Andrew Mark Sauerwein

SEVEN RELATIVISTIC ETUDES

For Piano

I. Prelude (Evening Shade)
II. Leviathan
III. Invention
IV. Artifice
V. Lounge
VI. Statues
VII. Postlude (Dangling Hope)

1993

Program Note

These Seven Relativistic Etudes are carefully constructed studies based on harmonic and melodic methods of my own devising. This logic may not be readily evident to the listener, who likely considers such matters of no consequence anyhow. In the true spirit of unbounded relativism, then, I offer the listener no explanation whatsoever for the technical or expressive content of the pieces, since my actual intent to communicate substantial ideas will be deemed irrelevant, or at least trivial. The unique end experience of the individual listener is the only valid consideration, from the present vantage point, so it is best to disregard this program note in its entirety, as well as the title of each etude, and imagine that the pieces conform to whatever notions most please the listener.

Andrew Mark Sauerwein
January 1993

Performance Notes

Pedaling is marked with a "P" and lines to show lifting and dropping of the pedal. The use of Sostenuto (indicated with "S"), or "selective sustain," should be clear and only occurs in Statues. Accidentals follow standard practice in metered music, but in unmeasured pieces they affect only the notes where they appear, if there is any question.

I. Prelude: evening shade should be rhythmically flexible but reserved in scope and expression: a thoughtful, hesitant, and mysterious mood. The pedal should be used freely at the performer's discretion, except where explicitly marked, but rests should be observed carefully. The first phrase contains the most basic manifestation of the melodic and harmonic material used throughout the remaining etudes.

II. Leviathan, so named after a piece I composed for Balinese gamelan and harpsichord, bears the image of a huge beast passing an underwater observer at close range. The movement is built around seven repetitions of a 49-note melodic line, subject to harmonic and textural elaboration. Pedaling should not be necessary, except perhaps to fatten up accents. Dynamic and textural contrast is of greatest importance and should not be understated. Articulation is a slightly detached marcato, except where marked.

III. Invention is to be played in the manner of a Bach two-part invention, but it comes with more specific indications of dynamic contrast and gradation. The piece is generally marcato, left mostly to the performer's taste. Staccato marks in the right hand of measures 14 and 21 are included to indicate where the legato section starts and stops. Thanks go to Sandy Holder for suggested fingerings.

IV. Artifice is a three-part canon in the shape of a large arch. It may be played slower or faster than indicated, as long as the mood is convincing, the tempo is strictly maintained and rhythms are precise. Pedaling is carefully marked throughout to sustain longer notes, although many of them are written in shorter values, in order to show the disposition of the two hands and clarify the rhythmic values. The sound should be as resonant as possible, such that it is on the verge of being too cluttered and muddy. Dynamics are indicated independently for each of the three canonic "voices," which are differentiated by register. The mood should have an air of pathetic transcendentalism, like a grandiose but obscure statement or a vast, useless building.

V. Lounge makes vague reference to a particular genre of jazz and should bear an improvisatory, loose, relaxed style. The "walking" bass is the only really strict rhythmic entity, and it should have a deliberate, indisputable momentum. The performer can opt to take liberties with melodic invention in measures 18-21 (where the right-hand melody is repeated). However, the underlying harmonies and characteristics of melodic movement must be taken into account

VI. Statues is based on a short marimba piece that I composed. It might be visualized as the experience of being trapped in a room full of gargoyles. Both the damper and the sostenuto pedal should be observed strictly. At the beginning and end of the movement, sympathetic vibrations in the "silent" notes should be audible. Depending on the capabilities of available pedals, an alternative (such as playing the left hand and catching the tail end of the sound with the pedal) might be employed, if necessary, to get a similar effect.

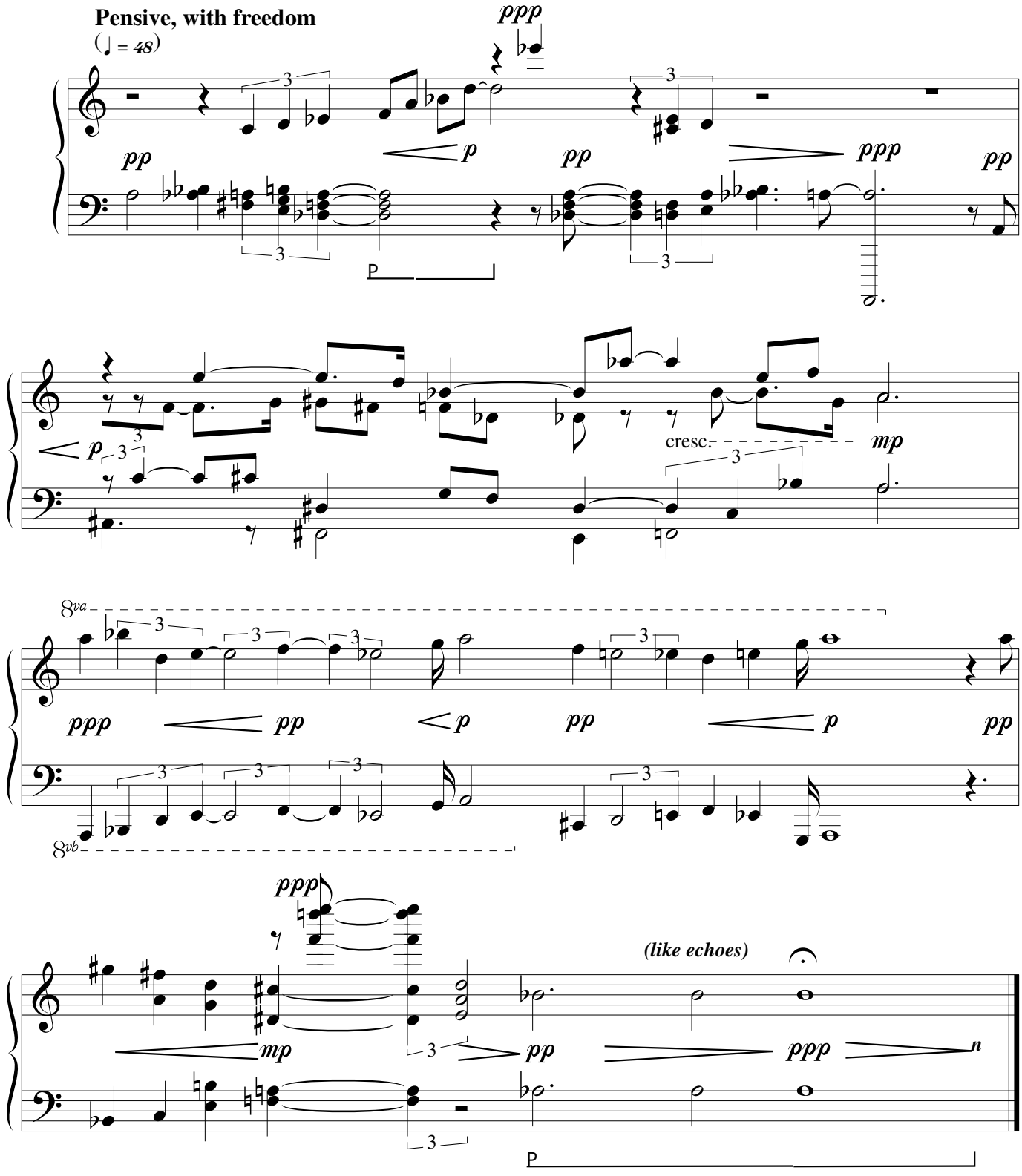
VII. Postlude: dangling hope is Chopinesque, marred by a hesitancy which ultimately dissolves the piece. The projection of a faltering waltz-like rhythm and a good sense of rubato are indispensable. Pedaling is at the performer's discretion. The prevailing mood is elegiac, pathetic melancholy. The last notes must be held until they have completely died away.

