Sergei RACHMANINOV

PRELUDES

Opus 23 N° 5 G minor

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Sergei RACHMANINOV

1873 - 1843

PRELUDES Opus 23 N° 5 G minor

The composition of 24 preludes covering all the major and minor keys is a huge challenge and Rachmaninov's contribution was spread over 20 years. As an active and successful stage artist at the piano and on the podium, time for composing was no doubt limited, unlike Debussy who completed his 24 Preludes in less than 6 months.

The ten works which comprise opus 23 were created over two years in the early 1900s whilst staying at the Hotel America in Moscow. Dedicated to his mentor and colleague Alexander Siloti, Rachmaninov believed that these works were far superior to his youthful first prelude, but audiences always clamoured for the "Bells of Moscow", much to his intense irritation.

The tempo indicated is very fast and Rachmaninov performed the opening pages of this Prelude faithfully, the central section therefore *molto meno mosso*; beautifully constructed, it is at once polyphonic, lyrical and highly romantic, imaginatively framed by the energetic and contrasting *Alla marcia.* However, many successful performances are taken at a more sedate tempo. It is suggested that diamond-headed notes might be omitted. **17-22** — for an alternative interpretation, these accompanying figures can be played less forcefully. Rachmaninov gave its first performance in Moscow in February 1903, probably the most popular from this opus.

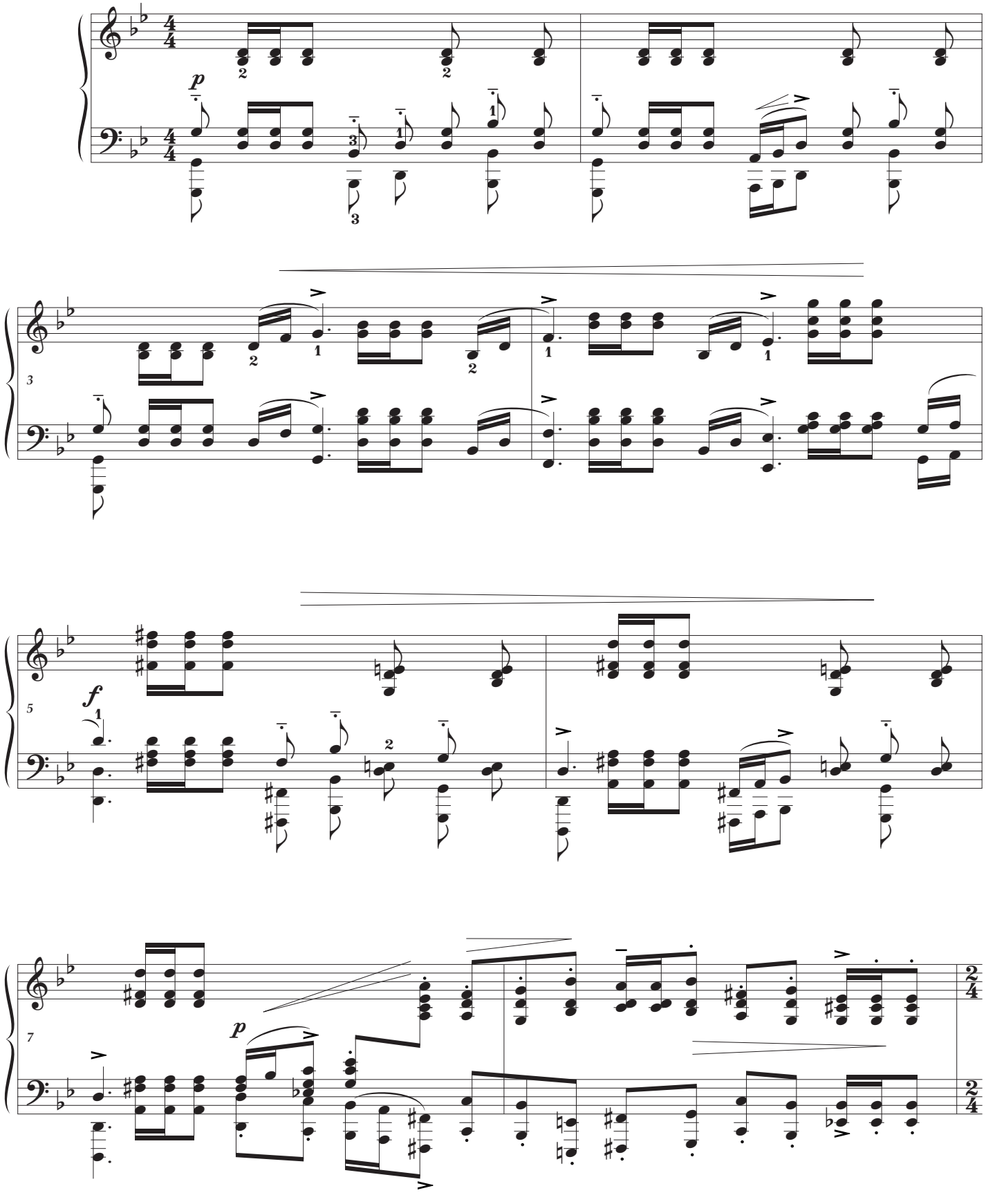
Given that the composer was born in 1873, an age of great artistic individuality, it is not surprising that he typically performed without wholly respecting the score. His choice of tempi are quite idiosyncratic and this edition reflects some of the more effective deviations, and the editor's preferences, sometimes indicated with an asterisk*. When the composer makes minor alterations to the text for repetition, they are not included in this edition; their absence is hardly audible and they are particularly awkward to memorise. In addition, some of the phrasing, dynamics and agogic markings have been sometimes modified; a zealous student will need to consult the original Russian publication by Gutheil or Robert Threlfall's Boosey & Hawkes 1992 edition.

