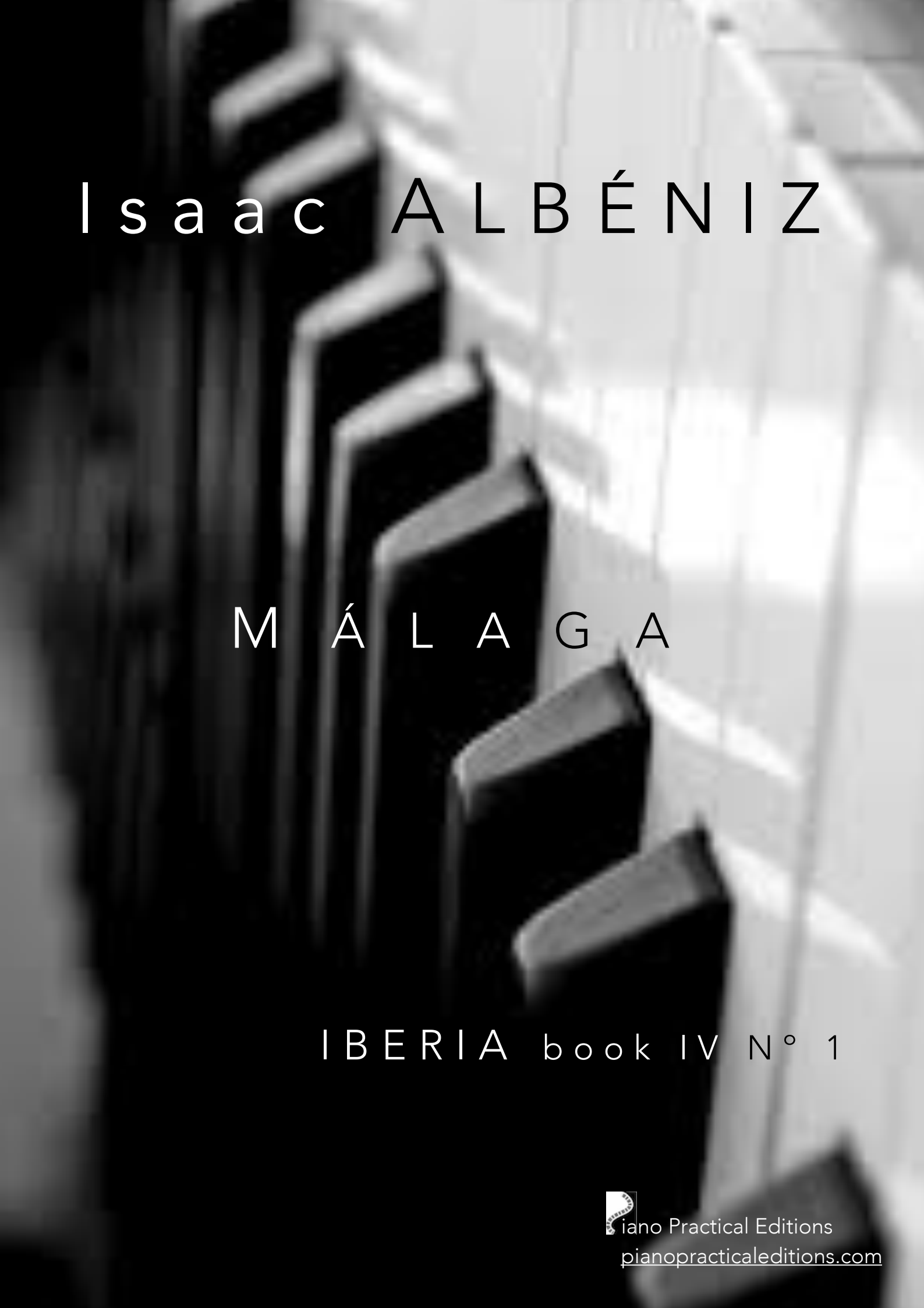


Isaac ALBÉNIZ

MÁLAGA

IBERIA book IV N° 1

Piano Practical Editions
pianopracticaleditions.com

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.

Please send comments and error reports to
Ray Alston contact@pianopracticaleditions.com

Isaac ALBÉNIZ 1860 - 1909

MÁLAGA

de la suite "IBERIA"

Preface to Volume 4

And so we come to the fourth and final volume of this huge undertaking by one of Spain's most illustrious composers. Aged 45 with health problems, Albéniz struggled to complete the volume dedicated to Madame Pierre Lalo, first performances occurring a few years later just before his death in 1909.

Francisco Rodriguez San Clemente

Of all the pieces which make up the first three volumes, I found Lavapiés the most challenging to decipher, play and edit — for early 20th century publishers, much of *Iberia* must have been an engraver's and proofreader's nightmare. The three pieces comprising Volume 4 seem to be increasingly tough to play — ever more cross-rhythms, interweaving of fingers and hands, quick leaps, and clusters containing a multitude of accidentals, not to mention an abundance of instructions in French and Italian. As Donal Henahan suggested — if only we had three hands! No pianist can hope to play all the notes and we have to become especially inventive, finding ways to perform at several registers, often simultaneously, whilst bringing out hidden melodies among clusters or rapidly flowing accompaniments, and all this with a mere 10 fingers. One can take comfort from Albéniz himself who confided to Manuel de Falla that he came close to destroying the manuscript because it seemed unplayable.

This edition therefore addresses these problems, by removing a minimum number of notes and suggesting alternative ways to perform this sublime, passionate and rewarding music. To clarify the text some adjustments have been made to non-essential counterpoint and unnecessary rests have been omitted. In a quest to remove challenging accidentals, a number of appropriate key signatures have been inserted.

Although Albéniz was a Catalan, his heart was immersed in the folklore and sounds of Andalusia, declaring "*Soy un moro*" — "I am a Moor". Drawing inspiration from their southern rhythms, distinctive idioms and modes, while inventing new themes — the composer writes with virtual Flamenco in his blood, giving an impression of spontaneous improvisation — a fusion of French impressionism and Andalusian folklore.

After the *Reconquista* Flamenco was born of Moorish, Gypsy and Jewish traditions and culture, minority ethnic groups who were persecuted by the Inquisition. Their common suffering found outlet in this highly expressive and passionate music. Eleven of the twelve pieces portray places

and scenes in southern Spain using the typical *Phrygian* and other modes, pedal points, and impressions of guitar, clapping, stamping and castanets.

Subtitled *Douze Nouvelles Impressions*, one can see that the composer had an enormous affinity with France, and musicians from Debussy to Messiaen were particularly impressed and inspired by his music. Albéniz had been living there for more than a decade when he began *Iberia*, the impressionist sounds, exotic modes, and dissonant clusters reflecting his Francophonic credentials. Granados described the music of Albéniz as quite unique: "an elegance that smiles with sadness and progresses by degrees until it achieves a mastery both commanding and serene; like Goya's *Maja*, *Iberia* evokes memories of our 'golden century."

***Málaga* was completed in Paris, July 1907**

A large port in southern Spain which happens to be the birthplace of Picasso — I believe Albeniz chose the title as an excuse to write a *malagueña**. Ten years previously he had composed another for the suite *España* (Op 165), but this work is far more elaborate with a large section devoted to an Andalusian version of the *Jota**. I particularly love the dramatic pedal point introduction, the sensuous dance melodies, the evocative harmony, the intense energy and the rhythmic variety of this very challenging Iberian episode.

The piece begins in B♭ minor and ends in B♭ major and in spite of a number of key changes, the composer has written this work entirely with a key signature of 5 flats. This edition makes quite a few changes of key signature rendering, I believe, the text easier to decipher and play by eliminating quite a few challenging accidentals; 3/4 has been rewritten in 6/4 which more clearly reveals hemiola and other rhythmic variants.

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 (corrected in this edition), many accidentals and too many instructions, coupled with sub-standard engraving; so I decided to edit the music myself.

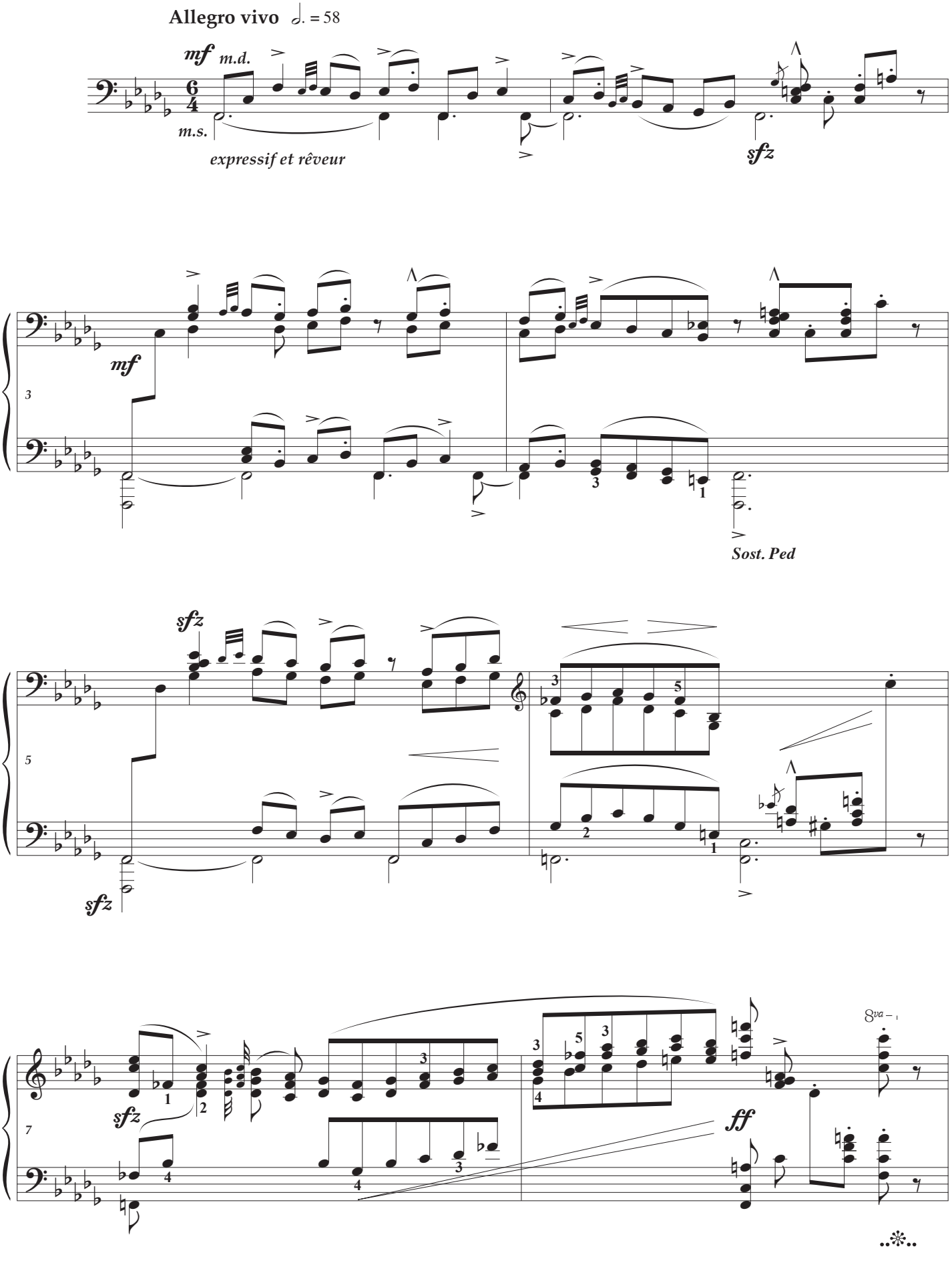
I plead guilty to not having religiously copied every dot, accent, sign, pedal marking and many others. Albeniz was very zealous in having often embellished many, sometimes conflicting, instructions and I have tried to simplify the music within reason relying upon present-day sophisticated pianists and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

