Frédéric CHOPIN

F. Chopin

ÉTUDES Opus 10

Volume III: ***9 - 12***

F minor

A♭ major

E♭ major

C minor

Piano Practical Editions
pianopracticaleditions.com

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

Frédéric CHOPIN 1810 - 1849

ÉTUDES Opus 10

à son ami *Franz Liszt*

Volume III

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appendix 30

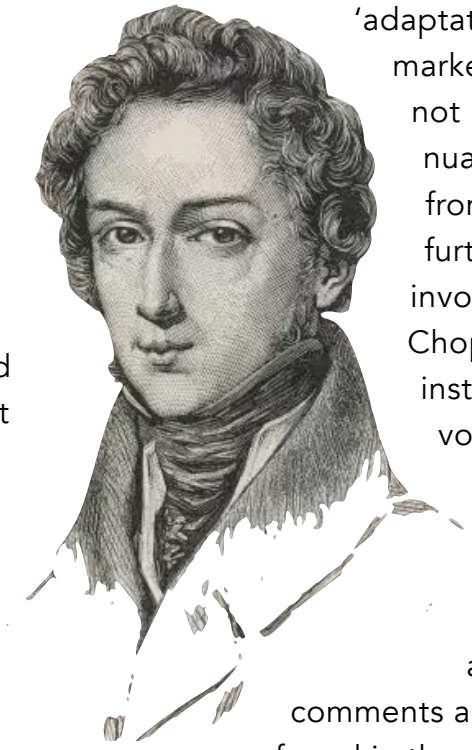
Some of Chopin's 24 studies were conceived when a precocious 19-year old, a period which saw his departure from Warsaw, arriving finally in Paris (via Dresden, Vienna, Linz, Munich and Stuttgart). A fairly early opus revealing the inspired creativity of this extraordinary composer before his short life was beset by complications of existence, relationships and ill-health in western Europe; all twelve studies from this collection were dedicated to Liszt.

Simultaneously published in France, England and Germany, they reveal conflicting details — and were then further tweaked by the composer. Quite apart from the futile quest for precision, and without wishing to encourage a 'free-for-all', a wide spectrum for individual readings is available.

To quote Jeffrey Kallberg — *Indeed, some of this sense of difference arose precisely because of Chopin's habits as a composer. He revised inveterately. Individual manuscripts of his works teem with cancellations and insertions. Multiple autographs of the same composition seldom agree. The texts of editions issued "simultaneously" in different countries during his lifetime frequently*

diverge. In sum, composition for Chopin was an open-ended process, unbounded by the nature and physical restrictions of the source or the limits of publication. However, it should not be overlooked that his sensitive organism and extraordinary improvisatory gift were constantly susceptible to the influence of spontaneous and intuitive creative impulses.

Piano Practical Editions



While a number of commercial editions vie with each other to produce a 'definitive' version*, I present an entirely personal interpretation of these *études*, created nearly 200 years ago and still probably the most significant contribution to the pleasure and frustration of thousands, dare I say millions, of aspiring pianists worldwide.

Cortot, who was usually most eloquent in his appraisal of Chopin's works, limits himself to a very short paragraph:

> *We did not wish to overload the text with any æsthetic observation. It is just possible to establish rules in hand and finger technique for artistic expression. We cannot equally define personality and taste.*

This edition attempts to underline the artistic qualities of these highly imaginative studies, before reviewing the multiple technical problems they pose.

It should be mentioned that the metronome speeds indicated seem to have been added after the autographs. Maelzel's latest gadget (1815) was a musician's *must-have*, but In general *tempi* are nearly always considerably faster than is musically desirable and reasonable. Although I dislike to commit myself, suggestions are included. Much thought has been given to alternative hand distribution and for what it is worth, my own individual fingering.

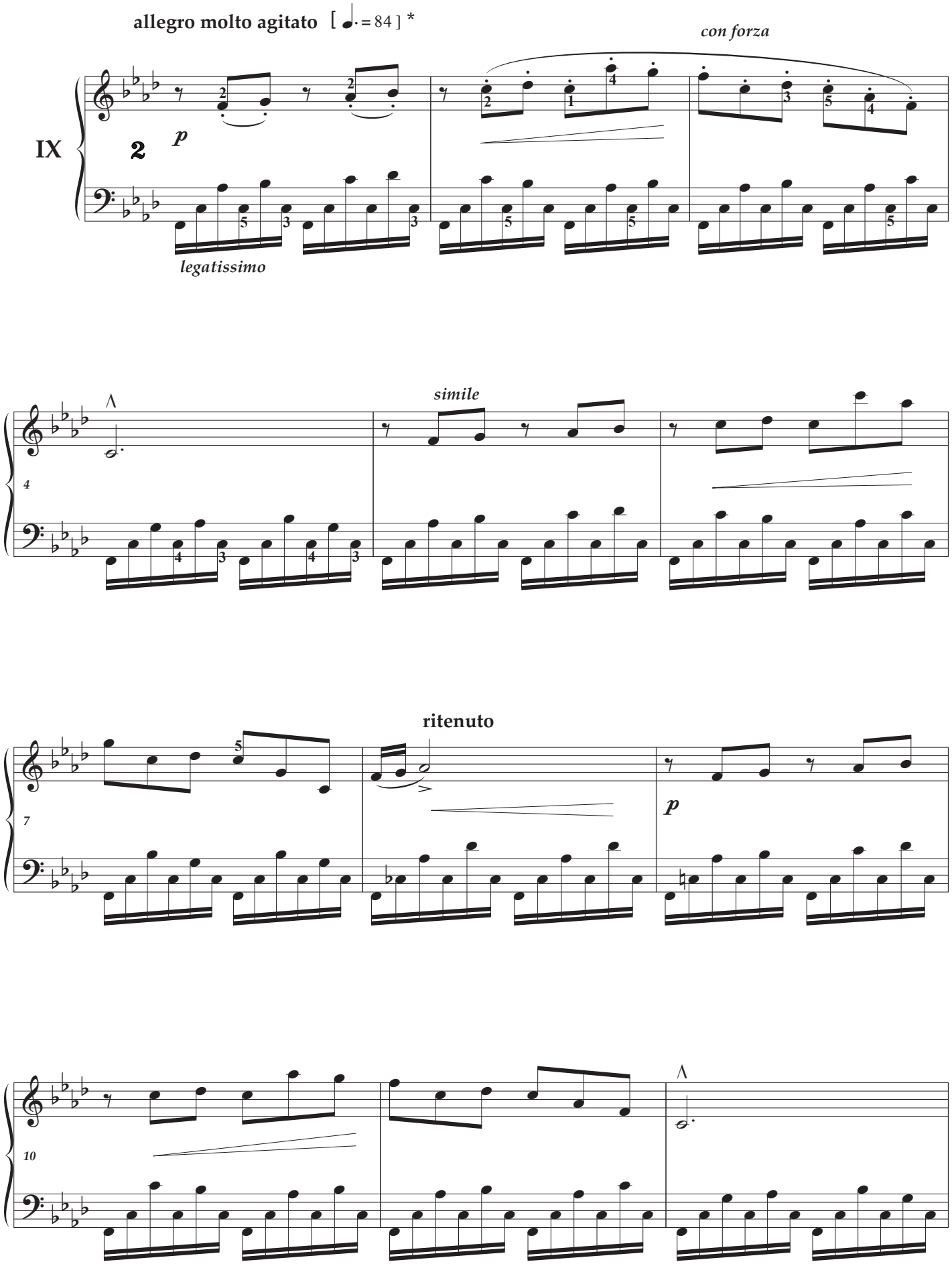
With apprehension, ***PPE*** admits to 'adaptations' of the text (usually marked with an asterisk) and does not reproduce every accent, nuance and expression mark from any particular source. A further consideration must involve a comparison between Chopin's Pleyel and modern instruments: there is less tone volume, the action is lighter, keys are smaller (the octave span is narrower) and the key dip is eight instead of ten millimetres on a modern piano. A few comments and afterthoughts can be found in the appendix on page 30.

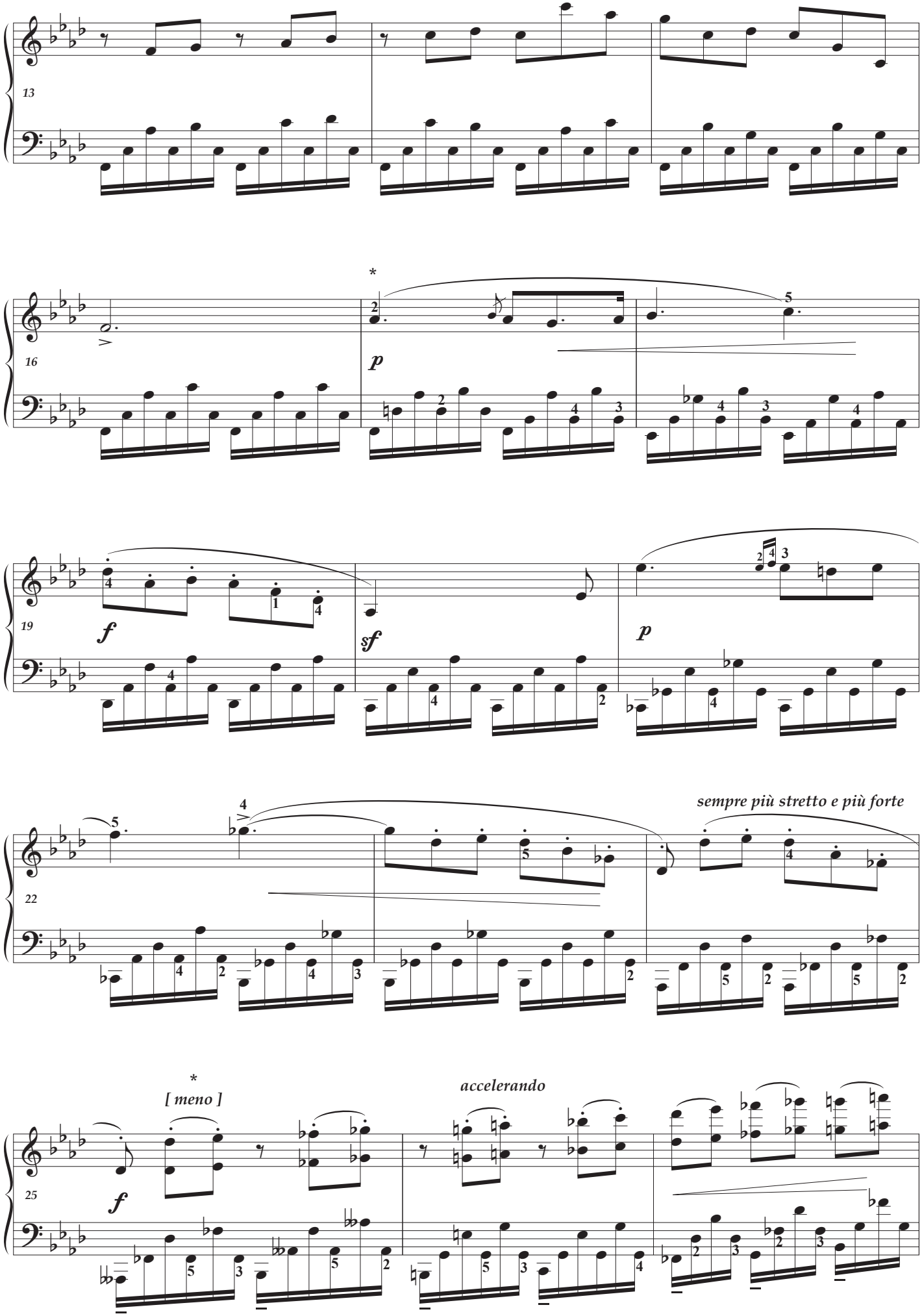
While each *étude* presents one or more specific technical challenges, the music presented is often emotionally charged and always very satisfying to study. Beyond mere transcendental exercises, they have become indispensable repertoire for self-discovery.

