Maurice RAVEL

the complete works for piano

MA MÈRE L'OYE

MOTHER GOOSE

5 pièces enfantines

transcribed for piano solo by

Ray Alston

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Maurice RAVEL 1875 - 1937

MA MÈRE I'OYE *

5 pièces enfantines *Pour MIMI et JEAN GODEBSKI*

transcribed for piano solo by

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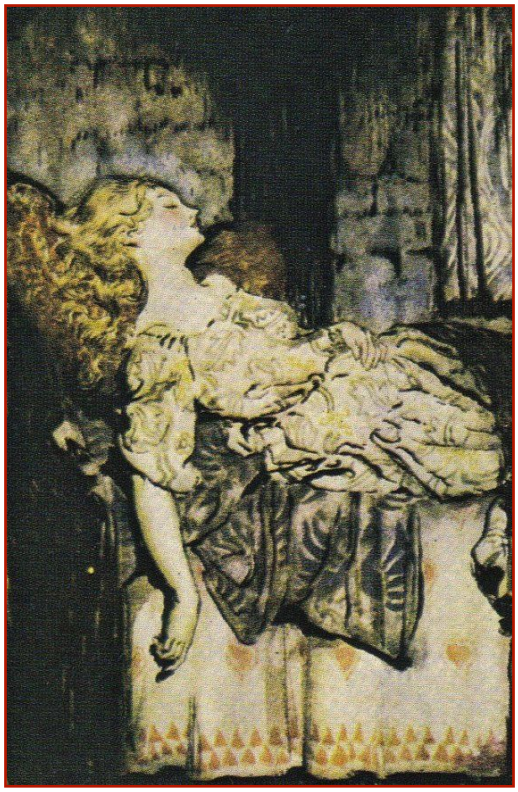
Sleeping Beauty by **Arthur Wardle**

Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant

Pavan of the sleeping beauty

The prelude — a stately step from Italy in aeolian mode and a troubadour's song, a fairy tale about a princess who slumbers under a spell for 100 years.



Arthur Rackham 1920

Petit Poucet *Tom Thumb*

> *Il croyait trouver aisément son chemin par le moyen de son pain qu'il avait semé partout où il avait passé ; mais il fut bien surpris lorsqu'il n'en put retrouver une seule miette : les oiseaux étaient venus qui avaient tout mangé.* (Ch. Perrault)
>
> Tom Thumb was not concerned, for he thought he could easily find the way again by means of his bread, scattered along the way; but he was very much surprised when he could not find so much as one crumb. The birds had come and eaten every bit of it up.

Another "antique" interpretation for this wistful and meandering tale of a small, a very small, boy who becomes lost, some crumbs, chirping, twittering birds and a cuckoo.

Laideronnette, Impératrice des Pagodes
Laidronette, Empress of the Pagodas

> *Elle se déshabilla et se mit dans le bain. Aussitôt pagodes et pagodines se mirent à chanter et à jouer des instruments : tels avaient des théorbes faits d'une coquille de noix ; tels avaient des violes faites d'une coquille d'amande ; car il fallait bien proportionner les instruments à leur taille.* (Mme d'Aulnoy — Serpentin Vert)
>
> She undressed and entered the bath. Immediately mandarins and mandarinettes began to sing and to play musical instruments. Some had lutes made of a walnut-shell, others viols made of an almond-shell, for it was necessary to suit the instruments to their size.

The Orient, the Gamelan, the pentatonic scale and another princess, this time Chinese, with the curse of disfigurement; for companionship a repulsive green serpent. They eventually cast off their spells and live happily ever after. You may also enjoy playing chopsticks, a canon, hearing the highest notes on the piano and another example of the composer skilfully superimposing two themes.

Les Entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête
Dialogue between Beauty and the Beast

"Quant je pense à votre bon cœur, vous ne me paraissez pas si laid." "Oh! dame oui ! j'ai le cœur bon, mais je suis un monstre." "Il y a bien des hommes qui sont plus monstres que vous." "Si j'avais de l'esprit je vous ferais un grand compliment pour vous remercier, mais je ne suis qu'une bête.

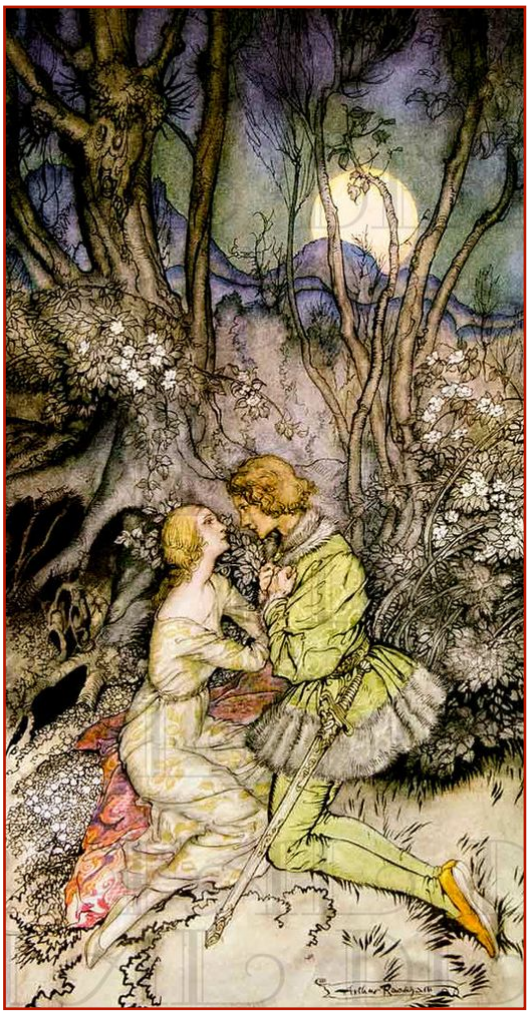
....La Belle, voulez-vous être ma femme ?" "Non, la Bête !..."

"Je meurs content puisque j'ai le plaisir de vous revoir encore une fois." "Non, ma chère Bête, vous ne mourrez pas : vous vivrez pour devenir mon époux!" ... La Bête avait disparu et elle ne vit plus à ses pieds qu'un prince plus beau que l'Amour qui la remerciait d'avoir fini son enchantement. (Mme Leprince de Beaumont).

Walter Crane 1874

"When I think of your good heart, you do not appear so ugly." "Oh! milady yes! my heart is good, but I am a monster." "There are many men who are more monstrous than you." "If I had sufficient wit I would make you a grand compliment to thank you, but I am only a beast."

".... Beauty, will you be my wife? "" No, the Beast! ... "



Arthur Rackham 1927

"I die happy for I have the pleasure of seeing you once more." "No, my dear Beast, you will not die: you will live to become my husband!" ... The Beast had disappeared and at her feet she saw a prince more beautiful than Love who thanked her for having terminated his enchantment.

A typically enchanting Ravelian waltz to describe our heroine — *Beauty* — and a typically deep, very deep (contrabassoon) theme to recognise our hero — the *Beast*. When love is declared, the two themes are superimposed polyphonically, a technique which Ravel first employed in his early *Menuet Antique* as a student in 1895. A treble pianissimo glissando announces the Beast's transformation into a handsome prince.

Le Jardin Féerique *The Enchanted Garden*

A version which Ravel prepared for the ballet presents this movement as Sleeping Beauty in a magical garden being awakened with a kiss by her handsome prince. Finally there are fanfares and wedding bells as they all live happily ever after.

In conclusion, Ravel's music is at once joyful and nostalgic, continuously revolving around modes and archaic language, always moving towards the future with more than a glance at the past. They are quite unique, neither modern nor impressionist nor classical… they are simply masterpieces by a sensitive and meticulous genius.

* This five-piece piano suite for four hands was composed in 1908 for Mimi and Jean, children of his close Parisian friends Ida and Cipa Godebski, even acting as occasional babysitter! Ravel often preferred the company of the young to that of adults and said : *Writing music to describe the poetry of childhood encouraged me to simplify my style and to refine my means of expression.*

The title is taken from Charles Perrault's collection of eight fairy tales, *Les Contes de ma mère l'Oye* (1697), but Ravel was also inspired by the work of *Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy* and *Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont*.

Piano Practical Editions

Who can fail to be charmed by the exquisite craftsmanship of these fairy tales? This solo transcription naturally evolved from my updated 2019 edition of the original duet. I believe it works well as a recital piece, including orchestral pedal points involving the *sostenuto* combined with damper pedal. It also offers an excellent study for glissandos in a wide range of dynamics (see below).

An unusual addition to the Ravel repertoire, the work features some modification of articulations, dynamics, phrasing and text extracted from the orchestral score (marked with an asterisk), although, given the nature of transcriptions, I invite the reader to take the initiative and add, adjust or omit.

The contrast between *Ma Mère l'Oye* and *Gaspard de la nuit*, from the same year — 1908, is staggering, yet the fundamentals — melodic design, exquisite harmony and the evocation of enchantment is equally evident.

The ***Pavane*** reminds me of the earlier "*pour une infante défunte",* and ***Le Jardin Féerique*** is an excellent study for the magical timing of arpeggiated chords. My favourite is no doubt ***Les Entretiens,*** a waltz with unusual phrase lengths, marked in this edition with dashed barlines; it also features Bach-like counterpoint and a ravishing and pertinent coupling of the two themes. A French vocabulary is included on page v.

Les Entretiens — 159 it is suggested that arpeggiated chords begin on the beat

Le Jardin Féerique — 23 it is suggested that arpeggiated chords begin before the beat.

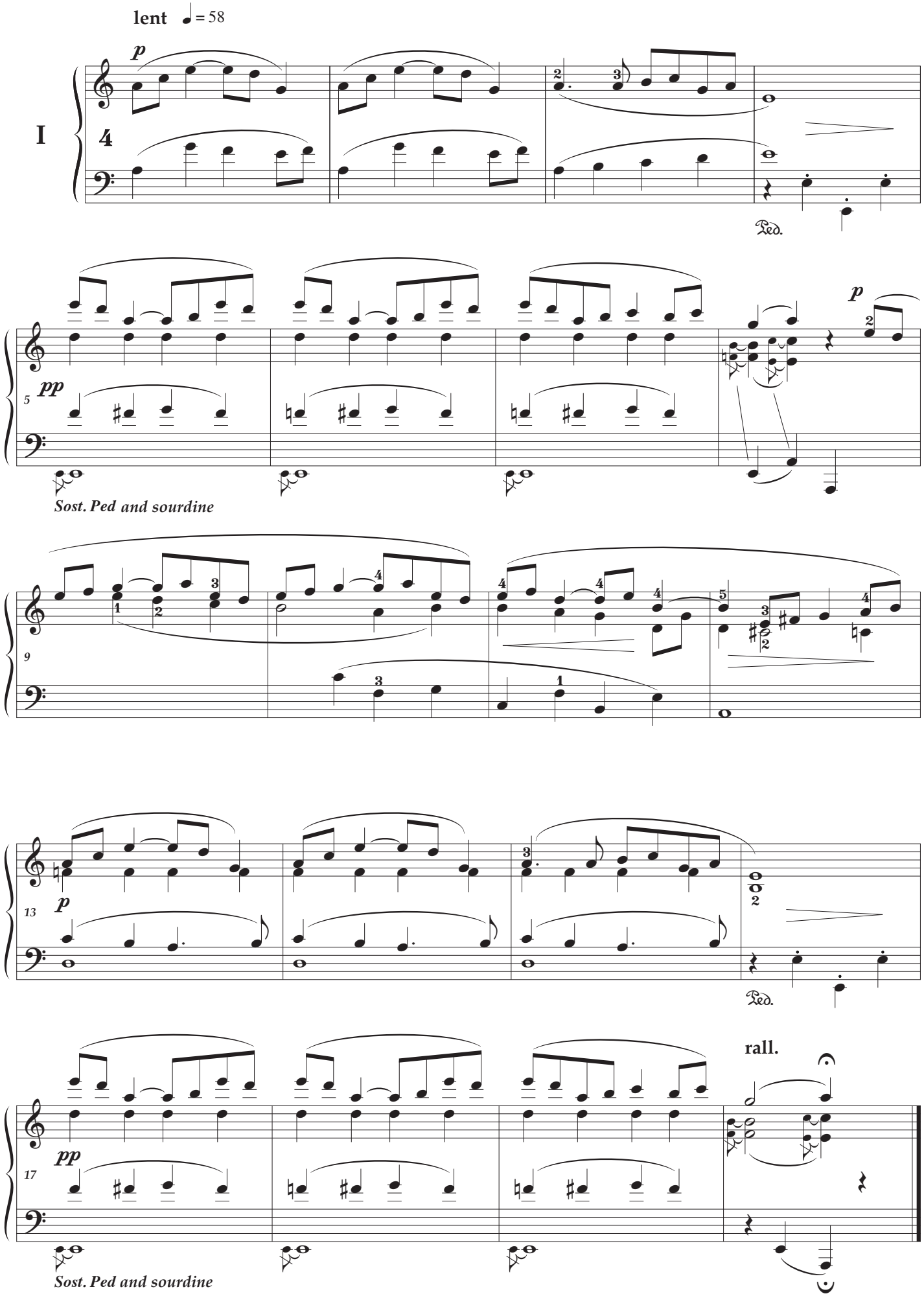
a *glissando* technique acquired many years ago from Russian and Greek pianists :

- with either hand **firmly clenched,** place four well-rounded fingers with all four nails evenly touching the white keys
- run either hand up and down the keyboard over 2 or 3 octaves **silently**
- repeat this noiseless glissando, depressing the lowest (ascending) or highest (descending) notes thus achieving a painless ***pianissimo glissando***
- the deeper the pressure the greater the dynamic
- this can also work with the black keys
- and at any tempo
- some situations improve by performing the first and/or last glissando note with the other hand
- once mastered, to protect one's nails, it is prudent to mainly mime in rehearsal

Ray Alston October 2022

très modéré	*molto moderato*
un peu en dehors	emphasise a little
bien expressif	very expressive
retenu	*ritenuto*
mouvement de marche	march tempo
sans nuances	without expression
mouvement de valse	waltz tempo
doux	*dolce*
très court	very short
sourdine	soft pedal
animez peu à peu	animate little by little
assez vif	quite lively
1er mouvement	tempo primo
un peu plus lent	a little slower
grave	solemn

Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant



Petit Poucet

très modéré ♩ = 66

II

sempre legato

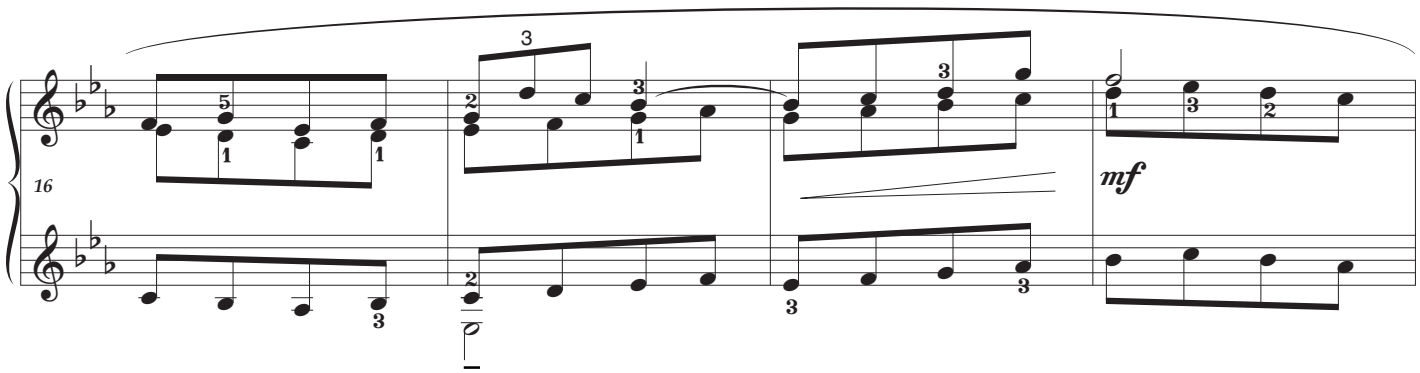
pp

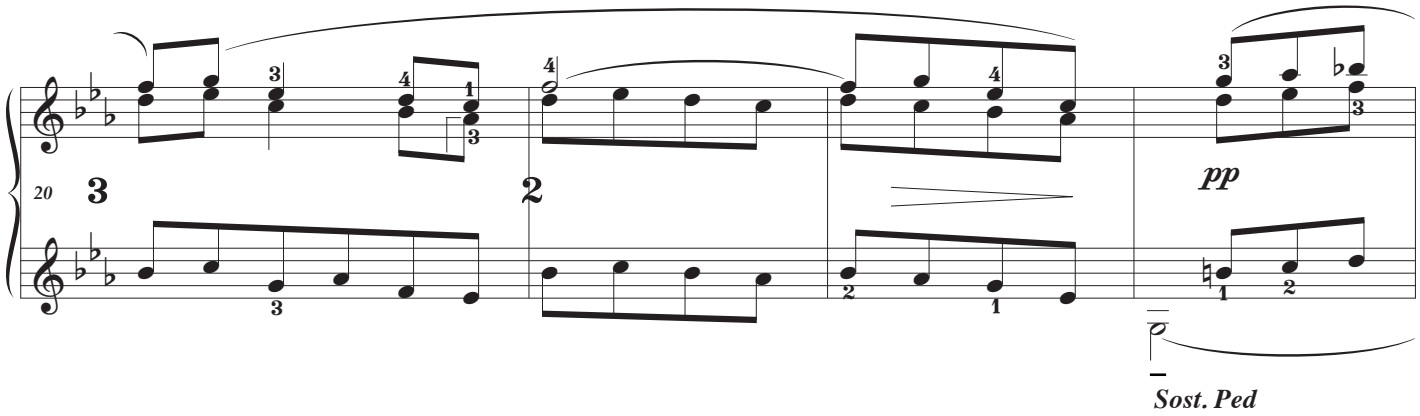
m.s.

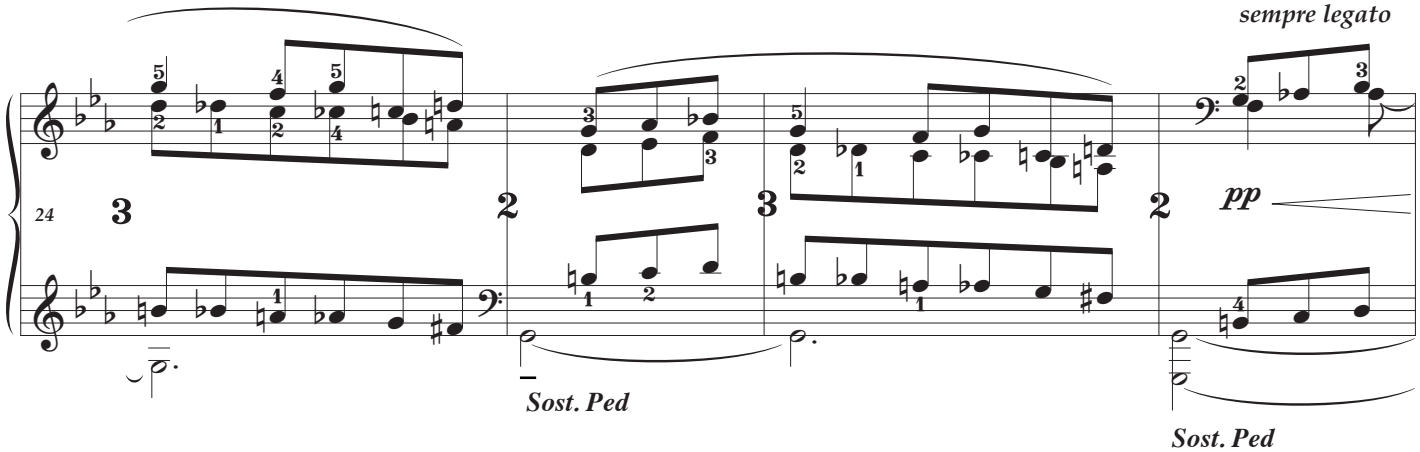
un peu en dehors et bien expressif

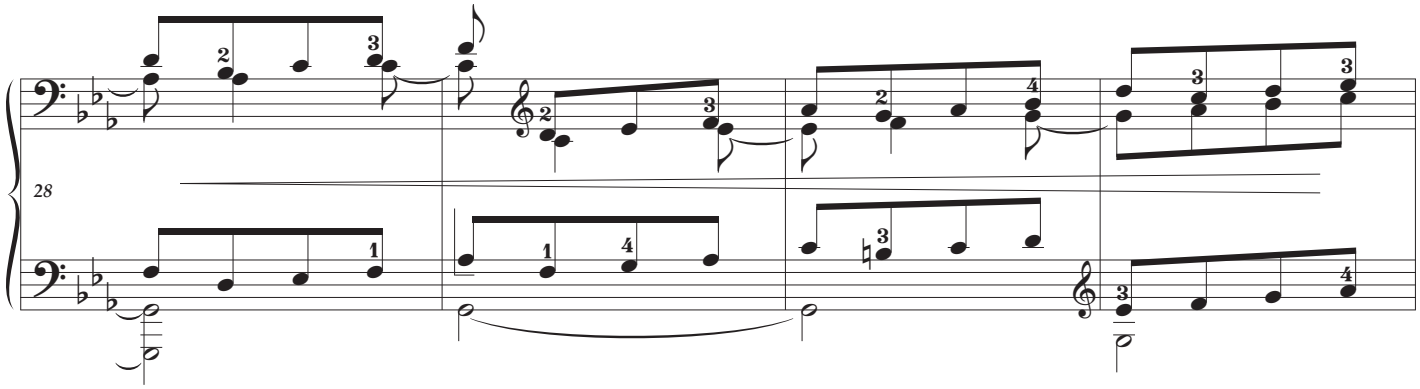
pp

p


16
mf


20
pp
Sost. Ped


sempre legato
24
pp
Sost. Ped
Sost. Ped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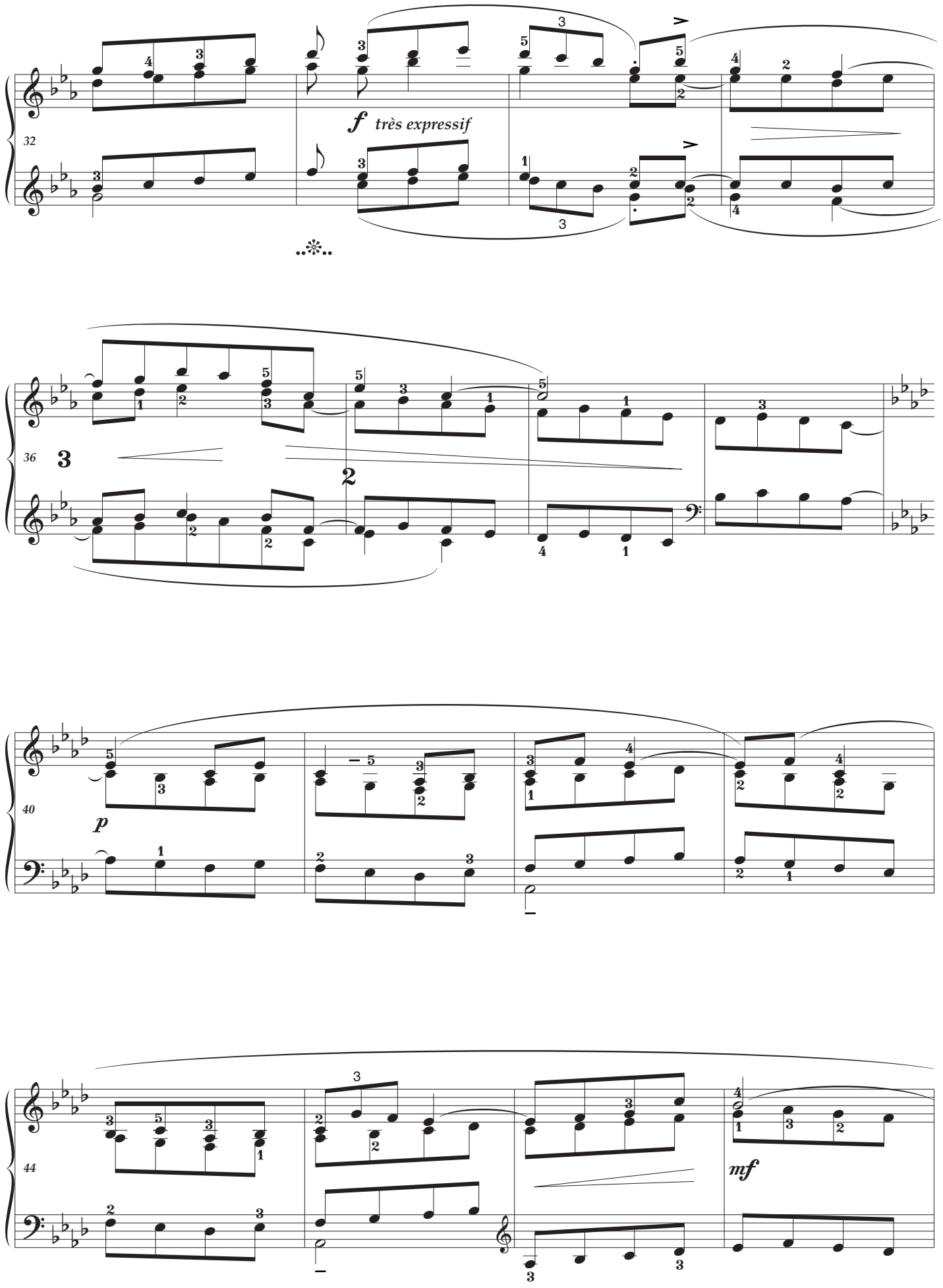
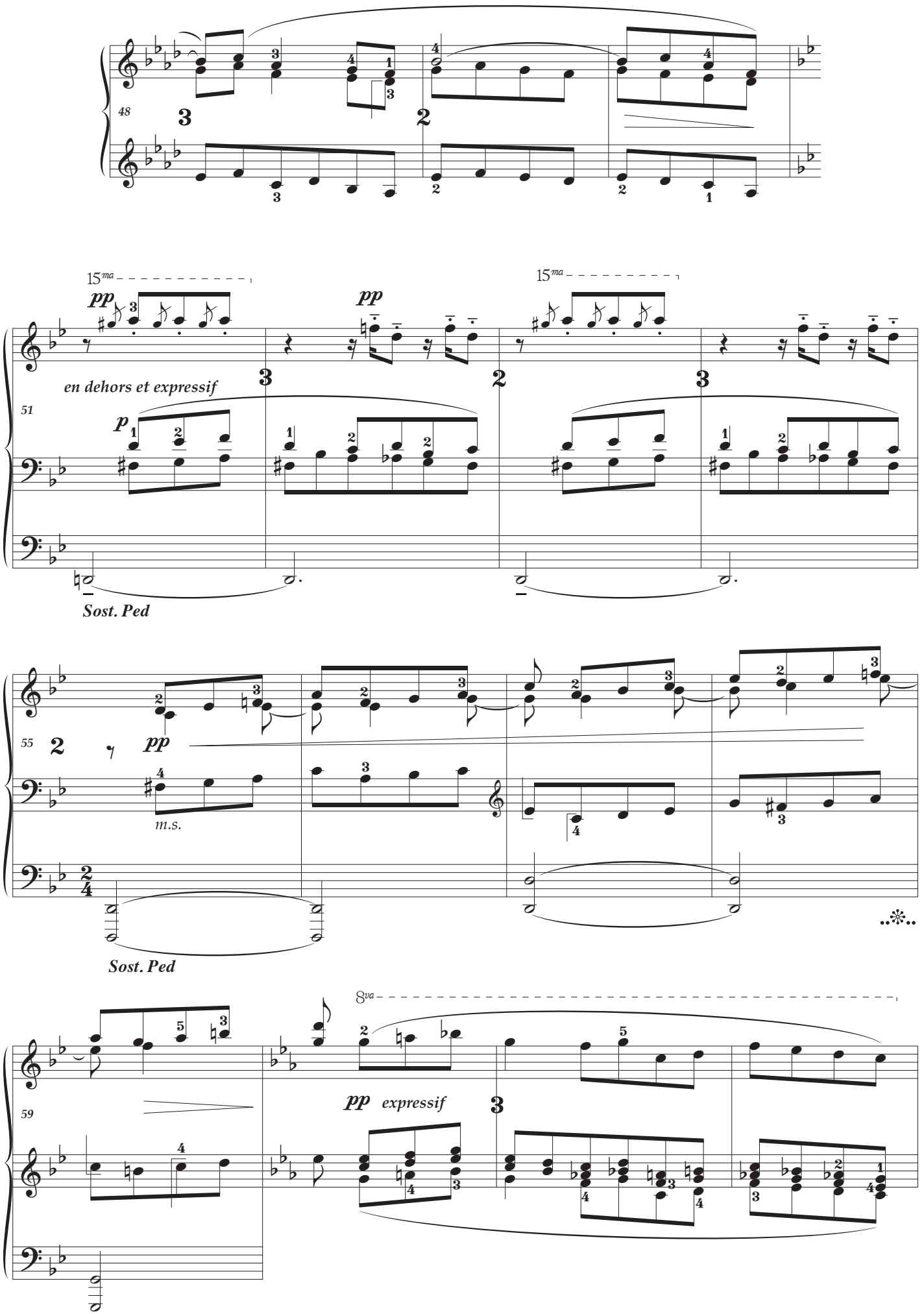
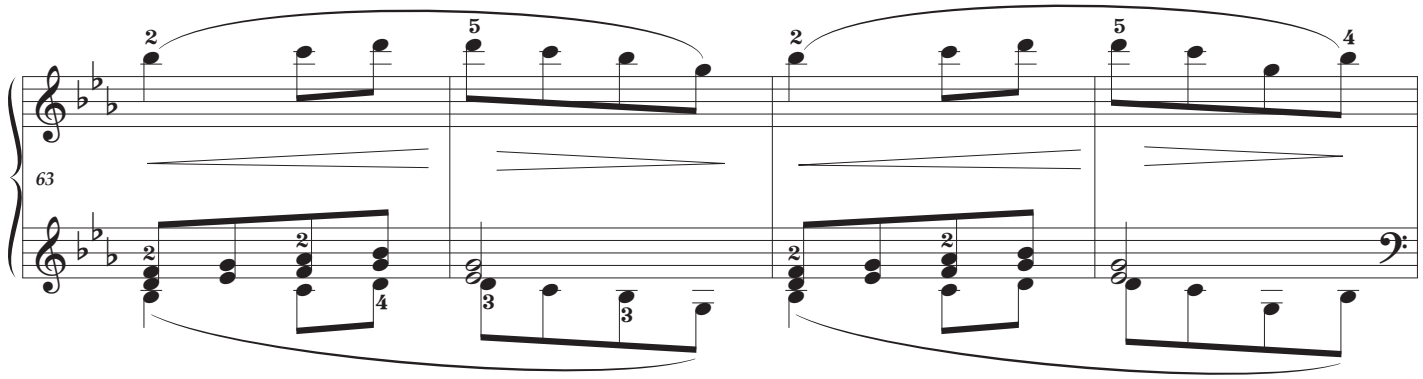
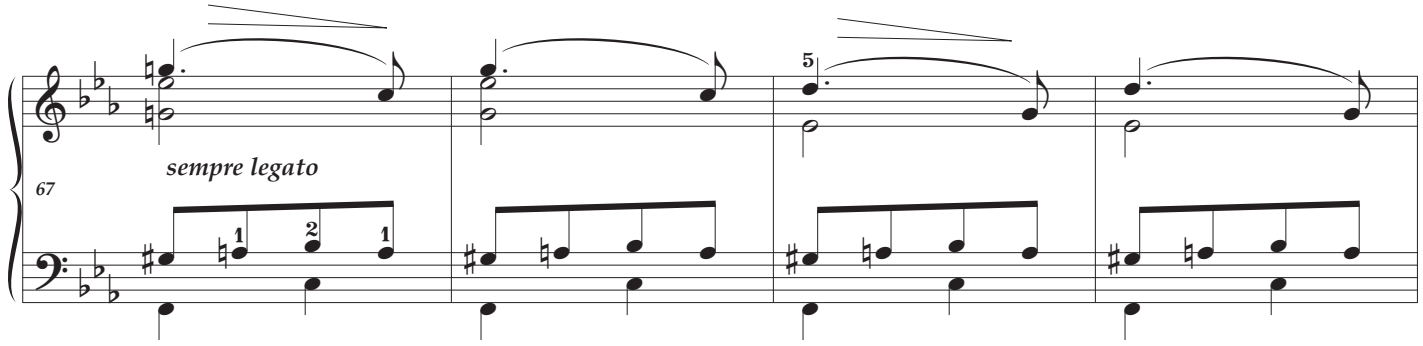
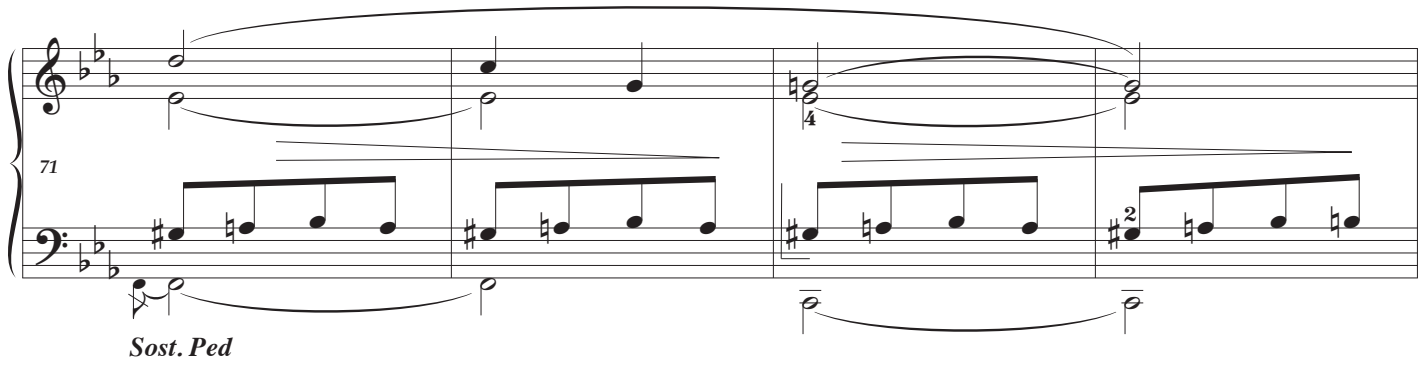
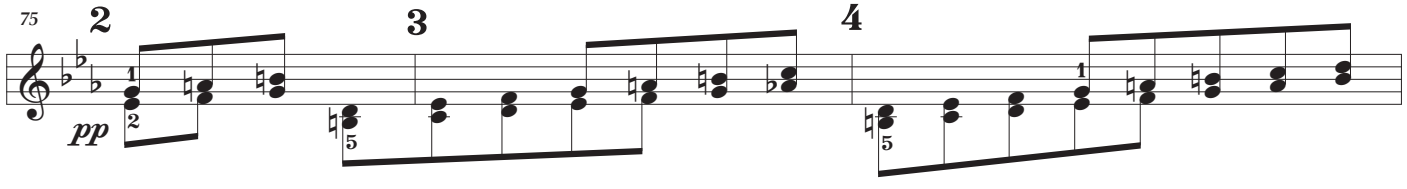

