SPECIAL ANALYTICAL EDITION.

MEDEA;

With detailed Analysis & Critical Annotations, BY A. J. GOODRICH.

For Piano

By

WM. H. SHERWOOD.

Op. 13.

CINCINNATI:
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NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

The pages of Grecian mythology supply us with many more interesting, but not with a more remarkable heroine than "Medea". Poets, musicians, painters and sculptors have perpetuated the legend of the famous sorceress.

It will be sufficient to mention Cherubini's Grand Opera and the powerful Overture of Bargiel.

The dimensions of the present work would not admit a musical exposition of the conflicting character or varied achievements of Medea; nor was it the intention of the composer to create a Program opus.

The burden of the music is, overpowering emotions and fatal ambition, which stop for no obstacle and fear no consequence.

The narrative details, and even the final apotheosis are not here considered.

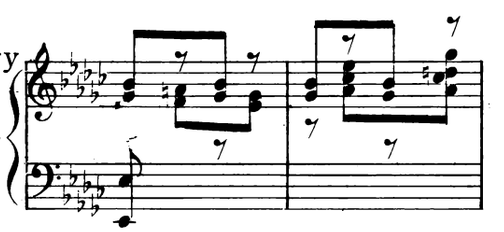
The form and structure are peculiar.

We should classify it as Rhapsodical. There are two contrasting subjects. The first continues for four pages, including the subsidiary theme in ***B Major.*** The second, in form of an Episode, begins at the ***Meno Mosso***, representing a less turbulent state. ✶

After a few measures of Return, as a means of connecting the two principal subjects, we have a partial repetition of Part I, and then a considerably developed Coda as termination to the whole.

It is neither possible nor desirable in such tone-poems as this to adhere strictly to the outlines of classical form; and this fact sheds considerable light upon the artistic mode of performance, in which there are few arbitrary restrictions.

THE EXECUTION.



To pianists unskilled in this style the editor suggests as a preliminary study, this mode of performance, being careful, however, to cross the hands as in the original; for this is one of the difficulties to be overcome. Practice the first period in this manner until it is in memory's keeping; then introduce the reiterated notes, gradually increase the movement, and finally include the dynamical marks as indicated. ✶✶

The three signs of accent used in this opus (∧ > –) are to be strictly observed. The first is the most forcible, the last is the least so. The ***sf*** and ***sff*** are of course still more forcible. The dot is also used for a light staccato accent occasionally

The mark ⌊——⌋ denotes *exactly* the places for pressing and releasing the damper pedal, according to the composers wishes. Where the pedal is to be used at greater length the ordinary marking is employed.

The double mark ⌊——⌋⌊——⌋ denotes a quick change of the pedal, at points where its use without change would cause blurring.

Observe that in the majority of cases the pedal is not pressed at the beginning of a measure, but just after the beat.

A. J. Goodrich.

The unmeaning and totally unmusical methods very frequently employed in marking and using the pedal by both publishers and pianists call for severe criticism and a more logical system. The thorough musician who has taste and control of the damper pedal will do as he pleases regarding these marks. W.H.S.

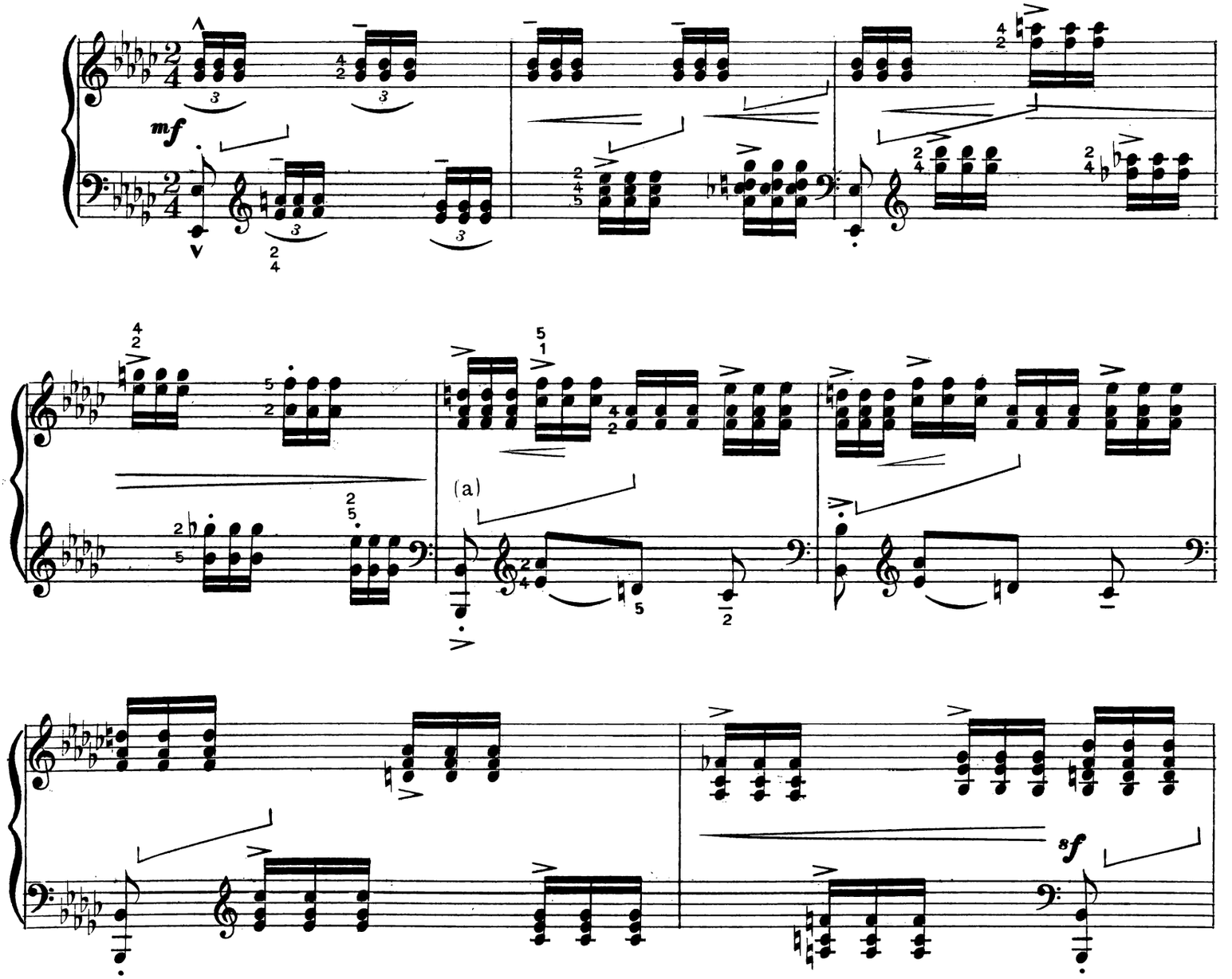
✶ One can easily believe such a character as "Medea" to be alike capable of faithful devotion to her loved ones, and of violent indignation at her wrongs. The gentler qualities may find appropriate expression in this episode. W.H.S.

✶✶ Those who have observed Rubinstein's manner of playing chords and octaves may have noticed the elevation and depression of forearm at the wrist, (the fingers remaining almost motionless at, or near the keys) as the means of playing such groups of notes. Such a method requires very intelligent application. It is almost as rarely understood as it is difficult to teach effectively W.H.S.

MEDEA.

Wm. H. Sherwood Op. 13

Allegro con fuoco ed appassionato.



(a) The canonic imitations in the middle part are to be perceptibly emphasized and well connected.

A slight change in tone color in all such cases is preferable to the heavy accent which some pianists consider essential whenever a particular note or figure is to be made distinguishable. A.J.G.

The composer suggests to those piano-players who unfortunately do not study Harmony, that the frequent use of c flat and d natural belongs to the Harmonic Minor Scale, (E flat minor.)

