ETUDE FANTASY

Commissioned by James Tocco on a grant from the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation, Inc., for the Bicentennial Piano Series of the Washington Performing Arts Society, and dedicated to the memory of Edyth Bush.

NOTES

My ETUDE FANTASY is actually a set of five studies combined into the episodic form and character of a fantasy. The material in the studies is related most obviously by the interval of a second (and its inversion and expansion to sevenths and ninths) which is used both melodically and in the building of the work's harmonic structure.

The first etude is for the left hand alone—a bold, often ferocious statement which introduces both an opening six-note row (the first notes of the work) and a melodic germ (marked "icy" in the score) which follows the initial outburst. This etude reaches a climax in which both the row and the thematic germ are heard together, and ends as the right hand enters playing a slow chromatic descent which introduces the next etude—a study of legato playing.

In the short second etude both hands slowly float downward as a constant crossing of contrapuntal lines provides melodic interest. The sustaining of sound as well as the clarity of the crossing voices is important here.

The third etude, a study on a two-note figure, follows—a fleet development on the simple pattern of a fifth (fingers one and five) contracting to a third (fingers two and four). In this section there is much crossing of hands; during the process a melody emerges in the top voices. A buildup leads to a highly chromatic middle section (marked "slithery"), with sudden virtuosic outbursts, after which the melody returns to end the etude as it began.

The fourth etude is a study of ornaments. Trills, grace notes, tremolos, glissandos and roulades ornament the opening material (Etude I) and then develop the first four notes of the third etude into a frenetically charged scherzando where the four fingers of the left hand softly play a low cluster of notes (like a distant drum) as the thumb alternates with the right hand in rapid barbaric thrusts. This leads to a restatement of the opening 6-note row of the fantasy in a highly ornamented fashion.

After a sonorous climax comes the final etude, a study of melody. In it, the player is required to isolate the melodic line, projecting it through the filigree which surrounds it; here the atmosphere is desolate and non-climactic, and the material is based entirely on the melodic implications on the left hand etude, with slight references to the second (legato) study. The work ends quietly with the opening motto heard in retrograde accompanying a mournful two-note ostinato.

J. C.

Performing time: 18 minutes

The premiere, by pianist James Tocco, took place in the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. on October 9, 1976.

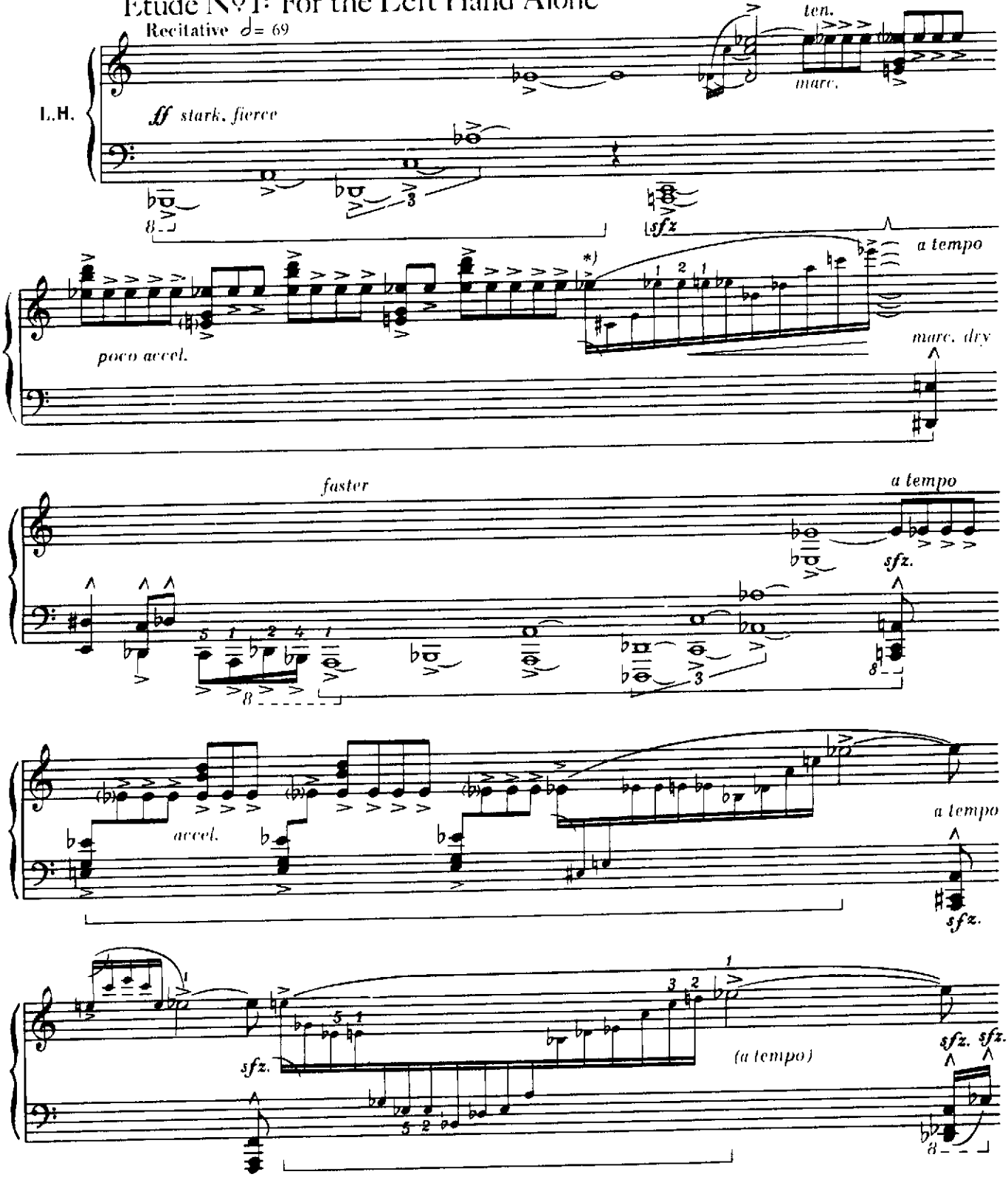
ETUDE FANTASY

for Solo Piano

Edited by James Tocco

John Corigliano (1976)

Etude No 1: For the Left Hand Alone



*) All small notes throughout piece are to be played at the dynamic level of the large notes (in this case *ff*)

