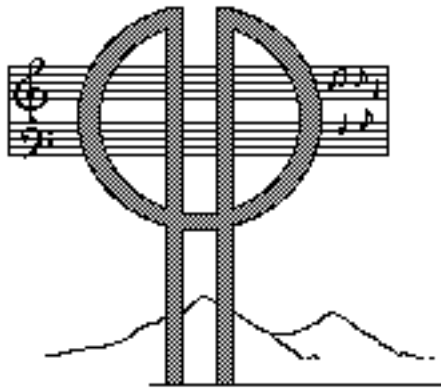
Poems of 1917

for Piano

by

LEO ORNSTEIN



Poon Hill Press

2200 Bear Gulch Rd. Woodside, CA 94062
(650) 851-4258

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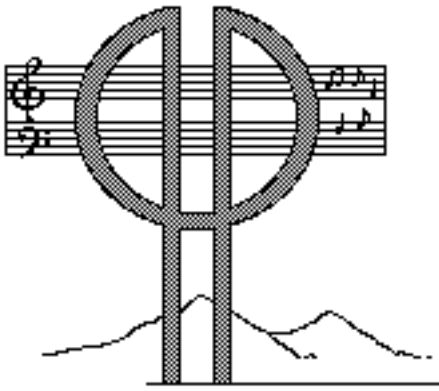

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Prelude to "Poems of 1917"

All the years of my life have been the years of my anguish. I was a child and I wept as the great laughing world spun against my will. And there came upon my little soul swift storms of despair when the world laughed no more but was black, and was a blow against me.

And I grew. I was a boy. My spirit went forth and was hurt. All of me became groping fingers that life crushed, and eager eyes that life blinded. I was a flower, then, bruised back to the hard earth from which I had pushed upward.

But still I grew, until I was a man. nd it was my agony that grew, feeding upon all the world. This was my growing. And this was how I learned to speak. My pain yearned to know itself. My pain needed words and a name. All of my language was the song of my pain. And all of what I saw and heard was pasturage for my despair.

O how wide was the world of my pain! and how innumerable were the ways of my sorrow! For sorrow had come. I had spread upward. My knowing was a blossom of warm petals above a wracked black field. I had come to understand. I had come to sorrow.

The world was full of men. the world was a dread pent prison. All about were the walls of Mystery—the gay hard walls that could not be broken down. The walls of the Sky swung and cajoled and laughed. The walls of Birth were a grey distant cloud welling with the laughter of remembrance. The walls of Death were near, and were a dancing maze of many colors. And when I looked at them they drew away and were deep black, and laughed. But all the walls were high beyond my thoughts and beyond my dreams; and within were men and women - all the men and women who had ever been and who should ever be. And I was one of them.

I was one of them; but I knew why the walls laughed. Understanding had come upon me like burgeoning on the bleak wood of a tree in this sad Spring. The years of my life had been years of anguish. Now I was a man and saw, a man and understood. I knew that the years of my life had turned to years of sorrow.

The men and women were angry together, and rended one another. They were prisoners. They were thrust in the prison of life. Mystery closed them together, closed them more close than the blood of a mother and her child that lives in her womb. But they were enemies. They hated one another. And the walls laughed at them.

They knew not whence they were, nor whither they were going. They were enthralled and agonized with this vast, close Mystery that held them. One skein of suffering and travail bound them together. Yet they were not friends; they would not be lovers. They maimed and cheated and slew. And the walls of the Heavens and the walls of Birth and the walls of Death laughed long at them.

What did they know but each other? What did they have but each other? What could they have and know, save one thing - love? Yet they poisoned; they wove bonds of pain; they made prisons for their hearts. The Mystery of life was not anguish enough for them; the bonds of Birth and of Death were not helplessness enough for them; the blind ecstasy of the world that circled them and made them quivering flesh of its despair was not despair enough for them. And the walls of their prison laughed.

I stood high upon the agony of the living and looked upon men, upon the pity of men who had love and who cast love away. This year, I was a man and looked about me. And I saw my brothers and my sisters, they who in all the common blackness of their lot had only love, and who hated each other. And the laughter of our Prison was clear to me. So the years of all my life shall be years of my sorrow.

