IN THE BOTTOMS.

Characteristic Suite.

"More an expression than a painting."
Beethoven.

"In the Bottoms"is a Suite of five numbers giving pictures of moods or scenes peculiar to Negro life in the river bottoms of the Southern sections of North America. It is similar in its expression, and in a way a continuation of the sentiments already set forth in the "Magnolia"Suite, but suggests ideas as incidental to life in a more particular geographic territory. Neither Suite, like Dvorak's famous "New World Symphony"is dependent for its effect upon the introduction of folk-songs, either in their natural, or in a highly developed form. As it is quite possible to describe the traits, habits and customs of a people without using the vernacular, so is it similarly possible to musically portray racial peculiarities without the use of national tunes or folk-songs. "In the Bottoms", then, belongs to that class of music known as "Program music" or "music with a poetic basis". The source of the "program"or "poetic basis"has already been referred to, and the following notes are appended to show that its relation to the music is intimate.

No. 1. Prelude—is nightfall; the heavy chords represent the heavy shadows, and the open fifths, the peculiar hollow effect of the stillness; the syncopated melody which occurs, is the"tumming" of a banjo, which music is, however, only incidental to the gloom.

No. 2. His Song—The psychological phenomenon is historic, that the moods of suppressed people have oftenest found their most touching expression in song. An aged Negro will sometimes sit for hours in the quiet of an evening, humming an improvised air, whose wierd melody seems to strangely satisfy a nameless yearning of the heart.

No. 3. Honey—Literally,"Honey"is a colloquialism—the familiar term of endearment (South.) It may mean much, little, everything or nothing; the intimation here, is one of coquetry. It is after a poem, "A Negro Love Song" by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

No. 4. The rhythmic figure,— ♪♪♪ —which forms the theme of this Barcarolle is in reality, the rhythmic motif of the whole Suite; it is of most frequent occurence in the music of the ante-bellum folk-dances, and its marked individuality has caused it to be much misused for purposes of caricature. Here it paints the pleasure of a sunshiny morning on the Father of Waters.

No. 5. Dance—This is probably the most characteristic number of the Suite, as it portrays more of the social life of the people. "Juba"is the stamping on the ground with the foot and following it with two staccato pats of the hands in two-four time. At least one-third of the dancers keep time in this way, while the others dance. Sometimes all will combine together in order to urge on a solo dancer to more frantic (and at the same time more fantastic) endeavors. The orchestra usually consists of a single"fiddler," perched high on a box or table; who, forgetful of self in the rather hilarious excitement of the hour, does the impossible in the way of double stopping and bowing.

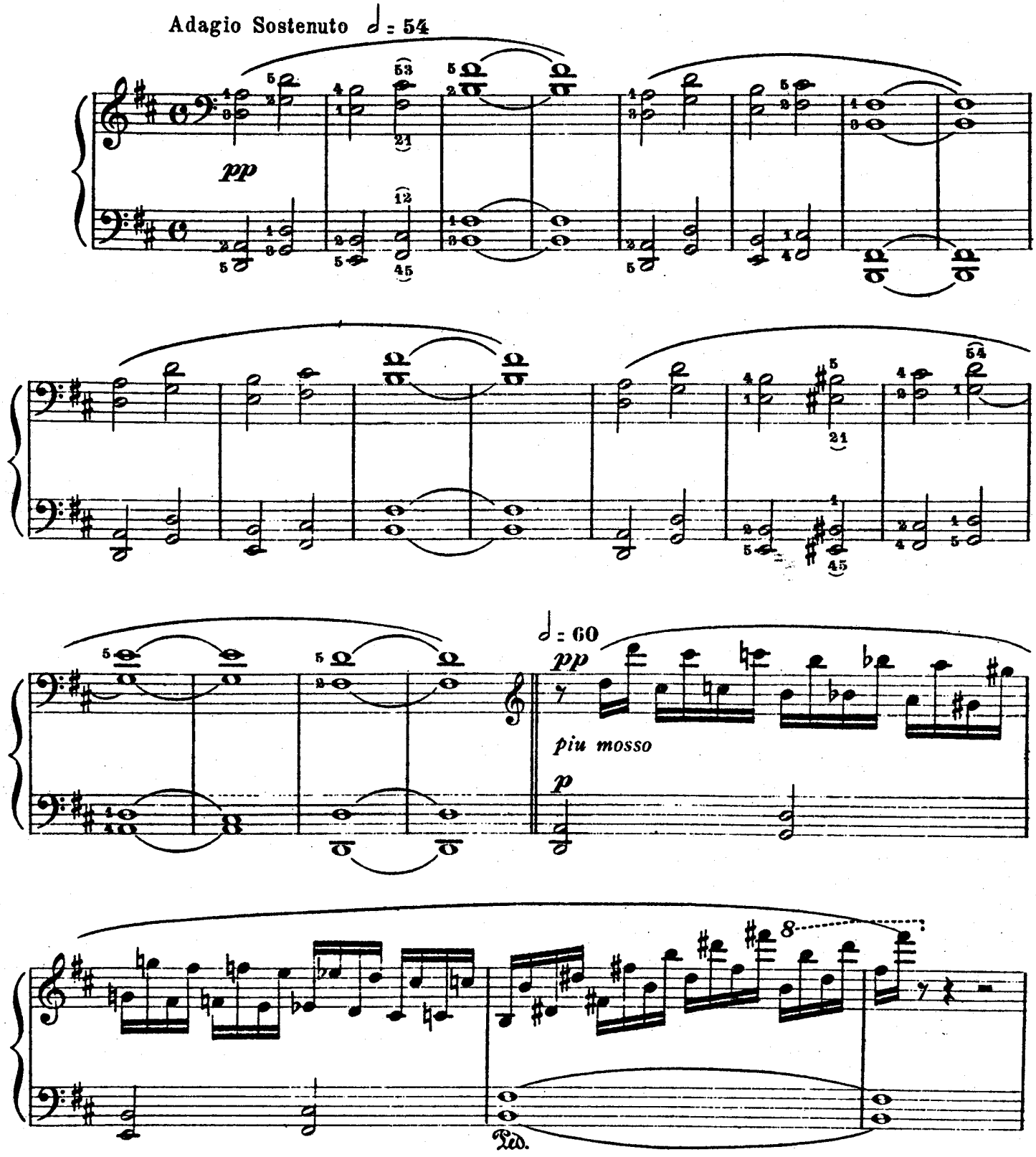
***A word of warning cannot be suppressed in regard to the tempo of the "Dance." Do not take it *too fast!* Much of the dancing in the bottoms is done with a grace and finish that a *Presto* tempo never could suggest.

*** Metronome marks, which should be carefully observed, are given for all of the movements. The Prelude should open and close with an air of mystery, and most of its serenade part be kept subdued as if sounding from afar. Let the major-key portion of His Song have a decidedly hopeful tone as it has prophetic significance. Flirt all you please with Honey; let your love of the beautiful in Nature permeate the Barcarolle, but don't become too boisterous in the dance; remember always that program music is at its best when most in accord with those sentiments uttered by the great Beethoven in regard to his own "Pastoral Symphony"when he said,—"more an expression than a painting."