Seven Relativistic Etudes

Andrew Mark Sauerwein

I. Prelude

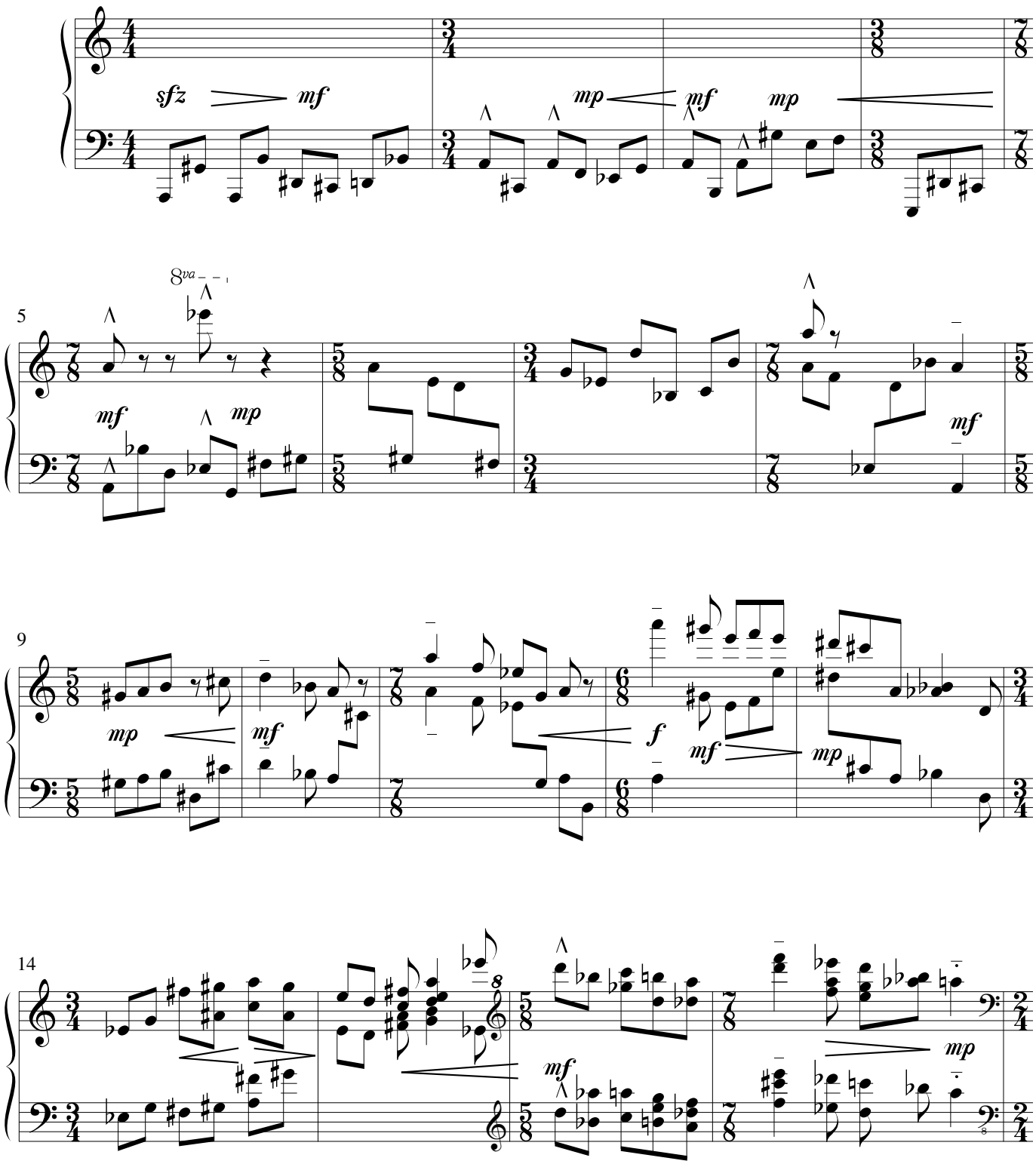
Evening Shade

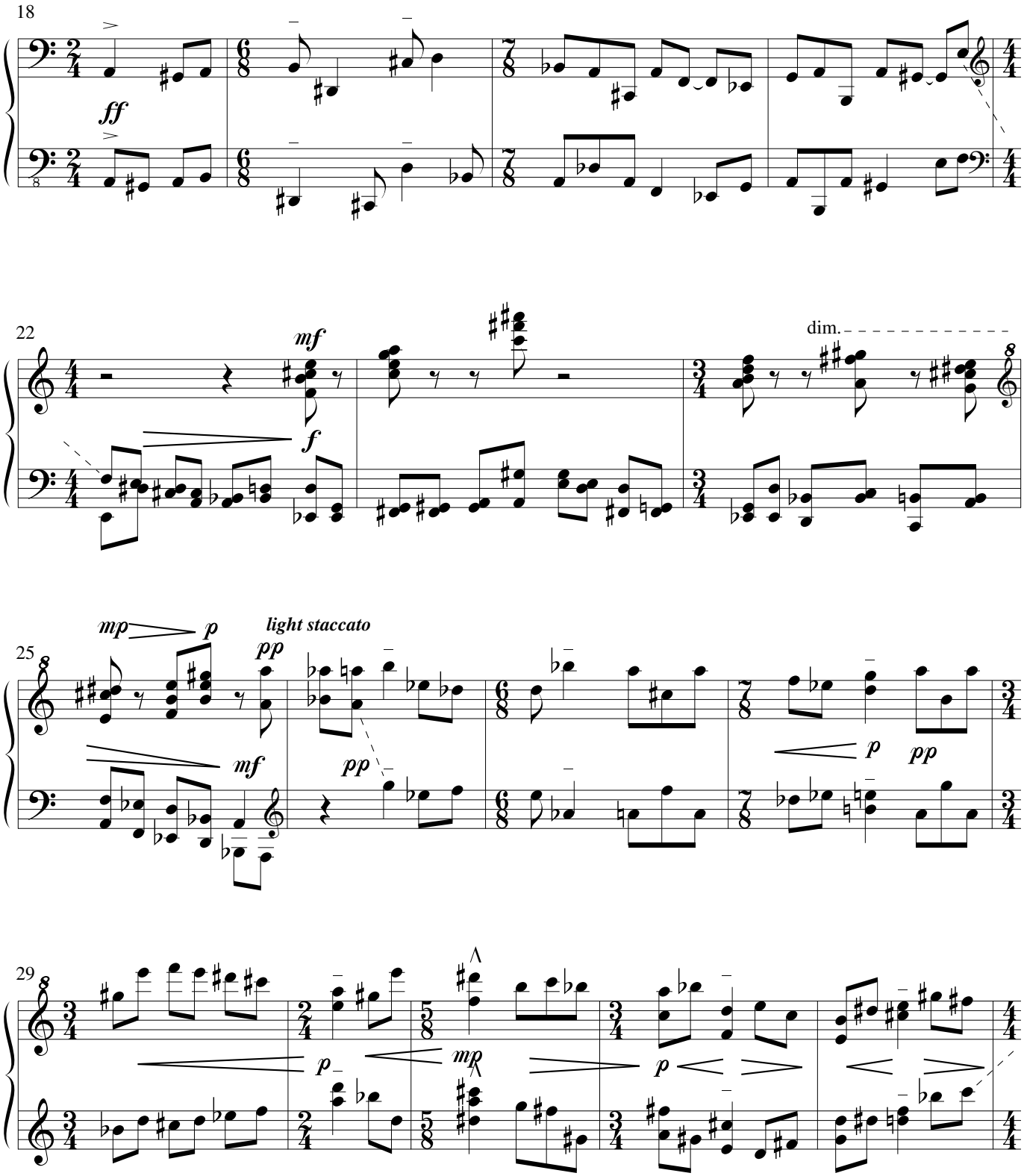


