Seven Elegies

Ayden Kael McDonald

For Piano

Introduction

Sketches for this work began in late August 2016. Each piece explores the reverberating power of the grand piano through the use of pedalling, plucking, range, harmony, and dynamics. Each piece is demonstrative of how sound travels within space.

I: Delicatamente e misterioso – Elegy in F major

This early work was composed to explore self-expression and harmonic interactions.
There are two melodies in this piece, the first being the middle moving voice and the second being the continuous unbroken F natural employed by the Sostenuto pedal.

The second melody should be played *sotto voce* in addition a heavy bass and light harmonies are engaged. The main melodic line should be clear, bright and cantabile. Each new bar should bleed into the next to create the impression of a thick unbroken texture. This piece is to be performed in any large space in which the reverb envelops the ears and mind to form a euphoric harmony.

Elegy in F major explores the capabilities of the piano and the vibrating air in which it resonates through.

II: Lento – Twilight

Like its predecessor, this piece was to be a standalone work. Early sketches up to b.37 remained untouched and abandoned until October 2017.

This work employs pedalling techniques under perpetual motion motifs. Moreover, plucking the strings is utilised in b.4 and 37.

Around the time of this work being revised and completed – Lento and Elegy in F major would be part of a decided larger work. Originally it was feasible I would write 24 preludes, however, this changed with time restraints and other projects coming forth. Seven Elegies would be the title after some deliberation. Twilight – a state of obscurity and ambiguity.

III: Sciolto – Canon

This work was the third last to be composed however was placed third in the set.
The melodic material was generated from an online melody generator through typing an assortment of random letters.
This short two-part canon explores intervallic relationships exhibiting infrequent beauty and dissonance. Sciolto: light, free and easy; without strictness.

IV: Niente

Employed to compose this piece for interior architect Teodora Jevtic's *Reader Collection*, I later transcribed it for piano solo in October 2017. It exercises a perpetual use of the sustain pedal. Each line has a separate technique – top (melodic line) is forte with cantabile as a performance guide, the middle line employs a legato, *tempo giusto* role, and the bottom a deep, *pesante* reinforcement of the upper harmonies.

Niente – nothing, immobile: still, without movement.

V: Molto espressivo

Composed sometime in late October 2017 pays homage to Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* Fugue in A minor.

There are three contrasting sections each employing the same melodic material. The main melody begins a retrograde version half way through its thematic development – after the first triplet.

This work explores the different registers of the piano and their subsequent tone colours.

VI: Allegro con passione – Amplitude Modulation

Originally composed for violoncello in early January 2017, it was later arranged for piano solo late October. Although there is only one line, the performer should employ both hands where necessary, for example b.17.

This piece explores the nature of continual modulation – so much so we end on E major without any sense of abandonment of the original D♭ Major.

VII: Presto vivace – Silent

The final elegy explores the reverberation of a Sostenuto silent cluster chord.

The scintillated melody helps vibrate the pedalled cluster to form an eerie dissonance. The melody from b.7 is an augmentation of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* Fugue in B minor.

Each piece should be played uninterrupted so as to keep a continuous meditative mood. The performer should thoroughly convey the required technical demands of each work for example clear voicing in I and II, or fluidity in VI. One should be cautious not to rush or become too agitated as each elegy contains a *riposo* style atmosphere which should sound effortless and tranquil.

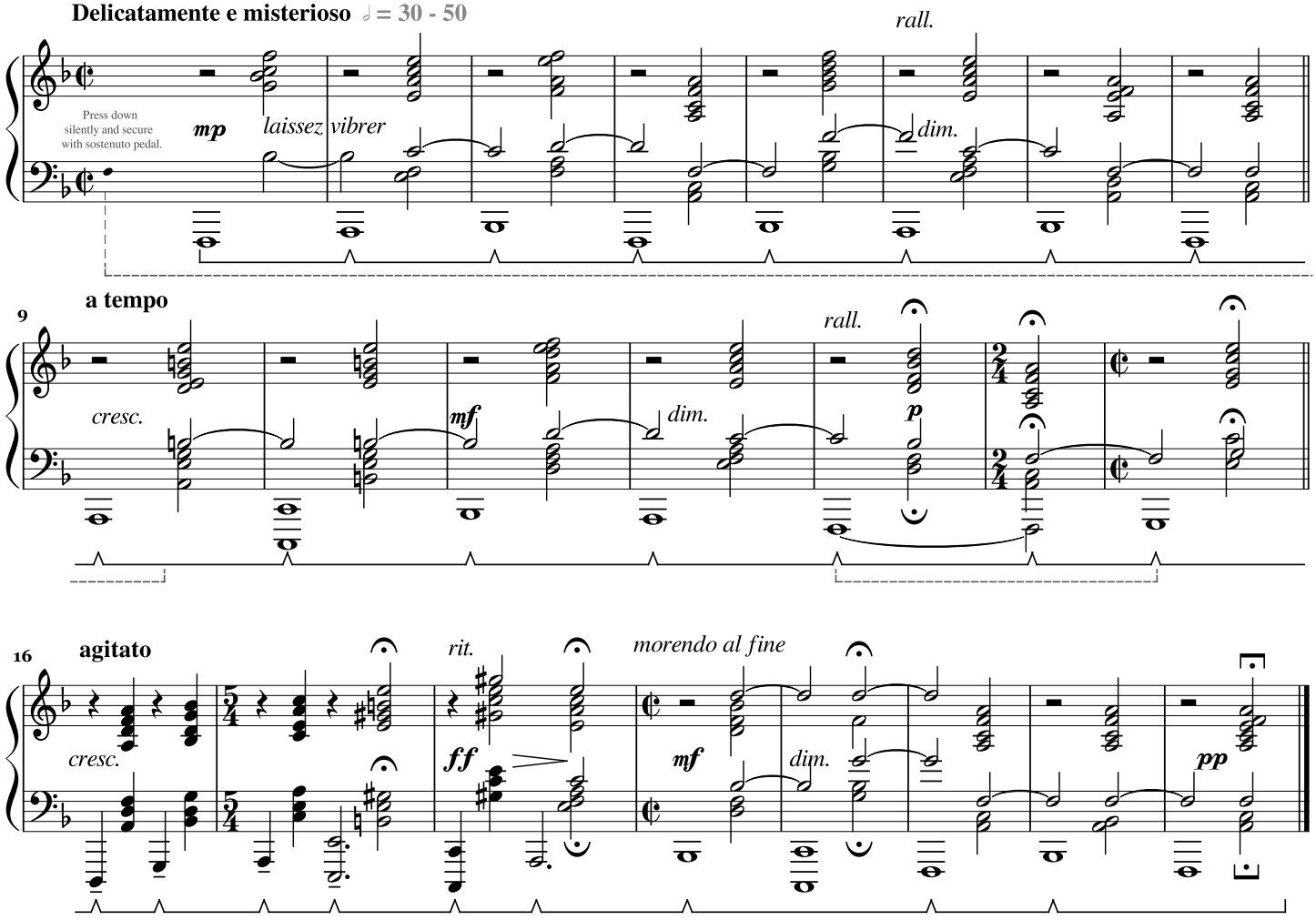
The acoustics within different performance spaces will determine the length of notes and pauses, contrasts in tone colour, and tempo. Metronome markings are given only as suggestions; one does not have to follow these markings exactly.