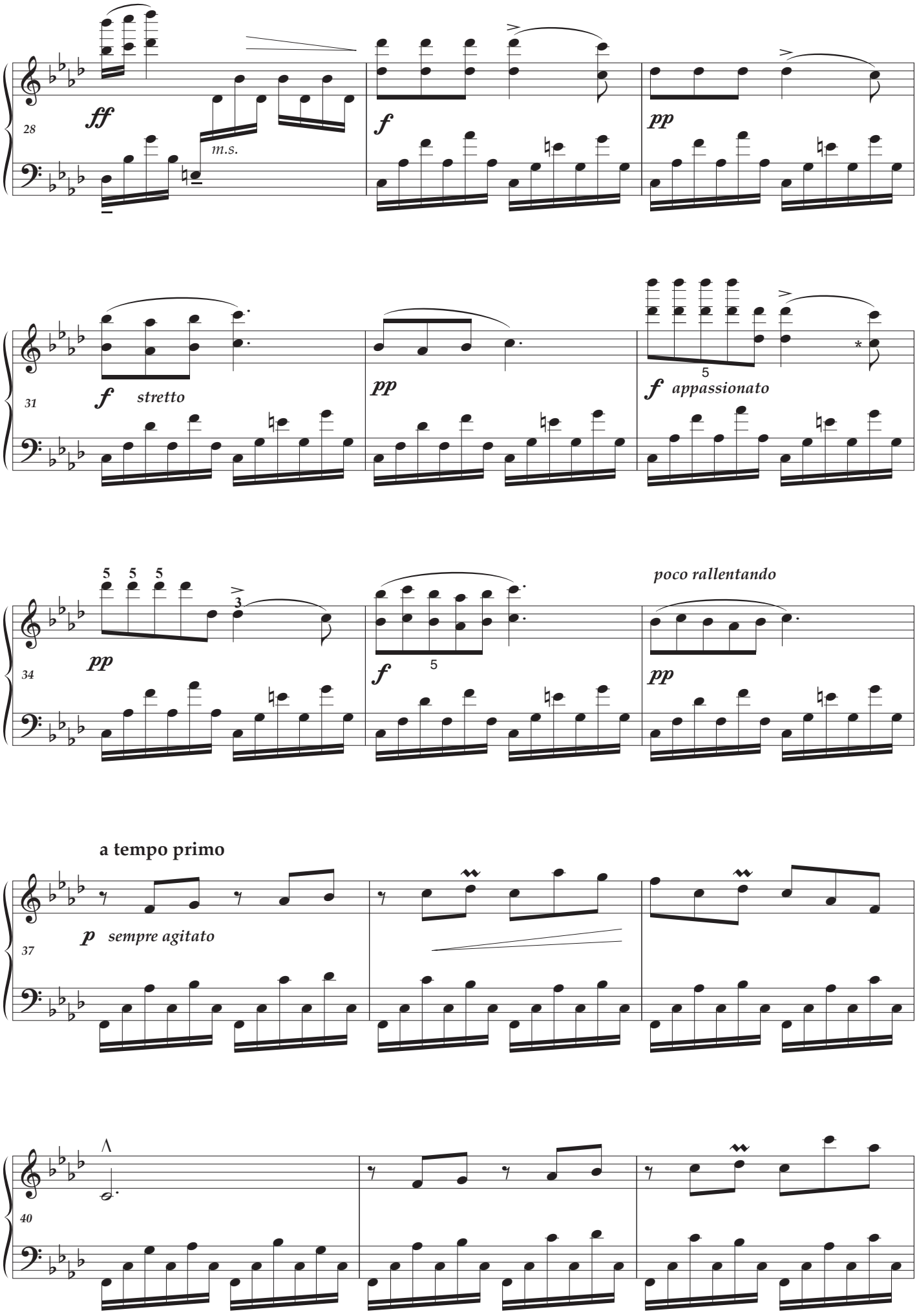
Ray Alston

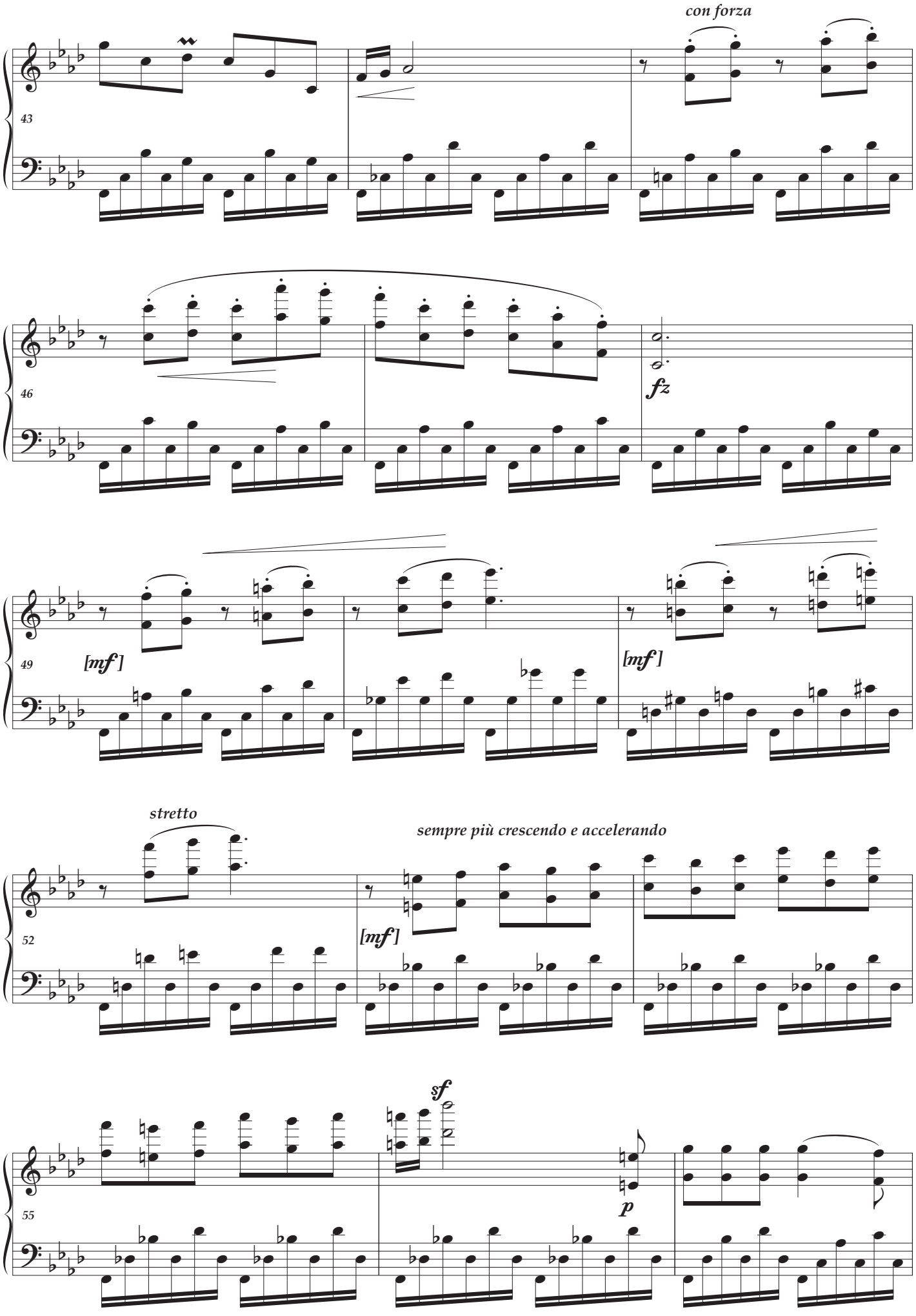
January 2023

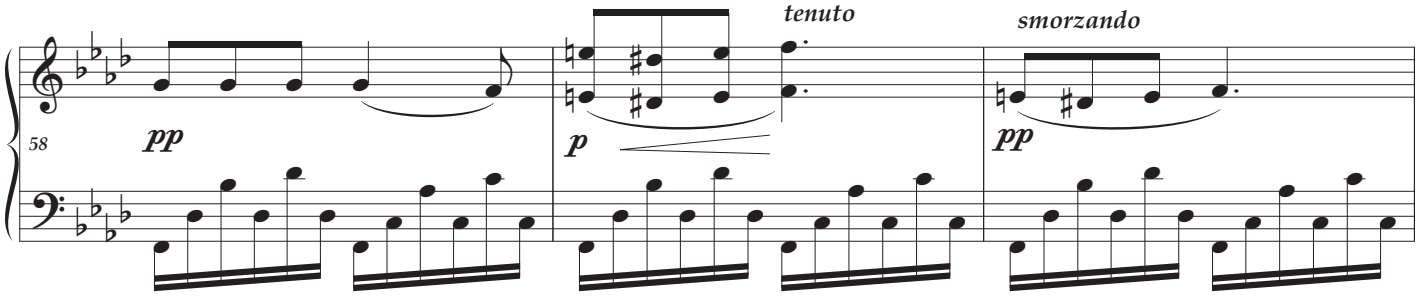
** There are no less than 24 editions of the studies, many claiming to be Urtext, including those of Paderewski, Fontana, Reinecke, Klindworth, von Bülow, Kullak, Mikuli, Friedman, Friedheim, de Pachmann, Casella, Joseffy and Badura-Skoda.*

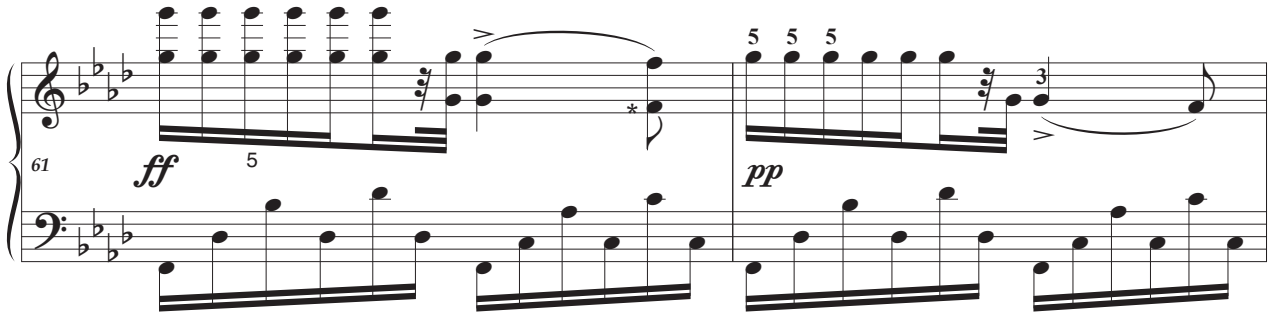

allegro molto agitato [♩. = 84] *
con forza
IX
2
p
legatissimo
simile
4
ritenuto
7
p
10

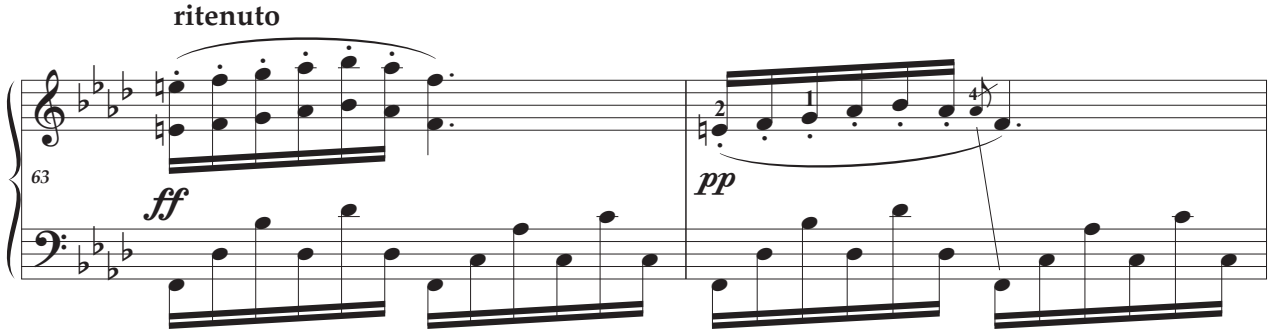

13
16
*
p
19
f
sf
p
22
sempre più stretto e più forte
25
*
[meno]
f
accelerando

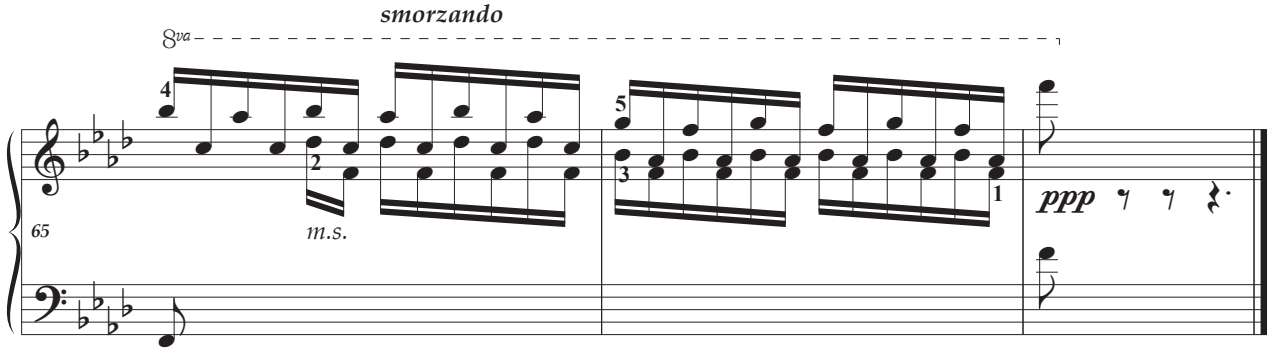

28
ff
m.s.
f
pp
31
f
stretto
pp
5
f
appassionato
34
5 5 5
3
pp
f
5
poco rallentando
pp
a tempo primo
37
p
sempre agitato
40


con forza
43
46
fz
49
[mf]
[mf]
stretto
sempre più crescendo e accelerando
52
[mf]
sf
55
p