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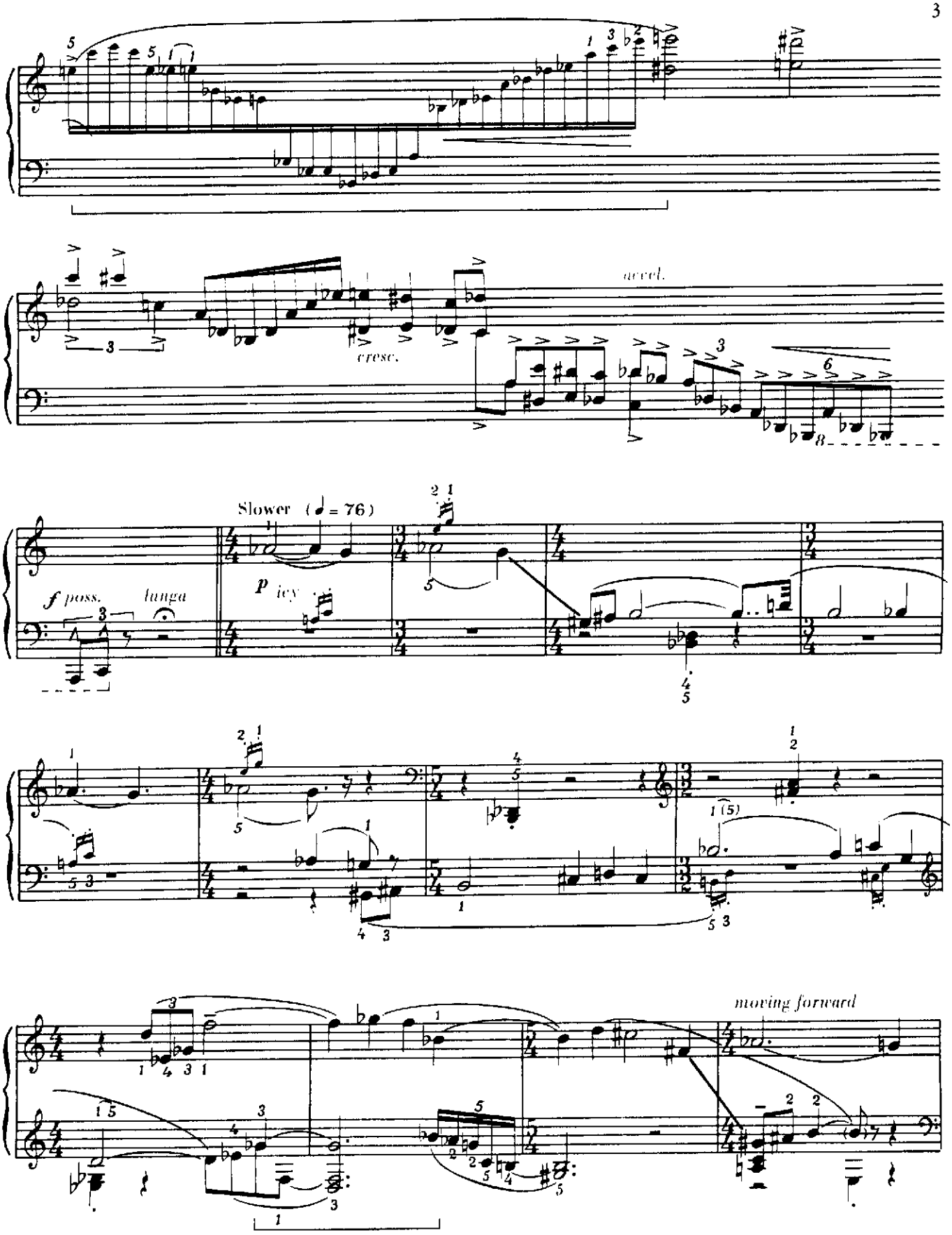
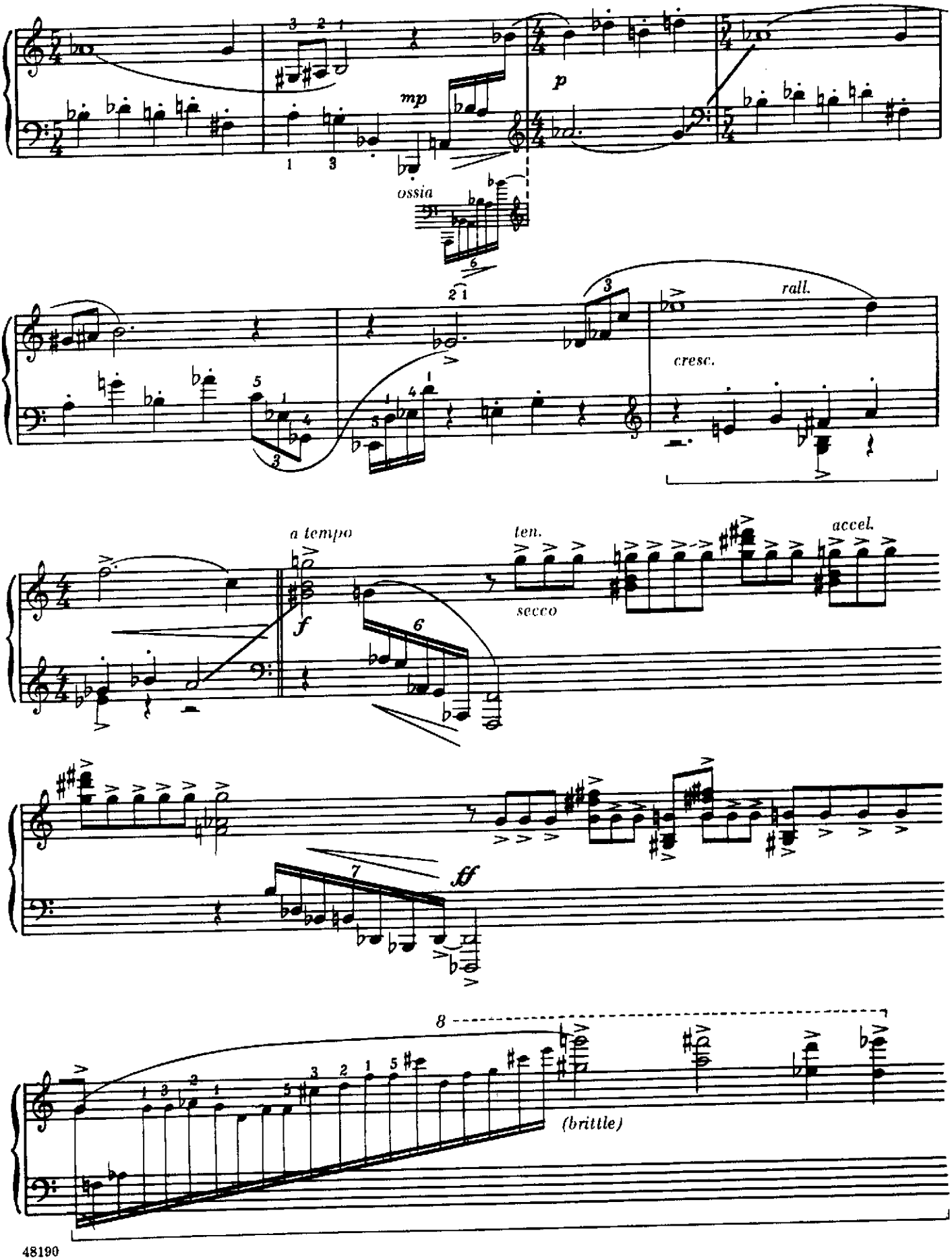
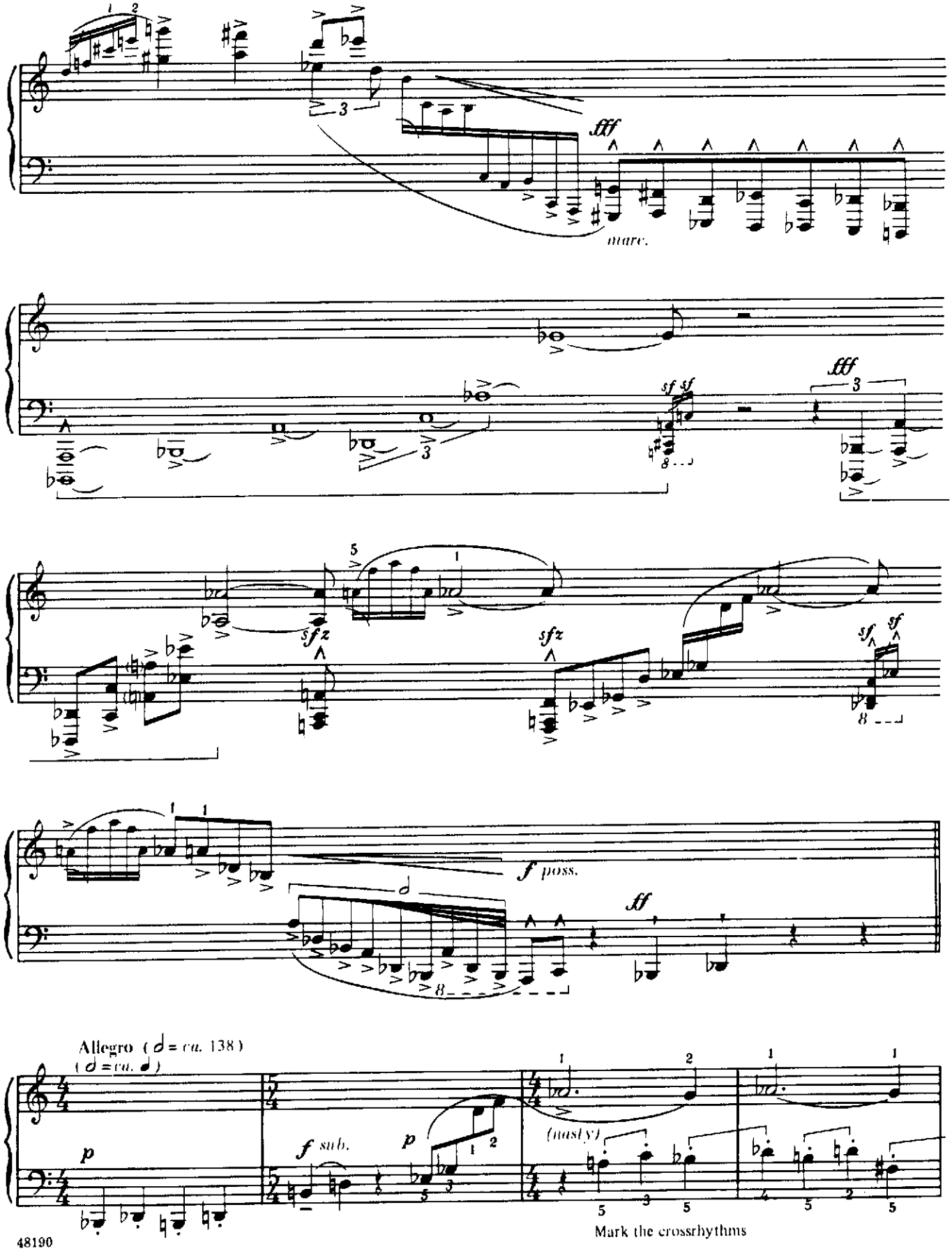
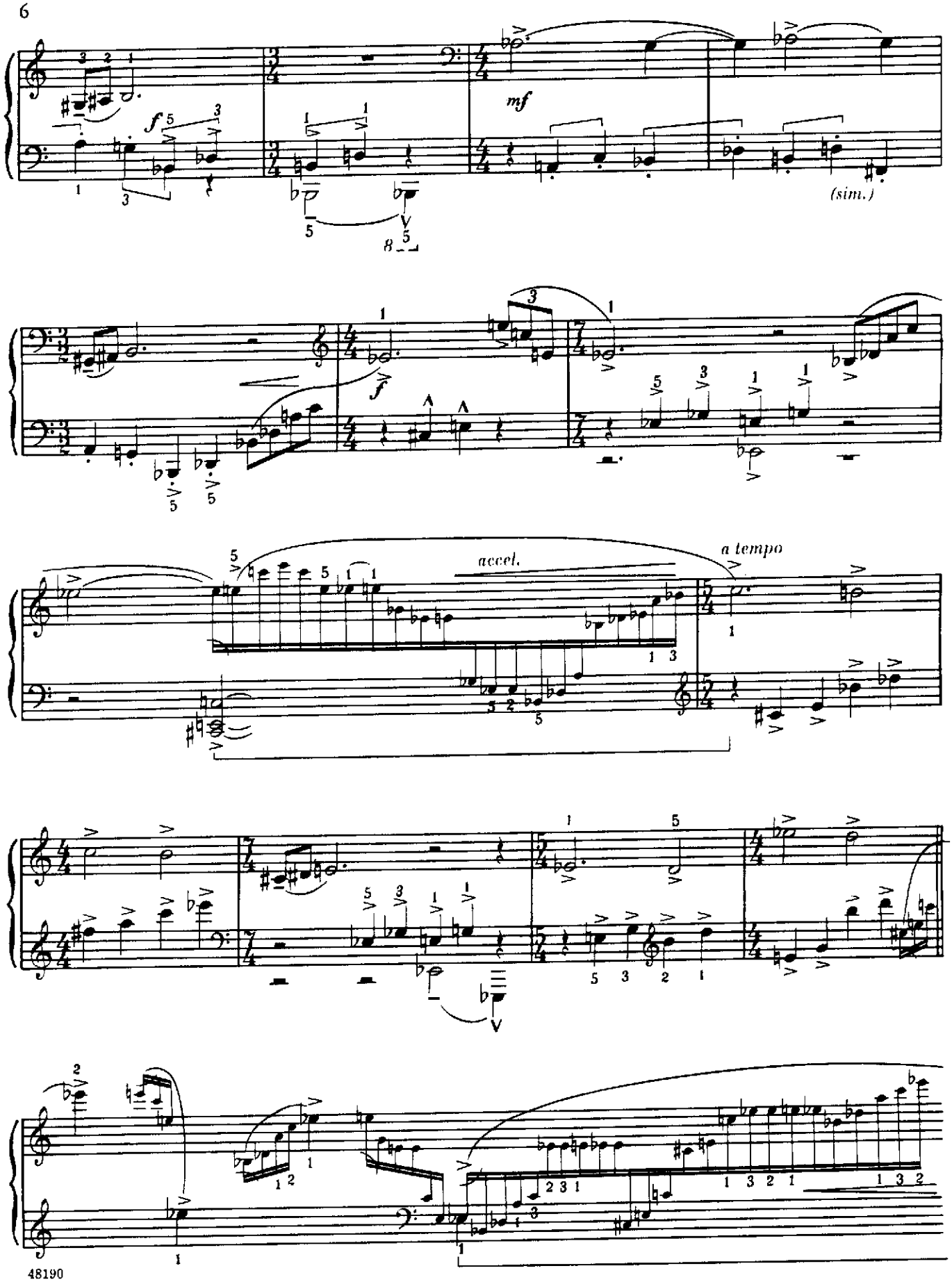
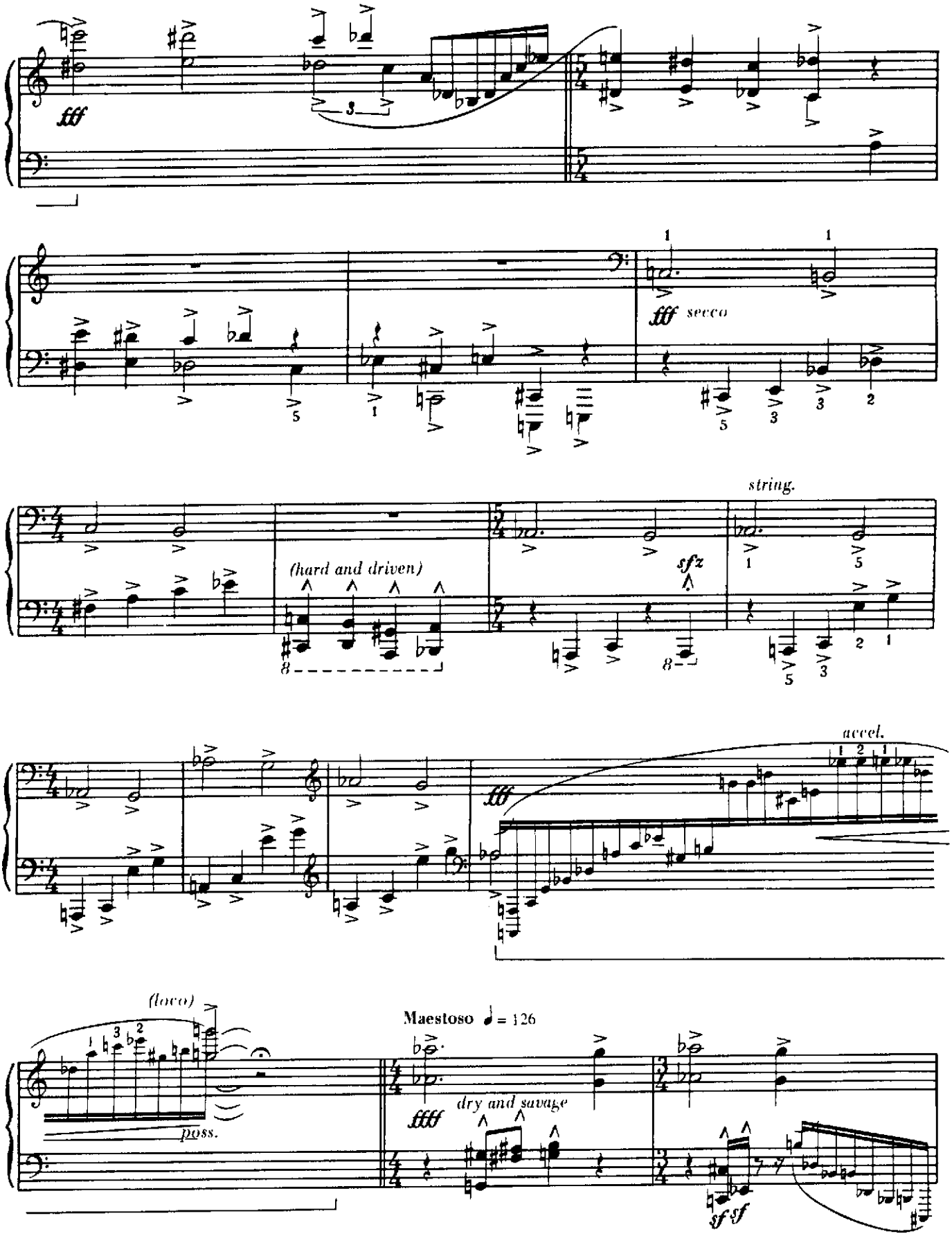

accel.
cresc.
Slower (♩ = 76)
f poss.
lunga
p icy
moving forward

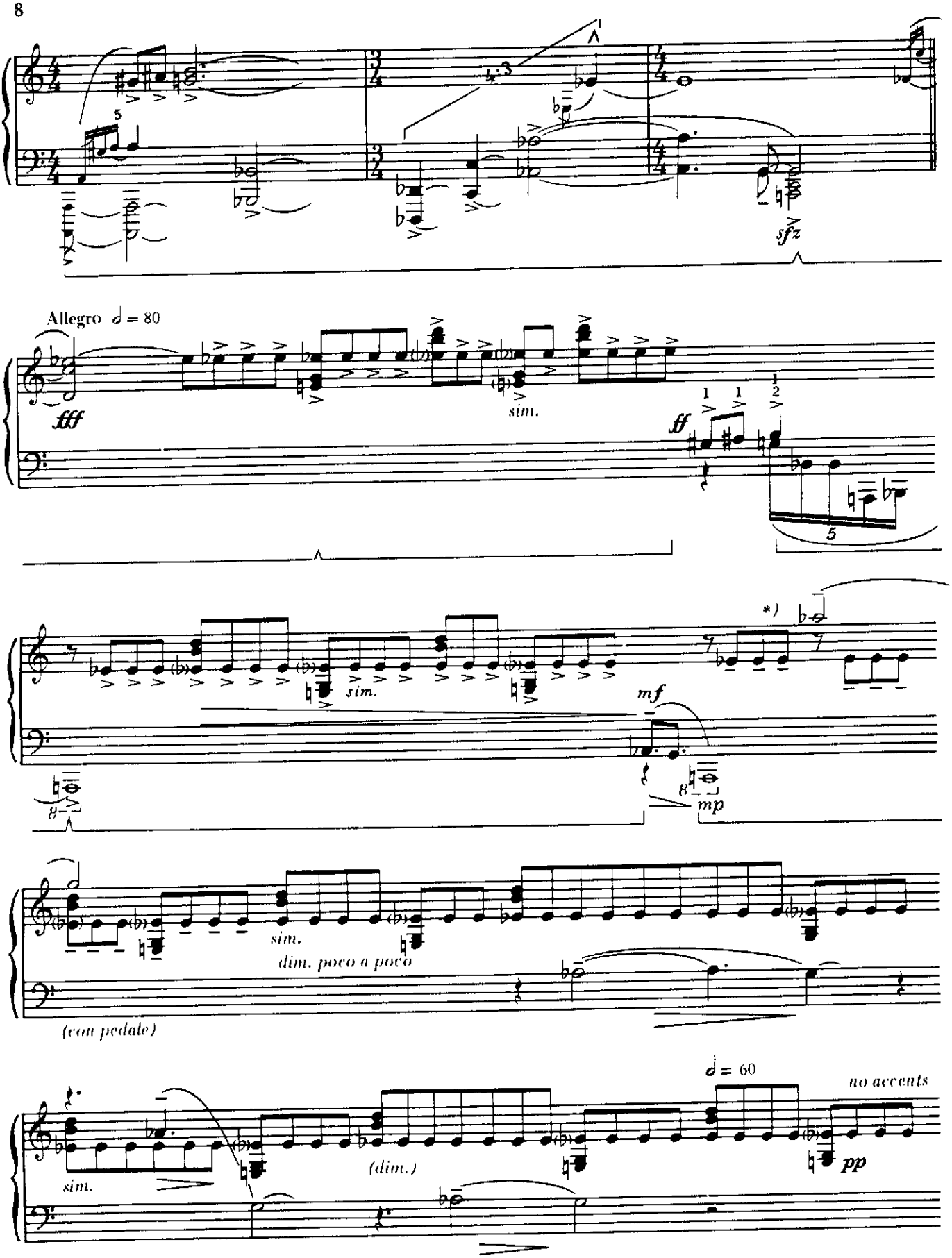

mp
p
ossia
rall.
cresc.
a tempo
f
ten.
secco
accel.
ff
(brittle)



