CÉSAR FRANCK

Chorale No. 3

in A minor, M. 40

from
Three Chorales for Organ

TRANSCRIBED
FOR SOLO PIANO

BY

STEPHEN HOUGH

Josef Weinberger Limited
12 - 14 Mortimer Street
London W1T 3JJ
Tel.: 020 - 7580 2827 Fax.: 020 - 7436 9616
general.info@jwmail.co.uk www.josef-weinberger.com

INTRODUCTION

"BEFORE I DIE, I am going to write some organ chorales, just as Bach did, but on quite a different plan", declared Franck in 1889, and by the end of September the following year the *Trois Chorals* were completed, only a month or so before his death. Unlike Bach's *Chorale Preludes* or Brahms' similar swan-songs, these are more like three fantasies, although their construction is as skilful in its subtle use of cyclic form as anything Franck wrote. The A minor Chorale is the most pianistic of the three, even though to represent the appropriate textures and sounds of a large organ on the piano creates a veritable Etude in pedalling (all three of them) and tone control. One specific challenge is to suggest an imperceptible acoustical ambience, similar to a slight octahedral overhang, by not changing the pedal too cleanly with each new harmony, and by allowing figuration sometimes to sound a little blurred.

Franck's original registration is quite specific in colour, particularly his love of reeds with their piercing timbre. It is interesting that at the moments of greatest melodic and harmonic sweetness in all three Chorales Franck asks for the most sour stops to be drawn. In the third Chorale, in the glorious central section, the left hand and pedals are gently painting a wash of harmonic colour with flutes and bourdon, whilst the endless melody on the Swell manual has to be etched with the acid of the combined oboe and trumpet stops. However, this is one of the peculiarities of Franck's style - the *non troppo dolce* that appears quite often in the piano works - with its poignant, emotional tug between the austere and the sentimental: the ice-cold marble altar, but the burning candles and the sweet incense.

The transcription is dedicated to Eric Chadwick, who taught me organ at the Royal Northern College of Music when I was a student there.

STEPHEN HOUGH

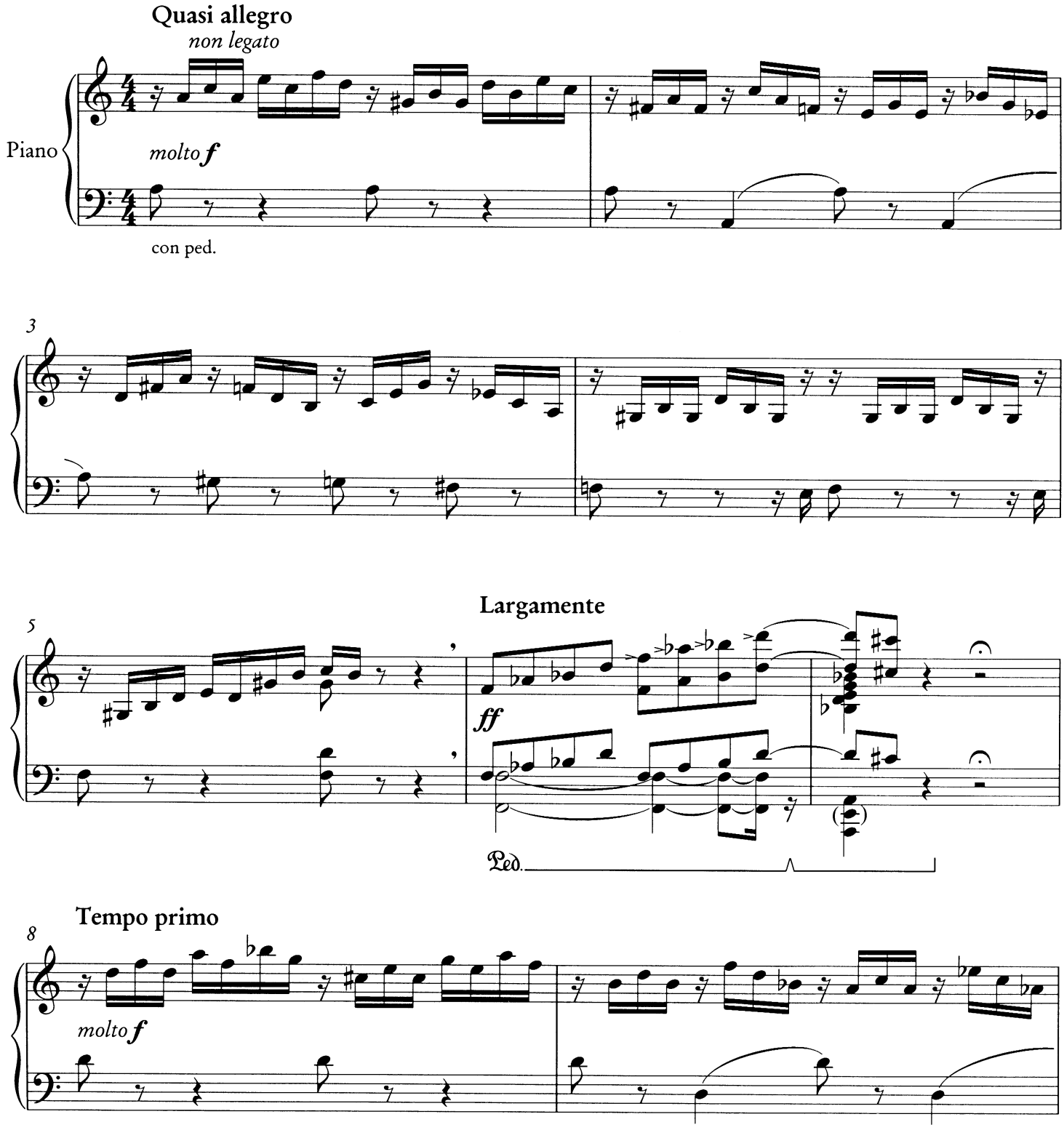
A recording of this work is available on:
César Franck Piano Music: HYPERION CDA 66918

Chorale No. 3

in A minor, M.40

César Auguste Franck
(1822 - 1890)

