Maurice RAVEL

the complete works for piano

GASPARD de la NUIT

3 Poèmes pour Piano
d'après Aloysius BERTRAND

I ONDINE
II LE GIBET
III SCARBO

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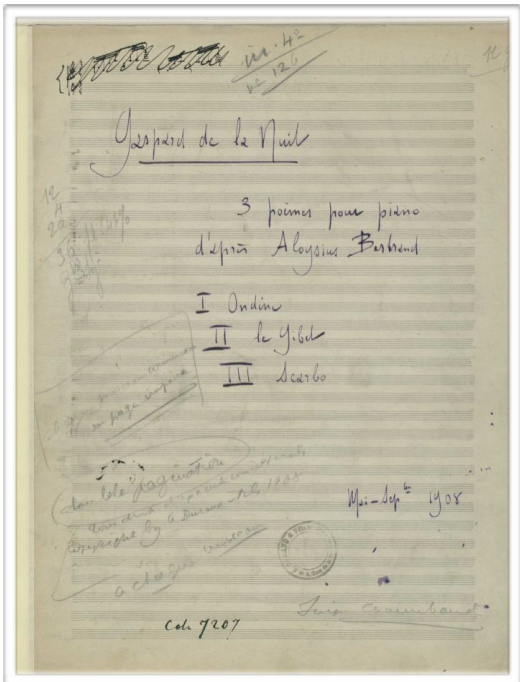
Maurice RAVEL 1875 - 1937

GASPARD de la NUIT

3 Poèmes pour Piano
d'après Aloysius BERTRAND

Published in 1909 *Gaspard de la Nuit* is considered to be the most beautiful, masterly and challenging of all Ravel's *œuvre* for piano. The poet Aloysius Bertrand* (1807— 1841), alchemist of irony and speech, whose only collection, *Gaspard de la Nuit* had just been reedited in 1908 by the *Mercure de France*, seduced Ravel, who immediately and dramatically changed his pianistic style: from the infantile Mother Goose (1908) to the fantastic, from extreme simplicity to extreme virtuosity, and to transpose as if for a wager the spell of prose poetry into the wizardry of the keyboard. Ravel confided that he wished to compose a work of transcendental virtuosity even more difficult than Balakirev's Islamey.



The poems themselves are expressed with strong creative imagination, and explore fantasies of medieval Europe — each prefaced by a short literary quotation.

The name "Gaspard" is derived from "Kaspur" or indeed "Casper", the biblical treasurer of the three wise men.

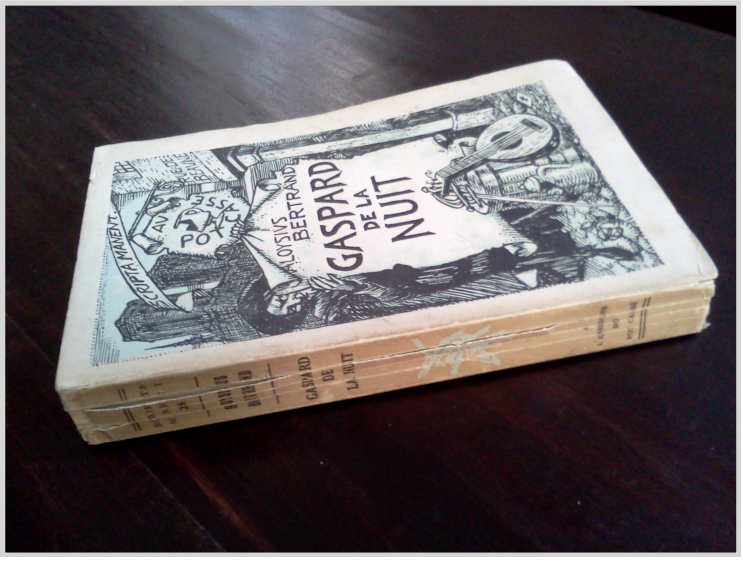
Of the work, Ravel himself said: "Gaspard has been a devil in coming, but that is only logical since it was he who is the author of the poems. My ambition is to say with notes what a poet expresses with words."

Alfred Cortot commented : “these three poems enrich the piano repertoire of our era by one of the most astonishing examples of instrumental resourcefulness that I have ever witnessed.”

This is programme music *par excellence* and it is essential to assimilate the meaning of this fascinating literature. Although the three Bertrand poems chosen by Ravel are very diverse, they seem to make an almost perfect three movement sonata. My translations will no doubt help understanding their meaning, but anyone who wishes to know more of French language and culture would do well to make an effort to study them in the original language, even if some of the more arcane vocabulary is obscure.

*Louis Jacques Napoléon Bertrand (with pen name Aloysius) introduces his collection by attributing the poems to a mysterious old man who lends him a book in a Dijon park. When he goes in search of Mr Gaspard to return the volume, he asks — “Tell me where Mr Gaspard may be found?” “He is in hell, provided that he isn't somewhere else,” comes the reply. “Ah! I am beginning to understand! What! *Gaspard de la Nuit* must be…?" the poet continues. “Ah! Yes... the devil!” his informant responds. “Thank you, *mon brave*!... If *Gaspard de la Nuit* is in hell, may he roast there. I shall publish his book.”

Bertrand lived a few generations before Ravel but was a source of inspiration for Baudelaire and Mallarmé who in turn inspired Debussy and other “impressionists”. Using imagery to create word pictures he was largely responsible for establishing the prose poem in French literature, leading subsequently to symbolism and eventually surrealism.



O N D I N E

à Harold BAUER

. . . . . Je croyais entendre
Une vague harmonie enchanter mon sommeil.
Et près de moi s'épandre un murmure pareil
Aux chants entrecoupés d'une voix triste et tendre.

. . . . . I thought I could hear
A vague harmony bewitch my slumber.
And near me emanate a whisper
Similar to songs interrupted by a forlorn and tender voice.

Ch. Brugnot (Les deux Génies)
(The two Spirits)

— «Ecoute ! — Ecoute ! — C'est moi, c'est Ondine qui frôle de ces gouttes d'eau les losanges sonores de ta fenêtre illuminée par les mornes rayons de la lune ; et voici, en robe de moire, la dame châtelaine qui contemple à son balcon la belle nuit étoilée et le beau lac endormi.

«Chaque flot est un ondin qui nage dans le courant, chaque courant est un sentier qui serpente vers mon palais, et mon palais est bâti fluide, au fond du lac, dans le triangle du feu, de la terre et de l'air.

— «Ecoute ! — Ecoute ! — Mon père bat l'eau coassante d'une branche d'aulne verte, et mes sœurs caressent de leurs bras d'écume les fraîches îles d'herbes, de nénuphars et de glaïeuls, ou se moquent du saule caduc et barbu qui pêche à la ligne.»

*

Sa chanson murmurée, elle me supplia de recevoir son anneau à mon doigt, pour être l'époux d'une Ondine, et de visiter avec elle son palais, pour être le roi des lacs.

Et comme je lui répondais que j'aimais une mortelle, boudeuse et dépitée, elle pleura quelques larmes, poussa un éclat de rire, et s'évanouit, en giboulées qui ruisselèrent blanches le long de mes vitraux bleus.

— «Listen! — Listen! — It is I, Undine* caressing with these drops of water the sonorous lattices of your window lit by the pale rays of the moon; and here, from her balcony on a beautiful starlit night, in a gown of watered silk, the lady '*châtelaine*' contemplates the lovely sleeping lake.

«Each ripple is a water-nymph who swims in the current, each current of each stream winds towards my palace, and my palace is a watery realm deep in the lake, in the triangle of fire, earth and air.

— «Listen! — Listen! My father stirs the gurgling stream with a green alder branch, and with foamy arms my sisters embrace cool isles of reeds, water lilies and gladioli, mocking the leafless and bearded willow who is angling.»

*

Her song whispered, she beseeched me to slip her ring upon my finger and become the spouse of an Undine, and to return with her to her palace, there to become king of the lakes.

And as I told her that I loved a mortal, she pouted as if vexed, wept a few tears, then burst into laughter, evaporating into a shower of raindrops, streaming white down the length of my blue stained glass windows.

* a water nymph

from the edition *Mercure de France,* 1908

Dedicated to the pianist Harold Bauer, the music of *Ondine* follows almost verse by verse the pattern of this fluid and seductive prose poem. It narrates the tale of the temptress *Ondine*, hauntingly irresistible and dangerous, who lures young men to their deaths, with sudden changes of mood, sometimes pouting and sometimes laughing, finally disappearing in a shower of raindrops.

Arthur Rackham *Undine*

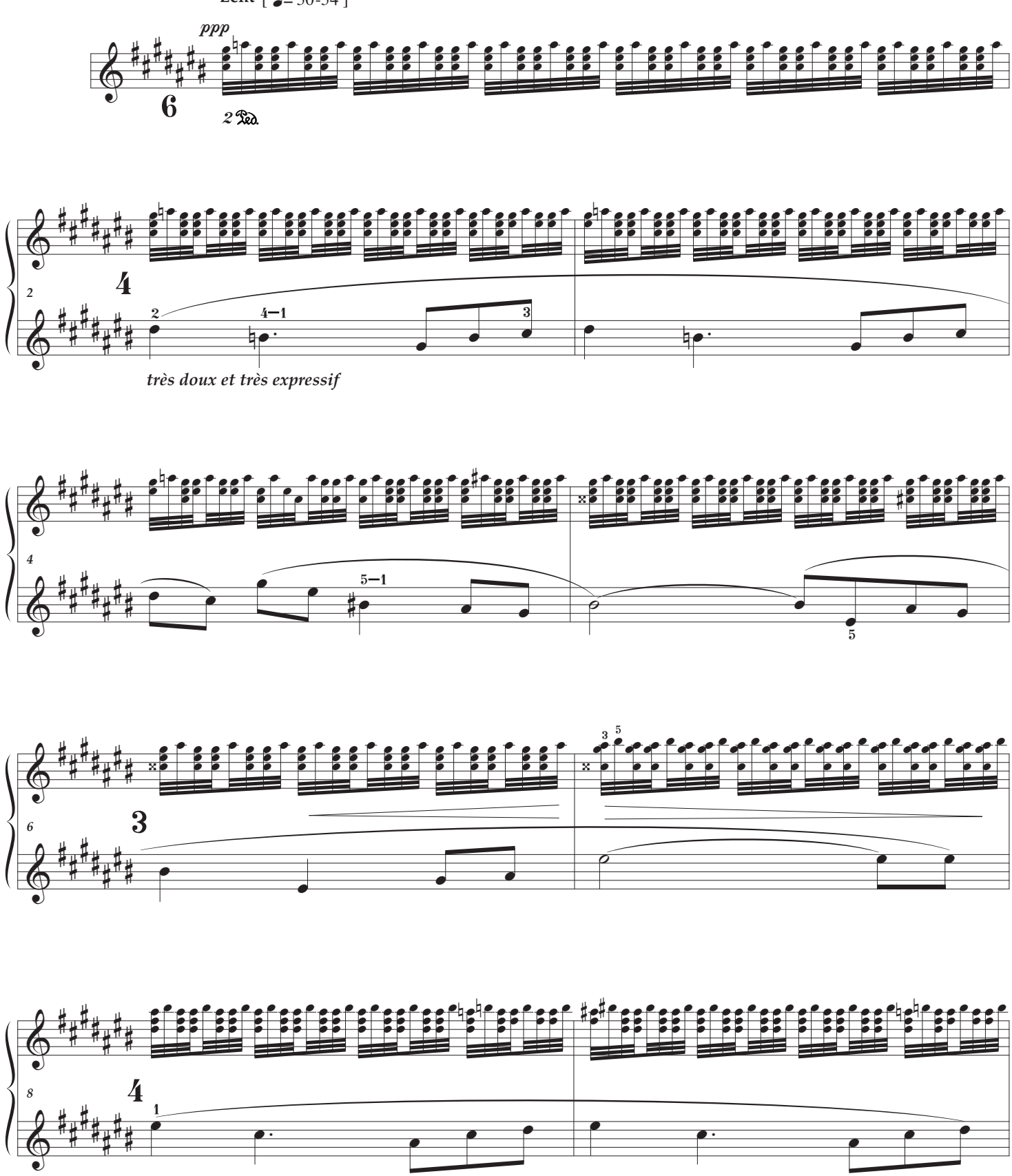
Although *lent* is indicated, and indeed the recitative has a slow tempo, most of the accompanying arpeggios, scales and glissandi require nimble fingers, although the overall effect must sound quite effortless and without virtuosity. Therein lies the challenge of this wondrous work of pianistic art.

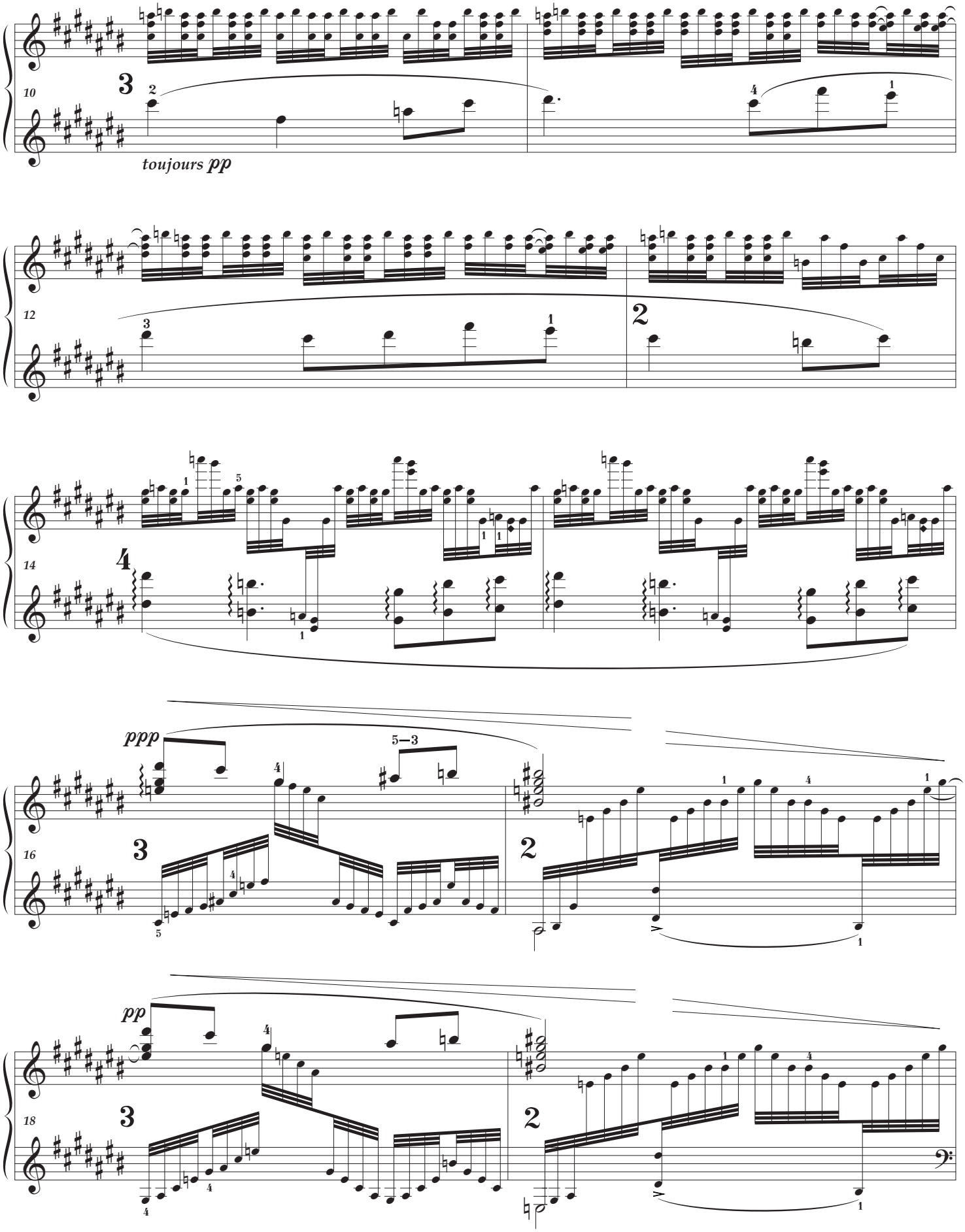
Ravel gives no metronome speeds and unlike the original edition, I have printed throughout noteheads of 80% for the element of water and 100% for the melody.

In addition to some suggested fingerings, the appendix contains 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 from time to time, although this is entirely editorial.

à HAROLD BAUER

ONDINE




10
toujours pp
12
14
16
ppp
5–3
18
pp

6

p

cédez légèrement

20

22

ppp

2 Ped.

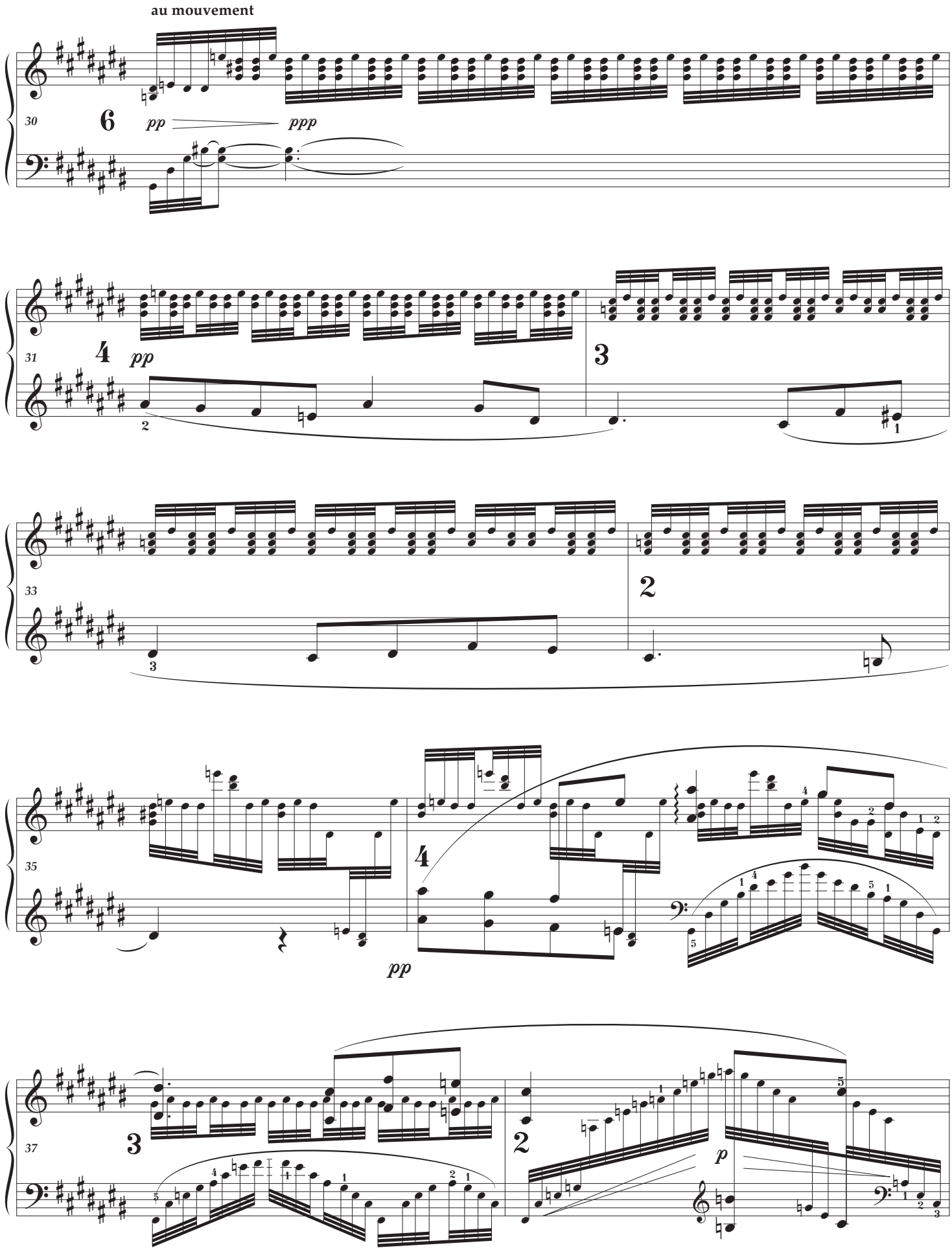
24

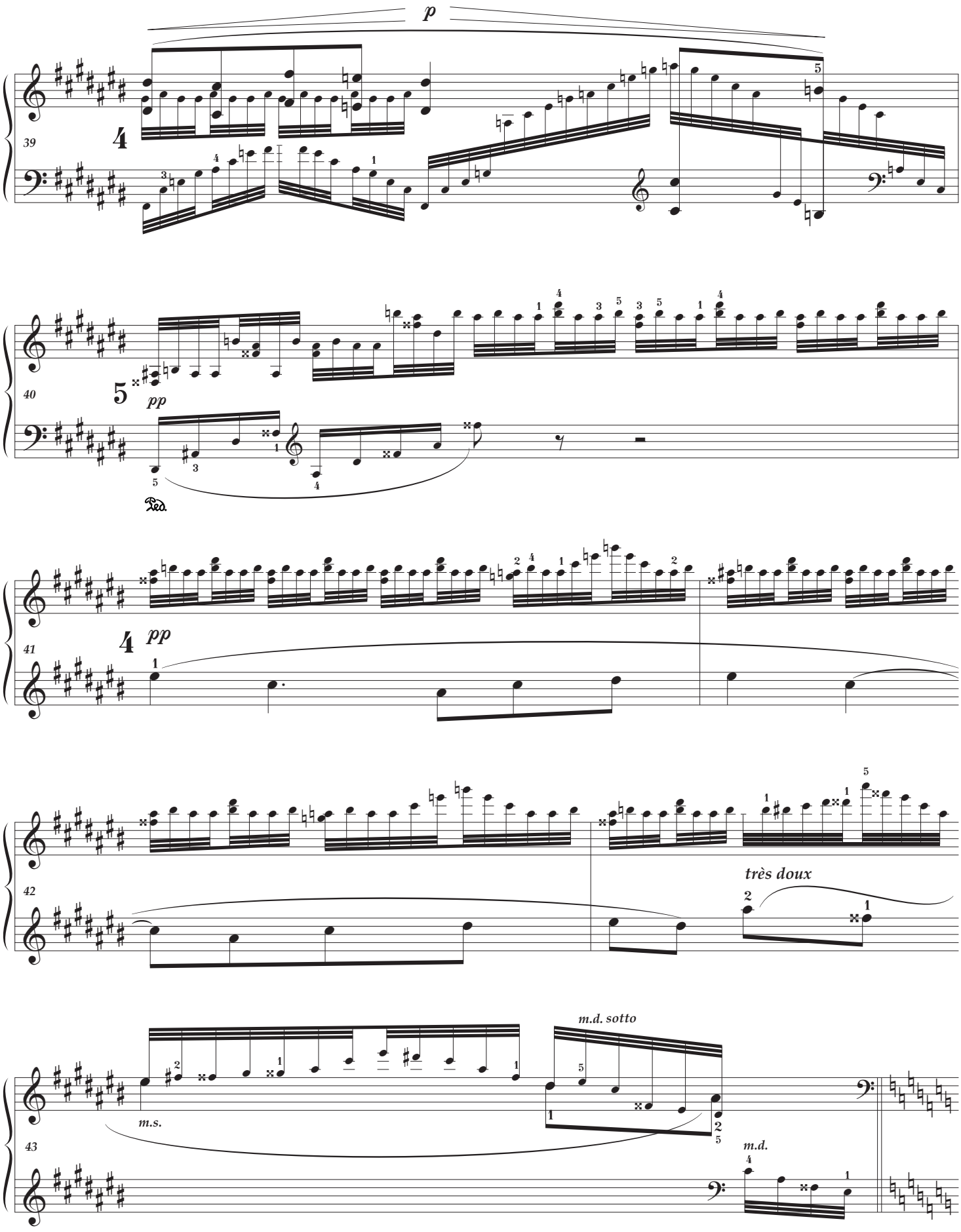
26

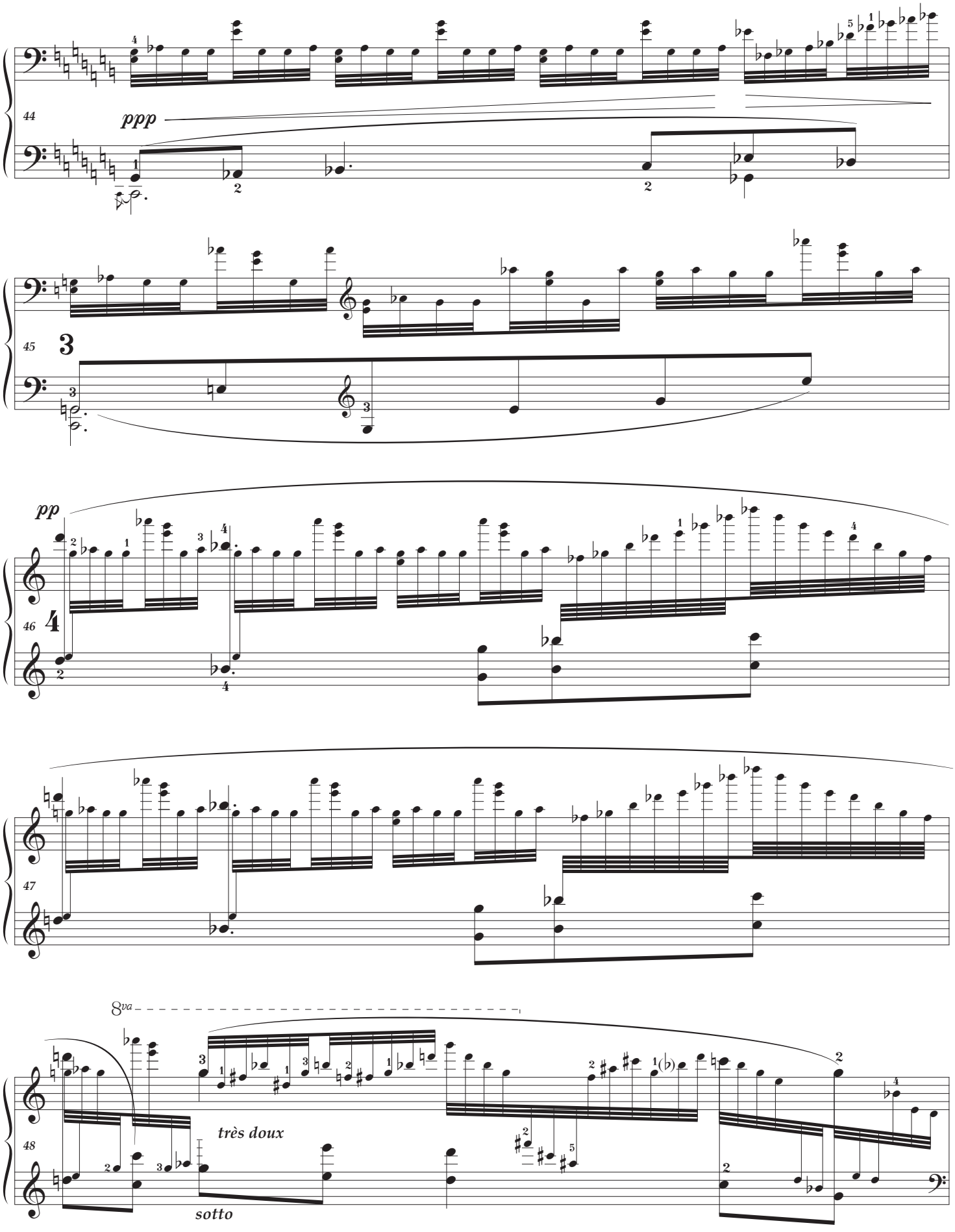
28

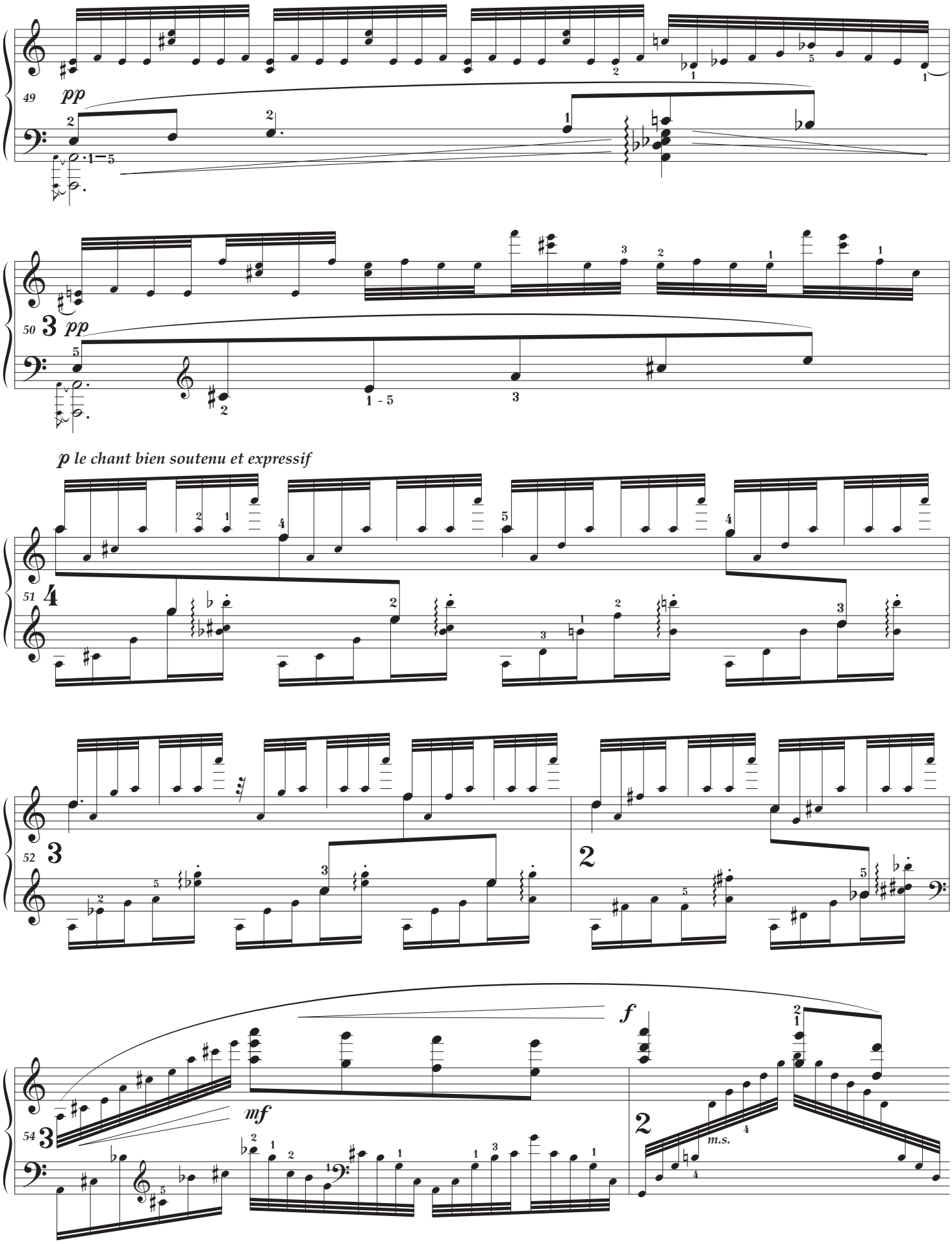
m.s.

