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Music Department

Polka-Étude

for

Piano

by

HENRY SCHWING.

Author of "Practical Harmony."

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PLAYING WITH EXPRESSION.

This study is not intended merely to promote rapid execution, as might appear from a cursory glance, but the two means of musical expression — modification of tone and time — find also abundant application. In regard to these it may be said (what is better known than practised) that not everything pertaining to the appropriate rendition of a piece can be expressed with mathematical exactness. Much must be left to the conception of the performer. To render a piece of music with expression, it requires cultivated taste and judgment, by which to determine when, where and to what extent a departure from the written signs is permissible. All qualities required of a musical performance, centre in two words: *appropriate distinctness*. While there is no doubt about what is implied by distinctness, yet around the adjective *appropriate*, there floats considerable mist.

Modification of tone includes shading in all its grades, from the softest to the loudest tone, in both the *legato* and *staccato* mode of playing. When it is considered that the piano furnishes the tone ready-made, and that all modifications of tone must be produced entirely by the touch and the aid of the pedals, the importance of these agents will be duly estimated. The student, therefore, should at all times endeavor to produce by the touch alone, a distinct and full tone, regulating its volume as required. Supposing perfect familiarity with the use of the pedals, it may perhaps be well to caution against the too frequent abuse of the so called forte pedal. Its object — to prolong tones which belong together, *i.e.* to constitute a chord — being known, it cannot be difficult to determine when and where to employ it. As regards the other means of expression, it cannot be denied but that the modern view of *modified time*, comes in direct conflict with such time-honored sayings as "keeping strict time," and "time is the soul of music." They fare, however, not worse than many other ancient notions which have had to give way to more enlightened ideas. Modification of time claims a right to prolong or shorten the duration of tones and to hasten or retard the execution of musical phrases — in other words, to give and take time — according to the dictates of educated taste and judgment. The reason for these departures from the copy is derived from the sister art, oratory, in which the beauty of delivery consists partly in the *modulation* of the speaker's voice, and partly in the rhythm by which he regulates the rapidity of his utterances. It must, however, be added that the only thing new about modified time and movement is the frequency of its use at the present time in comparison with its former very limited introduction.

In suggesting the following rules for playing with expression, it must be borne in mind, that they have only a *general* bearing, and that their application, therefore, appeals continually to the thoughtful attention of the player:

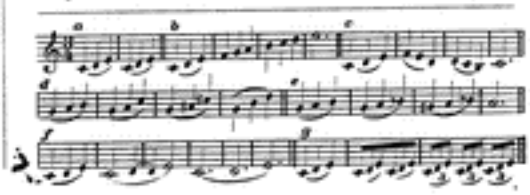
1. Quick movements require vigorous execution, hence a touch varying from *mf* to *ff*. 2. Slow movements, on the contrary, demand a delicate touch, ranging between *pp* and *f*. 3. Crescendo and accelerando, as well as diminuendo and ritardando, are often traveling companions, but the opposite often occurs. 4. Phrases full of meaning should be carefully emphasized and executed deliberately; while meaningless passages, (portions of scales for instance,) should not be rendered in a "much ado about nothing" style, but their execution should rather be hastened. 5. Many endings of phrases and periods, as well as passages leading to the beginning of a new theme, should be retarded. 6. Reiterated groups of notes should be, each time, differently rendered, varying from loud and quick to soft and slow. 7. Rapid successions of harmonies demand a hearing, hence they require deliberate rendition. 8. Distinctness of passages in the treble regions of the piano, will not suffer by rapid execution, but the opposite is the case in the bass, hence retardation is appropriate there. 9. A well known rule demands for ascending tones an increase in volume, and often in rapidity, as well, and for descending ones a decrease in both. The opposite may also be appropriate. 10. Long trills should gradually increase in volume and rapidity, and decrease again in both. 11. A melody in connection with an accompaniment, should be accented in the same way as when played by itself, and not every note, as is often heard. 12. Accentuation will be fairly correct if done on the commercial principle, "the longer the note the stronger the accent."

In the Etude following will be found abundant chances to practice shading in all its grades to retard and accelerate the time as well as to take up sudden changes of movement. Although signs for both are marked, they by no means express all the modifications of time and tone appropriate to its rendition.

Thematic treatment is a term applied to the varied use of a short musical phrase called motive, or theme. The changes are *melodic* when they affect the pitch of tones, and *rhythmatic* when they affect their duration.