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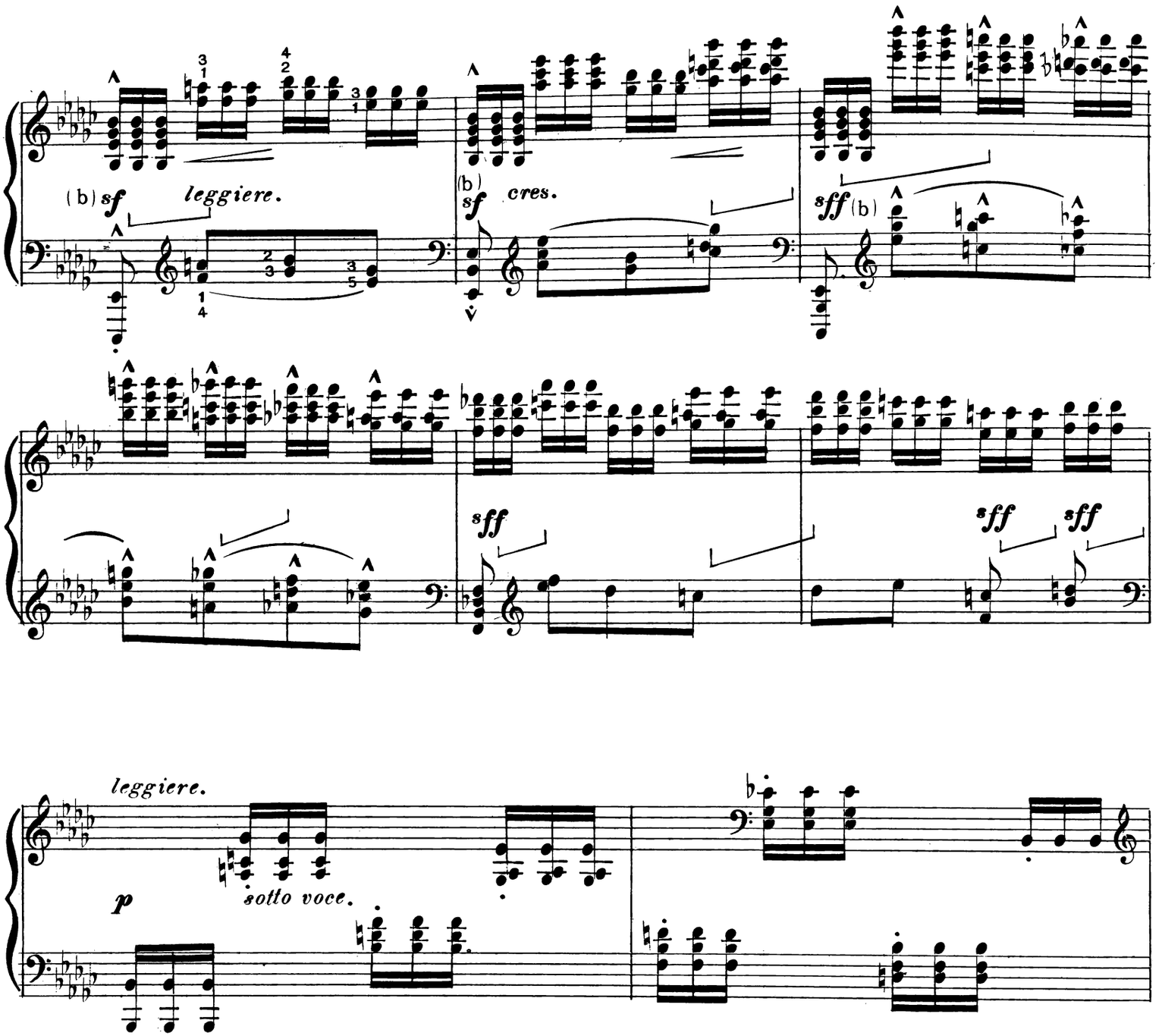
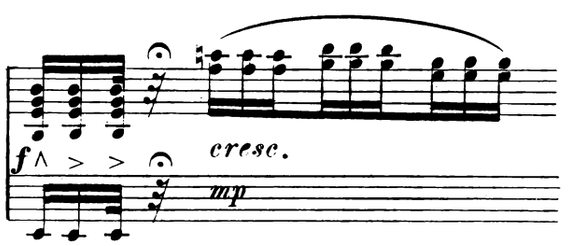


(b) To produce the proper effect here, and in the two following measures, a *Tempo Rubato* style is necessary. The first triplet in each measure is to be performed heavily and isolated from the following, in which the *timbre* is to be considerably changed and the movement increased, to compensate for the *slight interruption* caused by the fate-like chord in the beginning of each measure,

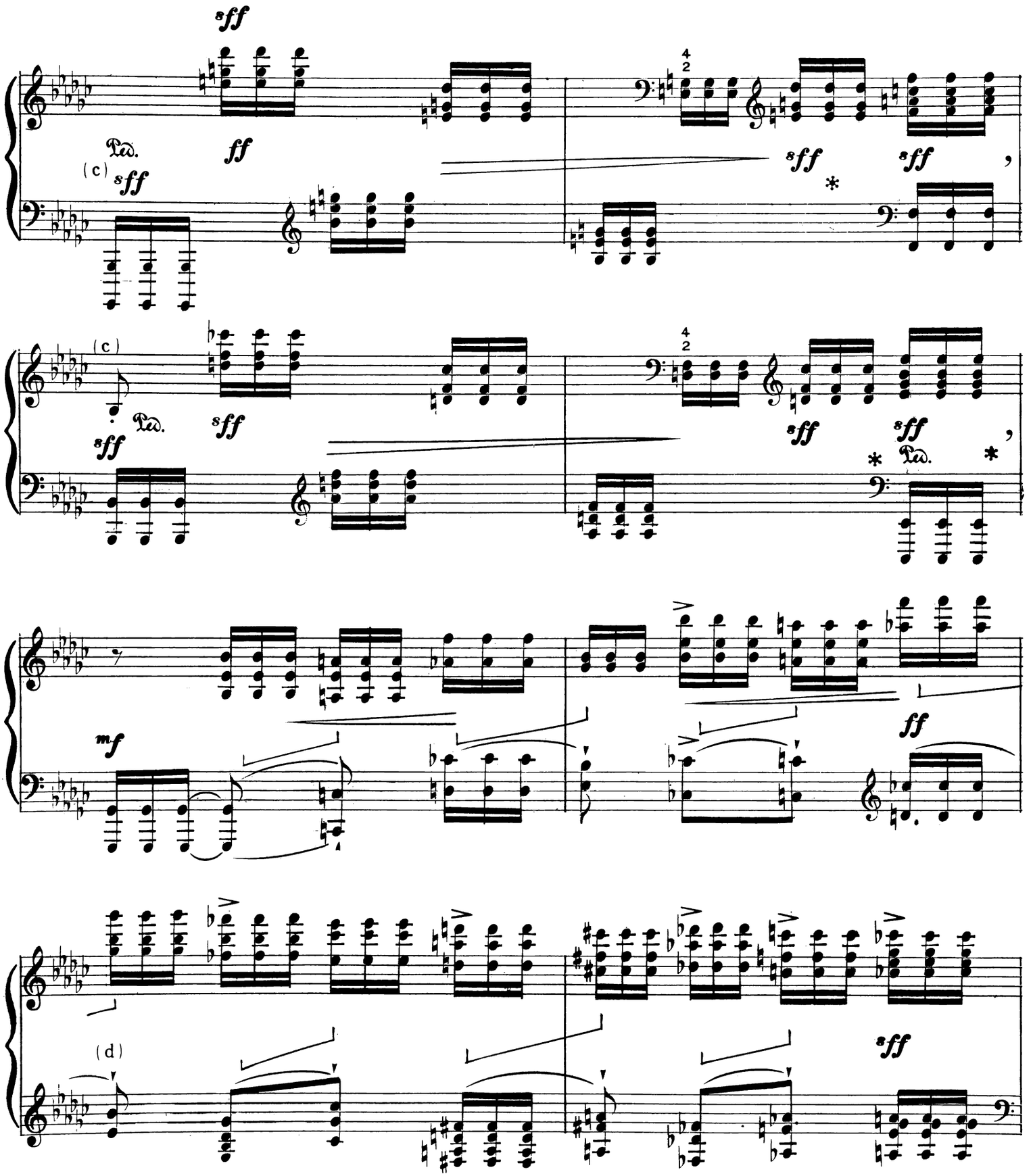
Thus:



Play the chord at (b) as if pronouncing a doom.

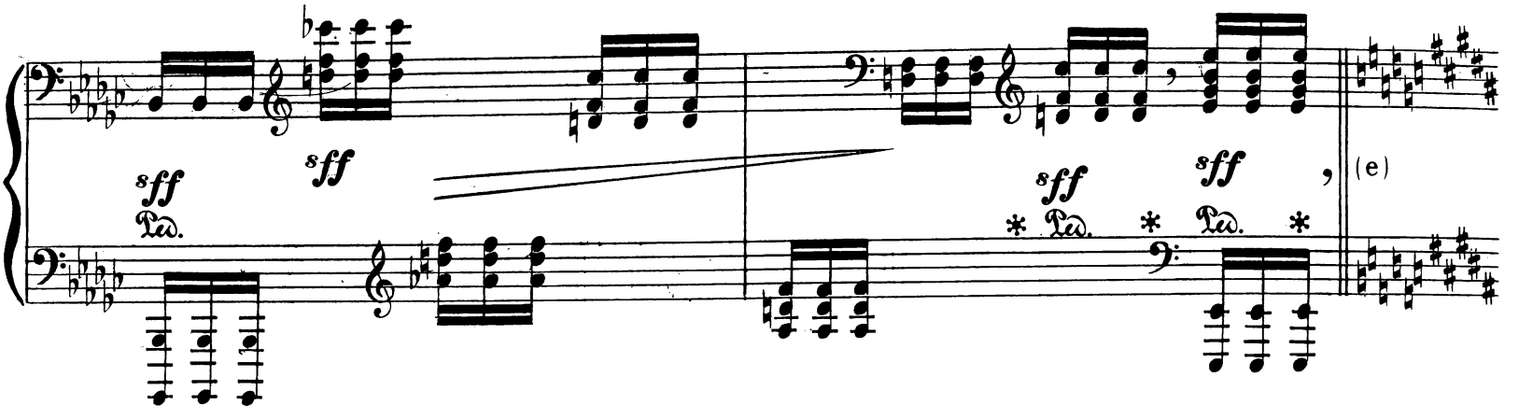
A.J.G.

The freedom of tempo must not be exaggerated.

