John Reager

Piano Sonata

In Four Movements

Sonata for Piano

I. Adagio…….. p. 03
II. Scherzo……. p. 17
III. Nocturne…….. p. 33
IV. Toccata……. p. 45

Notes on the composition:

While sketching the opening sections, a student emailed me with Rainer Maria Rilke's *Mein Leben ist nicht diese steile Stunde* (My life is not this steep hour). I was deeply moved and felt that the poem evoked a kindred spirit to the music that was emerging. Although this sonata is not *programmatic*, the poem was always in mind during the composition of the four movements.

Concerning labels, the term *sonata* originated in the 17th century indicating a piece in contrasting tempos or movements to be played by instruments (as opposed to a *cantata*, to be sung). None of the four movements in this work employ *sonata form* (an 18th century development). *Adagio* is a slow, stately tempo, which in the Late Romantic Era became associated with music full of pathos. A *Scherzo* is a vigorous, light, or playful composition. This one has a dark side which is revealed in the movement that follows. *Nocturne* suggests something nocturnal or dream like. Neither the *Scherzo* or the *Nocturne* have much to do with those of Frédéric Chopin or his contemporaries. The *Toccata* originated in the 15th century as a vehicle of virtuosic display and has remained popular ever since.

In the spirit of musical *post-modernism*, all of the movements freely combine historical and modern influences: *aleatoric* elements, *serial* techniques, clusters and other *non-diatonic* sonorities are freely mixed with post-romantic harmonies.
This *Sonata* is cyclical, in that themes and gestures recur throughout in various guises. None of the movements are in a traditional key or stay in one meter for very long. Yet on the whole, the effect is very mainstream and, I hope, relatable.

- John Reager

I. Adagio

rev. 12

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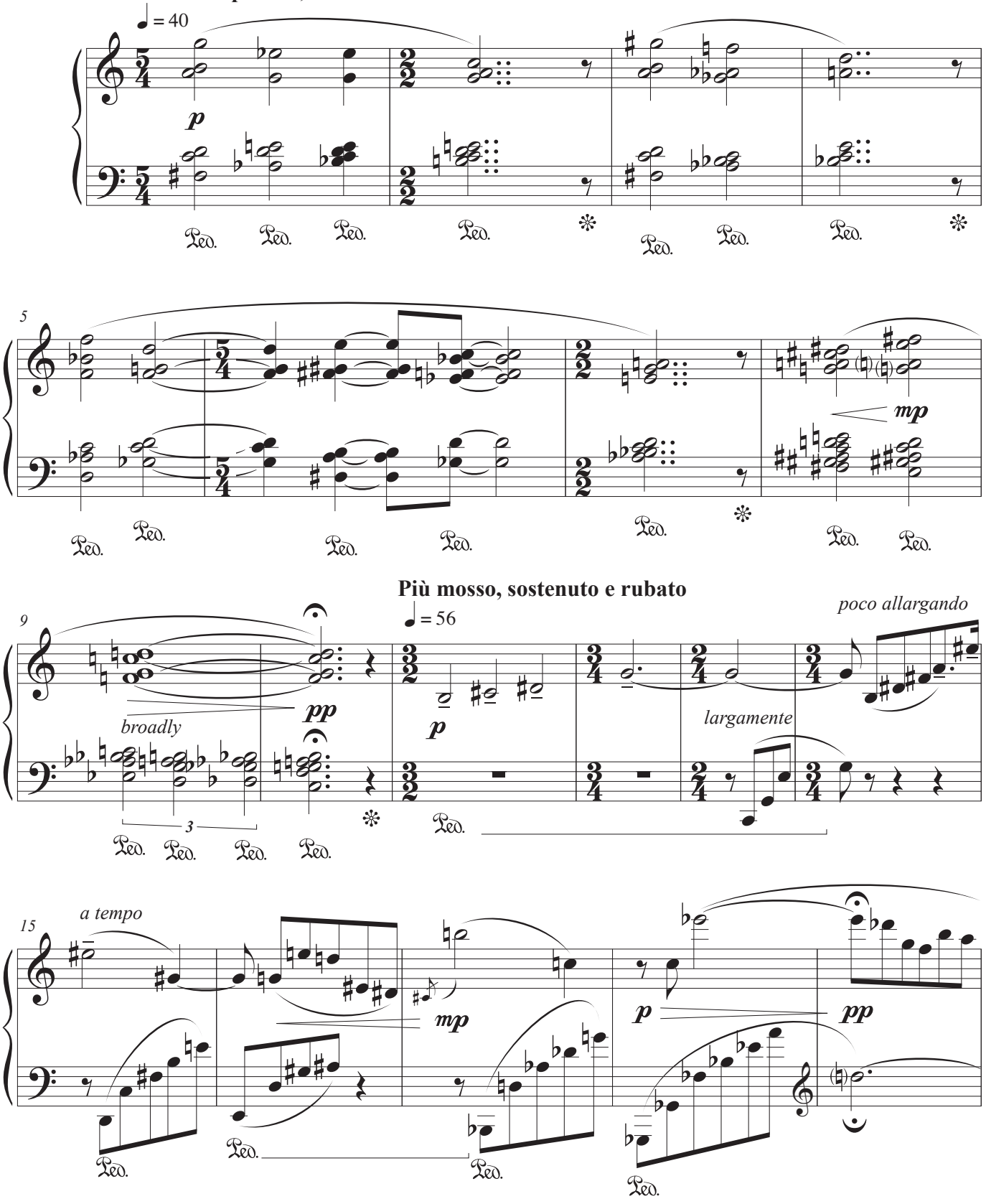
Slow and precise, *distant*

♩ = 40



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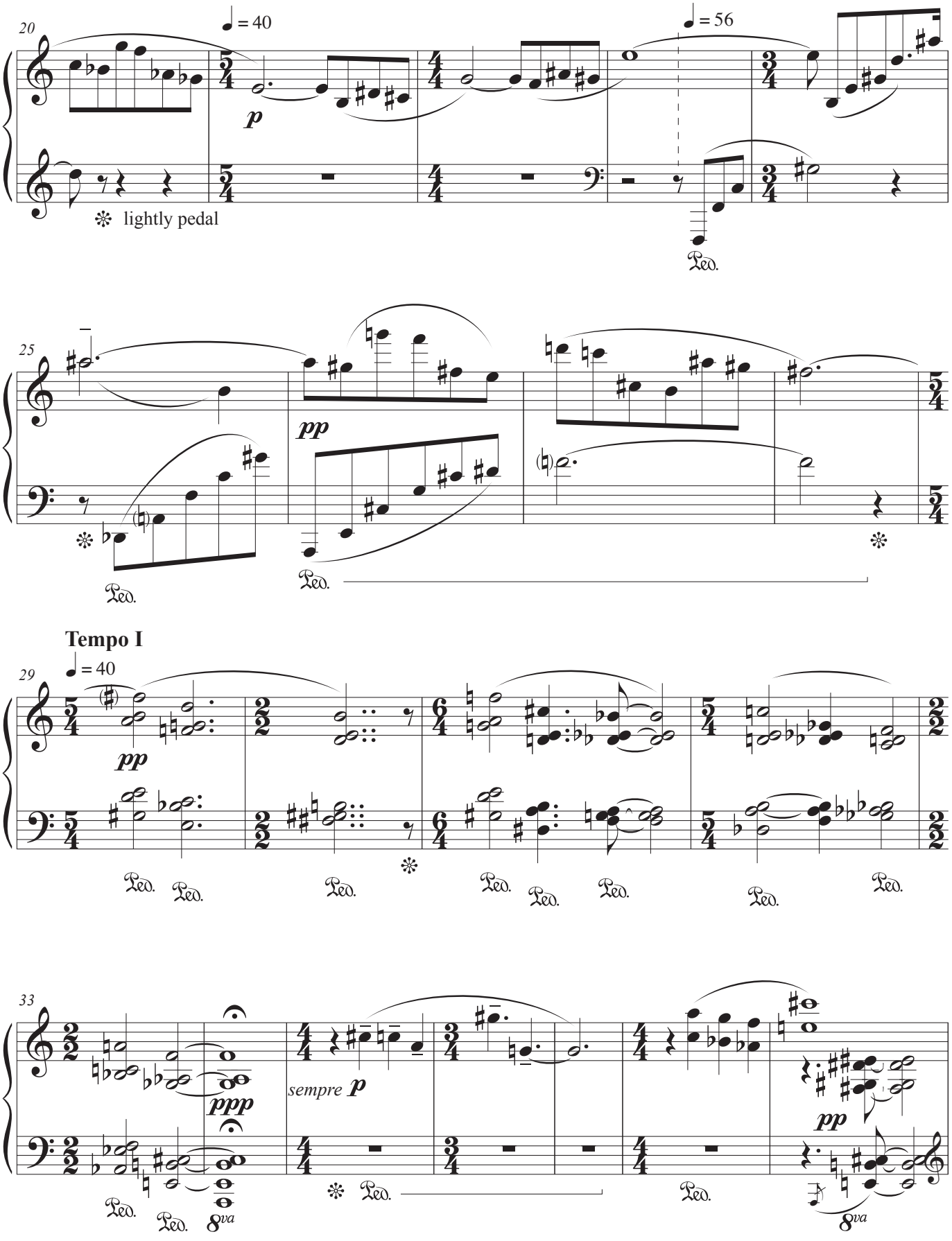
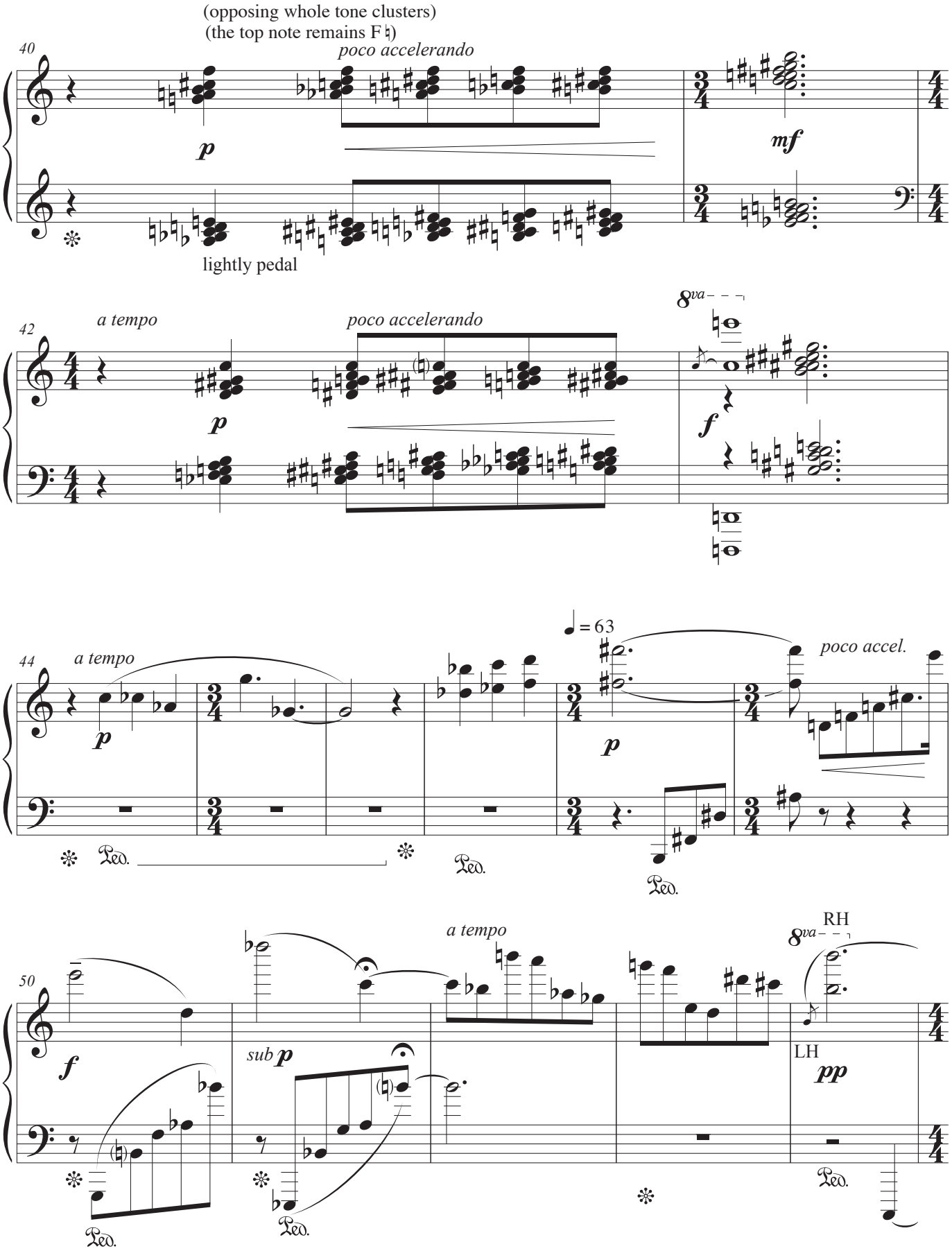
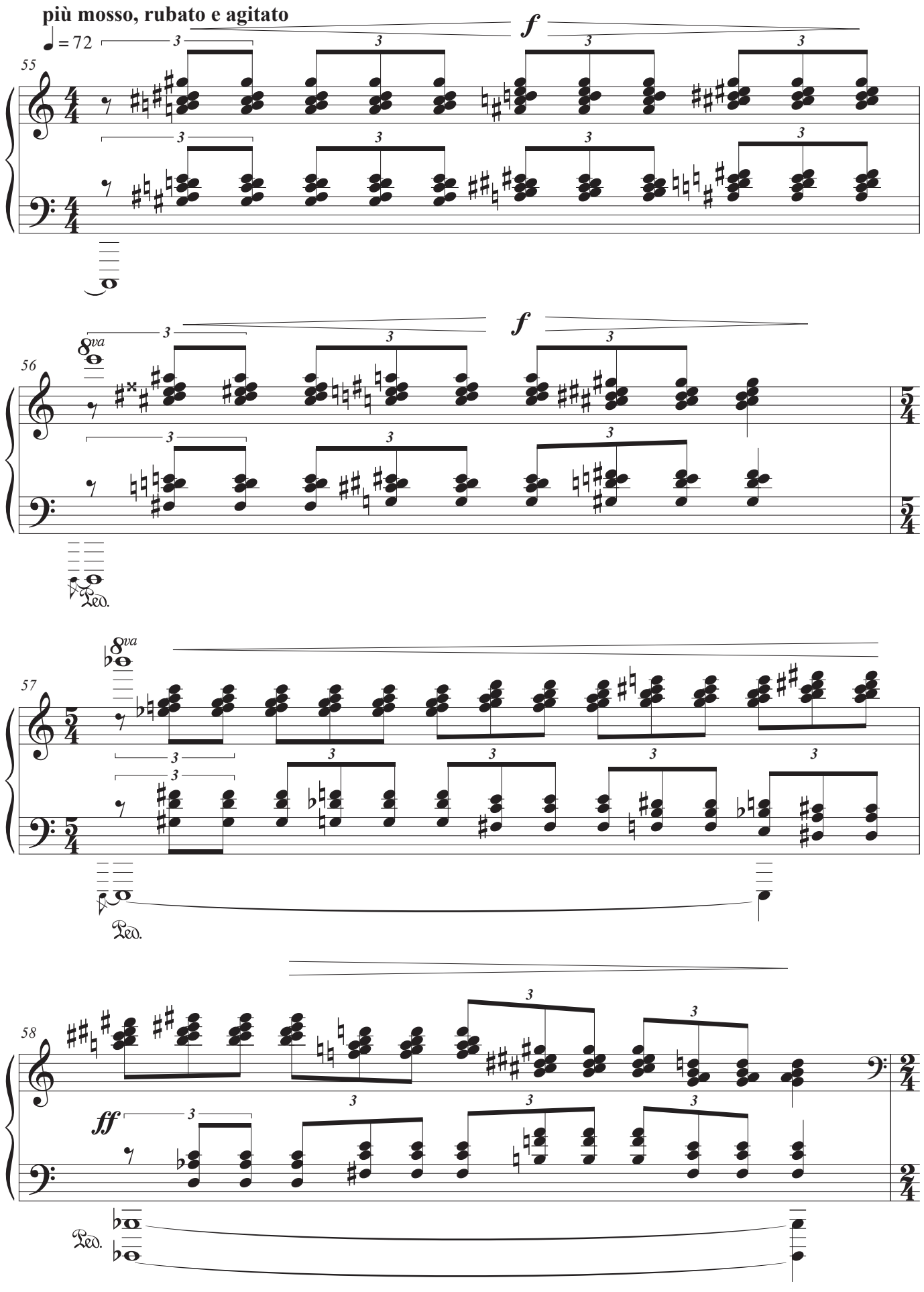
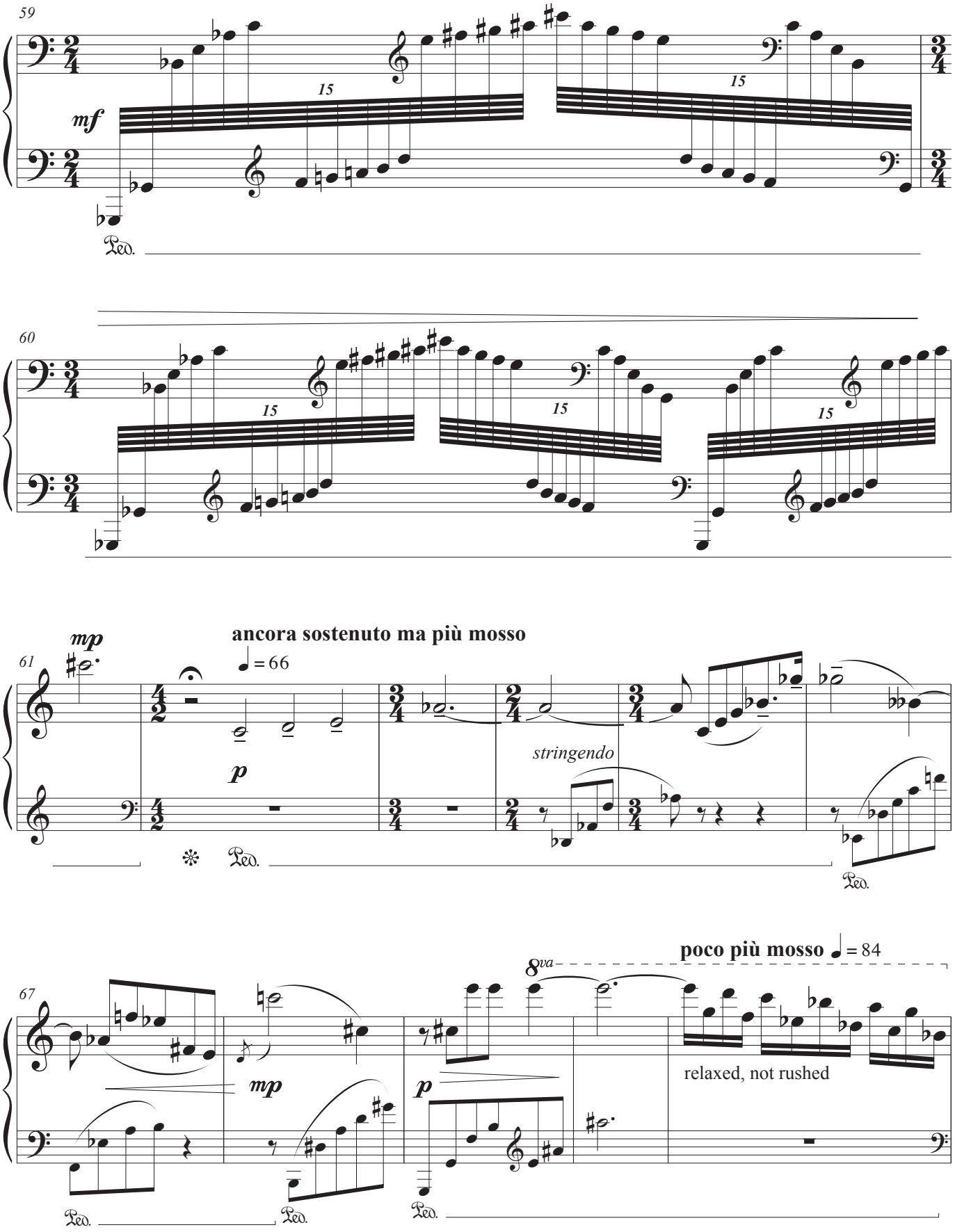
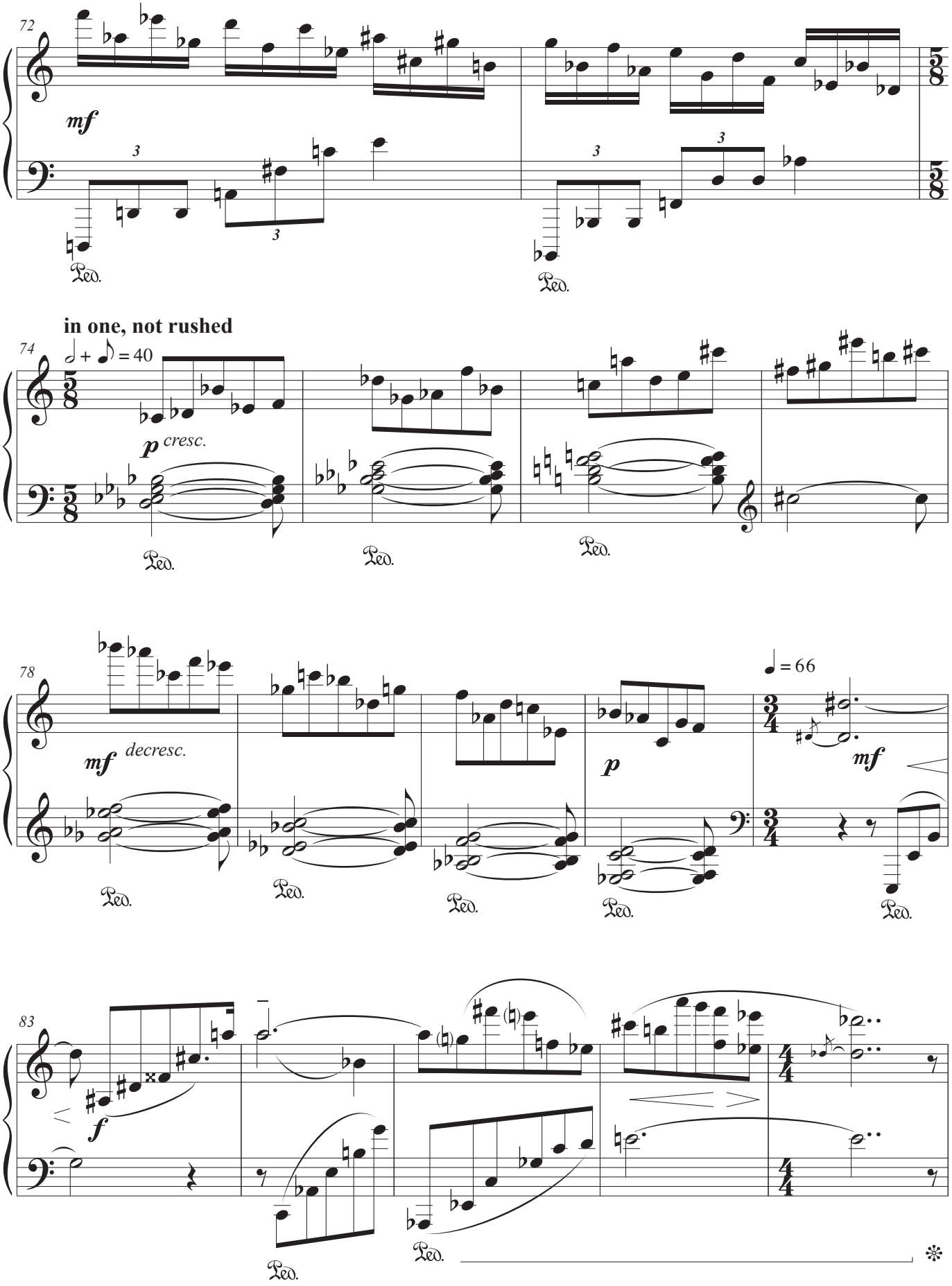
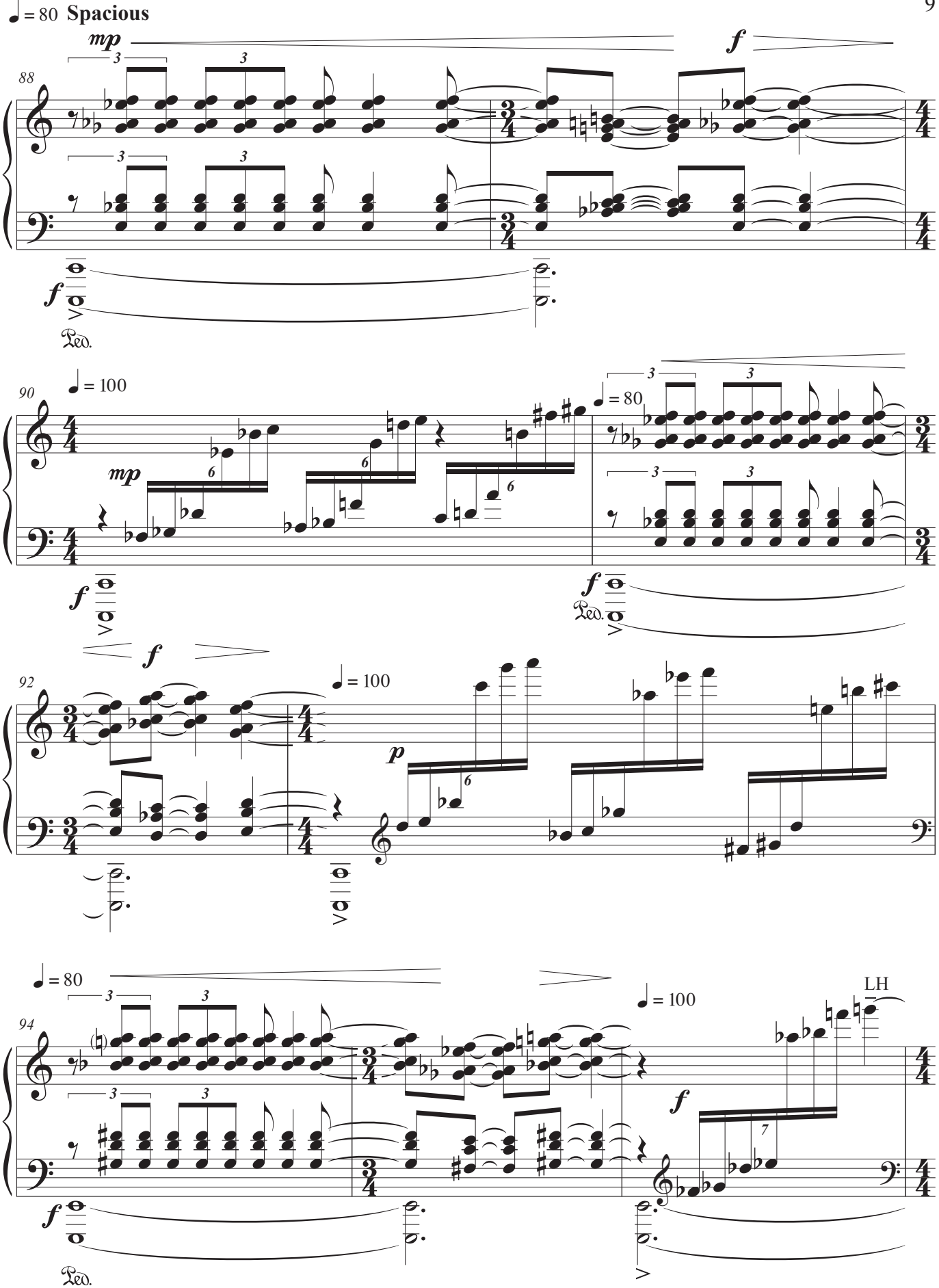

20
♩ = 40
p
lightly pedal
Ped.
♩ = 56
25
pp
Ped.
Ped.
Tempo I
29
♩ = 40
pp
Ped. Ped.
Ped.
Ped. Ped. Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
33
ppp
Ped. Ped. 8va
sempre p
Ped.
Ped.
pp
8va

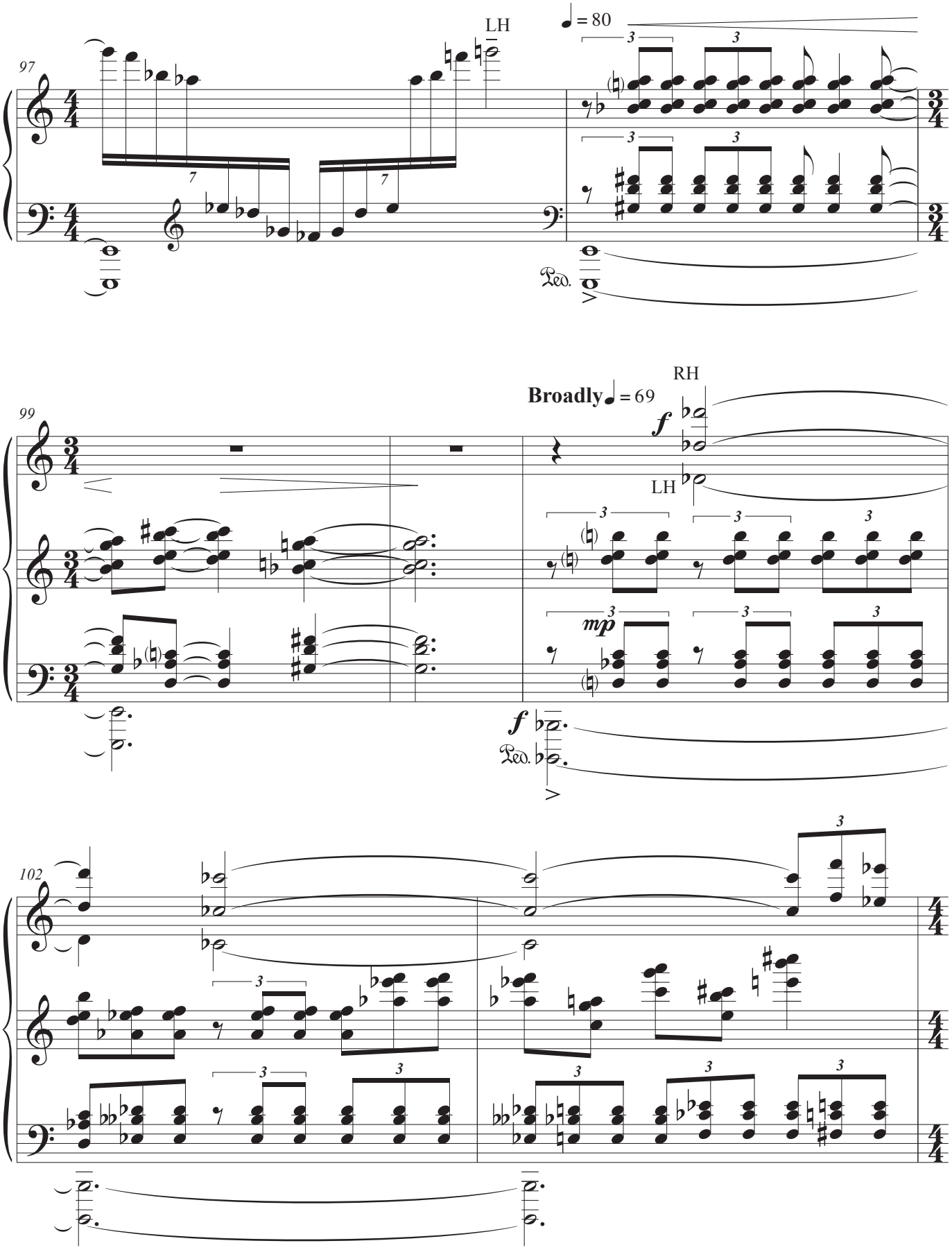

(opposing whole tone clusters)
(the top note remains F♮)
40
poco accelerando
p
mf
lightly pedal
42
a tempo
poco accelerando
8va
p
f
44
a tempo
♩ = 63
poco accel.
p
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
50
a tempo
8va
RH
LH
f
sub p
pp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

