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# Two Suites for Solo Instruments

Matthew O. Thomas
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Two Suites for Solo Instruments

by

Matthew O'Steen Thomas

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Music, Hunter College
The City University of New York

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| | |
|---|---|
| | Thesis Sponsor: |
| ~~May 5, 2018~~ | ~~Dr. Shafer Mahoney~~ |
| Date | Signature |
| ~~May 5, 2018~~ | ~~Dr. Catherine Coppola~~ |
| Date | Signature of Second Reader |

# TWO SUITES FOR SOLO INSTRUMENTS:

## Suite Médiévale
### For guitar

&

## Seven Recital Studies for Intermediate Grade
### for Piano

Composed by:
MATTHEW O. THOMAS

# SUITE MÉDIÉVALE
## For solo guitar

**1. Lament ..... 7**
**2. Basse Dance ..... 9**
**3. Pavane Méditatif ..... 13**
**4. Trotto Dervish ..... 15**

# SEVEN RECITAL STUDIES FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADE
## For solo piano

**1. Rondo Festiva ..... 21**
**2. Lullaby ..... 23**
**3. The Magi ..... 27**
**4. Loss Canon ..... 30**
**5. Daydreaming ..... 32**
**6. Watercolor Arabesque .....34**
**7. Serial-box Toy ..... 39**

## Notes for the student performer

1. Rondo Festiva

Traditionally a Rondo is a composition with a form of ABACA. This is a somewhat simplified definition of the form, but serves for our discussion. To better understand, Happy Birthday and Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star has an ABA form. Sing it to yourself and pay attention to what repeats and what's new. Rondo Festiva, is not a true Rondo as it only contains, within the form, A, B, and a repeat and slight variation of A. However, because the A section is a fast tempo and the B section is a slower tempo,

Rondo Festiva is a Rondo more kin to the 18th Century English song form of the same name.

Technical elements: Rapid Octaves, rapidly moving from octaves to a thinner texture, reading accidentals and uncommon chords, ornamentation, and a compound duple time signature, requiring the performer to alternate between three eighth notes (grouped in twos) and an eighth-dotted eighth-sixteenth rhythmic figure.

For further study: Mozart: *Rondo alla Turk,* from Piano Sonata in A Major, K. 331.

2. Lullaby

Interpretation, here, is the key! Lullaby opens with the interest, if not the melody, in the left hand. Soon the right hand takes the melody and the rhythmic pattern set by both hands, moves into the left hand alone. This requires an independent and rather strong left hand.

This composition could have been printed with the key signature A Major, however, by writing all the accidentals into the score, this helps the player remember the key and more accurately learn the music.

Other technical element requires the performer to play sixteenth notes against eight notes, steadily and evenly, and extended trilling. Make sure to create a sustained, singing melody throughout.

For further study Erik Satie: Lent et douloureux, *Gymnopédies no. 1.*

3. The Magi

This short composition also requires a proficiency in musical interpretation; the ability to sustain a full, flowing sound with sparse and repetitive material. One of the more accessible compositions in the suite, the major technical challenges for the player are playing a singing melody, while sustaining a sense of movement with the left hand, achieving a full sound with minimal material, reading and successfully moving from sharps to flats, mastering the rhythmic feel of, and achieving smooth transitions through, multiple time signatures, and sensitive handling of repeated material. Why do most of the phrases get repeated? Is this an echo? A conversation? A declaration? The answers to these questions will aid in a successful and authentic (or convincing) performance.

Further Recommended listening: Mendelssohn, Venetian Gondola Song from *Songs Without Words, Book Two,* Op. 30, No. 6.

4. Loss Canon

The title of this composition is incorrect! It stems from a misspelling of the word loose, and auto-correct's perceived ability to read minds. A canon, like Row, Row, Row Your Boat, (sung in a round) would traditionally contain complete phrases, whereas Loss Canon is loosely based on this form, as the entire theme is not repeated entirely each time it appears in the canon. However, the more I thought about the mistaken title, it became clear that *loss* was also a perfectly acceptable term, as there is an element of something missing, due to uneven phrases within the canon.

Technical elements include reading sharps and flats quickly and correctly, dynamic clarity and variety, multiple articulation styles, and an independence between the hands to bring out two independent lines, both melodically and rhythmically.

For further study, listen to Pachelbel's *Canon* in D Major.

5. Daydreaming

This composition utilizes a 5-note theme that is introduced, transposed, and inverted. This composition is an example of pitch set theory, where each chromatic scale degree receives a number 1-9 with ten and eleven being represented as T and E. Think of a the twelve pithes in a chromatic scale. Now start on C and assign each a number from 0 to eleven. Combining the different transpositions of this 5 - pitch theme aided in a polyphonic offering or layering of the thematic material.

The whole tone scale (see Watercolor Arabesque) in both of its transpositions is present and chord cluster give a foundation to a wandering theme created by alternating WT 1 and WT 0. Also included are quartal chords (chords with four members, or pitches) and chord clusters.

Performance of the piece should be slow and sustained. When the pedal is held down throughout the first 4 measures (including the pick-up) a quasi-fugue seems to emerge. In addition to interpretation, one of the major technical elements is reading multiple accidentals and moving seamlessly between thin textures, and large, multi-note chords, and mature sensitivity to multiple and varied dynamics.

6. Watercolor Arabesque

Watercolor Arabesque is a composition that uses, as a main building block, the Whole-tone Scale. The whole-tone scale, is a six note scale made up of whole-steps. For

instance, if the scale began on C, the pitches would be C,D, and E natural and G,A, and B-flat. To retain the minimalism of the composition, only one of the two forms of the whole-tone scale (WT 0).

If the style found in Daydreaming and Watercolor Arabesque are appealing, listen to one or both of the following works by Debussy: La cathédrale engloutie (The Sunken Cathedral) from *Preludes Book I No. 10,* or to hear an example of a larger orchestral work, listen to the hauntingly ethereal and beautiful *Prelude to an afternoon faun.*

7. Serial-box Toy

"Serial-Box Toy" is a twelve-tone composition with a unity of design. Although serial theory is a vast topic, a few pieces of foundation information will aid the player.

Think of a twelve-pitch chromatic scale (well eleven and a repeated pitch). Now Image those notes on a clock-face, with C on 12 o'clock, C# on 1, D on 2, D# on three and all the way around to B on eleven, or E. This information will help you as we discuss a "row"and the pitch numbering found below.

A somewhat sparse composition, Serial-box Toy is constructed in such a way that each musical line (Treble and Bass - two lines total) is made up of six versions of the row played consecutively. The original row contains two 6-20 Hexachords (0,1,4,5,8,9). The original order is:

| C, | C# | E, | F, | G#, | A, | | F#, | B, | G, | D#, | A#, | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | | 6 | E | 7 | 3 | T | 2 |

To understand "row ordering" a few terms need defining. Think of a twelve by twelve grid. Each row of the grid could be ready left to right, right to left, up to down and down to up. These rows are labeled Prime (P) Inversion (I), Retrograde (R), and Retrograde Inversion (RI). Prime rows contain the original order of pitches and intervals. The Inversion (I) of a row inverts the intervals (think a mirror image). Retrograde is the reverse order of the row. Retrograde inversion is the inversion (I) backwards (think upside down and backwards)

The rows in the right hand are: P1, R3, P5, RI 8, I 10, RI 1. The left hand rows are: R7, P9, R11, I2, R14, I6.

The first three rows mm. 1- 10 in the right hand, contain the complete rhythmic material for the entire composition. Starting at m. 11 the rhythmic material is presented backwards.

The left hand is a bit more disorderly. The original ordering of the rhythmic material (mm. 1-10) is presented second in the left hand, mm. 15 – 24. The first material in the left hand is comprised of the reverse order.

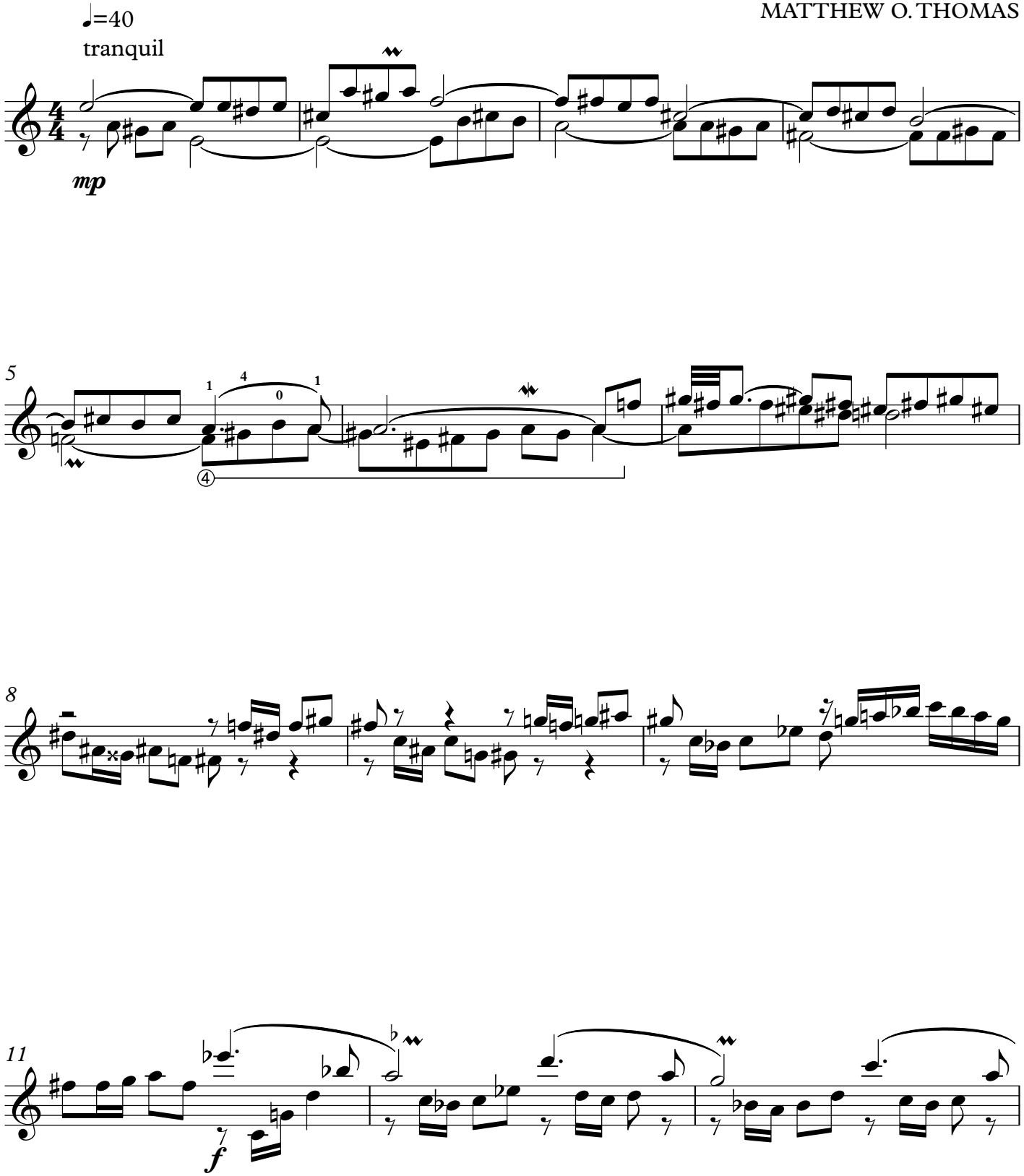
The first few measures of each hand have been assigned fingering. In the left hand, at mm. 8 and 12, notice there is a fingering 3-1. In this case the note is played with finger 3, and while holding the note down, the player shifts to (replaces with) finger 1. This allows the other fingers to be free to reach the next note(s) in the phrase more smoothly and easily. This is typically an Organ technique, but is very useful on the piano as well. The student is challenged to finish adding intelligent and streamlined fingering, based on the example given, to aid with complete independence between the hands.

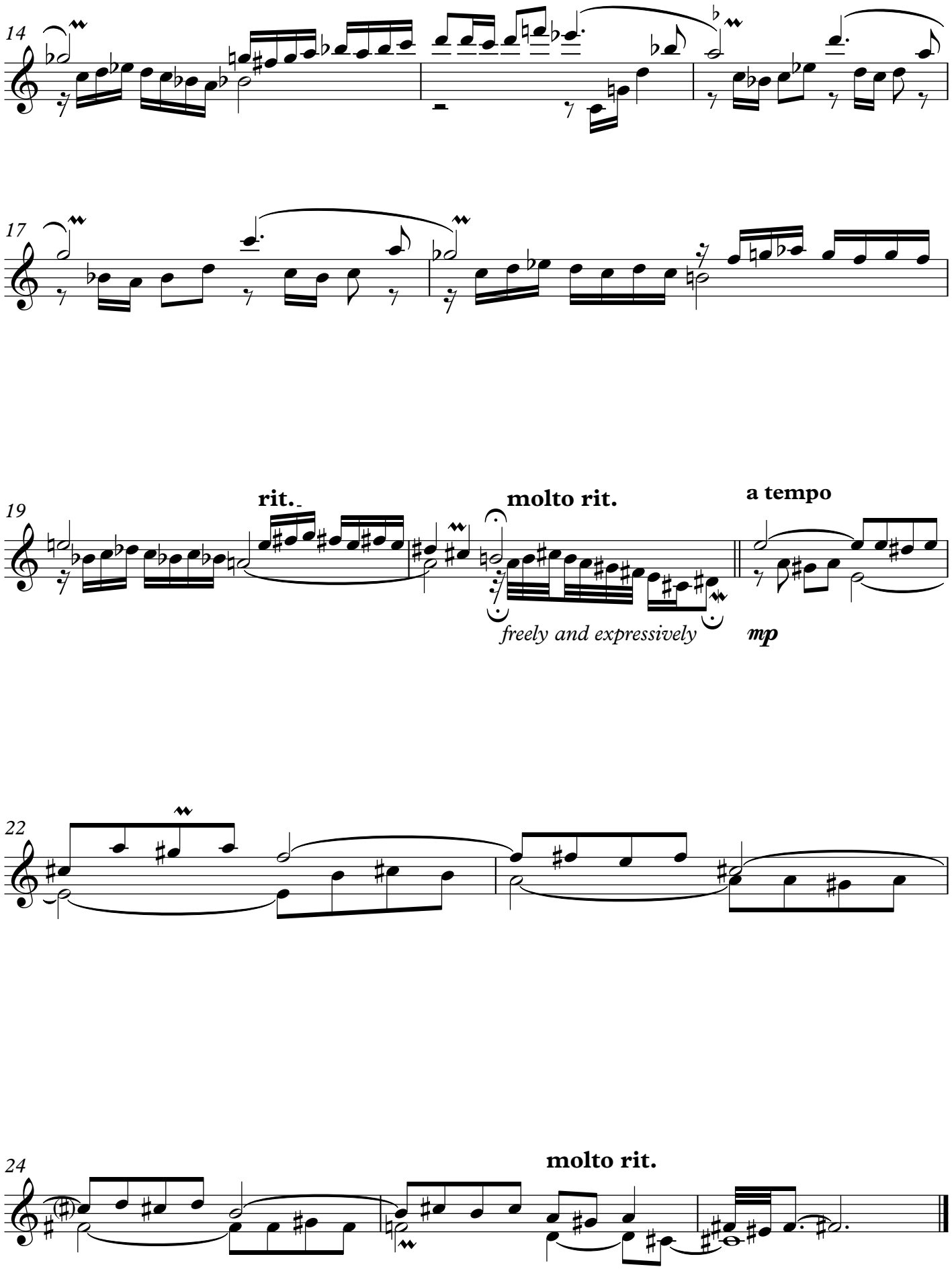
Further listening: Arnold Schoenberg, *Zwei Klavierstücke (Two Piano Pieces)* Op. 33 a and b.

