Don Freund

Feux d'artifice — Tombeau
("Shuttle Explodes: Seven Feared Dead")

Ballade for Piano Solo
(1986)

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Ballade for Piano Solo

The title and subtitle may provide all the listener needs to know about this work. The tension between the power and brilliance of the shuttle's lift-off and explosion and the tragic outcome demanded a musical expression, with solo piano being the ideal medium. The shuttle disaster deeply affects us, not simply because of sorrow for the loss of life, or because of bruised national pride, but because it presents an iridescent metaphor for our existence. Our awareness of the ultimate dissolution of the universe only creates a context which makes our quests and adventures, despite their inevitable futility, radiant and heroic.

The climax of this piece comes not in the virtuoso fireworks, but in a massive "white-key" chorale which appears suddenly, like death, suggesting the shuttle, gigantic, white, promising another world, poised with its enormous booster rockets on the launch pad on a frosty January morning, imposing and irresistible.

Feux d'artifice-Tombeau *was commissioned by and written for Samuel Viviano, a pianist who infuses his performances of new (and old) music with magical brilliance and electrifying emotional intensity. Mr. Viviano premiered the work on July 20, 1986 in Merkin Hall, New York City.*

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Ballade for Piano Solo

for Samuel Viviano

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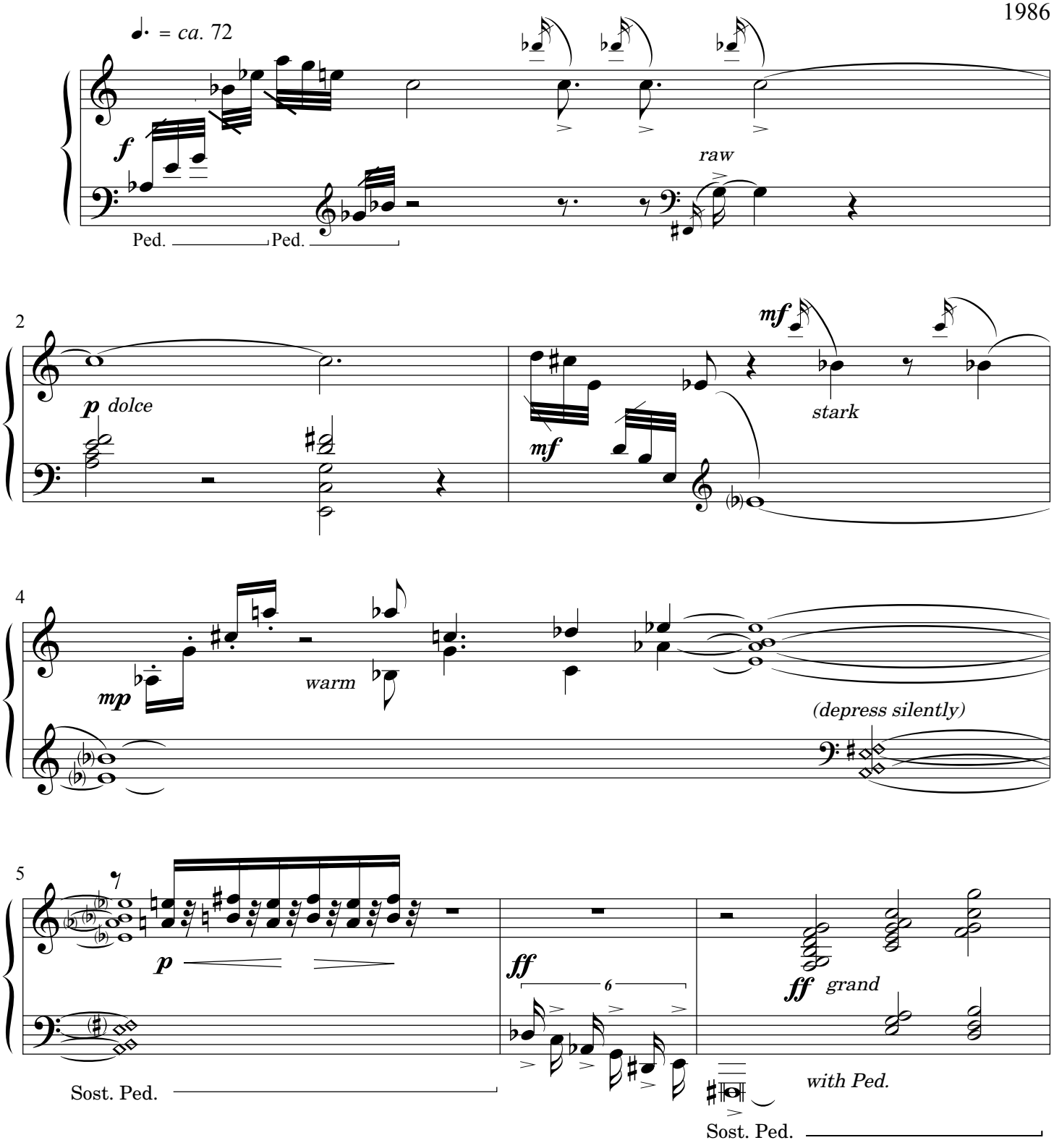
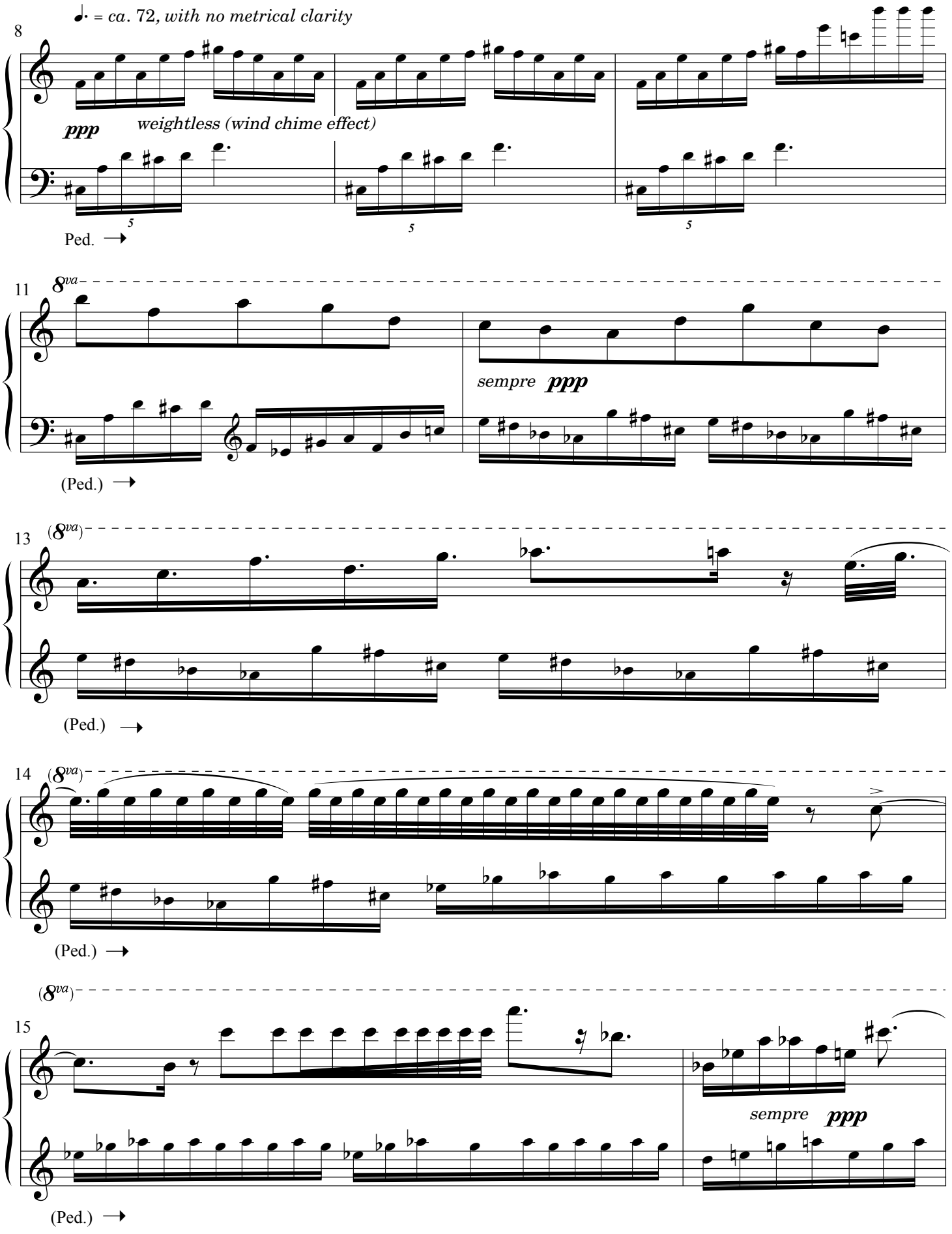
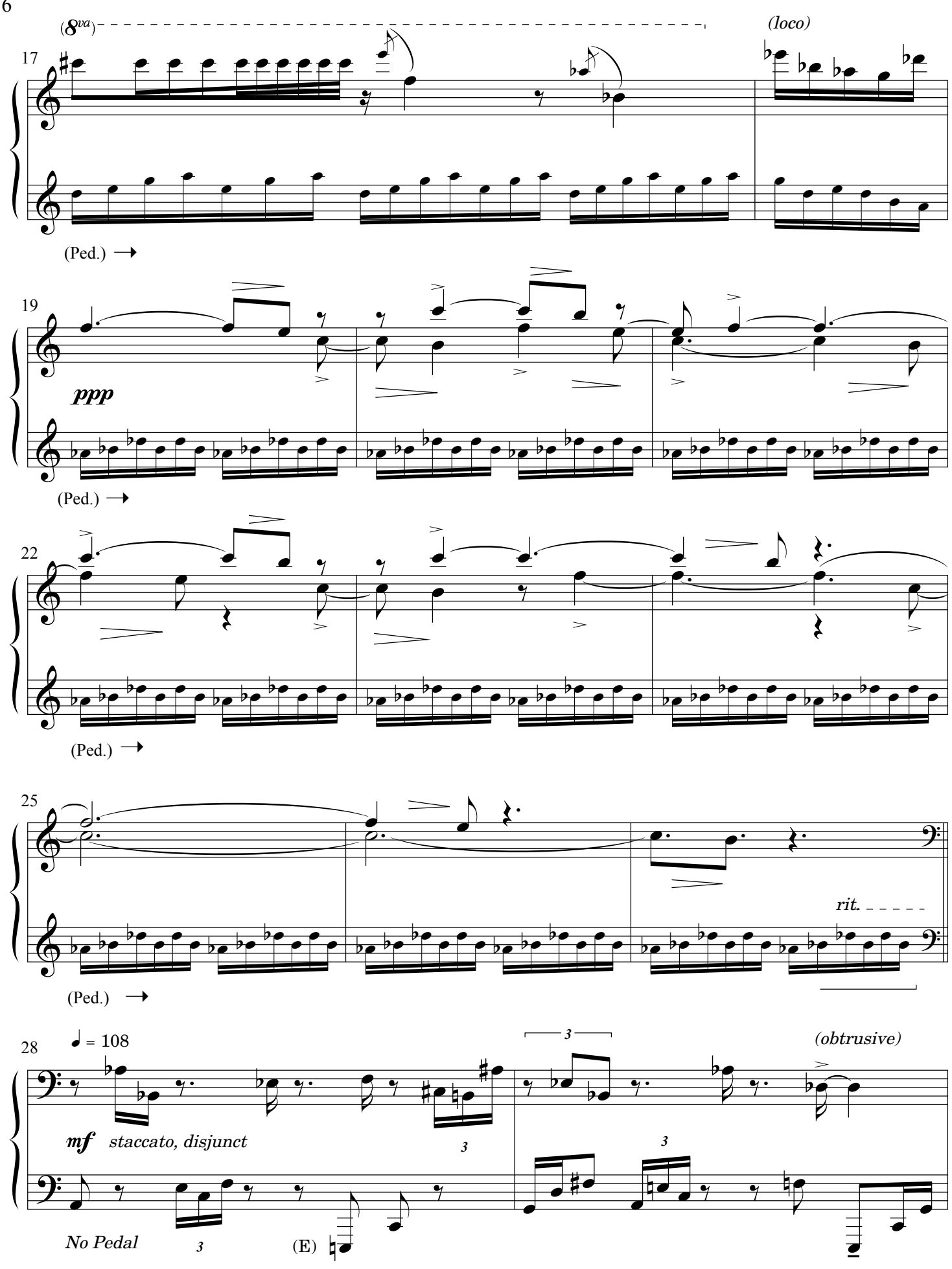
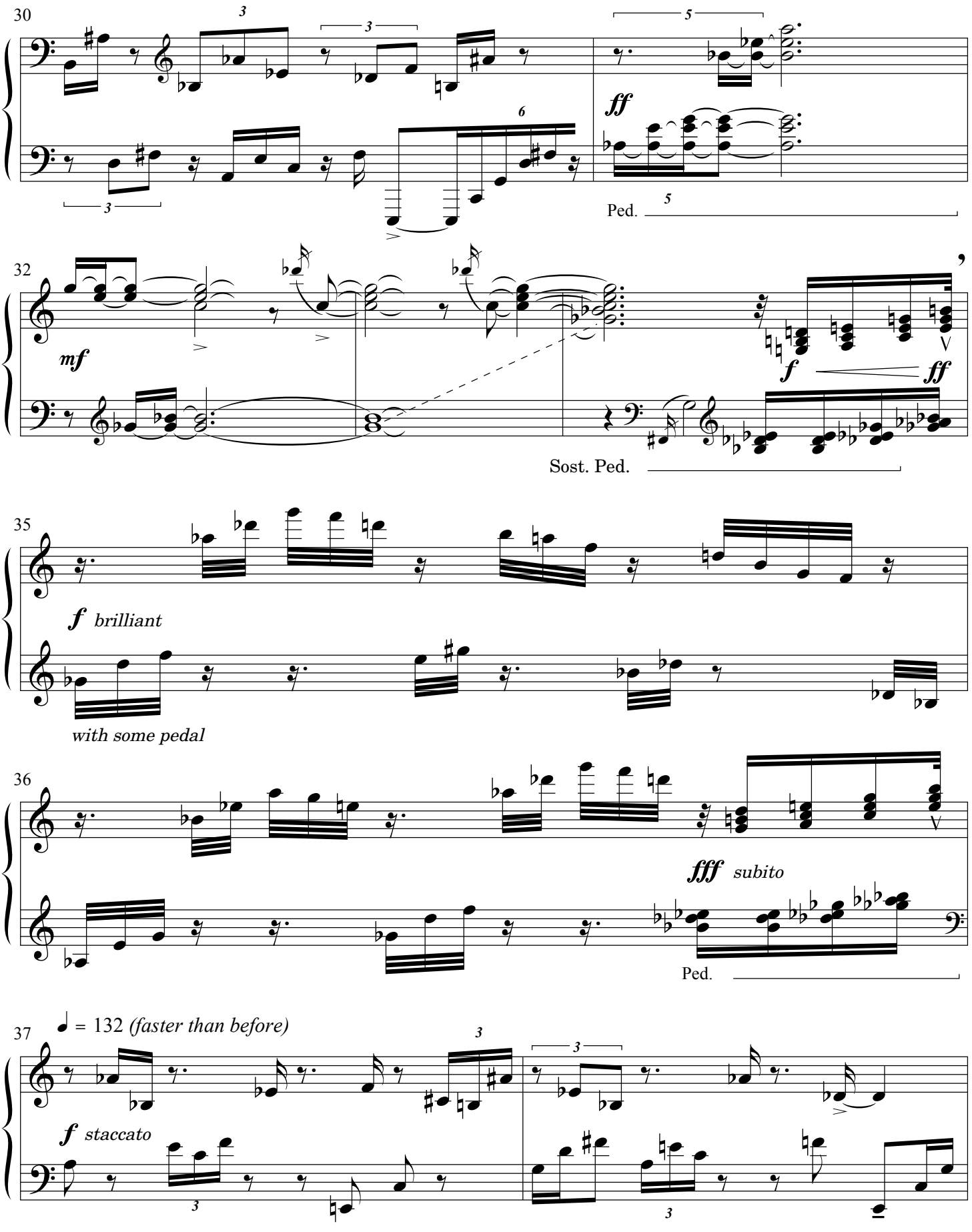
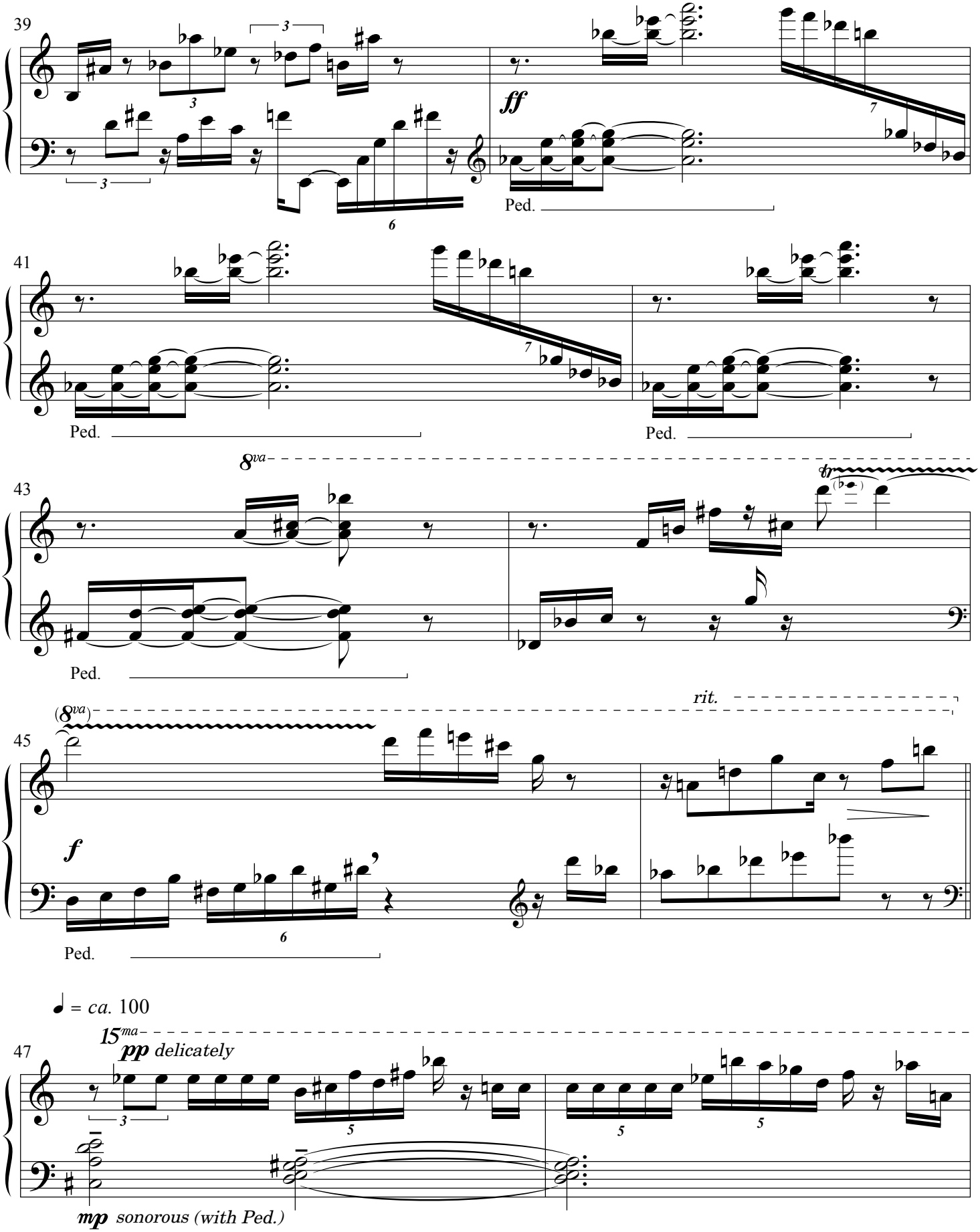
1986