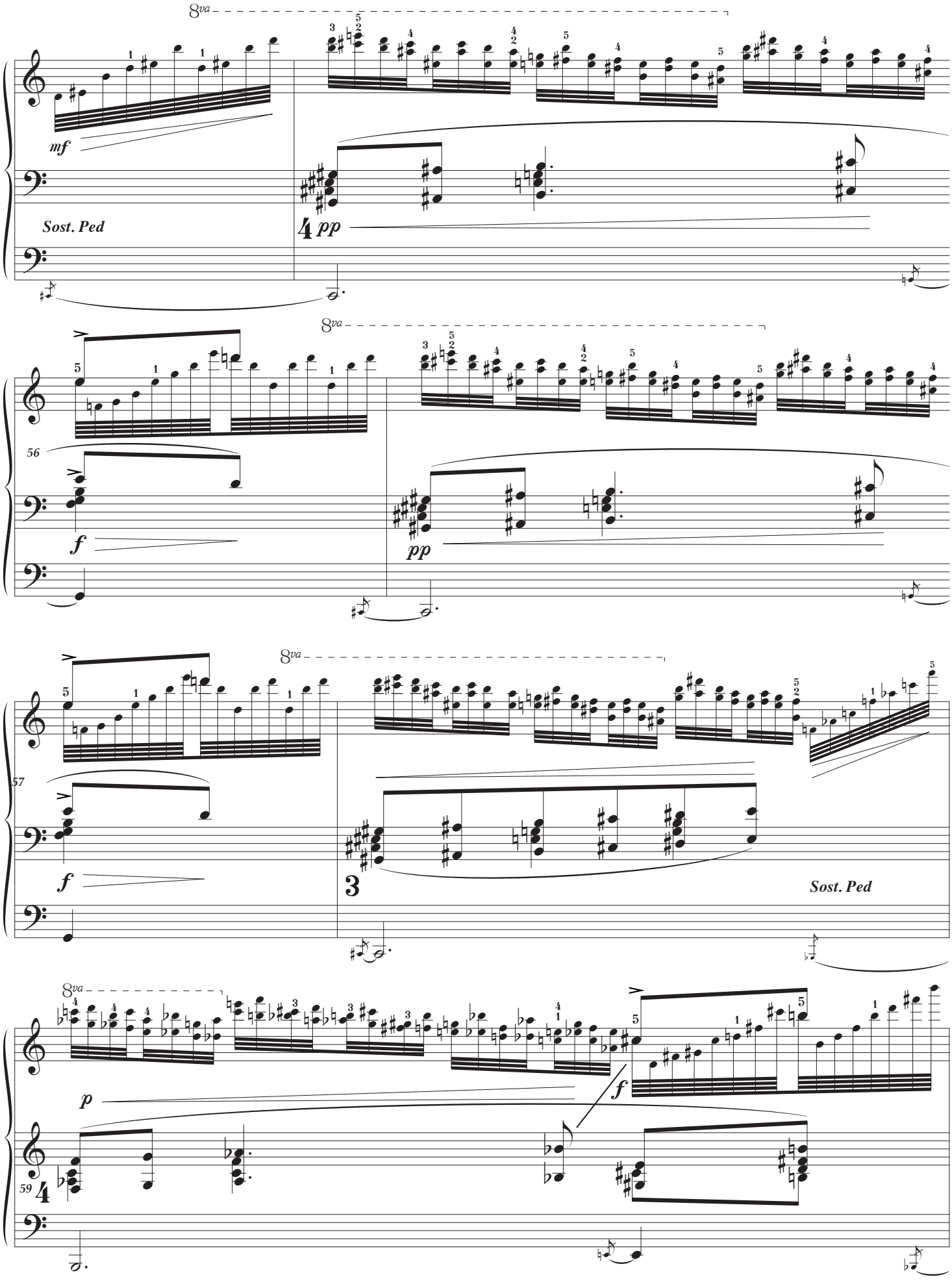
un peu retenu

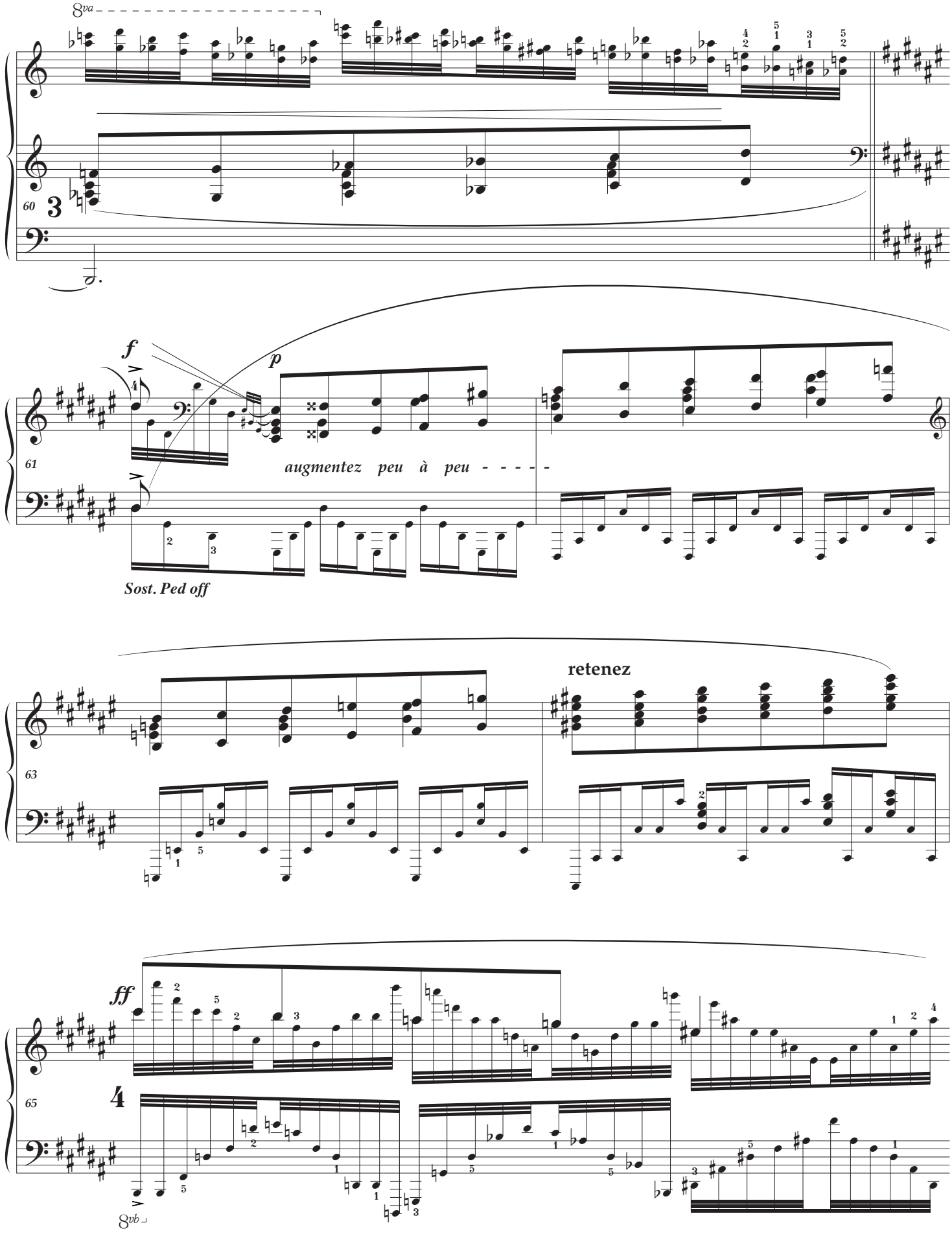

au mouvement
30
6
pp
ppp
31
4
pp
3
33
3
2
35
4
pp
37
3
2
p

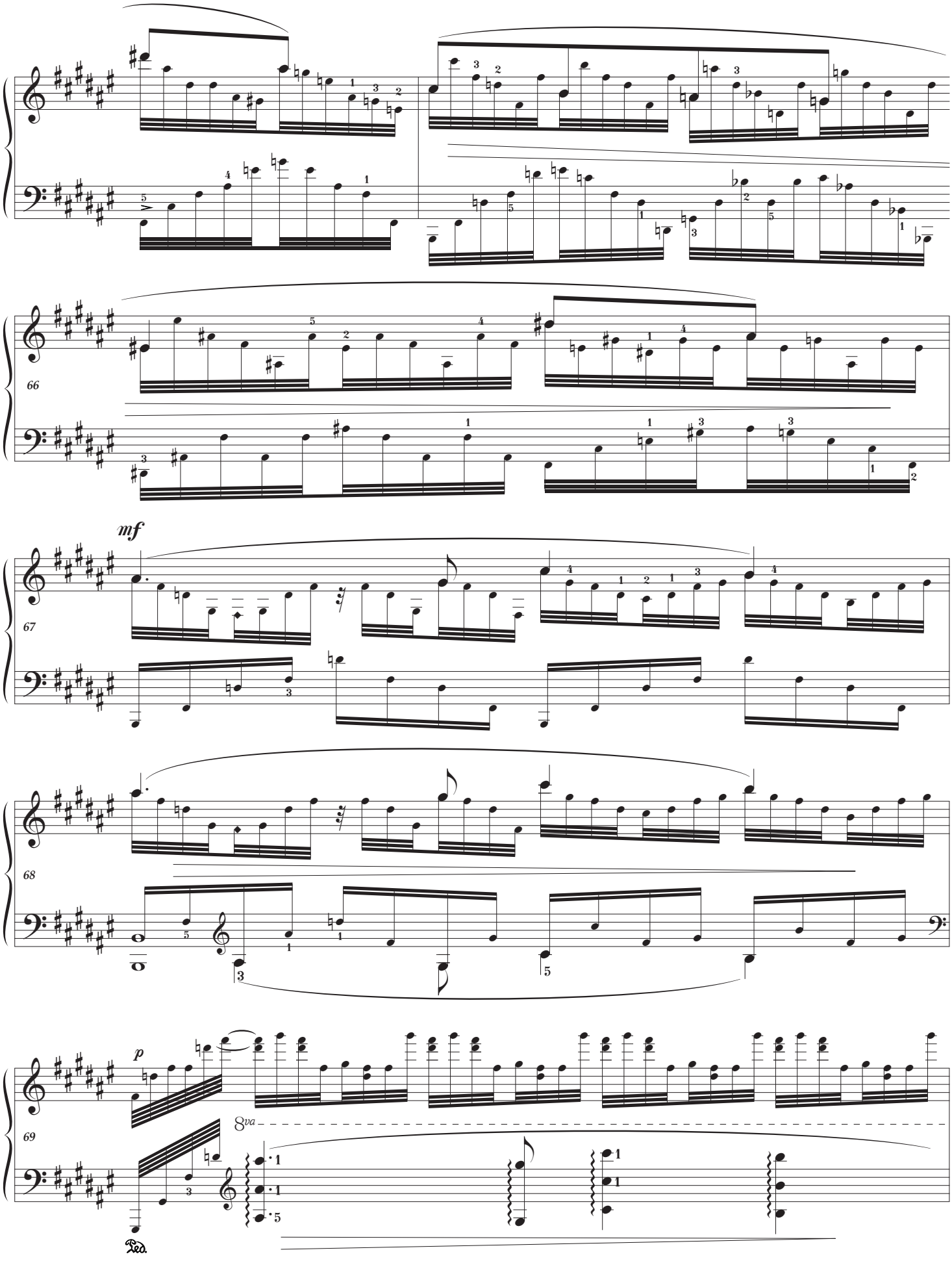

p
39
4
40
5
pp
Ped.
41
4
pp
42
très doux
43
m.d. sotto
m.s.
m.d.

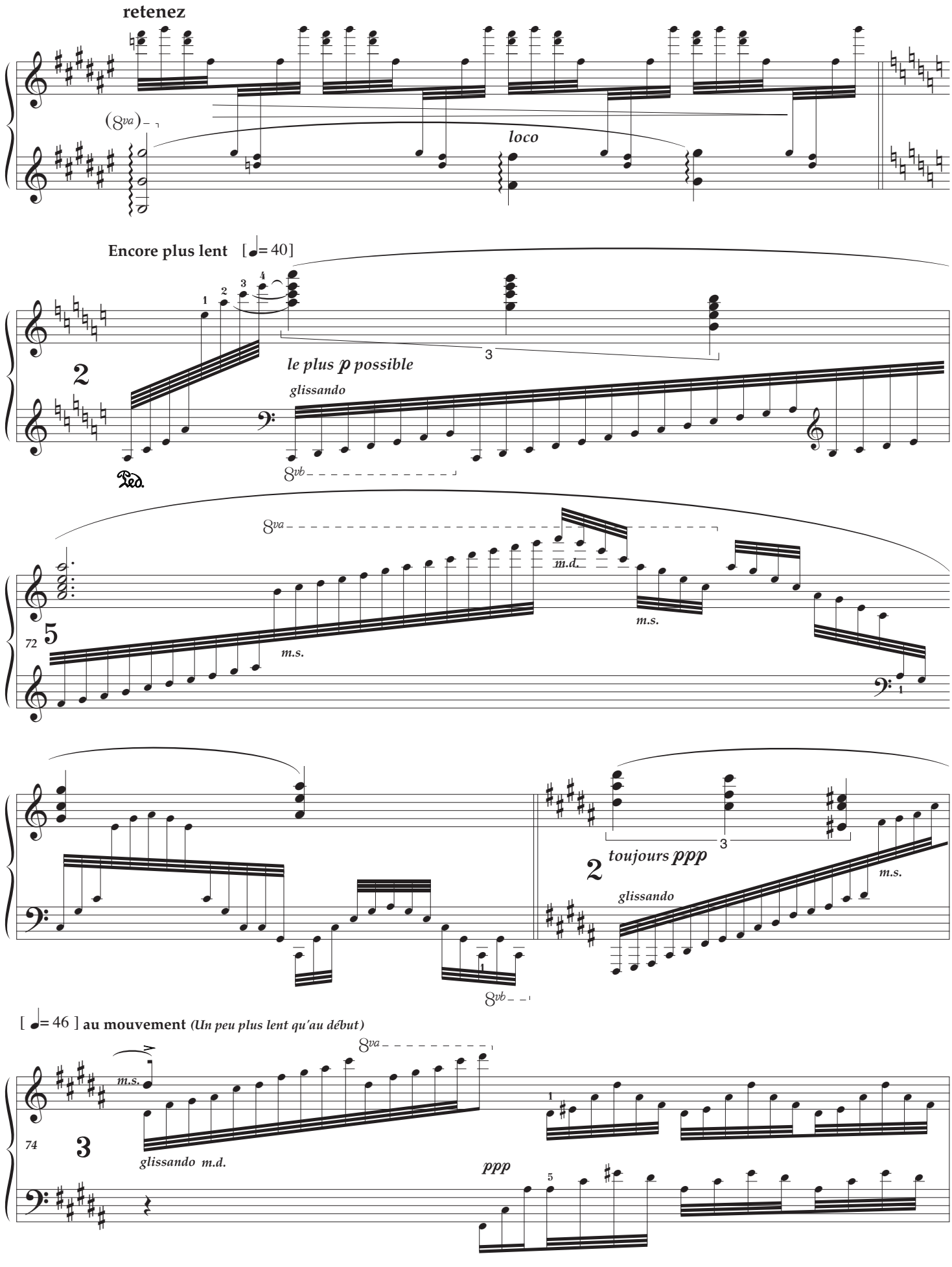

44
ppp
45
3
pp
46
4
47
8va
48
très doux
sotto

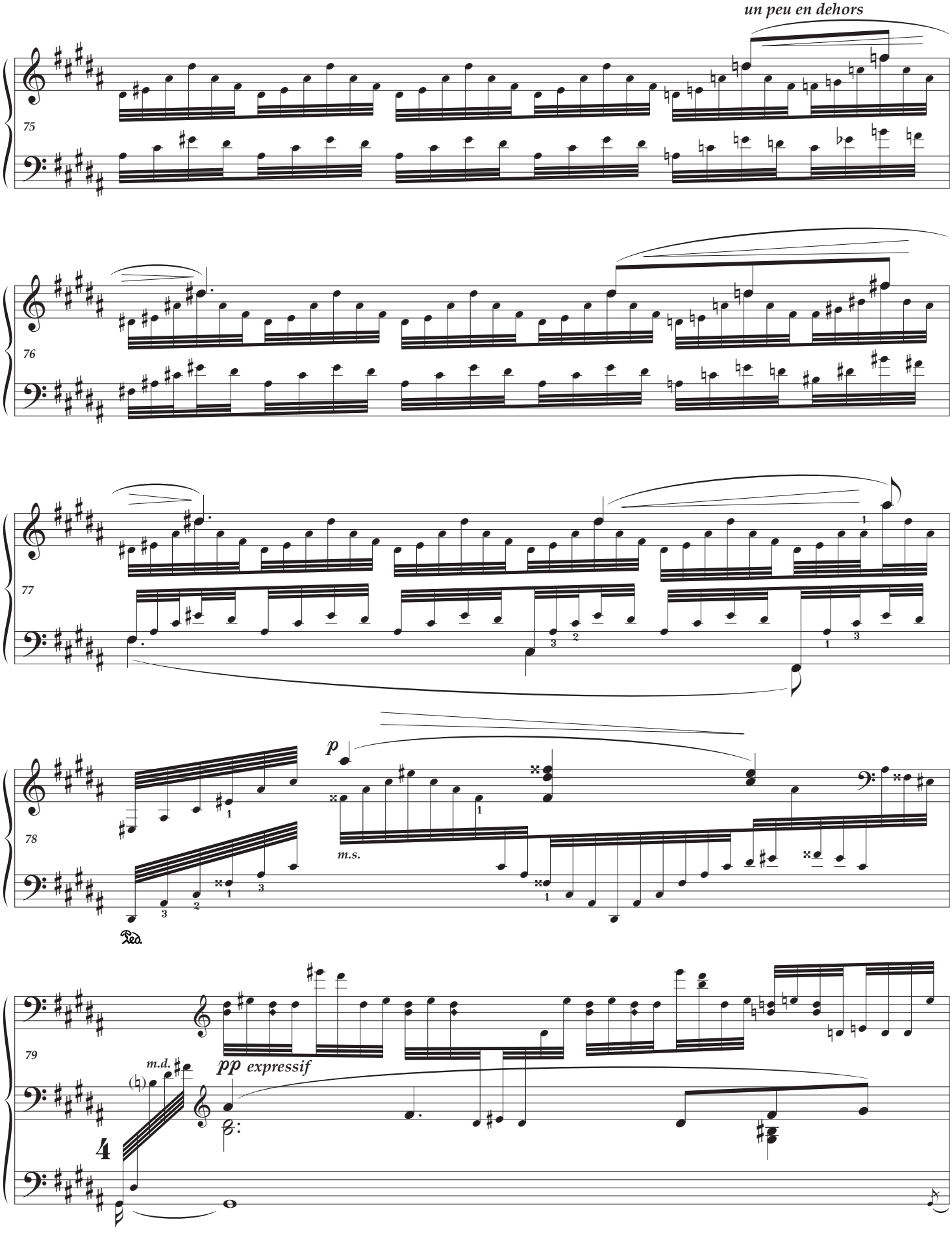

49
pp
50
3
pp
p le chant bien soutenu et expressif
51
4
52
3
2
54
3
mf
f
2
m.s.

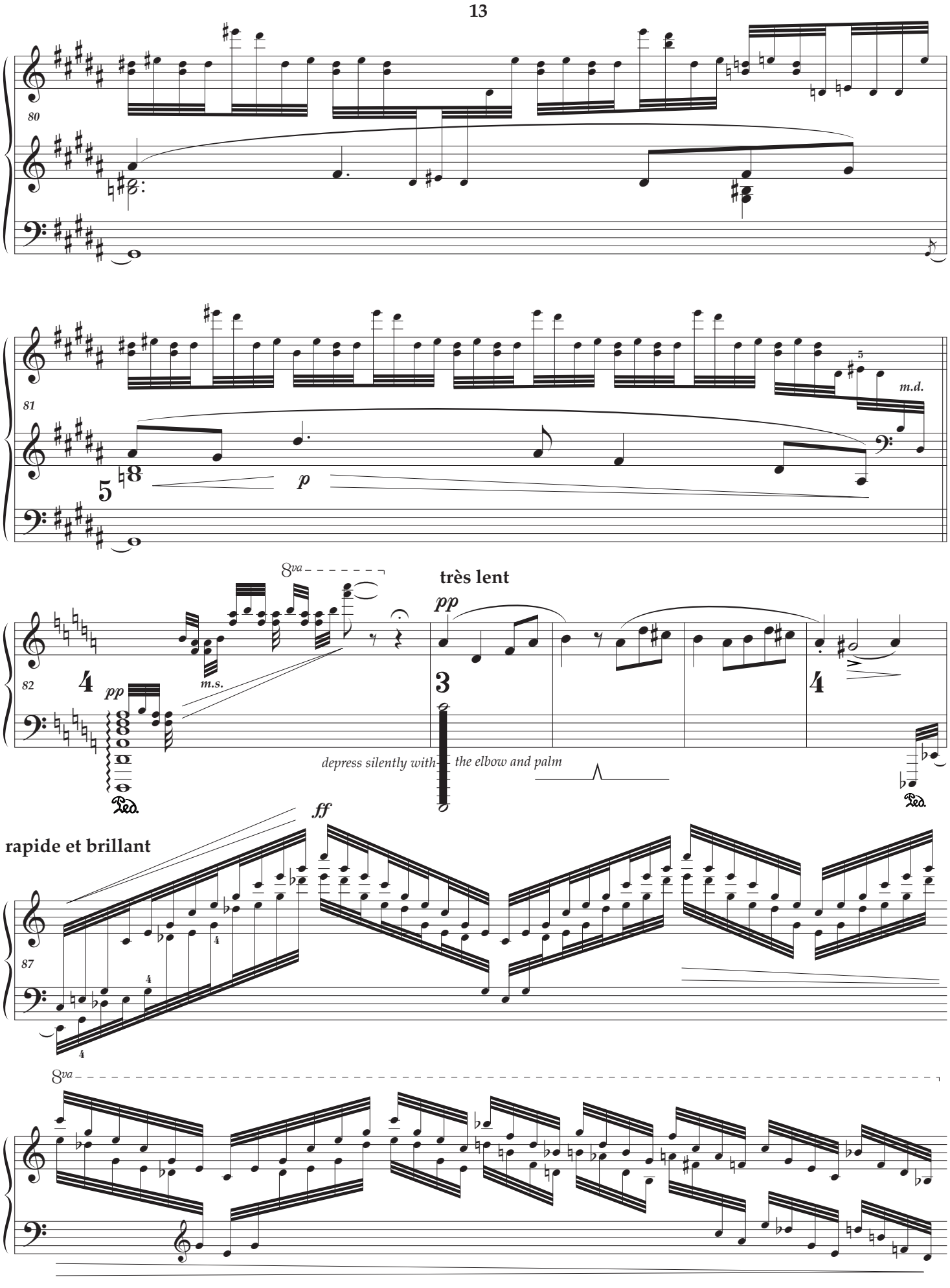

8va
mf
Sost. Ped
4
pp
8va
56
f
pp
8va
57
f
3
Sost. Ped
8va
59
4
p
f

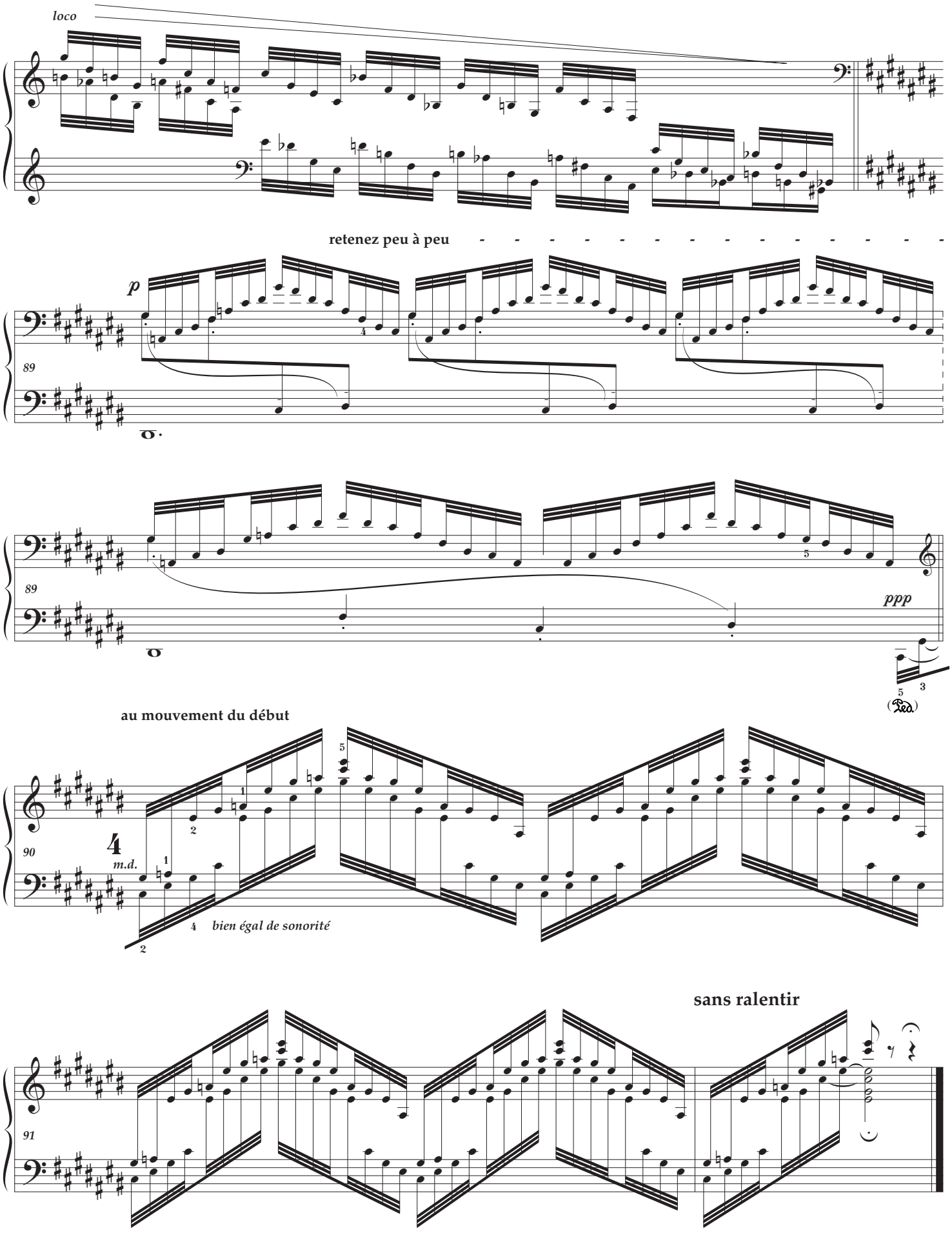

8va
60
3
f
p
61
augmentez peu à peu - - - - -
Sost. Ped off
63
retenez
ff
65
4
8vb


66
mf
67
68
p
69
8va
Ped.


retenez
(8va)
loco
Encore plus lent [♩= 40]
le plus p possible
glissando
Ped.
8vb
8va
m.d.
m.s.
72
5
toujours ppp
2
[♩= 46] au mouvement (Un peu plus lent qu'au début)
74
3
glissando m.d.
ppp


un peu en dehors
75
76
77
78
p
m.s.
Ped.
79
m.d.
pp expressif


80
81
5
p
m.d.
82
4
pp
m.s.
8va
très lent
pp
3
4
depress silently with the elbow and palm
Ped.
ff
rapide et brillant
87
8va


loco
retenez peu à peu
p
89
89
ppp
au mouvement du début
90
m.d.
bien égal de sonorité
sans ralentir
91

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Ondine — appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

Duration: 7'25

- Has Ondine so bewitched the composer that a some bars have curiously inaccurate time values :
    - **27** The first RH minim tied to a quaver reads as a crotchet in the original edition
    - **46** The last beat should have 8 hemidemisemiquavers
    - **89** The melodic line is originally in semiquavers and quavers but, given the note values of the accompaniment, I believe it makes more sense as presented here
- 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.
- Notes with a diamond head can be omitted — a strictly editorial suggestion for "challenging" passages

- **2-9** LH melody — try sustaining lower notes (particularly with 5th finger) to create a special "pedalled" effect; pedal changes will thus be less noticeable
- **3-13** RH notes which impede LH finger legato have been omitted (as in **1** beat 4)
- **4-7**, **23-27** The RH pattern should remain as hitherto (according to Casadesus, Perlemuter and Badura-Skoda)
- **13** RH 2nd beat accompaniment rearranged
- **25** RH 2nd beat thumb melody octave omitted
- **27** RH 1st beat a crotchet in Durand… probably an error
- **29** The final G# of the melody is a quaver in the original edition
- **37** An F# has been substituted for the original G# to avoid repeated notes between the hands (as in bar 39)
- **43** RH 2nd beat D# is clearly intended here

- **44, 49 & 50** editorial acciaccaturas (played on the beat) to help voicing the bass melody opening
- **49** LH 4th editorial arpeggiated chord for a particularly sensual sound
- **49** A final demisemiquaver G has been omitted and a tied D♭ inserted to facilitate this awkward transition
- **54** LH 2nd beat final demisemiquaver E replaced with a C♯ and LH last quaver beat — I suspect that middle E is a ledger line error — replaced here by G
- **65** RH beats 2 & 4 — I have added repeated notes (conforming to beats 1 & 4) for fluency and accuracy
- **73-74** An excellent way to control a white or black key ***pp*** glissando is to use four fingernails
- **72** I have extended the time signature from 4 to 5 crotchets, as I believe the melismata need an extra beat at this point. The octave higher sign is missing in the original edition. At the point where the glissando meets the descending arpeggio, it is more practical not to repeat the top note (as in the original edition). At the end of the bar the last two bass notes should be played an octave lower (according to Robert Casadesus).
- **79** The bass G# tie has been omitted in the original edition — clearly an error
- **82** Ravel's pedal instruction at this point is unclear and the following phrase (83-86 - where "Ondine wept a little") sounds 'dry' without it. I suggest holding a silent cluster with the left forearm and palm which clears out dissonance and enables normal pedalling.
- **89** The melody is originally in semiquavers and quavers but, given the note values of the accompaniment, I believe it makes more sense as presented here.
- **90-92** Non-legato within the pedal (according to Perlemuter)

très doux et très expressif	very gentle and very expressive
toujours	always
cédez légèrement	slight *ritardando*
un peu retenu	held back a little
au mouvement	a tempo
le chant bien soutenu et expressif	sustained and expressive melody
augmentez peu à peu	gradually louder
retenez	slowing down
un peu plus lent	slightly slower
encore plus lent	even more slowly
le plus ***p*** possible	as soft as possible
un peu plus lent qu'au début	a little slower than the opening
un peu en dehors	a little in relief
retenez peu à peu	gradually holding back
au mouvement du début	at the opening tempo
bien égal de sonorité	very even tone
sans ralentir	without slowing down

L e G I B E T

à Jean MARNOLD

Que vois-je remuer autour de ce Gibet?
What do I see stirring around this Gallows?
Faust

Ah ! ce que j'entends, serait-ce la bise nocturne qui glapit, ou le pendu qui pousse un soupir sur la fourche patibulaire ?