Mark the crossrhythms

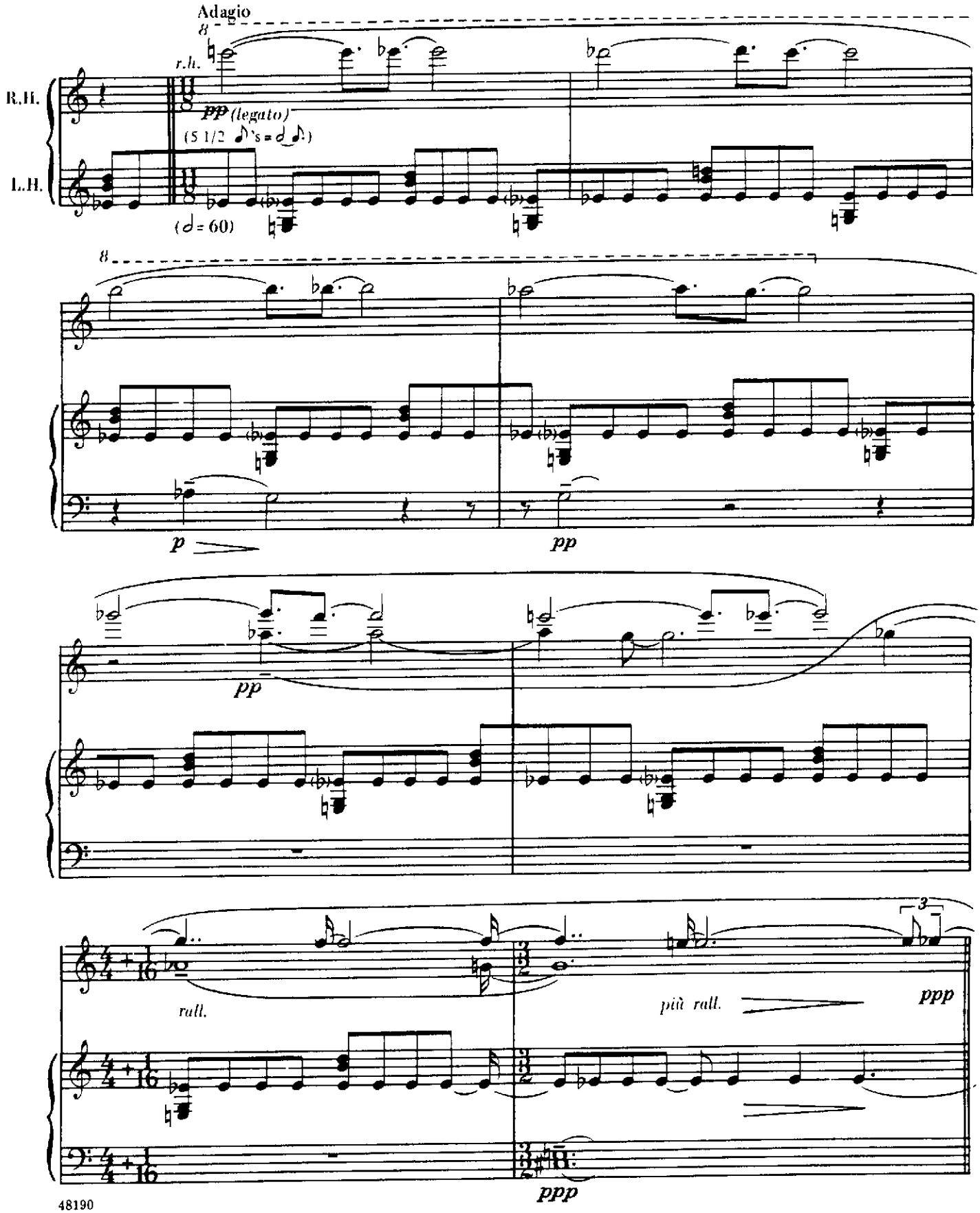

f
mf
(sim.)
f
accel.
a tempo

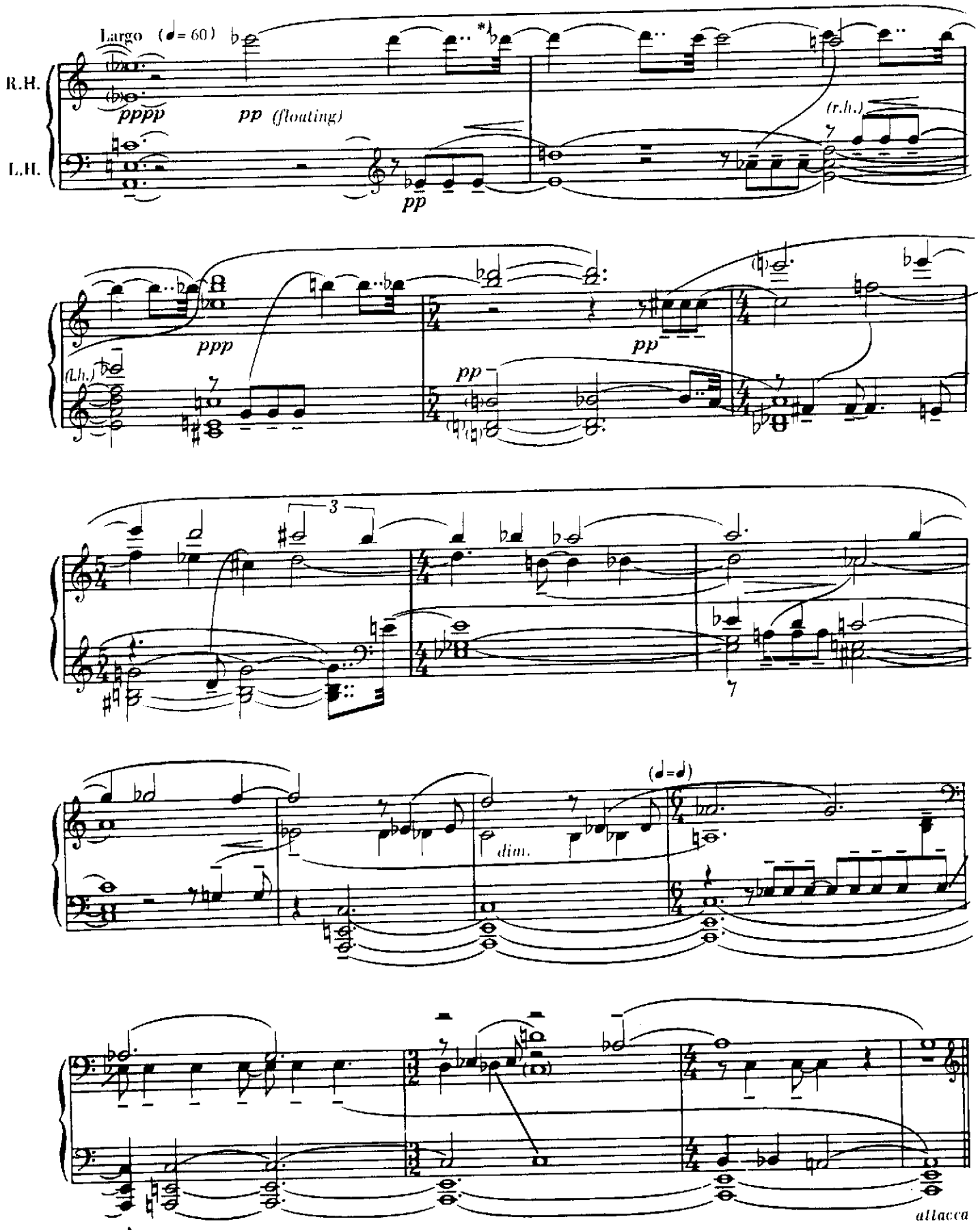

fff
fff secco
string.
(hard and driven)
sfz
accel.
fff
(loco)
poss.
Maestoso ♩ = 126
ffff
dry and savage
sf sf