Transcribed for piano by
Stephen Hough



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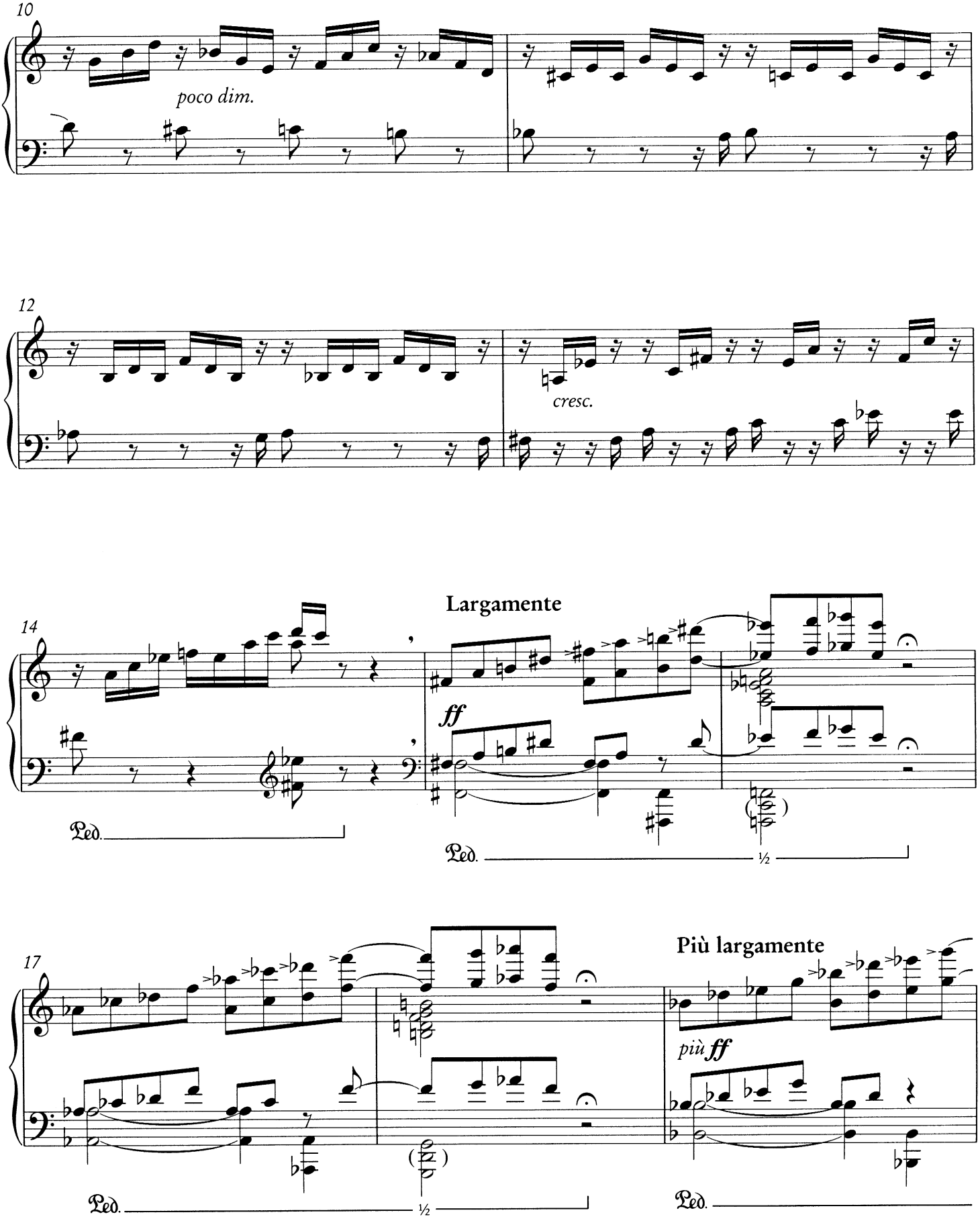
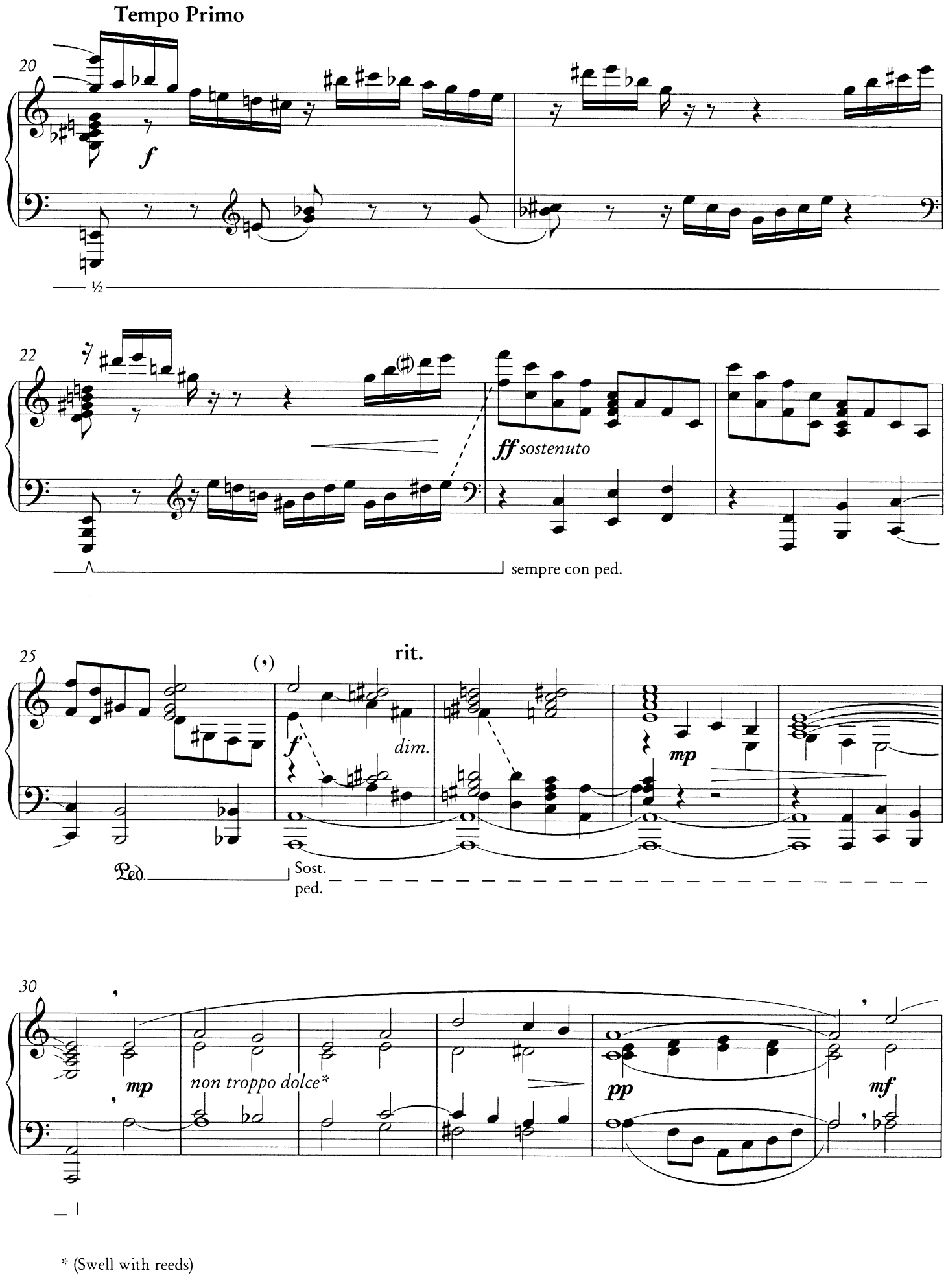
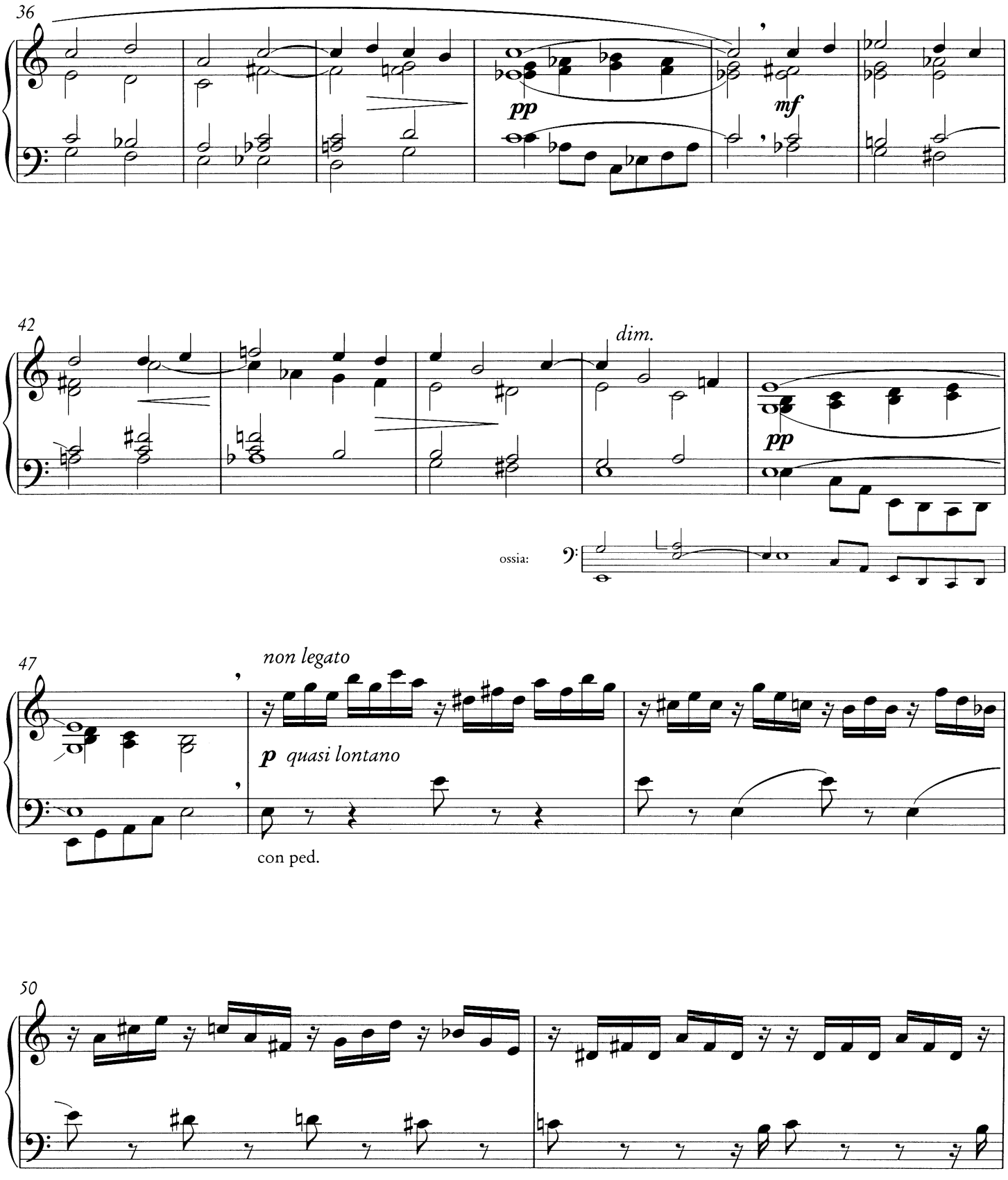
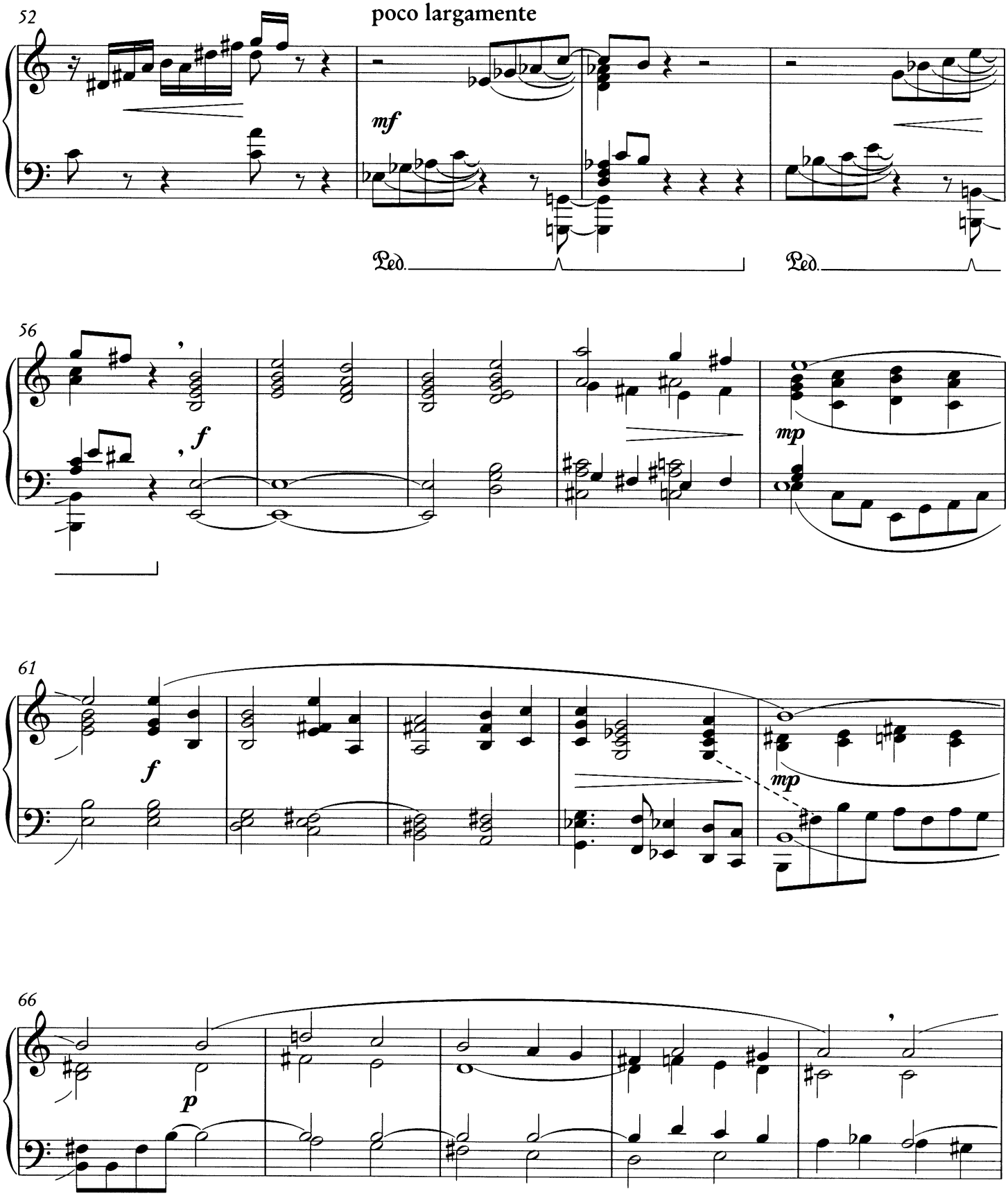
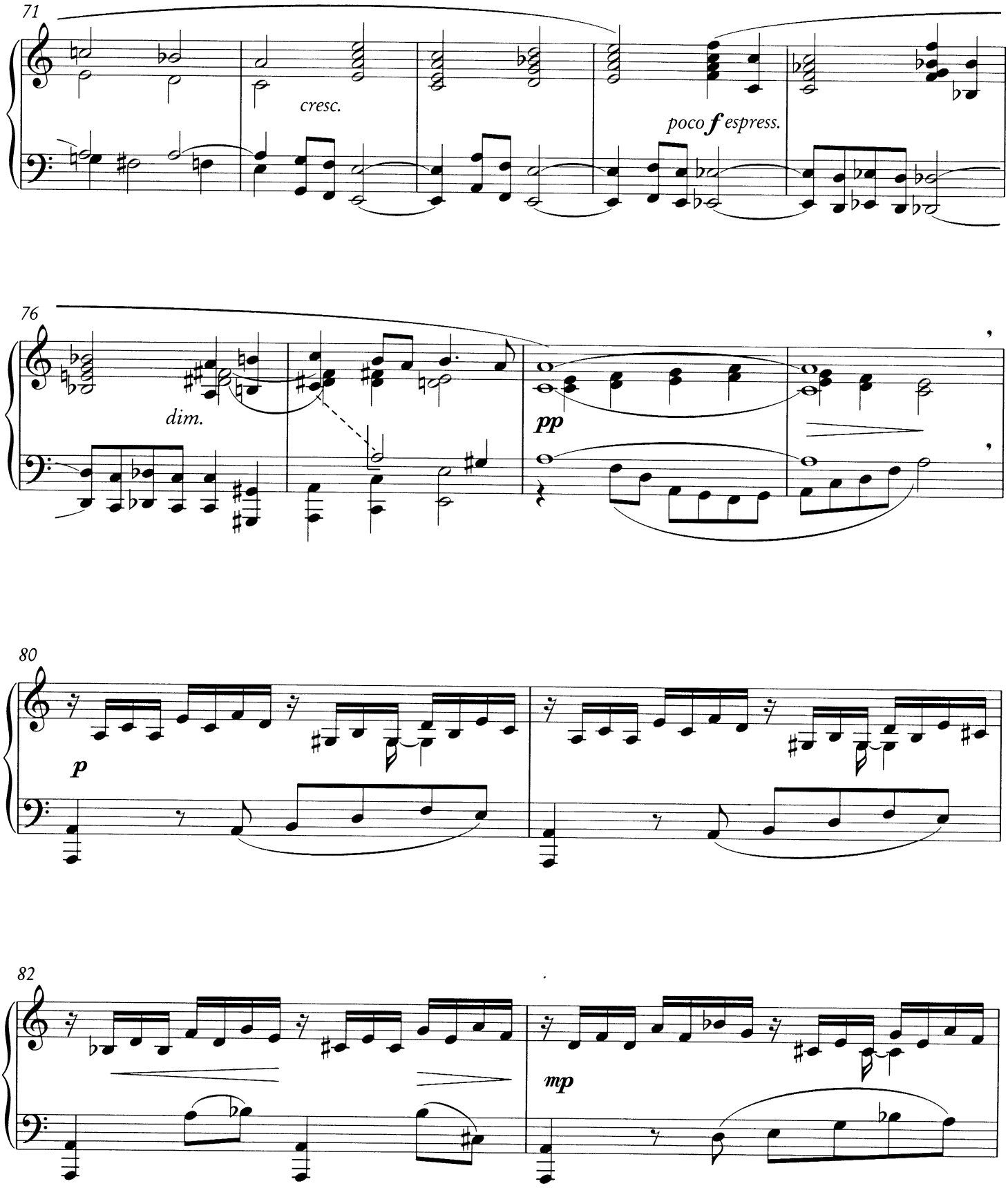

10
poco dim.
12
cresc.
14
Largamente
ff
Ped.
Ped.
½
17
Più largamente
più ff
Ped.
½
Ped.