# SUITE MÉDIÉVALE

## 1. Lament

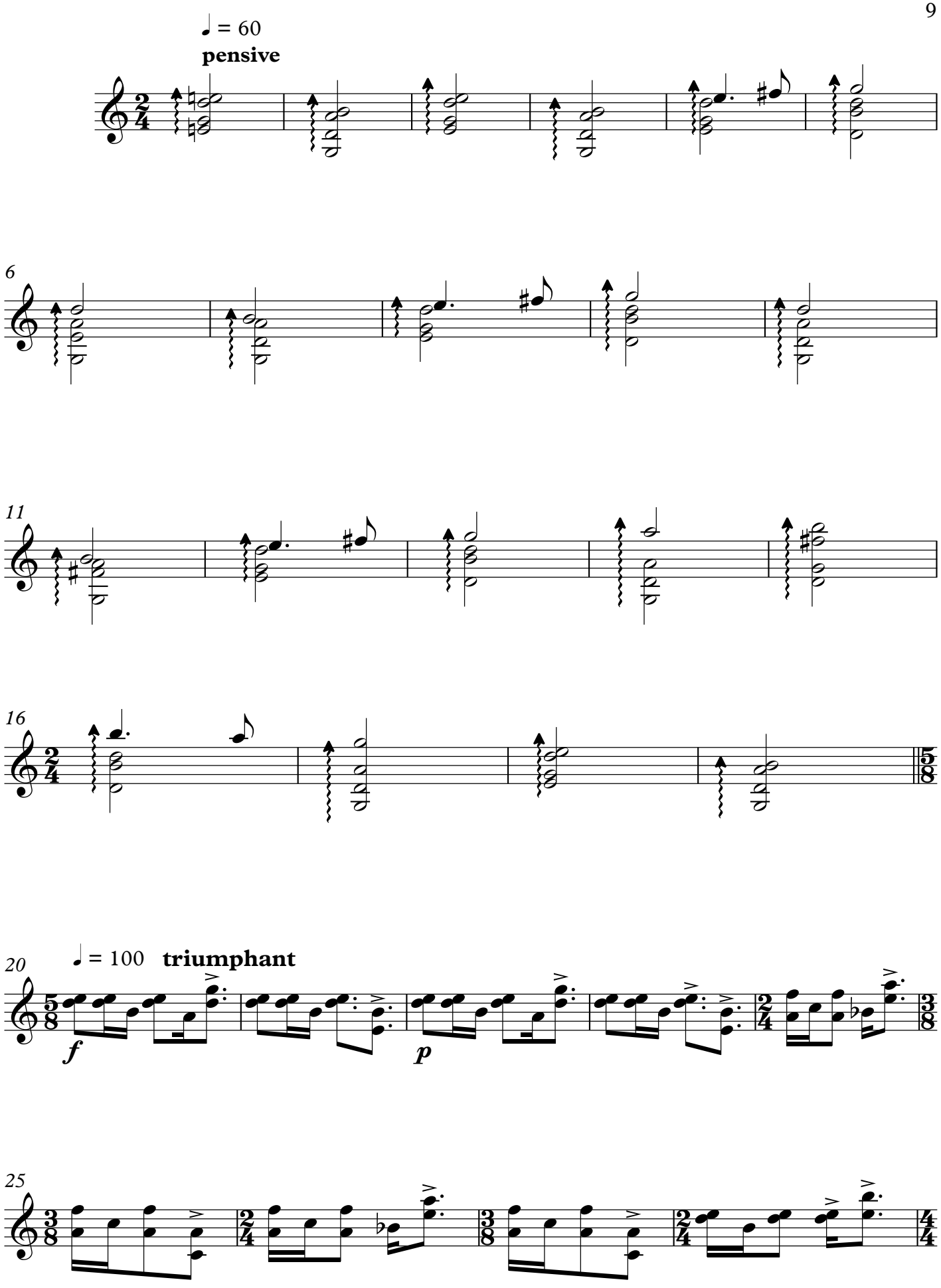
MATTHEW O. THOMAS

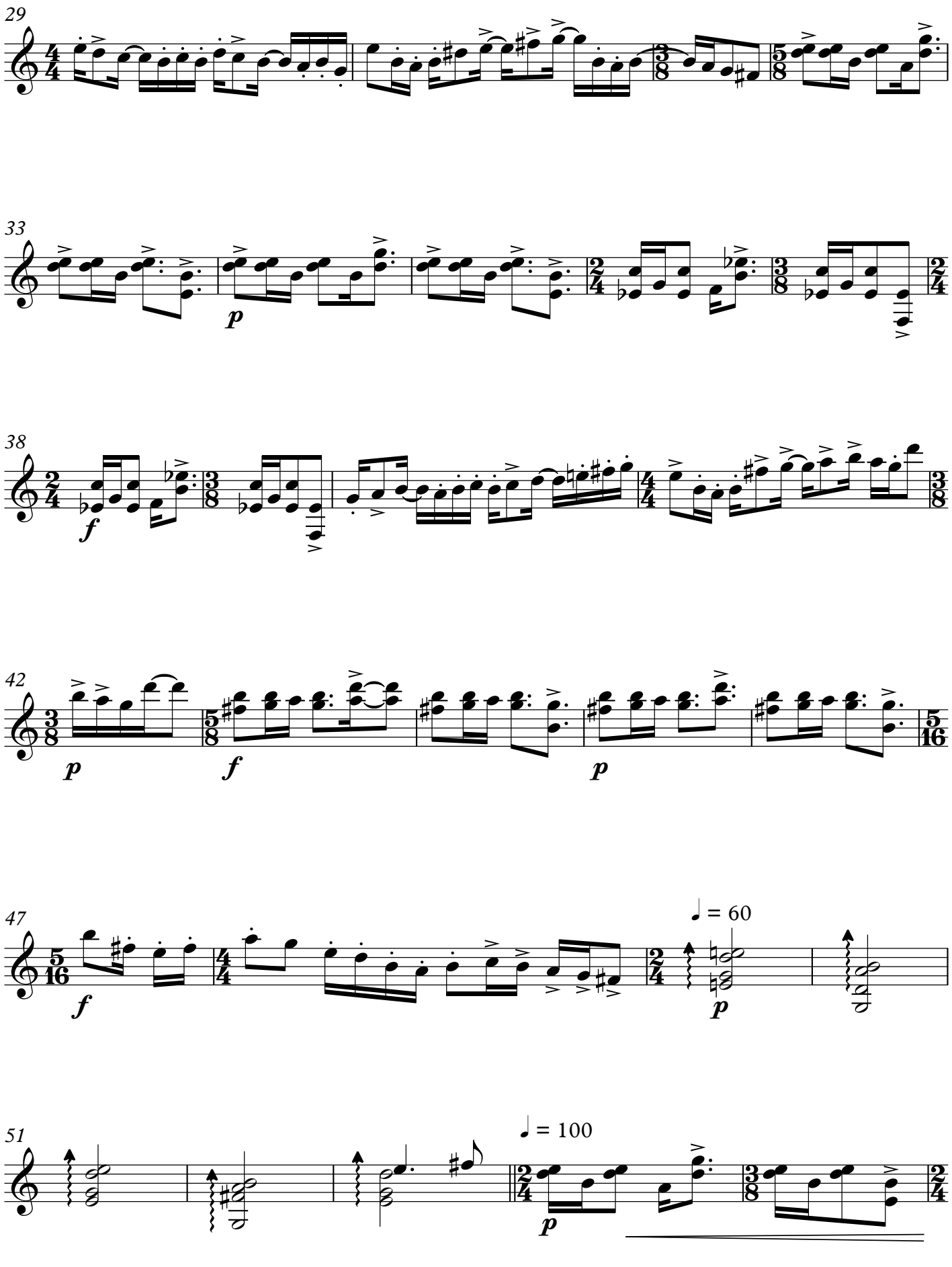


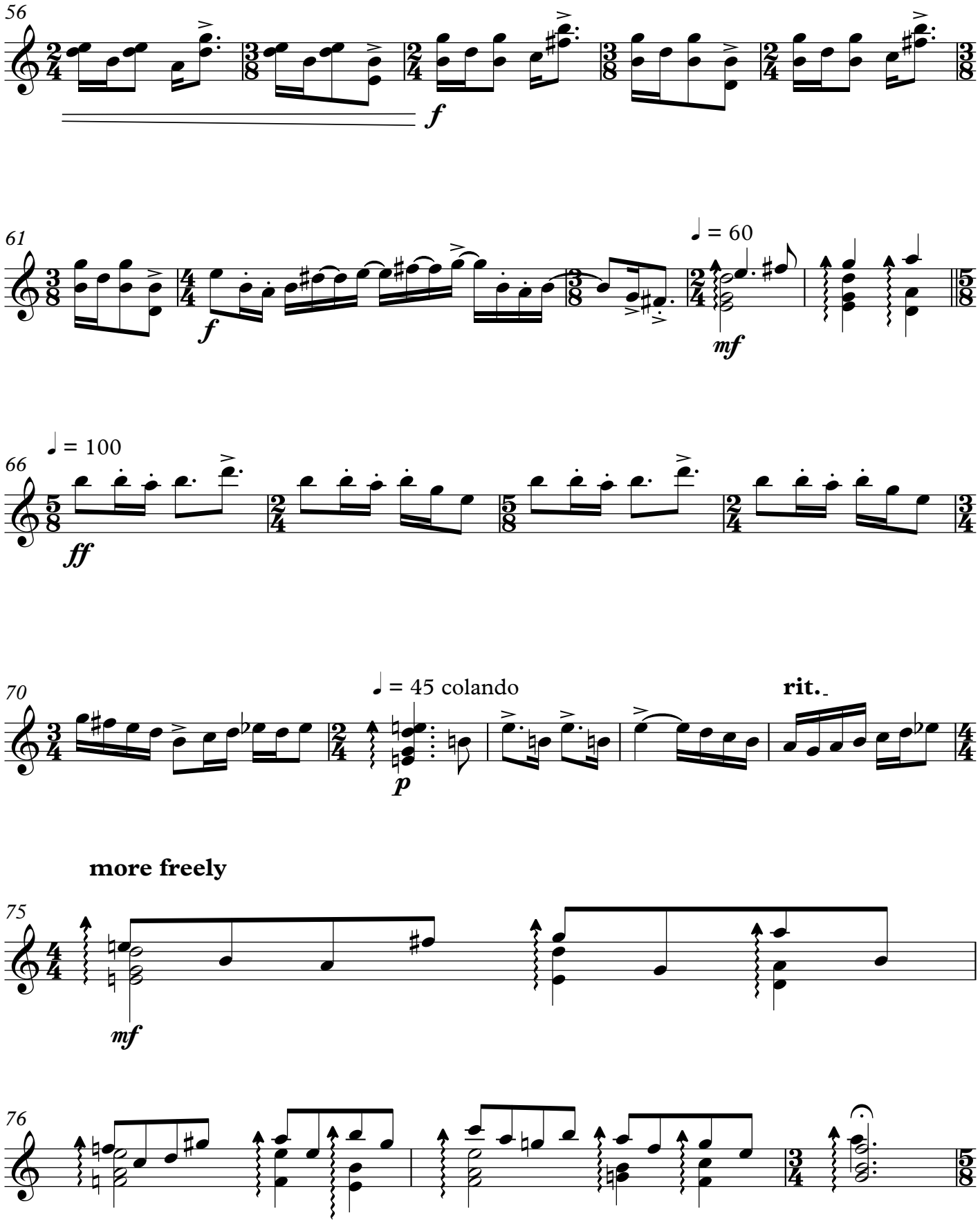

14
17
19
rit.
molto rit.
a tempo
freely and expressively
mp
22
24
molto rit.