Moreover, tempo markings such as *Lento* or *Allegro con passione* are more of an emotional indication than any strict tempo indications.

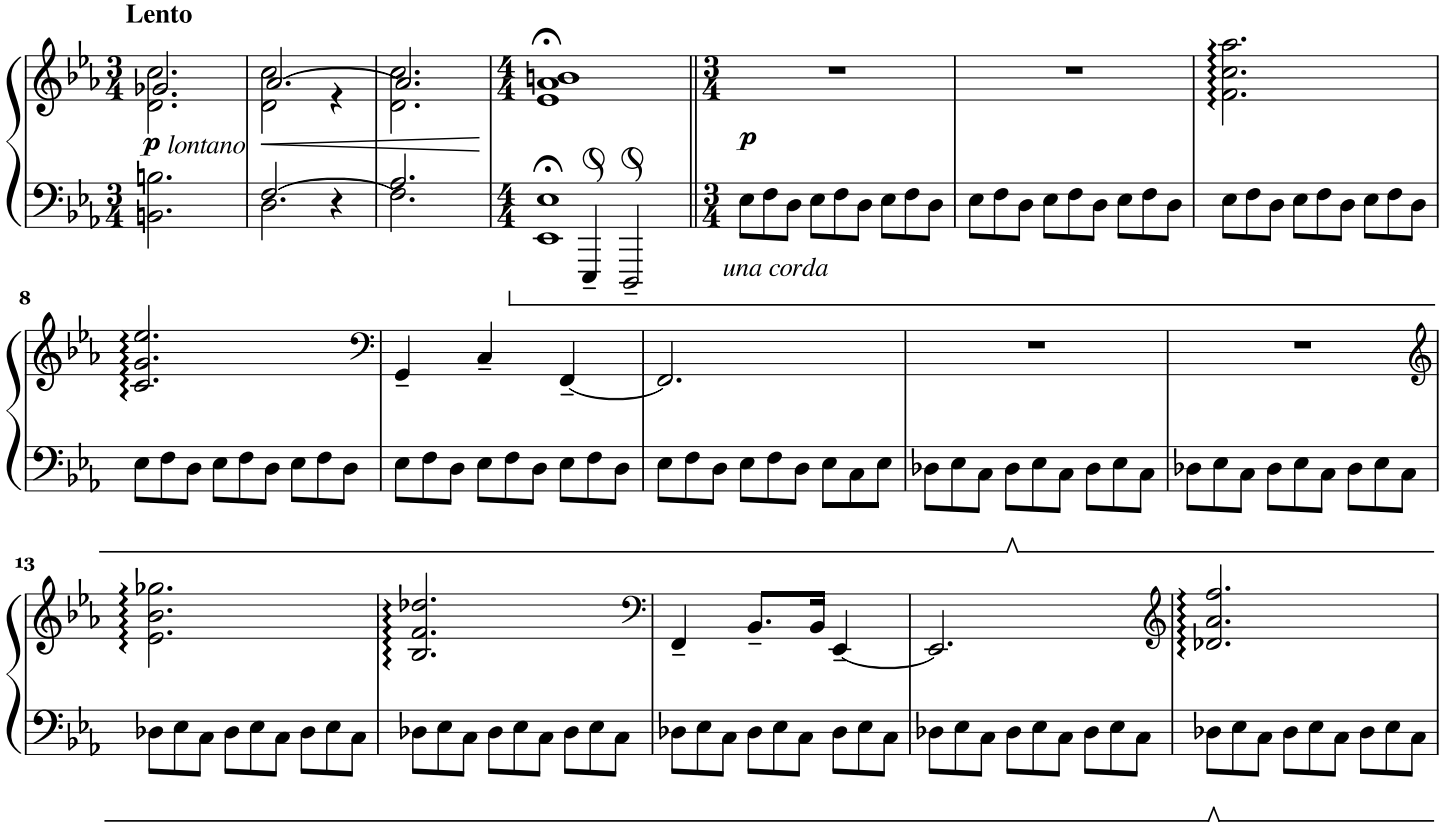
Ayden Kael McDonald
November 27, 2017

