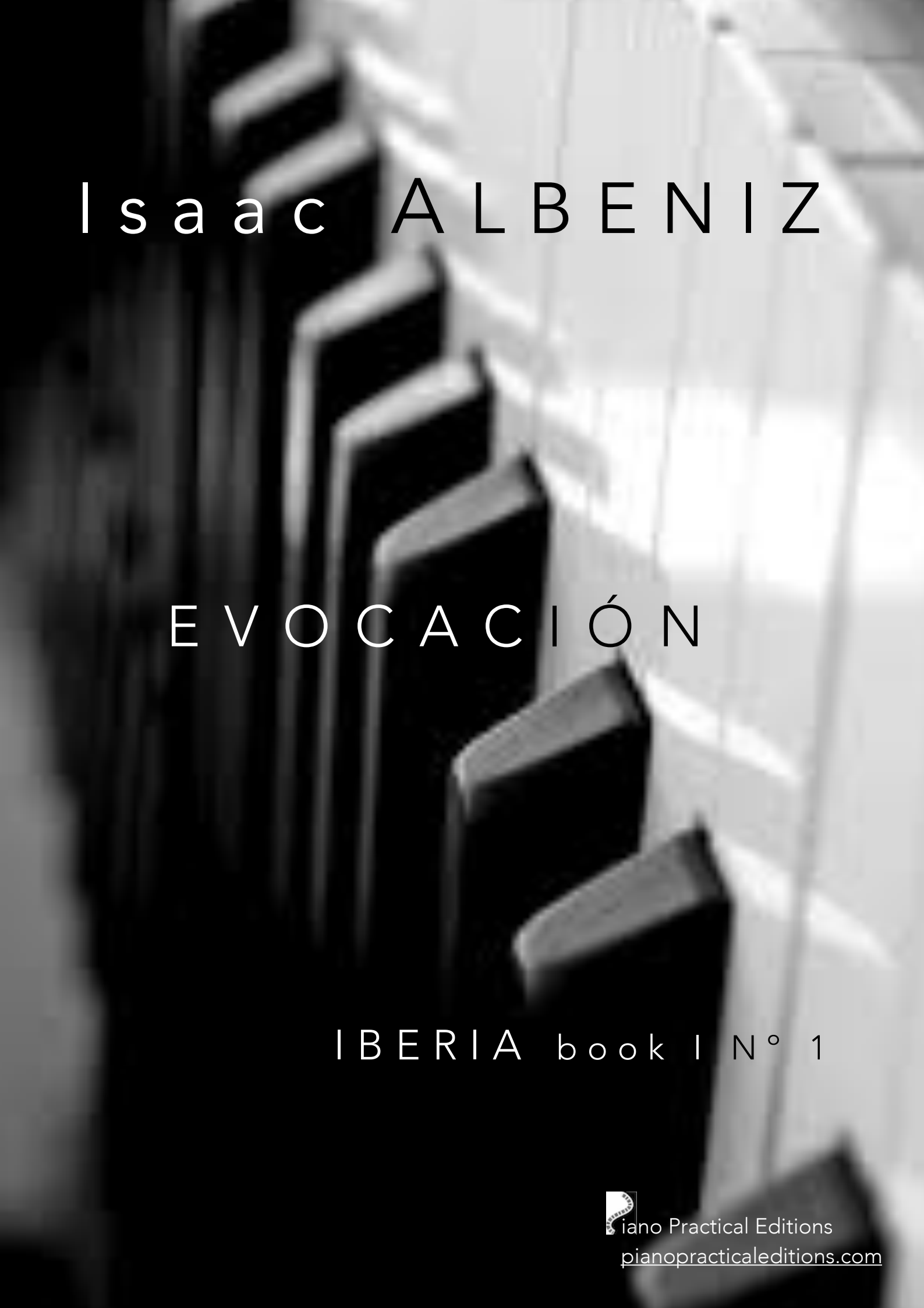

Isaac ALBENIZ

EVOCACIÓN

IBERIA book I N° 1

Piano Practical Editions
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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.

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Ray Alston contact@pianopracticaleditions.com

Isaac ALBENIZ 1860 - 1909

EVOCACIÓN

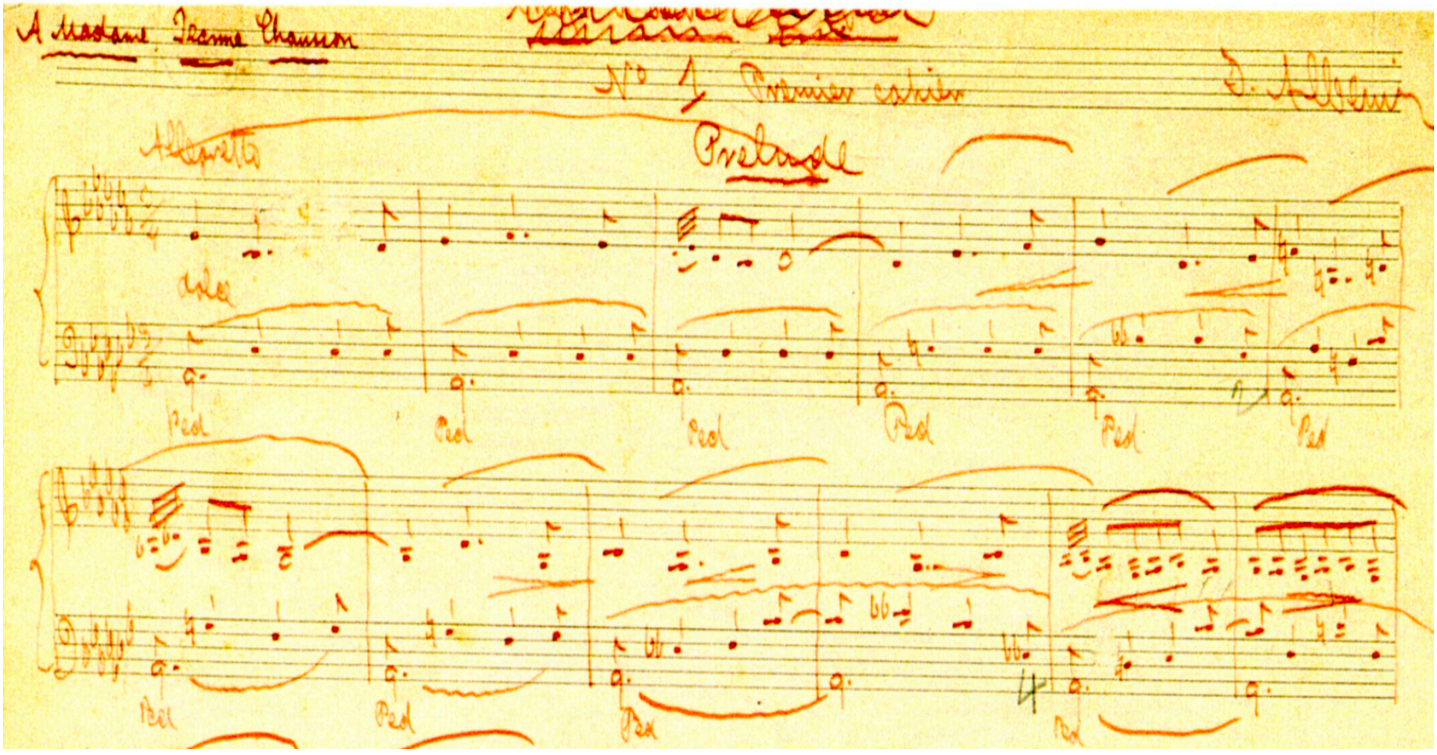
de la suite "IBERIA"