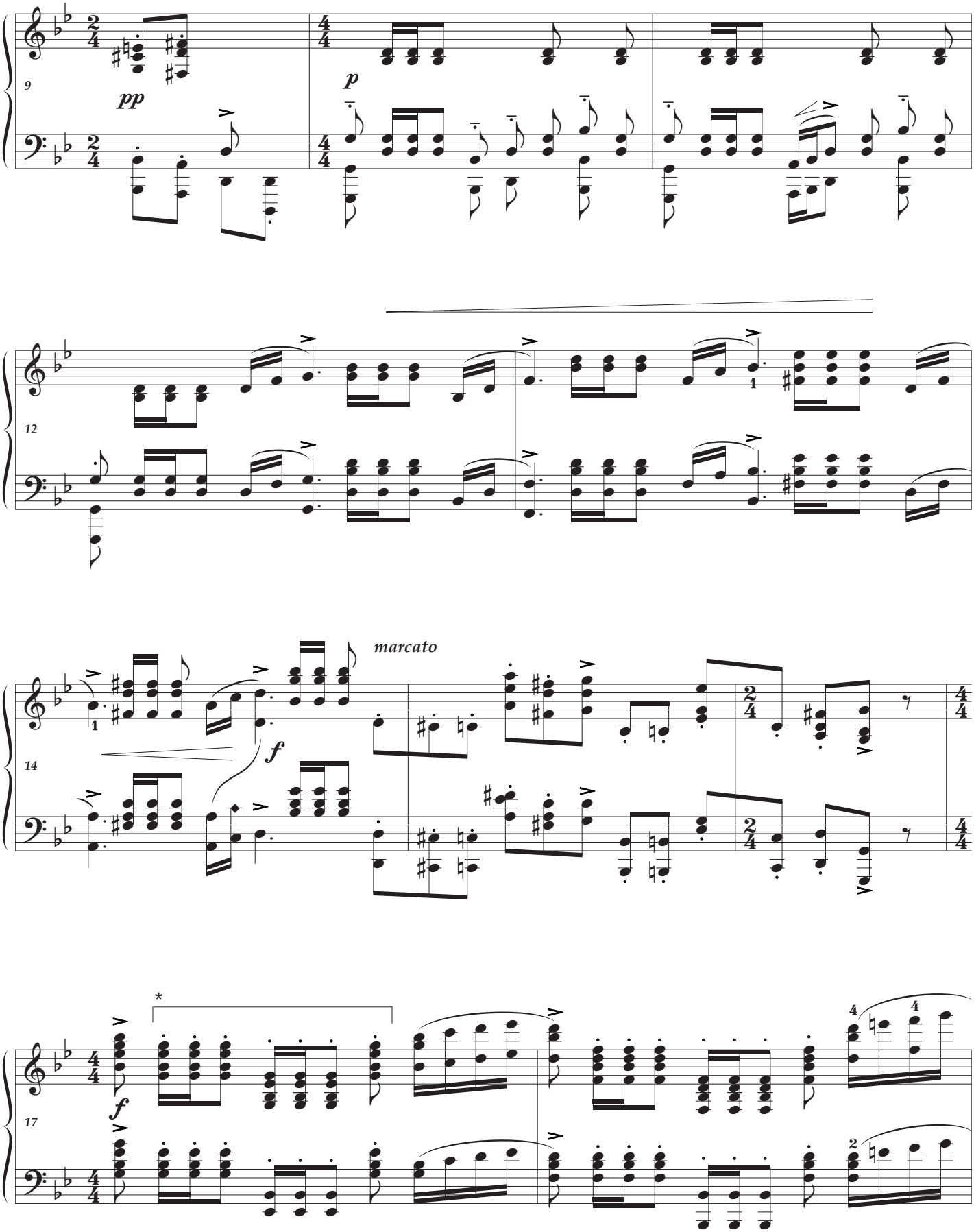
PRELUDE

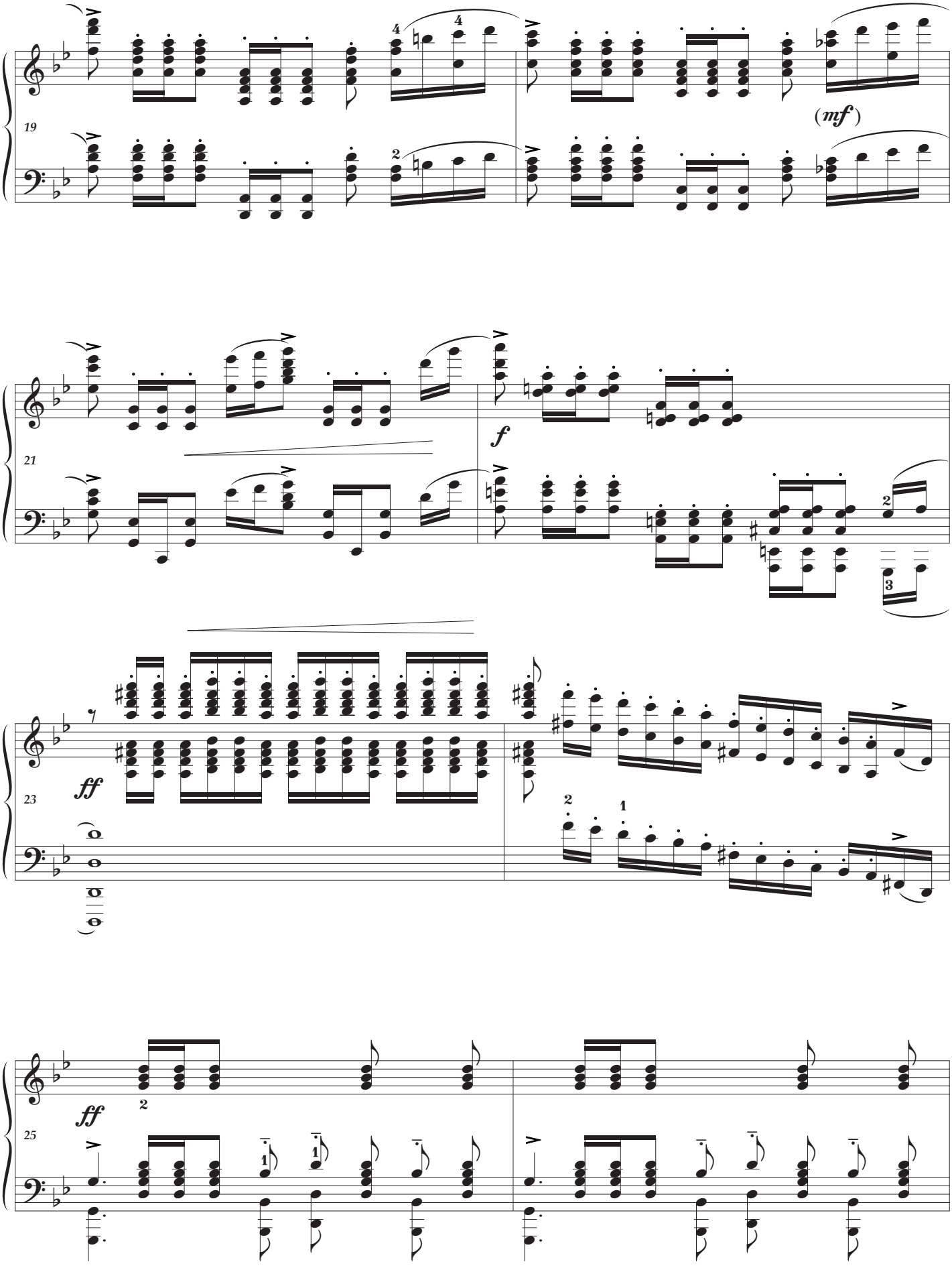
