Peter McKenzie Armstrong

Black & White

Voicing/articulation/pedal Study

for piano solo

197?, 2013

Edition Ottaviano Petrucci

N O T E S

COMPOSITION

Waiting one night for a train at Boston's North Station (it runs 7 Lines), I concocted a doodle for the piano's white keys (mod 7), as follows:

1. Group an octave's worth of A–thru–G so that D, the intervallic mirror point, is at its center.
2. Starting at D, play these keys sequentially outward: up (D E F G); then non–redundantly down (C B A).
3. Repeat, still from D, but skipping –– play every 2nd item, wrapping as necessary (D F, C A, E G, B).
4. Now every 3rd item (D G, A, F, B, E, C).
5. Then every 4th; 5th; 6th –– yielding altogether six bars of 7/something time, with the last half a once–rotated retrogression of the first half.
6. Repeat steps 2–5, but with the starting pattern one white key expanded (3rds, not 2nds), covering now nearly two octaves (D F A C, B G E).
7. Again those steps, from starting intervals one more expanded –– so, 4ths (D G C F, A E B).
8. Then from 5ths; 6ths; 7ths; 8vas –– realizing finally what we had stopped short of at first in not playing every 7th member.

With a few twists (pattern inversions and telescopings) for surprise's sake, the doodle became this work's 2nd movement, once a followup experiment – for textural/pianistic opposition's sake and realizing for the black keys instead – became the 1st. And in afterthought, a 3rd movement conceived and despaired of reconciling the others.

PERFORMANCE

Mvmt. 1: Ensure that as each long note sings through its full value, its busier companions have meanwhile been promptly and fully released. The metronome setting is meant as the average in an unstable tempo.

Mvmt. 2: Pedal only to realize slurs where the hands cannot; time pedal releases to honor all articulations. (The last line slightly stretches this rule.) Metronome settings are meant to apply strictly insofar as possible. S.P. throughout opens 5 never–played lowest strings for sympathetic resonance.

Mvmt. 3: Hold the last pedal until no sound remains.

Overall: A staccato dot on the note preceding a rest means, that the note must stop sounding *before* the rest's metrical starting point.

