Maurice RAVEL

à Ida et Cipa GODEBSKI

SONATINE

pour le piano

Piano Practical Editions
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Maurice RAVEL 1875 - 1937

SONATINE

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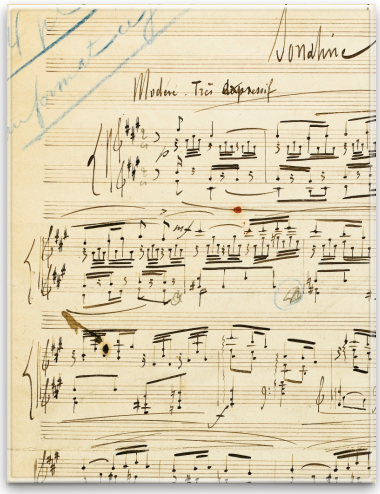
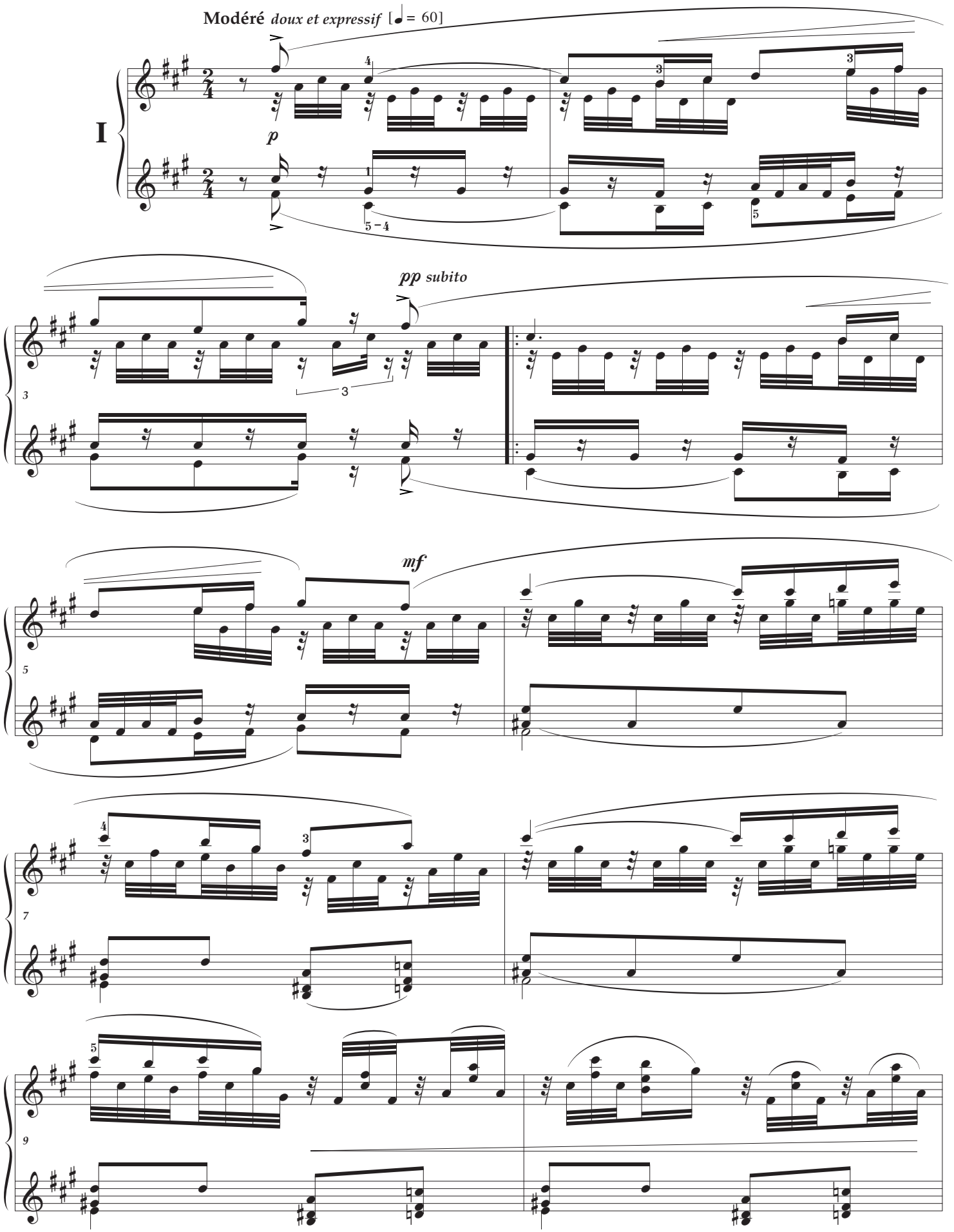
In 1903 an Anglo-French magazine, the *Weekly Critical Review*, promoted a competition for the composition of a piano sonata first movement. The rules stipulated the key (F# minor) and the length (less than 75 bars). There was a prize of 100 francs (now worth less than 400€) and the anonymous manuscript had to be received by 31st March — the six judges included d'Indy and Widor. Facing bankruptcy, the competition was cancelled and 28-year old Ravel became the only competitor; curiously, his entry was also over-long. Mystery surrounds the competition — did he really exceed the number of bars and was he really the only competitor? In any event it became one of his most popular piano pieces and led to the illustrious publishers Durand offering him a contract and annual salary.