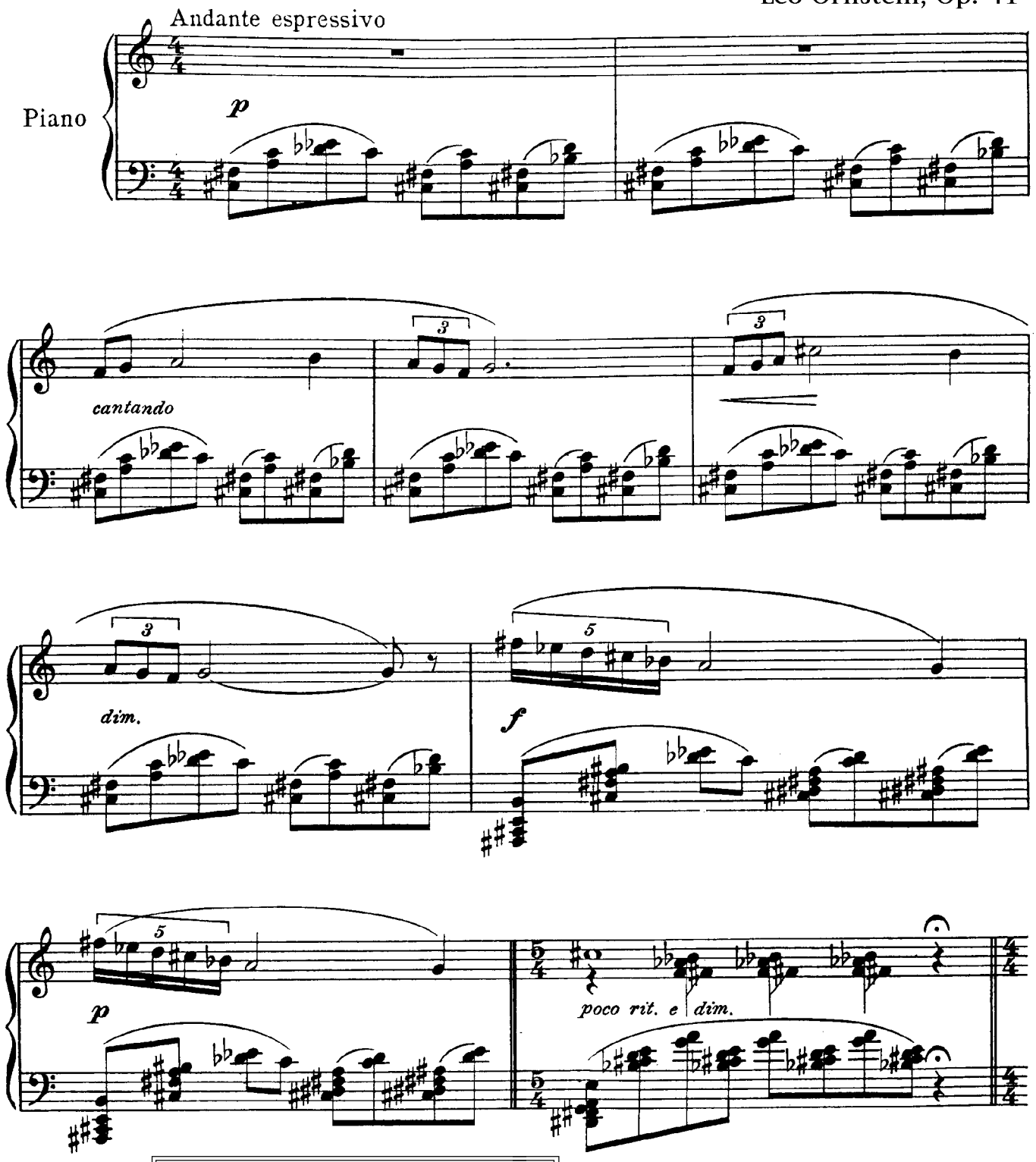
Waldo Frank

Dedicated to Leopold Godowsky

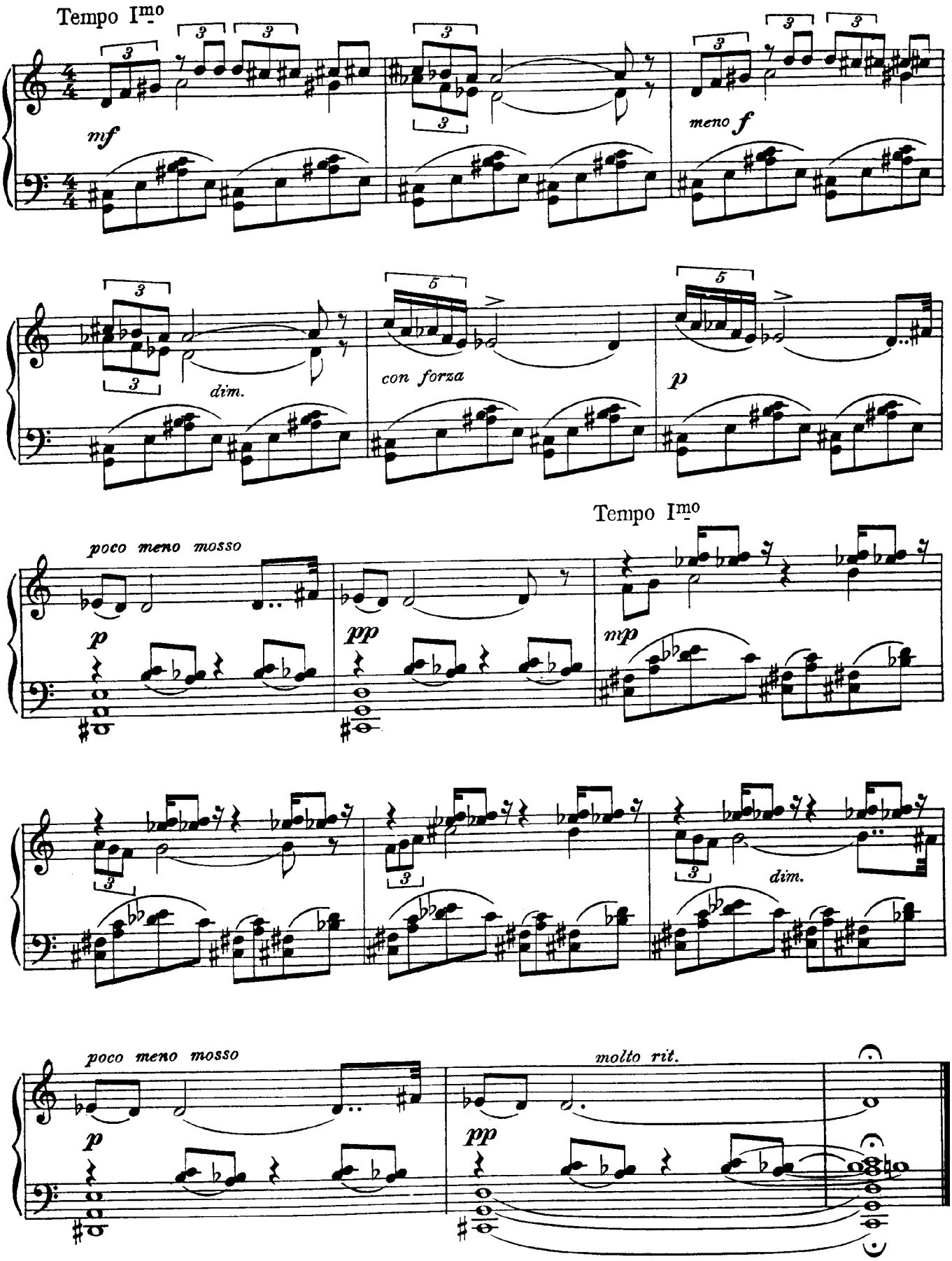
Poems of 1917

I.

