Twelve Preludes and Fugues for Piano
by Alan Belkin

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These twelve preludes and fugues were written as a demonstration of what can be done, in a novel way, in a very familiar form. Each fugue has something unusual about its material and/or construction.

1. After a rather grandiose prelude, This 2 part fugue has a rather playful, repetitive subject, with a "wrong note" leap, and odd pauses.
2. A wild prelude lead into this slow, serious fugue, which ends with an exposition in reverse, thinning down the texture.
3. After this wistful prelude, I wanted to see if it was possible to write a dreamy fugue. This one wanders quietly over the keyboard and twice seems to be entirely fading away. This is also the only fugue in the set to use its theme in retrograde.
4. A rather severe, chordal prelude, leads into this stretto fugue. Unusually, each stretto increases the interval of the leaps in the subject (third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and finally seventh), engendering unusual harmonic changes.
5. After a very sweet and gentle prelude, this extremely energetic fugue has a very wide ranging subject, which requires unusual treatment: it is sometimes shared between the two outer voices. The middle of the fugue contains 2 entries of the countersubject, but without the subject. The fugue ends with a close stretto.
6. After a lively, playful prelude, this is also a playful fugue, almost a joke, on a silly subject.
7. The prelude is a free little 2 part invention. The very introspective fugue has a rhythmically complex subject and countersubject, which require considerable elaboration. It also ends on an unexpectedly dreamy note.
8. The prelude is a wild little toccata. The subject of this fugue is not entirely monophonic, leading to unusual flexibility of texture.
9. The prelude here has 2 planes of tone: One is melodic, the other is distant chords, spaced far apart. The fugue uses a subject with an odd, symmetrical mode, which creates various unusual harmonic situations, including a very unconventional answer. It ends oddly, by fragmenting into silences.
10. This prelude is a study in interruptions. This fugue tries again and again to steer into "atonal" harmony, only to fail, discouraged, at the end.
11. A massive prelude leads to a very light fugue The subject here consists of 2 notes arguing. Only the arrival of a third note settles the feud. Various humorous events follow up on this argument.
12. After a rather mysterious prelude, this final fugue, on a complex. chromatic subject, is richly scored for the piano, and rises to the biggest climax in the whole series. Unusually, it contains several entirely homophonic episodes.

N.B. In the fugues, I have usually only indicated articulation the first time a theme is presented.

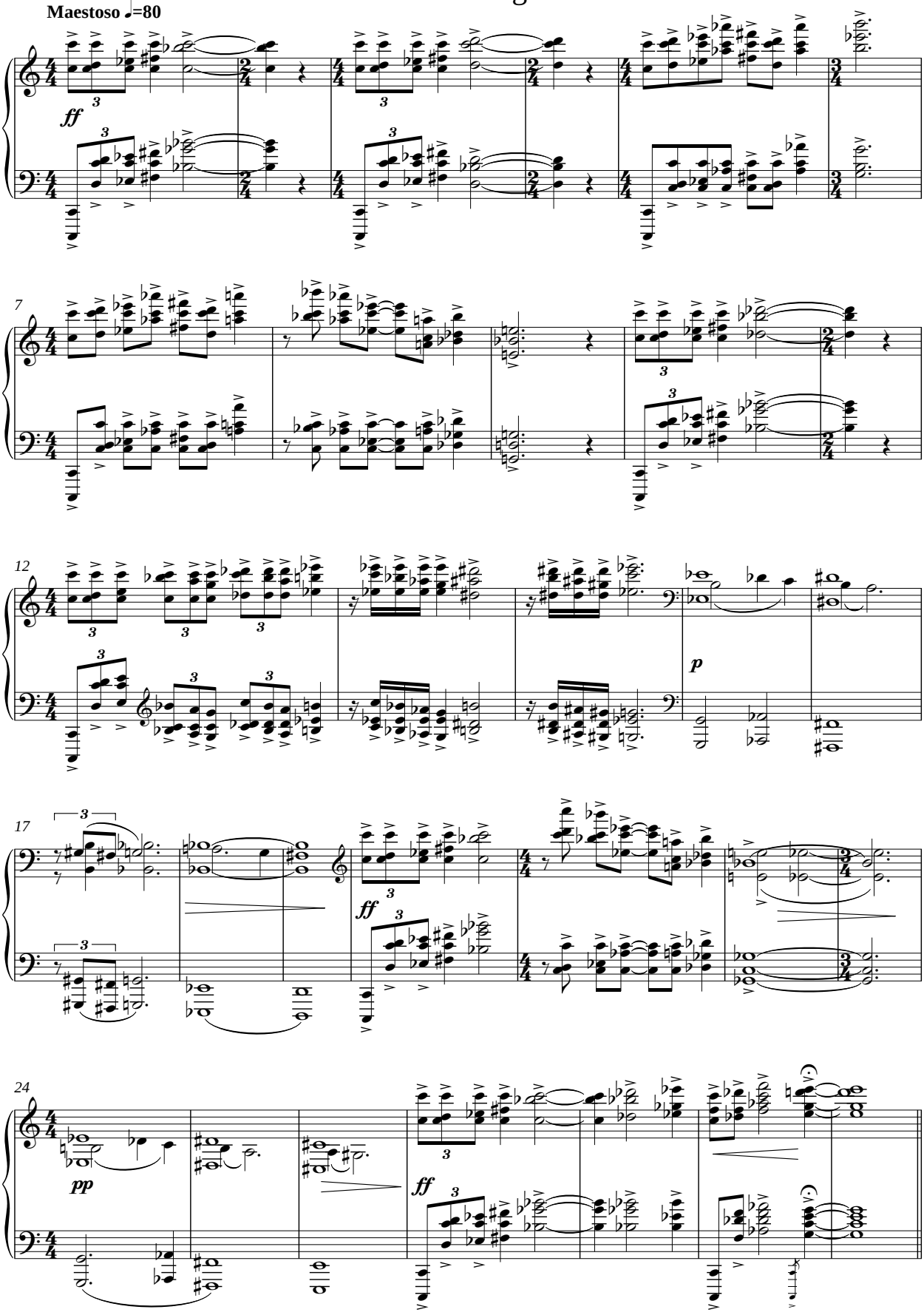
These preludes and fugues need not be all played together; various groupings are possible. If the last prelude and fugue is included however, it should be played at the end of the series. The whole series takes about one hour when played complete.

The Preludes, even when contrasting in character, are in the nature of introductions to the fugues. There should be not more than a couple of seconds pause between each prelude and its fugue.

Timings are approximate.

This collection is dedicated to my best friend, Charles Lafleur. For too many reasons to list!

Prelude and Fugue #1



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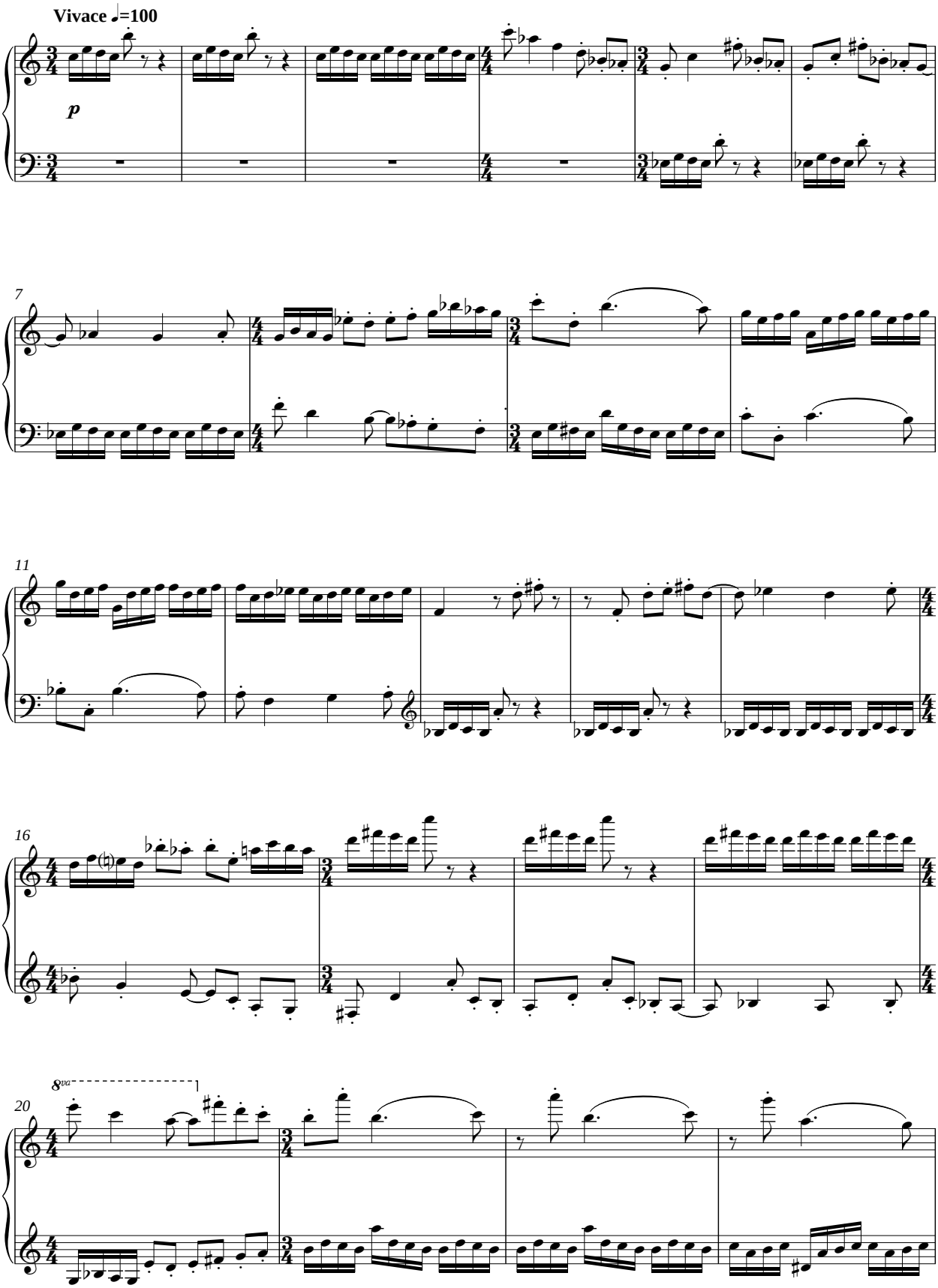
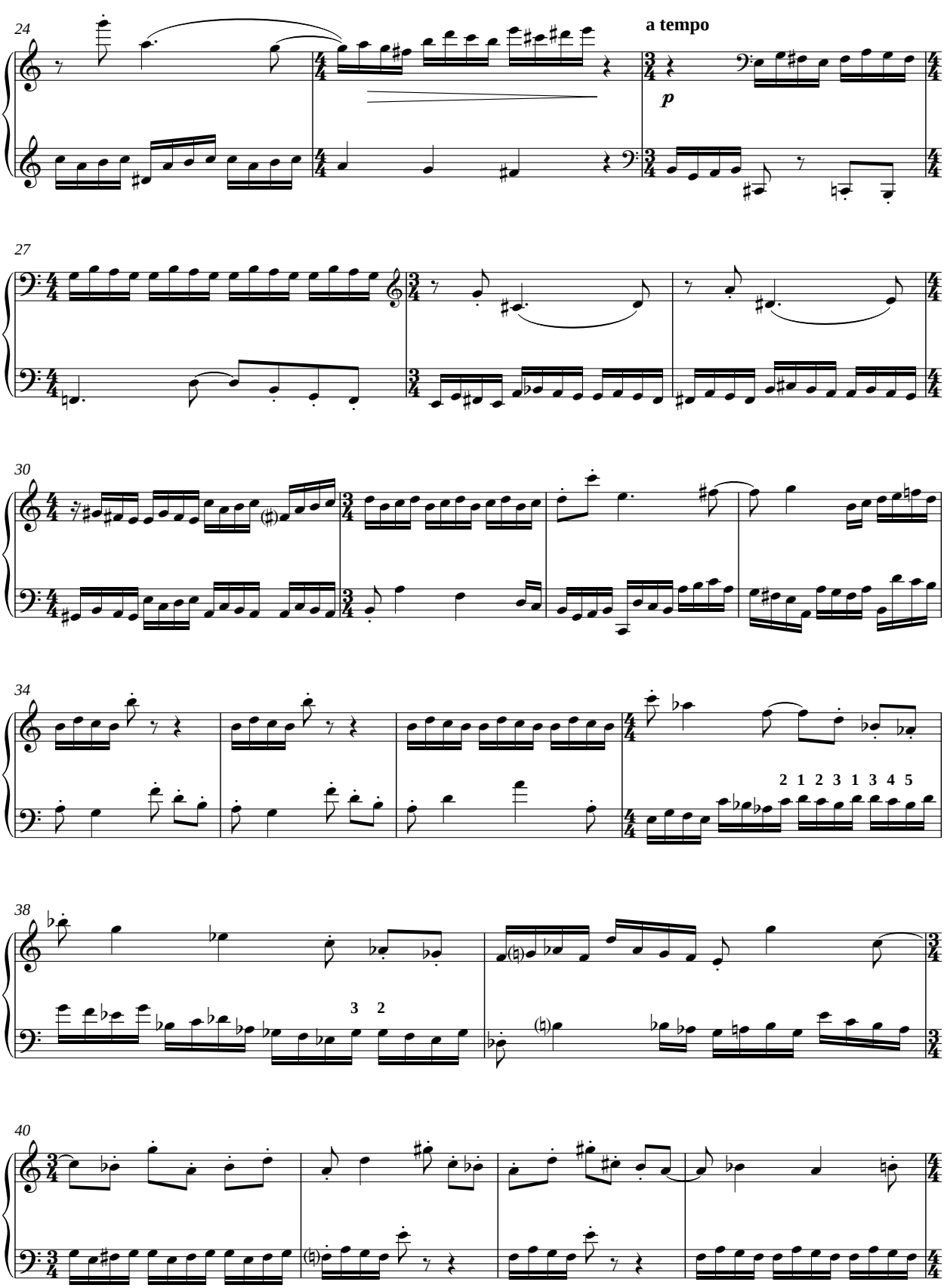
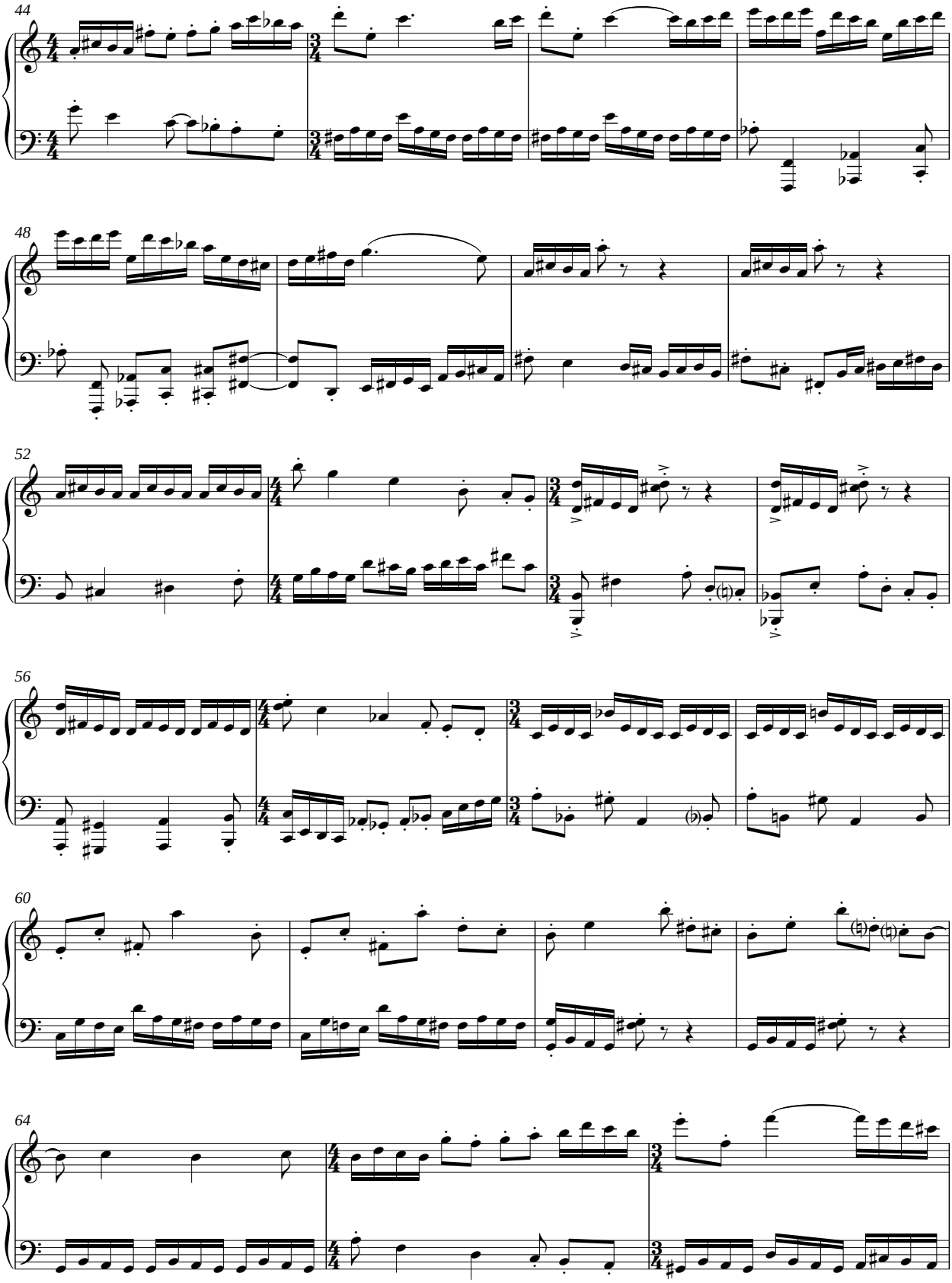
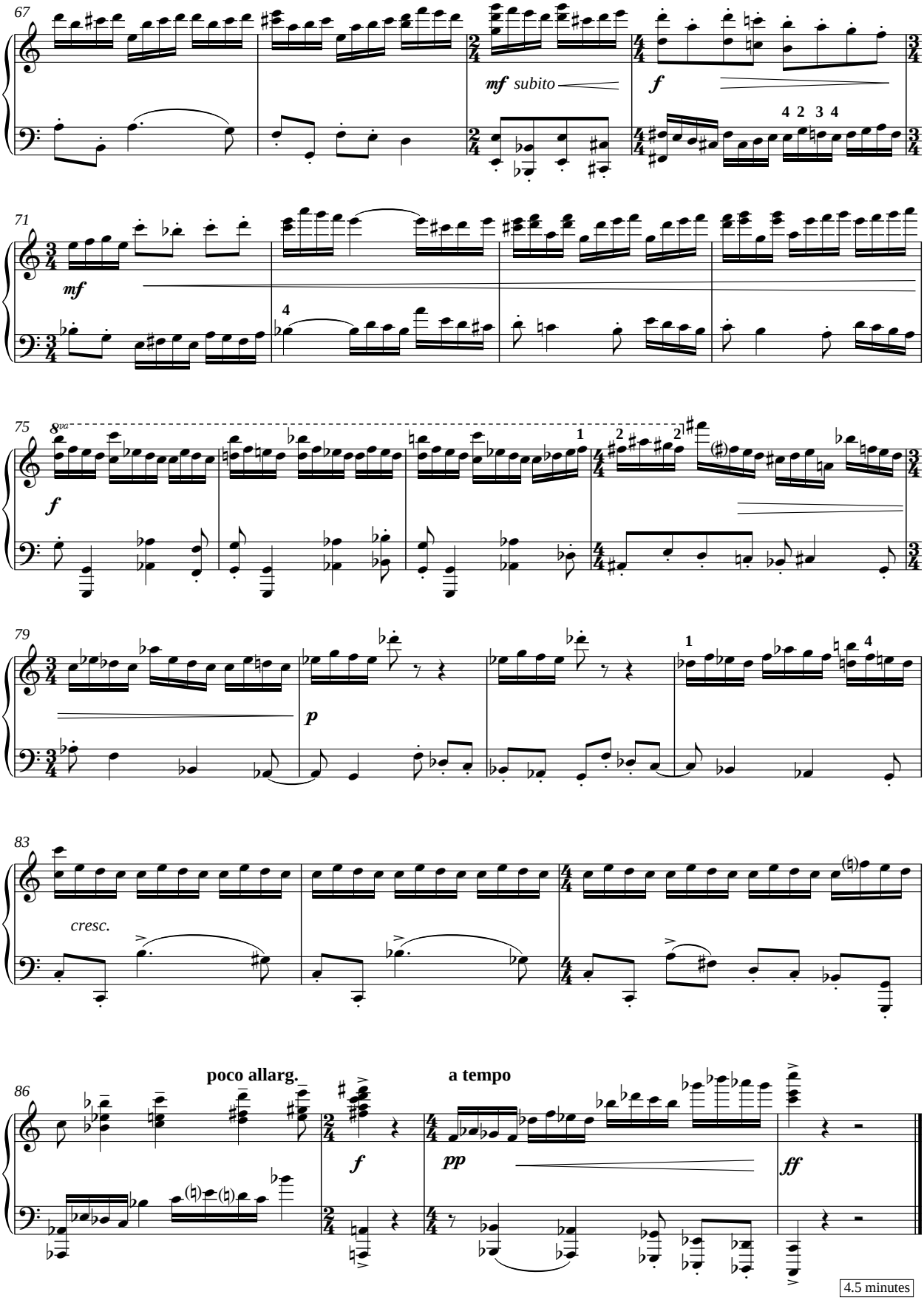
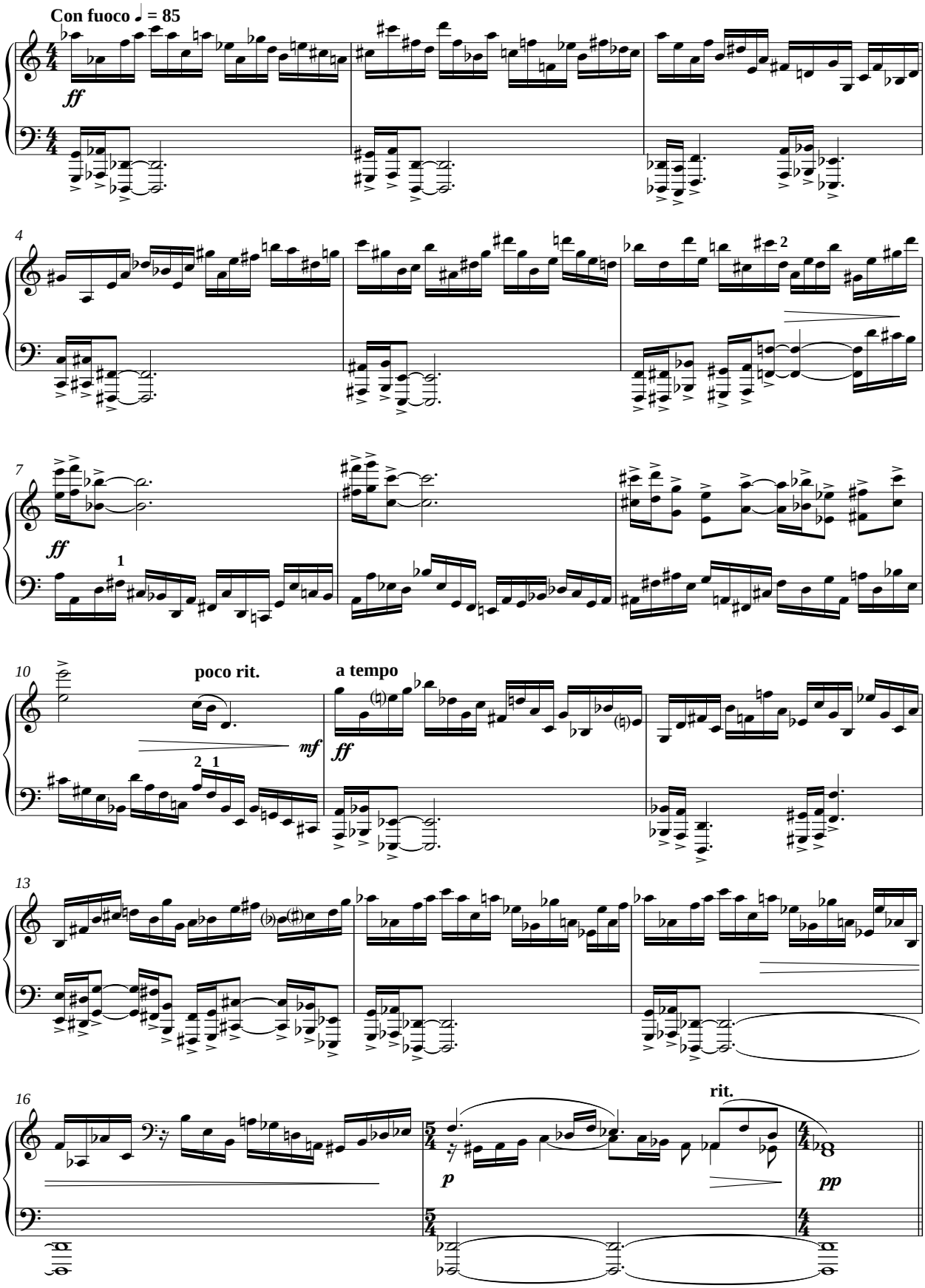

