Sergei RACHMANINOV

PRELUDES

Opus 32 N° 13 D♭ major

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Prelude Opus 32 N° 13 D♭ major

In spite of the demands of an active and successful stage career at the piano and on the podium, with limited time for composing, Rachmaninov rapidly completed Op 32 between August and September 1910. These tone poems created in his middle years reveal an extended improvisatory style, often with an exclusive character and freedom of form. Unlike Op 3 & 23, they are without dedication.

Some 18 years after the "Bells of Moscow" I believe he wrote the final D♭ prelude in order to exorcise his first youthful prelude, which had generated so much success but at the same time so much distress — the public would not appreciate that his subsequent works were more compelling and profound. Indeed the piece undergoes a harmonic and chromatic burial — to finally give this monster that he had created (he referred to it as Frankenstein) a dignified funeral.

However the bones can be easily identified at the grave's surface (the two preludes are published together at pianopracticaleditions.com): apart from sharing the same tonic —

1-9 and **18-20** observe the opening bars of this majestic introduction where the principal descending motif appears in an editorial middle stave

21-26 the *meno mosso* theme is based on the *agitato* descending 4-note chromatic figure

31-44 *più vivo* the descending motif has become a bass ostinato, above which an exalted syncopated chromatic passage emerges, flowing into the following *vivo*

45-49 the right hand traces the motif with the original notation of A/G♯/C♯ but with an alternative accompaniment leading to a first grand climax at **50-52**

53-60 the *grave* features the introductory clarion call complemented by an exciting reference to the *agitato* descending 4-note chromatic figure, transformed into a chordal accompaniment

61-62 the motif now in major mode leads into a most lovely harmonically chromatic section, with the original theme played by the left hand

67 more clarion calls lead to a C♯ minor coda reference featuring similar final coda harmony and again, a chromatic *agitato* right hand accompaniment

73-75 prominent tonic chords of D♭ are trumpeted with clarion calls and a direct rhythmic reference to the final bar of Op 3 N° 2

I wonder whether the opening clarion calls announce the triumph of finally completing all 24 preludes. This work is difficult to perform, requiring very large hands and the ability to voice and balance dense chordal writing. There are some inaccuracies in the original edition which demand "creative" editing.

Given that the composer was born in 1873, an age of great artistic individuality, it is not surprising that he typically performed without wholly respecting the score. His choice of tempi is quite idiosyncratic and this edition reflects some of the more effective deviations and the editor's preferences, sometimes indicated with an asterisk*. Some of the phrasing, dynamics and agogic markings have been modified and a zealous student will need to consult the original Russian Gutheil or Robert Threlfall's Boosey & Hawkes 1992 edition.

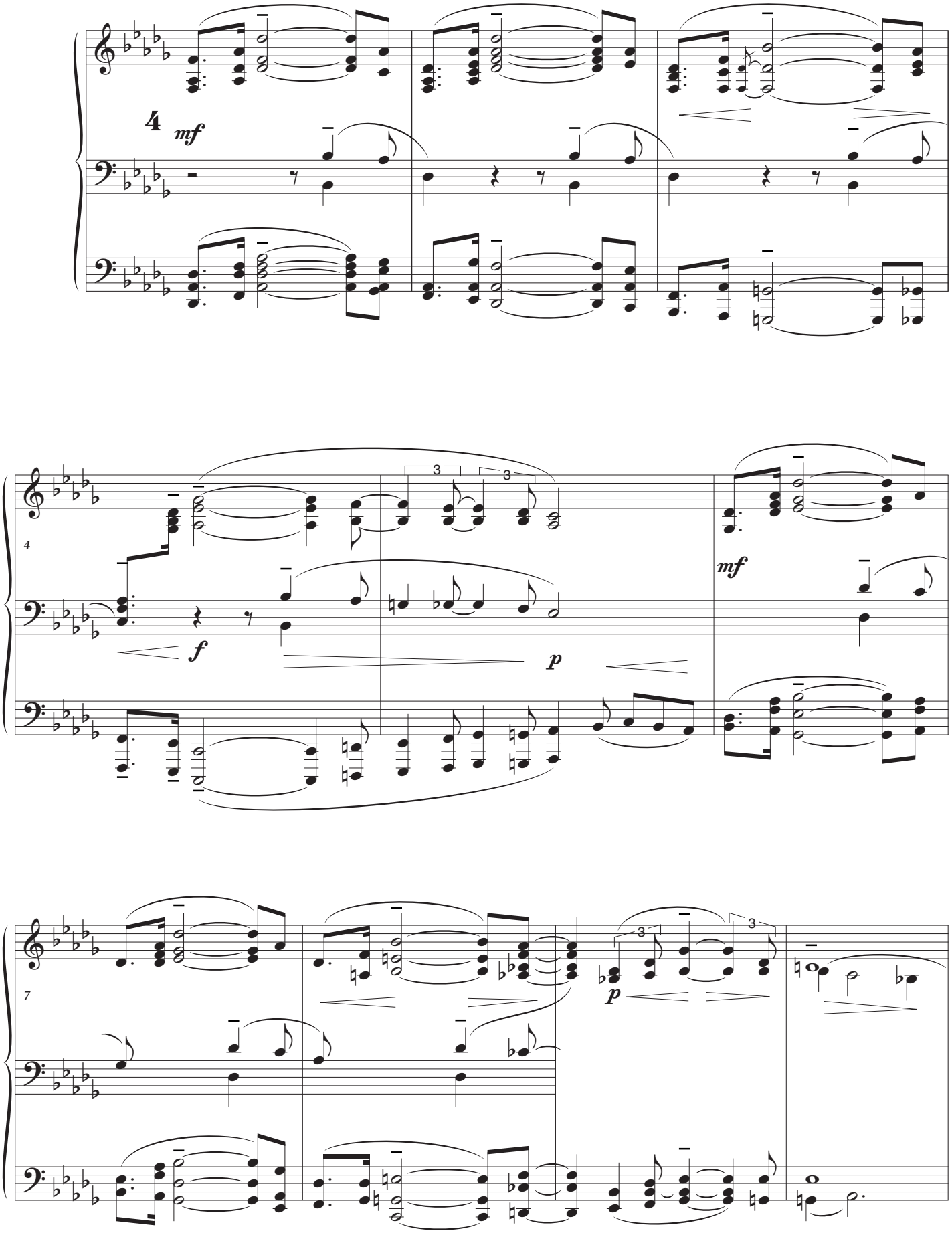
14-15 LH editorial accents
23 editorial acciacatura
21-26 absence of dynamics
29 it makes sense to play this semiquaver as in the previous beat
31-50 time signatures modified, upper numbering showing phrase bar lengths
48 D♯ probably an error
52 harmony and layout modifications — the *sforzandi* are editorial
57-60 it makes sense to play this semiquaver as printed
58 RH C♮ editorial addition
59-60 editorial acciacaturas
63 the diamond-headed A♭ is a suggested omission
67-73 modification of time-signature
76 modifications to the final chords
all sostenuto pedal suggestions are editorial