32
f très expressif
36
3
2
40
p
44
mf


48
51
55
59
15ma
pp
en dehors et expressif
p
Sost. Ped
m.s.
8va
expressif




sempre legato


Sost. Ped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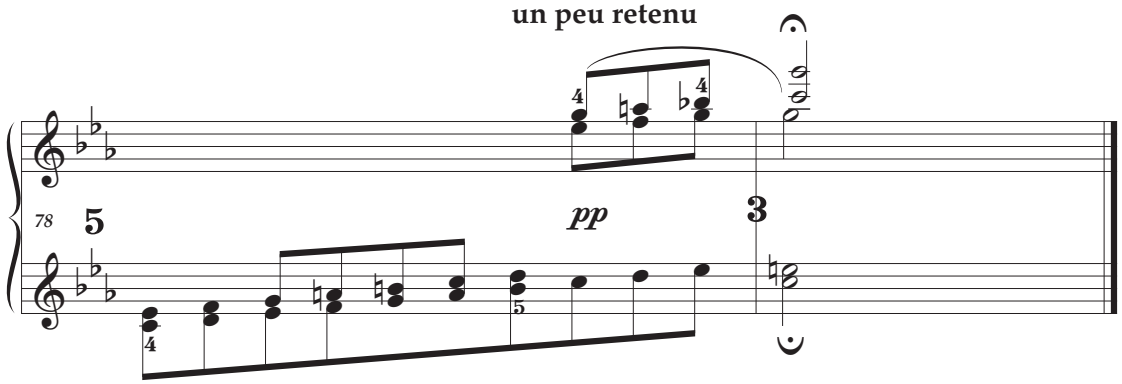
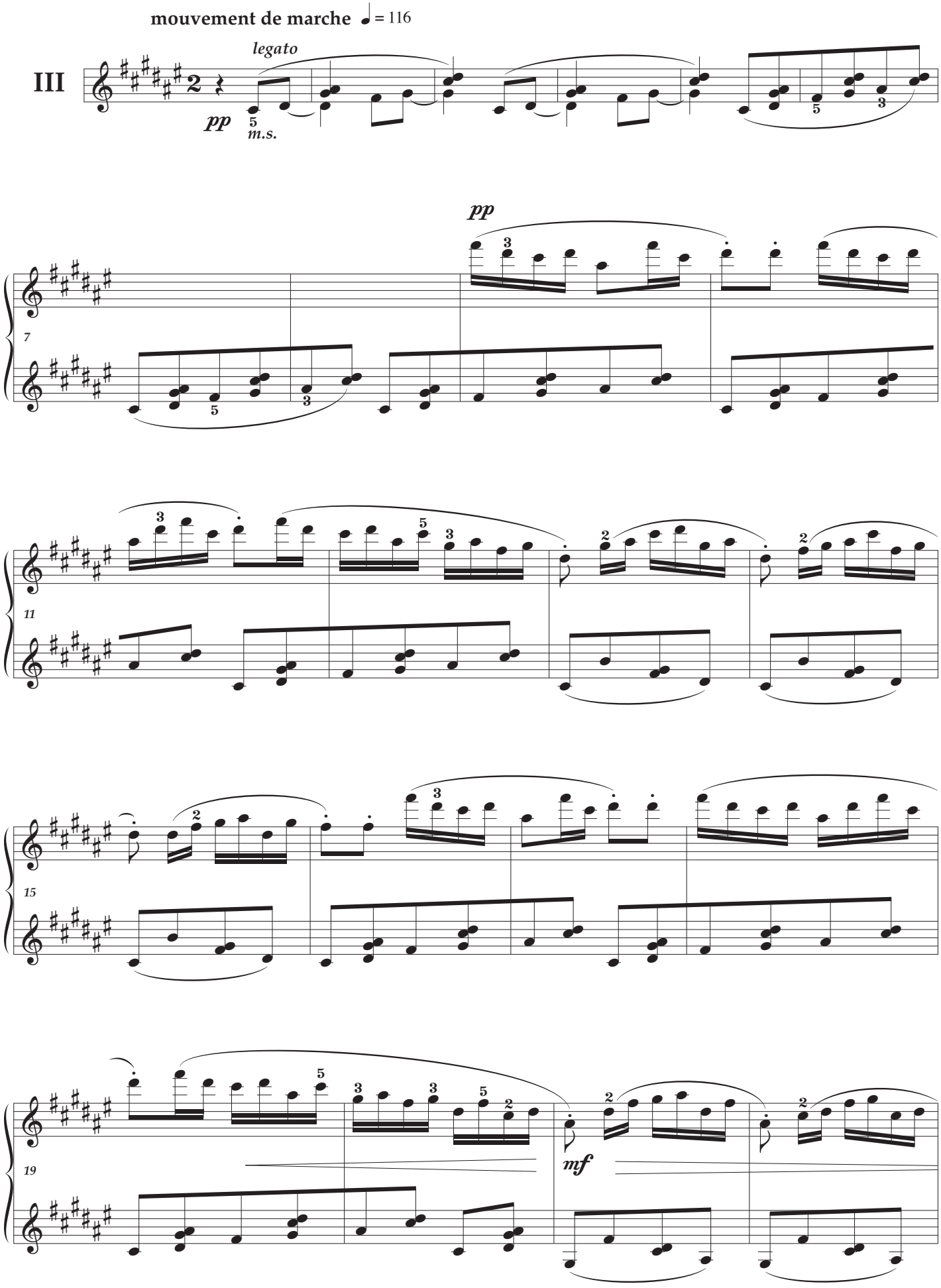
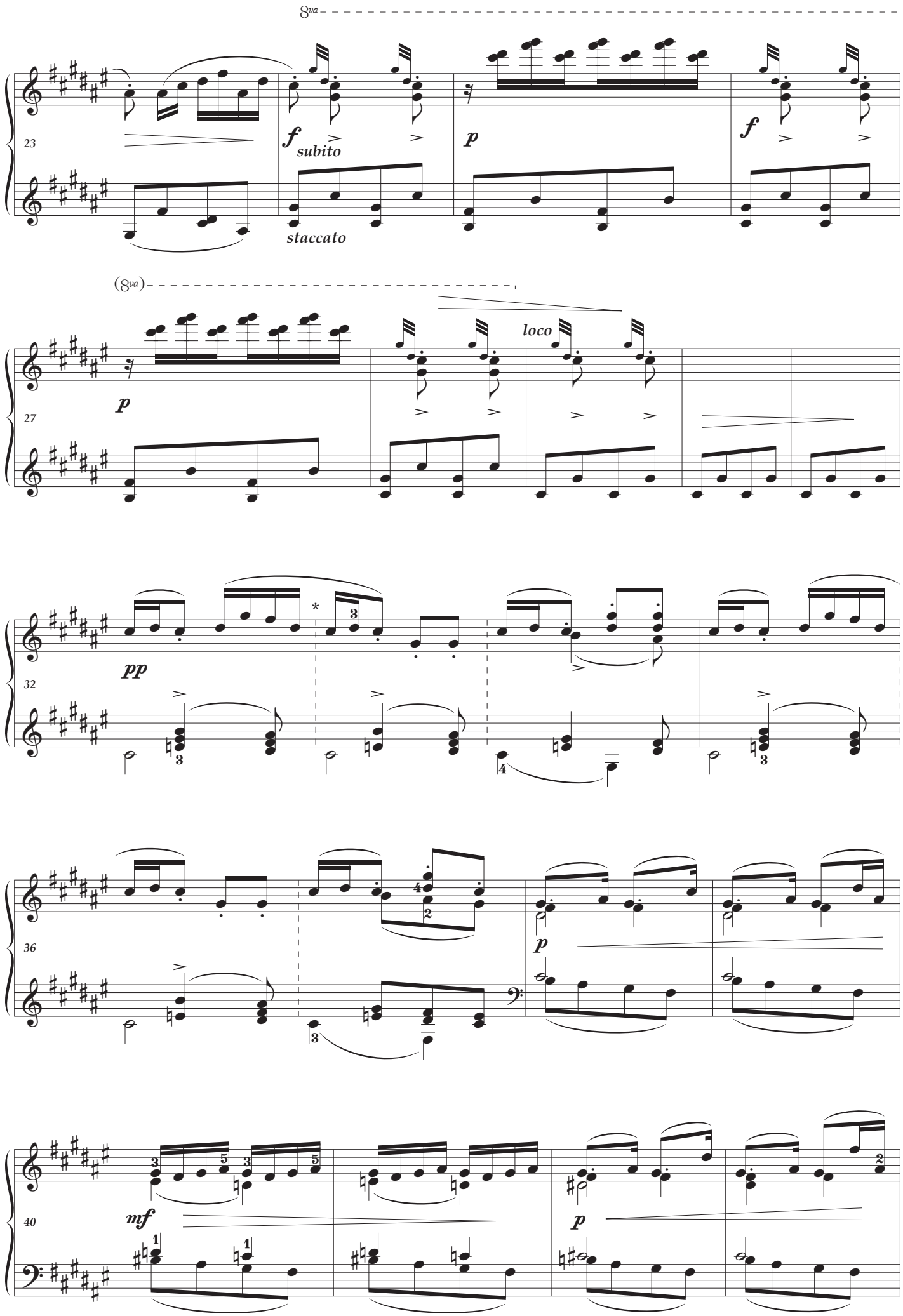
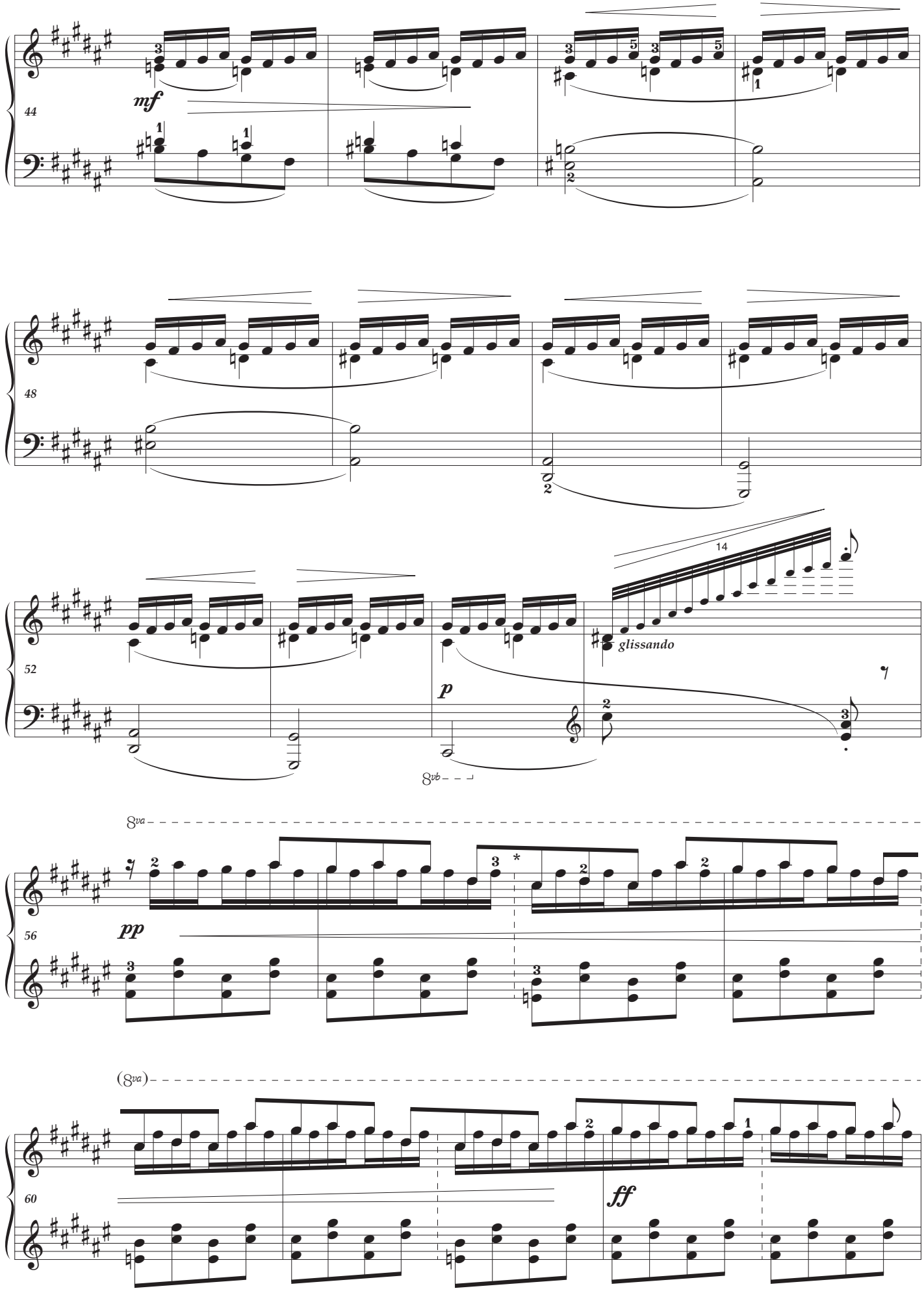
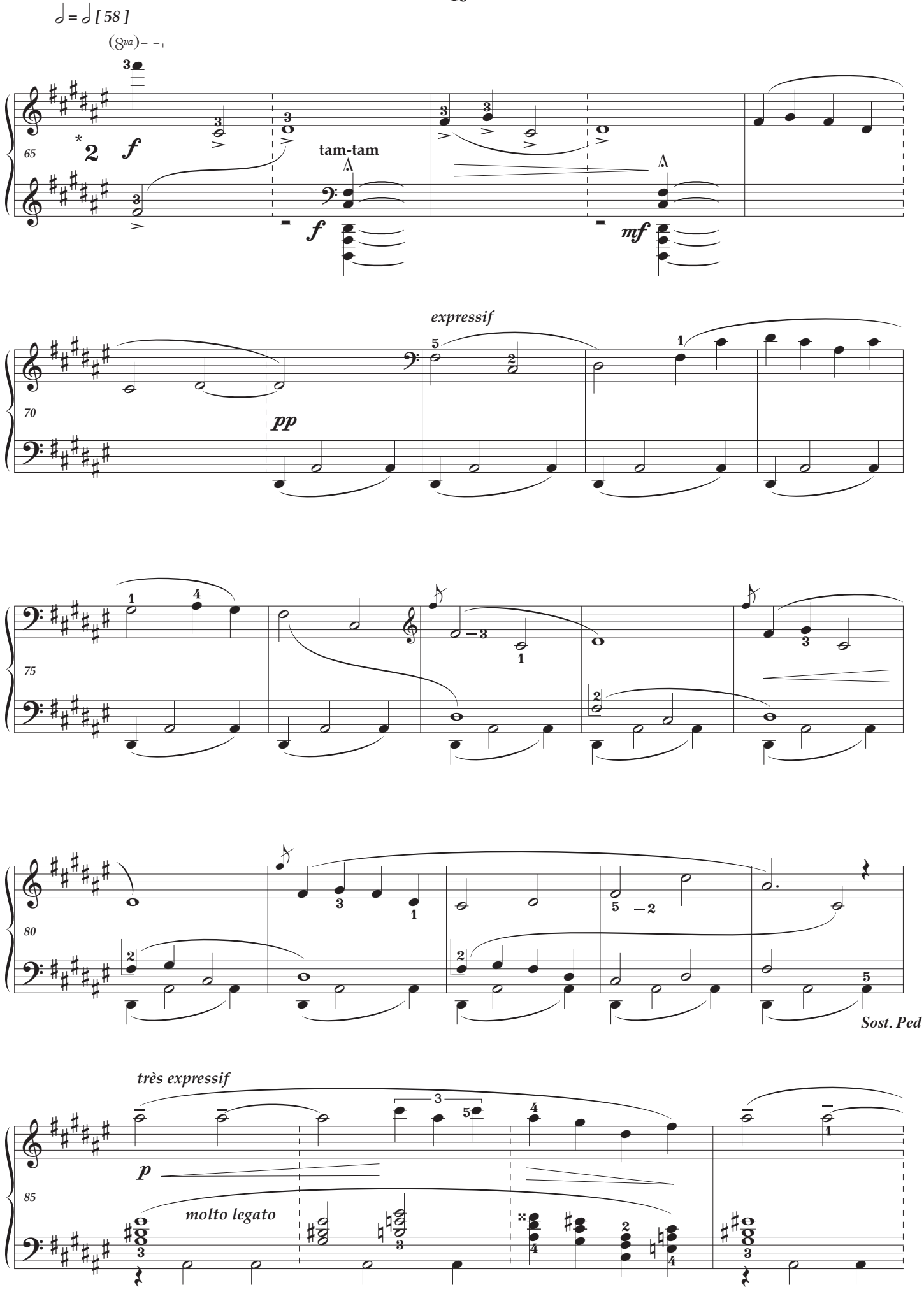

