FIRESIDE TALES

by

EDWARD MacDOWELL

Edited by

MAURICE HINSON

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PREFACE

Edward MacDowell (1861-1980) was our first and most important native-born composer. He received the finest European musical training available and returned to this country with a few works already published.

MacDowell then followed a varied career in Boston and in New York City ranging from concert pianist, teacher at Columbia University and conductor of a men's chorus, to composer.

Fireside Tales, Op. 61, is a late set of pieces (1902) that display a slight change in MacDowell's style. A certain strange, far-awayness of thought and a grave tenderness are not quite like anything he had composed up to this time. This set shows a kind of serious and even sombre aspect while the writing is more masterly than in any of the earlier short pieces.

1. *An Old Love Story (Simply and tenderly).* This opens with a flowing melody, but the succeeding section in D-flat major, marked PPP, is characterized by a new and earnest expressiveness. The opening theme returns and the piece ends tenderly, subdued and wistful.

2. *Of Br'er Rabbit (With much spirit and humour – lightly).* This bright composition opens with a roguish and catching tune that is brilliantly worked out with variety, droll humor, and masterly skill. The piece has an affinity with *From Uncle Remus (Woodland Sketches,*, Op. 51) since Br'er Rabbit is Uncle Remus' main hero; but the maturity and masterly handling of the material in *Of Br'er Rabbit* is much finer than anything in the earlier piece.

3. *From A German Forest (With deep feeling, dreamily.* This piece contains lovely tunes, chromatic figuration, and effective changing meters (3/4, 6/8, 9/8). A contrasting middle section prepares for the return of the opening section and the piece concludes PPPP.

4. *Of Salamanders (As delicately as possible).* This is a fanciful, intricate piece and very delicate in effect. It requires an absolute control of finger work. It was one of MacDowell's favorites.

5. *A Haunted House (Mysteriously).* This is one of MacDowell's most imaginative and realistic pieces. It opens *very dark and sombre* and develops into a wild and eerie fortissimo. The middle section requires fast fingers to suggest the nervous expectancy aroused by the preceding mysteriousness. The ghostly effect returns, then gradually recedes again tinto impenetrable gloom.

6. *By Smouldering Embers (Musingly).* This short and quiet piece opens with a tender theme and displays a mastery of harmony and counterpoint. The concise middle section is characterized by its most passionate, but sonorous and controlled emotion. The opening idea returns and the music becomes moving and subdued and then dies away with an effective decrescendo.

These delightful pieces appear exactly as MacDowell left them in the first edition.

Maurice Hinson

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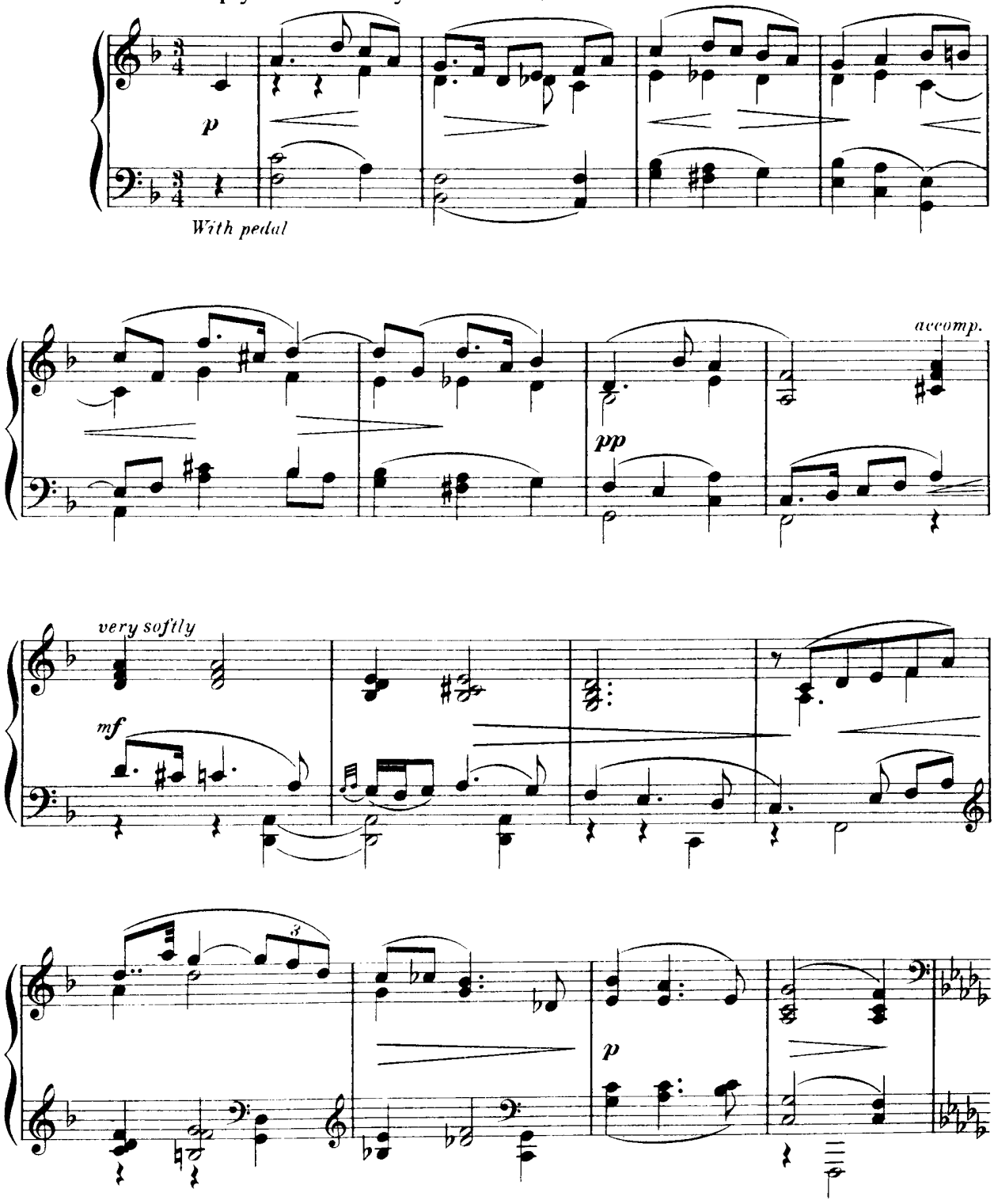
AN OLD LOVE STORY.

EDWARD MAC DOWELL.
Op. 61. № 1.

Simply and tenderly. (♩= about 56.)



