EDITION PETERS

No. 7376

Maurice Ravel

Le tombeau de Couperin

for

Solo Piano

Urtext Edition
by
Roger Nichols

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

Sources: the autograph (18 pp), signed and dated "juillet 1914, juin-novembre 1917", is in the collection of Madame A. Taverne, Monaco. It was not made available for the preparation of this edition. However, part of page 1 (title and elements of bars 1-9) - **A** - appears on the cover of Marguerite Long: *Au piano avec Maurice Ravel* (Paris, 1971)
E - first edition published by Durand (D. & F. 9569), deposited at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 25 May 1918

For details of all other sources see 'Editorial Method and Sources', p. 3. A table of Source abbreviations appears on p. 4

Prélude

A, E: no metronome marking. Editorial ♩.=92 supported by **RO**

Bars 2, 4, 31, 33, 38, 40, 50, 52, 87, 89. RH beats 1 and 2, if we assume RH ornaments in these bars to be similar, then Ravel's 3-4-2 fingering at start of bar 38 means that, contrary to what has been sometimes claimed, the *a'* (*e'* in bars 50, 52, 87, 89) is to be replayed, not tied to the first grace note

Bar 14. E: RH beat 2, semiquaver rest. Amended editorially to *d'* in round brackets

Bar 22. RH beat 1, Ravel's 3-1-2 fingering dispels any doubts regarding articulation of ornament. See note to bars 2, 4 etc.
PerS(conv), FauS 87,90: ...but in all cases, tenuto to be applied to first grace note, synchronised with LH, on the beat; second grace note and main note to be less distinct

Bar 40. E: LH beats 1 and 3, *F* ♮ s, no *laisser vibrer* ties. Added editorially by analogy with parallel passages

Bar 59. E: RH beats 1-2, *laisser vibrer* tie extends from second *d*♯ to beginning of beat 3. Dotted quaver *d*♯ inserted editorially at beat 2 (tied to previous note) by analogy with bars 55, 58. Supported by **RO**

Bar 60. As for bar 59, an octave higher
E: RH, treble clef before beat 4. Moved editorially to end of bar 59

Bar 68. E: crescendo begins on beat 2. Brought forward editorially to begin on beat 1 as in **RO** and by analogy with bar 63

Bar 77. E: LH beats 1 and 2, no slur. Added editorially

Bar 86. E: LH beat 3, quaver *g* , no staccato dot. Added editorially by analogy with parallel passages
E: LH beat 4, quaver rest above *B*. Augmentation dot added editorially

Bar 90. E: RH, *laisser vibrer* tie from *g* extends to end of beat 2. Shortened editorially by analogy with parallel passages

Bar 91. Editorial ***mf*** supported by **RO**

Bar 93. Editorial ***p*** supported by **RO**

Bar 96. Editorial ***f*** supported by **RO**

Fugue

E: no metronome marking. ♩=84 found in later editions, but provenance unclear; Perlemuter says it came from Marguerite Long. Added editorially

Bar 12. RH beat 3, round brackets to *b'* added editorially

Bar 14. E: redundant diminuendo on final quaver. Deleted editorially. *Subito* added editorially to ***pp*** in bar 15

Bar 16. CE: beat 3, Ravel indicates *f'*♯ and *e'* to be taken by LH

Bar 19. CE: beats 3 and 4, Ravel indicates *g'*, *f'*♯ and *a'* to be taken by LH

Bar 30. E: RH beat 1, slur from bar 29 ends incorrectly on *d'*♯. Repositioned editorially to end on *f*♯ in LH, beat 1

Bar 34. E: lower stave, no slur. Added editorially by analogy with LH of bar 32

Bar 47. E: RH beat 3, no augmentation dot to *e'*. Supplied editorially

Bar 50. E: RH beat 4, staccato dot above tied *d''*. Deleted editorially

Forlane

E: no metronome marking. Editorial ♩.=96 supported by **RO**

Bar 1. PerS(HJM) 66/71: "Ravel asked me not to put too much weight on the last quaver [*b'* of beat 1]; it merely hesitates before the second beat. It's only a touch away from being a grace note." ("Ravel m'avait demandé de ne pas alourdir la croche piquée, elle hésite simplement avant le 2ème temps. De là à la faire comme une petite note, il y a une nuance")

Bars 5-6. E: RH slur begins on first *b'*♯ of bar 6. Amended editorially to begin on *d''*♯ of bar 5 by analogy with parallel passages

Bar 10. E: RH beat 2, no augmentation dot to *b''*. Supplied editorially

Bar 19. E: soft pedal release not indicated. May be held until end of bar 24

Bar 23. E: RH beat 1, no augmentation dots to *a'* and *d''*. Supplied editorially. Present in **RO** (strings)

Bar 28. PerS(HJM) 67/72: "Ravel insisted on all the repeats." ("Ravel tenait à toutes les reprises.") **PerR** repeats bars 9-28; **CasR, FévR** do not

Bars 29-31, 33-35, 46-48, 50-52. E: LH slur extends to RH quaver *d'* in bars 31, 35, 48, 52. Shortened editorially to end on LH crotchet *g*

Bars 33, 37, 38. E: beat 2, redundant ***pp*** . Deleted editorially

Bar 38, 39. E: no crescendo. Present in **RO**

Bar 39. E: LH beat 2, tenuto. Deleted editorially

Bar 41. E: RH beat 2, dotted crotchet *e'*♯. **CE:** *e'*♯ transferred to LH, as printed here

Bars 46-48, 50-52. See note to bars 29-31 etc.

Bar 57. E: LH beat 2, no slur. Supplied editorially

Bars 58-59. E: RH, separate slurs for bar 58 beat 2 and bar 59 beat 1. Amended to one slur editorially by analogy with bars 4-5, 8-9. Similarly at bars 61-62, 99-100, 103-104

Bars 61-62. See note to bars 58-59

Bars 66. E: RH beat 2, no slur. Added editorially by analogy with bar 91

Bars 70, 95. E: RH beat 2, tremolo incorrectly notated as dotted quaver. Amended to dotted crotchet editorially

Bar 88. CE: RH beat 1, Ravel's fingering $\overset{2}{3}$. Amended editorially

Bars 99-100, 103-104. See note to bars 58-59

Bar 105. E: beat 1, *C*♯ */G*♯ dyad, dotted crotchet. Amended editorially to dotted minim by analogy with bar 10. **RO:** dotted crotchet tied to quaver on beat 2 in both bars

Bar 114. "1 Corde" suggested editorially by analogy with bar 19

Bar 123. E: RH beat 2, slur. Extended editorially to beat 1 of bar 124 by analogy with bars 28-29, 62-63

Bar 135. E: LH beat 2, lower part, no augmentation dot to *a'*. Supplied editorially by analogy with bar 133

Bars 143. E: RH beat 2, no slur. Slur to beat 1 of bar 144 extended to begin at *f''*♯ trill of bar 143. Supported by **RO**

Bars 156, 161. E: beat 2, redundant ***pp*** . Deleted editorially

Bars 161-162. E: *laisser vibrer* ties in bar 161 stop short of barline. Extended editorially into bar 162. In **RO** these chords continue for the duration of bar 162 beat 1

Rigaudon

E: no metronome marking. Editorial ♩=120 supported by **RO**

Bars 2, 24, 94, 116. E: RH beat 2, quaver joined to semiquavers by quaver beam. Beam deleted editorially in view of articulation and/or changes of dynamic

Bars 9, 13, 16, 20, 101, 105, 108, 112. E: LH beat 2. See note to bars 2, 24 etc.

Bar 33. E: crescendo continues to bar 34 beat 1. Shortened editorially by analogy with bar 125. Supported by **RO**

Bar 37. PerS(HJM) 71/74, 75: Ravel wanted the pianist to imitate the oboe used in **RO**. He also "wanted it without nuance. The tune's continuity is enough in itself." ("Il la voulait sans nuance, la continuité de la mélodie se suffit à elle-même")

Bar 77. Editorial soft pedal release supported by muting of cellos in **RO**, bars 69-76.