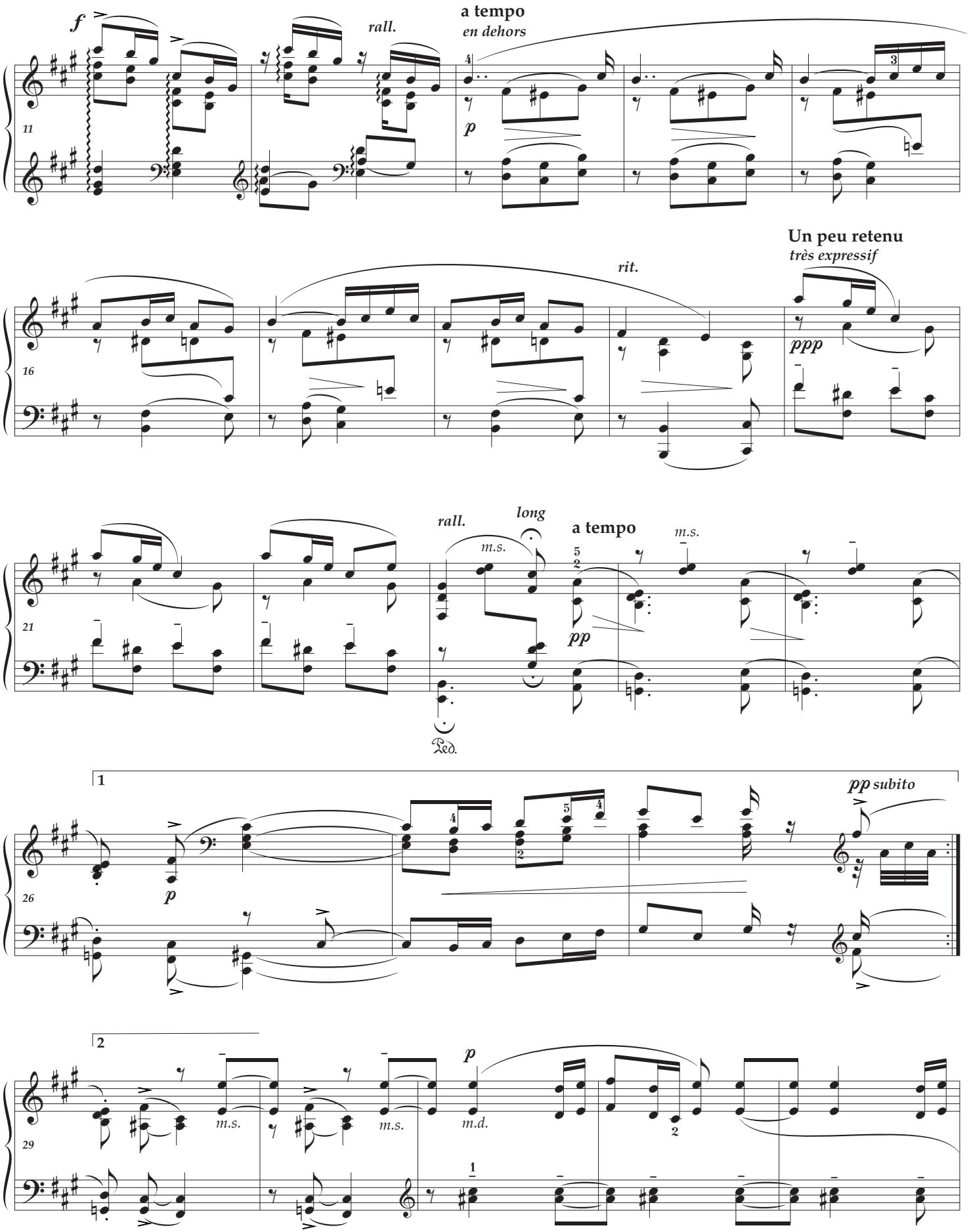


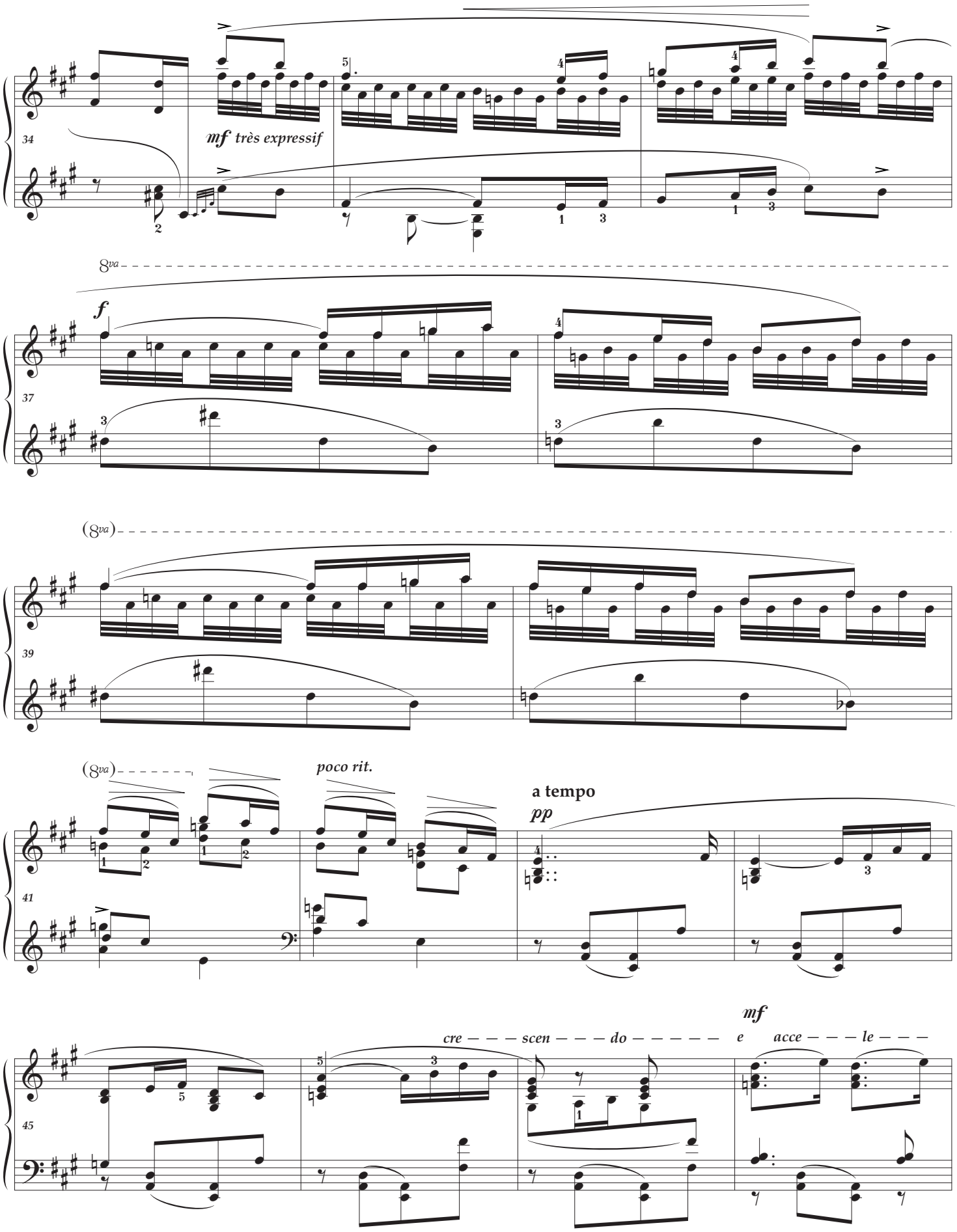
Ravel had demoted the *sonata* to *sonatine* and added two movements by August 1905. This "downgrading" in no way demeans a work which demonstrates Ravel's harmonic and melodic originality; nor does it resemble the sonatinas of Mozart and Beethoven, displaying great inventiveness and demanding unassuming virtuosity for the first two movements. The third movement hints at the bravura to be found in the Toccata from the *Tombeau de Couperin* published during the first world war. The idea behind the title may well reflect its brevity, paying homage to late eighteenth-century musical elegance and classical structure — a watchmaker's * miniaturist response to the large-scale German sonatas of Beethoven or Brahms. Dedicated to his new friends the Godebskis, it was one of those works which Ravel would perform during his American tour.

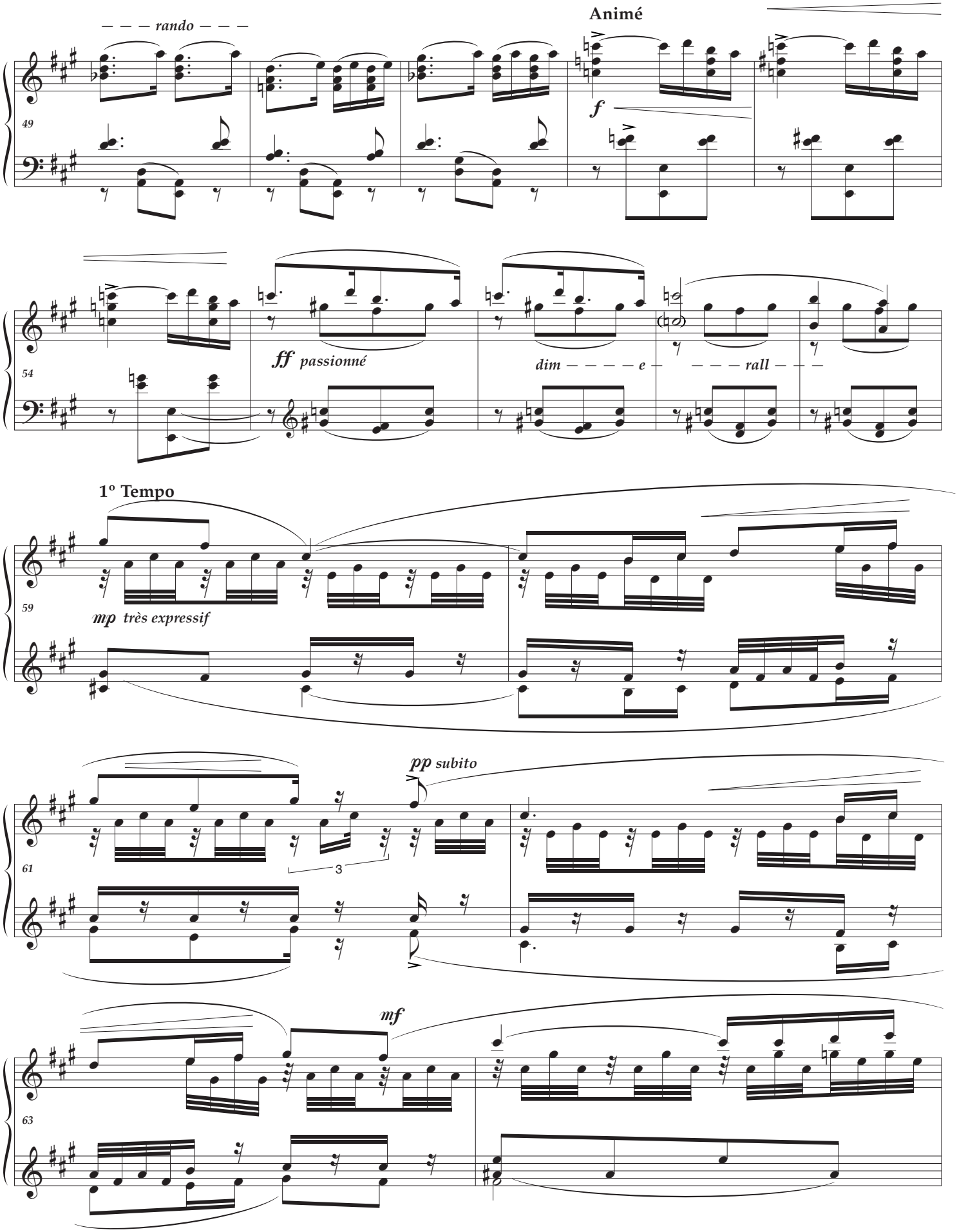
In addition to some suggested fingerings, the appendix contains durations, comments, afterthoughts and a vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more persuasive. Ravel uses the pedal sign sparingly, preferring extended ties or long bass notes, impossible to hold otherwise. It is possible to use the sostenuto pedal effectively at the end of the second movement, although this is entirely editorial.

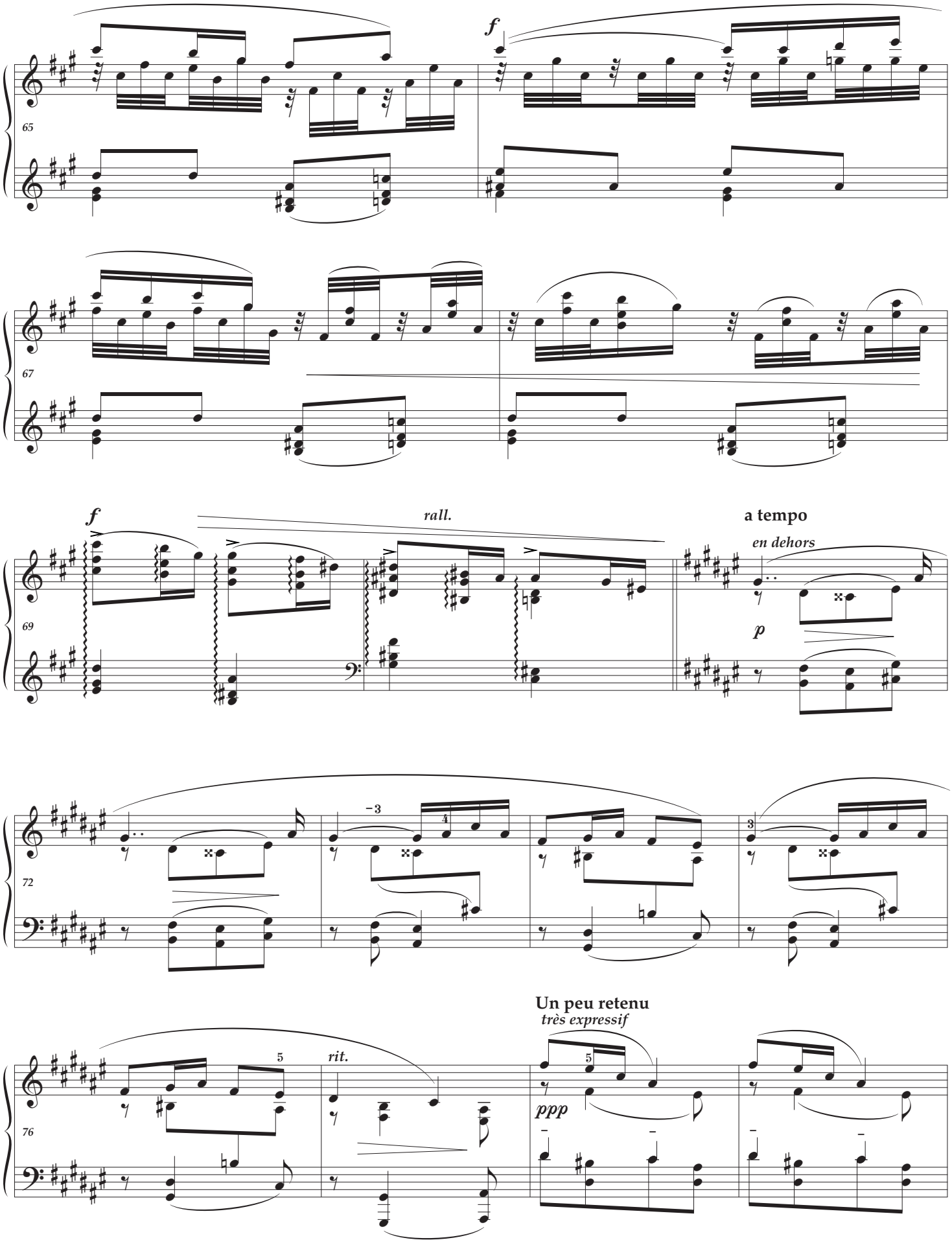
* A reference to Igor Stravinsky who referred to Ravel as "the most perfect of Swiss watchmakers."