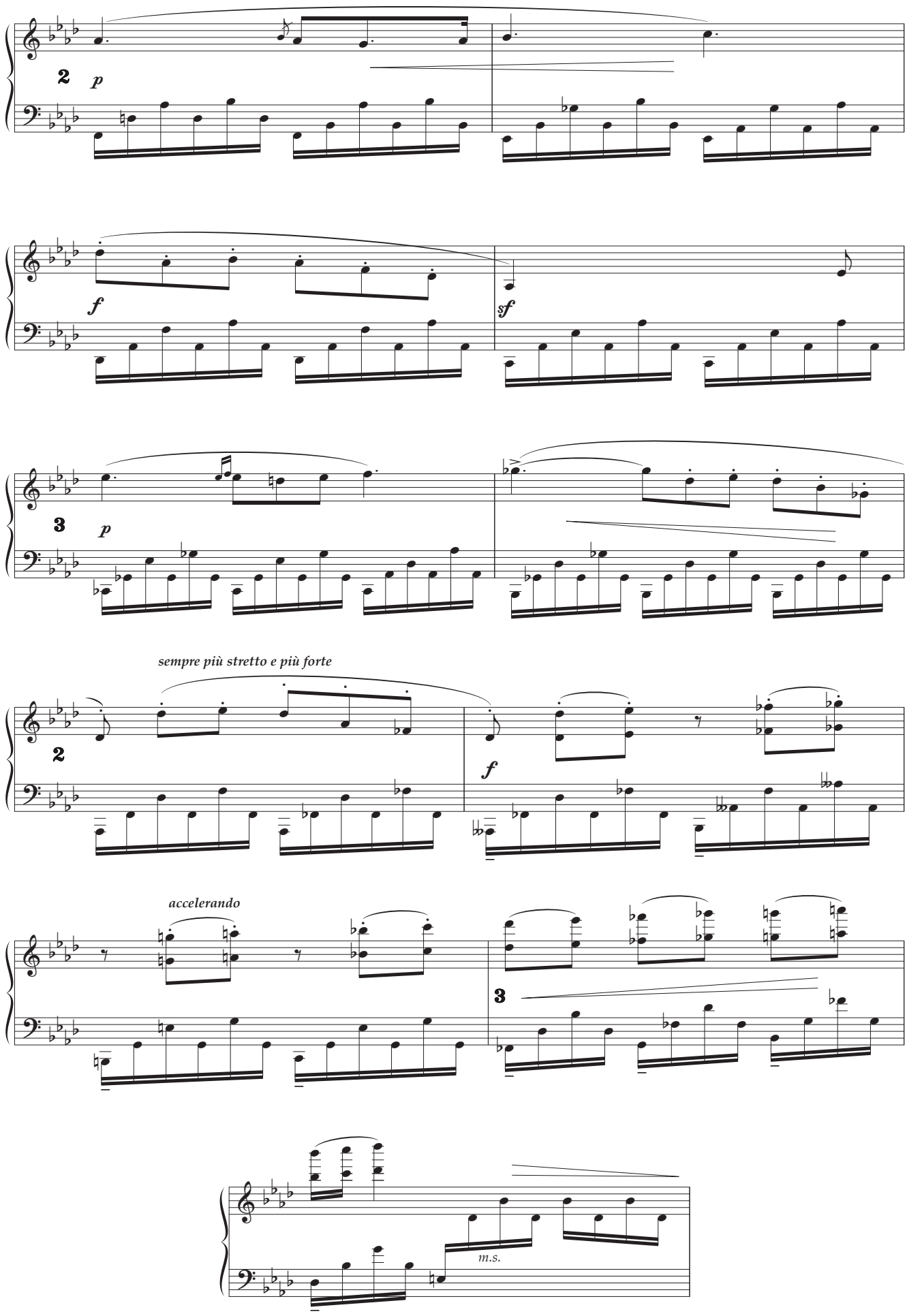

58
pp
tenuto
p
smorzando
pp

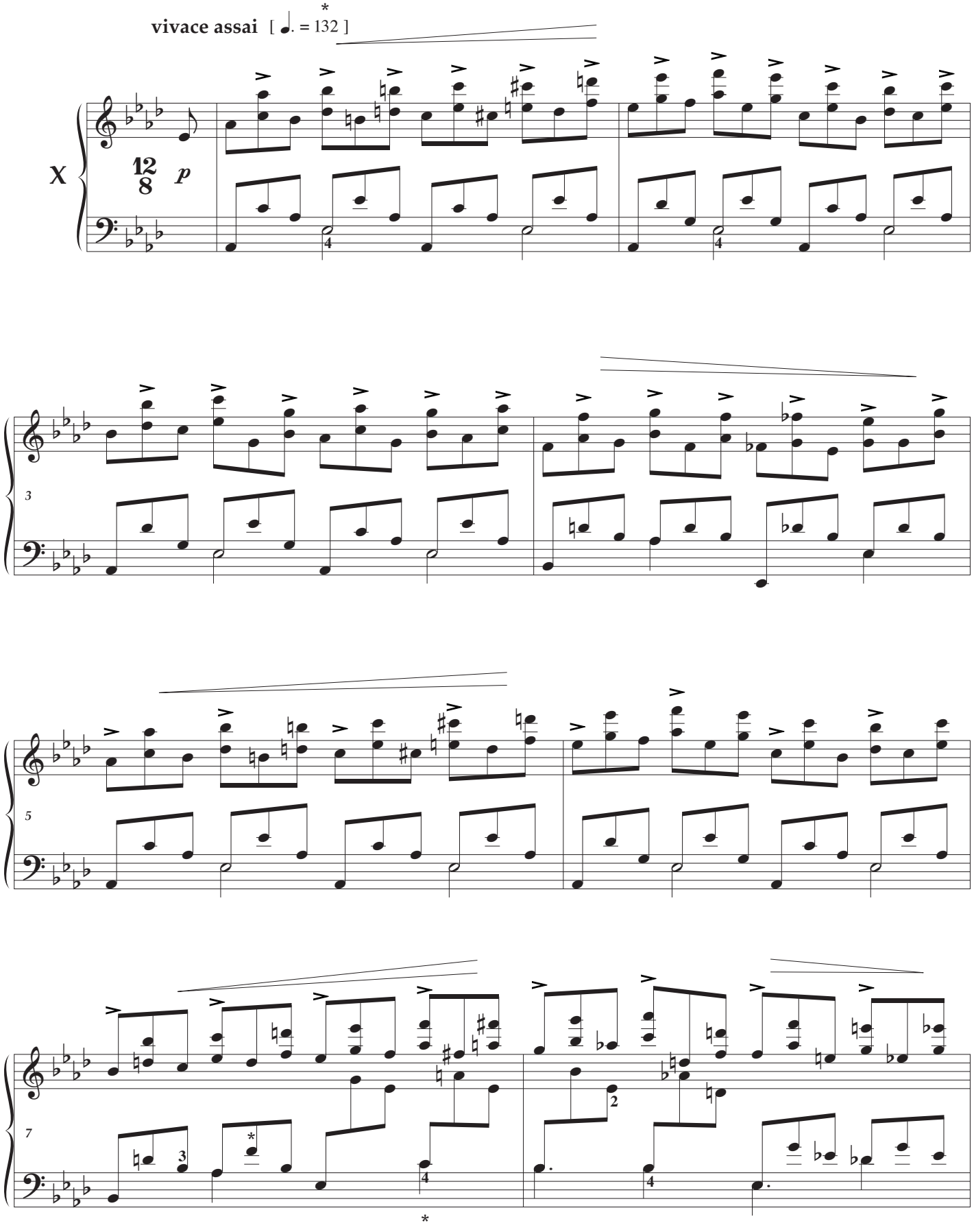

61
ff
5
5 5 5
3
pp

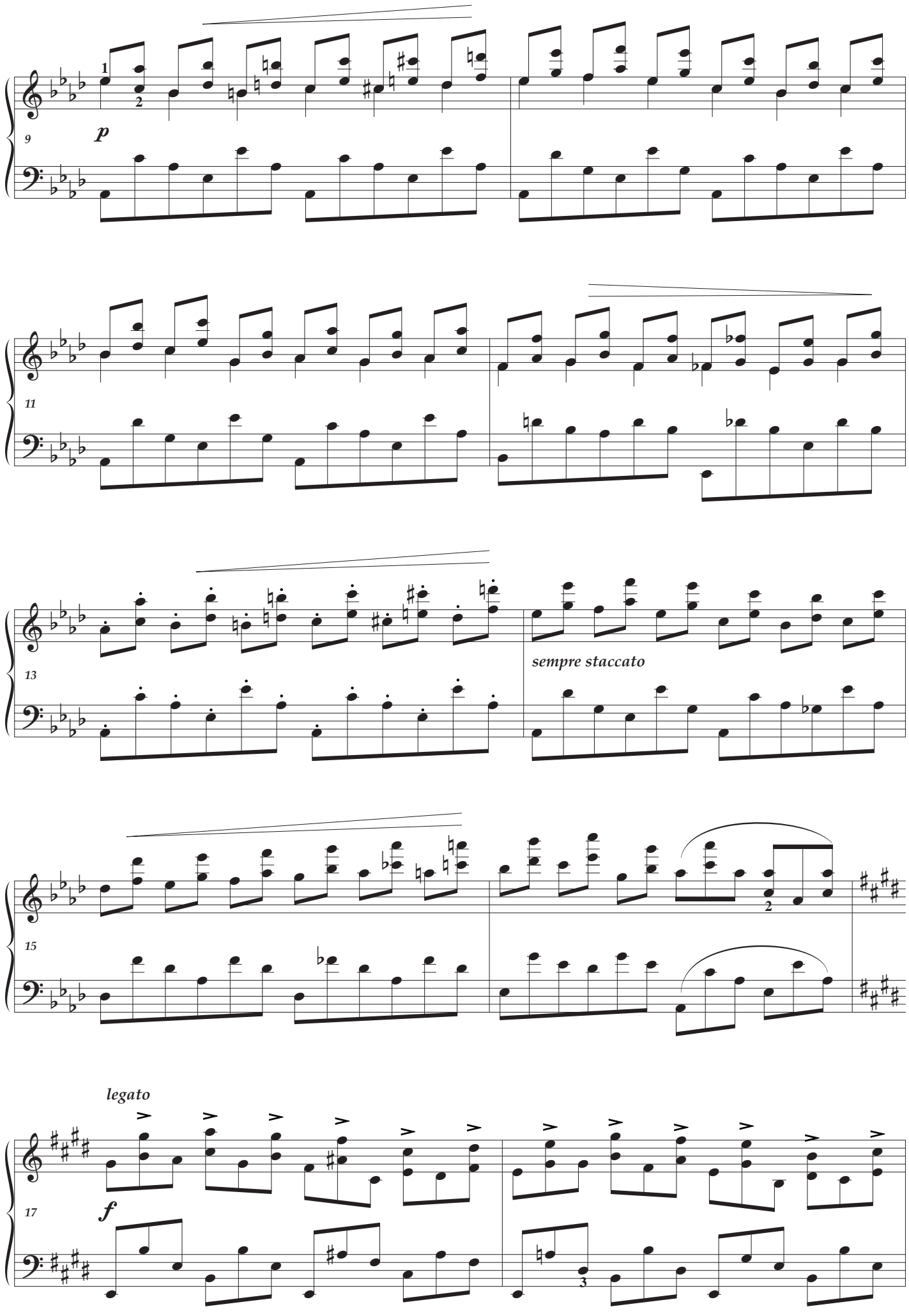

ritenuto
63
ff
2
1
4
pp

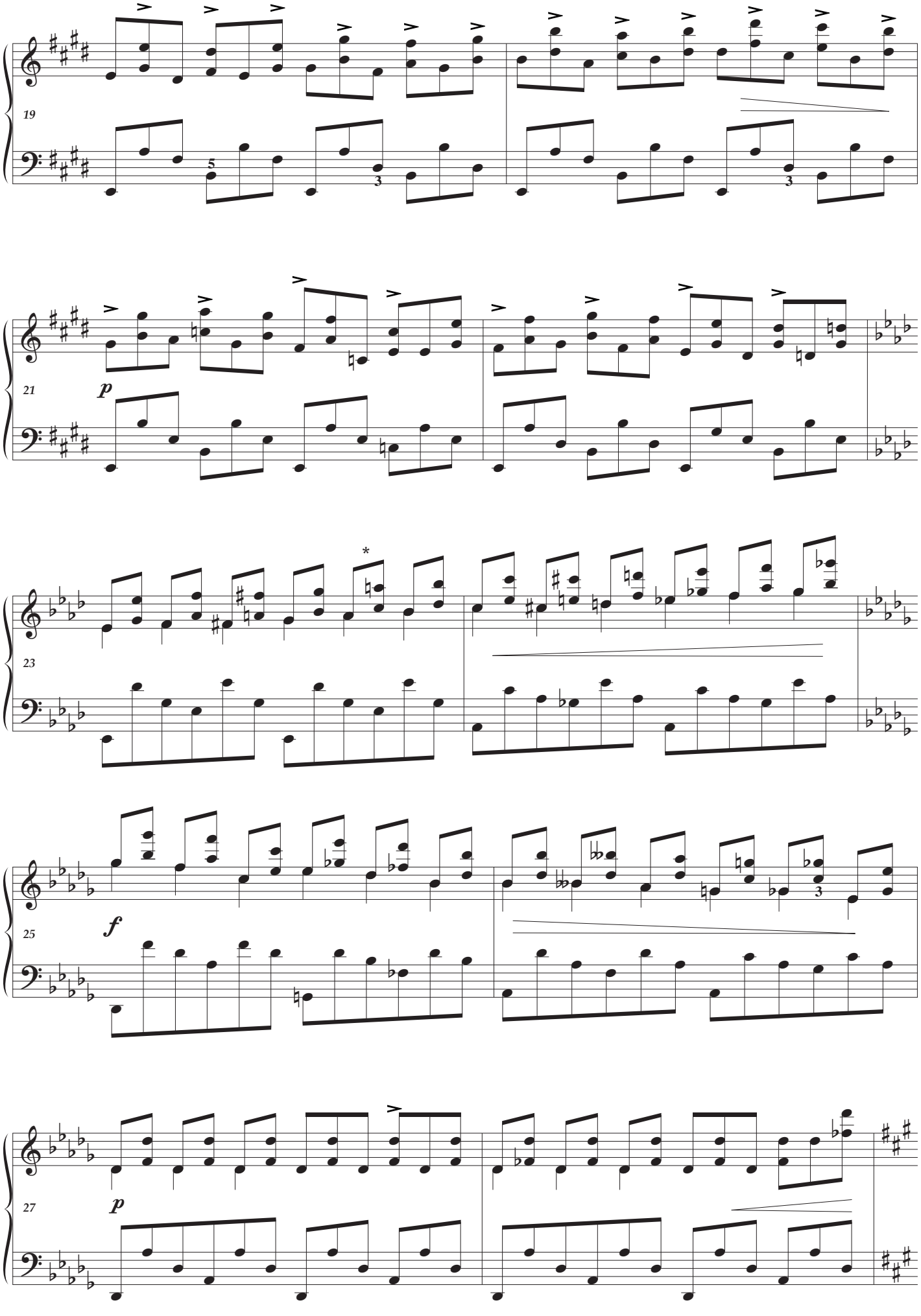

smorzando
8va
4
2
m.s.
5
3
1
65
ppp

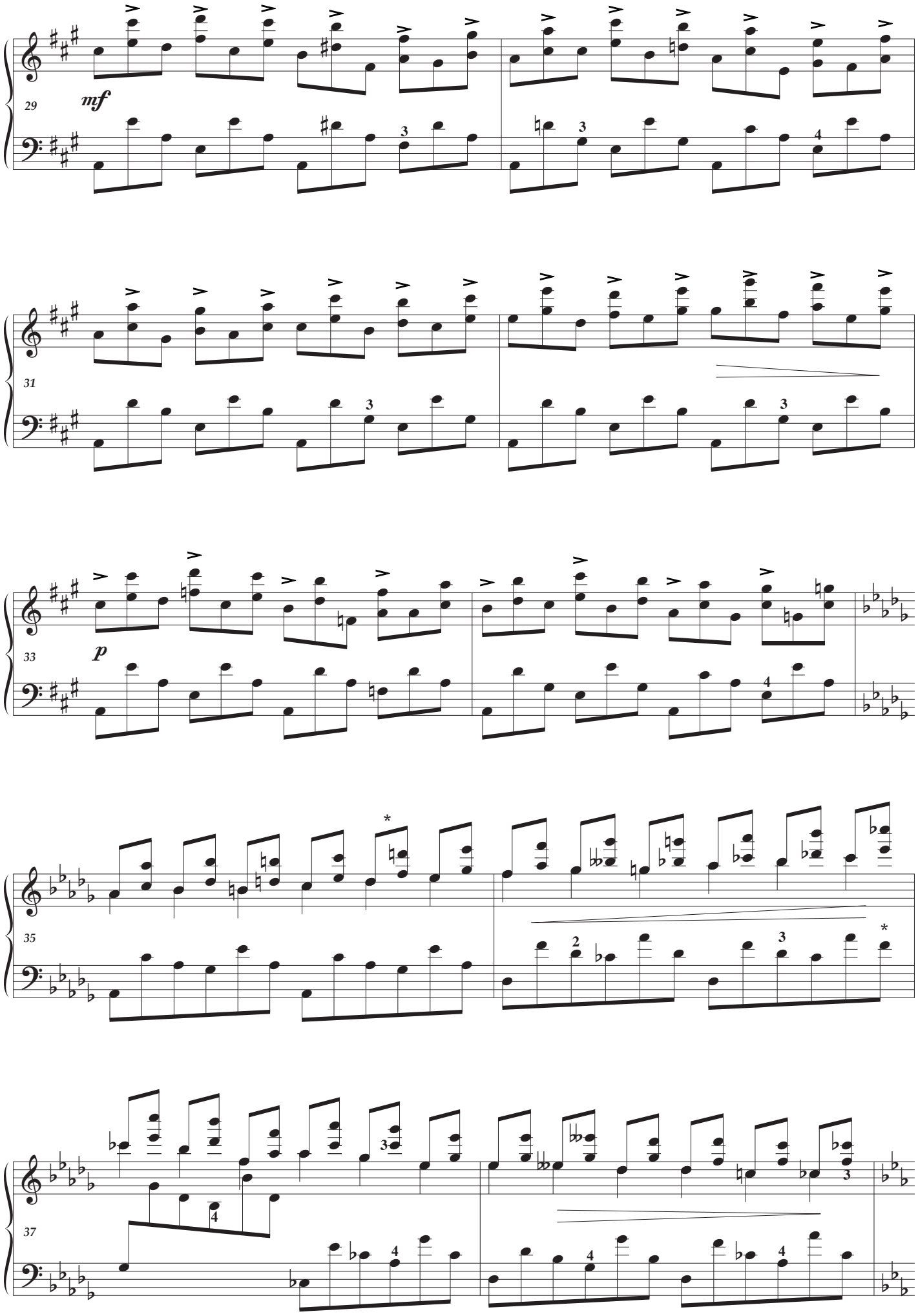
17-28 presented with an alternative metre

