pattern preludes

24 preludes for piano
books 1–4
(2005–2015)

Karim Al-Zand

Notes:

[BOOK 1] "Pattern" pieces abound in the piano literature, pieces constrained by a single idea (usually a rhythmic or textural ostinato) through which a composer expresses a narrowly focused thought. Patterning is especially well-suited to preludes, which are by convention short, concise and introductory. Most of the patterns in *Pattern Preludes, book 1* are immediately identifiable: a repeated-note motive in no. 2; asynchronous cascades between the hands in no. 4; and a gesture bouncing between interlocked hands in no. 6. In addition, three of the pieces give a nod to other famous preludes in the piano repertoire. No. 1 is a gloss on what is likely the most famous prelude ever written. Within an innocent arpeggio, Bach skillfully intertwines several syncopated rhythmic patterns, something exploited in my paraphrase. No. 3 takes its cue from Chopin's Op. 28/4, which every student of harmony knows (and which a professor of mine once called the epitome of "creeping chromaticism"). No. 5 was written as a retirement gift for my high school music teacher, whose lessons were inspirational preludes to my own study of music. In mood and phrasing it echoes some well-known Debussy preludes.

[BOOK 2] "Pattern Prelude" is a title I have been using for an ongoing collection of short piano pieces. These brief works are characterized by a single, consistent surface texture that prevails from beginning to end. In *Pattern Preludes, book 2*, the elements of musical patterning are present—interlocked syncopations in no. 1, super-imposed meters in no. 6—but the focus is also on patterns in the physical and visual sense. No. 2 (*figure-ground*) has one hand playing only white keys, the other only black keys (they exchange roles mid-way through); the small gesture of no. 3 (*ripple effect*) is gradually multiplied, expanding outward from its center; in no. 4 (*mirror game*) the hands play symmetrically around the keyboard's central axis; no. 5 (*parallel play*) features closely packed eight-note chords locked in tandem motion.

[BOOK 3] *Pattern Preludes, book 3* arose out of a commission from the Renée B. Fisher Competition for Young Pianists, a request for a piece tailored to their middle school division. The work is thus intended for an "intermediate pianist" and, though not overtly pedagogical, the set presents one musical element most cons-picuously: rhythmic patterning. The six preludes explore both regular and irregular patterns through a range of odd time signatures and metric subdivisions. They alternate slow and fast tempos and are grouped in pairs, set in meters of five (nos. 1 & 2), seven (nos. 3 & 4) and nine (nos. 5 & 6) beats. In addition to the rhythmic elements, no. 4 *(solfeggio)* is my own gloss on a well-known intermediate level piano work by C. P. E. Bach; and no. 5 *(lullaby)* was written for my two-year-old son.

[BOOK 4] The musical gestures and textures used in *Pattern Preludes, book 4* continue to explore themes of physical balance, visual symmetry, repetition and compositional concision. Prelude no. 2 places a melody between two inwardly leaping arpeggios; nos. 3 & 5 make use of persistent chromatic ostinati; and nos. 4 & 6 use metric shifts to create irregular rhythmic momentum. In addition, the left hand plays alone in no. 1, the right hand alone in no. 4. Two of the preludes are elegies: no. 1 was written in memory of Sergiu Luca, a wonderful and generous musical colleague and prelude no. 3 is dedicated to Ethan Frederick Greene, a young composer and former student of mine who passed away recently, very much before his time.

Pattern Preludes, book 1 was written for Calogero Di Liberto, who gave the work its premiere on October 5, 2005 in Houston, TX. *Pattern Preludes, book 2* was written for Brian Connelly who gave the work its premiere on November 20 2009 in Houston, TX. Preludes 3 & 4 in *Pattern Preludes, book 3* were commissioned by the Renée B. Fisher Competition for Young Pianists. The entire set was premiered by Brian Connelly on November 20, 2009 in Houston, TX. Prelude 1 in *Pattern Preludes, book 4* was written for Brian Connelly (in memory of Sergiu Luca) and premiered February 24, 2011 in Houston, TX.

Duration:

Book 1 (2005)

1. Moderato; smoothly *(after Bach)*	2' 10"
2. As quickly as possible, chirring	1'
3. Slowly; delicate thrumming *(after Chopin)*	2' 10"
4. Very swiftly; restless, agitated	1' 10"
5. Slowly; lyrically *(after Debussy)*	2' 30"
6. Quickly; vibrant, full of life	1' 30"

TOTAL: *ca.* 10' 30"

Book 2 (2007–2009)

1. Moderately; wistful	1' 30"
2. Extremely Quickly; manic, mechanical *(figure-ground)*	1' 10"
3. Slowly; delicate, fragile *(ripple effect)*	1' 20"
4. Quickly; raucous, boisterous *(mirror game)*	1' 10"
5. Slowly; calm, placid *(parallel play*)	1' 30"
6. Very Quickly; massive, unrelenting	1' 20"

TOTAL: *ca.* 8' 00"

Book 3 (2008–2009)

1. Moderately; tranquil, serene	1' 30"
2. Very Quickly; fidgety, nervous	50"
3. Moderately; flowing	1' 45"
4. Very Quickly; nimble, playful *(solfeggio)*	1' 00"
5. Slowly, with rubato; delicate, innocently *(lullaby)*	1' 40"
6. Very Quickly; spirited, bouncing	1' 15"

TOTAL: *ca.* 8' 00"

Book 4 (2011–2015)

1. Unhurried; lyrically, legato *(for the left hand)*	2' 30"
2. Speedily; with a swiftly loping gait	1' 10"
3. Slowly; lyrically roaming, melancholic	1' 50"
4. Quickly; scherzando, skittish *(for the right hand)*	1' 40"
5. Steadily; grand, processional	2' 10"
6. Extremely Fast; furious, turbulent	1' 10"

TOTAL: *ca.* 10' 30"

TOTAL: *ca.* 37' 00"

pattern preludes

24 preludes for piano

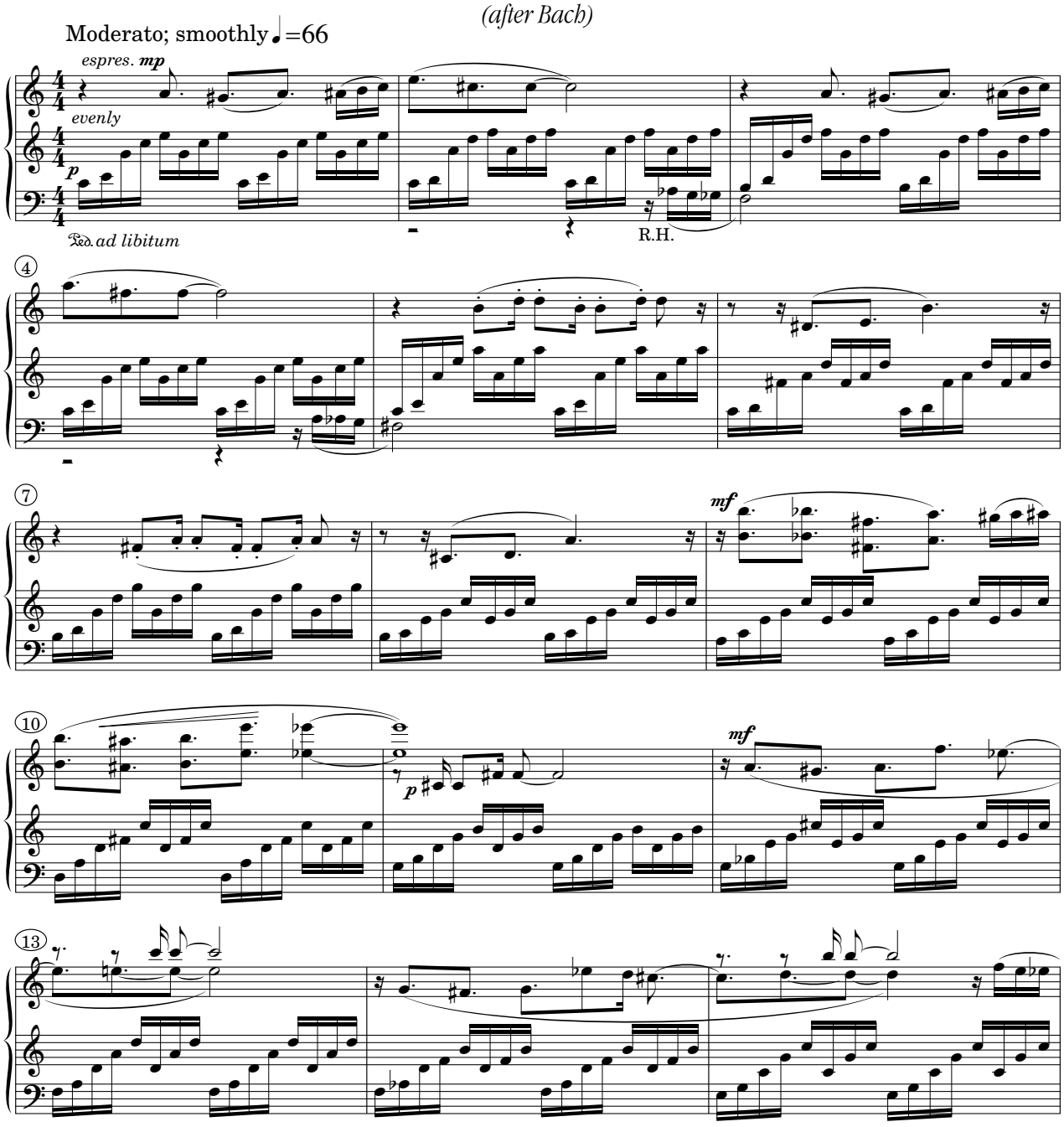
Karim Al-Zand
(2005–2015)

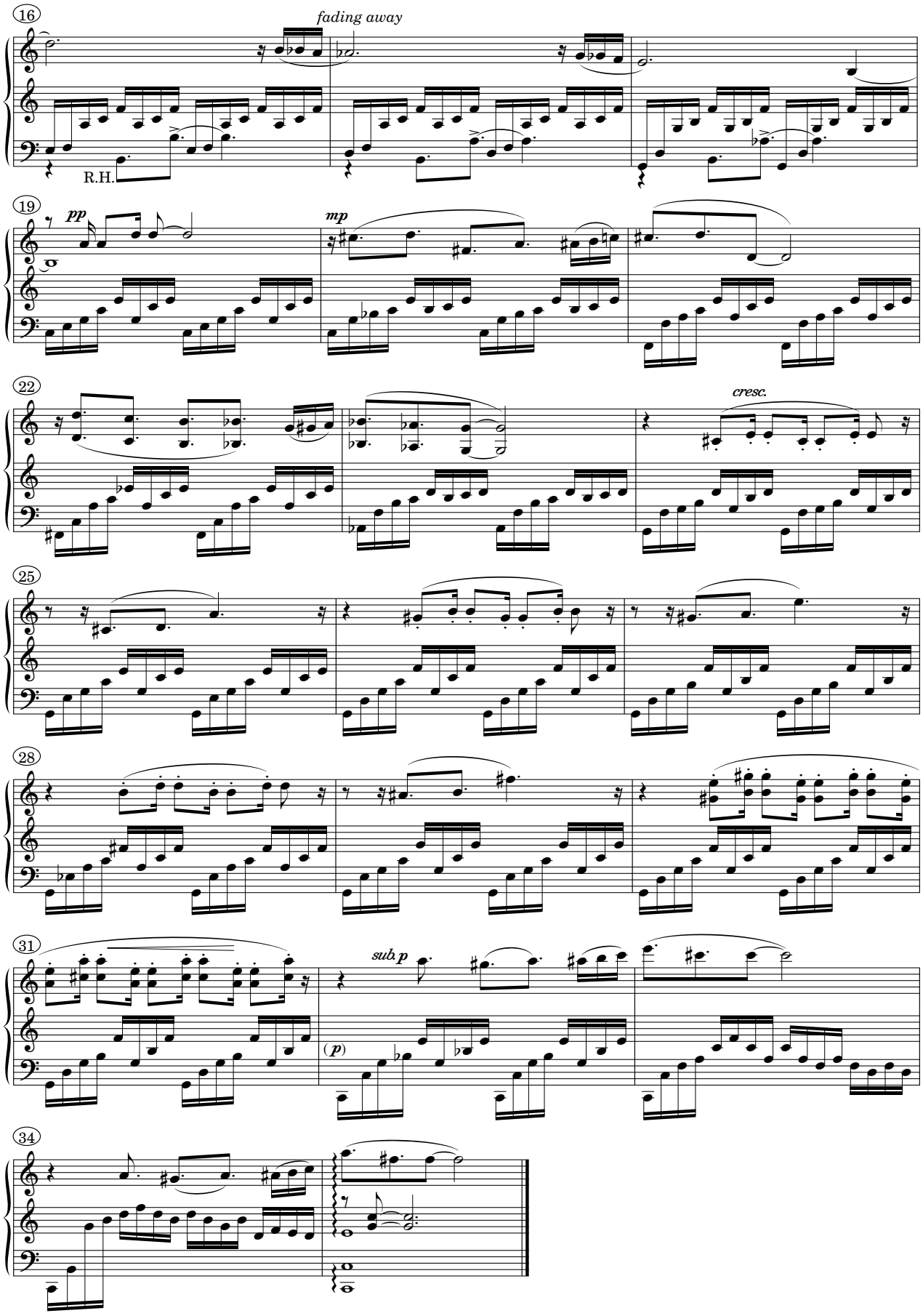
book 1

for Calogero Di Liberto

no. 1

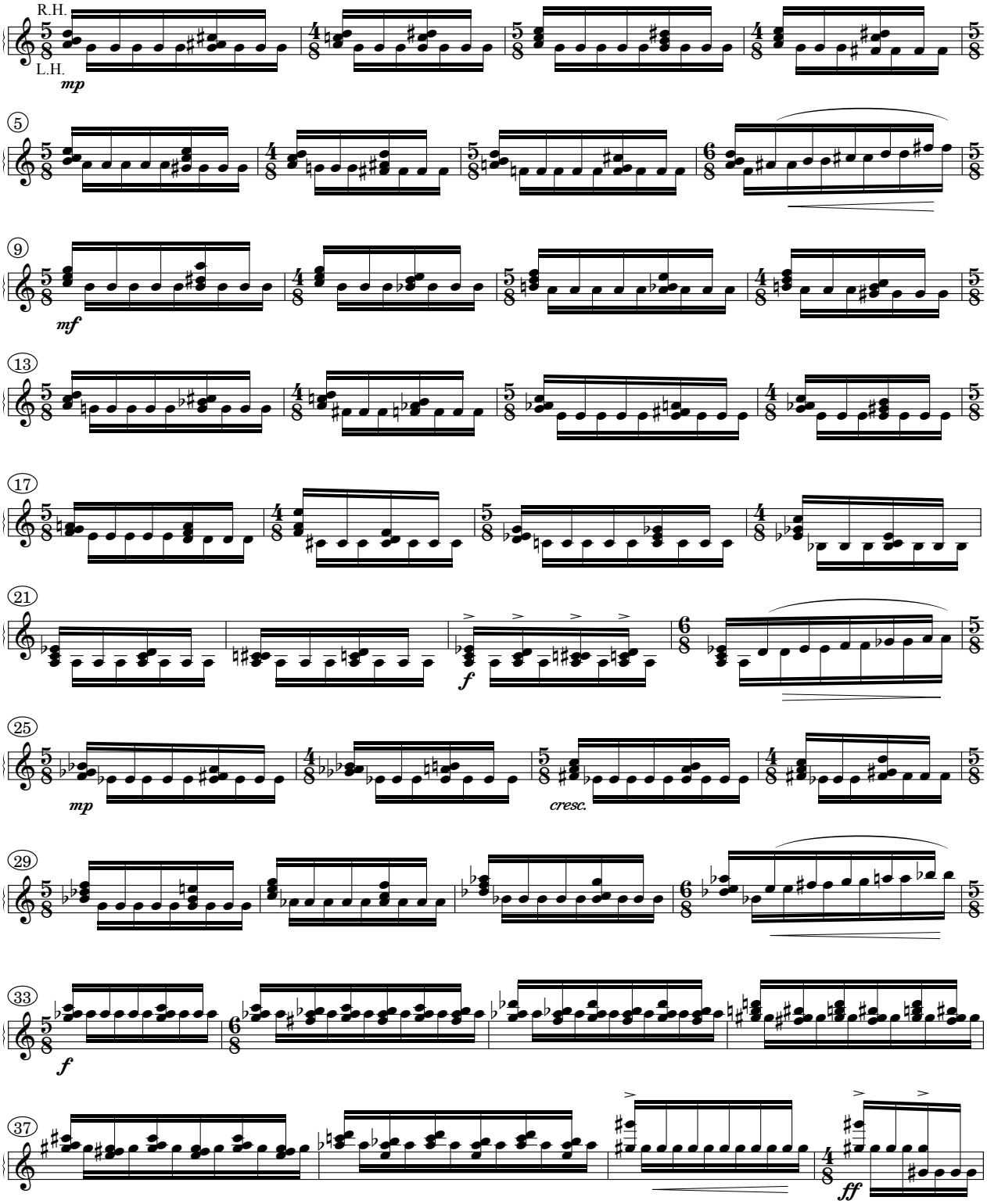
(after Bach)

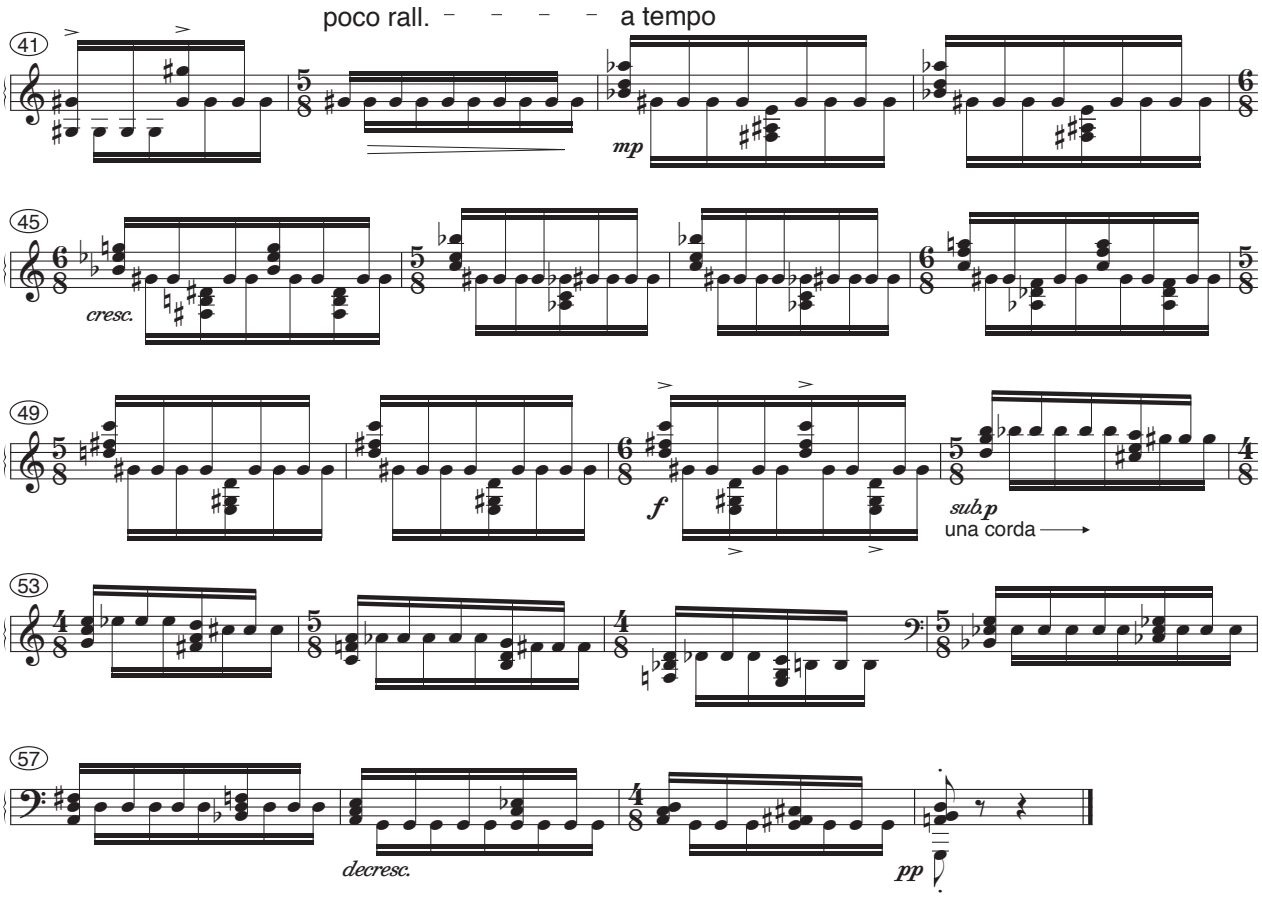



16
fading away
R.H.
19
pp
mp
22
cresc.
25
28
31
sub. p
(p)
34

book 1, no. 2

As quickly as possible; chirring ♪=280+ (♩.=93)