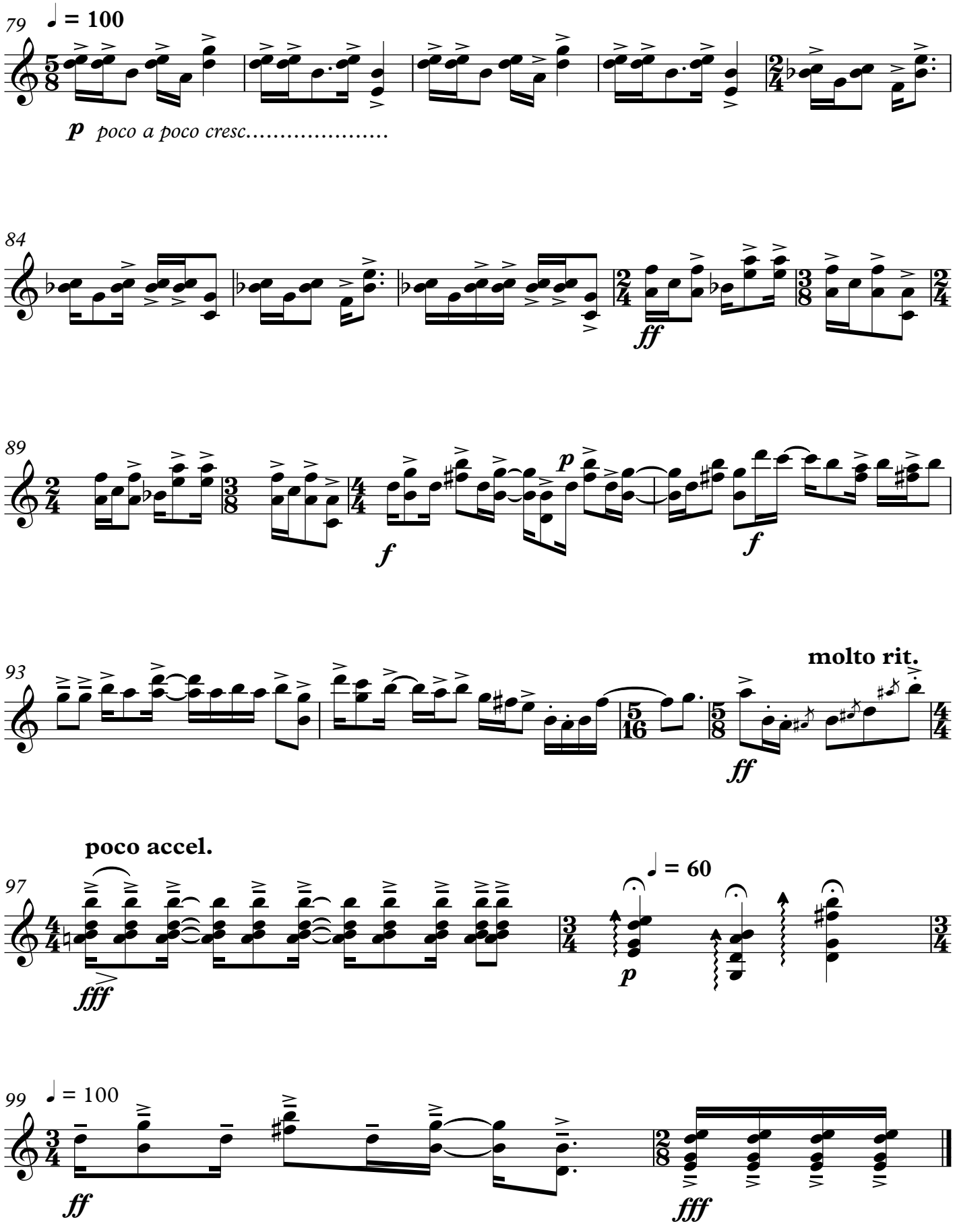
# 2. Basse Dance





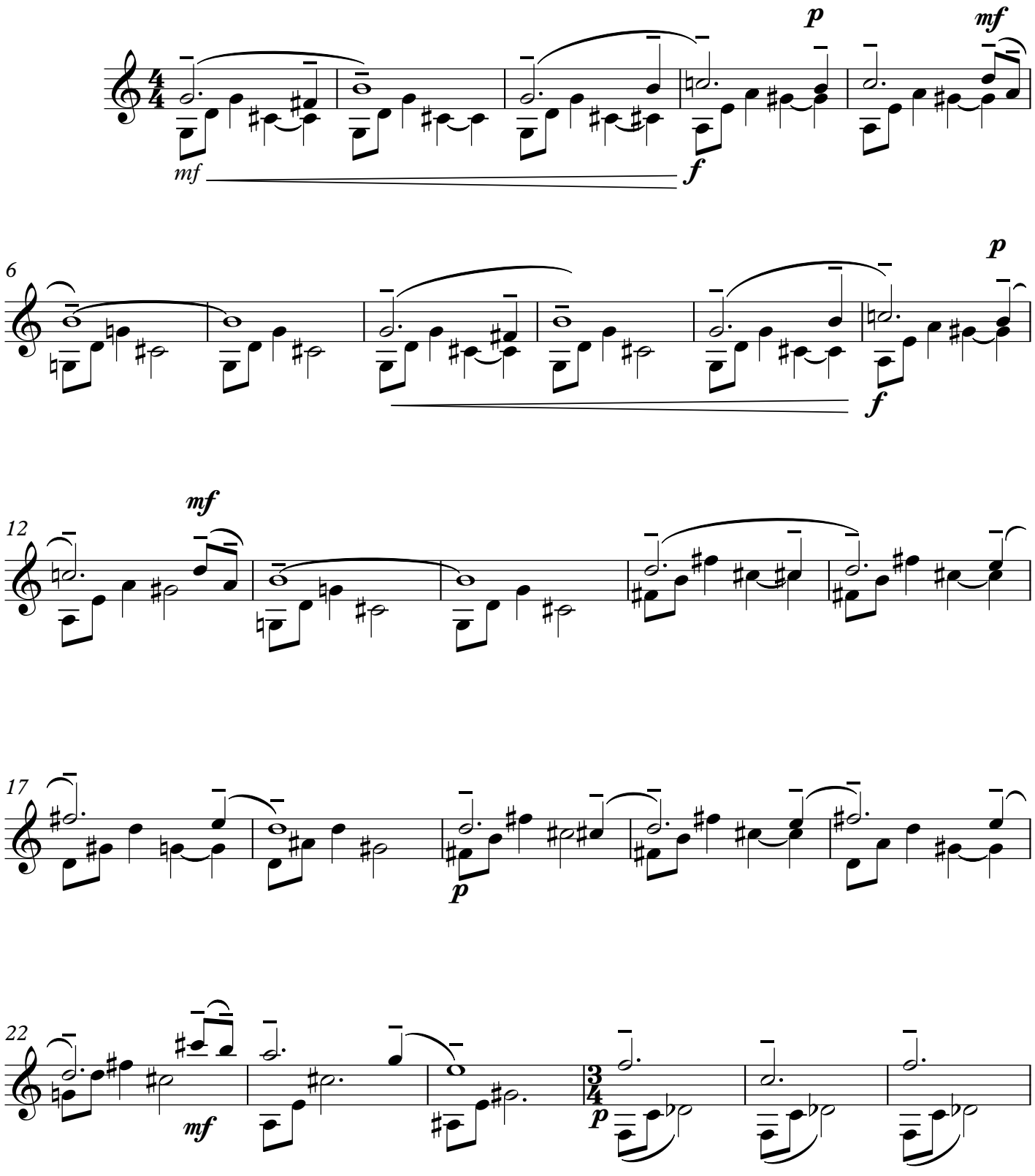

29
33
p
38
f
42
p
f
p
47
f
♩ = 60
p
51
♩ = 100
p

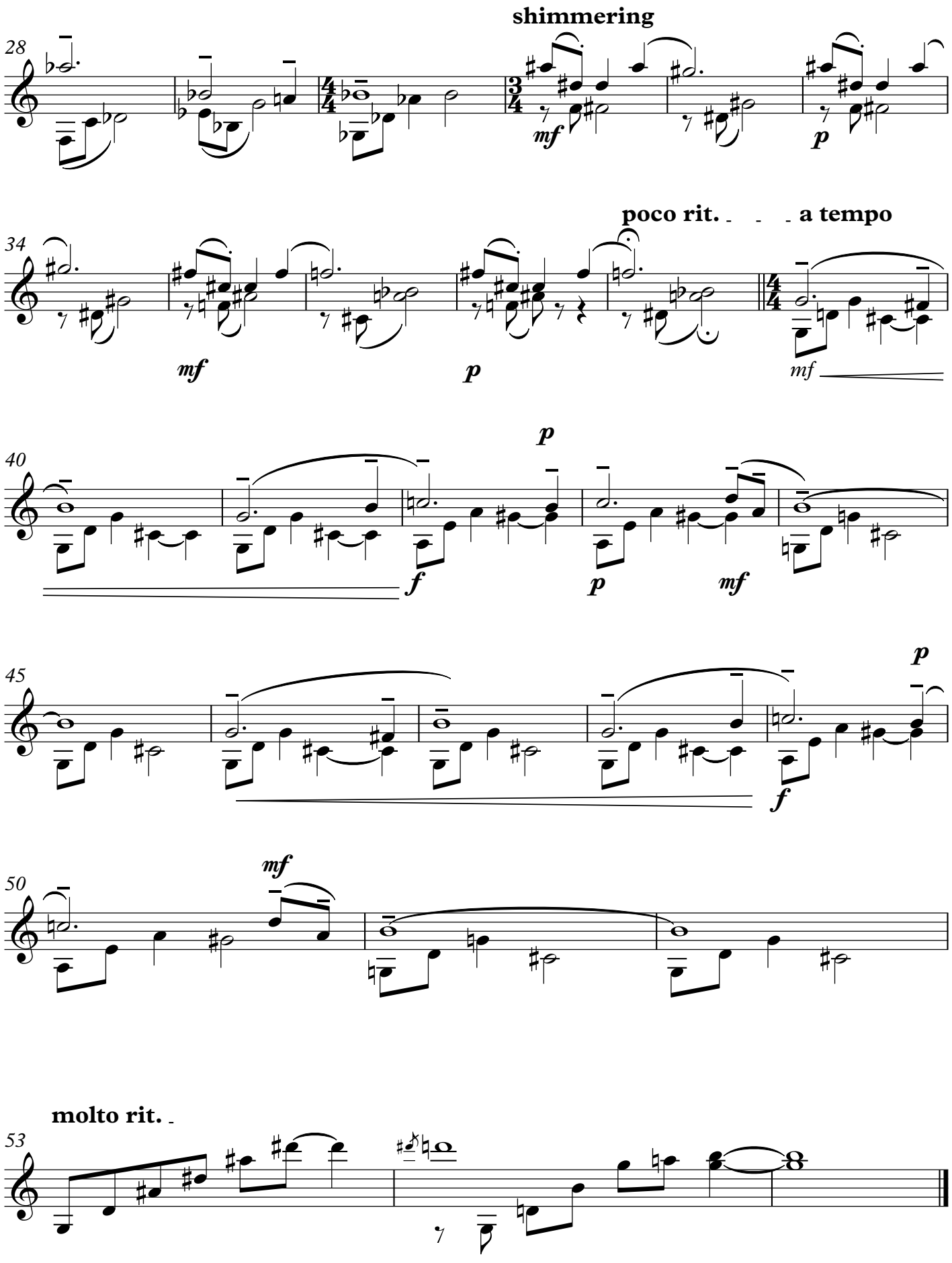

56
f
61
f
♩ = 60
mf
66
♩ = 100
ff
70
♩ = 45 colando
p
rit.
more freely
75
mf
76


79
♩ = 100
p poco a poco cresc.....
84
ff
89
f
p
f
93
molto rit.
ff
poco accel.
97
fff
♩ = 60
p
99
♩ = 100
ff
fff

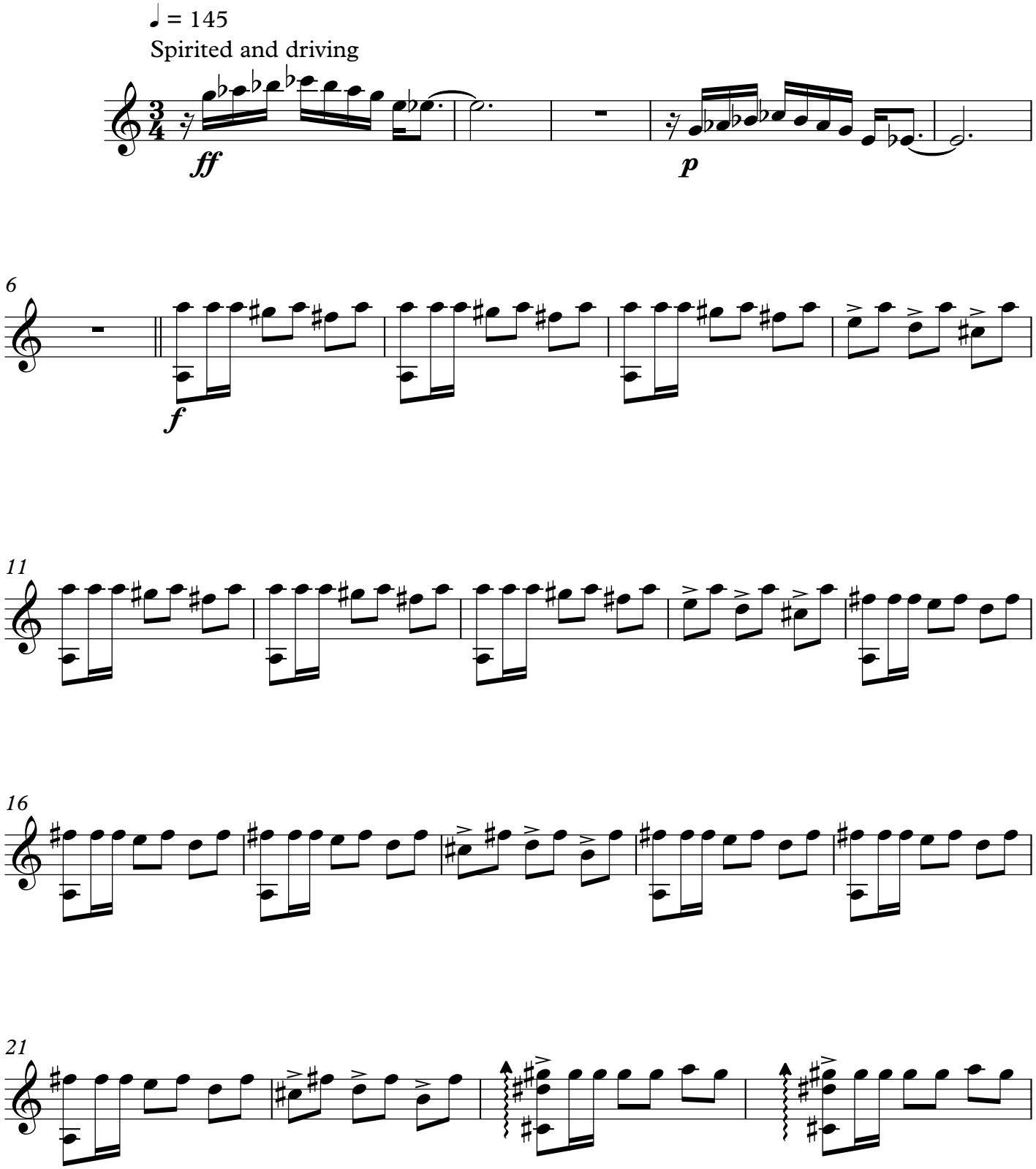
# 3. Pavane Méditatif

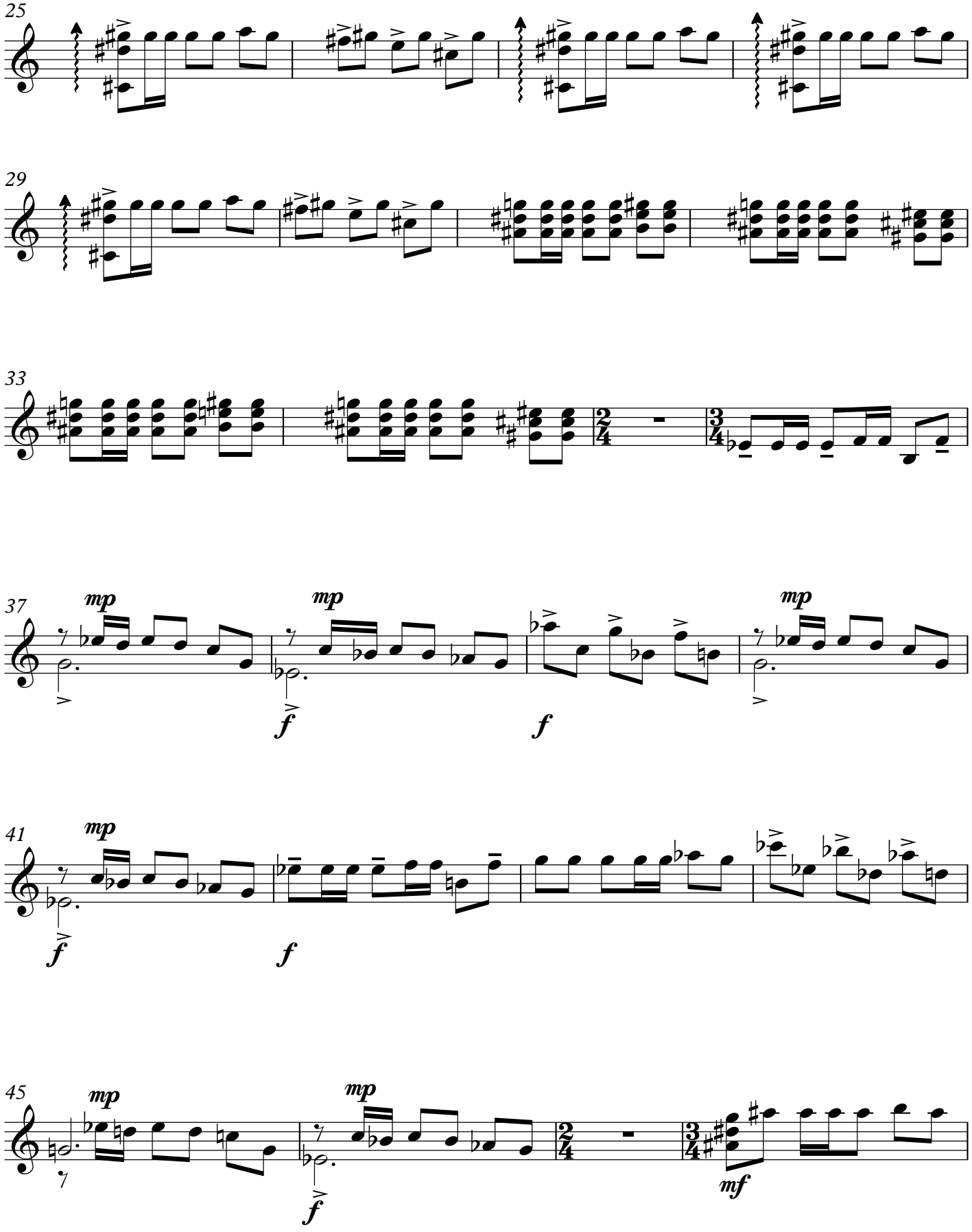
♩ = 72 - 76 Meditatively, a sustained traversing

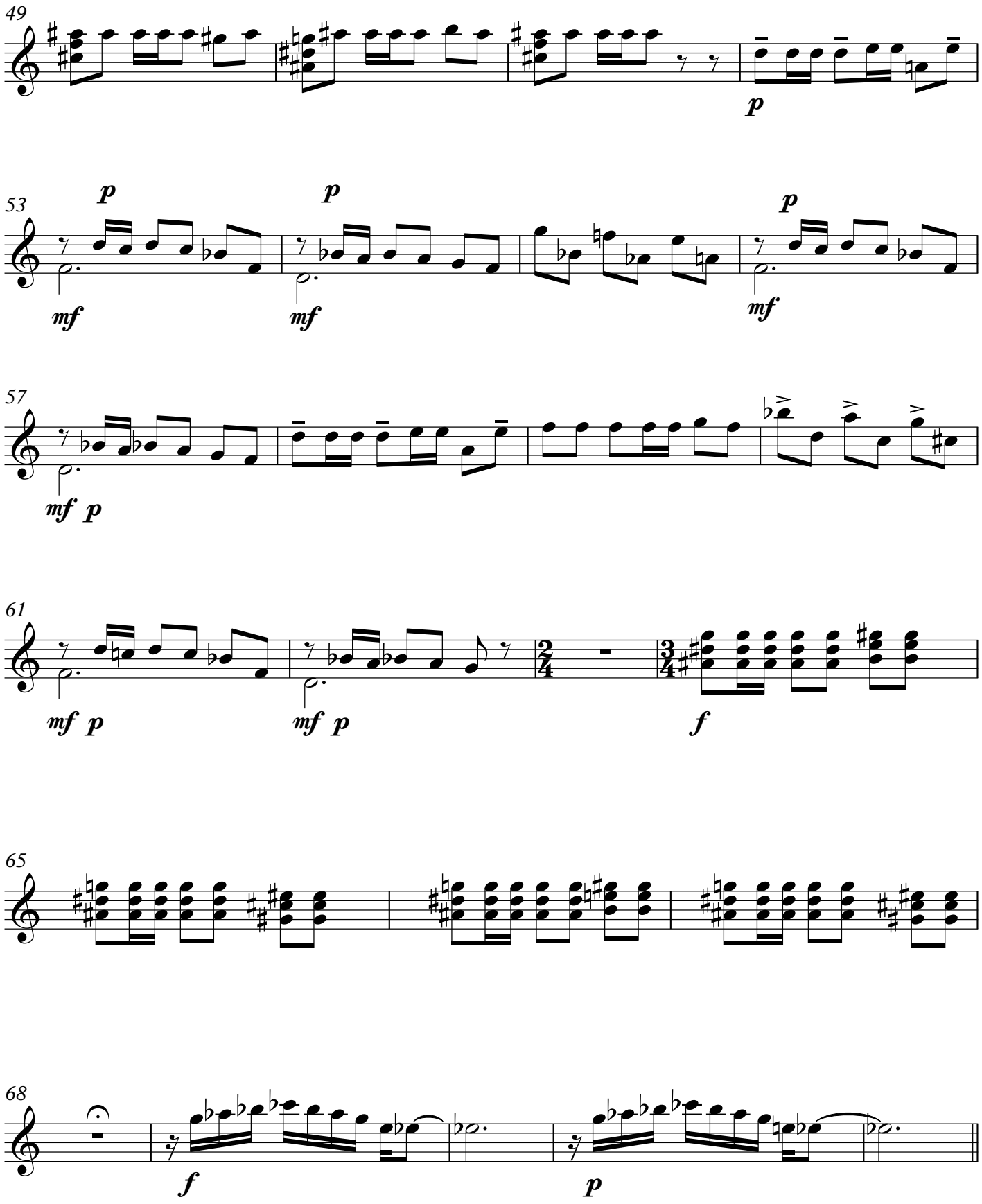


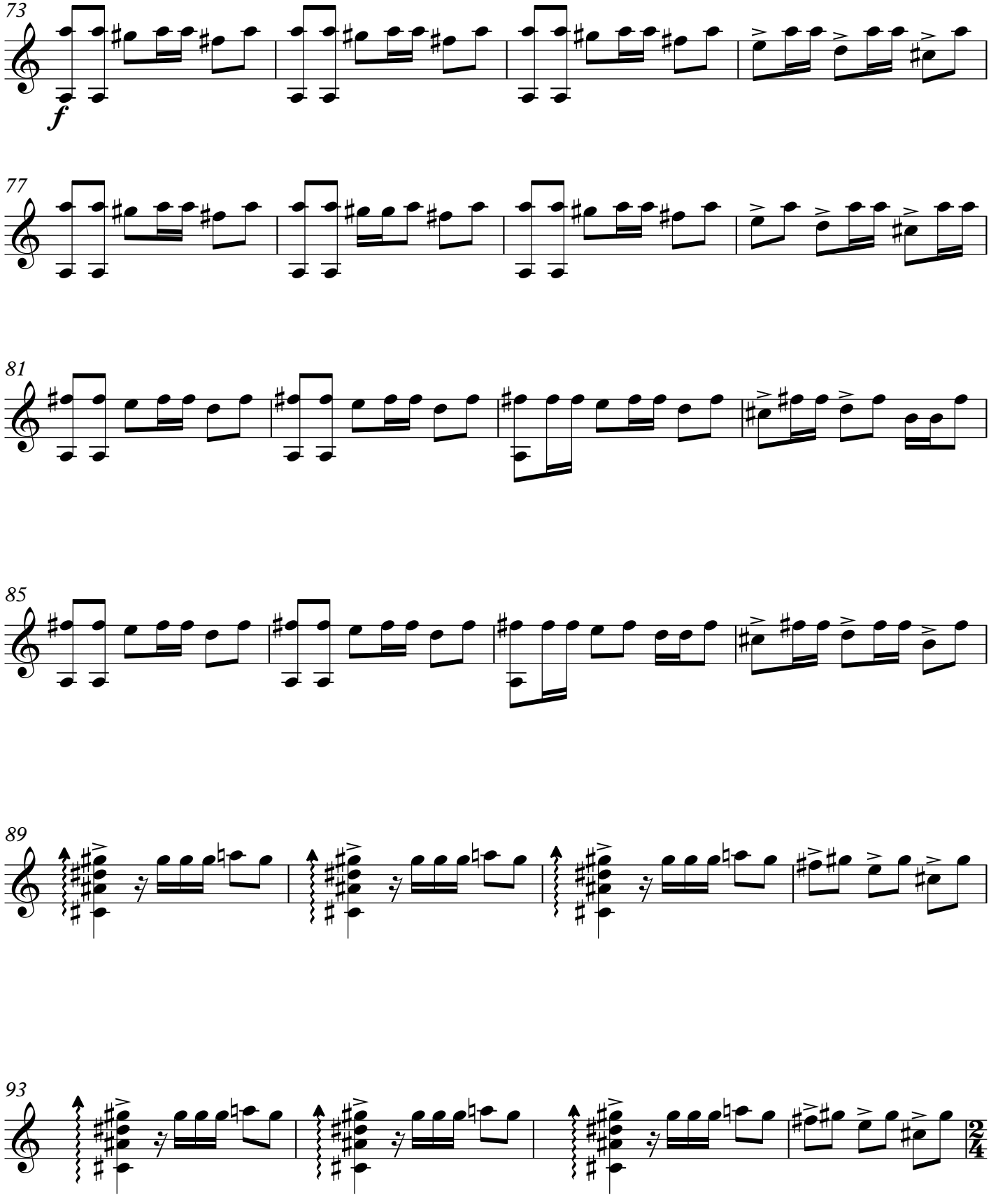

shimmering
28
mf
p
poco rit.
a tempo
34
mf
p
mf
40
p
f
p
mf
45
p
f
50
mf
molto rit.
53