Bar 116. E: beat 2, no staccato dots to accented chords. Added editorially by analogy with bar 24

Menuet

E: no metronome marking. ♩=92 found in later editions, but provenance unclear; as with 'Fugue', Perlemuter says it came from Marguerite Long. **RO:** ♩=120. Ideal speed would seem to lie between these extremes: **PerRII** takes 4′53″ (♩=102), **CasR** takes 4′20″ (♩=117). ♩=92-120 added editorially

Bar 1. RH beat 1. By analogy with bar 38 of 'Prélude', it seems logical to play the grace notes as slurred to the crotchet dyad and not to tie the Ds. As elsewhere, tenuto to be applied to first grace note, with following notes less distinct See note to bar 22 of 'Prélude'

Bar 22. PerS(HJM) 73/76: "Here many pianists make a diminuendo on the third beat, whereas Ravel asked me to make a continuous crescendo." ("Ici beaucoup de pianistes diminuent sur le 3ème temps, alors que Ravel m'avait demandé un crescendo continu.") Thus in **E**

FauS 90: "In this piece, Ravel's most important observation was to ask me to make a diminuendo through the rising chords on the first page." ("Dans cette pièce l'observation essentielle que me fit Ravel fut de me demander de faire dans la 1ère page les montées d'accords en diminuant.") Thus in **RO**

Bar 25. E: RH beat 1, tenuto marking to crotchet. Deleted editorially by analogy with bars 1, 29, 101

Bar 28. E: LH, lower part, minim *a* with *laisser vibrer* tie extending to crotchet rest at beat 3. Amended to dotted minim by analogy with bar 100. Supported by **RO** (2nd horn)

Bar 33. PerS(HJM) 73/77: "Ravel asked me to play the Musette at the same tempo as the outer sections." ("Ravel m'avait demandé de jouer la Musette dans le même mouvement...")

Bars 41-48. E: melody in LH in odd-numbered bars, in RH in even-numbered bars. **PerS(conv):** Ravel preferred melody played in RH throughout. Layout altered editorially

Bar 81. Editorial soft pedal release supported by RO (removal of mutes in 2nd violin, viola, cello)

Bar 95. E: RH, lower part, no slur. Added editorially by analogy with bar 23

Bar 104. E: redundant ***pp*** above upper stave. Deleted editorially

Bars 109, 110, 111. Beat 1, editorial tenuto supported by **RO**

Bars 120, 121. PerS(HJM) 73/77: "Ah! Ravel wanted this delicate effect [grace notes to beat 1 of bar 121] made quickly and unexpectedly, like a surprise!" ("Ah! Ce petit effet! Ravel, en effet, le voulait rapide et... inattendu, comme une surprise!")

Bars 122, 123. RH beat 1, grace note in this instance tied to minim

Bar 126. E: LH trill, no augmentation dot. Supplied editorially

Toccata

E: no metronome marking. ♩=144 found in later editions, but provenance unclear; as with 'Fugue' and 'Menuet', Perlemuter says it came from Marguerite Long. **CasR, FévR, PerR** range between ♩=130 and ♩=140. ♩=144 added editorially

Bar 119. E: LH beat 1, *d″*♯ minim. Shortened to crotchet editorially in view of continuation of melody in RH, beat 2

Bar 155. Editorial soft pedal release indicated, but it could be that Ravel wanted soft pedal re-applied at bar 160, or retained from bar 145 through to bar 167 and perhaps beyond

Bars 155-159. E: RH, slur ends at crotchet *d′* of bar 157; new slur begins at *e′* of same bar. Slurs joined editorially by analogy with bars 168-172

Bar 191. PerS(HJM) 75/79: "Here Ravel asked me to begin *piano*, with the soft pedal, to allow room for the crescendo. *Piano*, but intense." ("Ici, Ravel m'avait demandé aussi de commencer piano, avec la sourdine afin de ménager le crescendo, piano, mais intense.") Unfortunately, Ravel did not say where soft pedal should be released

Bars 194, 198. E: LH beat 2, quaver rest. Deleted, and editorial crotchet rest supplied

Bar 221. PerS(HJM) 75/79: "When the first episode returns with an outburst of regularly alternating chords, Ravel asked me to take it a little slower to give more weight to the accents; then to come back gradually to the opening tempo, but without giving the impression of a gallop!" ("Lorsque le premier épisode est repris dans son éclat d'accords alternés et rythmiques, Ravel m'avait encore demandé de le prendre un peu moins vite pour affirmer les accents, mais en reprenant petit à petit le tempo initial et sans donner une impression de galopade!") But not observed in **PerR**

Bar 244. E: LH beat 2, crotchet rest. Deleted editorially

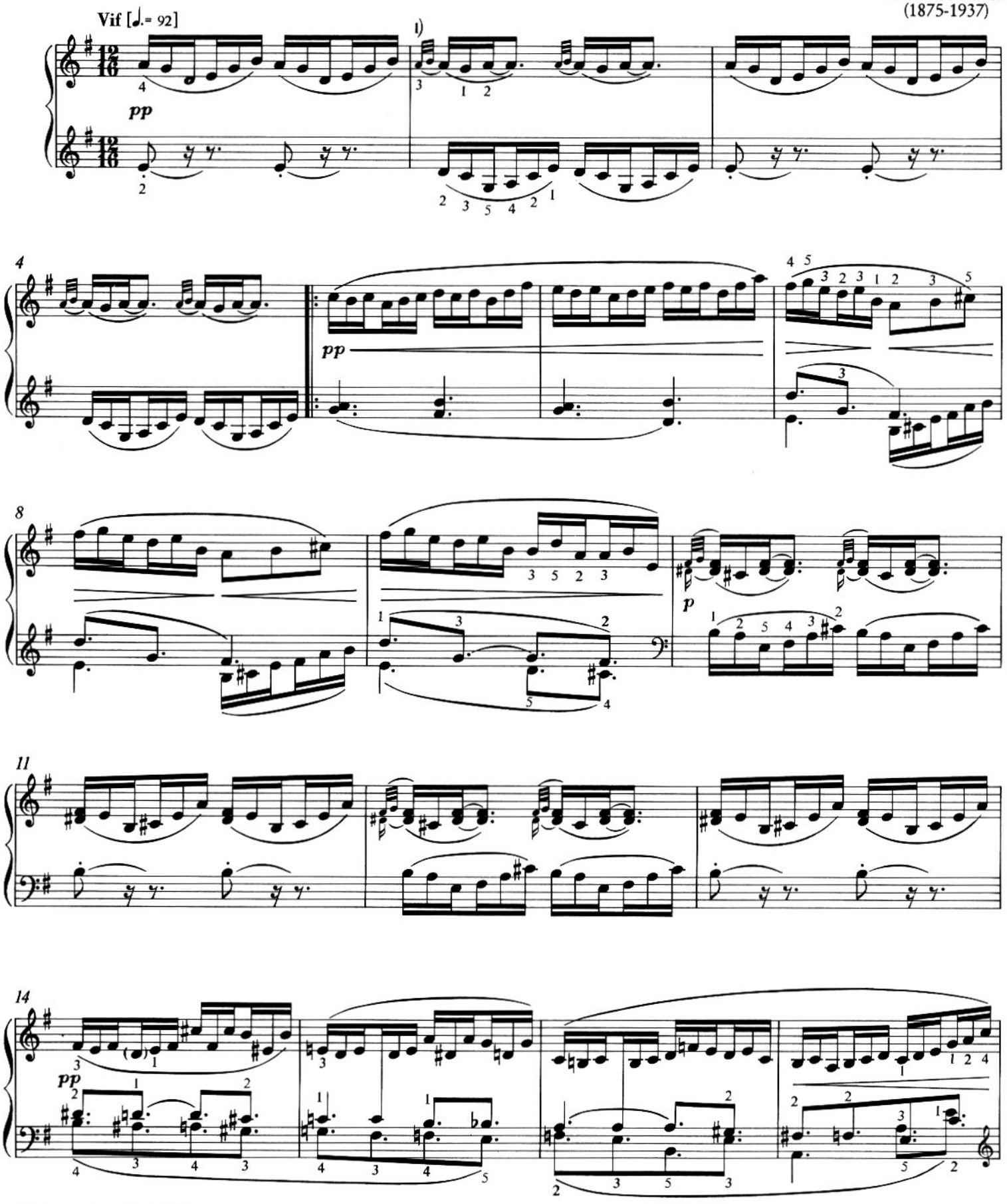
Roger Nichols
1995

Le tombeau de Couperin

I: Prélude

à la mémoire du lieutenant Jacques Charlot

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)