poco rall. a tempo
41
mp
45
cresc.
49
f
sub.p
una corda
53
57
decresc.
pp

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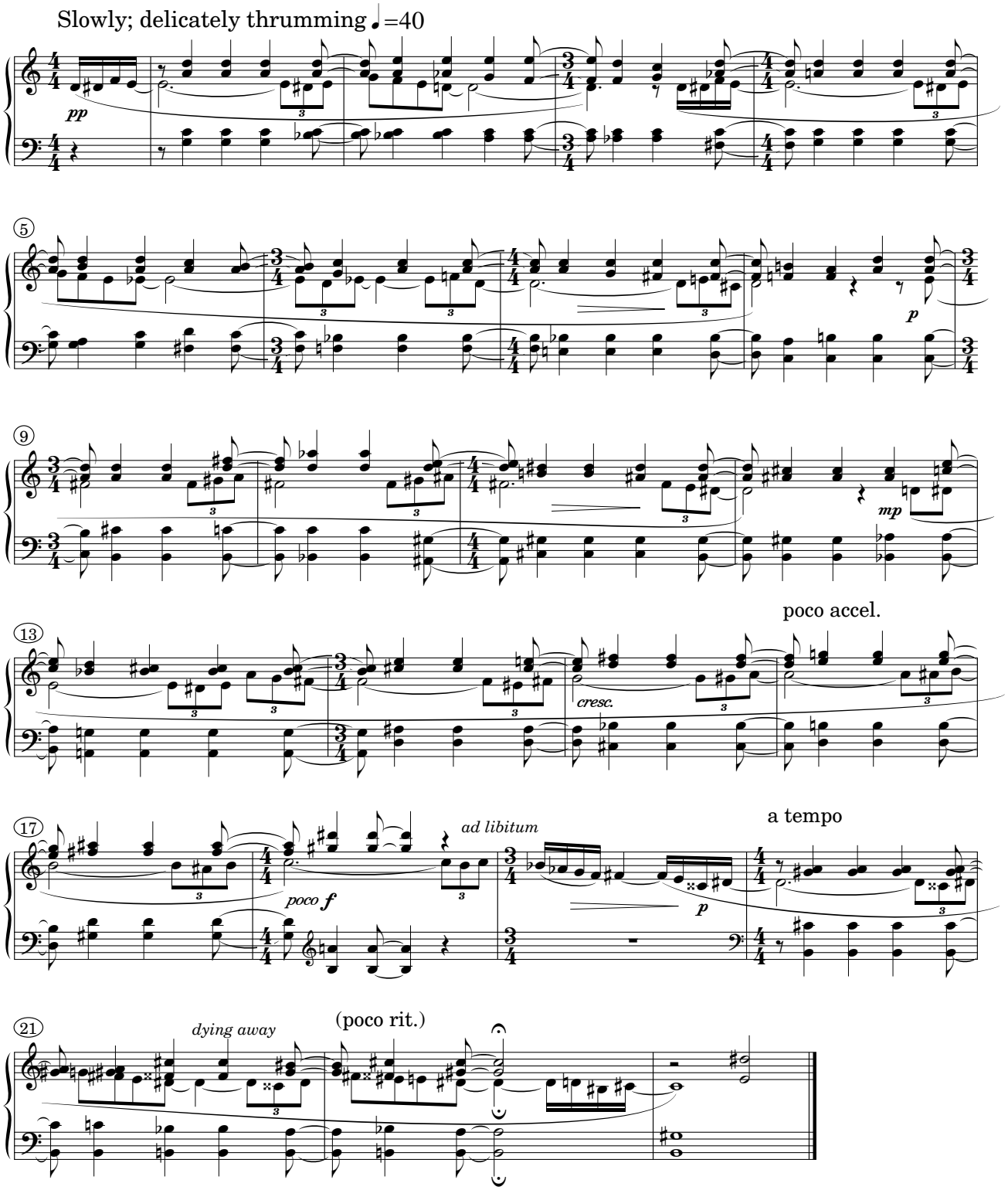
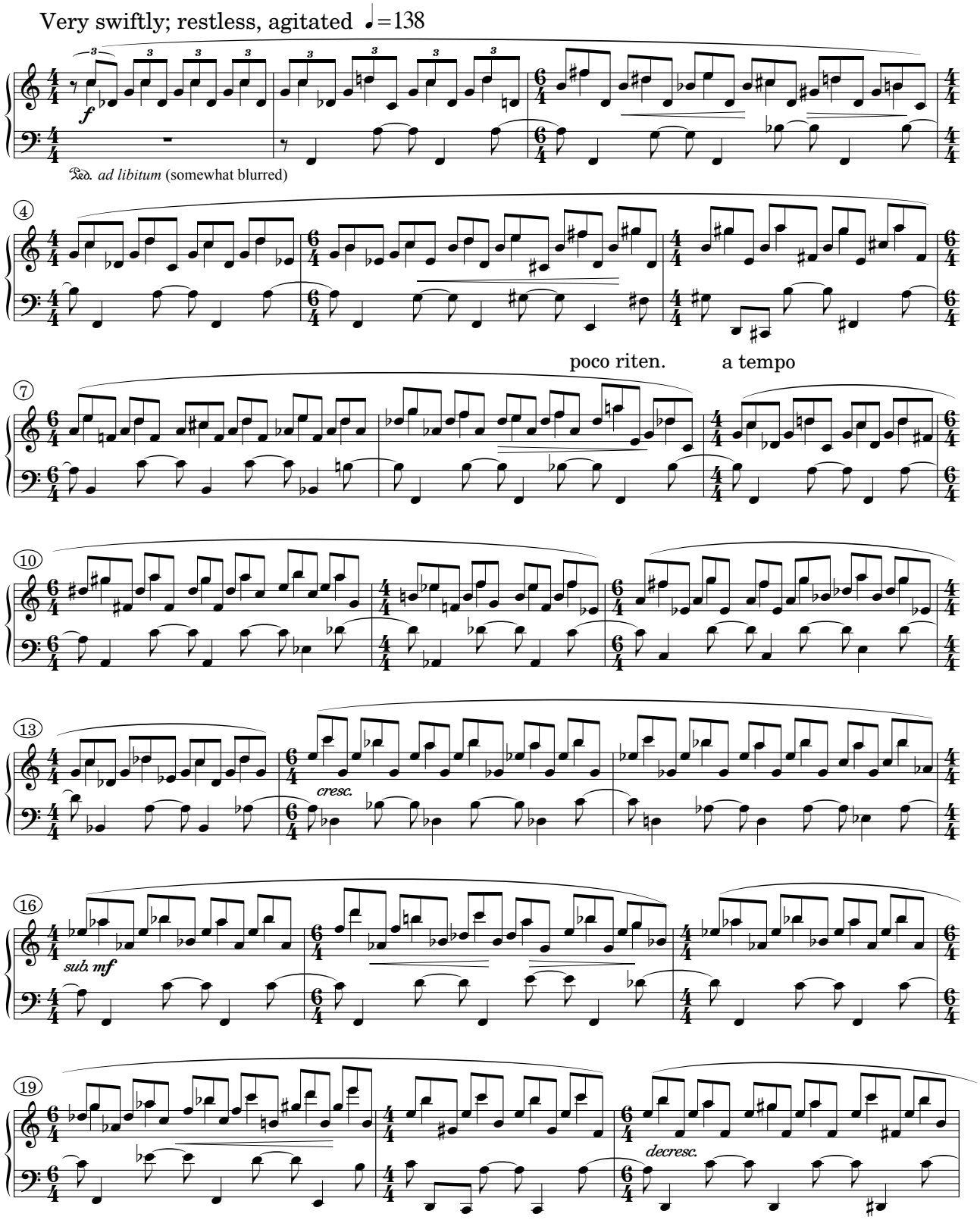
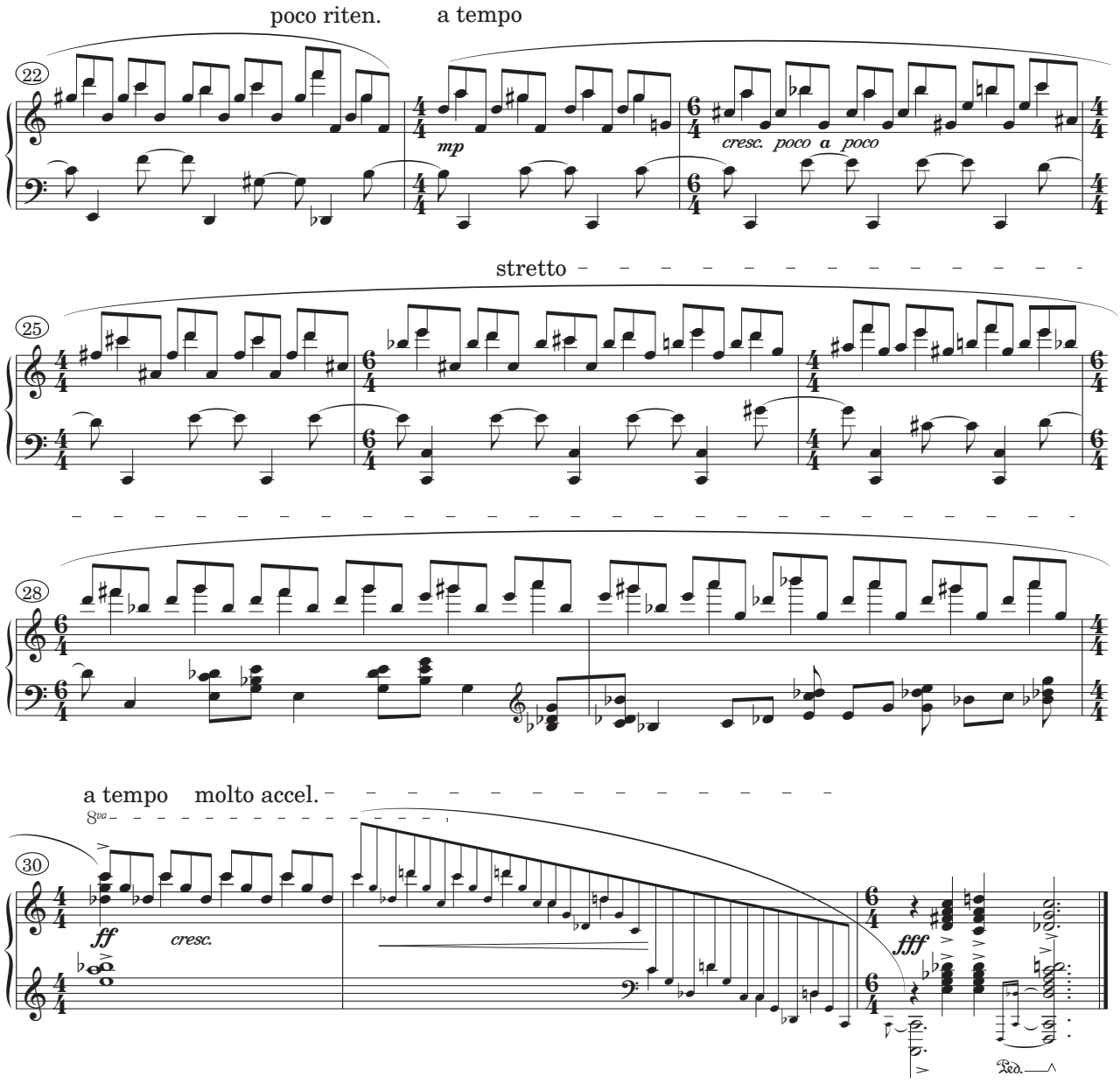
book 1, no. 3

(after Chopin)



book 1, no. 4

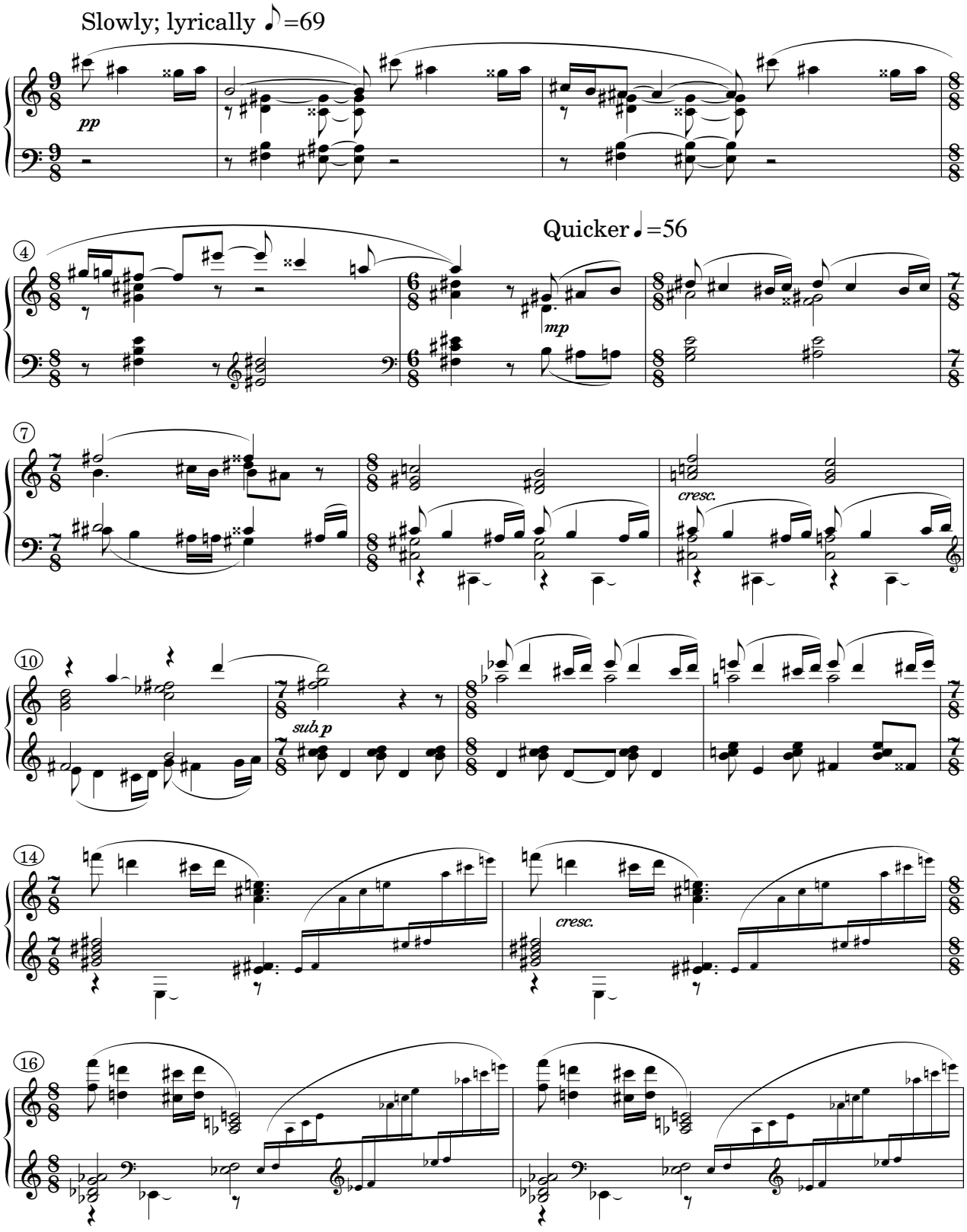

Very swiftly; restless, agitated ♩=138
f
Ped. ad libitum (somewhat blurred)
poco riten.
a tempo
cresc.
sub. mf
decresc.

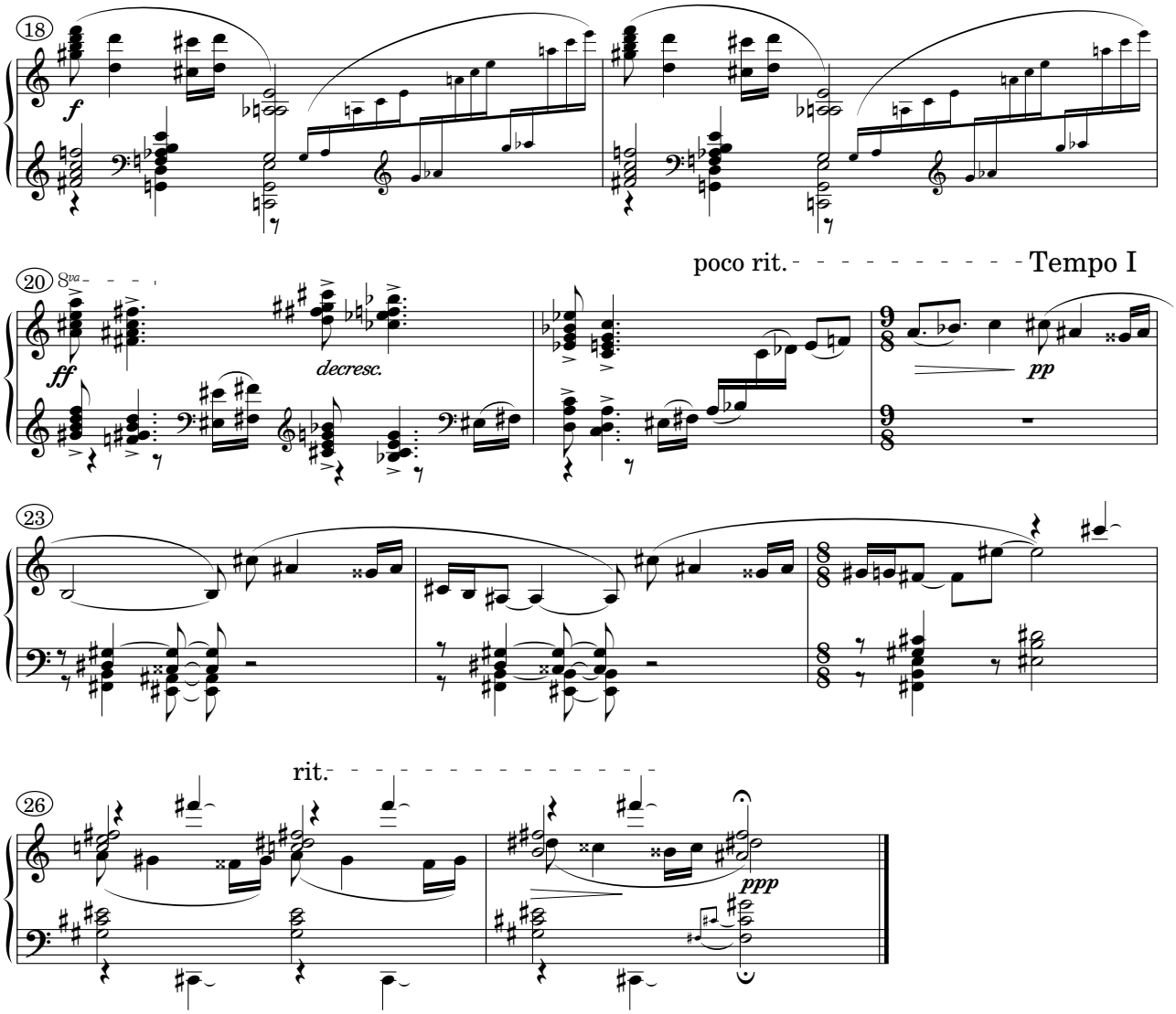

poco riten.
a tempo
22
mp
cresc. poco a poco
stretto
25
28
a tempo molto accel.
8va
30
ff
cresc.
fff
Ped.