un peu retenu
pp

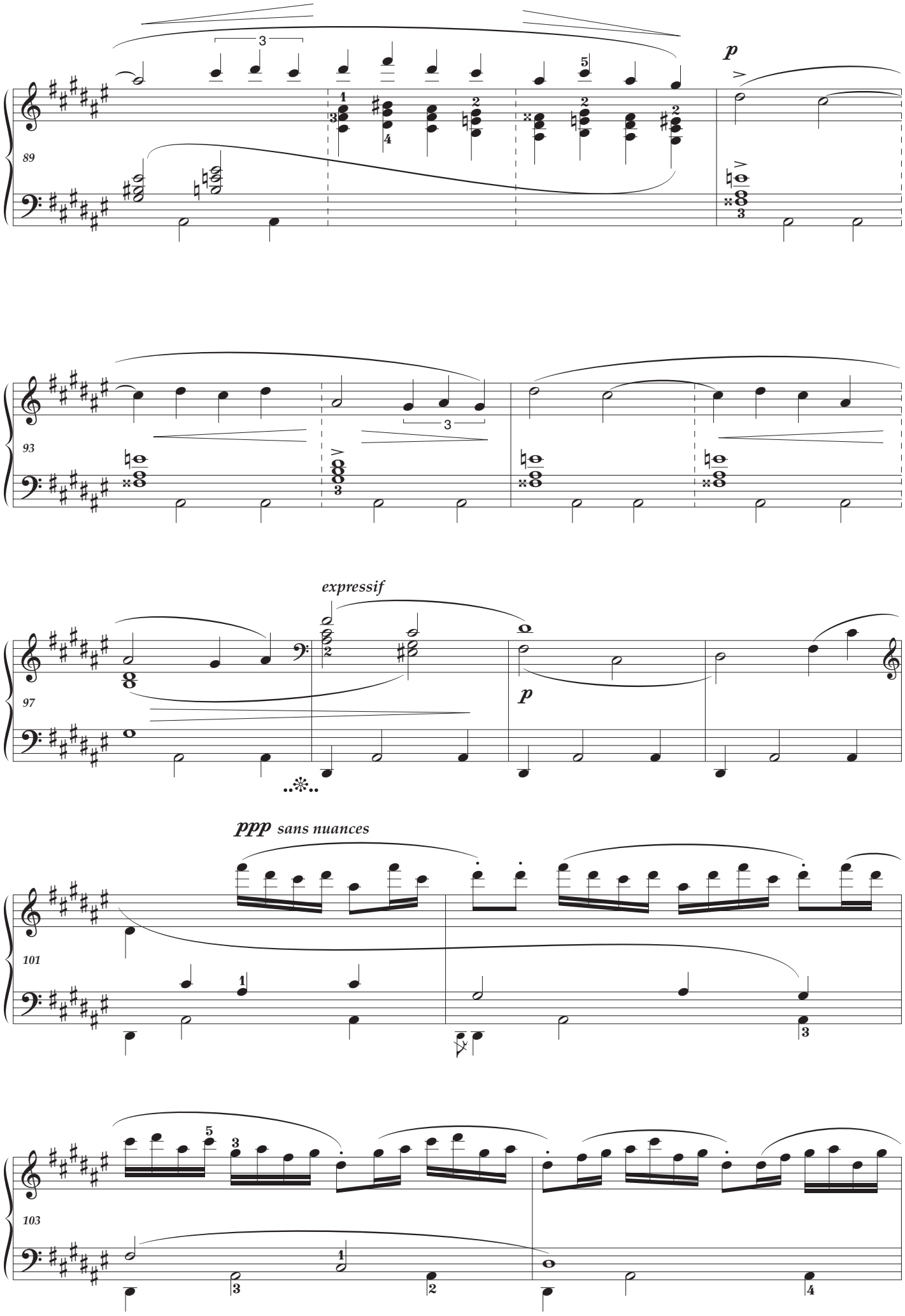
Laideronette, Impératrice des Pagodes

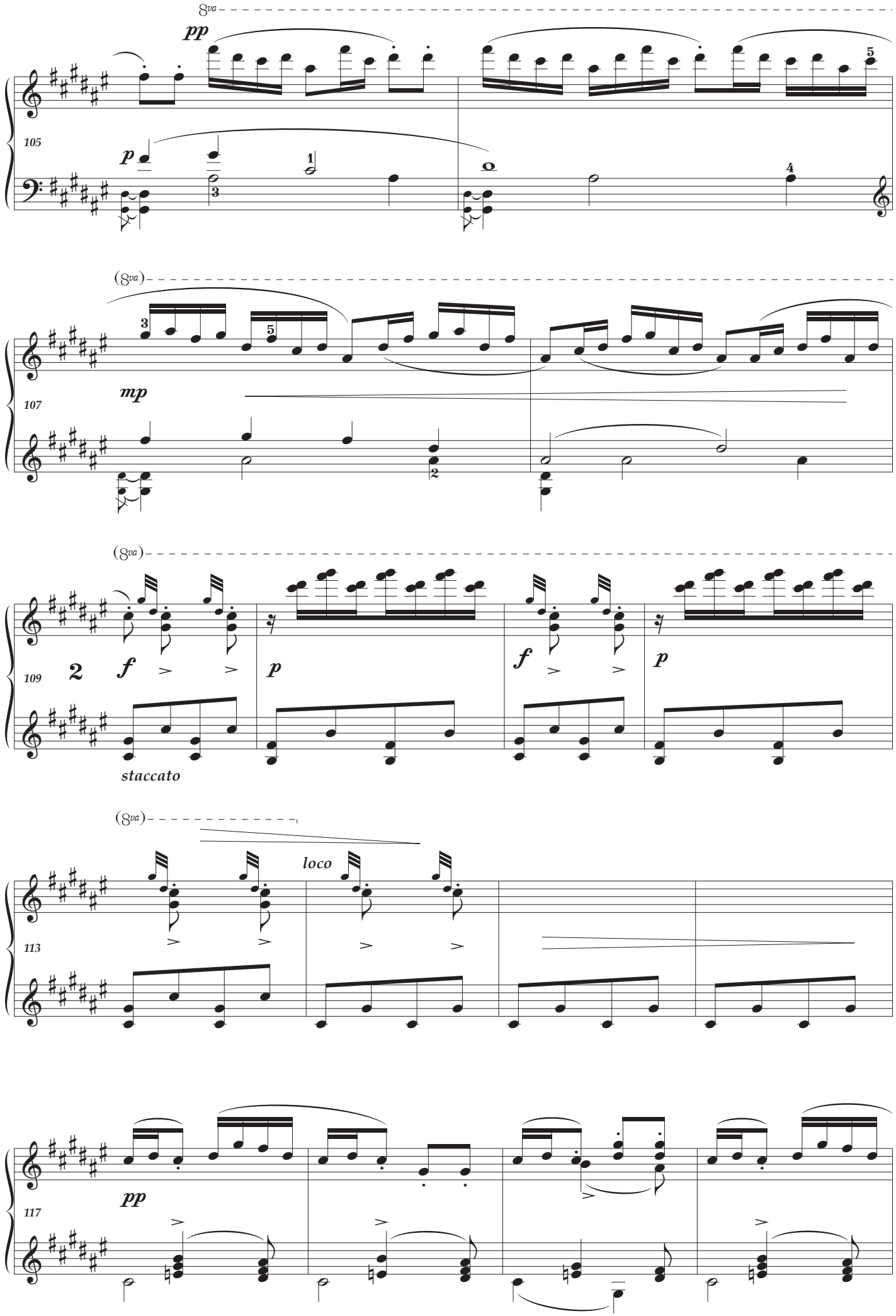


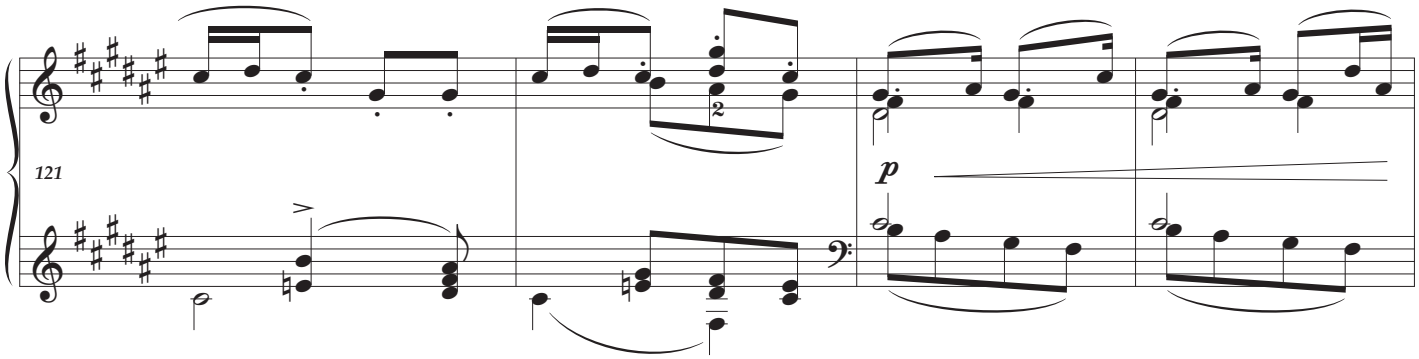

8va
23
f subito
staccato
p
f
(8va)
27
p
loco
32
pp
*
36
p
40
mf
p

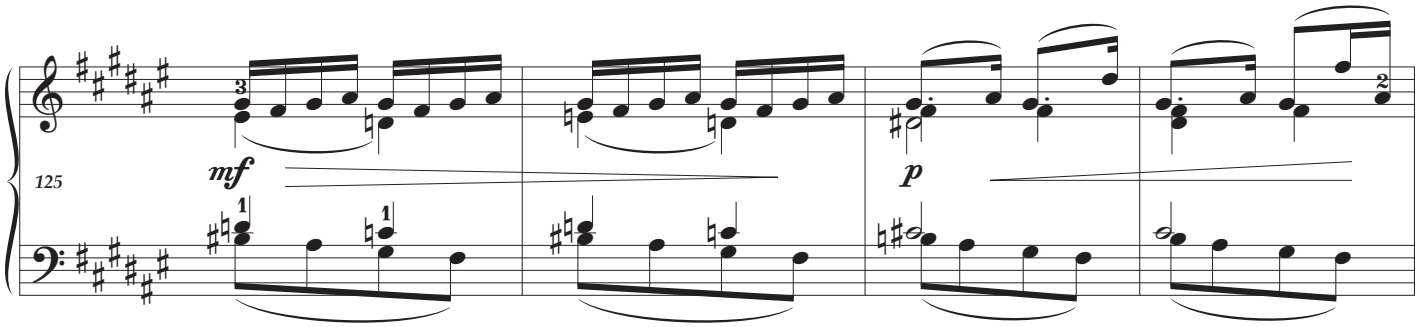

44
mf
48
52
14
glissando
p
8vb
8va
56
pp
*
(8va)
60
ff

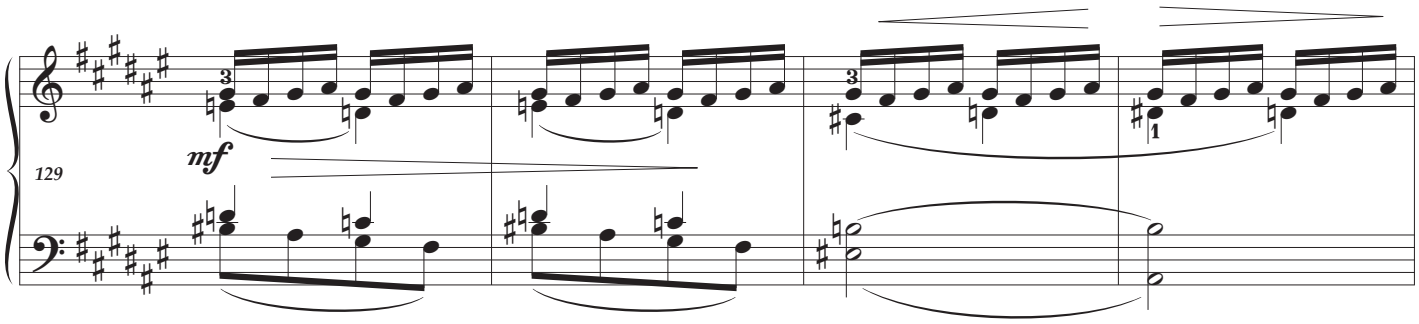

𝅗𝅥 = 𝅗𝅥 [58]
(8va)
65
f
tam-tam
f
mf
expressif
70
