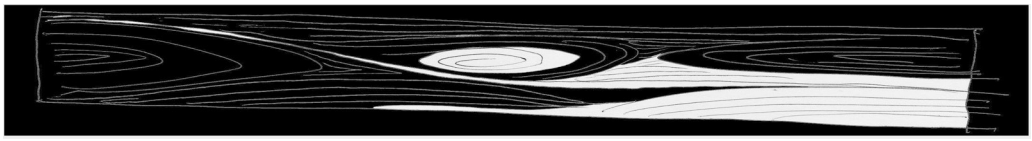
Sonata for Flute and Piano

The Stillness of Waves.....



Romano Crivici

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Sonata for Flute and Piano

"The stillness of waves...

Dedicated to my dearest toots, Carla T.

First draft:	8th - 31st May
Second draft:	1st - 11th June, 2020
Revised:	23rd June – 6th July
Dur:	~14:30"

Locked down during the Covid-19 pandemic in our new abode up on the far north coast of NSW I contacted Nena Beretin from Judith Nielsen's Phoenix Central Park about the mixing of our last recording project, *Slavic Grooves and Meditations*. She wrote back with an invitation to record something for flute and piano for Judith's "Behind Closed Doors" recording project. Without a moment's hesitation, and a lot of excitement I started to write this work. If nothing else, we needed repertoire if we weren't going to improvise the lot or perform already written work from the existing repertoire. But the main reason was that I can't resist writing new work for a meaningful real-world purpose.

Reflections on the process:

During the lock-down we went most mornings to the beach to walk and swim in the ocean. There I would sit and meditate, occasionally seeing the waves - moving, yet within the constant flux of being, utterly still. This became the driving energy of the work.

The composition also came from our work over the last couple of years rehearsing the French repertoire for flute and piano; works by Roussell, Poulenc and Milhauld. Playing works by these composers completed a process begun in my early days as a student. I was fortunate, (even more so now in retrospect) to have studied piano with Gordon Watson, who introduced me to the works of Roussel, Chabrier, Poulenc and Milhaud, as well as Lizt. While studying in Paris Gordon had friendships with some of these composers, and with Milhaud in particular, a working relationship. I feel I have been influenced by all of them in some aspects of my writing of this work. And so the circle has closed.

Carla helped me get this work out of my head, and into the real world of what not only works technically for the flute, but how to use the qualities of the flute's unique voice to make the lines sing. It can't have been an easy task but throughout it all, she maintained a kind and patient good humour. [1]

1**Further reflections on the process**: We started to rehearse the early sketch on the 26th May and had different ideas of how some things should be played. Carla wanted to make very clear ritenutos which to my taste were a little too much. Carla also wanted more writing in the higher register of the flute "it has to be able to sing" and suggested where and when to flutter-tongue. It was met with some resistance on my part but in the end, we were both satisfied - we achieved what she thought was best for the flute and herself as a performer, and I achieved a playable and coherent work.

Having said all of the above, she fought a hard and 'take no prisoners' game with the regular accusation: "you compose as if you're writing for a second violin". Ouch! The truth can be painful.

Then there was the issue of the peak at Fig 12, where I left Carla hanging on a long, low note, whilst the piano went on with the musical climax. After her feedback, I rewrote it, (from bar 111) with the flute continuing and concluding the peak. Bringing her attention to the change, and pointing out that it was now happening together, she said something to the effect of: "you mean, not just you as usual climaxing on your own". Oh, how we both laughed...and laughed..... but with hindsight, and not having any idea of what it may have been she was refering to, I suspect the joke was on me.

Performance notes:

As I constantly comment in most of my works, phrasings, dynamics, and tempo markings, particularly in the middle section (the bird song)) are suggestions only. The ebb and flow of waves or the random light-hearted twittering of birds are the constant references. Blessed be the butcher birds in our bushland, who, in constantly singing to us their varied and creative calls also contributed to this work.

Fig's 6 and 12: As Carla and I were rehearsing, I drew out these sections with some unwritten pianissimo sustained "atmospherics", when she suggested "let's extend that sense of stillness, and include flute in some free impro....a good balance, or contrast to the relentless nature of a lot of the material", and she was right, so there you go.

Having said that, these sections are optional; if the flautist is not comfortable with "improvising" (mainly 'atmospehrics.... over blown harmonics, random..... or fragments/material from the final section from Fig 30) just skip to the next allegro sections. I leave space in those bars for the performer to make simple notes of material to work with. If that is not 'th go', one could just simply perform the piano material... hanging, suspended, with a lot of sustain pedal; blurry windchime-like a-rhythmic "colours", if you get my drift.

Fig 30: (terminal dissolution) Though tempi are marked, these are indicative of a step by step slowing down, within each section there is a lot of rubato, ebb and flow, as it inexorably unwinds and loses momentum, until the final accellerando..... [2]

And in the end…. Thanks to my brother Rudolf for the artwork that graces not only this volume, but those of the last probably more than twenty years, and to Nena Beretin, who not only presented me with the opportunity to write this work but supported its birth into the world.

And of course, enormous thanks to Judith Nielsen herself for her profoundly generous support of artists and the Australian cultural world, and that bigger, less tangible 'thing'... the Soul? and the human heart.

31 London St, Enmore
Sydney
Romano Crivici -6th July, 2020

For a complete listing of works and recordings by Crivici, and contact details, go to www.crivici.com

ISMN: 979-0-720090-72-6 ***Sonata for Flute and Piano*** *(The Stillnes of Waves...)* June, 2020

2 After we recorded our first proper 'live' run of the work in a church hall (Judith Nelsen's) on a mobile phone, we listended back. The final section (terminal dissolution) didn't seem to quite work; my thoughts were I needed to practise my part more, but Carla felt there were "too many notes" (a tragic replay of the line from the movie "Amadeus"!?) that is, the moving quaver almost ostinato line.... "clear the texture out.... silences..." I hated the idea (I loved that section) but given the artistic equality in our relationship, and the traditional (!?) understanding/feedback roles between composer and soloist, I took it on board, and decided to at least try it. Sadly, even before doing so, I could hear ways of doing it that would not only work, but make it equally musically meaninful, if not even 'better'(!?) (I had played with that idea in different sections of the work, as well as even the end).... so, grudgingly (as usual) the work has had another 'rewrite', as it were.

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The stillness of waves...

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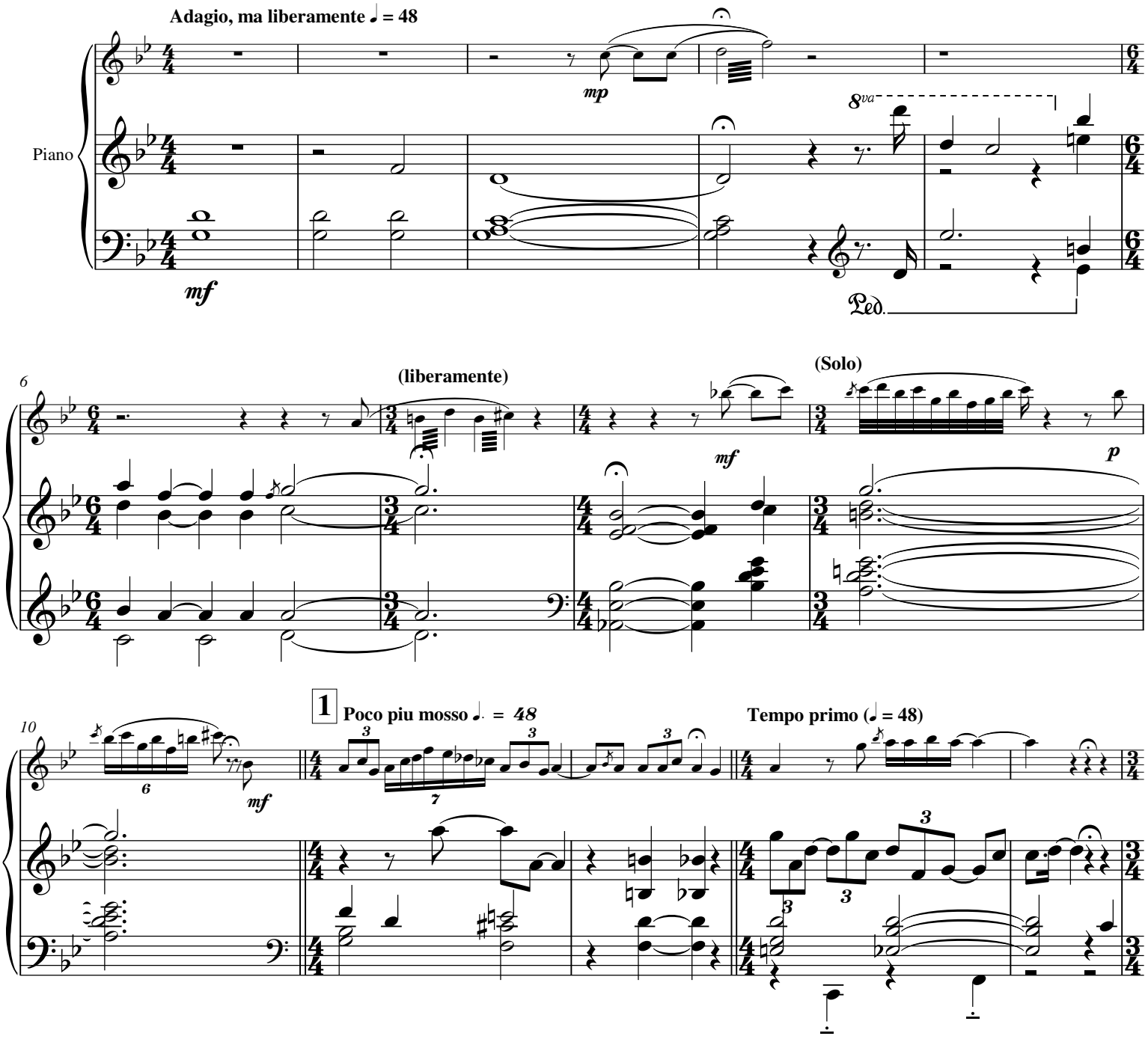