for Lionel Tanod

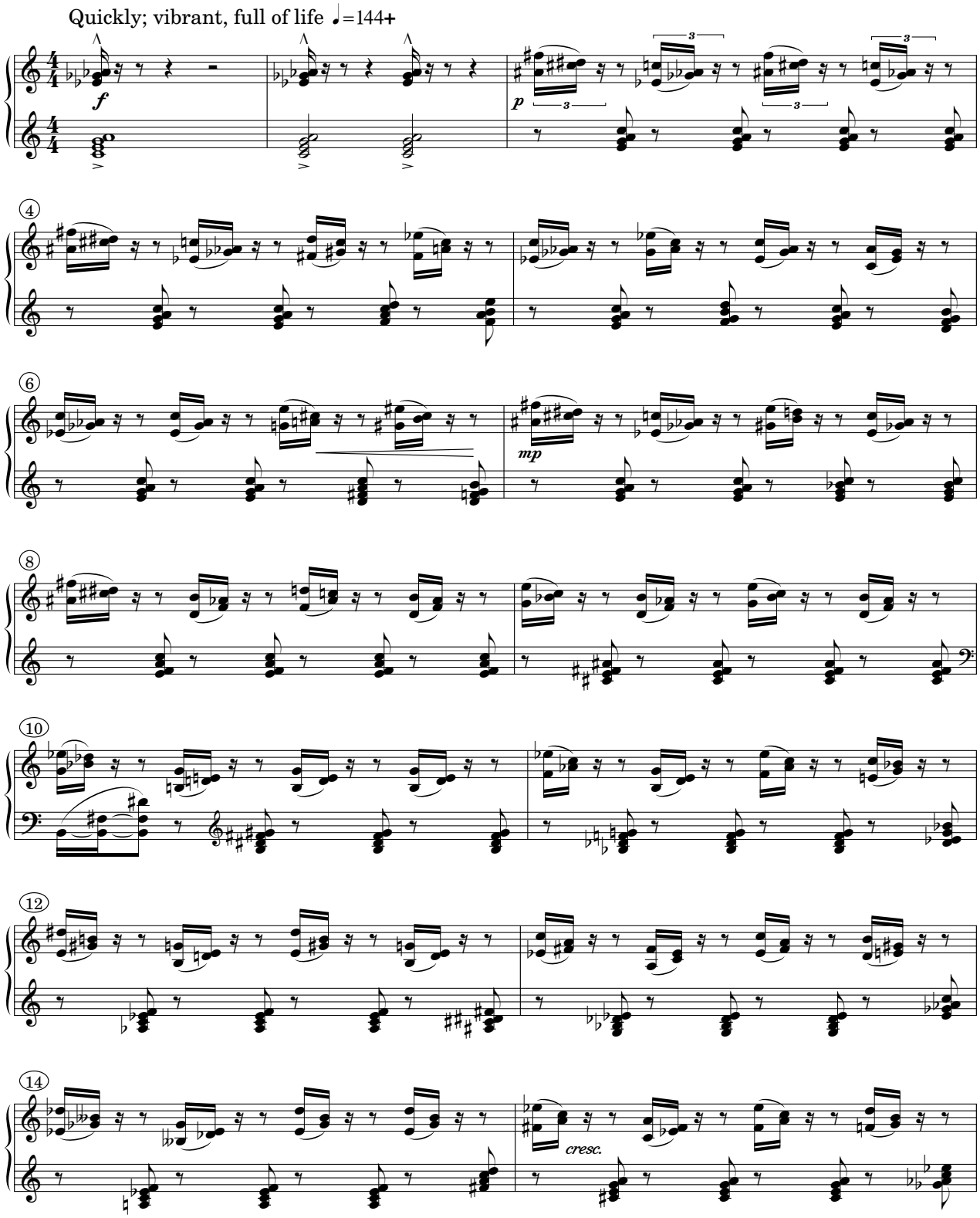
book 1, no. 5

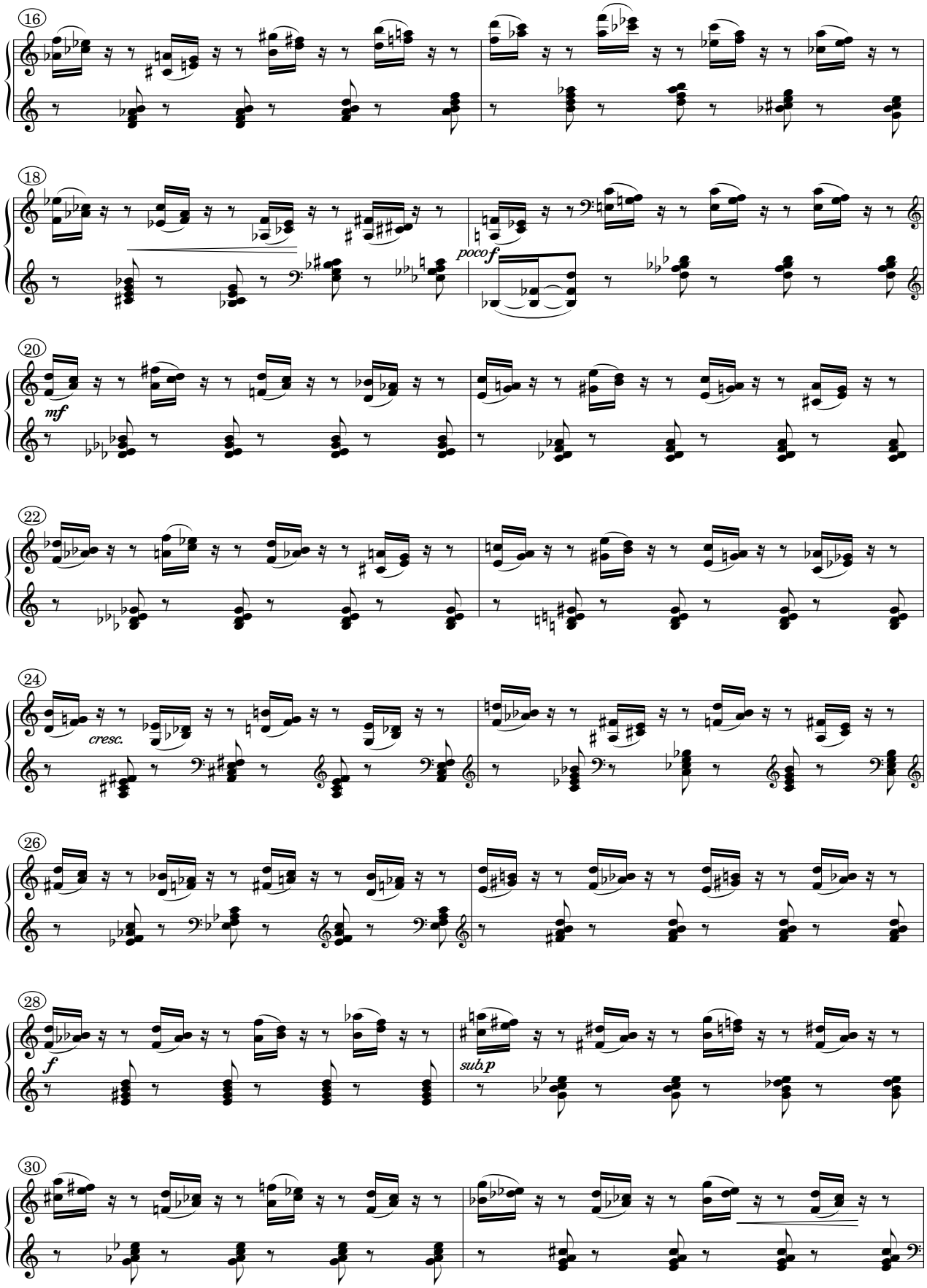
(after Debussy)

