Robert SCHUMANN

PHANTASIE

Opus 17

Piano Practical Editions
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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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Robert SCHUMANN 1810 - 1856

PHANTASIE Opus 17

As a student discovering the Fantasy for the first time, without reading all the glowing reports and detailed analyses, I instinctively knew that this was extraordinarily imaginative music. It is difficult to conceive of a more intense and personal composition, created with compelling eloquence and passion; I have since had more than 50 years to grapple with a singular musical challenge.

Schumann's love life in his early twenties was in continuous renewal; moving on from Ernestine von Fricken, he transferred affection to his piano teacher's extremely gifted young daughter, the pianist Clara Wieck. Finding at last a true soul-mate might explain a change of emotional state and a decision to compose a grand-scale work after the preceding collections of shorter pieces (i.e. *Davidsbündler*, *Carnaval*, *Kreisleriana*). Full of ardour, virtuosity and refinement, it was written at a time when their future together was in doubt. With obsessive thoughts he pleads seductively, declaring characteristic feelings aroused by being in love – anguish and euphoria.

The Beethoven Connection

When Beethoven died in Vienna in 1827 Schumann was 17, and the erection of a monument was being planned for Bonn in 1836. After rejecting two descriptive titles: *Fata Morgana* (a Sicilian sorceress and a mirage) and *Dichtungen* (Poems), the *Phantasie** was offered to publishers : *"Florestan* and *Eusebius*** have written a Grand Piano Sonata entitled

Ruins. Trophies. Palms.
for Beethoven's Monument

and are keen to contribute this new work." These titles were axed before it was eventually published in May 1839 by Breitkopf & Härtel. The monument was finally erected six years later, Liszt making a large cash contribution. The unveiling was witnessed by Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the King and Queen of Prussia.

First Movement

Composed during the tortuous years of a bitter legal battle with his future father-in-law, Friedrich Wieck was totally opposed to their union and in 1836 separated the lovers by removing Clara from Leipzig to Dresden. Schumann confessed his deep despair, writing this most impassioned and profound lament. He later wrote to Clara – "you can understand the *Phantasie* only if you transport yourself back to that unhappy summer when I had to give you up". The motto by Friedrich Schlegel is from a cycle of poems entitled *Abendröte* (Sunset) and *Die Gebüsche* (the Bushes) is the ninth (of 20). Schumann must have found these lines particularly pertinent to his secret message.

Liszt, the dedicatee, stated that this movement is often performed in too vigorous a style. In spite of the fortissimos, it is primarily *träumerisch* – dreamlike – the opposite of 'resonant and vigorous'. However, it should not be performed 'indifferently', for of course there are phrases which demand robust execution. In this edition some of the more excessive dynamics have been tempered.

With Clara isolated and afar, the Beethoven song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* Op 16 (to the distant beloved) became an appropriate inspiration. The

final song of the cycle, *Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder* (Accept, then, these songs), provides a specific message for Clara in the coda, bringing the first (and third) movement to a close in the home key of her initial.

Second Movement

Clara wrote from Paris: "*Yesterday I received your wonderful Fantasie – today I am still half ill with rapture; as I played through it I was drawn involuntarily towards the window, and there I felt like leaping out to the beautiful spring flowers and embracing them. The March is enchanting, and bars 8-16 make me quite beside myself; just tell me what you were thinking of in them? I have never had such a feeling, I heard a full orchestra, I can't tell you how I felt. It hurt me much and made me unhappy to think how long it is since I heard a single note of yours – and yet your notes are still so vivid in my memory! "*

Another *March of the Davidsbündler against the Philistines*, with incessant dotted rhythm reminiscent of the second movement from Beethoven's Sonata in A Op 101 and in similar style to the finale of the Op 13 Symphonic Studies. A typical rondo worthy of Florestan** at his most playful, a central section with characteristic rhythmic ambiguity and a notorious coda demanding nerve and virtuosity. Liszt was one of the few pianists at the time with sufficient technique to meet the challenge. He reported playing the Fantasy privately for the composer: "After listening to the first movement, he asked me to proceed with the March, after which he would share his thoughts. I played it to such effect that Schumann jumped out of his chair, flung his arms around me, and with tears in his eyes, cried – *Göttlich*!" (heavenly). At **117** it can be revealing to play this section as recast on page **53**. The preparatory study of the coda on page **54** includes added octaves for accuracy and an alternative division of the hands.

Third Movement

The dawn of a new century found Beethoven casting off the shackles of classical form; fusing Sonata and Fantasy, the *Sonata quasi una Fantasia* was born. Following such dramatic and hypercharged movements it was fitting for Eusebius** to end with a calm and poetic lament, its subdued mood admitting defeat and impotence, its dramatic modulations an ecstatic dream. We encounter a constant and eloquent romantic vocal duet between baritone and soprano based on the secret sharing of Beethoven's seventh symphony; allusions are plentiful (i.e. from the first *movement 398 and second 123*), and at **15** these phrases were surely inspired by the *Emperor* concerto slow second movement. The original discarded coda discovered by Alan Walker has attracted the attention of a number of eminent pianists and is included in this edition (page 52).

Piano Practical Editions

Devised to be used in conjunction with traditional scores, the *Phantasie* has been completely and audaciously re-drafted; using modern editing technology, radical and original solutions are proposed, always keeping to the spirit of the composer's original intentions.

These editions reflect an entirely personal interpretation and do not always exactly follow original texts. Modifications are made to accommodate the timbre of modern instruments and are based on wide experience, analysis and intuition; changes to notation, ties, phrasing and accentuation are marked with an asterisk sometimes referring to the notes and index on page iii. Clara's Metronome speeds are omitted and pedalling only indicated when its use might not be evident.

*pre-reform German spelling of *Fantasie*

**pseudonyms representing the extrovert and introvert aspects of Schumann's personality

I am indebted to Nicholas Marston, John Daverio, Joan Chissell, Charles Rosen and Rudy Rozanski in the writing of this introduction and for detailed analyses in the preparation of this publication.

I *Durchaus fantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen* page **1**

playing grace notes on the beat is an editorial suggestion

29 bass octave added

41 staccato dots = light accentuation

64/259 repeated quaver removed

95/287 tenor voice modified

118 bass octaves added

130 *Im Legenden Ton* originally entitled *Romanza*

134 editorial acciaccatura

143 editorial suggestion

149 editorial voicing

167 editorial *poco a poco*

183-186 editorial ties, pedal and dashed barlines

201/203 A♭ removed

298 treble tied quaver G removed

301/304 editorial ties

305 many editions give F, probably in error

308 editorial pedal suggestion

311 editorial suggestion

II *Mäßig. Durchaus energisch* page **22**

1-5 given that the LH arpeggiated chord at **6** is clearly to start before the beat, logically these should start on the beat.

30 LH original G, a possible error

40 editorial treble minim

36-42 editorial modification of time-signatures and dashed barlines

77 RH alto E♭ added

128 LH A♭ original F

133 tenor A♭ added

143 LH A♭ removed

146/150 LH modifications

148 bass E♭ added

160 modification to bass E♭

197 editorial *a tempo*

264 bass modifications

III *Langsam getragen. Durchweg leise zu halten* page **42**

10 alto dotted crotchet

32 editorial tenor voice

35/39 modifications to the accompaniment

68 bass octave added

139 editorial tenor voice

157 editorial suggestion

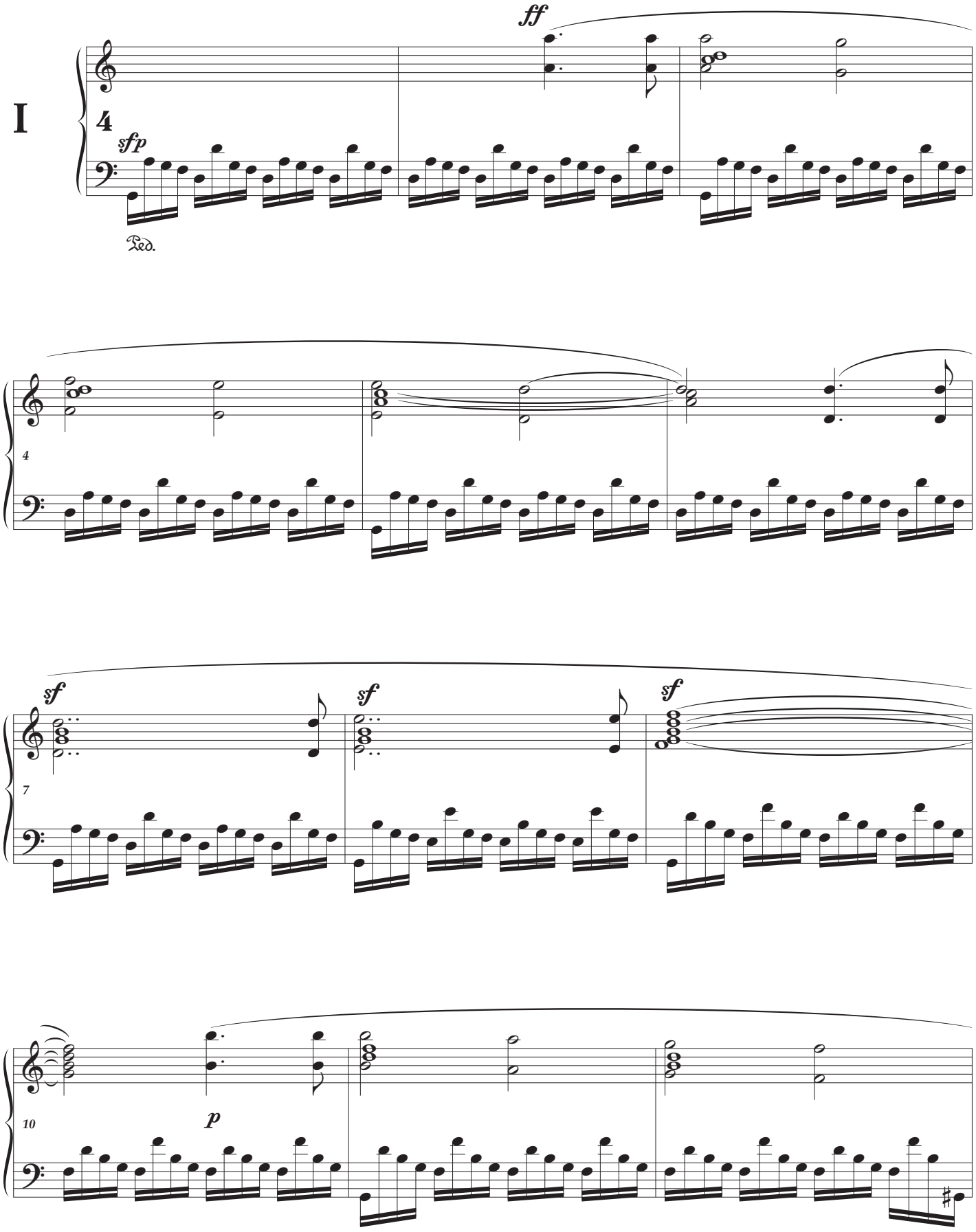
Durch alle Töne tönet
Im bunten Erdentraum
Ein leiser Ton gezogen
Für den, der heimlich lauschet

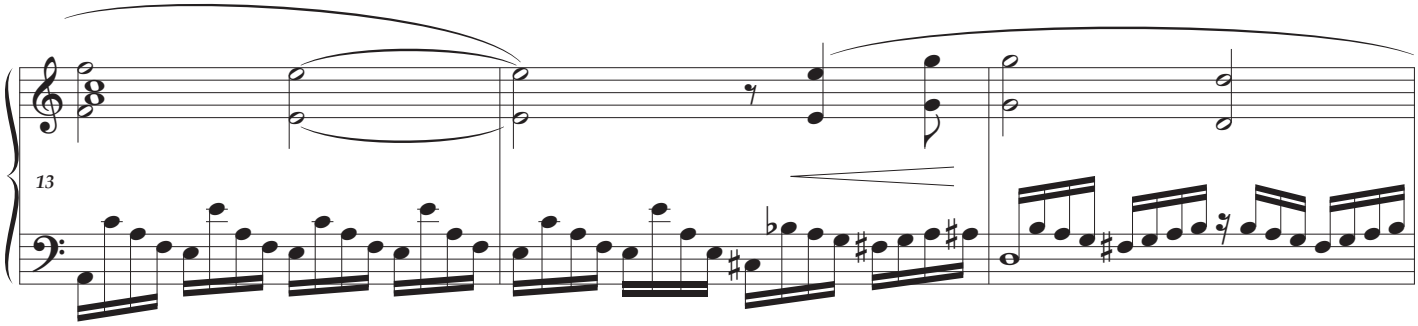
Amidst all the sounds which permeate
the earthly iridescent dream
there is one soft sound
for those who listen in secret

Friedrich Schlegel

Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen

with imagination and passion throughout

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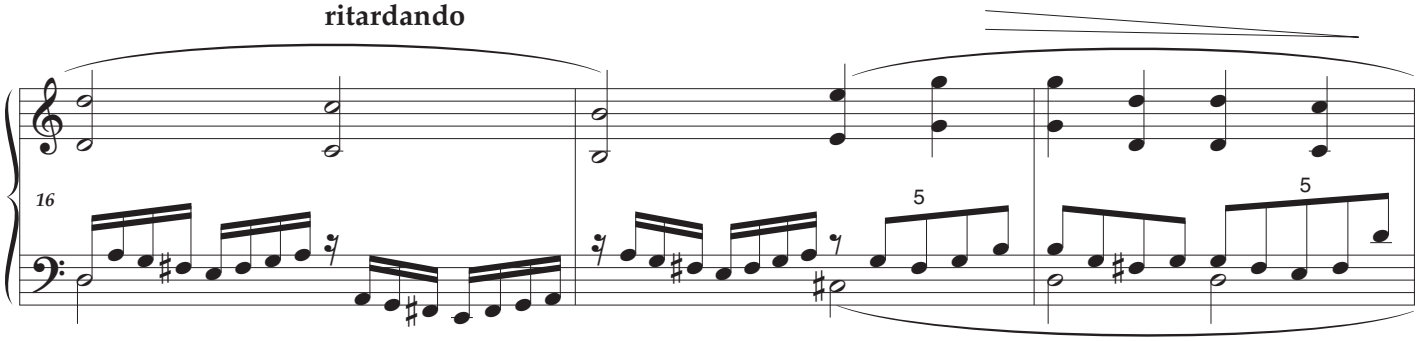
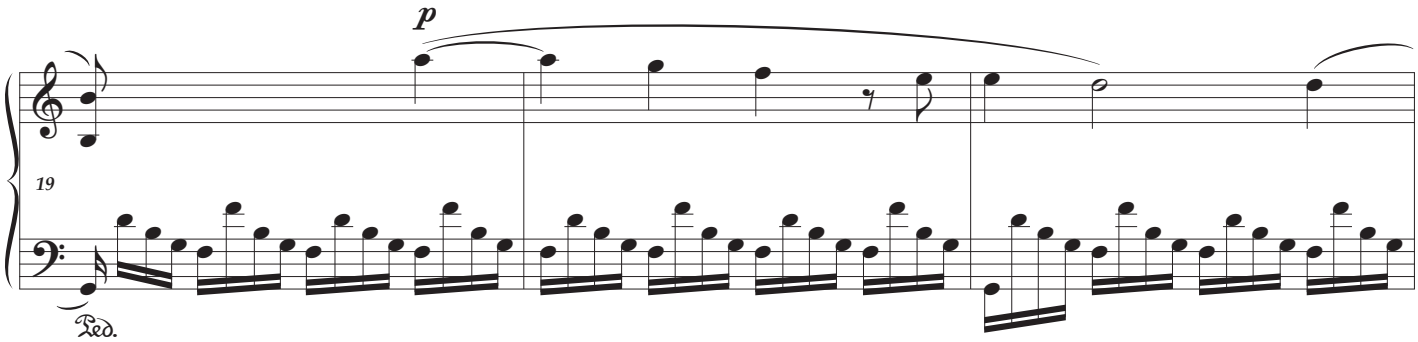

ritardando
16
5
5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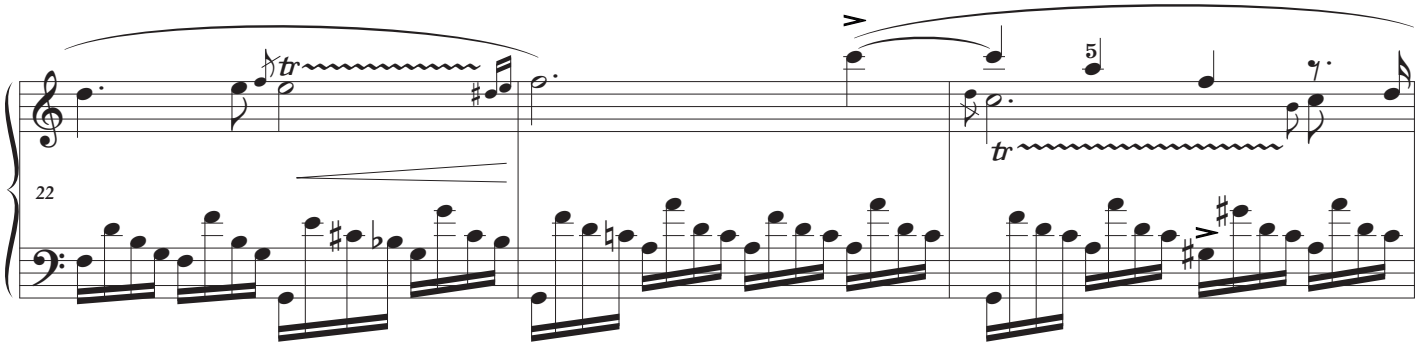
Ped.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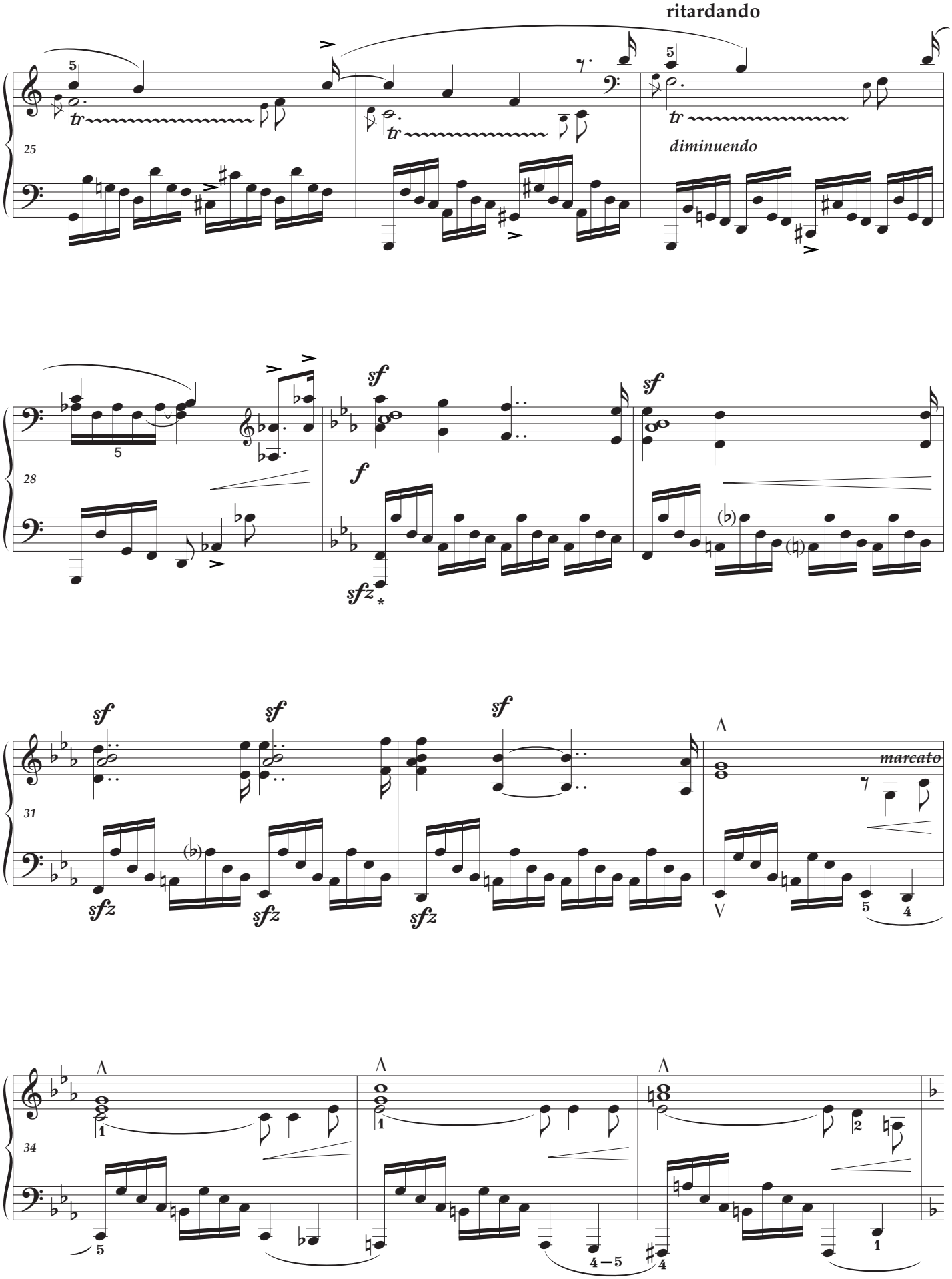
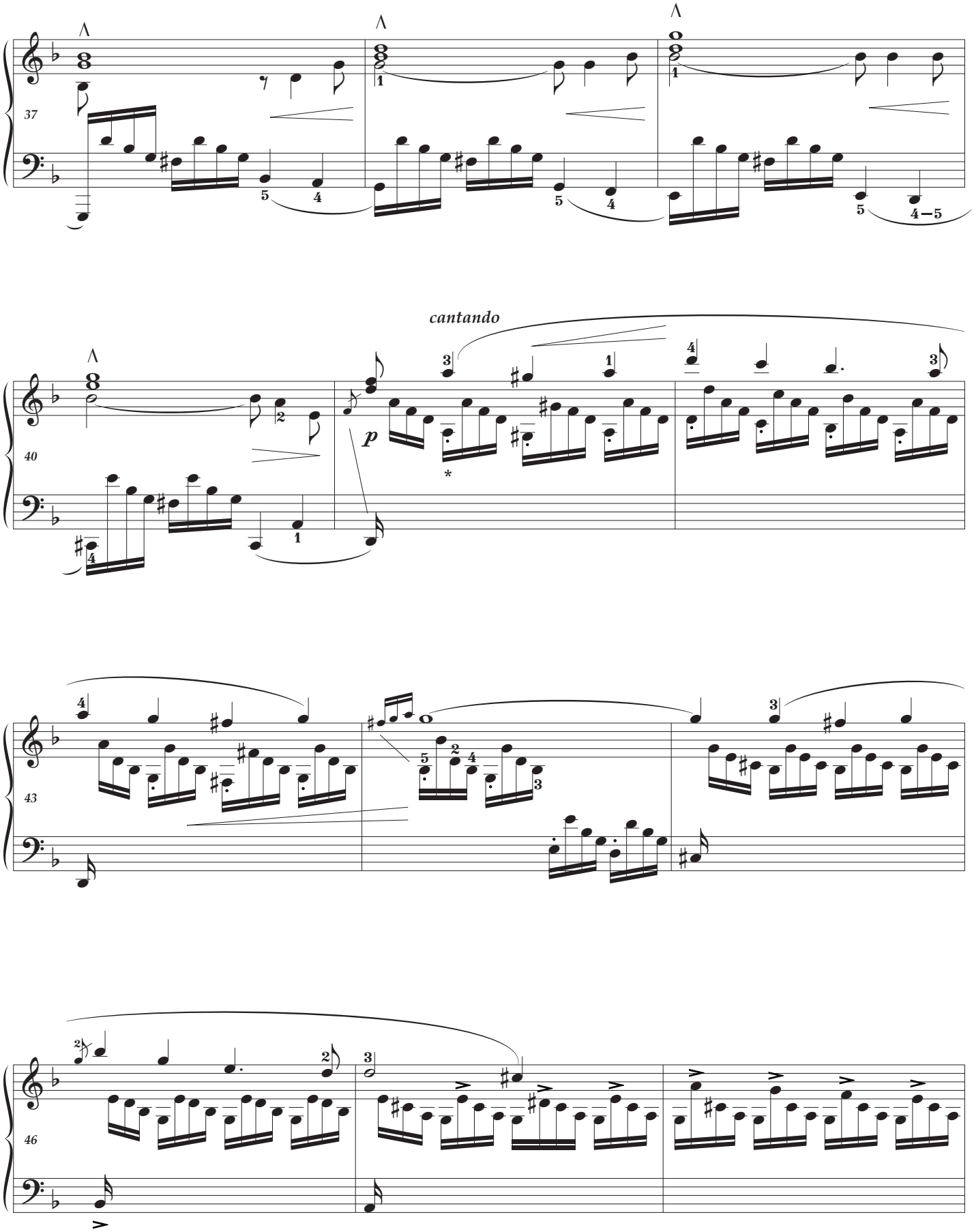
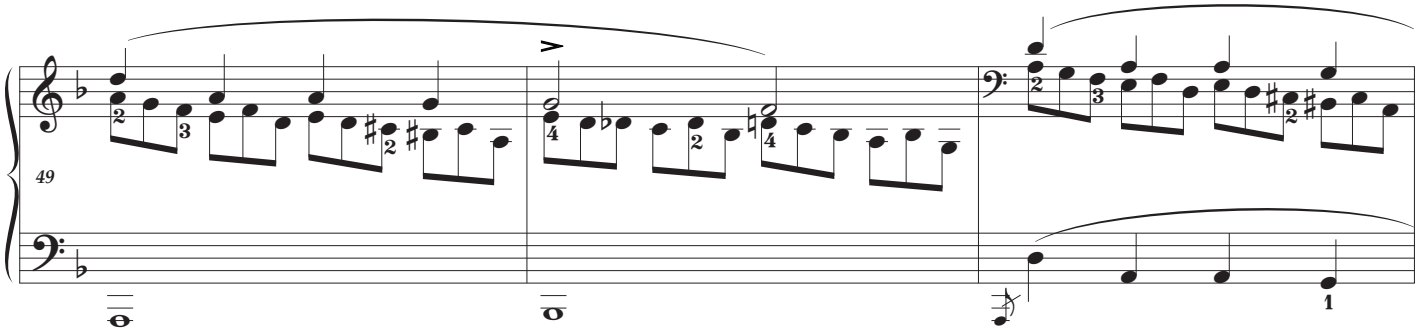
22
5
tr


ritardando
diminuendo
sf
f
sfz
marcato


37
40
cantando
p
43
46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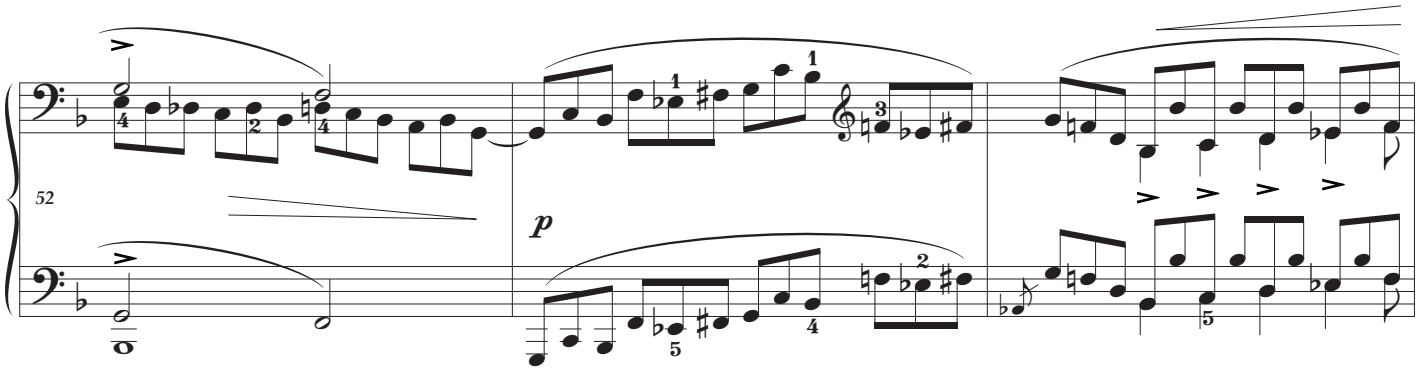
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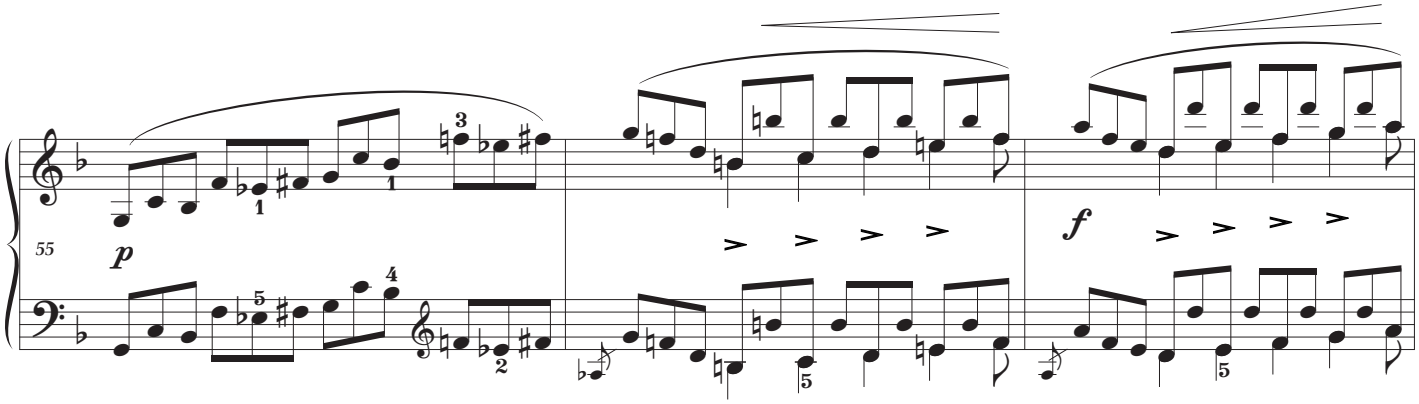
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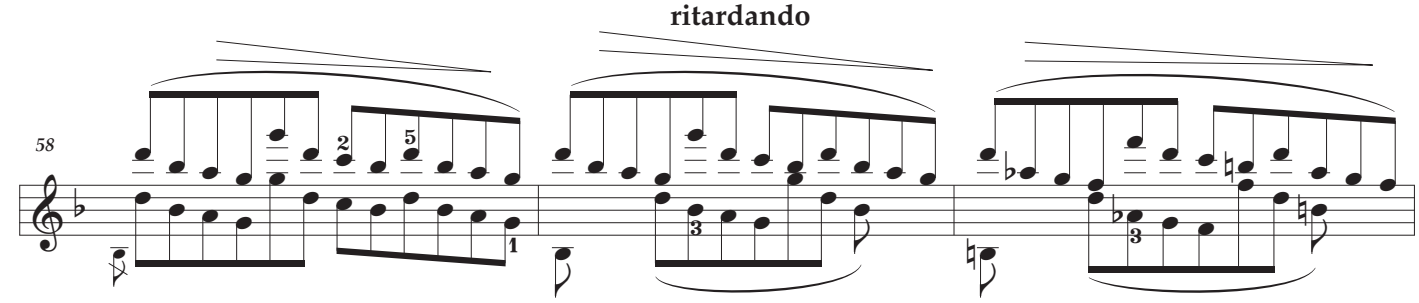
p
f


ritardando
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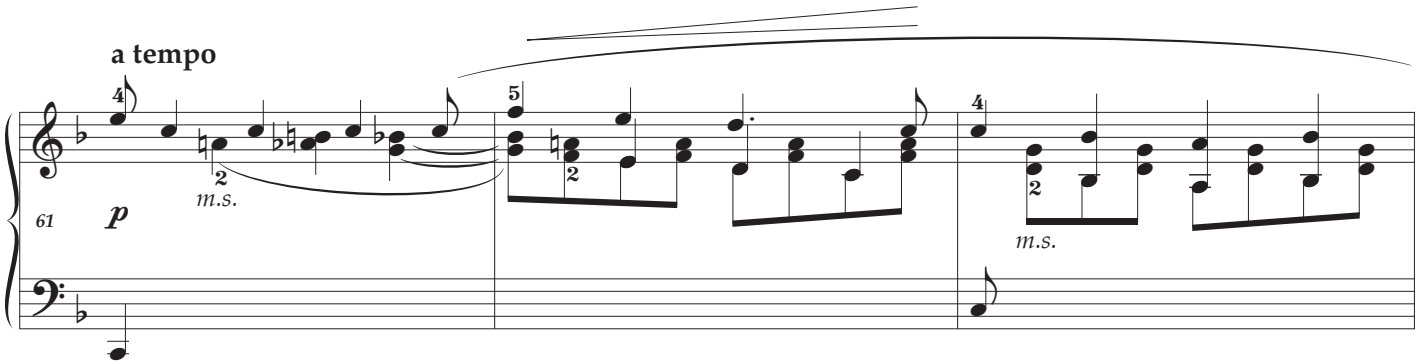
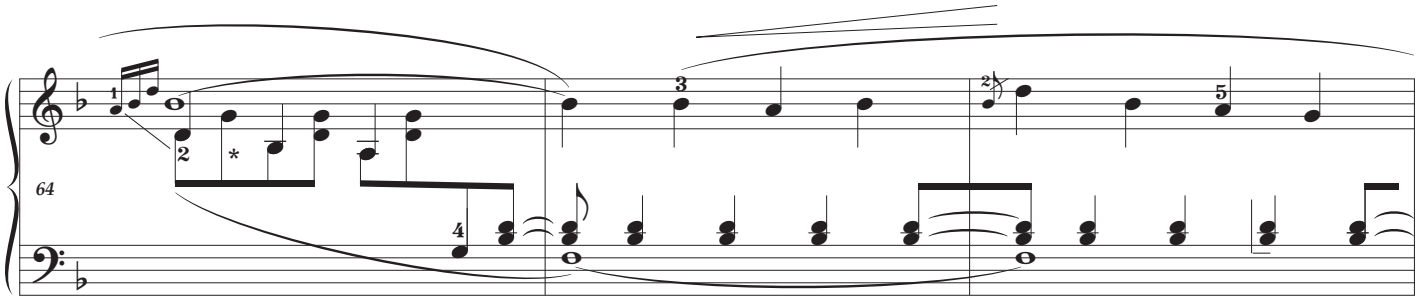