There is general agreement among pianists and musicians that *Iberia*, Albeniz' *"swan song"*, is arguably his greatest work and possibly the greatest work for piano by a Spanish composer. A richly inspirational and harmonic fabric is immediately recognisable in this *Evocación*, which acts as a prelude to the twelve works which comprise the opus. Enthused by the music of Ravel and Debussy, Albéniz transformed his earlier charming salon style, into a series of tone poems capturing the spiritual essence of Spain.

As you can see, its original title was indeed a "Prelude" dedicated to Jeanne Escudier (Ernest Chausson's wife) — a most hauntingly wistful and introspective piece reflecting a truly nostalgic vision of Albeniz' native country.

With the exception of differing major and minor modes in this work and *El Corpus en Sevilla*, Albeniz never changes key signatures in *Iberia*, preferring the heavy use of accidentals to underline the many changes of key. Was this through negligence or by design? If the former, I humbly offer this edition which makes quite a few changes of signature, rendering, I believe, the text easier to read and comprehend by eliminating a raft of double sharps and flats.

Albéniz was an extrovert with a keen sense of humour, loved and respected by all who knew him. In this wonderful and imaginative music, he was also flamboyant with long descriptions in

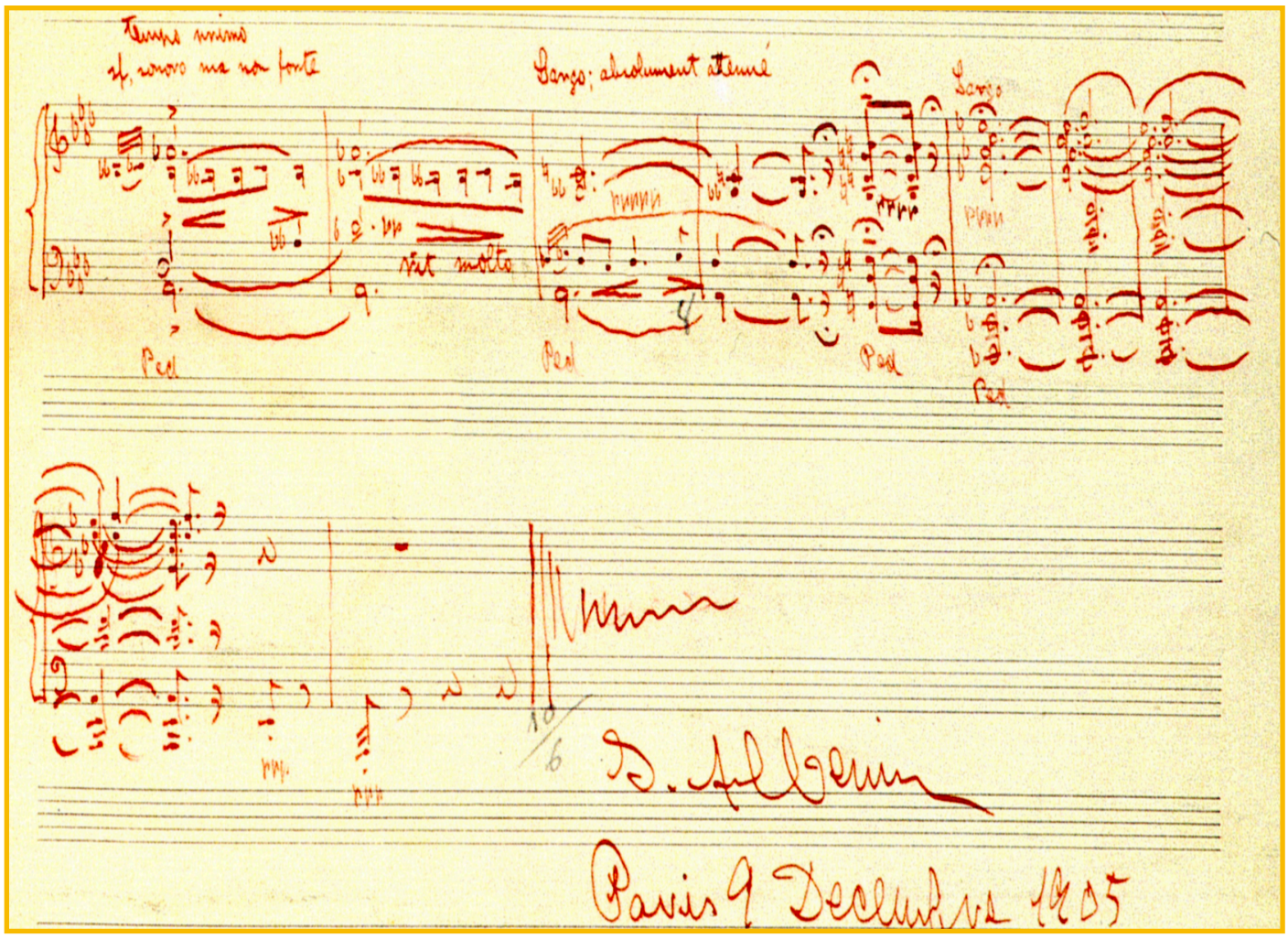


French and pedalling directions which sometimes seem to be a whirlwind of far-fetched impossibilities — unreasonable and endearing as they are. I plead guilty to not having religiously copied every

Jeanne Escudier & Debussy playing a duet
1893

dot, accent, sign, pedal marking and many others. He was very zealous in having often provided many, sometimes conflicting, instructions and I have tried to simplify the music within reason relying upon present-day sophisticated pianists and teachers reading the score philosophically. Regarding use of the sustaining pedal, I quote Debussy : "Pedalling cannot be written down — it varies from one instrument to another, from one room, or one hall, to another."