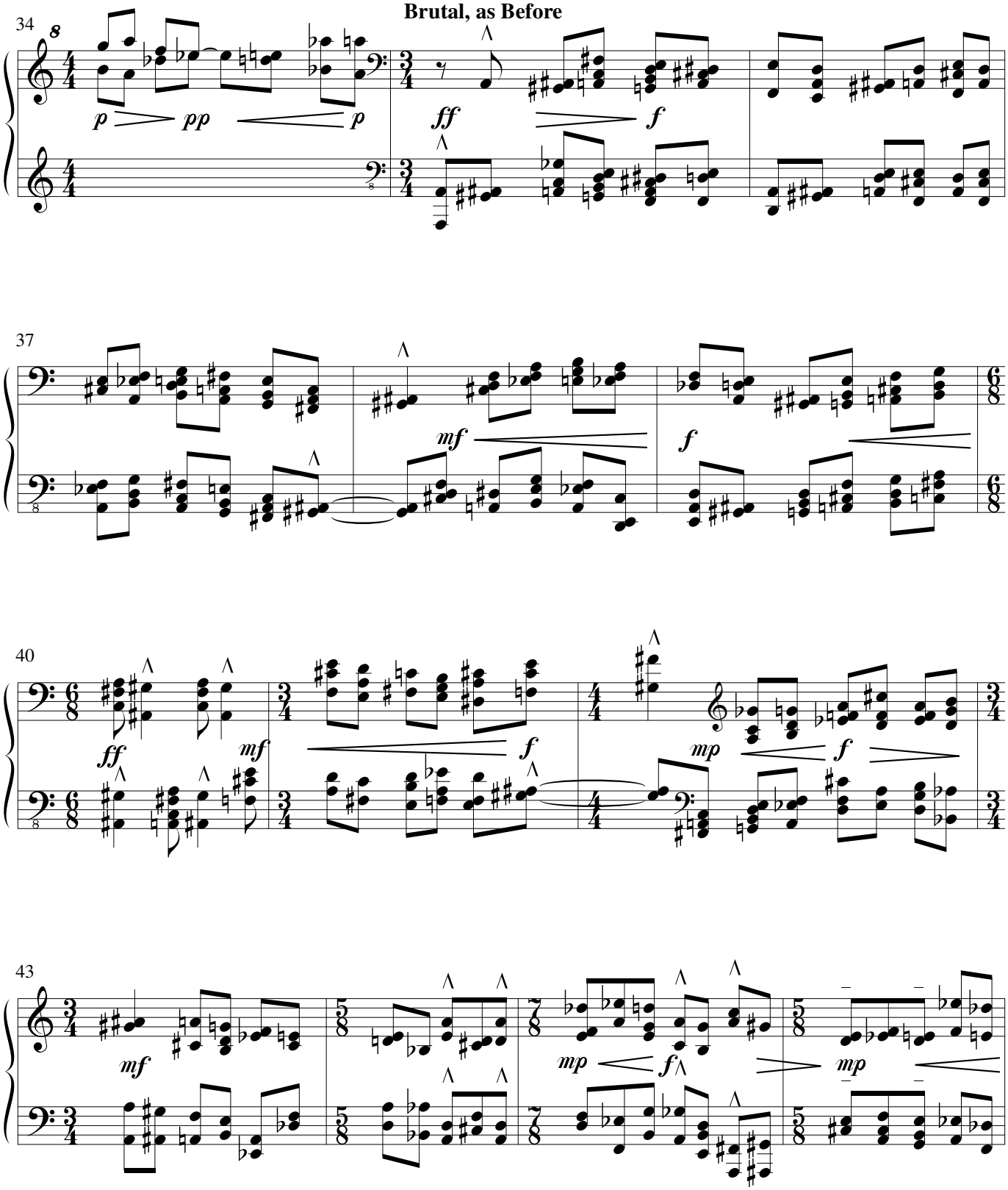
II. Leviathan

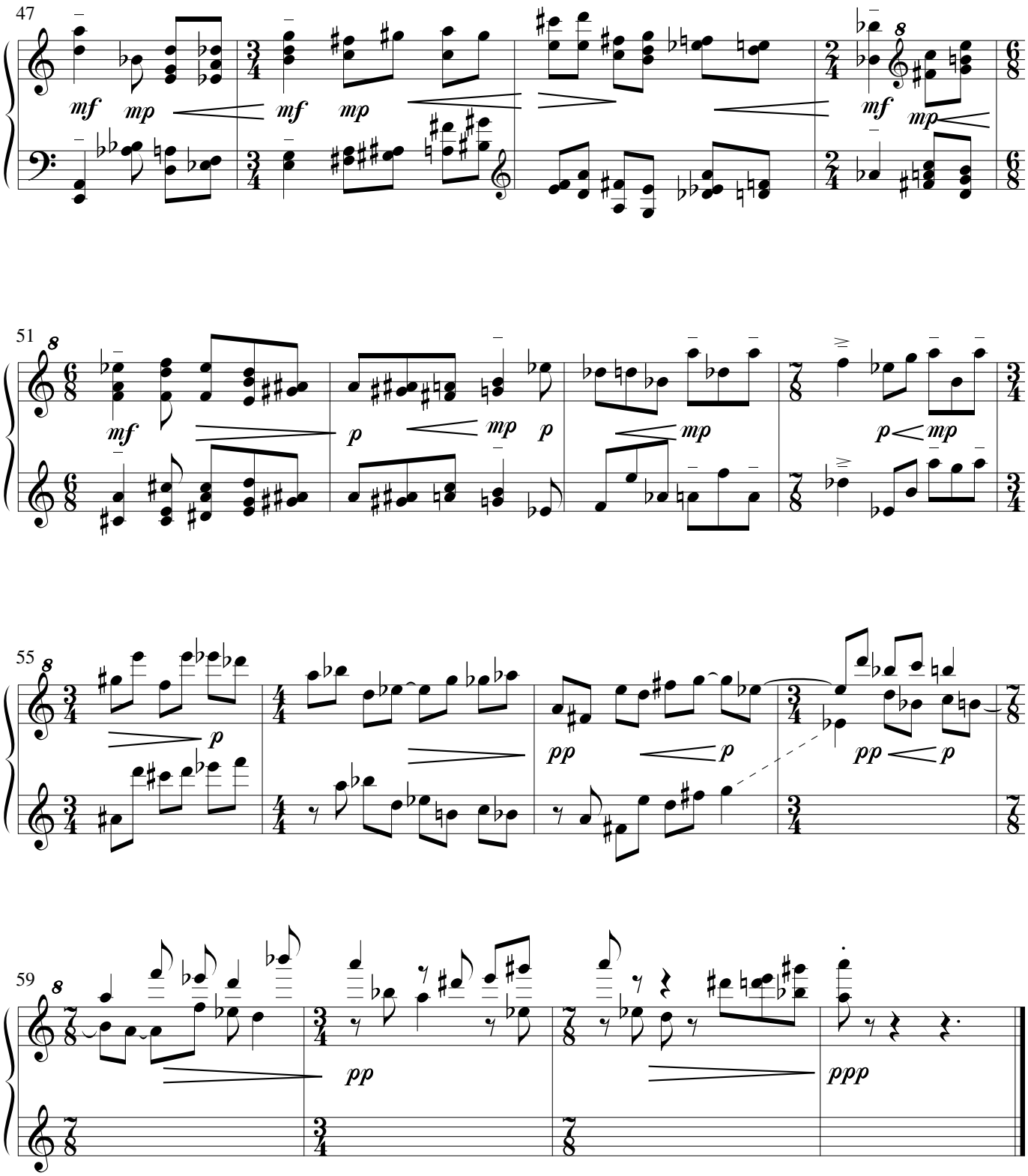
Monolithic, Brutal: **Molto Marcato**

(♩ = 112+)