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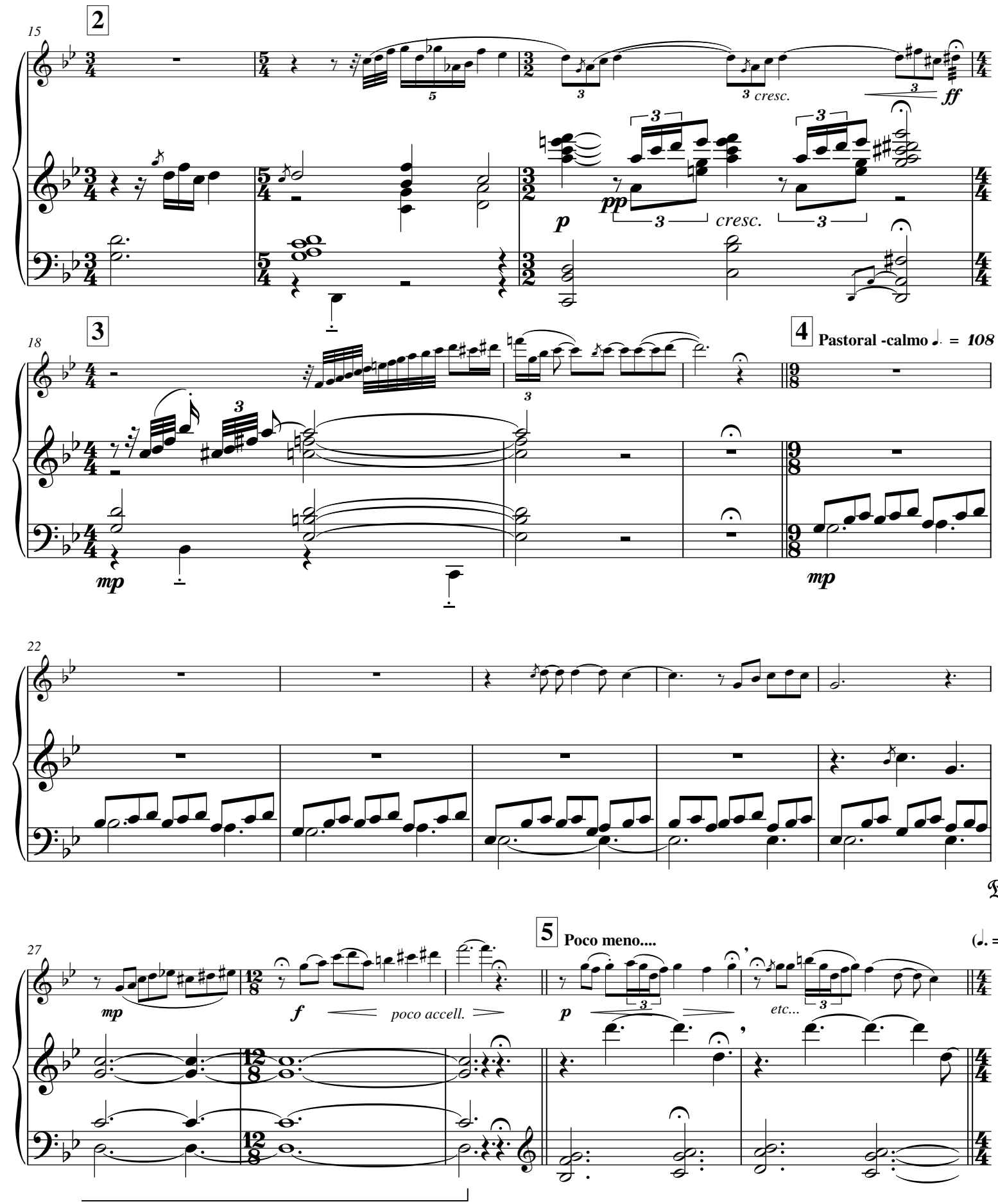