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. It is possible, even desirable, to use the sostenuto pedal effectively, although this is entirely editorial.



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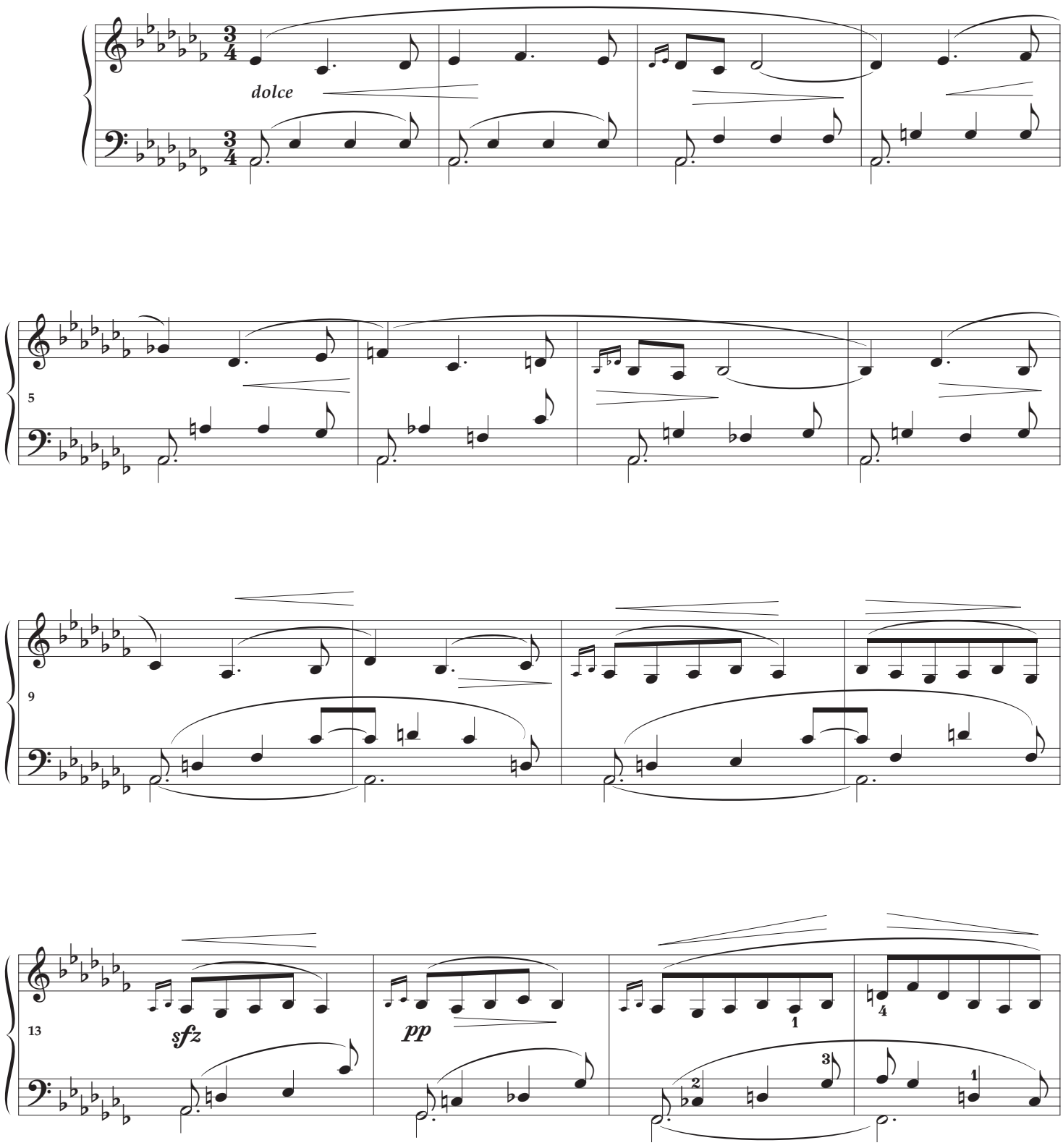
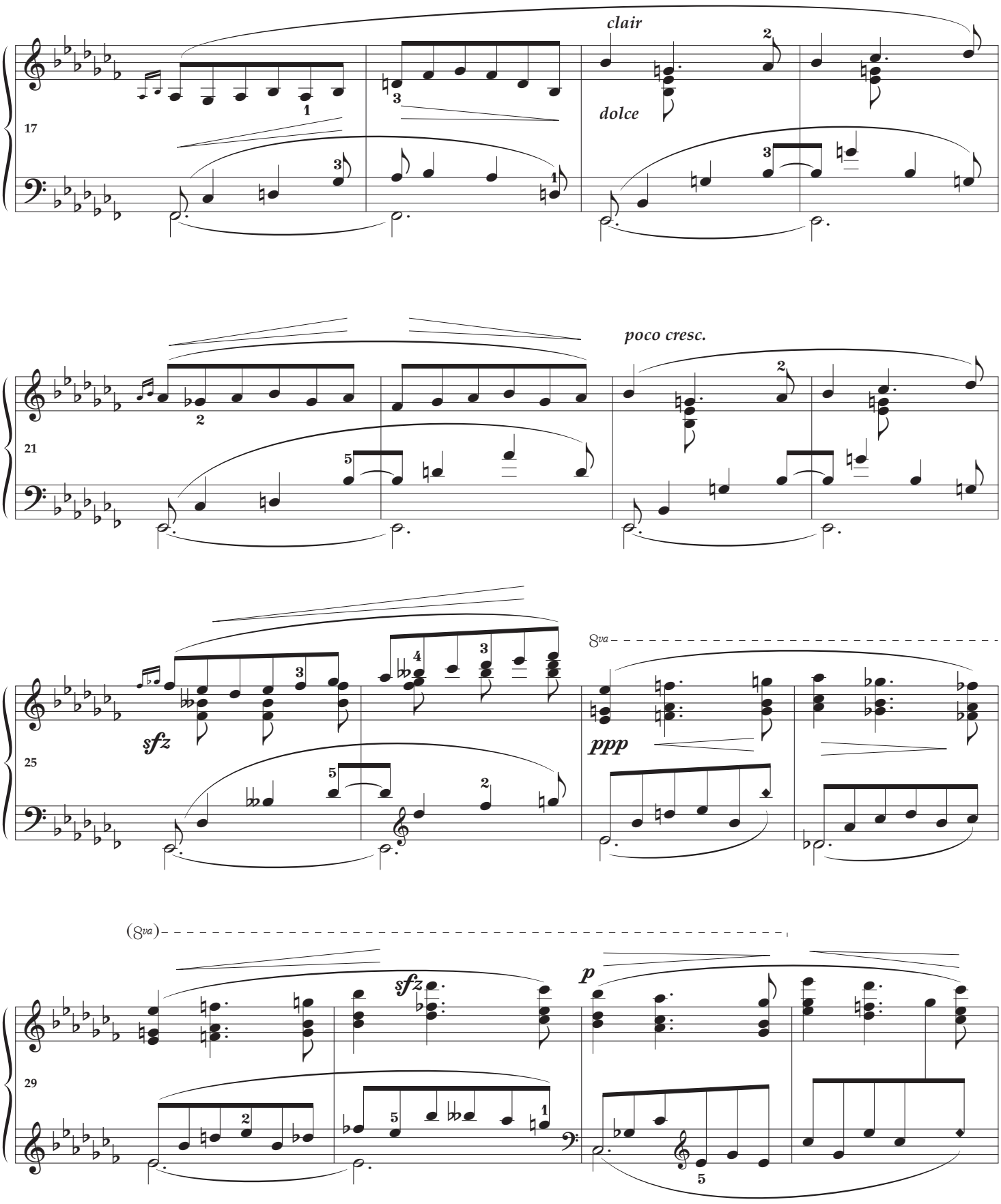