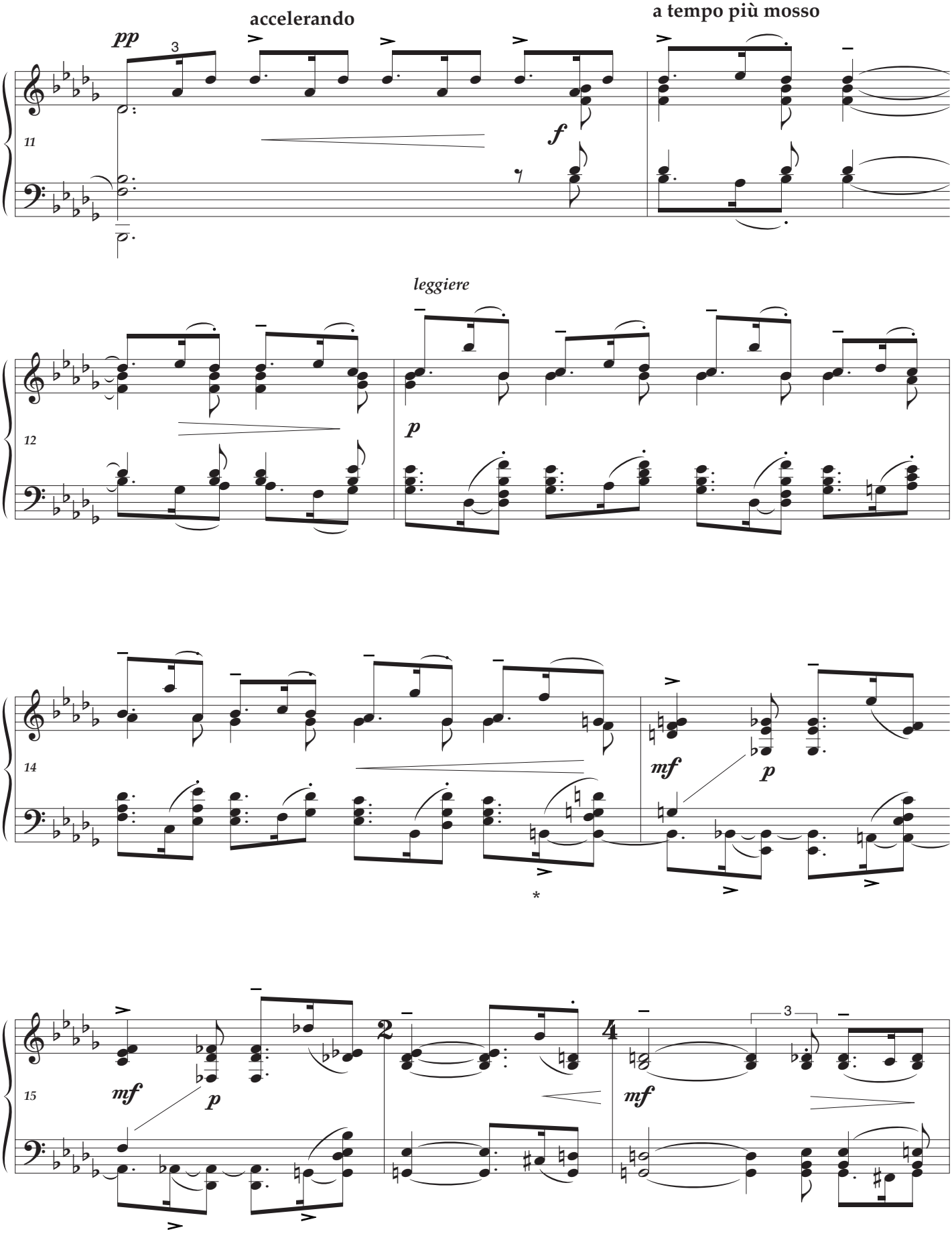
Siloti and Rachmaninov

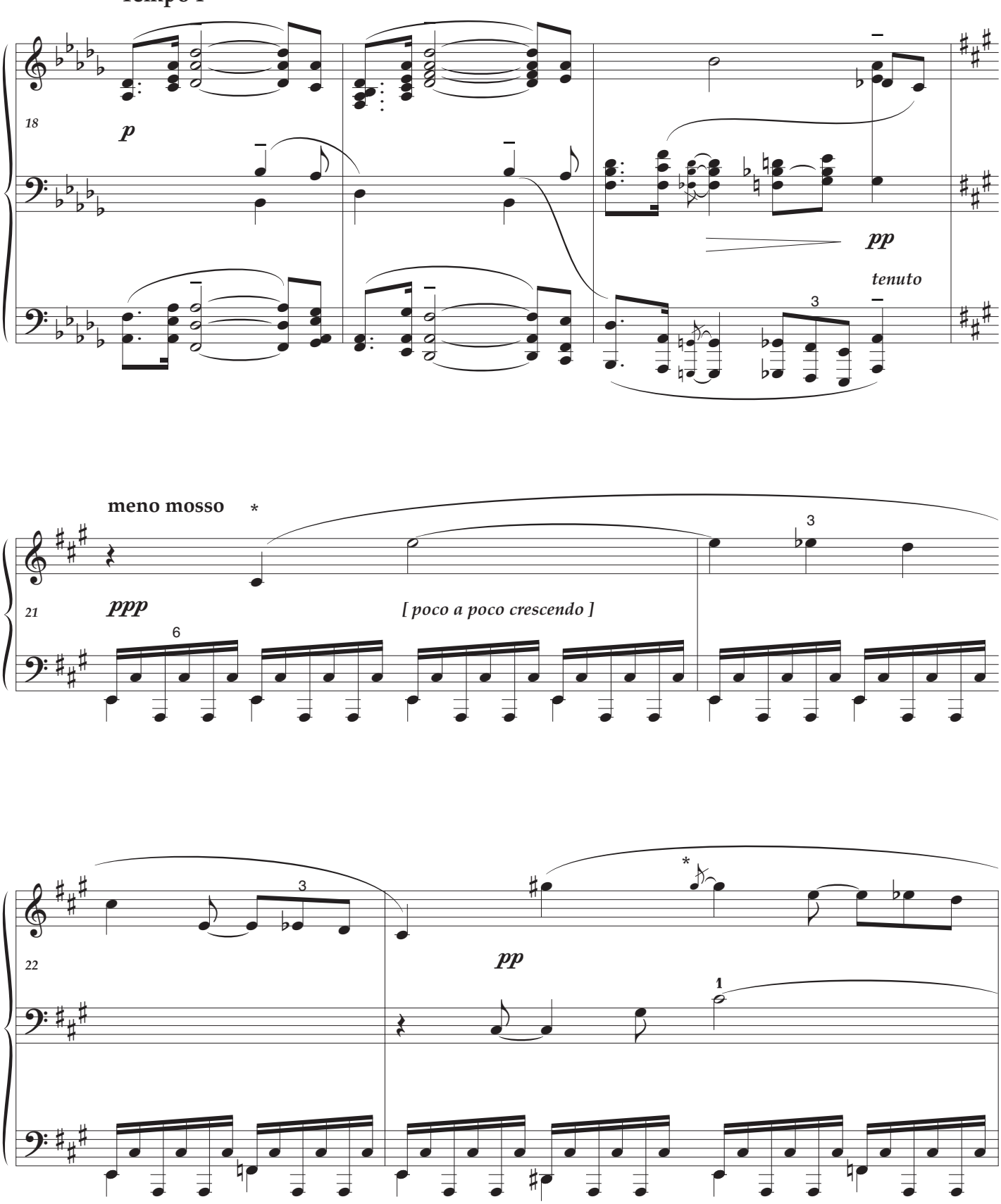
PRELUDE

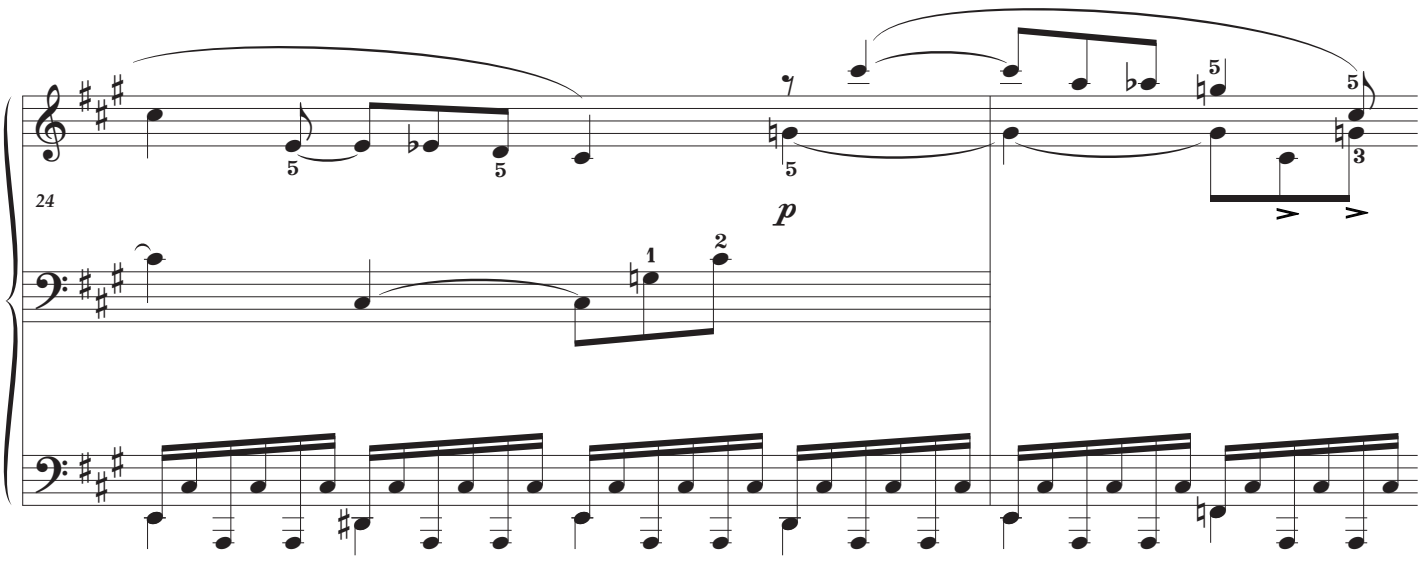
Op 32 Nº 13

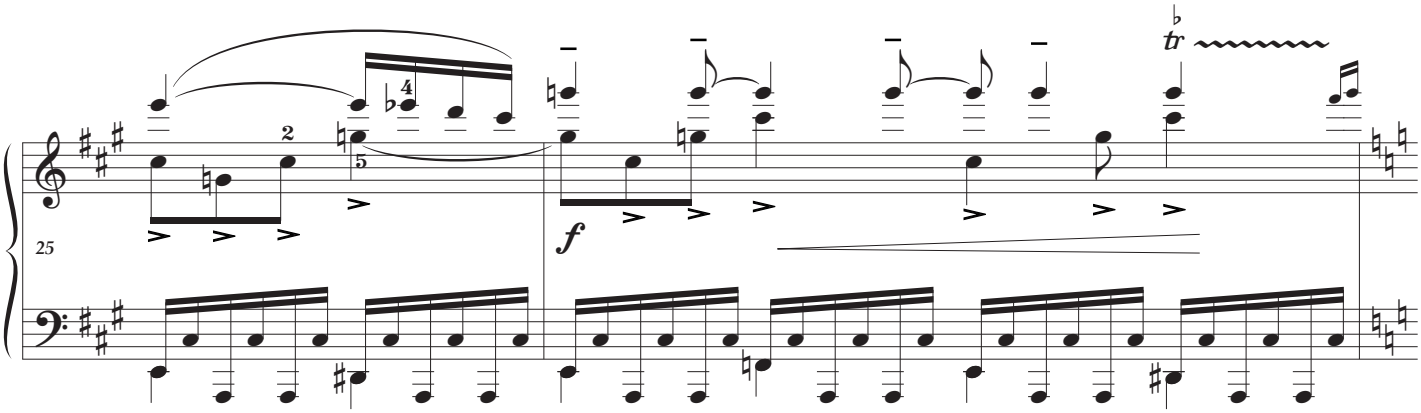
grave