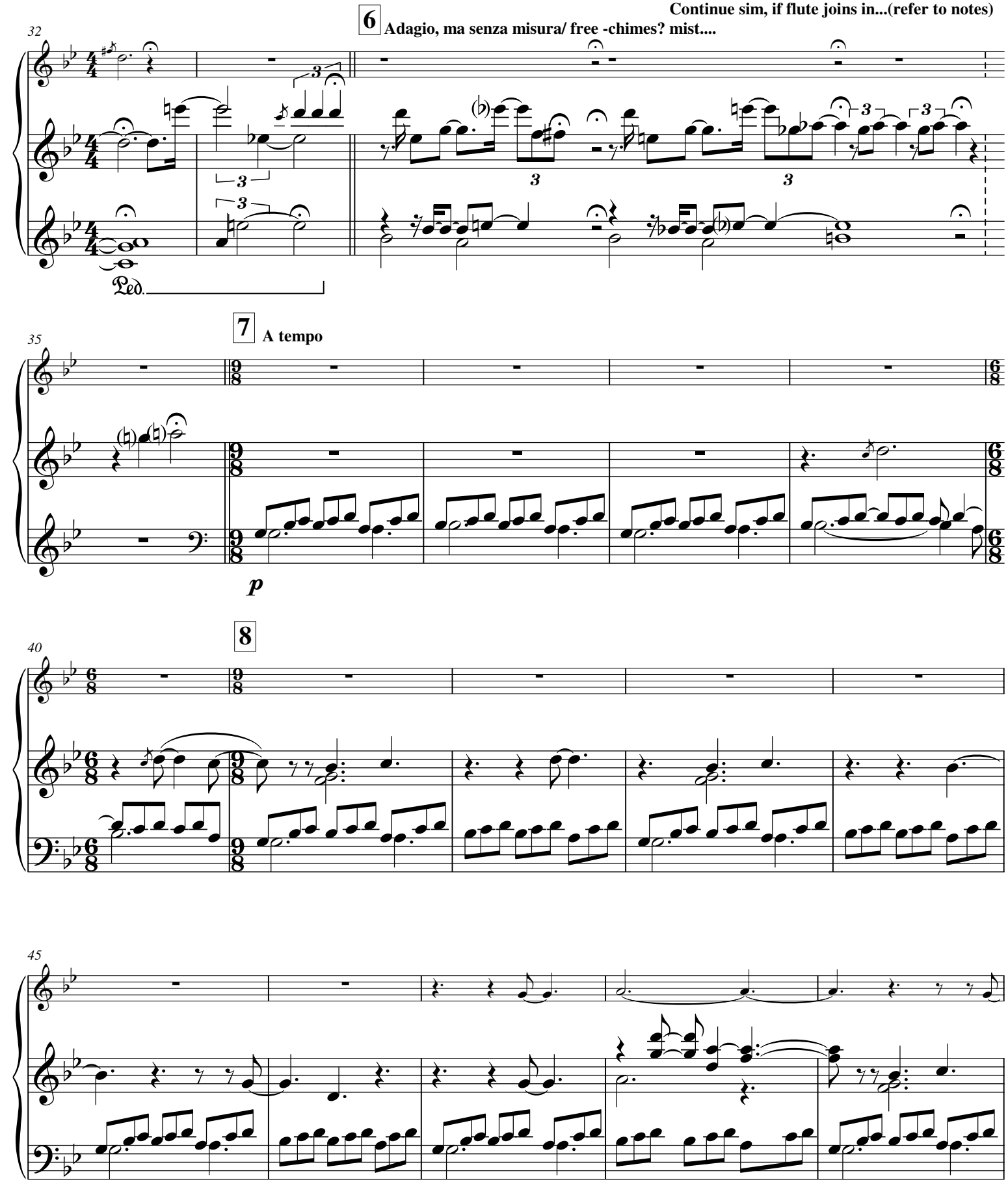
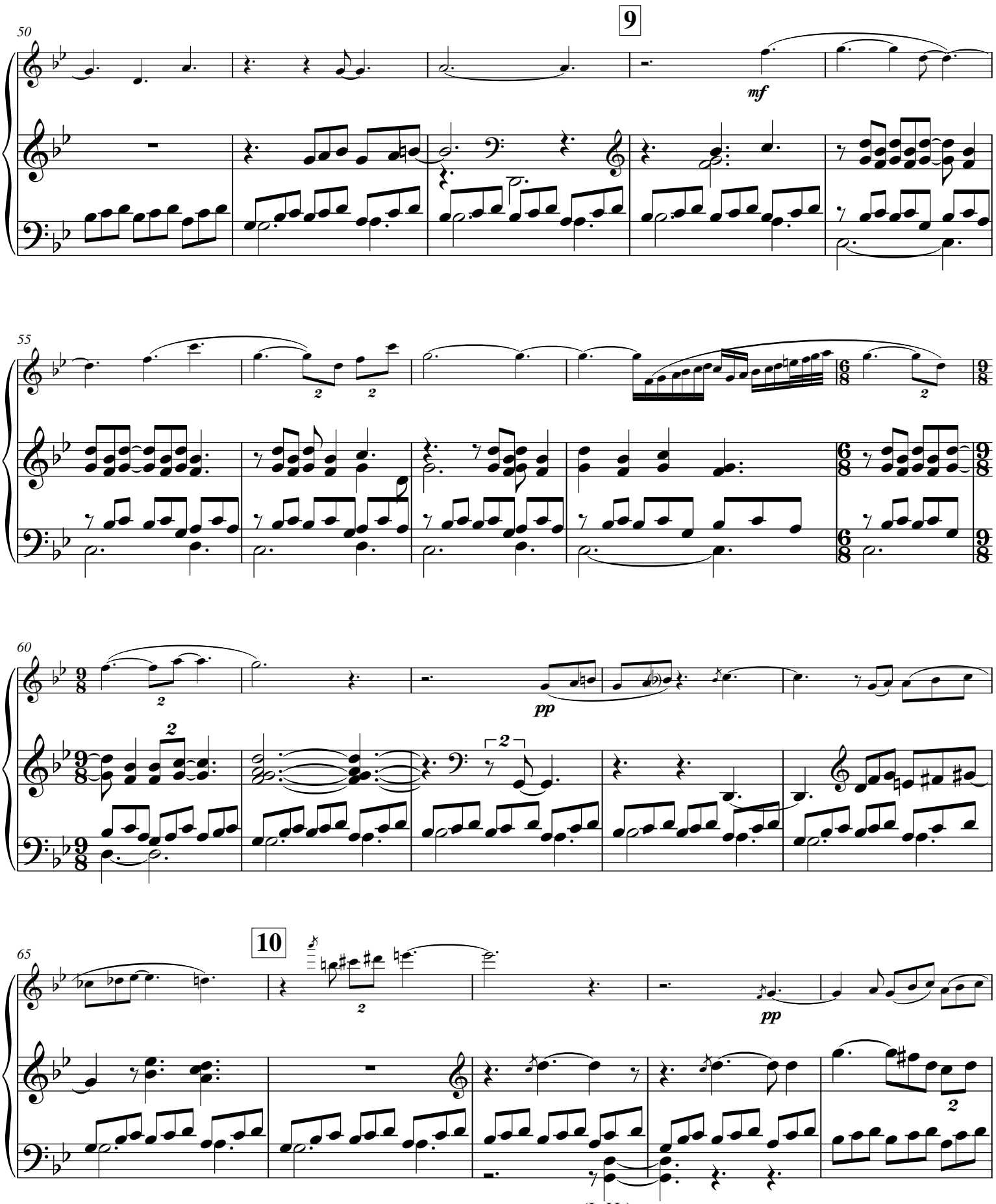
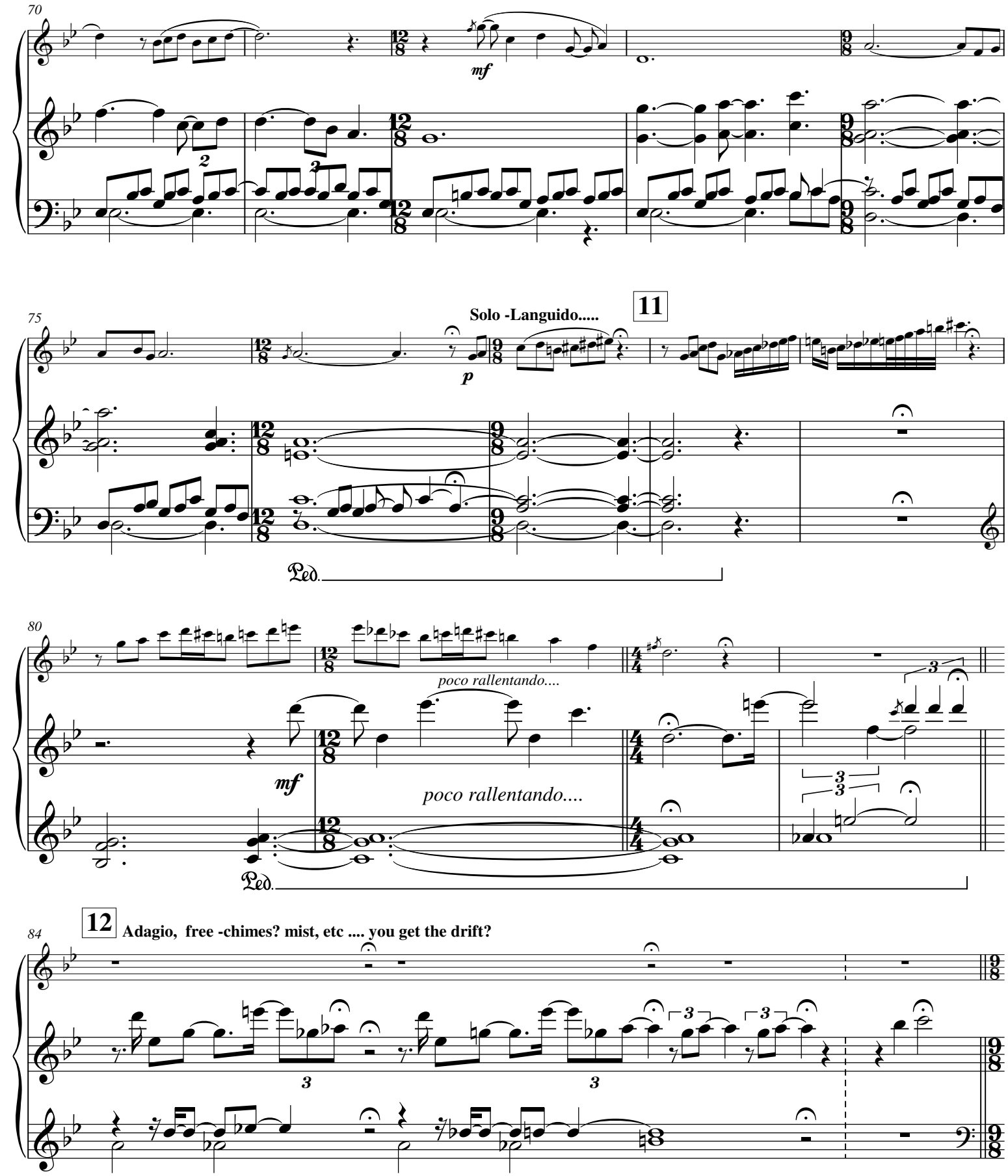