Vivace ♩=100
p
7
11
16
20
8va

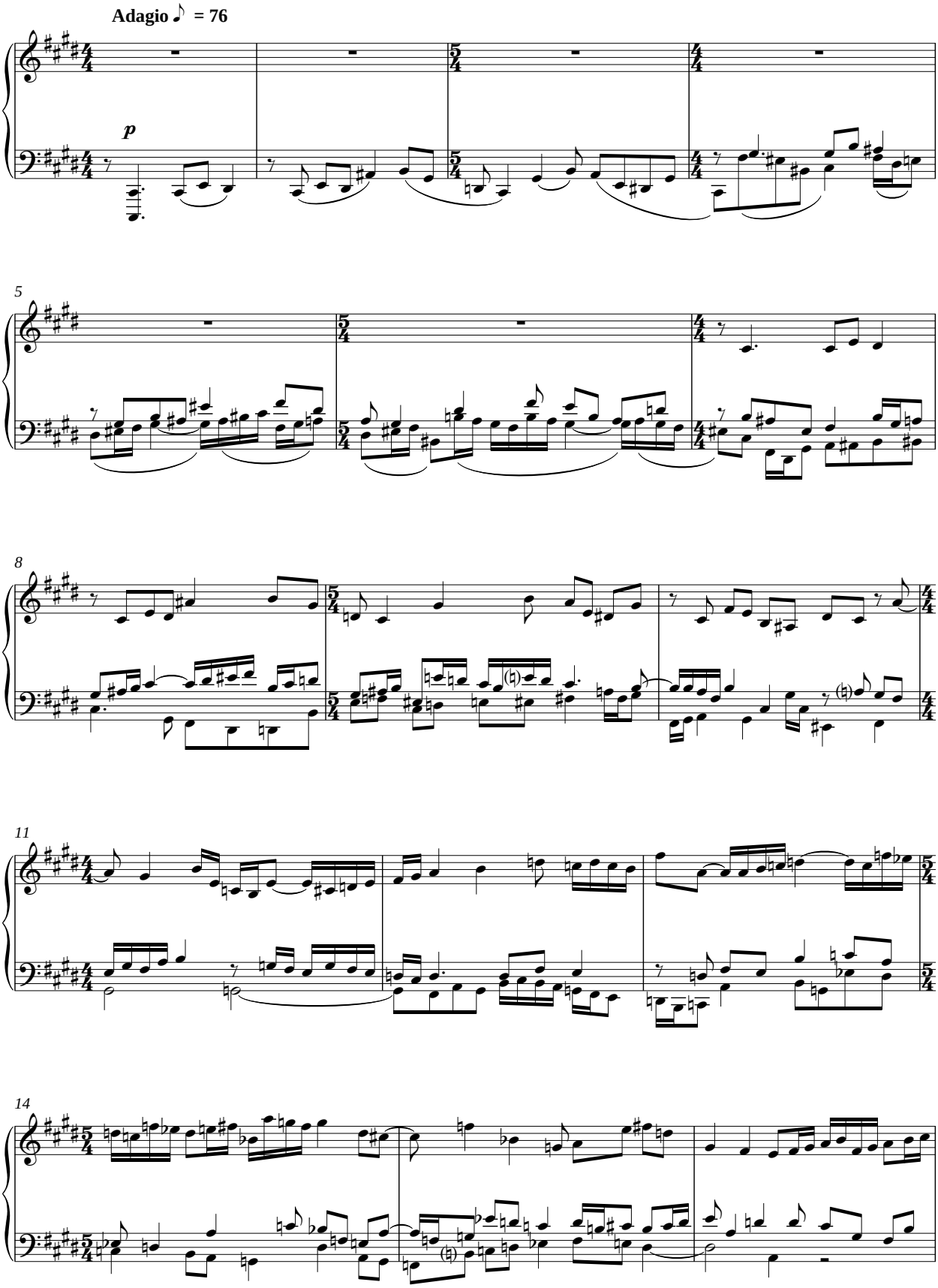

rit.
a tempo
p
24
27
30
34
38
40
2 1 2 3 1 3 4 5
3 2

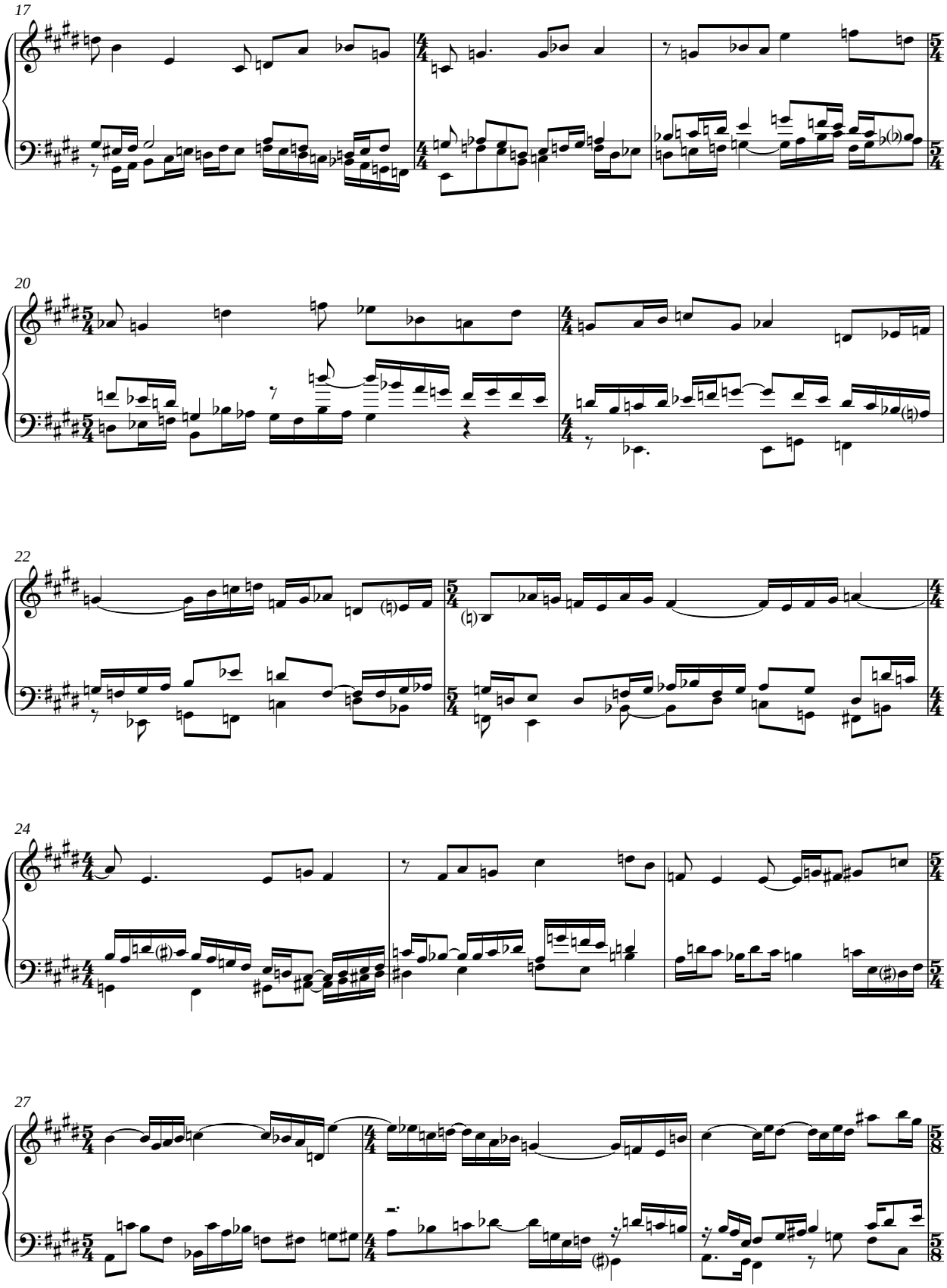

44
48
52
56
60
64


67
mf subito
f
4 2 3 4
71
mf
4
75
8va
f
1
2
2
79
p
1
4
83
cresc.
86
poco allarg.
a tempo
f
pp
ff
4.5 minutes

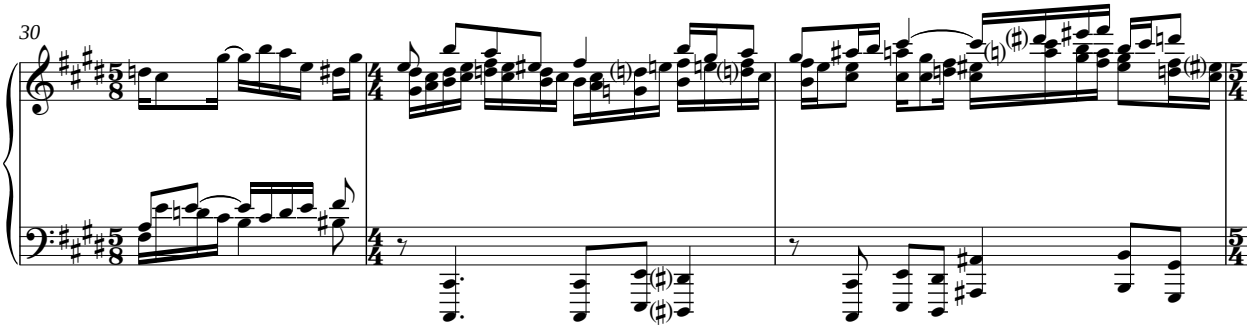
Prelude and Fugue #2




Adagio ♪ = 76
p
5
8
11
14


17
20
22
24
27

30



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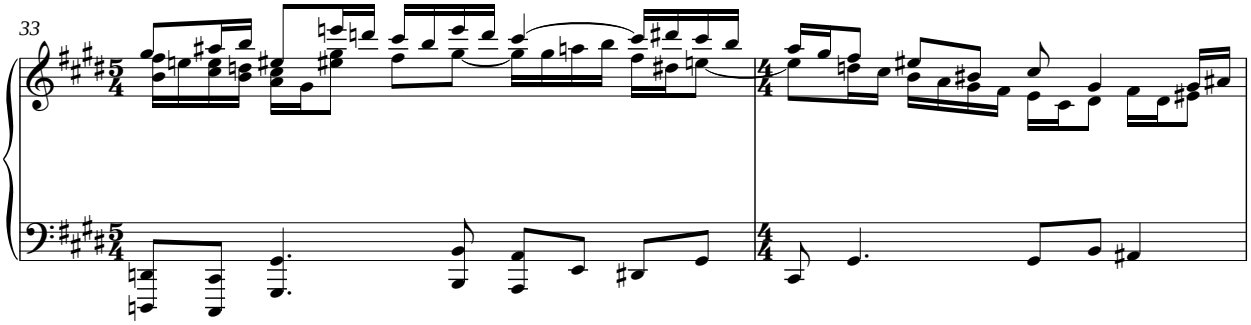

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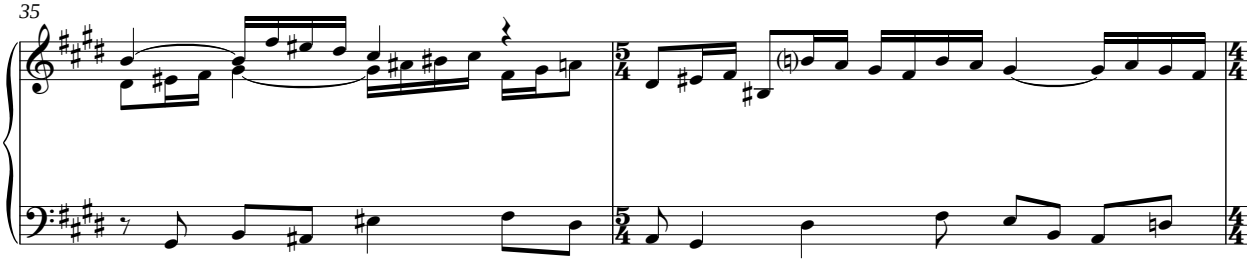
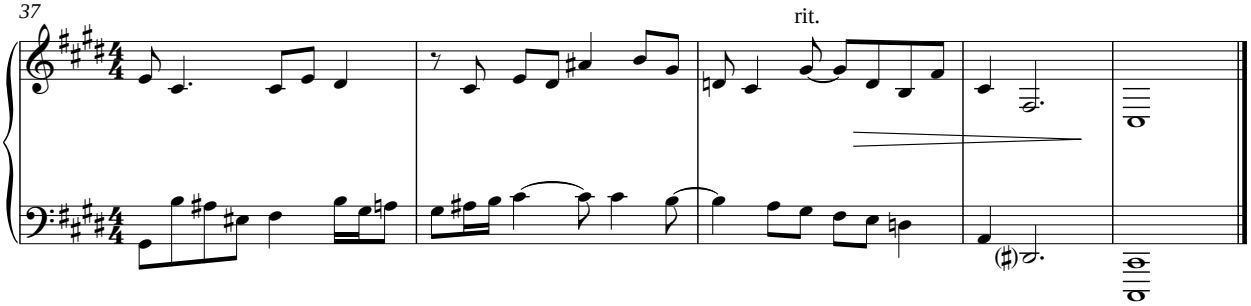


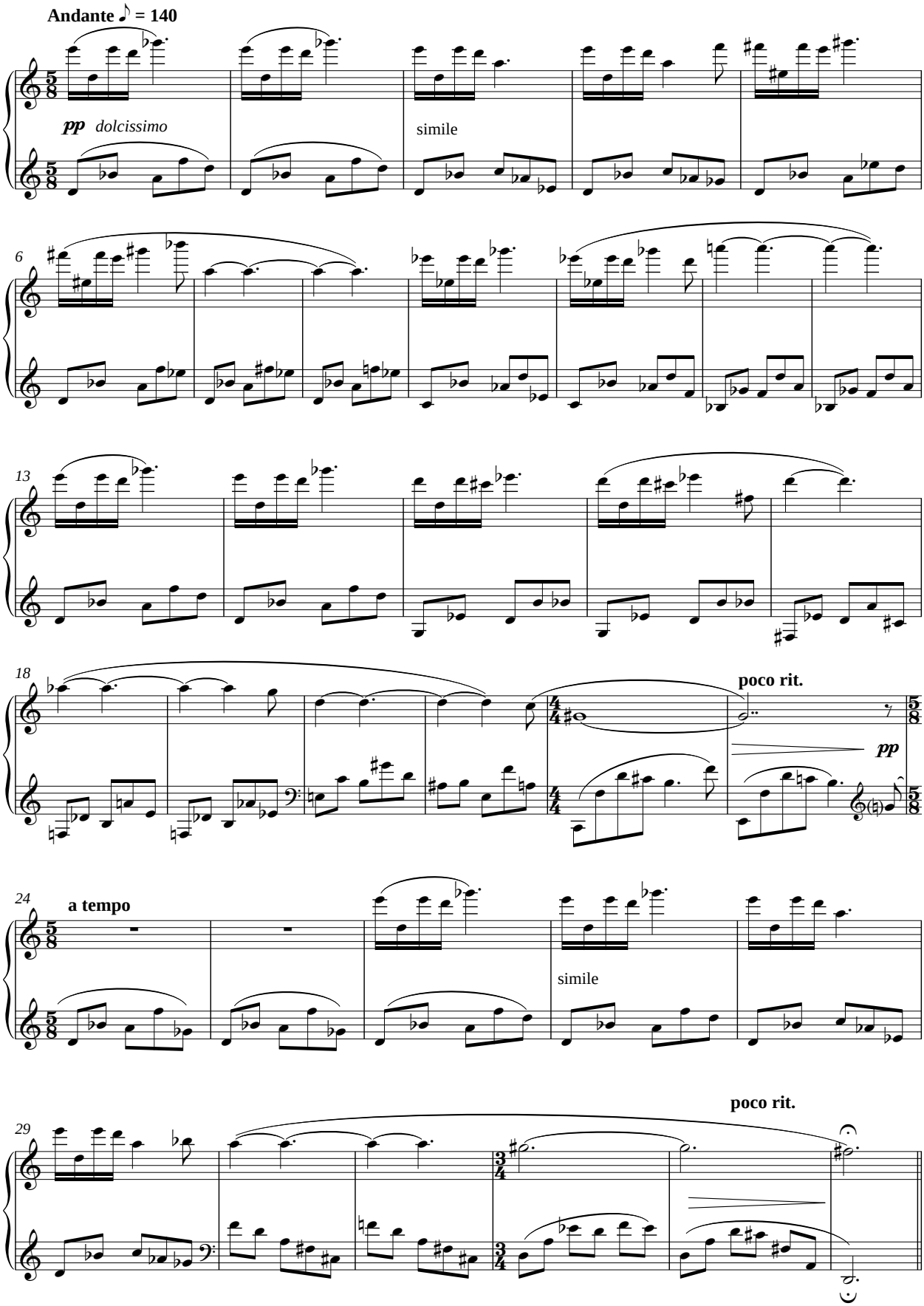
37

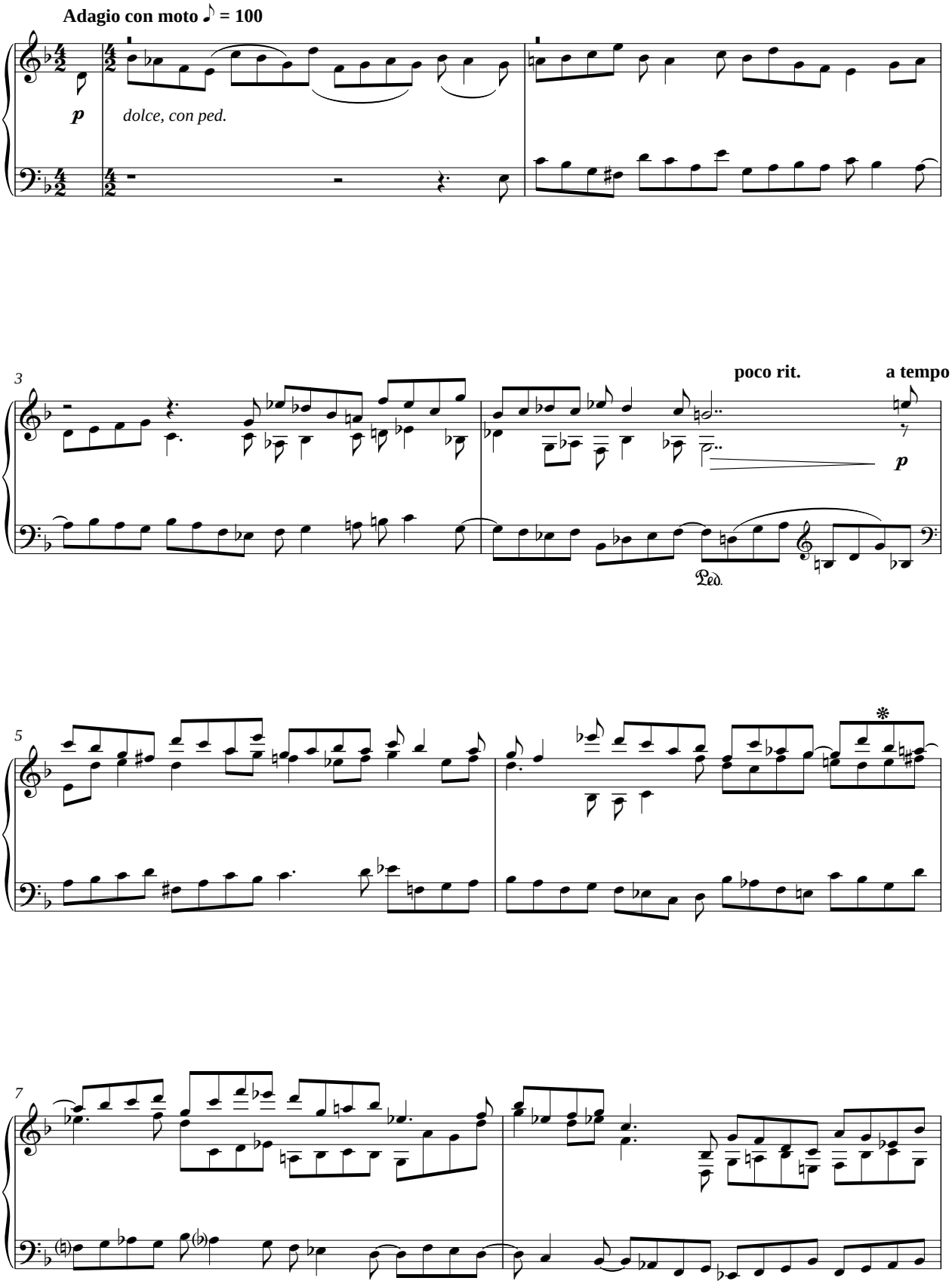
rit.

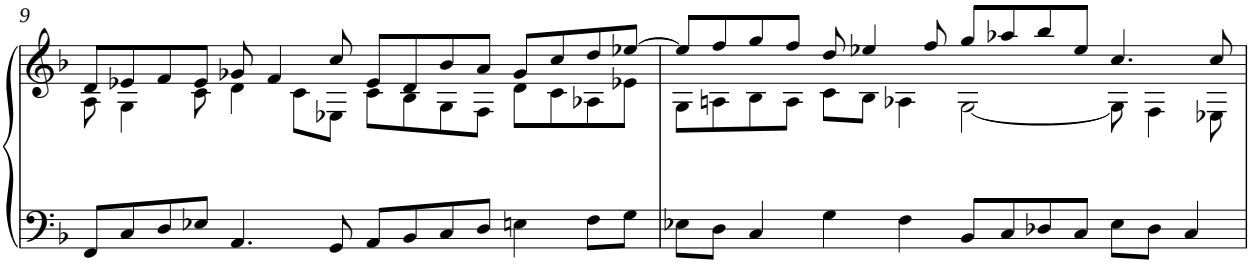


6 minutes

Prelude and Fugue #3




Adagio con moto ♪ = 100
p
dolce, con ped.
3
poco rit.
a tempo
p
Ped.
5
7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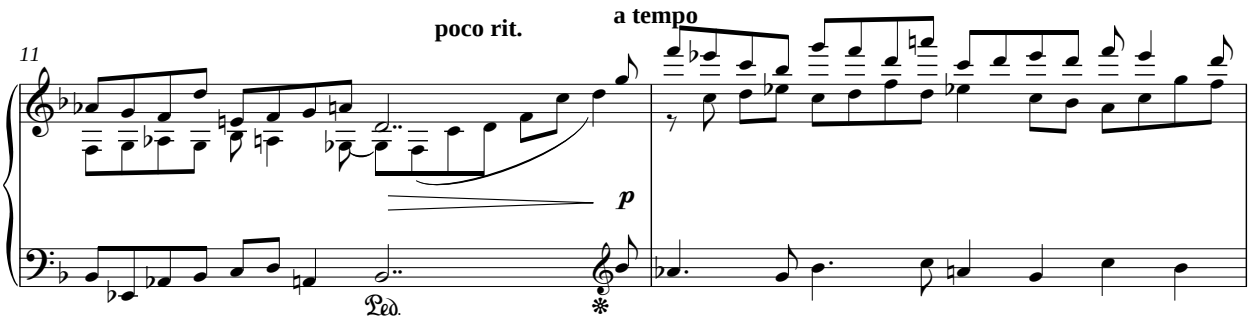
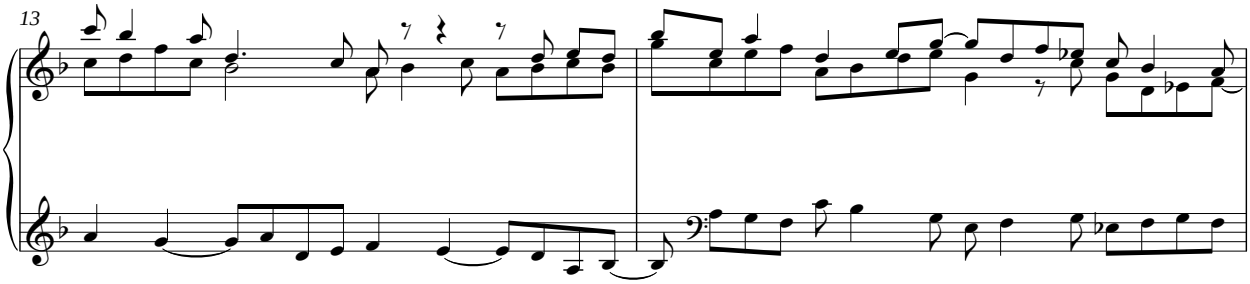

poco rit.
a tempo
11
p
Ped.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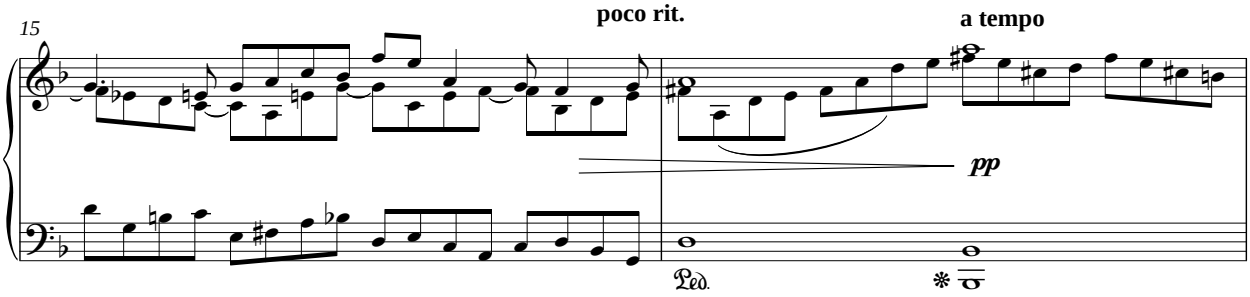
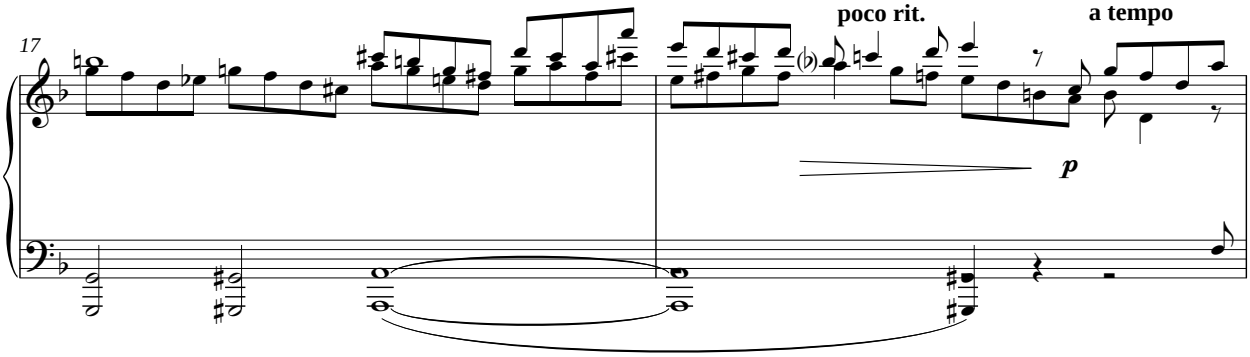
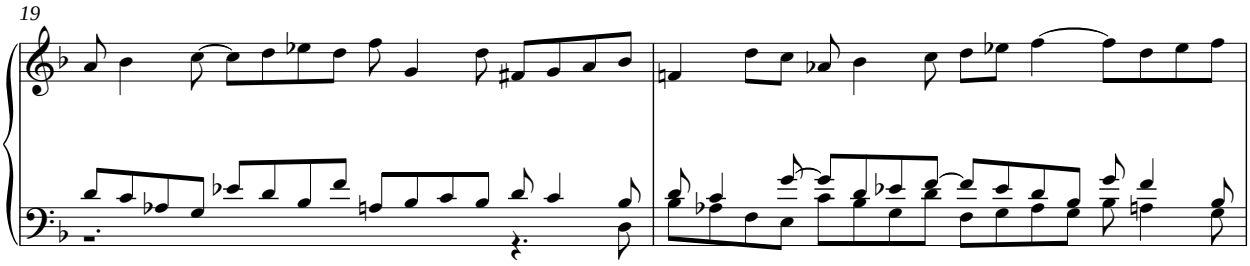
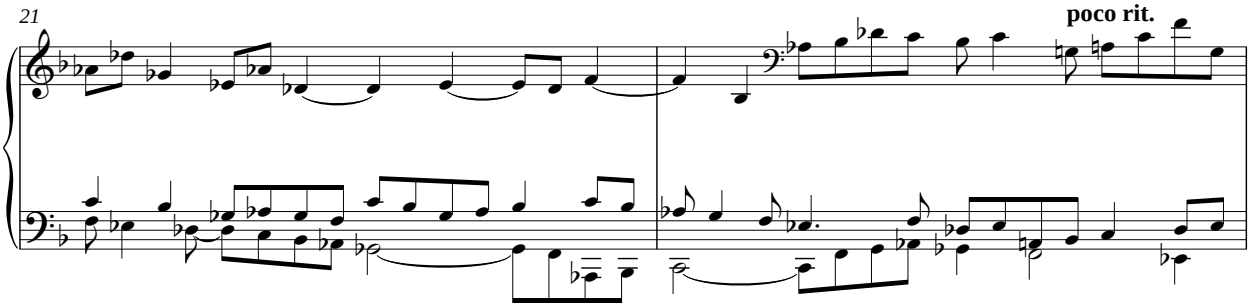
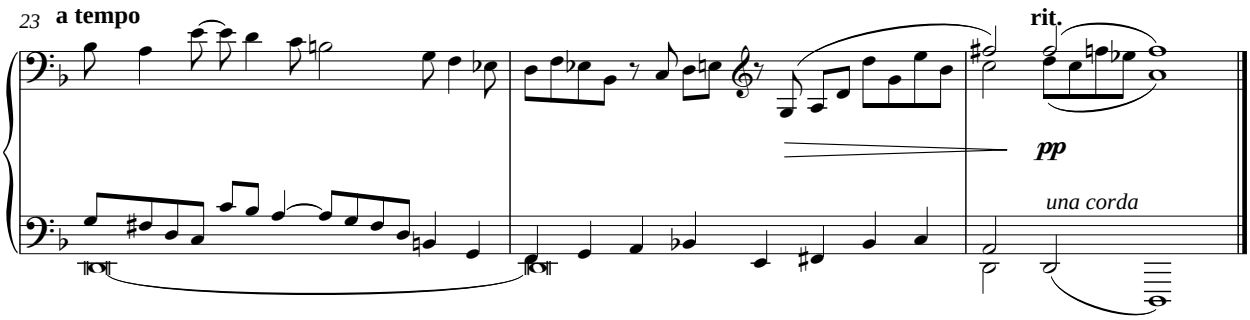

poco rit.
a tempo
15
pp
Ped.