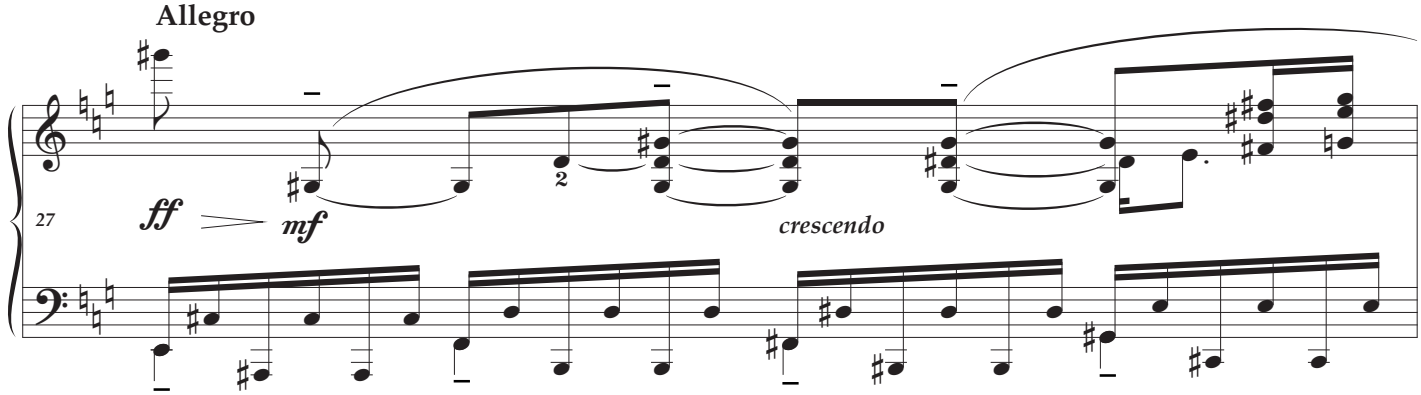


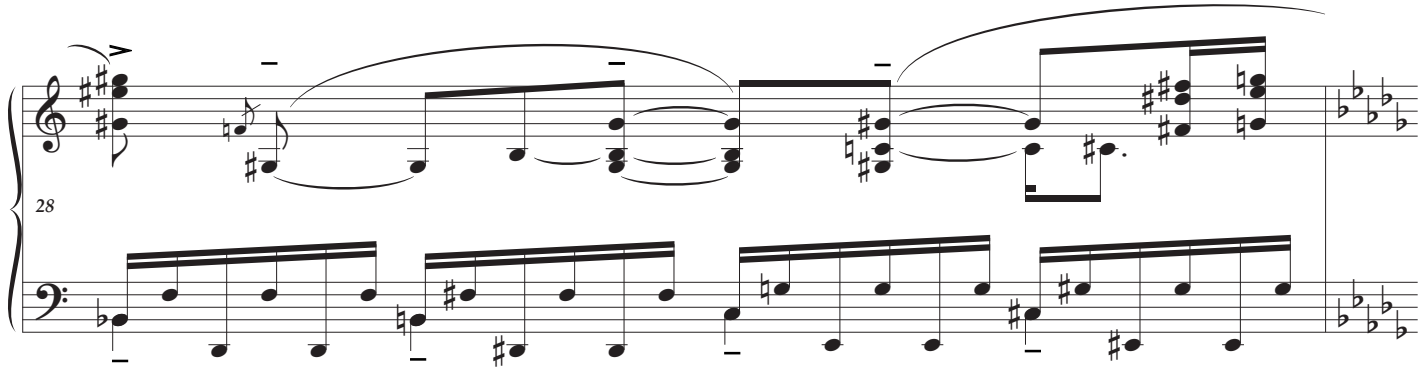

accelerando
a tempo più mosso
pp
f
11
leggiere
p
12
mf
p
14
*
mf
p
15
mf


Tempo I
18
p
pp
tenuto
3
meno mosso
*
21
ppp
[poco a poco crescendo]
6
3
22
3
*
pp
1


