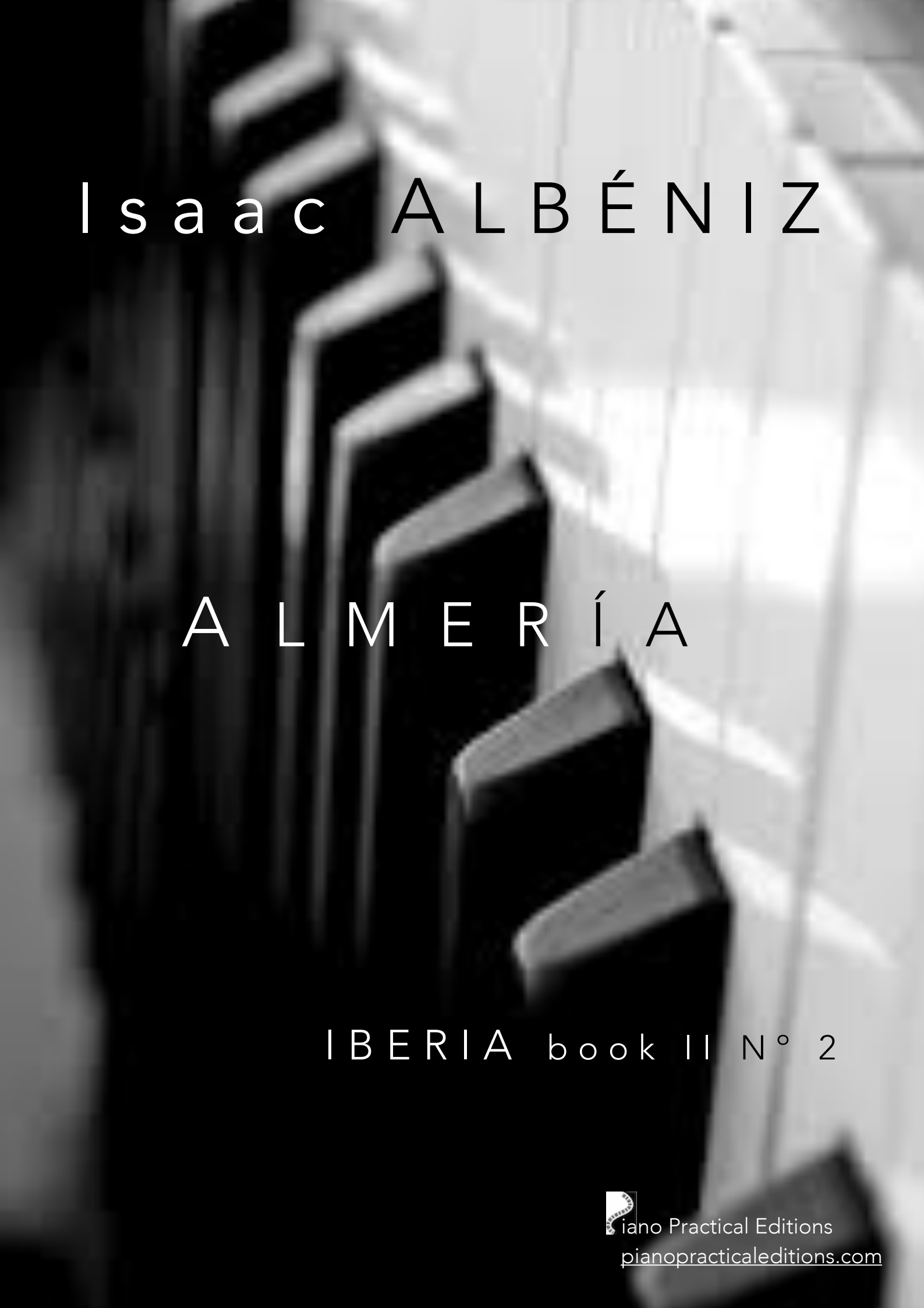

Isaac ALBÉNIZ

ALMERÍA

IBERIA book II N° 2

Piano Practical Editions
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iano Practical Editions

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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Isaac ALBÉNIZ 1860 - 1909

ALMERÍA

de la suite "IBERIA"

Almería was completed in June 1906 and dedicated to the pianist Blanche Selva, the first to perform all four books of *Iberia*. Although a difficult piece to master, It is considered one of the less challenging of the collection.

This is perhaps not the most original piece in *Iberia*, taking inspiration, motifs and harmonies from other pieces which reflect this southern region of Spain. *Almería* begins much like the piece which precedes it, *Rondeña*, but the dance has now become a languid dream during a siesta in the torrid Andalusian heat, reinforced by long and mesmerising repetition of the opening riff. I love the animated section, a passionate *jota** and also the typical Albeniz central impression of *cante jondo*** — ardent music from the heart.

Francisco Rodriguez San Clemente

When I first heard Alicia De Larrocha perform Albeniz I was amazed and impressed by the language and technical mastery of both composer and interpreter. And when I was finally able to attempt *Iberia,* I noticed that the text (Éditions *Salabert*) was often difficult to study: there were inaccuracies, many accidentals and too many instructions, coupled with sub-standard engraving; so I decided to edit the music myself.

In spite of passing through a number of key changes, the composer has curiously written this work entirely with a key signature of one sharp. Was this through negligence or by design? If the former, I humbly offer this edition which makes quite a few changes of key signature, rendering, I believe, the text easier to comprehend and read by eliminating quite a few challenging accidentals.

I plead guilty to not having religiously copied every dot, accent, sign, pedal marking and many others. Albeniz was very zealous in having often embellished many, sometimes conflicting, instructions and I have tried to simplify the music within reason relying upon present-day sophisticated pianists and teachers reading the score philosophically.

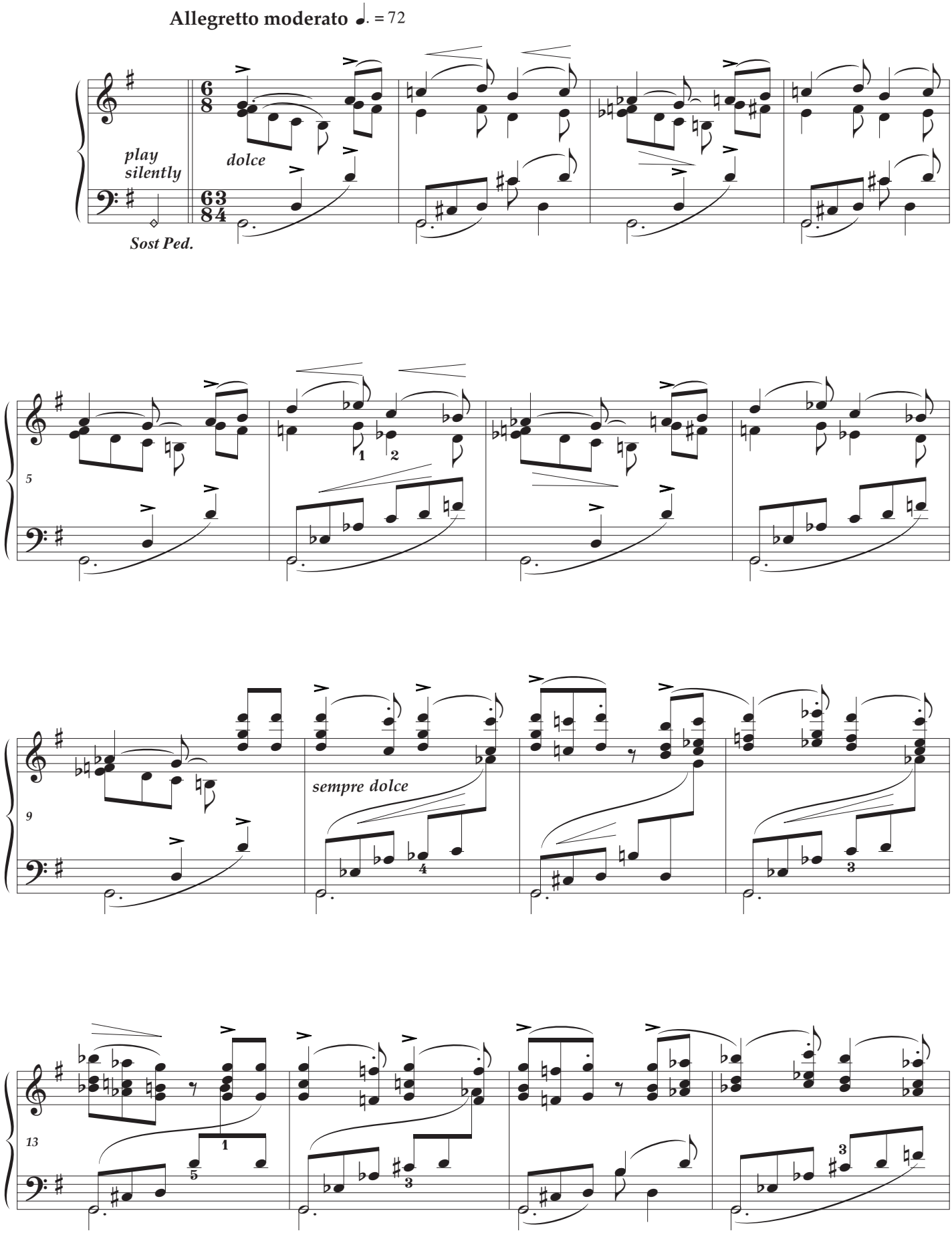
Albéniz was an extrovert with a keen sense of humour, loved and respected by all who knew him. In this wonderful and imaginative music, he was also flamboyant with long descriptions in French and pedalling directions which sometimes seem to be a whirlwind of far-fetched impossibilities — unreasonable and endearing as they are.

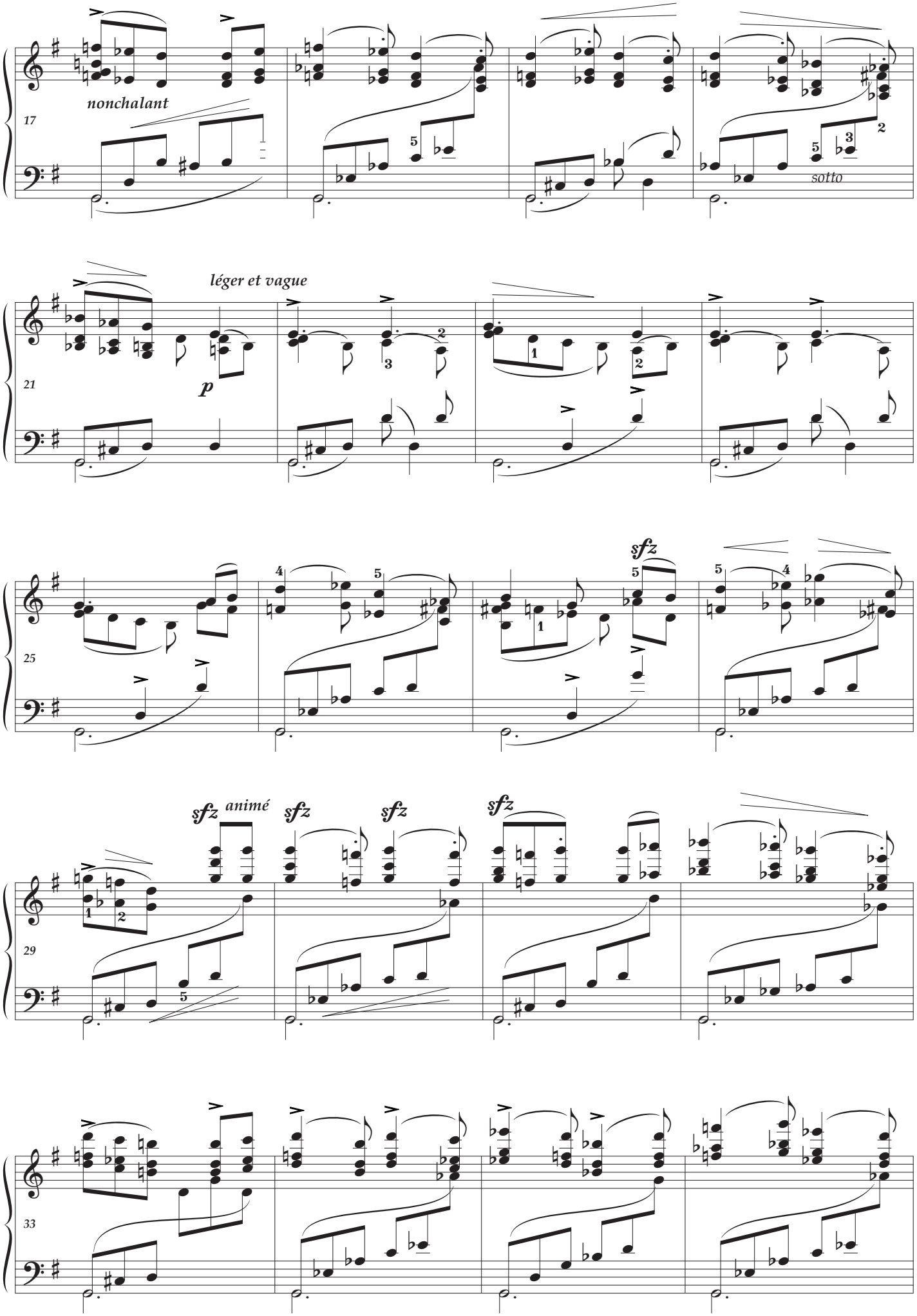
In addition to some suggested fingerings, the appendix contains comments, afterthoughts and a vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more persuasive. It is possible, even desirable, to use the sostenuto pedal effectively, although this is entirely editorial.