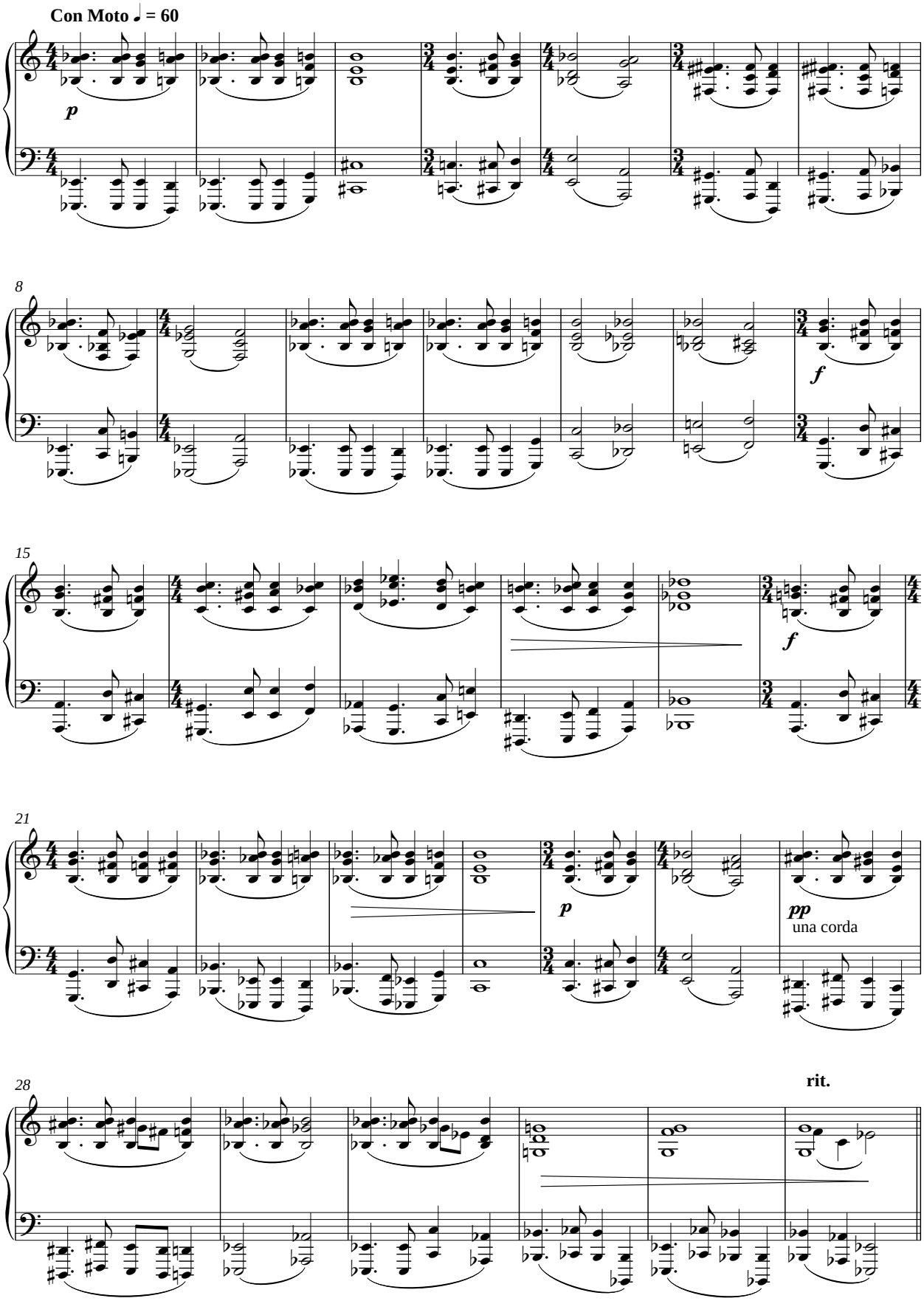


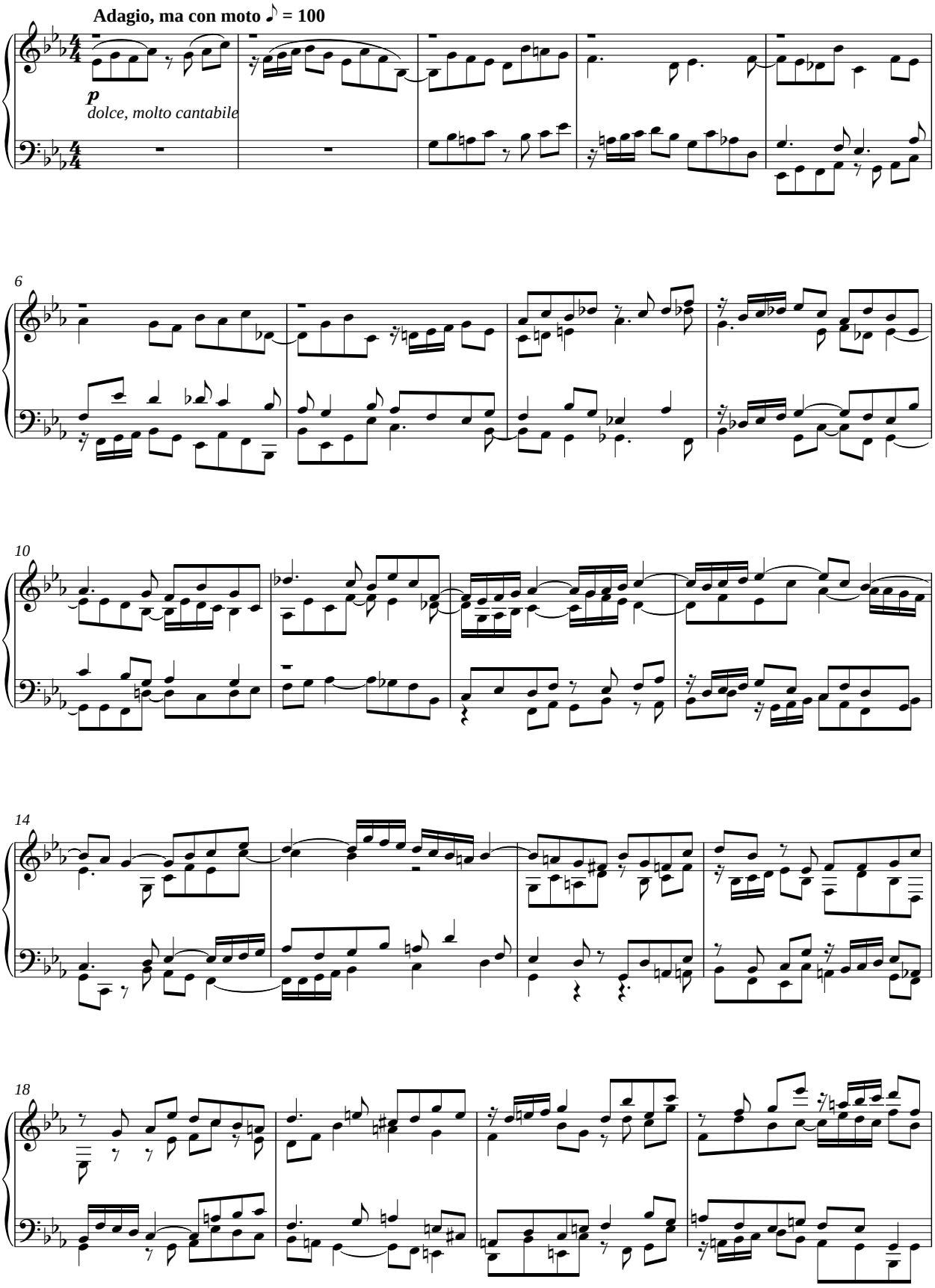




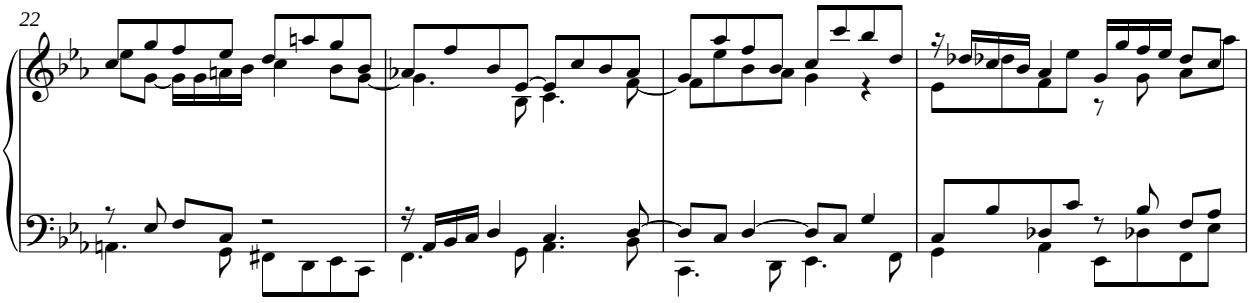
6 minutes

Prelude and Fugue #4




Adagio, ma con moto ♪ = 100
p
dolce, molto cantabile
6
10
14
18

22



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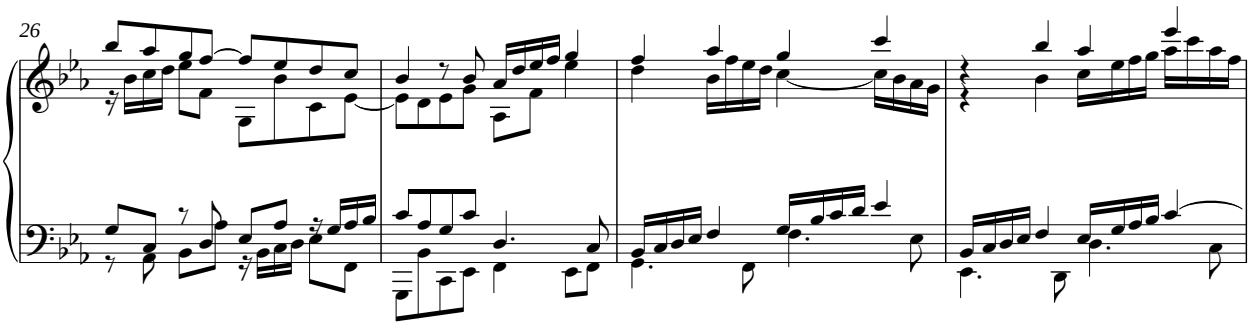

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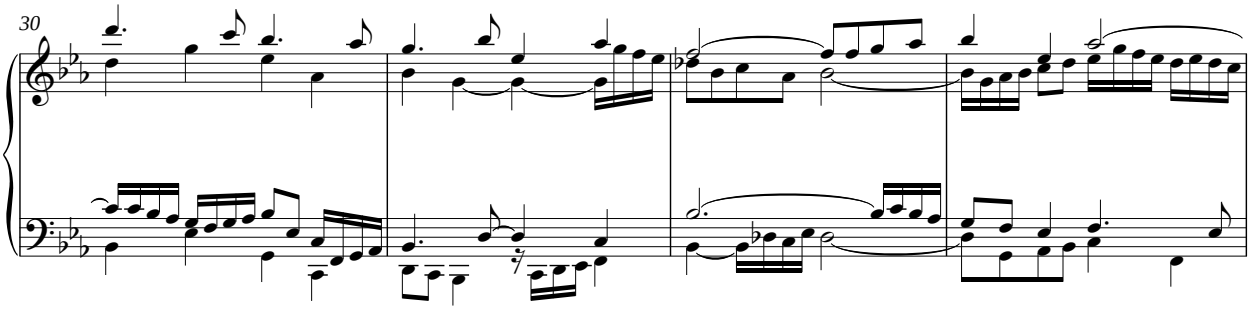
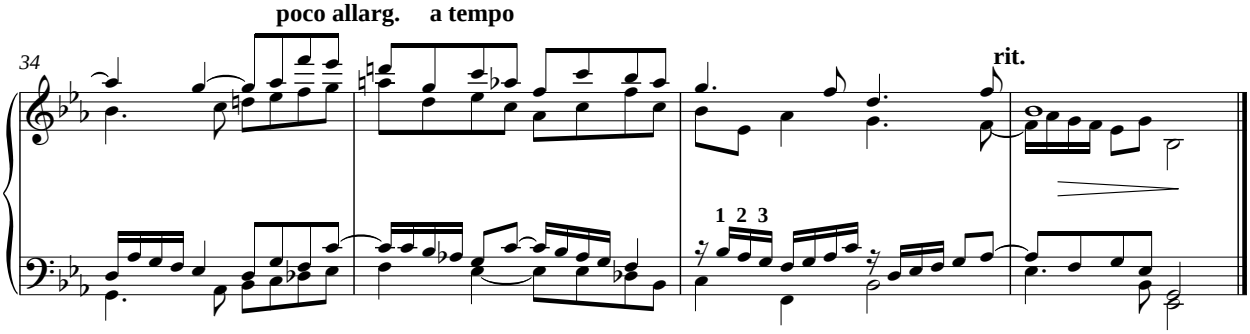


poco allarg. a tempo

34

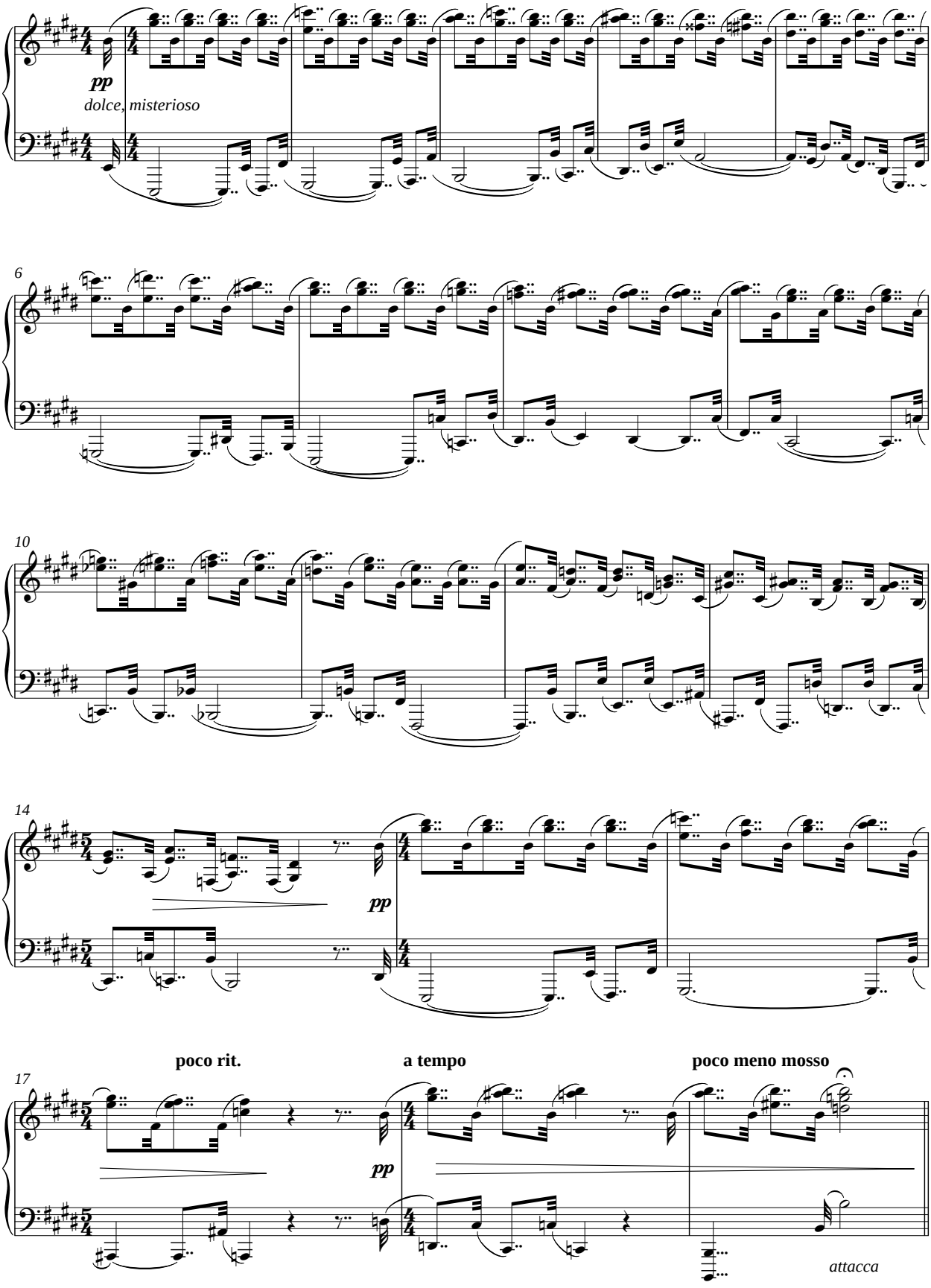
rit.