24
p


25
f
tr


Allegro
27
ff
mf
crescendo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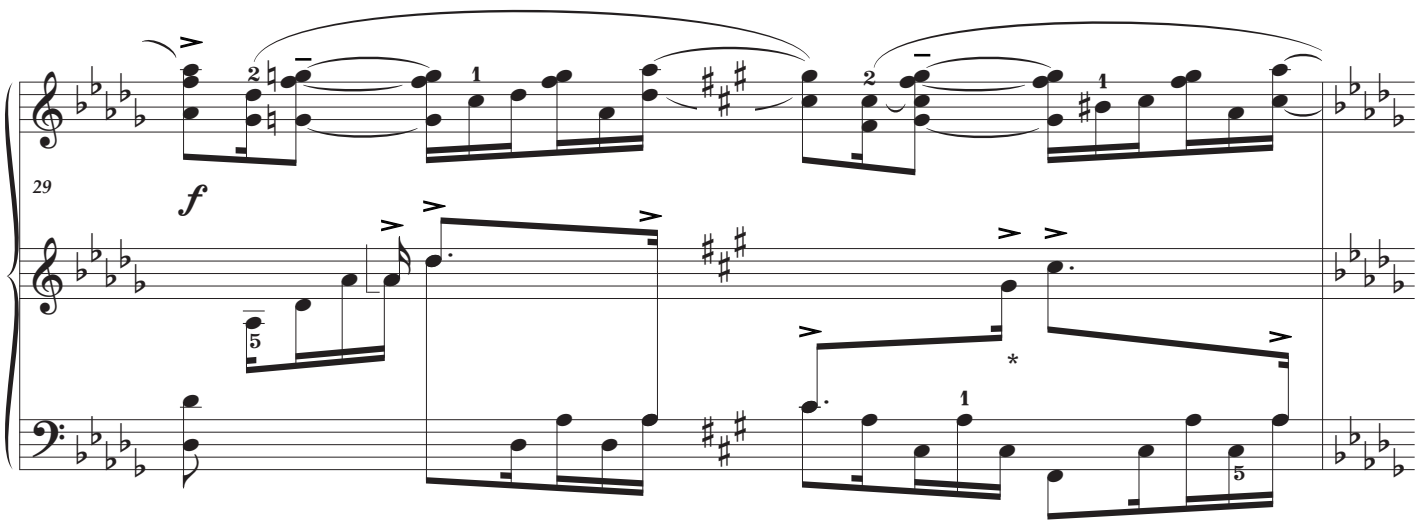
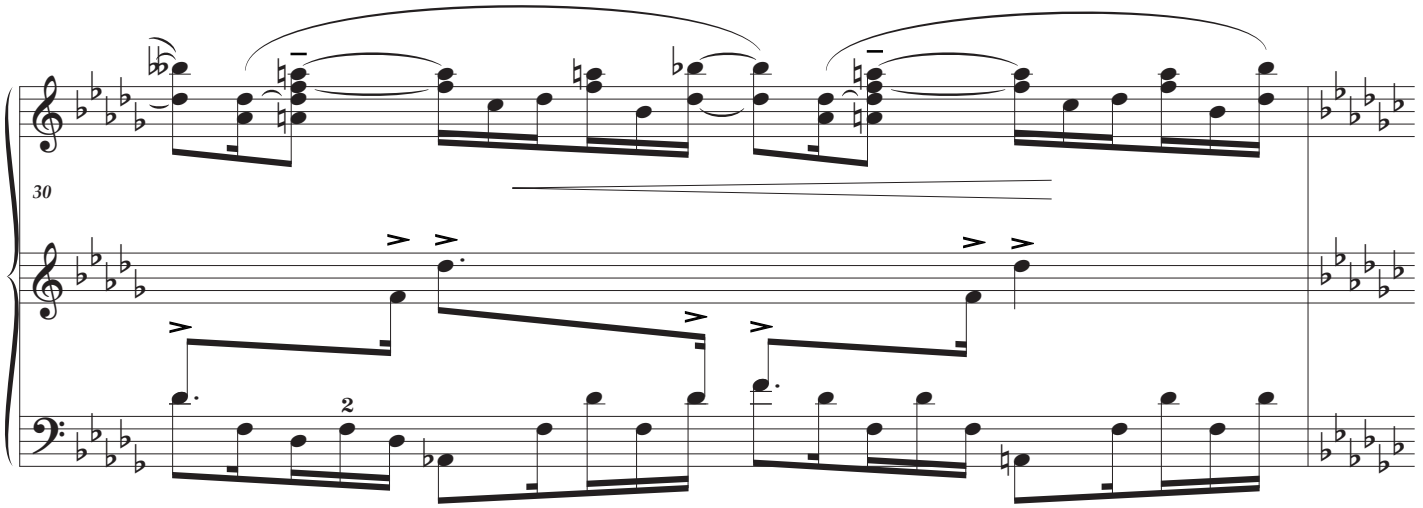