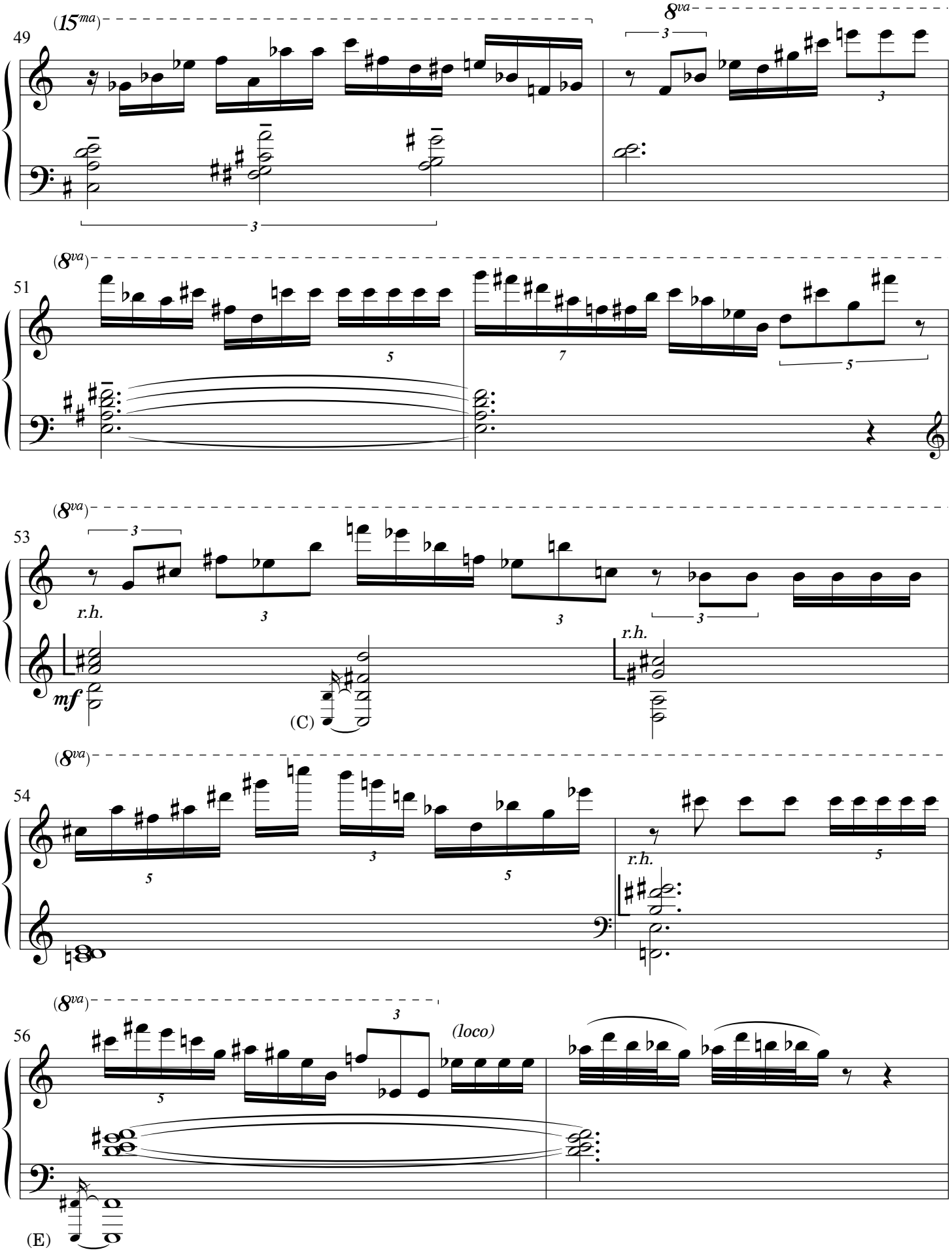



♩. = ca. 72, with no metrical clarity
8
ppp
weightless (wind chime effect)
Ped.
11
8va
sempre ppp
(Ped.)
13
(8va)
(Ped.)
14
(8va)
(Ped.)
(8va)
15
sempre ppp
(Ped.)


(8va)
(loco)
17
(Ped.)
19
ppp
(Ped.)
22
(Ped.)
25
rit.
(Ped.)
28
♩ = 108
mf staccato, disjunct
3
3
3
(obtrusive)
No Pedal
(E)


30
ff
Ped.
32
mf
f
ff
Sost. Ped.
35
f brilliant
with some pedal
36
fff subito
Ped.
37
♩ = 132 (faster than before)
f staccato


39
ff
Ped.
41
Ped.
Ped.
8va
43
tr
Ped.
rit.
(8va)
45
f
Ped.
♩ = ca. 100
15ma
47
pp delicately
mp sonorous (with Ped.)


(15ma)
8va
49
3
3
3
(8va)
51
5
7
5
(8va)
53
3
r.h.
3
3
3
r.h.
mf
(C)
(8va)
54
5
3
5
r.h.
5
(8va)
56
3
5
(loco)
(E)

Very fast, ♩. = 132

58

mp

mf

p leggiero

60

f

mf

ff

Ped.

63

mf

mf

ff

Ped.