pp
75
80
Sost. Ped
très expressif
85
p
molto legato

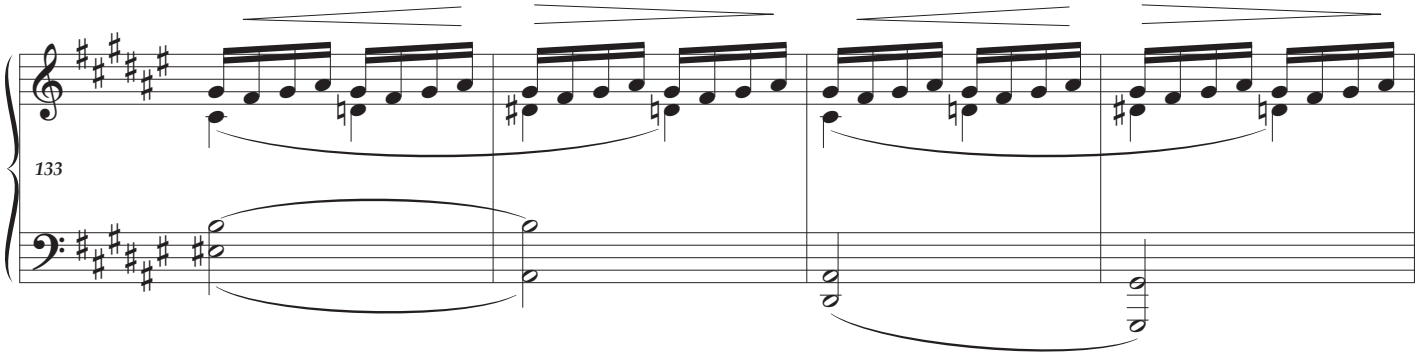

89
p
93
97
expressif
p
101
ppp sans nuances
103


8va
pp
105
p
1
3
4
5
(8va)
3
5
mp
107
2
(8va)
109
2
f
p
f
p
staccato
(8va)
loco
113
117
pp


121
p


125
mf
p


129
mf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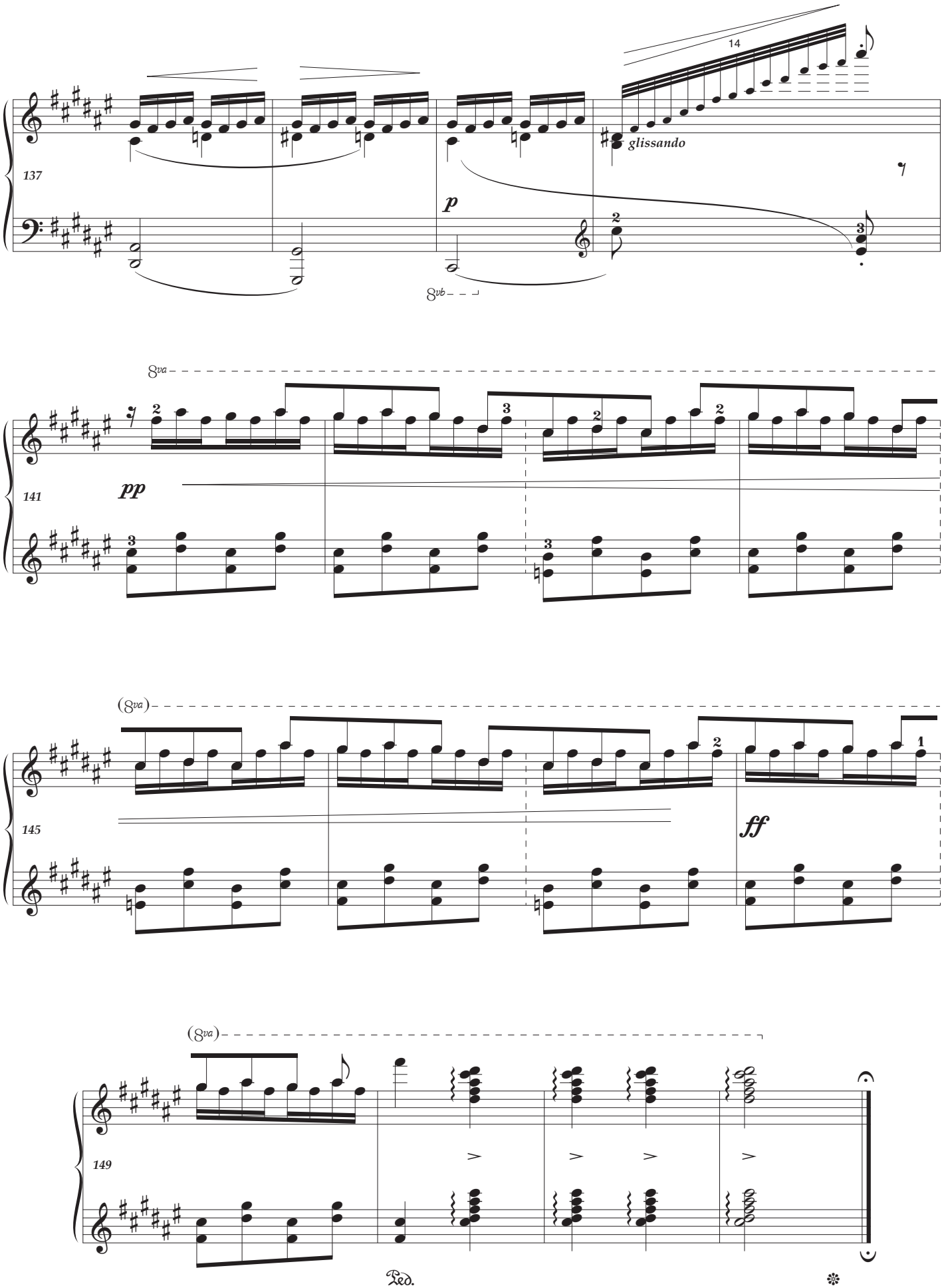
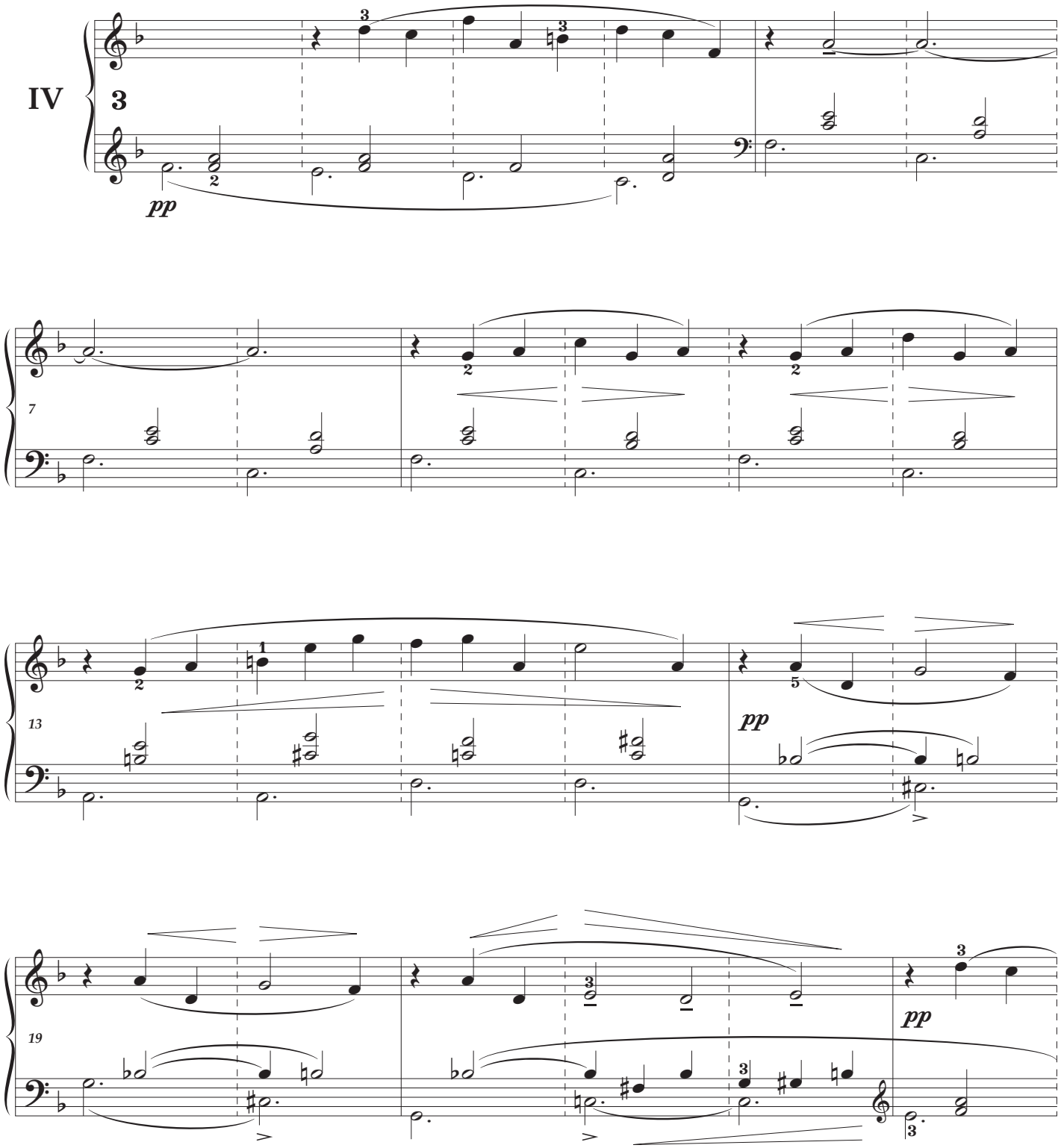
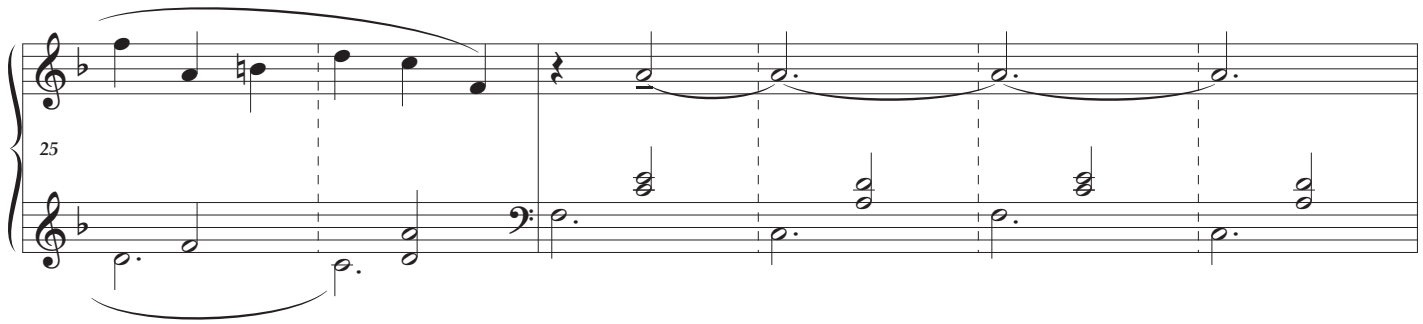