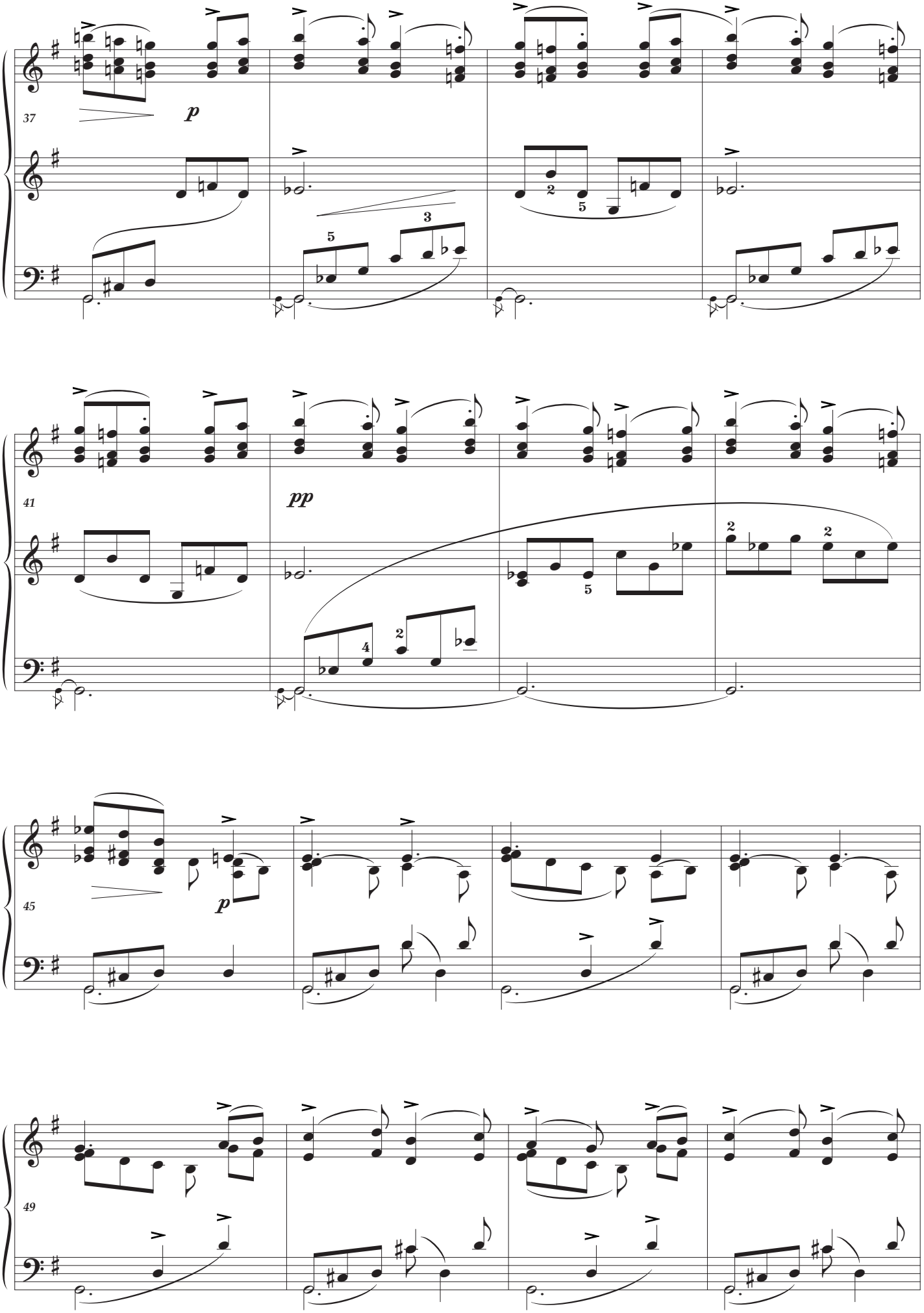
✶ **A dance from the Almería region**

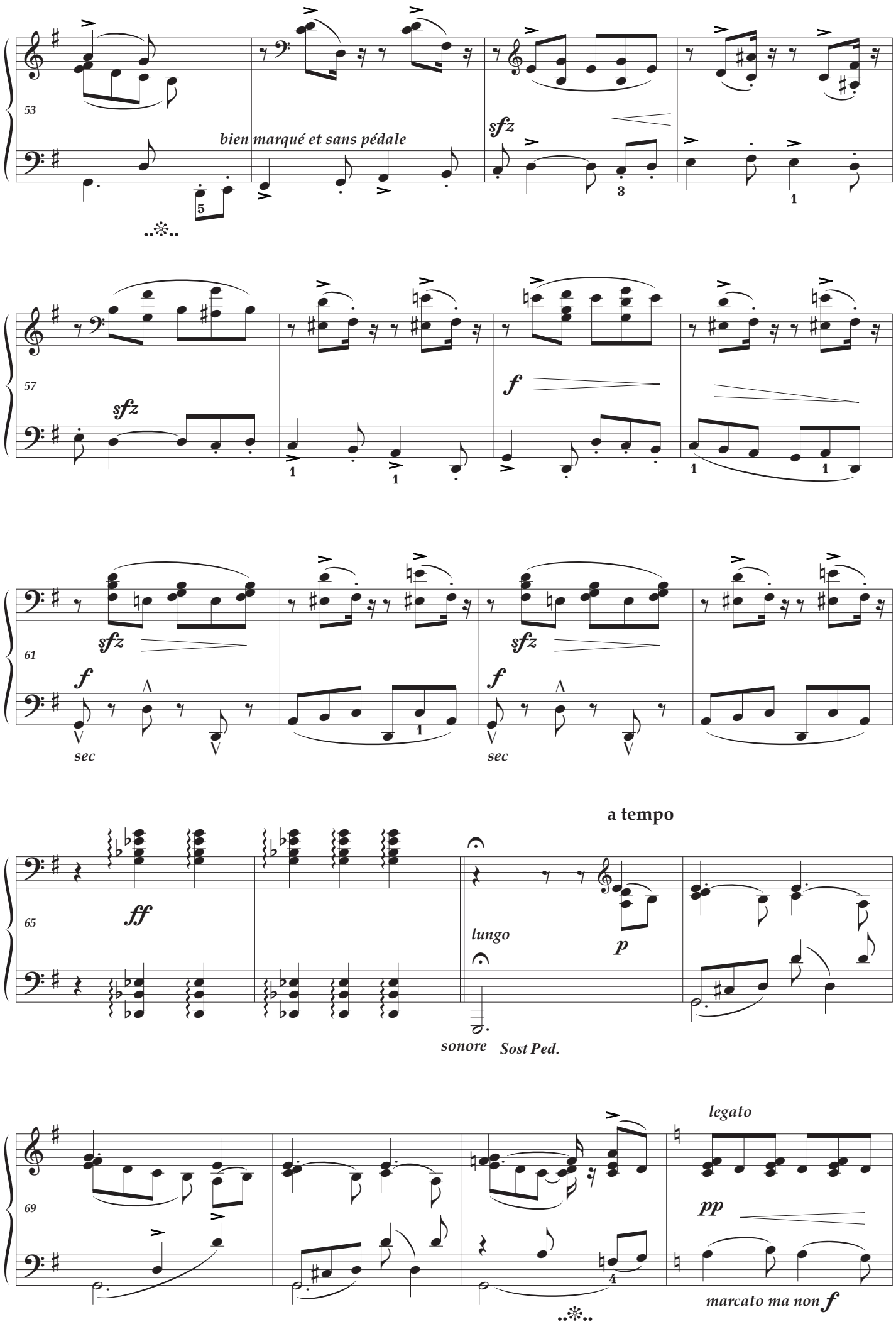
✶ **Deeply moving vocal flamenco**

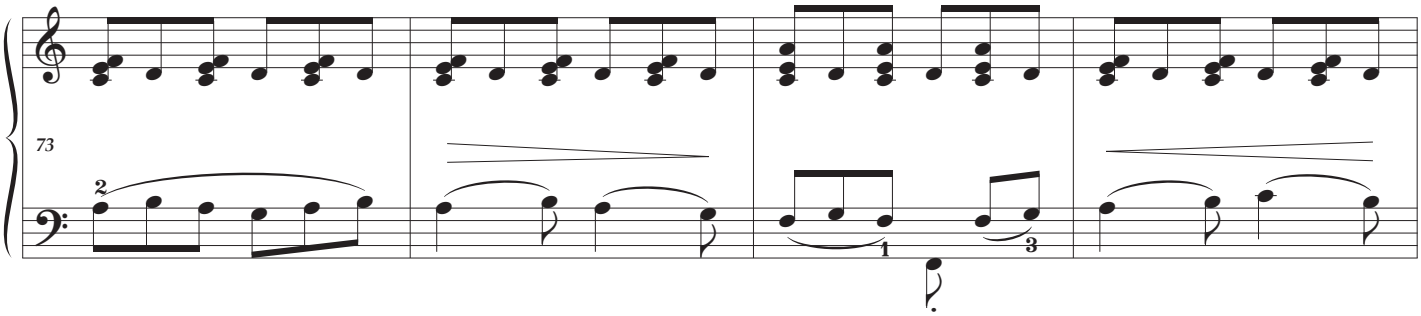
A L M E R Í A

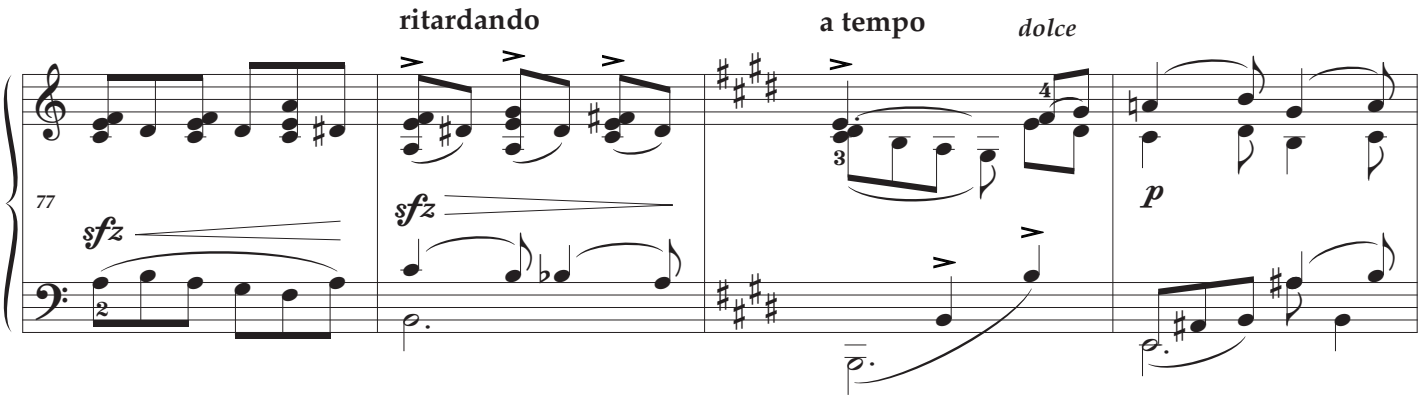

Allegretto moderato ♩. = 72
play silently
dolce
Sost Ped.
sempre dolce

