Roger Zare

Sonata

for alto saxophone and piano

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This sonata was commissioned by saxophonist Scotty Phillips and premiered at the 2016 North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conference in Lubbock, Texas.

This work was composed while in residence at Copland House, Cortlandt Manor, New York, as a recipient of the Copland House Residency Award.

While growing up in Florida, I have many memories related to rain, from dodging downpours at theme parks to enduring the lashing from a tropical storm. Rain is, of course, absolutely vital to our survival, and we are extremely sensitive to any changes in the rain pattern. Extended droughts strain our resources, but the excessive rain that often follows is even more damaging, causing floods, landslides, and sinkholes. This composition captures three facets of the rain cycle.

The first movement is about the restlessness and aggravation of drought. The rhythms are constantly shifting and asymmetrical, with the saxophone frequently angrily jumping between registers. The piano never uses the damper pedal, so the soundscape is devoid of the comfort of sustaining resonance. Occasionally, the rhythm settles down into a steady beat, imitating a Native American rain dance and offering a glimmer of hope as a respite from the restlessness. But in the end, it is the rain dance that frantically and desperately accelerates out of control to close the movement.

Many times, as the dry winter gave way to the wet spring, I remember the refreshing smell that would emanate from the ground as the first raindrops began to fall. This scent is called "petrichor," and offered relief from the preceding dryness. Every time I smell this today, I feel a bit nostalgic for those days in my youth. Finally allowing the use of the damper pedal, I evoke this nostalgia as well as comforting relief as the drought is now over. The disjointed and panicked cries of the first movement are replaced with lyrical and delicate melodies; the biting dissonance is replaced with diatonic harmonies. The discovery of the damper pedal allows for a glorious swelling of sound that leads to the climax of the movement, but a cadenza by the saxophone returns to the poignancy of the opening bars.

The third movement, deluge, returns to materials from the first movement, leading off with the forceful piano gesture that opened the sonata. Instead of the clarity and desolation of the first movement, there is an almost constant flow of running notes, and the sonic density increases steadily as the movement progresses. The saxophone alludes to a flowing melody from the second movement, but it is inundated with descending arpeggios in the piano. A scherzando section references some of the rhythmic shifting of the first movement, and it leads to another barrage of arpeggios and running notes. The rain dance returns, but this time it is submerged, with the incessant damper pedal rarely letting the music come up to breathe as it gets more and more restless and panicked. Excess is often not the solution to the problem of absence. One final return to the lyrical melody is little relief, as it drowns in a flash flood of tone clusters and glissandos.

duration: ca. 20'
score is transposed

for more information, please visit www.rogerzare.com

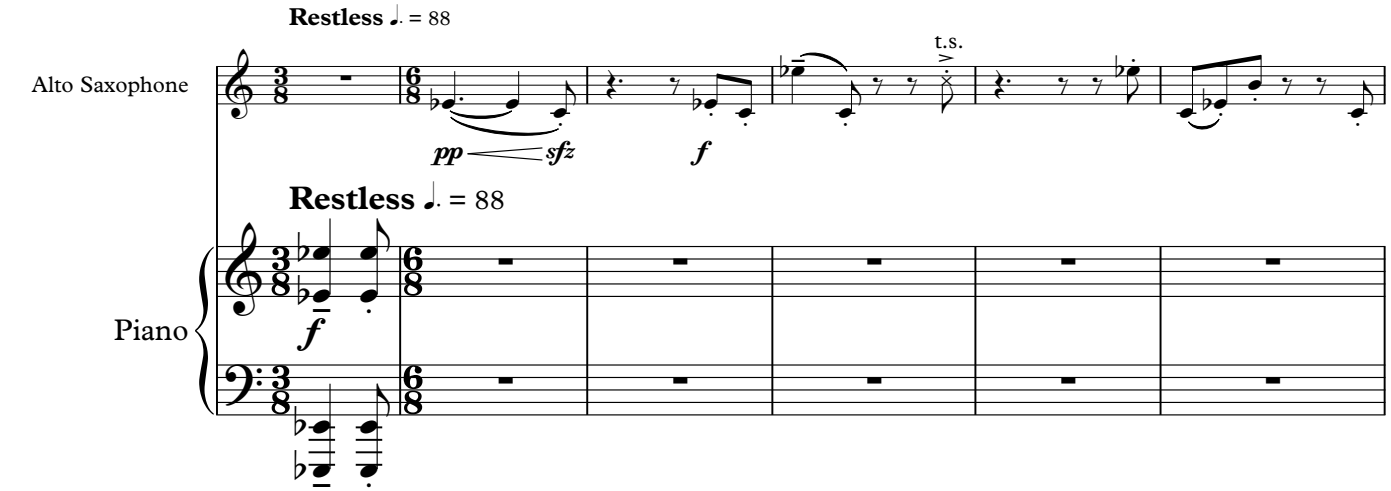
For Scotty Phillips

Sonata

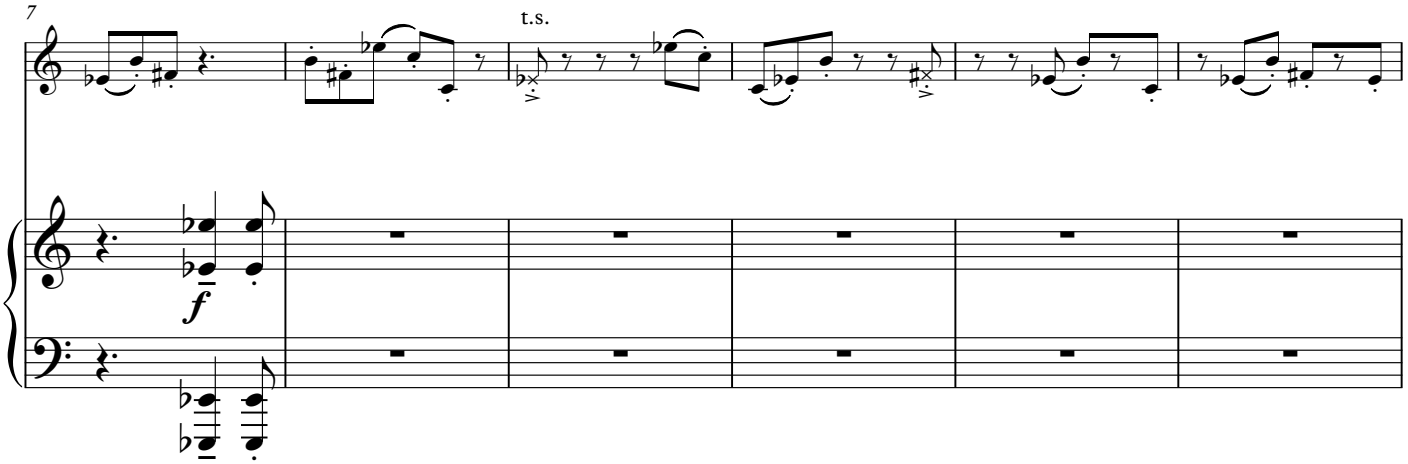
for alto saxophone and piano

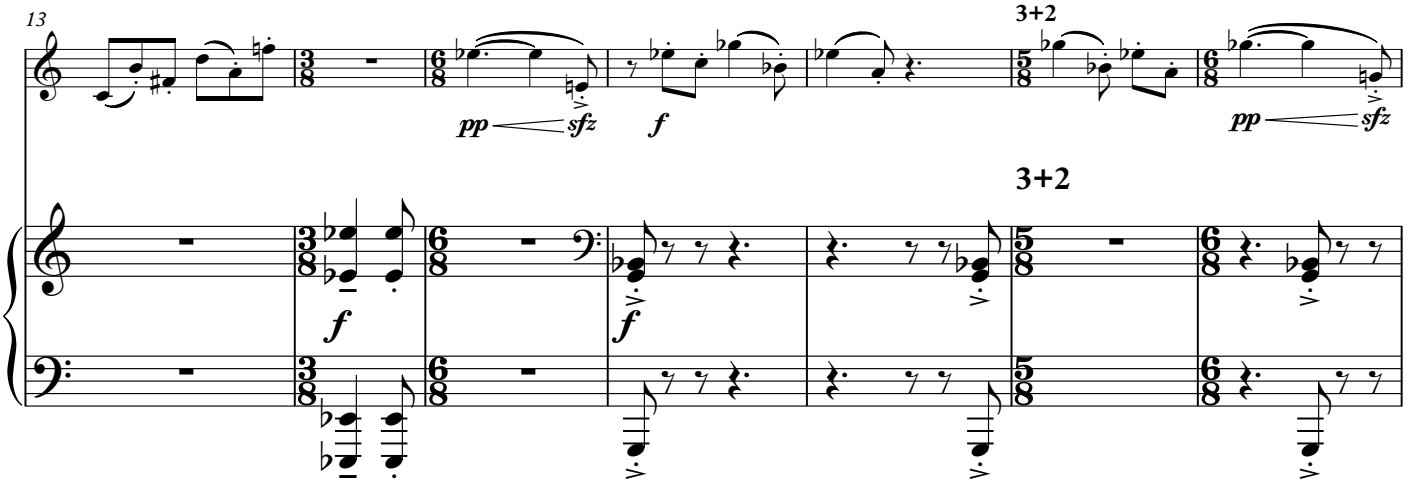
I. Drought

Roger Zare
(b. 1985)



do not use any damper pedal in this movement





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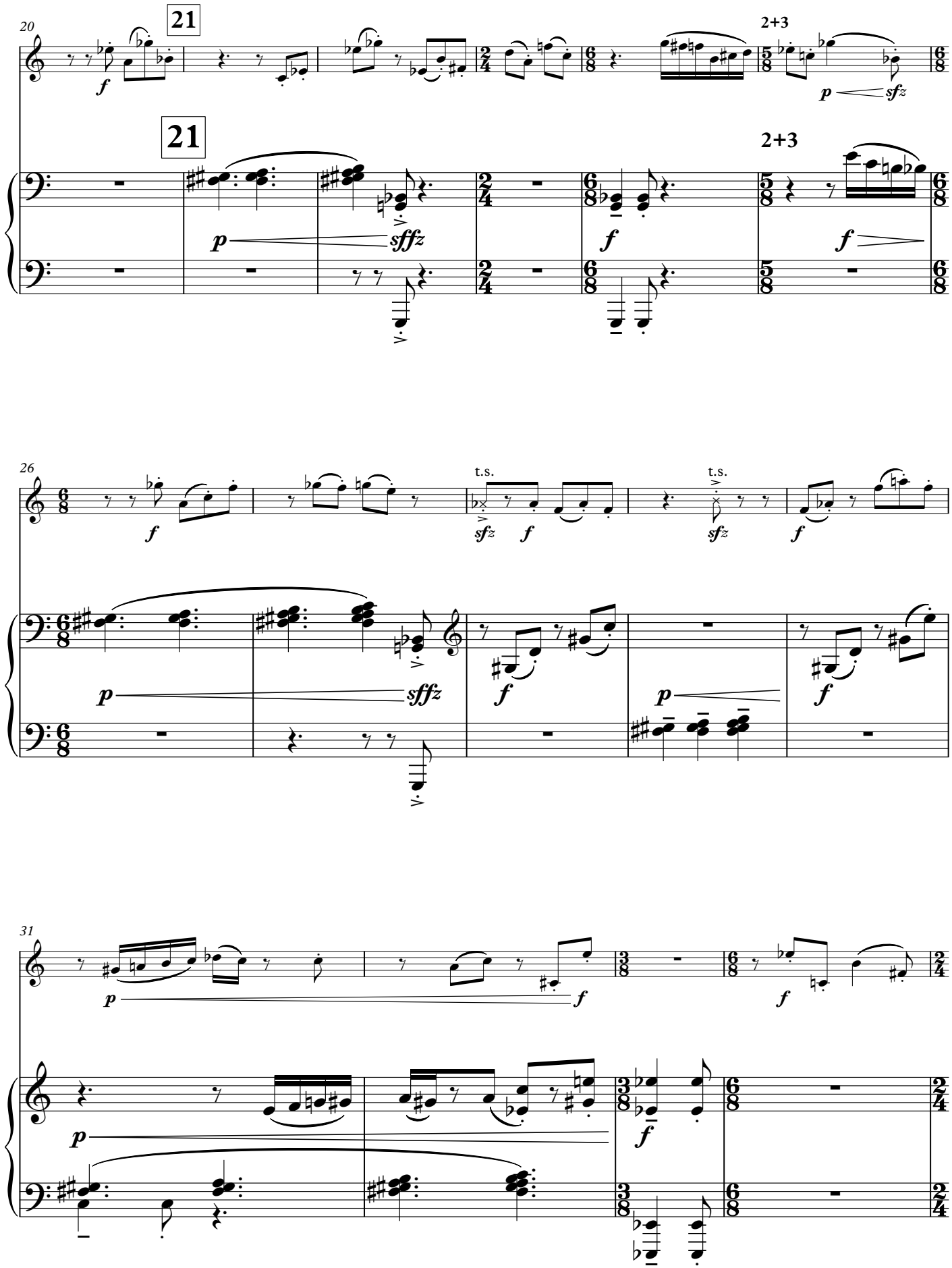
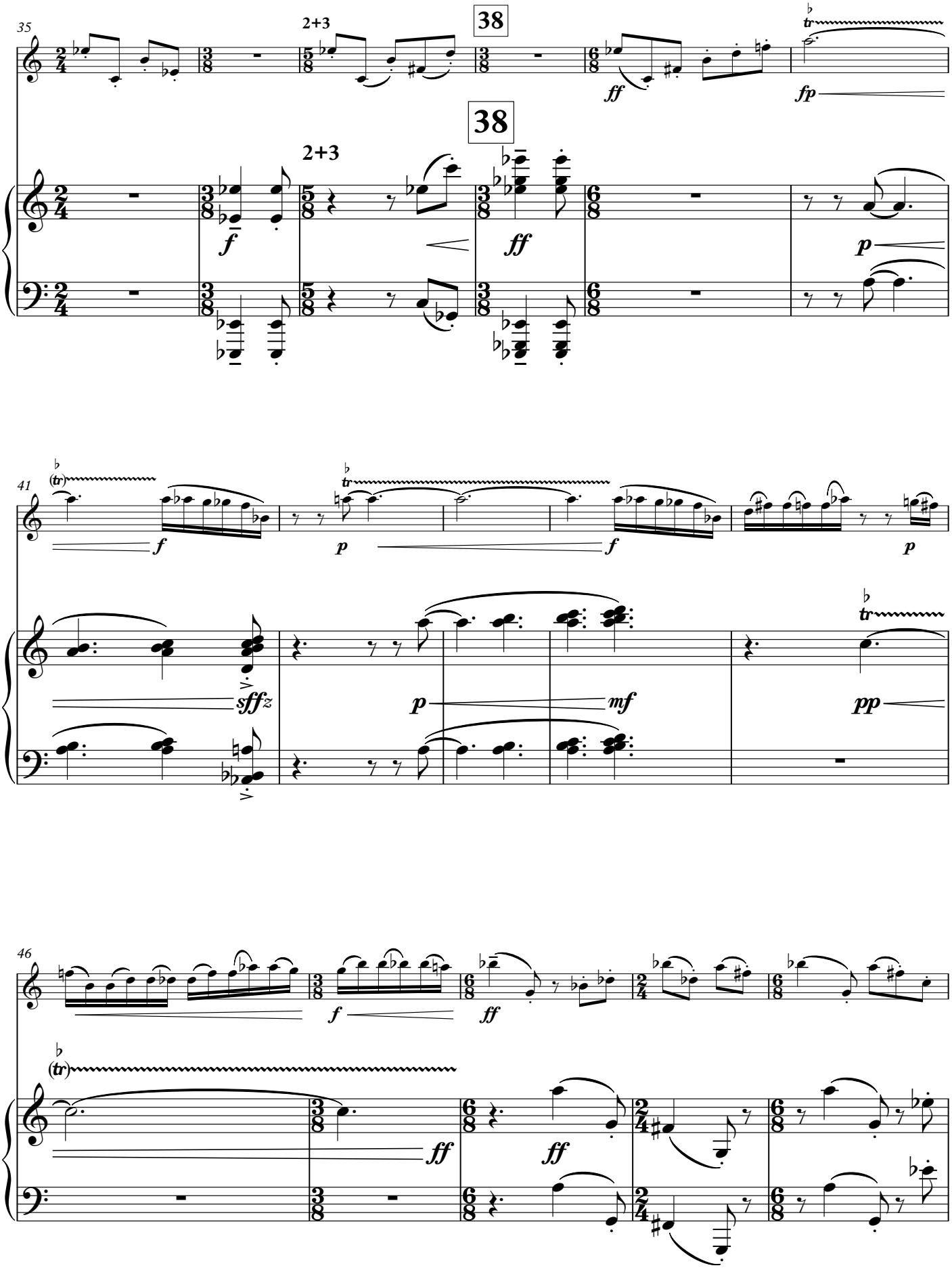
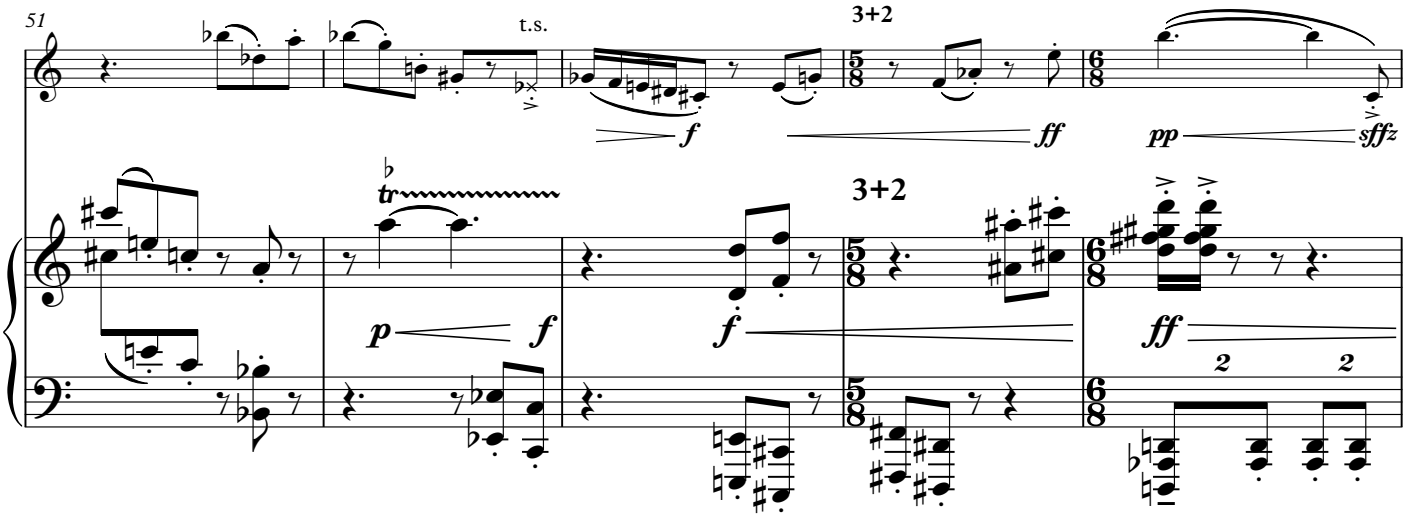
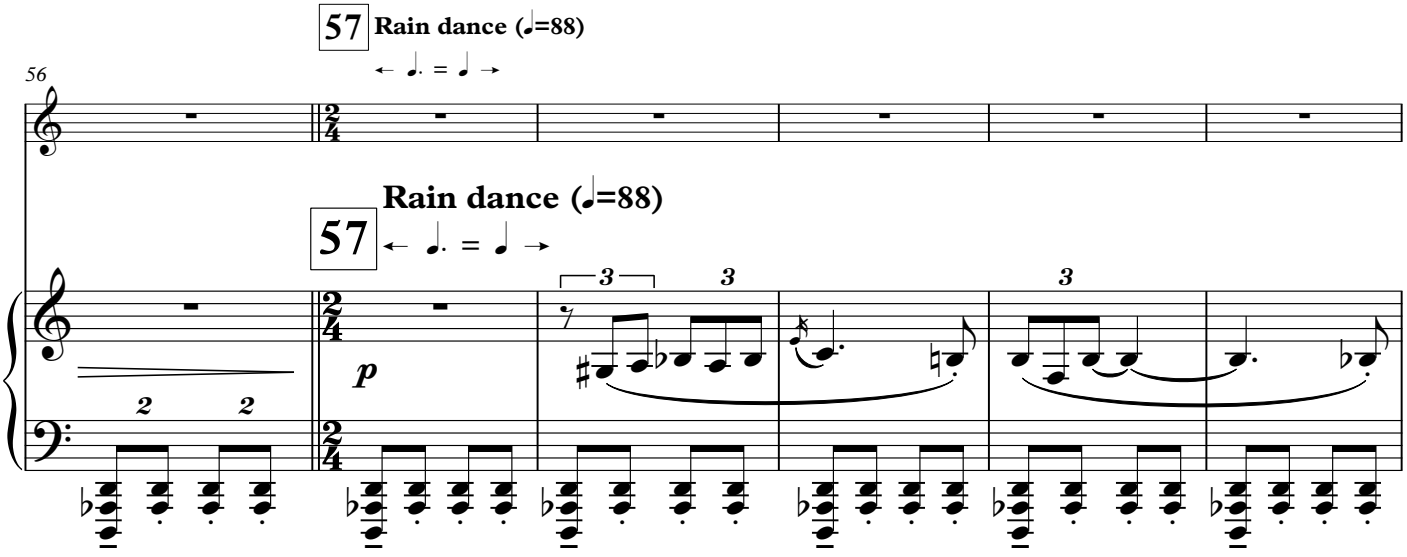
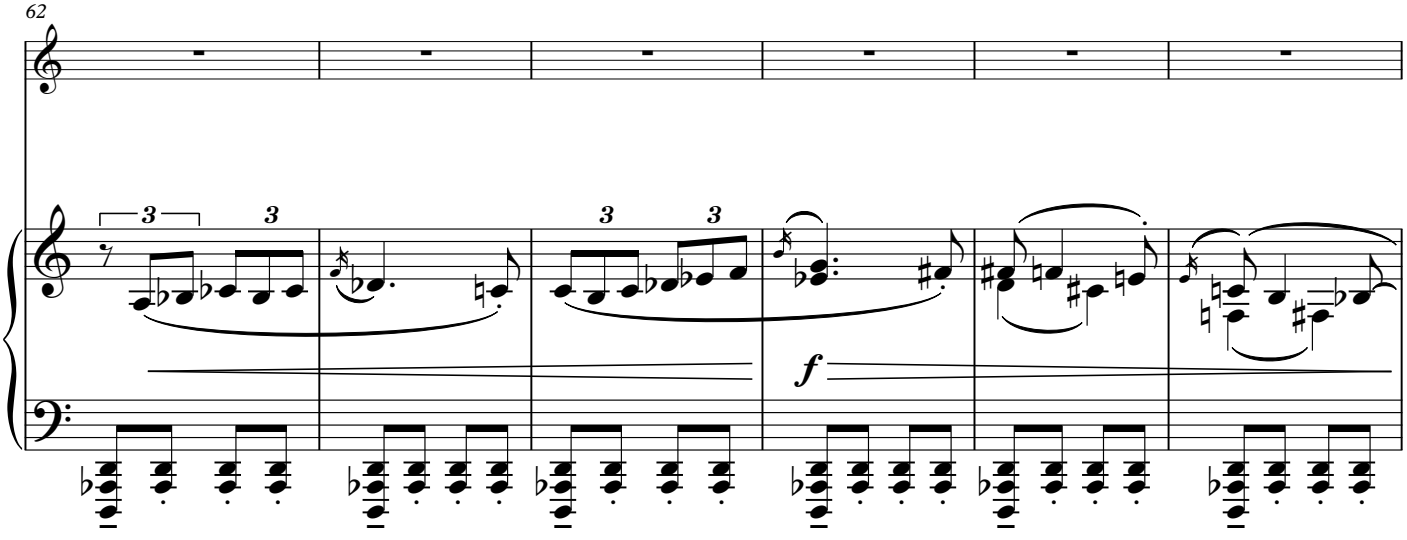
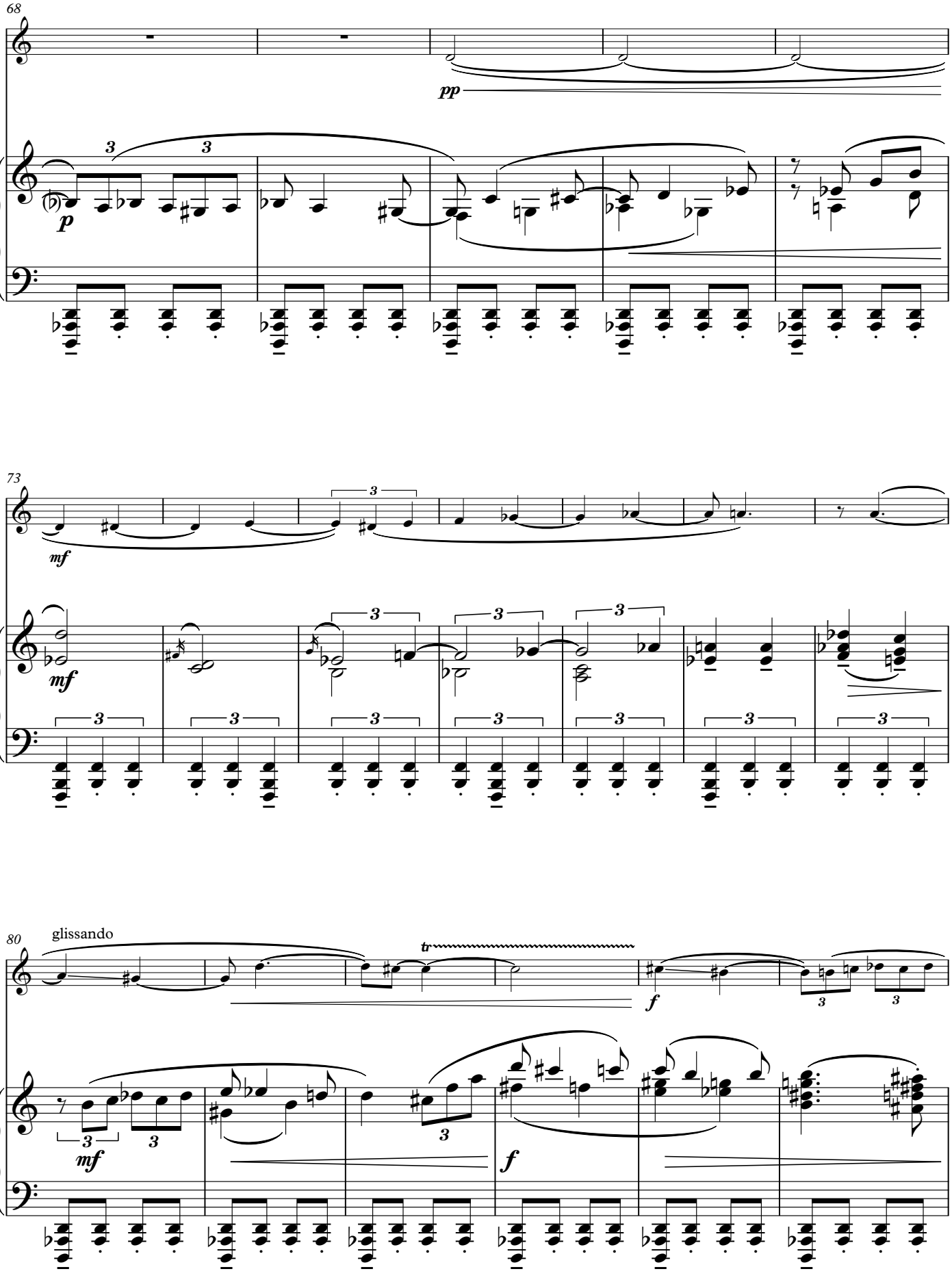