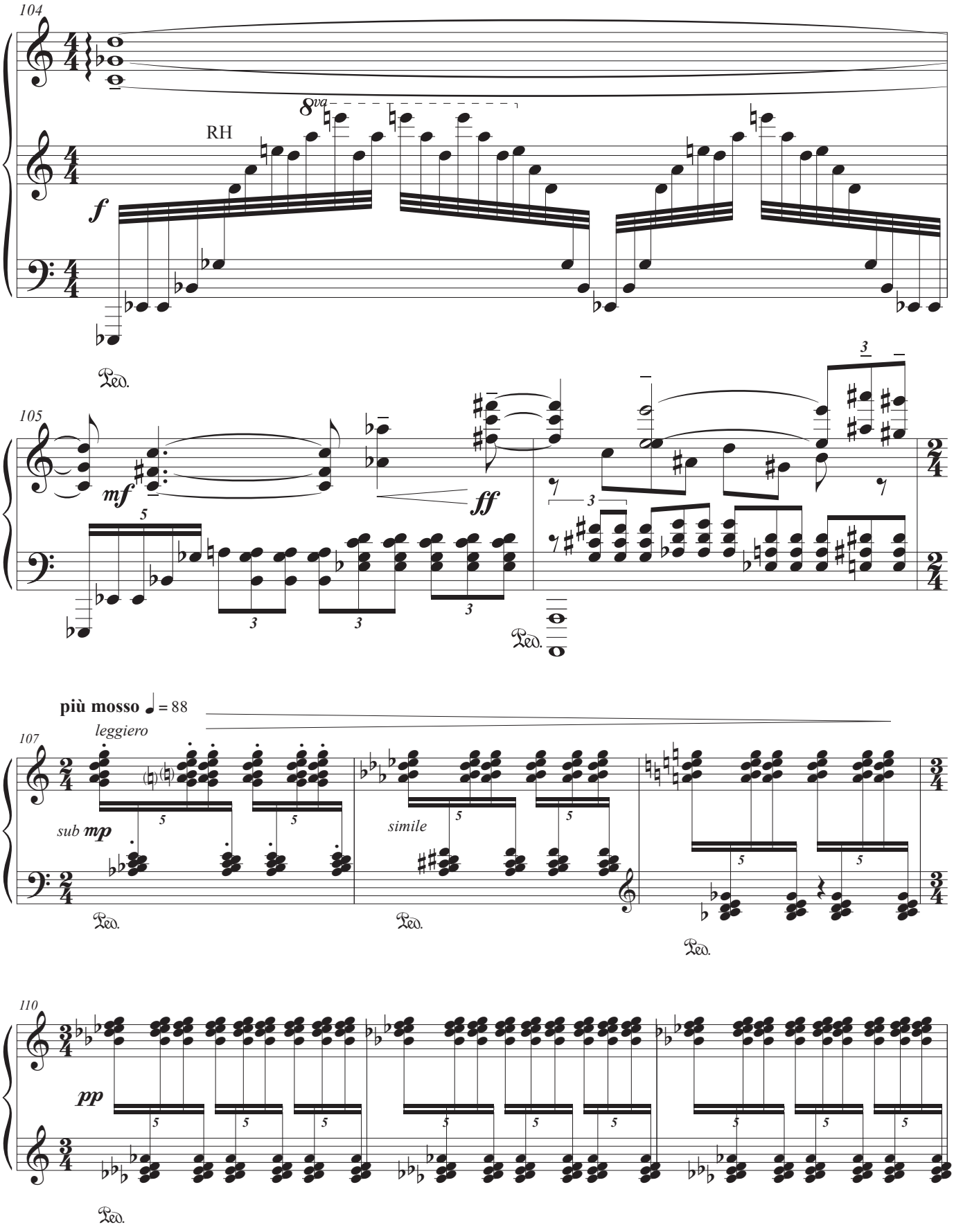

più mosso, rubato e agitato
♩ = 72
55
f
56
8va
57
58
ff
Ped.

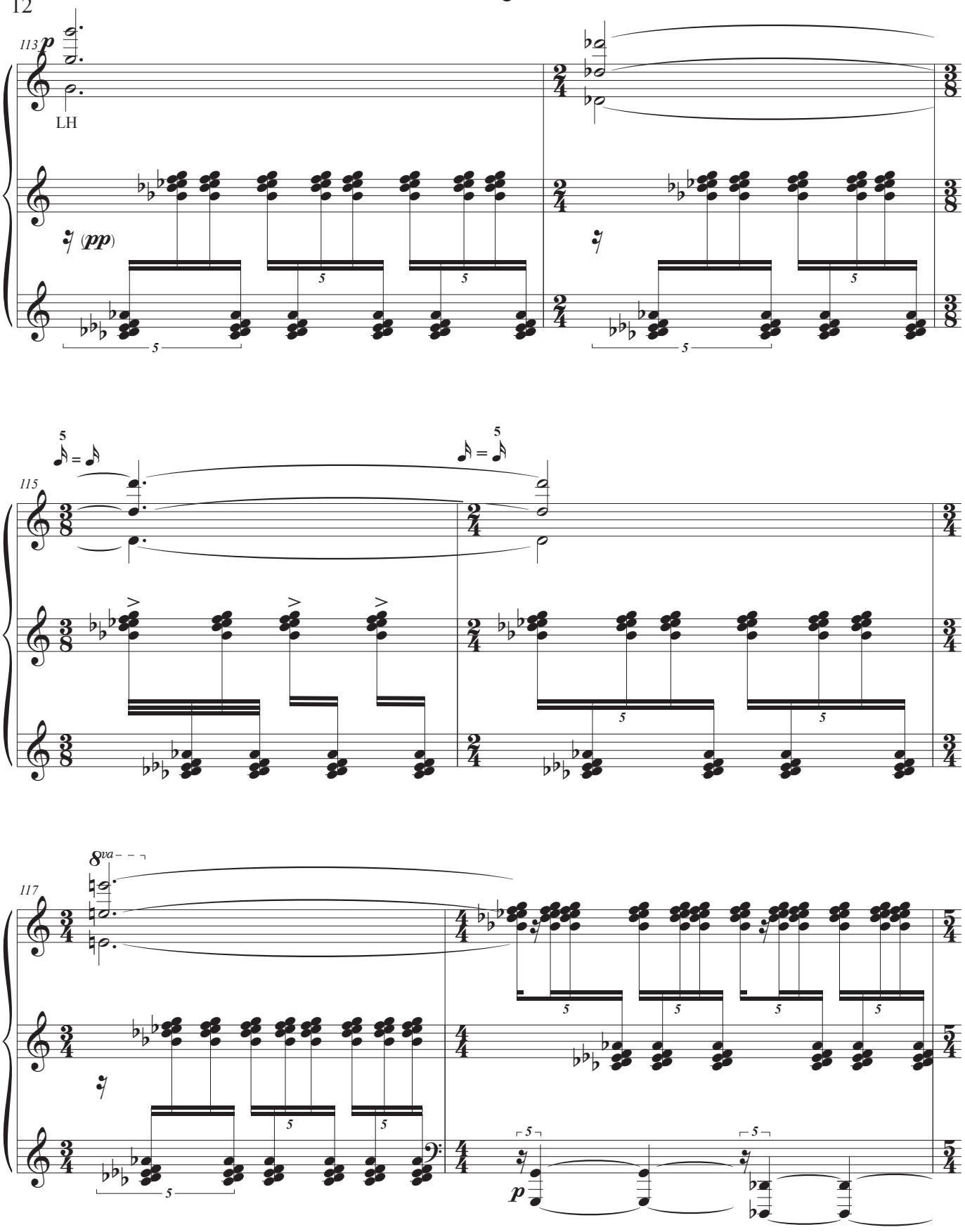

59
mf
15
15
Ped.
60
15
15
15
61
mp
ancora sostenuto ma più mosso
♩ = 66
p
stringendo
Ped.
Ped.
67
poco più mosso ♩ = 84
8va
mp
p
relaxed, not rushed
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

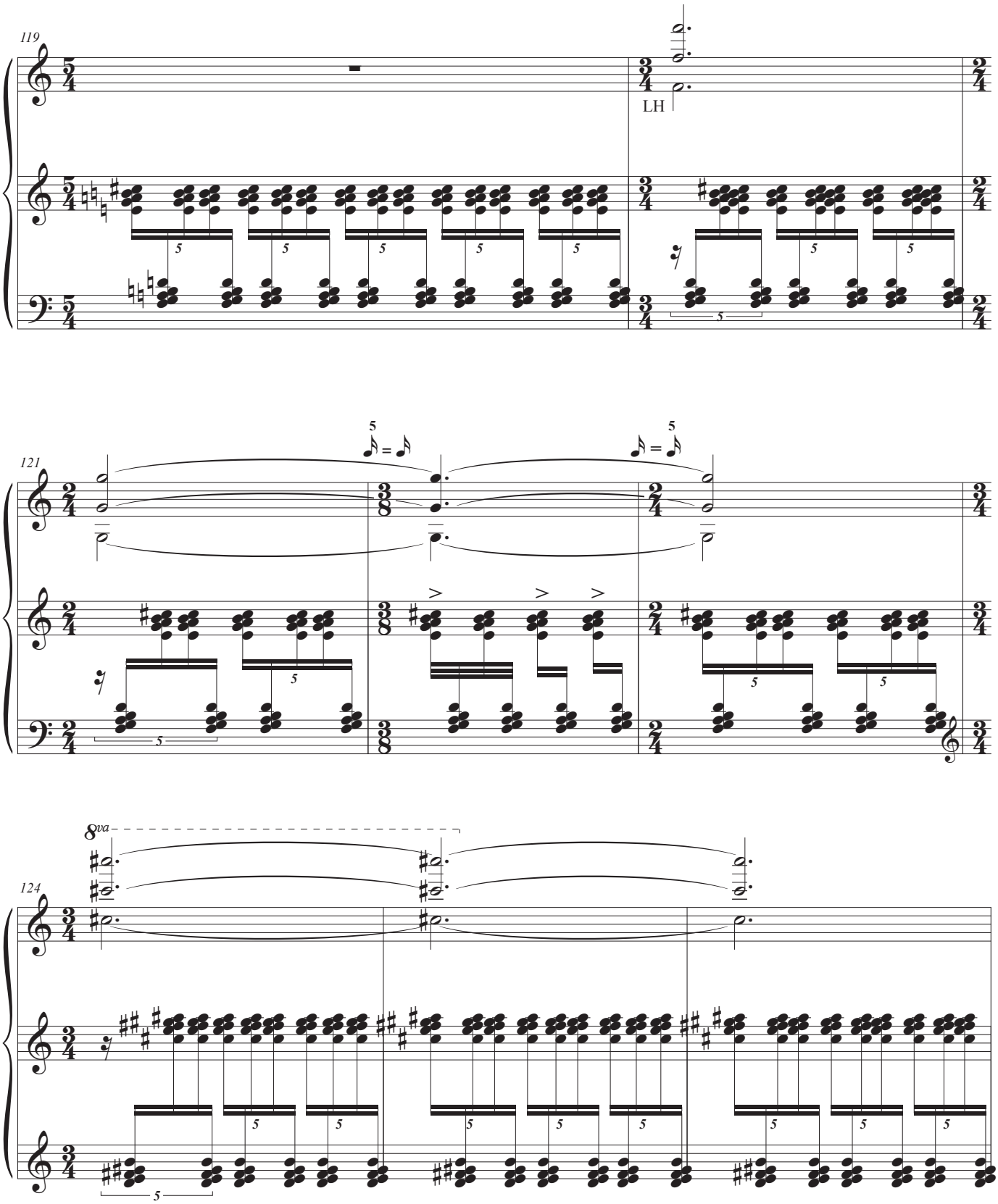

72
mf
Ped.
in one, not rushed
74
♩ + ♪ = 40
p cresc.
78
mf decresc.
♩ = 66
p
mf
83
f

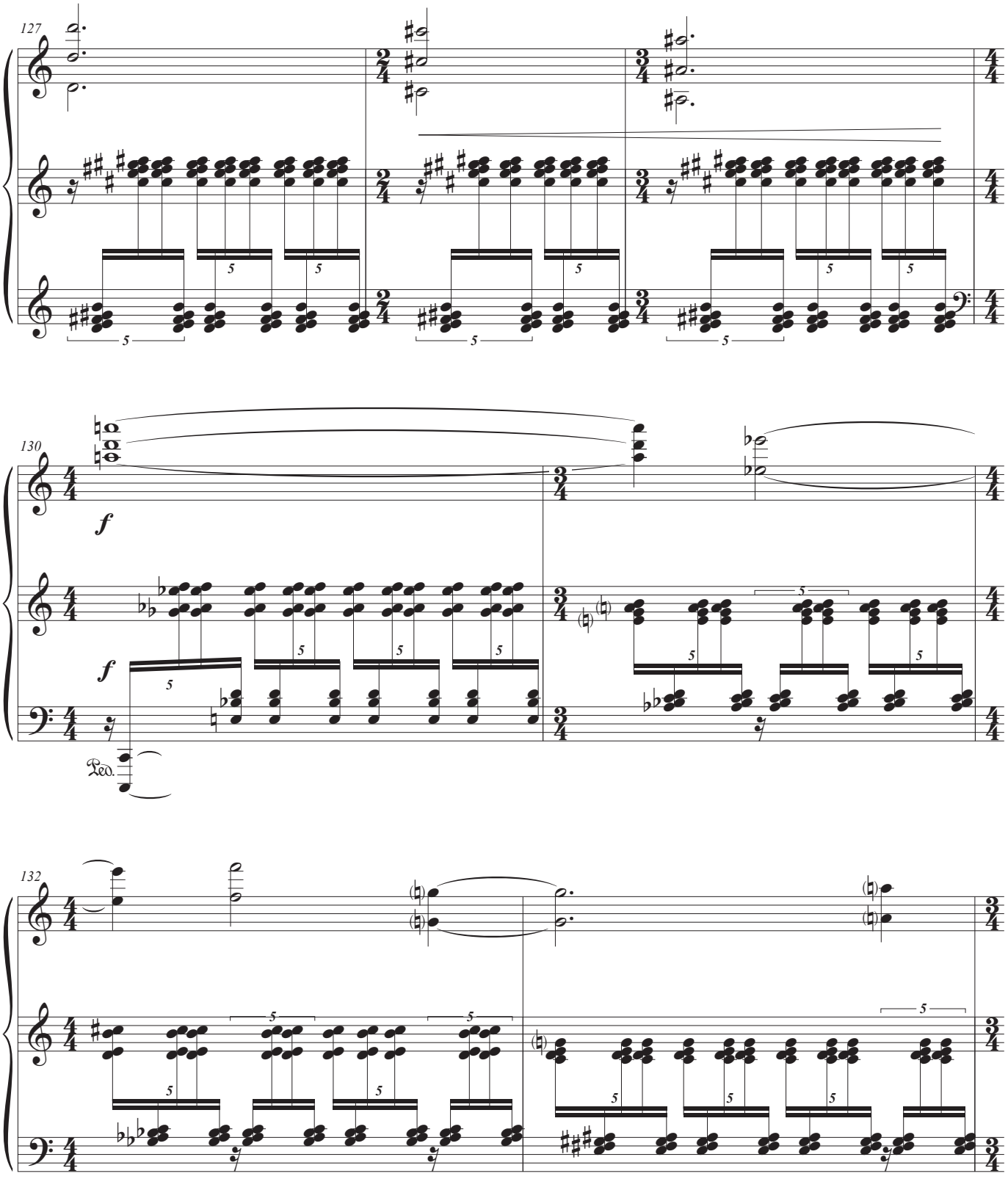

♩ = 80 Spacious
mp
f
88
Ped.
♩ = 100
90
mp
♩ = 80
f
Ped.
f
92
♩ = 100
p
♩ = 80
94
♩ = 100
LH
f
Ped.

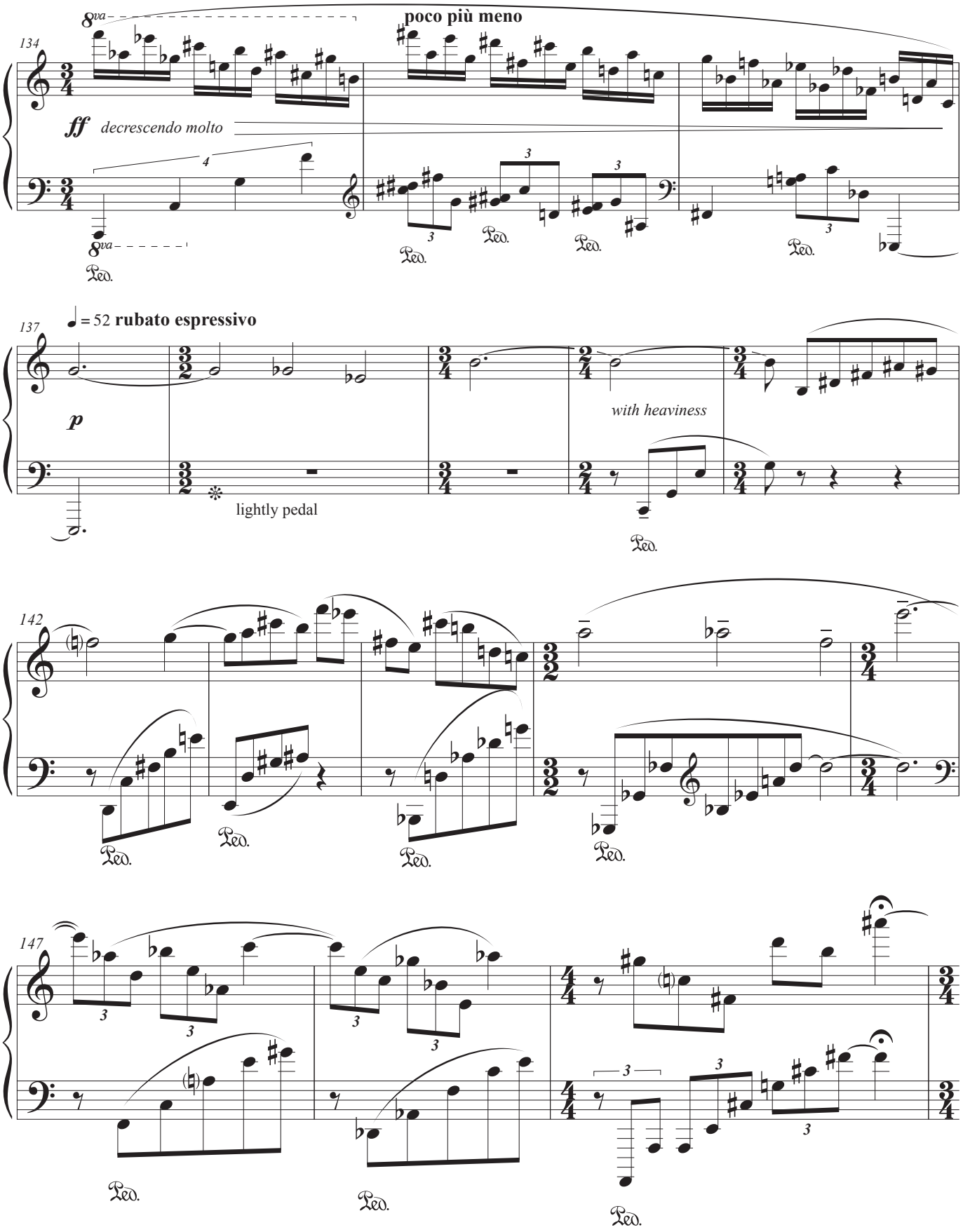

97
LH
♩ = 80
Ped.
99
Broadly ♩ = 69
RH
f
LH
mp
f
Ped.
102

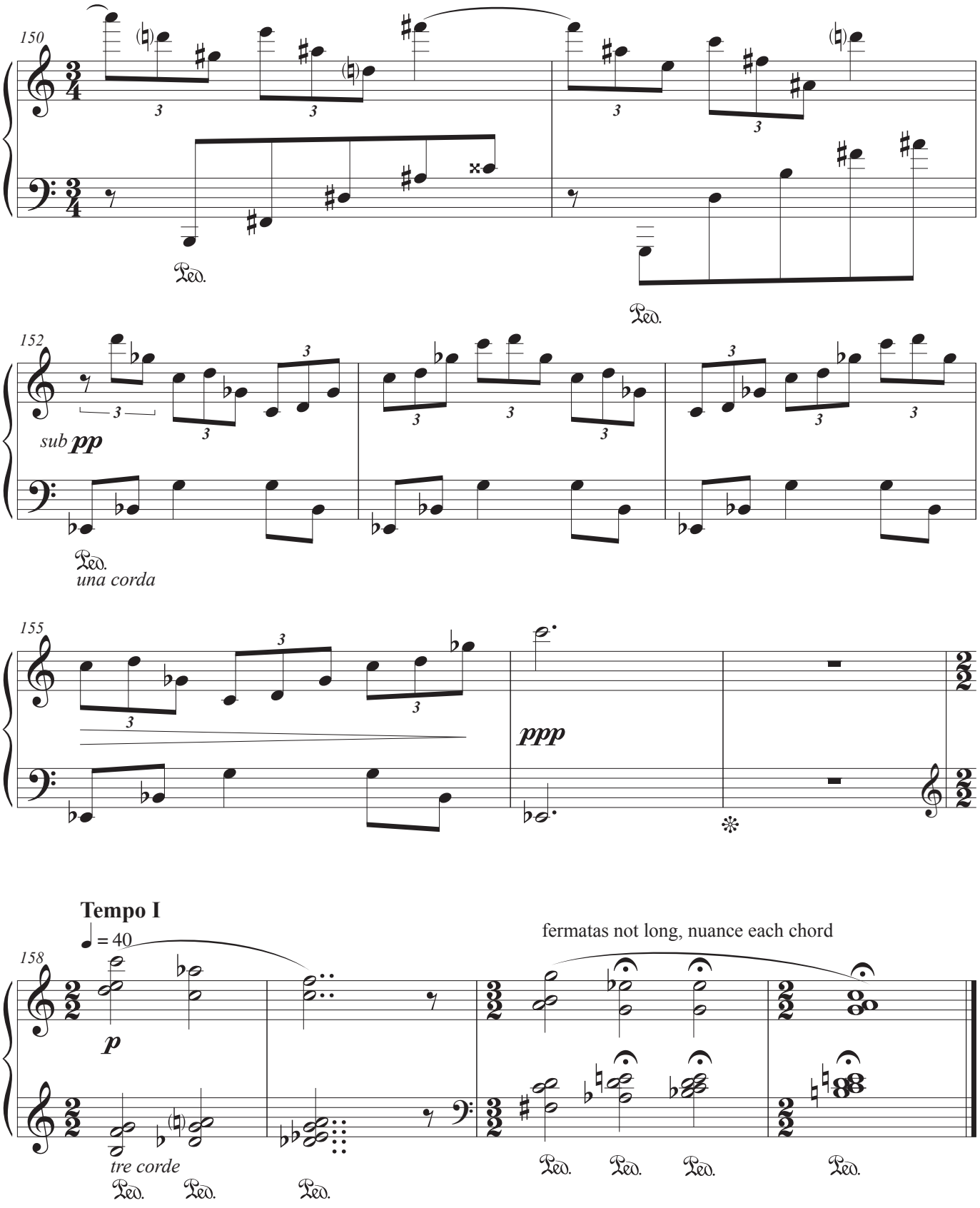

104
8va
RH
f
Ped.
105
mf
ff
Ped.
più mosso ♩ = 88
leggiero
107
sub mp
simile
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
110
pp
Ped.


113
p
LH
(pp)
115
117
8va
p


119
LH
121
124
8va


127
130
f
f
Ped.
132


134
poco più meno
ff
decrescendo molto
137
♩ = 52 rubato espressivo
p
with heaviness
lightly pedal
142
147


150
Ped.
Ped.
152
sub pp
Ped.
una corda
155
ppp
Tempo I
♩ = 40
158
p
tre corde
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
fermatas not long, nuance each chord
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

II. Scherzo

rev. 10

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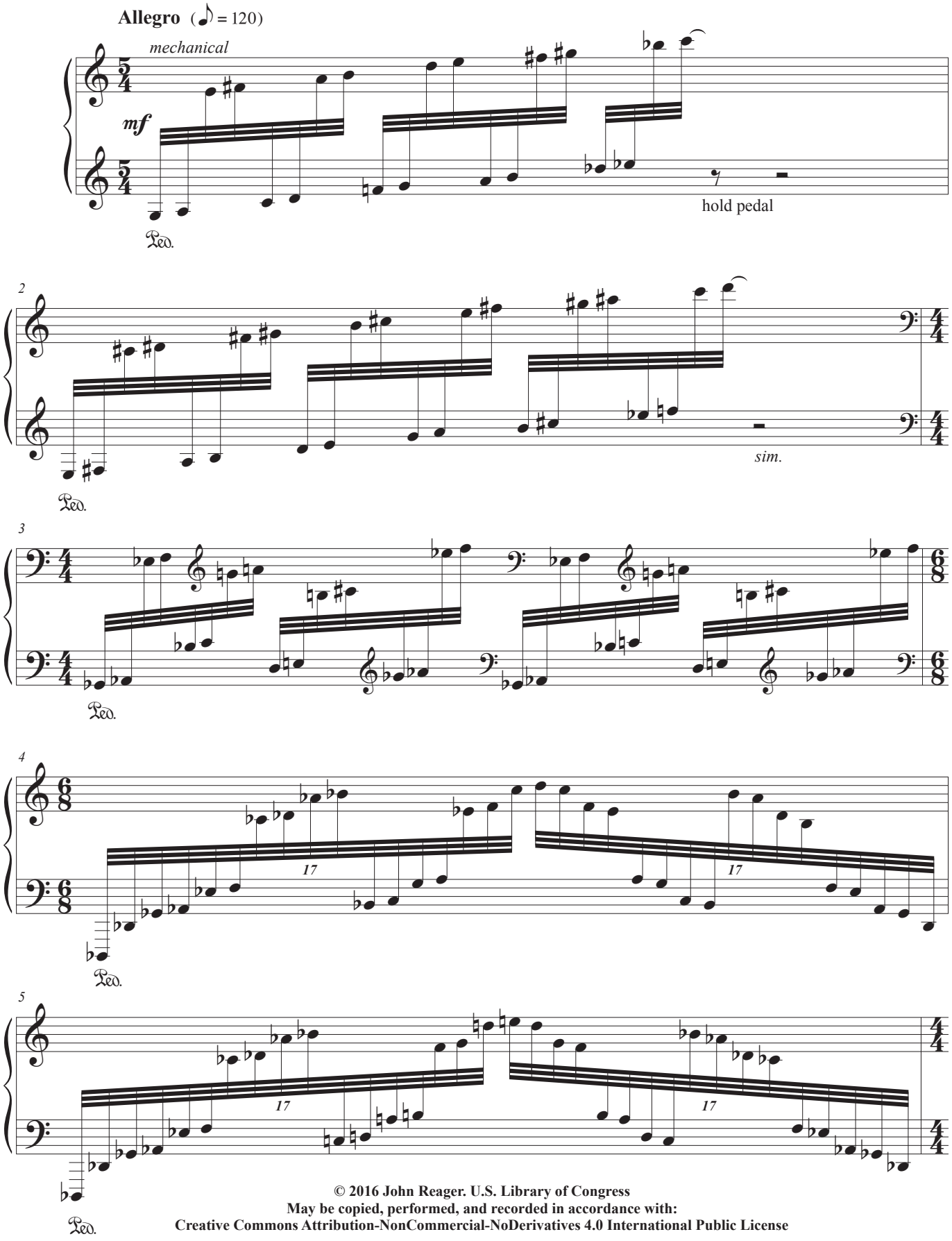