*) Imperceptibly change to legatissimo (Etude No. 2) and relax to ♩ = 60

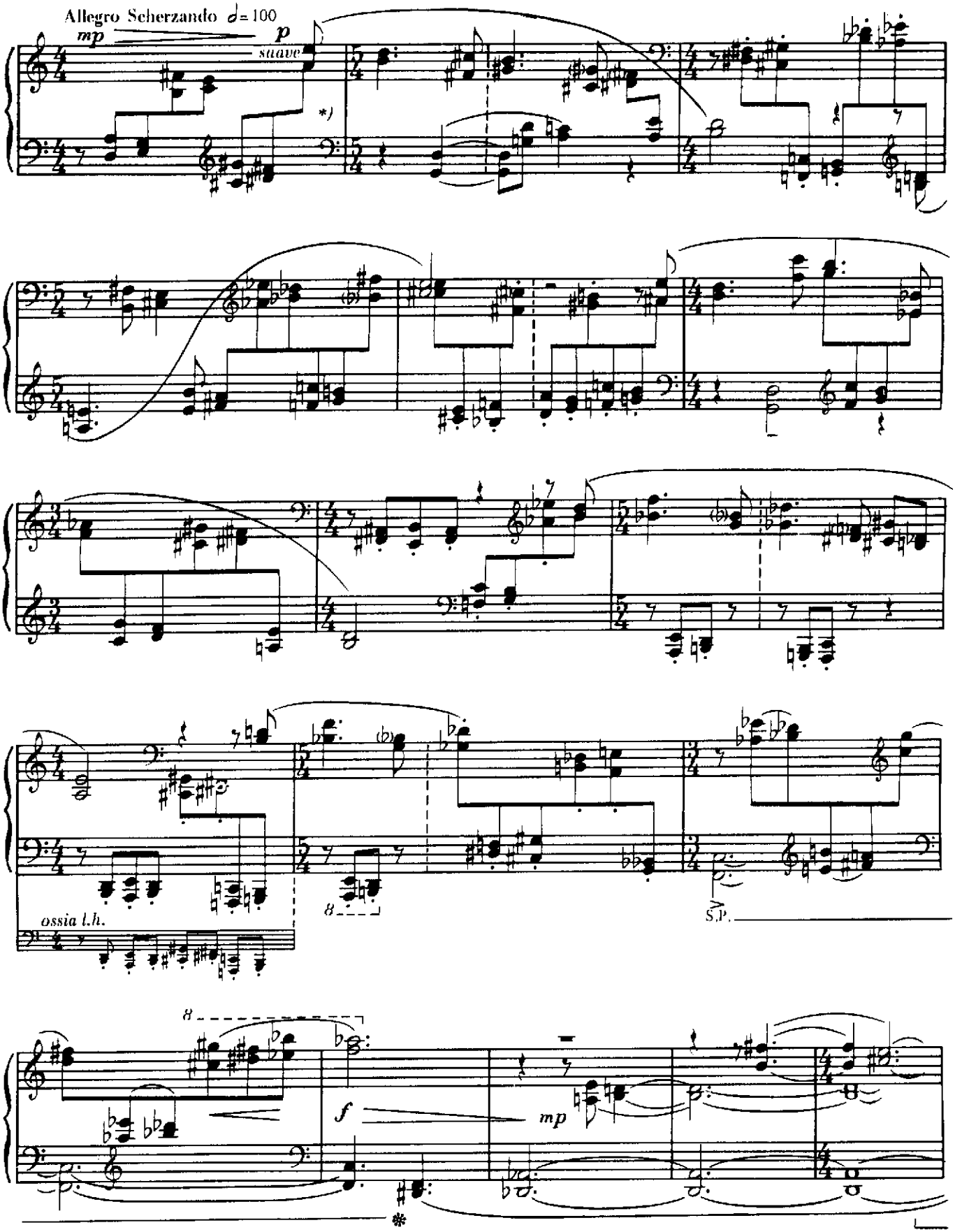
Etude No 2: Legato



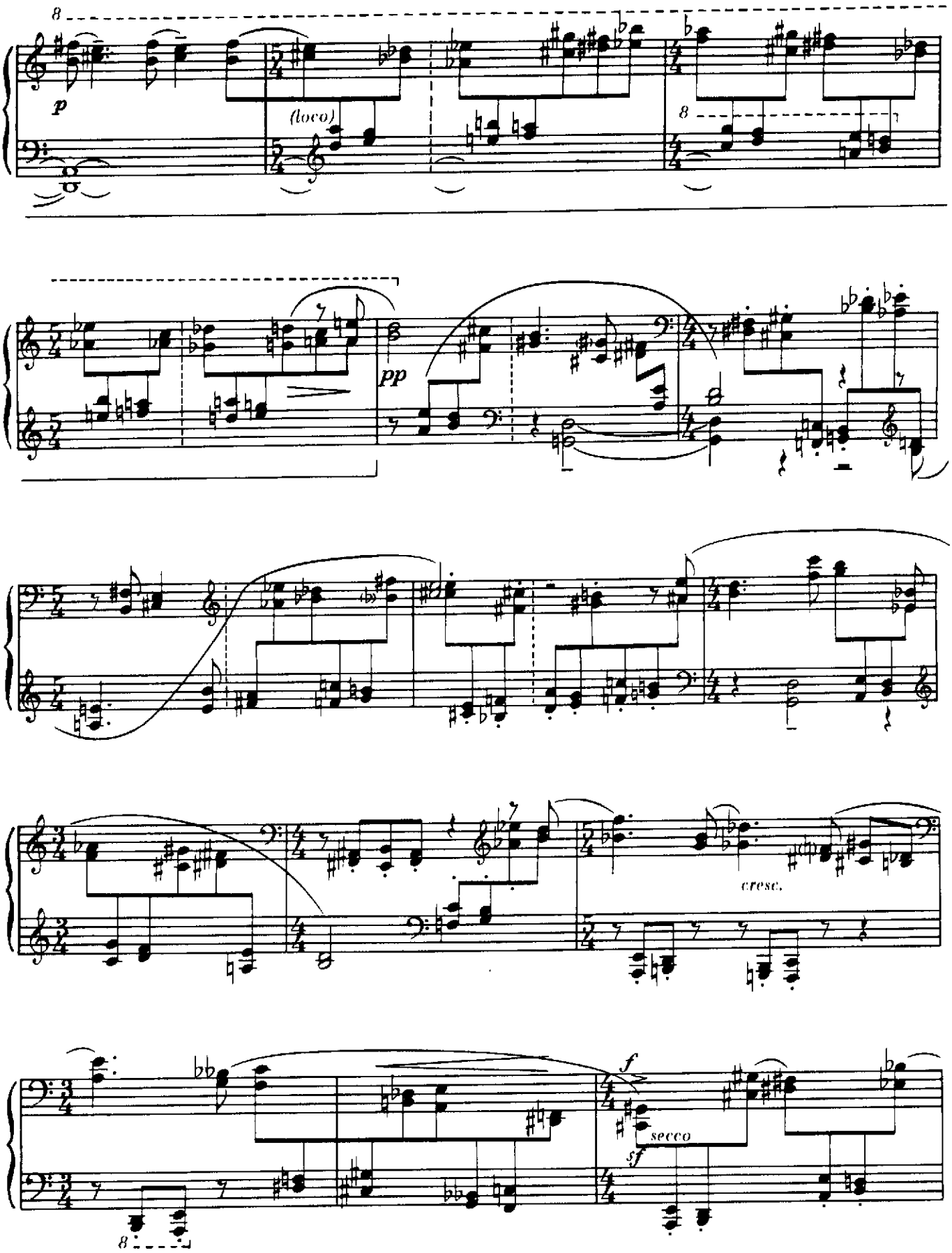


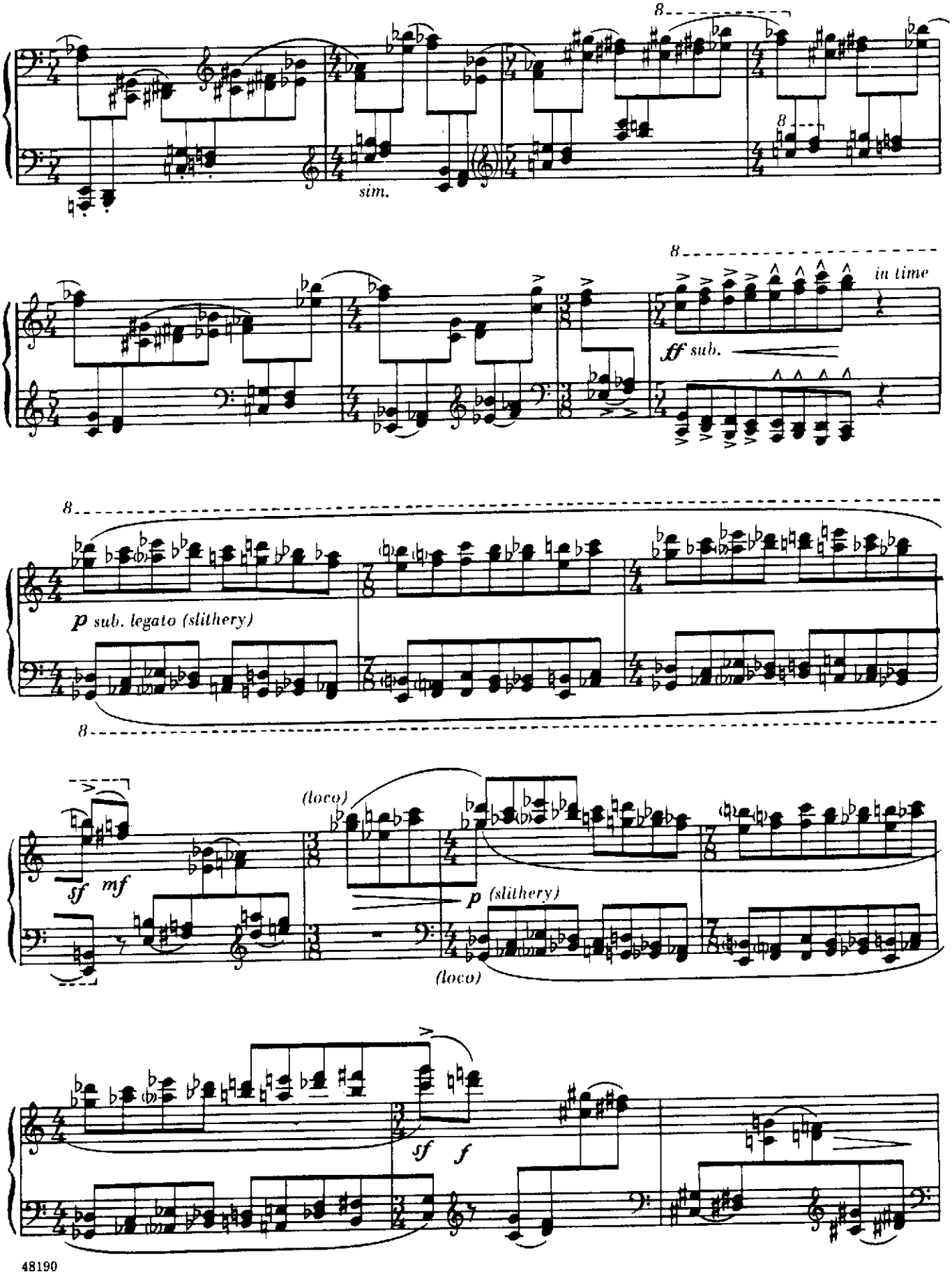
*) All 𝅘𝅥𝅯 's unaccented

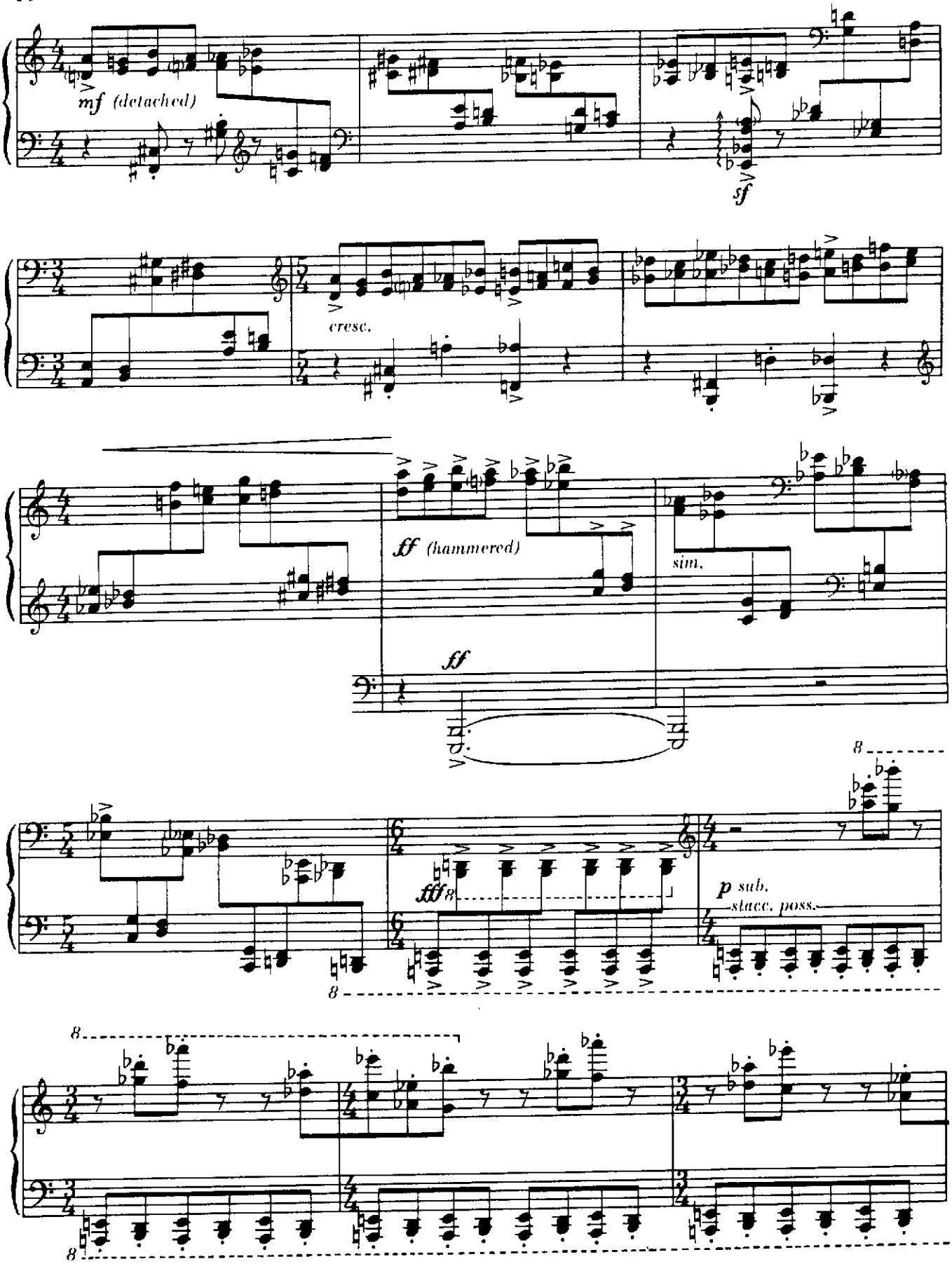
Etude No 3: Fifths to Thirds

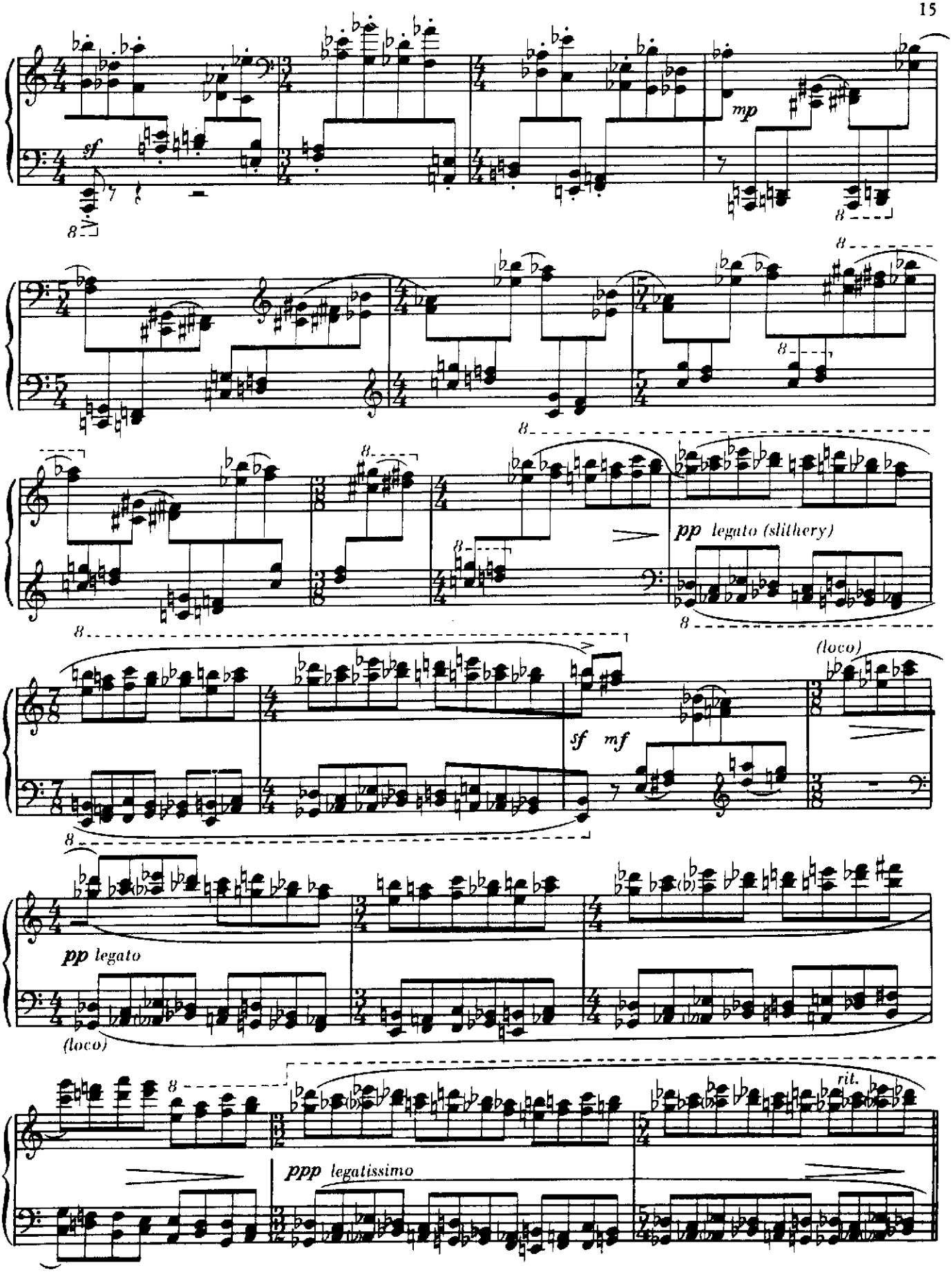


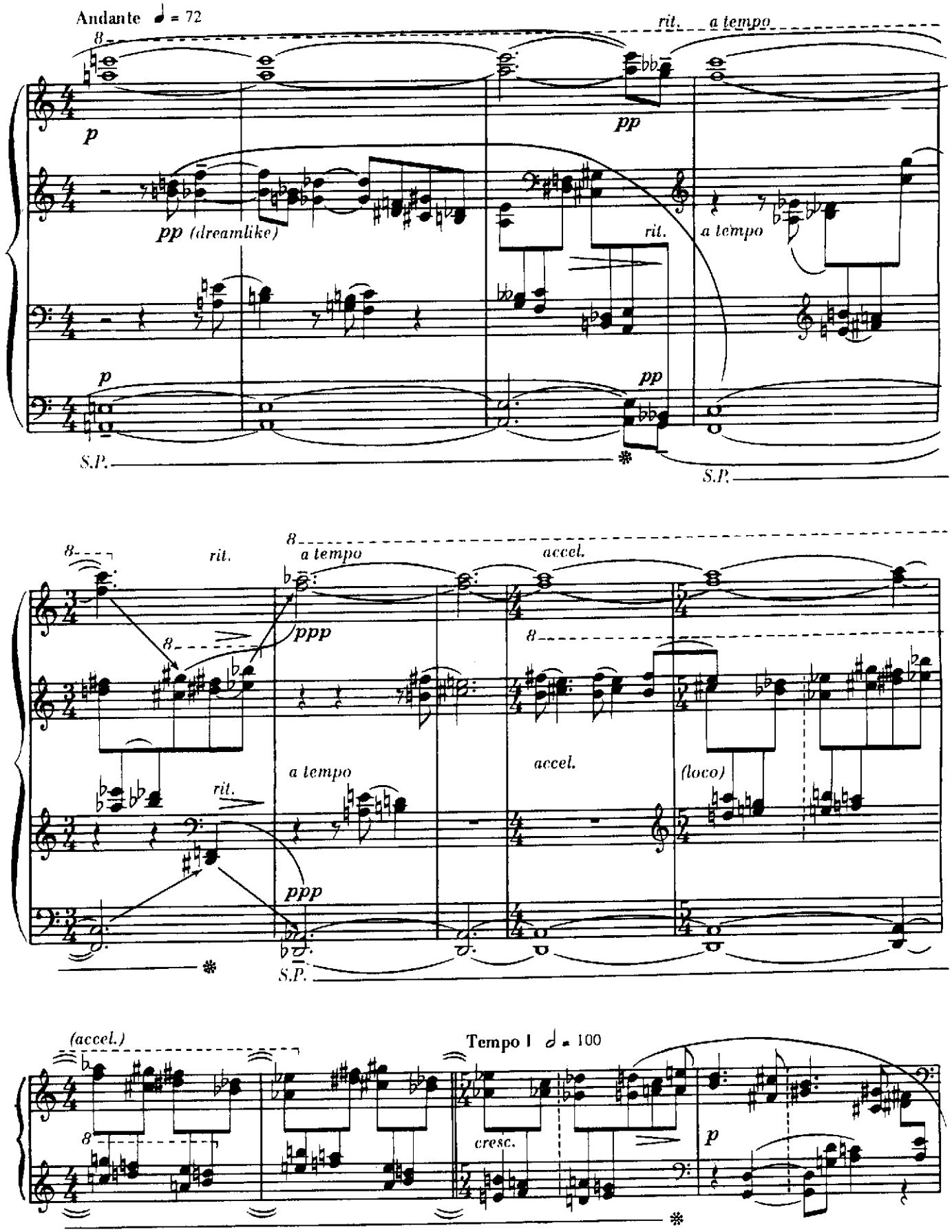
*) Play the phrased melody legato; other notes are detached