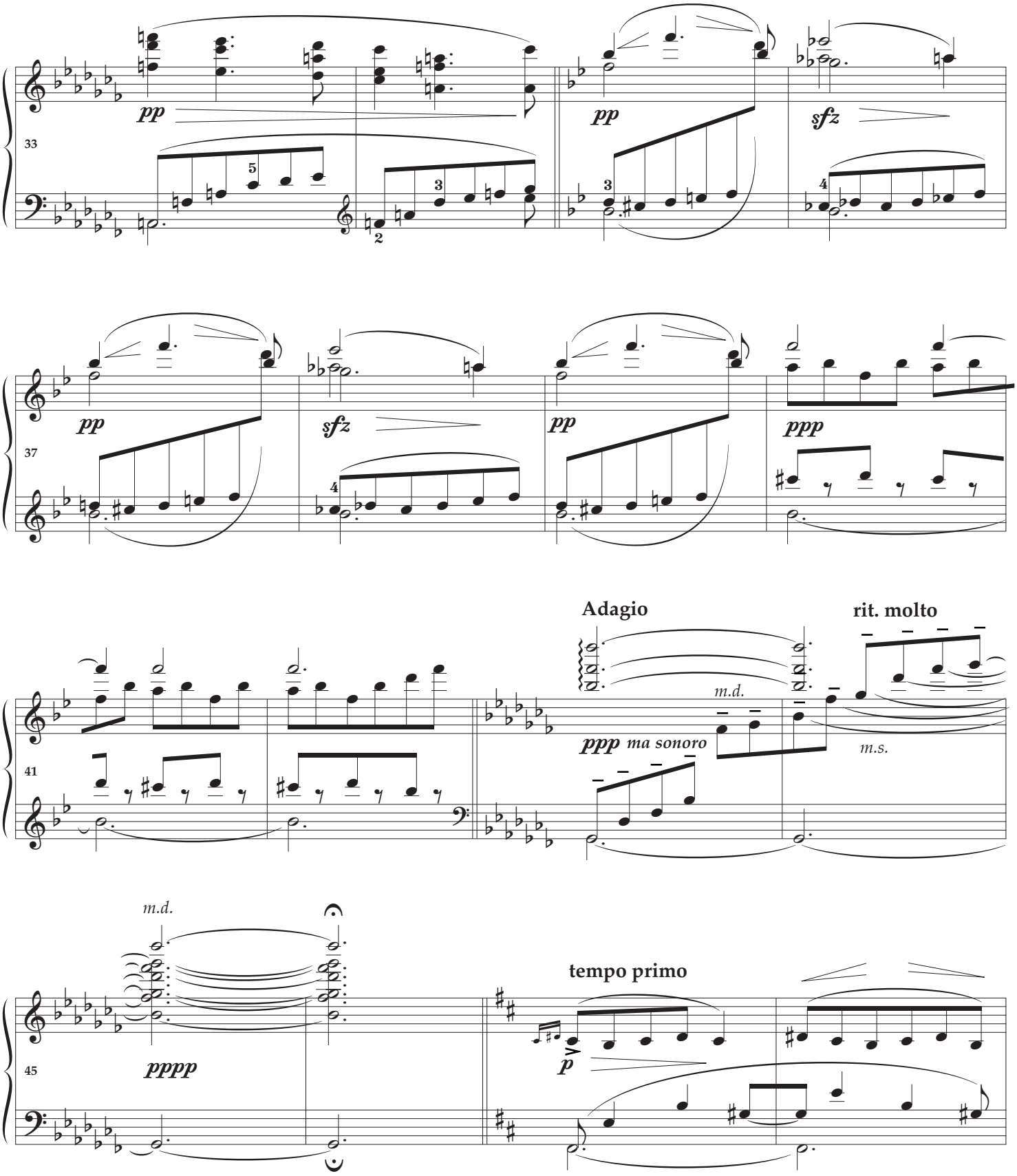
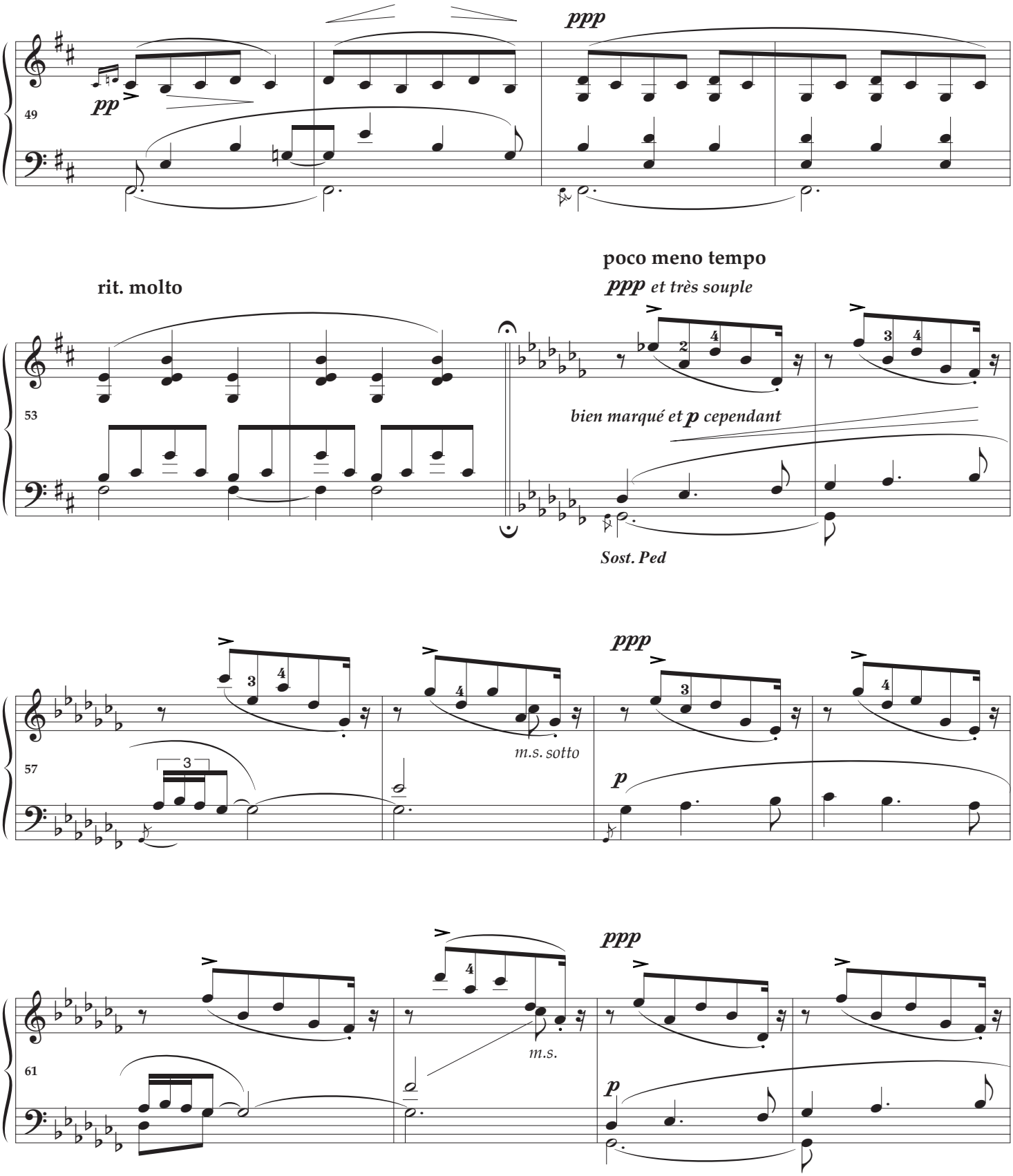
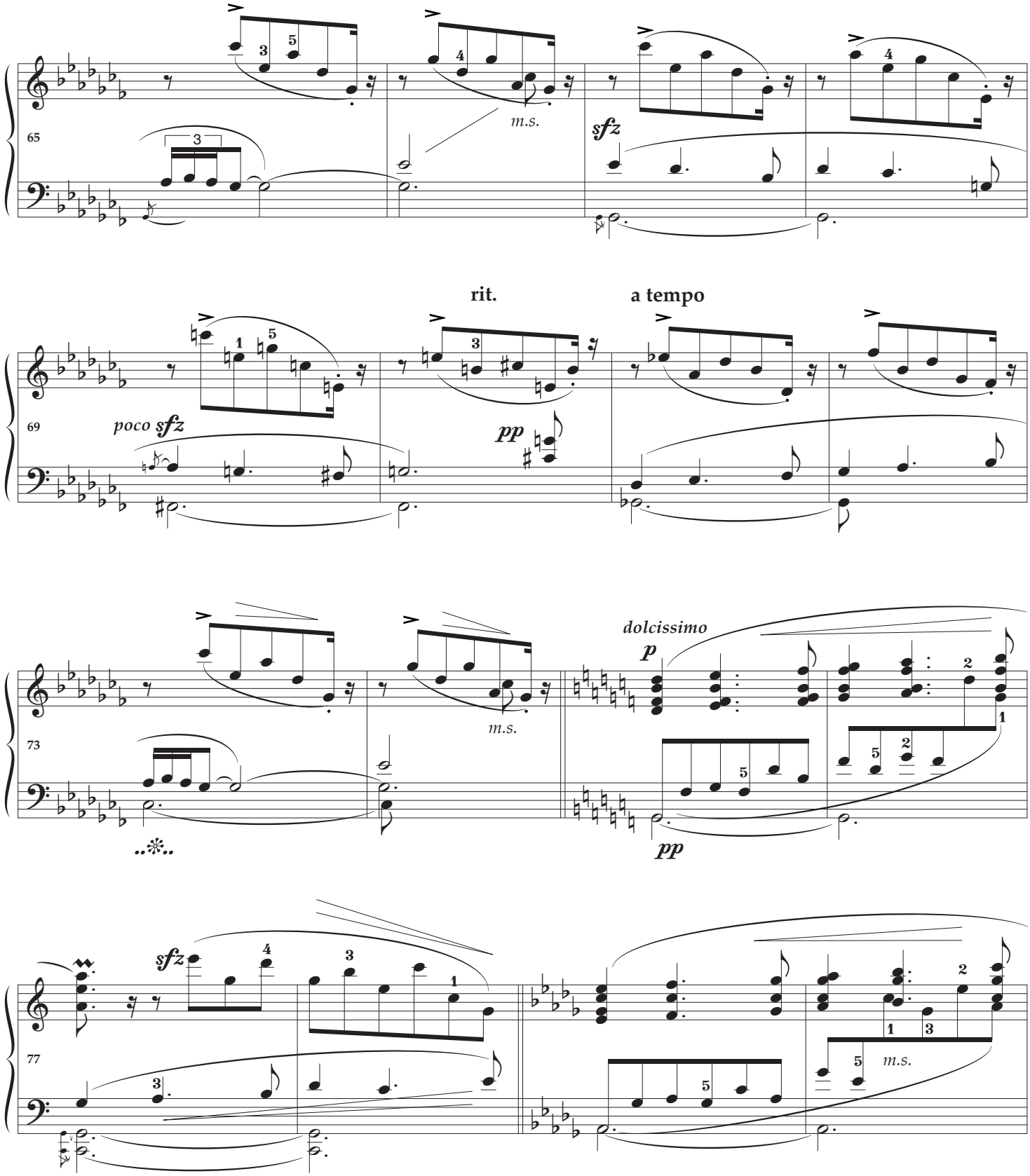
Allegretto expressivo