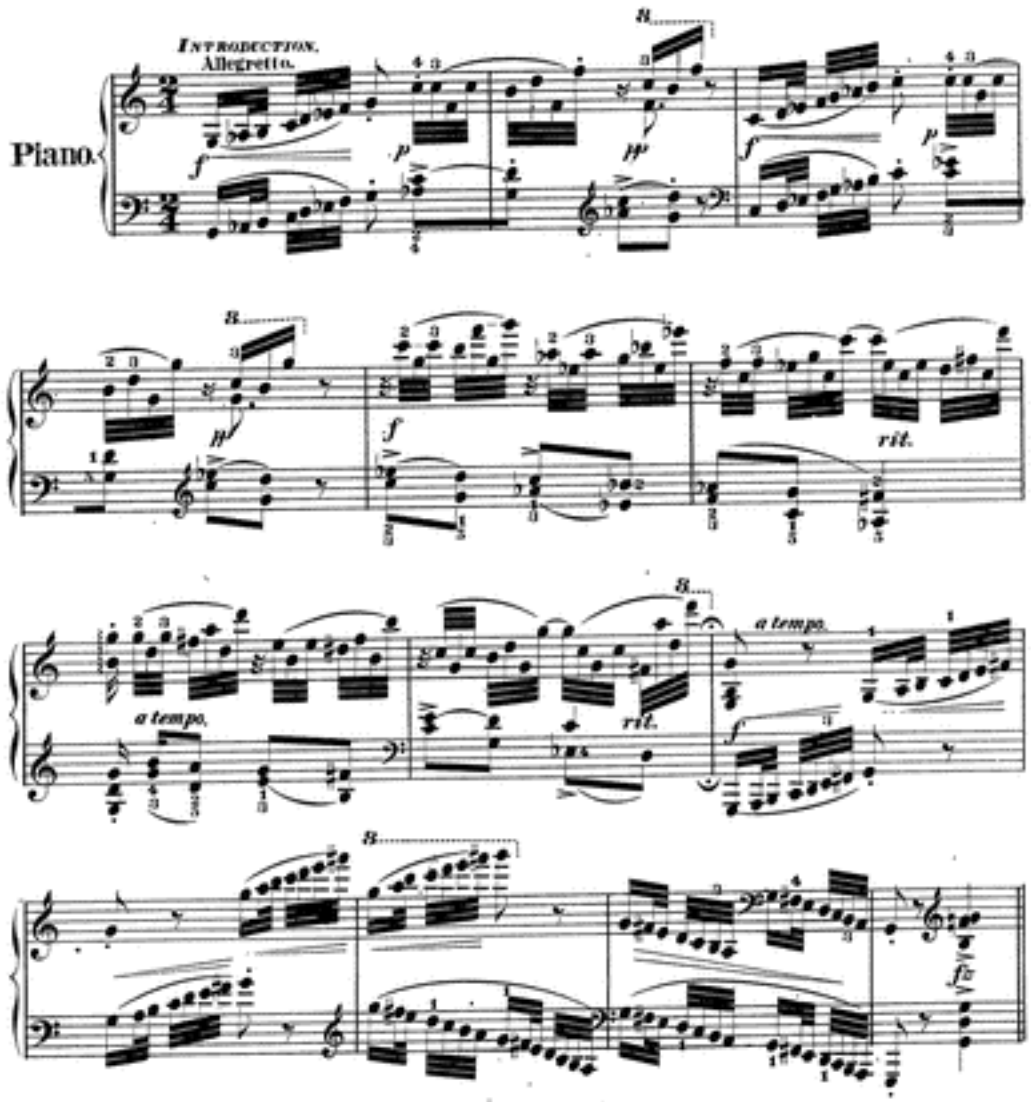
Melodic changes are made: 1. by repetition *(a)* 2. by transposition *(b)*. 3. by reversion *(c)*. 4. by enlargement of intervals *(d)*. 5. by diminution of intervals *(e)*. *Rhythmic* changes are produced: 1. by *prolonging (f)* and 2. by *shortening (g)* the duration of tones.

With the aid of the above explanation the student should endeavor to trace the use of motives in this Etude as well as in other compositions.



POLKA-ETUDE.

HENRY SCHWING.