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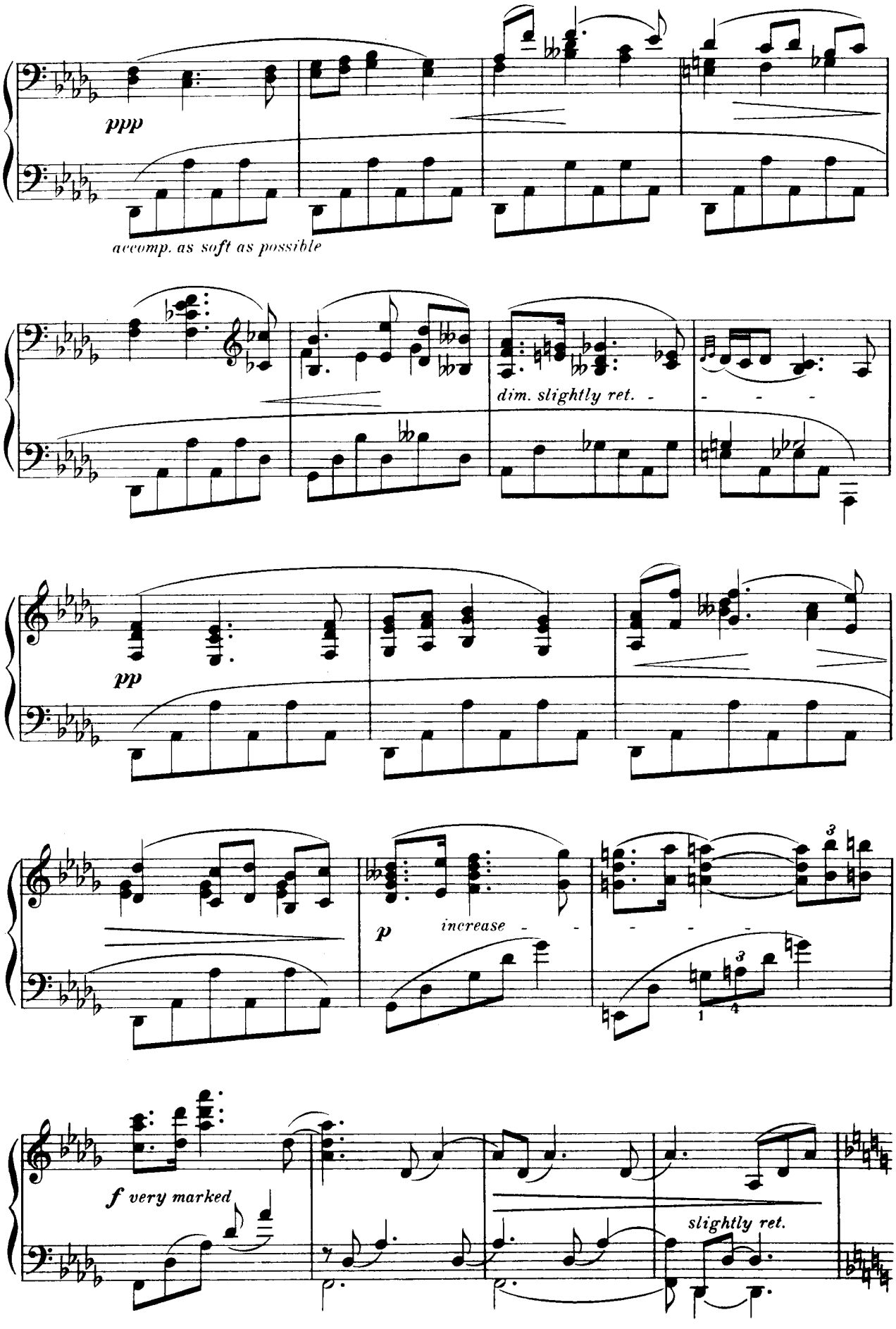
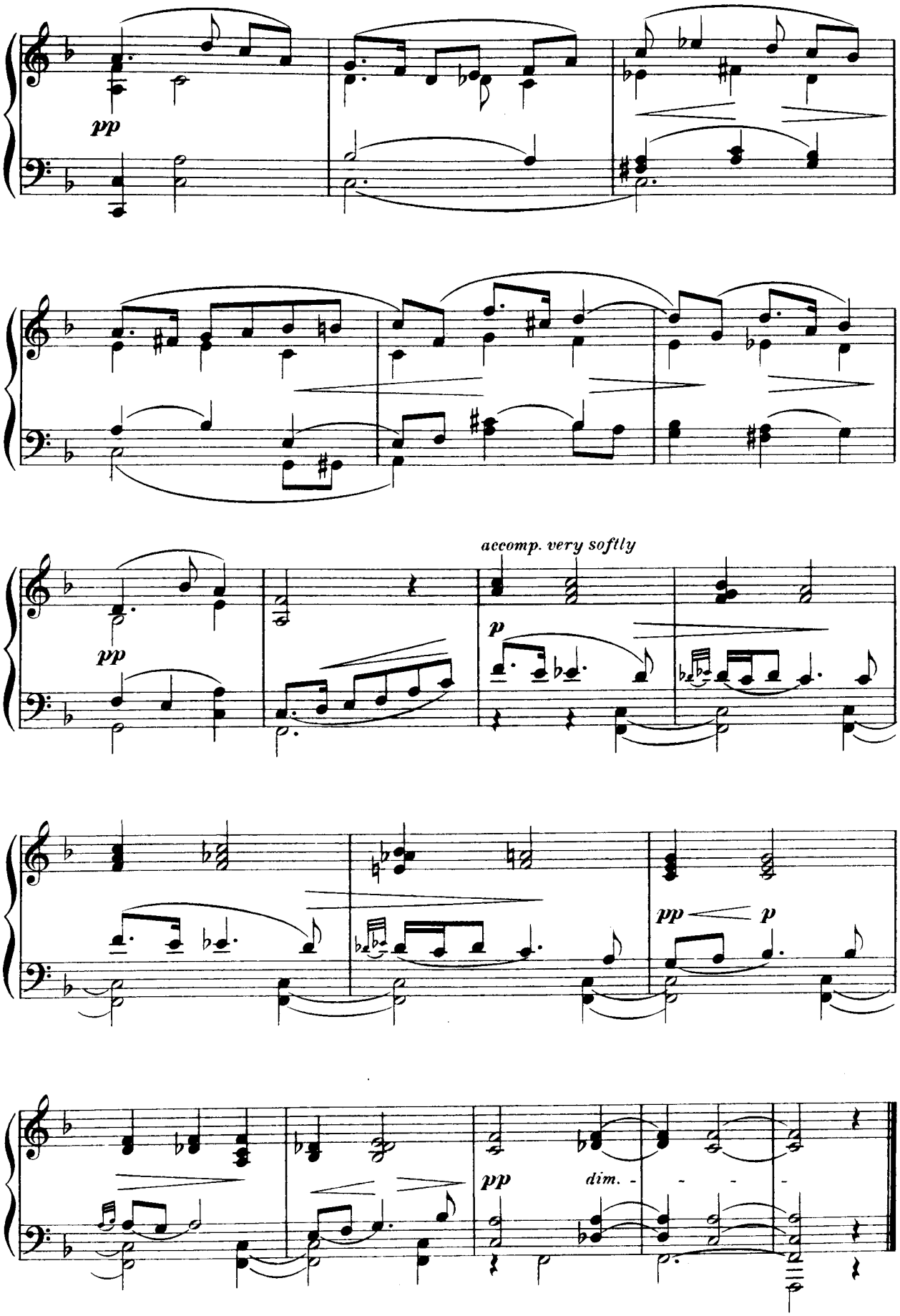
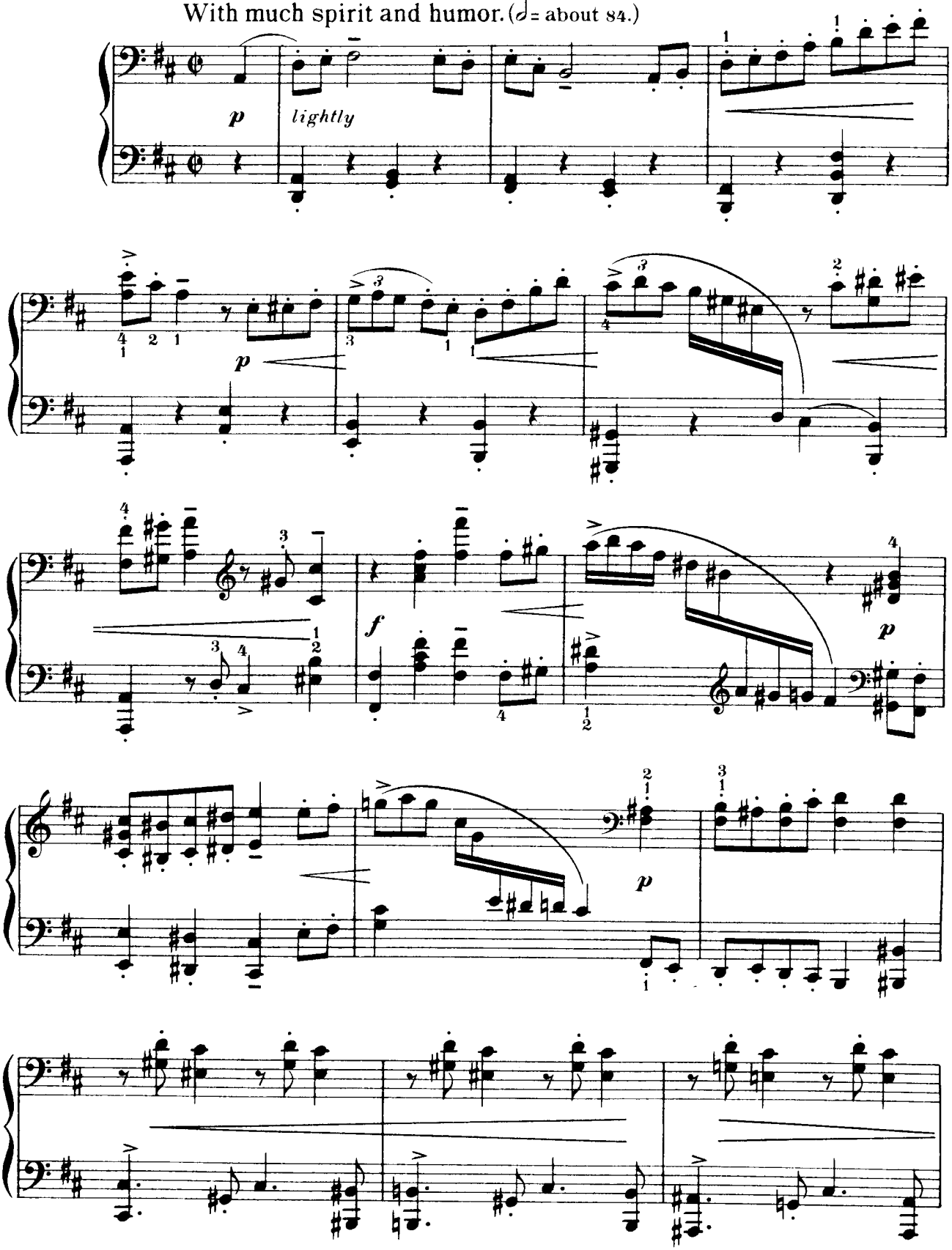

ppp
accomp. as soft as possible
dim. slightly ret.
pp
p
increase
f very marked
slightly ret.


pp
accomp. very softly
p
pp
p
pp
dim.

OF BR'ER RABBIT.

EDWARD MAC DOWELL.
Op. 61. No 2.

With much spirit and humor. (𝅗𝅥 = about 84.)