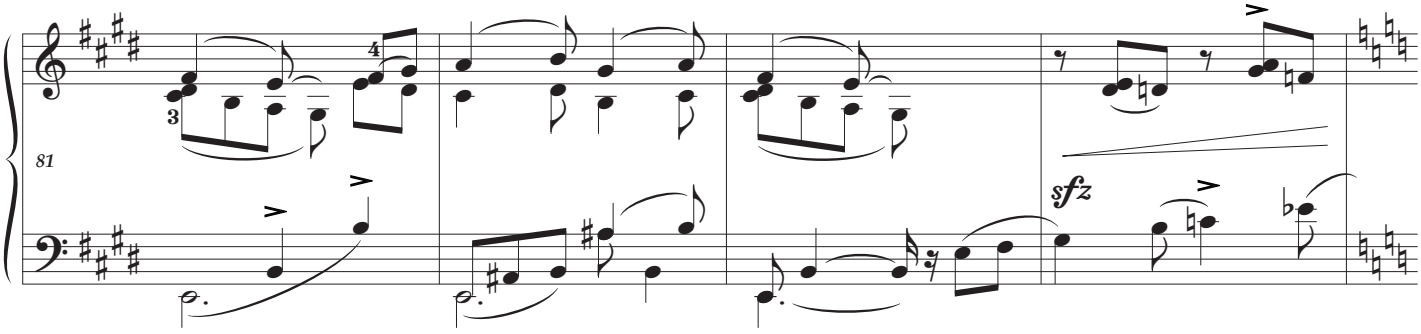

nonchalant
17
sotto
léger et vague
21
p
25
sfz
sfz animé
sfz
sfz
sfz
29
33

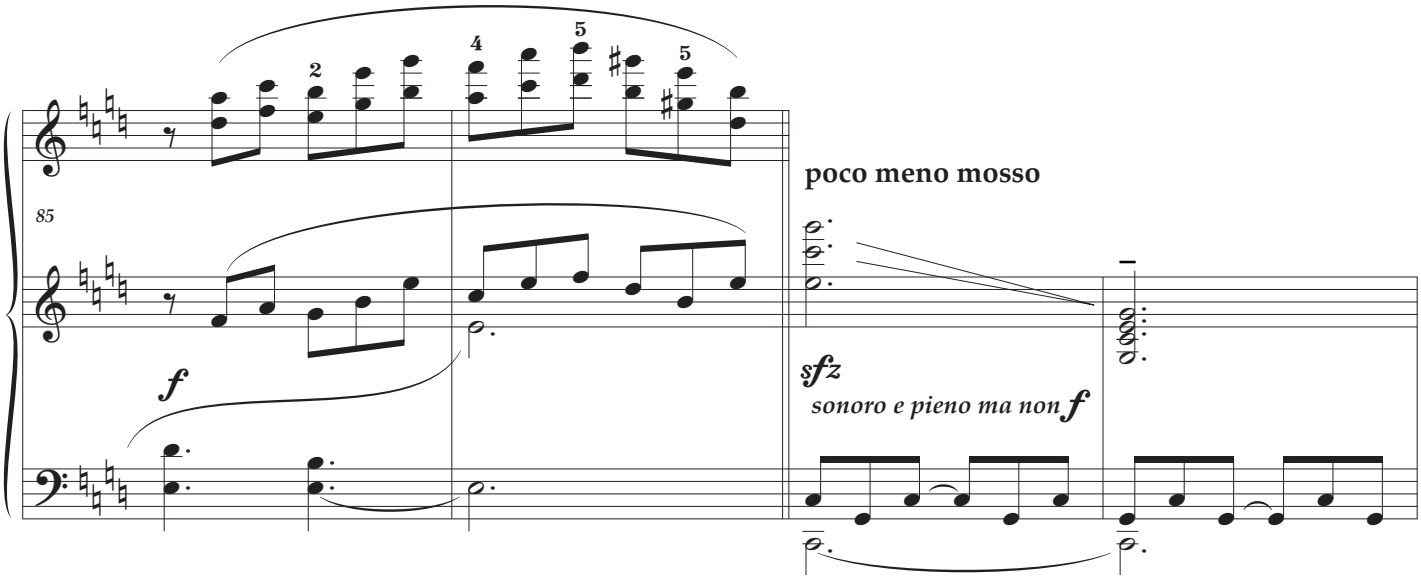

37
p
41
pp
45
p
49

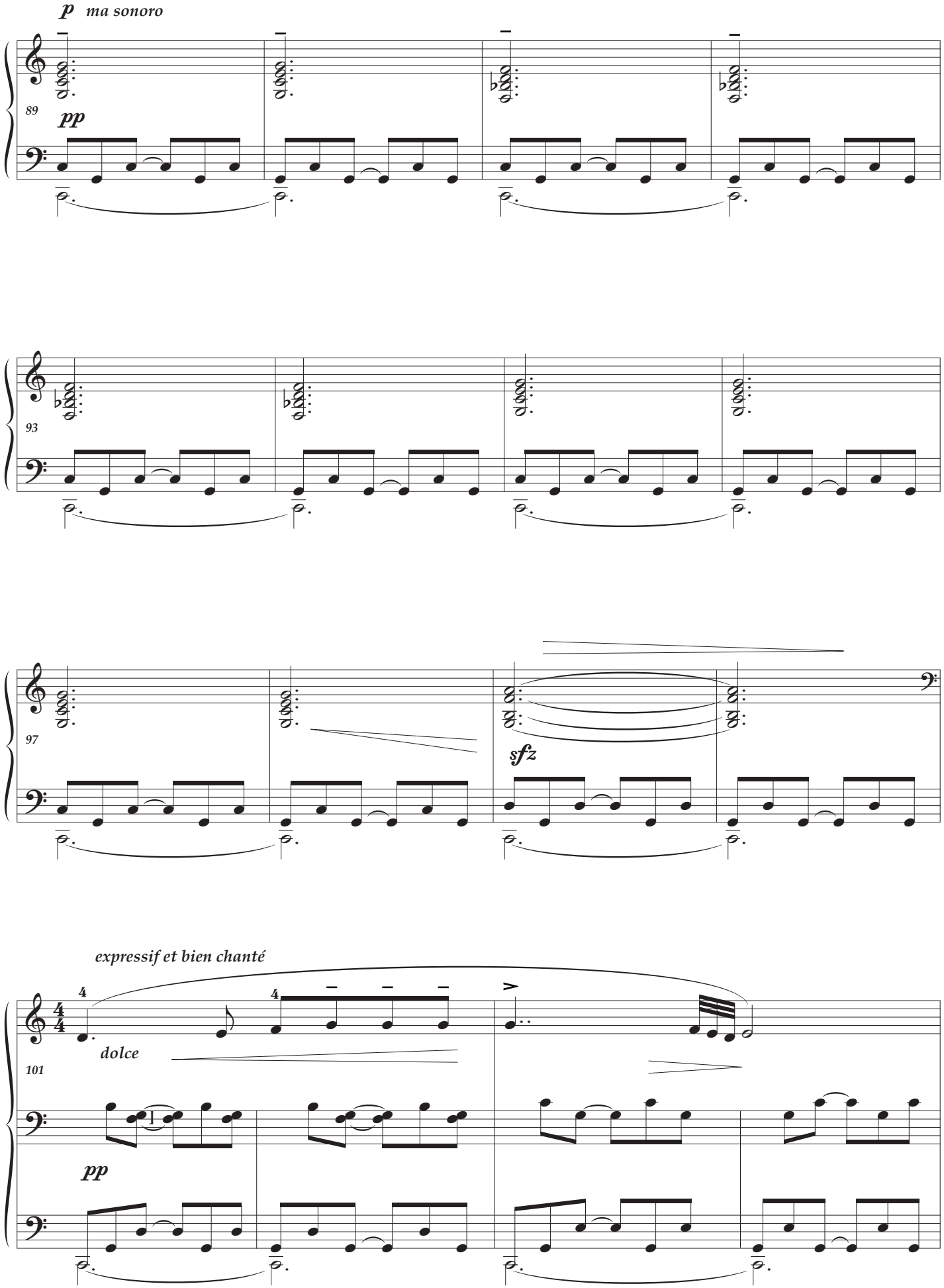

53
bien marqué et sans pédale
sfz
57
sfz
f
61
sfz
f
sec
sfz
f
sec
a tempo
65
ff
lungo
p
sonore
Sost Ped.
69
legato
pp
marcato ma non f