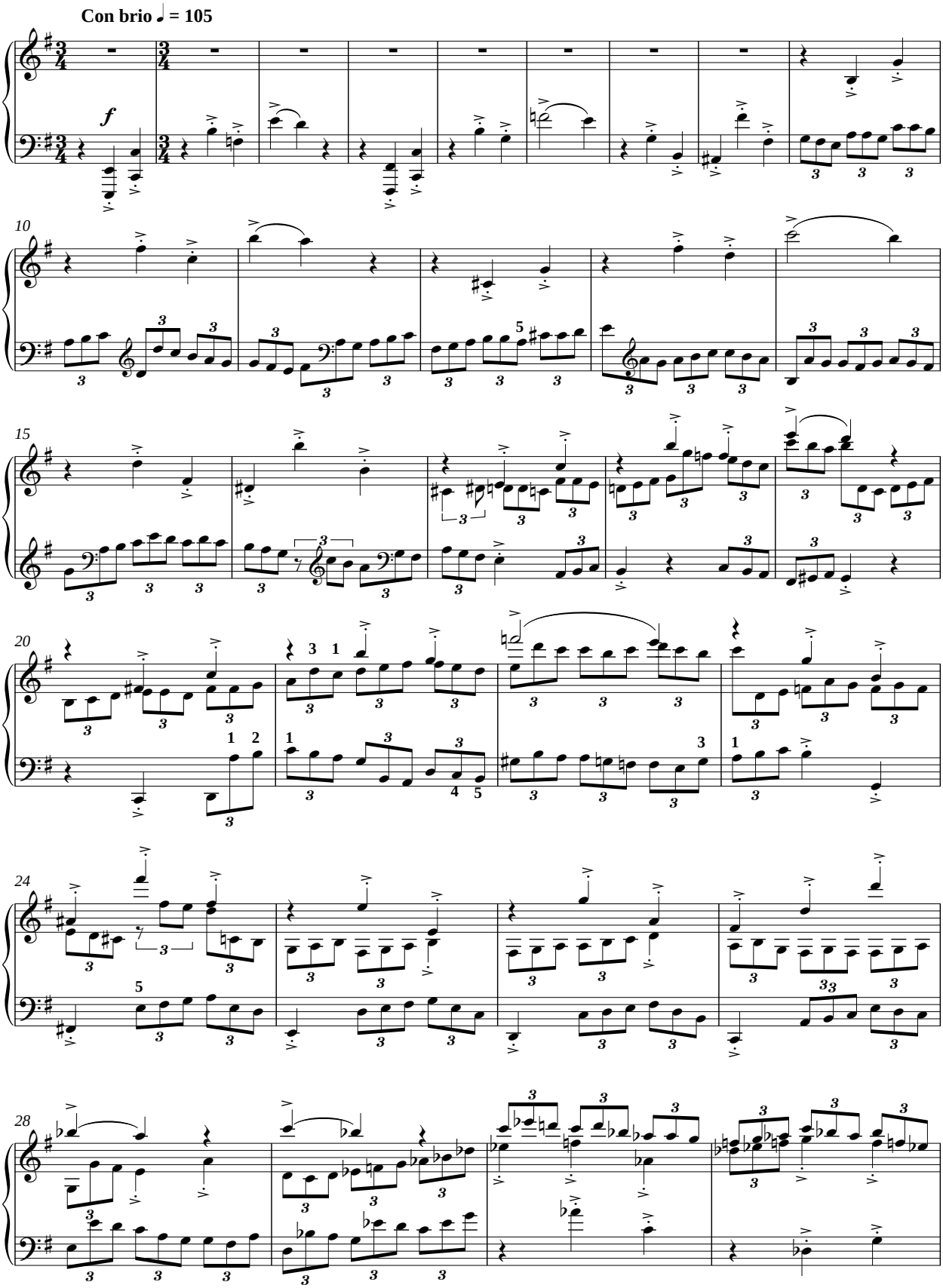
1 2 3

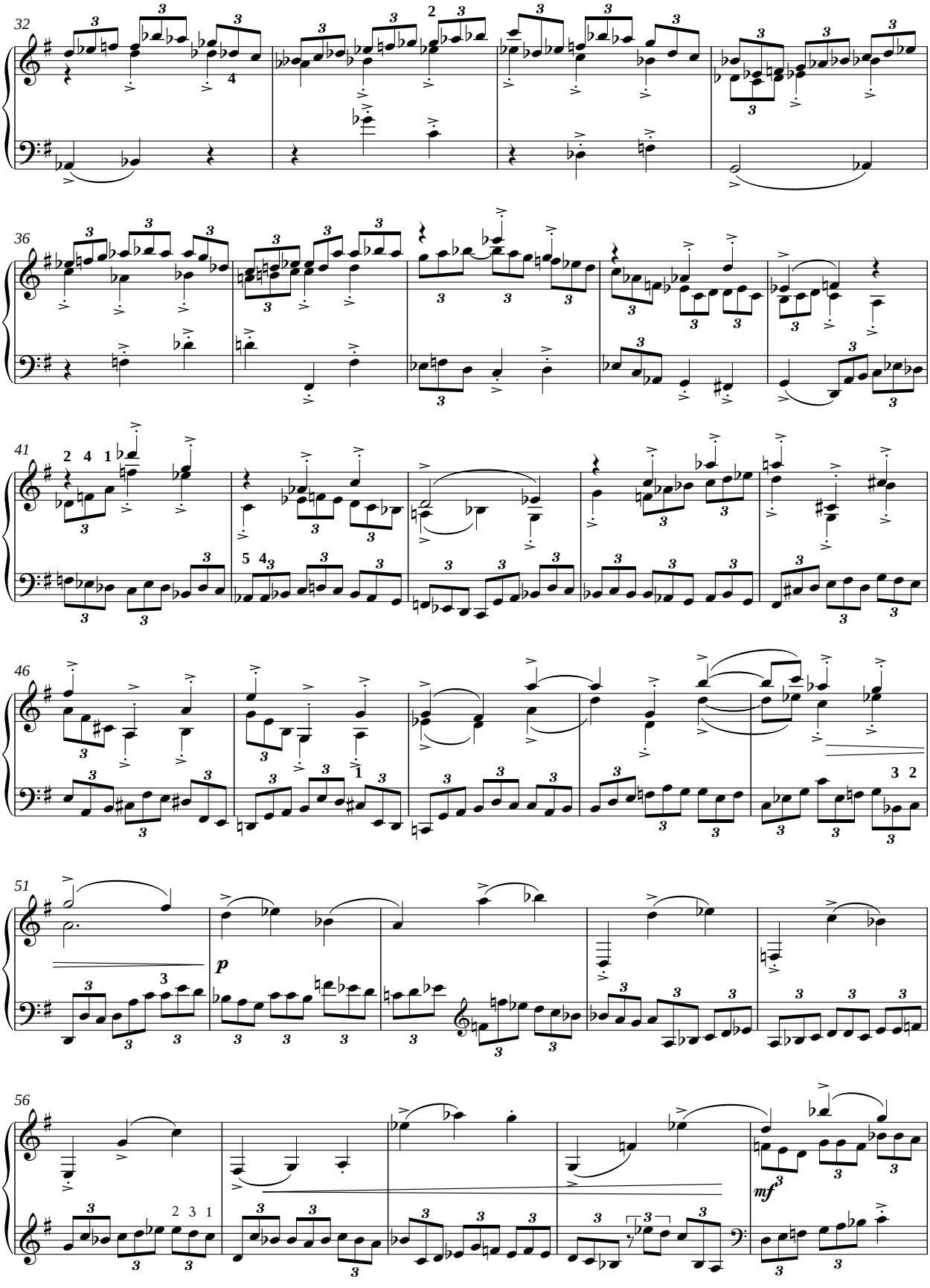


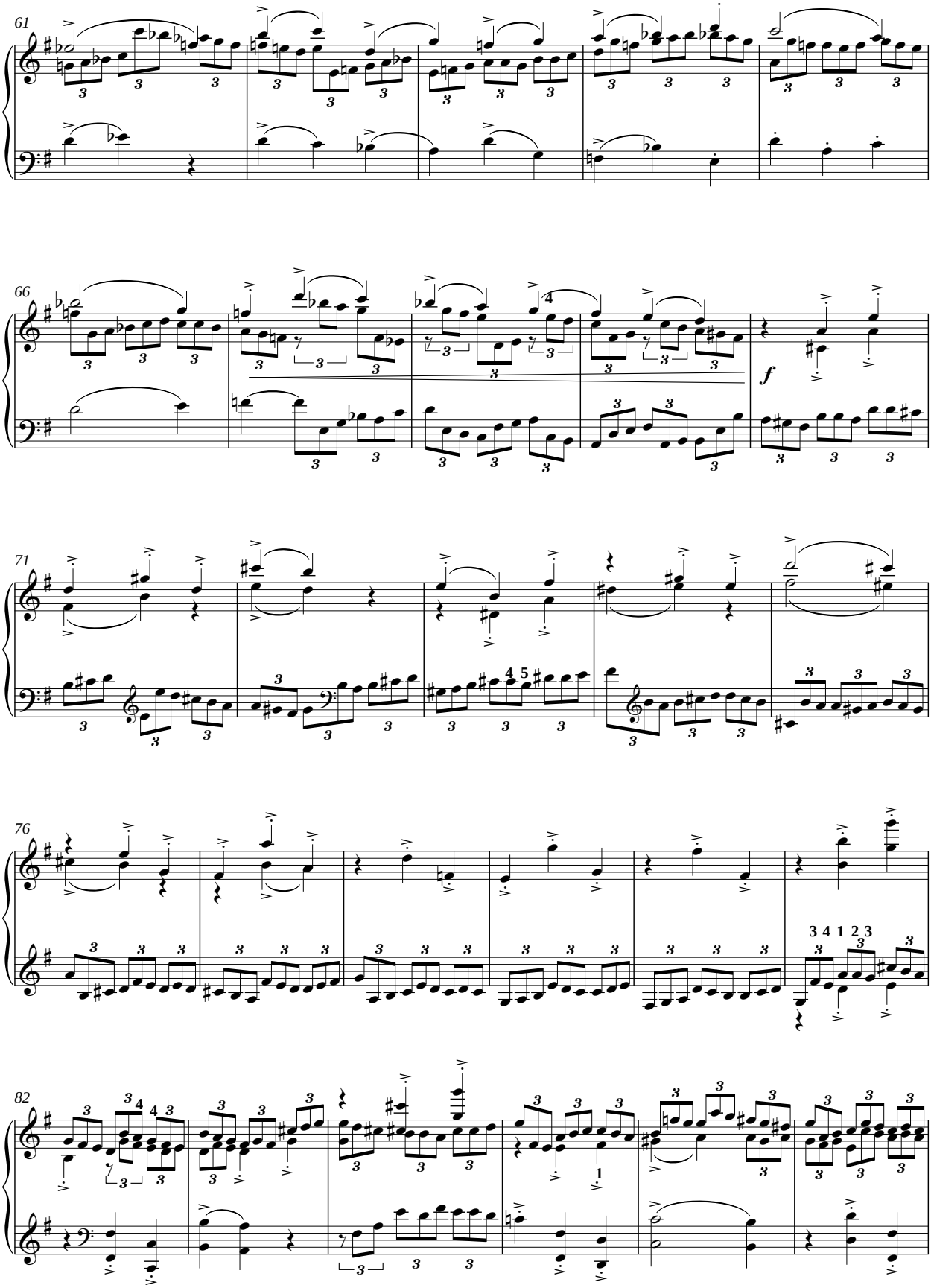
5 minutes

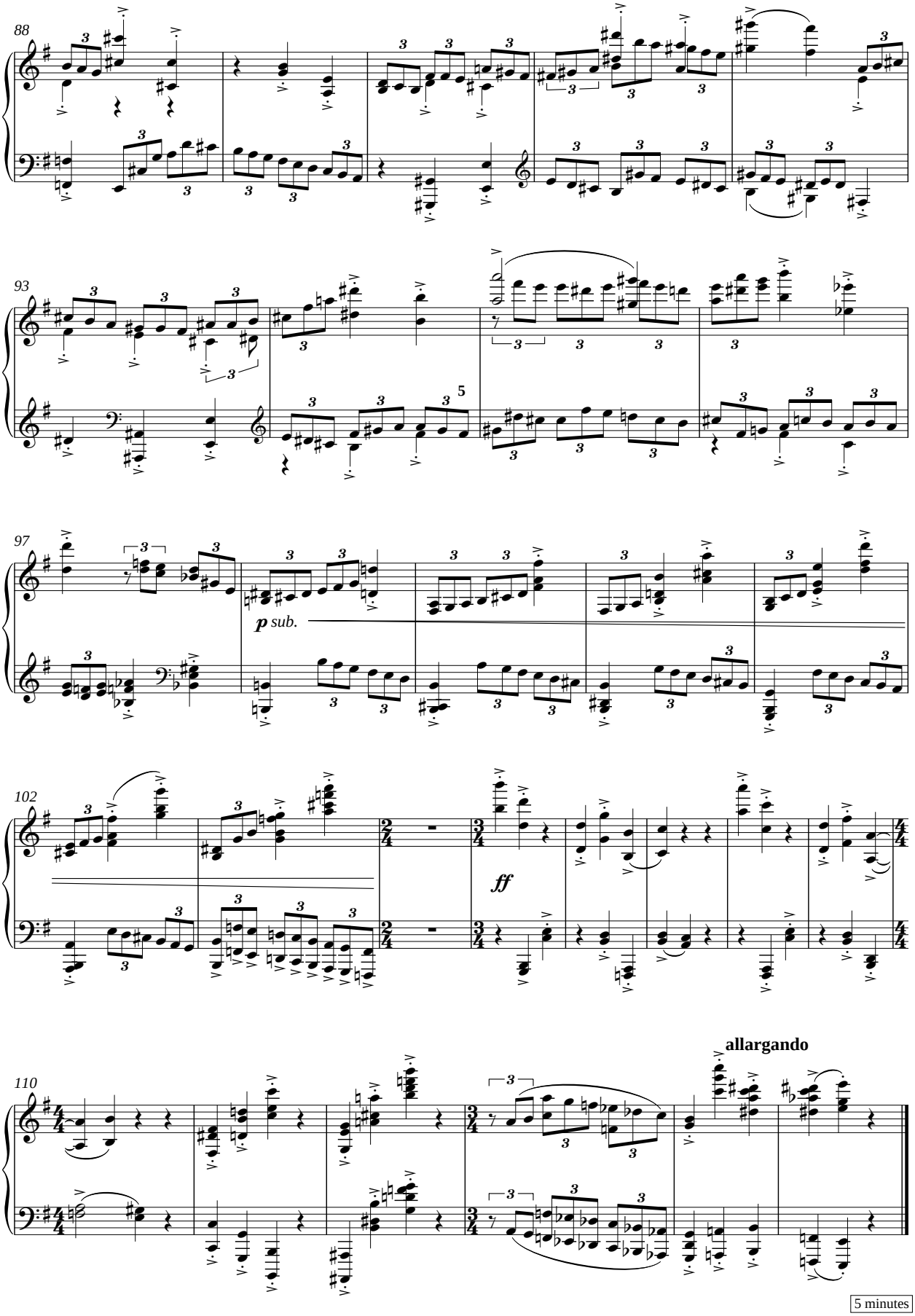
Andante ♩ = 75


pp
dolce, misterioso
6
10
14
pp
17
poco rit.
a tempo
poco meno mosso
pp
attacca


Con brio ♩ = 105
f
10
15
20
24
28

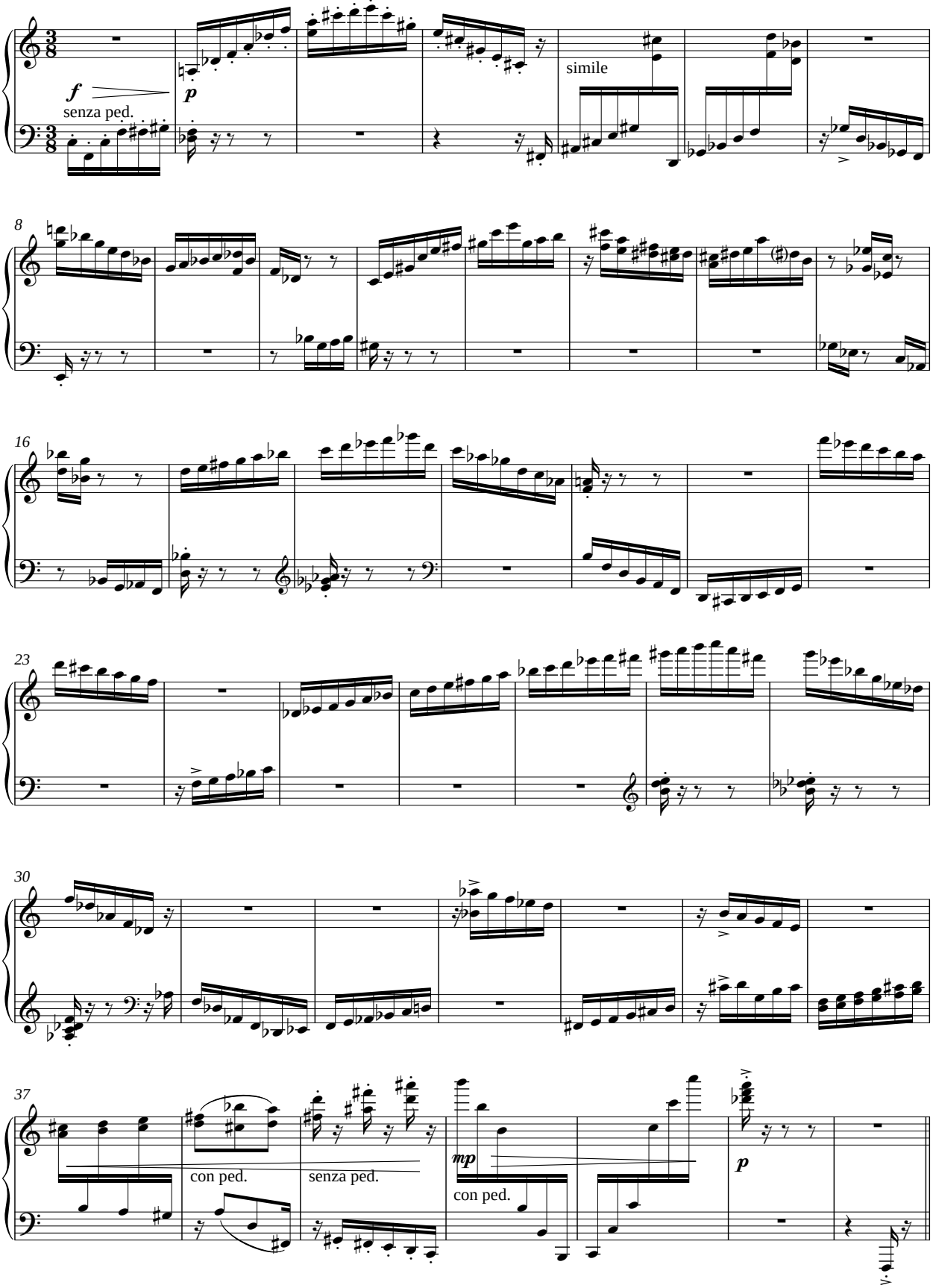

32
36
41
46
51
p
56
mf


61
66
f
71
76
3 4 1 2 3
82

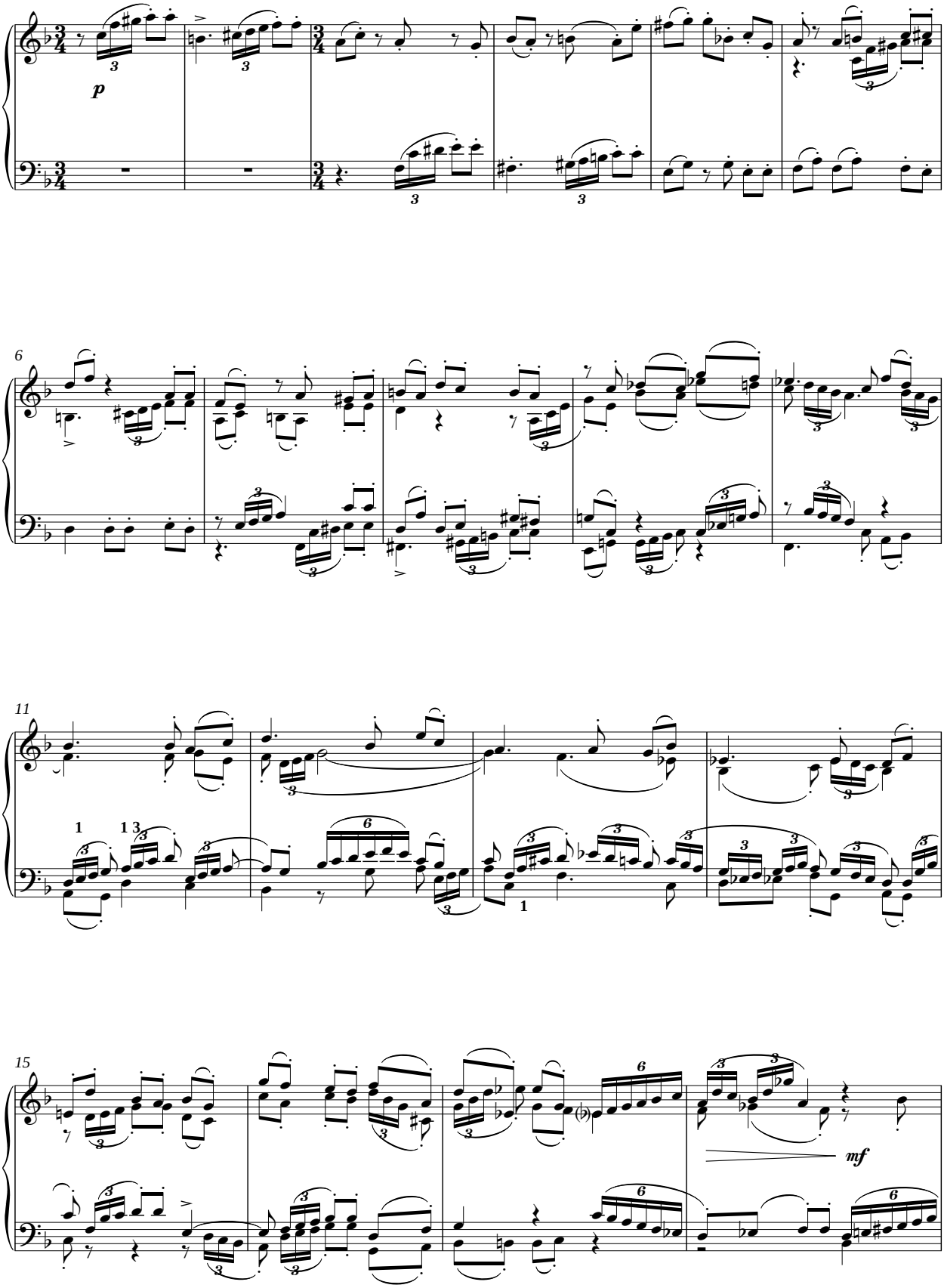

88
93
5
97
p sub.
102
ff
110
allargando
5 minutes

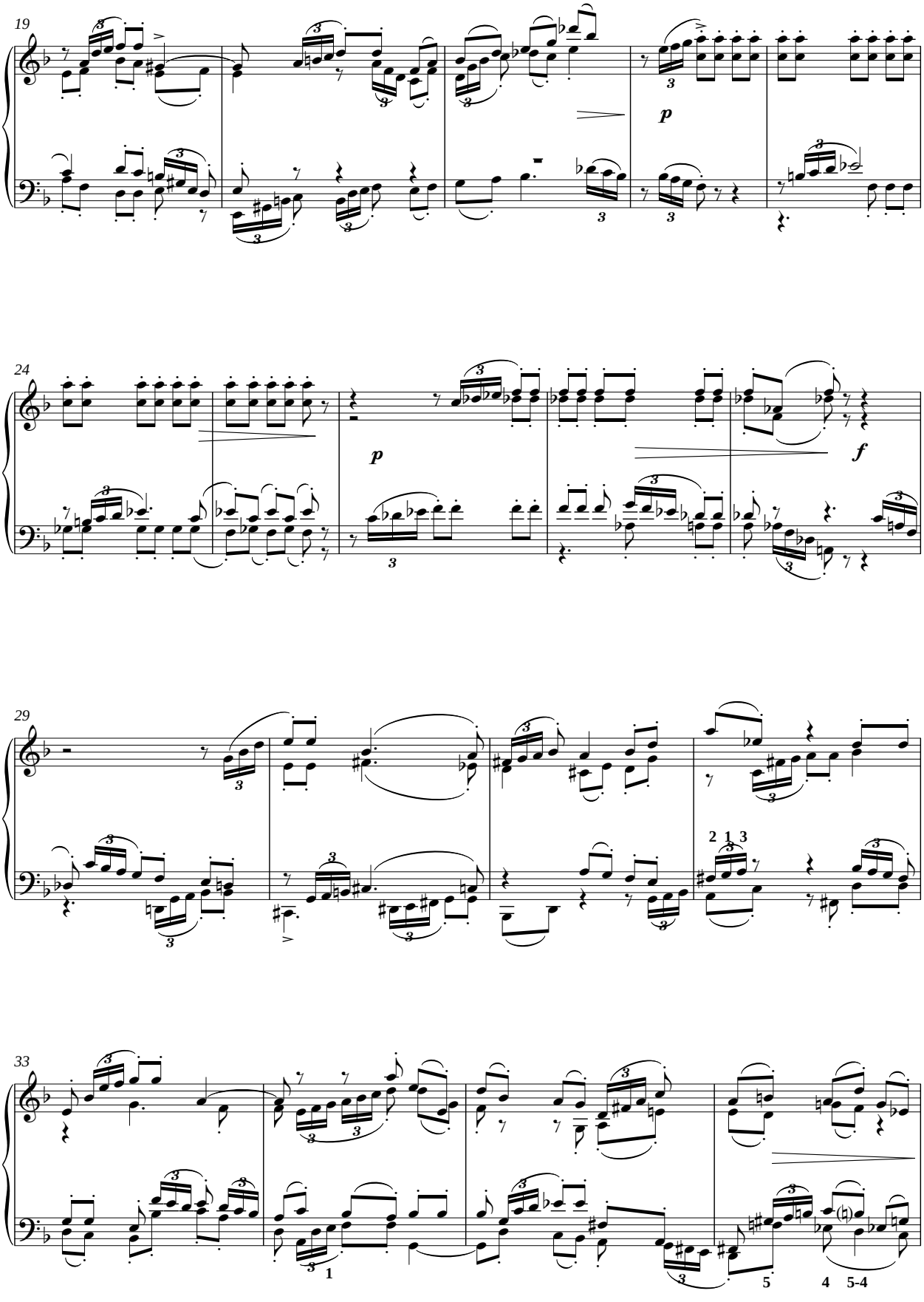
Prelude and Fugue #6

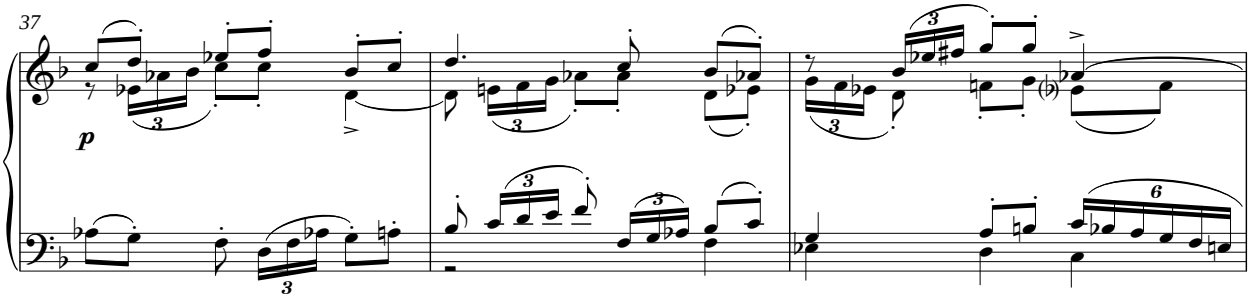
Presto ♪= 170

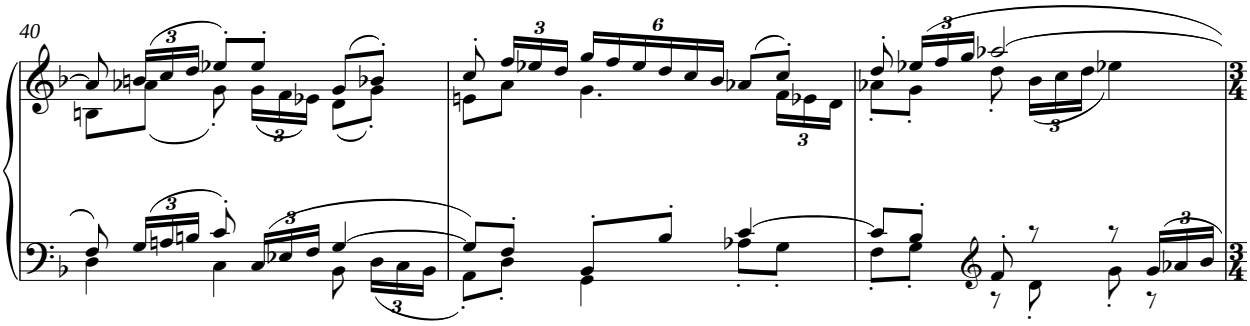


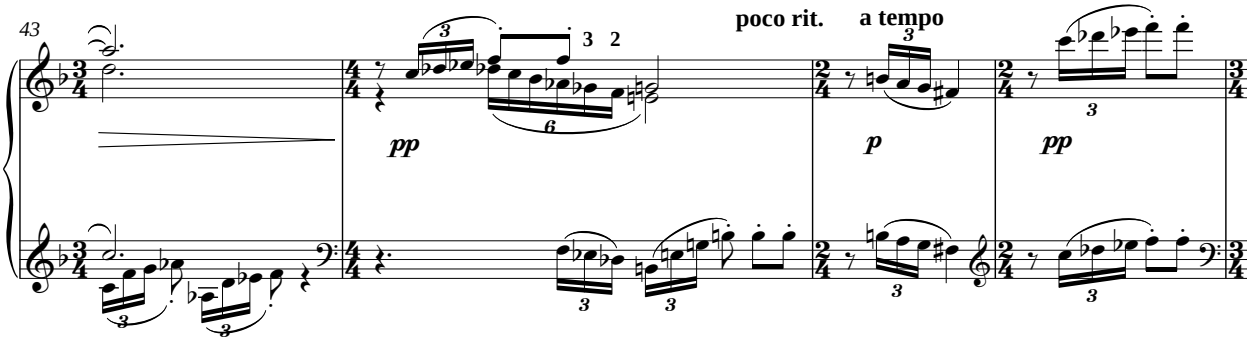