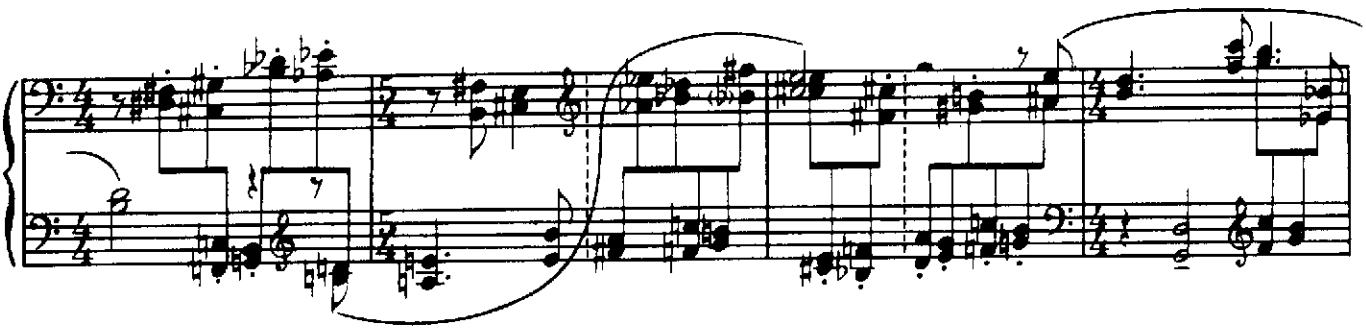

8
p
(loco)
8
pp
cresc.
f
secco
sf
8

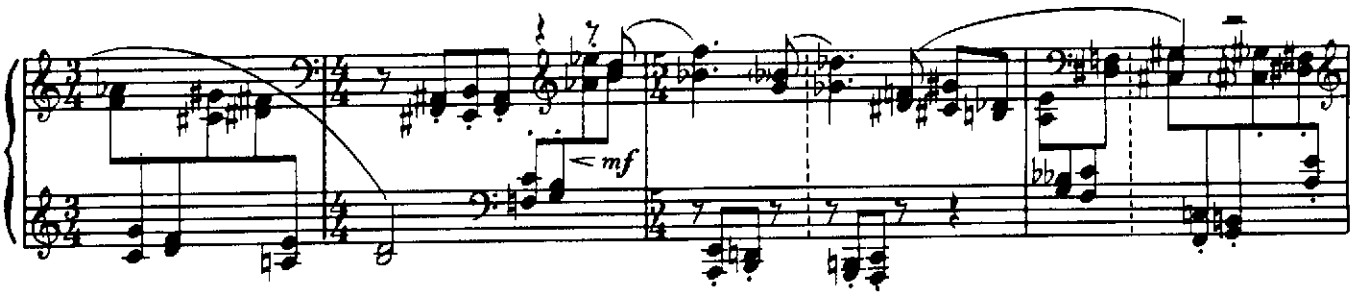

8
sim.
8
in time
ff sub.
8
p sub. legato (slithery)
8
(loco)
sf
mf
p (slithery)
(loco)
sf
f

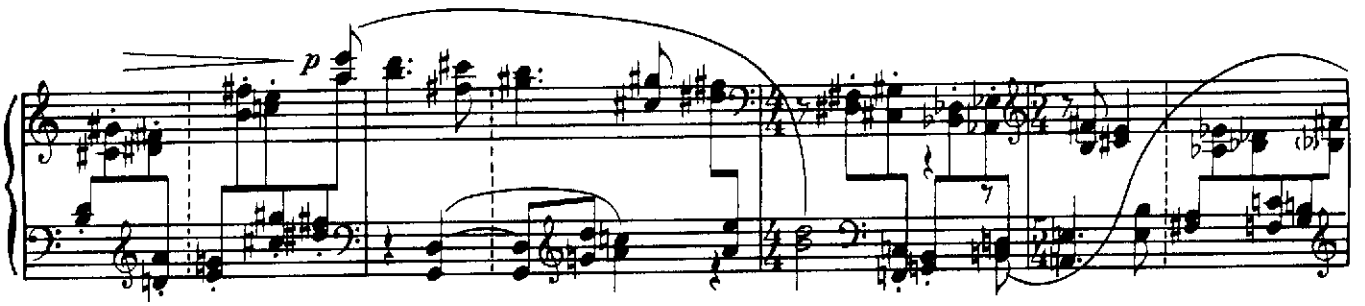

mf (detached)
sf
cresc.
ff (hammered)
sim.
ff
fff
p sub.
stacc. poss.

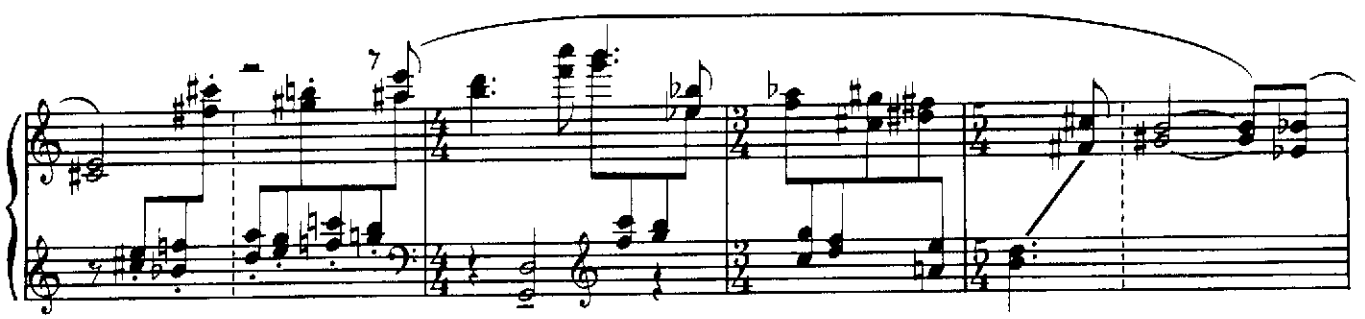

sf
mp
pp legato (slithery)
(loco)
sf mf
pp legato
(loco)
rit.
ppp legatissimo

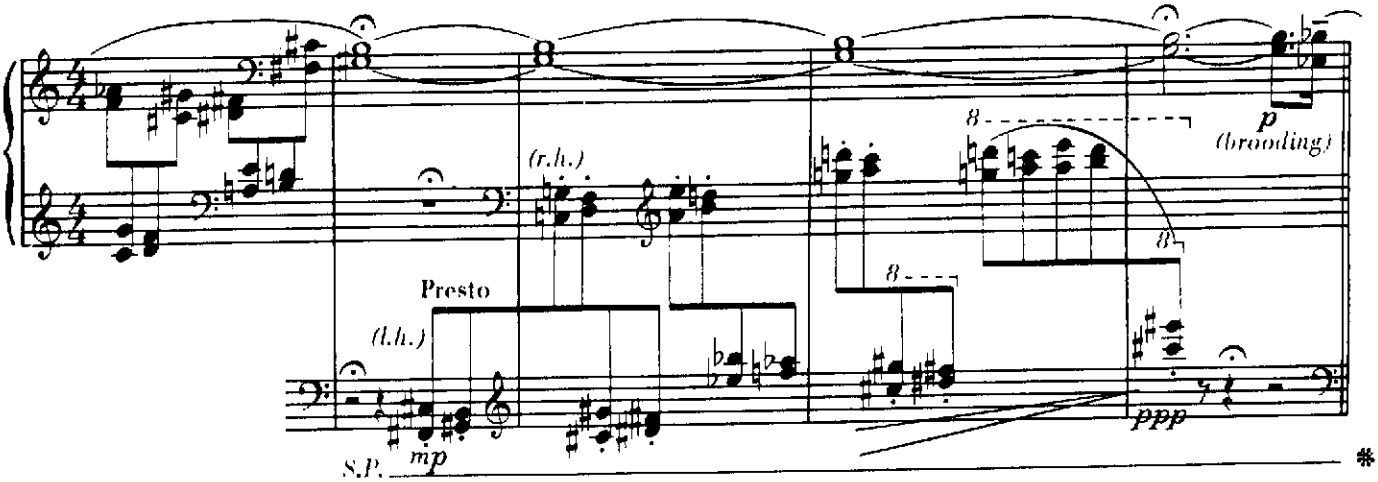

Andante ♩ = 72
rit.
a tempo
pp
p
pp (dreamlike)
rit.
a tempo
S.P.
S.P.
rit.
a tempo
accel.
ppp
a tempo
accel.
(loco)
rit.
ppp
S.P.
(accel.)
Tempo I ♩ = 100
cresc.
p