Op 23 Nº 5

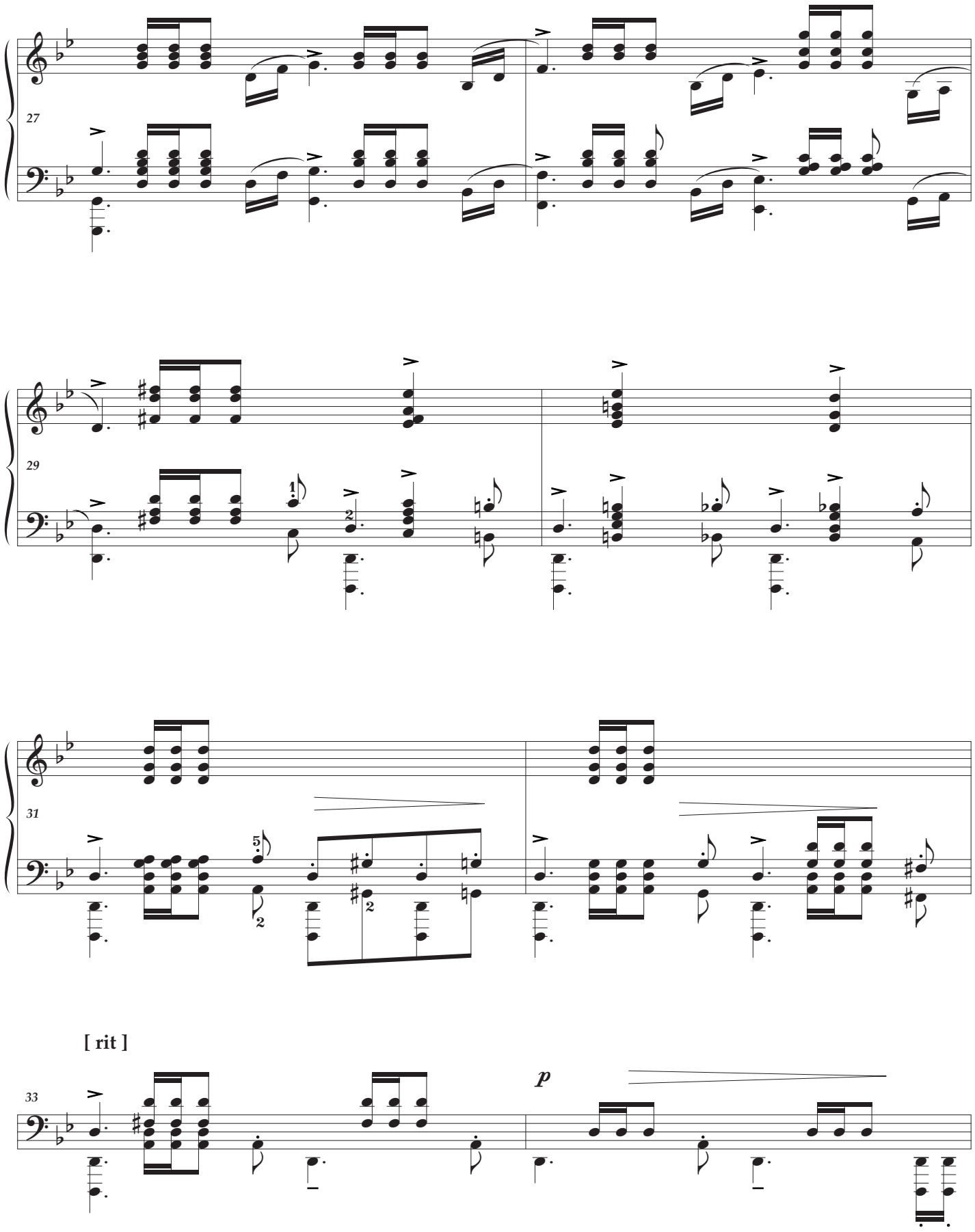
*

alla marcia [♩ = 108]