a tempo
61
p
m.s.
m.s.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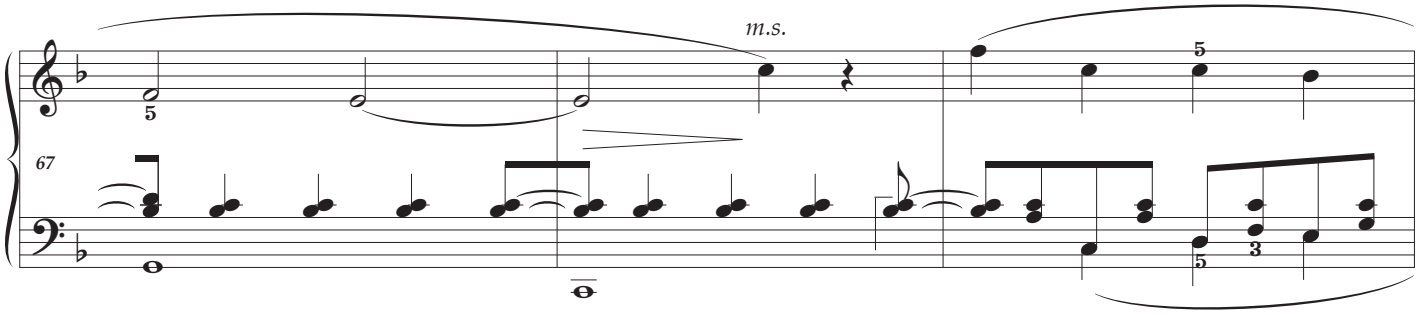
m.s.
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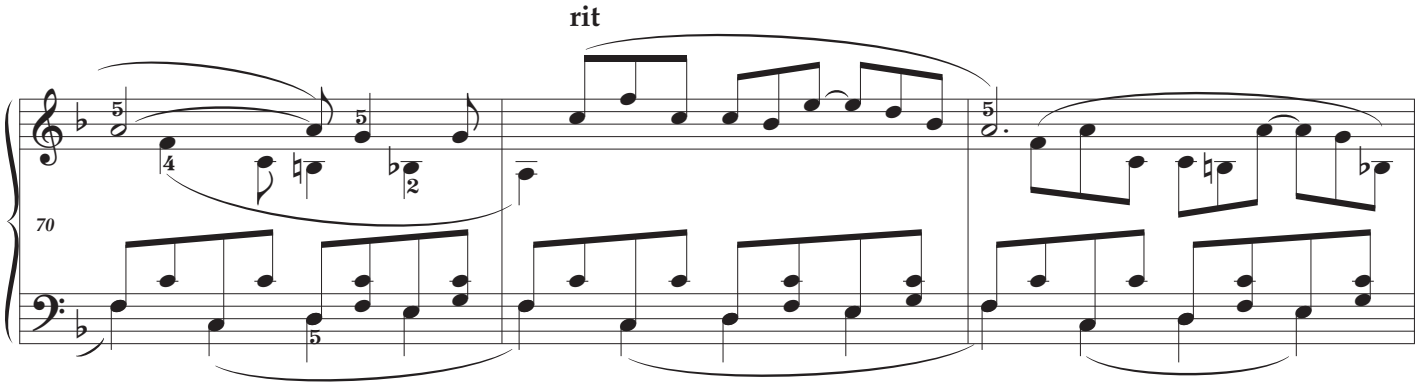
rit
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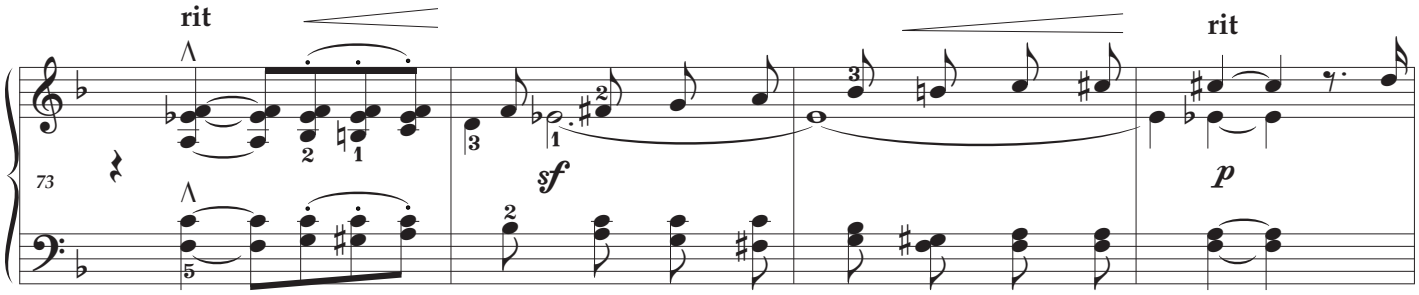
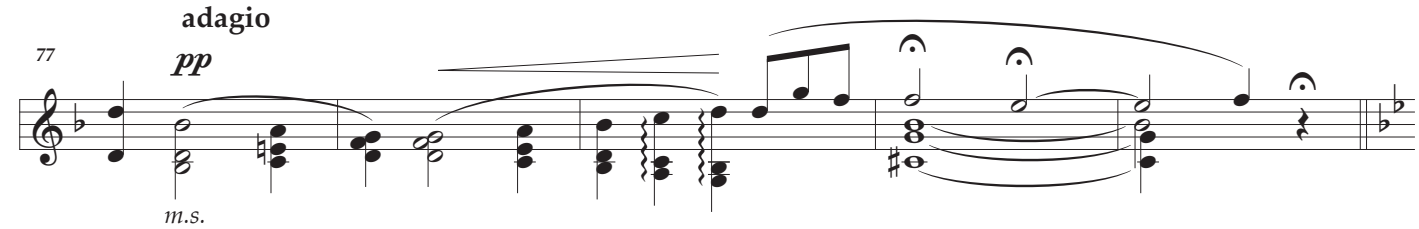
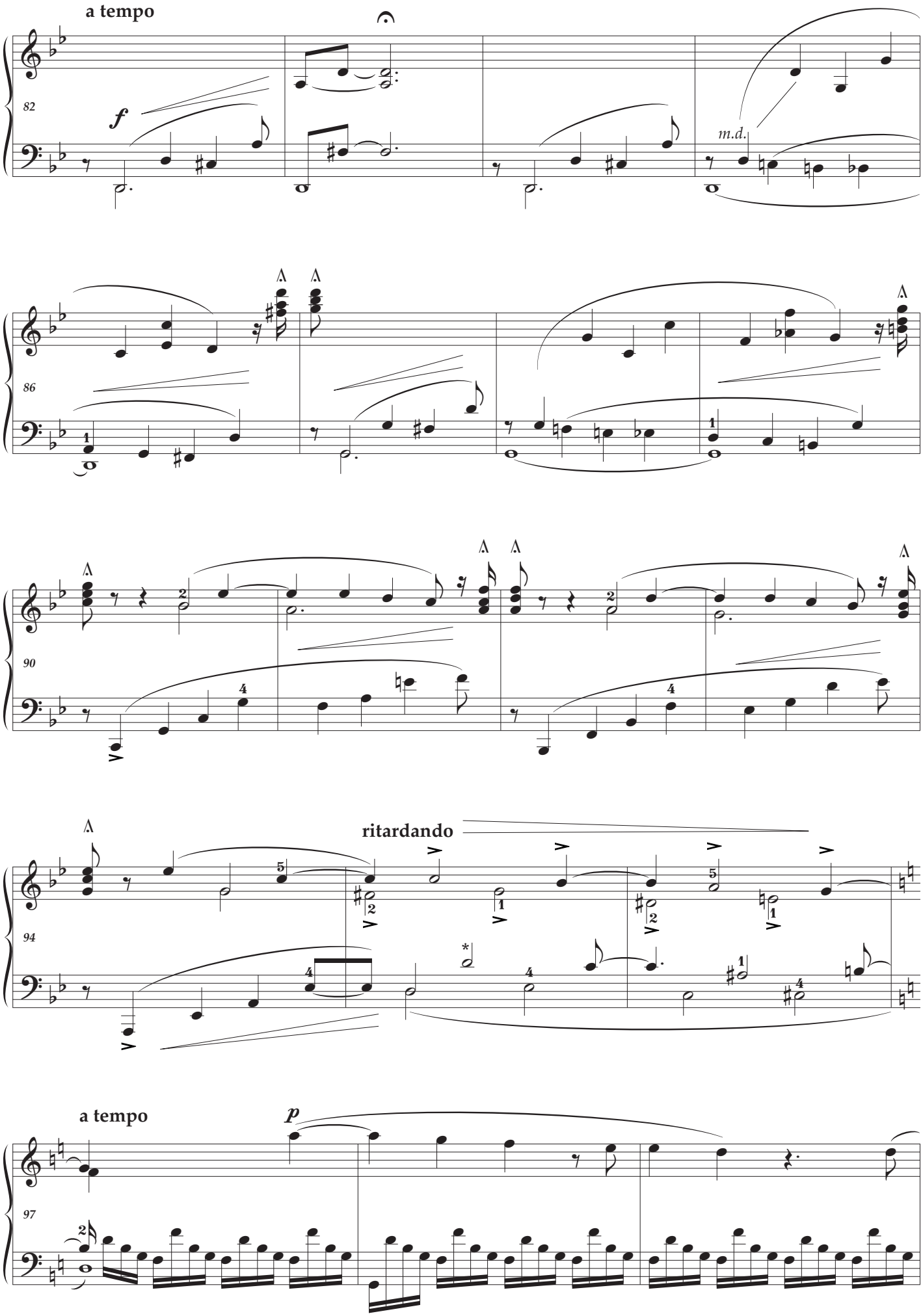
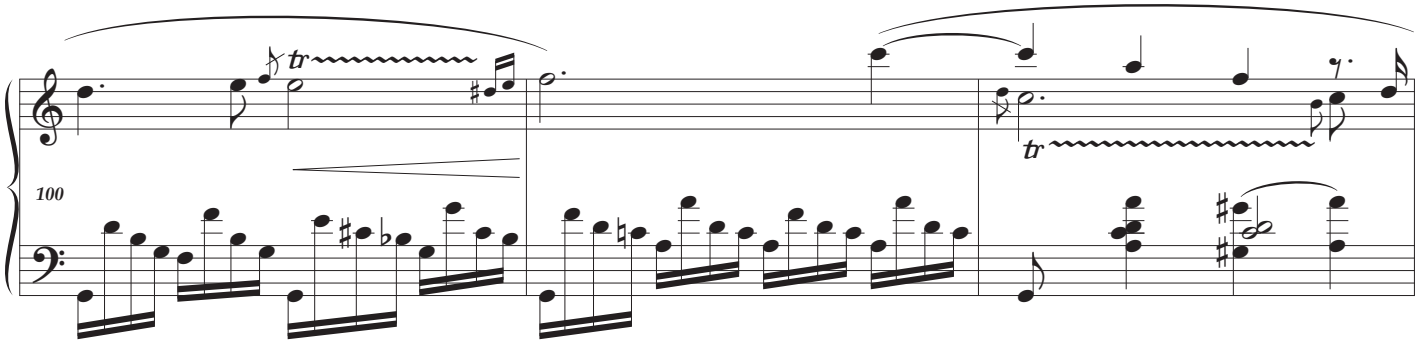

rit
73
sf
rit
p


adagio
77
pp
m.s.


a tempo
82
f
m.d.
86
90
94
ritardando
a tempo
97
p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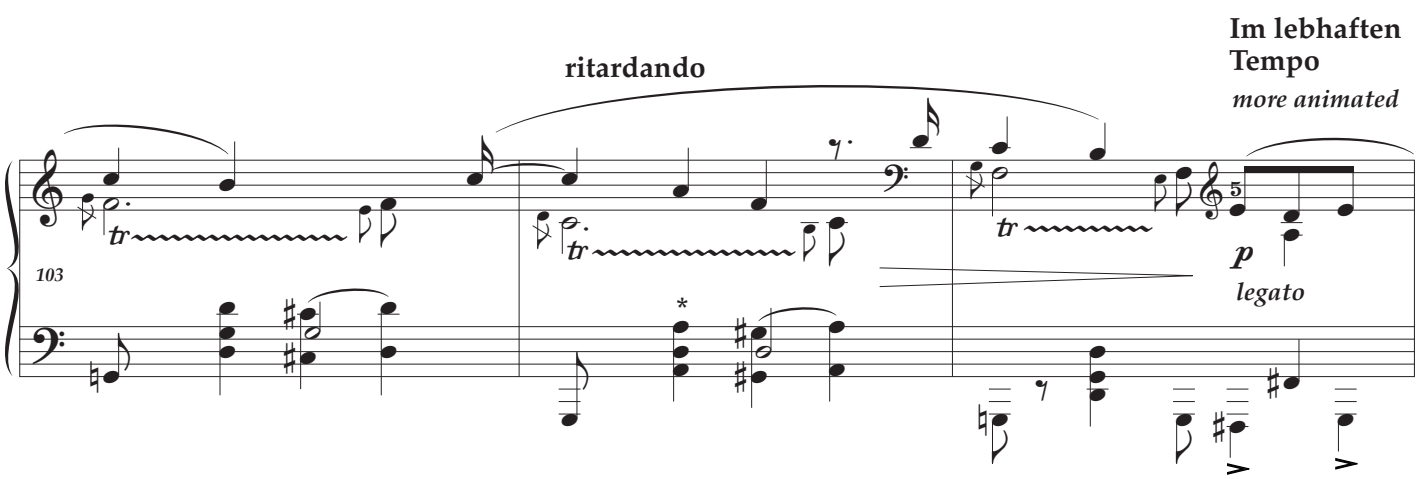
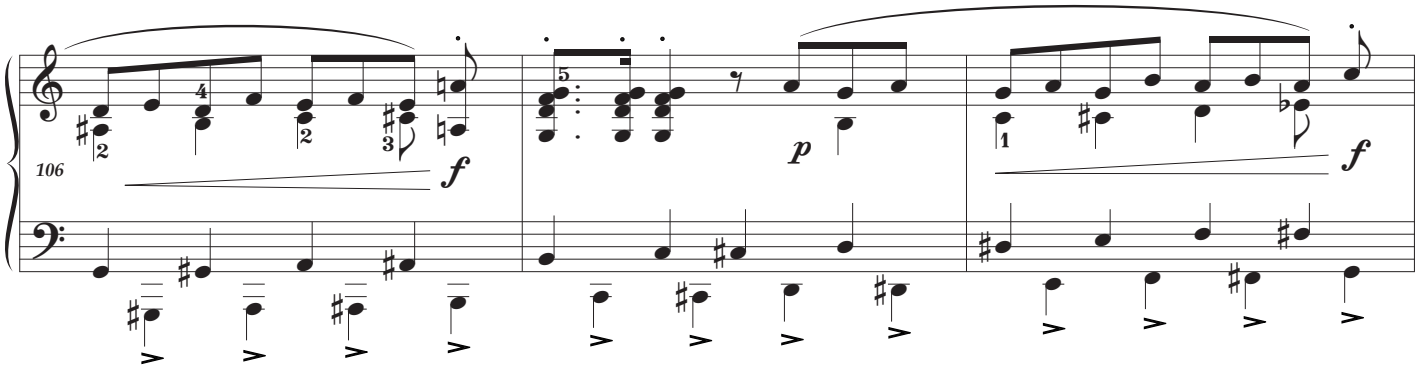
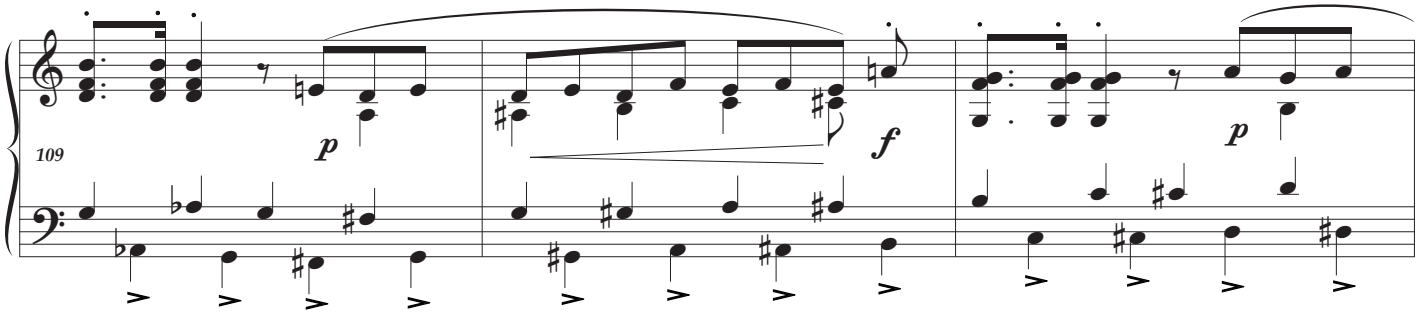

ritardando
Im lebhaften Tempo
more animated
103
tr
tr
tr
p
legato


106
f
p
f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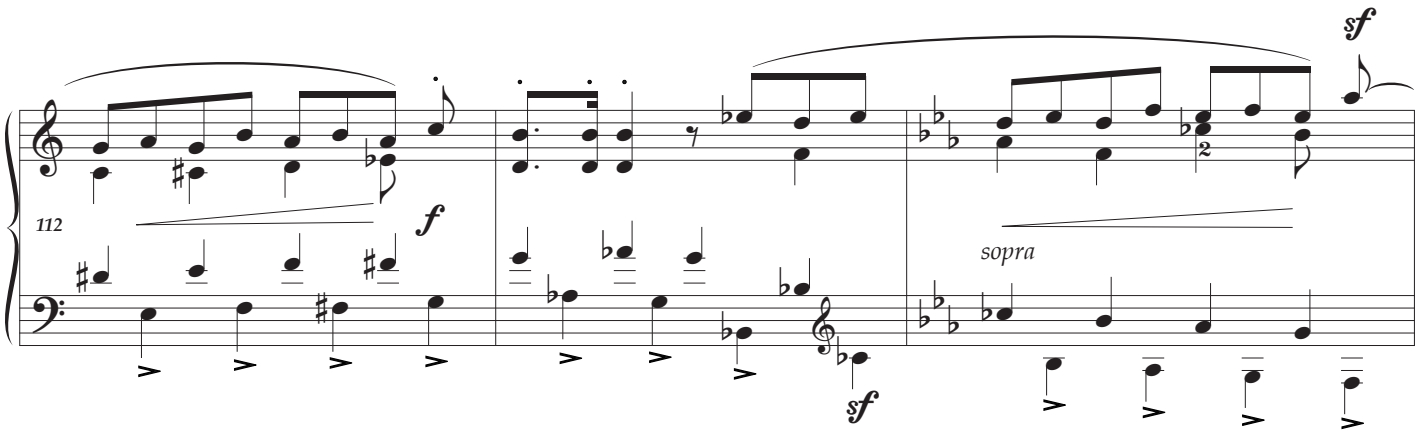
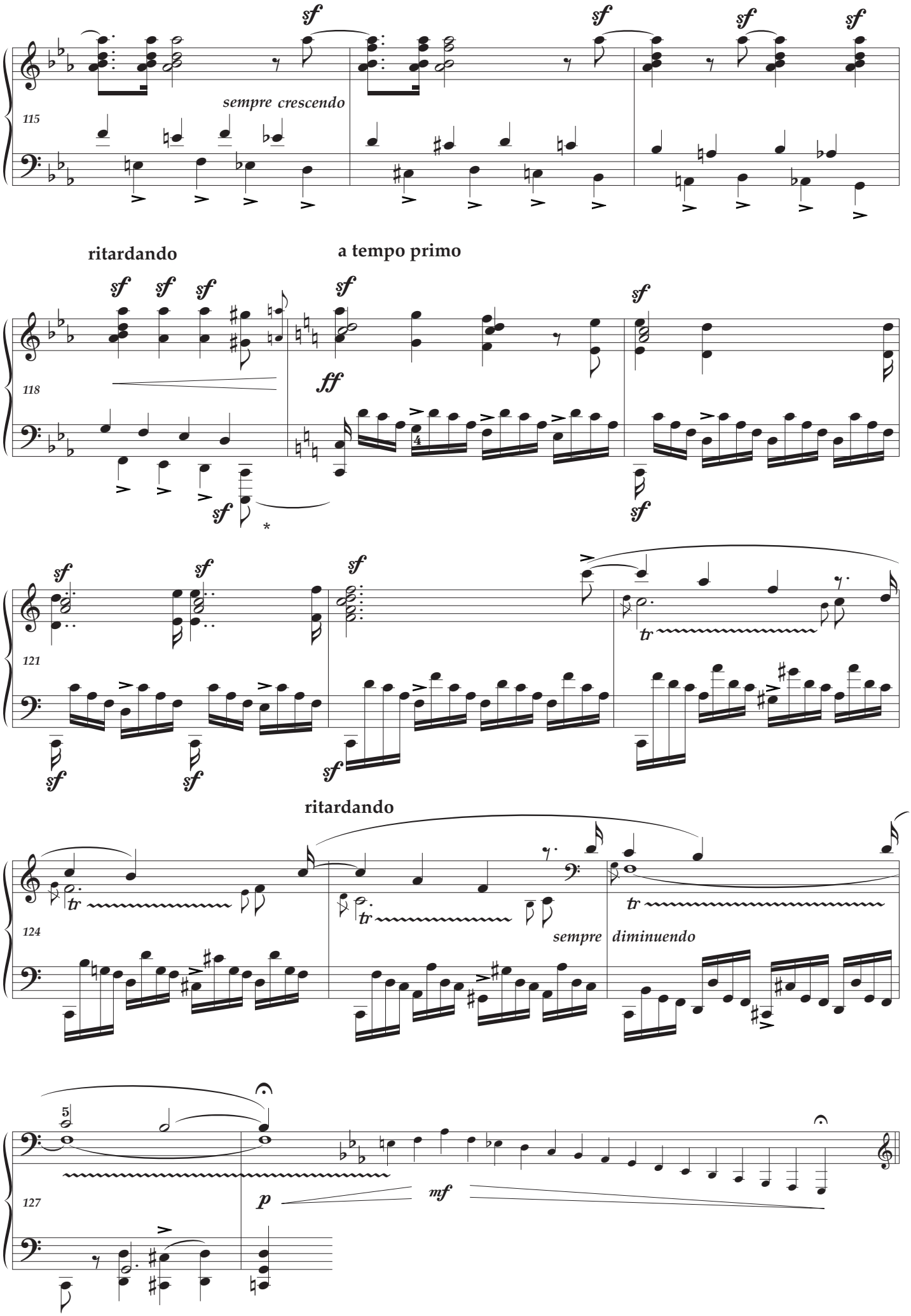
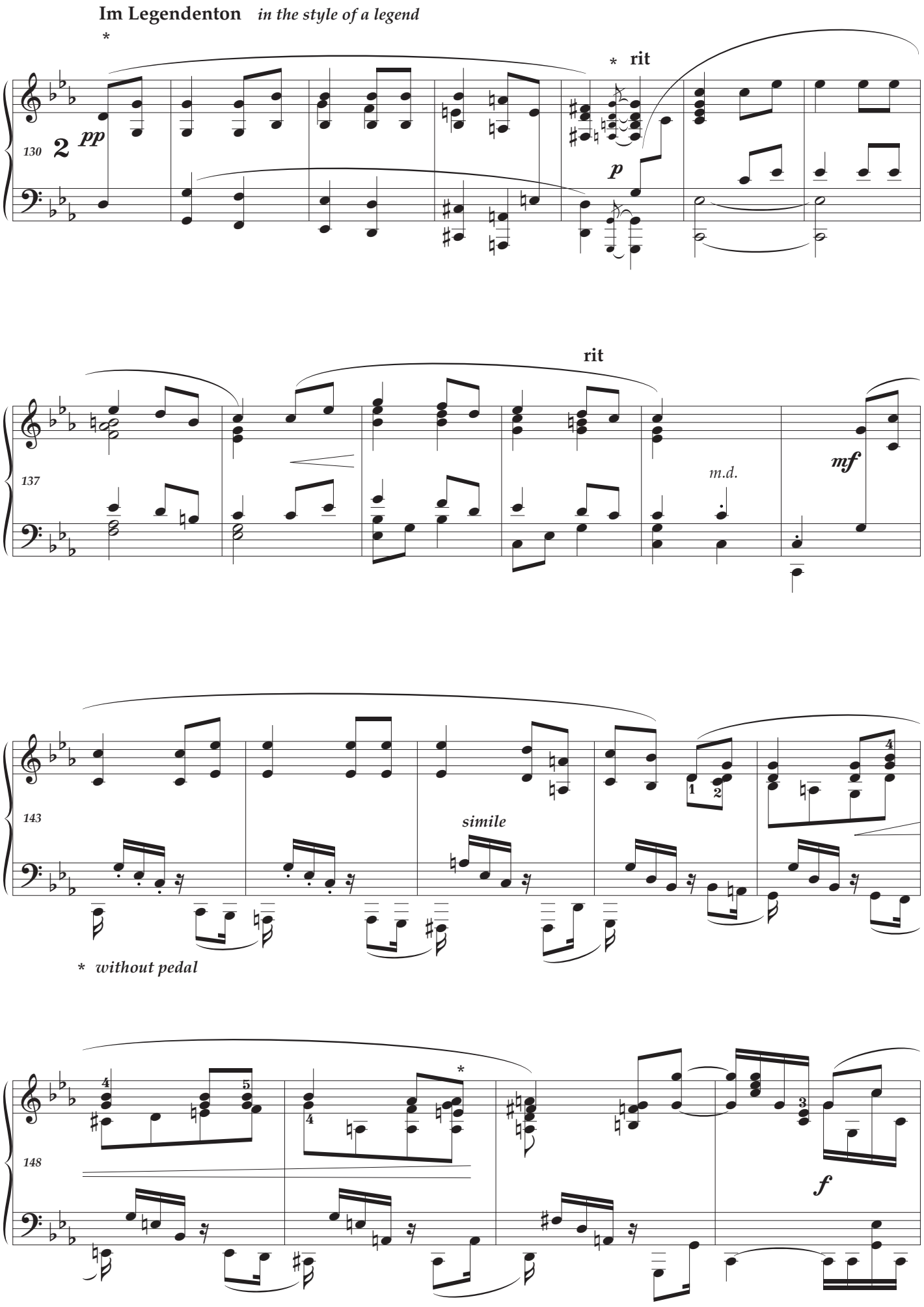
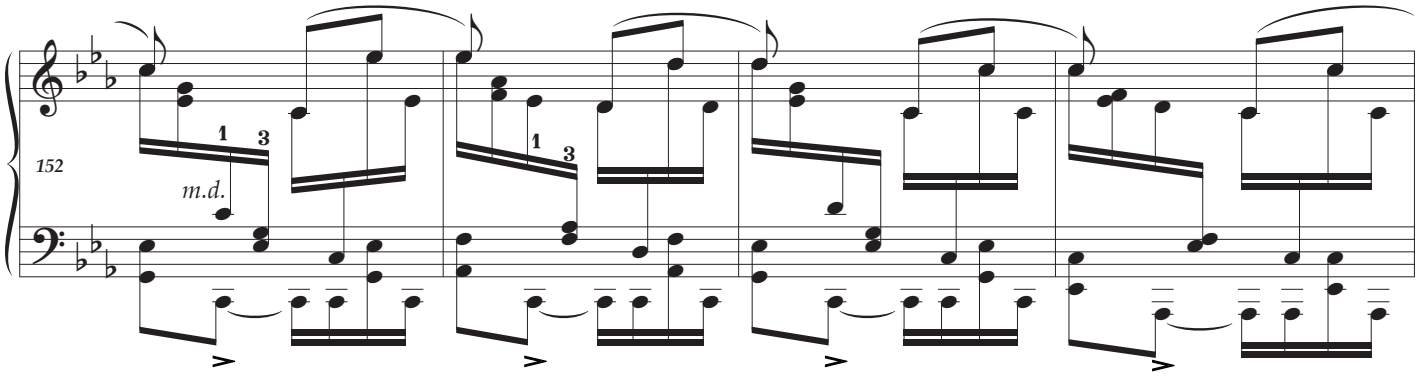
p
f
p


112
f
sf
sopra
sf


sf
sempre crescendo
115
ritardando
a tempo primo
118
ff
121
tr
ritardando
124
sempre diminuendo
127
p
mf


Im Legendenton in the style of a legend
*
* rit
130
2
pp
p
rit
137
m.d.
mf
143
simile
* without pedal
148
f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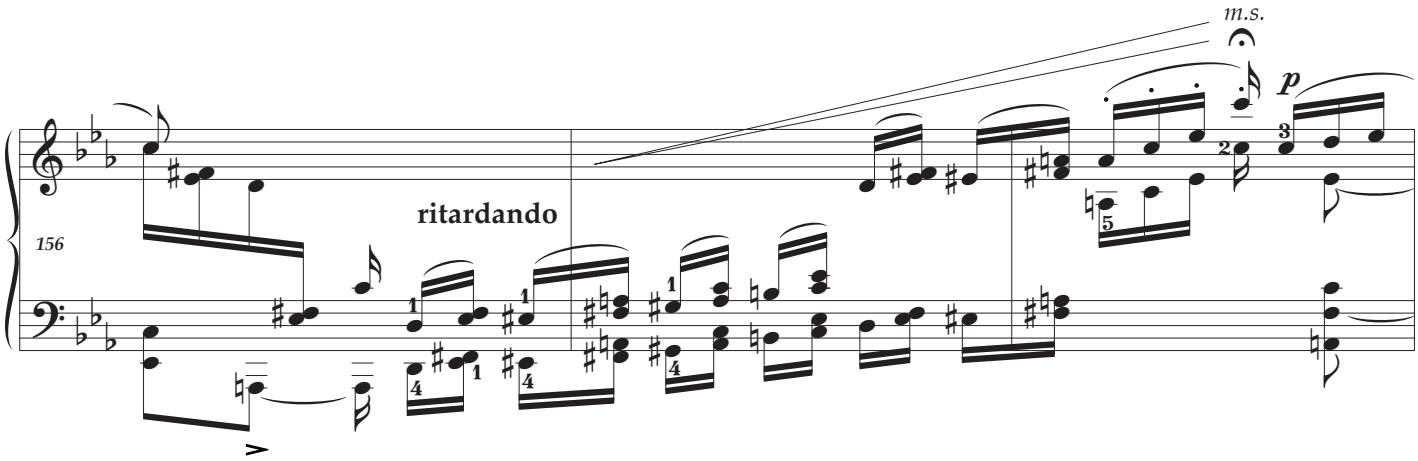
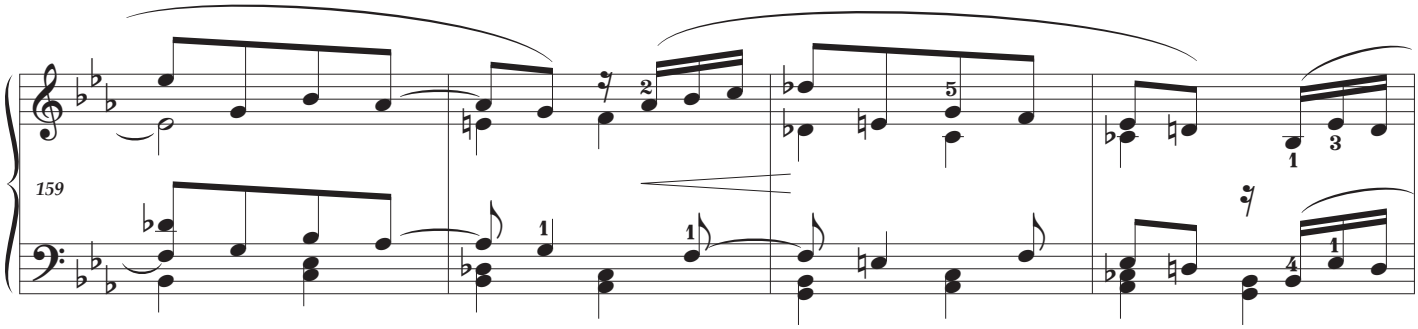
m.d.


156
ritardando
m.s.
p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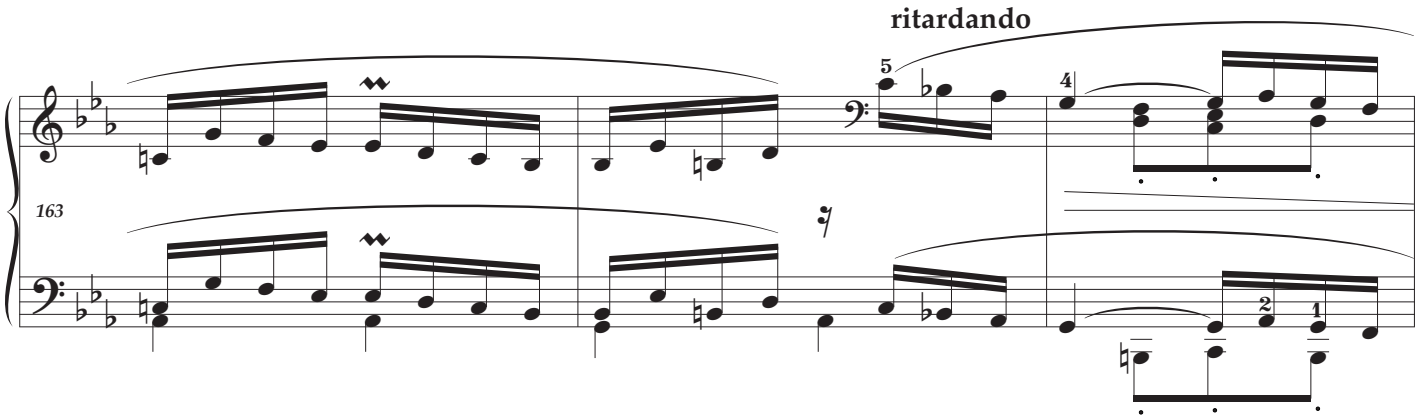
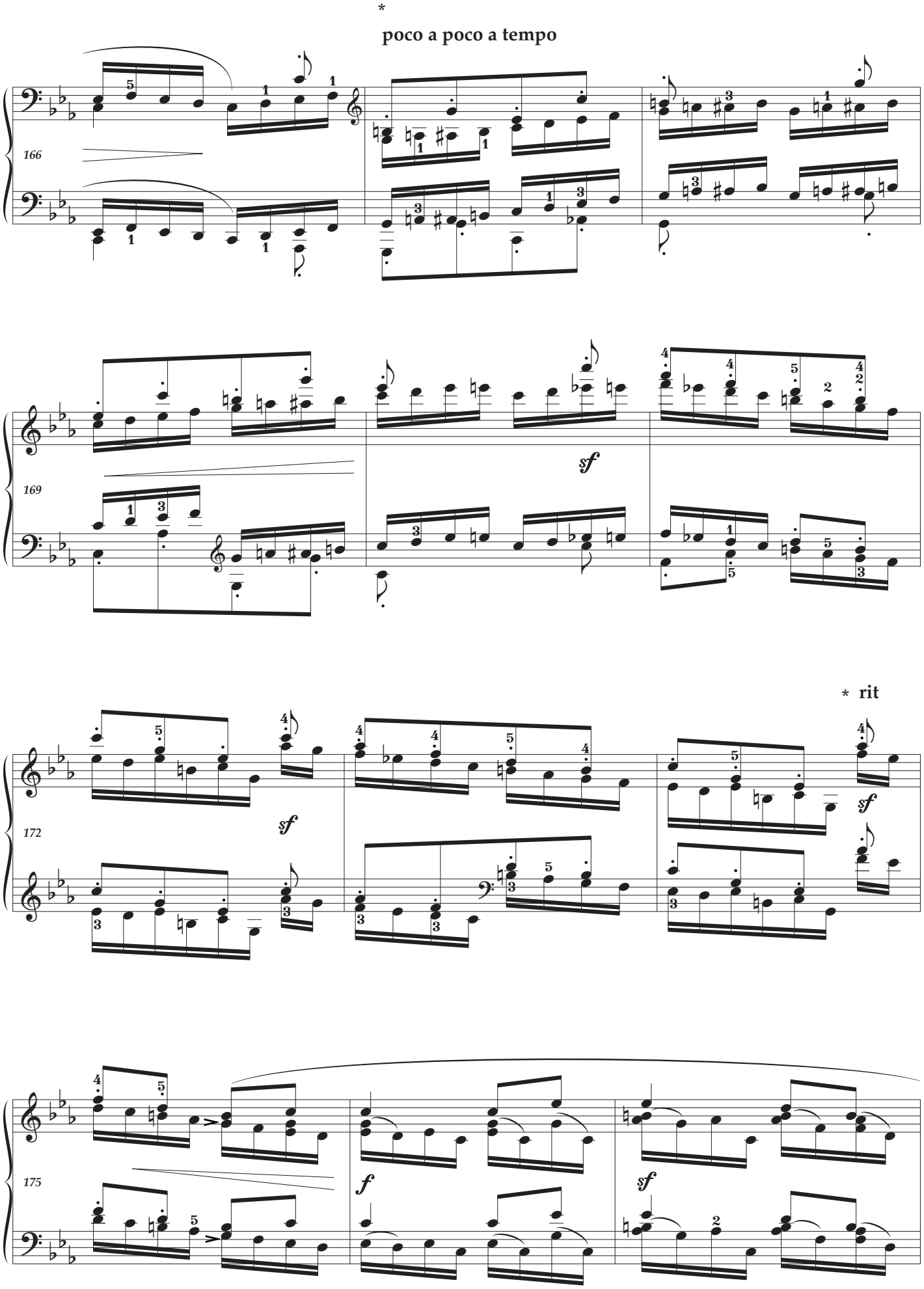
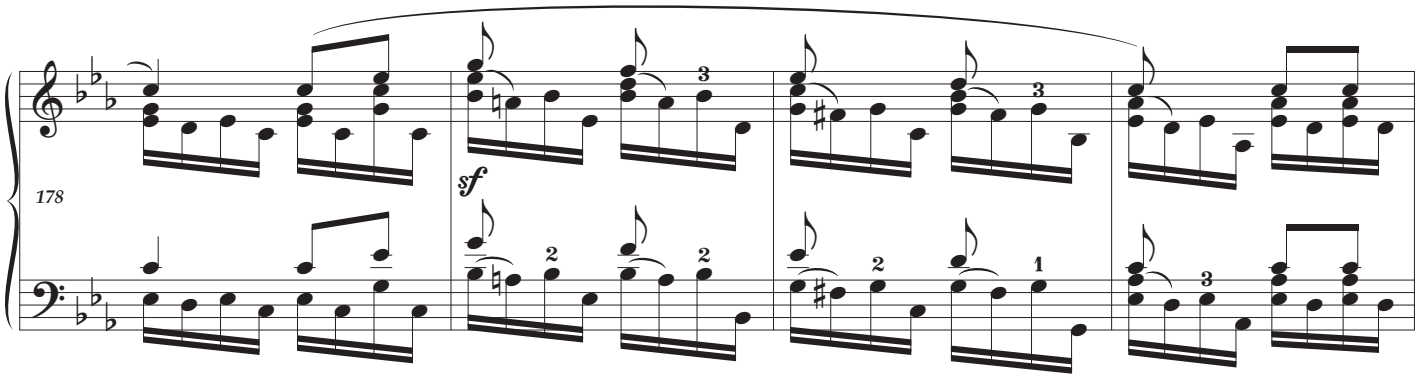

