Three Studies

for piano

op. 11

Victor Frost

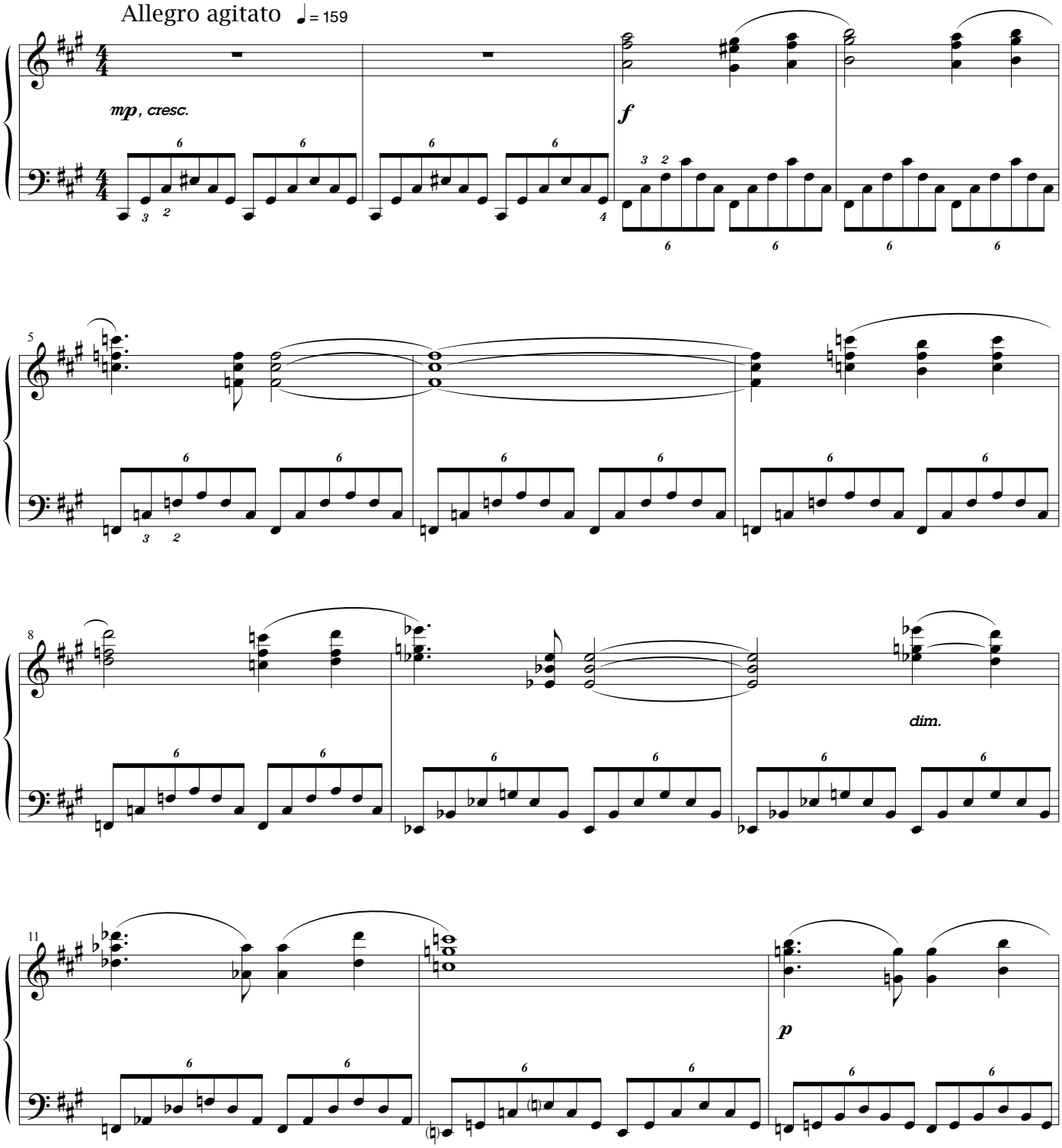
to George Roth

Three Studies

for piano, op. 11

I.

