Sergei RACHMANINOV

PRELUDES

Opus 32 N° 5 G major

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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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Sergei RACHMANINOV

1873 - 1943

PRELUDE Opus 32 N° 5 G major

The composition of 24 preludes covering all the major and minor keys is a huge challenge and Rachmaninov's contribution was spread over 20 years. In spite of the demands of an active and successful stage career at the piano and on the podium, with limited time for composing, between August and September 1910 he rapidly completed thirteen for opus 32. These tone poems created in his middle years reveal an even more improvisatory style, often with a distinctive identity and no precise form. Unlike opus 23, they are without dedication.

At the age of 19 his celebrated C♯ minor prelude gained so much success that his fans would not allow him to leave the stage unless he performed it, yet again, as an encore. He believed that any of the 23 preludes following this youthful first essay in

the genre were far superior, although one must admit that he had certainly hit upon a unique formula to enthuse his audiences. However, the "Bells of Moscow" would cause him intense irritation.

This prelude features a haunting ostinato and flowing melody, providing solace for a composer who often created music of more sombre hue. Little wonder that it has become one of his most popular, Rachmaninov himself blessing the work with frequent recital inclusion and recordings from which this edition features a few modifications not found in earlier publications. His tempo is very free, at a somewhat slow *moderato* except for the *leggiero* passages **7-8** etc. and the coda **36-39**, which are played more quickly.

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 a few of the more effective deviations. Phrasing, dynamics and agogic markings have been occasionally modified and a zealous student will need to consult the original Russian Gutheil or Robert Threlfall's Boosey & Hawkes 1992 edition.

5 according to one of the composer's recordings, perhaps in error

6-8 in his recordings Rachmaninov plays these *leggiero* passages as quasi ornamental turns