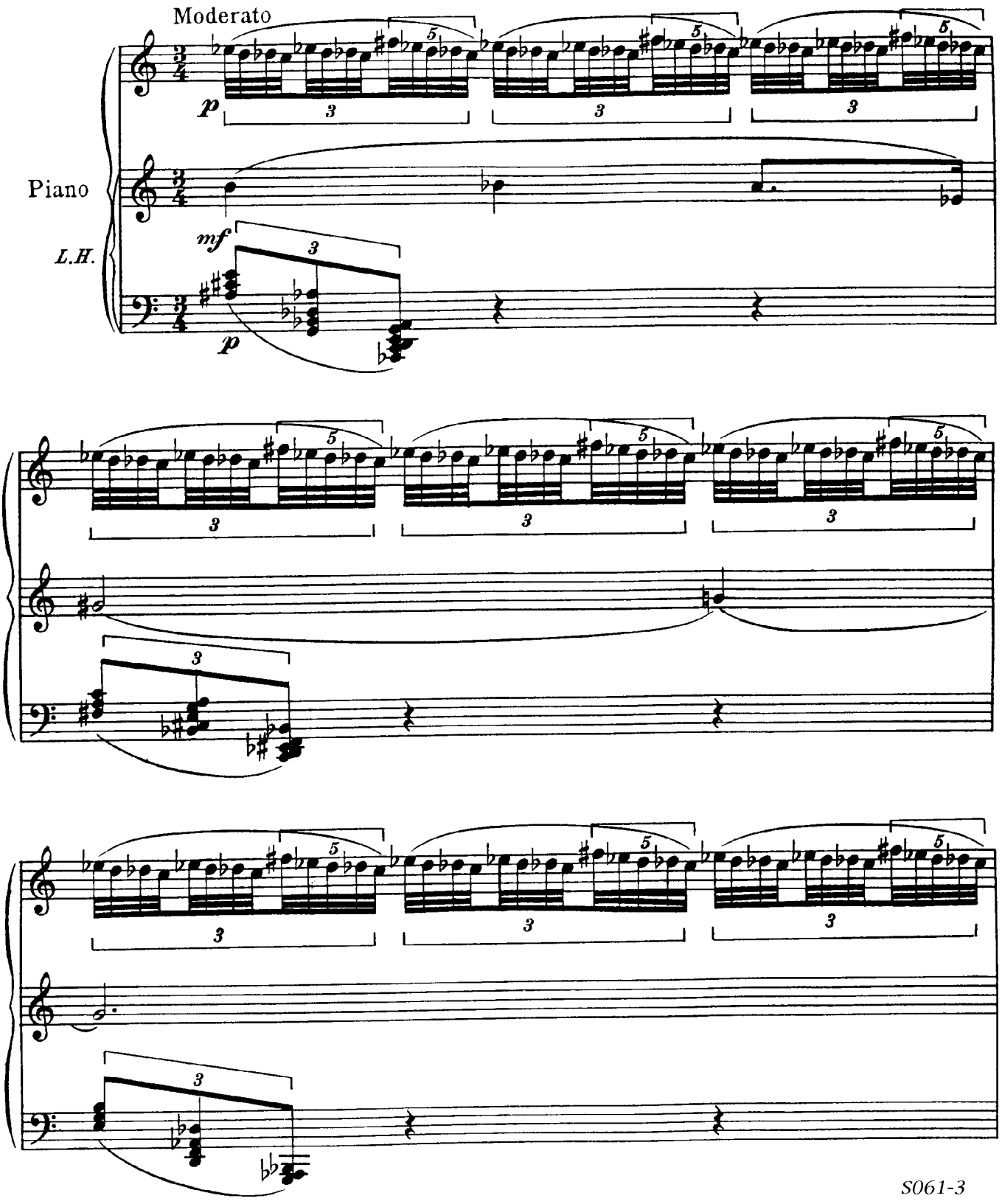
Leo Ornstein, Op. 41

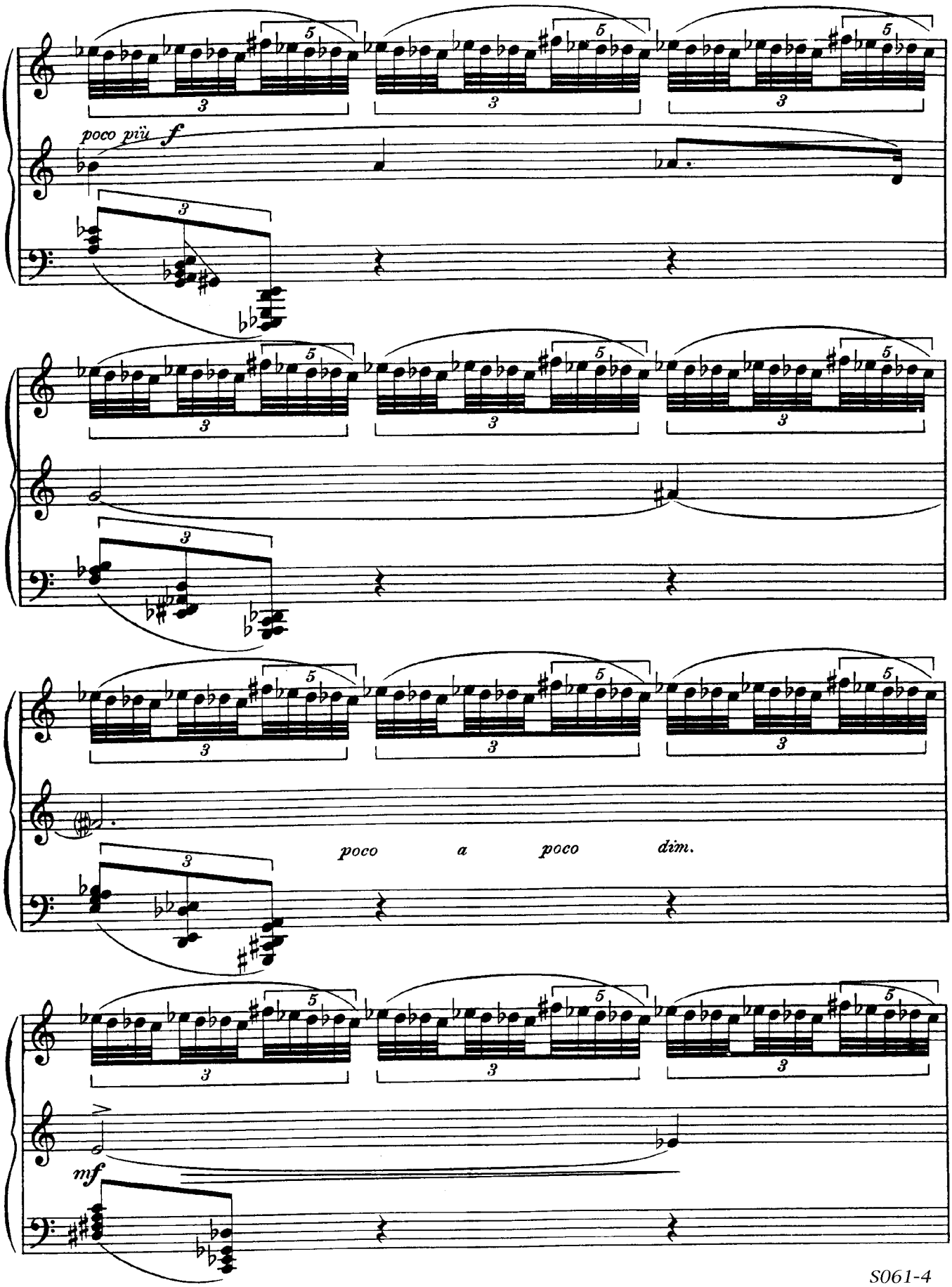


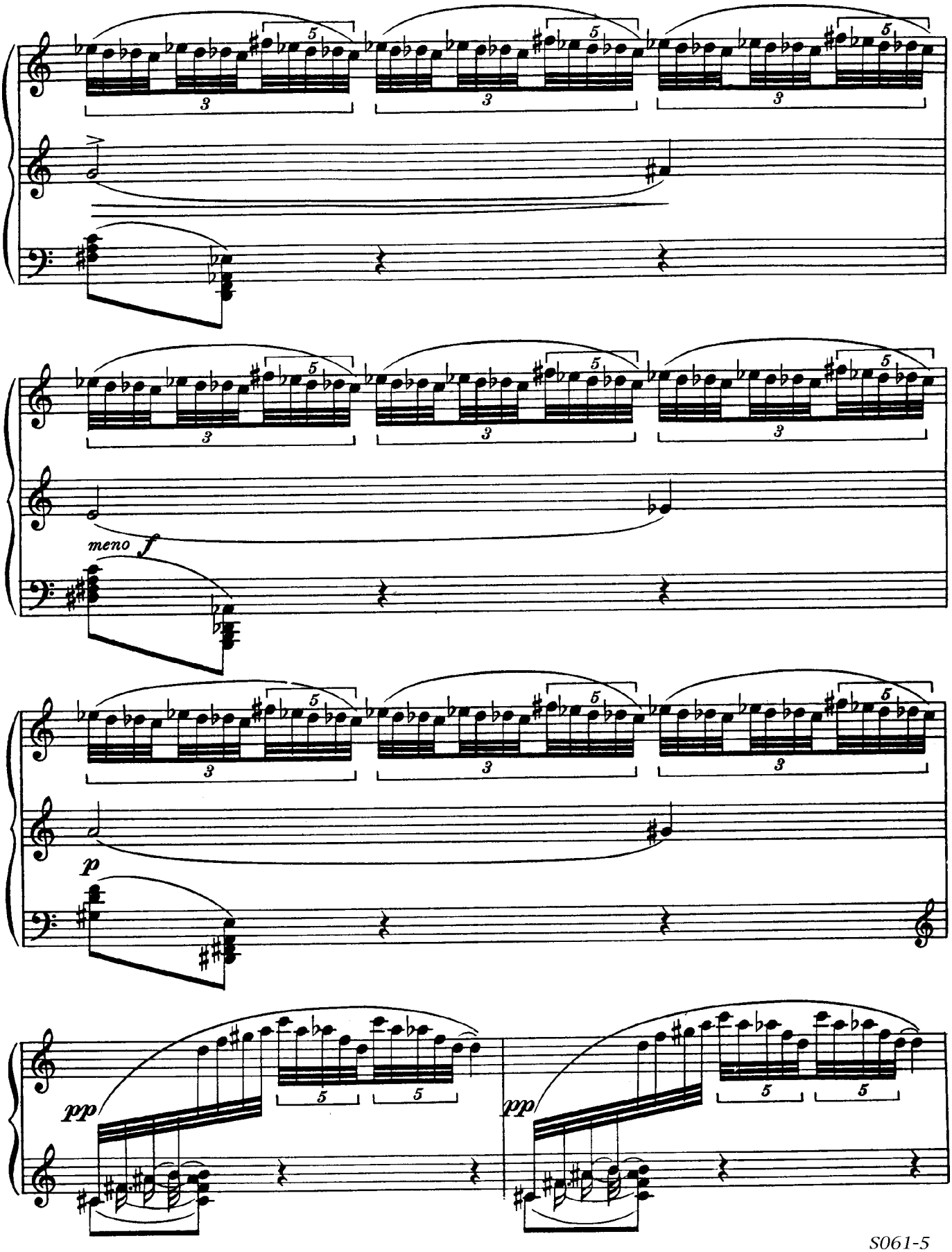
In all these pieces accidentals apply only to those notes before which they stand. They