Serait-ce quelque grillon qui chante tapi dans la mousse et le lierre stérile dont par pitié se chausse le bois?

Serait-ce quelque mouche en chasse sonnant du cor autour de ces oreilles sourdes à la fanfare des hallali ?

Serait-ce quelque escarbot qui cueille en son vol inégal un cheveu sanglant à son crâne chauve ?

Ou bien serait-ce quelque araignée qui brode une demi-aune de mousseline pour cravate à ce col étranglé ?

C'est la cloche qui tinte aux murs d'une ville sous l'horizon, et la carcasse d'un pendu que rougit le soleil couchant.

Aha! What's this I hear, could it be the nocturnal wail of an icy blast of winter, or the hanged man heaving a sigh on the lugubrious gibbet?

Could it be some singing cricket cowering in the moss and barren ivy, which mercifully clothe the wood?

Could it be some fly in pursuit sounding a horn to these ears deaf to the fanfare of the halloo?

Could it be some scarab in erratic flight plucking a gory hair from his bald skull?

Or could it even be some spider embroidering an ell of muslin as a cravat for this strangled neck?

It is the bell that tolls from the walls of a city beneath the horizon, and the corpse of a hanged man that glows red by the setting sun.

(from the edition *Mercure de France*, 1908)

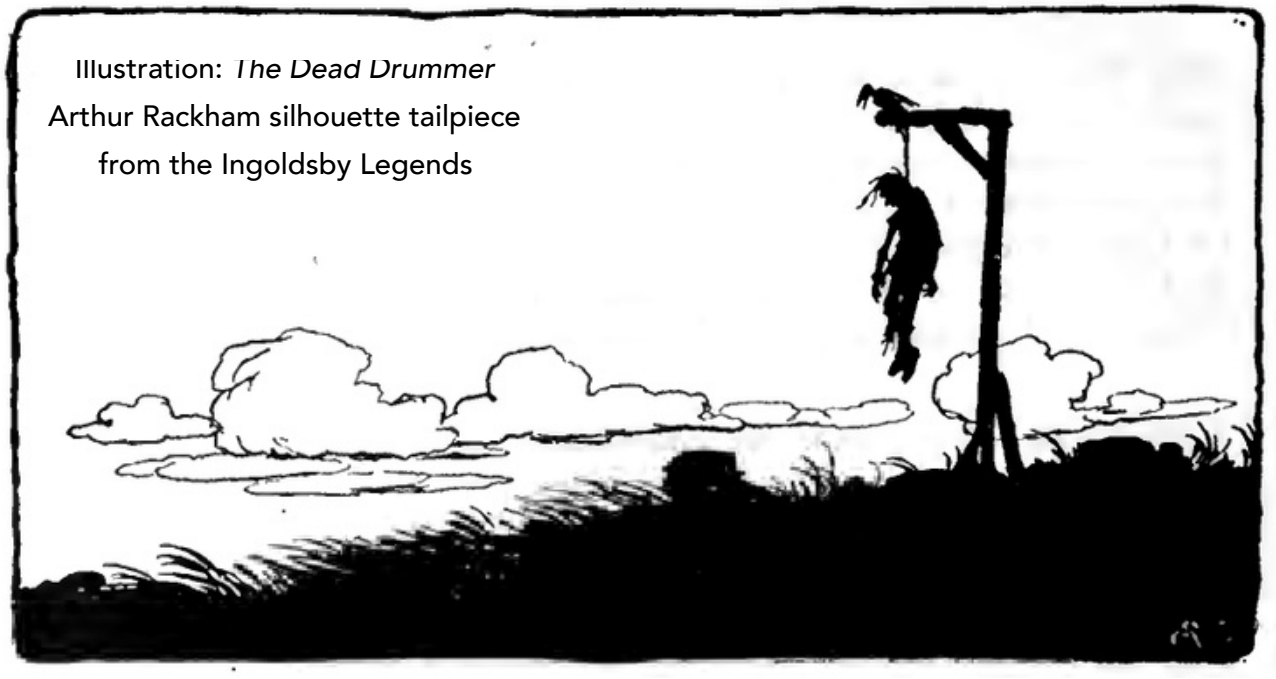


Illustration: *The Dead Drummer*
Arthur Rackham silhouette tailpiece
from the Ingoldsby Legends

Aloysius Bertrand

With Bertrand's compellingly plaintive composition of gloom, a gruesome and ominous portrayal of a lurid sunset illuminating the corpse of a hanged man on a gallows, Ravel was also undoubtedly influenced by the American poet Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849); it is the last verse of the poem which is the true inspiration of this macabre masterpiece.

The fatal bell is represented by a B♭ death knell, and have no fear of being static, as it is the essence of this atmospheric masterpiece. As difficult as it may seem, resist any temptation to become over-expressive; in fact, as Perlemuter stated — monotony is an integral part of the poetry and the music.

Polyphonic skills will provide the demanding pianistic technique and sensitivity necessary to simultaneously project the melodic line, accented and non-accented bells and accompaniment.

Performing Le Gibet requires a zen-like tranquillity and hallucinatory attitude at the piano, where you cannot even react to a gory scarab plucking at your bald skull. The final tolling bell sends shivers down the spine.

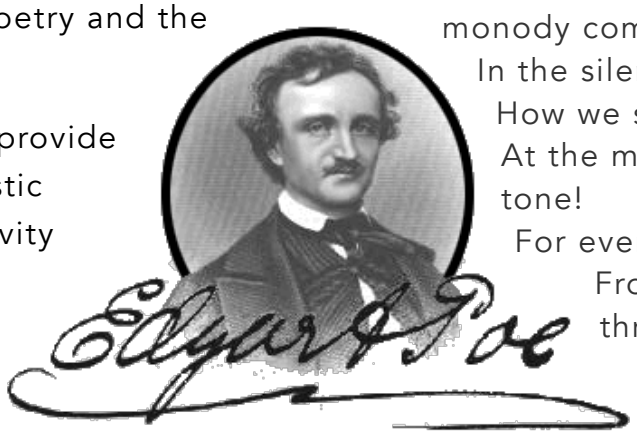
In addition to some suggested fingerings, the appendix contains comments, afterthoughts and a vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more persuasive. Ravel uses the pedal sign sparingly, preferring extended ties or long bass notes, impossible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

The dedicatee, the critic *Jean Marnold*, was a personal friend of the composer.

***The Bells* — Edgar Allan Poe**

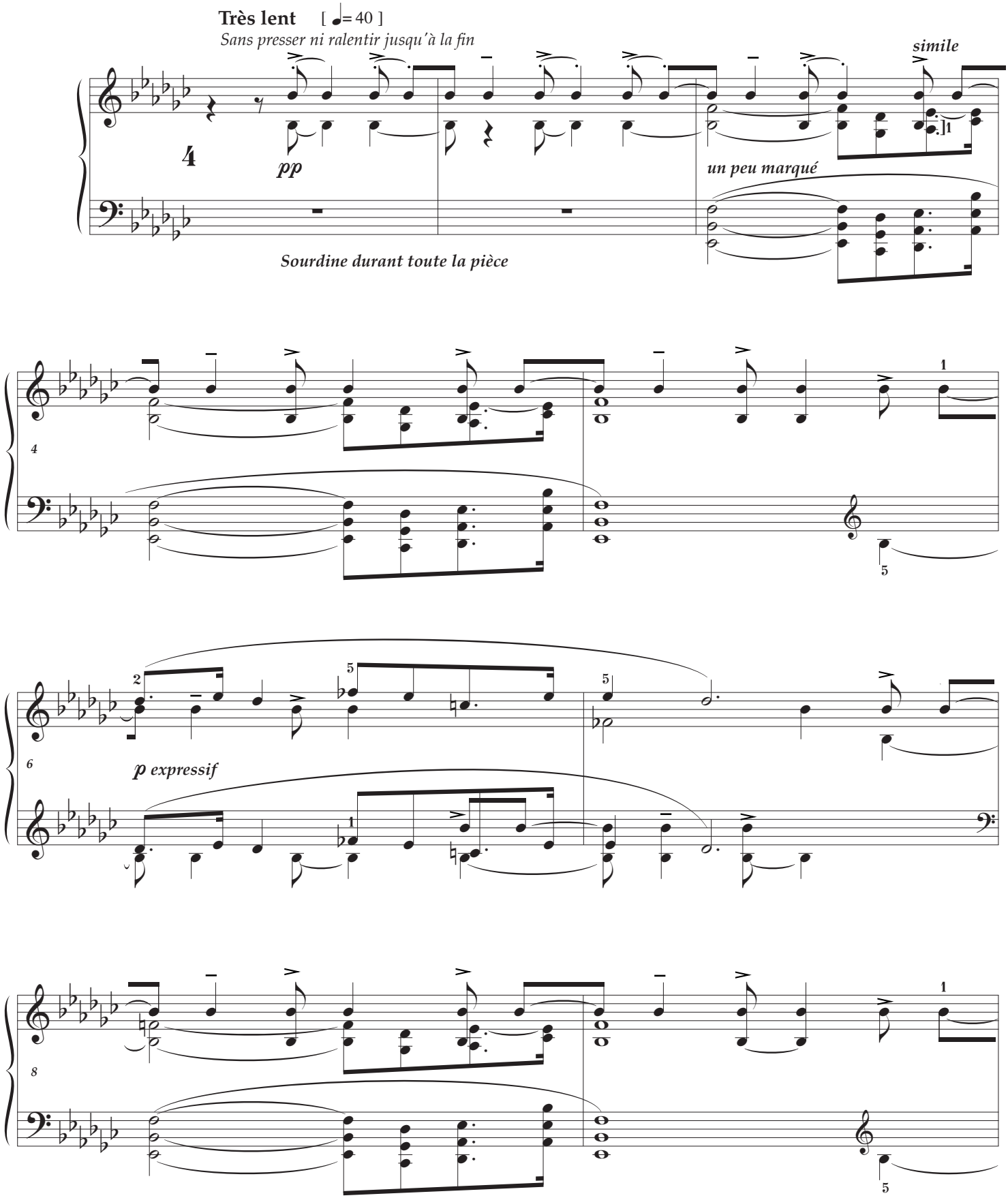
— a short extract from part 4

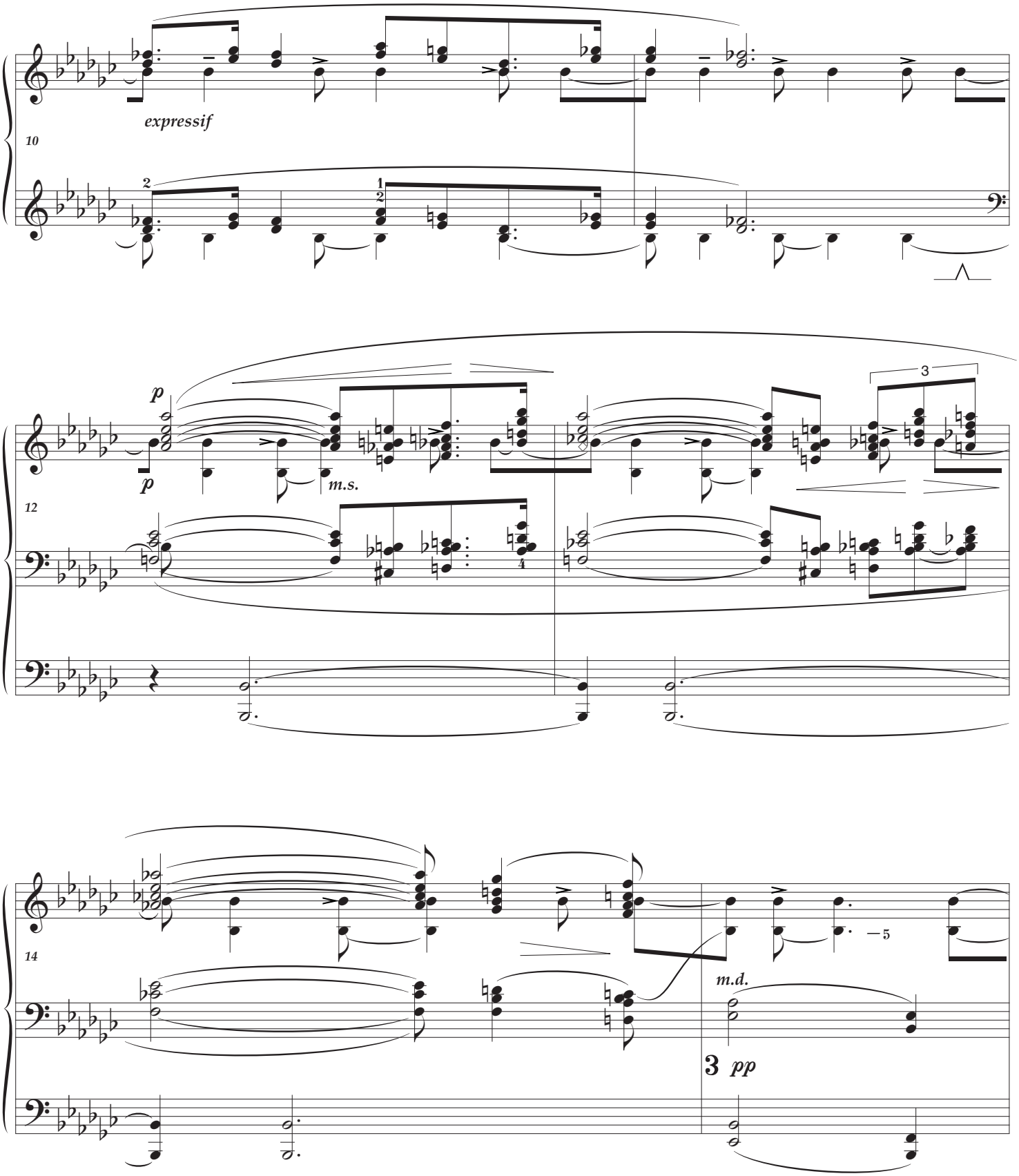
Hear the tolling of the bells —
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their
monody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their
tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their
throats
Is a groan.