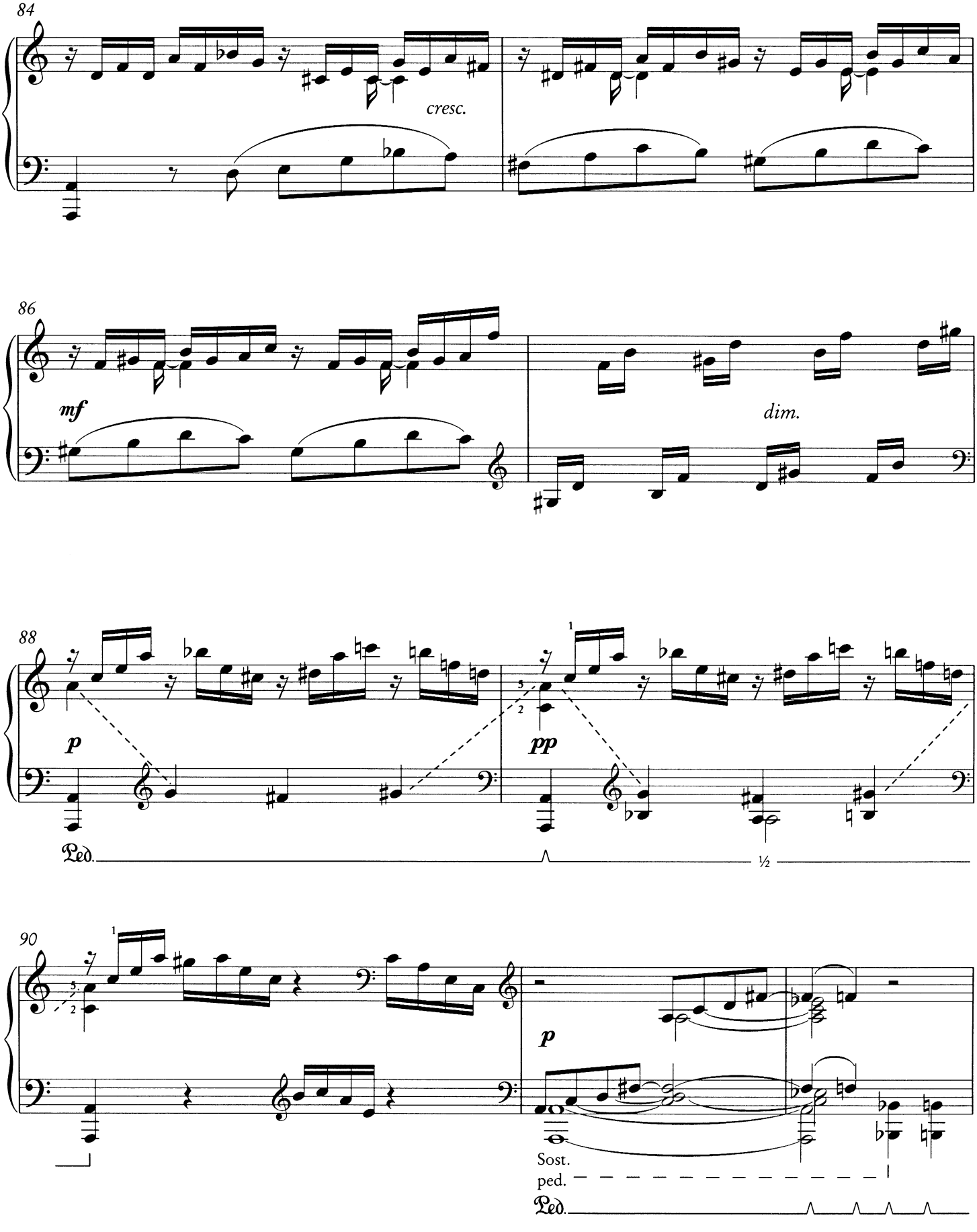


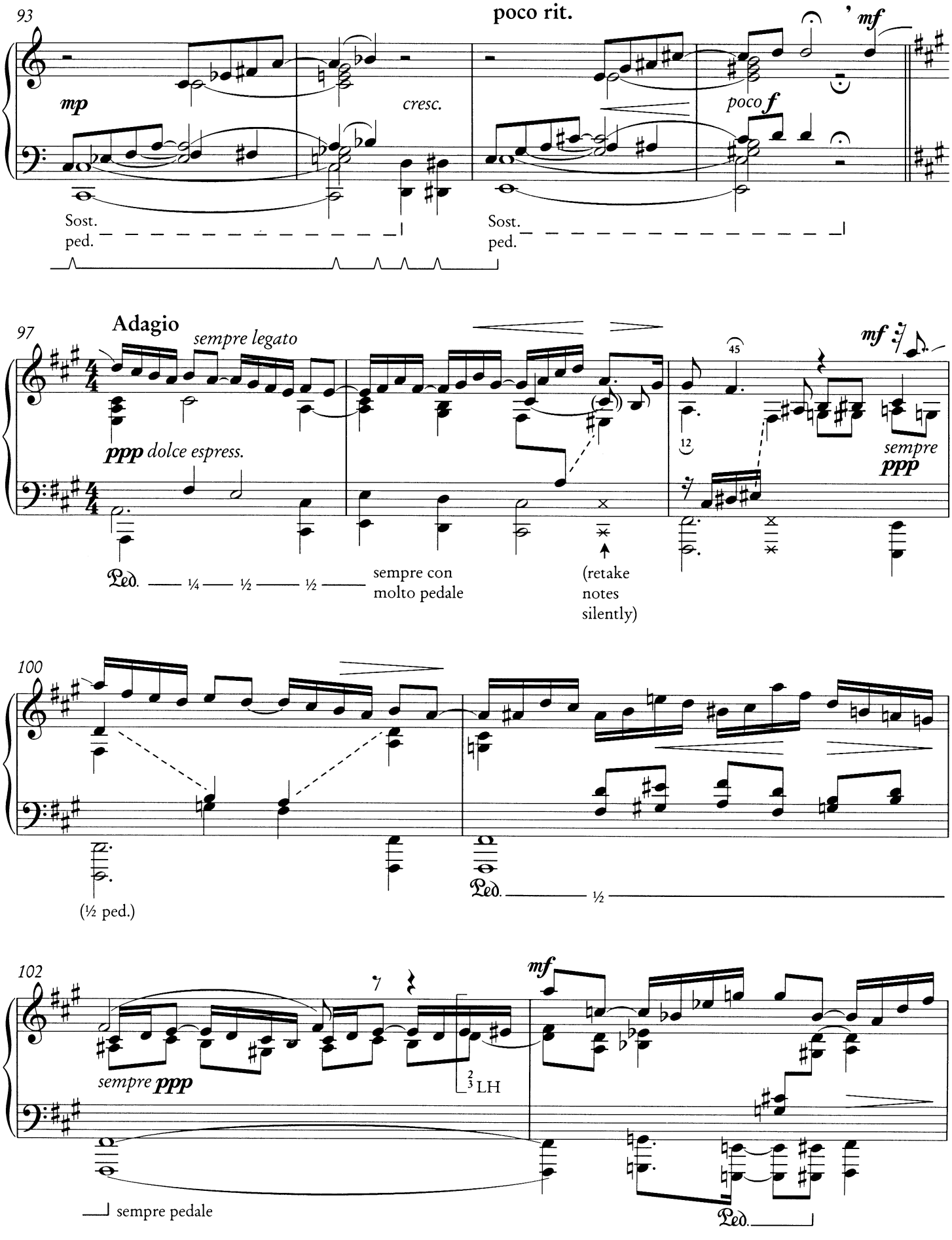
* (Swell with reeds)