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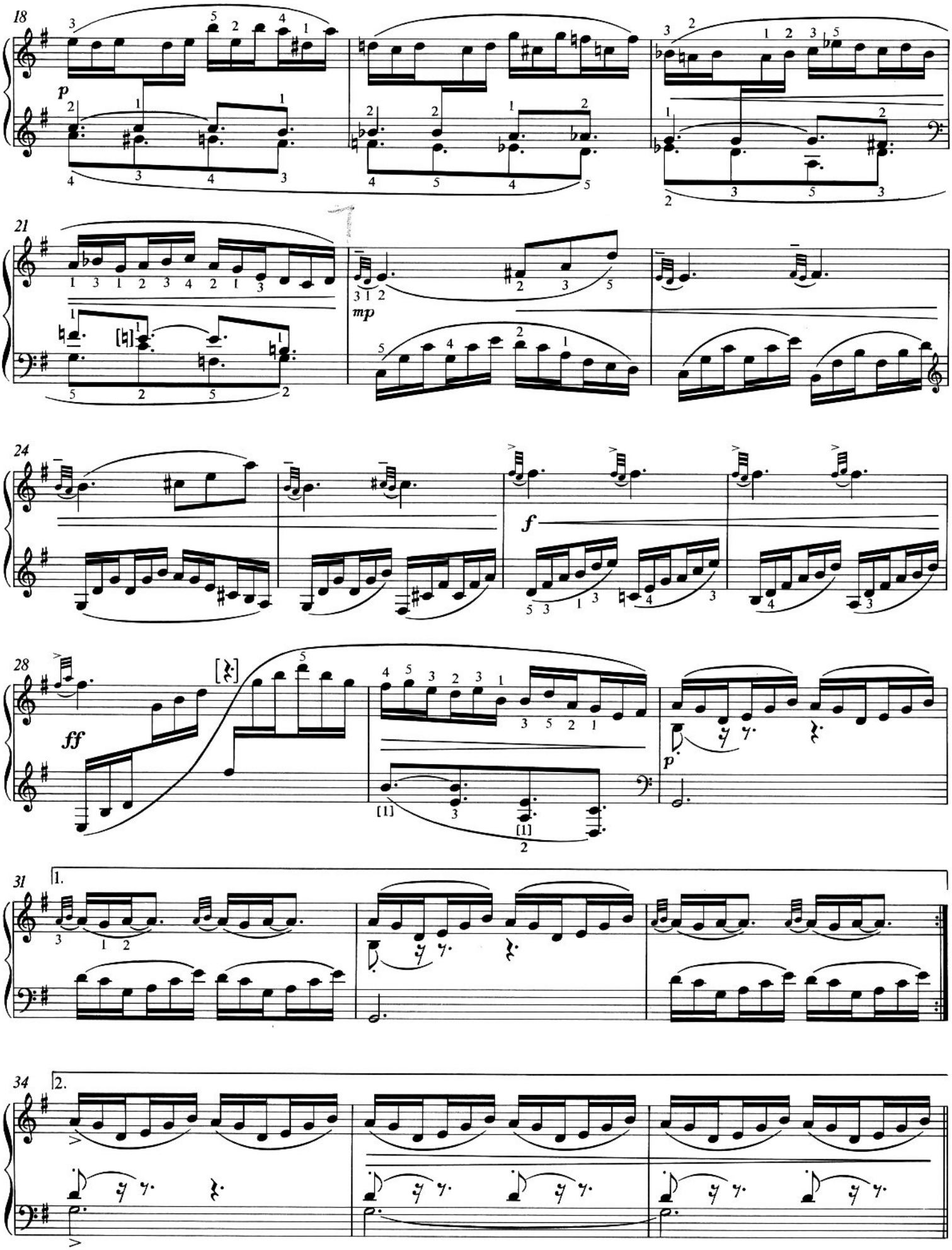
1) Les petites notes doivent être frappées sur le temps
The grace notes must be played on the