29
f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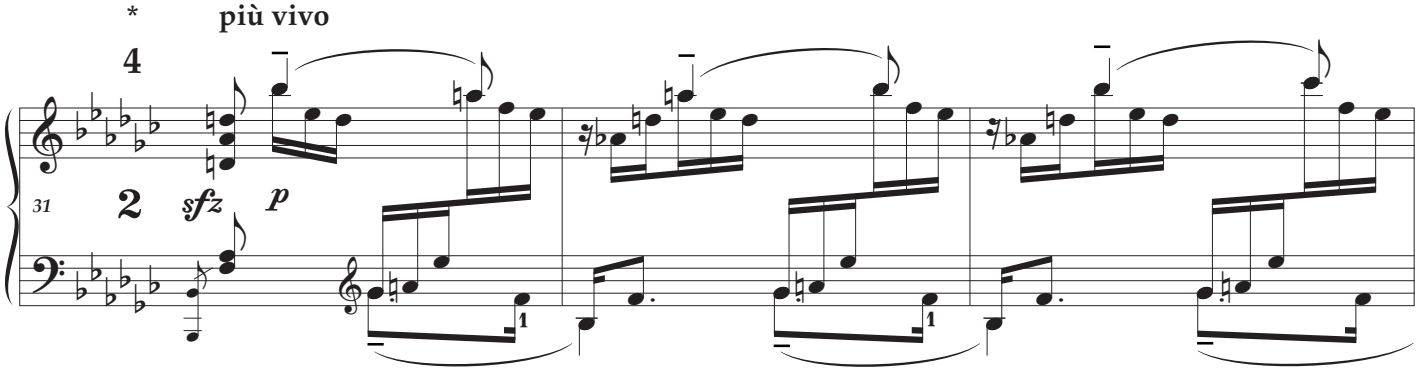
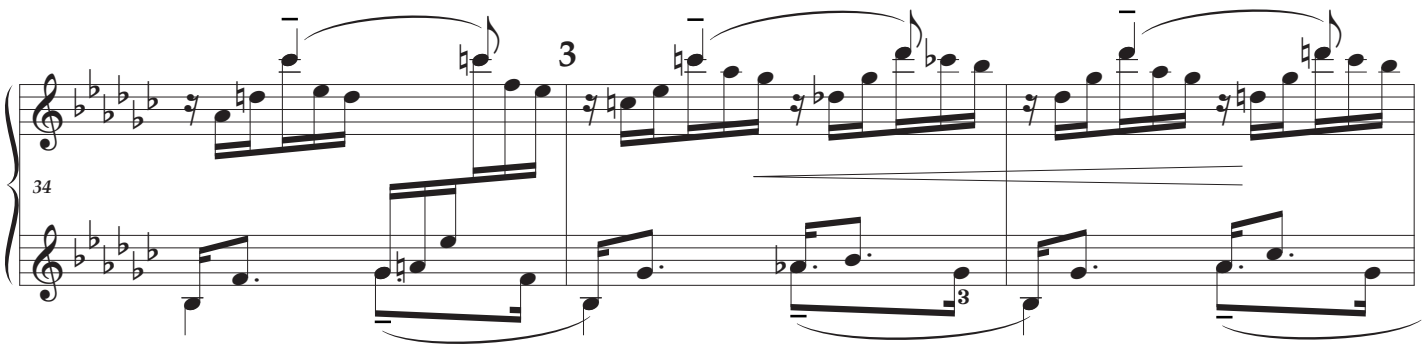