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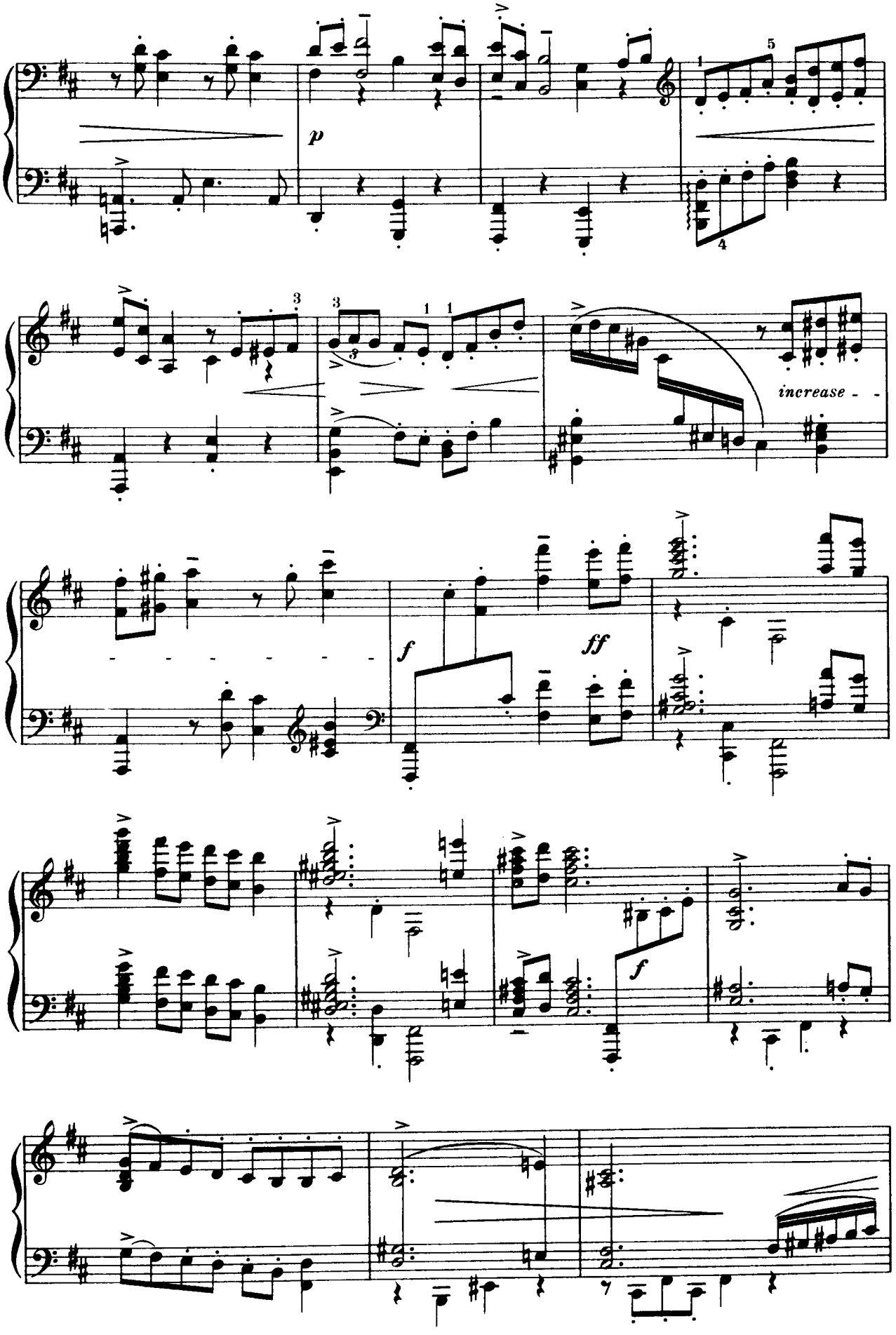
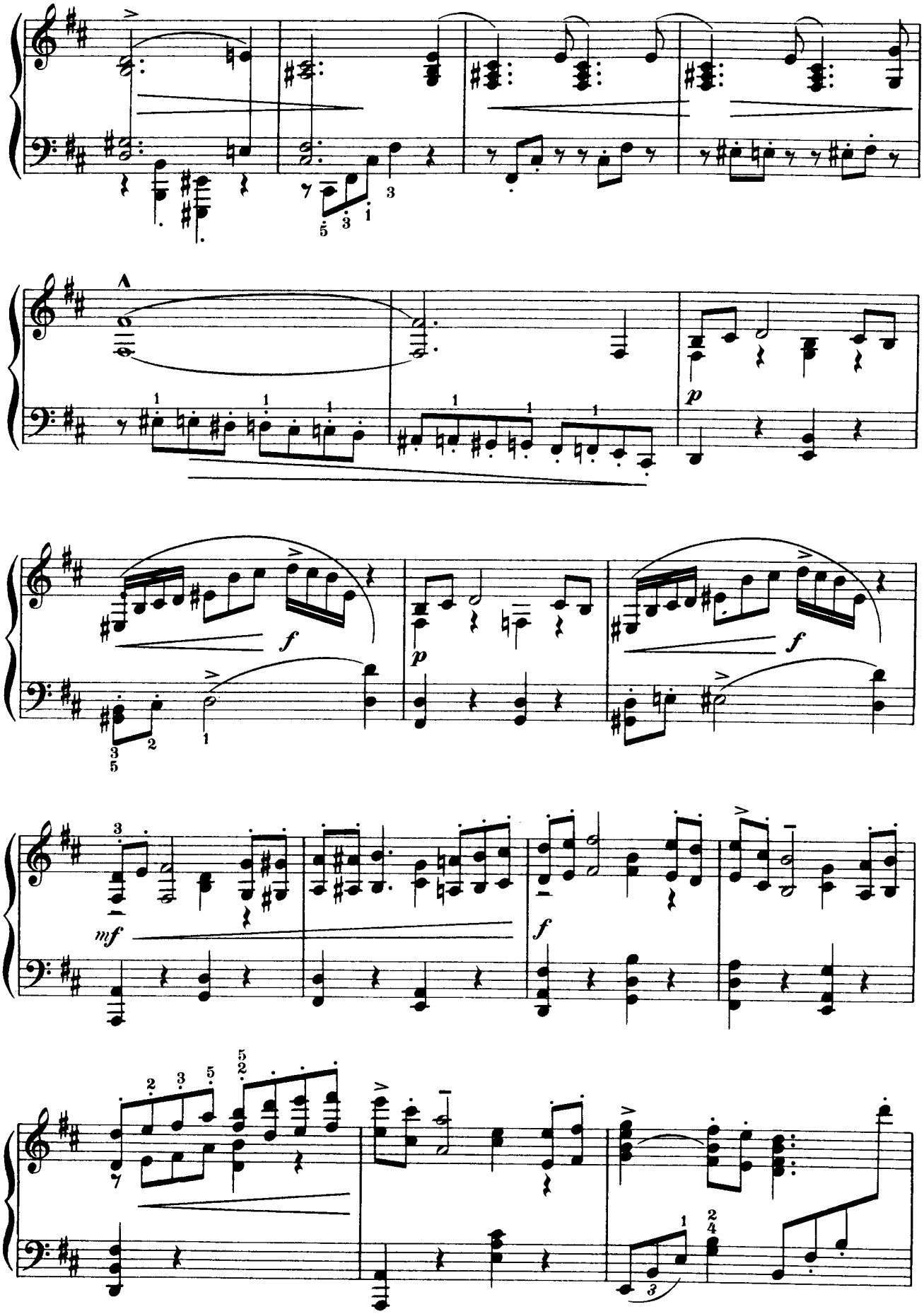
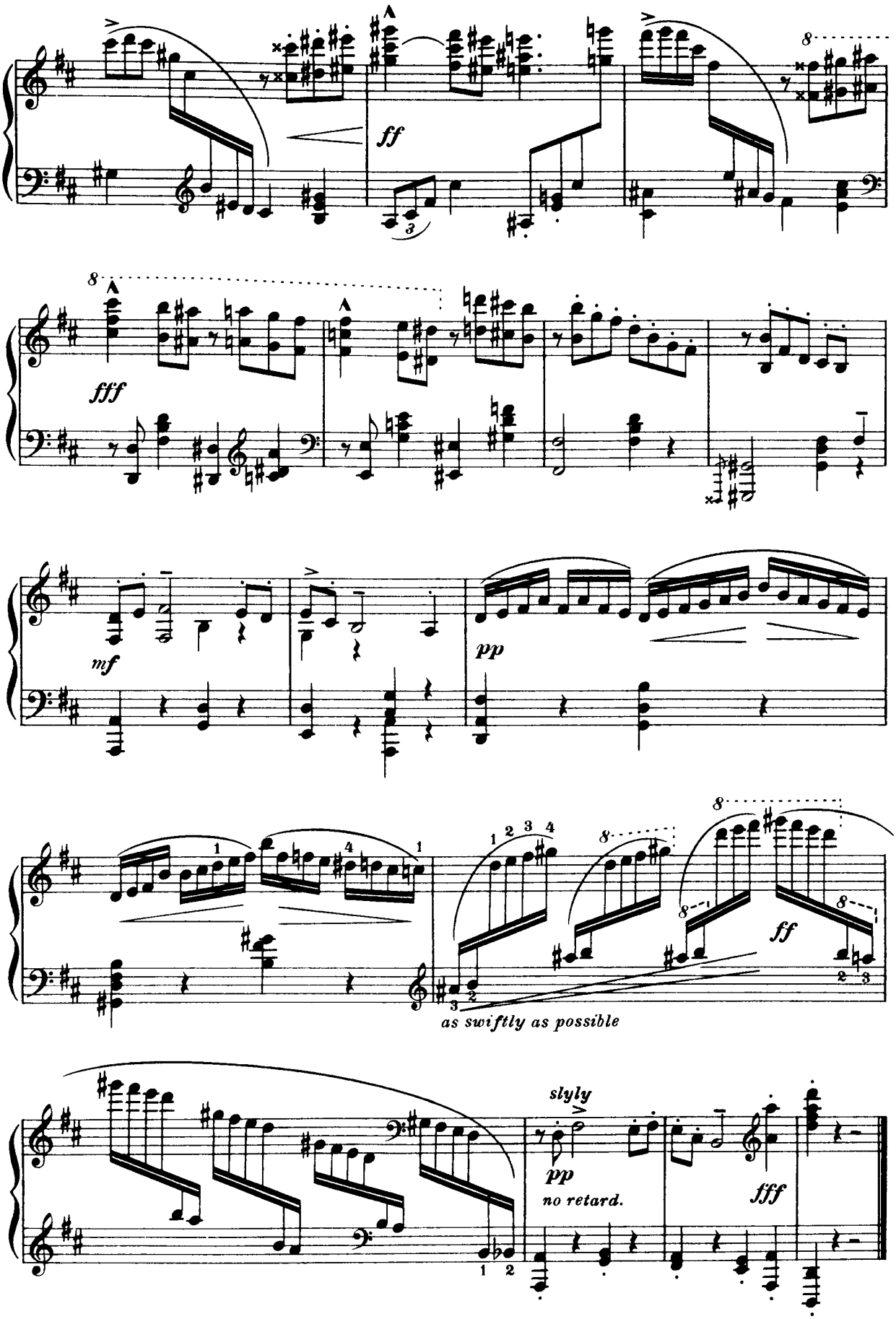