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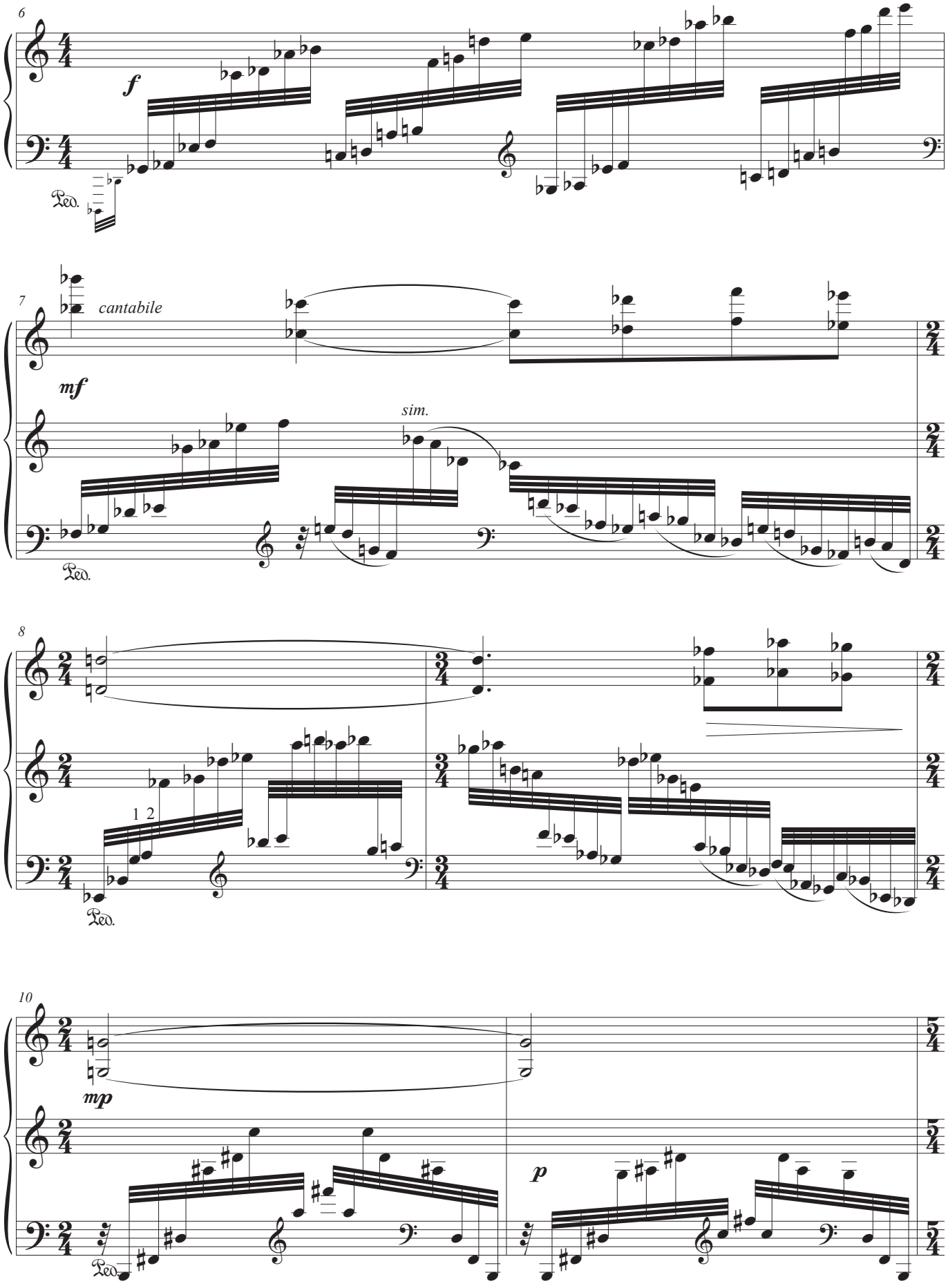
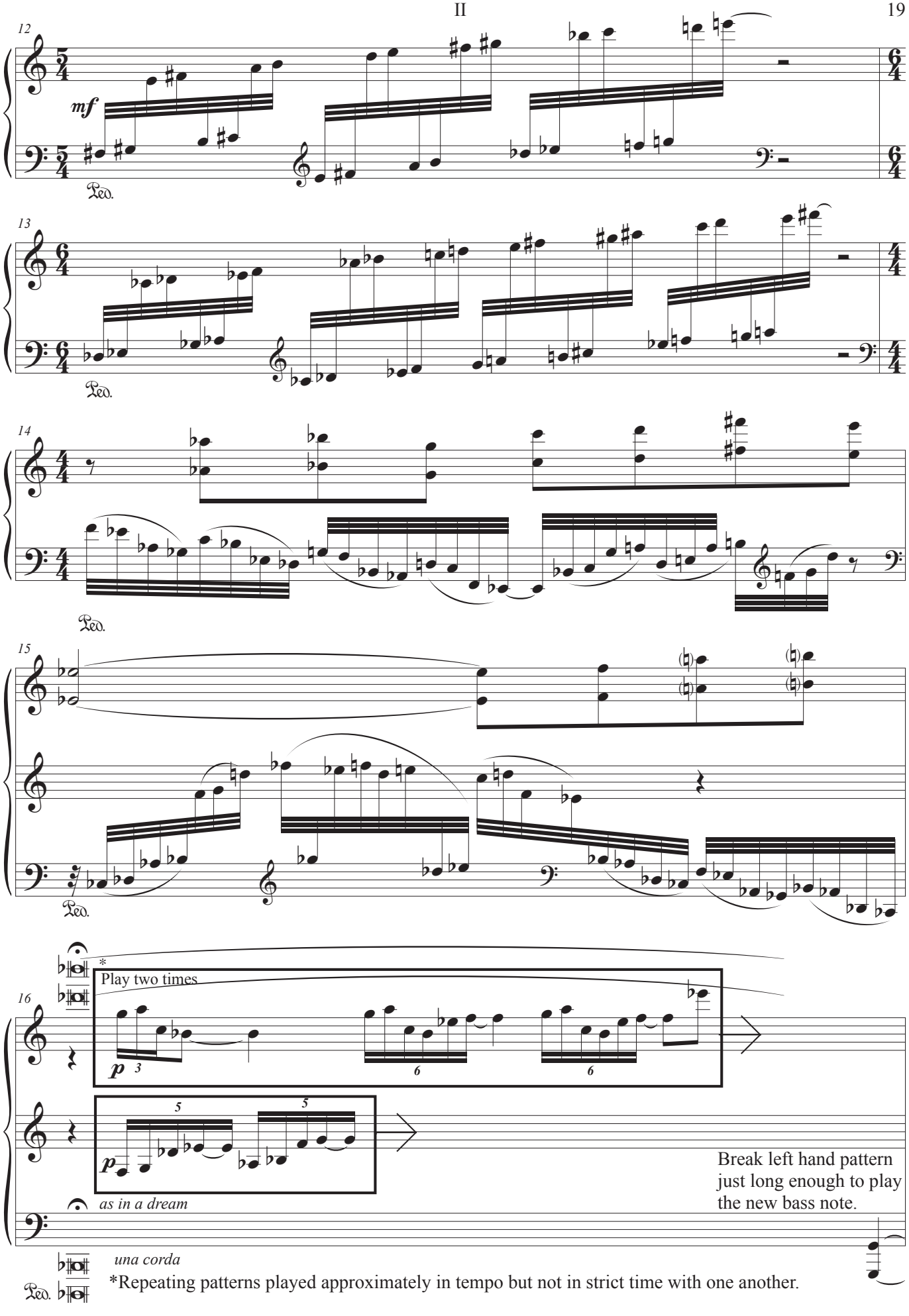
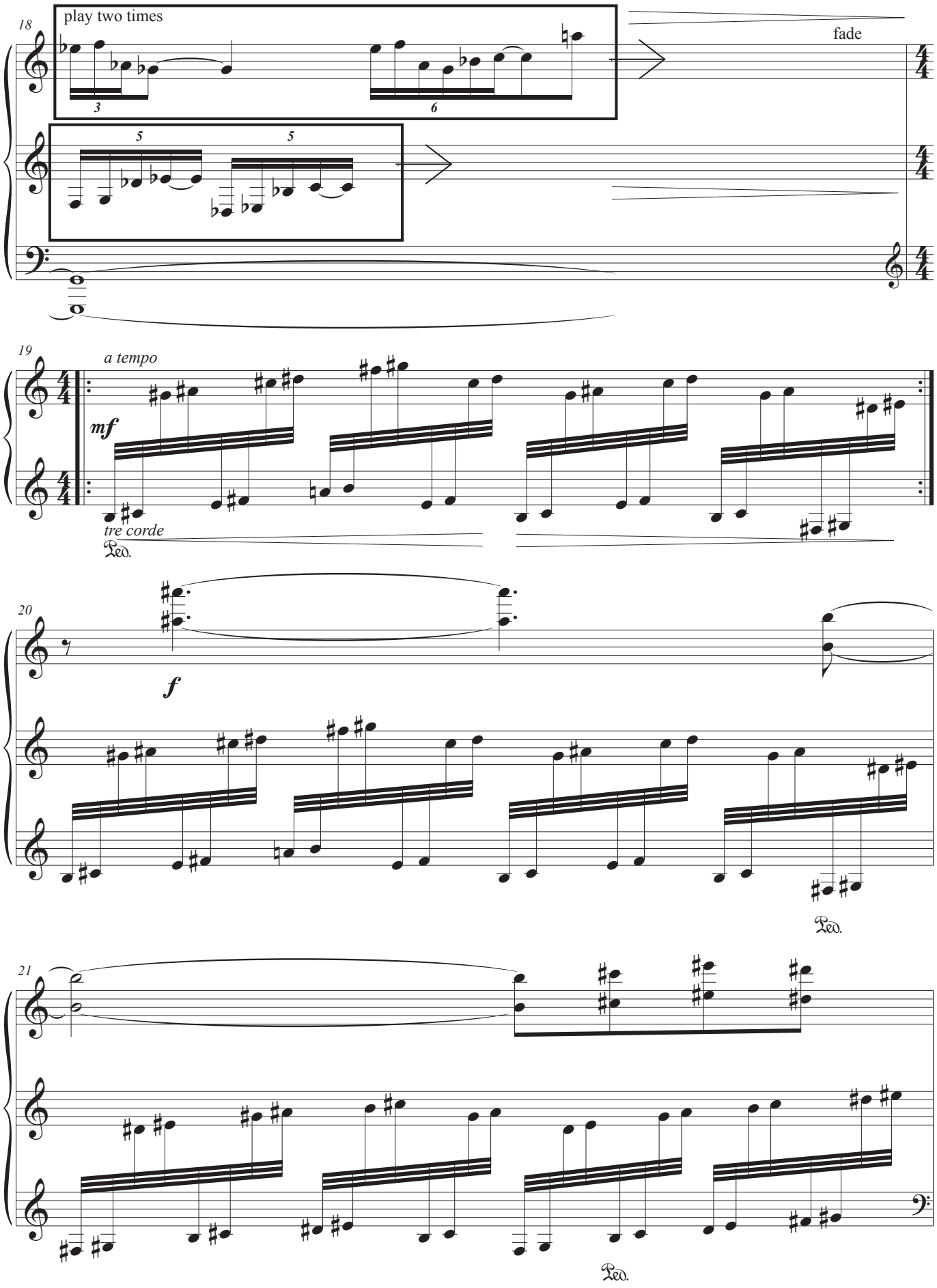
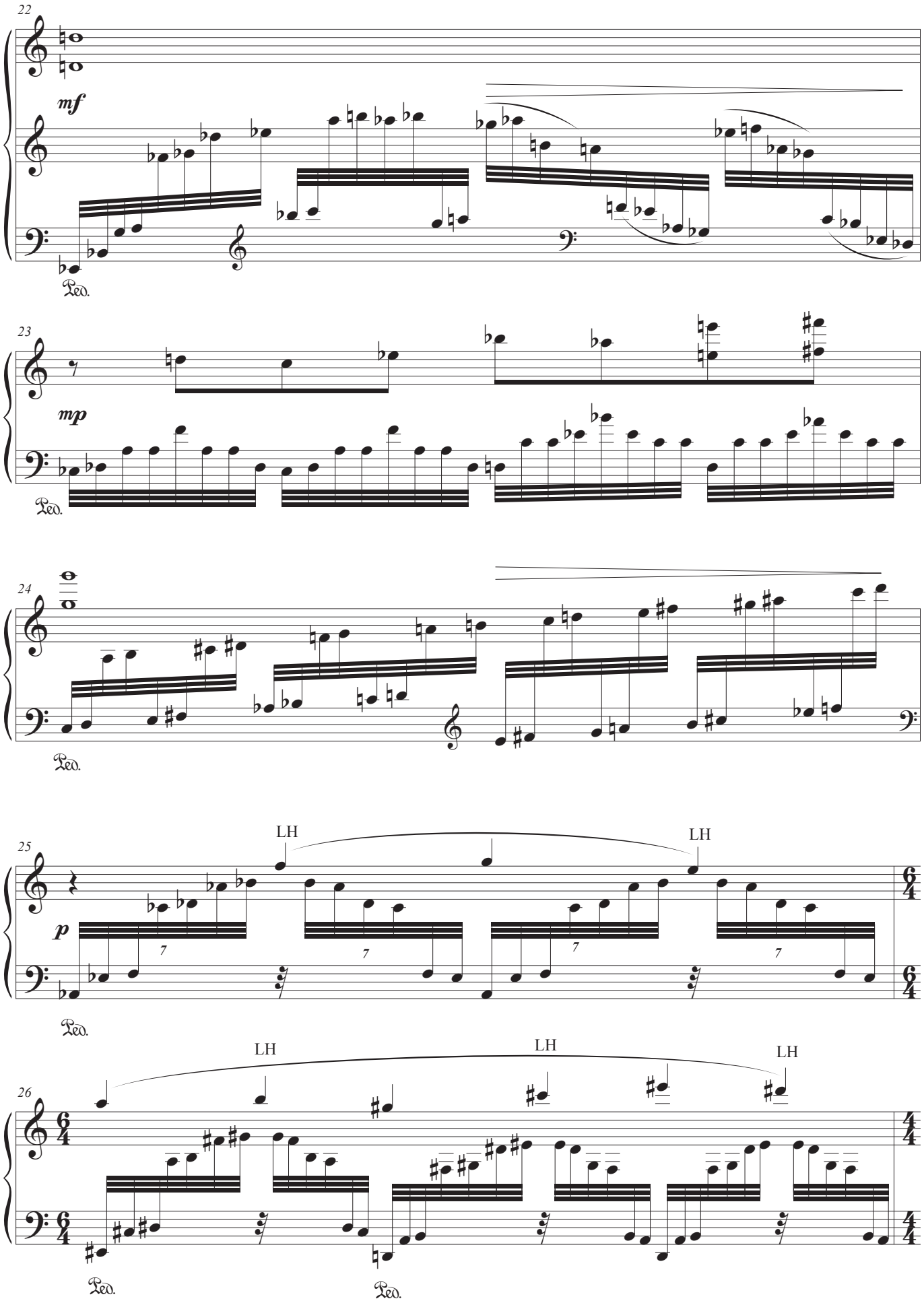
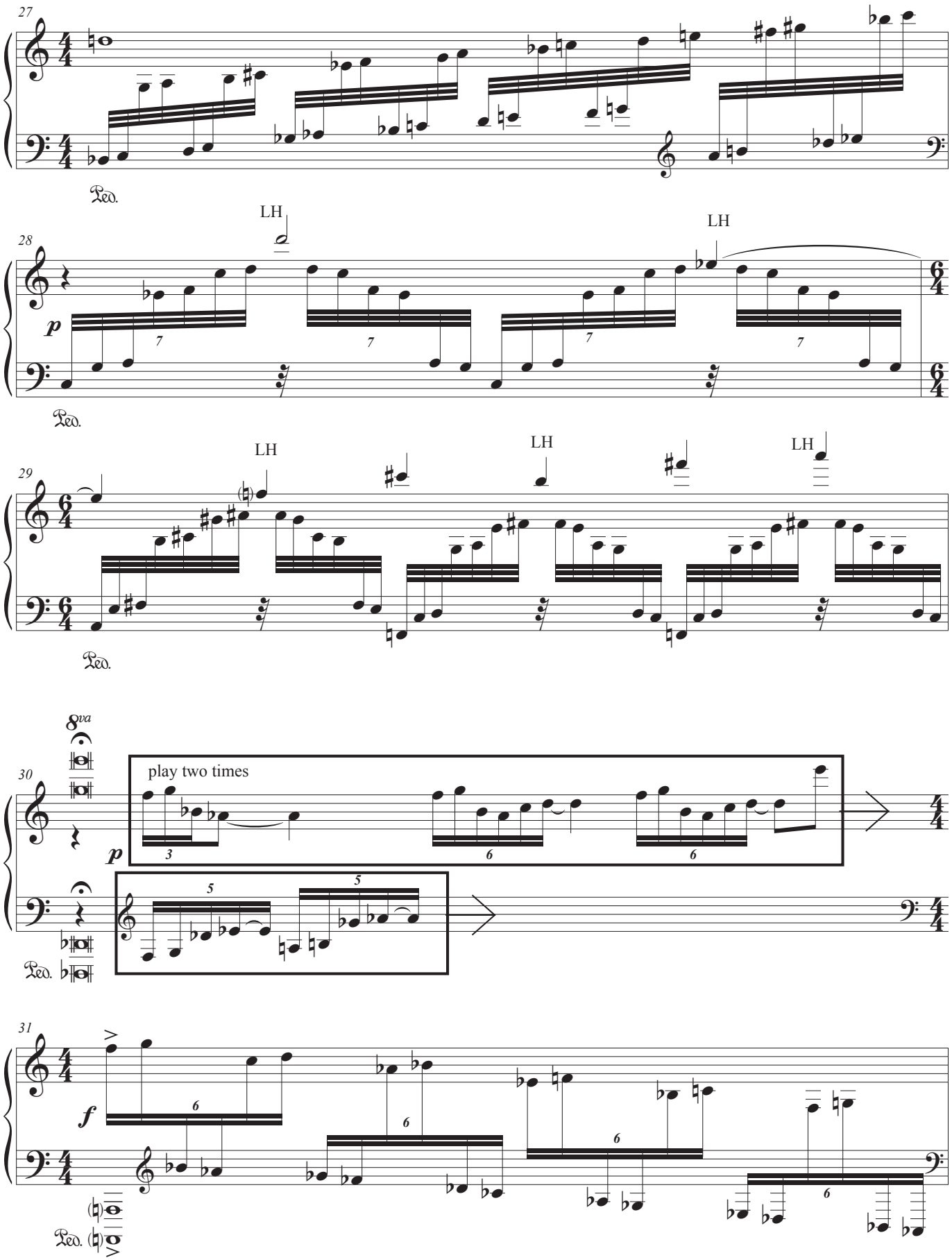

6
f
Ped.
7
cantabile
mf
sim.
Ped.
8
1 2
Ped.
10
mp
p
Ped.

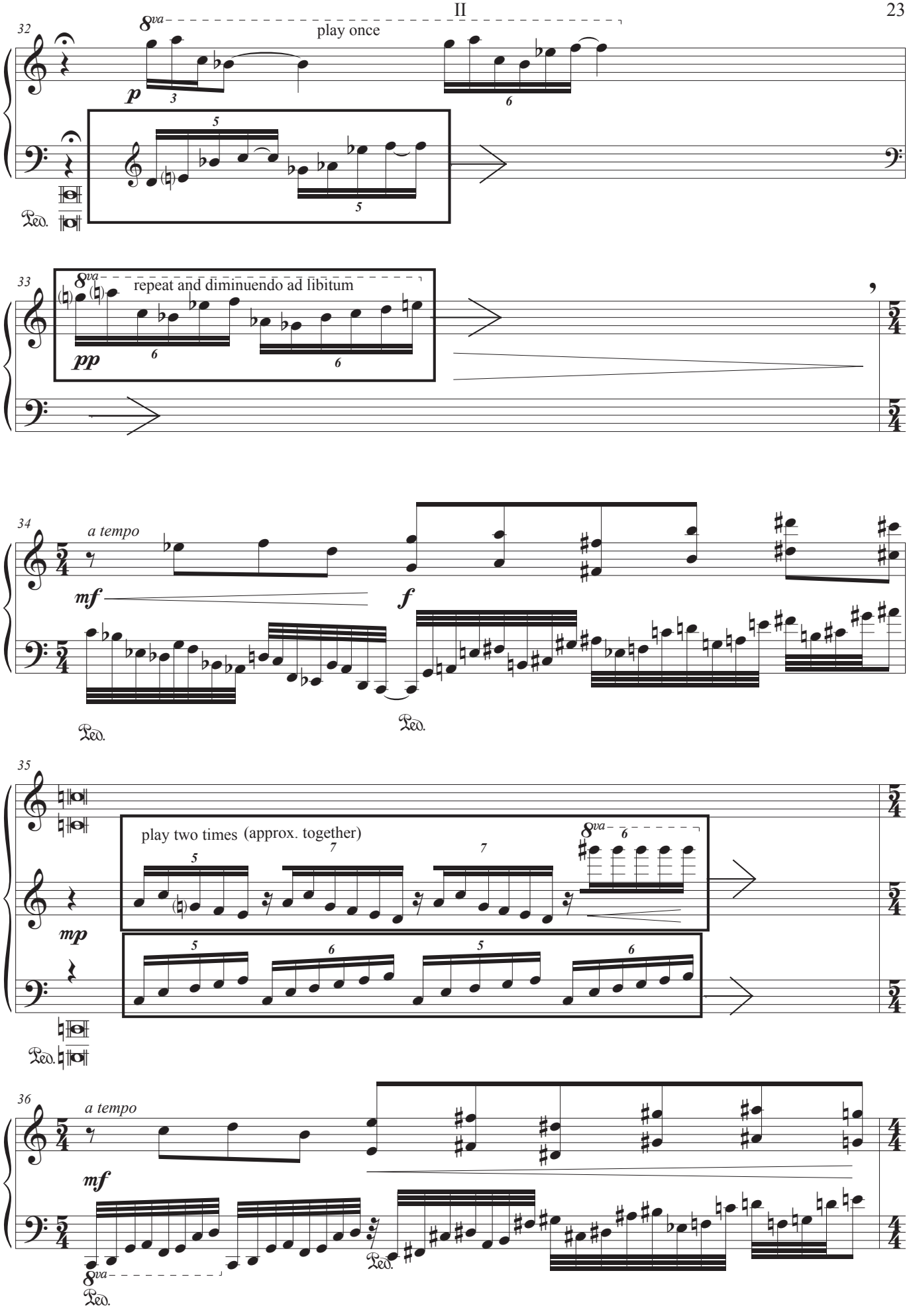


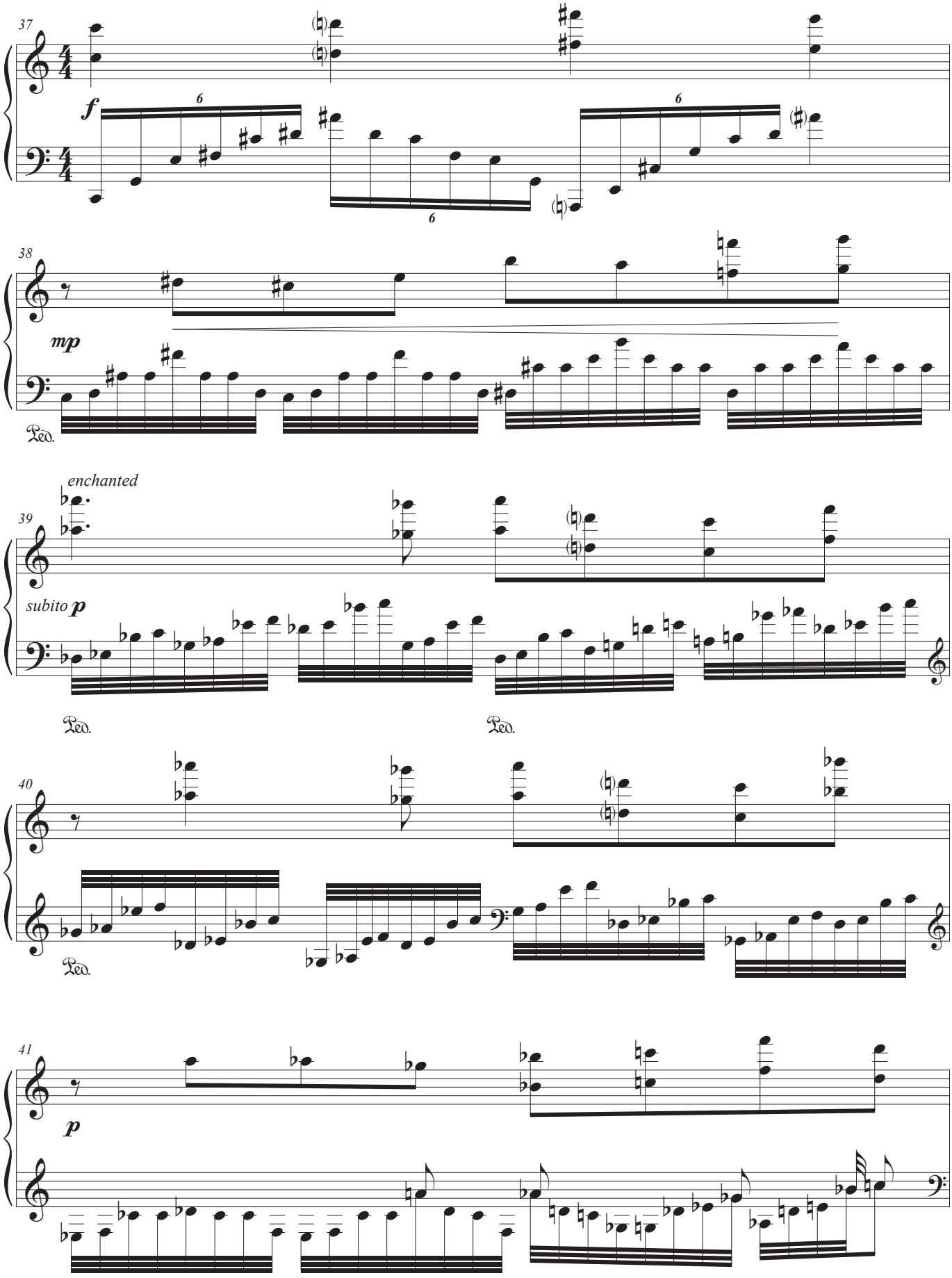
*Repeating patterns played approximately in tempo but not in strict time with one another.

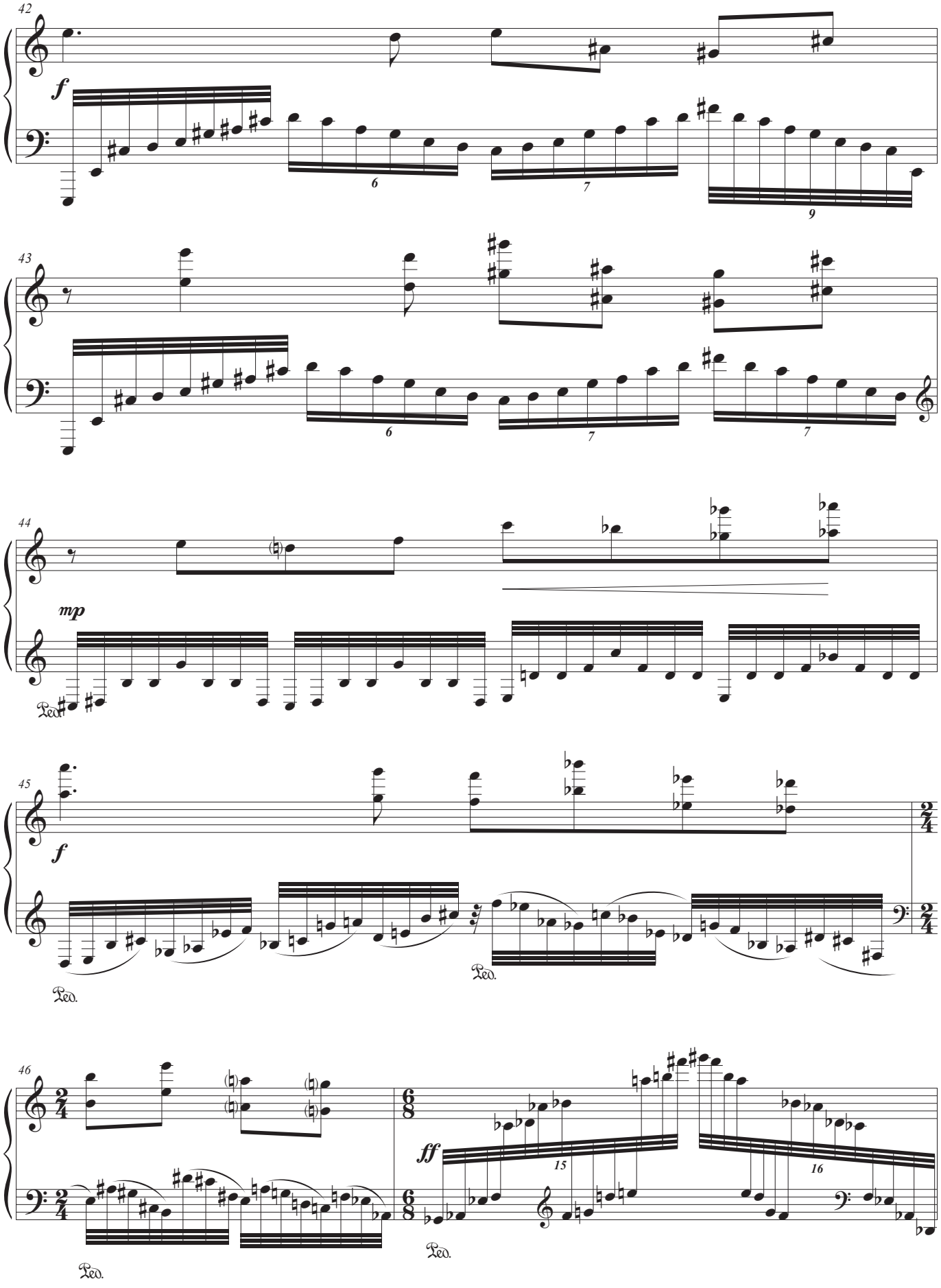

18
play two times
fade
19
a tempo
mf
tre corde
Ped.
20
f
Ped.
21
Ped.

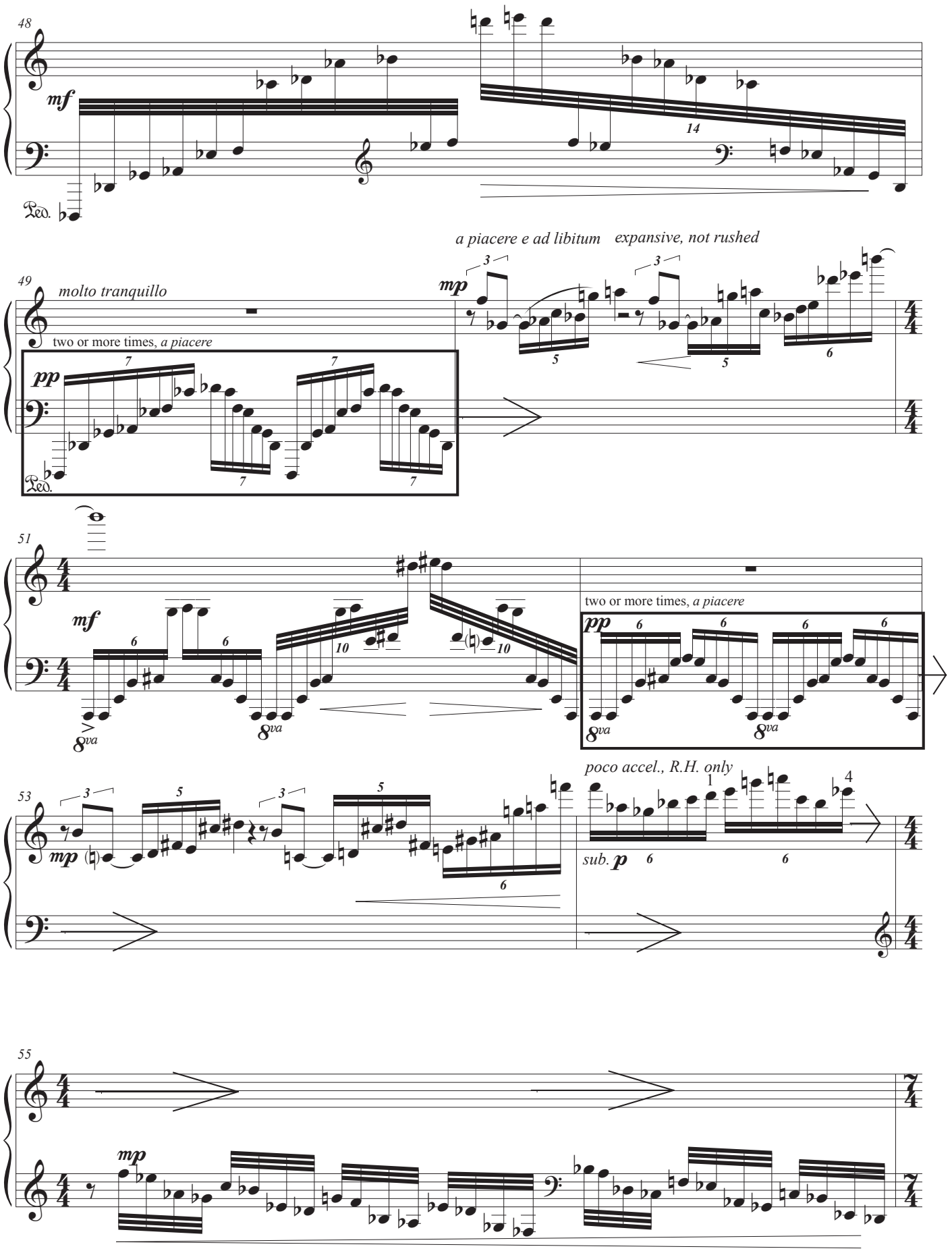

22
mf
Ped.
23
mp
Ped.
24
Ped.
25
LH
LH
p
7
7
7
7
Ped.
26
LH
LH
LH
Ped.
Ped.