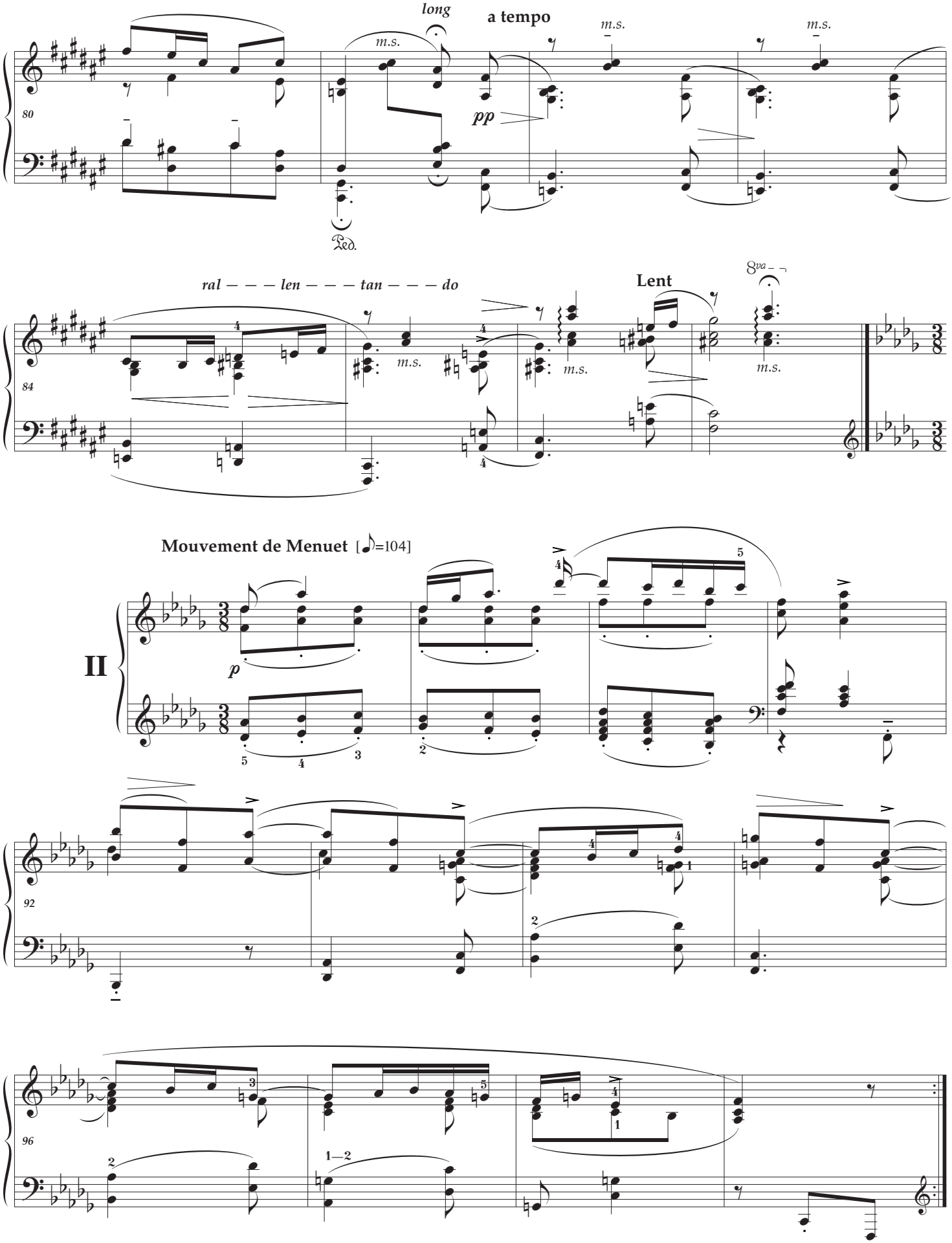

Modéré doux et expressif [♩ = 60]
I
p
pp subito
mf

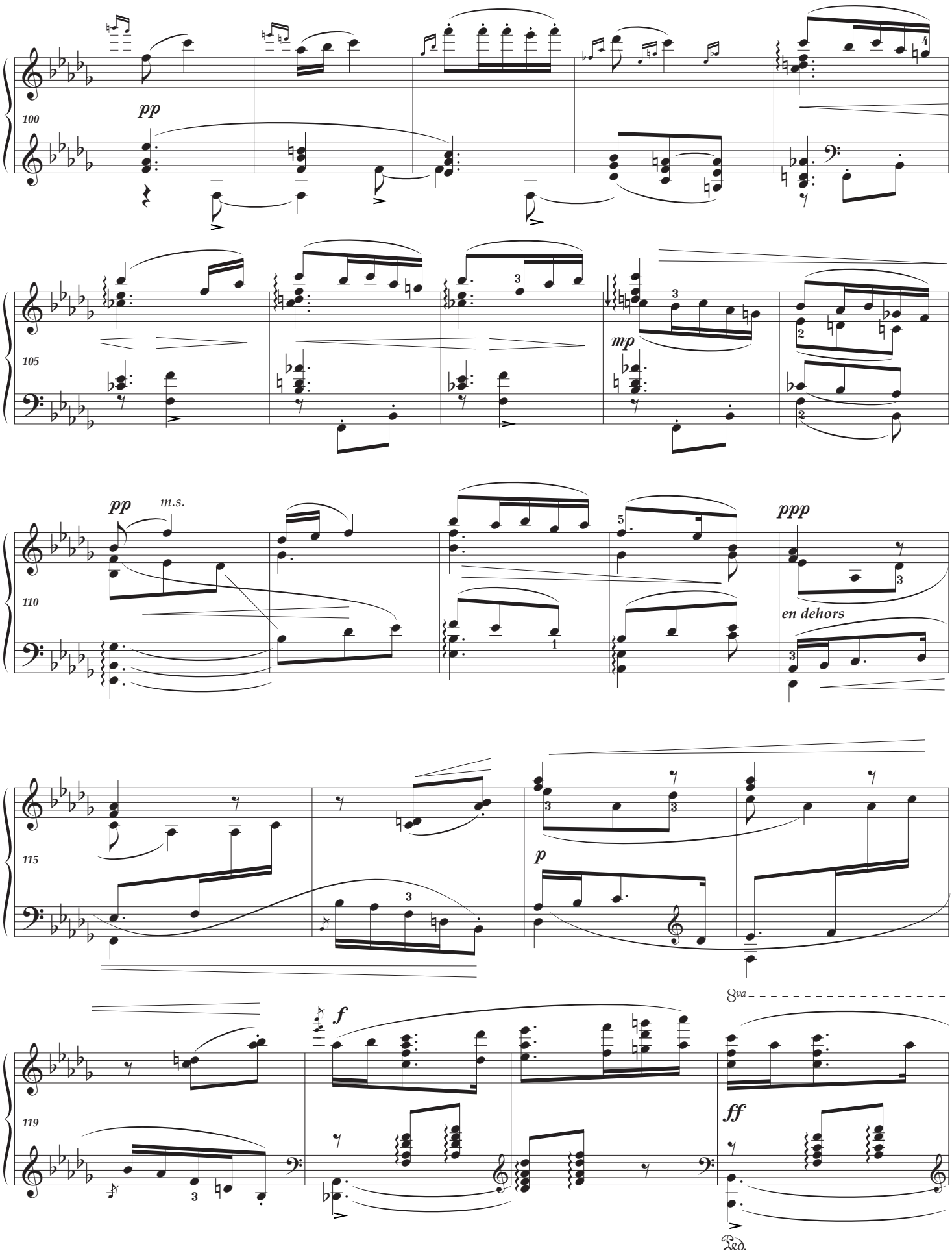

f
rall.
a tempo
en dehors
p
11
Un peu retenu
très expressif
rit.
ppp
16
rall.
long
a tempo
m.s.
pp
Ped.
21
1
pp subito
p
26
2
m.s.
m.d.
29

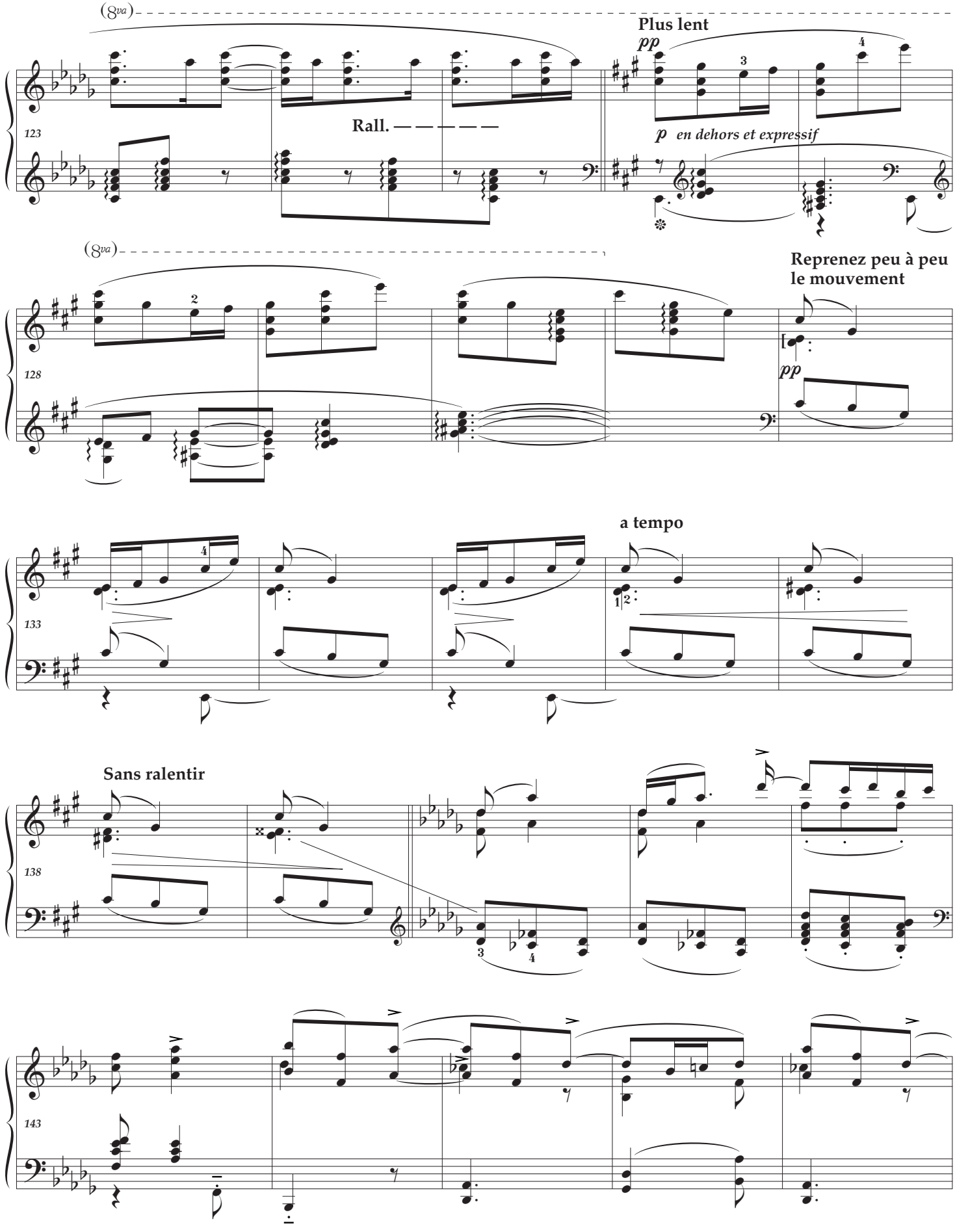

34
mf très expressif
8va
f
37
(8va)
39
(8va)
poco rit.
a tempo
pp
41
mf
cre — — — scen — — — do — — — — — — e acce — — — le — — —
45