p
increase - -
f
ff
f

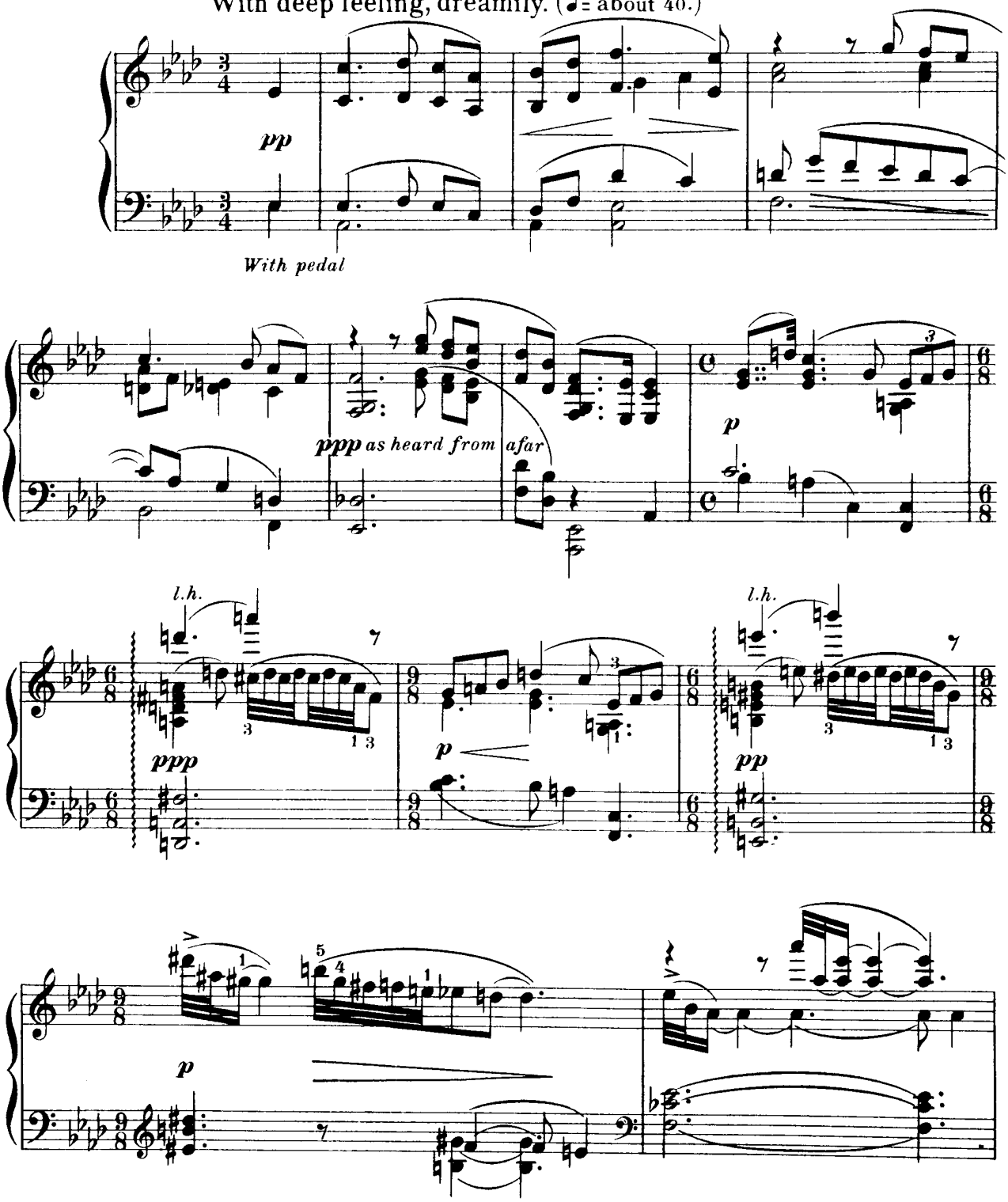

p
f
p
f
mf
f


ff
fff
mf
pp
as swiftly as possible
slyly
pp
no retard.
fff

FROM A GERMAN FOREST

EDWARD MAC DOWELL.
Op. 61. № 3.

With deep feeling, dreamily. (♩= about 40.)