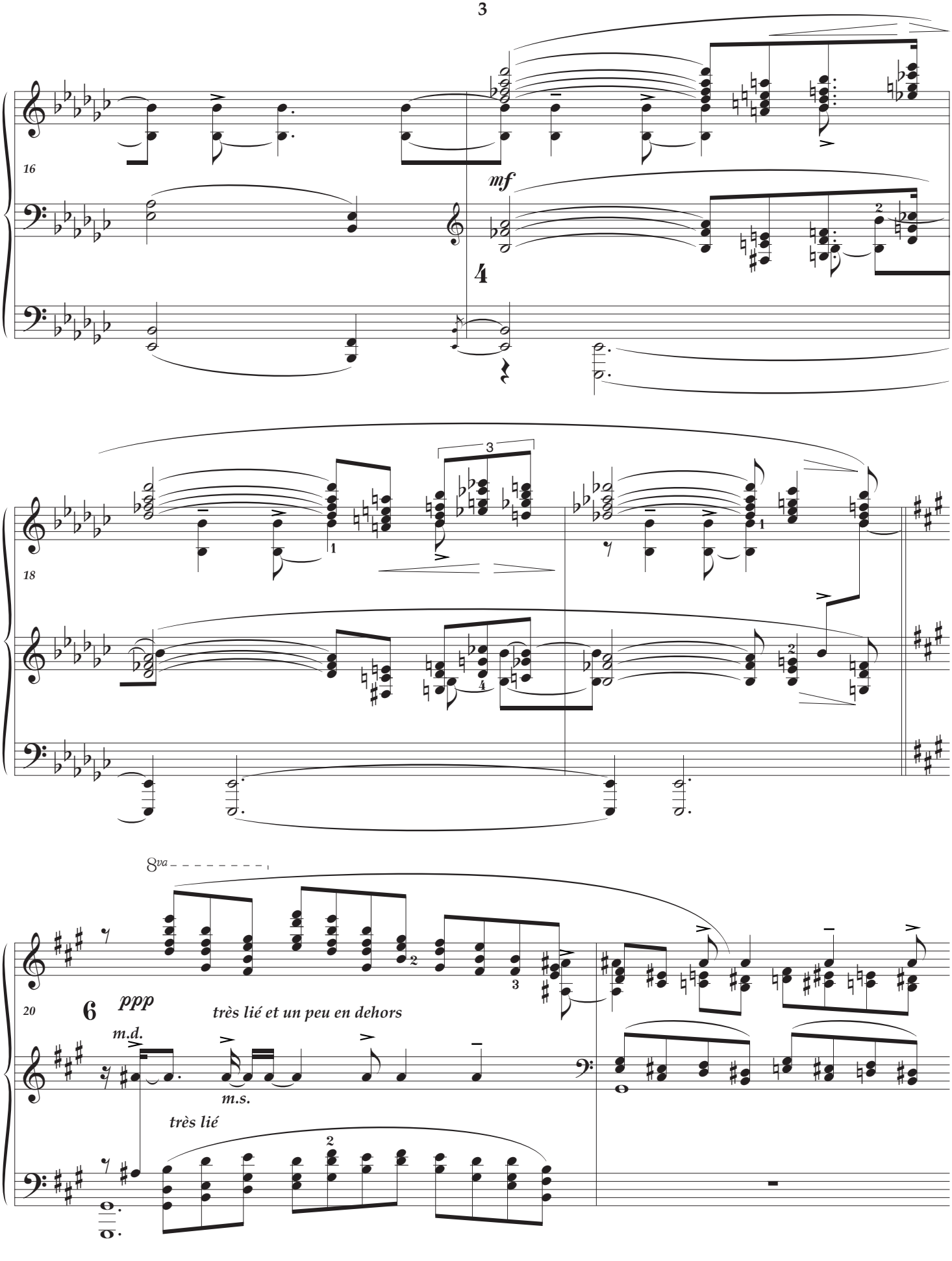


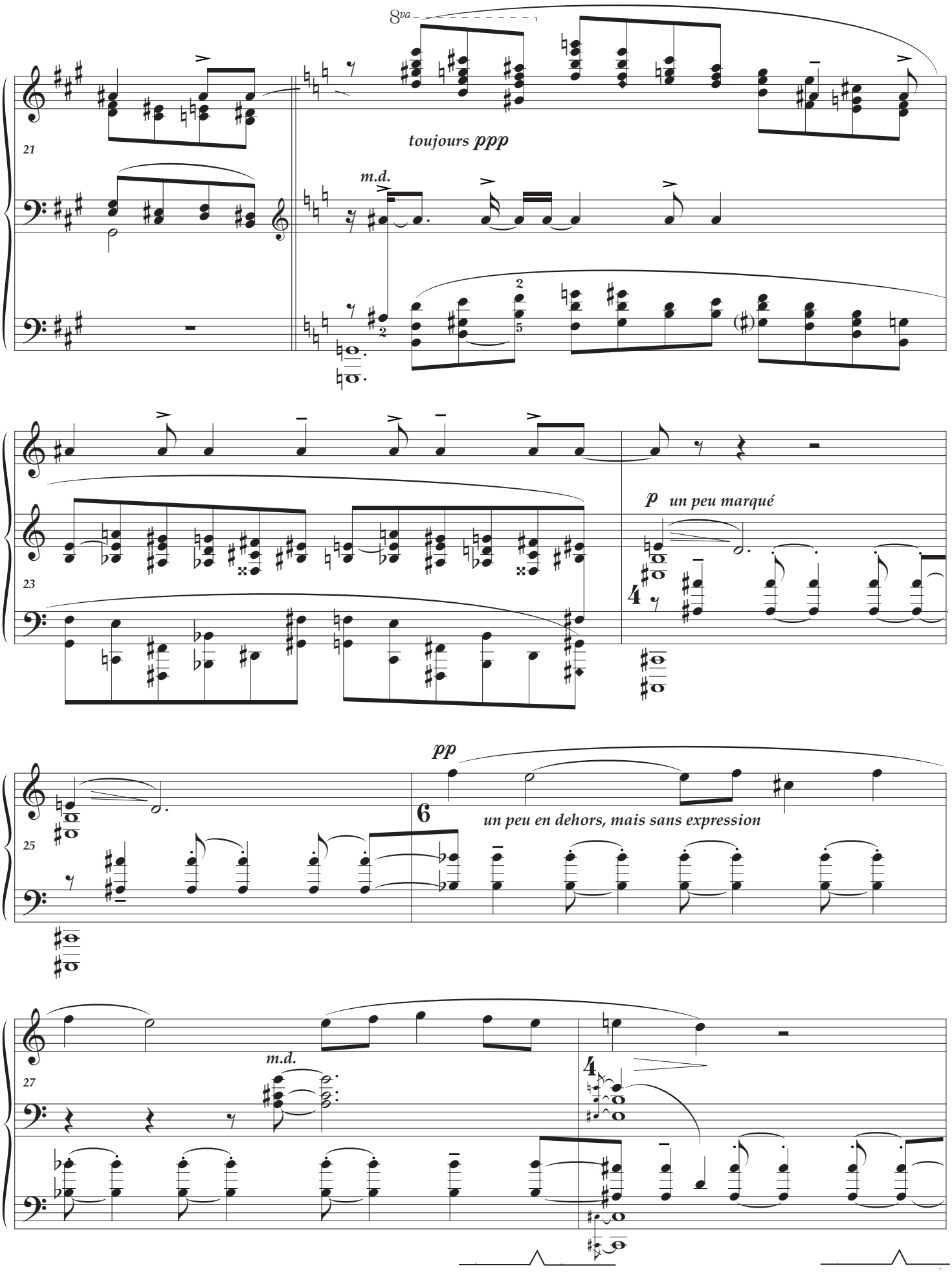
à JEAN MARNOLD

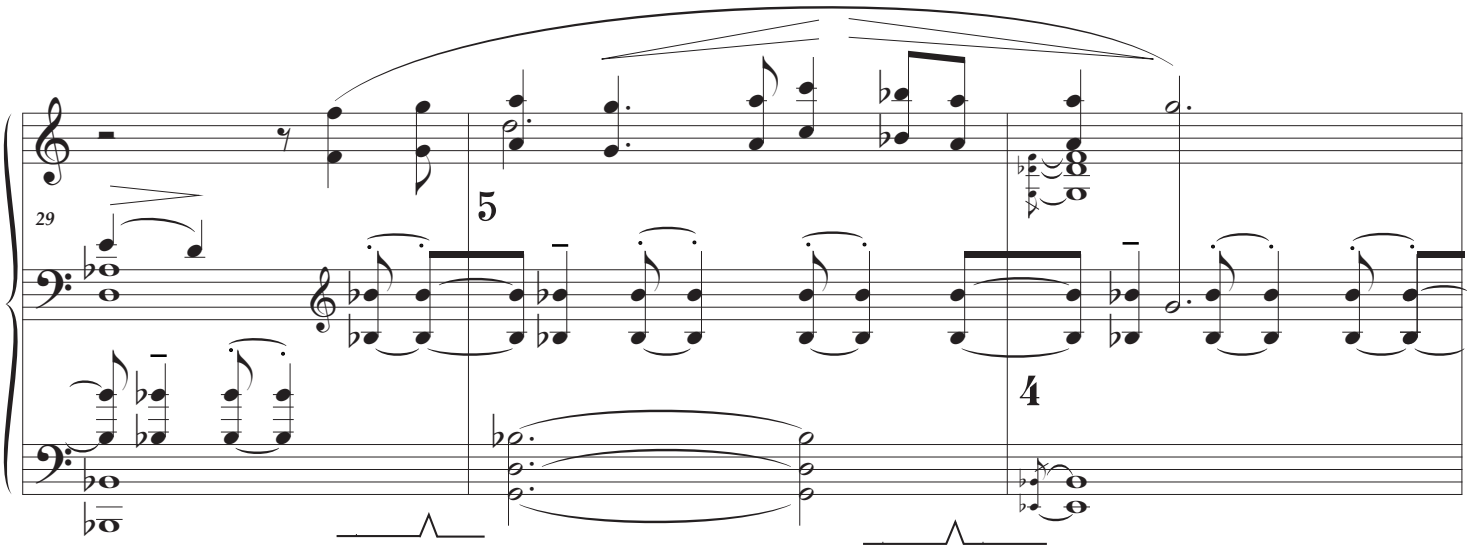
LE GIBET

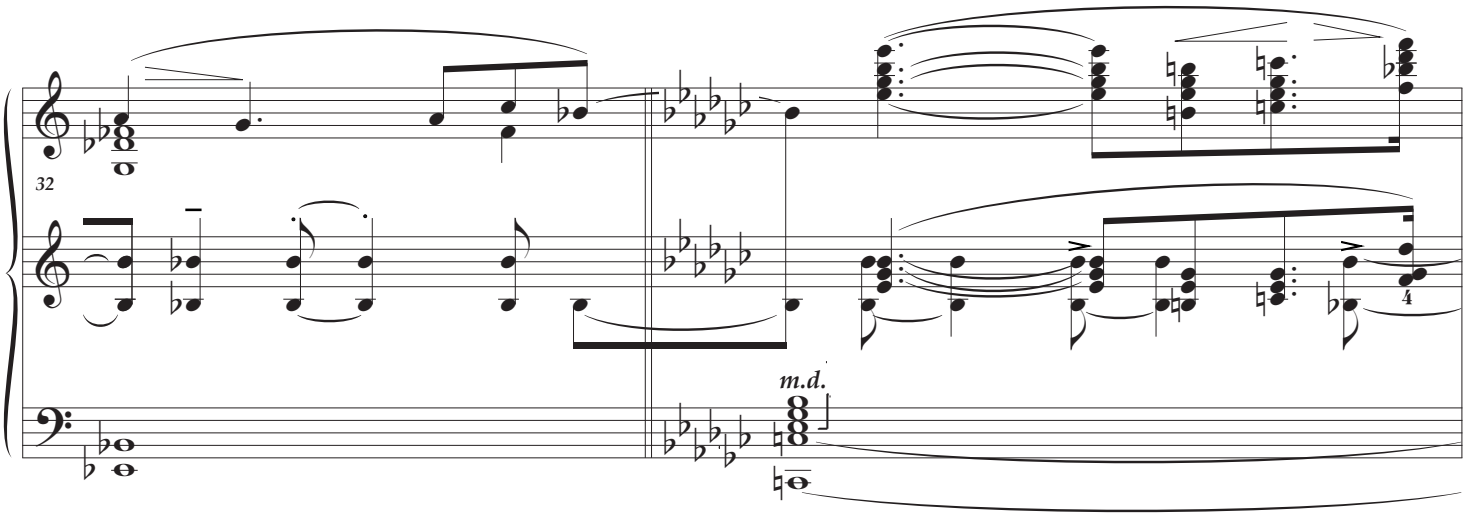



expressif
10
12
p
m.s.
3
14
m.d.
3 pp

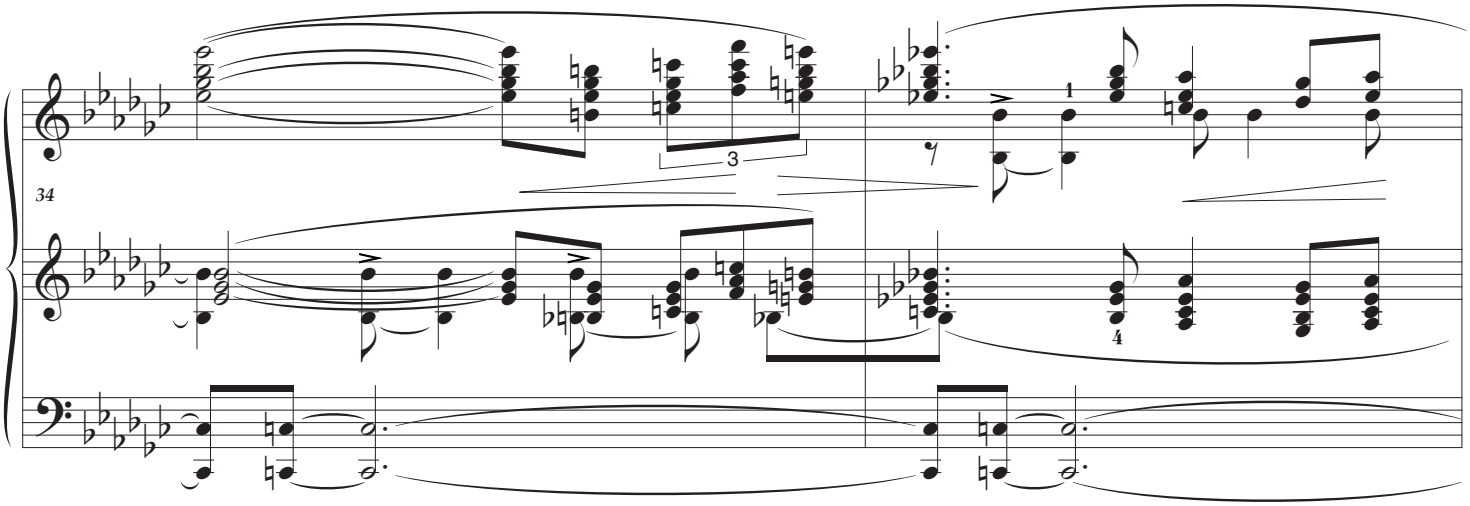

16
mf
4
18
3
20
8va
6
ppp
très lié et un peu en dehors
m.d.
m.s.
très lié

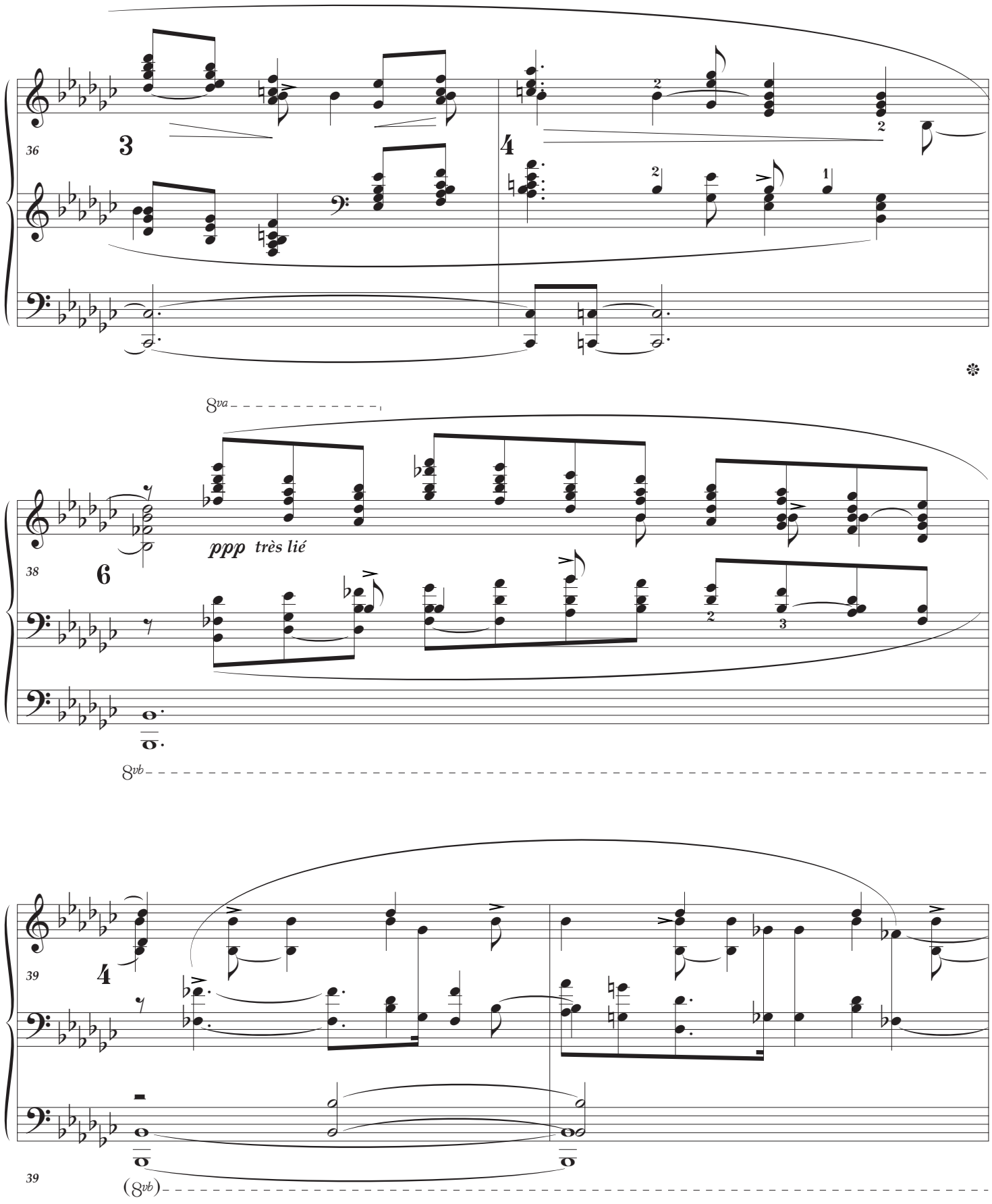

8va
toujours ppp
m.d.
21
23
p un peu marqué
4
25
pp
6
un peu en dehors, mais sans expression
27
m.d.
4

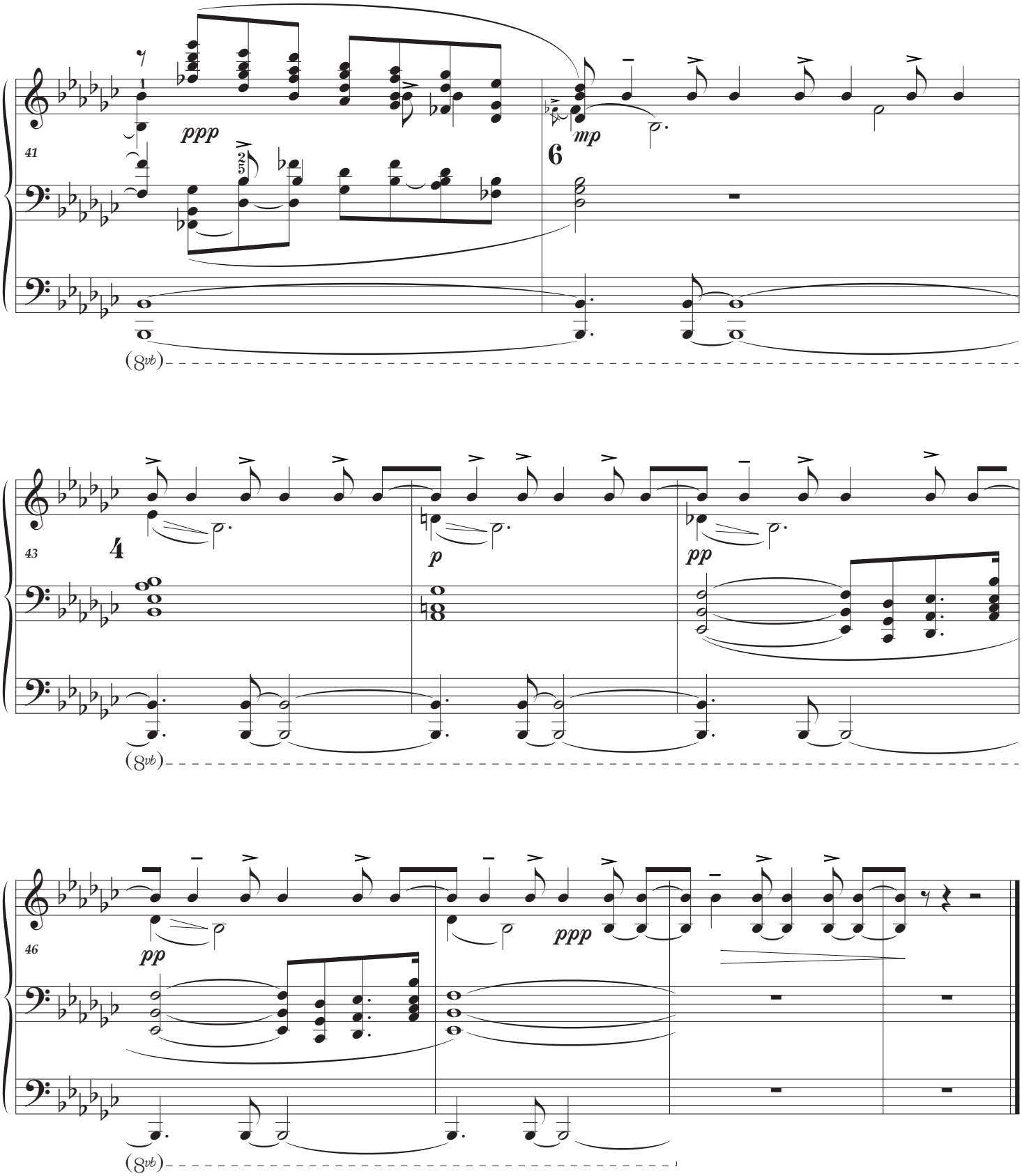




Sost. Ped




36
3
4
38
8va
ppp très lié
6
8vb
39
4
39
(8vb)


41
ppp
mp
6
(8vb)
43
4
p
pp
(8vb)
46
pp
ppp
(8vb)

Piano Practical Editions

Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

Please send comments and error reports to
Ray Alston contact@pianopracticaleditions.com

Le Gibet — appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

Duration : 6'

- *Édition Durand* : there are no metronome speeds
- Ravel used the pedal sign very sparingly, preferring elongated ties and extended notes, impossible to hold otherwise.
- *Le Gibet* demands a very large hand span… if you are unable to play a chord, rather than arpeggiating, it is better to compromise, removing certain notes, or try an alternative hand arrangement.

- **3-5** LH thumb to be marked (*un peu marqué)*
- **4** 4th beat — E♭ tie missing in Durand
- **11** & **27-30** The indicated pedal changes are important
- **13** RH first beat: as it is not possible to both tie the B♭ and play the thumb A♭, it is suggested to omit the latter, duplicated at the top.
- **20-21** presented in A major
- **22** unless you are blessed with a huge hand, best to leave out the diamond-headed note
- **20-23** presented as 6 crotchet beats instead of 4
- **23** The final "bell" quaver can be played if the bass G# is omitted
- **26-32** Absence of accentuated bells to underline *sans expression*
- **31** acciaccatura ties missing in Durand
- **38-42** Changes to metre and bar lines
- **42** The accented acciaccatura should almost certainly be tied

Sans presser ni ralentir jusqu'à la fin	Keep the same tempo throughout
Sourdine durant toute la pièce	Use the soft pedal throughout
un peu marqué	a little marked
très lié et un peu en dehors	very smooth and a little in relief
toujours *ppp*	always *ppp*
mais sans expression	but without expression

S C A R B O

à Rudolph GANZ

Il regarda sous le lit, dans la cheminée, dans le bahut; - personne. Il ne put comprendre par où il s'était introduit, par où il s'était évadé.

He looked under the bed, in the chimney, in the chest; - nobody. He could not understand where he had got in, nor where he had escaped.

E.T.A. Hoffman - *Contes nocturnes*
Nocturnal Tales

Oh! que de fois je l'ai entendu et vu, Scarbo, lorsqu'à minuit la lune brille dans le ciel comme un écu d'argent sur une bannière d'azur semée d'abeilles d'or !

Que de fois j'ai entendu bourdonner son rire dans l'ombre de mon alcôve, et grincer son ongle sur la soie des courtines de mon lit !

Que de fois je l'ai vu descendre du plancher, pirouetter sur un pied et rouler par la chambre comme le fuseau tombé de la quenouille d'une sorcière !

Le croyais-je alors évanoui? le nain grandissait entre la lune et moi comme le clocher d'une cathédrale gothique, un grelot d'or en branle à son bonnet pointu !

Mais bientôt son corps bleuissait, diaphane comme la cire d'une bougie, son visage blémissait comme la cire d'un lumignon, - et soudain il s'éteignait.

Oh! Scarbo, how often have I heard and seen him, when the midnight moon shimmers in the sky like a silver shield on an azure banner studded with golden bees!

How often have I heard his chuckle droning in the shadow of my alcove, and the scratching of his fingernail on the silk of my bedcurtains.

How often have I seen him swoop from the ceiling, pirouette on one foot and whirl around the room like the spindle fallen from a witch's wand!

Did I believe he'd fainted? the dwarf would grow between the moon and myself like the belfry of a Gothic cathedral, a golden bell quivering on his pointed hat!

But soon his body would turn blue, translucent as the wax of a candle, his face blanching like the wax of a bougie, - and then suddenly he'd vanish.

(from the edition *Mercure de France*, 1908)

"I set out to compose a caricature of Romanticism, but have perhaps allowed myself to be carried away by it" — thus confided Ravel to Vlado Perlemuter.

A truly dark, heavy, tense and agonising creation of brilliance and malice, this final movement evokes Scarbo*, a hideous goblin, a devilish and sadistic dwarf, who takes pleasure in persecuting his victim. The creature of one's nightmares, who scratches at the bed-curtains, cackles in the shadows, rolls on the floor, and grows huge and menacing before vanishing like the snuffed flame of a candle. Dedicated to the pianist and conductor Rudolph Ganz, much of the poem's character has been absorbed in the music and its torment is even more telling after the deliberately static movement which precedes it.

Illustration from an early edition

Scarbo incarnates the mischief, the tangle of the mind and literally overwhelms the listener in a destructive manner, danger lurking at any moment. Nevertheless the music is lyrical and refined, accentuating a dark beauty, the elf of the damned. Ravel was inspired by this idea of a hallucinatory dream.

Pianists fear Scarbo: the rhythmic virtuosity is a real test; anxiety is caused by so many notes, a fast tempo and diabolic dissonances.

Bertrand was obsessed with Scarbo, having written four poems about him. If you have not had enough poetry about this gruesome character, there are a few more verses by Bertrand at the end of this book which might have been the source of inspiration for this prose poem.

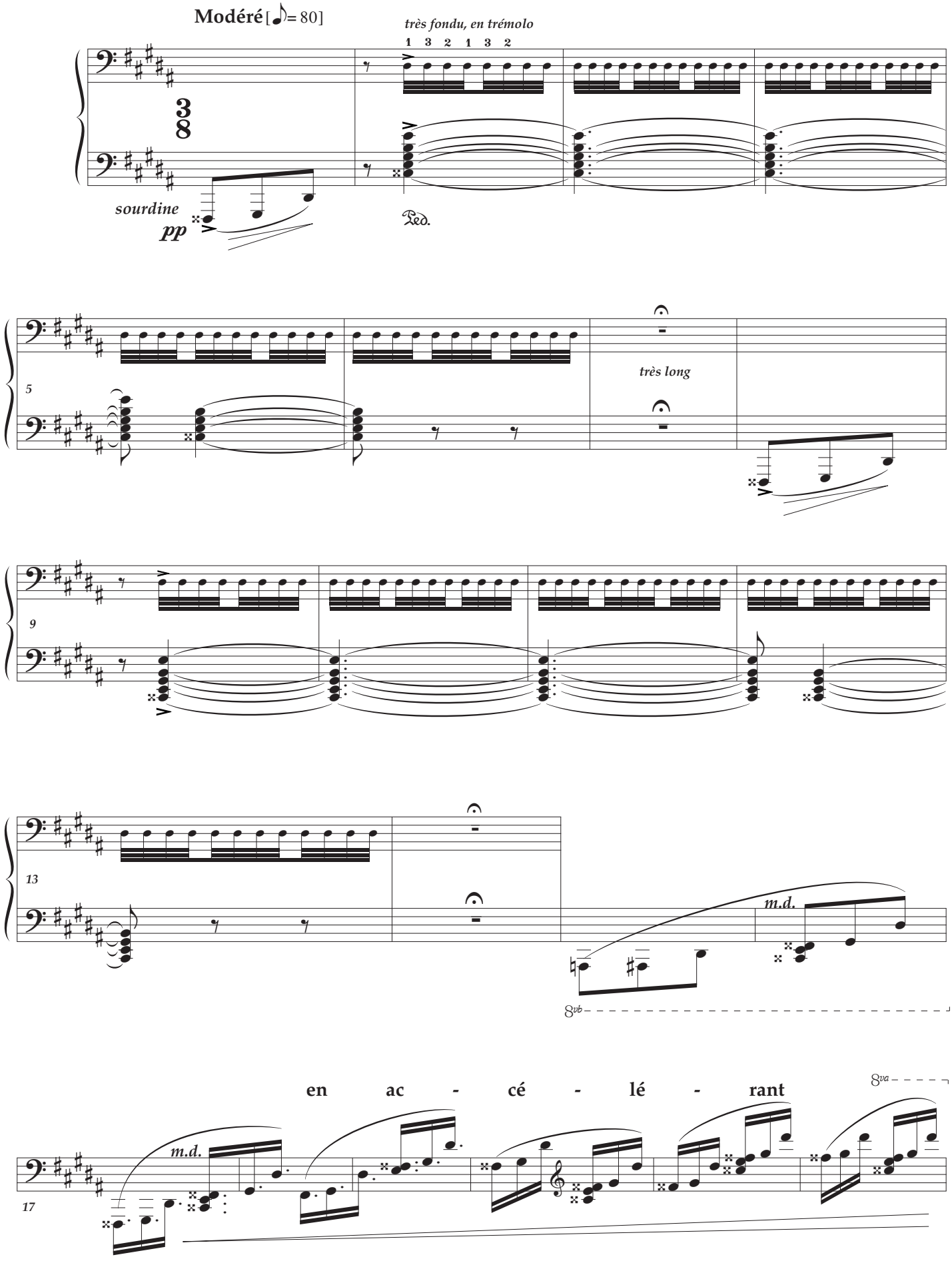
I wonder whether Scarbo himself influenced Ravel in the writing of the music! For example, there are missing *a tempi*, eccentric choices of clef, time signatures and layout. Perhaps Scarbo has deliberately and devilishly introduced inconsistencies and mistakes to test the mind and mettle of the performer (and editor) — a fascinating thought. Ravel was a most meticulous writer, and his mistakes are few and far between. However, in this particular piece there are more than usual. Perhaps his customary sang-froid deserted him during the understandable turbulence and fury of the music.

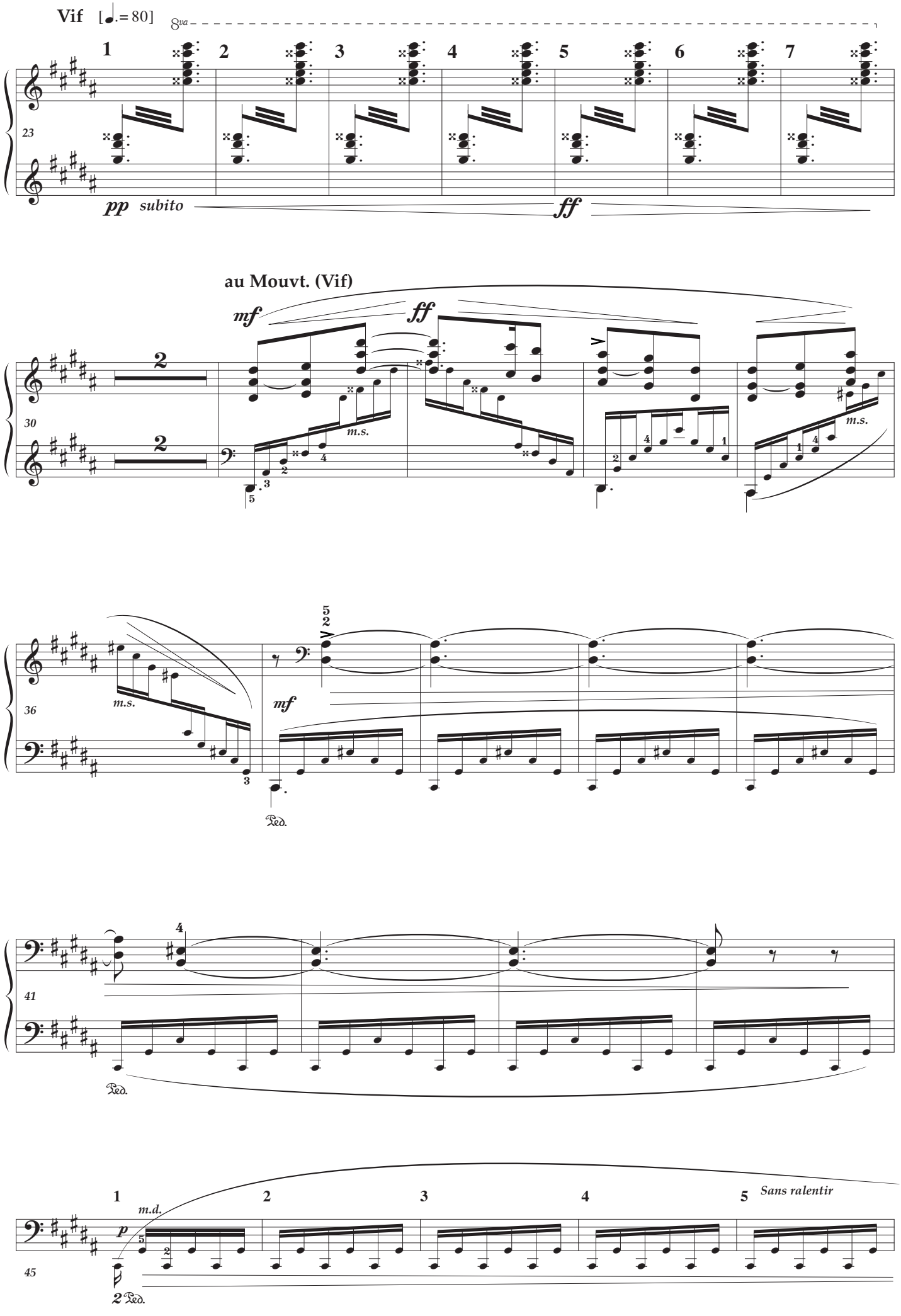
All the suggested metronome marks are editorial and, as in Ondine, 80% note-heads have been used to differentiate between accompanying figures and melodic lines. Bars which are repeated more than four times have been numbered.

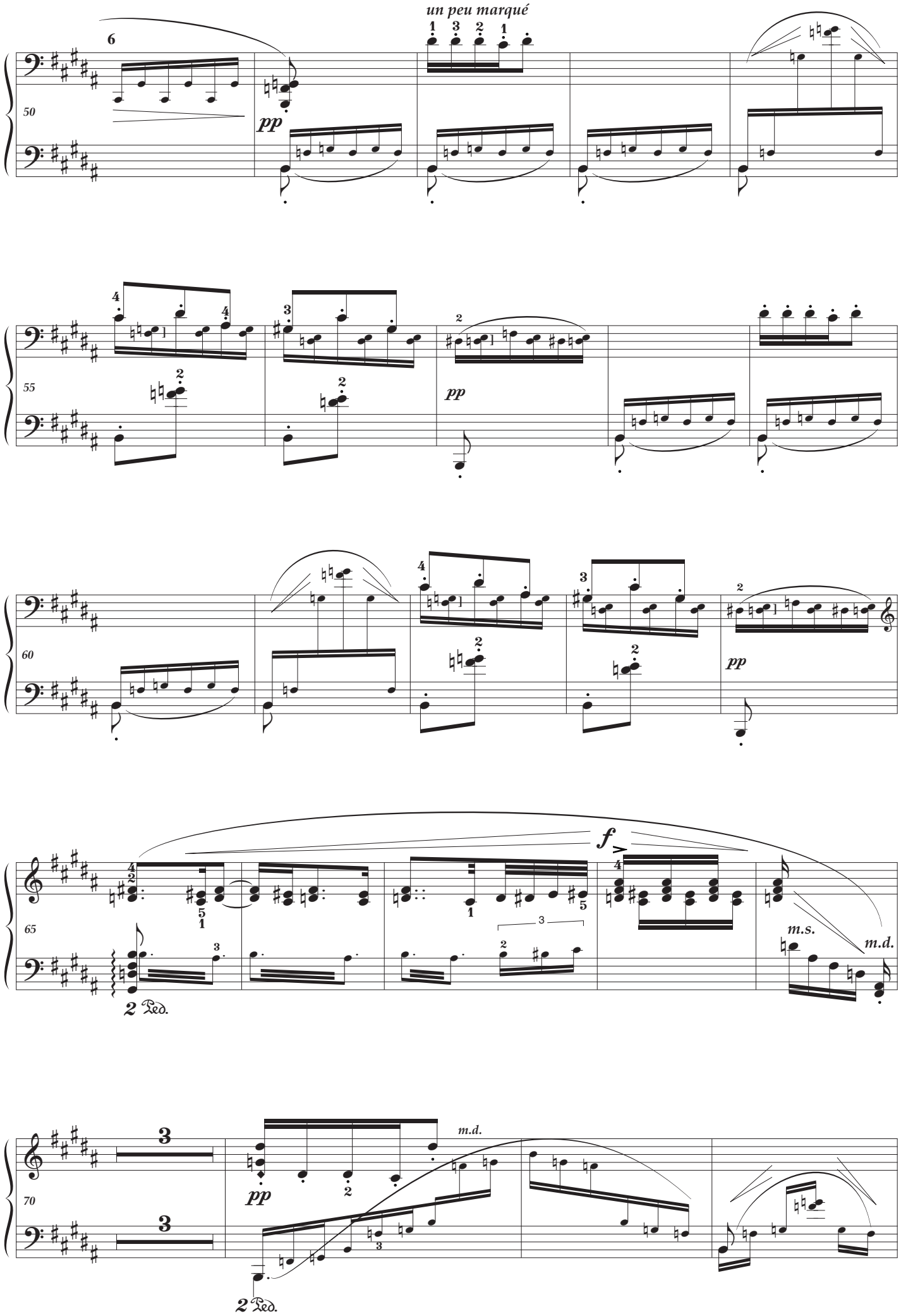
**** The kobold is a sprite in Germanic mythology. Usually invisible, he can materialise in the form of an animal, fire, a candle, or an ugly, hunched being, about the size of a small child.***