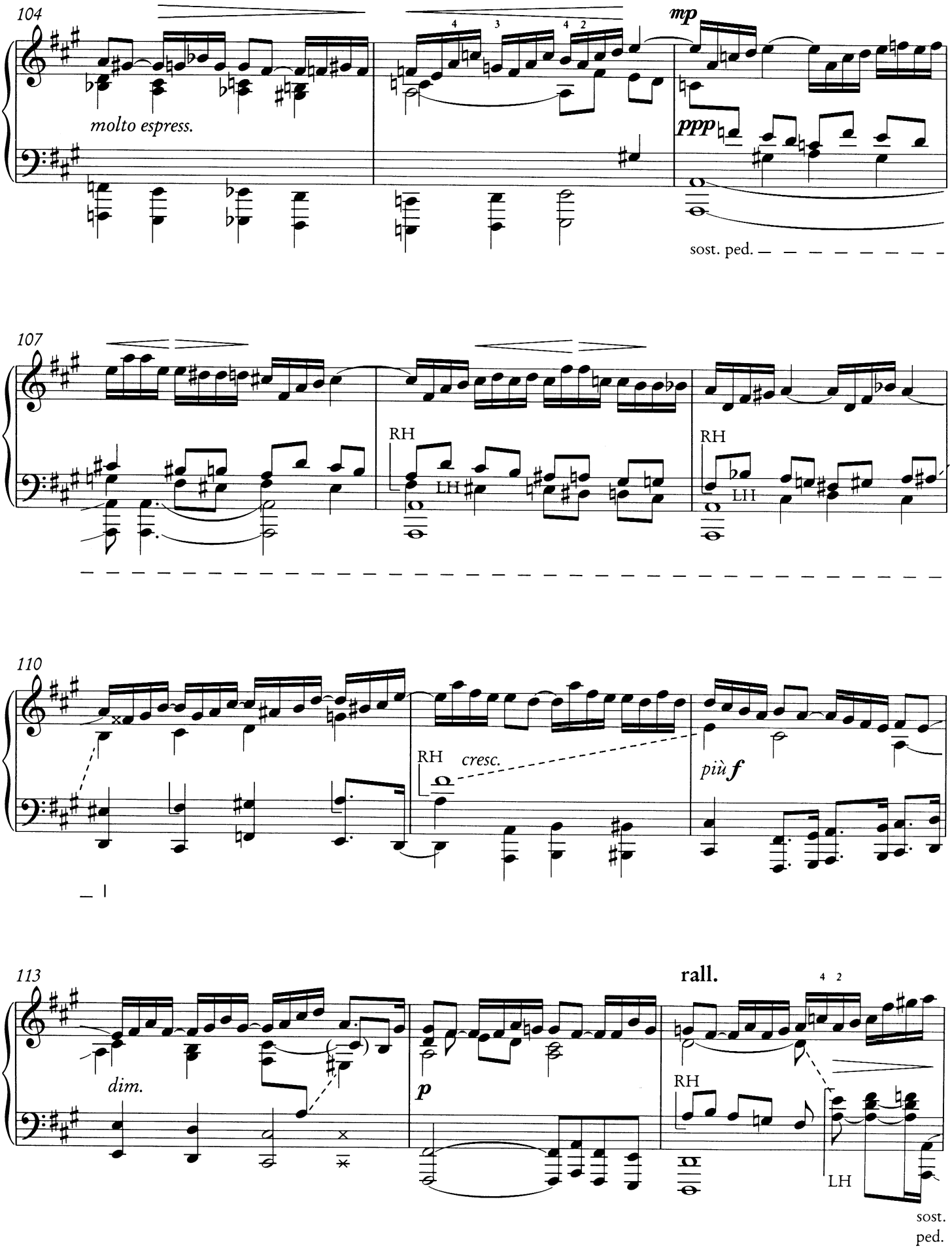

36
pp
mf
42
dim.
pp
ossia:
47
non legato
p quasi lontano
con ped.
50

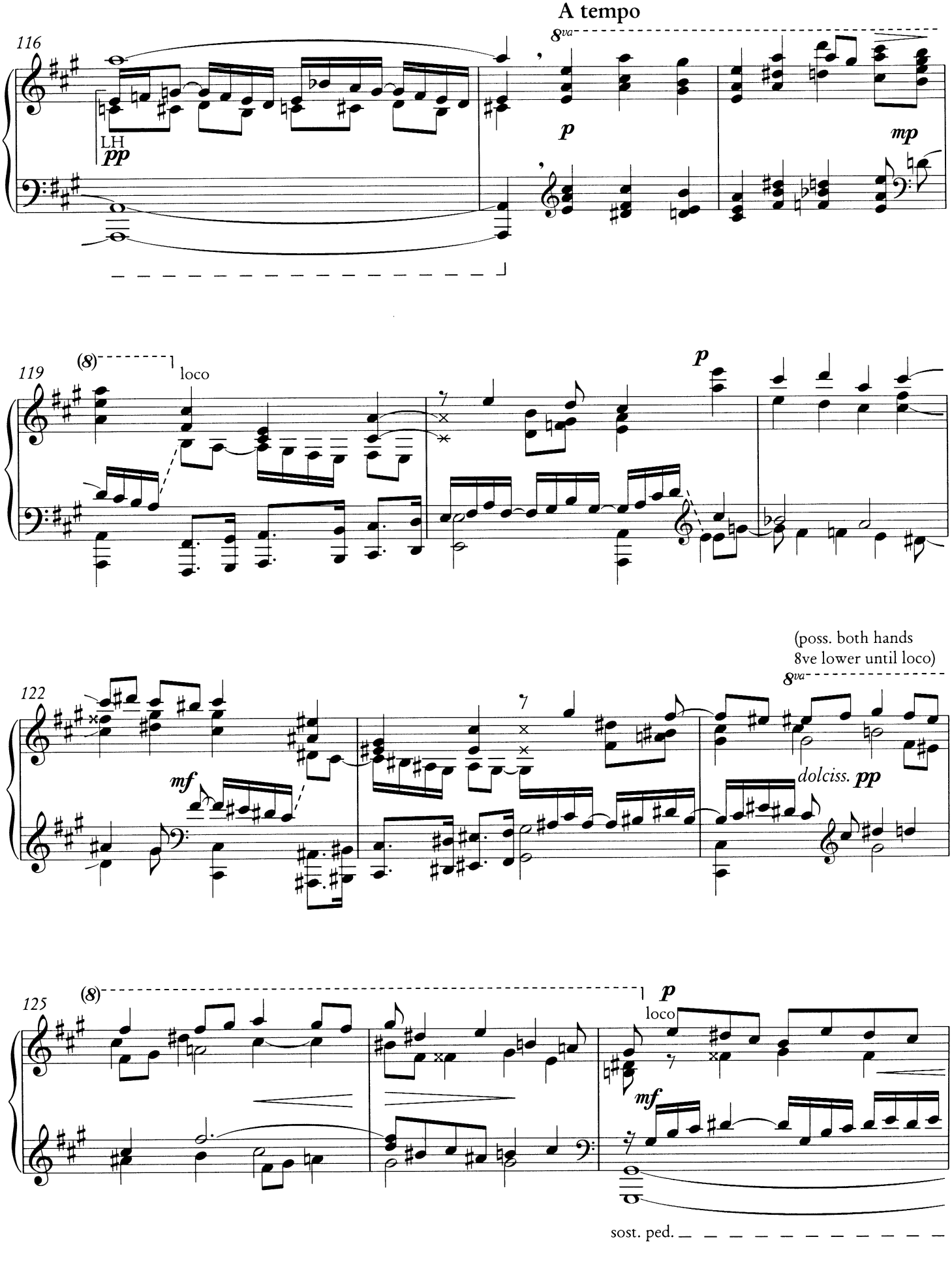

52
poco largamente
mf
Ped.
Ped.
56
f
mp
61
f
mp
66
p

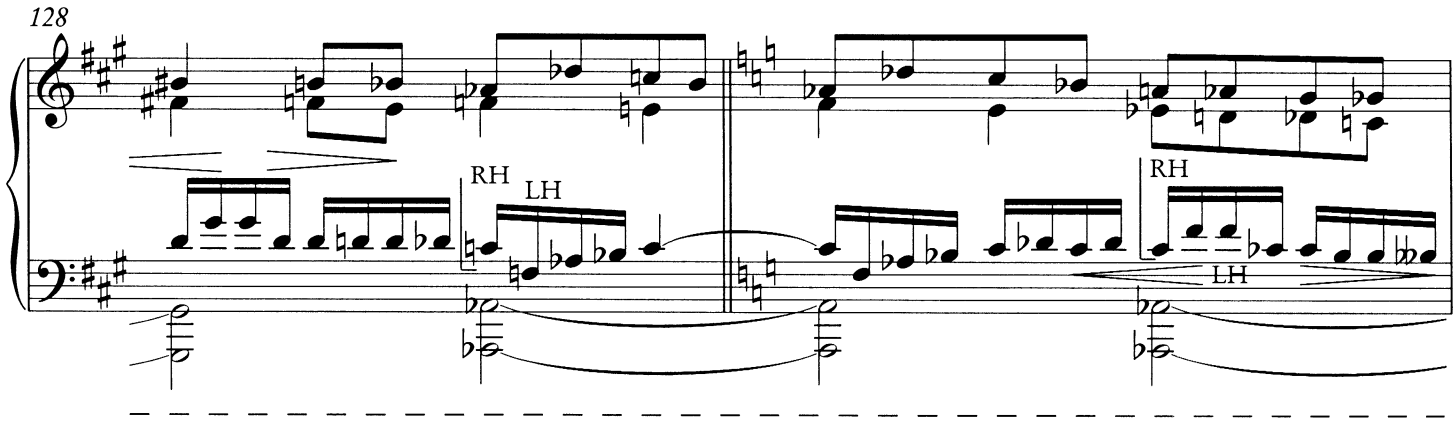

71
cresc.
poco f espress.
76
dim.
pp
80
p
82
mp


84
cresc.
86
mf
dim.
88
p
pp
Ped.
½
90
p
Sost.
ped.
Ped.

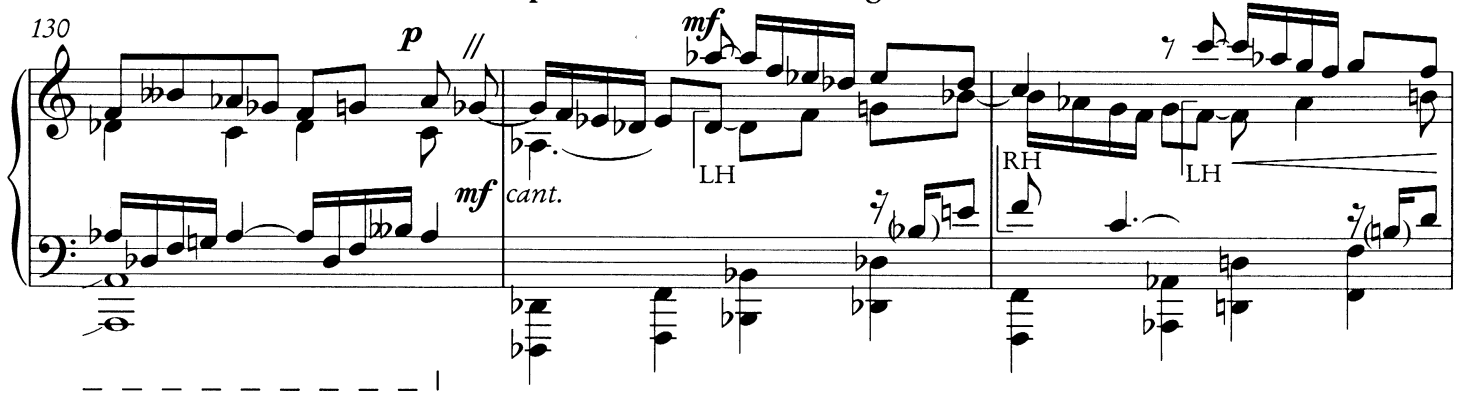

93
poco rit.
mf
mp
cresc.
poco f
Sost. ped.
Sost. ped.
97
Adagio
sempre legato
mf
45
ppp dolce espress.
12
sempre ppp
Ped. ¼ ½ ½
sempre con molto pedale
(retake notes silently)
100
(½ ped.)
Ped. ½
102
mf
sempre ppp
2/3 LH
sempre pedale
Ped.

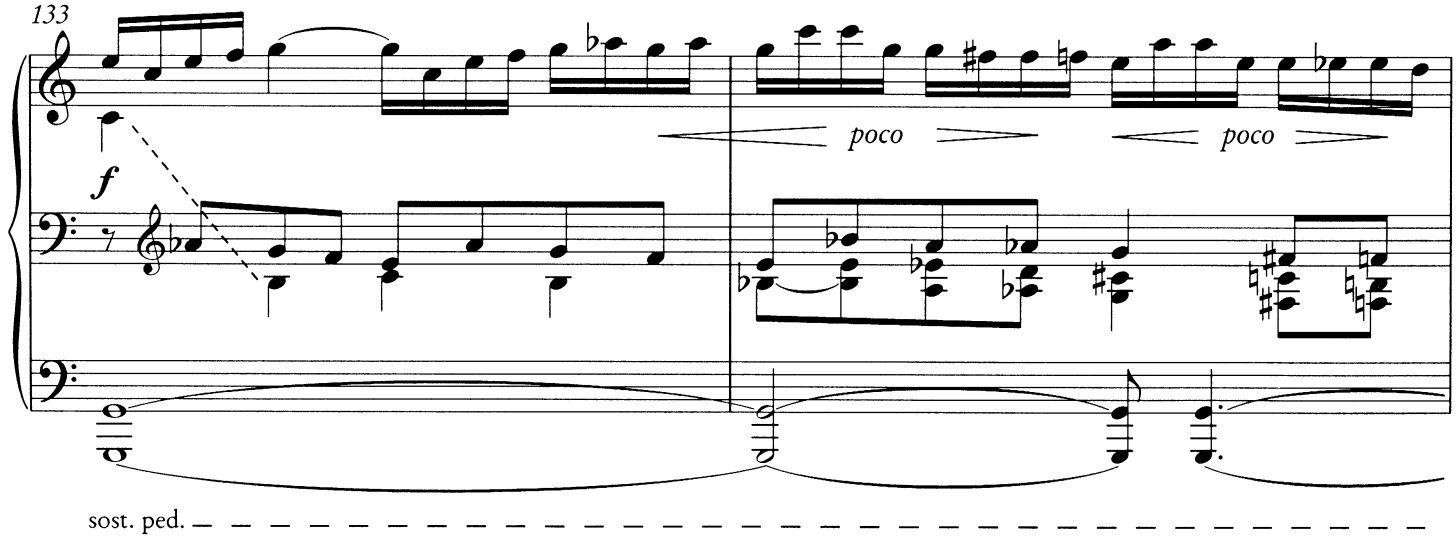

104
molto espress.
mp
ppp
sost. ped.
107
RH
LH
RH
LH
110
RH
cresc.
più f
113
dim.
p
rall.
RH
LH
sost.
ped.

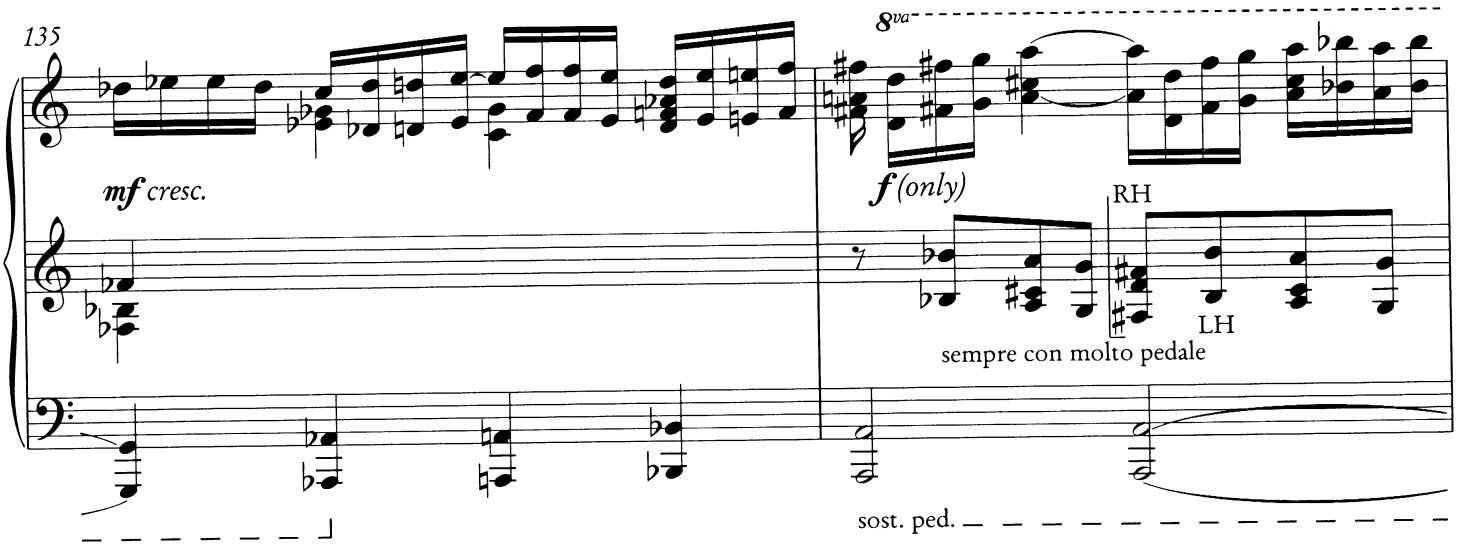

A tempo
116
8va
LH
pp
p
mp
119
(8)
loco
p
122
(poss. both hands
8ve lower until loco)
8va
mf
dolciss. pp
125
(8)
p
loco
mf
sost. ped.

