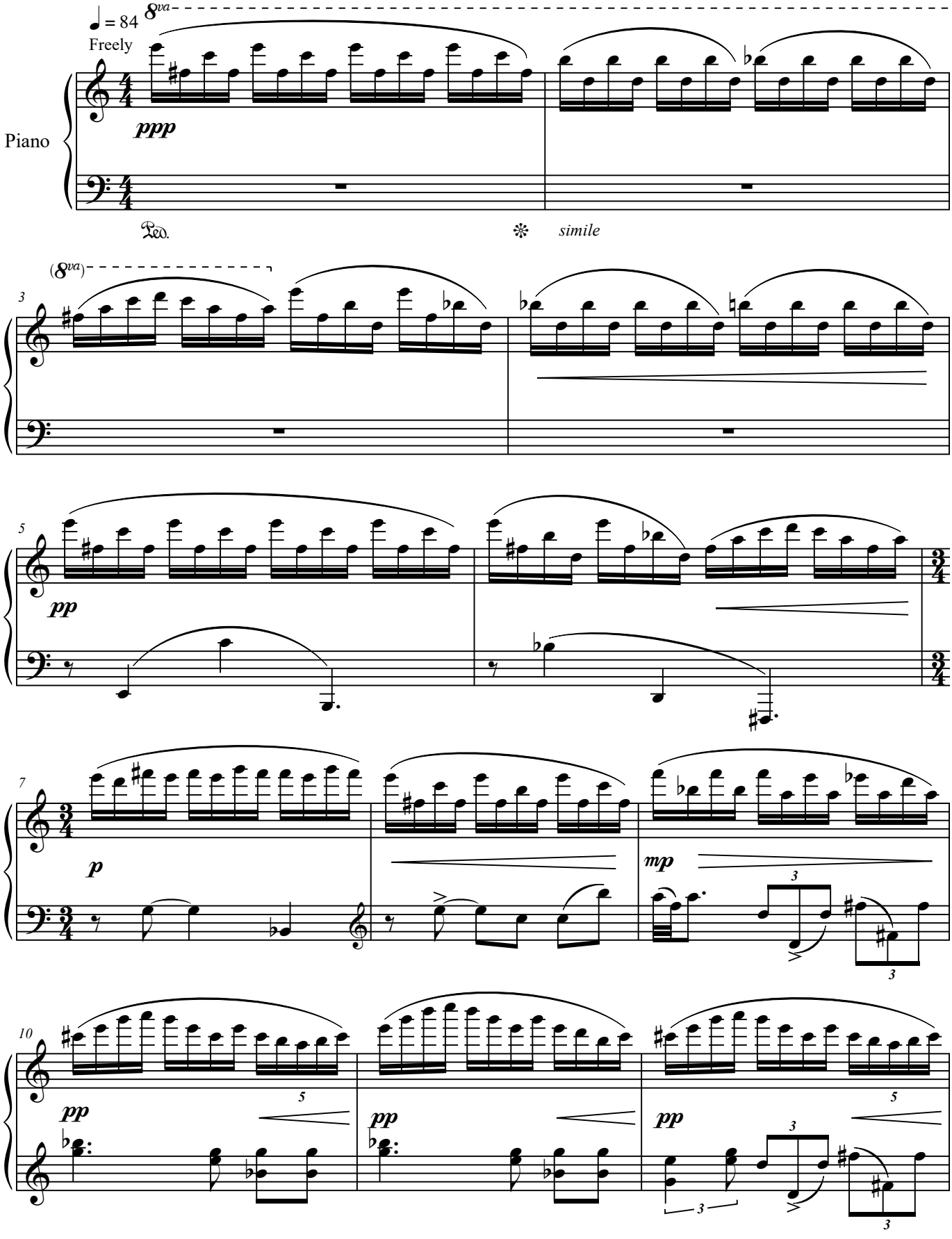
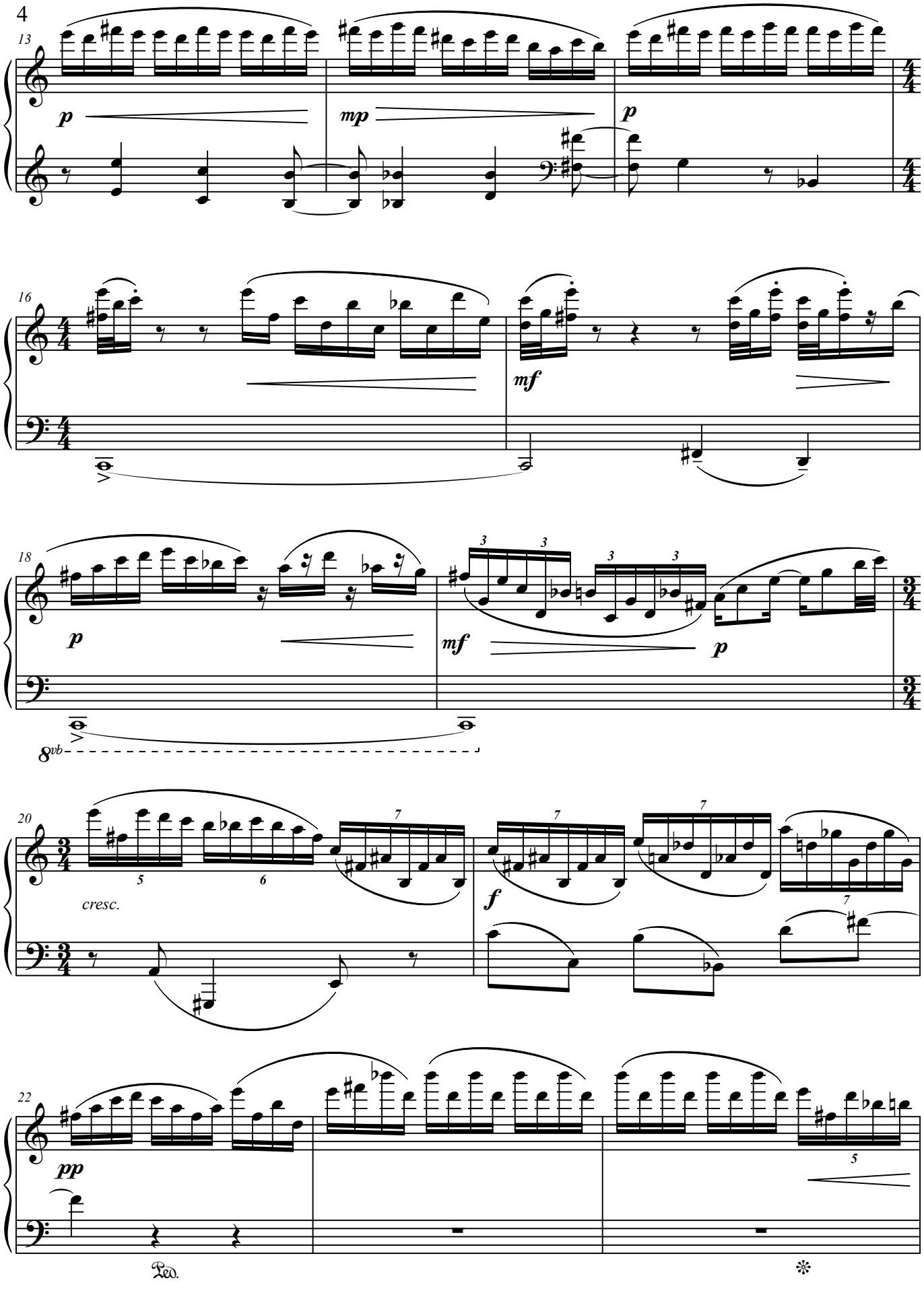
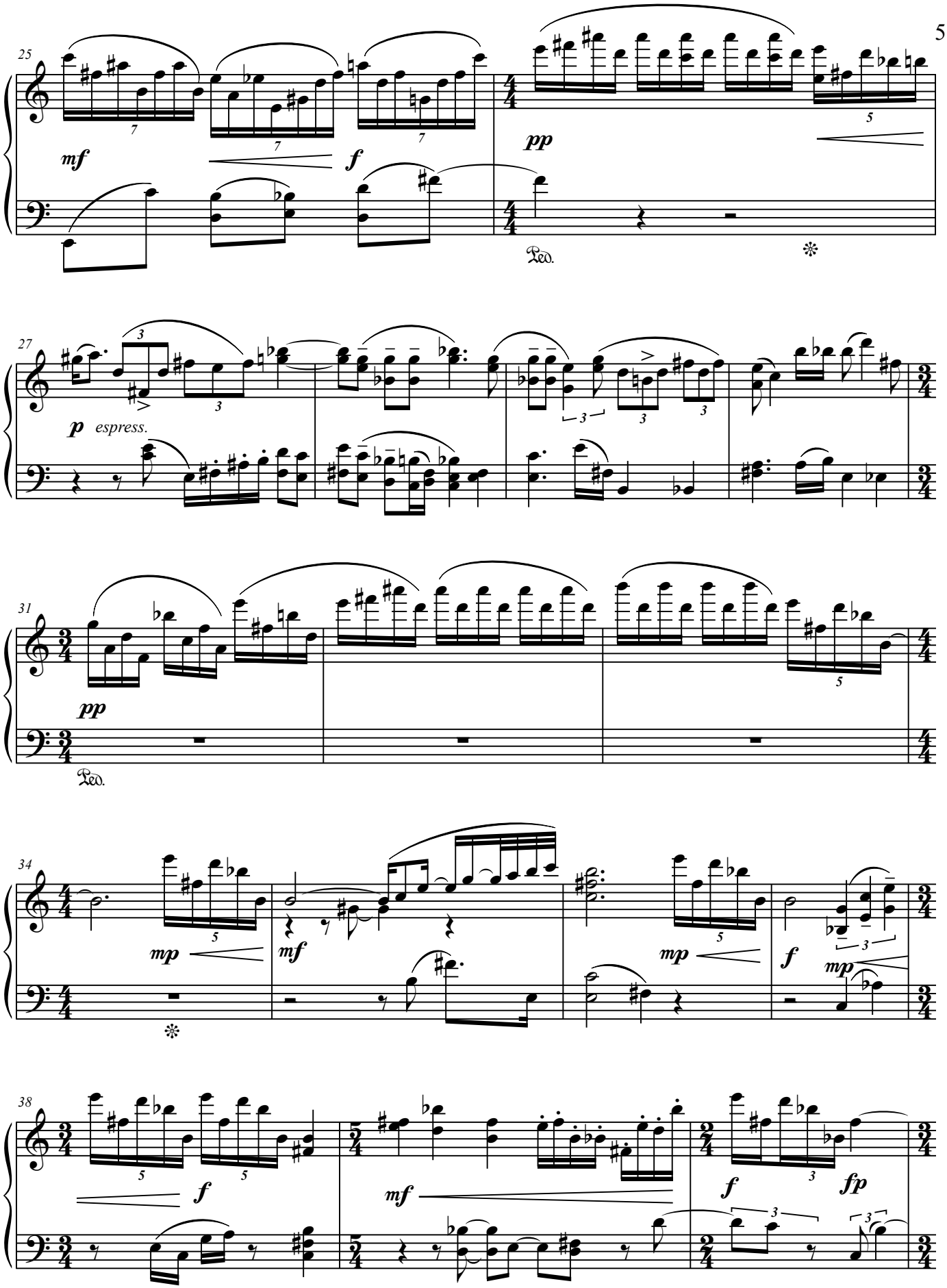