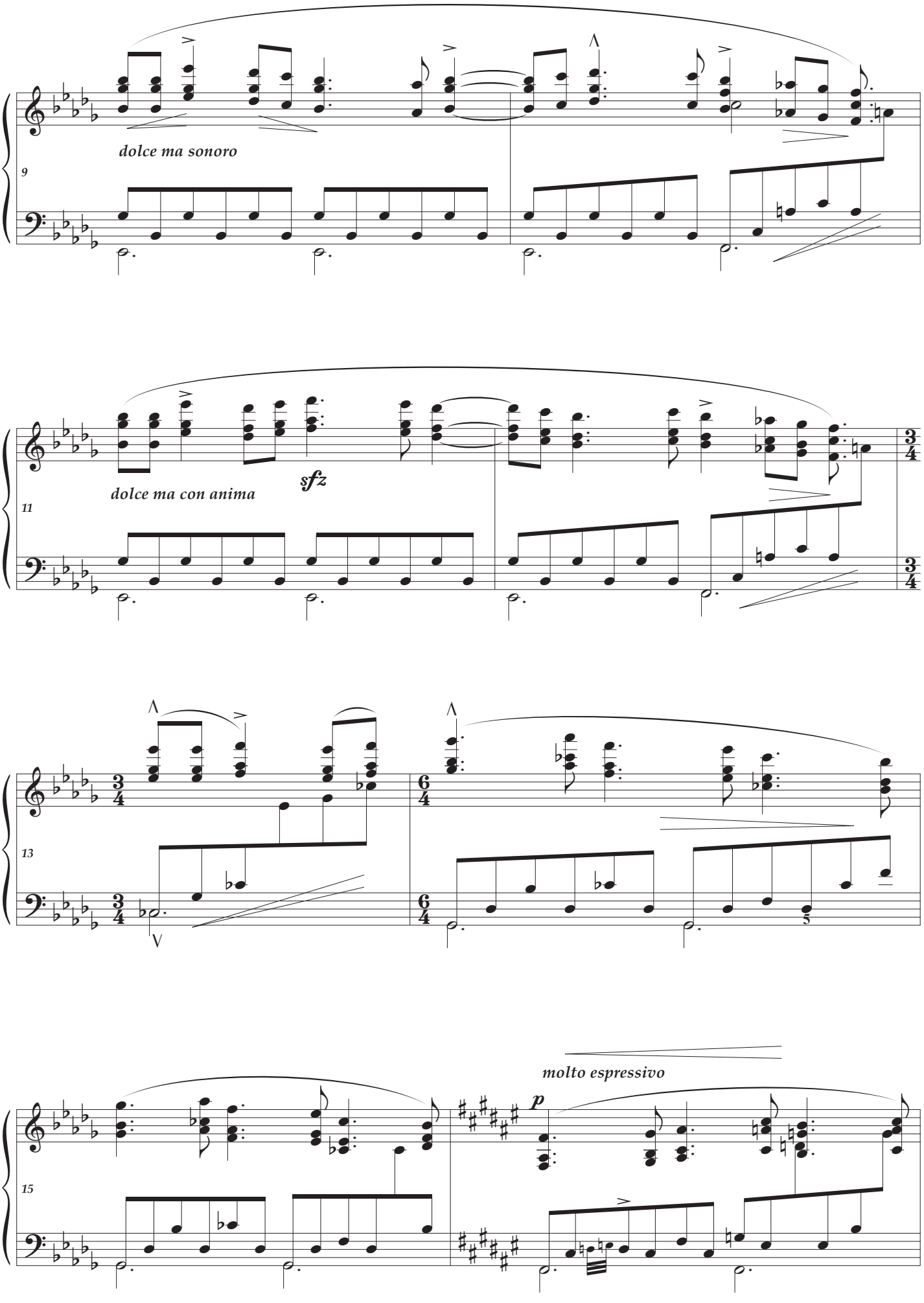
Albéniz was an extrovert with a keen sense of humour, loved and respected by all who knew him. In this wonderful and imaginative music, he was also flamboyant with long descriptions in French and pedalling directions which sometimes seem to be a whirlwind of far-fetched impossibilities — unreasonable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

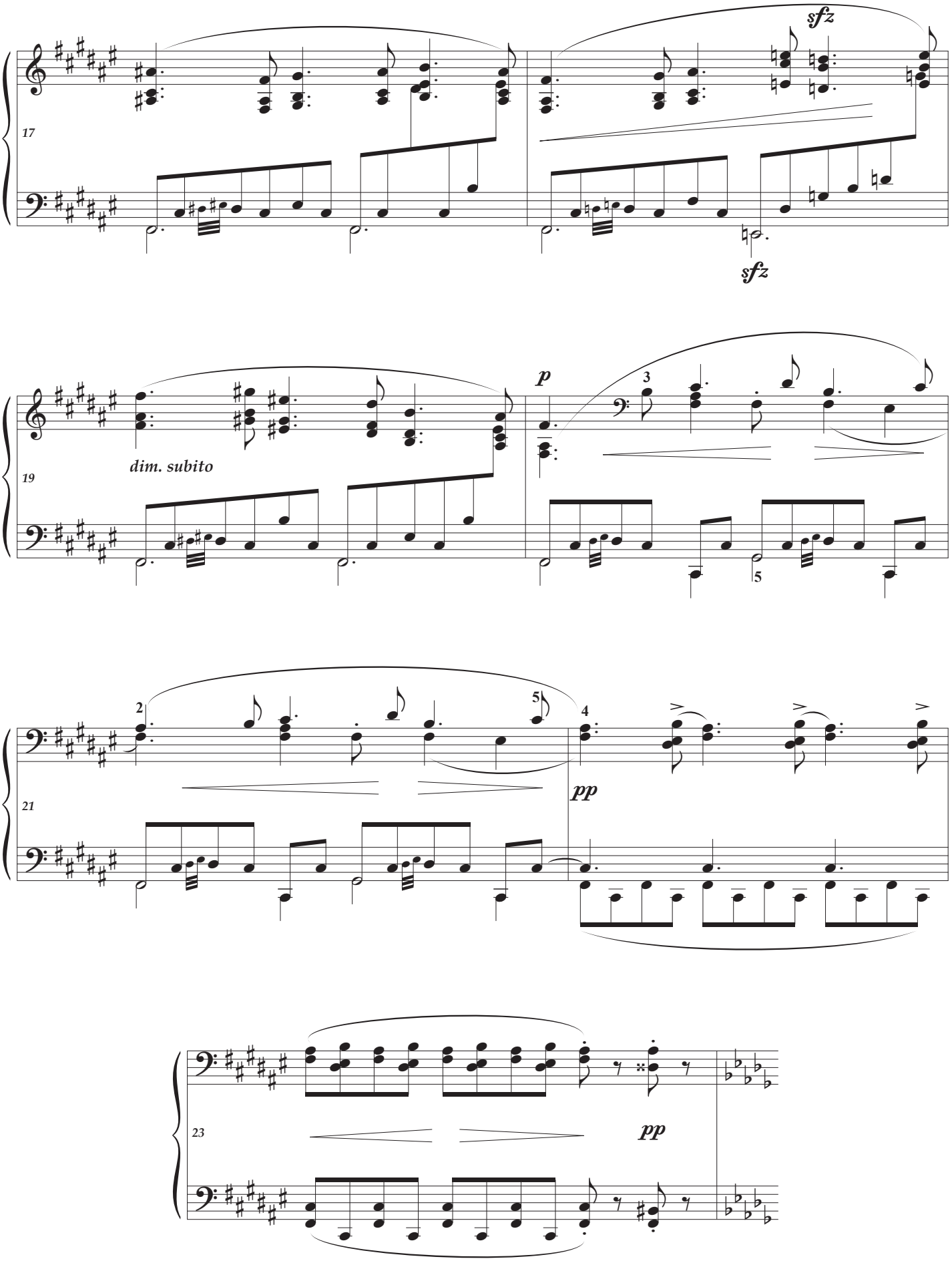
In addition to some suggested fingering, the appendix contains comments, afterthoughts and a French vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more persuasive. It is possible, even desirable, to use the sostenuto pedal effectively, although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

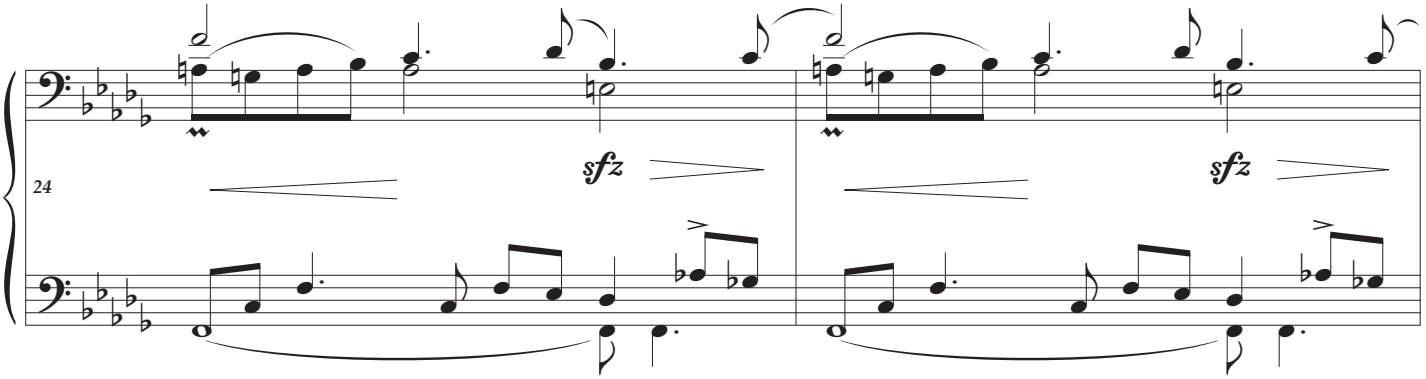
* **malagueña — a flamenco dance from the southern Spanish province of Málaga**
* **a jota is danced and sung accompanied by castanets**