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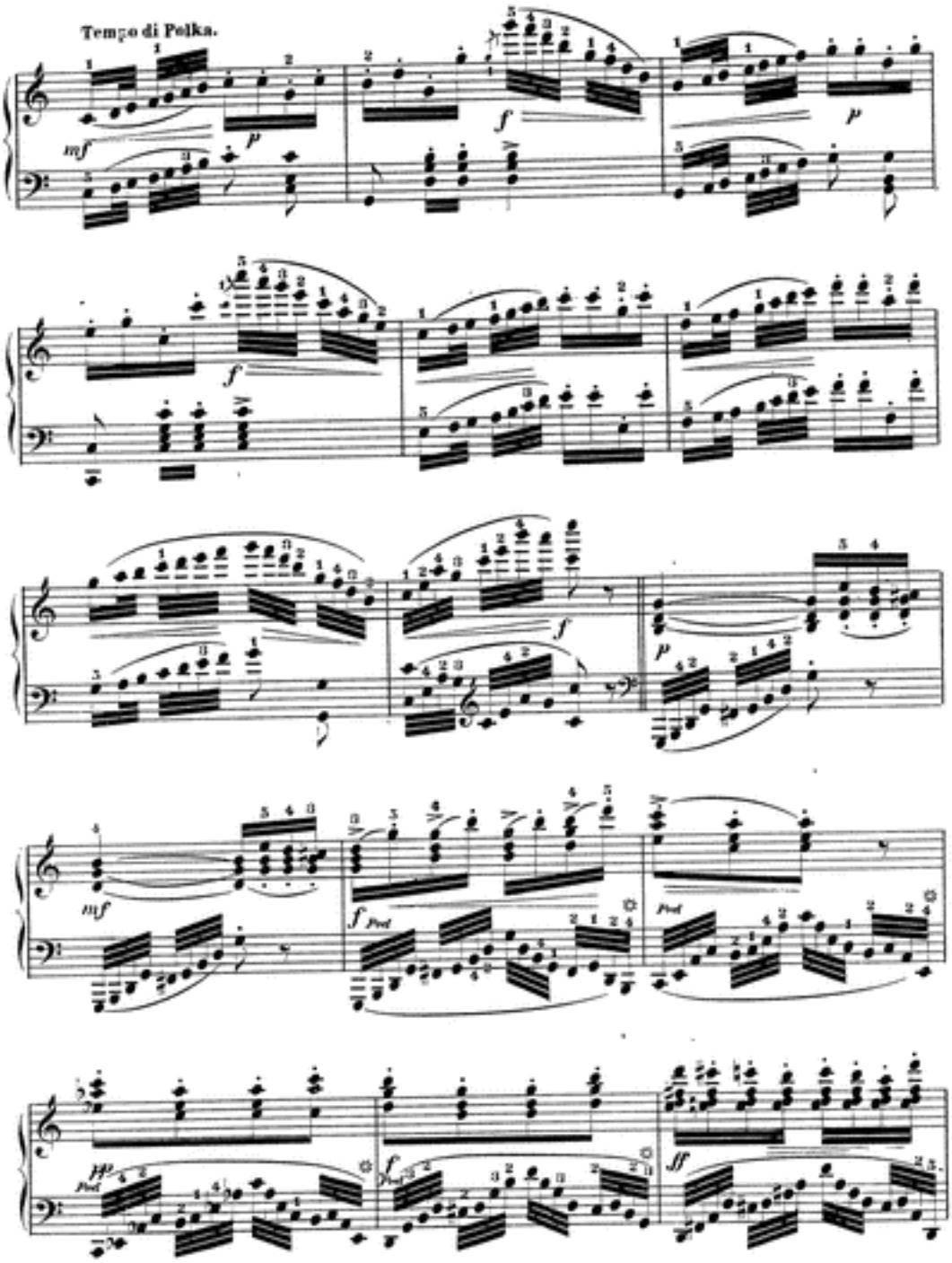