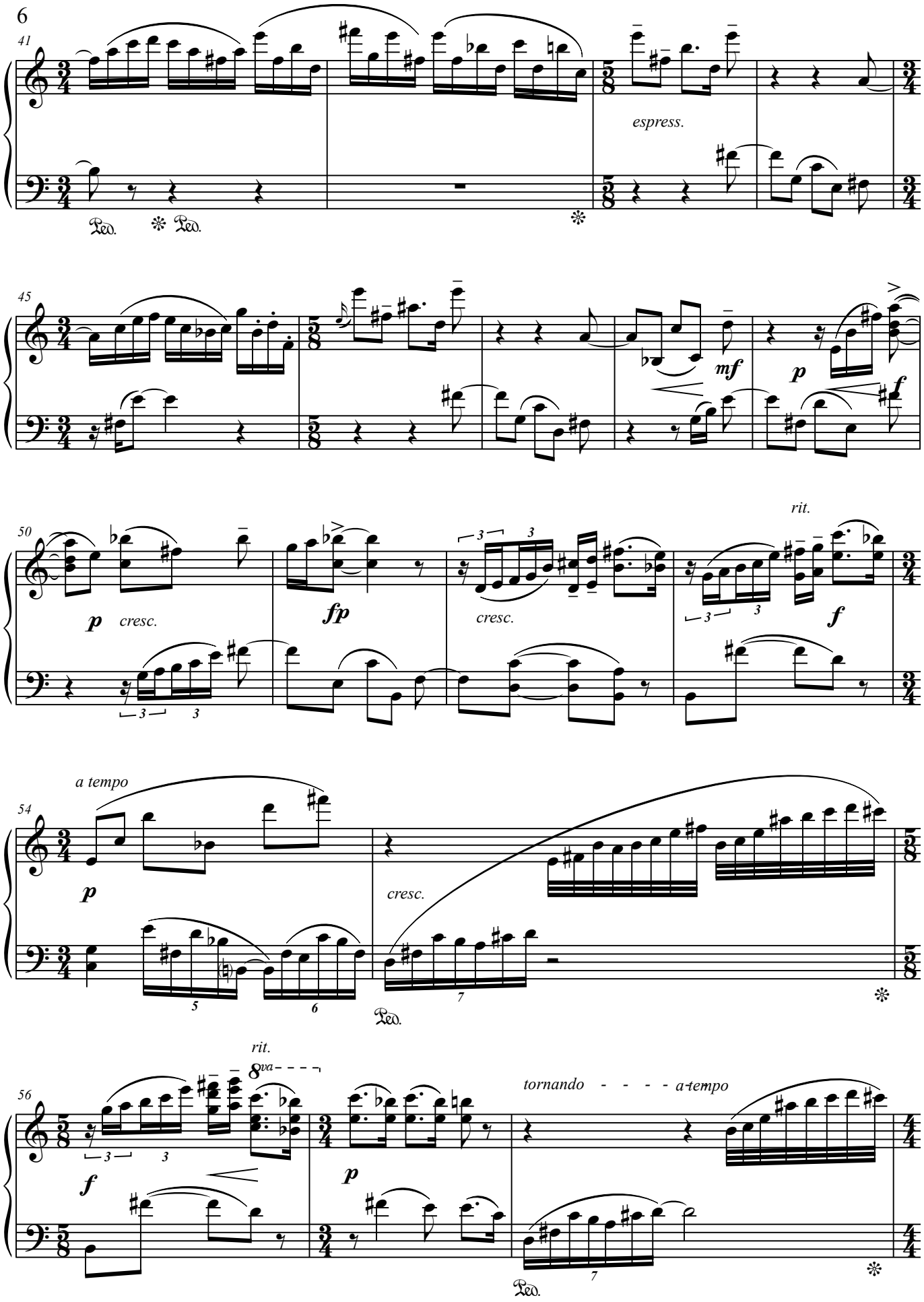
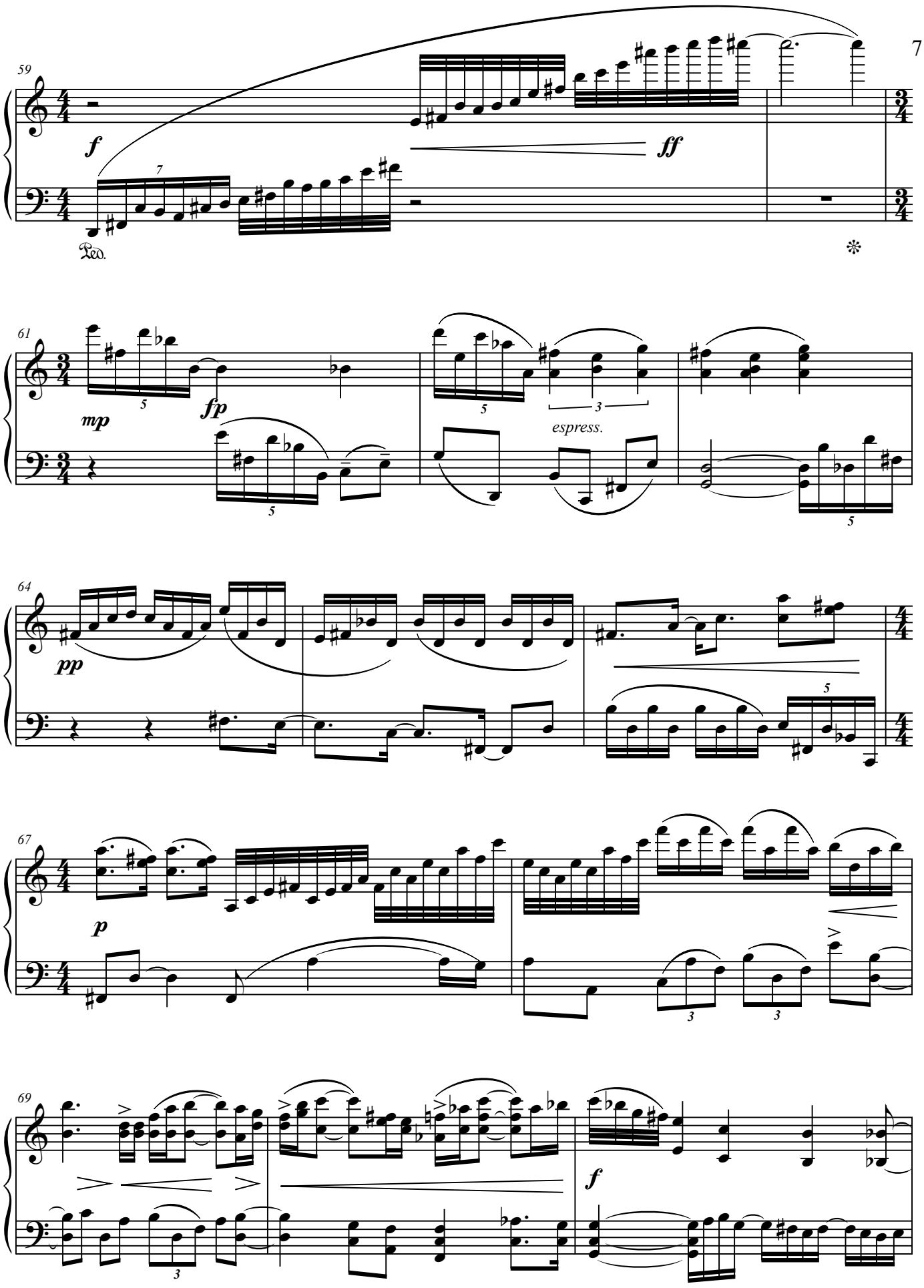
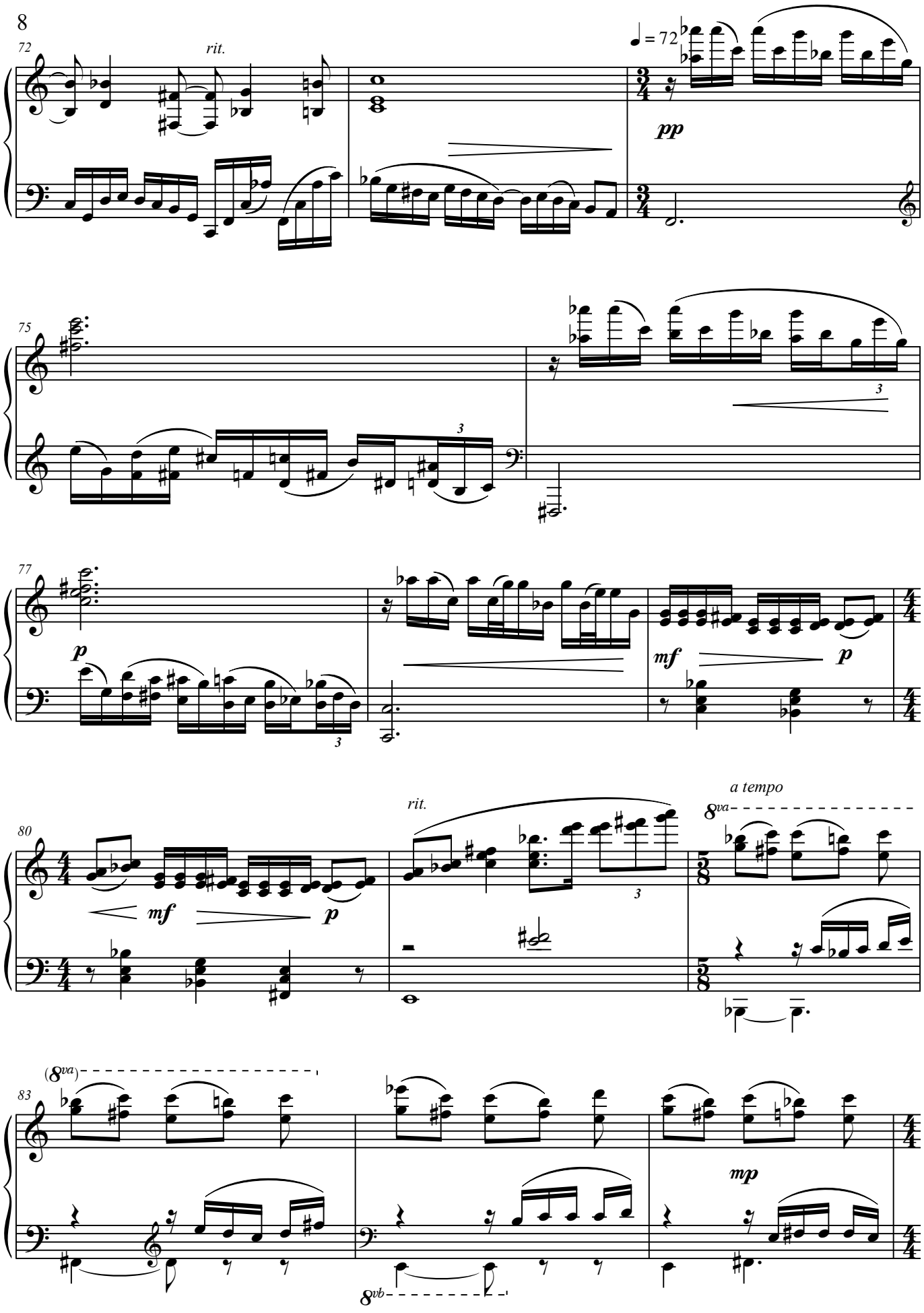