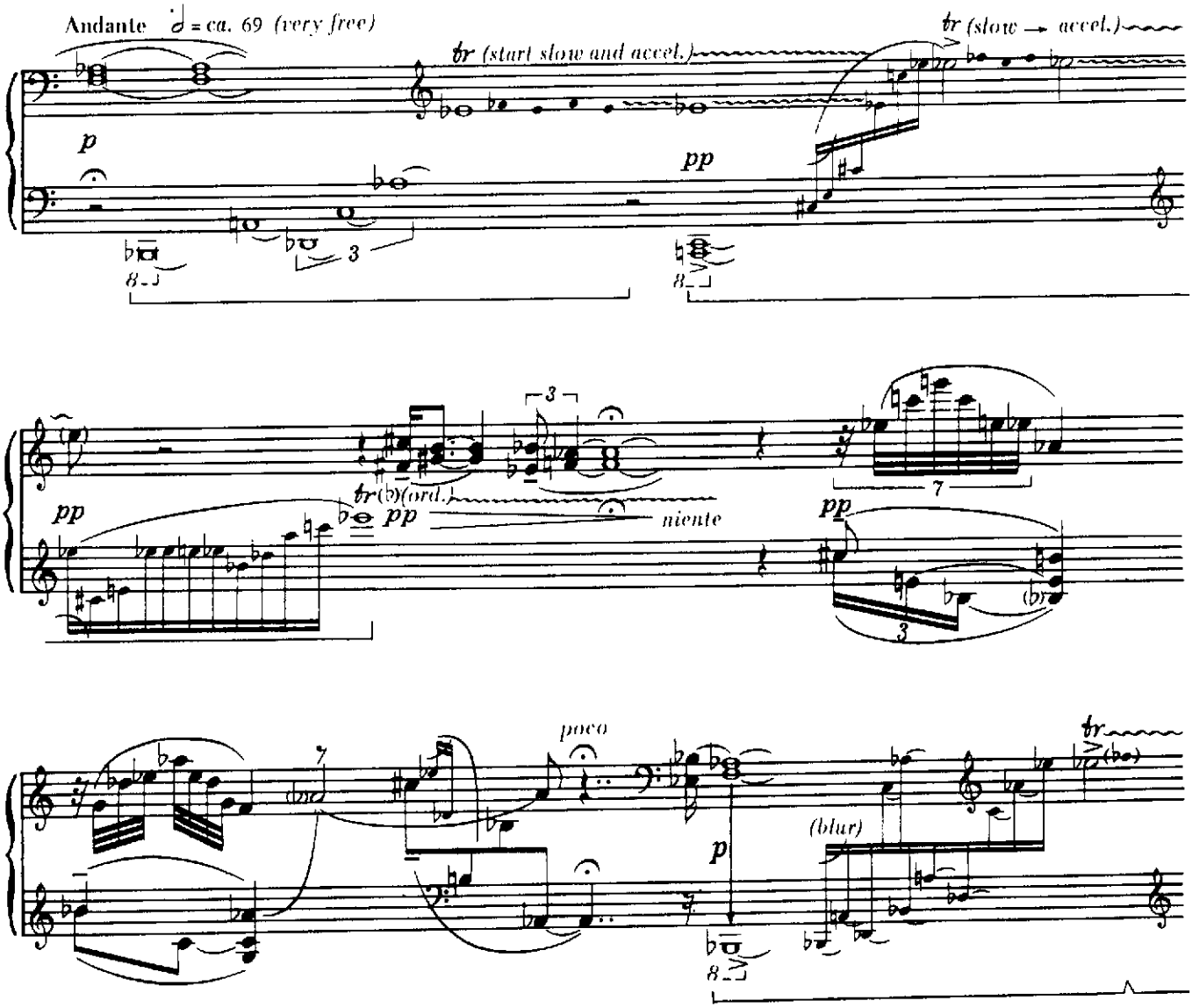

< mf

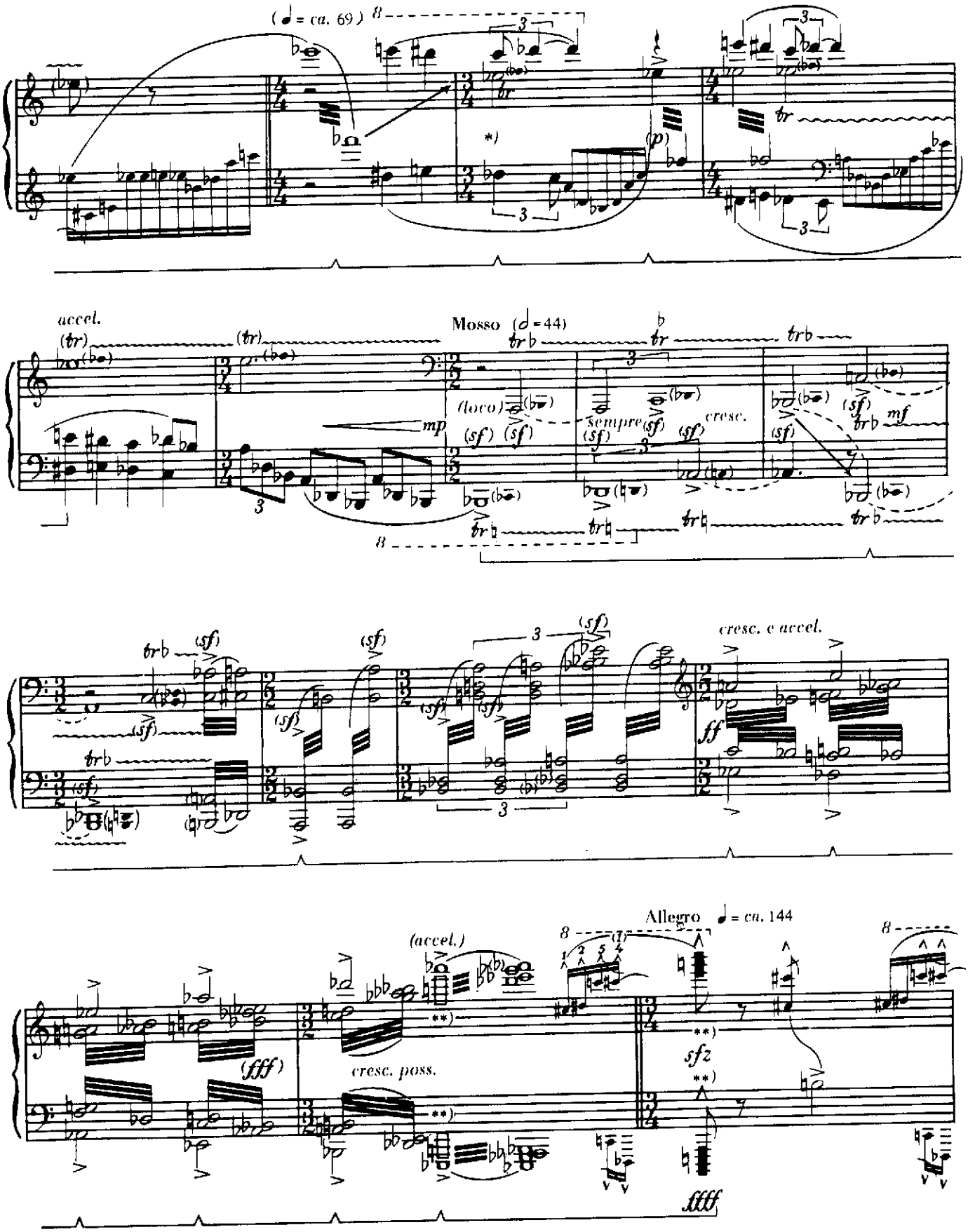

p





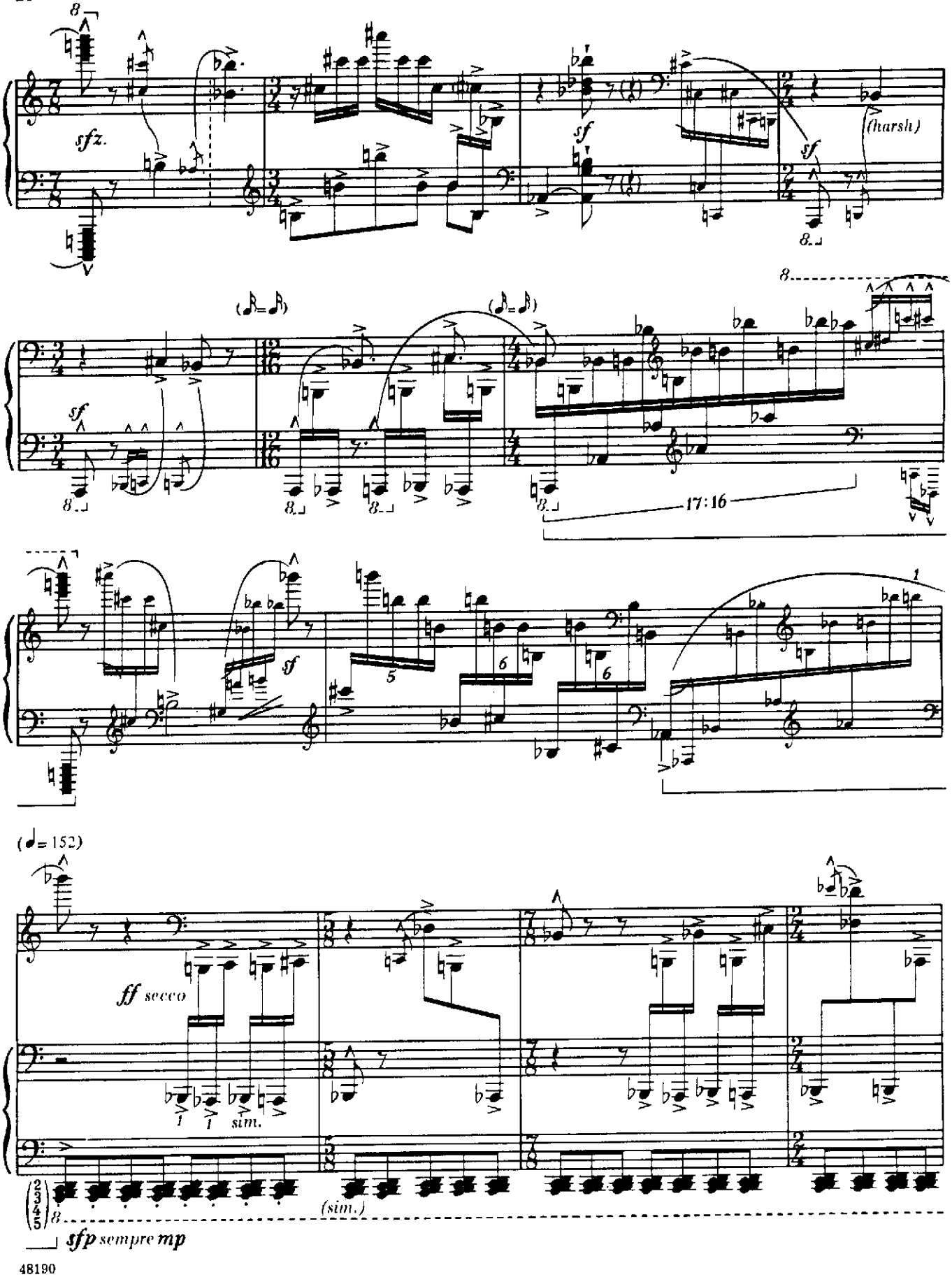
Etude №4: Ornaments

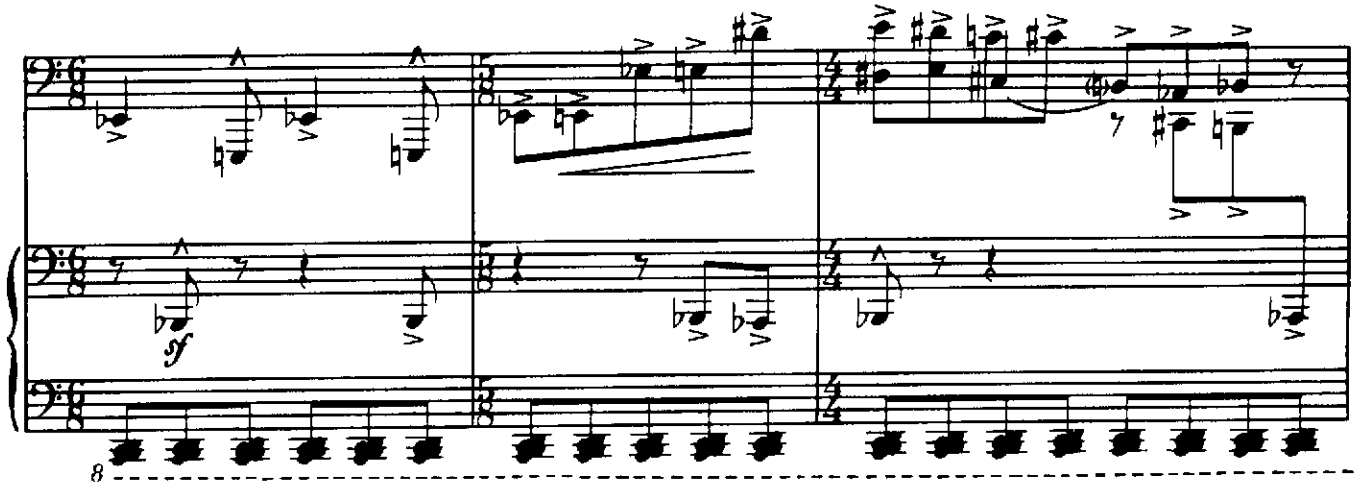


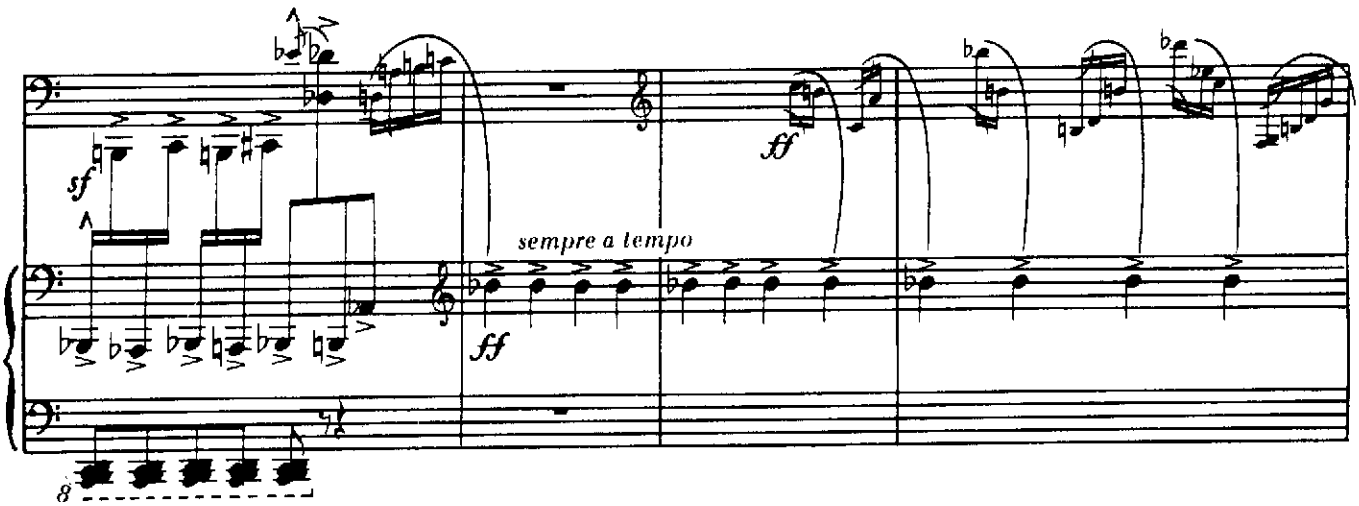


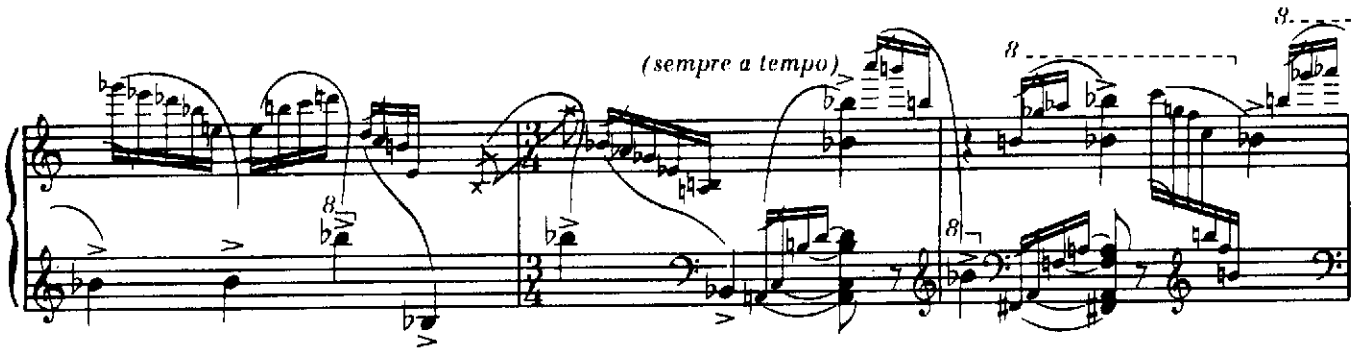
*) The change from tremolo to trill must be inaudible

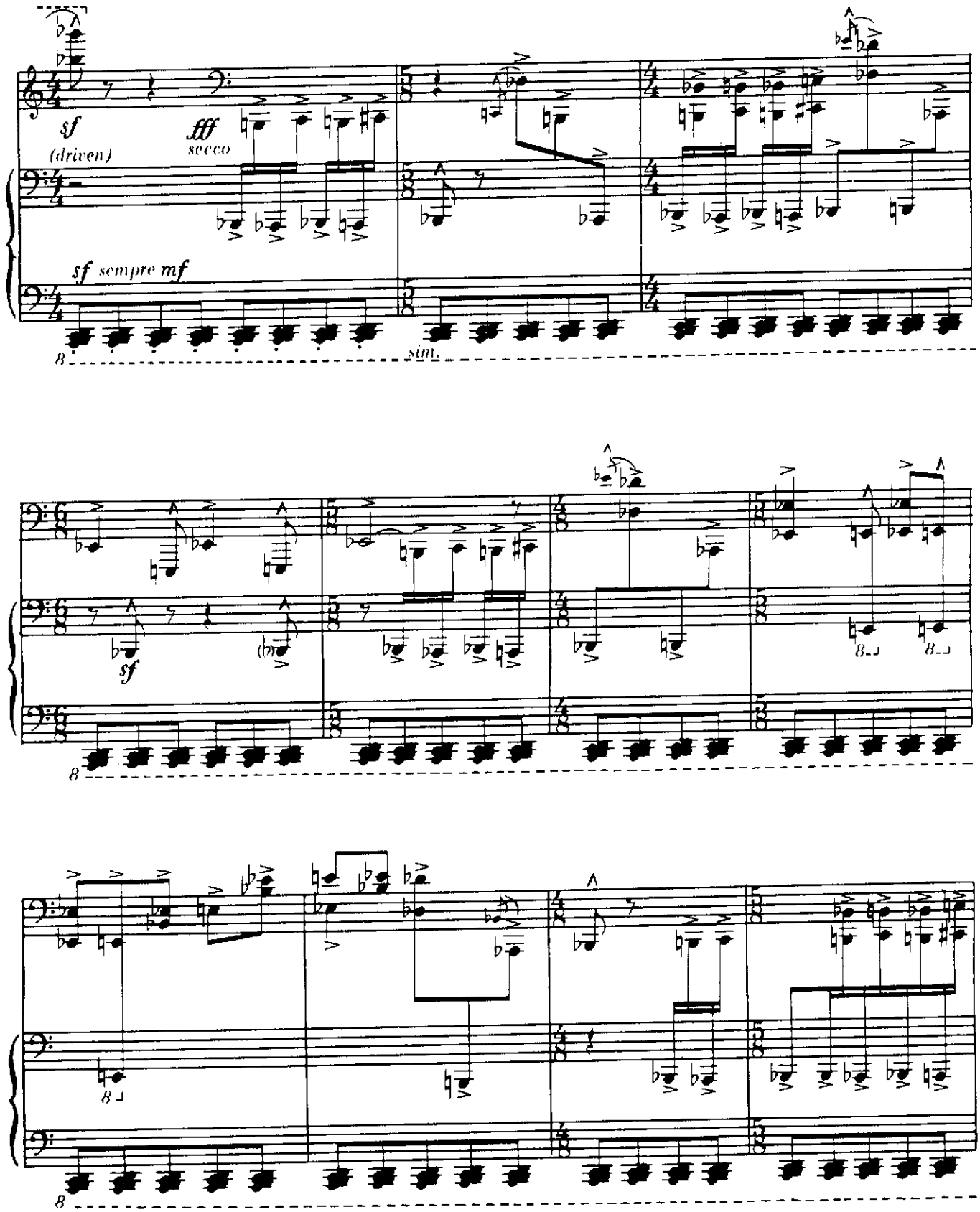
**) Clusters to be played with the heel of the hand on white keys