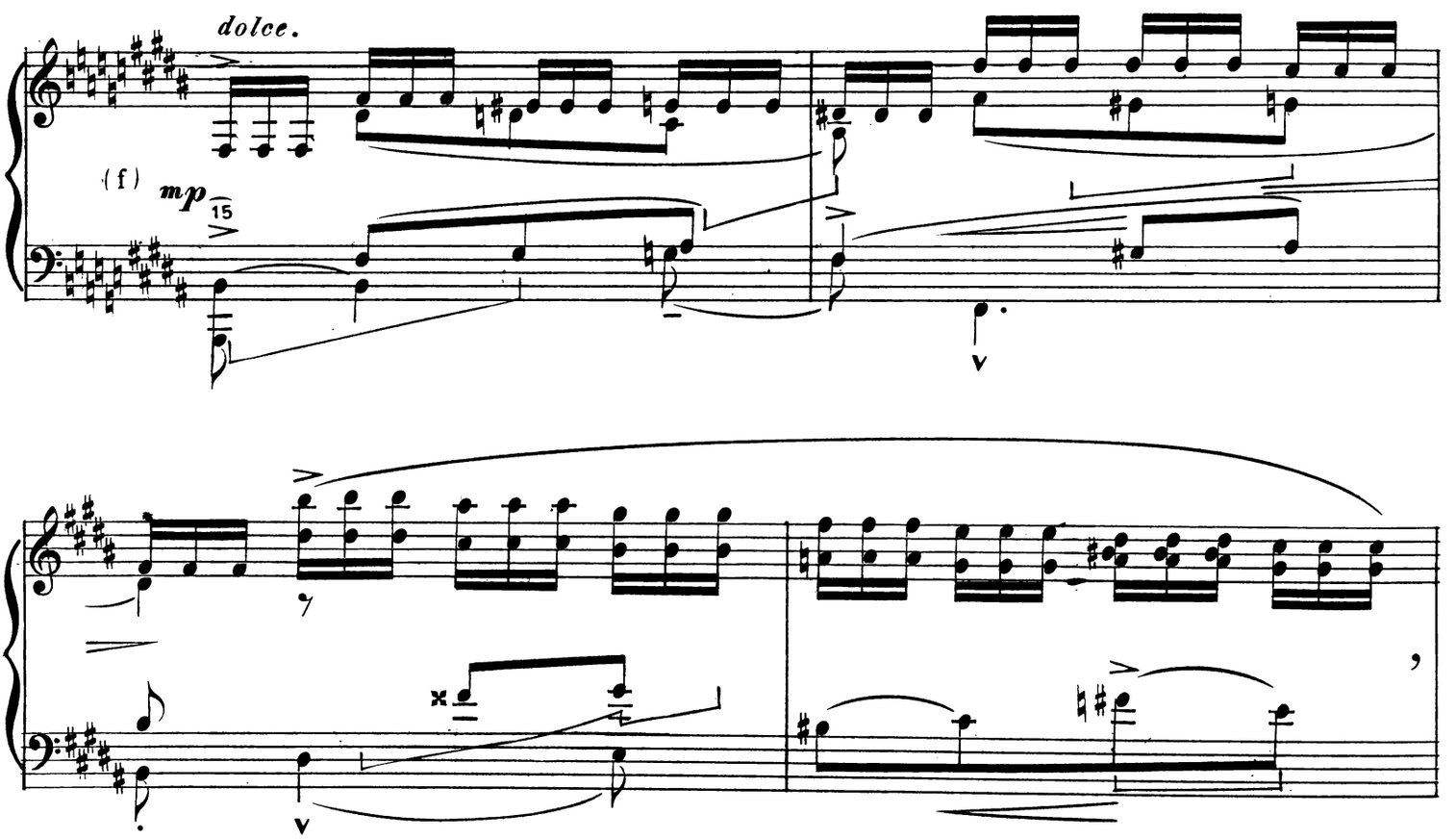


(c) Each of these phrases to be well separated, as indicated by the commas.

(d) A noticeable distinction here exists between the upper and lower parts, especially from (d) where the legato couplets of the left hand must be entirely independent of the more continuous part above.

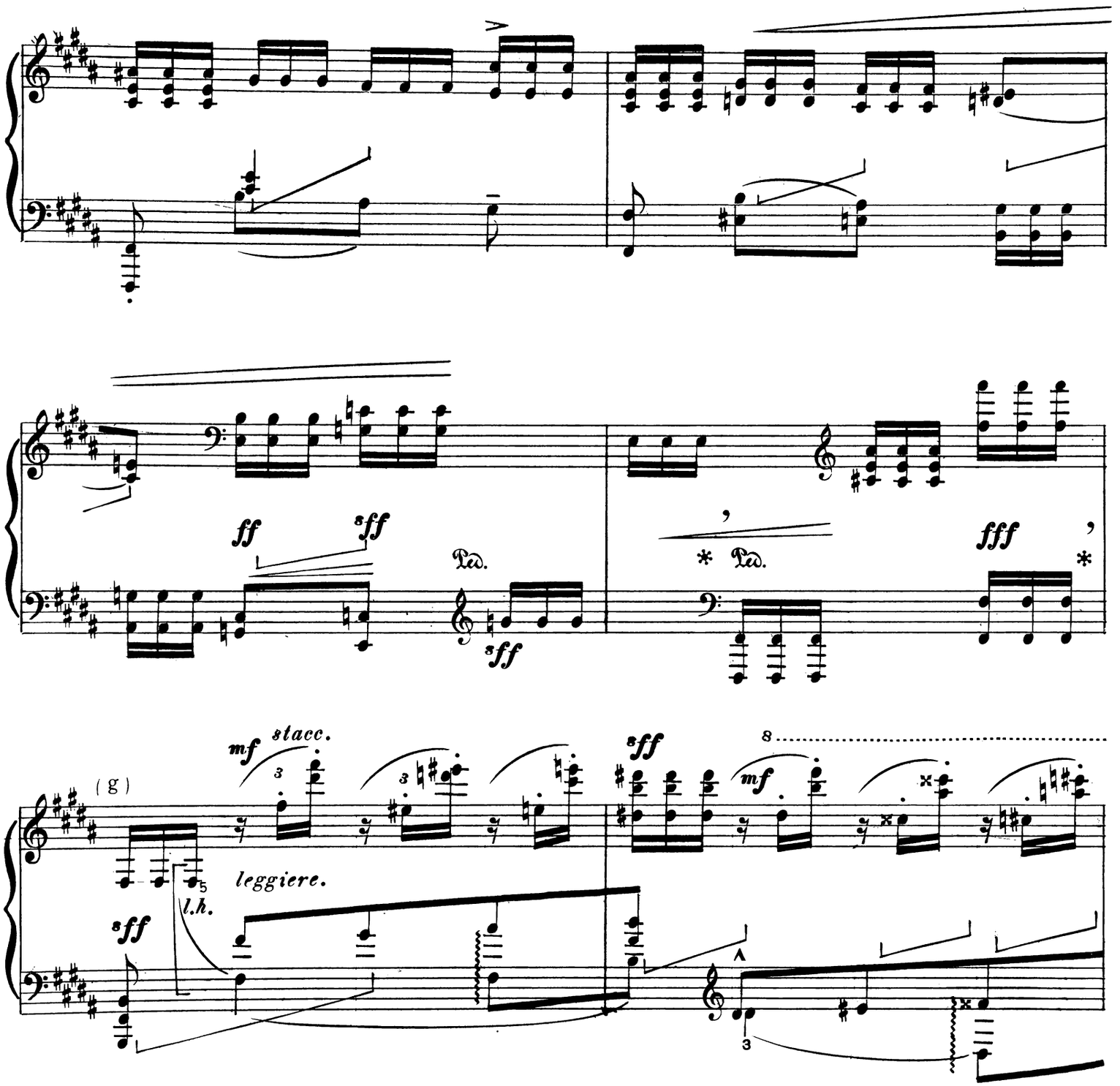


Con anima.

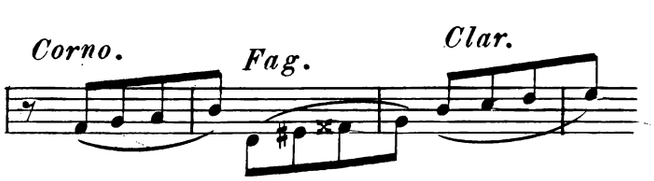


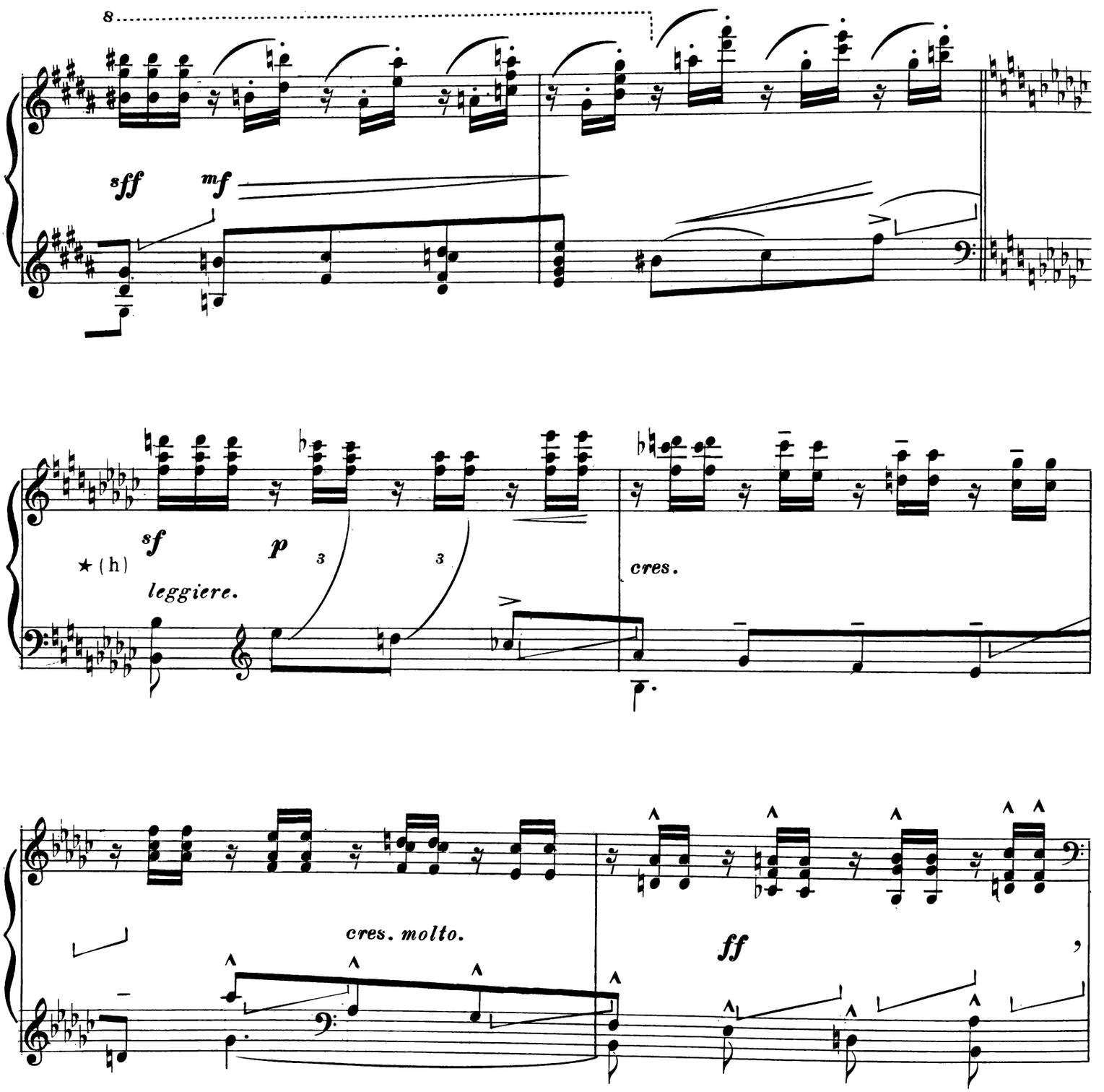
(e) Proceed with the next strain without interruption.