beat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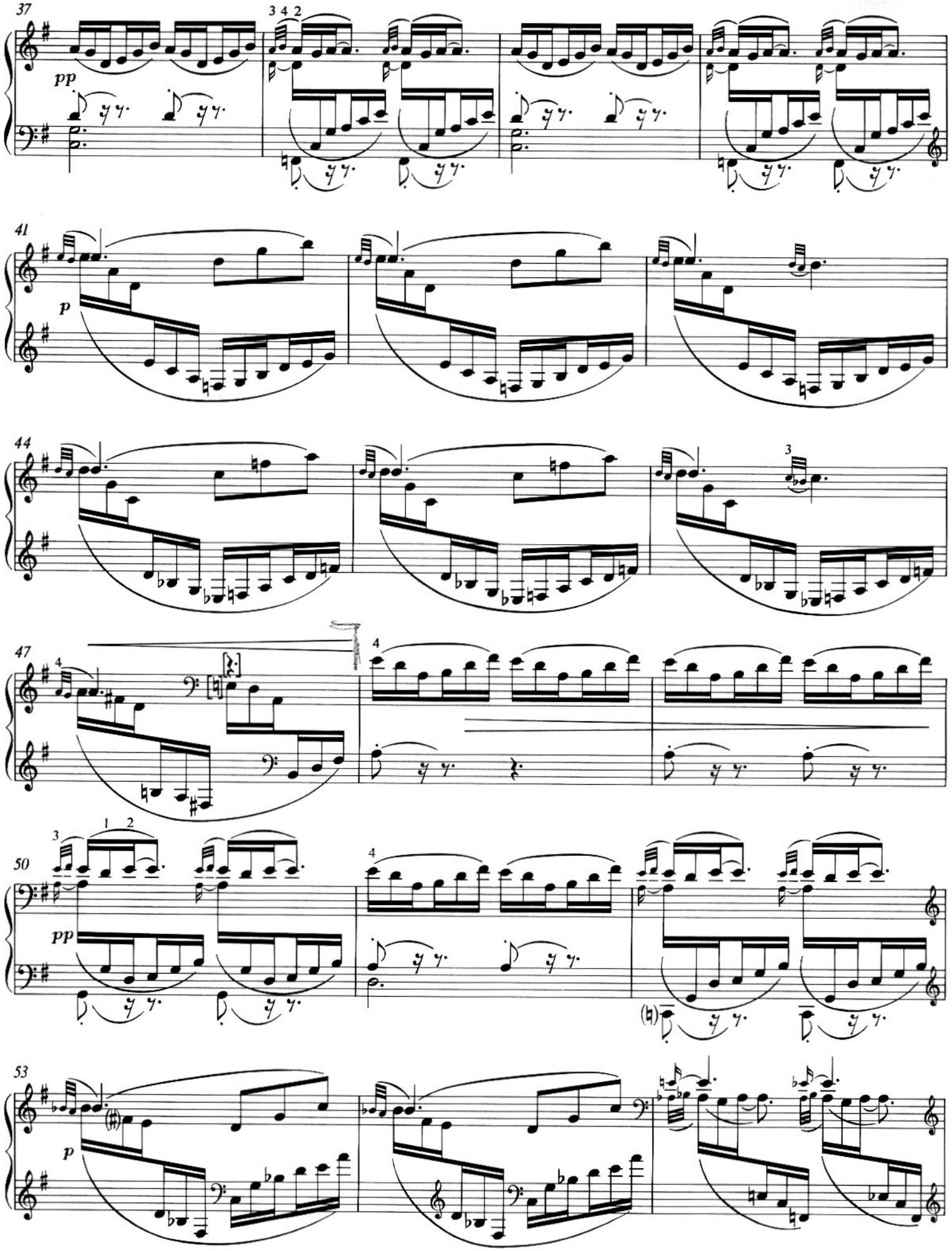
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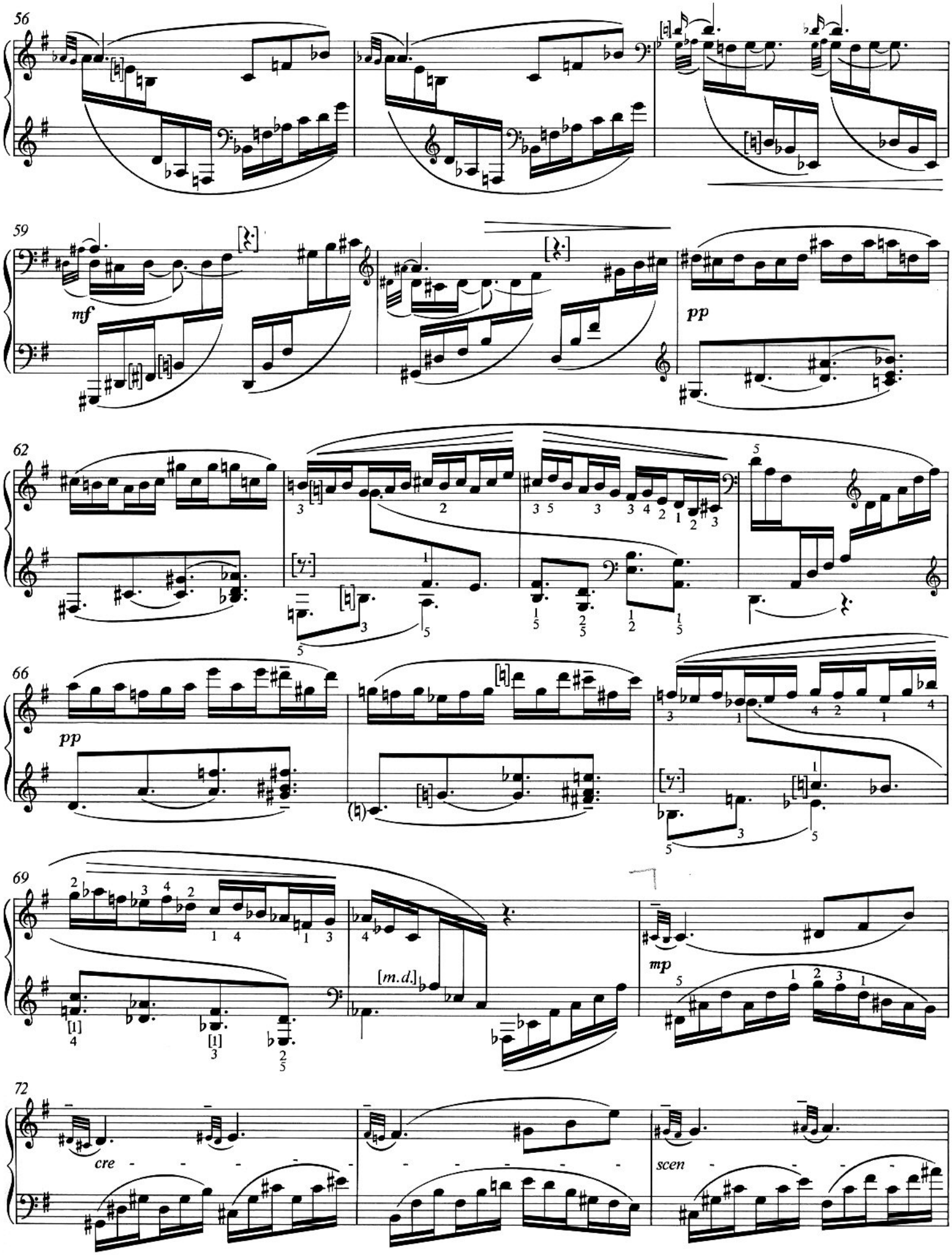
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