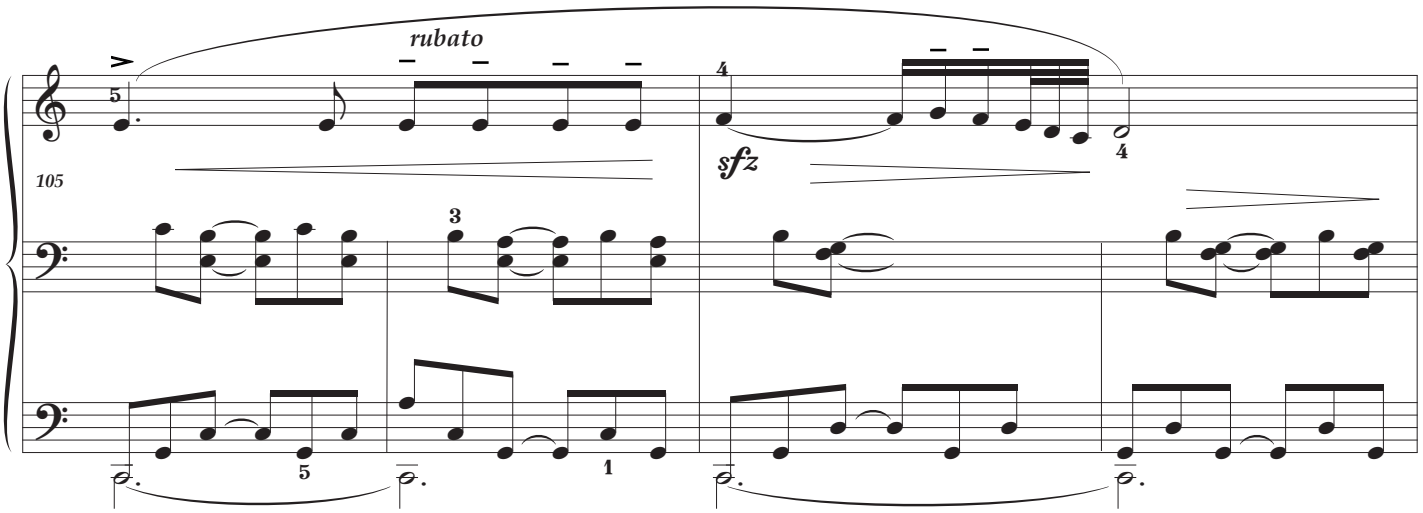

73

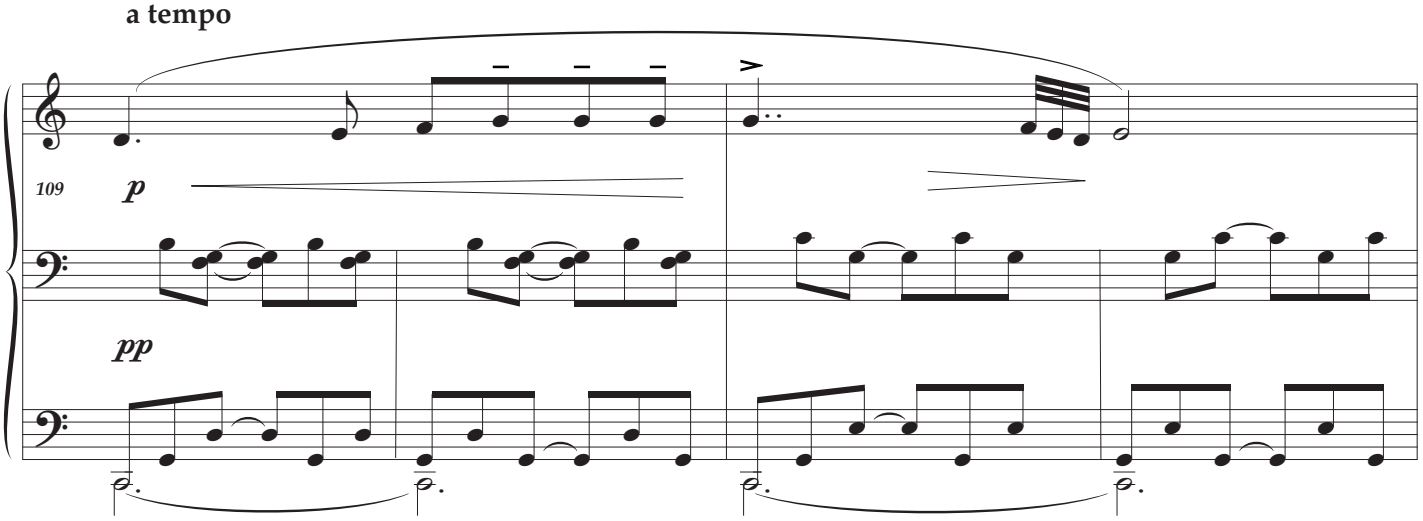

ritardando
a tempo
dolce
77
sfz
sfz
p

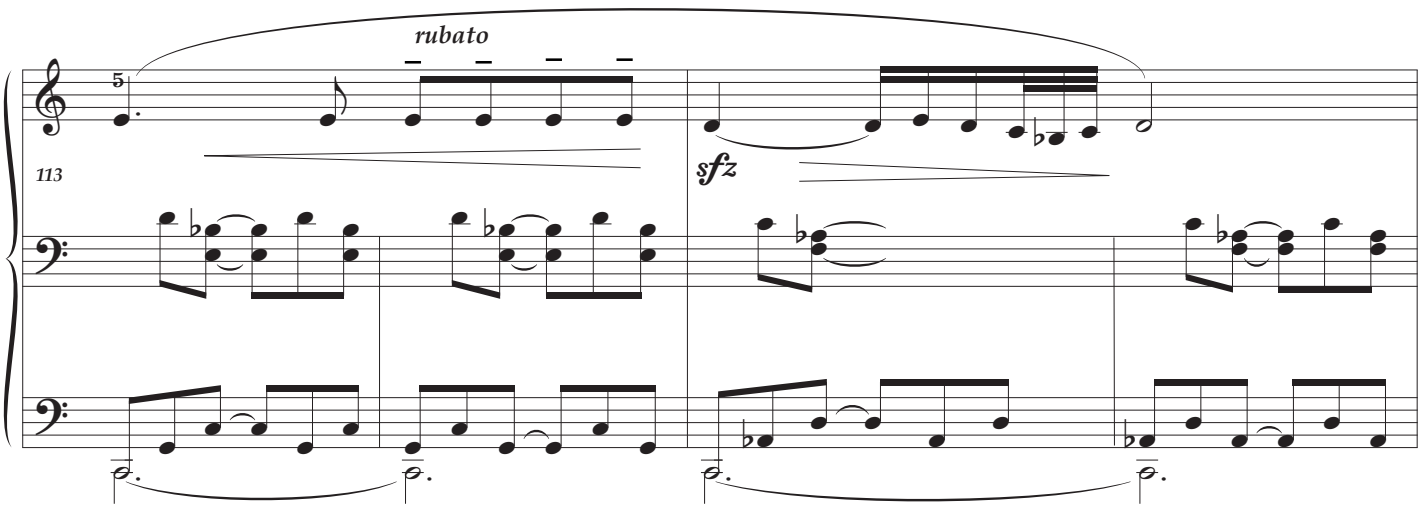

81
sfz

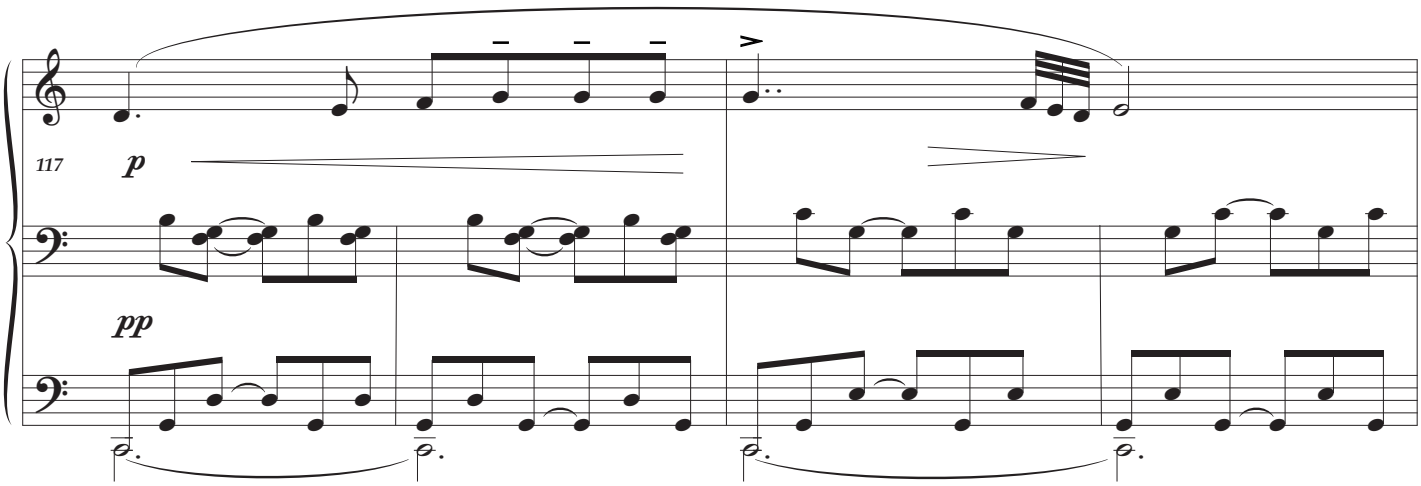

85
poco meno mosso
f
sfz
sonoro e pieno ma non f

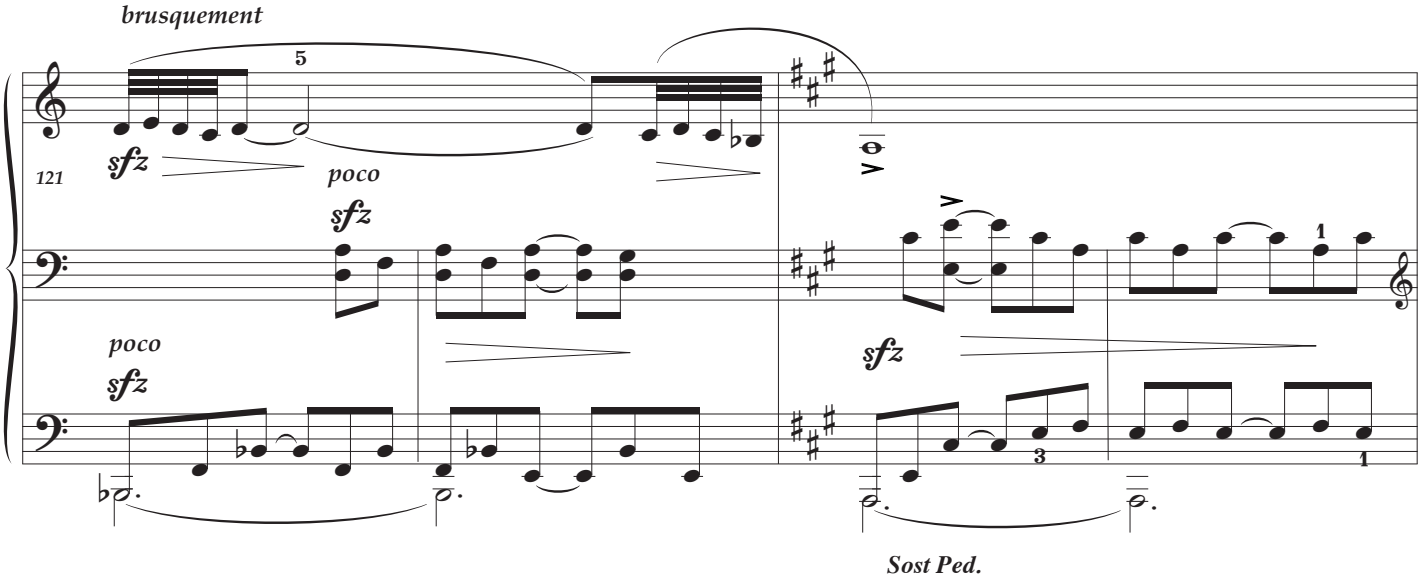

p ma sonoro
89
pp
93
97
sfz
expressif et bien chanté