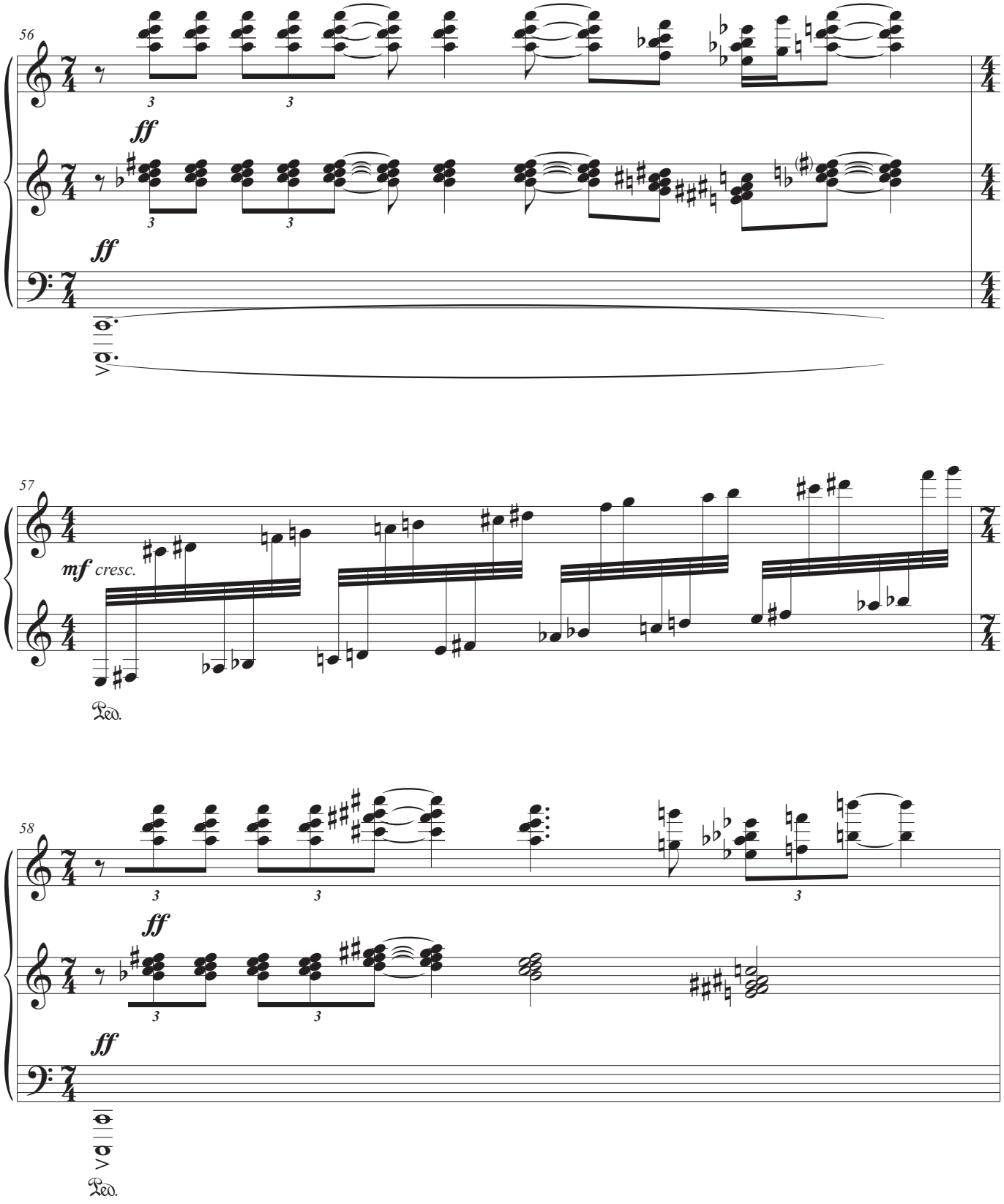

27
Ped.
28
LH
LH
p
7
7
7
7
Ped.
29
LH
LH
LH
Ped.
8va
30
play two times
p
3
6
6
5
5
Ped.
31
f
6
6
6
6
Ped.

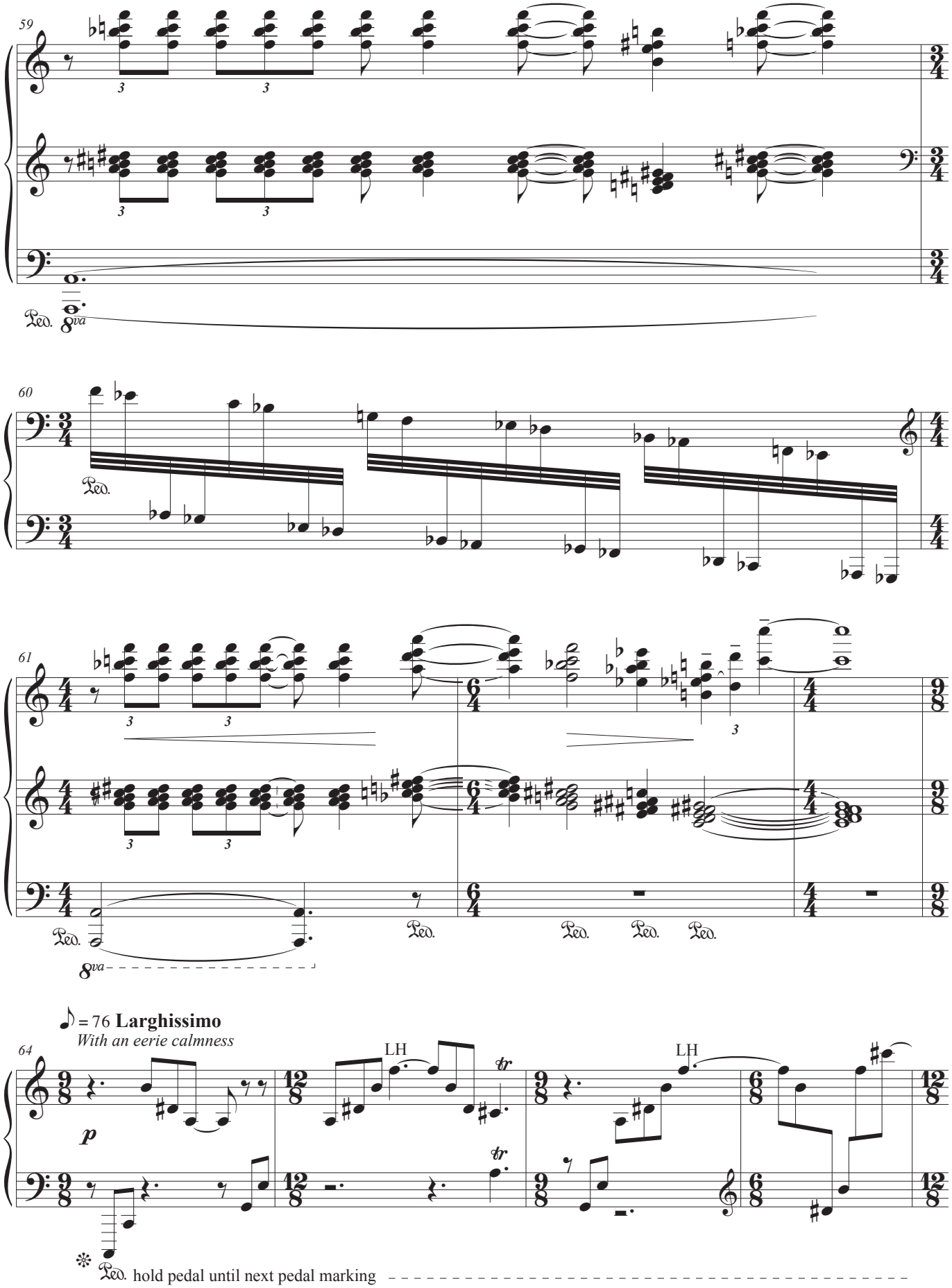

32
8va
play once
p
3
6
5
5
Ped.
33
8va
repeat and diminuendo ad libitum
pp
6
6
34
a tempo
mf
f
Ped.
Ped.
35
play two times (approx. together)
5
7
7
8va
6
mp
5
6
5
6
Ped.
36
a tempo
mf
8va
Ped.
Ped.

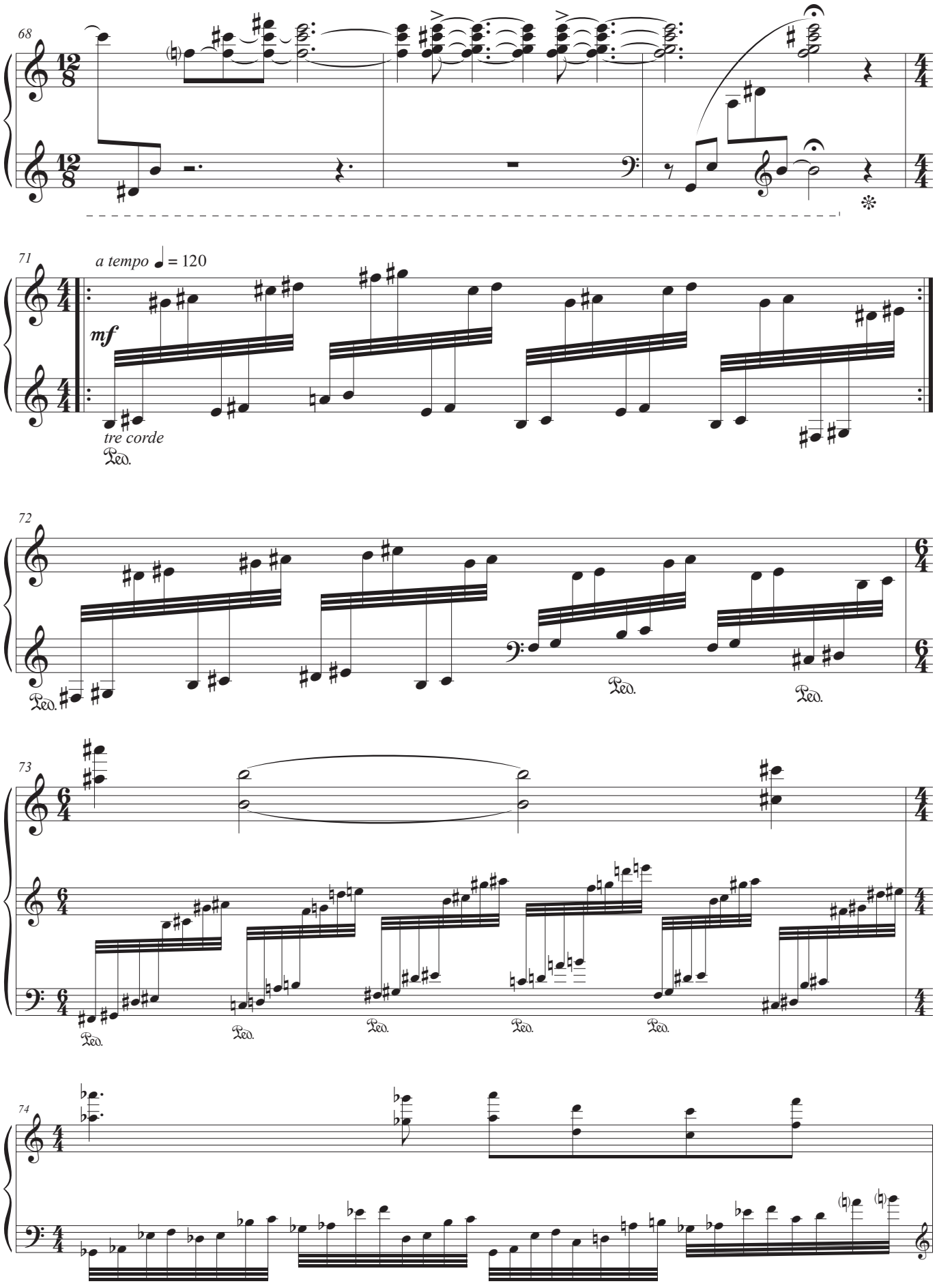

37
f
6
6
6
38
mp
Ped.
enchanted
39
subito p
Ped.
Ped.
40
Ped.
41
p

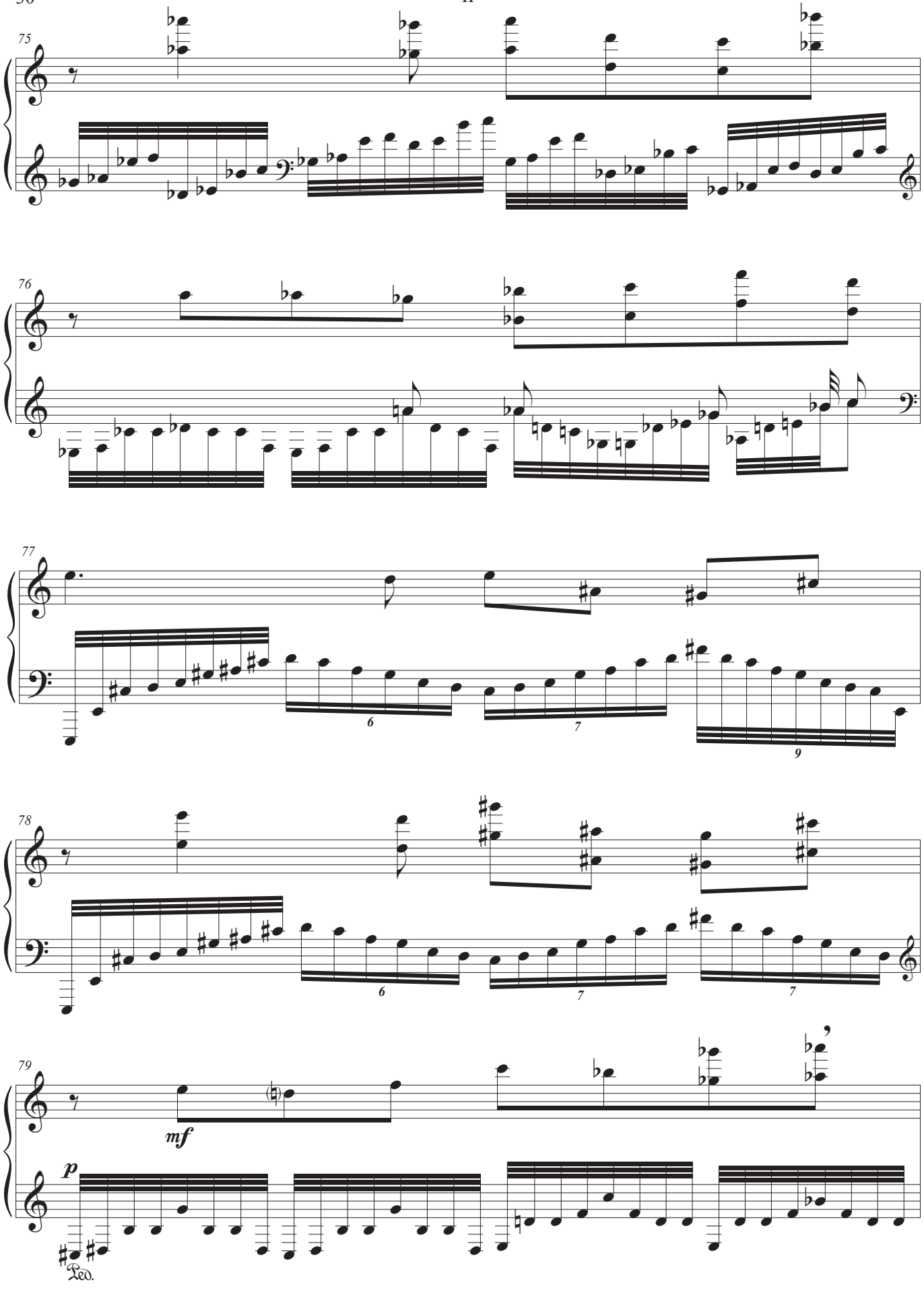

42
f
6
7
9
43
6
7
7
44
mp
Ped.
45
f
Ped.
Ped.
46
ff
15
16
Ped.
Ped.

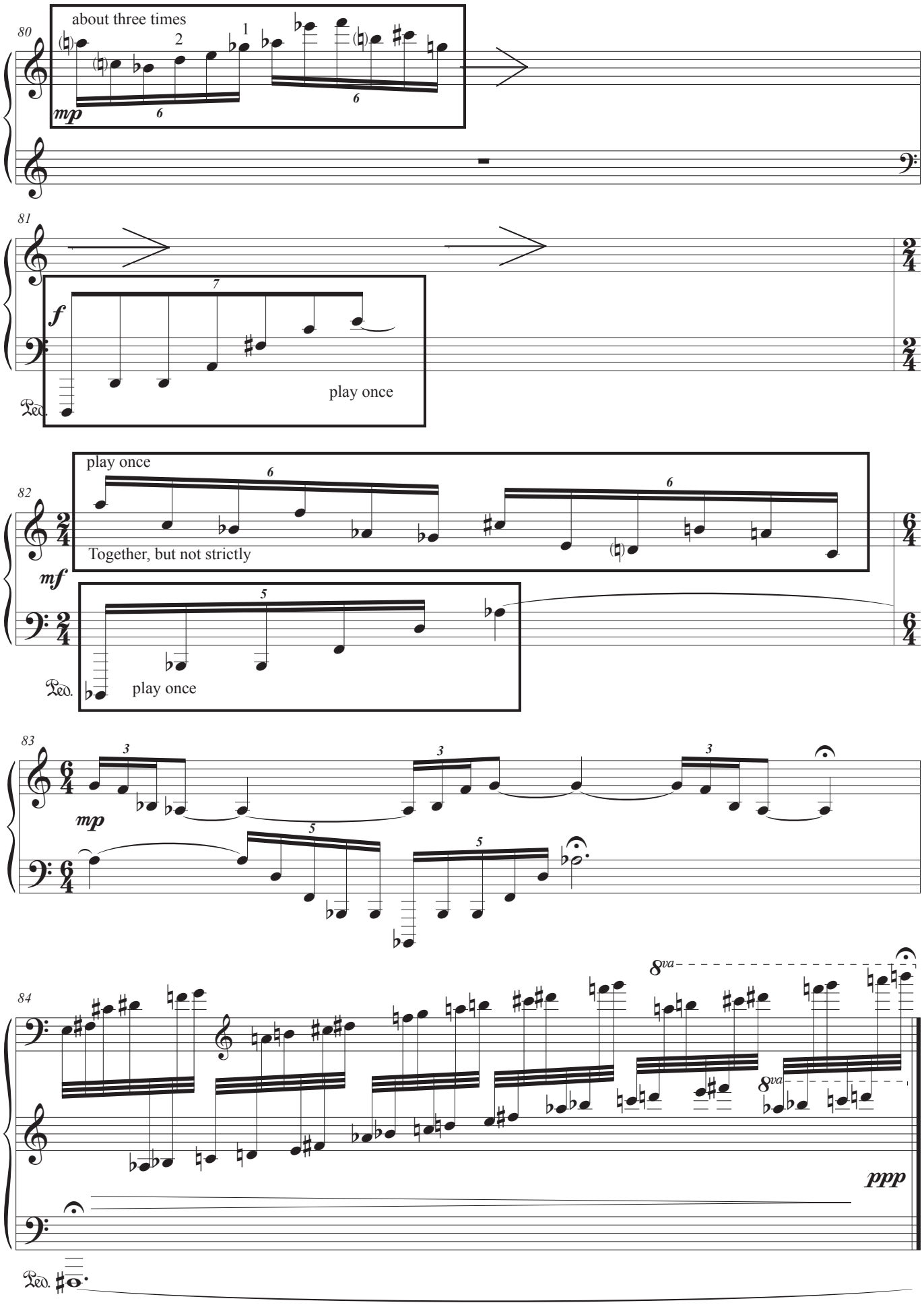

48
mf
Ped.
14
49
molto tranquillo
two or more times, a piacere
pp
a piacere e ad libitum expansive, not rushed
mp
51
mf
8va
two or more times, a piacere
53
mp
poco accel., R.H. only
sub. p
55
mp


56
ff
ff
57
mf cresc.
Ped.
58
ff
ff
Ped.


59
Ped.
8va
60
Ped.
61
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
8va
64
♪ = 76 Larghissimo
With an eerie calmness
LH
LH
p
tr
tr
Ped. hold pedal until next pedal marking


68
71
a tempo ♩ = 120
mf
tre corde
Ped.
72
73
74


75
76
77
78
79
mf
p
Ped.


80
about three times
mp
81
f
play once
Ped.
82
play once
Together, but not strictly
mf
play once
Ped.
83
mp
84
8va
8va
ppp
Ped.

III. Nocturne

rev. 8

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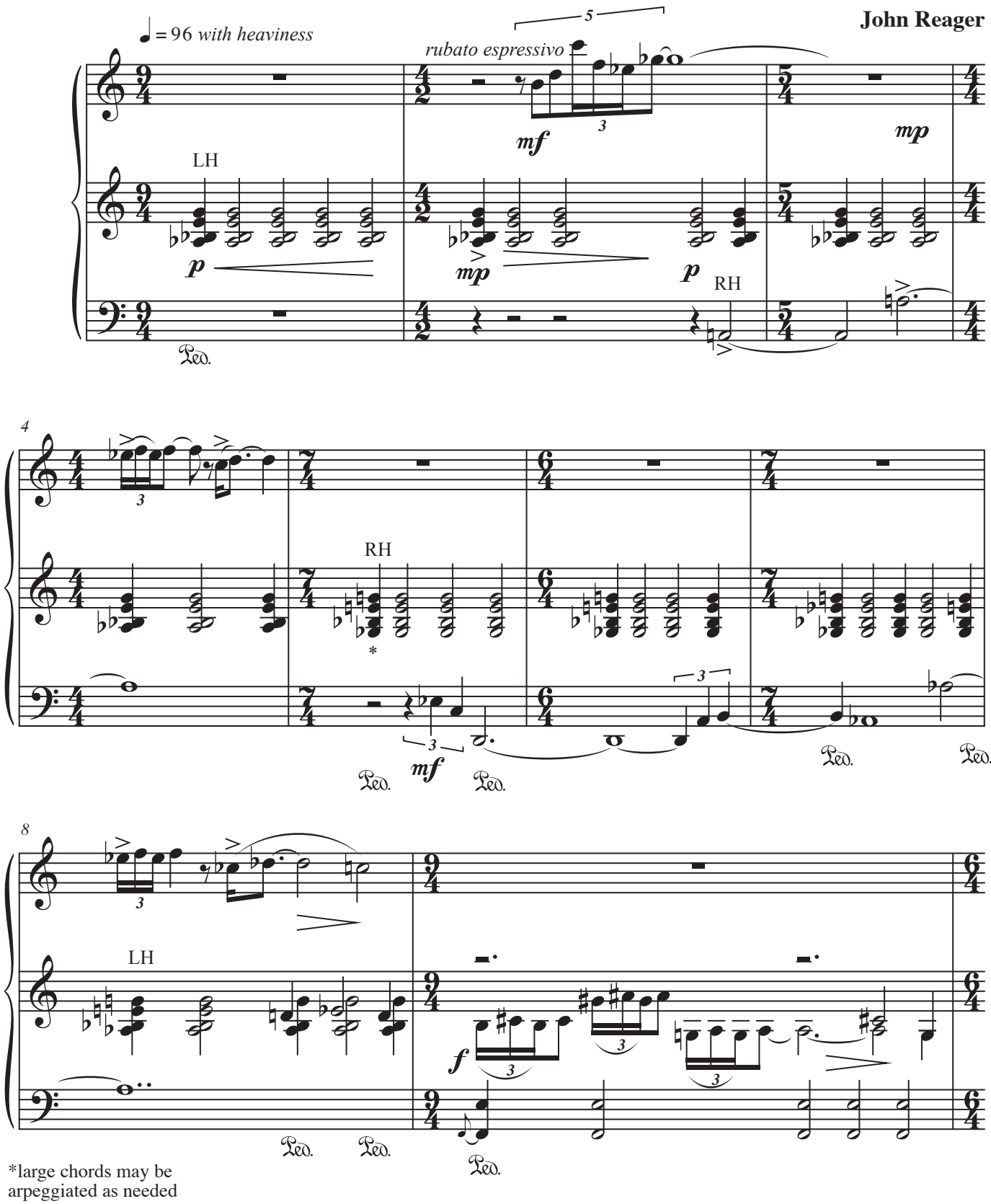