8 modification of this harmony

9 to be played with the LH bass G, according to the original edition

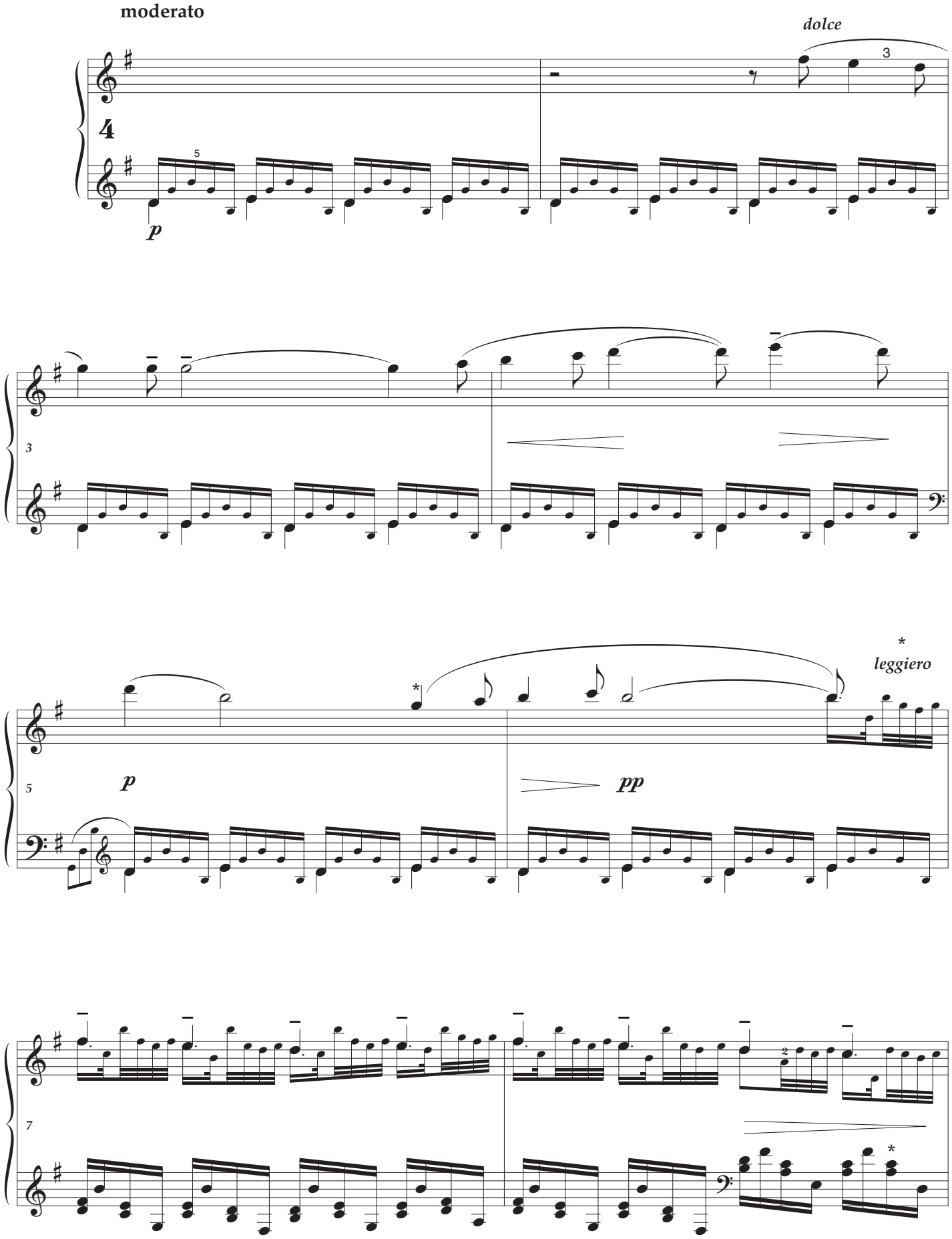