Victor Frost



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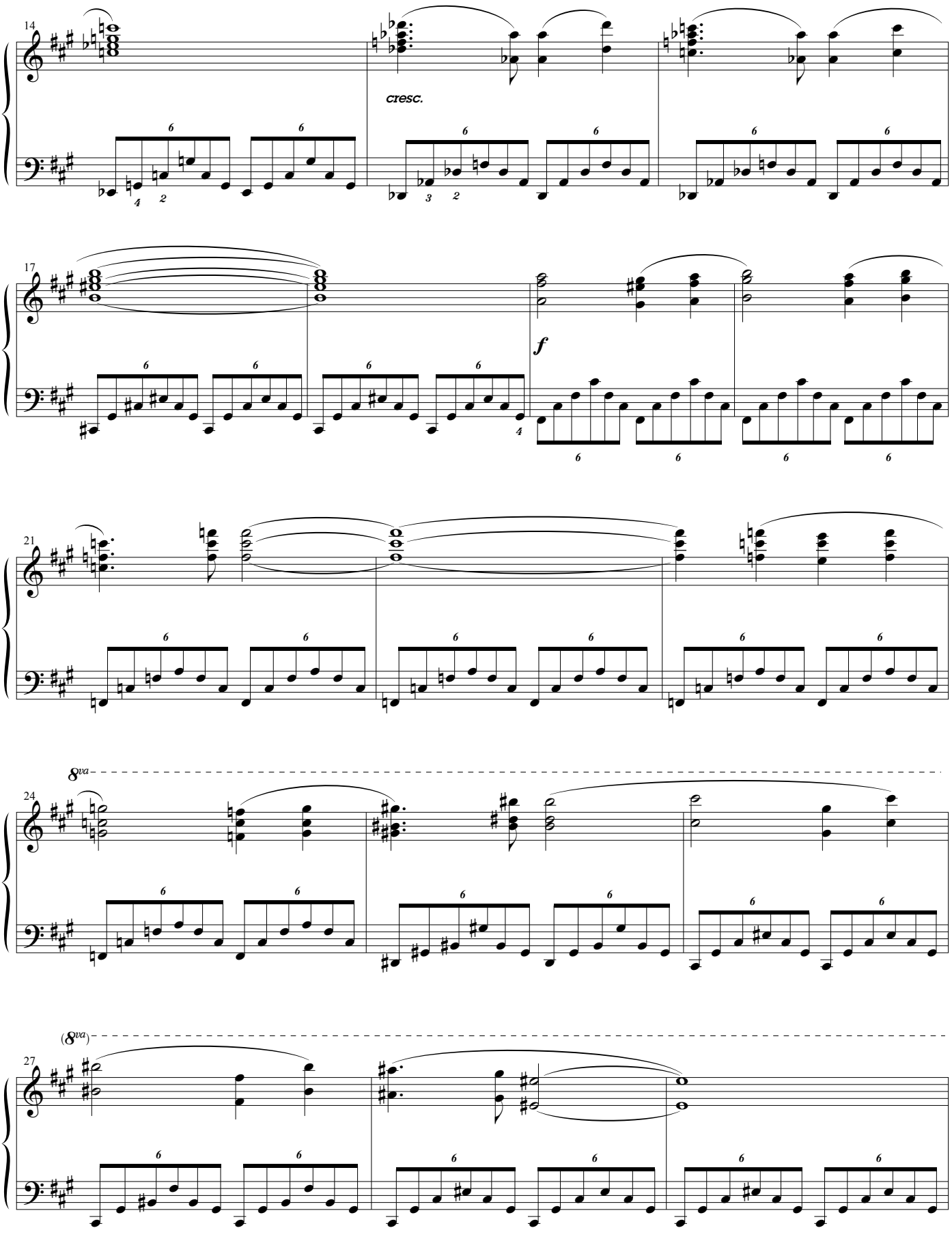
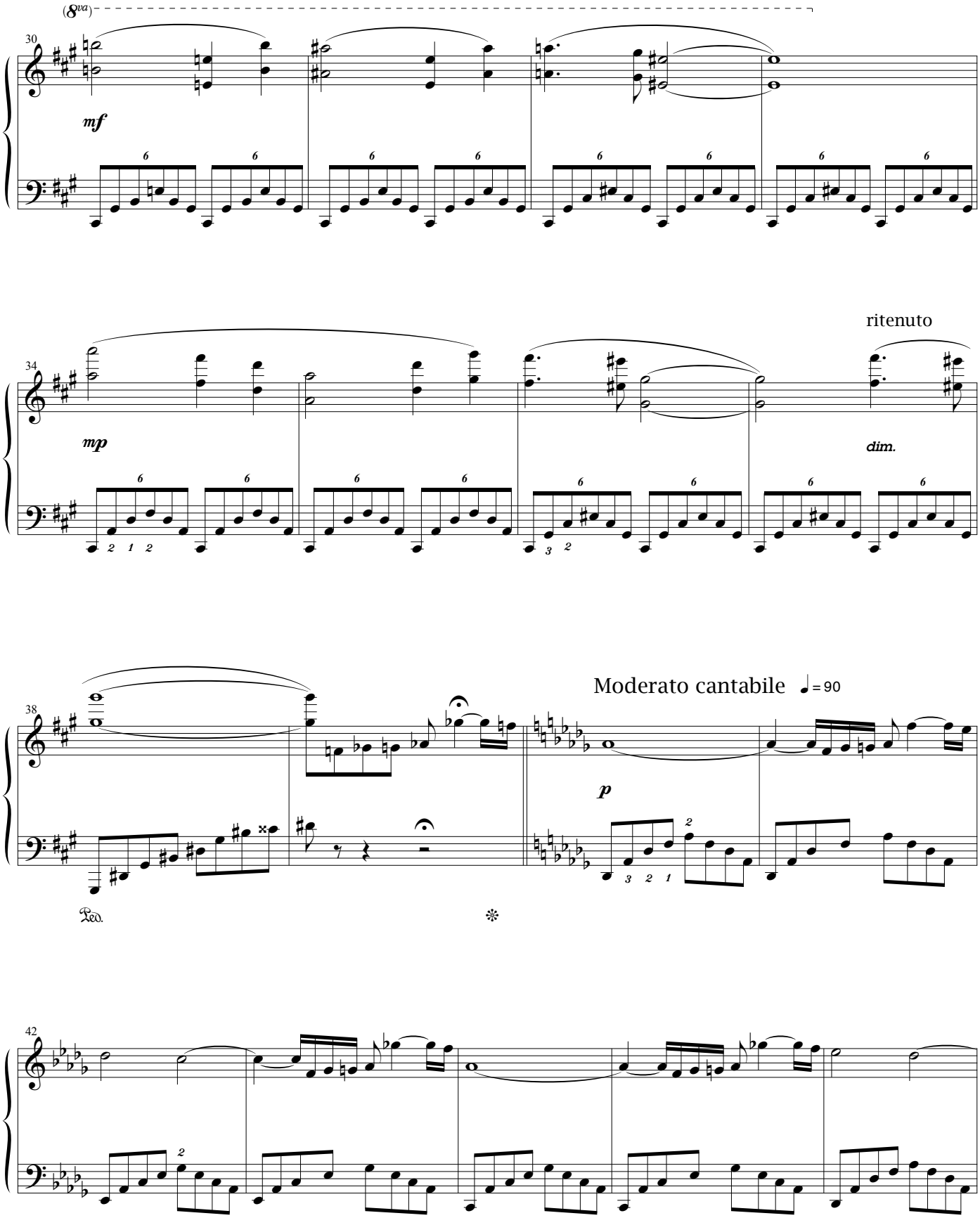
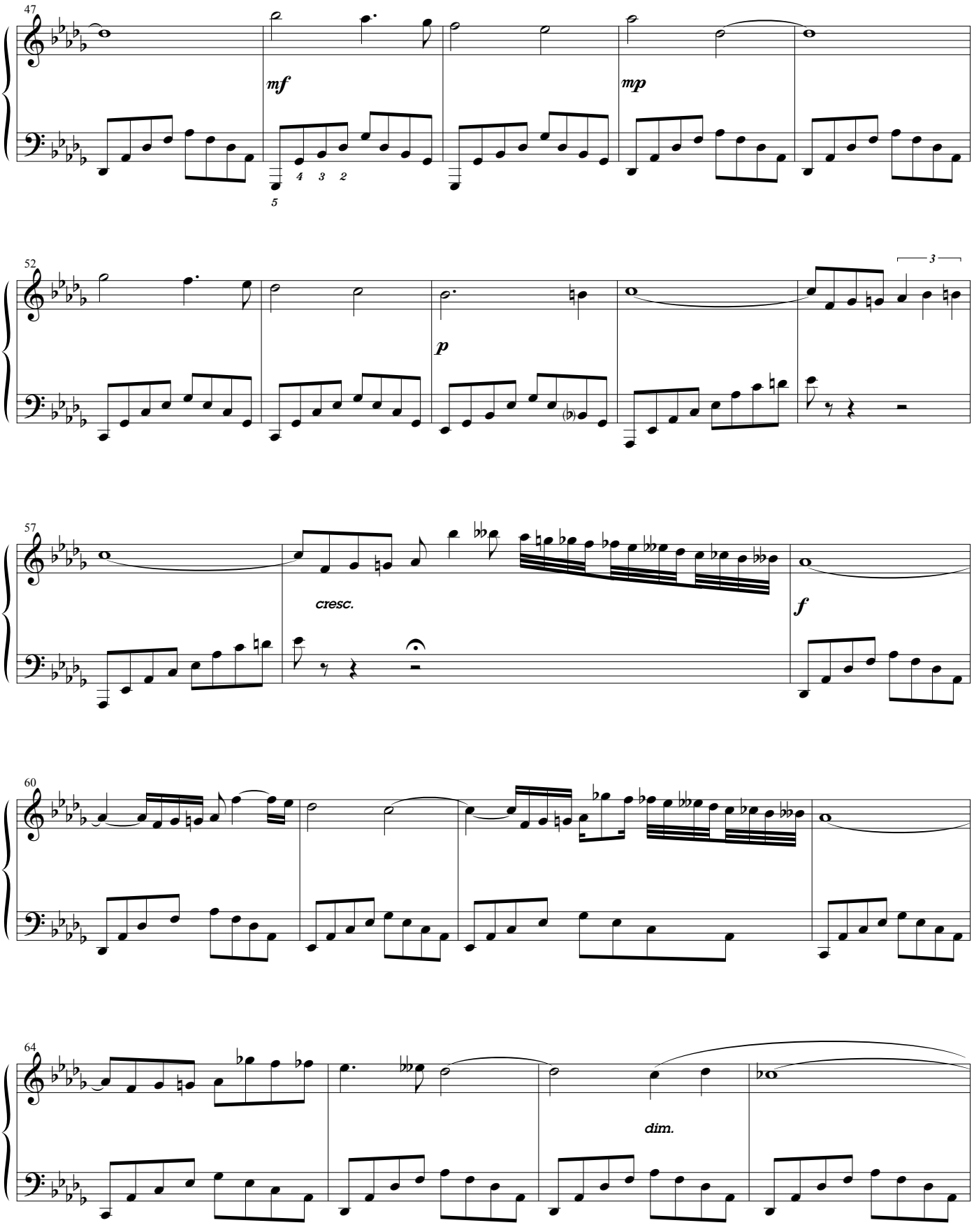
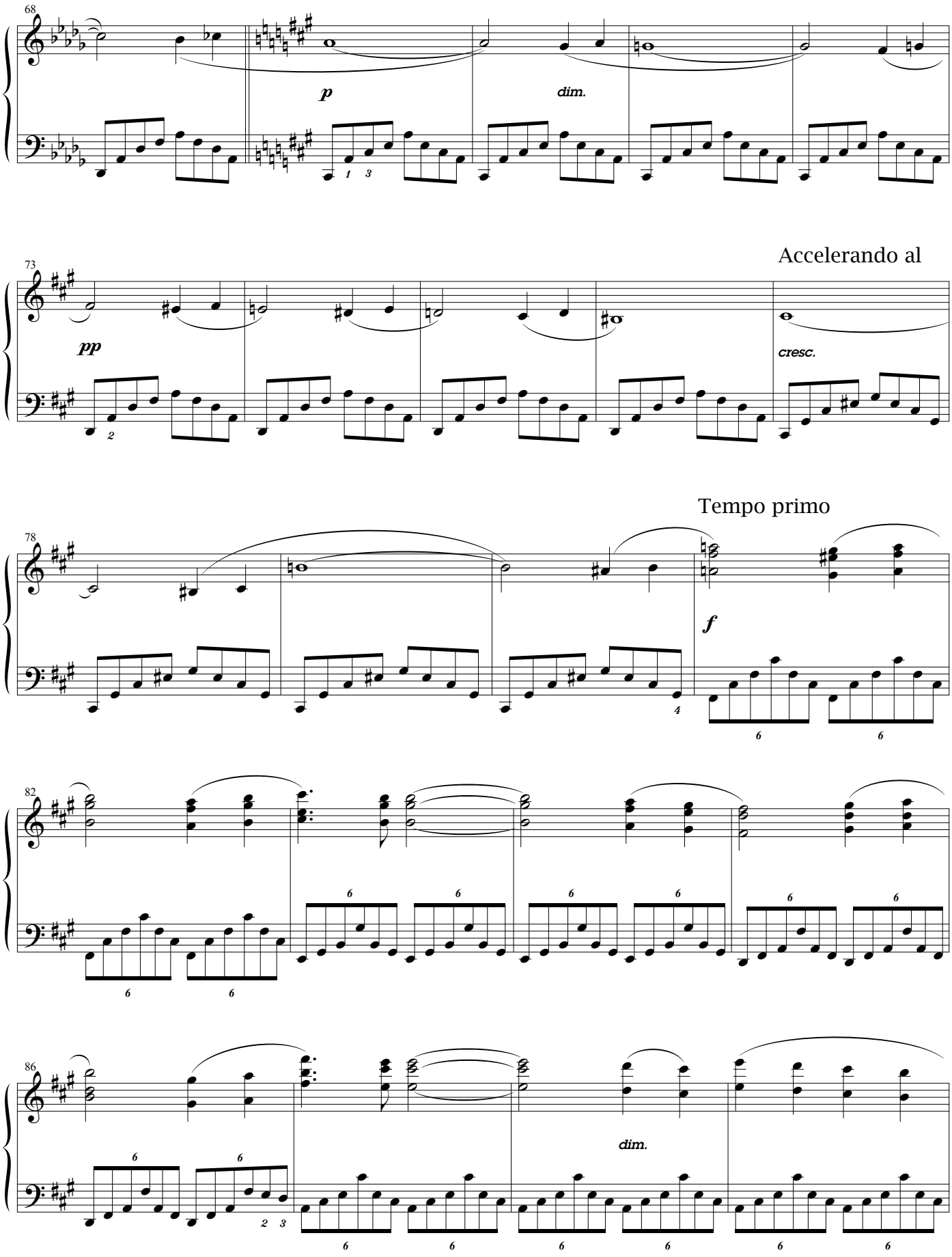
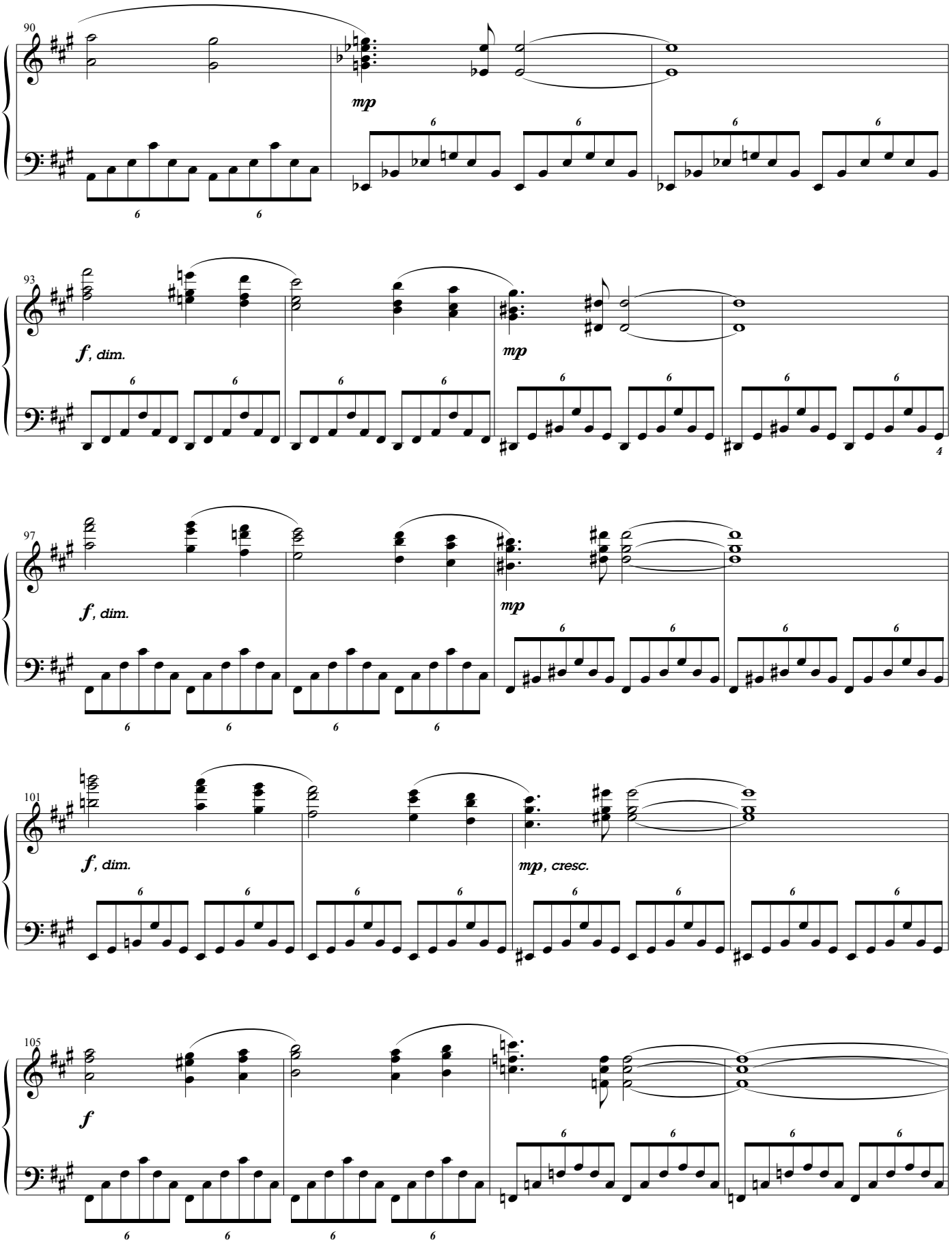
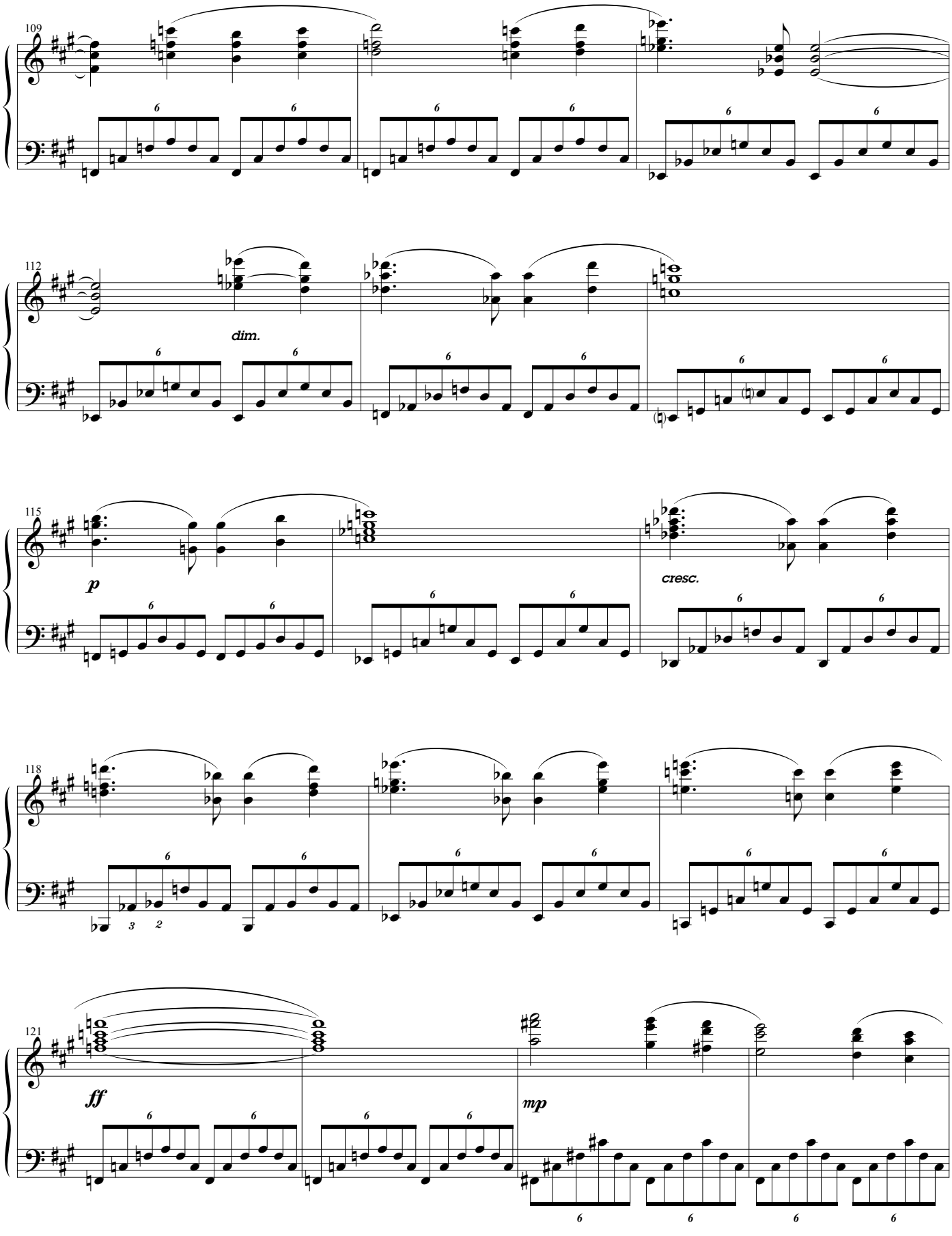