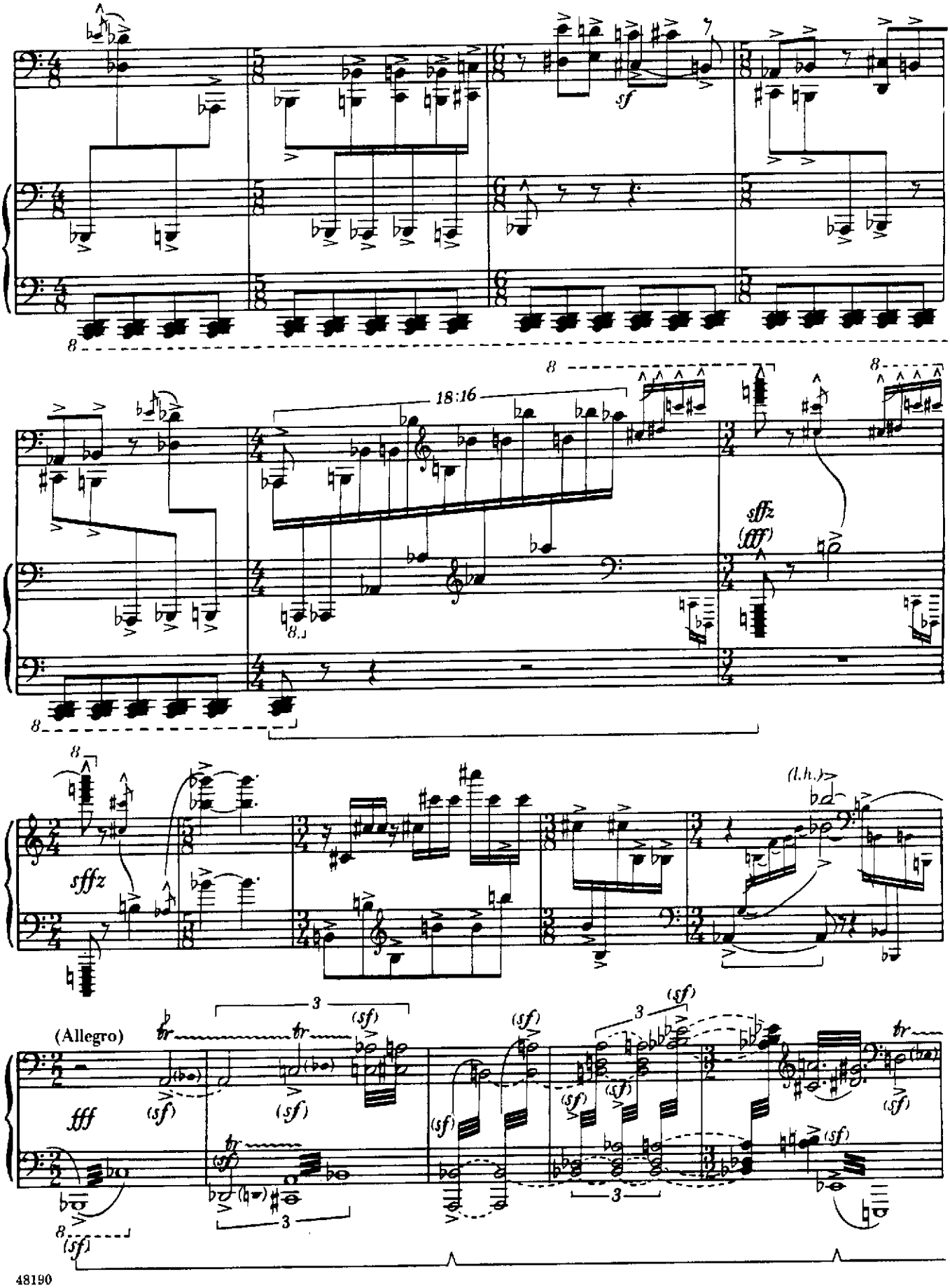

sfz.
sf
(harsh)
17:16
(♩= 152)
ff secco
L. H.
sim.
(sim.)
sfp sempre mp

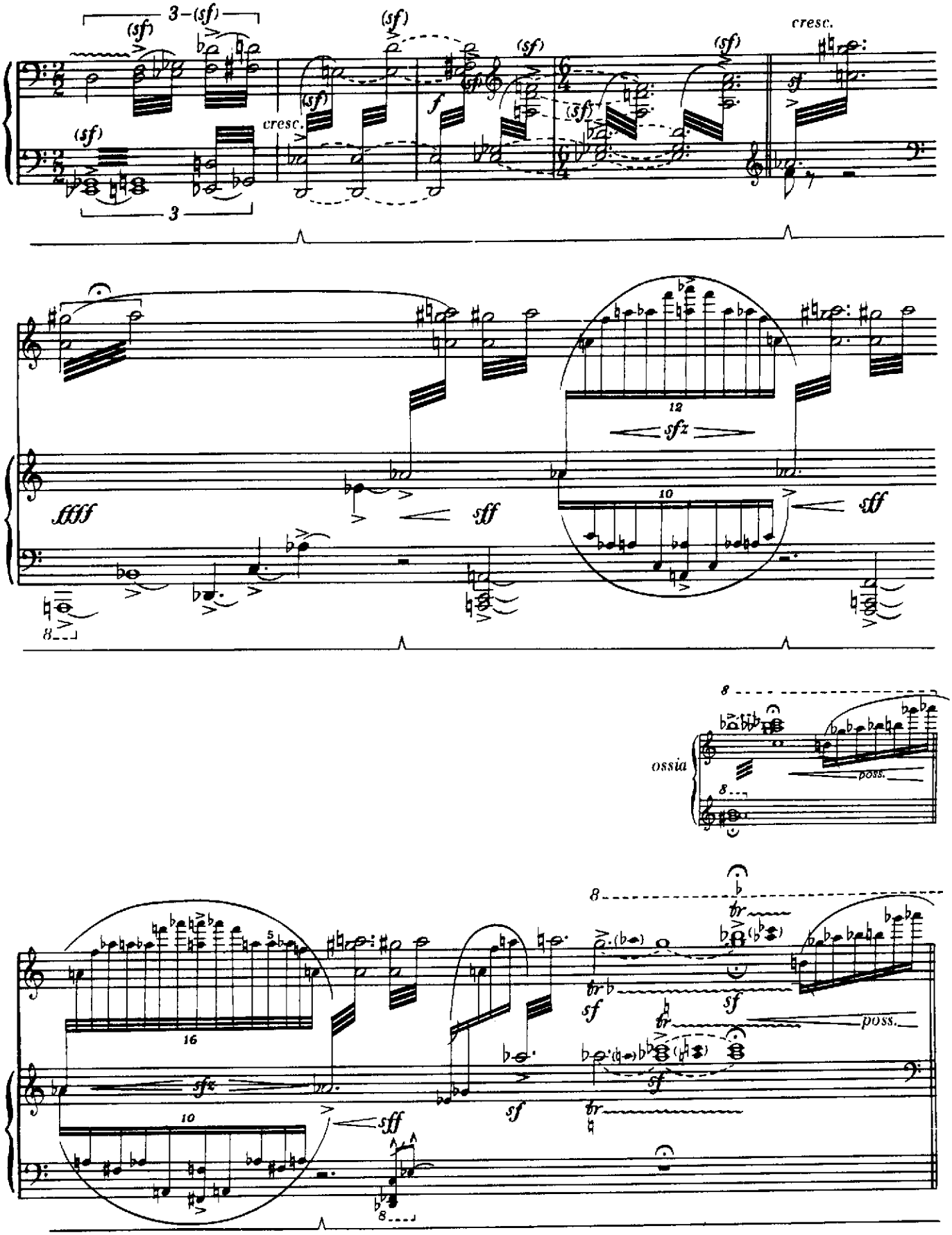

sf
8

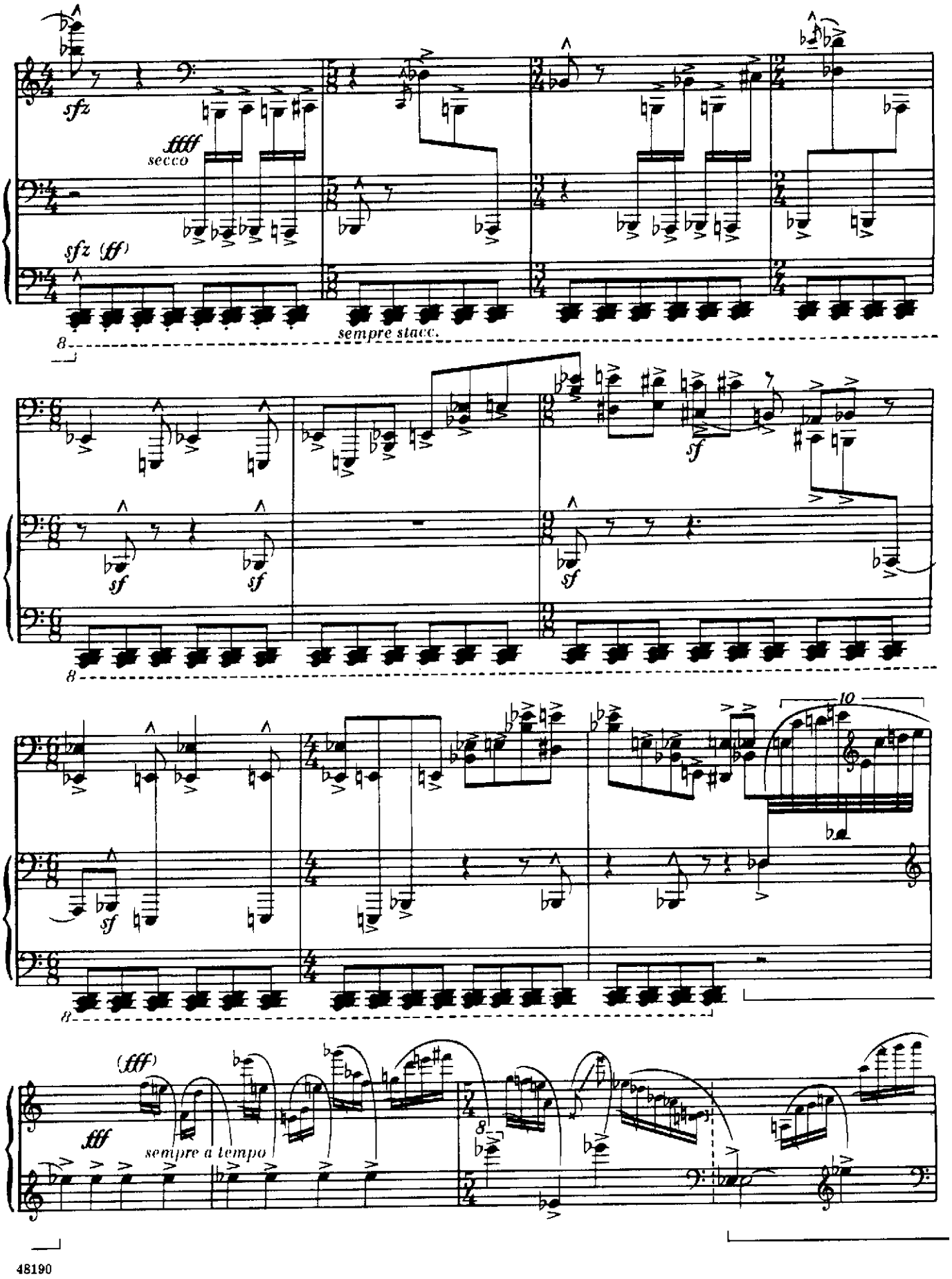

sf
ff
sempre a tempo
ff
8

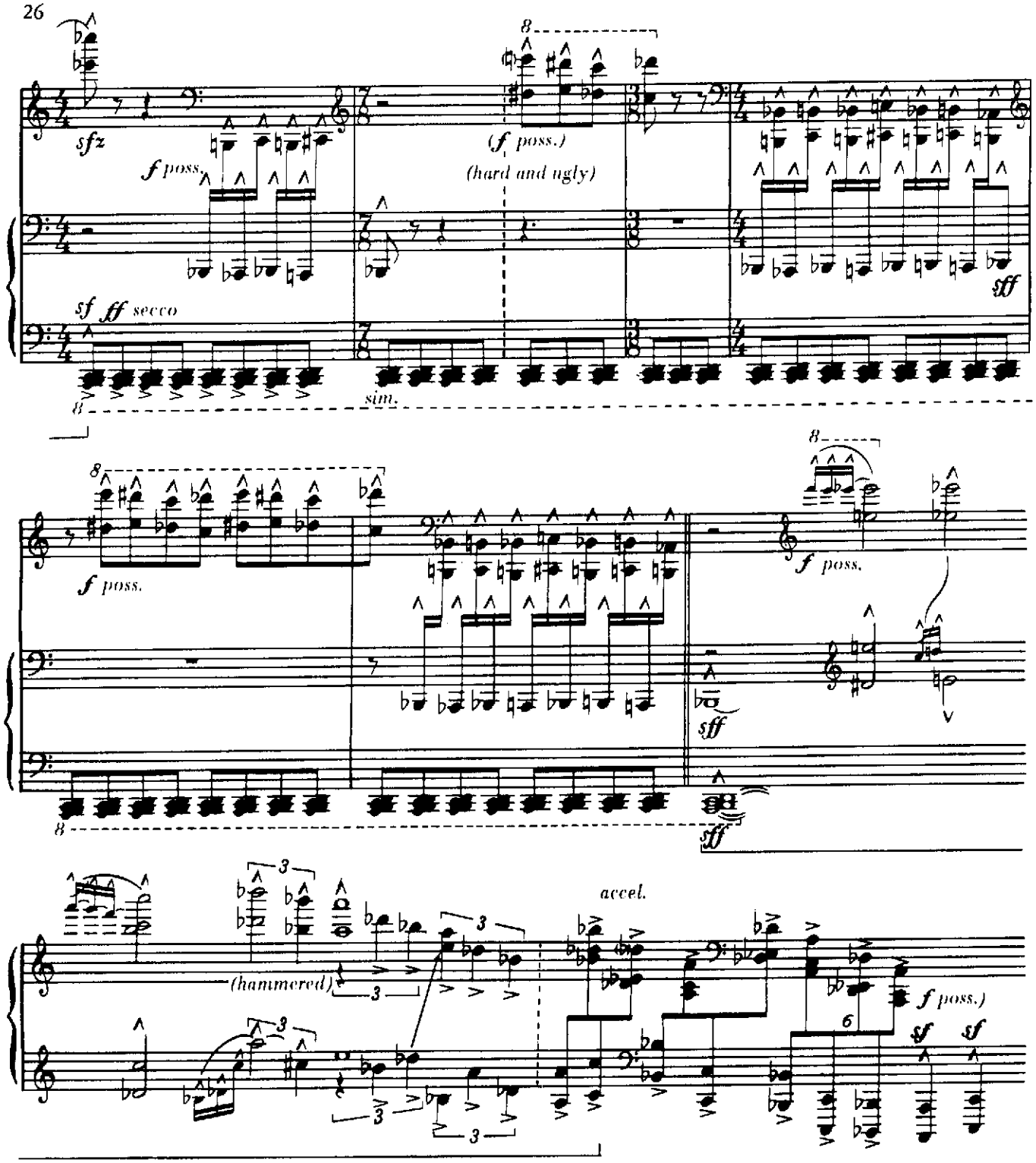

(sempre a tempo)
8
8
8
8


sf
(driven)
fff
secco
sf sempre mf
sim.
sf


sf
18:16
sffz
(fff)
sffz
(l.h.)
(Allegro)
fff
(sf)
3

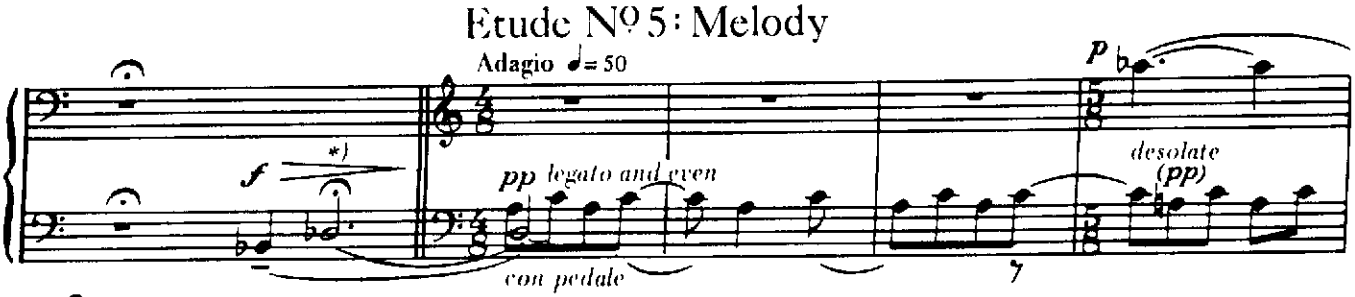

3-(sf)
(sf)
cresc.
f
sf
ffff
sff
sfz
12
10
8
ossia
poss.
16
5
tr
sf
sff


sfz
ffff
secco
sfz (ff)
sempre stacc.