– PMA

for George Barth

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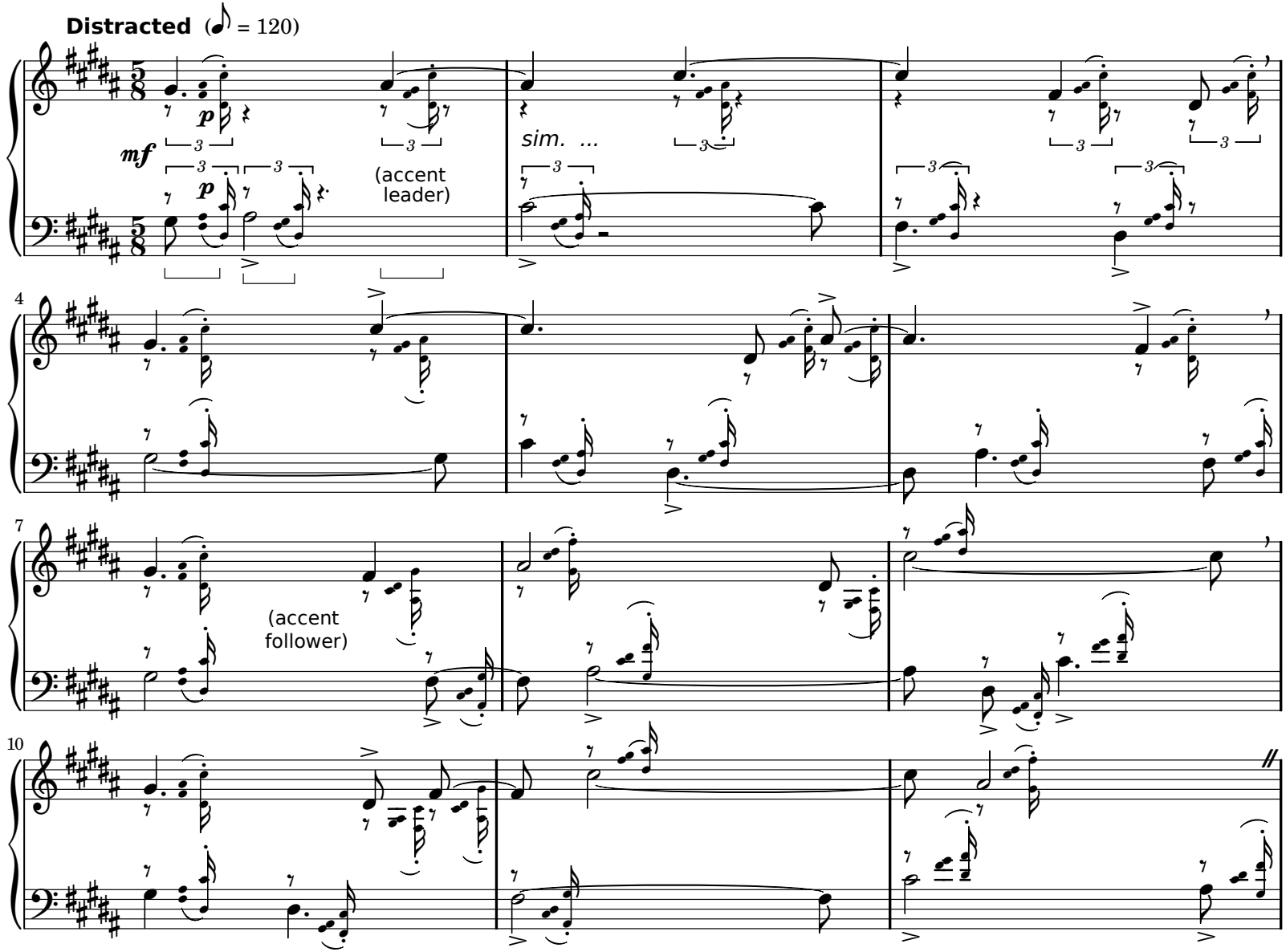