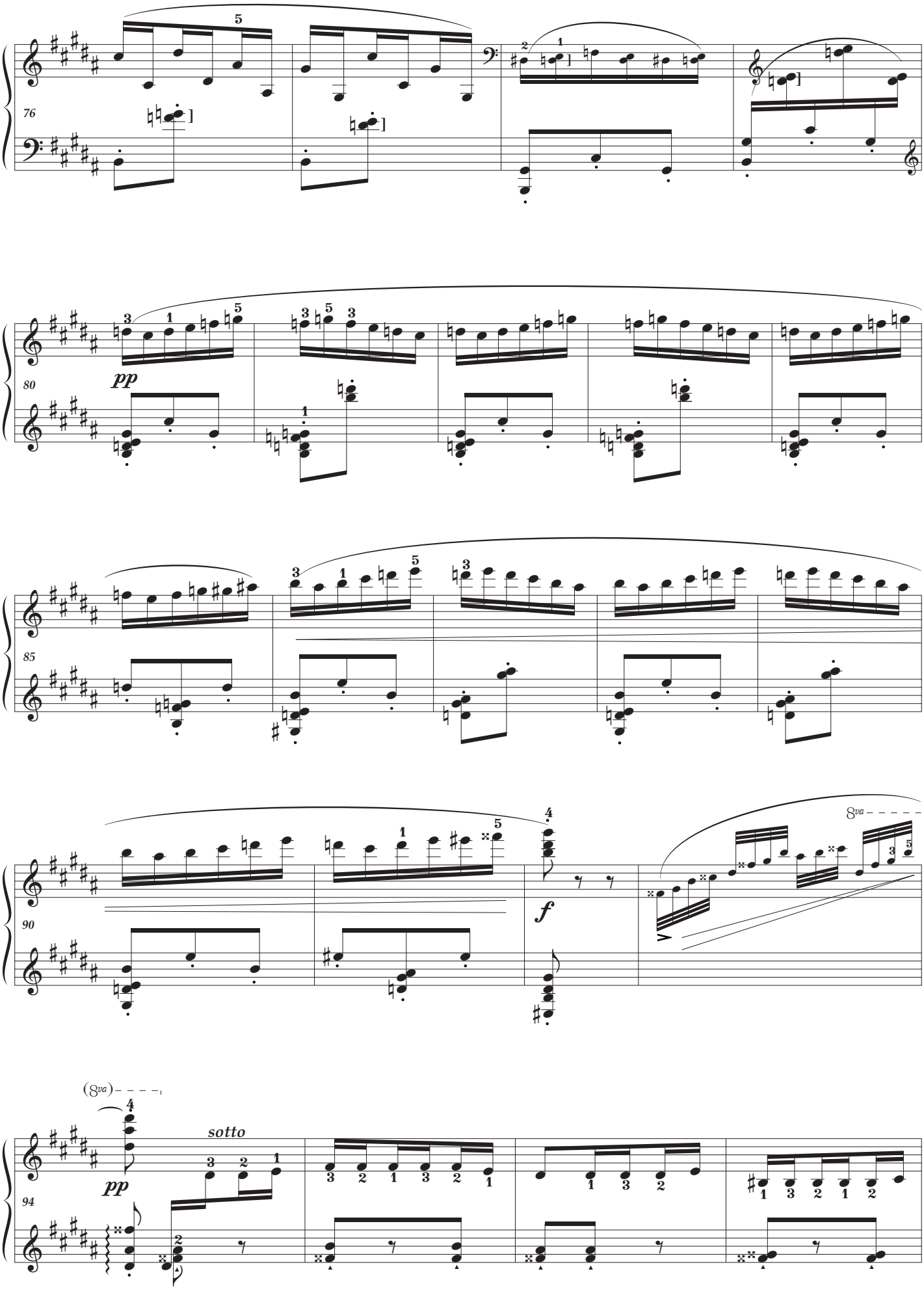
à RUDOLPH GANZ

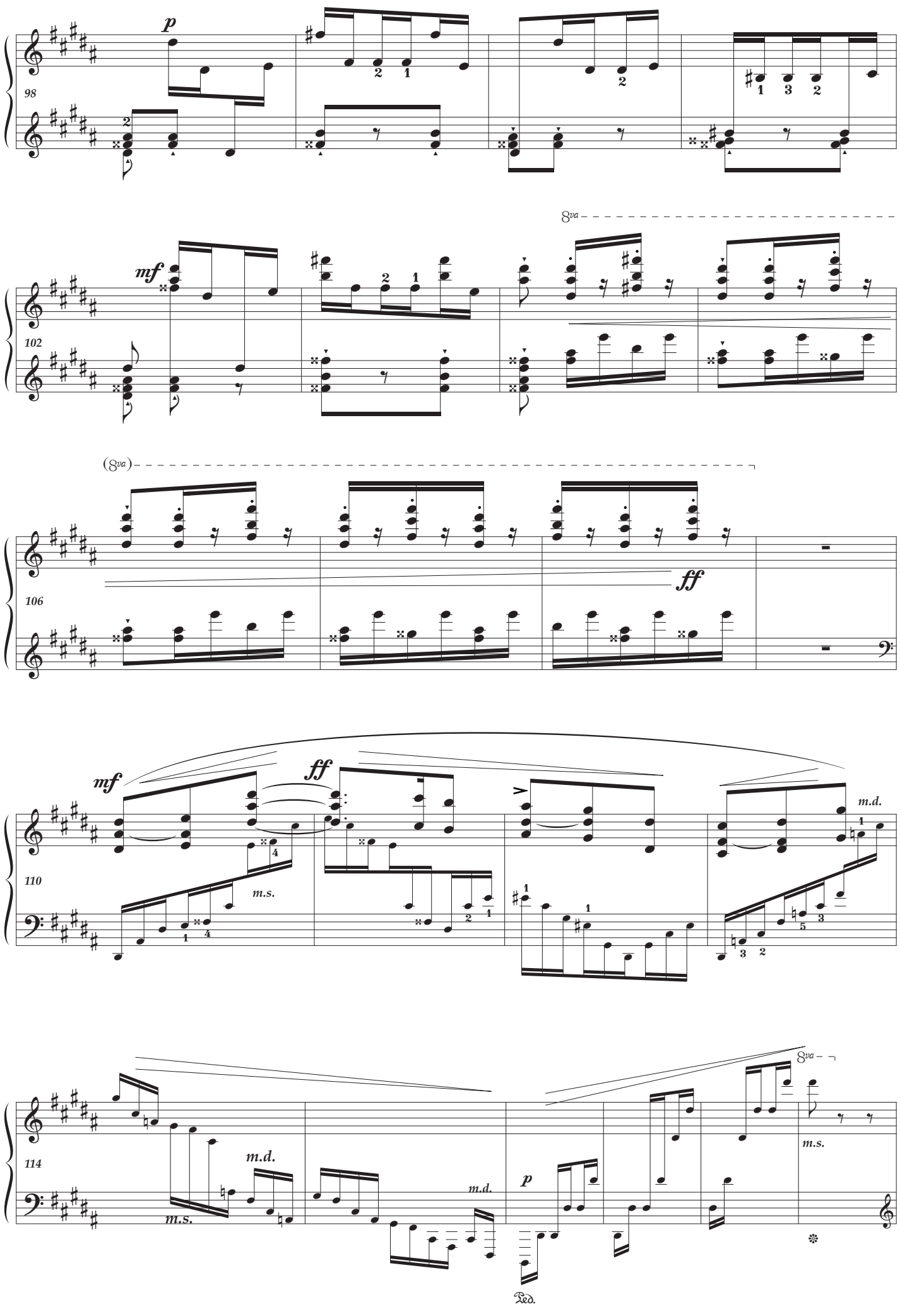
SCARBO

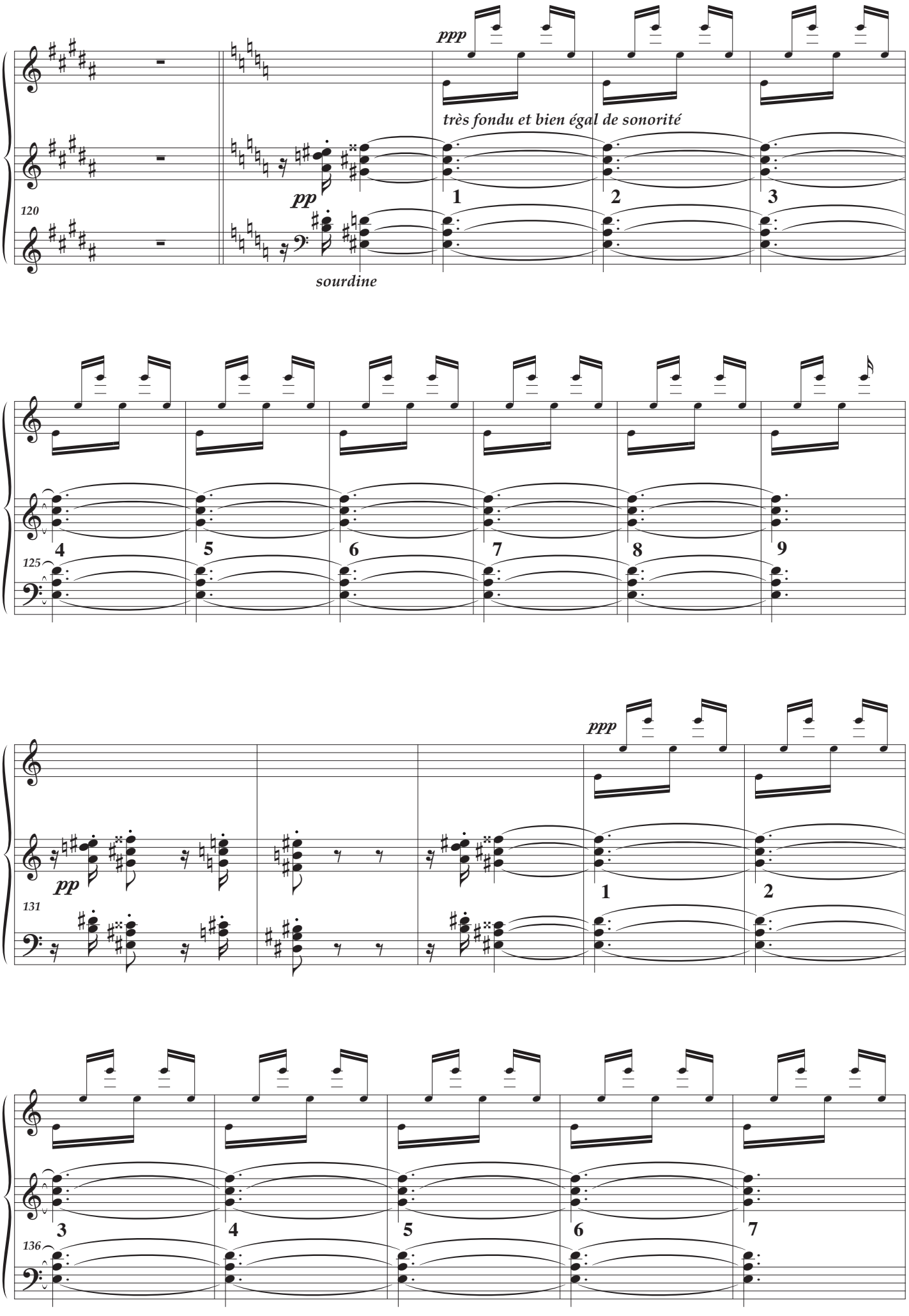


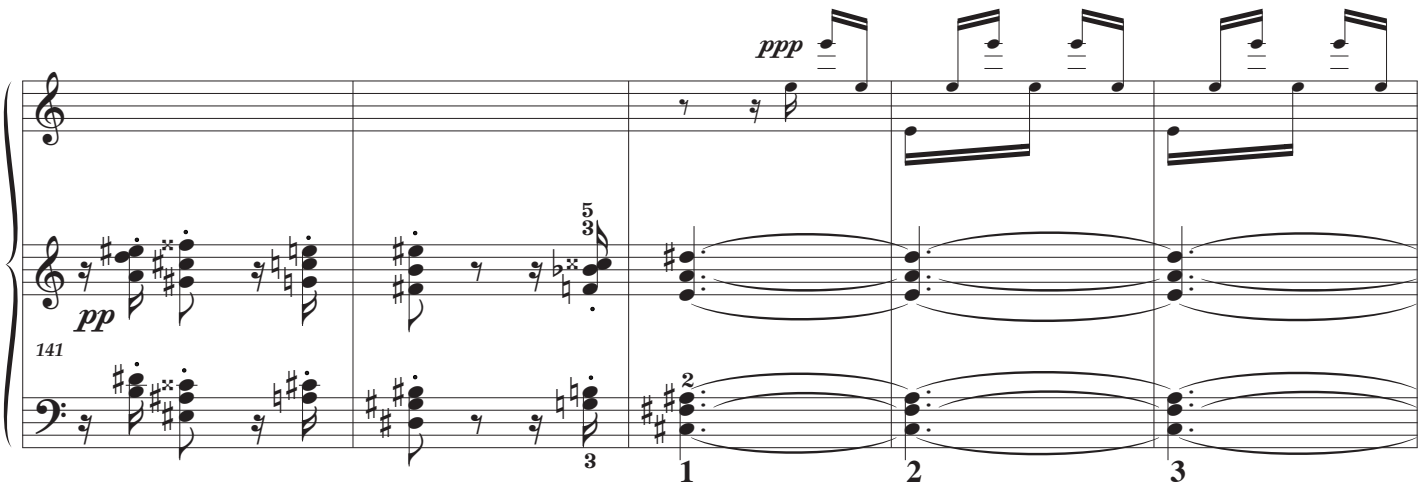

Vif [♩.= 80]
8va
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23
pp subito
ff
au Mouvt. (Vif)
mf
ff
30
m.s.
m.s.
36
m.s.
mf
Ped.
41
Ped.
1 2 3 4 5
Sans ralentir
m.d.
p
45
2 Ped.

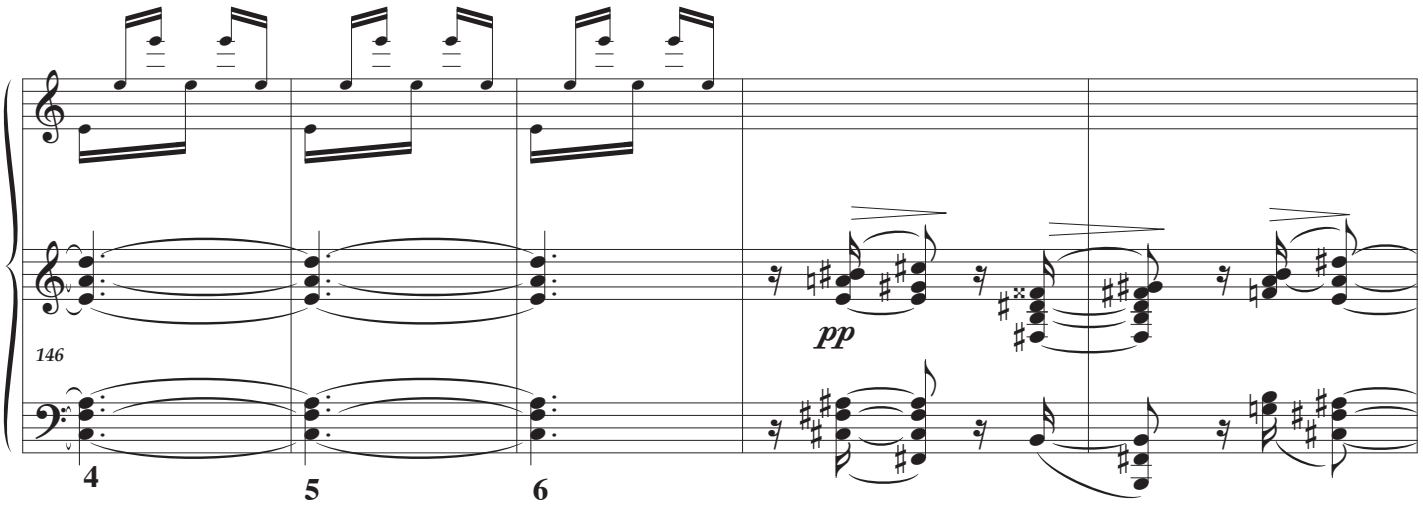

un peu marqué
6
50
pp
55
pp
60
pp
65
f
m.s.
m.d.
2 Ped.
70
pp
m.d.
2 Ped.

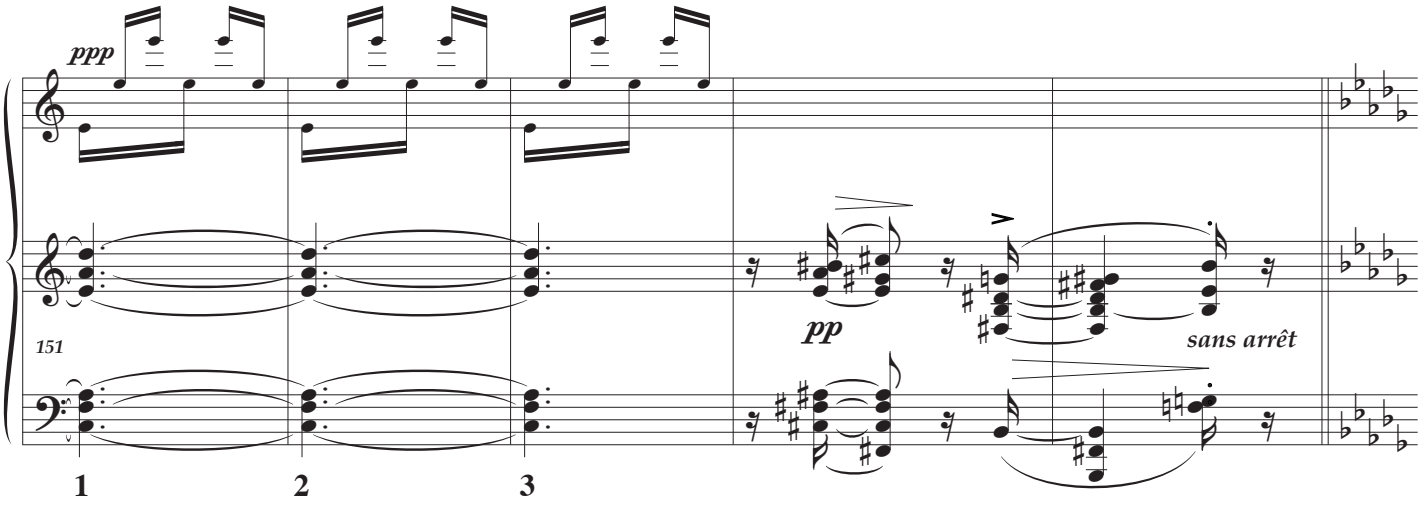

76
80
pp
85
90
f
8va
(8va)
94
pp
sotto

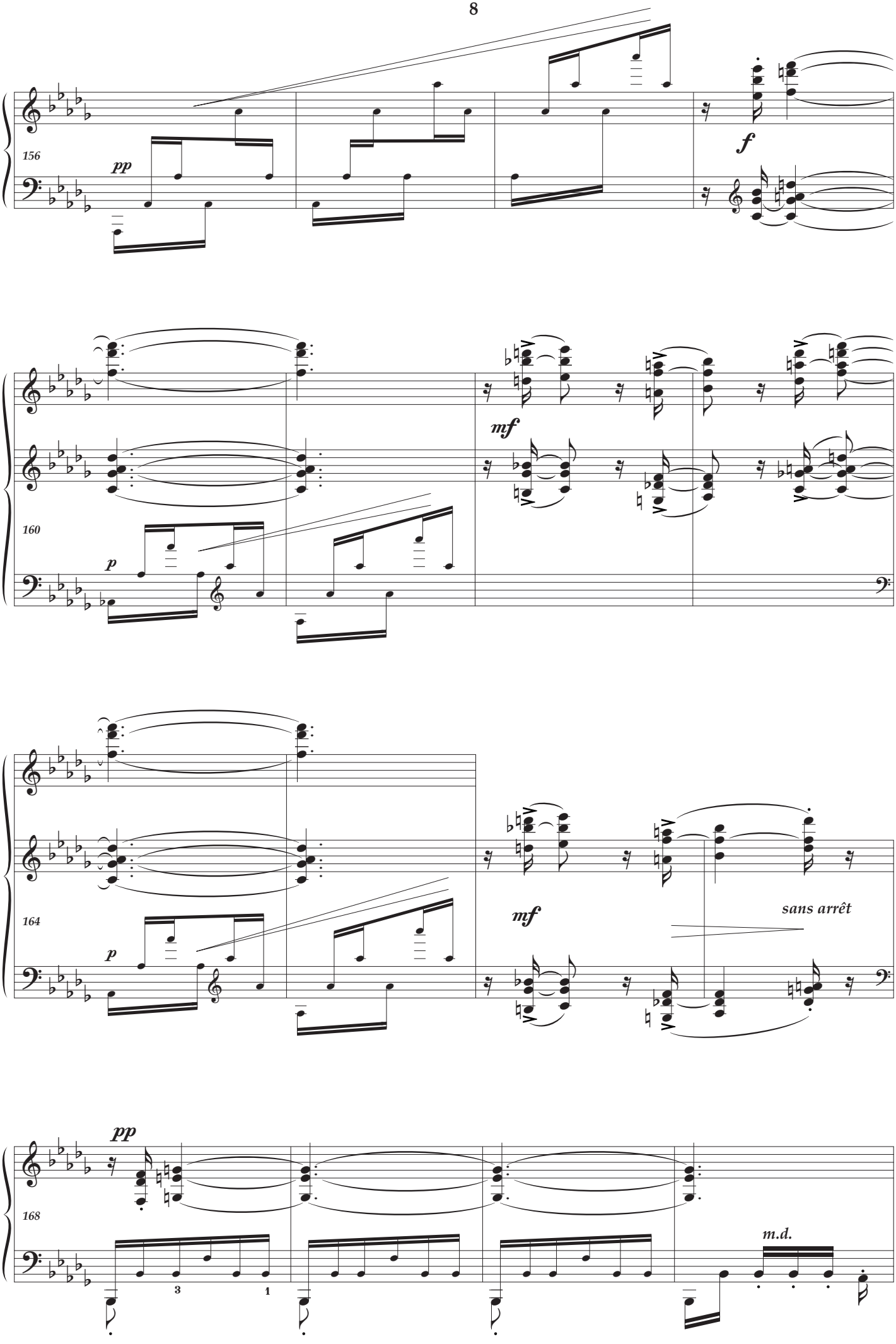

98
p
102
mf
8va
106
(8va)
ff
110
mf
ff
m.s.
m.d.
114
m.s.
m.d.
m.d.
p
8va
m.s.
Ped.

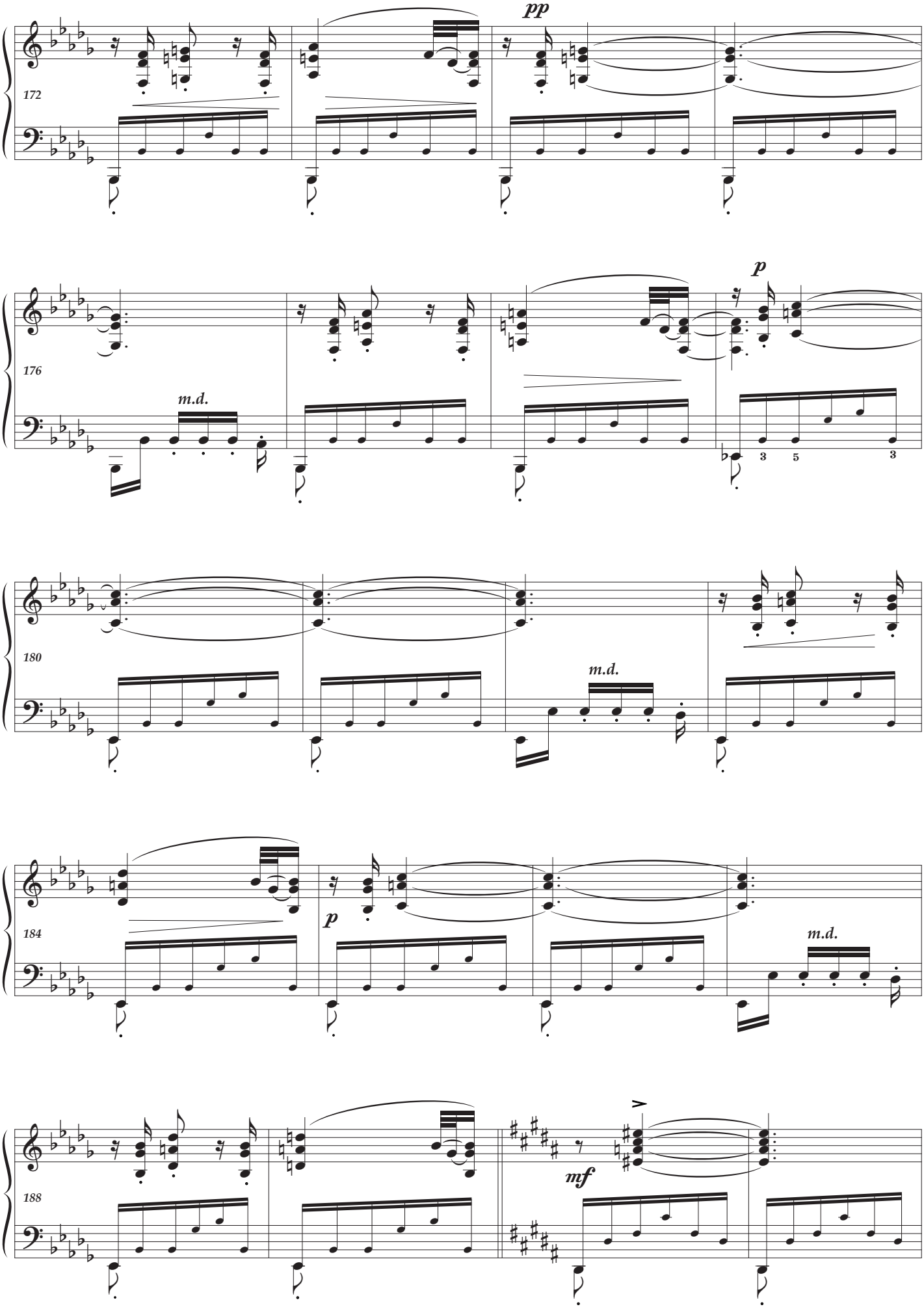

ppp
très fondu et bien égal de sonorité
pp
1
2
3
120
sourdine
4
5
6
7
8
9
125
ppp
pp
1
2
131
3
4
5
6
7
136