20
21
2+3
f
p
sfz
21
2+3
p
sffz
f
f
26
t.s.
t.s.
f
sfz
f
sfz
f
p
sffz
f
p
f
31
p
f
f
p
f

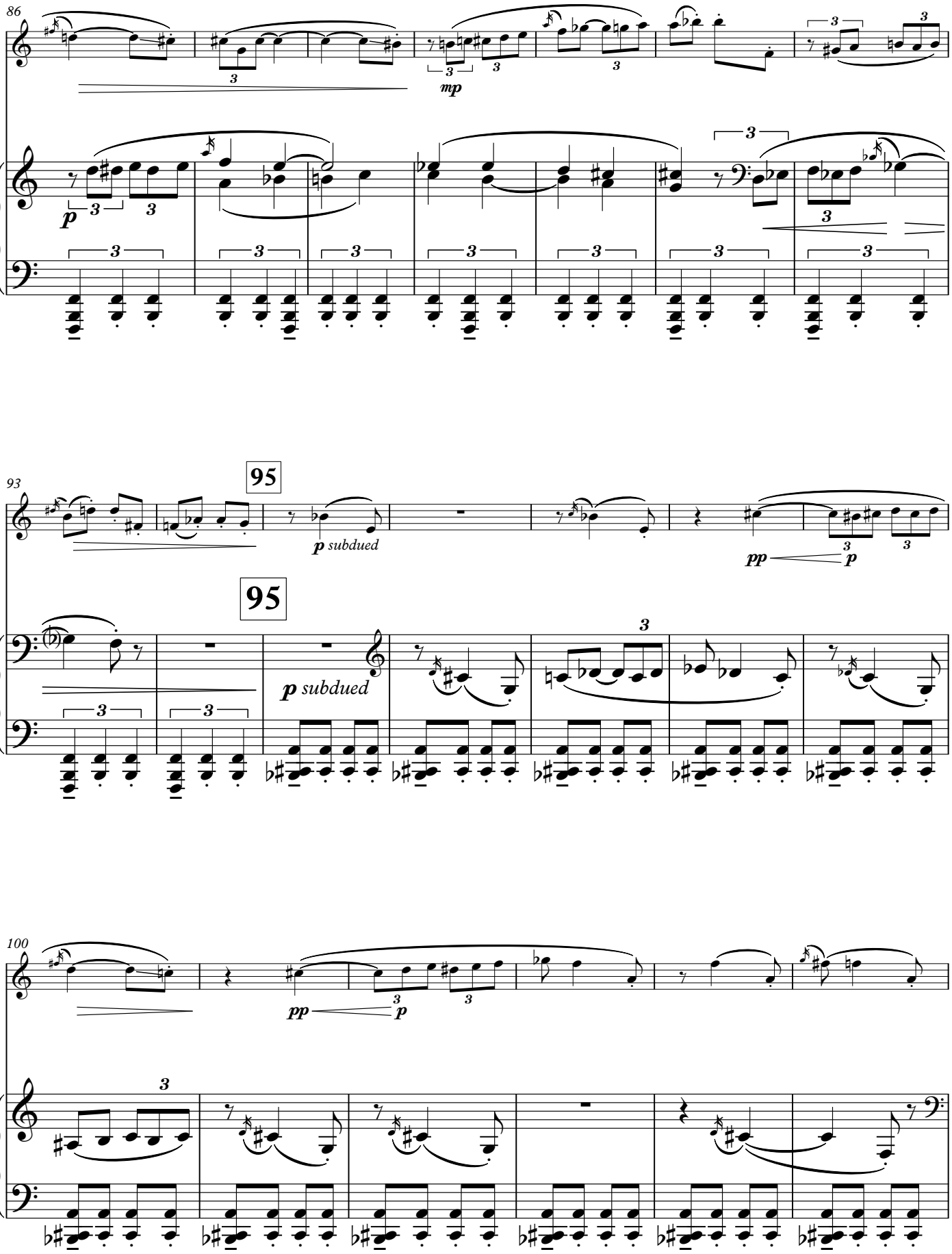

35
2+3
38
38
2+3
41
46

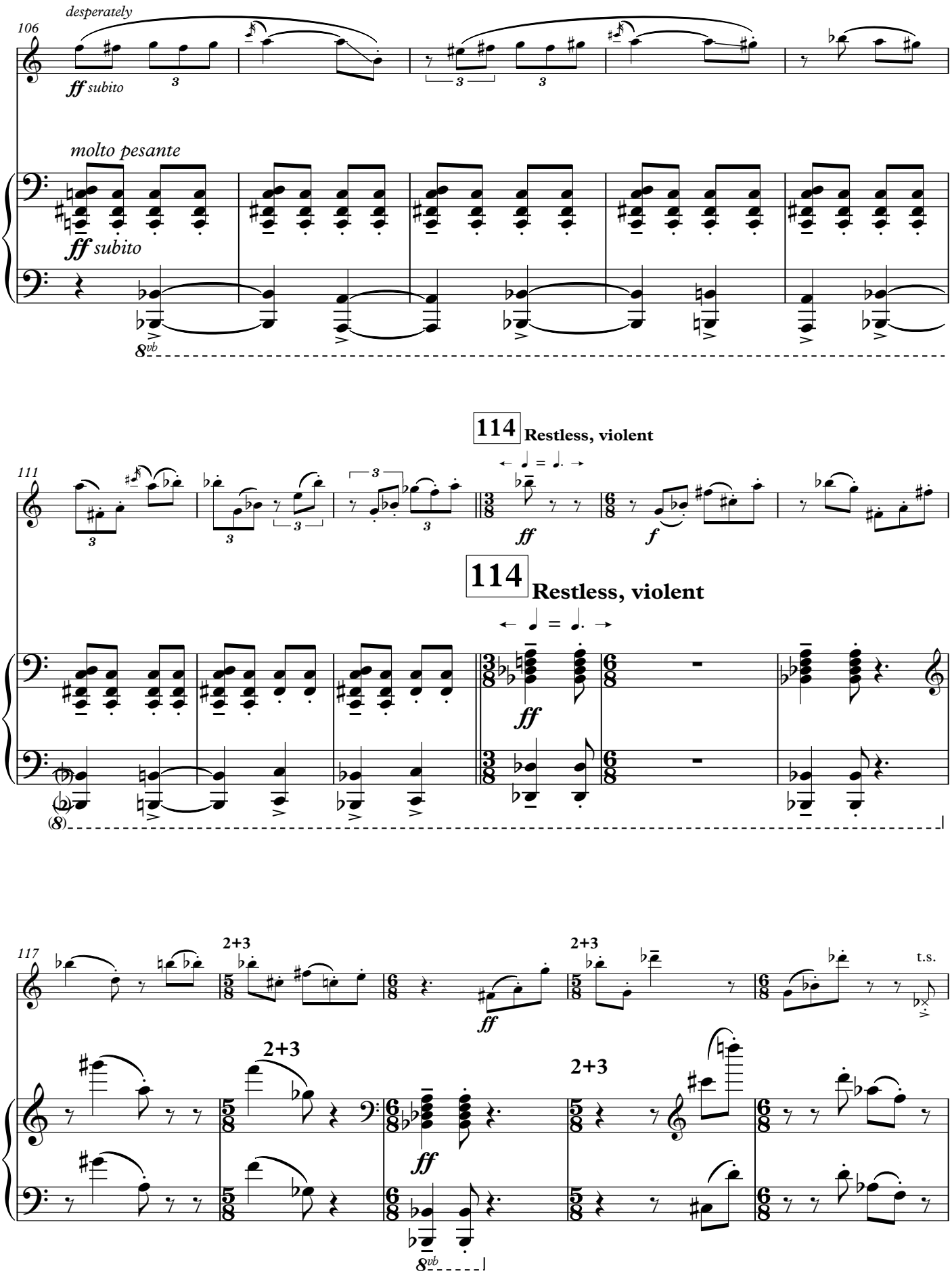

51
t.s.
3+2
f
ff
pp
sffz
tr
p
f
f
3+2
ff
2
2

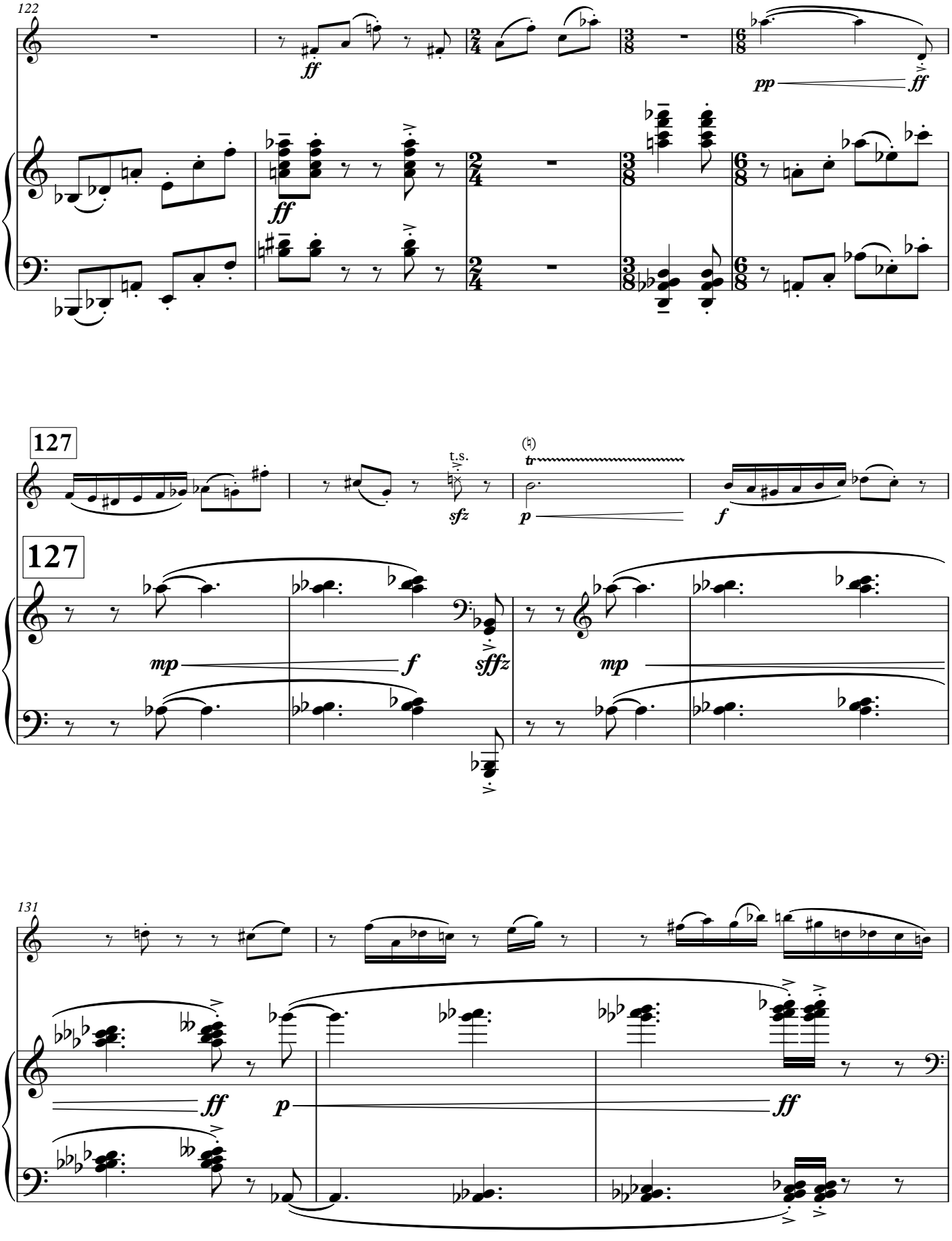

57 Rain dance (♩=88)
56
Rain dance (♩=88)
57
p
3
3
3
2
2

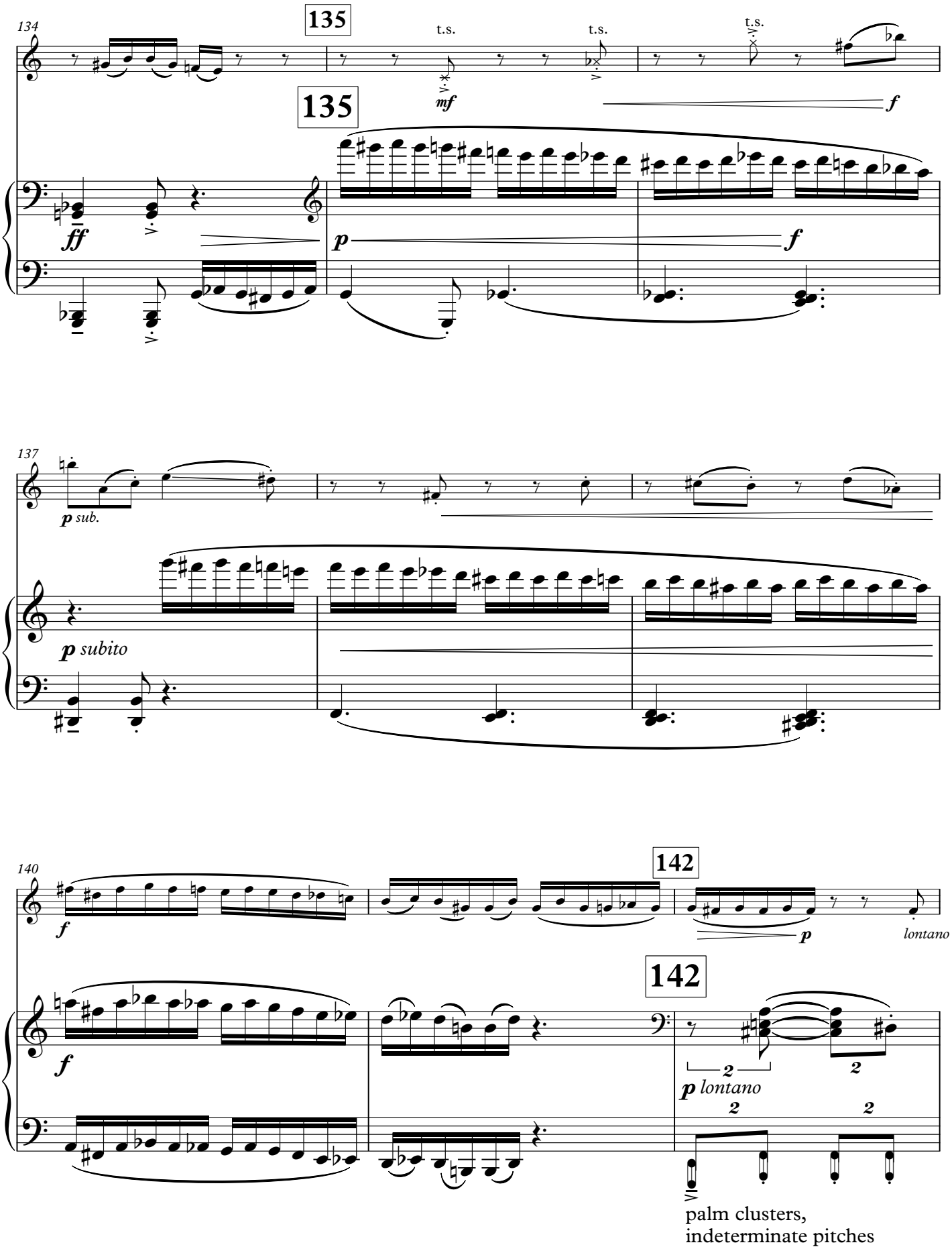

62
3
3
3
3
f

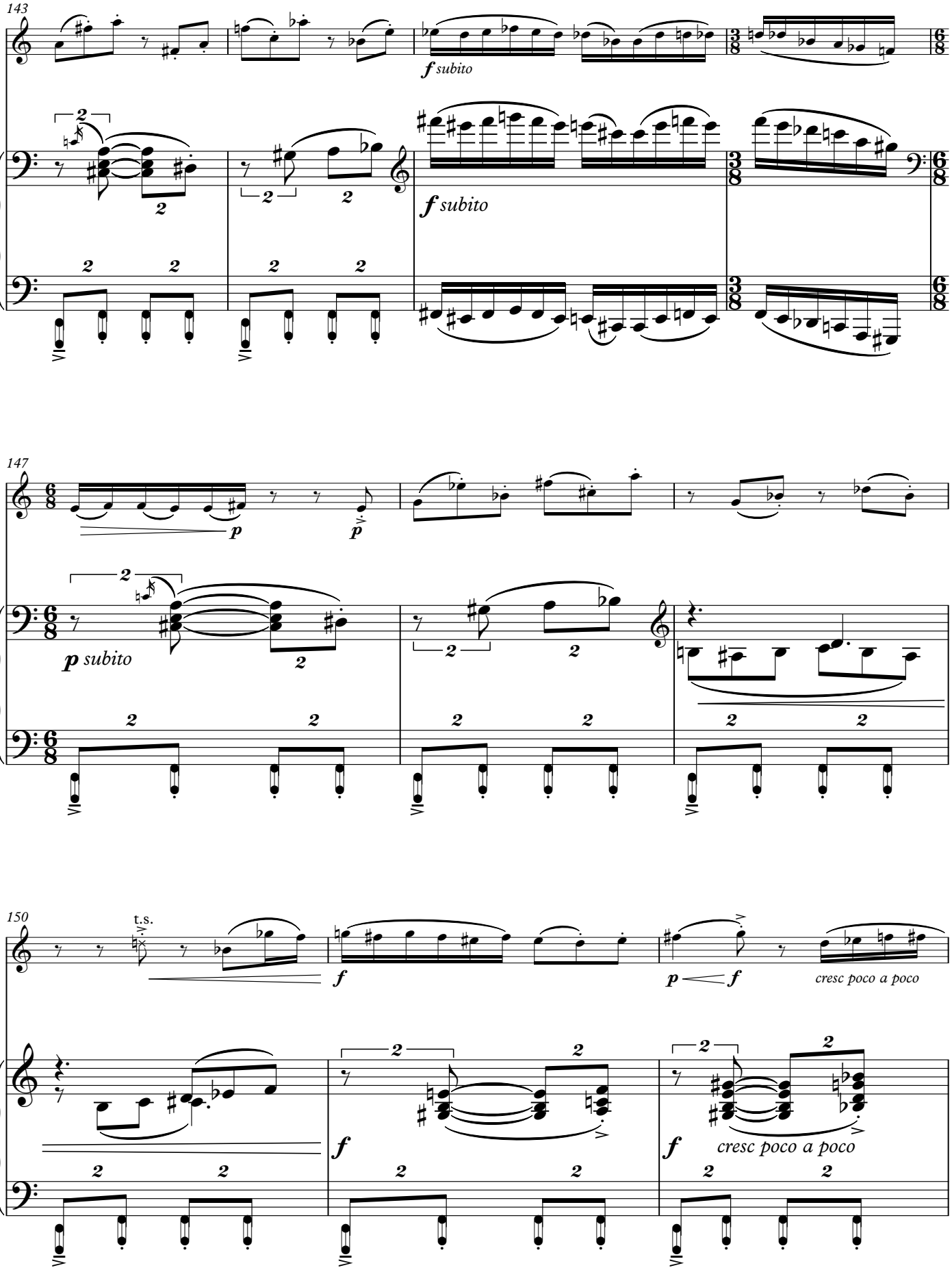

68
pp
p
73
mf
mf
80
glissando
mf
f
f

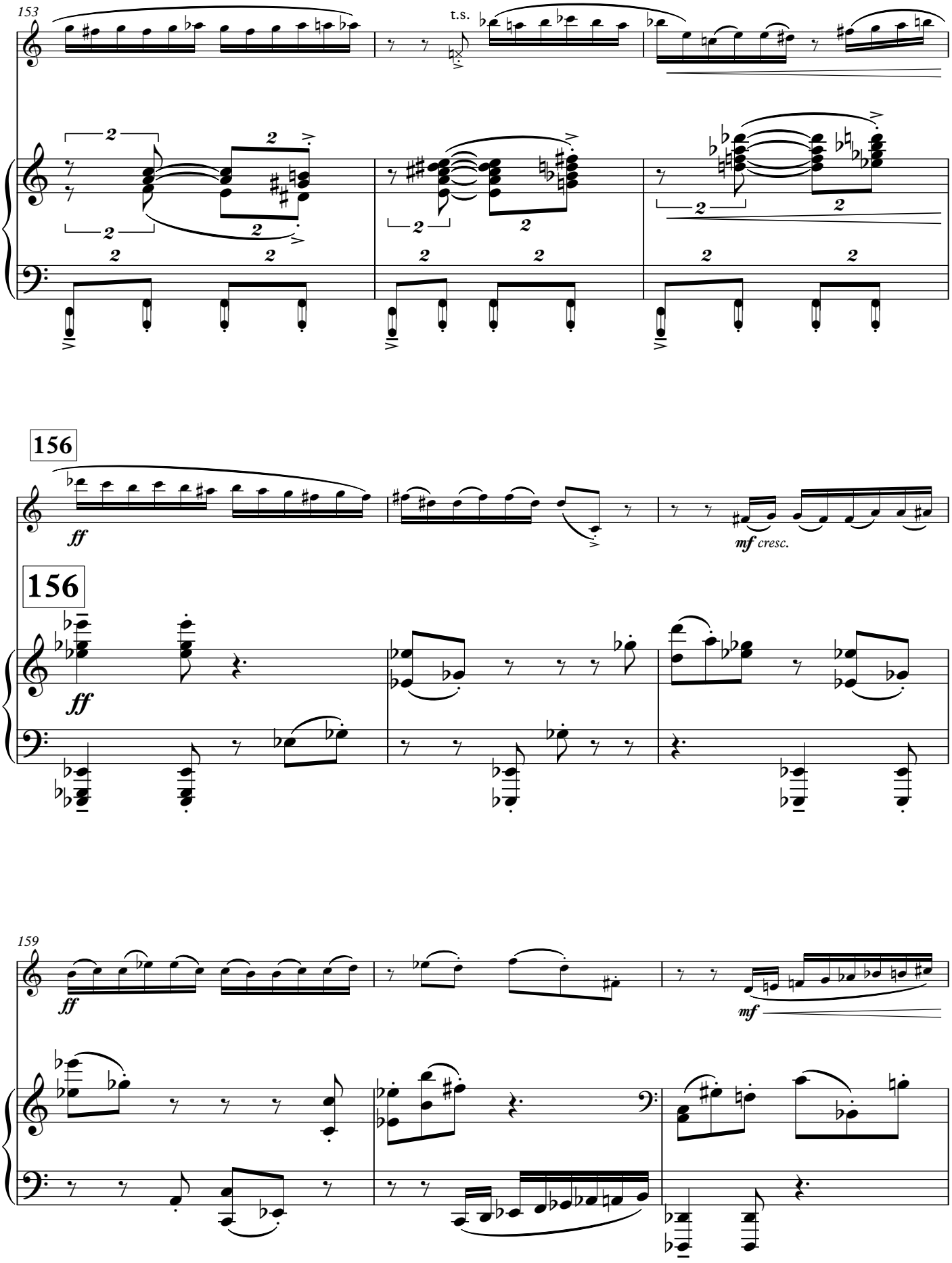

86
mp
p
3
93
95
p subdued
pp
p
95
p subdued
100
pp
p

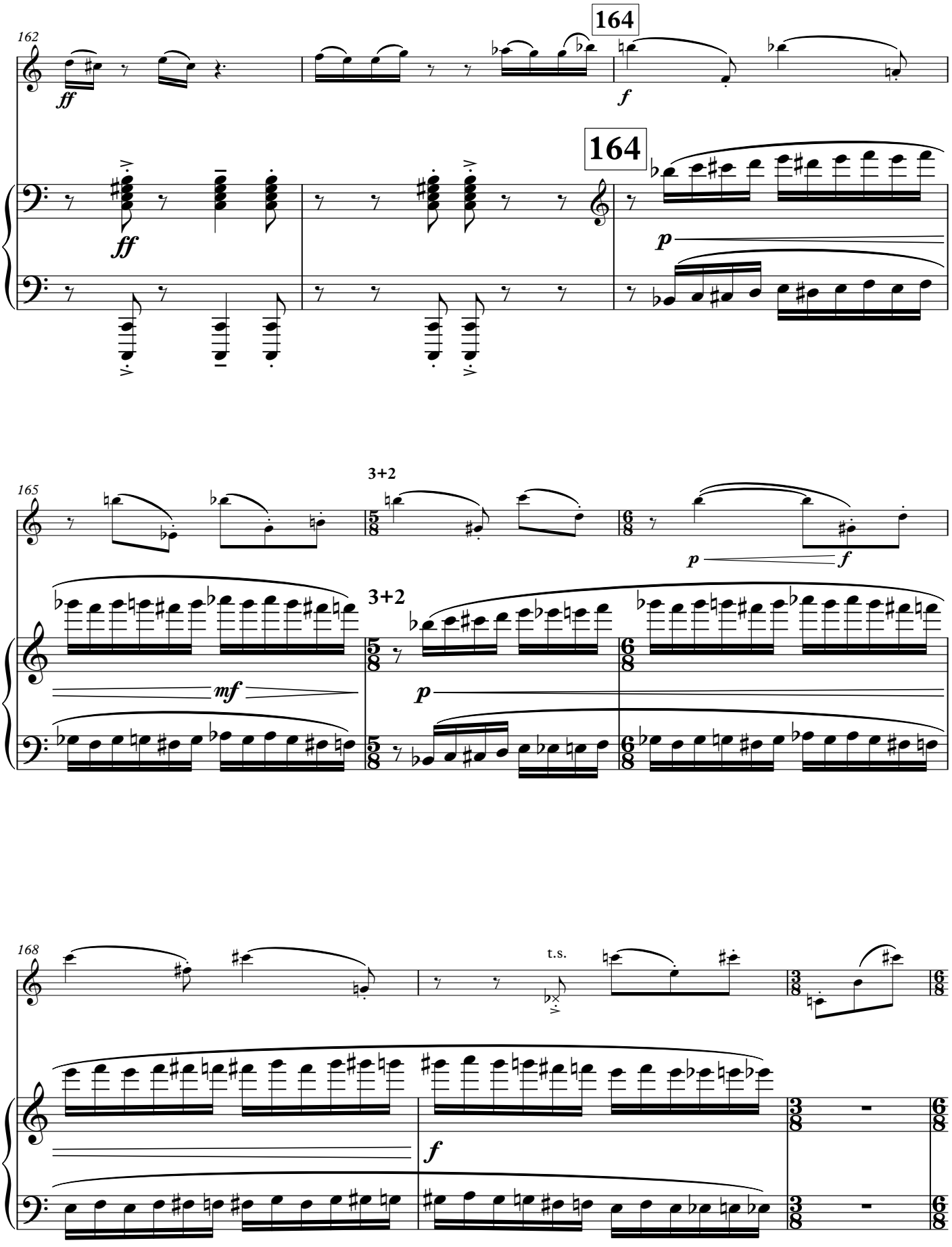

106
desperately
ff subito
molto pesante
ff subito
8vb
111
114
Restless, violent
ff
f
114
Restless, violent
ff
(8)
117
2+3
ff
2+3
t.s.
2+3
2+3
ff
8vb