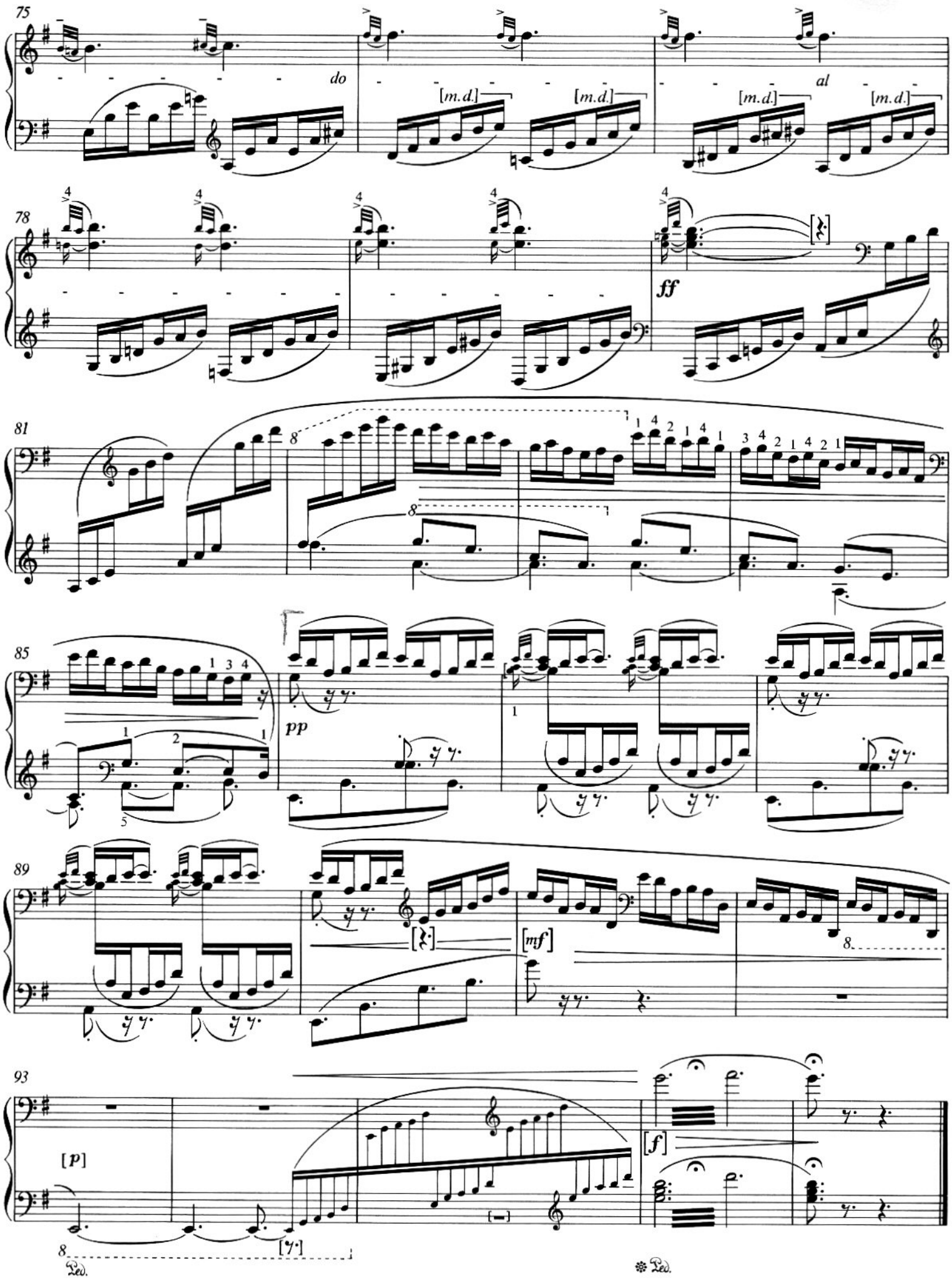
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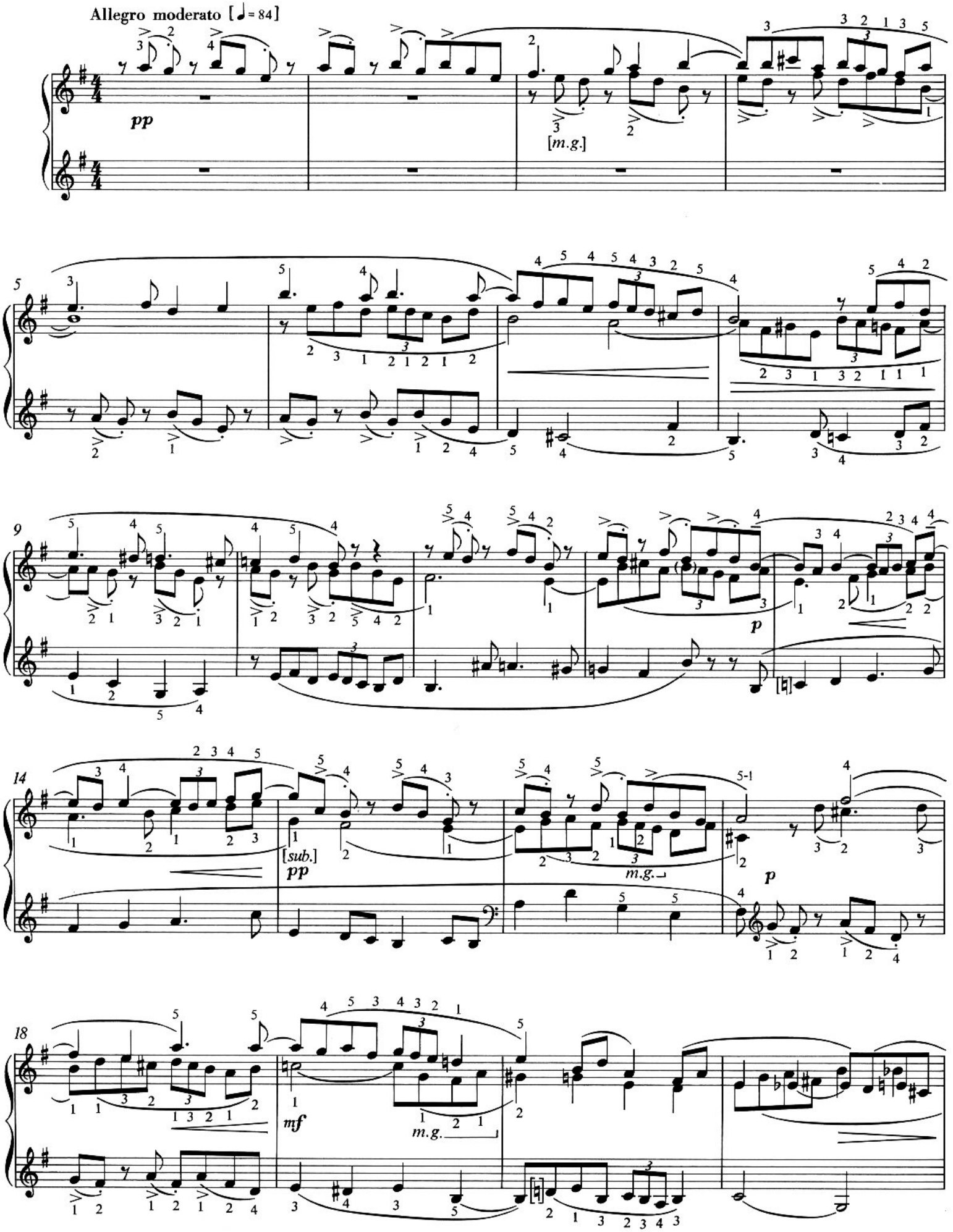
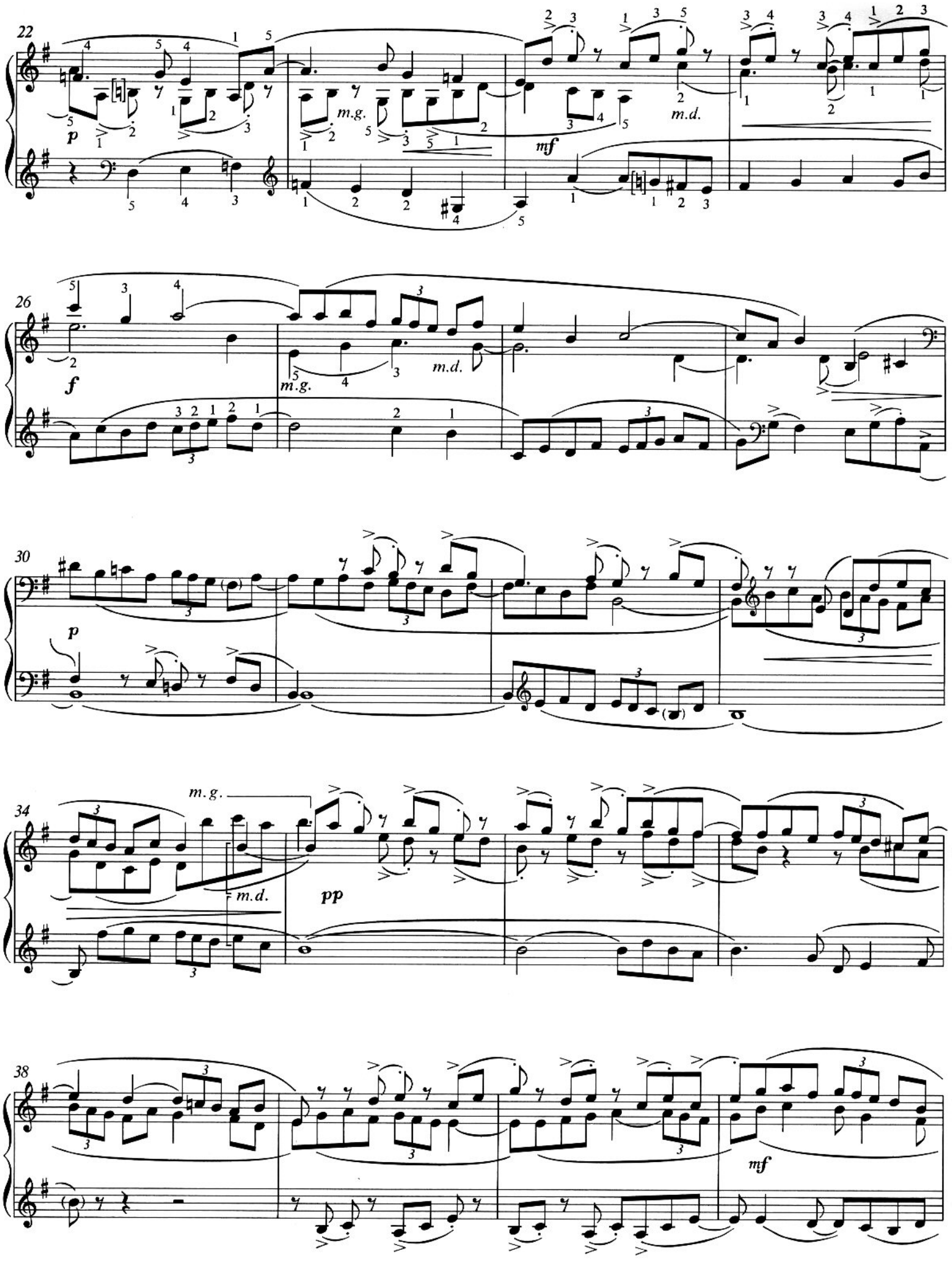
II: Fugue