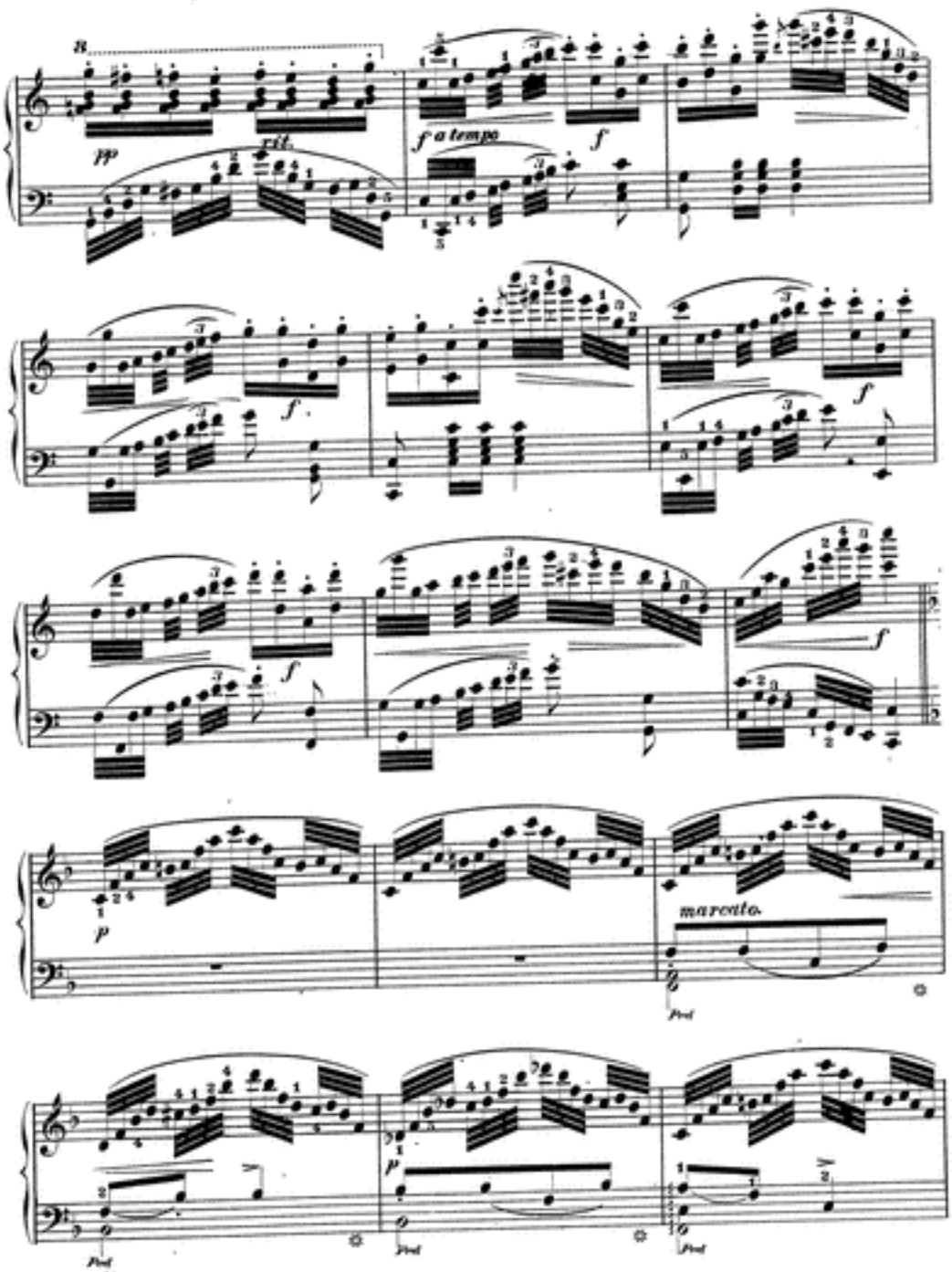