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
10
(fff)
fff
sempre a tempo

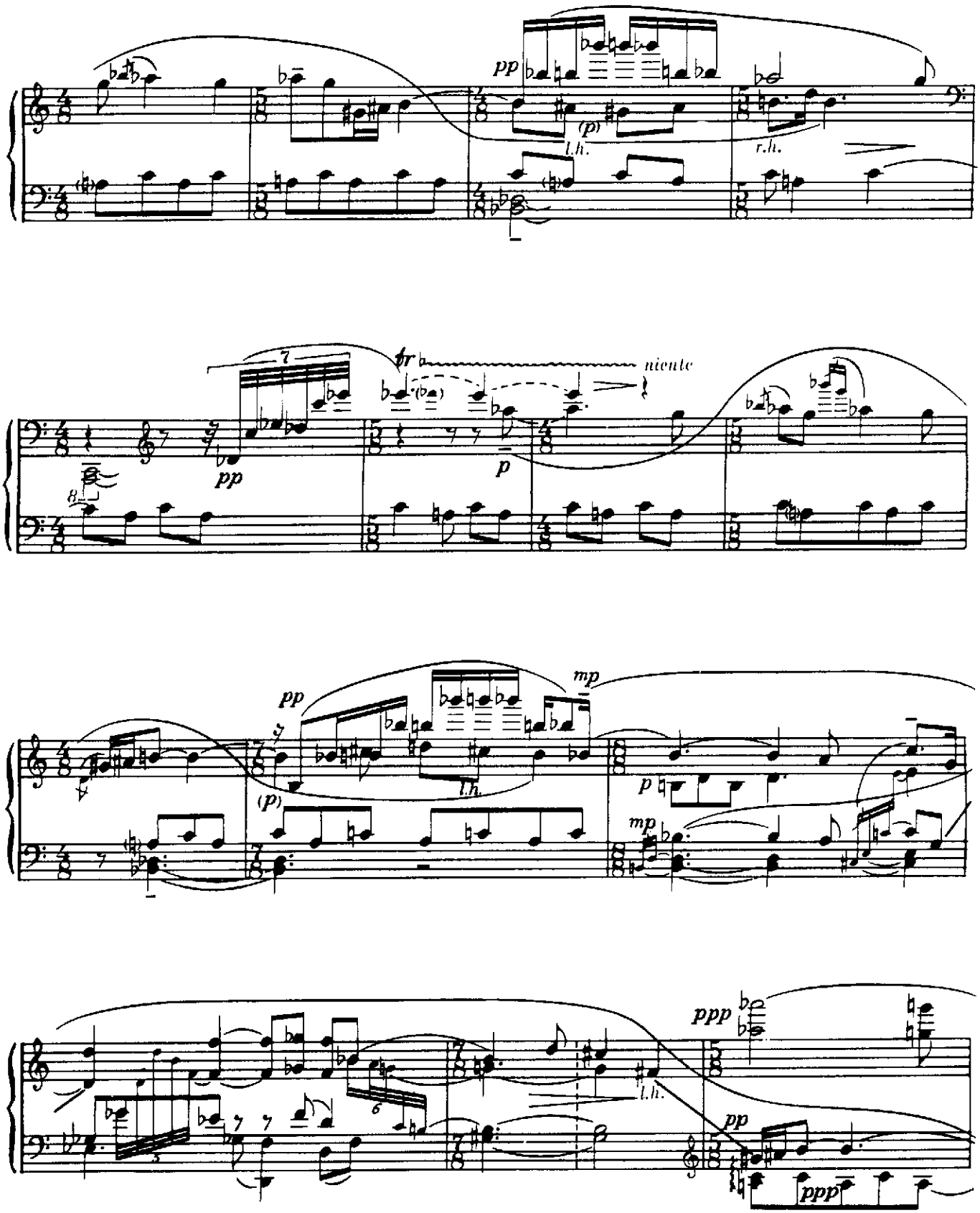


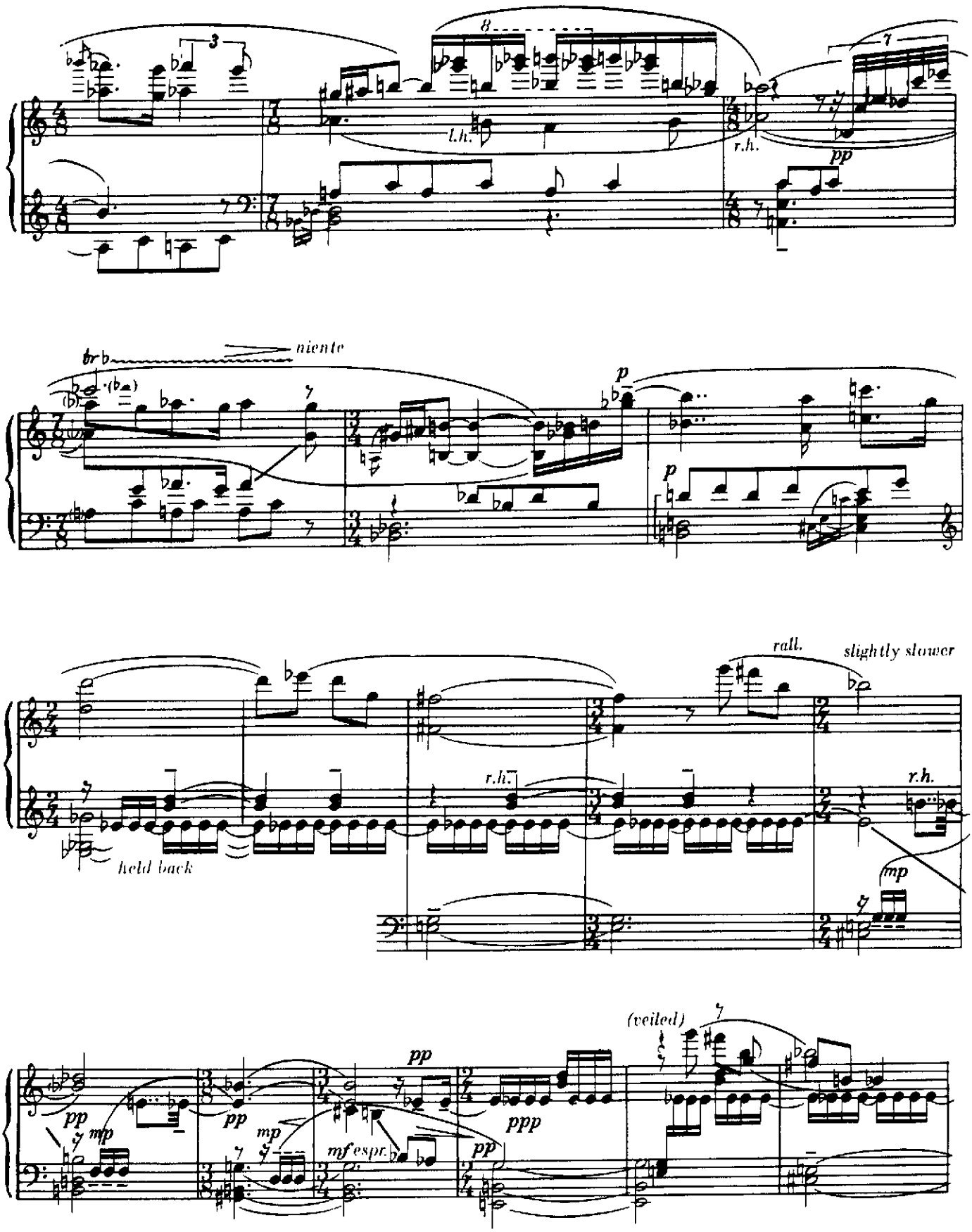
Etude No 5: Melody

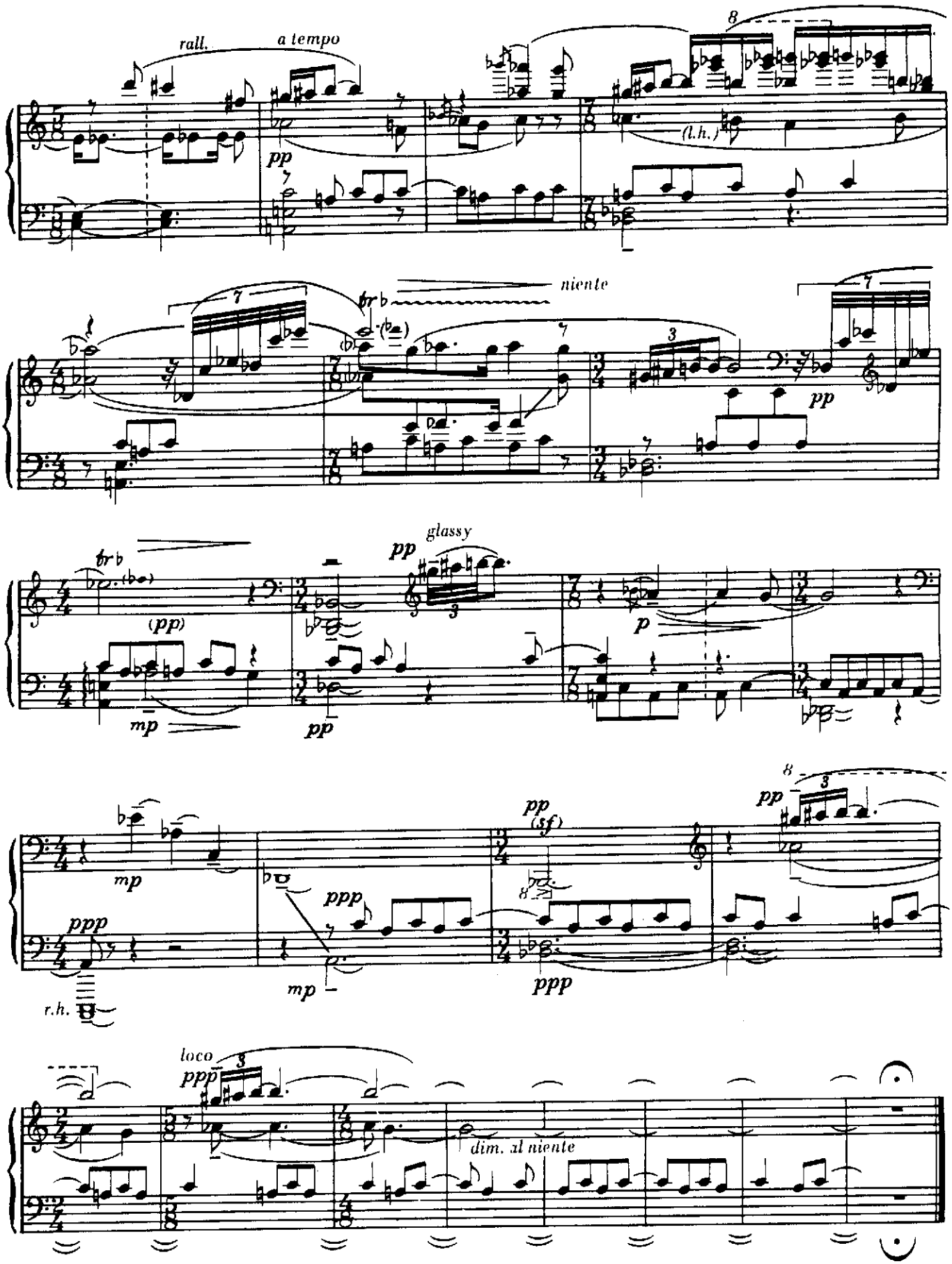
Adagio ♩= 50



*) until Db is *pp*


pp
(p)
l.h.
r.h.
tr
niente
pp
p
pp
mp
(p)
l.h.
p
mp
ppp
l.h.
pp
ppp


l.h.
r.h.
pp
niente
p
p
rall.
slightly slower
r.h.
r.h.
held back
mp
(veiled)
pp
pp
mp
pp
mp
mf espr.
pp
ppp


rall.
a tempo
pp
(l.h.)
niente
pp
glassy
pp
(pp)
mp
pp
p
mp
ppp
r.h.
ppp
mp
pp
(sf)
ppp
pp
loco
ppp
dim. al niente