16 modification of LH thumb B

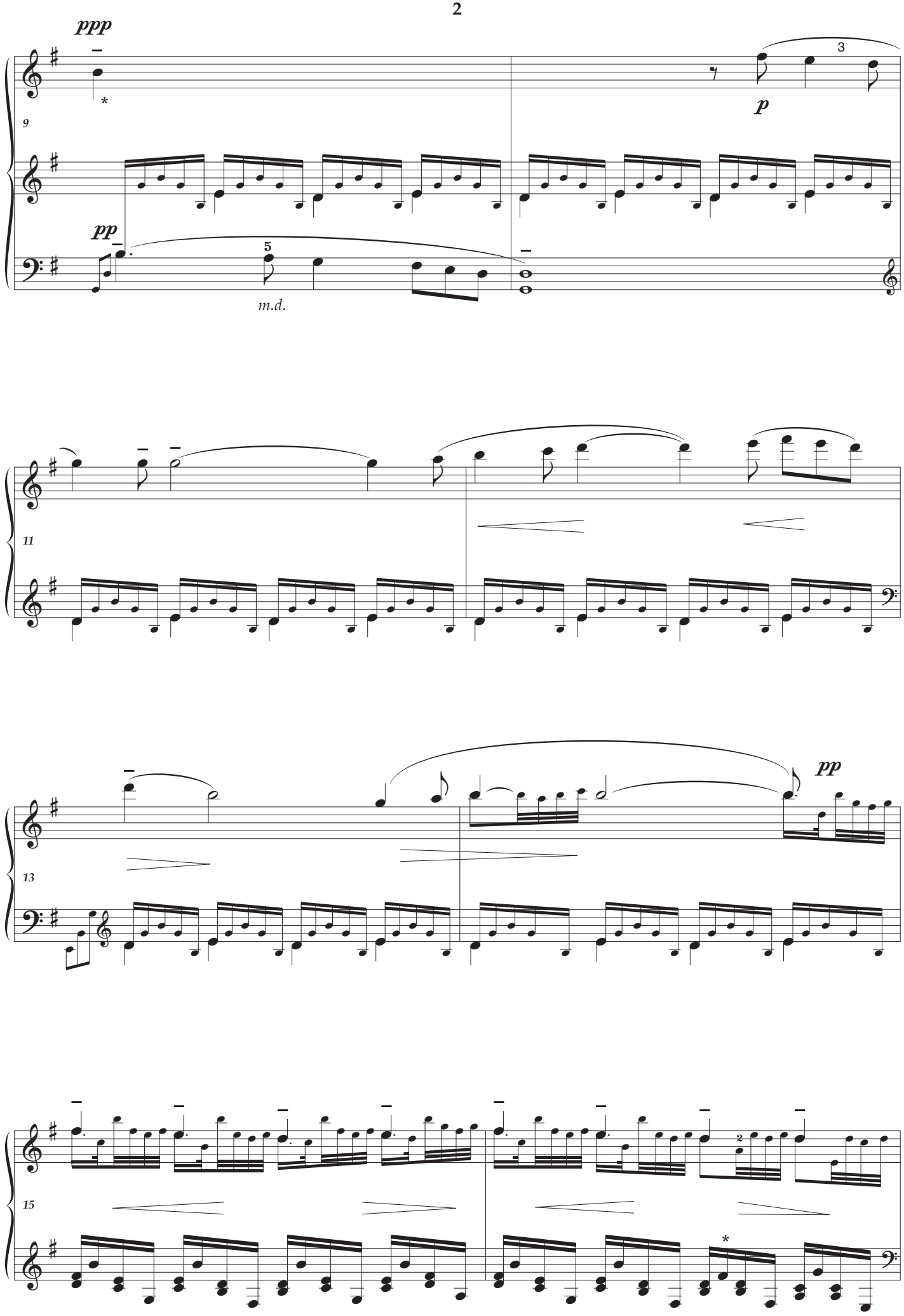
22 presented as a continuation of **21**