163
ritardando


*
poco a poco a tempo
166
169
sf
* rit
172
sf
175
f
sf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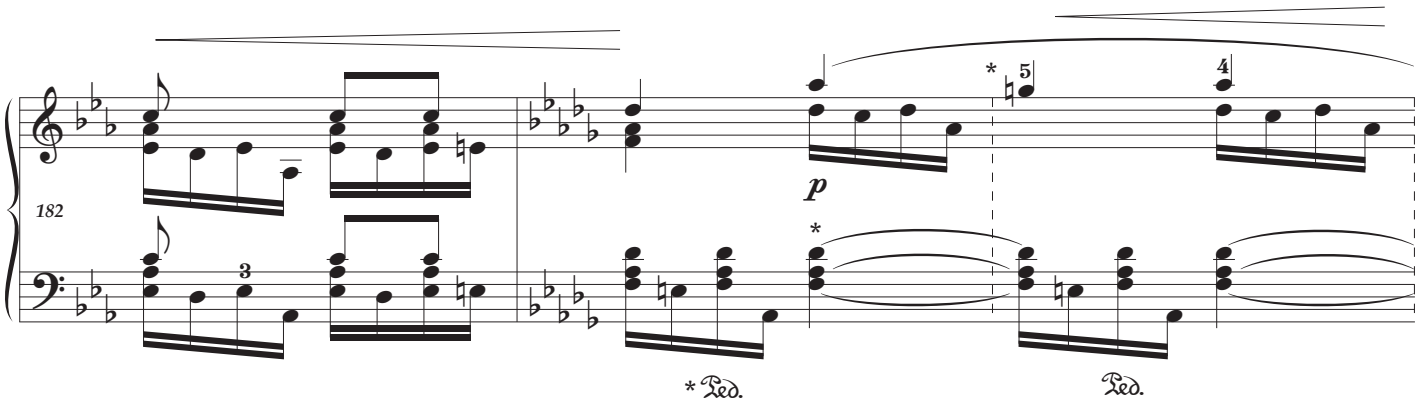
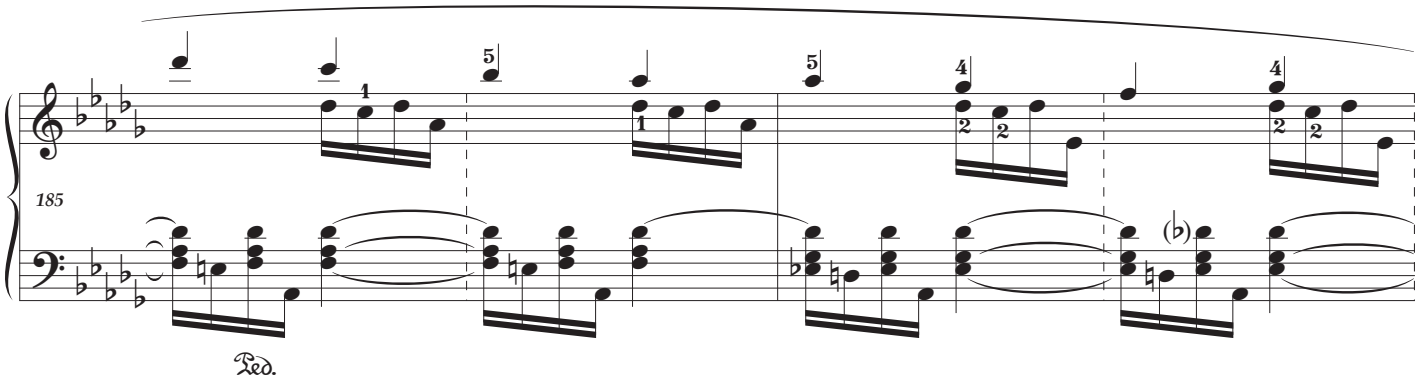
sf


182
p
* Ped.
Ped.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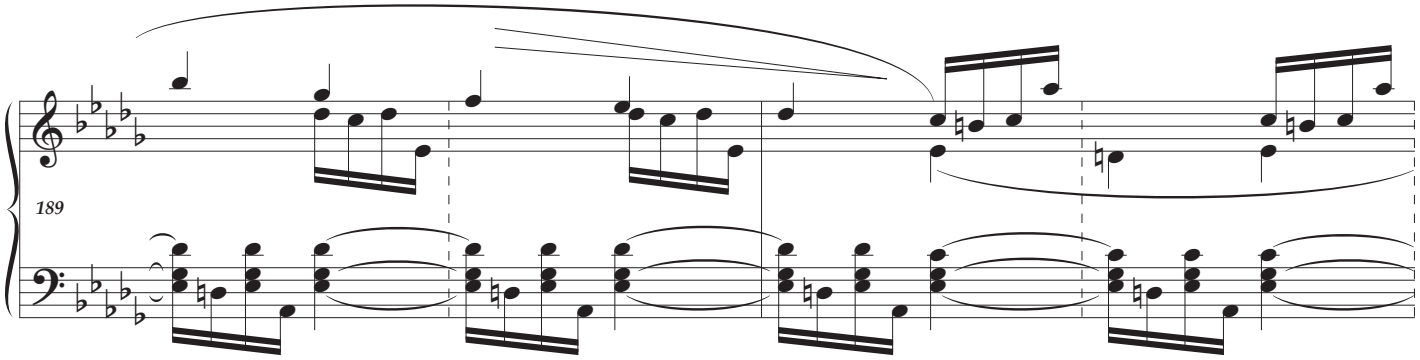
Ped.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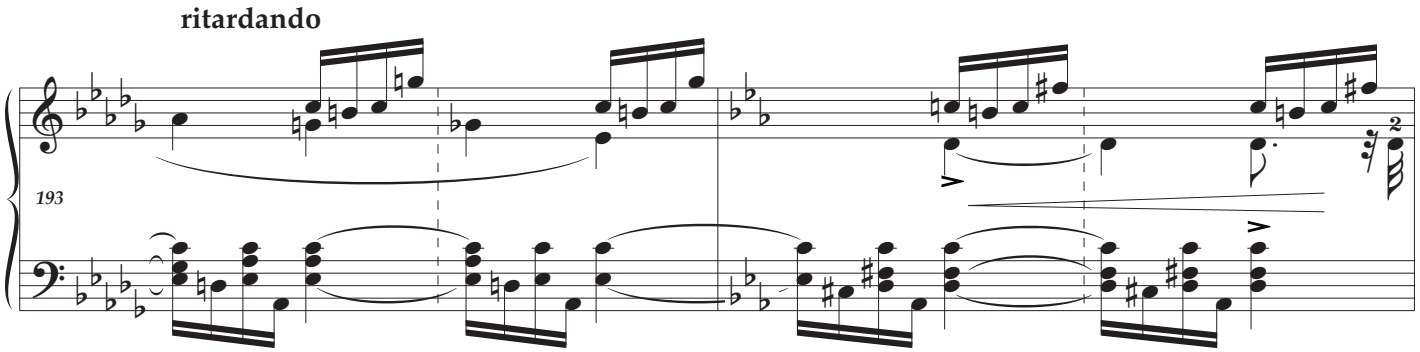
ritardando
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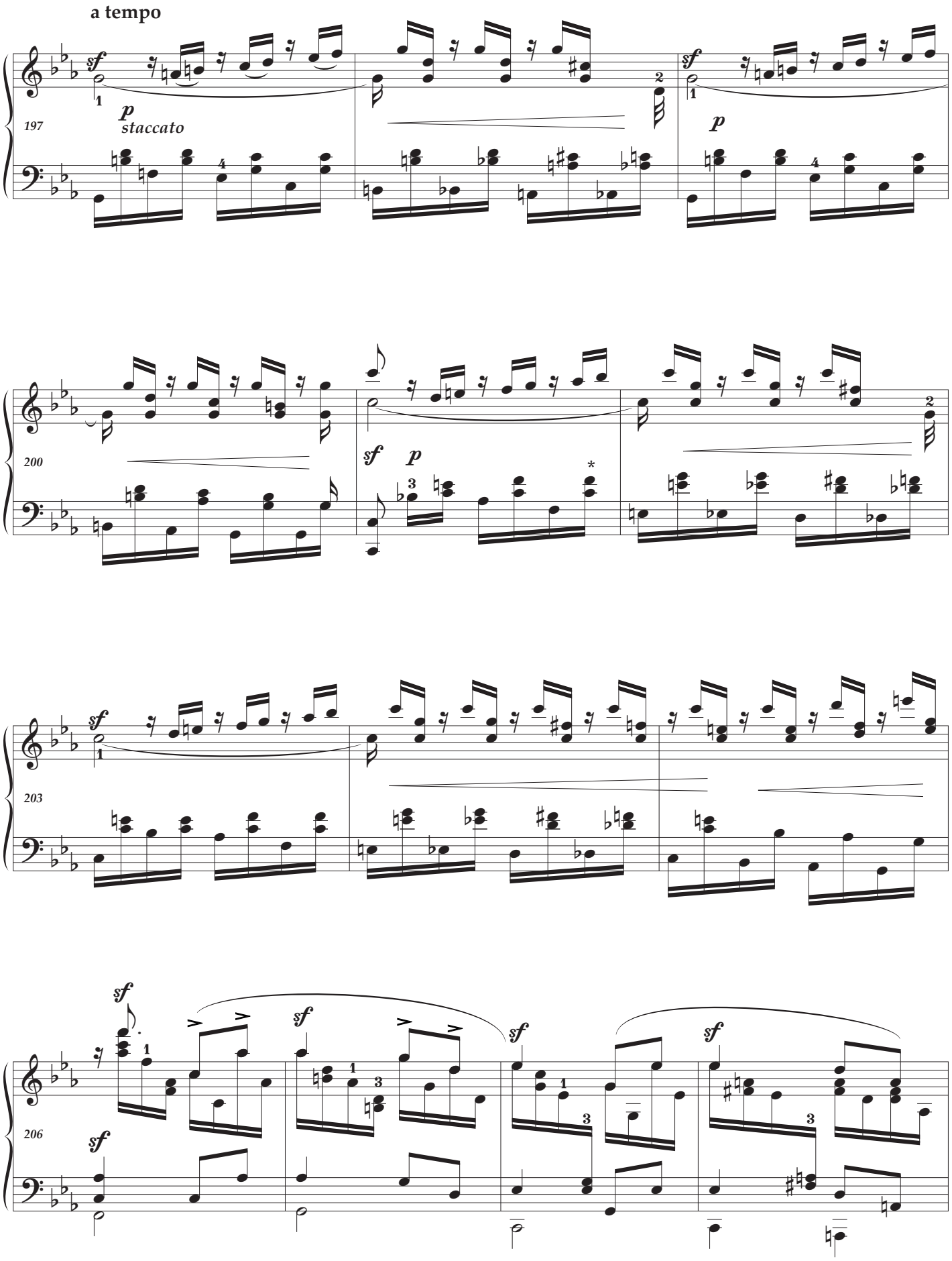
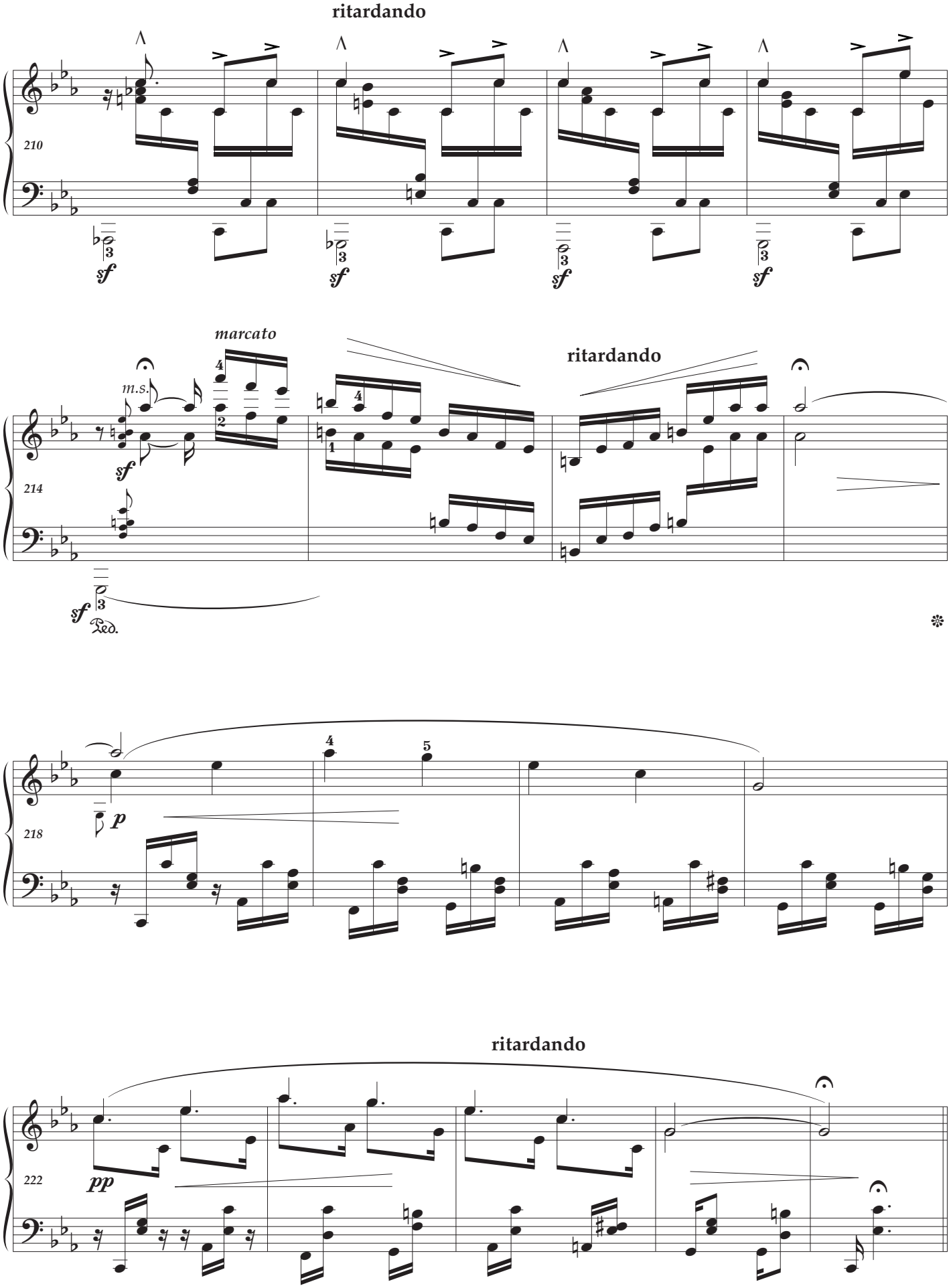
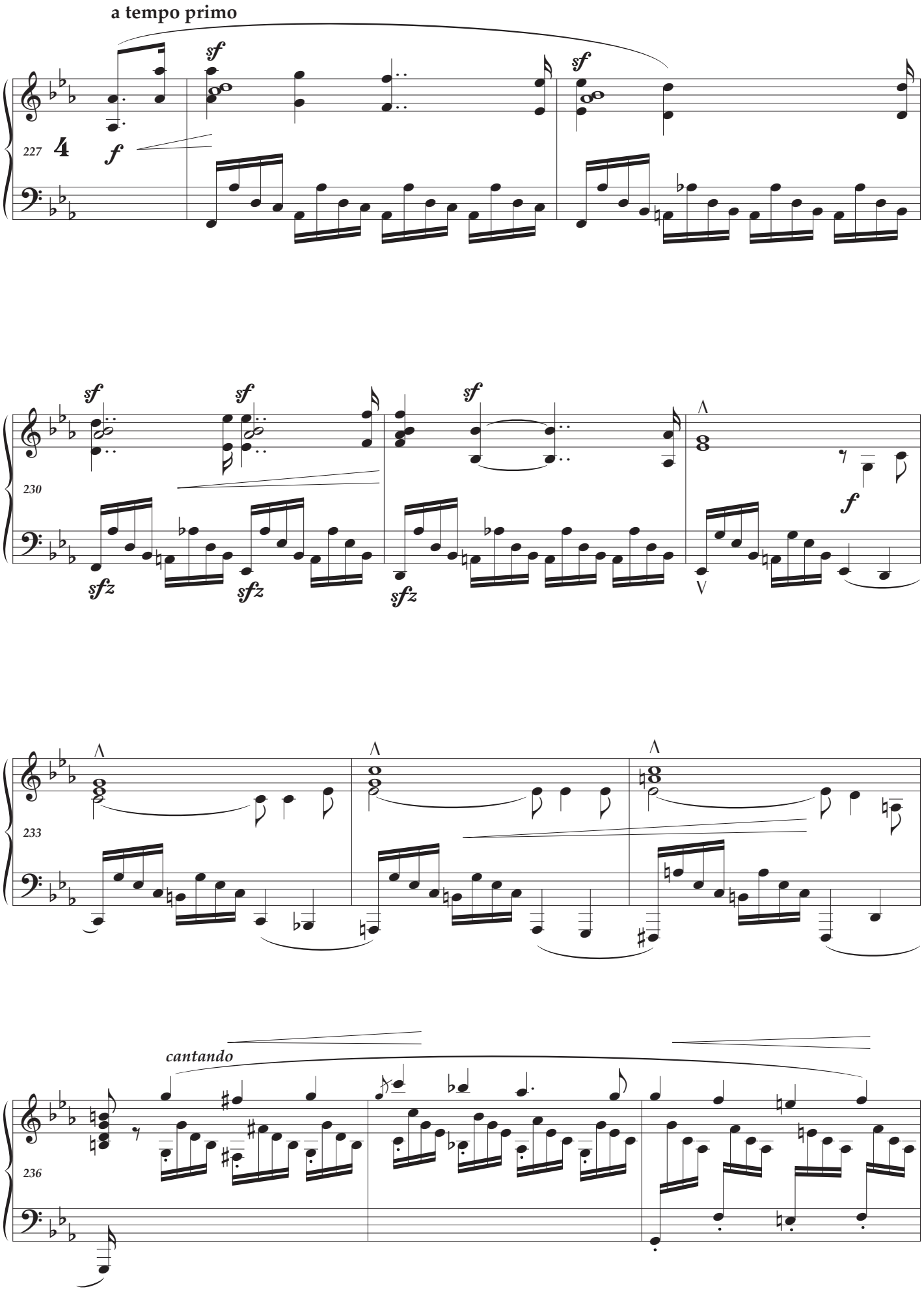
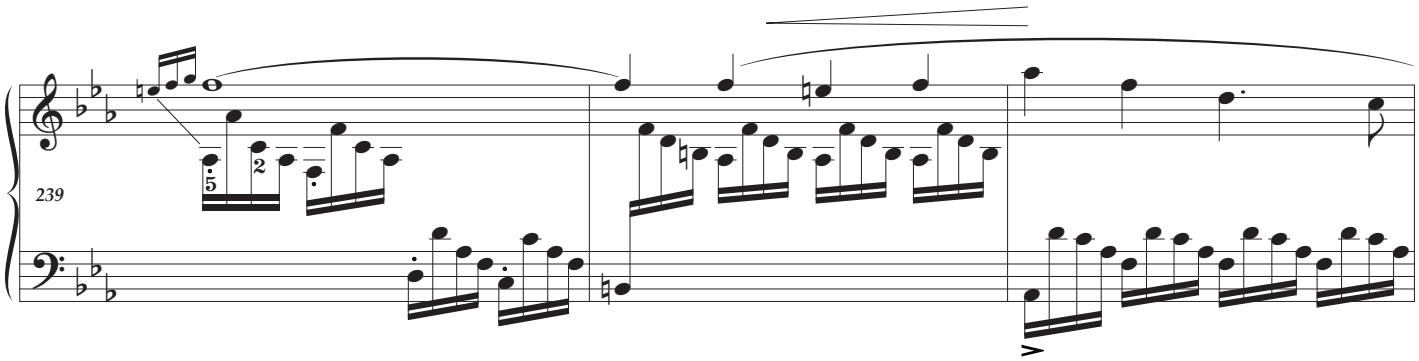

a tempo
197
sf
p
staccato
sf
p
200
sf
p
203
sf
206
sf


ritardando
210
sf
marcato
m.s.
214
Ped.
ritardando
218
p
ritardando
222
pp


a tempo primo
227
4
f
sf
sf
230
sf
sf
sf
sfz
sfz
sfz
f
233
236
cantando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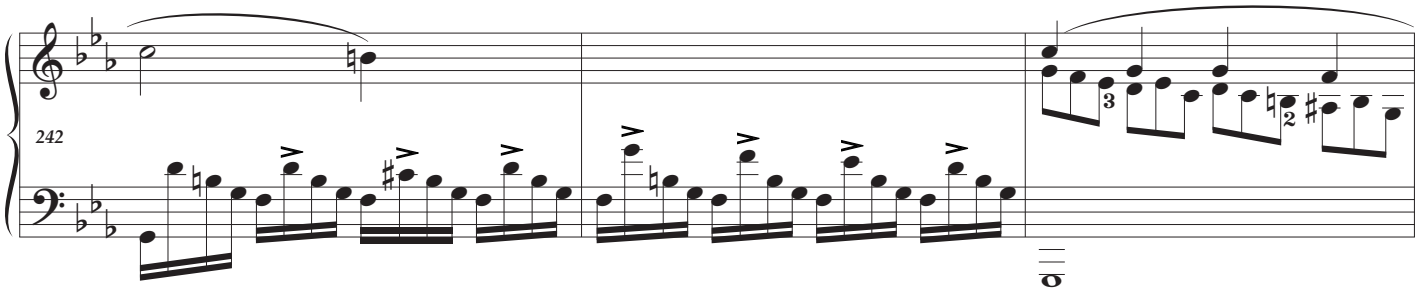
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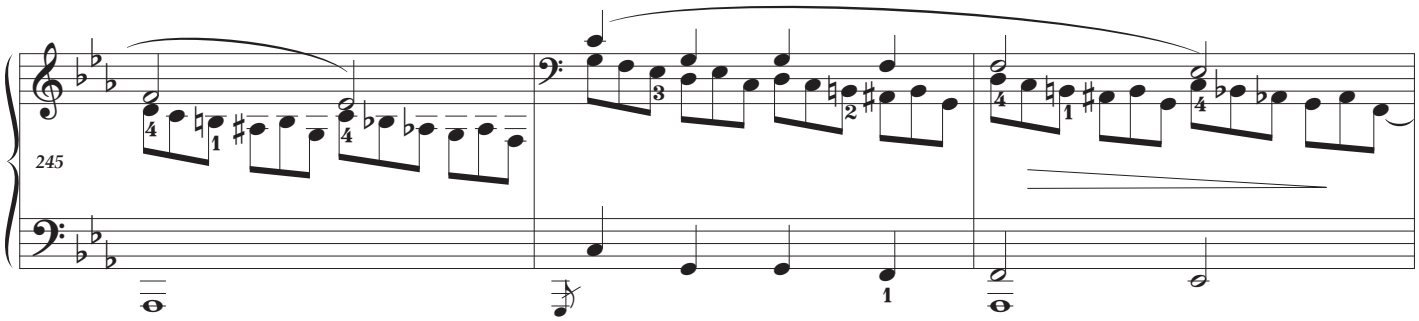
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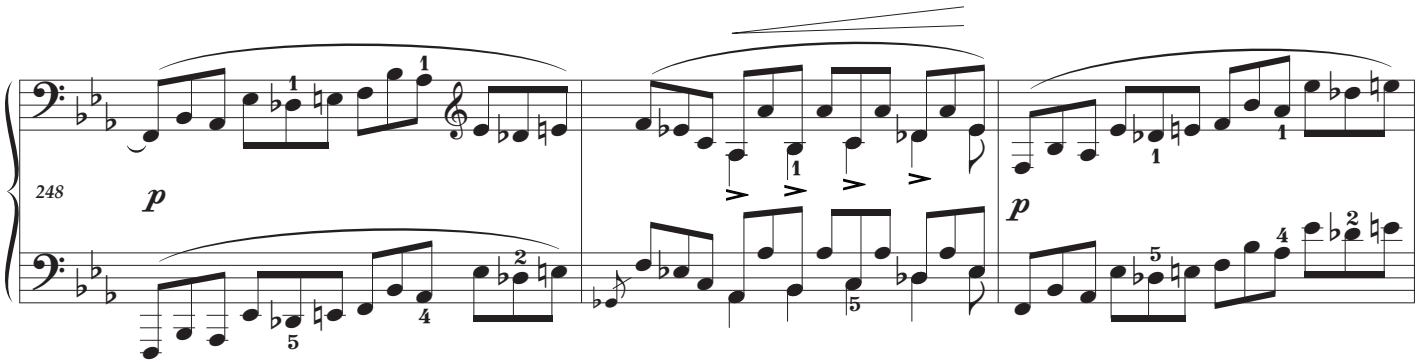
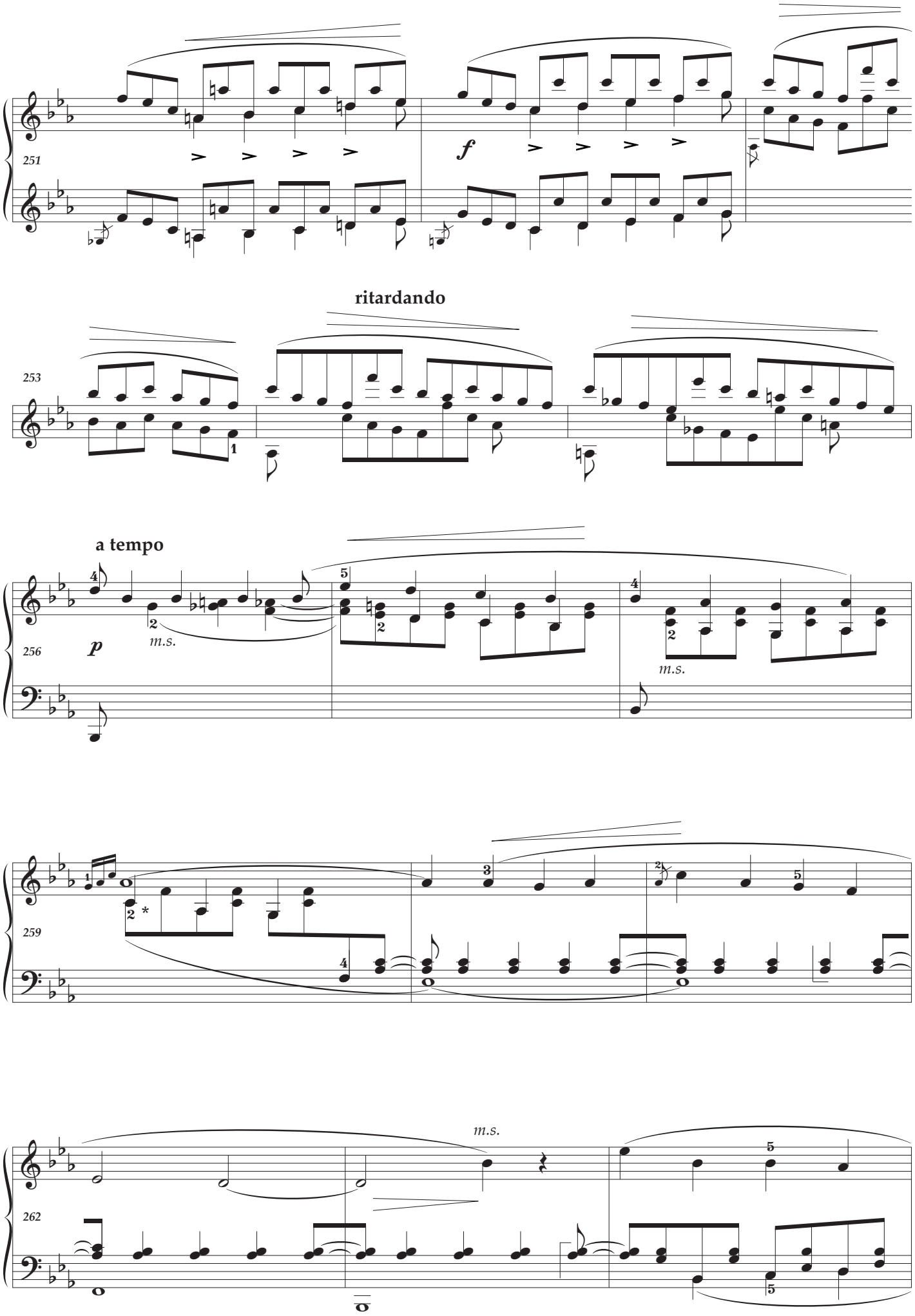
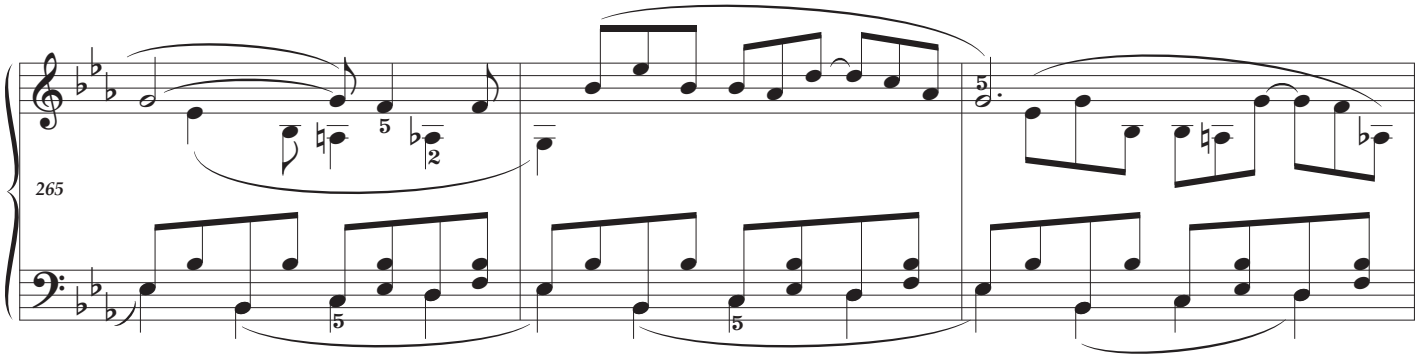

248
p
p


251
f
ritardando
253
a tempo
256
p
m.s.
m.s.
259
m.s.
262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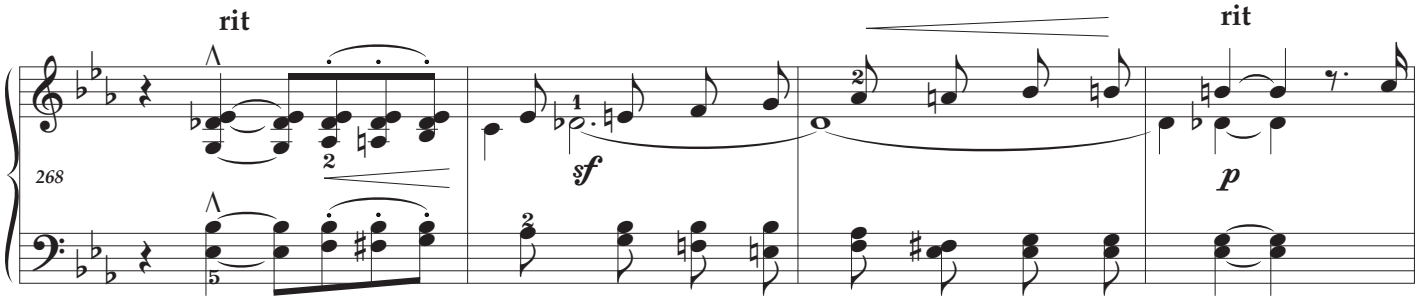
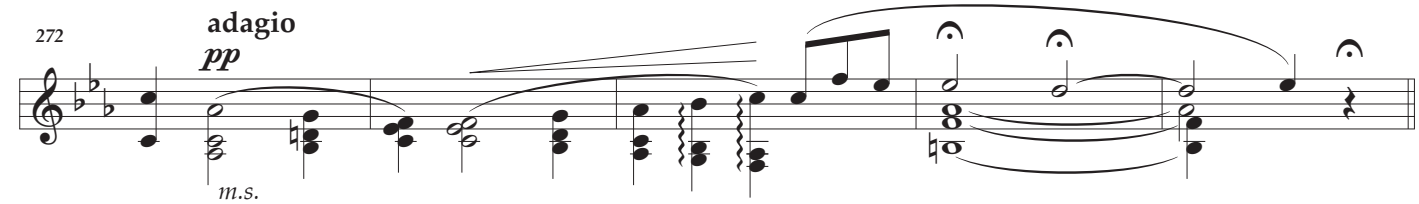
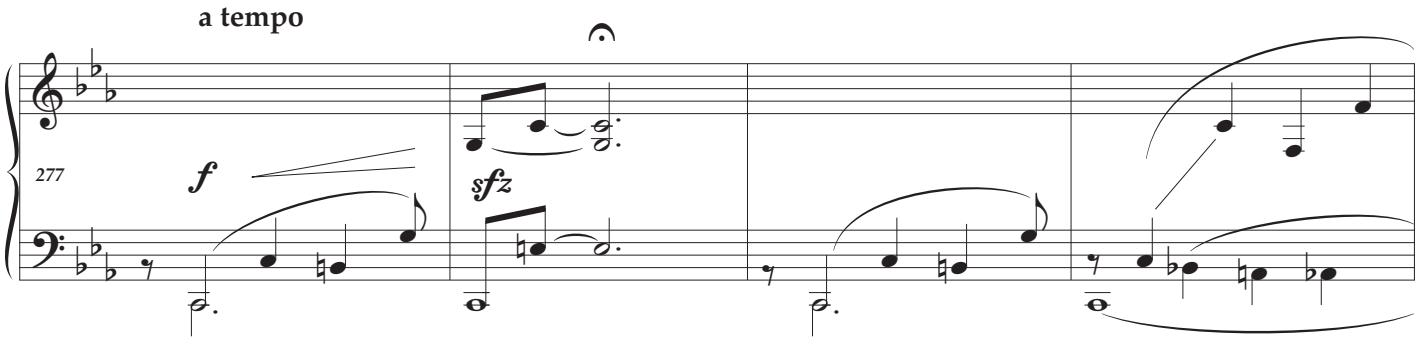
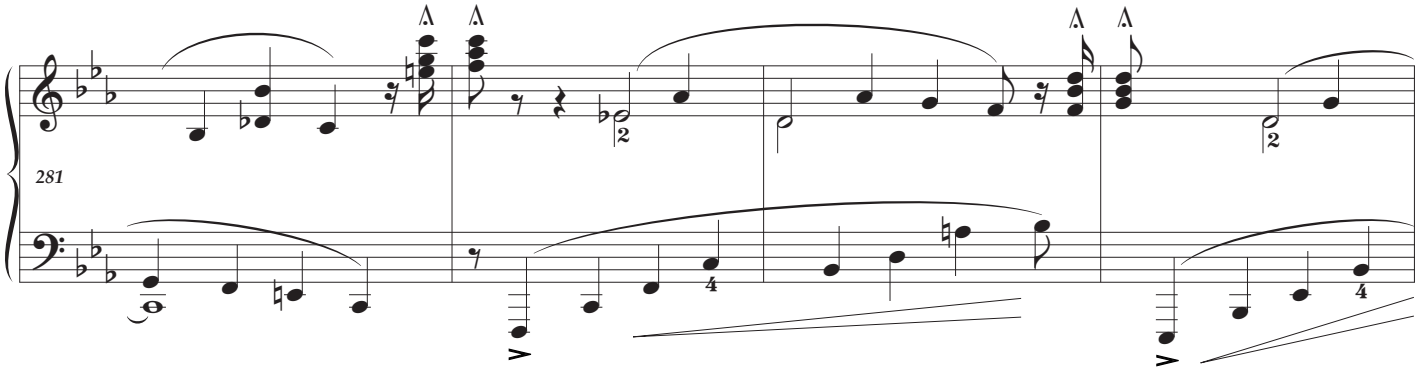
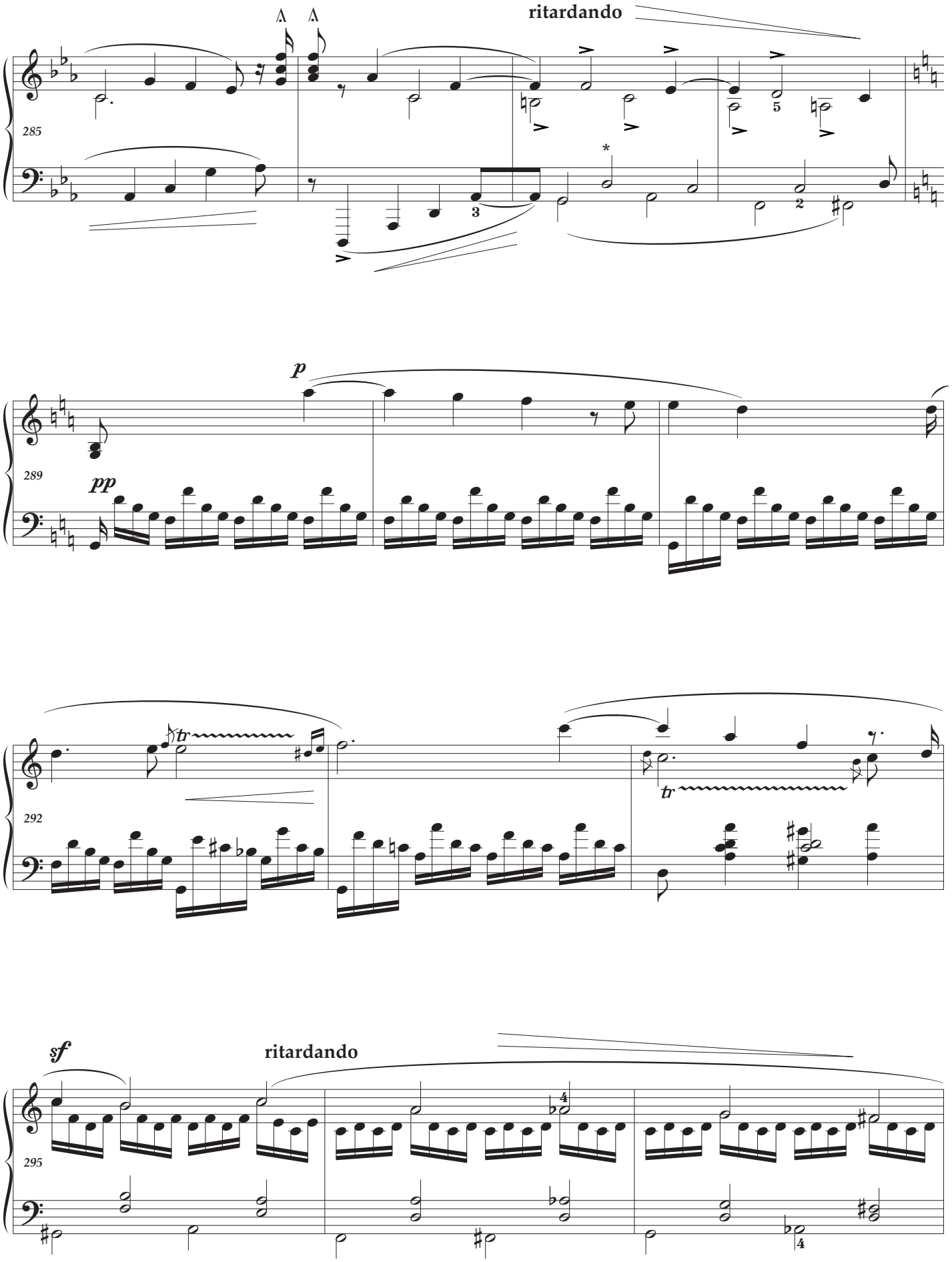
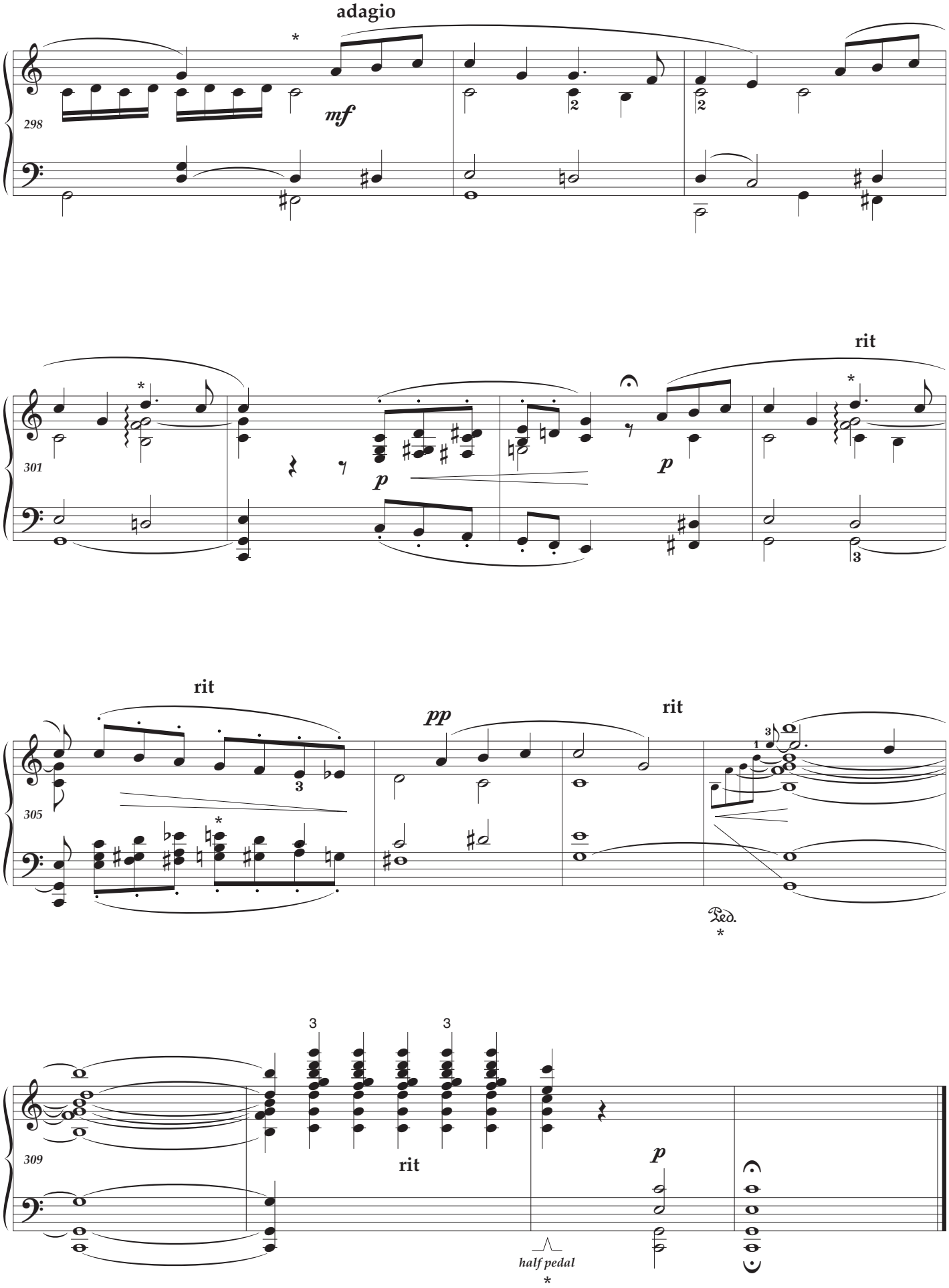