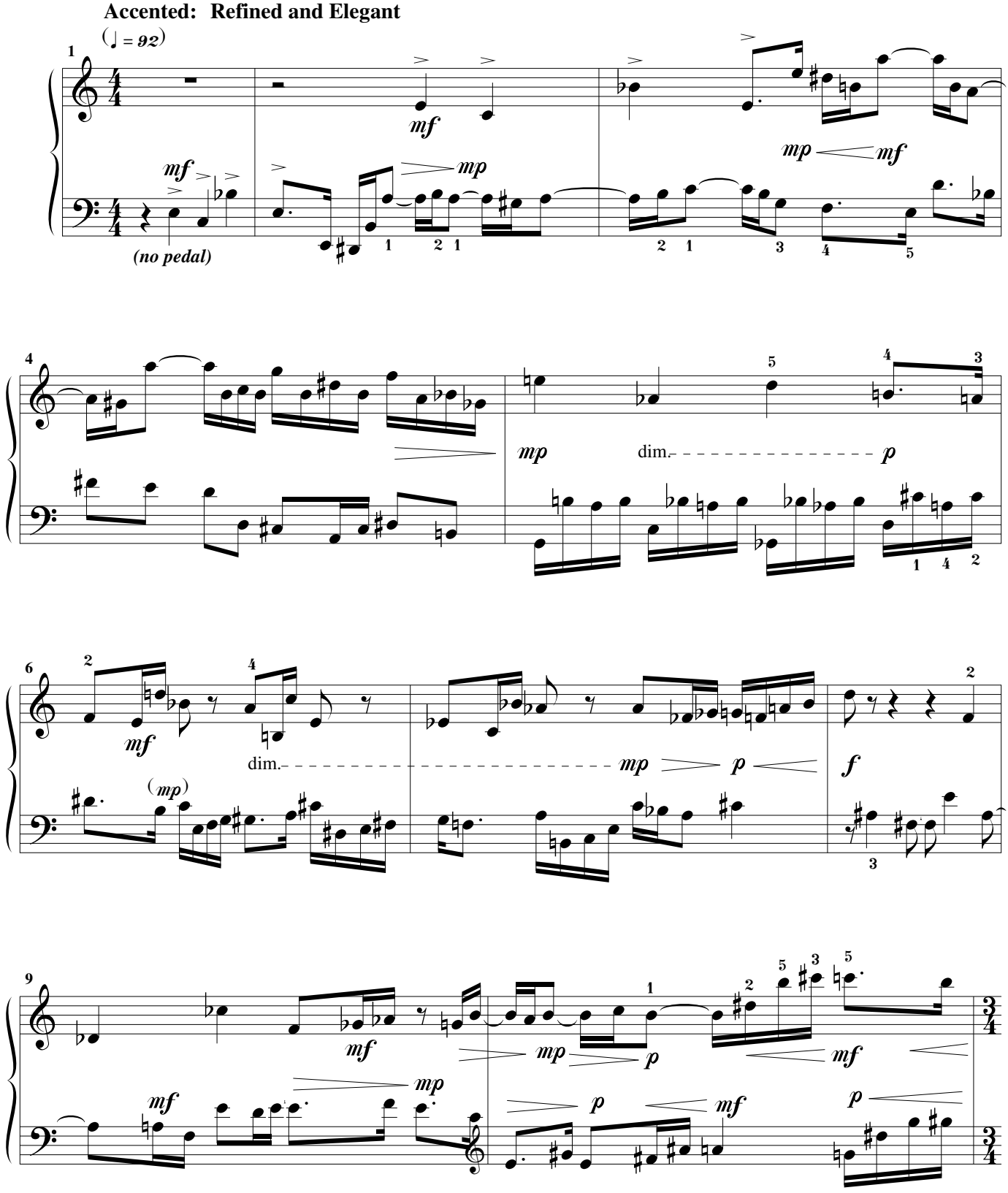


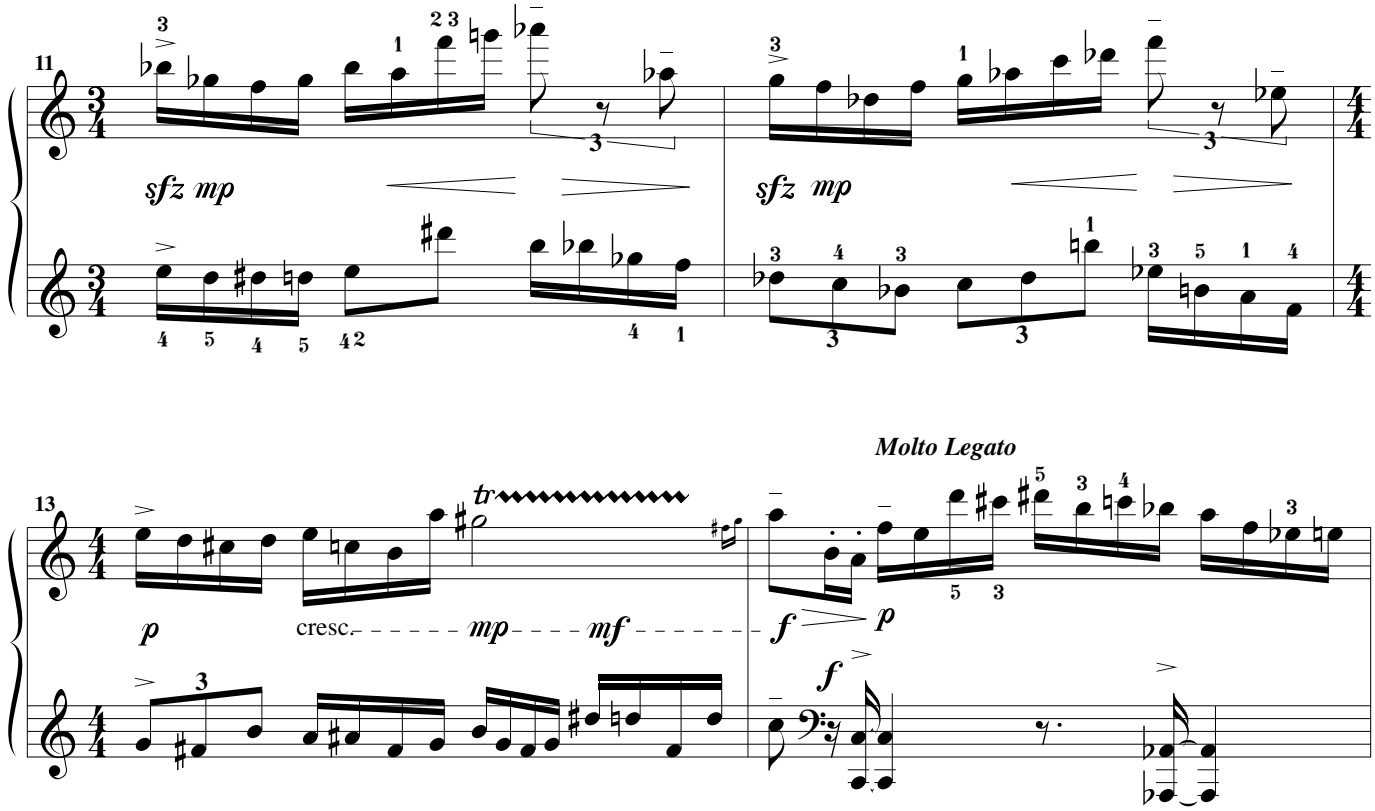

18
ff
22
mf
f
dim.
25
mp
p
light staccato
pp
mf
pp
p
pp
29
p
mp
p

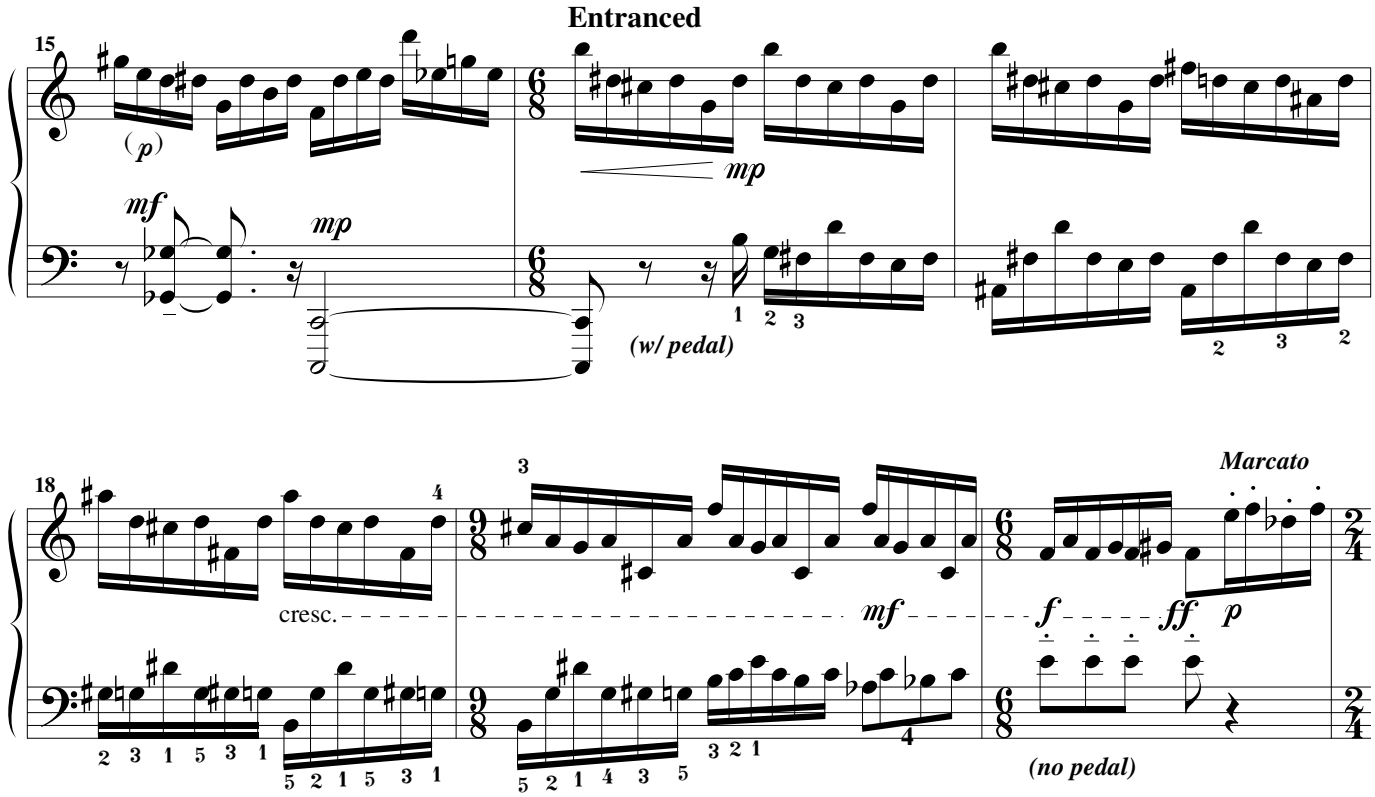

Brutal, as Before
34
37
40
43

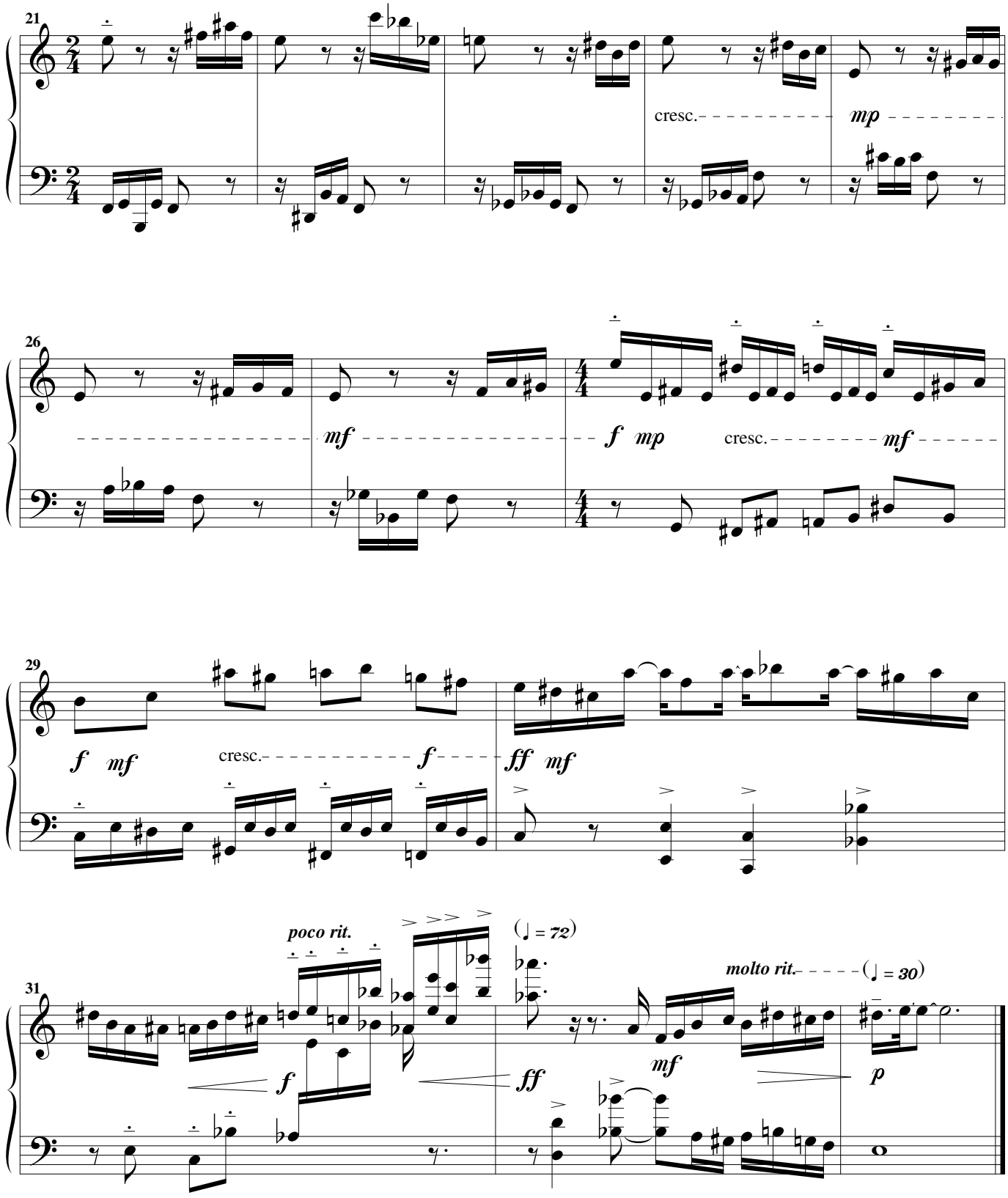

47
mf
mp
mf
mp
mf
mp
51
mf
p
mp
p
mp
p
mp
55
p
pp
p
pp
p
59
pp
ppp