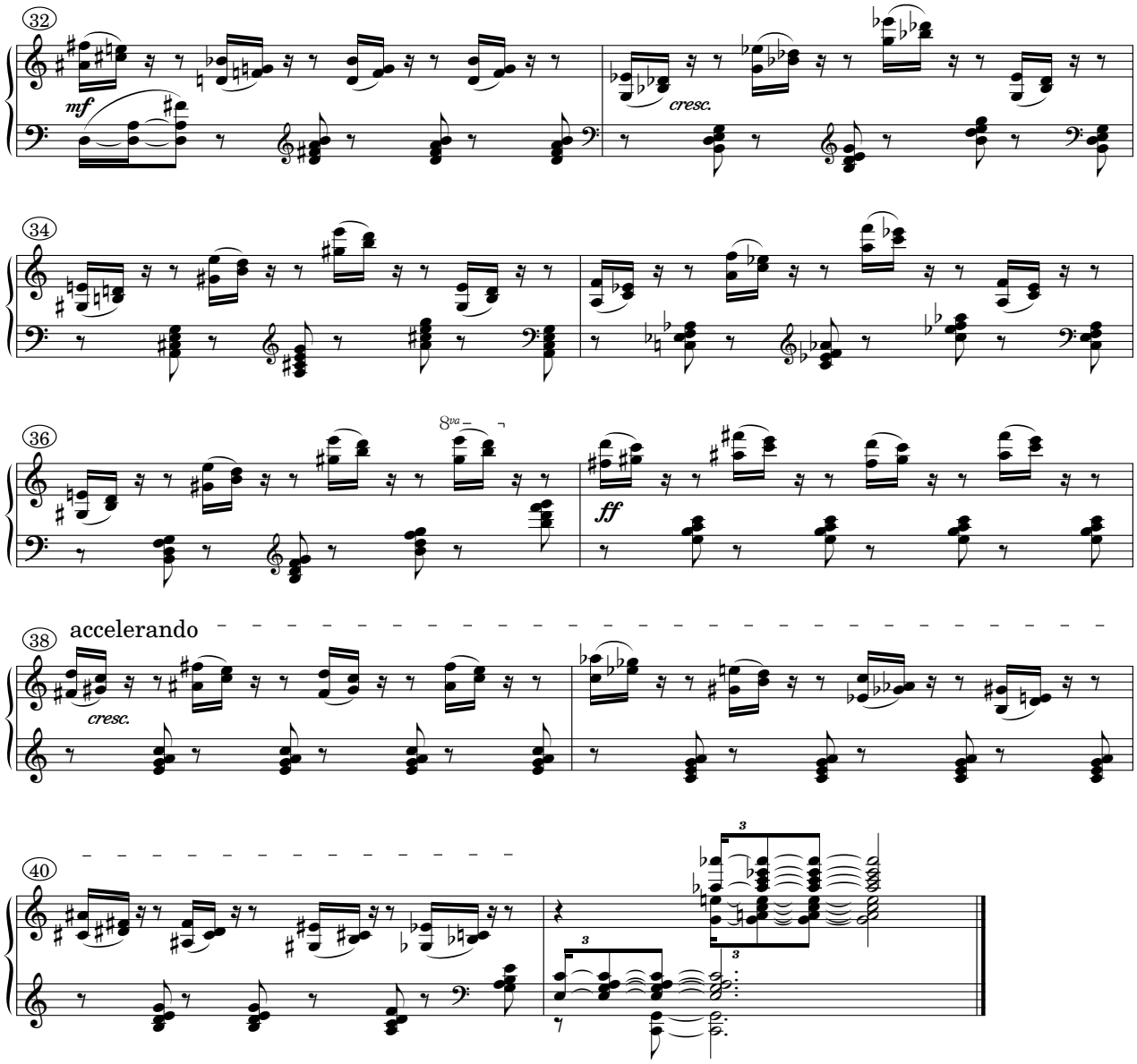



18
f
20
8va
ff
decresc.
poco rit.
Tempo I
pp
23
rit.
26
ppp

book 1, no. 6




16
18
poco f
20
mf
22
24
cresc.
26
28
f
sub. p
30


32
mf
cresc.
34
36
8va
ff
accelerando
cresc.
38
40
3
3
3

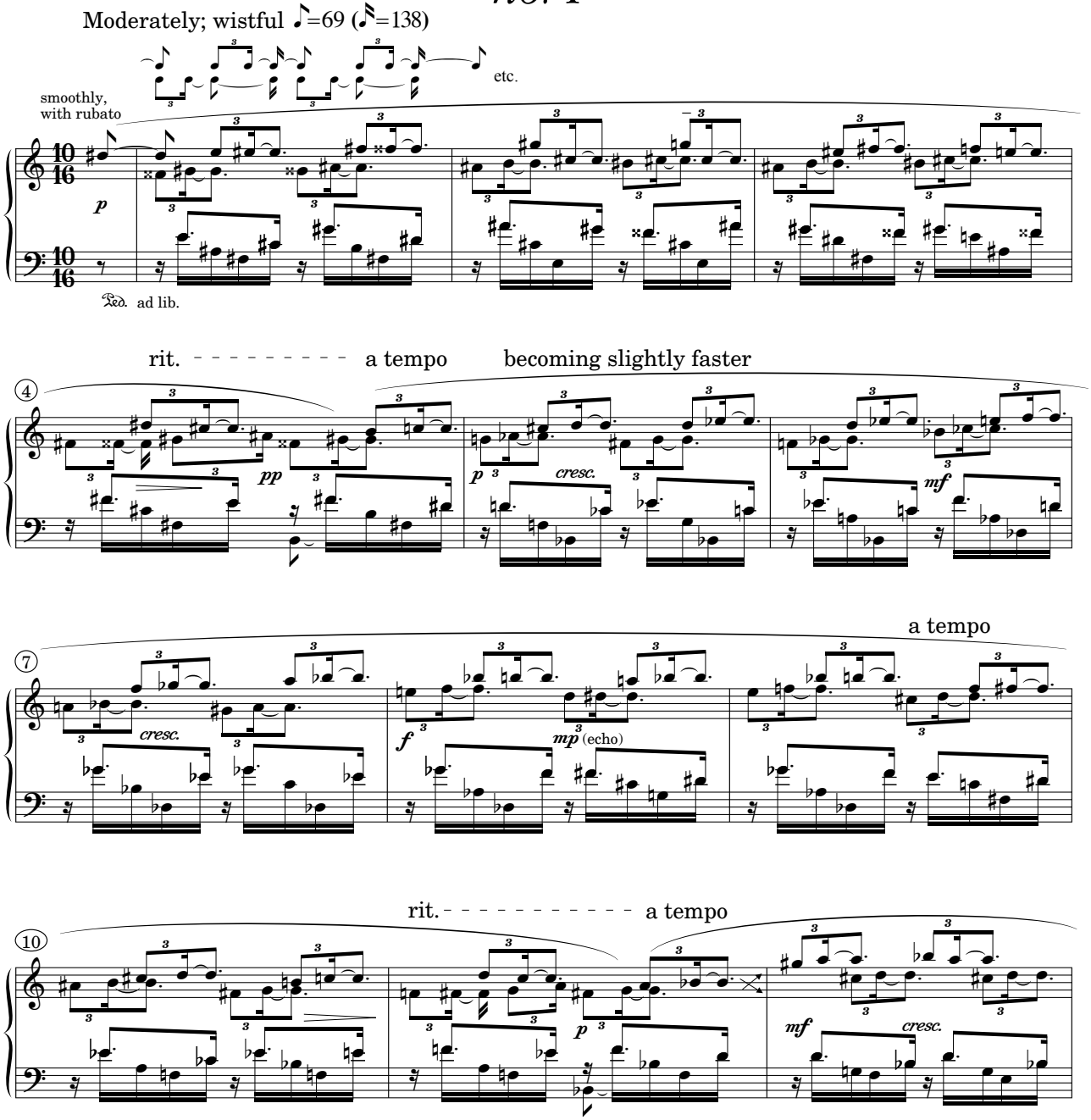
pattern preludes

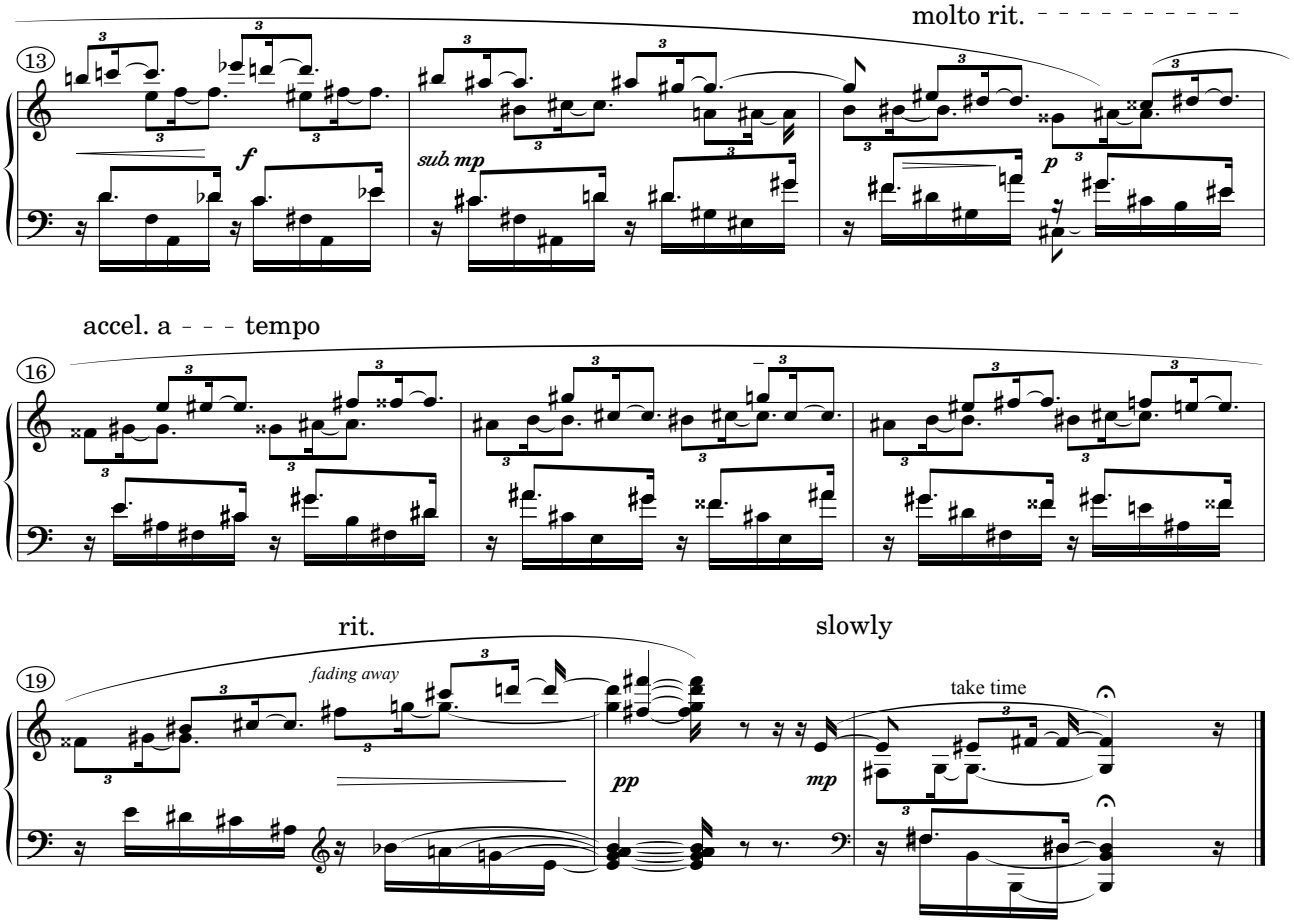
Karim Al-Zand

book 2

for Brian Connelly

no. 1

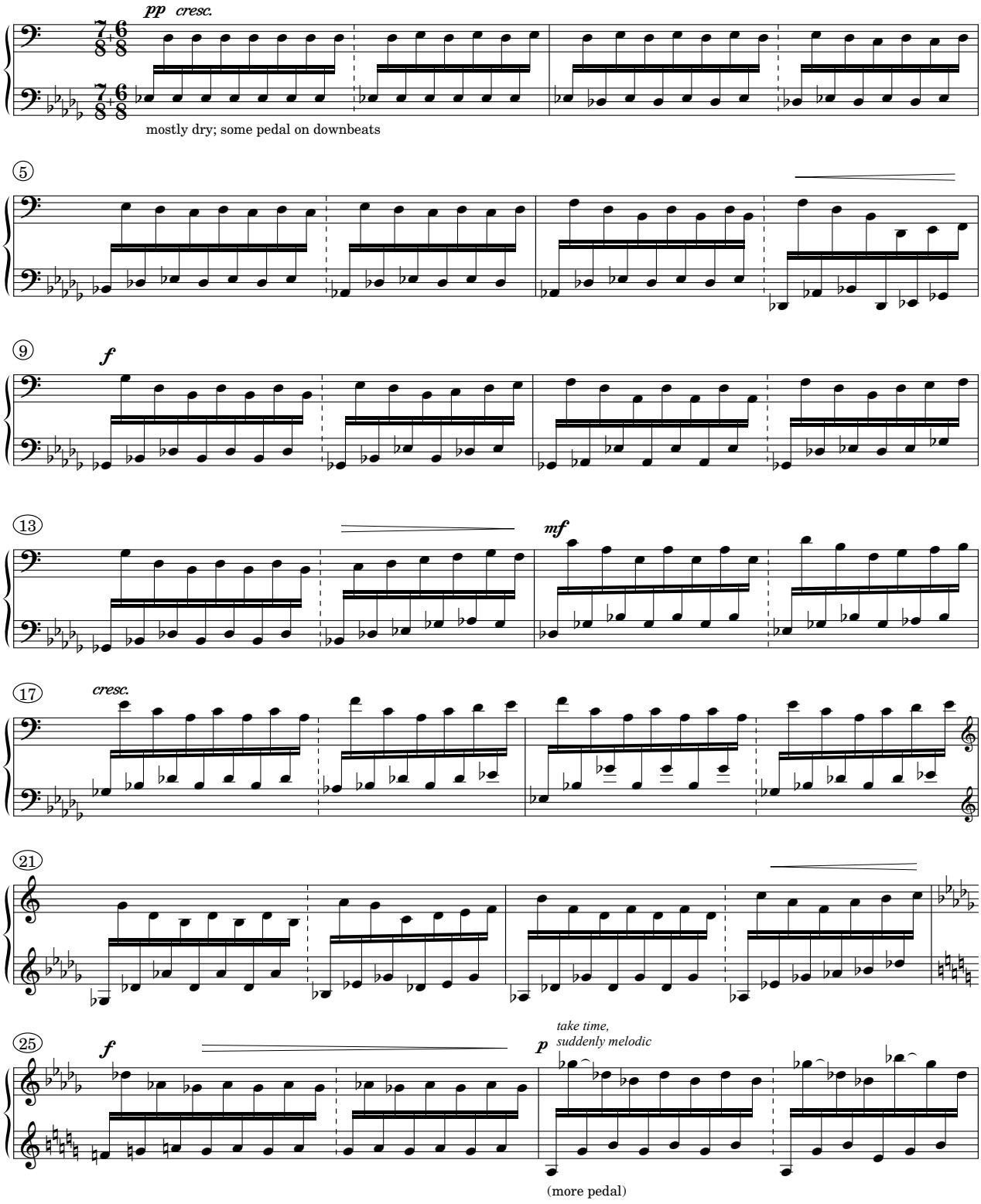


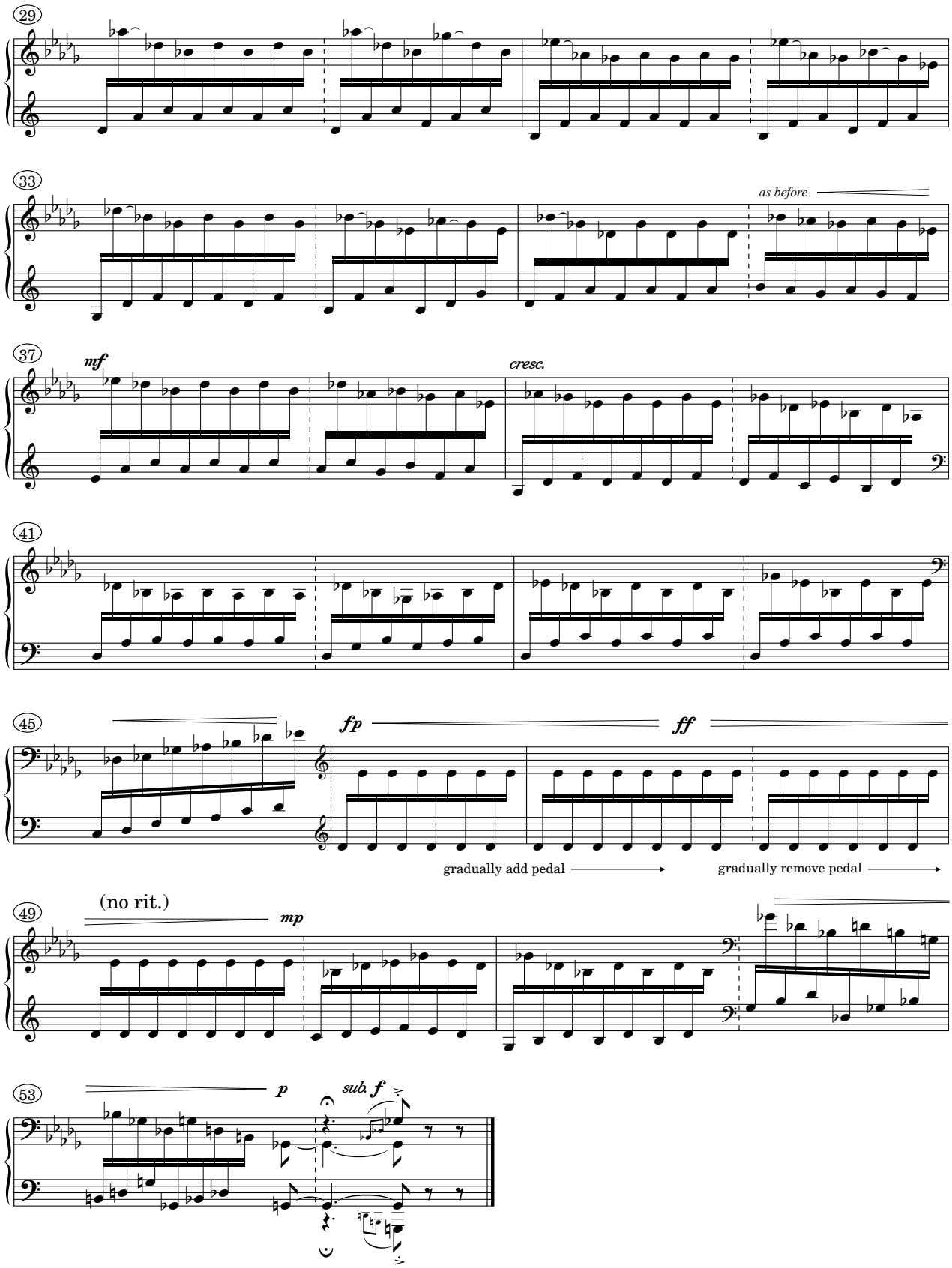

molto rit.
13
f
sub. mp
p
accel. a - - - tempo
16
rit.
slowly
19
fading away
pp
mp
take time

book 2, no. 2

(figure-ground)

Extremely quickly; manic, mechanical ♩=160 (♪=320)




29
33
as before
37
mf
cresc.
41
45
fp
ff
gradually add pedal
gradually remove pedal
49
(no rit.)
mp
53
p
sub. f

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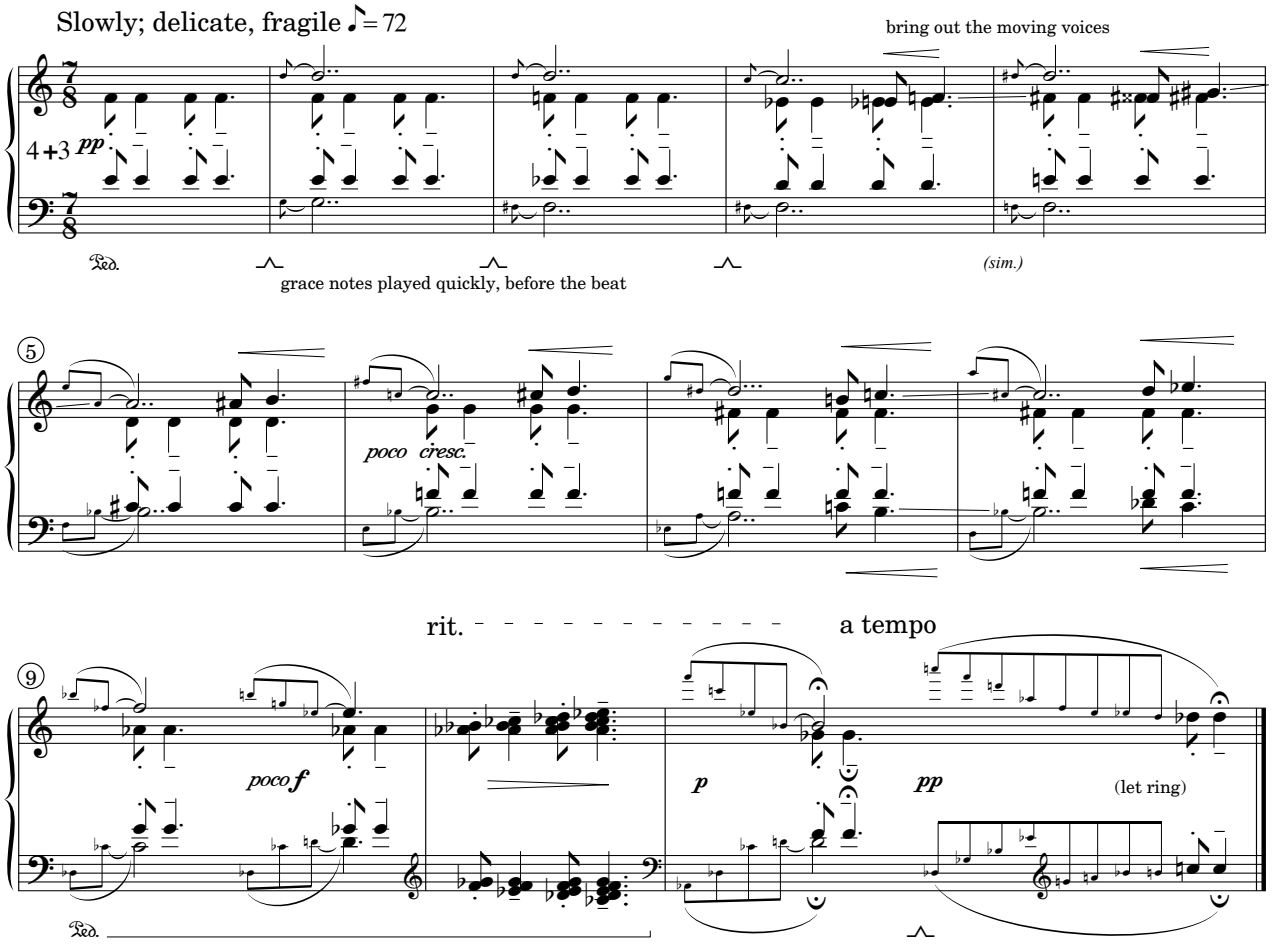
book 2, no. 3

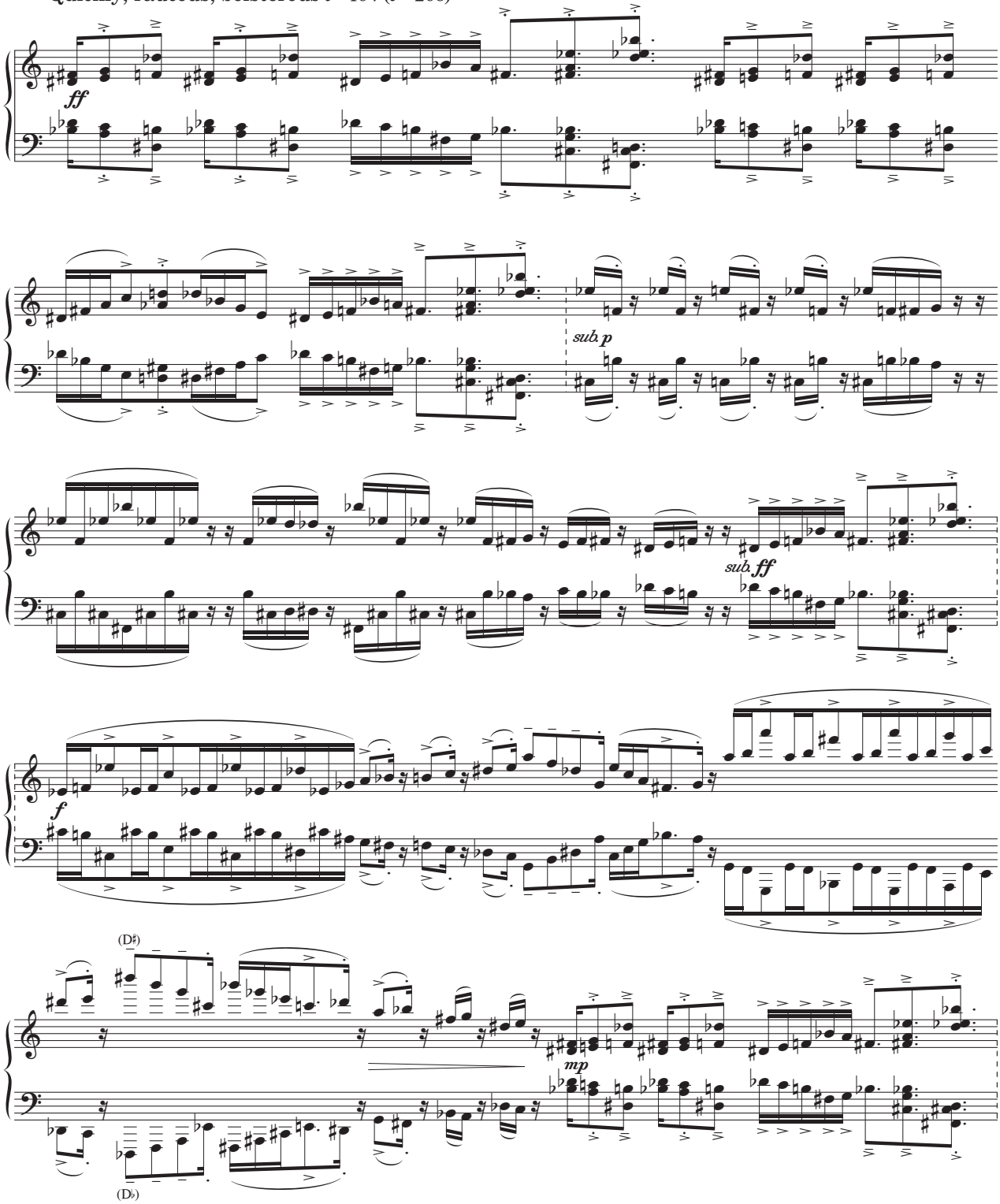
(ripple effect)

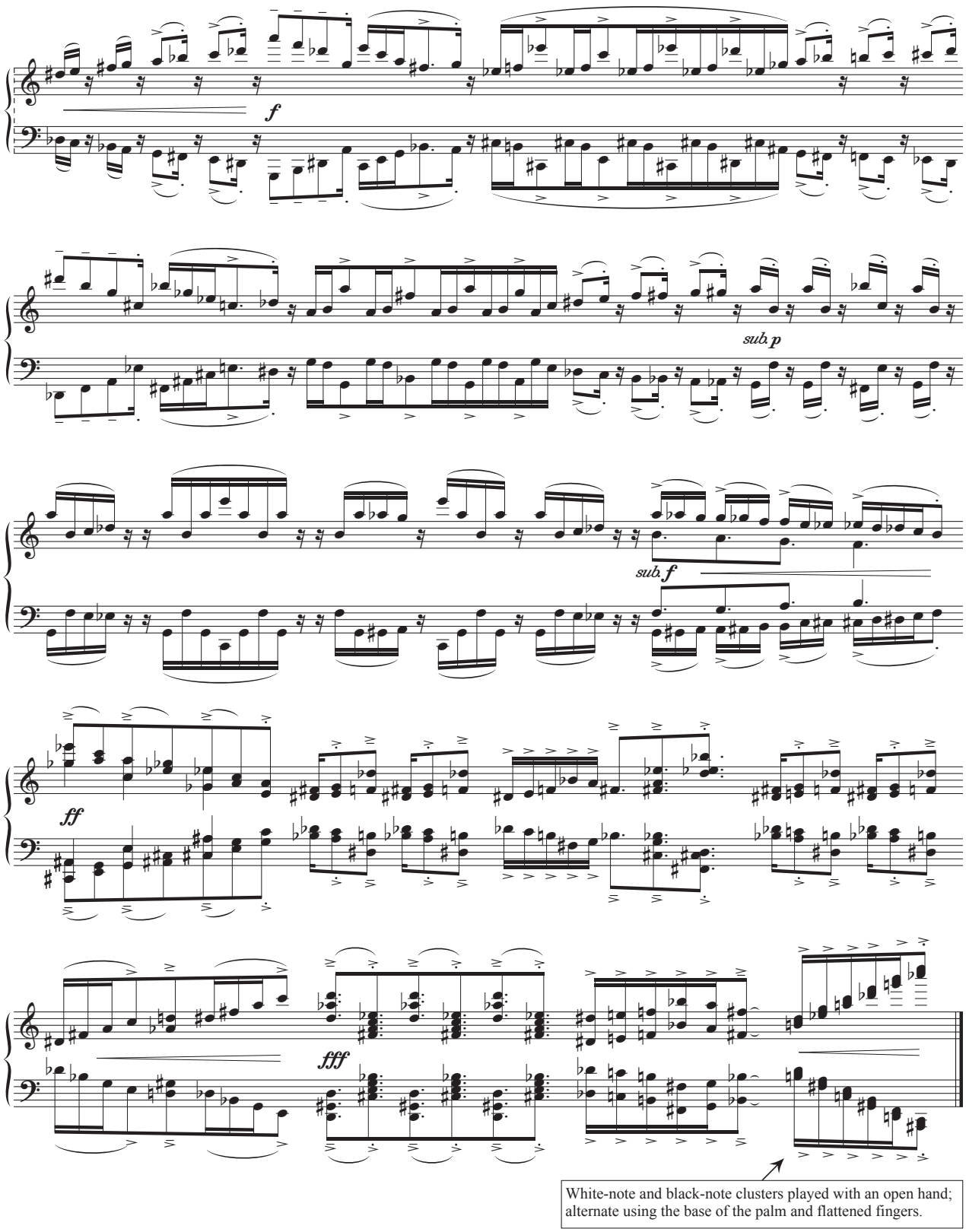


book 2, no. 4

(mirror game)

Quickly; raucous, boisterous ♩=104 (♪=208)




f
sub. p
sub. f
ff
fff
White-note and black-note clusters played with an open hand;
alternate using the base of the palm and flattened fingers.