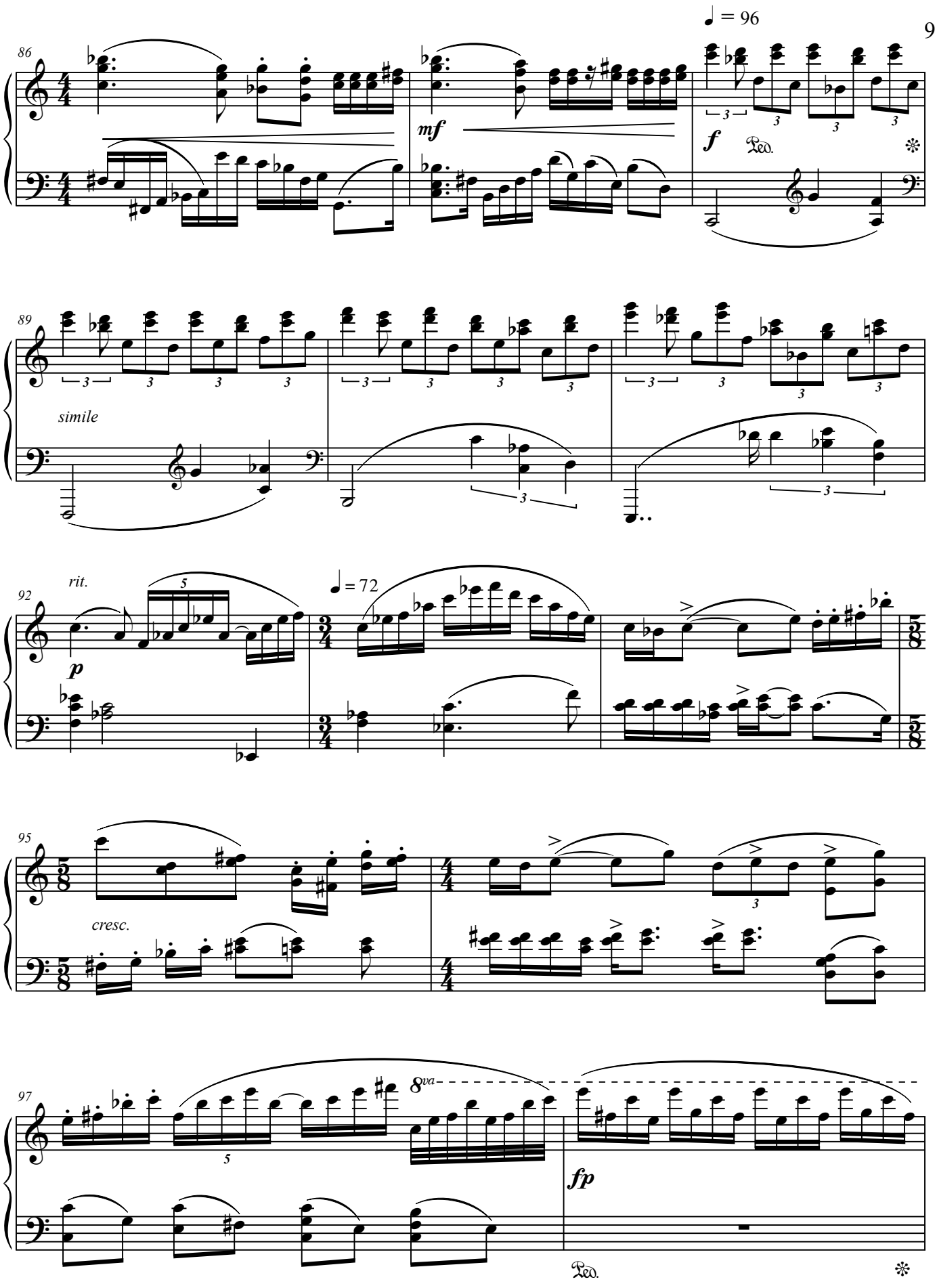

13
p
mp
p
16
mf
18
p
mf
p
8vb
20
cresc.
f
22
pp
Ped.
*

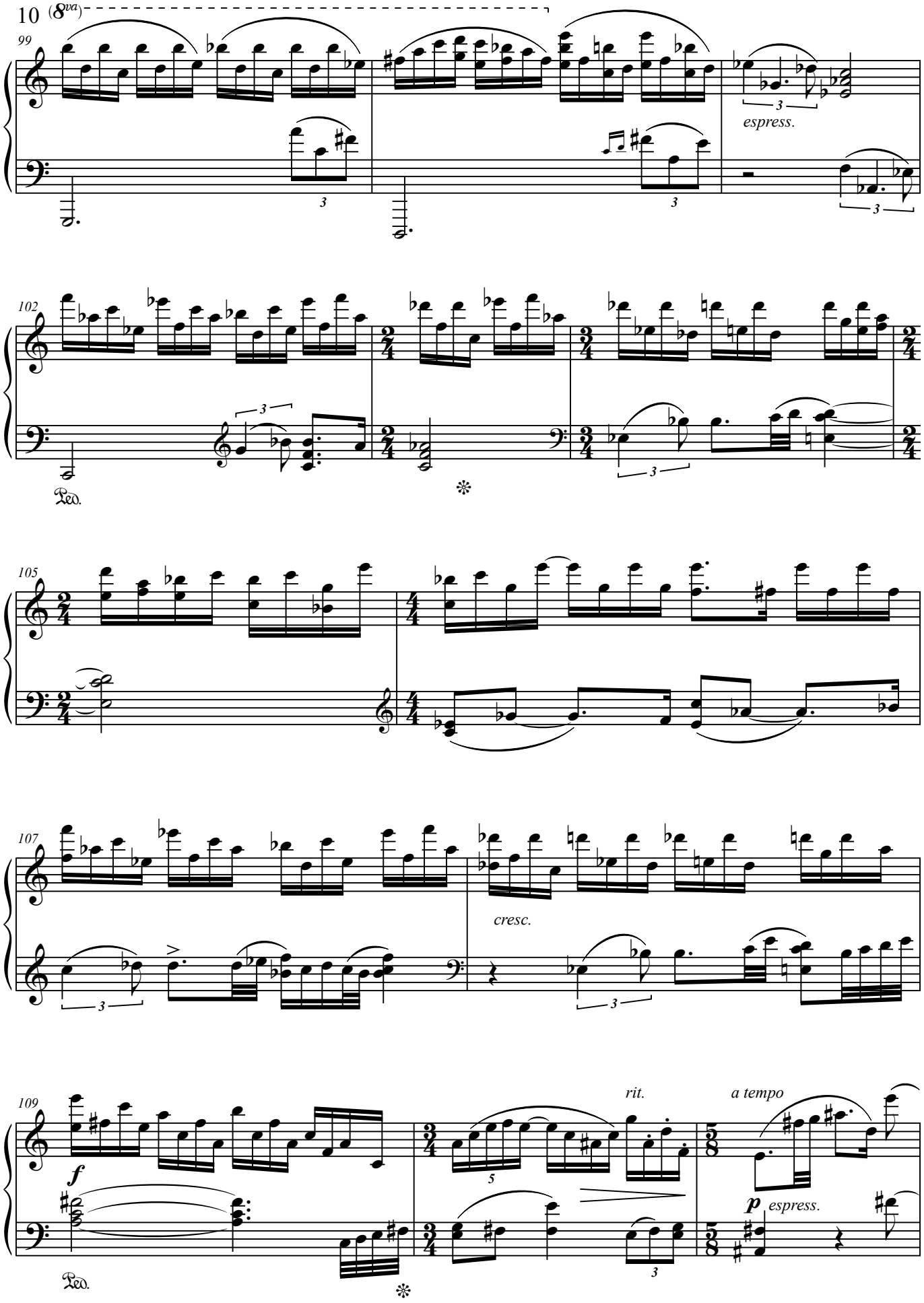

25
mf
f
pp
Ped.
27
p espress.
31
pp
Ped.
34
mp
mf
mp
f
mp
38
f
mf
f
fp

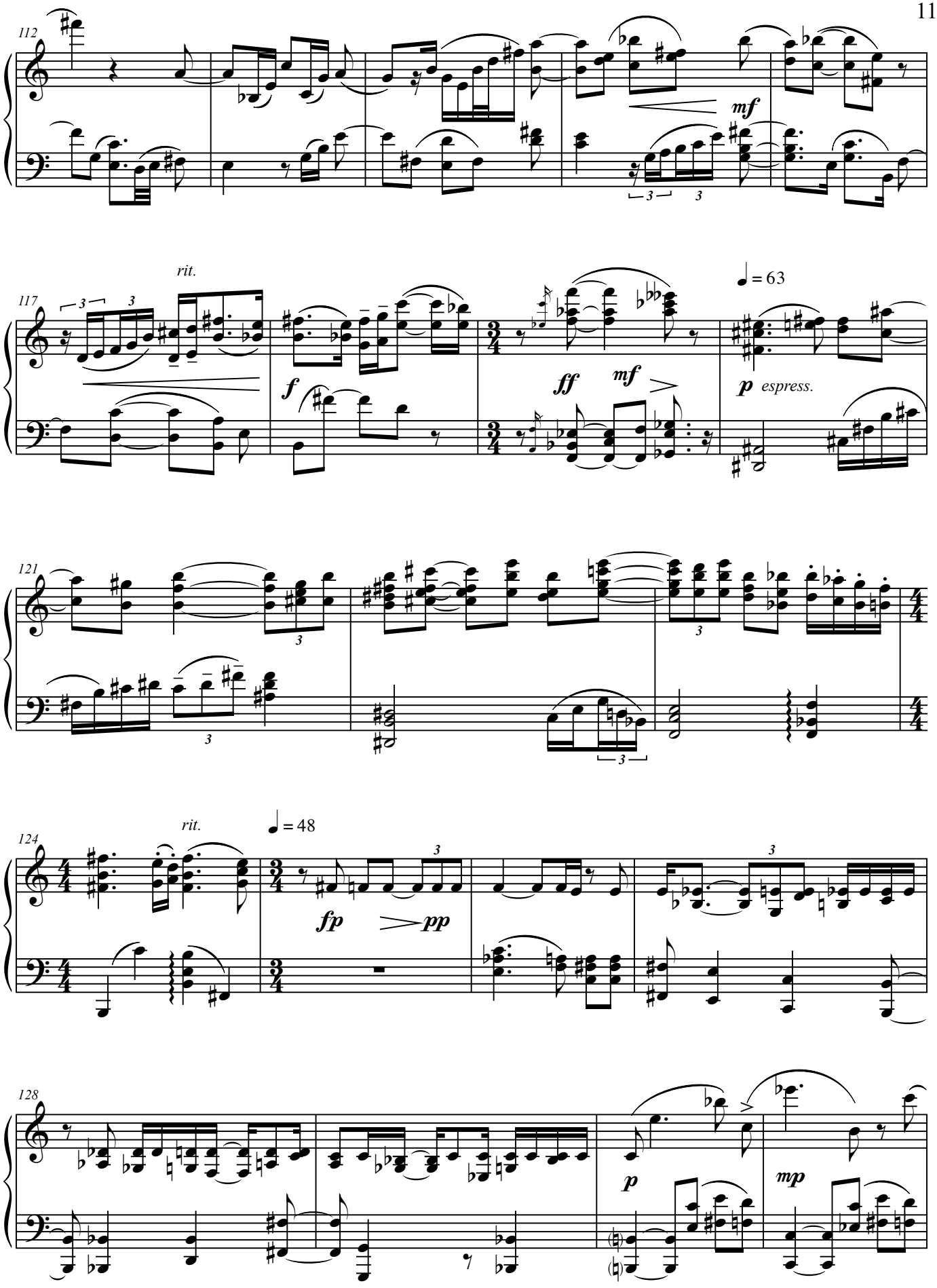

41
espress.
45
mf
p
f
50
p
cresc.
fp
cresc.
rit.
f
54
a tempo
p
cresc.
56
rit.
8va
f
p
tornando - - - - a tempo