III. Invention




11
sfz mp
sfz mp
13
tr
p
cresc.
mp
mf
f
p
Molto Legato
f

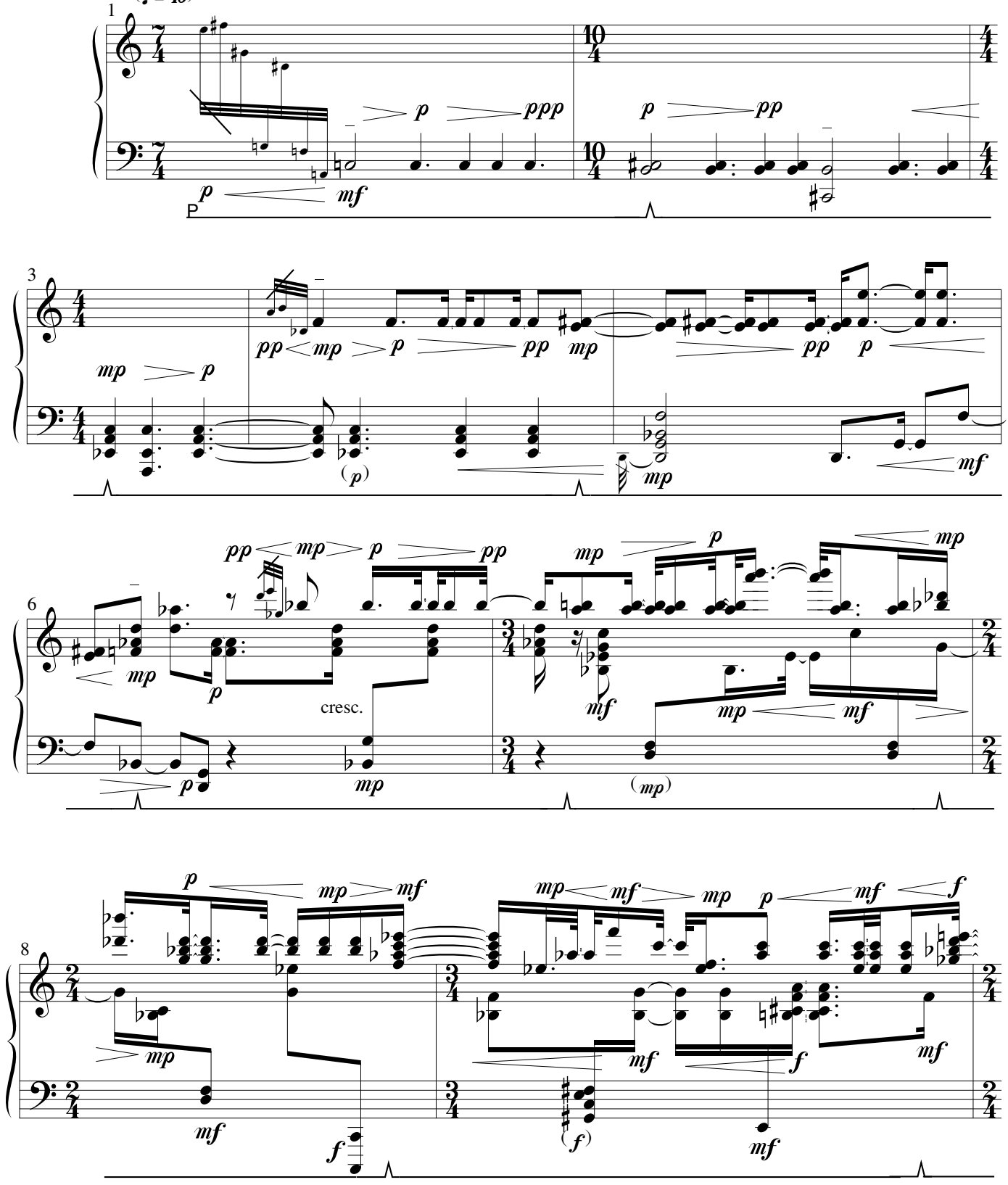

Entranced
15
(p)
mf
mp
mp
(w/ pedal)
18
cresc.
mf
f
ff
p
Marcato
(no pedal)

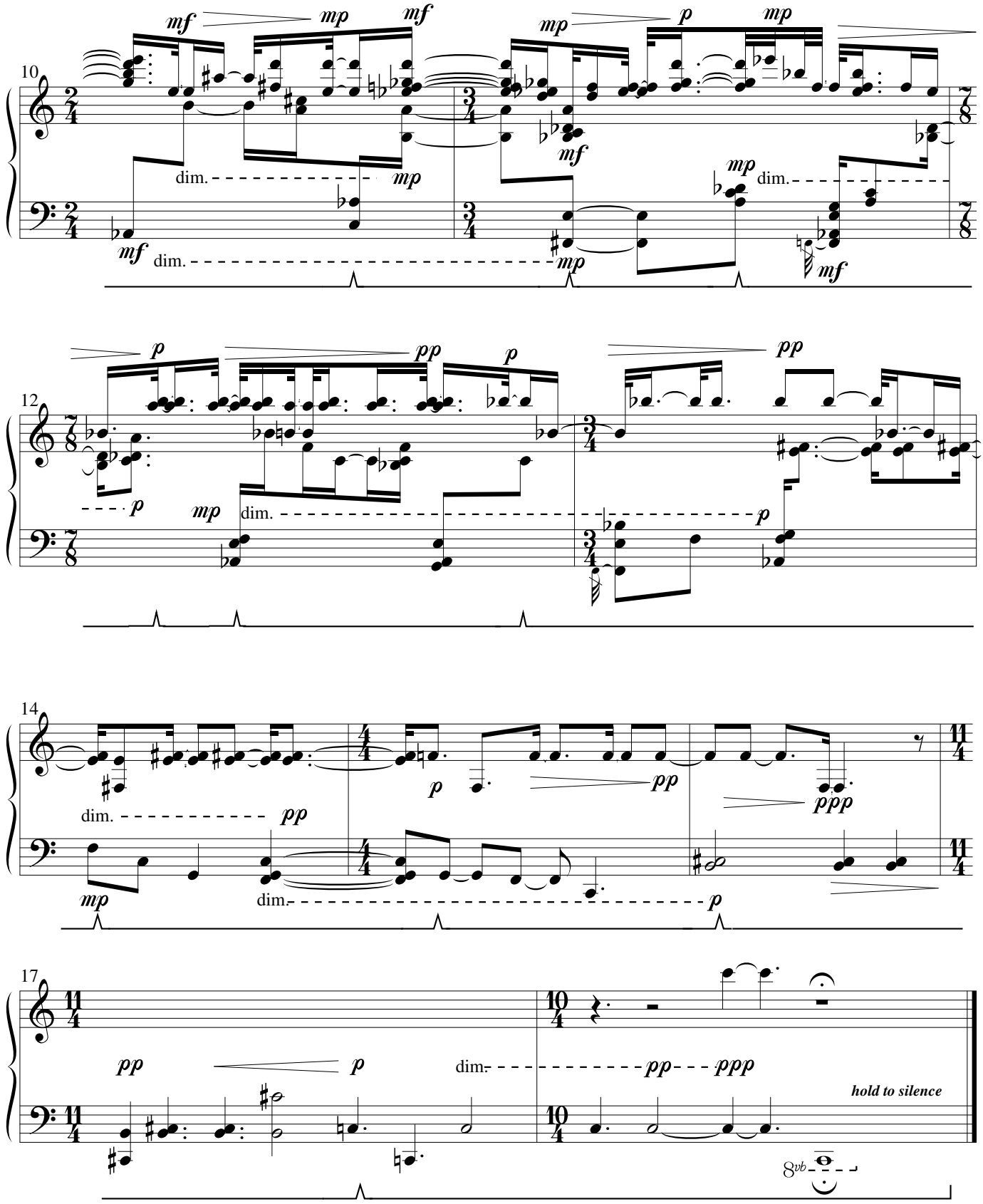

21
cresc.
mp
26
mf
f mp
cresc.
mf
29
f mf
cresc.
f
ff mf
poco rit.
(♩ = 72)
molto rit.
(♩ = 30)
31
f
ff
mf
p