(f) Attention is here called to the individuality of each of the four voice-parts, which must be performed accordingly; also to the strict canonic imitation of the leading motive in the second measure.



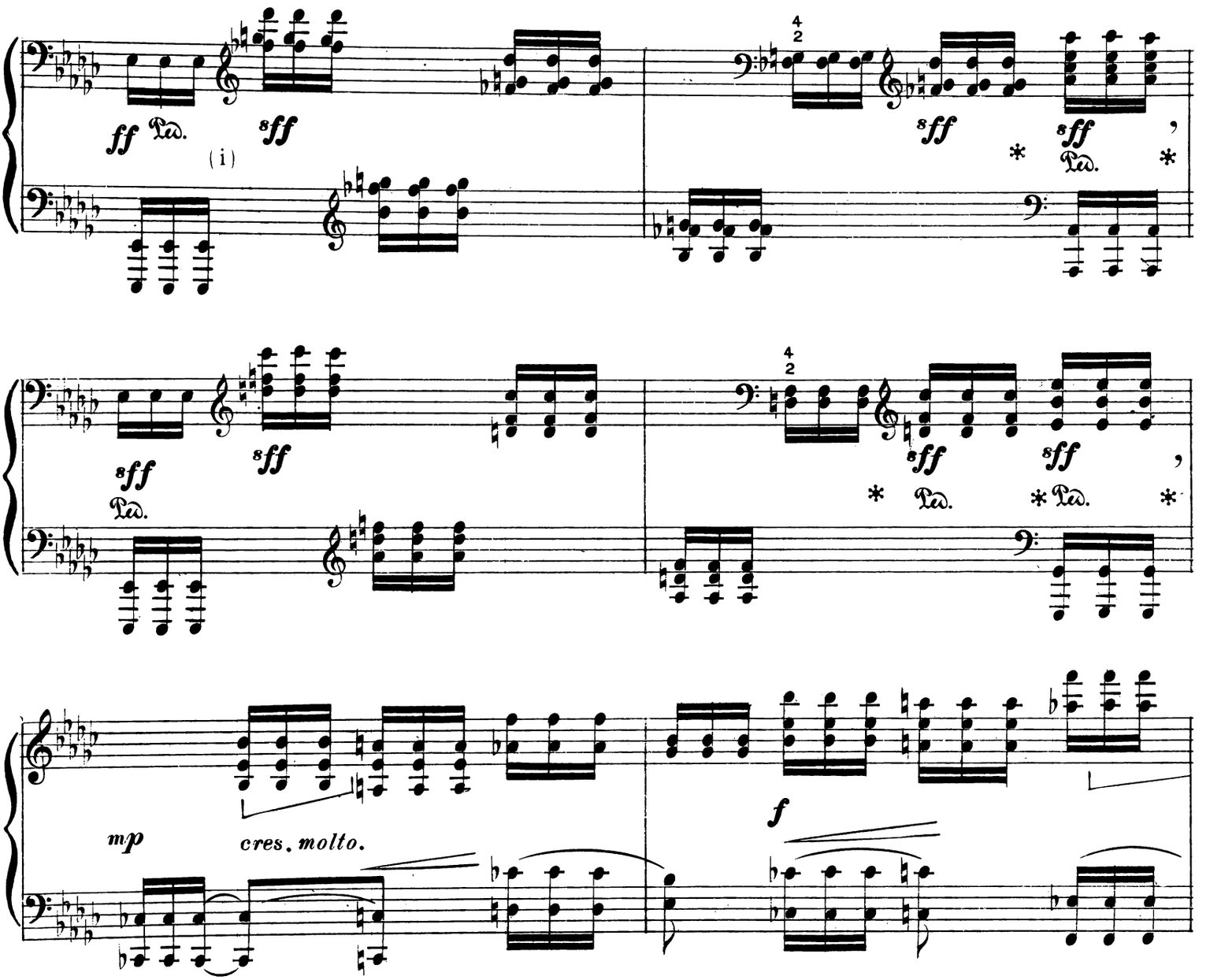
(g) This, and what follows, is an elaboration of the same motive. The counter-theme below is to be made prominent, and (what is more difficult) in antiphonal style,

somewhat like this 



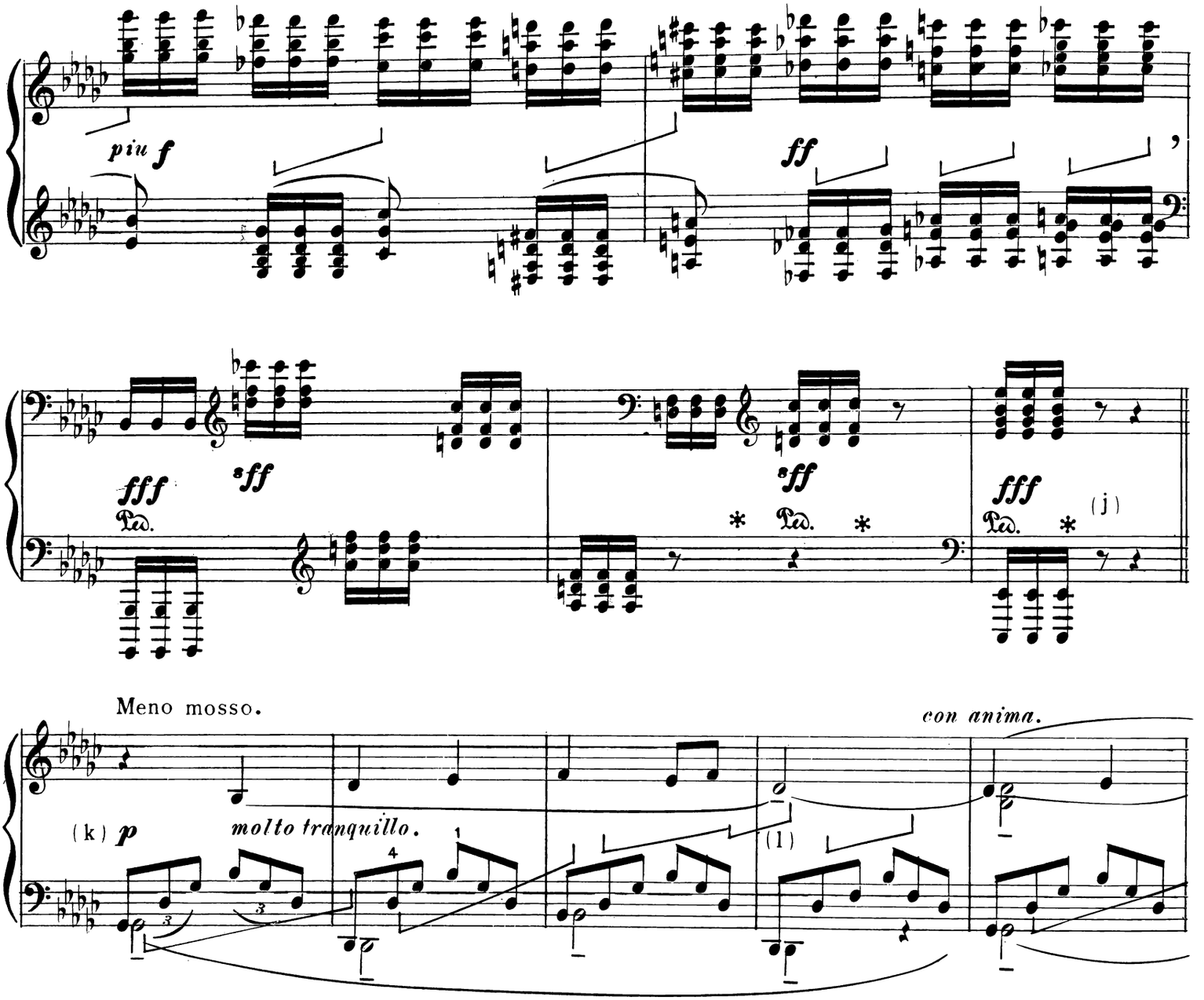
(h) The upper part is not a mere accompaniment, but contains in syncopation the original melodic outline, to which the middle part(*l.h.*) responds.