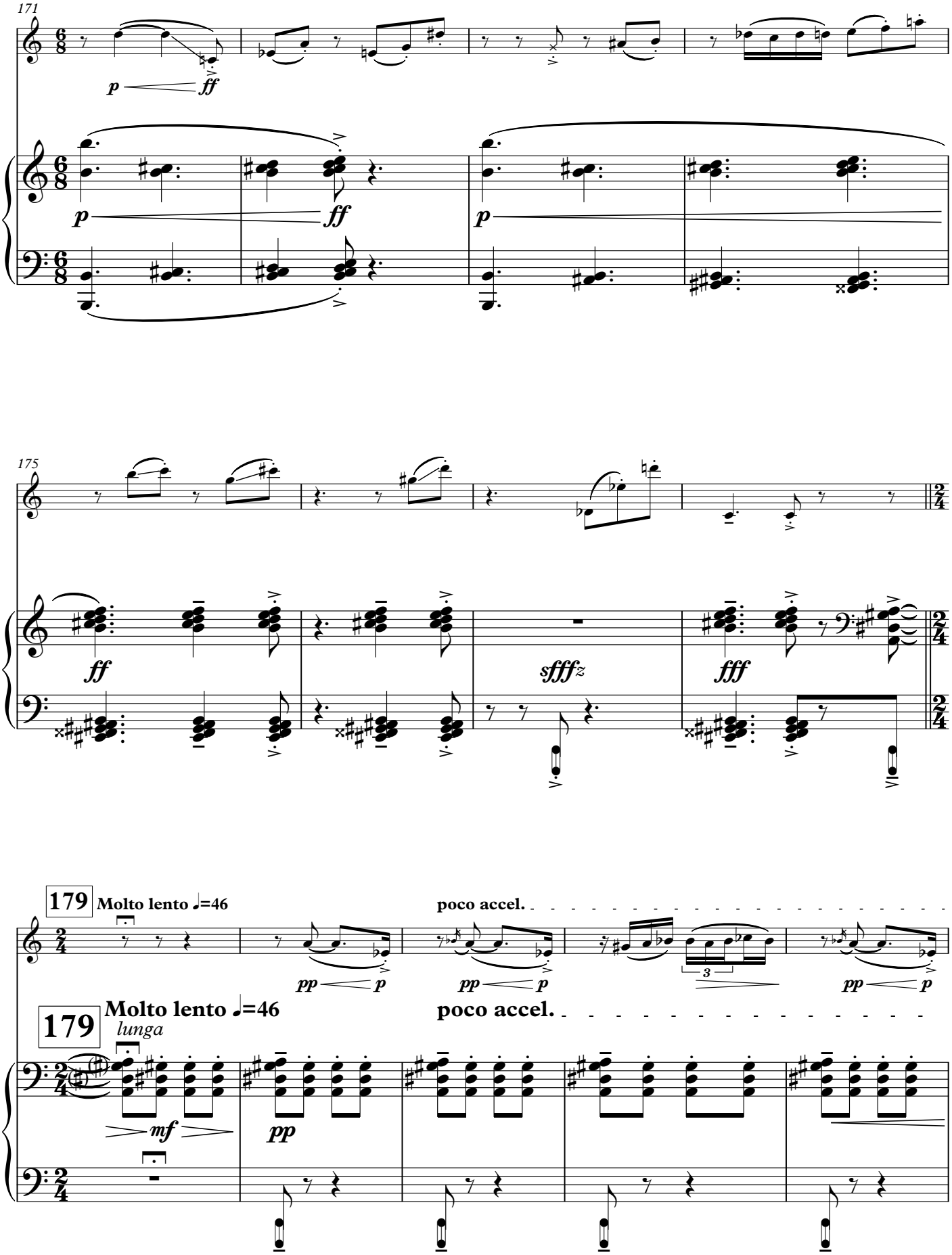

122
ff
pp
ff
ff
127
t.s.
sfz
tr
p
f
127
mp
f
sffz
mp
131
ff
p
ff

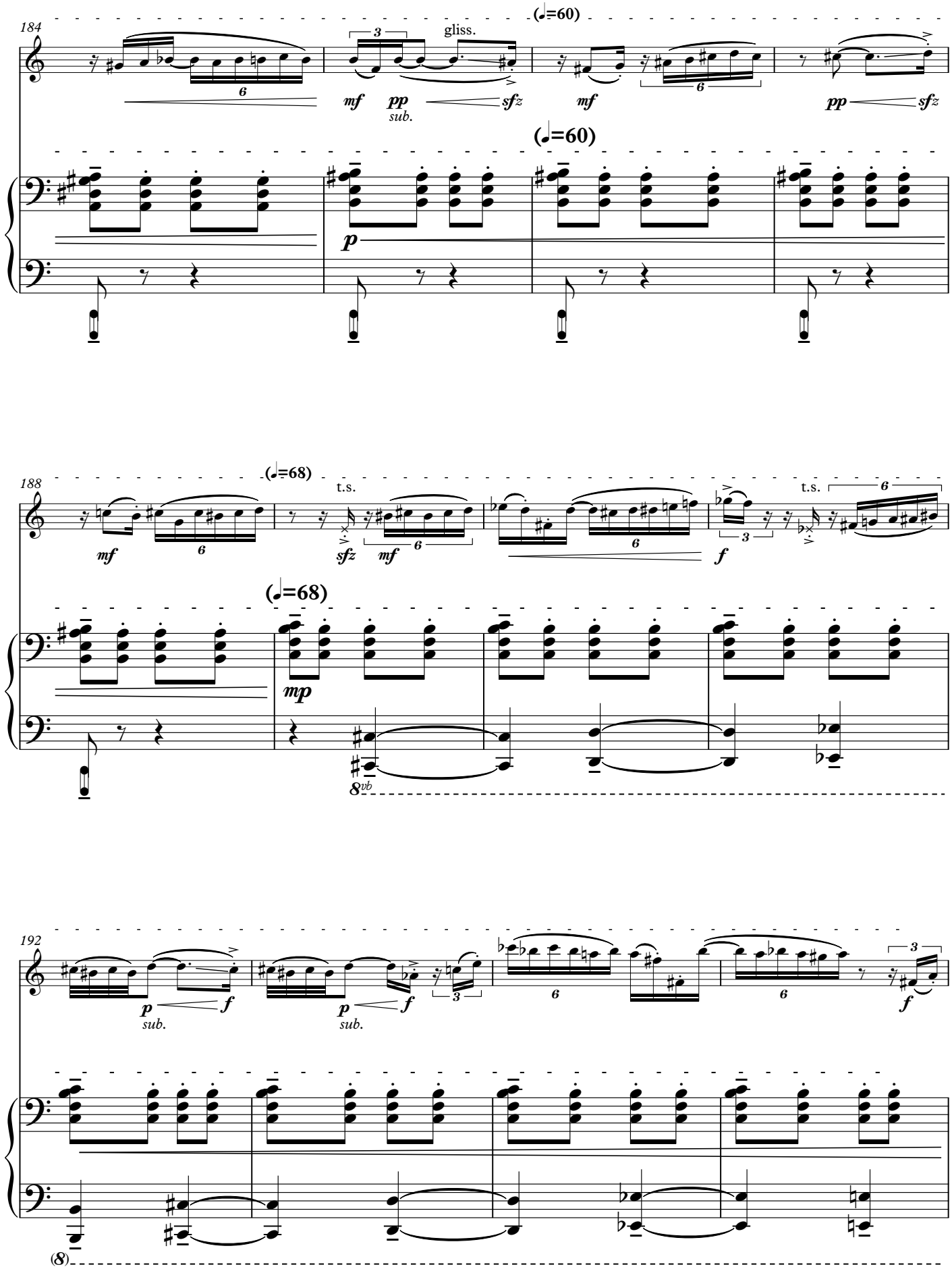

134
135
t.s.
t.s.
t.s.
mf
f
135
ff
p
f
137
p sub.
p subito
140
f
142
p
lontano
142
f
p lontano
palm clusters,
indeterminate pitches

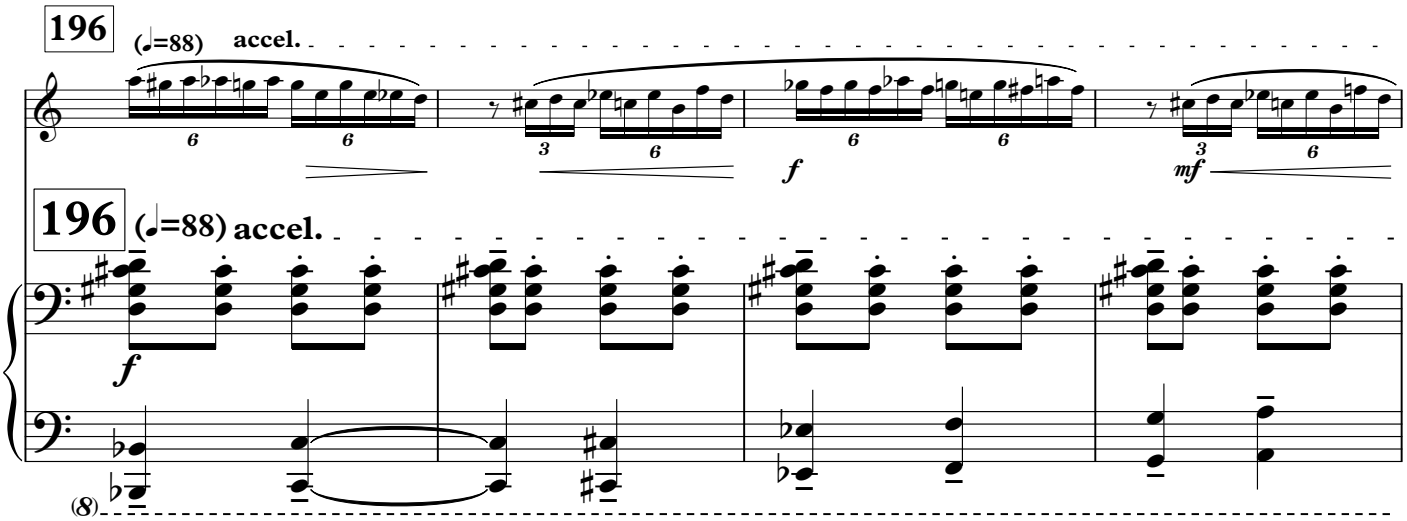

143
f subito
f subito
147
p
p subito
150
t.s.
f
p
f
cresc poco a poco
f
f
cresc poco a poco


153
t.s.
156
ff
mf cresc.
156
ff
159
ff
mf

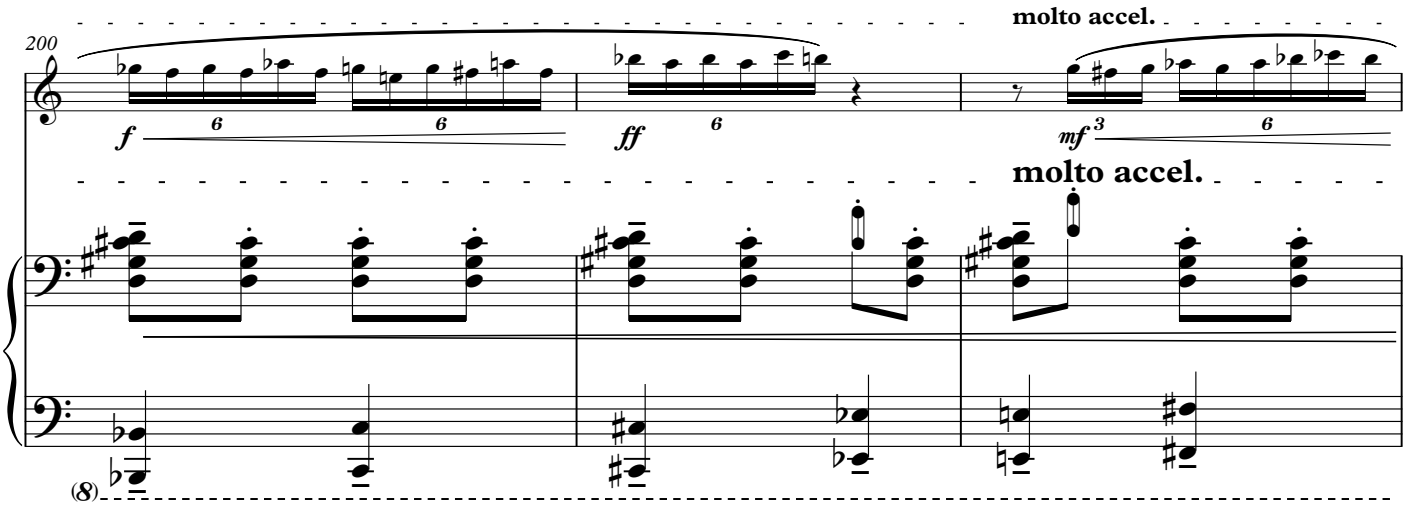

162
164
ff
f
ff
164
p
165
3+2
3+2
p
f
mf
p
168
t.s.
f

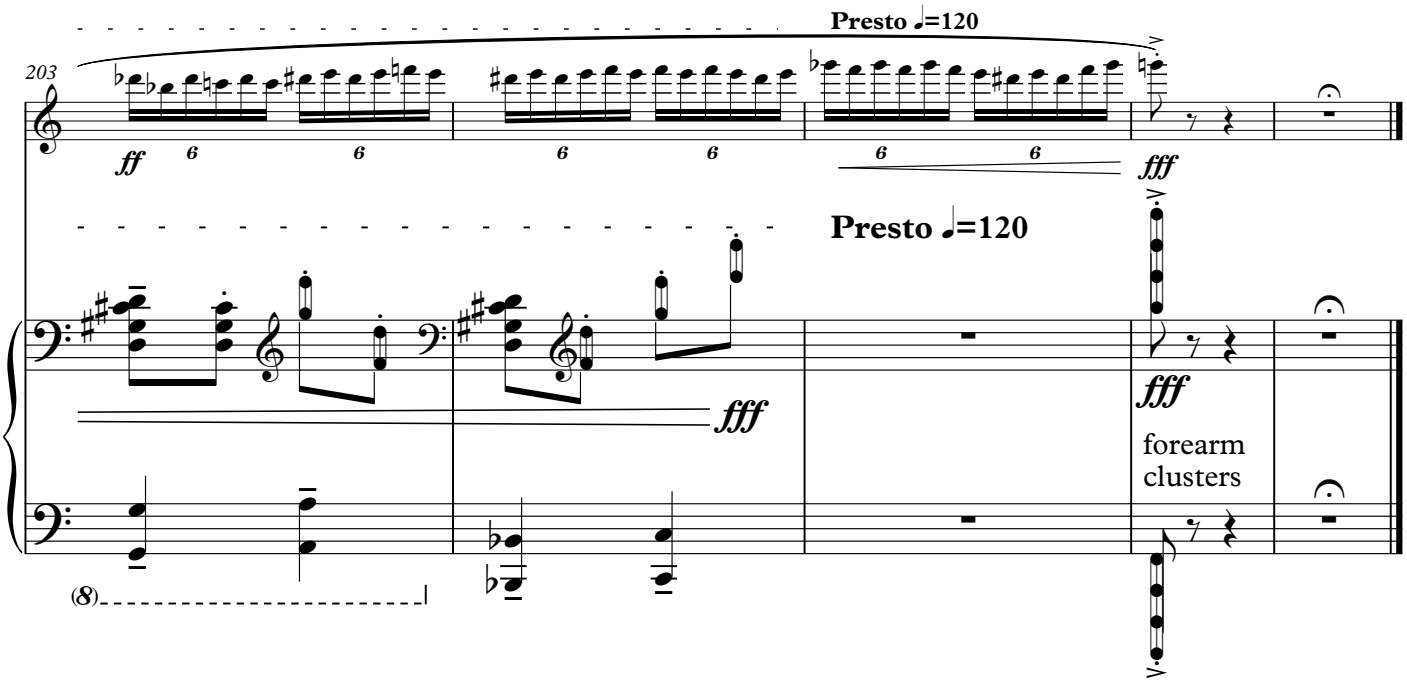

171
p
ff
p
ff
p
175
ff
sffffz
fff
179
Molto lento ♩=46
poco accel.
pp
p
pp
p
3
pp
p
179
Molto lento ♩=46
lunga
poco accel.
mf
pp


184
(♩=60)
gliss.
mf
pp
sub.
sfz
mf
pp
sfz
(♩=60)
p
188
(♩=68)
t.s.
mf
sfz
mf
t.s.
f
(♩=68)
mp
8vb
192
p
sub.
f
p
sub.
f
f
(8)

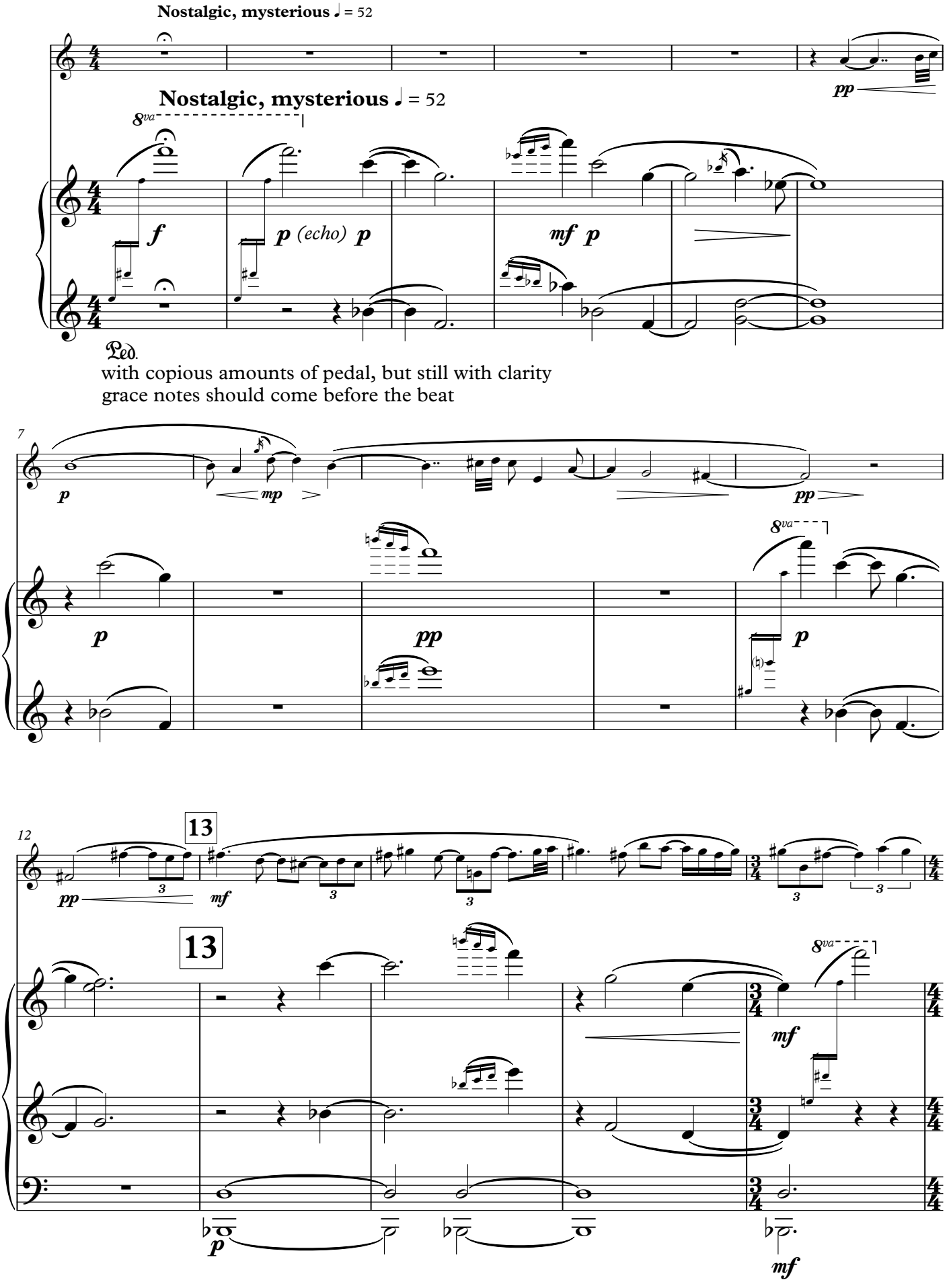

196
(♩=88) accel.
f
mf

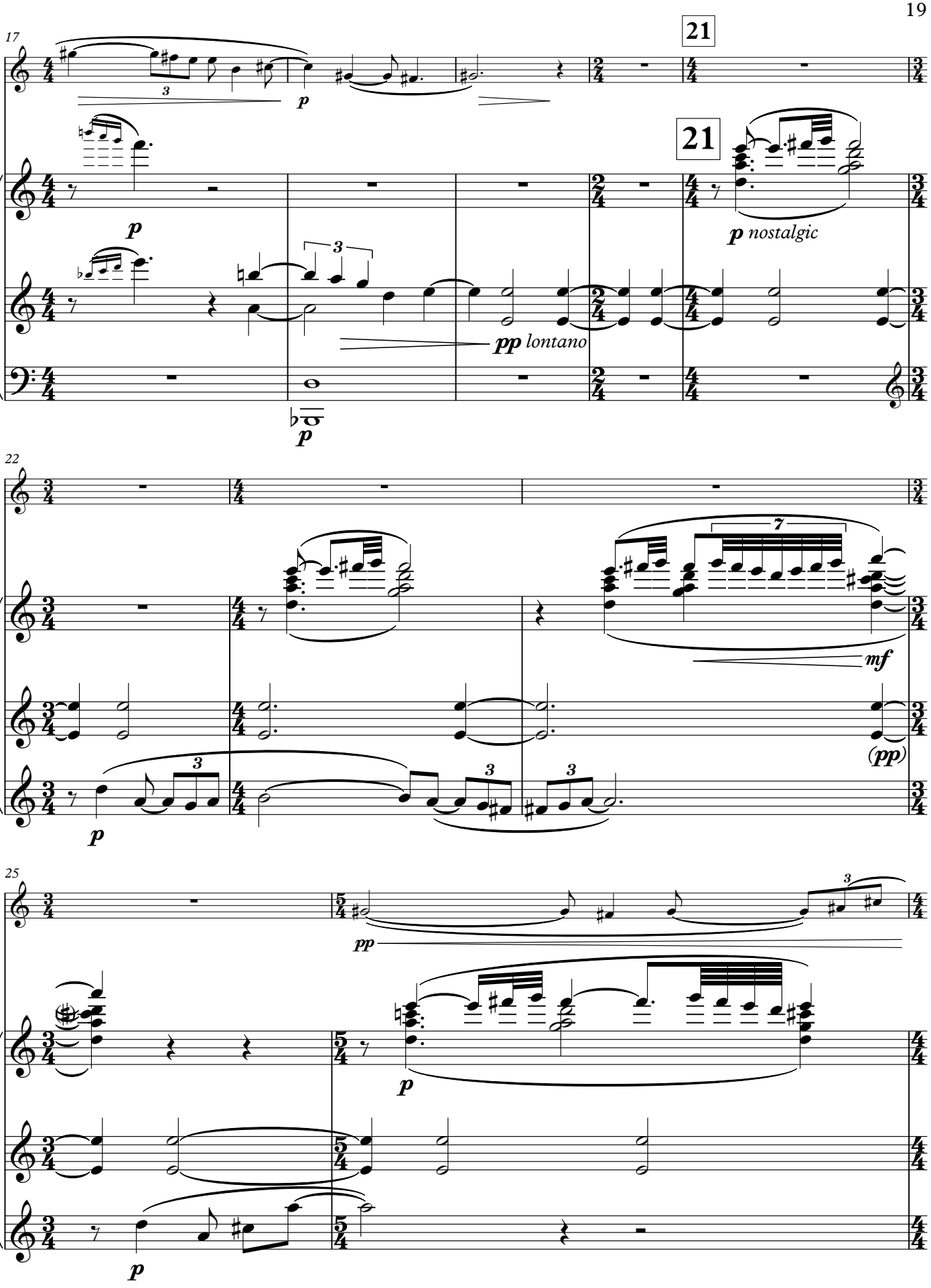
196
(♩=88) accel.
f
(8)