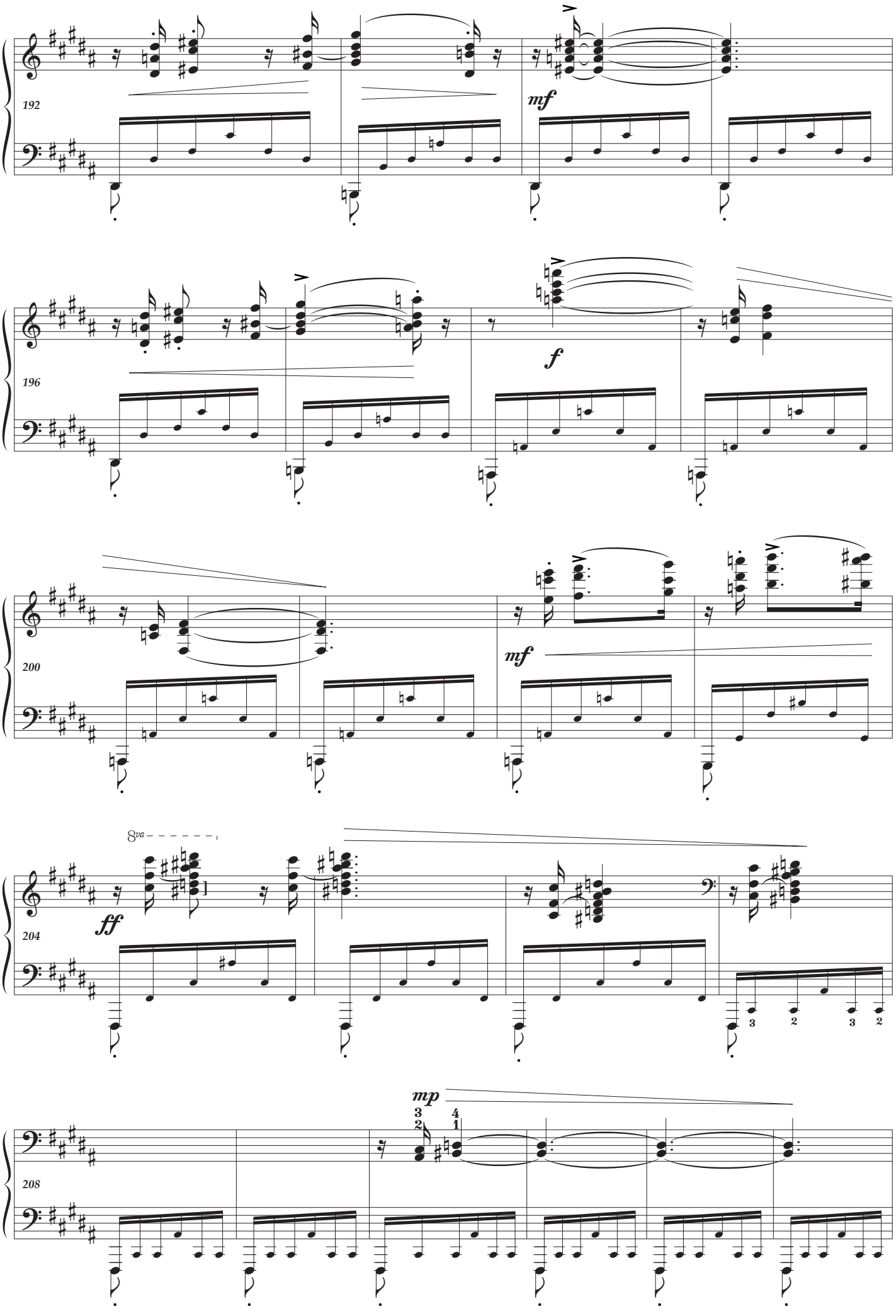

ppp
pp
141
1
2
3

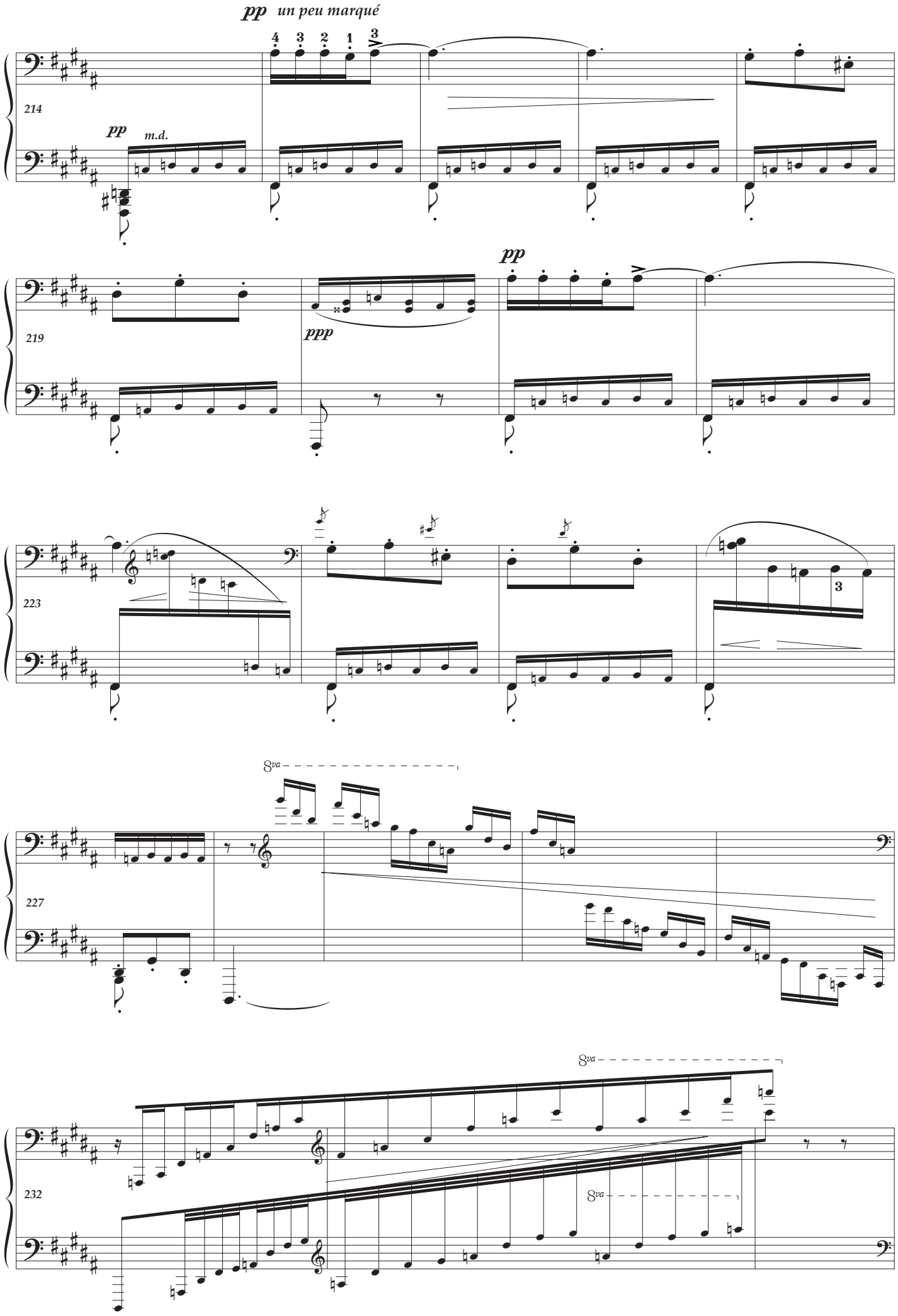

pp
146
4
5
6

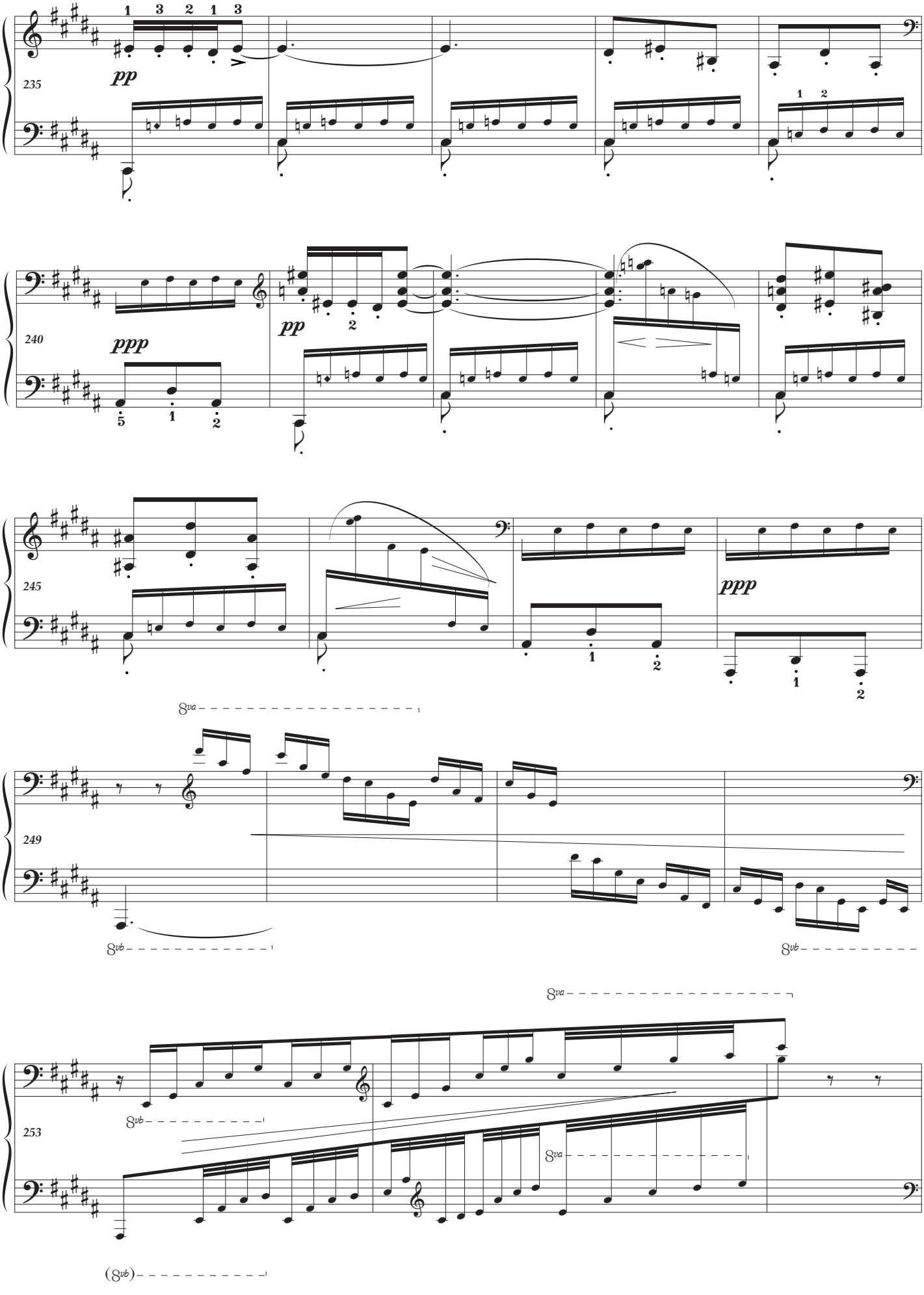

ppp
pp
sans arrêt
151
1
2
3

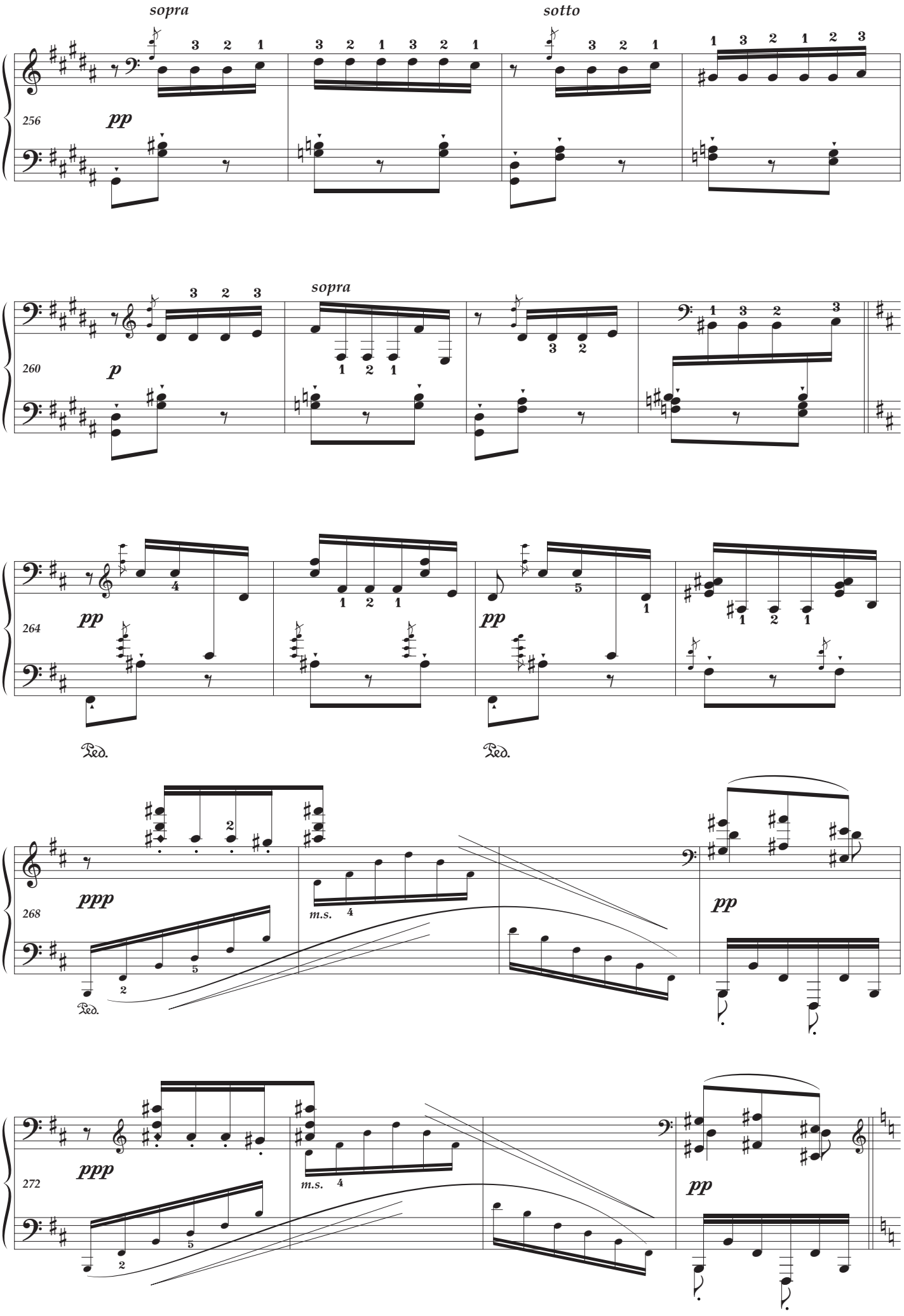

156
pp
f
160
mf
p
164
mf
sans arrêt
p
168
pp
3
1
m.d.

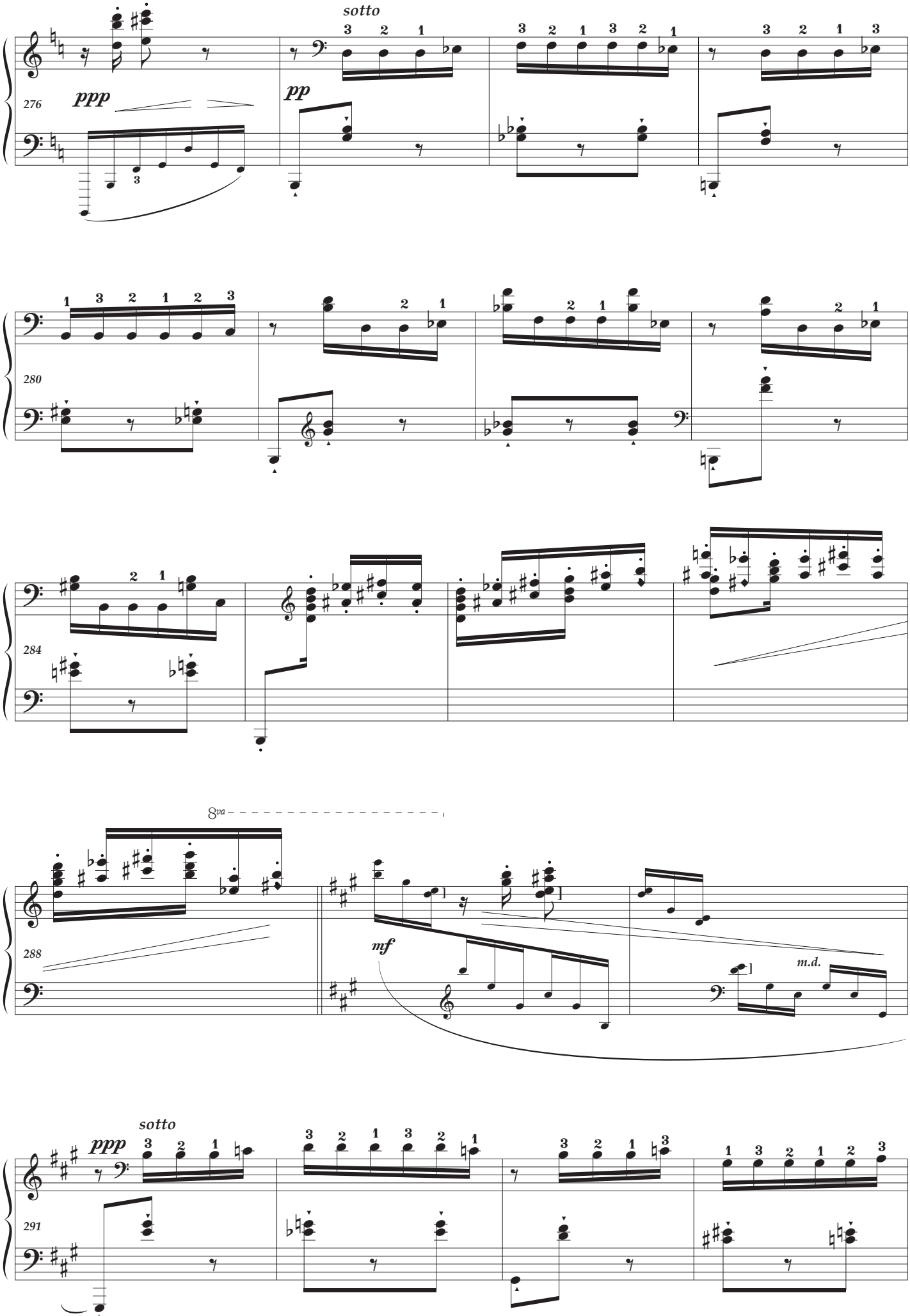

pp
172
p
176
m.d.
3
5
3
180
m.d.
184
p
m.d.
188
mf

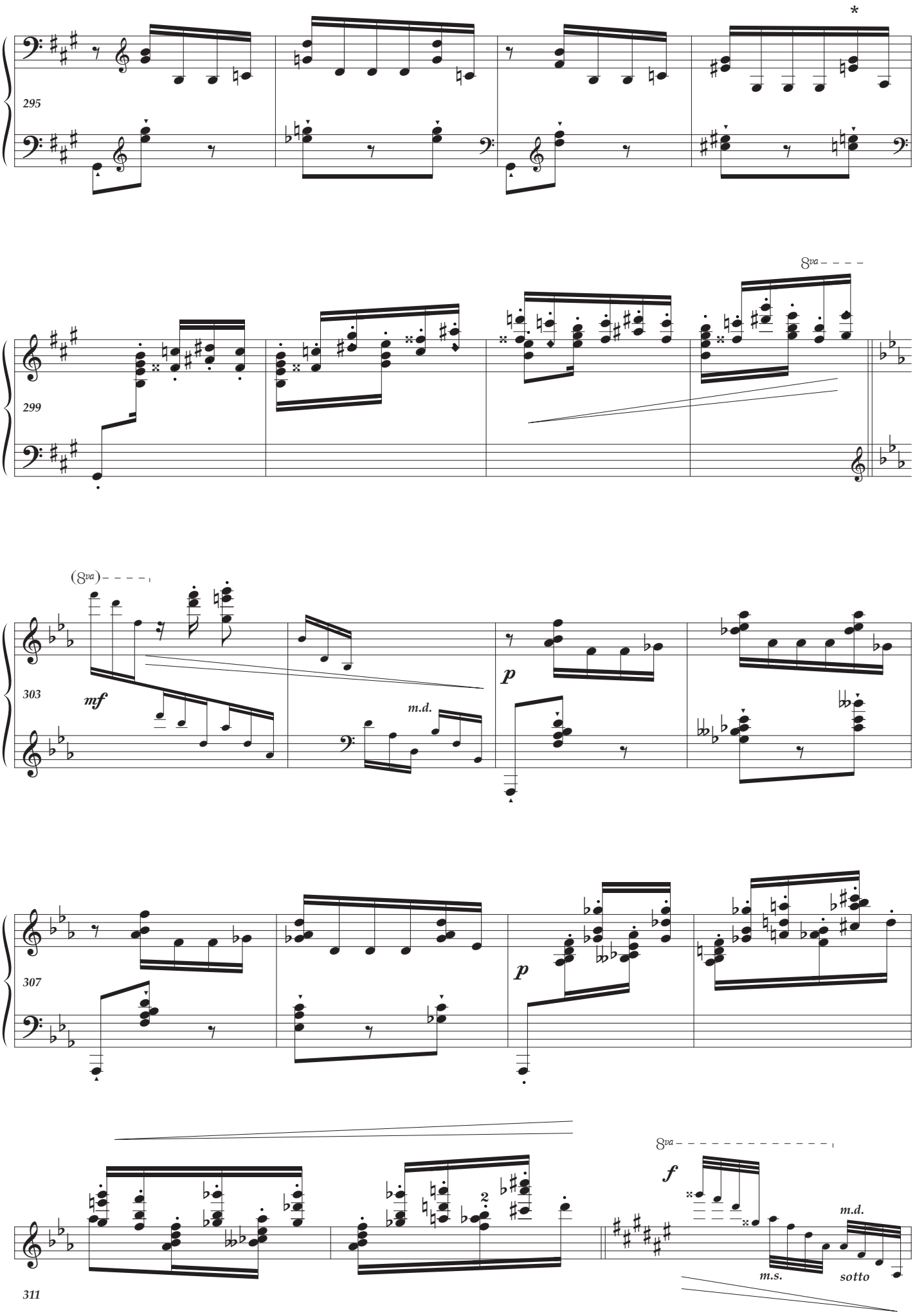

192
mf
196
f
200
mf
8va
ff
204
3
2
3
2
mp
208

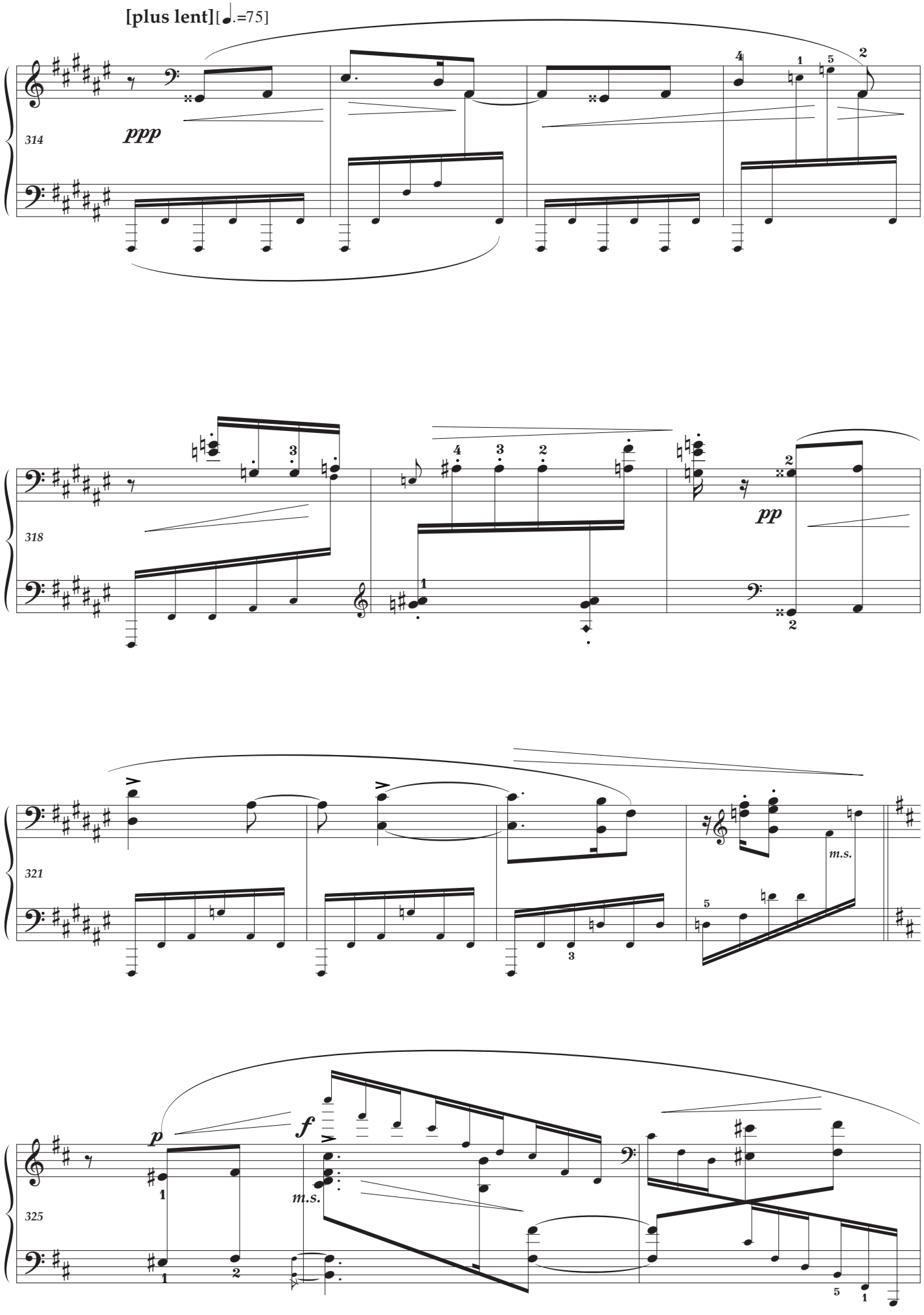

pp un peu marqué
214
pp m.d.
219
ppp
pp
223
3
8va
227
8va
8va
232

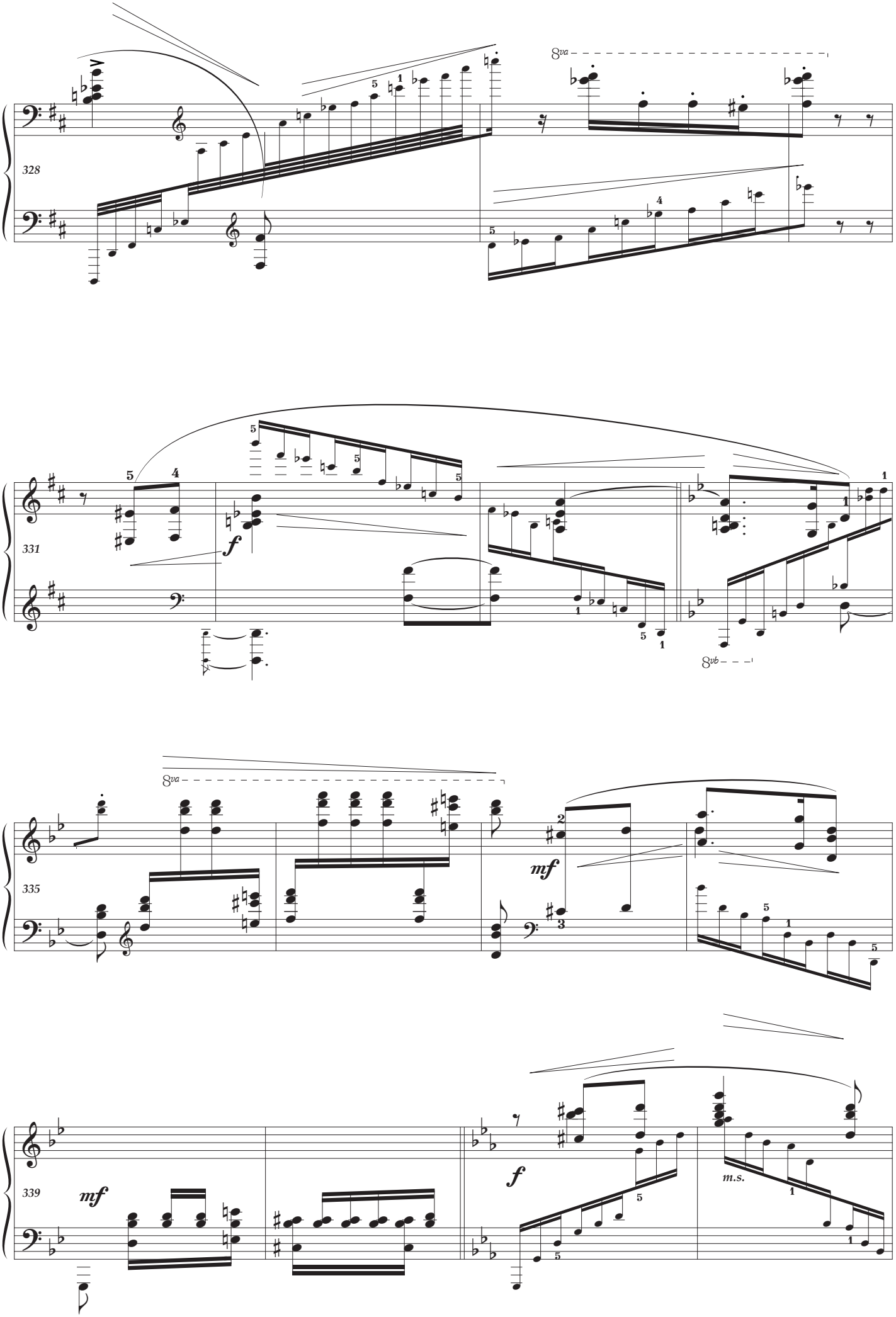

235
pp
240
ppp
pp
245
ppp
249
8va
8vb
8vb
253
8va
8vb
8va
(8vb)

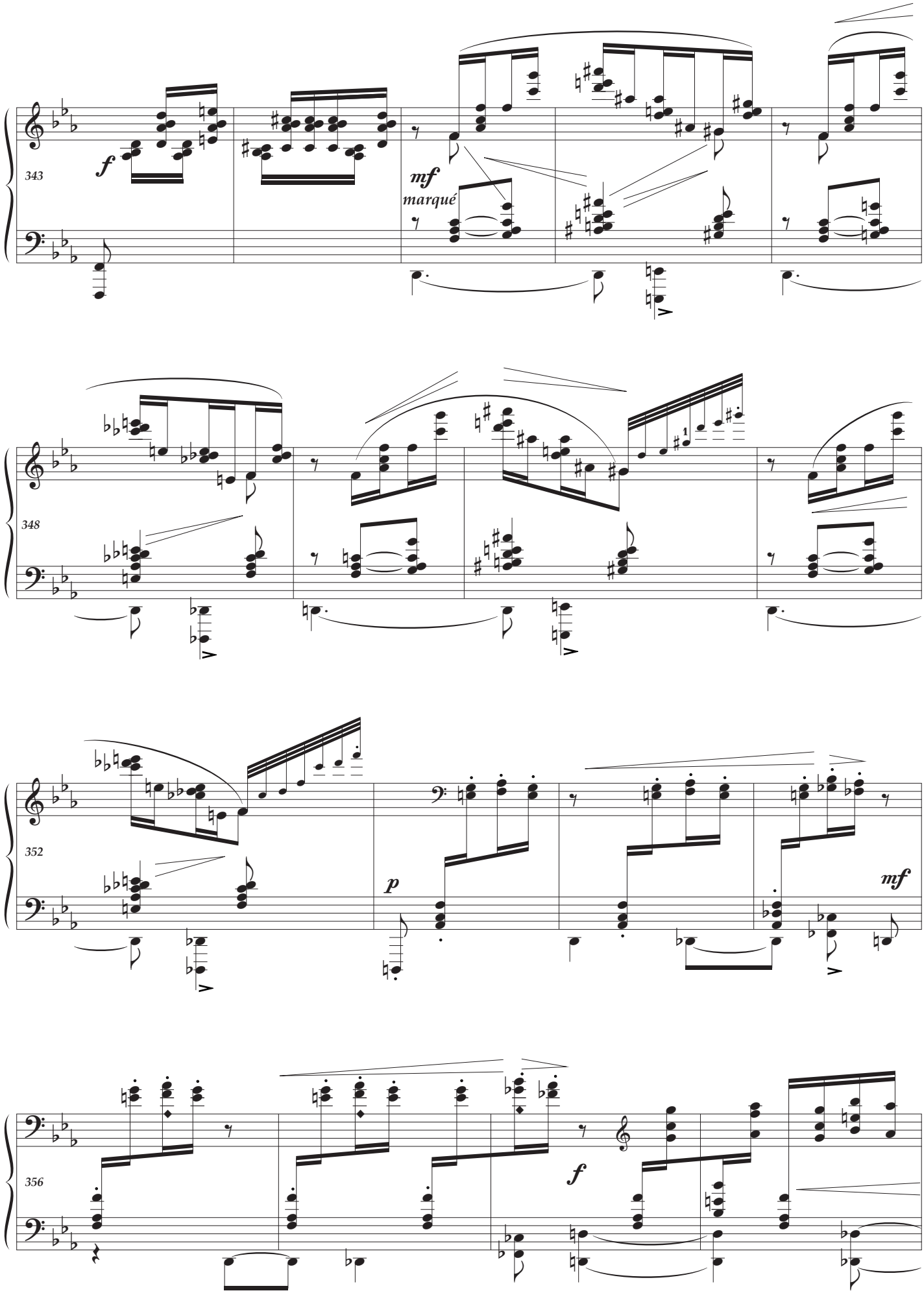

sopra
sotto
256
pp
sopra
260
p
264
pp
pp
Ped.
Ped.
268
ppp
m.s.
pp
Ped.
272
ppp
m.s.
pp