★ The chief harmonic peculiarity of this and other passages can be rendered more effective through strong emphasis upon c flat and d natural.



(i) These four measures, though they seem isolated, belong to the extended period, and are to be played accordingly.

These distinctions between a short Coda and Extended period, as well as numerous other intermediate details have already been explained by the Editor in his "Musical Analysis", and further comment may therefore be omitted.

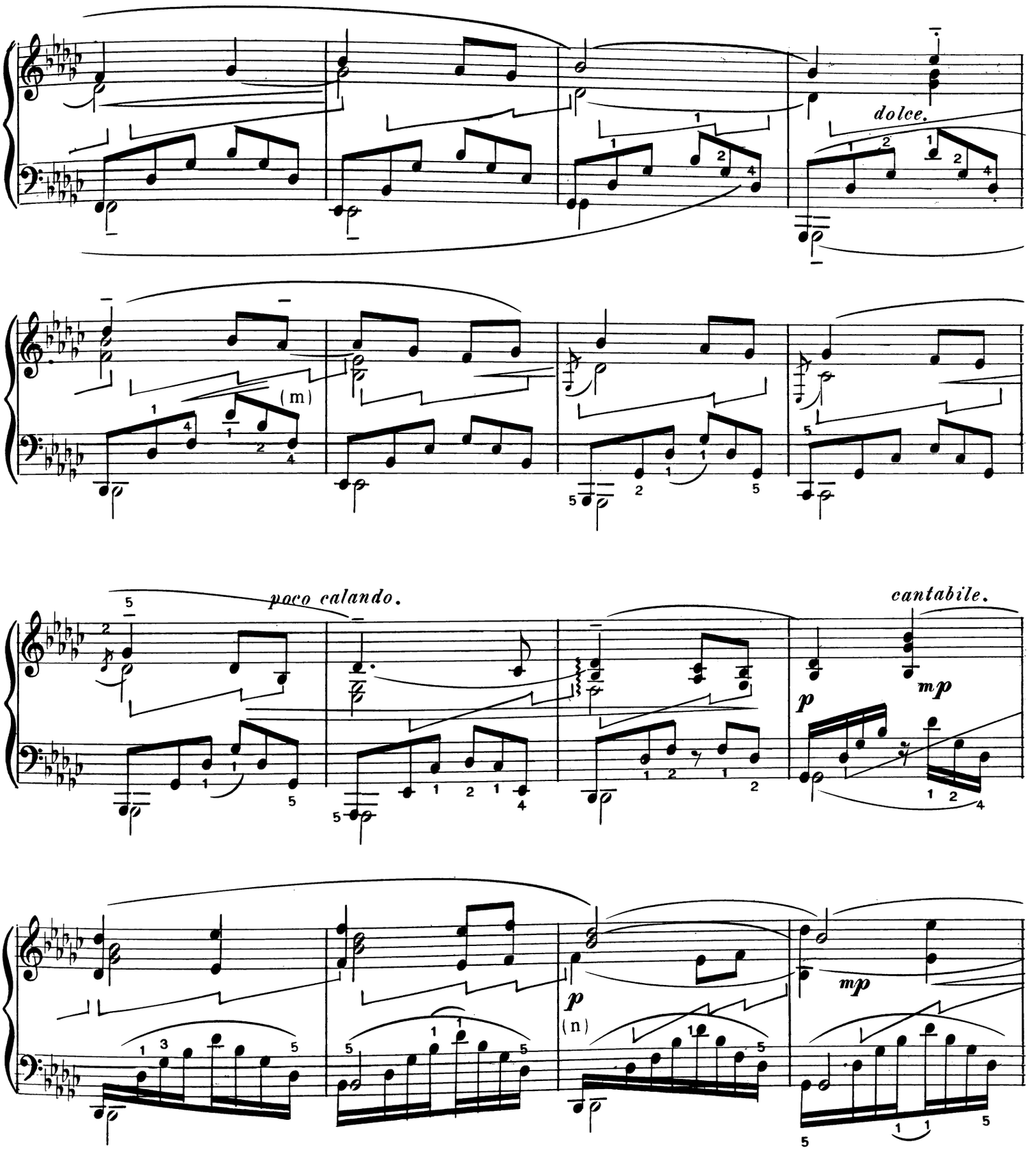


(j) Notwithstanding this impatient and impassioned close, a pause should be observed here, particularly on account of the following change of form. The latter presents a totally different emotional picture. The most turbulent agitation of soul gives place to spiritual hope and calm.

(k) This theme is in the nature of an uninterrupted melody, and must not be allowed to subside in interest. To prevent such an occurrence it is necessary to *draw out* the tone from the sustained notes.

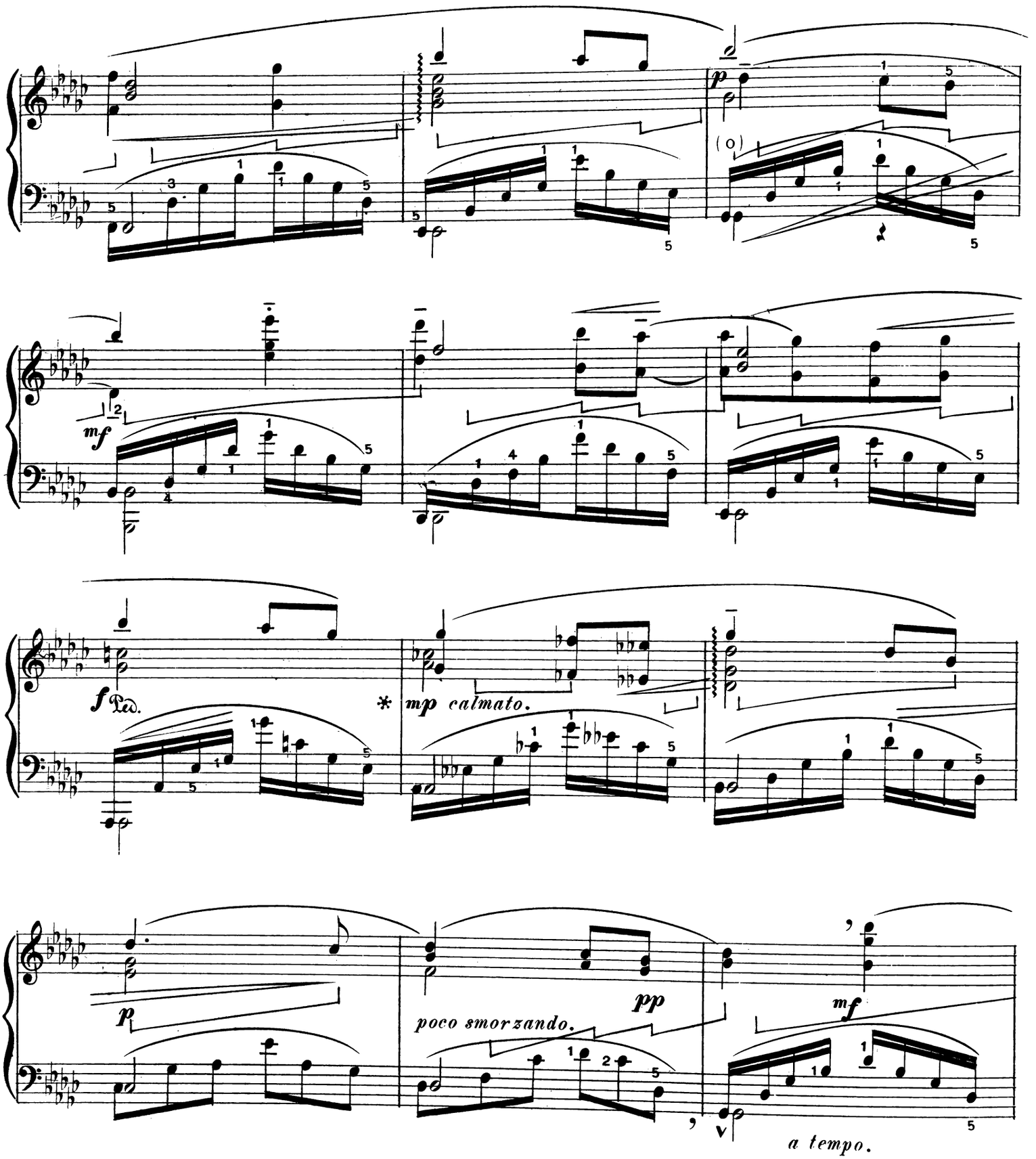
(l) At(1) for example, the *d - flat* must be made to sing distinctly during the space of three measures, so that in the following measure the melody will seem to proceed from that tone continuously. Against these tones which are continued in vibration the adventitious parts must of course be considerably subdued. A.J.G.

A legatissimo touch combined with moderate crescendo where ascending the scale will help the player to breathe some life into these phrases of melody. W.H.S.