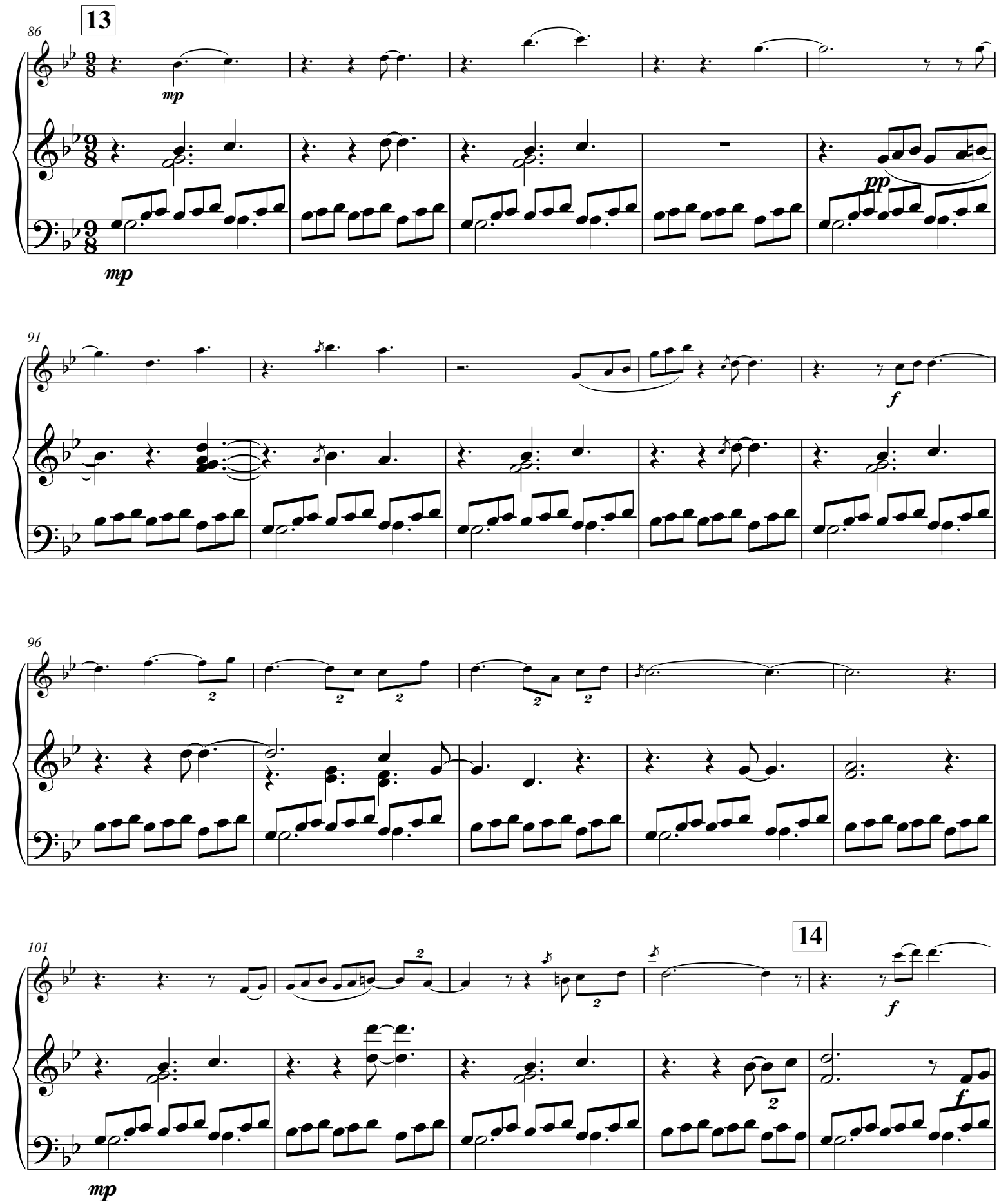
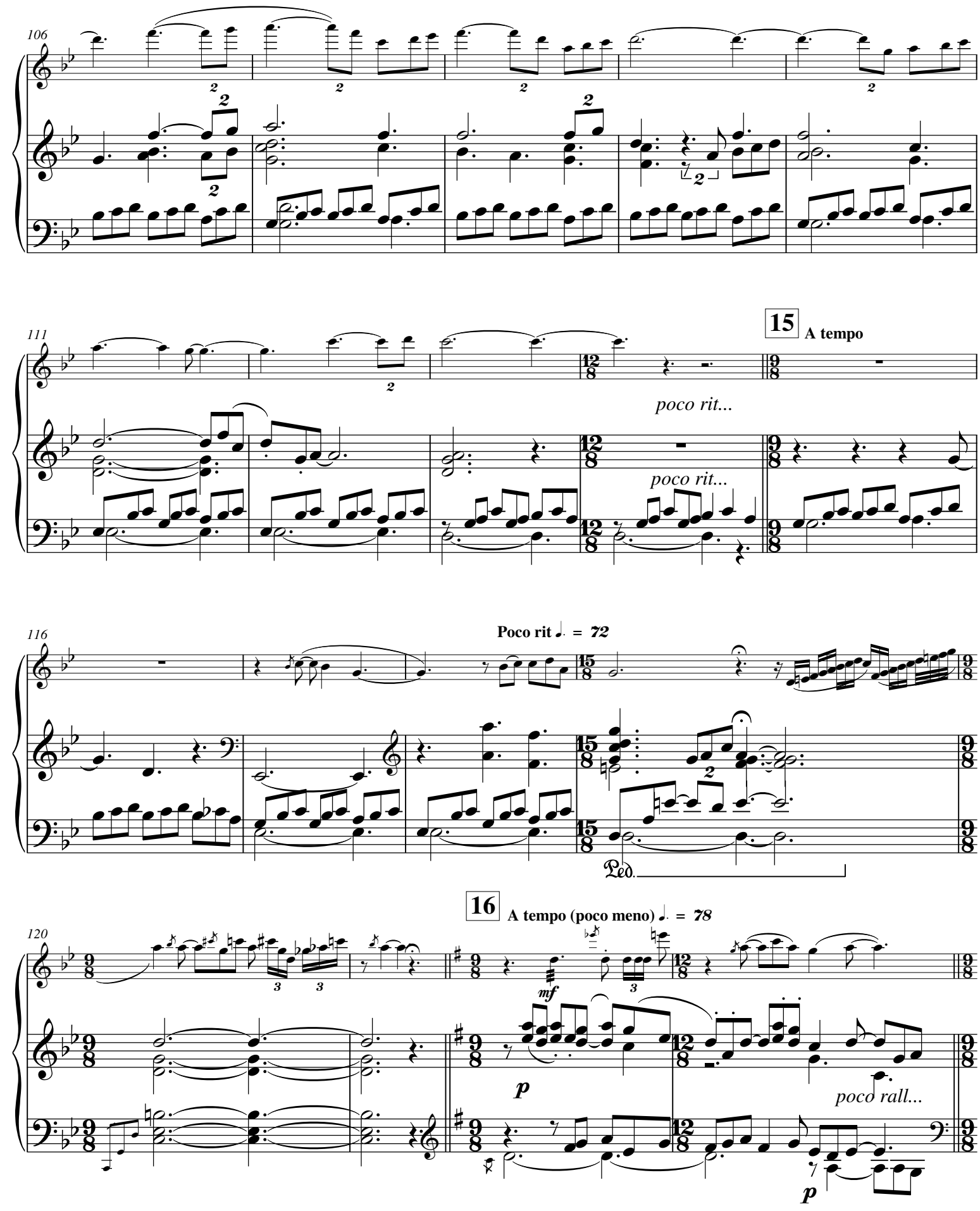