137
14
glissando
p
8vb
141
8va
pp
145
(8va)
ff
149
(8va)
Ped.

Les Entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête

mouvement de valse très modéré ♩. = 50

doux et expressif

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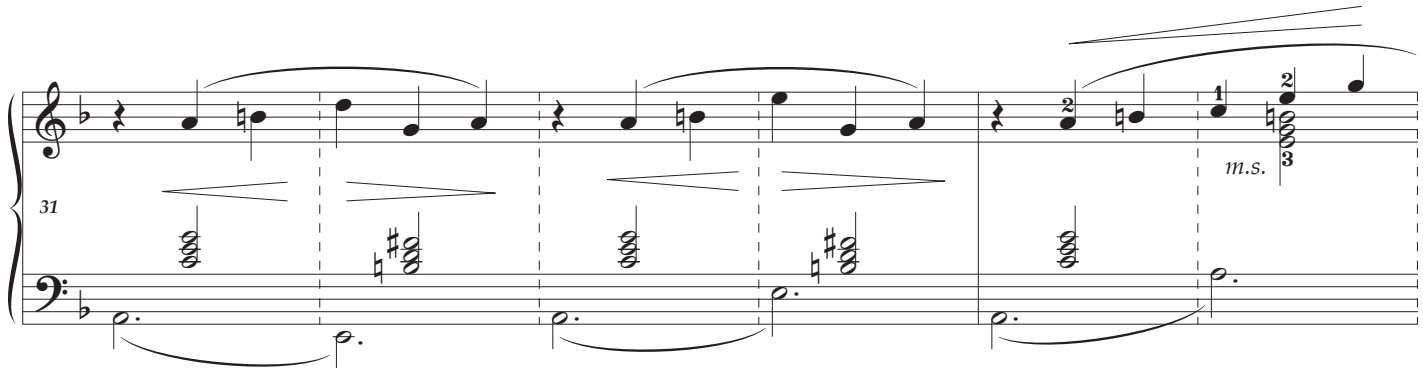
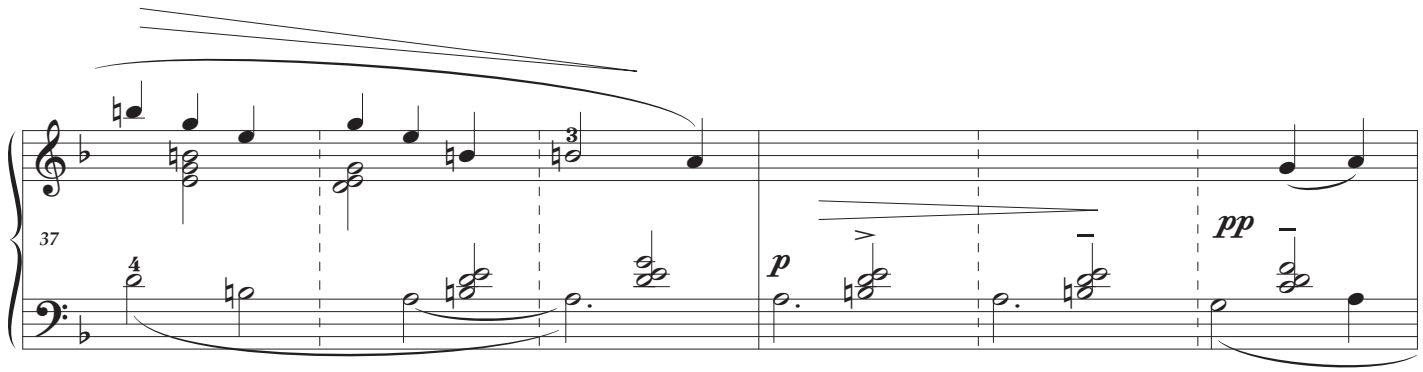
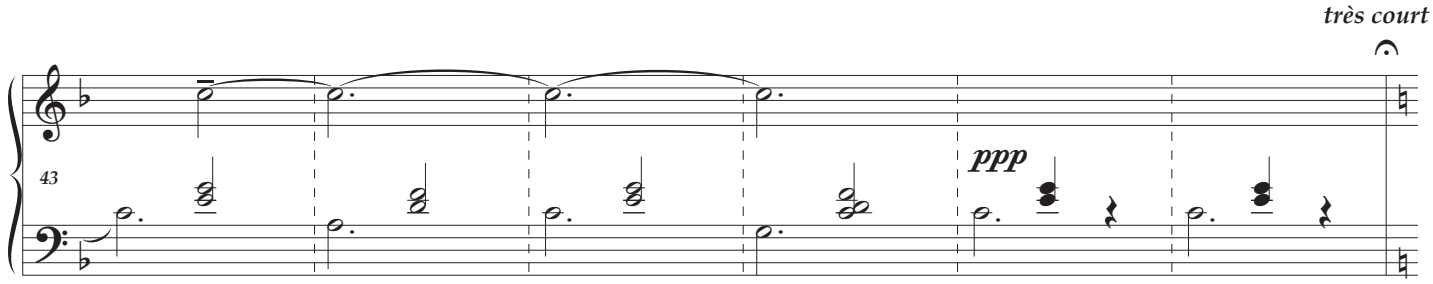
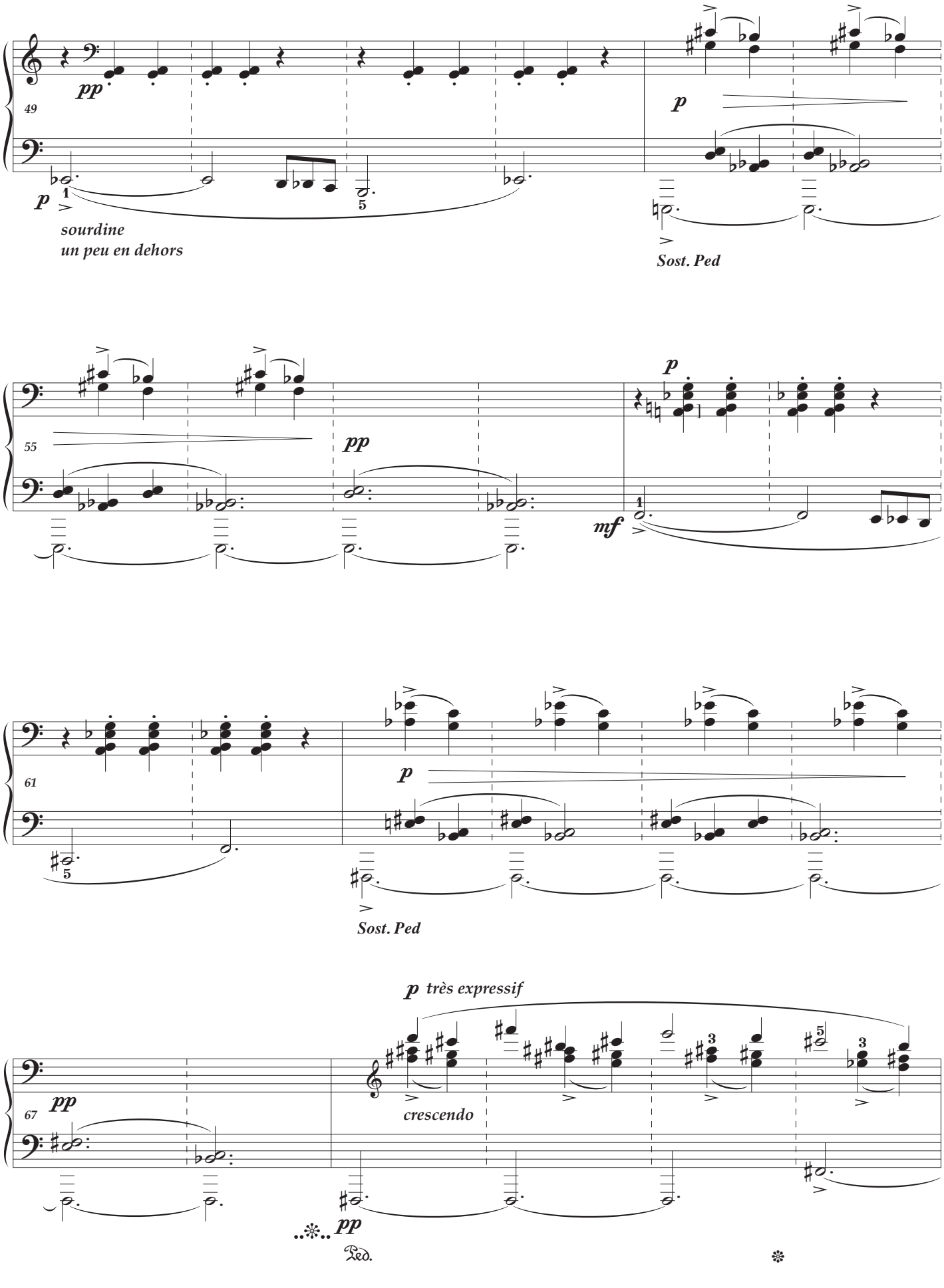
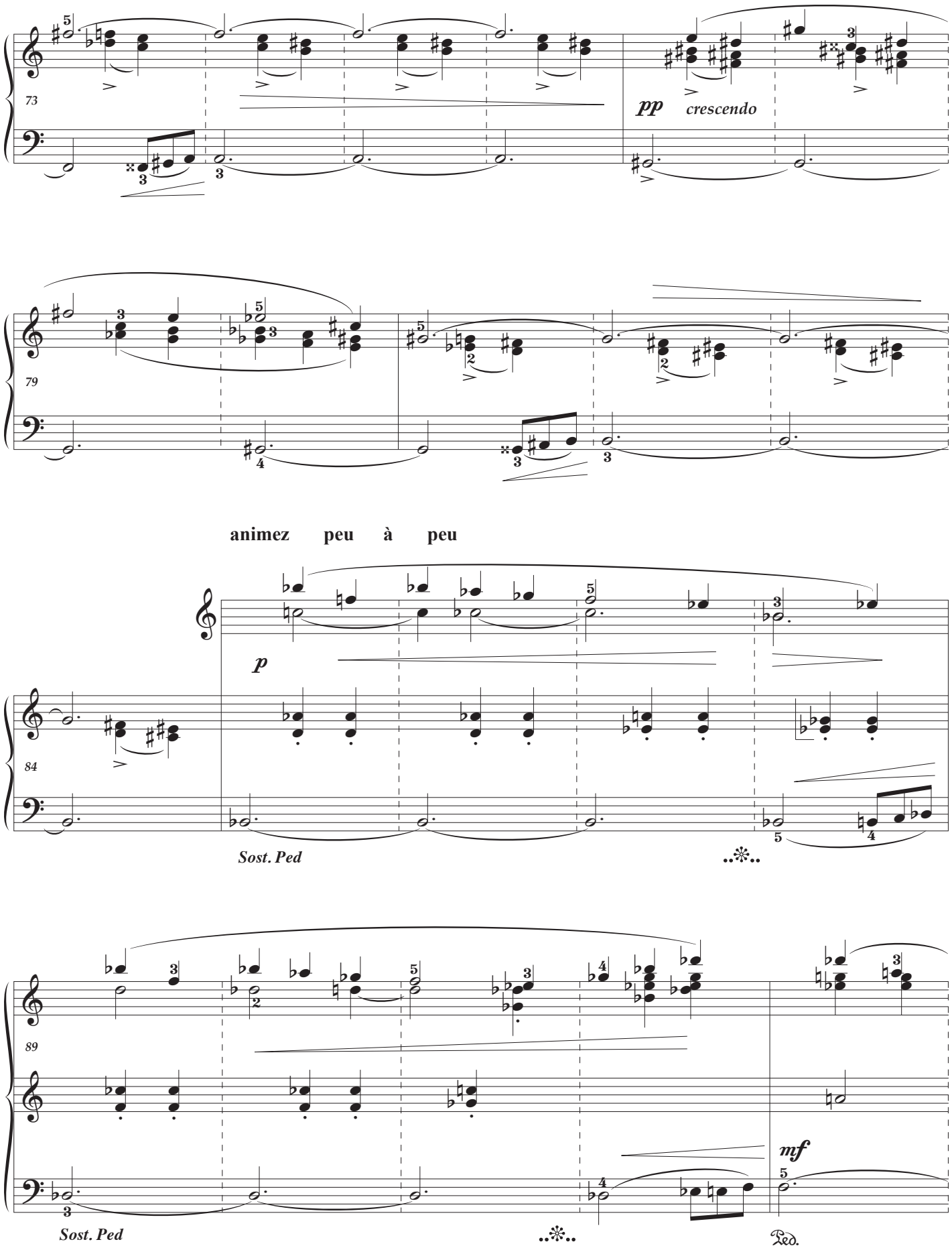
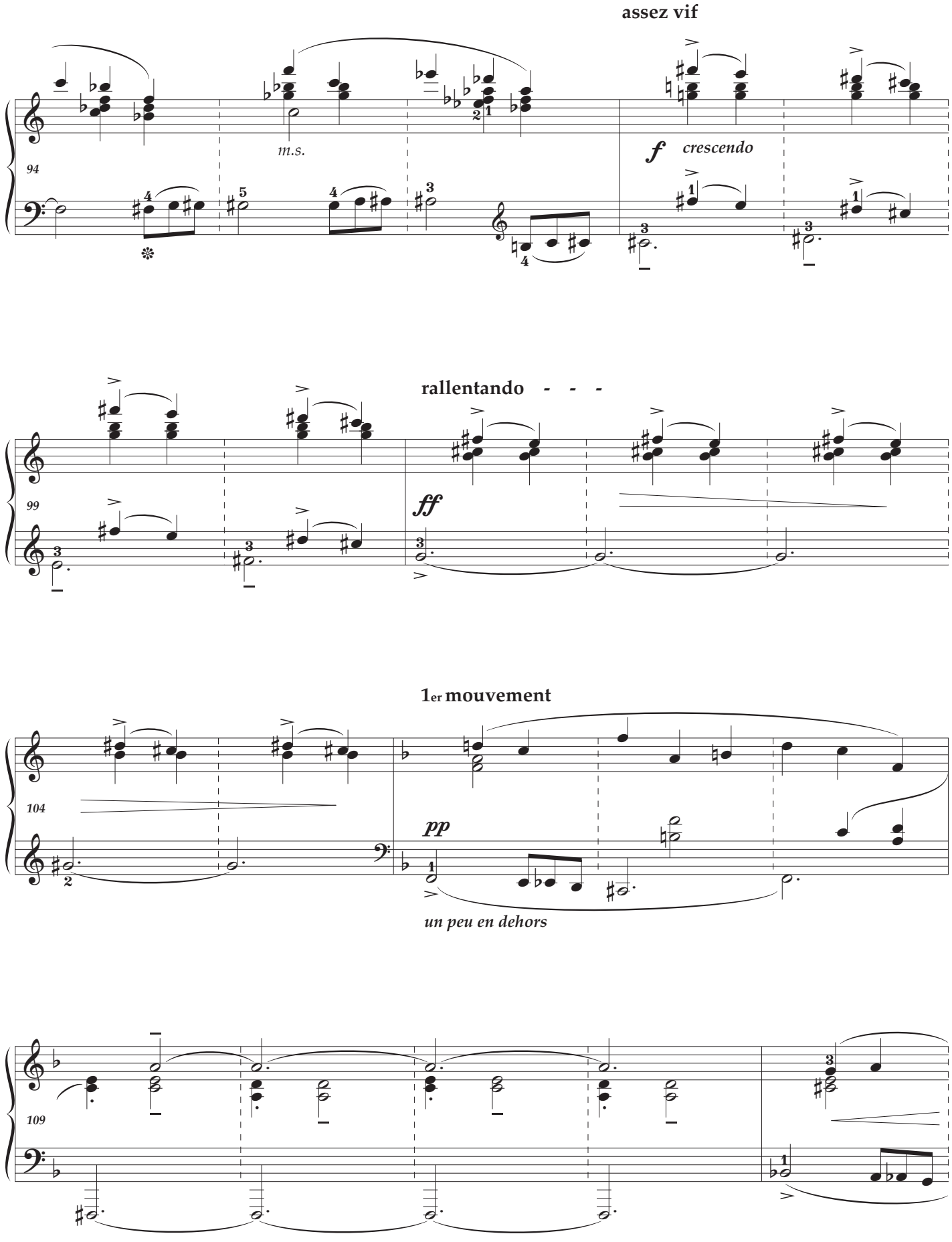