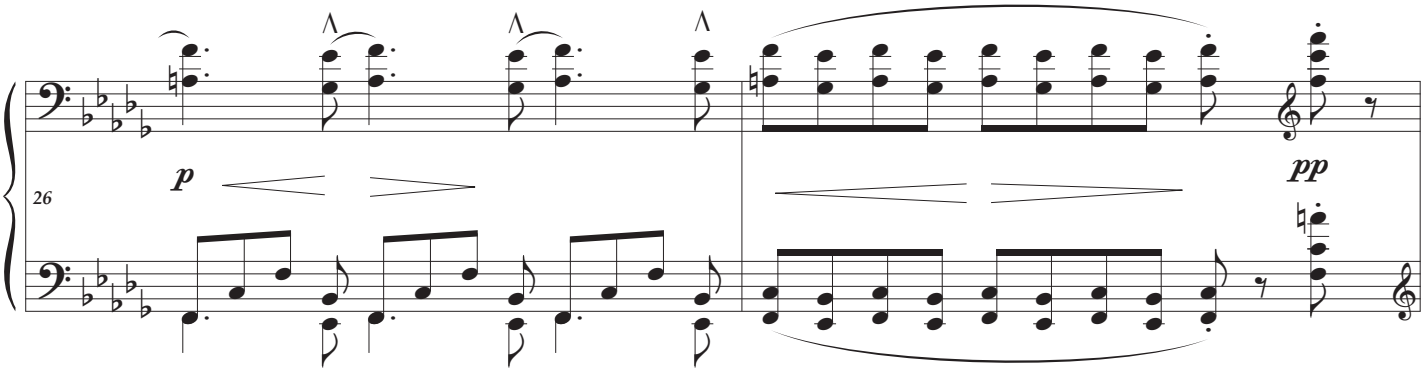
MÁLAGA

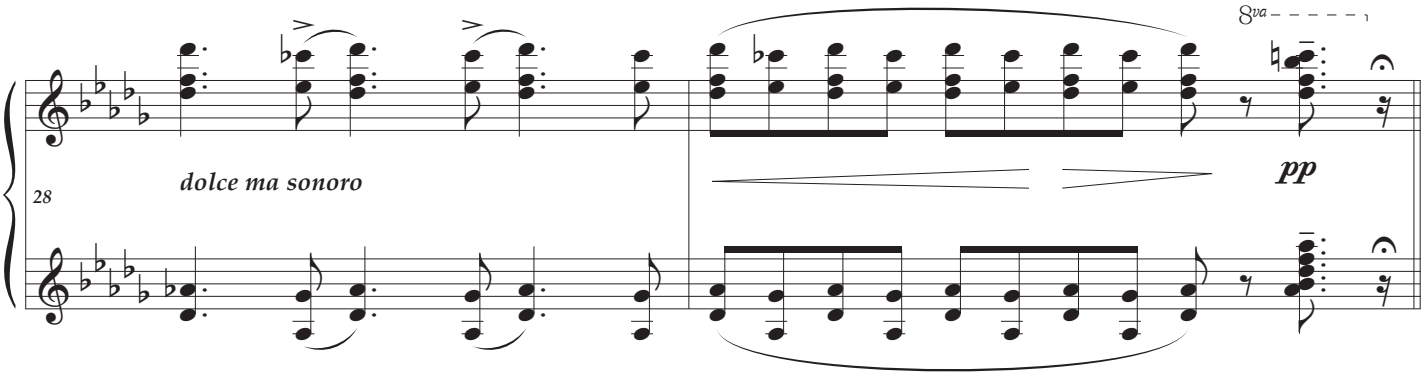

Allegro vivo ♩. = 58
mf m.d.
m.s.
expressif et rêveur
sfz
mf
Sost. Ped
sfz
sfz
sfz
ff
8va

