Organ Symphony No. 2

on Gregorian Easter Chants

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Alexander Kirsch

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Organ Symphony No. 2 on Gregorian Easter Chants

A preface by the composer.

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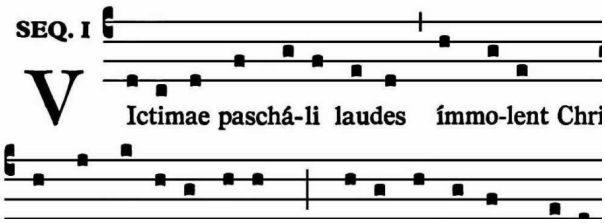
This latest installment in the development of single-movement sonata forms has most of its thematic material in common with the tenth, and last, of Charles Marie Widor's great organ symphonies, the "Symphonie Romane", op. 73. However, as is generally the case with the late romantic French organ symphonies, Widor's piece is more akin to the Baroque suite than to the symphonic formal principles of the Classical age and beyond, as there is little connection across its four movements (Moderato; Choral; Cantilène; Finale), nor are these movements in any way related to the traditional symphonic arrangement (Sonata Allegro; Andante/Adagio; Minuet/Scherzo; Finale).

The author's *Organ Symphony No. 2 on Gregorian Easter Chants*, on the other hand, can be understood as a four movement symphony (Sonata movement; Scherzo; Slow movement; Rondo-Finale) which is contained within a traditional sonata form (Exposition with 1st & 2nd Subject groups; Development; Recapitulation and Coda), and it should be relatively easy to perceive this duality when listening to the work.[1]

The Gregorian chorales chosen as the main thematic material in this Organ Symphony No. 2, as well as in Widor's "Symphonie Romane" - and amongst numerous other works from the Middle Ages until today -, are some of the most popular tunes indeed which formed part of the monastic liturgies of both the Holy Week and the Easter Holidays.[2] Here, in the Organ Symphony No. 2, they are initially being presented in the following, distinct manners:

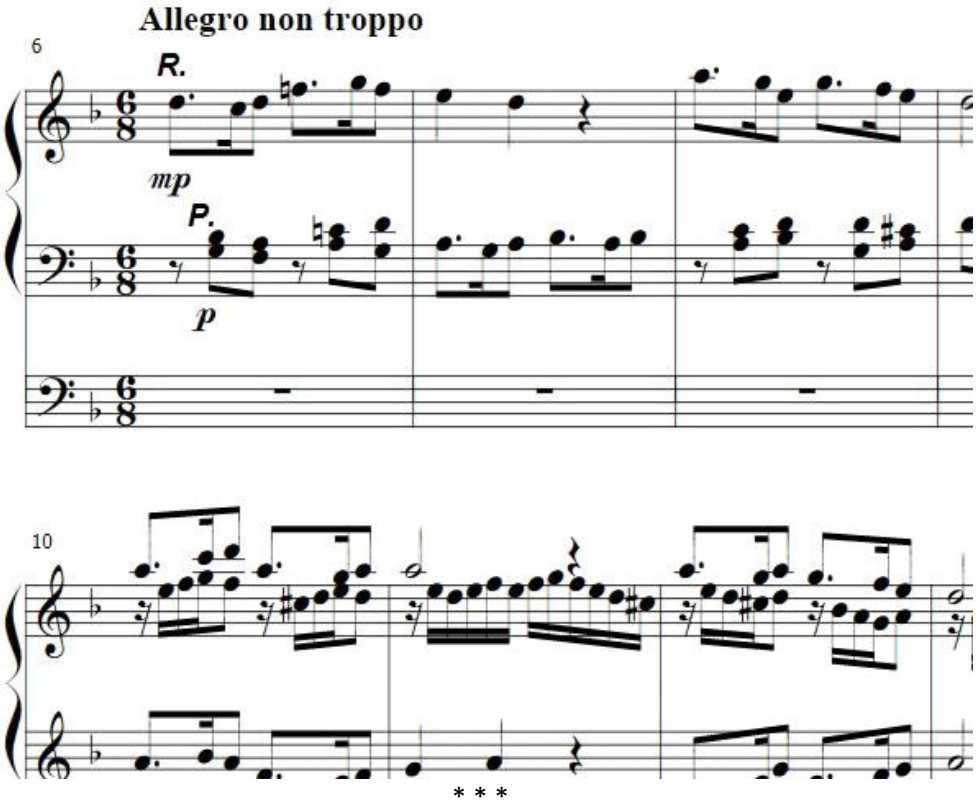
- ***Victimae Paschalis Laudes***



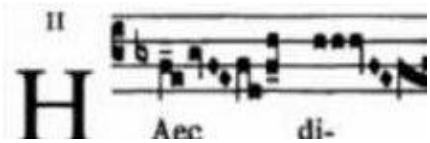
appears in the style of a ***Siciliano:***

[1] For a more detailed essay on the genesis - and the problematic - of the single-movement sonata form, past and present, visit this blog post by the author: Developing the Single-movement Sonata Form

[2] Several of the Gregorian chants have been, following the Reformation, incorporated into the Protestant Hymn books, such as *Victimae Paschalis Laudes* which has become, albeit in a much altered form, *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, by Martin Luther in 1524.

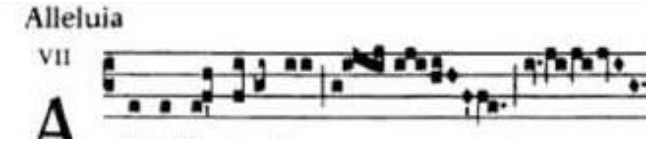


- ***Haec Dies***

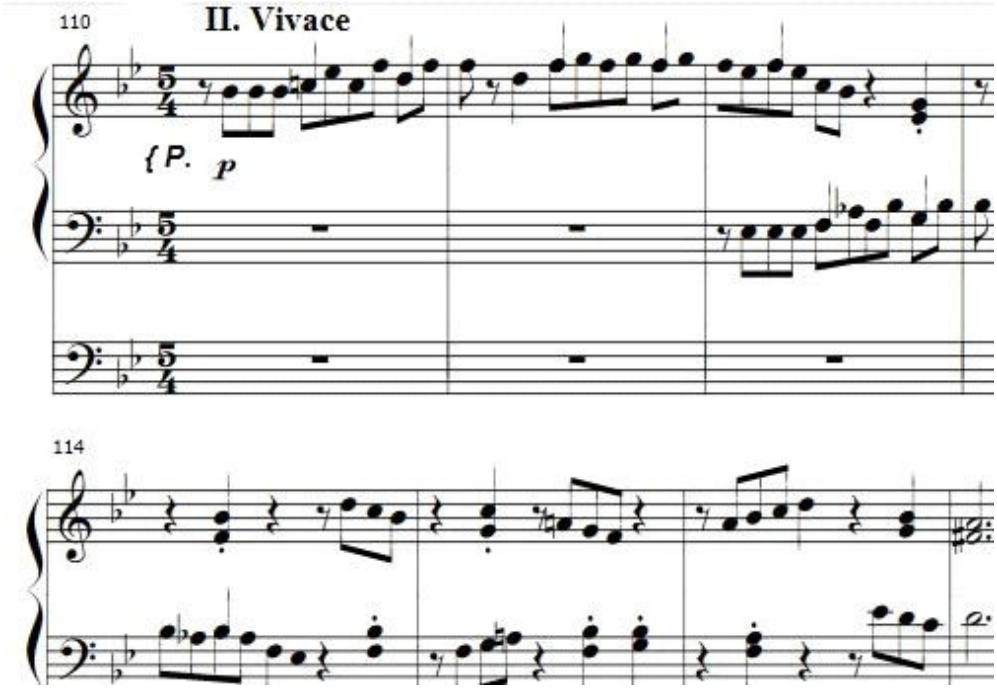


as a ***Ricercare:***

- ***Alleluia Pascha Nostrum***

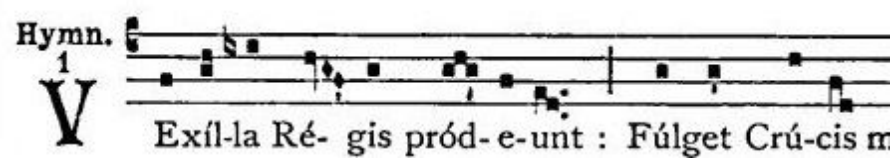


as a ***Fuga:***

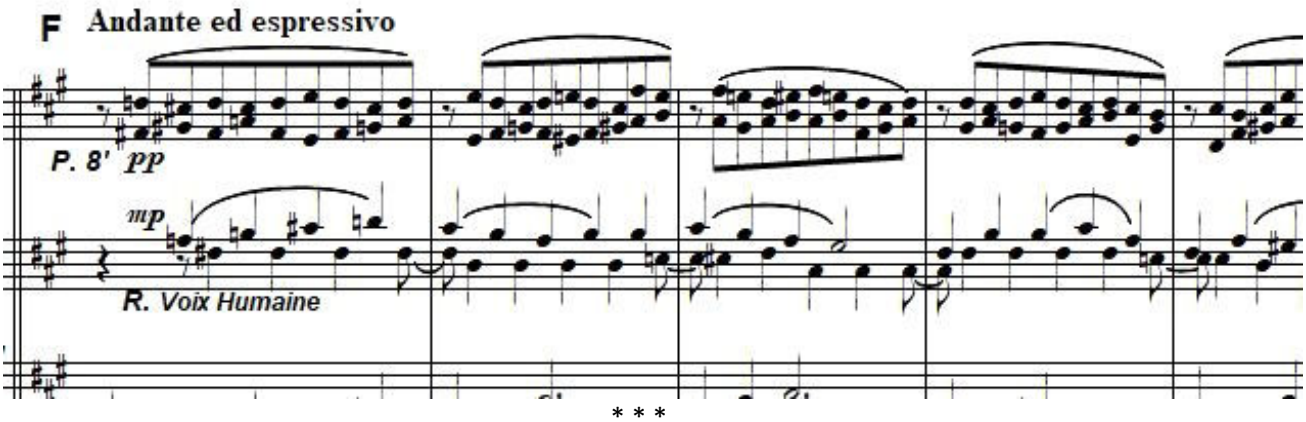


* * *

- ***Vexilla Regis***



as an ***Arioso*** *(in the Tenor):*



* * *

The diagram below serves to illustrate - in place of a full verbal analysis - the formal sections of the Organ Symphony No. 2 and how the themes fit into its general scheme: [3]

I. Sonata movement	**II. Scherzo**	**III. Slow movement**	**IV. Rondo-Finale - Coda**	
Exposition		***Development***	***Recapitulation***	***Coda***
1st Subject Group	2nd Subject Group			
d Minor bar: 1	*Bb Major* 110	*a Minor/modulatory* 210	*d Minor* 263	*D Major* 447
Exposition: Motto* 1. Subj. *Victimae Paschalis* - **d** 2. Subj. *Haec Dies*/Codetta - **F** Motto/Development/Motto Recapitulation: 1. Subj. - **d** 2. Subj - **D** Motto/Codetta/Transition	**Fuga** *Alleluia Pascha* - ***Bb*** **Trio** *Vexilla Regis* - ***f#*** Fuga - **Bb** Trio - **d** Fuga - **Bb** Motto/Codetta/Transition	A (*all themes*) B (Development) A' Transition	Motto 1. Subj. - **d** 2. Subj. - **D** 1. Subj./Motto - **d** **Fuga** (Development)/*Vexilla Regis* - **F** Motto/1. Subj - **D/g** 2. Subj. - **D** Interlude (1. Subj. *Lento*/Motto) - **D**	**Toccata - D** (*all themes*) Motto

*Motto: The first six notes of *Victimae Paschalis* (beginning of the first phrase), followed by a cadential figure (end of the second phrase).[4]

The Organ Symphony No. 2 shows much improvement in respect of the overall flow and coherence of the individual sections, as well as the way the themes are being juxtaposed and combined. With just under 20 minutes of performing time, or 479 bars of music, it is also a fair bit shorter than its predecessor.

For a colour-coded explanation of the contrapuntal connections throughout all of this work, which are quintessential to the thematic development on one side, and the understanding of the formal logic on the other, the author has prepared this YouTube video:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJVHfzrnYXUDcc7uXwbYbiA?view_as=public

Alexander Kirsch

Blackpool, in December 2020

[3] see above footnote [1]; also the preface to the *Organ Symphony No.1 - on Lutheran Christmas Chorales*

[4] Interestingly, notes 1-3 form at the same time their retrograde; notes 4-6 the inversion, as well as the retrograde inversion, of notes 1-3. This matter is being of some importance throughout the polyphonic settings of the Organ Symphony No. 2.

Duration: approx. 20'

Sections:

I. Maestoso p. 1

II. Vivace p. 9

III. Molto adagio p. 18

IV. Tempo I p. 23

Organ Symphony No. 2

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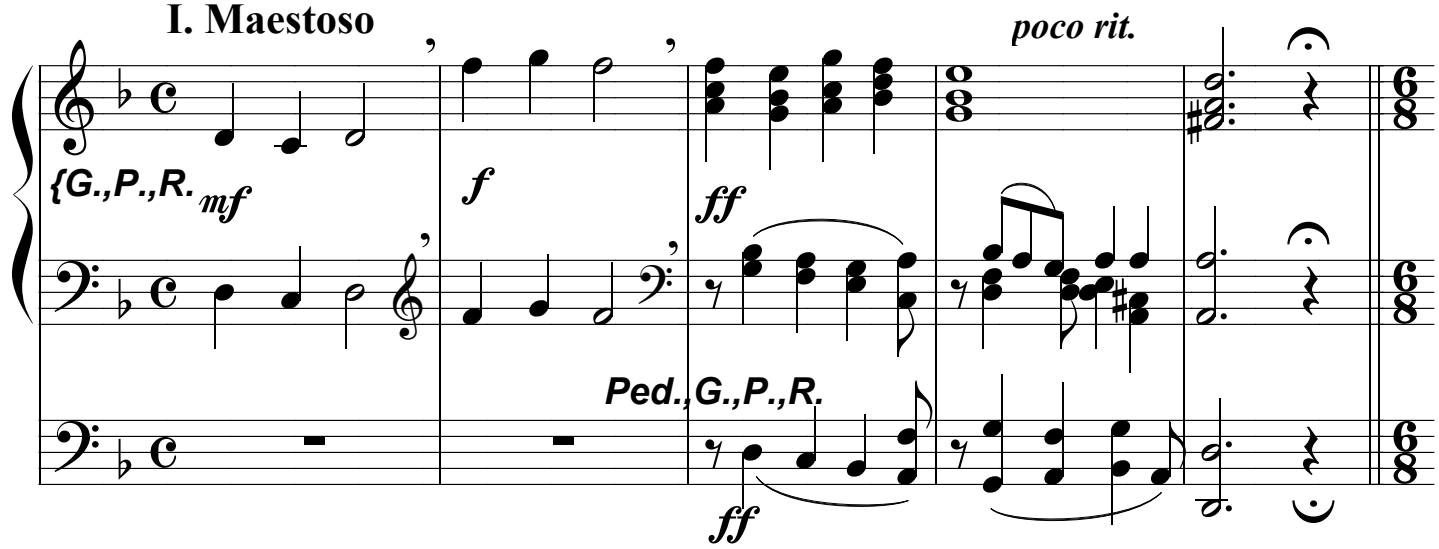
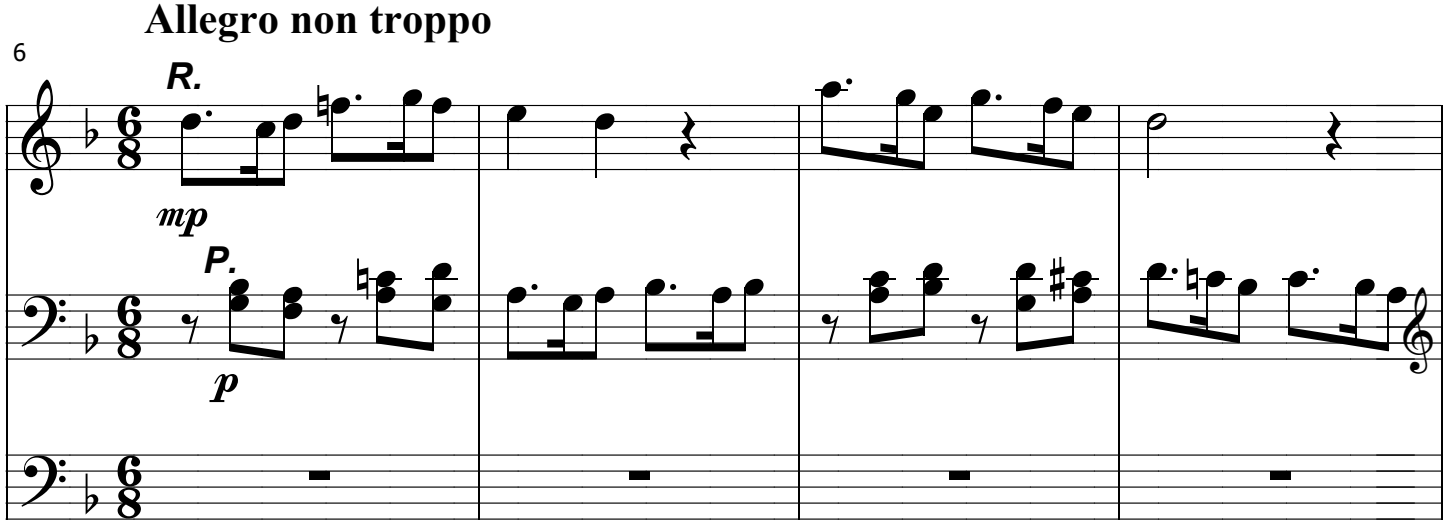
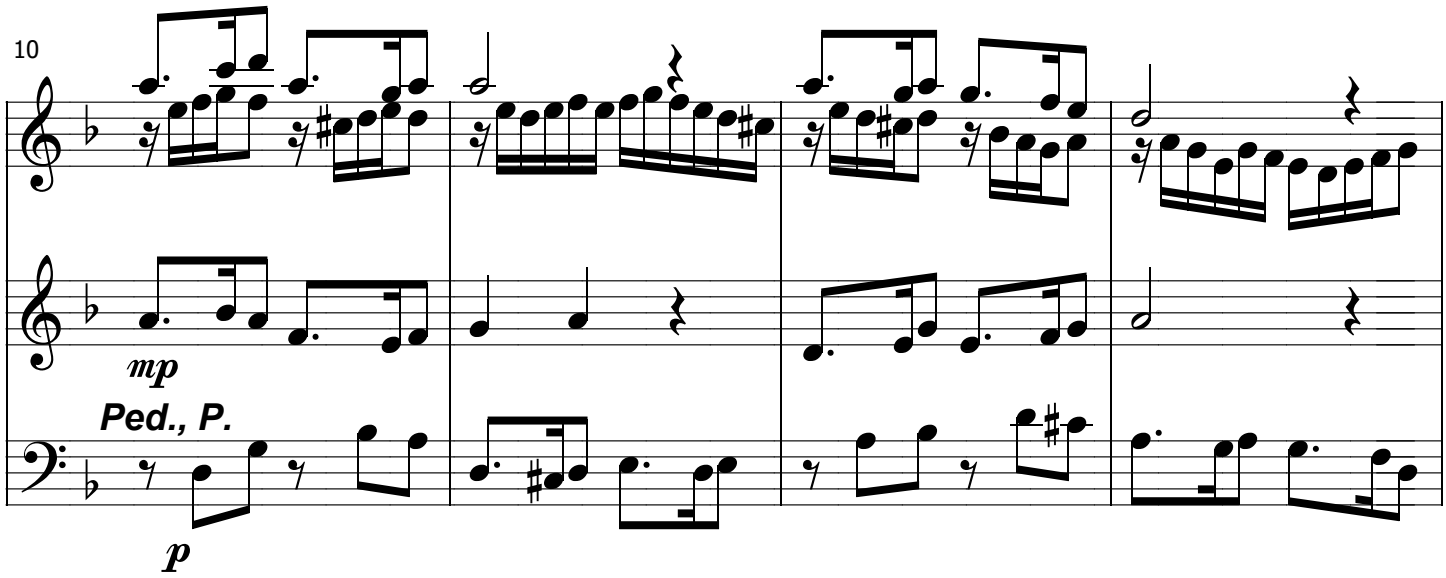
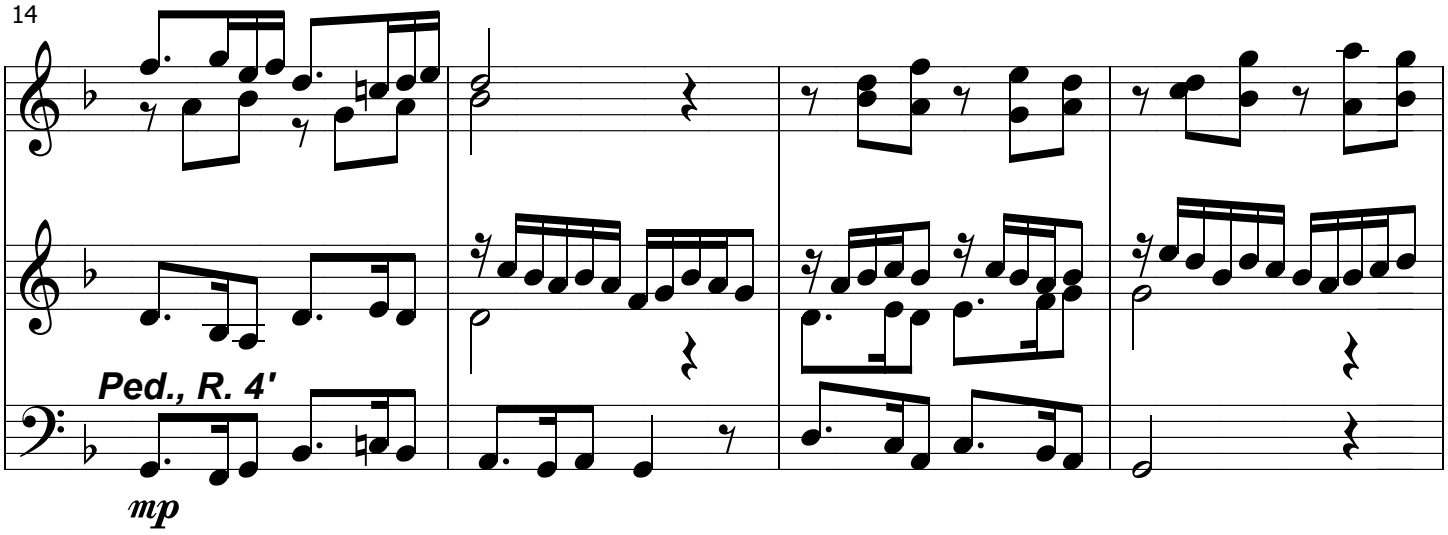
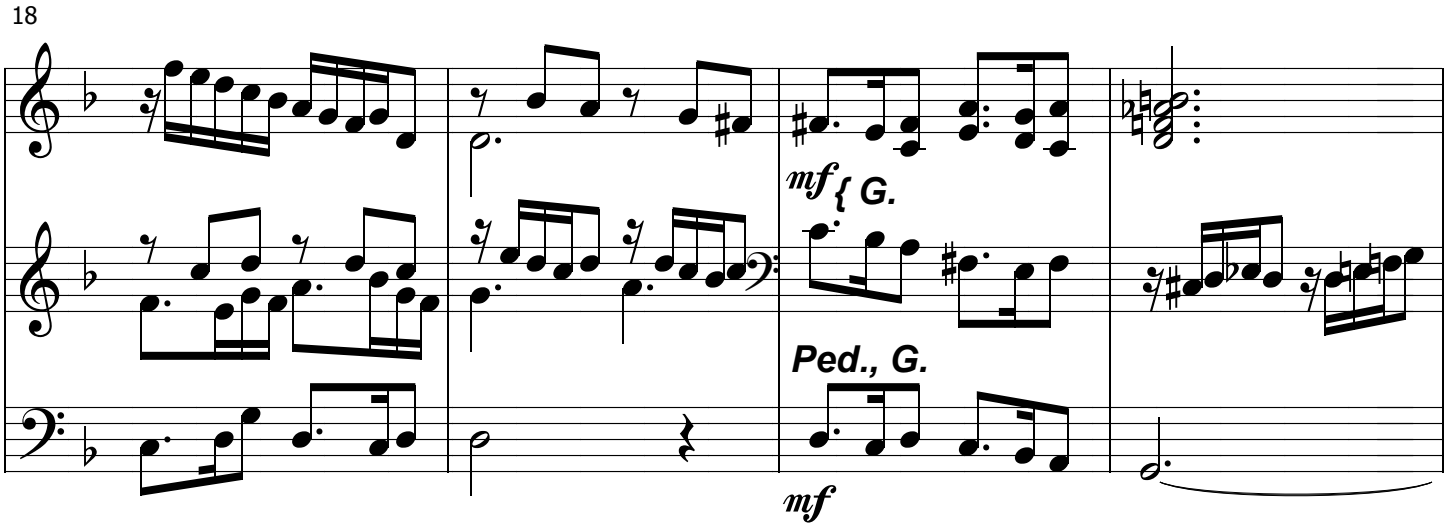
P. 8,4' - R. 8,4' - G. 16,8,4' - Ped. 16,8'