2
15
cresc.
ff
p
pp
cresc.
3
18
mp
4
Pastoral -calmo ♩. = 108
mp
22
Ped.
27
mp
f
poco accell.
5
Poco meno....
p
etc...
(♩. = ♩)

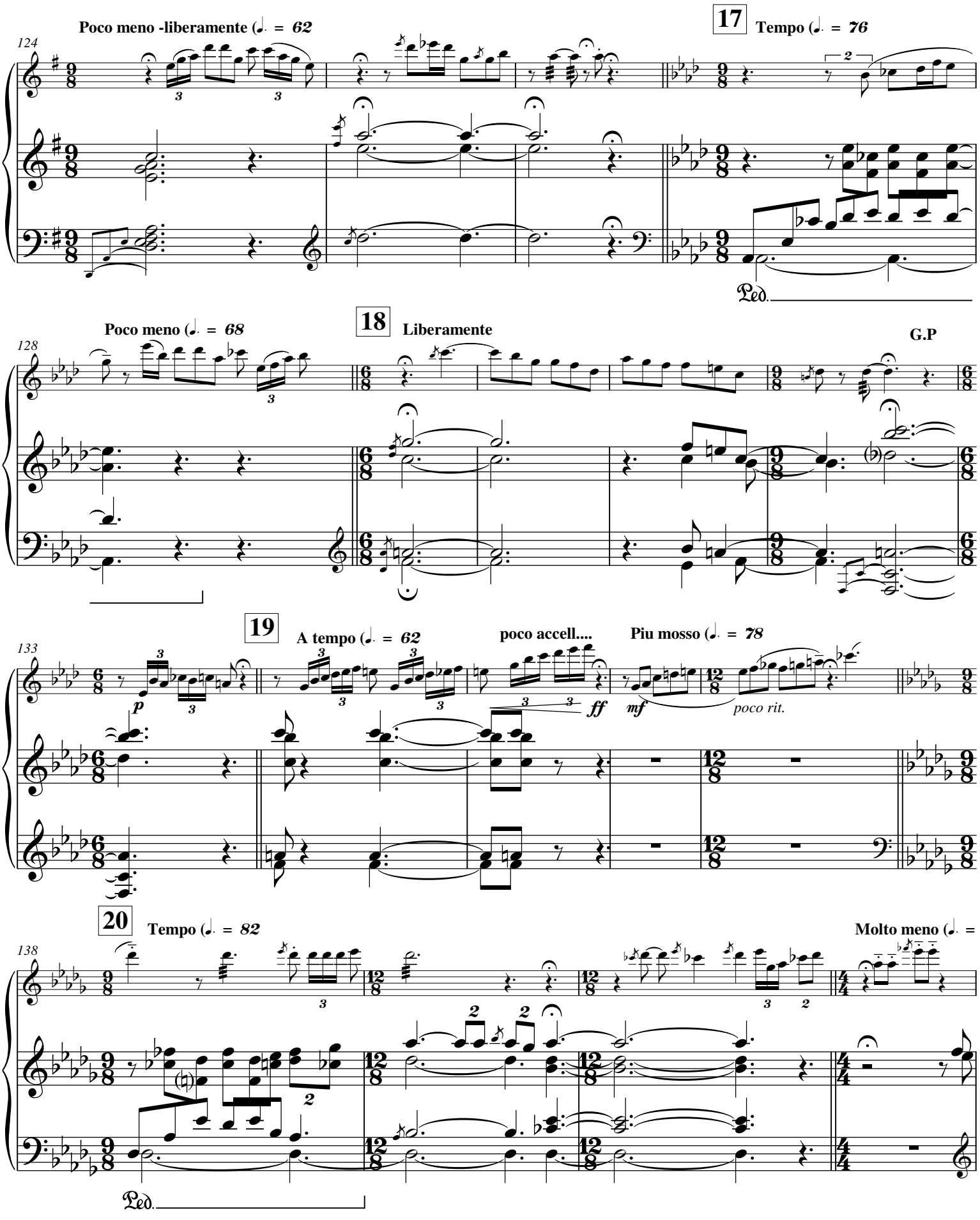

Continue sim, if flute joins in...(refer to notes)
6
Adagio, ma senza misura/ free -chimes? mist....
32
Ped.
7
A tempo
35
p
8
40
45

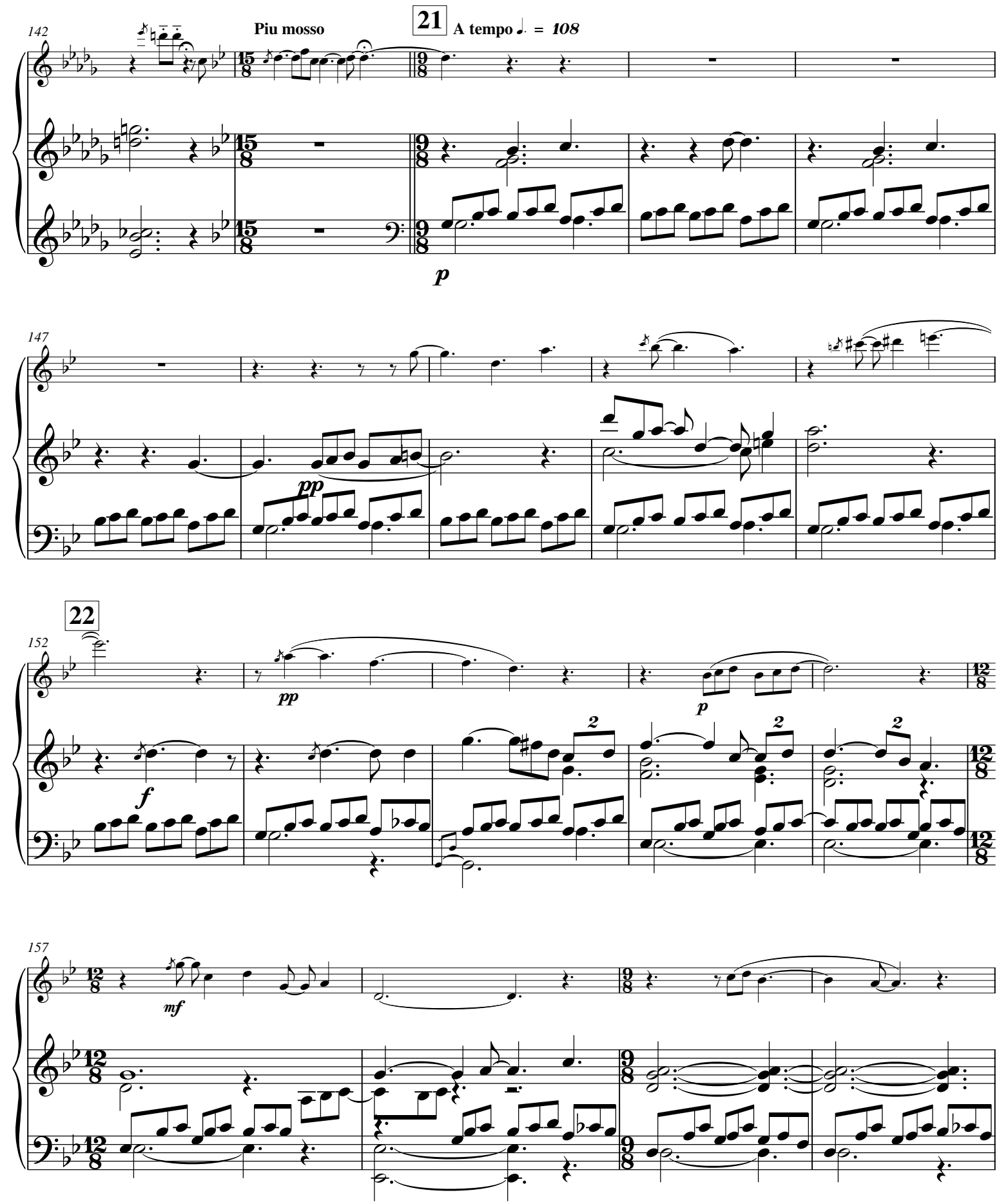

9
50
mf
55
60
pp
10
65
pp
(L.H.)