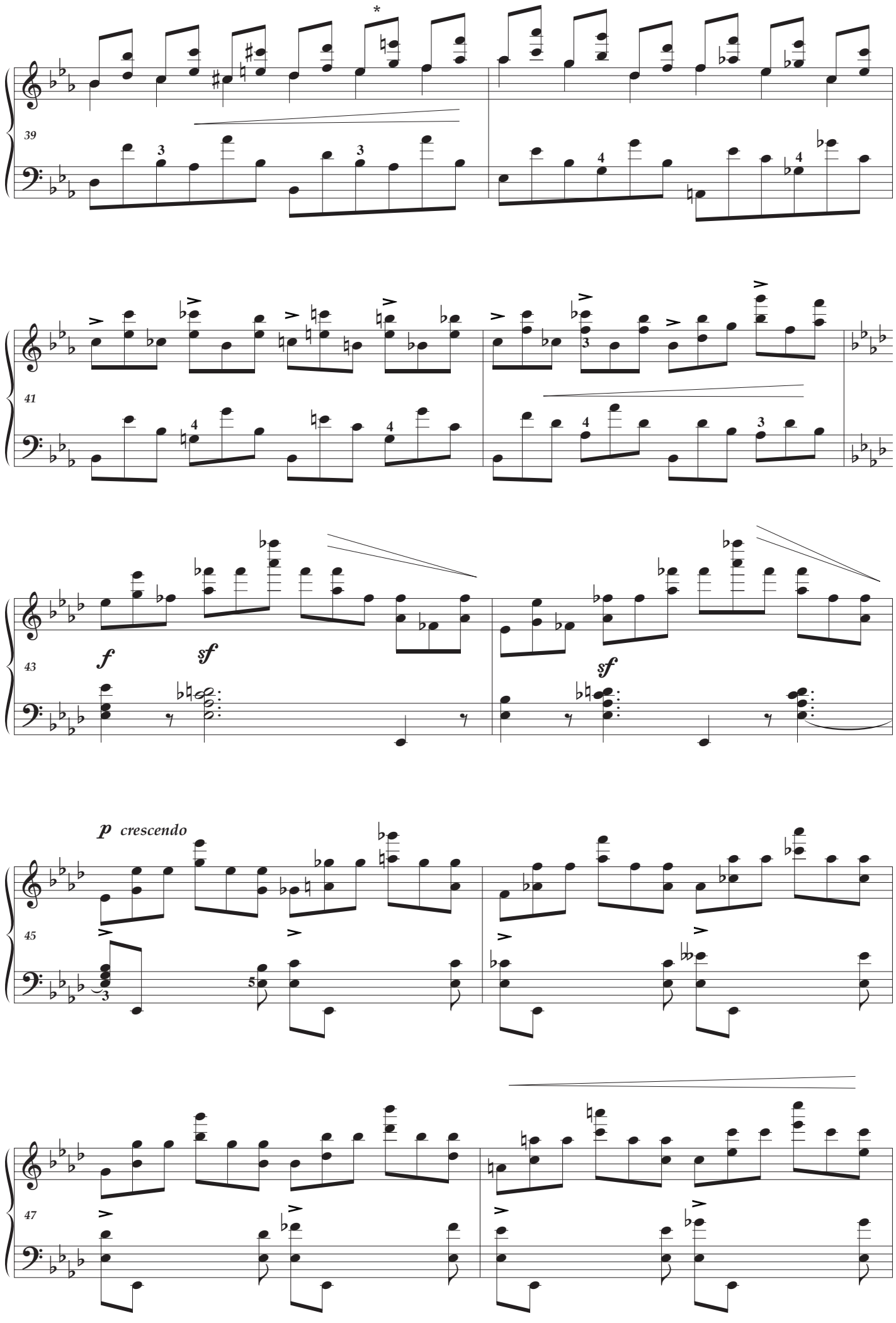


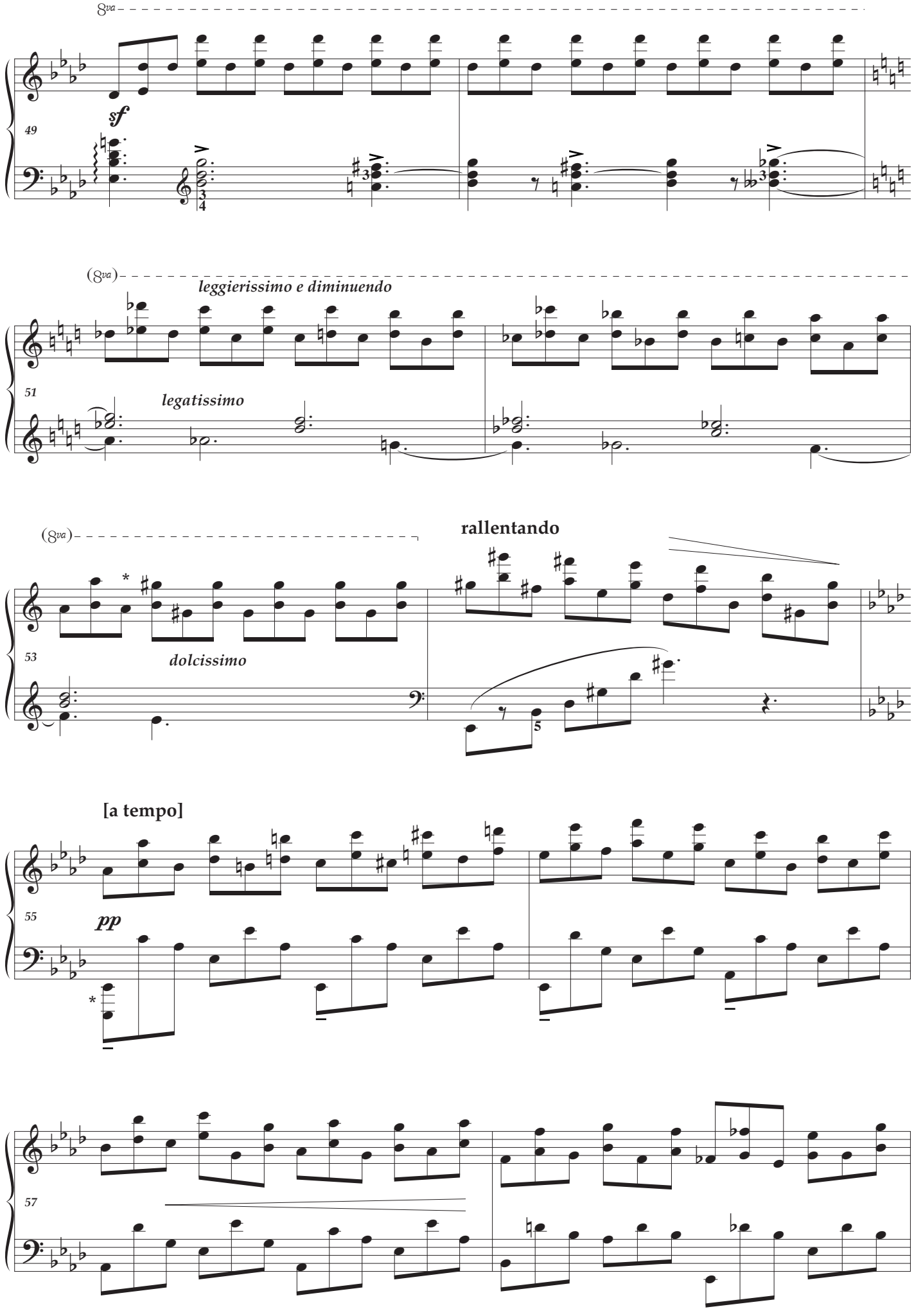

vivace assai [♩. = 132]
*
X
12/8
p
3
5
7
*

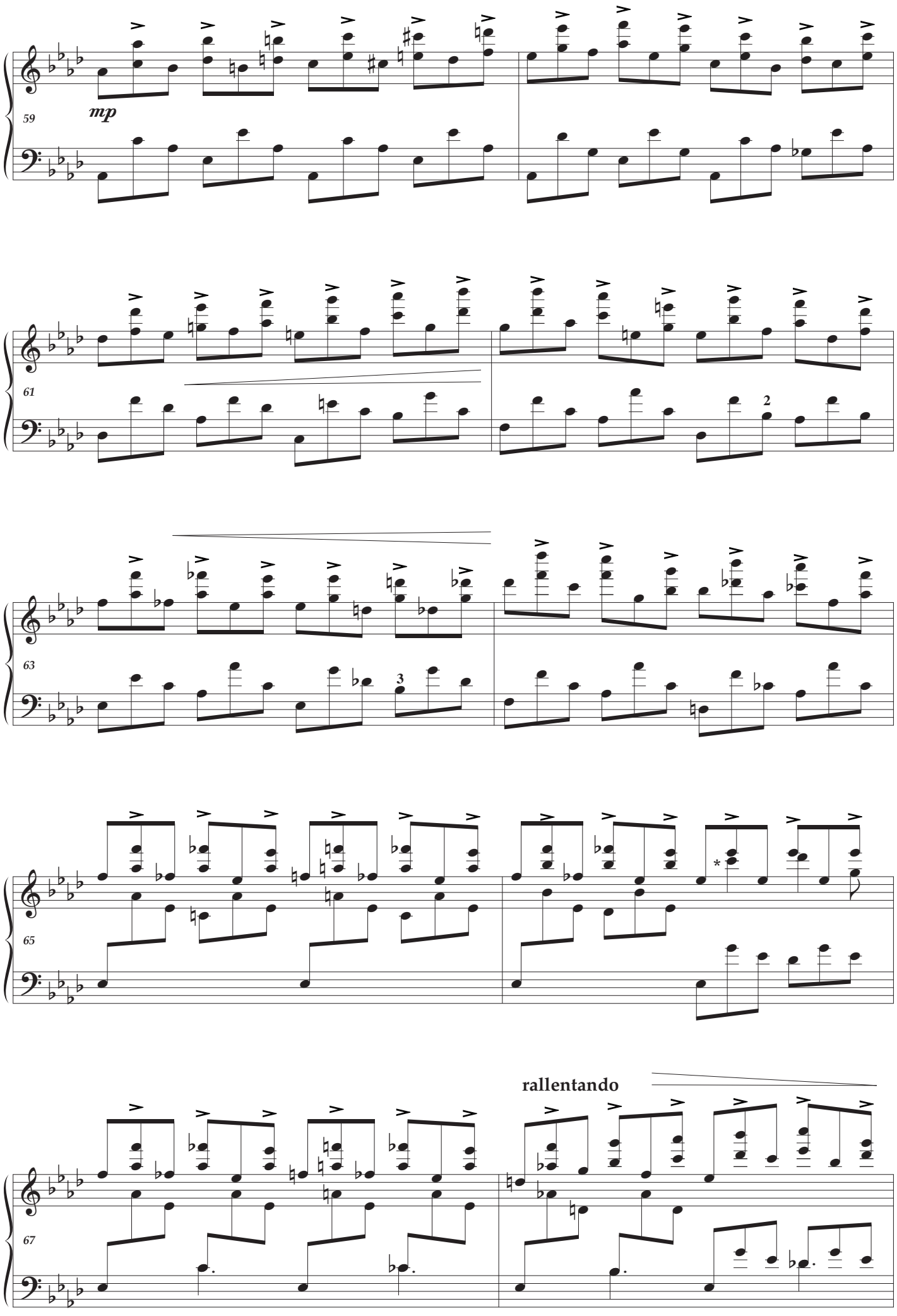

9
p
11
13
sempre staccato
15
legato
17
f


19
21
p
23
*
25
f
27
p

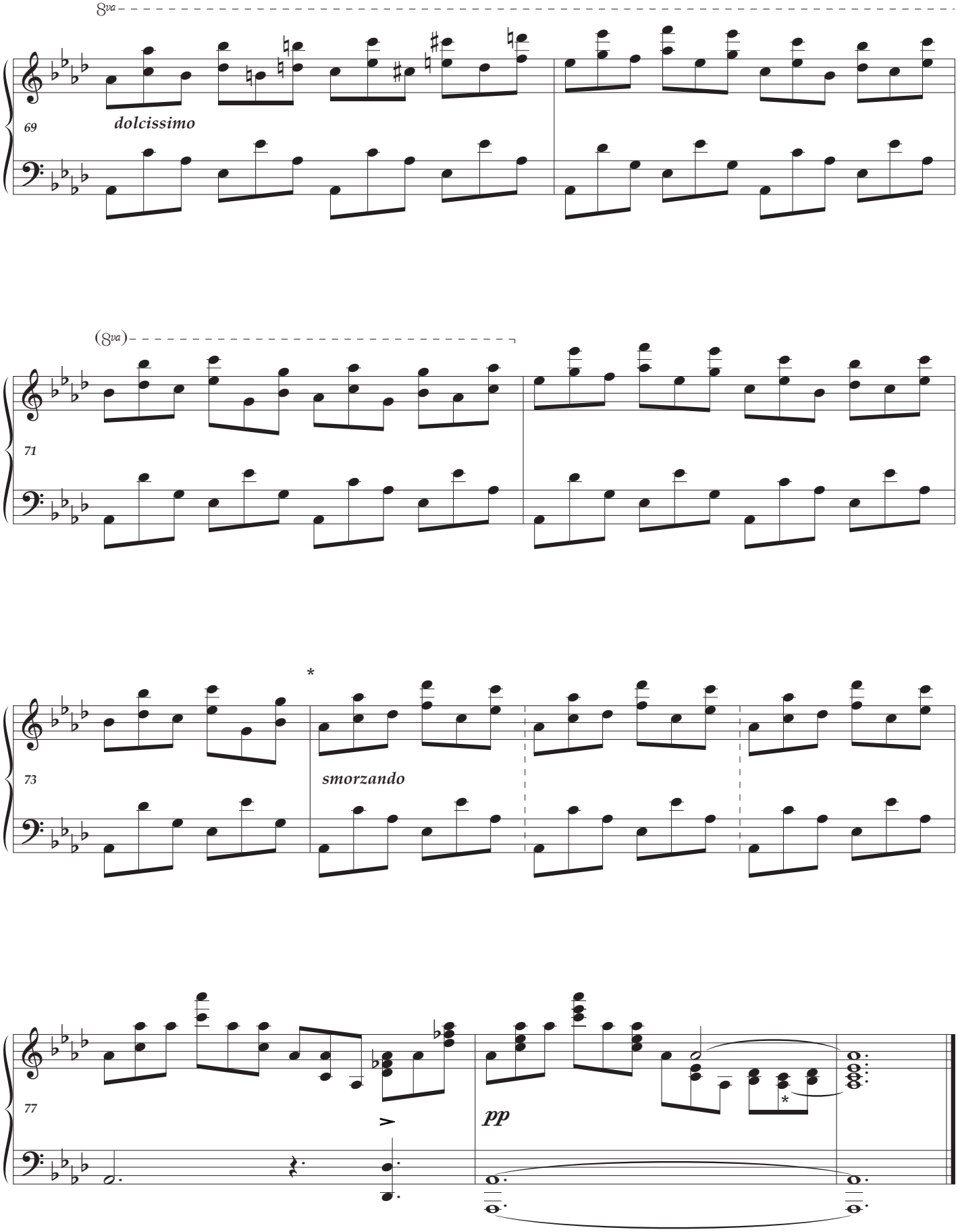

29
mf
31
33
p
35
37


39
41
43
f
sf
sf
45
p crescendo
47


8va
sf
49
(8va)
leggierissimo e diminuendo
51
legatissimo
(8va)
rallentando
53
dolcissimo
[a tempo]
55
pp
57

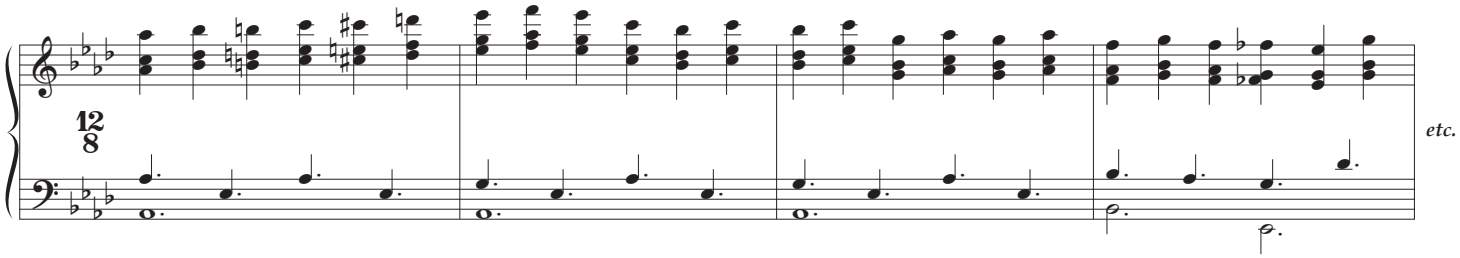

59
mp
61
2
63
3
65
*
rallentando
67
*

a tempo

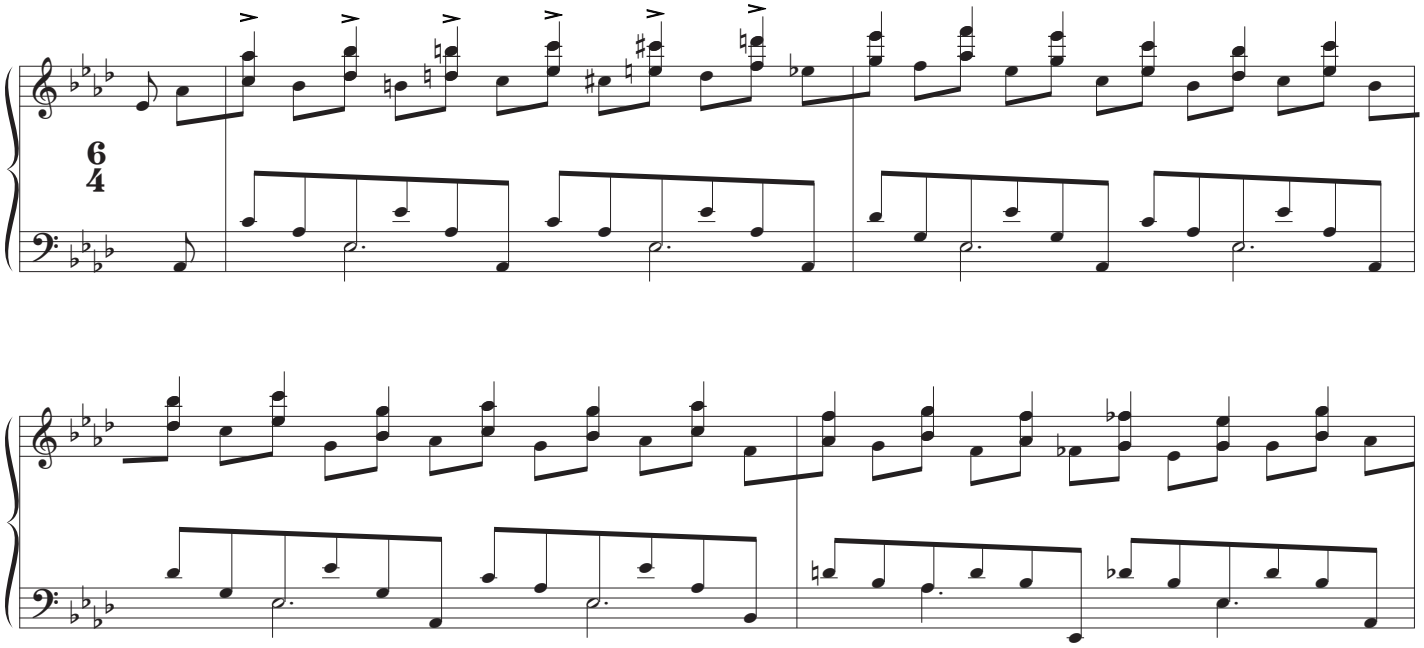


preparatory exercises

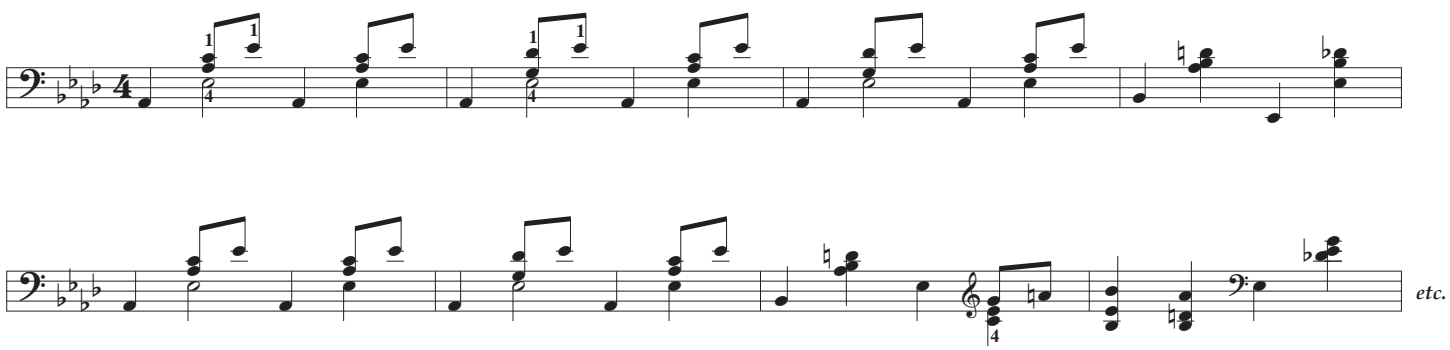
try playing the entire piece in melodic chords as follows, taking pleasure in the exotic modulations