Scherzando ♩ = 80

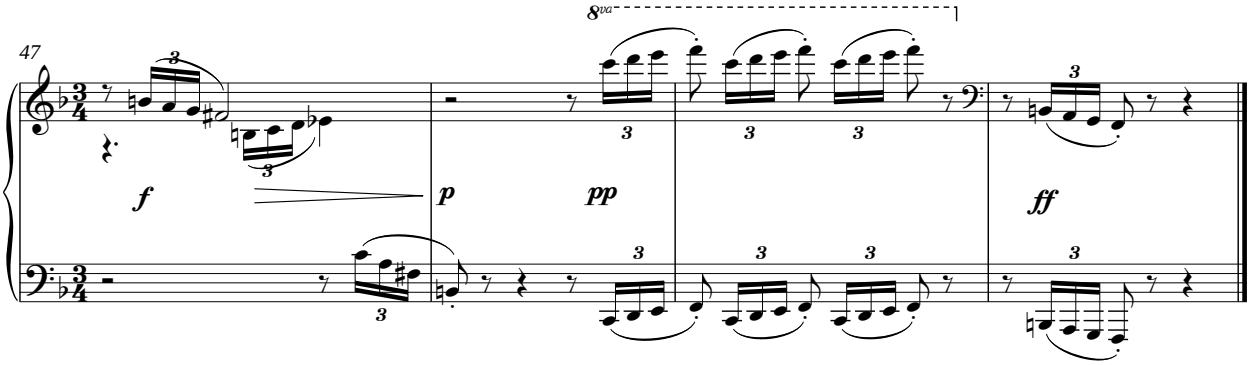



19
p
24
p
f
29
2 1 3
33
1
5
4
5-4



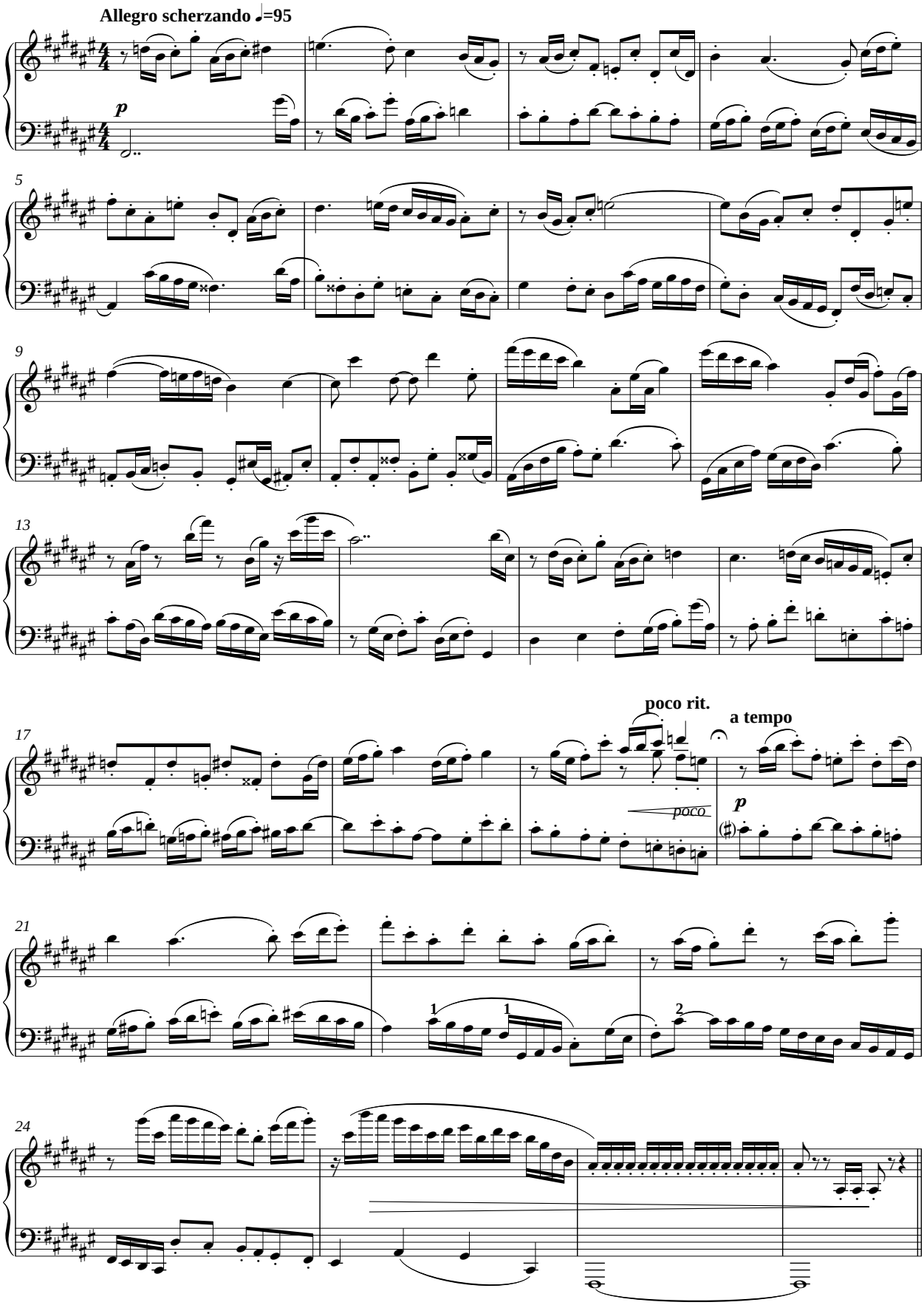






3.5 minutes

Prelude and Fugue #7



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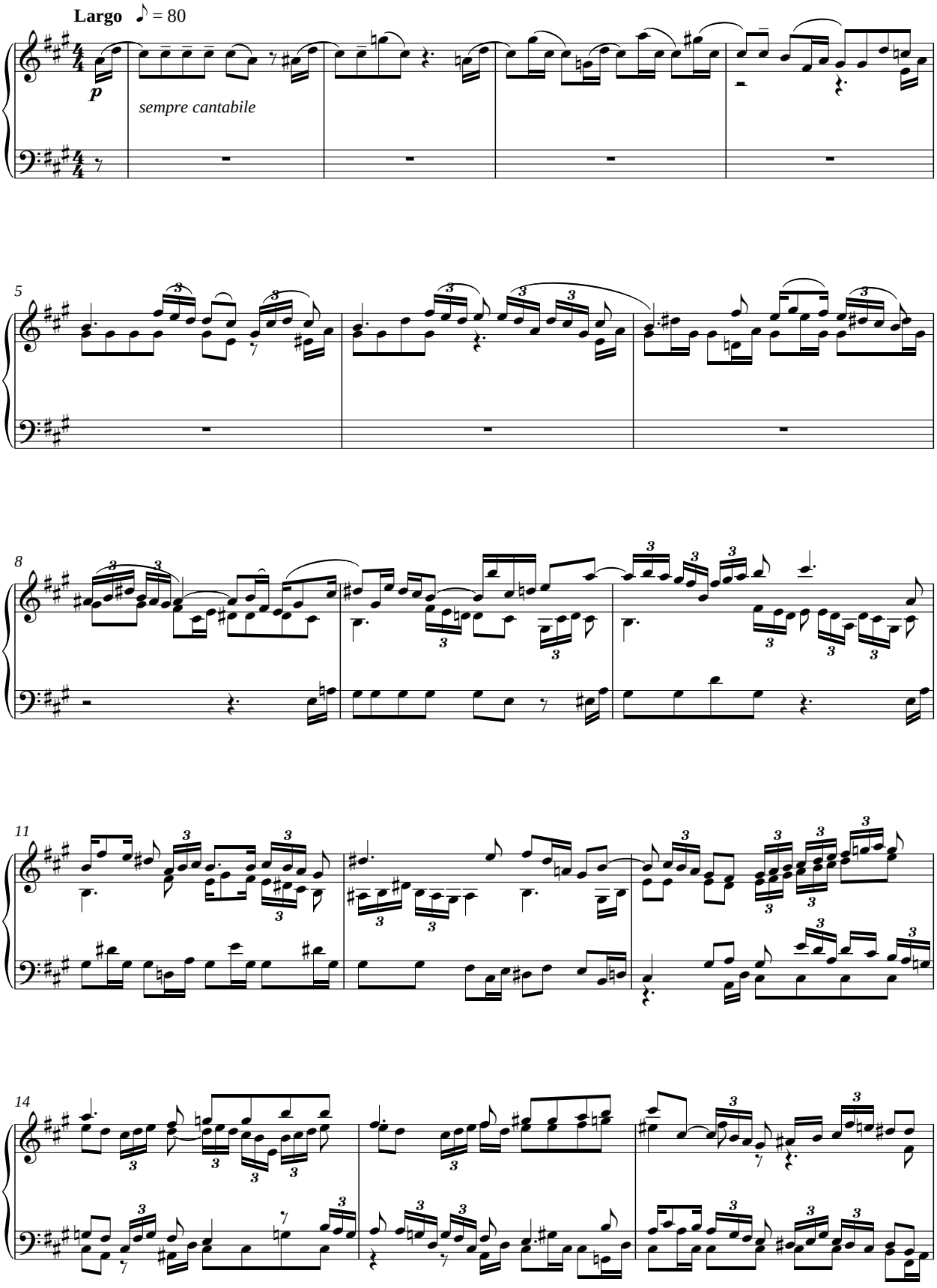
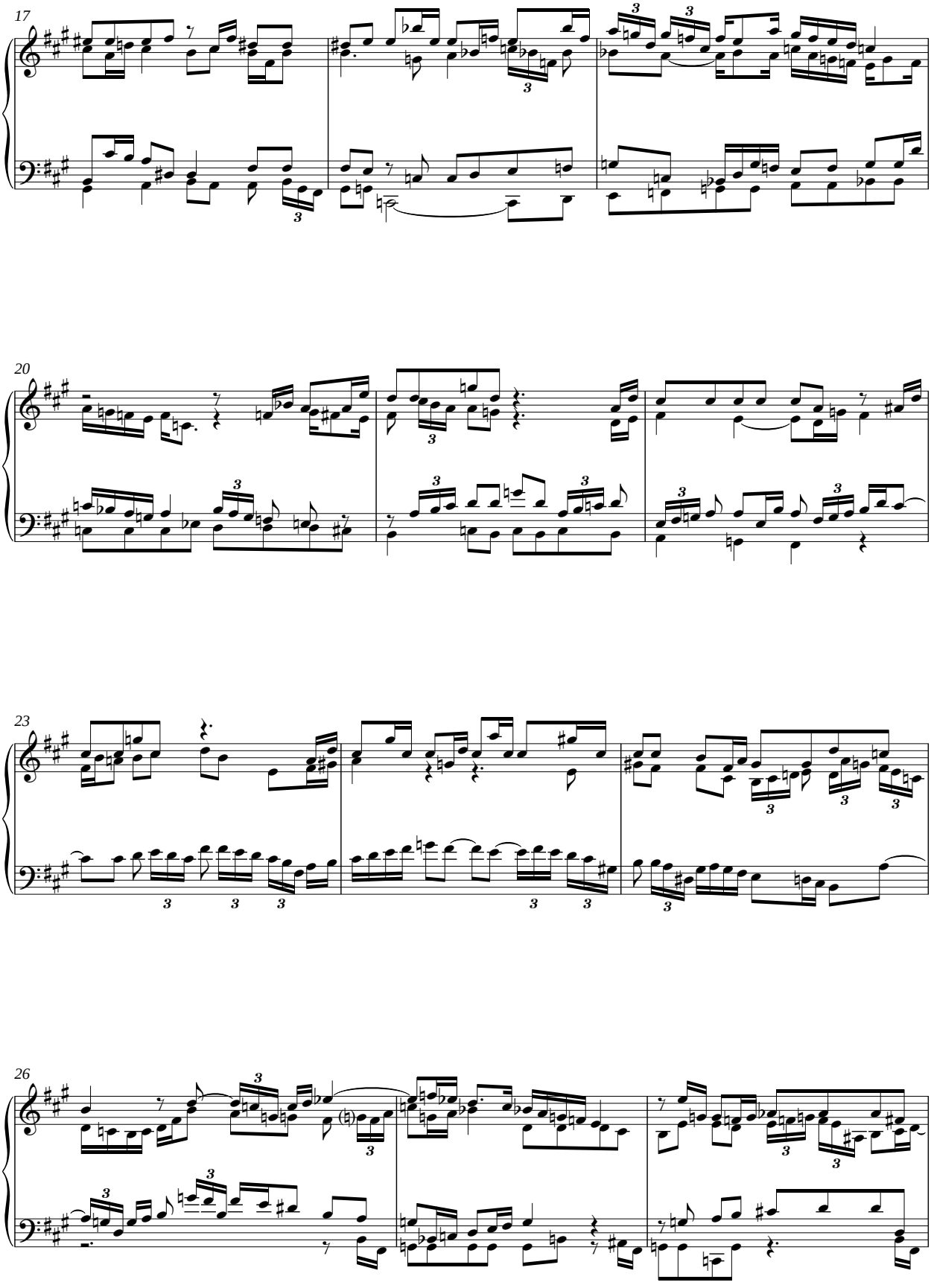
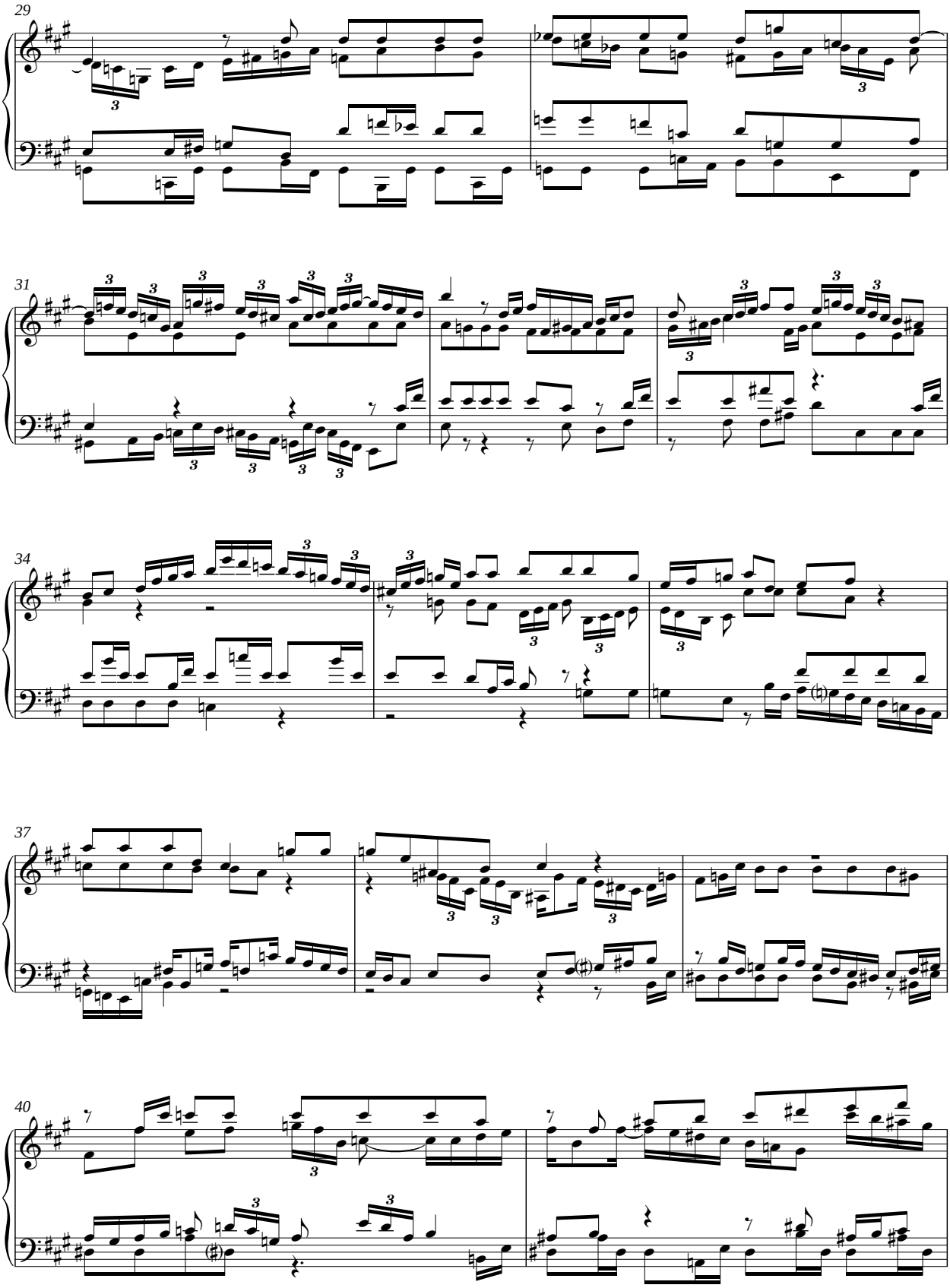
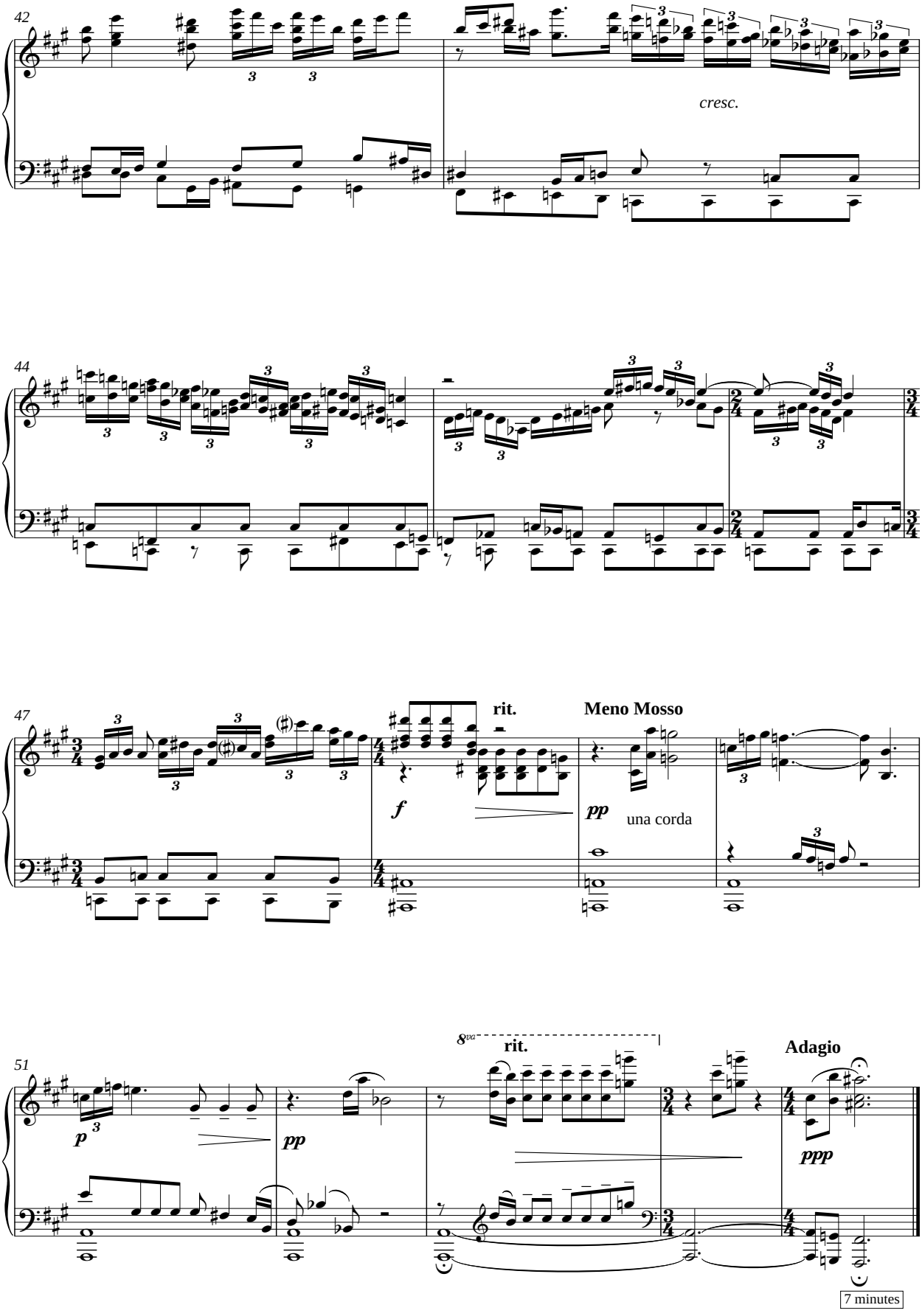
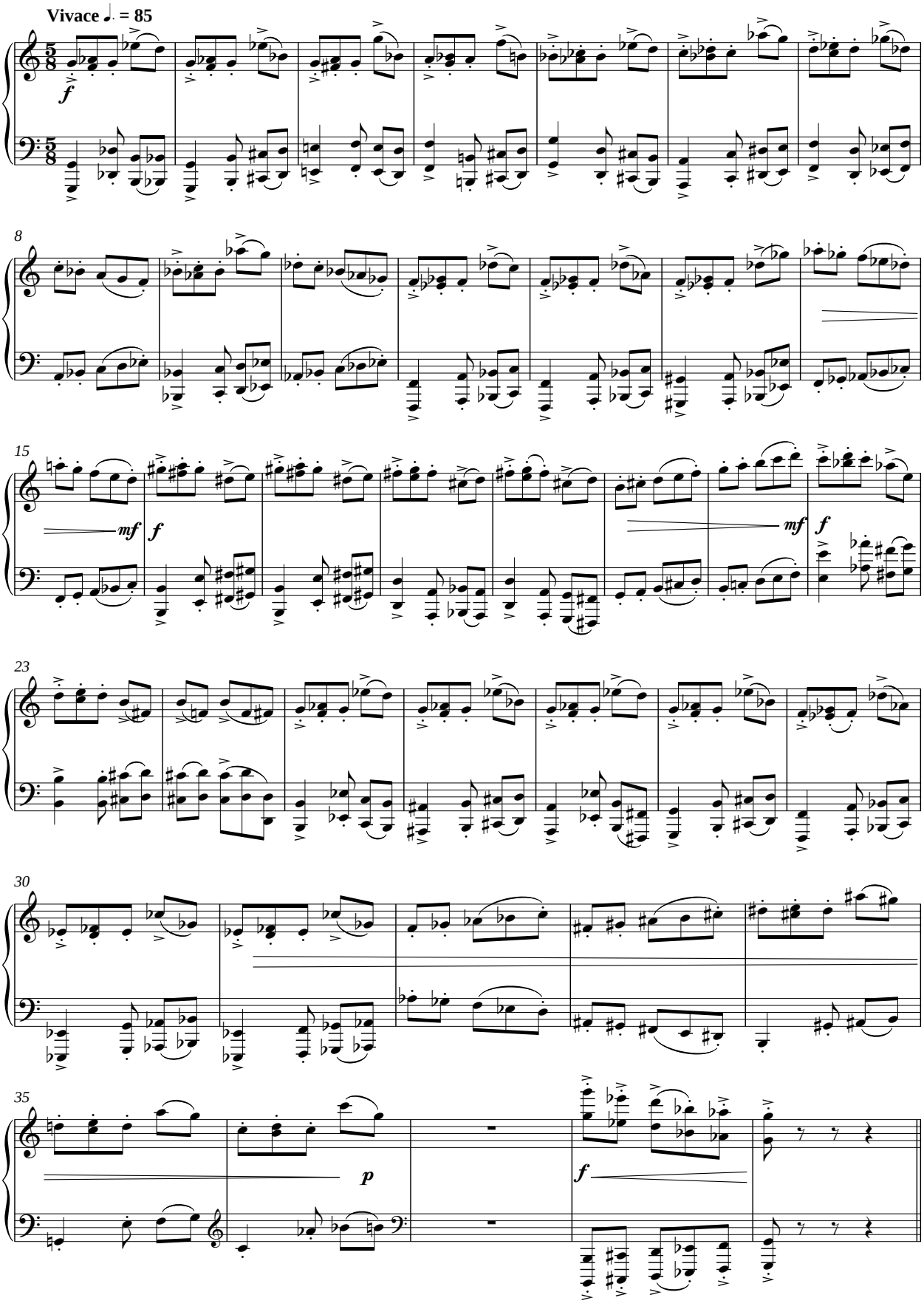

Largo ♪ = 80
p
sempre cantabile
5
8
11
14

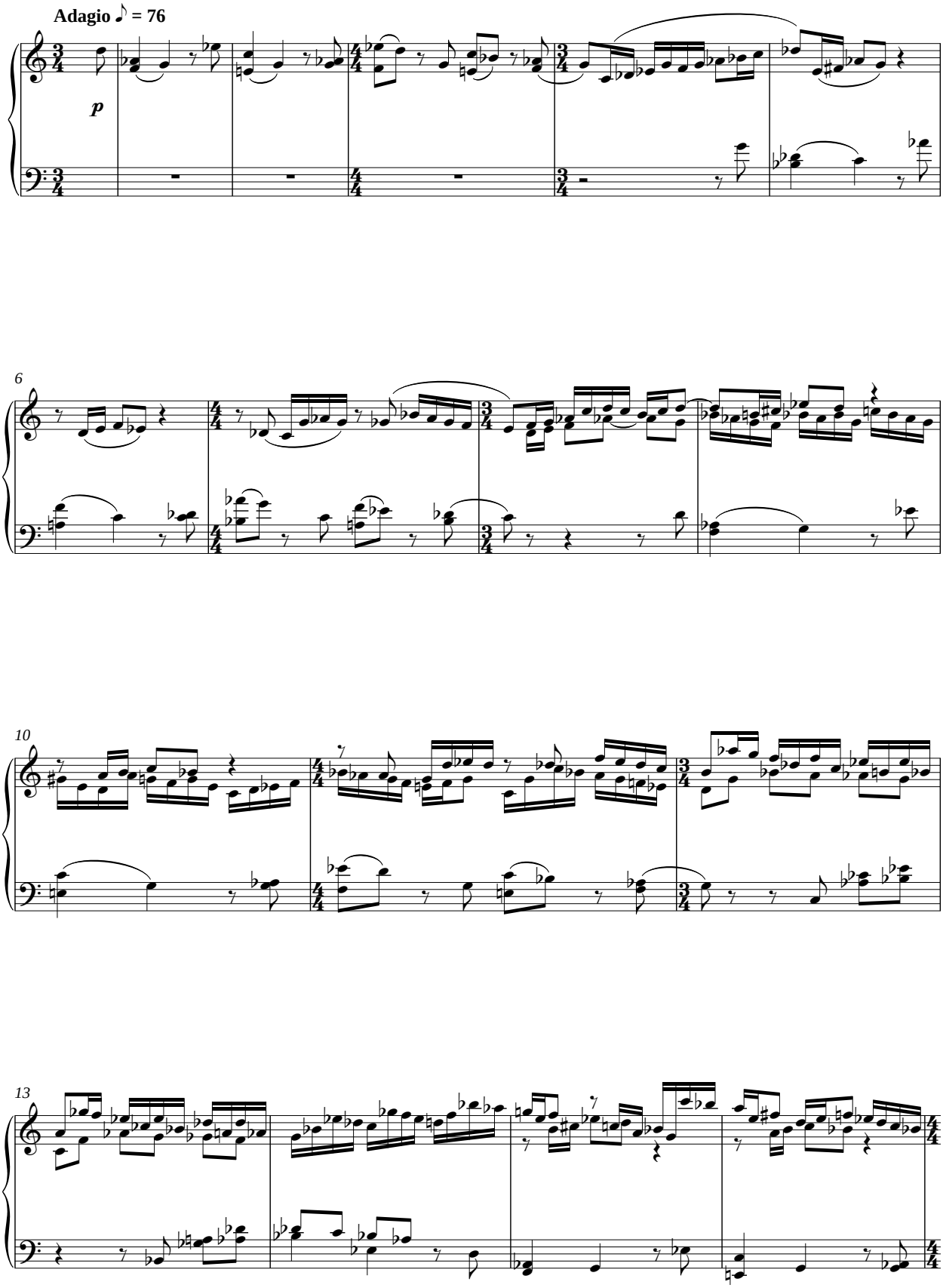

17
20
23
26

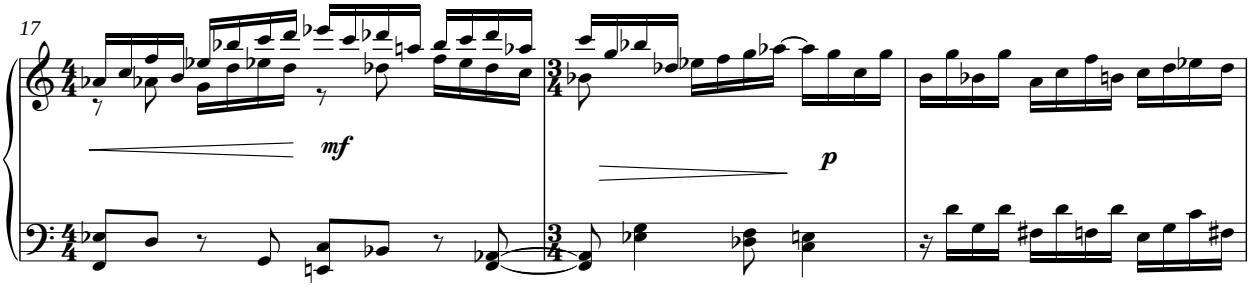

29
31
34
37
40

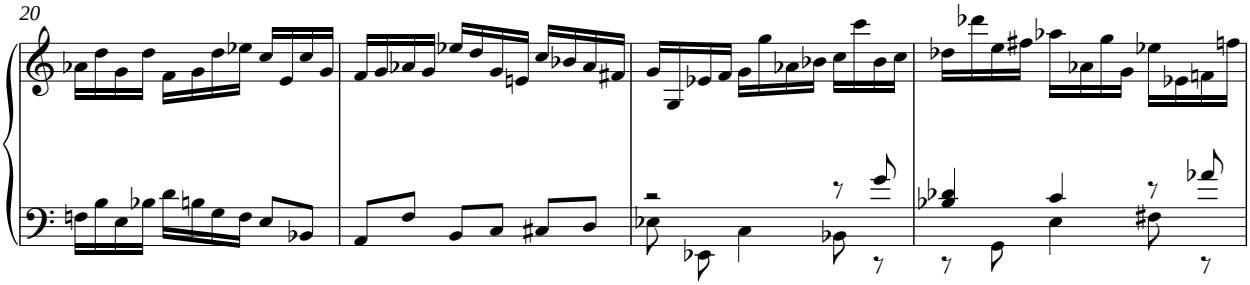

42
cresc.
44
47
rit.
Meno Mosso
f
pp
una corda
51
8va
rit.
Adagio
p
pp
ppp
7 minutes