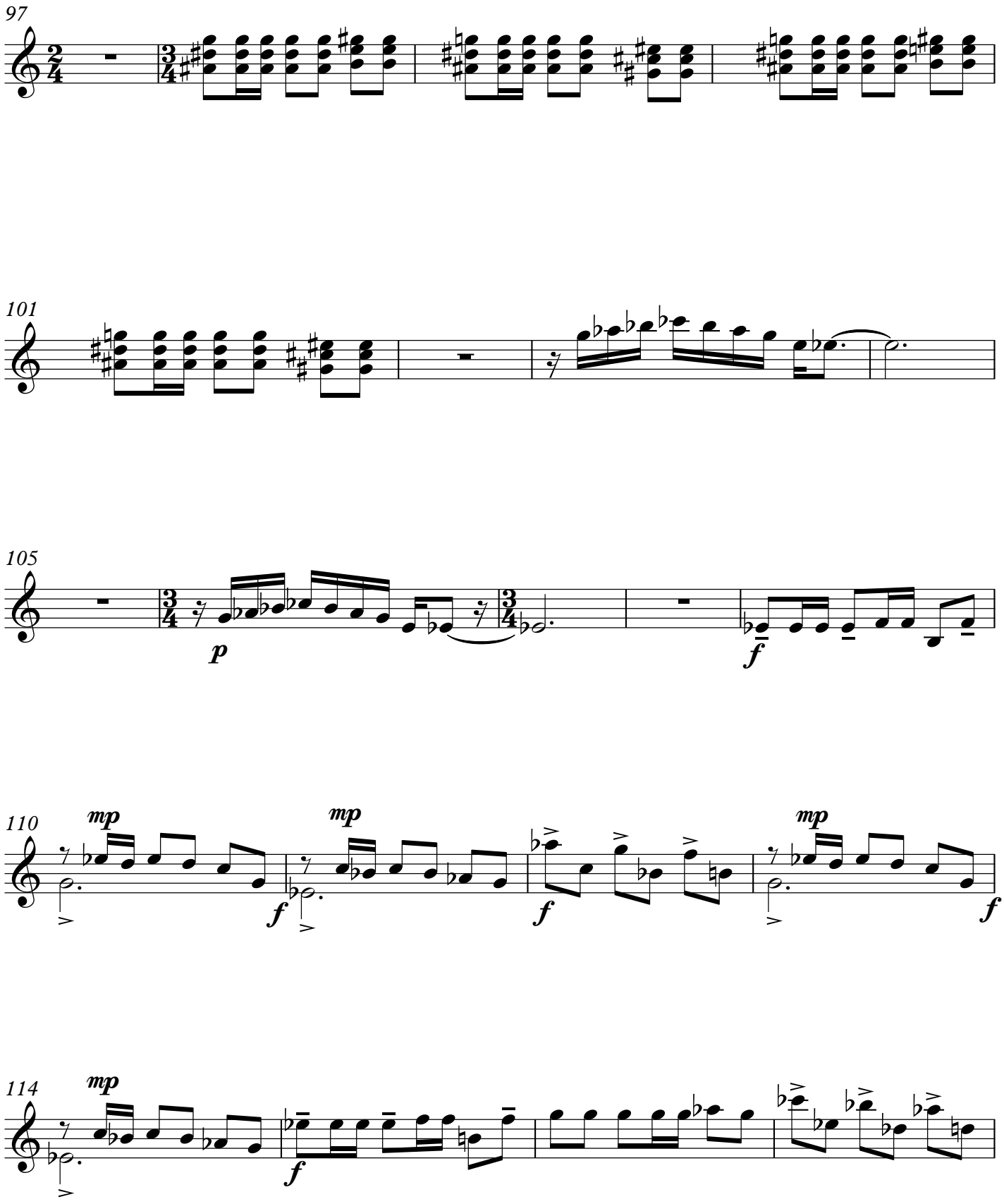
# 4. Trotto Dervish

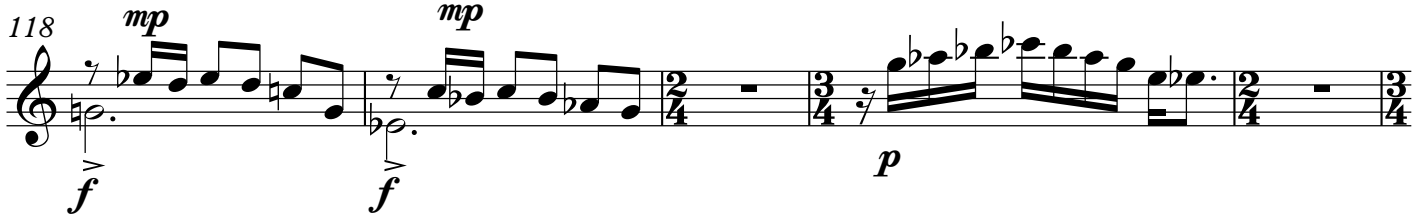


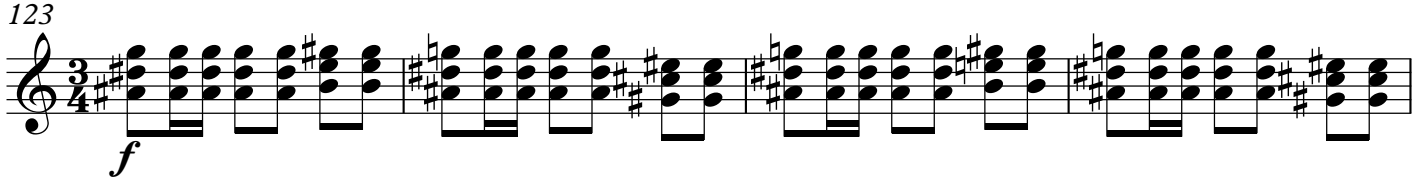

25
29
33
37
mp
f
41
45
mf

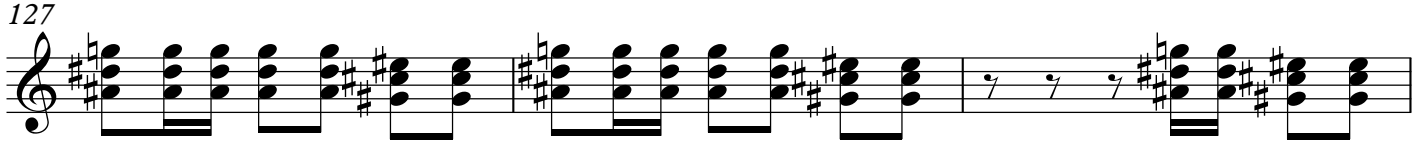

49
p
53
p
p
p
mf
mf
mf
57
mf p
61
mf p
mf p
f
65
68
f
p

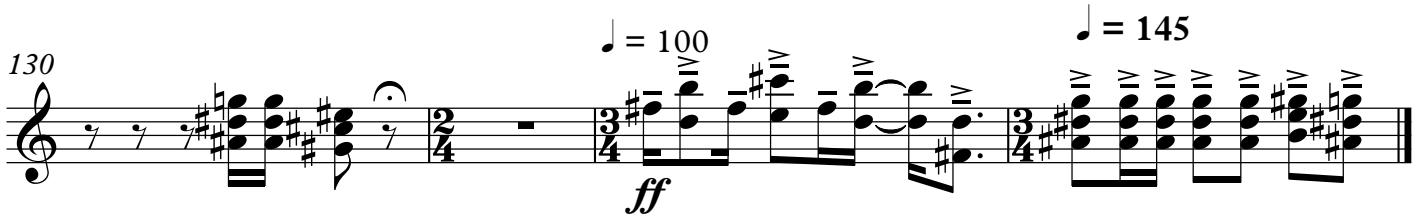

73
f
77
81
85
89
93


97
101
105
110
114
p
f
mp


118
mp
mp
f
f
p
2/4
3/4

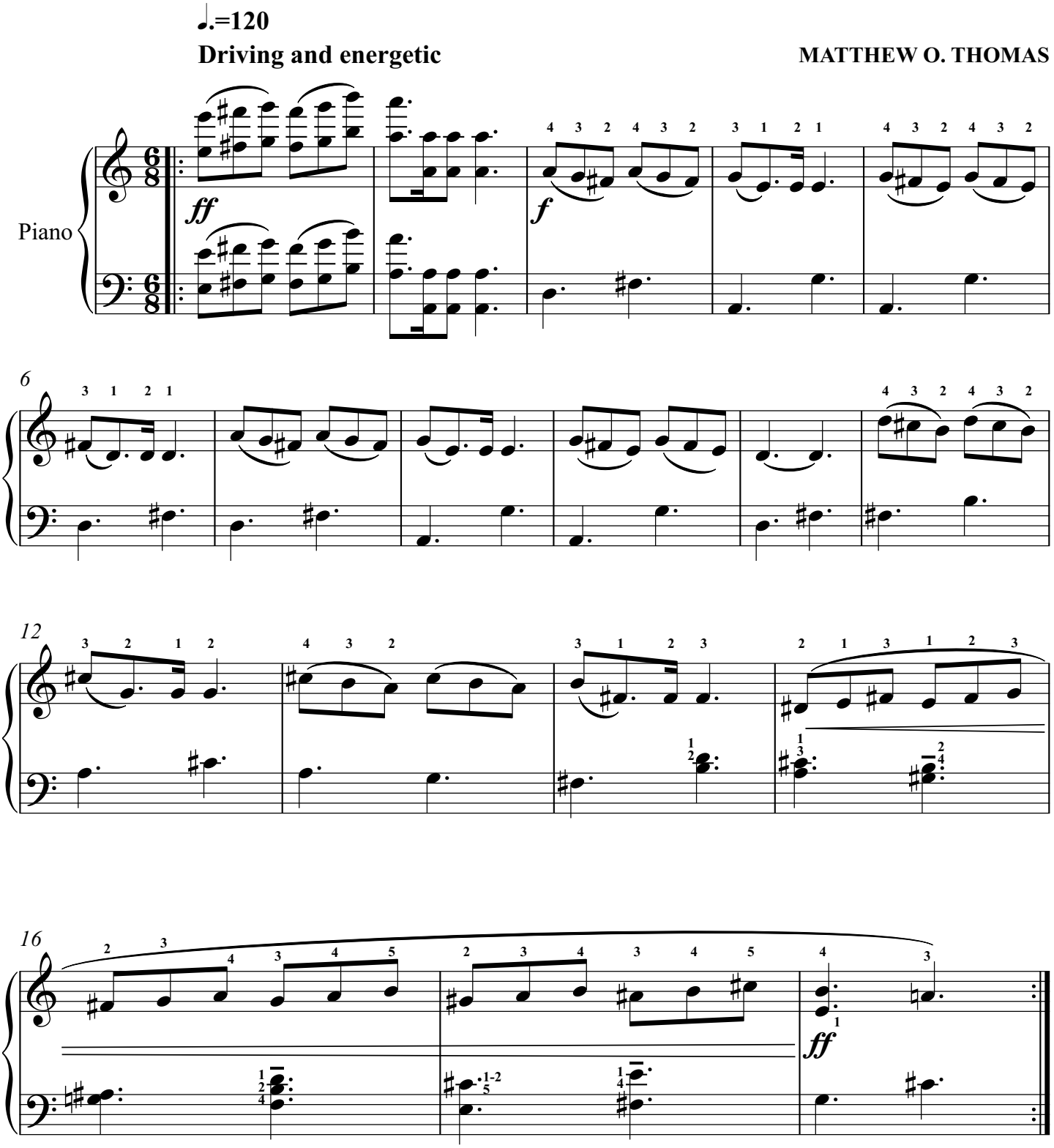

123
3/4
f

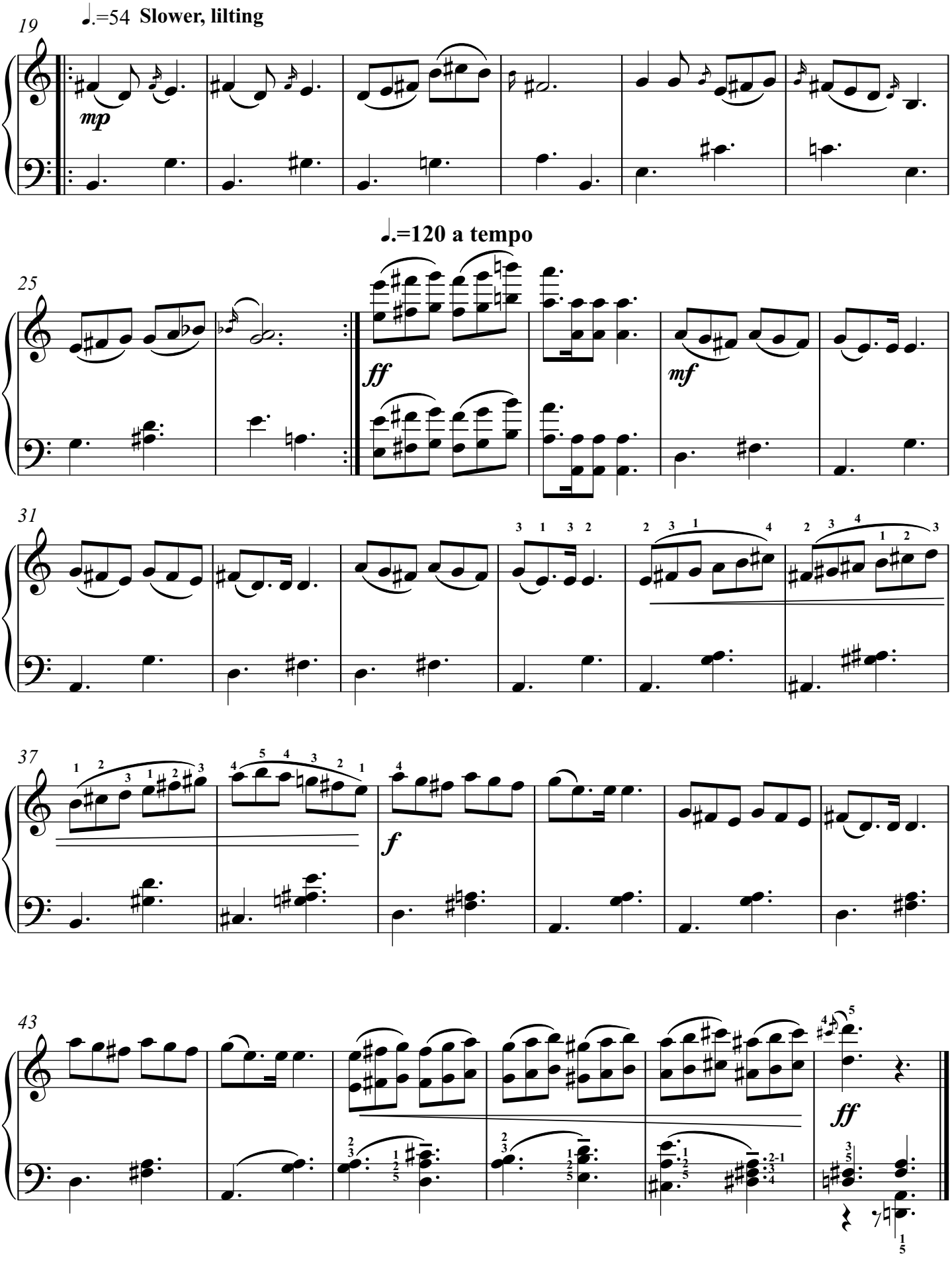

127


130
2/4
♩ = 100
3/4
ff
♩ = 145
3/4