IV. Artifice

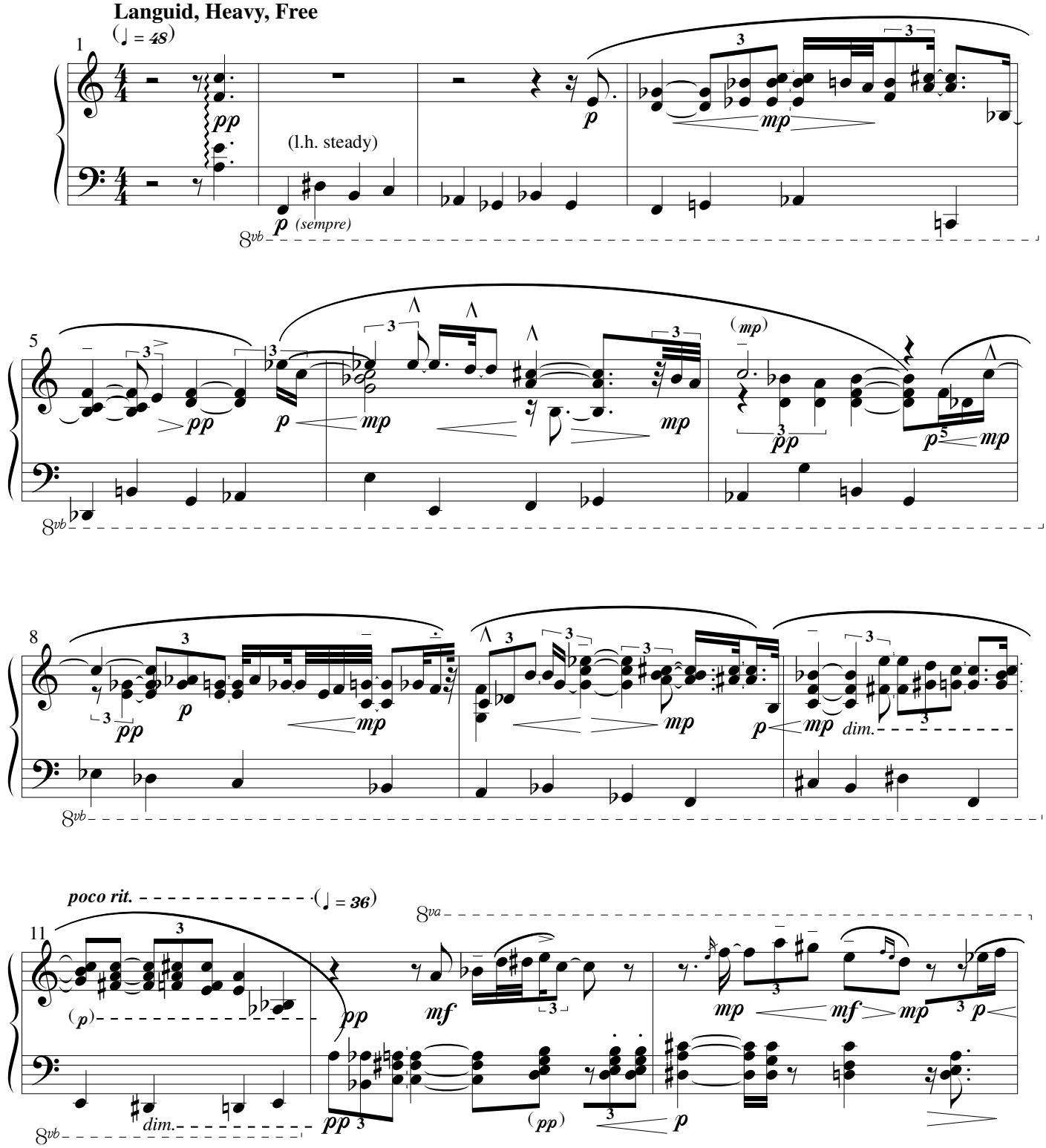
Austere, Deliberate

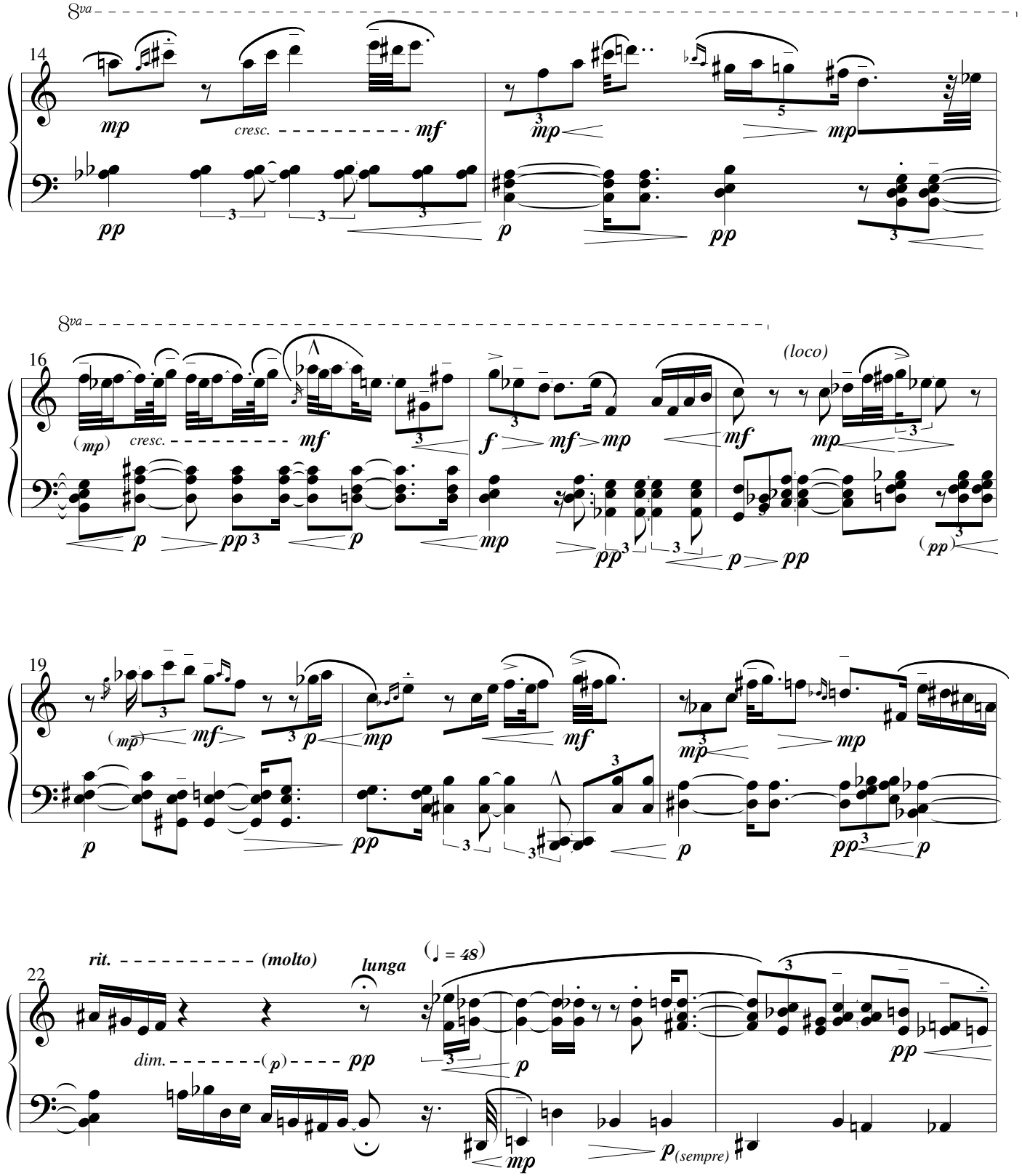
(♩ = 40)

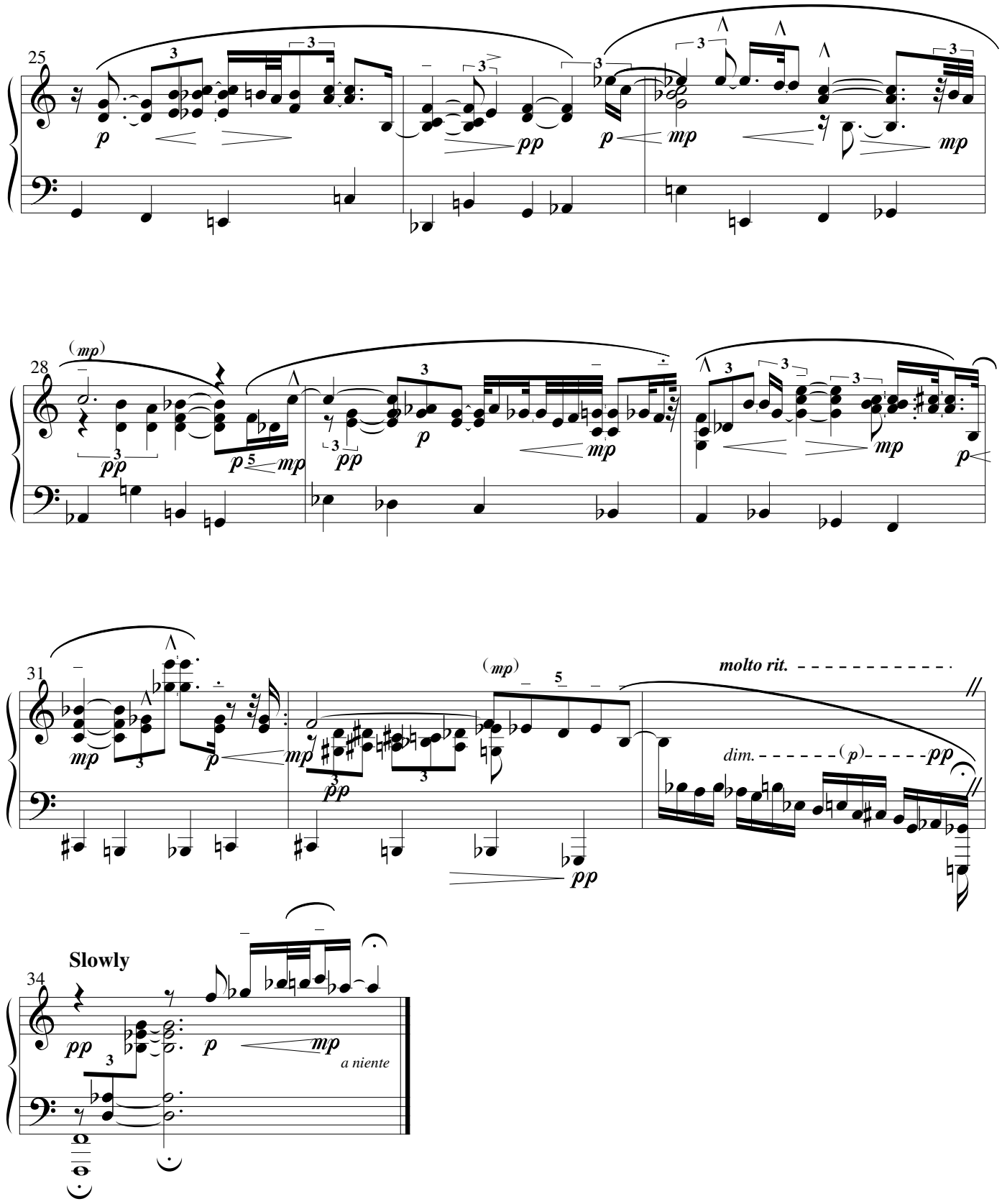



10
mf
mp
mf
dim.
mp
mf
dim.
mp
mp
p
mp
mf
mp
dim.
mf
12
p
pp
p
mp
dim.
p
pp
p
14
dim.
pp
mp
p
pp
ppp
dim.
p
17
pp
p
dim.
pp
ppp
hold to silence
8vb