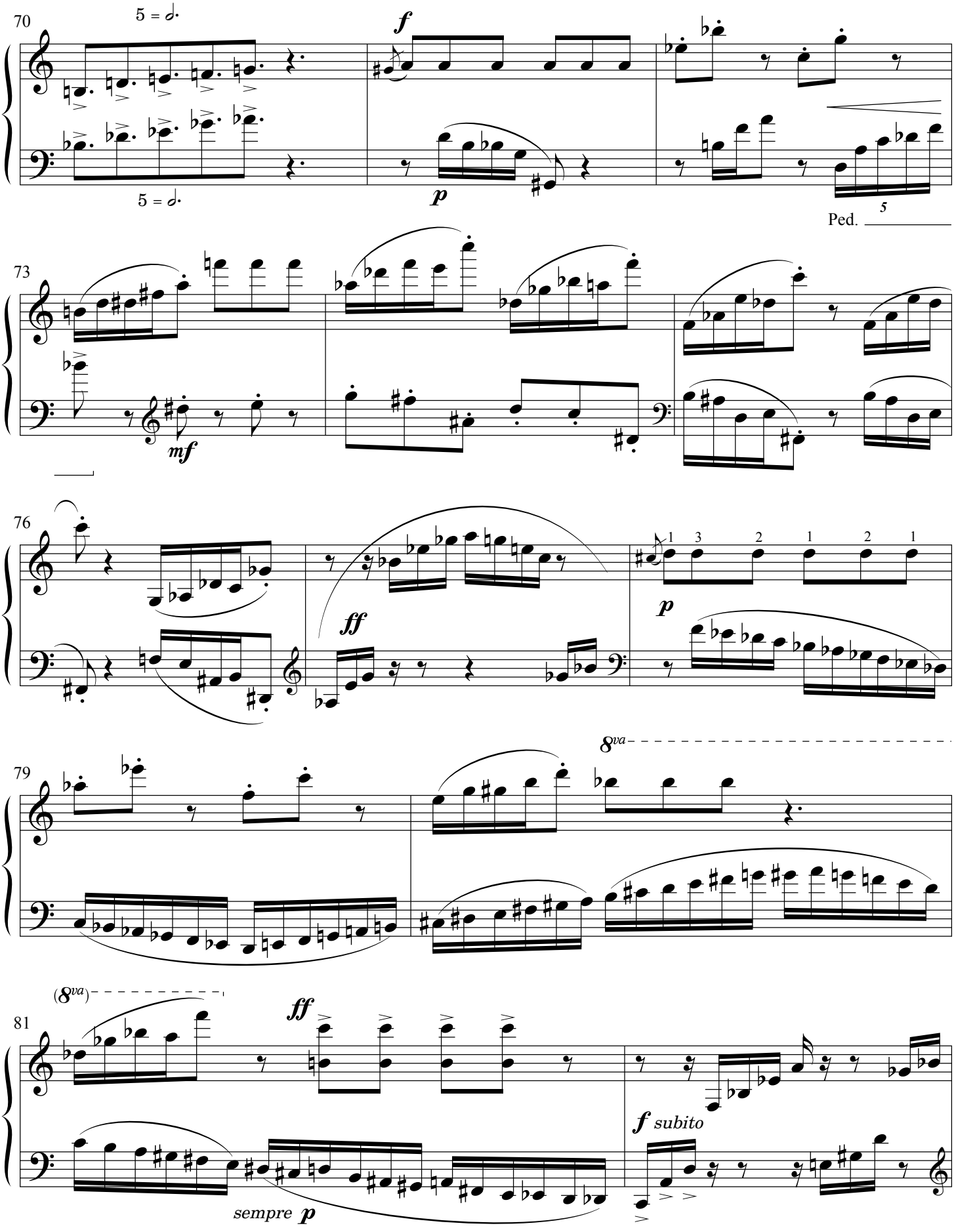
65

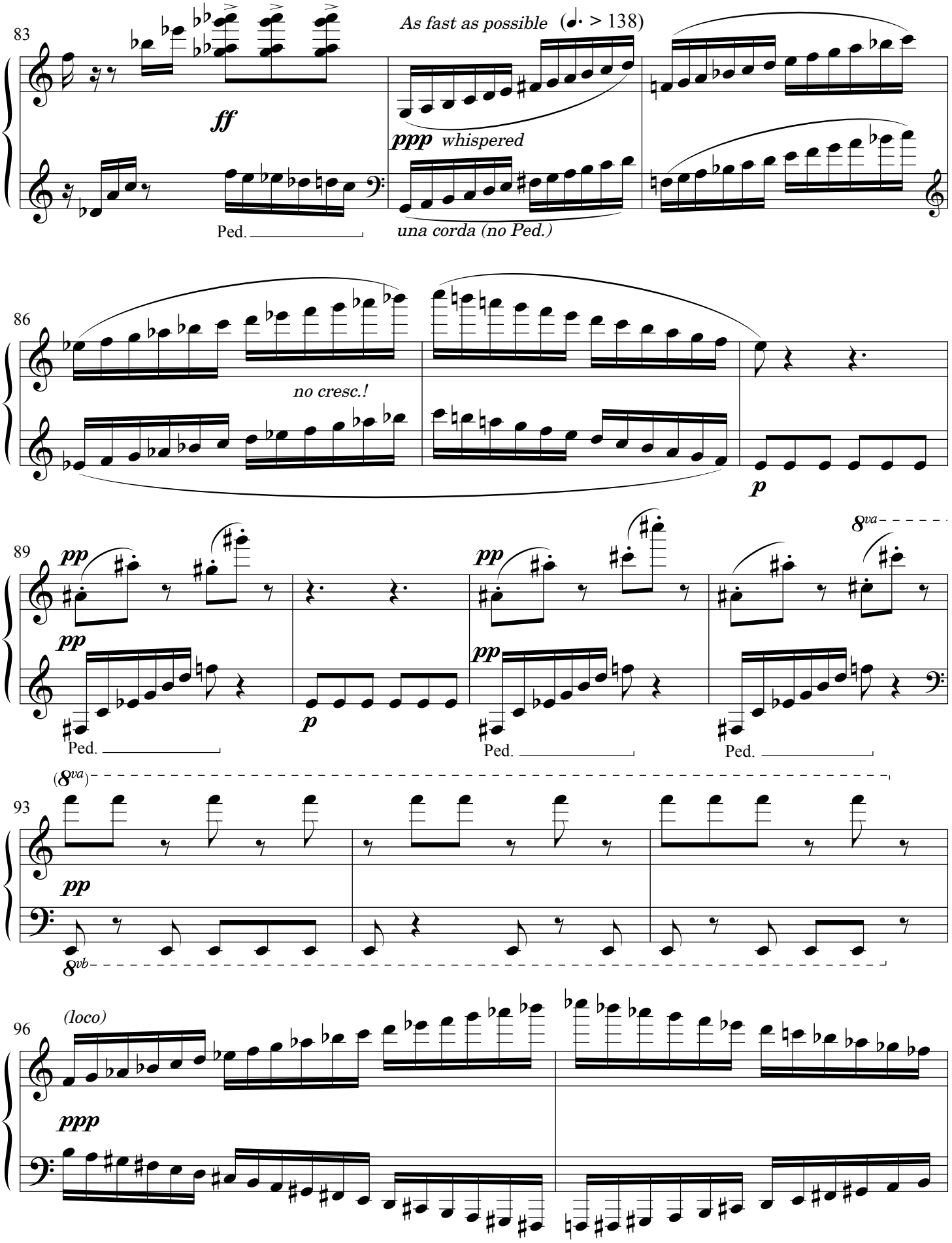
p

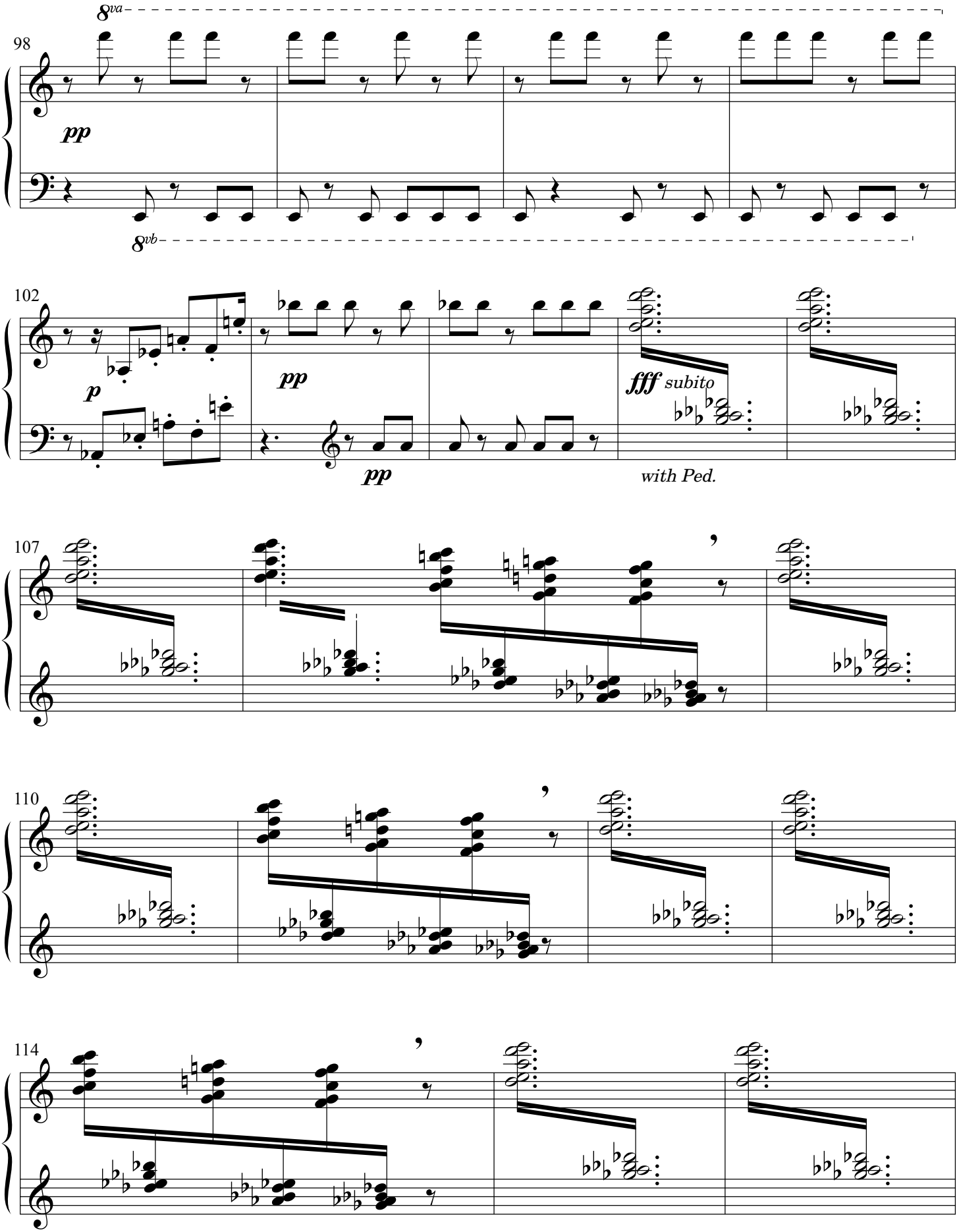