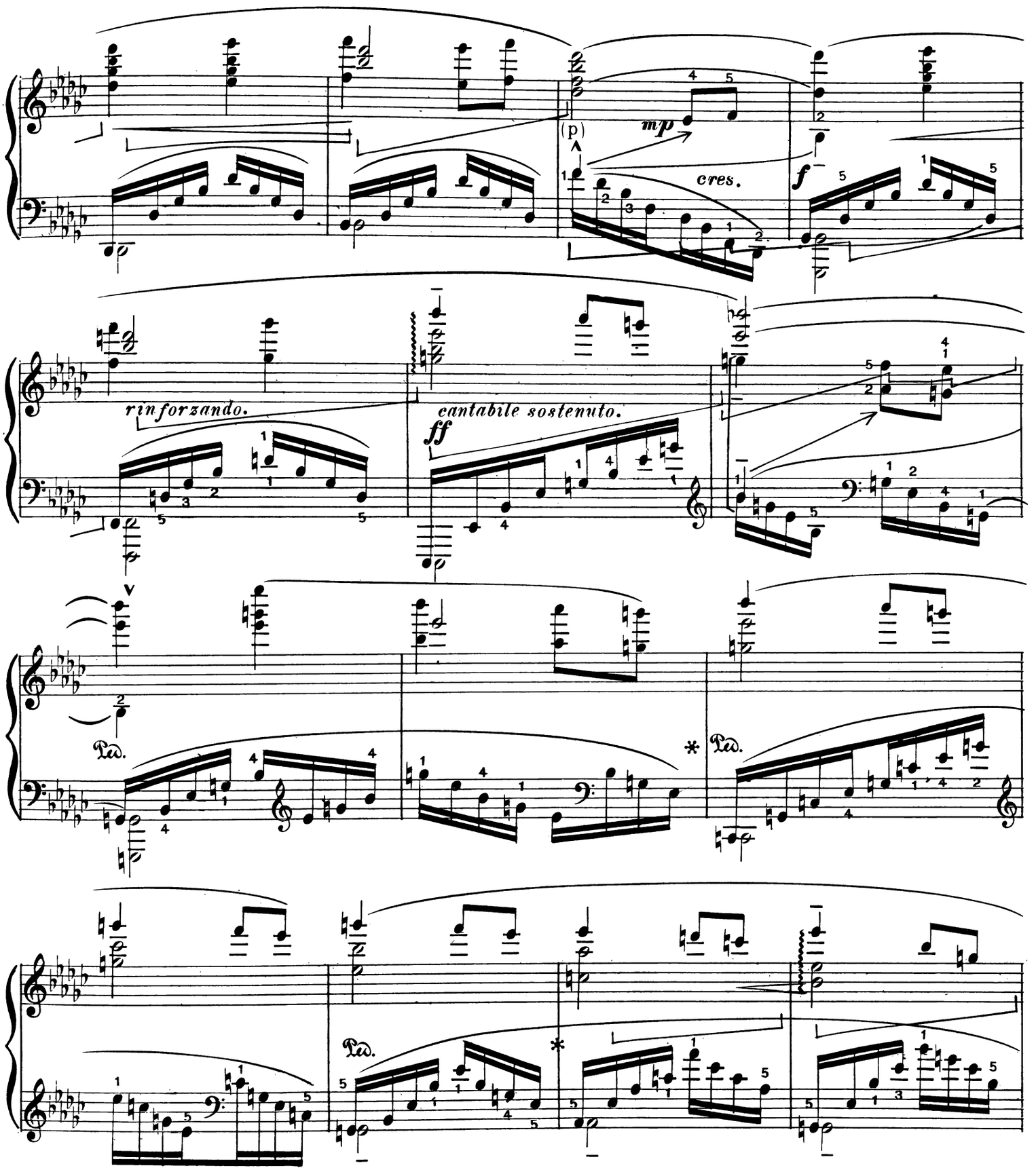


(m) The same observations apply here.

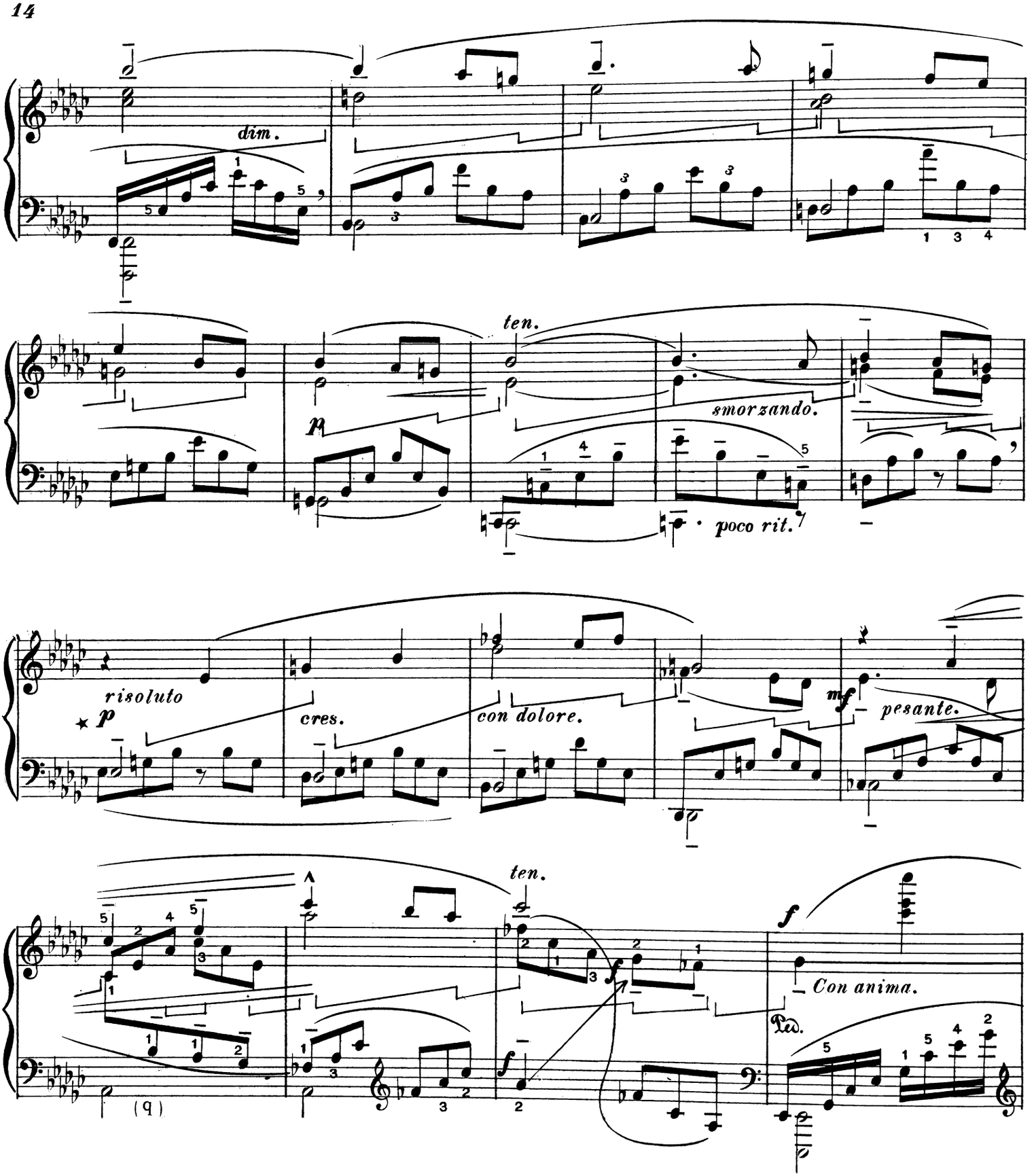
(n) The imitations should begin simultaneously with the ending of the melodic phrase above, so as not to call away the attention from the upper part. To facilitate this effect give a slight accent to the *f* of the previous measure.



(o) To the same end the contralto note, *d - flat*, which is the beginning of the imitation, should be made more prominent than *g - flat* below, as the latter is a mere harmonic tone.

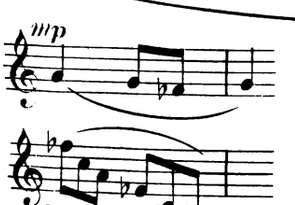


(p) Observe that the f in the left hand is the beginning of the imitation, which is continued by the right hand.