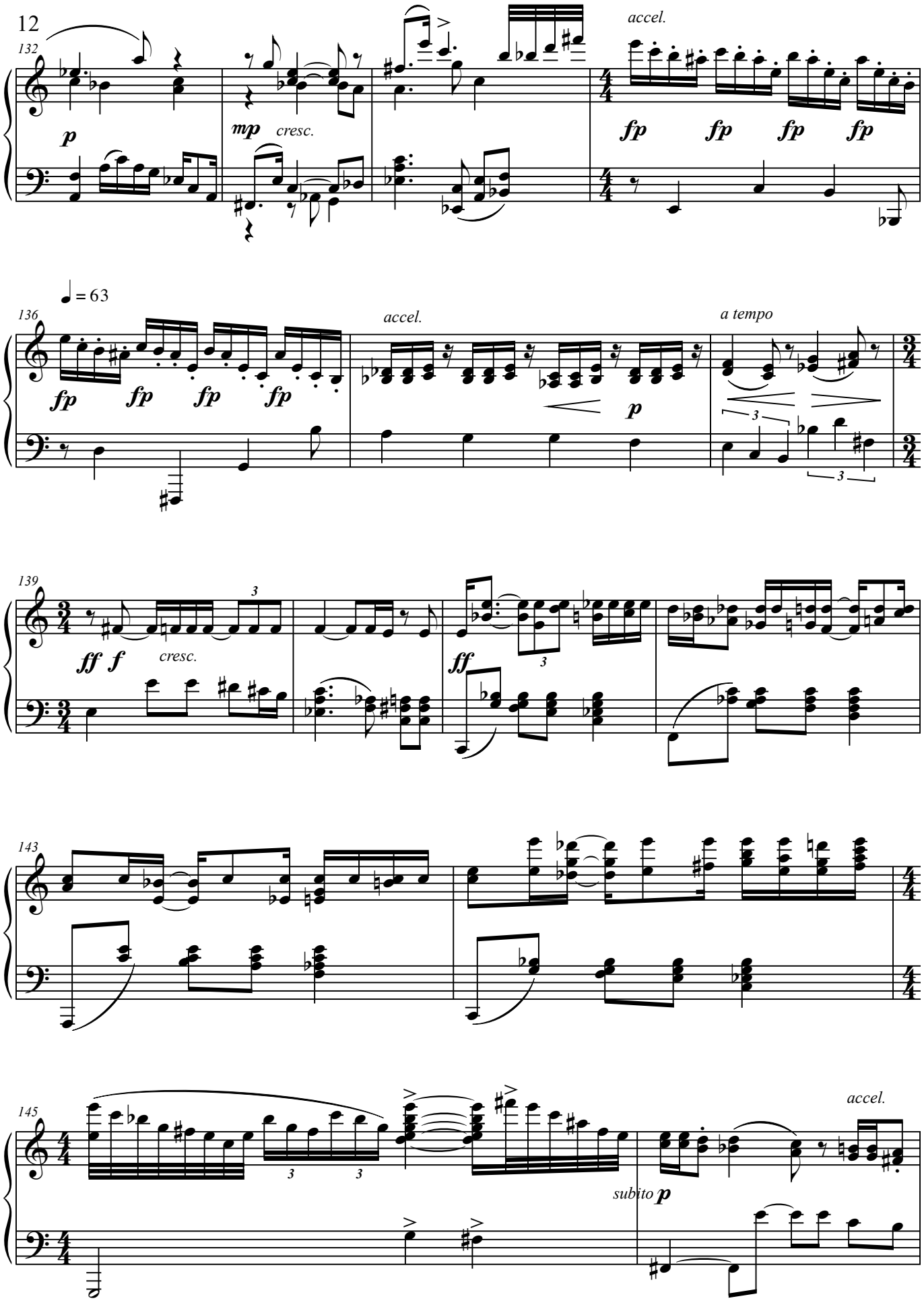

59
f
ff
Ped.
61
mp
fp
espress.
64
pp
67
p
69
f

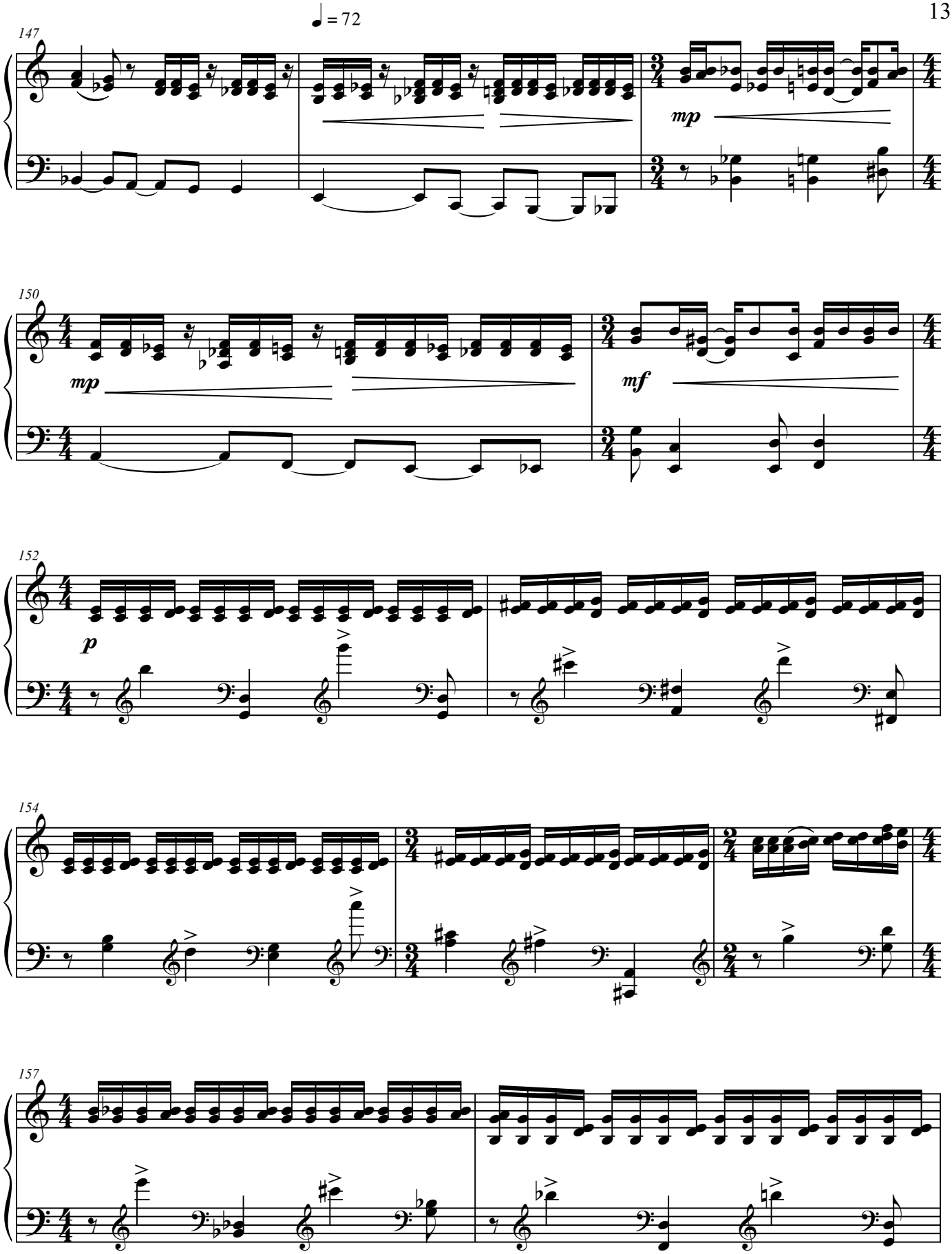

72
rit.
♩ = 72
pp
75
3
3
77
p
3
mf
p
80
mf
p
rit.
3
a tempo
8va
(8va)
83
mp
8vb