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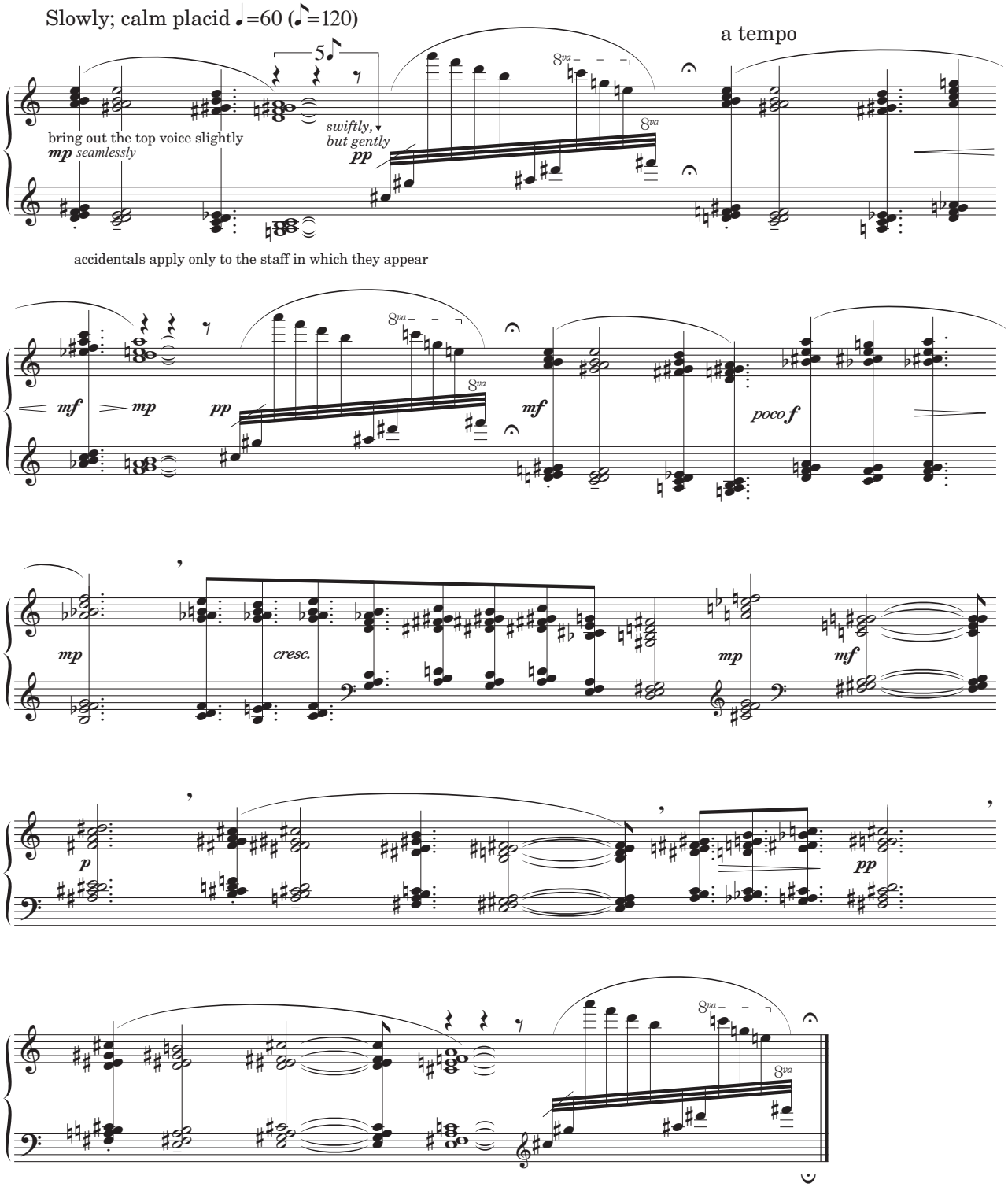
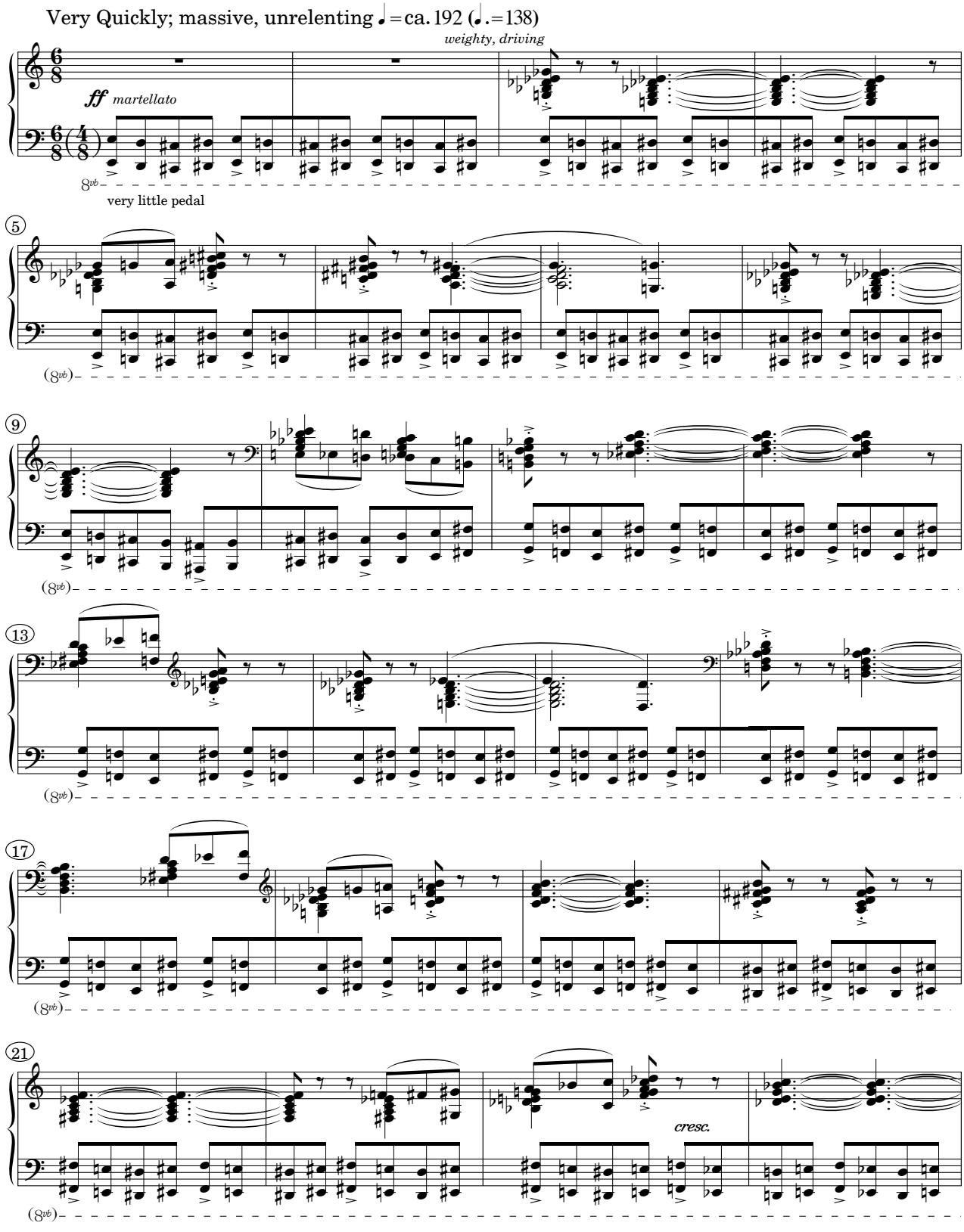
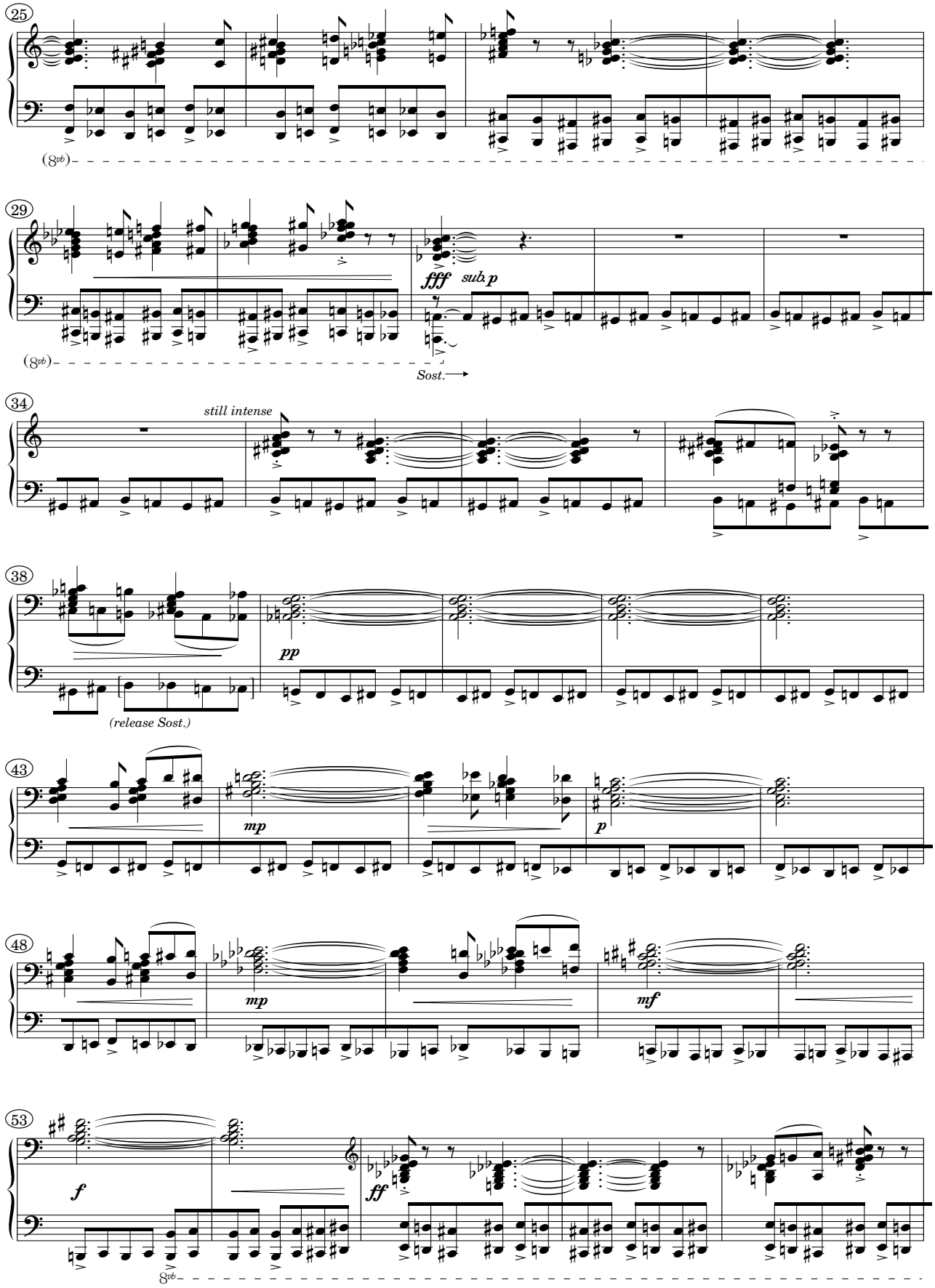
book 2, no. 5

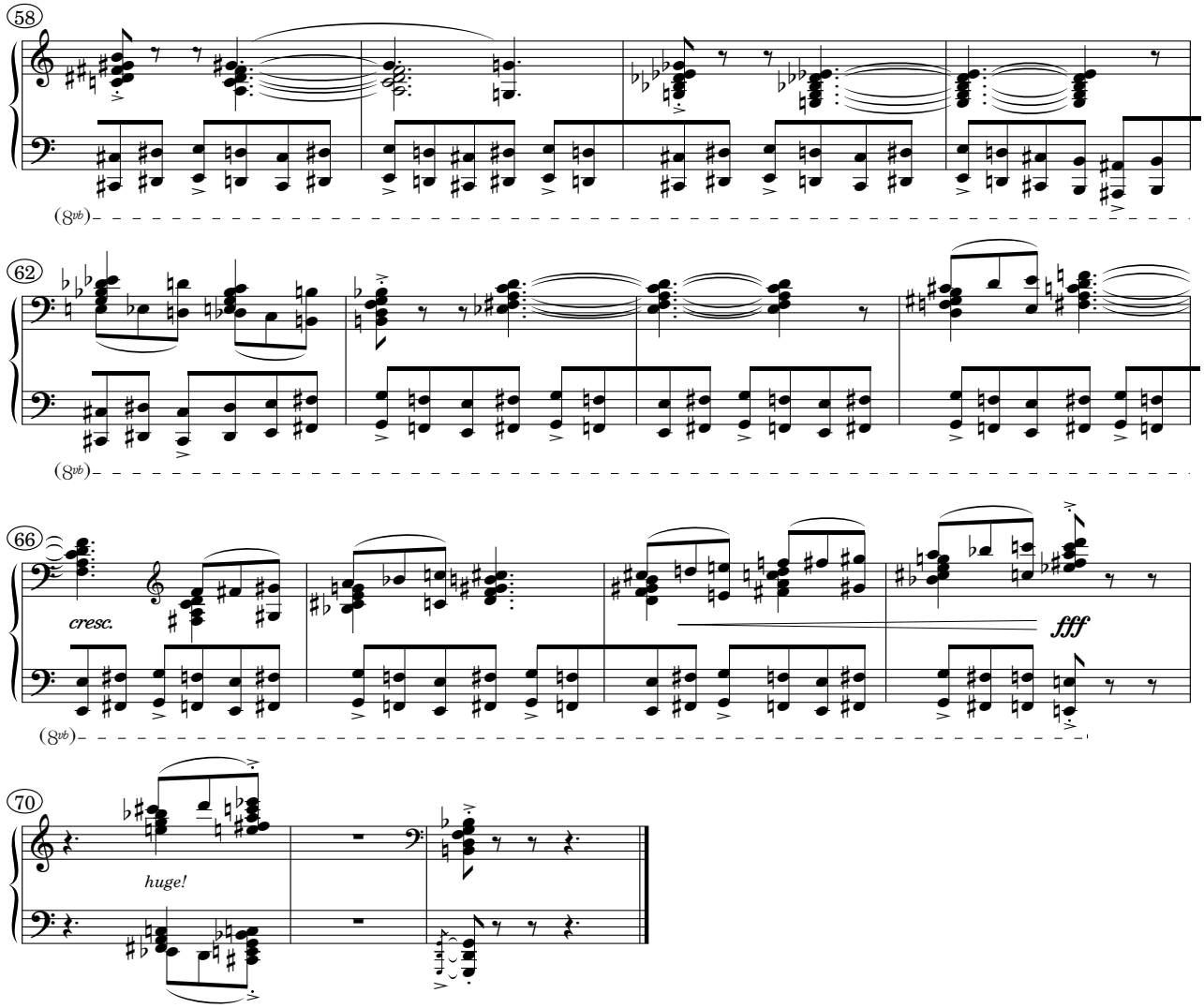
(parallel play)



book 2, no. 6


Very Quickly; massive, unrelenting ♩=ca. 192 (♩.=138)
weighty, driving
ff martellato
very little pedal
cresc.


25
(8vb)
29
fff
sub. p
(8vb)
Sost.
34
still intense
38
pp
(release Sost.)
43
mp
p
48
mp
mf
53
f
ff
8vb


58
(8vb)
62
(8vb)
66
cresc.
fff
(8vb)
70
huge!

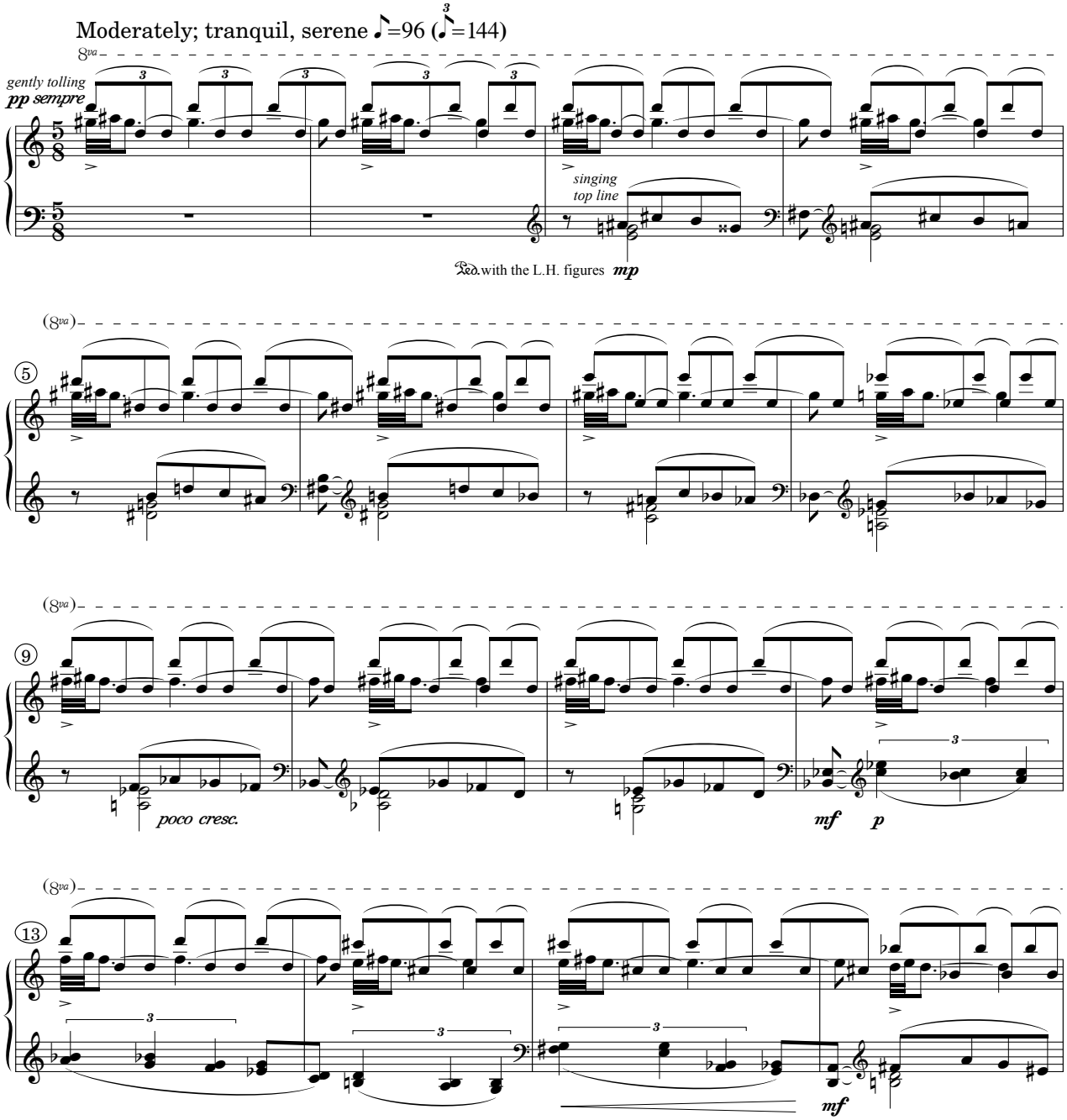
pattern preludes

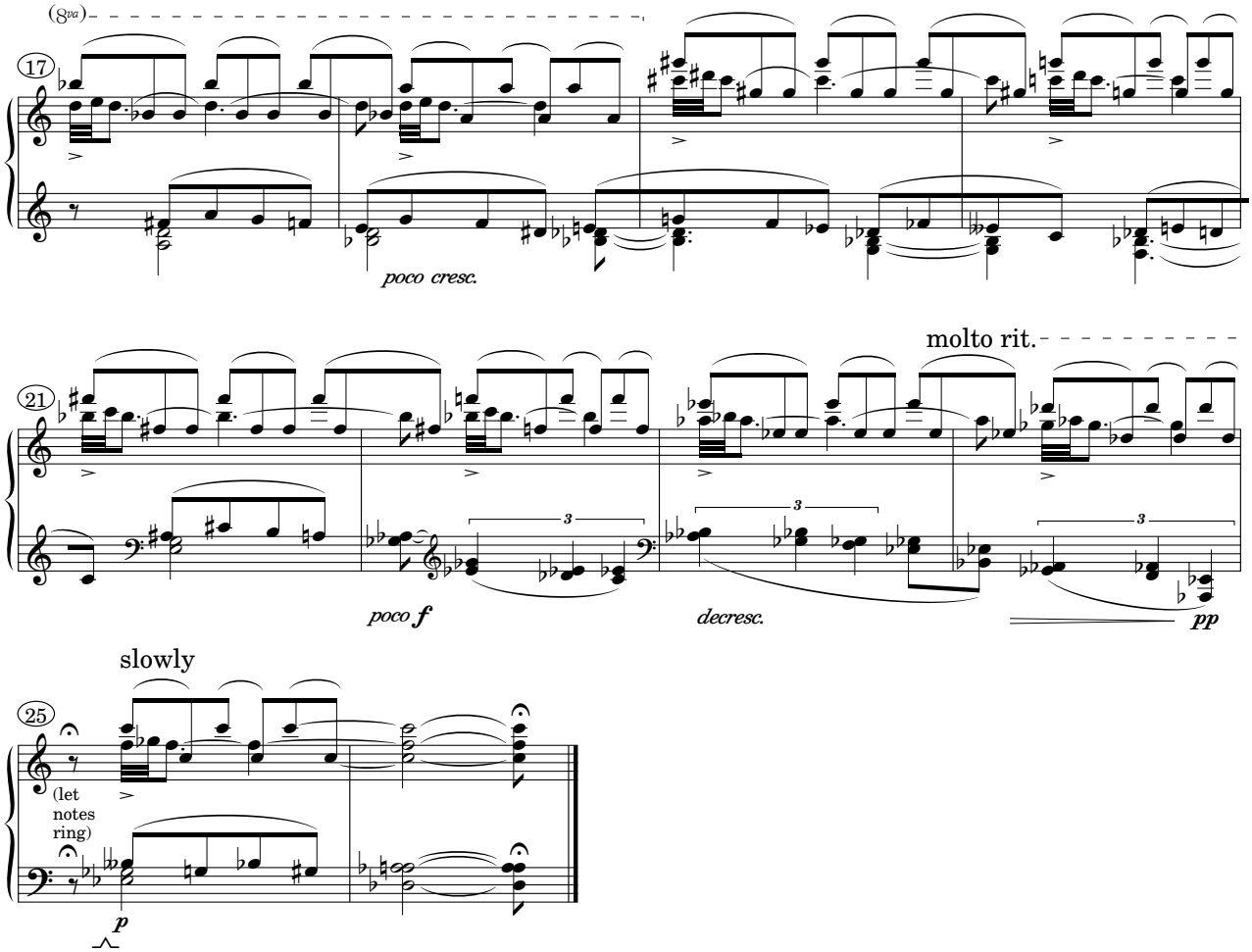
Karim Al-Zand

book 3

for intermediate pianist

no. 1




(8va)
17
poco cresc.
molto rit.
21
poco f
decresc.
pp
slowly
25
(let notes ring)
p