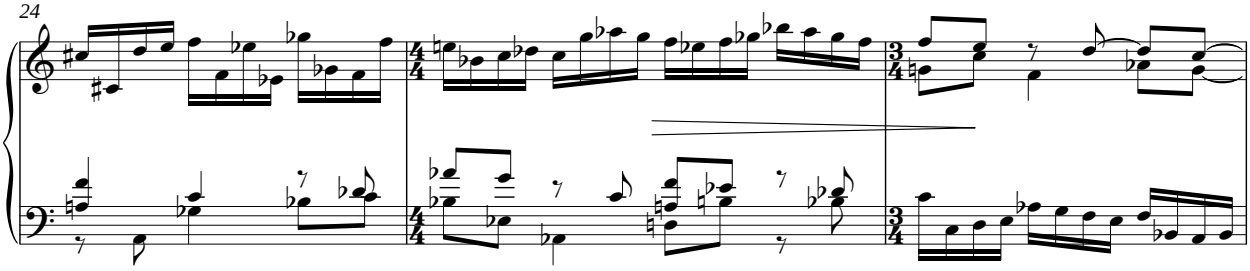
Prelude and Fugue #8

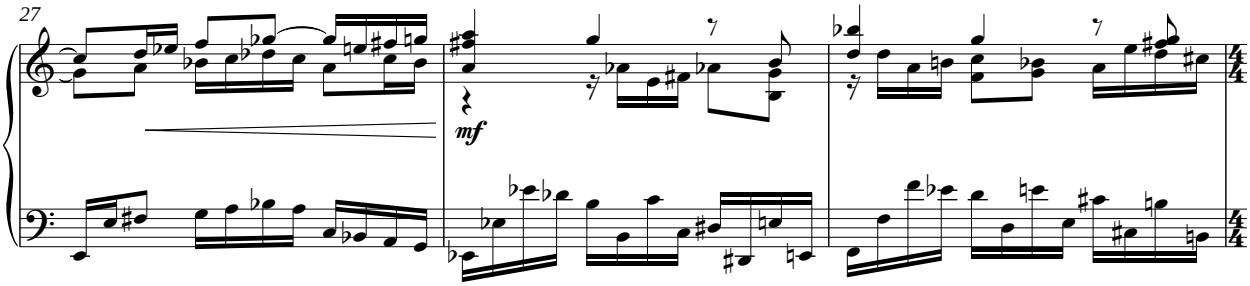


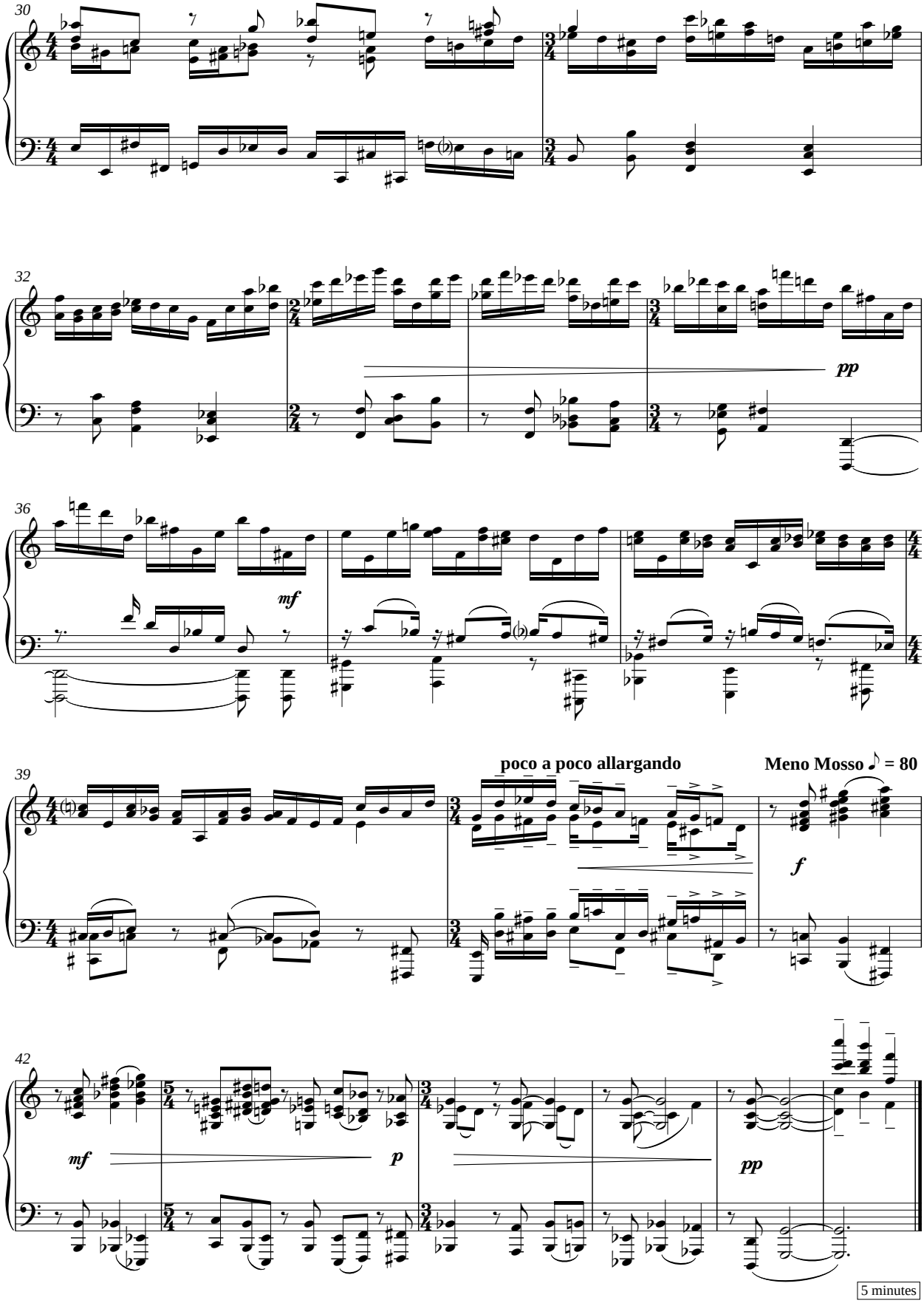

Adagio ♪ = 76
p
6
10
13


17
mf
p

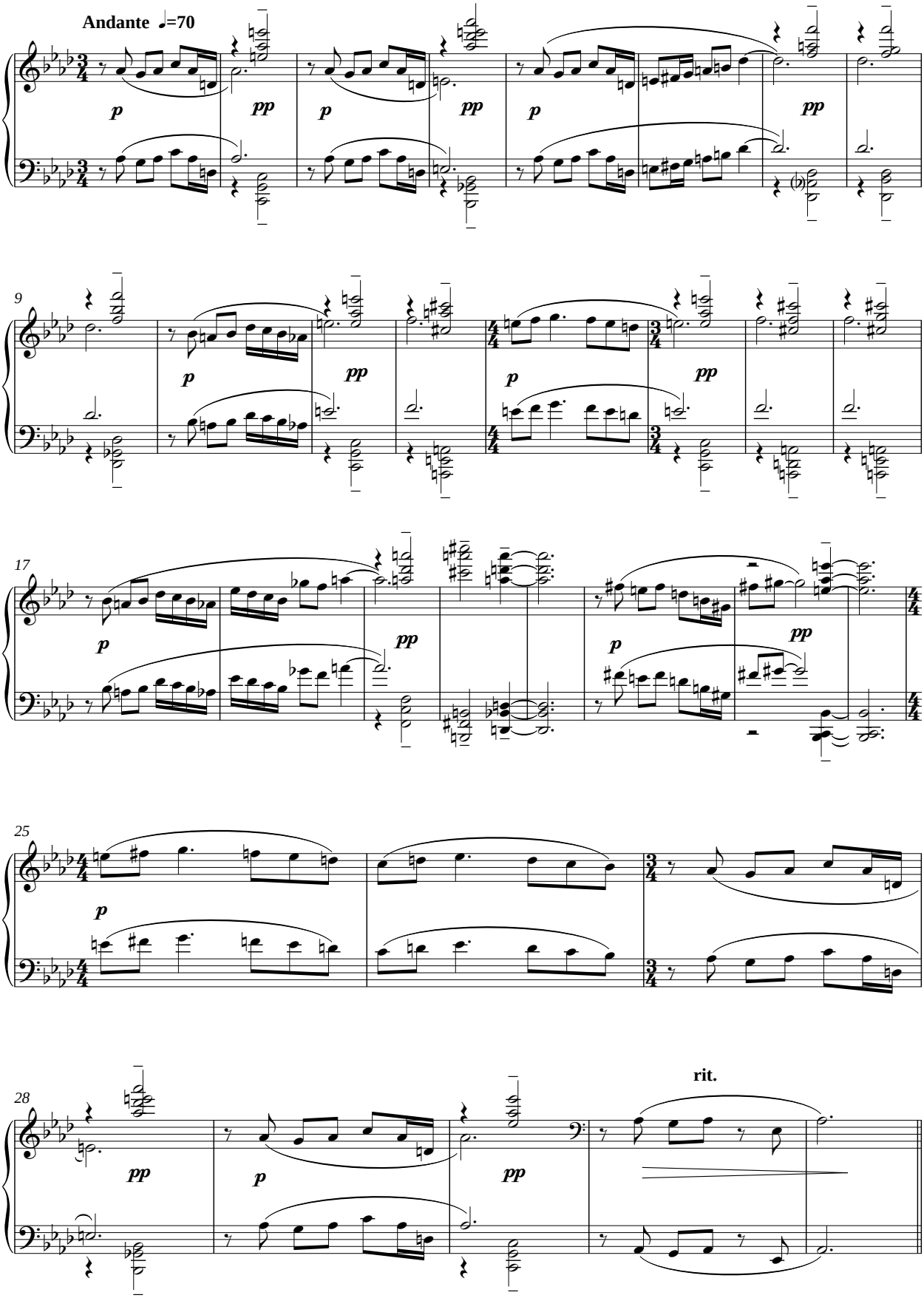

20

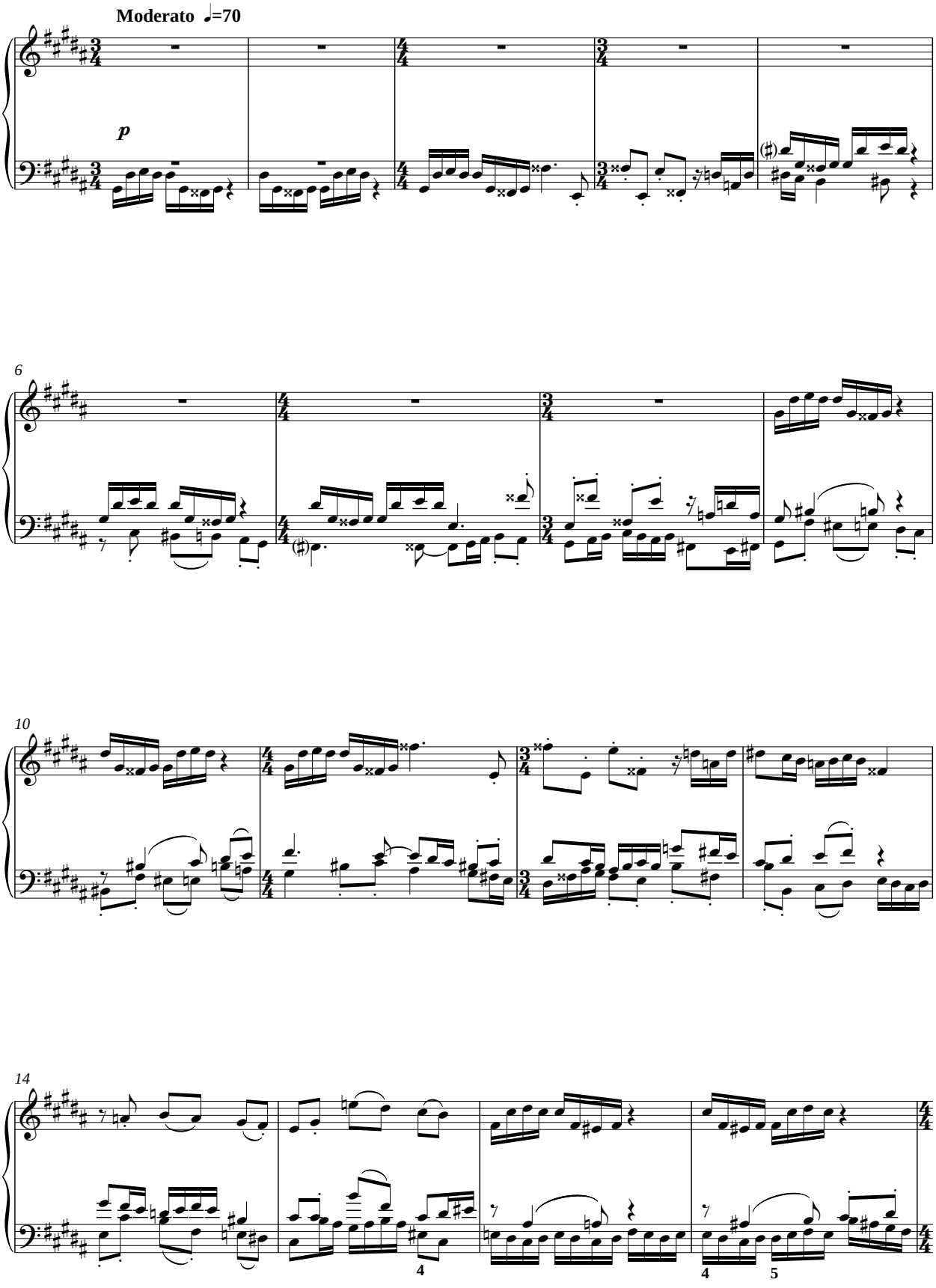

24

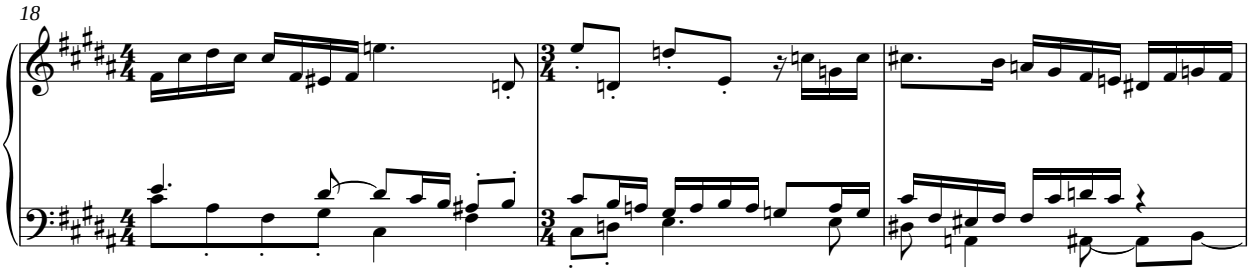

27
mf

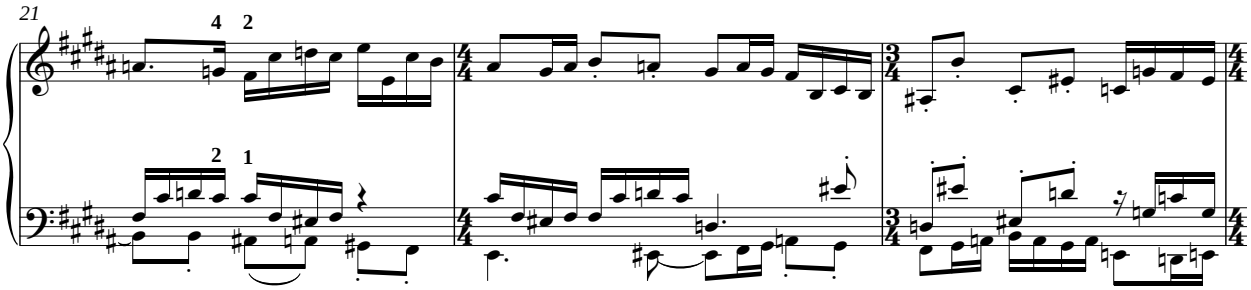

30
32
pp
36
mf
39
poco a poco allargando
Meno Mosso ♪ = 80
f
42
mf
p
pp
5 minutes