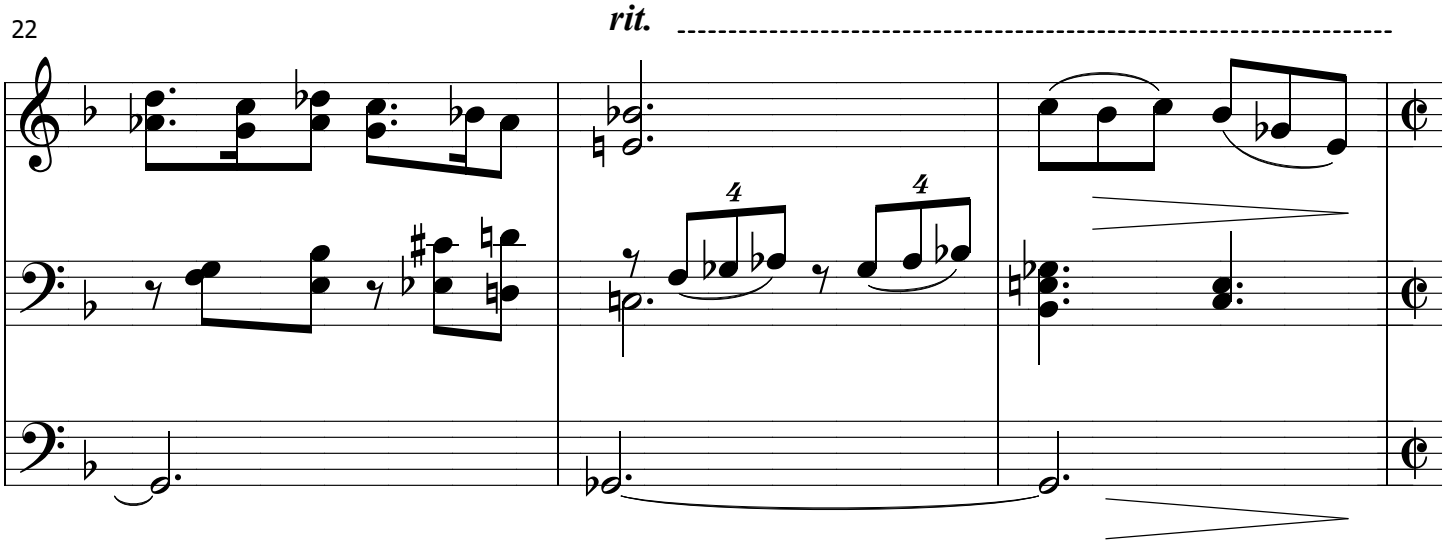


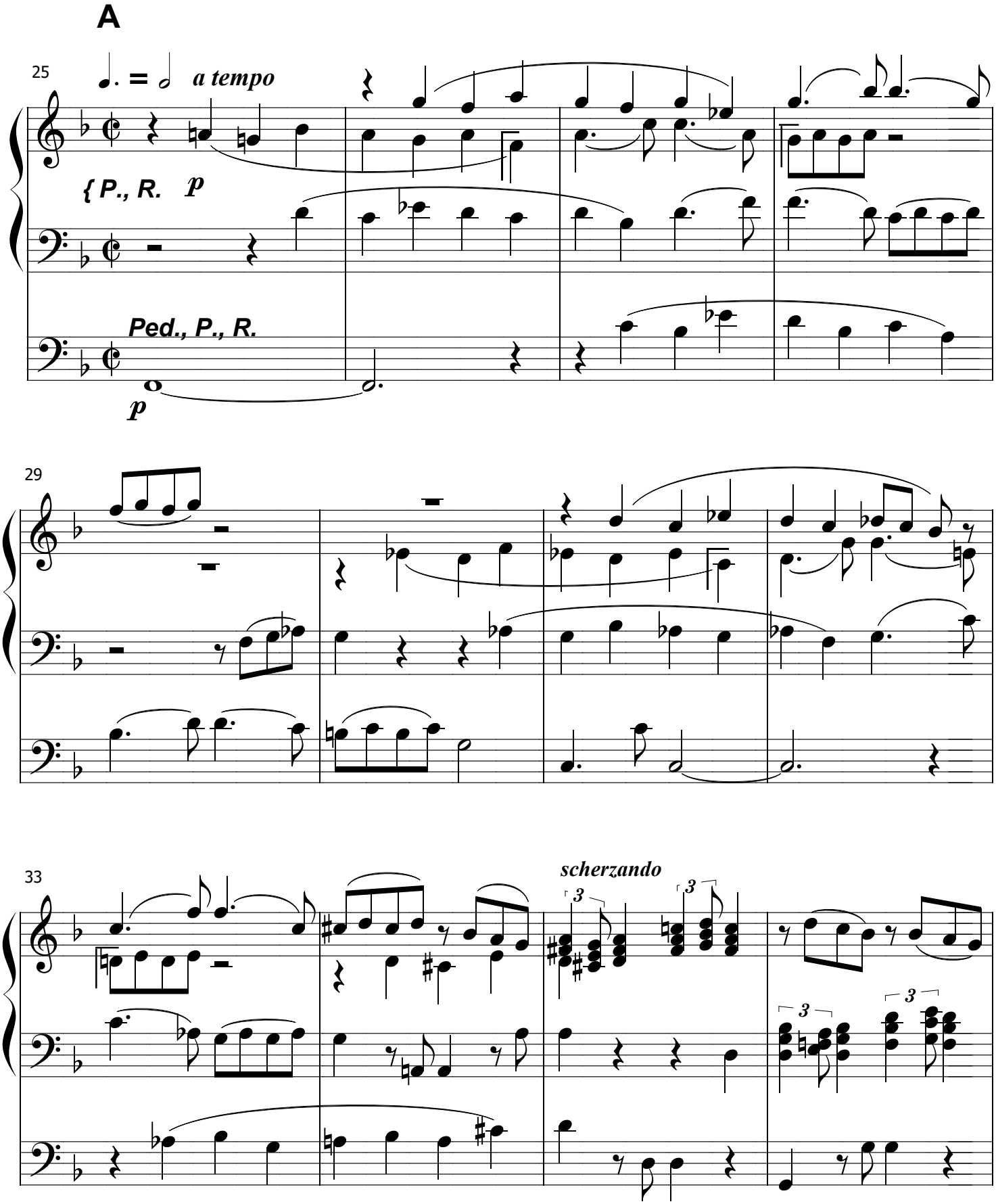


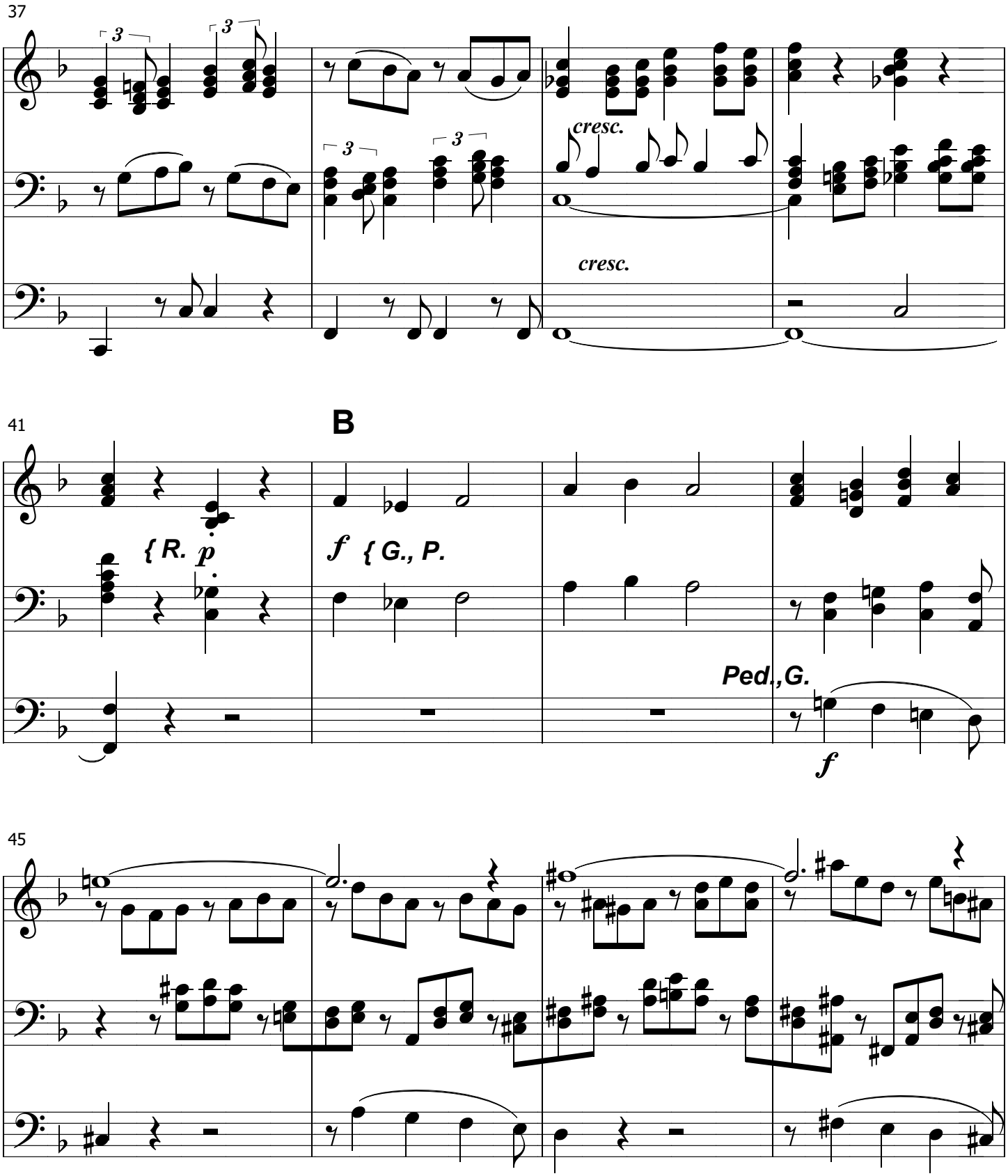


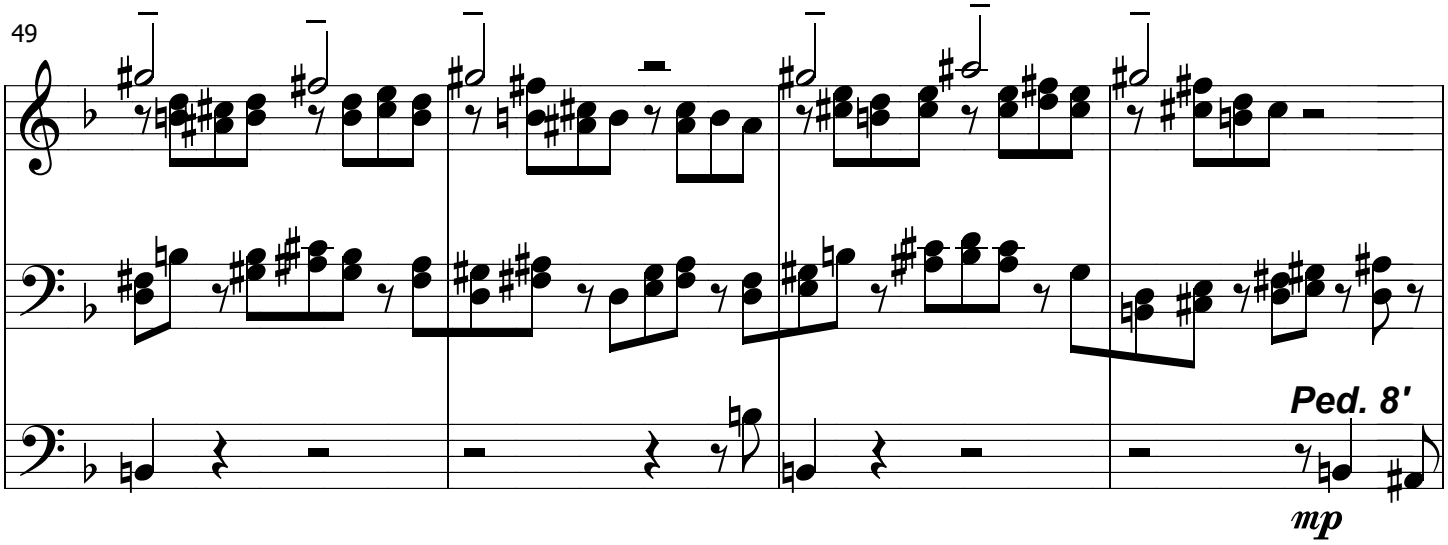

14
Ped., R. 4'
mp

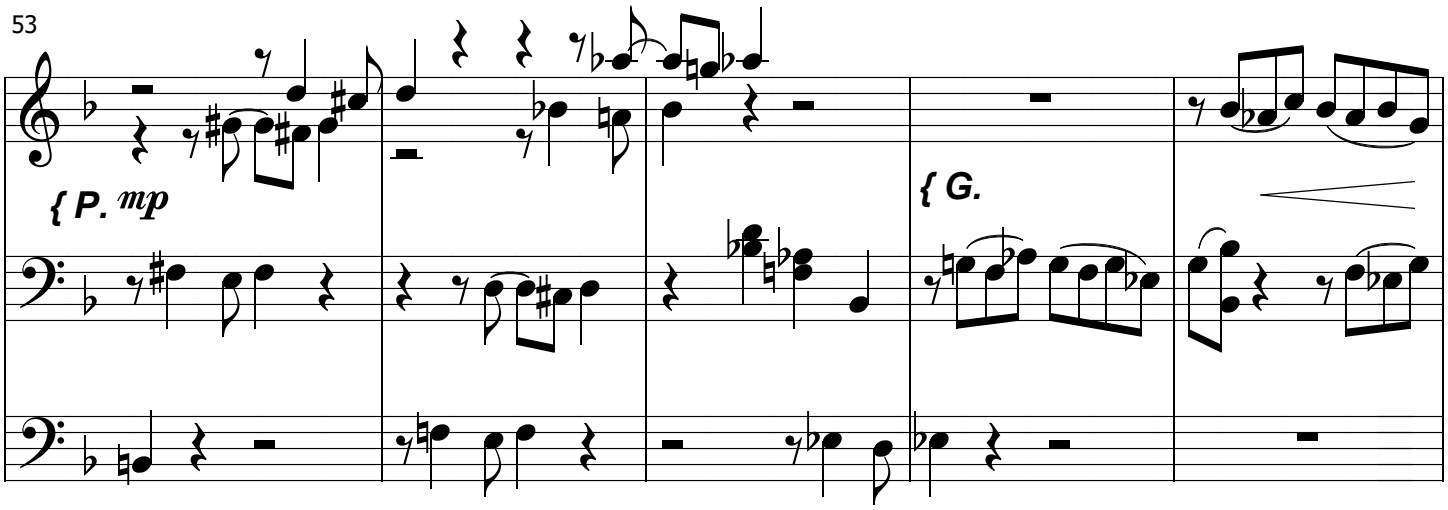

18
mf
{ G.
Ped., G.
mf

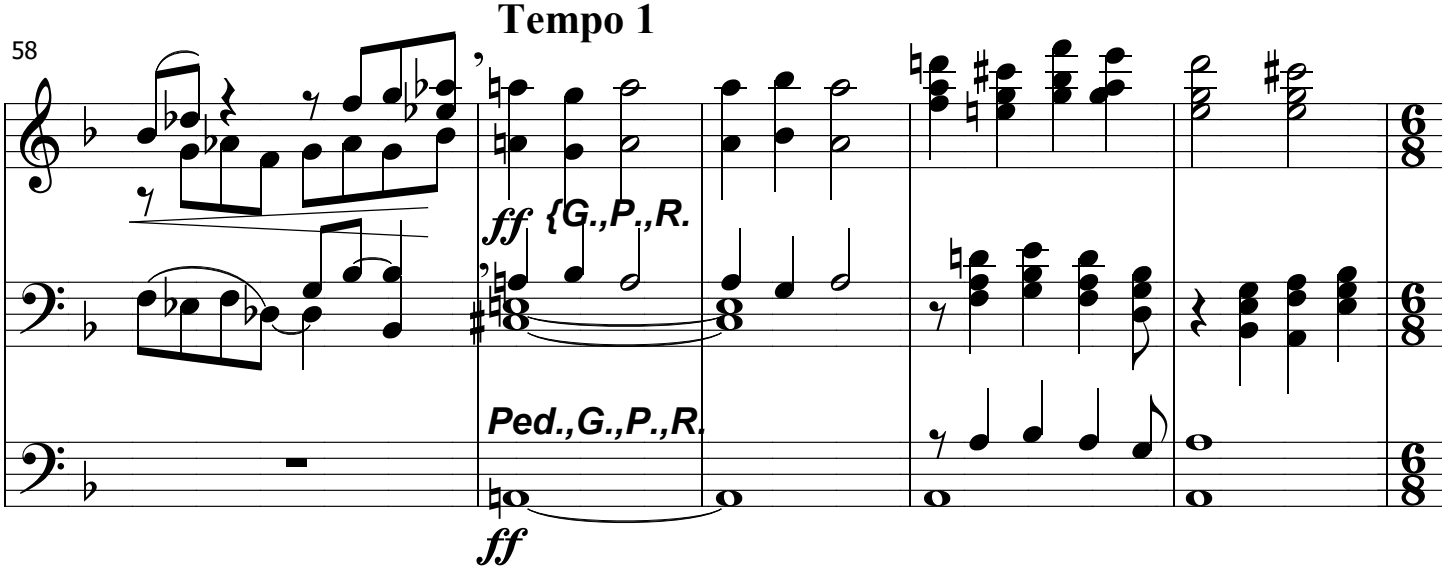

22
rit.
4
4

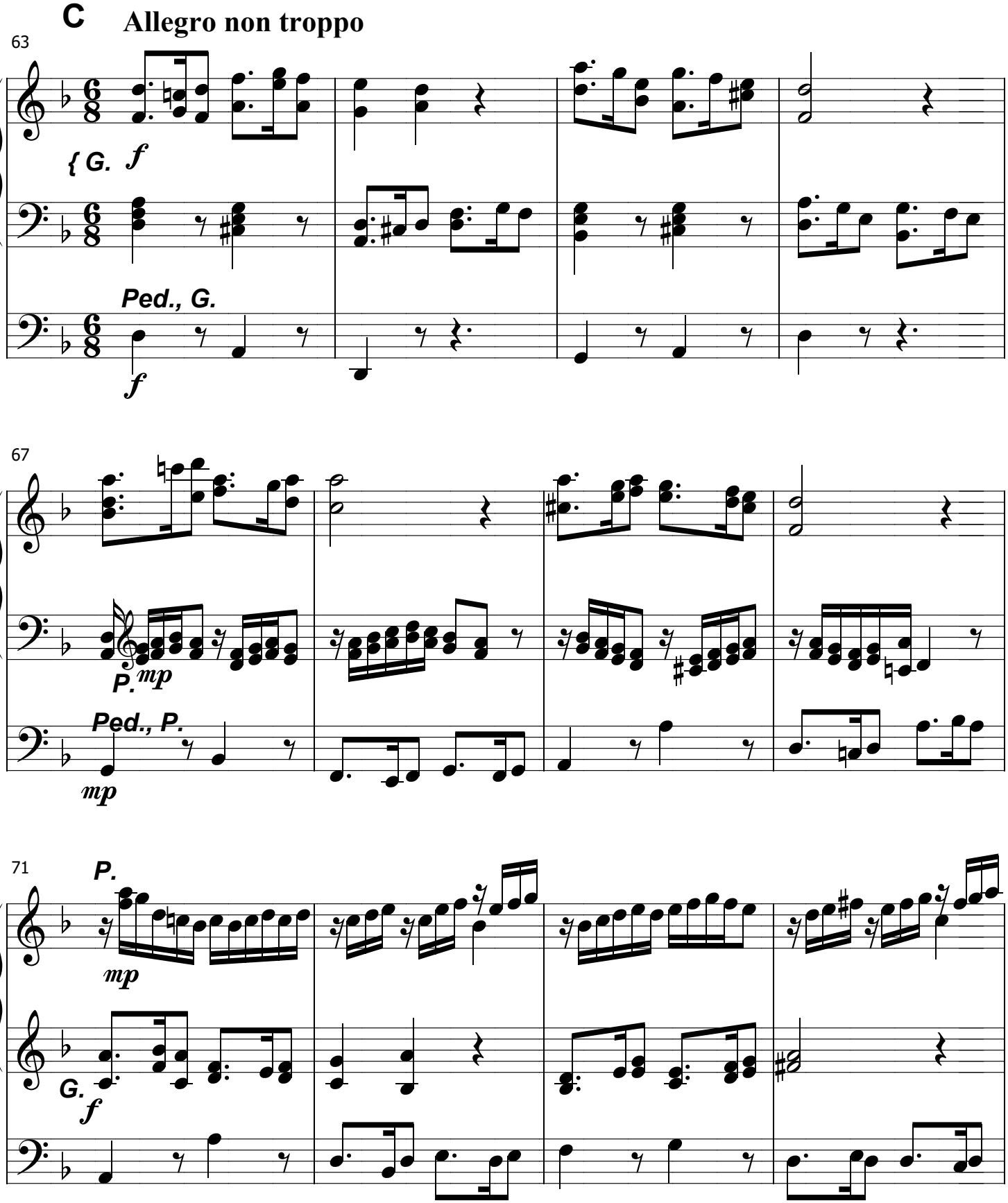

A
25
a tempo
{ P., R.
p
Ped., P., R.
p
29
33
scherzando
3
3
3
3

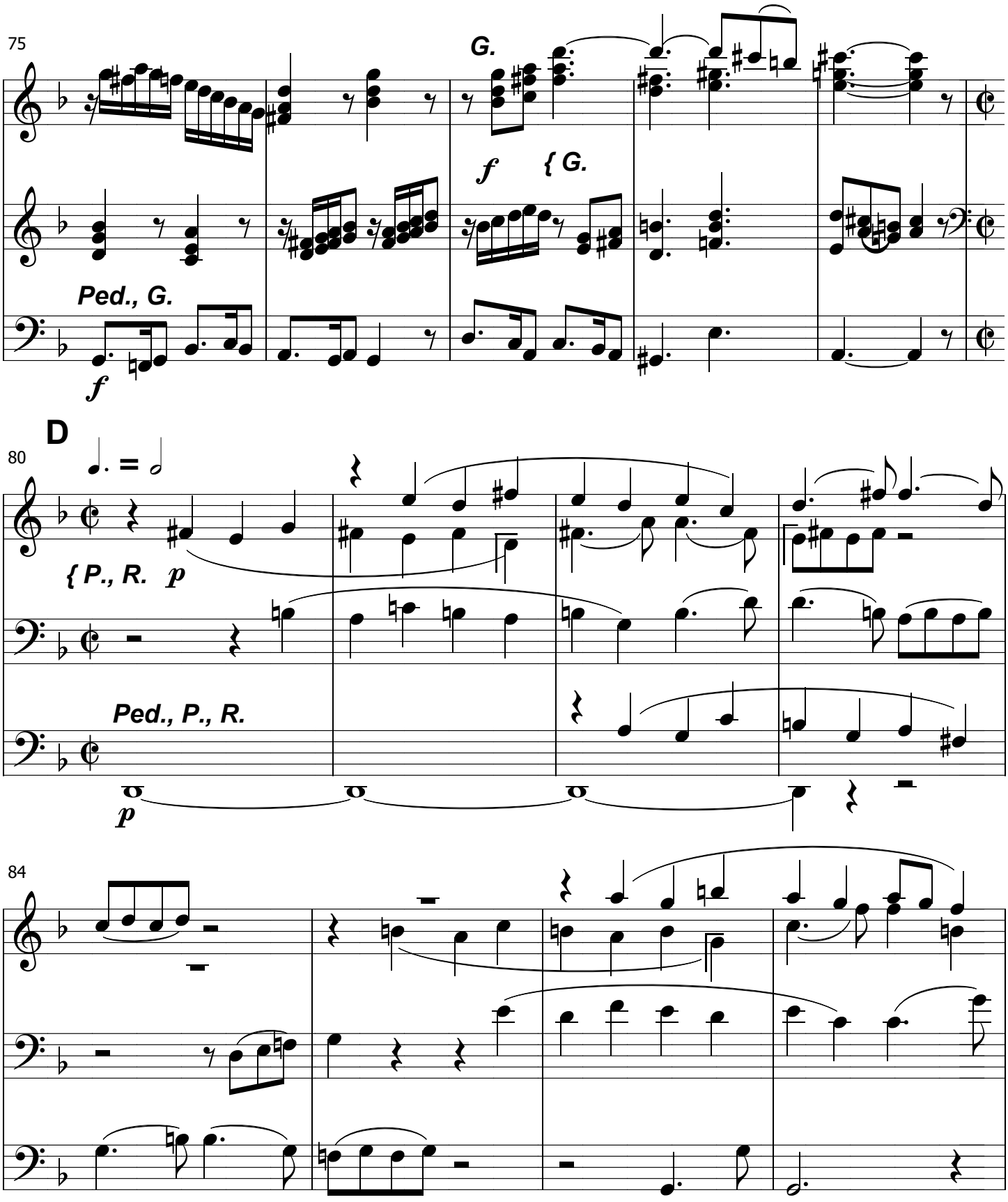

37
3
3
cresc.
3
3
cresc.
41
B
{ R. p
f { G., P.
Ped.,G.
f
45

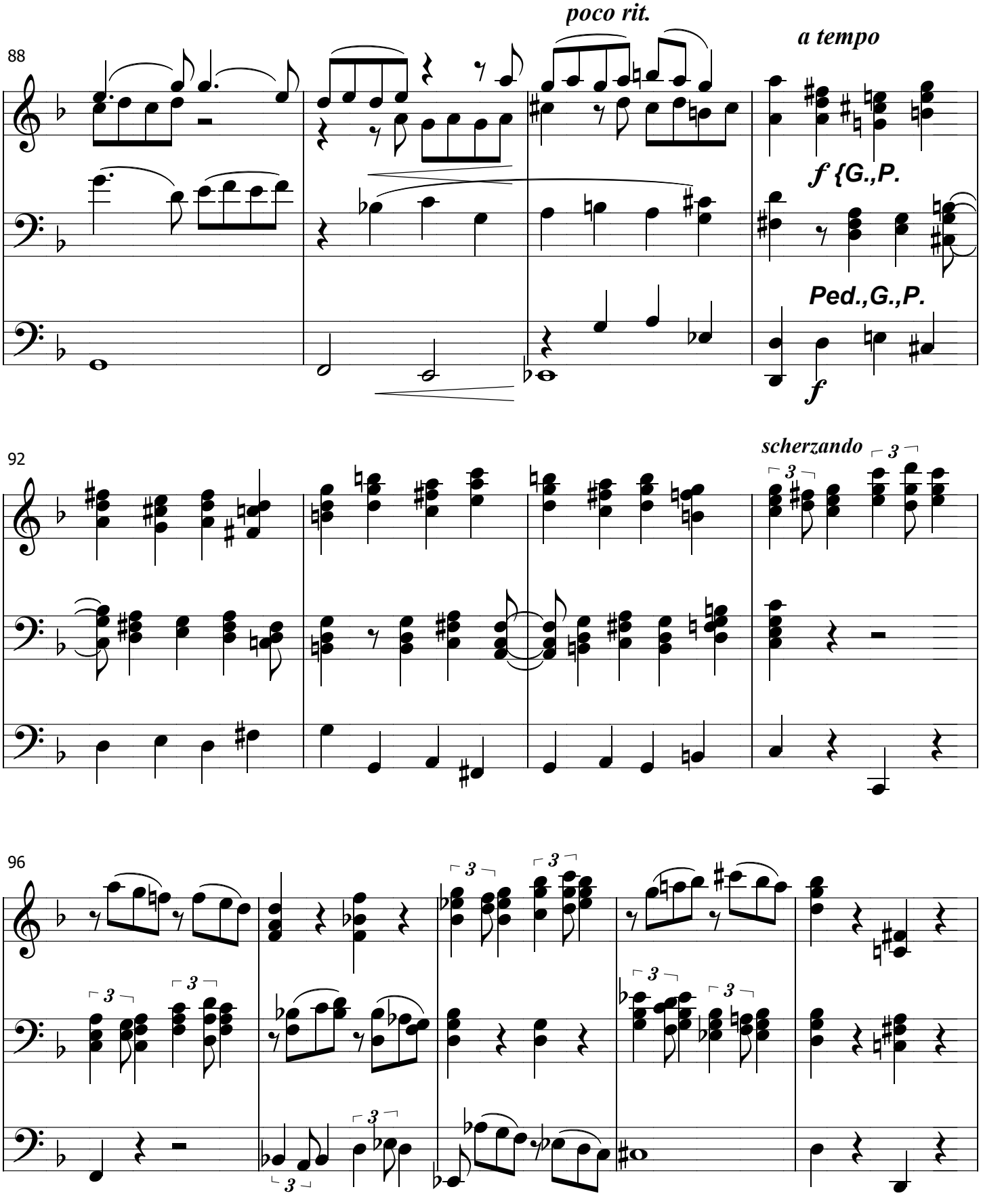

49
Ped. 8'
mp

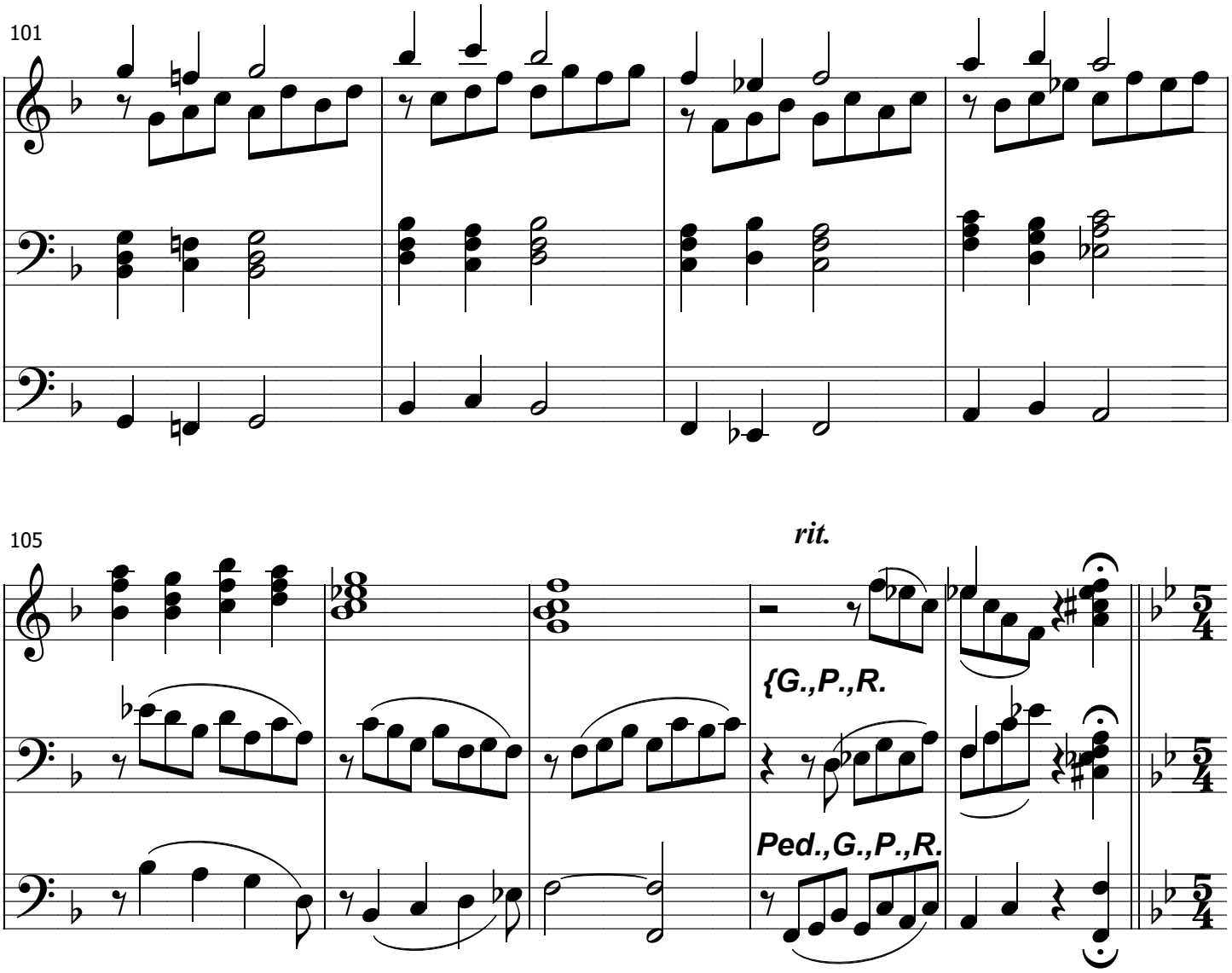

53
{ P. mp
{ G.