*large chords may be arpeggiated as needed

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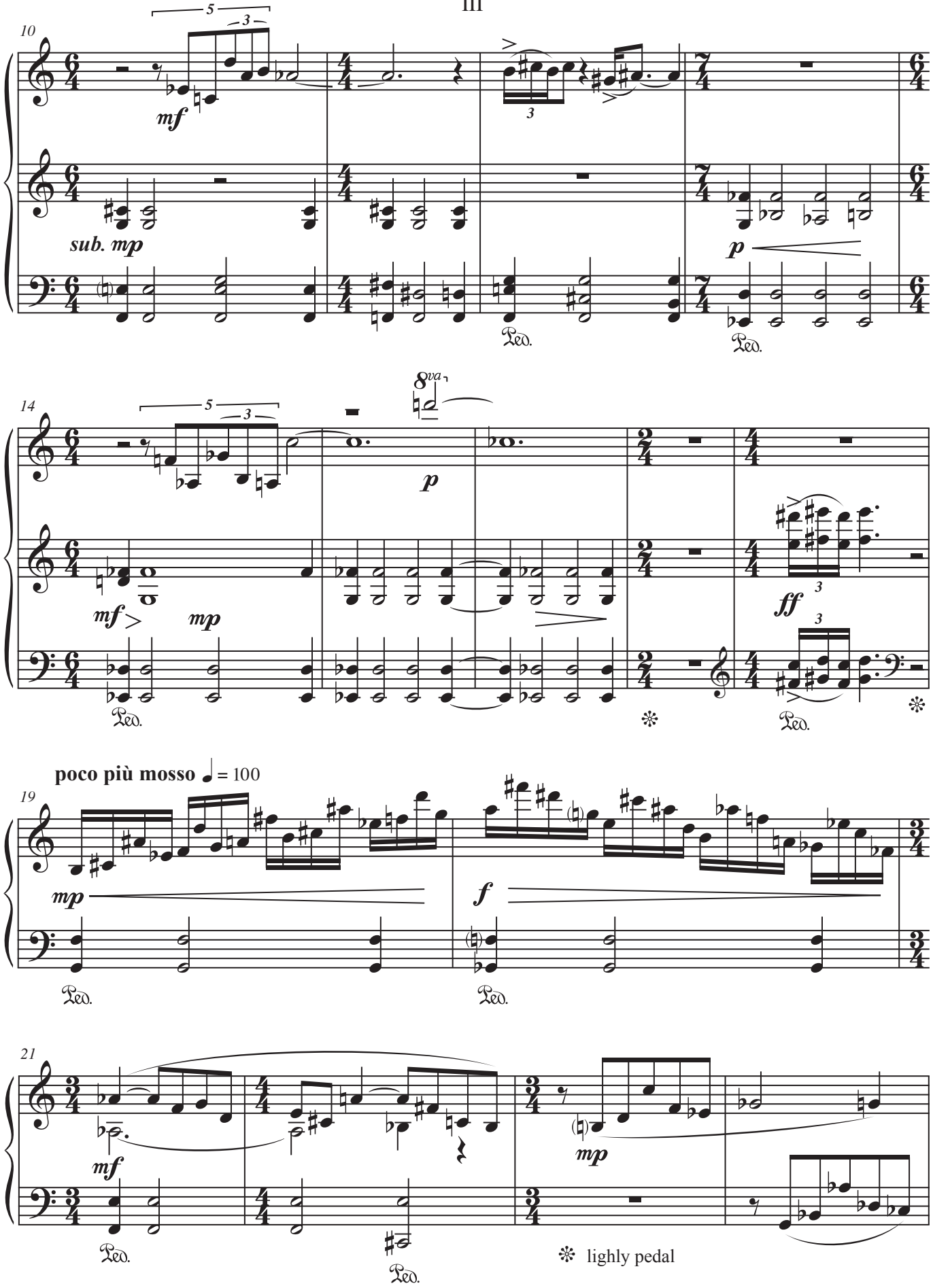
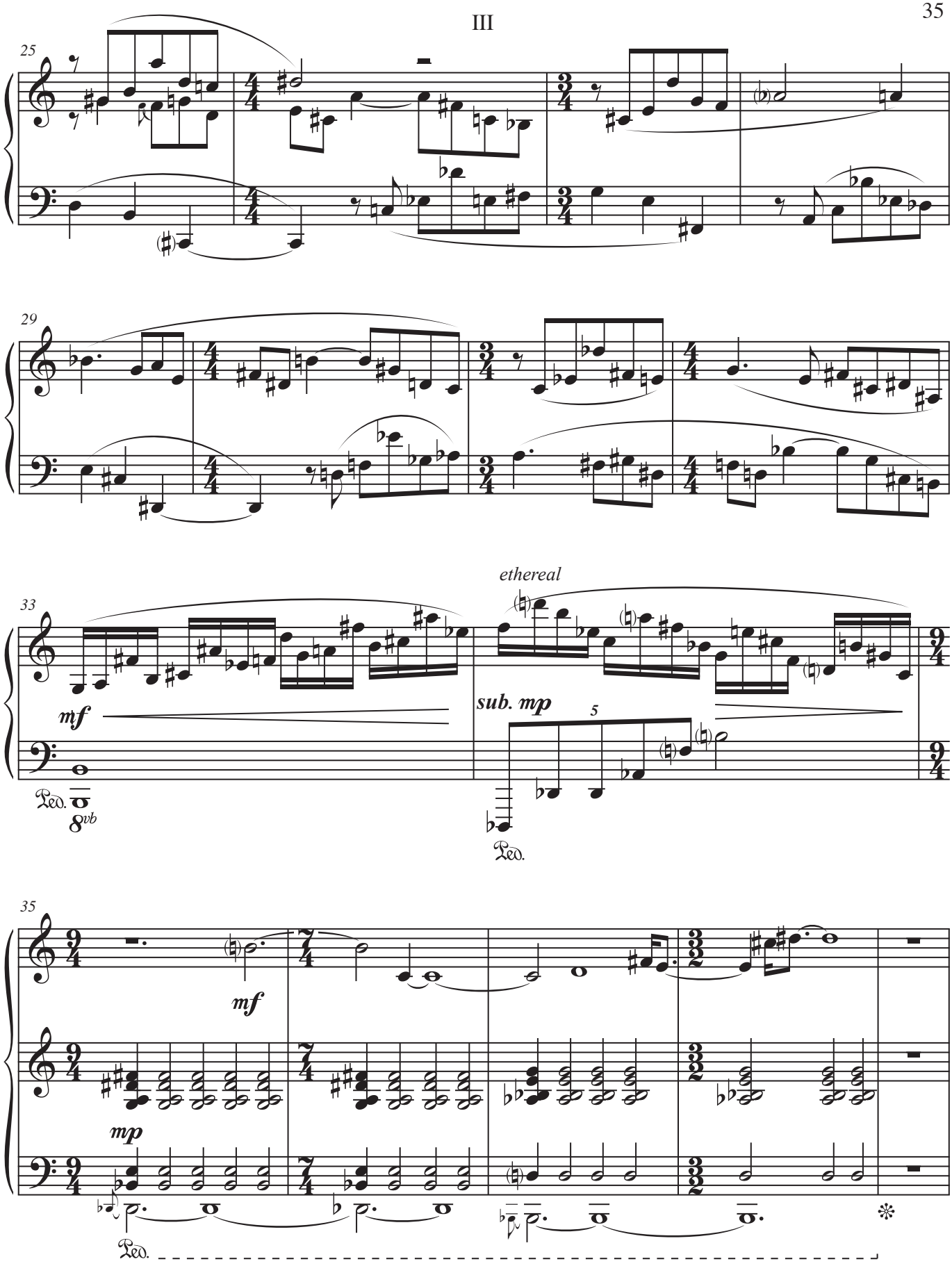
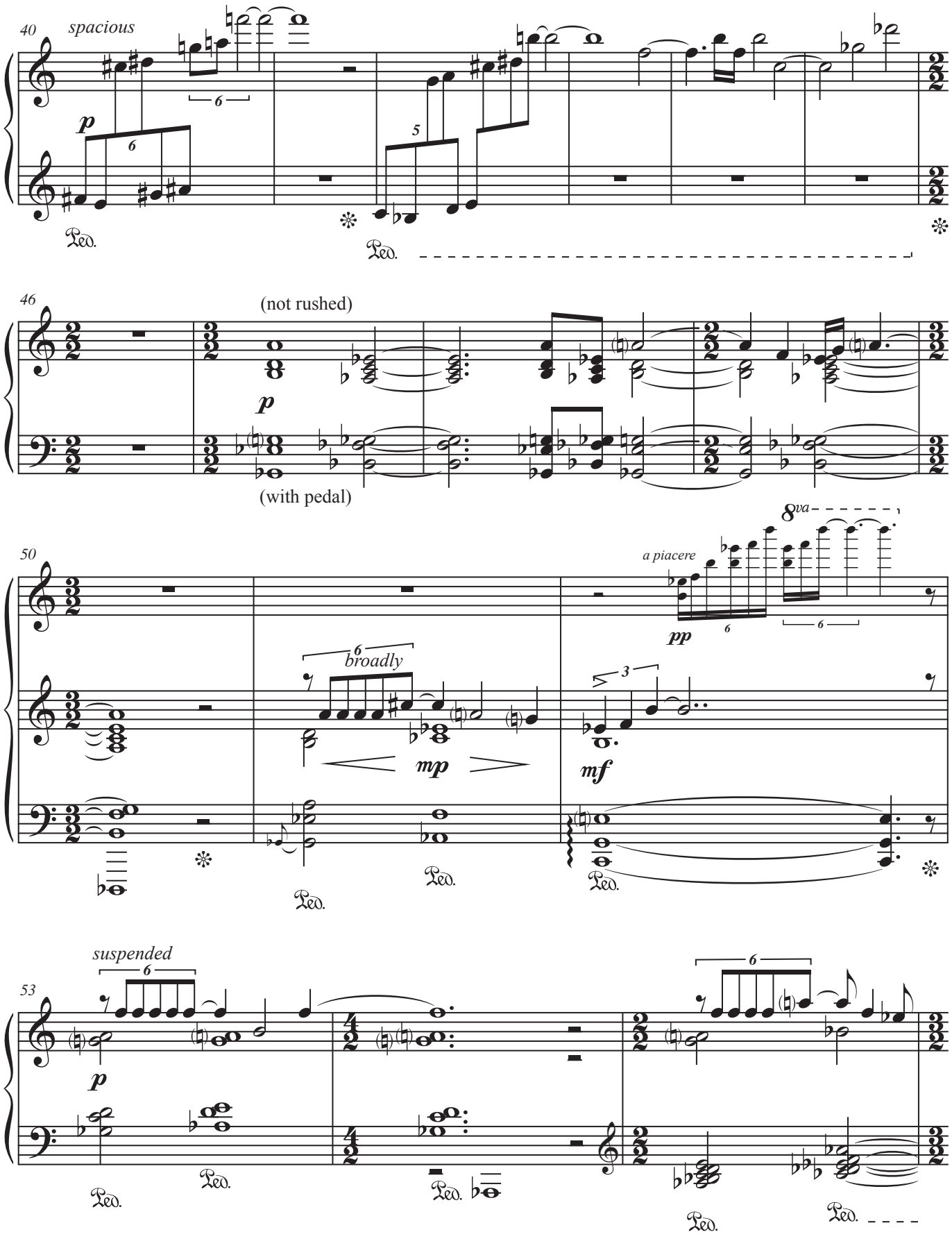
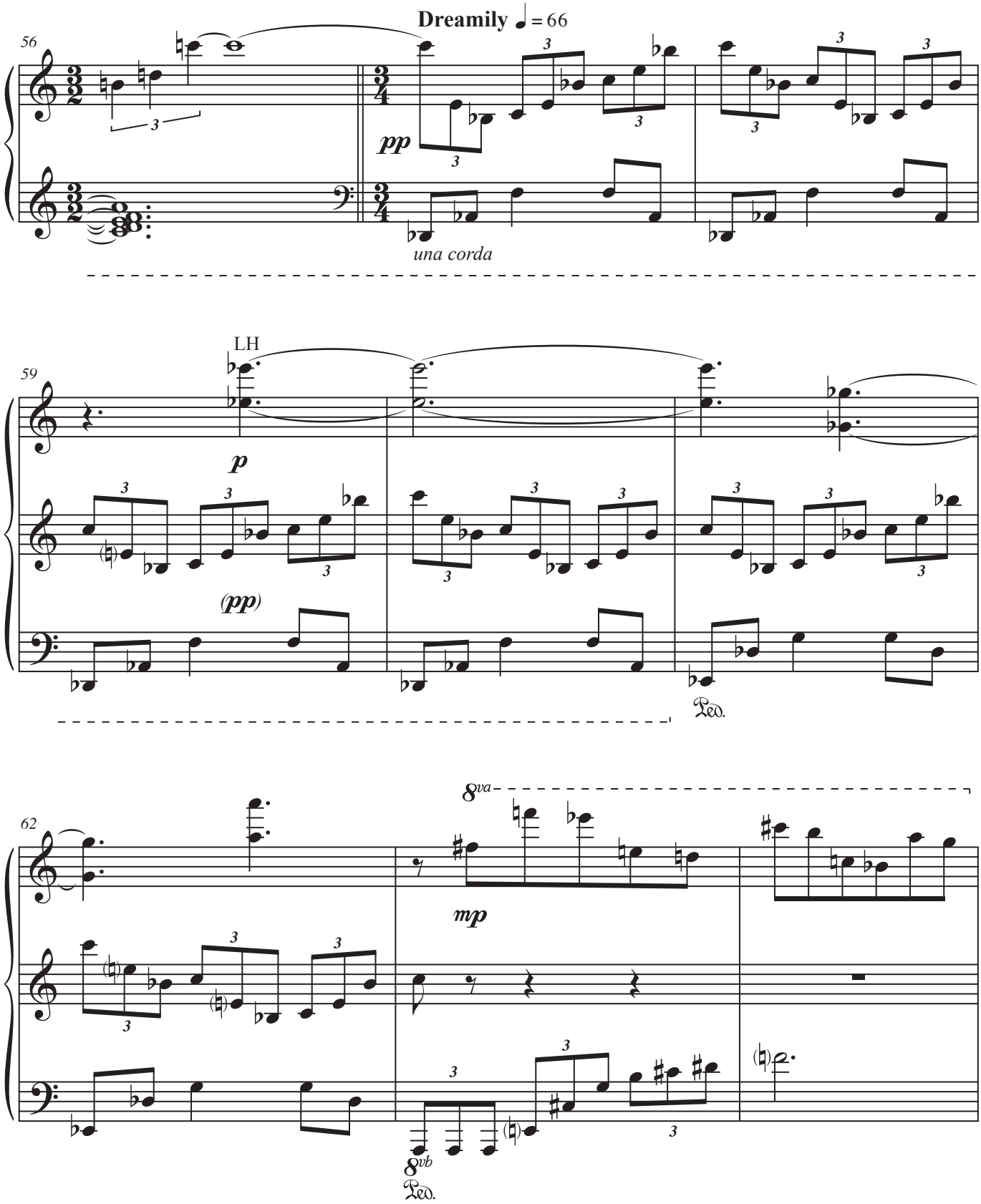
III


10
mf
sub. mp
p
Ped.
14
8va
p
mf
mp
ff
poco più mosso ♩ = 100
mp
f
21
mf
mp
Ped.
❊ lighly pedal


25
29
33
ethereal
mf
sub. mp
5
Ped.
8vb
35
mf
mp
Ped.

III


40
spacious
p
Ped.
46
(not rushed)
p
(with pedal)
50
broadly
mp
mf
8va
a piacere
pp
53
suspended
p


Dreamily ♩= 66
56
pp
una corda
LH
59
p
(pp)
Ped.
62
8va
mp
8vb
Ped.

III

poco Animato ♩ = 88

65

p *mf*

Ped. *tre corde*

Ped.

68

♩ = 72 *tempo giusto*

mp

(with pedal)

73

RH

RH

8vb

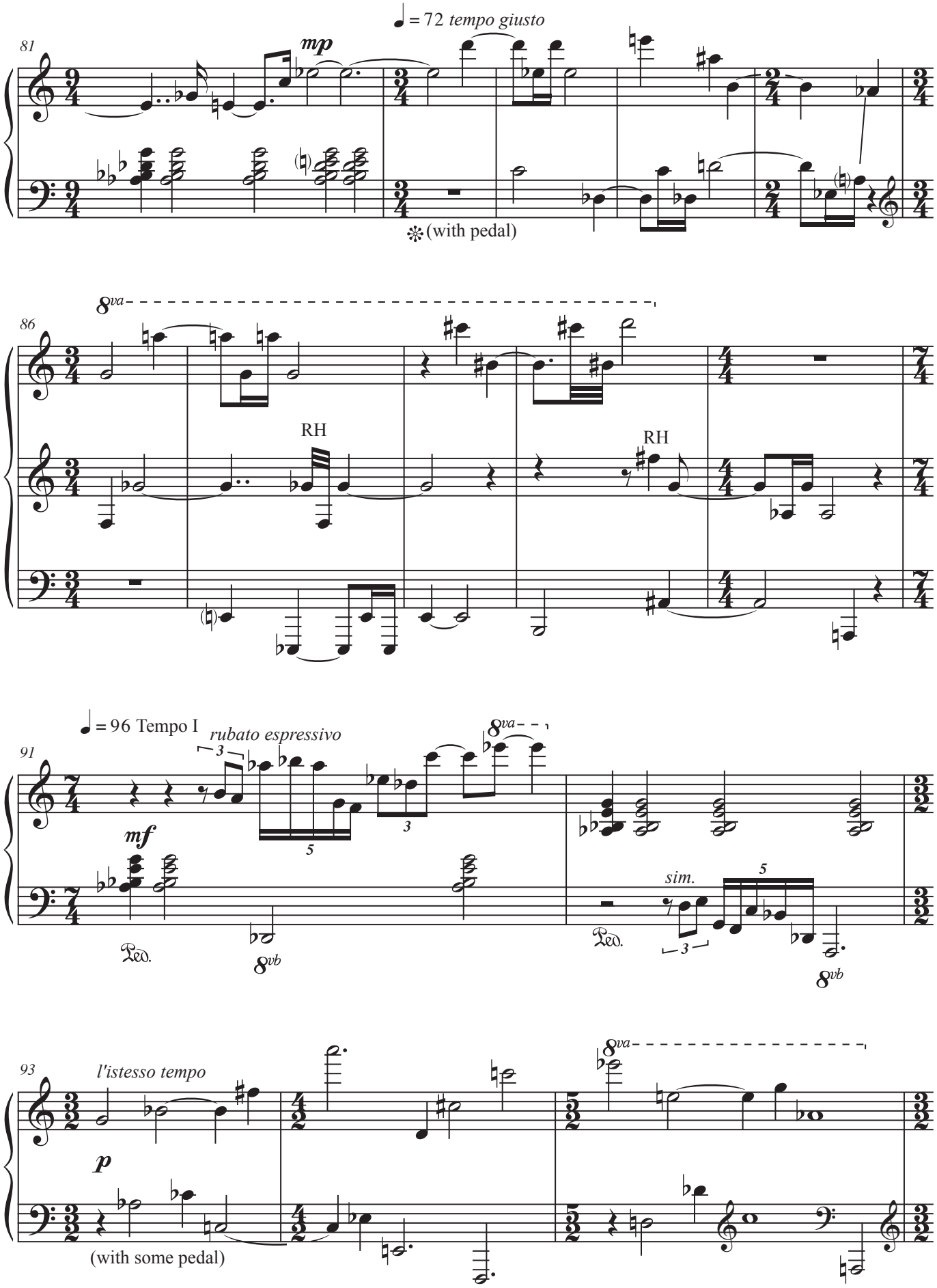
78

♩ = 108 *quasi Tempo I, ma poco agitato*

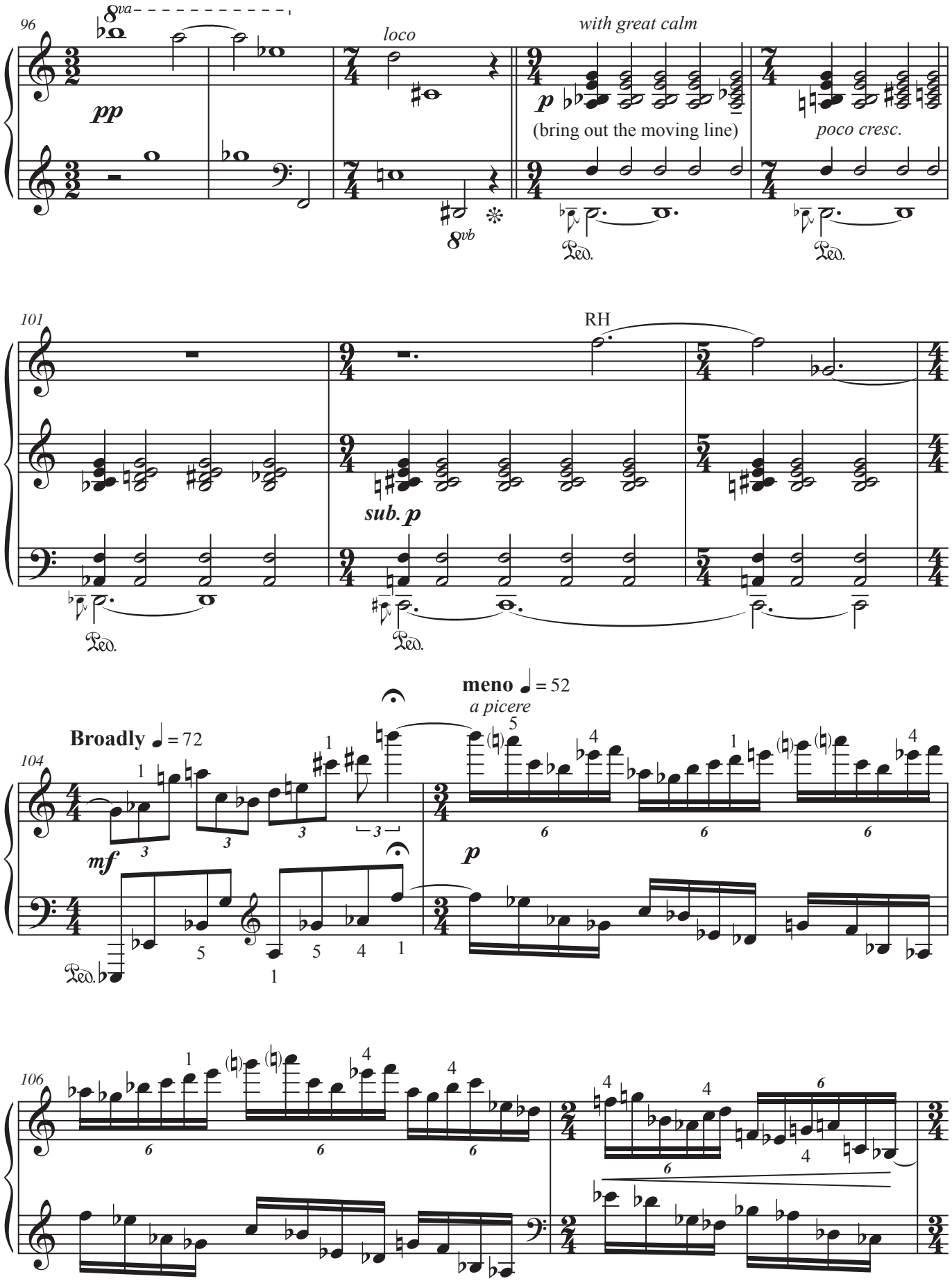
p

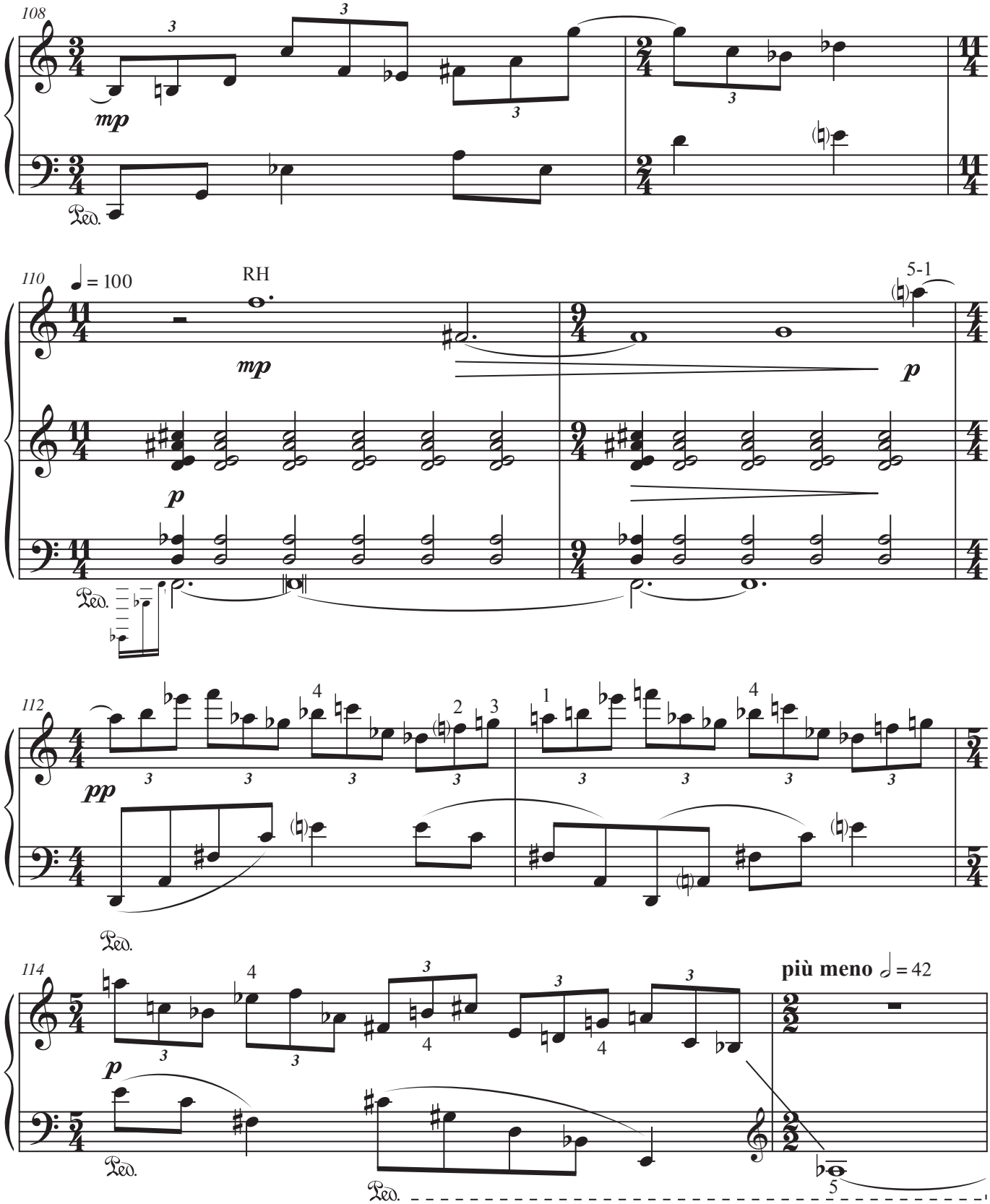
Ped.

III

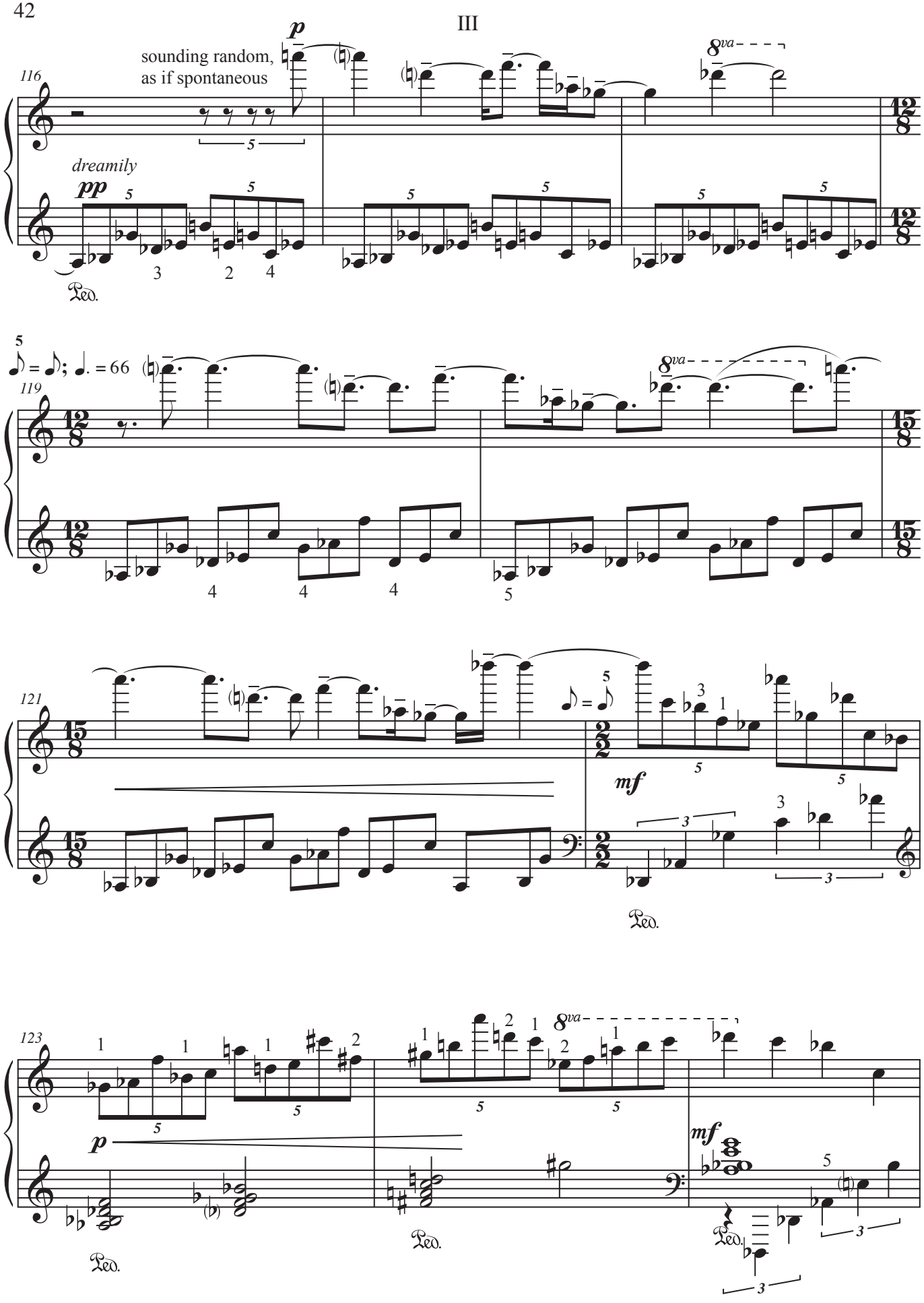

♩ = 72 tempo giusto
81
mp
(with pedal)
8va
86
RH
RH
♩ = 96 Tempo I
rubato espressivo
91
mf
Ped.
8vb
8va
sim.
Ped.
8vb
93
l'istesso tempo
p
(with some pedal)
8va

III

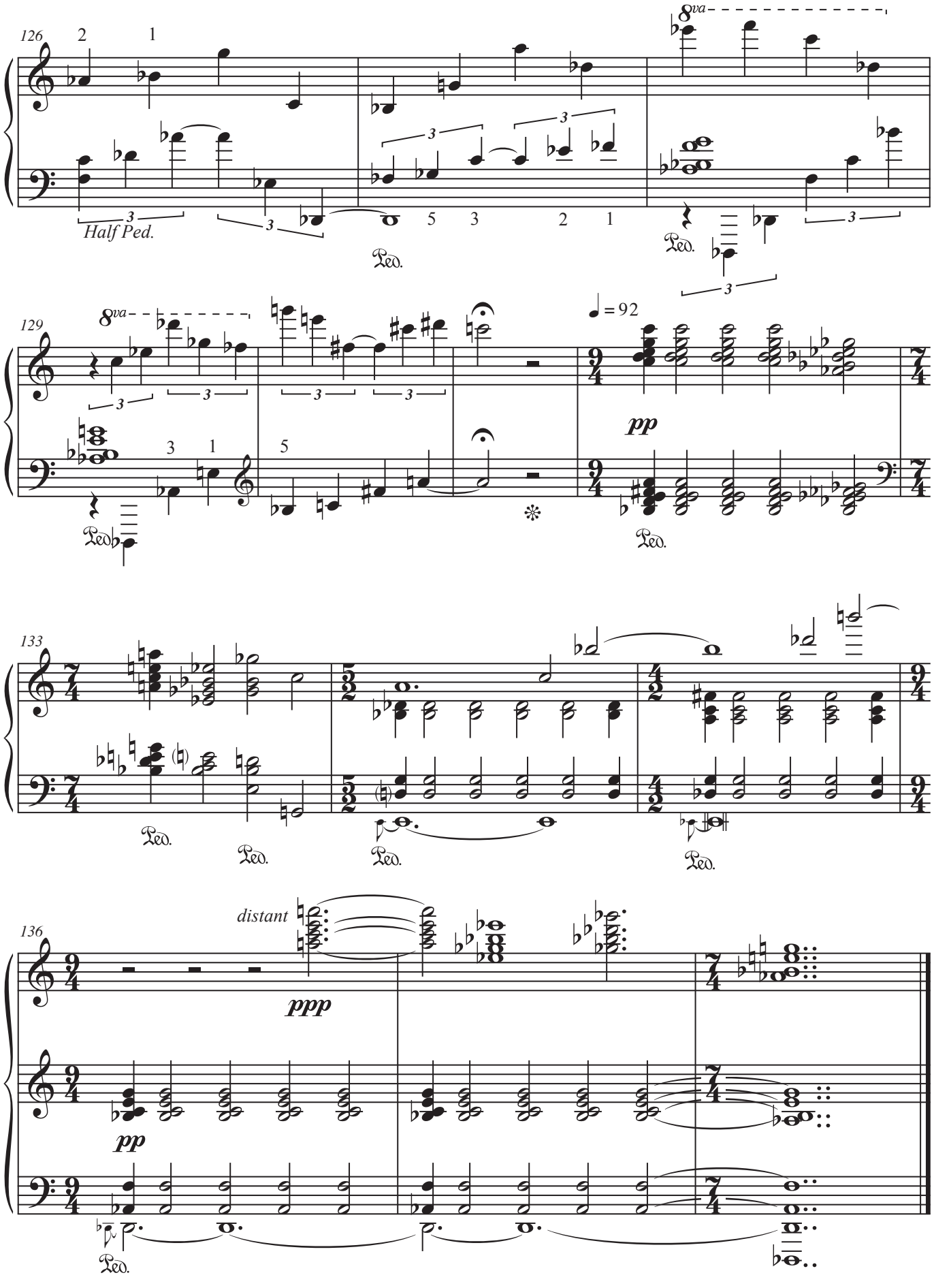

96
8va
pp
loco
8vb
with great calm
p
(bring out the moving line)
poco cresc.
Ped.
101
RH
sub. p
Broadly ♩ = 72
meno ♩ = 52
a picere
104
mf
p
106


108
mp
Ped.
110
♩ = 100
RH
mp
p
5-1
p
Ped.
112
pp
Ped.
114
p
Ped.
Ped.
più meno ♩ = 42
5

III


116
sounding random,
as if spontaneous
p
8va
dreamily
pp
Ped.
119
♪ = ♪; ♩. = 66
8va
121
mf
Ped.
123
p
Ped.
Ped.
mf
Ped.

