Sergei RACHMANINOV

PRELUDES

Opus 23 N° 8 A♭ major

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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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Sergei RACHMANINOV

1873 - 1943

PRELUDES Opus 23 N° 8 A♭major

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.

Following the Introverted, passionate and meditative seventh prelude we find Rachmaninov in serene mode, and in the suitably Chopinesque key of A♭ major. The character of the eighth remains virtually unchanged except for the mysterious section **32-45**, which has been substantially re-written in this edition. This attractive interlude seems to work well by allowing the left hand to take over the syncopated top melodic line, and using plenty of pedal to keep the long tied middle-voice semibreves sustained.

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 is quite idiosyncratic and this edition reflects some of the more effective deviations, and the editor's preferences, sometimes indicated with an asterisk*. 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.

Metronome bracketed tempo from the original edition; perhaps 84 is more realistic.

19 modification RH F♯

20 editorial acciaccatura

23 modification

29-31 modification of time signature

30 modification to two notes

32-45 This atmospheric section has been substantially re-written : time-signature, layout, hand disposition, acciaccaturas.

75 & **77** square noteheads = silent repetition

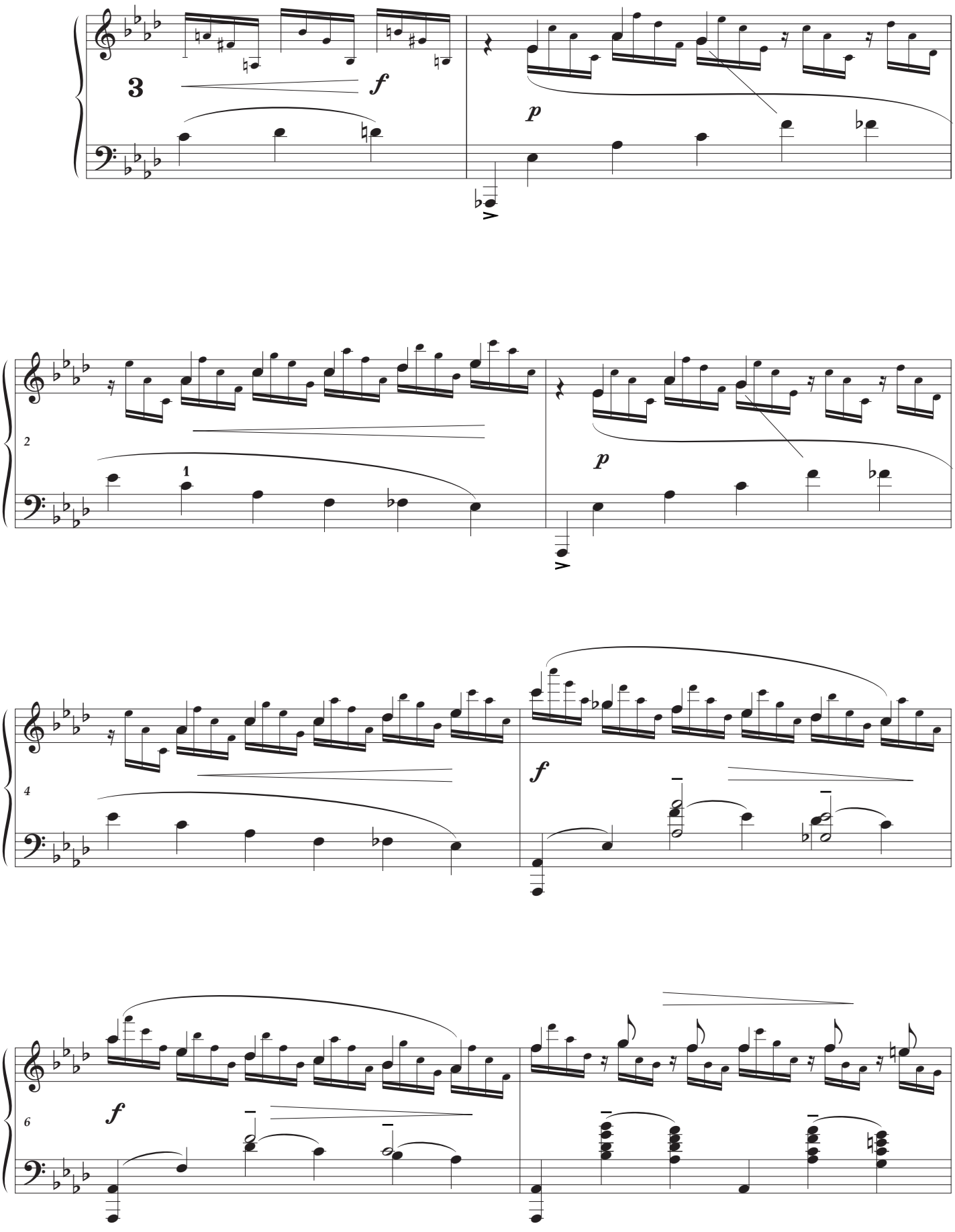
75-80 editorial descant

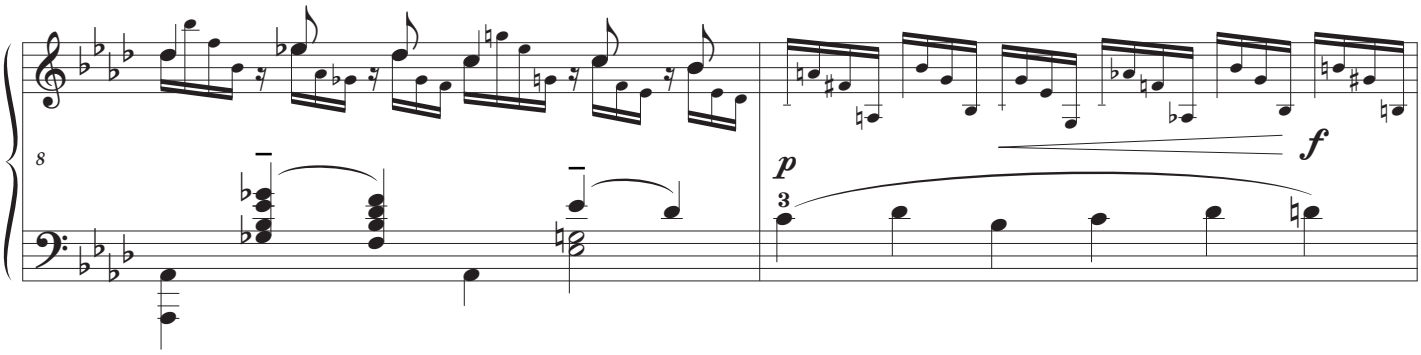
PRELUDE

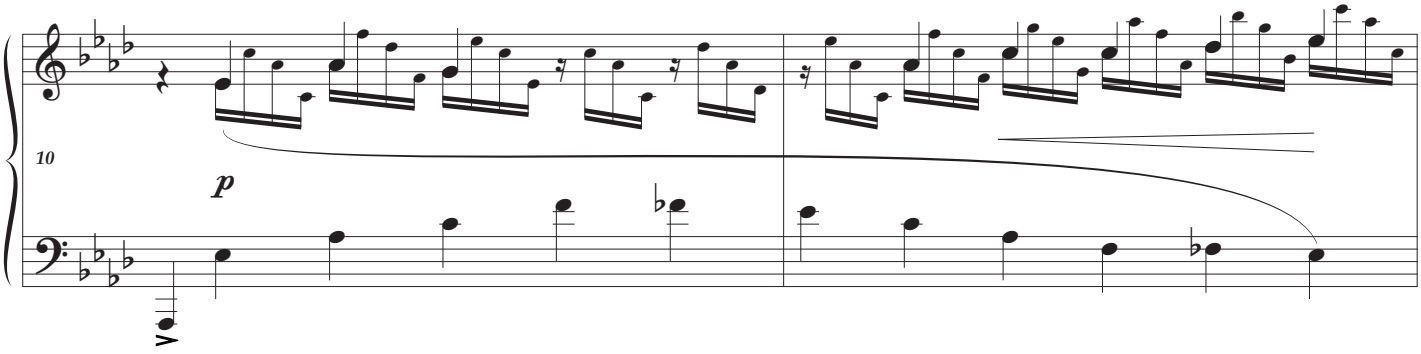
Op 23 Nº 8

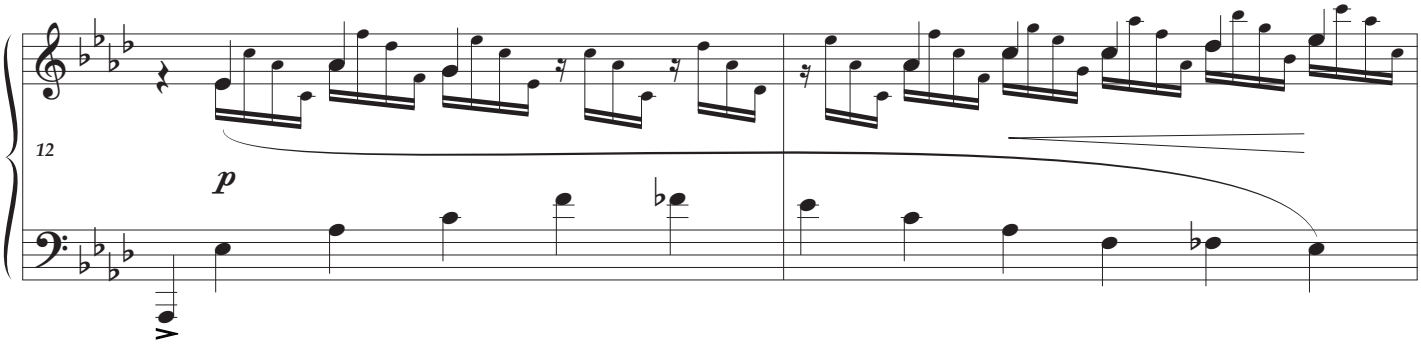
*

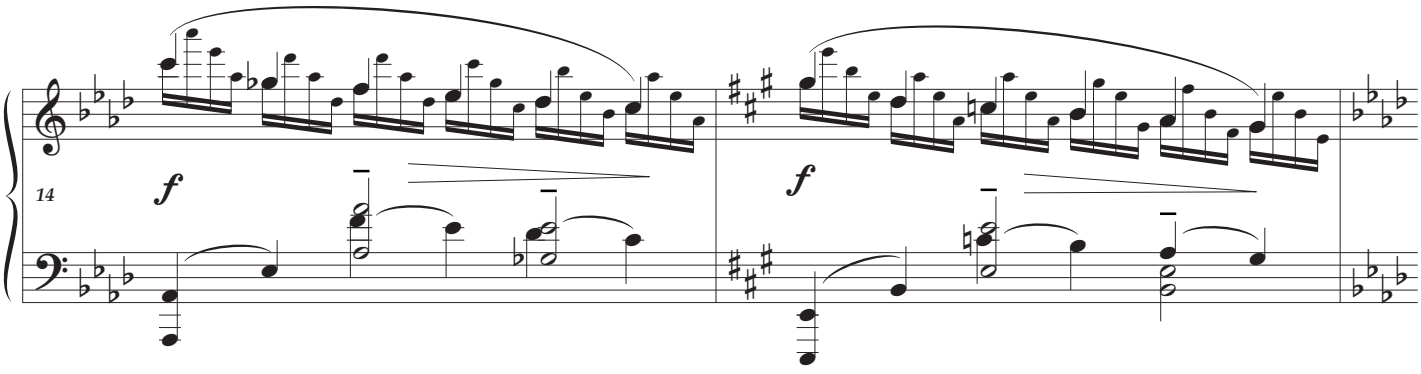
allegro vivace (♩ = 108)