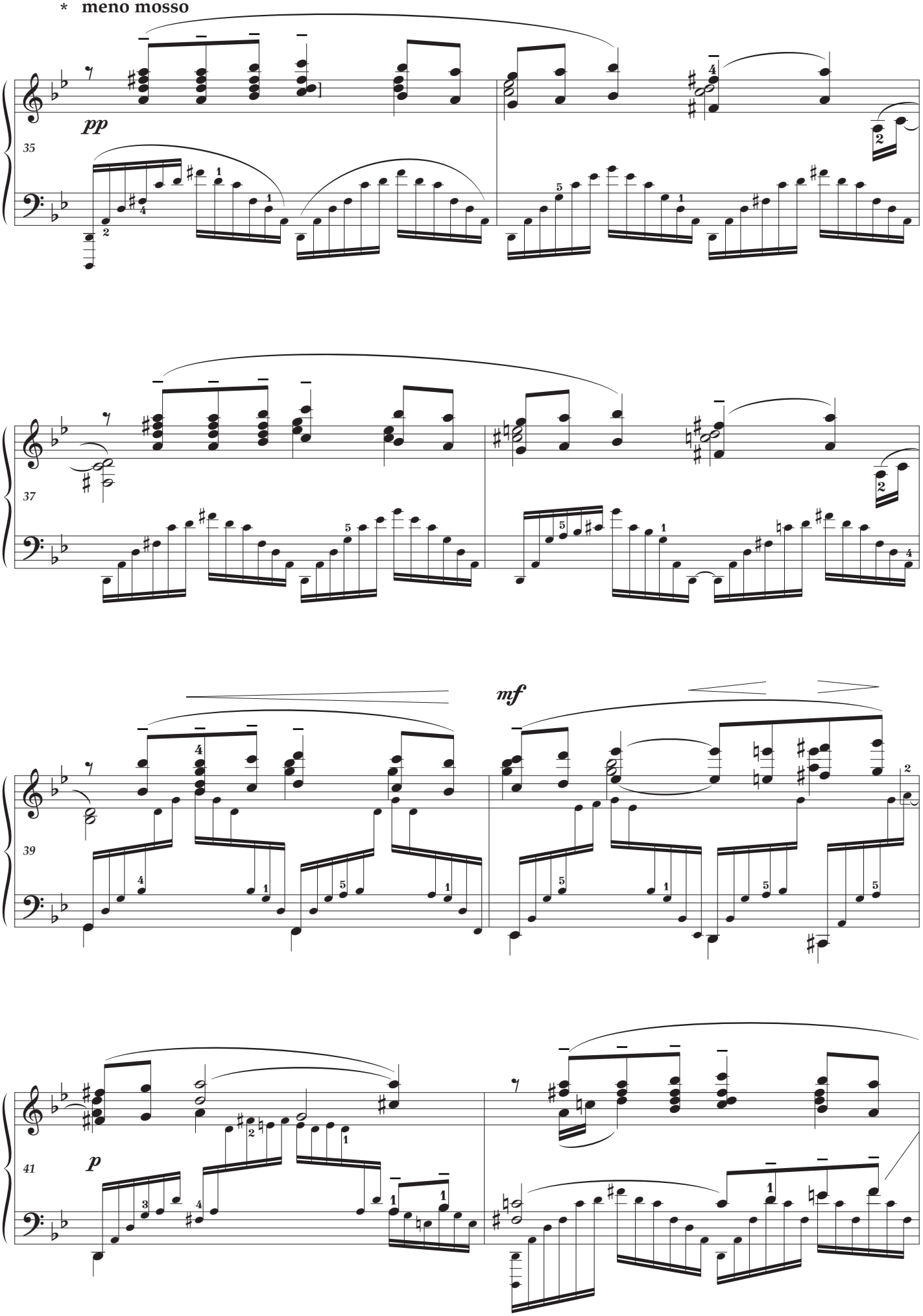


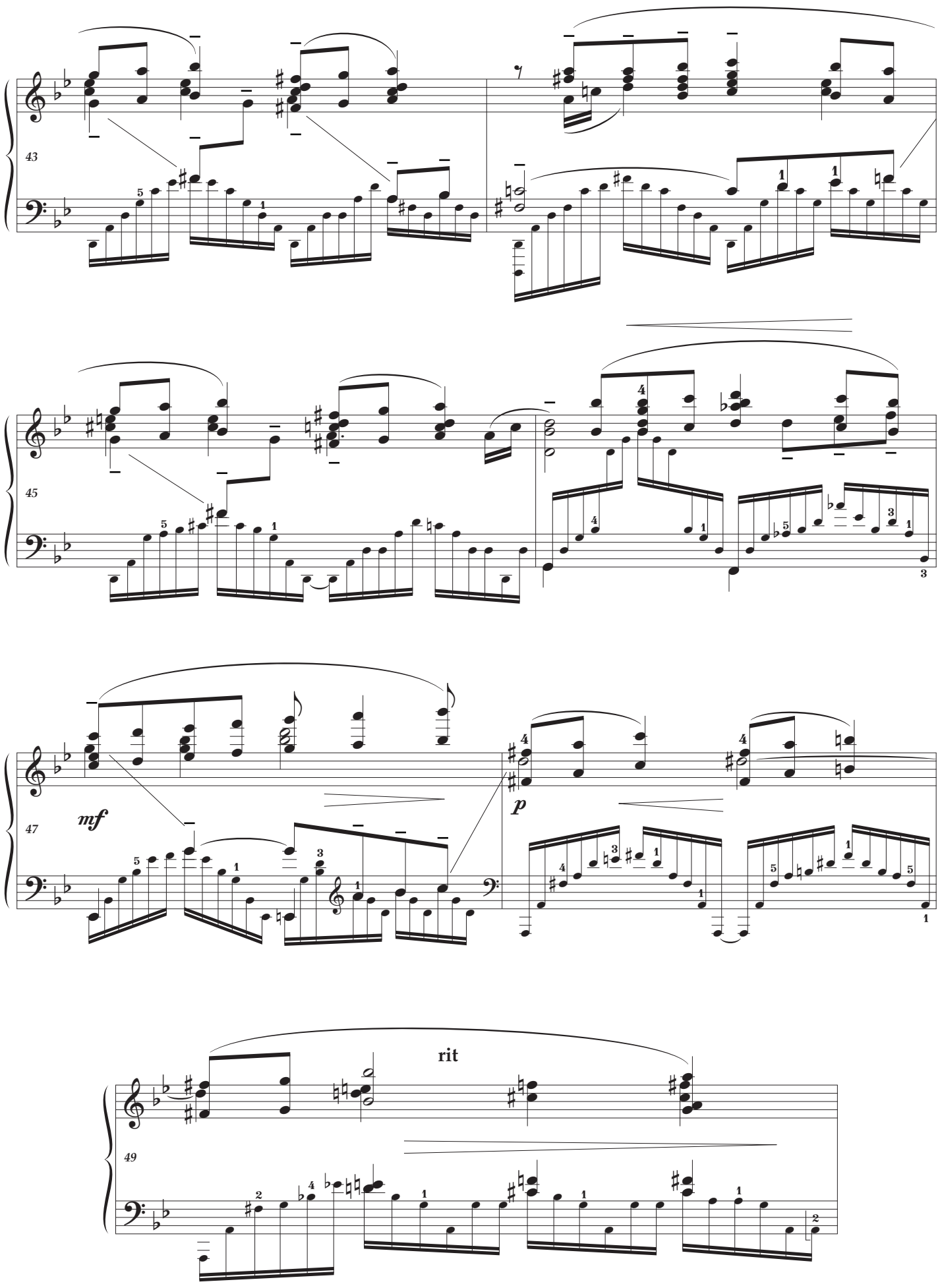

9
pp
p
12
14
marcato
f
17
f
*