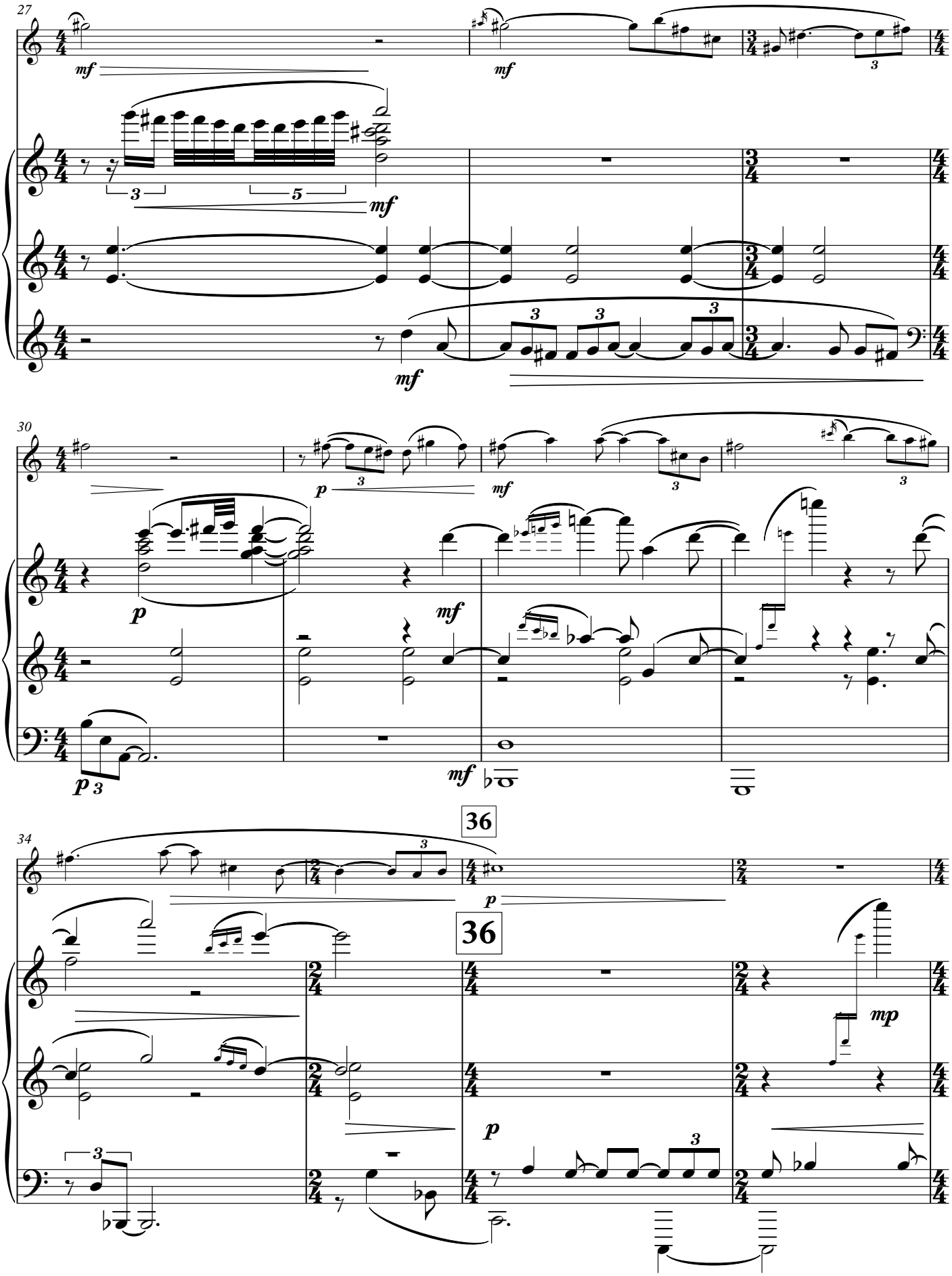

200
molto accel.
f
ff
mf
molto accel.
(8)

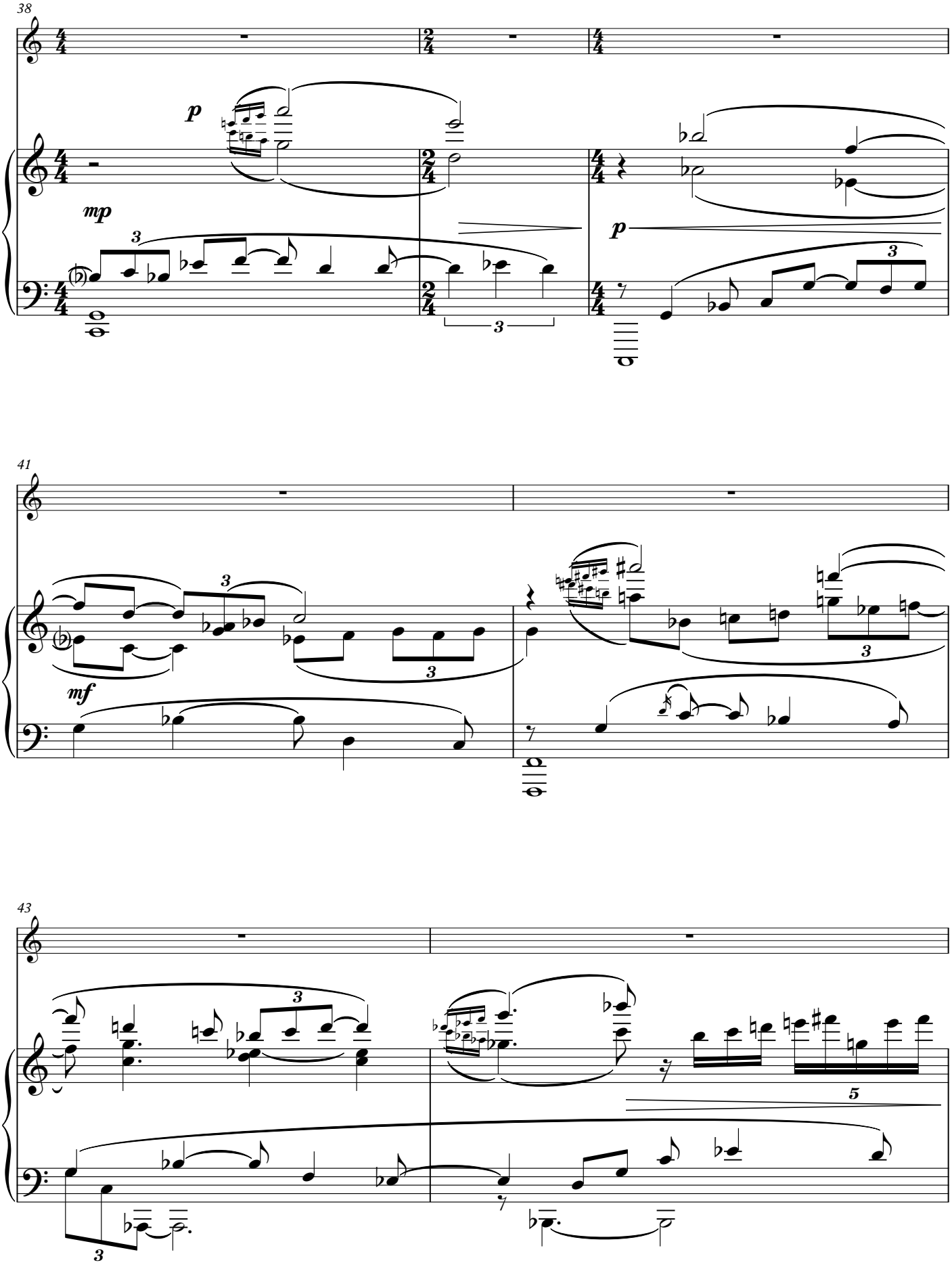

203
Presto ♩=120
ff
fff
Presto ♩=120
fff
fff
forearm
clusters
(8)

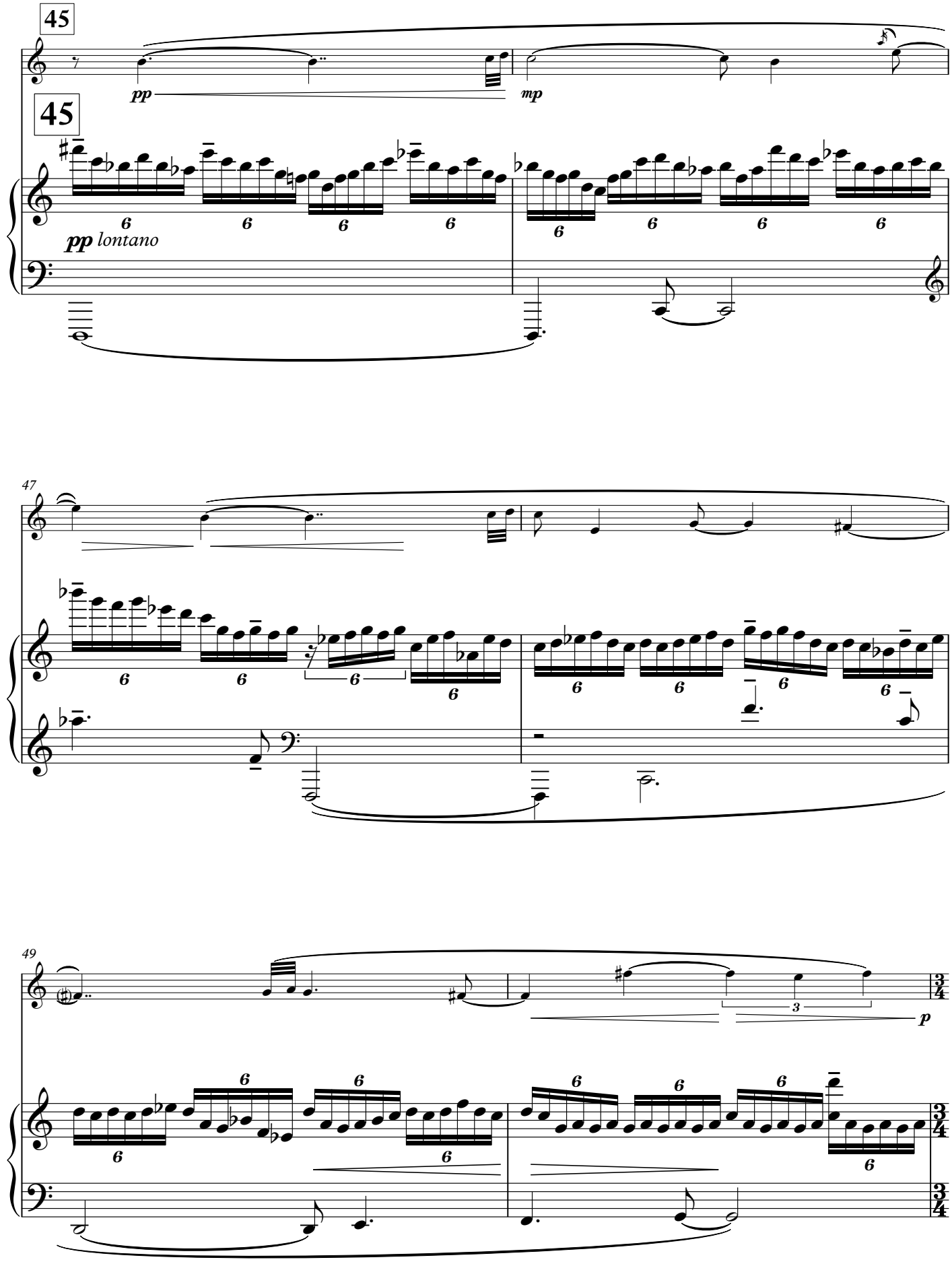
II. Petrichor

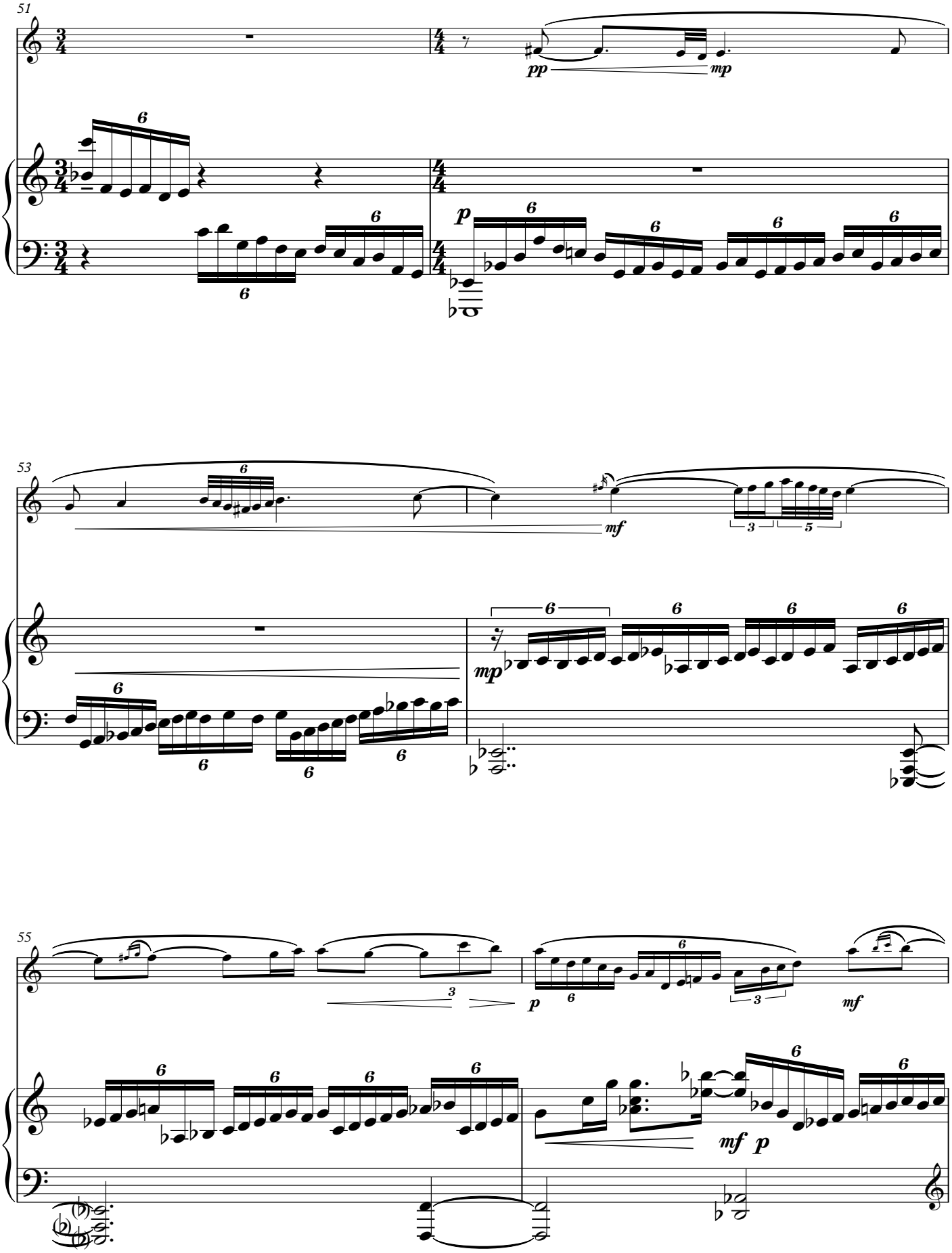


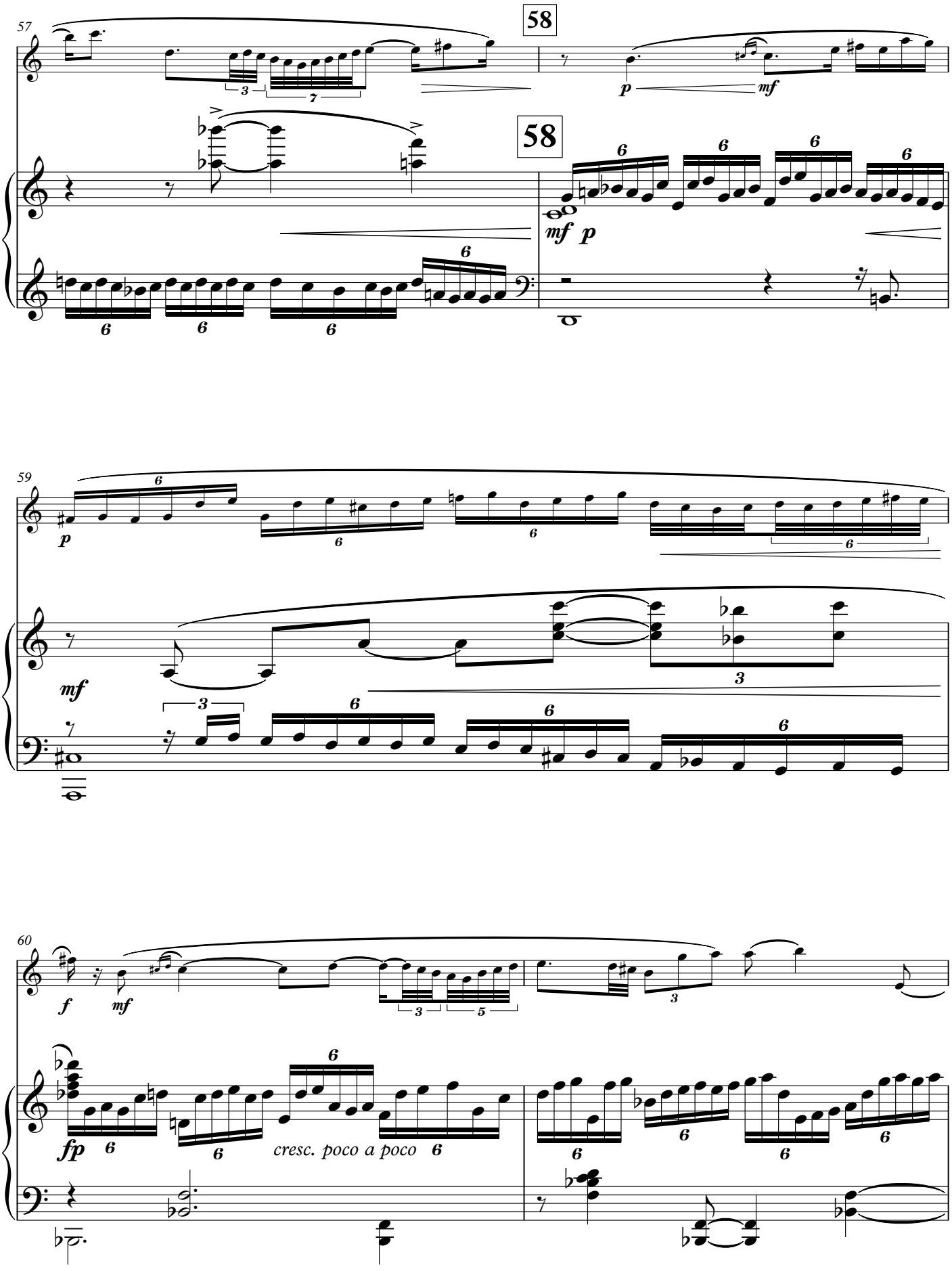

17
21
21
p
p
3
pp lontano
p nostalgic
22
7
mf
(pp)
25
pp
p
p

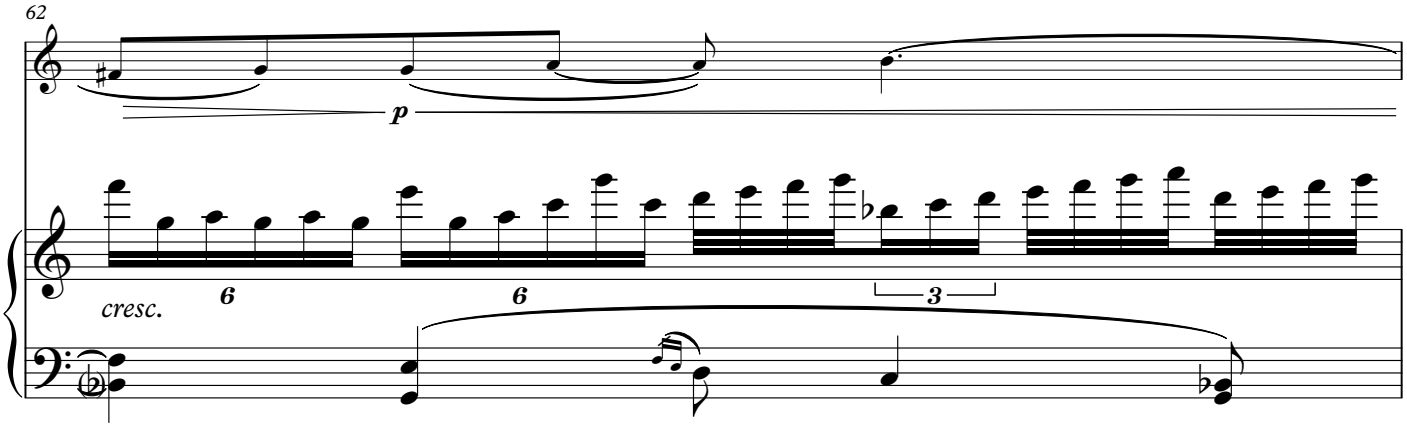

27
mf
mf
3
5
mf
mf
30
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
34
36
p
36
mp
p