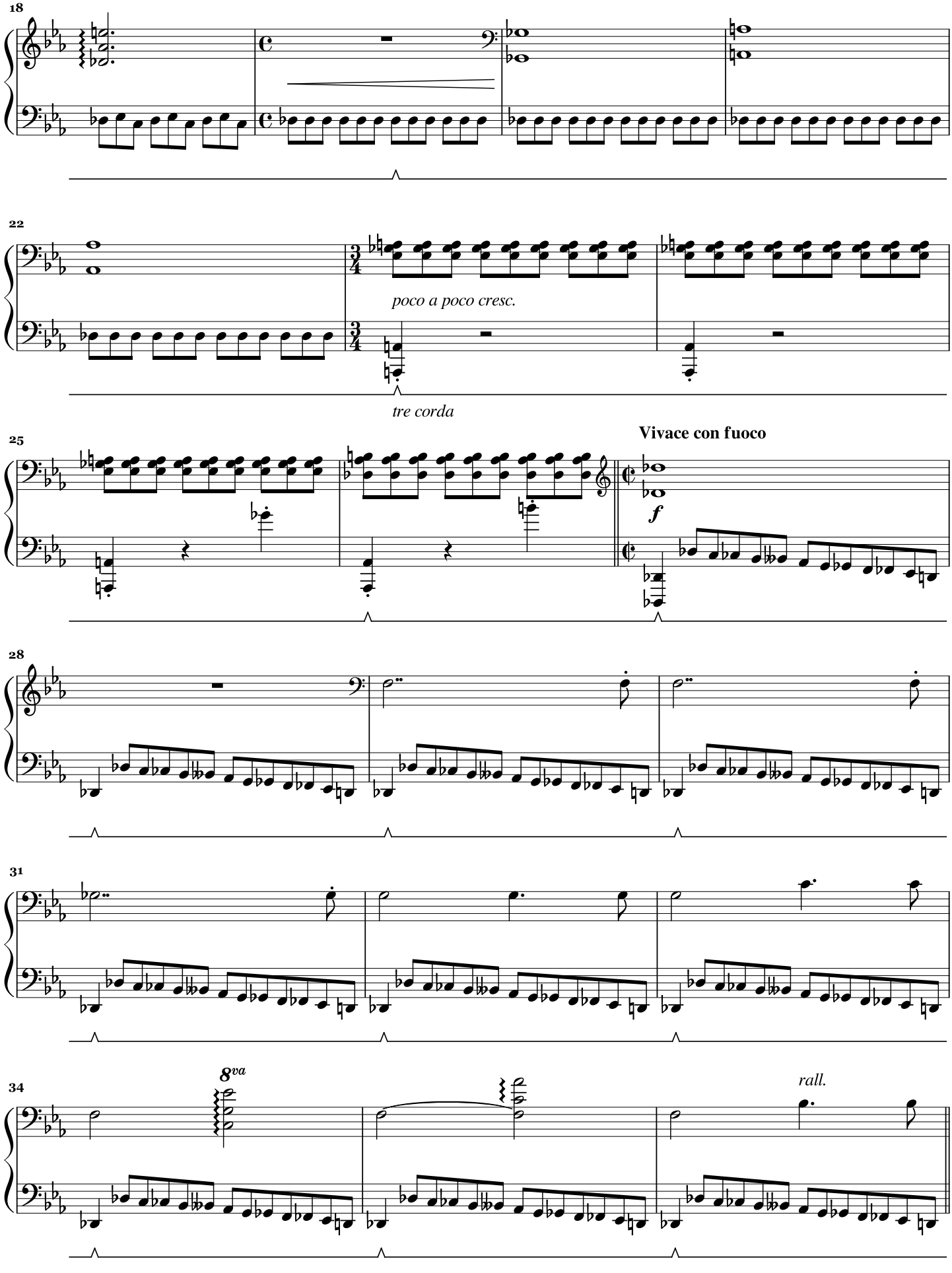
I

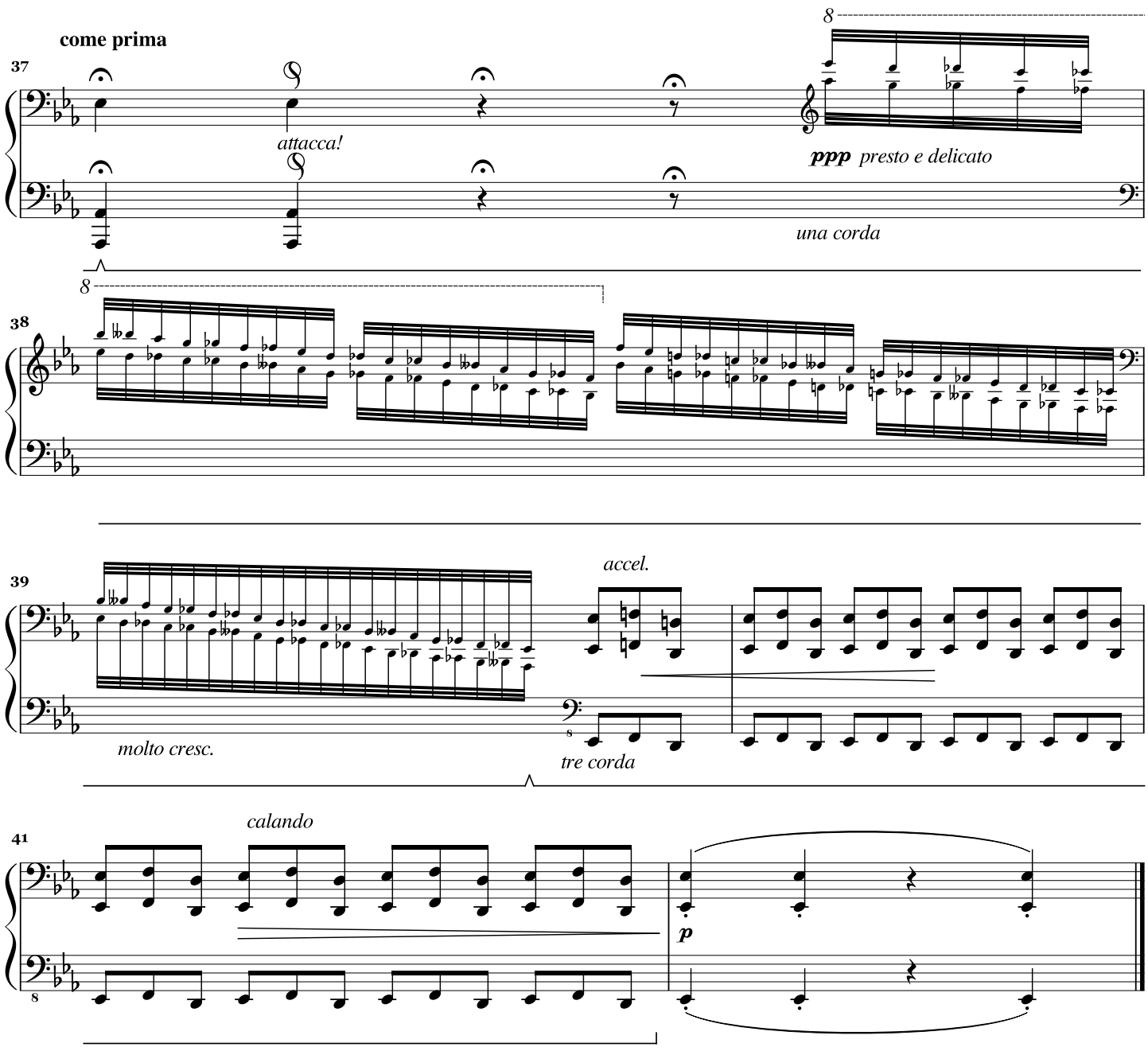
Delicatamente e misterioso ♩ = 30 - 50



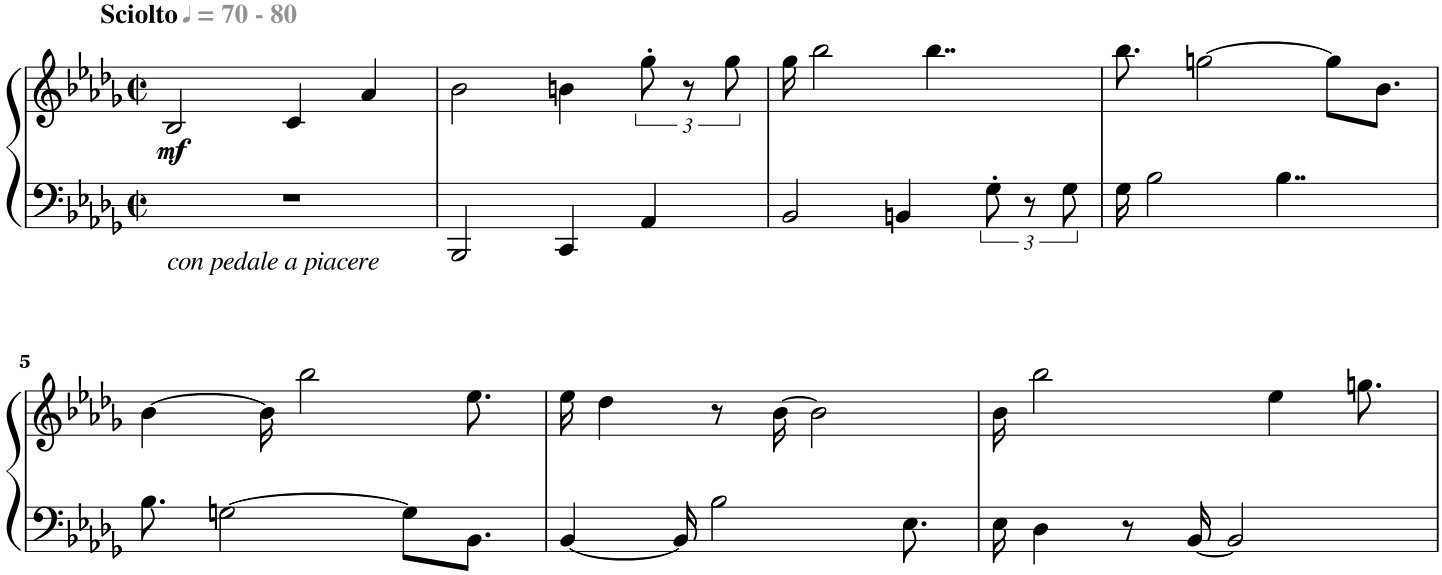
II

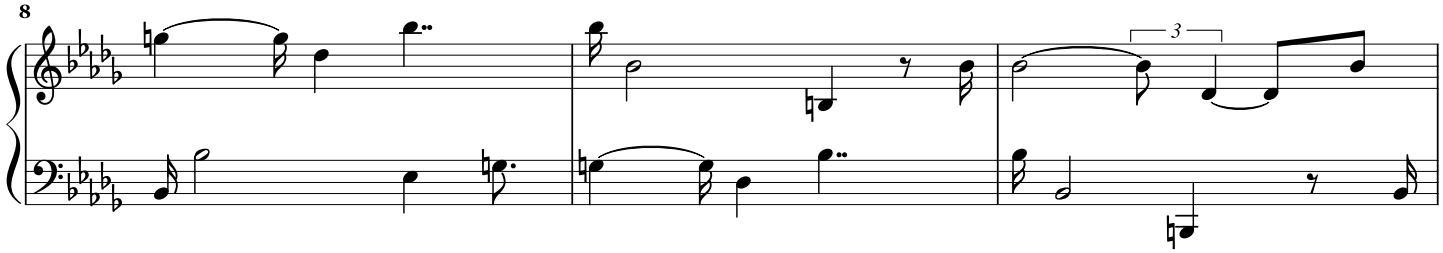