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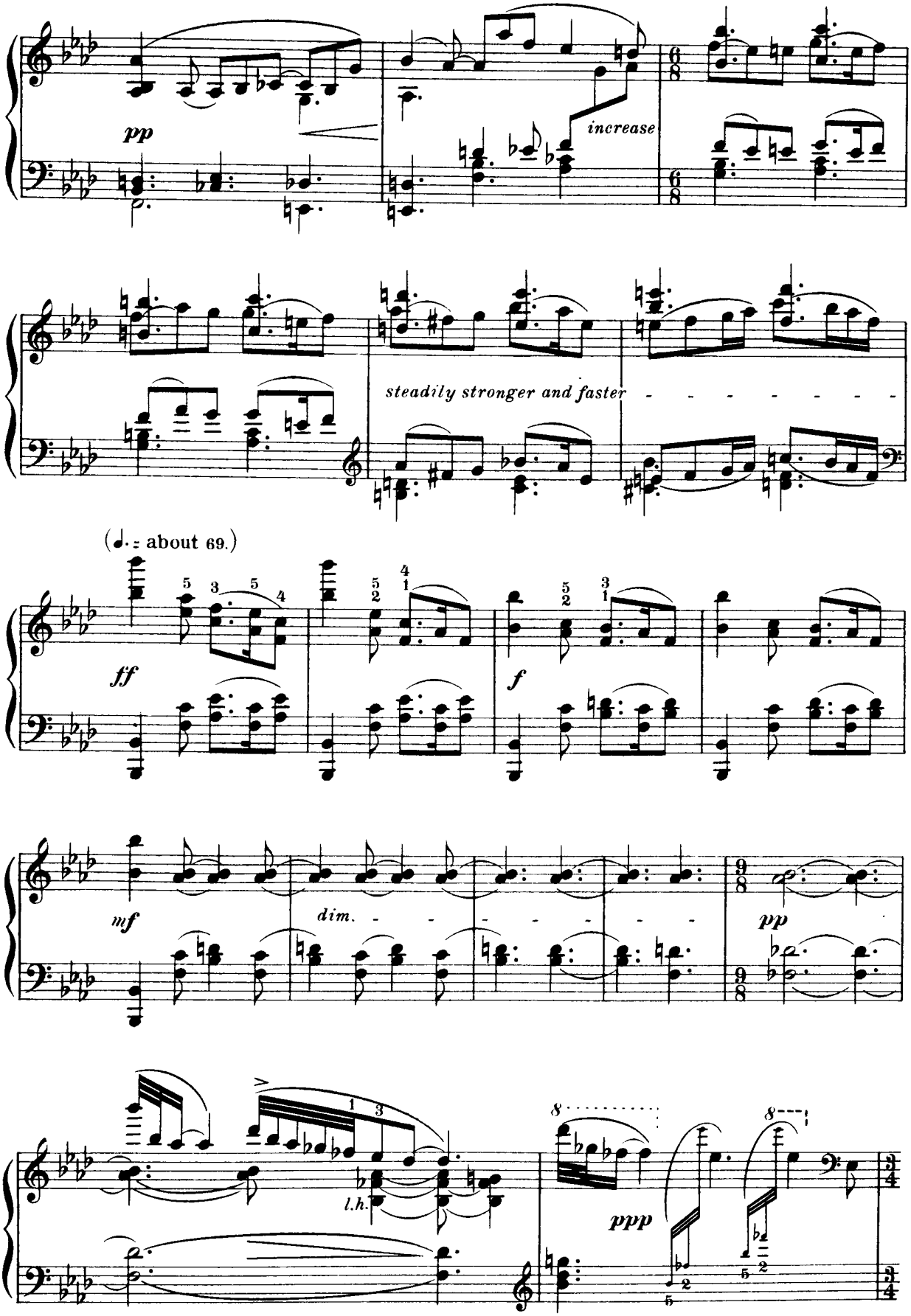
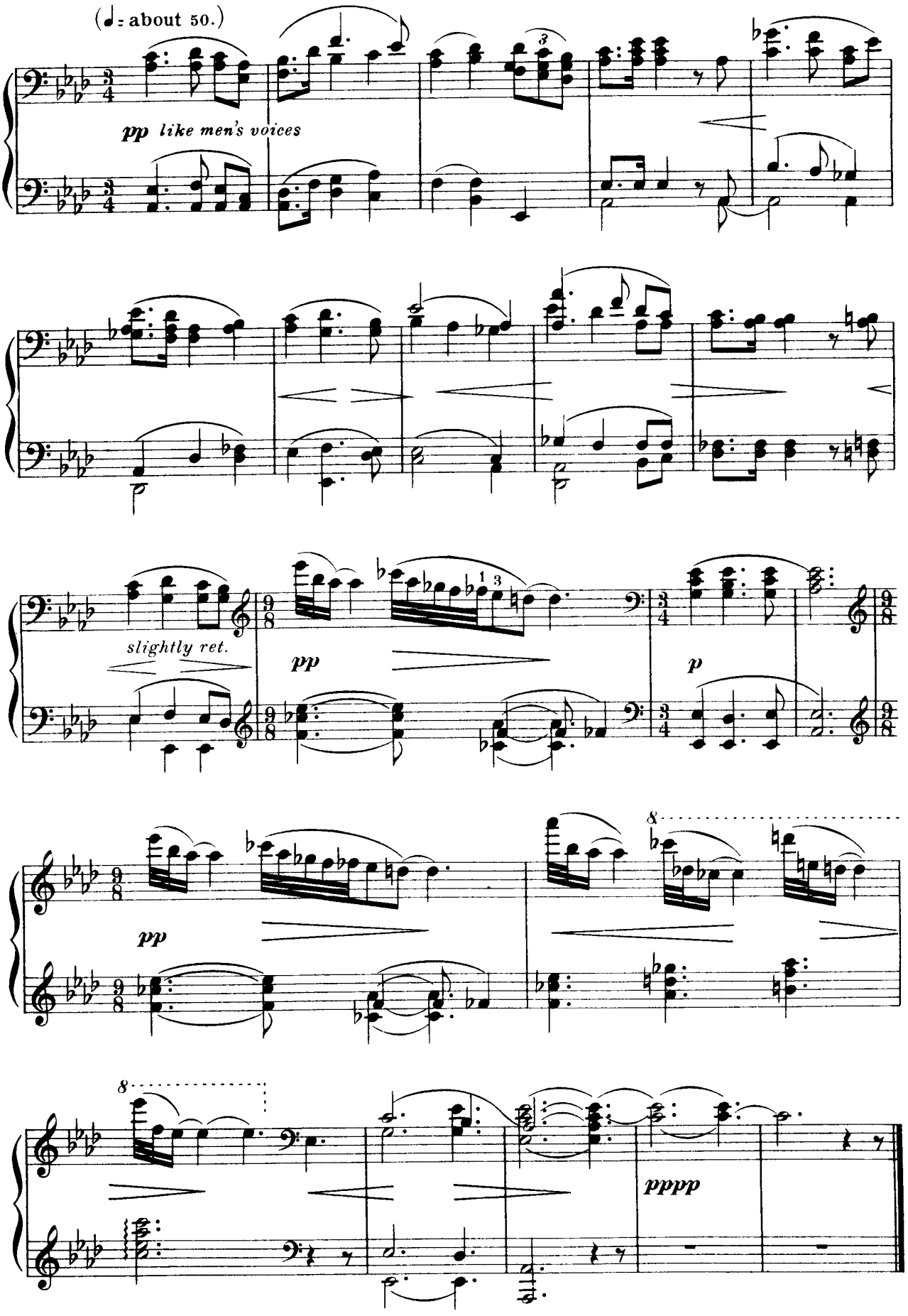
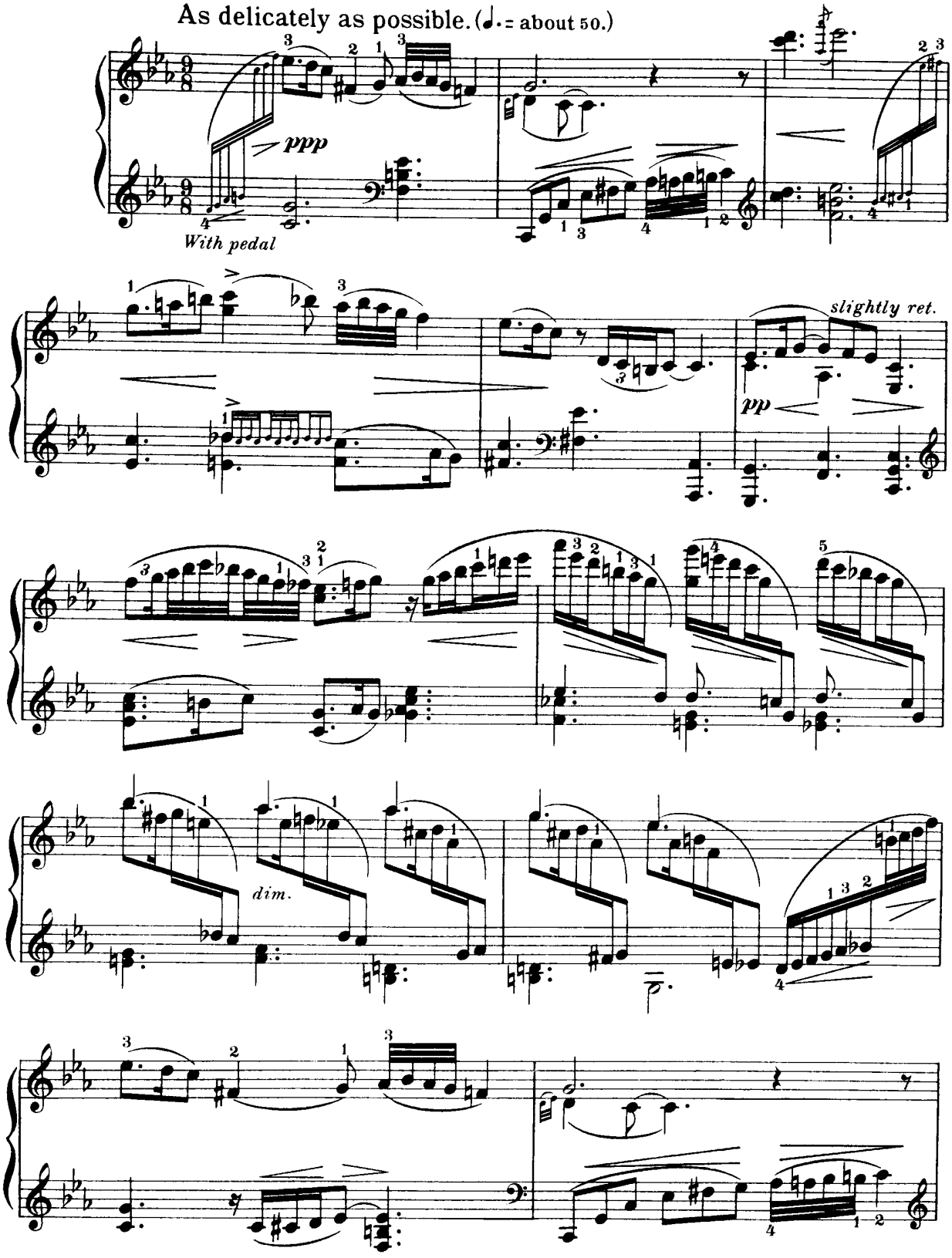

pp
increase
steadily stronger and faster
(♩. = about 69.)
ff
f
mf
dim.
pp
l.h.
ppp


(♩= about 50.)
pp like men's voices
slightly ret.
pp
p
pp
8
8
pppp

OF SALAMANDERS.

EDWARD MAC DOWELL.
Op. 61. № 4.