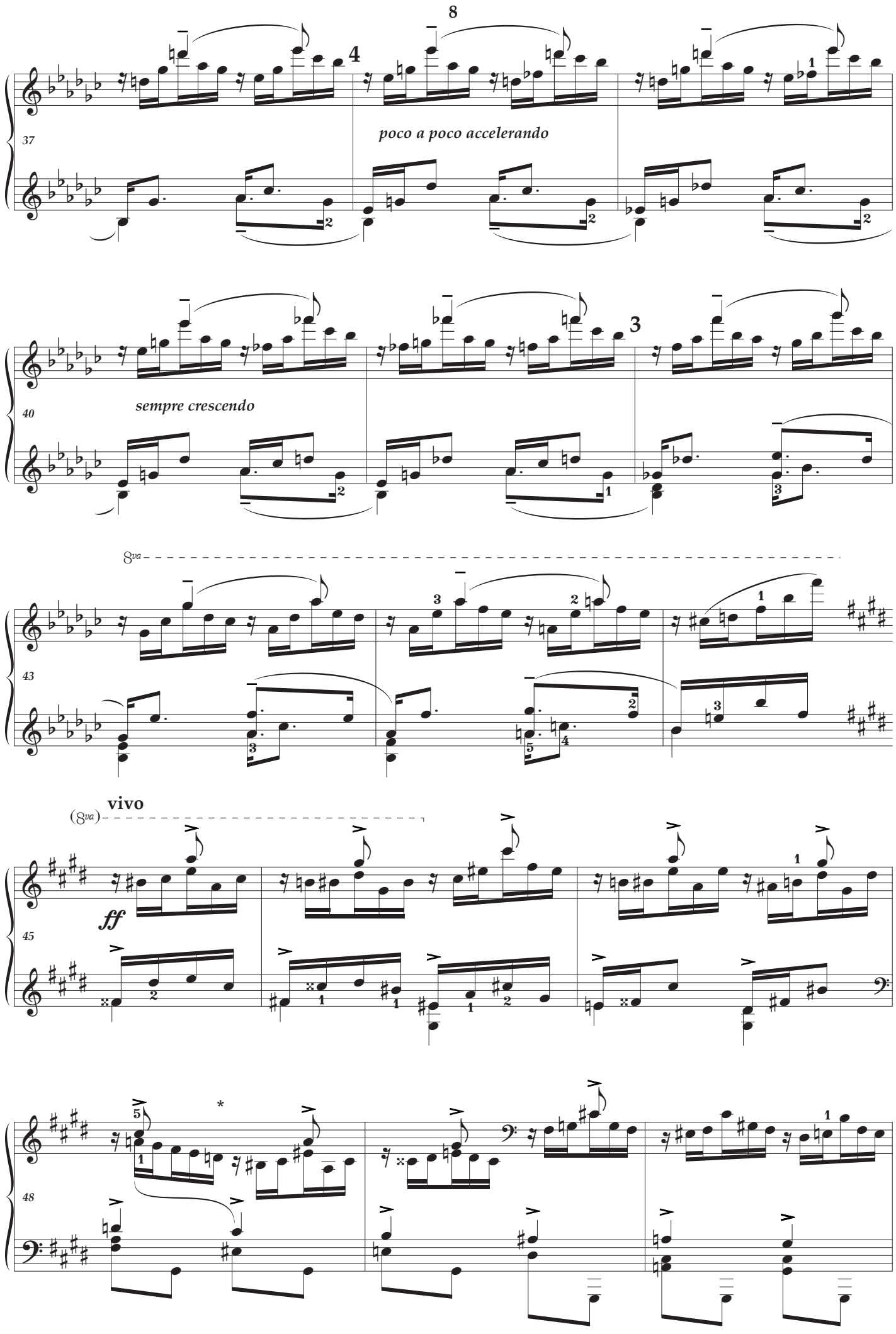
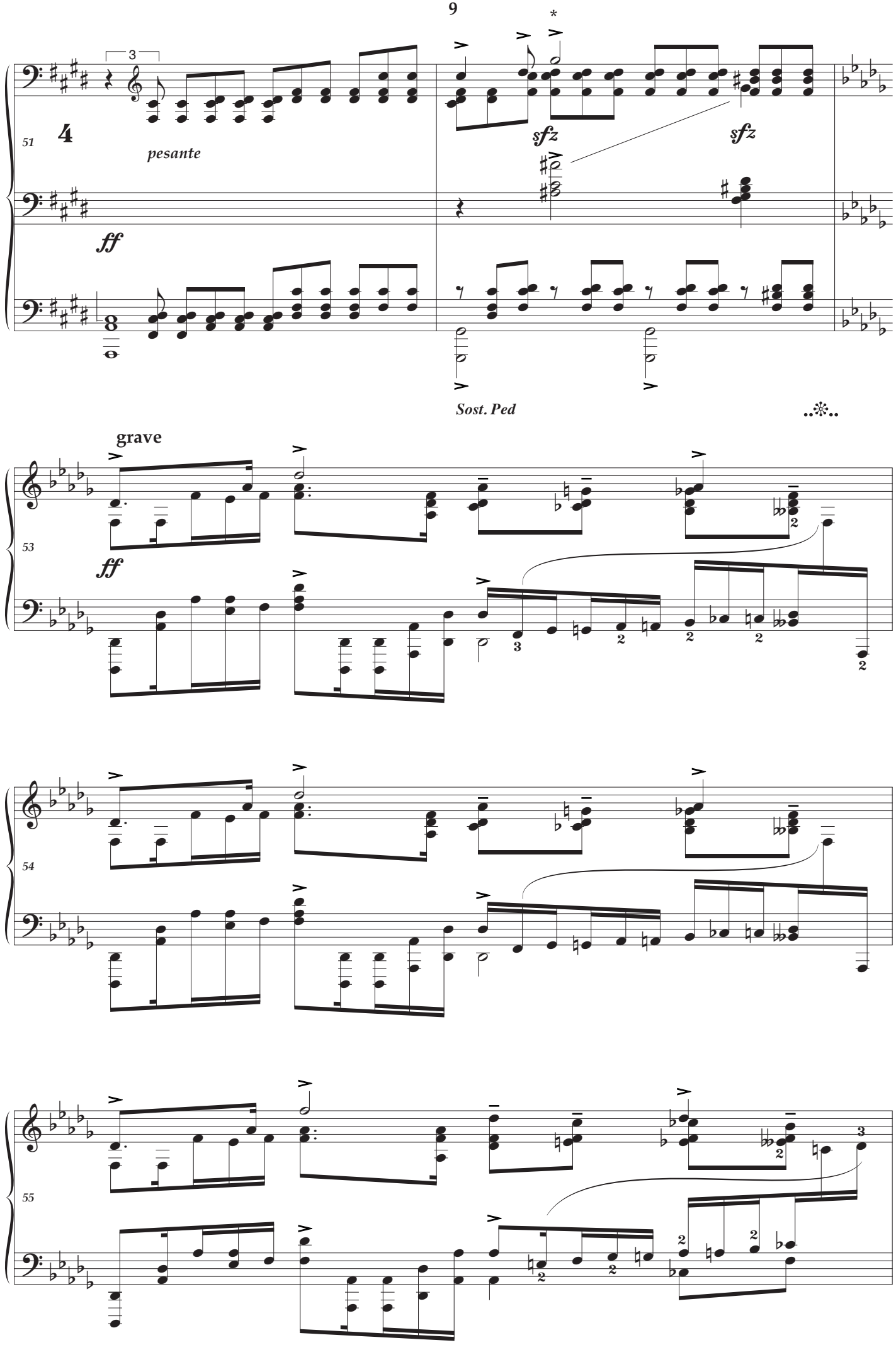
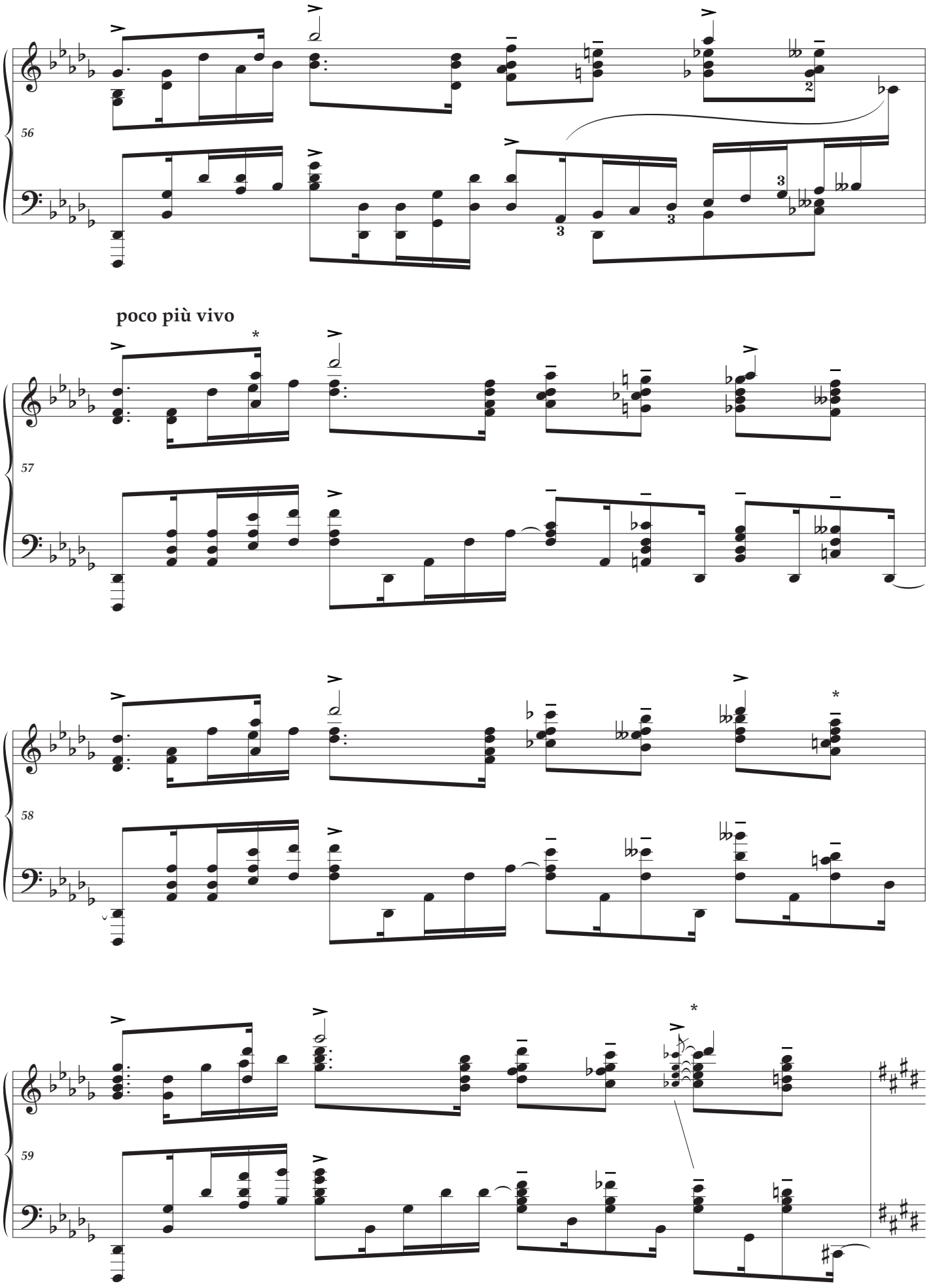
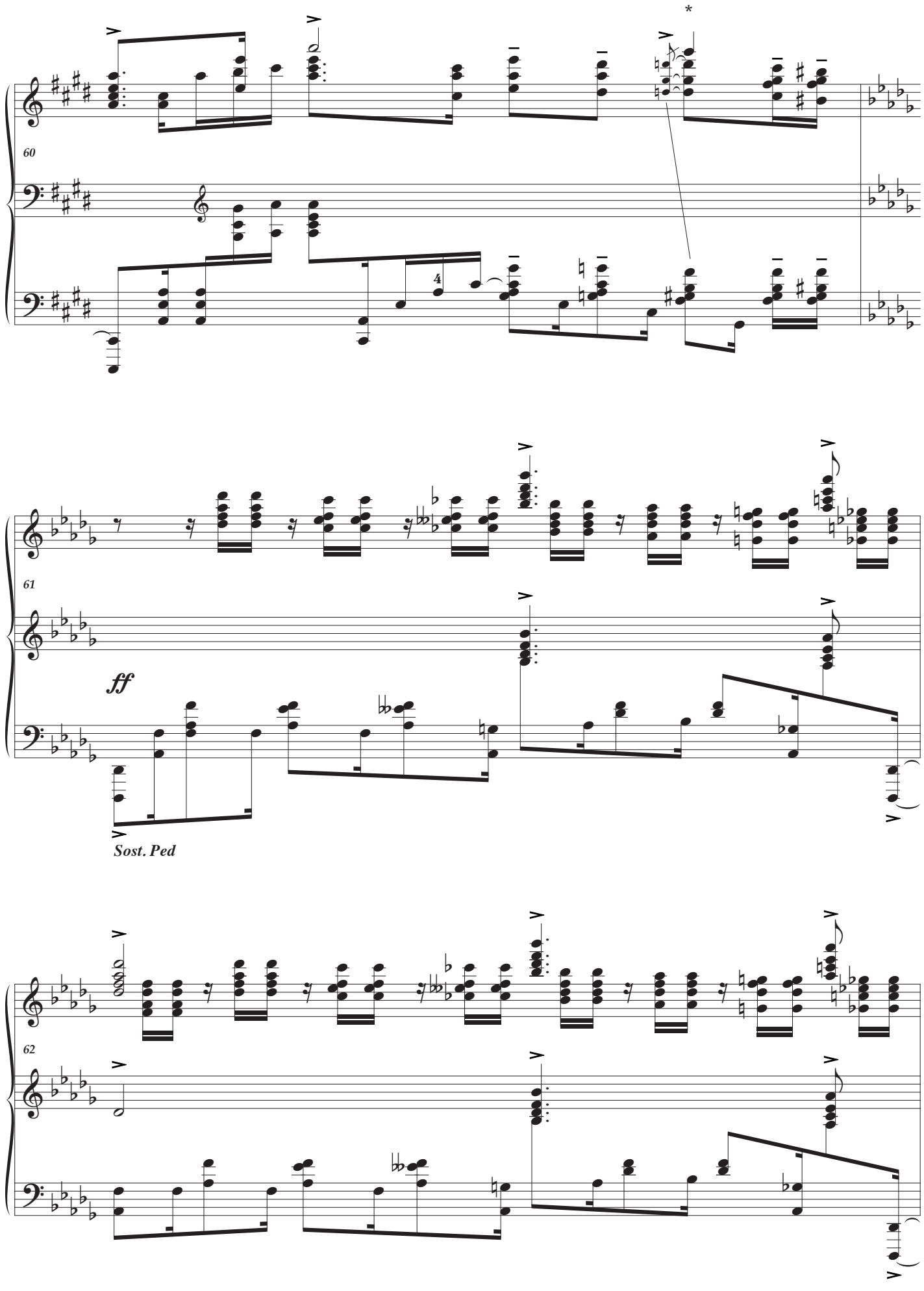