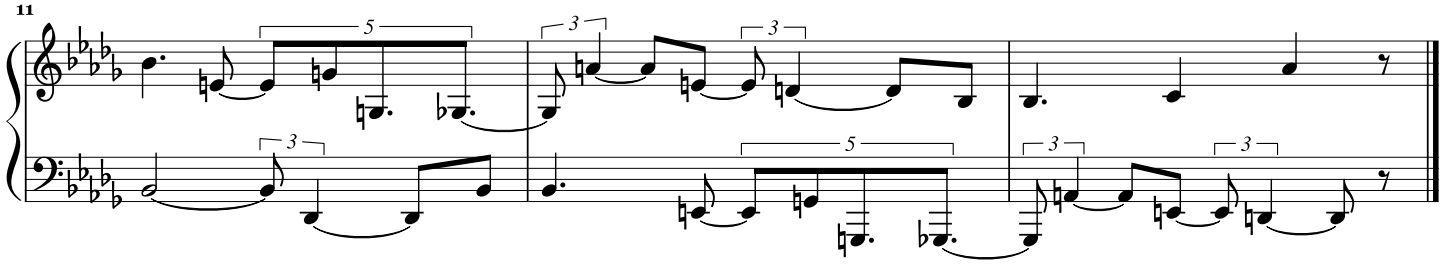

18
22
poco a poco cresc.
tre corda
25
Vivace con fuoco
f
28
31
34
8va
rall.


come prima
37
attacca!
8
ppp presto e delicato
una corda
8
38
39
molto cresc.
accel.
tre corda
41
calando
p