do not carry through the measure.

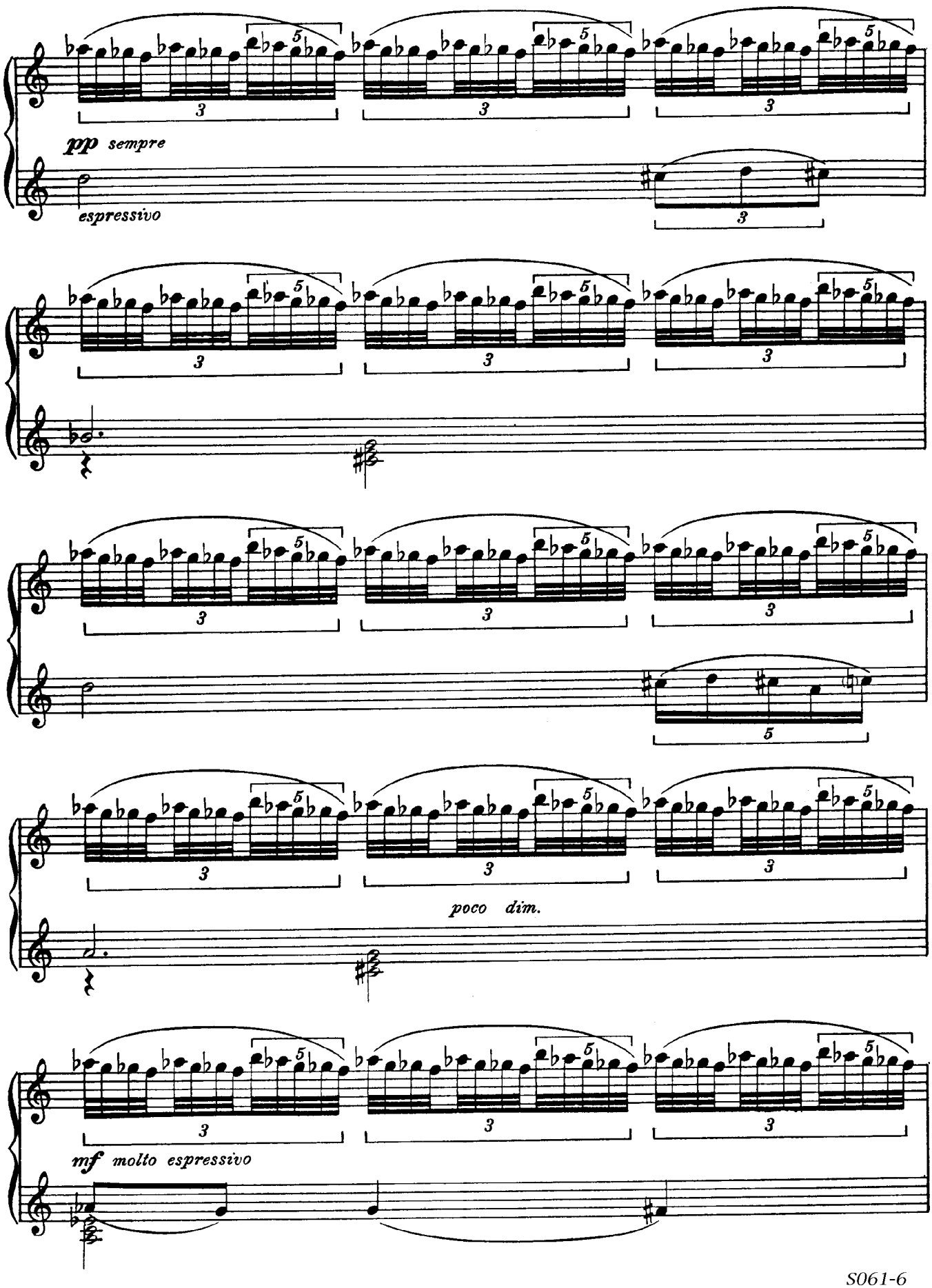

Tempo I^mo
mf
meno f
dim.
con forza
p
Tempo I^mo
poco meno mosso
pp
mp
dim.
poco meno mosso
molto rit.

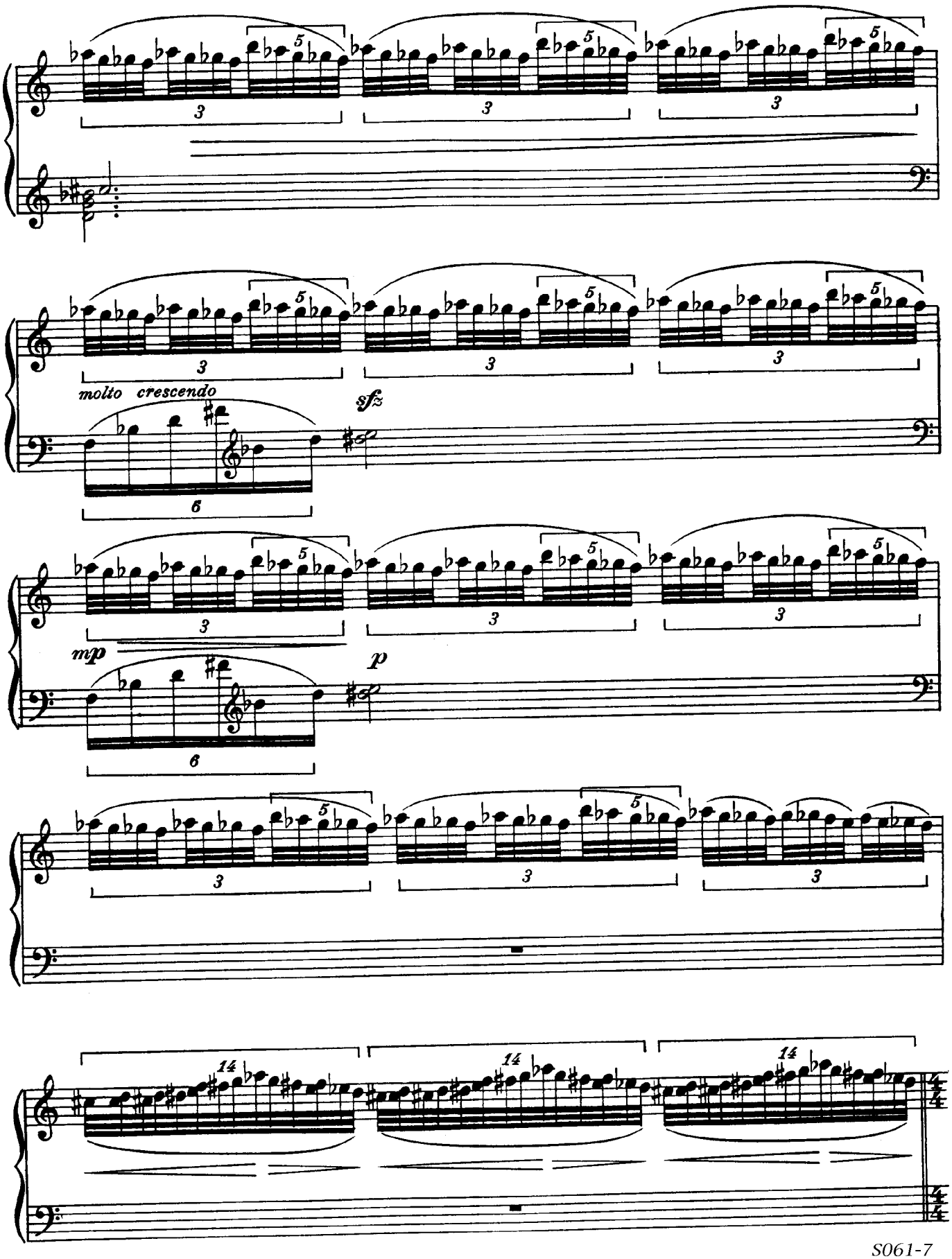
II.