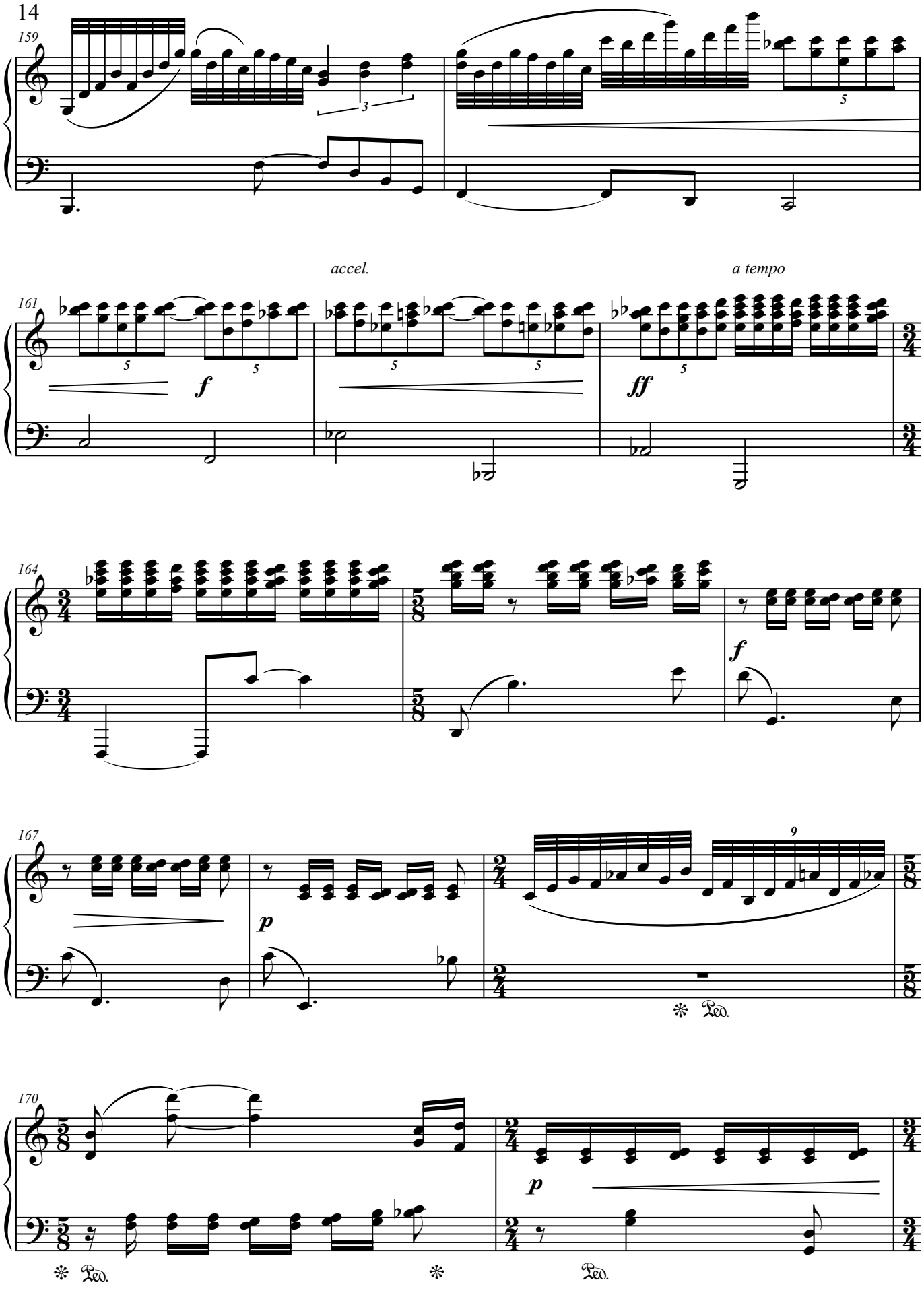

♩ = 96
86
mf
f
Ped.
89
simile
92
rit.
p
♩ = 72
95
cresc.
97
8va
fp
Ped.

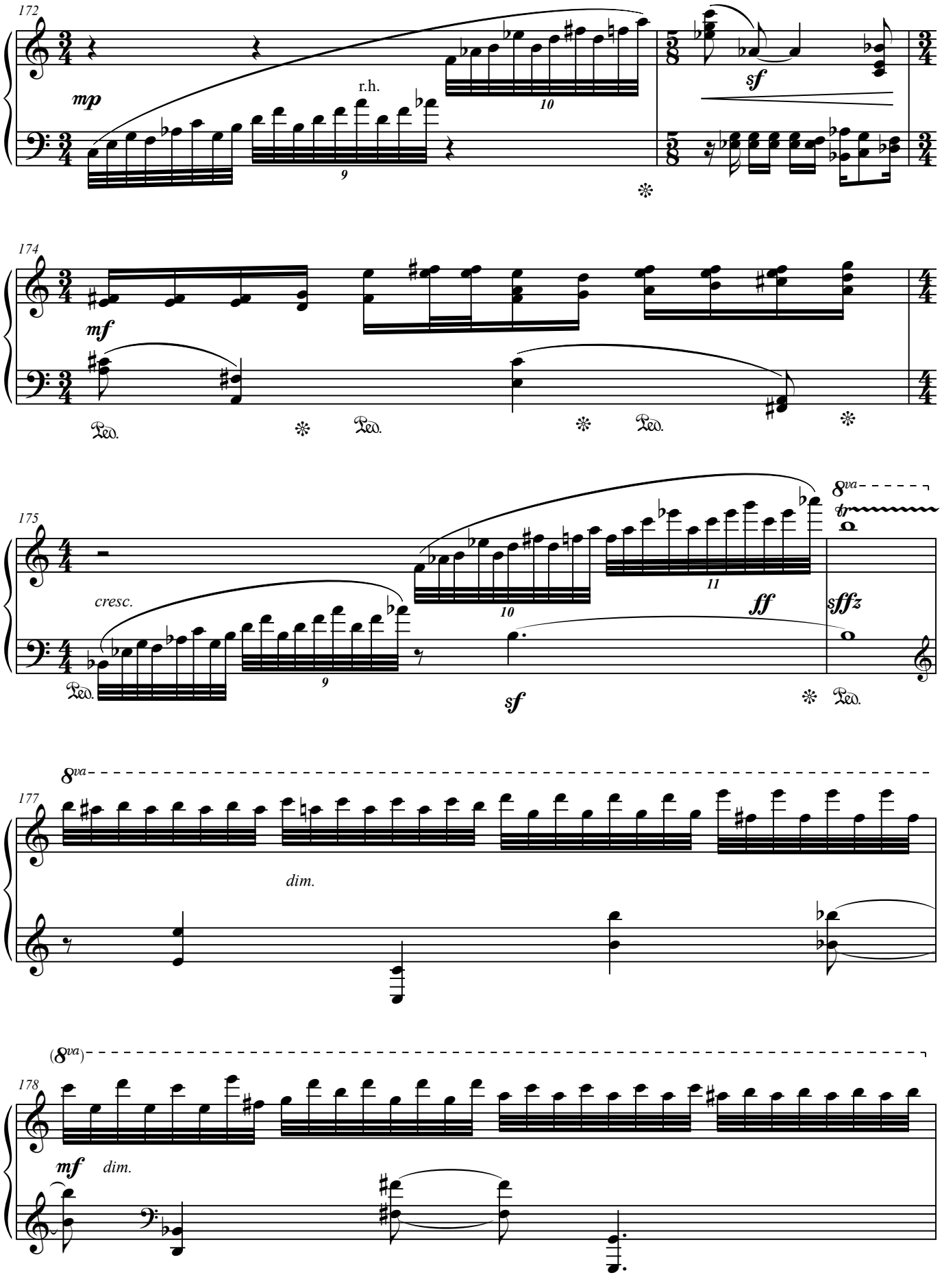

(8va)
99
espress.
102
Ped.
105
107
cresc.
109
f
rit.
a tempo
p
espress.
Ped.