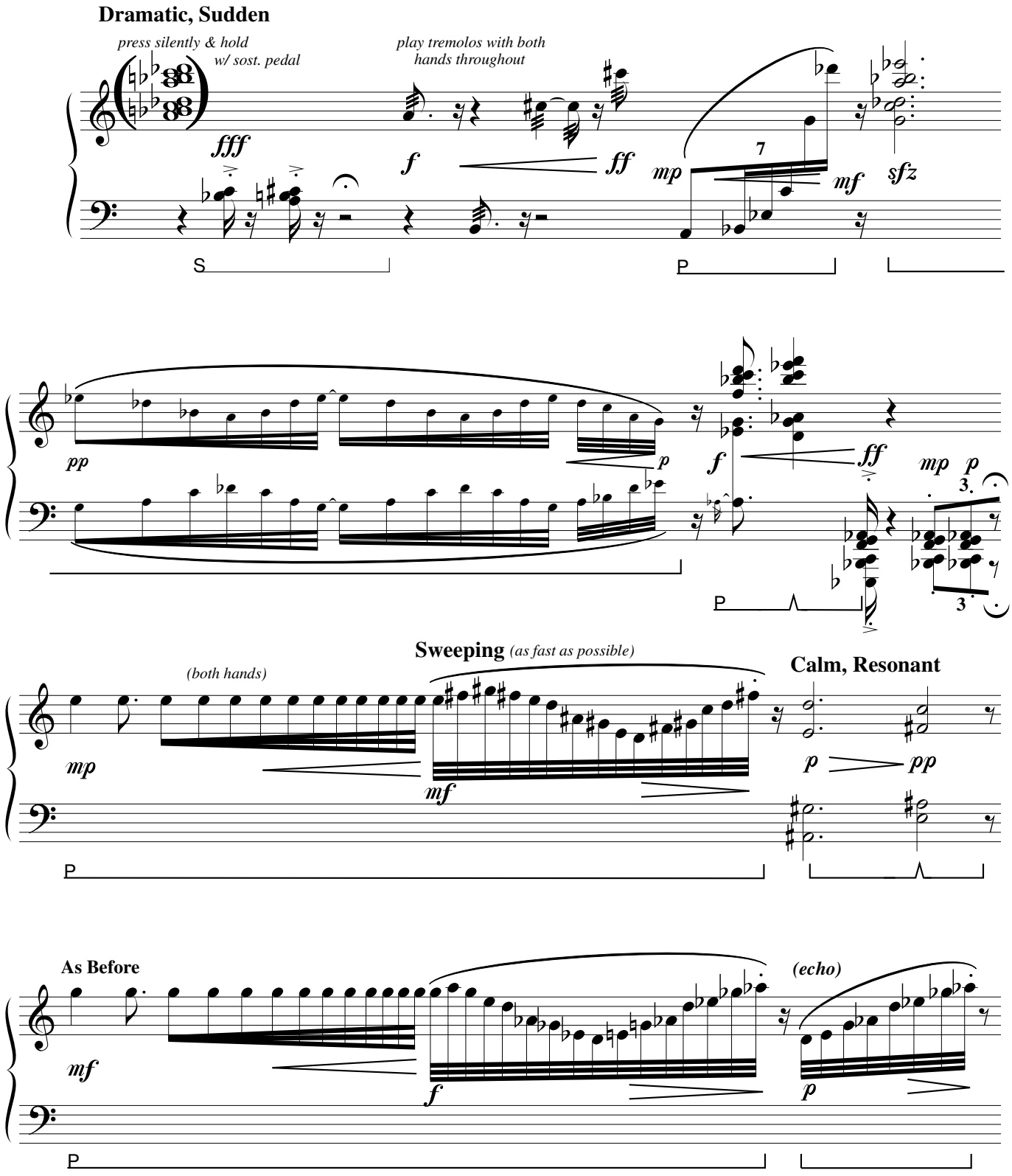
V. Lounge

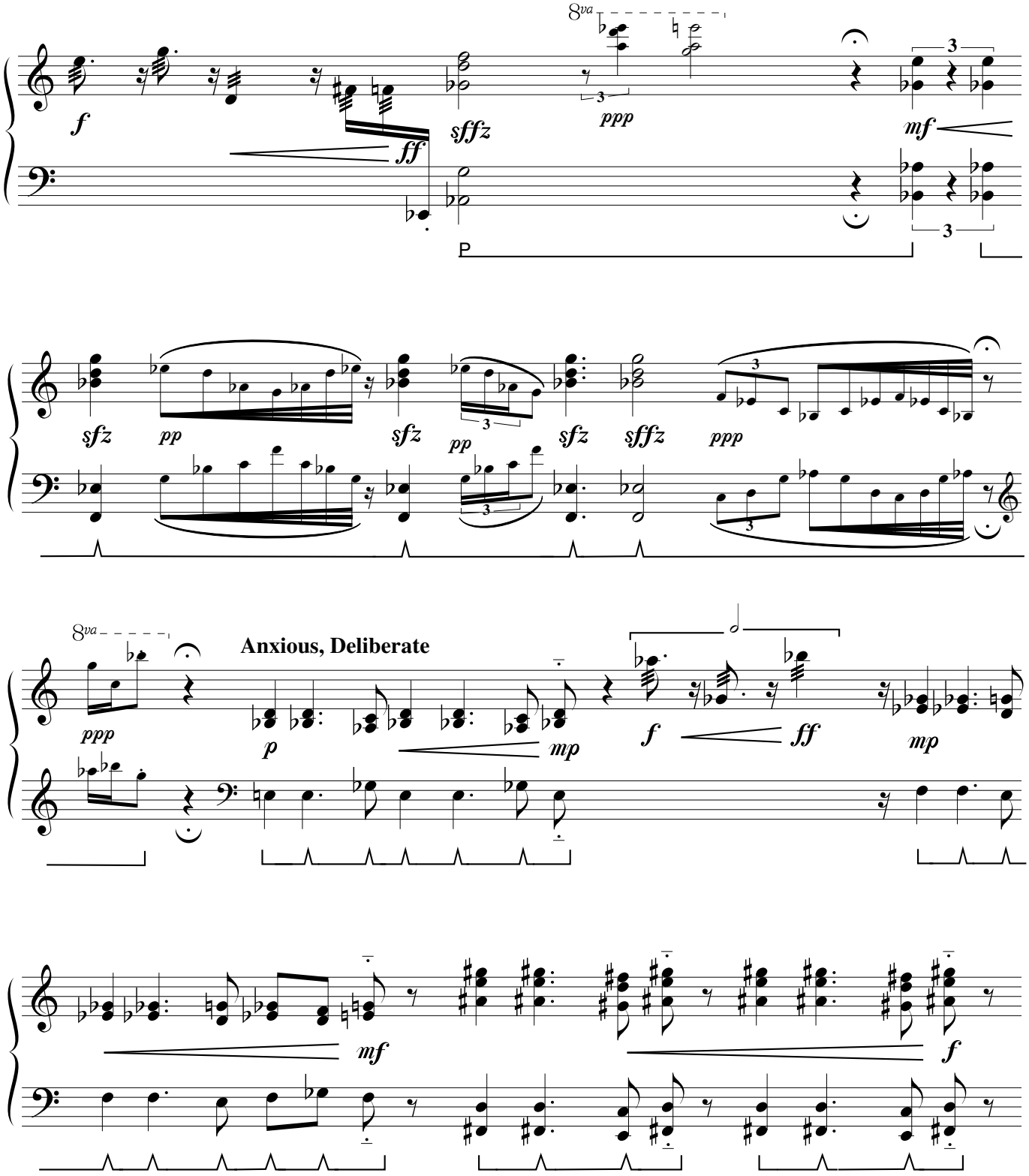

Languid, Heavy, Free
(♩ = 48)
(l.h. steady)
p (sempre)
8vb
poco rit.
(♩ = 36)
8va
dim.

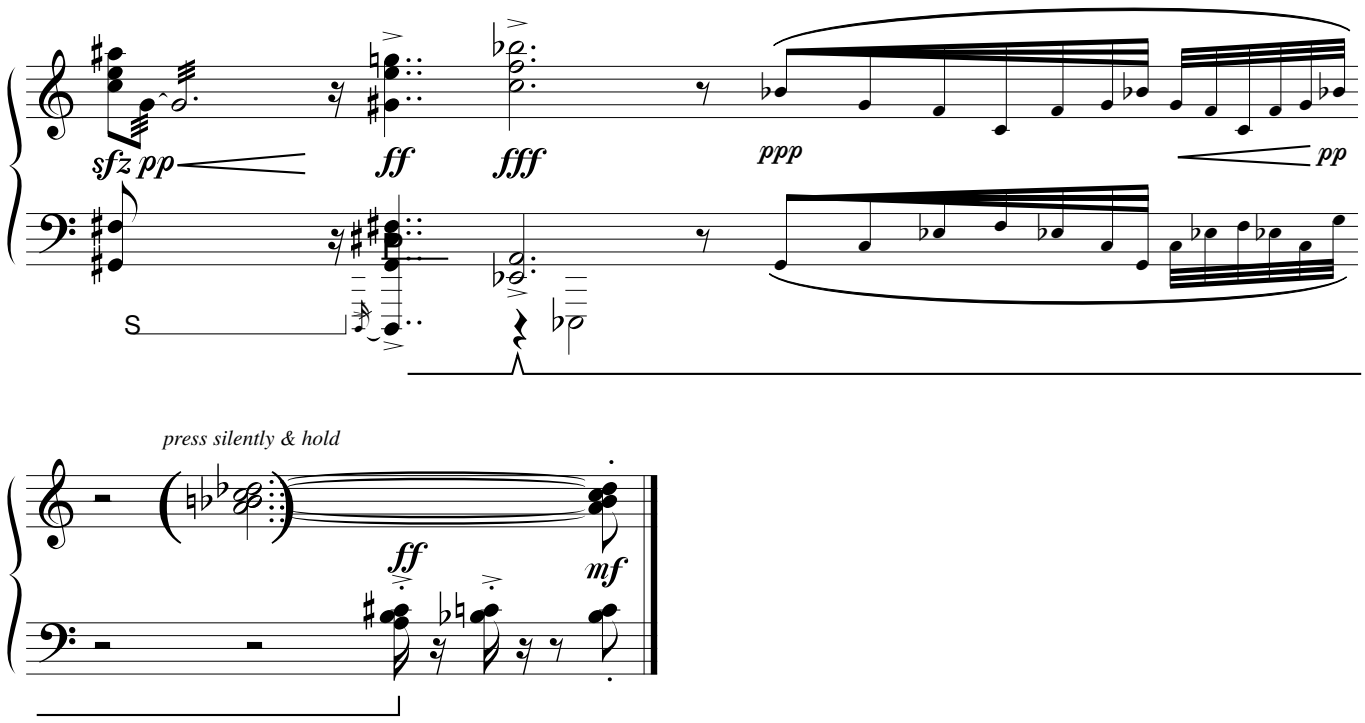

8va
14
mp
cresc.
mf
pp
p
mp
pp
8va
16
(mp)
cresc.
mf
(loco)
f
mf
mp
p
pp
mp
pp
p
pp
(pp)
19
(mp)
mf
p
mp
mf
mp
p
pp
p
pp
p
22
rit.
(molto)
lunga
(♩ = 48)
dim.
(p)
pp
p
pp
mp
p(sempre)


25
28
31
34
molto rit.
dim.
Slowly
a niente

VI. Statues


Dramatic, Sudden
press silently & hold
w/ sost. pedal
play tremolos with both
hands throughout
fff
f
ff
mp
mf
sfz
7
S
P
pp
p
f
ff
mp
p
3
3
P
Sweeping (as fast as possible)
(both hands)
Calm, Resonant
mp
mf
p
pp
P
As Before
(echo)
mf
f
p
P