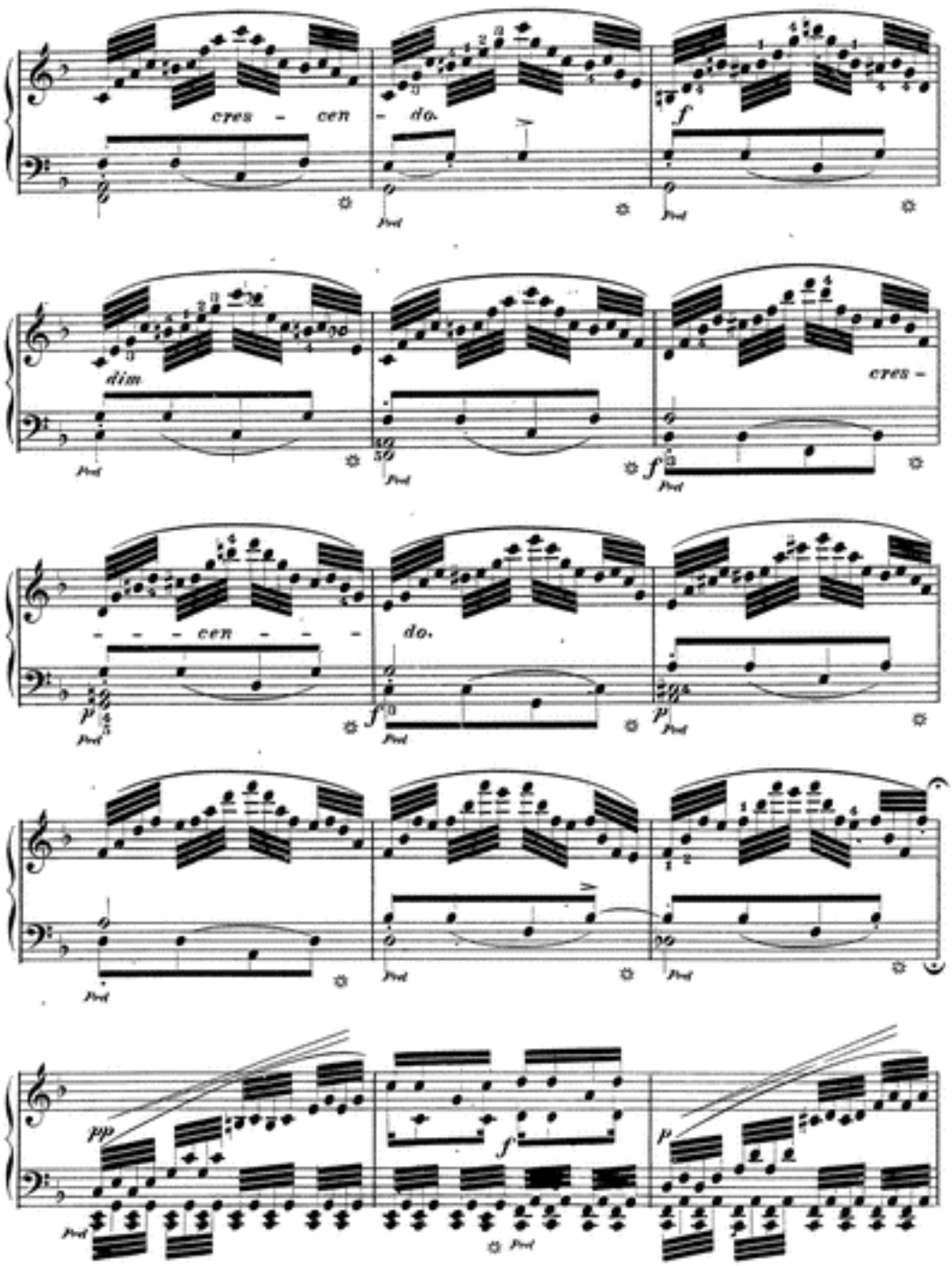
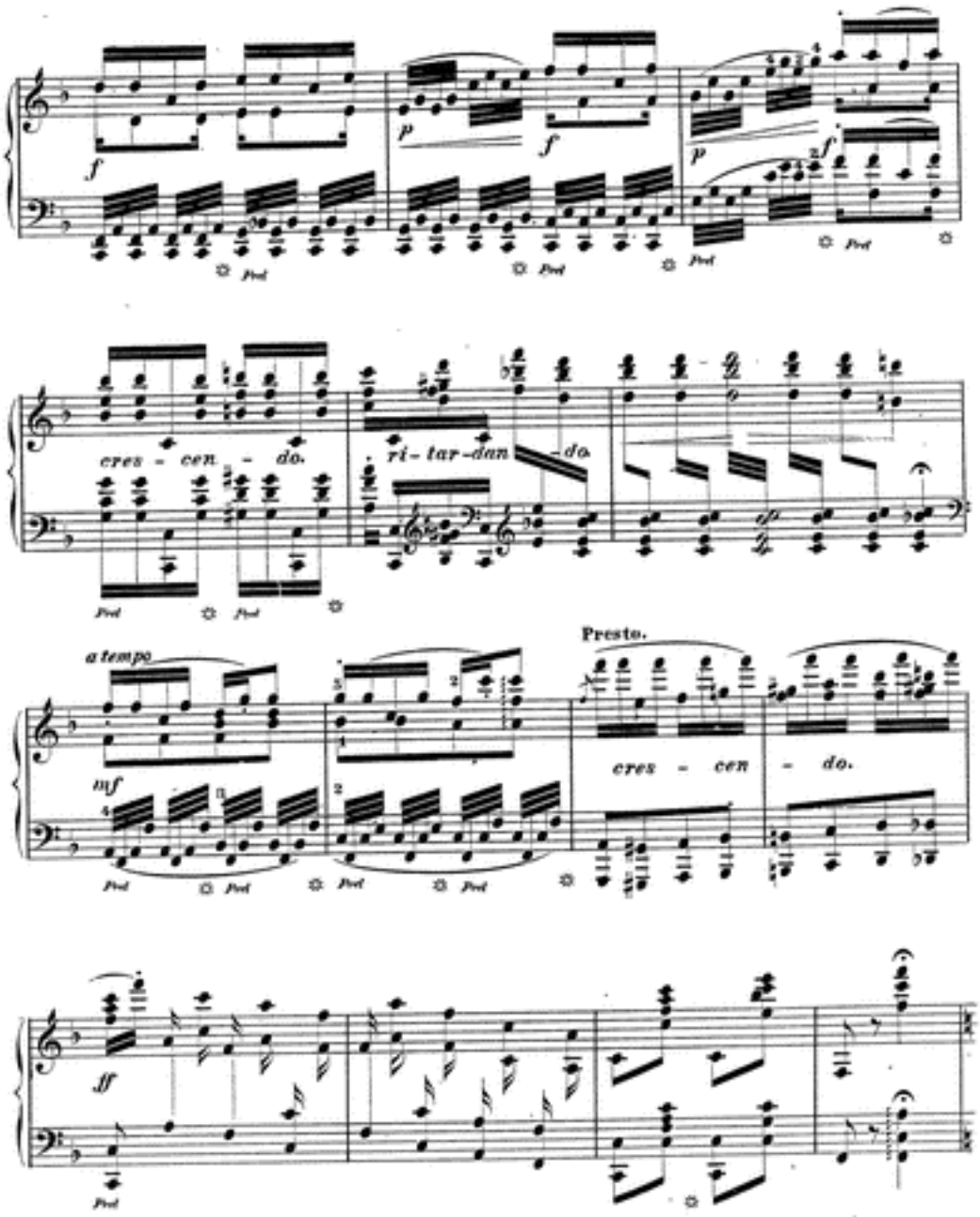