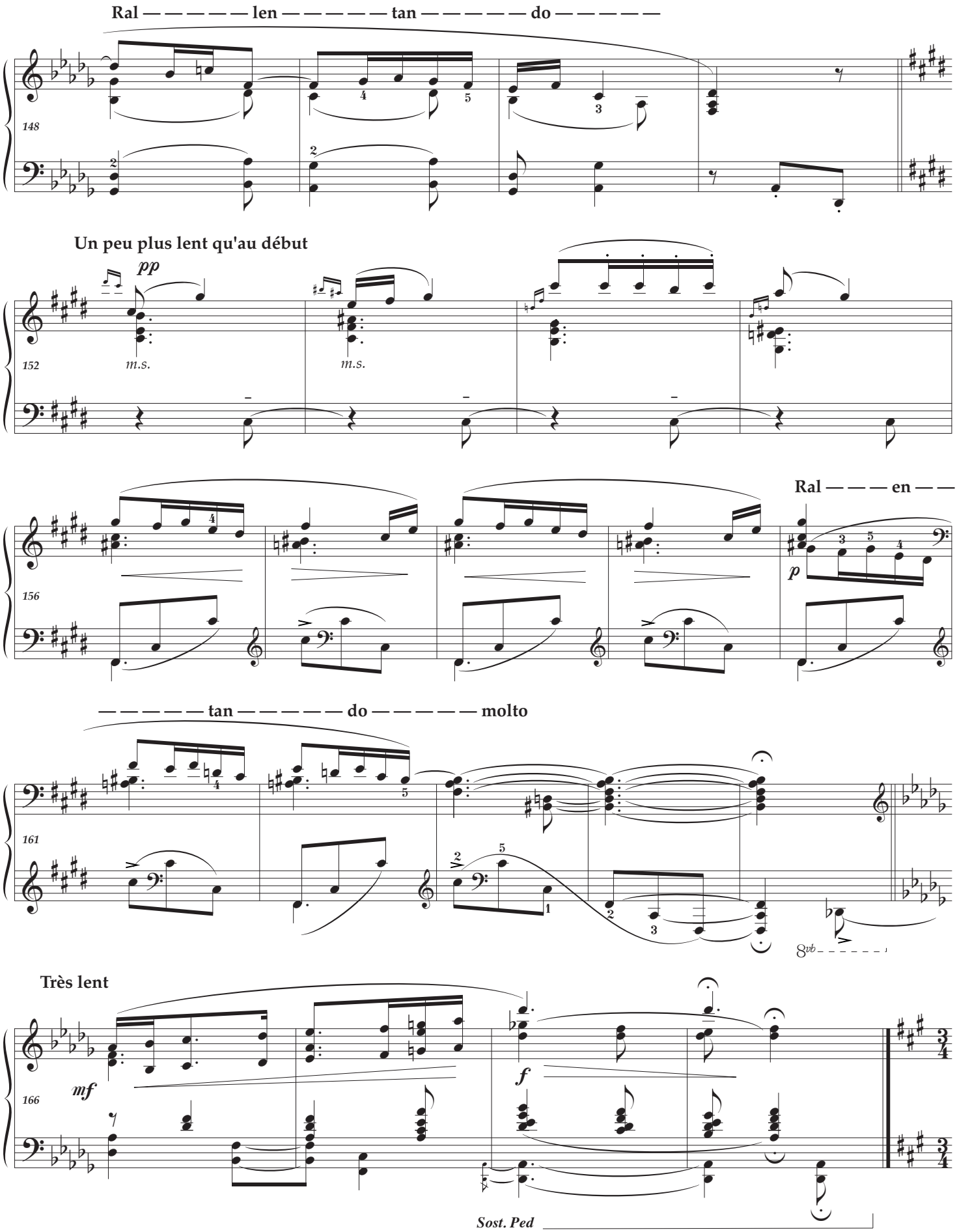

rando
Animé
f
49
ff passionné
dim e
rall
54
1º Tempo
mp très expressif
59
pp subito
3
61
mf
63

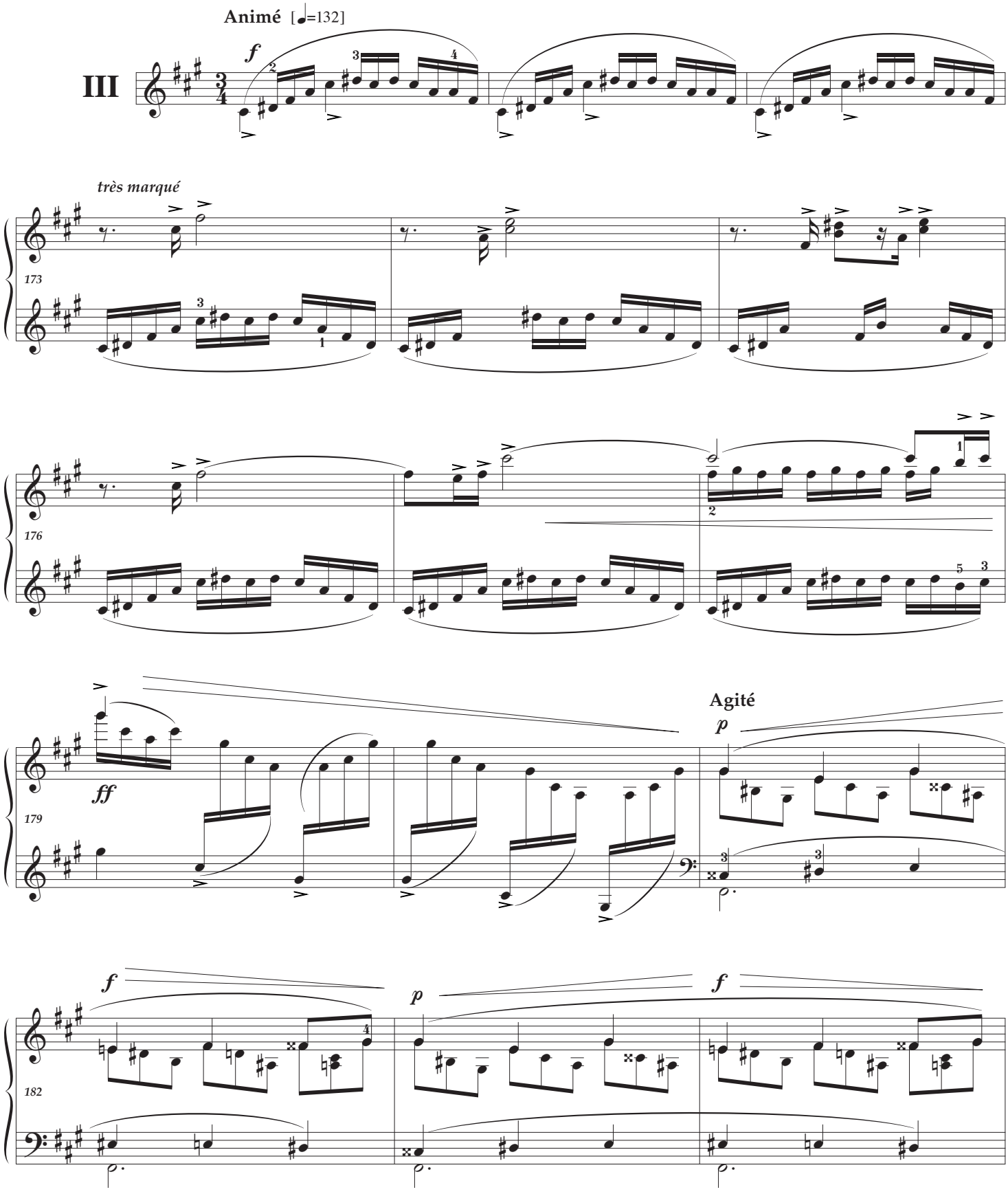

65
f
67
69
f
rall.
a tempo
en dehors
p
72
−3
4
3
76
5
rit.
Un peu retenu
très expressif
5
ppp