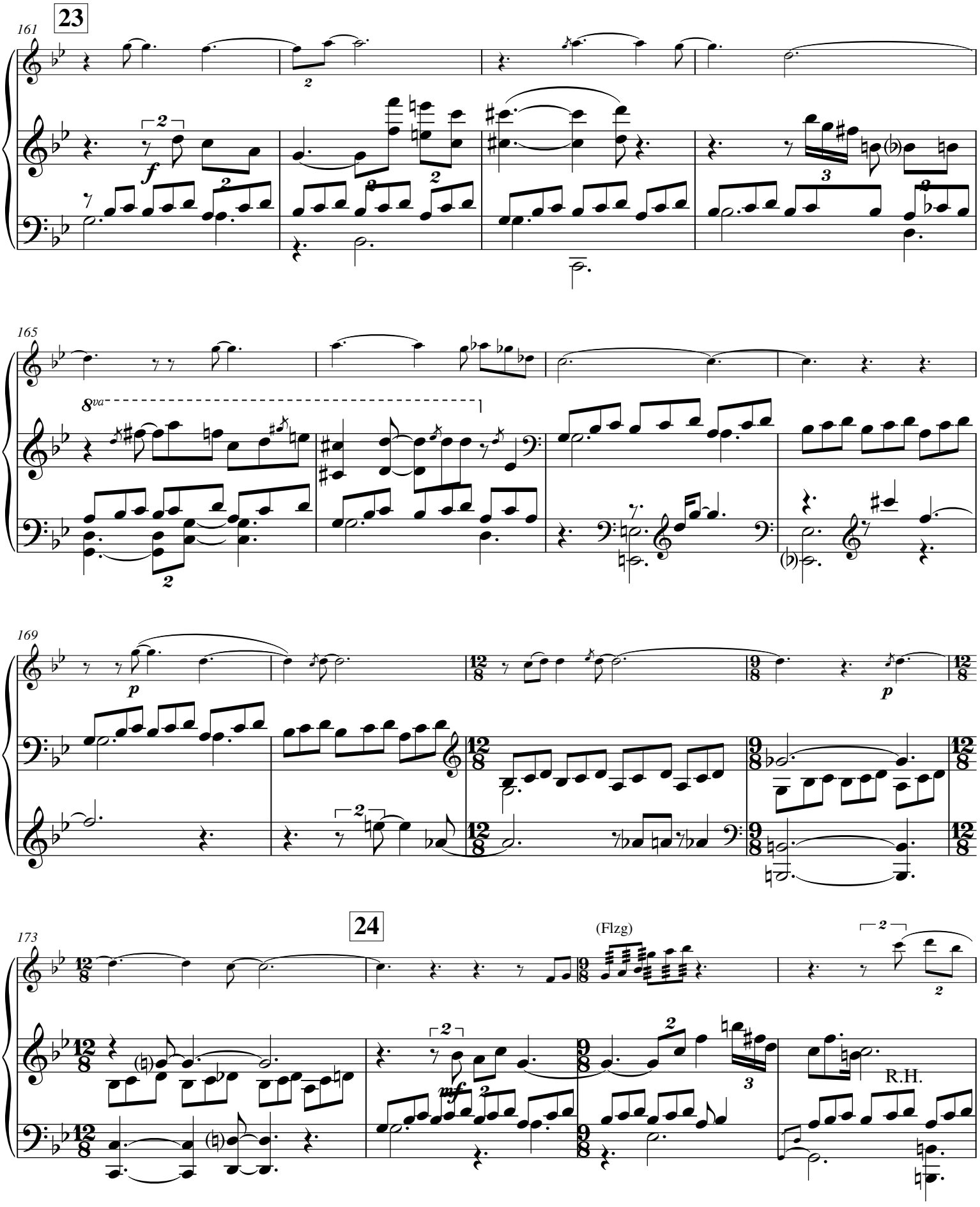

70
mf
75
Solo -Languido.....
11
p
Ped.
80
poco rallentando....
mf
poco rallentando....
Ped.
84
12
Adagio, free -chimes? mist, etc .... you get the drift?