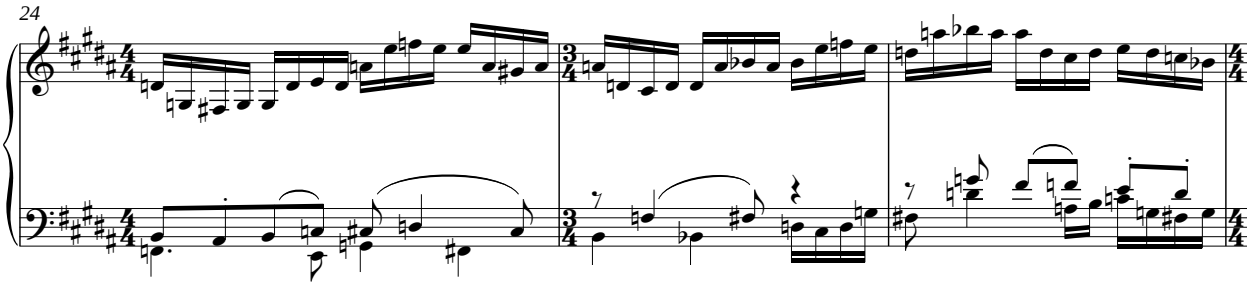
Prelude and Fugue #9

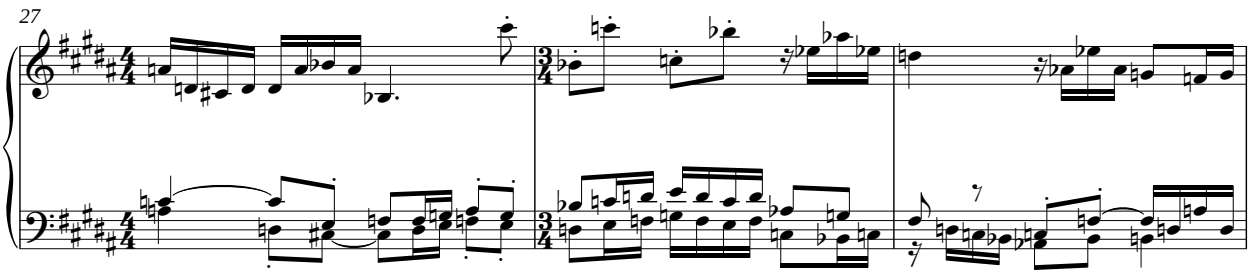


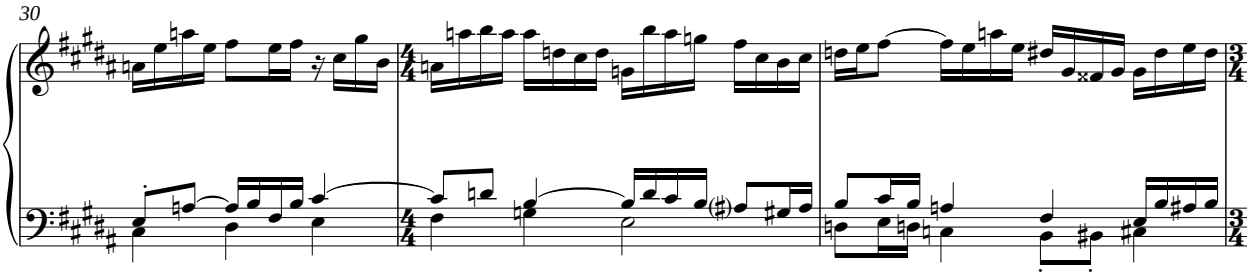

Moderato ♩=70
p
6
10
14
4
4
5

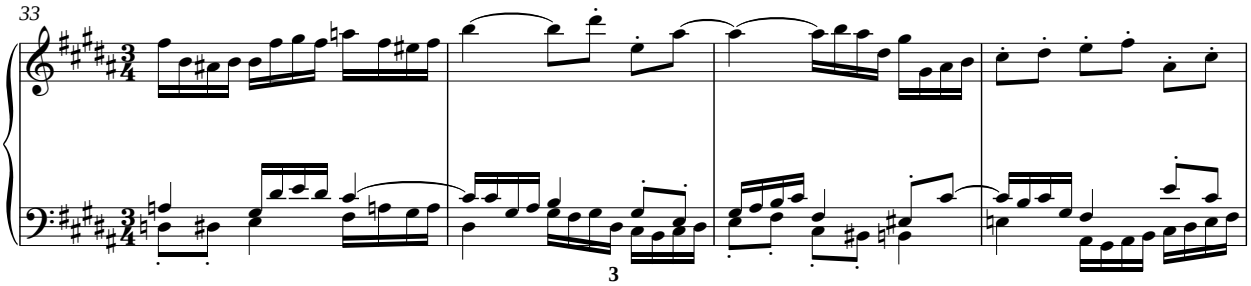

18

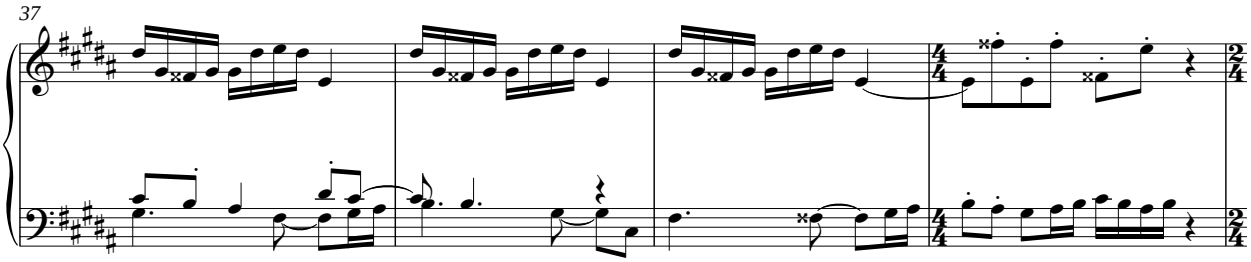

21
4
2
2
1

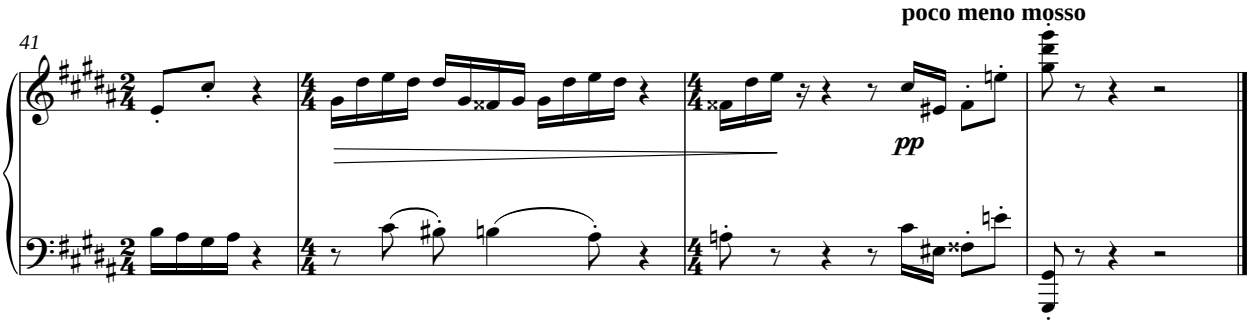

24


27









3.5 minutes

Prelude and Fugue #10

Molto moderato ♩ = 70

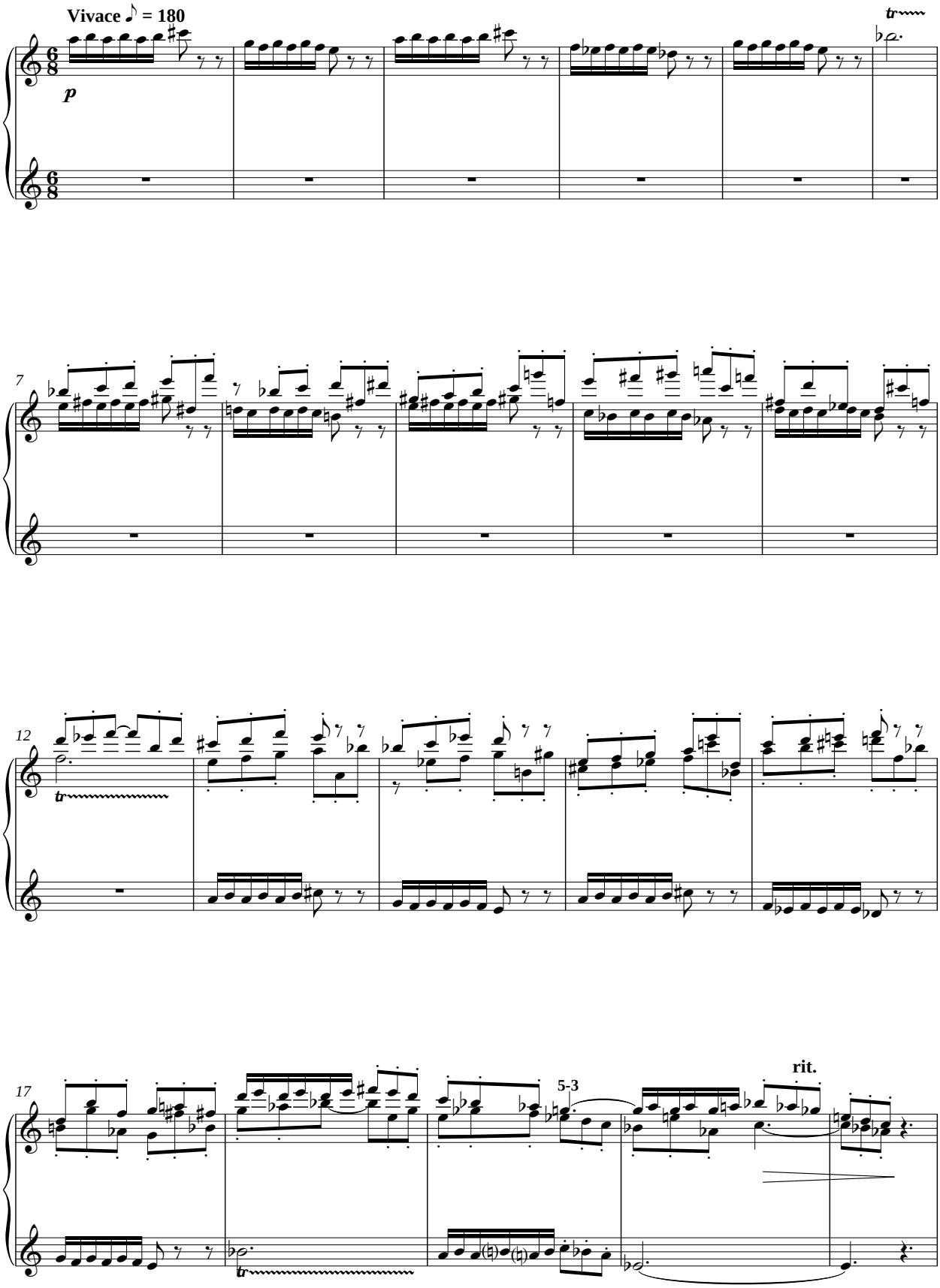
p

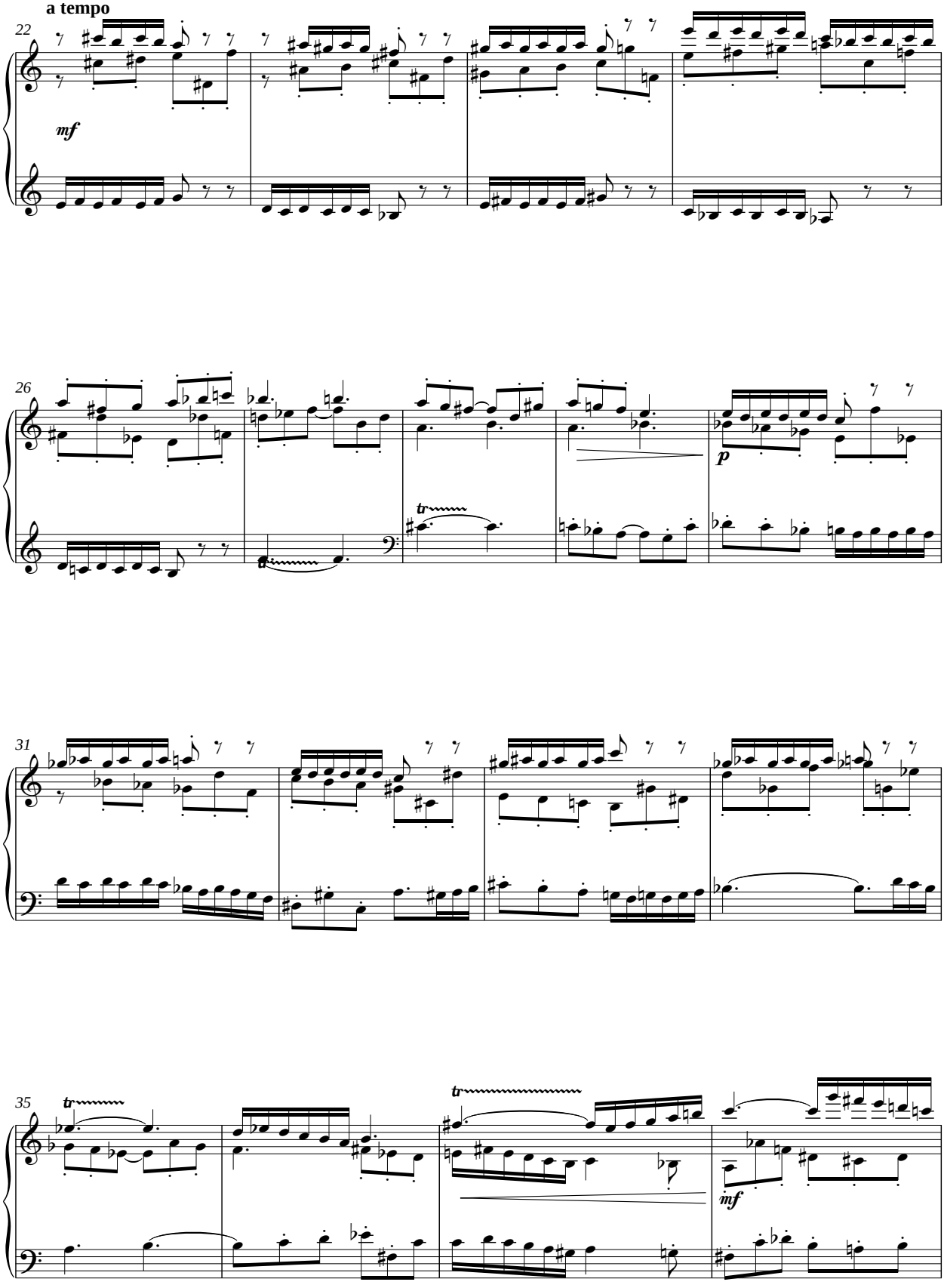
5

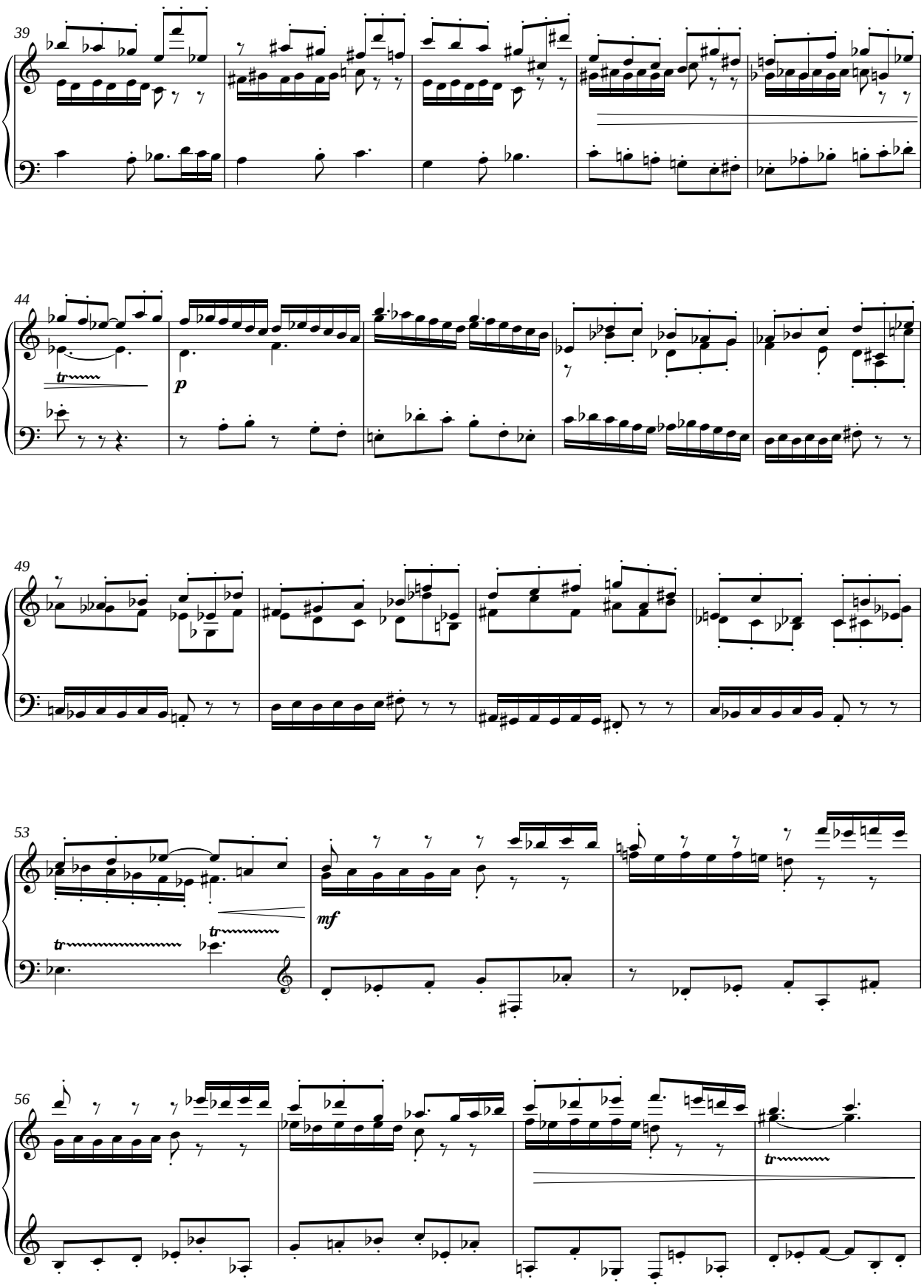
9

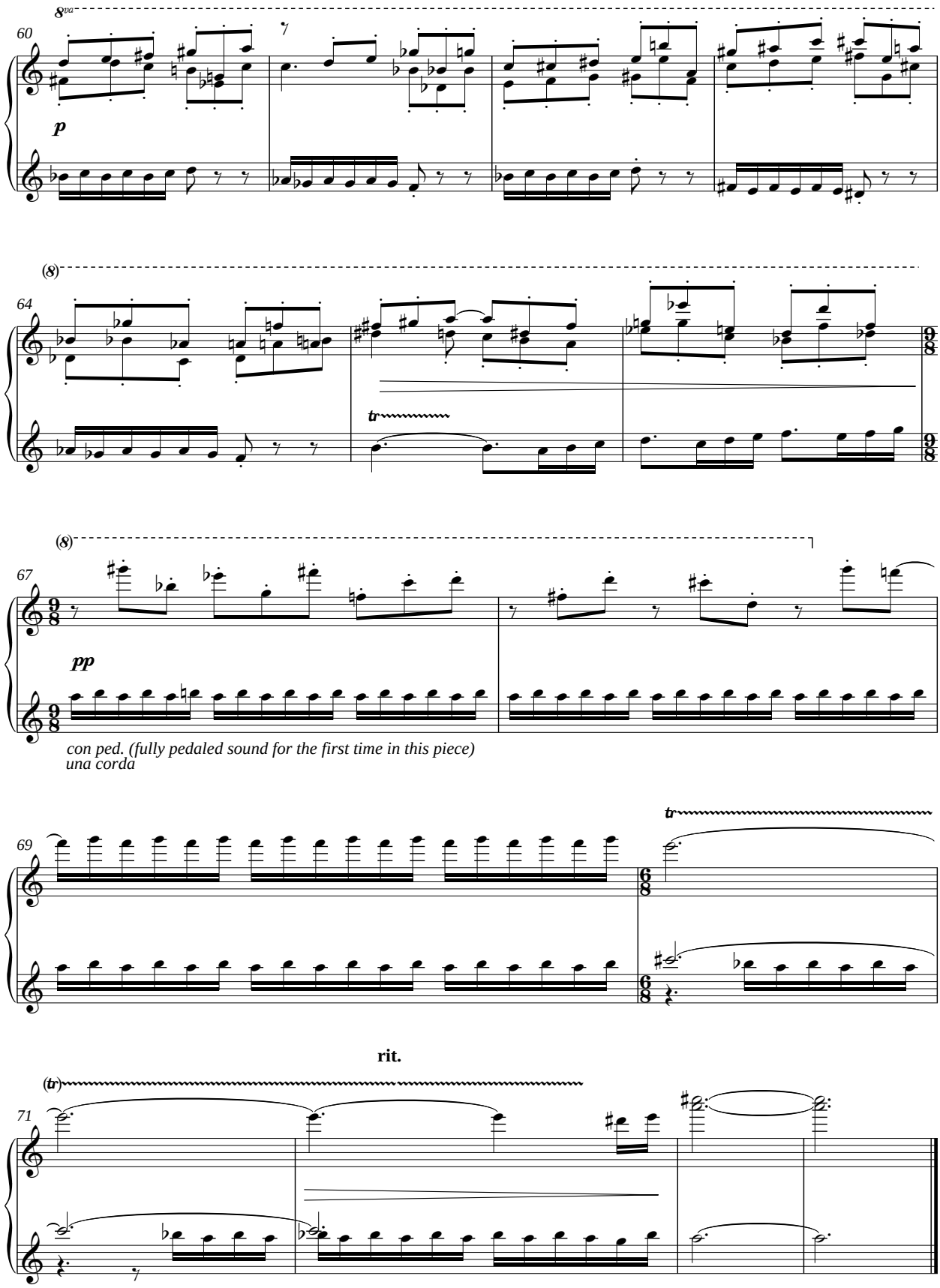
13

meno mosso


Vivace ♪ = 180
p
tr
7
12
tr
17
5-3
rit.
tr

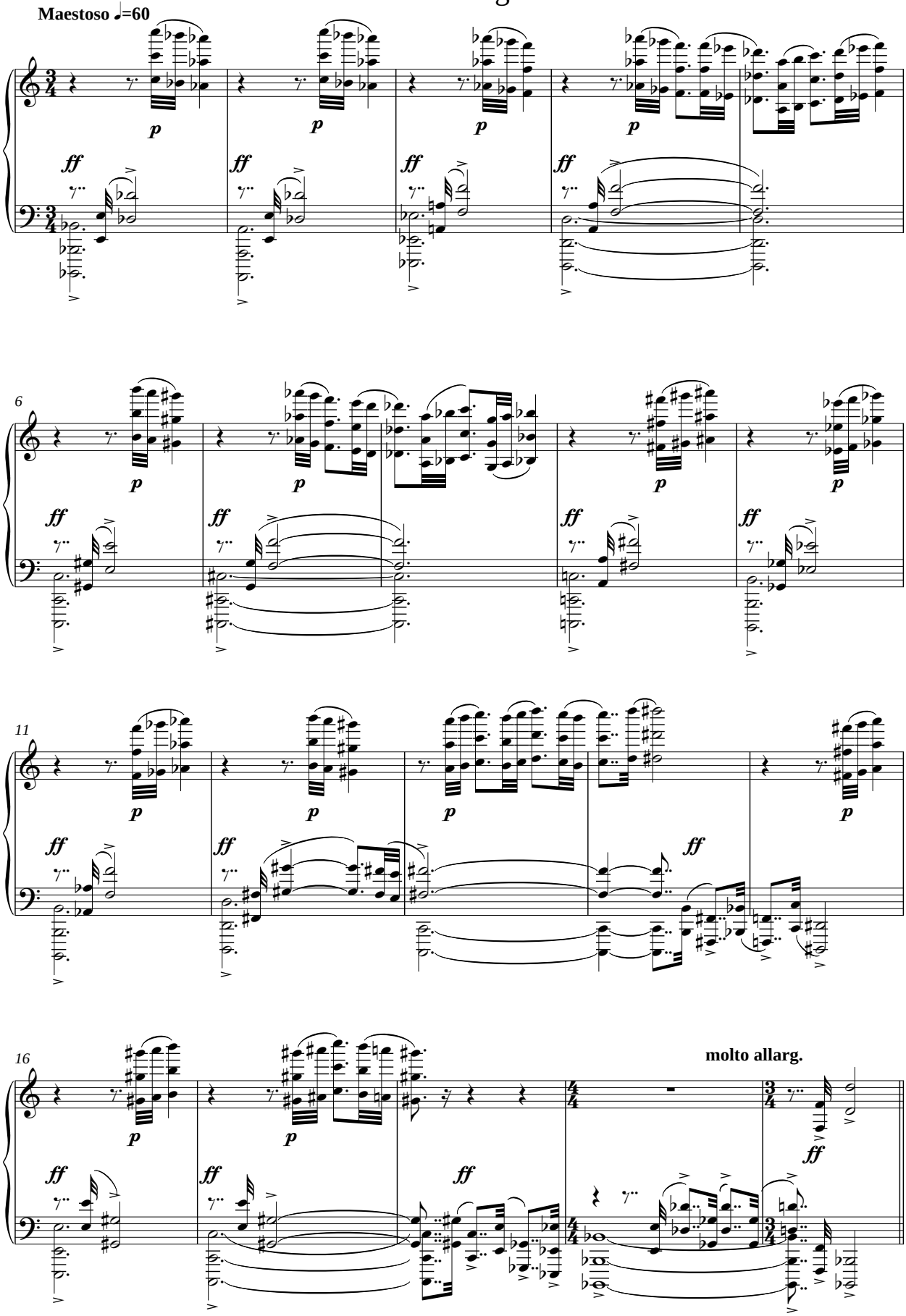

a tempo
22
mf
26
tr
p
31
35
tr
tr
mf

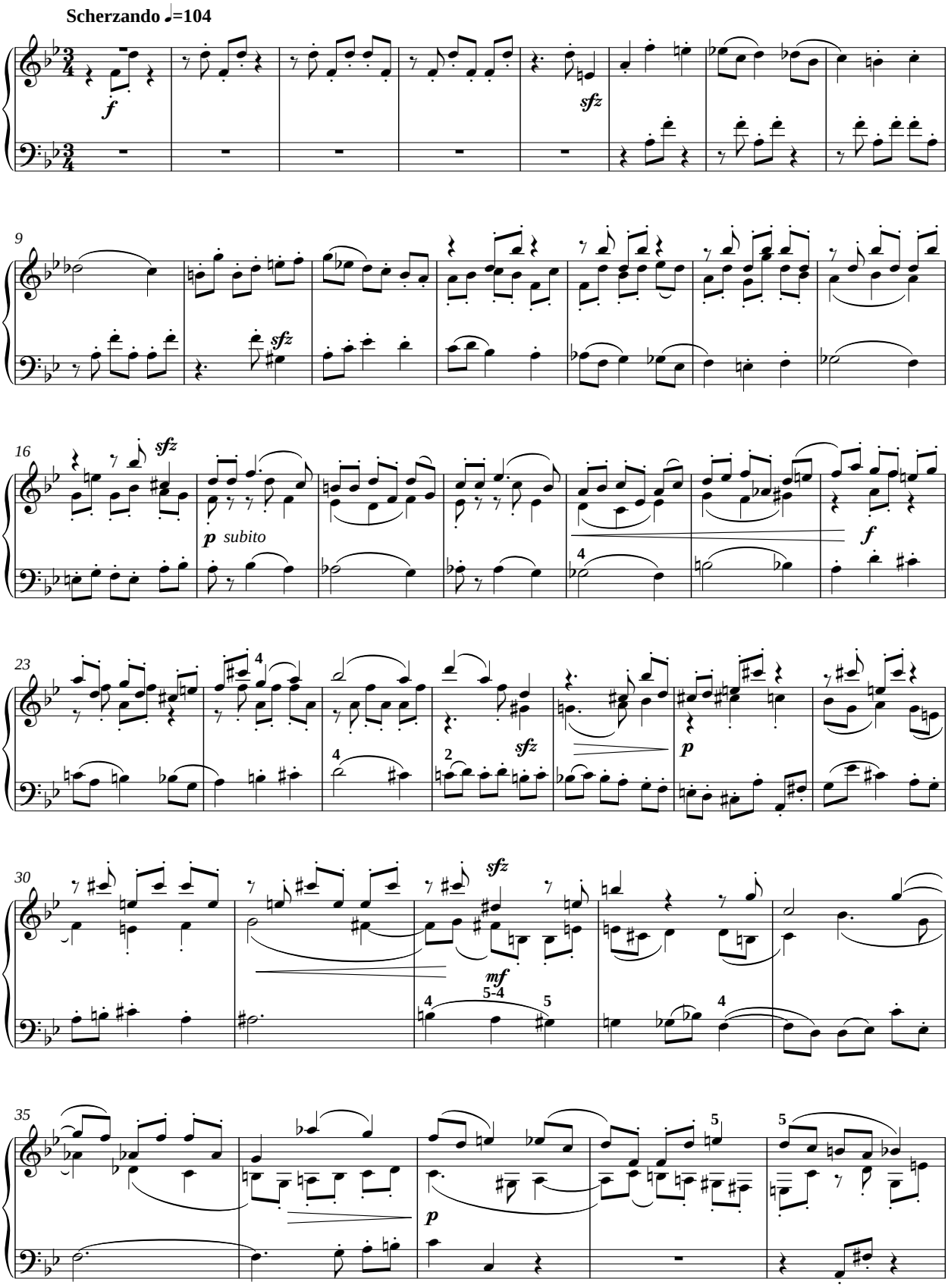

39
44
tr
p
49
53
tr
tr
mf
56
tr

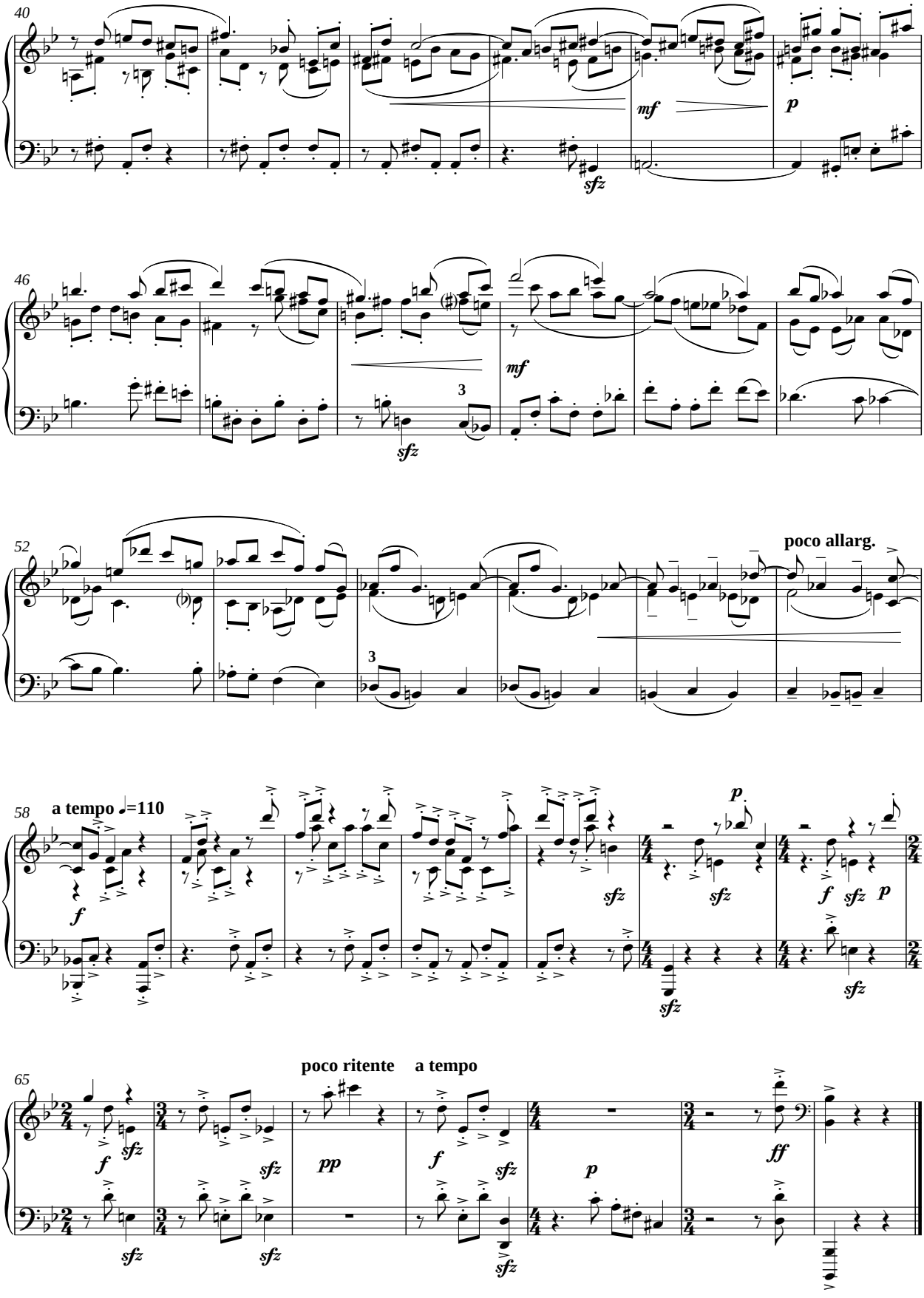

8va
60
7
p
(8)
64
tr
(8)
67
pp
con ped. (fully pedaled sound for the first time in this piece)
una corda
69
tr
rit.
(tr)
71