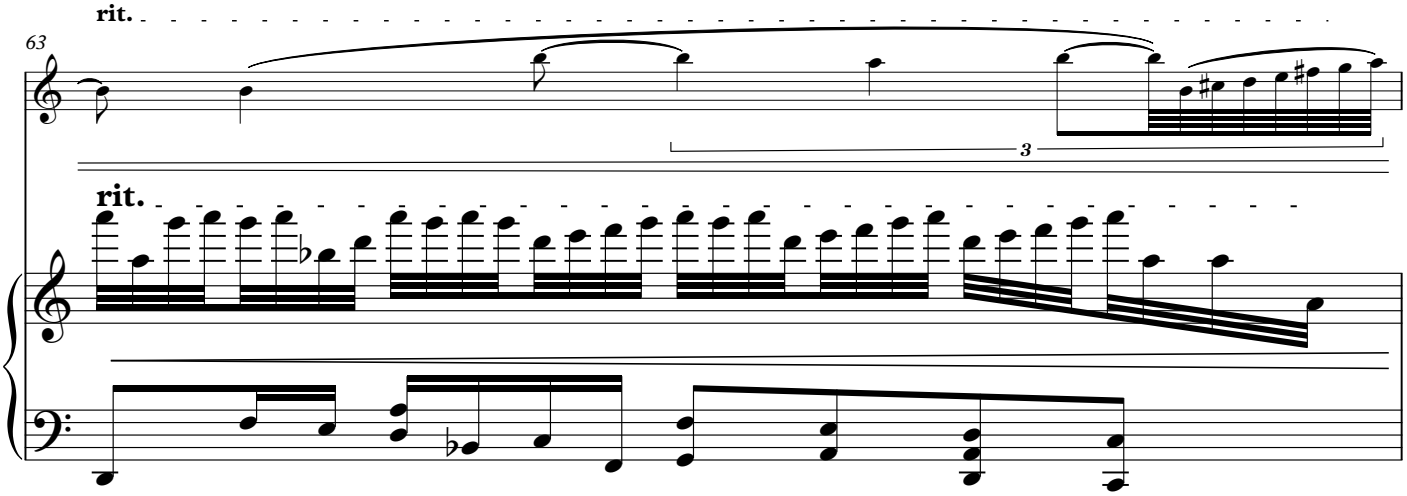

38
p
mp
3
3
p
3
41
3
3
mf
3
43
3
5
3

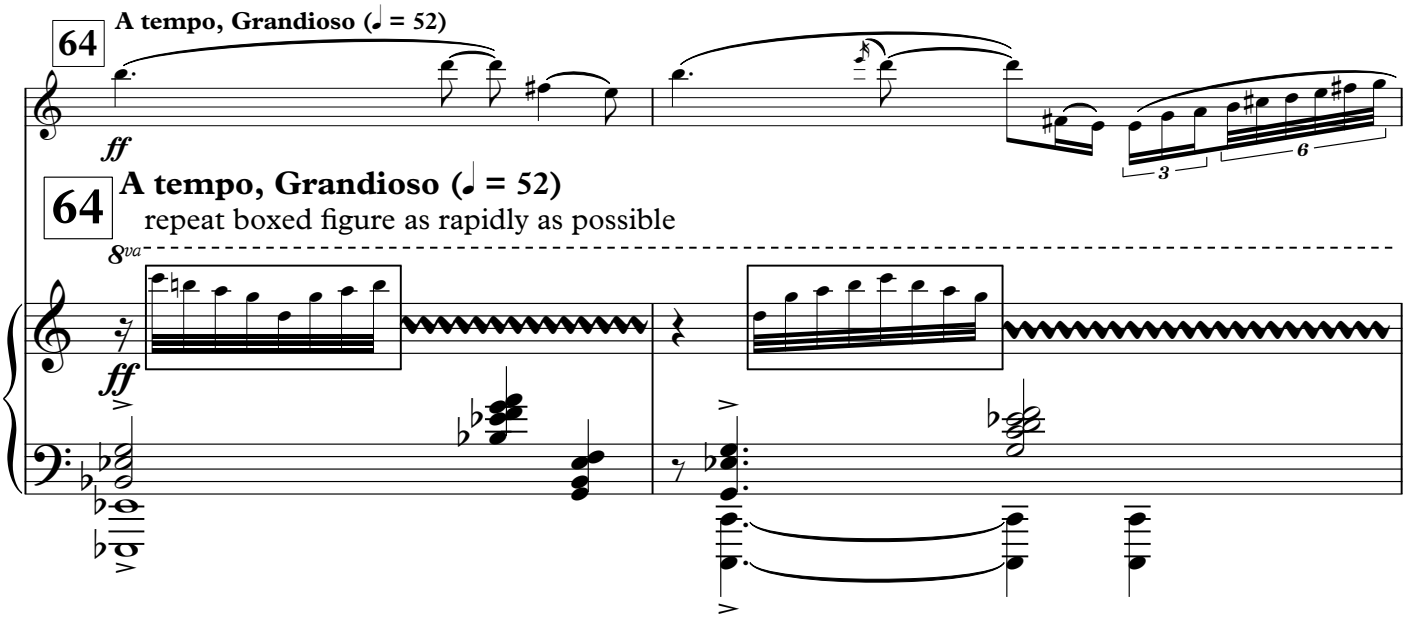

45
45
pp
mp
pp lontano
47
49
3
p

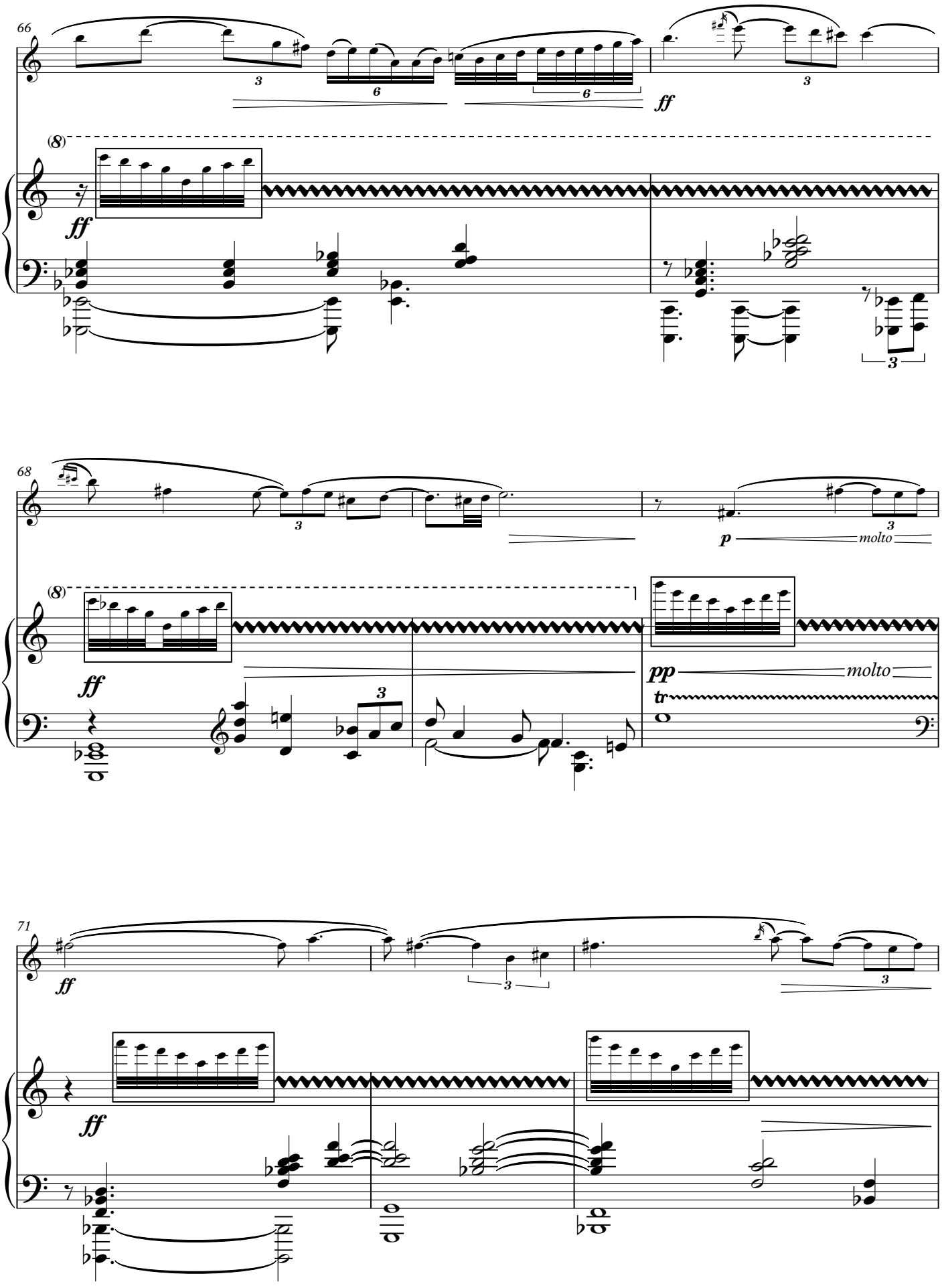

51
pp
mp
p
53
mf
3
5
mp
55
3
p
mf
mf p

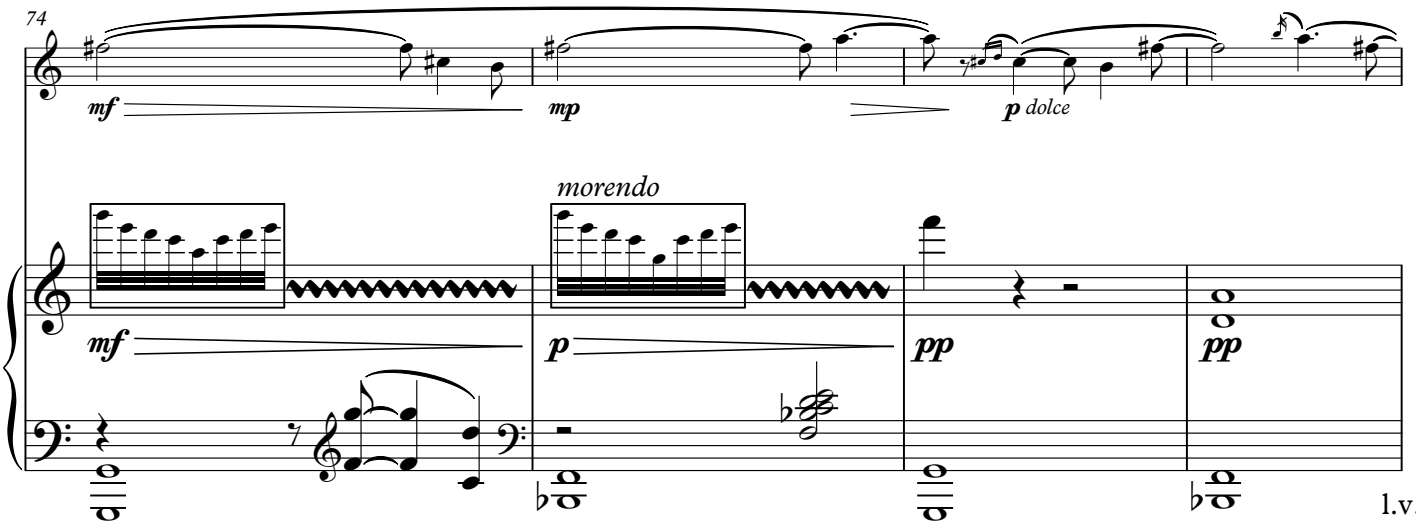

57
58
58
p
mf
mf
p
59
p
mf
60
f
mf
fp
cresc. poco a poco

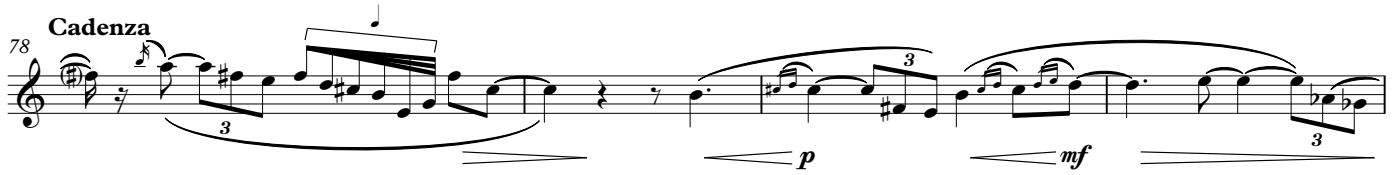

62
p
cresc.
6
6
3

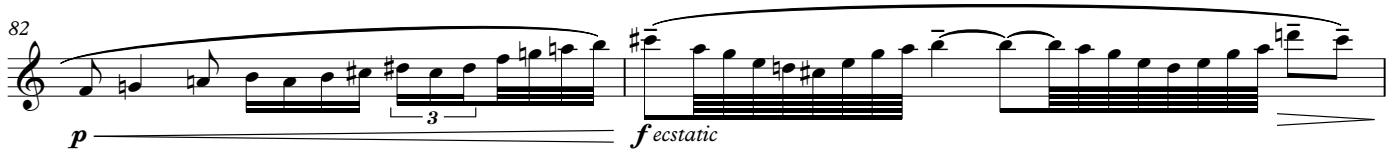

rit.
63
3
rit.

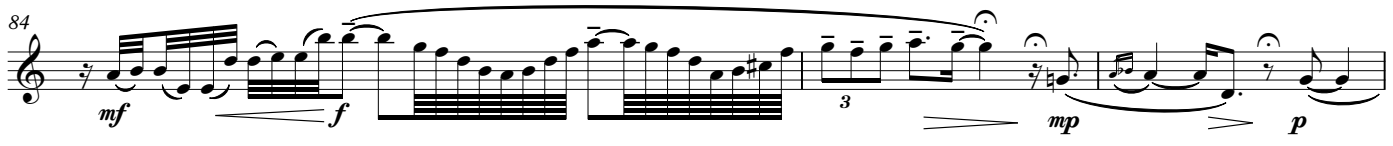

64
A tempo, Grandioso (♩ = 52)
ff
3
6
64
A tempo, Grandioso (♩ = 52)
repeat boxed figure as rapidly as possible
8va
ff

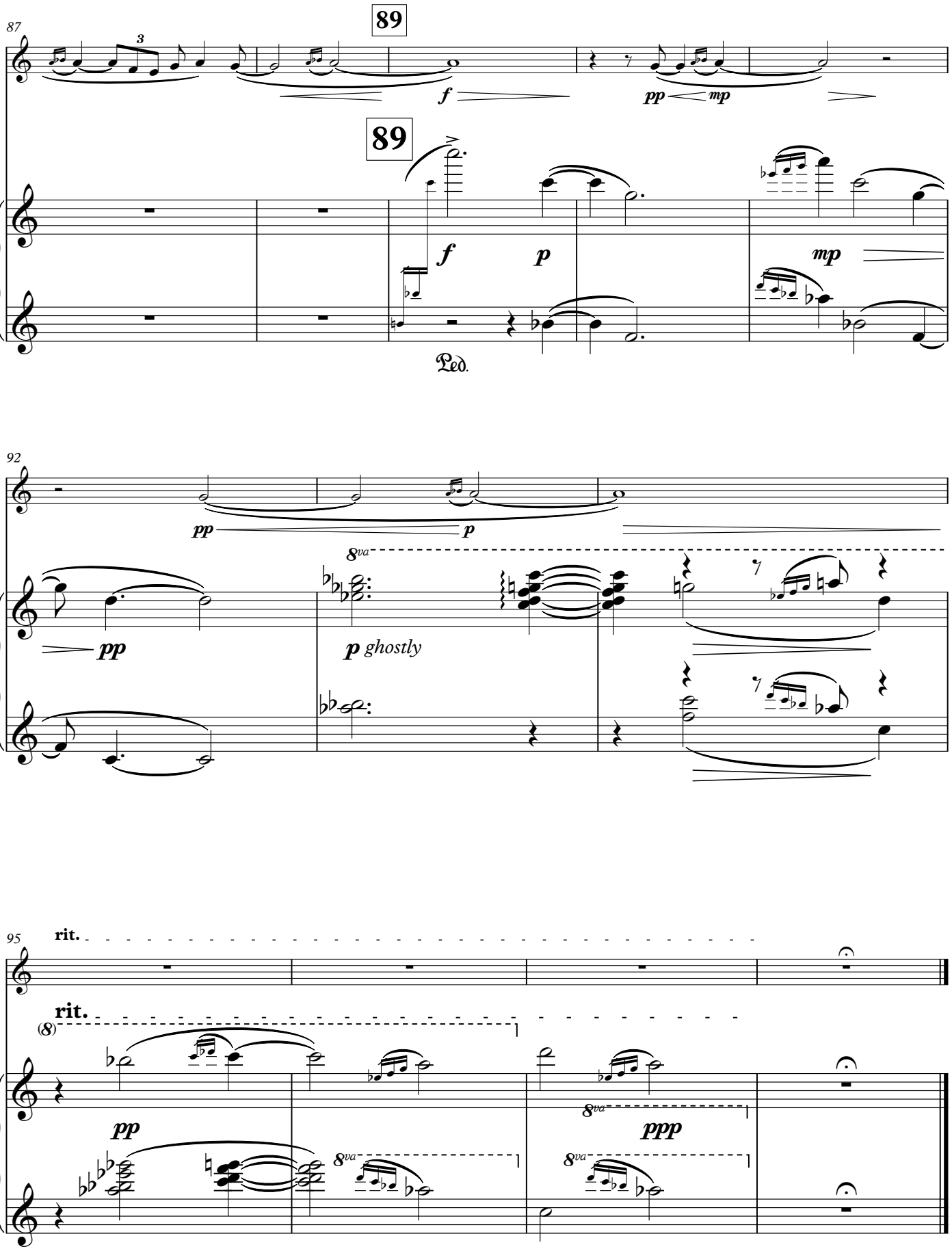

66
ff
(8)
ff
68
p
molto
(8)
ff
pp
molto
tr
71
ff
ff


74
mf
mp
p dolce
morendo
mf
p
pp
pp
l.v.

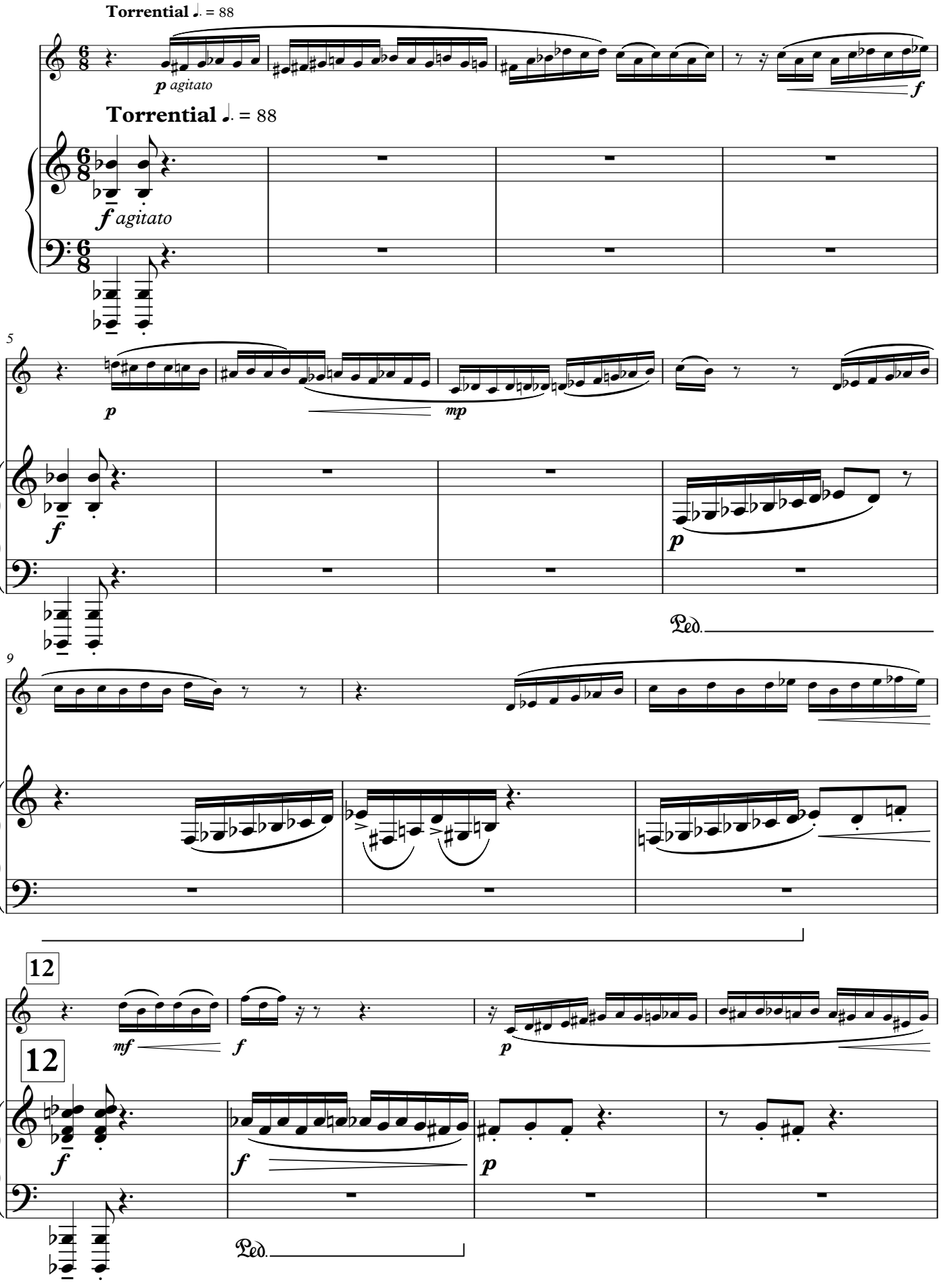

Cadenza
78
3
p
mf
3

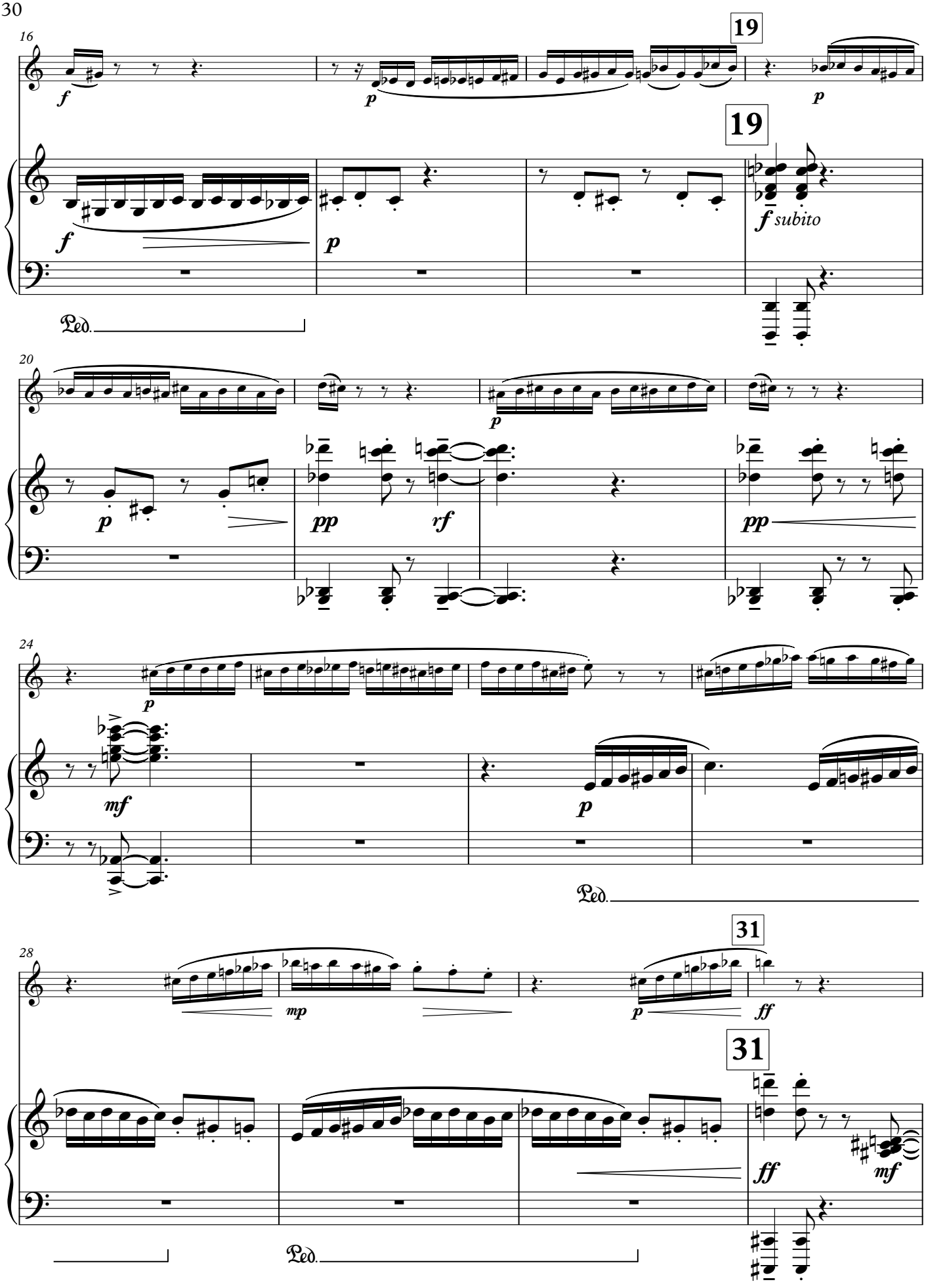

82
p
3
f ecstatic

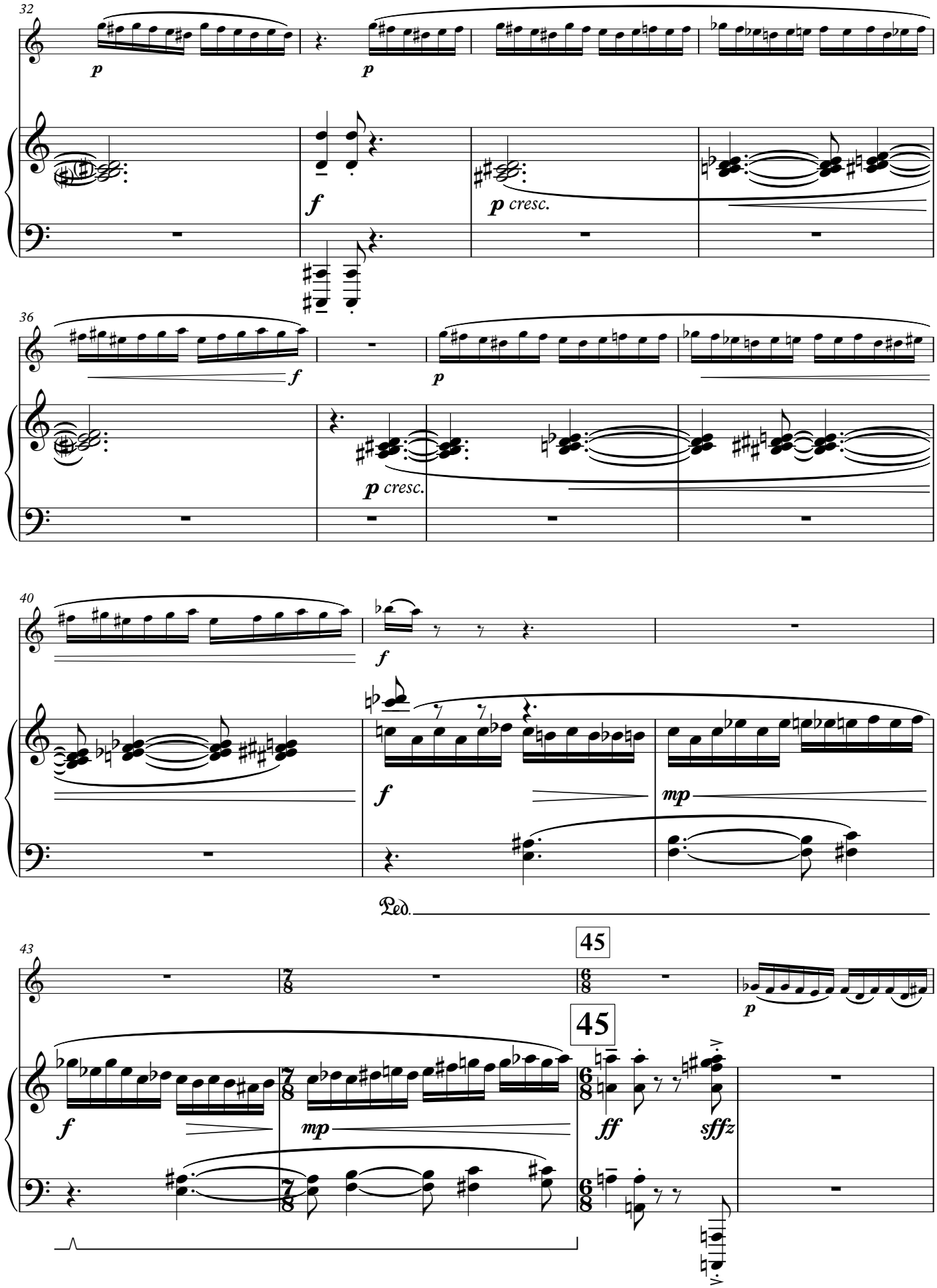

84
mf
f
3
mp
p

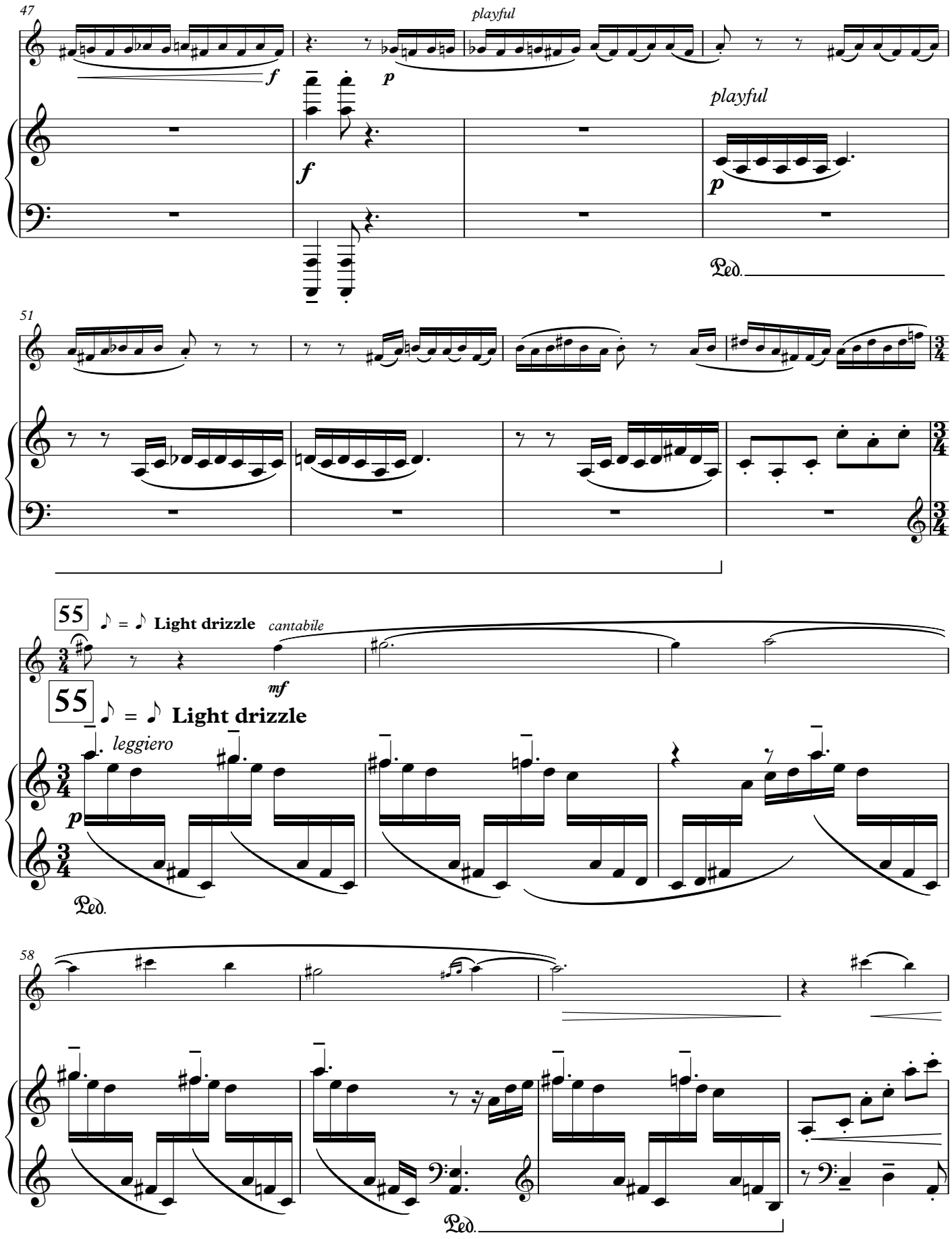

87
89
89
f
pp
mp
f
p
mp
Ped.
92
pp
p
8va
pp
p ghostly
95
rit.
rit.
(8)
pp
8va
ppp
8va
8va