4
4
4
4
dolce
101
pp

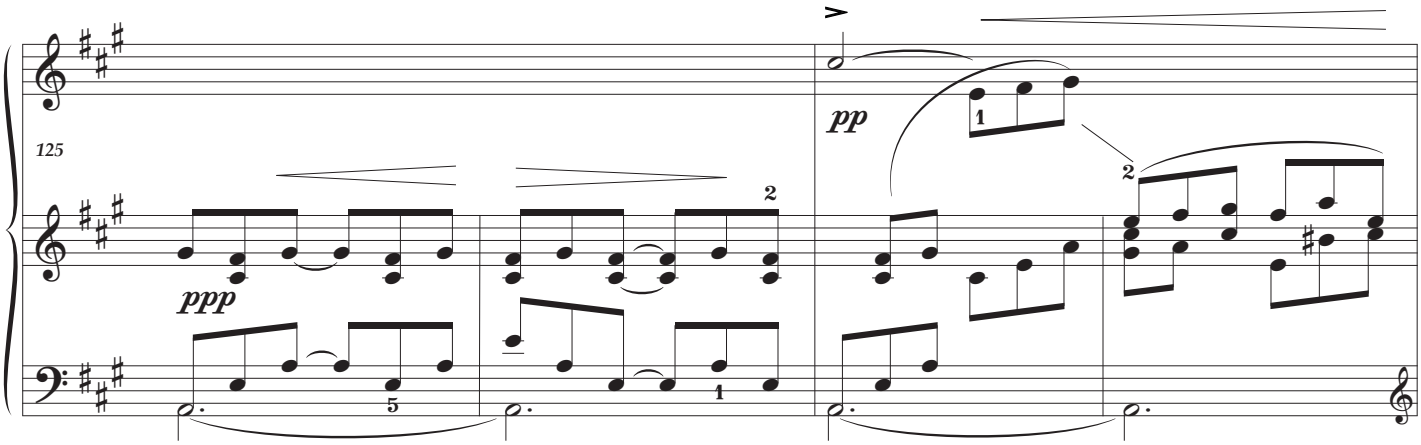

rubato
105
sfz

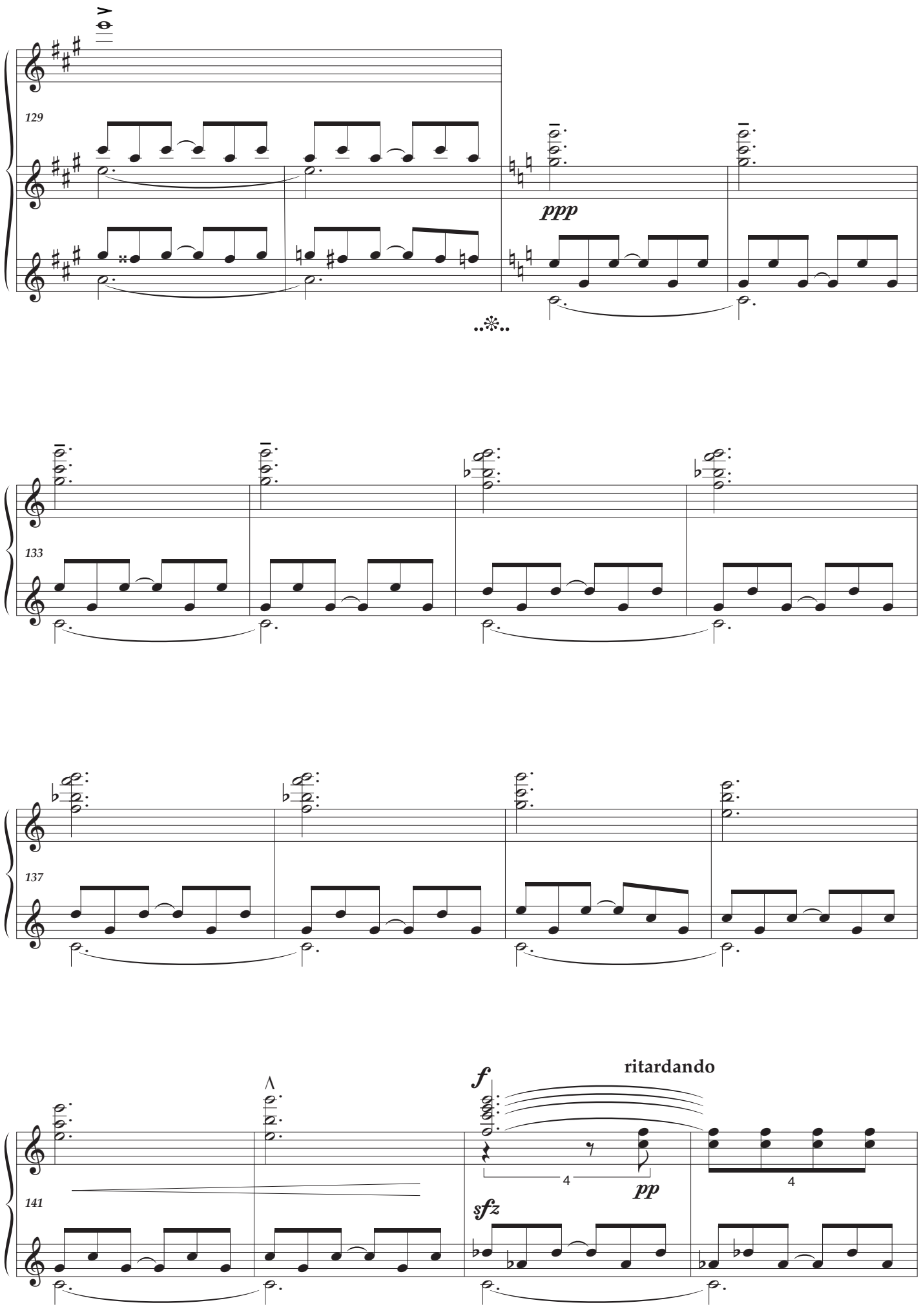

a tempo
109
p
pp

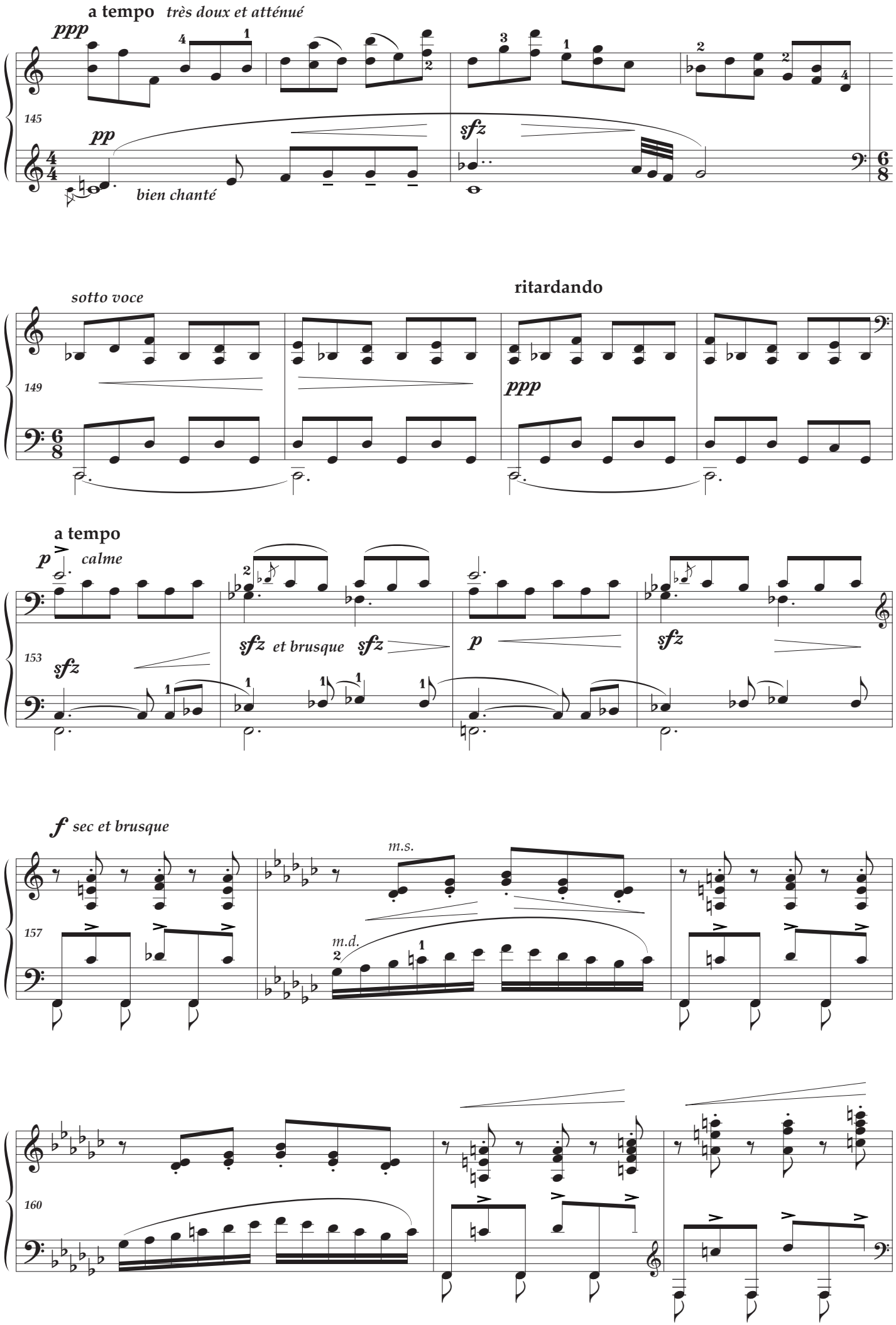

rubato
113
sfz

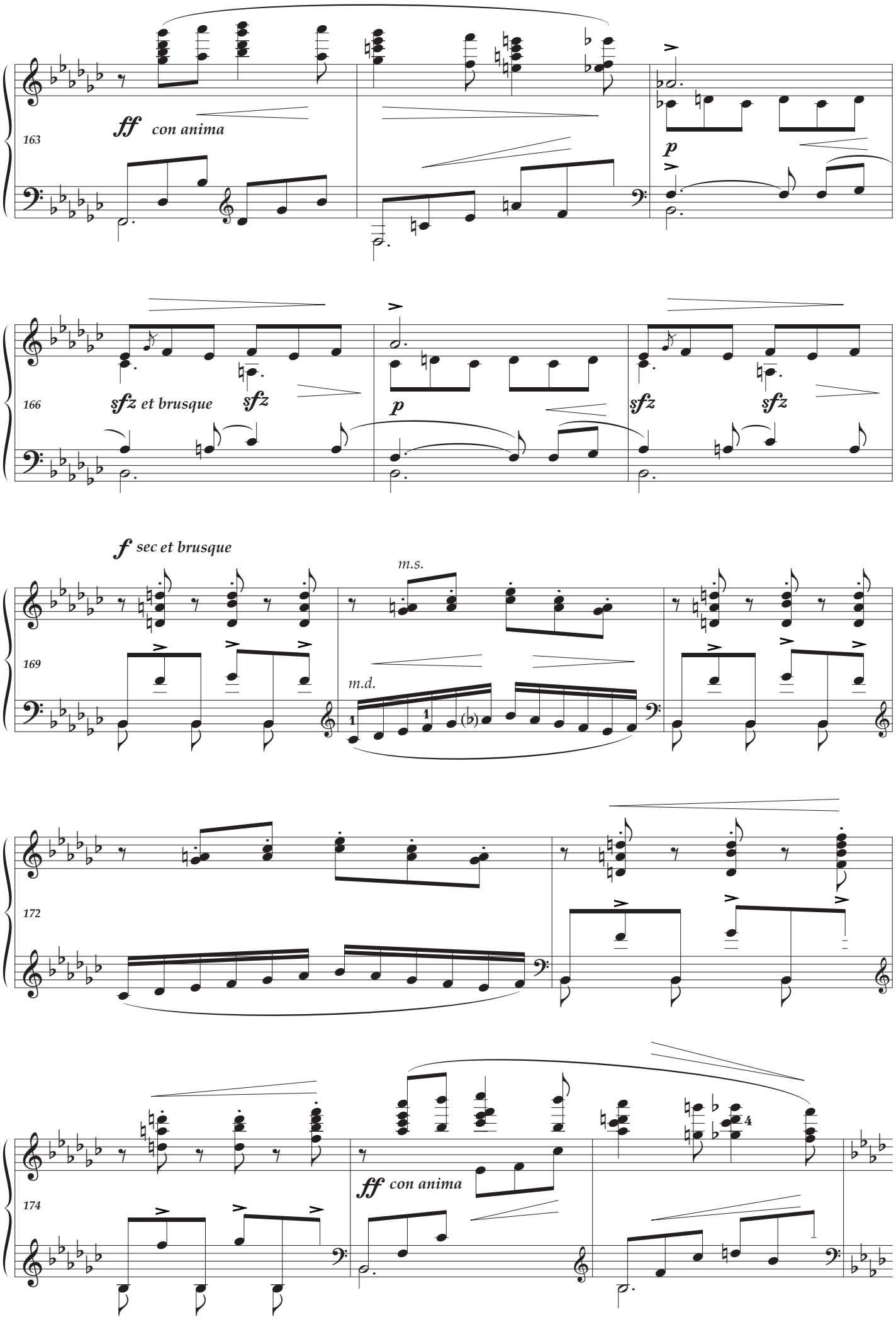

117
p
pp

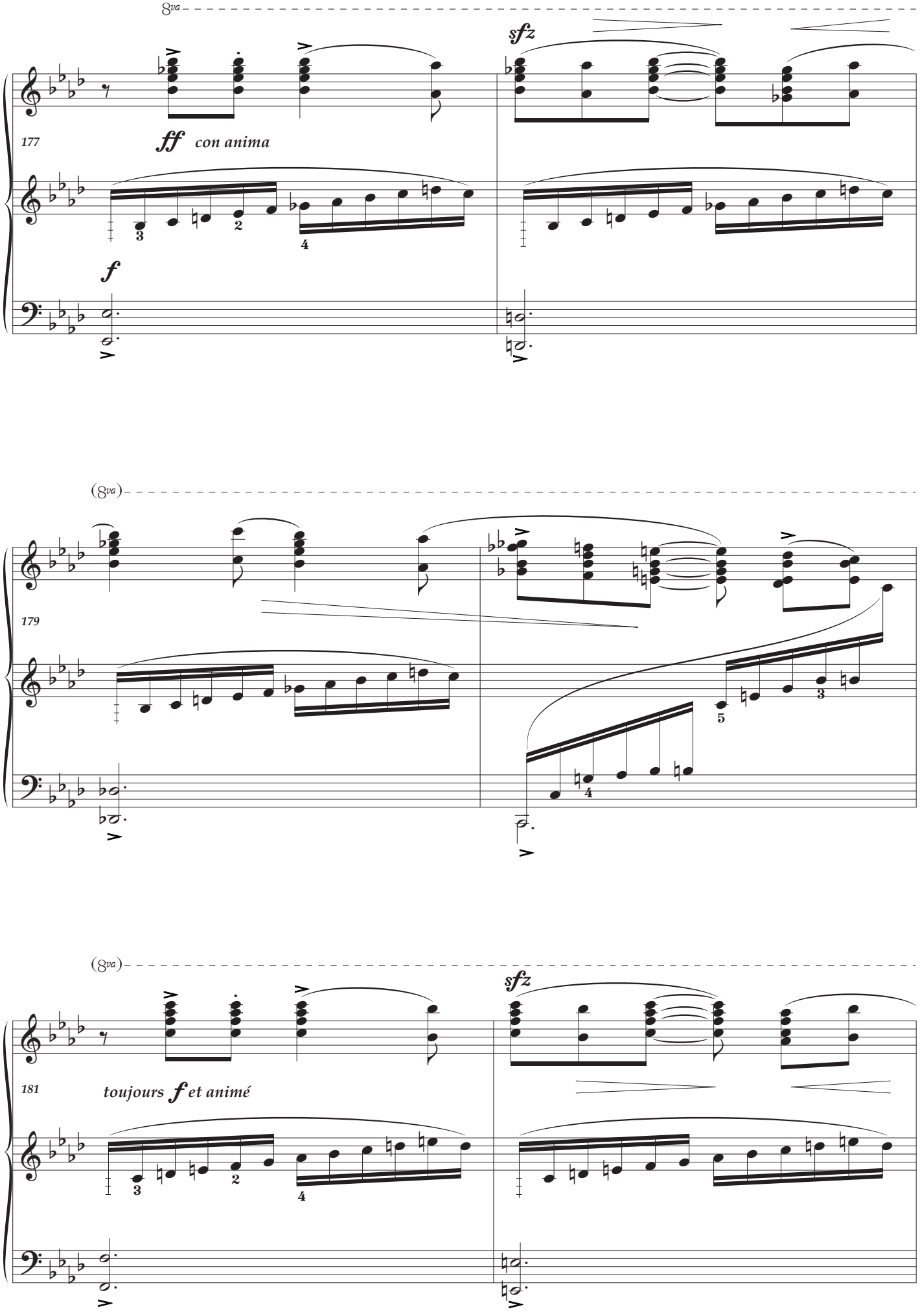

brusquement
121
sfz
poco
sfz
poco
sfz
sfz
Sost Ped.