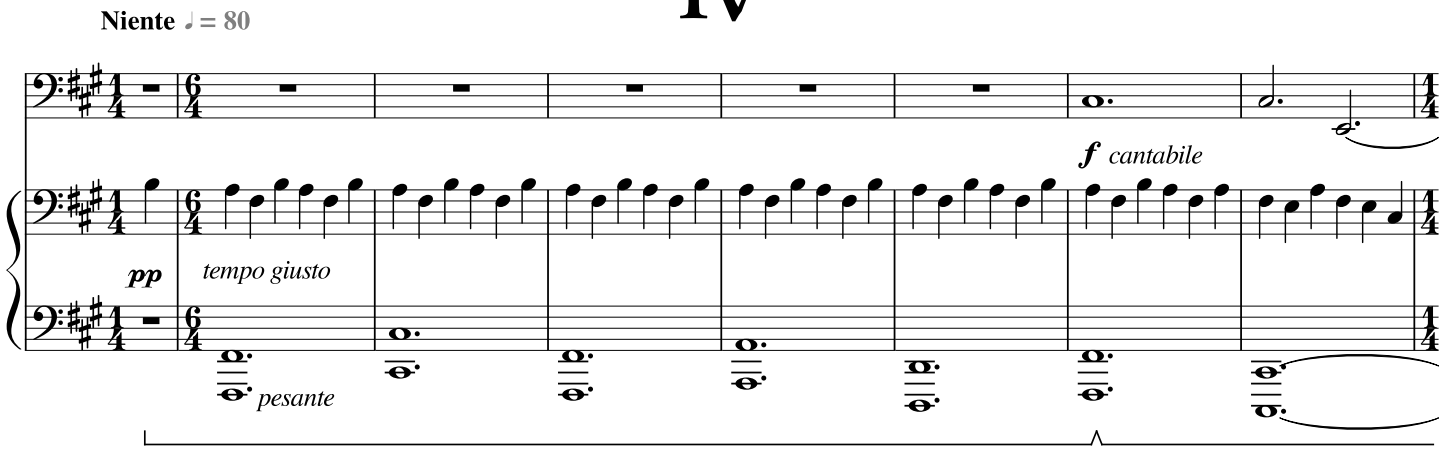
III

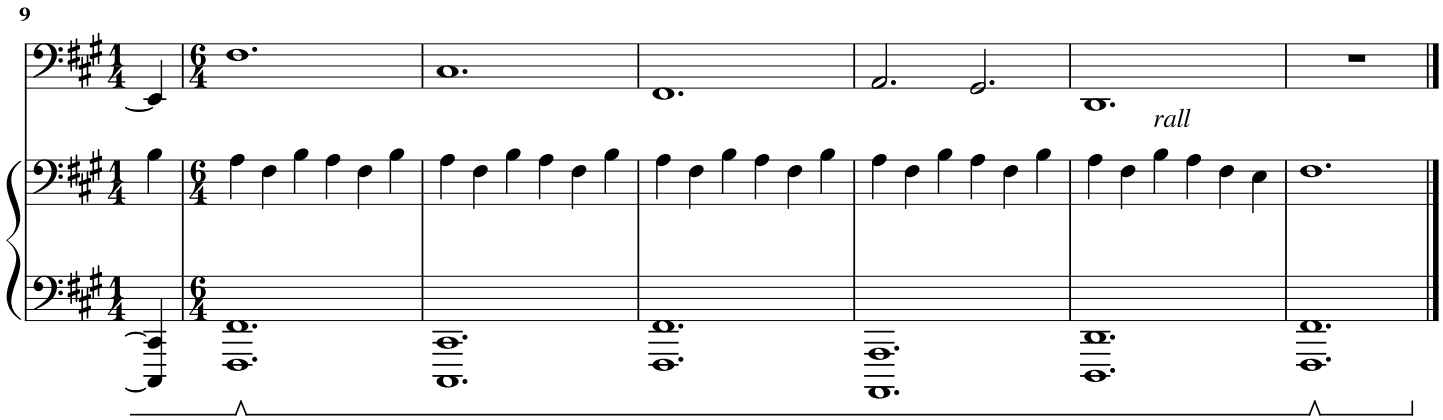

Sciolto ♩ = 70 - 80
mf
con pedale a piacere
3
3
5


8
3

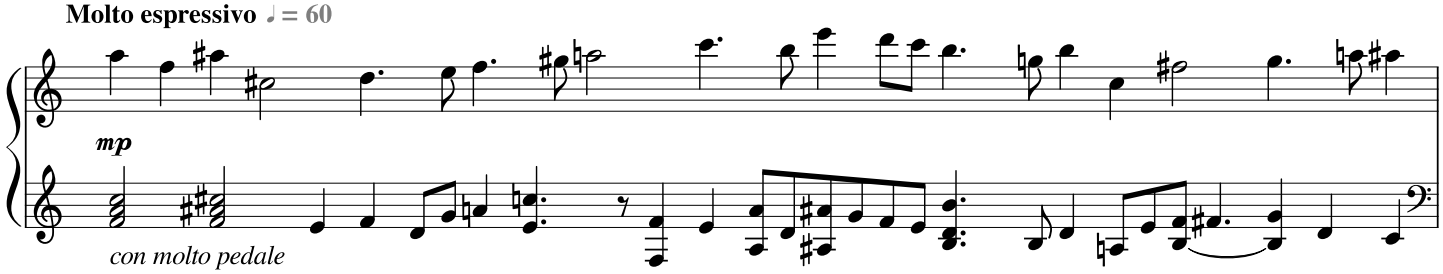

11
5
3
3
3
5
3
3

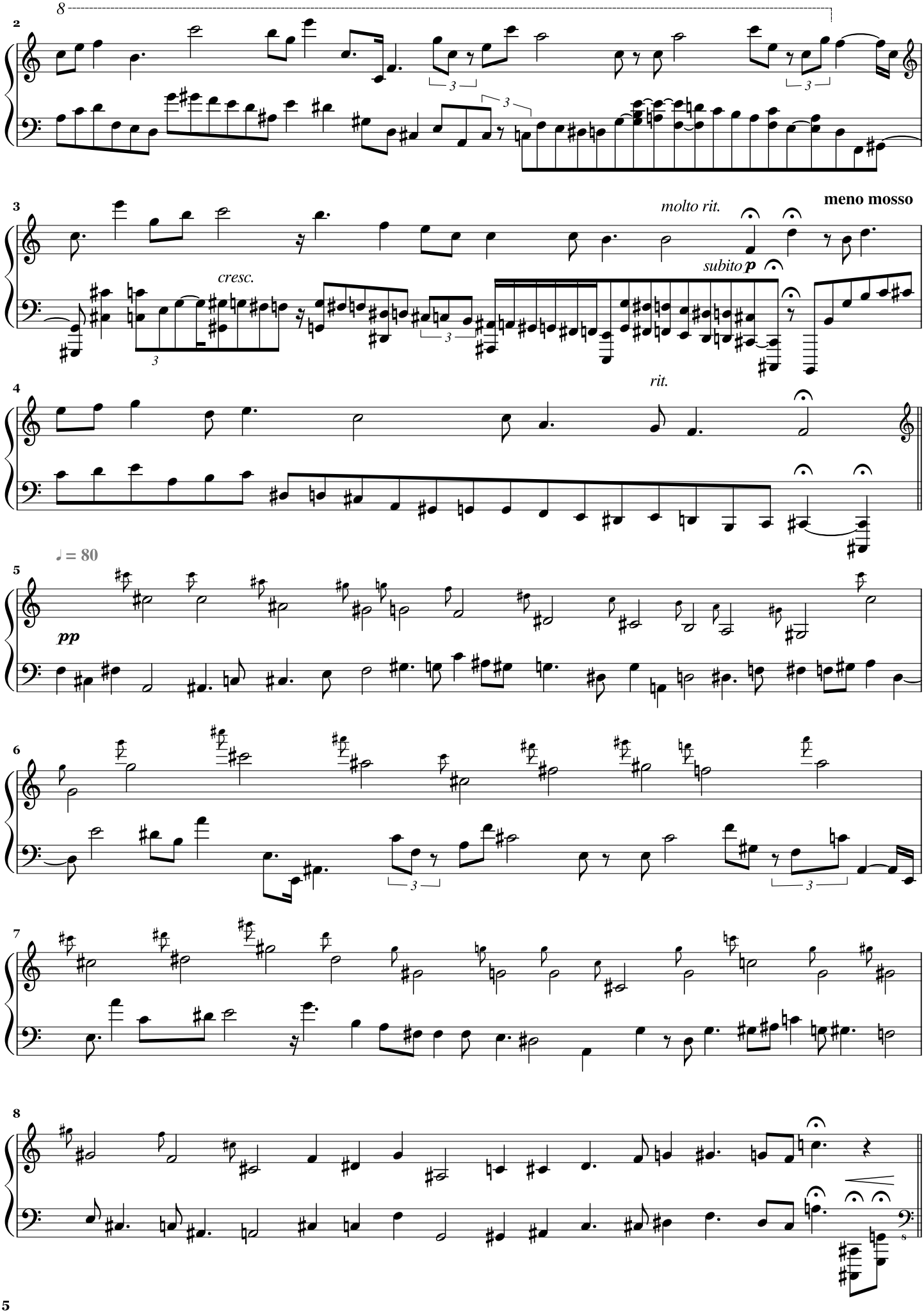