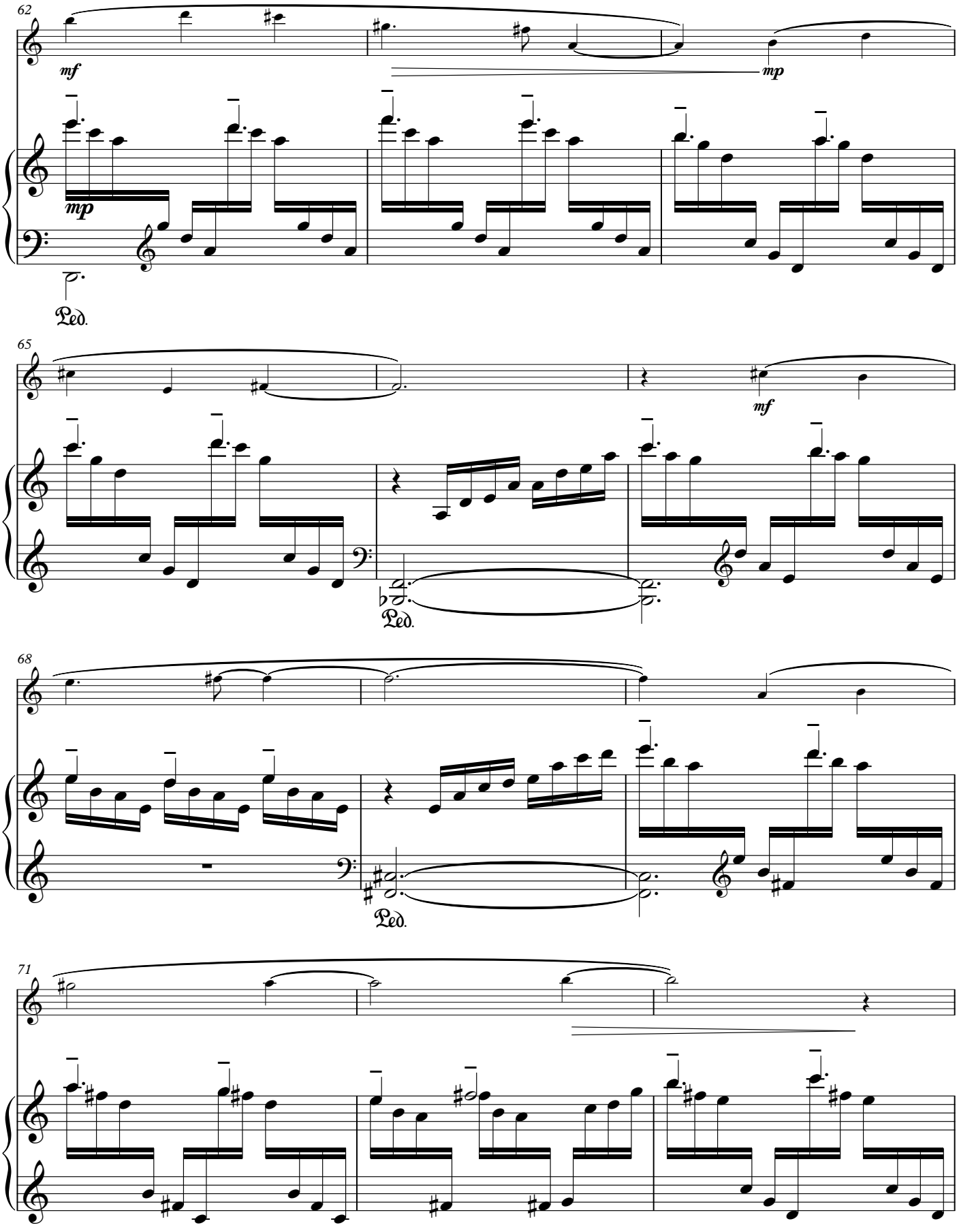
III. Deluge

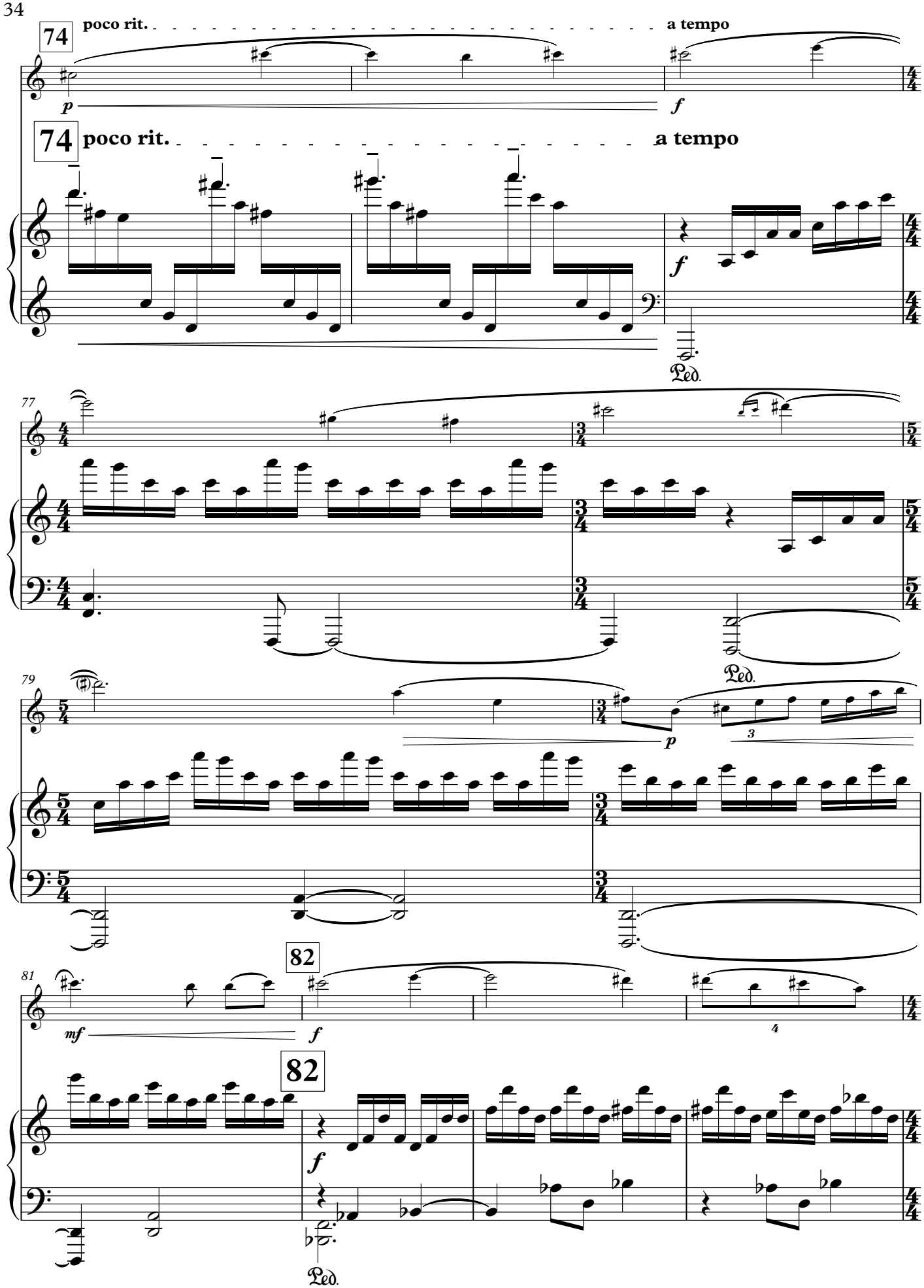

Torrential ♩. = 88
p agitato
f
Torrential ♩. = 88
f agitato
5
p
mp
f
p
Ped.
9
12
mf
f
p
12
f
f
p
Ped.

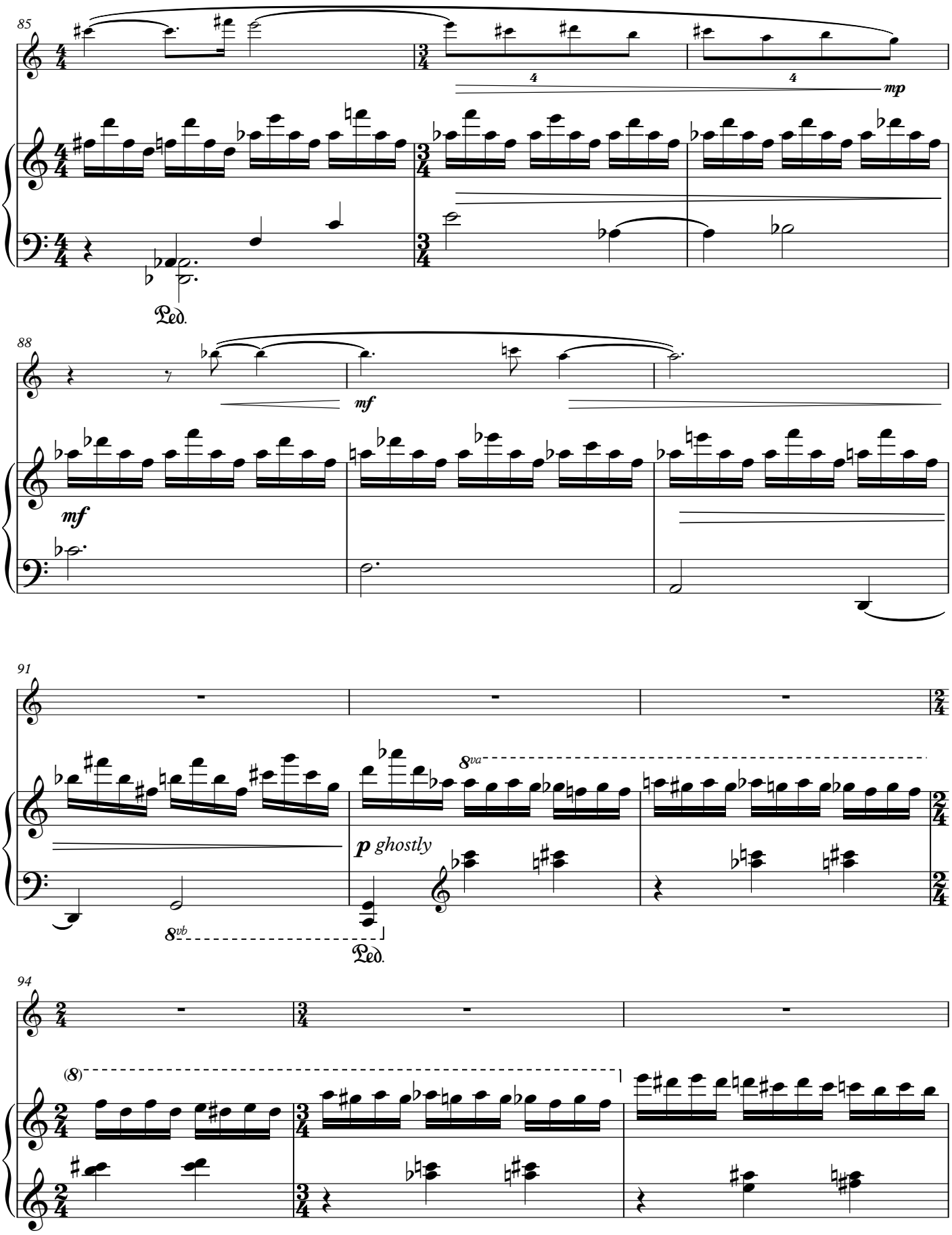

16
19
f
p
19
f
p
f subito
Ped.
20
p
p
pp
rf
pp
24
p
mf
p
Ped.
28
31
mp
p
ff
31
ff
mf
Ped.

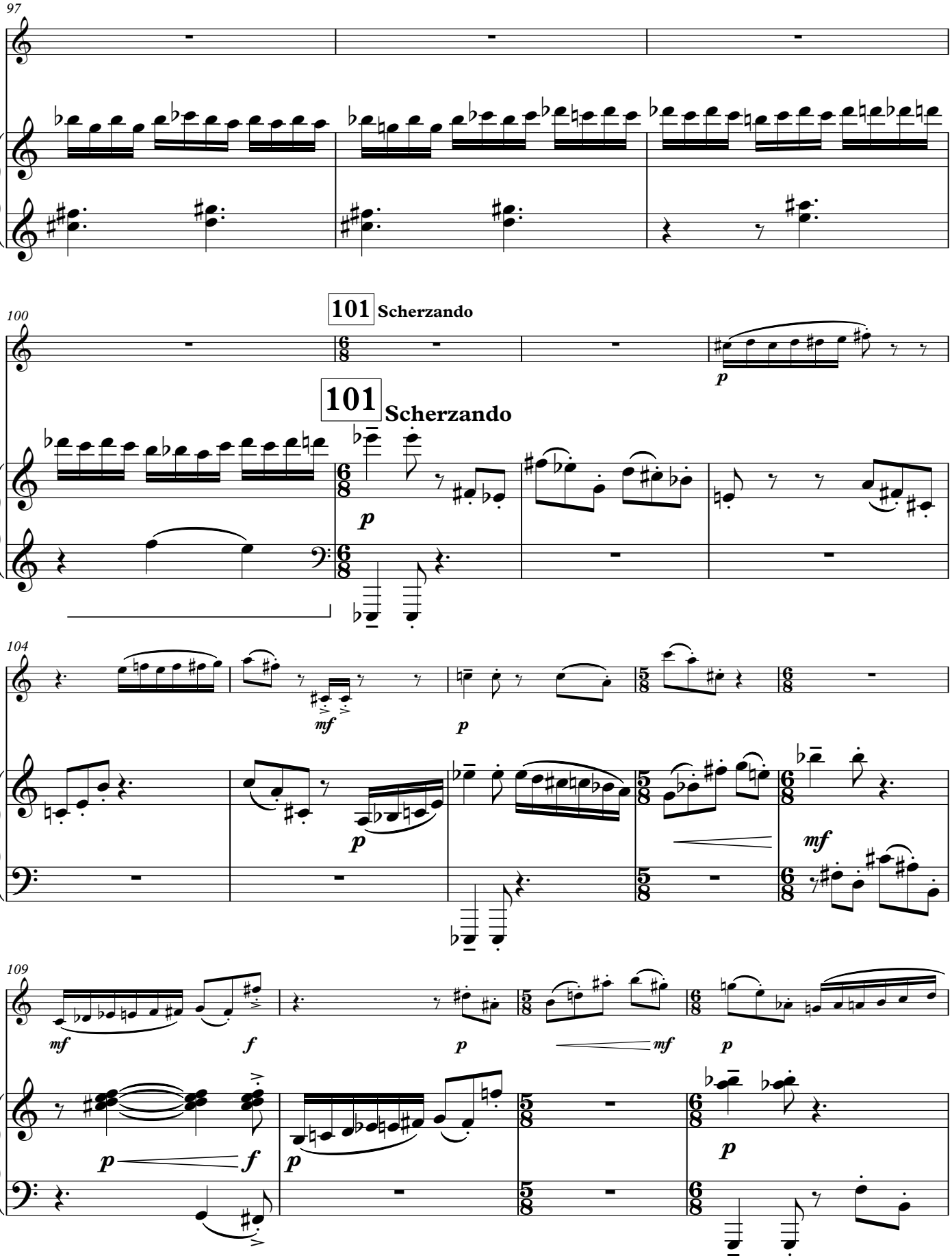

32
p
p
f
p cresc.
36
f
p
p cresc.
40
f
f
mp
Ped.
43
45
45
p
f
mp
ff
sffz

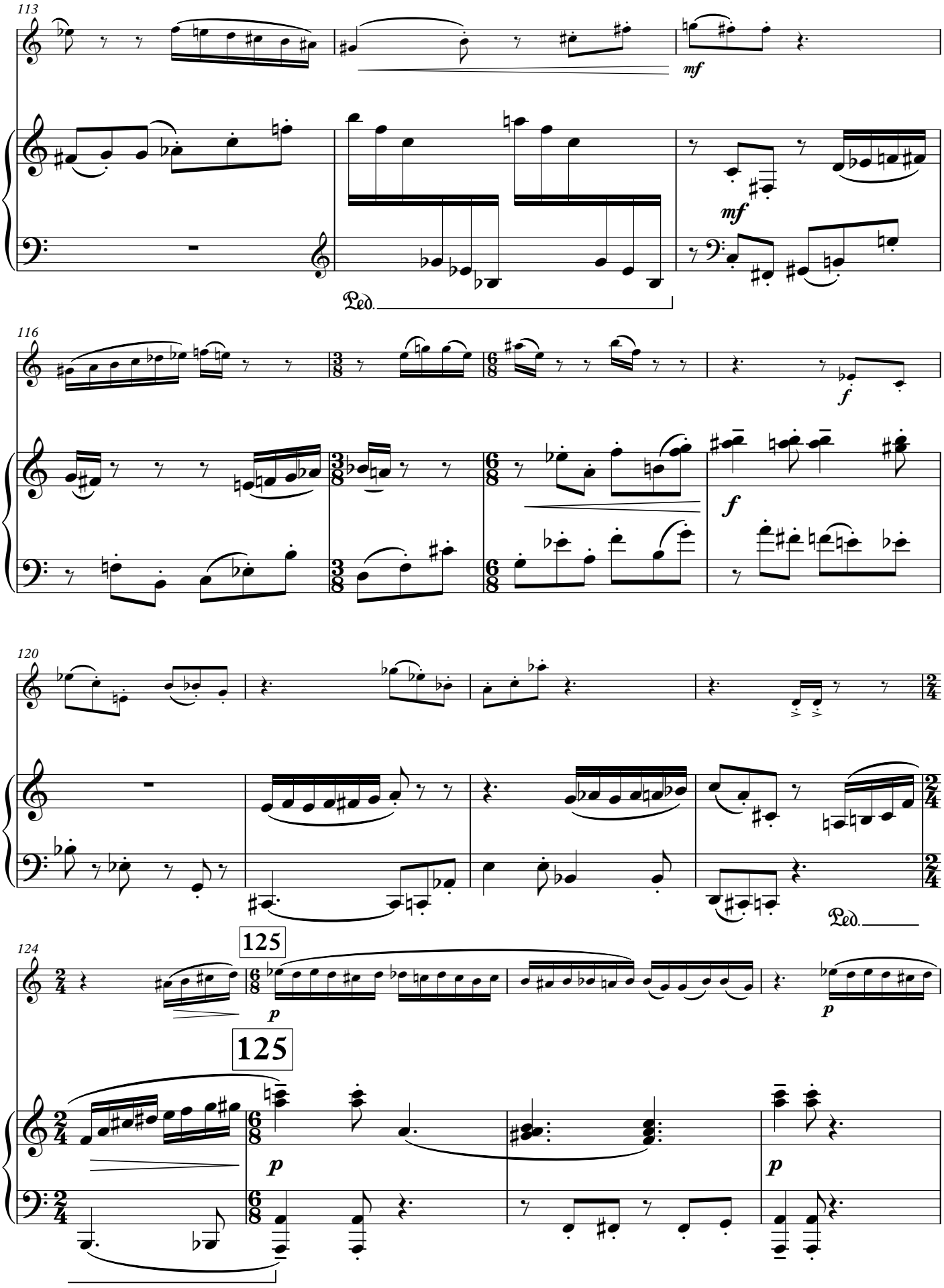

47
playful
f
p
playful
f
p
Ped.
51
55
♪ = ♪ Light drizzle
cantabile
mf
55
♪ = ♪ Light drizzle
leggiero
p
Ped.
58
Ped.