R. Nathaniel Dett.

PRELUDE

NIGHT



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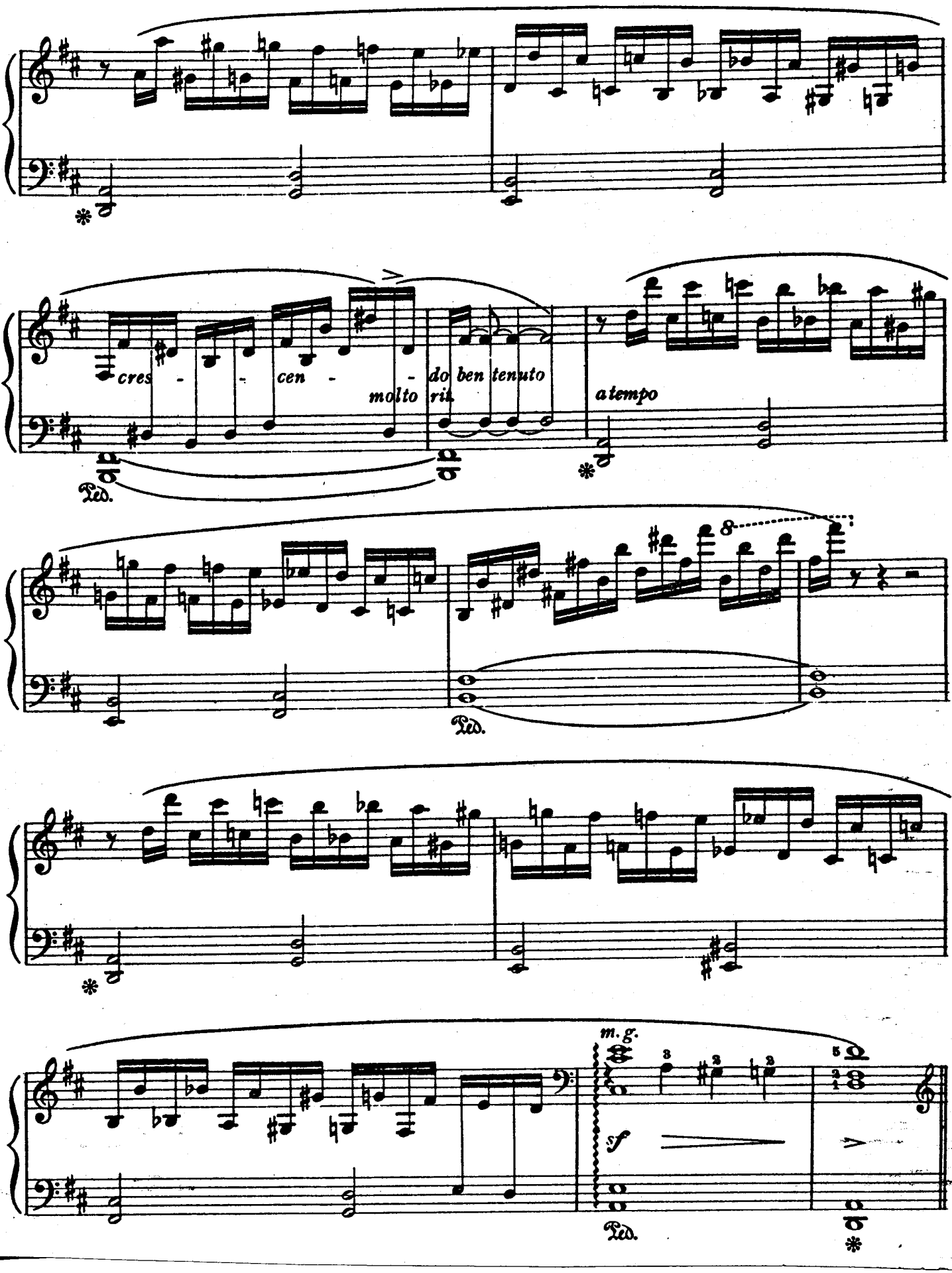
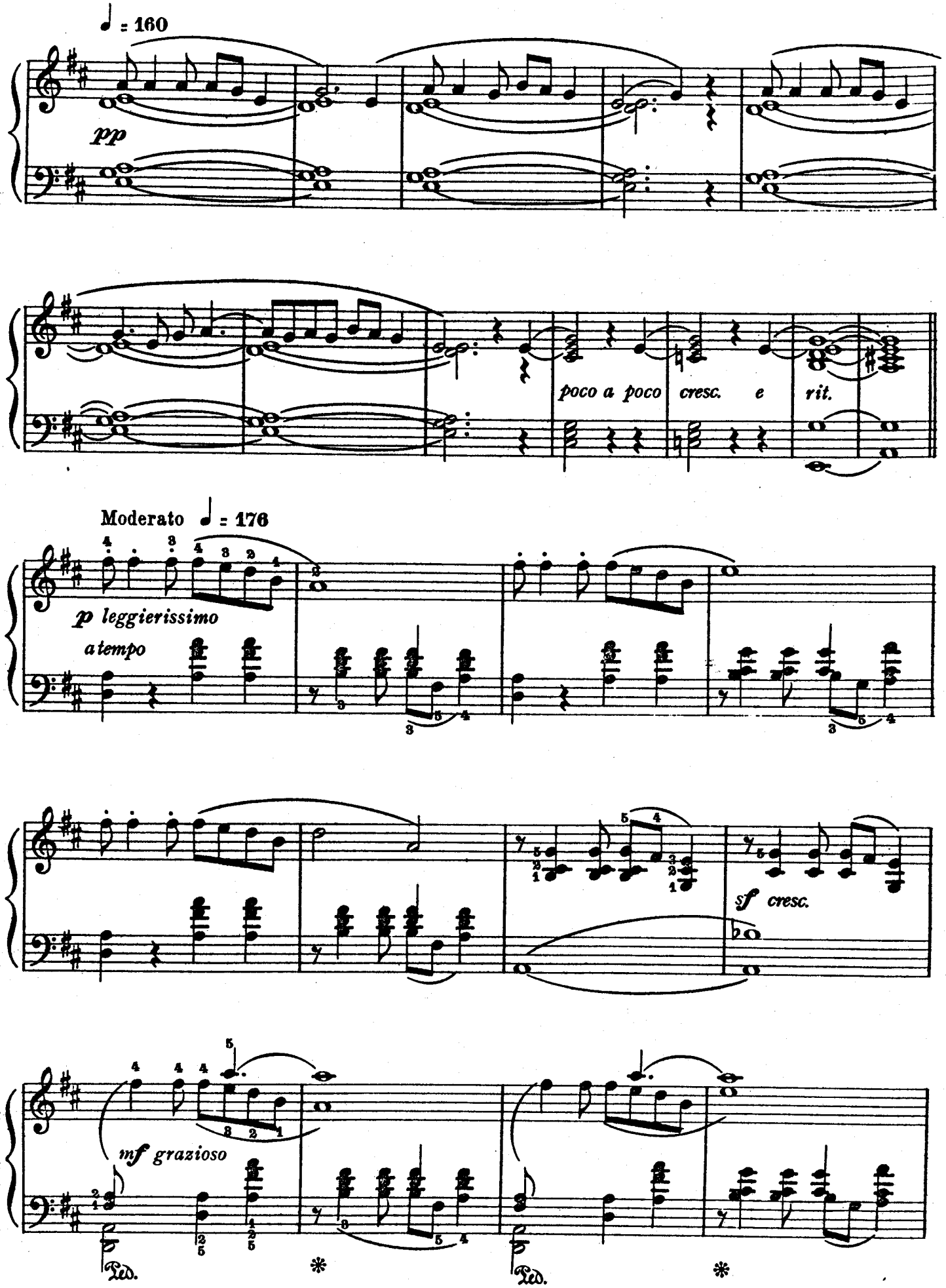
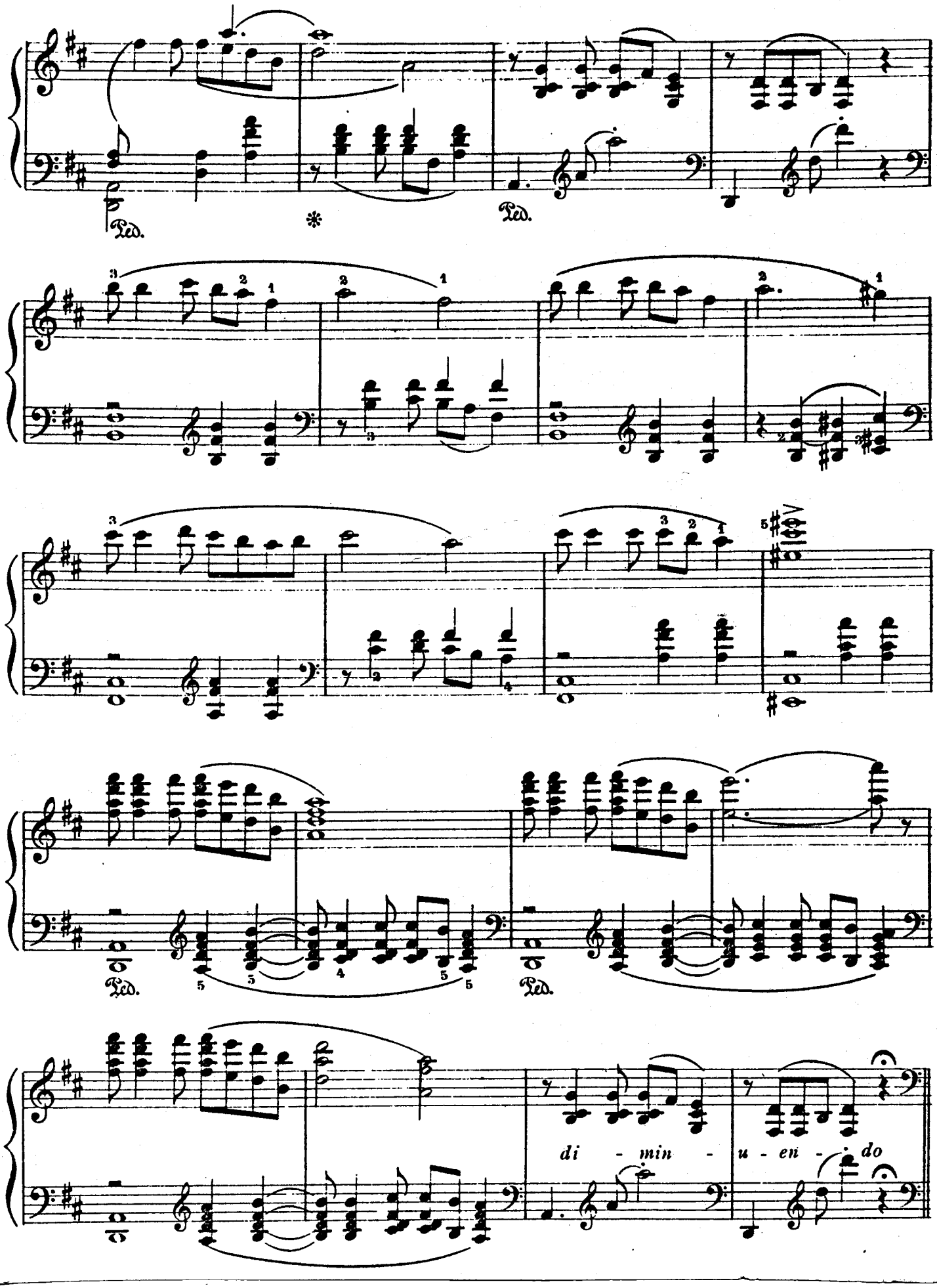
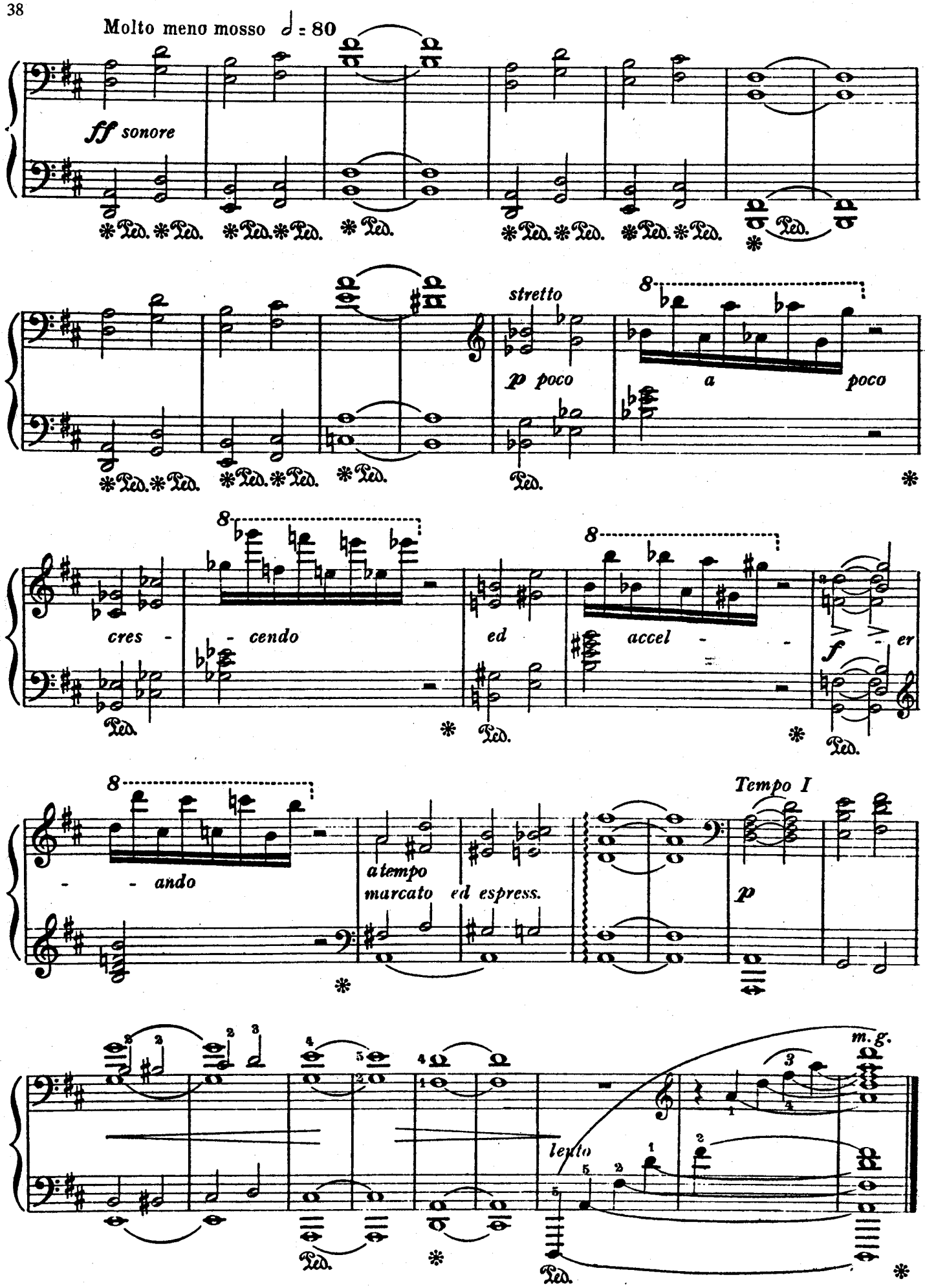

cres - - - cen - - do ben tenuto
molto rit.
atempo
Ped.
Ped.
m.g.
sf
Ped.


♩ = 160
pp
poco a poco cresc. e rit.
Moderato ♩ = 176
p leggierissimo
a tempo
sf cresc.
mf grazioso
Ped.
*
Ped.
*

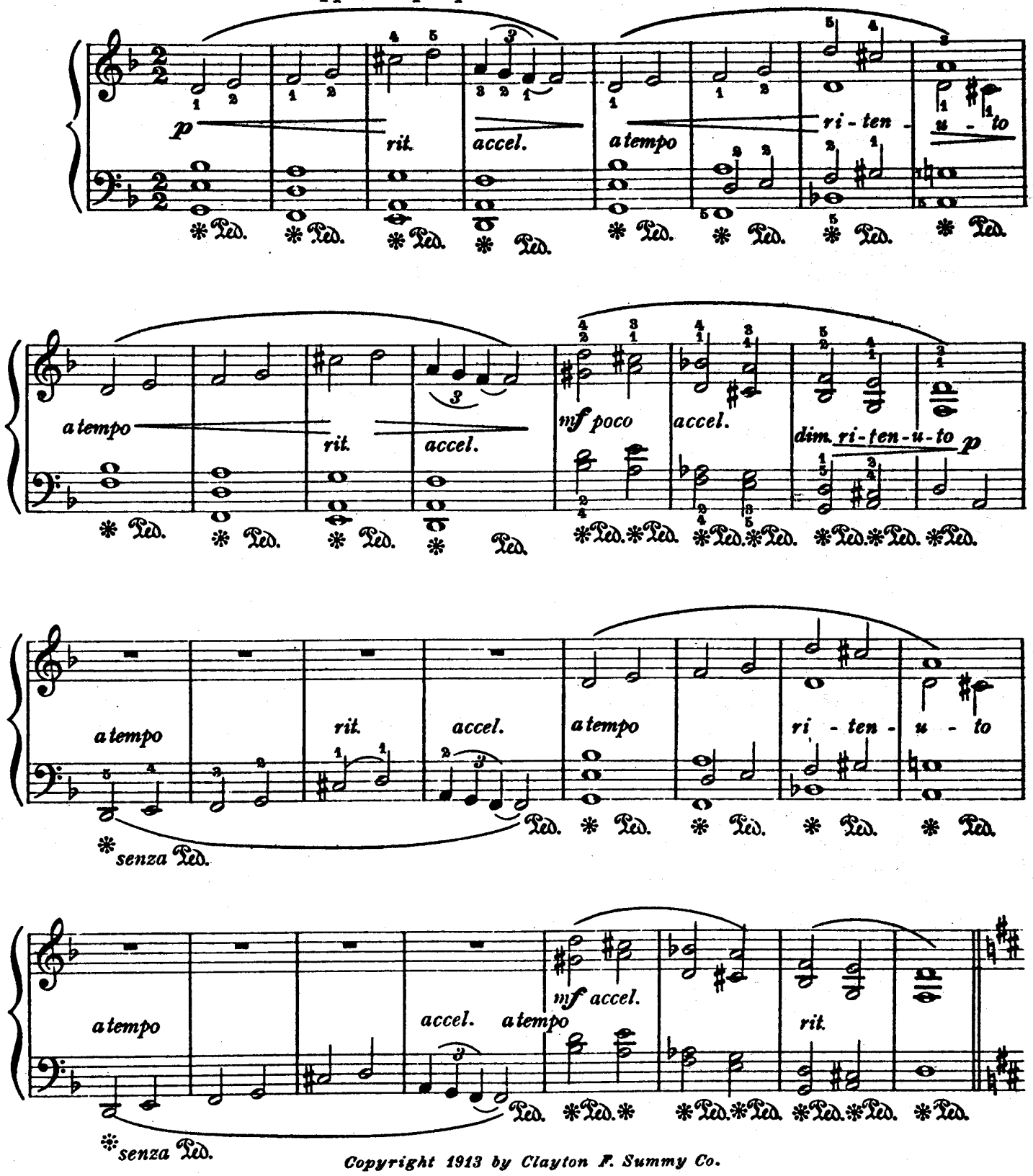

Ped.
*
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
di - min - u - en - do