14
cresc.
17
f
21
8va
24
(8va)
27

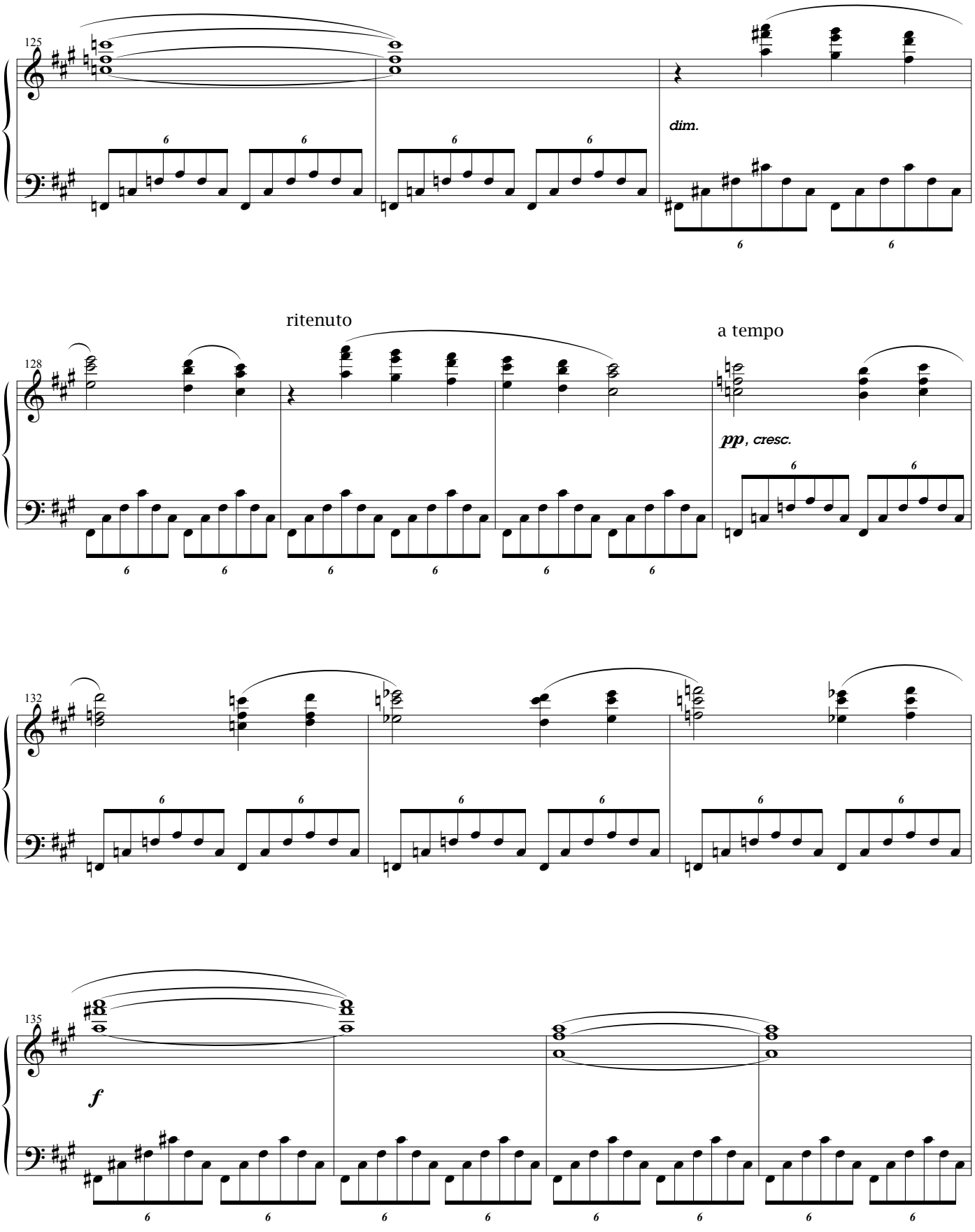

(8va)
30
mf
34
mp
ritenuto
dim.
38
Moderato cantabile ♩= 90
p
Ped.
42


47
mf
mp
52
p
3
57
cresc.
f
60
64
dim.

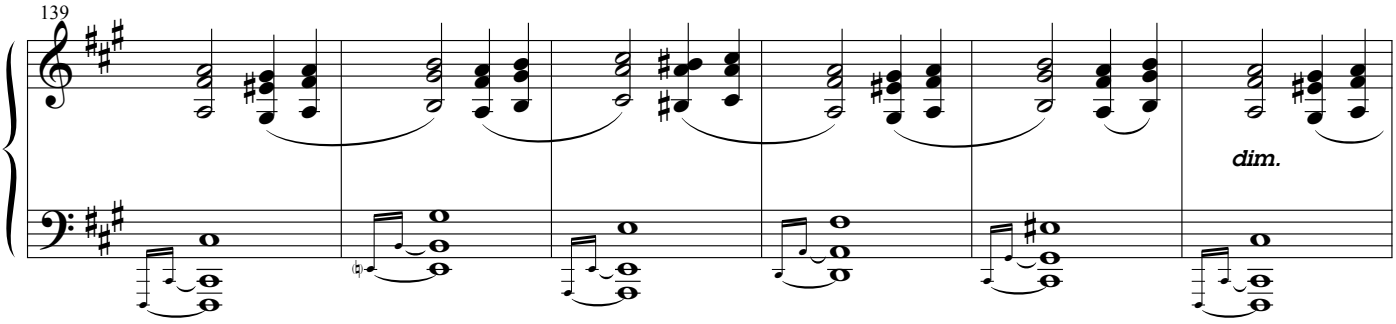

68
p
dim.
Accelerando al
73
pp
cresc.
Tempo primo
78
f
82
86
dim.