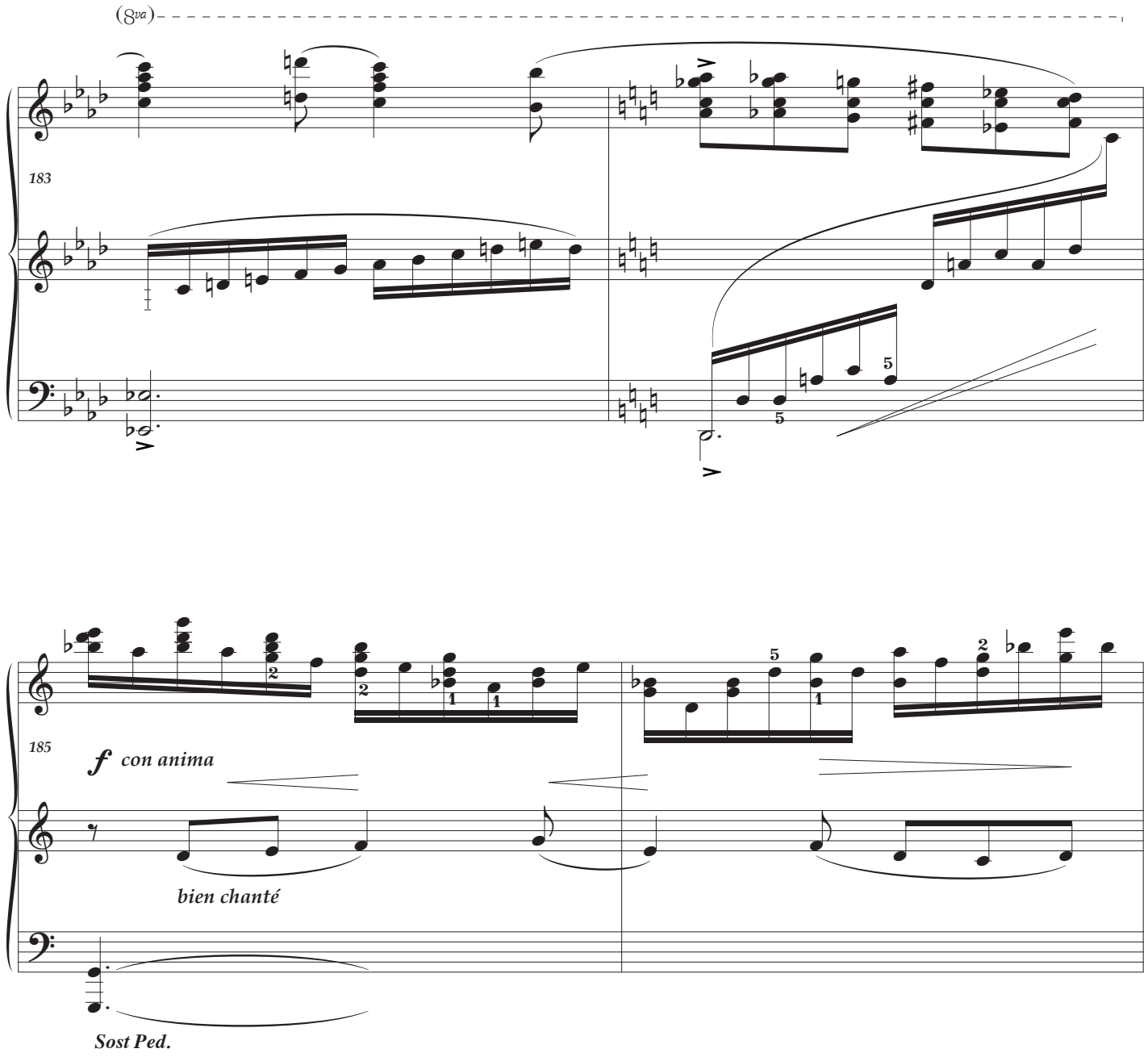

125
ppp
pp

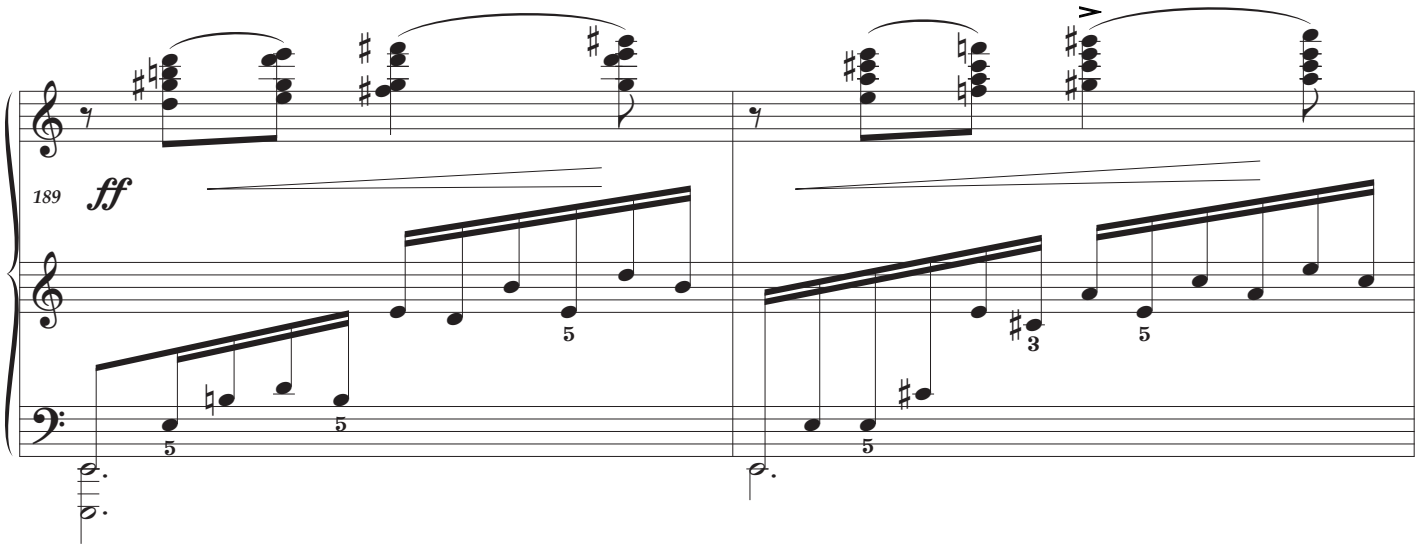

129
ppp
133
137
141
ritardando
f
pp
sfz
4
4

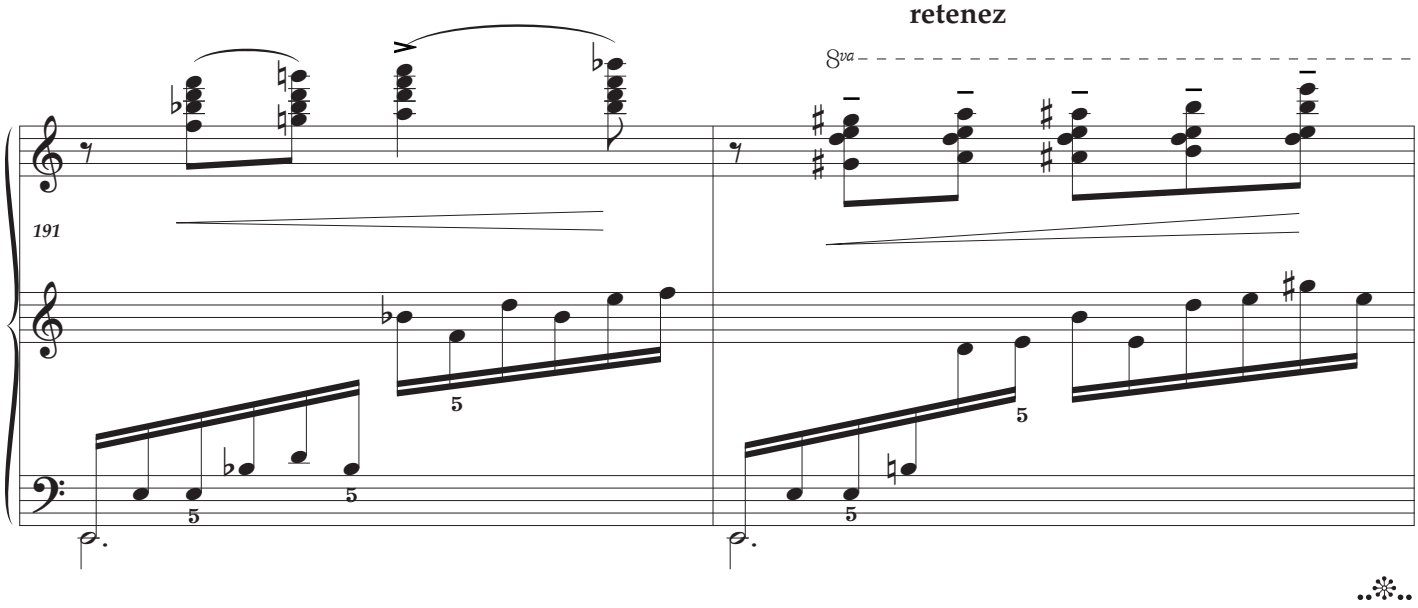

a tempo très doux et atténué
ppp
145
pp
bien chanté
sfz
sotto voce
ritardando
149
ppp
a tempo
p calme
153
sfz
sfz et brusque sfz
p
sfz
f sec et brusque
157
m.s.
m.d.
160

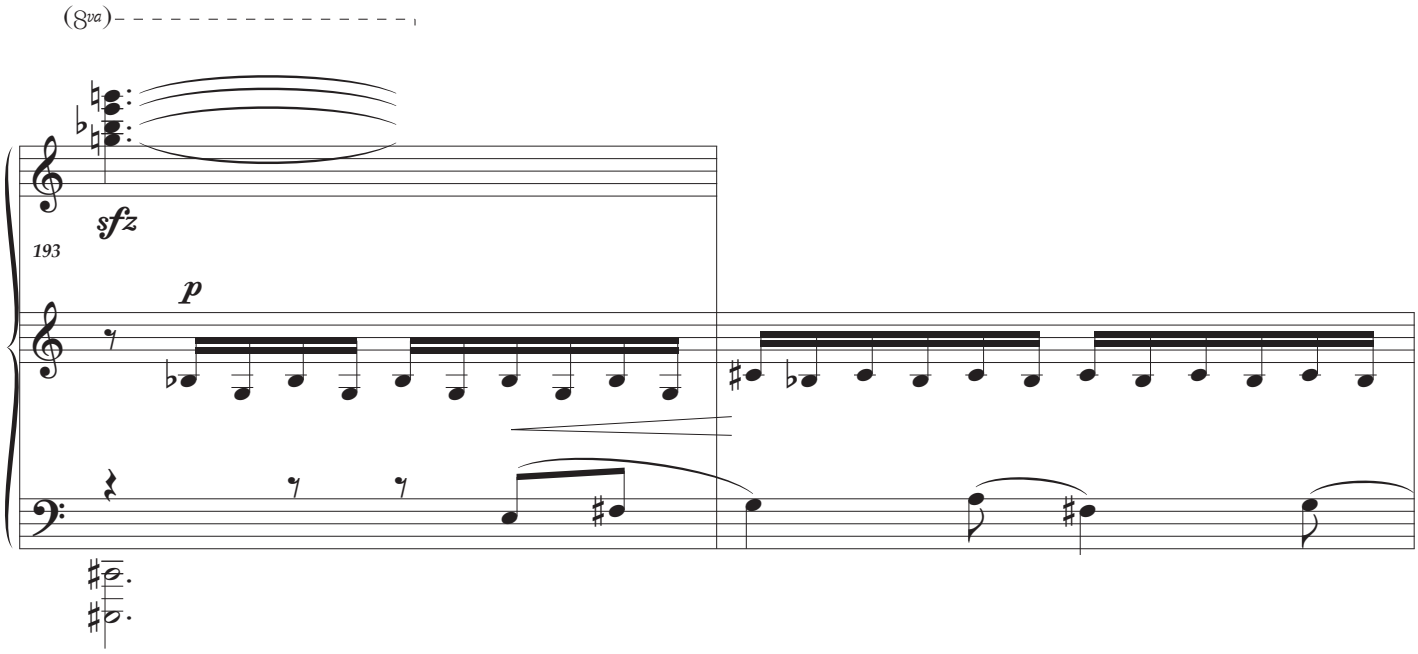

163
ff con anima
p
166
sfz et brusque
sfz
p
sfz
sfz
f sec et brusque
m.s.
169
m.d.
172
174
ff con anima