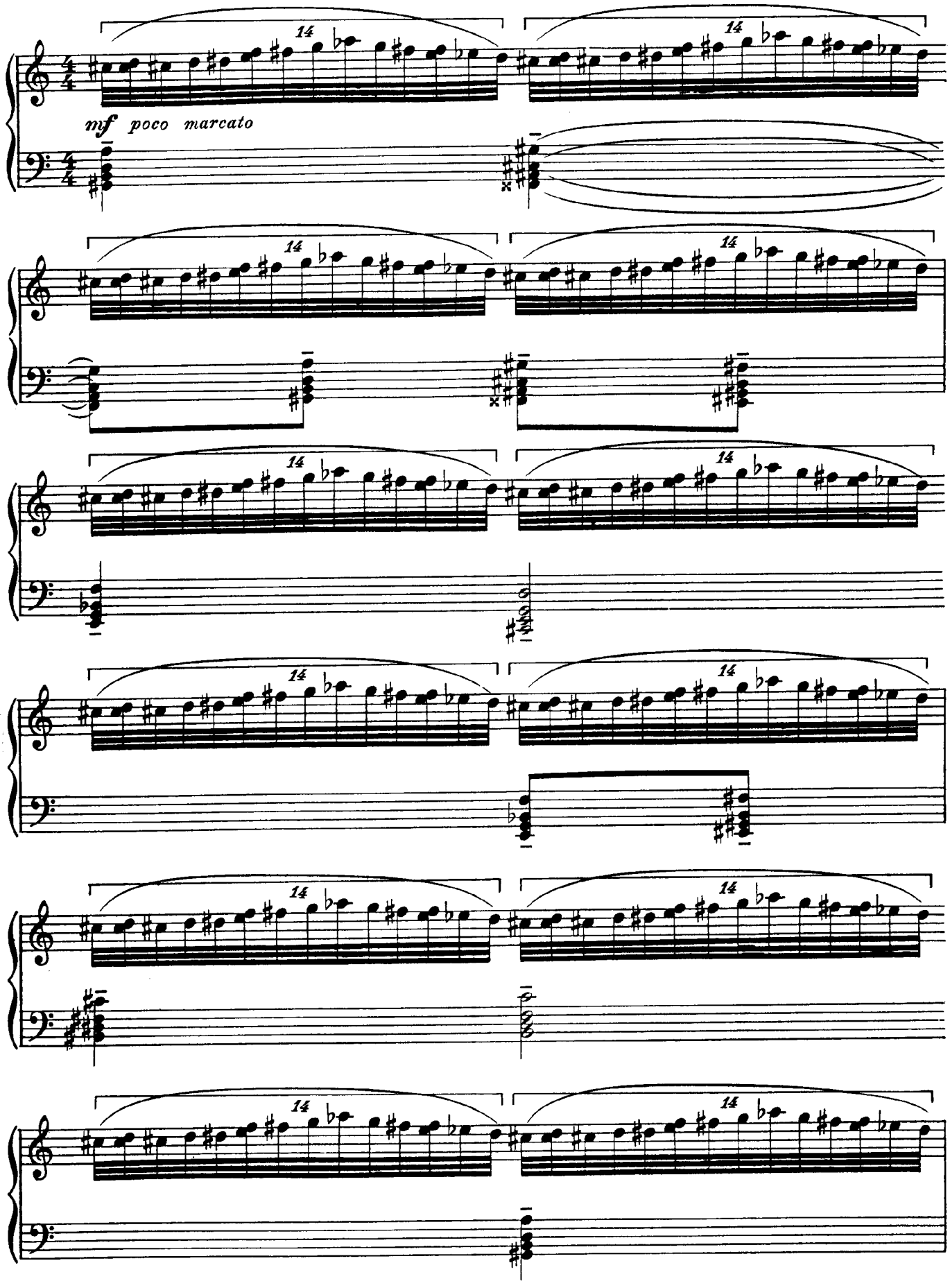


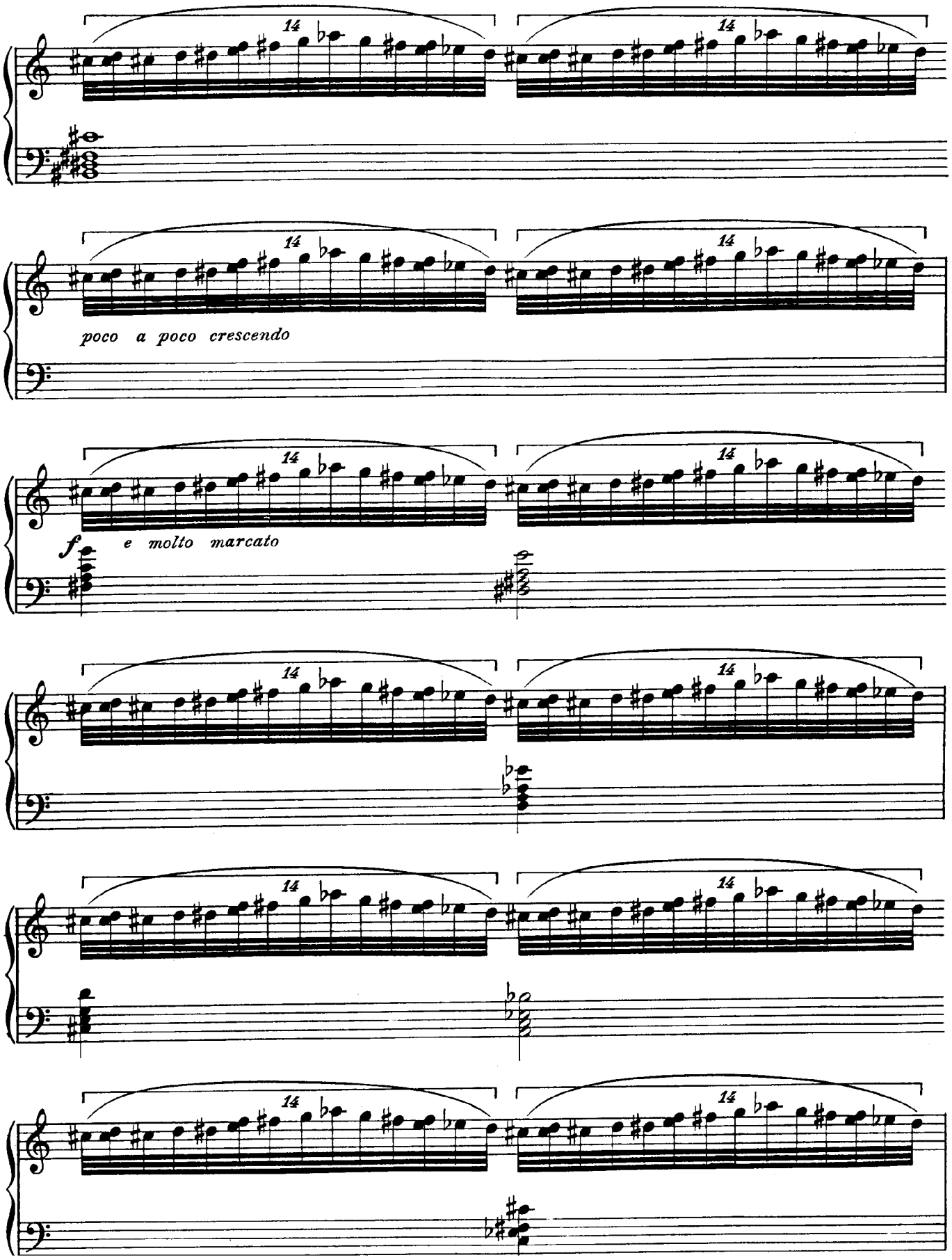

poco più f
poco a poco dim.
mf

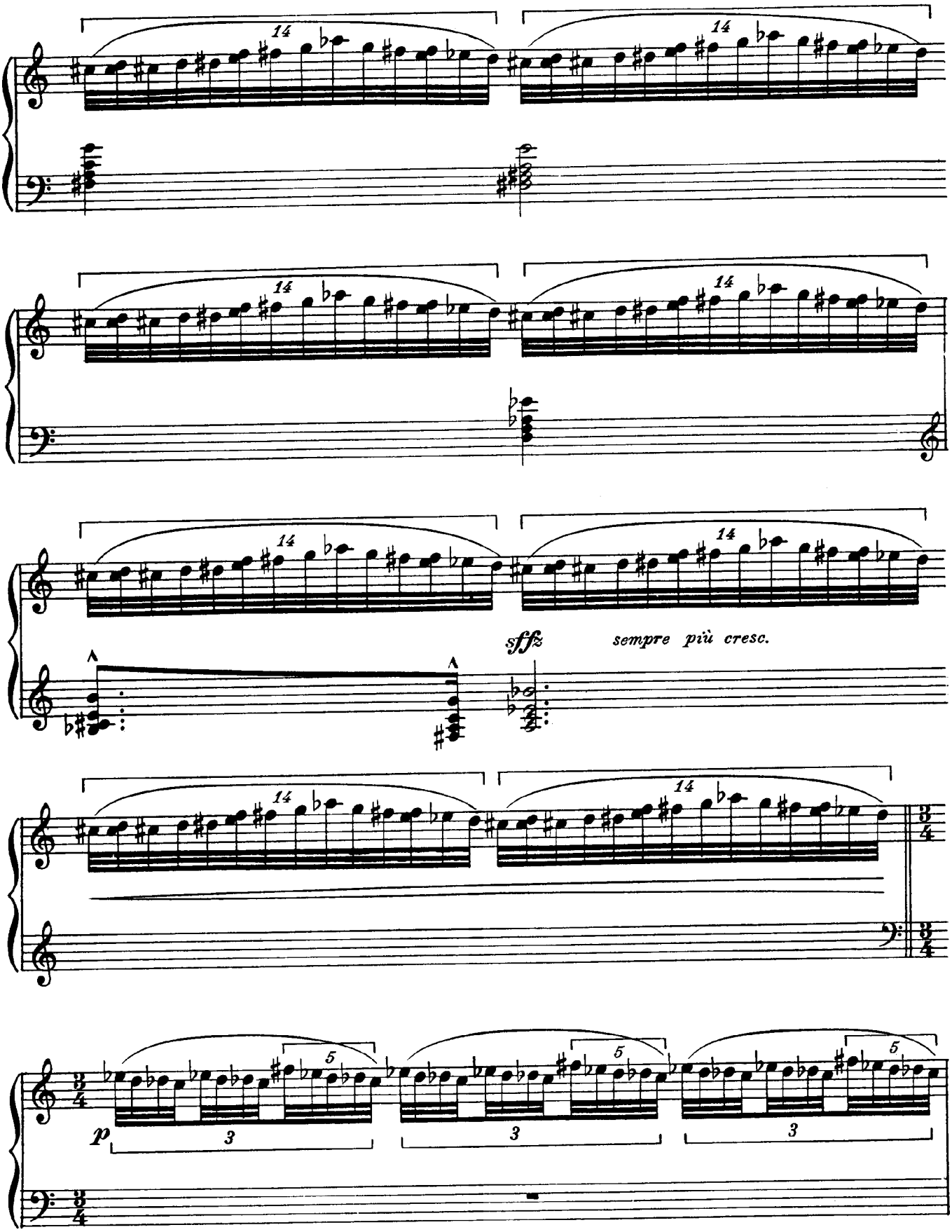

meno f
p
pp
pp

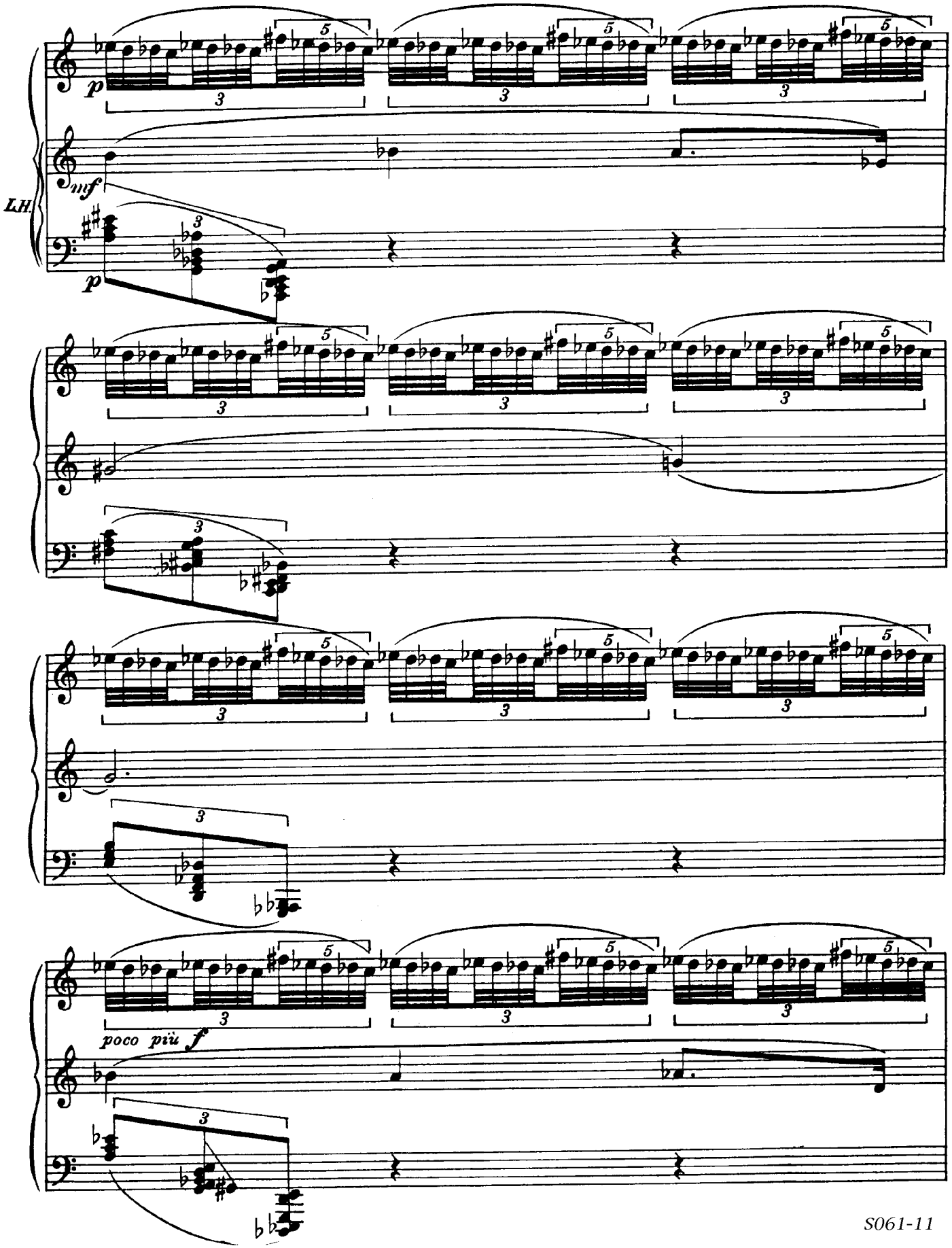

pp sempre
espressivo
poco dim.