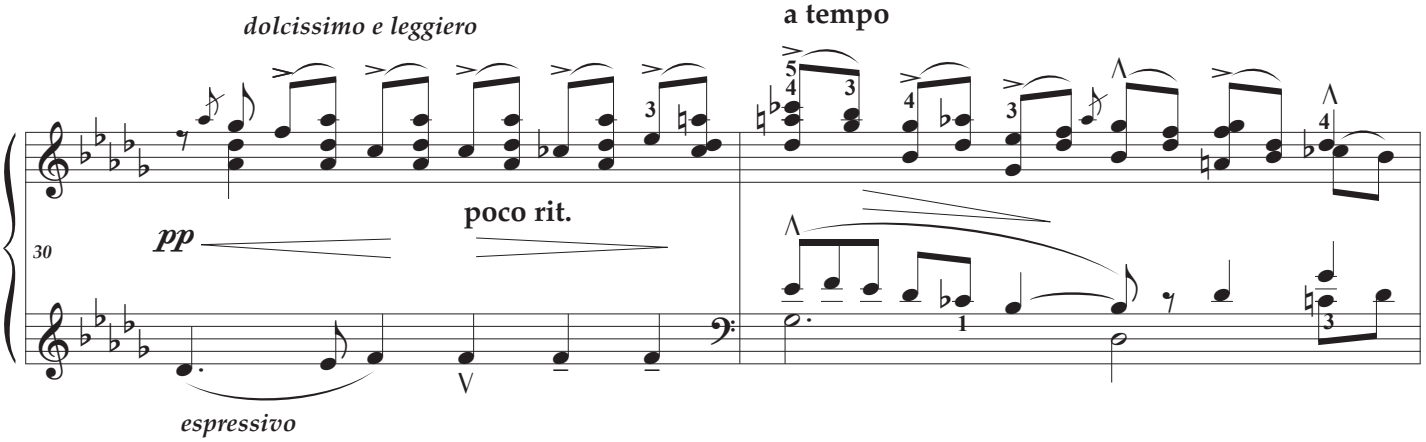

dolce ma sonoro
9
dolce ma con anima
sfz
11
3
4
13
6
4
5
15
molto espressivo
p

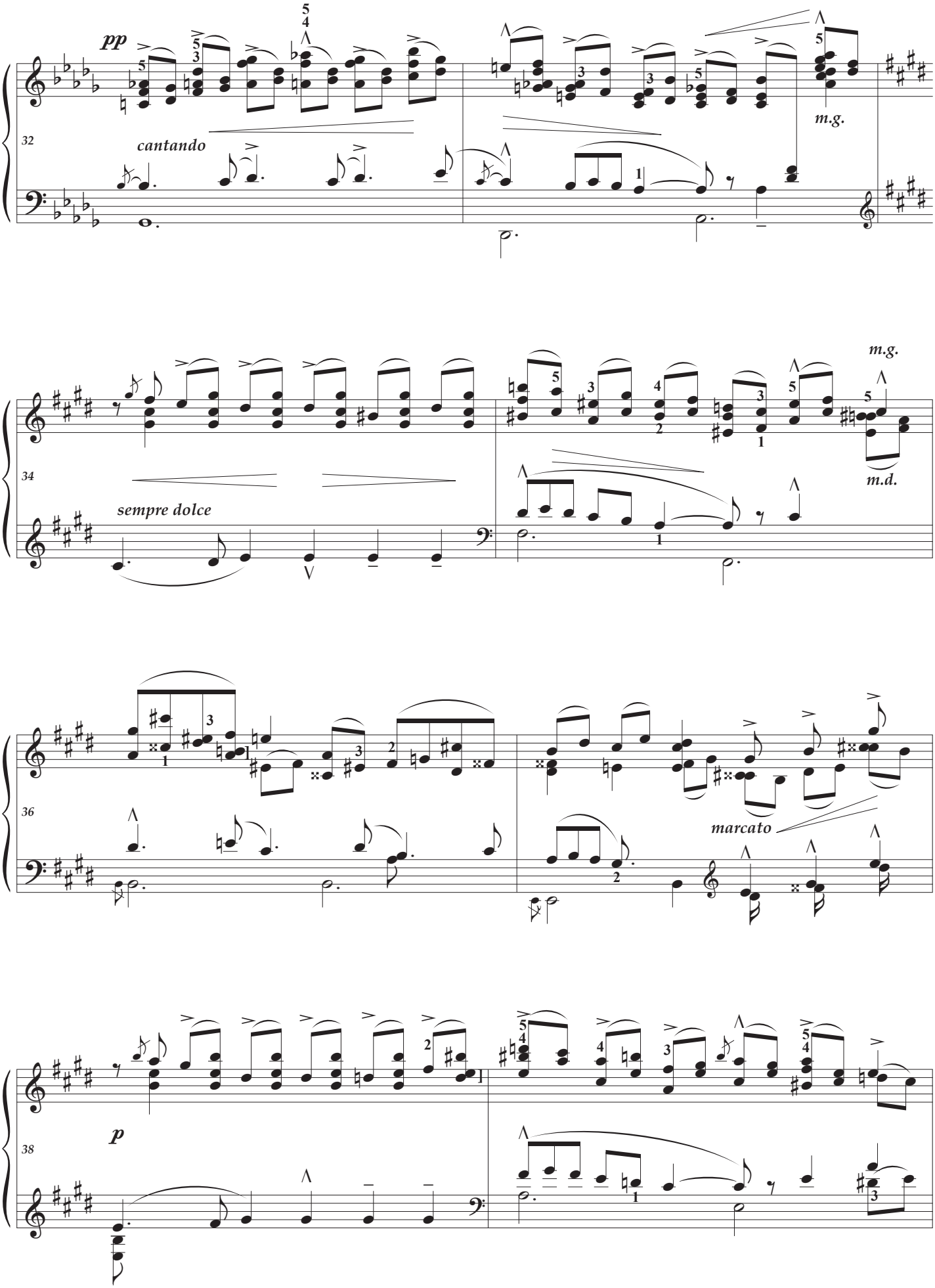

17
sfz
sfz
19
dim. subito
p
3
5
21
2
5
4
pp
23
pp

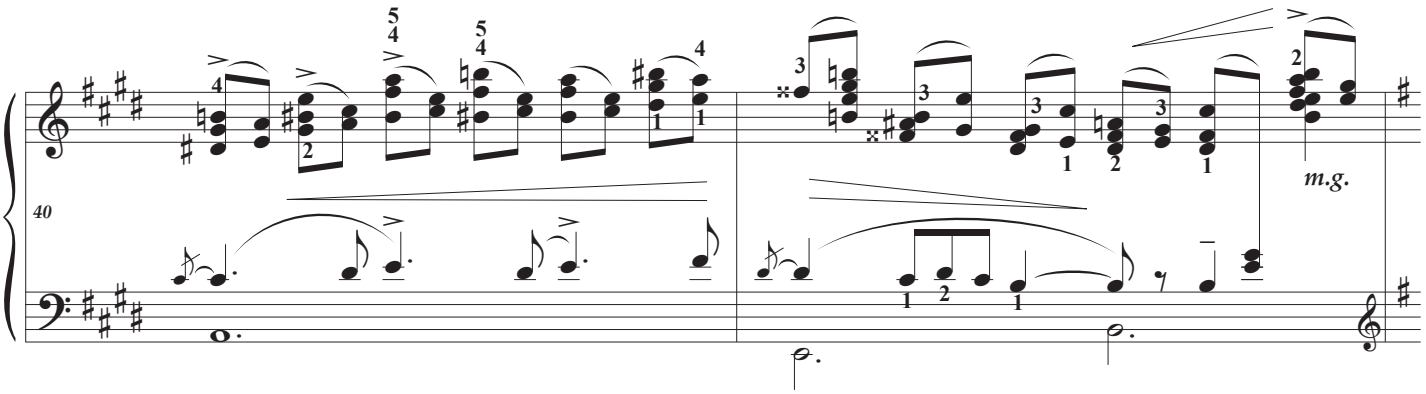

24
sfz
sfz

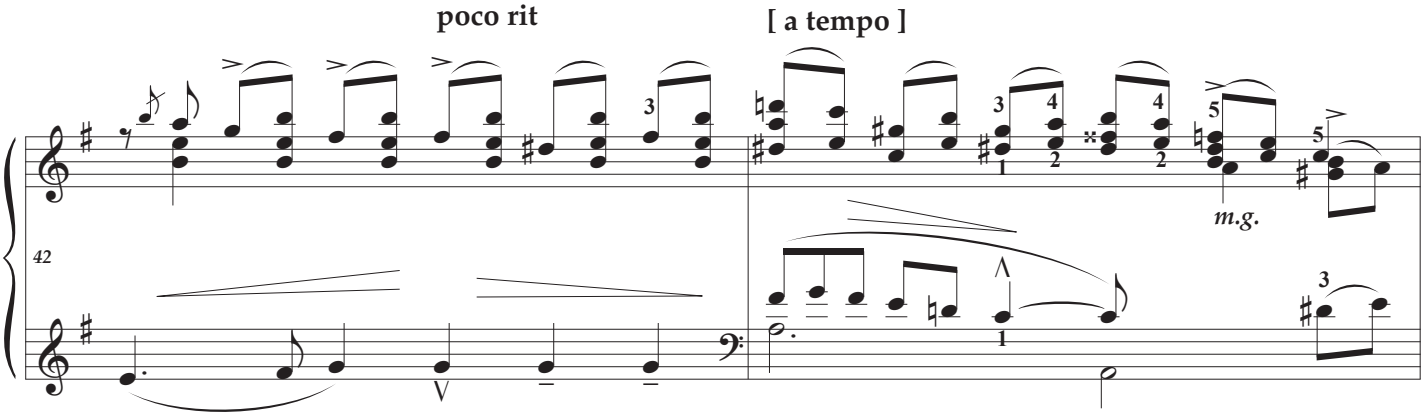

26
p
pp

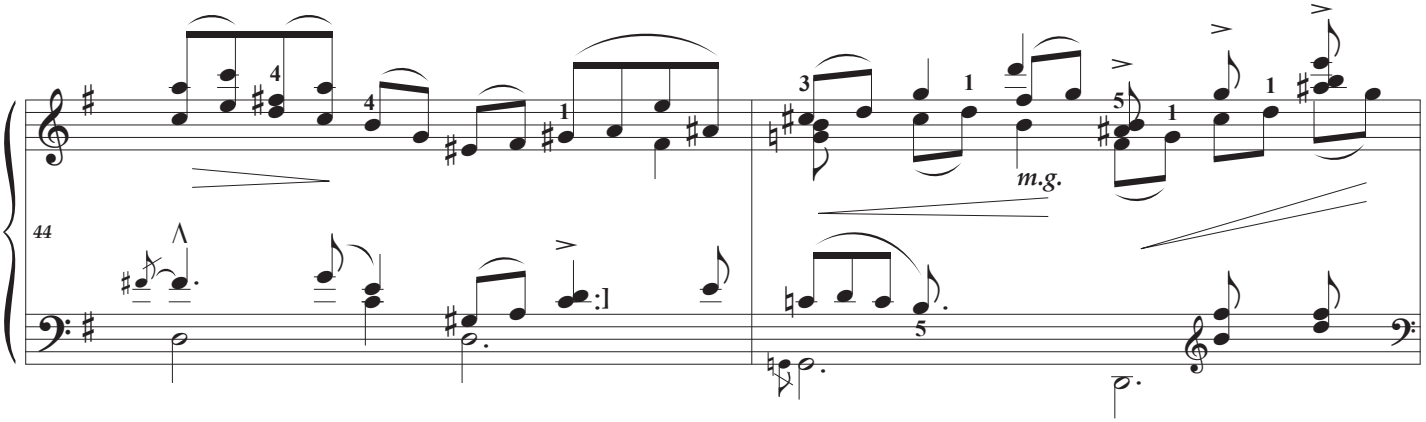

8va
28
dolce ma sonoro
pp

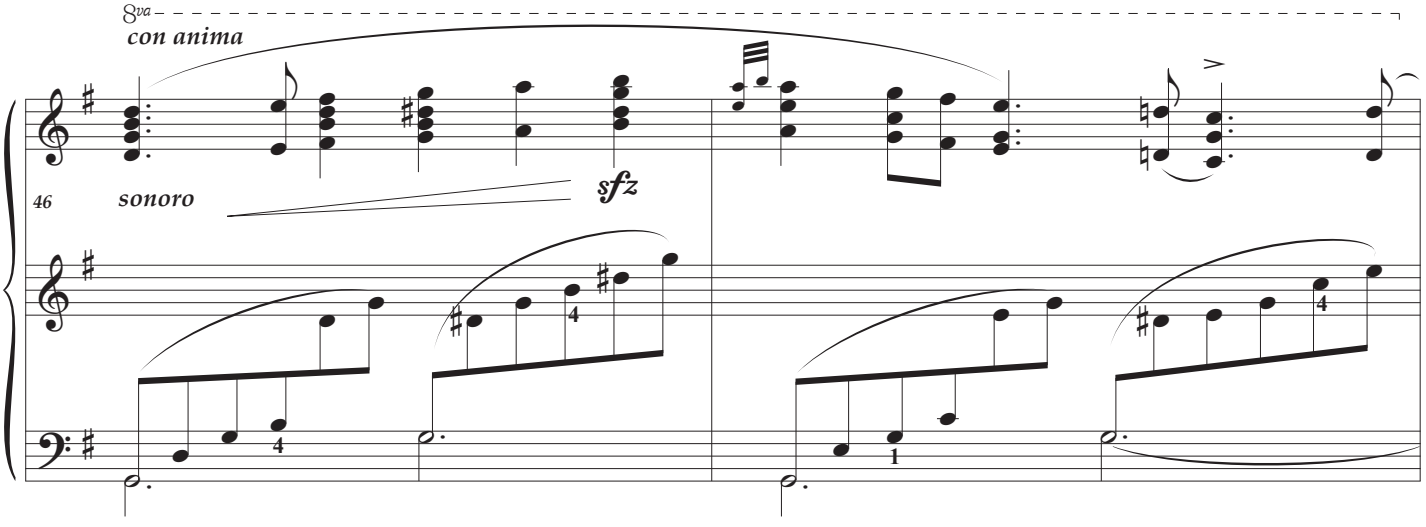

dolcissimo e leggiero
a tempo
30
pp
poco rit.
espressivo

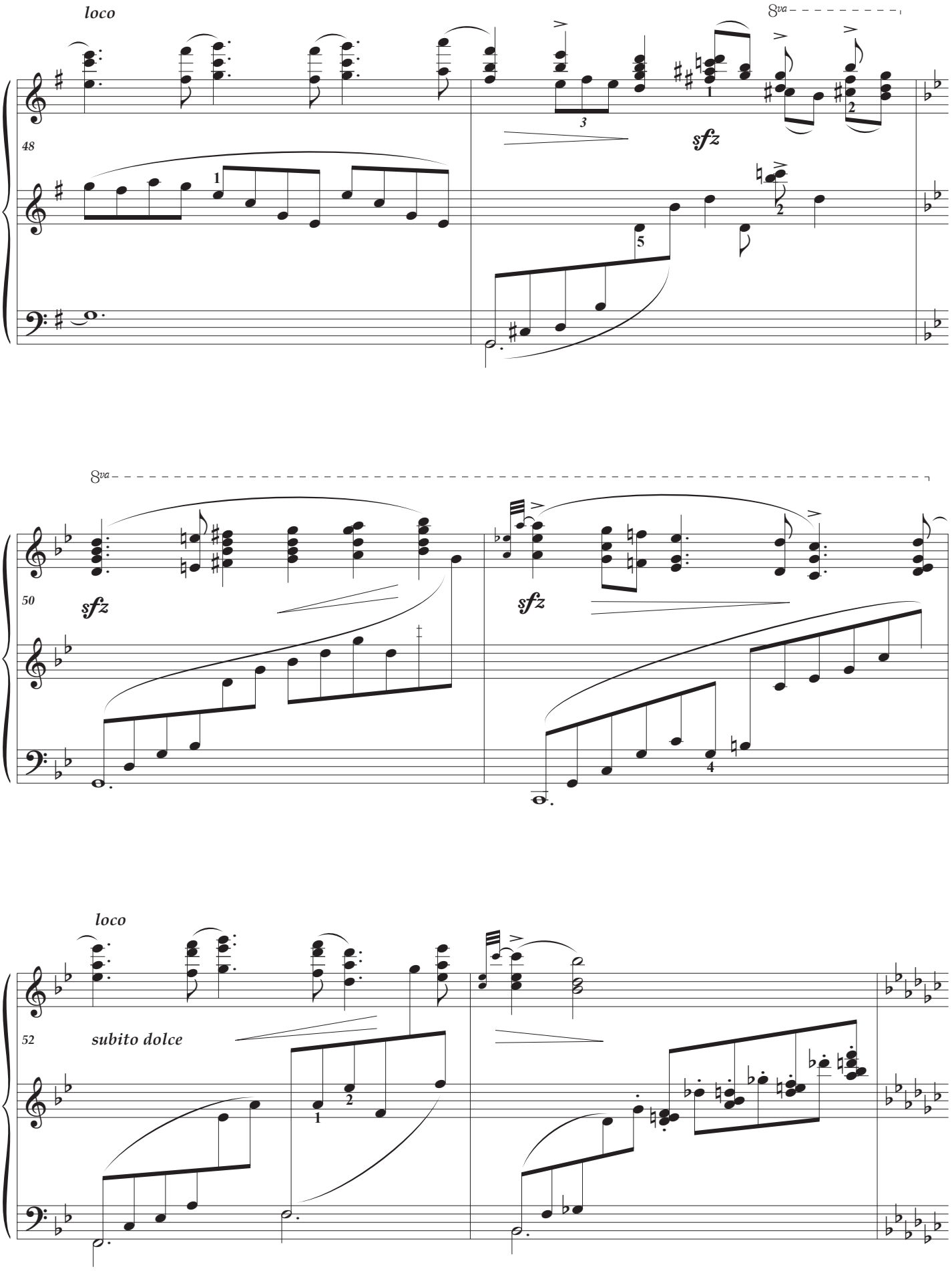

pp
32
cantando
m.g.
34
sempre dolce
m.g.
m.d.
36
marcato
38
p

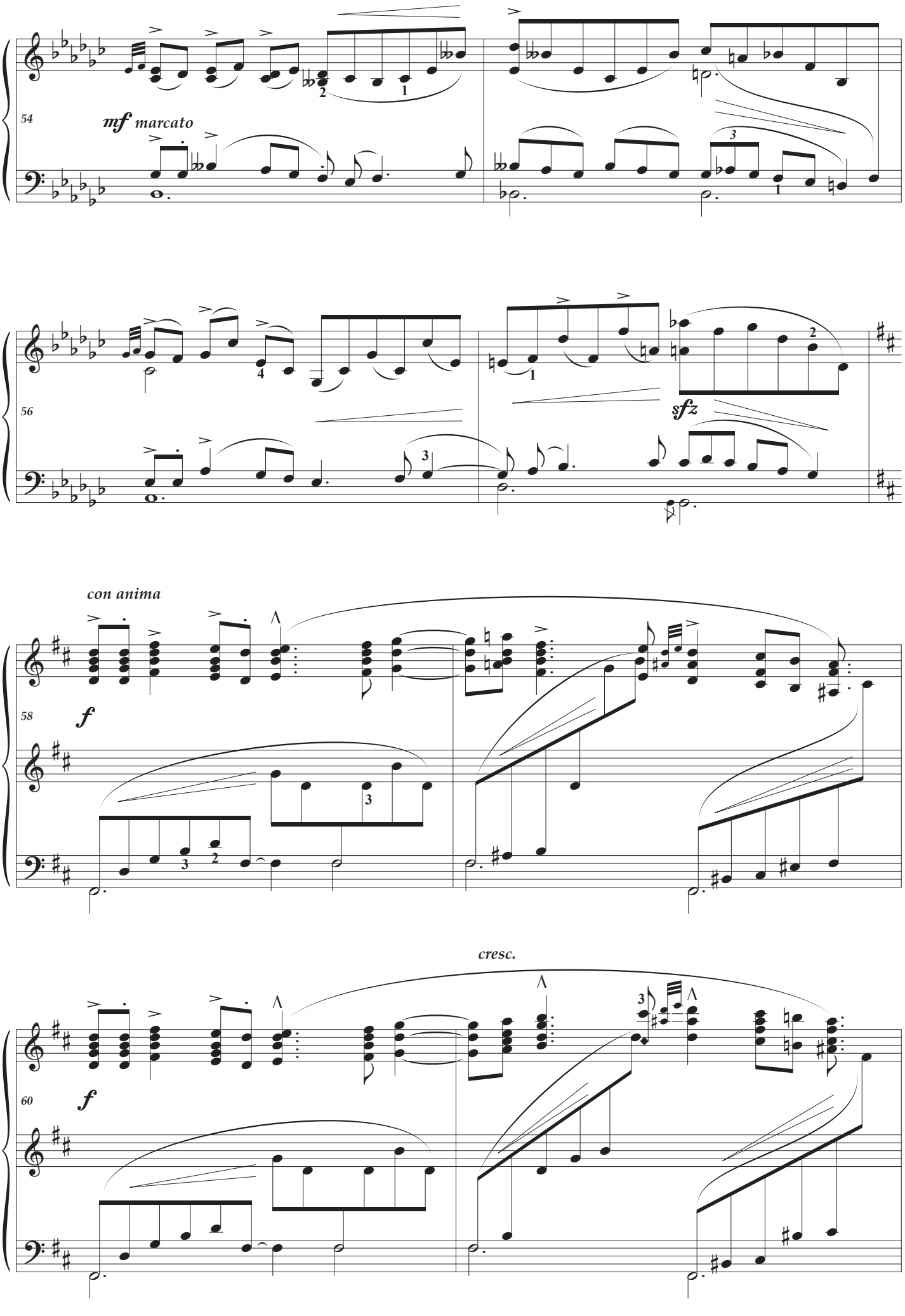

40
m.g.