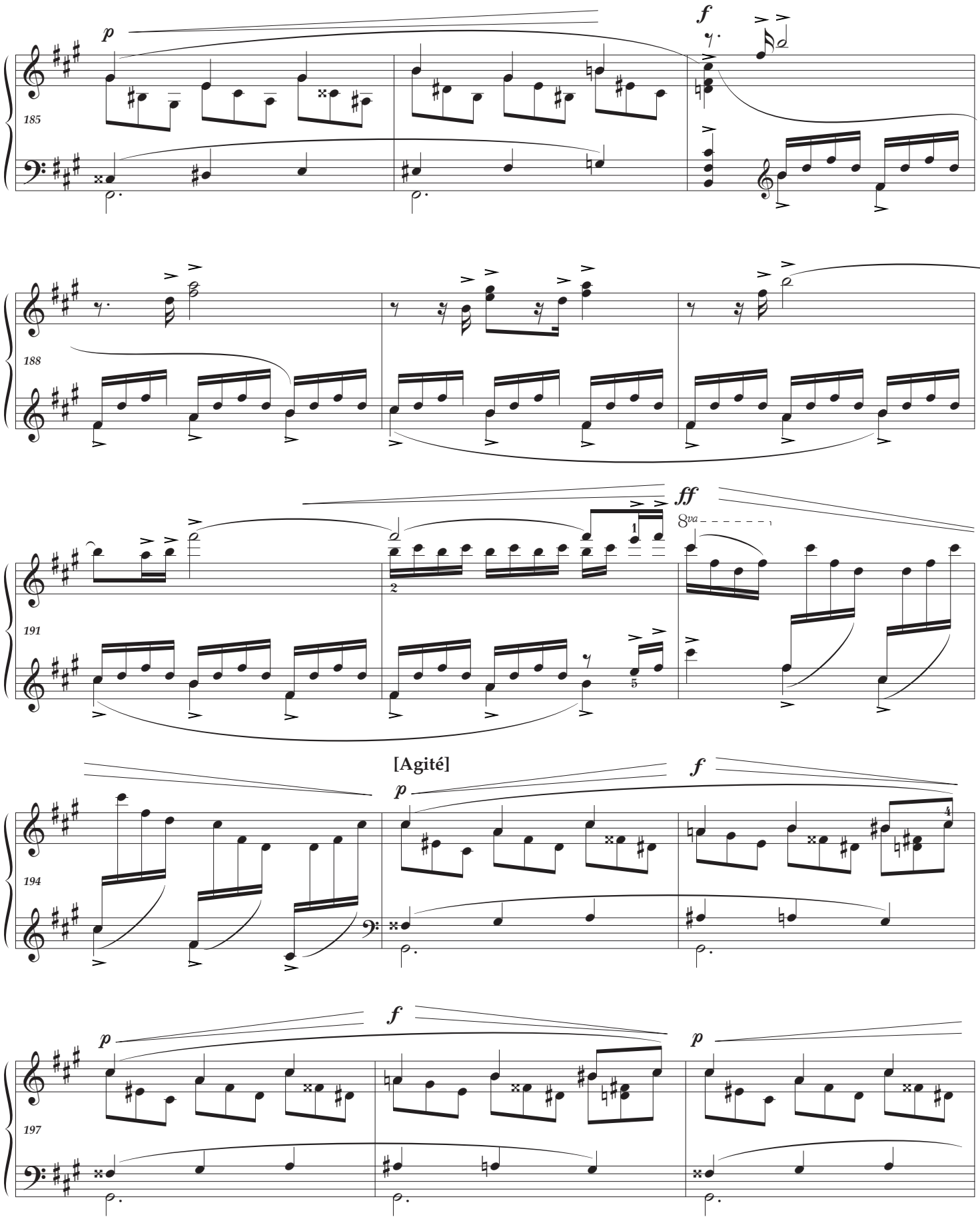

long
a tempo
m.s.
pp
Ped.
ral — — — len — — — tan — — — do
Lent
8va
Mouvement de Menuet [♪=104]
II
p

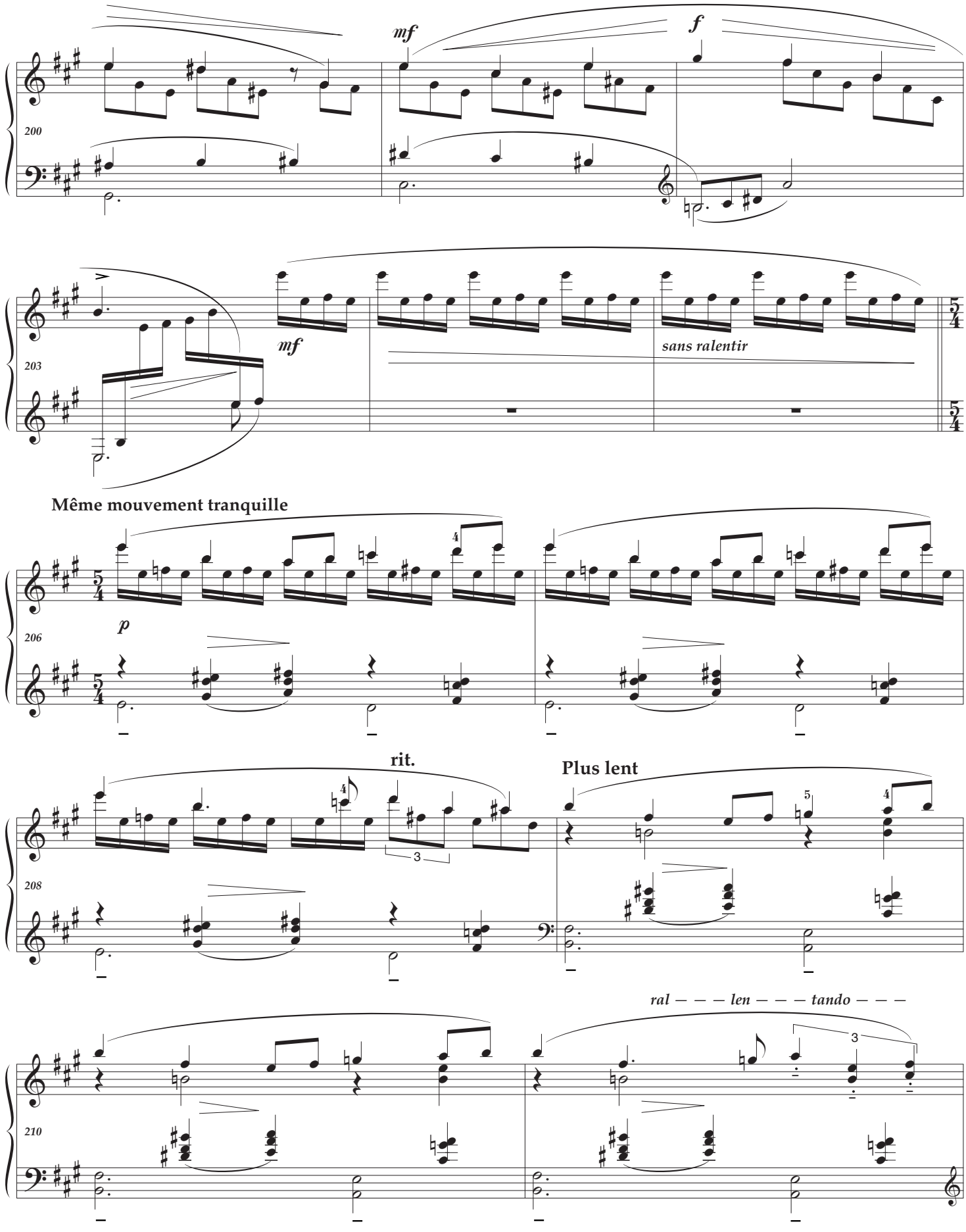

100
pp
105
mp
110
pp
m.s.
ppp
en dehors
115
p
119
f
8va
ff
Ped.


(8va)
Plus lent
pp
Rall.
p en dehors et expressif
123
(8va)
Reprenez peu à peu
le mouvement
pp
128
a tempo
133
Sans ralentir
138
143


Ral — — — — — — len — — — — — — tan — — — — — — do — — — — — —
148
Un peu plus lent qu'au début
pp
152
m.s.
m.s.
Ral — — — — en — —
156
p
— — — — — — tan — — — — — — do — — — — — — molto
161
8vb
Très lent
mf
166
f
Sost. Ped