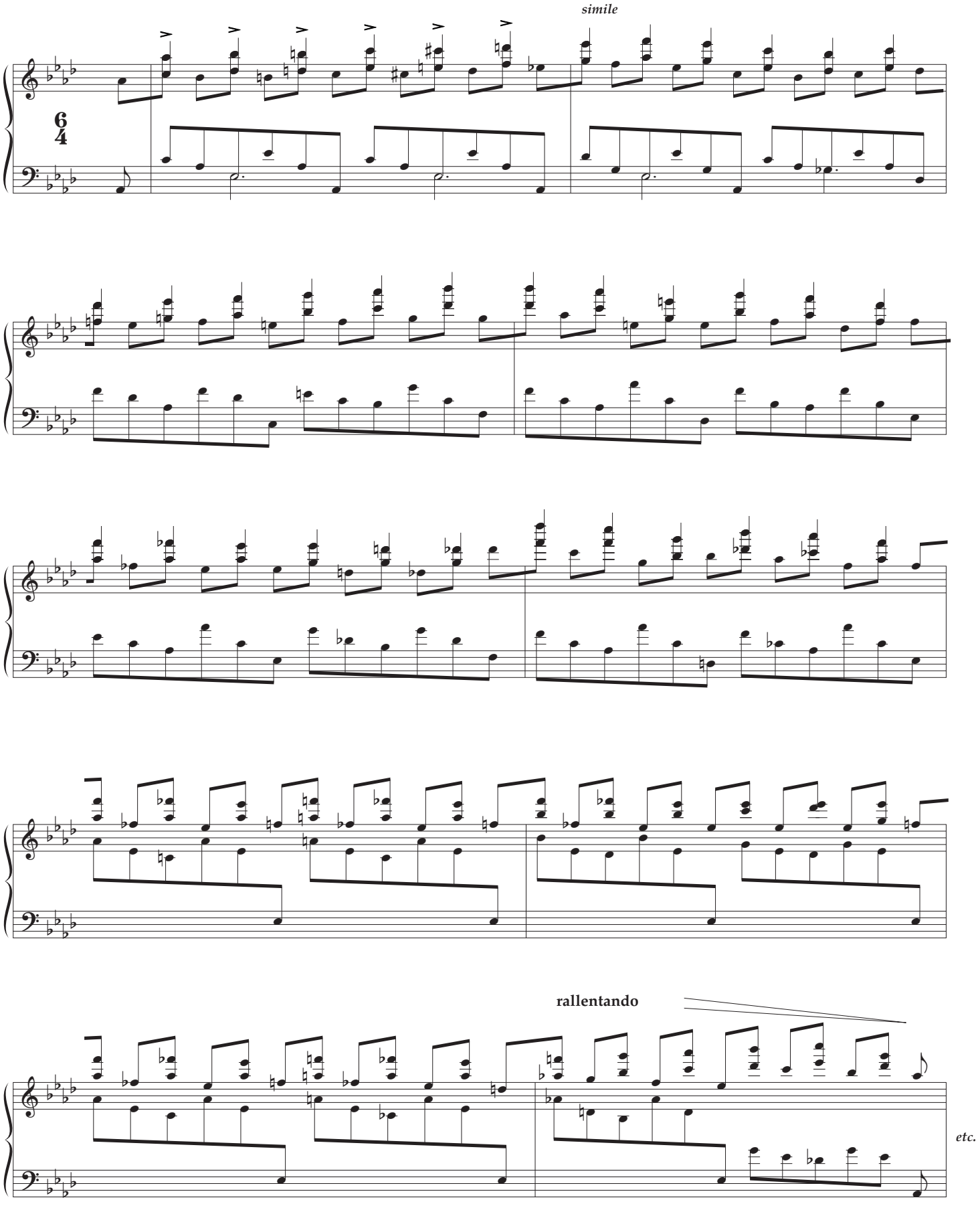
the opening presented in 6/4 with accents falling on the main beats

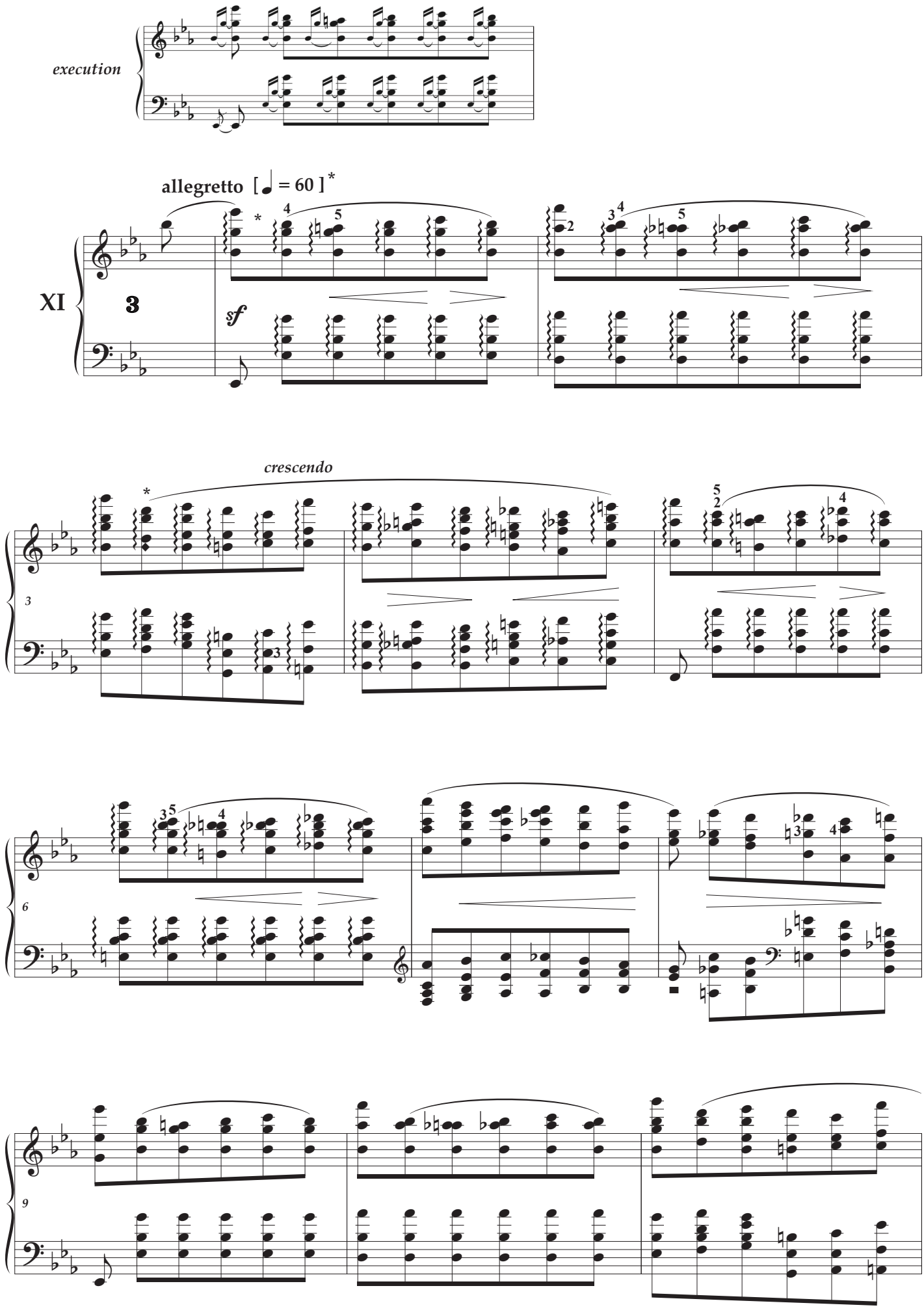


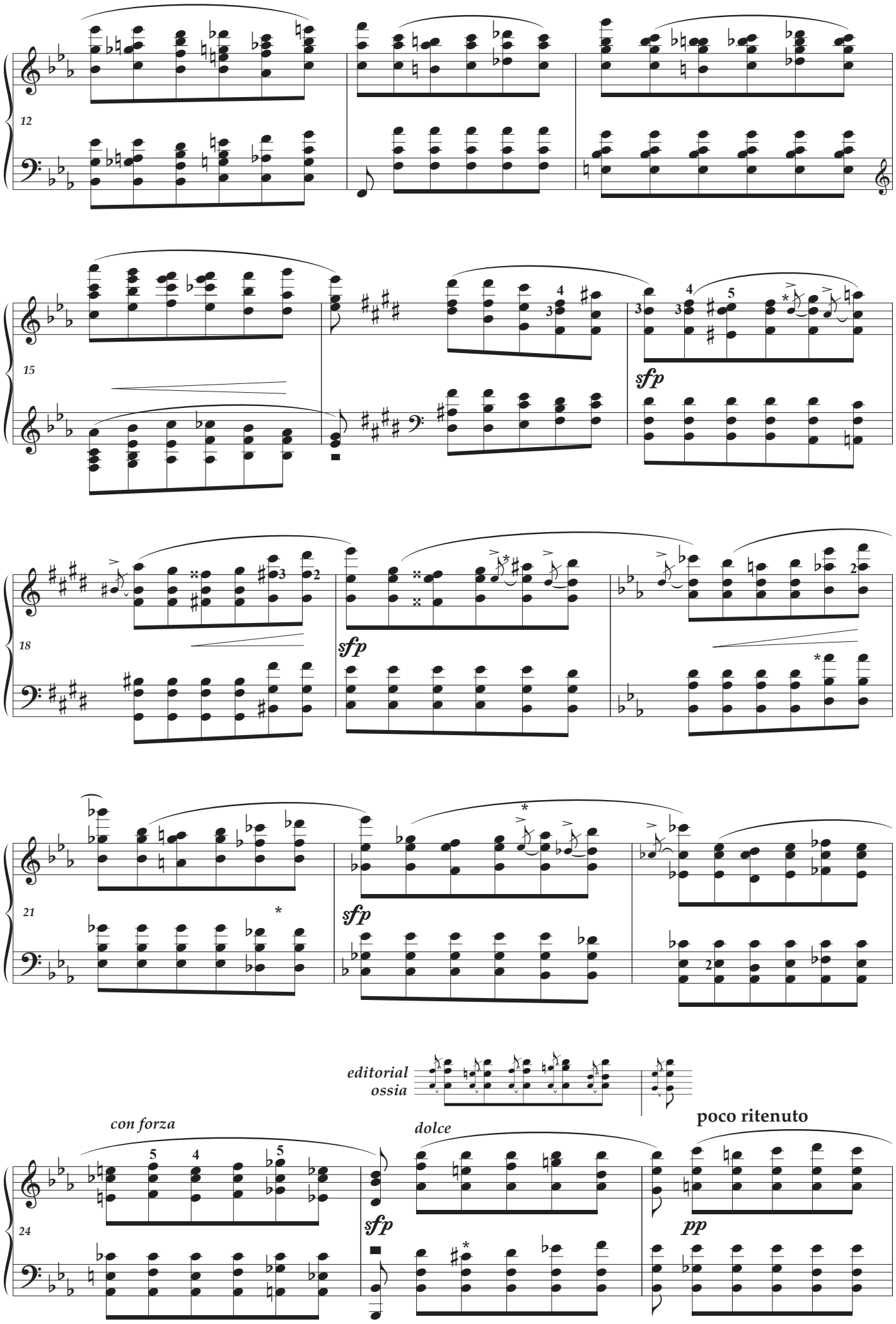
for the left hand

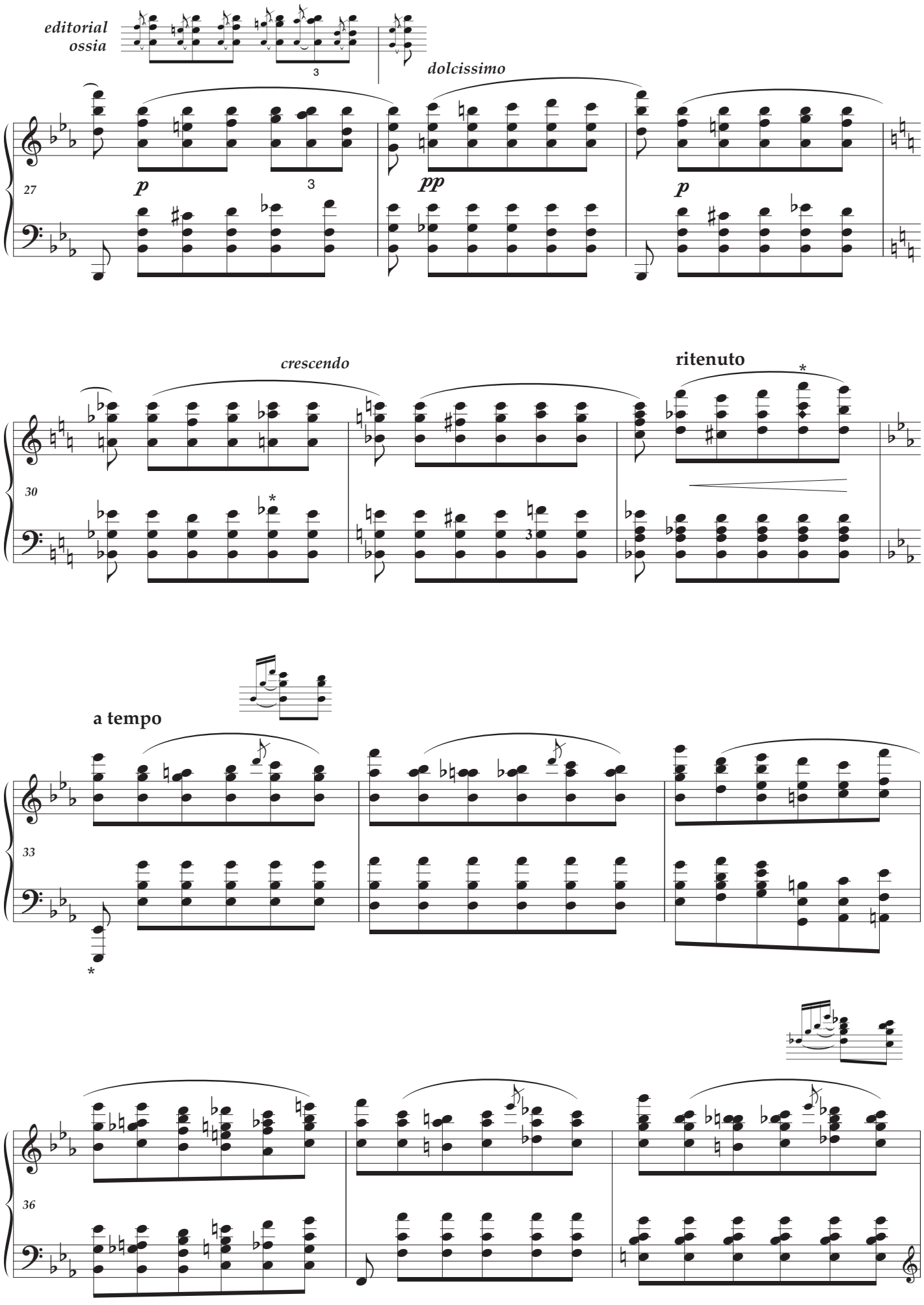


finally, after the recapitulation (59-68) it can be instructive to modify the accentuation as in the opening bars