3.5 minutes

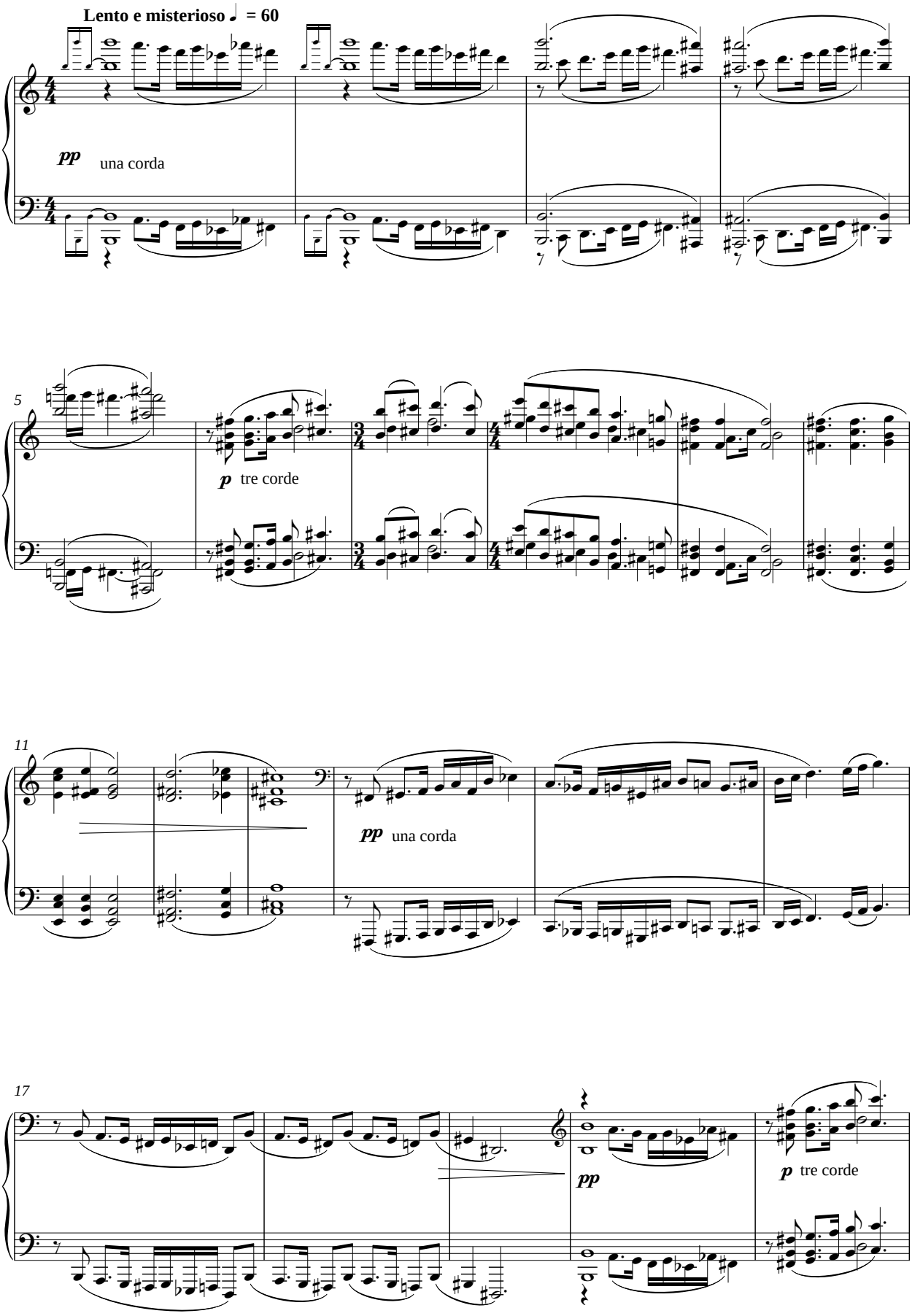
Prelude and Fugue #11

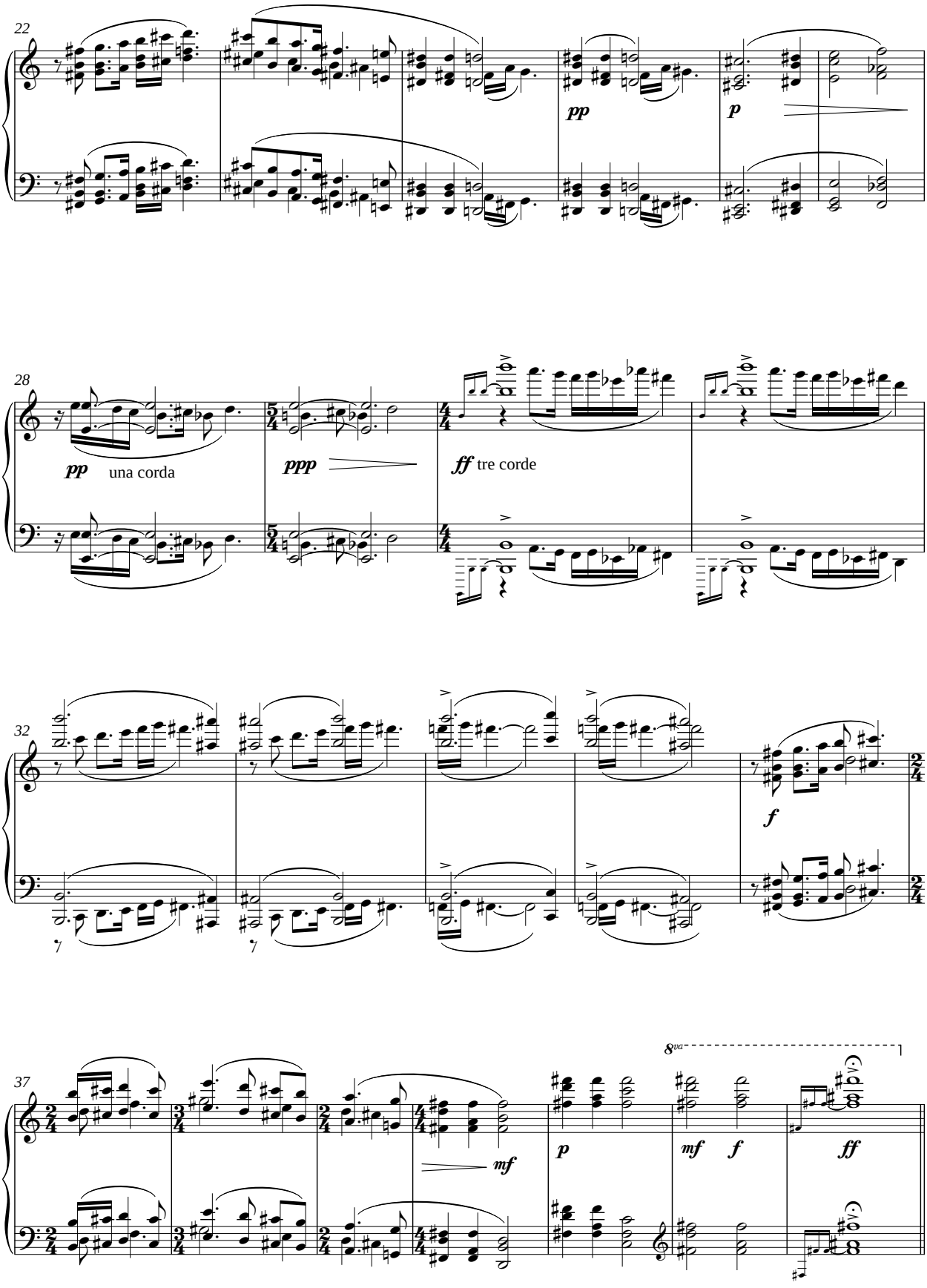


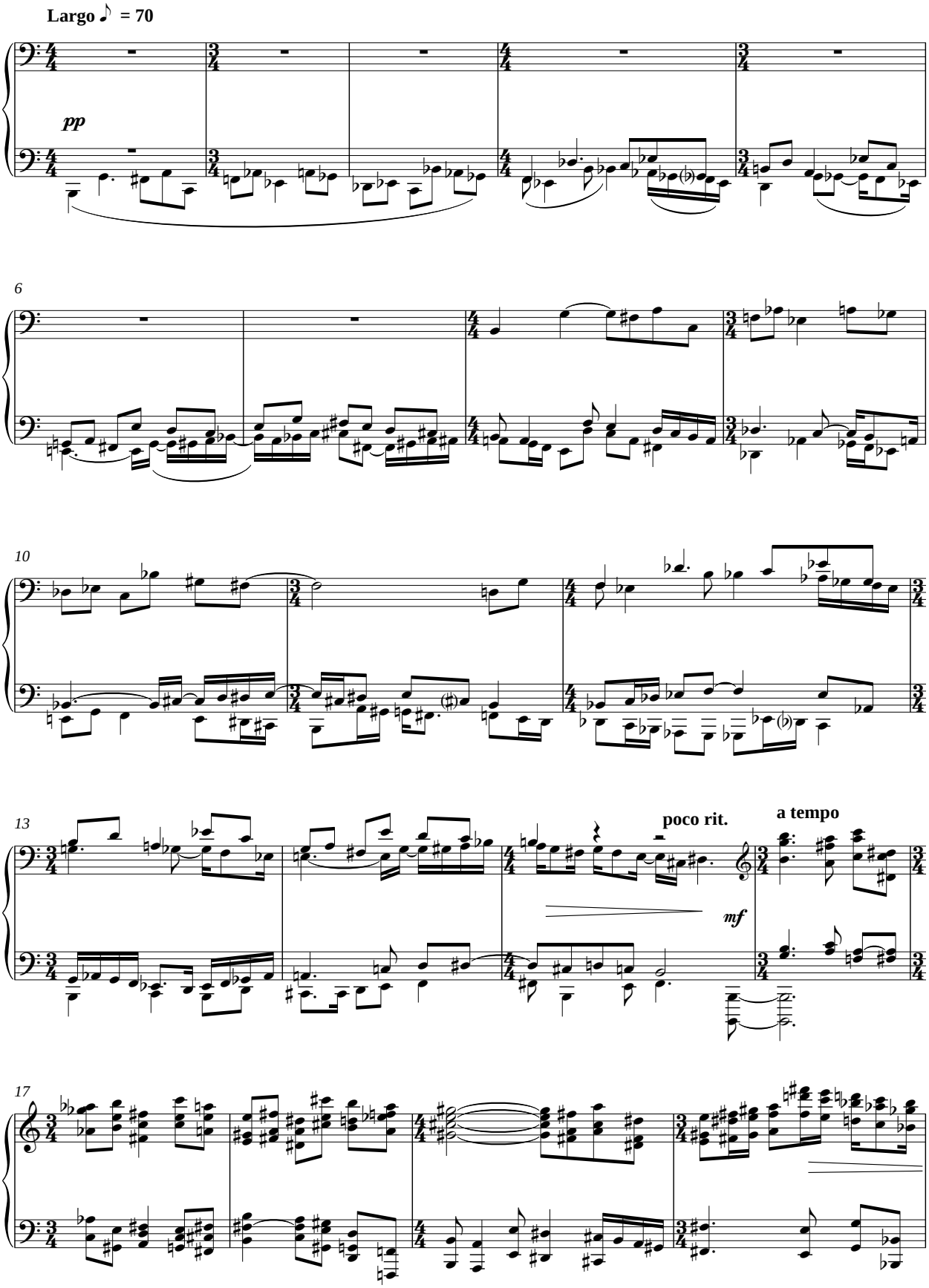

Scherzando ♩=104
f
sfz
9
sfz
16
sfz
p subito
f
23
sfz
p
30
sfz
mf
35
p

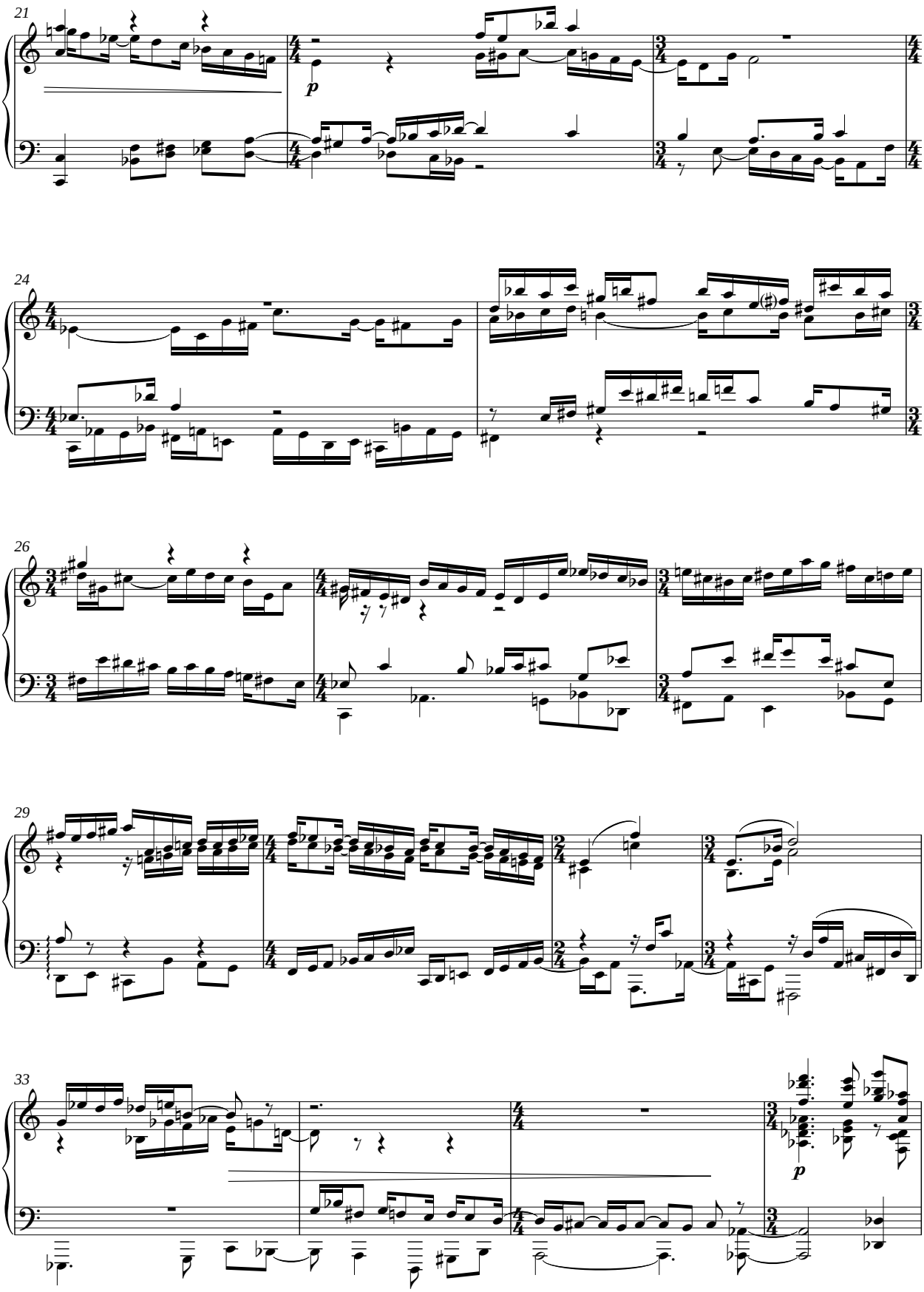

40
mf
p
sfz
46
mf
3
sfz
52
poco allarg.
3
58
a tempo ♩=110
f
sfz
p
65
poco ritente
a tempo
pp
ff
3 minutes

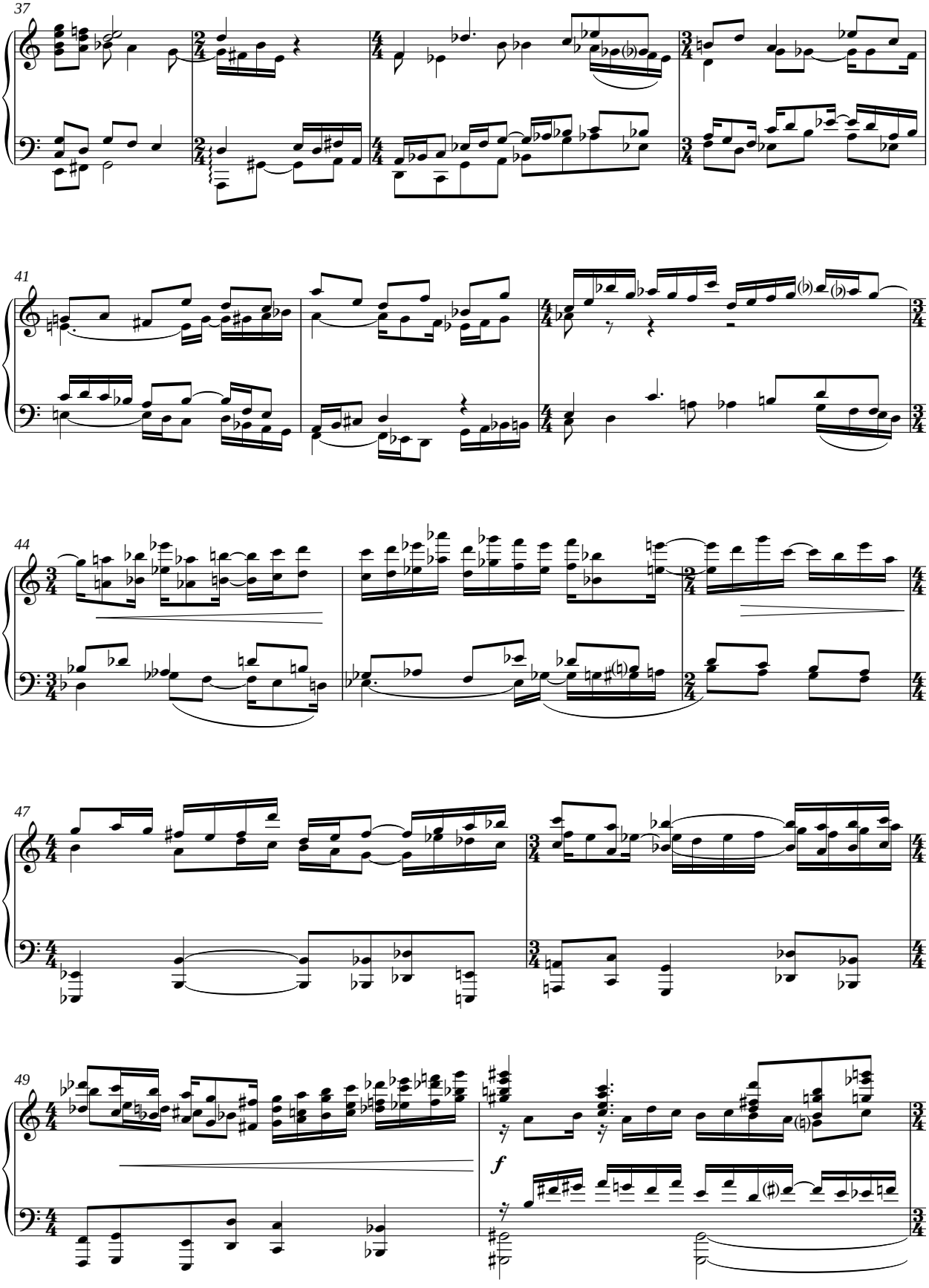
Prelude and Fugue #12

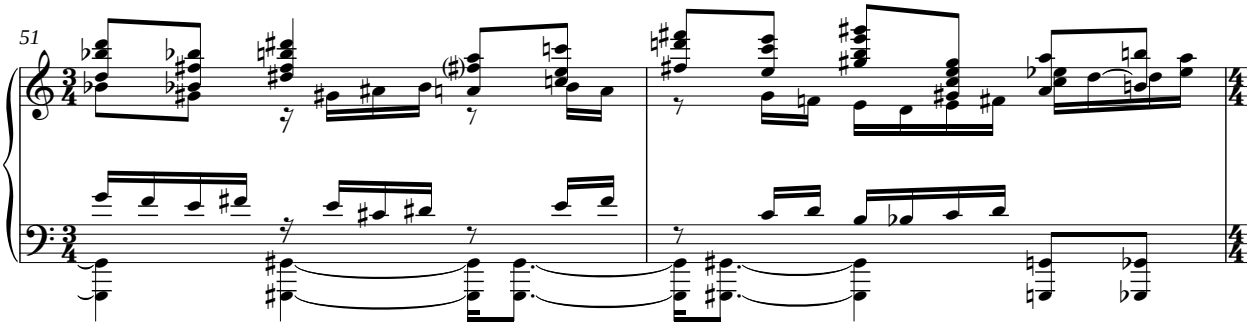


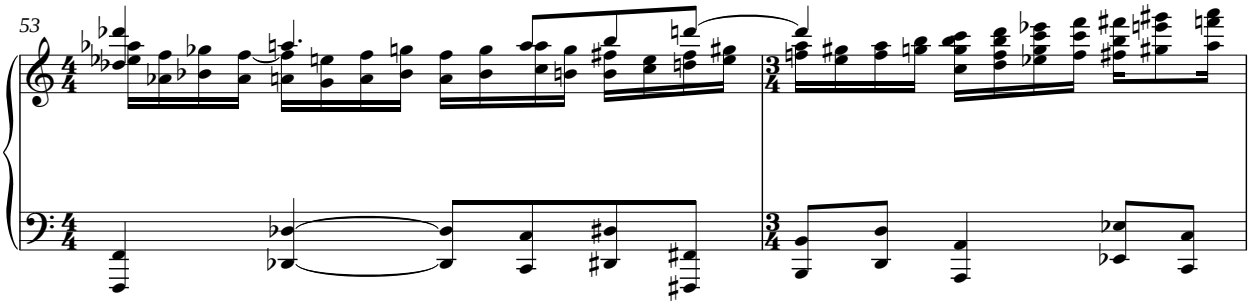

22
pp
p
28
pp una corda
ppp
ff tre corde
32
f
37
mf
p
mf
f
ff
8va

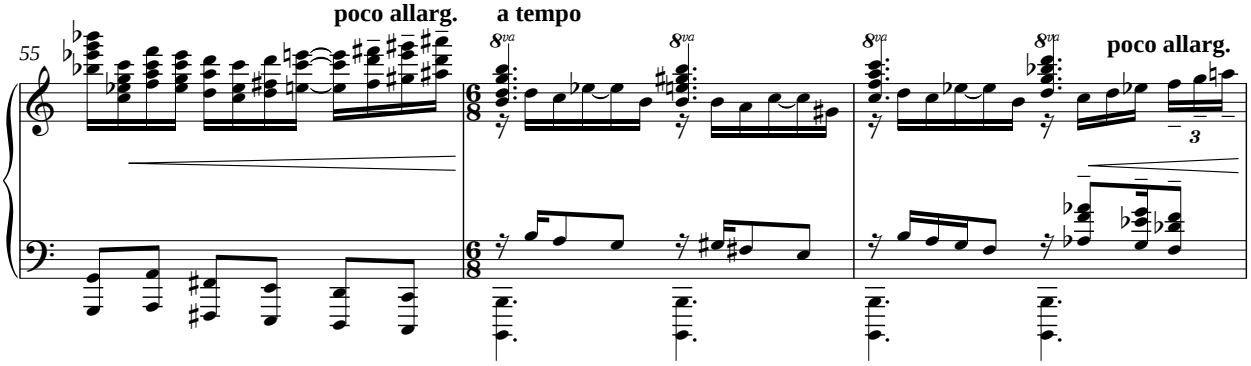

Largo ♪ = 70
pp
6
10
13
poco rit.
a tempo
mf
17

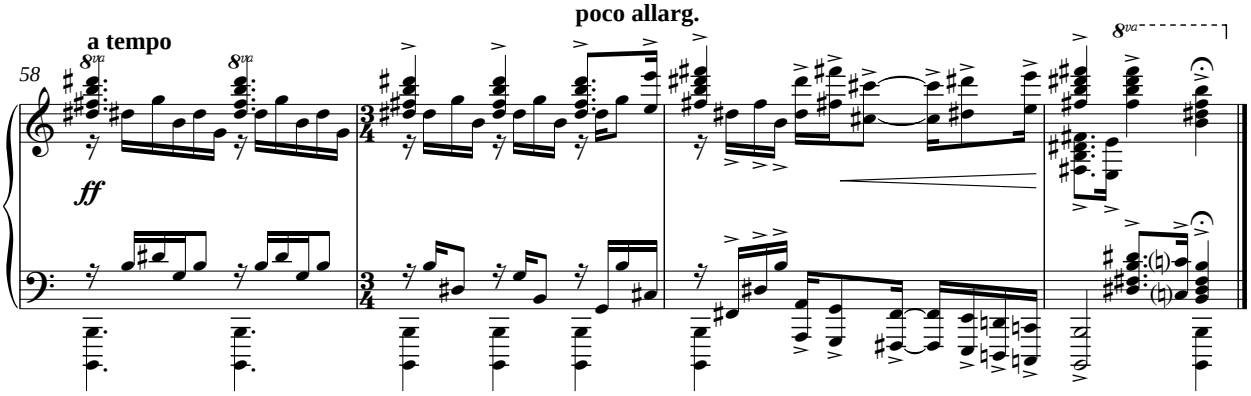

21
p
24
26
29
33
p


37
41
44
47
49
f









5 minutes, 30 seconds