III



III

IV. Toccata

rev. 4

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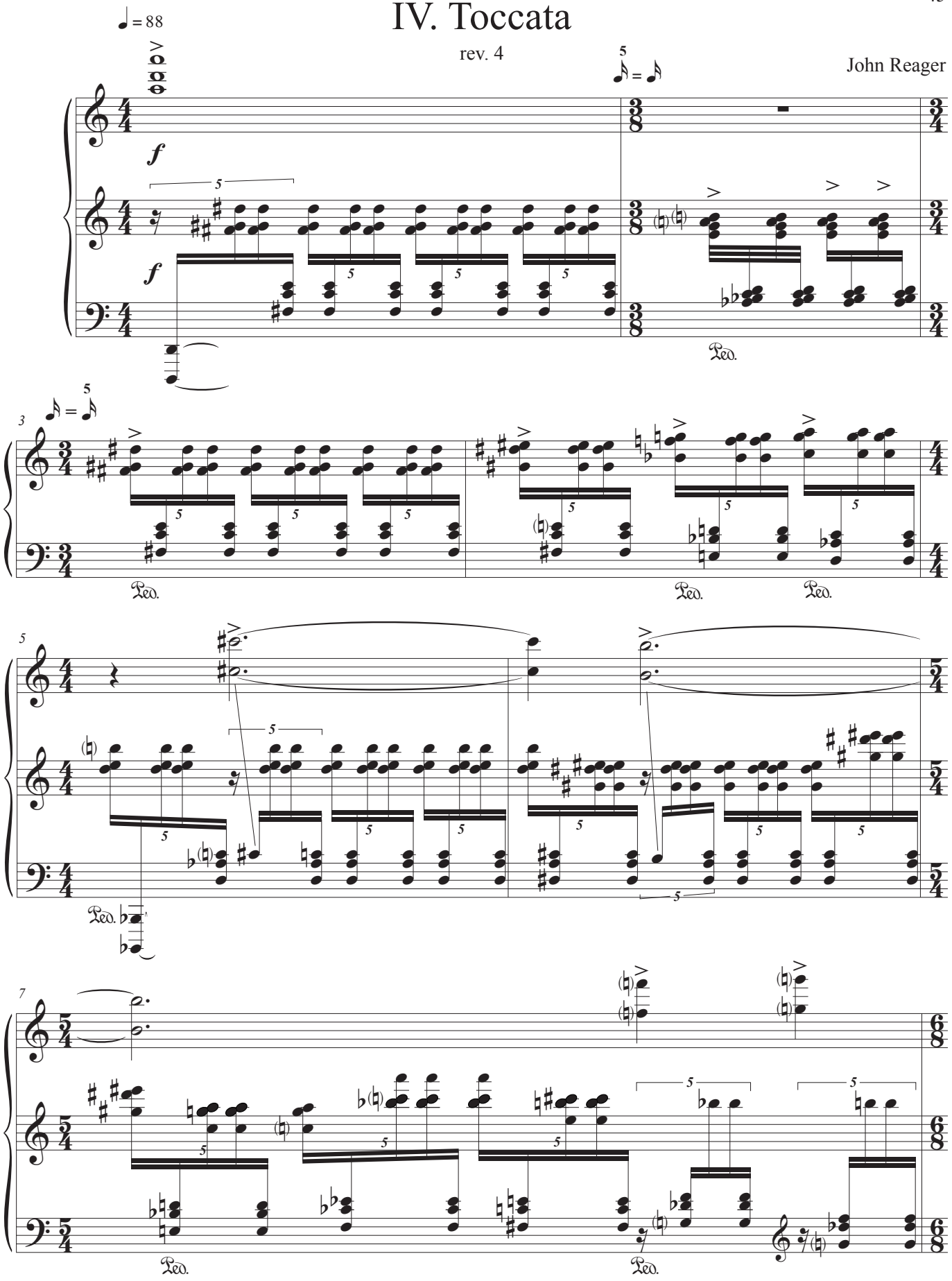

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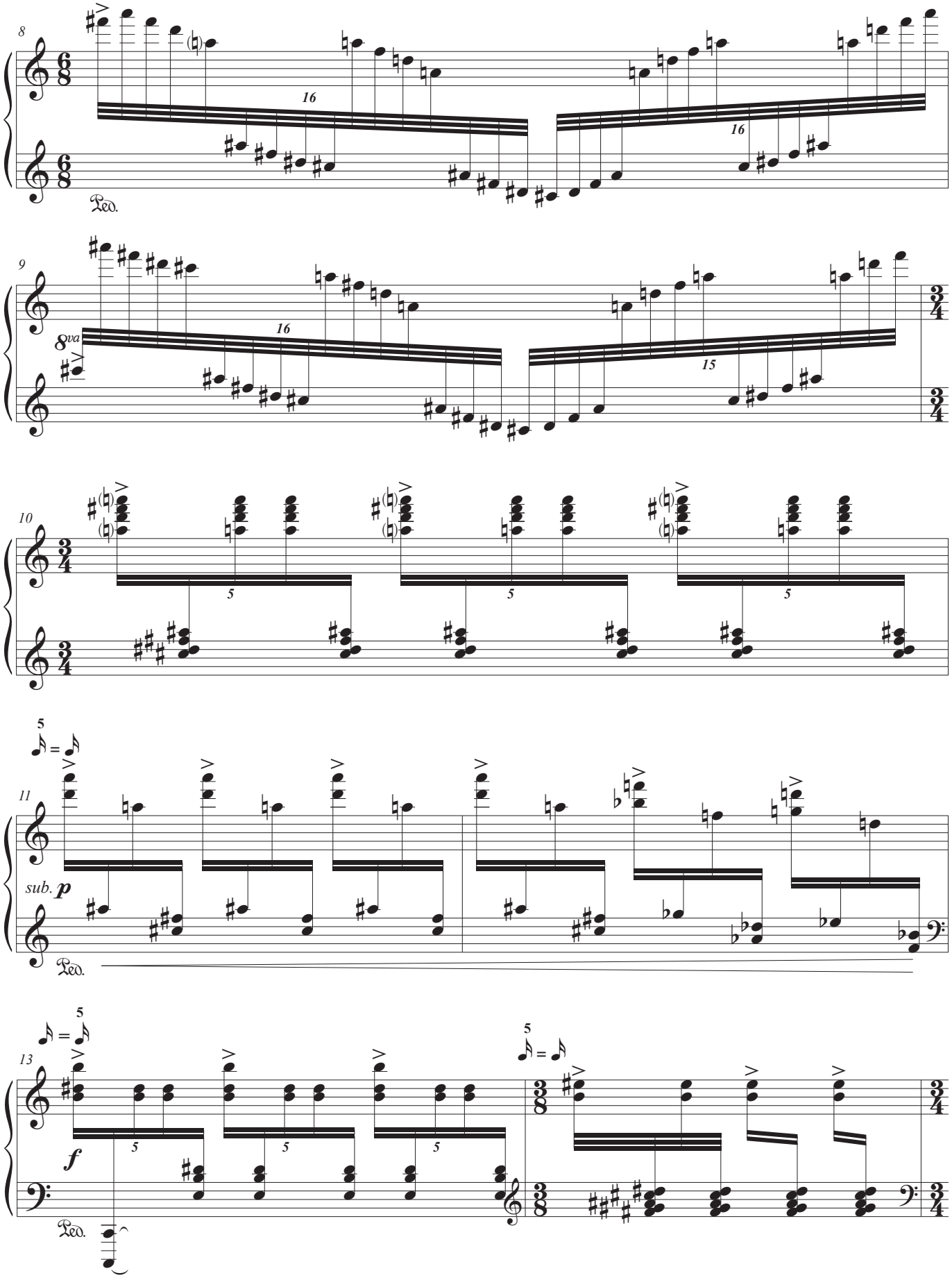
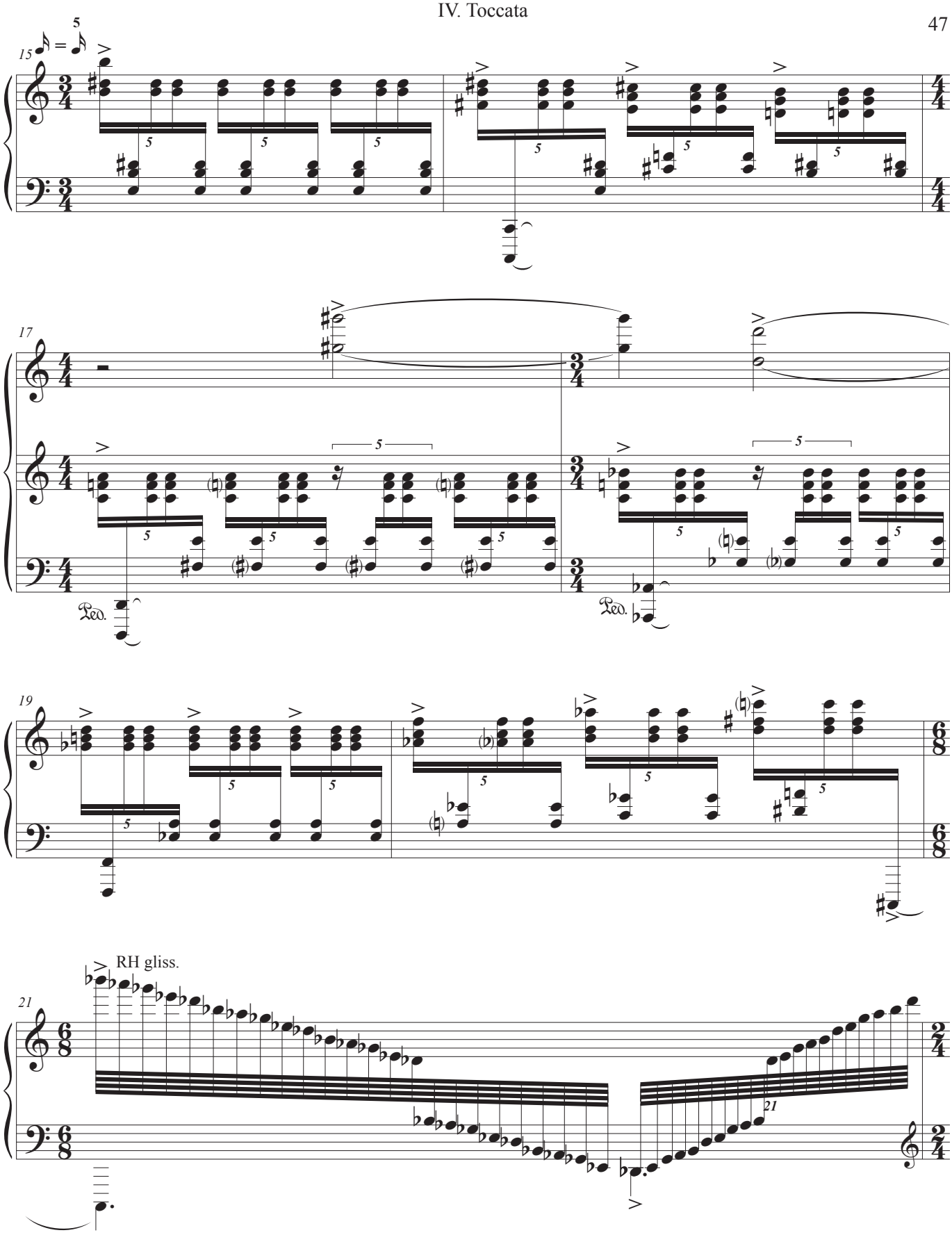
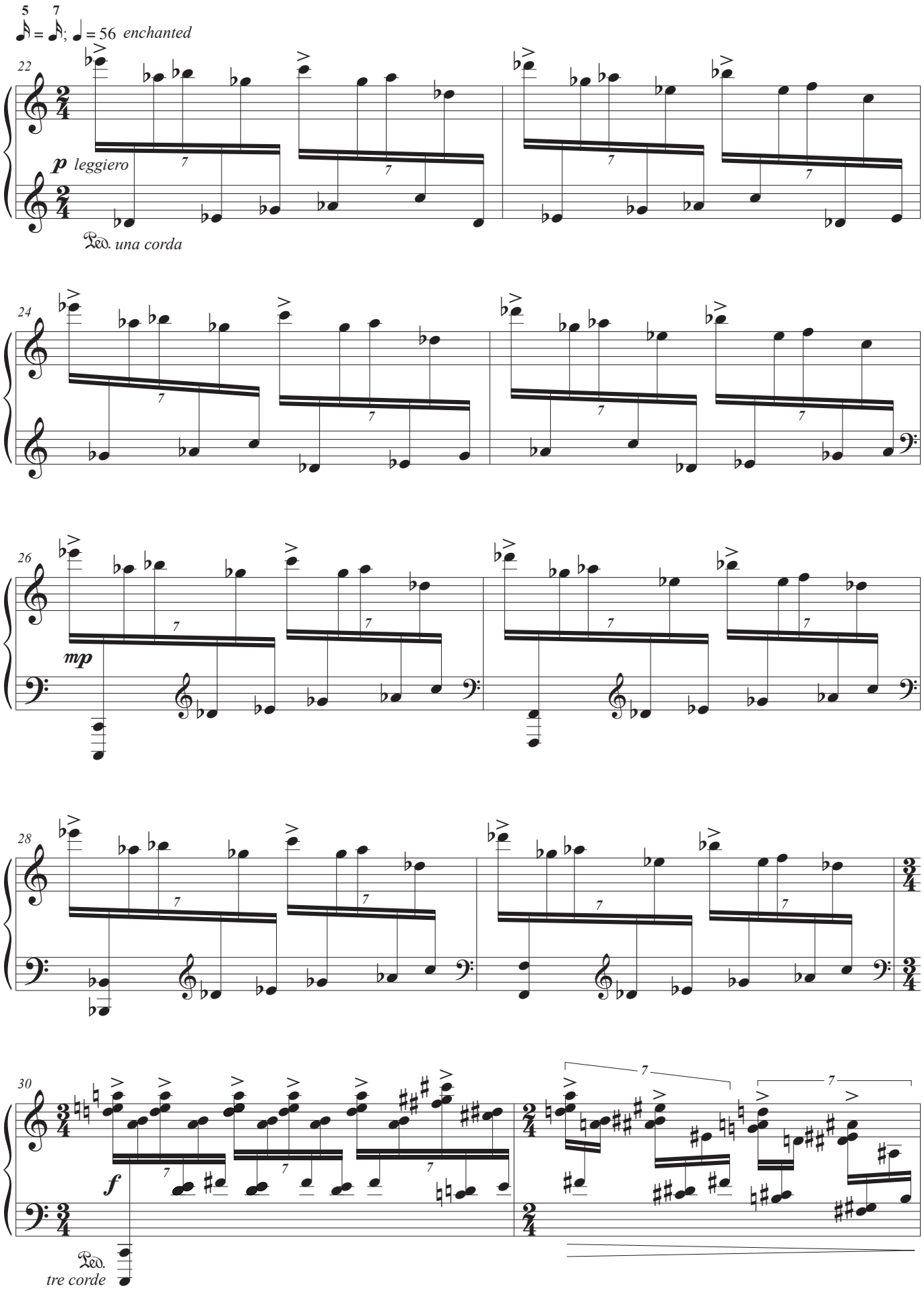
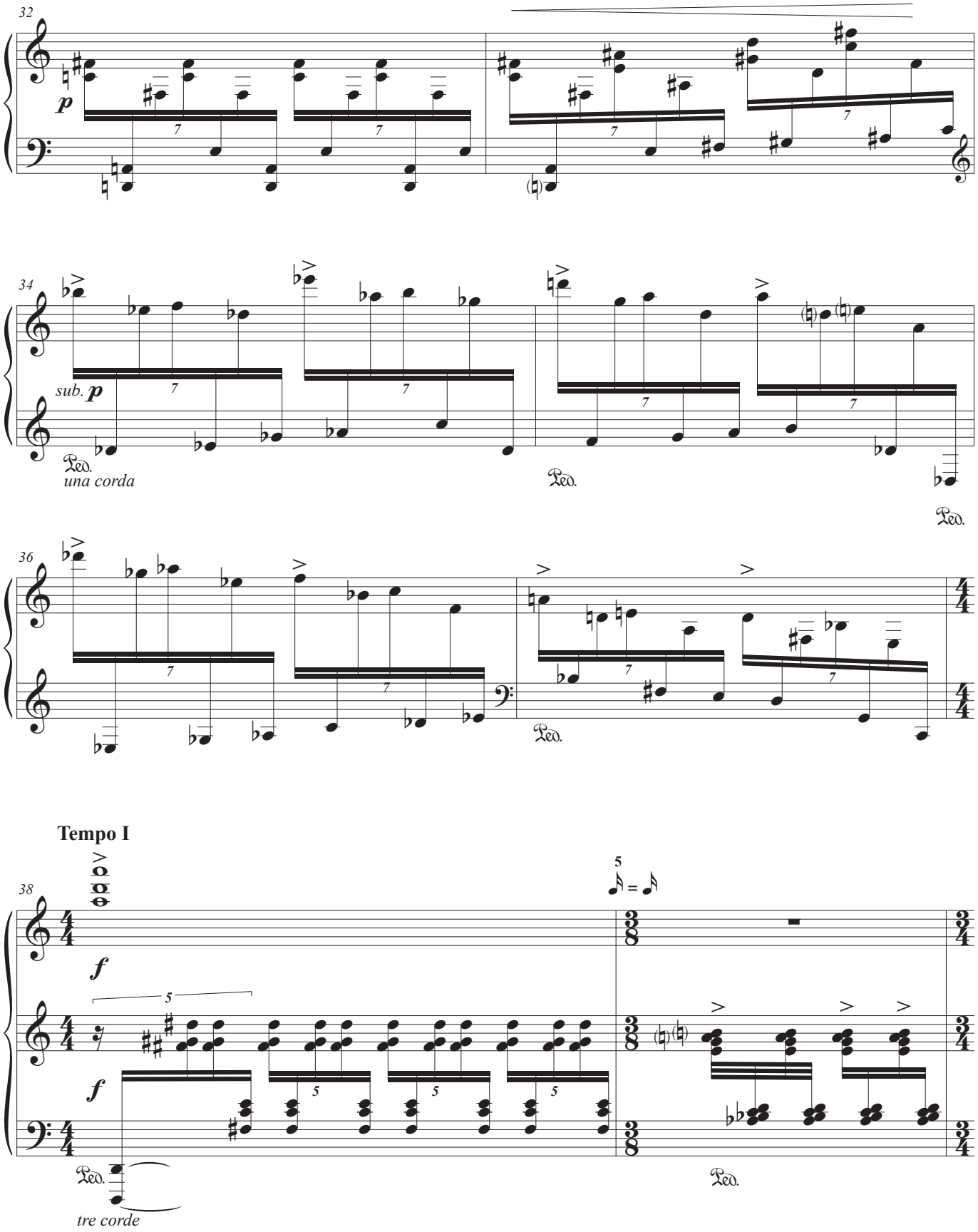
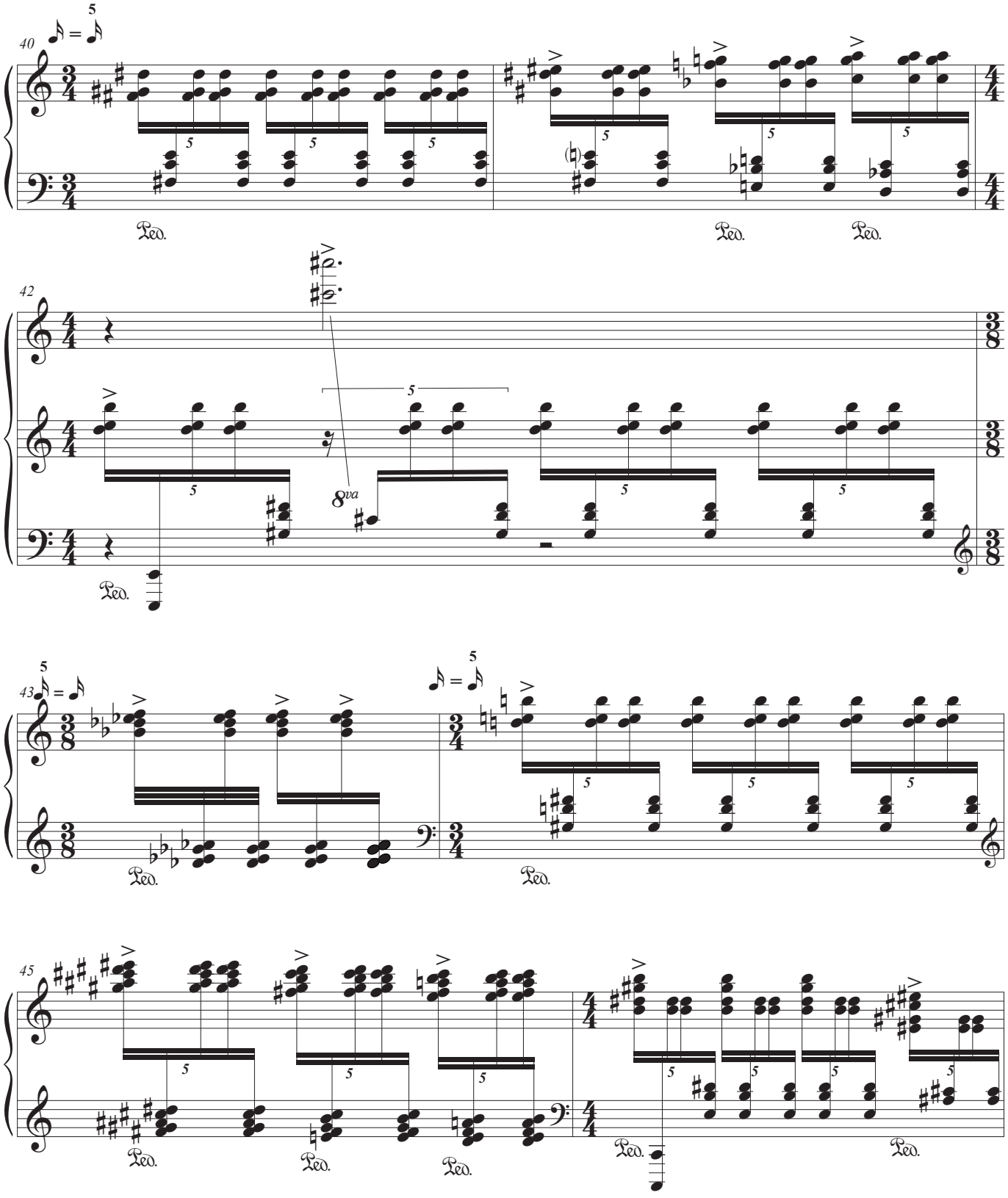
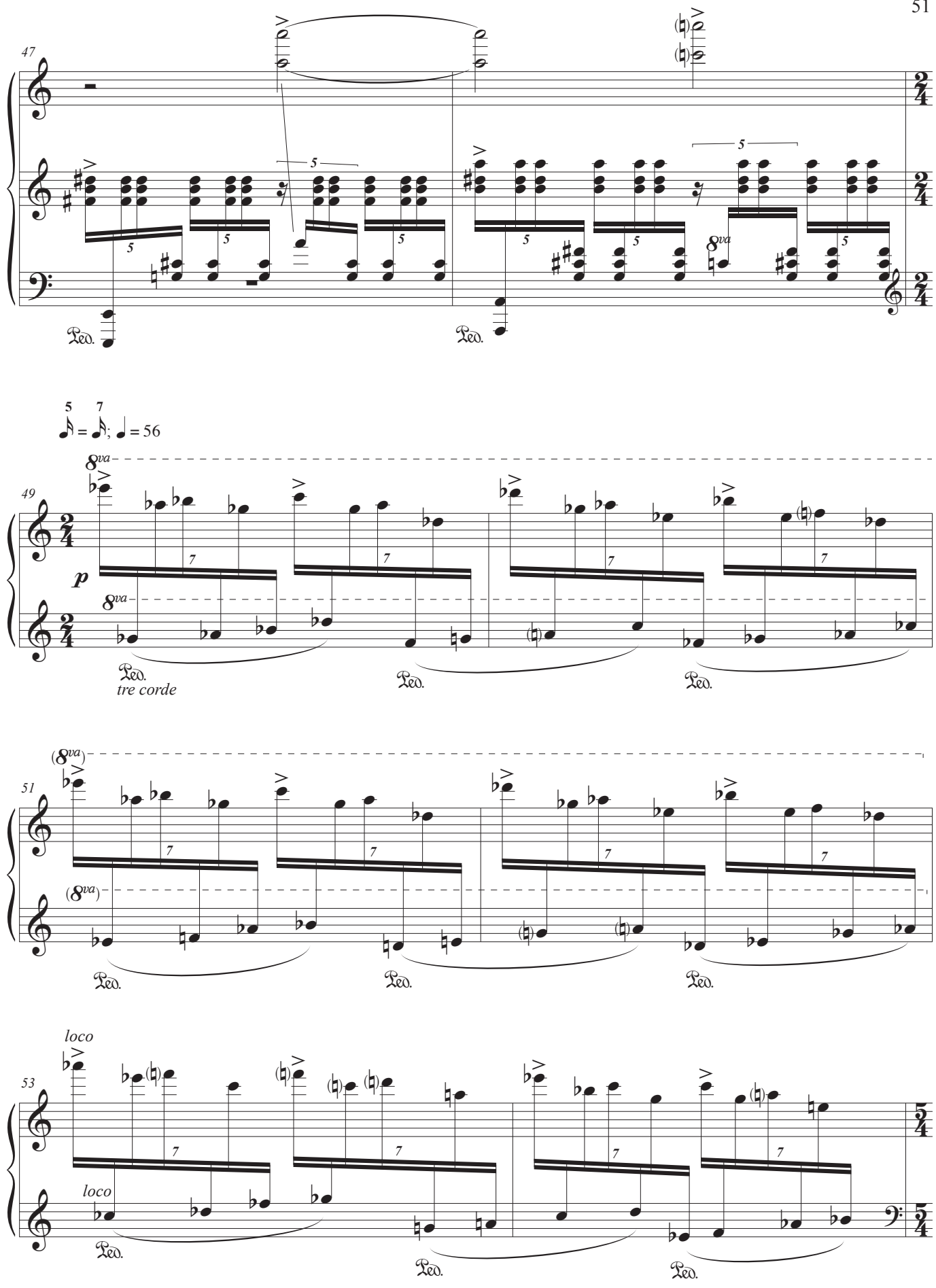

8
16
16
Ped.
9
8va
16
15
10
5
5
5
11
sub. p
Ped.
13
5
5
5
5
f
Ped.

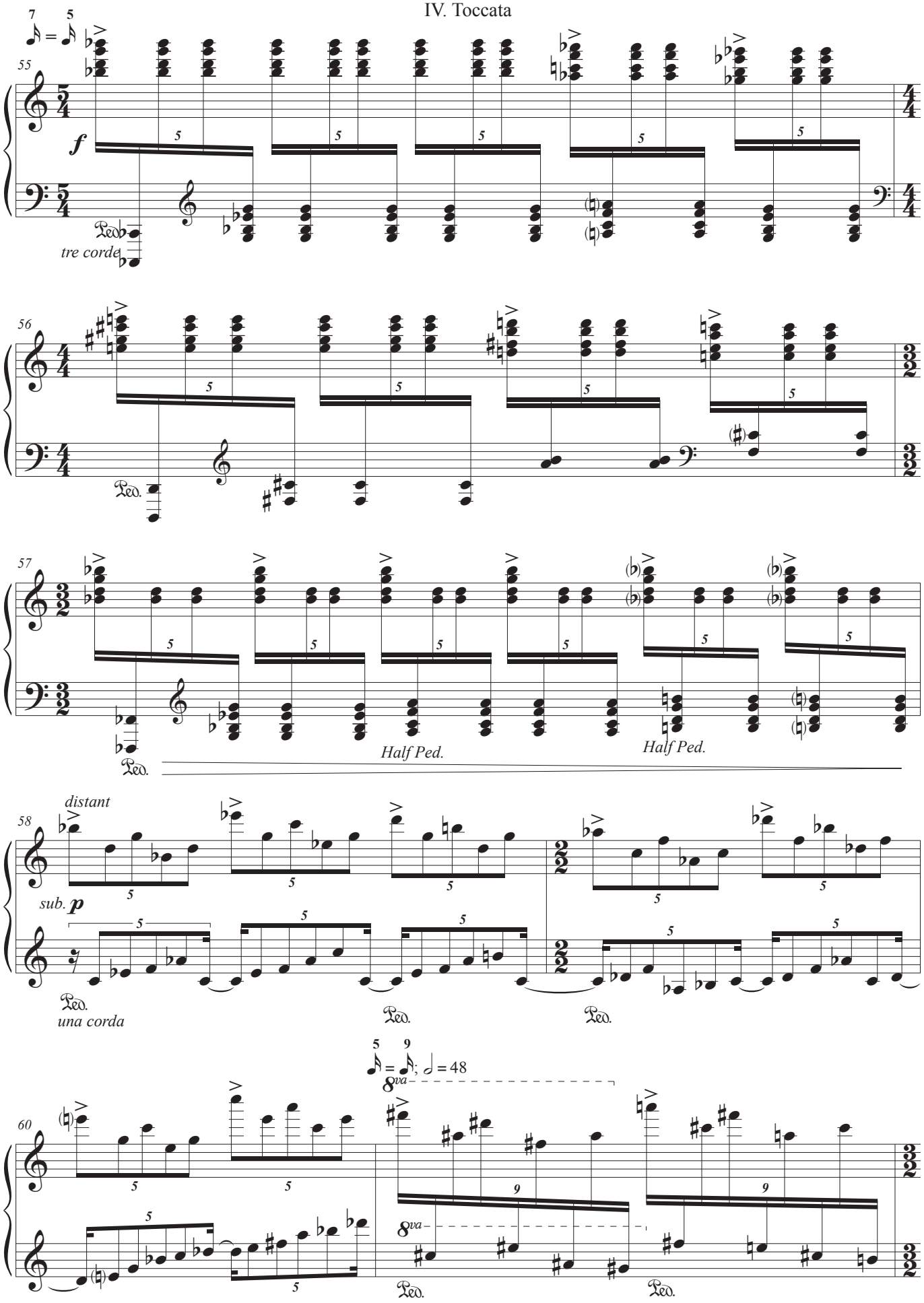

15
17
19
21
RH gliss.
Ped.
Ped.