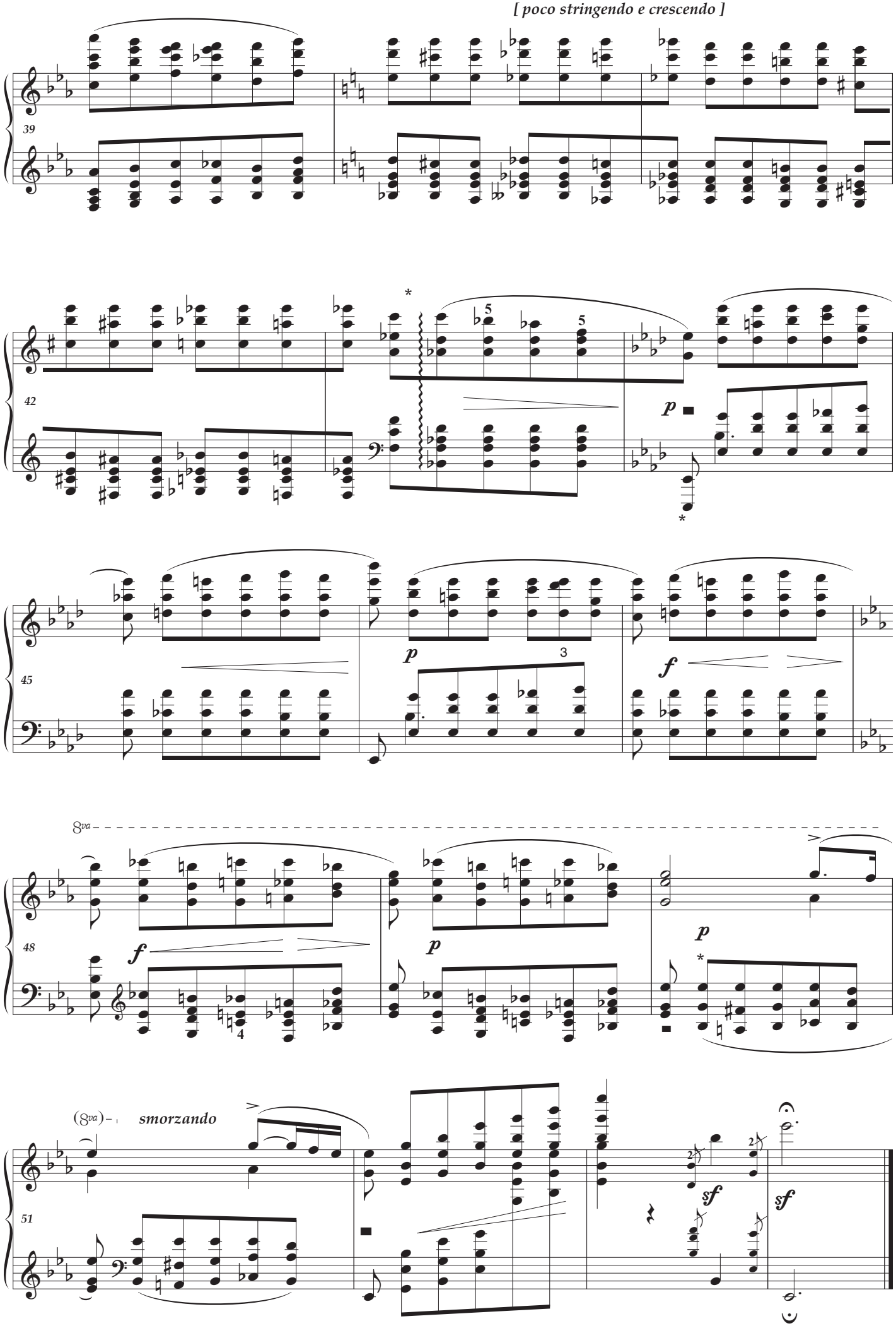


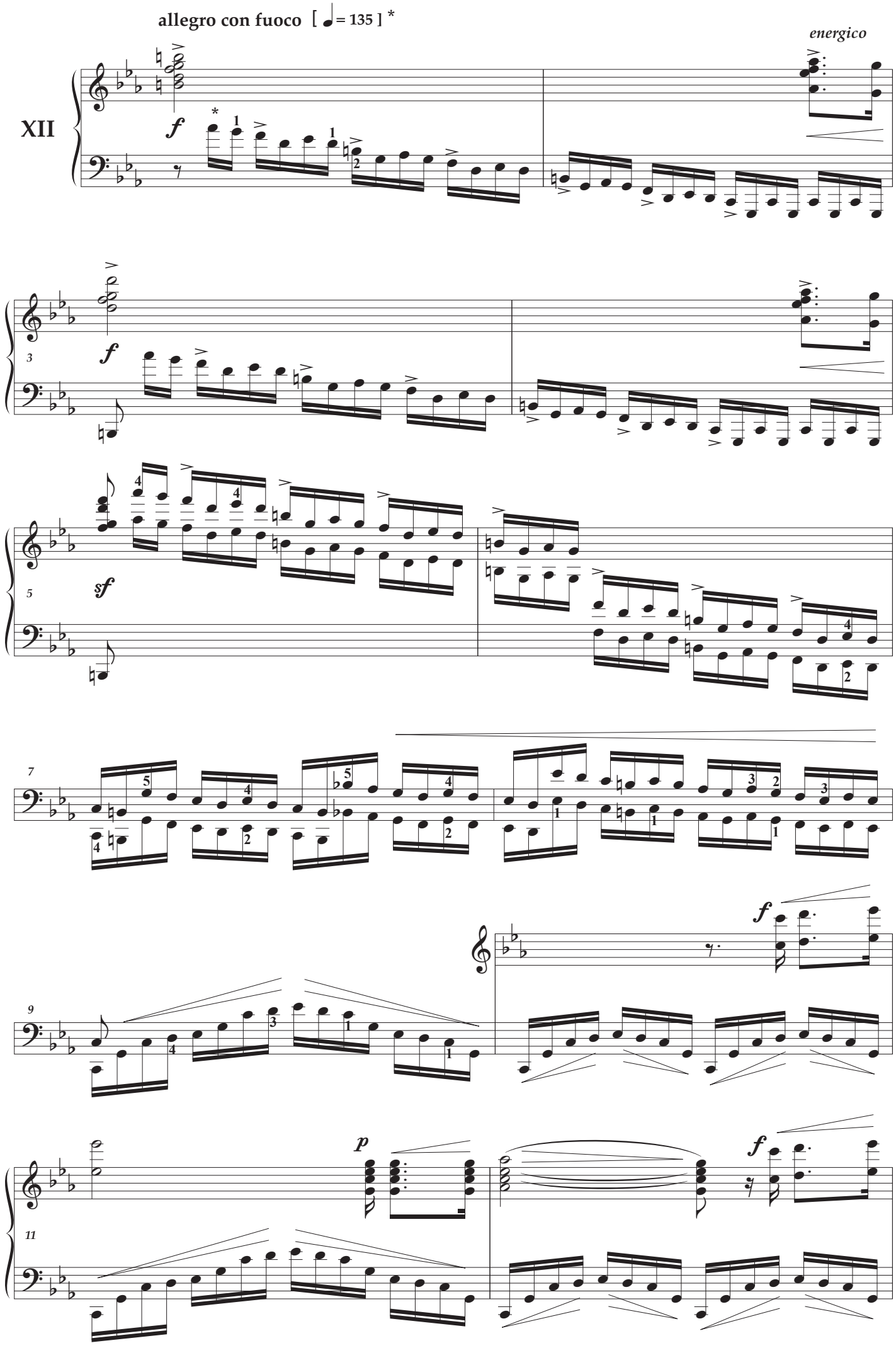

execution
allegretto [= 60]*
XI
3
sf
crescendo
3
6
9

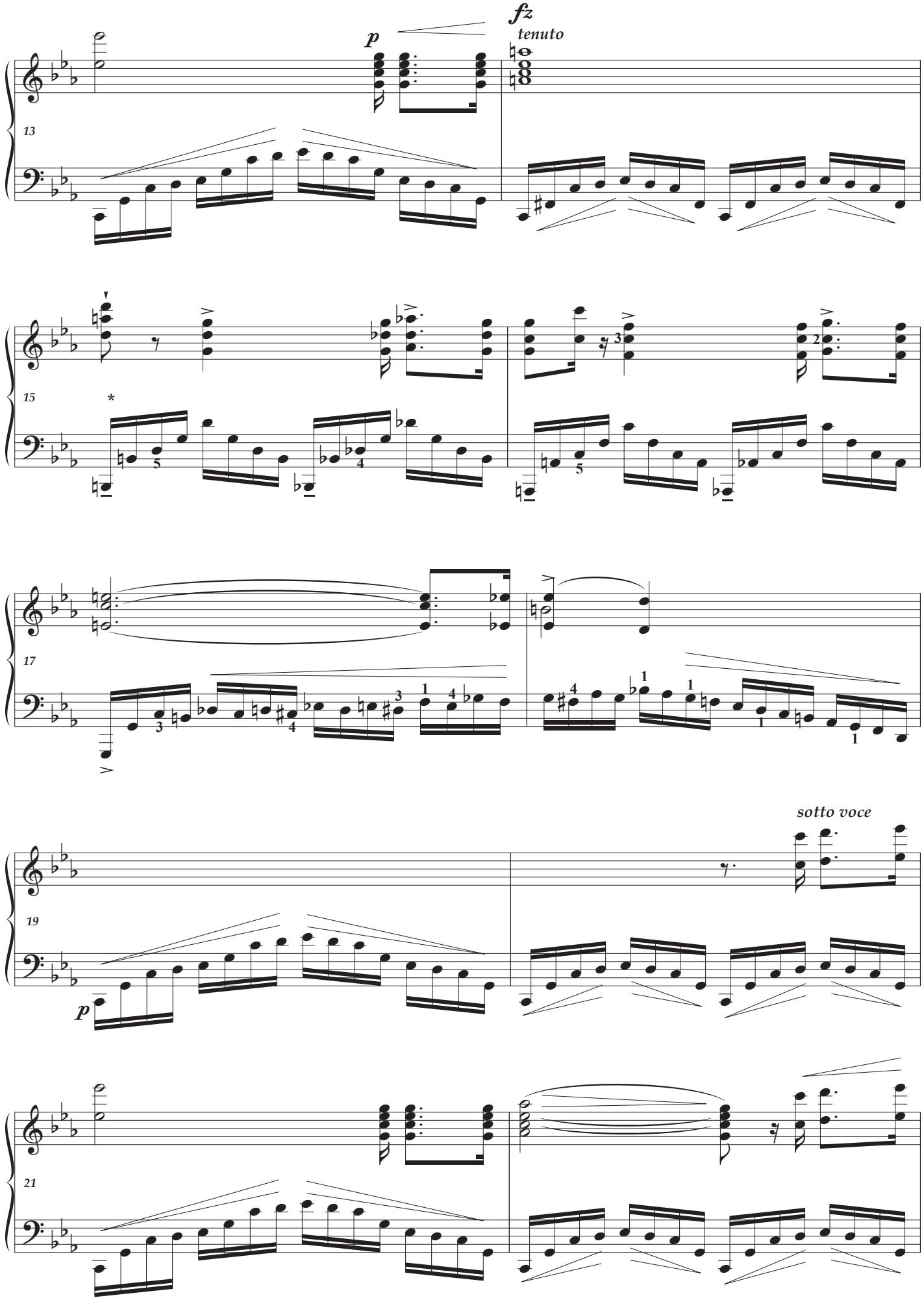

12
15
sfp
18
sfp
21
sfp
editorial
ossia
con forza
dolce
poco ritenuto
24
sfp
pp

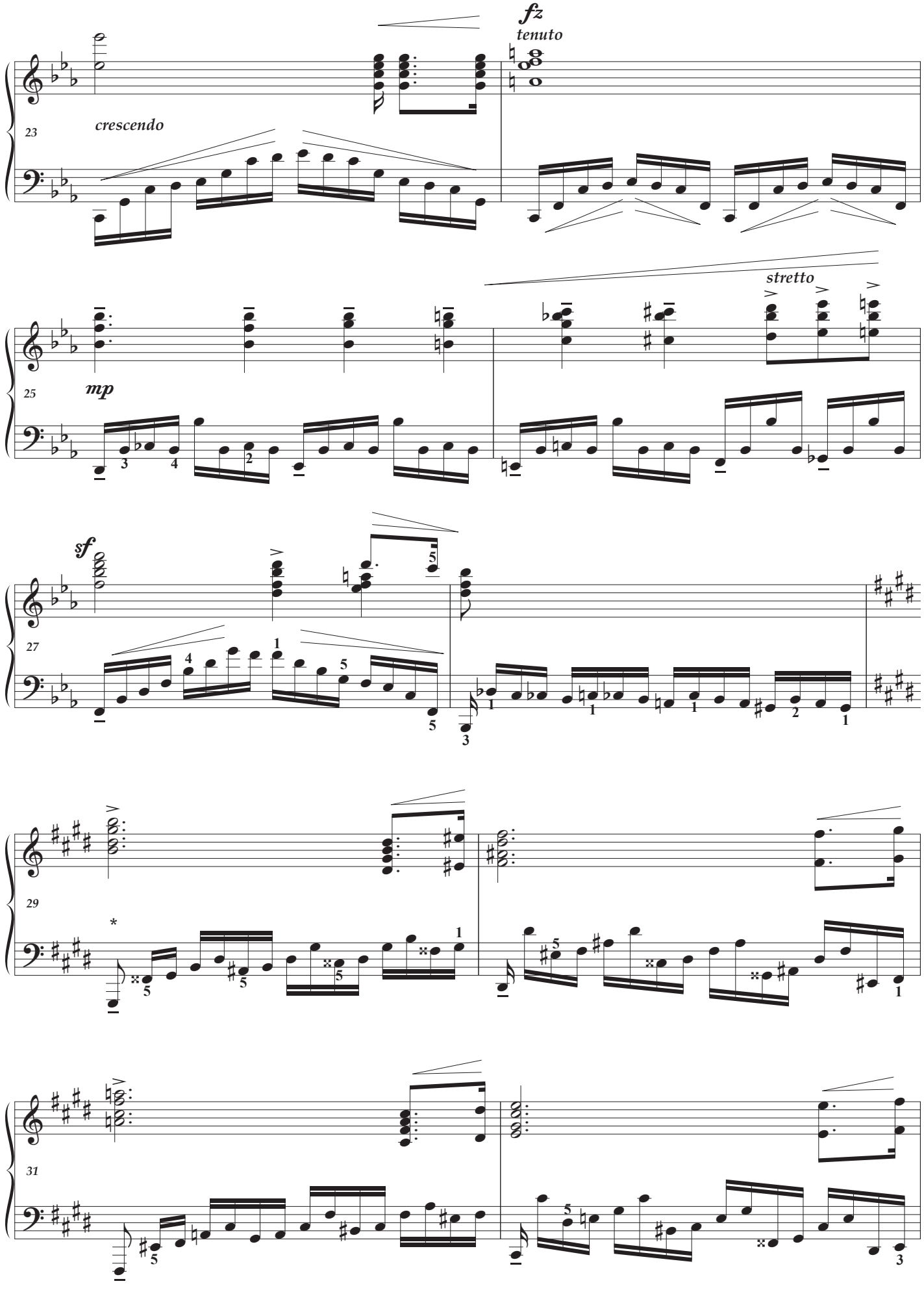

editorial
ossia
dolcissimo
27
p
pp
p
crescendo
ritenuto
30
a tempo
33
36

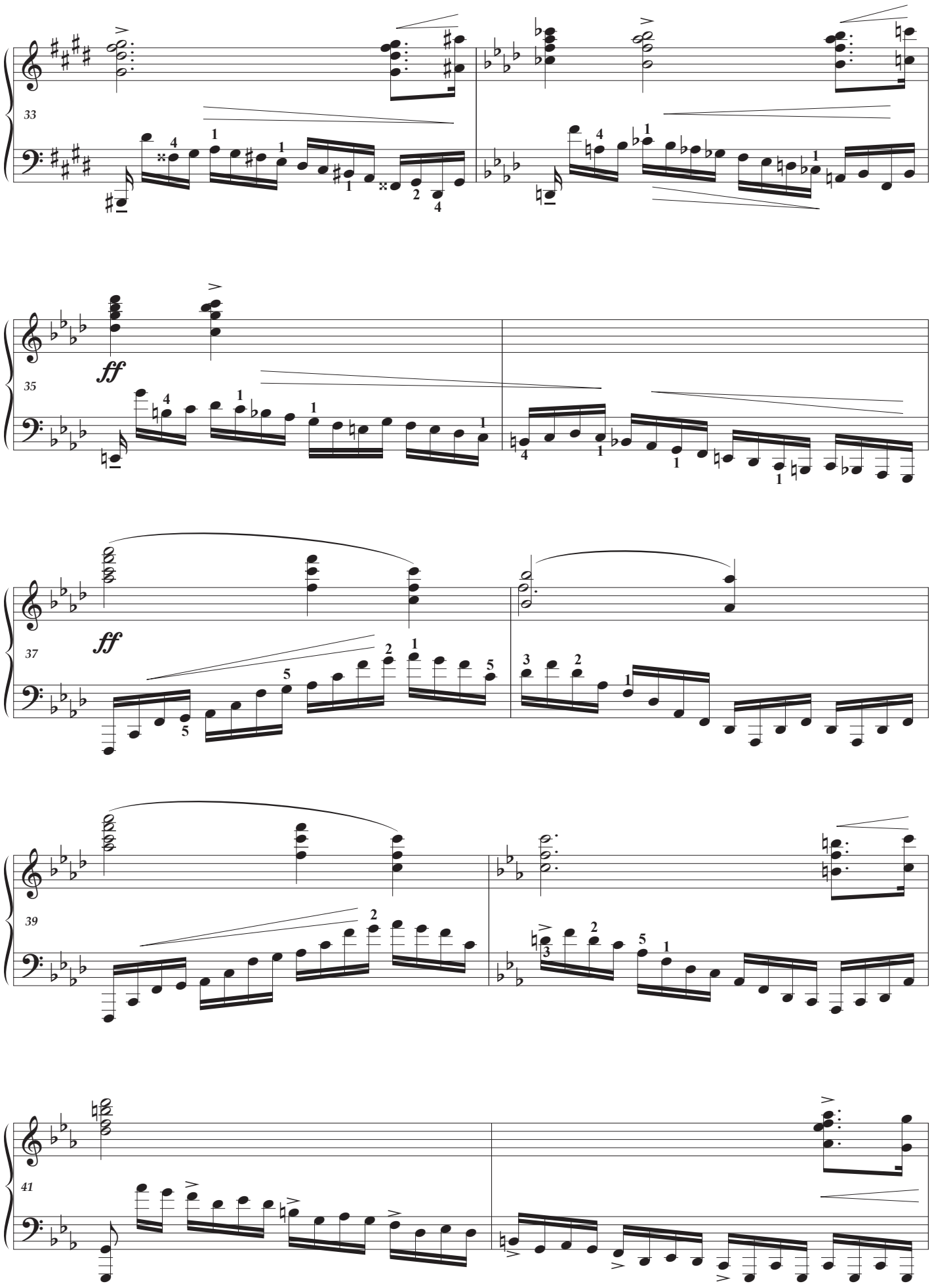
[poco stringendo e crescendo]