rit
268
sf
rit
p


272
adagio
pp
m.s.

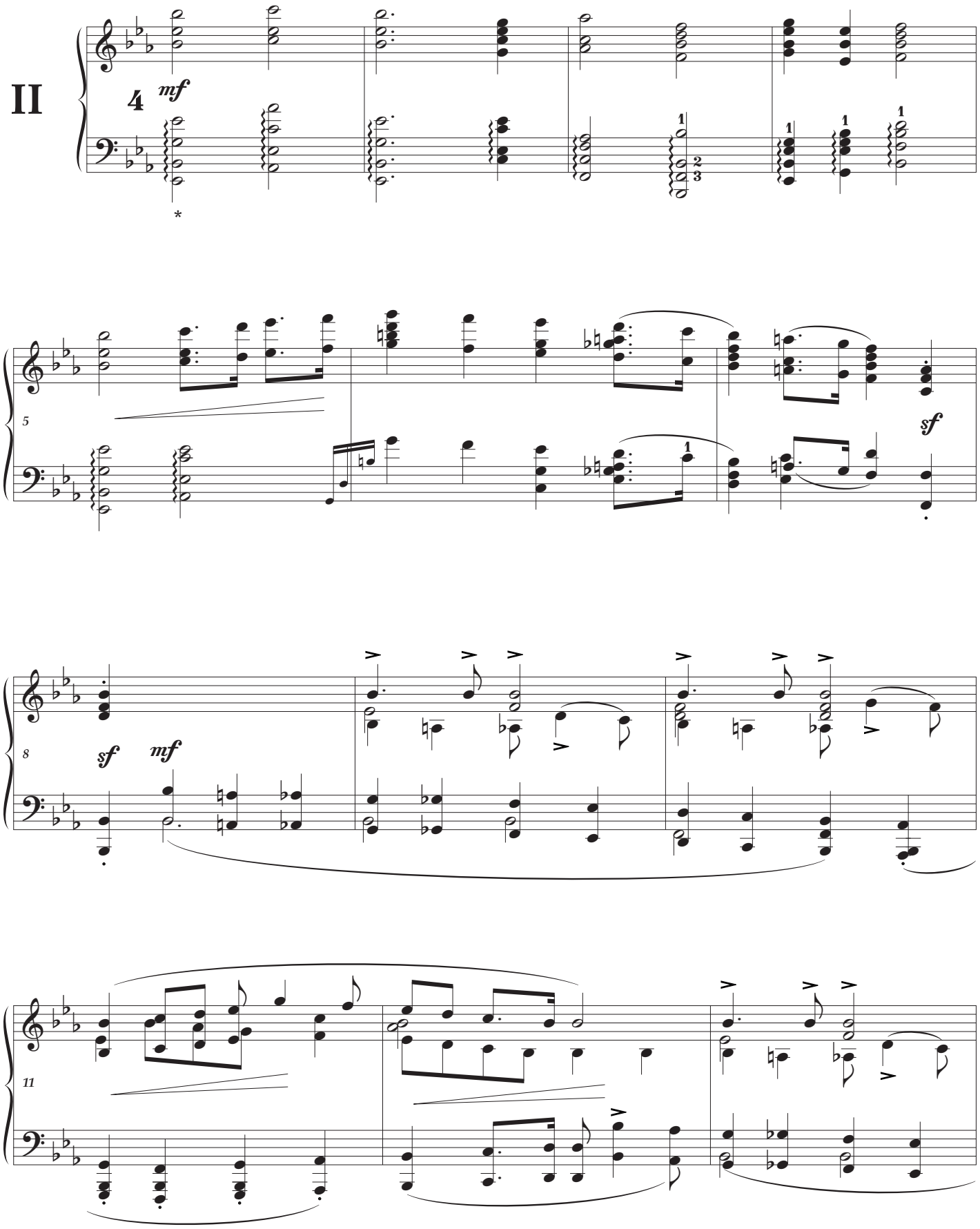

a tempo
277
f
sfz

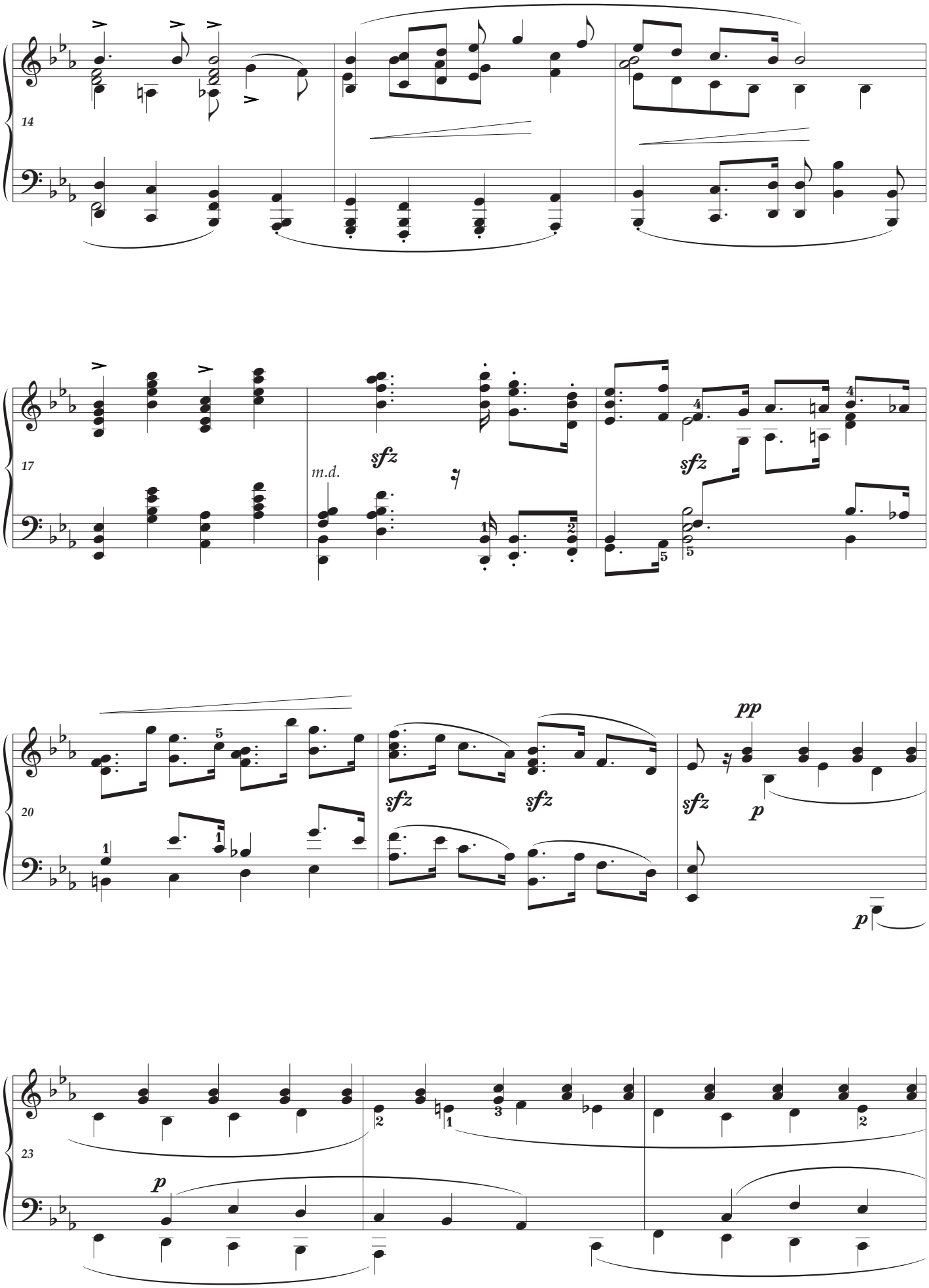

281

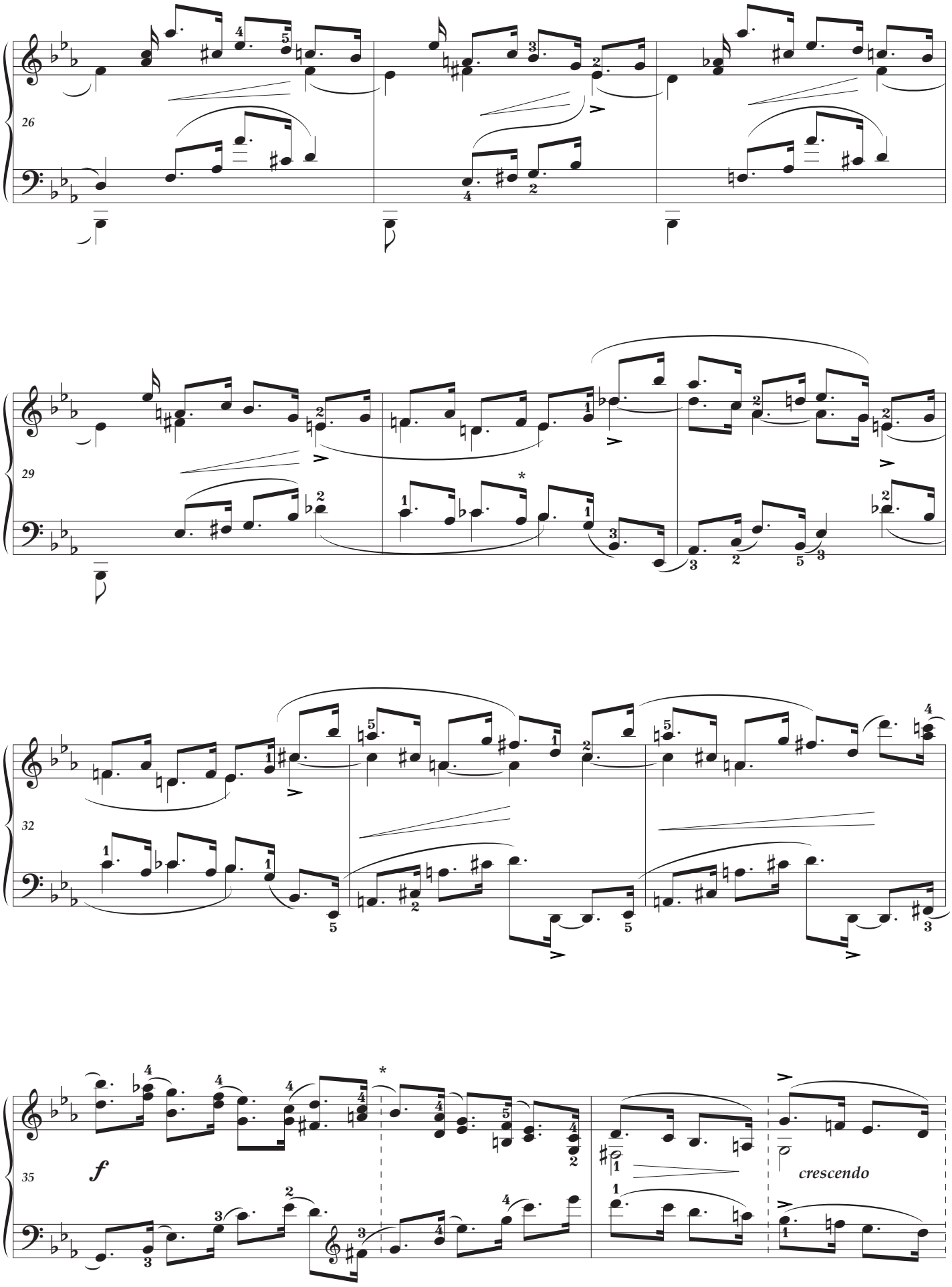

ritardando
285
p
289
pp
292
tr
tr
sf
ritardando
295

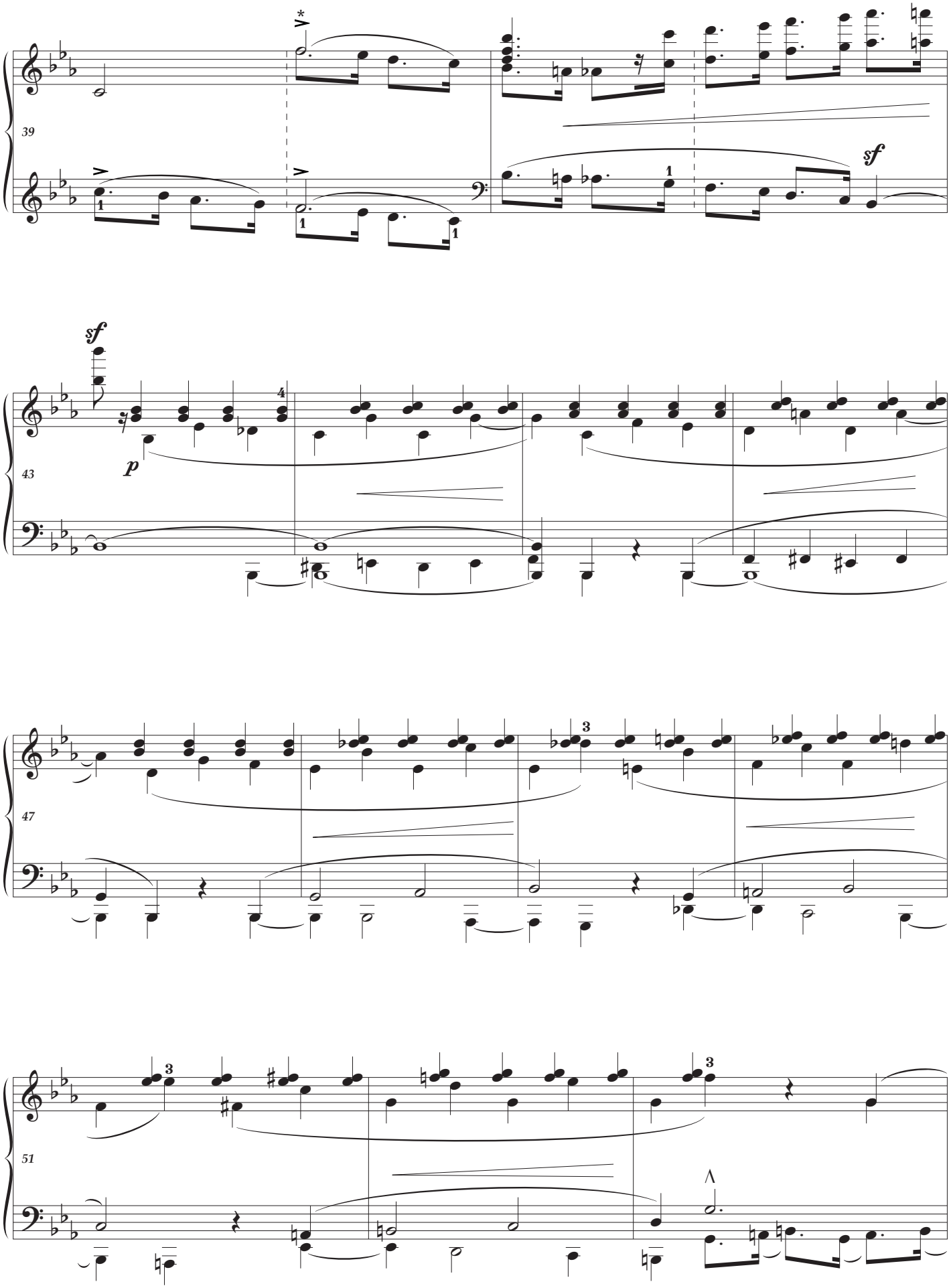

adagio
298
mf
301
p
rit
305
pp
rit
rit
Ped.
309
rit
p
half pedal

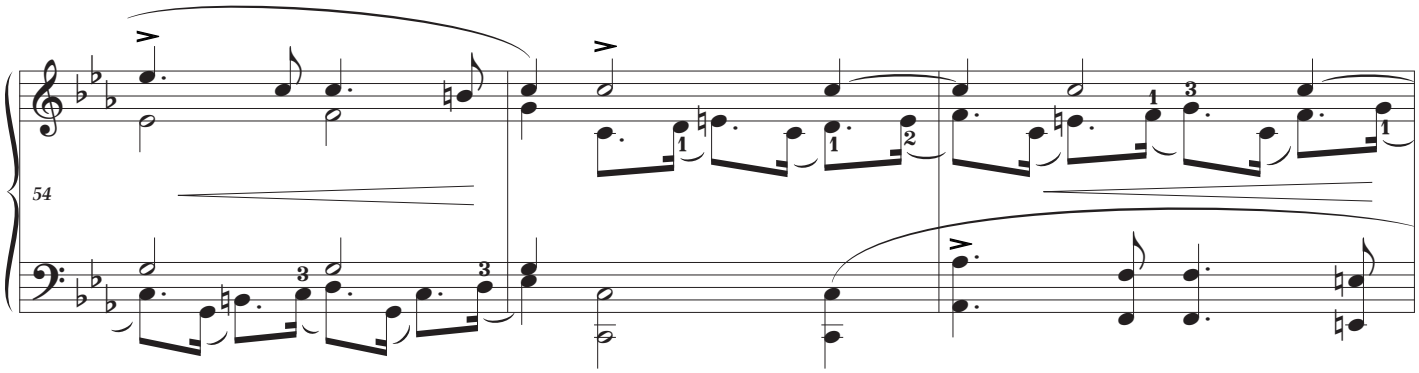
Mässig. Durchaus energisch
moderate tempo. quite energetic




14
17
m.d.
sfz
sfz
20
sfz
sfz
sfz
pp
p
p
23
p


26
29
32
35
f
crescendo


39
sf
43
sf
p
47
51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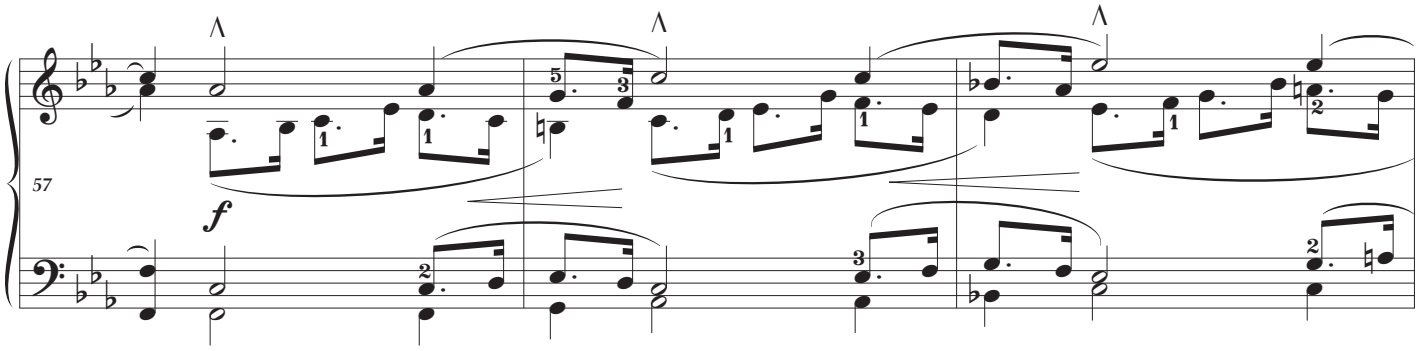
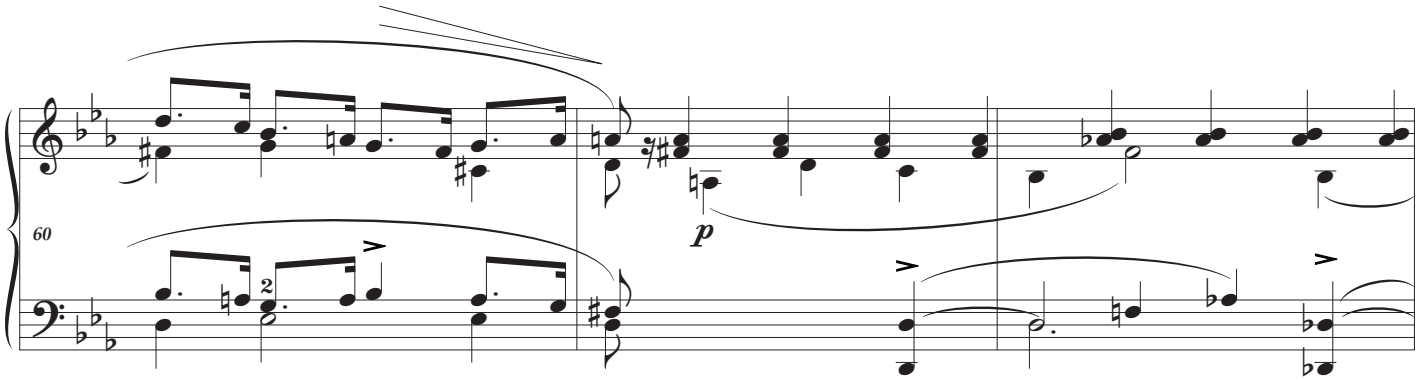
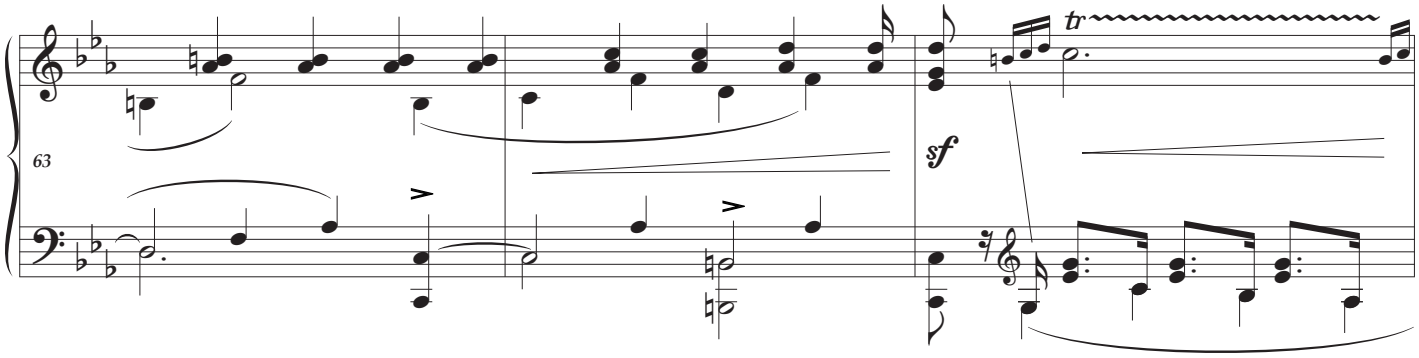
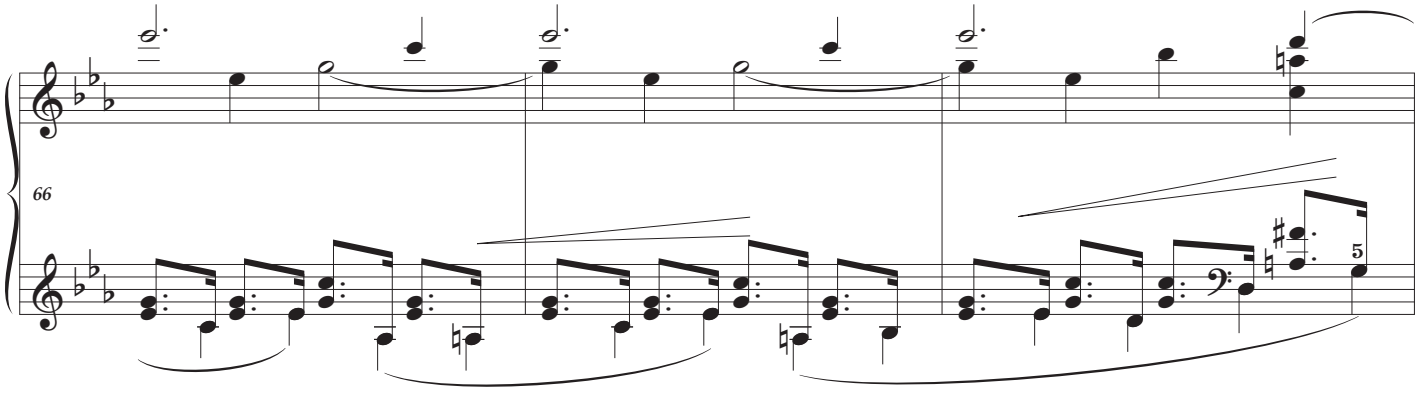
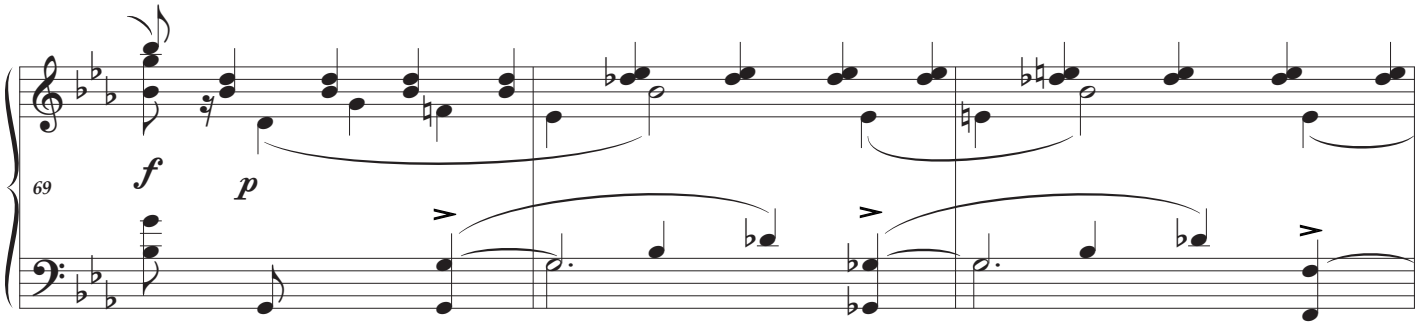
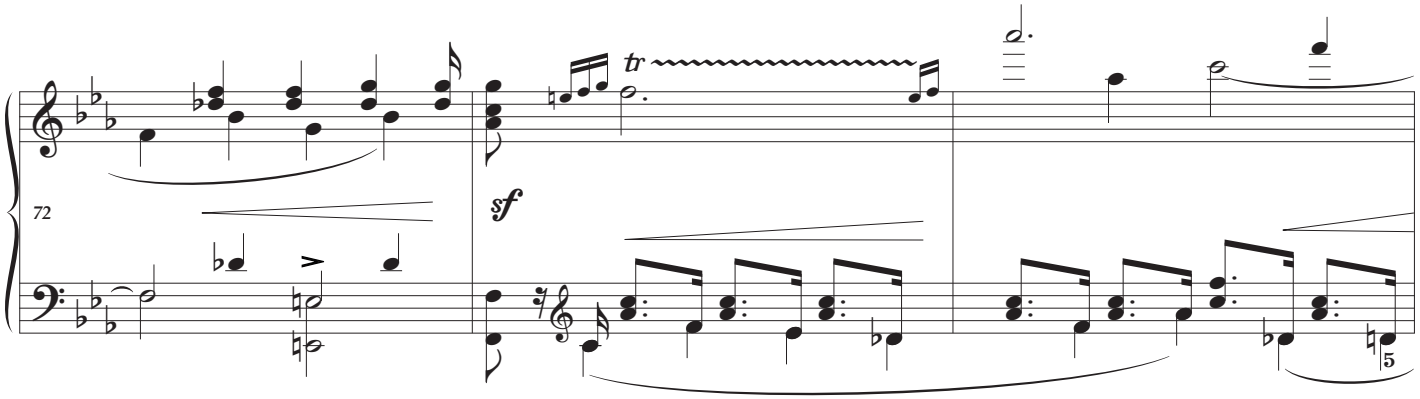