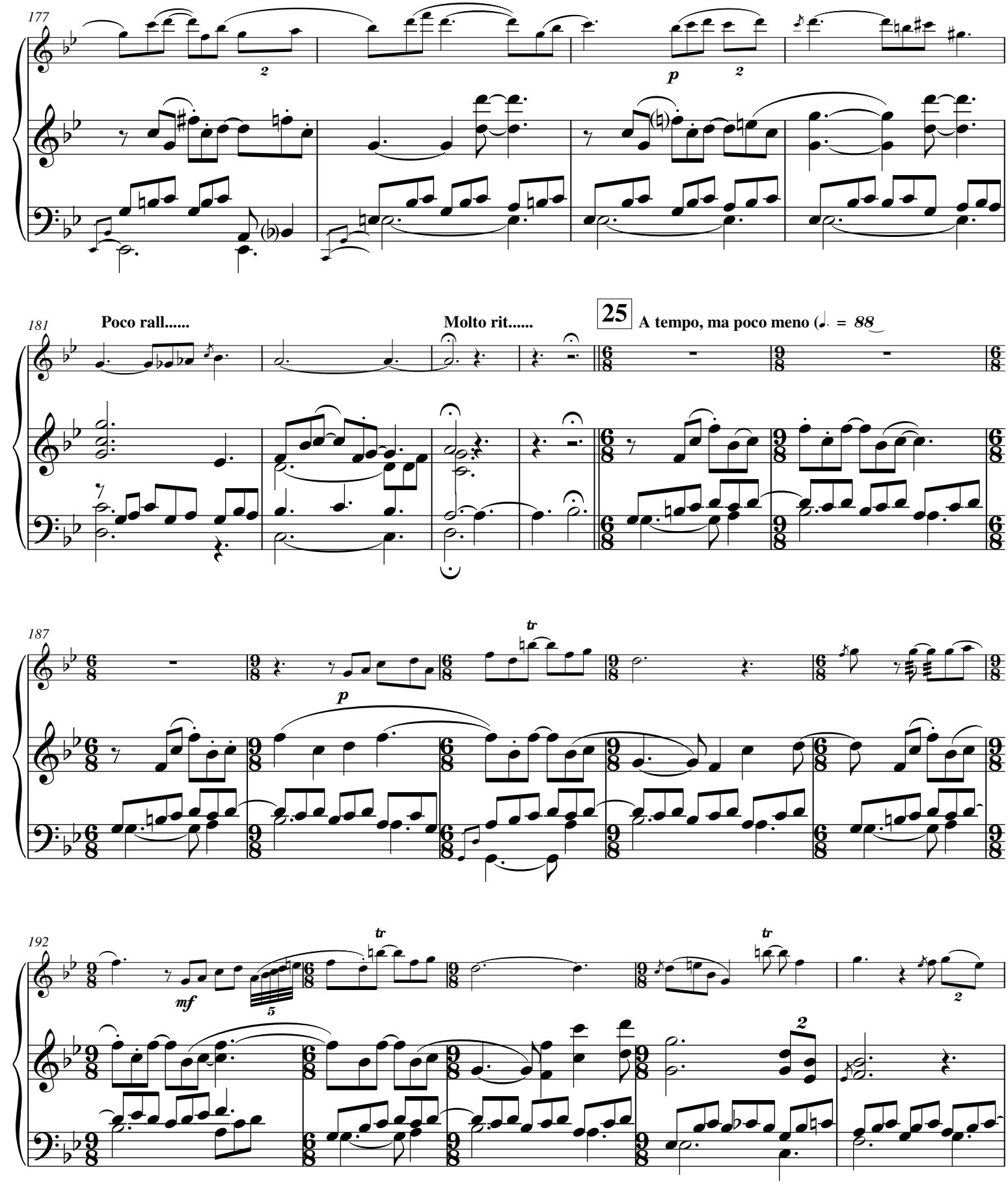

13
86
mp
pp
mp
91
f
96
101
14
f
mp

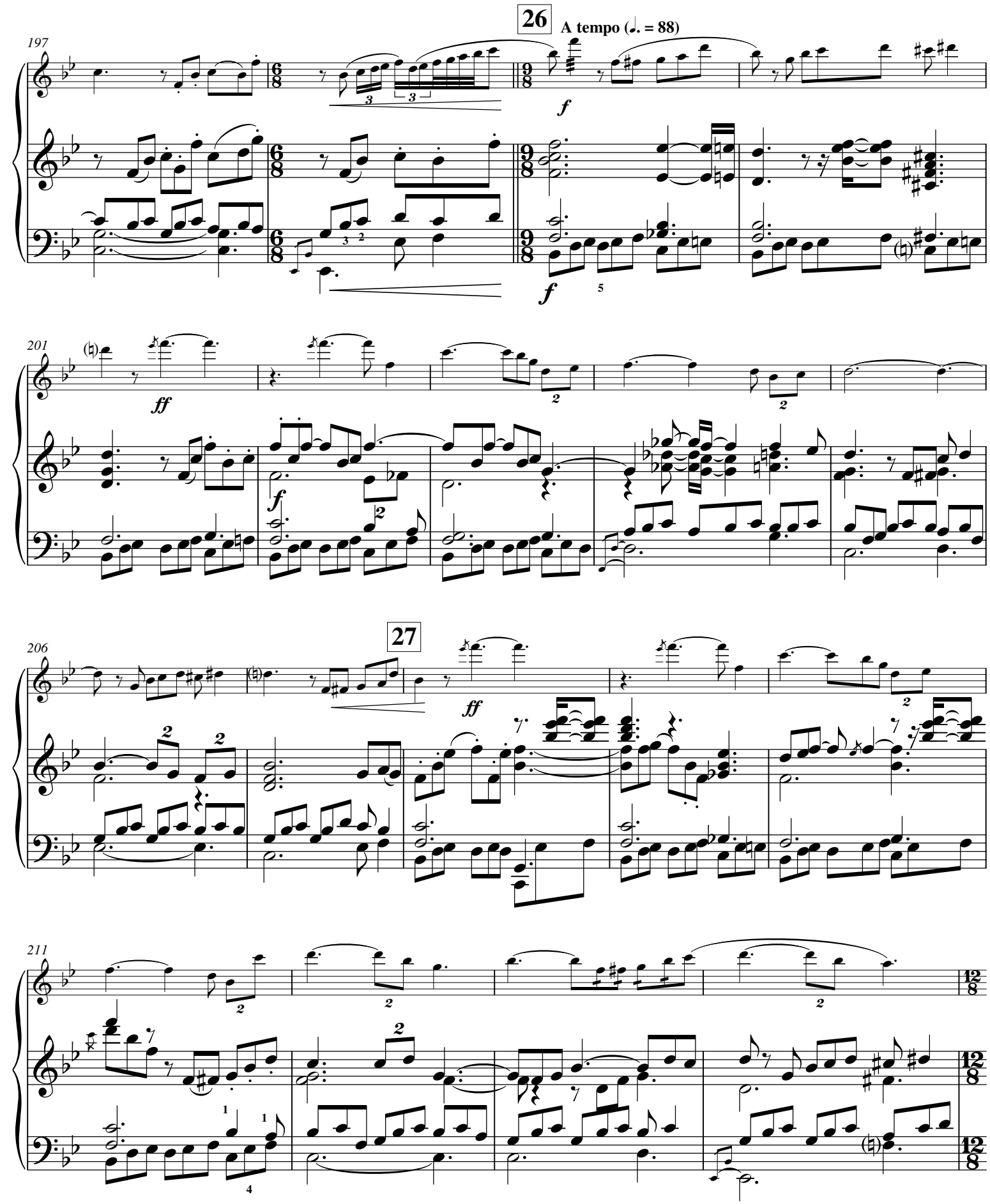

106
111
15
A tempo
poco rit...
poco rit...
116
Poco rit ♩. = 72
Ped.
16
A tempo (poco meno) ♩. = 78
120
mf
p
poco rall...
p

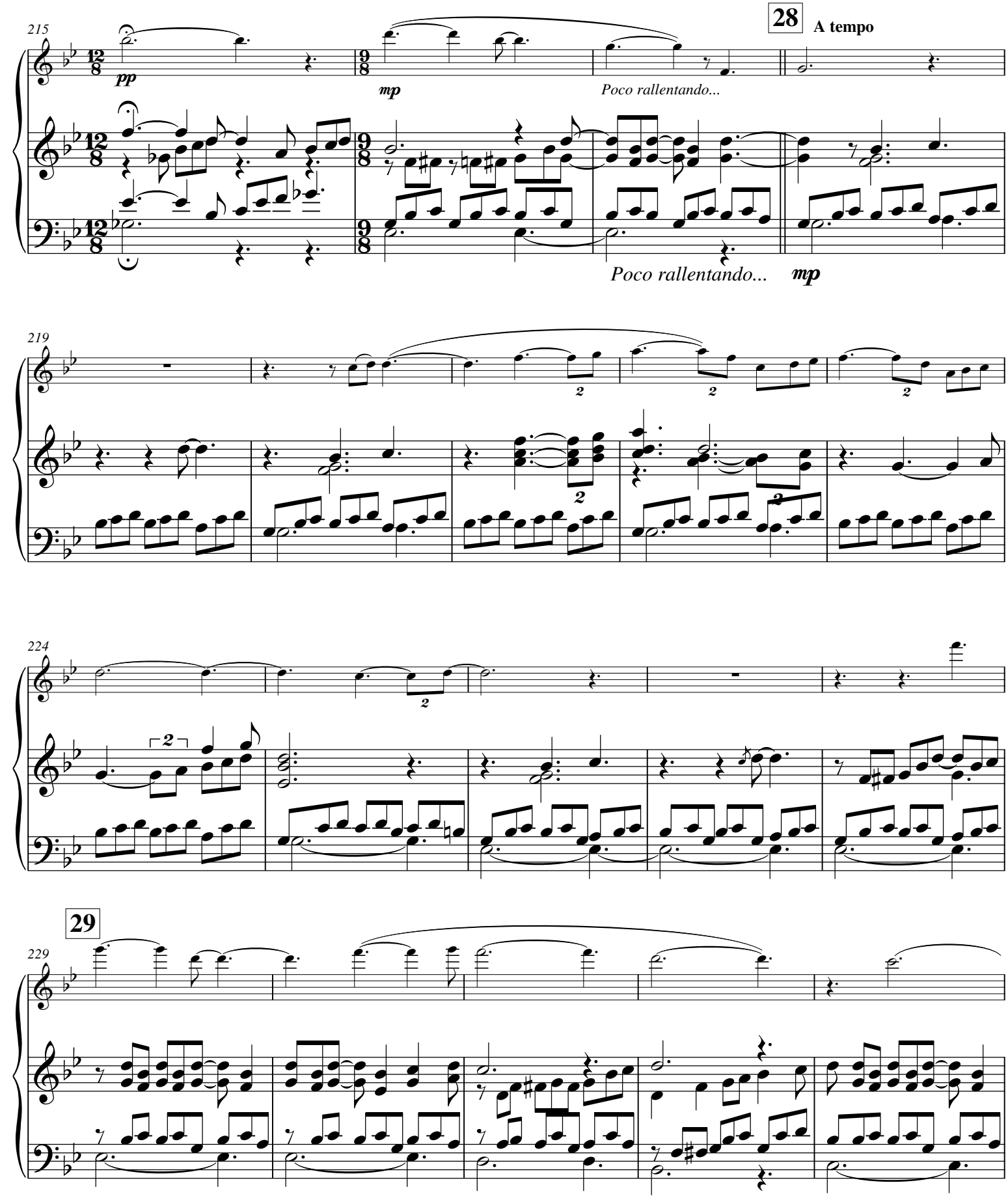

Poco meno -liberamente (♩. = 62
124
17
Tempo (♩. = 76
Ped.
Poco meno (♩. = 68
128
18
Liberamente
G.P
19
A tempo (♩. = 62
poco accell....
Piu mosso (♩. = 78
133
p
ff
mf
poco rit.
20
Tempo (♩. = 82
Molto meno (♩. = 52
138
Ped.


142
Piu mosso
21
A tempo ♩. = 108
p
147
pp
22
152
pp
p
f
2
2
2
157
mf


23
161
f
165
8va
169
p
24
173
(Flzg)
mf
R.H.