f

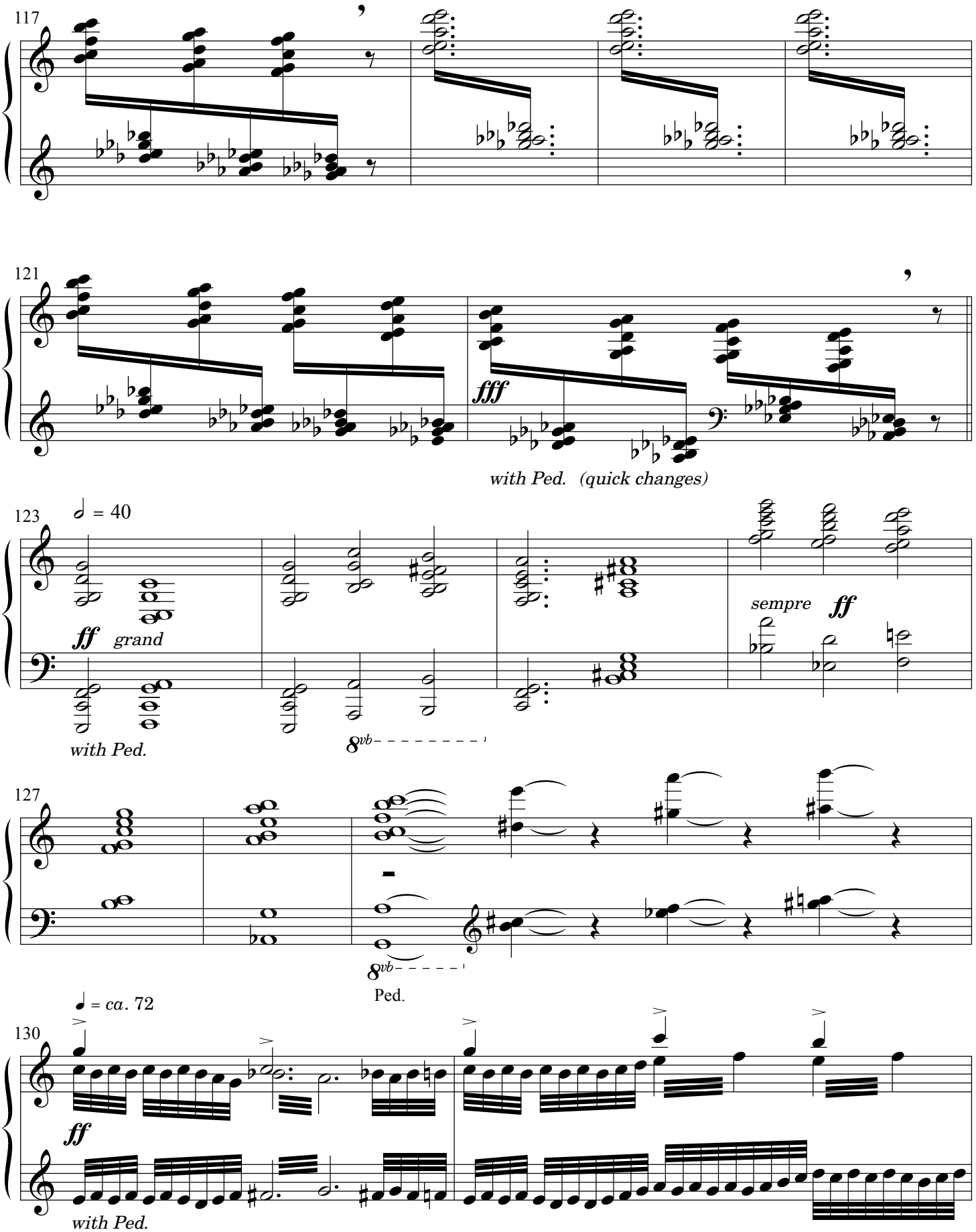
67

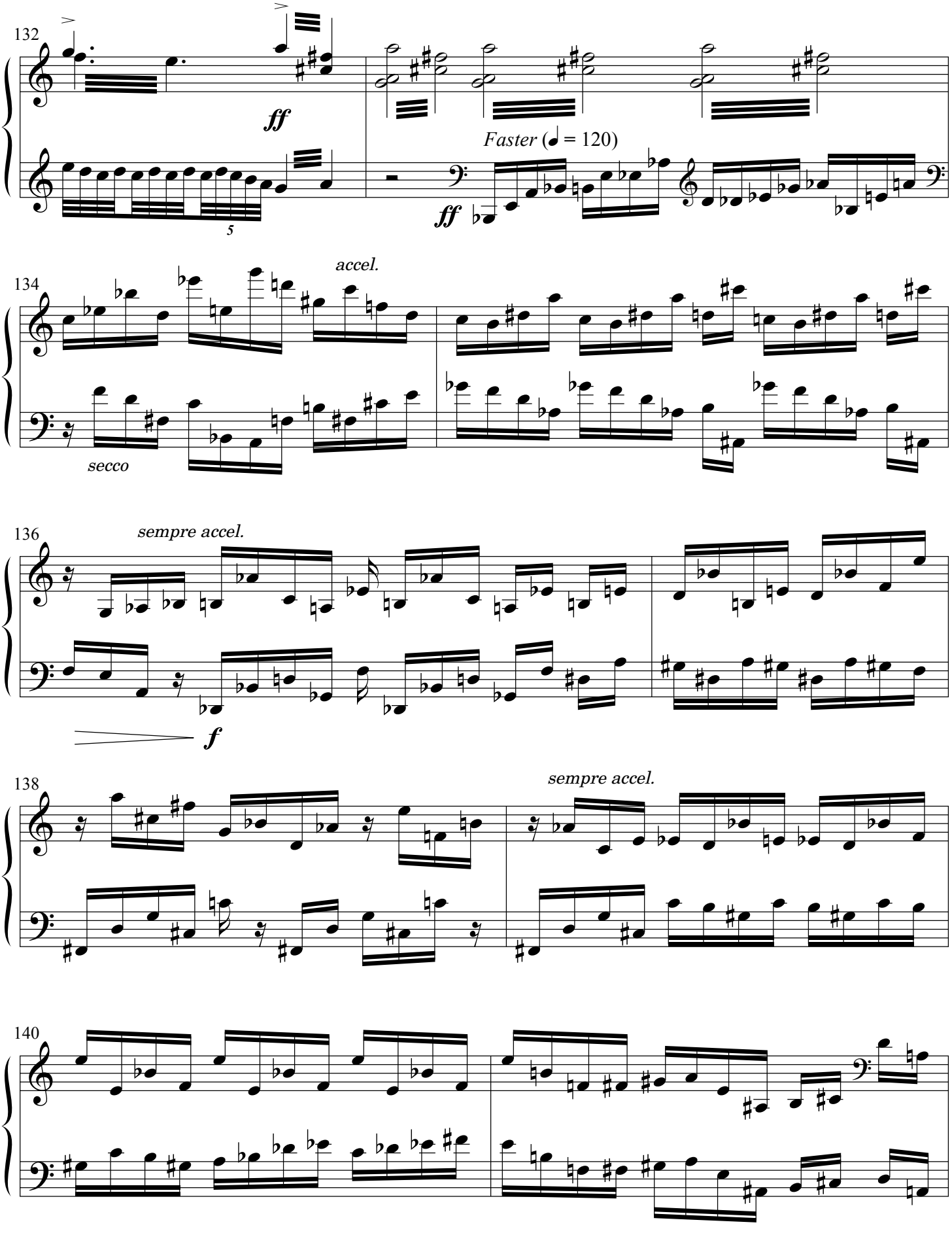
f