Molto meno mosso ♩ = 80
ff sonore
Ped.
stretto
p poco
a
poco
cres - cendo
ed
accel - er
f
- ando
a tempo
marcato ed espress.
Tempo I
p
m. g.
lento

HIS SONG

♩ = 120

Andante non troppo, ma più patetico



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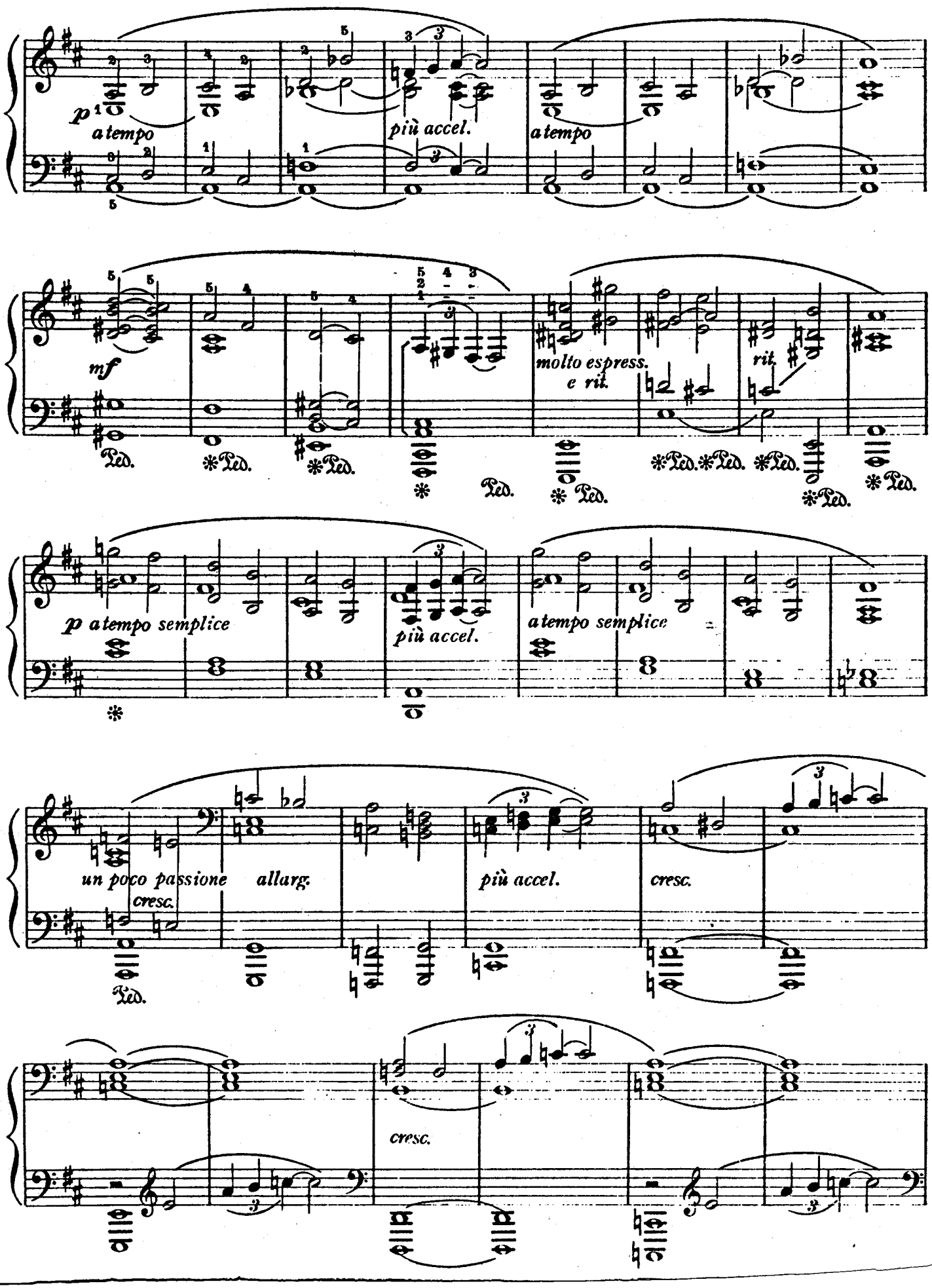
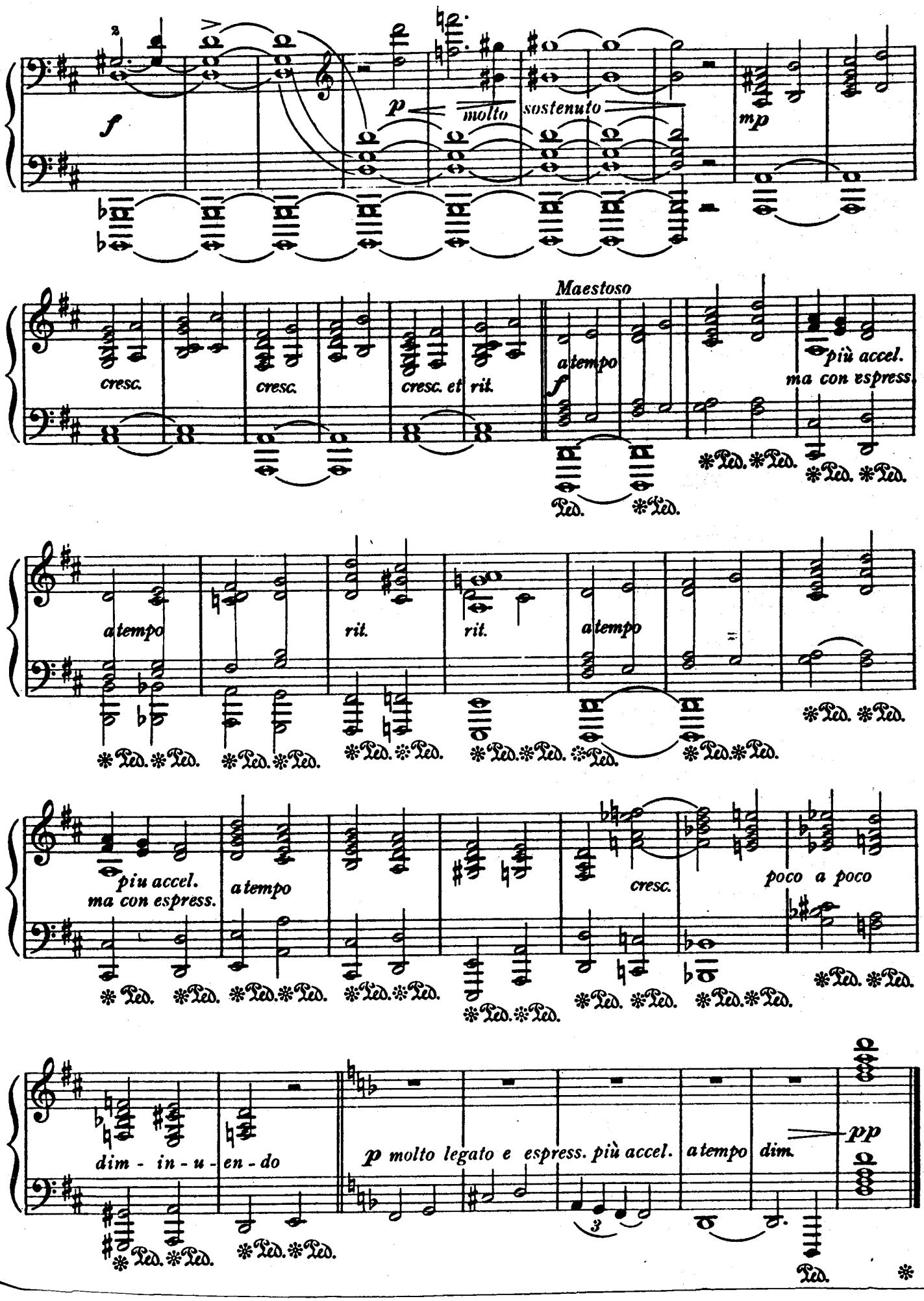
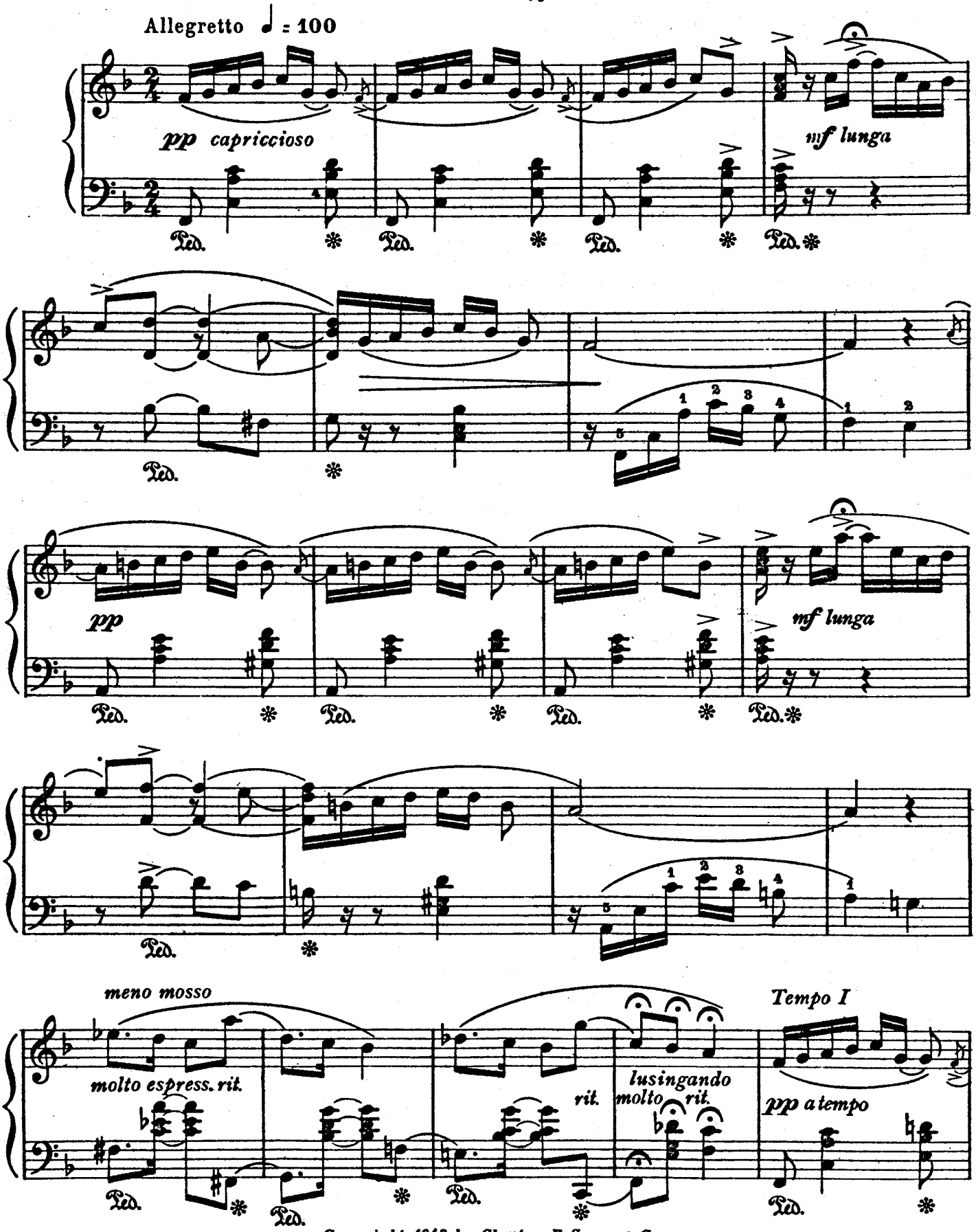

p
a tempo
più accel.
a tempo
mf
molto espress.
e rit.
rit.
Ped.
p a tempo semplice
più accel.
a tempo semplice
un poco passione
cresc.
allarg.
più accel.
cresc.
cresc.