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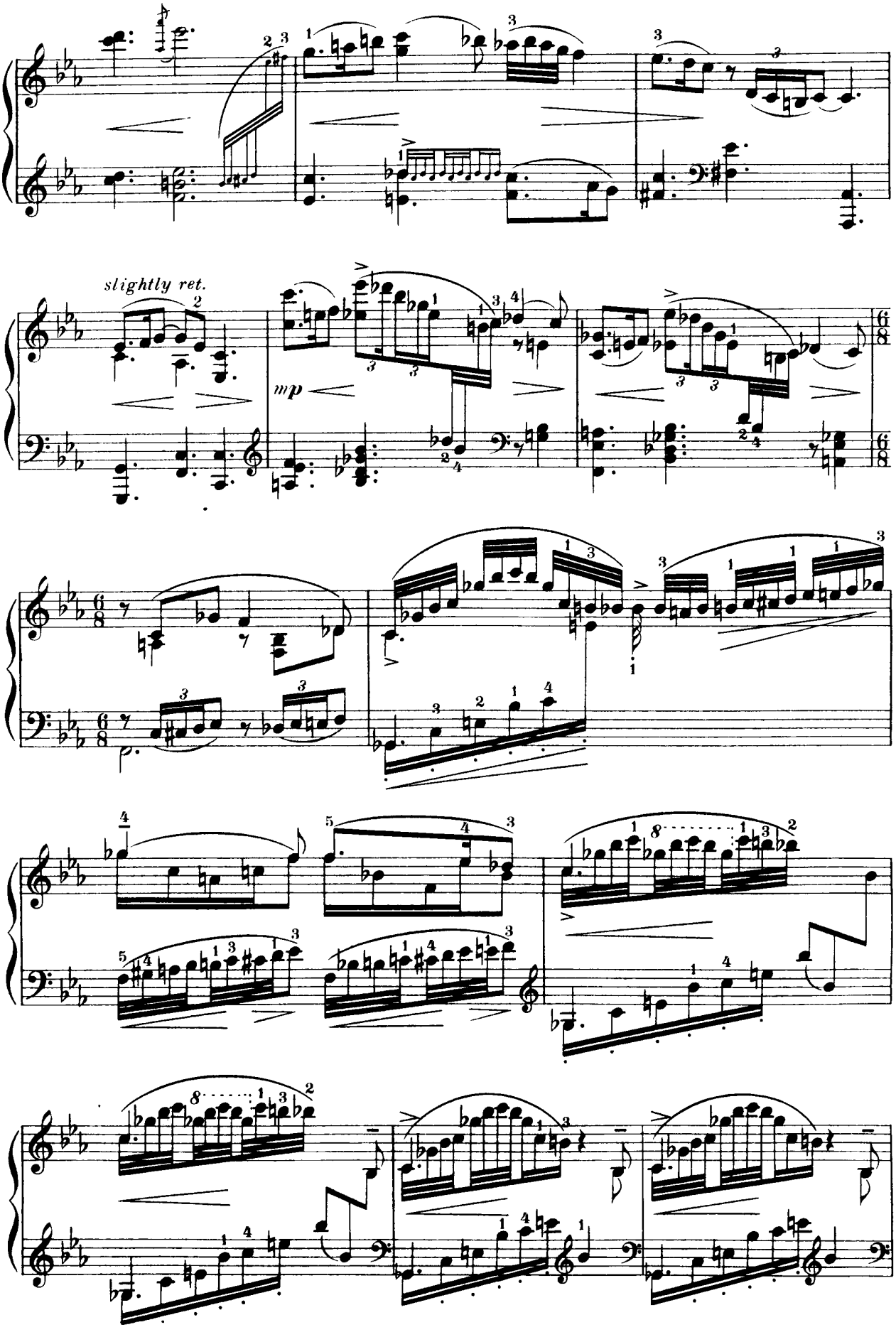
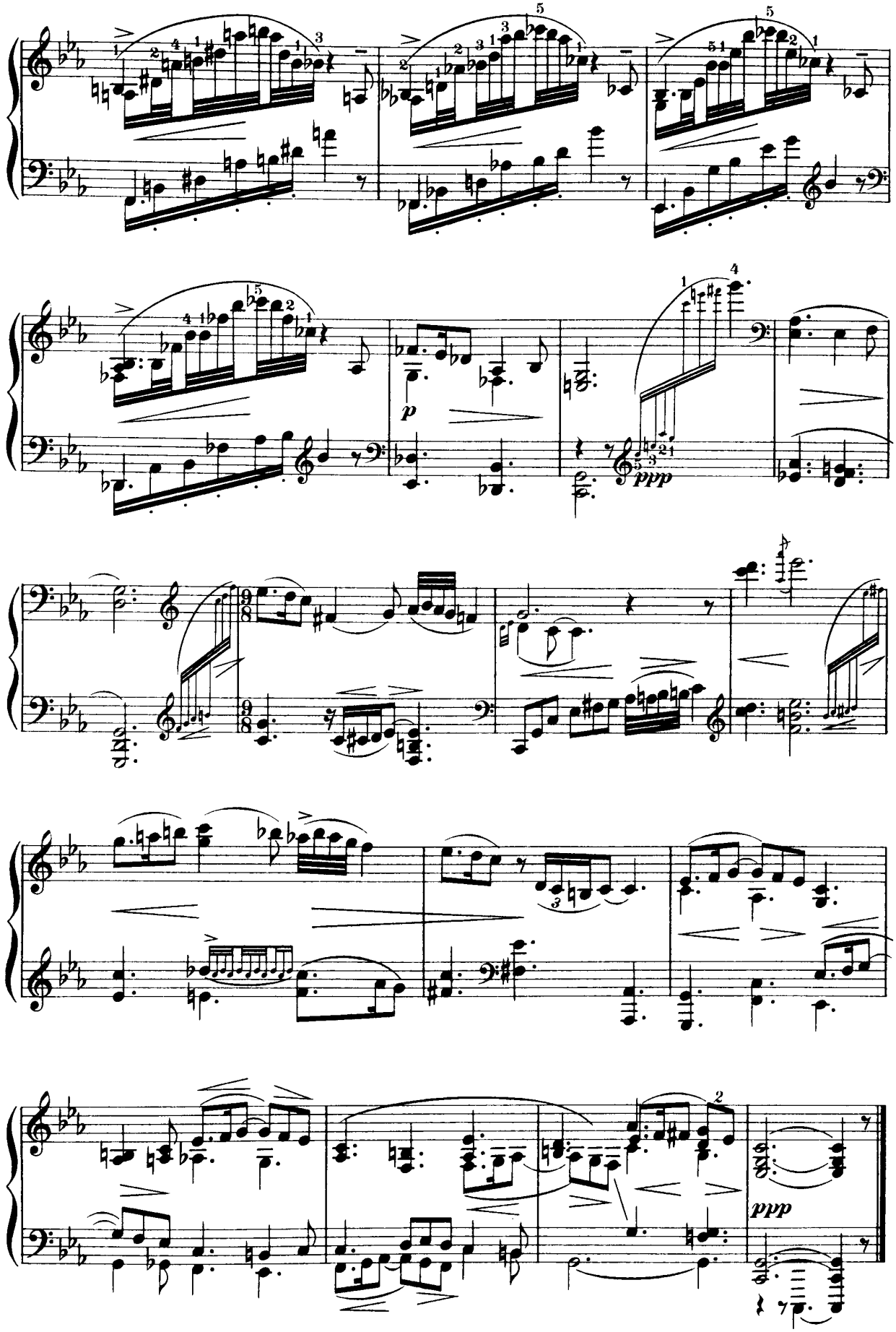