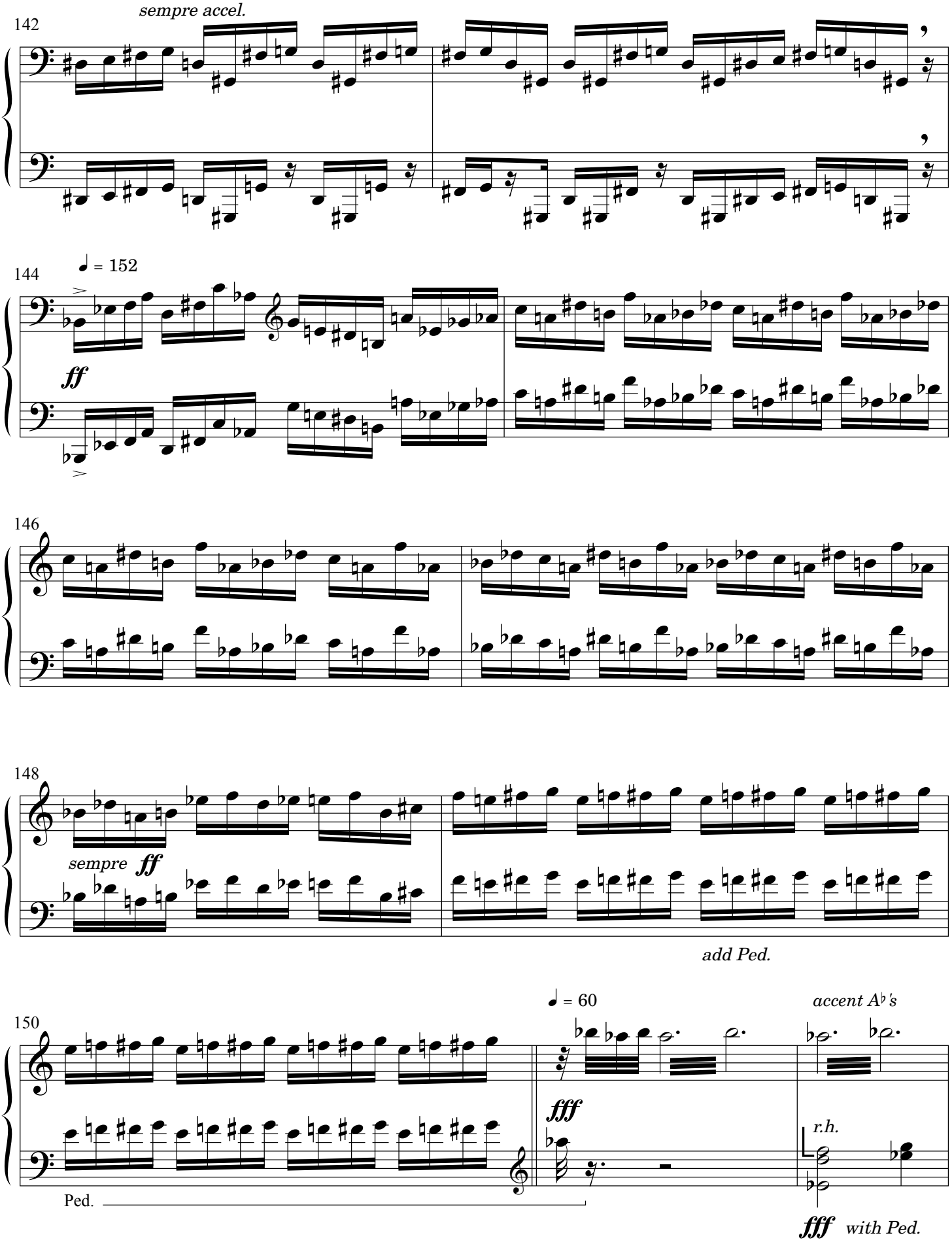

70
5 = 𝅗𝅥.
f
p
5 = 𝅗𝅥.
5
Ped.
73
mf
76
ff
p
1 3 2 1 2 1
79
8va
(8va)
81
ff
sempre p
f subito