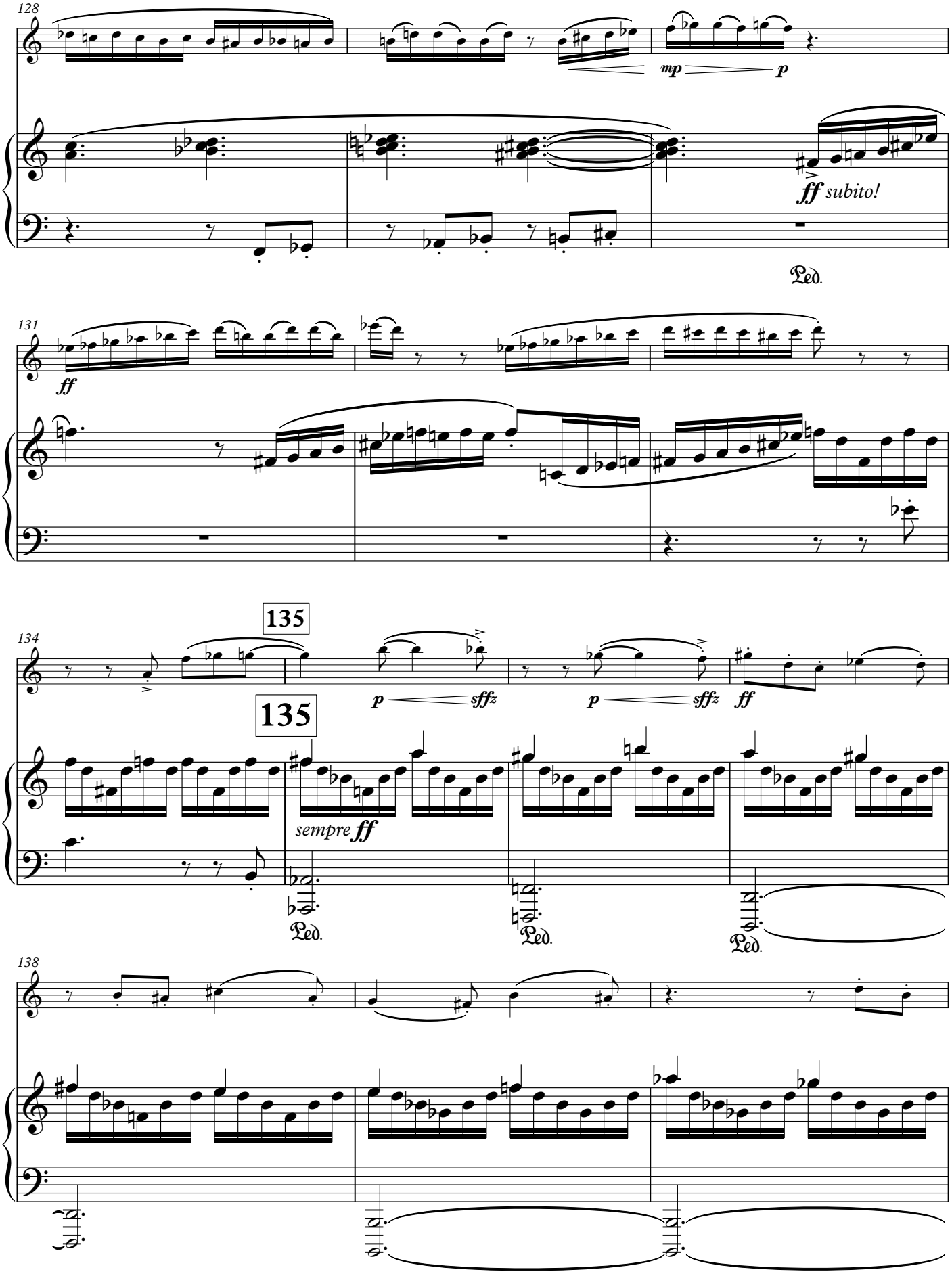

62
mf
mp
mp
Ped.
65
mf
Ped.
68
Ped.
71

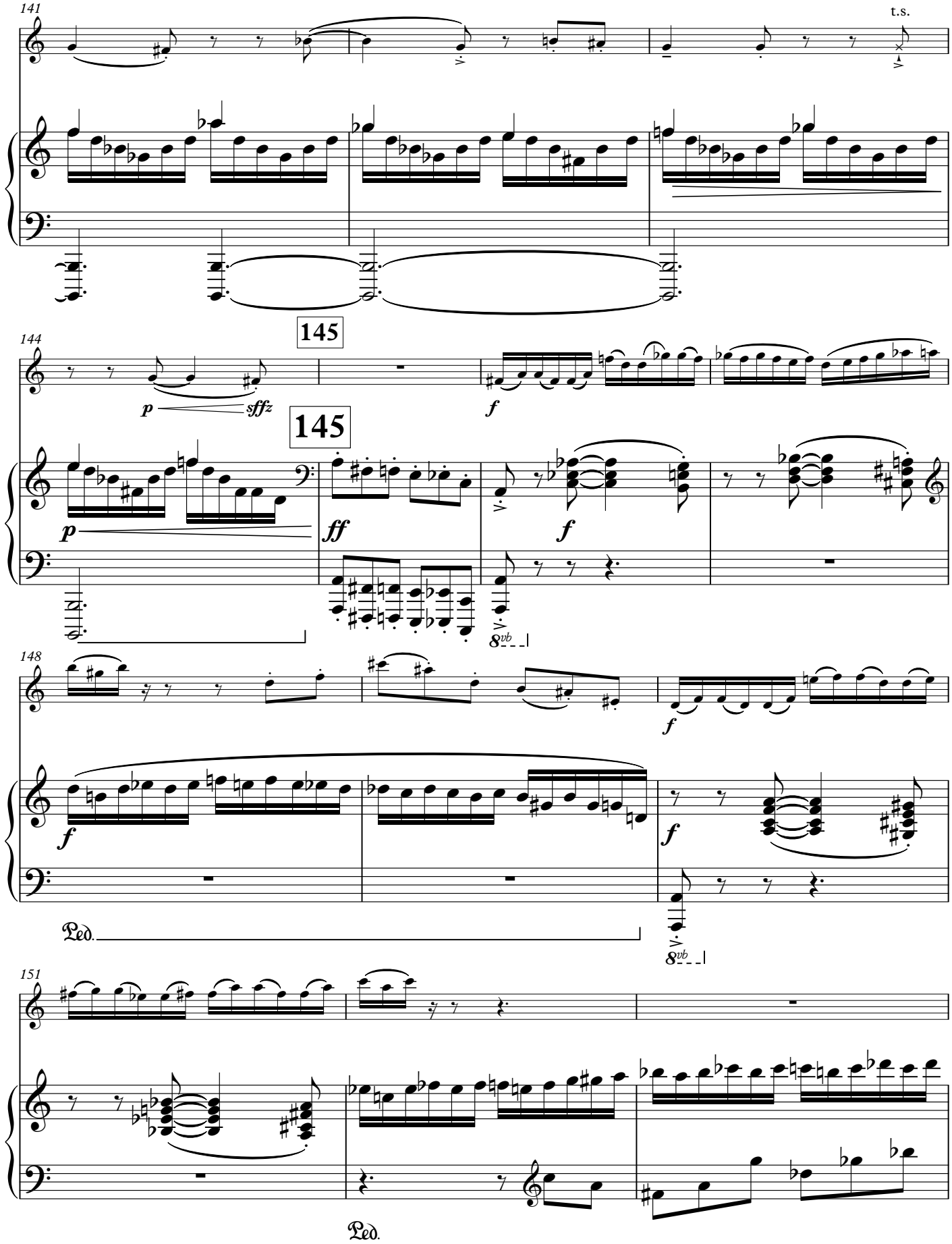

74
poco rit.
a tempo
p
f
74
poco rit.
a tempo
f
Ped.
77
Ped.
79
p
3
81
mf
82
f
4
82
f
Ped.

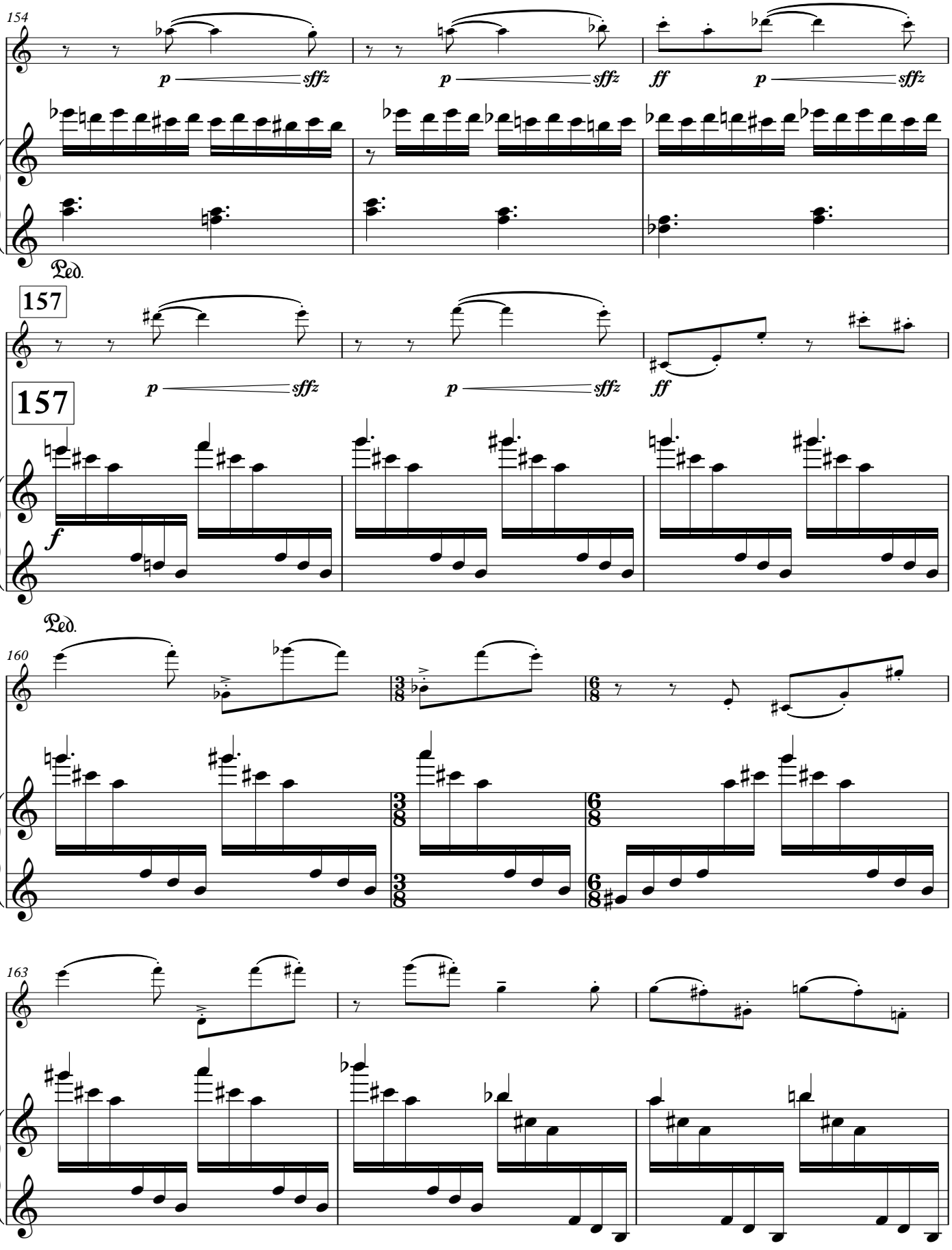

85
mp
Ped.
88
mf
mf
91
8va
p ghostly
8vb
Ped.
94
(8)


97
100
101 Scherzando
101 Scherzando
104
109


113
mf
mf
Ped.
116
f
f
120
Ped.
124
125
p
125
p
p


128
mp
p
ff subito!
Ped.
131
ff
134
135
p
sffz
p
sffz
ff
135
sempre ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
138


141
t.s.
144
145
p
sffz
145
f
p
ff
f
8vb
148
f
f
f
Ped.
8vb
151
Ped.


154
p sffz
p sffz
ff
p sffz
Ped.
157
p sffz
p sffz
ff
157
f
Ped.
160
163

168 **Submerged rain dance (♩.=88)**

166

168 **Submerged rain dance (♩.=88)**

ff *mf* *p*

Ped.

with copious amounts of pedal, very wet

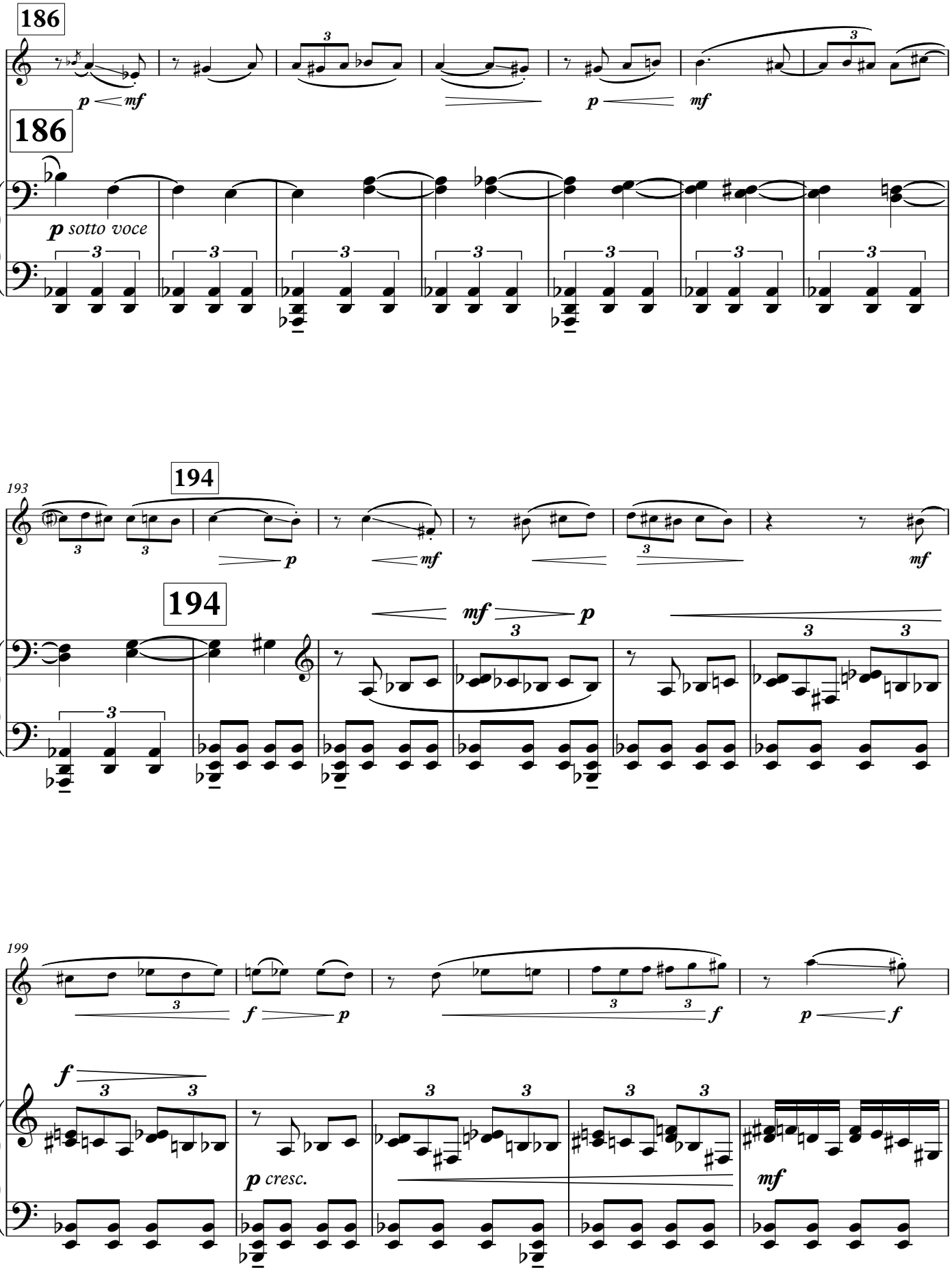
172

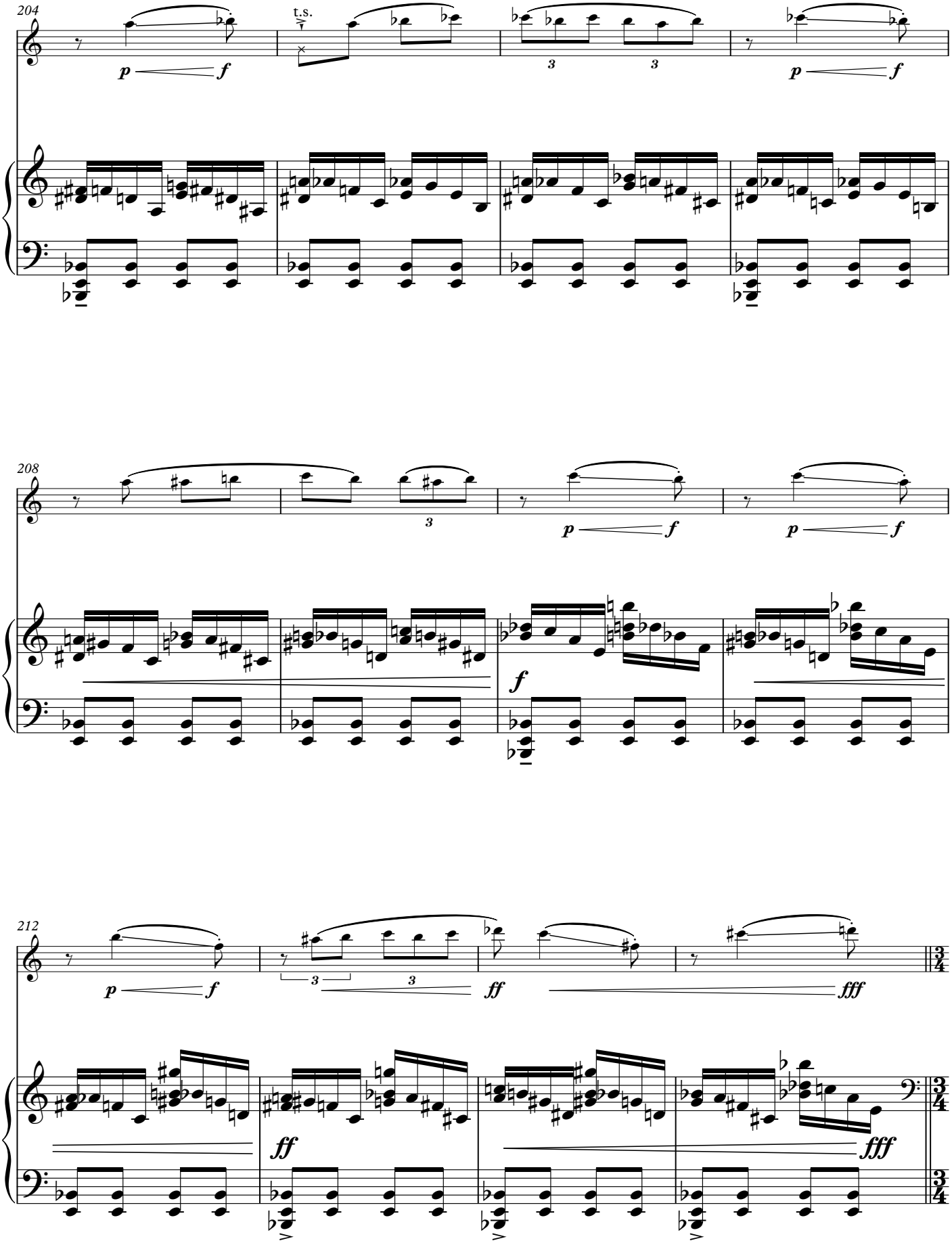
p *mf* *f*

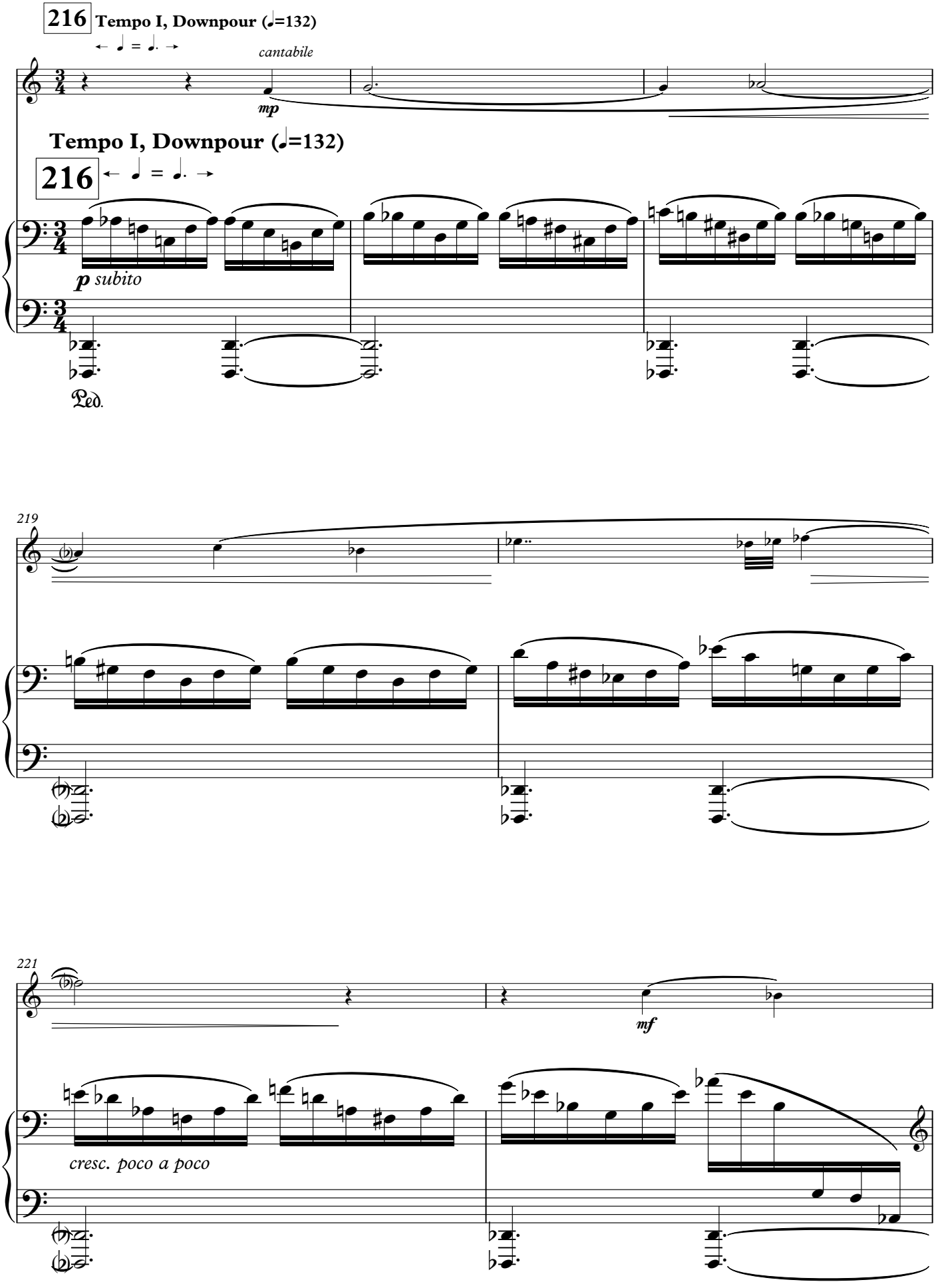
179

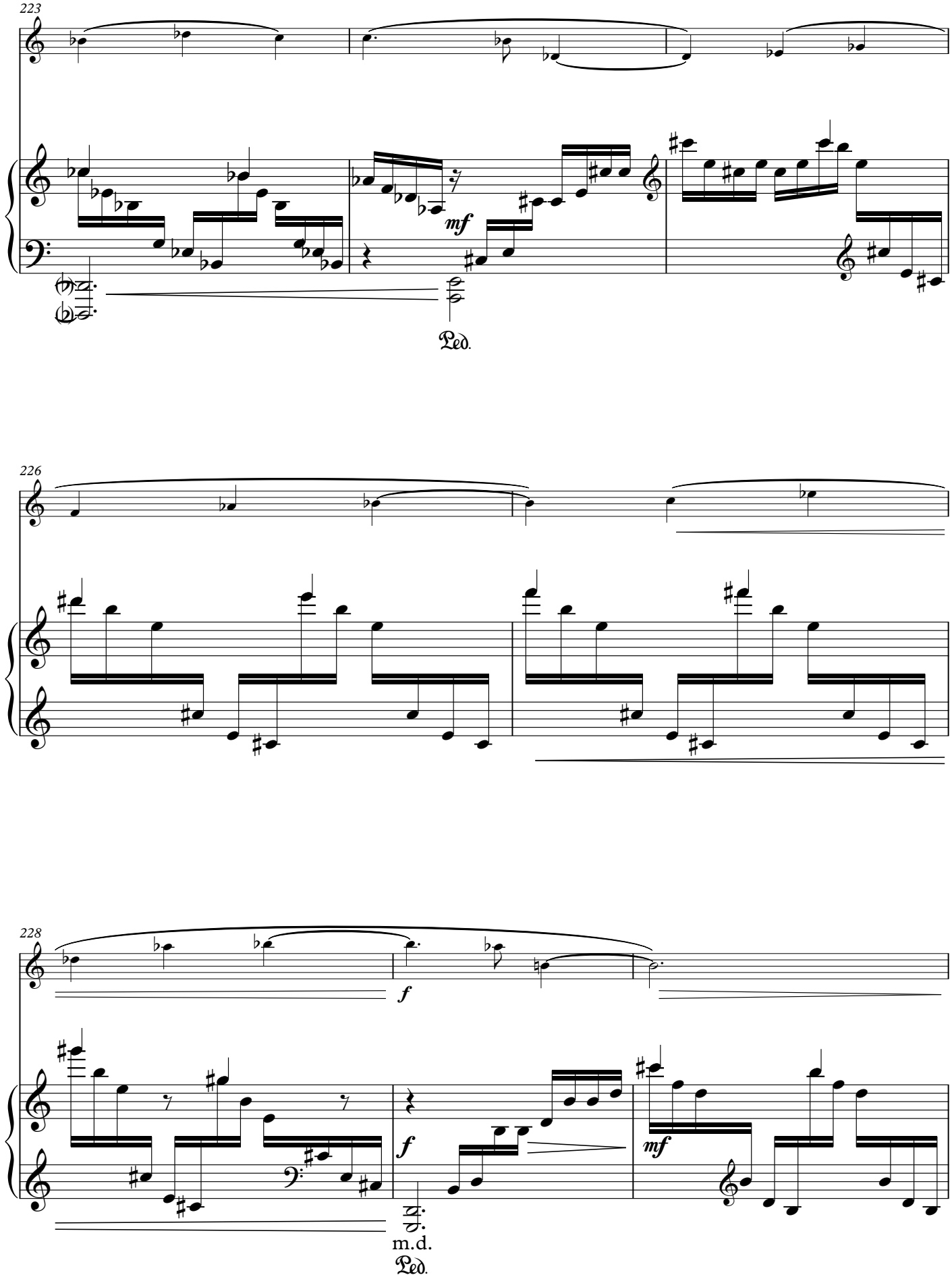
gliss. gliss.