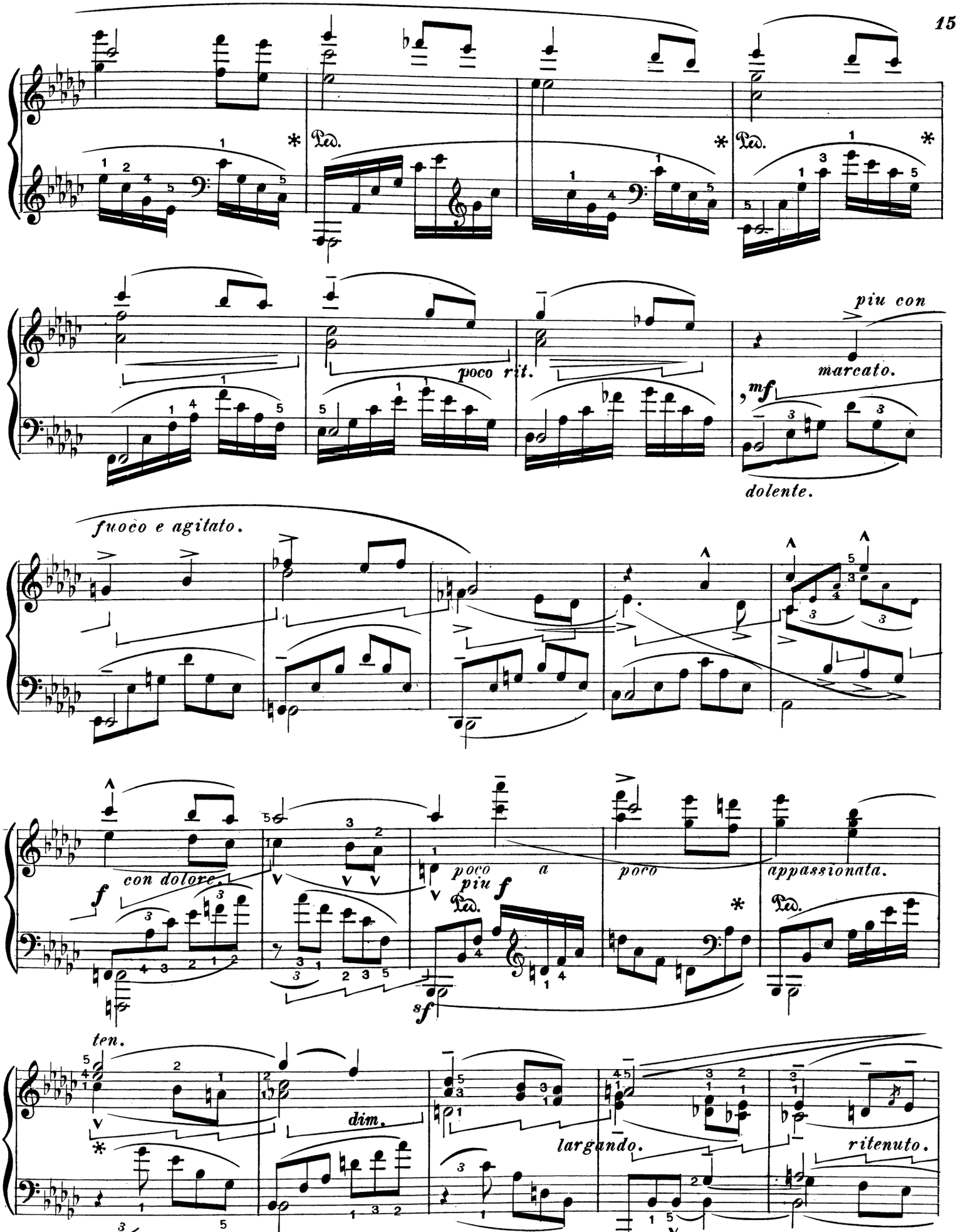


(q) The triplets in the right hand below the melody are a mere inversion of the left hand accompaniment. The counter theme is this:

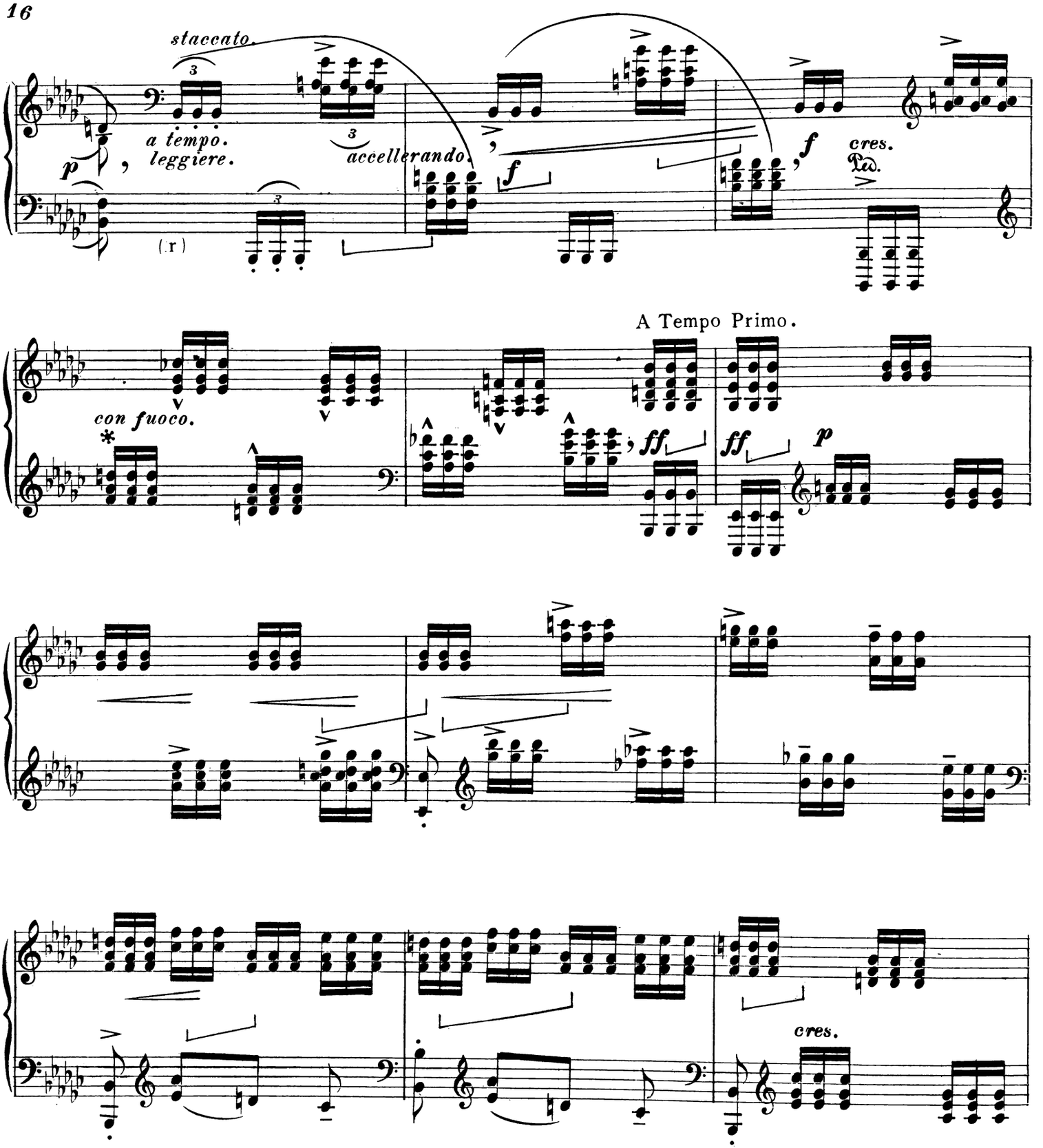
A similar instance occurs two measures after (q). The free imitation,



is to be kept distinct from the accompaniment which is woven around it



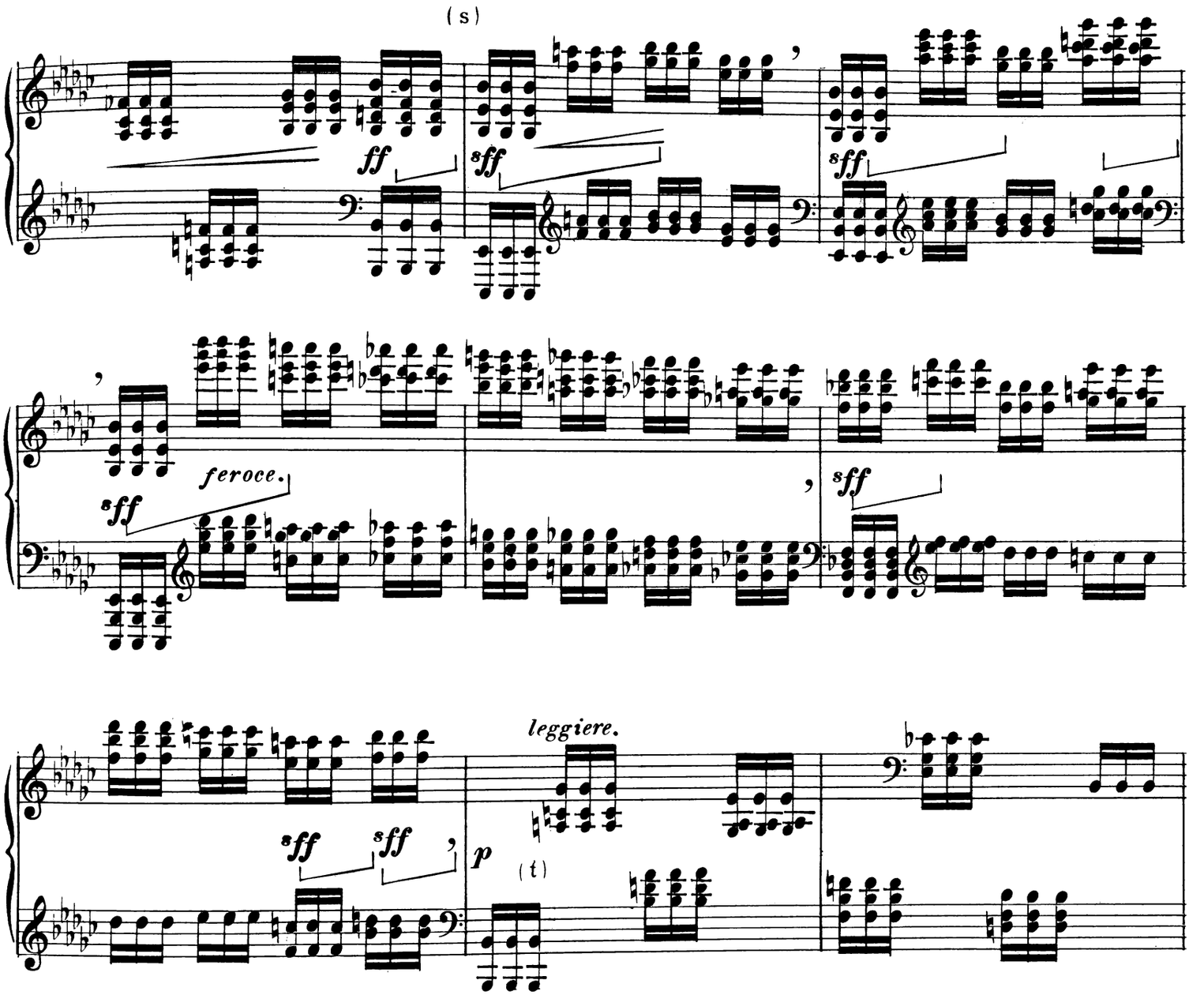
* As if a gradual realization of the hopelessness of brighter things dreamed of were forcing itself upon us, the music, from this point grows mournful, then sullen, before the final outburst of violence and passionate abandon.