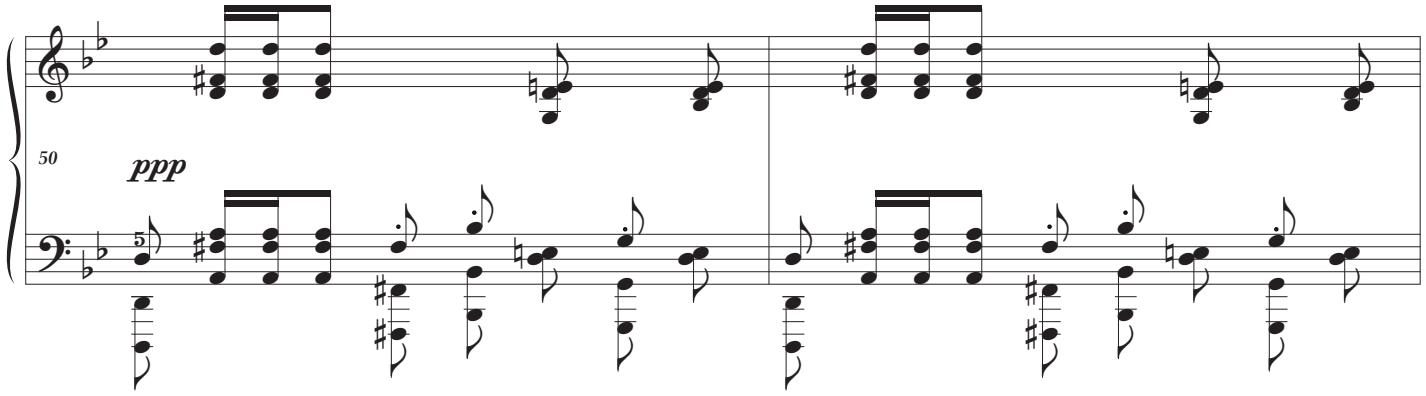

19
(mf)
21
f
23
ff
25
ff


27
29
31
[rit]
33
p

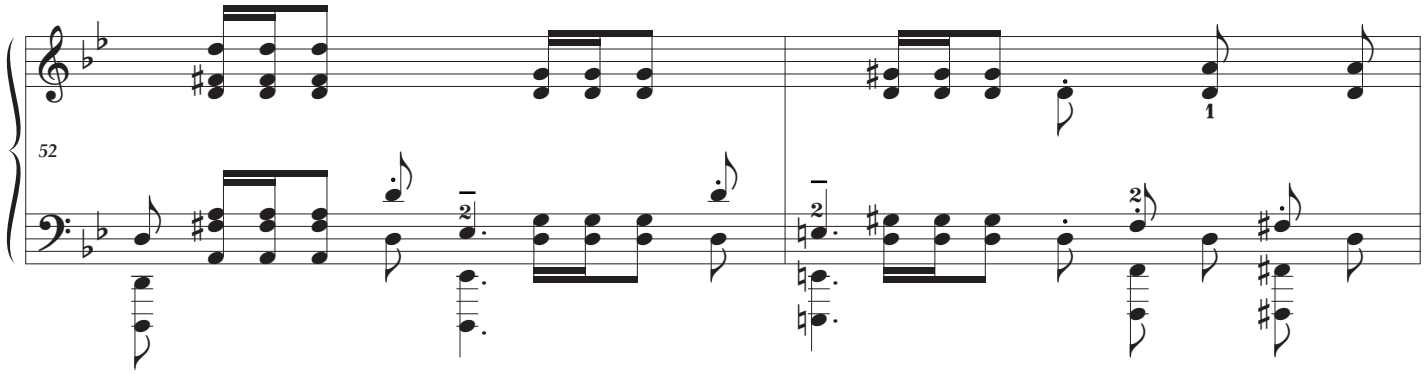