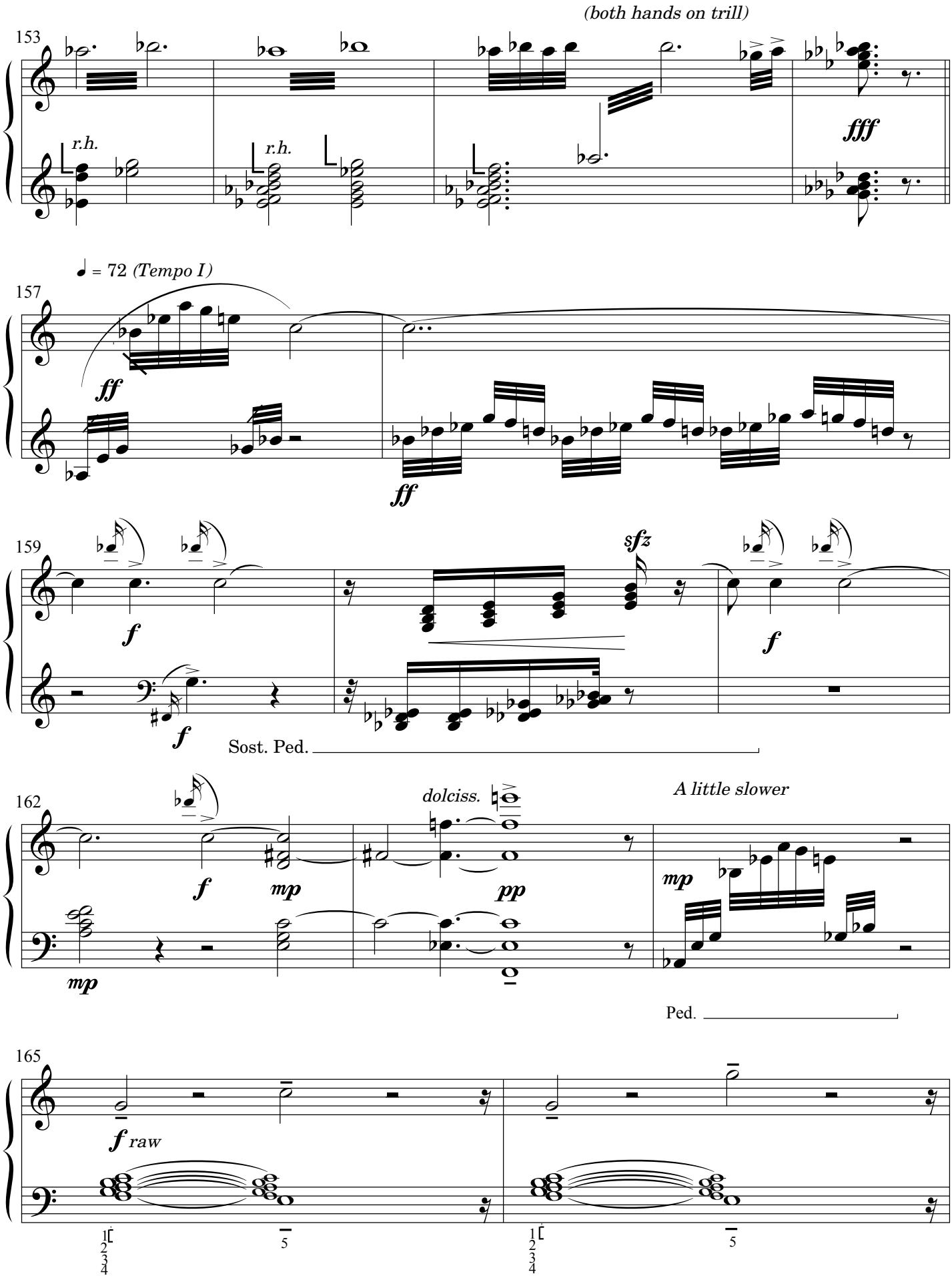

83
As fast as possible (♩. > 138)
ff
ppp whispered
Ped.
una corda (no Ped.)
86
no cresc.!
p
89
pp
p
8va
Ped.
(8va)
93
8vb
96
(loco)
ppp

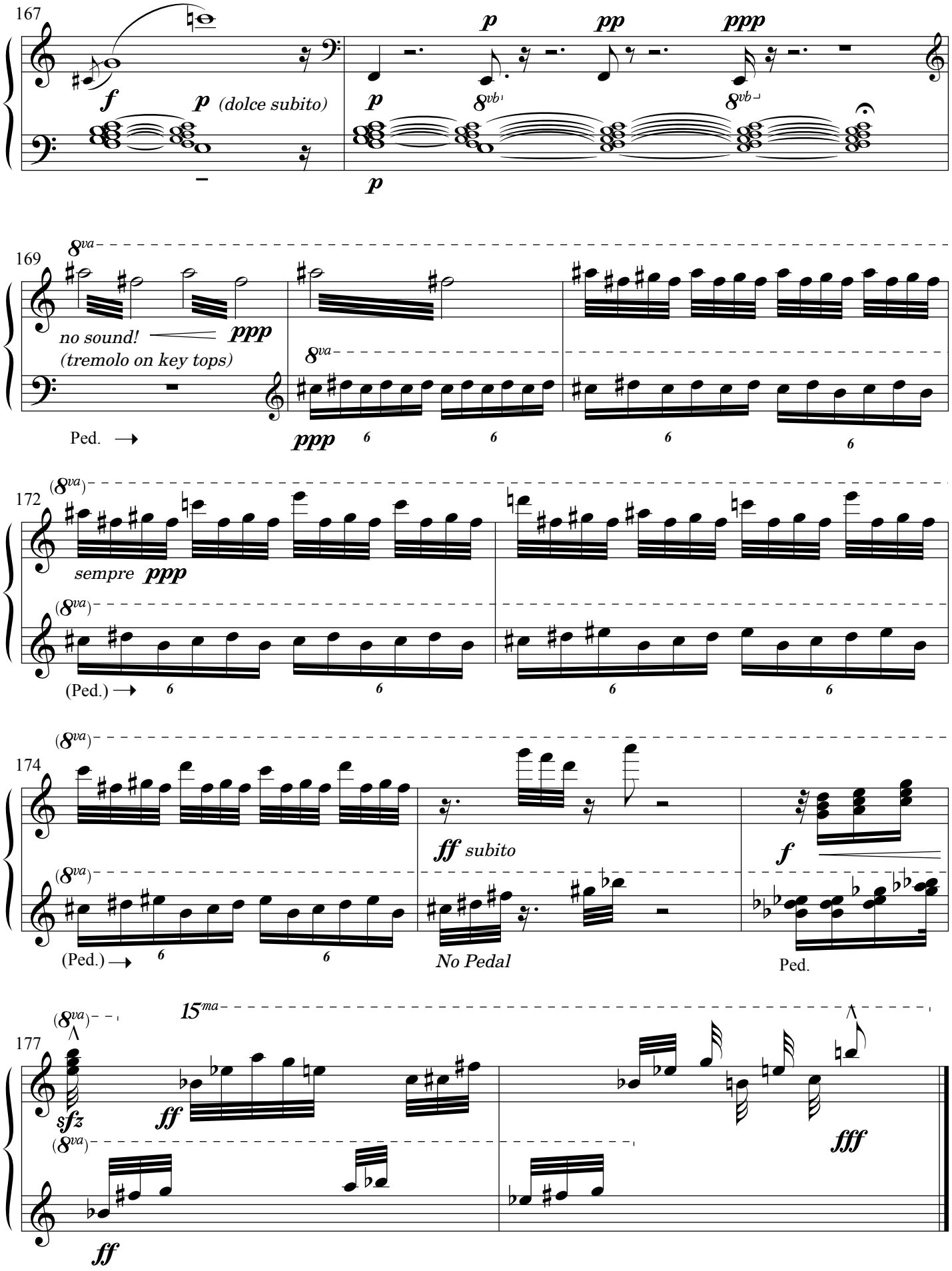

8va
98
pp
8vb
102
p
pp
pp
fff subito
with Ped.
107
110
114


117
121
fff
with Ped. (quick changes)
123
♩ = 40
ff grand
with Ped.
8vb
sempre ff
127
8vb
Ped.
♩ = ca. 72
130
ff
with Ped.


132
ff
Faster (♩ = 120)
ff
5
134
accel.
secco
136
sempre accel.
f
138
sempre accel.
140


142
sempre accel.
144
♩ = 152
ff
146
148
sempre ff
add Ped.
150
♩ = 60
accent A♭'s
fff
r.h.
Ped.
fff with Ped.


(both hands on trill)
153
r.h.
r.h.
fff
♩ = 72 (Tempo I)
157
ff
ff
159
f
f
sfz
f
Sost. Ped.
162
f
mp
mp
dolciss.
pp
A little slower
mp
Ped.
165
f raw


167
f
p (dolce subito)
p
p
8vb
pp
ppp
8vb
169
8va
no sound!
(tremolo on key tops)
ppp
8va
Ped.
ppp
172
(8va)
sempre ppp
(8va)
(Ped.)
174
(8va)
ff subito
f
(8va)
(Ped.)
No Pedal
Ped.
177
15ma
(8va)
sfz
ff
(8va)
fff
ff