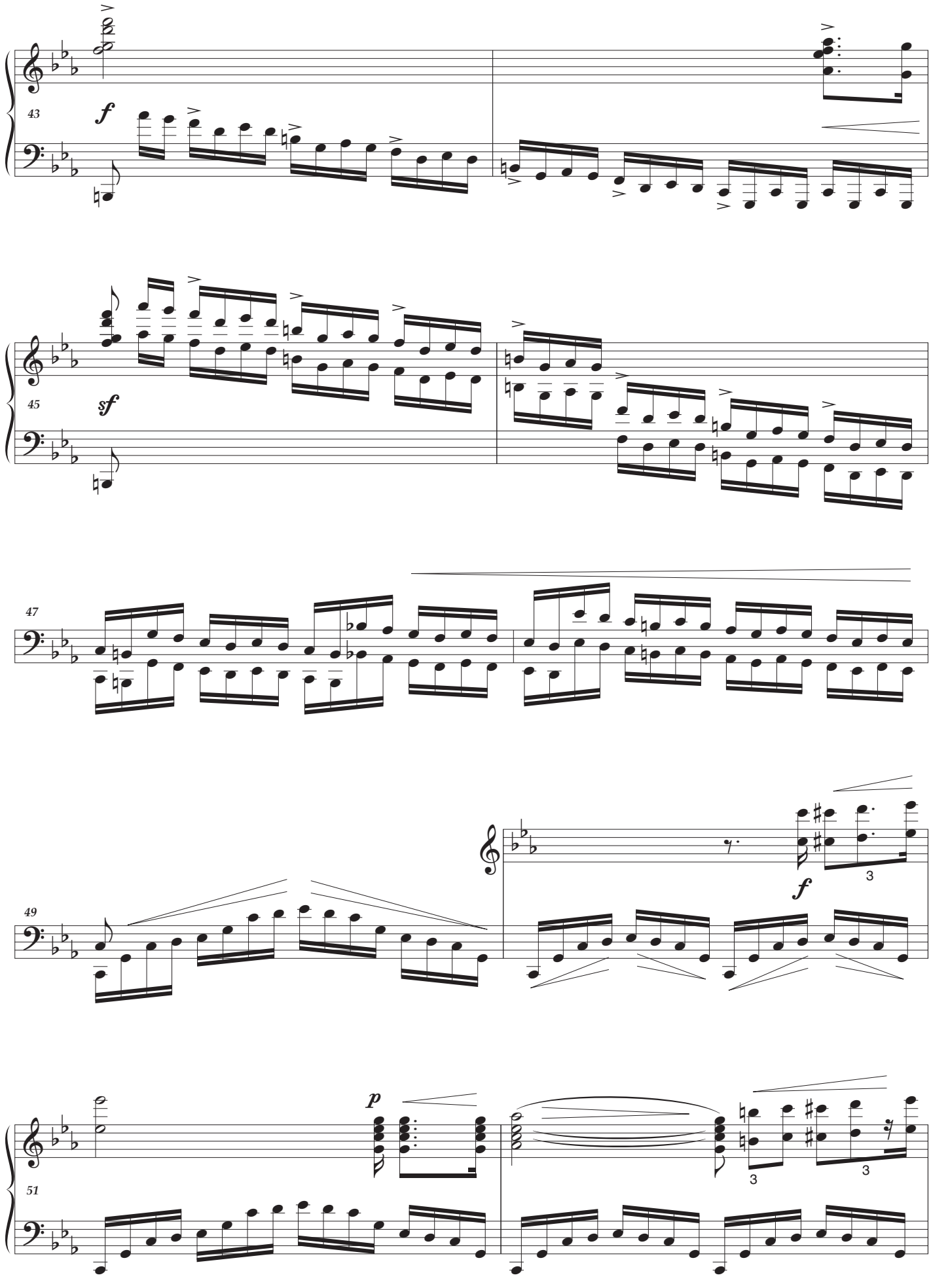


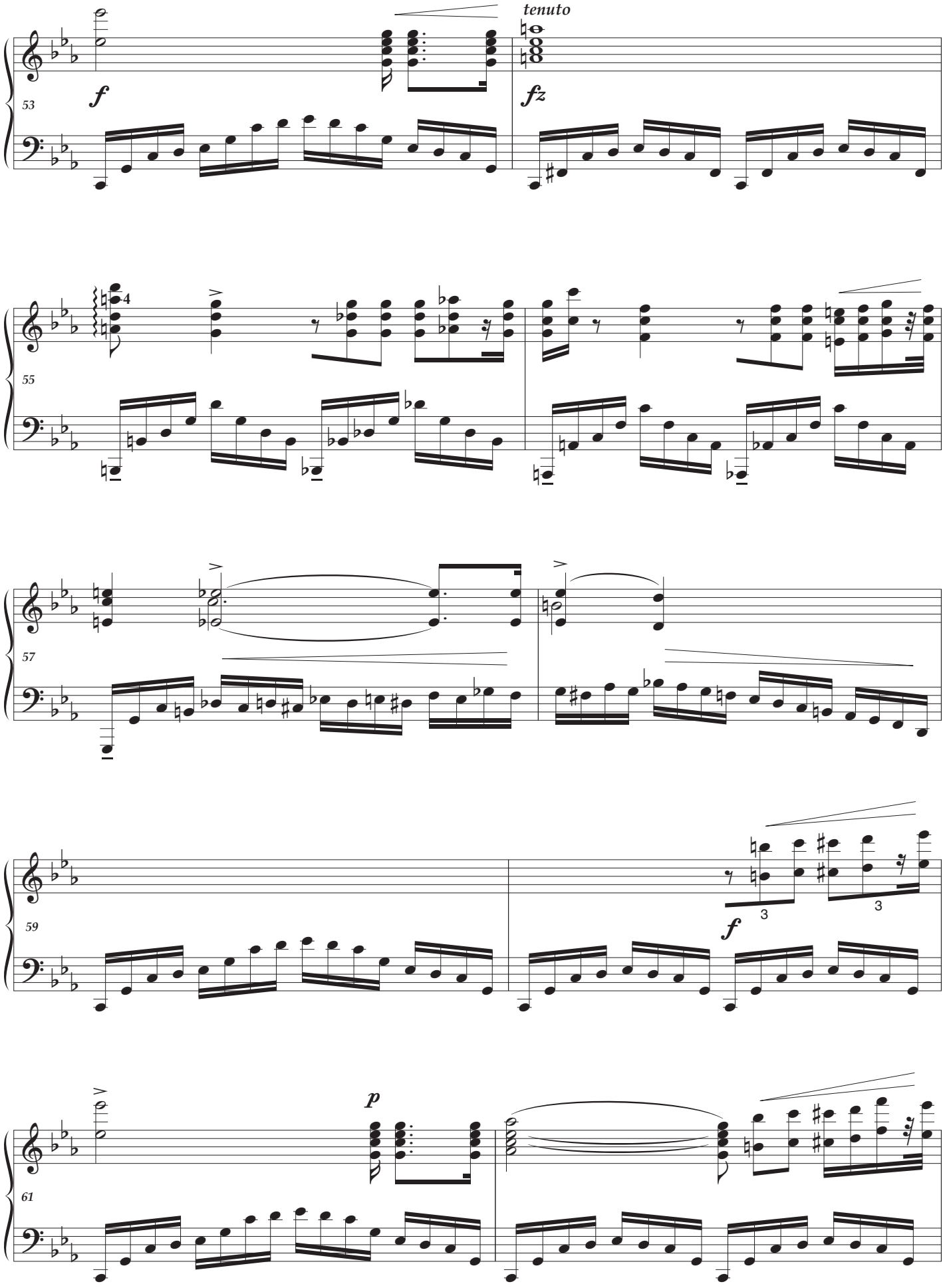

allegro con fuoco [♩ = 135] *
energico
XII
f
3
f
5
sf
7
9
f
p
f
11

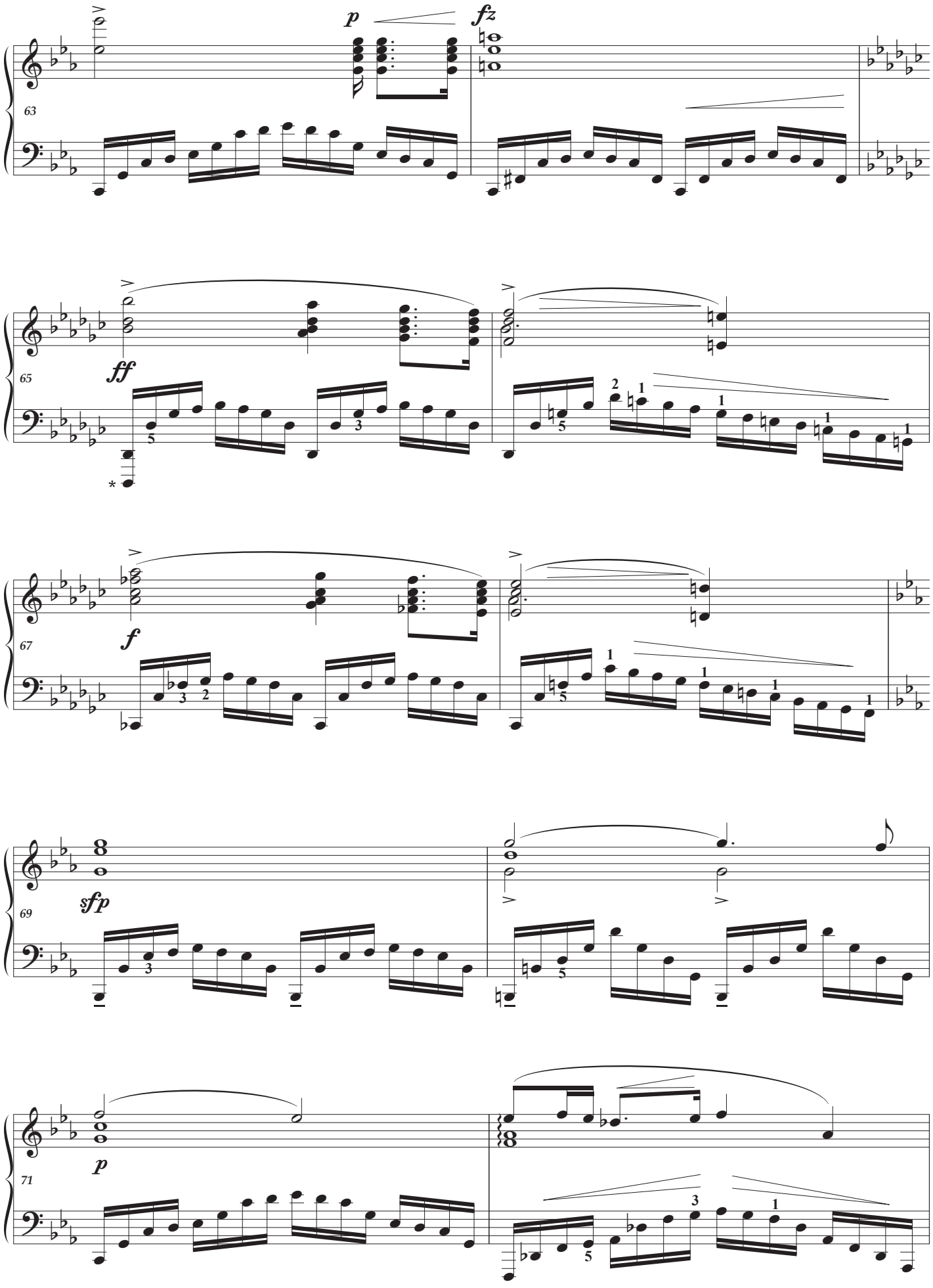

fz
tenuto
p
13
15
*
17
sotto voce
19
p
21

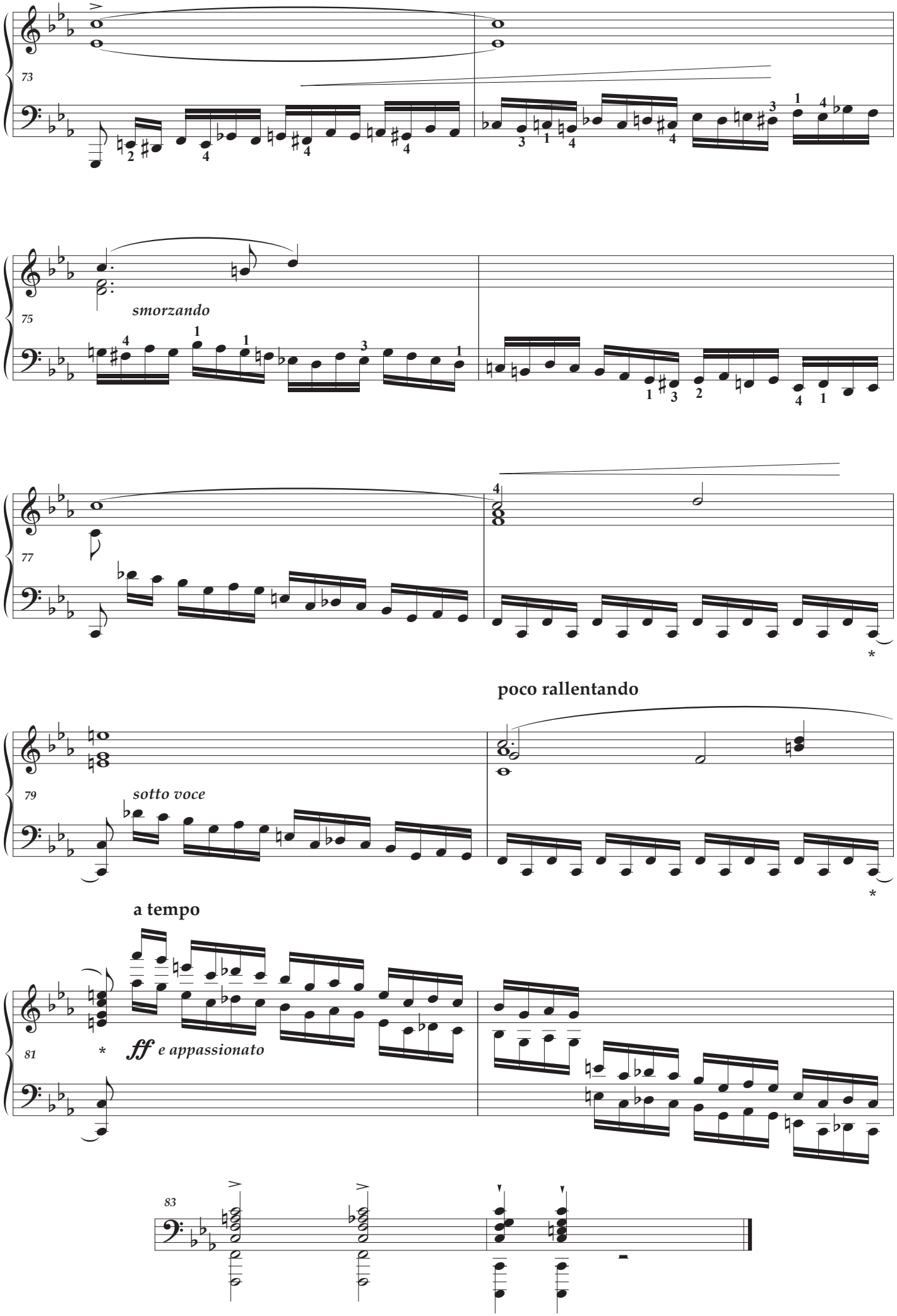

fz
tenuto
crescendo
23
stretto
mp
25
sf
27
29
31


33
35
ff
37
ff
39
41

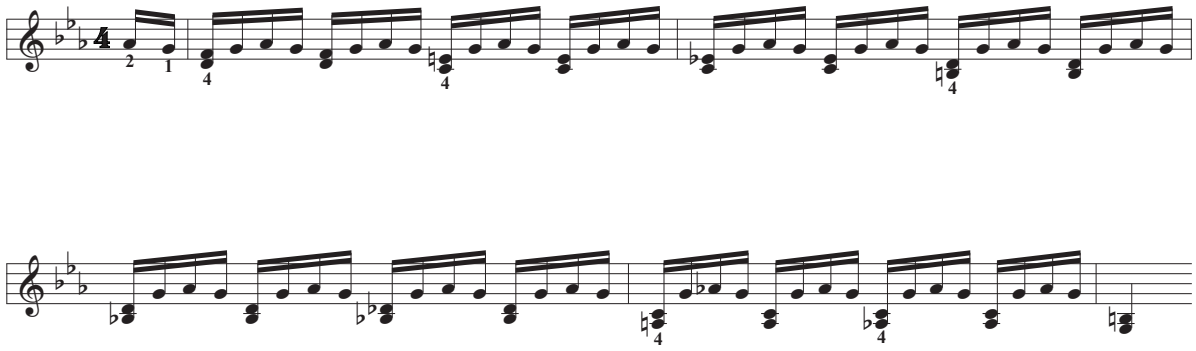

43
f
45
sf
47
49
f
3
51
p
3
3


tenuto
f
fz
53
4
55
57
59
3
3
f
p
61

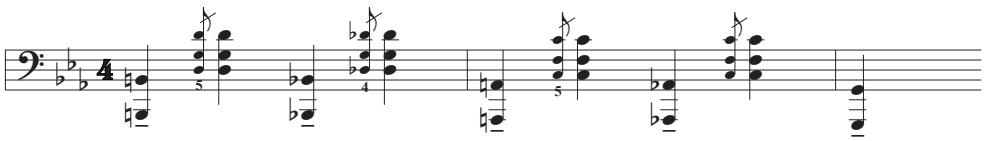

63
p
fz
65
ff
67
f
69
sfp
71
p


73
75
smorzando
77
79
sotto voce
poco rallentando
a tempo
81
ff e appassionato
83

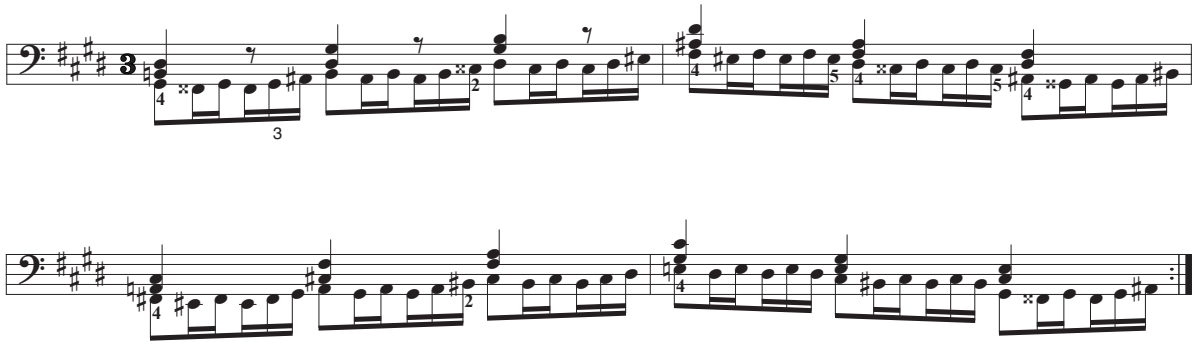
preparatory left hand exercise for bar 1



preparatory exercise for bars 15-16



preparatory exercise for bars 29-32



Appendix

Comments and afterthoughts

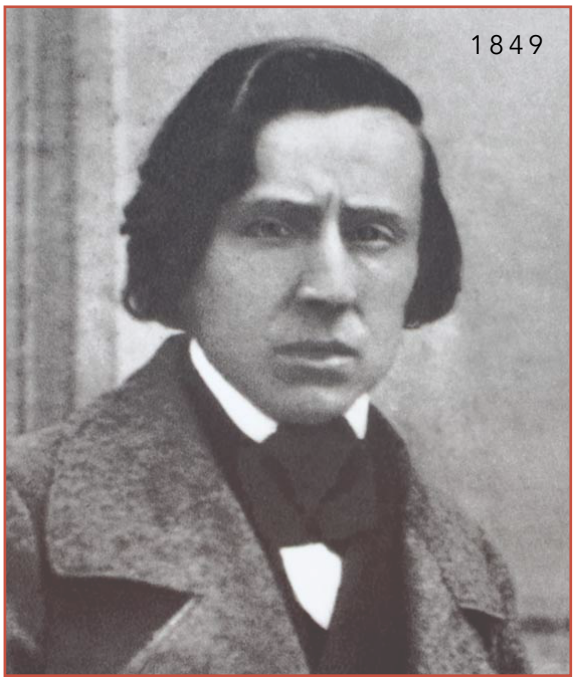
- phrasing, dynamics and accentuation are not a strict copy from any particular source
- The composer disliked giving titles, and those that have gained favour over the years are often quite inappropriate.

The four studies which form this third volume are clearly complementary in key and character.

Étude N° 9 in F minor page **1**

A syncopated opening with hushed apprehension, the left hand thumb adding interest with a tenor response at the sixth. The study is eloquent and unusually sombre throughout, and we find a subtle change of metre at **17-28** set out with alternative barlines on page 6.

I recommend a reasonable speed to allow space for harmonic and poetic subtlety, and the echoes provide opportunities for ingenuity and imagination. At **61** the final *fortissimo* is a fateful cry of anguished despair. At **25** and **49** observe an early example of Messiaen's octatonic scale (second mode), and the final slow trill at the sixth echoing the opening.


1849

In addition to recommending the Cortot edition preparatory exercises, it can be instructive to study the LH alone, lightly accented in 12/16.

Notes

- Early editions give ♩. = 96, 88 or 76. I would suggest a flexible 84; quite apart from the necessary elasticity necessary for the 'echoes' there are an *accelerando* and *stretto* to follow.
- phrasing, dynamics and accentuation are not a strict copy of any edition
- **17-28** an alternative metre is set out on page 6
- **25** meno — to prepare for the *accelerando* and *crescendo* to follow
- **33** & **61** for stability the thumb may be held for the following 5th finger repeated notes

Étude N° 10 in A♭ major page **7**

Broken octaves in poetic perpetual motion, with a typical Chopinesque flexible left hand accompaniment. If one defers for the moment the problem of pure speed, it is satisfying to concentrate on 'voicing' particularly alternating between the thumb and 5th. A sensitive and imaginative approach to colouring through varied accentuation might even help solve problems of stamina. As with the étude Op 25 N° 5 in E minor where each phrase is repeated with differing ornamentation, here we find repetition with differing light — achieved by varying weight and accentuation. One cannot fail to be charmed by the charismatic modulations.

In addition to recommending the Cortot edition preparatory exercises, I have added a few more on pages 8 and 9.

Despite a deceptively simple harmonic structure, the modulations provide a musically interesting study and the the result is a triumph in the quest of beauty integrated with a technical problem of stamina.

Notes

- ♩. = 152 — another extremely fast metronome speed given in most editions
- phrasing, dynamics and accentuation are not a strict copy of any edition
- **7** original D, possibly an error
- **7-8** editorial bass voice