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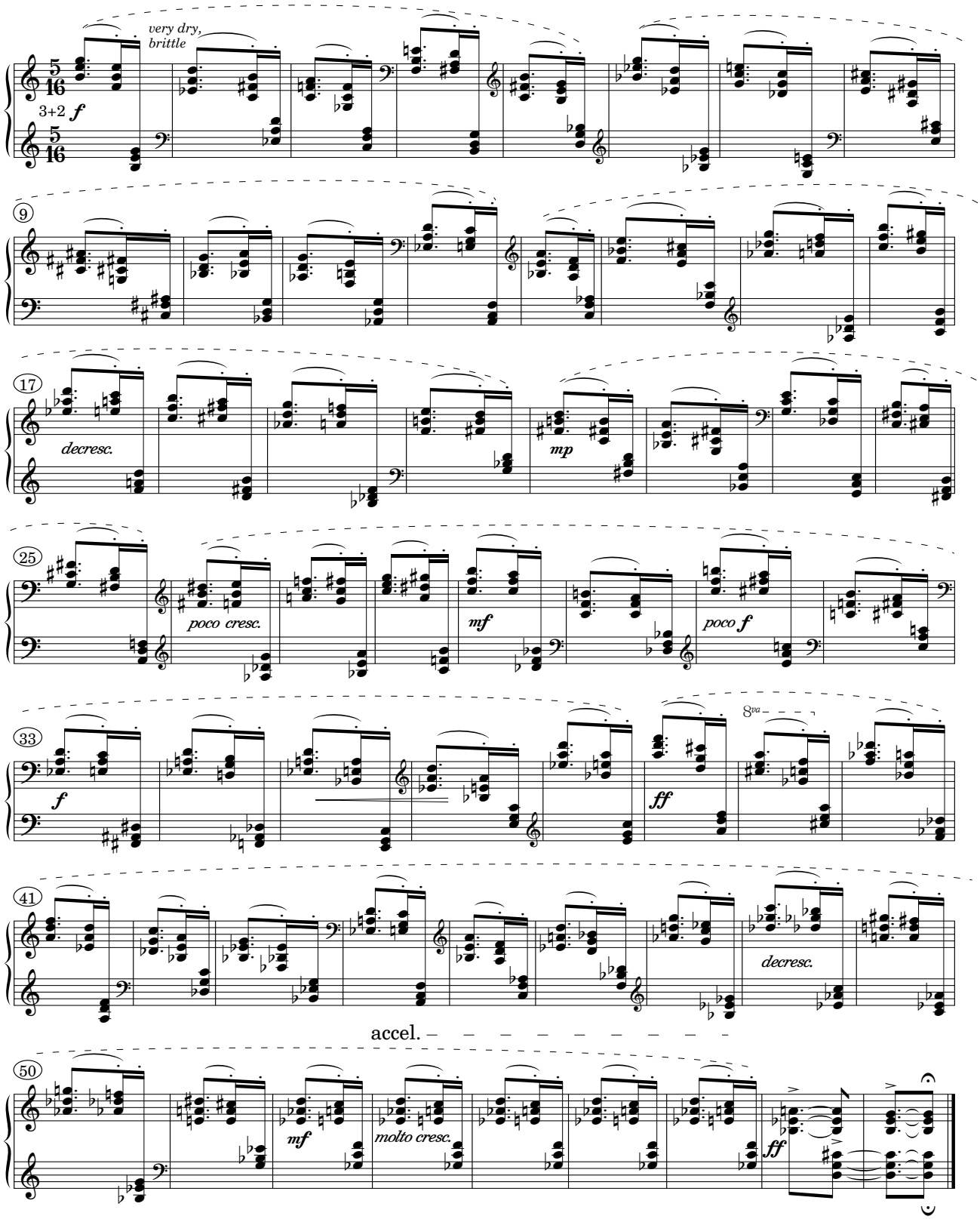
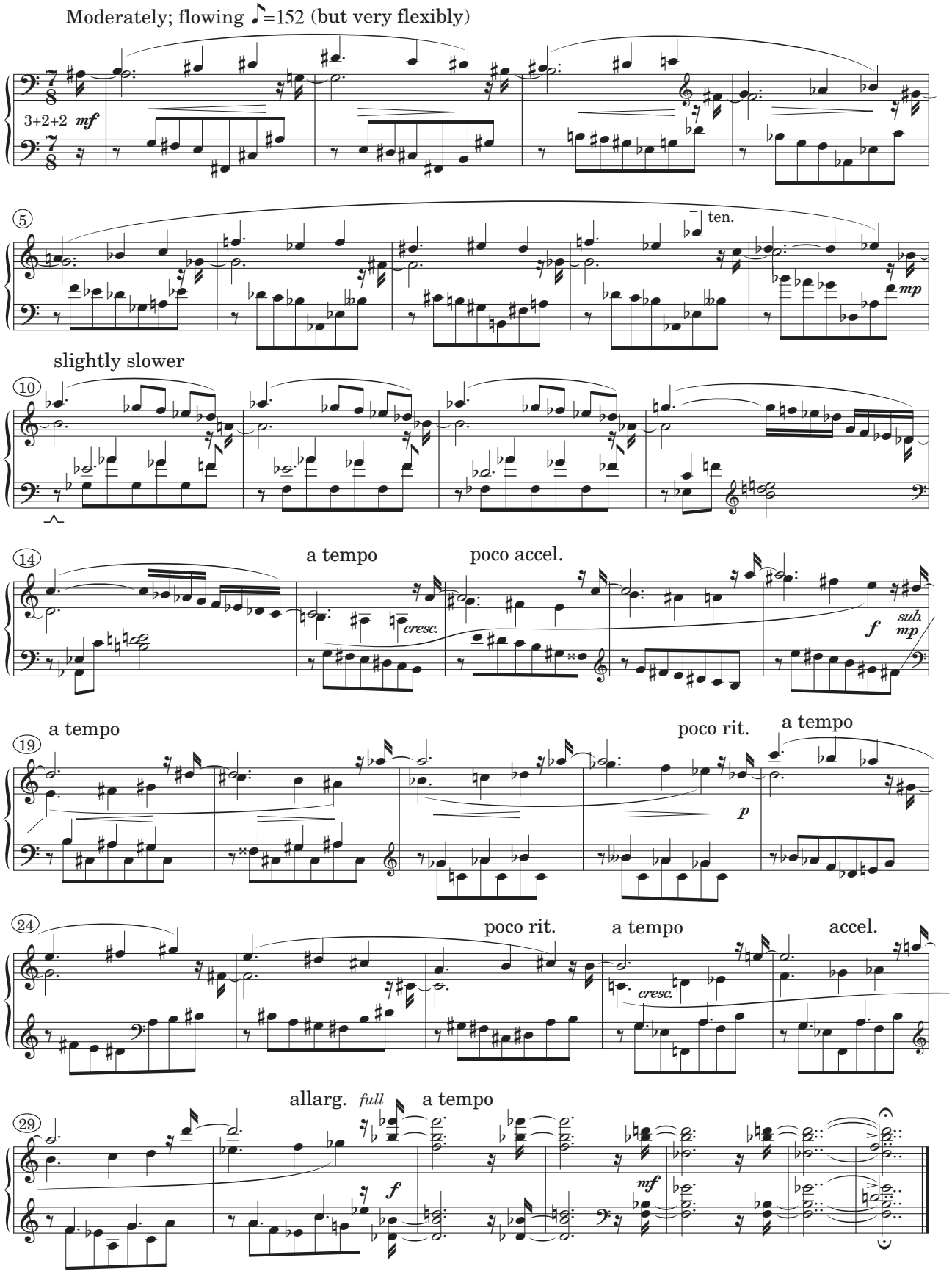
book 3, no. 2

Very Quickly; fidgety, nervous ♪=184 (𝅘𝅥𝅯=368)



commissioned by the Renée B. Fisher Competition for young pianists

book 3, no. 3

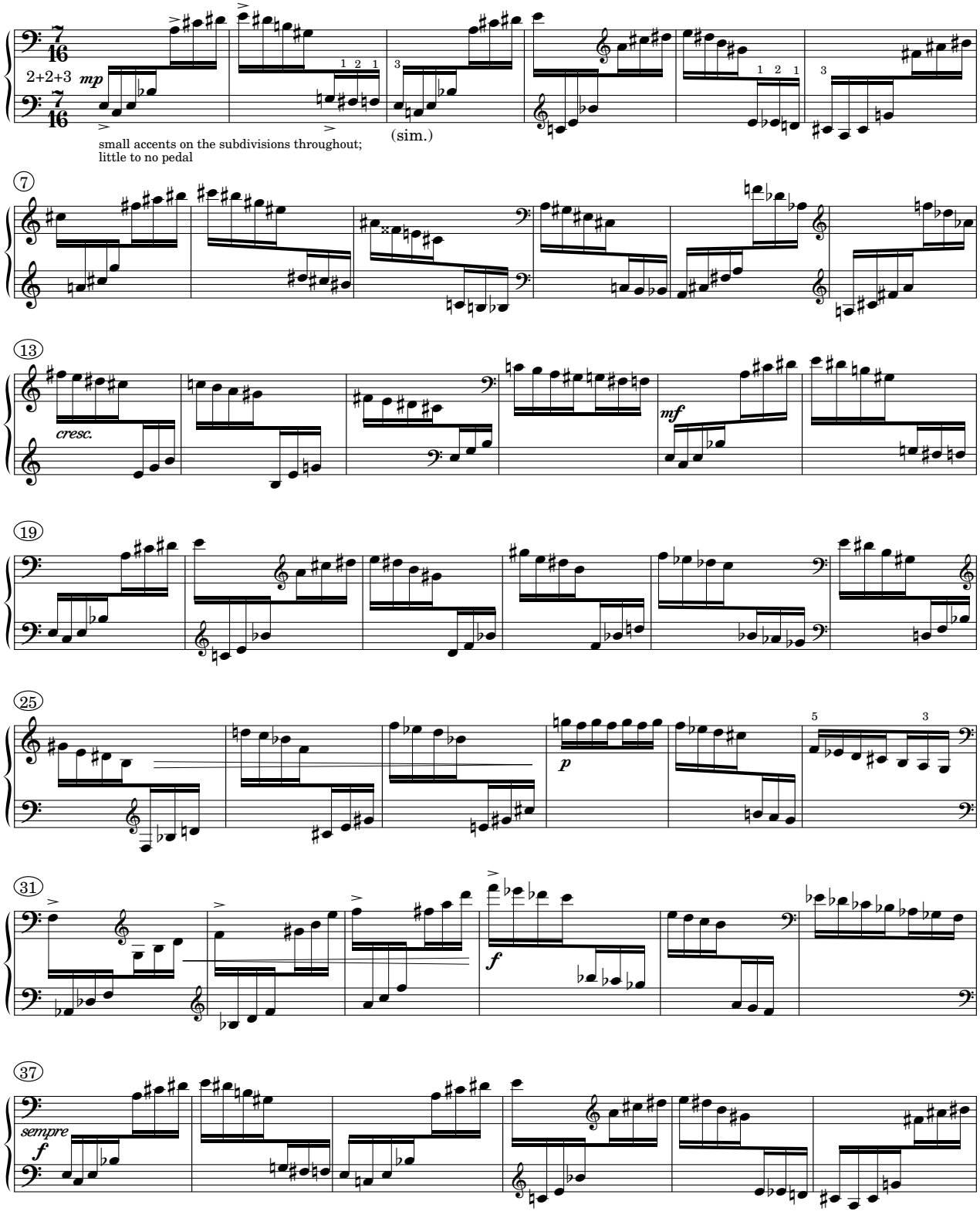


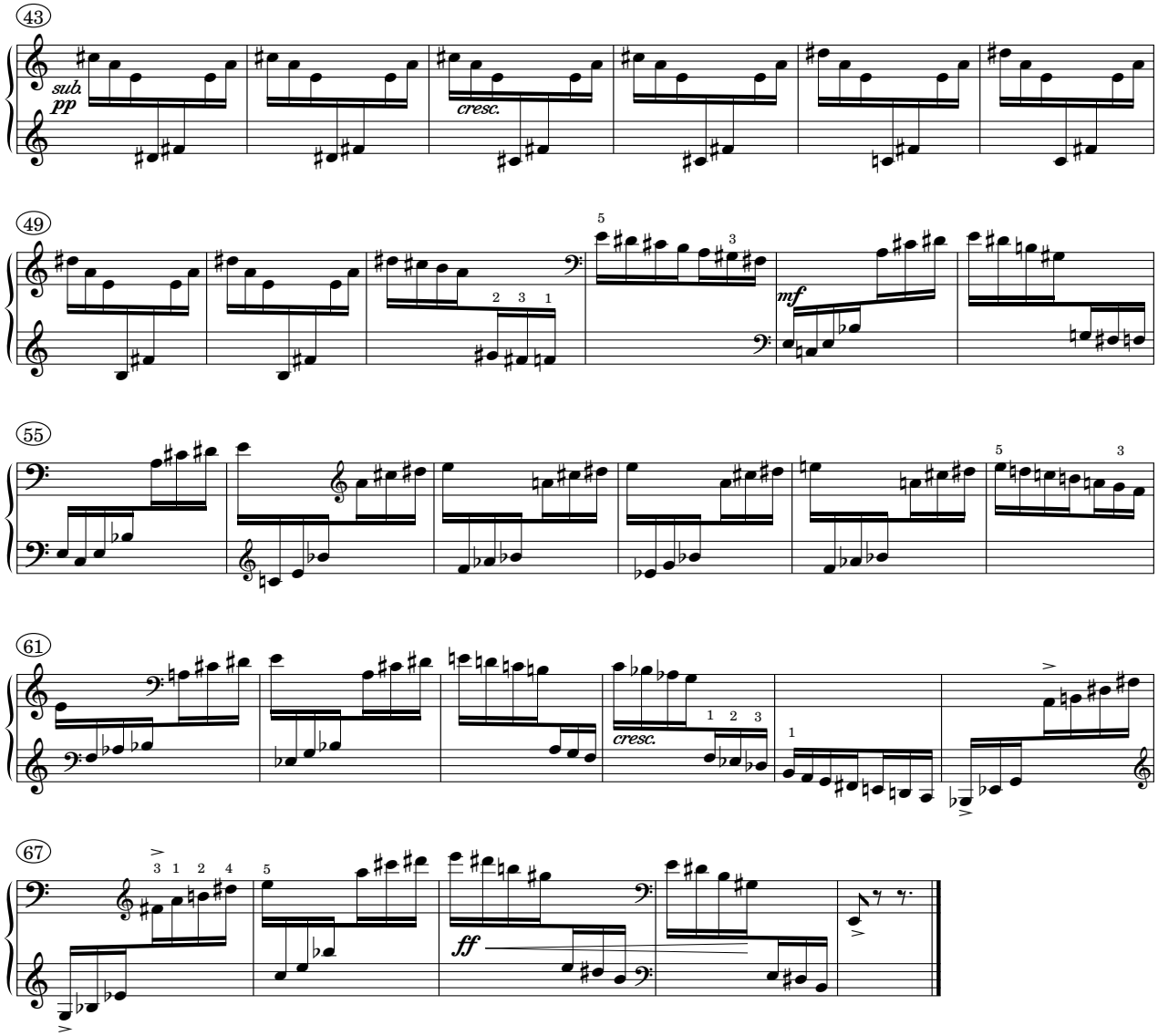
commissioned by the Renée B. Fisher Competition for young pianists

book 3, no. 4

(solfeggio)