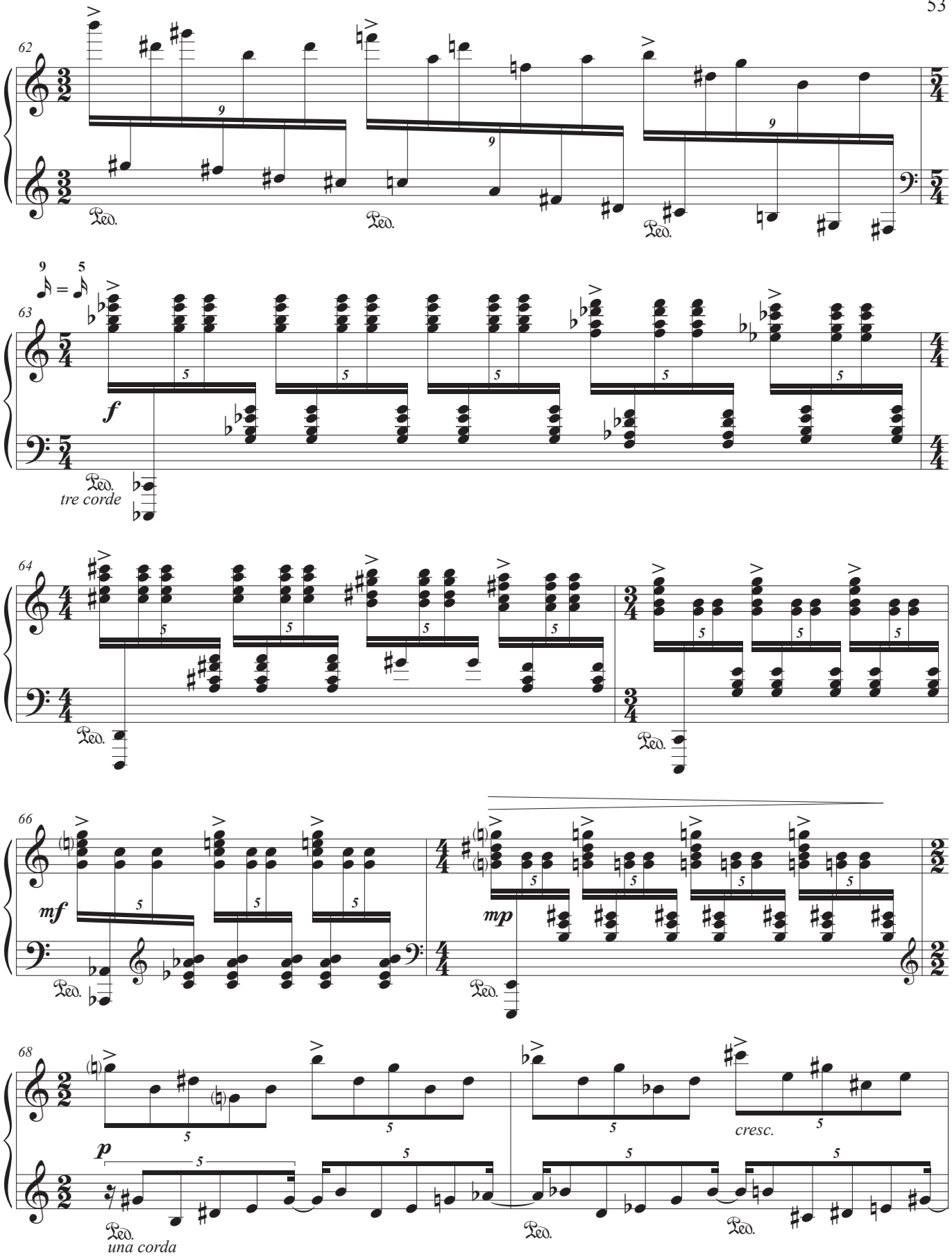

5 7
= = 56 enchanted
22
p leggiero
Ped. una corda
24
26
mp
28
30
f
Ped.
tre corde

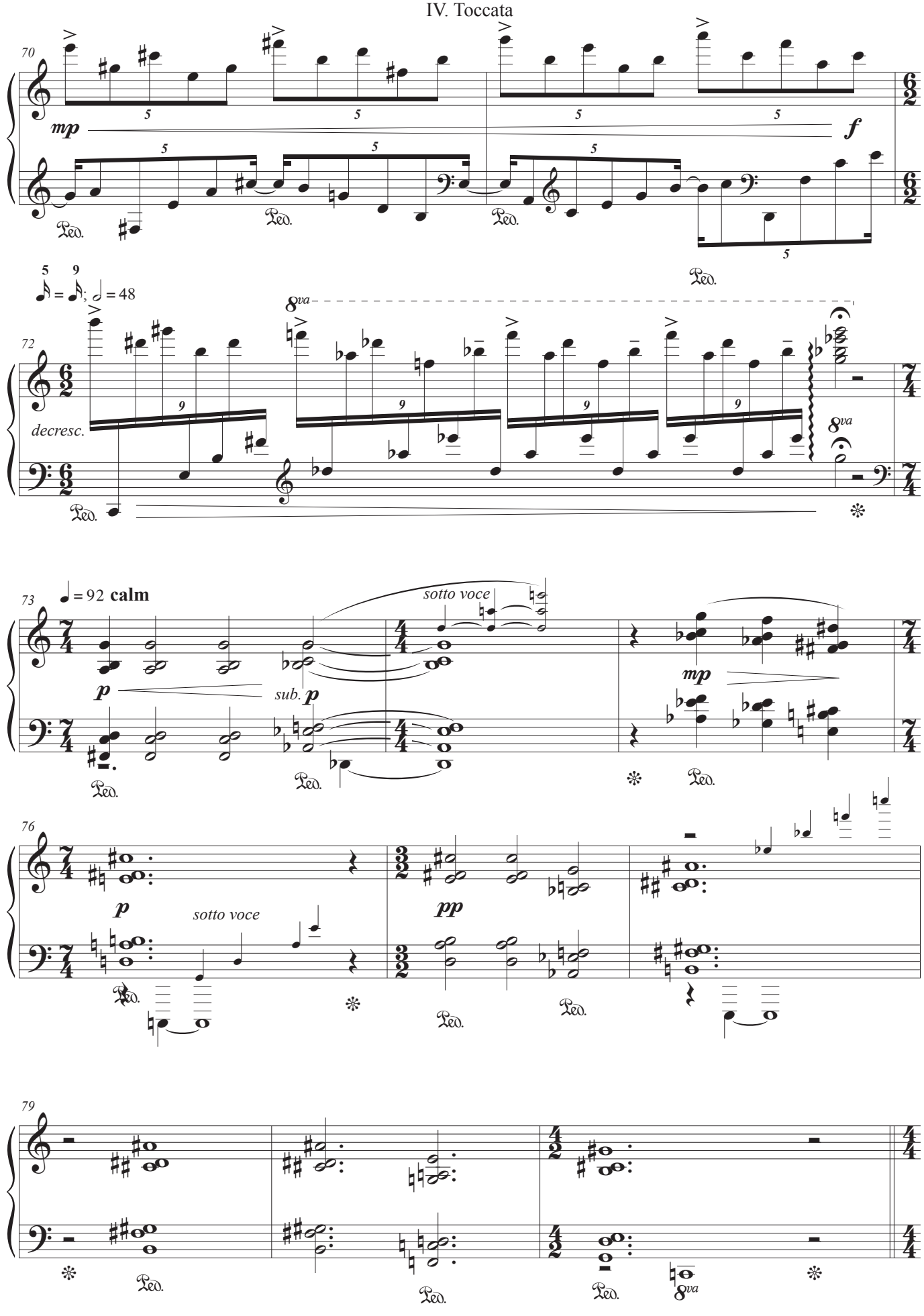

32
p
34
sub. p
una corda
Ped.
36
Tempo I
38
f
tre corde

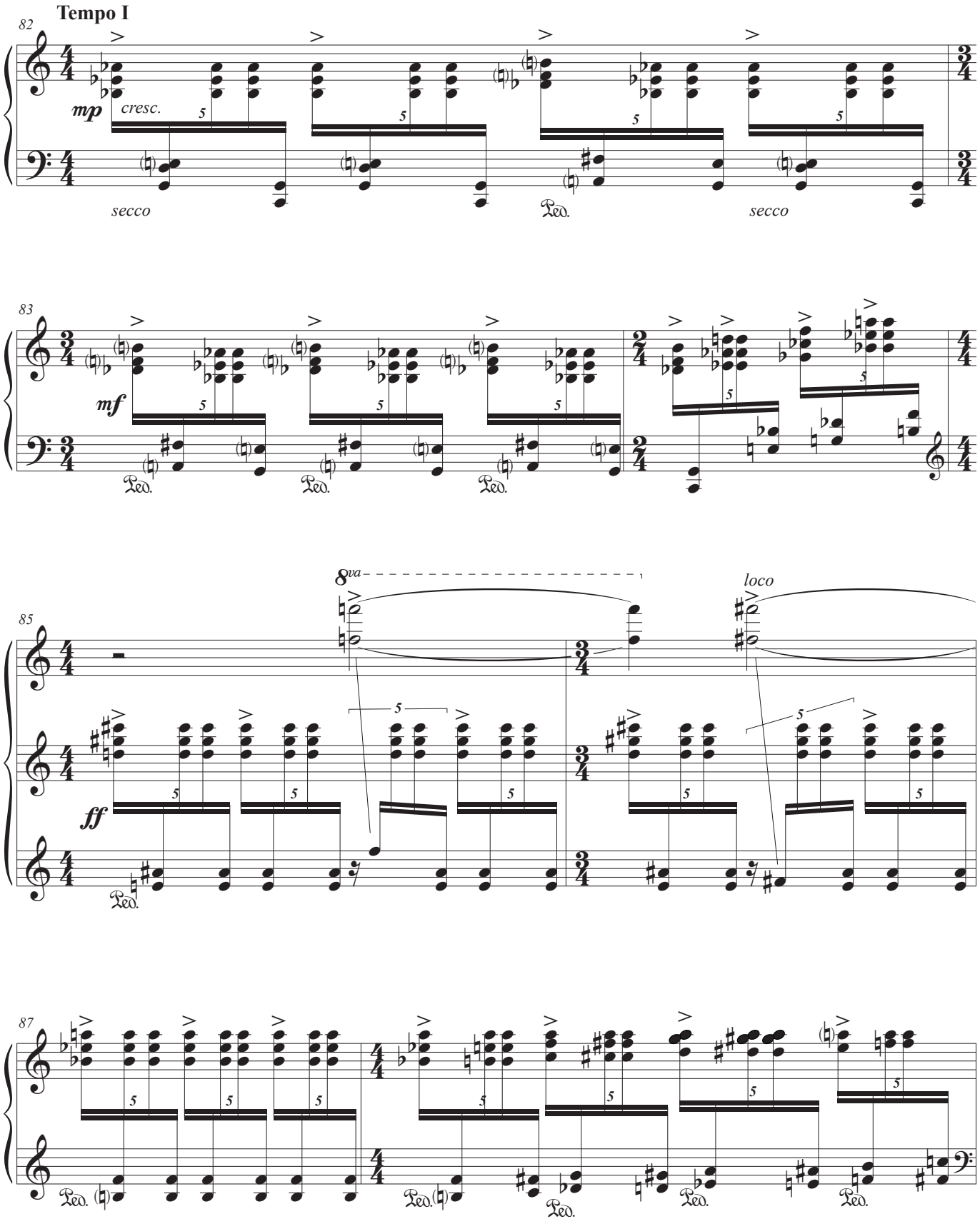

40
42
8va
43
45
Ped.

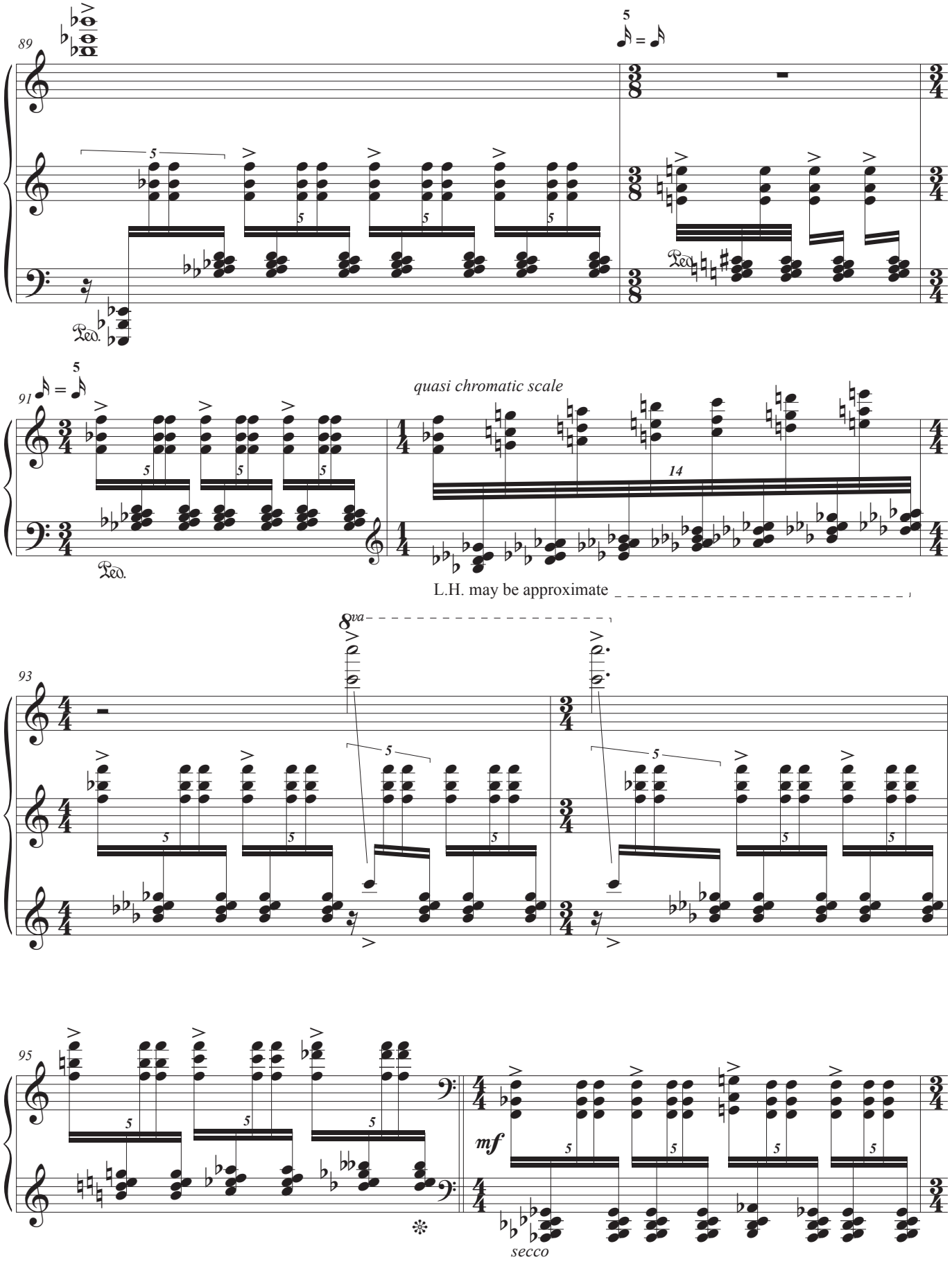

47
Ped.
Ped.
5 7
= ; = 56
49
8va
p
8va
Ped.
tre corde
Ped.
Ped.
(8va)
51
(8va)
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
loco
53
loco
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

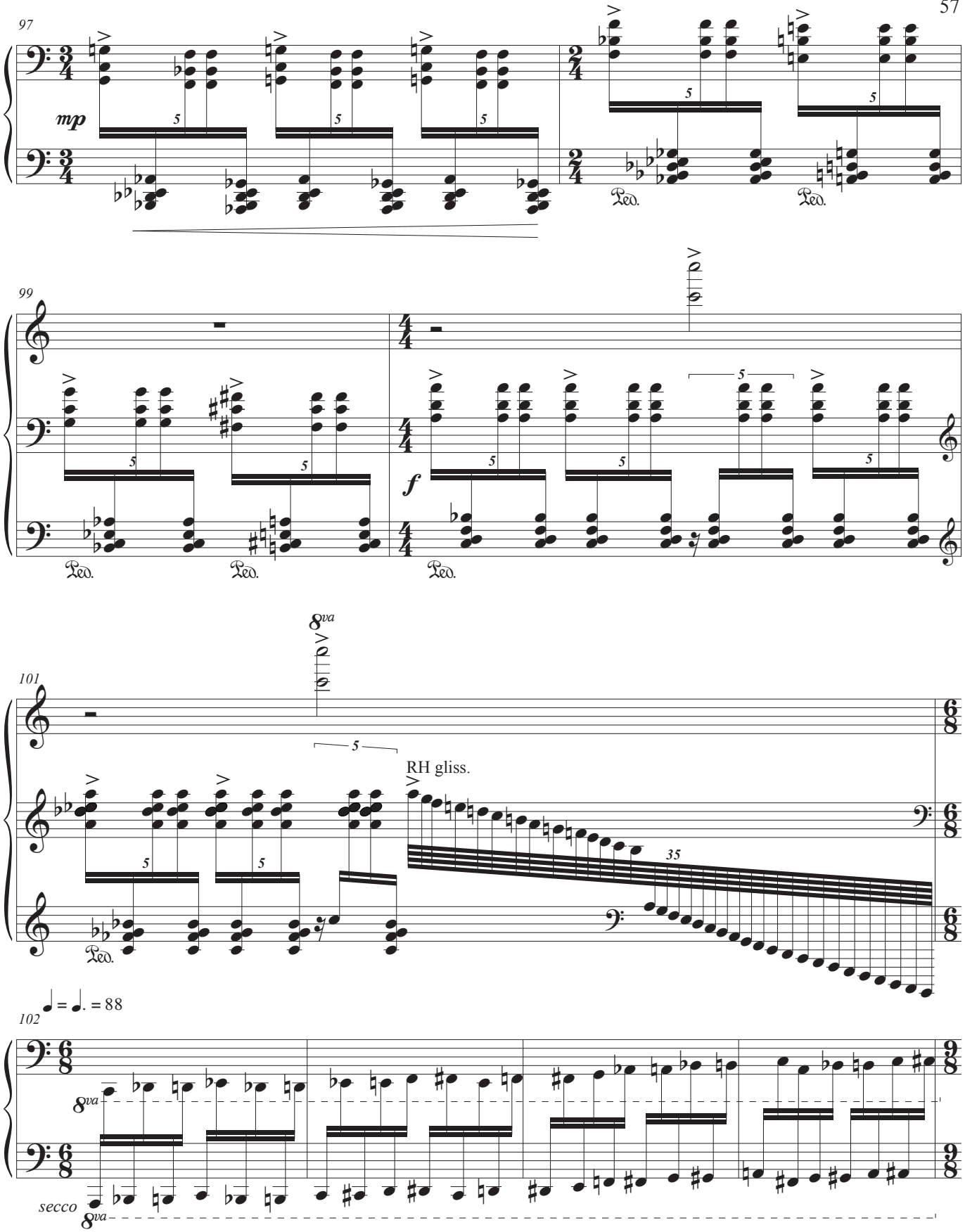

7 = 5
55
f
tre corde
56
Ped.
57
Half Ped.
Half Ped.
distant
58
sub. p
Ped.
una corda
Ped.
Ped.
5 = 9; = 48
8va
60
8va
Ped.
Ped.

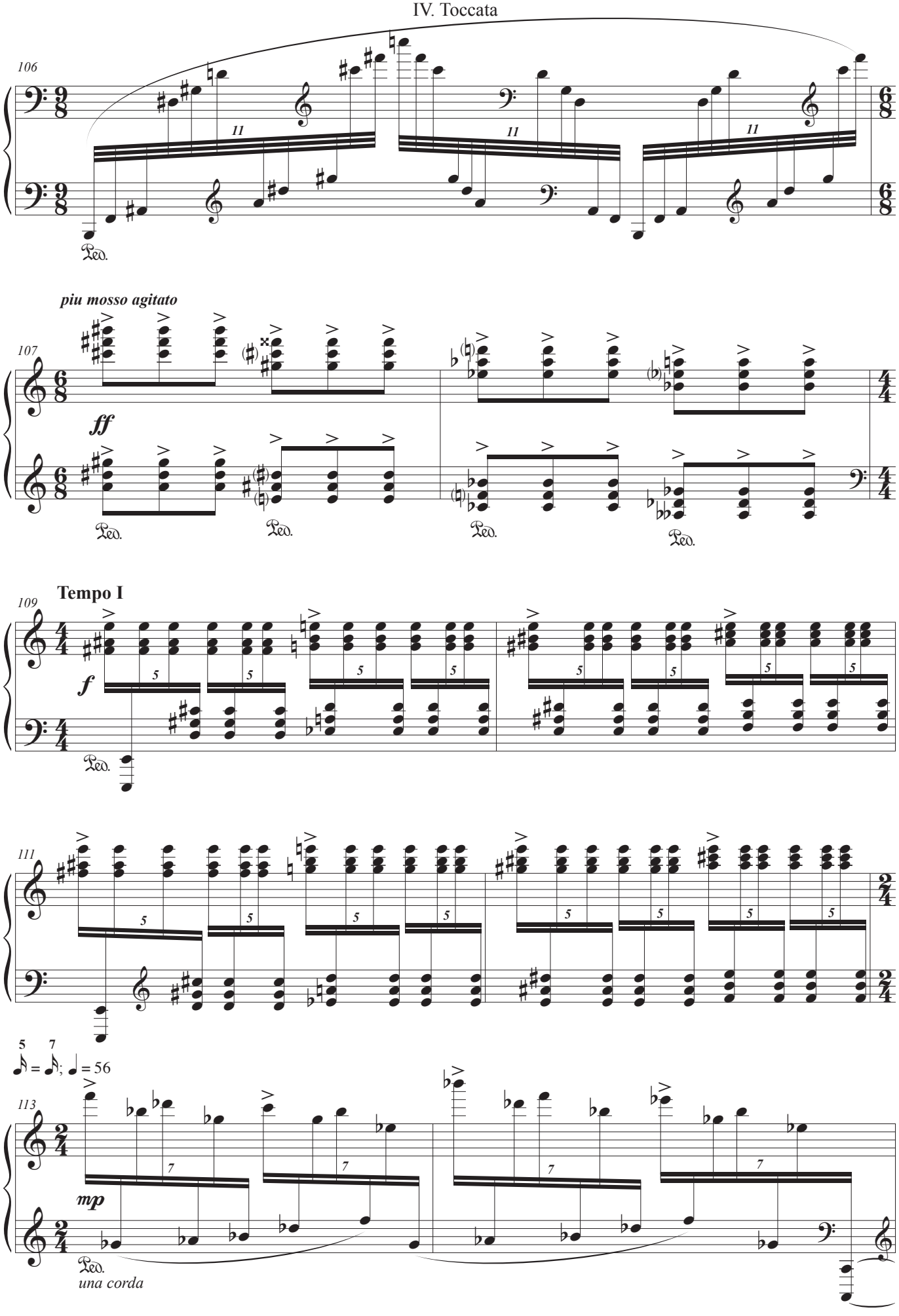

62
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
9 = 5
63
f
Ped.
tre corde
64
Ped.
Ped.
66
mf
Ped.
mp
Ped.
68
p
Ped.
una corda
Ped.
cresc.
Ped.

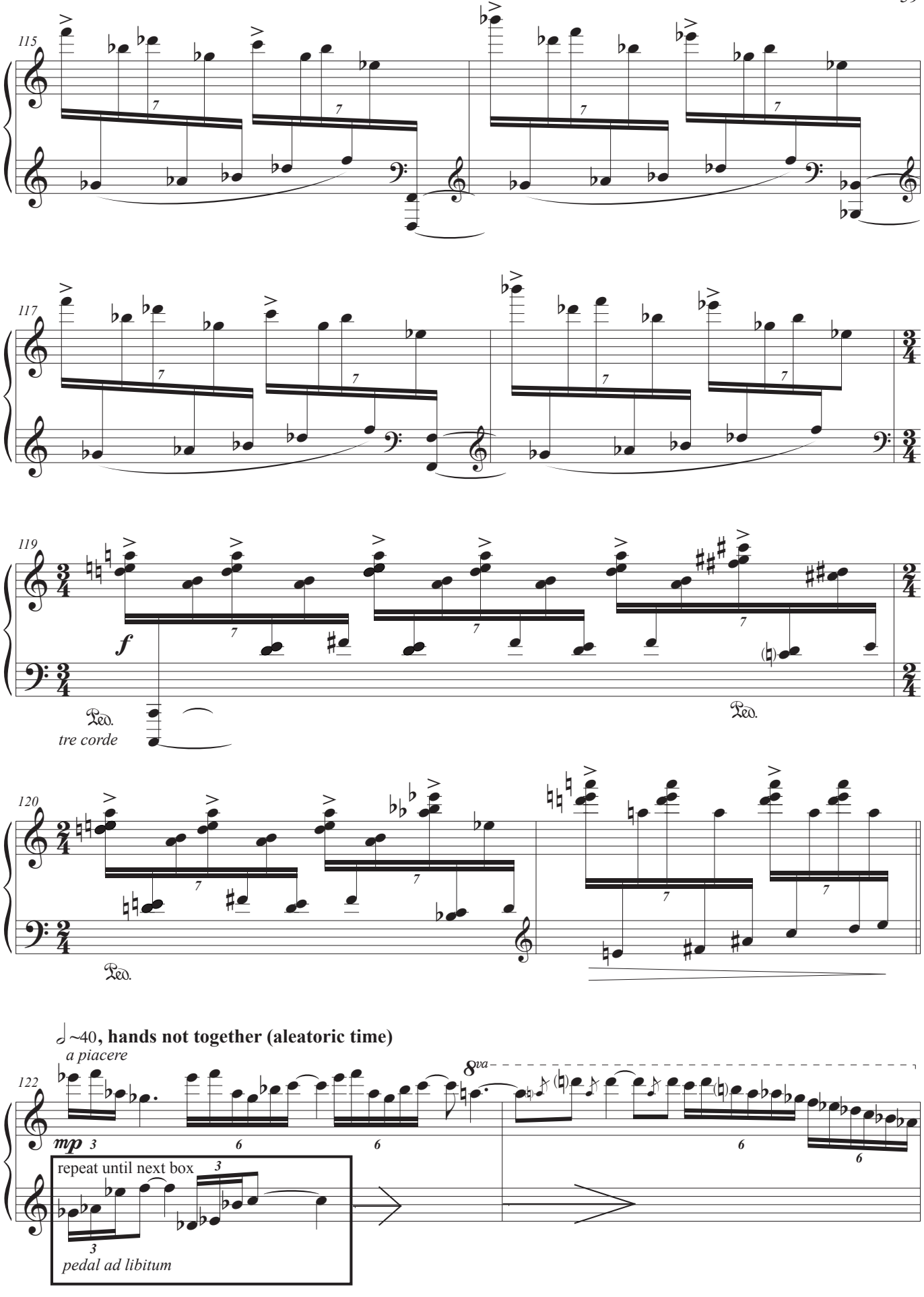

70
mp
f
Ped.
5 = 9; = 48
72
decresc.
8va
73
= 92 calm
p
sub. p
sotto voce
mp
76
p
sotto voce
pp
79

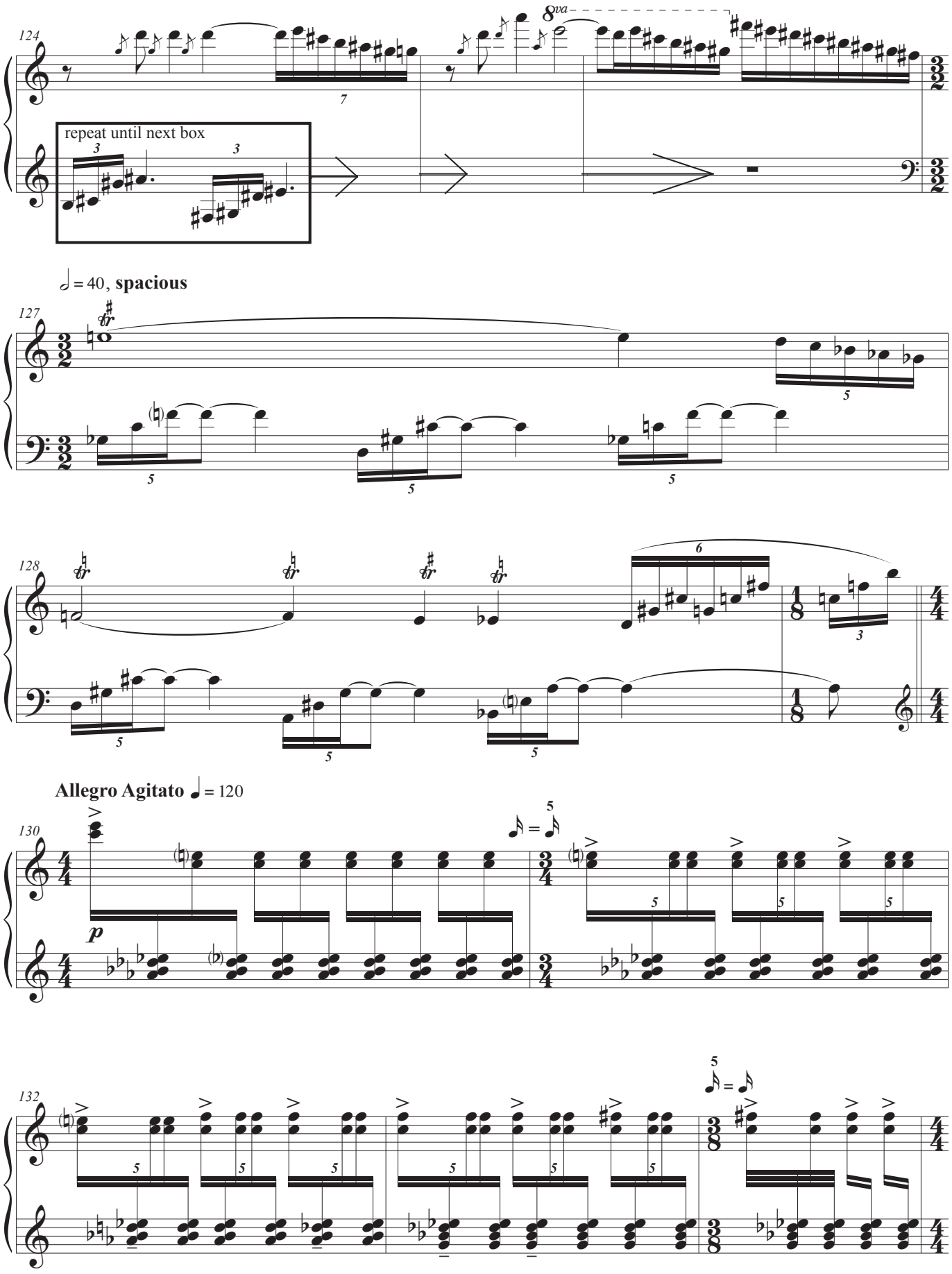

Tempo I
82
mp
cresc.
secco
Ped.
secco
83
mf
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
85
8va
loco
ff
Ped.
87
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