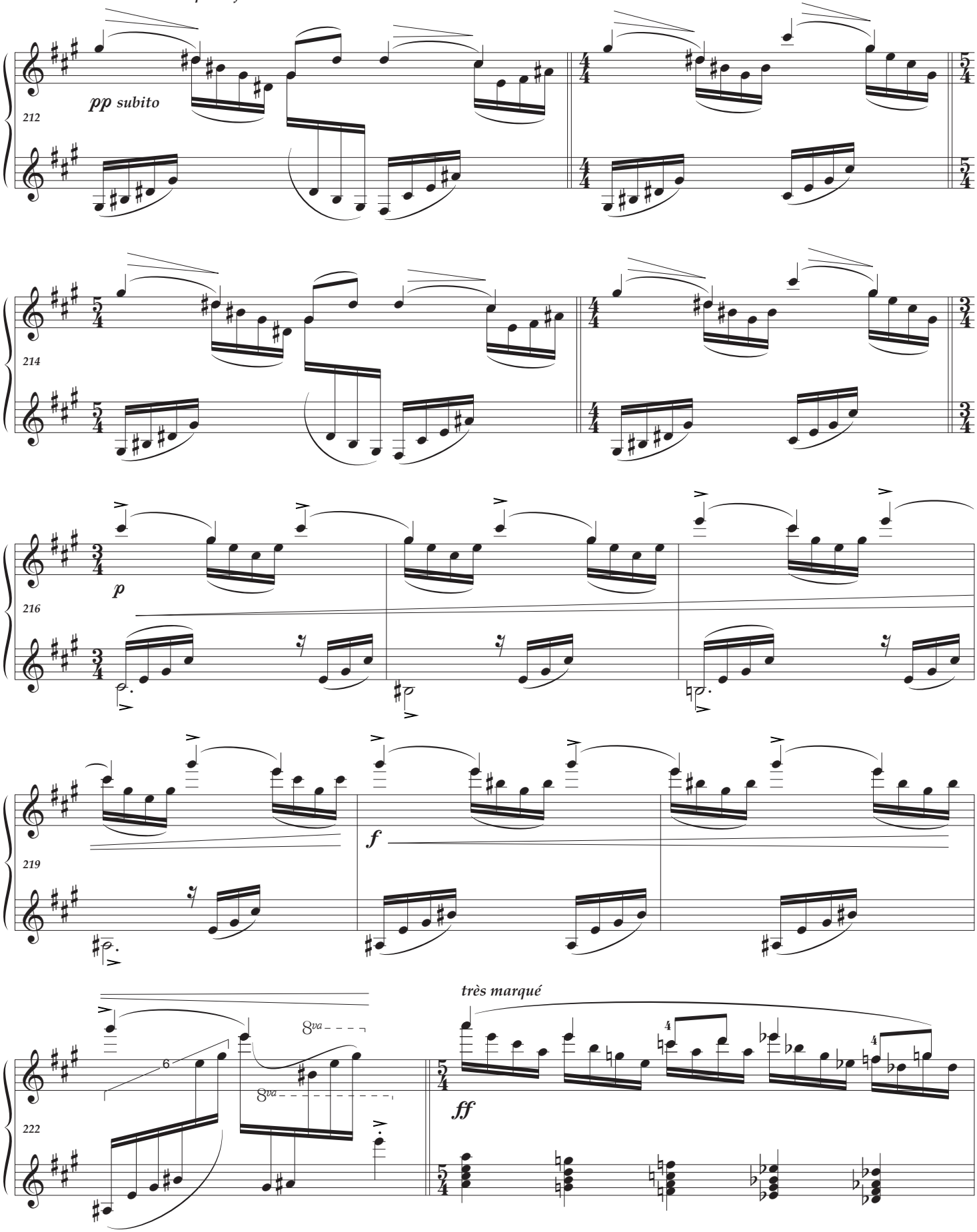

Animé [♩=132]
III
f
très marqué
173
176
179
ff
Agité
p
182
f
p
f

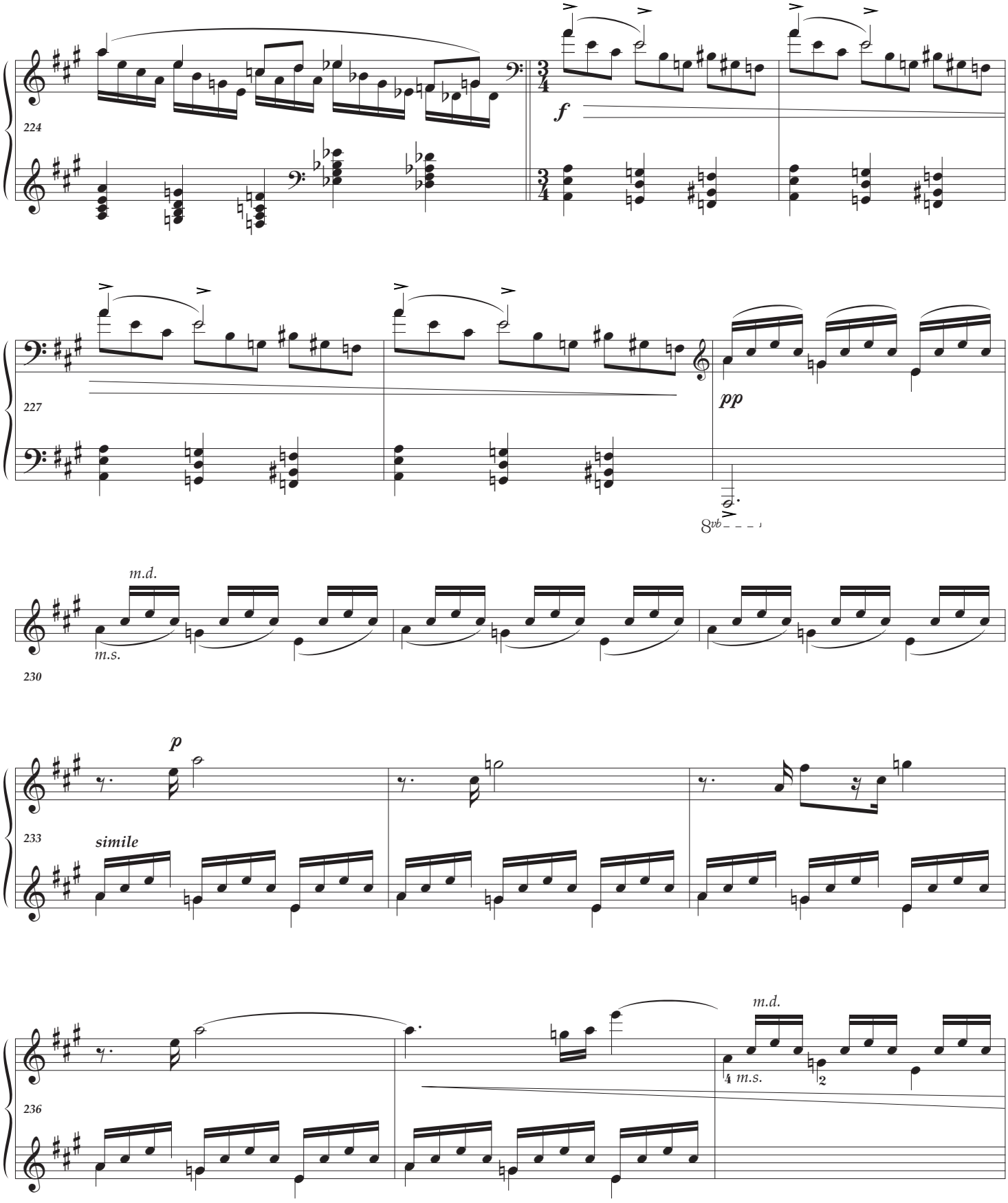

185
188
191
194
197
[Agité]
8va

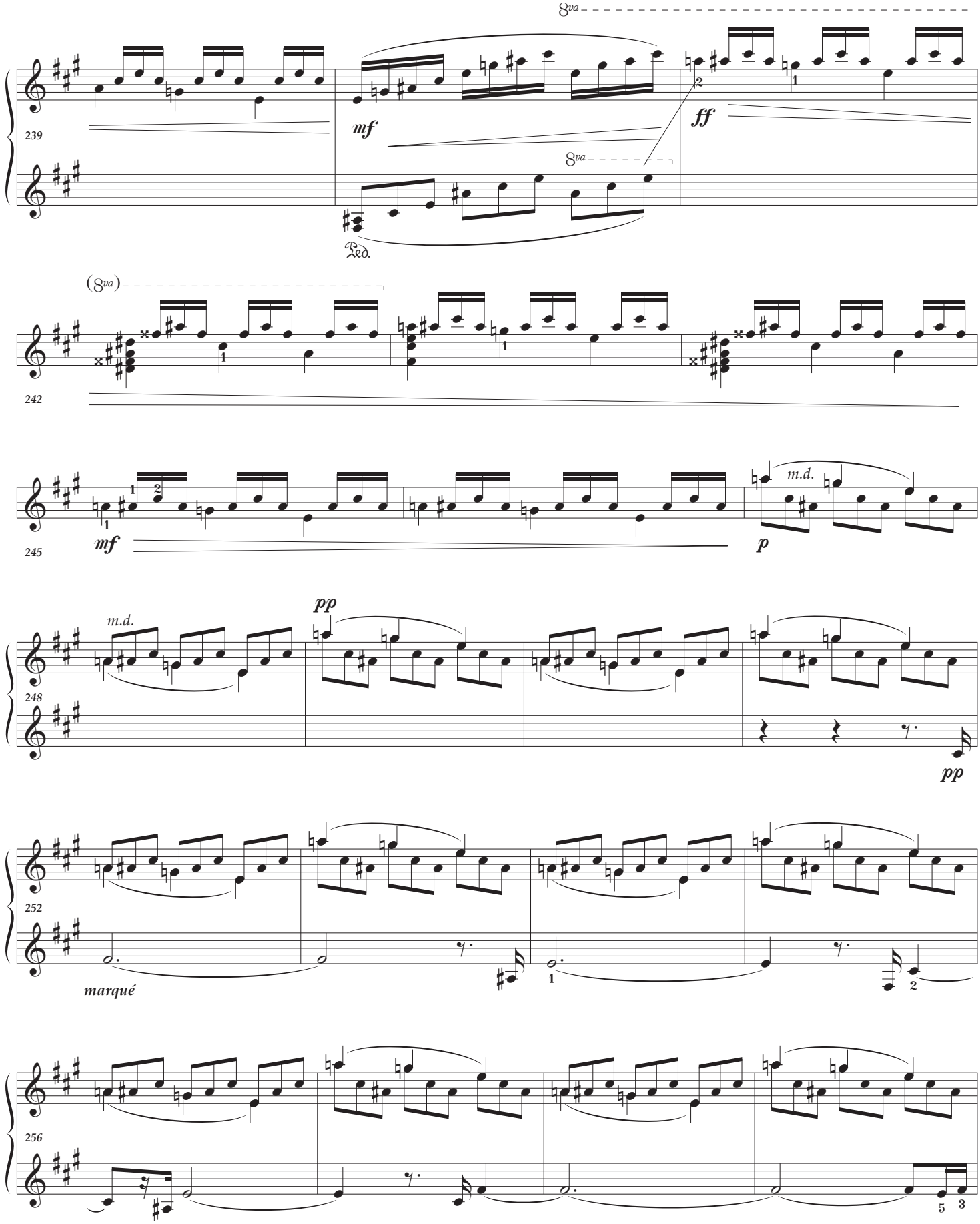

mf
f
200
mf
sans ralentir
203
Même mouvement tranquille
p
206
rit.
Plus lent
208
ral — — — len — — — tando — — —
210