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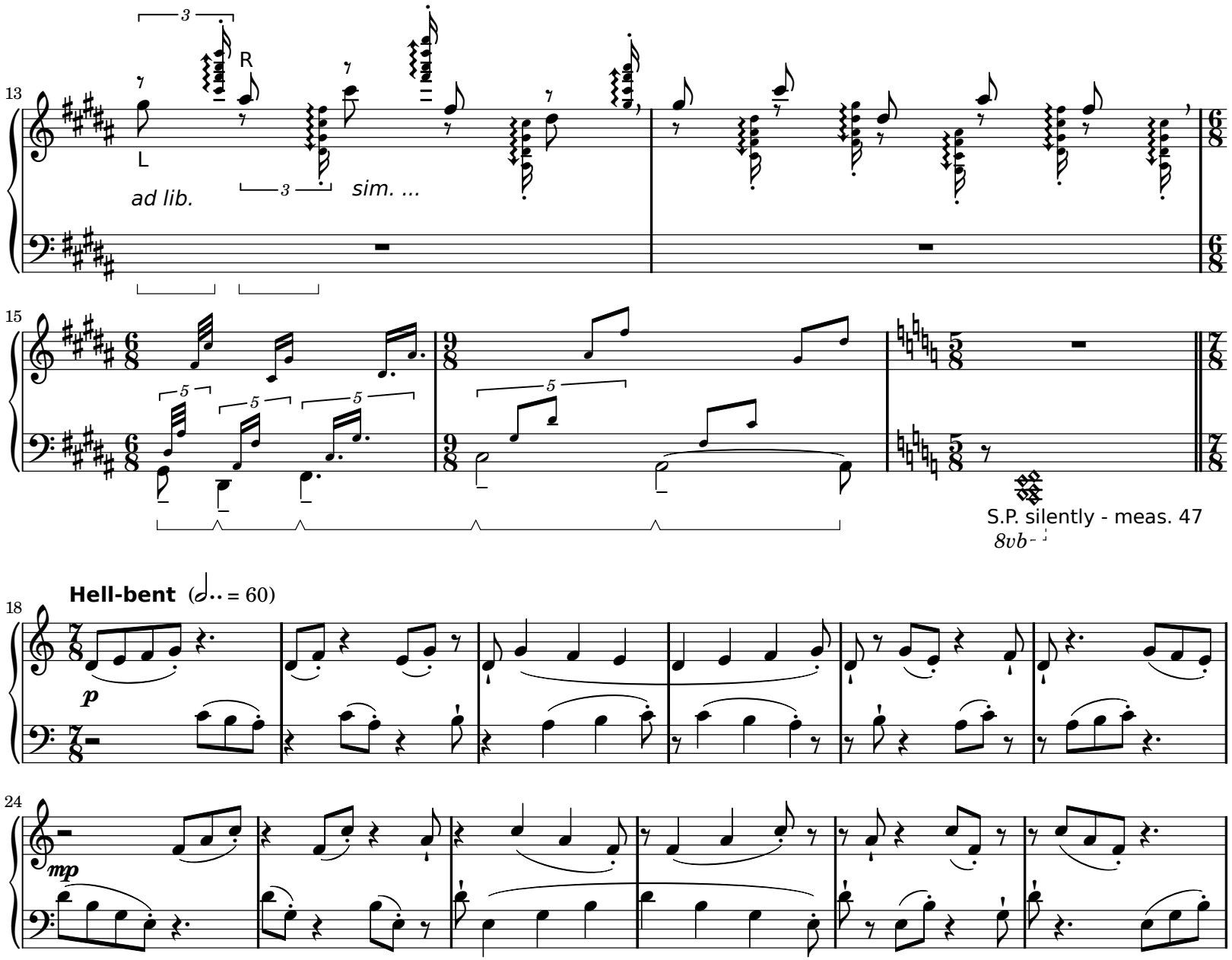
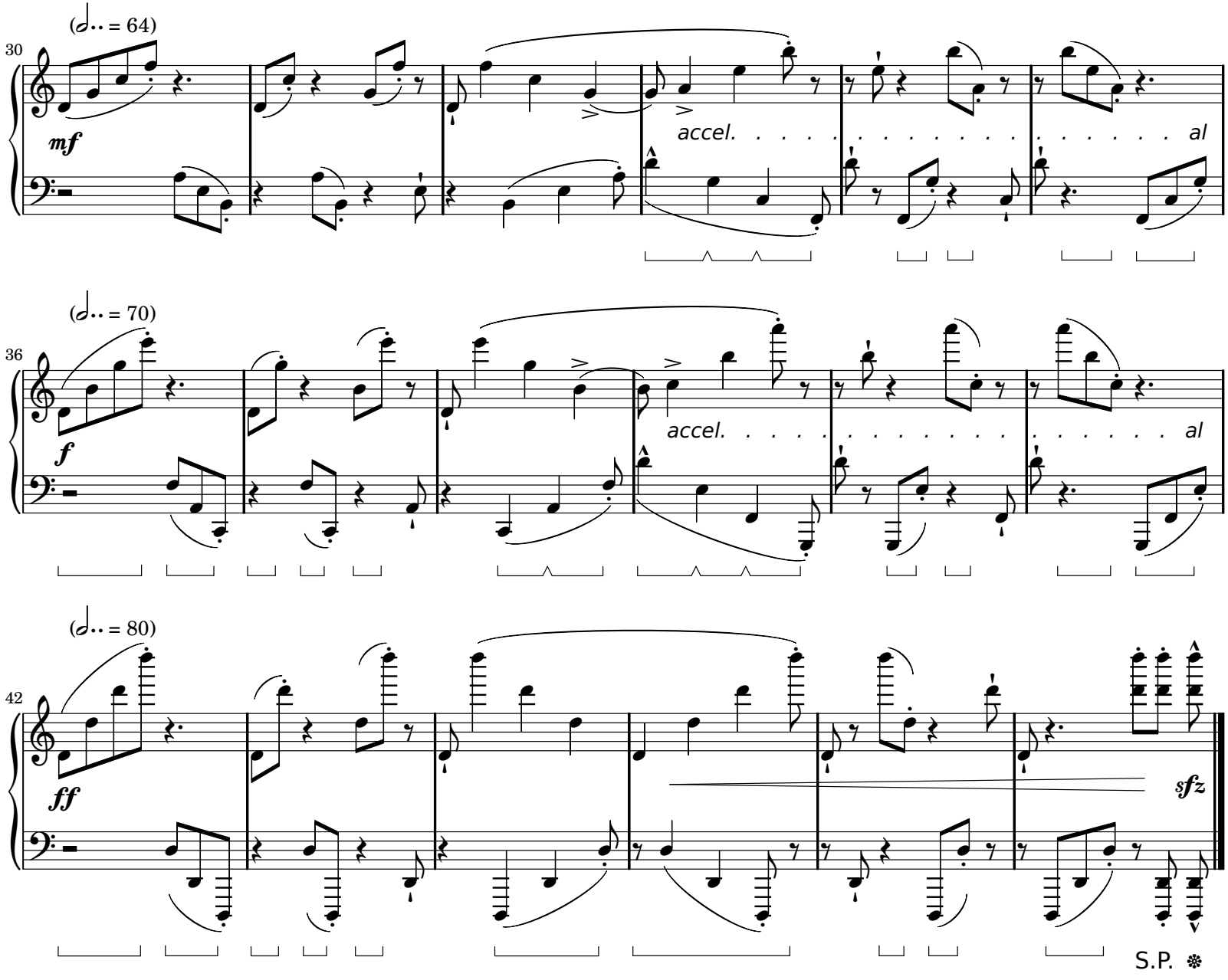
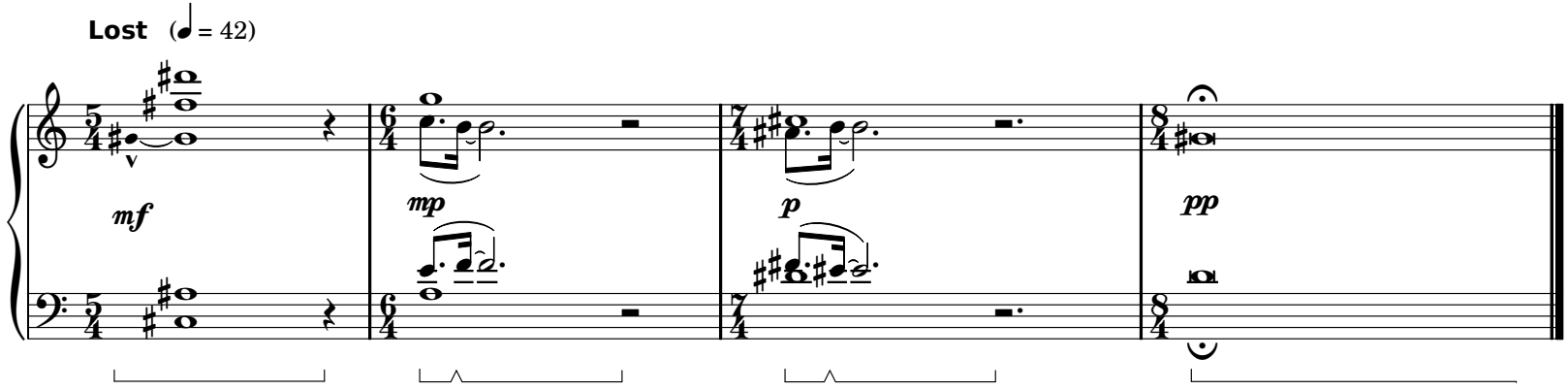

13
L
R
ad lib.
sim. ...
15
S.P. silently - meas. 47
8vb
18
Hell-bent (𝅗𝅥.. = 60)
p
24
mp


(𝅗𝅥.. = 64)
30
mf
accel.
al
(𝅗𝅥.. = 70)
36
f
accel.
al
(𝅗𝅥.. = 80)
42
ff
sfz
S.P.


Lost
(♩ = 42)
mf
mp
p
pp