# SEVEN RECITAL STUDIES FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADE

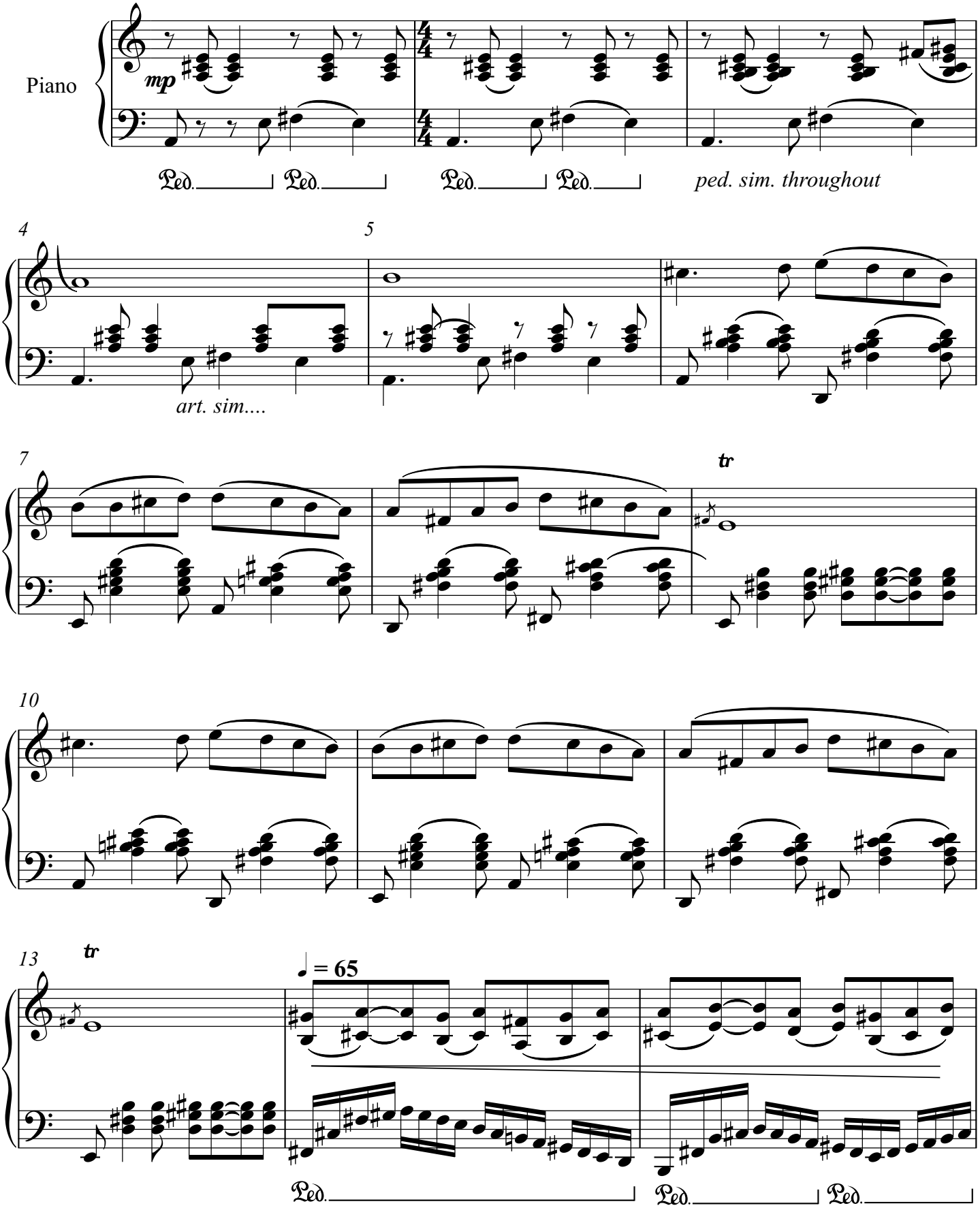
## 1. Rondo Festiva

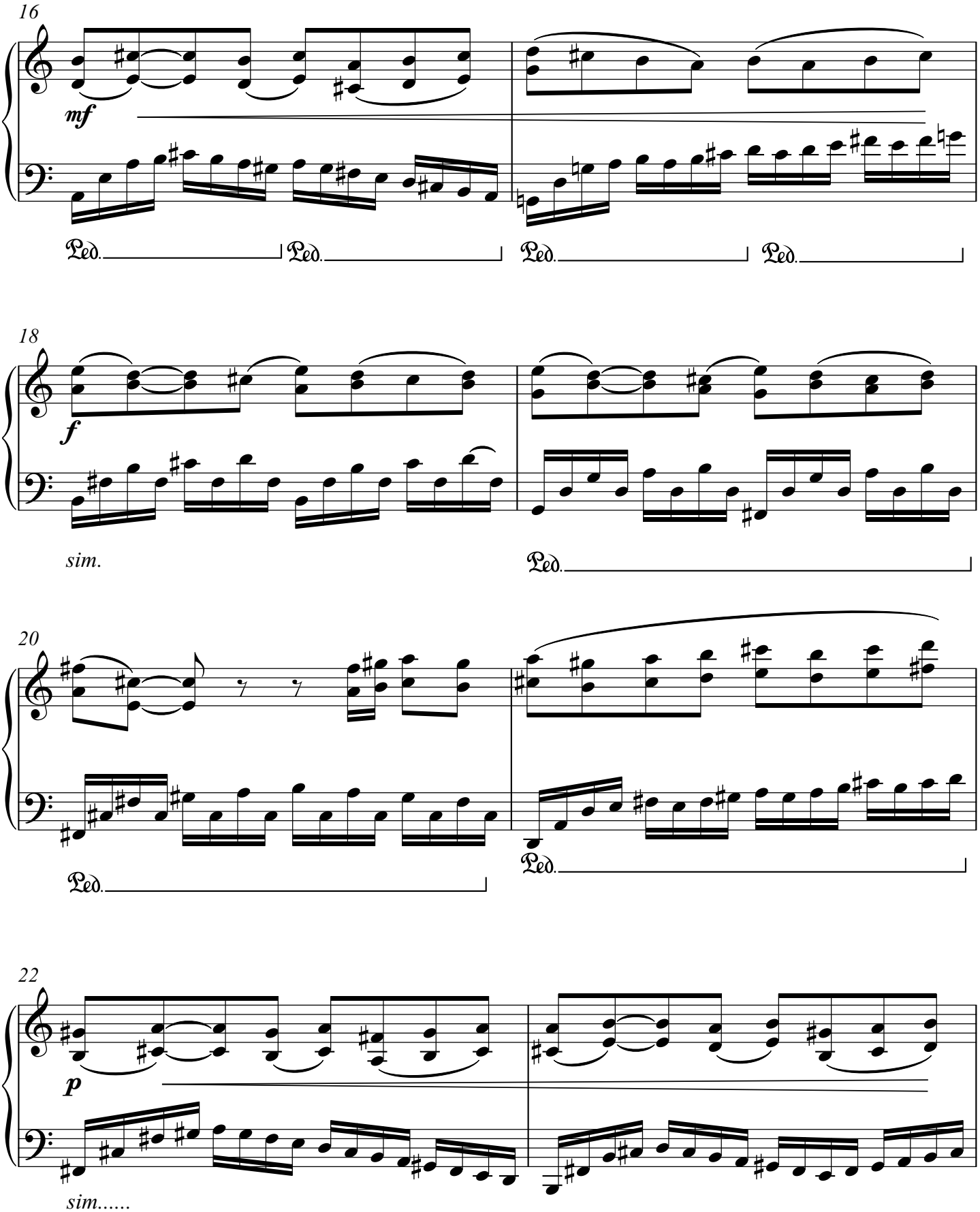


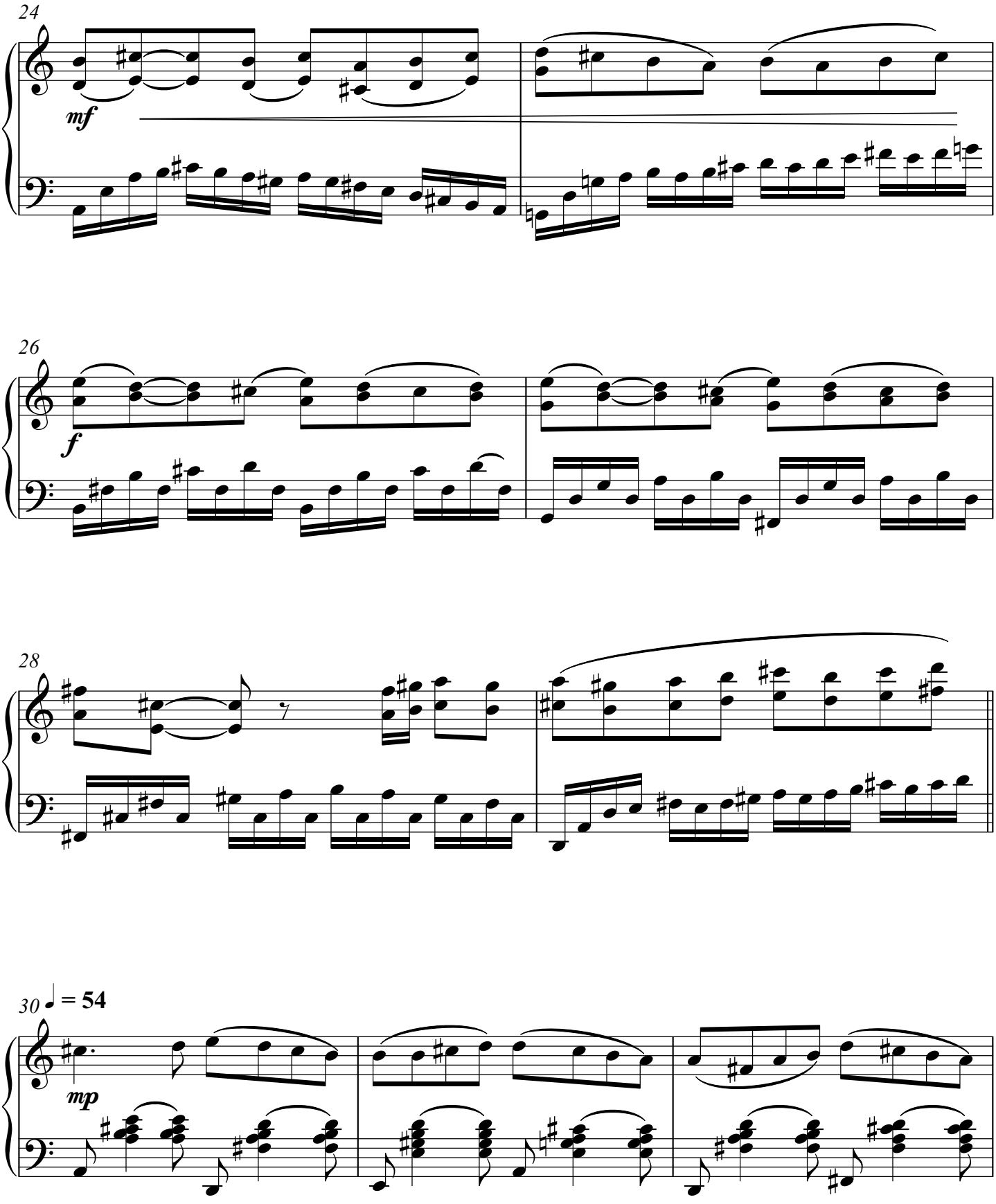

19
♩.=54 Slower, lilting
mp
♩.=120 a tempo
25
ff
mf
31
37
f
43
ff

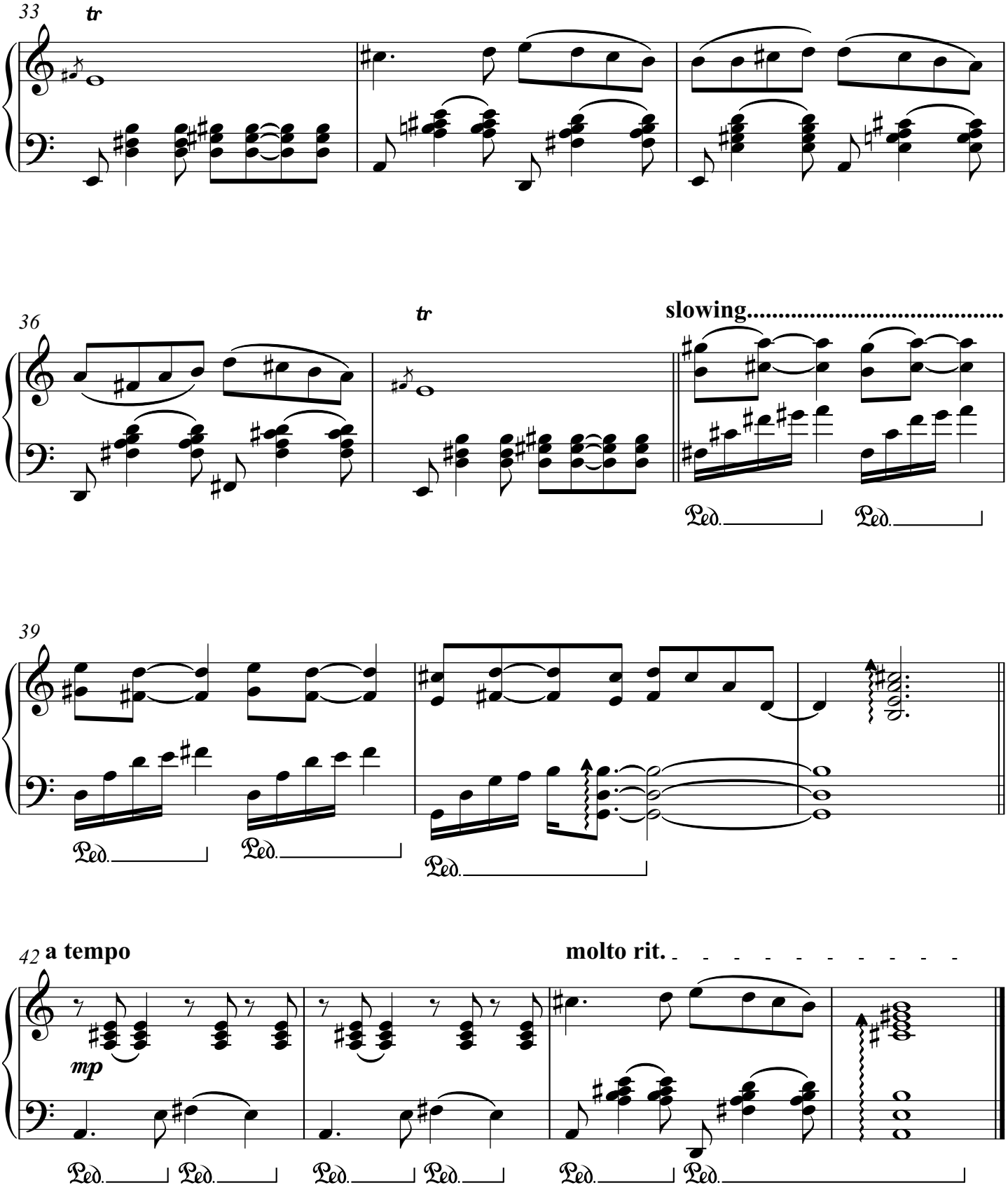
# 2. Lullaby

♩ = 54
**like a daydream**

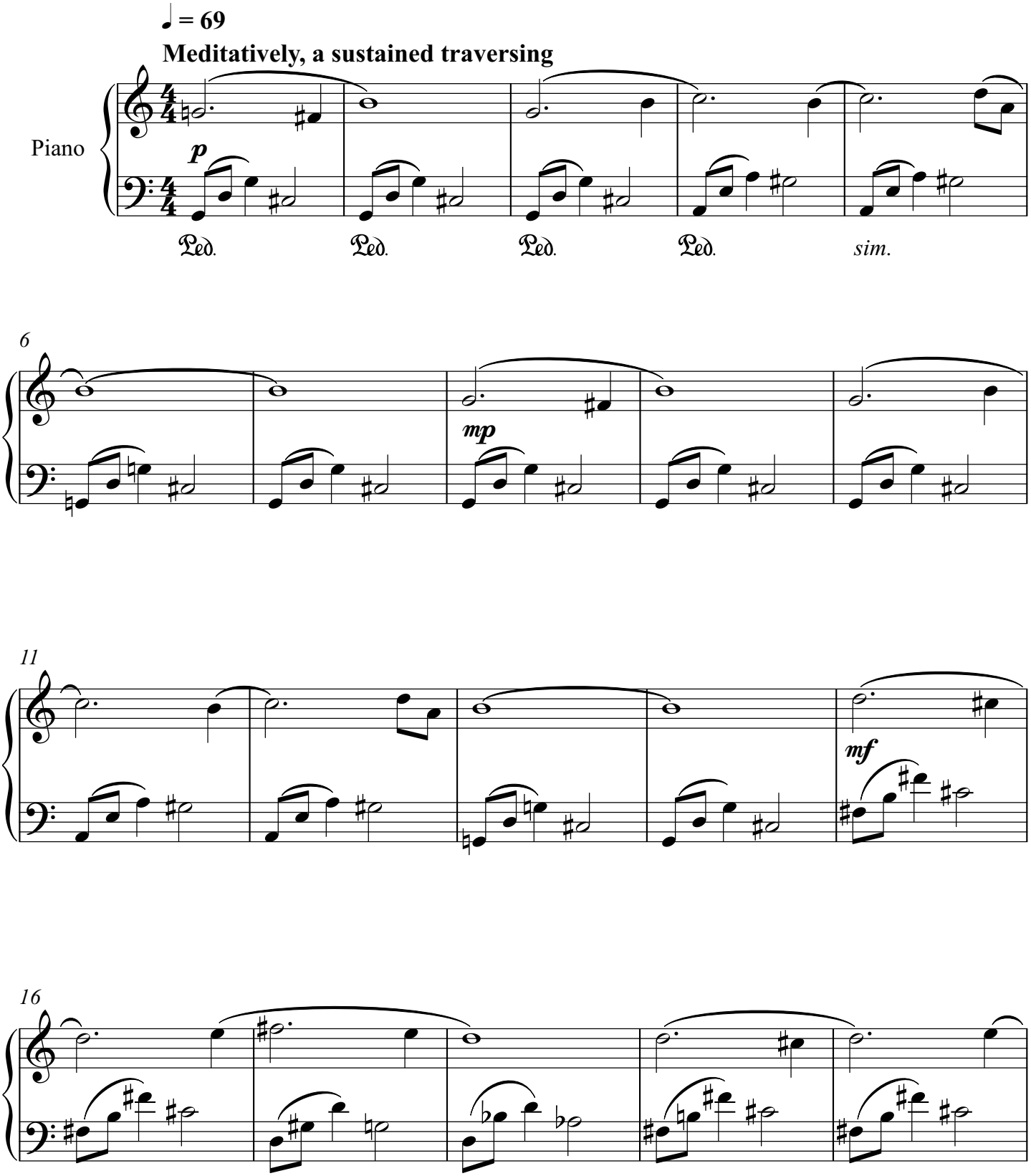


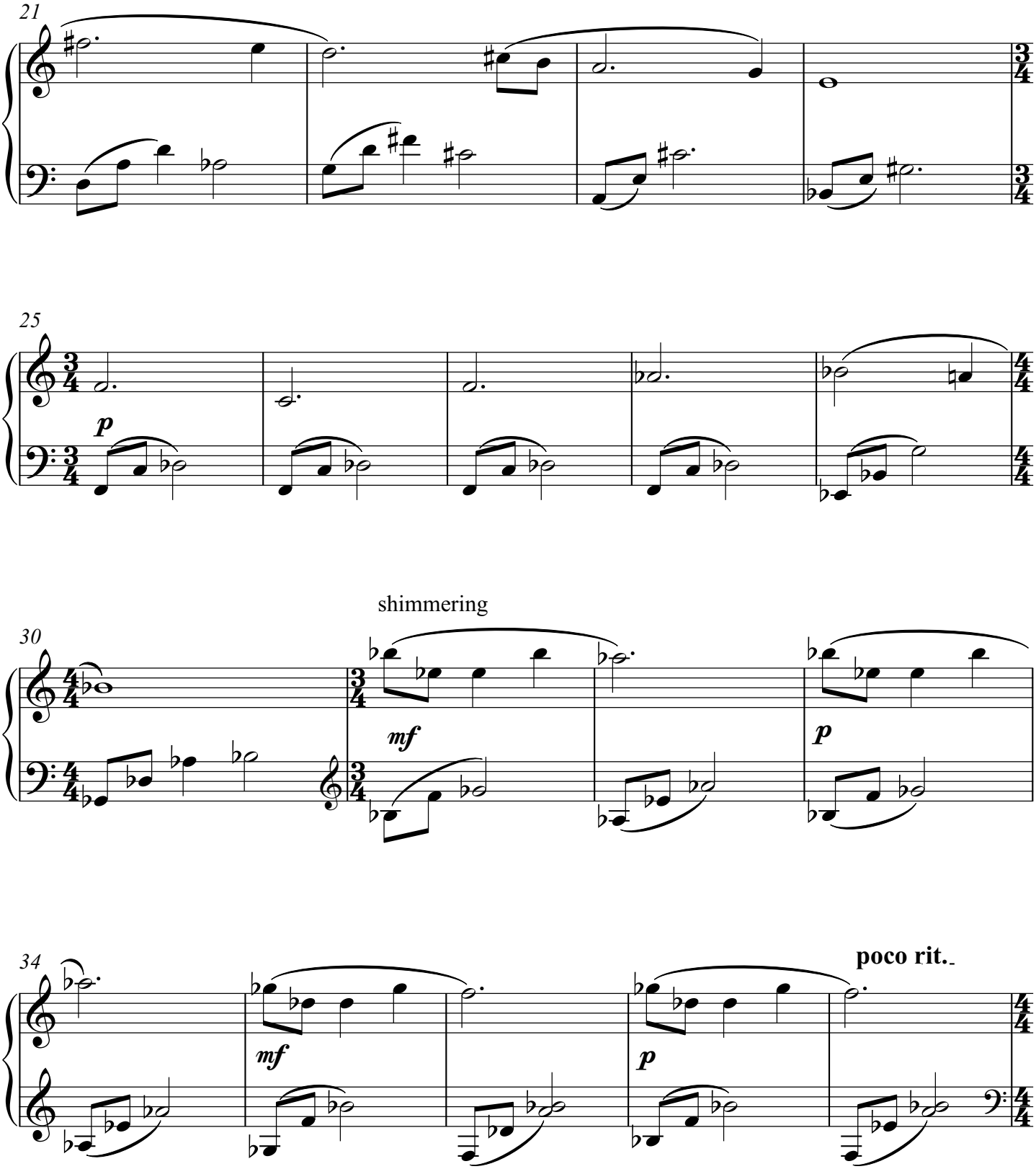

16
mf
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
18
f
sim.
Ped.
20
Ped.
Ped.
22