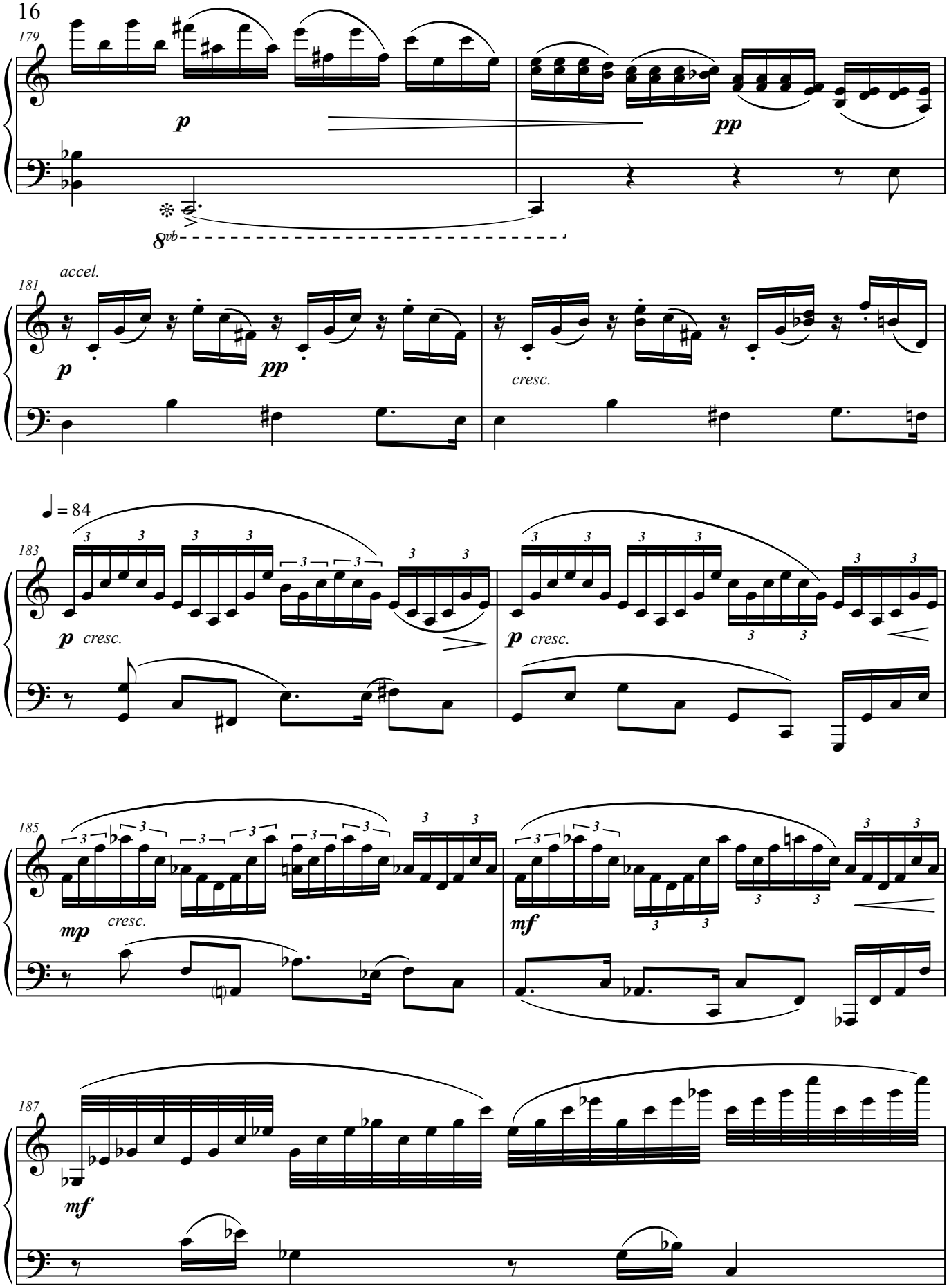

112
mf
117
rit.
f
ff
mf
♩ = 63
p espress.
121
124
rit.
♩ = 48
fp
pp
128
p
mp

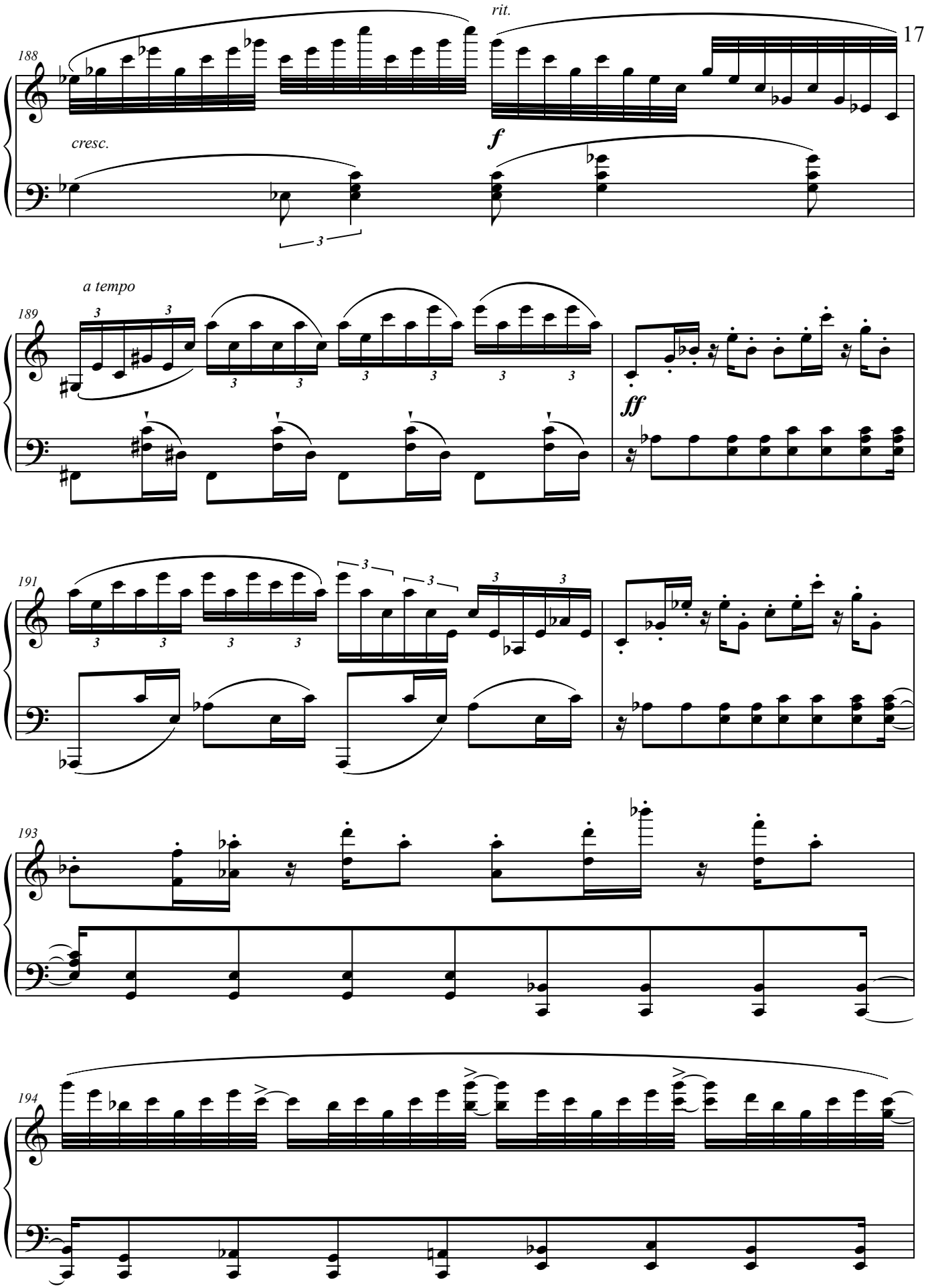

132
p
mp
cresc.
accel.
fp
fp
fp
fp
♩ = 63
136
fp
fp
fp
fp
accel.
p
a tempo
3
3
139
ff
f
cresc.
3
ff
3
143
145
3
3
accel.
subito p