*
più vivo
4
2
31
sfz
p

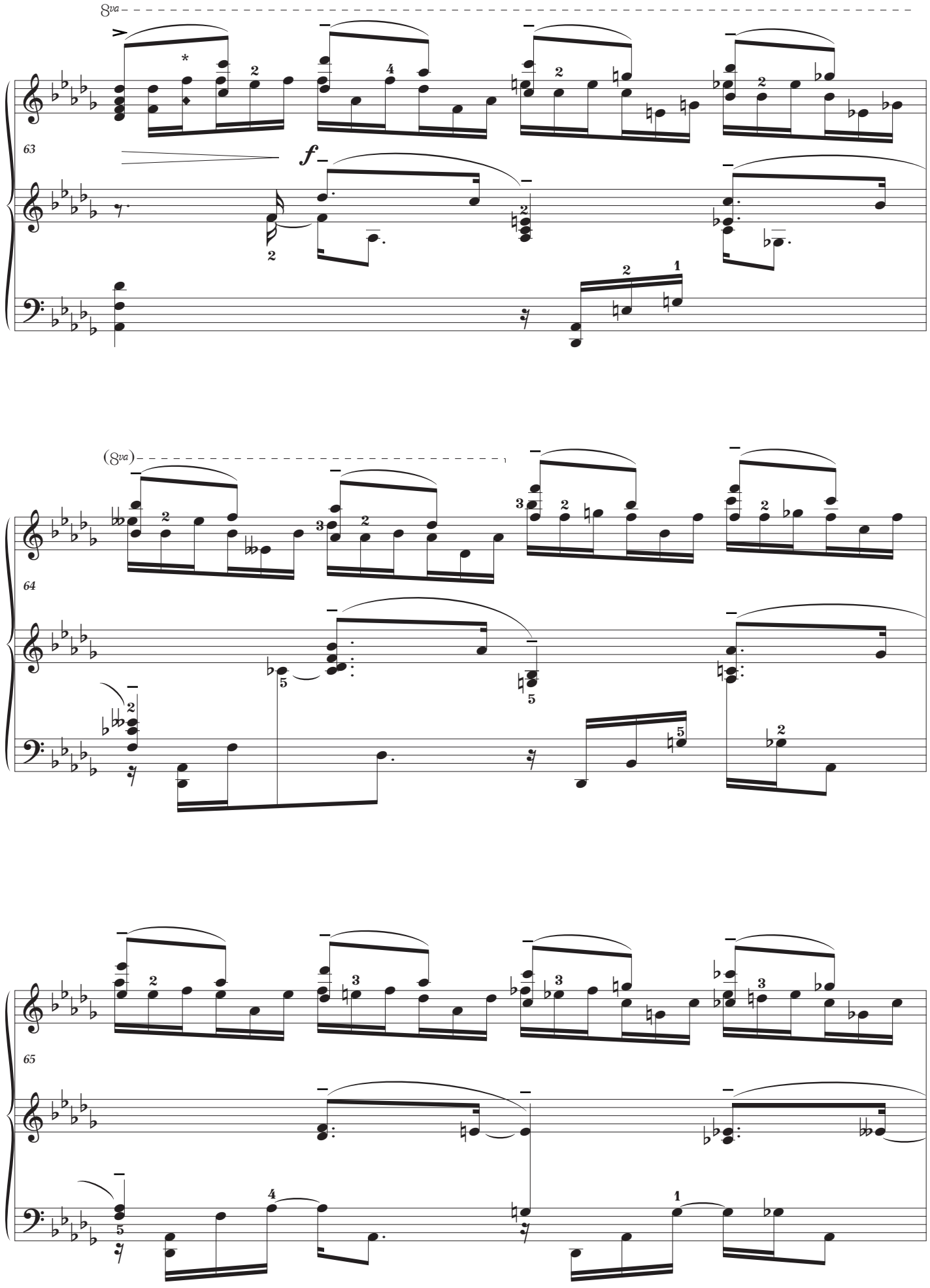

3
34

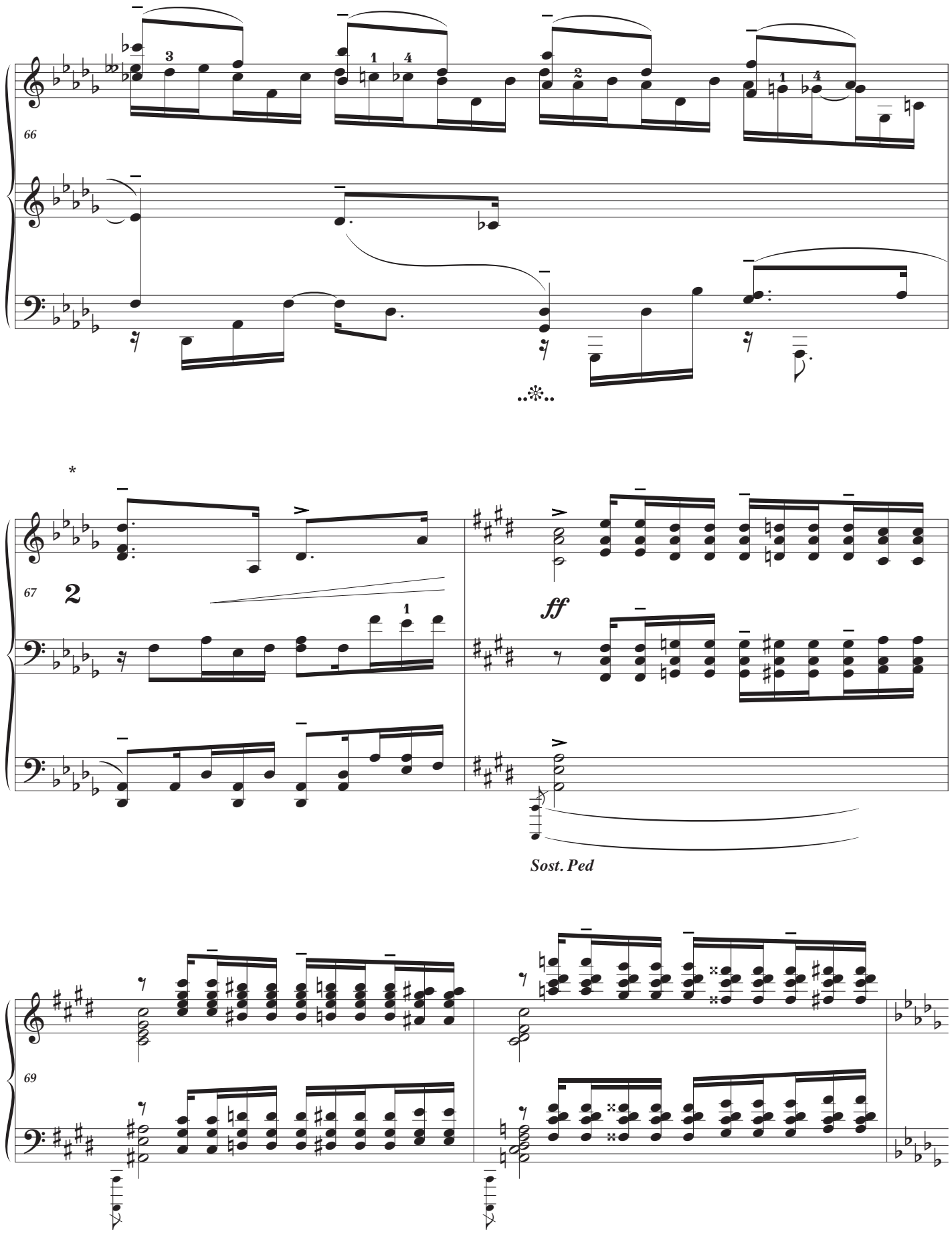

37
poco a poco accelerando
40
sempre crescendo
43
8va
45
vivo
(8va)
ff
48

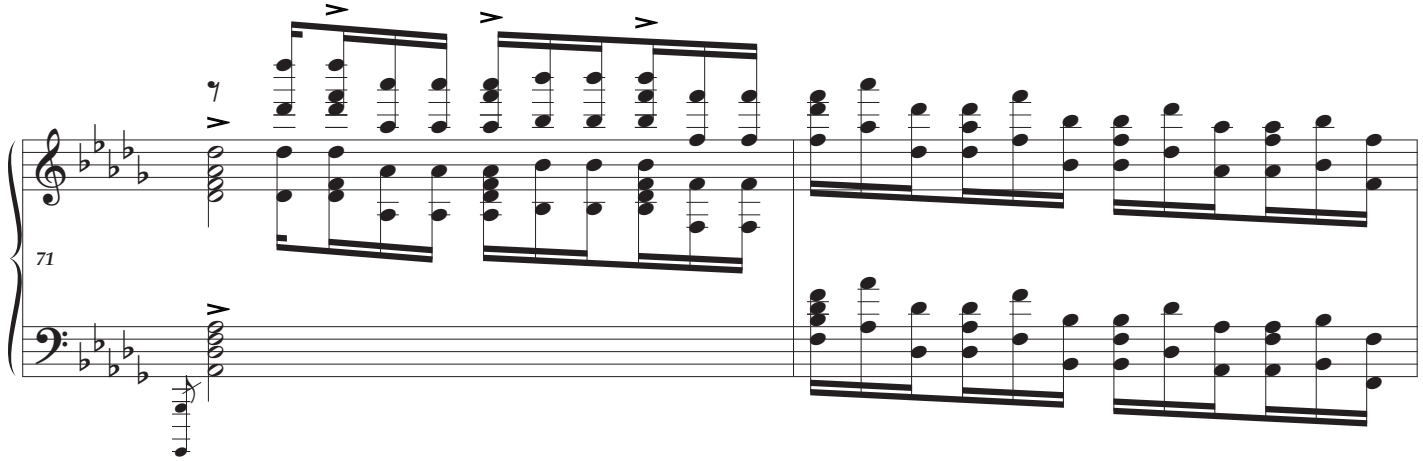

51
4
pesante
ff
sfz
sfz
Sost. Ped
grave