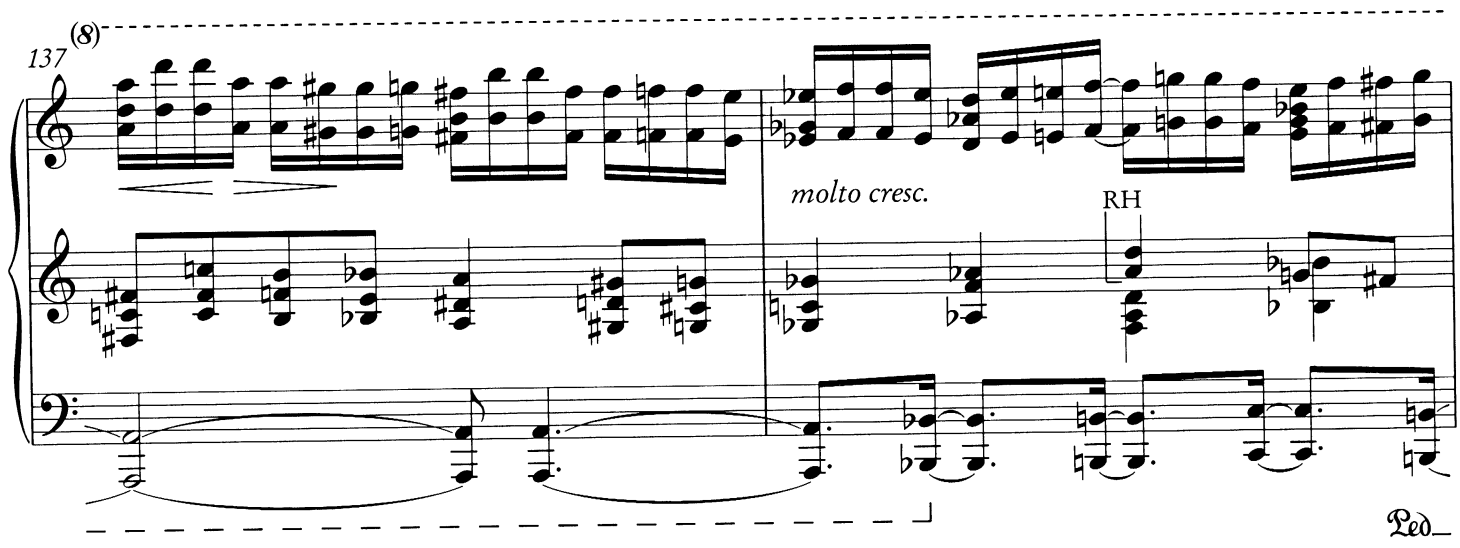


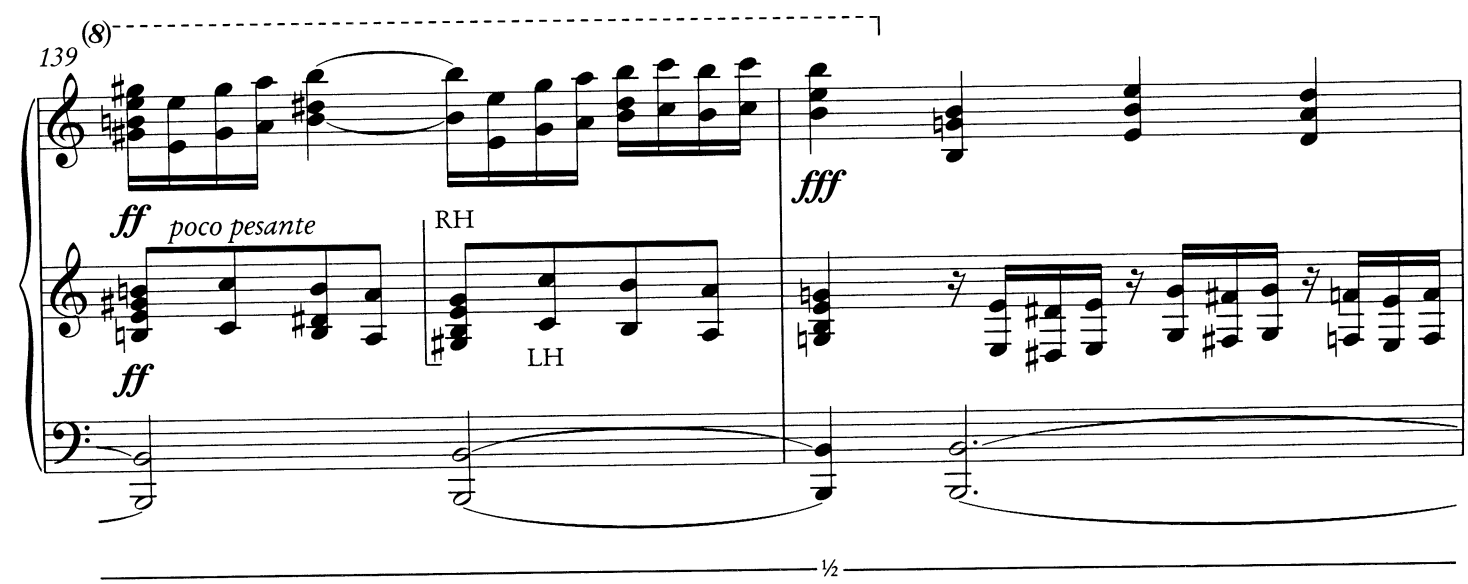
sempre con moto ma non agitato

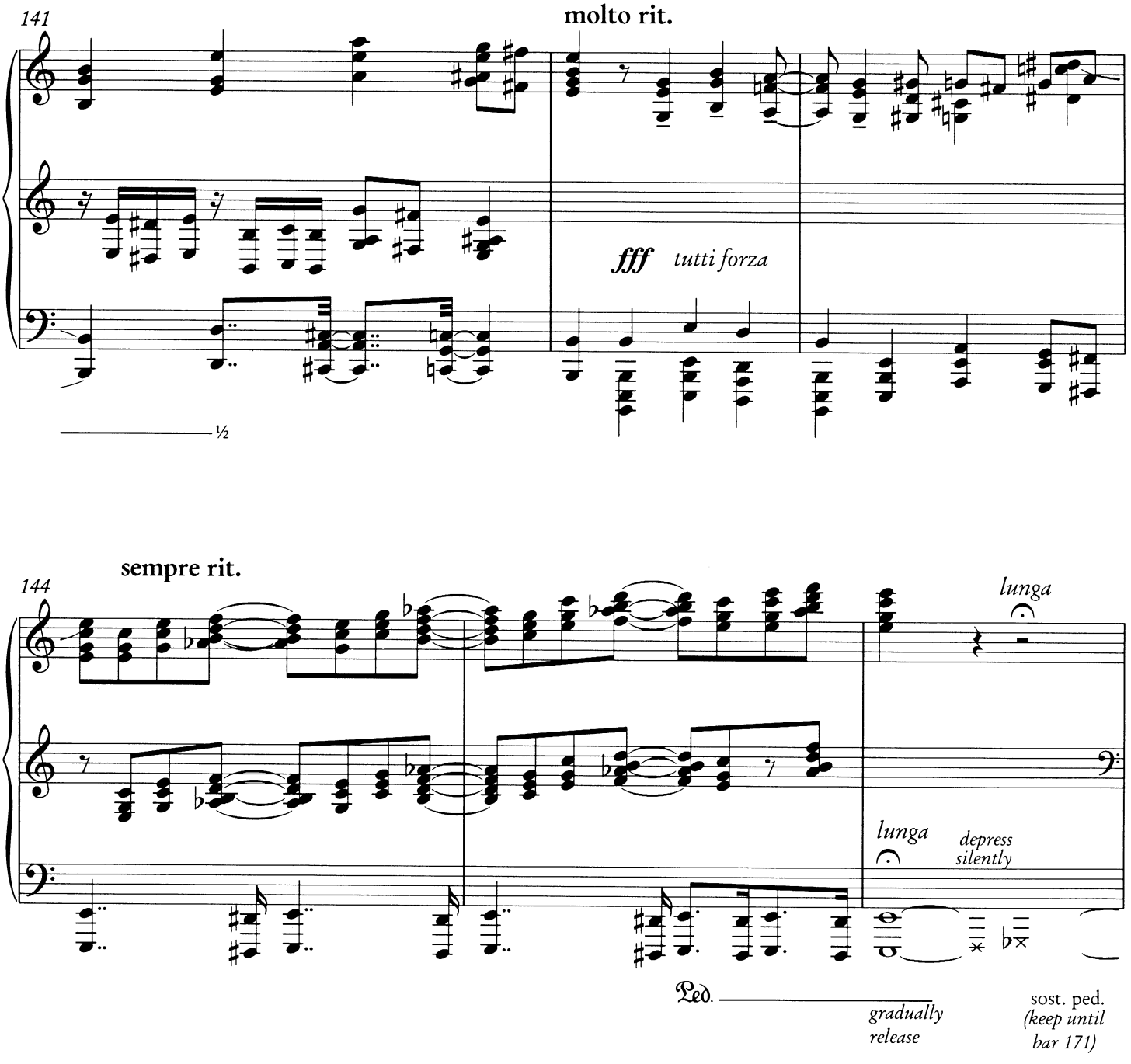


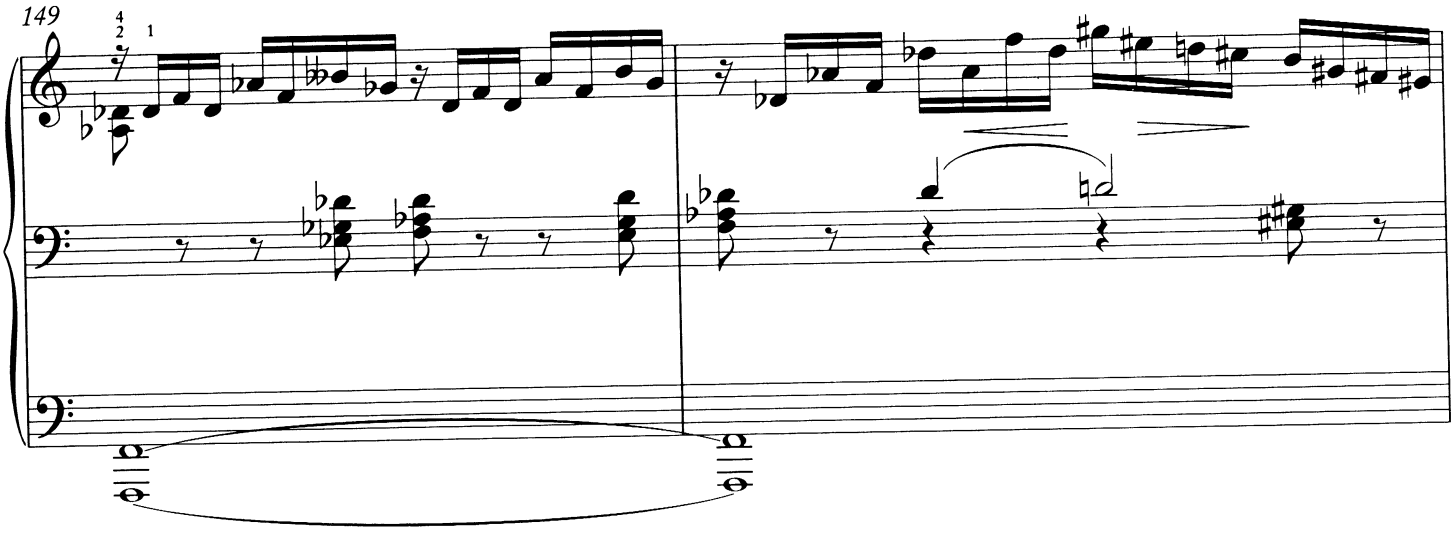


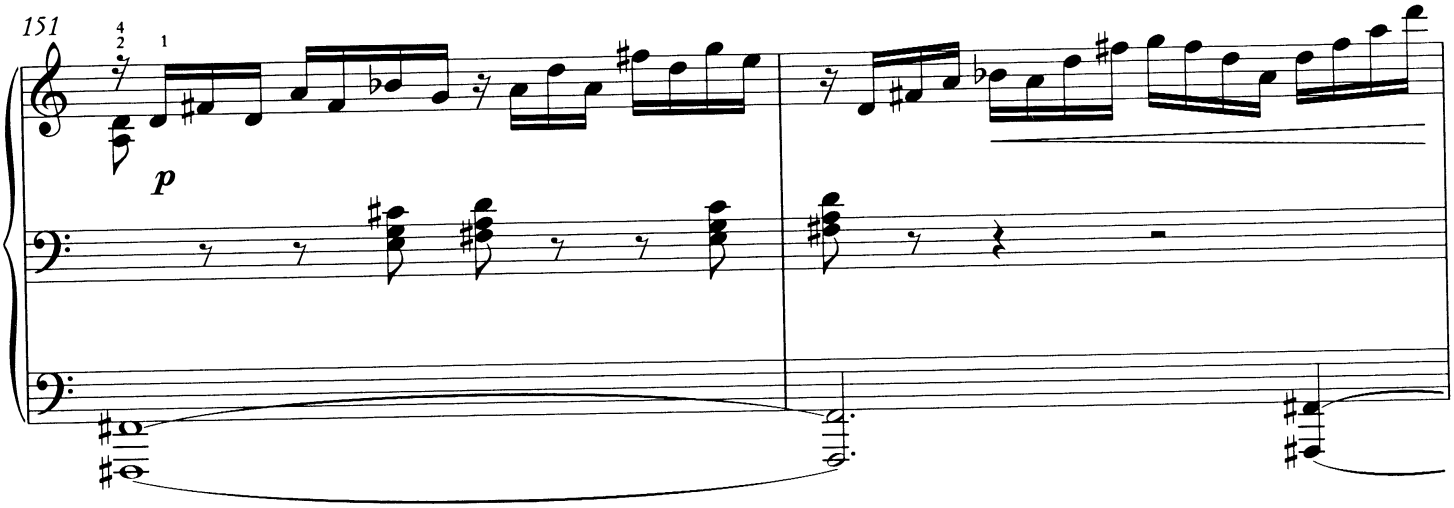

135
8va
mf cresc.
f (only)
RH
LH
sempre con molto pedale
sost. ped.