35-38 modification of time-signatures and barlines

PRELUDE

Op 32 Nº 5

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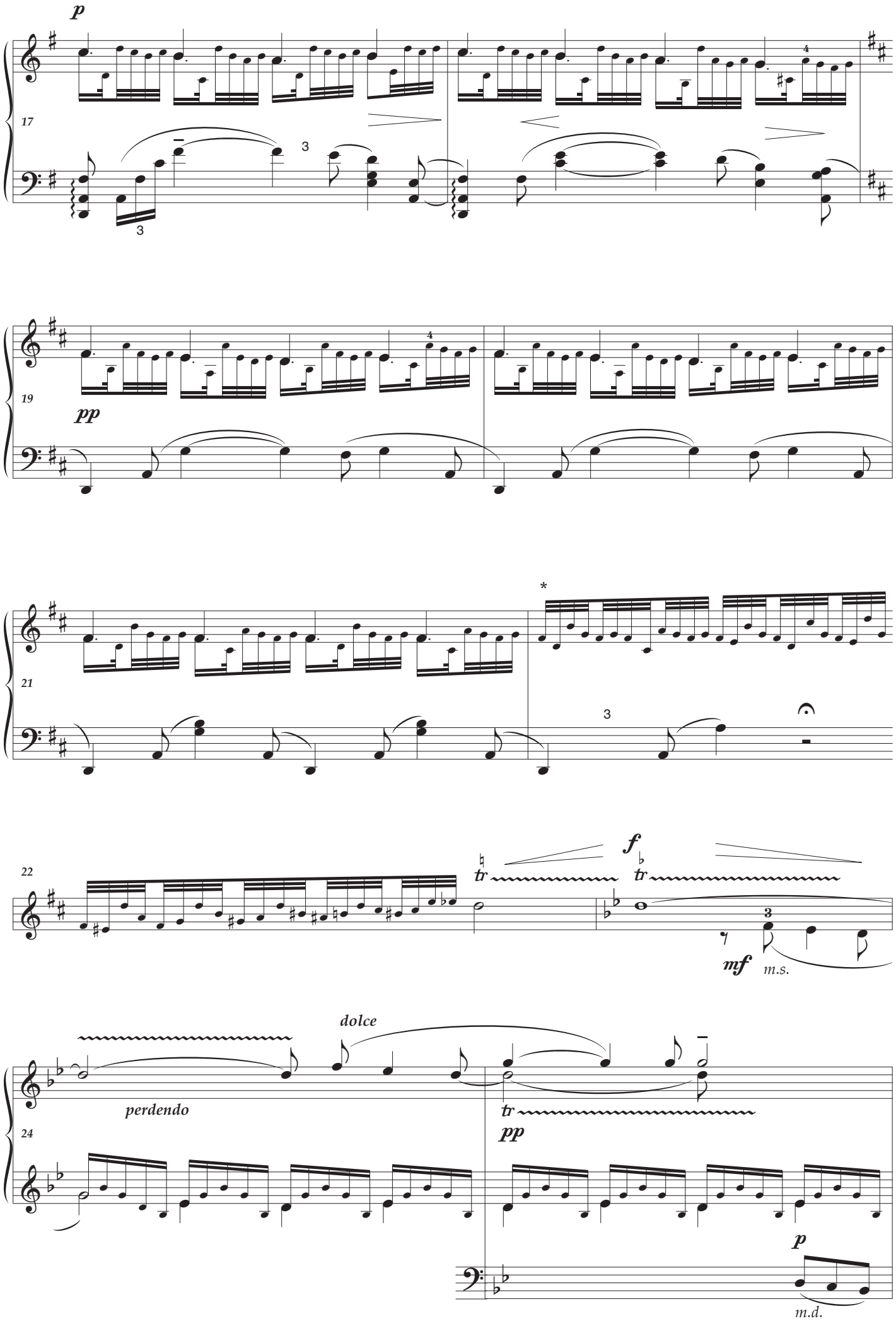
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24
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