(r) *A tempo* here signifies a return to the movement of the Second Part. From this point the movement is to be gradually increased until the *tempo* of the First Part is reached. *A tempo primo.*

The slurs over the semi-phrases (after the *ritenuto*) are not to indicate smoothness, but merely to show where the punctuations occur.

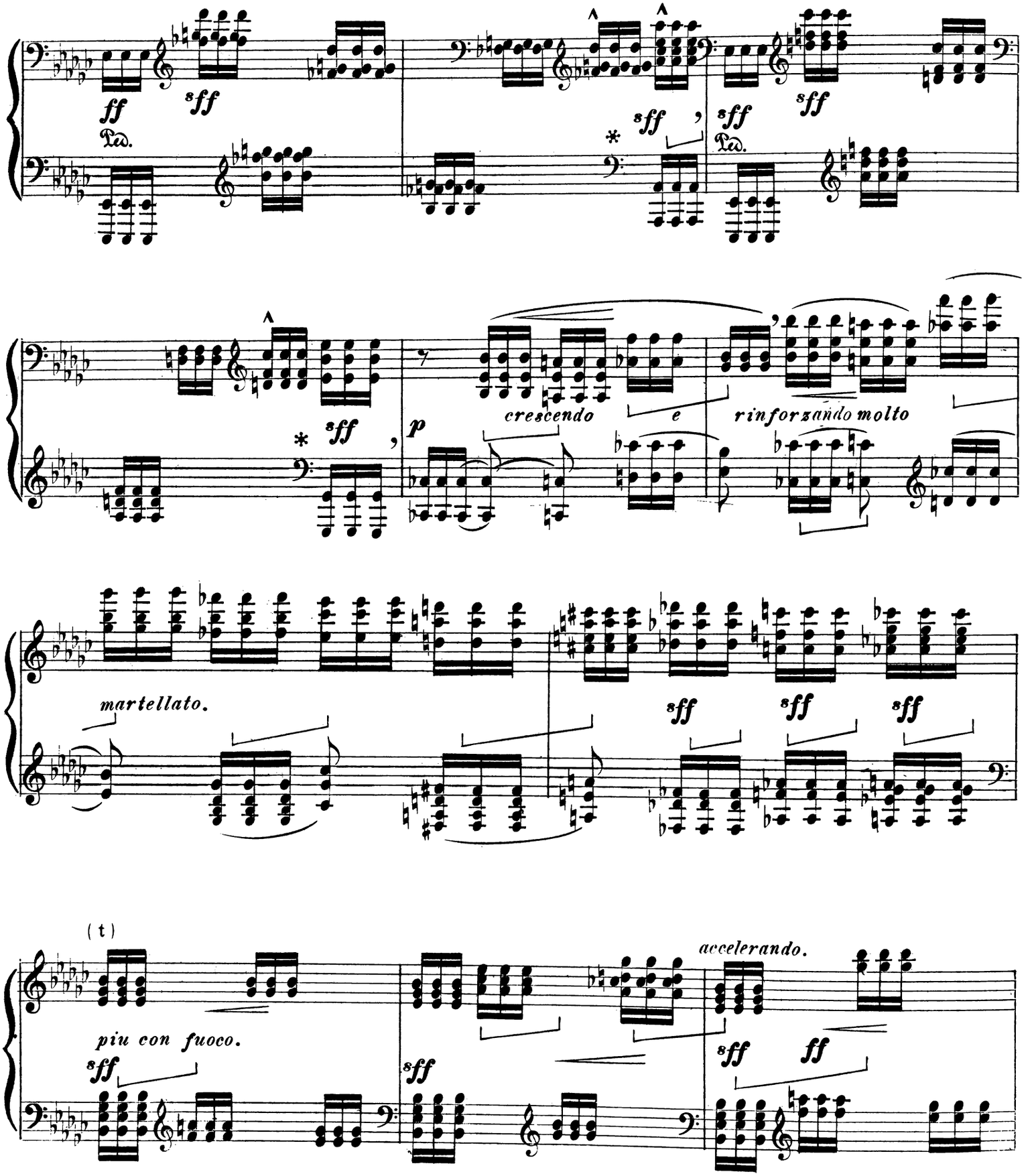
The special accent at the commencement of each semi-phrase will facilitate this peculiar manner of phrasing.

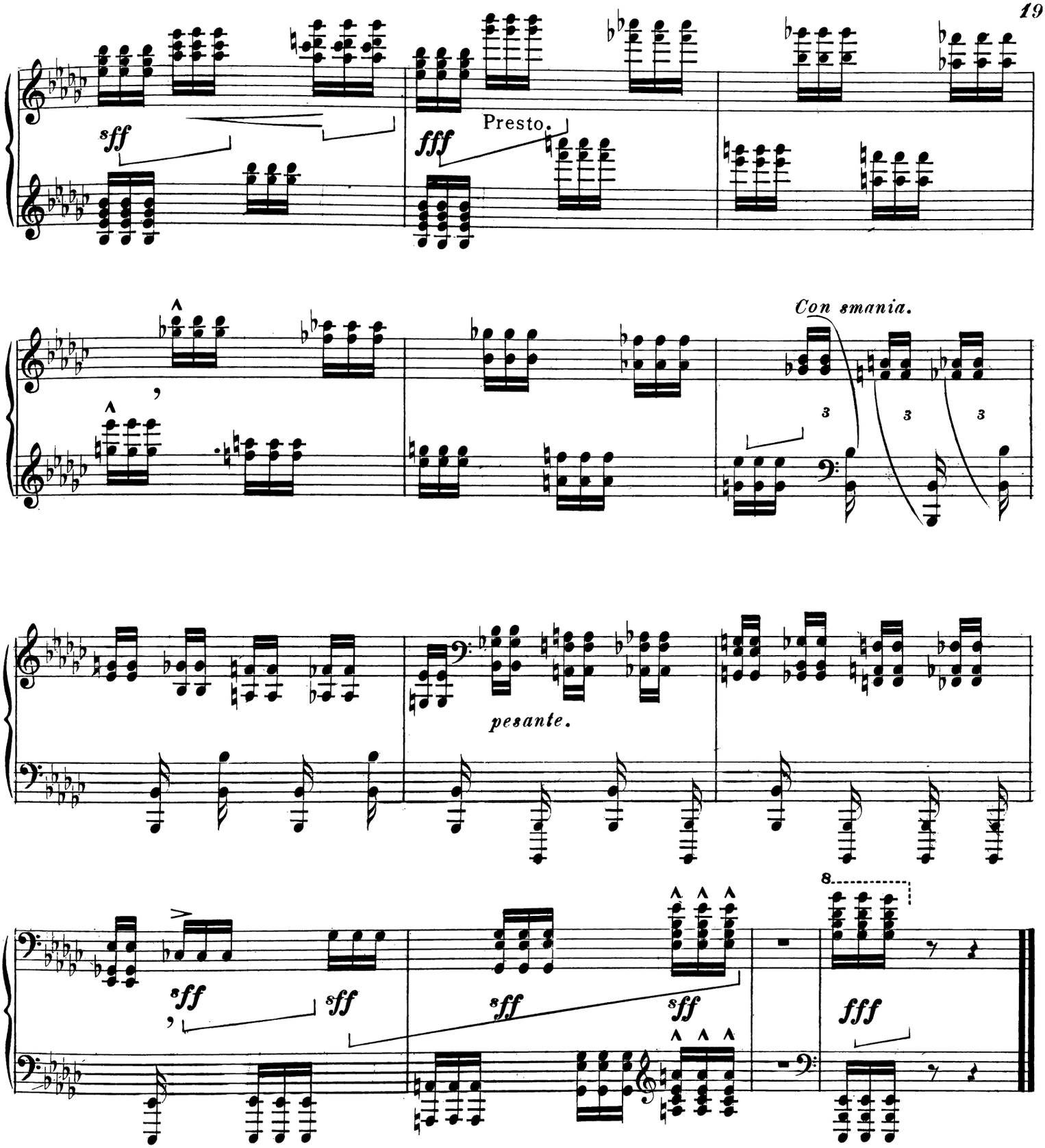


(s) The *tempo rubato* and other peculiarities of style in this passage have previously been set forth. They are still more pronounced here. The sudden contrasts in tone-quantity, temporary changes in movement, and frequent increase and diminish in dynamical power, are especially necessary during this part in order to represent that state of soul-agitation, of alternate remorse and hope which are supposed to have formed the burden of Medea's earthly career.

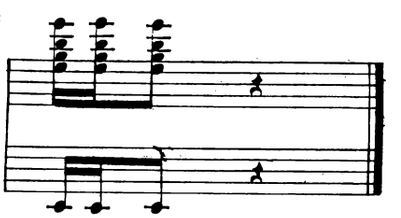
★
(t) The Termination begins here, and from this point the movement is to be gradually increased. On this account it will be necessary to cultivate a degree of reserve power, particularly as this Opus is calculated to exhaust the muscular energies.

★ See page 18


ff
sff
Ped.
sff
sff
sff
Ped.
sff
p
crescendo
e
rinforzando molto
martellato.
sff
sff
sff
(t)
piu con fuoco.
sff
sff
accelerando.
sff
ff



(u) In executing the last repeated chord as loud as possible do not allow the *rhythm of the triplet* to relapse into anything like this:



The suddenness of stopping upon the last note of a triplet, and leaving the second eighth thus silent, constitute both the difficulty of the execution and the appropriateness of the conception.