Tempo 1
58
ff {G.,P.,R.
Ped.,G.,P.,R.
ff

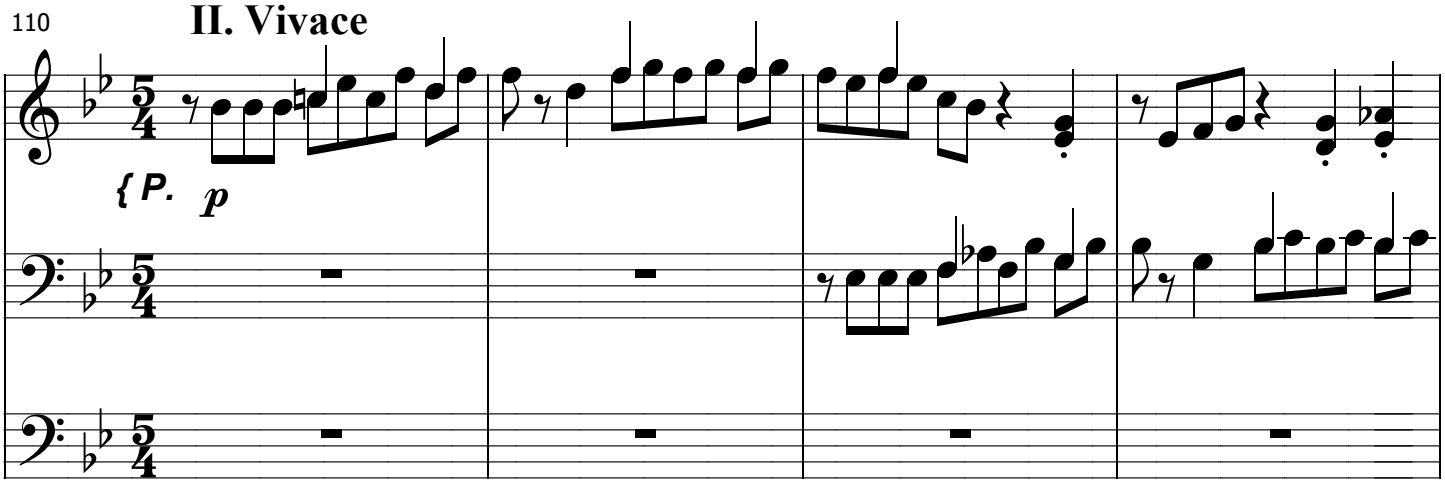

C
Allegro non troppo
63
{ G.
f
Ped., G.
f
67
P.
mp
Ped., P.
mp
71
P.
mp
G.
f

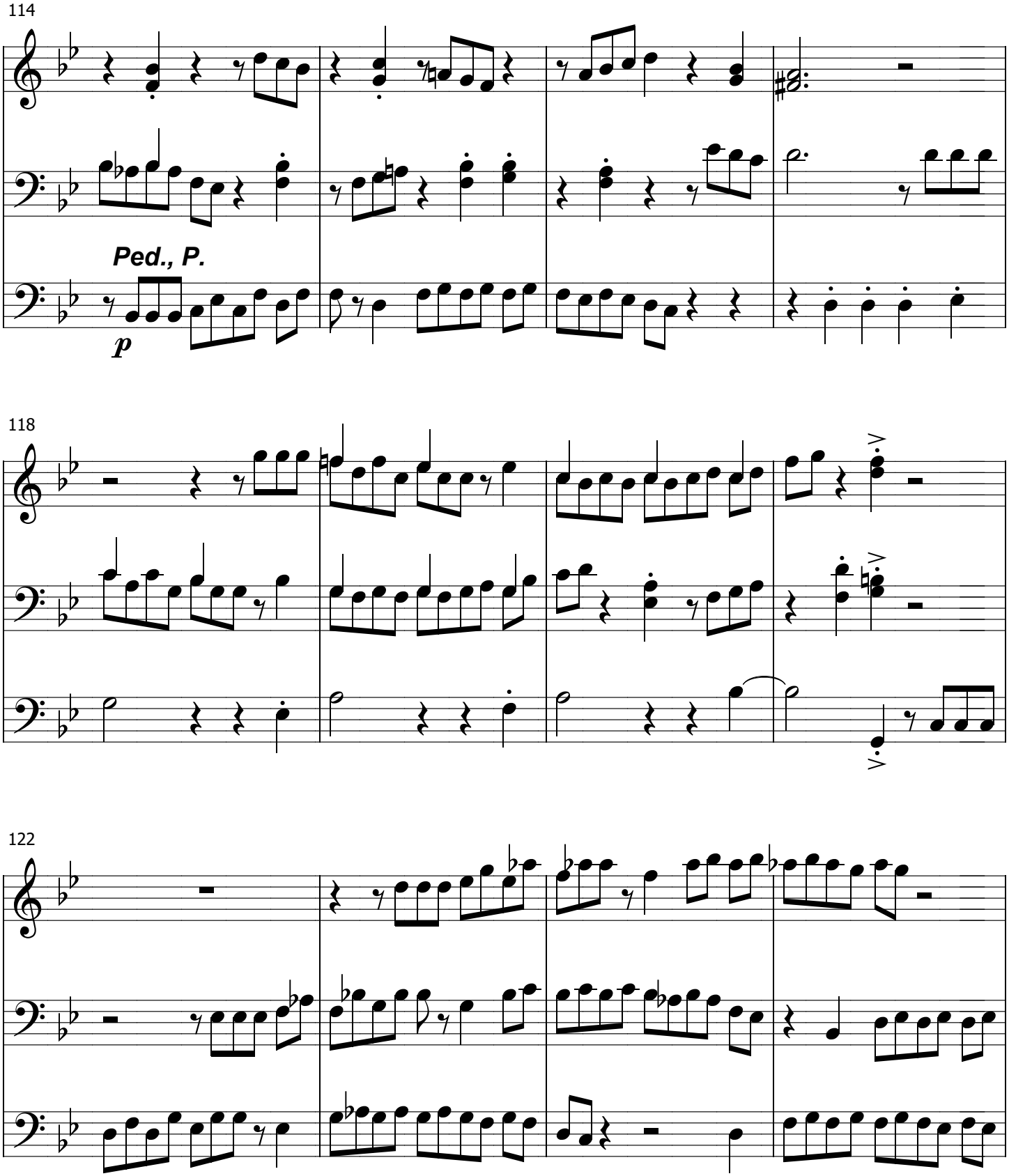

75
G.
f
{ G.
Ped., G.
f
D
80
{ P., R. p
Ped., P., R.
p
84

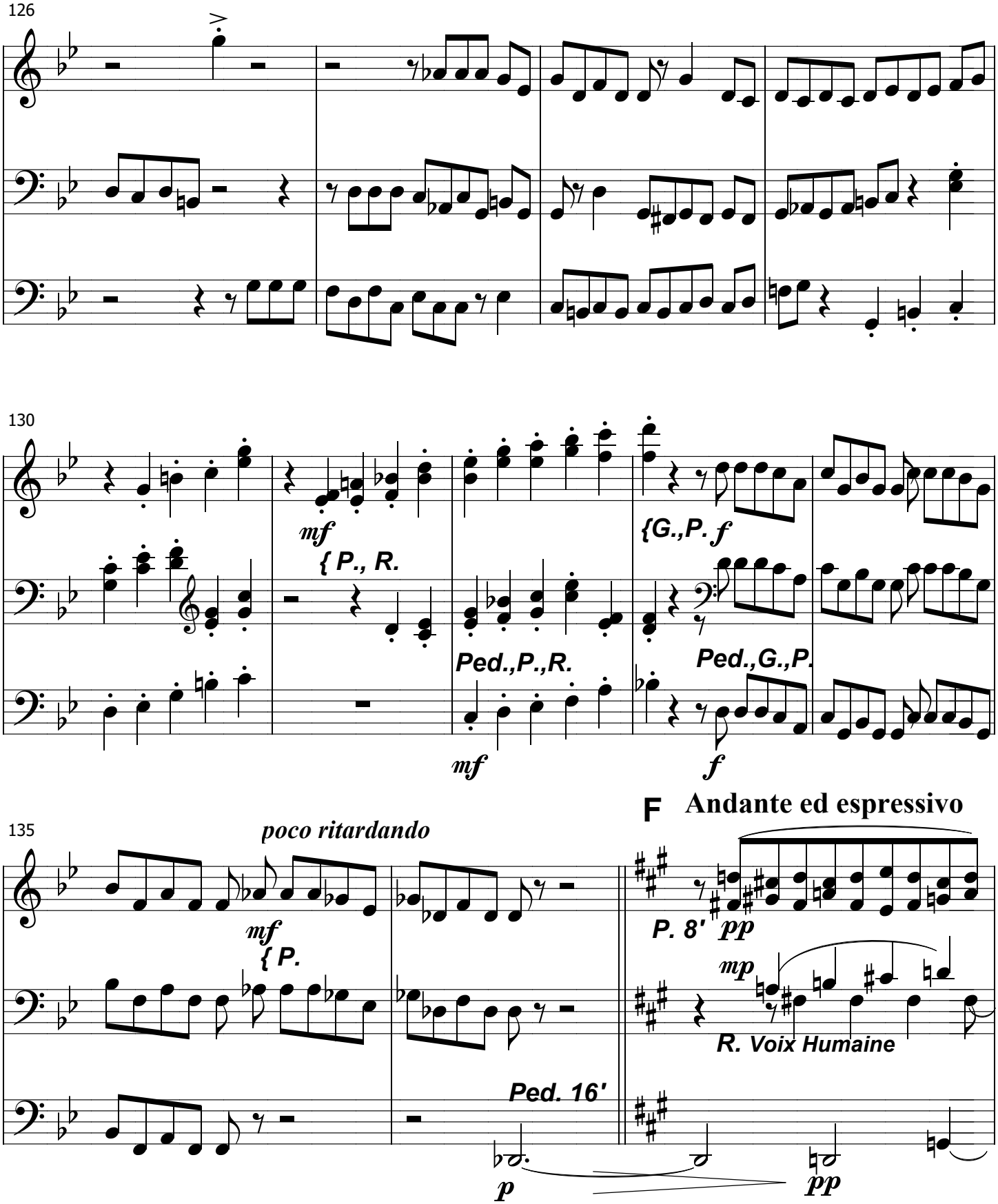

88
poco rit.
a tempo
f {G.,P.
Ped.,G.,P.
f
92
scherzando
3
96
3

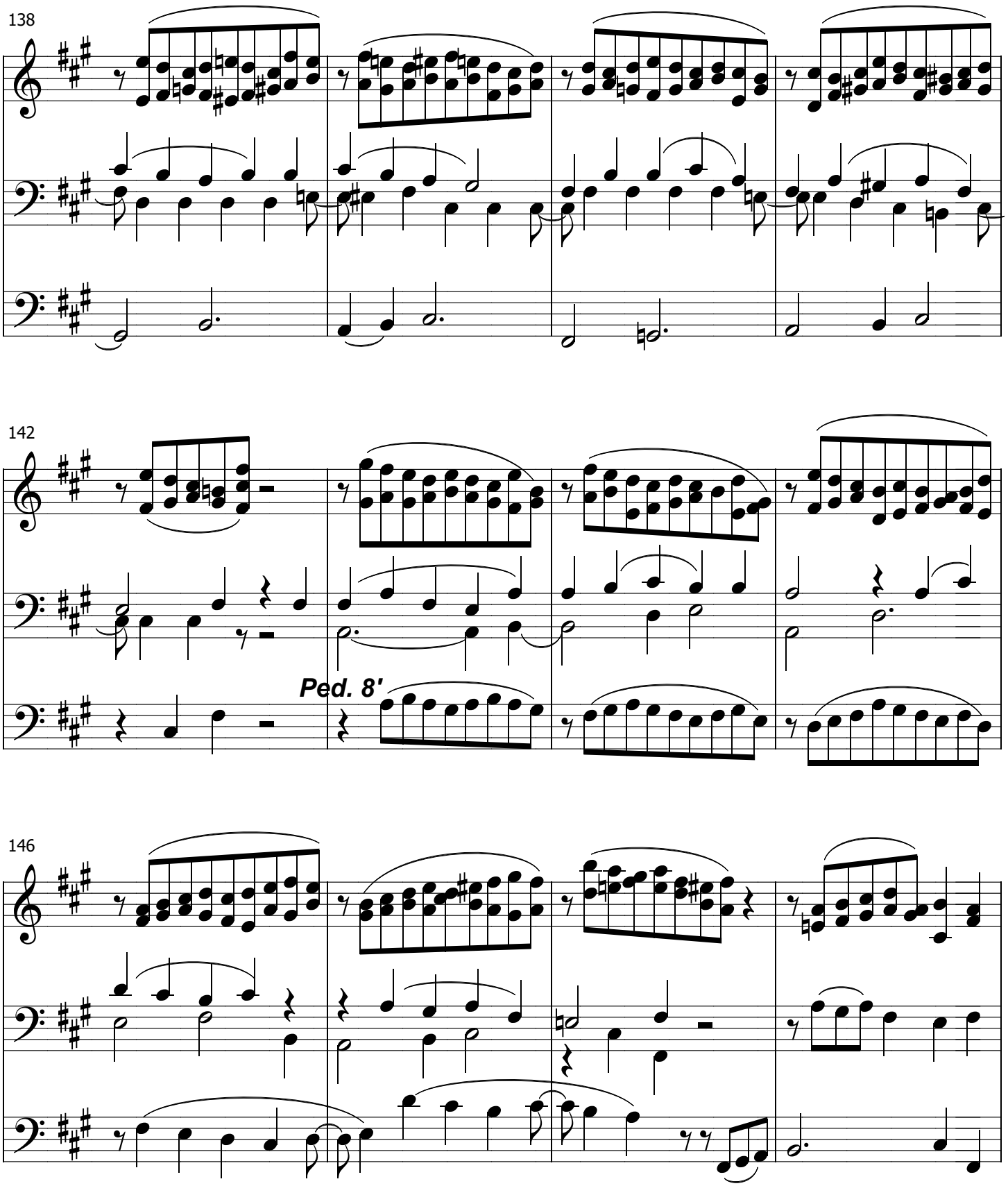


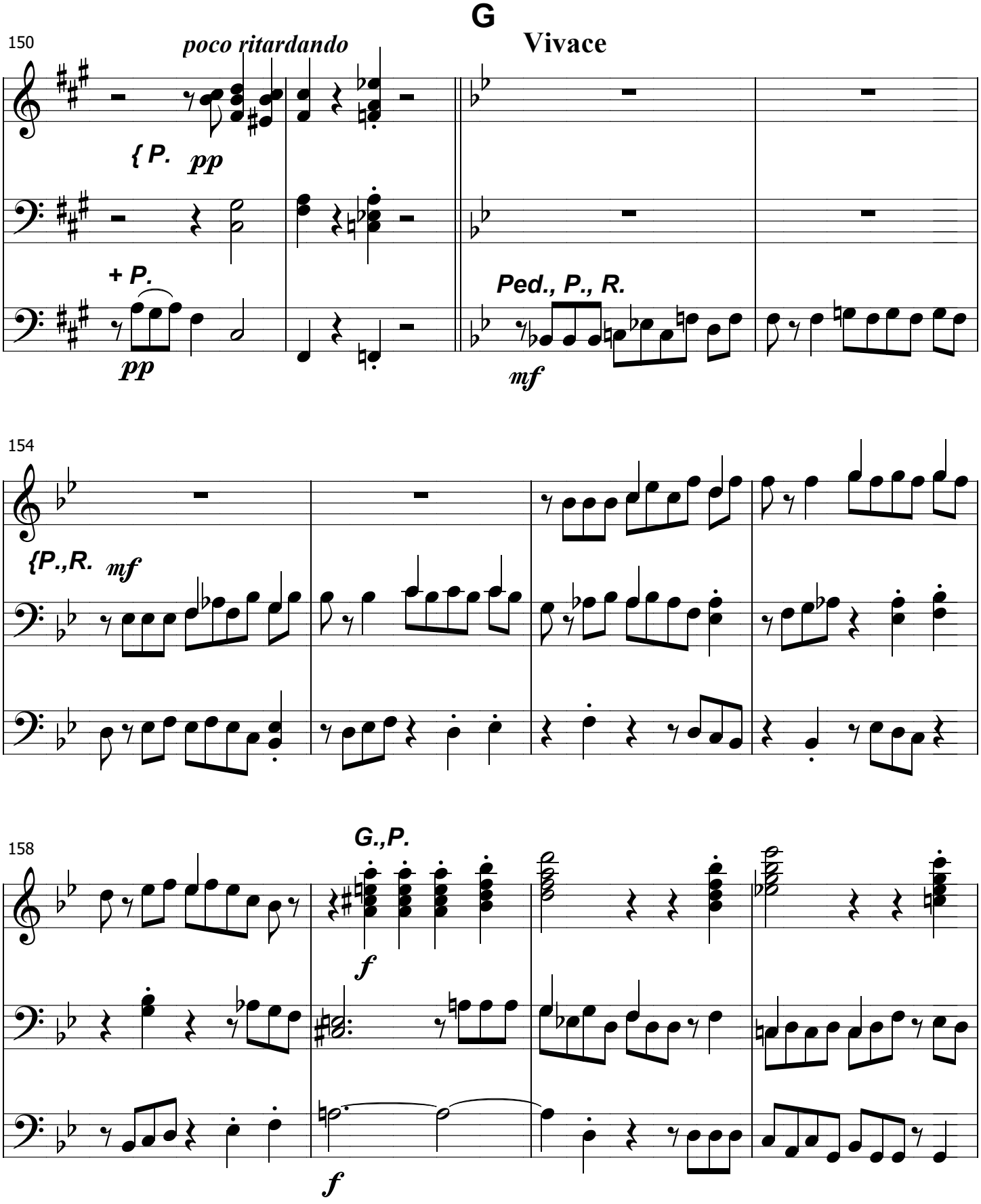
P. 8,4' - R. 8,4' / Voix Humaine - G. 16,8,4' - Ped. 16,8'