- **23** A flat is an alternative reading
- **35** D♭ is an alternative reading
- **36** some editions give C♭
- **39** E♭ is an alternative reading
- **53** A♭ (G♯)is usually given here
- **55** editorial bass octave
- **66** editorial alto voice
- **67-68** editorial tenor voice
- **73-76** editorial barline modification
- **78** Cortot omits the tied A♭

Étude N° 11 in E♭ major page **18**

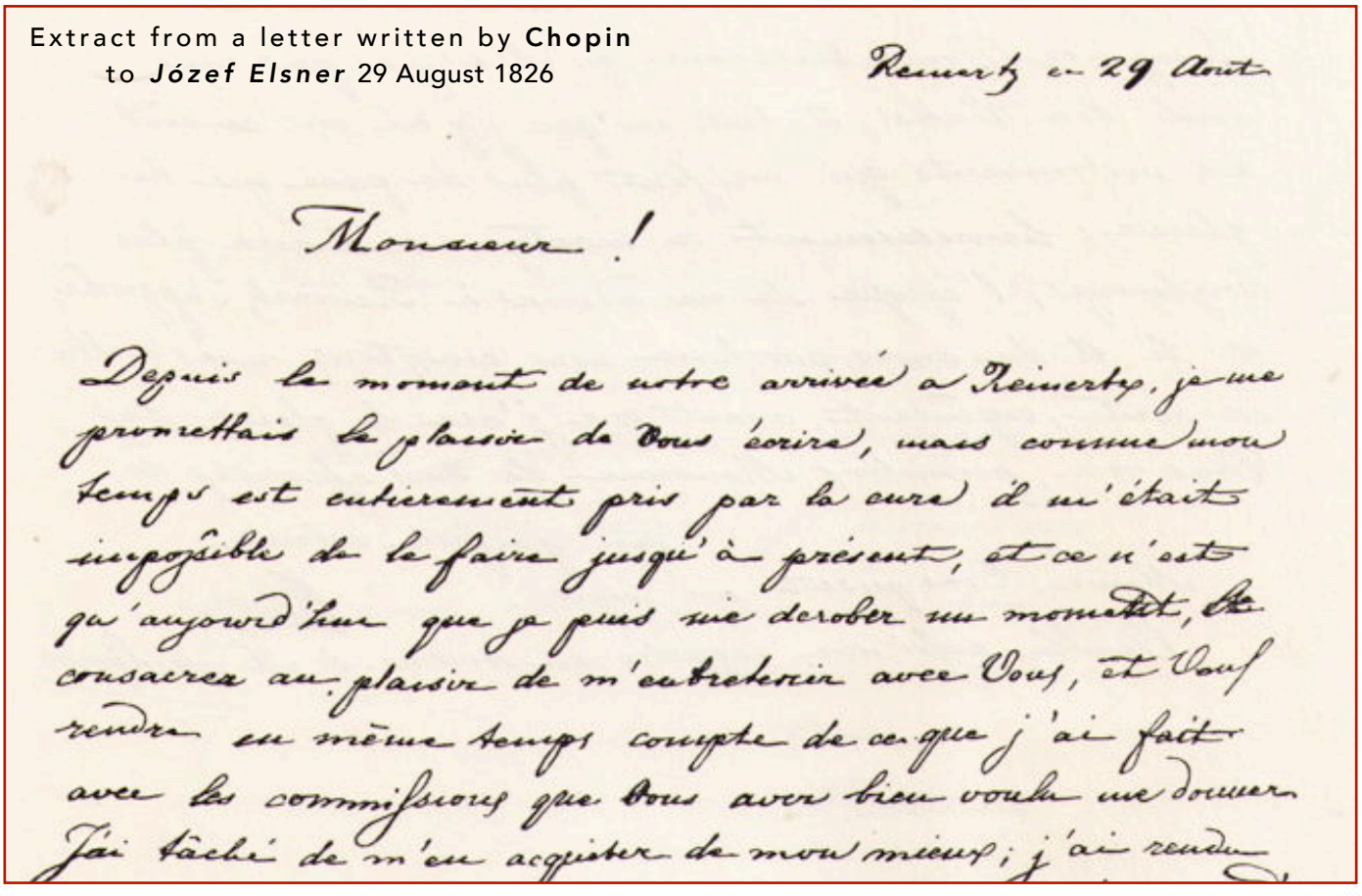
An etude dedicated to arpeggiated chords and clearly displaying how the young Chopin used his extraordinarily supple hands* to create impossibly large stretches. The melodic line is mostly in the soprano, but when the alto has particular charm it does demand a slight change of technique. These switches are not usually marked and here I have suggested a few *ossias* to project the inner voice. As in N° 9 the echo effects call on much ingenuity and tonal imagination. The study serves as an admirable prelude to the *tour de force* which follows.

Notes

- all chords are to be arpeggiated with the exception of those marked ■
- most editions give ♩ = 76 — I recommend 60 — 66
- phrasing, dynamics and accentuation are not a strict copy of any edition
- **3** optional omission of the diamond-headed B♭ which does not appear in all editions
- **17-23** editorial accented alto voice
- **21** C♭ and F♮ according to some editions
- **25** D according to other editions
- **30** F♭ according to Fontana
- **32** editorial optional A♭
- **33** & **44** editorial bass octave
- **43** editorial extended arpeggiation
- **50-51** I recommend projecting the bass <u>on the beat</u> for these two bars

*on the final page — a photo of Chopin's hand (cast by Clésinger)

Extract from a letter written by **Chopin** to ***Józef Elsner*** 29 August 1826



Reinertz ce 29 Août

Monsieur !

Depuis le moment de notre arrivée à Reinertz, je me promettais le plaisir de Vous écrire, mais comme mon temps est entièrement pris par la cure il m'était impossible de le faire jusqu'à présent, et ce n'est qu'aujourd'hui que je puis me dérober un moment, le consacrer au plaisir de m'entretenir avec Vous, et Vous rendre en même temps compte de ce que j'ai fait avec les commissions que Vous avez bien voulu me donner. J'ai tâché de m'en acquitter de mon mieux; j'ai rendu

Étude N° 12 in C minor page **24**

For once the epithet ‘revolutionary’ is appropriate; as with the first scherzo (1833) it reflects the composer’s distress following the ‘November Insurrection’ of 1830-31 with Poland’s failure in its rebellion against Russia. Just as present-day Ukrainian artists express their impotence, it is almost certain that Chopin was inspired by virtual fists in the air, anguished and defiant, execrating Russian oppressors. The result is an inspired chordal etude for the right hand and an equally challenging variety of scales and broken chords for the left.

The decisive and abrupt ending might be interpreted as the outcome of a struggle (at the keyboard and on the battlefield) fought with courage, bringing opus ten to a stirring conclusion.

Notes

- most editions give ♩ = 160 (144 Friedheim) — I recommend 135
- phrasing, dynamics and accentuation are not a strict copy of any edition
- **1** preparatory exercise on page 29
- **15-16** preparatory exercise on page 29
- **29-32** preparatory exercise on page 29
- **65** editorial bass octave
- **78** & **80** editorial tie and added bass
- **81** some editions give the ***ff*** (with or without a preceding *crescendo*) from the first beat

Wojciech Kossak Battle of Olszynka Grochowska c. 1931

CHOPIN

ÉTUDES Op 10

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Clésinger c. 1849

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