177
p
181
Poco rall.....
Molto rit.....
25
A tempo, ma poco meno (♩. = 88)
187
tr
p
192
mf
tr
tr


26
A tempo (♩. = 88)
197
f
f
201
ff
f
27
206
ff
211


215
pp
mp
Poco rallentando...
28
A tempo
Poco rallentando...
mp
219
224
29
229

234

Poco rallentando al .....

30 **Poco meno ♩. = 72**

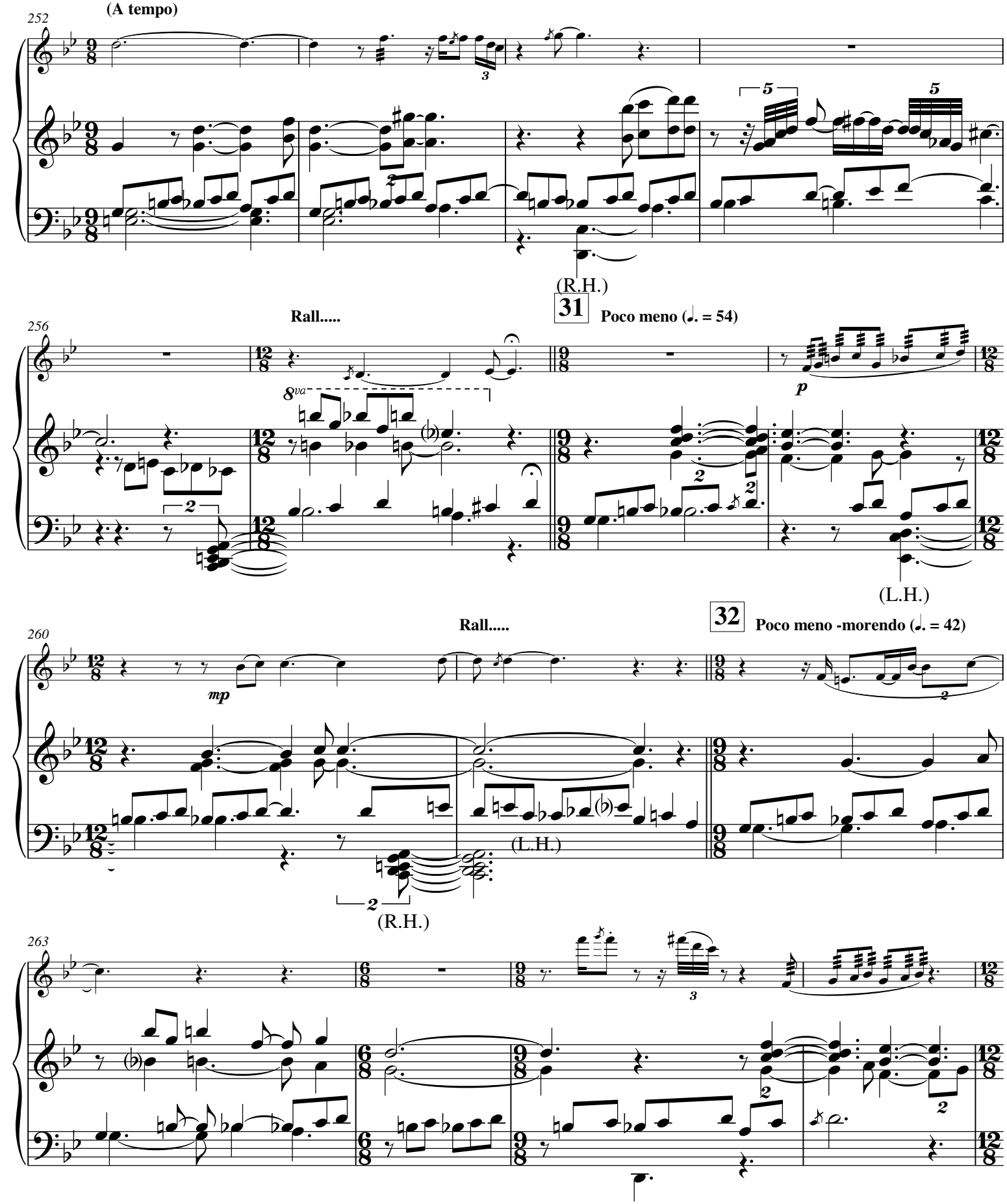
238

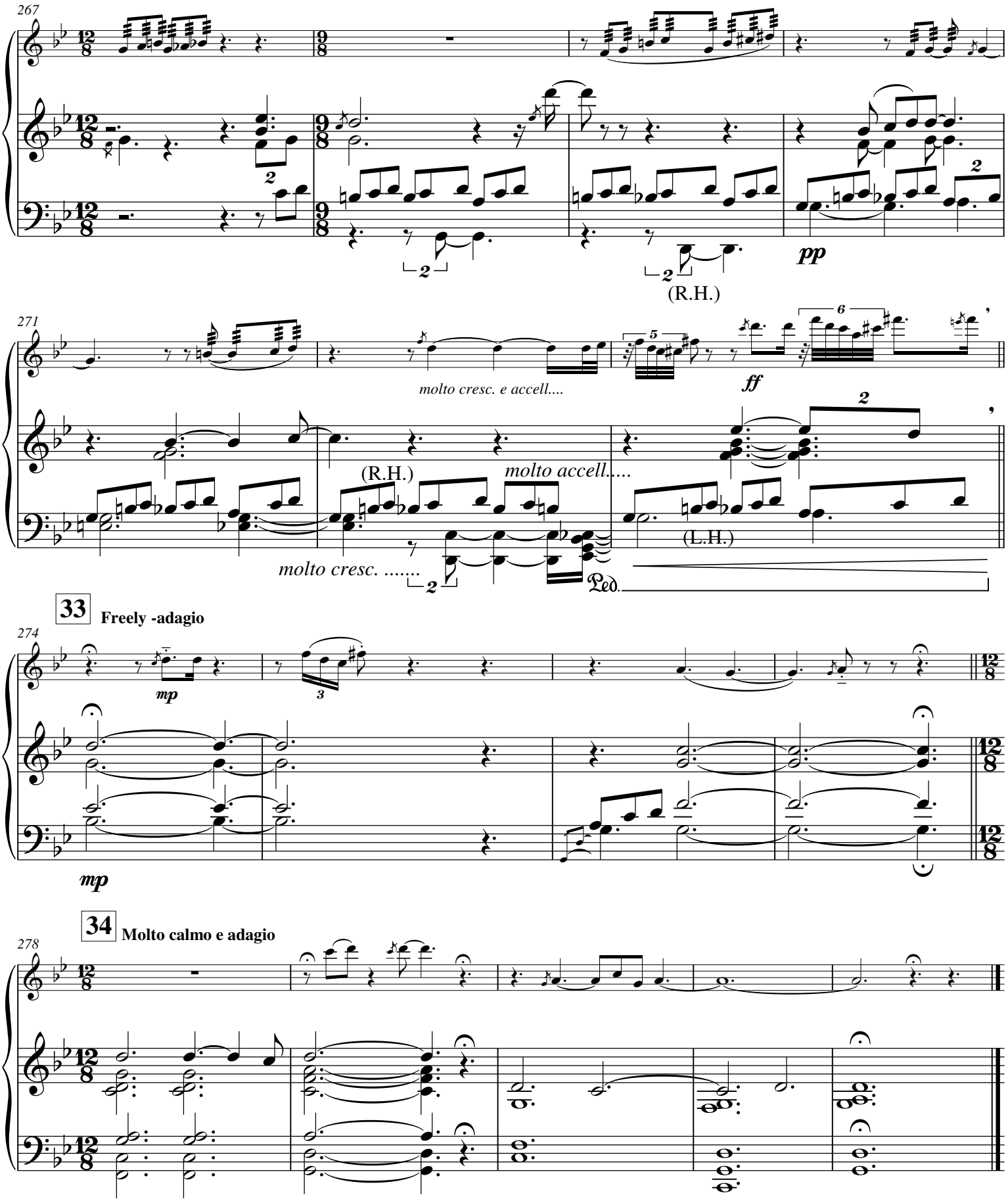
243

248

poco rall...

poco rall...


252
(A tempo)
(R.H.)
31
Poco meno (♩. = 54)
256
Rall.....
8va
p
(L.H.)
32
Poco meno -morendo (♩. = 42)
260
Rall.....
mp
(L.H.)
(R.H.)
263



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