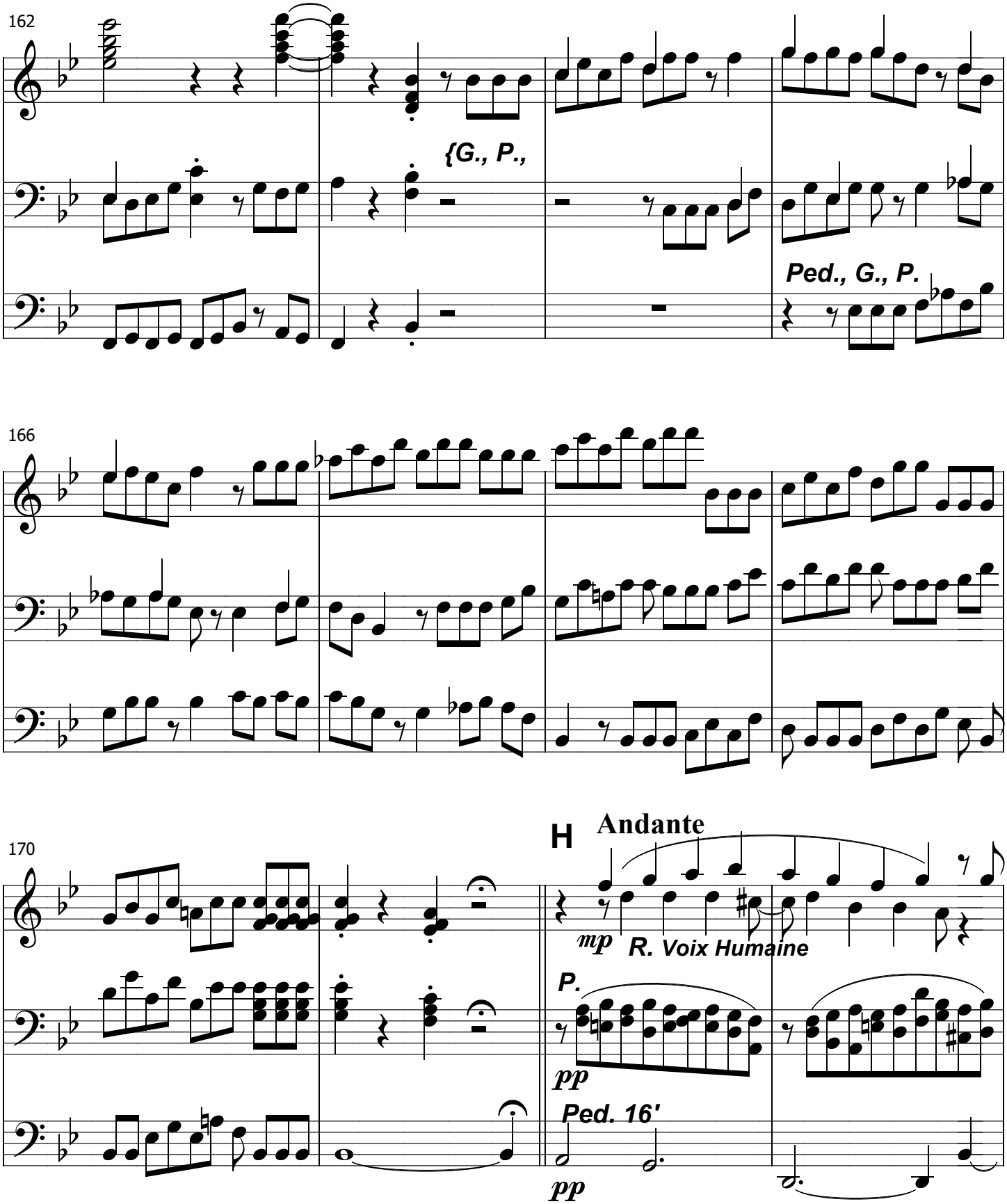


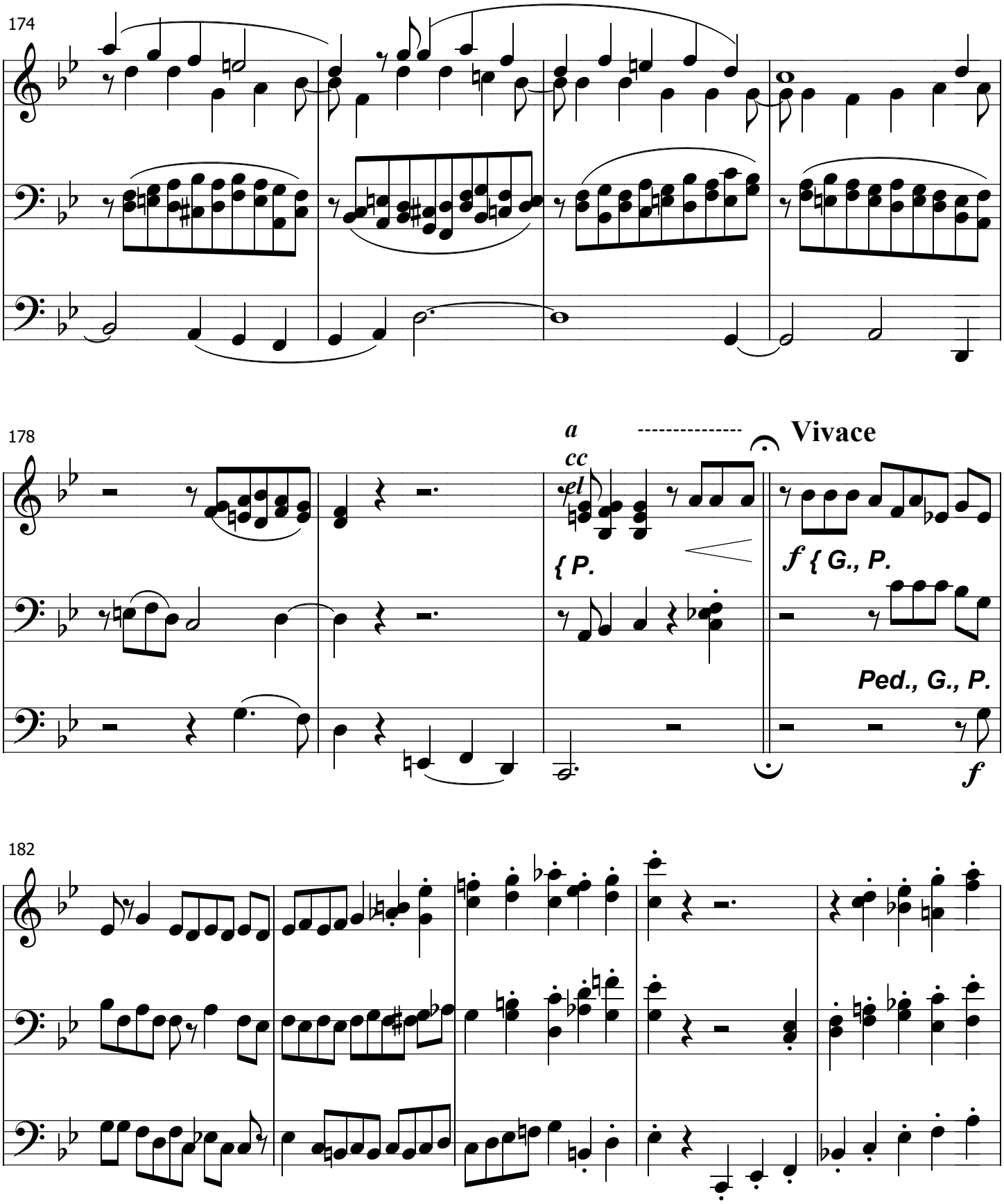

114
Ped., P.
p
118
122

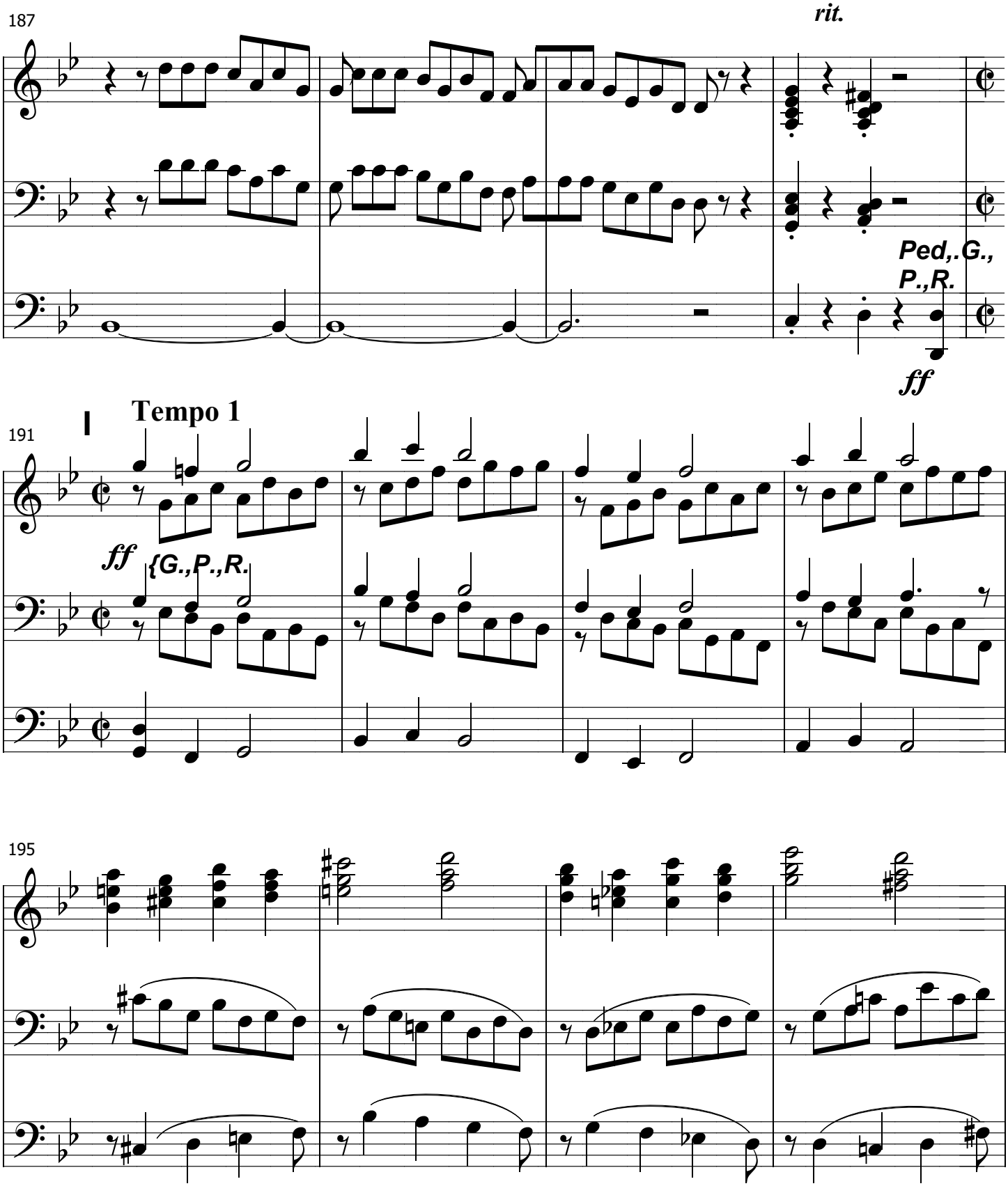

126
130
mf
{ P., R.
Ped.,P.,R.
mf
{G.,P. f
Ped.,G.,P.
f
135
poco ritardando
mf
{ P.
Ped. 16'
p
F Andante ed espressivo
P. 8'
pp
mp
R. Voix Humaine
pp

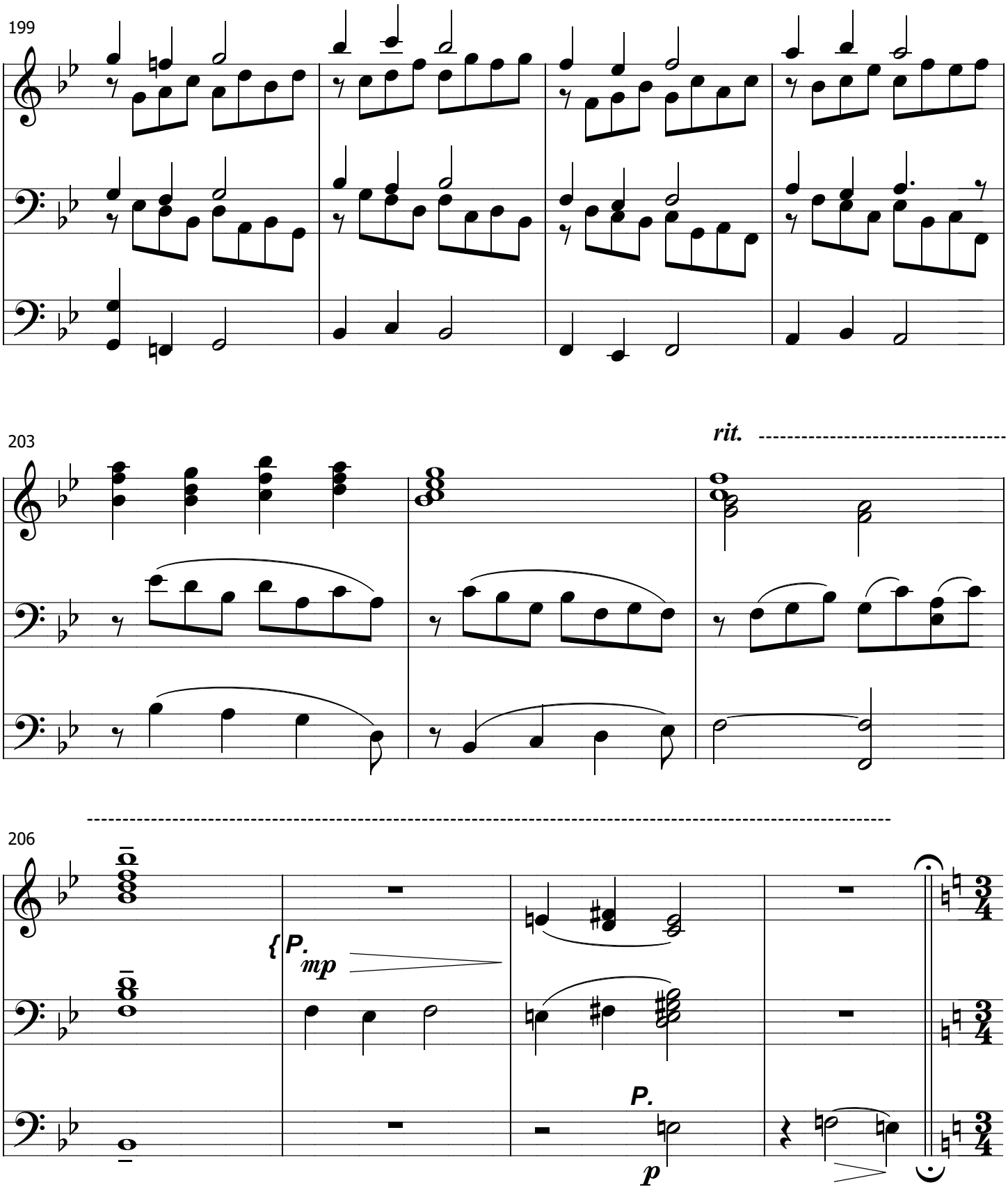

138
142
Ped. 8'
146


G
150
poco ritardando
Vivace
{ P.
pp
+ P.
pp
Ped., P., R.
mf
154
{P.,R.
mf
158
G.,P.
f
f