mf molto espressivo

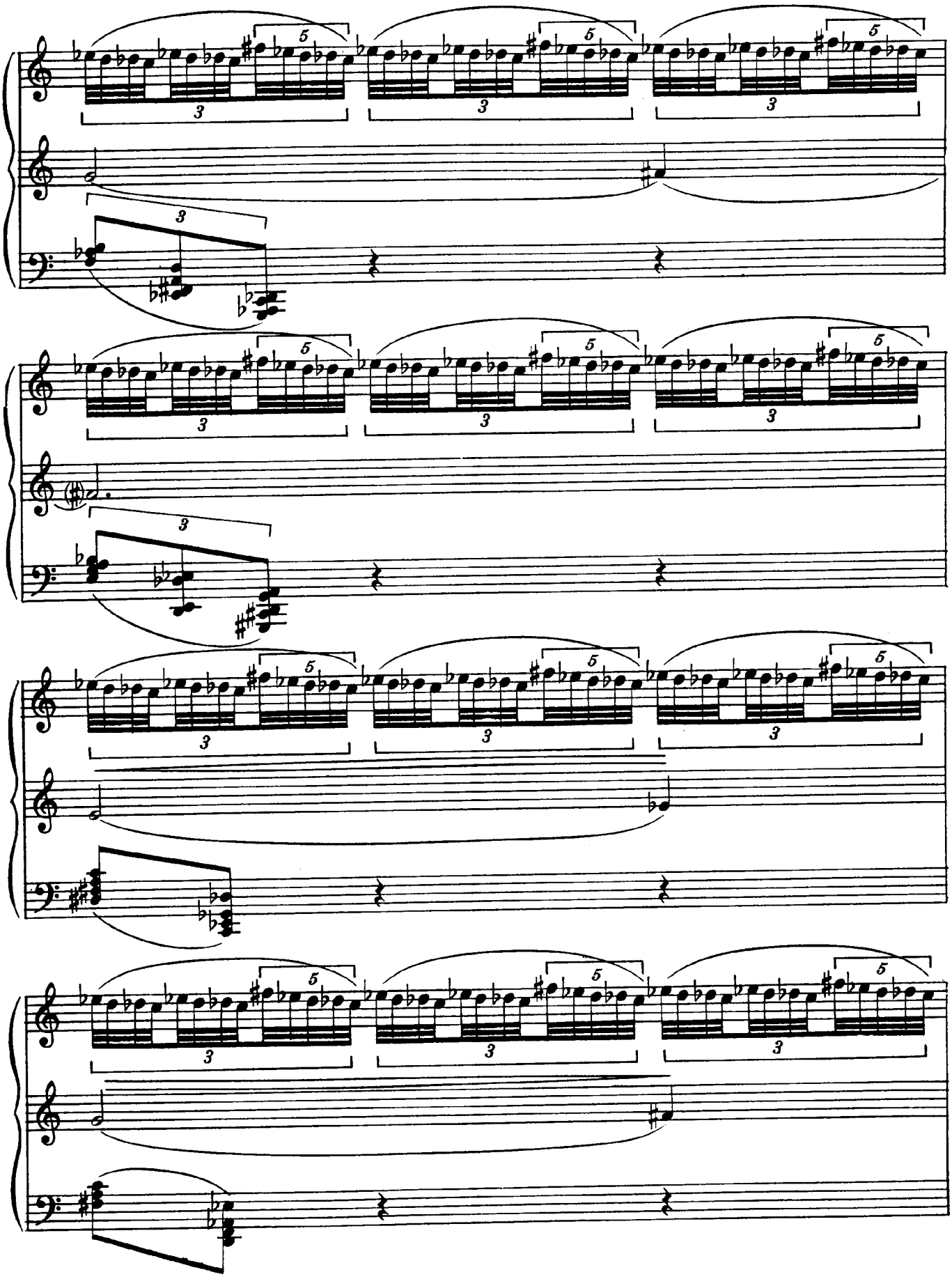

molto crescendo
sfz
mp
p

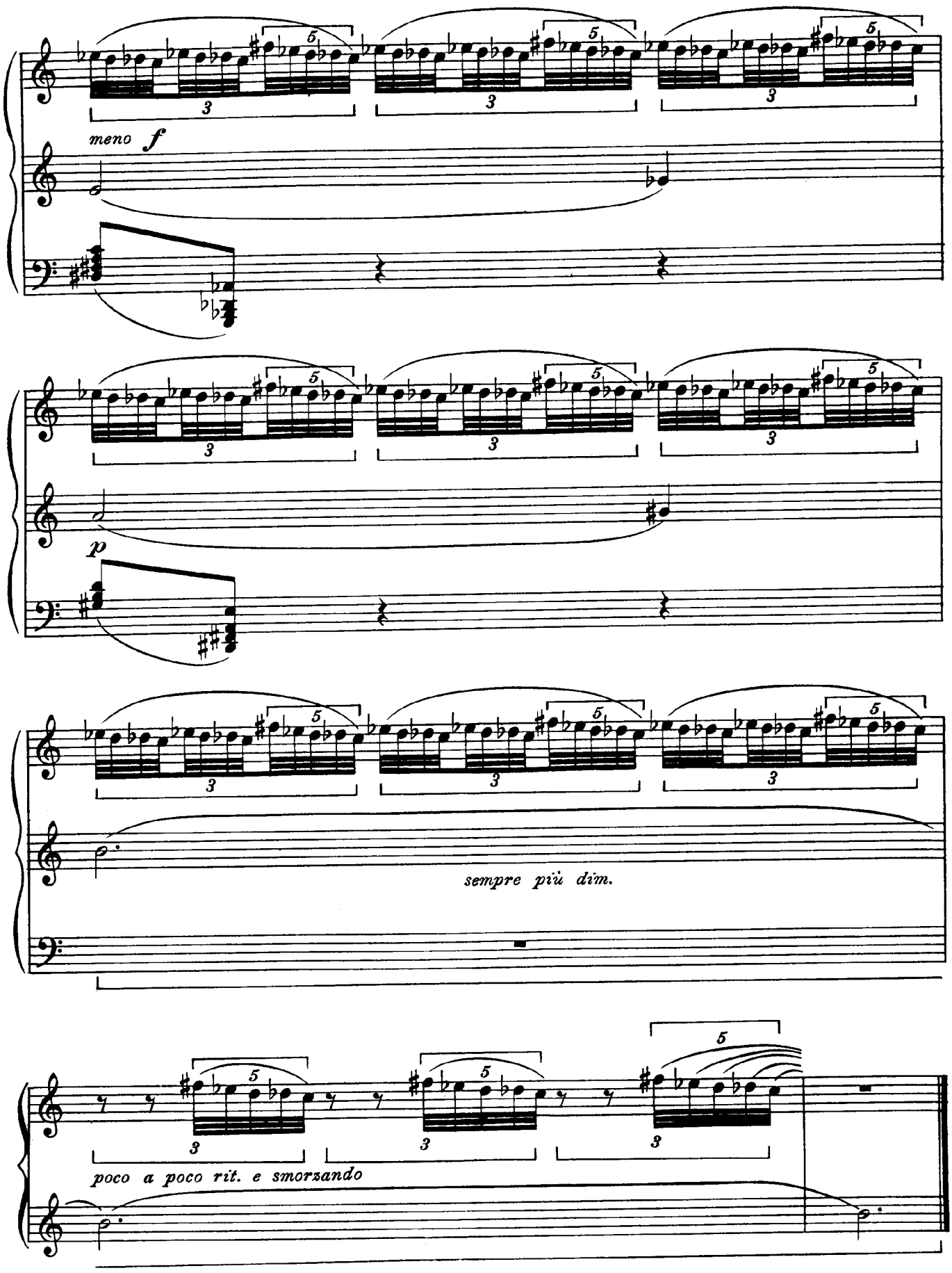

mf poco marcato


poco a poco crescendo
f
e molto marcato

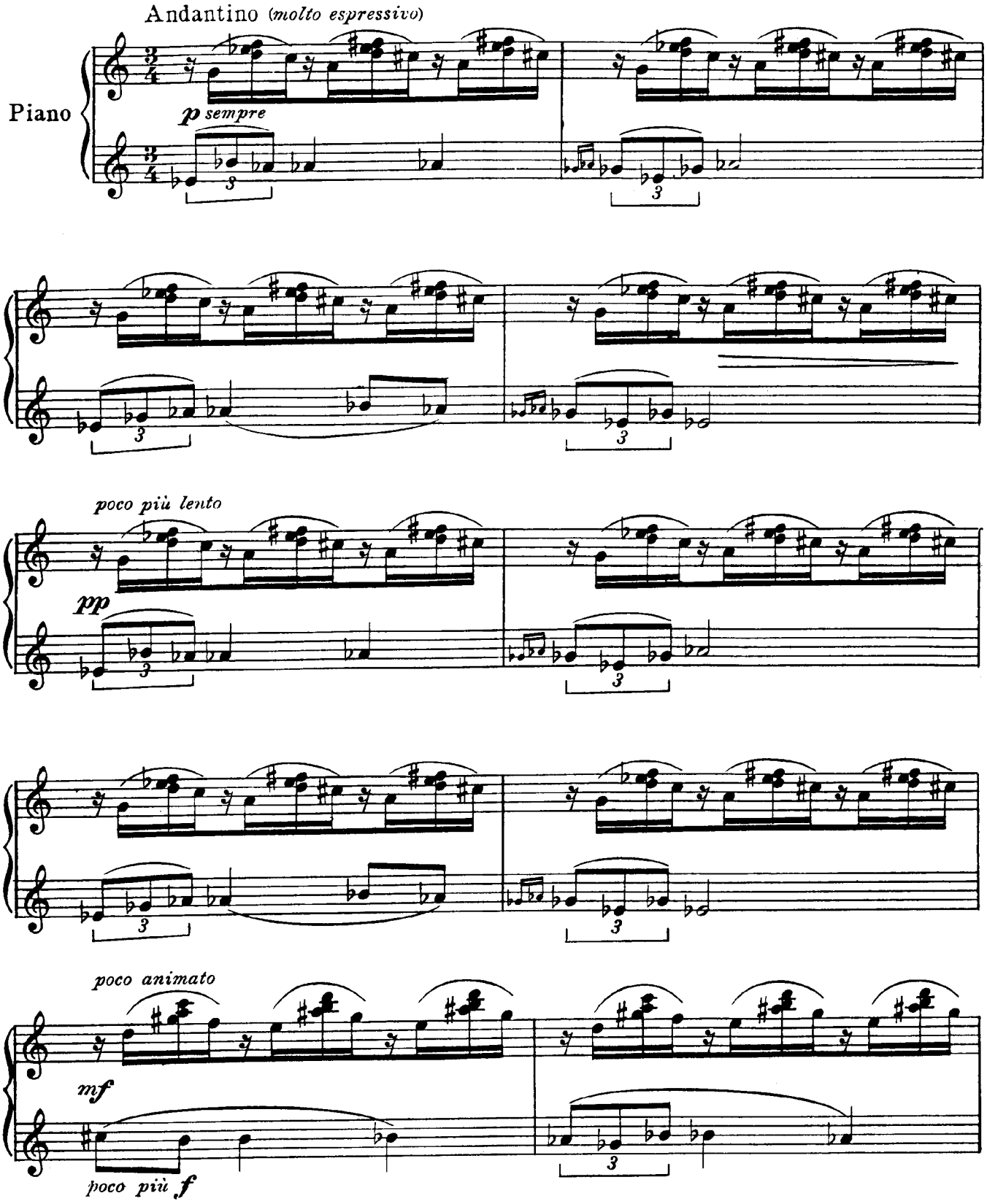

14
14
14
14
14
14
sffz