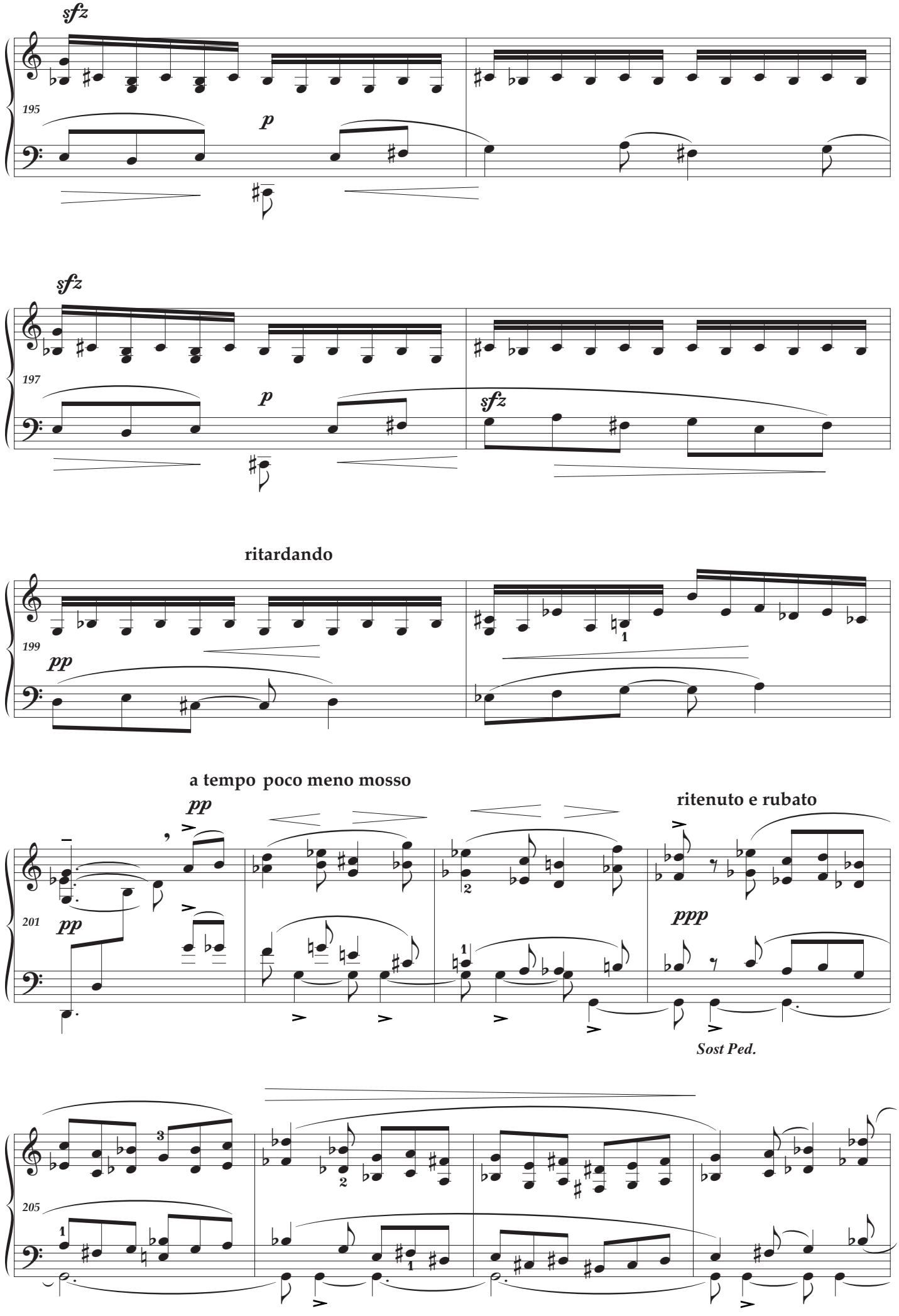

8va
177
sfz
ff con anima
f
(8va)
179
(8va)
181
sfz
toujours f et animé

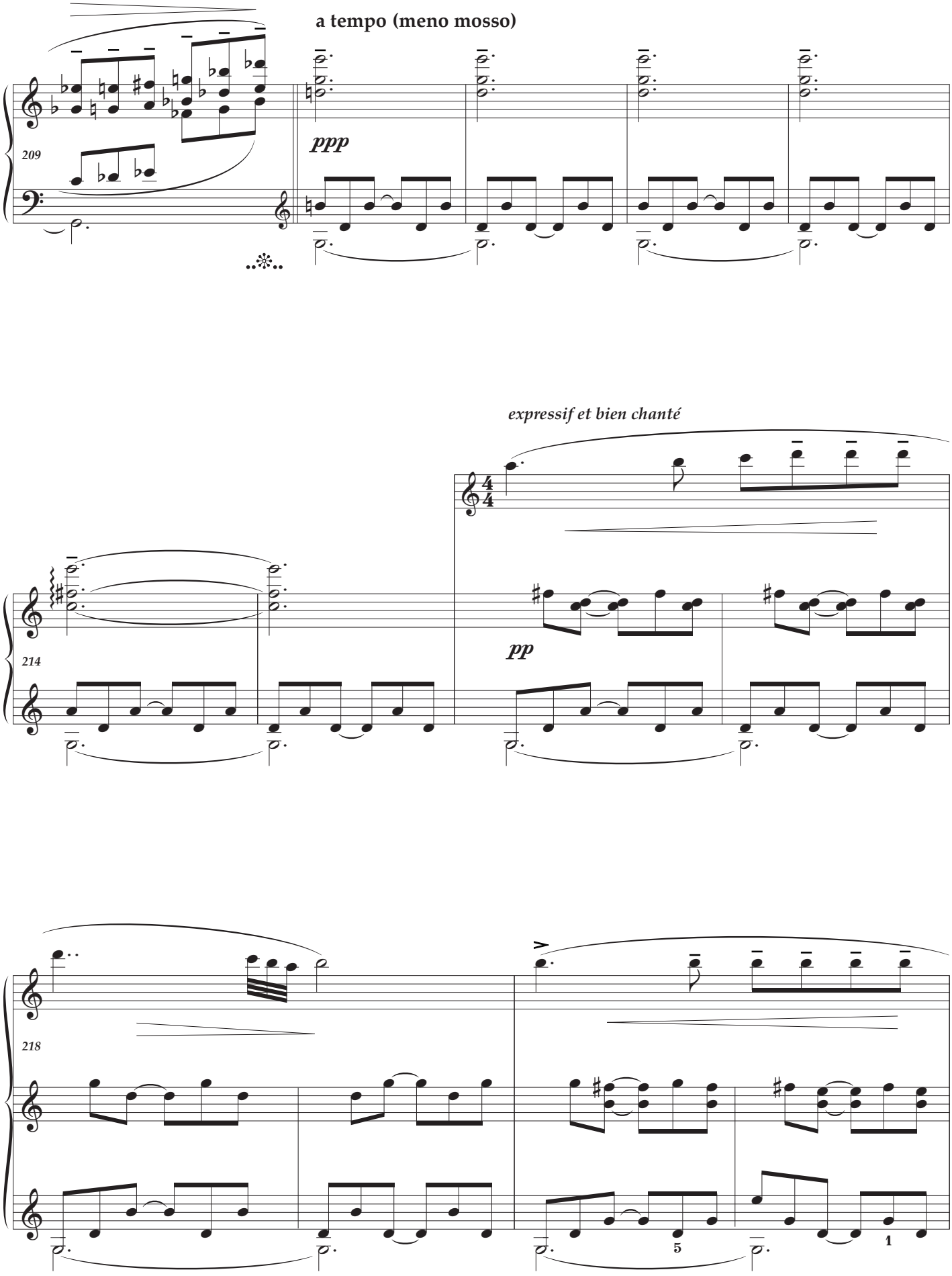

(8va)
183
185
f con anima
bien chanté
Sost Ped.
187
Sost Ped.

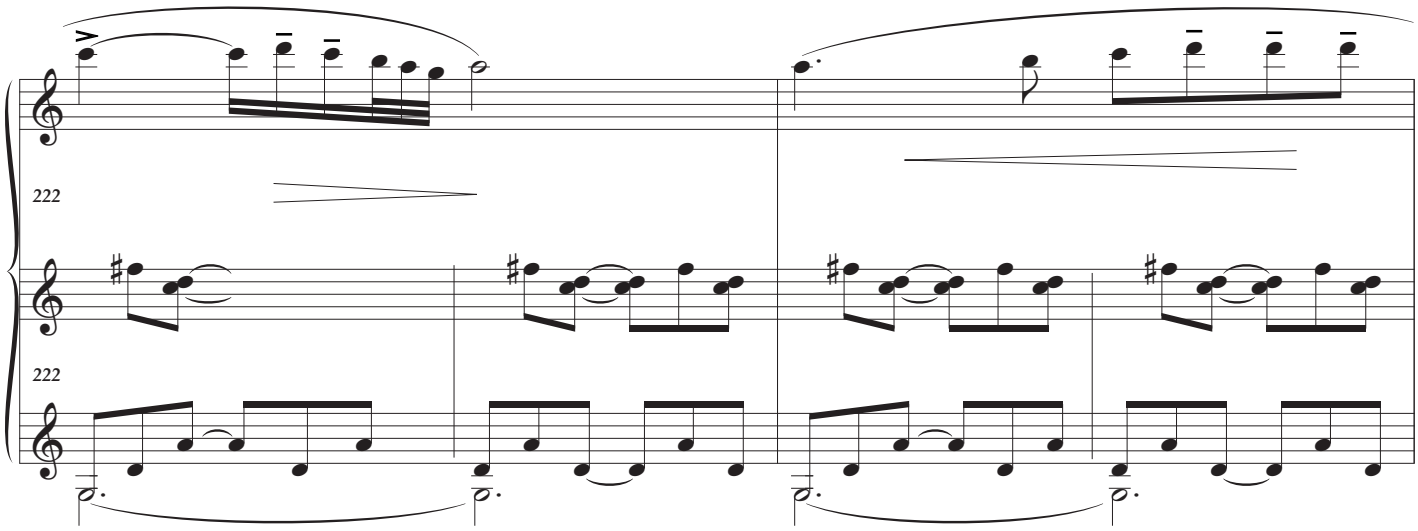

189
ff
Sost Ped.

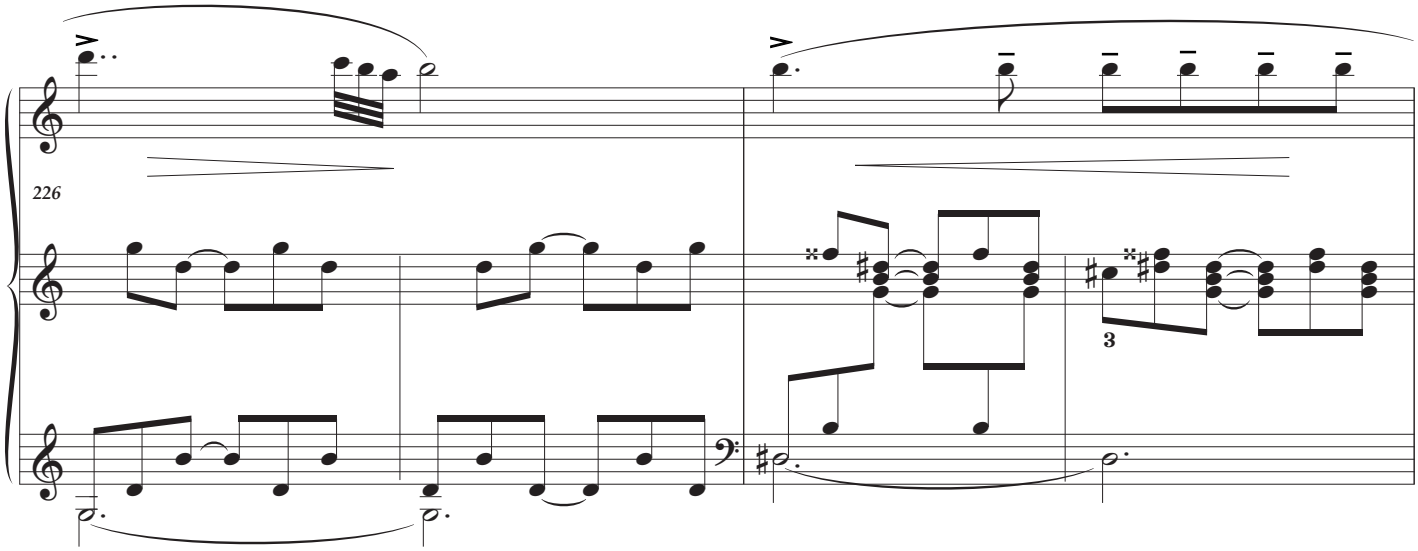

retenez
8va
191


(8va)
193
sfz
p


sfz
195
p
sfz
197
p
sfz
ritardando
199
pp
a tempo poco meno mosso
pp
201
pp
ritenuto e rubato
ppp
Sost Ped.
205