* meno mosso

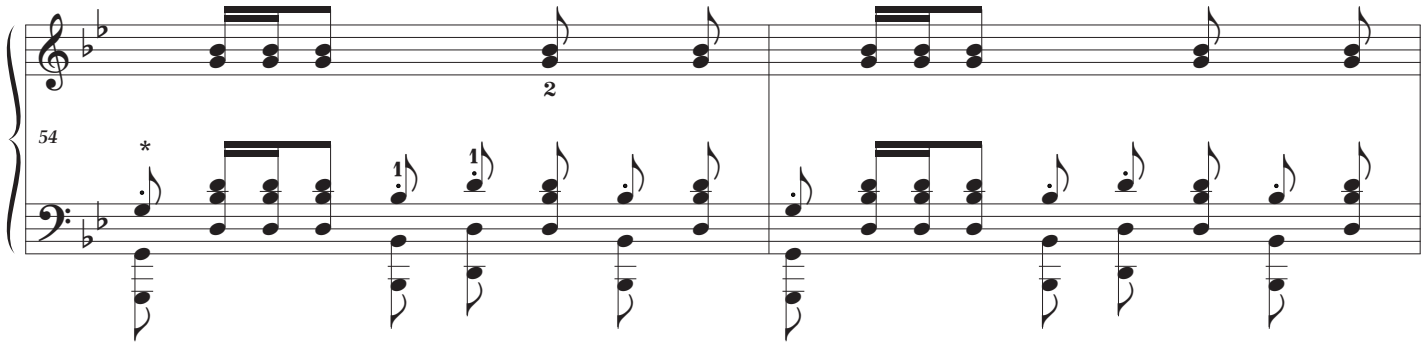


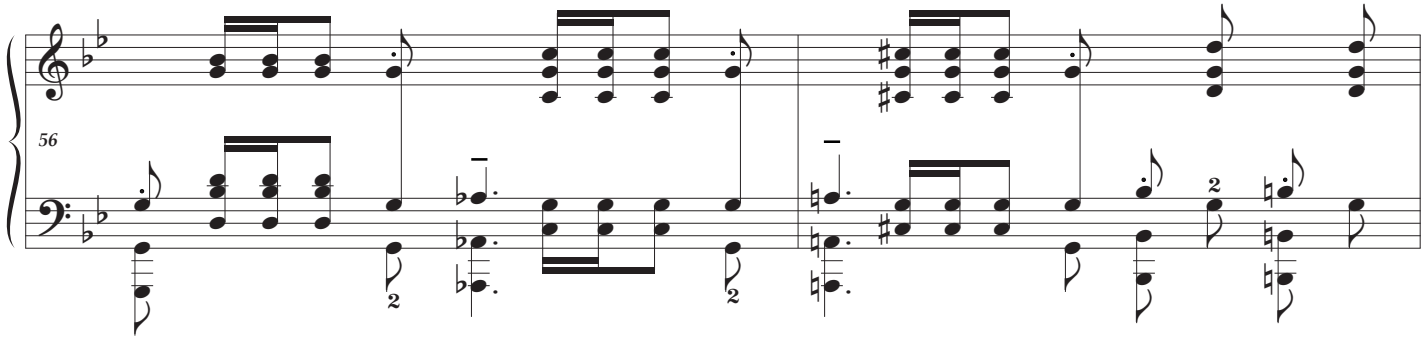