162
{G., P.,
Ped., G., P.
166
170
H
Andante
mp
R. Voix Humaine
P.
pp
Ped. 16'
pp


174
178
a
cc
el
{ P.
Vivace
f { G., P.
Ped., G., P.
f
182


187
rit.
Ped,.G.,
P.,R.
ff
191
Tempo 1
ff
{G.,P.,R.
195


199
203
rit.
206
P.
mp
P.
p

P. 8,4' - R. 8,4' / Gemshorn - G. 16,8,4' - Ped. 16,8'

J

III. Molto adagio

210

{P. Flute 8'

pp

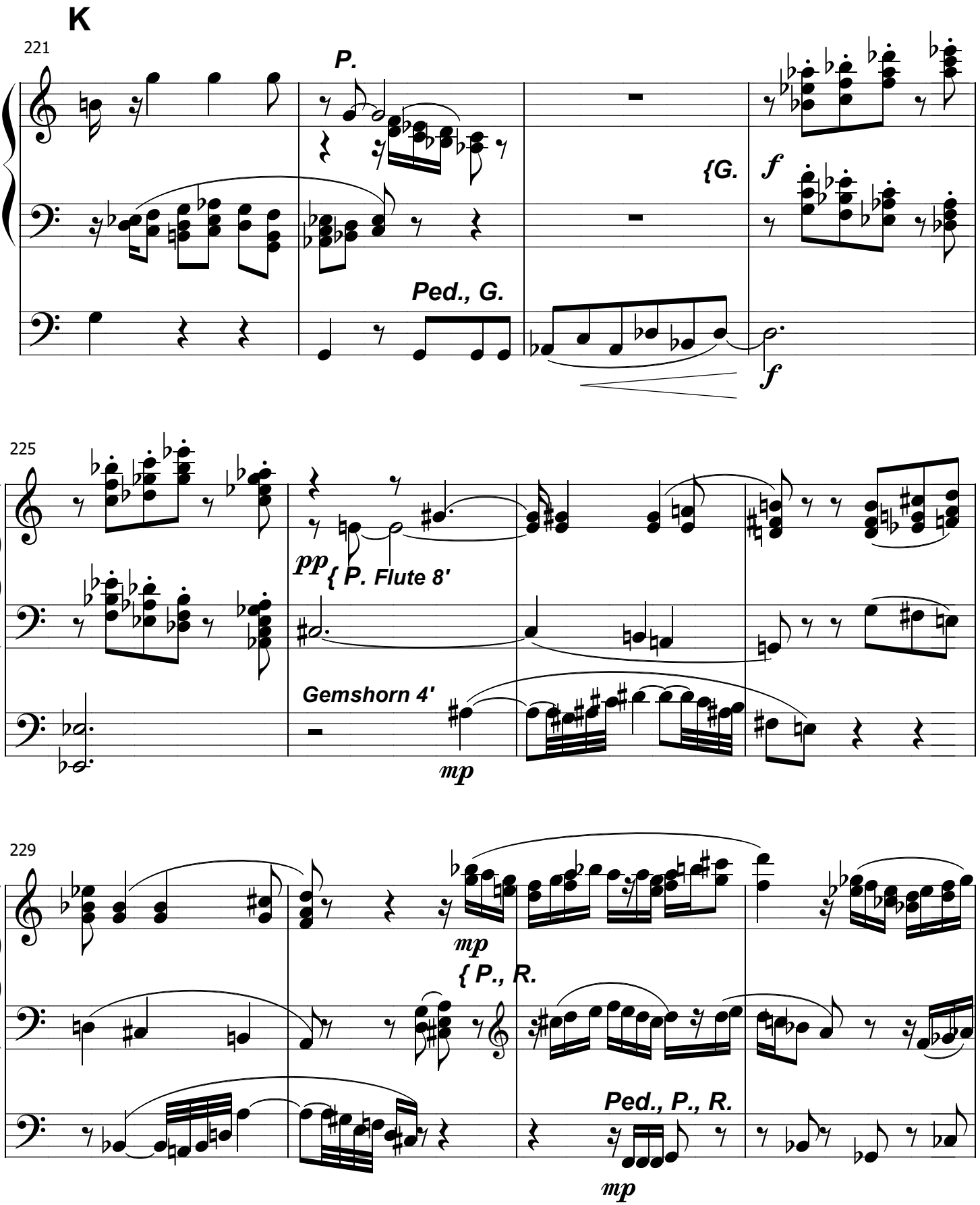
Ped. 16'

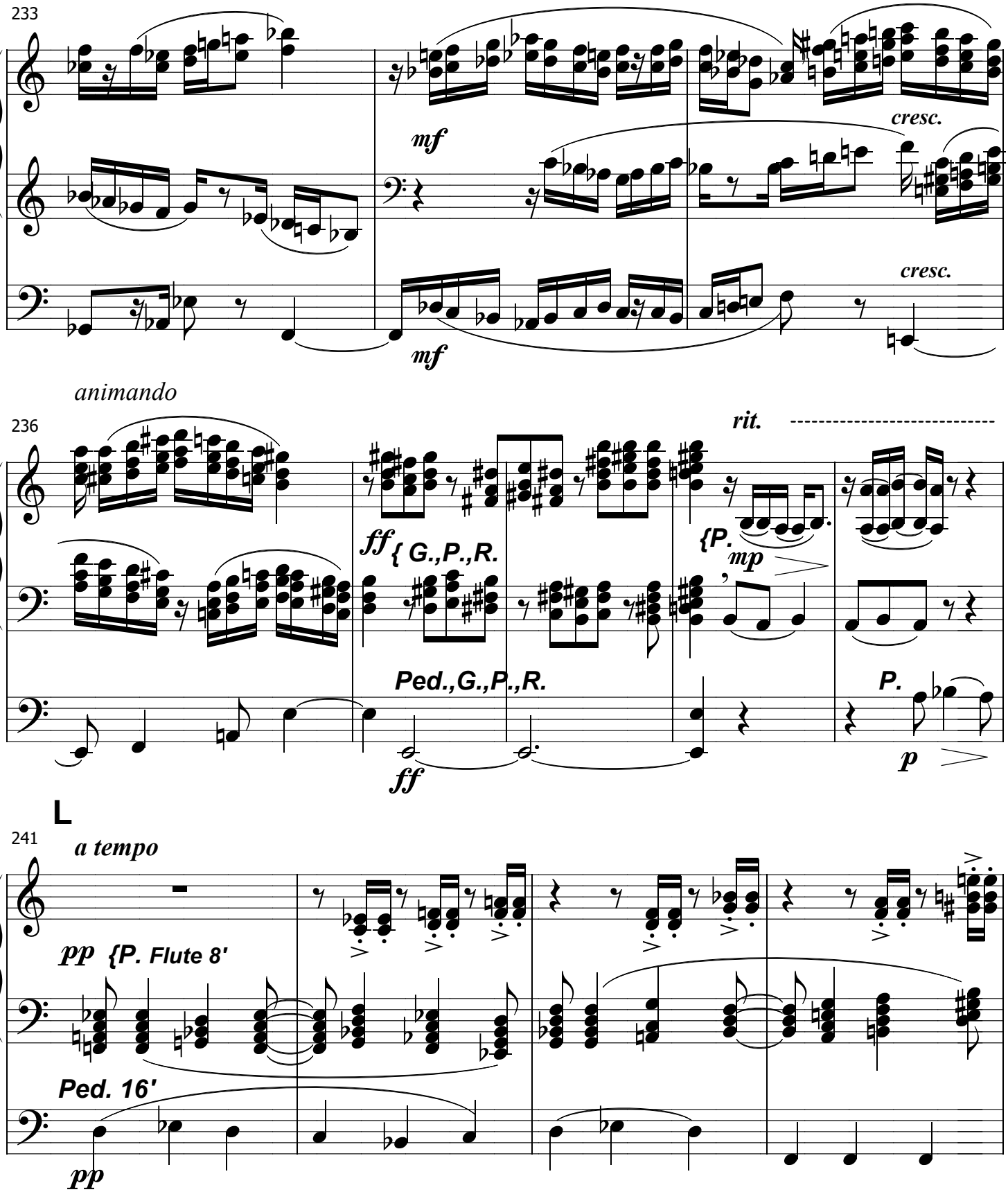
pp

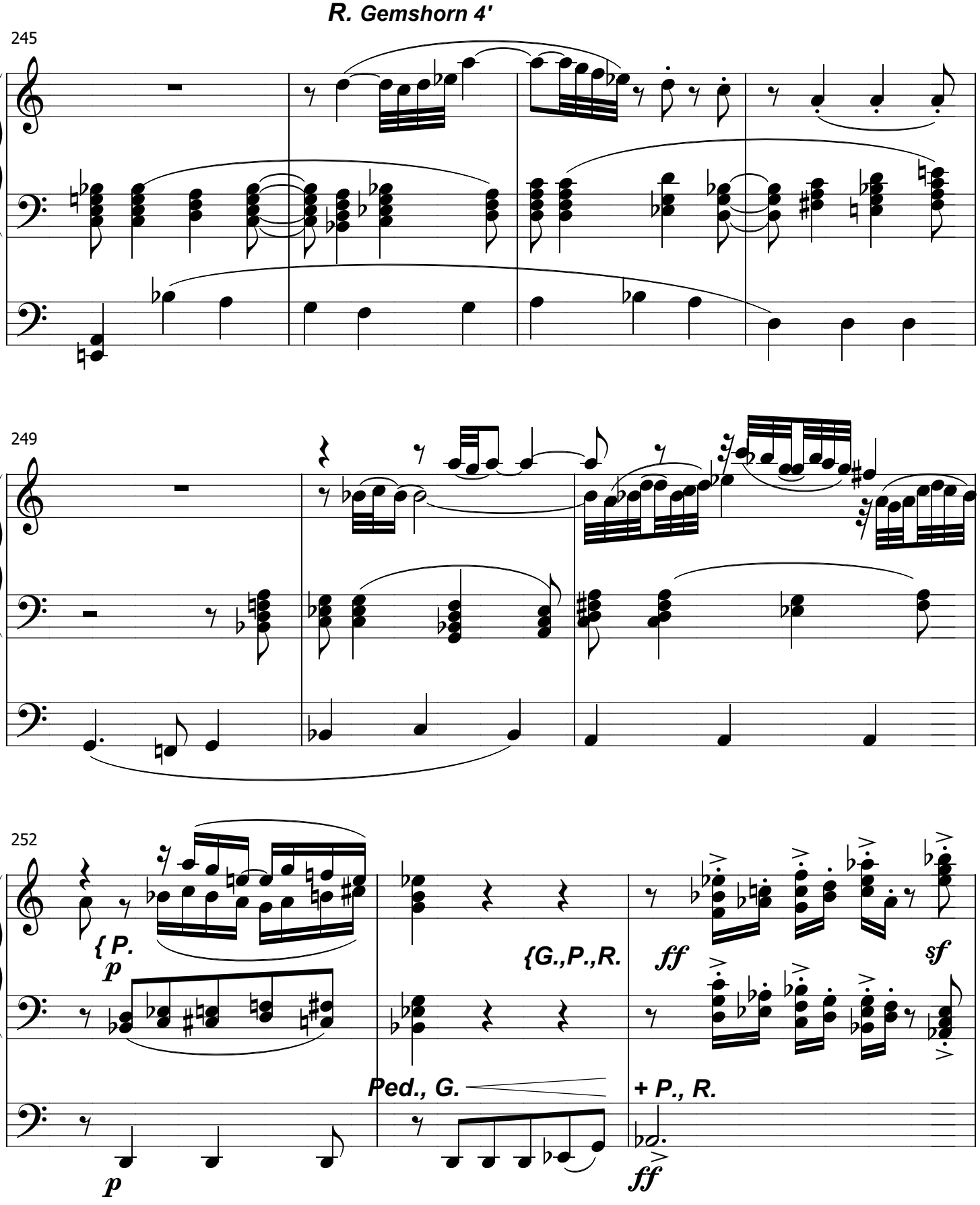
R. Gemshorn 4'

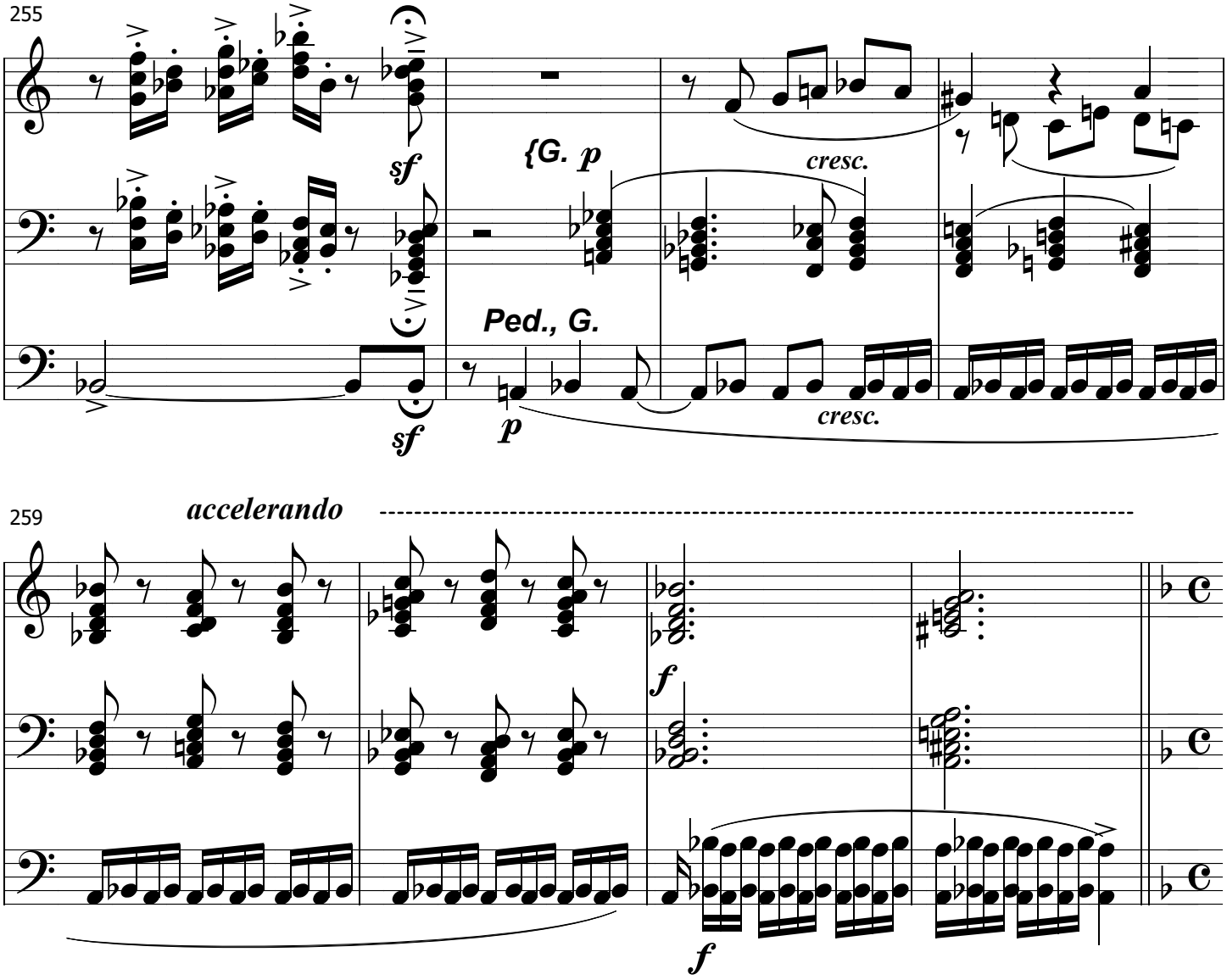
214

218


K
221
P.
{G.
f
Ped., G.
f
225
pp
{ P. Flute 8'
Gemshorn 4'
mp
229
mp
{ P., R.
Ped., P., R.
mp


233
mf
cresc.
mf
cresc.
animando
236
rit.
ff
{ G.,P.,R.
{P.
mp
Ped.,G.,P.,R.
P.
ff
p
L
241
a tempo
pp
{P. Flute 8'
Ped. 16'
pp


R. Gemshorn 4'
245
249
252
{ P.
p
{G.,P.,R.
ff
sf
Ped., G.
+ P., R.
p
ff


255
sf
{G. p
cresc.
Ped., G.
sf
p
cresc.
259
accelerando
f
f

P. 8,4' - R. 8,4' - G. 16,8,4' - Ped. 16,8'

M **IV. Tempo 1**

263

poco rit.

ff

{G.,P.,R.

Ped.,G.,P.R.