sempre più cresc.
14
14
3/4
3/4
p
5
5
5
3
3
3

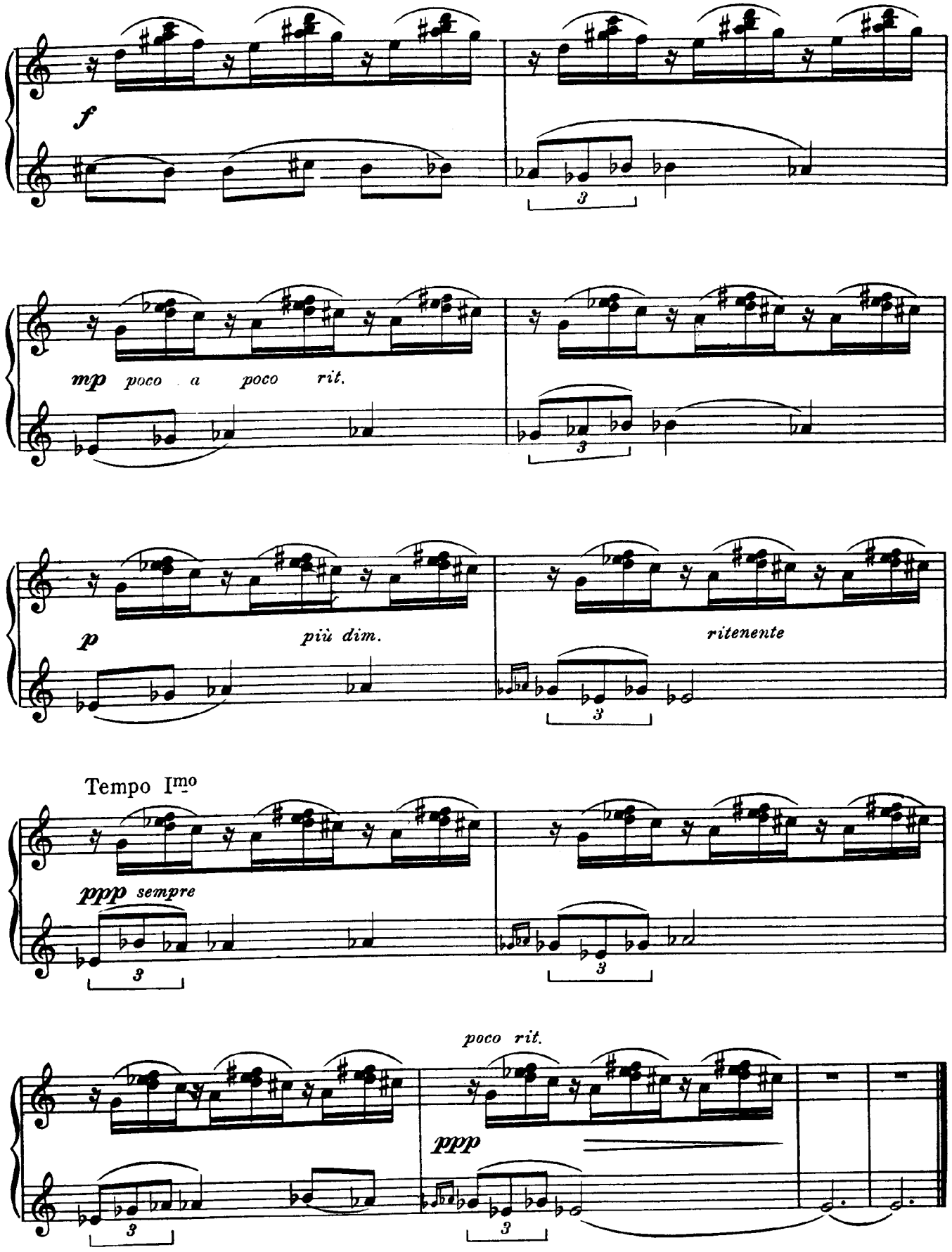

p
mf
LH.
p
poco più f



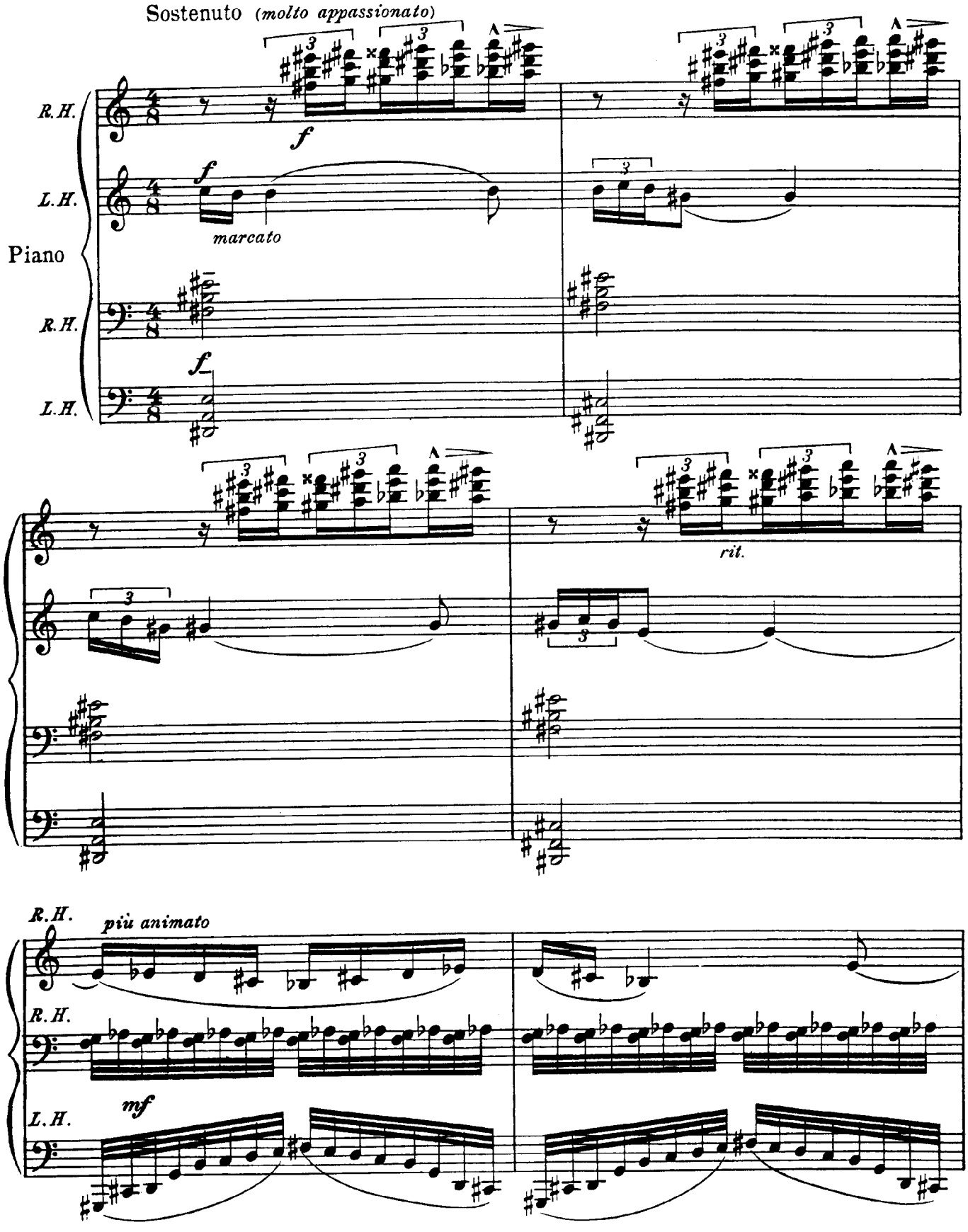

meno f
p
sempre più dim.
poco a poco rit. e smorzando

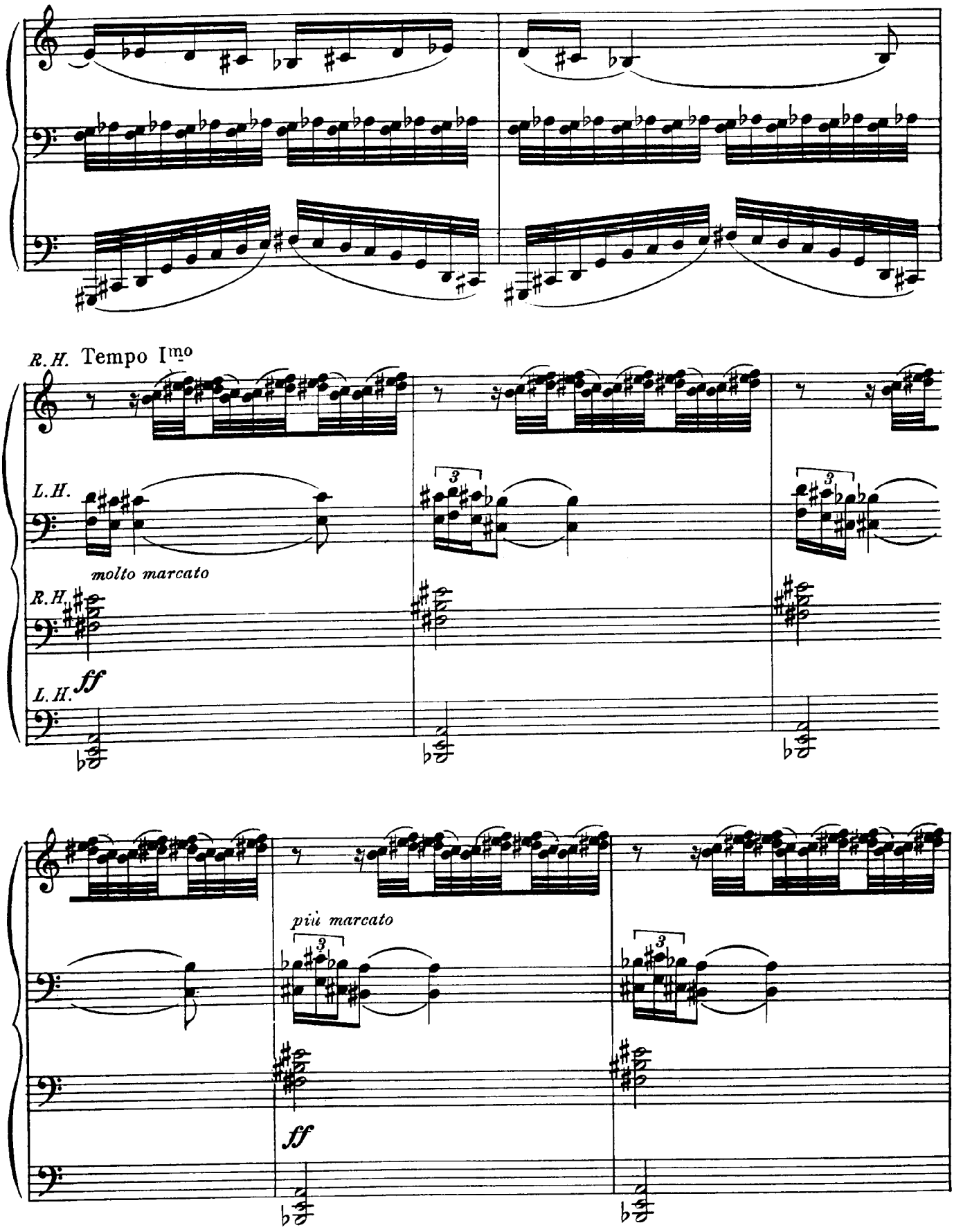
III.