p
sim.....

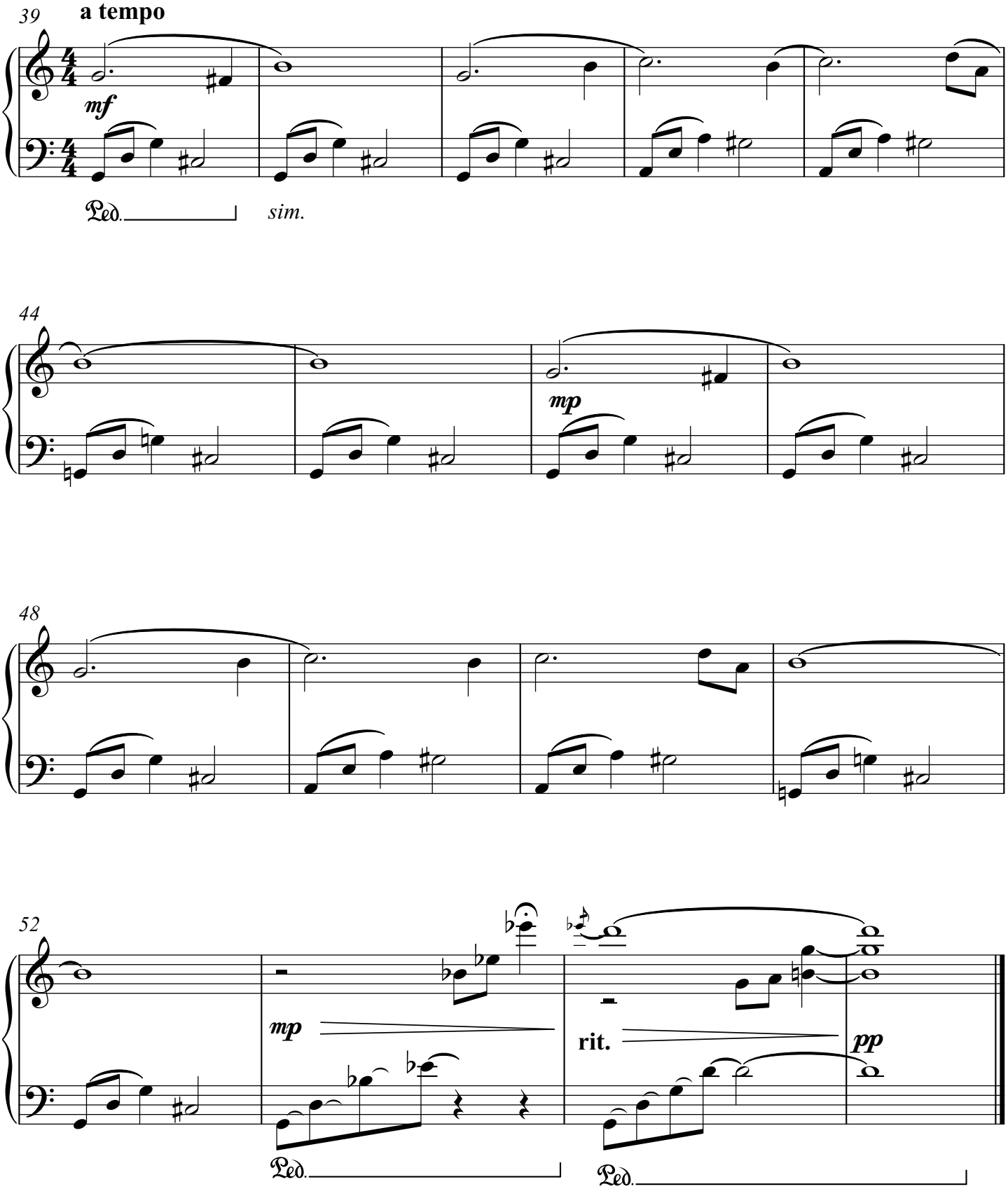

24
mf
26
f
28
30
♩ = 54
mp


33
tr
36
tr
slowing.....
Ped.
Ped.
39
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
42
a tempo
mp
molto rit.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

# 3. The Maji


♩ = 69
Meditatively, a sustained traversing
Piano
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
sim.
6
mp
11
mf
16


21
25
p
30
shimmering
mf
p
34
mf
p
poco rit.

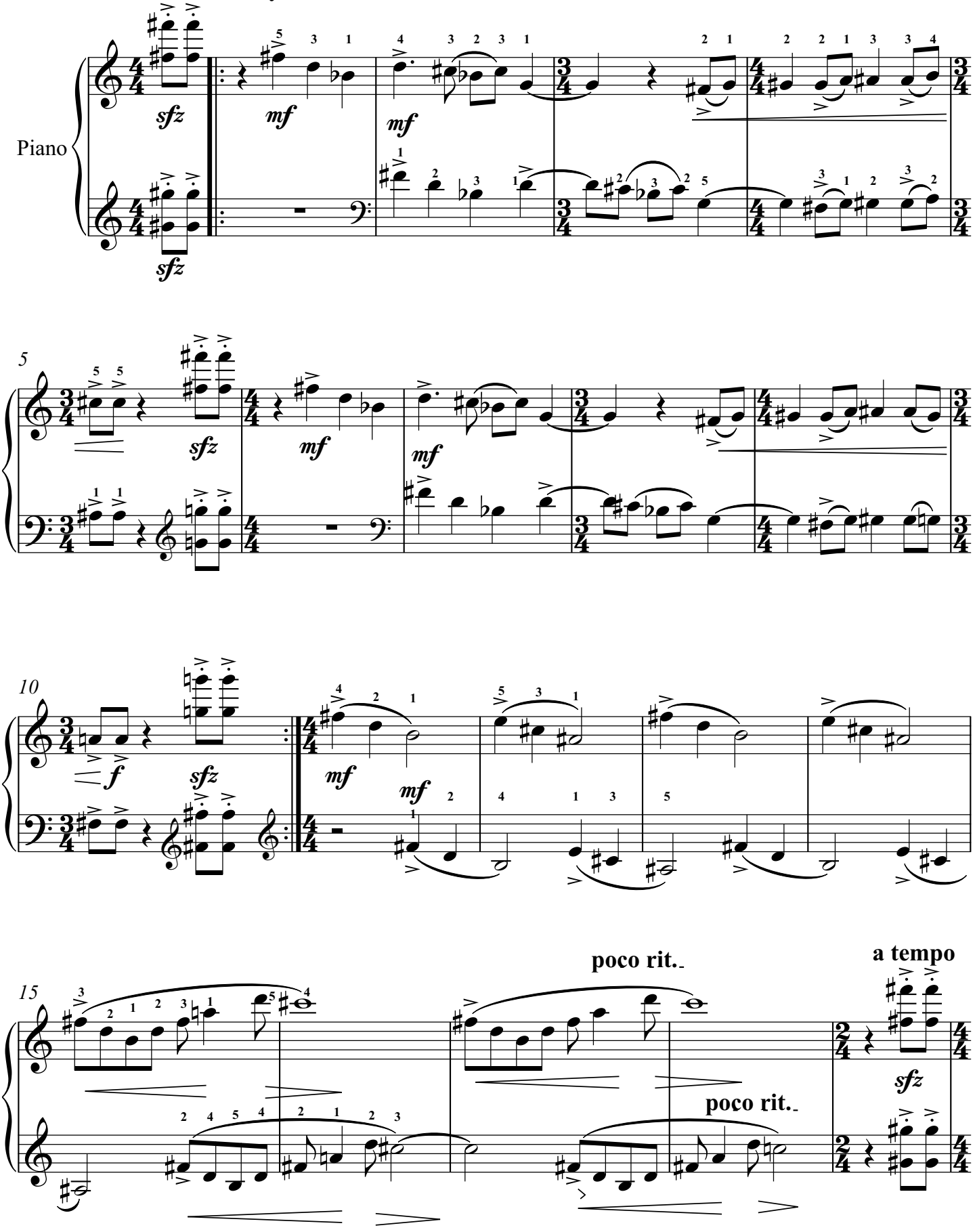

39
a tempo
mf
Ped.
sim.
44
mp
48
52
mp
rit.
pp
Ped.
Ped.