43
45
47
mf
p
49
rit



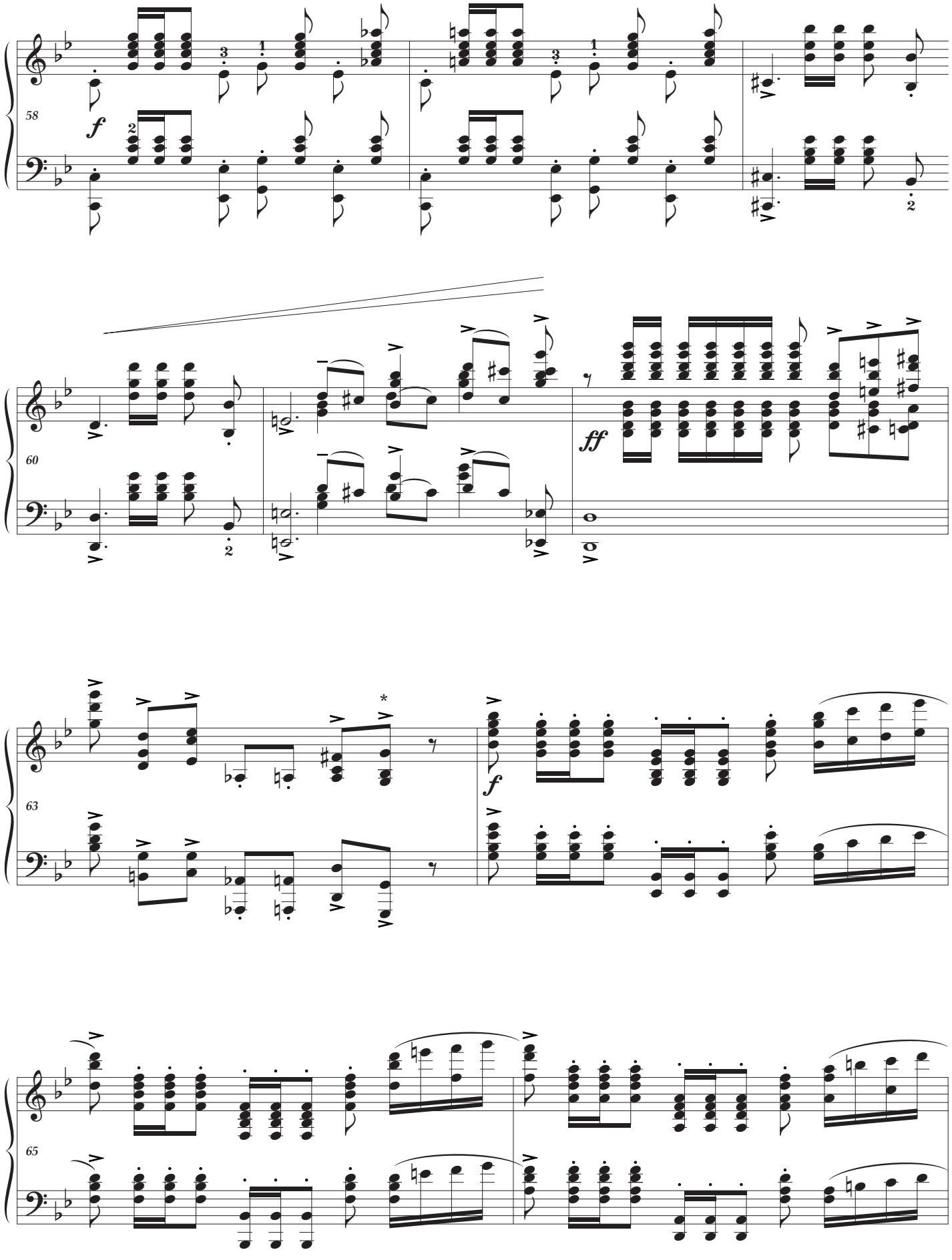
poco a poco accelerando e crescendo al Tempo I