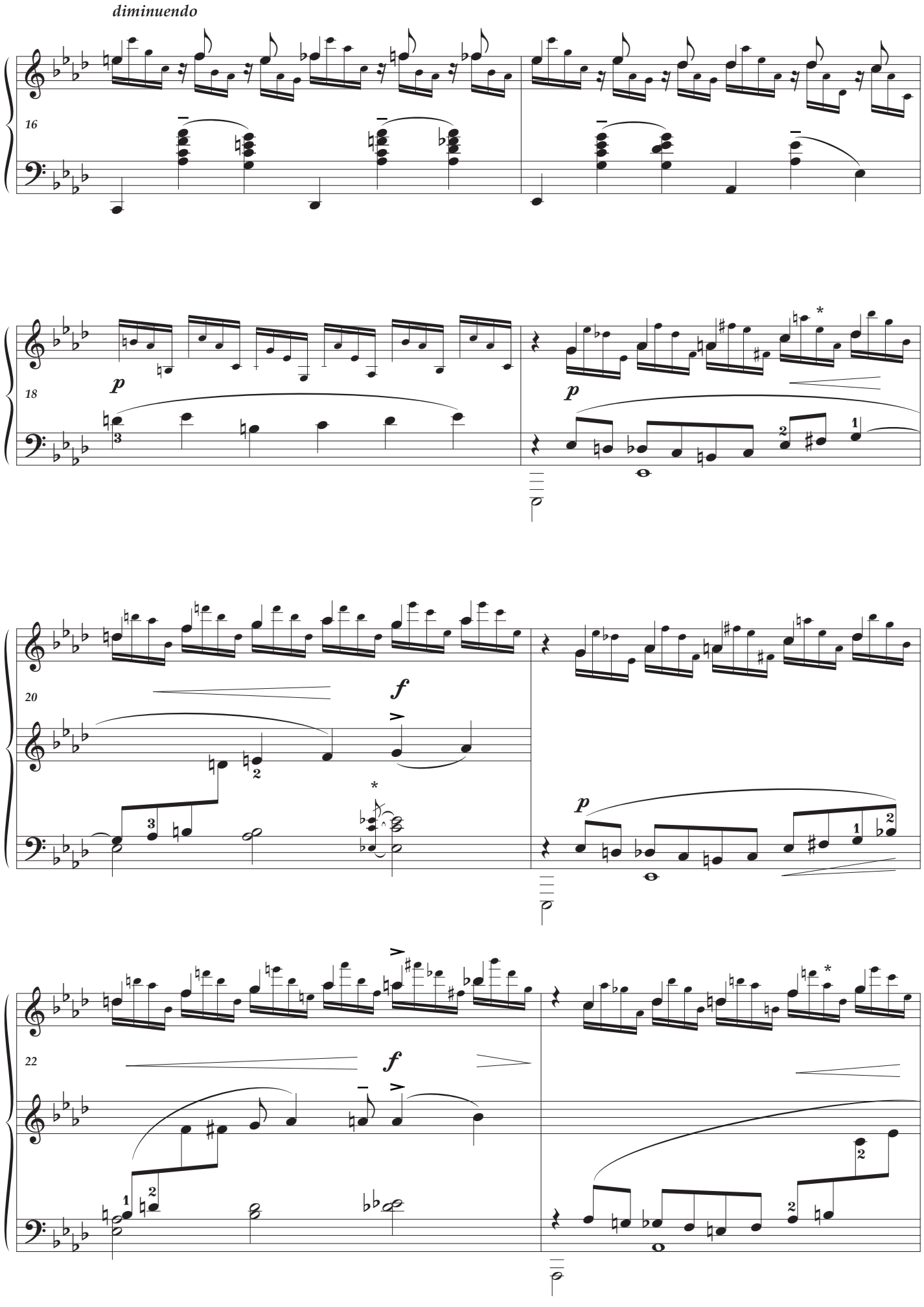


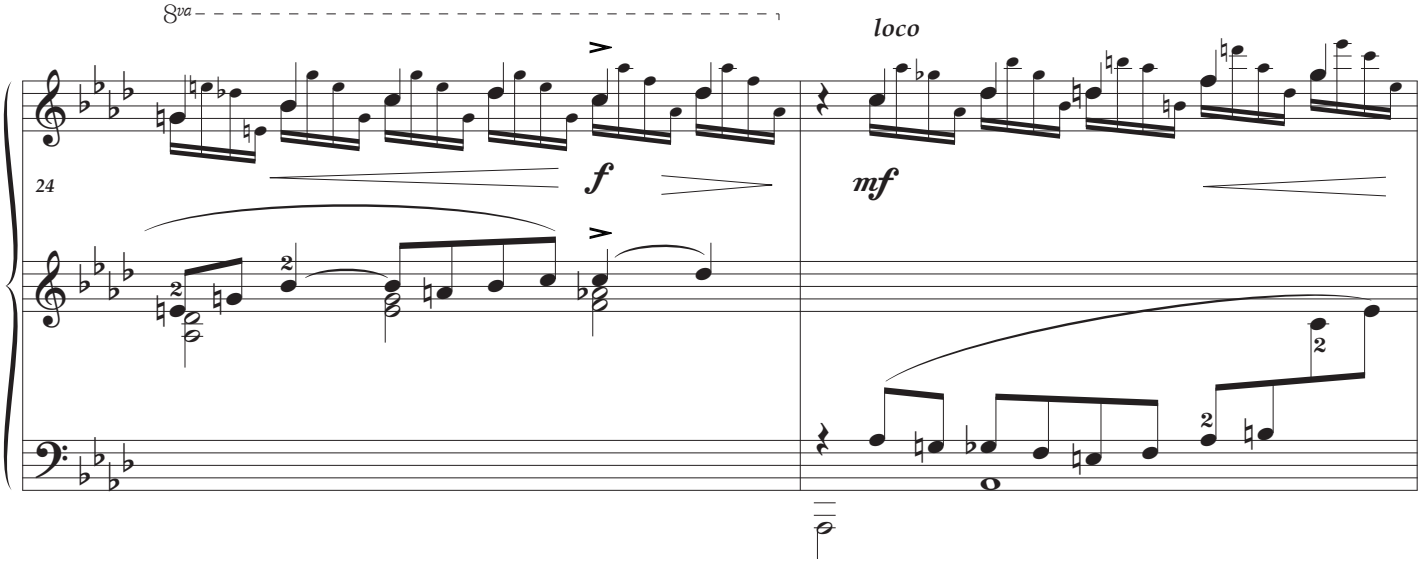

8
p
3
f

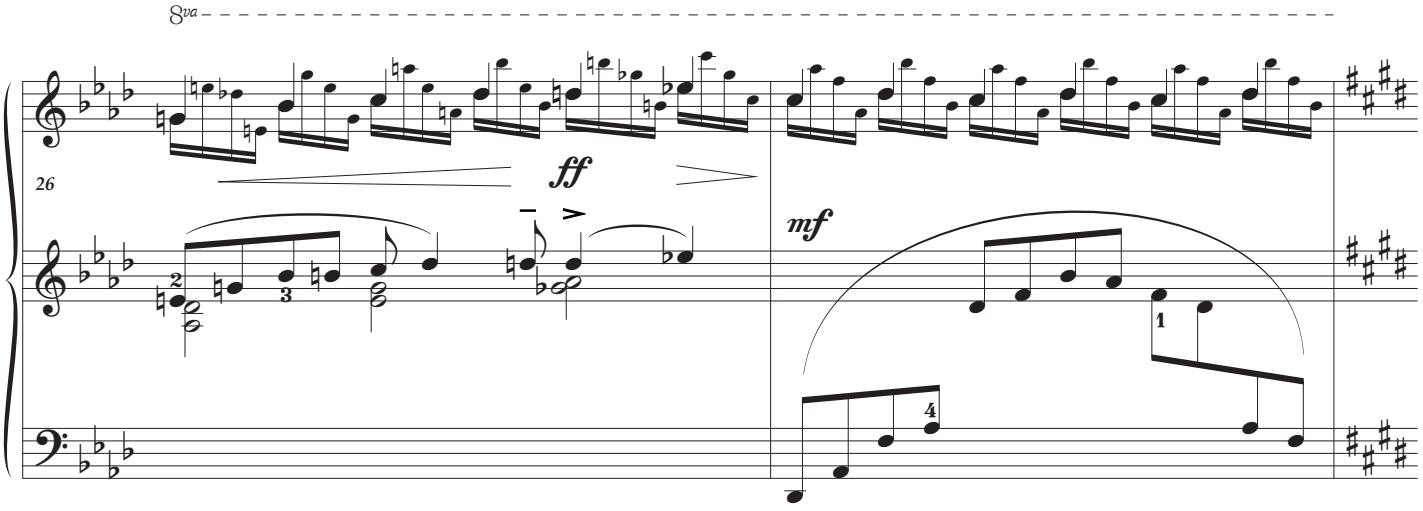

10
p