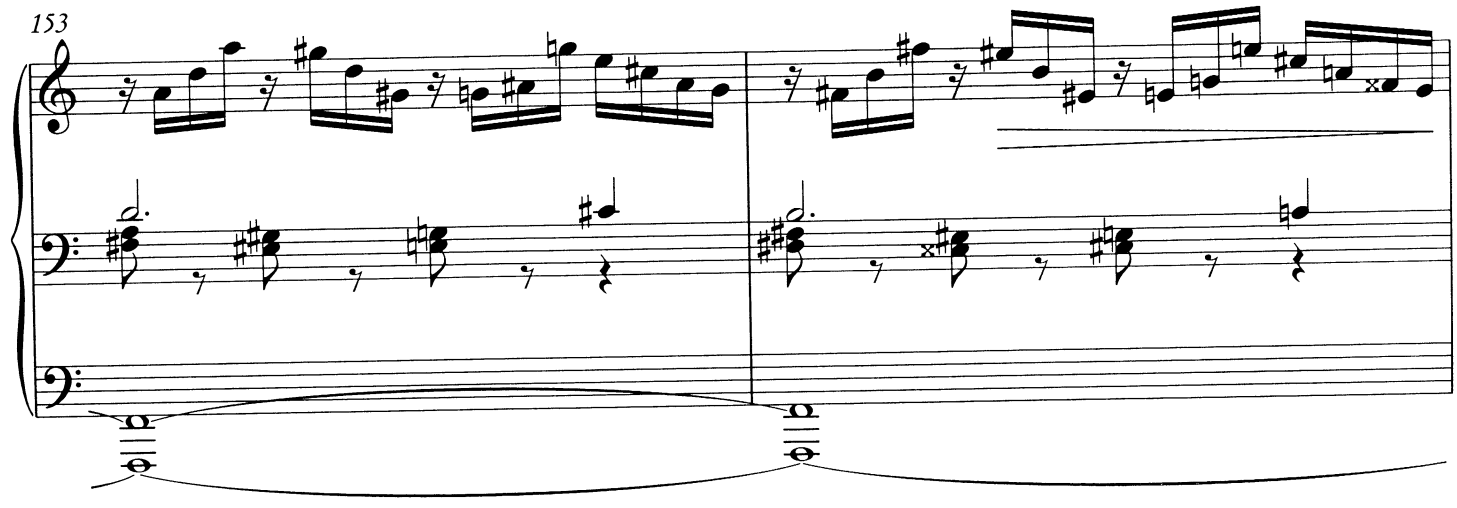

(8)
137
molto cresc.
RH
Ped.

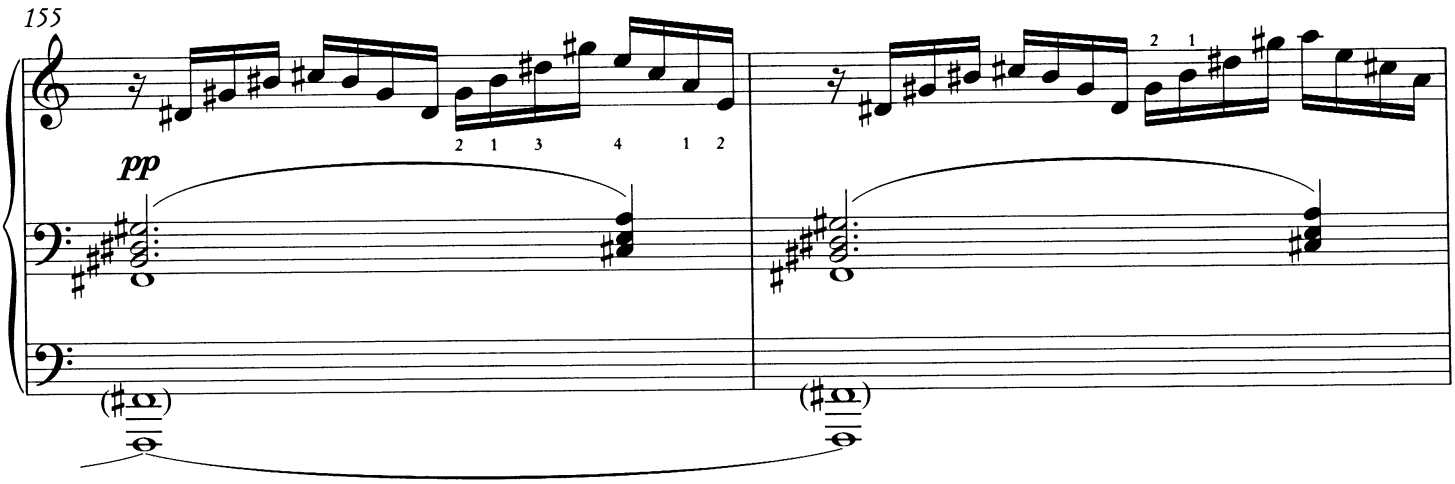

(8)
139
ff
poco pesante
RH
LH
fff
ff

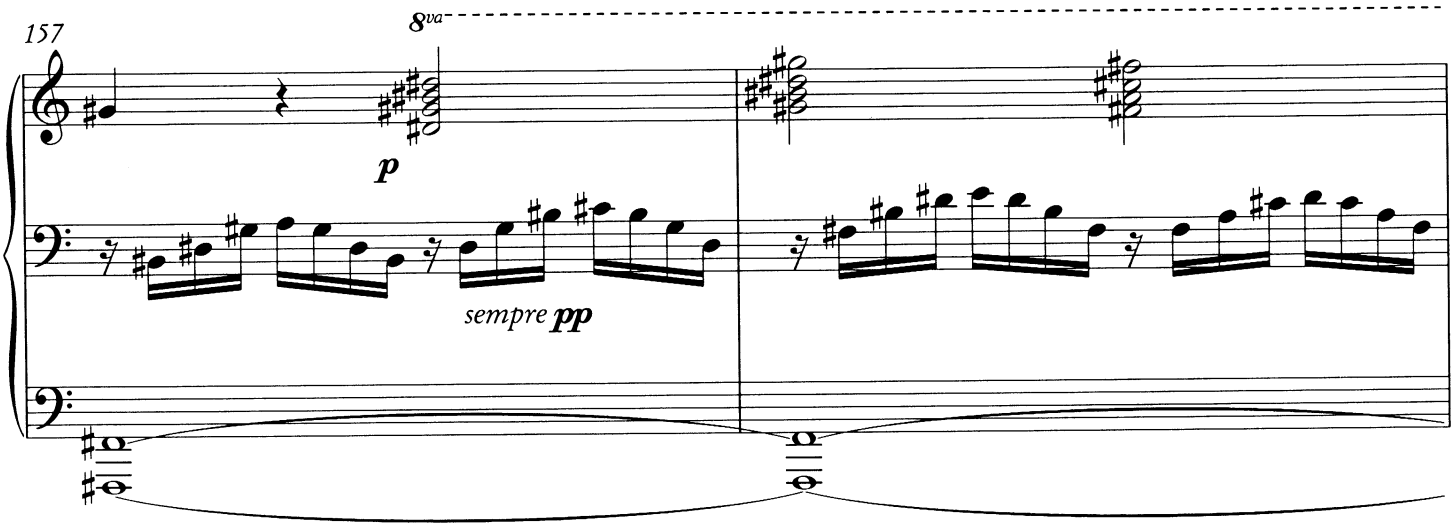

141
molto rit.
fff tutti forza
½
144
sempre rit.
lunga
lunga
depress silently
Ped.
gradually release
sost. ped. (keep until bar 171)
147
Tempo 1 (♪ = ♩)
pp
pp
Keep an 1/8 pedal 'blur' throughout this section.