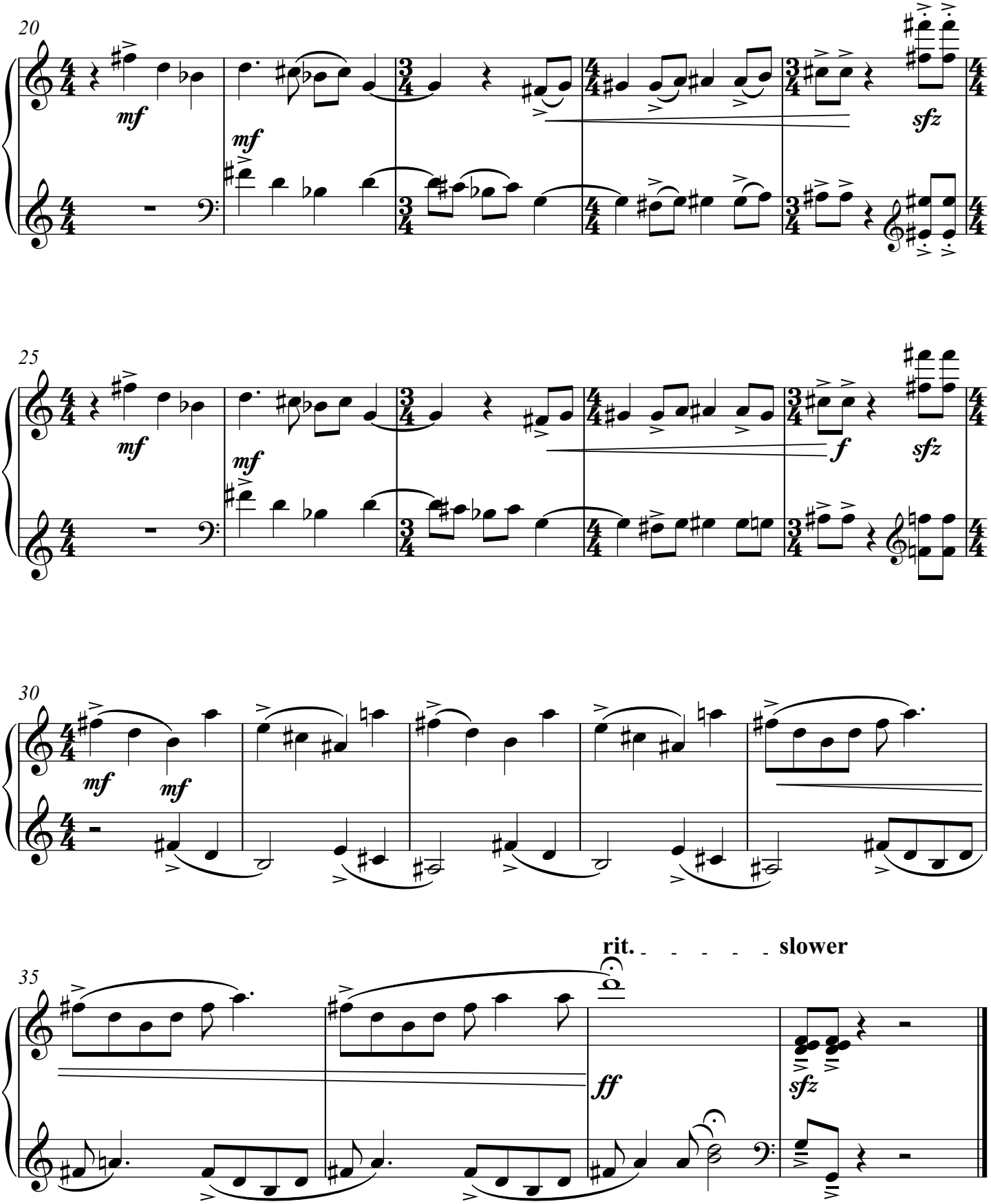
# 4. Loss Canon

♩ = 176 - 184

**Mischeviously**

Piano

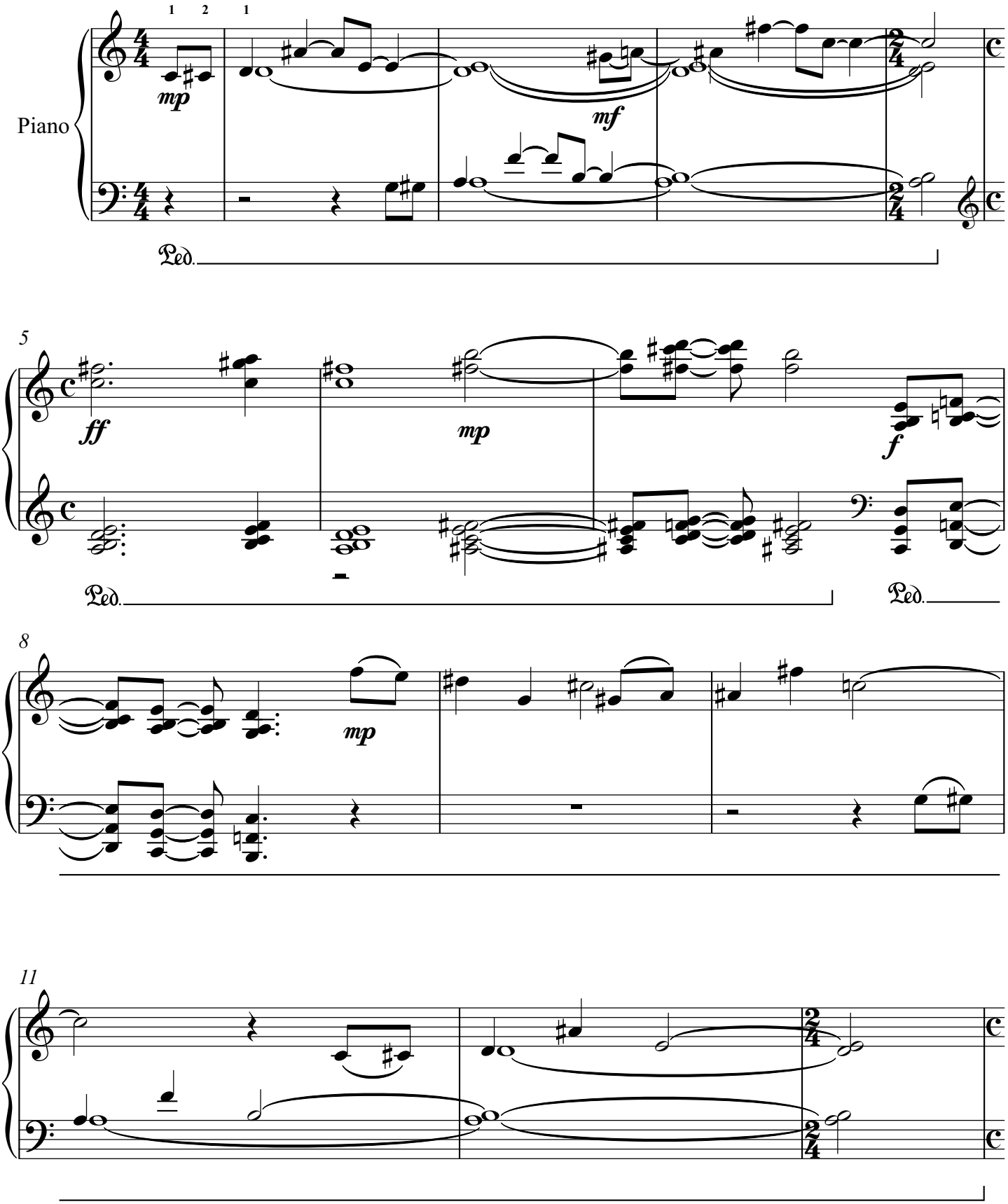


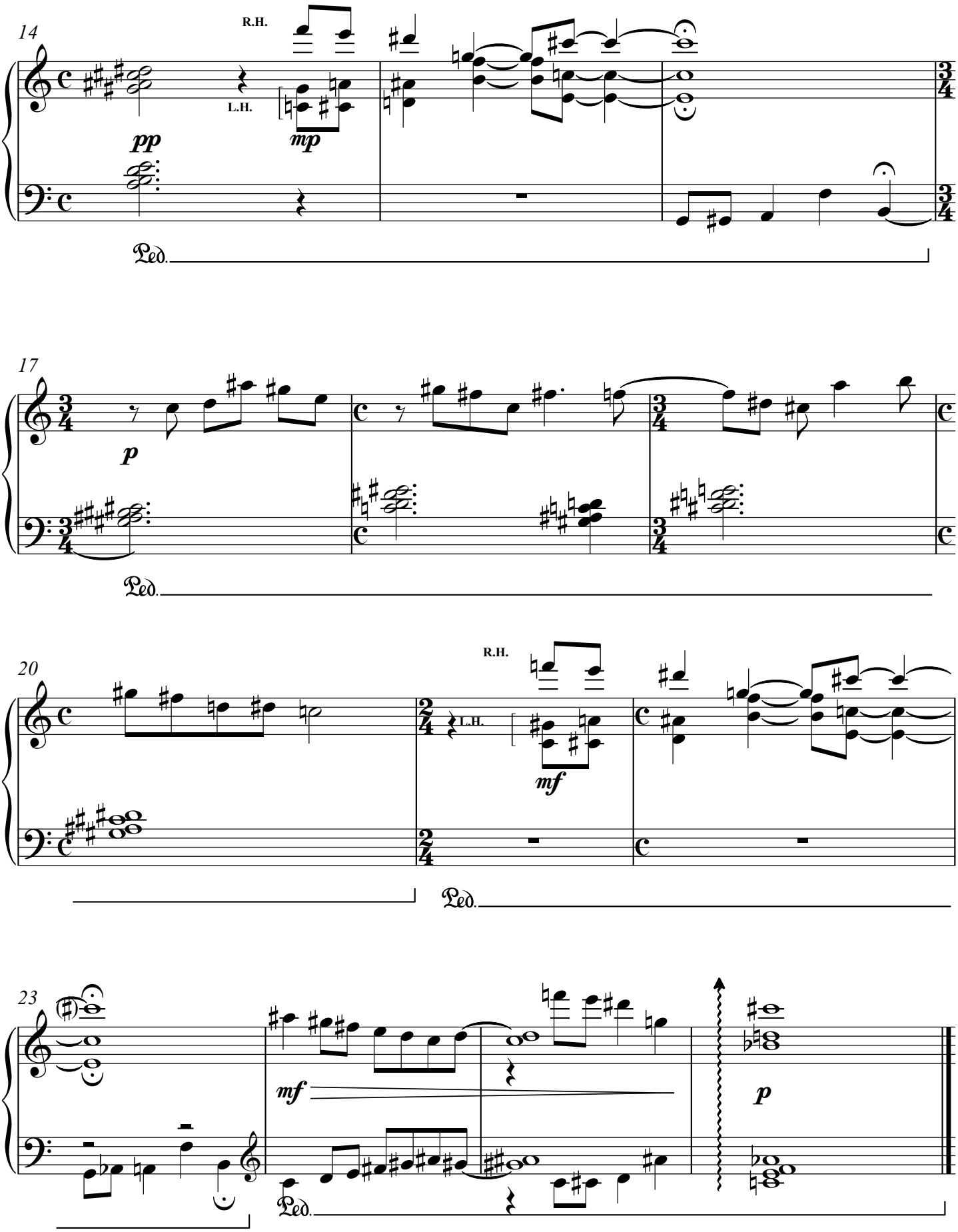

20
mf
mf
sfz
25
mf
mf
f
sfz
30
mf
mf
35
rit. - - - - - slower
ff
sfz

# 5. Daydreaming

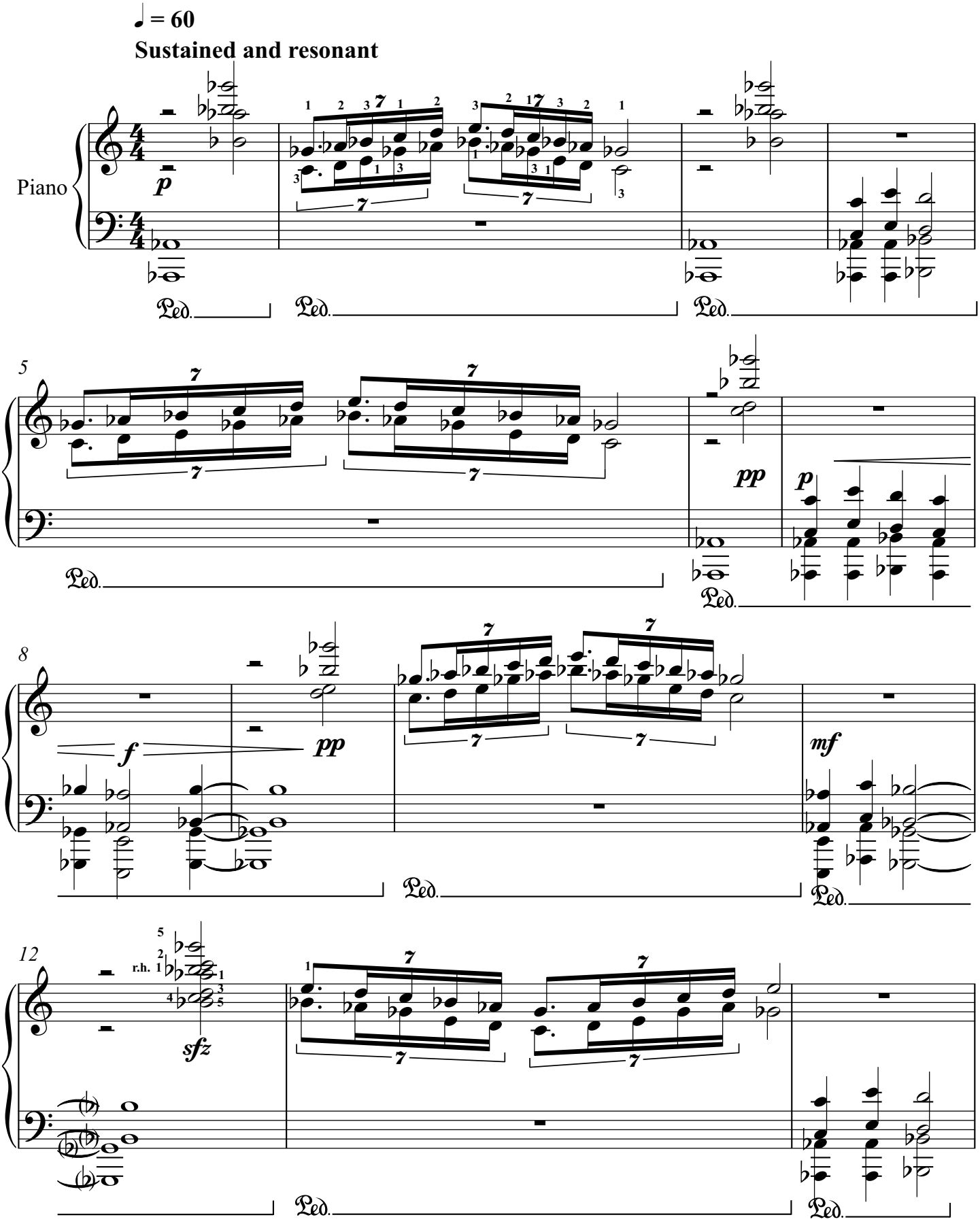
♩ = 60

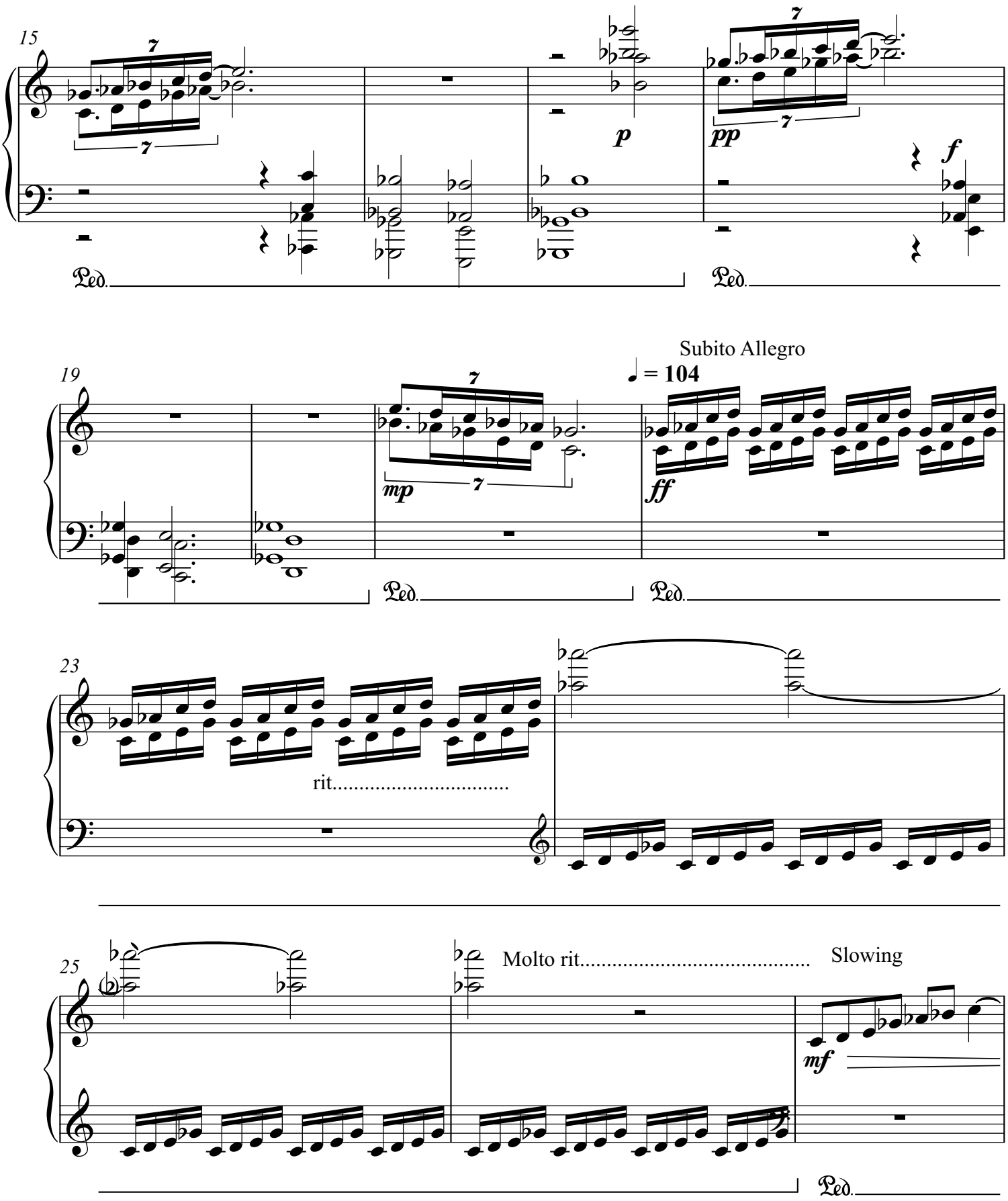
**a reverie; musing and fanciful, sustained**