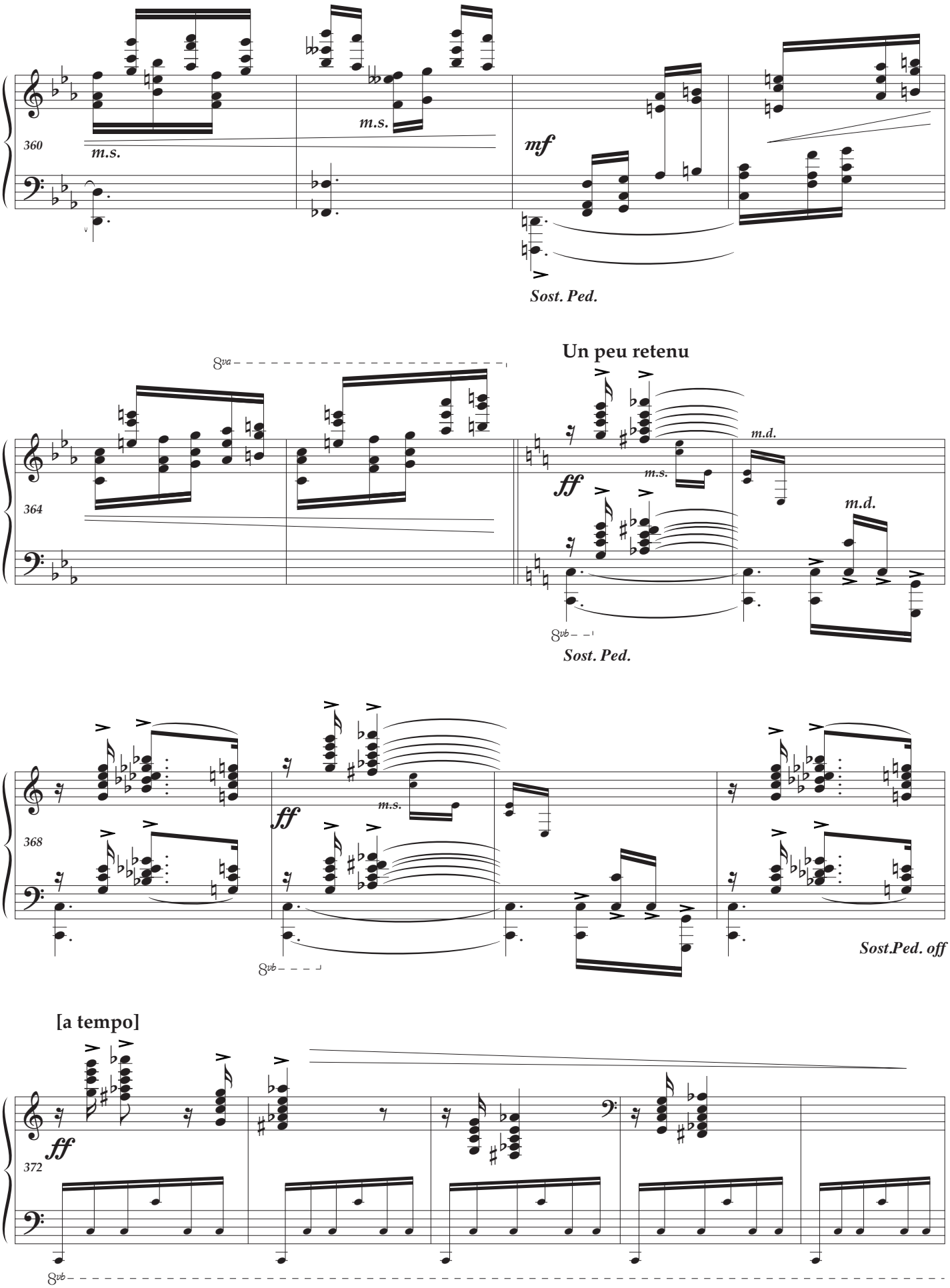

sotto
ppp
pp
276
280
284
8va
mf
m.d.
288
sotto
ppp
291

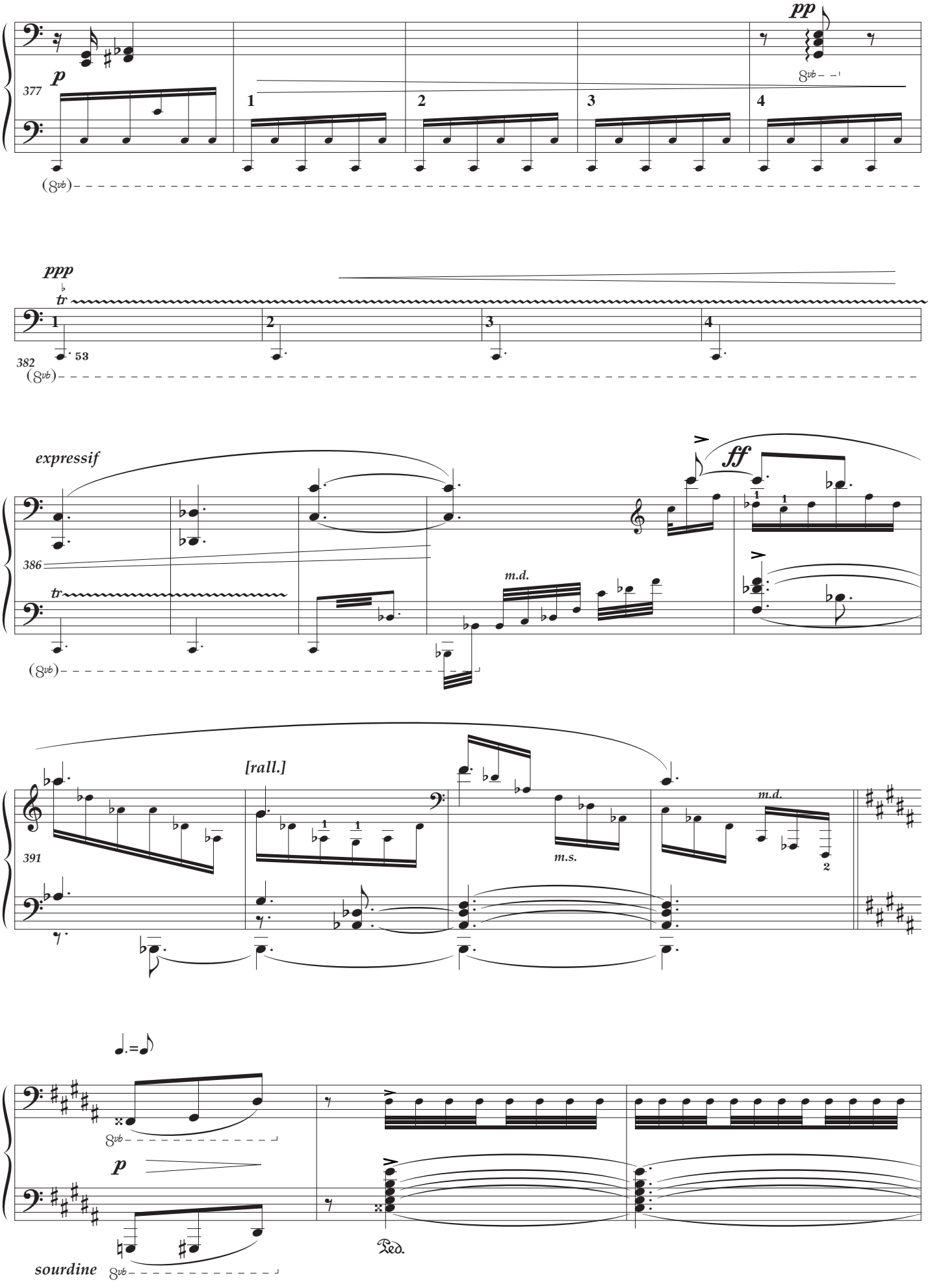

295
*
299
8va
303
(8va)
mf
m.d.
p
307
p
311
8va
f
m.s.
m.d.
sotto

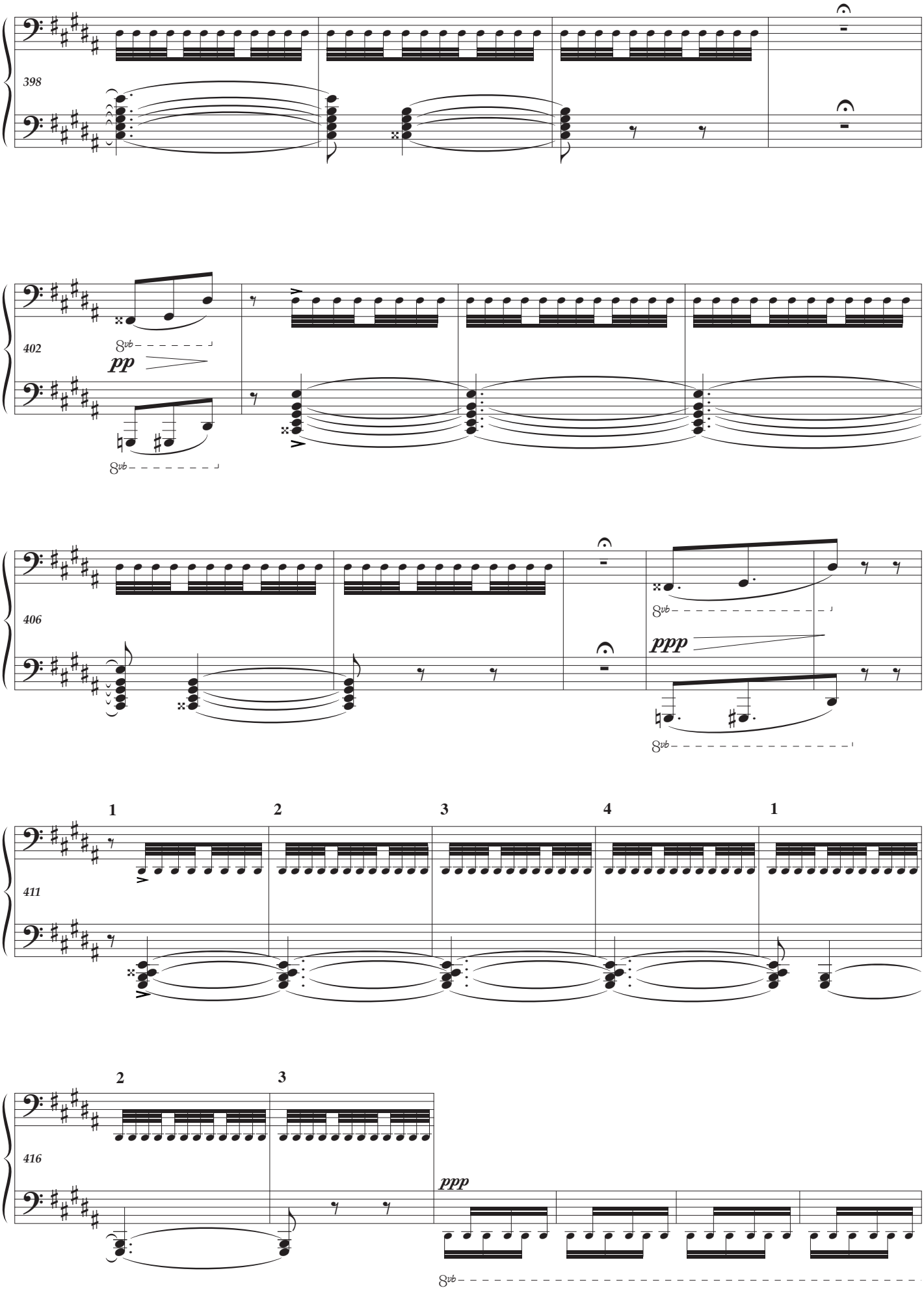

[plus lent][♩.=75]
314
ppp
318
pp
321
m.s.
325
p
f
m.s.

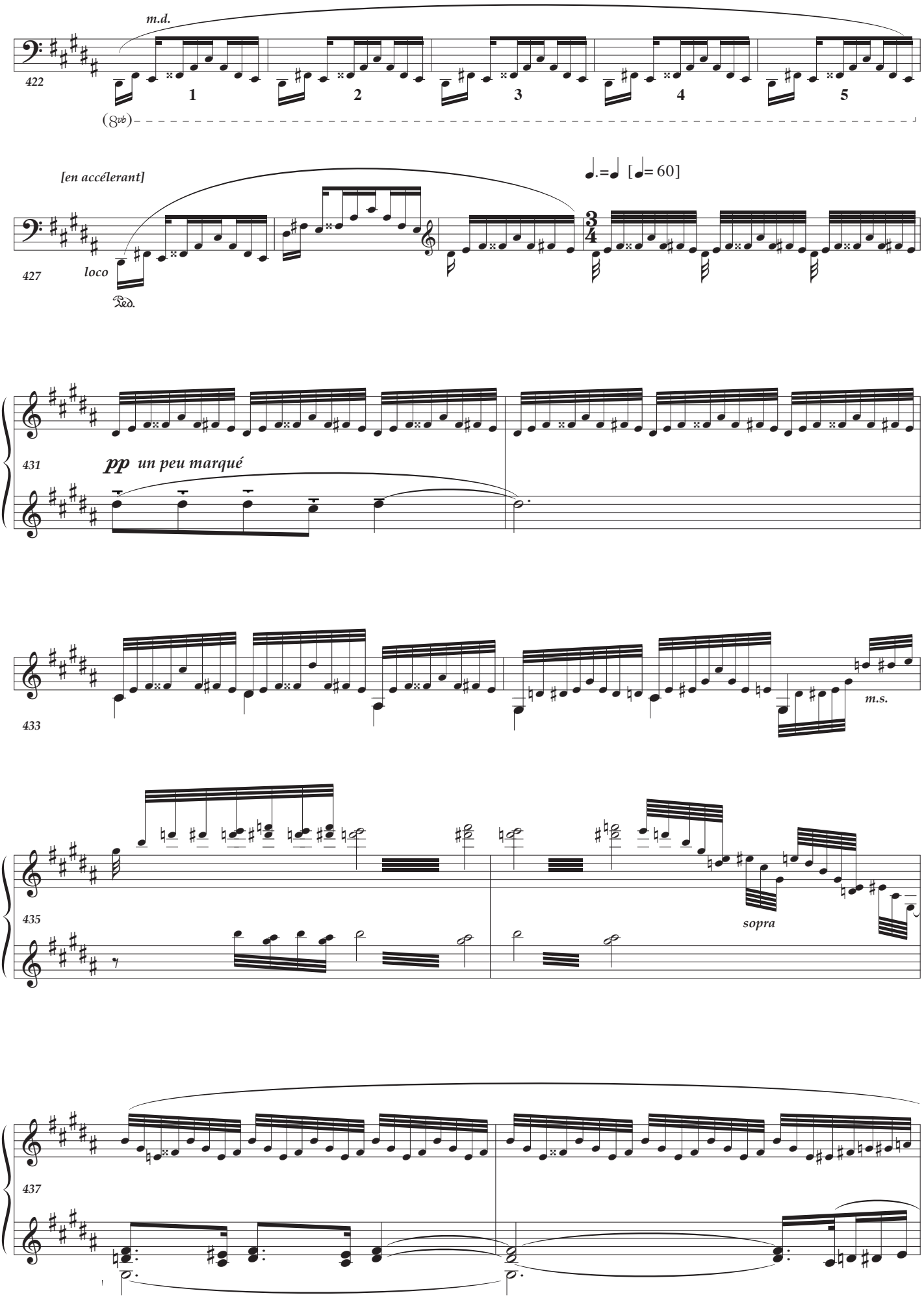

328
8va
331
f
8vb
335
8va
mf
339
mf
f
m.s.

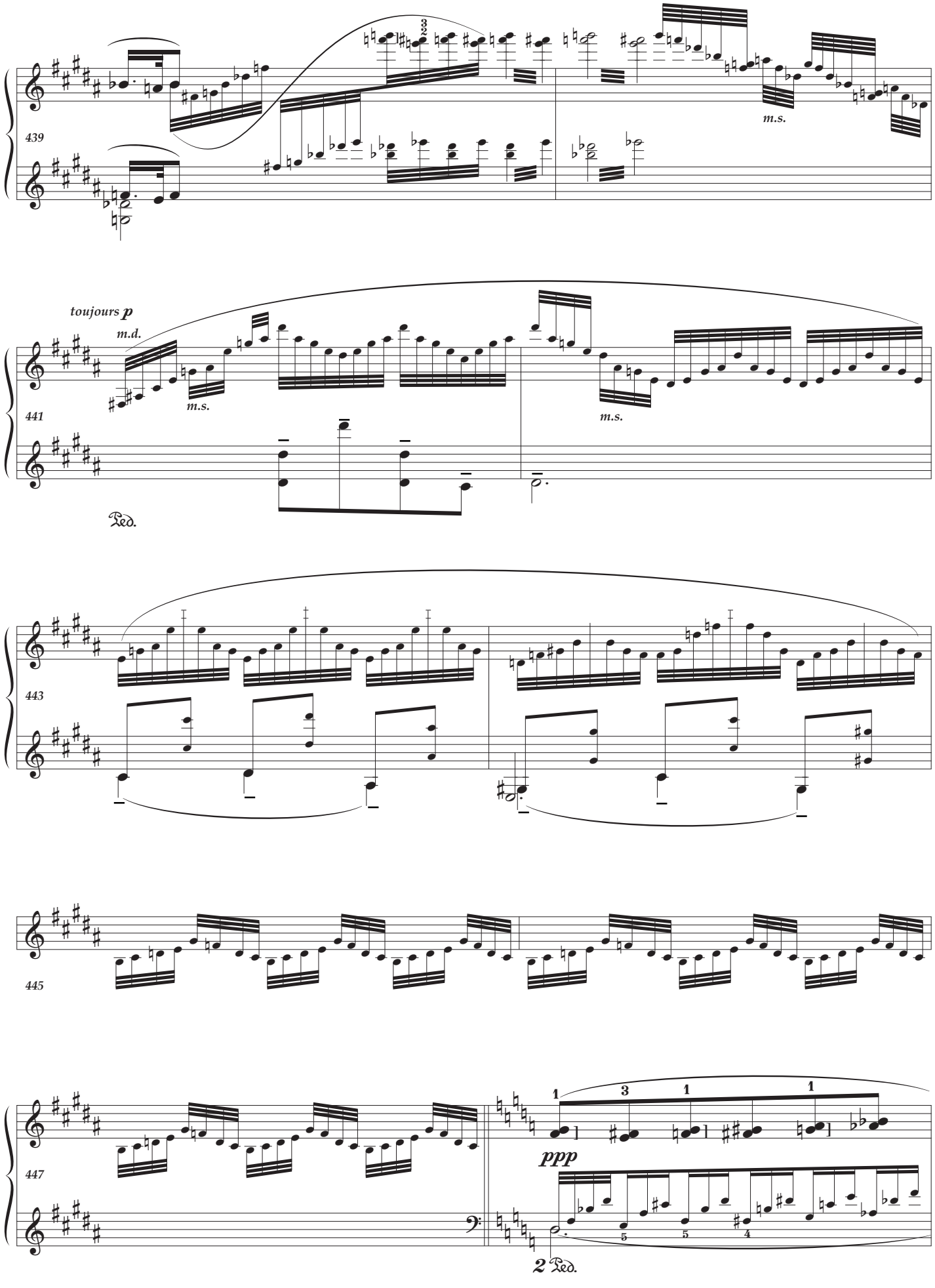

343
f
mf
marqué
348
352
p
mf
356
f

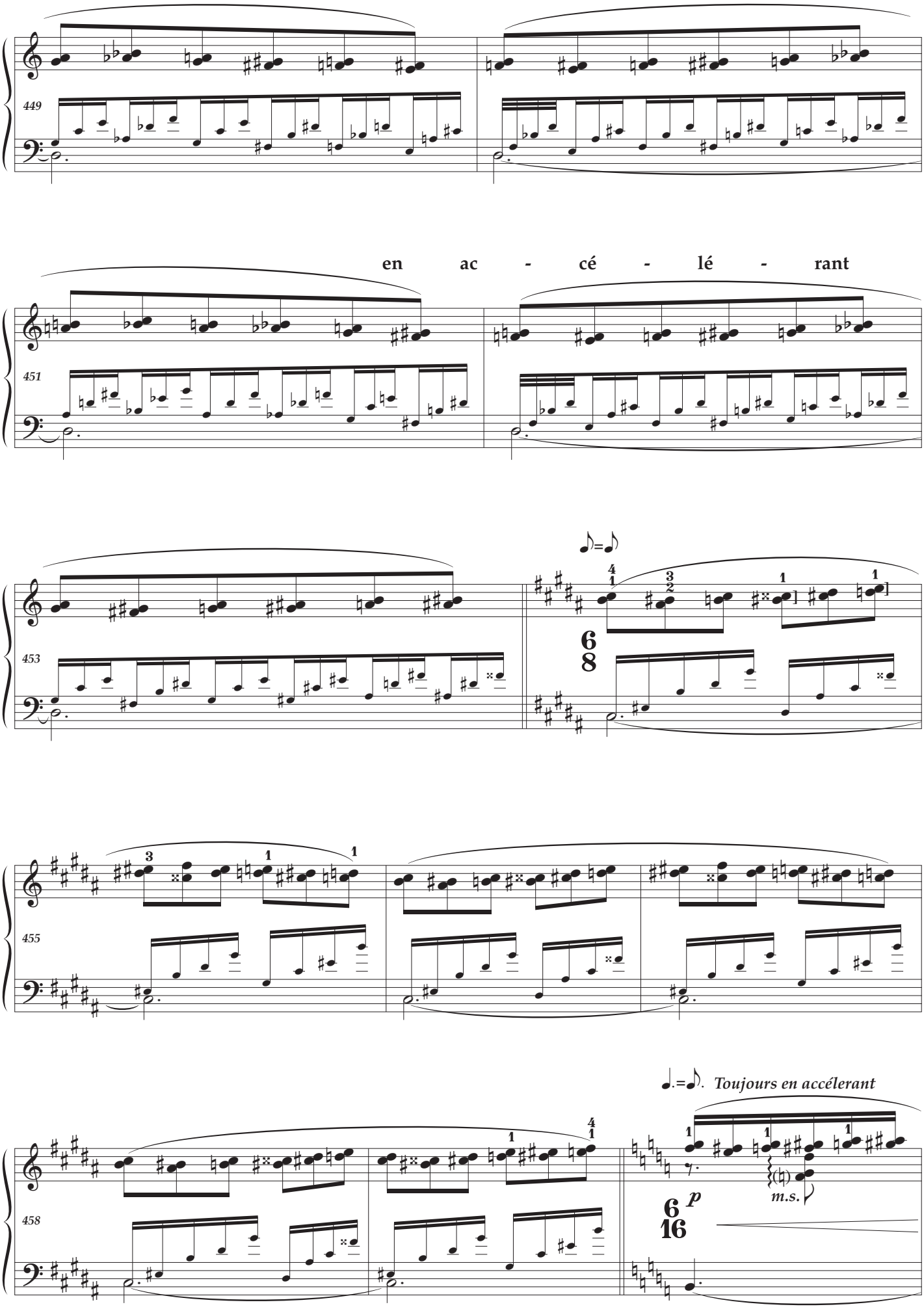

360
m.s.
m.s.
mf
Sost. Ped.
Un peu retenu
8va
364
ff
m.s.
m.d.
m.d.
8vb
Sost. Ped.
368
ff
m.s.
8vb
Sost.Ped. off
[a tempo]
372
ff
8vb

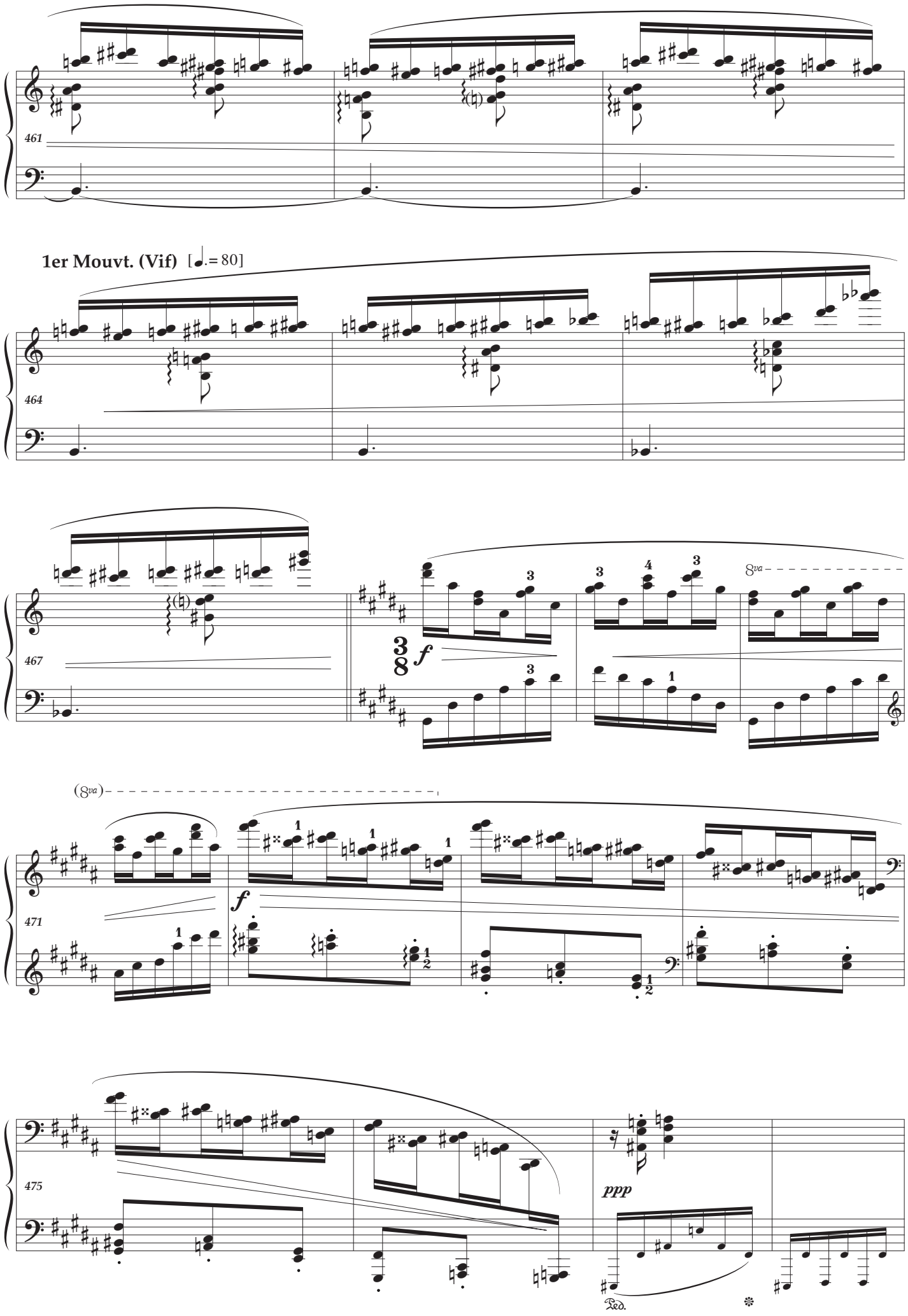

pp
p
377
1
2
3
4
8vb
ppp
tr
382
53
expressif
ff
386
m.d.
[rall.]
391
m.s.
m.d.
2
p
sourdine
Ped.