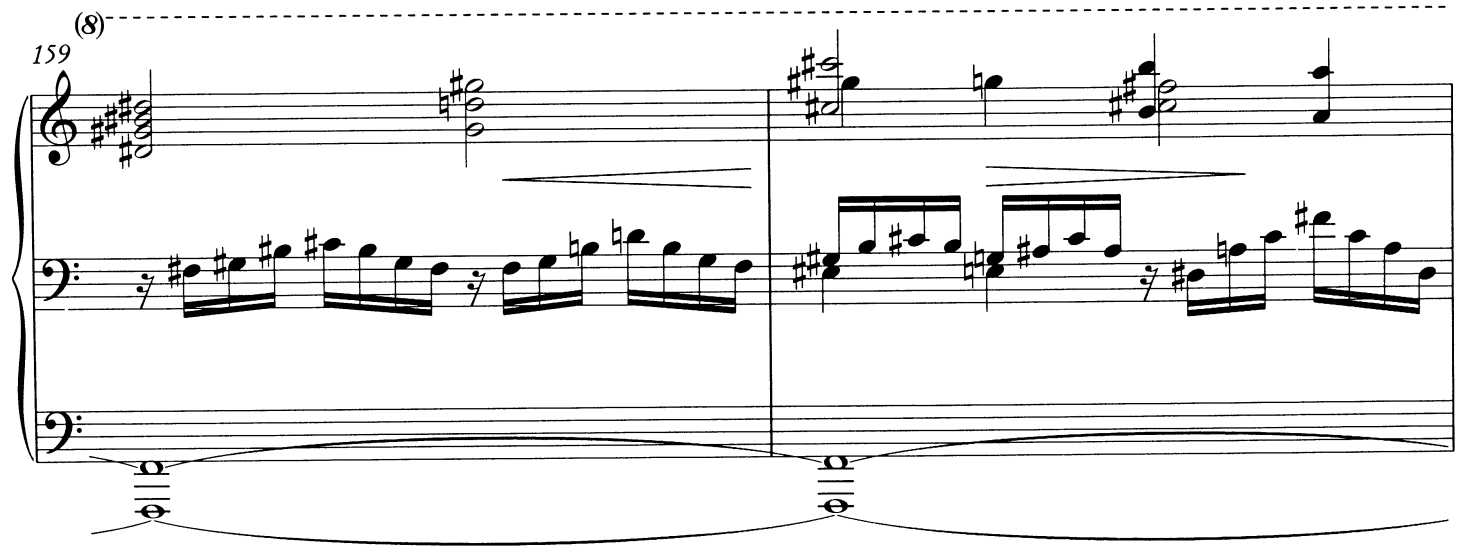

149

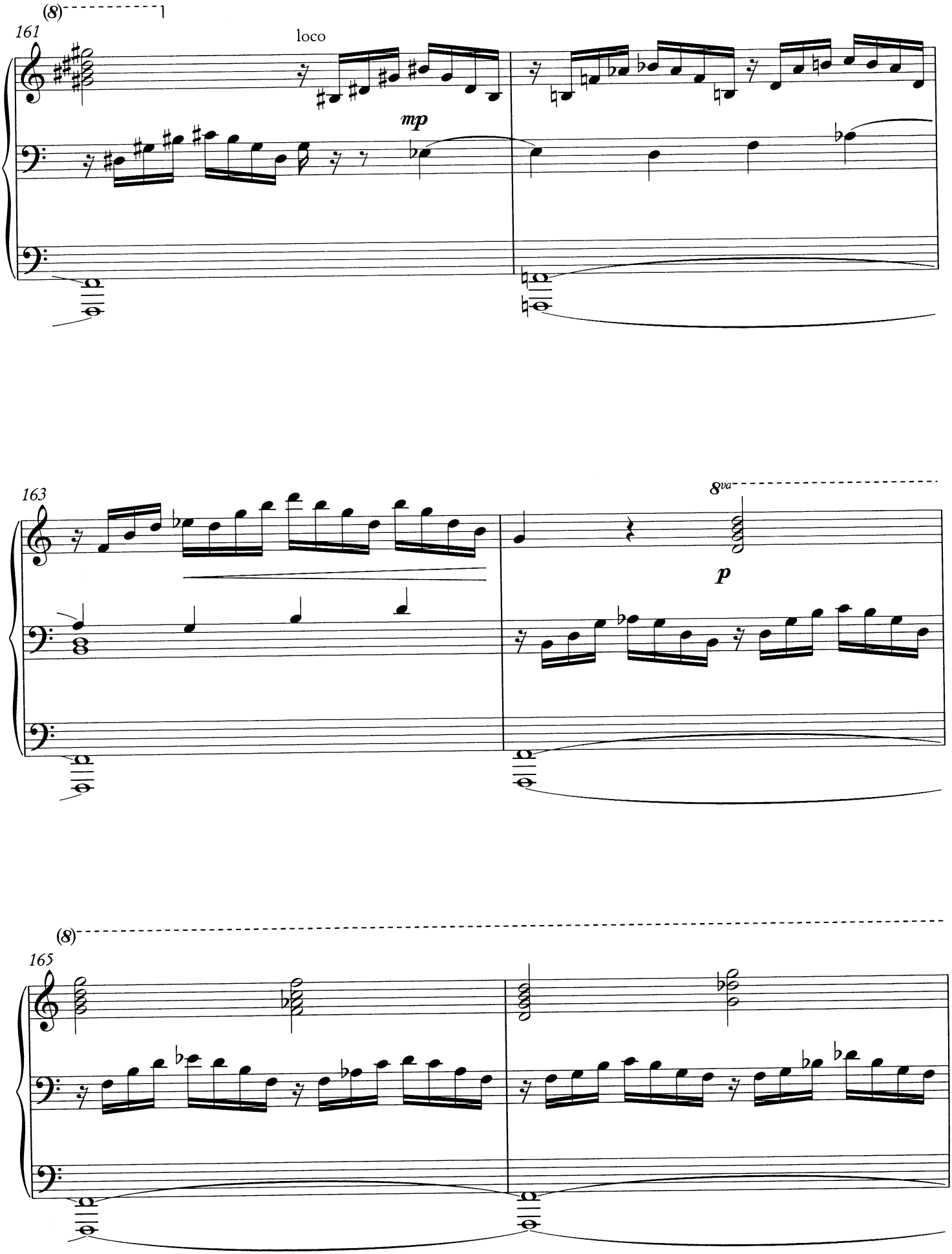

151
p

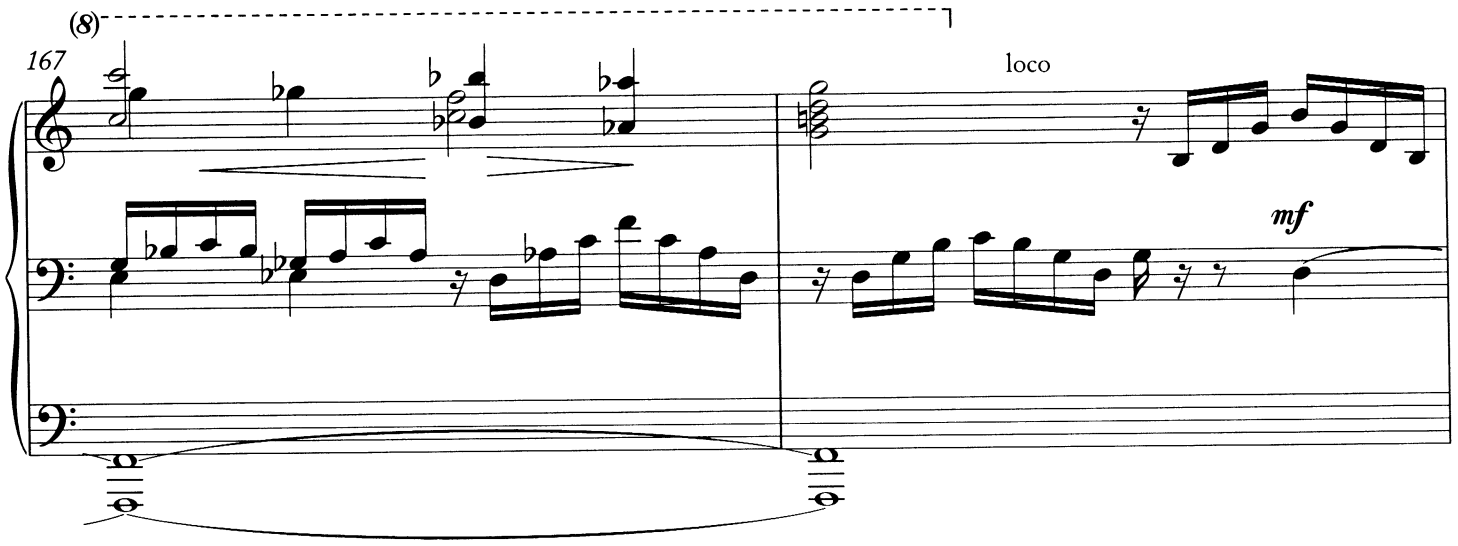

153

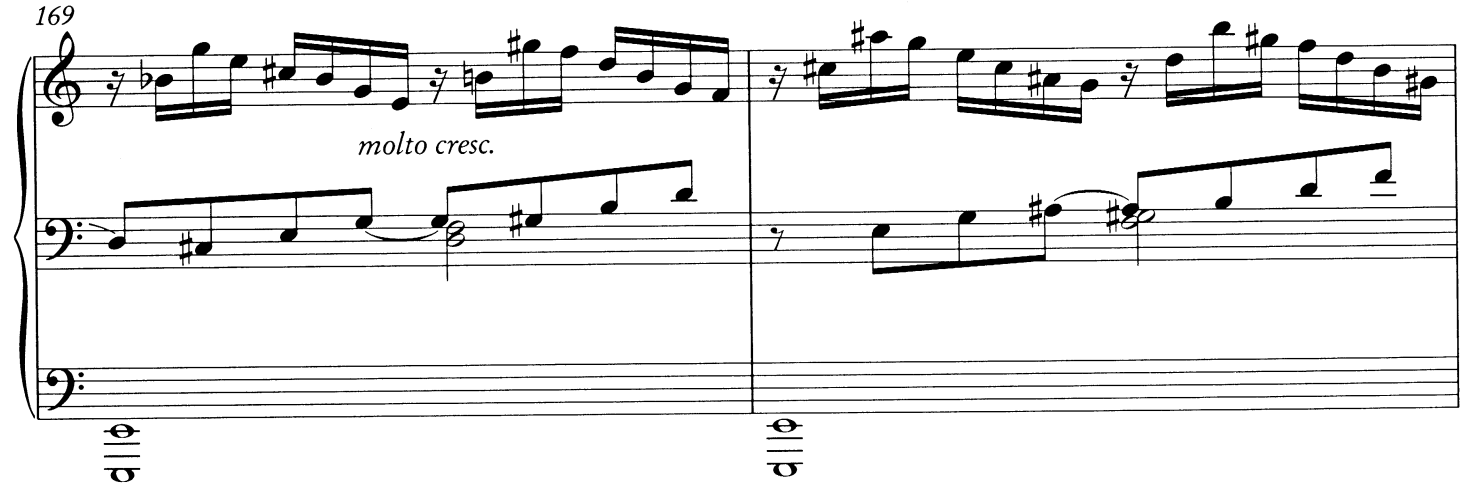

155
pp
2 1 3 4 1 2
2 1

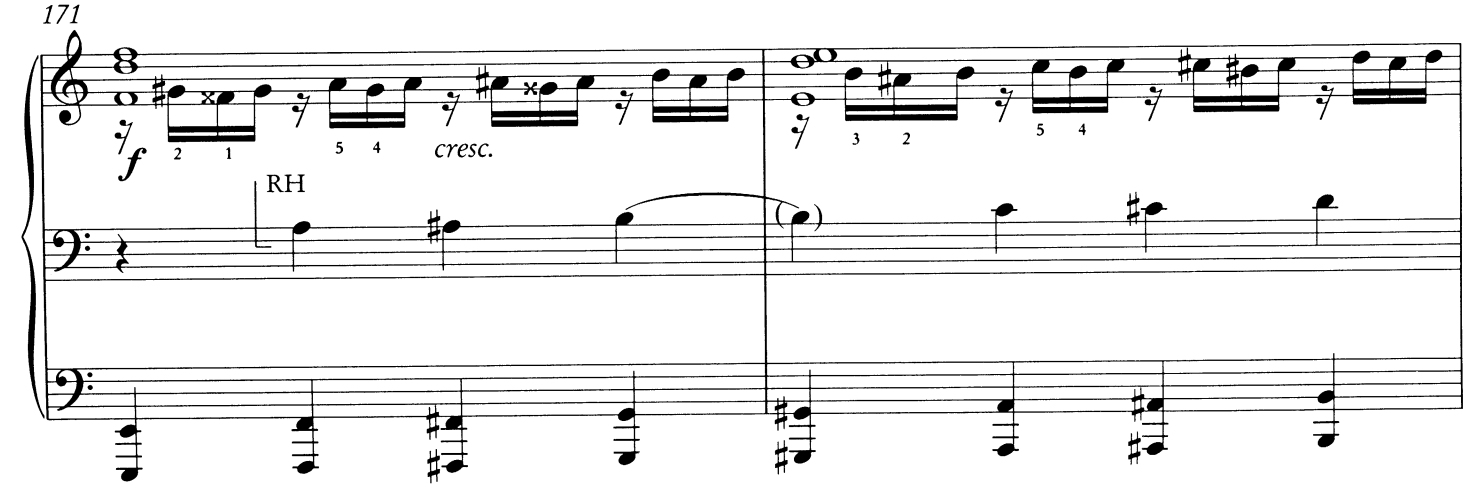

157
8va
p
sempre pp

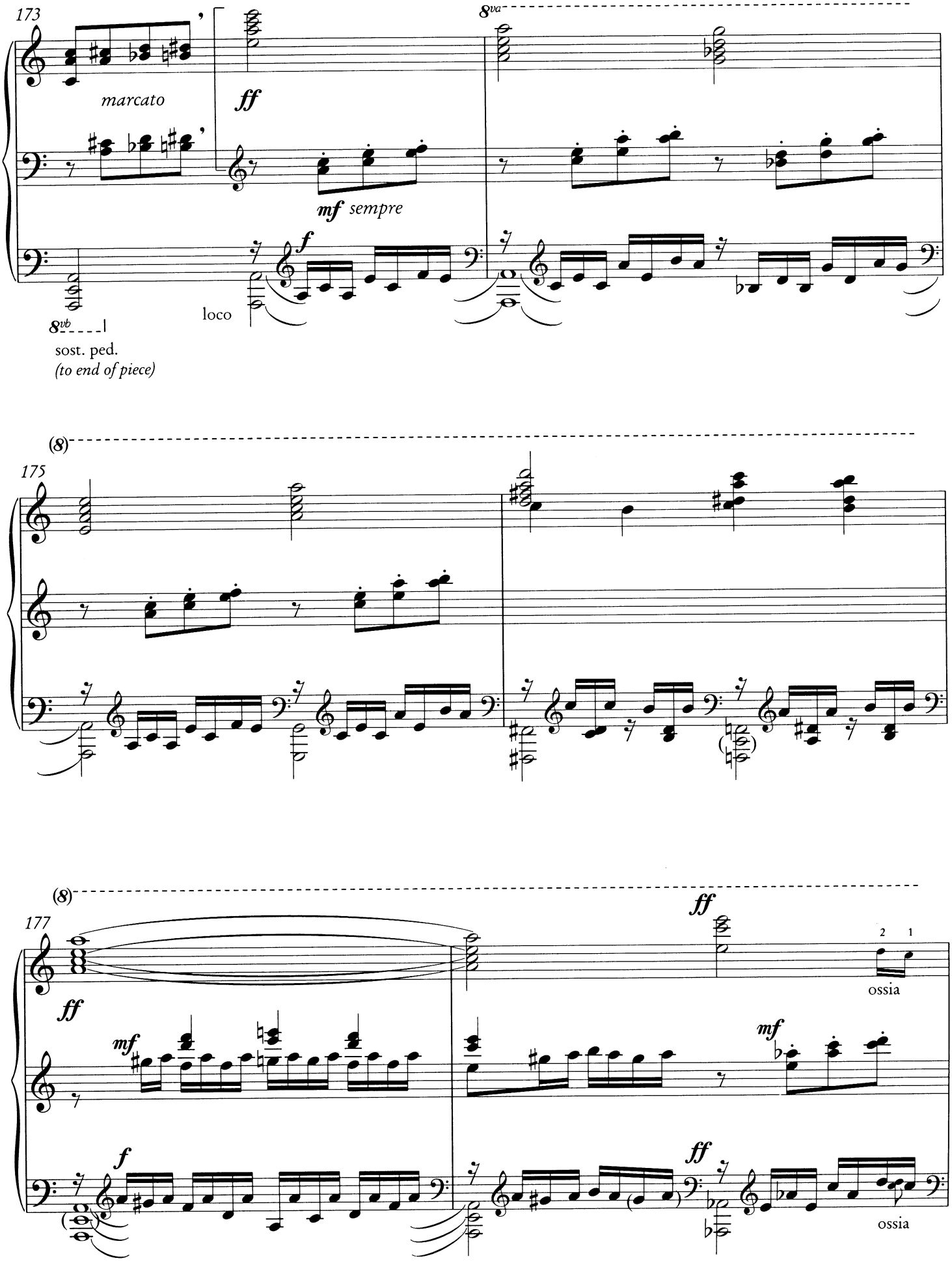

(8)
159

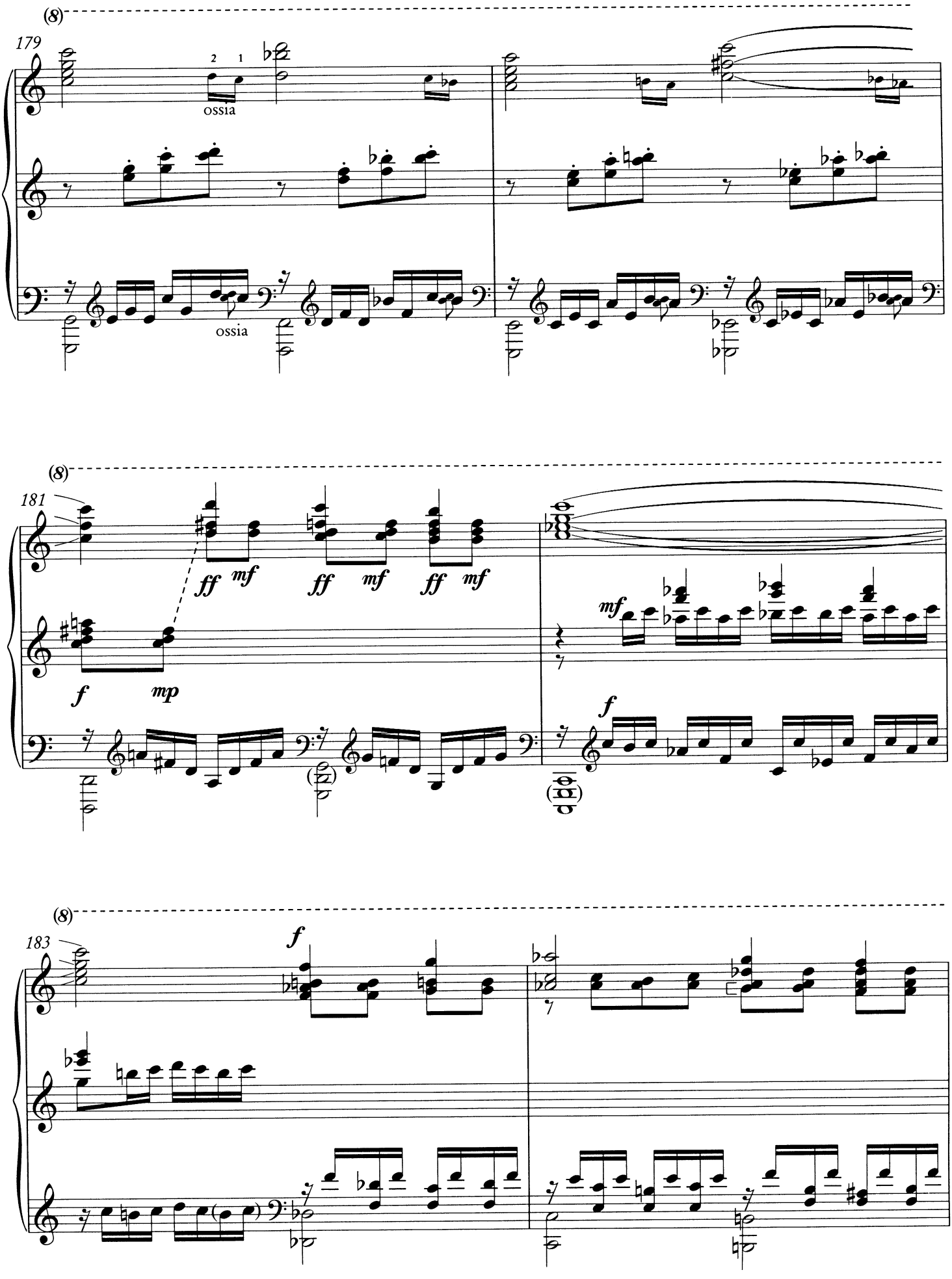

(8)
161
loco
mp
163
8va
p
(8)
165

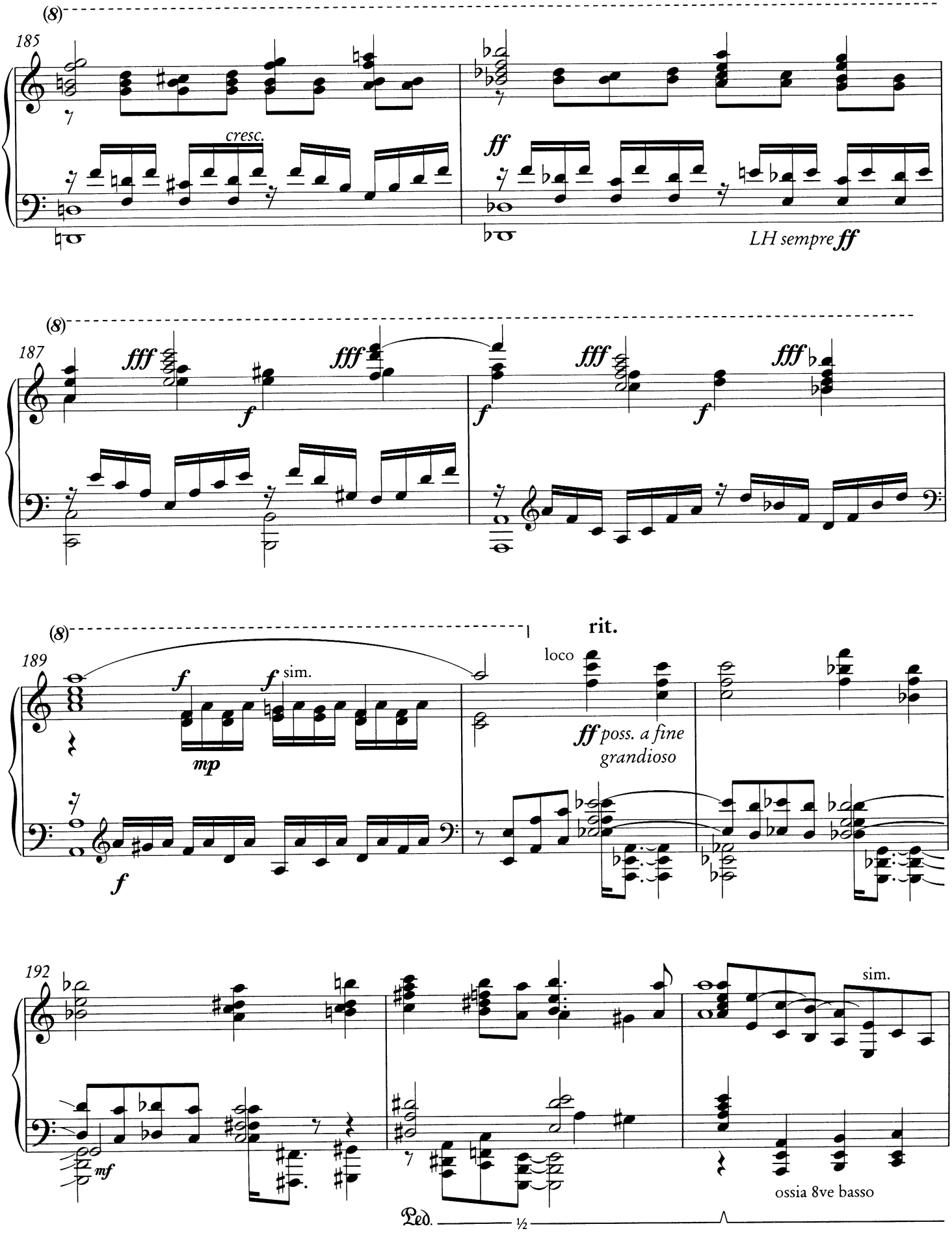

(8)
167
loco
mf