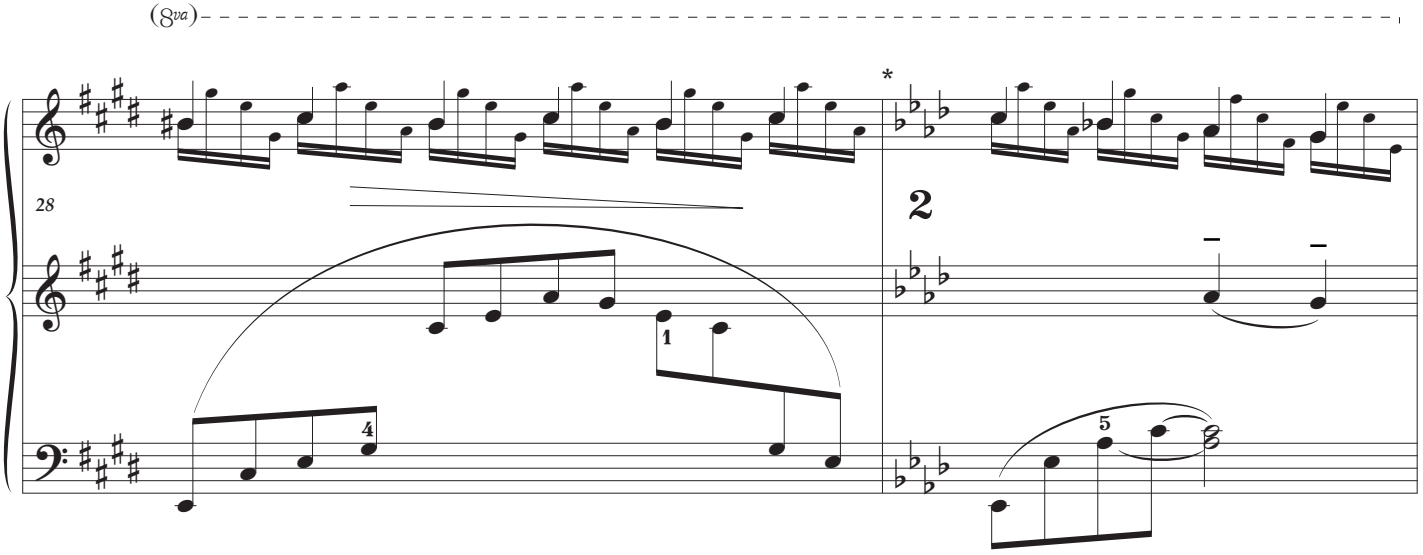

12
p

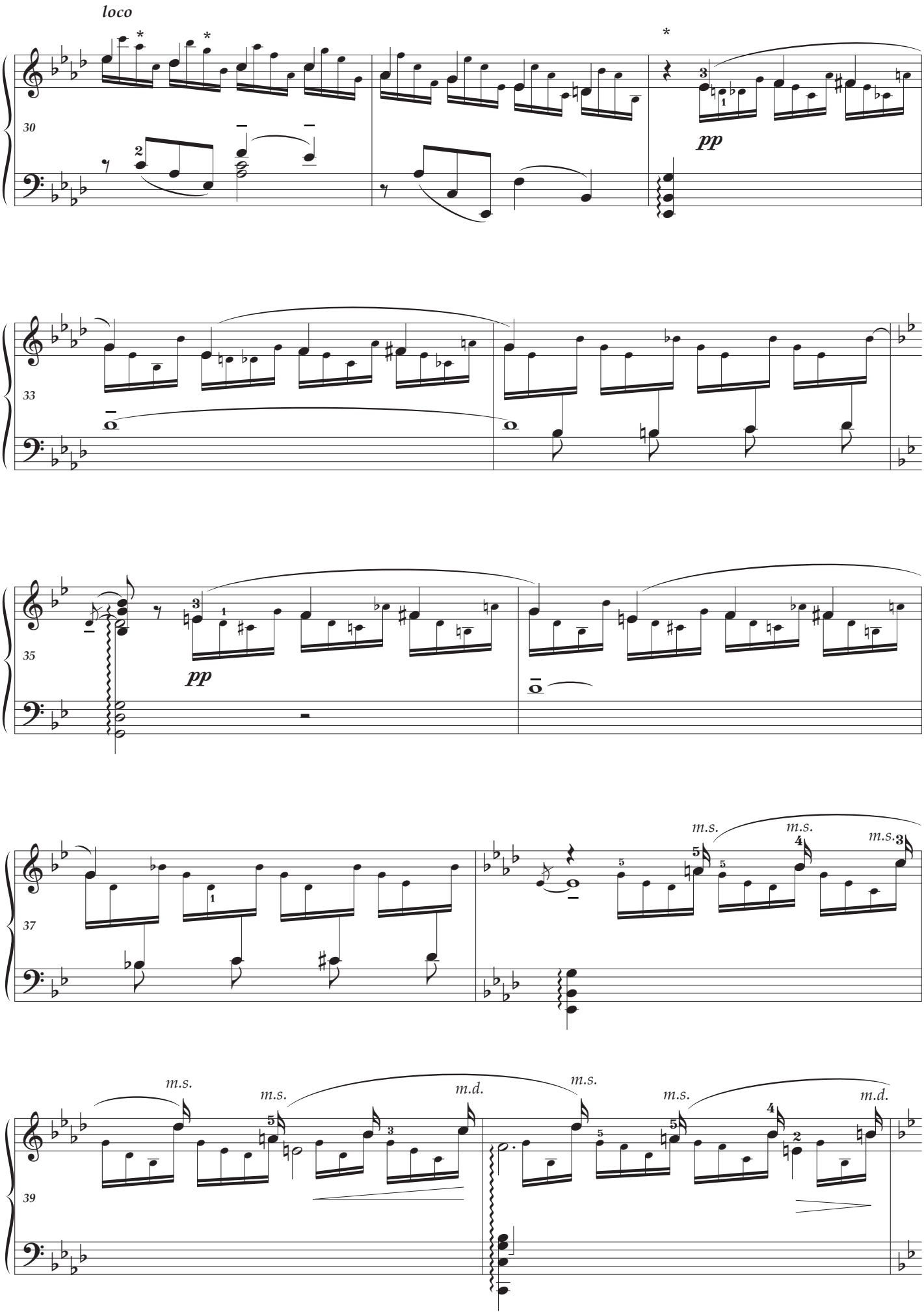

14
f
f

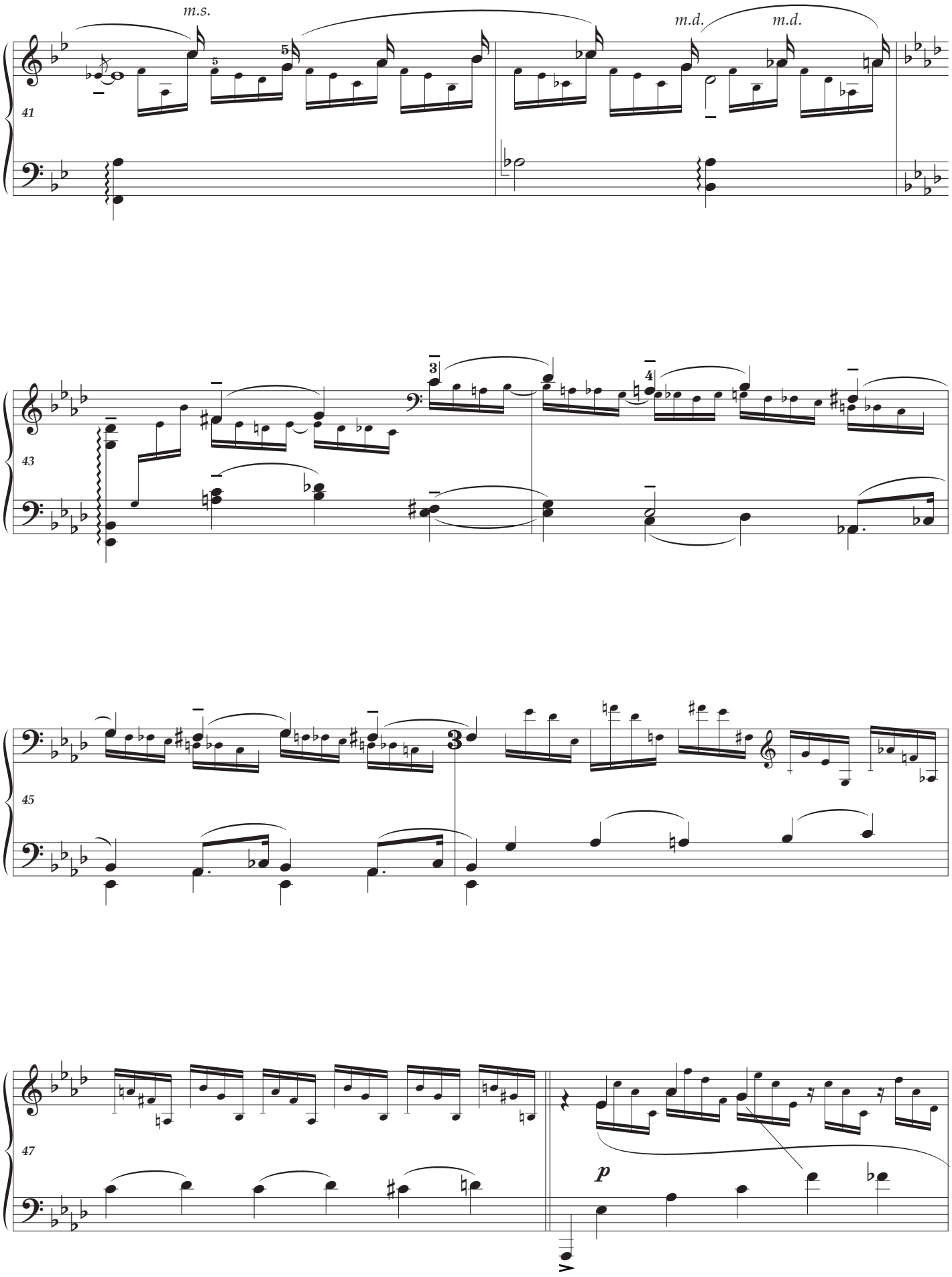

diminuendo
16
18
p
p
20
f