31
m.s.


37
p
pp


très court
43
ppp


49
pp
p
sourdine
un peu en dehors
p
Sost. Ped
55
pp
p
mf
61
p
Sost. Ped
67
pp
p très expressif
crescendo
pp
Ped.


73
pp
crescendo
79
animez peu à peu
84
p
Sost. Ped
89
mf
Sost. Ped
Ped.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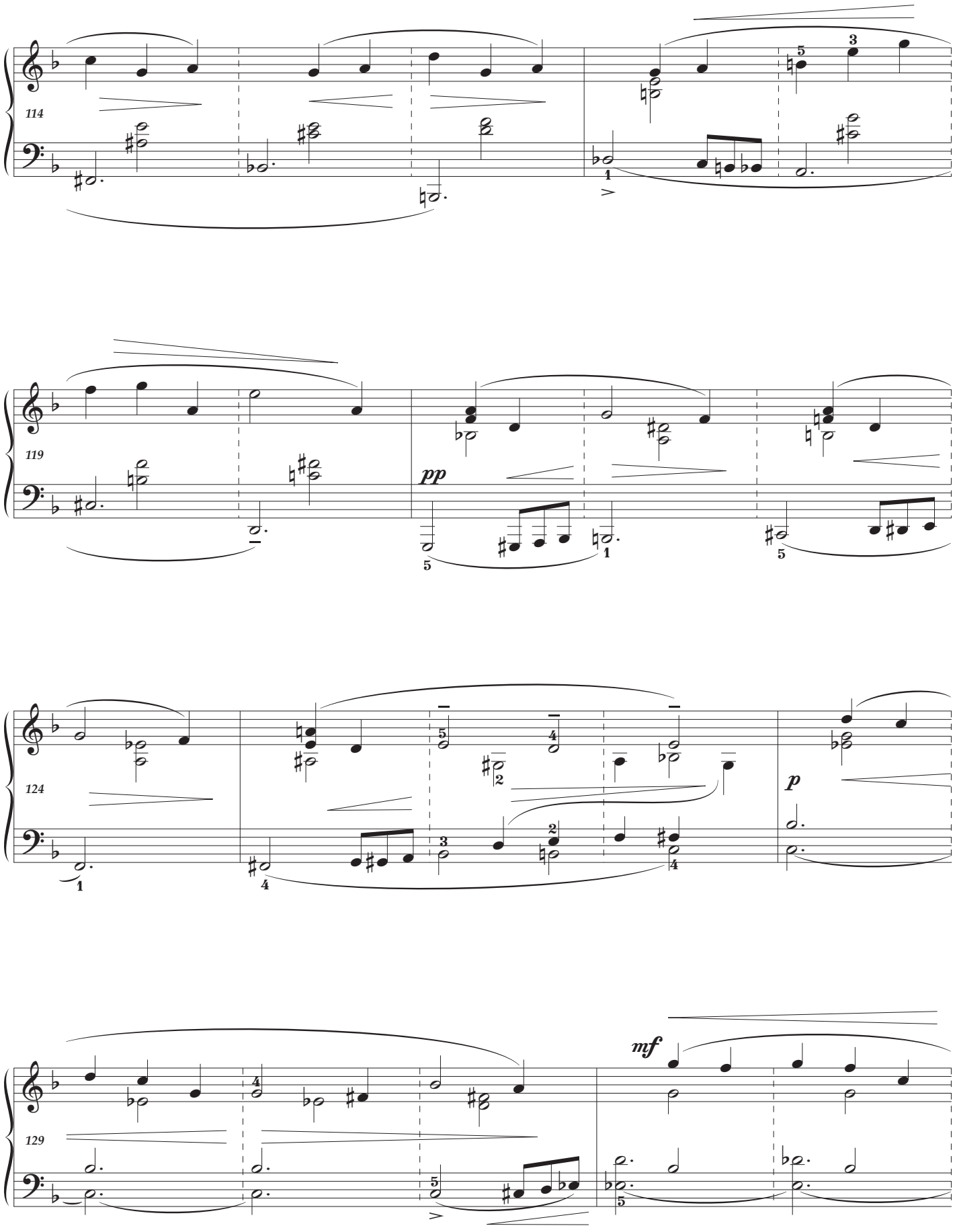
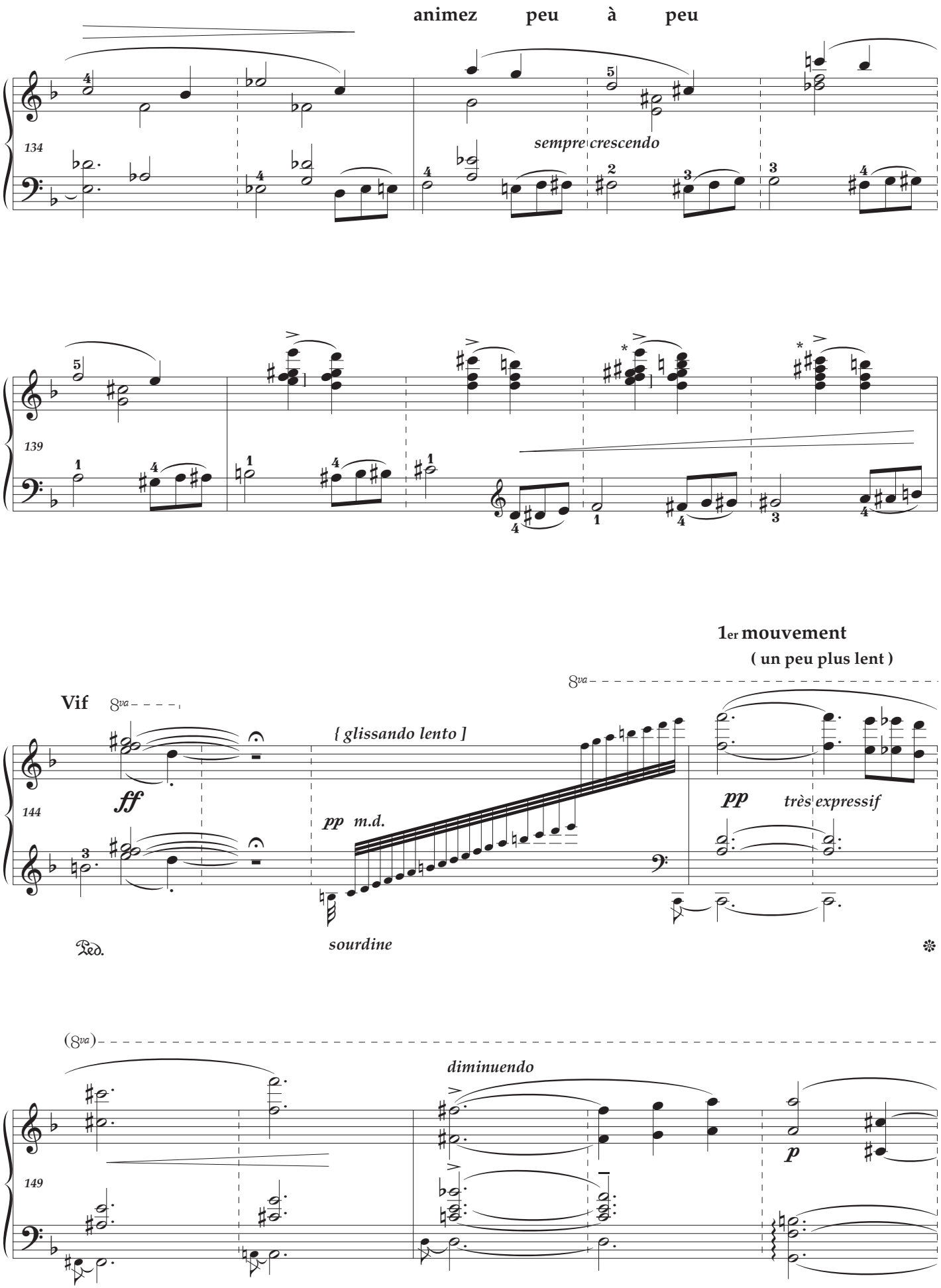
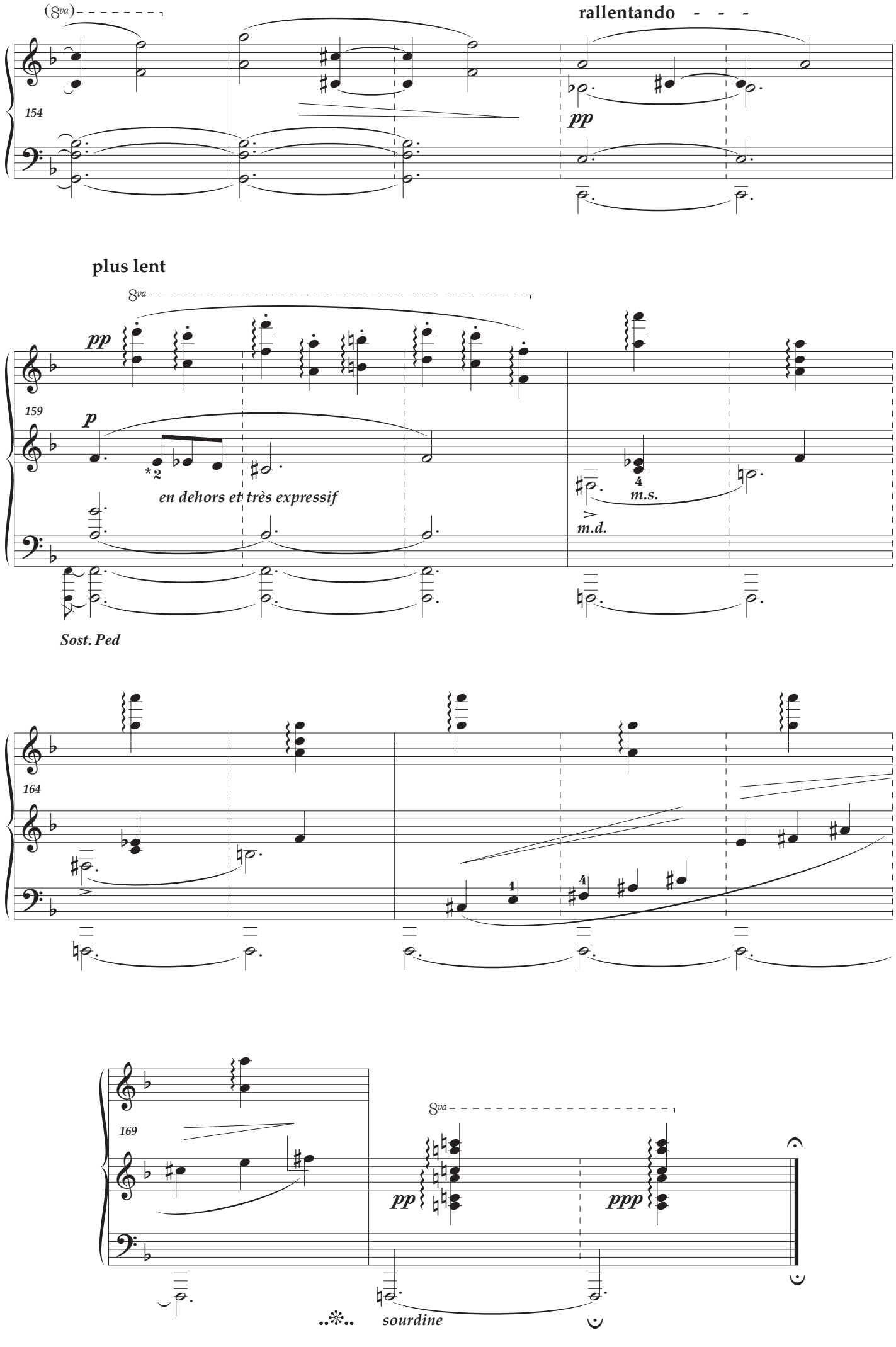
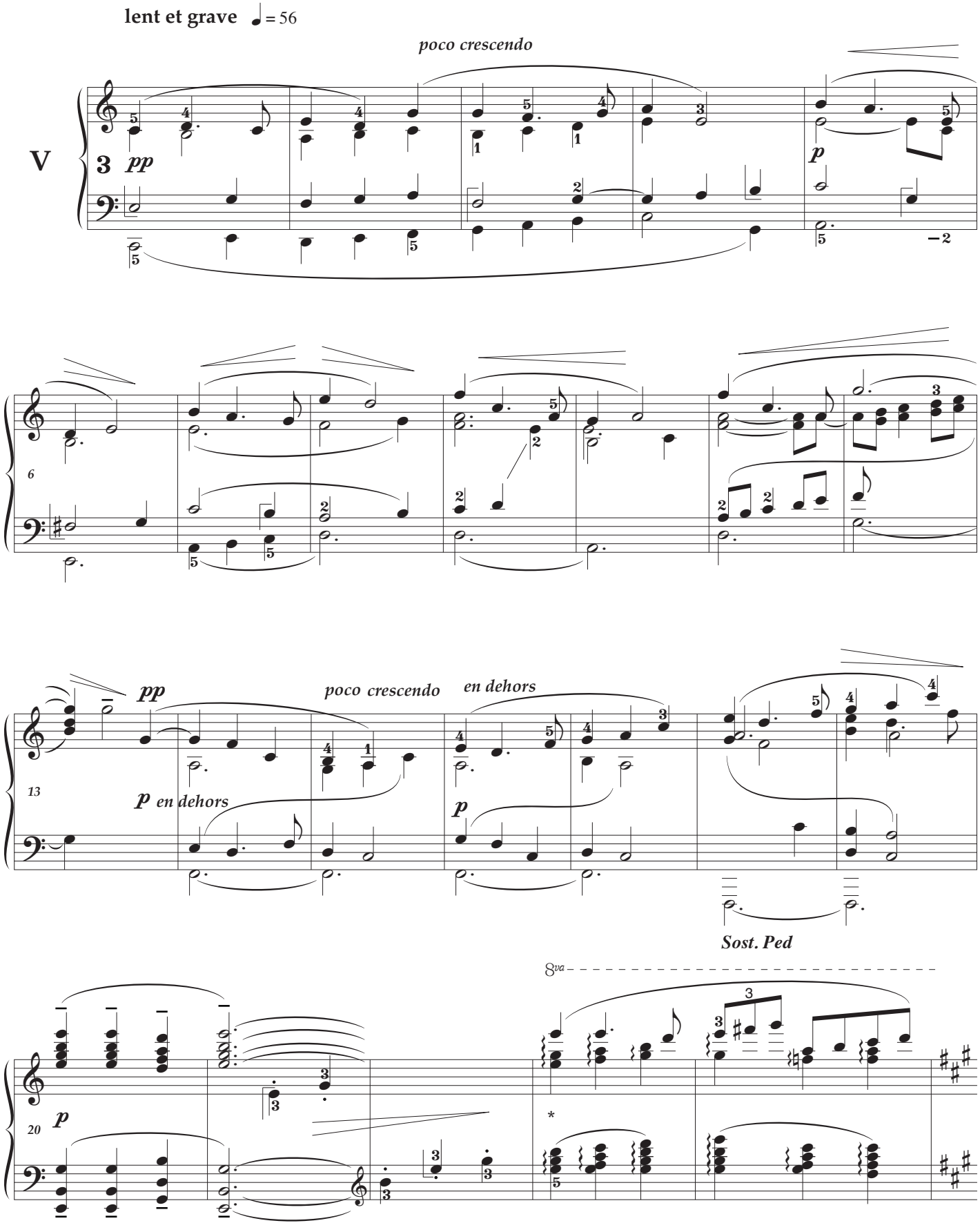
m.s.
f crescendo
94
rallentando - - -
ff
99
1er mouvement
pp
un peu en dehors
104
109