ff

268

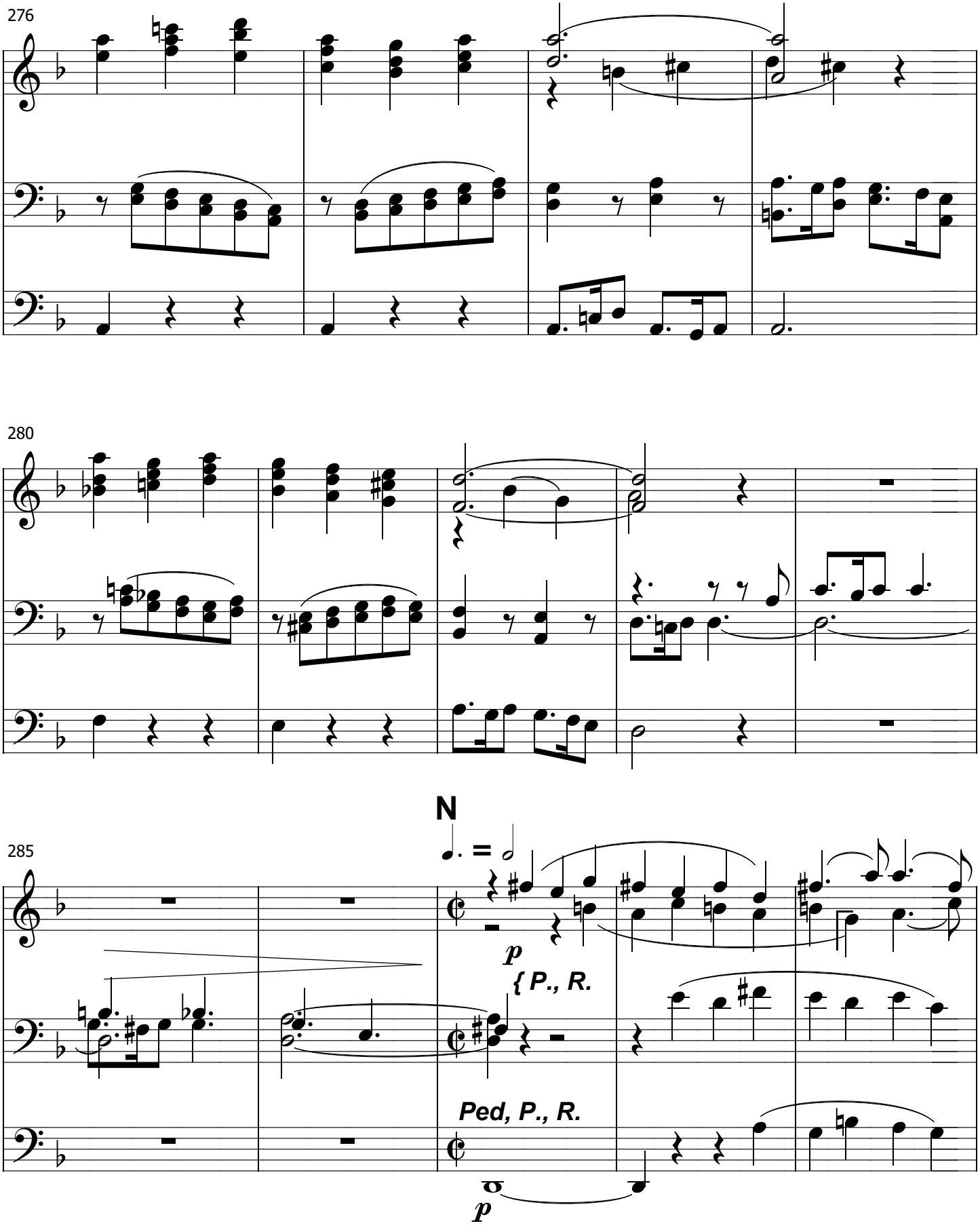
Allegro non troppo

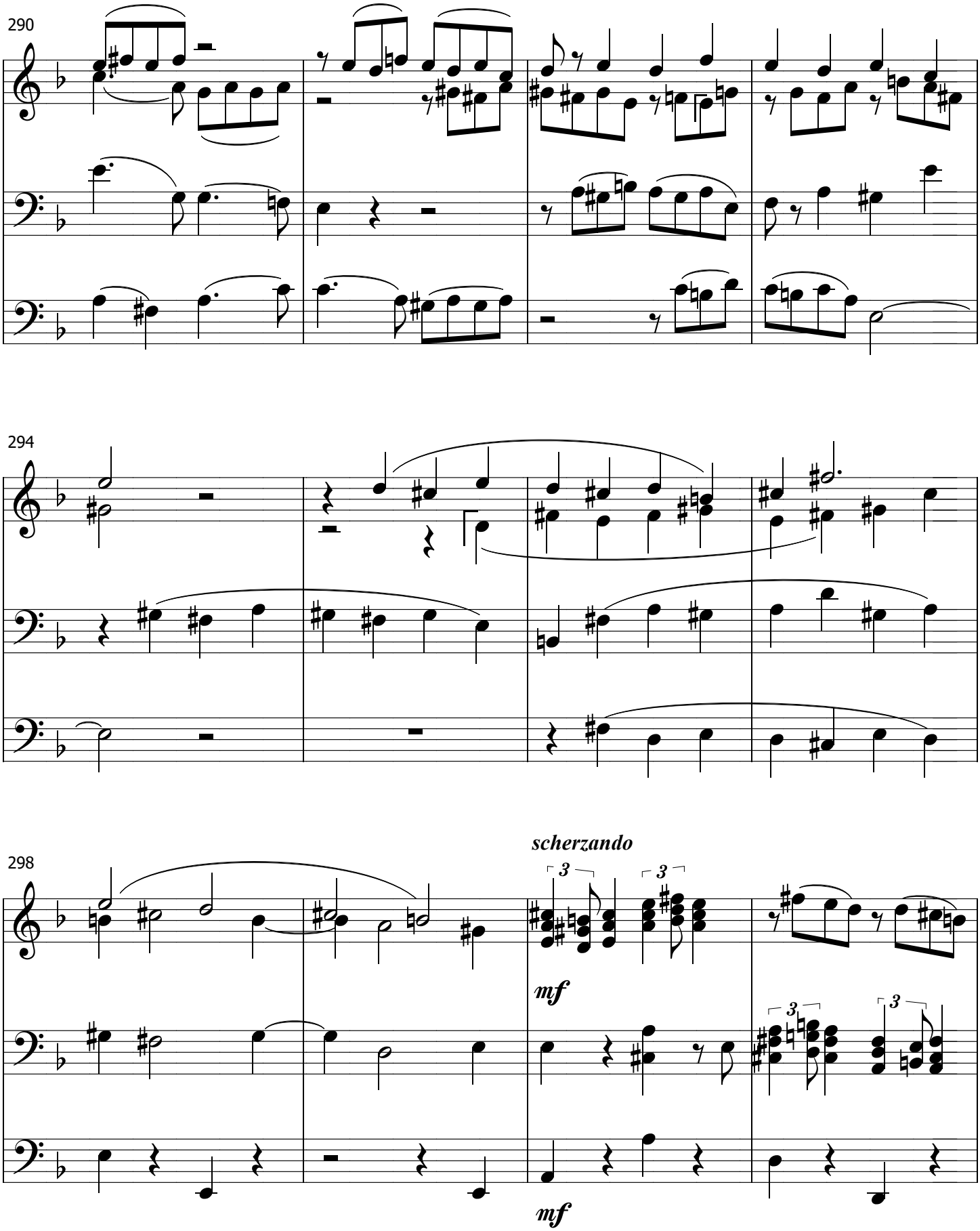
{ G. *f*

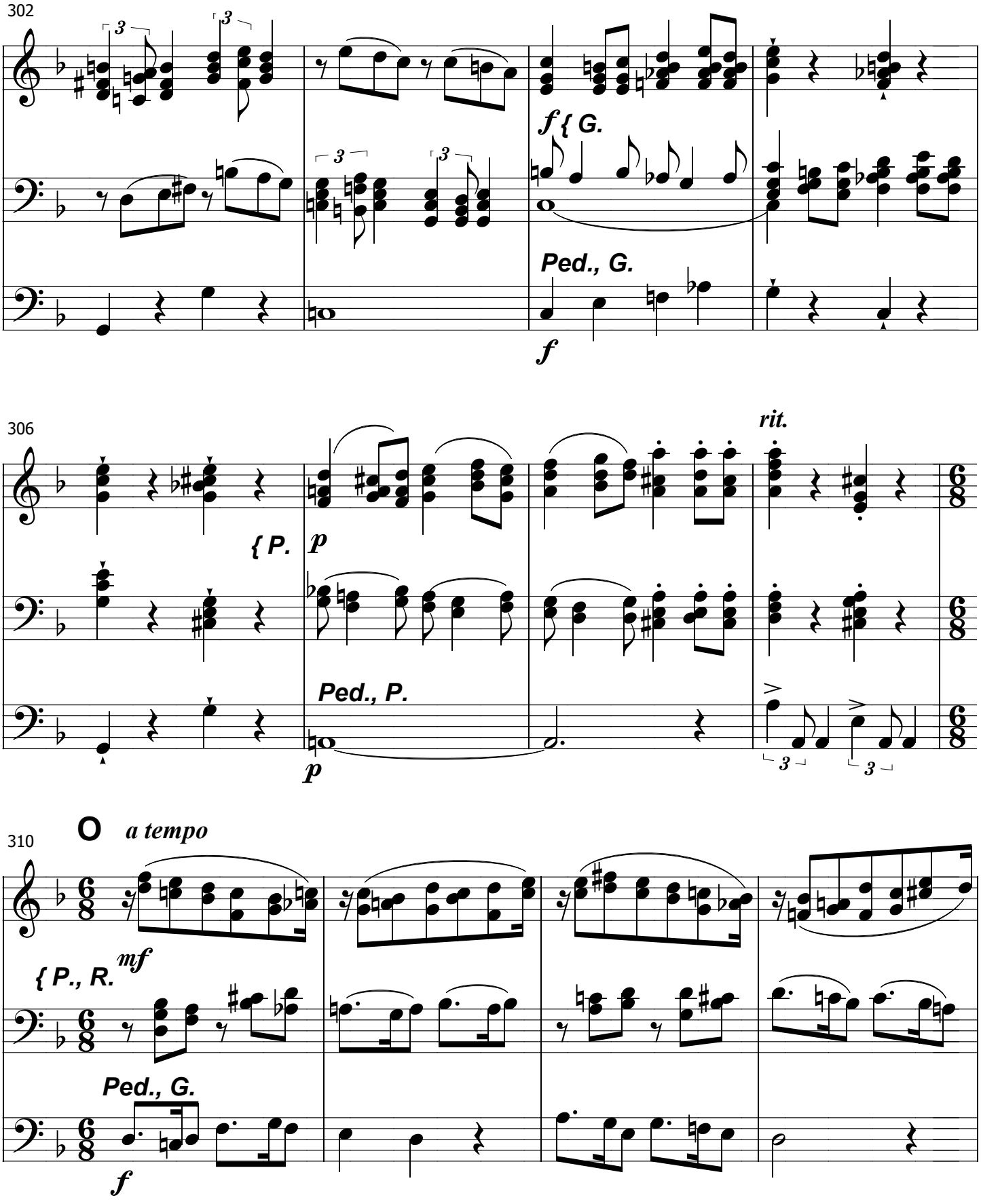
Ped., G.

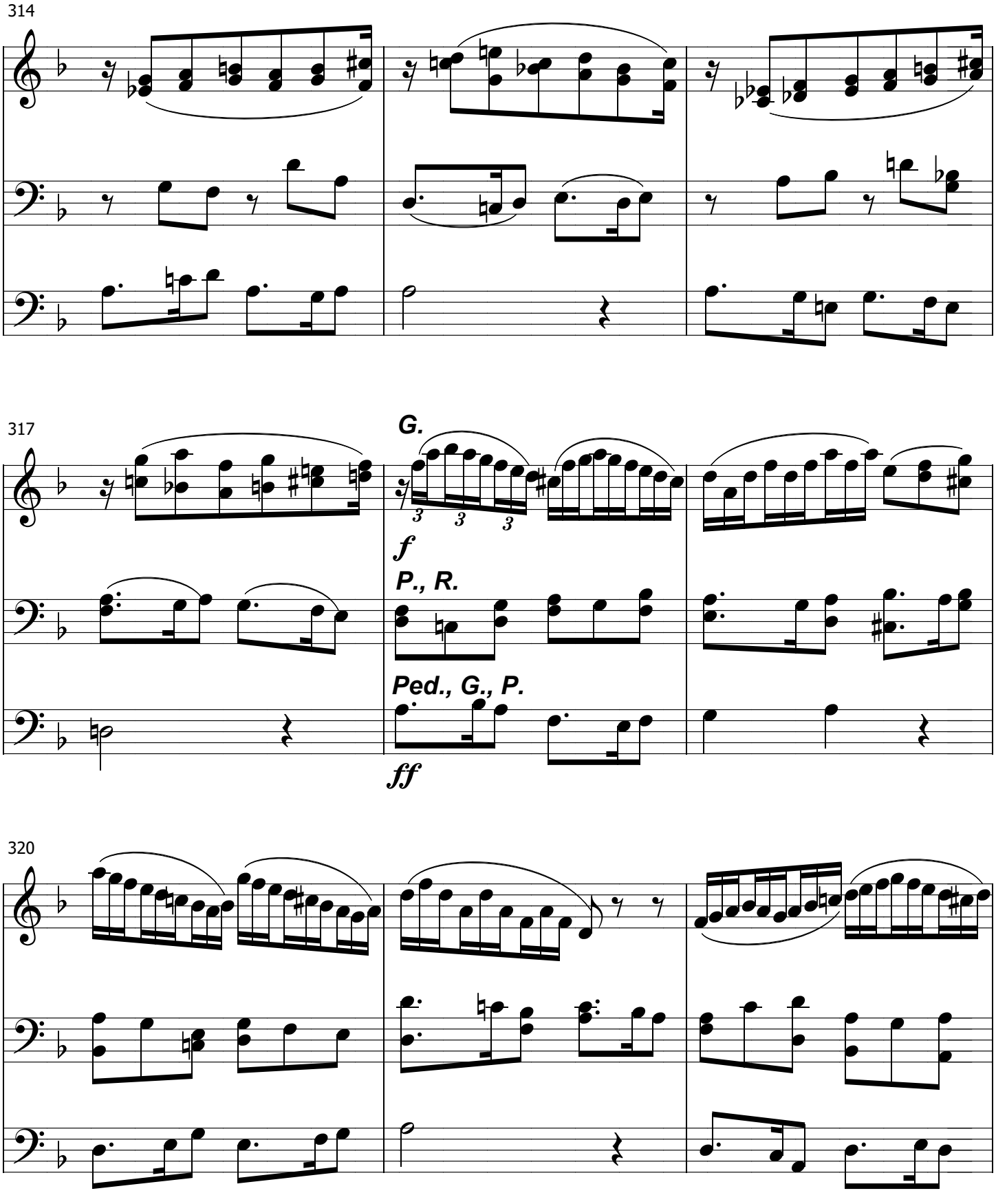
f

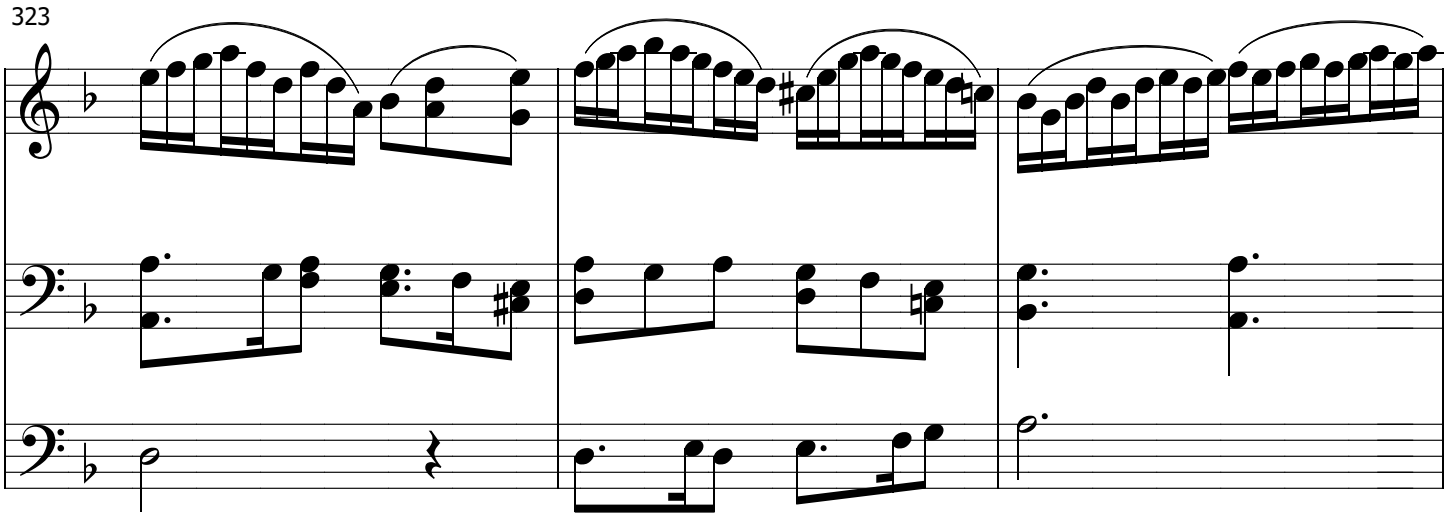
272

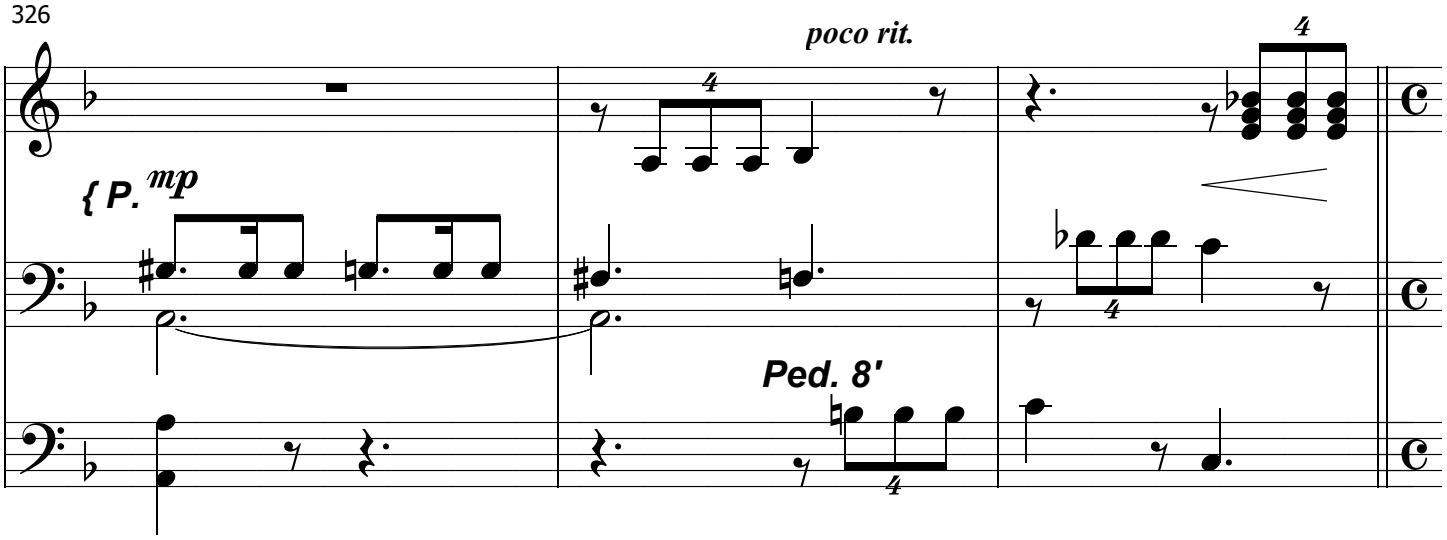

276
280
N
285
p
{ P., R.
Ped, P., R.
p

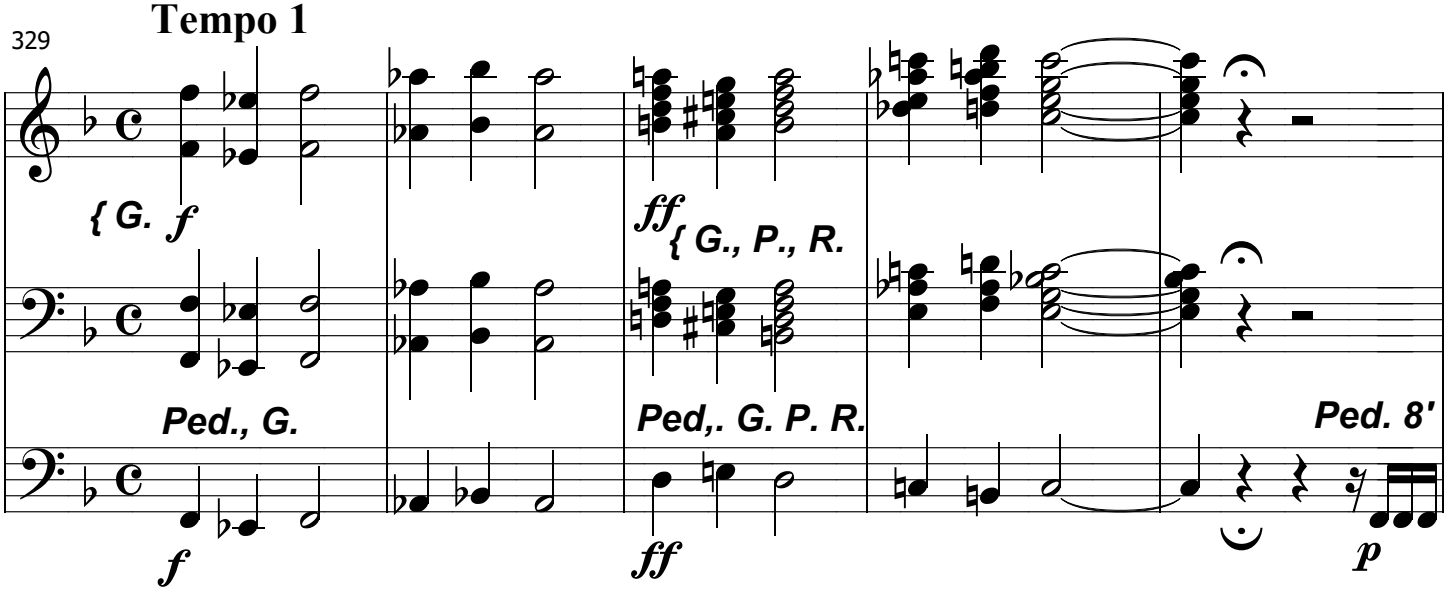

290
294
298
scherzando
3
3
mf
3
3
mf

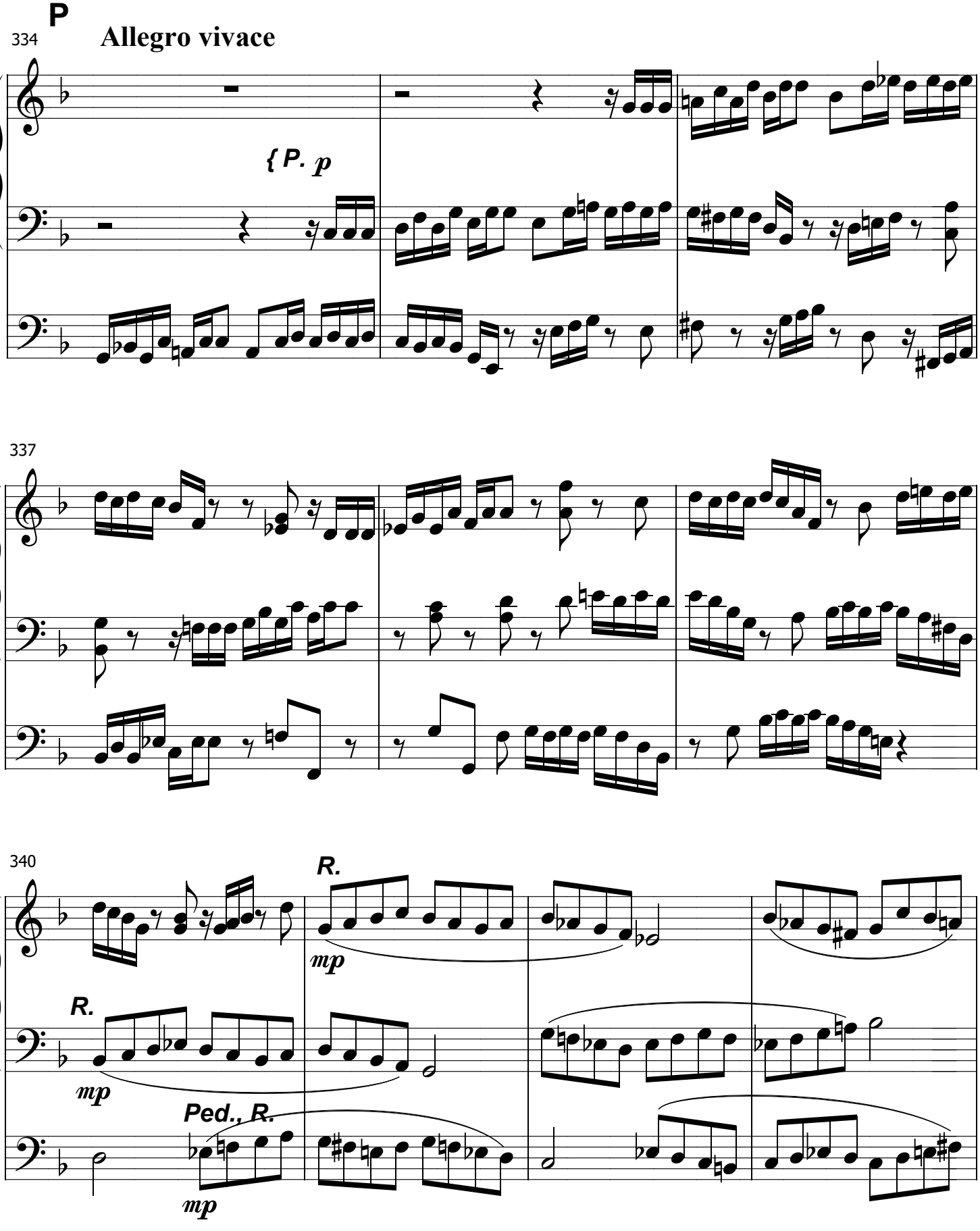

302
3
3
f { G.
3
3
Ped., G.
f
306
rit.
{ P.
p
Ped., P.
p
3
3
310
O
a tempo
{ P., R.
mf
Ped., G.
f