8va
f
ff
sfffz
ppp
mf
P
sfz
pp
sfz
pp
sfz
sfffz
ppp
8va
Anxious, Deliberate
ppp
p
mp
f
ff
mp
mf
f

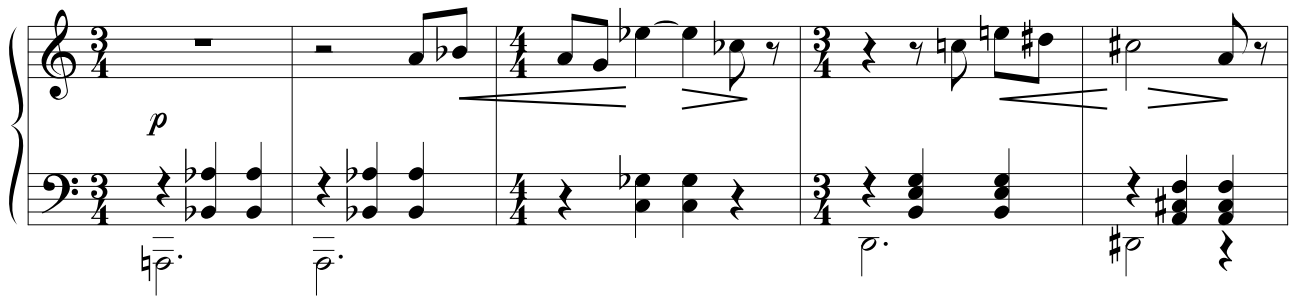

sfz pp
ff
fff
ppp
pp
S
press silently & hold
ff
mf

VII. Postlude

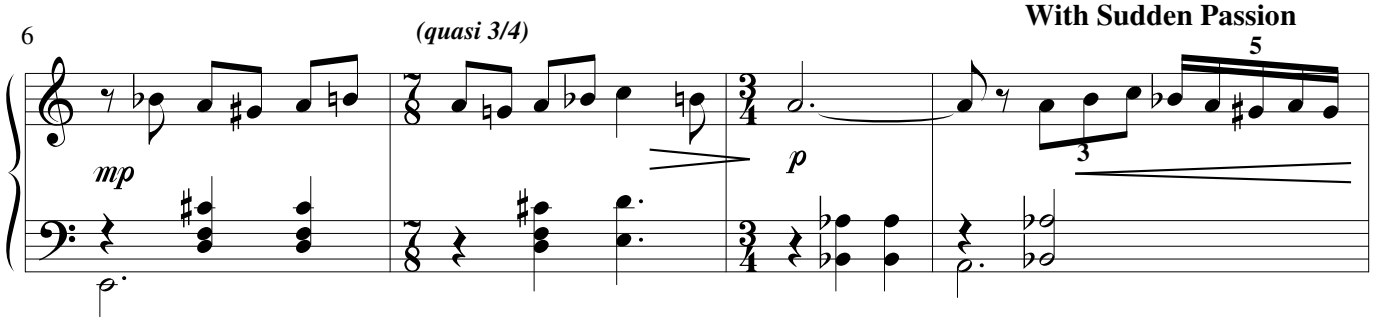
Dangling Hope

In the Romantic style: **Slow, Sombre, Hesitant**

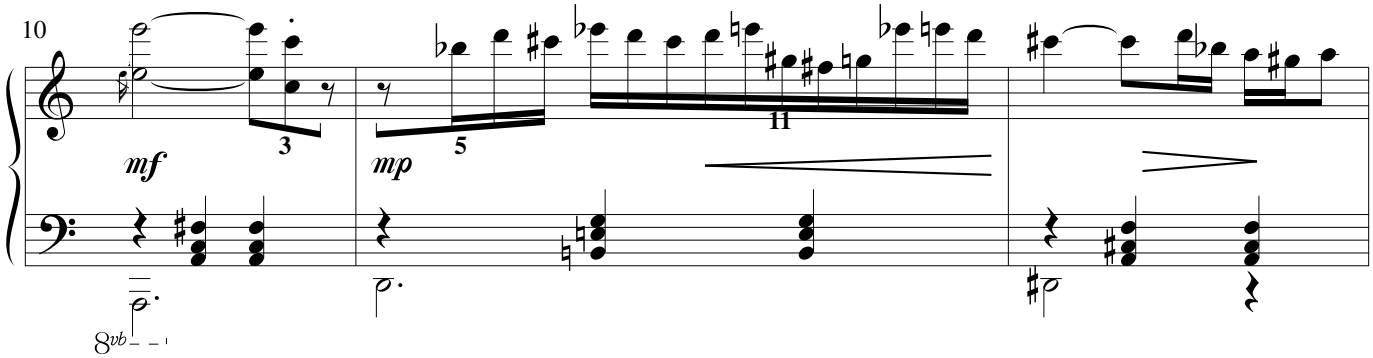
1 (♩ = 72)



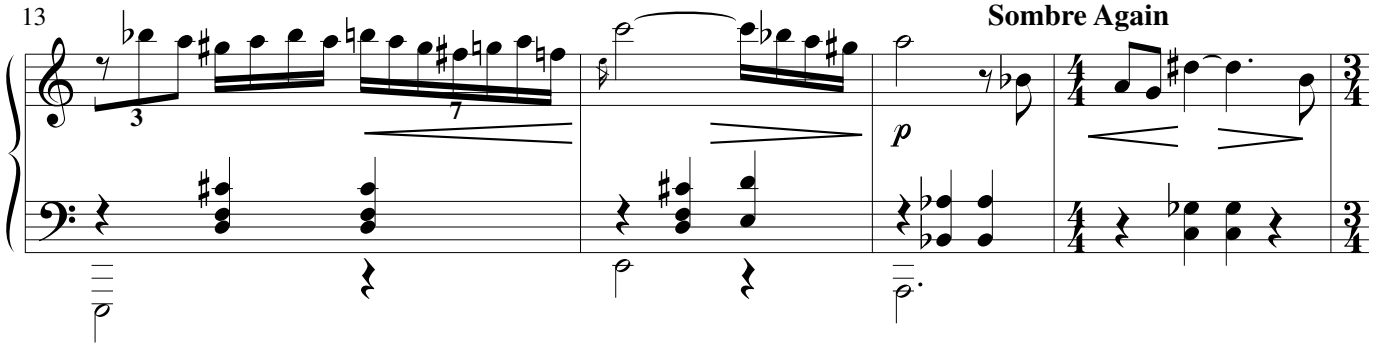
6

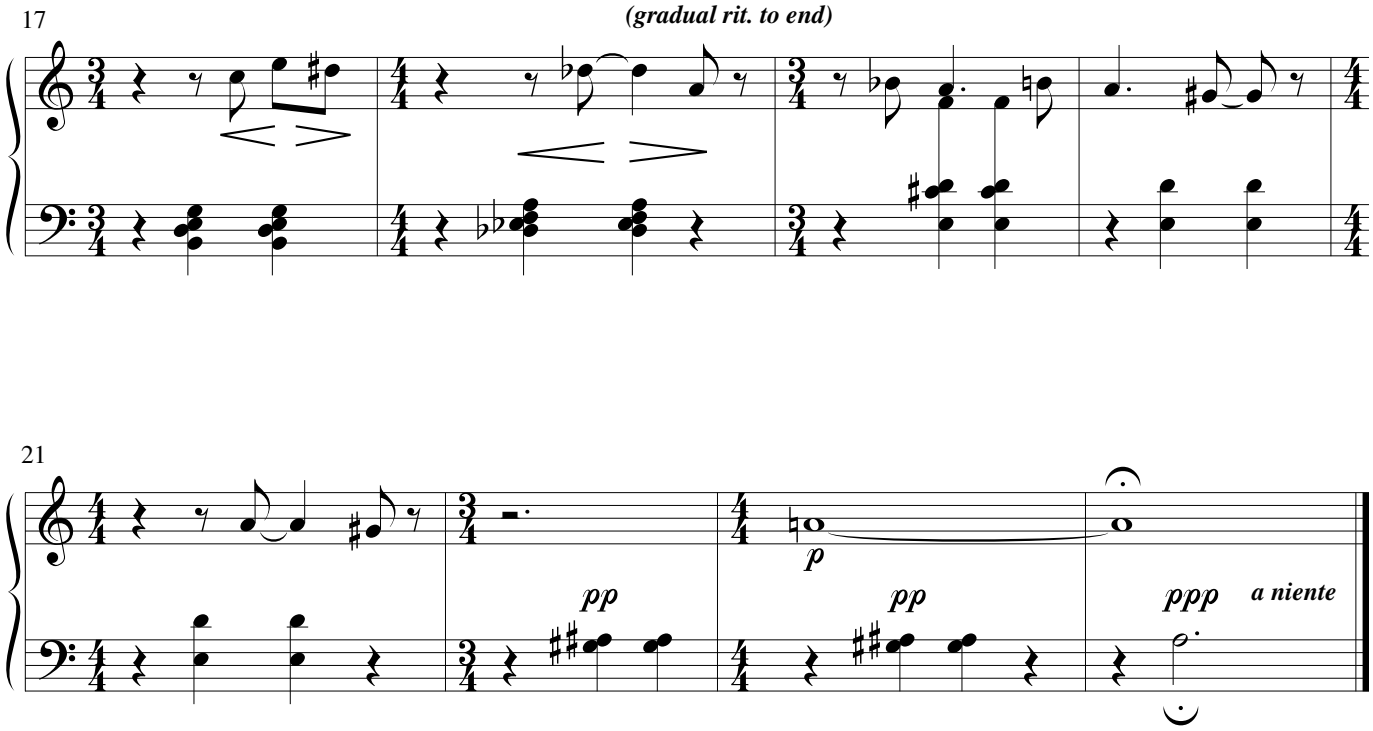


10



13




17
(gradual rit. to end)

21
p
pp
pp
ppp
a niente