p
22
f

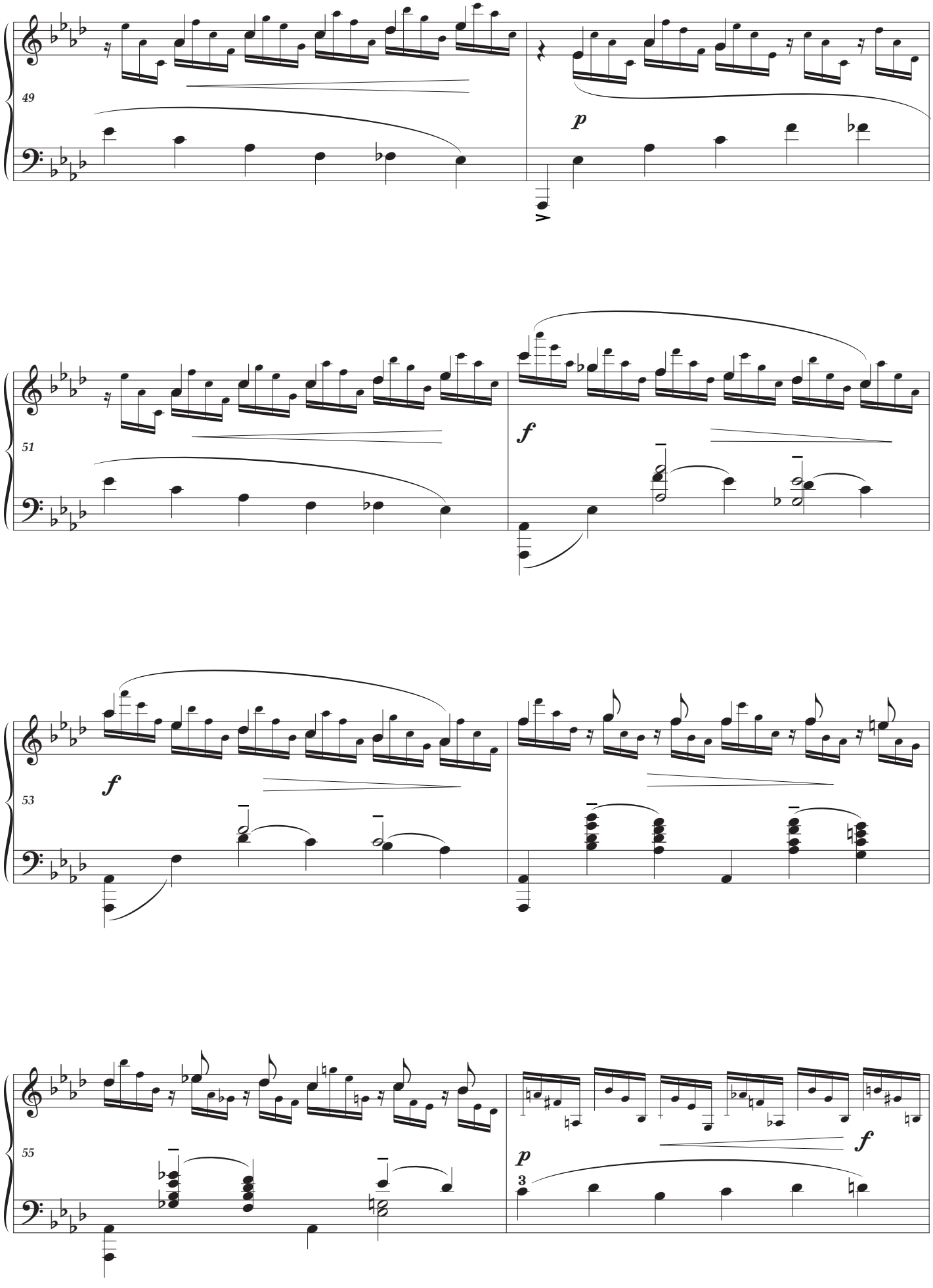

8va
loco
24
f
mf

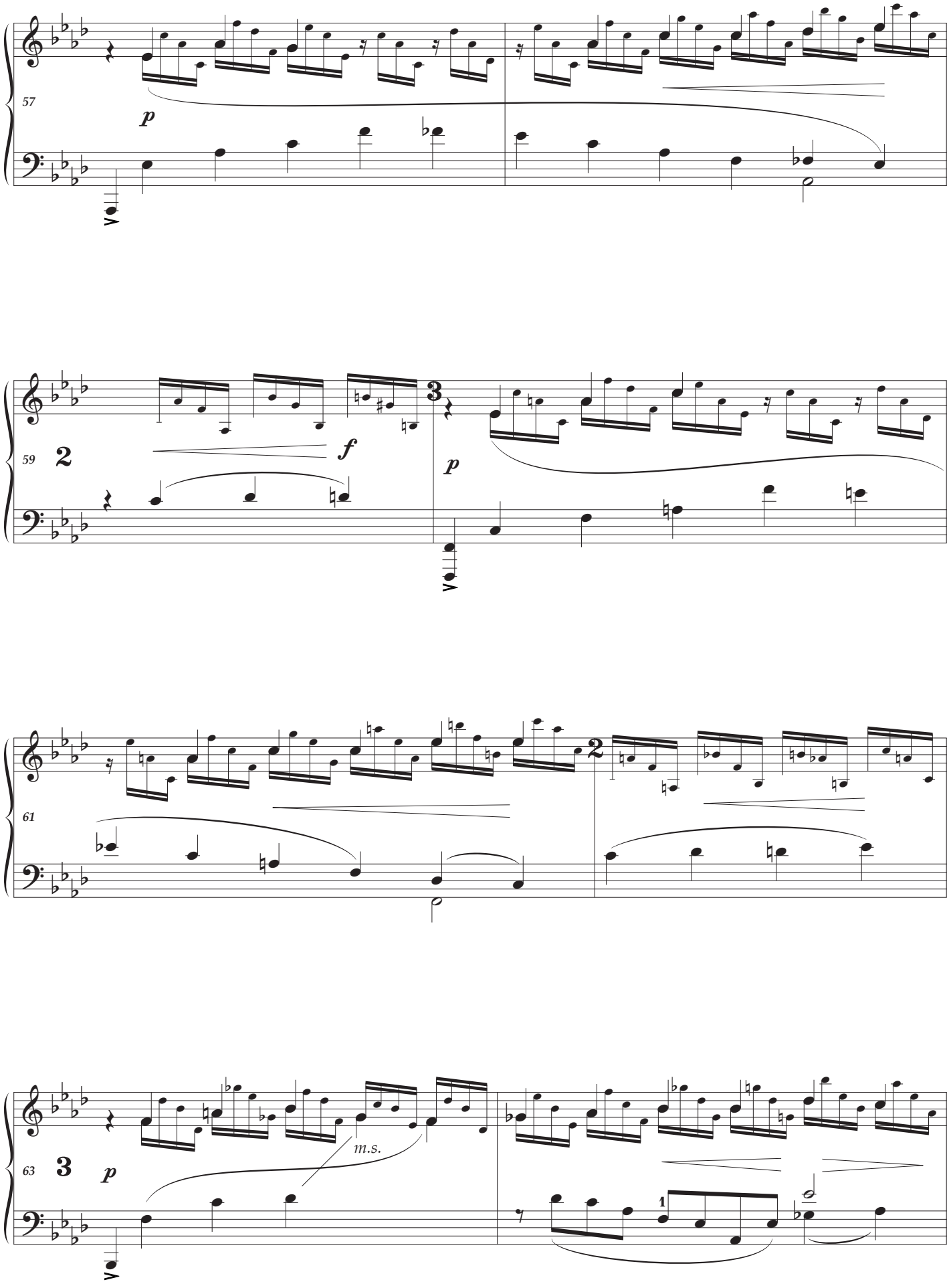

8va
26
ff
mf

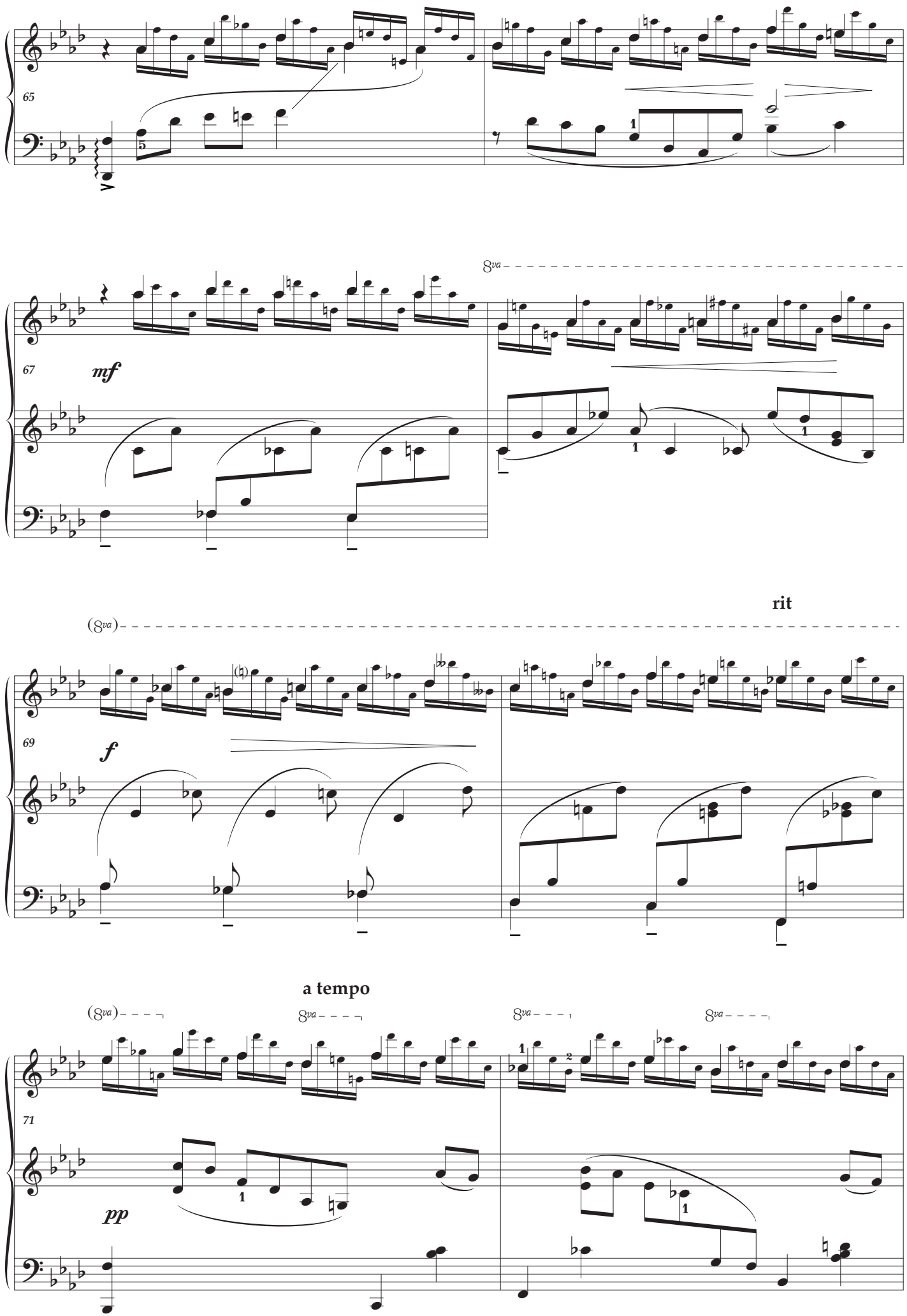