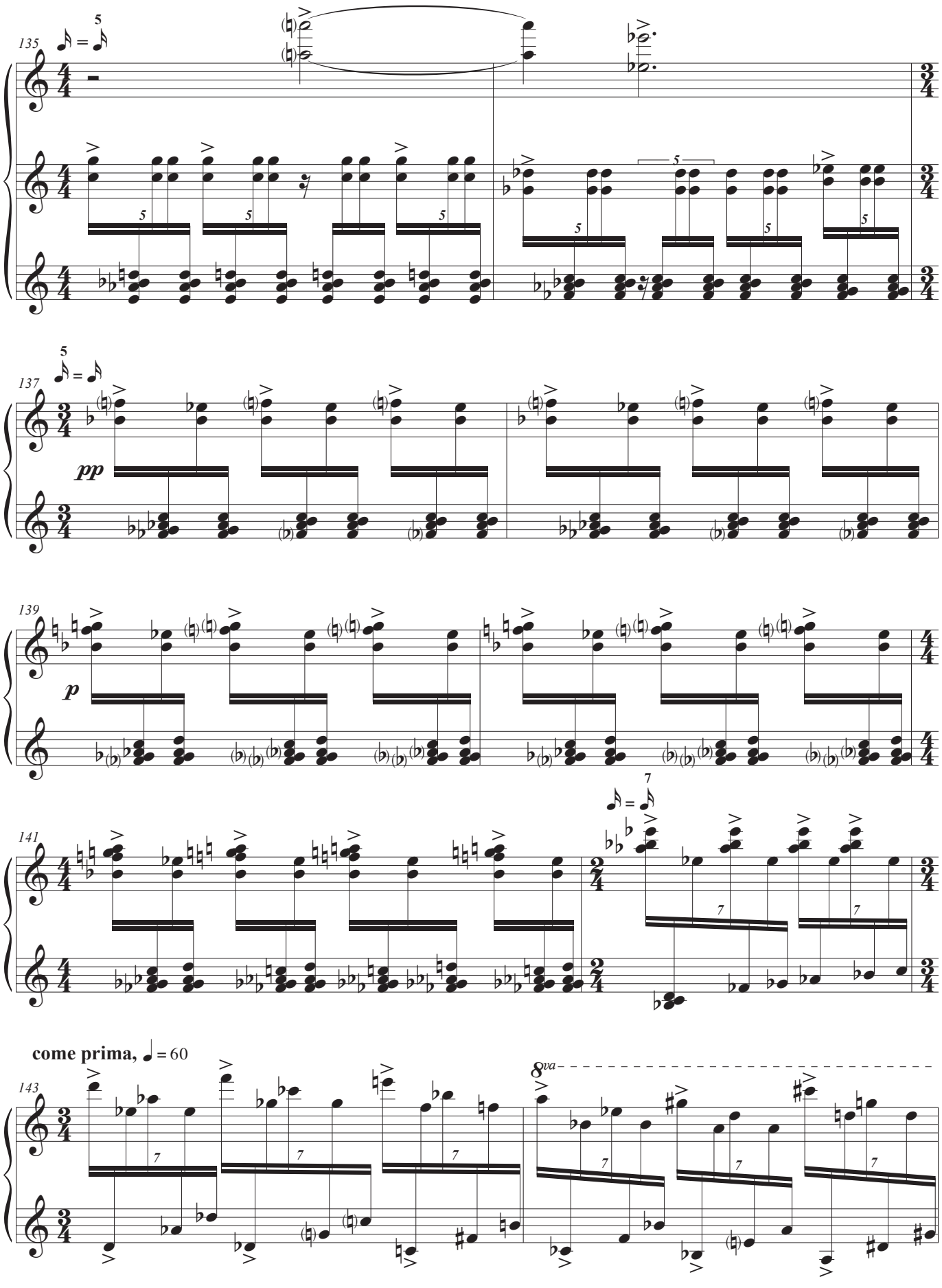

89
5
=
Ped.
91
5
=
quasi chromatic scale
14
Ped.
L.H. may be approximate
8va
93
95
mf
secco

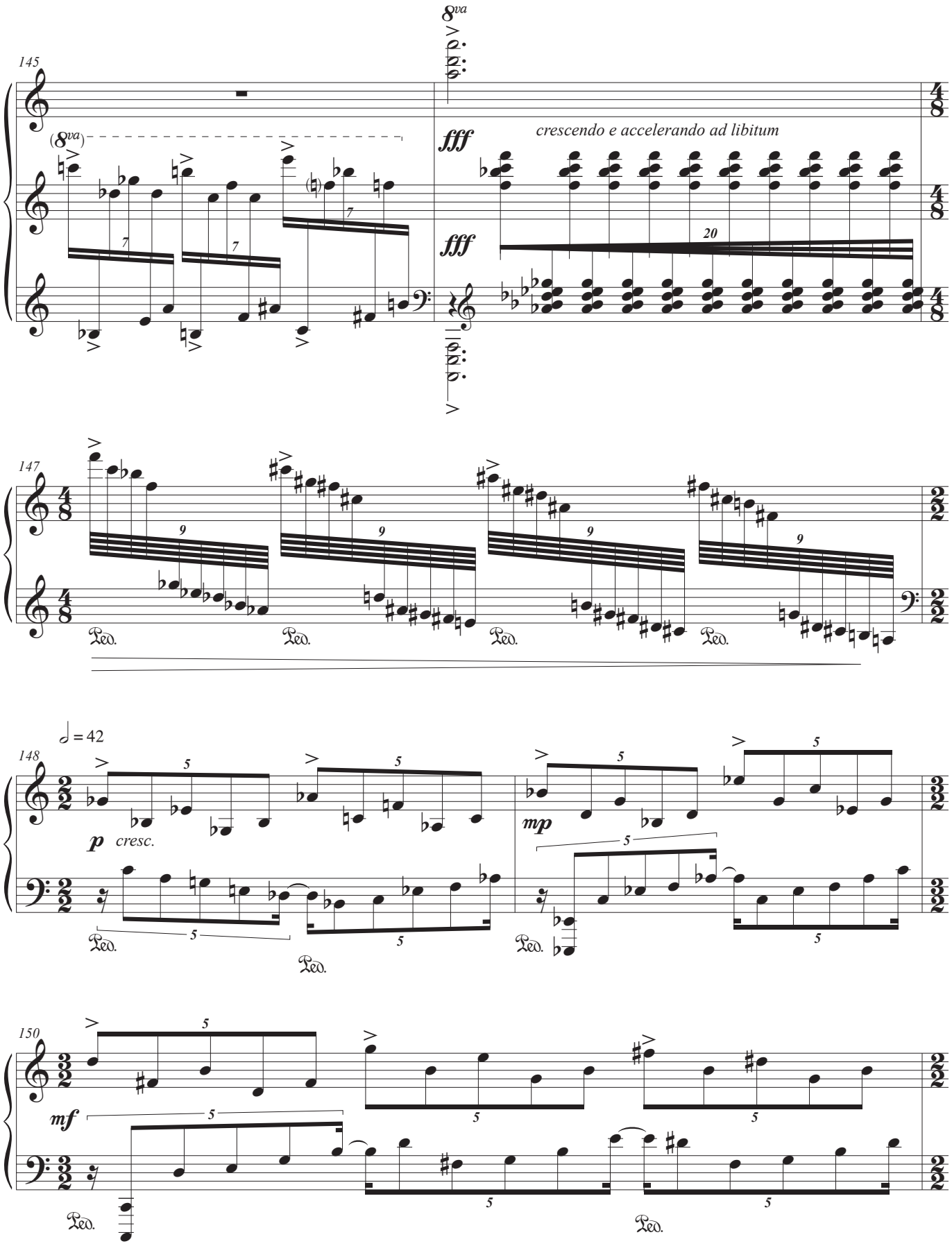

97
mp
Ped.
99
f
101
8va
RH gliss.
35
102
♩ = ♩. = 88
secco

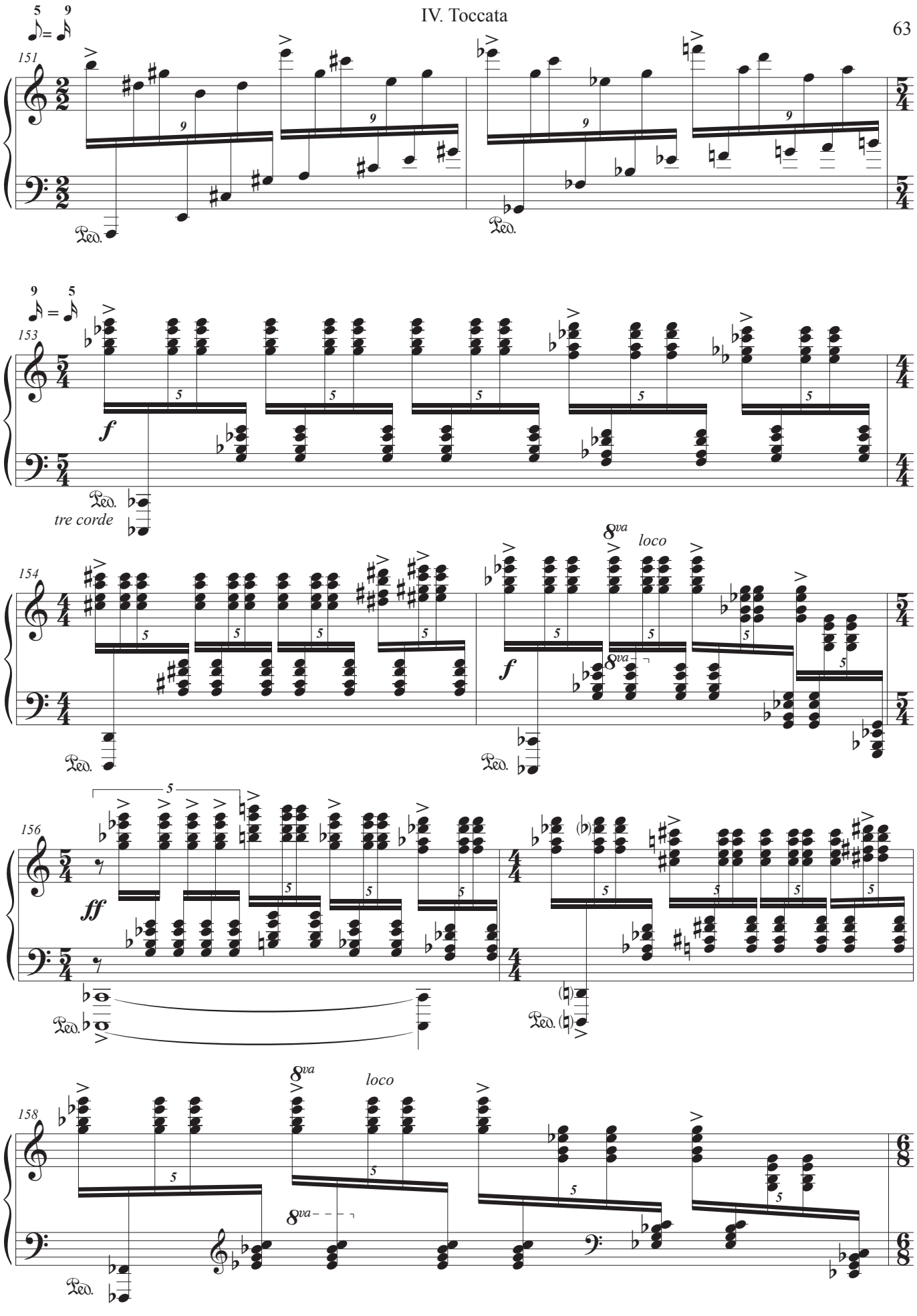

106
11
11
11
Ped.
piu mosso agitato
107
ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Tempo I
109
f
5
Ped.
111
5
113
5 7
= ; = 56
mp
7
Ped.
una corda

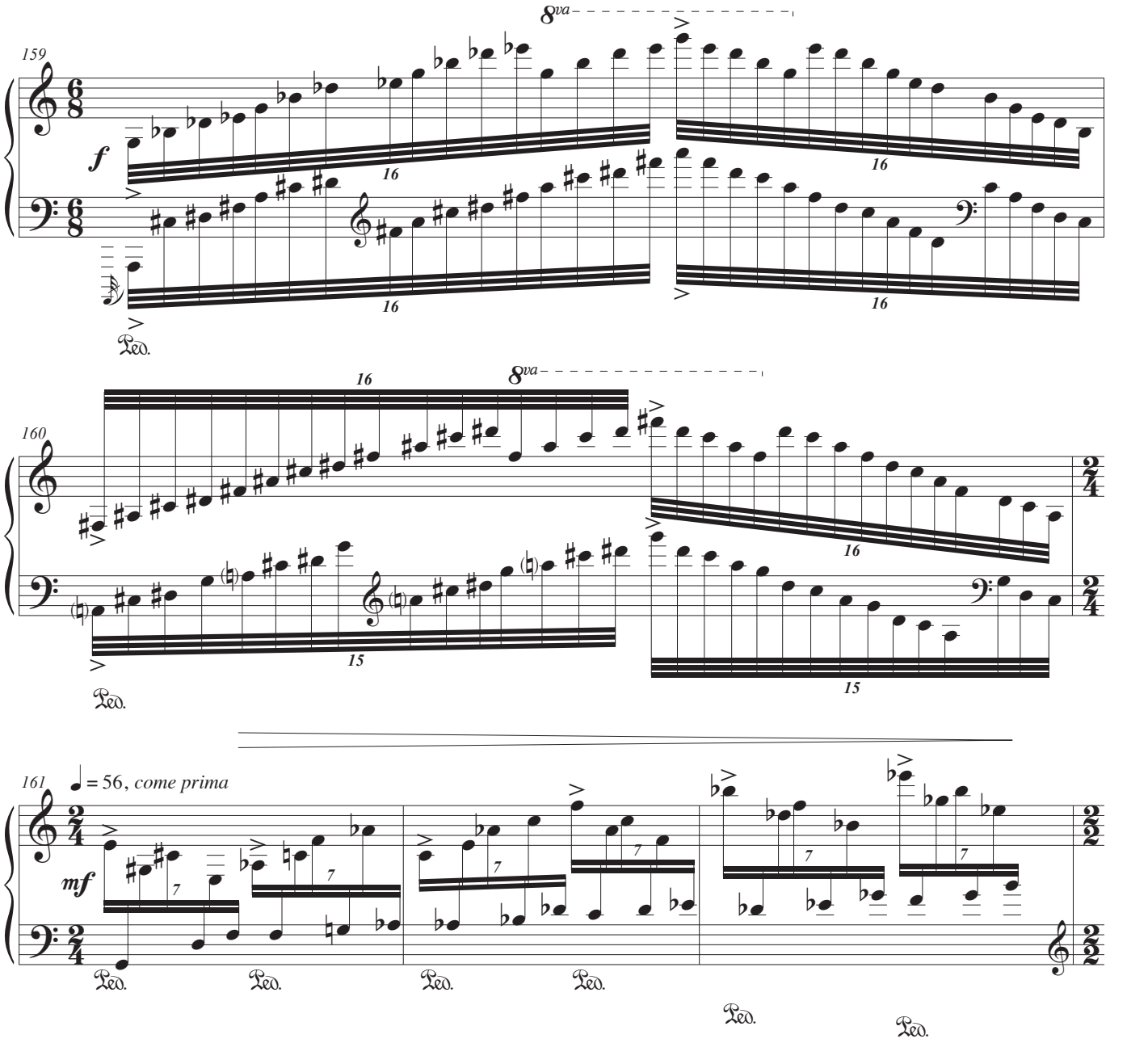

115
117
119
f
Ped.
tre corde
Ped.
120
Ped.
~40, hands not together (aleatoric time)
a piacere
122
8va
mp
repeat until next box
pedal ad libitum

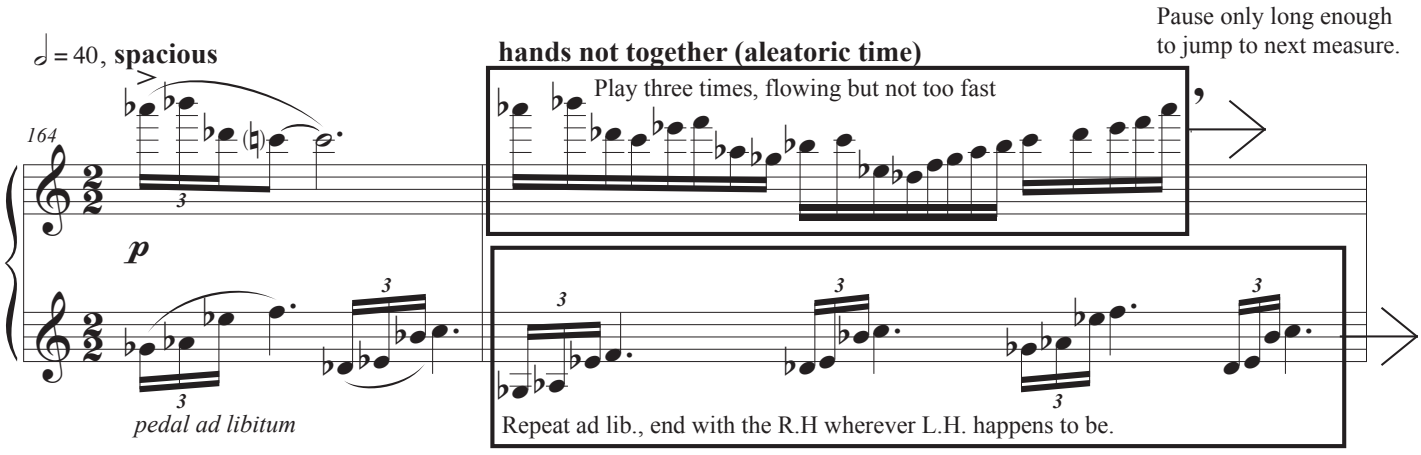

124
8va
repeat until next box
127
𝅗𝅥 = 40, spacious
128
Allegro Agitato ♩ = 120
130
p
132

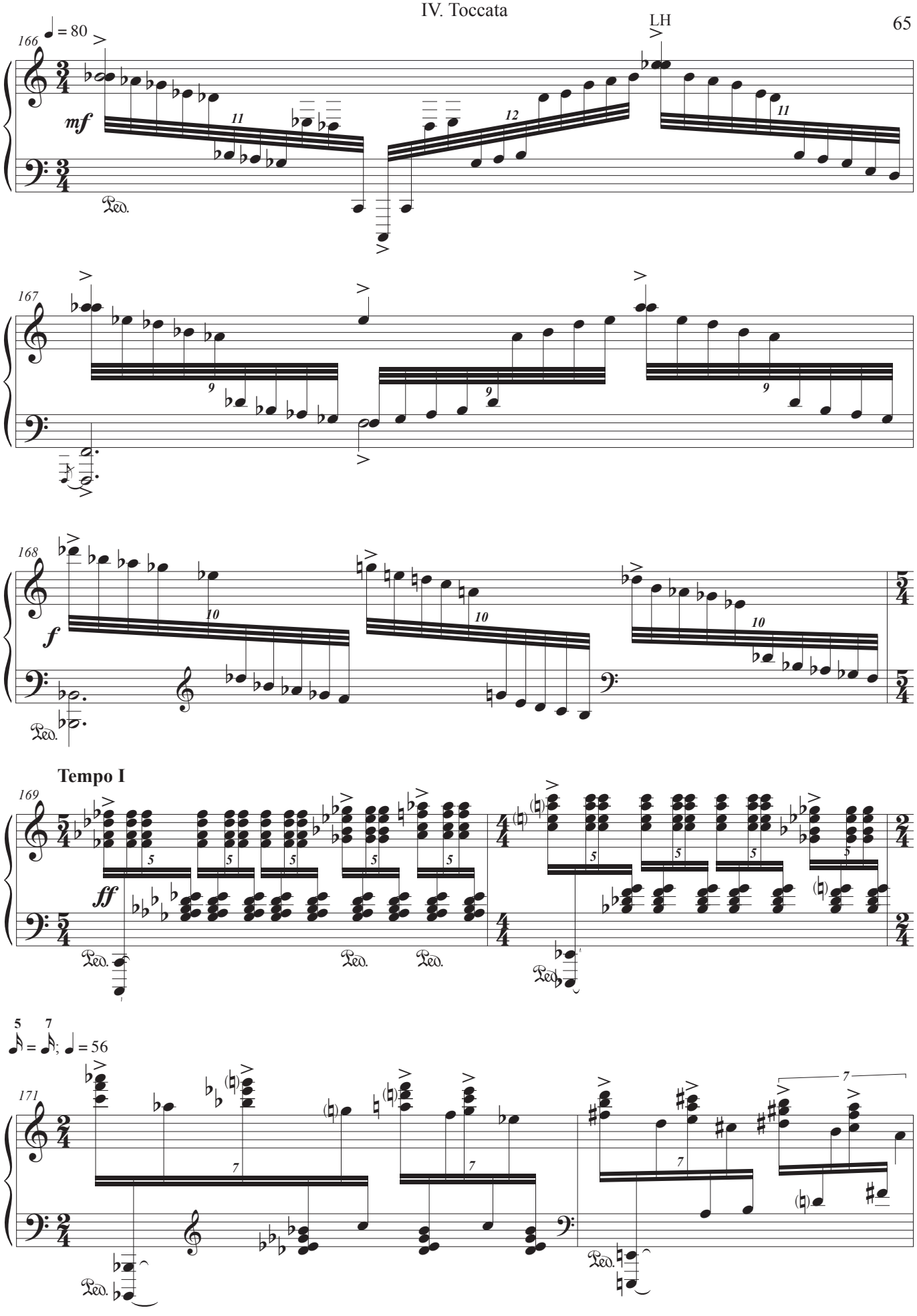

135
137
pp
139
p
141
come prima, ♩ = 60
143
8va

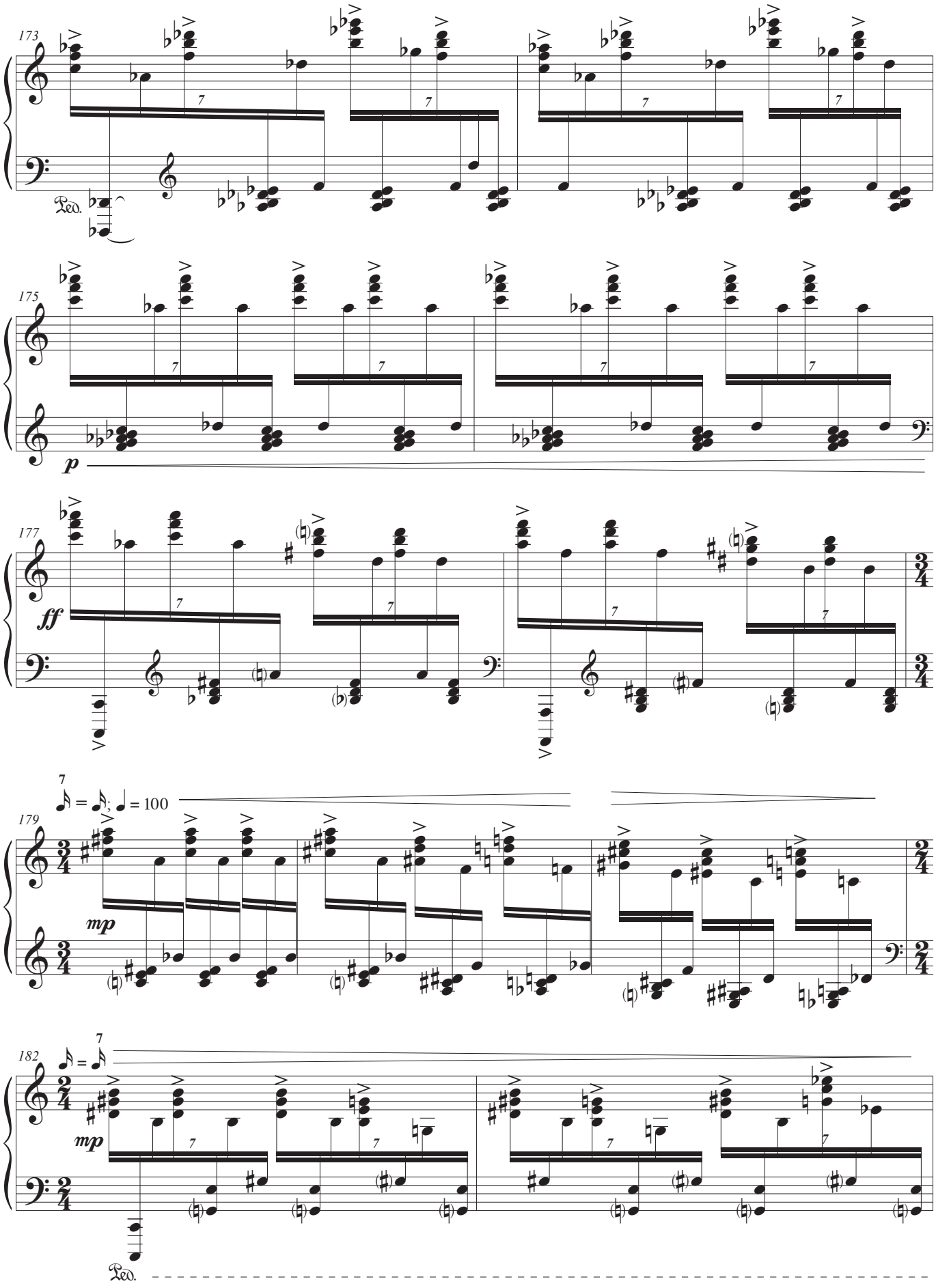

145
8va
(8va)
fff
crescendo e accelerando ad libitum
fff
20
147
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
148
♩ = 42
p
cresc.
Ped.
Ped.
mp
Ped.
150
mf
Ped.
Ped.

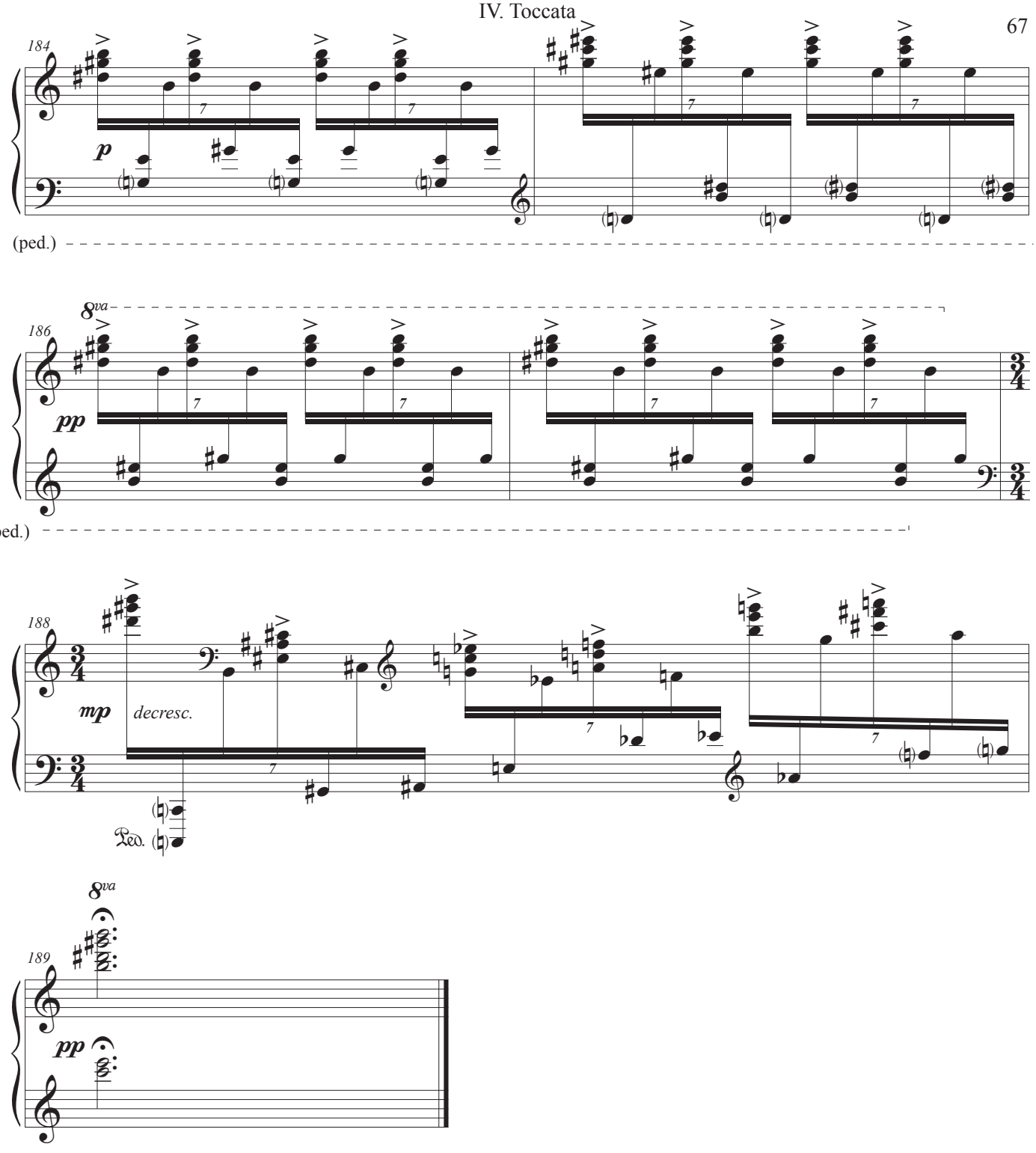

151
153
f
tre corde
154
8va
loco
f
156
ff
158
8va
loco
8va


159
8va
f
16
Ped.
160
15
161
♩ = 56, come prima
mf
7
Ped.


Pause only long enough
to jump to next measure.
𝅗𝅥 = 40, spacious
hands not together (aleatoric time)
Play three times, flowing but not too fast
164
p
3
pedal ad libitum
Repeat ad lib., end with the R.H wherever L.H. happens to be.


166
♩ = 80
mf
LH
Ped.
167
168
f
Ped.
Tempo I
169
ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
5 7
𝅘𝅥𝅯 = 𝅘𝅥𝅯; ♩ = 56
171
Ped.
Ped.


173
Ped.
175
p
177
ff
7
= ; = 100
179
mp
182
mp
Ped.


184
p
(ped.)
8va
186
pp
(ped.)
188
mp
decresc.
Ped.
8va
189
pp