90
mp
93
f, dim.
mp
97
f, dim.
mp
101
f, dim.
mp, cresc.
105
f

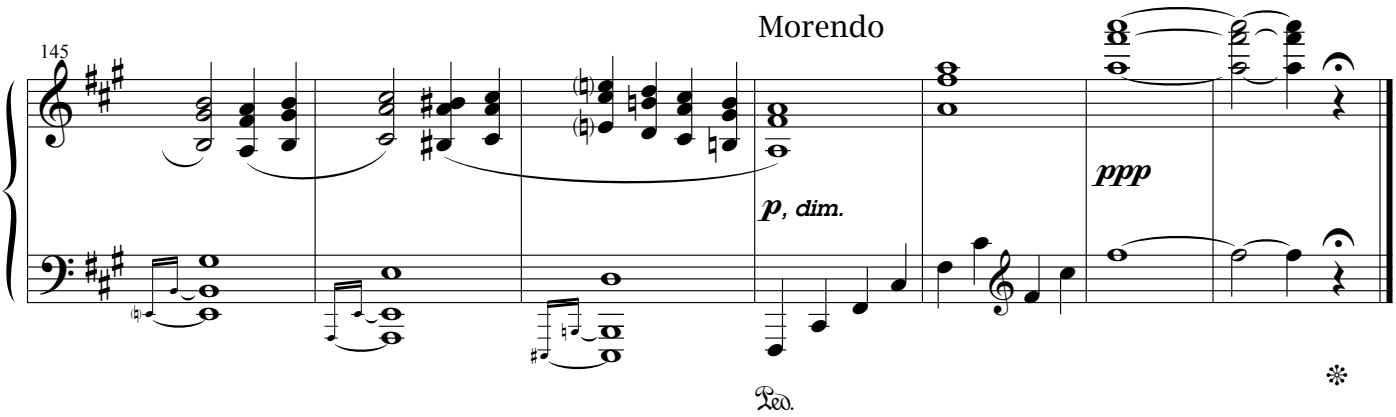

109
112
dim.
115
p
cresc.
118
121
ff
mp


125
dim.
ritenuto
128
a tempo
pp, cresc.
132
135
f

Solenne ♩= 90



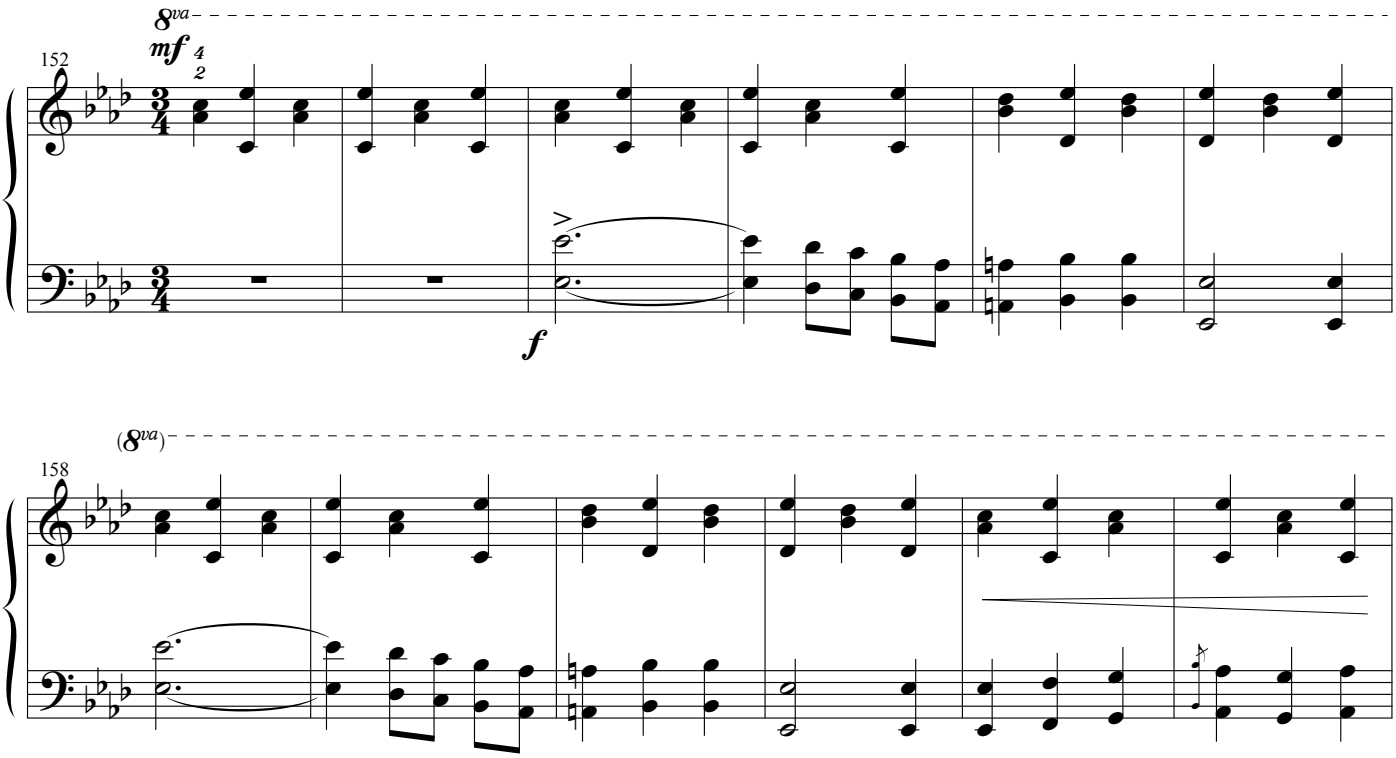
Morendo

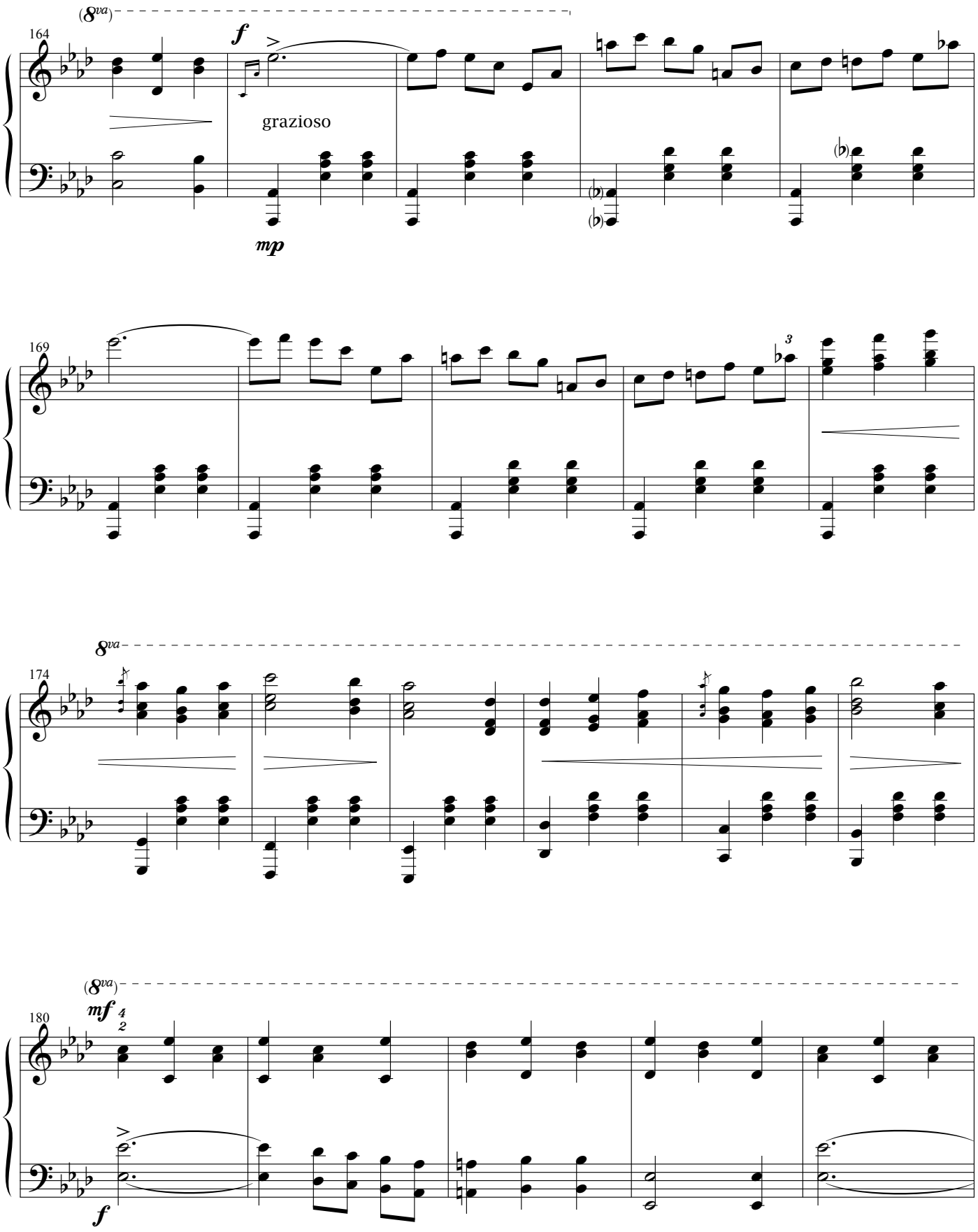


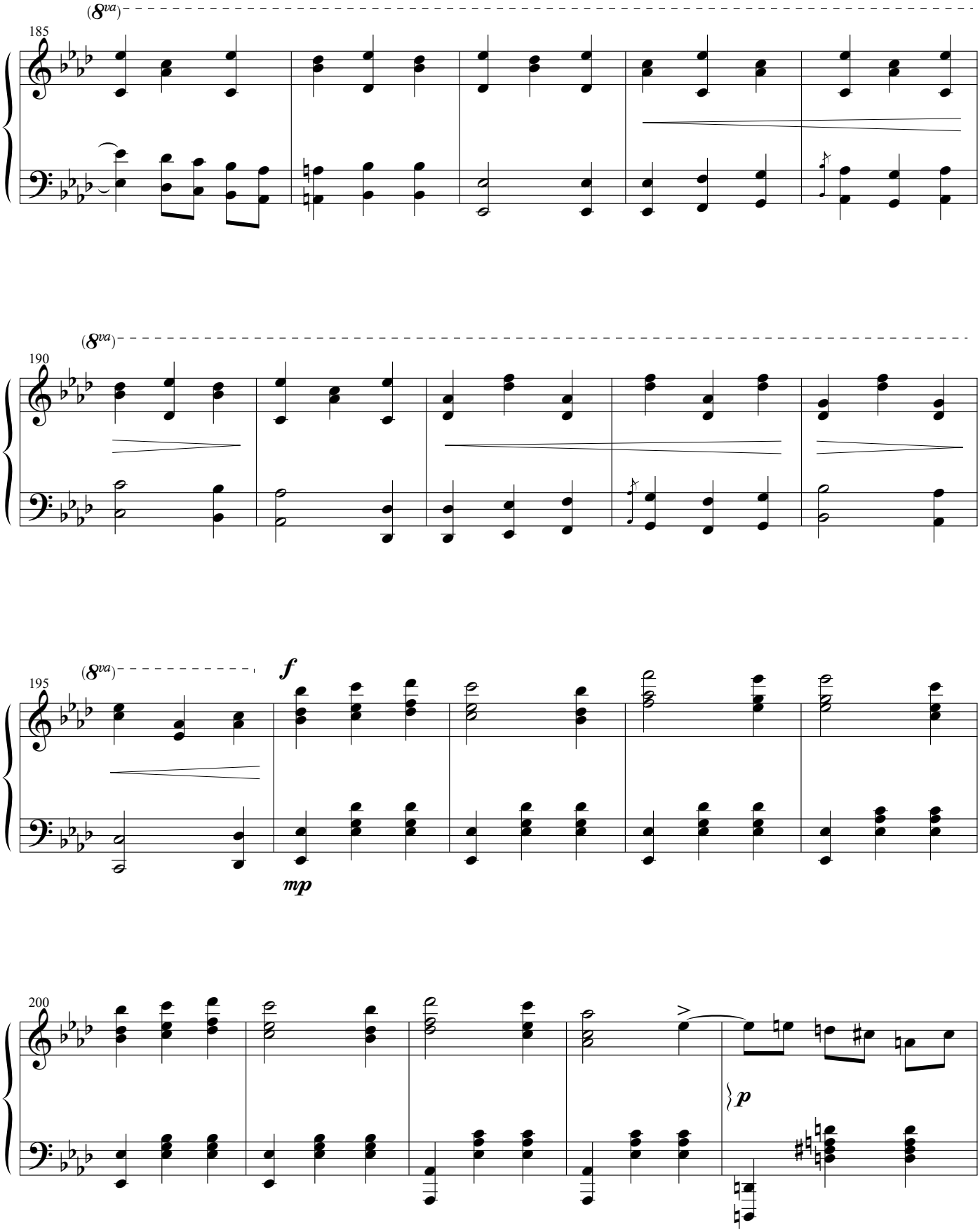
(X 78 Miami)