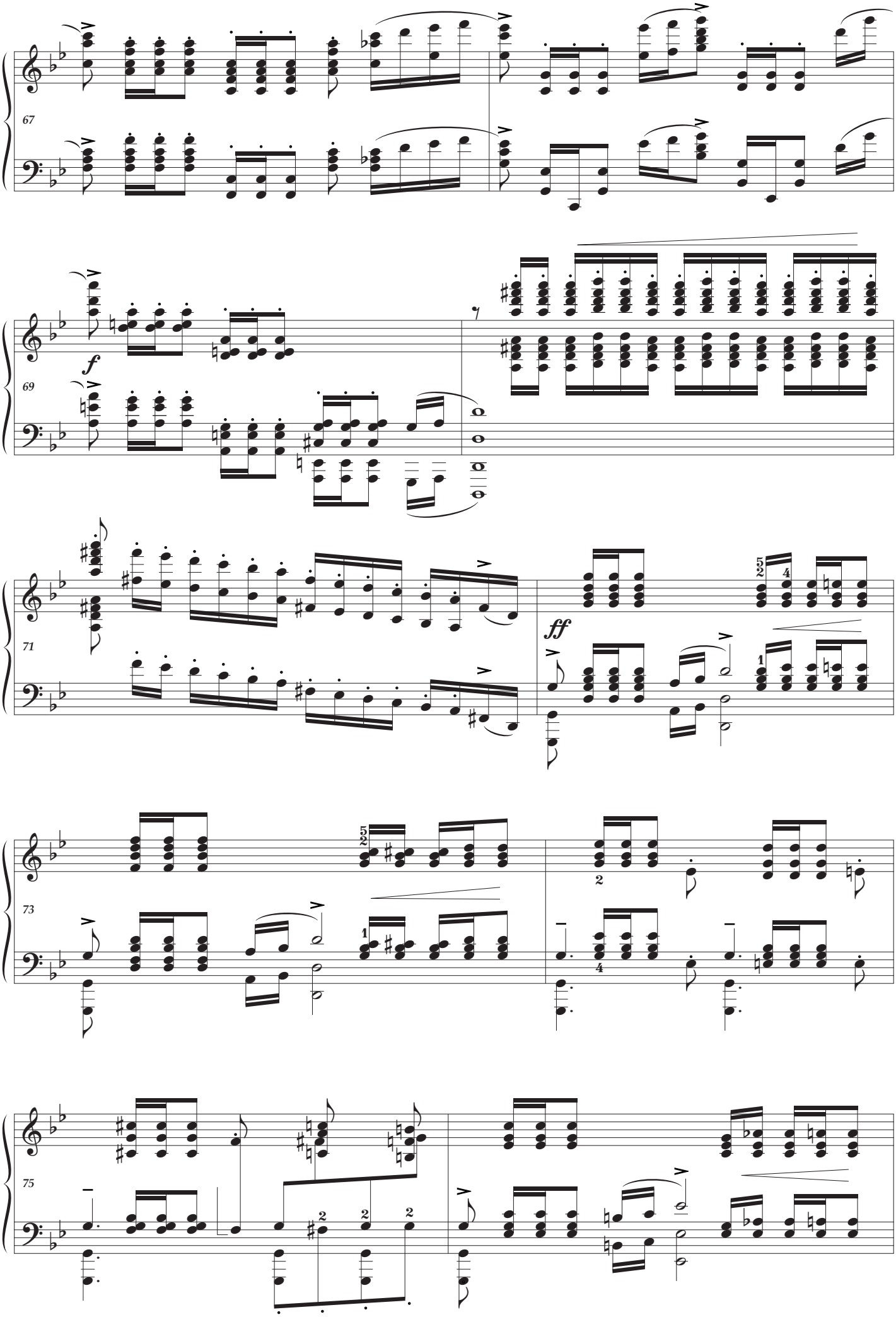


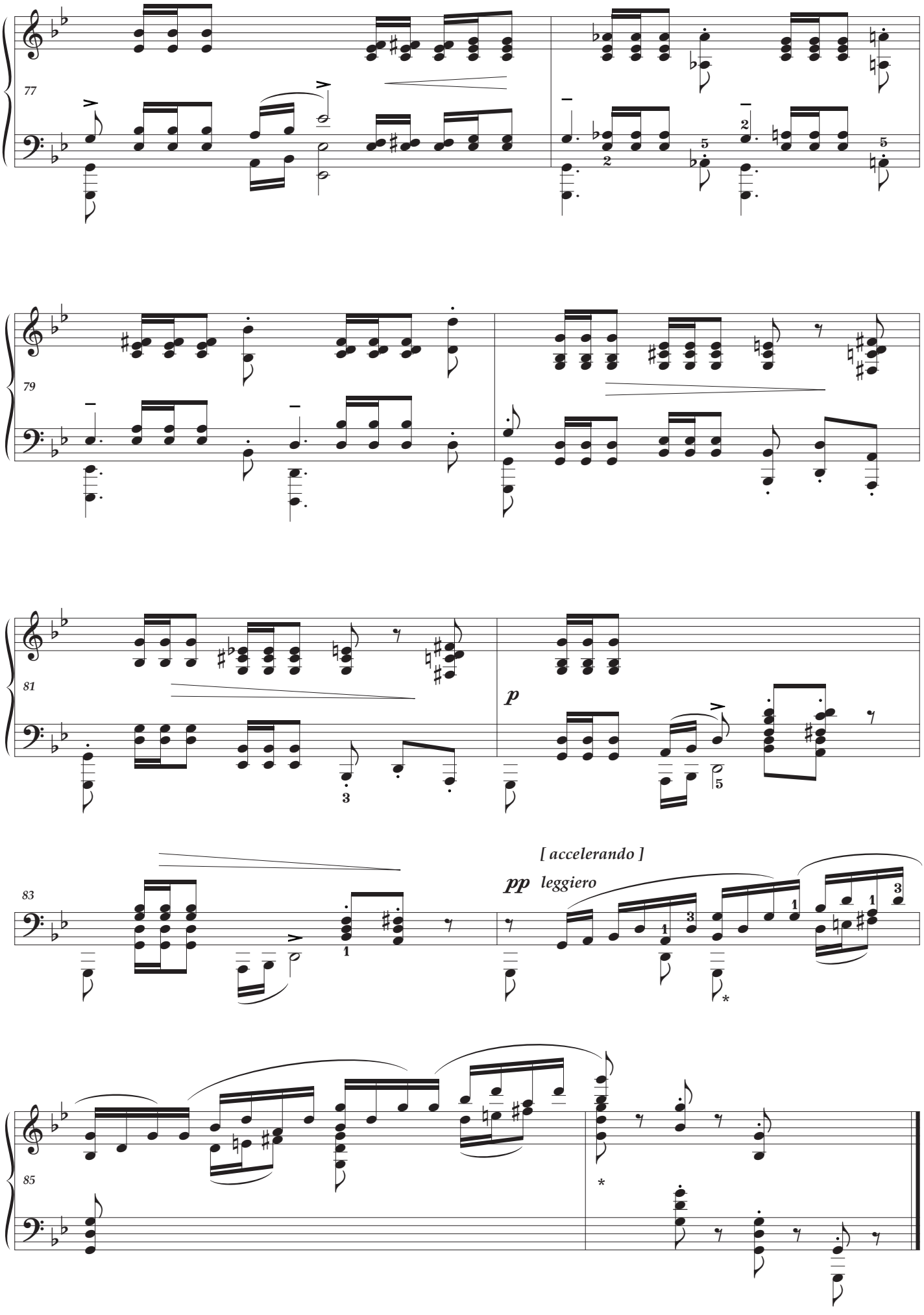




Tempo I




67
69
f
7
71
ff
73
75


77
79
81
p
83
[accelerando]
pp leggiero
85