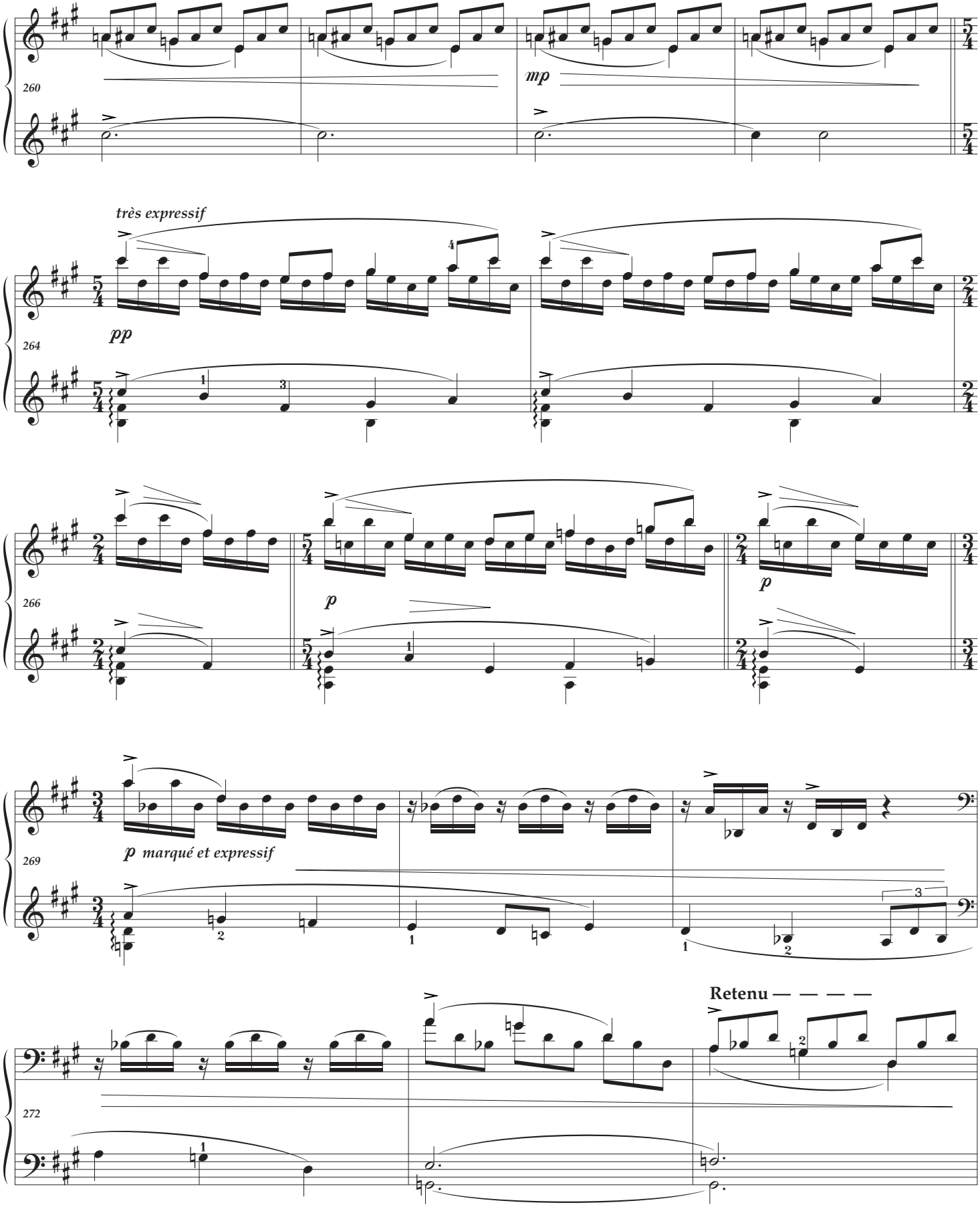
a tempo

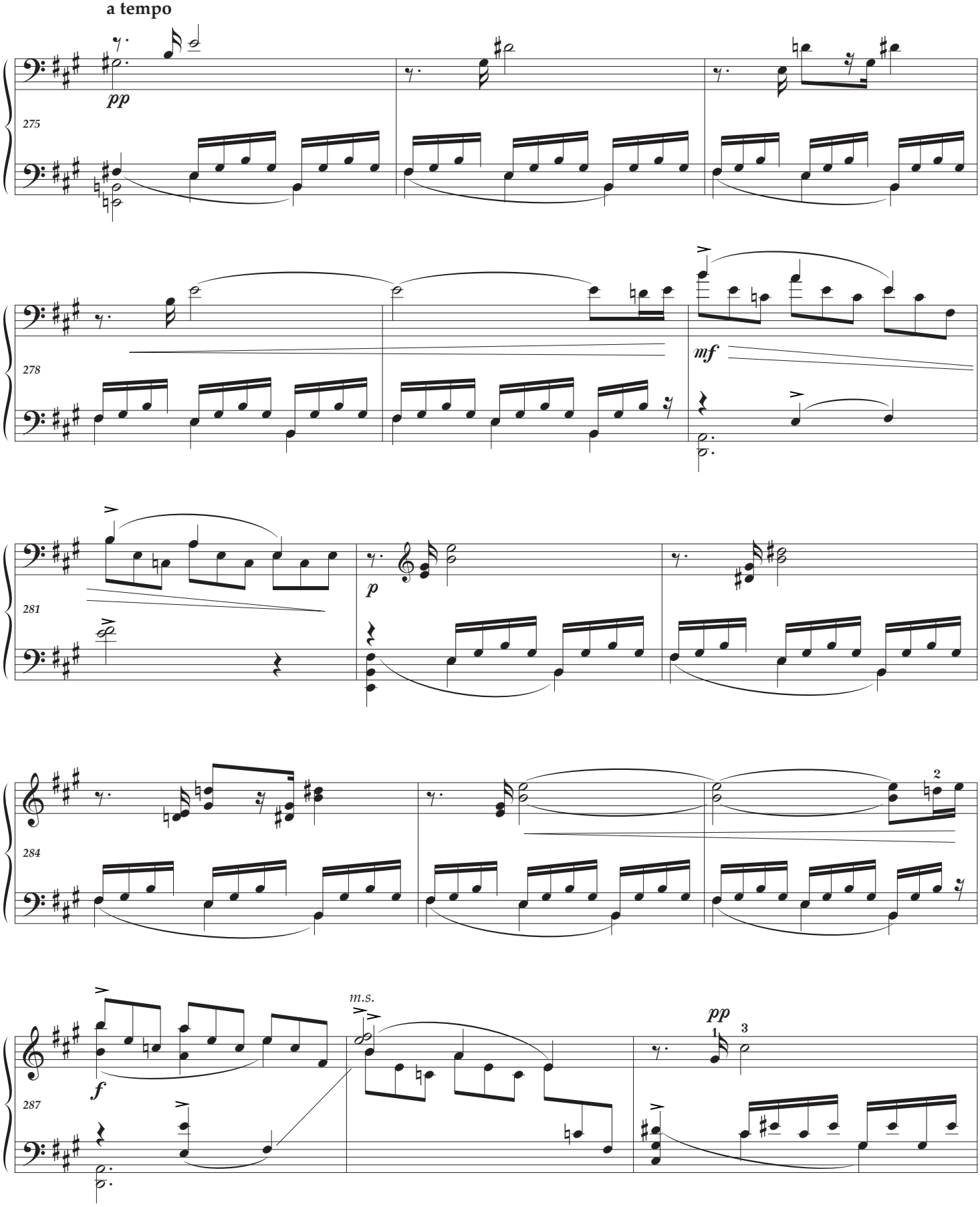
très doux et expressif

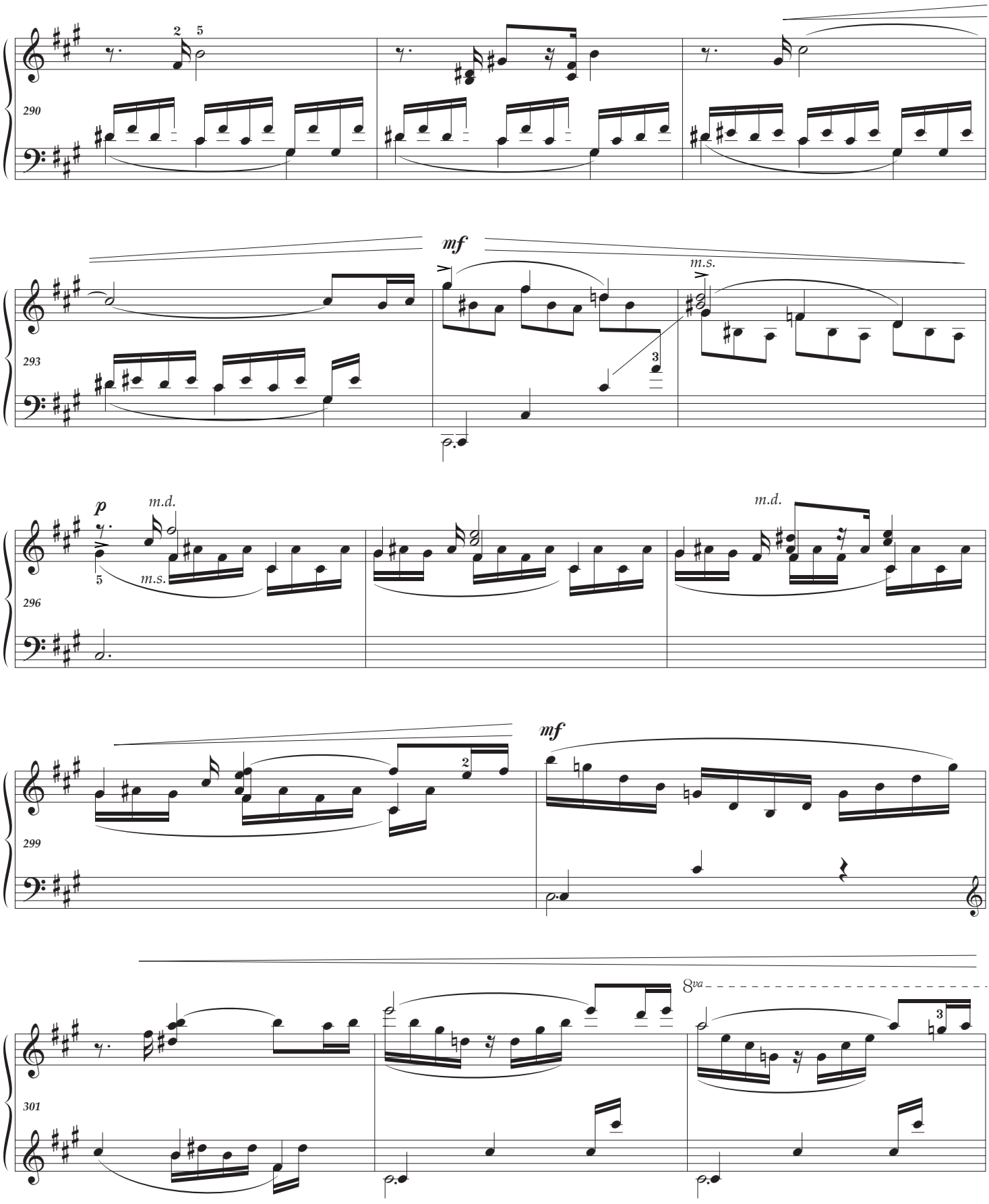


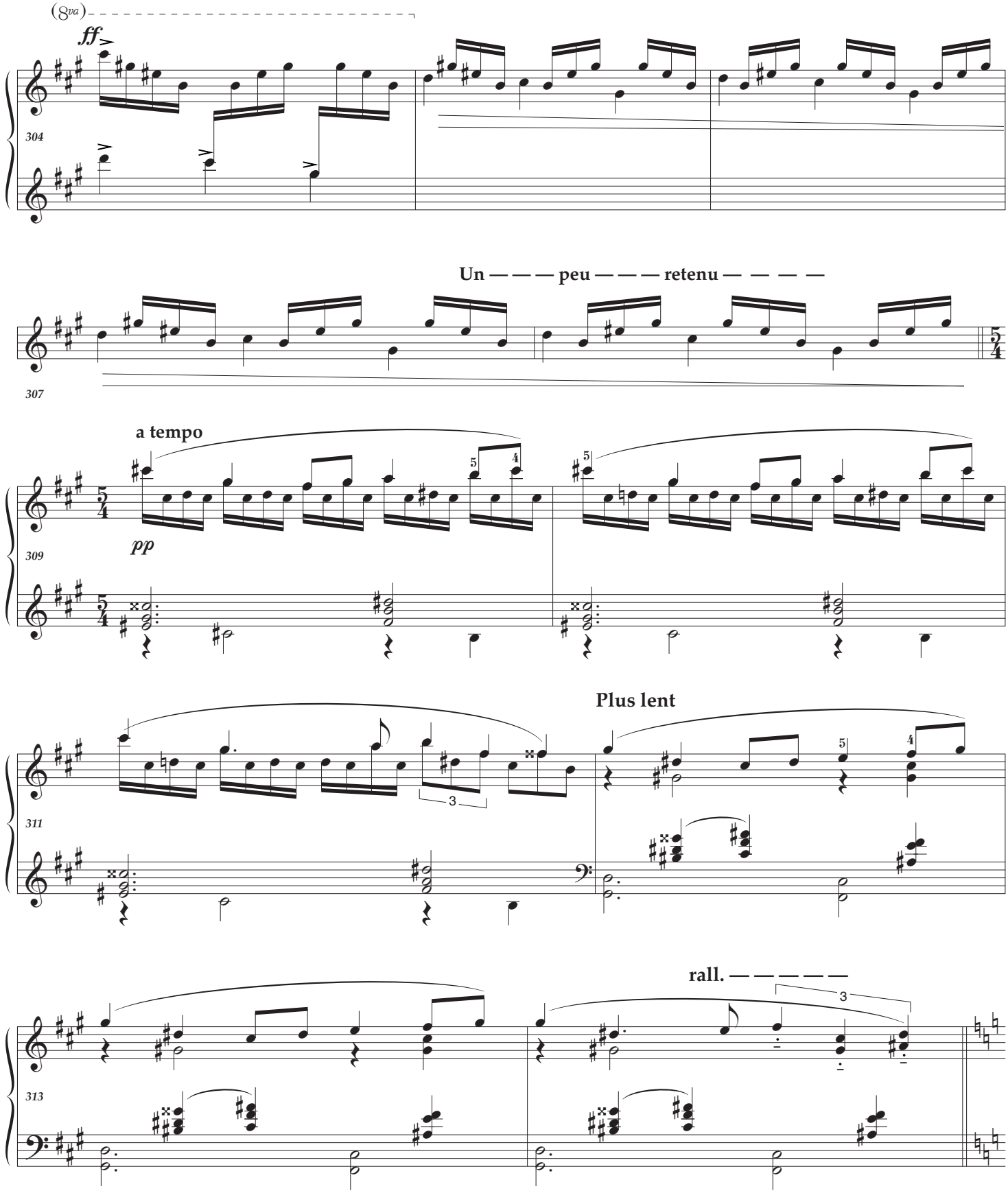

224
f
227
pp
8vb
m.d.
m.s.
230
p
233
simile
m.d.
4 m.s.
2
236

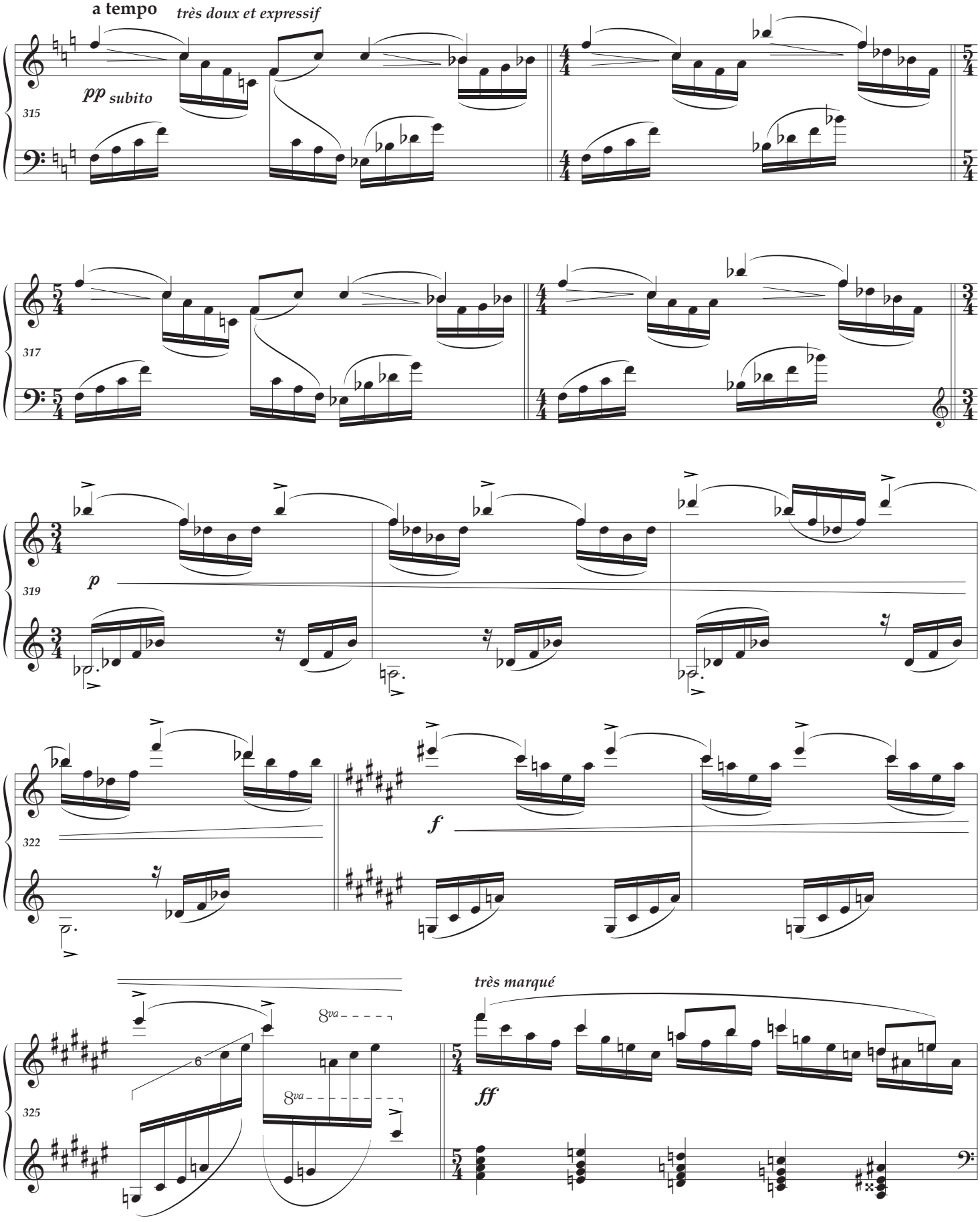

8va
mf
ff
Ped.
(8va)
239
242
245
mf
p
m.d.
248
pp
pp
252
marqué
256

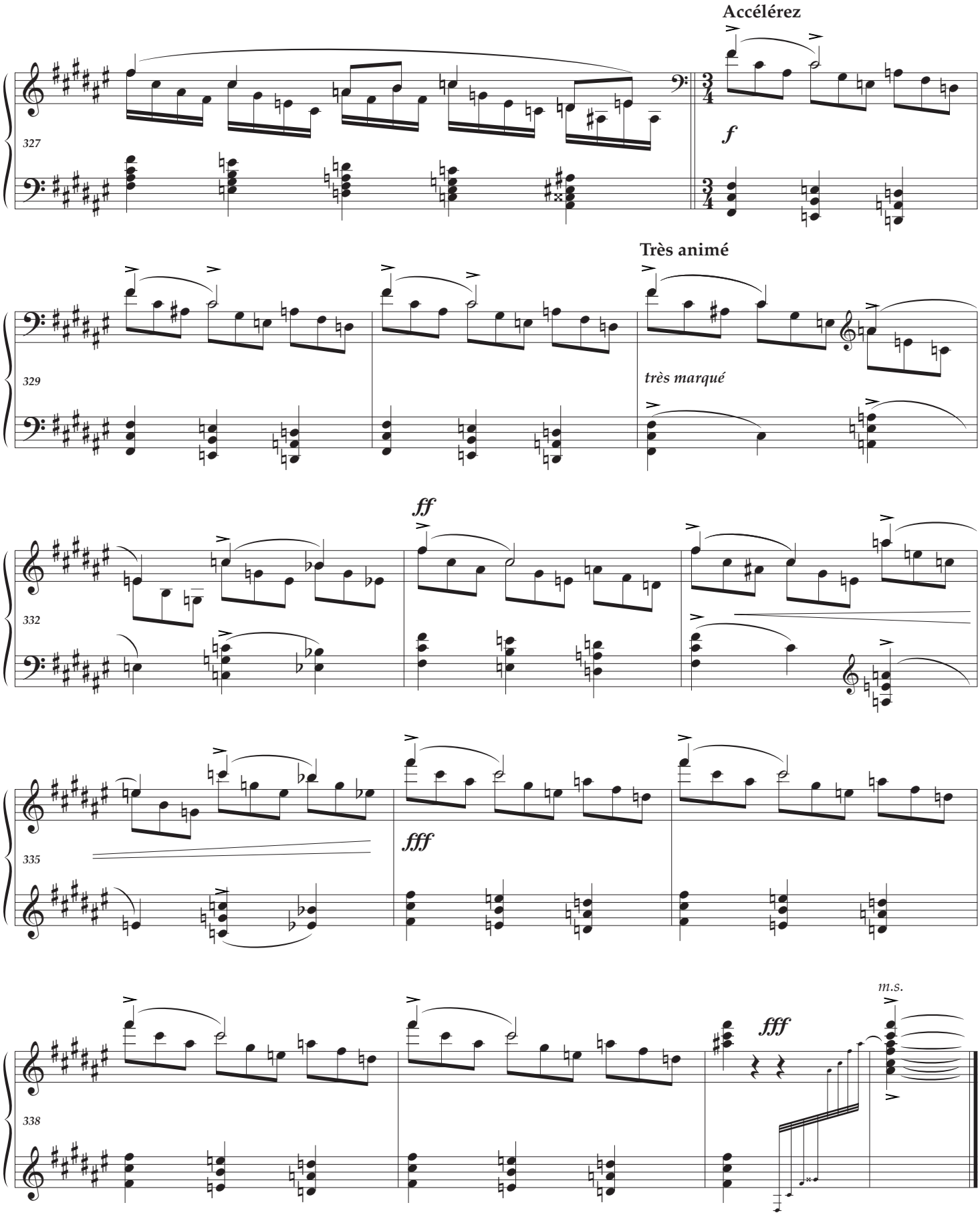

260
mp
très expressif
pp
264
p
266
p
p marqué et expressif
269
Retenu
272


a tempo
pp
275
278
mf
281
p
284
2
f
m.s.
287
pp
1
3


290
293
mf
m.s.
296
p
m.d.
m.s.
m.d.
299
mf
301
8va


(8va)
ff
304
Un — — — peu — — — retenu — — — —
307
a tempo
pp
309
Plus lent
311
rall. — — — — —
313


a tempo
très doux et expressif
pp subito
315
317
319
p
322
f
très marqué
ff
325
8va
8va
6


Accélérez
f
327
Très animé
très marqué
329
ff
332
fff
335
fff
m.s.
338

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Appendix

durations, comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

- Édition Durand : there are no metronome speeds
- Ravel used the pedal sign very sparingly, preferring elongated ties and extended notes, impossible to hold otherwise.