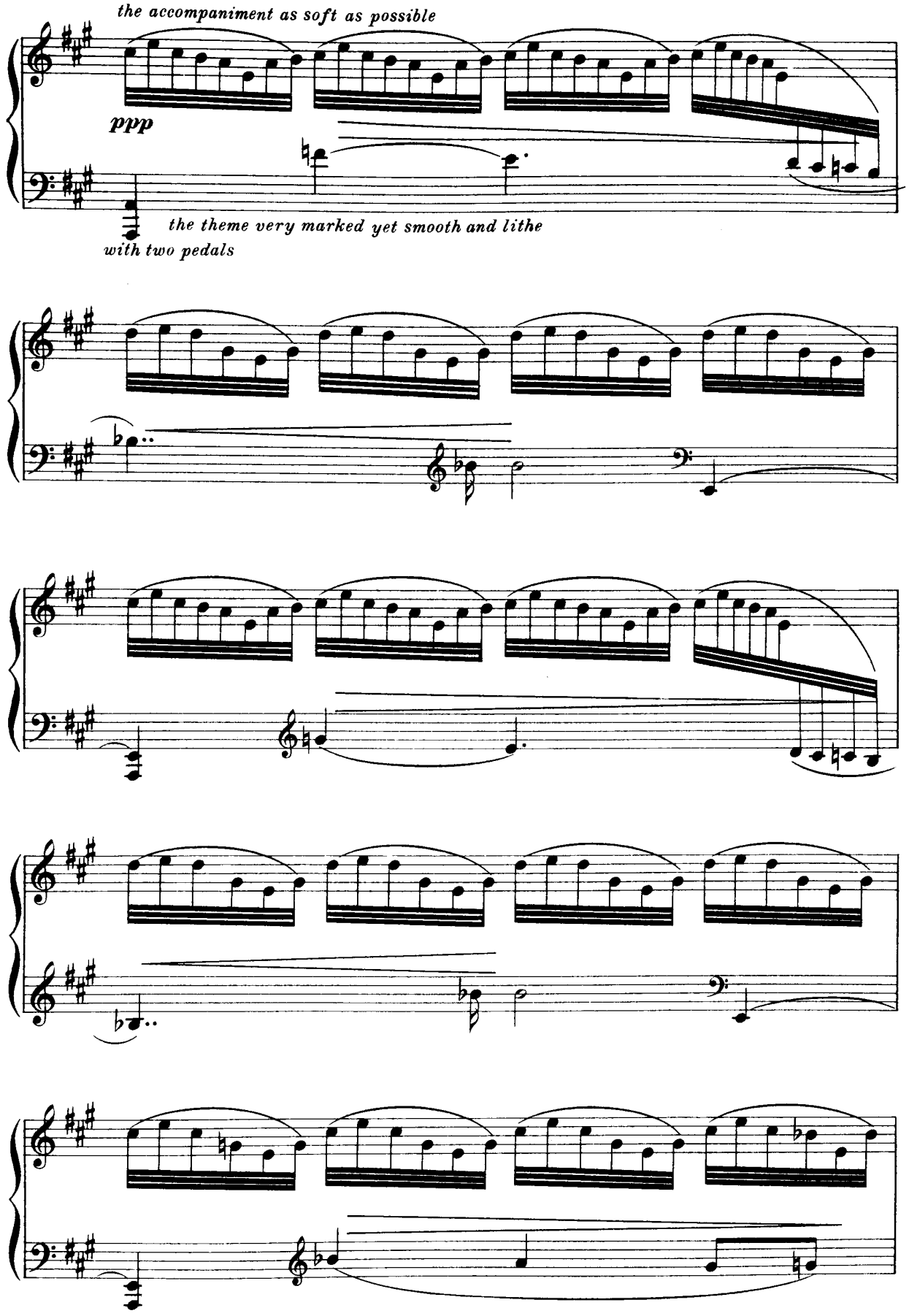
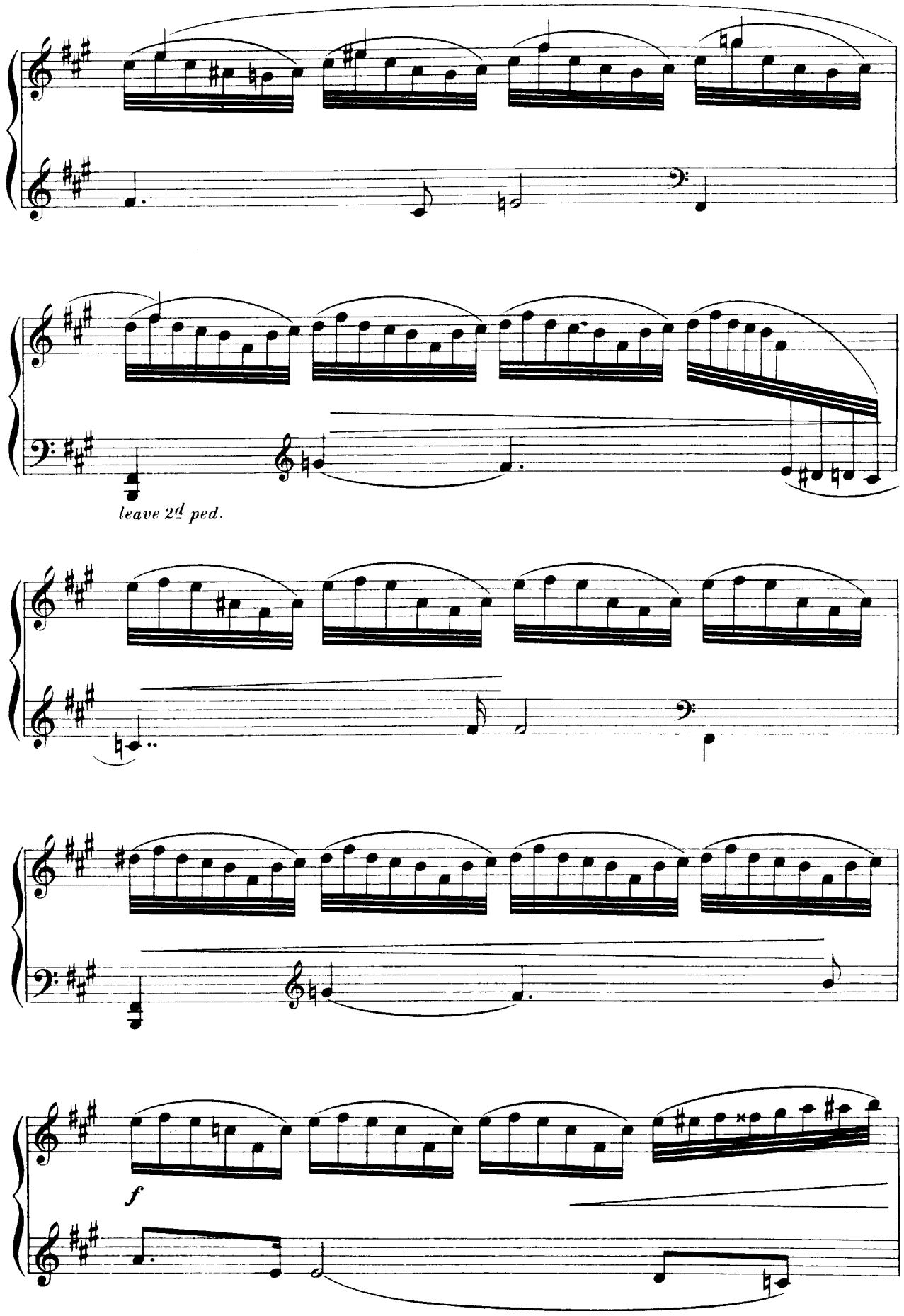
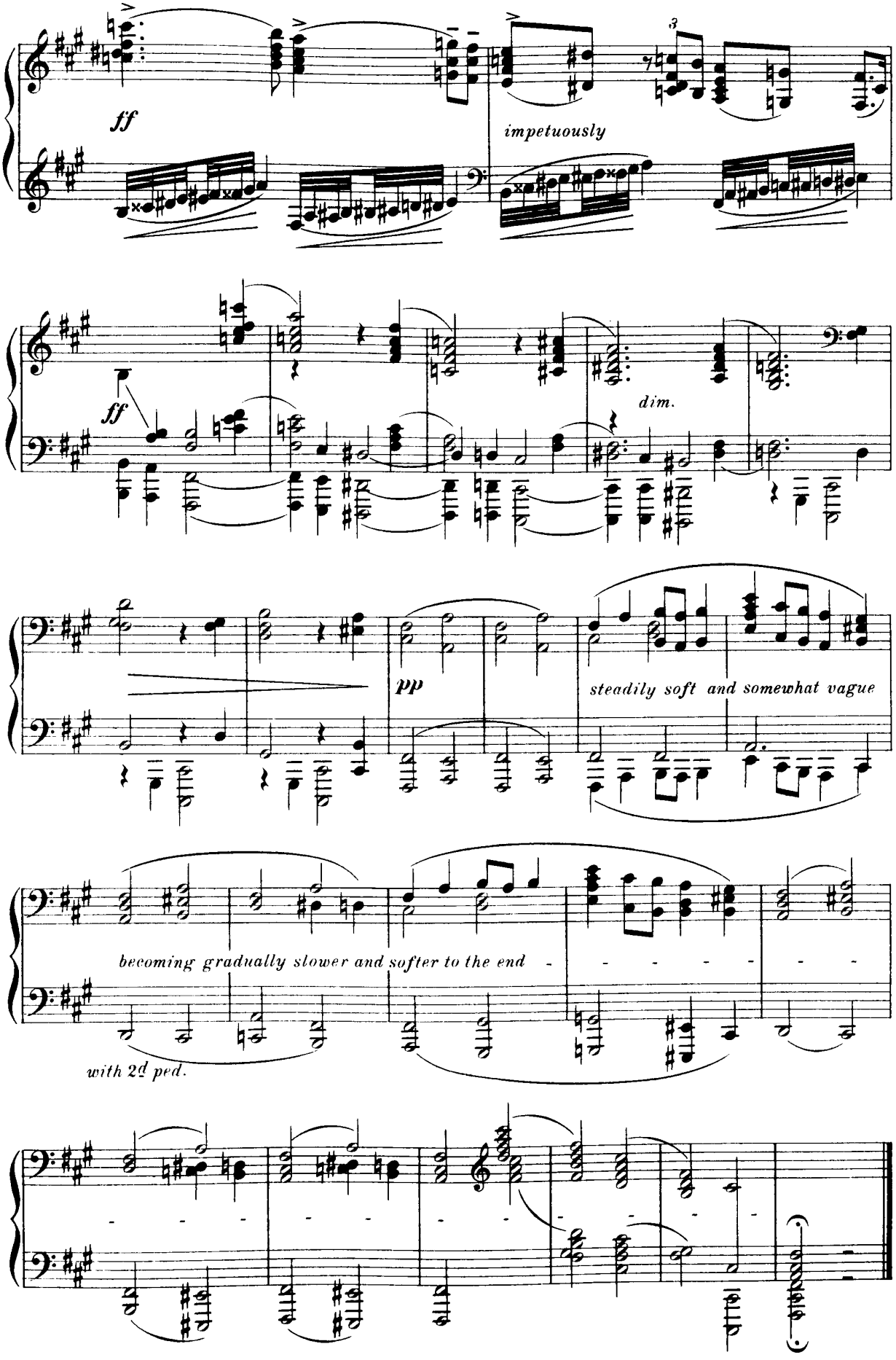