57
f

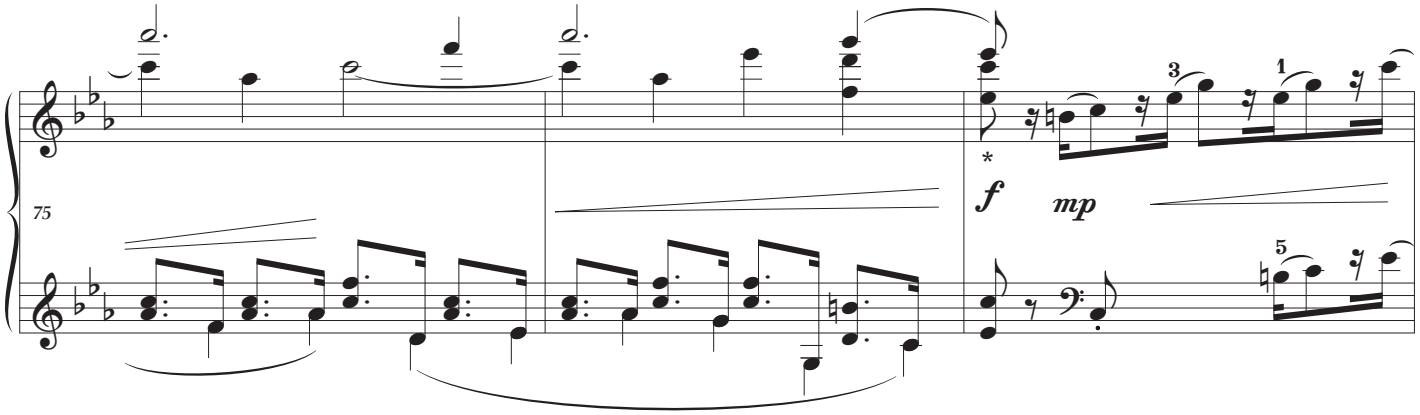

60
p

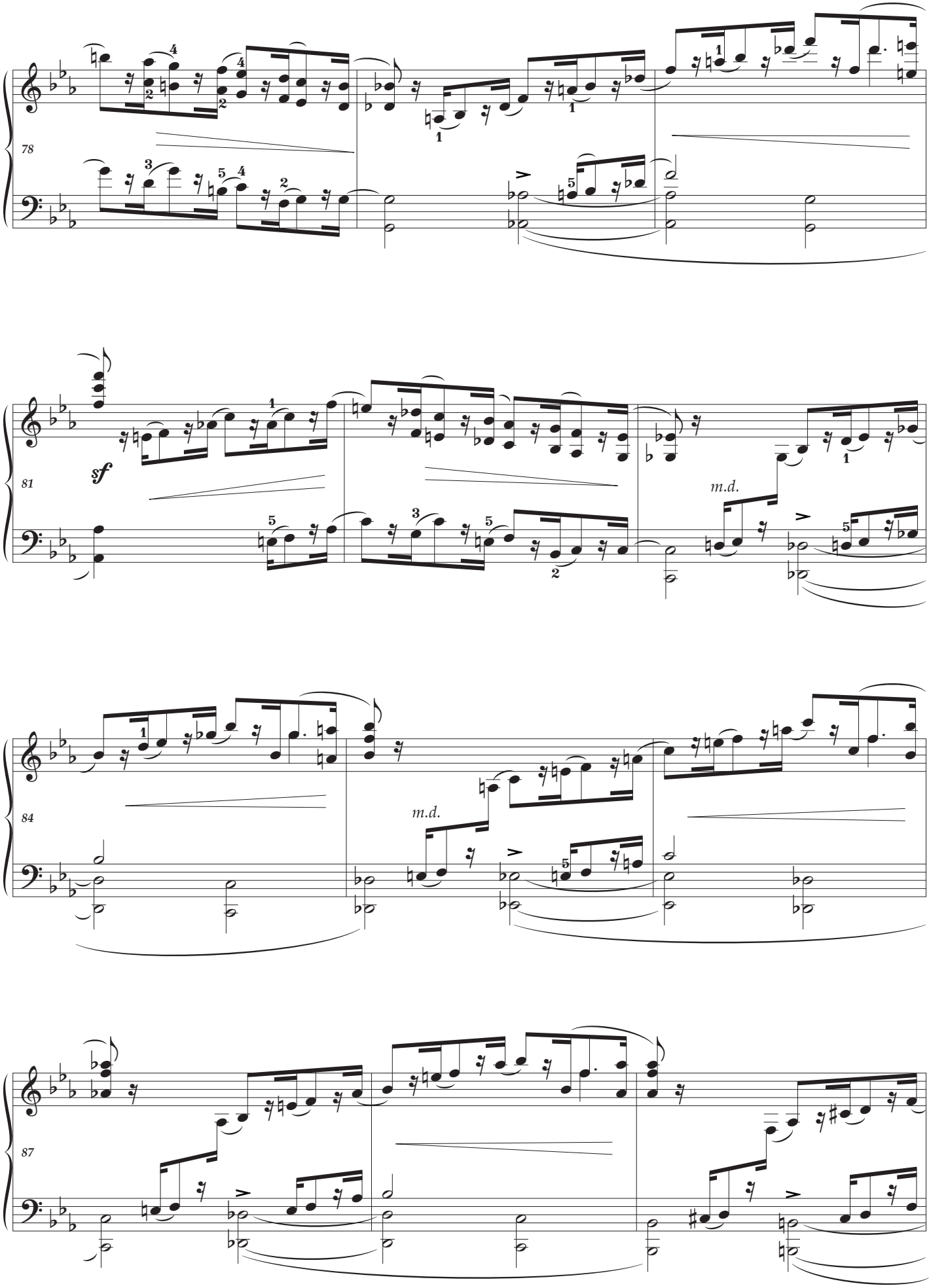

63
tr
sf

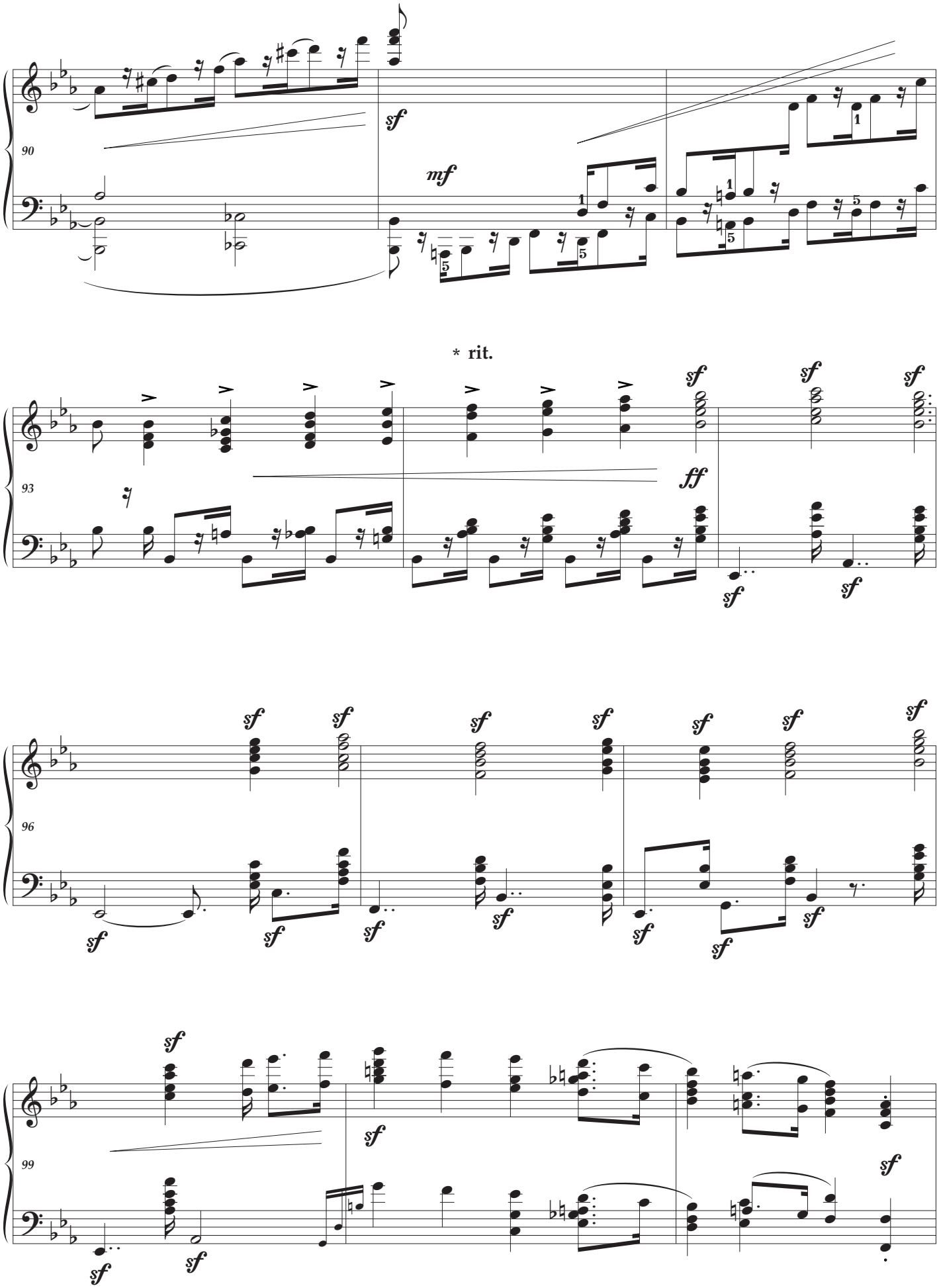

66
5

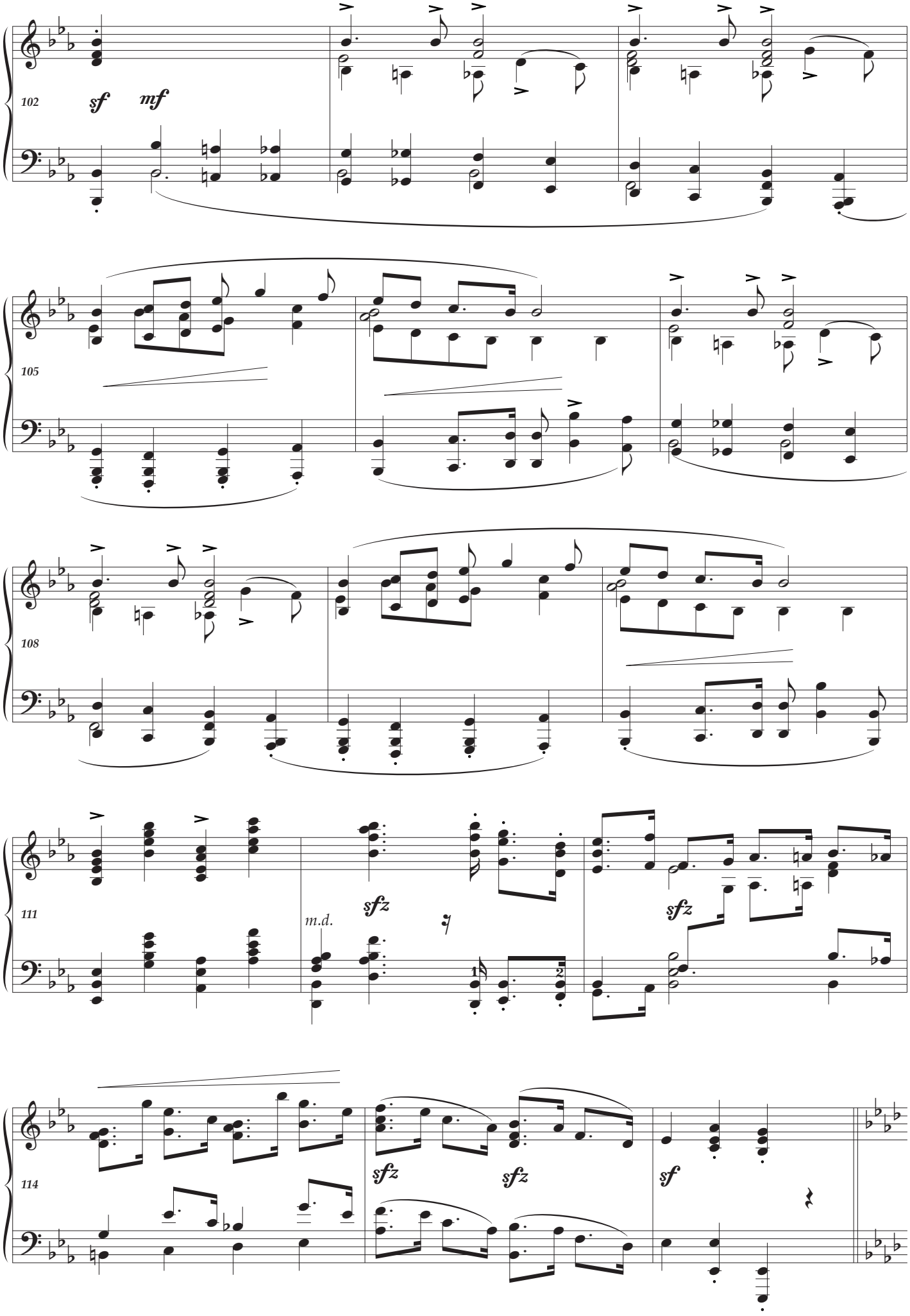

69
f
p


72
tr
sf
5


75
3
1
*
f
mp
5


78
81
sf
m.d.
84
m.d.
87

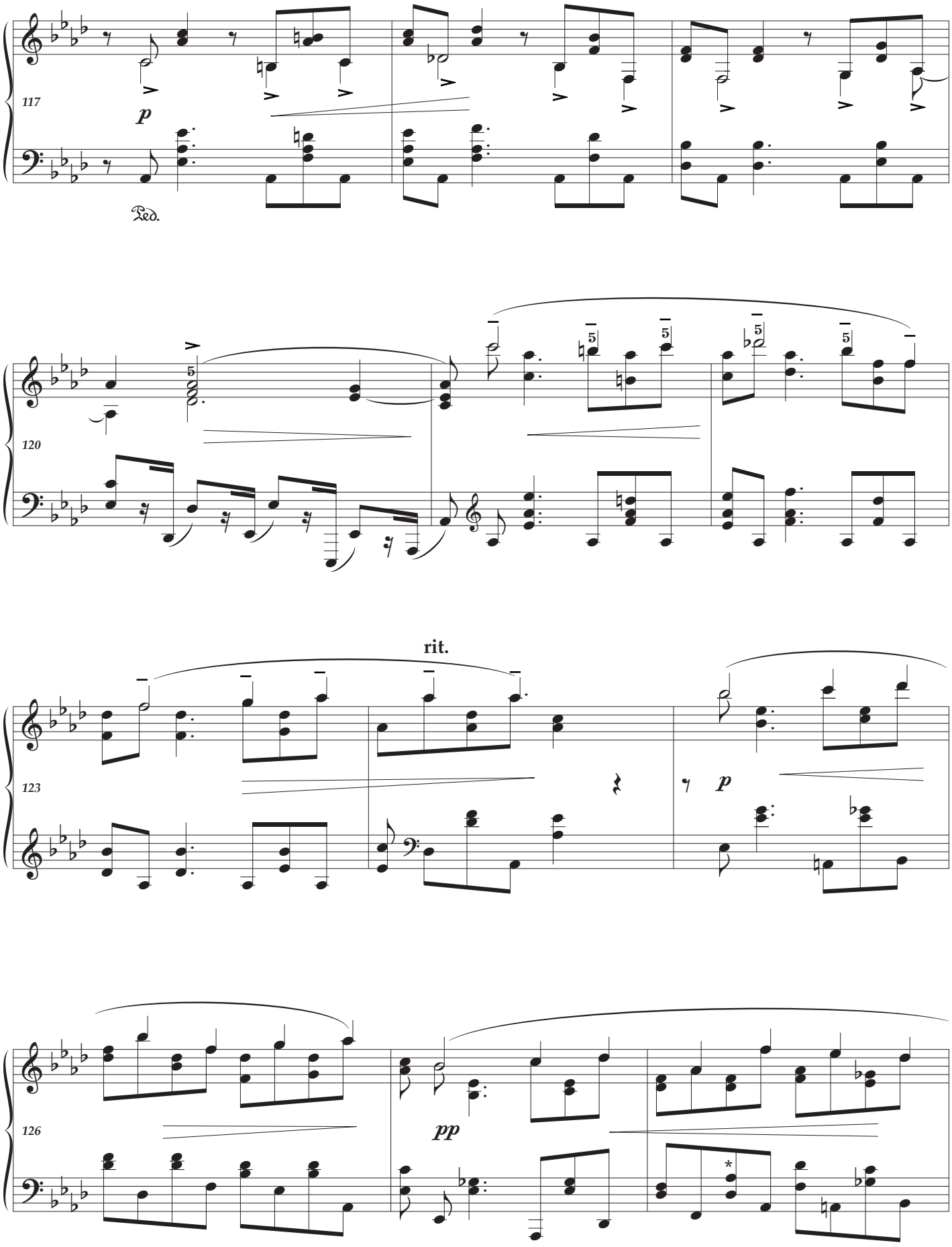

90
sf
mf
* rit.
93
sf
ff
96
99

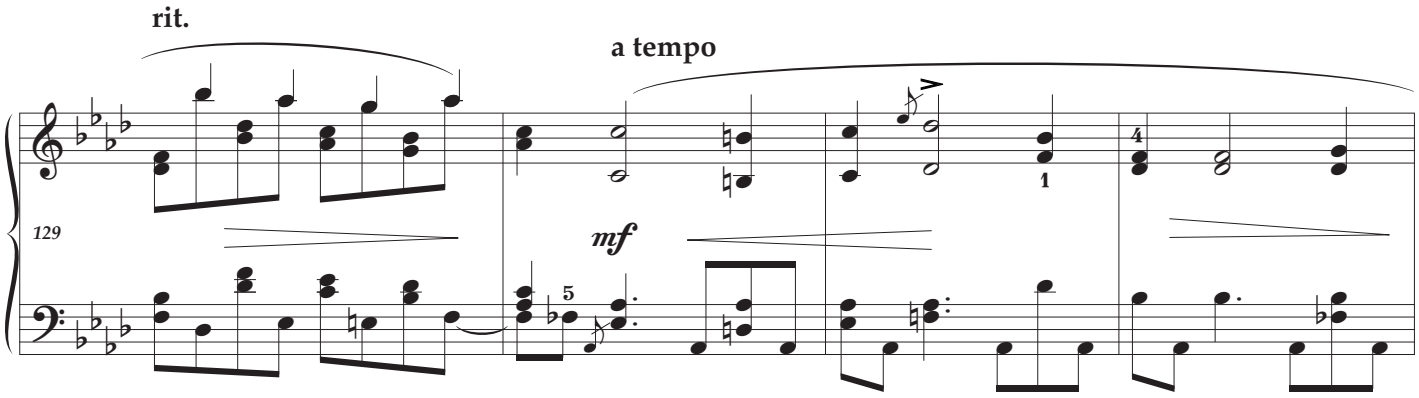

102
sf
mf
105
108
111
m.d.
sfz
sfz
114
sfz
sfz
sf

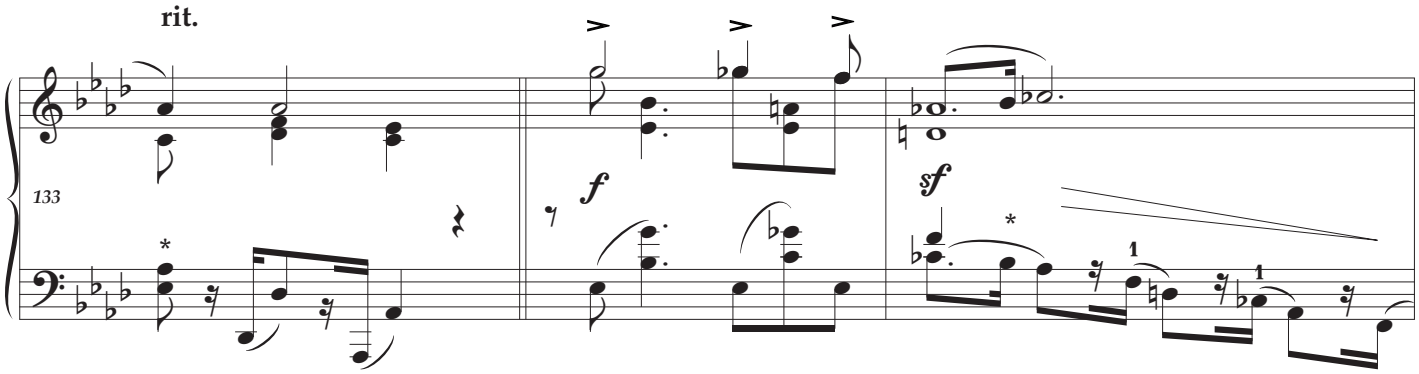
an editorial preparatory study of this section — page 53

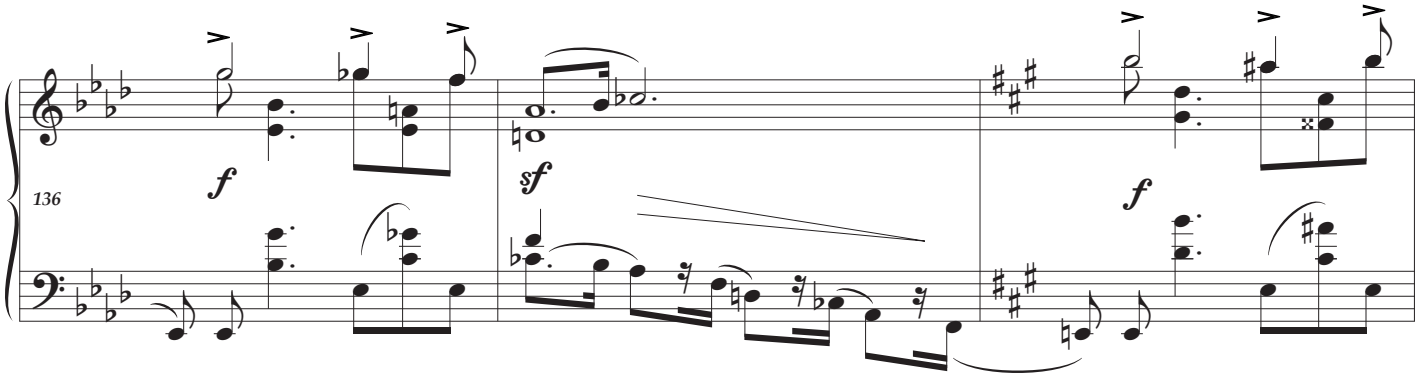
etwas langsamer

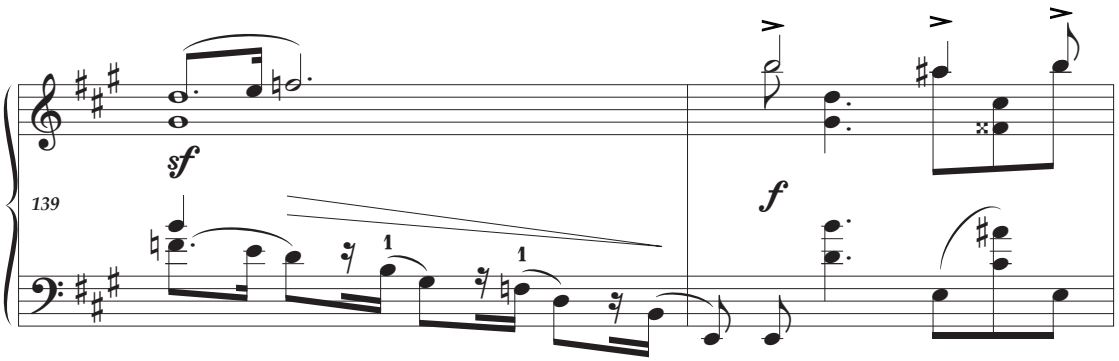
somewhat slower




rit.
a tempo
129
mf


rit.
133
f
sf


136
f
sf
f


139
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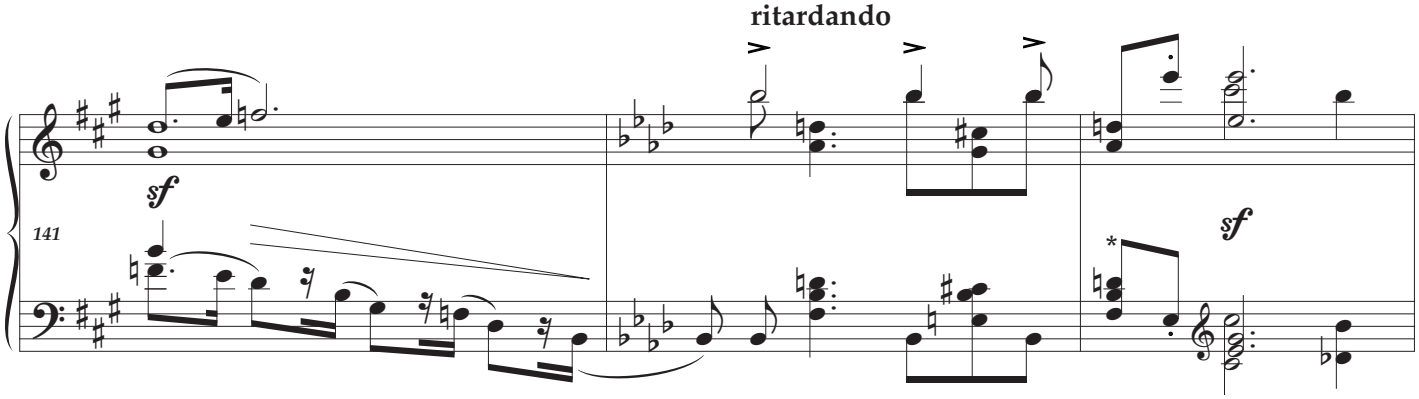
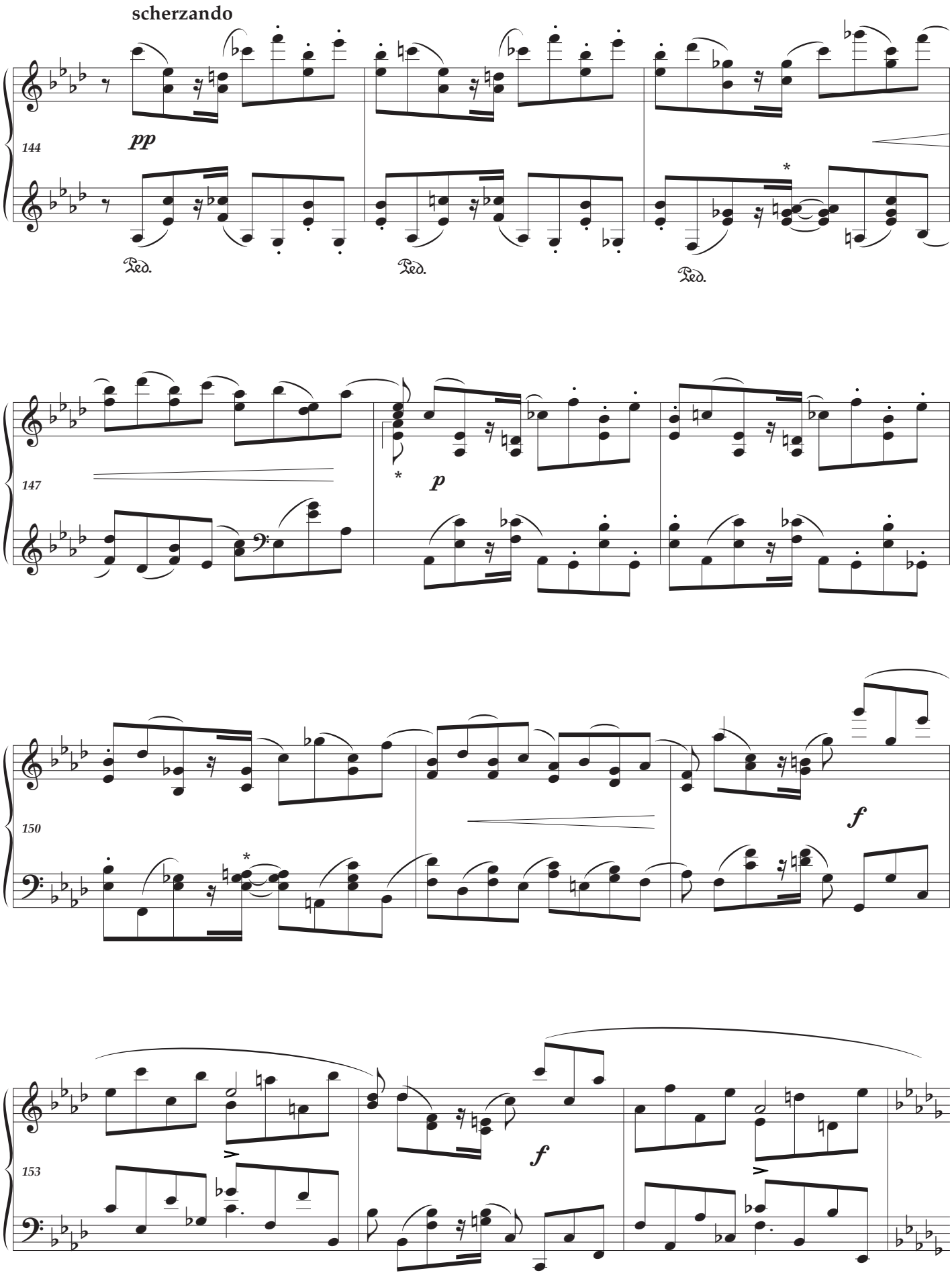
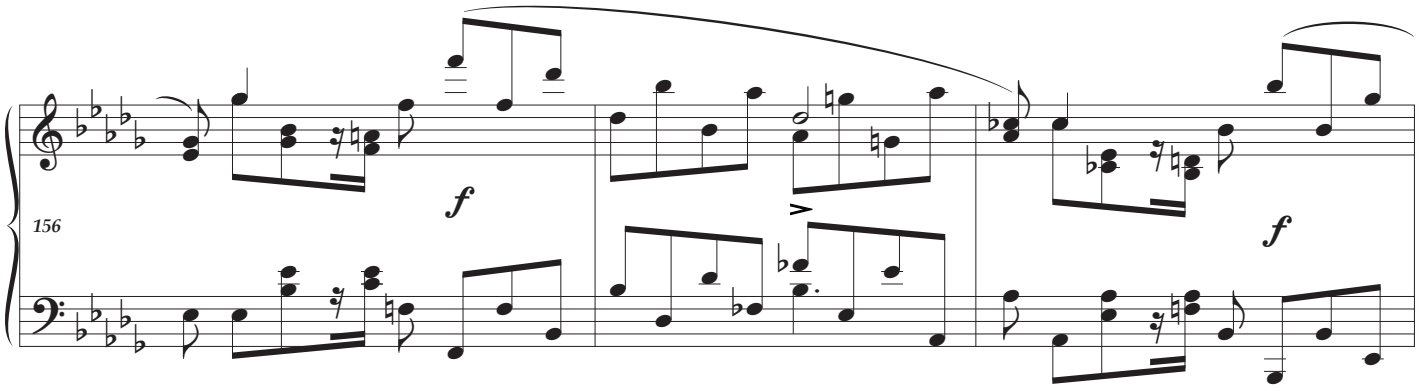
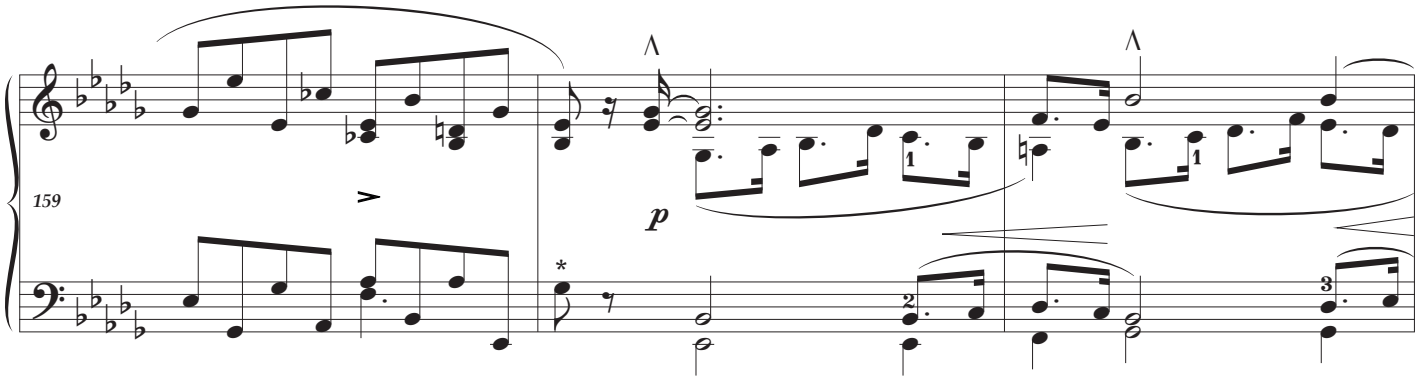

ritardando
141
sf
sf


scherzando
144
pp
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
147
p
150
f
153
f


156
f
f


159
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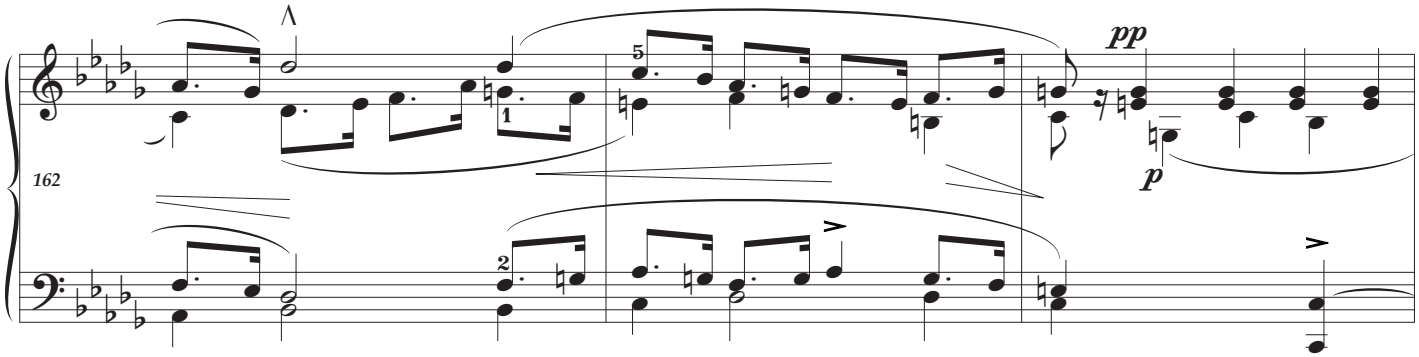
162
pp
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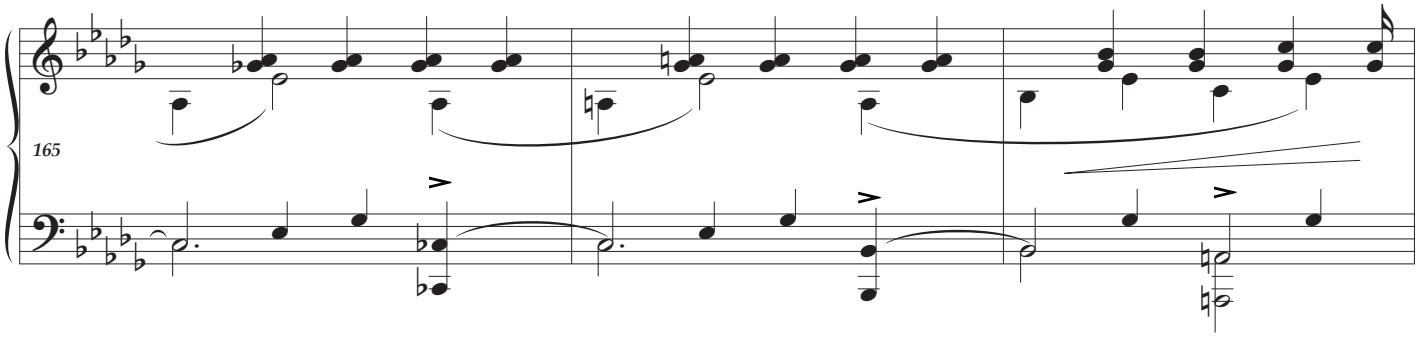
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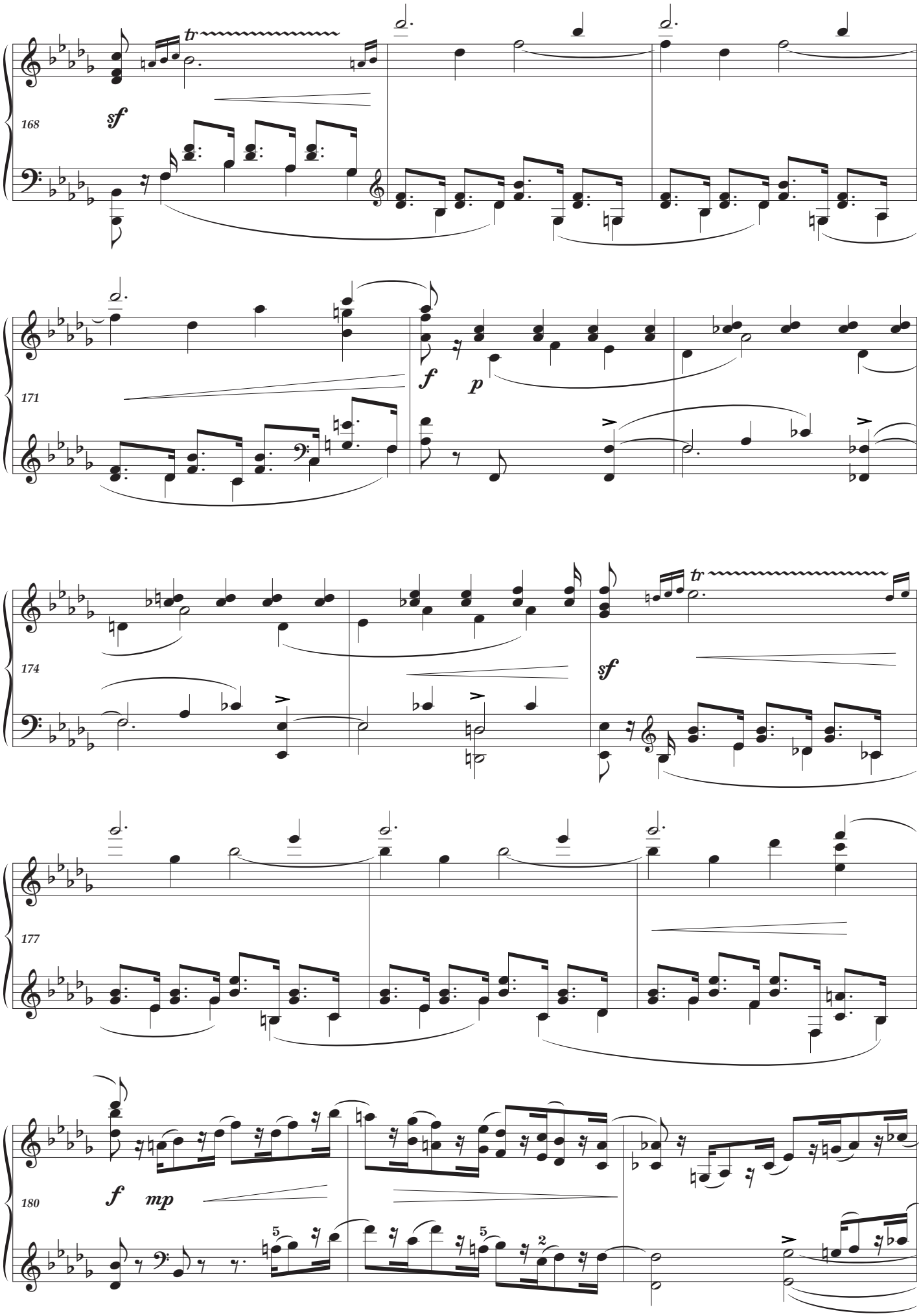
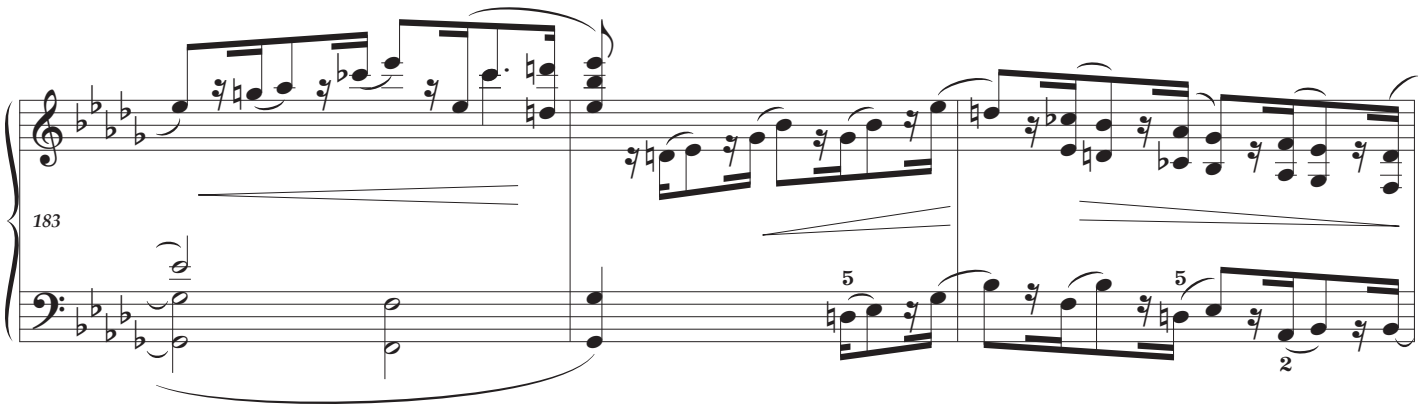