à la mémoire du sous-lieutenant Jean Cruppi

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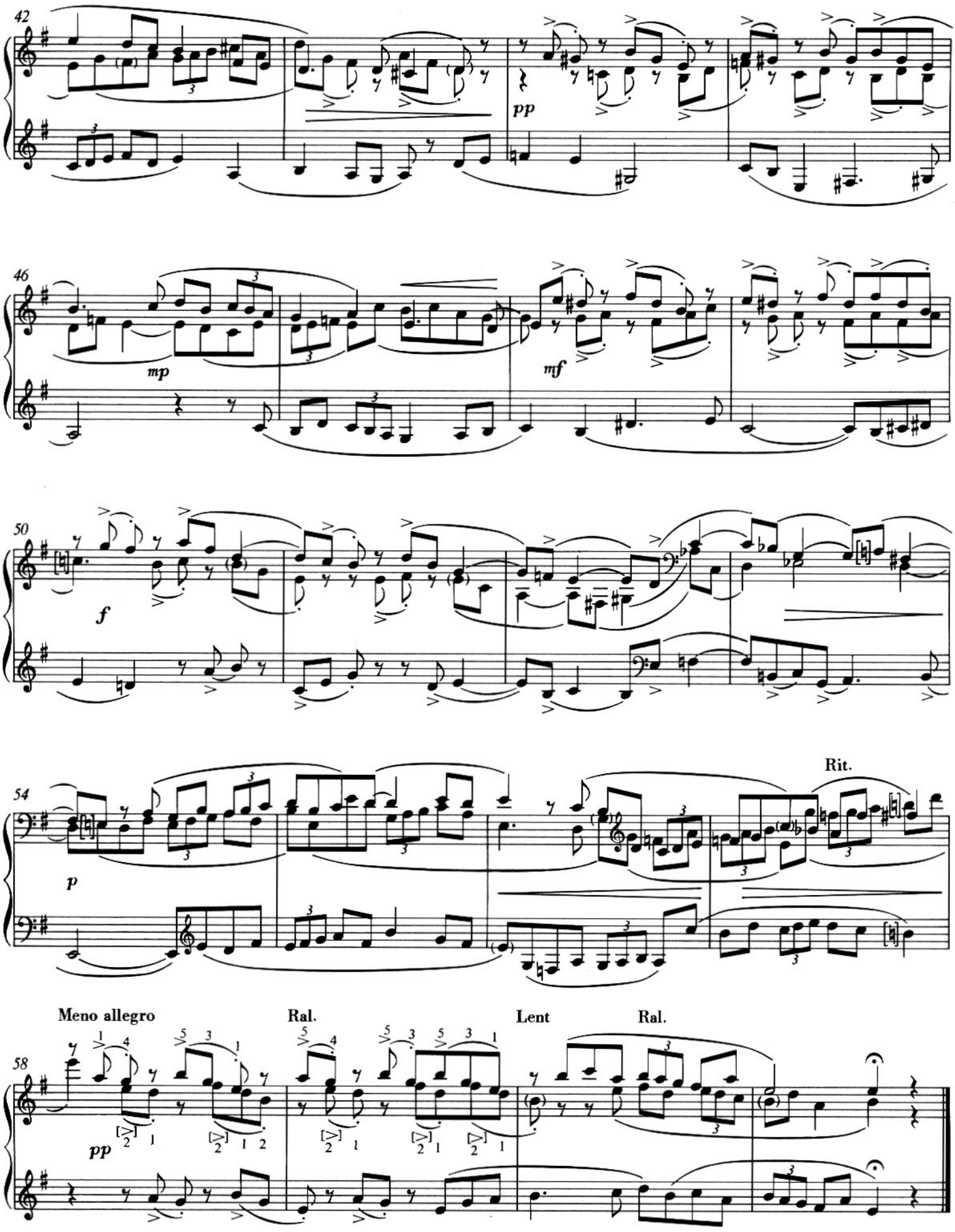
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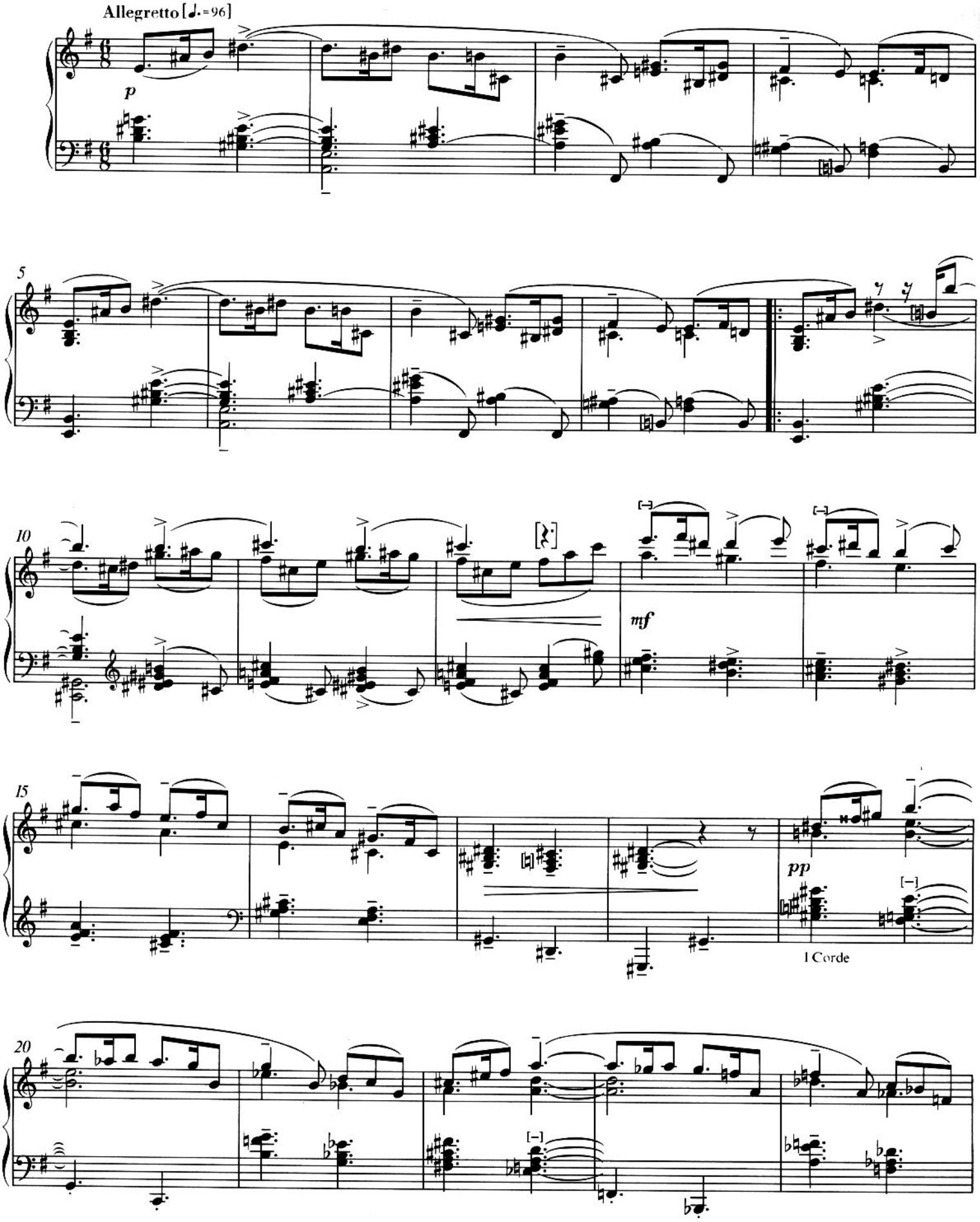
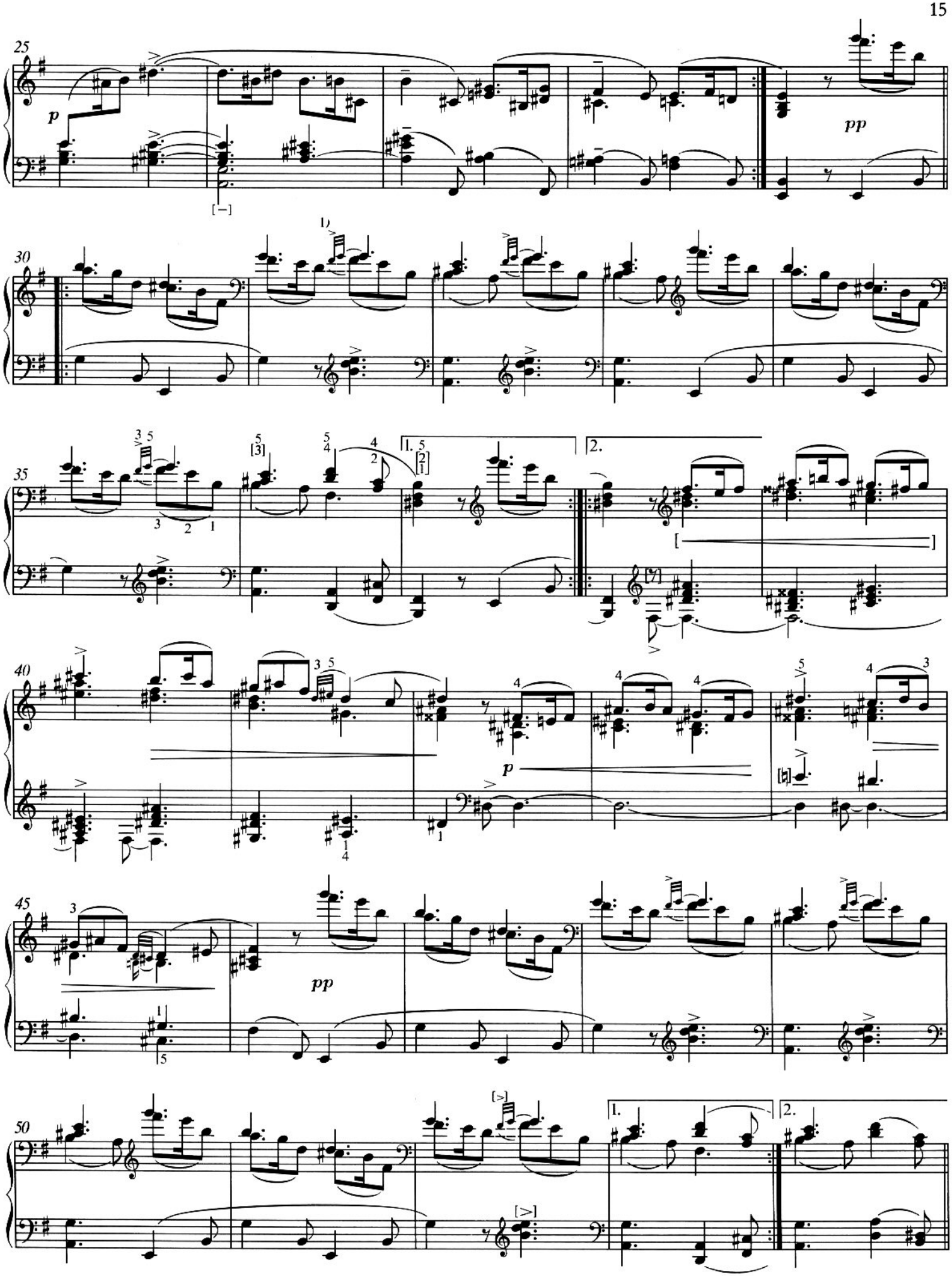
III: Forlane