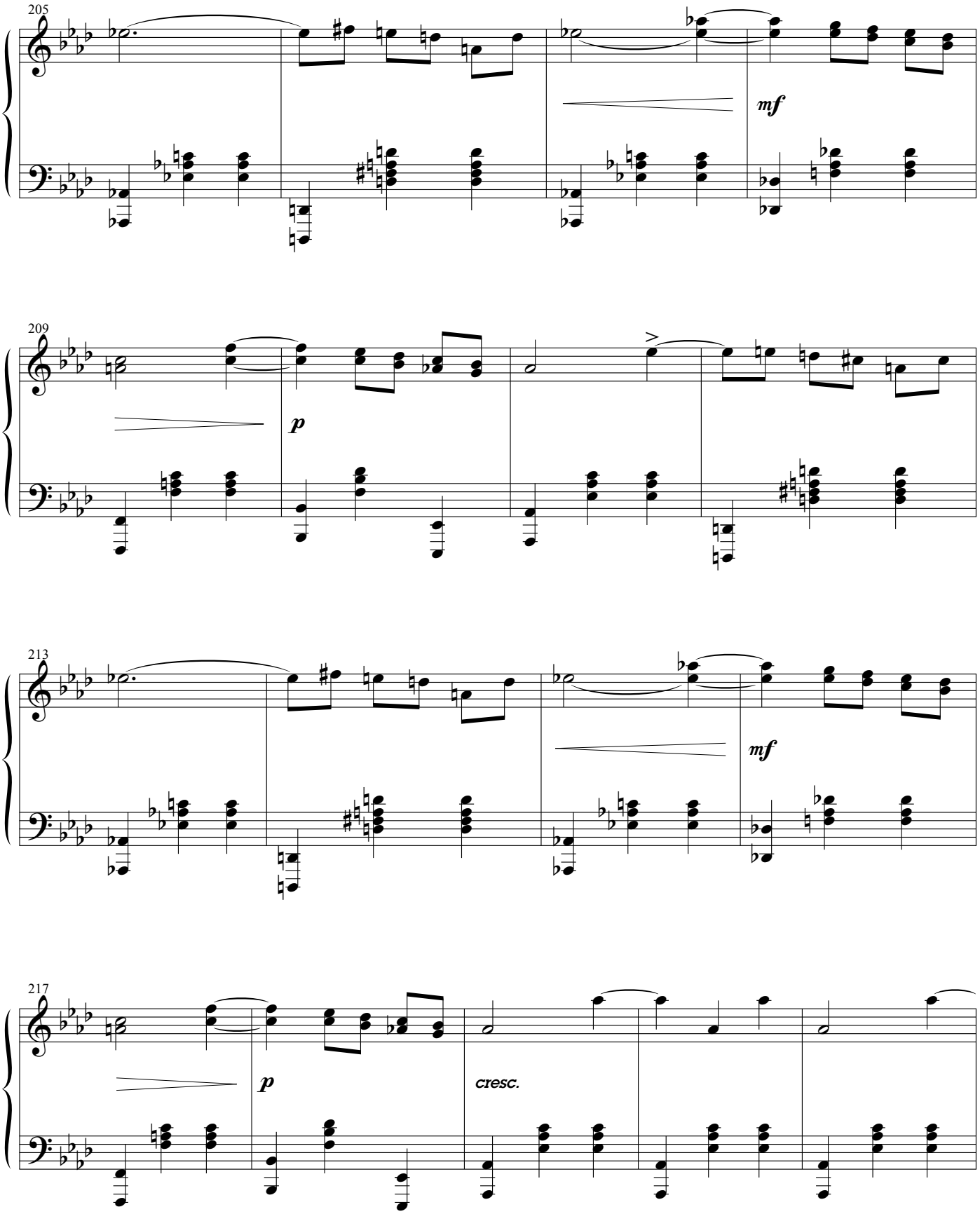
II.