f
p
molto sostenuto
mp
cresc.
cresc.
cresc. et rit.
Maestoso
a tempo
f
più accel.
ma con espress.
a tempo
rit.
rit.
a tempo
piu accel.
ma con espress.
a tempo
cresc.
poco a poco
dim - in - u - en - do
p molto legato e espress. più accel.
a tempo
dim.
pp

HONEY

HUMORESQUE



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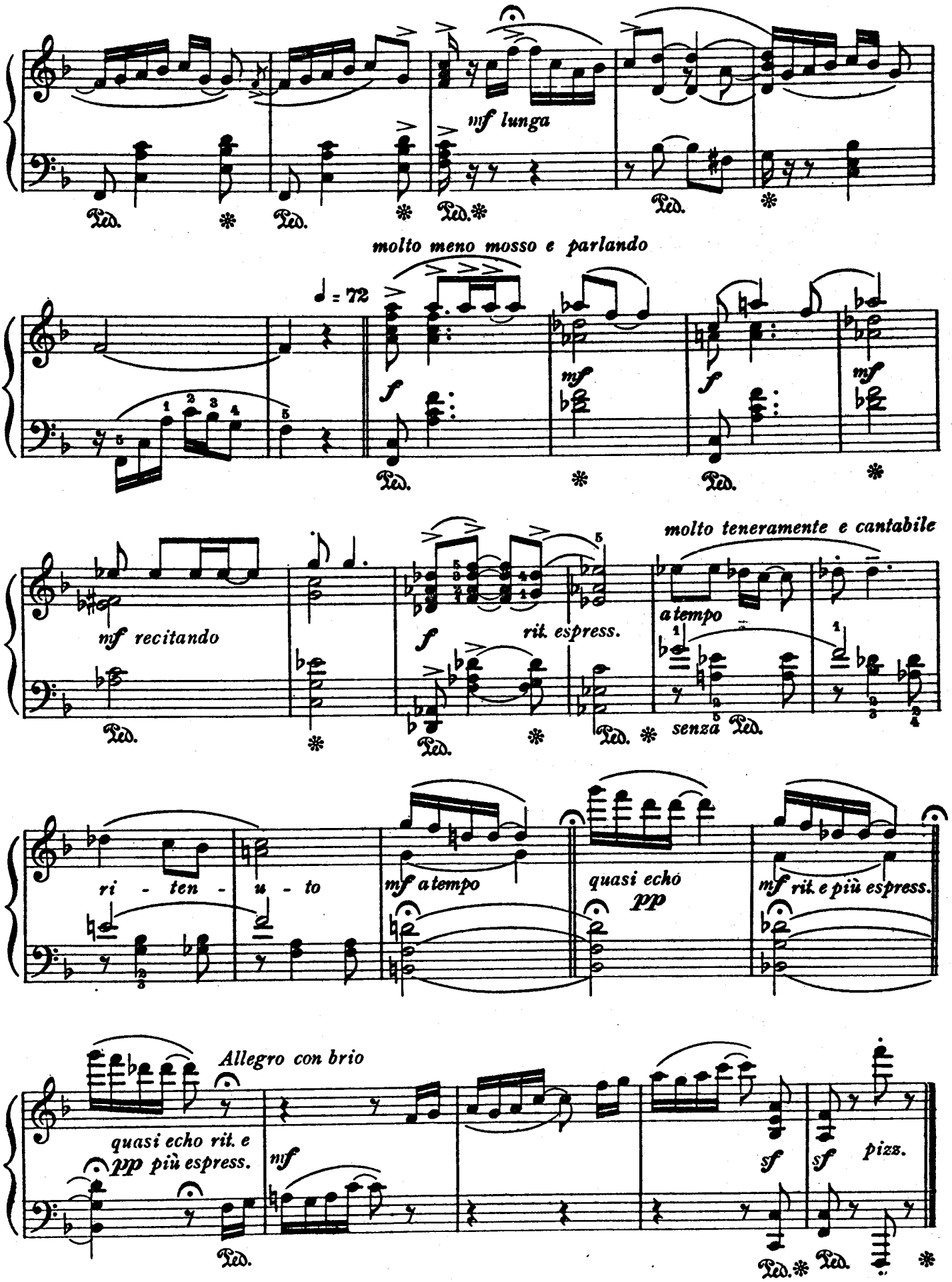
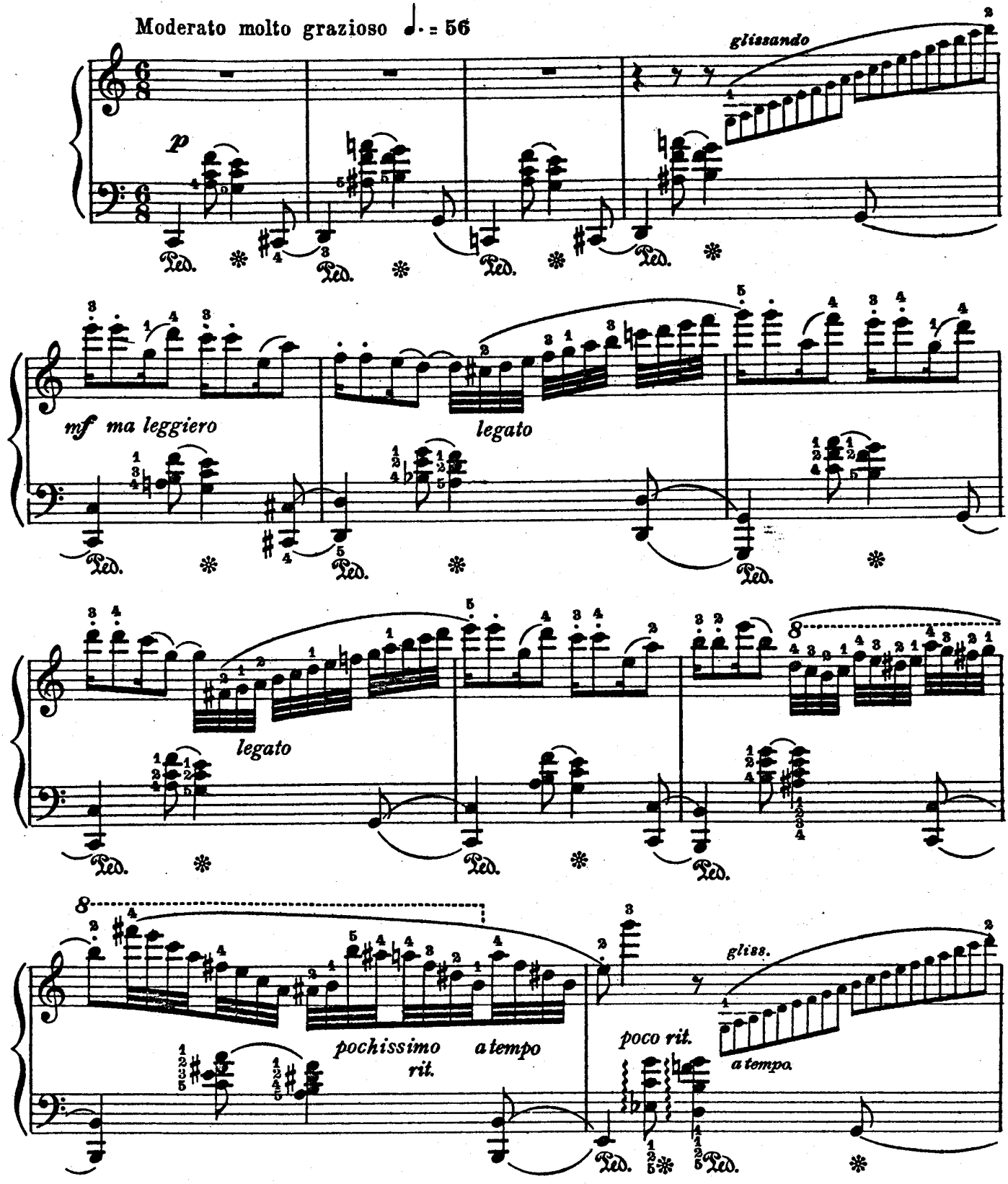

mf lunga
molto meno mosso e parlando
♩ = 72
mf recitando
rit. espress.
molto teneramente e cantabile
a tempo
senza Ped.
ri - ten - u - to
mf a tempo
quasi echo
pp
mf rit. e più espress.
Allegro con brio
quasi echo rit. e
pp più espress.
mf
sf
pizz.