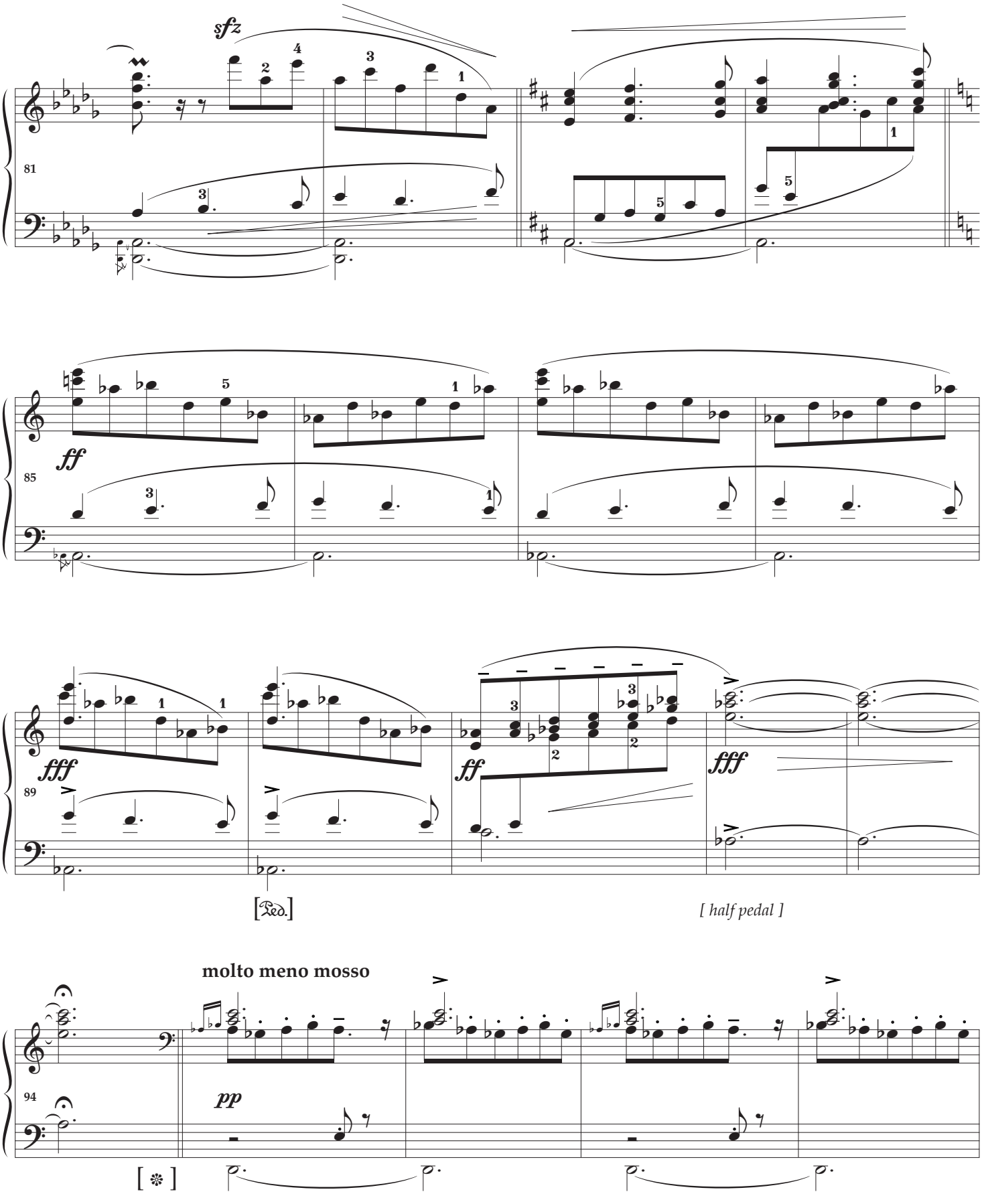


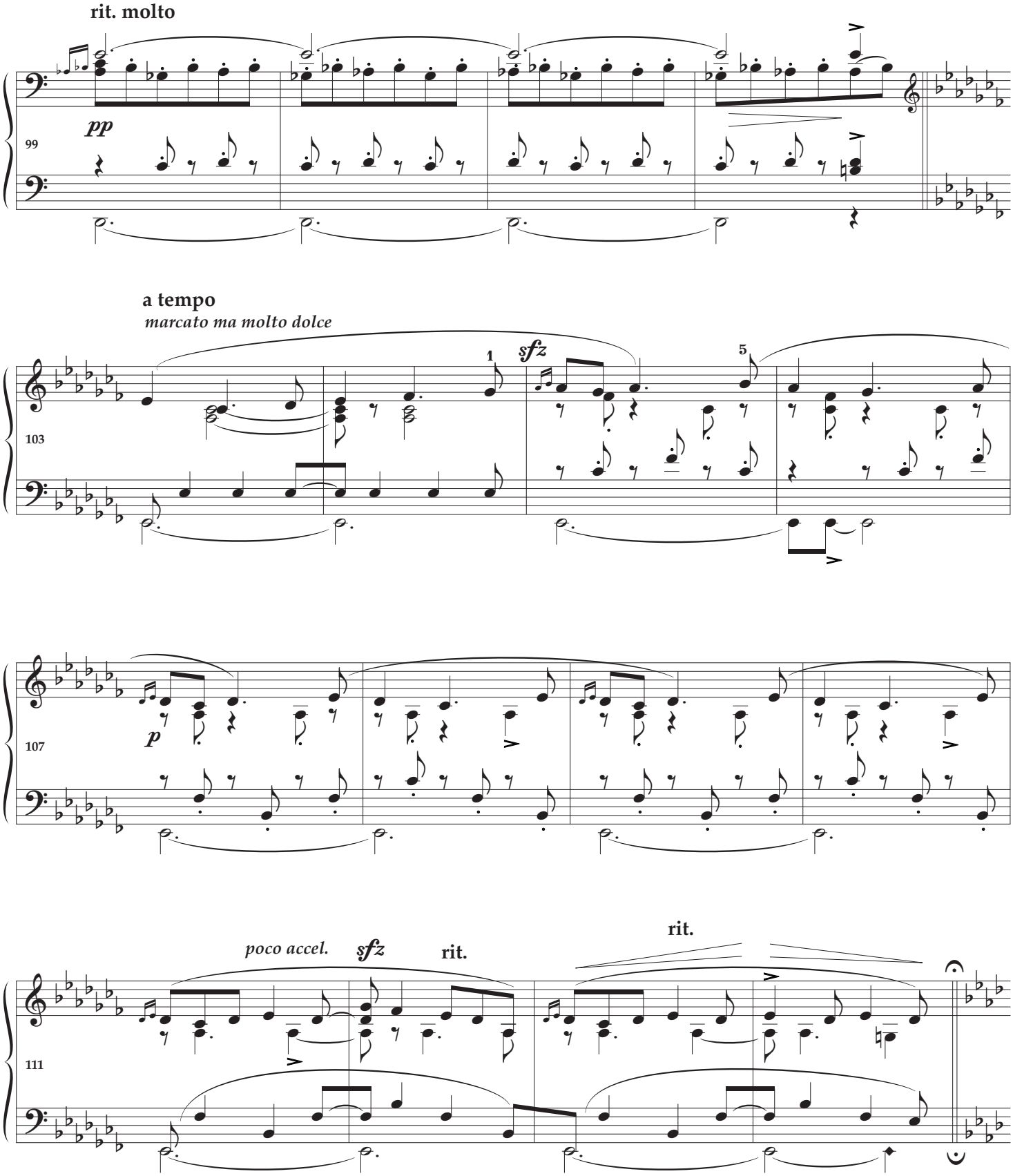

clair
dolce
17
poco cresc.
21
sfz
ppp
8va
25
(8va)
sfz
p
29


33
pp
pp
sfz
37
pp
sfz
pp
ppp
41
Adagio
rit. molto
m.d.
ppp ma sonoro