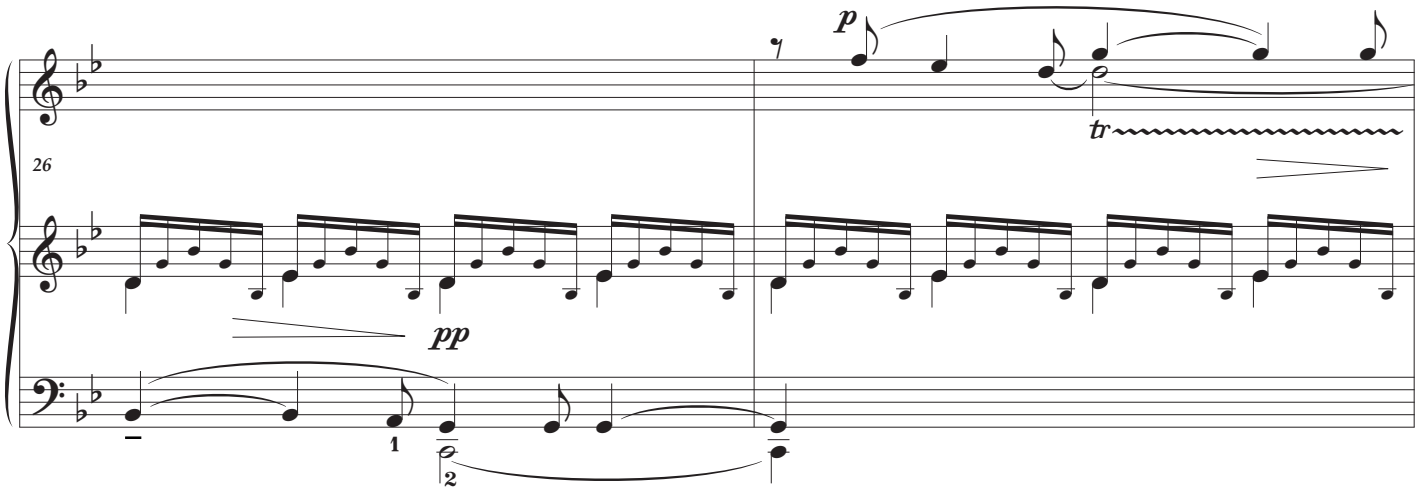
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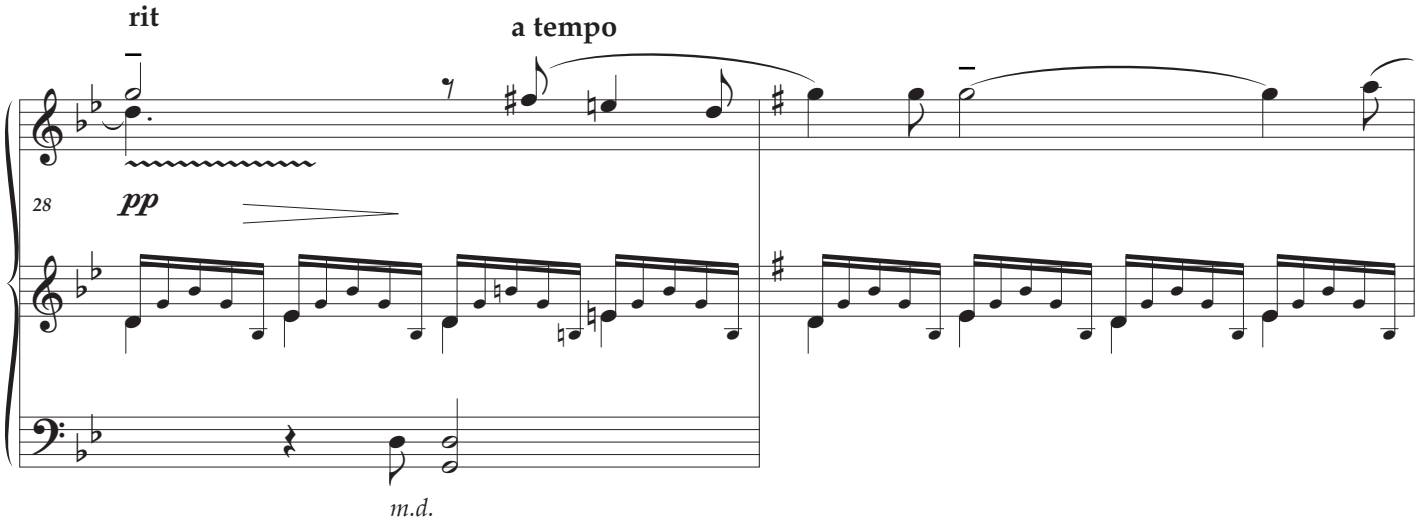
rit
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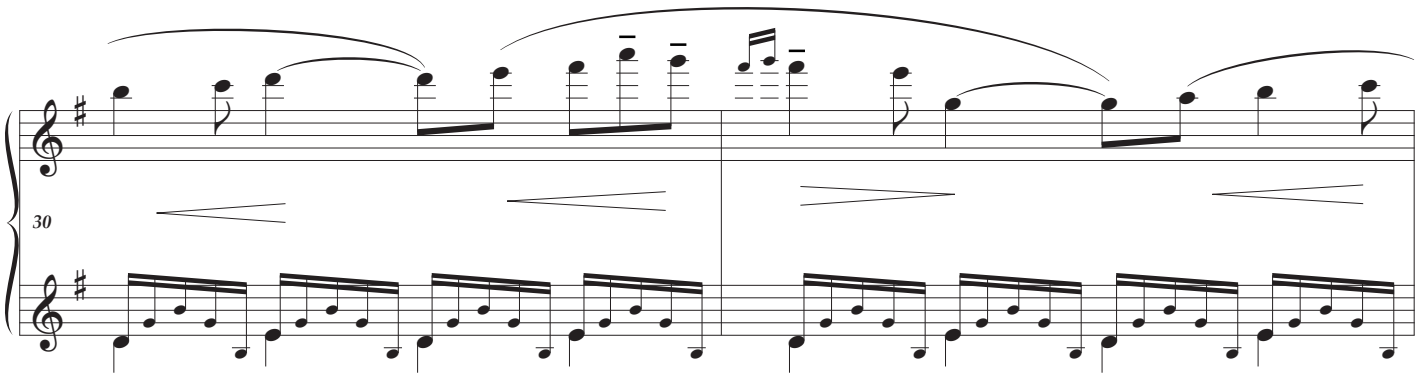