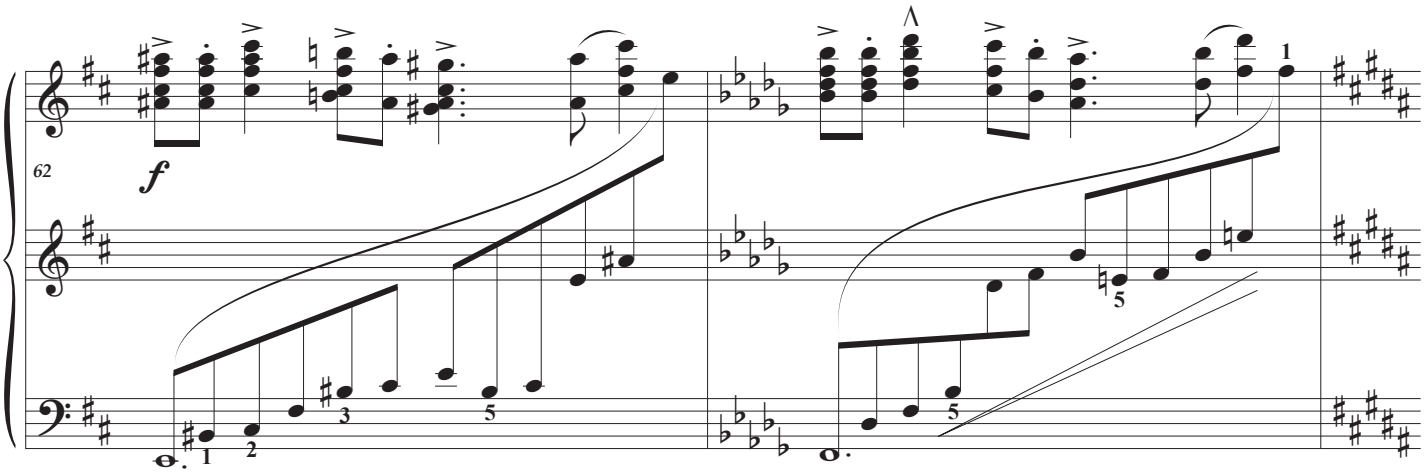

poco rit
[a tempo]
42
m.g.

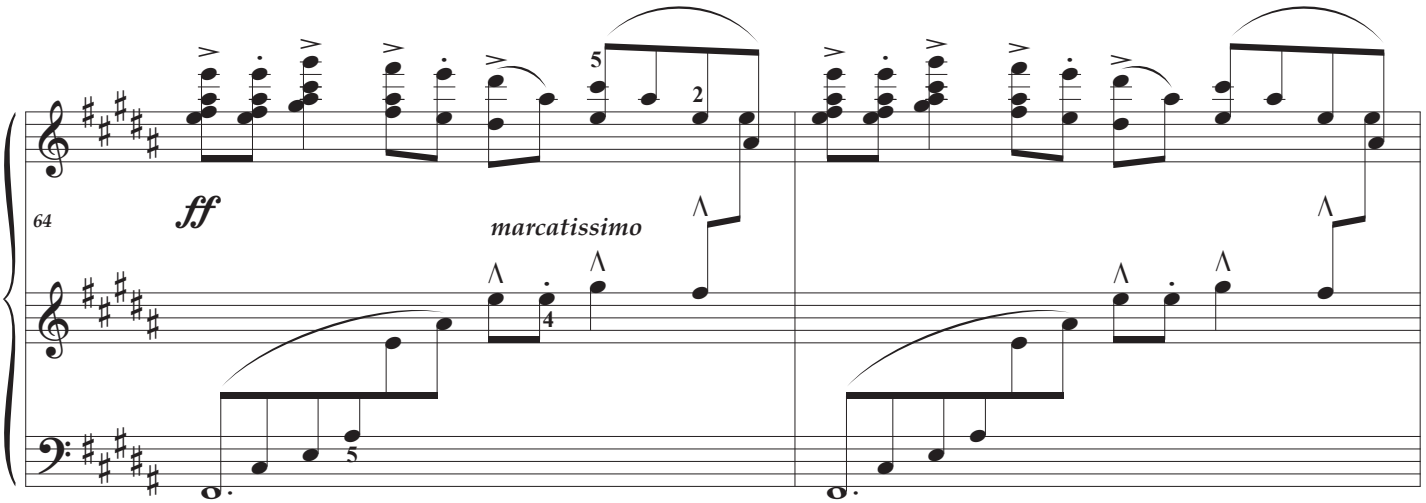

44
m.g.