m.s.
45
m.d.
pppp
tempo primo
p

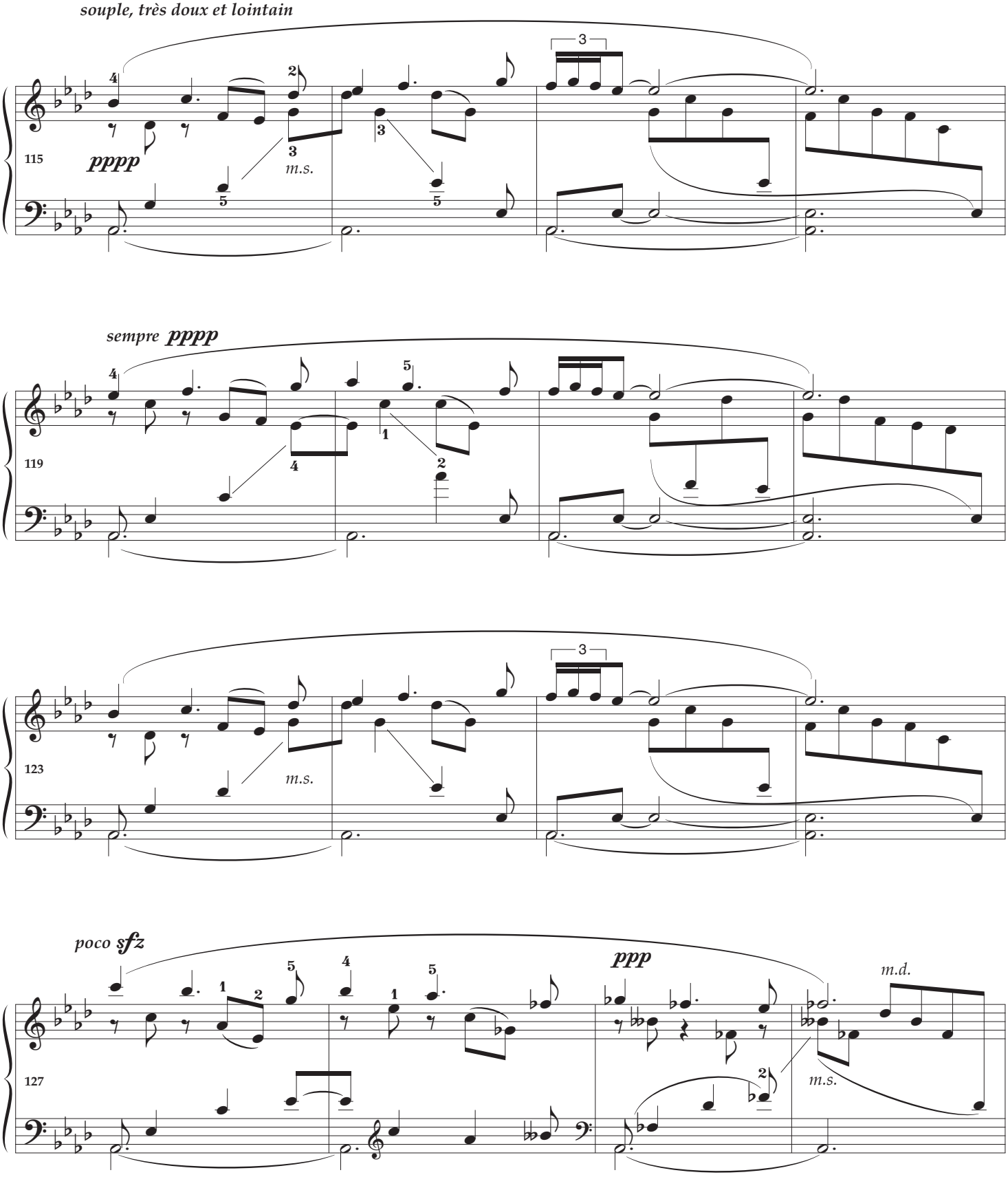

ppp
pp
49
rit. molto
poco meno tempo
ppp et très souple
53
bien marqué et p cependant
Sost. Ped
ppp
57
m.s. sotto
p
ppp
61
m.s.
p