a tempo (meno mosso)
ppp
209
expressif et bien chanté
pp
214
218
5
1


222
222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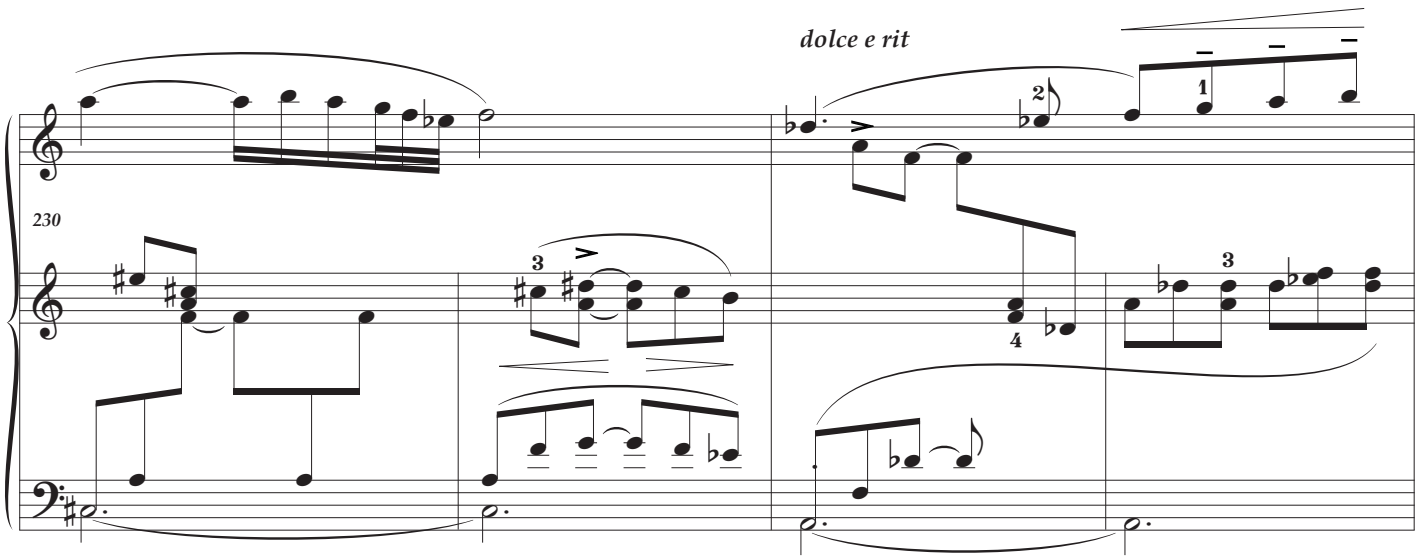
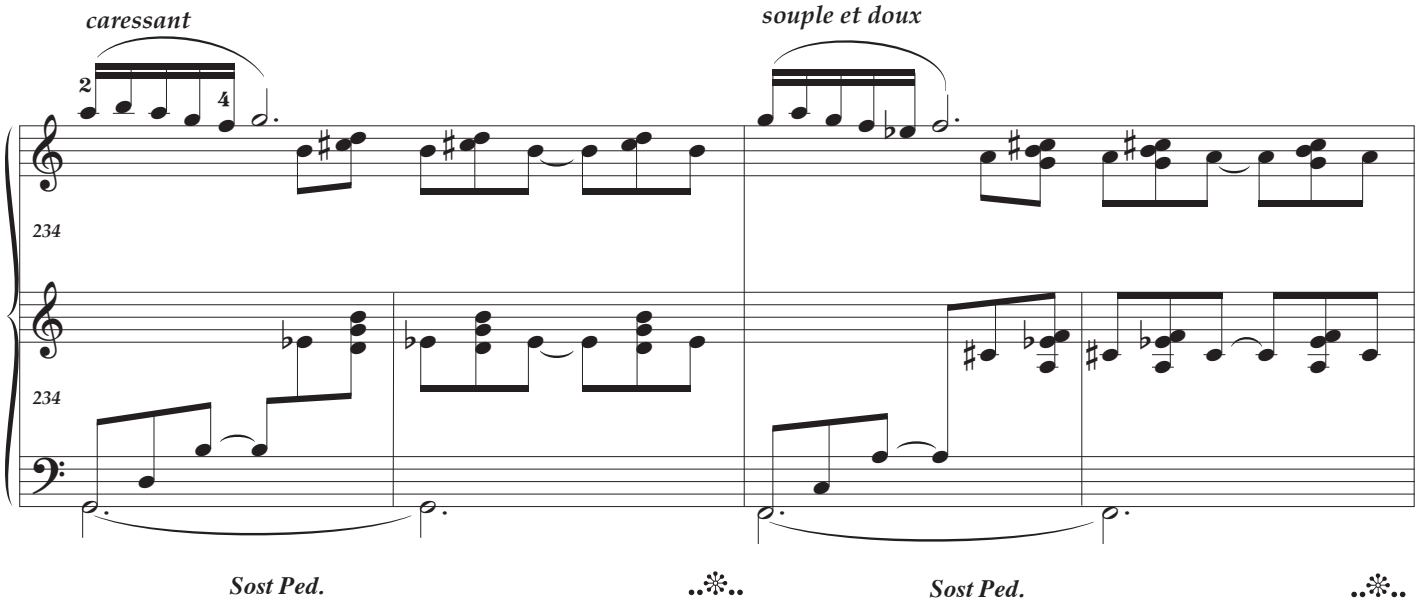
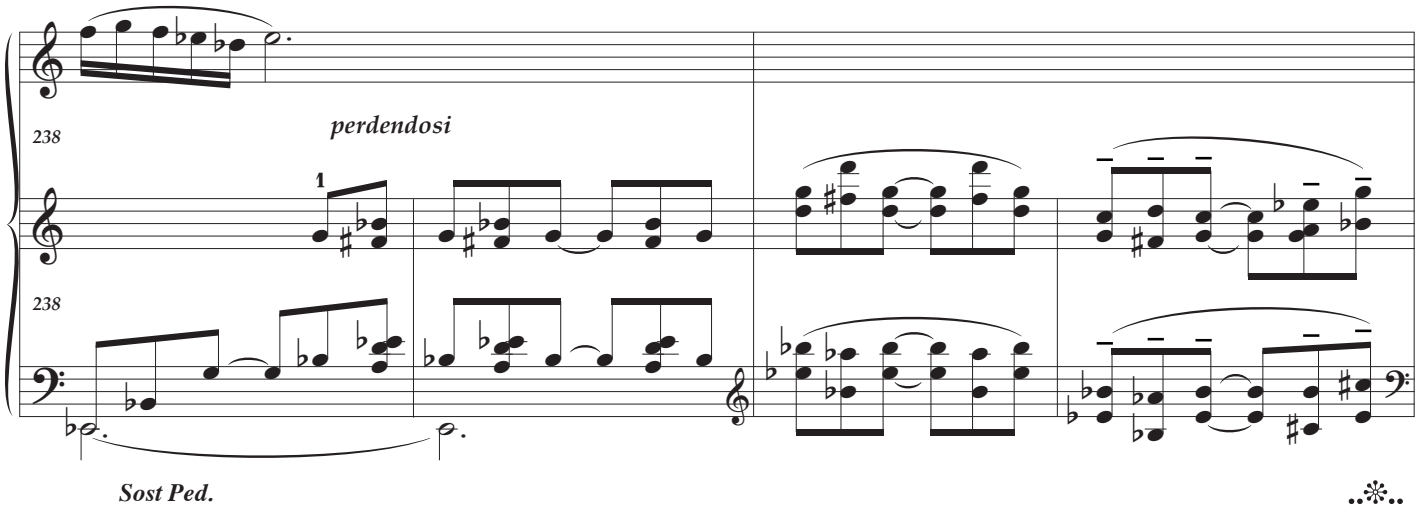
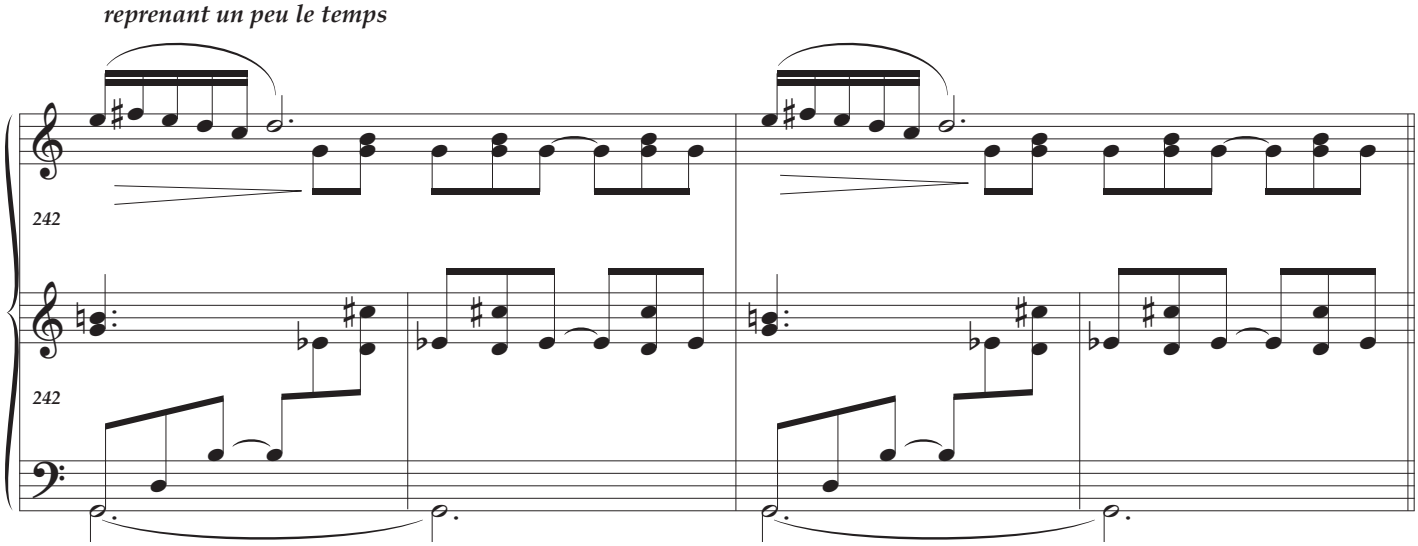
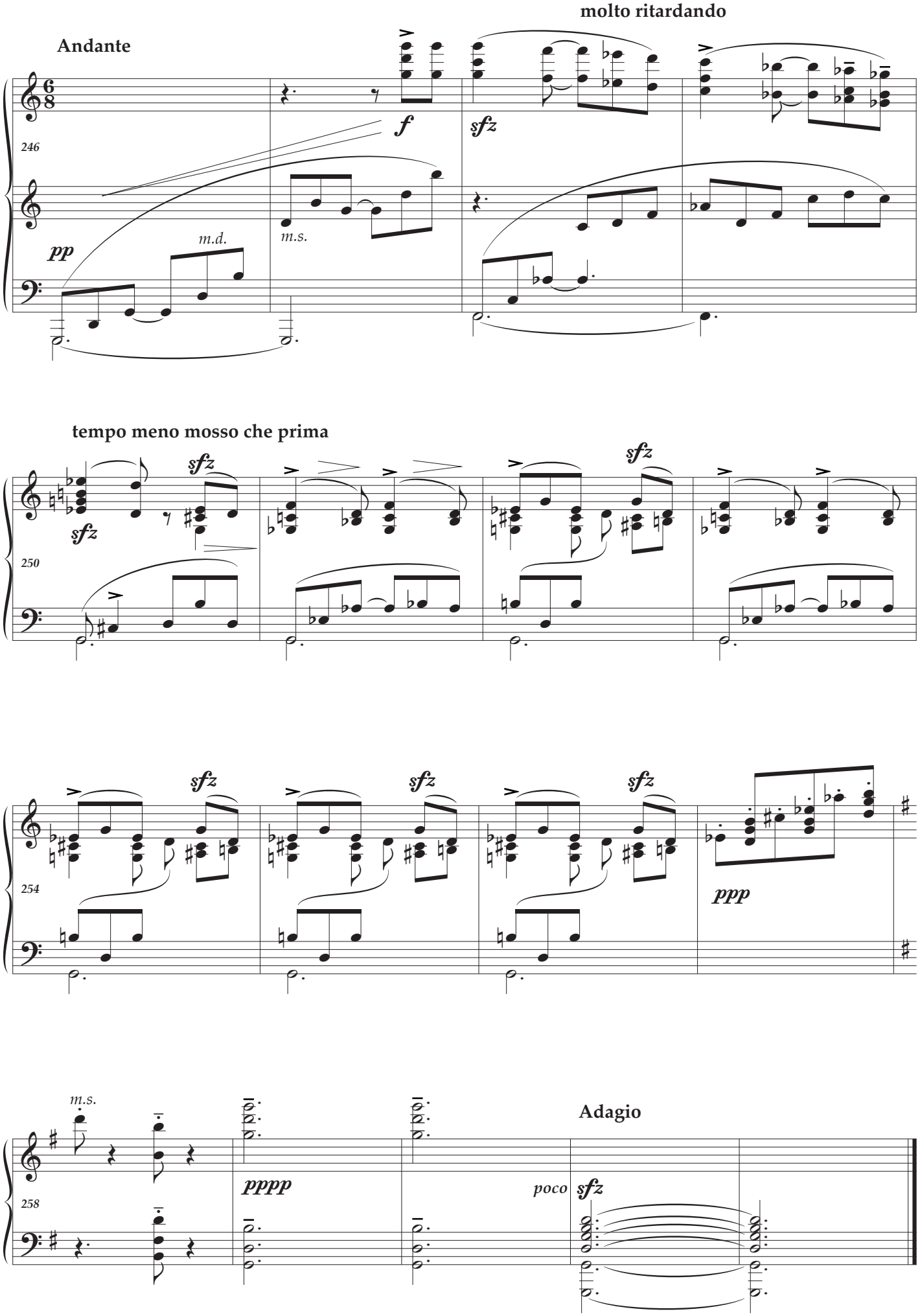

dolce e rit
230


caressant
souple et doux
234
234
Sost Ped.
Sost Ped.


perdendosi
238
238
Sost Ped.


reprenant un peu le temps
242
242



Paris, 22 juin 1906

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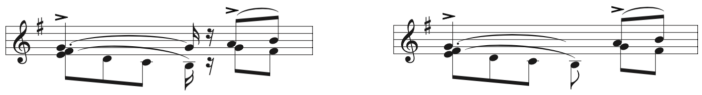
Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

- In the original editions, there are many, many pedal (and other signs) and an observation by Debussy can provide a pertinent object lesson: "Pedalling cannot be written down. It varies from one instrument to another, from one room, or one hall, to another."
- As with *El Albaicín, Triana, Rondeña* and indeed most of *Iberia*, Albeniz presented *Almería* with only one key signature. In an effort to eliminate a plethora of accidentals, this edition presents appropriate key signatures.
- In order to simplify the text some bars have been "re-drawn" thus :



- Time-signatures … every bar contains 6 quavers, and the metre is evident through beaming
- There has been some pruning of Albeniz's multiple instructions in Italian and French
- There are quite a number of opportunities to use the sostenuto pedal* combined with the sustaining pedal.

Duration: 9'40

- **142** a crescendo is suggested to prepare for the sforzato in **143**
- **145** an acciaccatura has been added in the bass to reinforce the first melodic note
- **204** Some "rearrangement" to enable the magical sostenuto pedal
- **254-256** Editorial tied notes enable a pedal change to "clean up" the harmonies

* The sostenuto pedal was first shown in Paris at the Industrial Exposition of 1844. The idea was not immediately taken up by piano builders, but in 1874, is was perfected and patented by Steinway, soon to be fitted on all their grands and better uprights. One obvious commercial reason for not including the sostenuto pedal in musical scores must have been the thought of excluding buyers whose pianos didn't have it. Debussy and Ravel certainly played such Steinways in the Paris *salons*. Apparently, in 1900 the composer René de Castéra bought a 3-pedal Steinway on the advice of Albeniz. One could say that it took over 100 years for it to become widespread.

This is Albeniz commenting on his own music written before Iberia: “Here are among them a few things that are not completely worthless. The music is a bit infantile, plain, spirited; but in the end, the people, our Spanish people, are something of all that. I believe that the people are right when they continue to be moved by *Córdoba*, *Mallorca*, by the *copla* of the *Sevillanas*, by the *Serenata*, and *Granada*. In all of them I now note that there is less musical science, less of the grand idea, but more colour, sunlight, flavour of olives. That music of youth, with its little sins and absurdities that almost point out the sentimental affectation... appears to me like the carvings in the Alhambra, those peculiar arabesques that say nothing with their turns and shapes, but which are like the air, like the sun, like the blackbirds or like the nightingales of its gardens. They are more valuable than all else of Moorish Spain, which though we may not like it, is the true Spain”.

léger et vague	light and vague
animé	lively
bien marqué et sans pédale	well marked and without pedal
sonore	resonant
expressif et bien chanté	expressive and cantabile
brusquement	abruptly
très doux et atténué	very gentle and more at ease
sec	crisp
caressant	caressing
souple	flexible
reprenant un peu le temps	gradually back to the original tempo