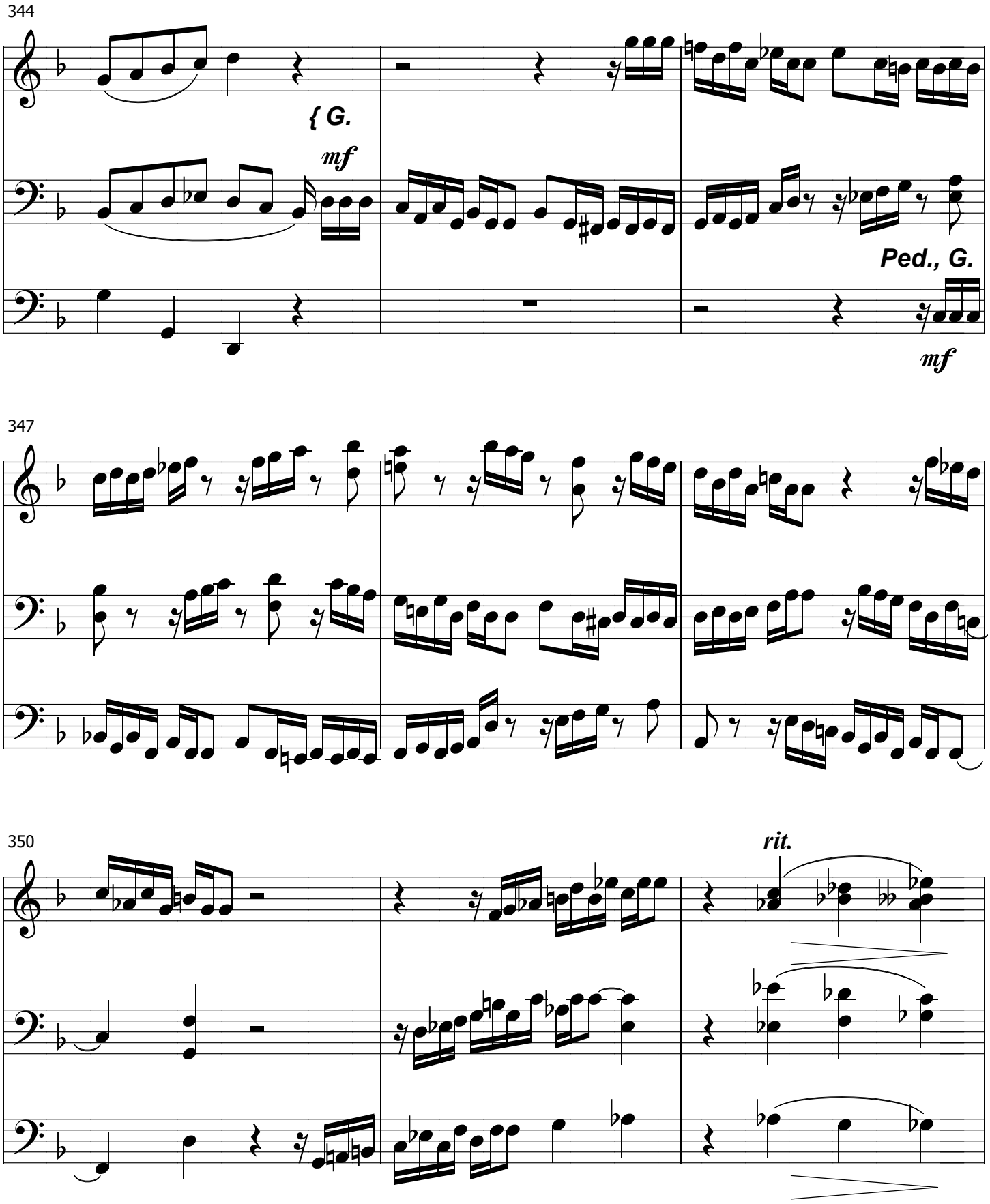

314
317
G.
f
P., R.
Ped., G., P.
ff
320

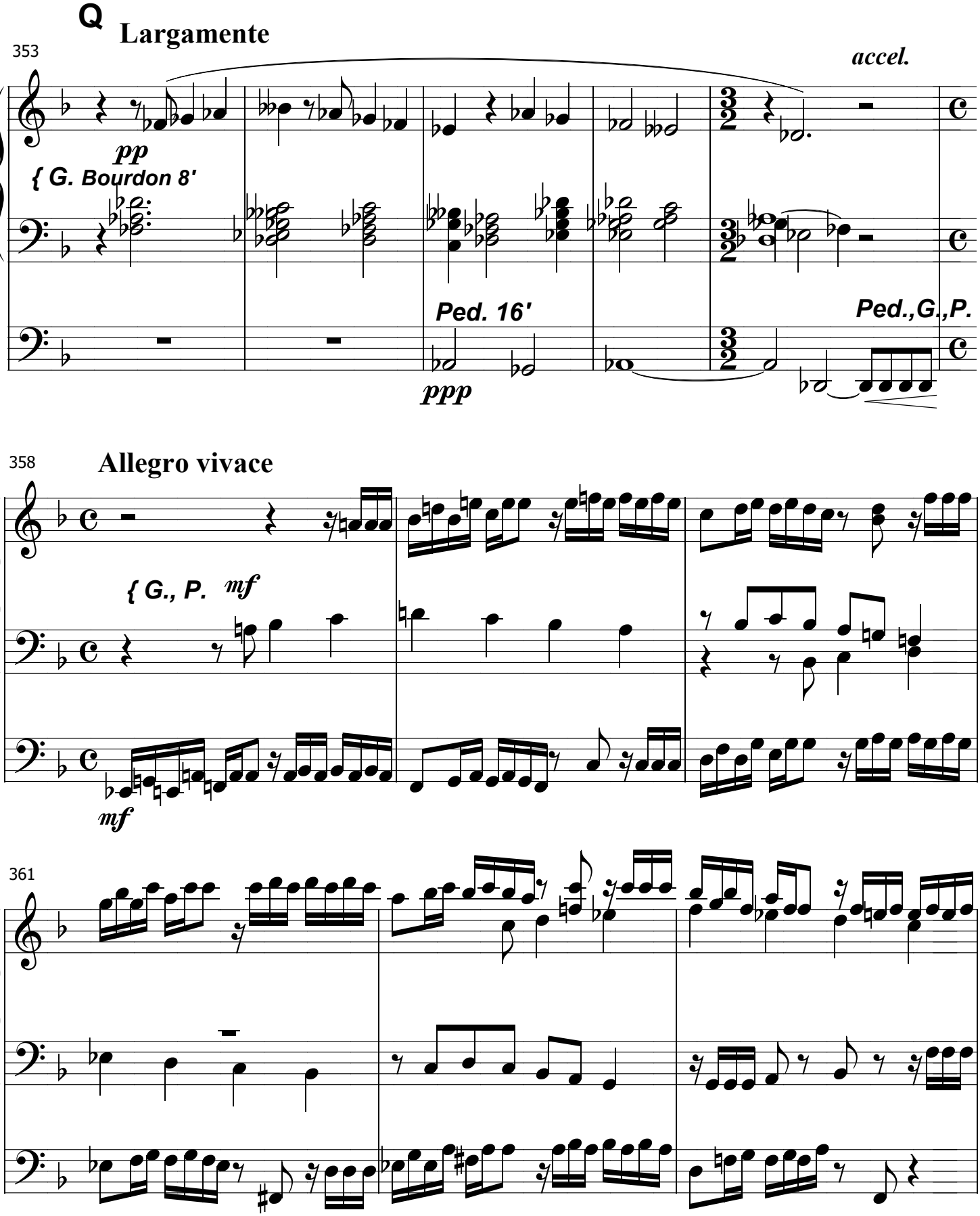

323

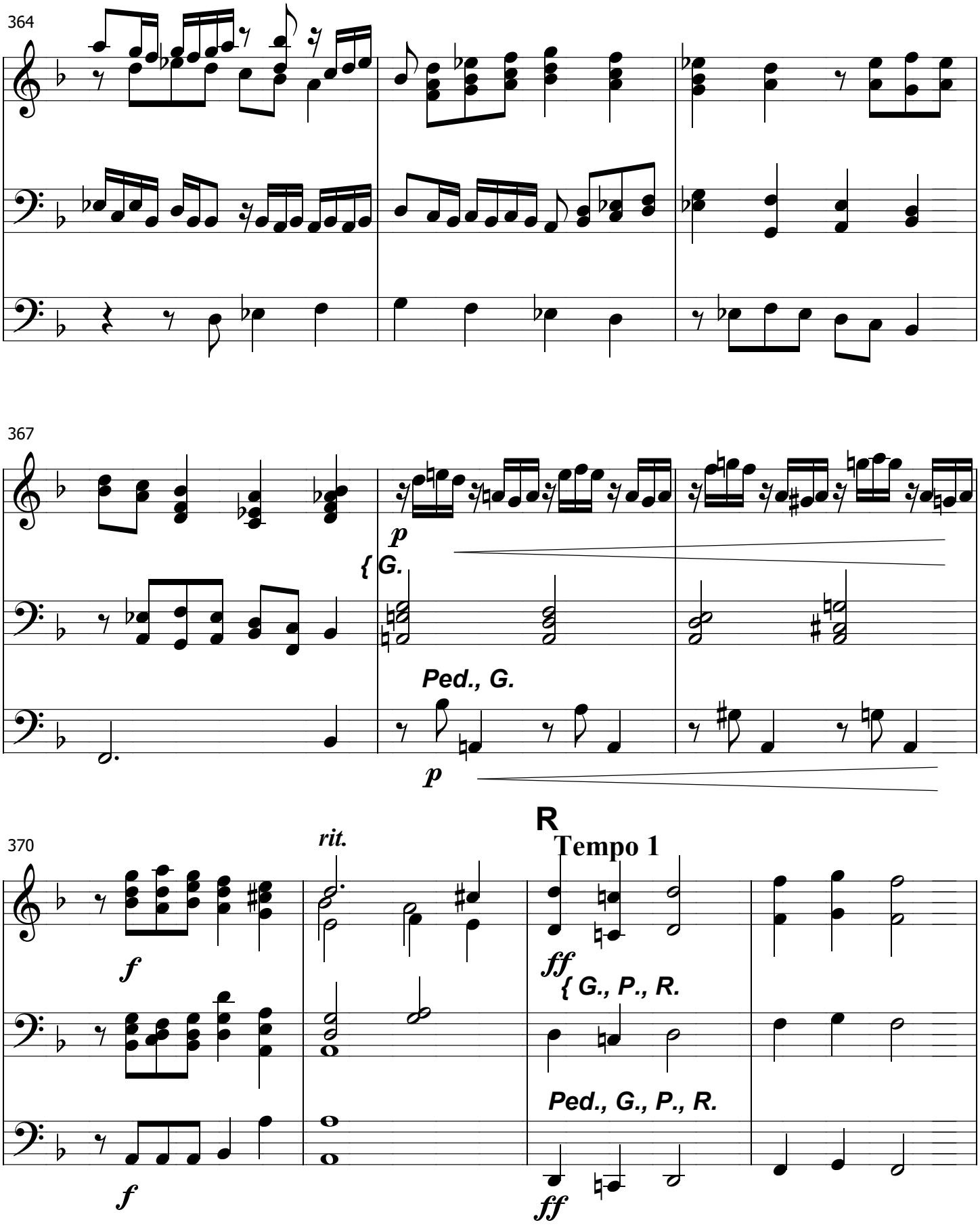

326
poco rit.
{ P.
mp
Ped. 8'

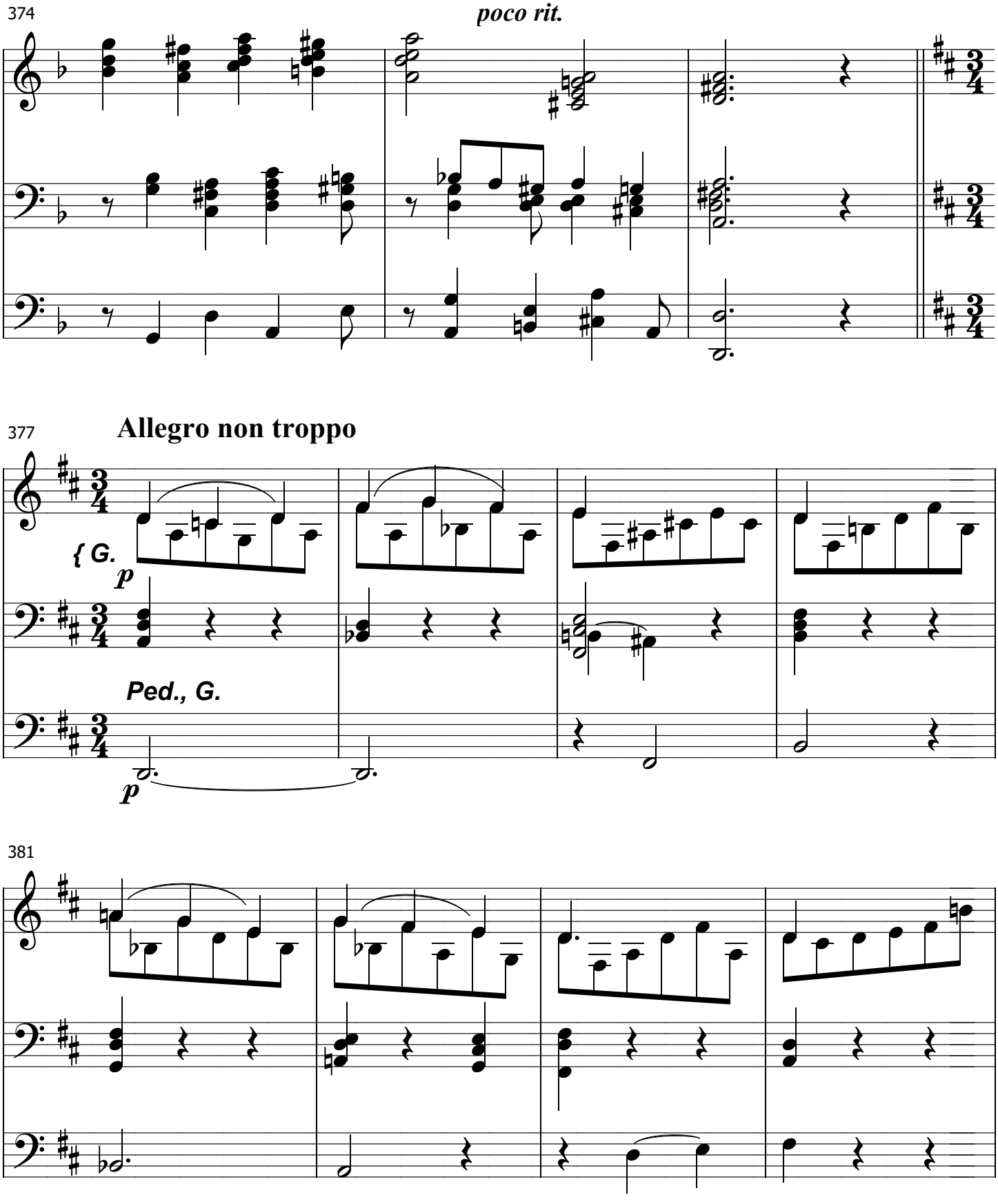

Tempo 1
329
{ G.
f
ff
{ G., P., R.
Ped., G.
Ped,. G. P. R.
Ped. 8'
f
ff
p

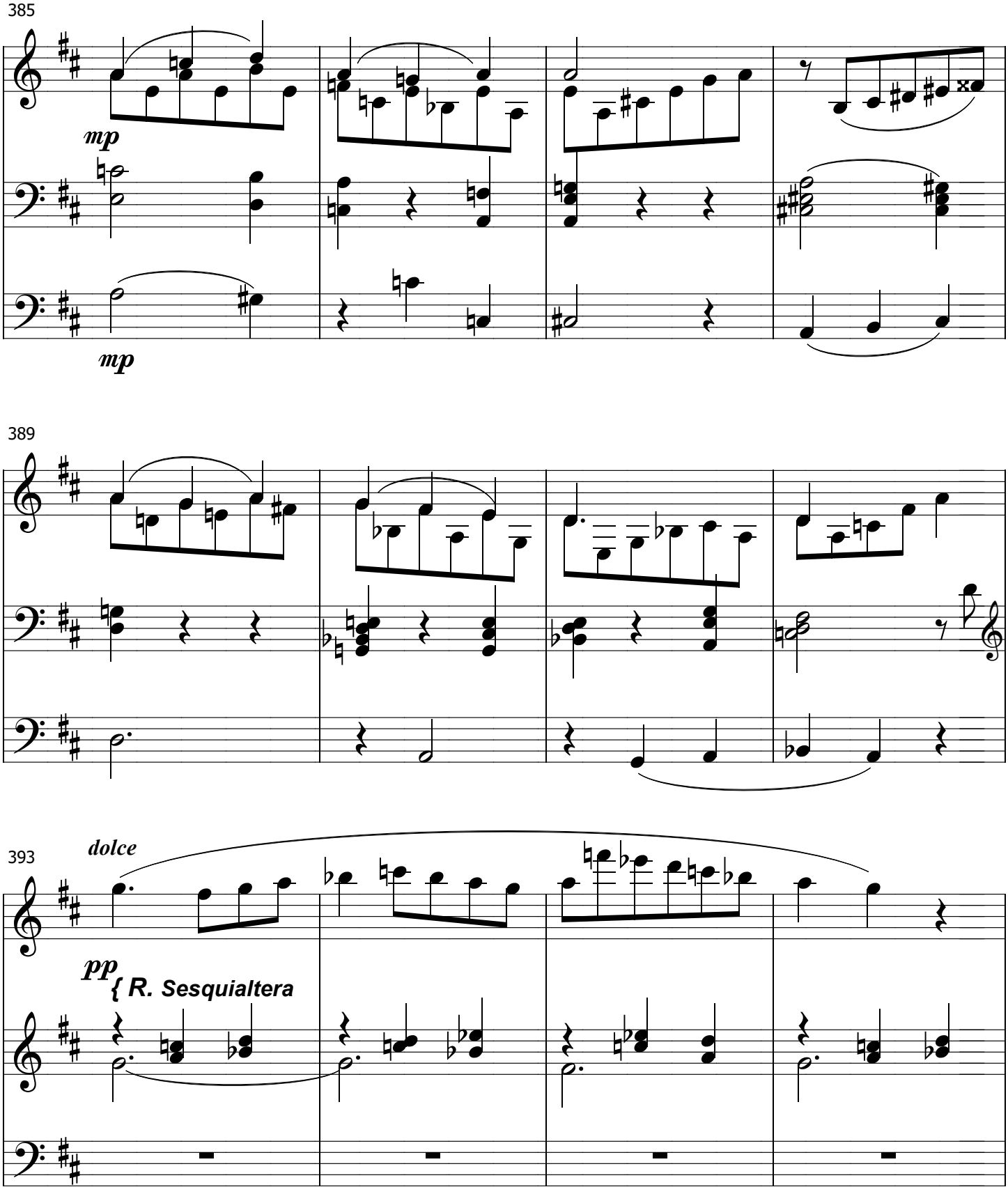

P
Allegro vivace
334
{ P. p
337
340
R.
mp
R.
mp
Ped., R.
mp

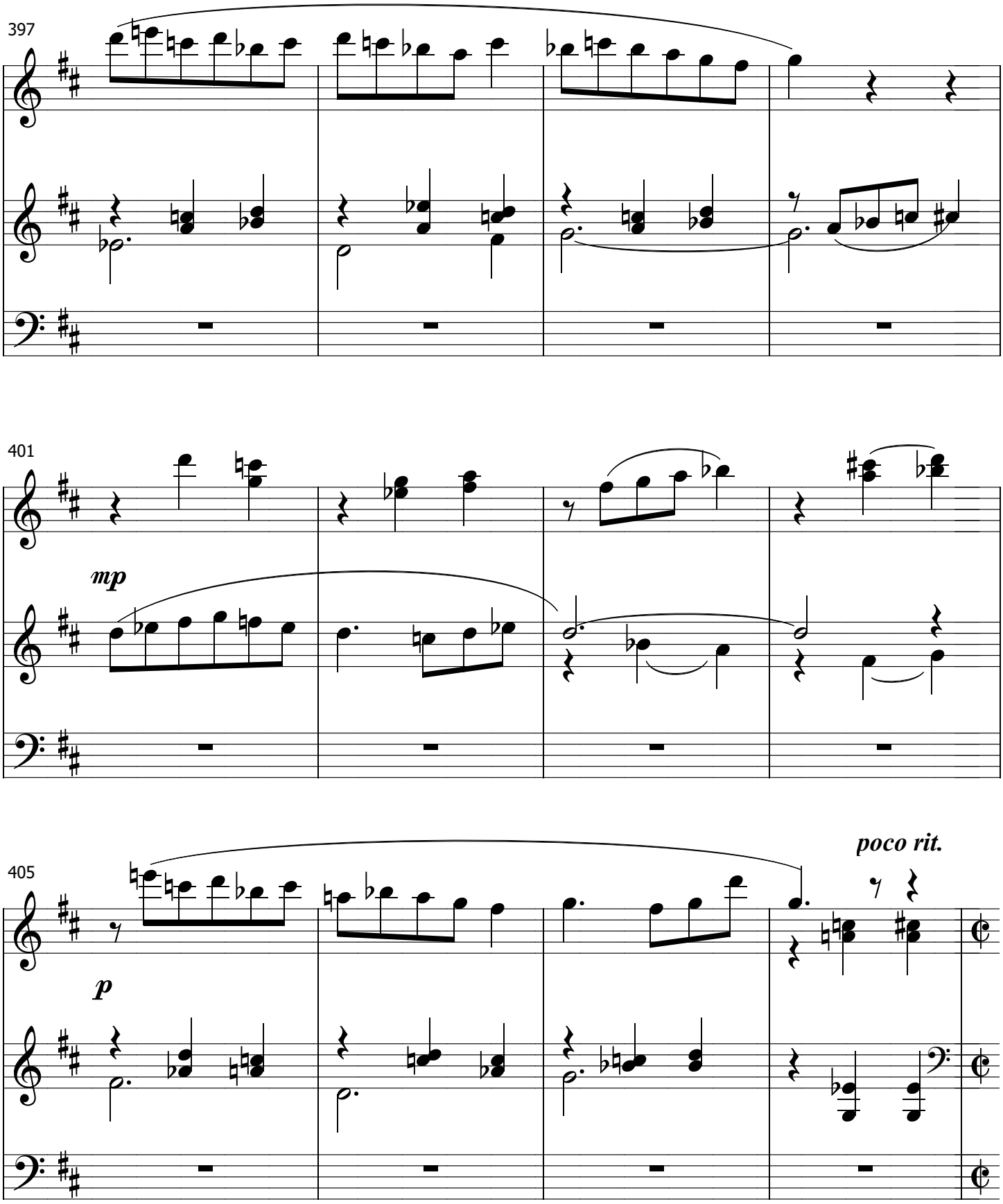

344
{ G.
mf
Ped., G.
mf
347
350
rit.