à la mémoire du lieutenant Gabriel Deluc





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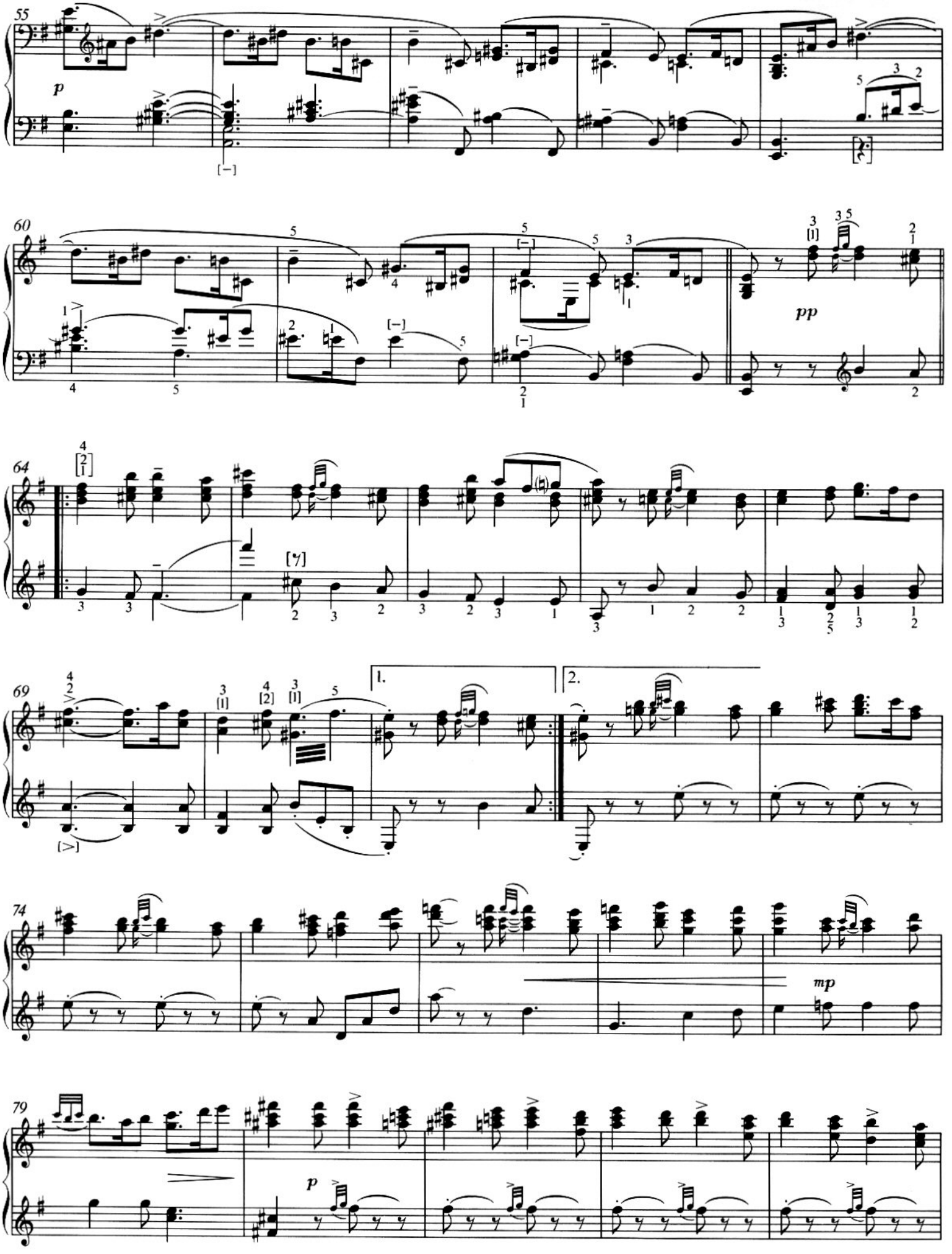
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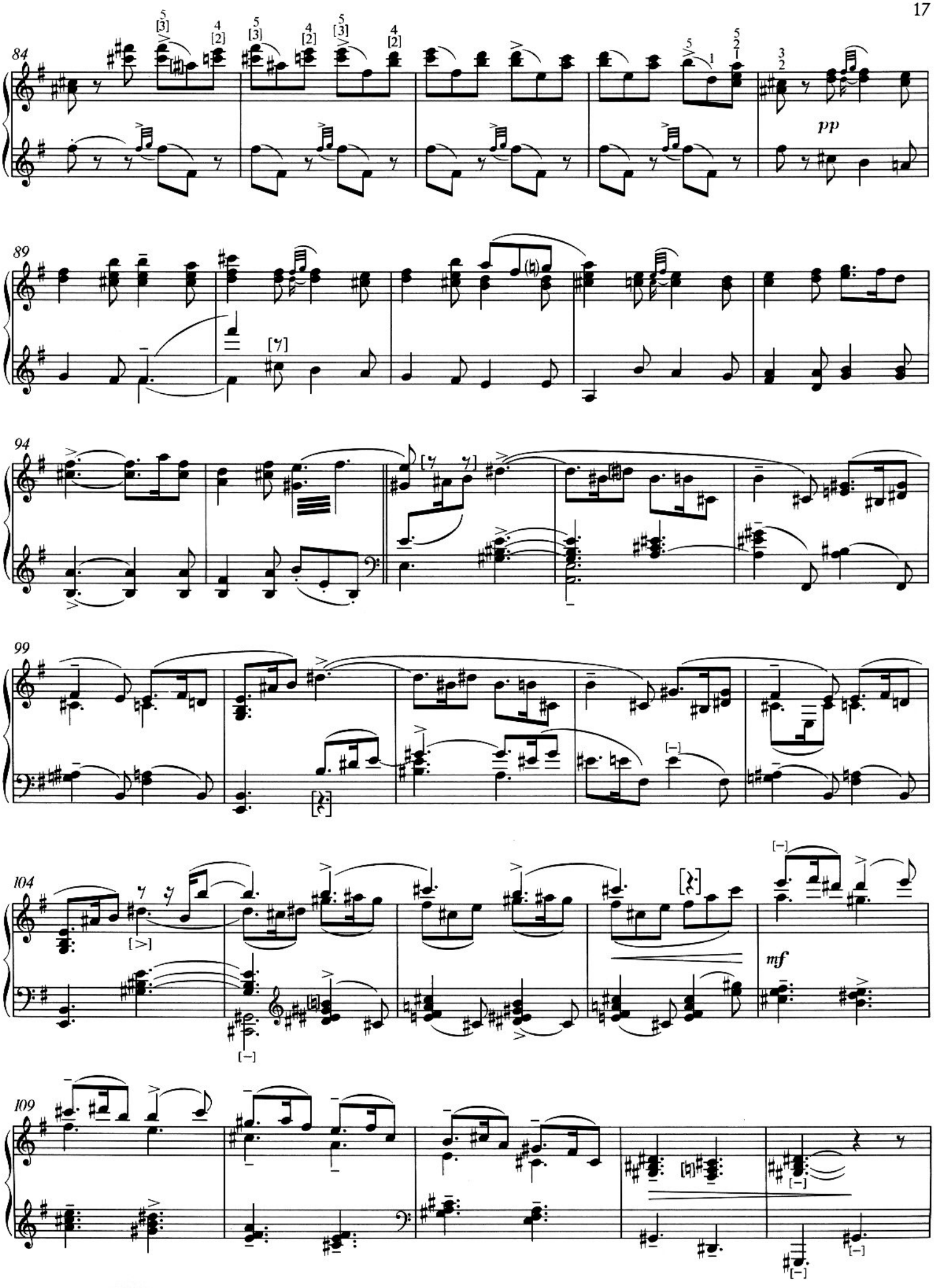