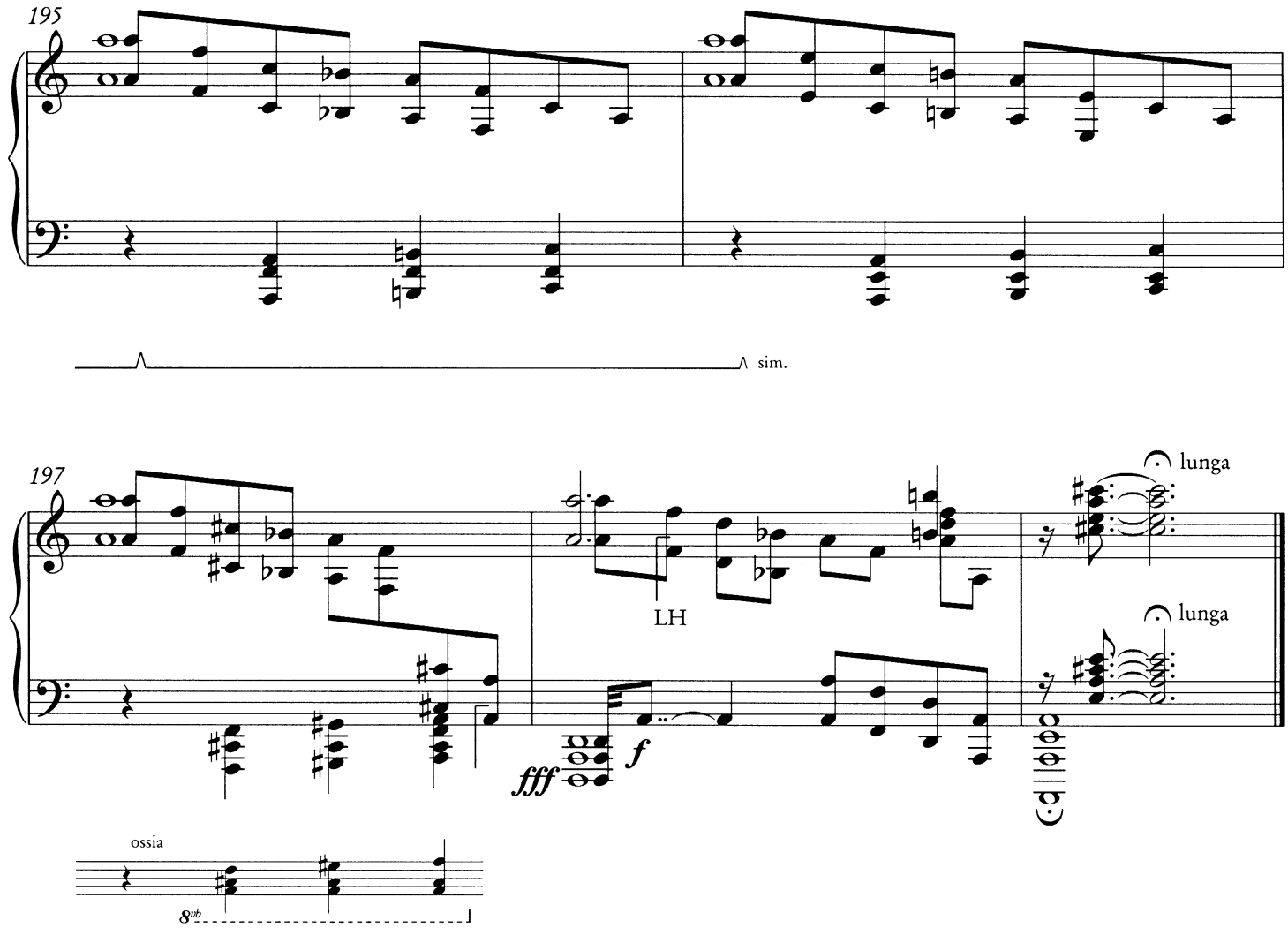

169
molto cresc.


171
f
2 1
5 4
cresc.
RH
3 2
5 4
release
sost. ped.


173
marcato
ff
mf sempre
f
8va
8vb
loco
sost. ped.
(to end of piece)
(8)
175
(8)
177
ff
mf
f
ff
2 1
ossia
ossia


(8)
179
2 1
ossia
ossia
(8)
181
ff mf ff mf ff mf
f mp
mf
f
(8)
183
f


(8)
185
cresc.
ff
LH sempre ff
(8)
187
fff
f
fff
f
fff
f
fff
(8)
189
f
mp
f sim.
f
rit.
loco
ff poss. a fine
grandioso
192
mf
sim.
ossia 8ve basso
Ped.
½


195
sim.
197
LH
fff
f
lunga
lunga
ossia
8vb