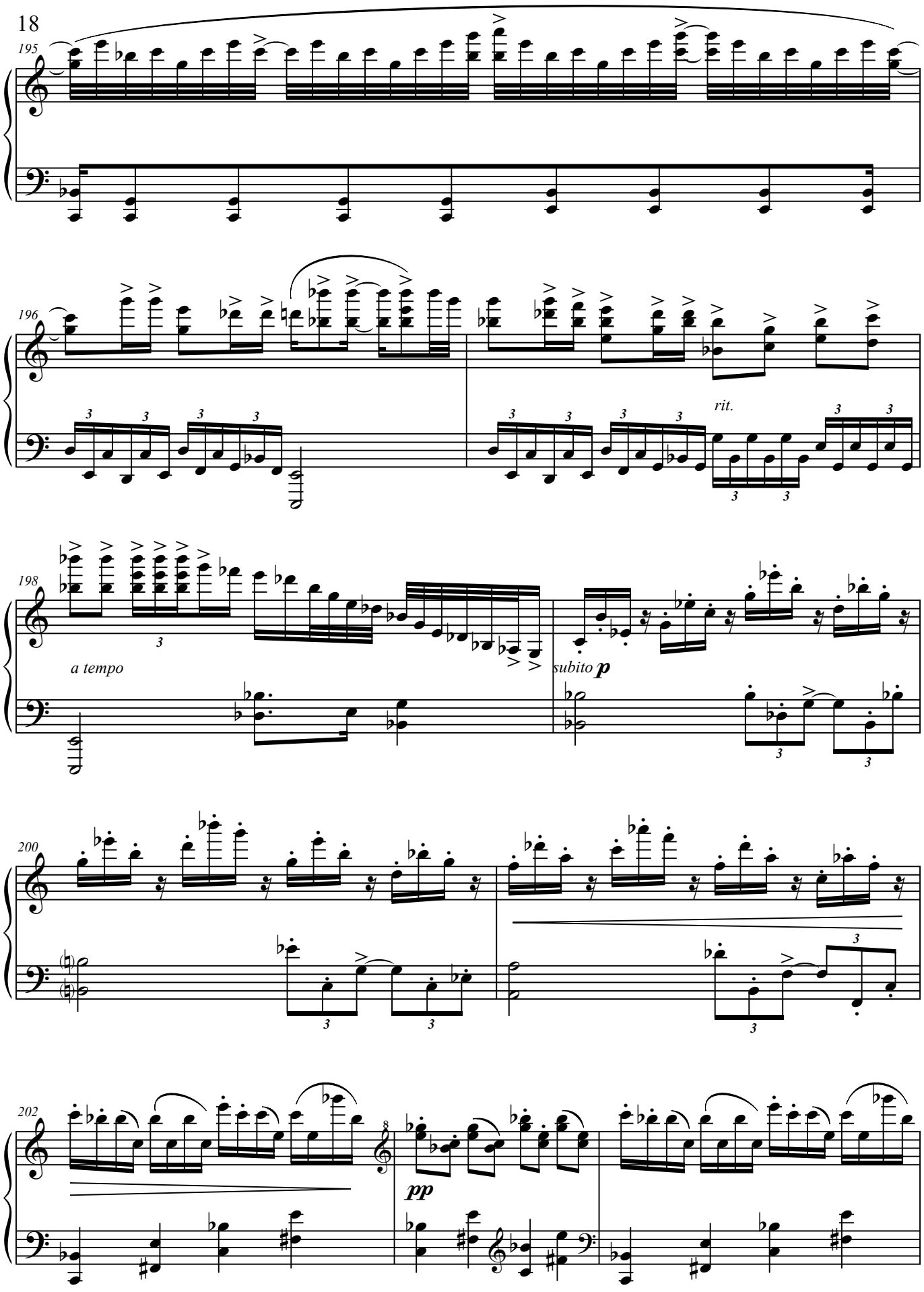

♩ = 72
147
mp
150
mp
mf
152
p
154
157

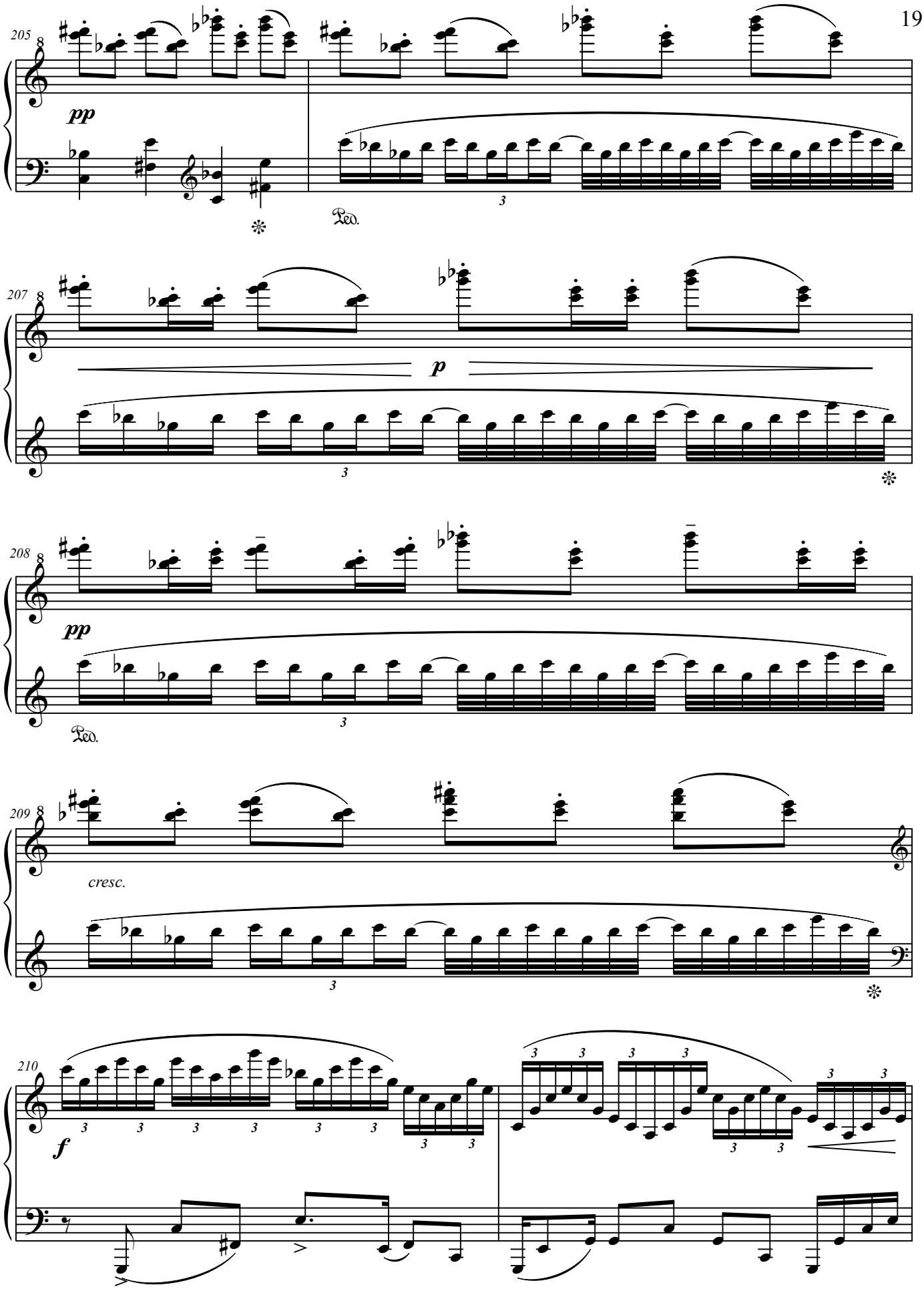

159
accel.
a tempo
161
164
167
170
Ped.

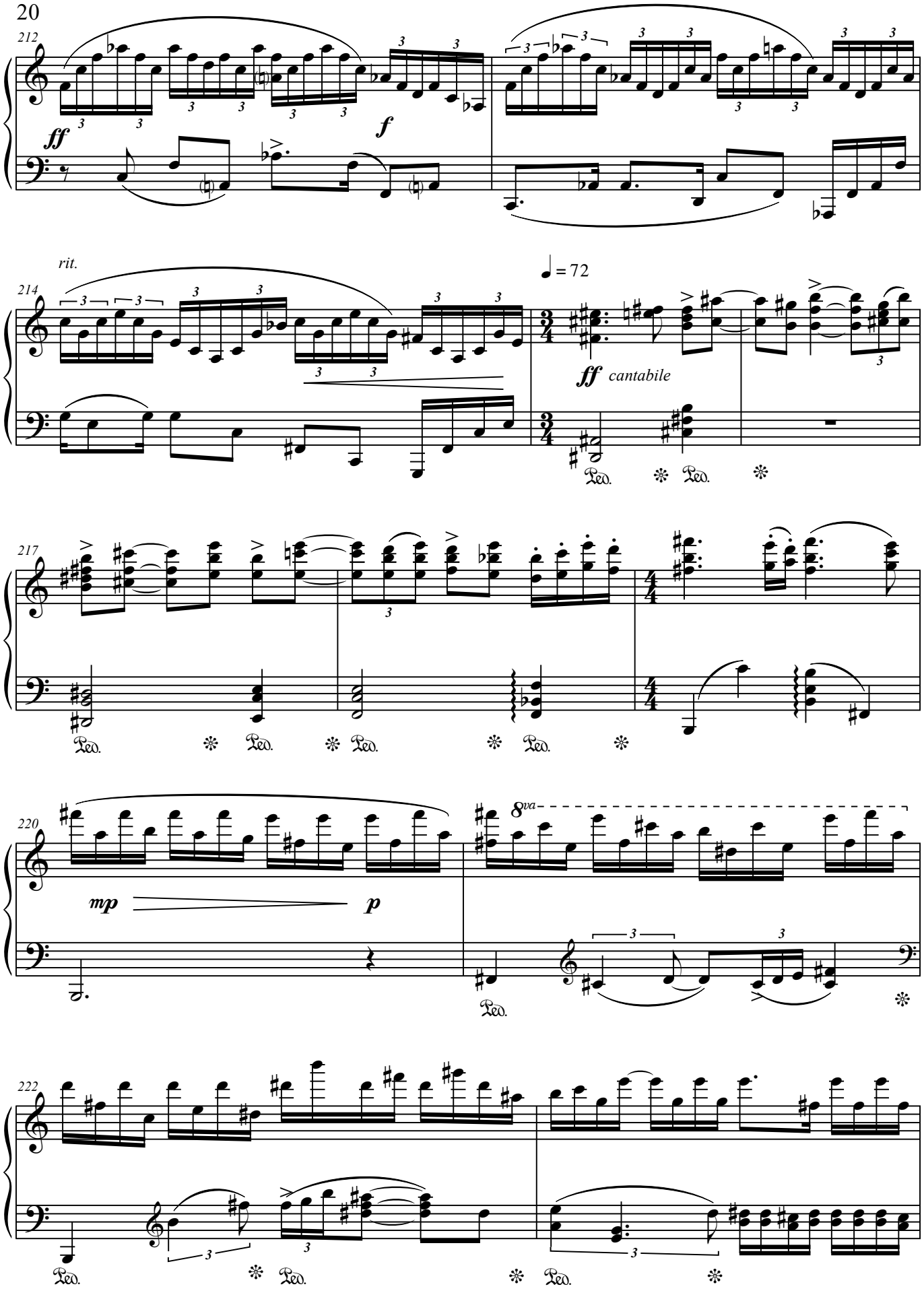

172
mp
r.h.
10
9
sf
174
mf
Ped.
175
cresc.
10
11
ff
sffz
8va
tr
9
sf
177
8va
dim.
178
(8va)
mf
dim.