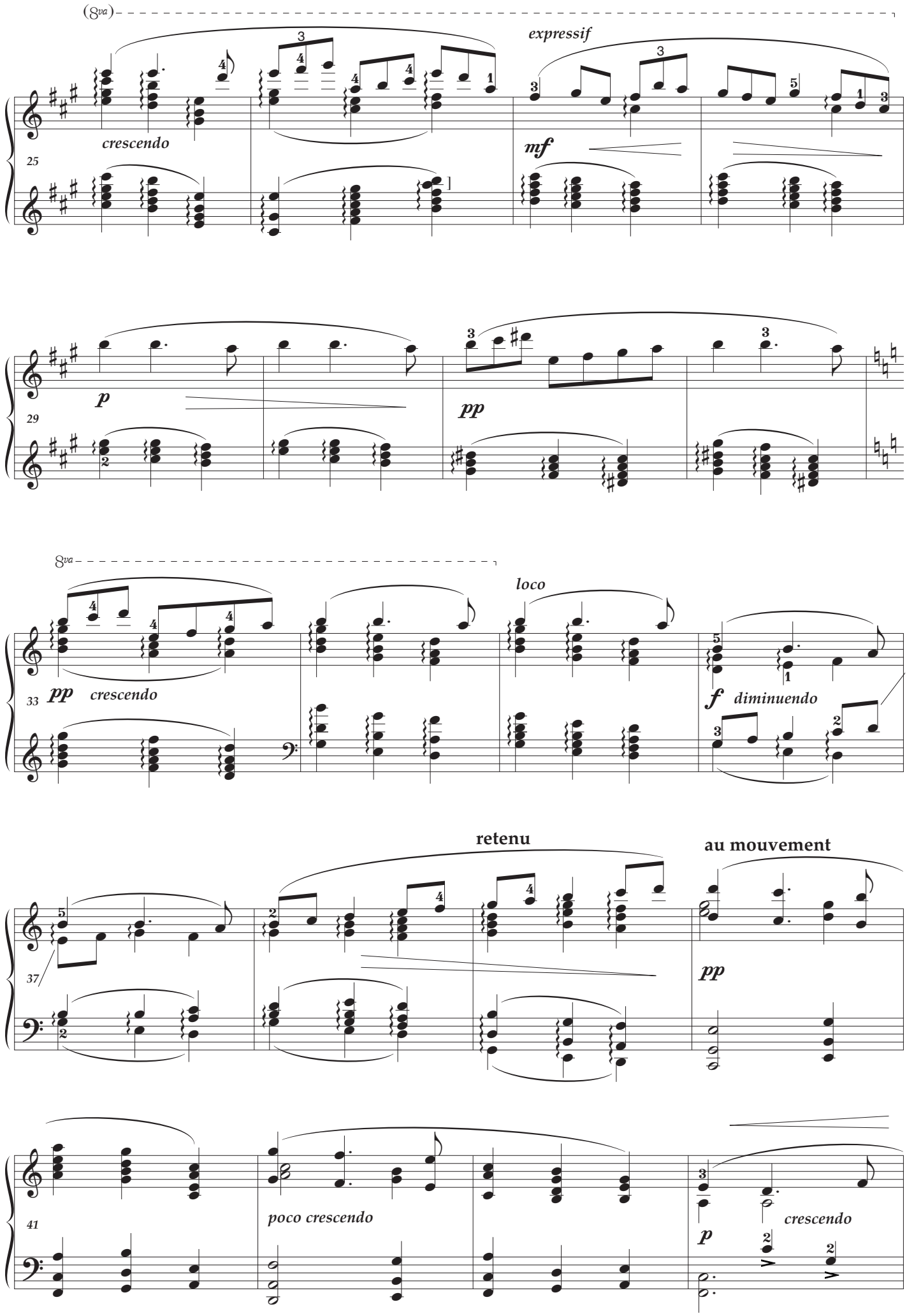

114
119
pp
124
p
129
mf

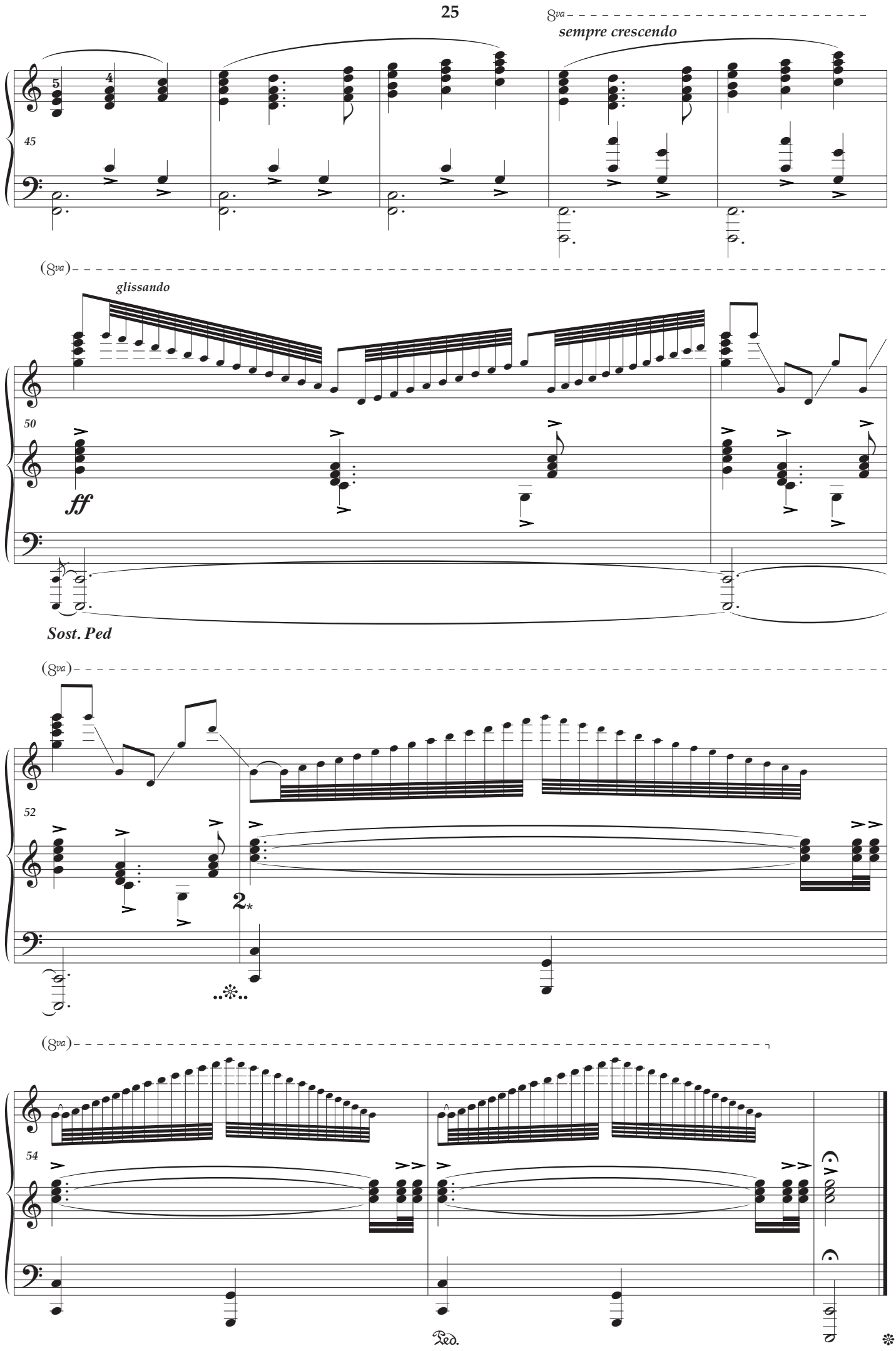

animez peu à peu
134
sempre crescendo
139
1er mouvement
(un peu plus lent)
Vif
8va
ff
[glissando lento]
pp m.d.
sourdine
pp très expressif
Ped.
(8va)
149
diminuendo
p


(8va)
rallentando - - -
154
pp
plus lent
8va
pp
159
p
*2
en dehors et très expressif
m.s.
m.d.
Sost. Ped
164
169
8va
pp
ppp
sourdine

Le Jardin Féerique




(8va)
expressif
crescendo
mf
25
p
pp
29
8va
loco
pp
crescendo
33
f
diminuendo
retenu
au mouvement
37
pp
poco crescendo
41
p
crescendo


8va
sempre crescendo
45
(8va)
glissando
50
ff
Sost. Ped
(8va)
52
2*
(8va)
54
Ped.

RAVEL
MA MÈRE I'OYE

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