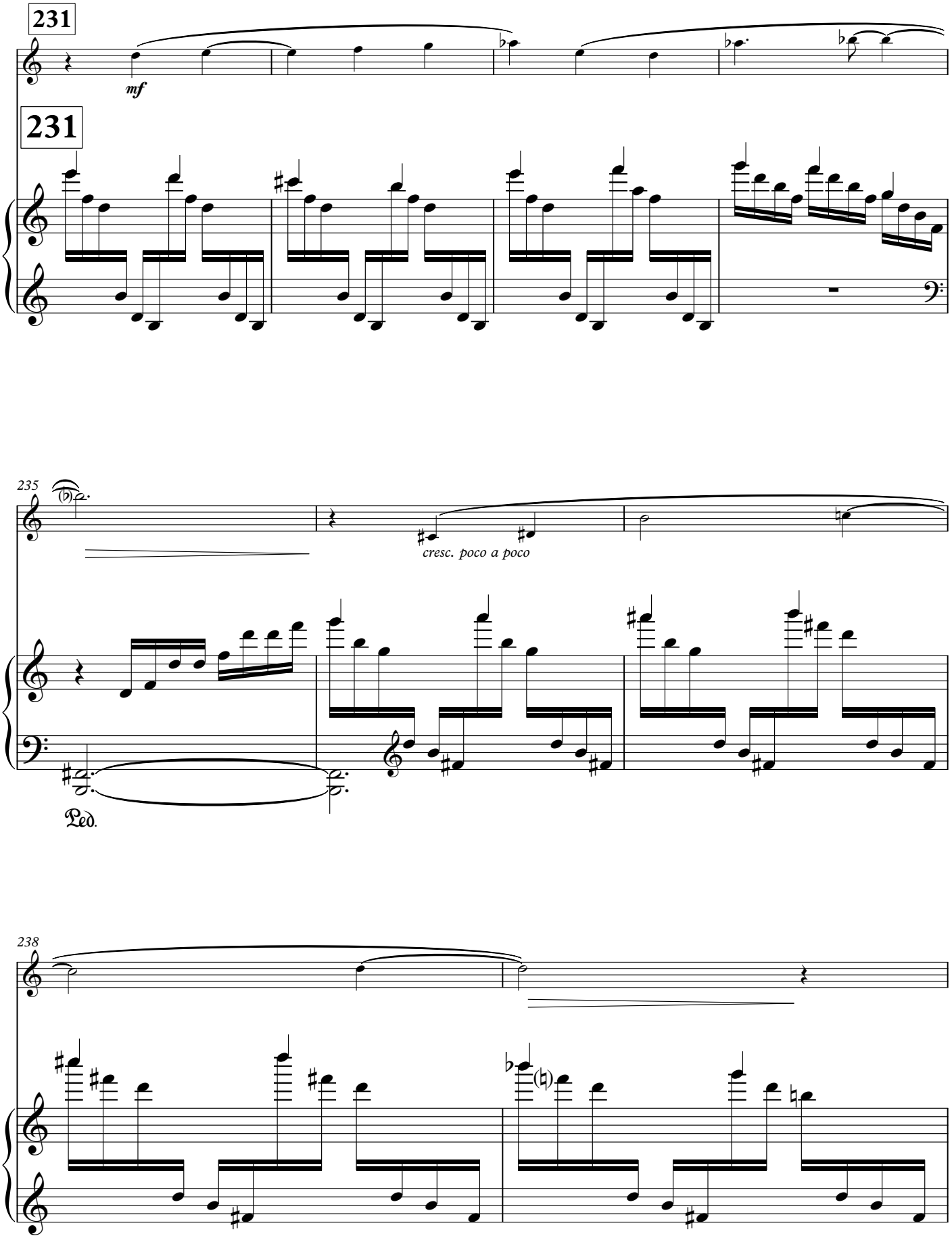
p *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

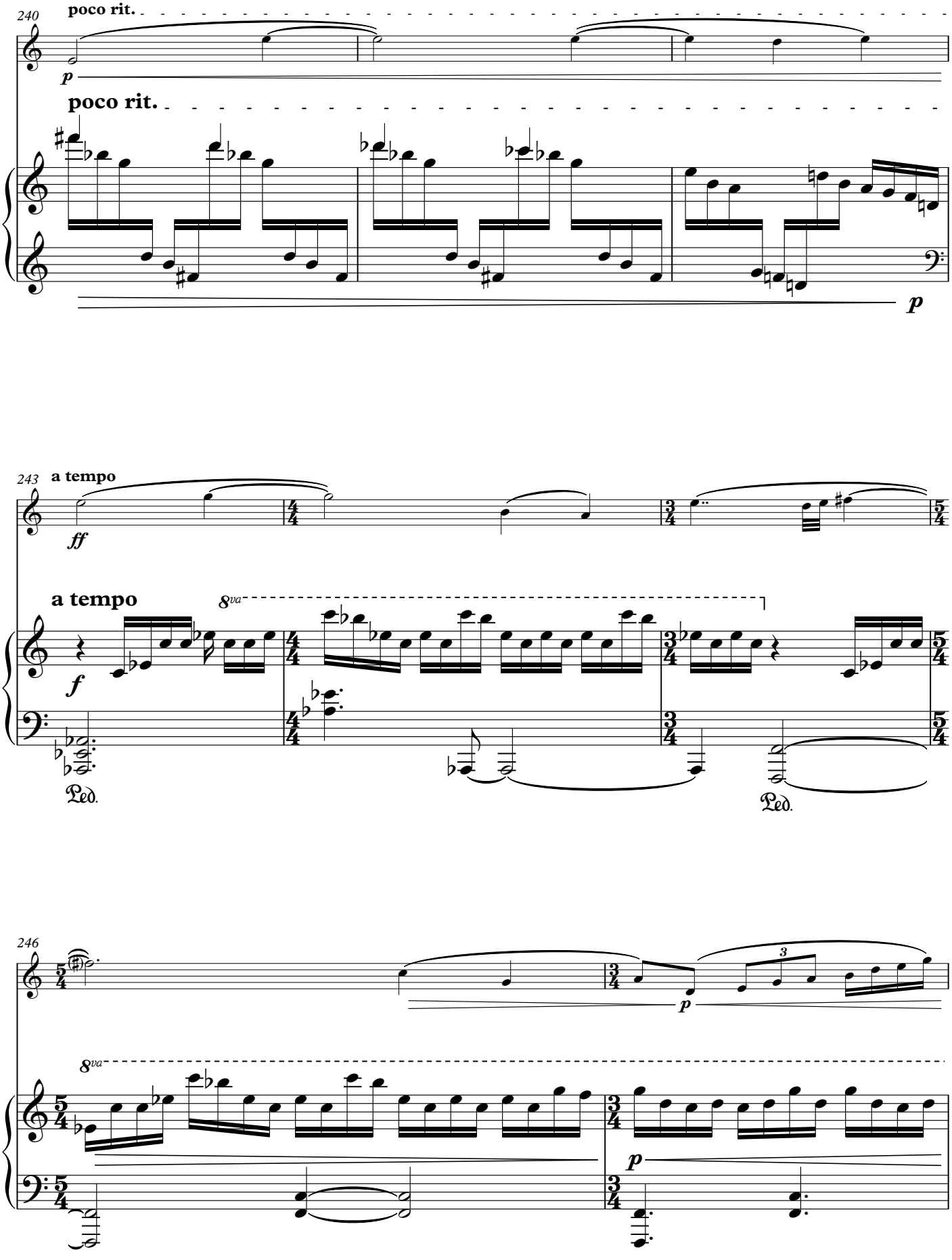

186
186
p sotto voce
193
194
194
199
p cresc.

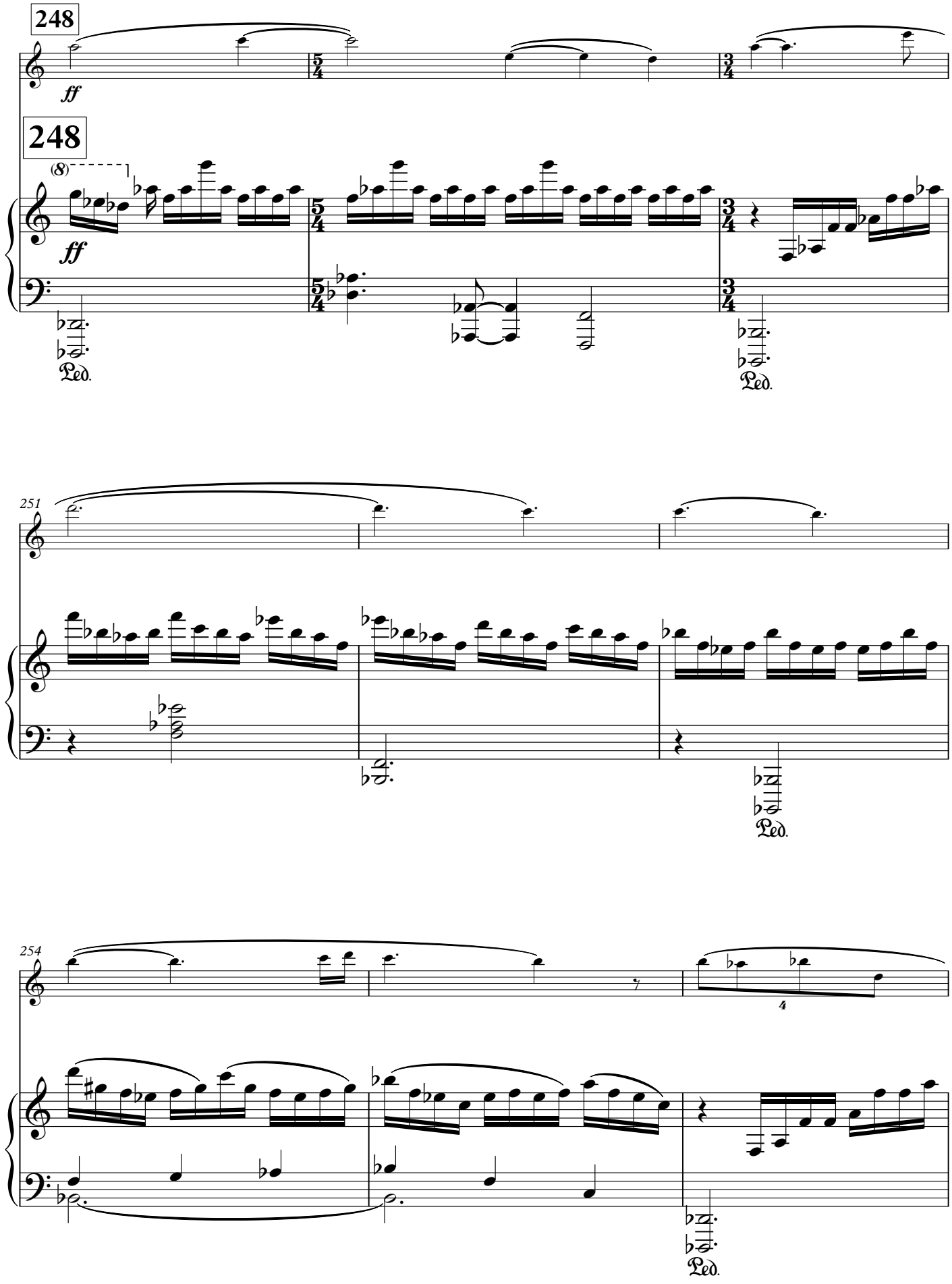

204
t.s.
p
f
3
208
212
ff
fff

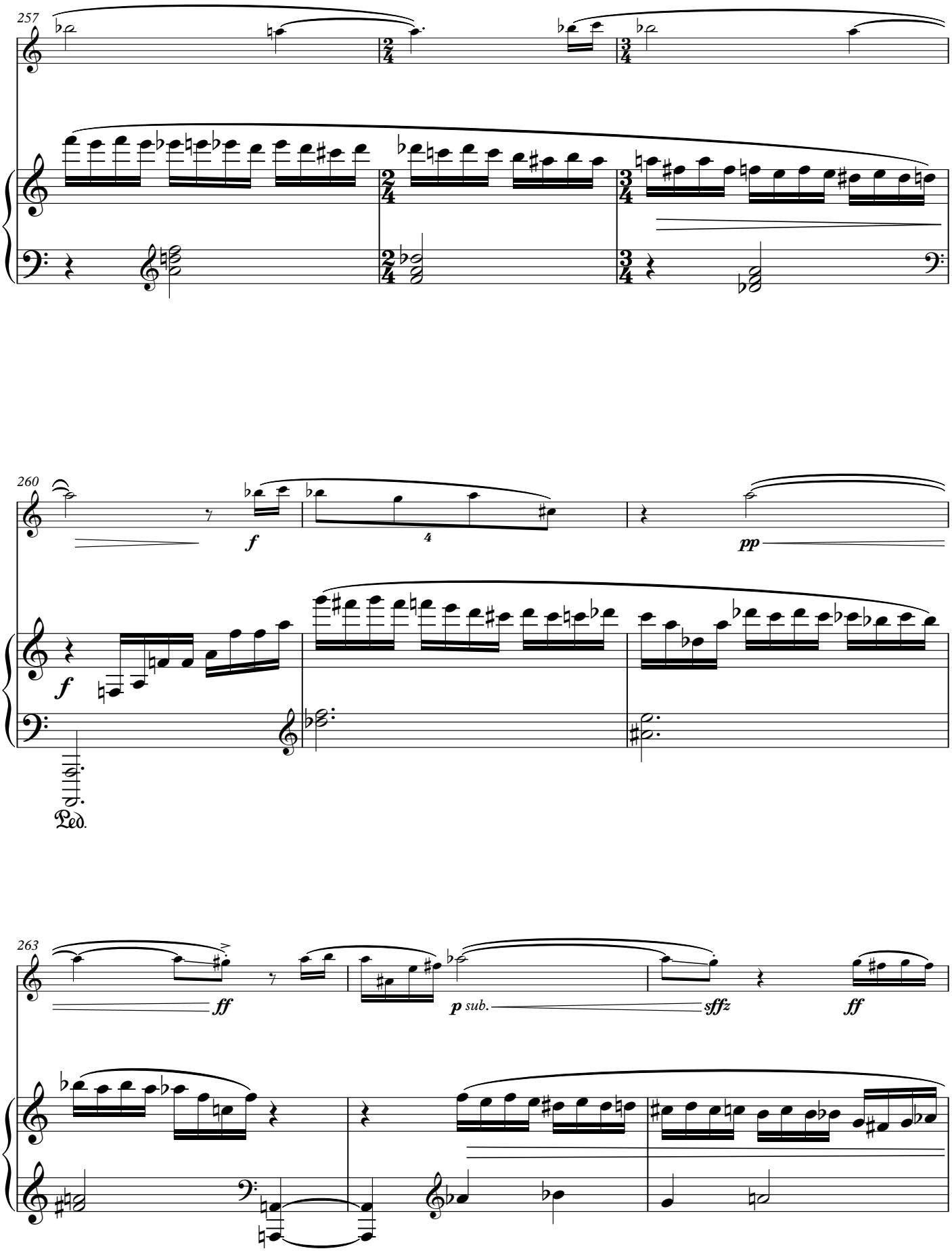

216 Tempo I, Downpour (♩=132)
← ♩ = ♩. →
cantabile
mp
Tempo I, Downpour (♩=132)
216
← ♩ = ♩. →
p subito
Ped.
219
221
mf
cresc. poco a poco

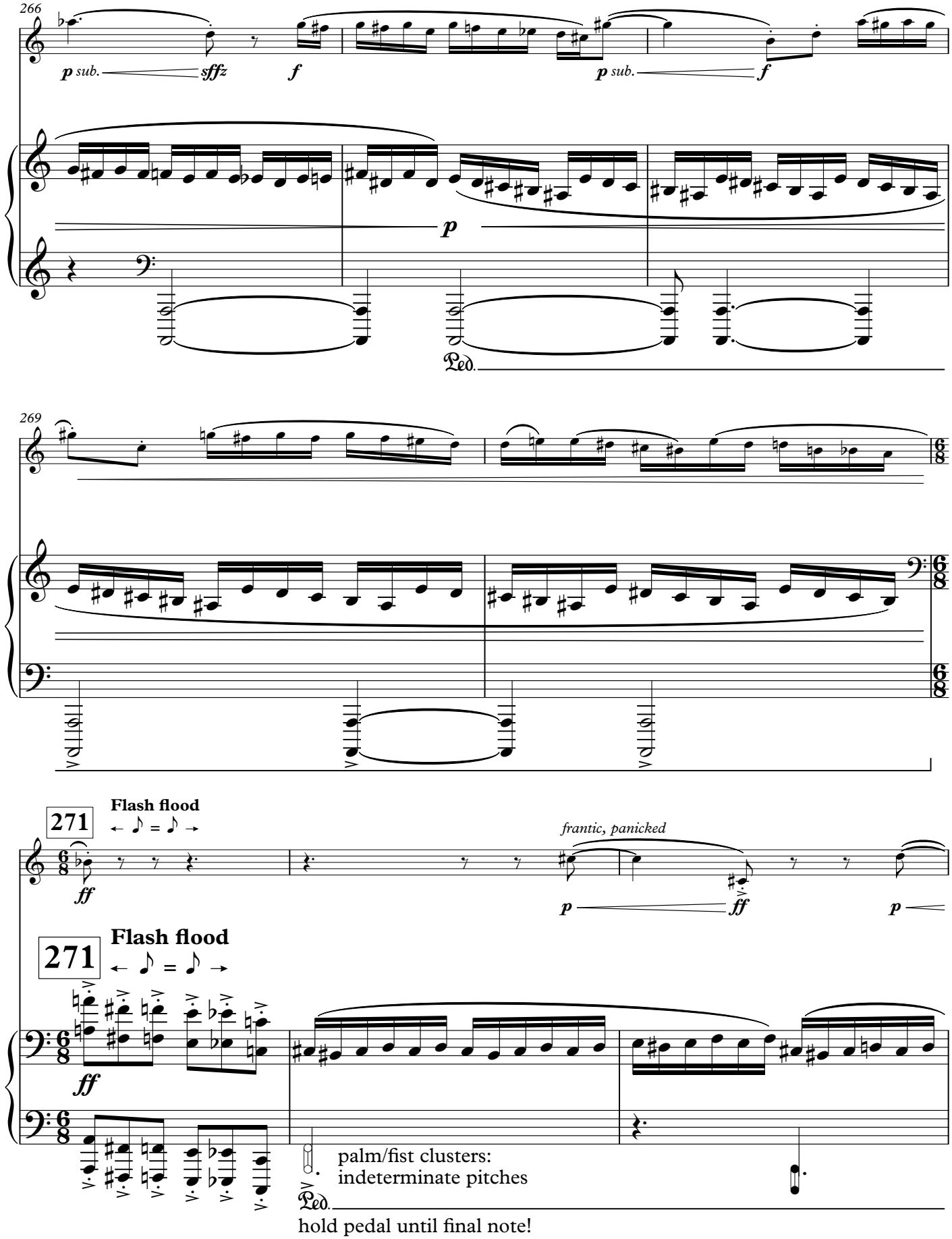

223
mf
Ped.
226
228
f
f
mf
m.d.
Ped.

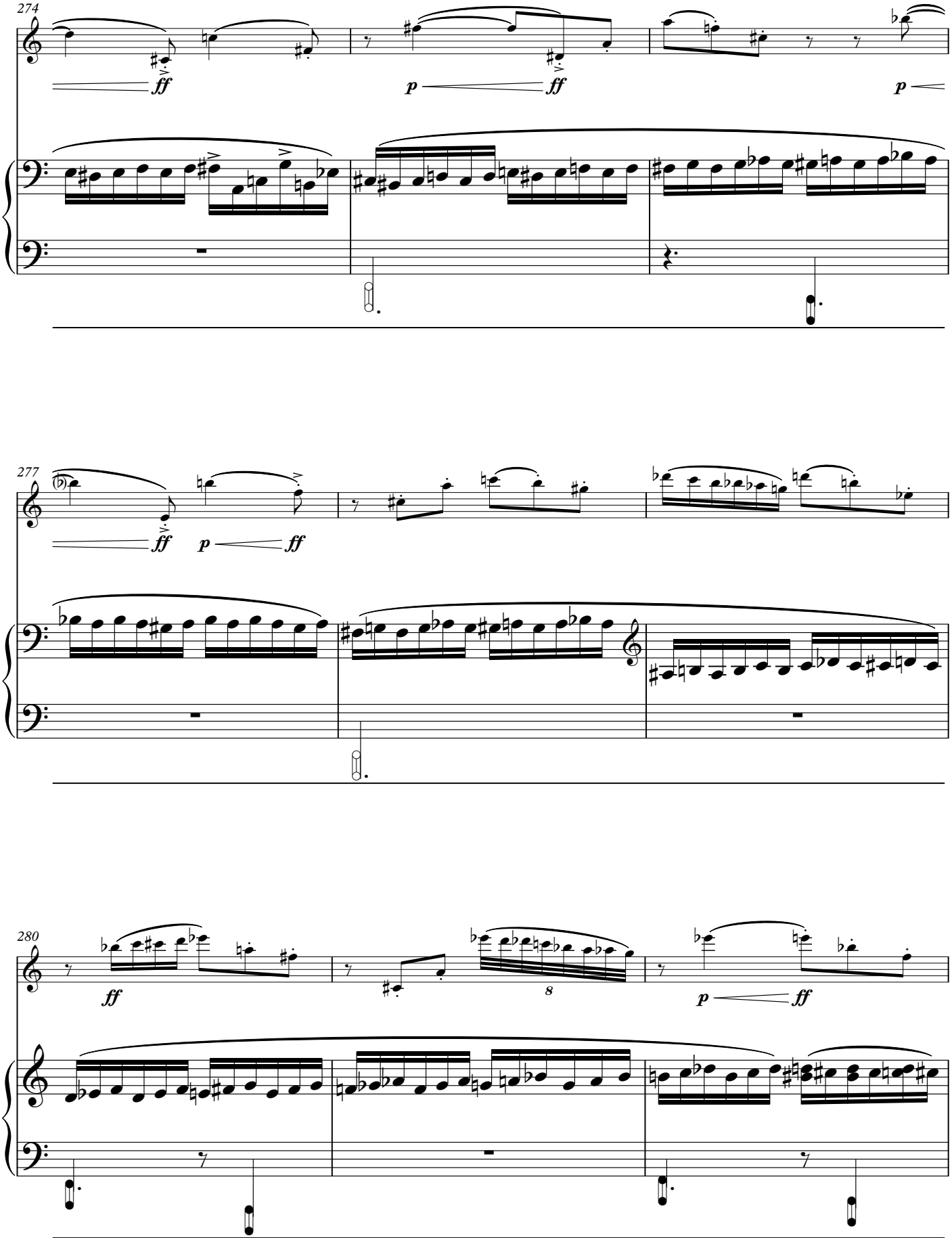

231
mf
231
235
cresc. poco a poco
Ped.
238

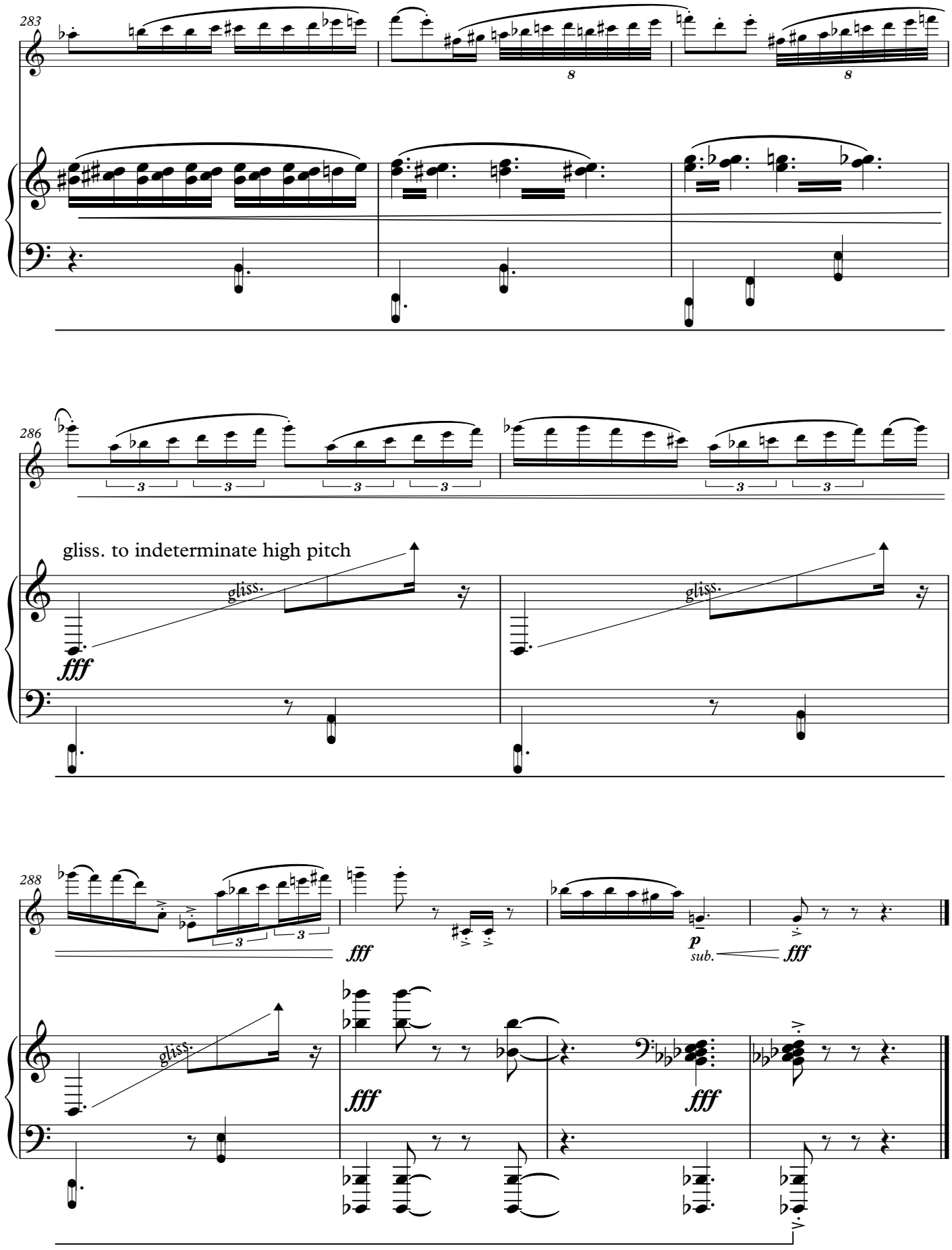

240
poco rit.
p
poco rit.
p
243
a tempo
ff
a tempo
8va
f
Ped.
Ped.
246
p
8va
p


248
ff
248
(8)
ff
Ped.
Ped.
251
Ped.
254
4
Ped.


257
260
f
4
pp
f
Ped.
263
ff
p sub.
sffz
ff


266
p sub.
sffz
f
p sub.
f
p
Ped.
269
271
Flash flood
ff
frantic, panicked
p
ff
p
271
Flash flood
ff
palm/fist clusters:
indeterminate pitches
Ped.
hold pedal until final note!


274
ff
p
ff
p
277
ff
p
ff
280
ff
8
p
ff


283
8
8
286
3
3
3
3
3
3
gliss. to indeterminate high pitch
gliss.
fff
gliss.
288
3
3
fff
p
sub.
fff
gliss.
fff
fff