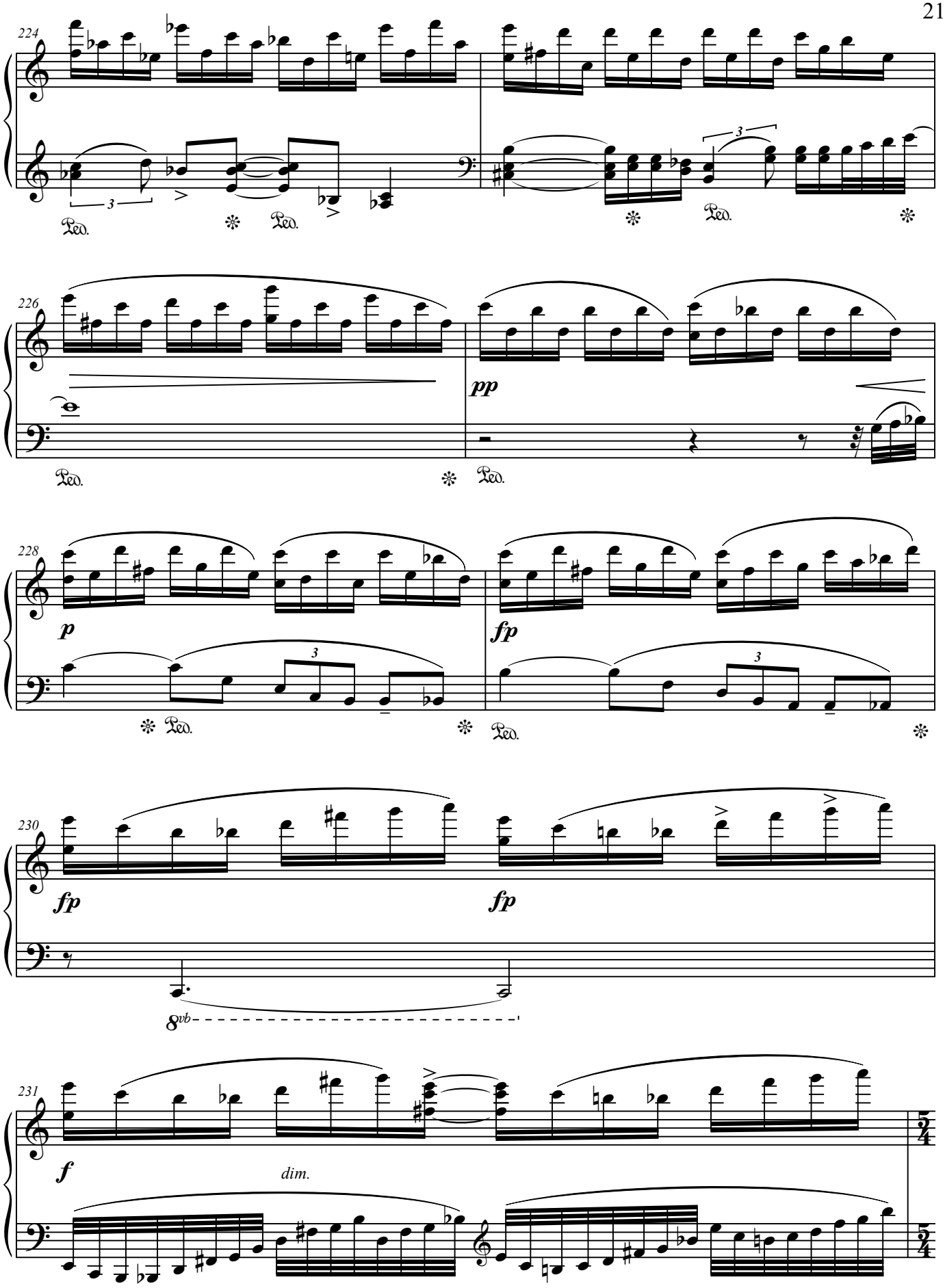

179
p
pp
8vb
accel.
181
p
pp
cresc.
♩ = 84
183
p cresc.
p cresc.
185
mp
cresc.
mf
187
mf

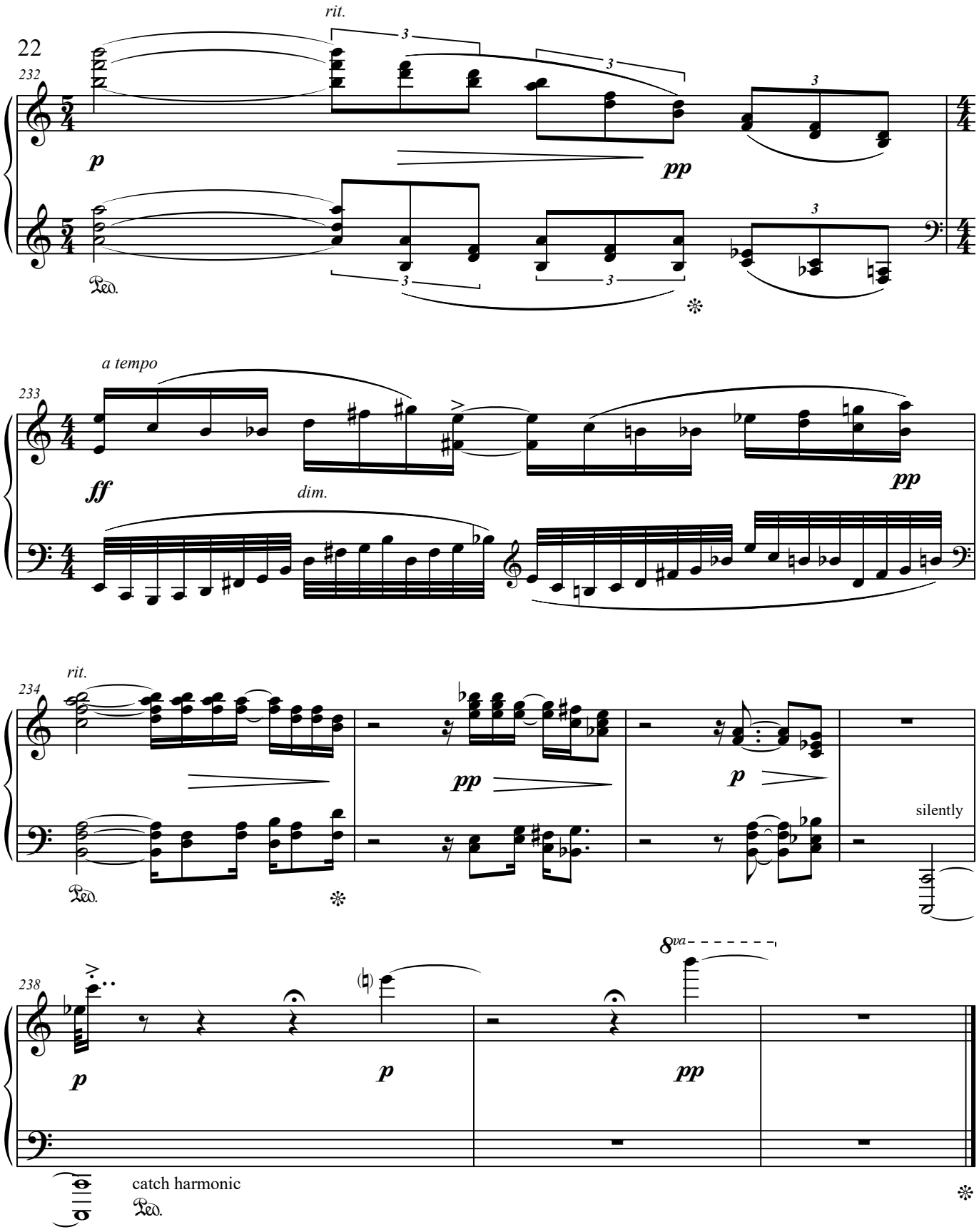

188
rit.
cresc.
f
189
a tempo
ff
191
193
194


195
196
rit.
198
a tempo
subito p
200
202
8
pp


205
pp
Ped.
207
p
208
pp
Ped.
209
cresc.
210
f


212
ff
f
rit.
214
♩ = 72
ff cantabile
217
220
mp
p
8va
222
Ped.


224
Ped.
226
pp
Ped.
228
p
fp
230
fp
fp
8vb
231
f
dim.
5/4


232
rit.
3
3
3
p
pp
3
3
3
Ped.
233
a tempo
ff
dim.
pp
234
rit.
pp
p
Ped.
silently
238
8va
p
p
pp
catch harmonic
Ped.