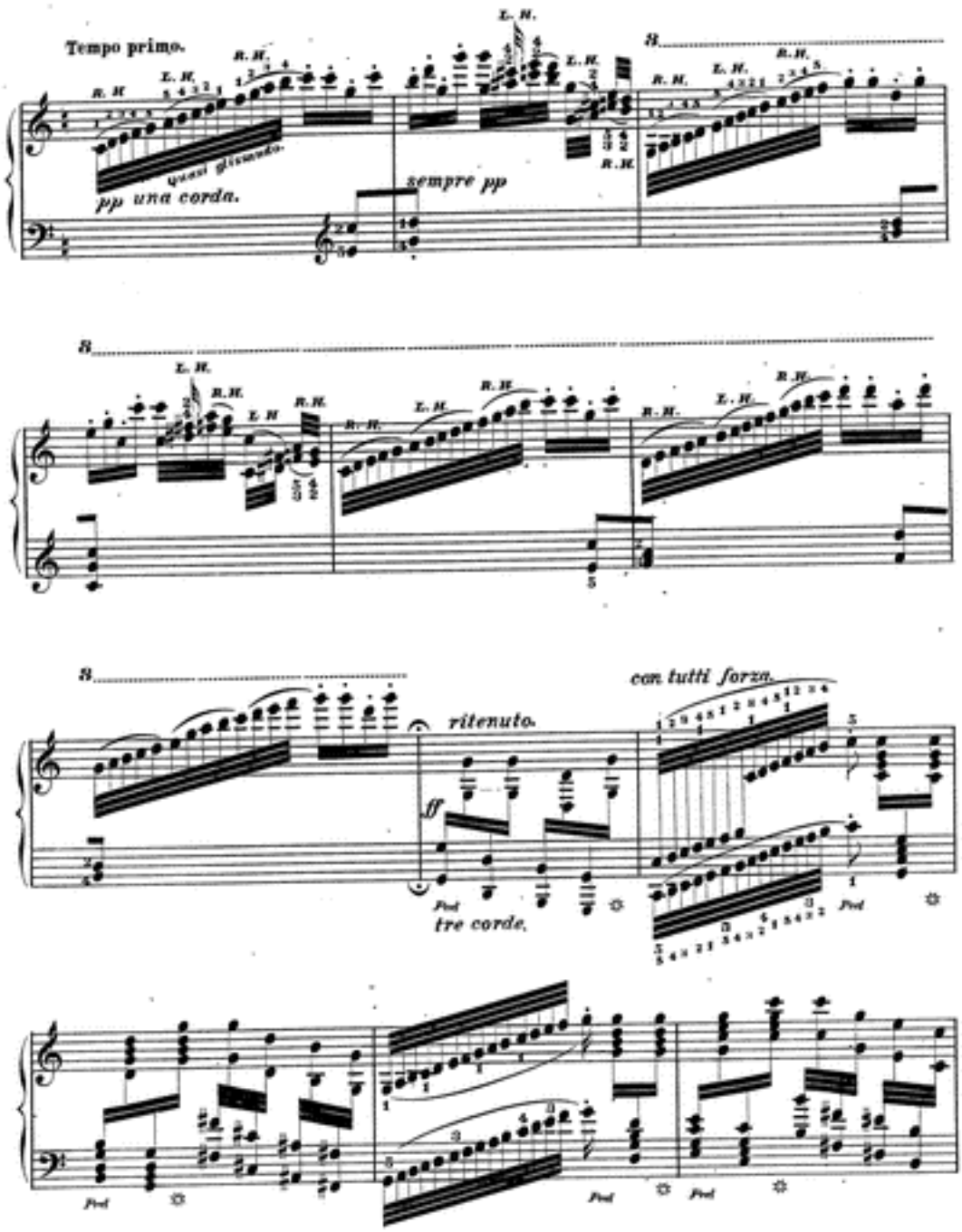
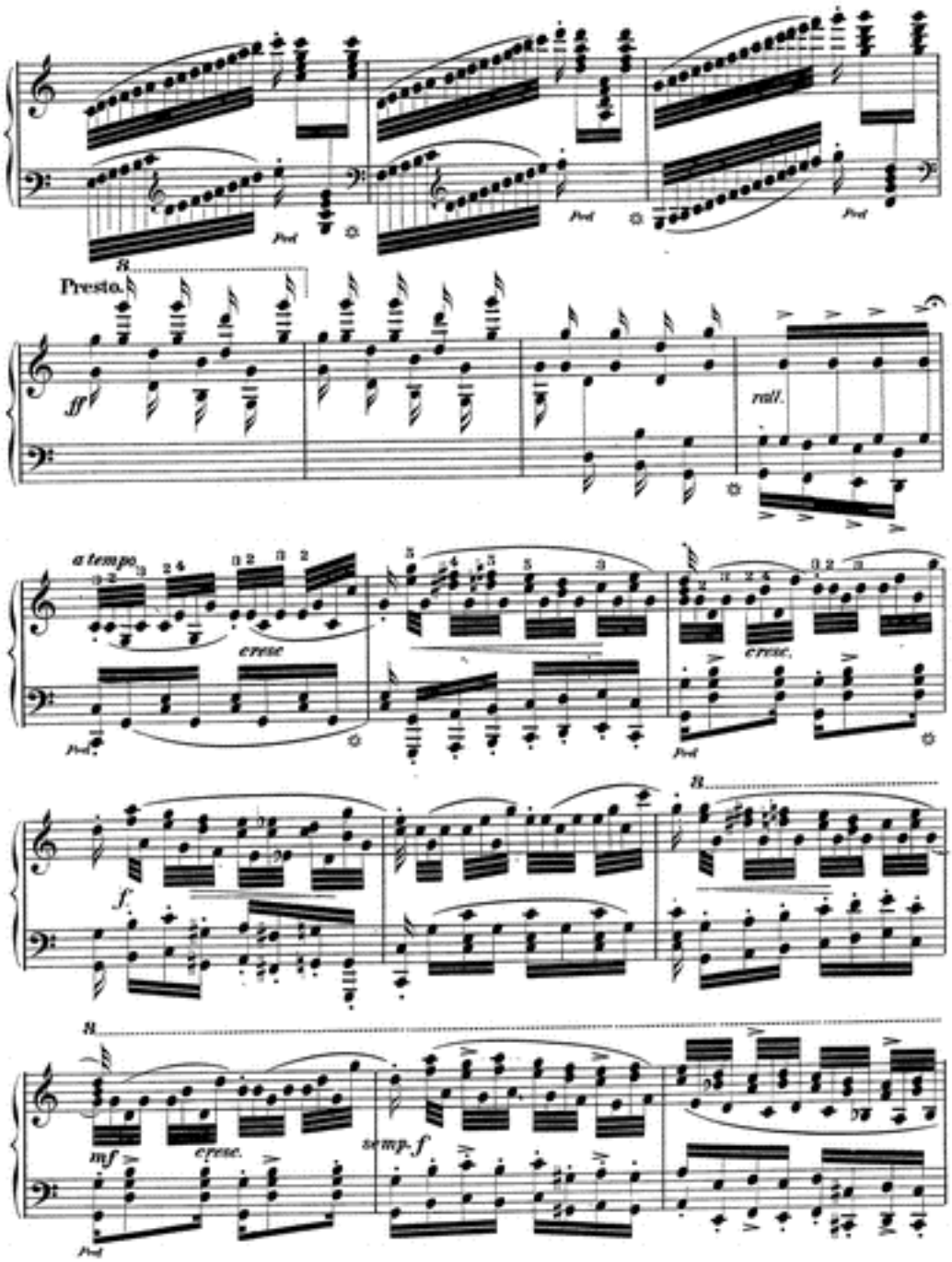