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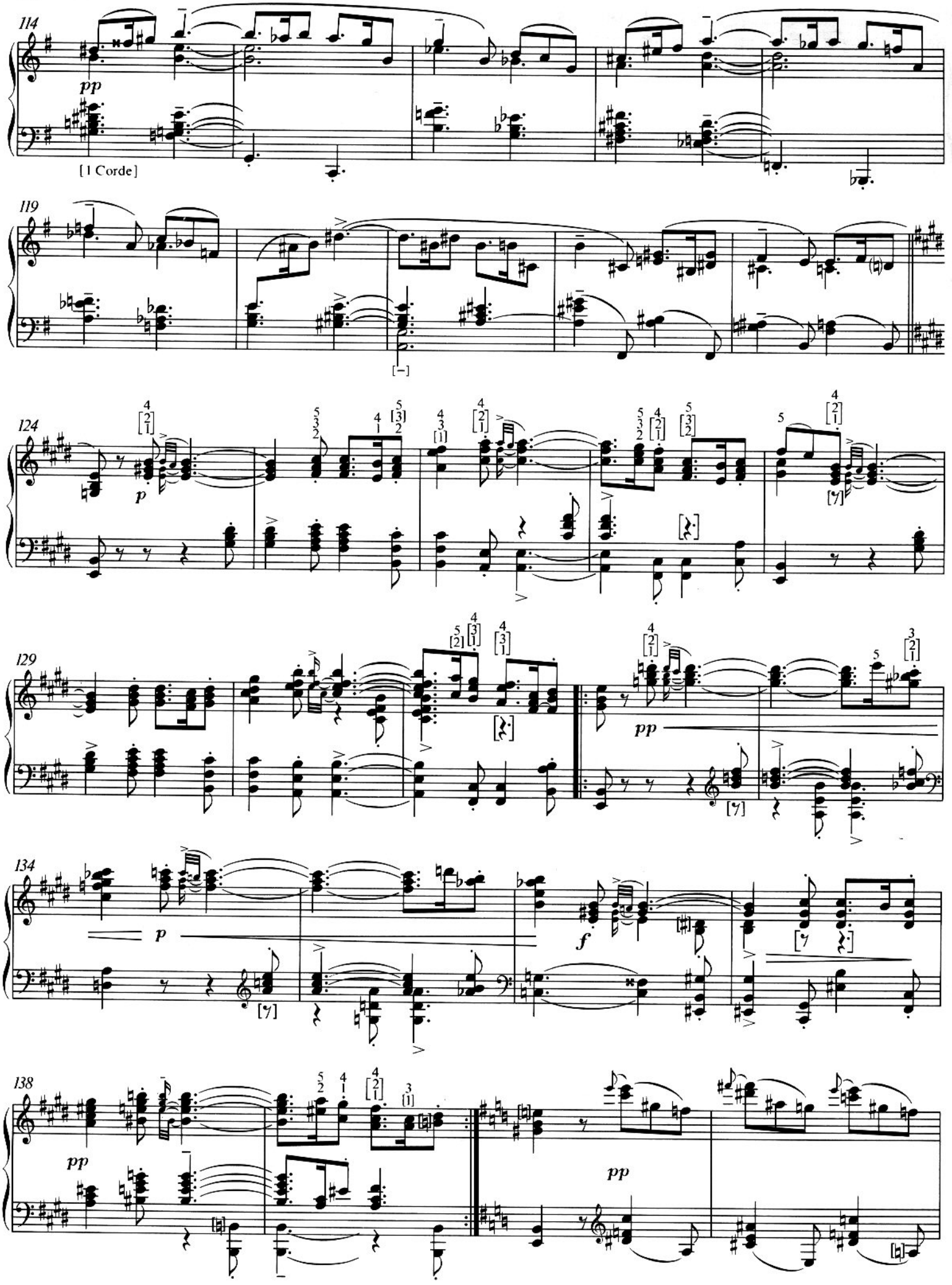
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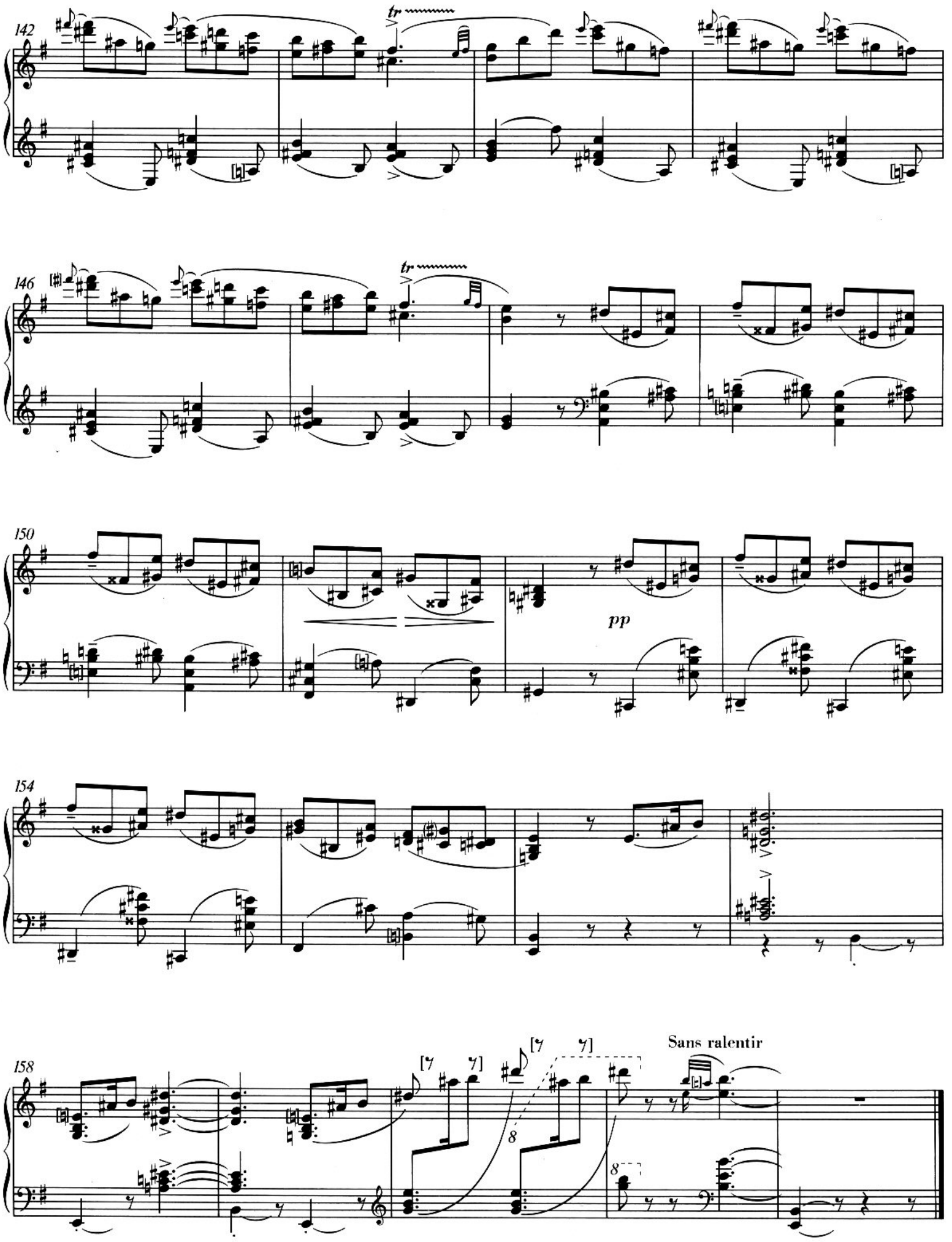
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