slightly ret.
mp


p
ppp
ppp

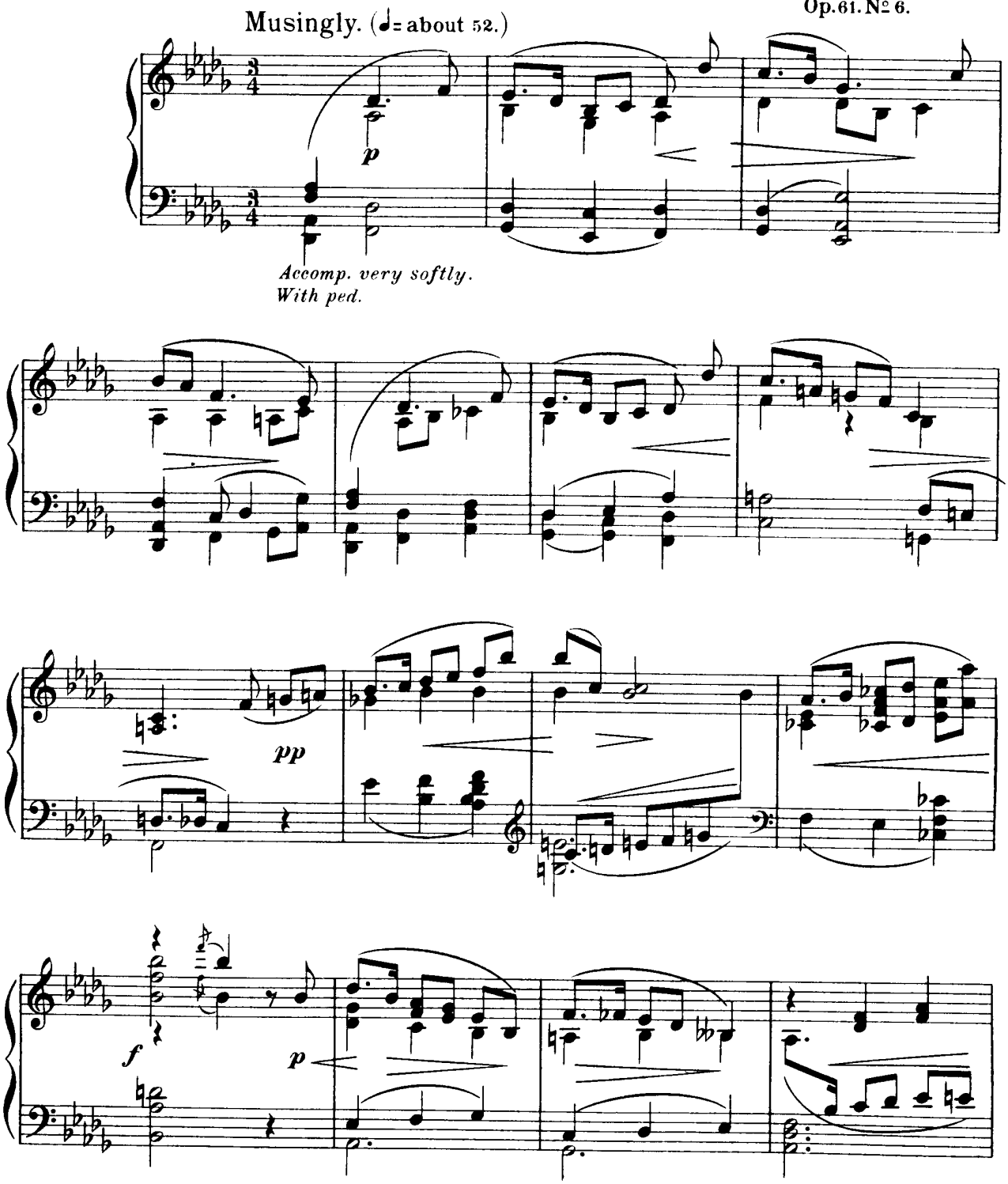

the accompaniment as soft as possible
ppp
the theme very marked yet smooth and lithe
with two pedals


leave 2d ped.
f


ff
impetuously
ff
dim.
pp
steadily soft and somewhat vague
becoming gradually slower and softer to the end
with 2d ped.

BY SMOULDERING EMBERS

EDWARD MAC DOWELL.
Op. 61. № 6.



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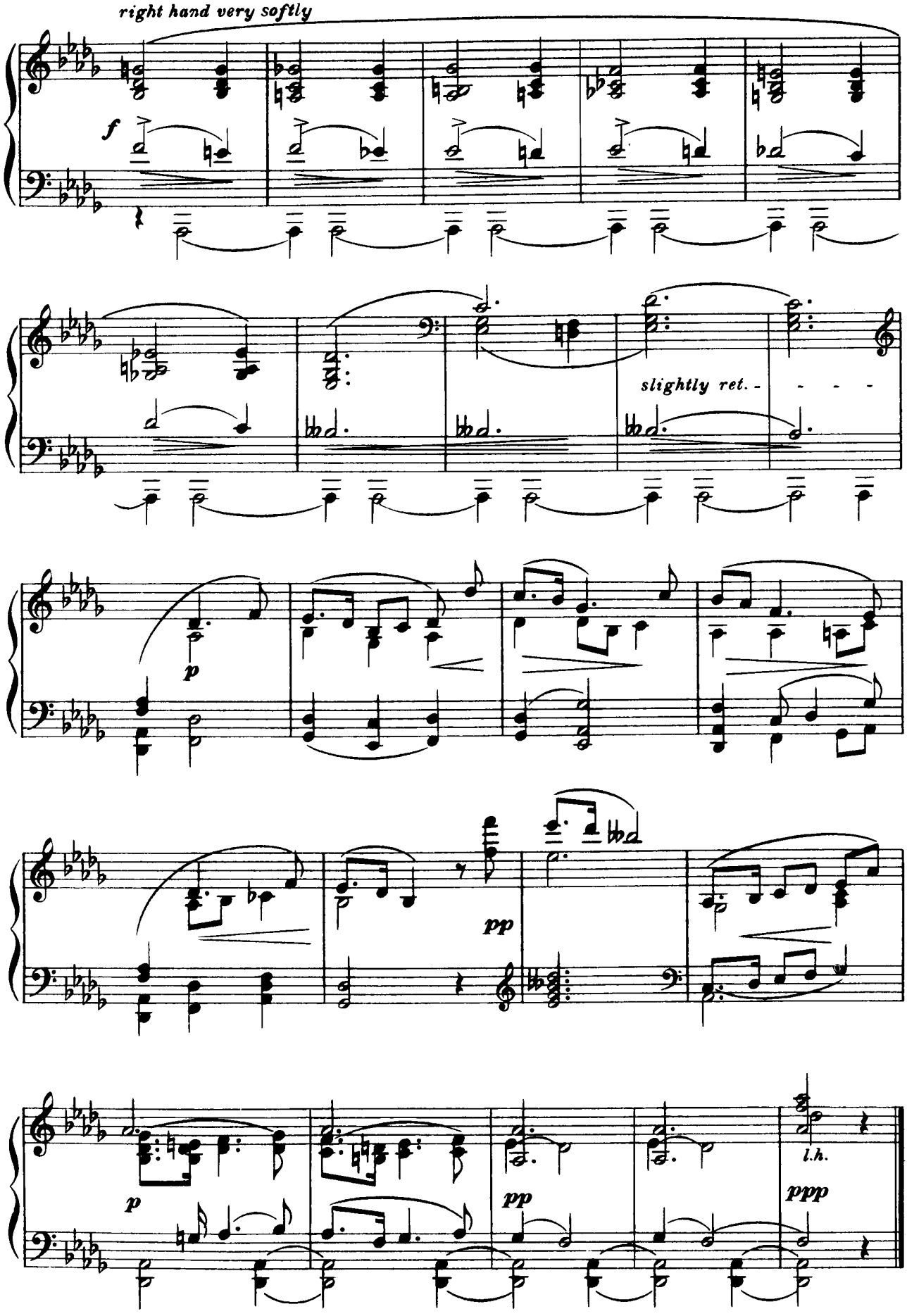
right hand very softly
f
slightly ret.
p
pp
p
pp
l.h.
ppp