Tempo di Polka.
mf
p
f
p
f
f
p
mf
f Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
f
ff

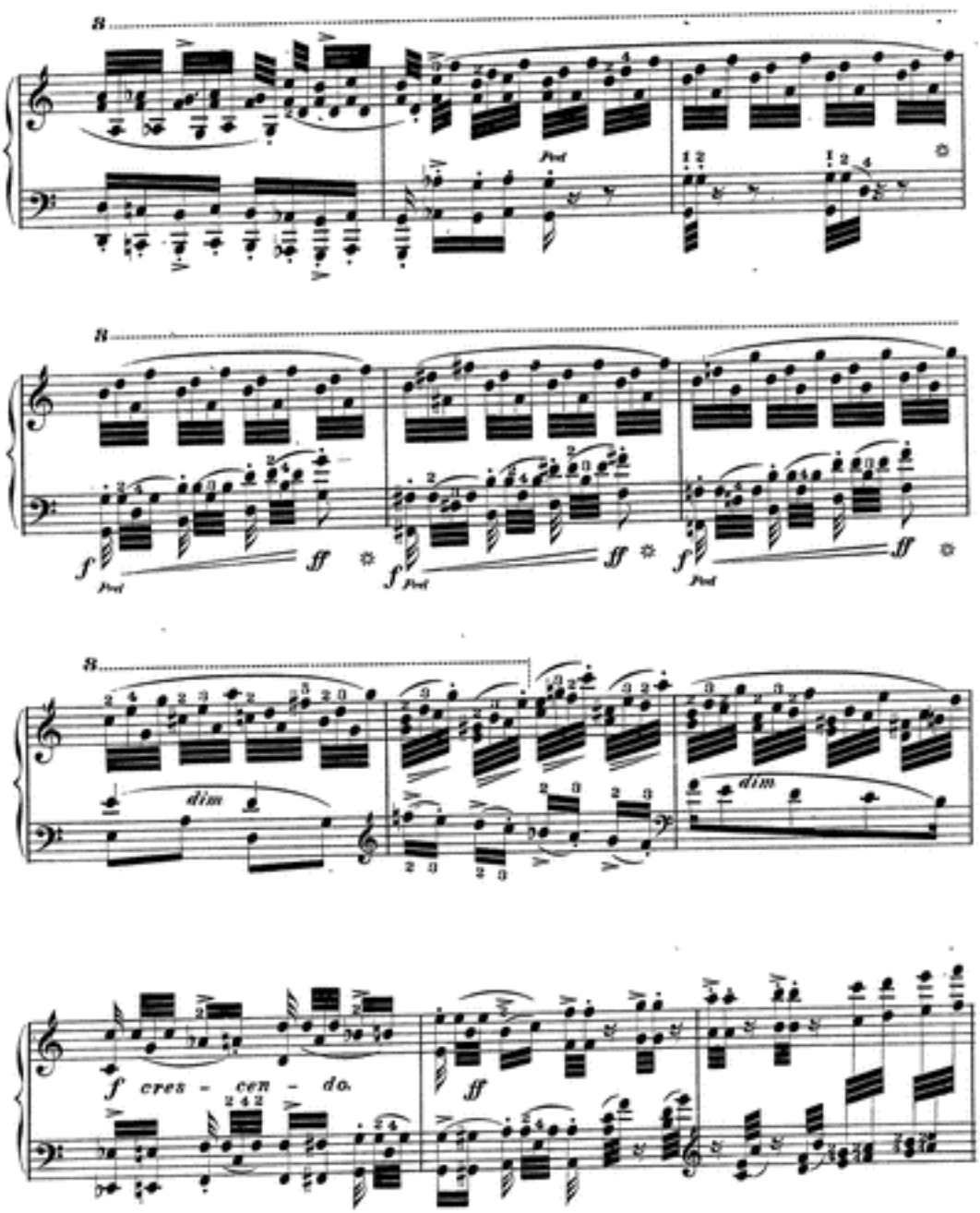

8
pp
rit.
f a tempo
f
f
f
f
f
p
marcato.
Ped
p
Ped
Ped
Ped

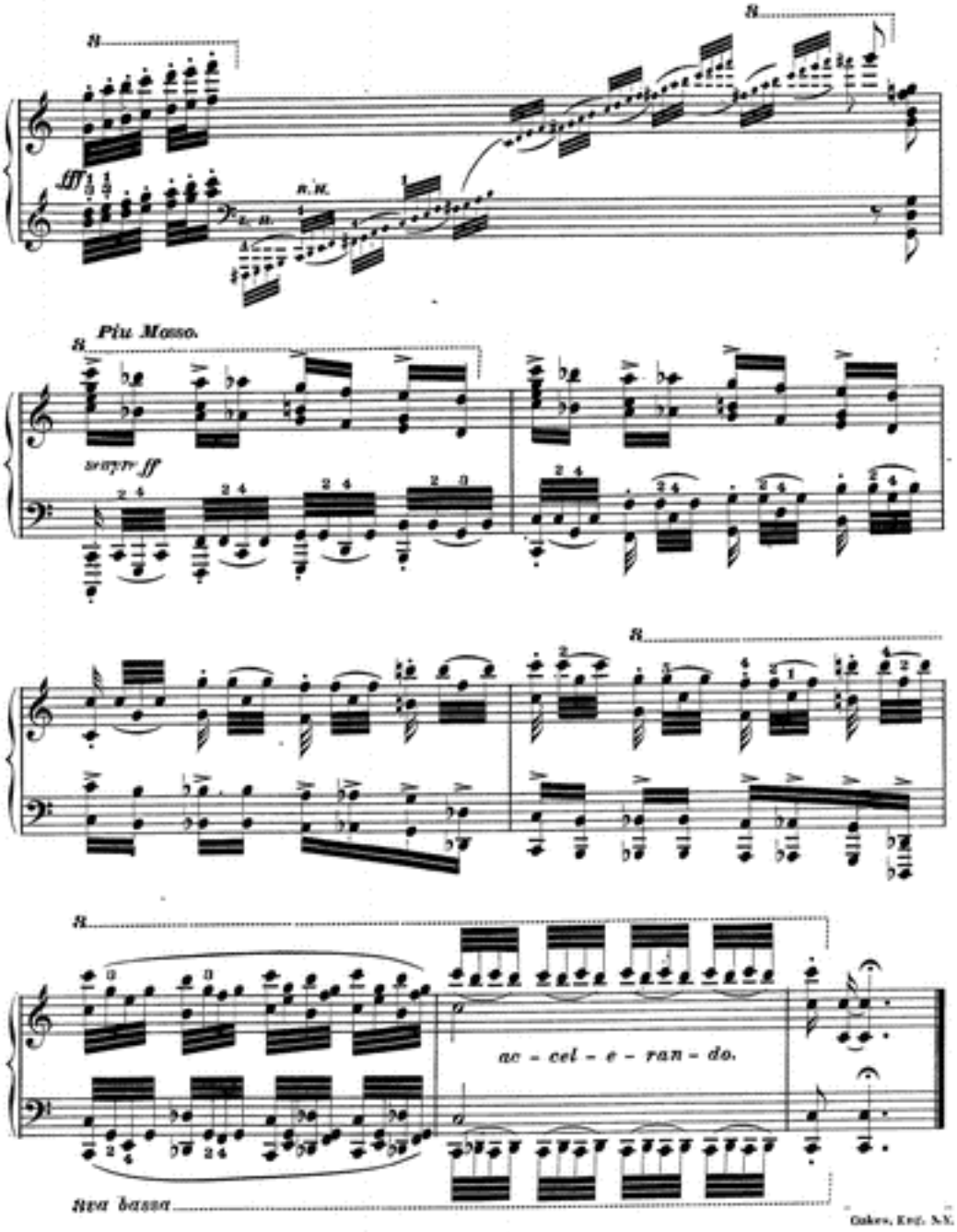

cres - cen - do.
f
dim
cres -
f
- - - cen - - -
do.
p
f
p
pp
f
p


f
P
f
P
f
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
cres - cen - do.
ri - tar - dan - do.
Ped
Ped
a tempo
mf
Presto.
cres - cen - do.
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
ff
Ped


Tempo primo.
R. H.
L. H.
quasi glissando.
pp una corda.
sempre pp
ritenuto.
ff
con tutti forza.
Ped
tre corde.


Ped
8
Presto.
ff
rall.
a tempo
cresc
cresc.
Ped
f.
8
8
mf
cresc.
semp. f
Ped


8
Ped
8
f
Ped
ff
f
Ped
ff
f
Ped
ff
8
dim
dim
f cres - cen - do.
ff



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