BARCAROLLE

MORNING



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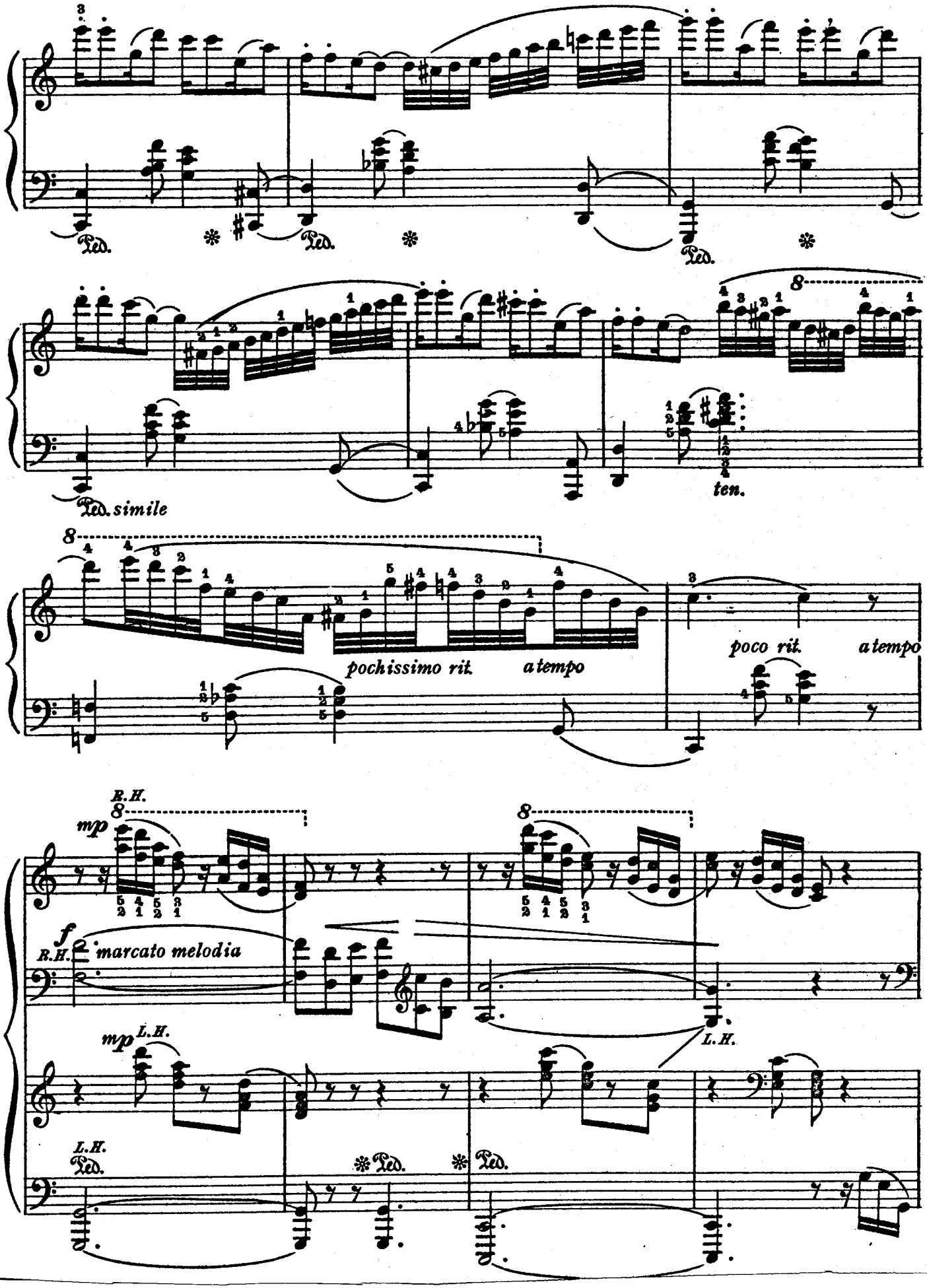
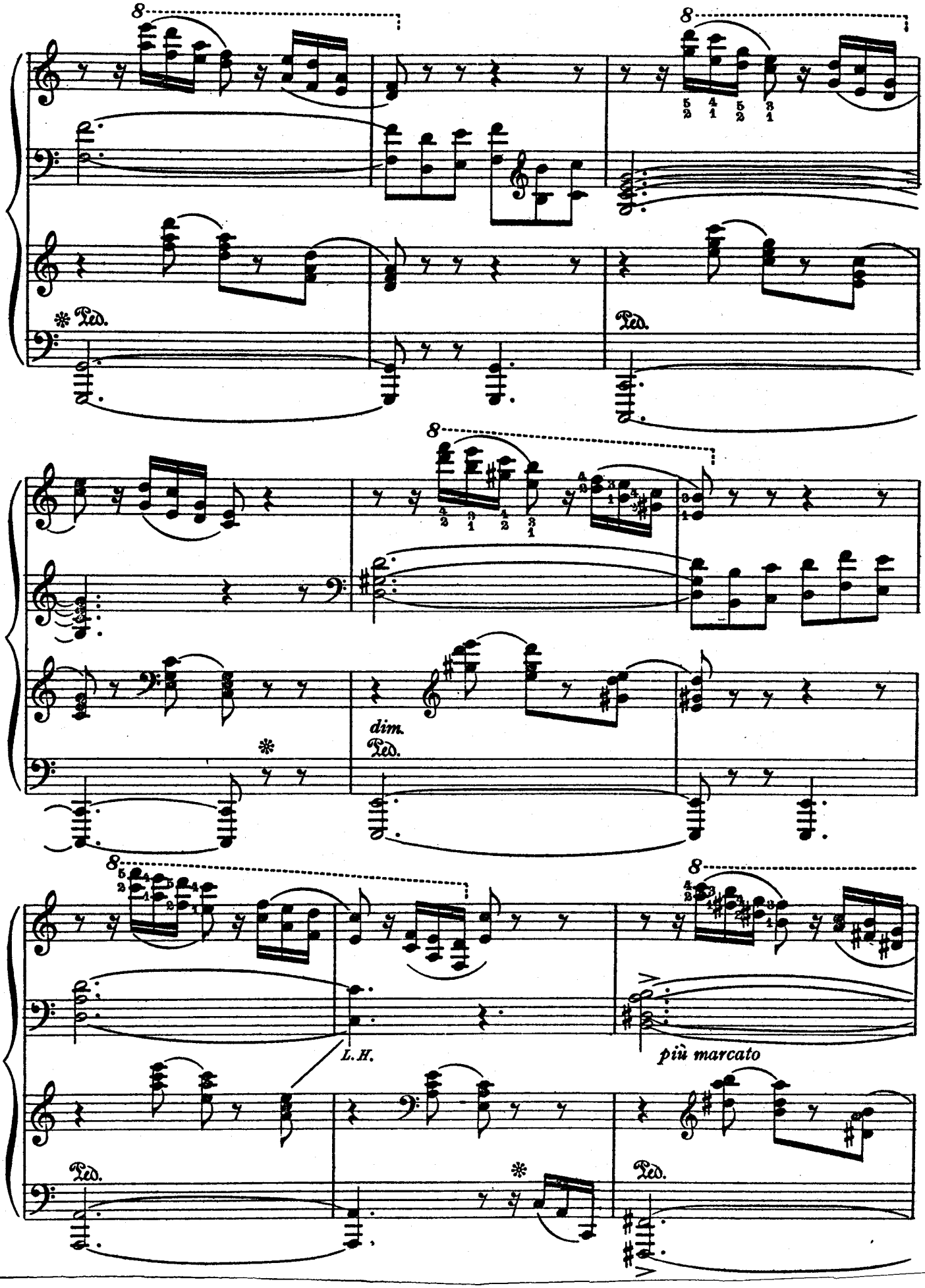