- When chords and arpeggiated chords are combined I find this useful: LH arpeggiated — connect the **top** note with RH chord; RH arpeggiated — connect the **lower** note with LH.

First movement	**Page 1**	**Duration: 4'**
	1	Durand : accents missing (see repeat)
	31-34	Hands swapped
	47	Alto voice "re-written"
	54	It is suggested to use the pedal generously for an impassioned sustained E pedal point here
	57	Alto C in brackets added for tone
Second movement	**Page 6**	**Duration: 2'40**
	108	Descending arpeggiation suggestion
	168-169	The combined sostenuto and sustaining pedals work well here
Third movement	**Page 10**	**Duration: 3'50**
	136-140	The alto line here is rather lovely
	229-263	According to Vlado Perlemuter, this section should be "*enveloppé*" but rhythmical

Overall duration : Vlado Perlemuter : 10'30

doux et expressif	gentle and expressive
en dehors	in relief
un peu retenu	slight *ritardando*
très expressif	very expressive
animé	lively
passionné	impassioned
reprenez peu à peu le mouvement	gradually *a tempo*
sans ralentir	without slowing down
un peu plus lent qu'au début	slightly slower than the opening
agité	troubled
très marqué	well marked
même mouvement tranquille	same tempo but calm
plus lent	slower tempo