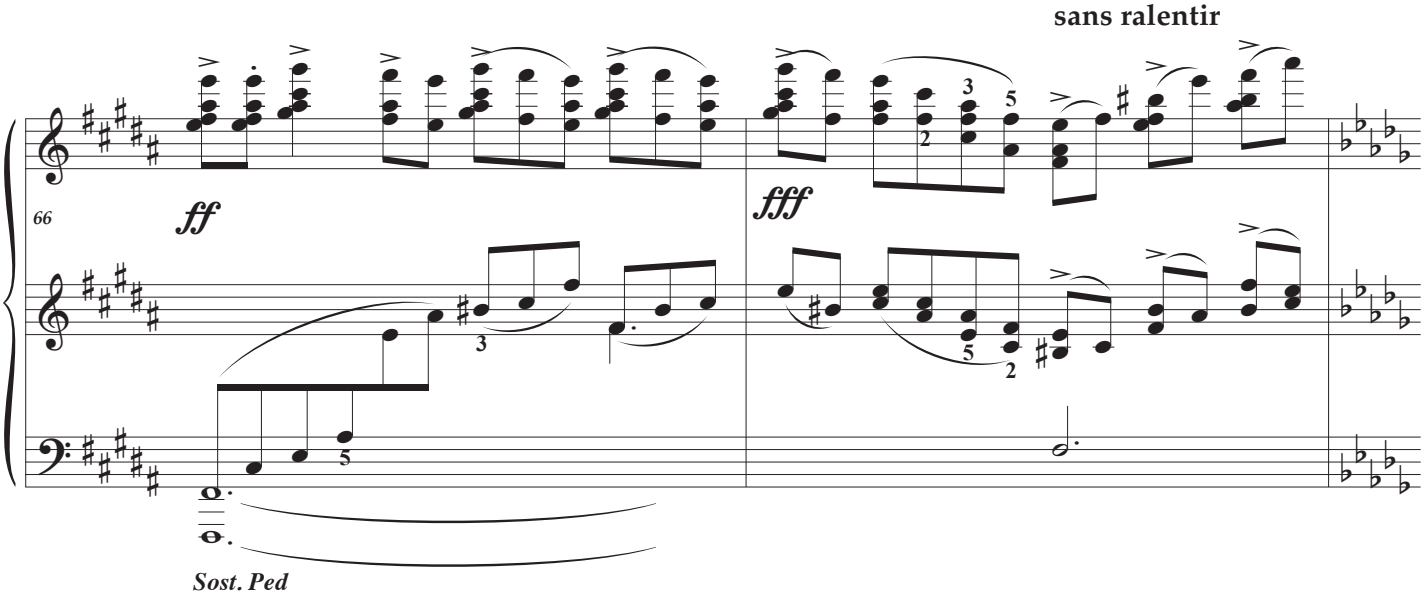

8va
con anima
46
sonoro
sfz

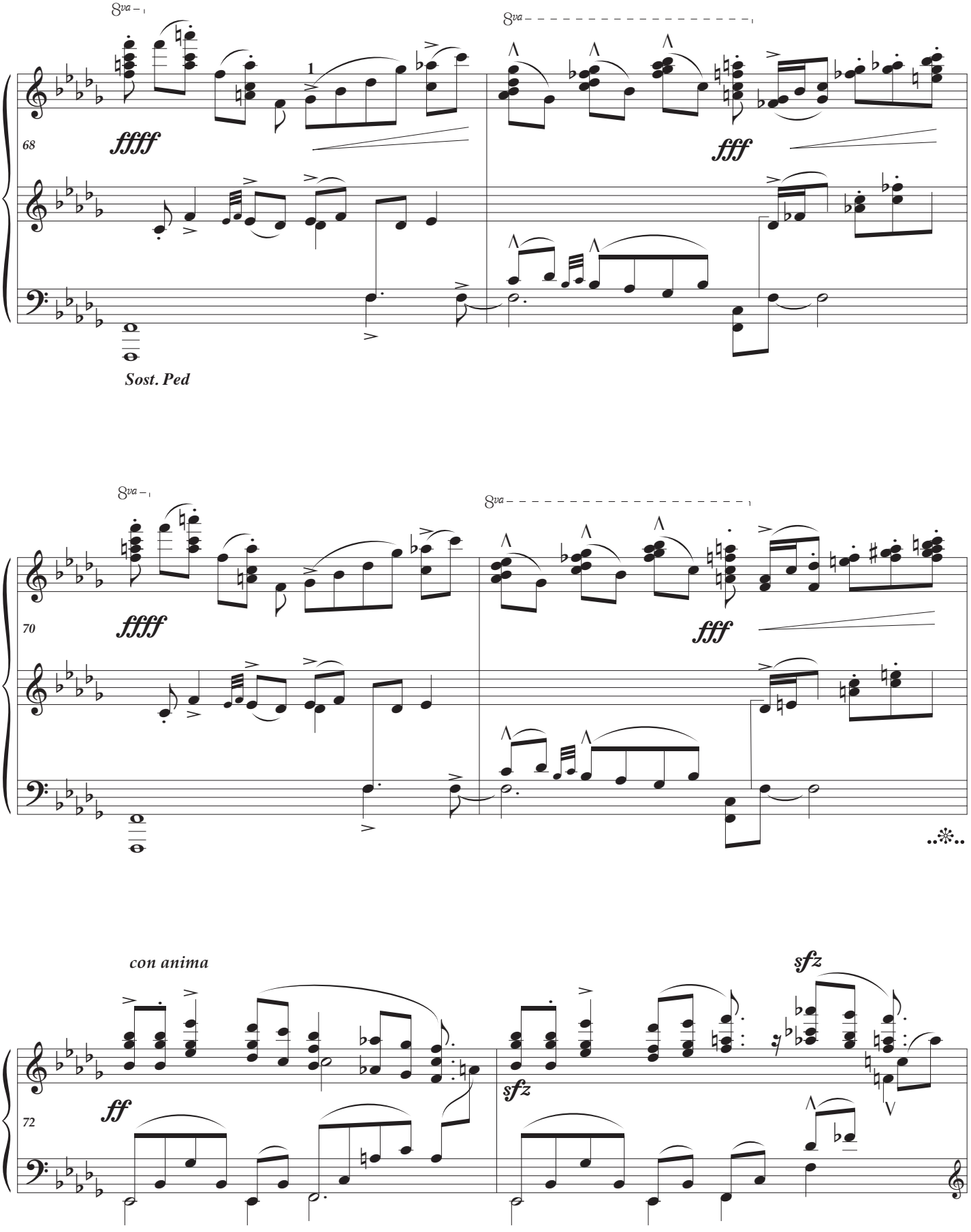

loco
8va
48
sfz
8va
50
sfz
sfz
loco
52
subito dolce

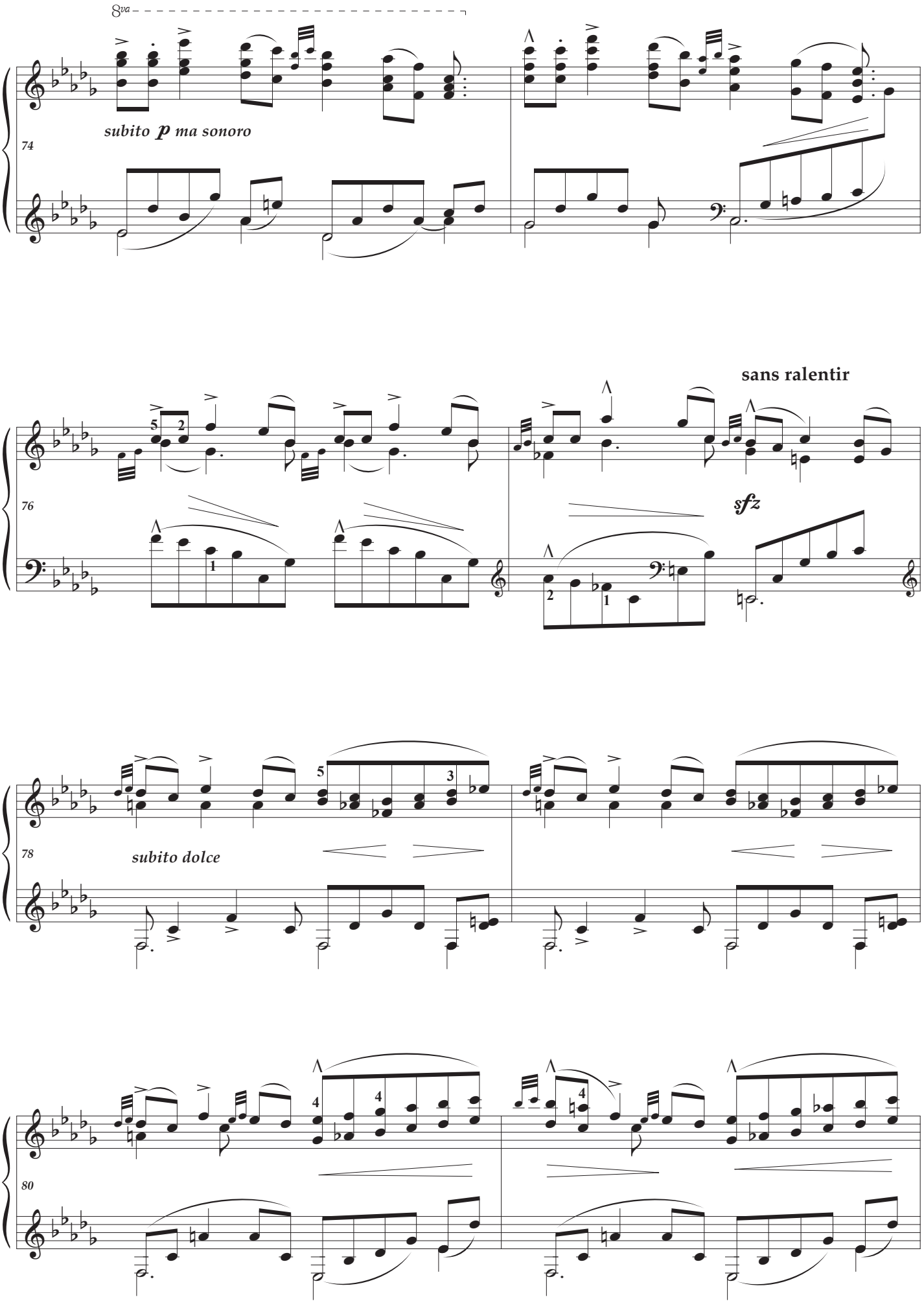

54
mf marcato
56
sfz
con anima
58
f
cresc.
60
f

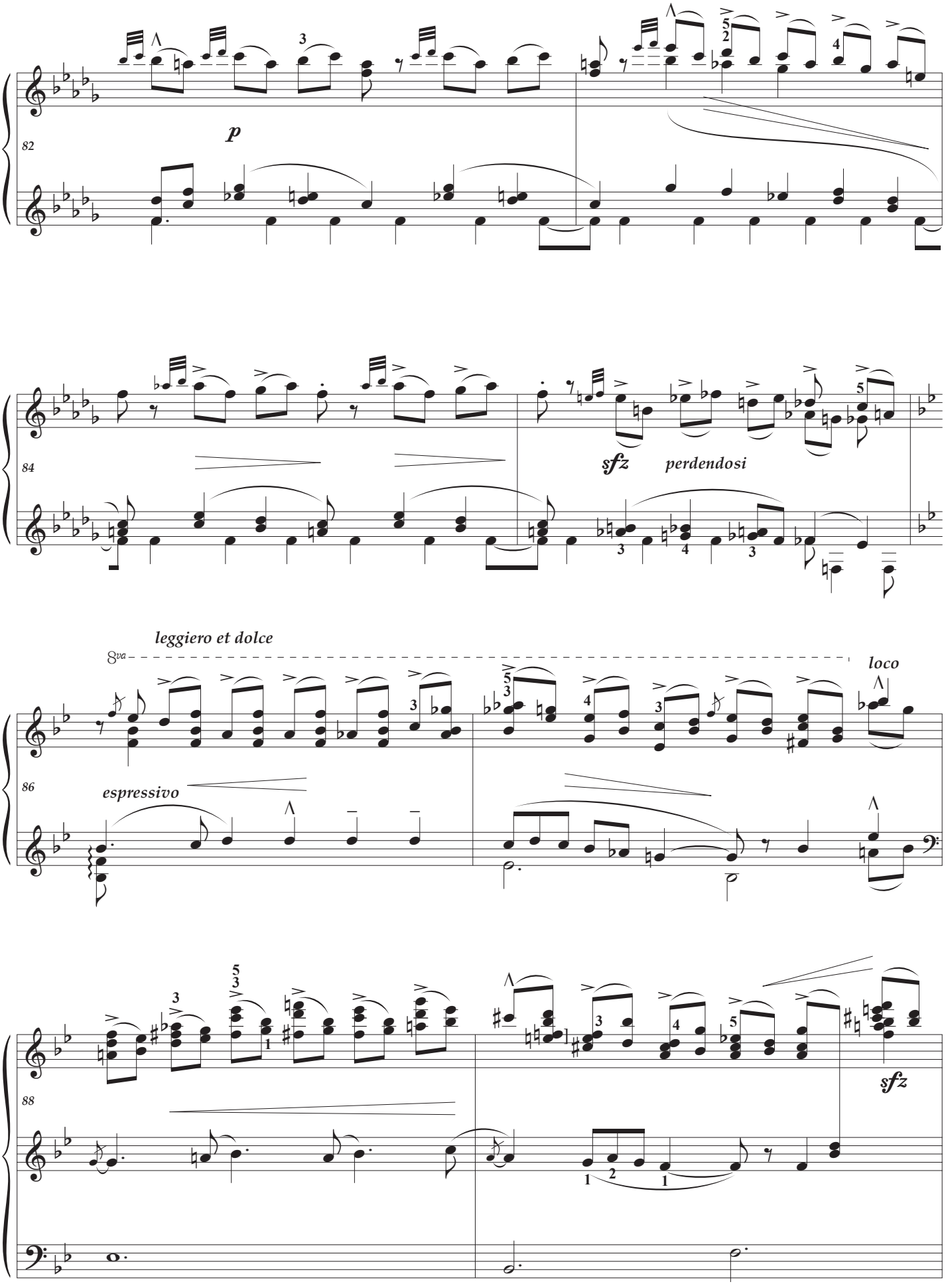

62
f

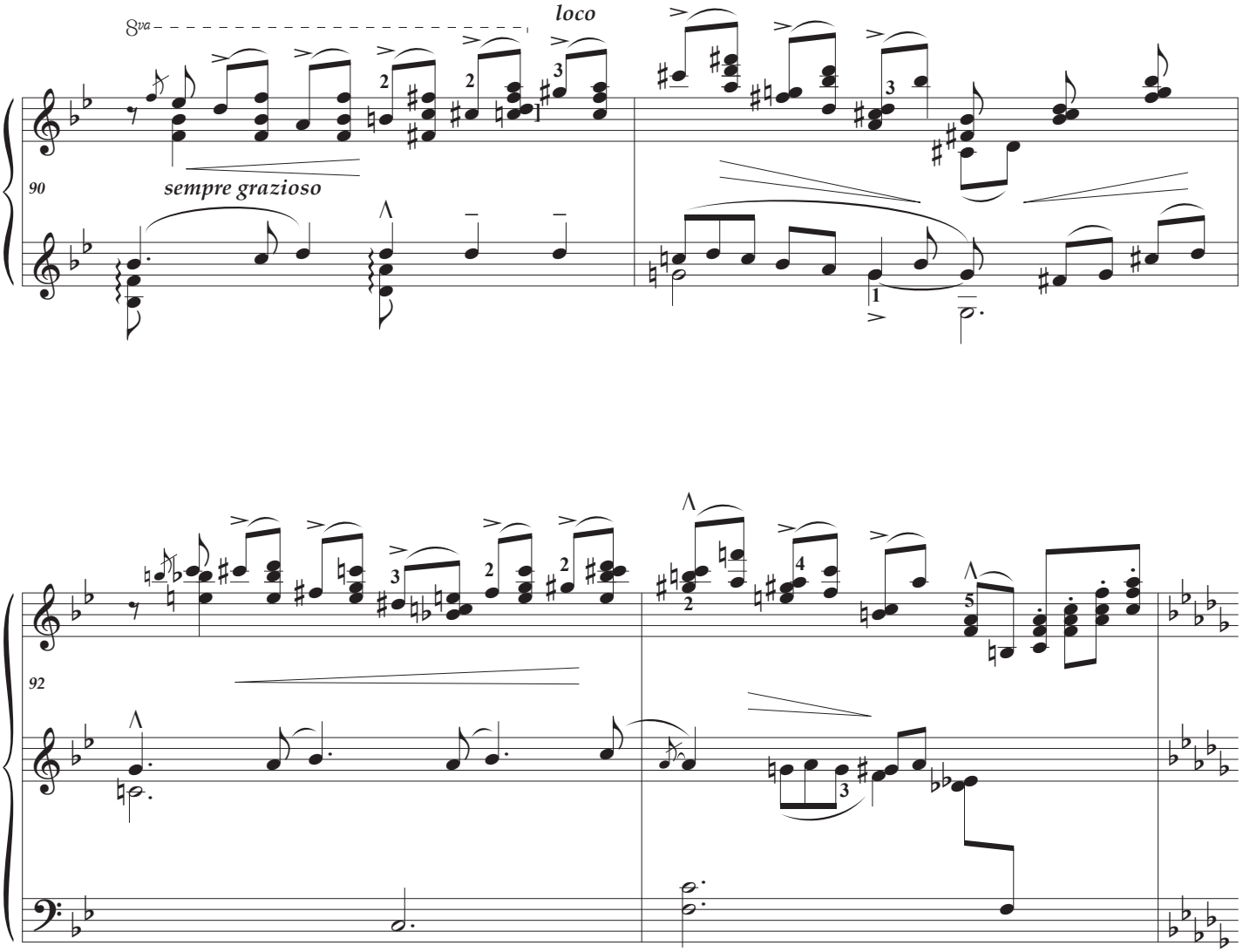

64
ff
marcatissimo


sans ralentir
66
ff
fff
Sost. Ped

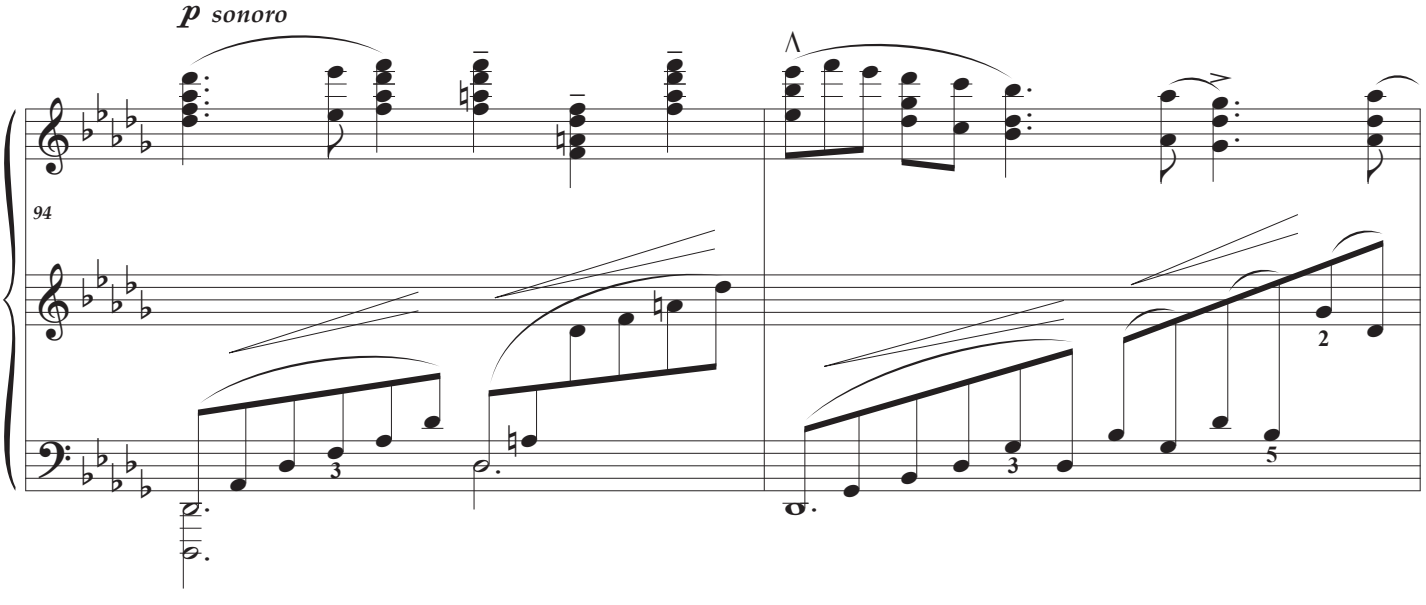

8va
8va
68
ffff
fff
1
Sost. Ped
8va
8va
70
ffff
fff
con anima
sfz
72
ff
sfz
V

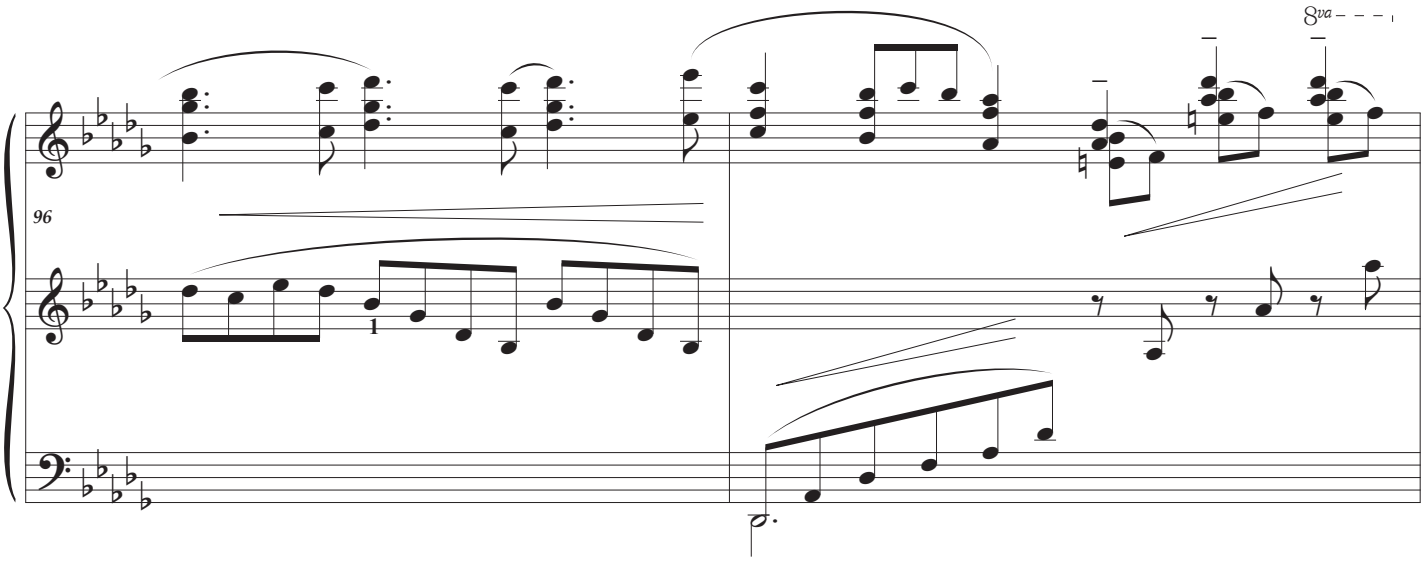

8va
subito p ma sonoro
74
sans ralentir
sfz
76
subito dolce
78
80

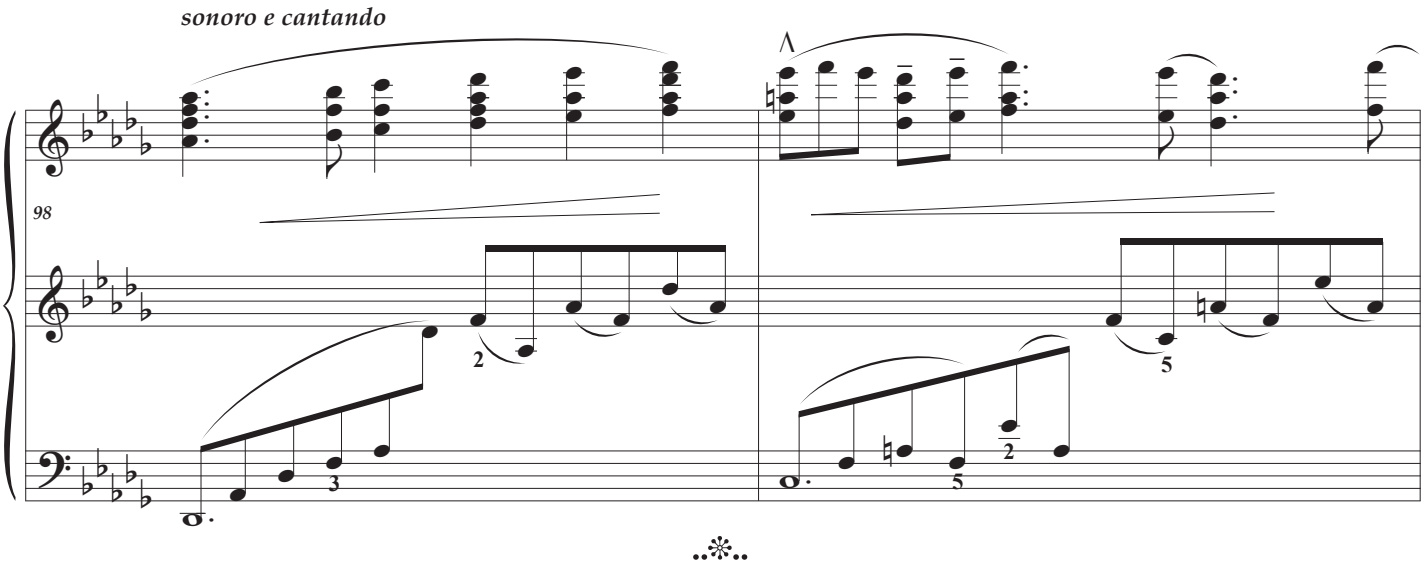

82
p
84
sfz
perdendosi
leggiero et dolce
8va
loco
86
espressivo
88
sfz

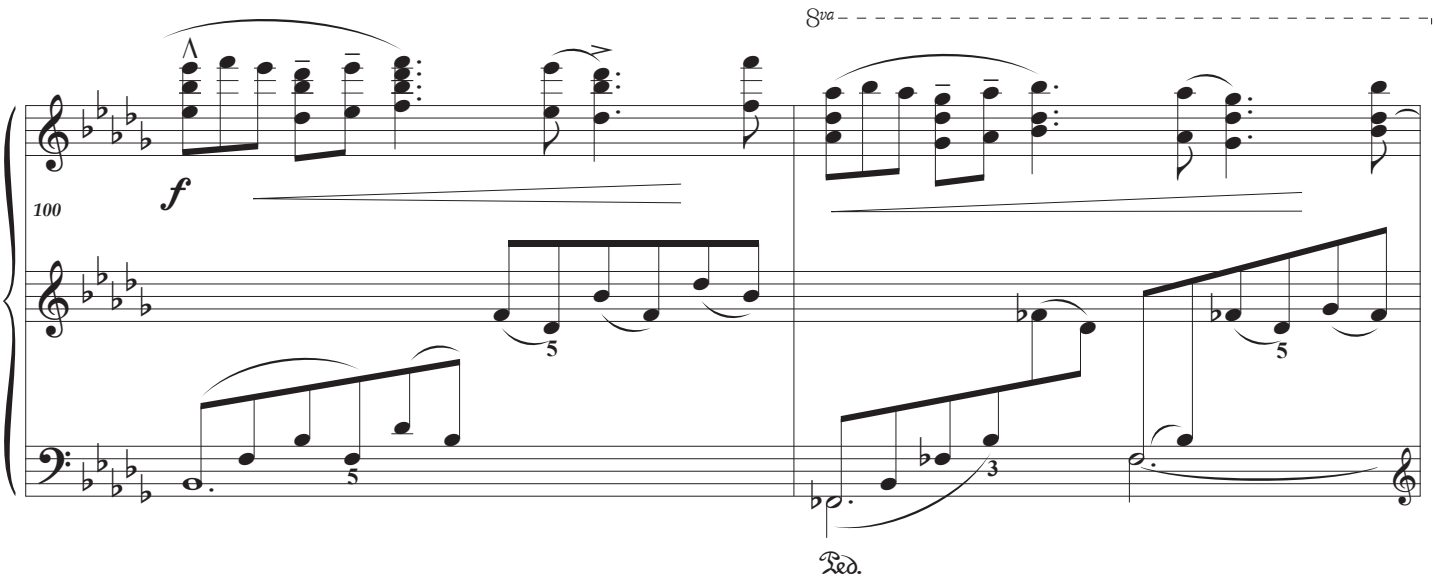

8va
loco
90
sempre grazioso

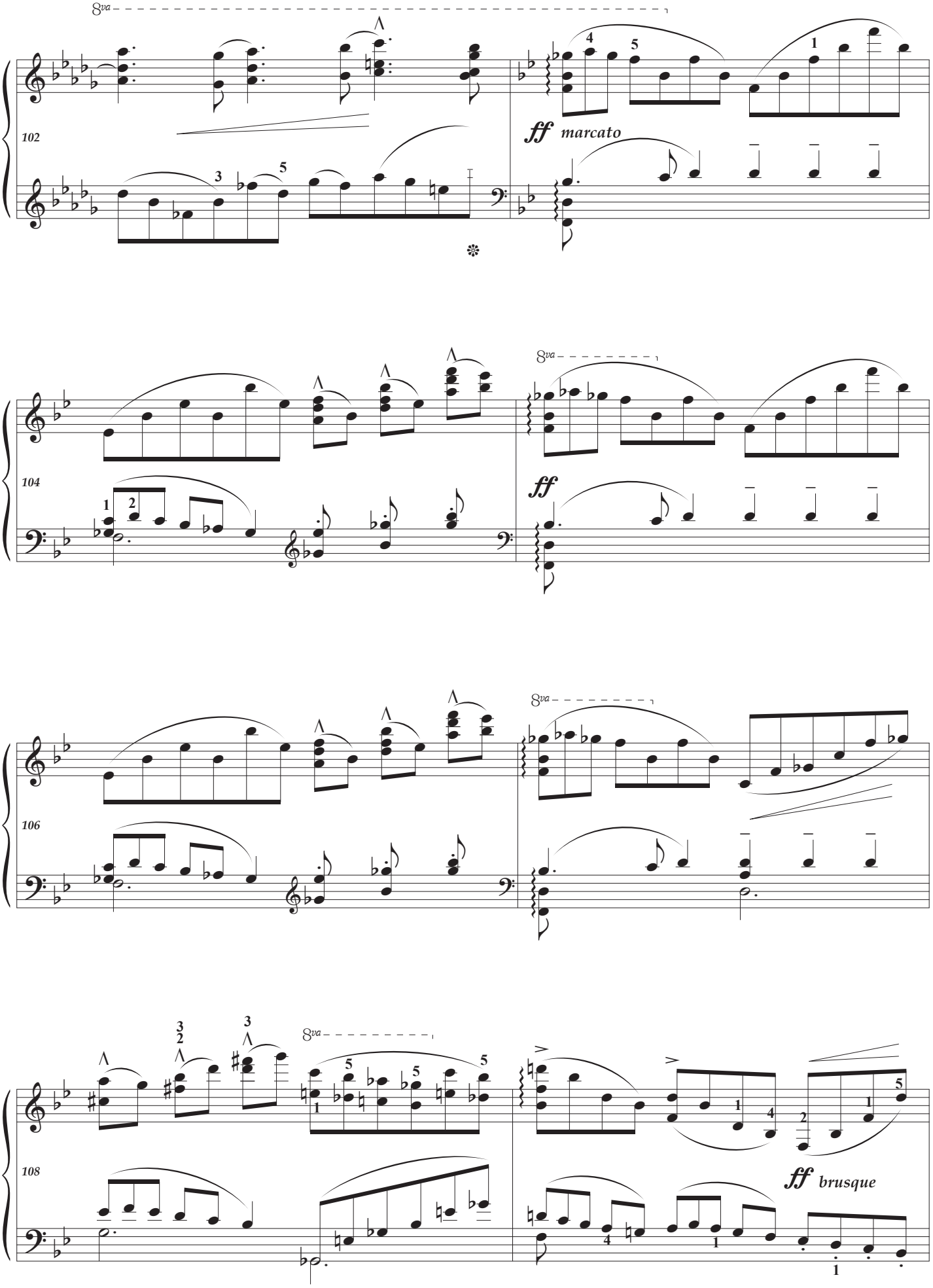
92

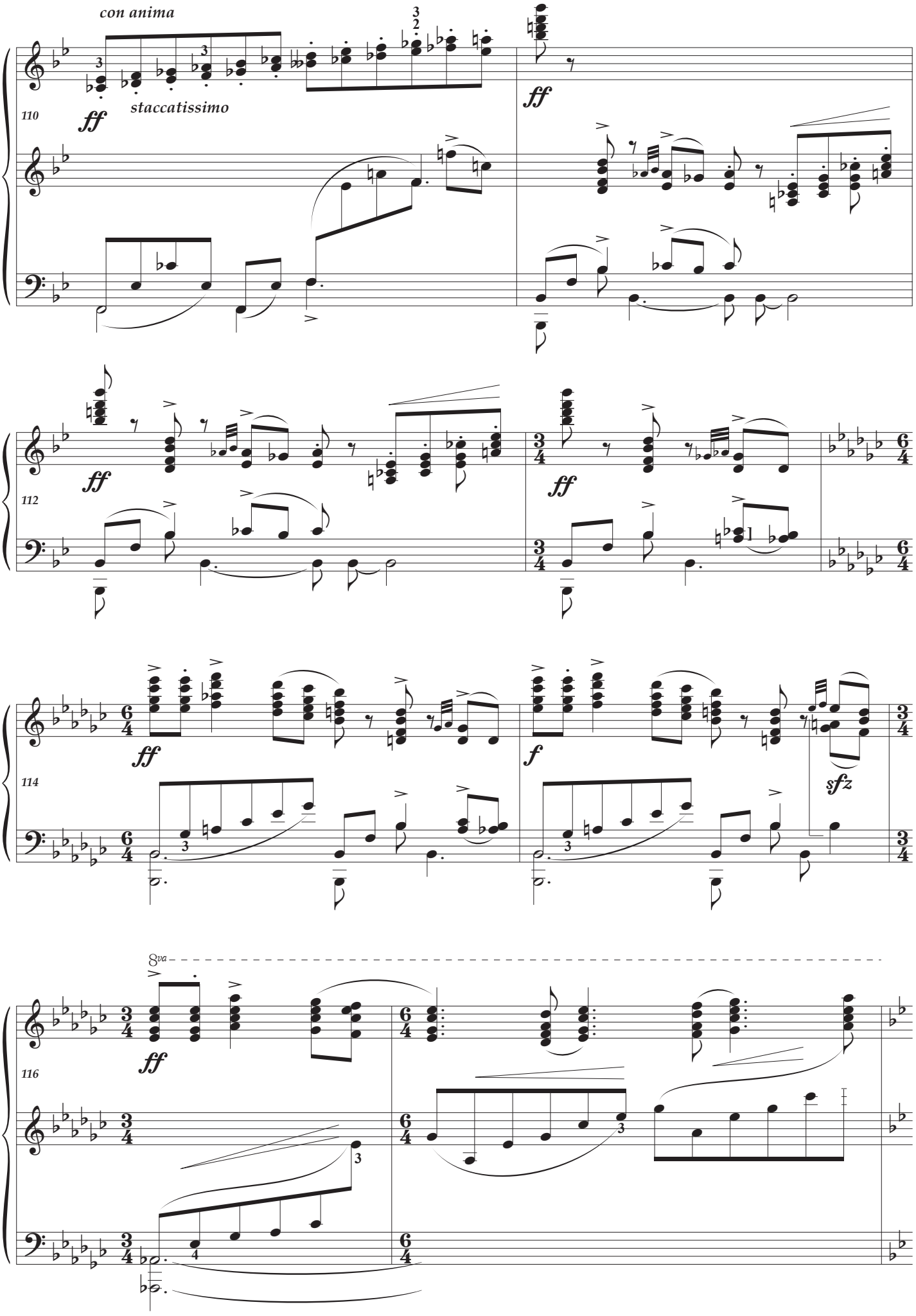

p sonoro
94
Sost. Ped

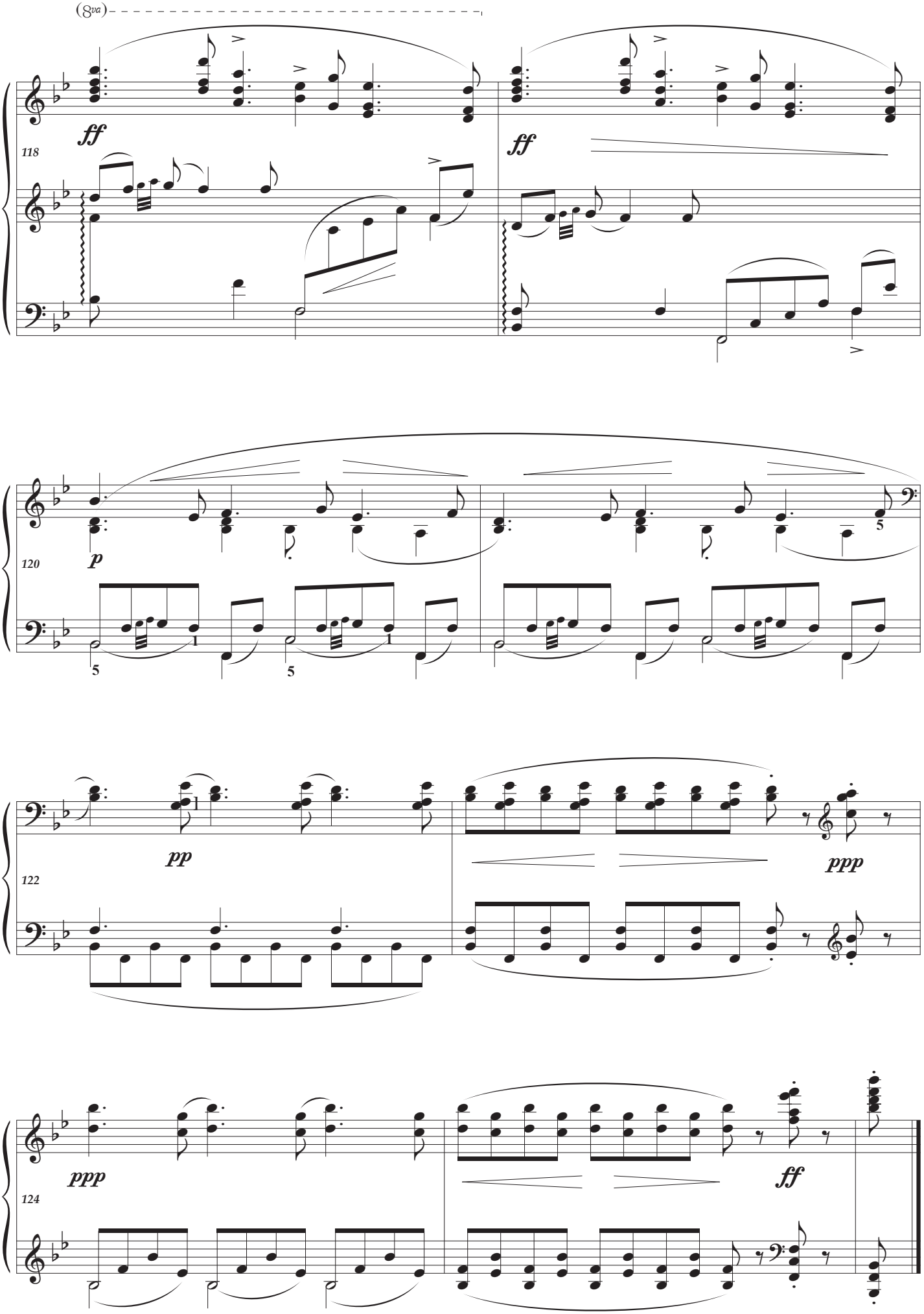

8va