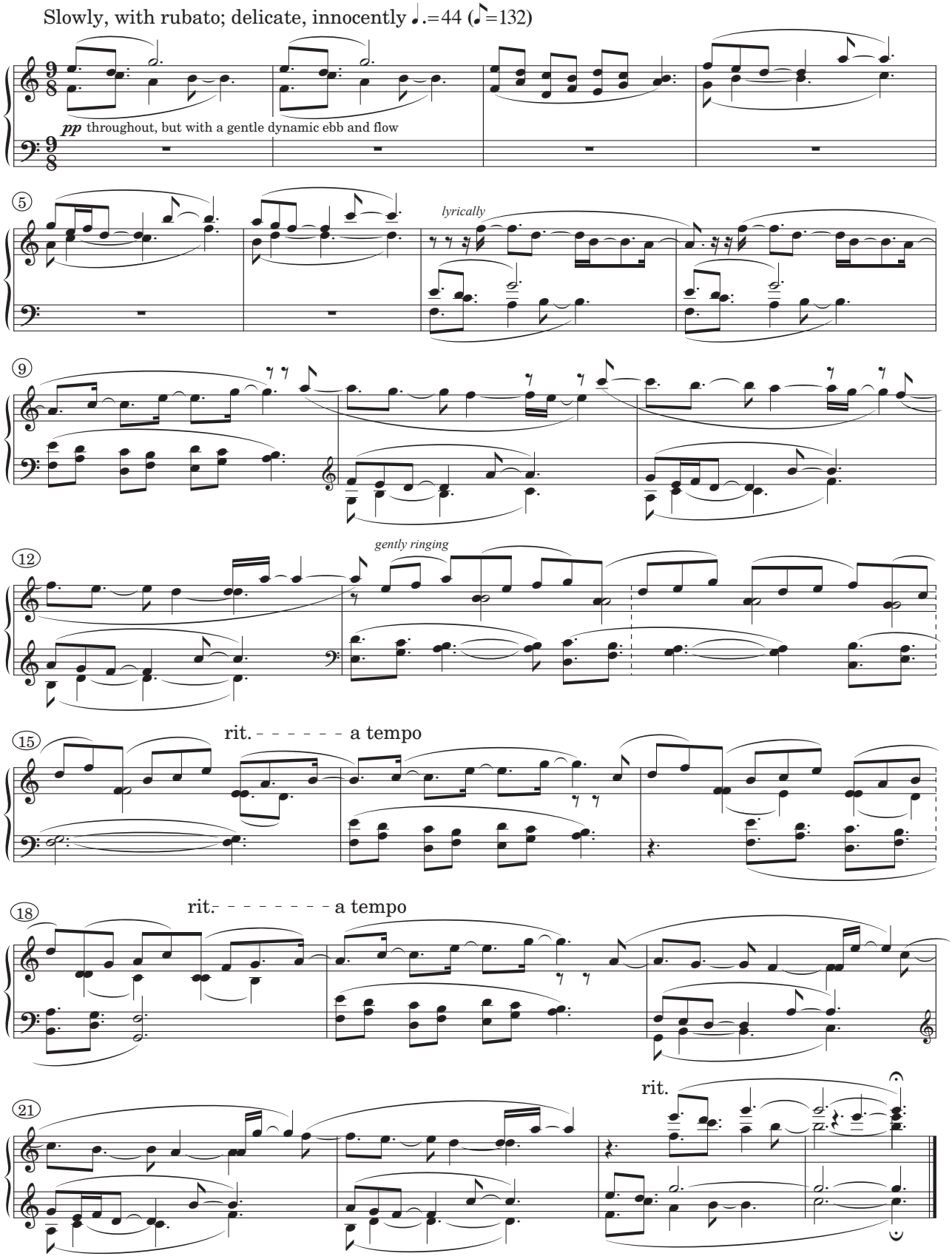
Very quickly; nimble, playful ♩.♪.=76



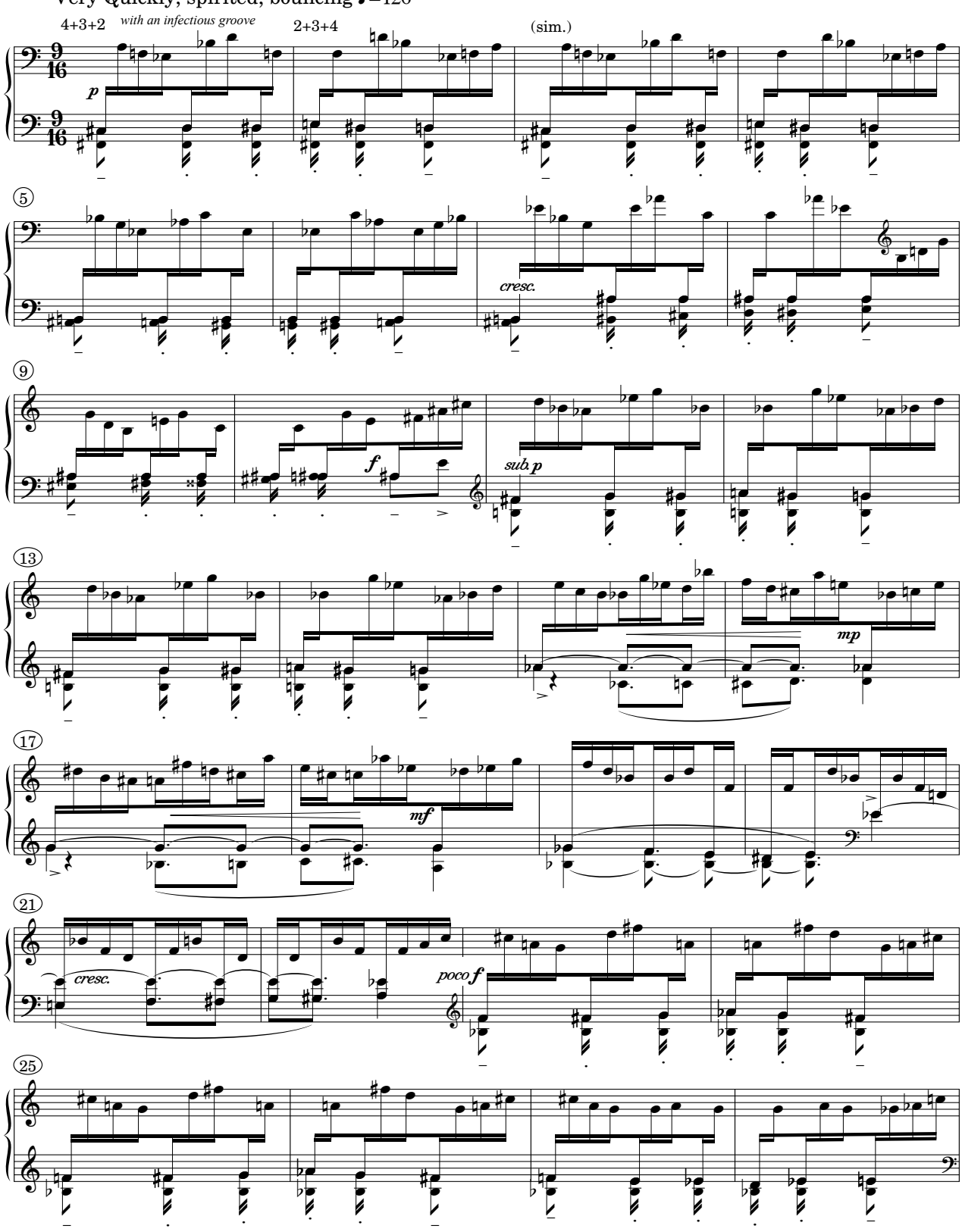

43
sub.
pp
cresc.
49
mf
55
61
cresc.
67
ff

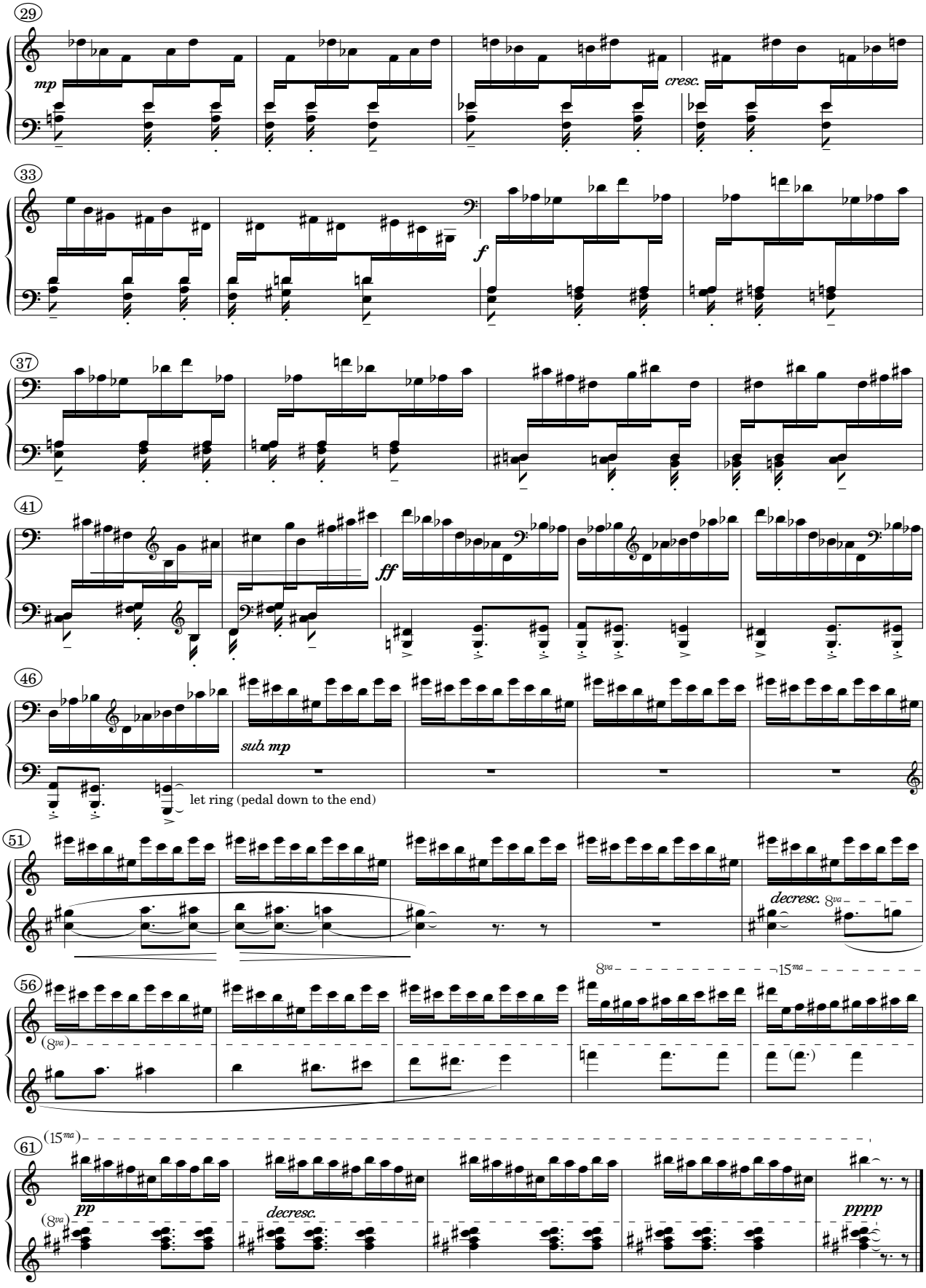
book 3, no. 5

(lullaby for Zayd)



book 3, no. 6


Very Quickly; spirited, bouncing ♩=126
4+3+2
with an infectious groove
2+3+4
(sim.)
p
5
cresc.
9
f
sub. p
13
mp
17
mf
21
cresc.
poco f
25


29
mp
cresc.
33
f
37
41
ff
46
sub. mp
let ring (pedal down to the end)
51
decresc.
8va
56
8va
15ma
61
(15ma)
pp
8va
decresc.
pppp

pattern preludes

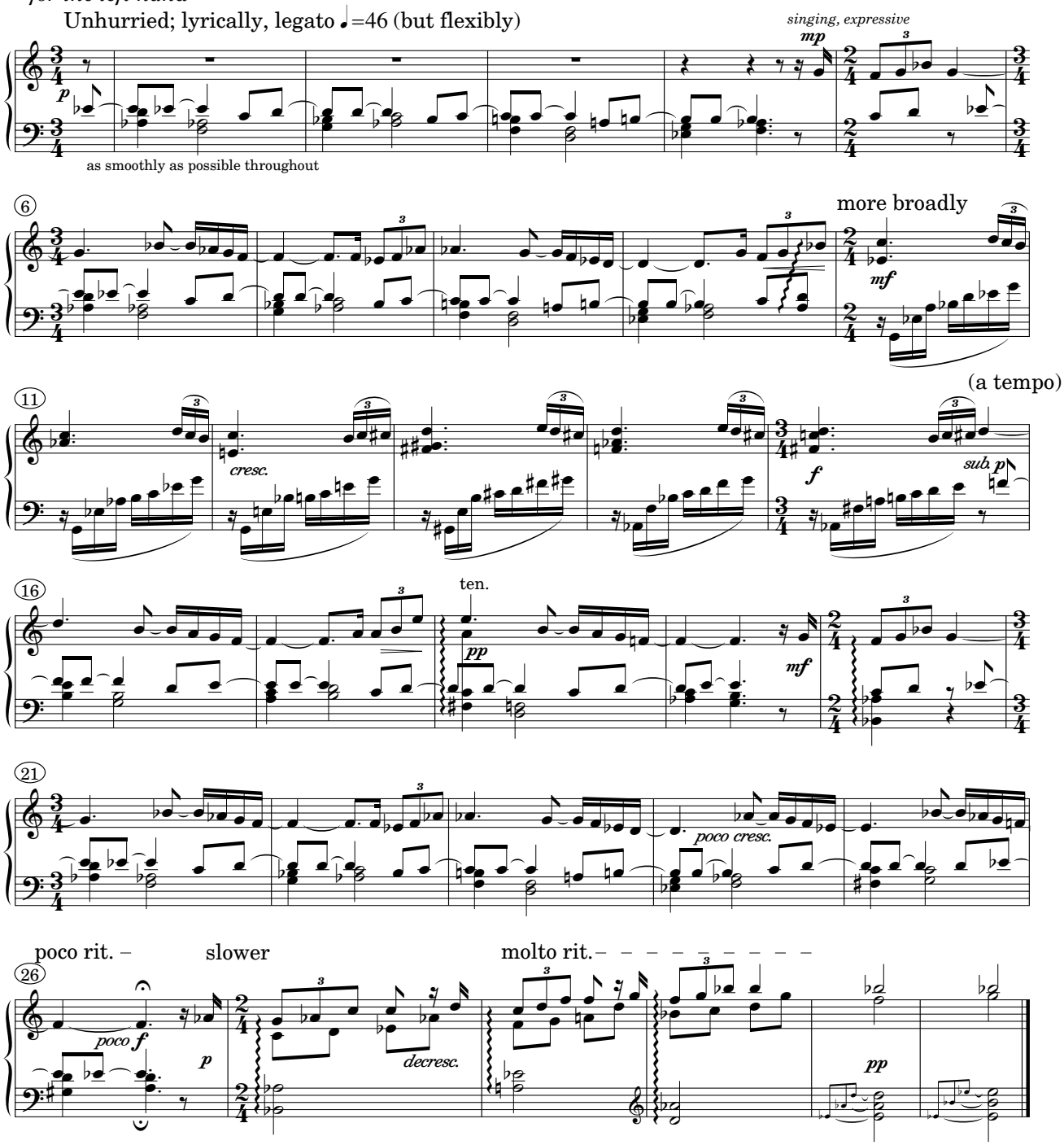
Karim Al-Zand

book 4

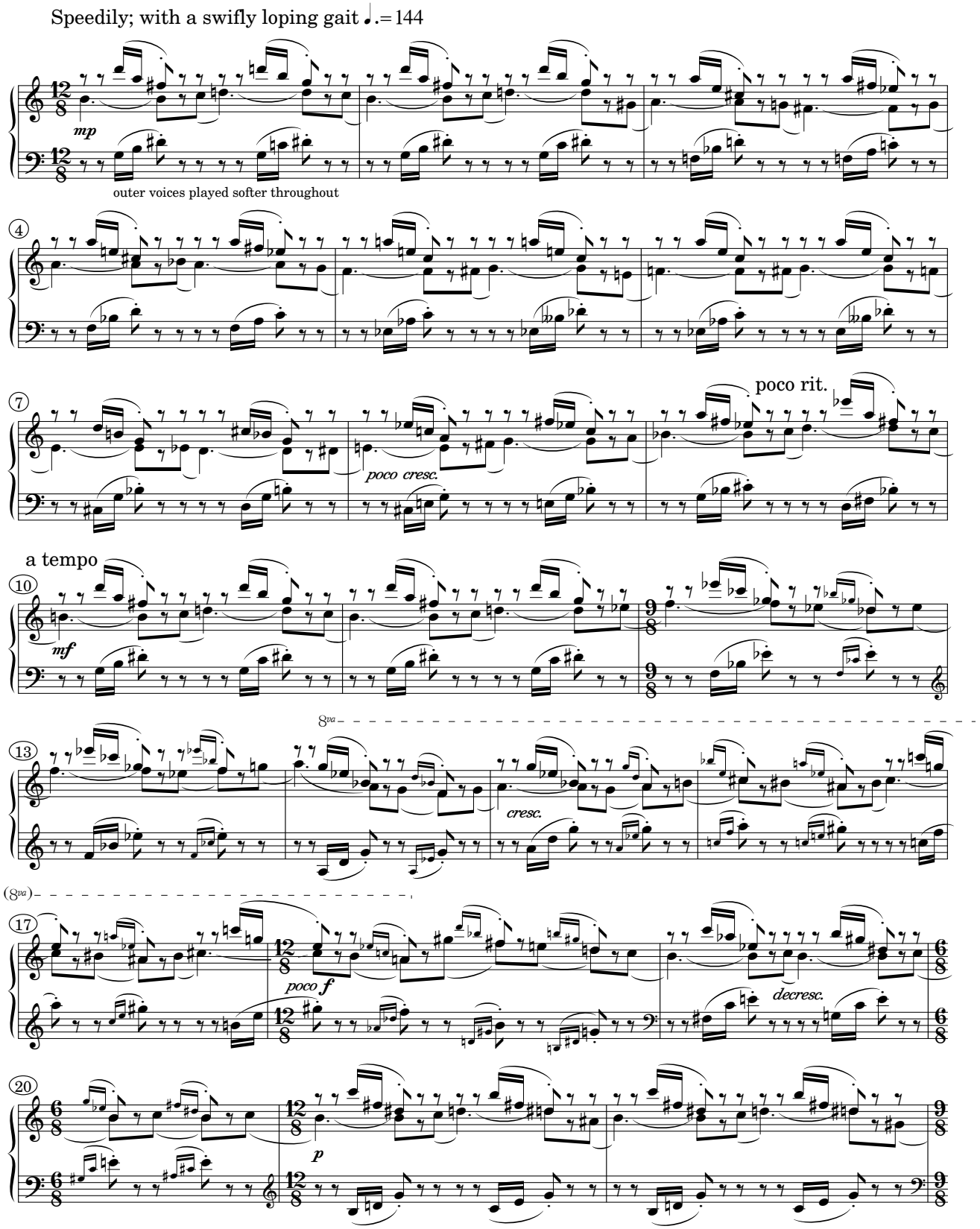
no. 1

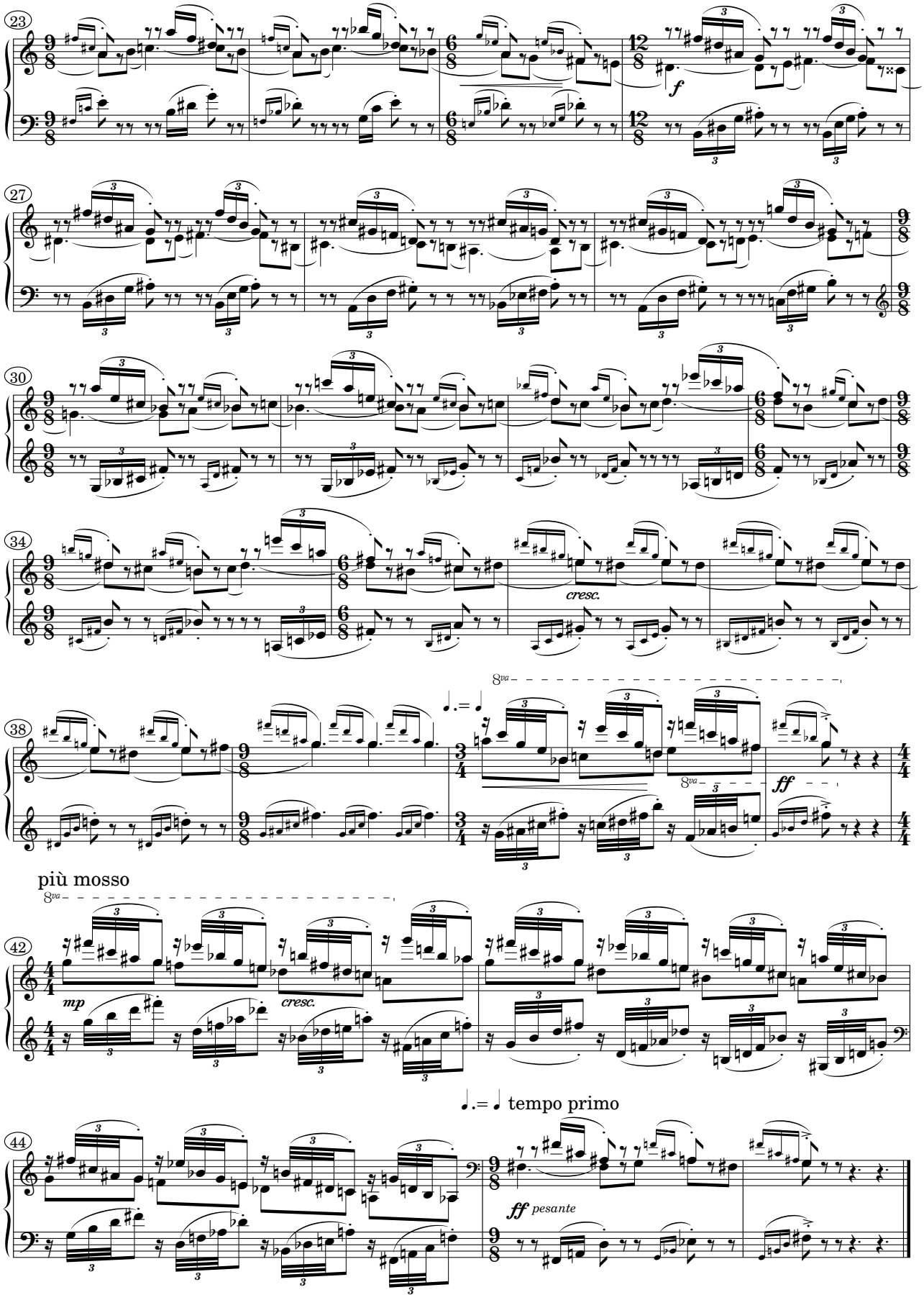
In memoriam Sergiu Luca (1943–2010)

for the left hand



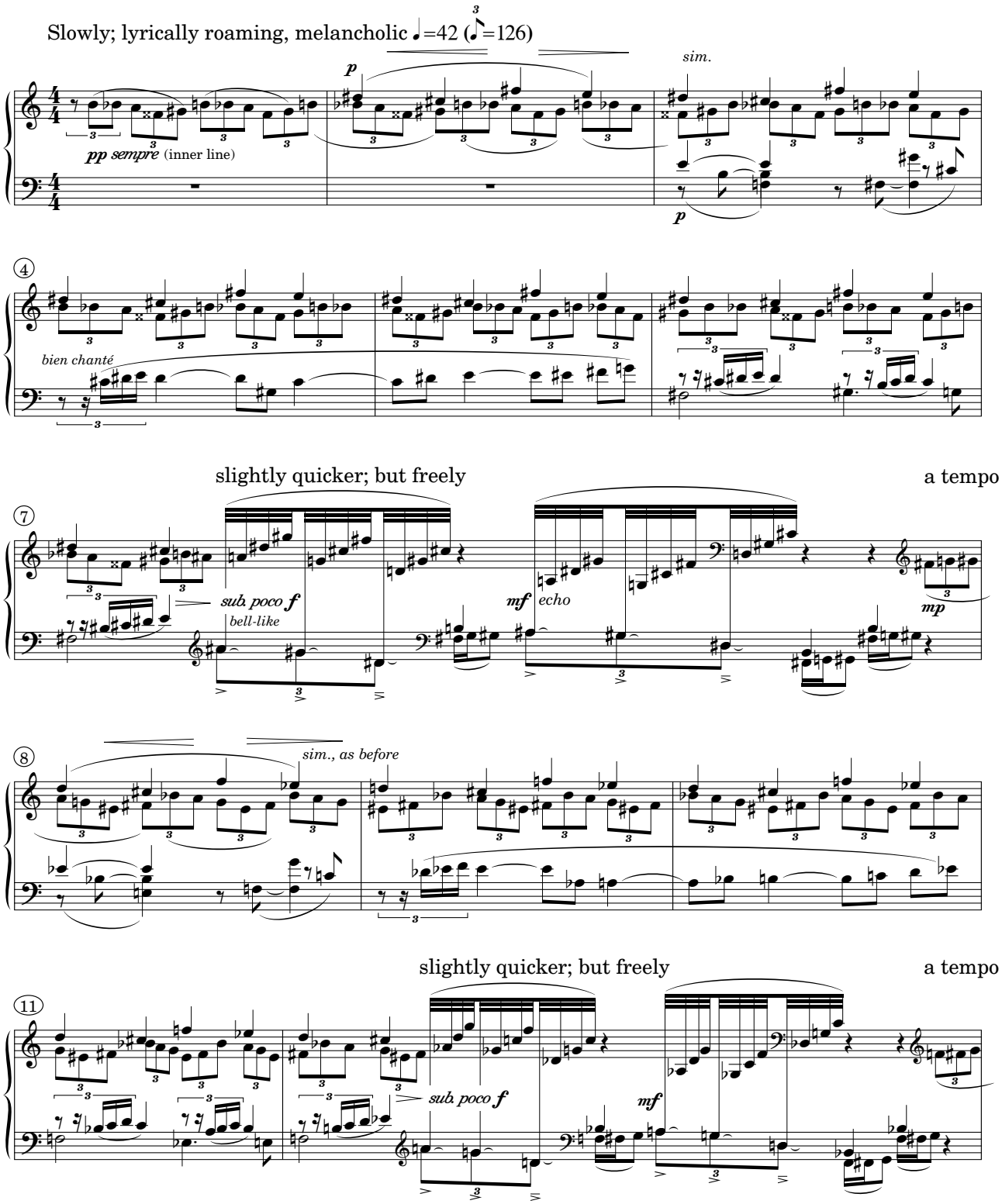
book 4, no. 2

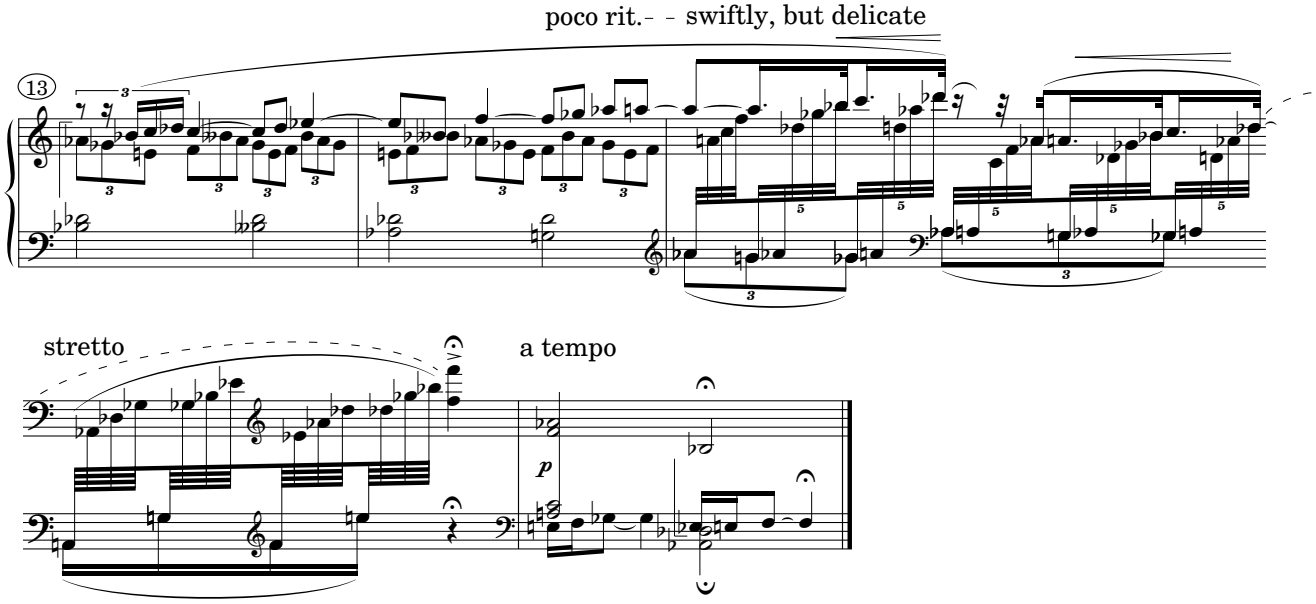

Speedily; with a swifly loping gait ♩.=144
mp
outer voices played softer throughout
poco cresc.
poco rit.
a tempo
mf
8va
cresc.
(8va)
poco f
decresc.
p