168
sf
171
f
p
174
sf
177
180
f
mp


183
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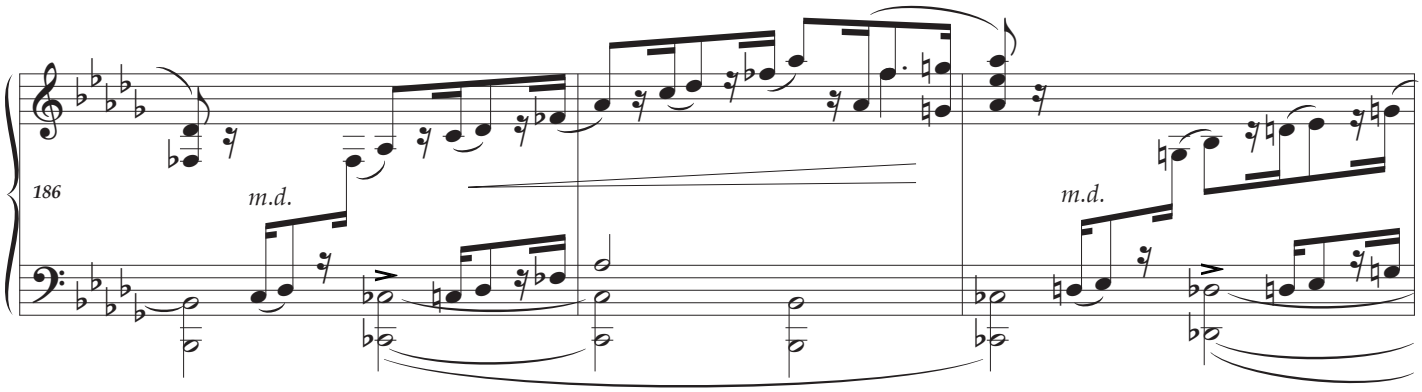
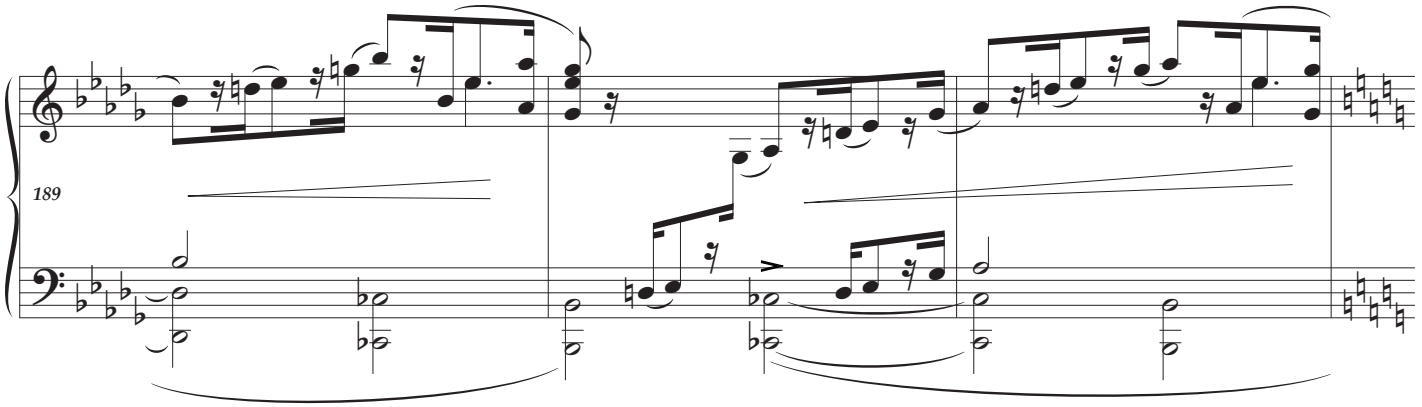
5
2


186
m.d.
m.d.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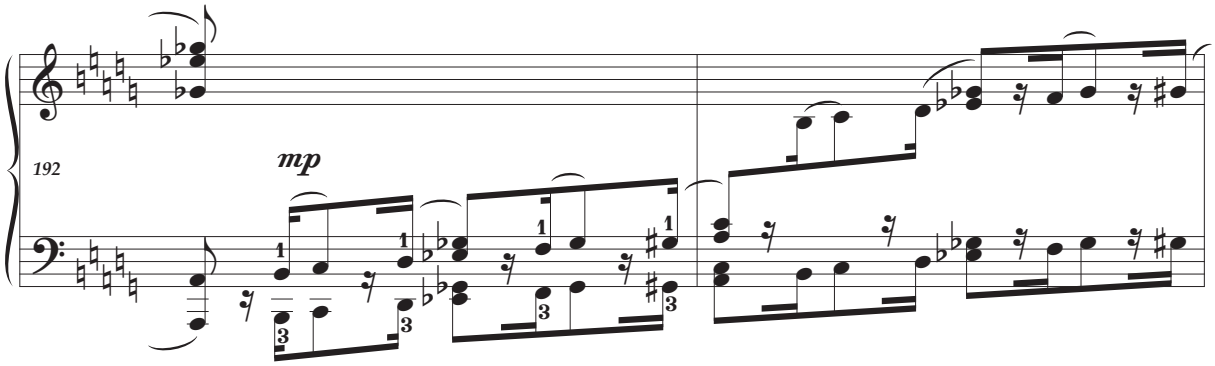
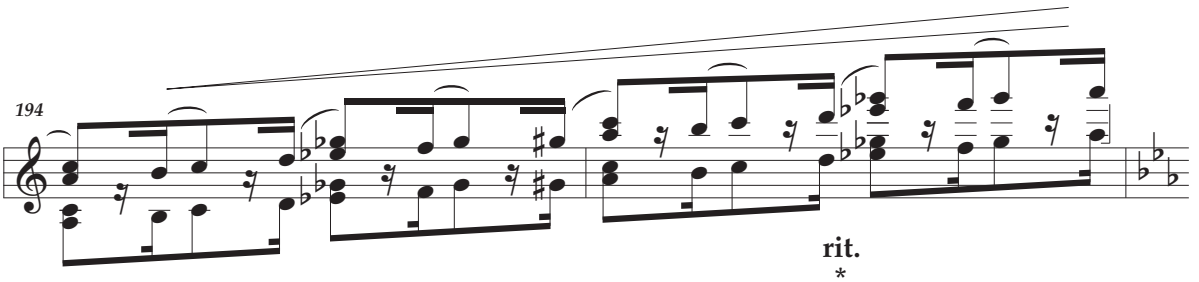
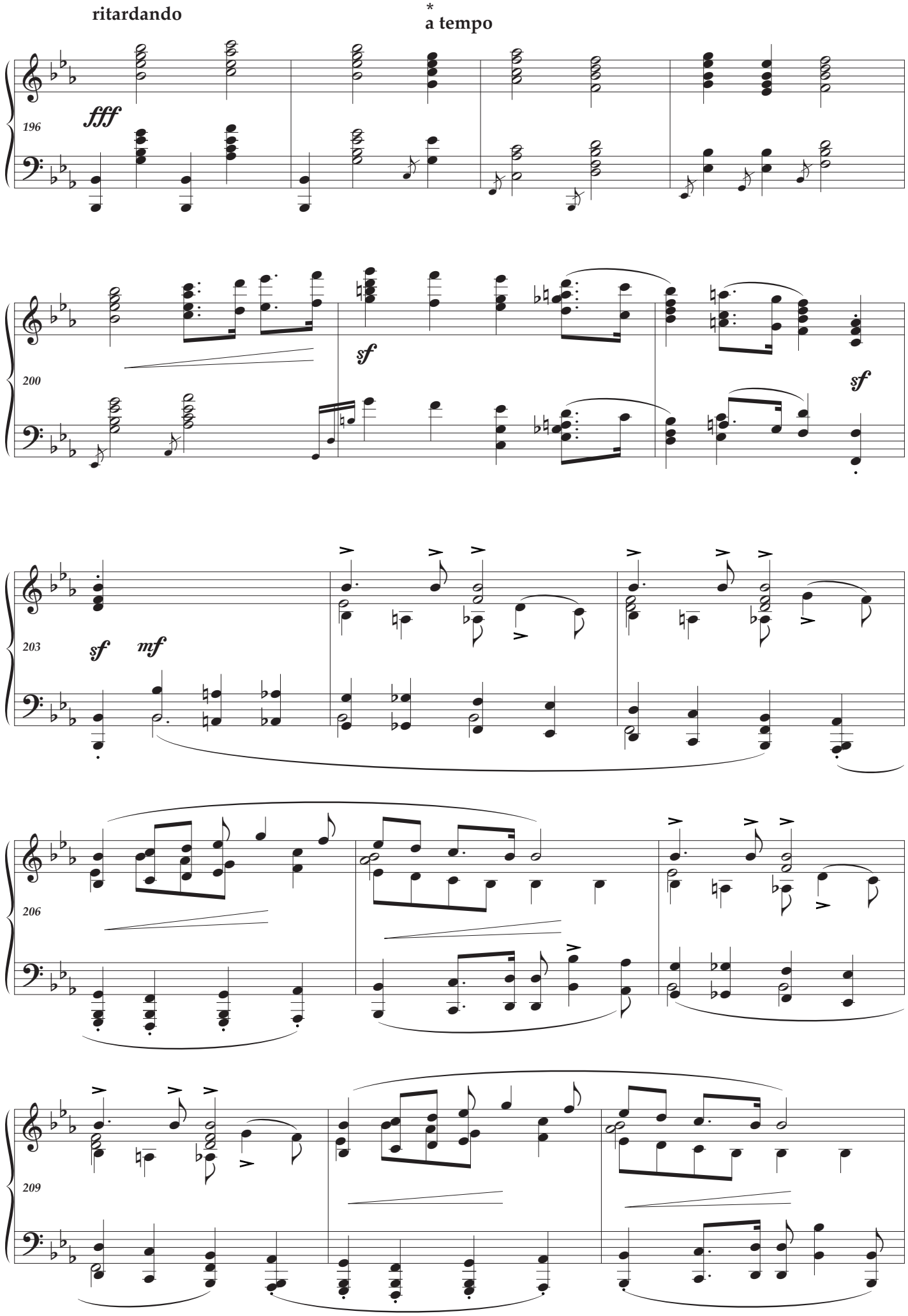
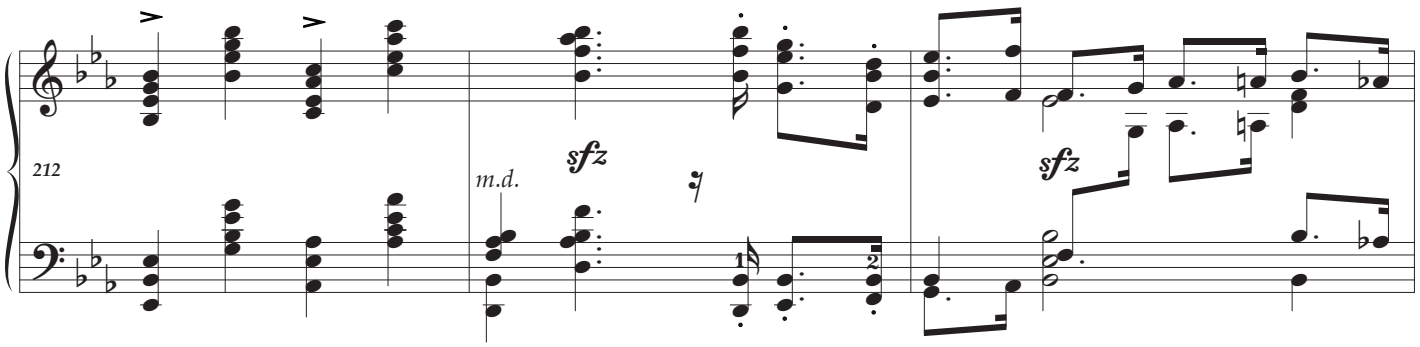
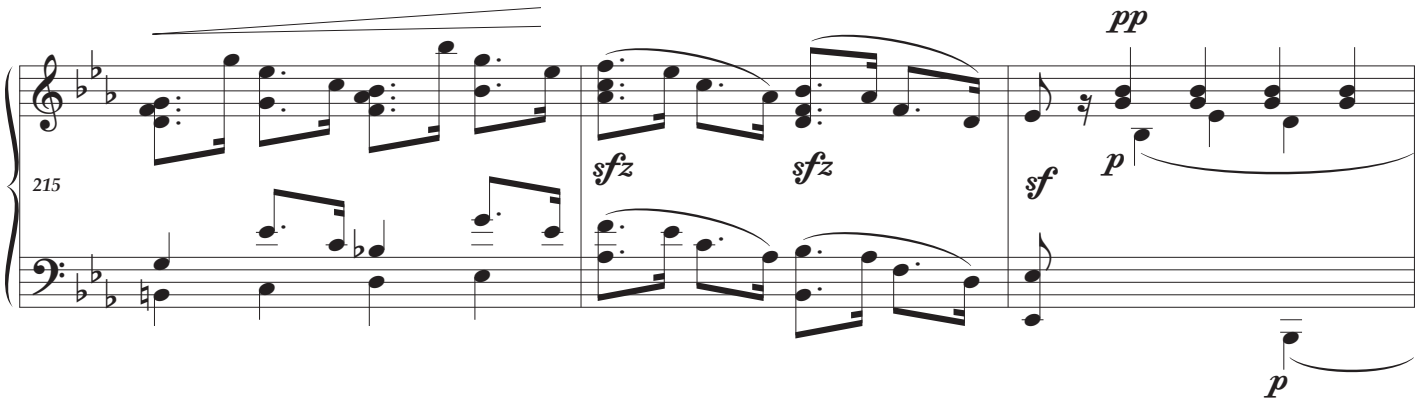
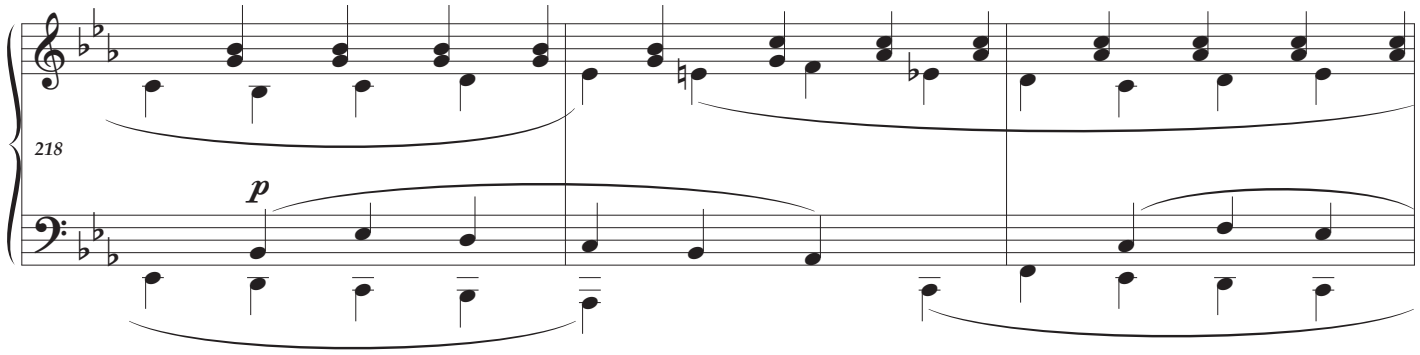

192
mp
1
3
1
3
1
3
1
3

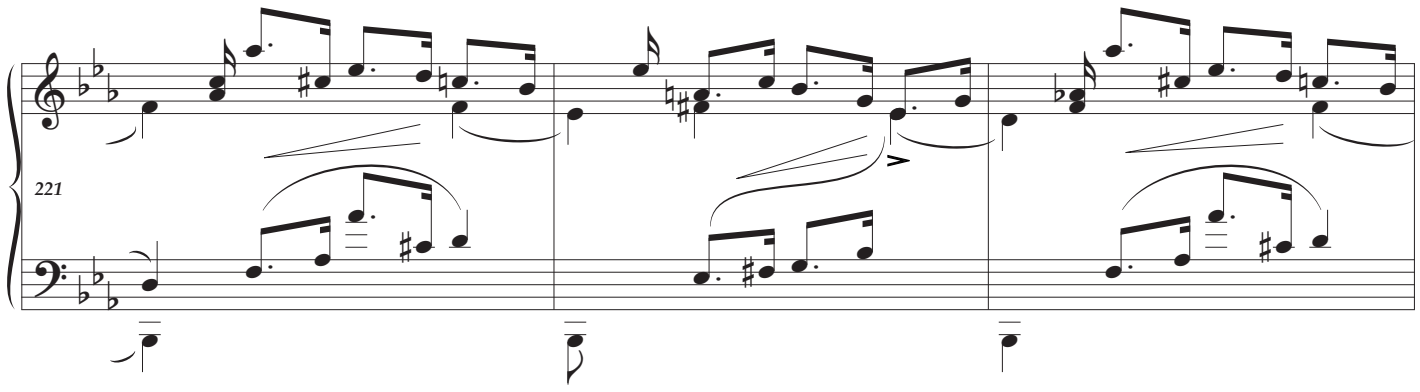

194
rit.
*


ritardando
*
a tempo
fff
196
sf
200
sf
sf
mf
203
206
209


212
m.d.
sfz
sfz


215
sfz
sfz
sf
pp
p
p


218
p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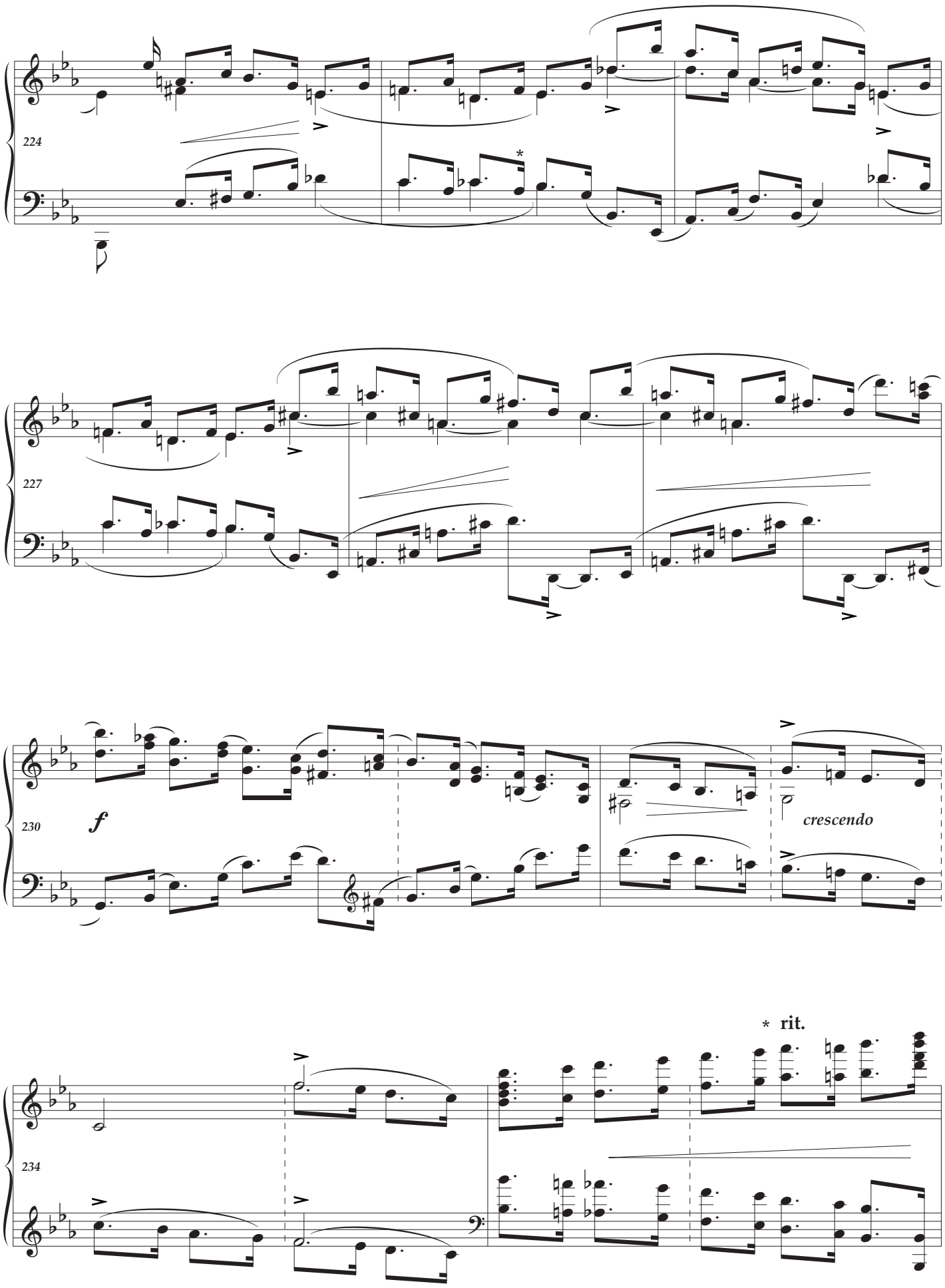
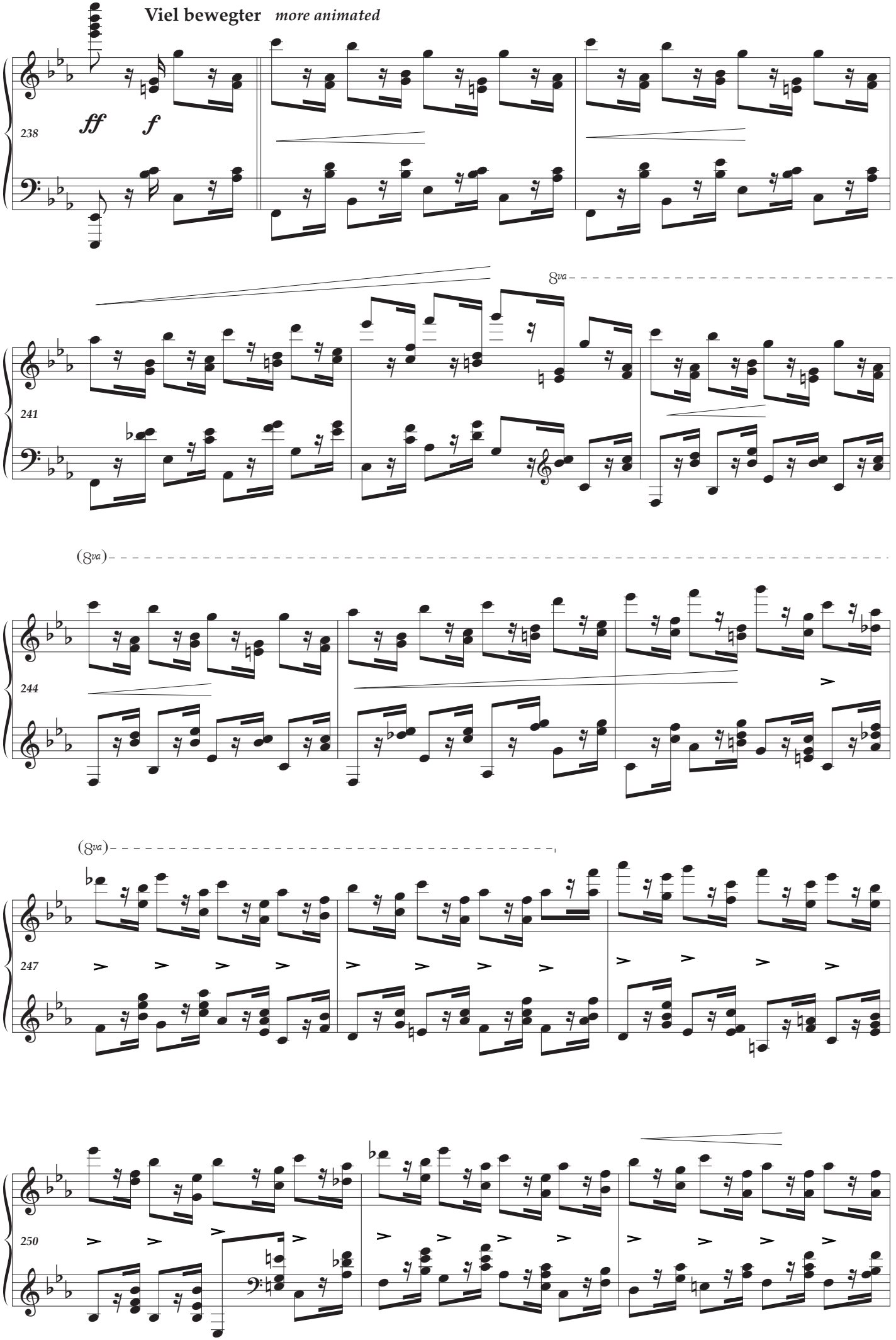
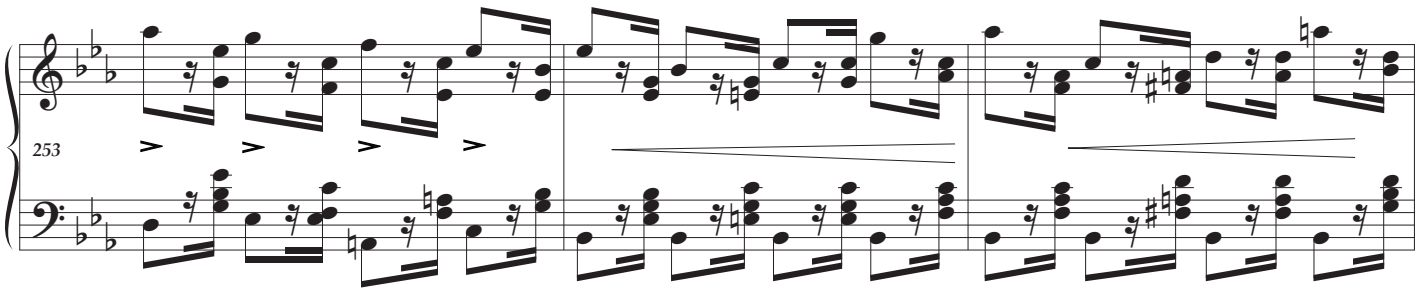


an editorial preparatory study
of the coda — page 54
and a slightly easier version — page 56


Viel bewegter more animated
ff
f
238
8va
241
(8va)
244
(8va)
247
250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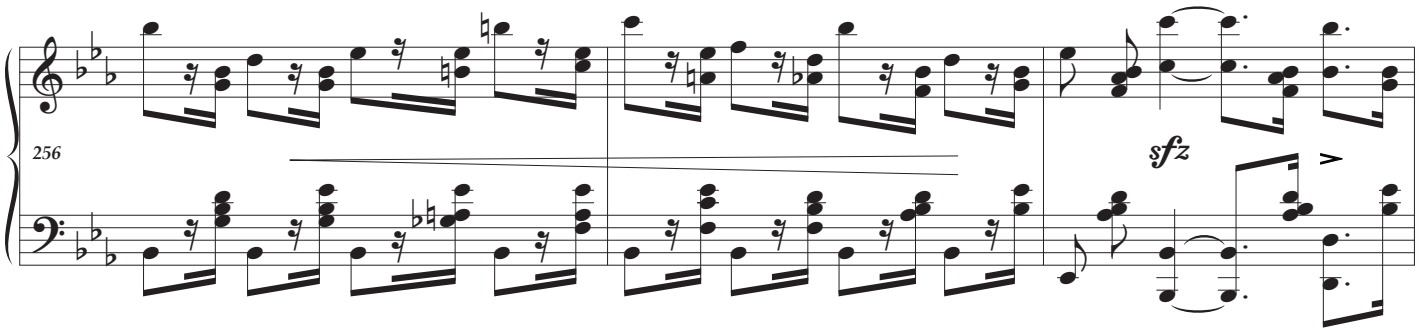
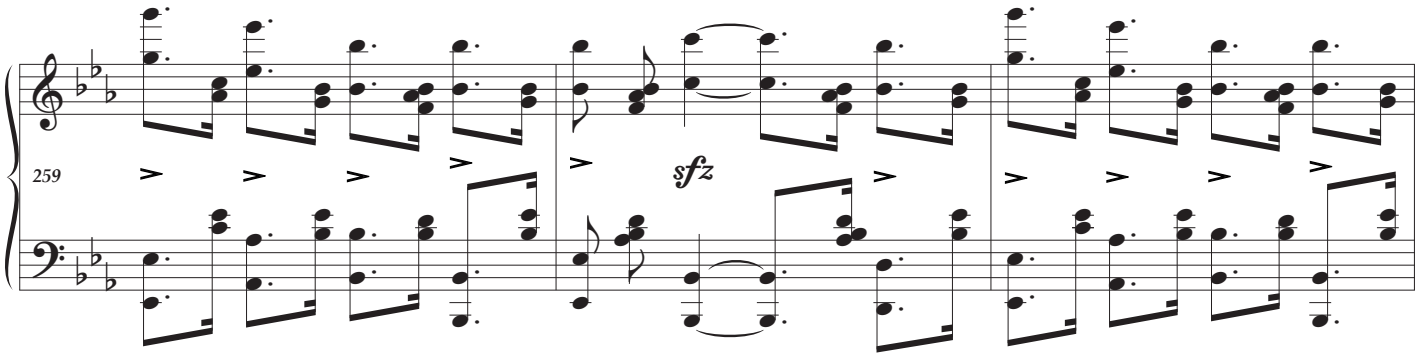
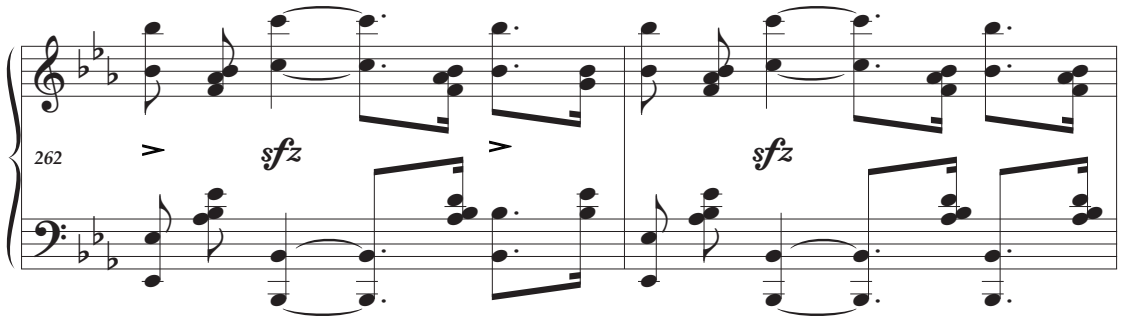
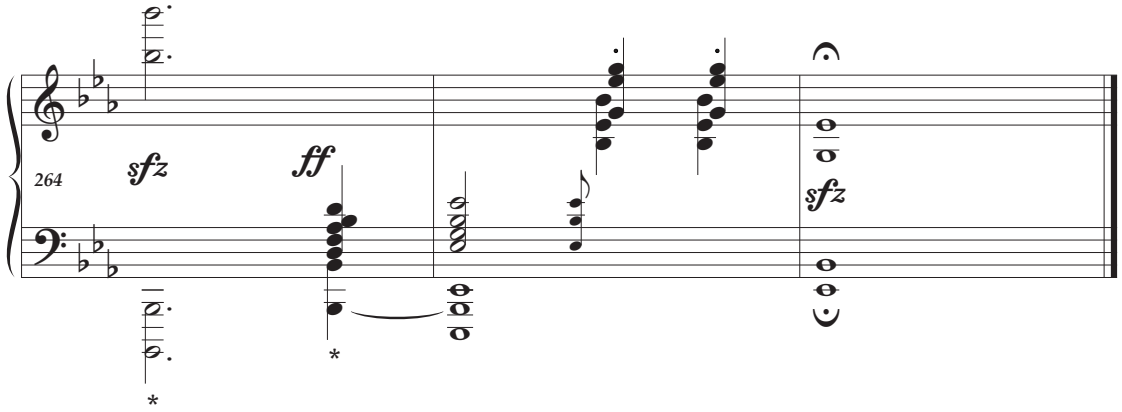

256
sfz


259
sfz


262
sfz
sfz


264
sfz
ff
sfz

Langsam getragen. Durchweg leise zu halten. *slow, sustained and gentle throughout*

III

legato

p

Ped.

ritardando

ritardando

*

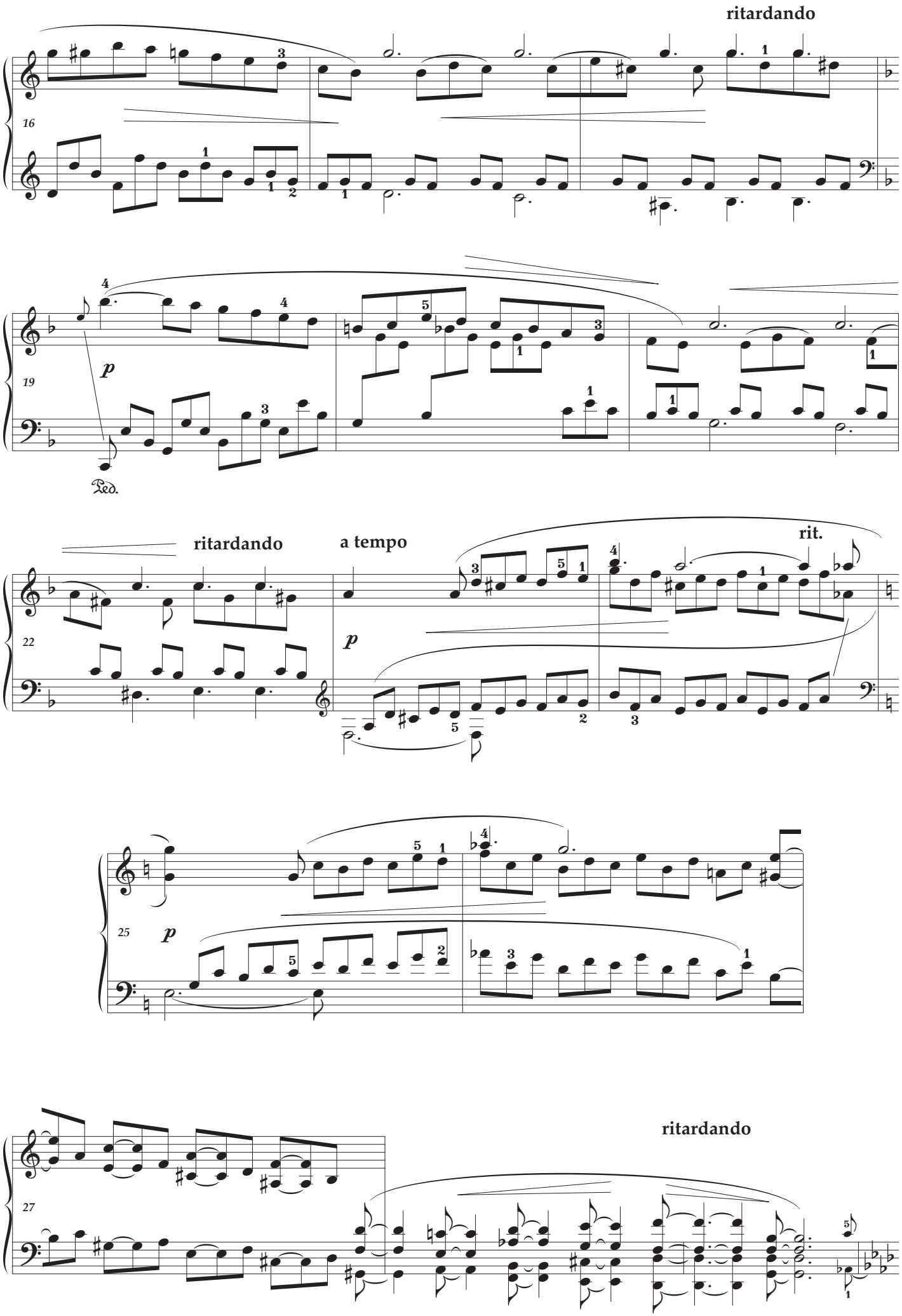
a tempo

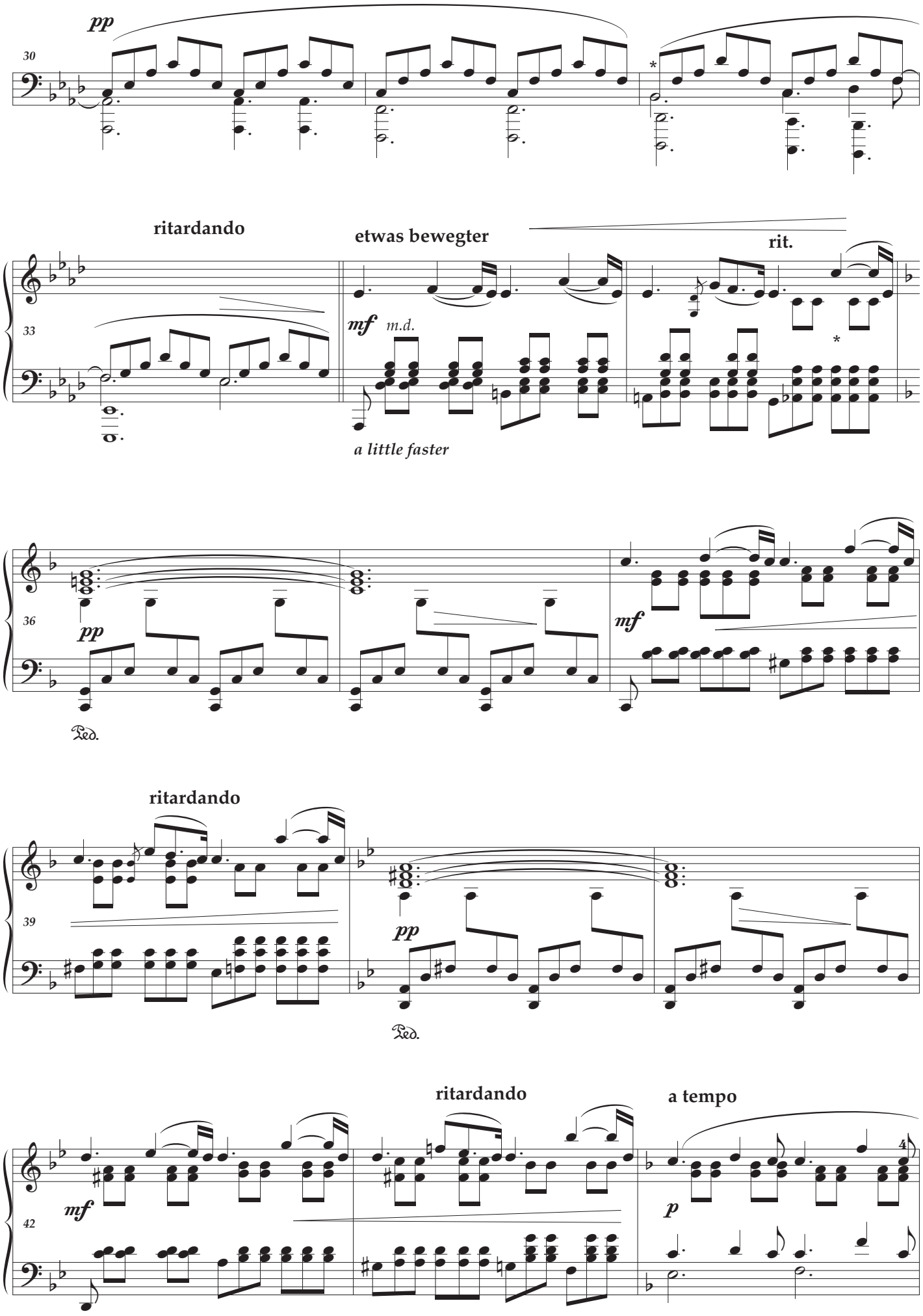
m.d.