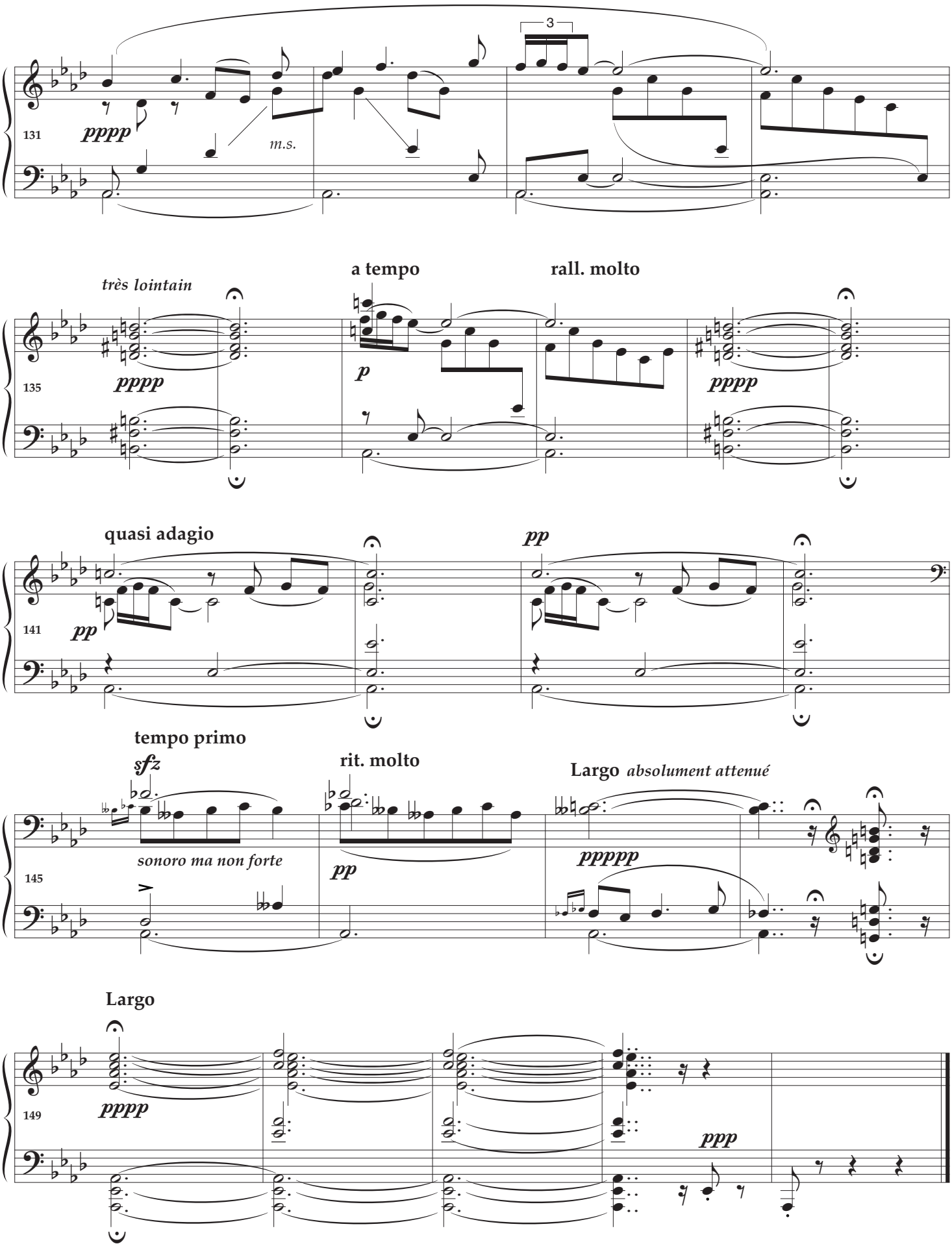

65
m.s.
sfz
69
rit.
a tempo
poco sfz
pp
73
m.s.
dolcissimo
p
pp
77
sfz
m.s.


sfz
81
ff
85
fff
89
ff
fff
[Ped.]
[half pedal]
molto meno mosso
94
pp
[❄]


rit. molto
pp
99
a tempo
marcato ma molto dolce
sfz
1
5
103
p
107
poco accel.
sfz
rit.
rit.
111
[replay silently]

meno mosso
souple, très doux et lointain




131
pppp
m.s.
3
très lointain
pppp
135
a tempo
p
rall. molto
pppp
quasi adagio
pp
141
pp
tempo primo
sfz
sonoro ma non forte
145
rit. molto
pp
Largo absolument attenué
ppppp
Largo
pppp
149
ppp

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Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

As an interpreter-performer I often have to ask myself why a composer has chosen a particular time or key signature and sometimes the answer is not at all obvious. Now that we have the tools with which to "re-arrange" the music otherwise, my work as an editor becomes much more interesting. When these pieces were first written I like to think that the composer did not necessarily consider all the options, (at the time they had so much else to think about) and I doubt whether a colleague, editor or proofreader would have had the temerity to question a composer's wishes. However, in retrospect I like to think that these now aged composers are approvingly viewing my modifications from above and giving the nod to my humble efforts.

- None of the sostenuto pedal suggestions are attributed to Albeniz. With practice it is possible to combine the sostenuto* and soft pedals with the left foot, judiciously coupled with the sustained pedal, producing wonderful impressionist orchestral sounds.

- The dynamic range is from ***f*** to a barely audible ***ppppp***

Duration: 6'40

- **35 - 42** presented in B flat
- **47 - 54** presented in B minor
- **55/67/69/77/81** acciaccaturas have been added
- **75 - 78** presented in C
- **79 - 82** presented in D flat
- **83 - 84** presented in D
- **85 - 102** presented with a blank key-signature
- **90** editorial pedal suggestion
- **114** editorial suggestion to silently replay the bass E♭, changing the pedal for a "clean" sound

clair	clair
très souple	not metronomic
bien marqué et *p* cependant	*p* but well marked
très doux et lointain	very gentle and as from afar

* The sostenuto pedal was first shown in Paris at the Industrial Exposition of 1844. The idea was not immediately taken up by piano builders, but in 1874, is was perfected and patented by Steinway, soon to be fitted on all their grands and better uprights. One obvious commercial reason for not including the sostenuto pedal in musical scores must have been the thought of excluding buyers whose pianos didn't have it. Debussy and Ravel certainly played such Steinways in the Paris *salons*. Apparently, in 1900 the composer René de Castéra bought a 3-pedal Steinway on the advice of Albeniz. One could say that it took over 100 years for it to become prevalent.

This is Albeniz commenting on his own music written before Iberia: "Here are among them a few things that are not completely worthless. The music is a bit infantile, plain, spirited; but in the end, the people, our Spanish people, are something of all that. I believe that the people are right when they continue to be moved by *Córdoba*, *Mallorca*, by the copla of the *Sevillanas*, by the *Serenata*, and *Granada*. In all of them I now note that there is less musical science, less of the grand idea, but more colour, sunlight, flavour of olives. That music of youth, with its little sins and absurdities that almost point out the sentimental affectation... appears to me like the carvings in the Alhambra, those peculiar arabesques that say nothing with their turns and shapes, but which are like the air, like the sun, like the blackbirds or like the nightingales of its gardens. They are more valuable than all else of Moorish Spain, which though we may not like it, is the true Spain".