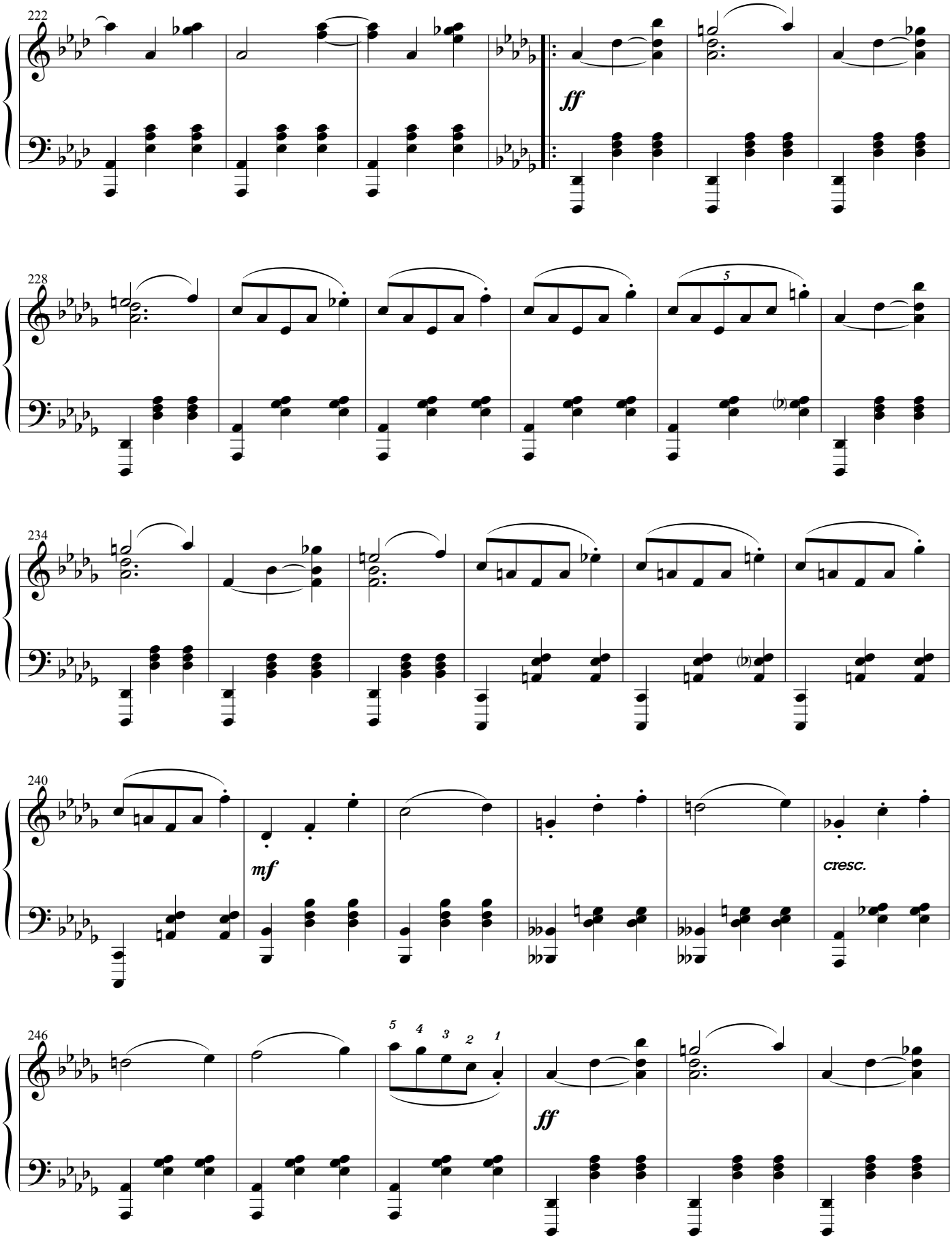
Tempo di valzer ♩= 180

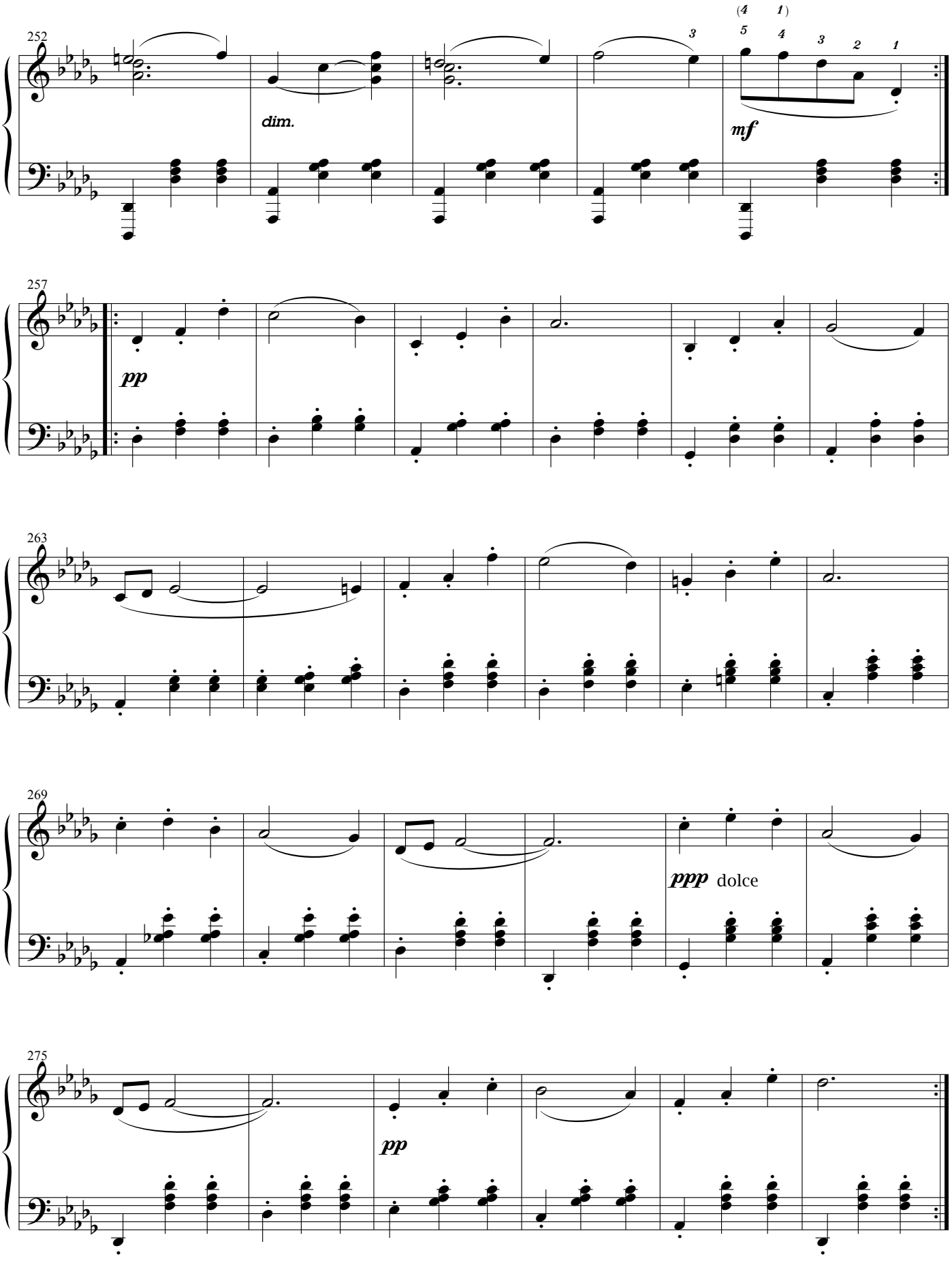


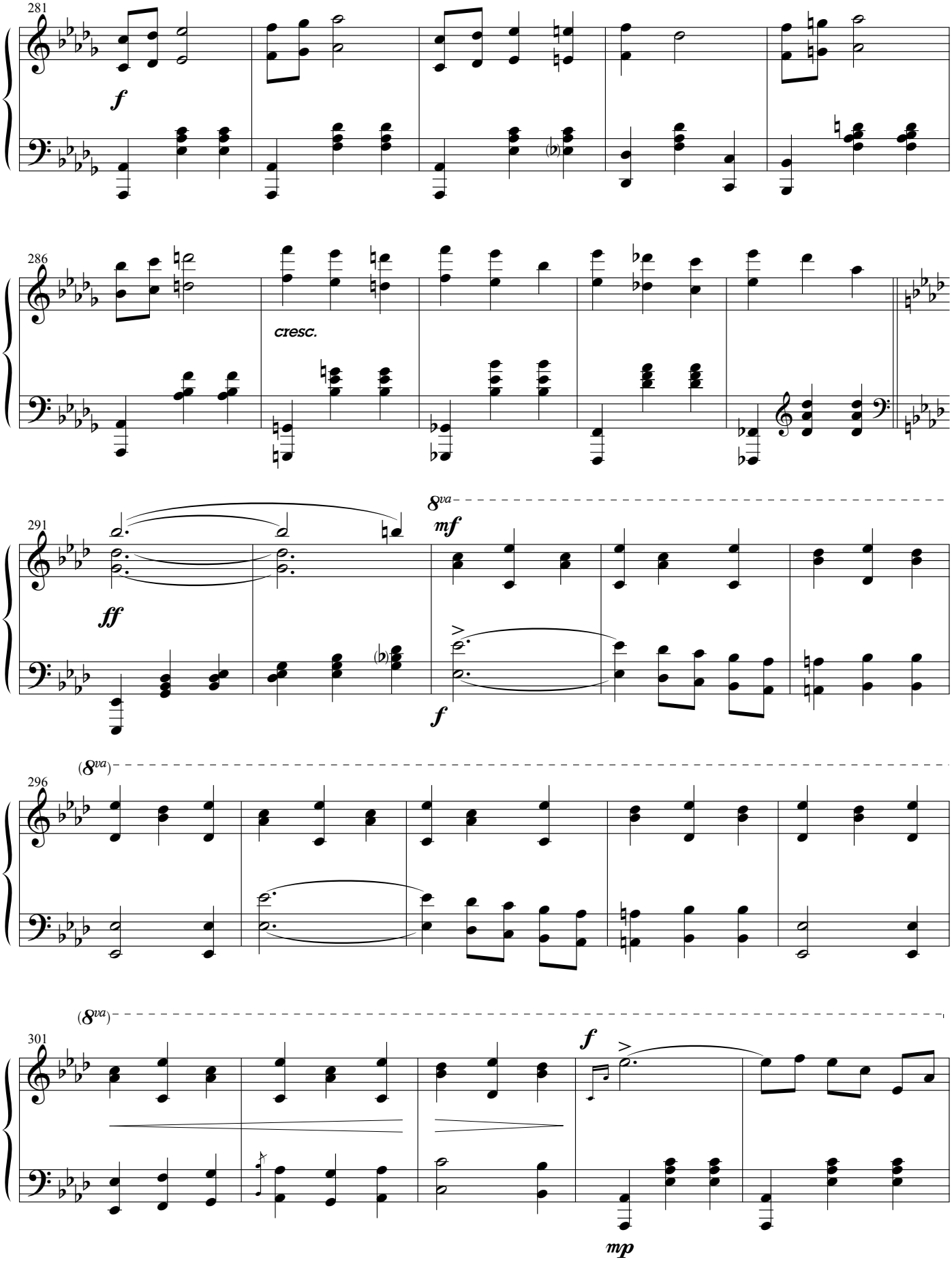

(8va)
164
f
grazioso
mp
169
3
8va
174
(8va)
180
mf
4
2
f

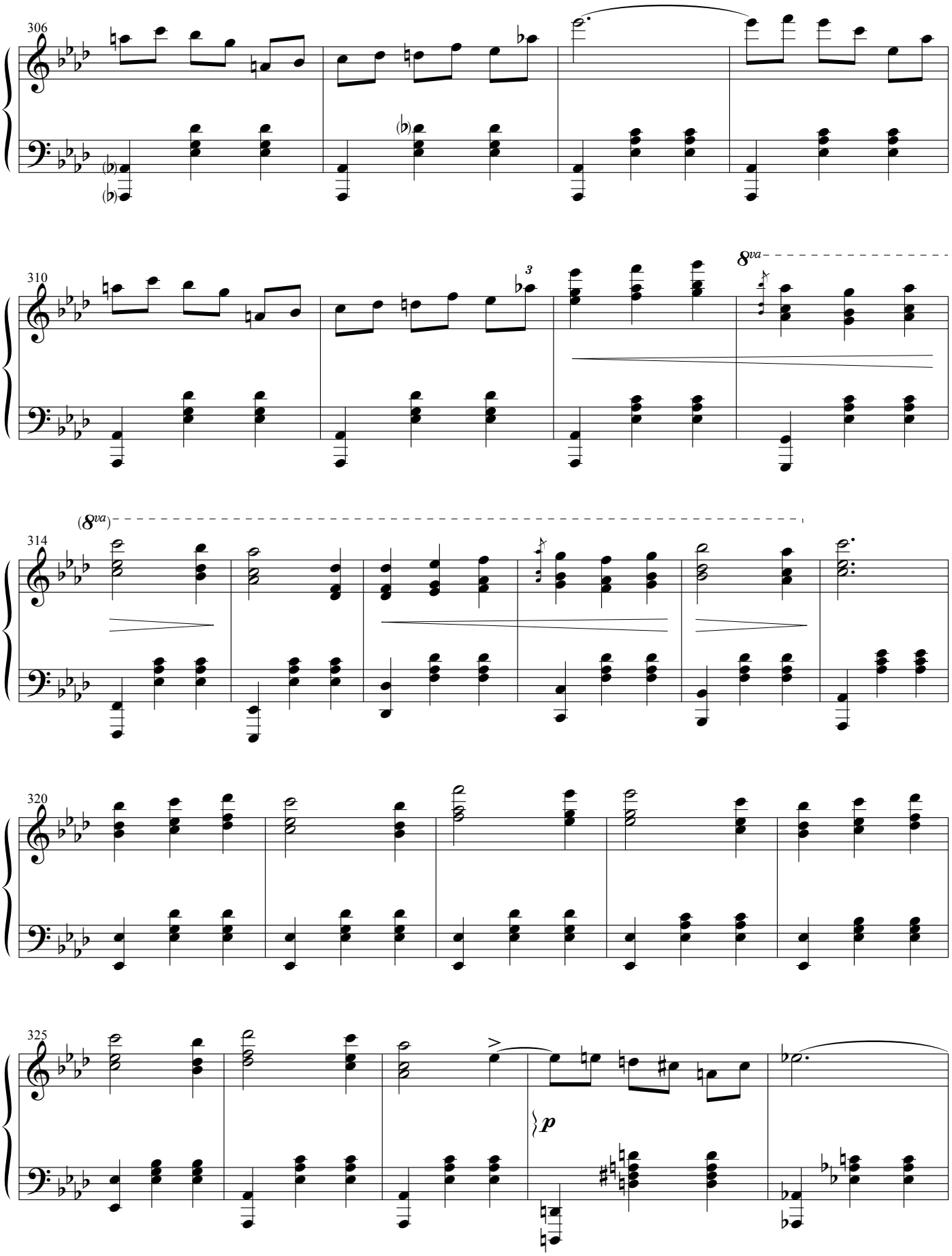

(8va)
185
(8va)
190
(8va)
195
f
mp
200
p

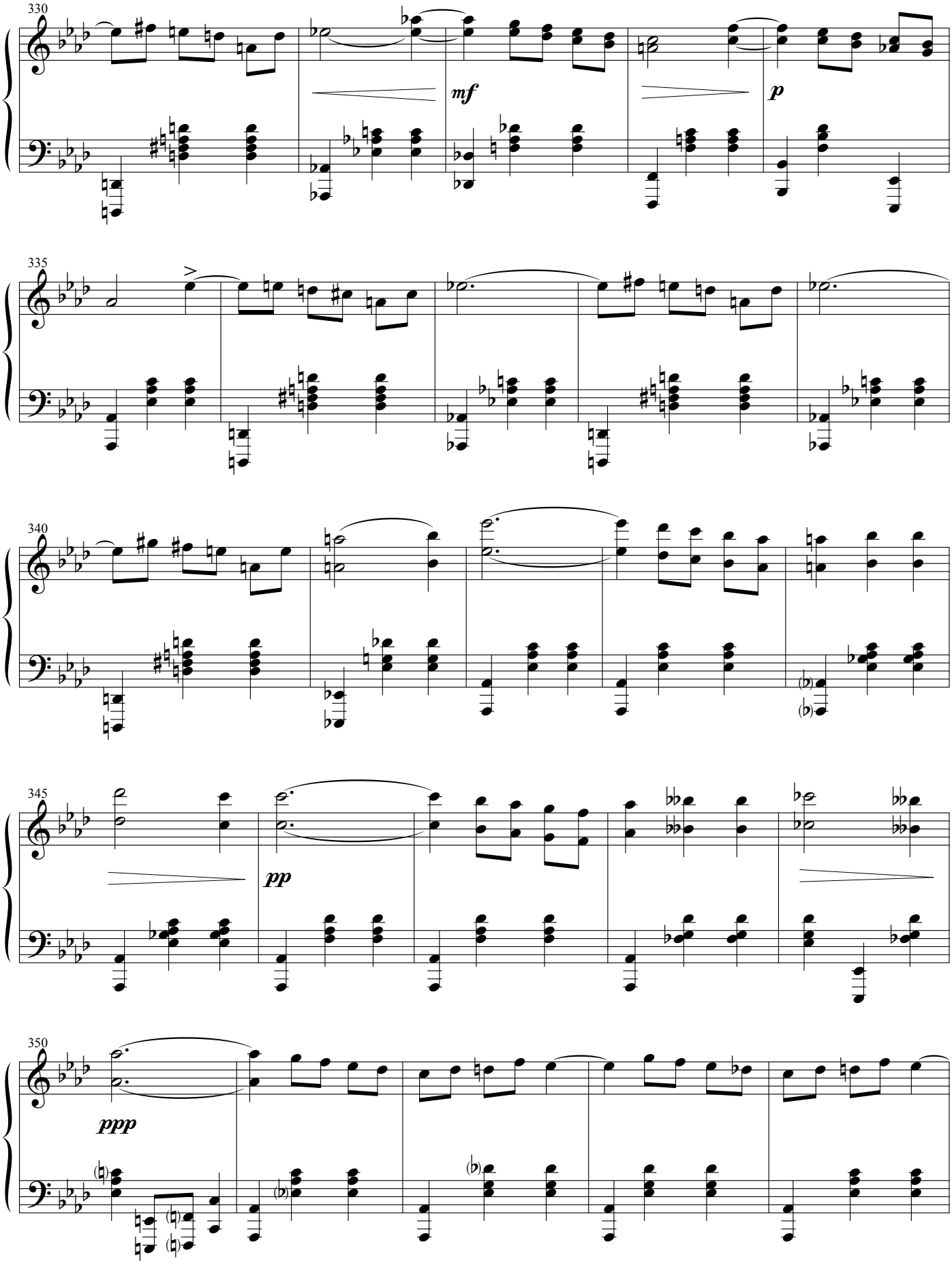

205
mf
209
p
213
mf
217
p
cresc.