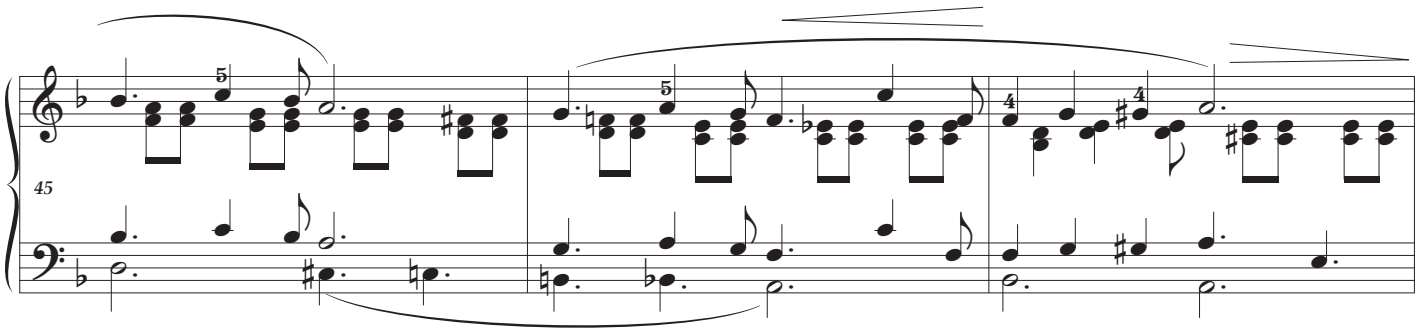
ritardando

p

Ped.


ritardando
16
19
p
Ped.
ritardando
a tempo
rit.
22
p
25
p
ritardando
27


pp
30
ritardando
etwas bewegter
rit.
33
mf
m.d.
a little faster
36
pp
mf
Ped.
ritardando
39
pp
Ped.
ritardando
a tempo
42
mf
p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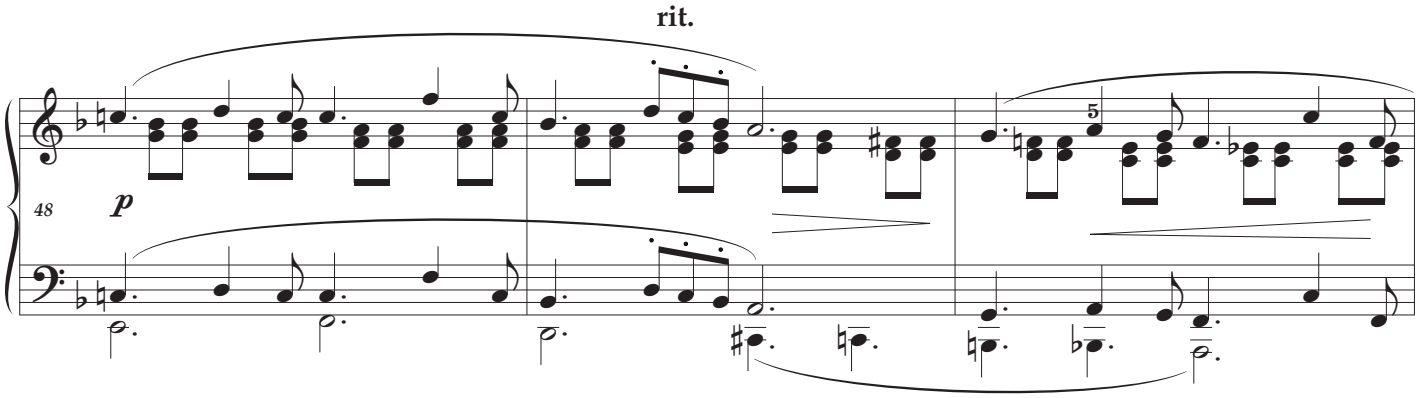
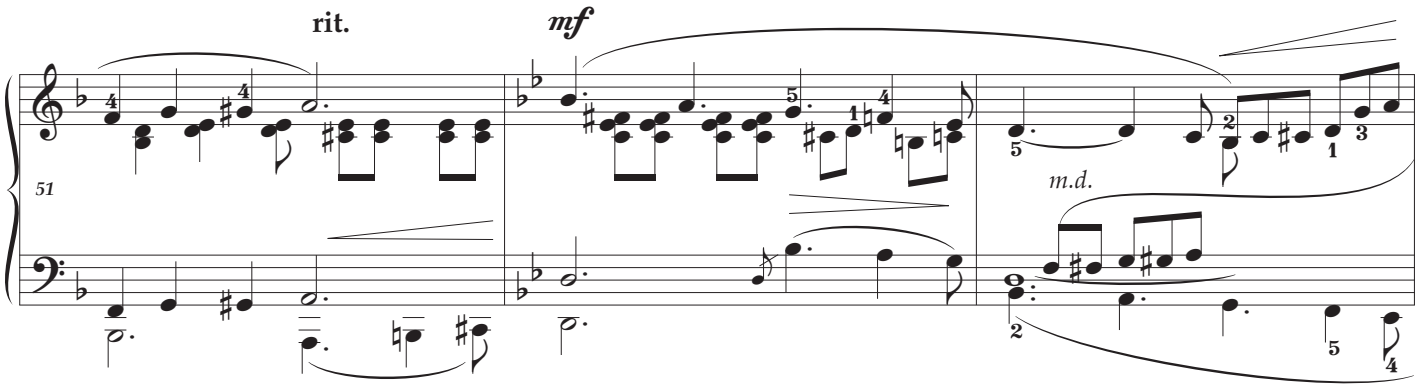
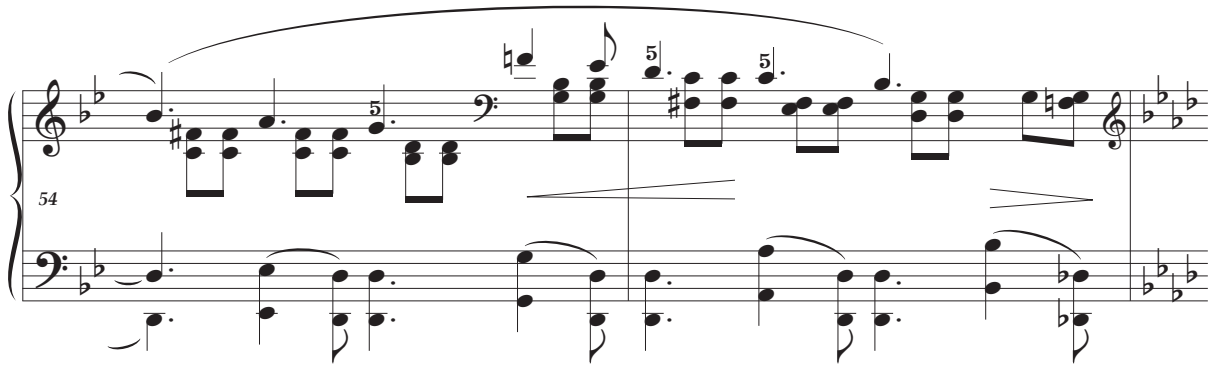
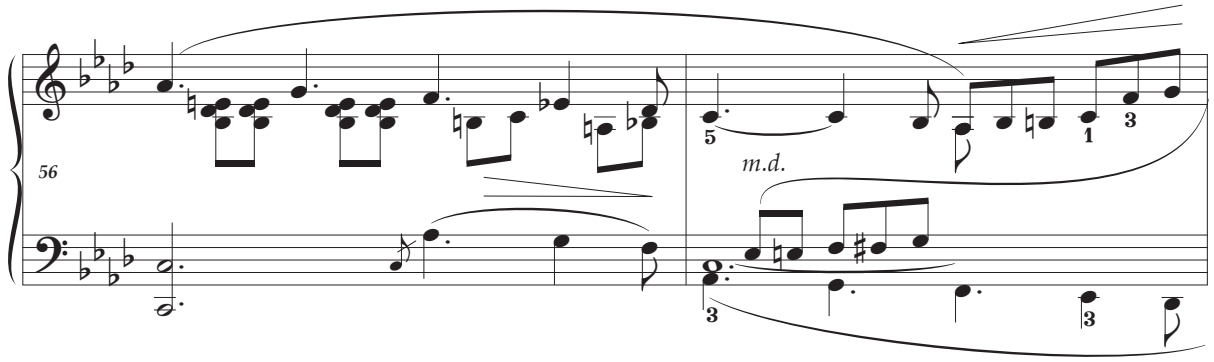
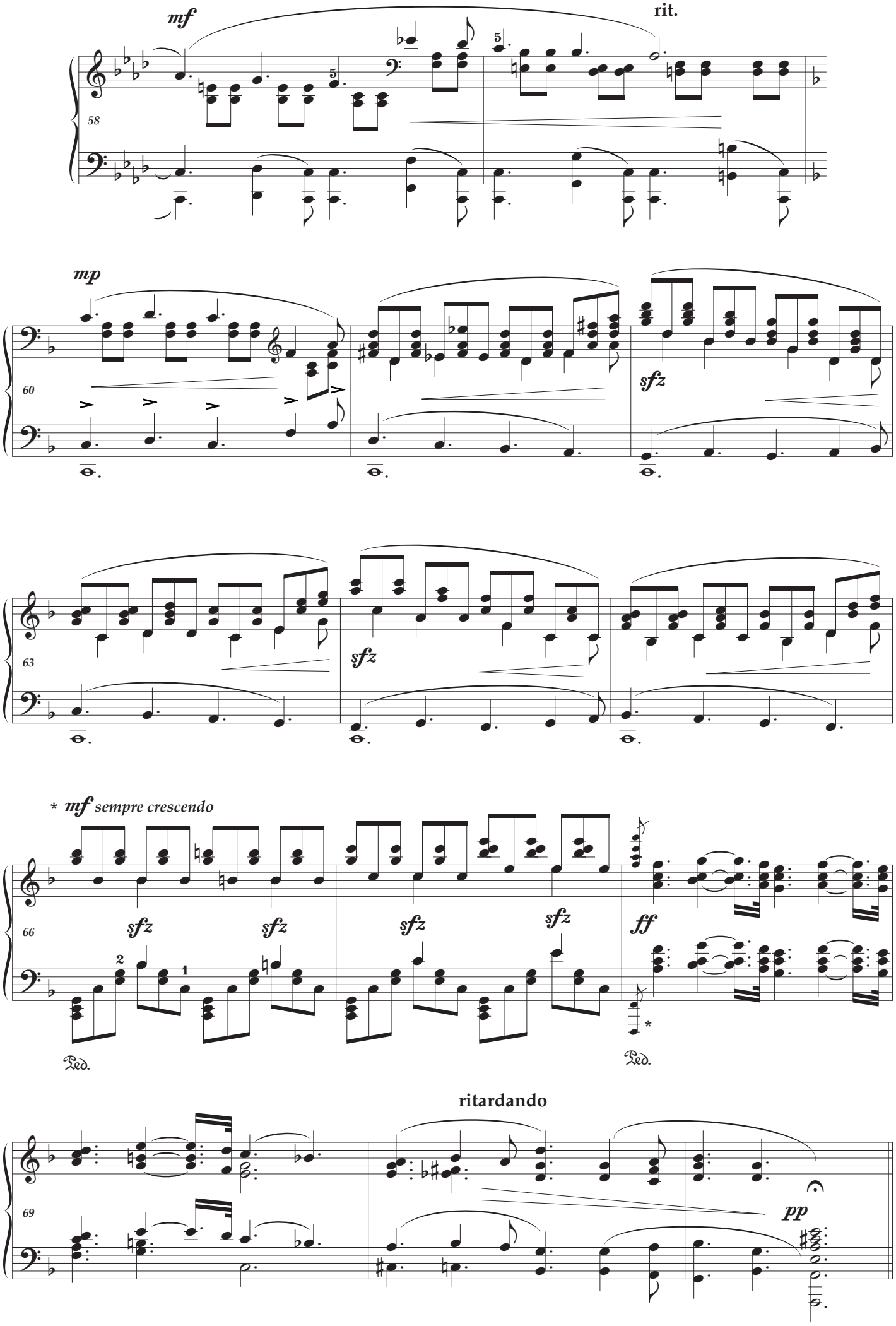
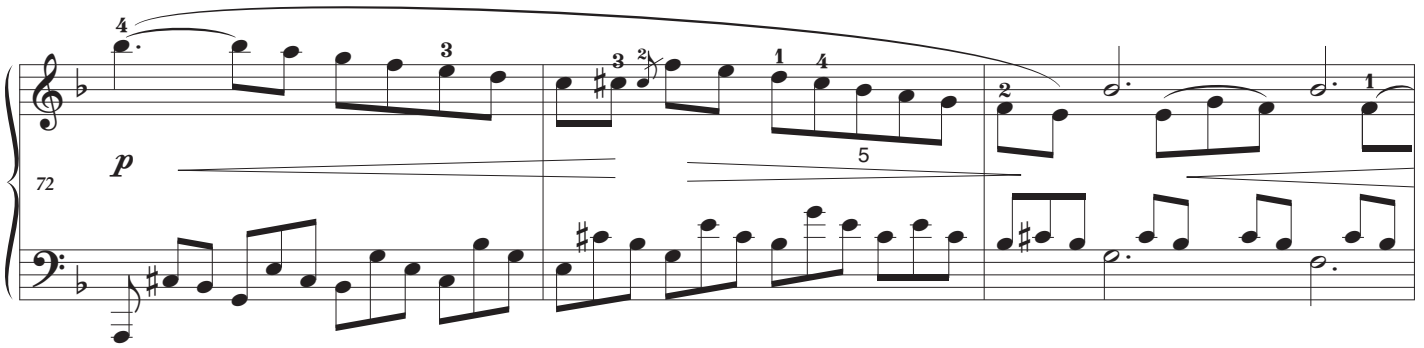

rit.
48
p

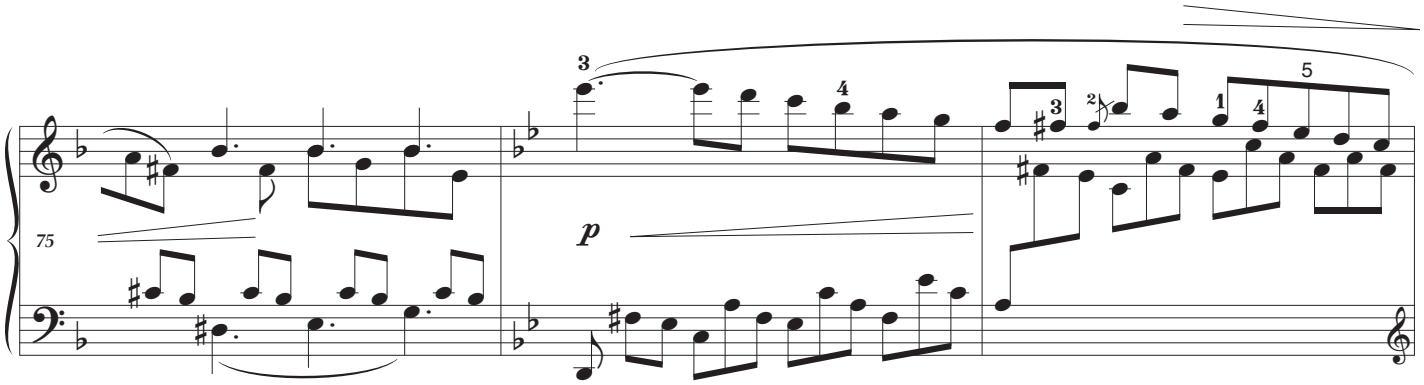

rit.
mf
51
m.d.

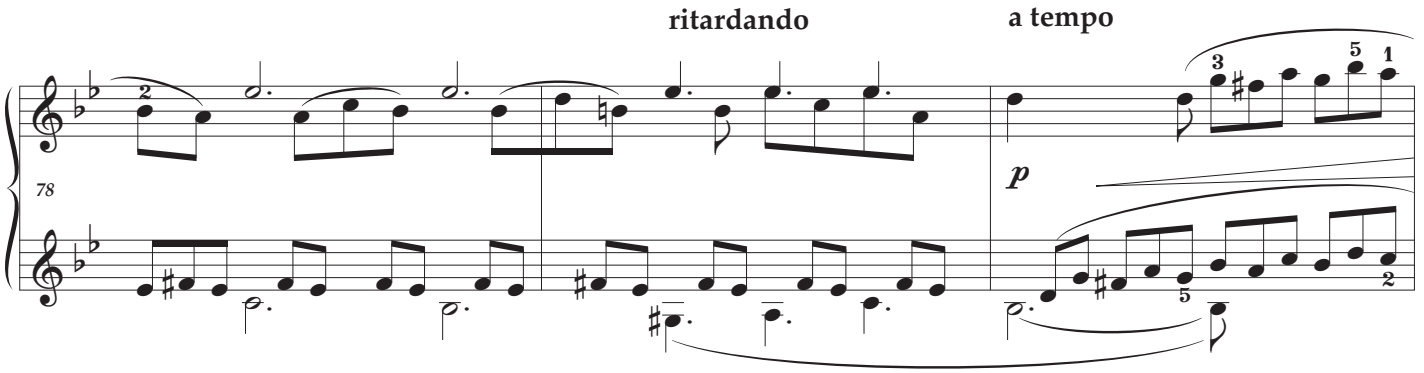

54

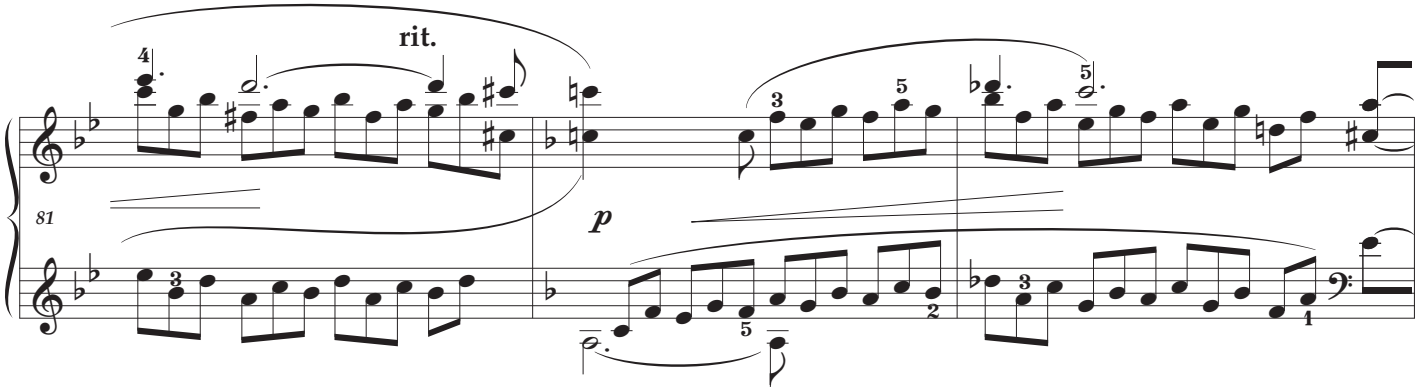

56
m.d.

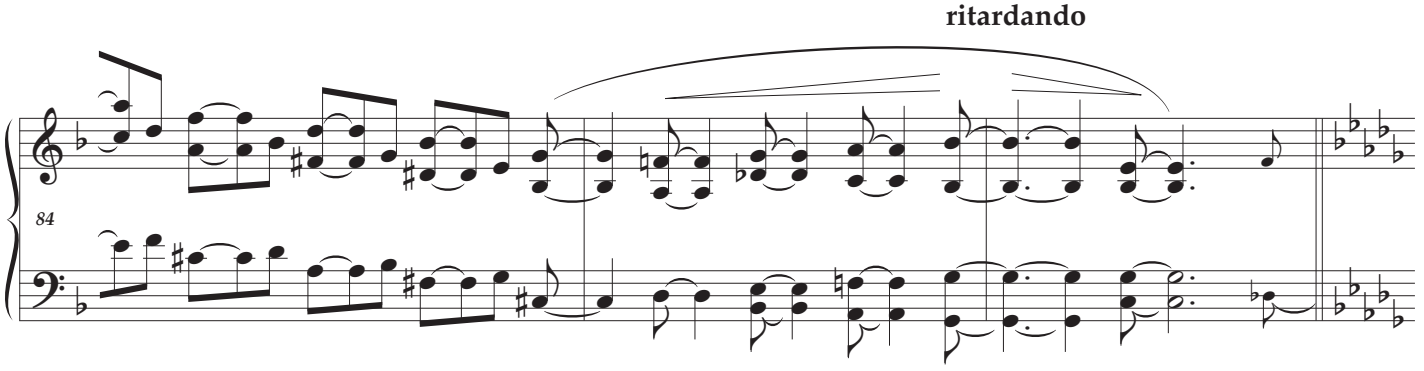

mf
rit.
58
mp
60
sfz
63
sfz
* mf sempre crescendo
66
sfz
sfz
sfz
sfz
ff
Ped.
Ped.
ritardando
69
pp

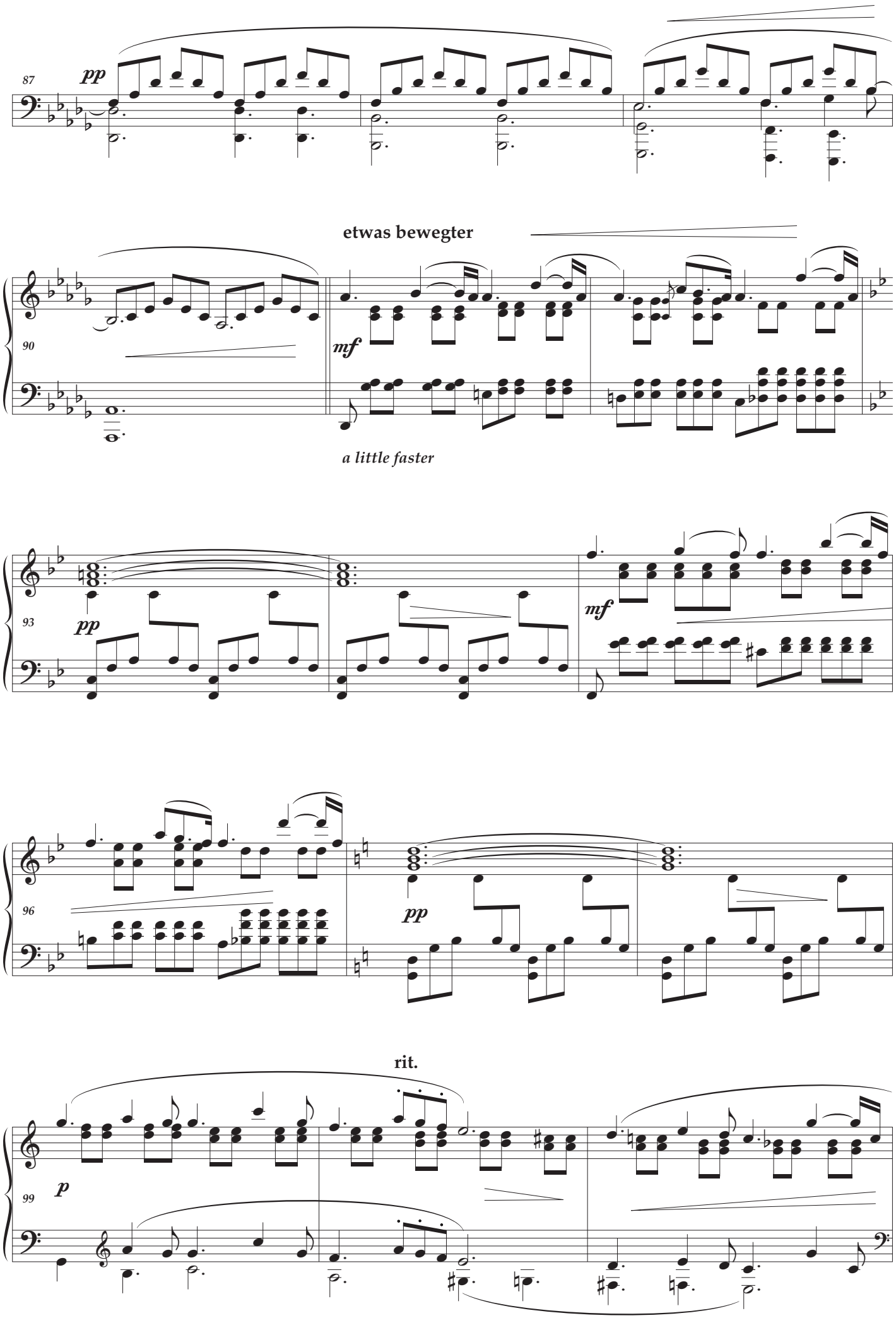

72
p

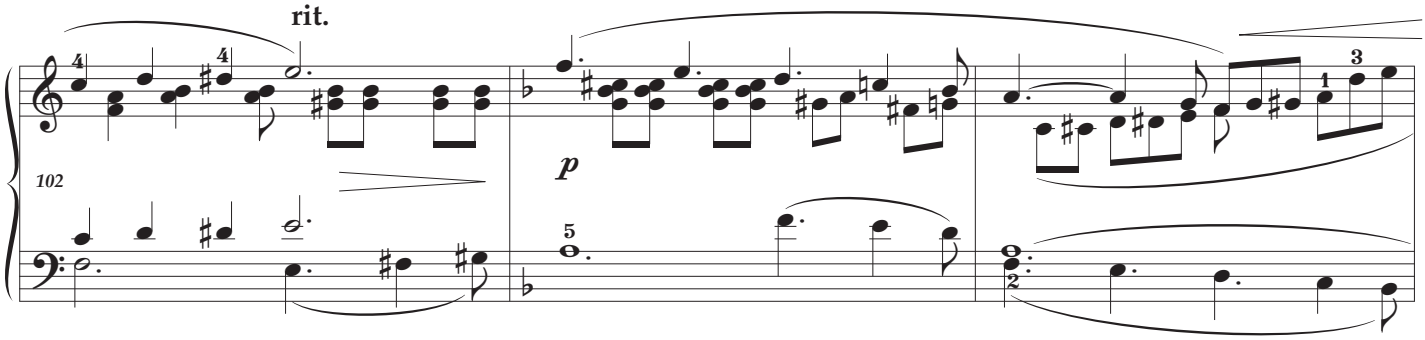

75
p

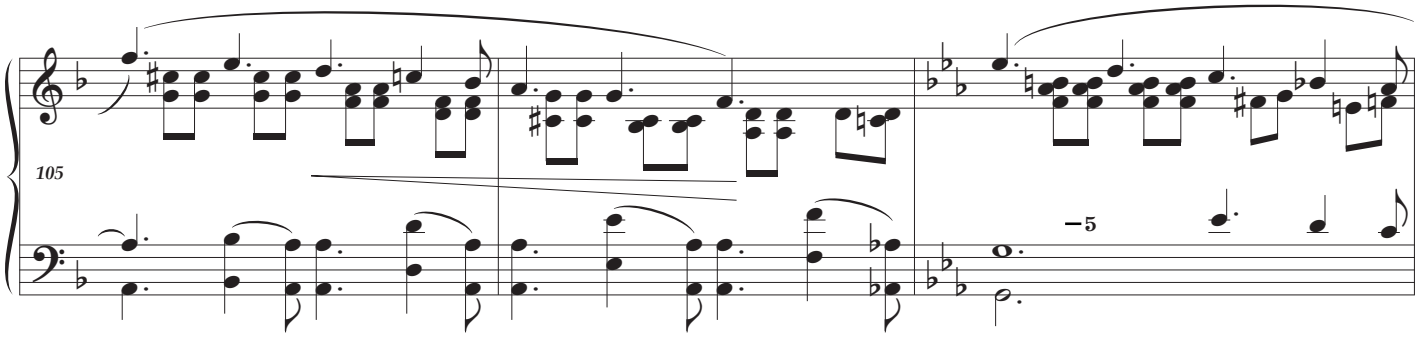

ritardando
a tempo
78
p


rit.
81
p


ritardando
84


87
pp
etwas bewegter
90
mf
a little faster
93
pp
mf
96
pp
rit.
99
p


rit.
102
p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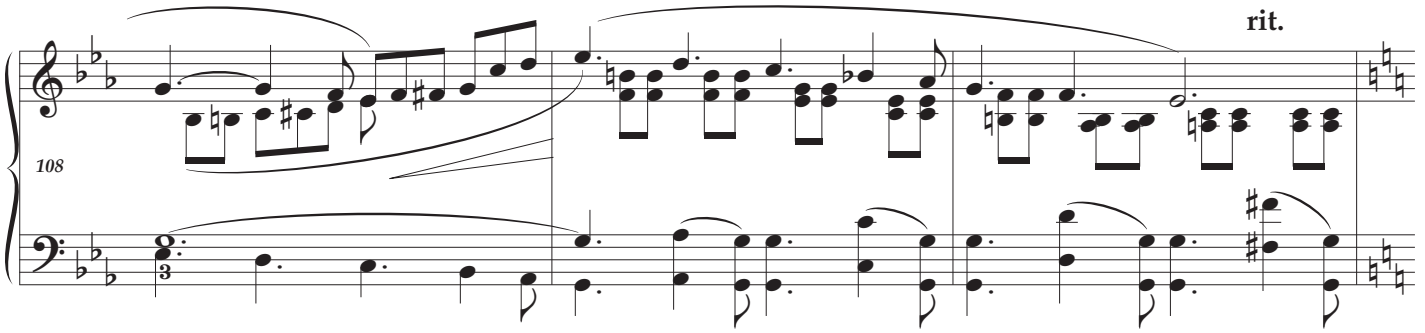
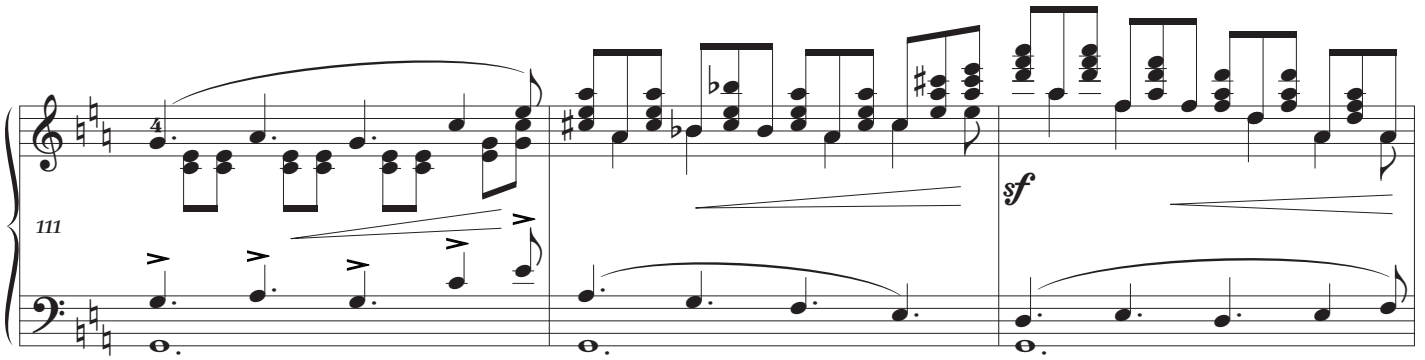
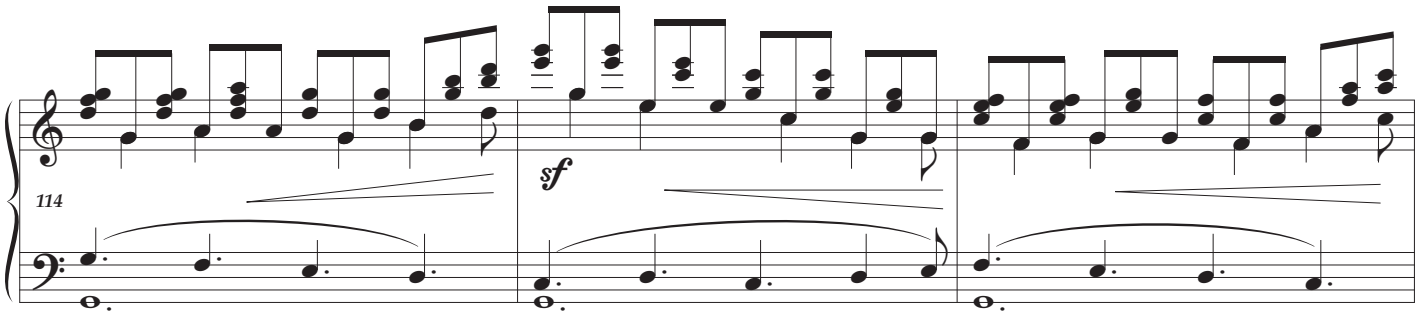
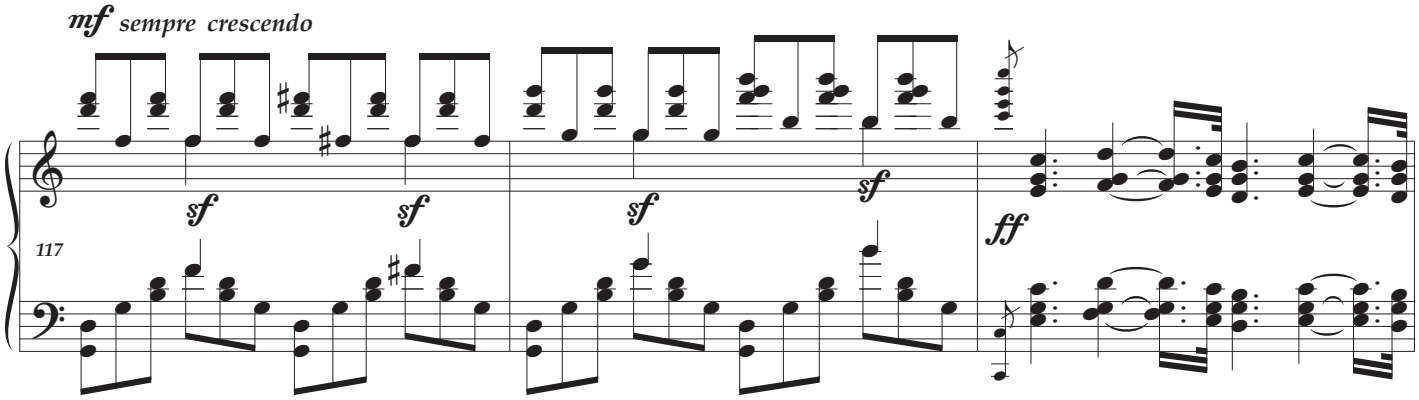
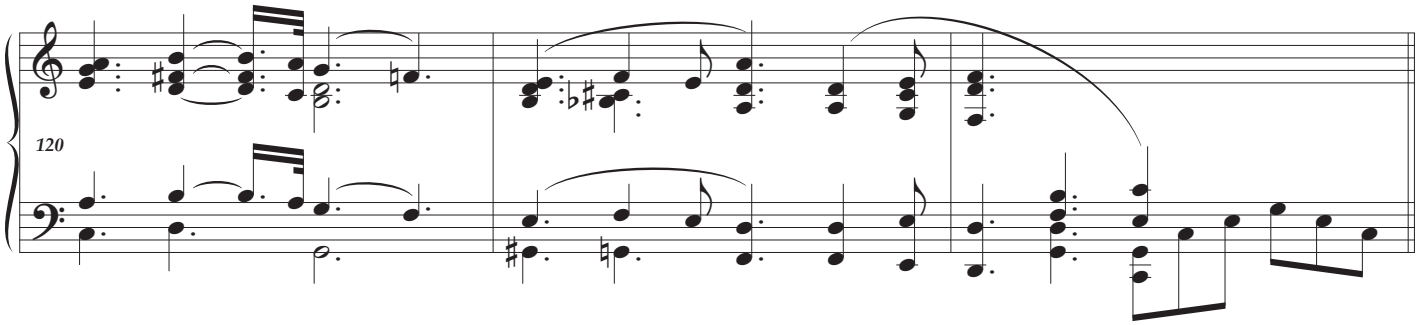
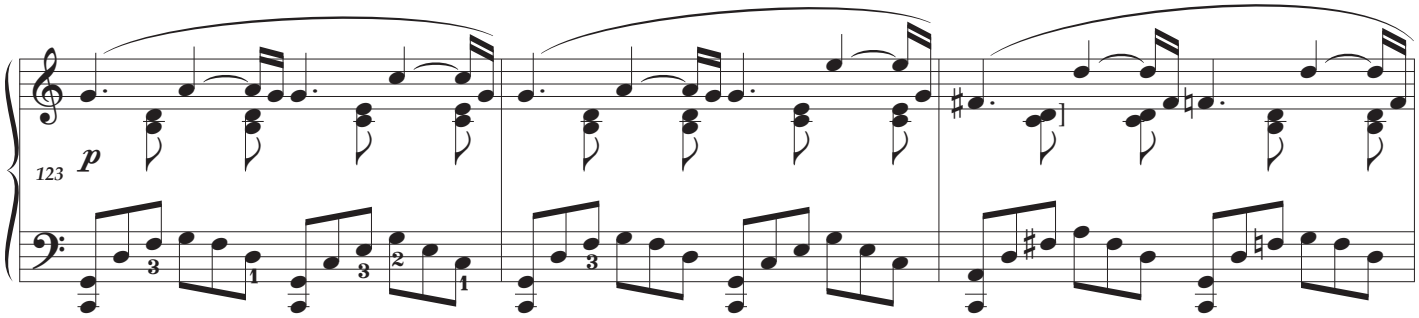