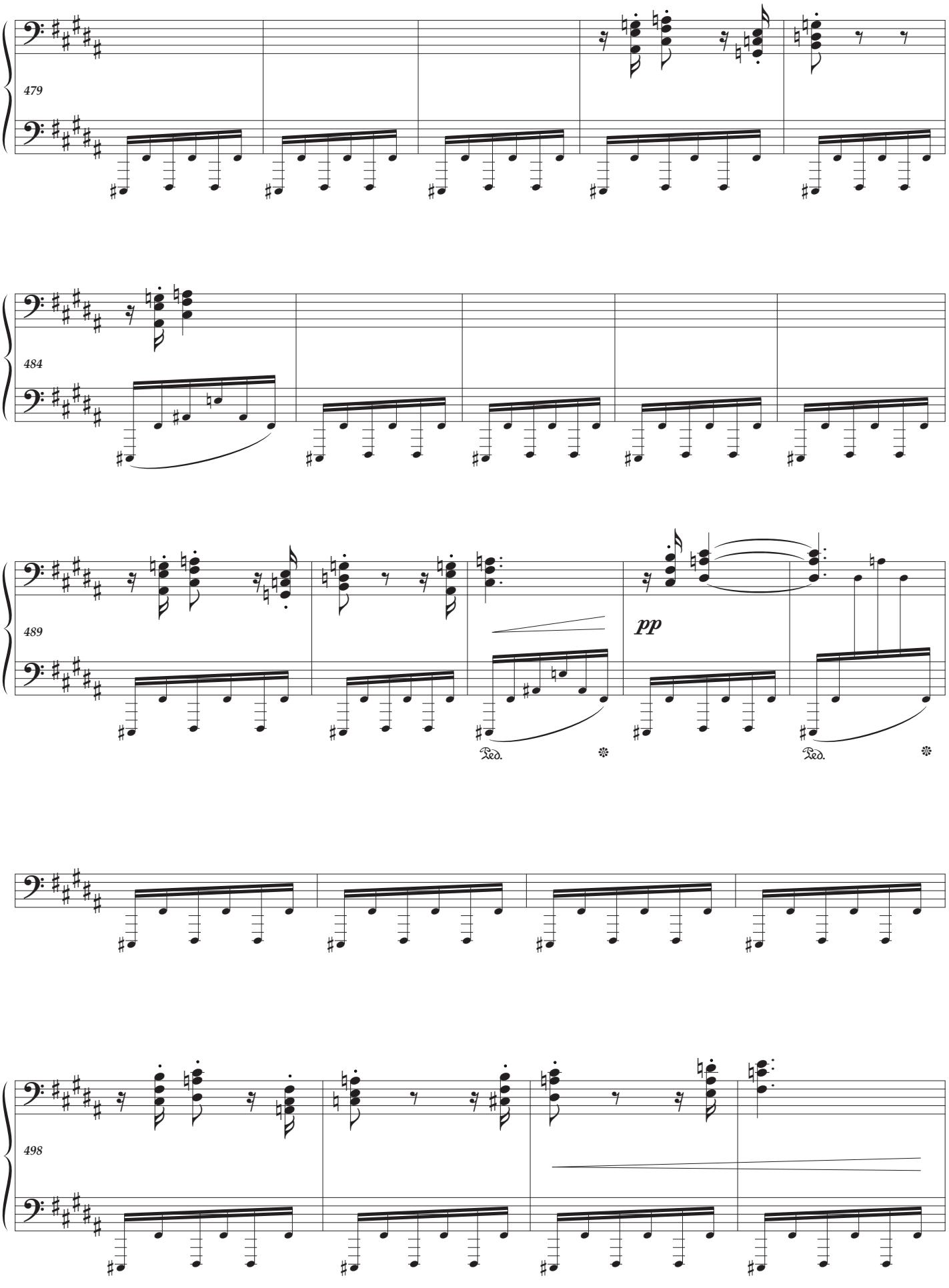

398
402
pp
406
ppp
411
1
2
3
4
1
416
2
3
ppp

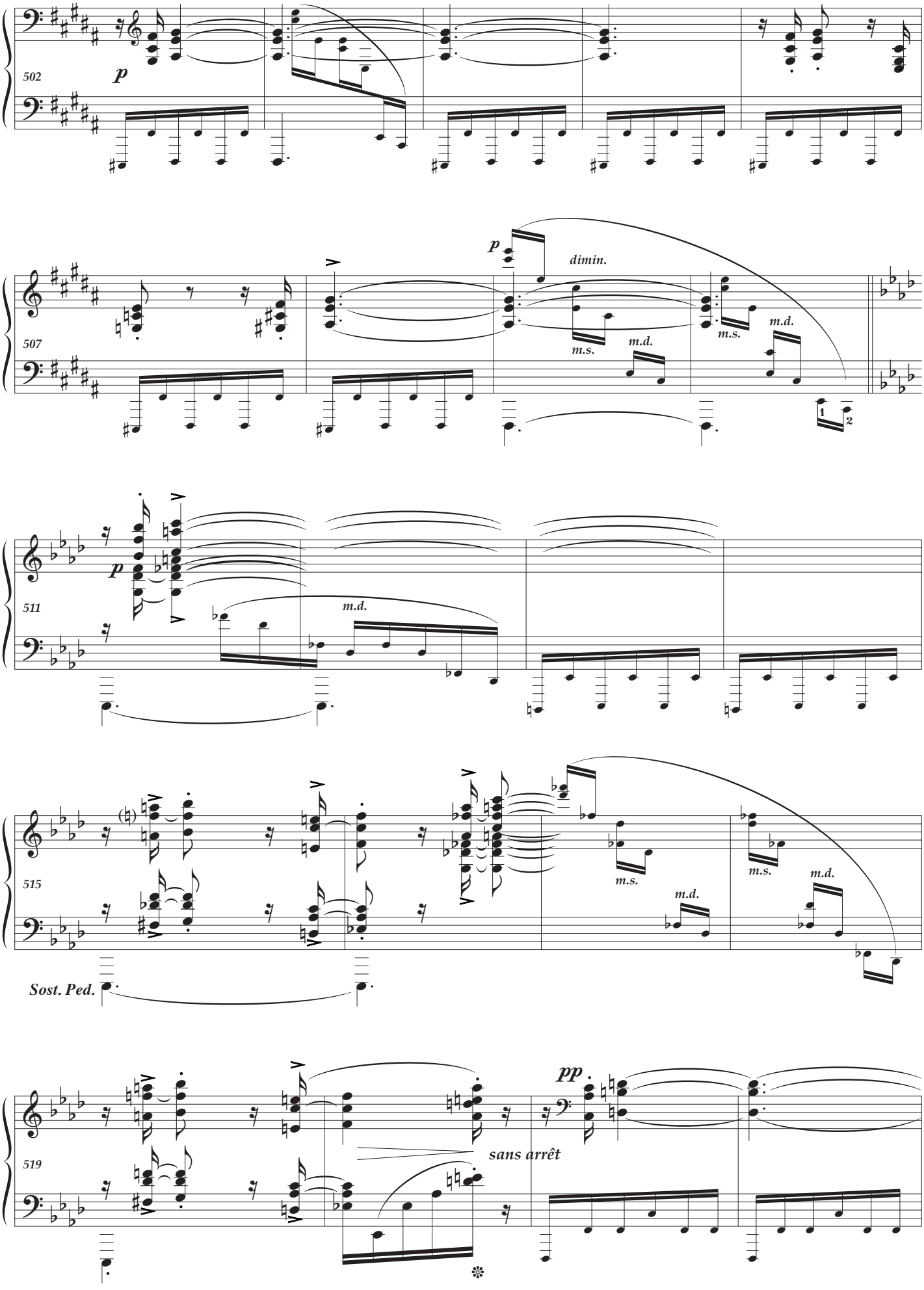

m.d.
422
1
2
3
4
5
(8vb)
[en accélerant]
♩.=♩ [♩= 60]
427
loco
Ped.
3/4
431
pp un peu marqué
433
m.s.
435
sopra
437

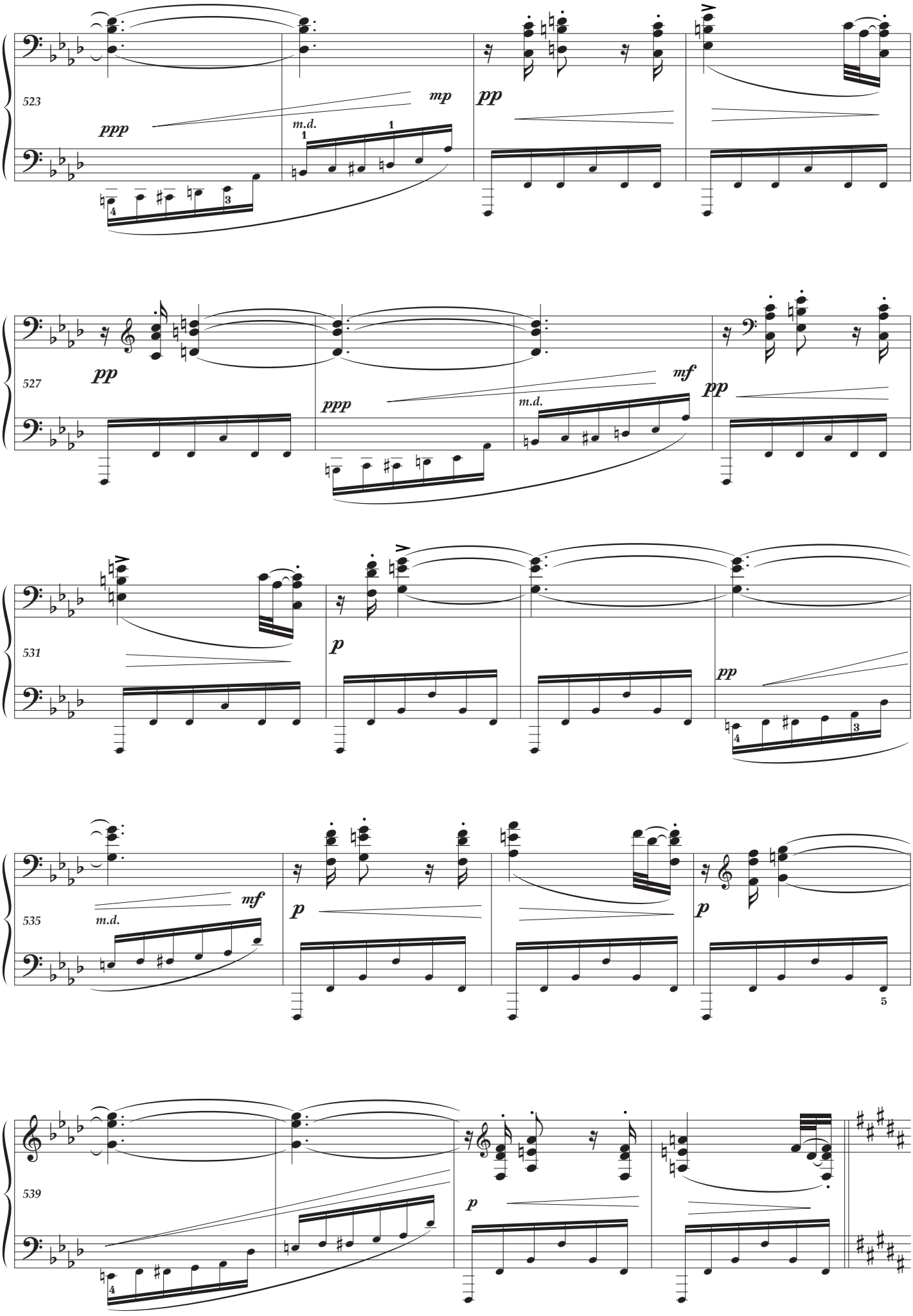

439
m.s.
toujours p
m.d.
441
m.s.
m.s.
Ped.
443
445
447
ppp
2 Ped.

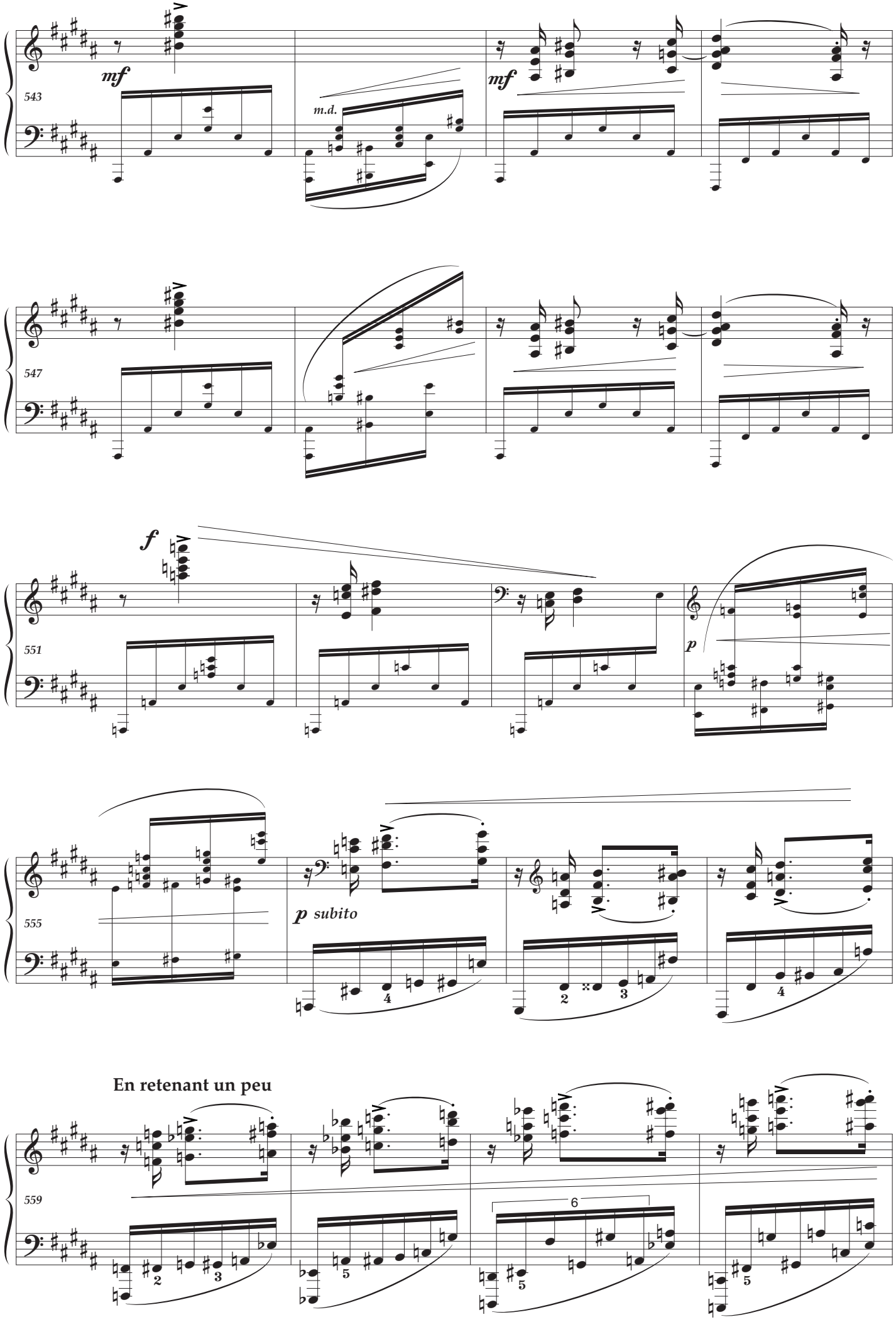

449
en ac - cé - lé - rant
451
453
6
8
455
Toujours en accélerant
458
m.s.
p
6
16


461
1er Mouvt. (Vif) [♩.= 80]
464
467
f
8va
471
(8va)
f
475
ppp
Ped.


479
484
489
pp
Ped.
Ped.
498

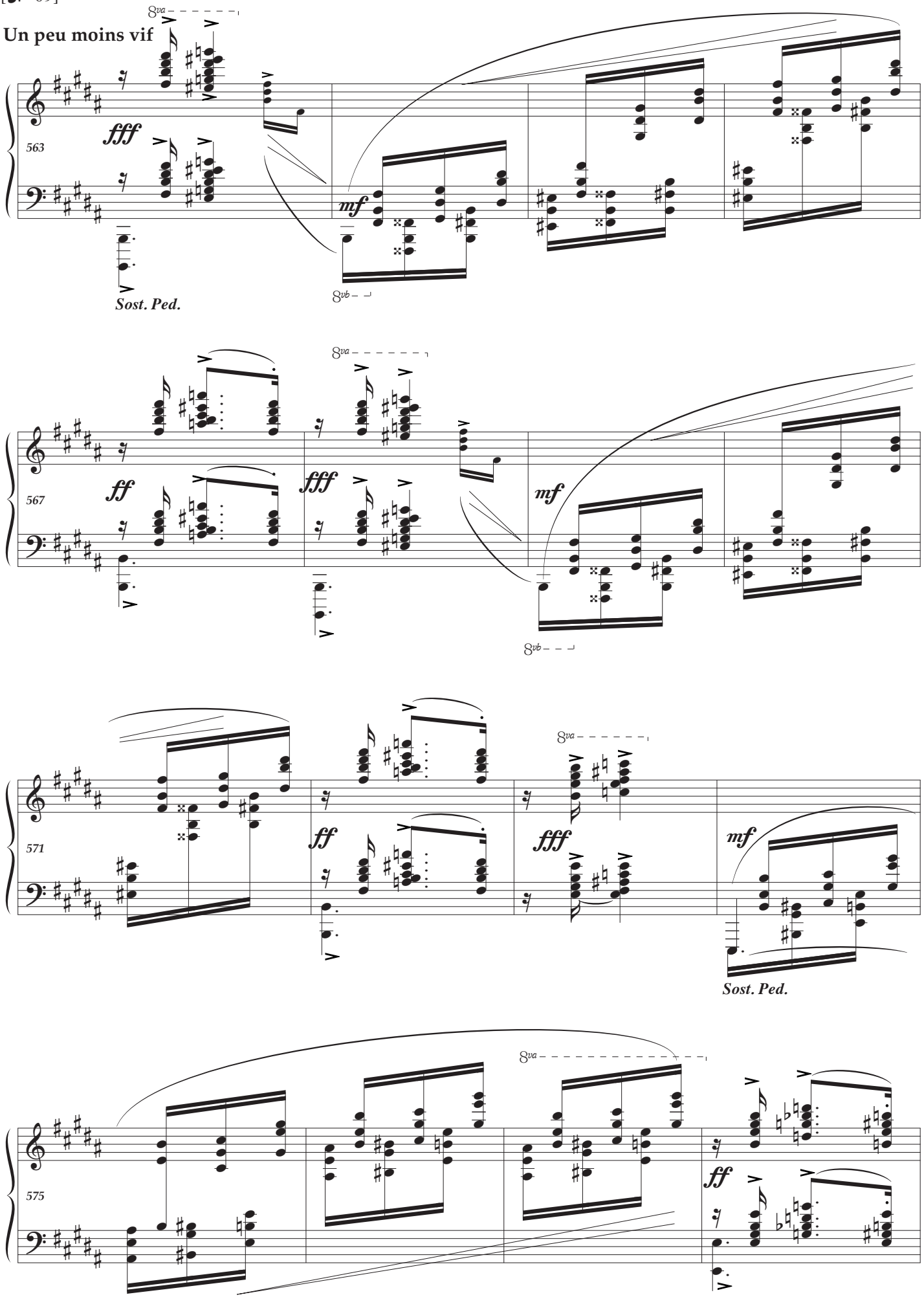

502
p
507
p
dimin.
m.s.
m.d.
m.s.
m.d.
1
2
511
p
m.d.
515
m.s.
m.d.
m.s.
m.d.
Sost. Ped.
519
pp
sans arrêt

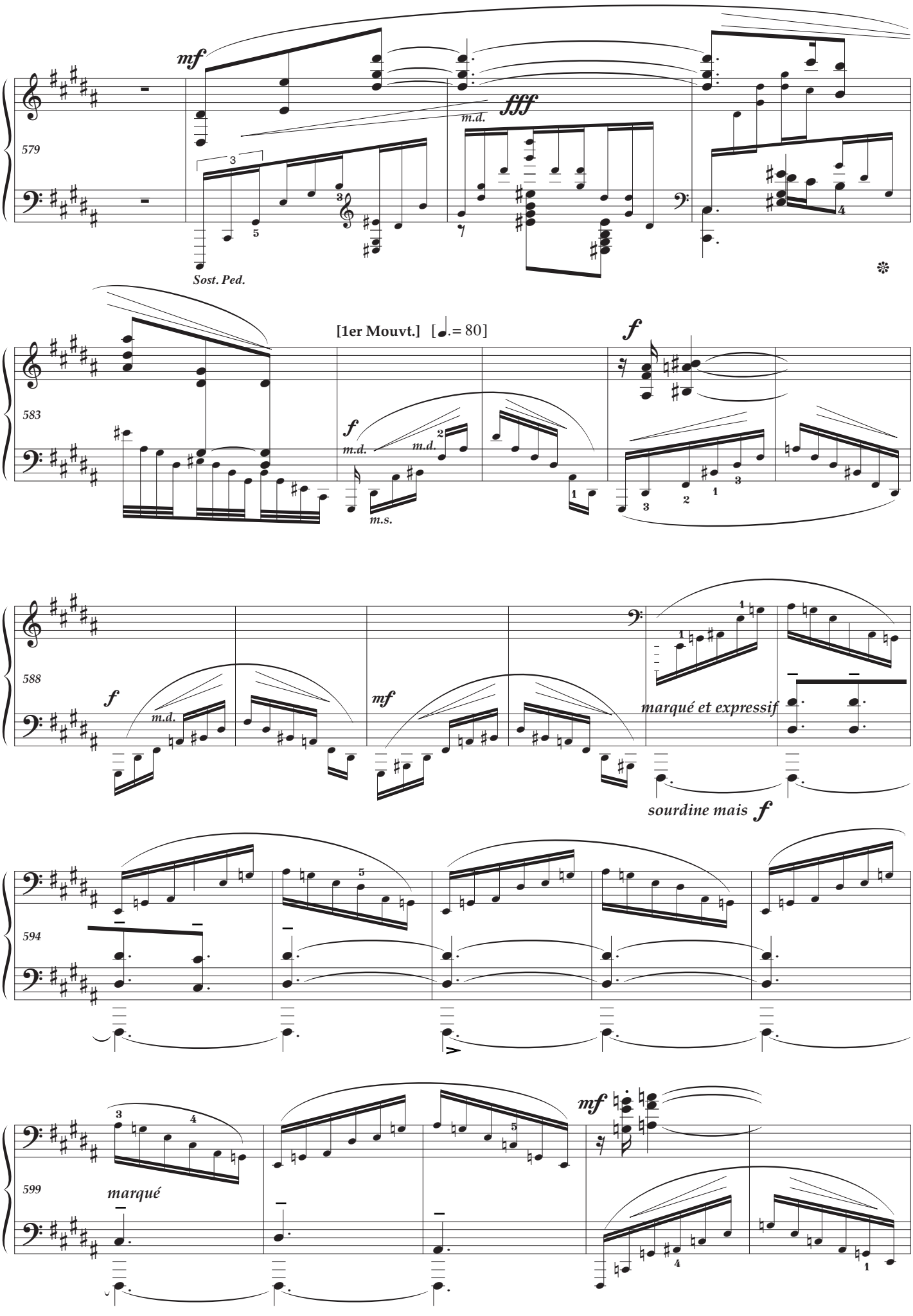

523
ppp
mp
m.d.
pp
527
pp
ppp
mf
m.d.
pp
531
p
pp
535
mf
m.d.
p
p
539
p

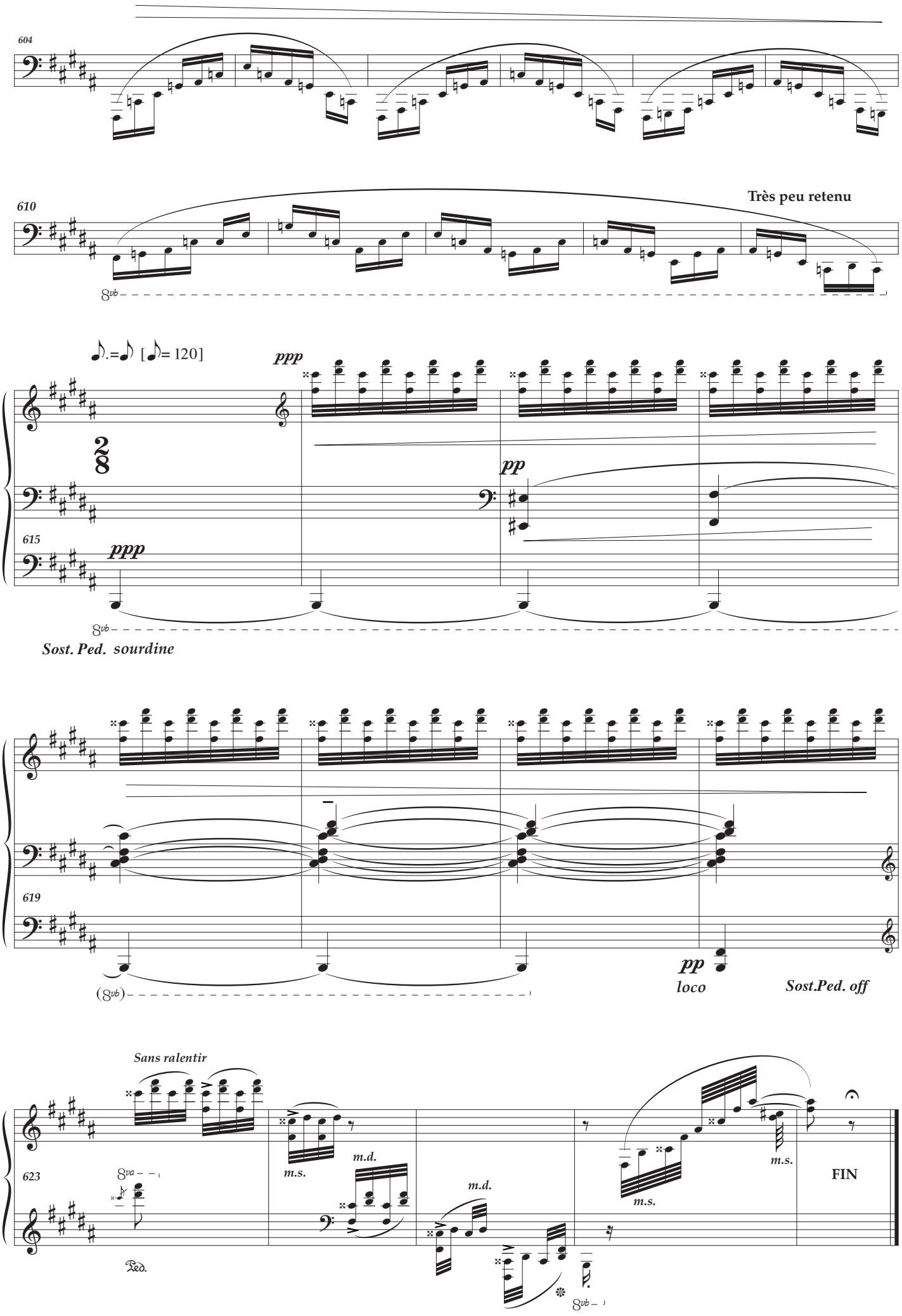

543
mf
m.d.
mf
547
551
f
p
555
p subito
En retenant un peu
559
6

[♩.= 69]

Un peu moins vif




mf
fff
m.d.
579
Sost. Ped.
[1er Mouvt.] [♩.= 80]
f
583
m.d.
m.s.
588
marqué et expressif
sourdine mais f
594
599
marqué


604
610
Très peu retenu
8vb
♪.=♪ [♪= 120]
ppp
615
ppp
pp
8vb
Sost. Ped. sourdine
619
(8vb)
pp
loco
Sost.Ped. off
Sans ralentir
623
8va
m.s.
m.d.
m.d.
m.s.
m.s.
FIN
Ped.
8vb

iano Practical Editions

Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

Please send comments and error reports to
Ray Alston contact@pianopracticaleditions.com

Scarbo — appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

- Édition Durand : there are no metronome speeds indicated
- It is suggested that diamond-headed notes can be omitted
- Ravel used the pedal sign very sparingly, preferring elongated ties and extended notes, impossible to hold otherwise. It is possible to use the sostenuto pedal effectively although this is entirely editorial.

Duration: 11

vif	lively
très fondu	very muted
sans ralentir	without slowing down
un peu marqué	a little marked
bien égal de sonorité	even tone
sans arrêt	without stopping
un peu retenu	held back a little
toujours	always
en retenant un peu	slowing a little
un peu moins vif	a little less lively

- **15** Beats 1 & 2 — With a Bösendorfer F𝄪 and G♯ are possible here
- **66** The D♮ is missing in Durand — clearly a misprint
- **73** The thumb D♯ is most awkward and can be omitted without spoiling the effect (see **241**)
- **113** 3rd quaver beat rearranged
- **121-155** presented without key-signature
- **142** RH final semiquaver — B♭ to complete the chromatic alto (Durand B♮)
- **144-148** According to Perlemuter the treble accompaniment should conform (as presented here)
- **160/1** & **164/5** RH accompaniment conforming to **157** and **158**; I suspect the Durand edition to be in error here.
- **171/176/182/187** The demonic motif has been adapted for two hands
- **235/241** LH 2nd semiquaver can be omitted
- **240/247** rearranged between the hands
- **271** LH adapted from **275**
- **298** RH 3rd quaver beat : the G♯ replaces a suspected G♮ error to be consistent with **284**
- **314** The editorial *plus lent* seems to be musically justified
- **322** I suspect the RH C♯ thumb should be tied
- **334** A Bösendorfer could play bass G
- **372** *a tempo* missing in Durand… an undoubted oversight
- **395/402/409** as **15**
- **418** The repeated notes can be played with LH alone
- **427-430** A slight accelerando is suggested here; the ambiguous ♩=♪ has been replaced by an editorial metronome speed
- **448-453** presented without key signature
- **454** the 6/8 time signature is editorial but a reasonable interpretation
- **460** another perhaps more meaningful time signature, easier to realise.
- **476** LH 1st beat B♯ removed for clarity in the bass
- **503** RH accompanying figure slightly rearranged
- **561-562** LH sextuplet not evident in Durand
- **580-582** A G♯ has been added to the climactic RH 3rd quaver, and the RH has been slightly rearranged to strengthen this awkward technical and musical moment
- **584** *a tempo* probably omitted in error
- **615** The change of time signature takes place at **616** (Durand), but this interpretation makes the 4-bar phrases easier to perceive.
- **625** slightly rearranged

LE FOU

Aloysius Bertrand

LE FOU

Un carolus ou bien encor,
Si l'aimez mieux, un agneau d'or *.

MANUSCRIT DE LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE DU ROI

THE JESTER

A sovereign or even,
If you better prefer, a golden angel *.

MANUSCRIPT FROM THE KING'S LIBRARY

La lune peignait ses cheveux avec un démêloir d'ébène qui argentait d'une pluie de vers luisants les collines, les prés et les bois.

Scarbo, gnome dont les trésors foisonnent, vannait sur mon toit, au cri de la girouette, ducats et florins qui sautaient en cadence, les pièces fausses jonchant la rue.

Comme ricana le fou qui vague, chaque nuit, par la cité déserte, un oeil à la lune et l'autre - crevé !

"Foin de la lune ! grommela-t-il, ramassant les jetons du diable, j'achèterai le pilori pour m'y chauffer au soleil ! "

Mais c'était toujours la lune, la lune qui se couchait. - Et Scarbo monnoyait sourdement dans ma cave ducats et florins à coups de balancier.

Tandis que, les deux cornes en avant, un limaçon qu'avait égaré la nuit, cherchait sa route sur mes vitraux * lumineux.

*** Note the interesting similarity to Ondine : again in the final verse.**

The moon was combing her hair with an ebony brush, showering the hills, the fields and the woods with silvery glowworms.

Scarbo, a gnome whose treasures abound, winnowed on my roof, to the screech of the weathervane, ducats and florins leaping in time, the fake coins strewn in the street.

How the jester sneered in the deserted city, wandering each night, one eye on the moon and the other - punctured!

"A plague on the moon! he grumbled, collecting the devil's chips, I'll buy the pillory to warm myself in the sun."

But it was always the moon, the moon who retired to bed. - And Scarbo was furtively counterfeiting ducats and florins in my cellar to the blows of a pendulum.

Whilst, with two horns leading, a snail strayed by nightfall was seeking its path on my luminous stained-glass windows.

* A *carolus* and *agneau d'or* are medieval French coins.
The English *sovereign* and *golden angel* have been translated with some poetic licence as their values have been inverted.

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