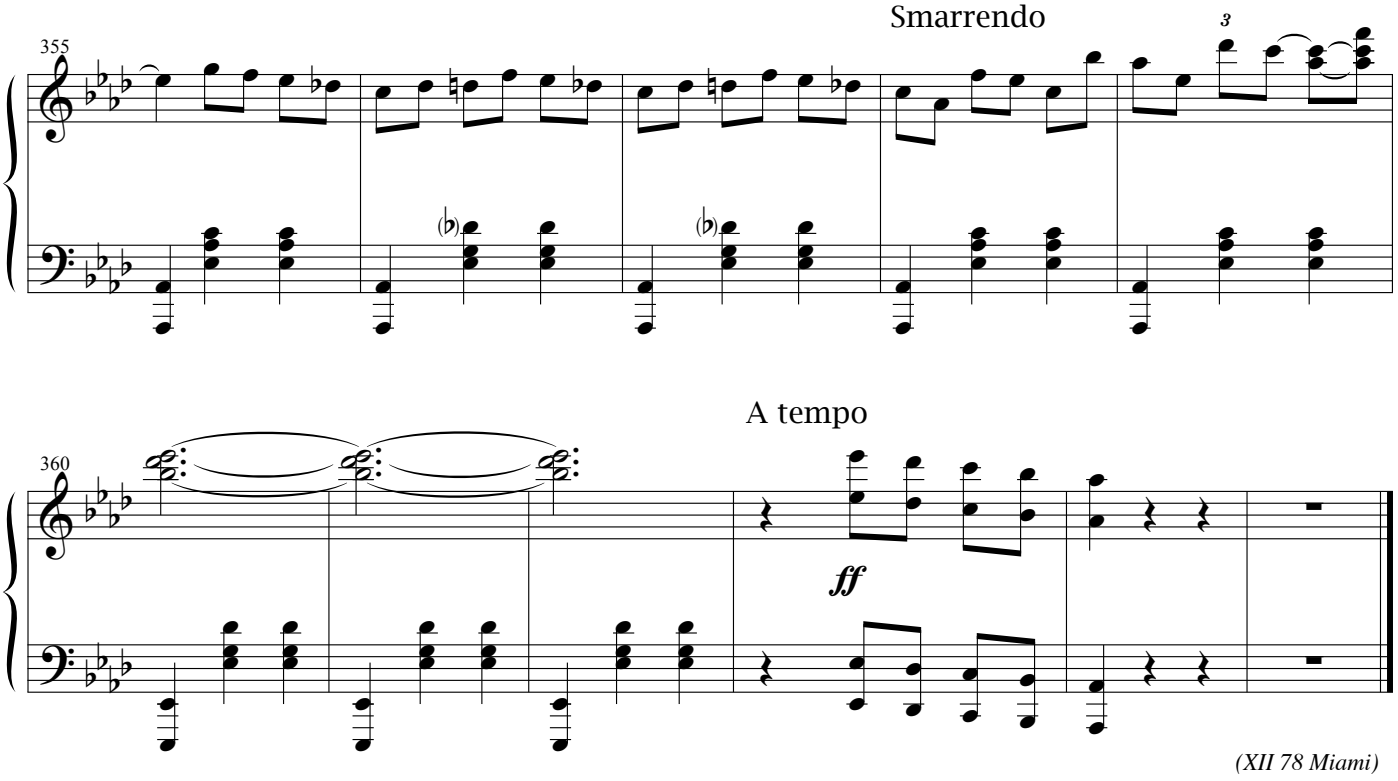

222
ff
228
5
234
240
mf
cresc.
246
5 4 3 2 1
ff


252
dim.
mf
257
pp
263
269
ppp dolce
275
pp


281
f
286
cresc.
291
ff
8va
mf
f
(8va)
296
(8va)
301
f
mp

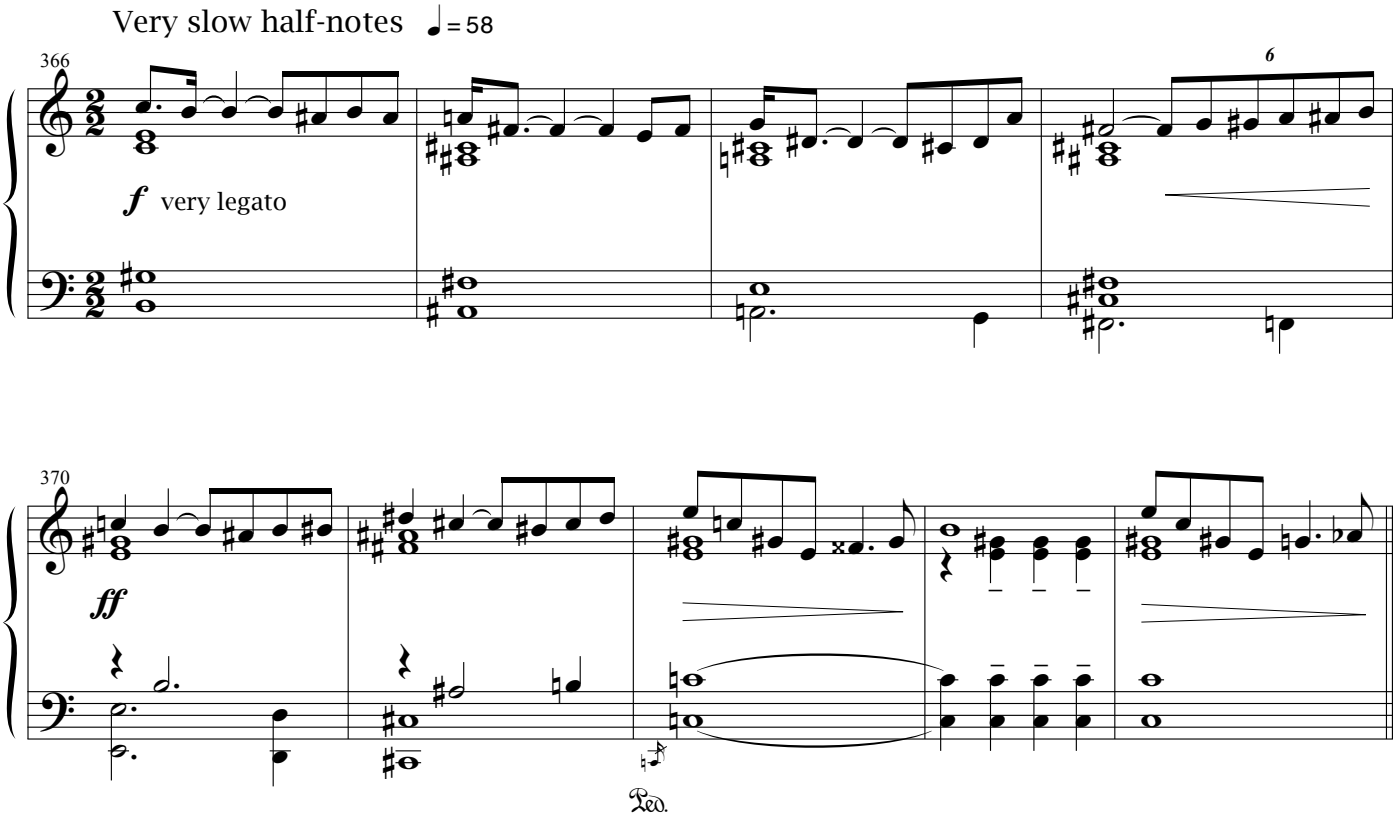

306
310
8va
(8va)
314
320
325
p

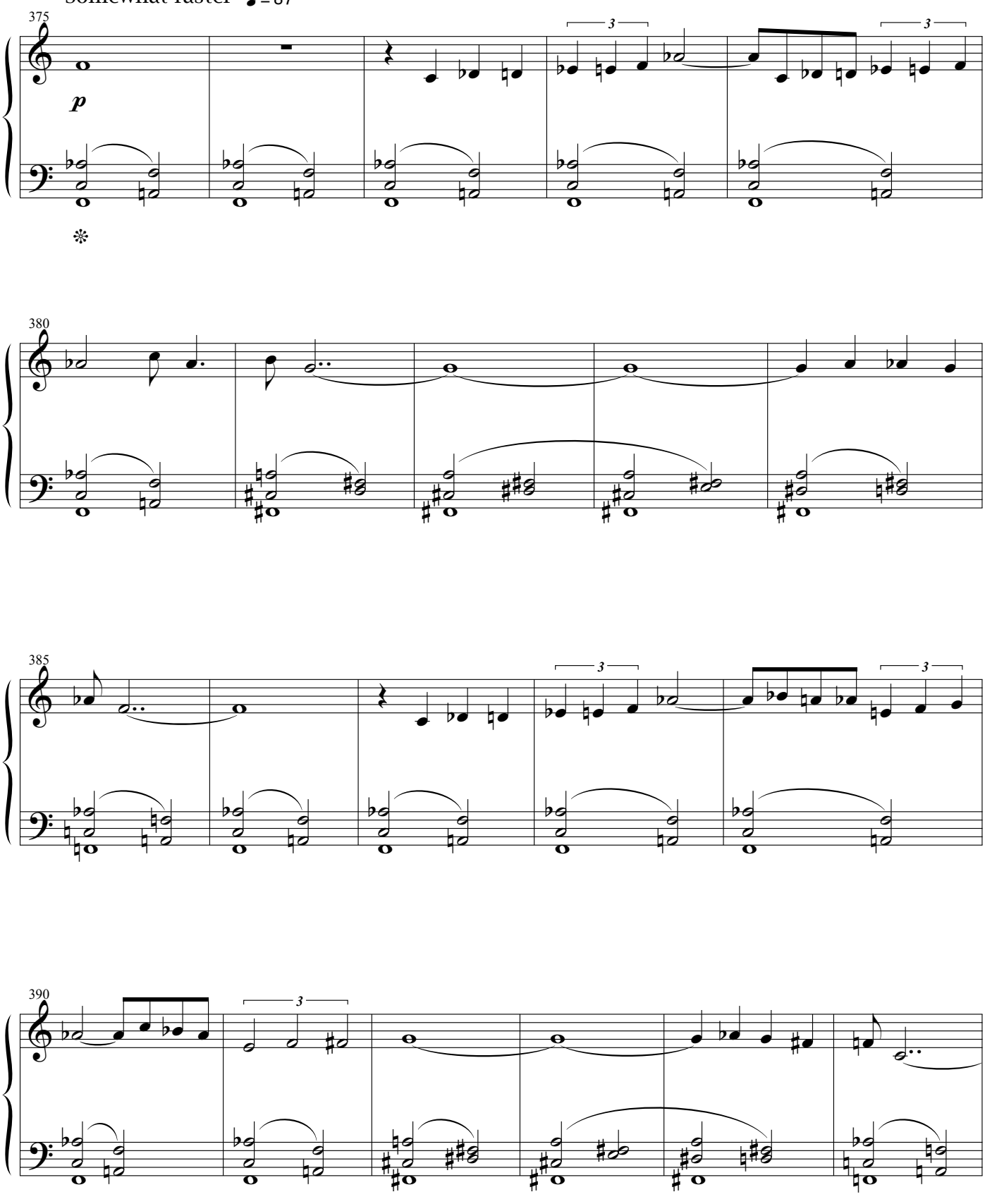

330
mf
p
335
340
345
pp
350
ppp

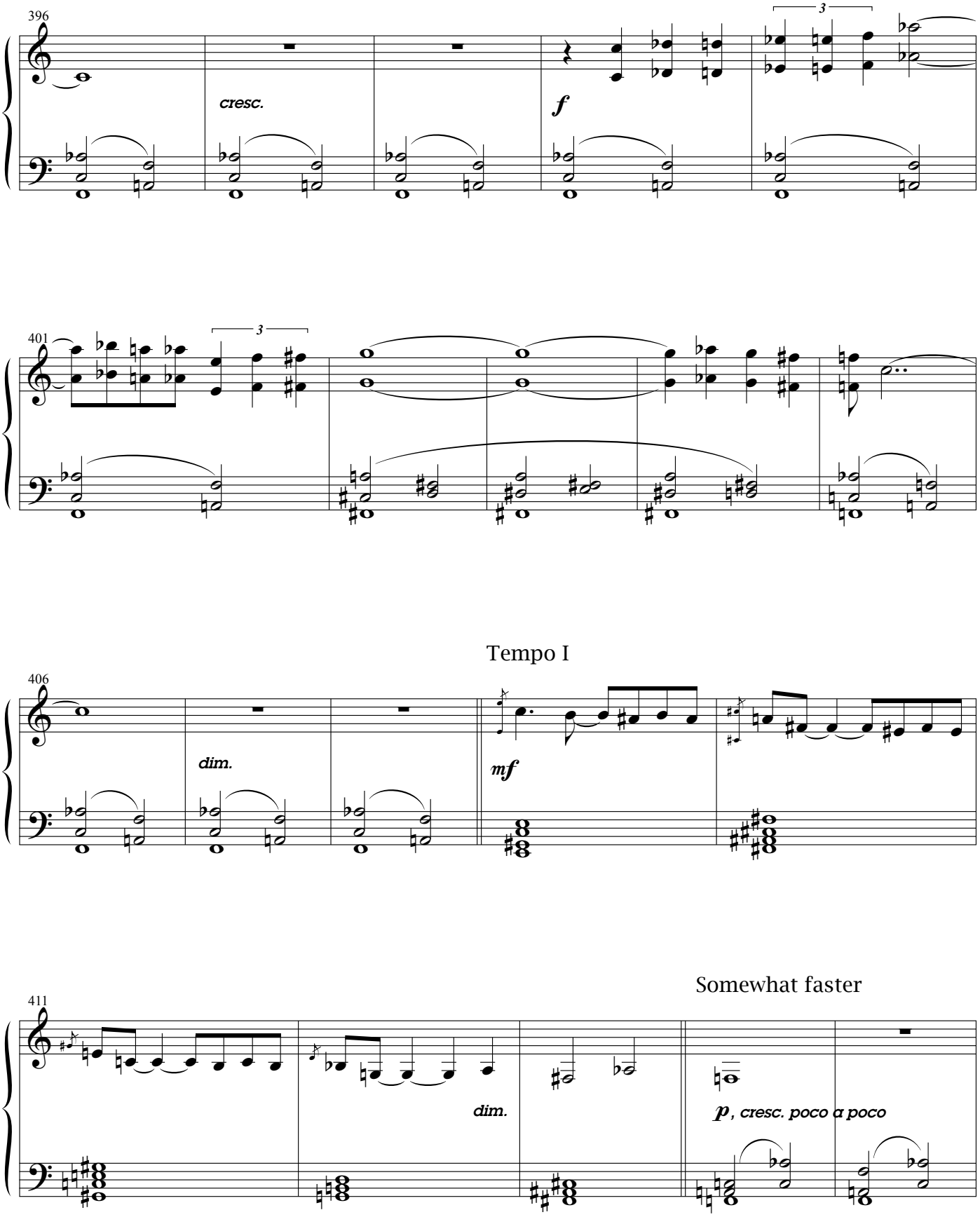


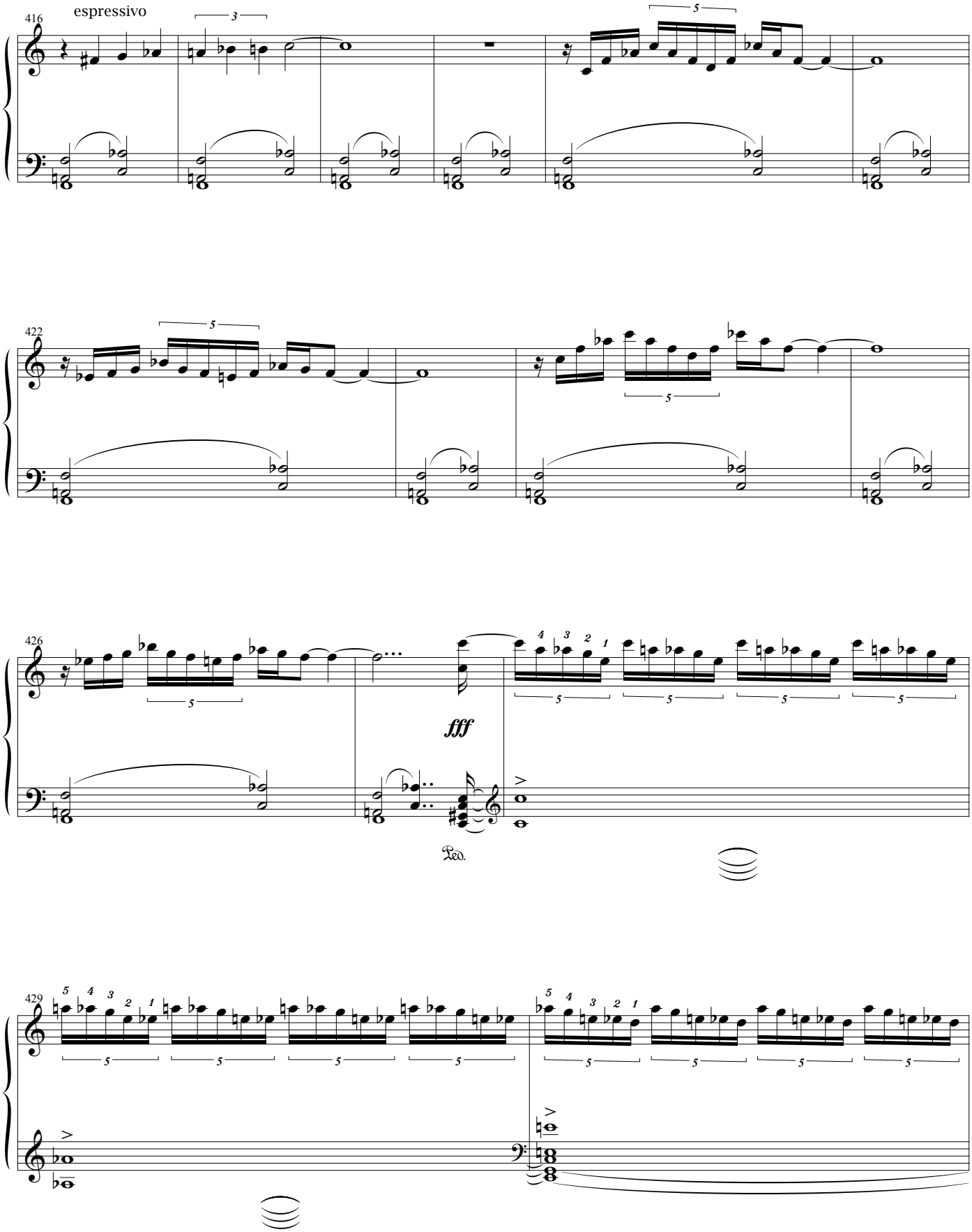
(XII 78 Miami)

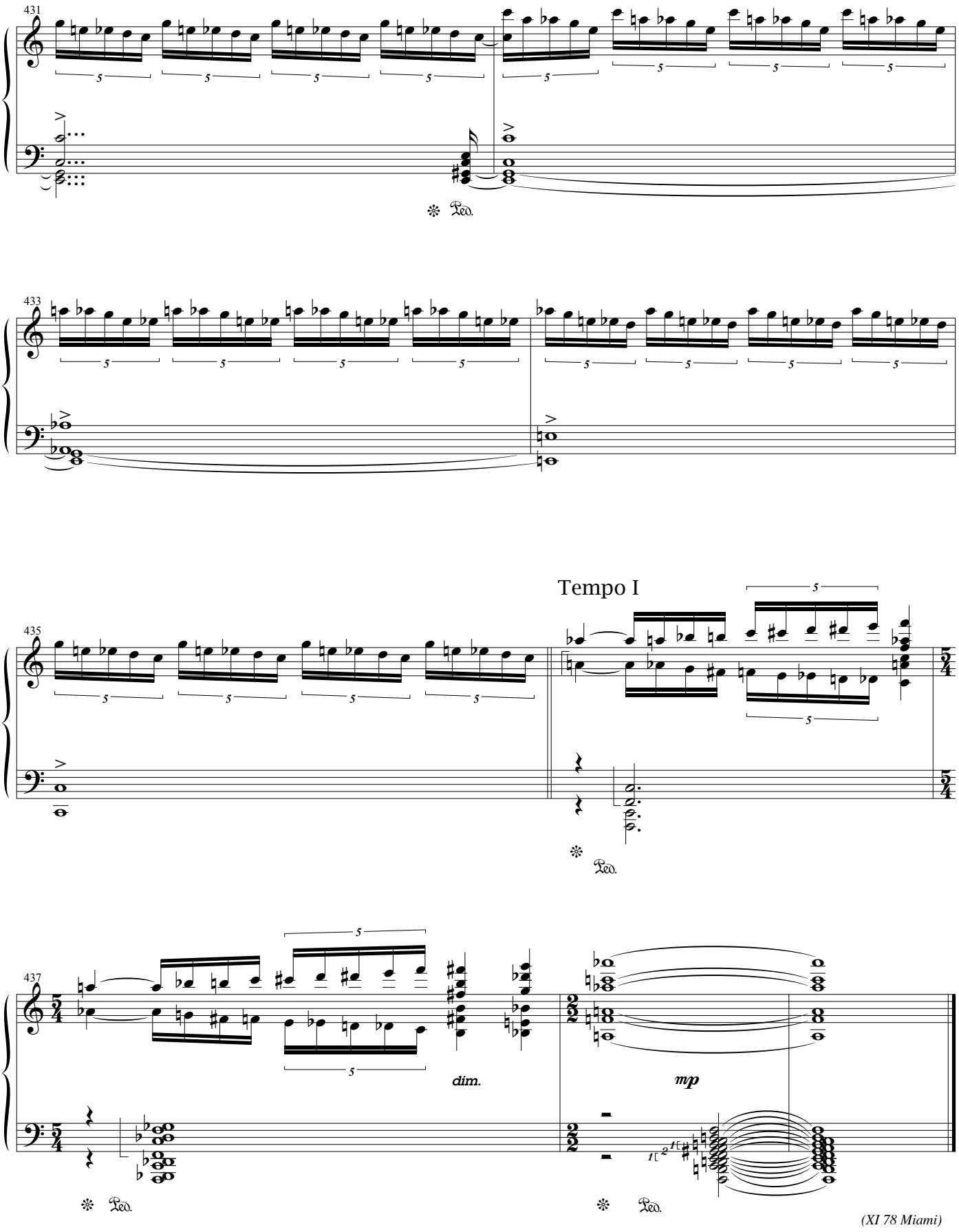
III.




Somewhat faster ♩= 87
375
p
380
385
390


396
cresc.
f
3
401
3
Tempo I
406
dim.
mf
Somewhat faster
411
dim.
p, cresc. poco a poco


416
espressivo
422
426
fff
Ped.
429


431
Ped.
433
Tempo I
435
Ped.
437
dim.
mp
Ped.
Ped.

Three Studies for piano, op. 11

With many young students of piano, the teacher comes first and then there's the school the person teaches at! So it was with me and George Roth, with whom I was studying at the University of Miami when I composed these three études in the fall of 1978.

George had given me an exercise to do at the piano which involved stretching the hands. This was designed to promote suppleness and strength, the better to handle certain kinds of passagework found in the pages of many Romantic composers. I was bored with what I was doing, and began to enhance the experience by improvising with one hand while the other was stretching. Soon enough this became an end in itself, and I liked what I was doing enough to write down the opening of the present F-sharp minor Study.

This first Study features a cantabile middle section. As it returns to the key, texture, dynamics and tempo of the agitated first pages, one naturally expects a simple recap of the opening theme. Instead that theme is subjected first to considerable sequential development, which finally culminates with a literal restatement of the opening material. (Was I trying to get in more exercise?)

The third and last Study, a blues, was written next. As with the first Study, the left hand stretches into its accompaniment pattern, over which the right hand freely weaves a tune. But near the end, blue sadness erupts into a redder anger. Technically I had gone in the opposite direction: the right hand plays flustered quintuplets in patterns that are chromatically *compressed*. If scalar passagework in Bach or Mozart be regarded as the norm, then here the five fingers have to get in notes that lie closer together than the standard diatonic position (the mode in which, after all, the keyboard was originally designed for playing). The very end is perhaps sadder again than it is angry, or at best resigned.