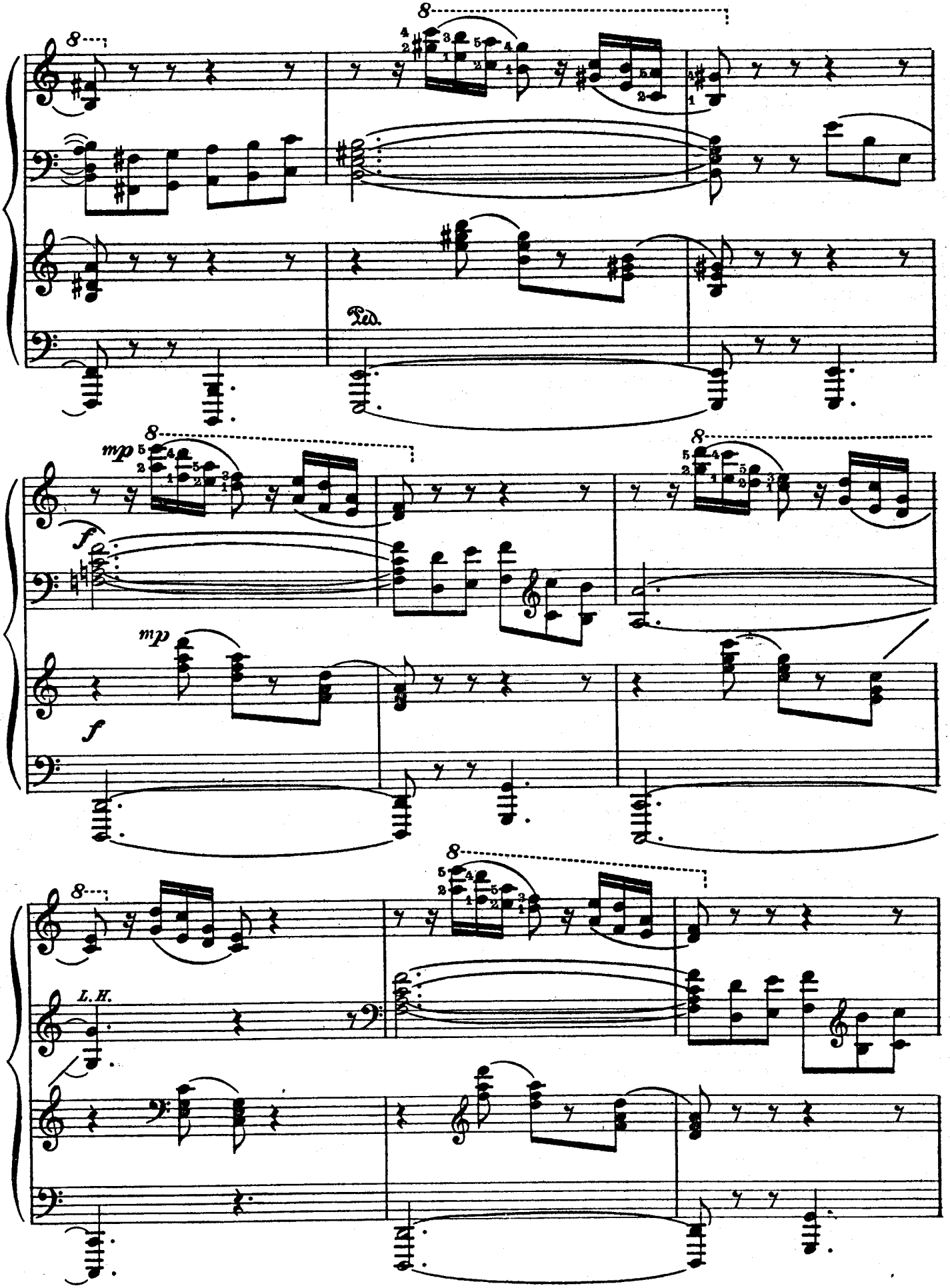
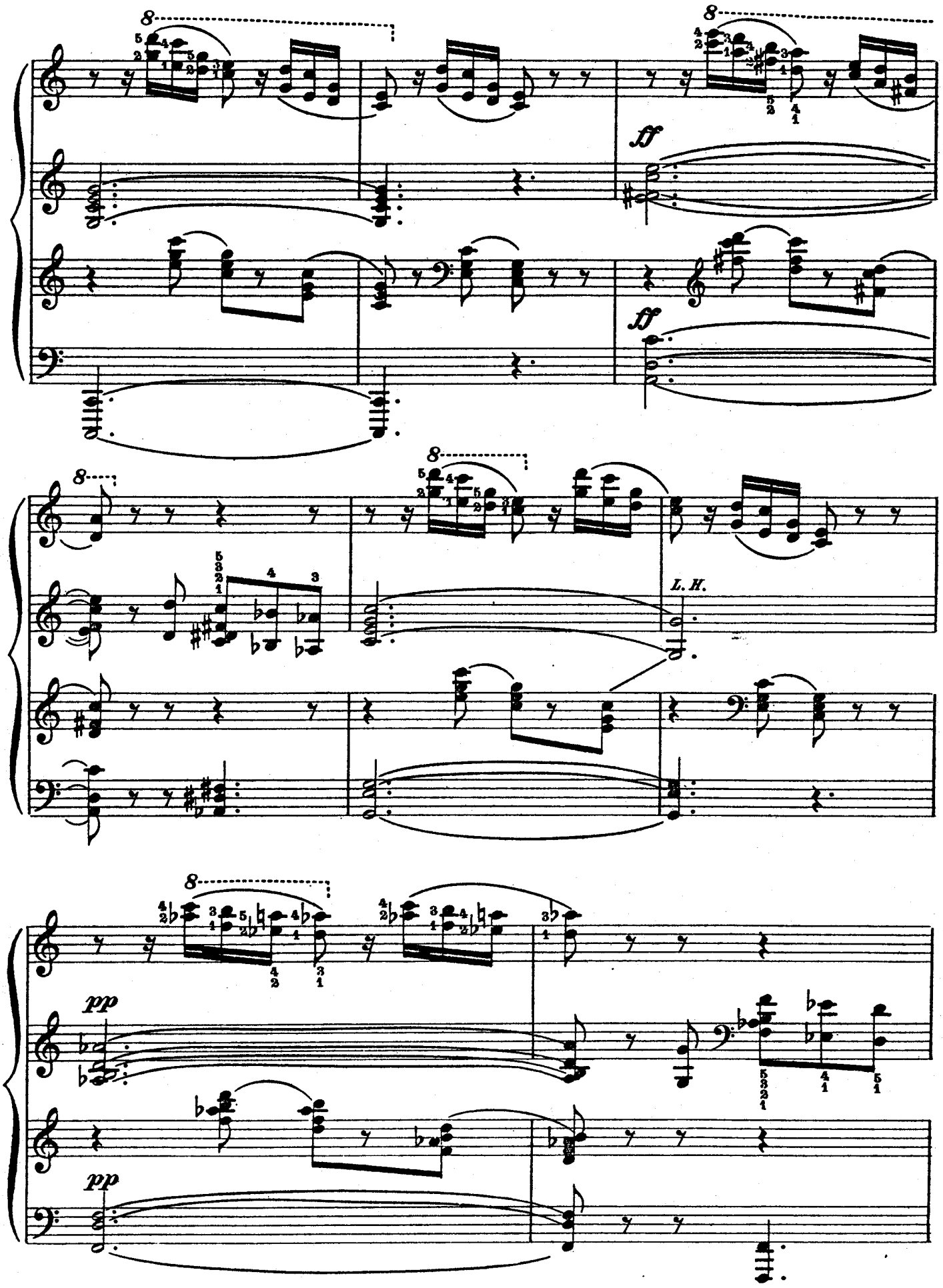
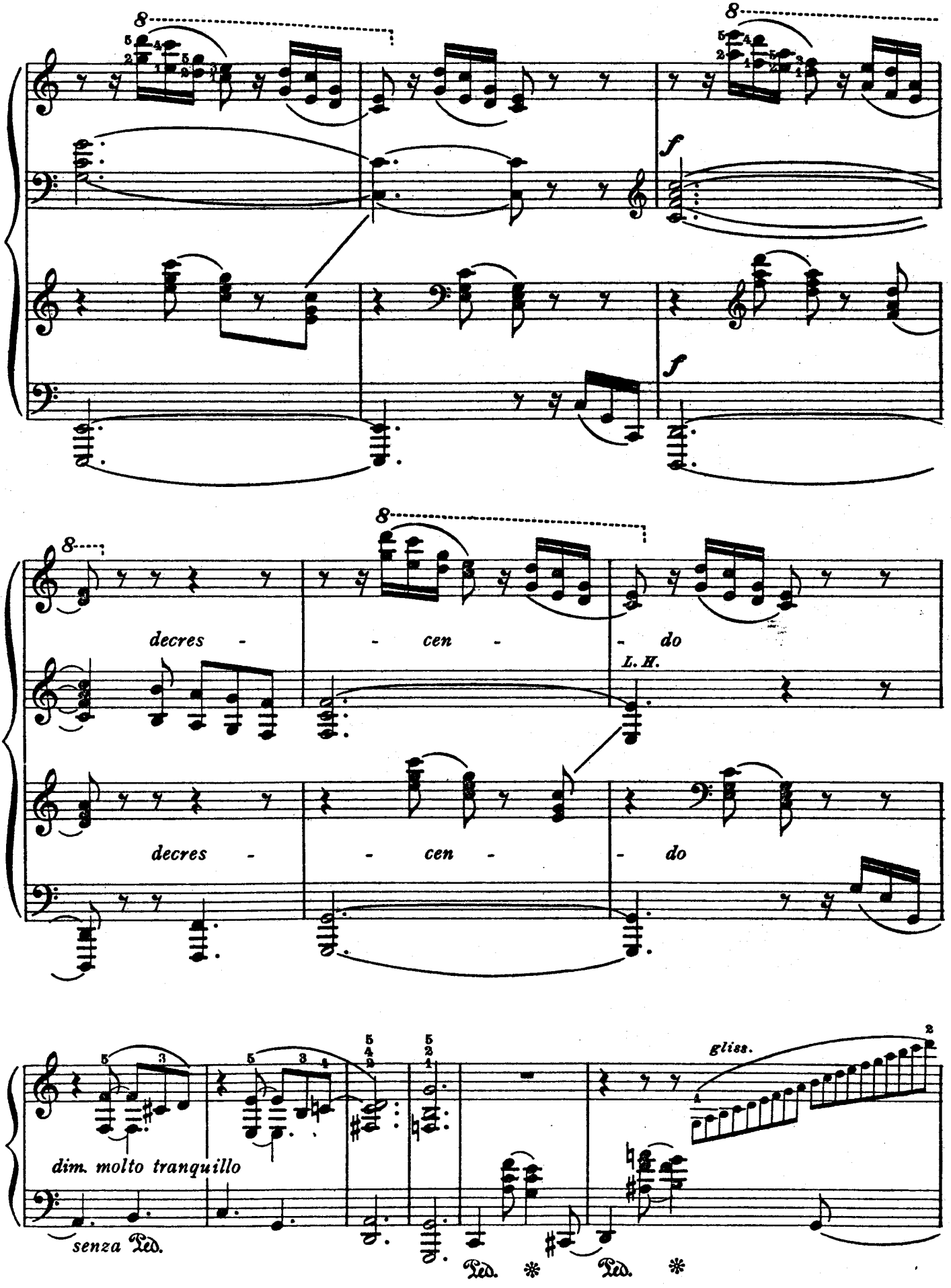
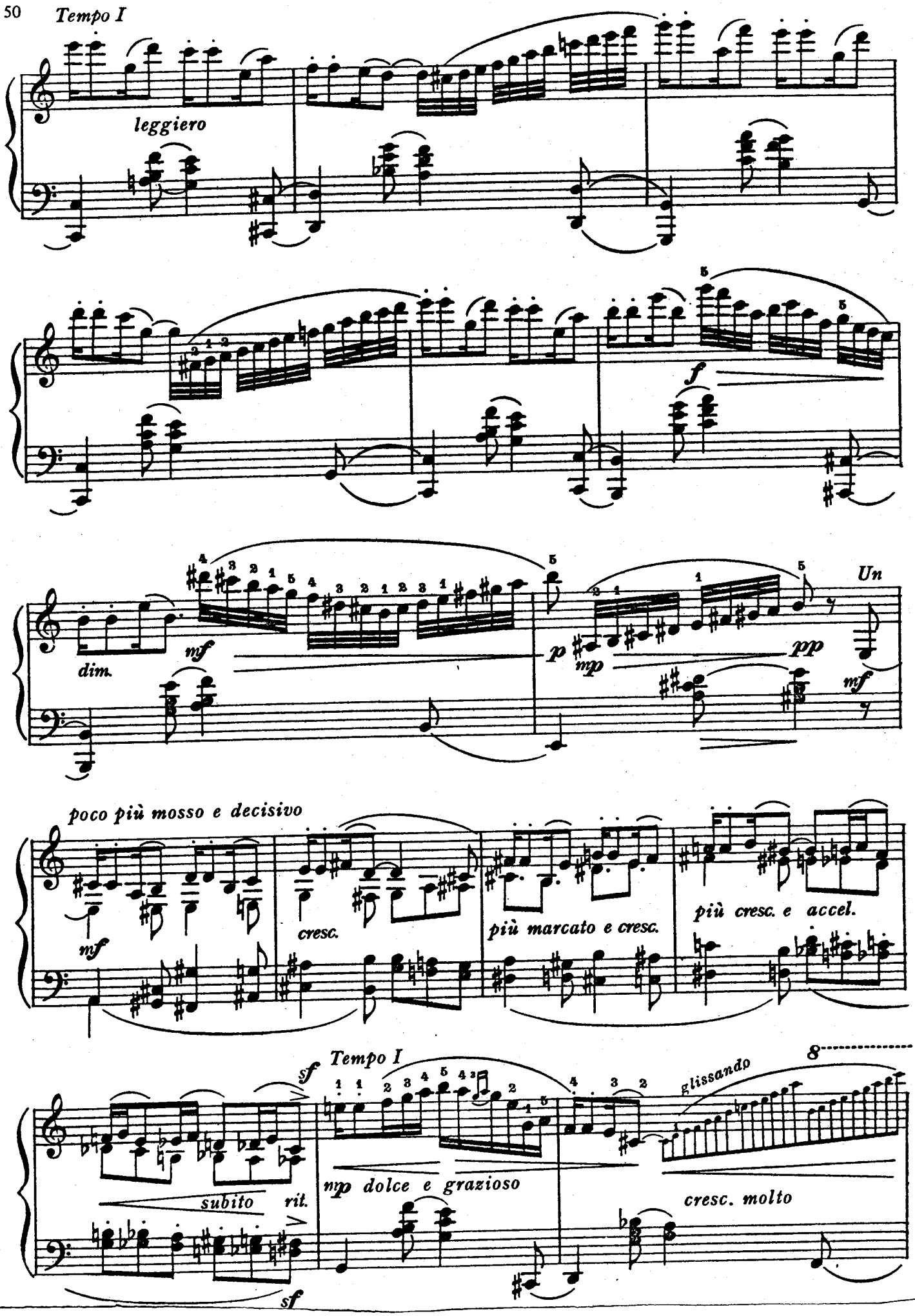

Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped. simile
ten.
pochissimo rit.
a tempo
poco rit.
a tempo
R.H.
mp
f
R.H.
marcato melodia
mp
L.H.
L.H.
L.H.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

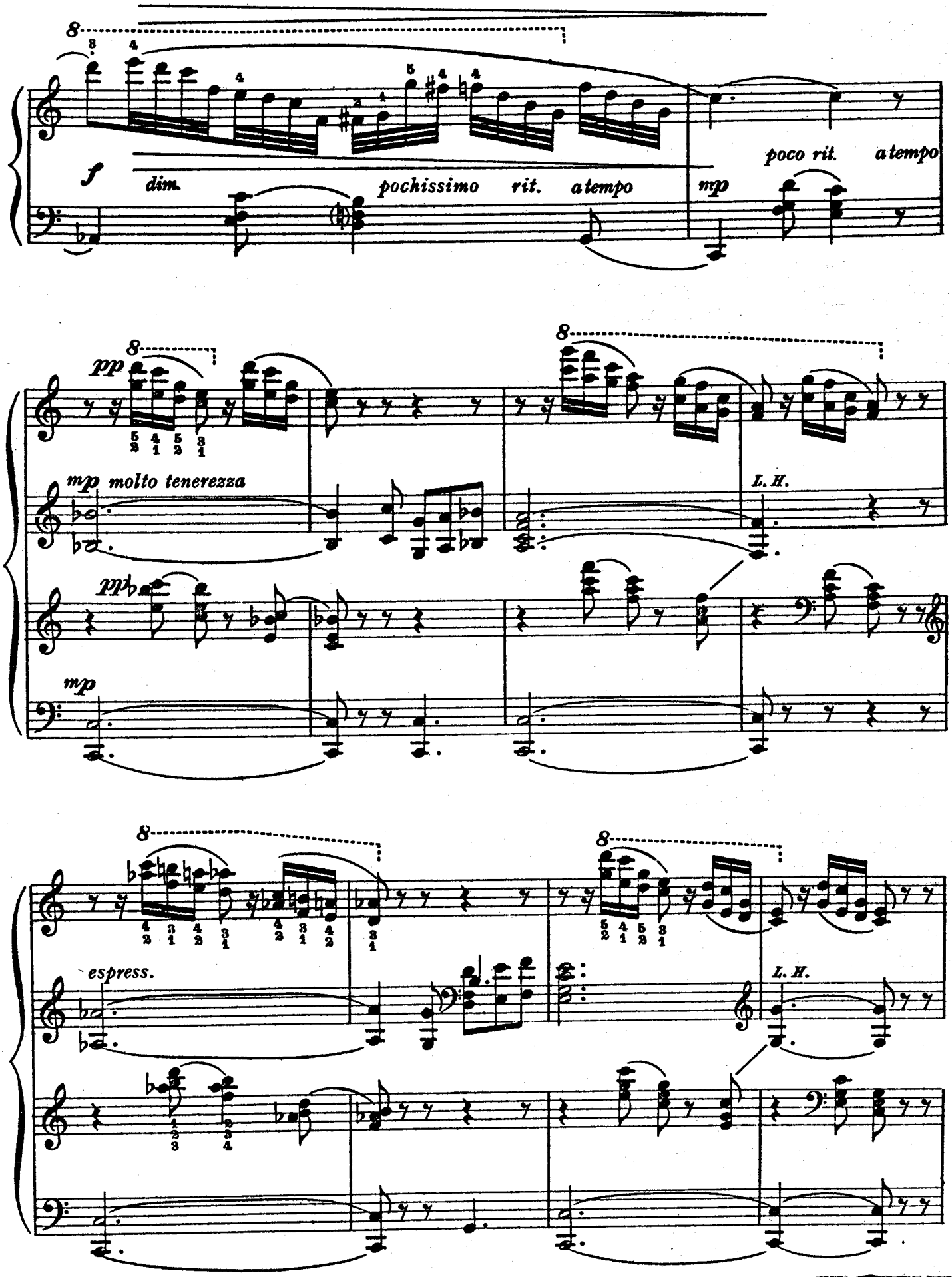

8
Ped.
8
Ped.
8
dim.
Ped.
8
8
L.H.
più marcato
Ped.
Ped.

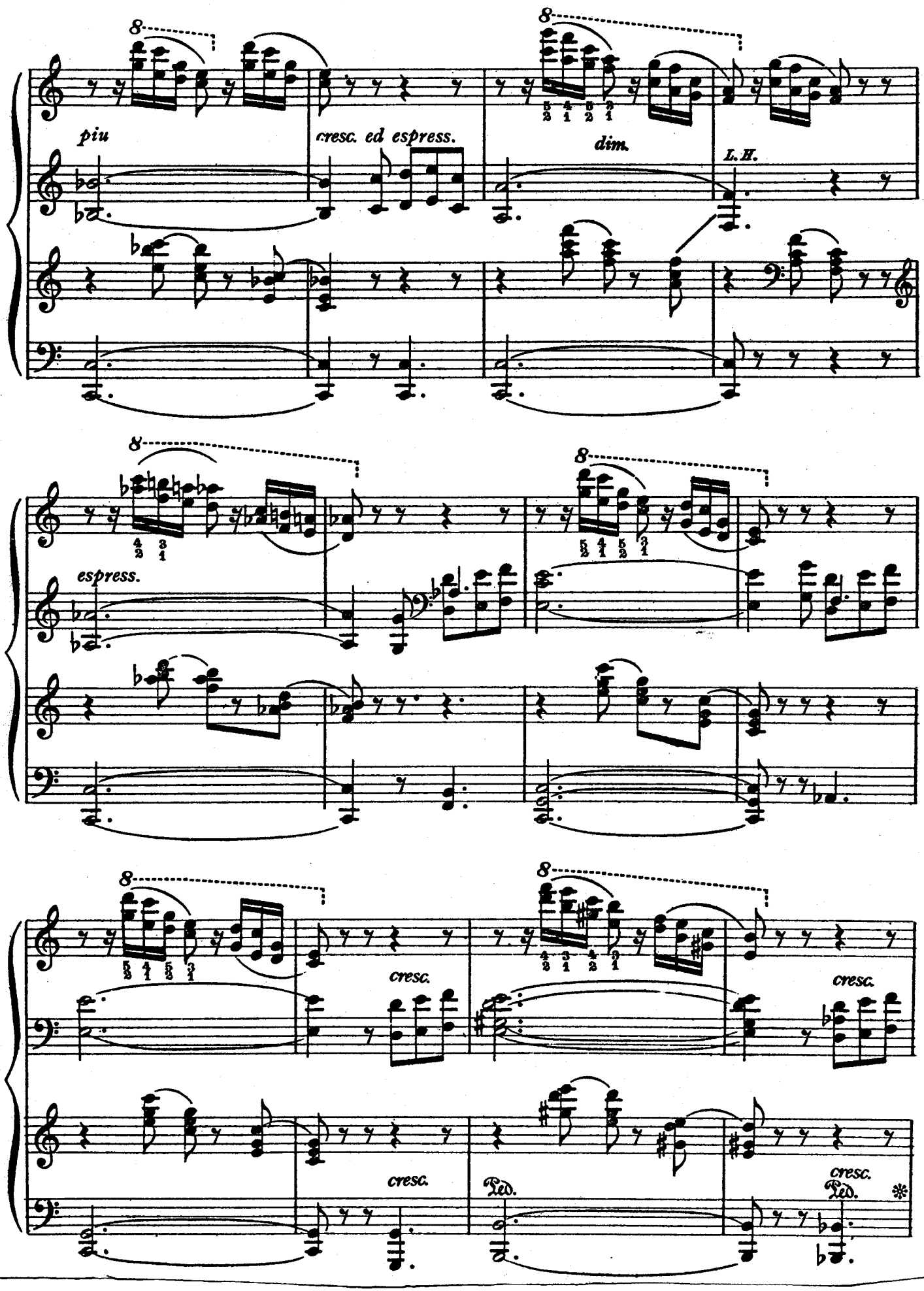

8
Ped.
mp
f
L.H.

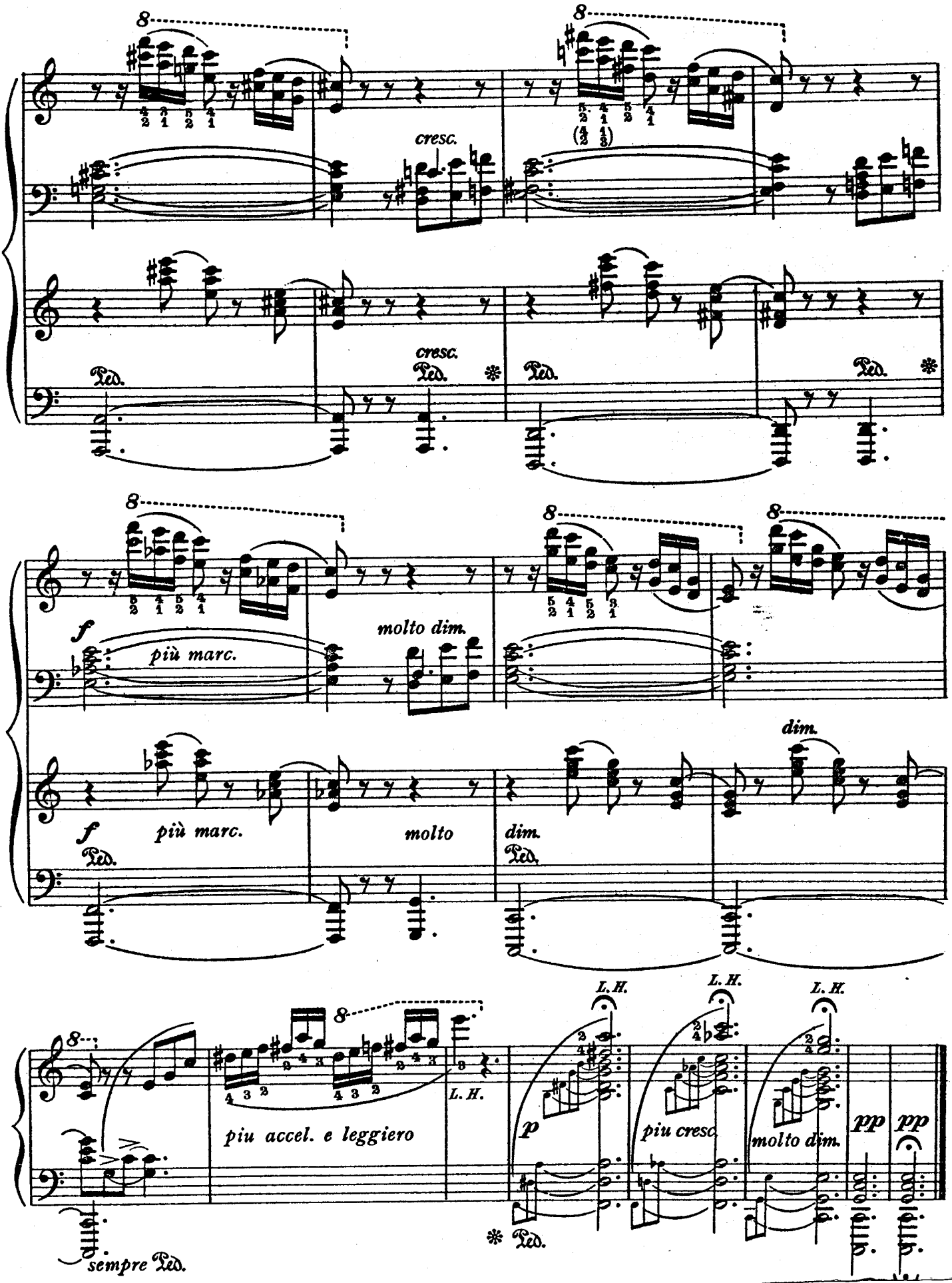

8
ff
ff
8
8
L. H.
8
pp
pp


8
8
f
f
8
8
decres - - cen - - do
L. H.
decres - - cen - - do
dim. molto tranquillo
senza Ped.
gliss.
Ped. *
Ped. *


Tempo I
leggiero
f
dim.
mf
p
mp
pp
Un
mf
poco più mosso e decisivo
mf
cresc.
più marcato e cresc.
più cresc. e accel.
Tempo I
sf
subito
rit.
sf
mp dolce e grazioso
glissando
8
cresc. molto

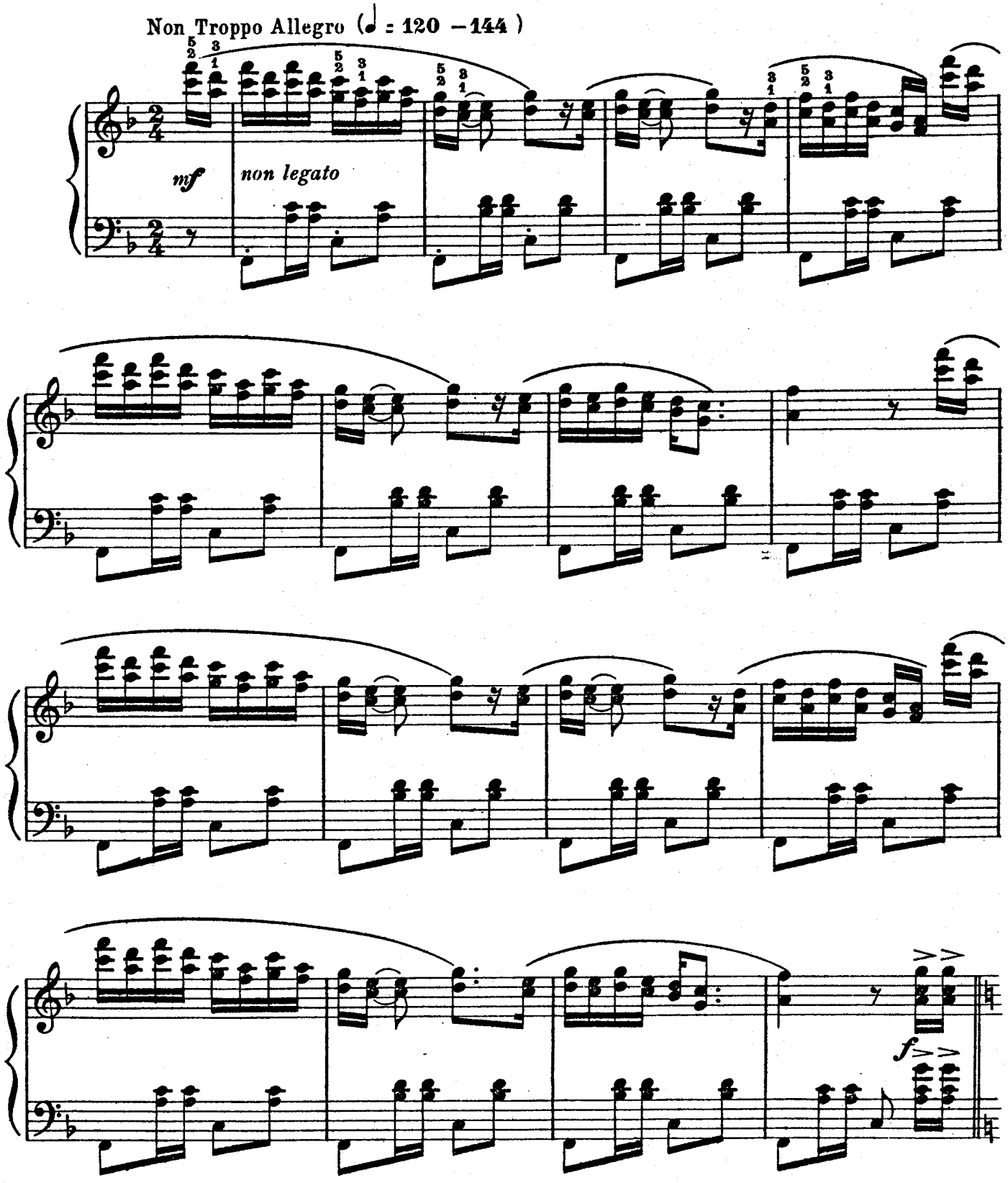

f
dim.
pochissimo rit. a tempo
mp
poco rit. a tempo
pp
mp molto tenerezza
L. H.
ppp
mp
espress.
L. H.


piu
cresc. ed espress.
dim.
L.H.
espress.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
Ped.
Ped.


cresc.
cresc.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
molto dim.
f
più marc.
f
più marc.
molto
dim.
dim.
Ped.
Ped.
L. H.
L. H.
L. H.
L. H.
piu accel. e leggiero
p
piu cresc.
molto dim.
pp
pp
Ped.
sempre Ped.