53
ff
54
55


56
poco più vivo
57
58
59


60
61
ff
Sost. Ped
62

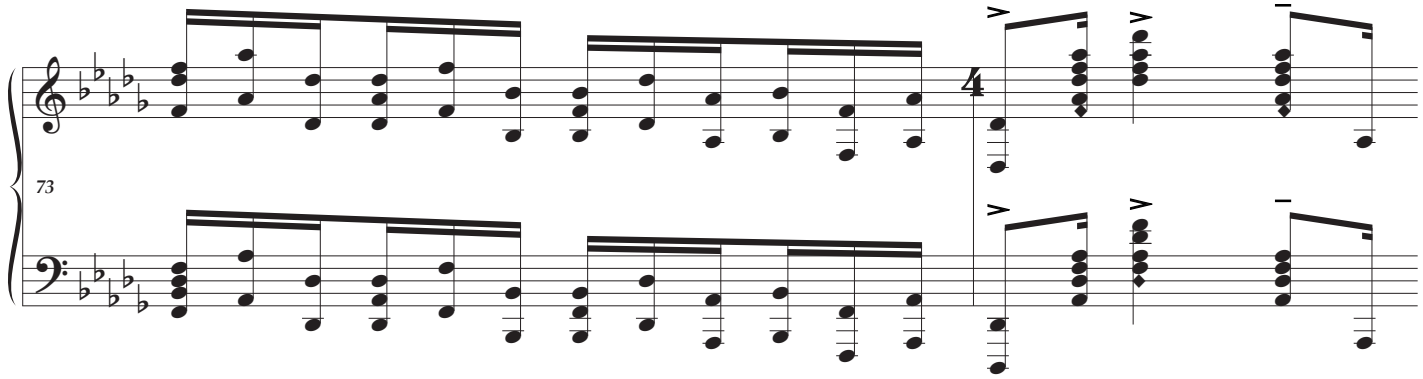

8va
63
f
(8va)
64
65

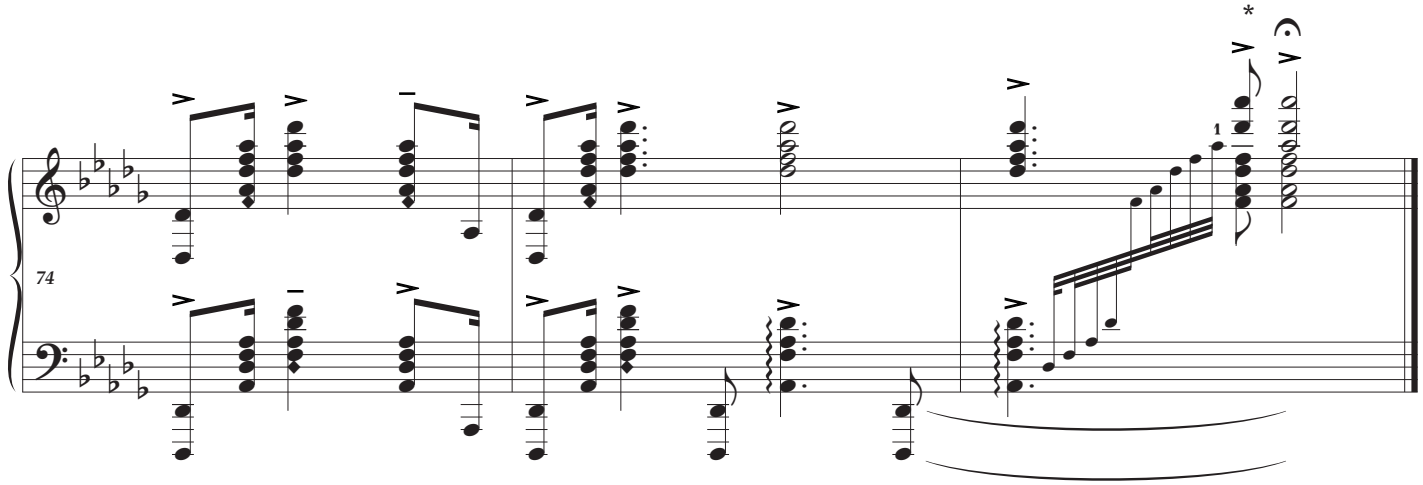

66
67
2
ff
Sost. Ped
69



..❊..

grave





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