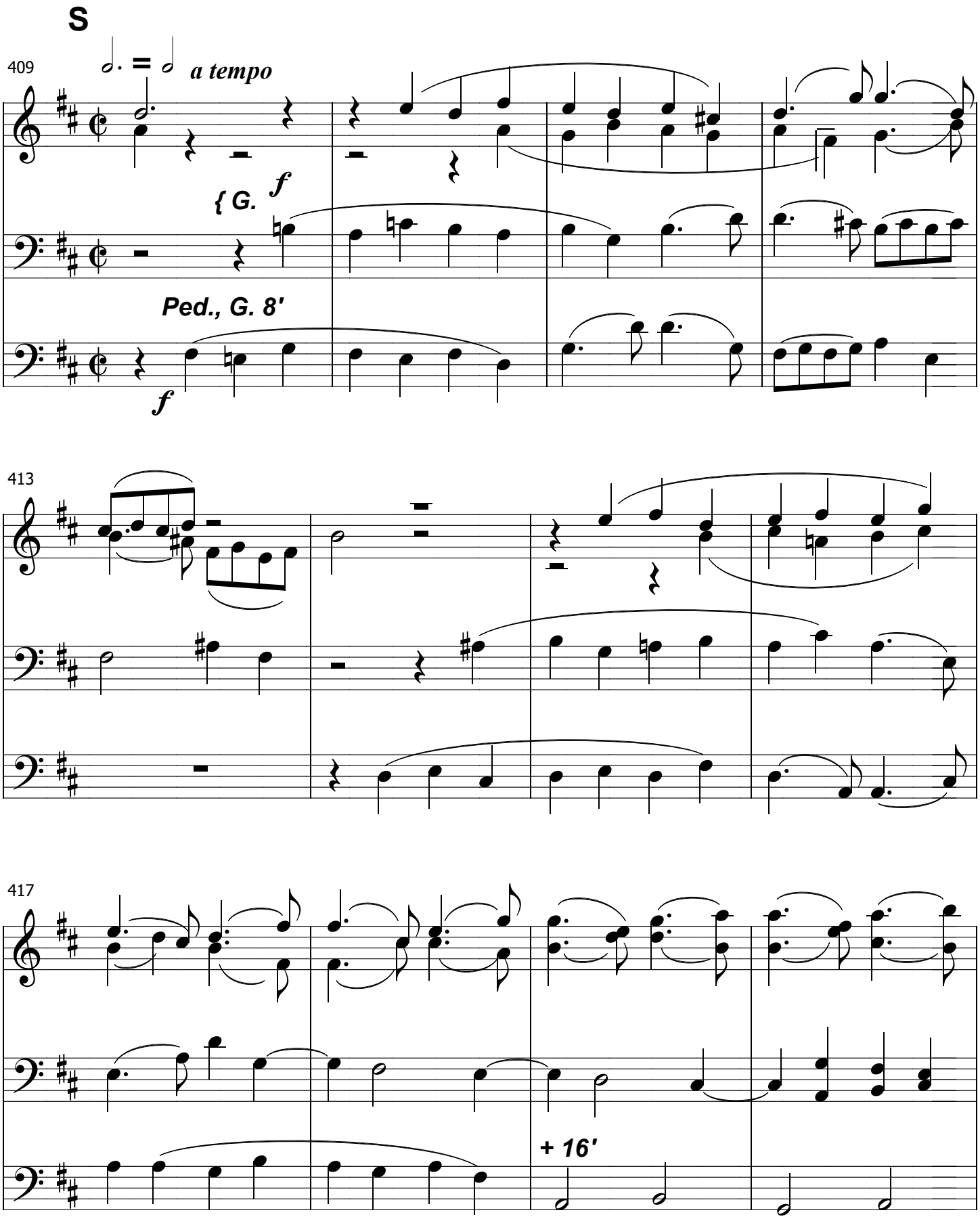

Q
Largamente
353
accel.
pp
{ G. Bourdon 8'
Ped. 16'
ppp
Ped.,G.,P.
358
Allegro vivace
{ G., P.
mf
mf
361

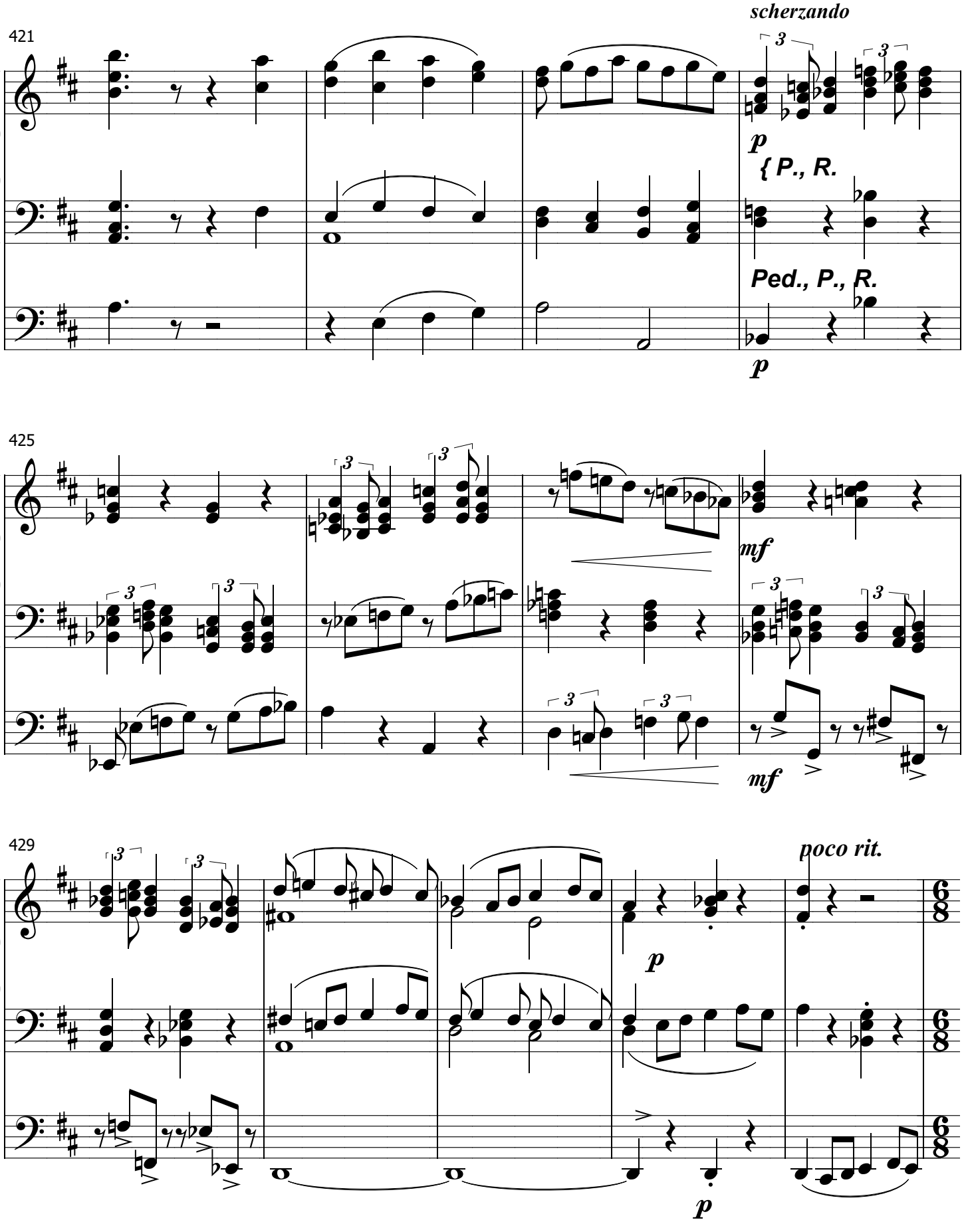

364
367
p
{ G.
Ped., G.
p
370
rit.
R
Tempo 1
f
ff
{ G., P., R.
Ped., G., P., R.
f
ff


374
poco rit.
377
Allegro non troppo
{ G.
p
Ped., G.
p
381


385
mp
mp
389
393
dolce
pp
{ R. Sesquialtera


397
401
mp
405
poco rit.
p


S
409
a tempo
f
{ G.
Ped., G. 8'
f
413
417
+ 16'


scherzando
421
p
{ P., R.
Ped., P., R.
p
425
mf
mf
429
poco rit.
p
p

T

Lento

434

pp

{ R. Voix Celeste

438

Ped. 8'

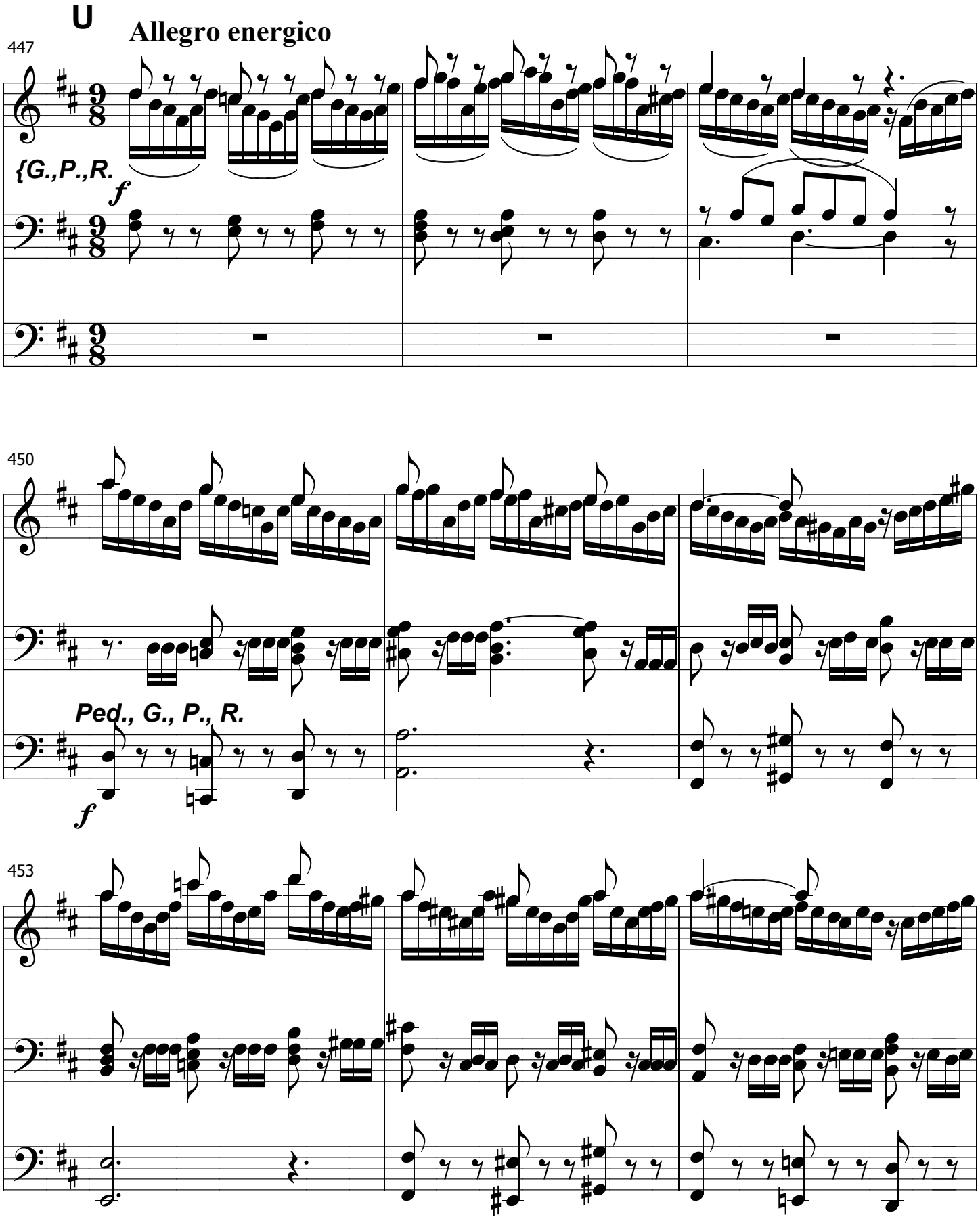
pp

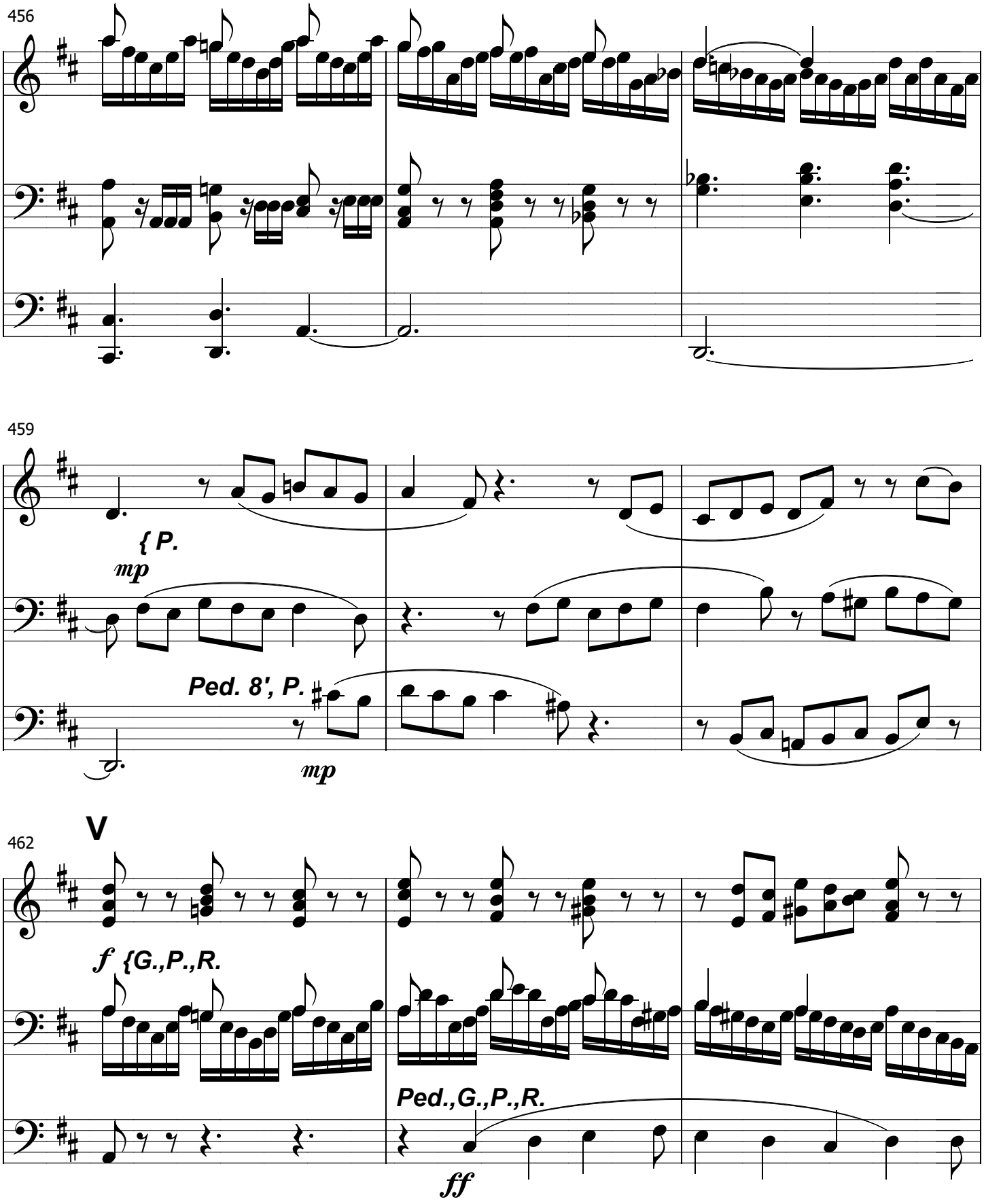
442

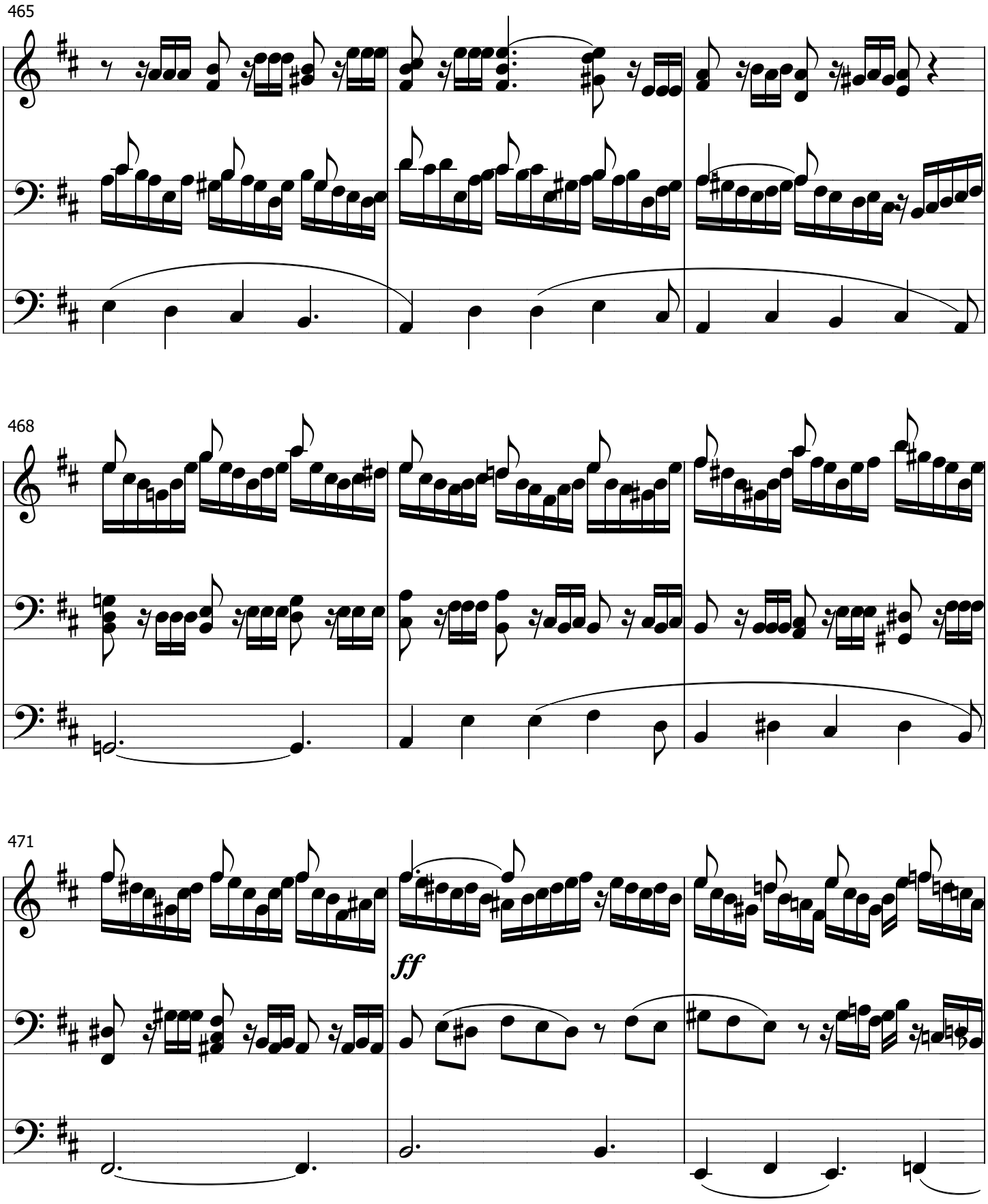
{ G. mf

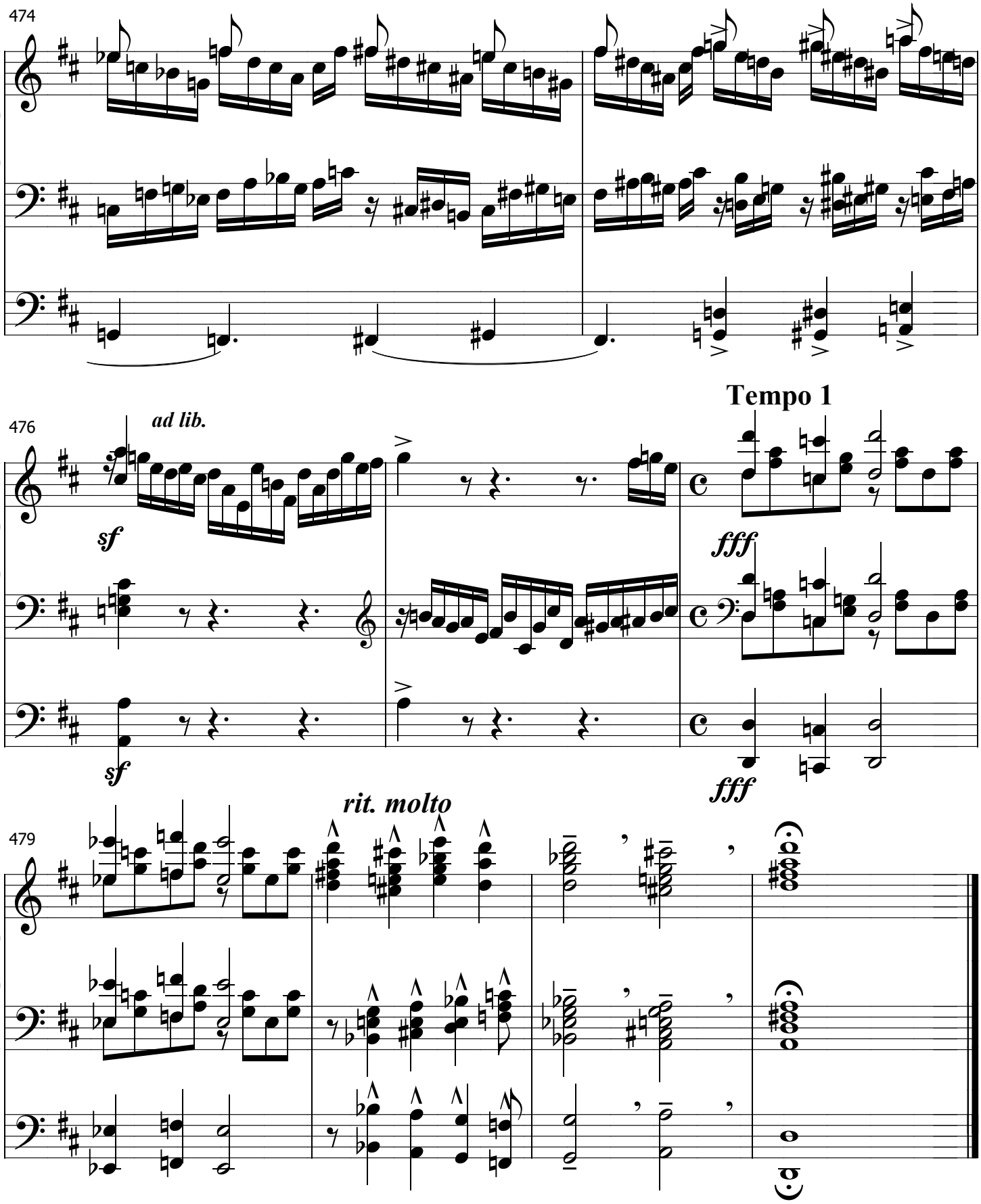
Ped., G.

mf


U
Allegro energico
447
{G.,P.,R.
f
450
Ped., G., P., R.
f
453


456
459
{ P.
mp
Ped. 8', P.
mp
462
V
f {G.,P.,R.
Ped.,G.,P.,R.
ff


465
468
471
ff


474
476
ad lib.
sf
sf
Tempo 1
fff
fff
479
rit. molto