DANCE

JUBA



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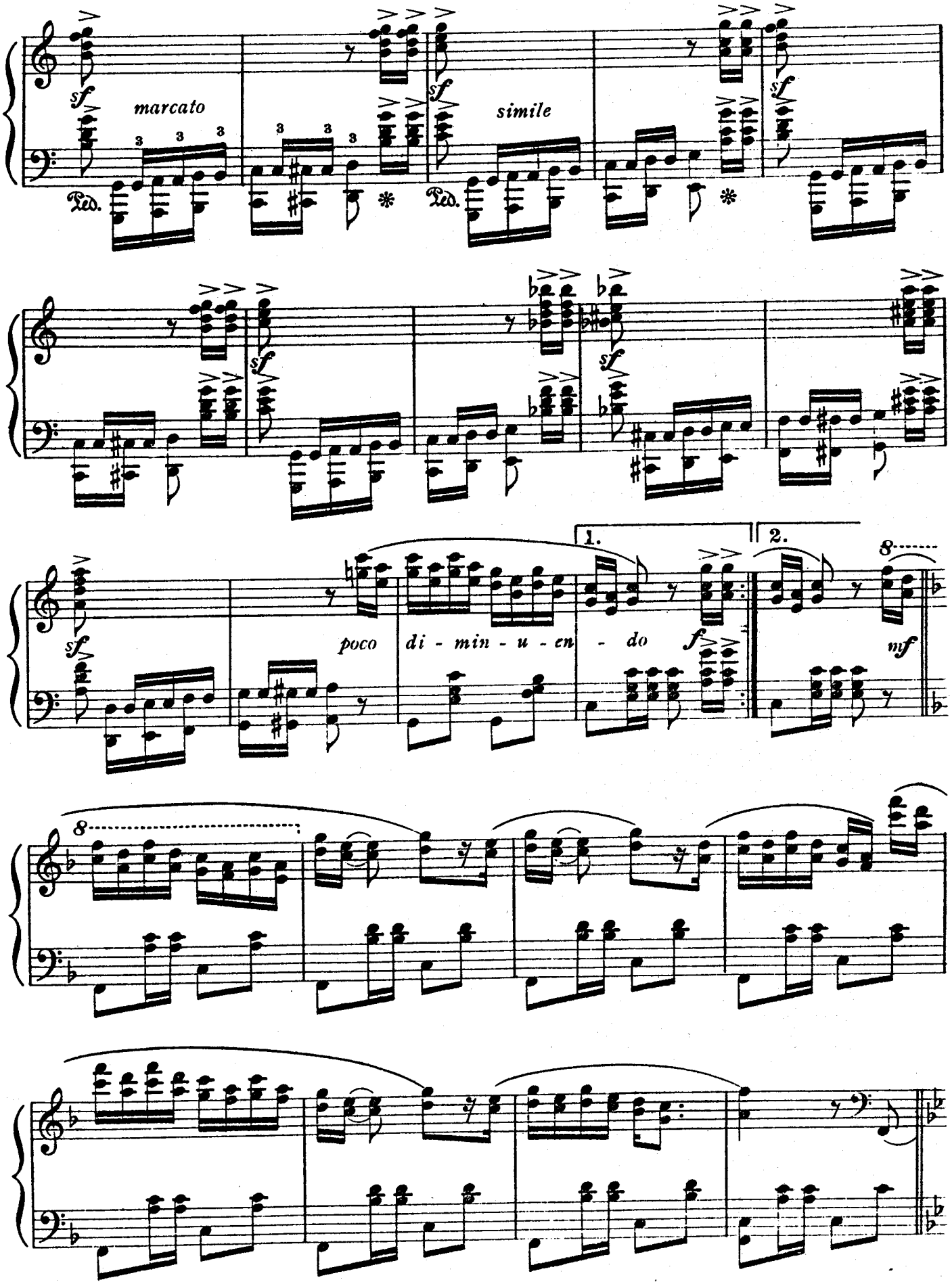
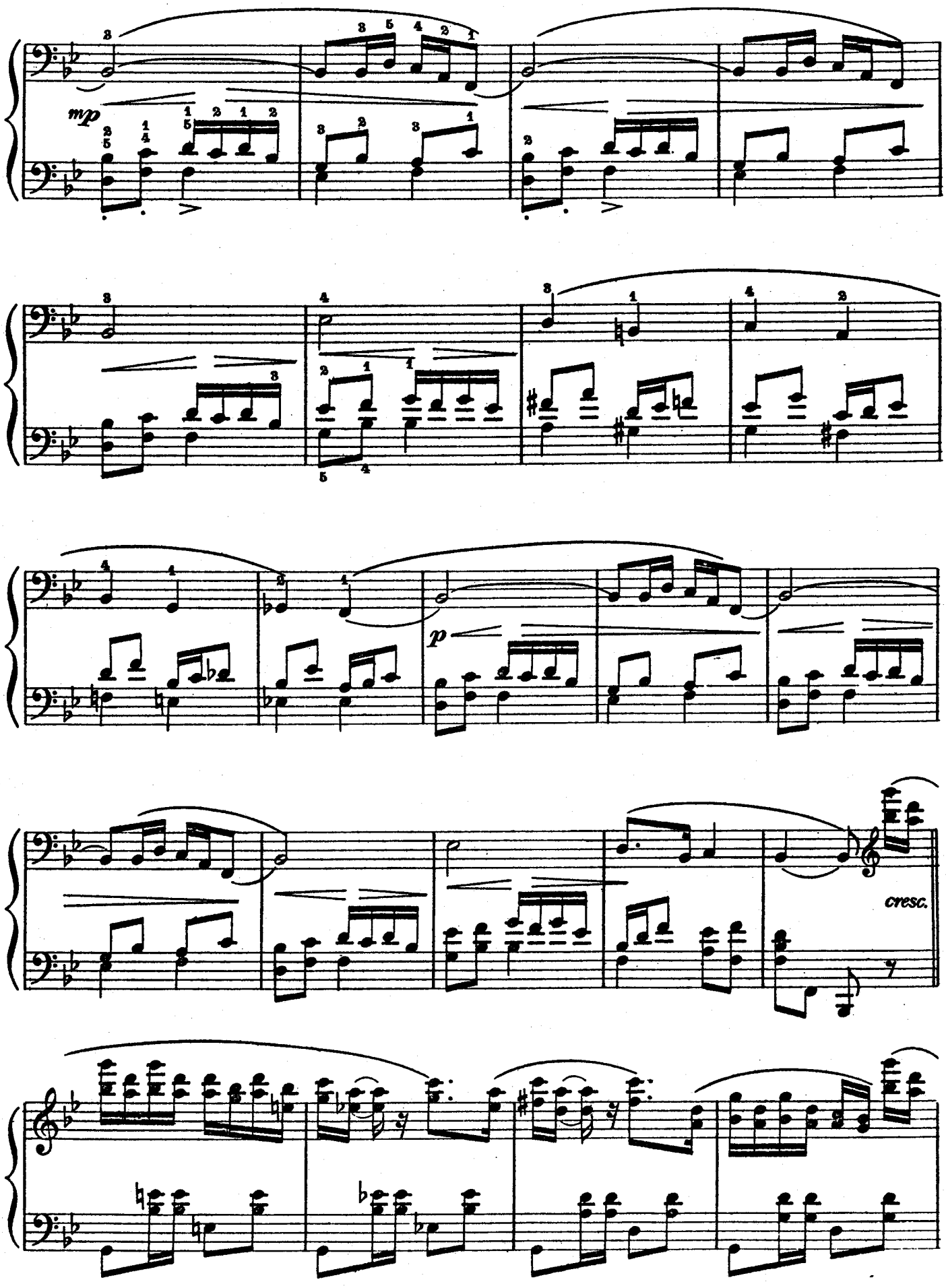
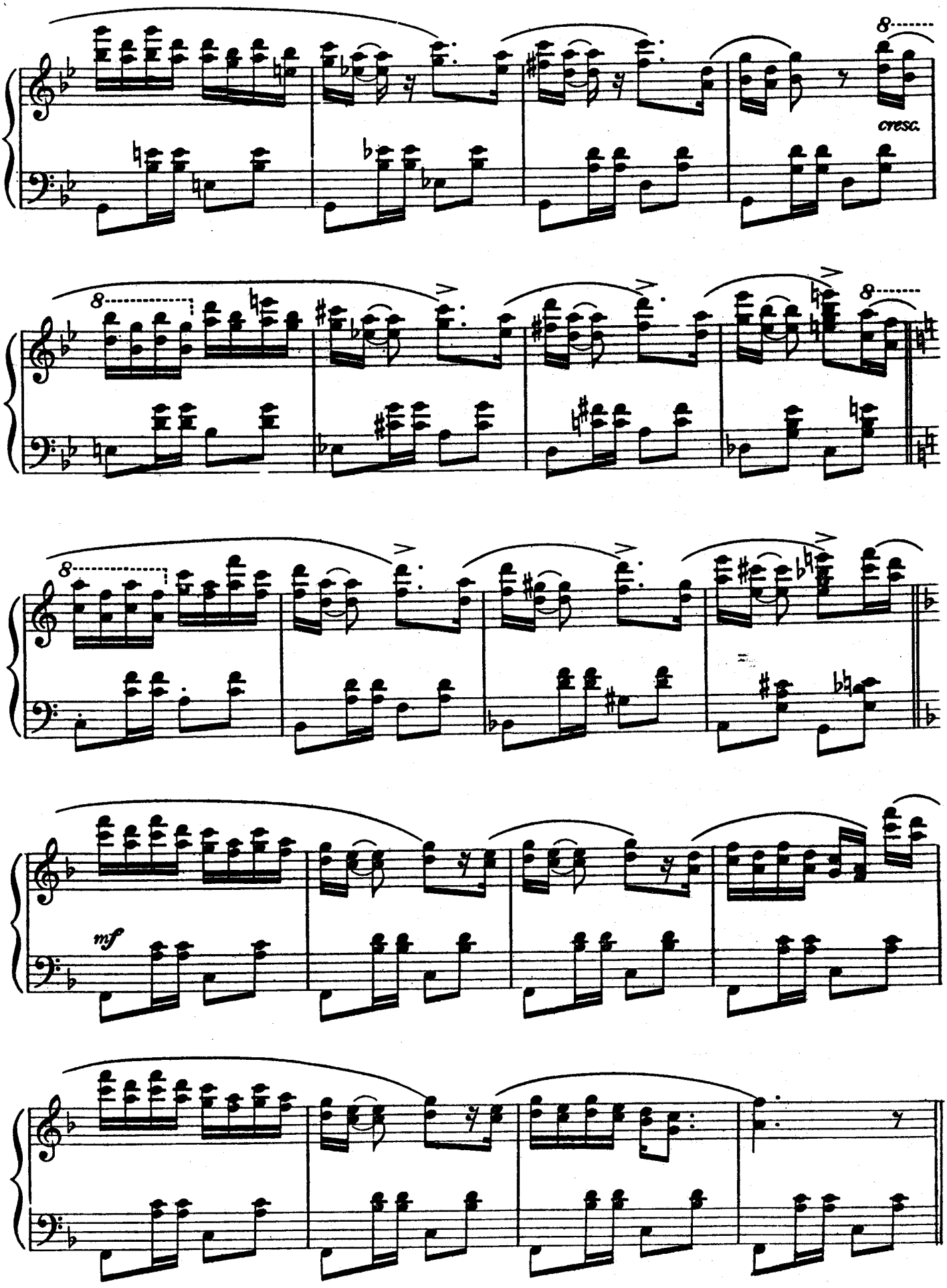
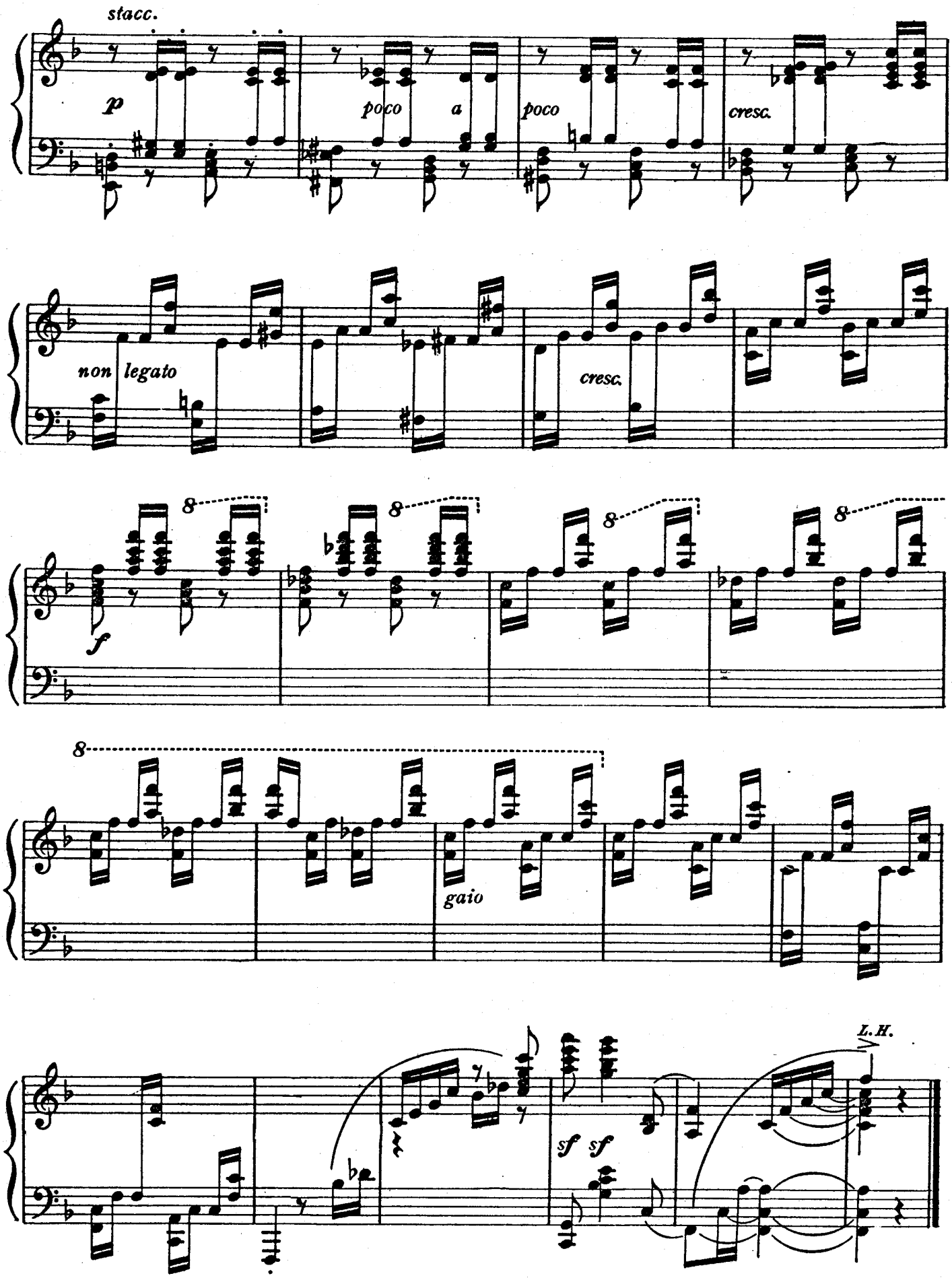

marcato
simile
Ped.
Ped.
1.
2.
poco di - min - u - en - do
f
mf


mp
p
cresc.


8
cresc.
8
8
mf


stacc.
p
poco a poco
poco
cresc.
non legato
cresc.
8
f
8
8
8
8
gaio
L.H.
sf sf