Finally I wrote the middle Study, an elaborate waltz. This time the right hand does the stretching, whether it is accompanying the melody played by the left hand (in octaves), taking over that melody in an acrobatically wide spaced variant, or moving on to new material negotiated from a stretched position as well.

Cats seem to have an instinctive sense of the benefits of stretching. So I drew a picture of our family feline J.J. to serve as cover for my opus 11. (She would be known anywhere by that kink in her tail.) I was glad for this concentrated session with her, for but a few weeks later she was let out, as was her daily wont, but unfortunately never returned.

It goes without saying that the numbers are dedicated to George, who, knowing my bent for composition, fashioned my lessons to involve inquiry into form and style, branching into repertoire of which I had been quite ignorant, without for a moment neglecting the mastery of technique and interpretation for which my fellow students and I came to his

studio. My Three Studies, written under his aegis, are a token of gratitude from a student and fellow composer.

Victor Frost
4 XI 79
Weehawken, New Jersey

Performance note (2009)

The final chord in the final blues has proved over the years to be problematical. The r.h. is easy to play if one simply employs the given fingering. The l.h. notes though, a cluster of white notes, involves the stretch of a fourth between 5 and 4, and yet really should not be arpeggiated. In ascending order of preference, I approve the following modifications:

1. A four-note chord in which the notes B and E are simply omitted;
2. A five-note chord in which the D is omitted;
3. The six-note cluster as written, but with the top three notes all played by a flattened-out thumb. (This eliminates the need to use finger 4, and there is time in the music to "set this up," as they say. And I assure the player: practicing this technique will pay off in other, more august works from the twentieth century!)