rit.
108


111
sf


114
sf

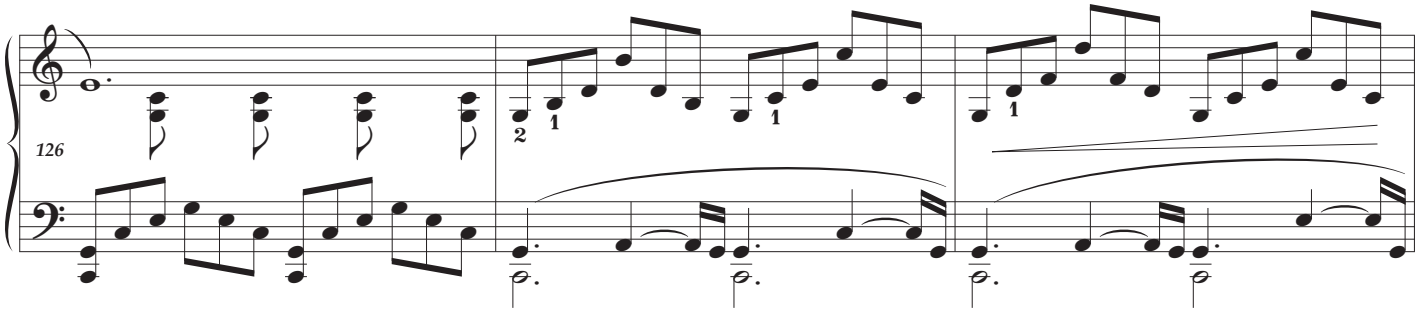


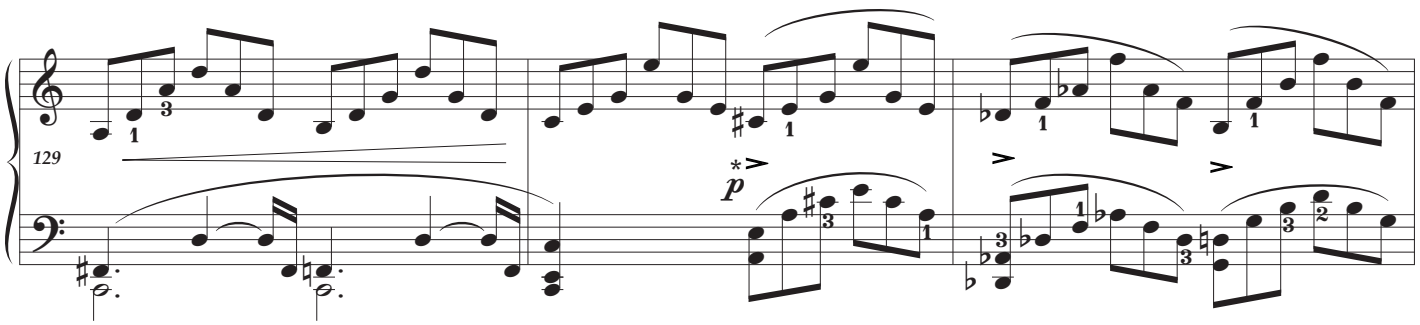


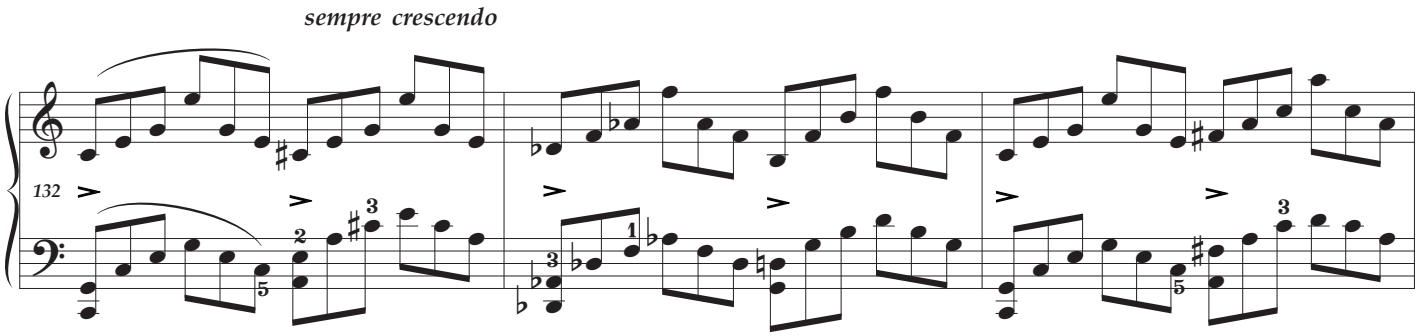


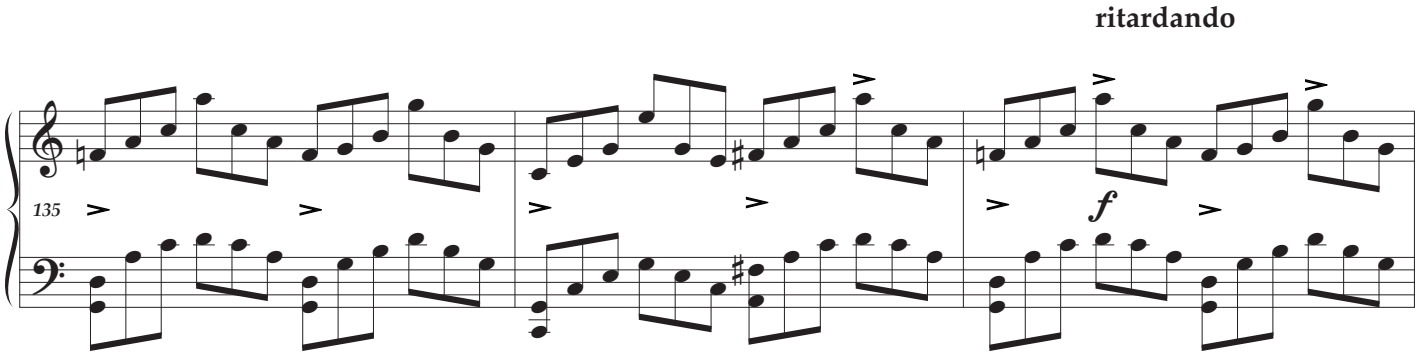
Nach und nach bewegter und schneller

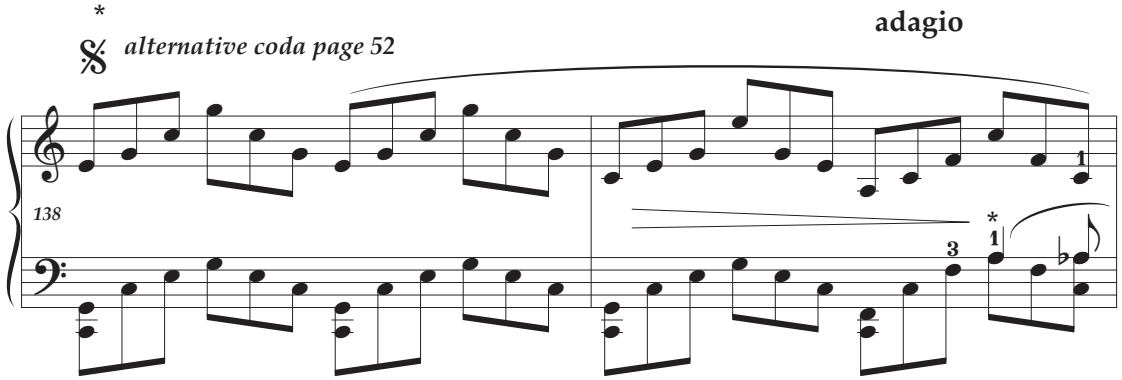
gradually more animated and faster

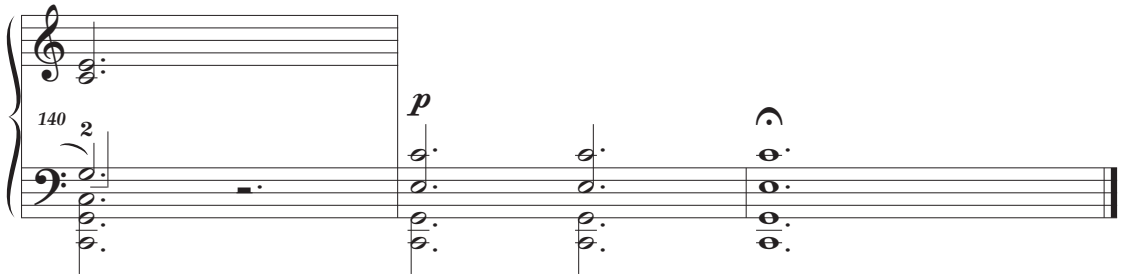



129
p

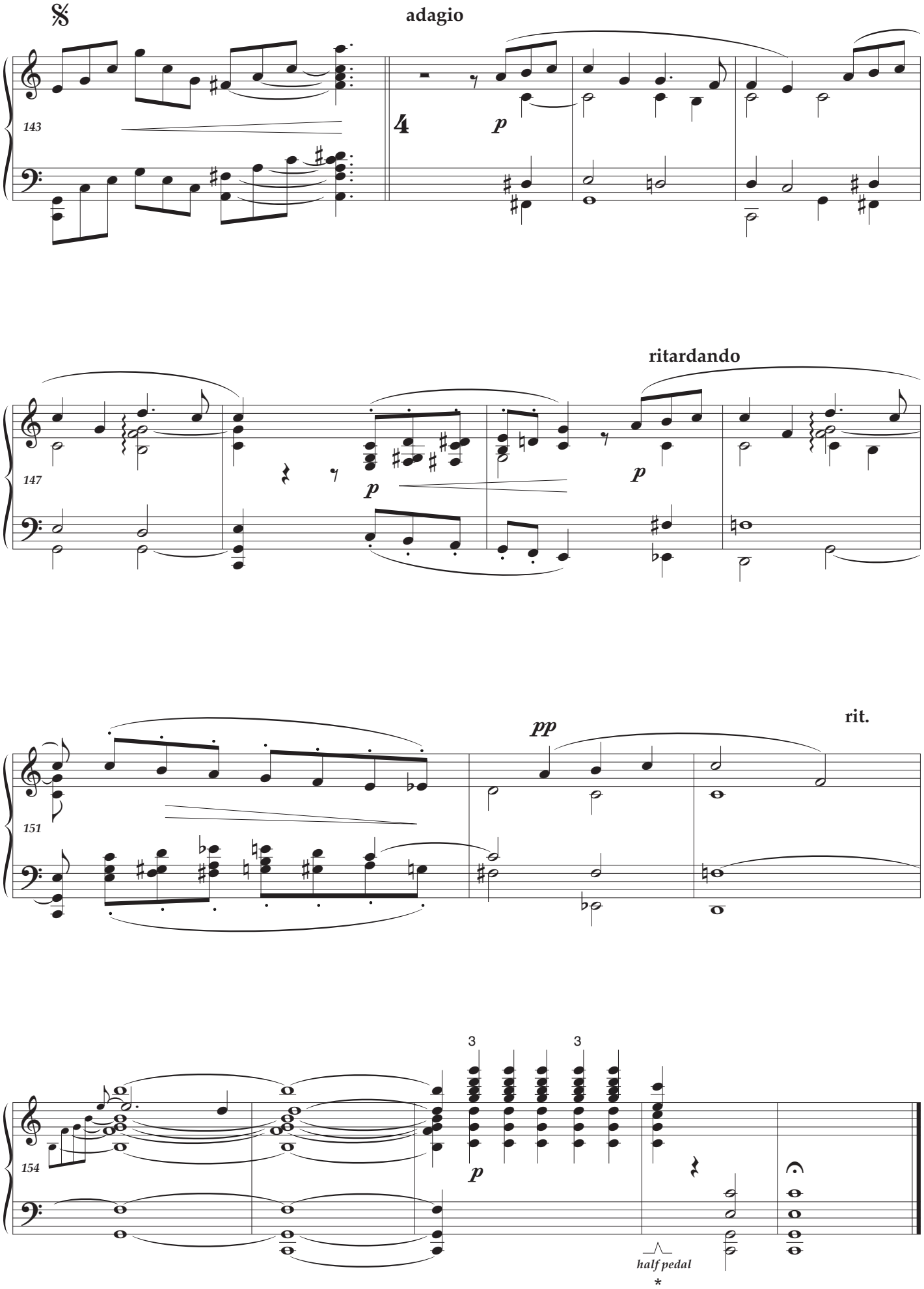

sempre crescendo
132


ritardando
135
f

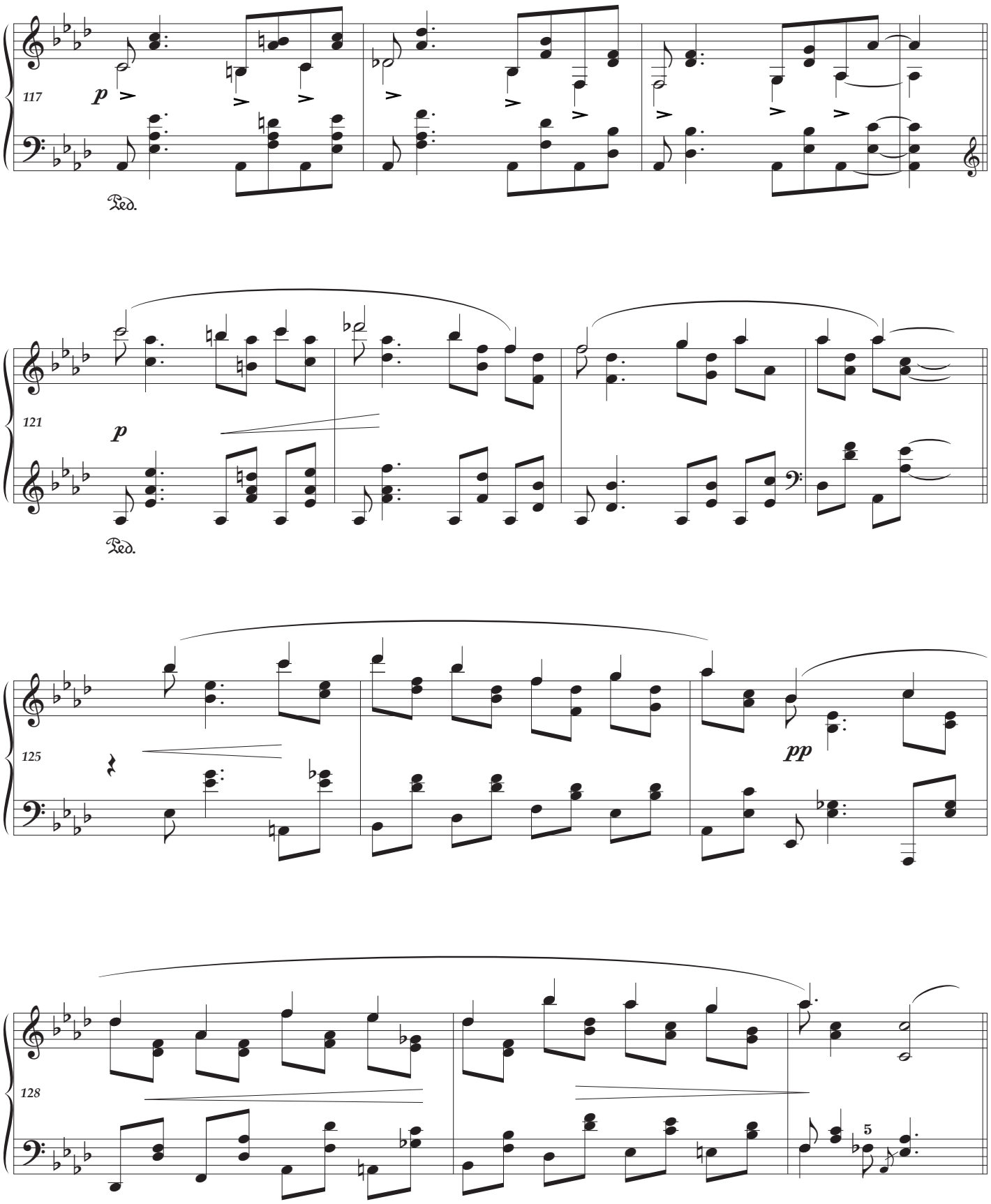

alternative coda page 52
adagio
138


140
p

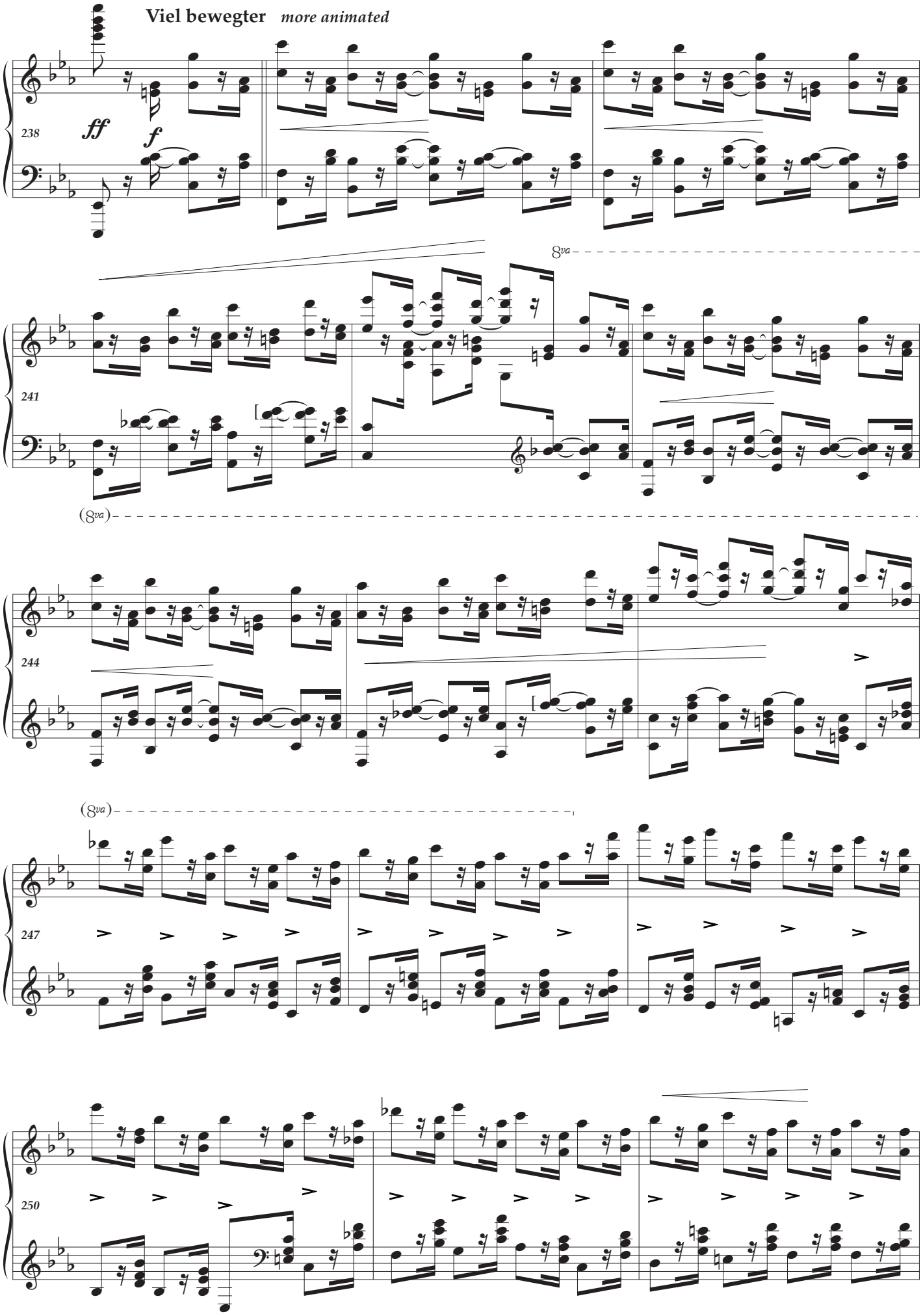
Schumann's original discarded coda

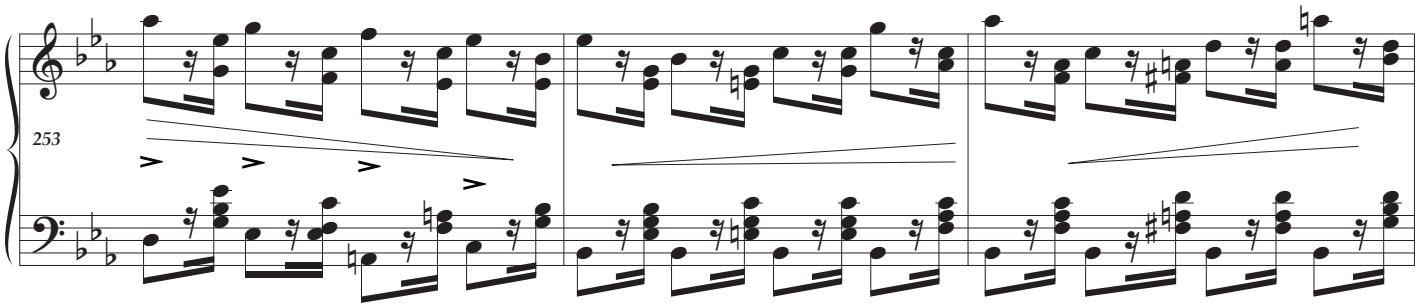


second movement central section (page 31)
preparatory study



second movement CODA
preparatory study

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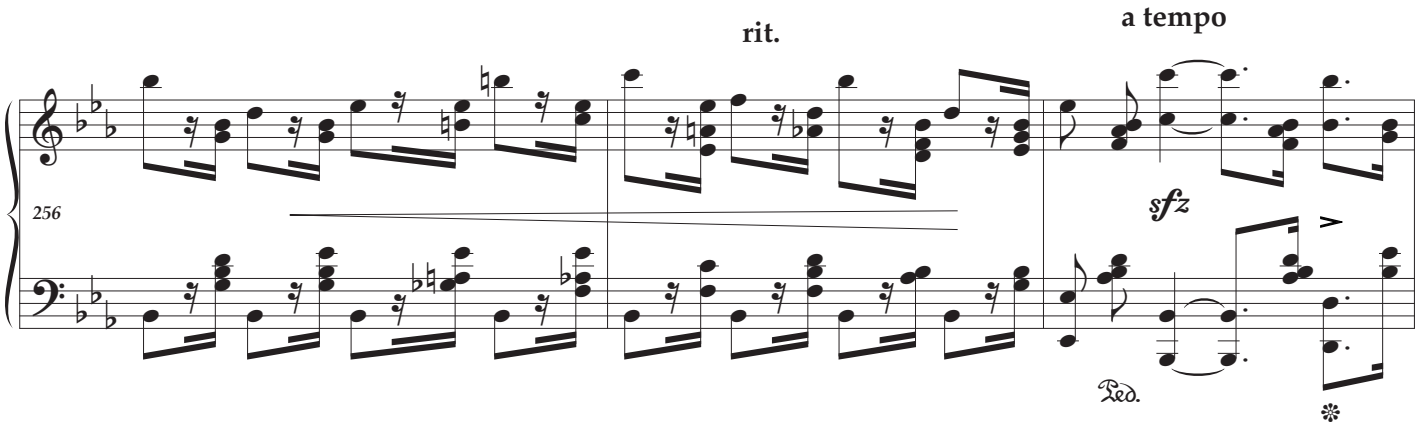
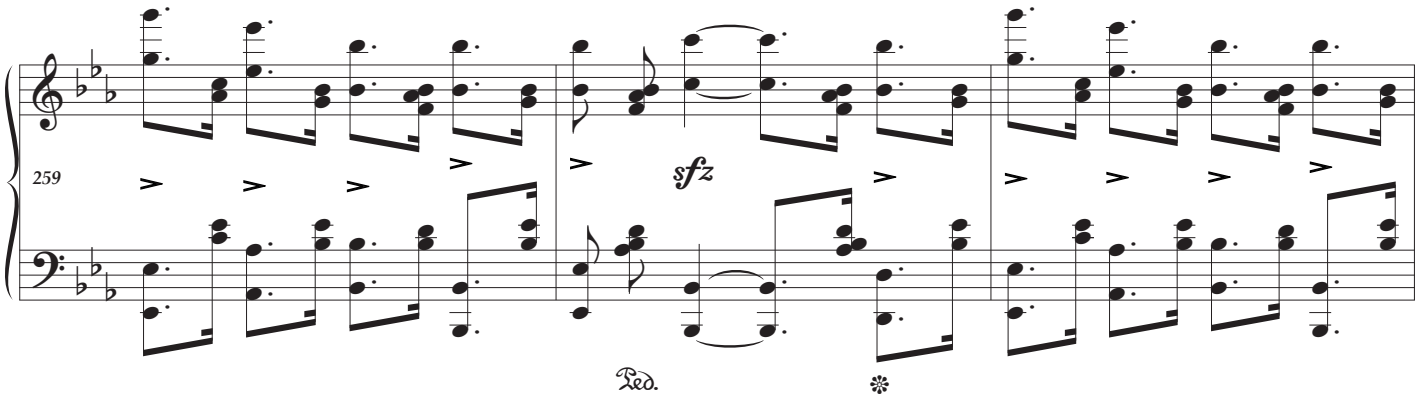
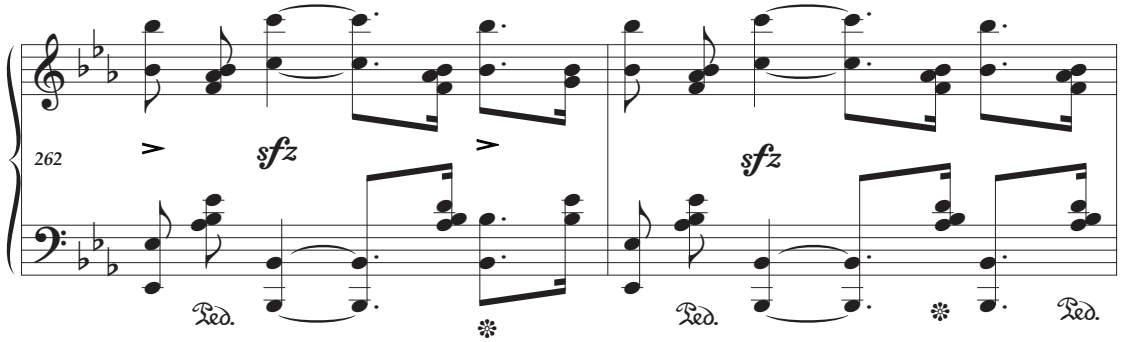
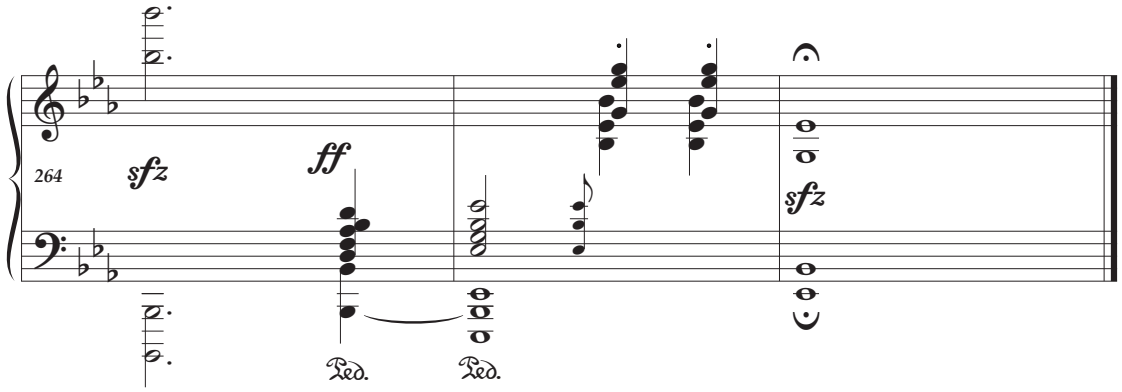
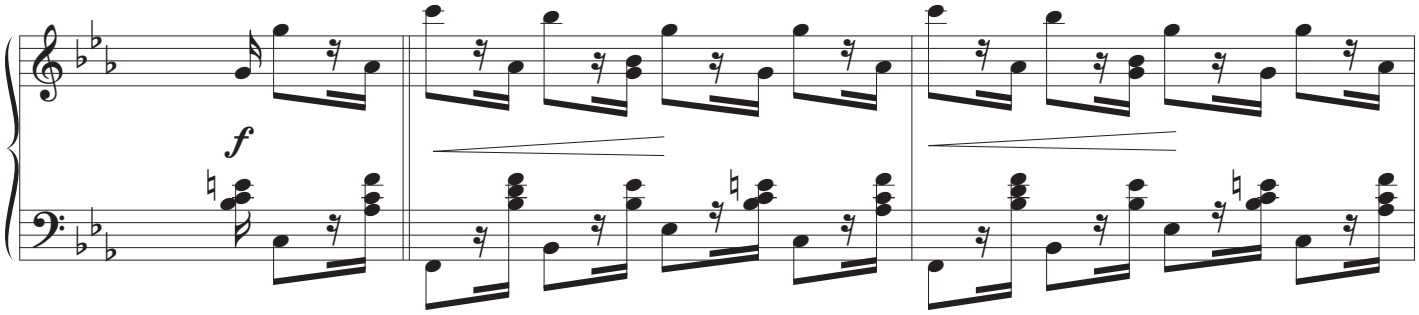

rit.
a tempo
256
sfz
Ped.

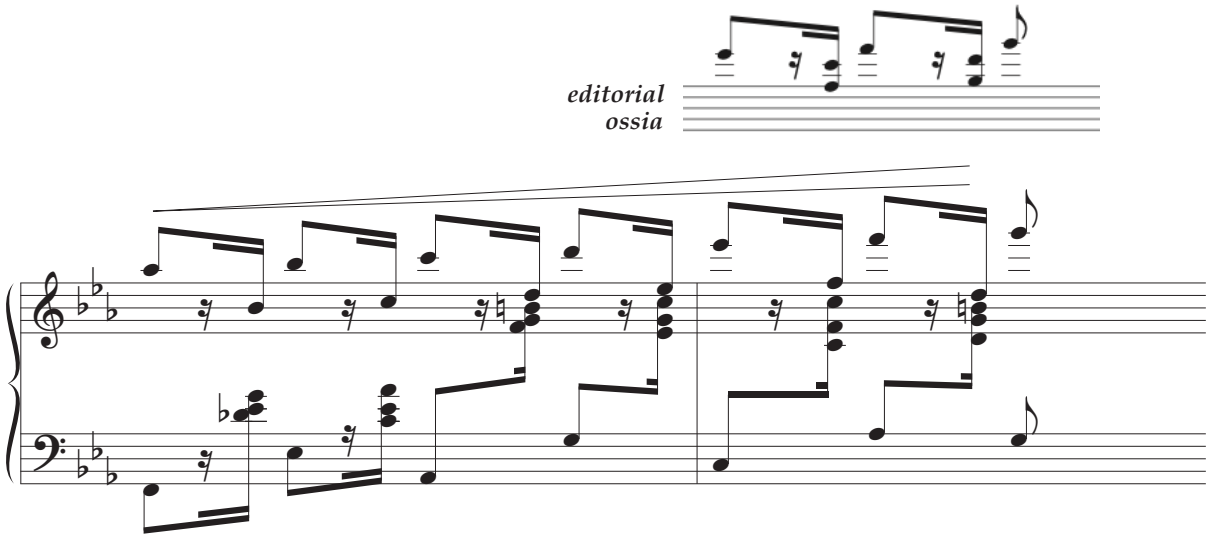

259
sfz
Ped.


262
sfz
Ped.


264
sfz
ff
Ped.

second movement CODA
alternative version — slightly easier
sanctioned by Cortot





SCHUMANN

PHANTASIE

Opus 17

published October 2021

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