IV

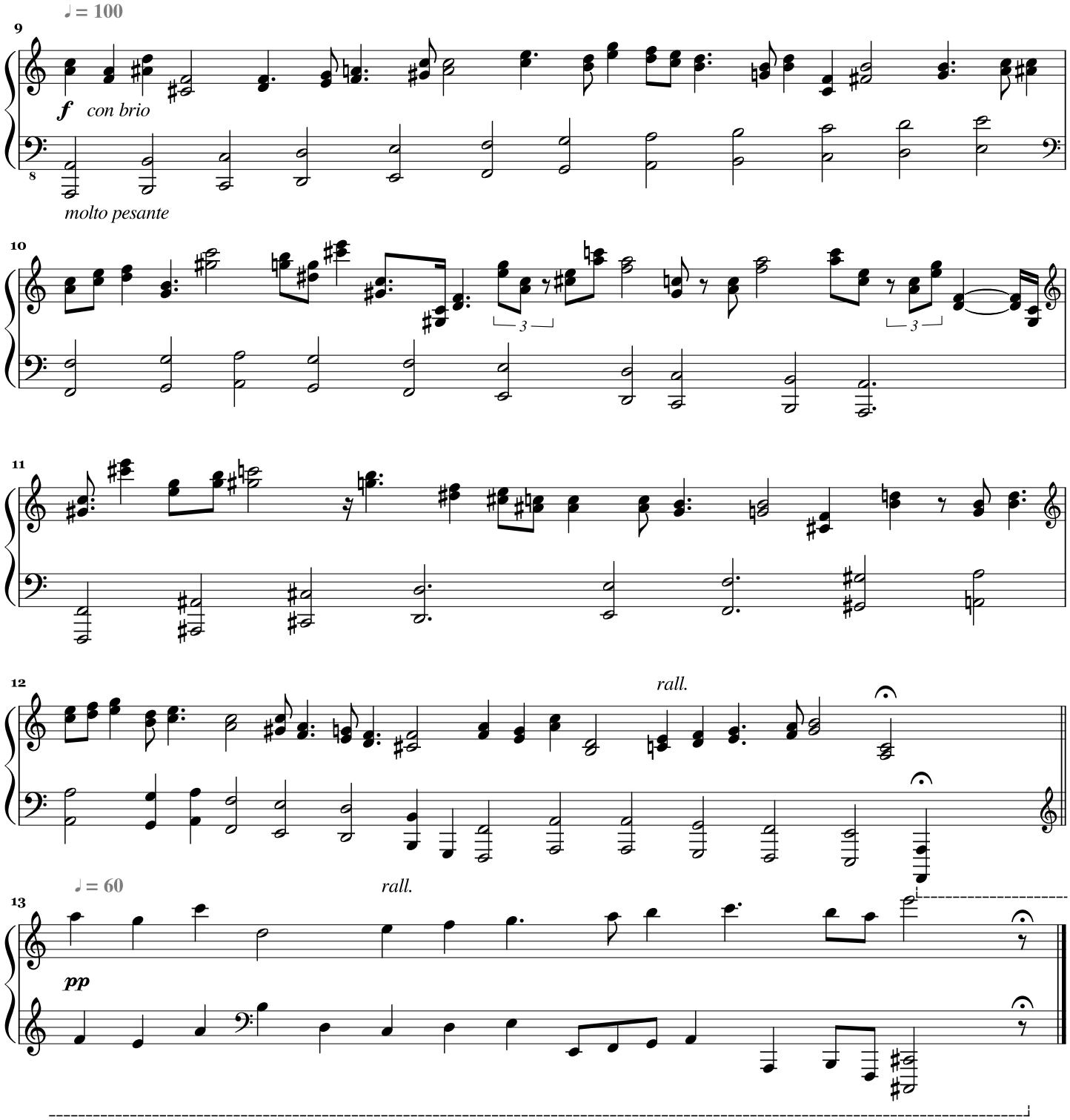

Niente ♩ = 80
f cantabile
pp
tempo giusto
pesante


9
rall

V

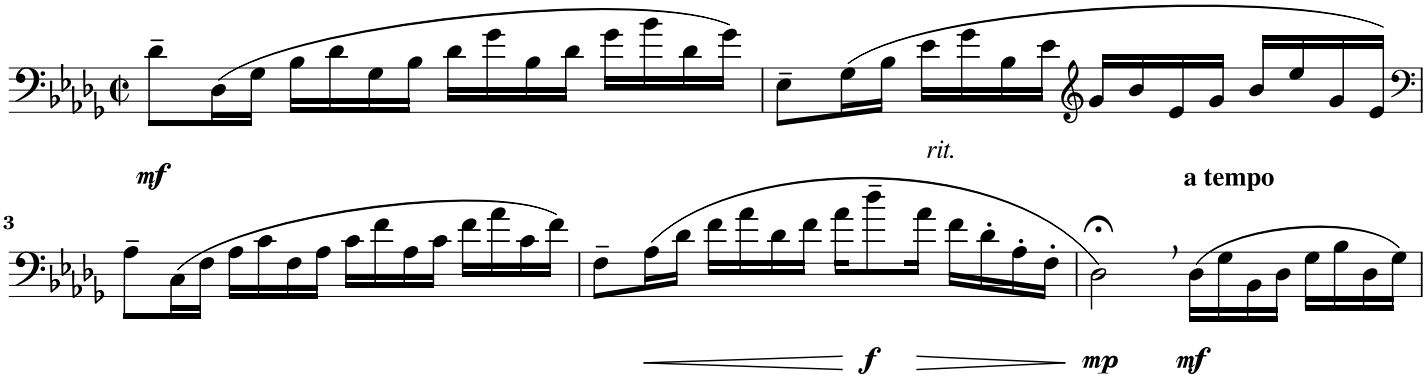

Molto espressivo ♩ = 60
mp
con molto pedale