(8va)
28
*
2

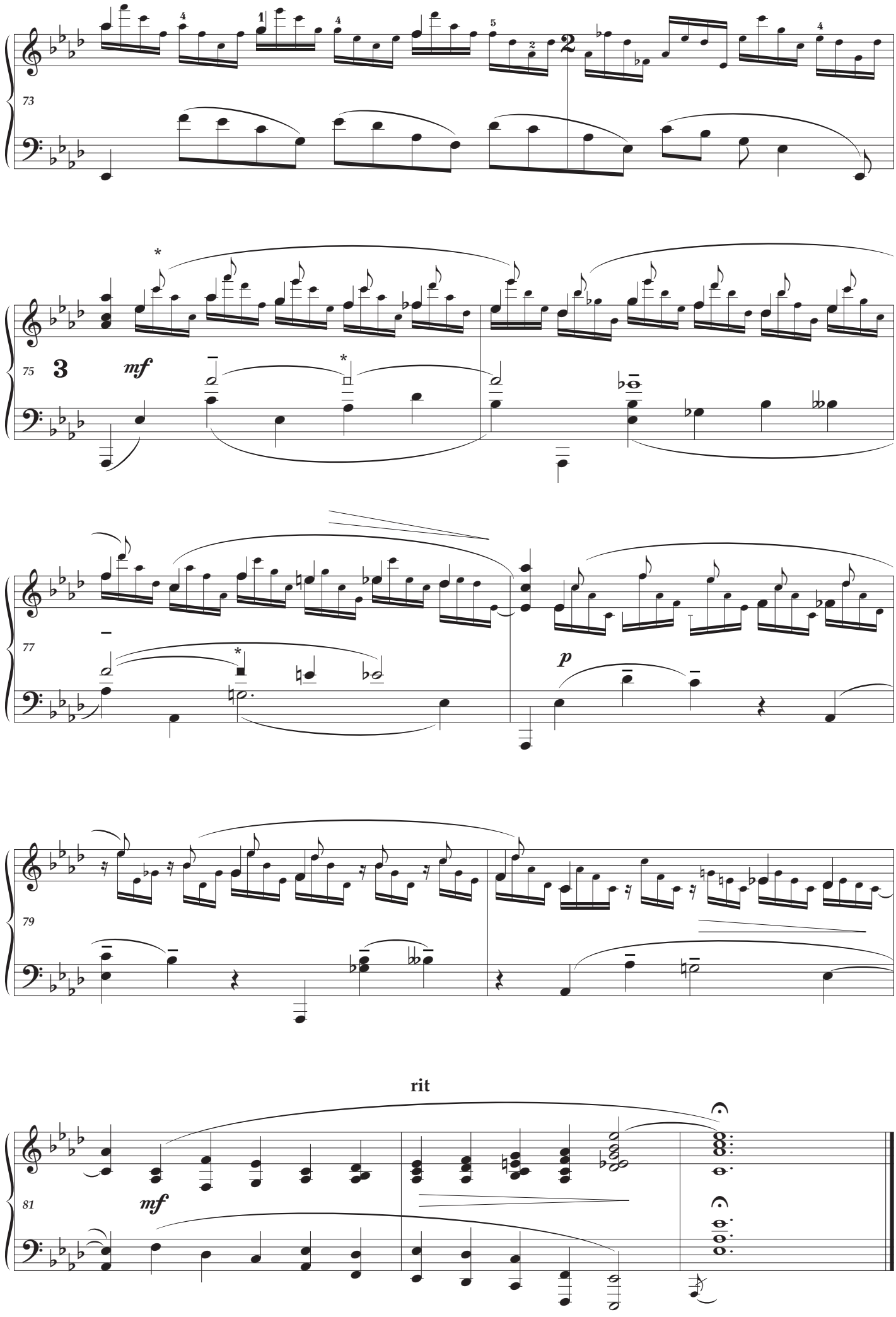

loco
30
pp
33
35
pp
37
m.s.
m.s.
m.s.
39
m.s.
m.s.
m.d.
m.s.
m.s.
m.d.


m.s.
m.d.
m.d.
41
43
45
47
p


49
p
51
f
53
f
55
p
3
f


57
p
59
2
f
3
p
61
2
63
3
p
m.s.
1


65
67
mf
8va
69
f
rit
(8va)
a tempo
71
pp


73
75
3
mf
77
p
79
rit
81
mf

R A C H M A N I N O V

P R E L U D E S

Opus 23 N° 8 A flat

p u b l i s h e d A u g u s t 2 0 2 0

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