96


sonoro e cantando
98


8va
f
100
Ped.


8va
102
ff marcato
8va
104
ff
8va
106
8va
108
ff brusque


con anima
staccatissimo
ff
110
112
114
116
8va
sfz



Paris, juillet 1907

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.

Please send comments and error reports to
Ray Alston : contact@pianopracticaleditions.com

Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

- In the original editions there are several pedal 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."
- Diamond-headed notes are used to suggest omission.
- As with El Albaicín and Triana (and indeed most of *Iberia*), Albeniz presented *Málaga* with a unique key signature, appropriately modified in this edition.
- In an effort to simplify the text and eliminate accidentals, the time-signature of 3/4 has been replaced with 6/4, which also serves to reveal hemiola and other rhythmic variants.
- For further simplification, short staccato notes and chords are written as quavers instead of semiquavers. Except where necessary, rests have been largely omitted, the clearly defined empty spaces serving to show silence.
- There has been some pruning of the composer's multiple instructions in Italian and French.
- The number of staves varies according to the text, and in general stems up = RH and down = LH.
- Some ***sf*** and *poco* ***sf*** have been replaced with the *marcato* sign.
- Some subsidiary grace notes have been omitted.
- *Málaga* stretches a pianist to the limit, with hair-raising changes of register and dynamics. As often as possible the text layout is presented with maximum clarity to enable the reader to choose the most musical and practical use of the meagre ten fingers at his or her disposition.
- Unusually for Albeniz, there are very few instructions in French.

Duration: 4'45

expressif et rêveur	dreamily expressive
sans ralentir	without slowing down
brusque	abrupt

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".