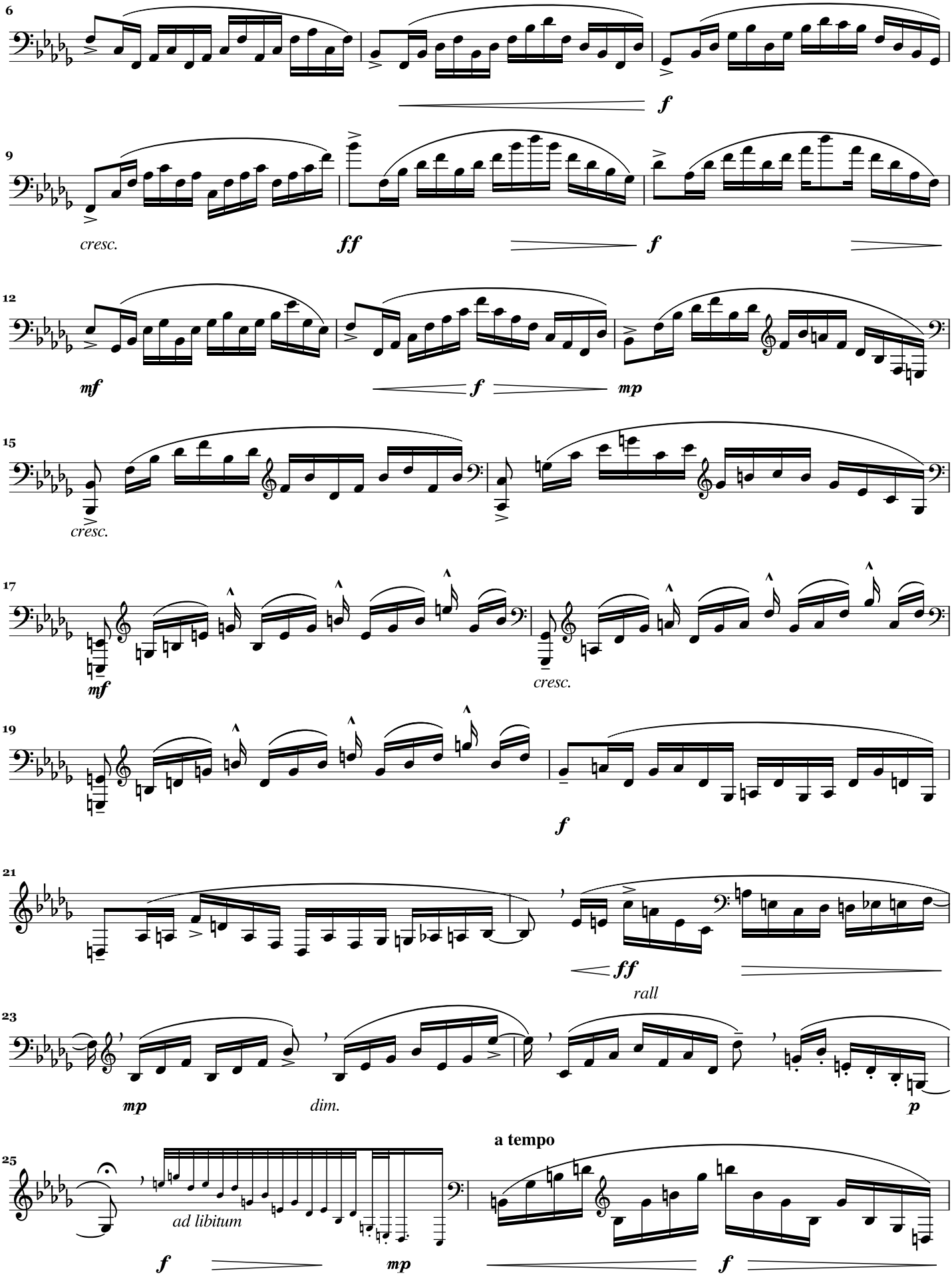

8
2
3
molto rit.
meno mosso
cresc.
subito p
4
rit.
♩ = 80
5
pp
6
7
8

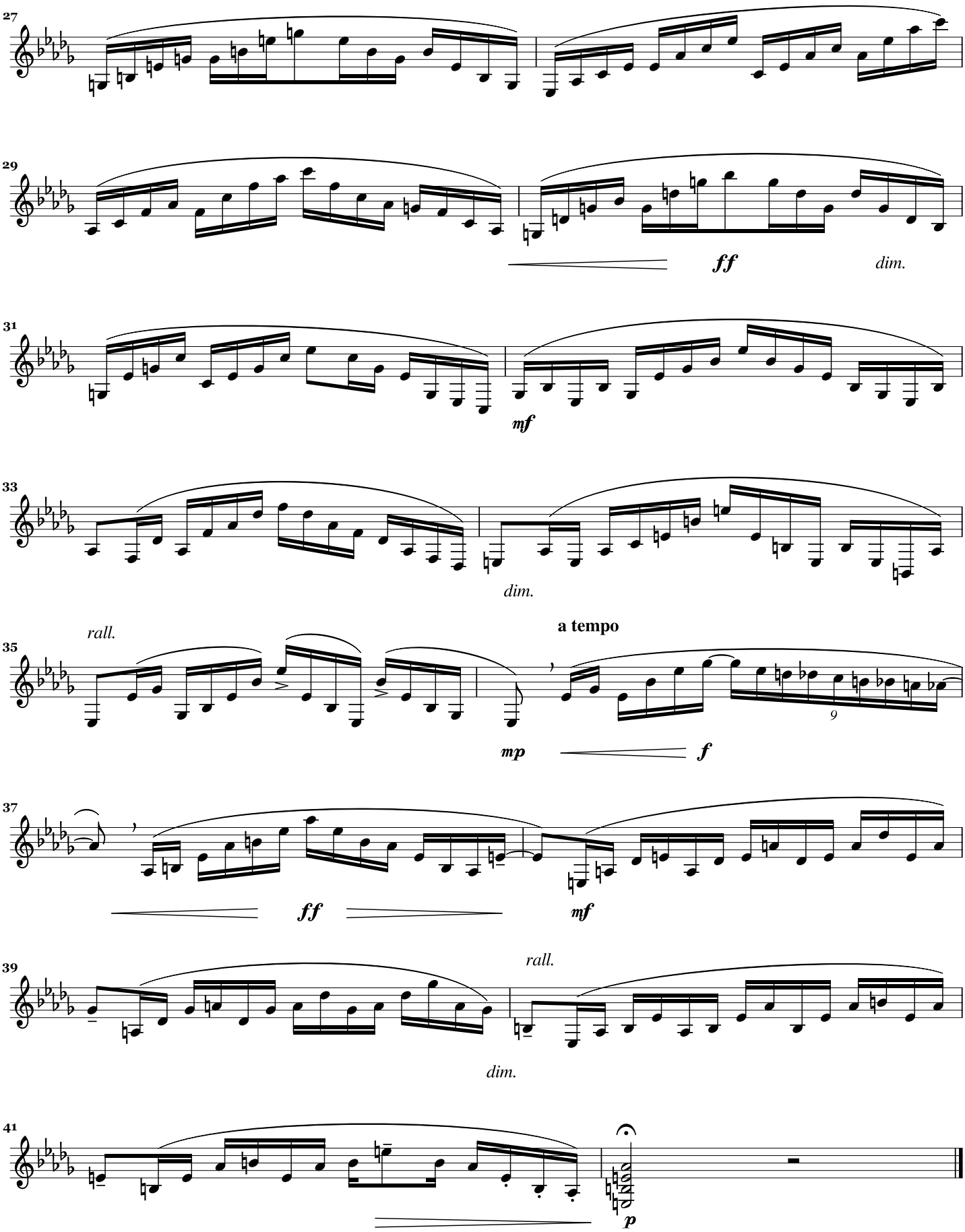


VI

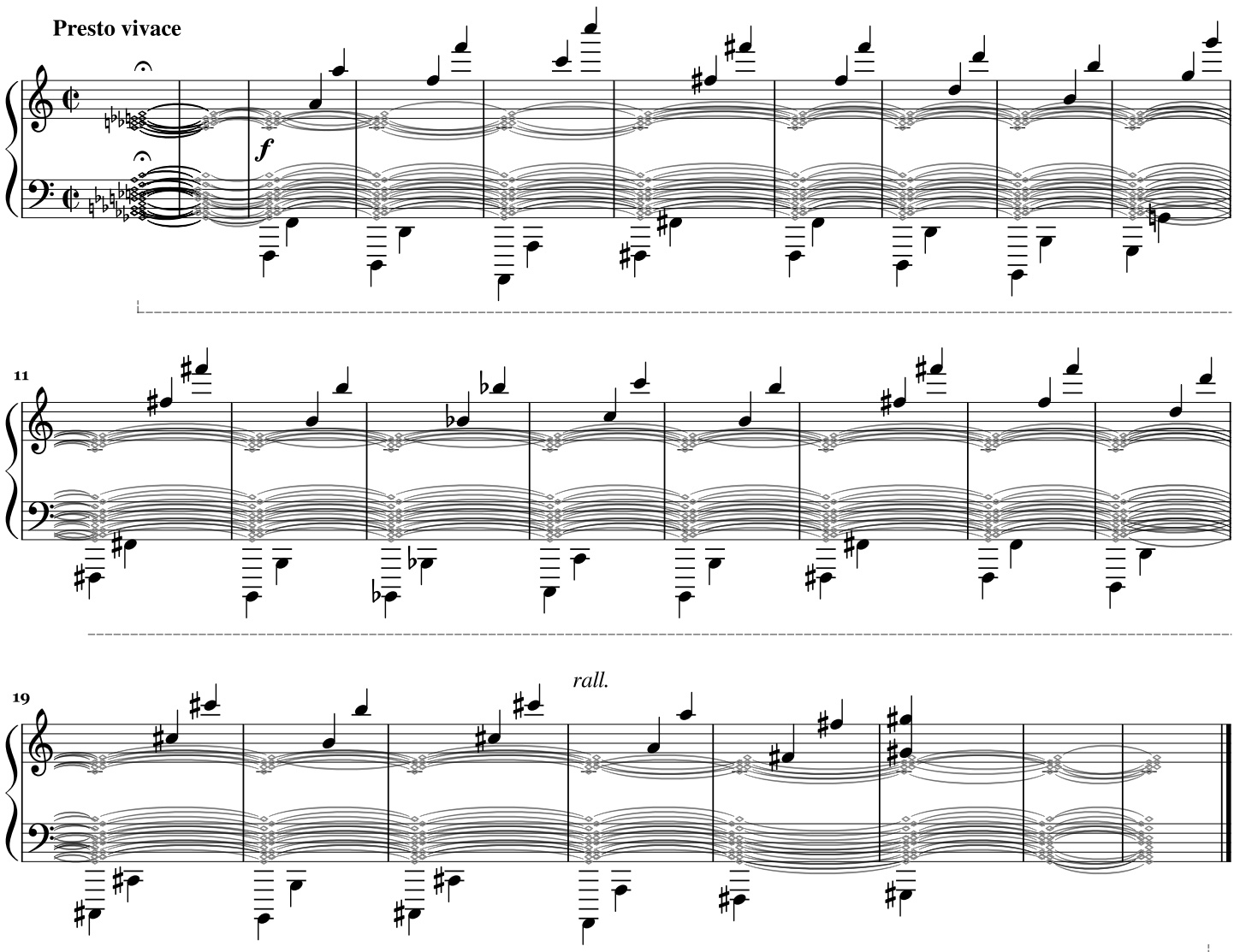
Allegro con passione




6
f
9
cresc.
ff
f
12
mf
f
mp
15
cresc.
17
mf
cresc.
19
f
21
ff
rall
23
mp
dim.
p
25
a tempo
ad libitum
f
mp
f


27
29
ff
dim.
31
mf
33
dim.
rall.
a tempo
35
mp
f
9
37
ff
mf
rall.
39
dim.
41
p

VII



Ayden Kael McDonald
November 27, 2017