m.d.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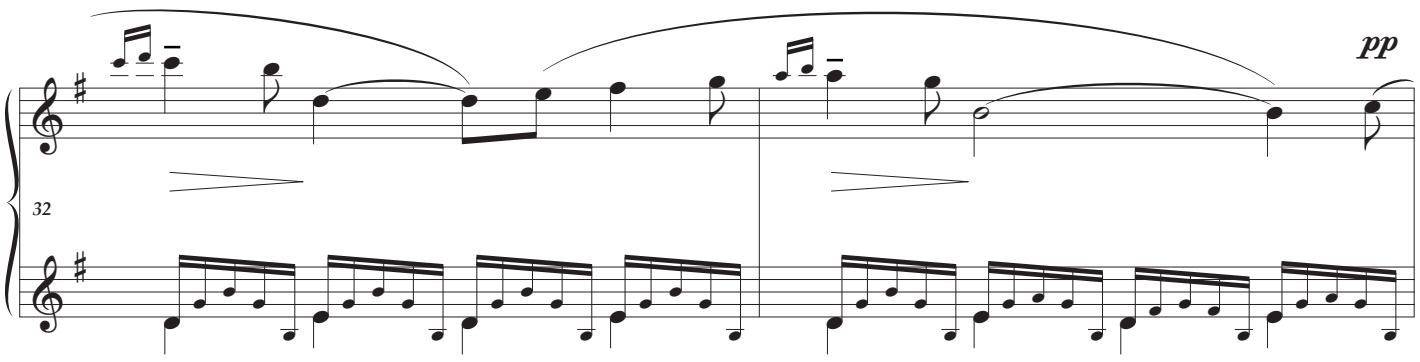
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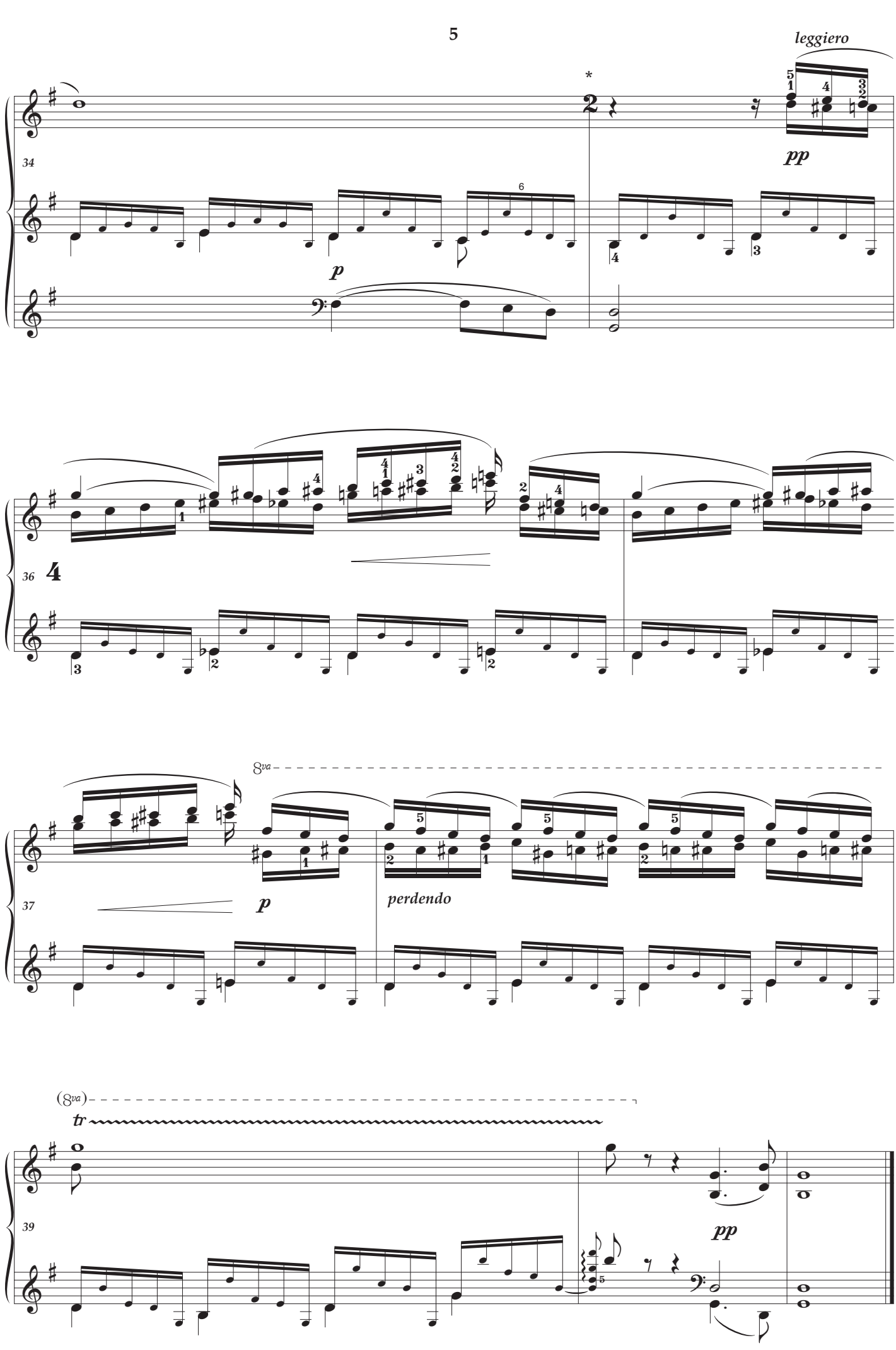
leggiero
pp
p
8va
perdendo
(8va)
tr
pp

RACHMANINOV

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