23
f
27
30
34
cresc.
38
8va
ff
più mosso
42
mp
cresc.
tempo primo
44
ff pesante

book 4, no. 3

In memoriam Ethan Frederick Greene (1982–2015)

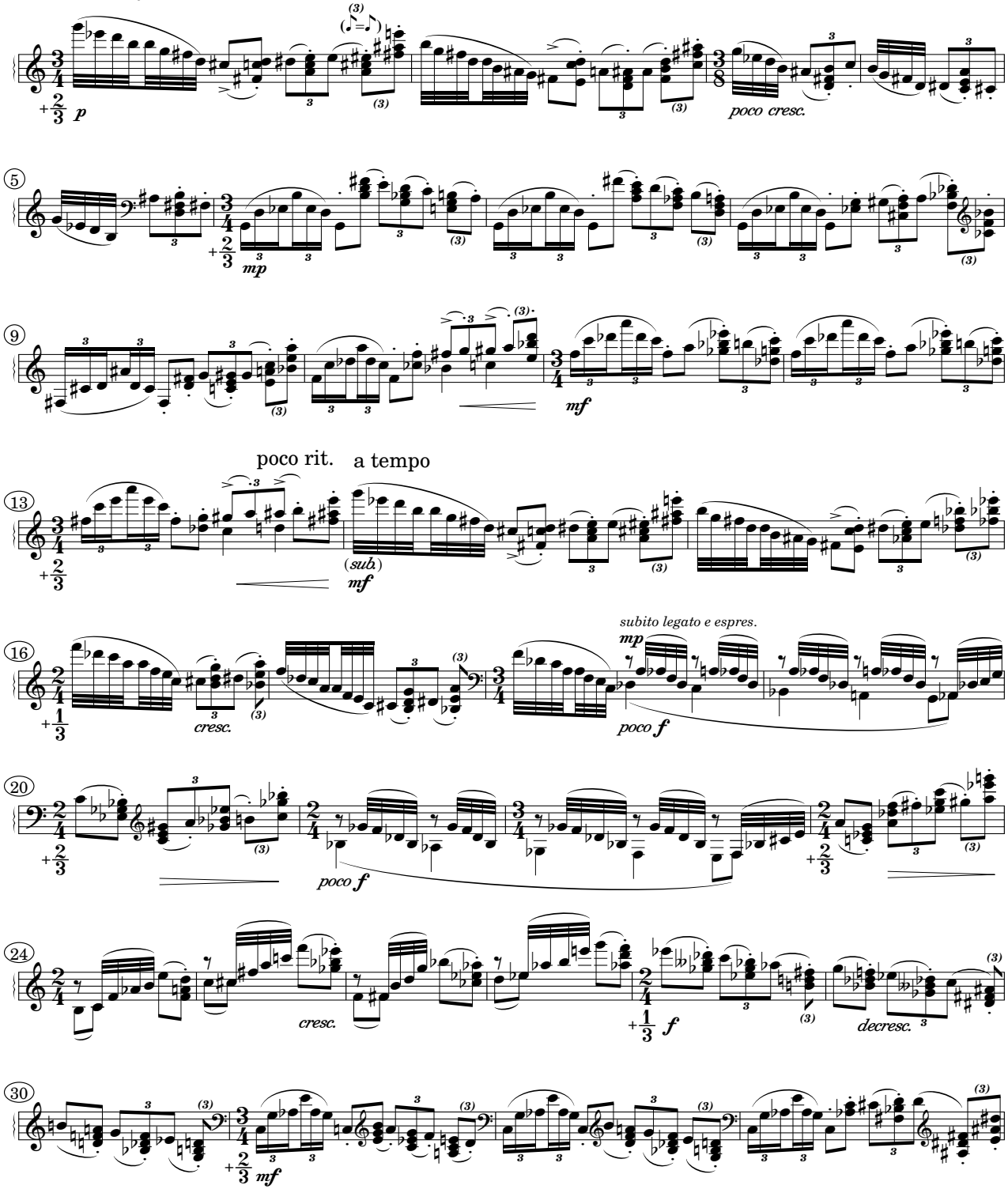


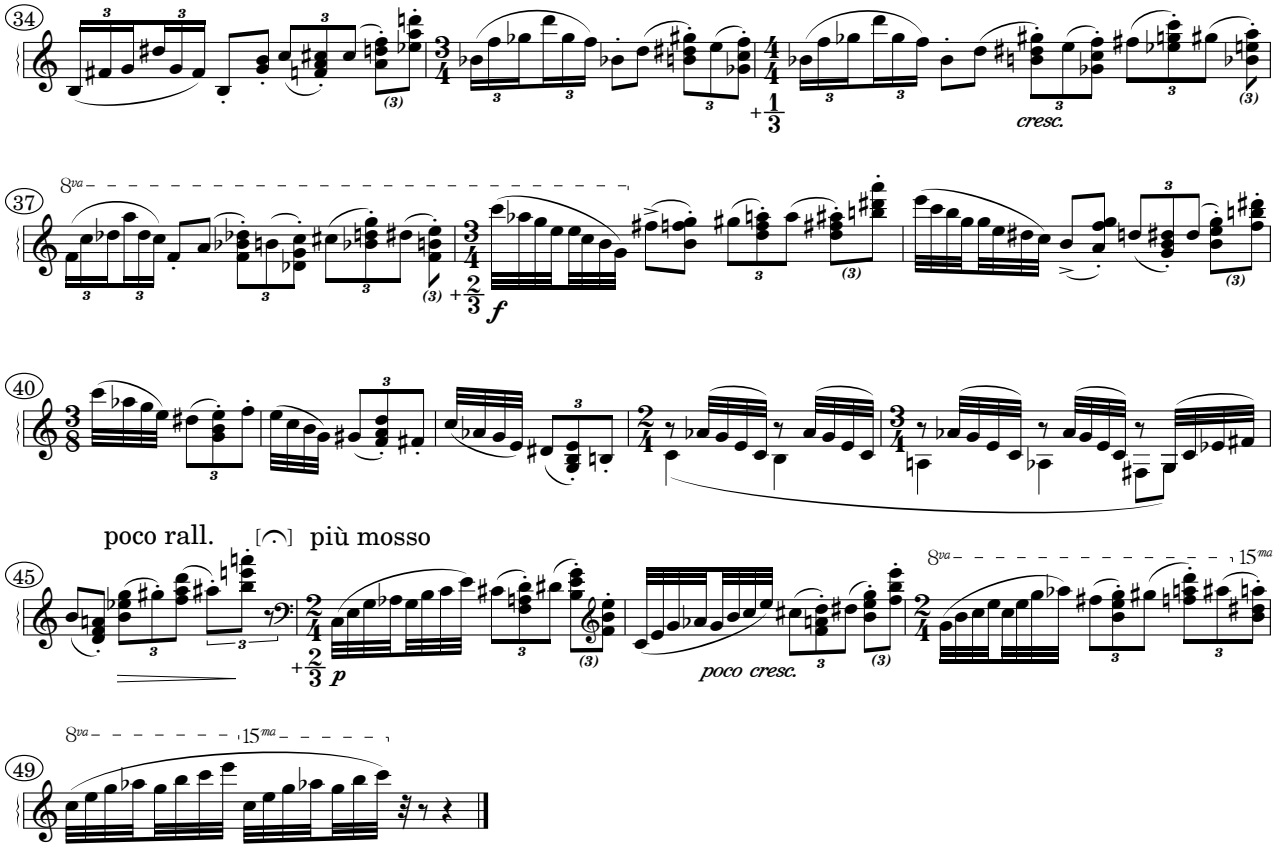

poco rit. - - swiftly, but delicate
13
stretto
a tempo
p

book 4, no. 4

for the right hand

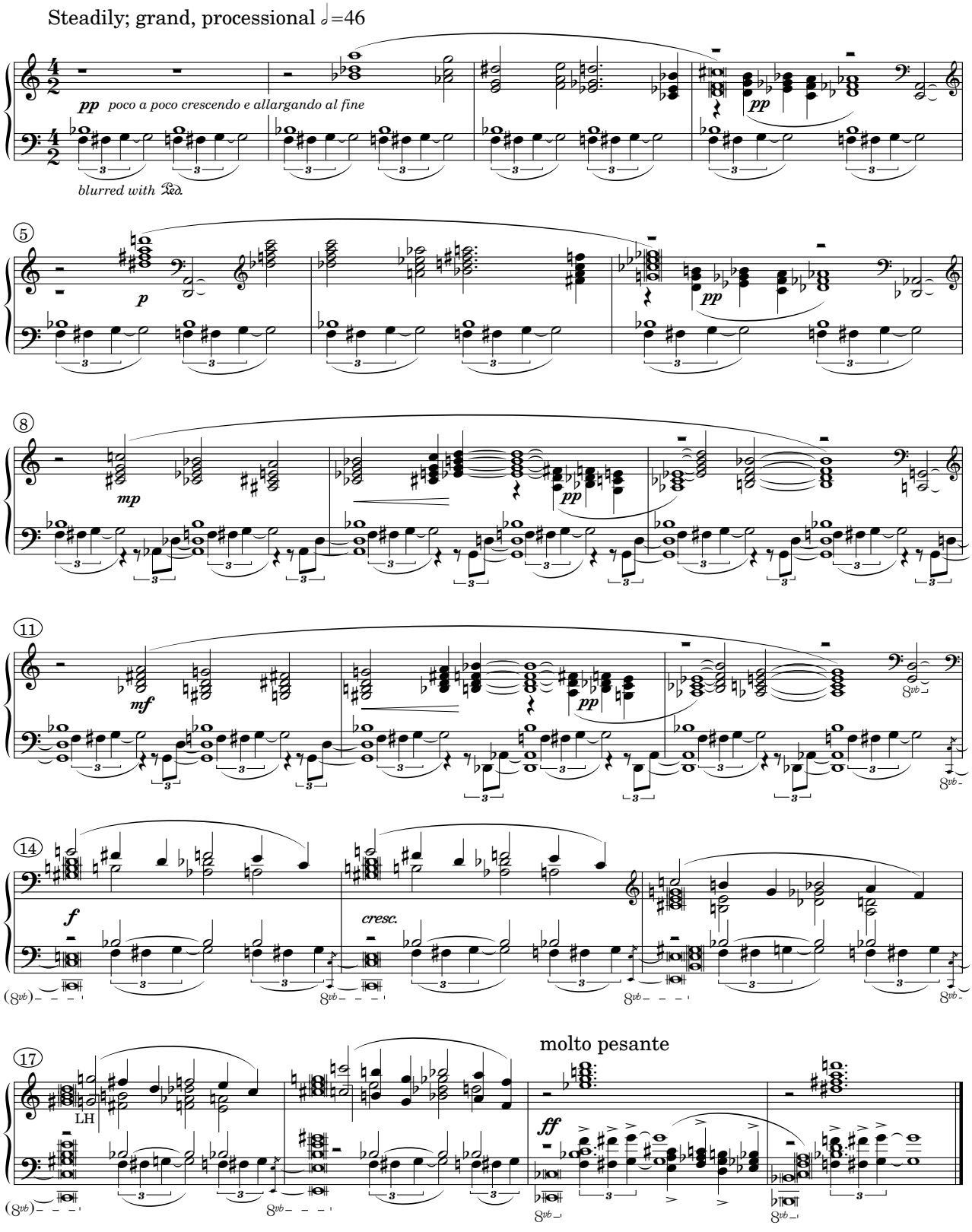
Quickly; scherzando, skittish ♩=88 (♪=176)




34
cresc.
37
8va
f
40
poco rall.
più mosso
45
8va
15ma
p
poco cresc.
49
8va
15ma

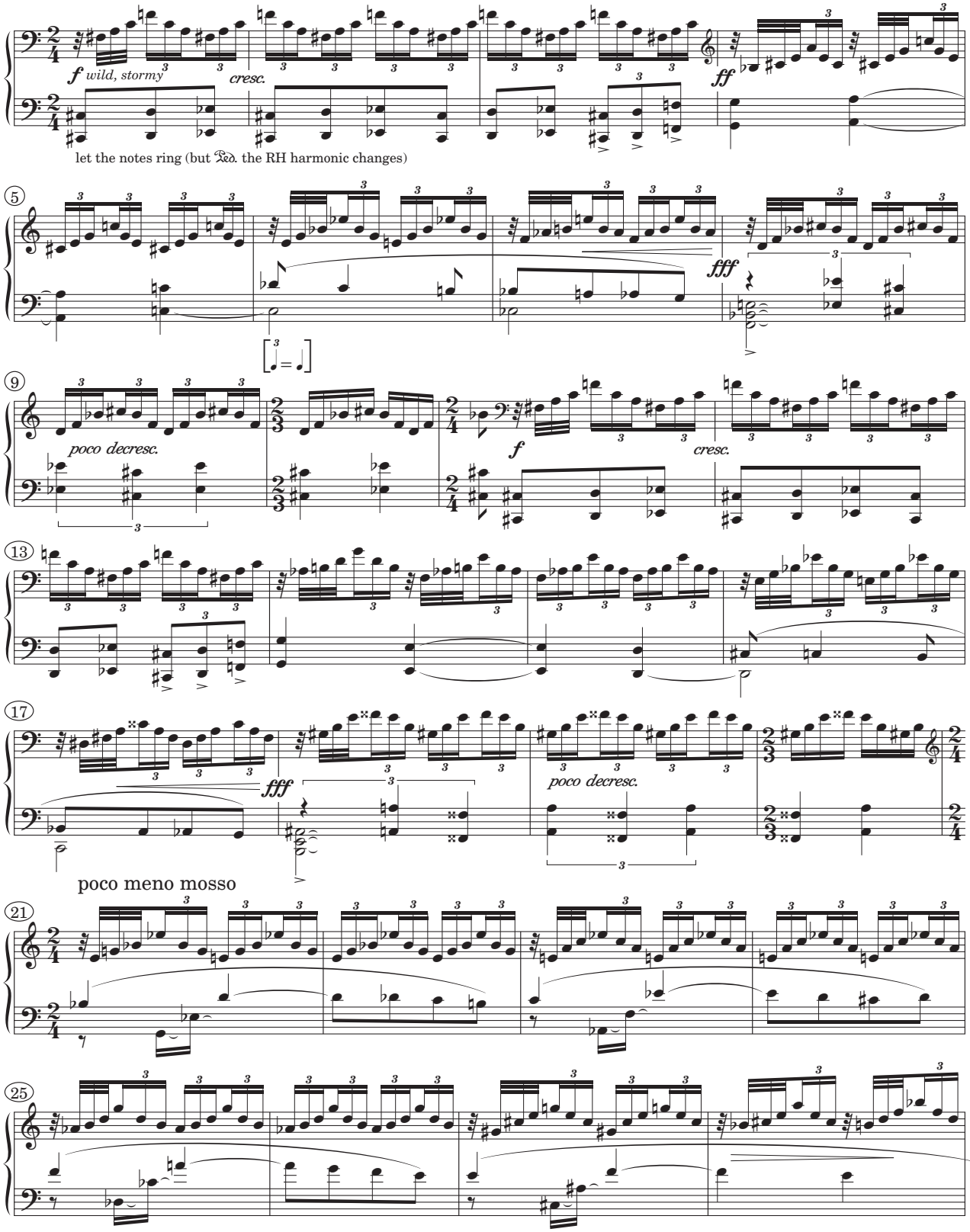
this page blank for page turns

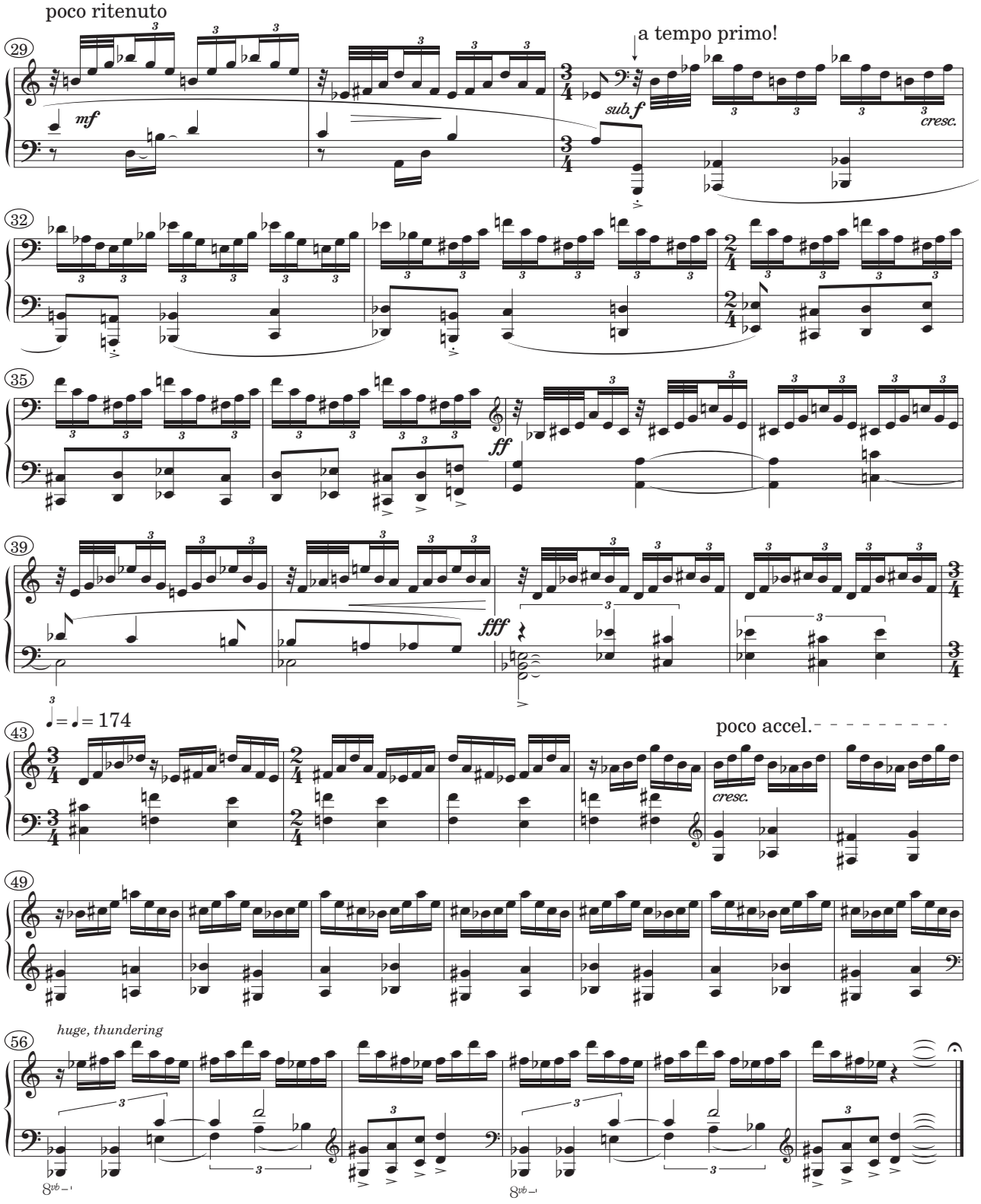
book 4, no. 5


Steadily; grand, processional ♩=46
pp
poco a poco crescendo e allargando al fine
blurred with Ped.
5
p
pp
8
mp
pp
11
mf
pp
8vb
14
f
cresc.
(8vb)
8vb
17
LH
molto pesante
ff

book 4, no. 6

Extremely Fast; furious, turbulent ♩=116




poco ritenuto
29
mf
a tempo primo!
sub.f
cresc.
32
35
ff
39
fff
3 = 3 = 174
43
poco accel.
cresc.
49
56
huge, thundering
8vb
8vb