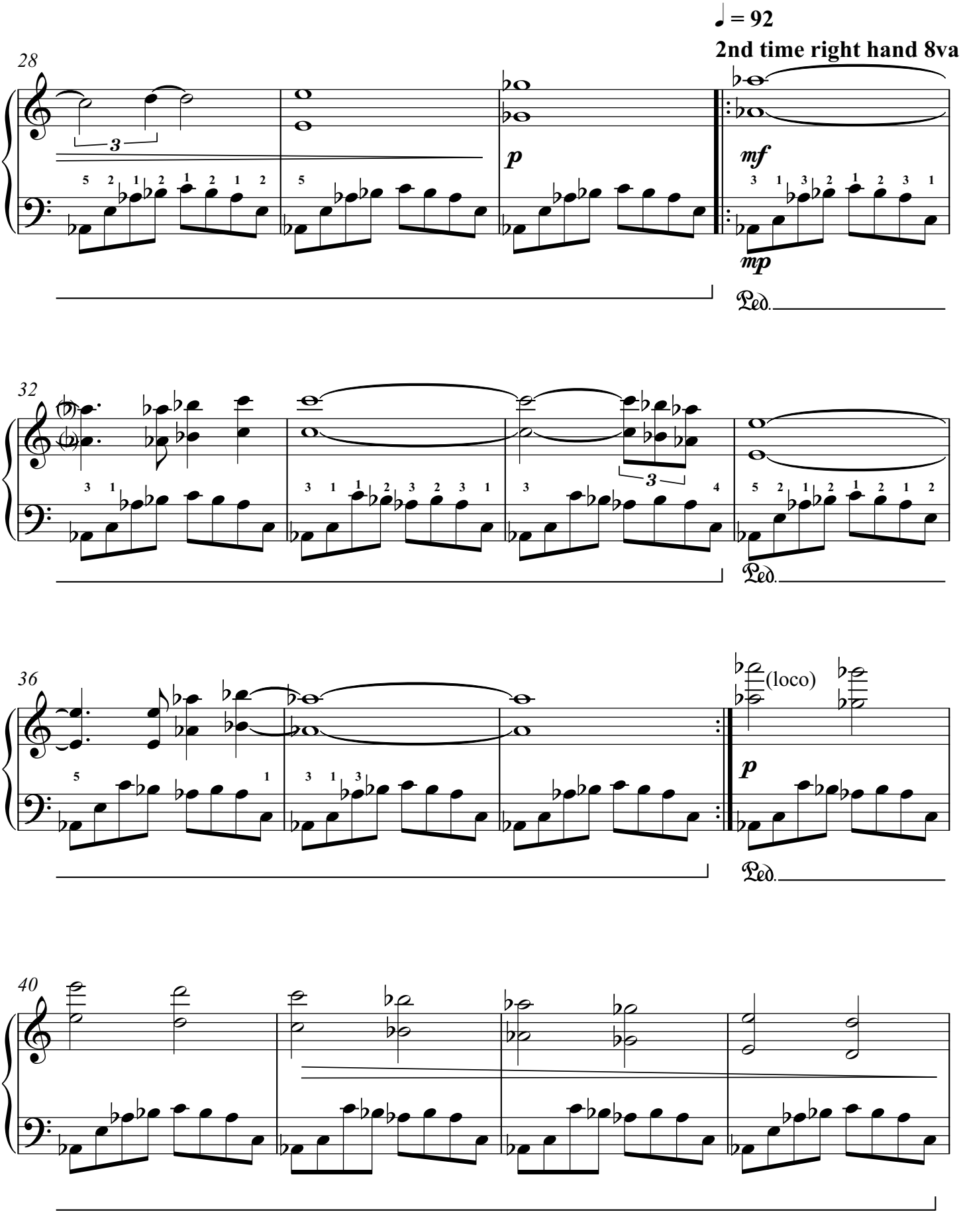


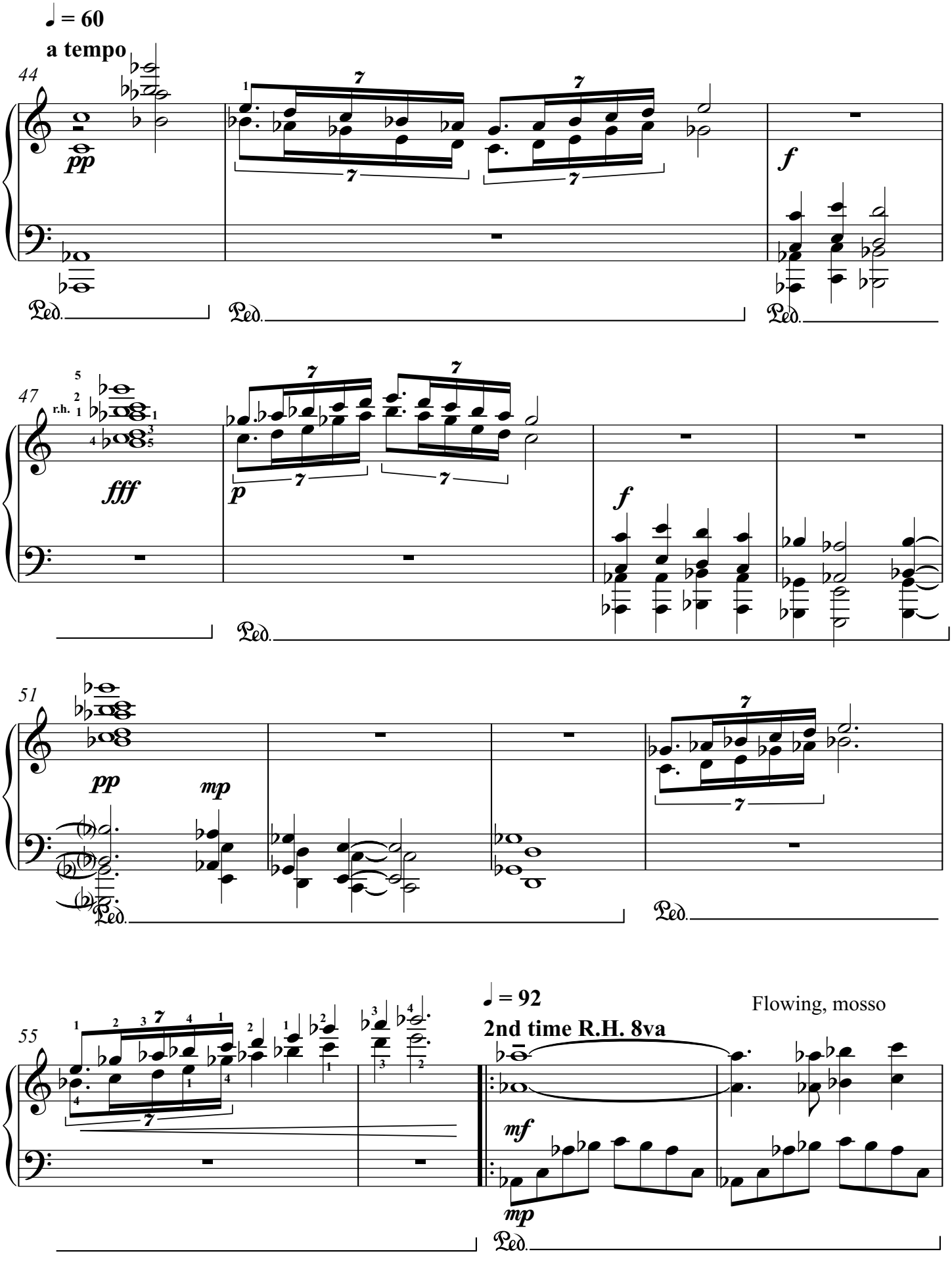

14
R.H.
L.H.
pp
mp
Ped.
17
p
Ped.
20
R.H.
L.H.
mf
Ped.
23
mf
p
Ped.

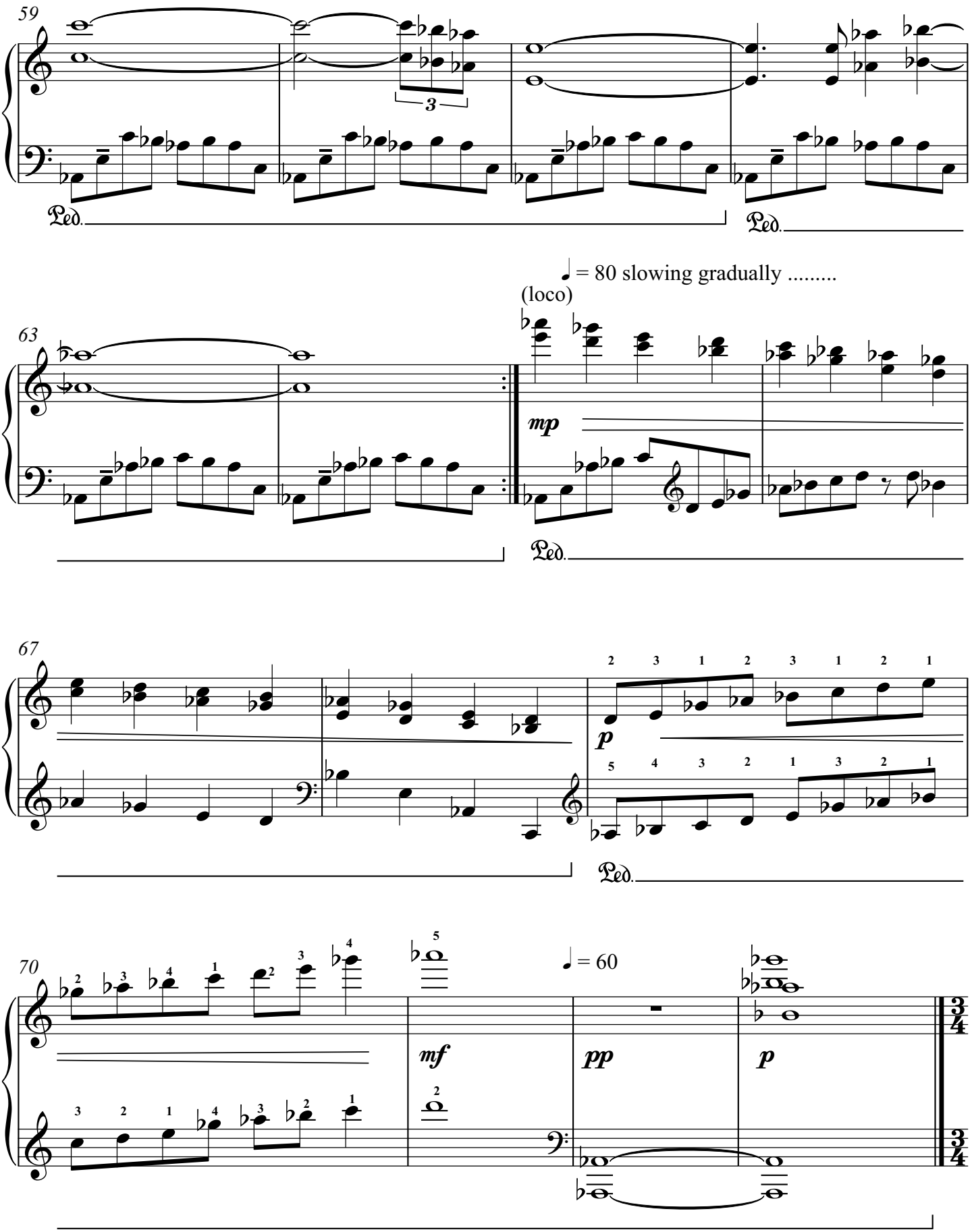
# 6. Watercolor Arabesque



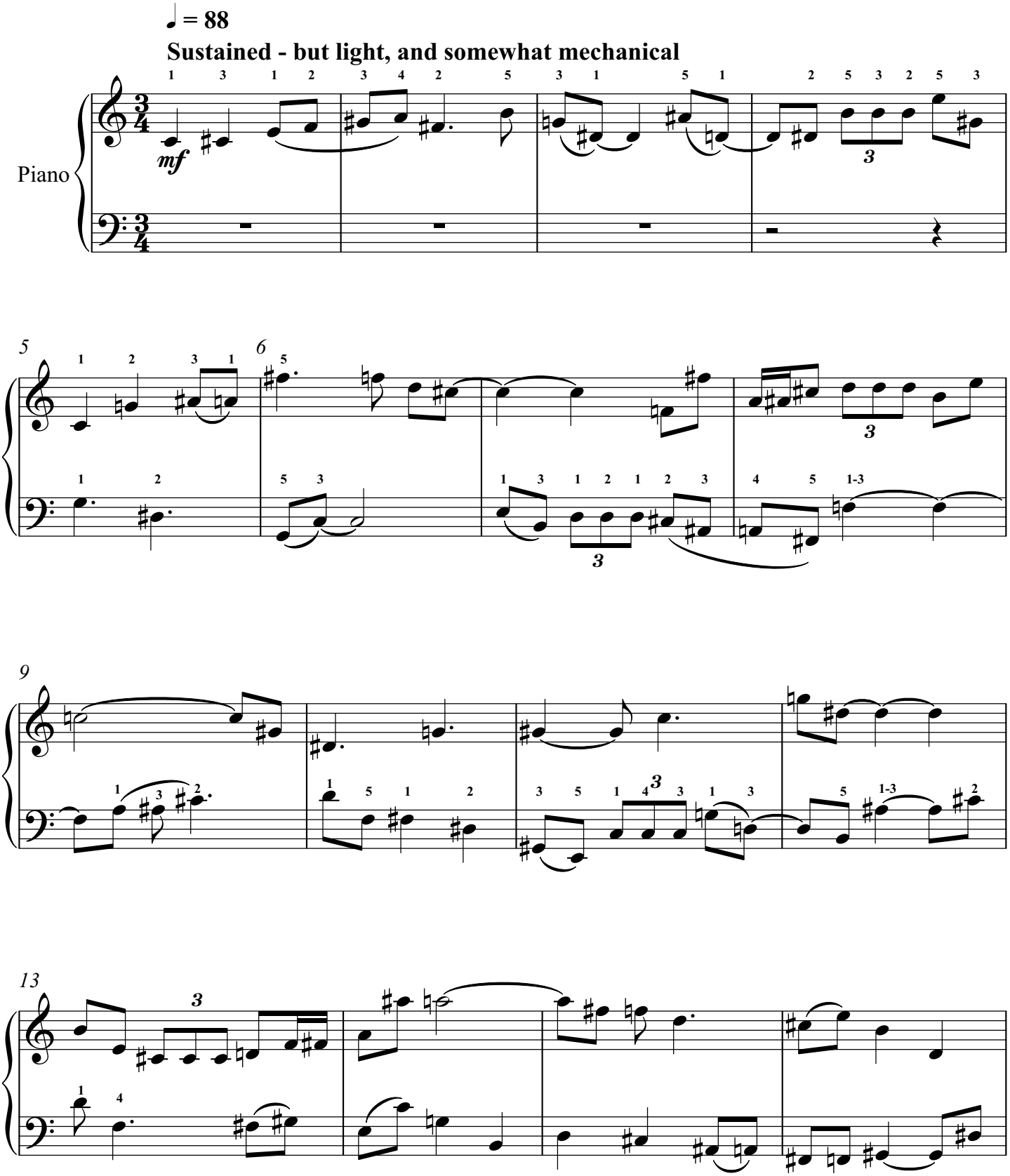

15
7
7
p
pp
7
f
Ped.
Ped.
Subito Allegro
19
♩ = 104
7
mp
7
ff
Ped.
Ped.
23
rit.....
25
Molto rit.....
Slowing
mf
Ped.

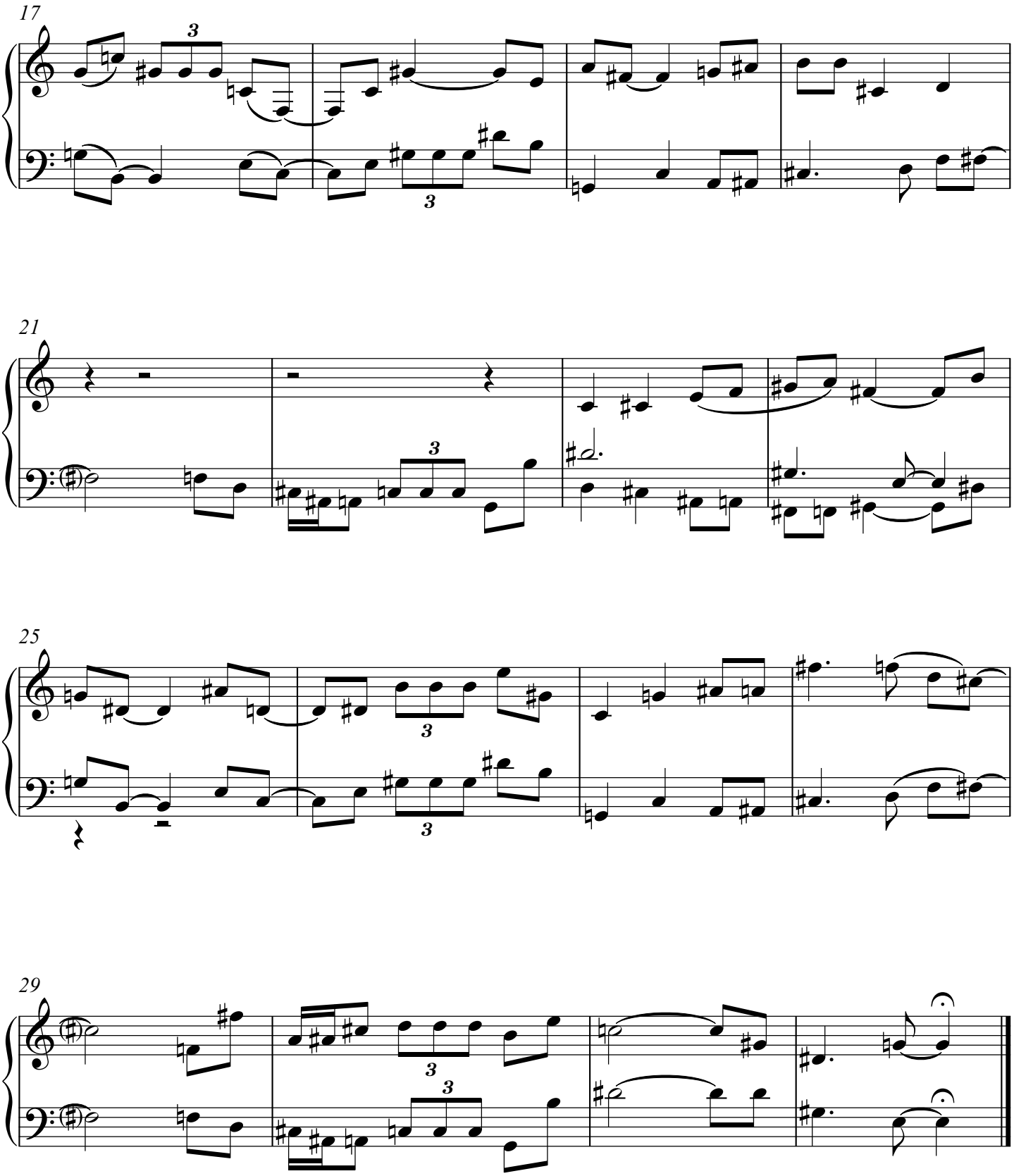

♩ = 92
2nd time right hand 8va
28
p
mf
mp
Ped.
32
3
Ped.
36
(loco)
p
Ped.
40


♩ = 60
a tempo
44
pp
f
Ped.
47
r.h.
fff
p
f
51
pp
mp
55
♩ = 92
2nd time R.H. 8va
Flowing, mosso
mf
mp


59
Ped.
Ped.
♩ = 80 slowing gradually .....
(loco)
63
mp
Ped.
67
p
Ped.
70
mf
pp
♩ = 60
p

# 7. **Serial-Box Toy**




17
21
25
29