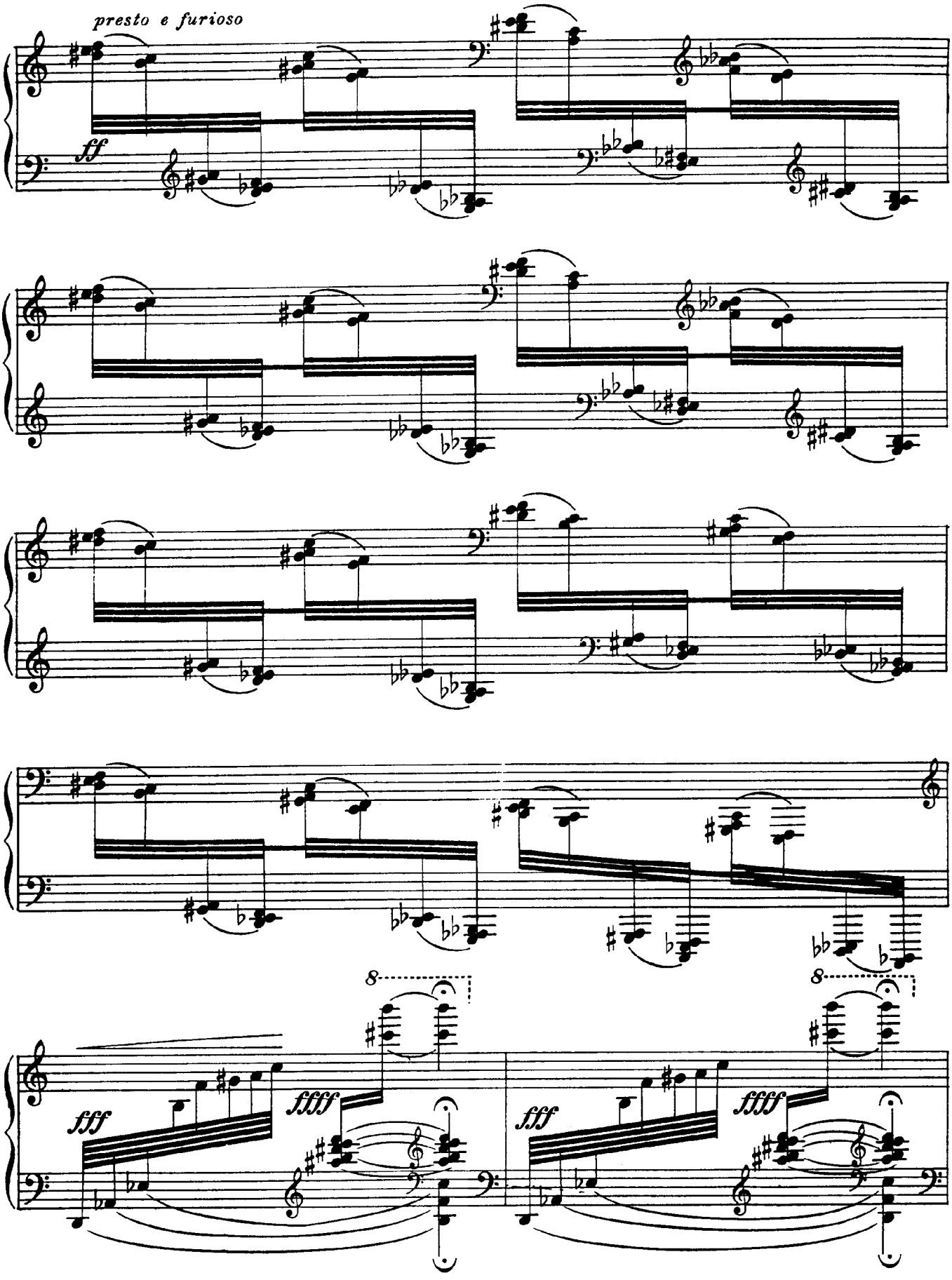

Andantino (molto espressivo)
Piano
p sempre
poco più lento
pp
poco animato
mf
poco più f

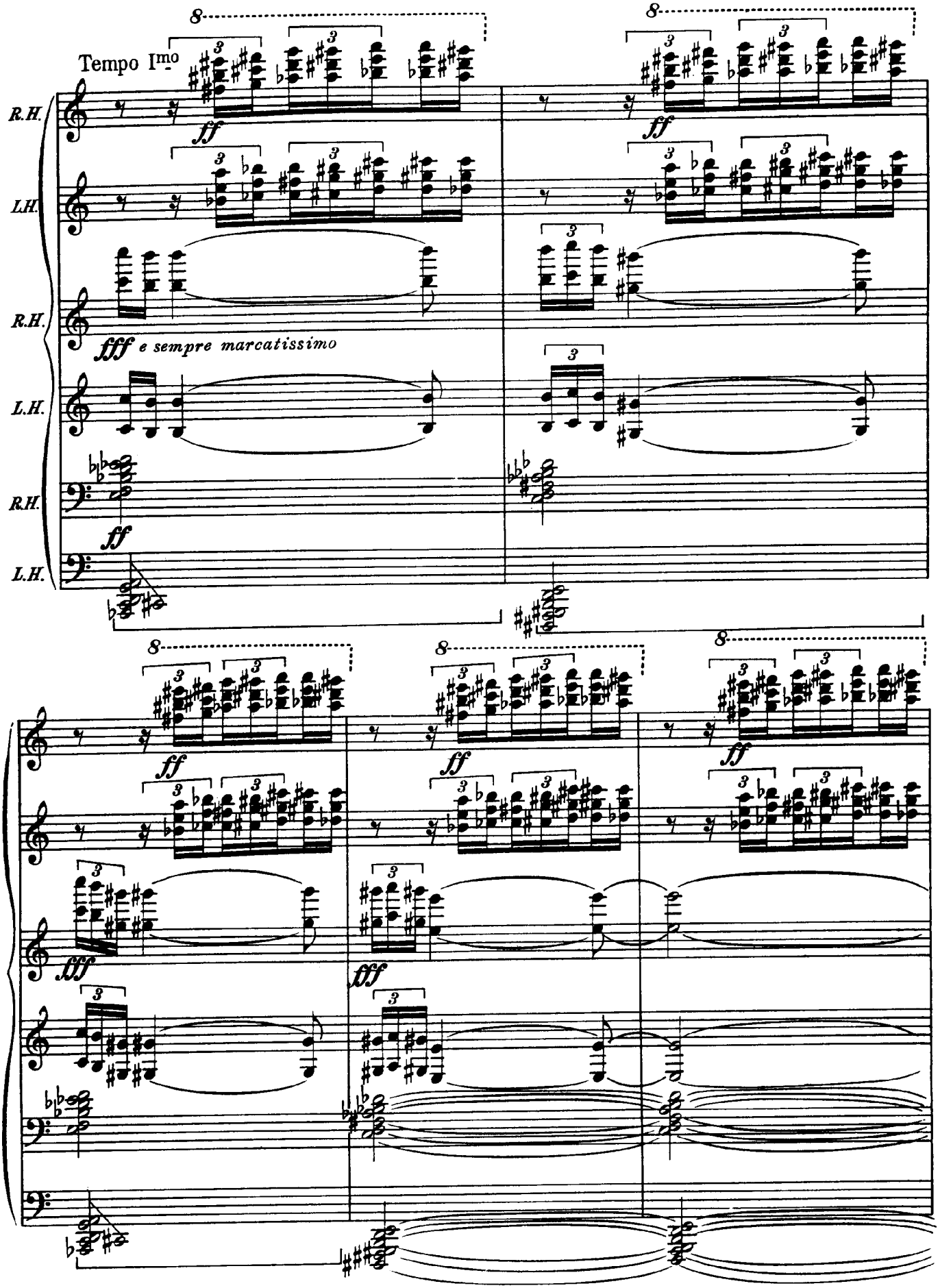

f
mp poco a poco rit.
p più dim.
ritenente
Tempo Imo
ppp sempre
poco rit.
ppp

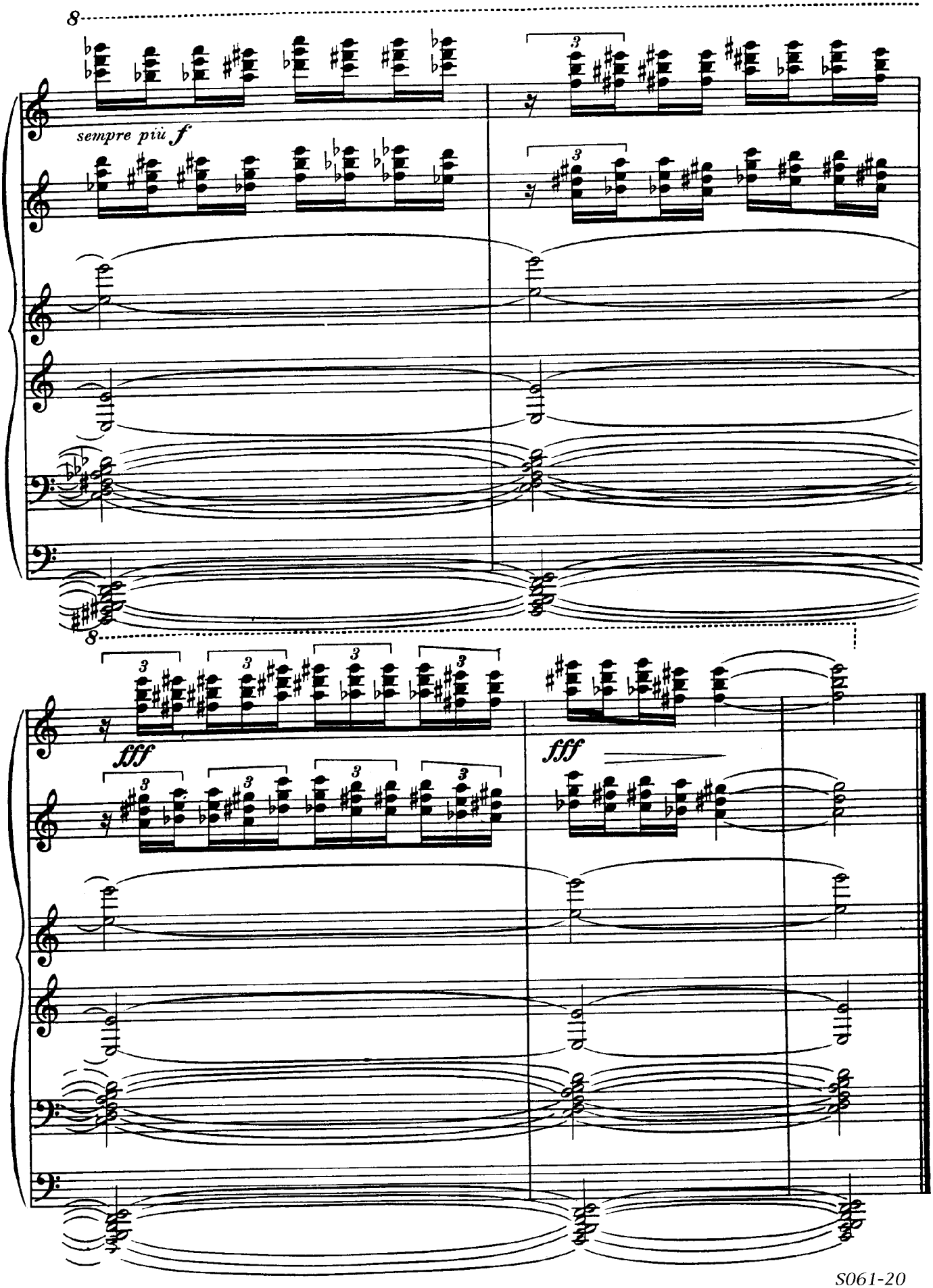
IV.


Sostenuto (molto appassionato)
R.H.
L.H.
Piano
R.H.
L.H.
f
marcato
rit.
R.H.
più animato
R.H.
L.H.
mf

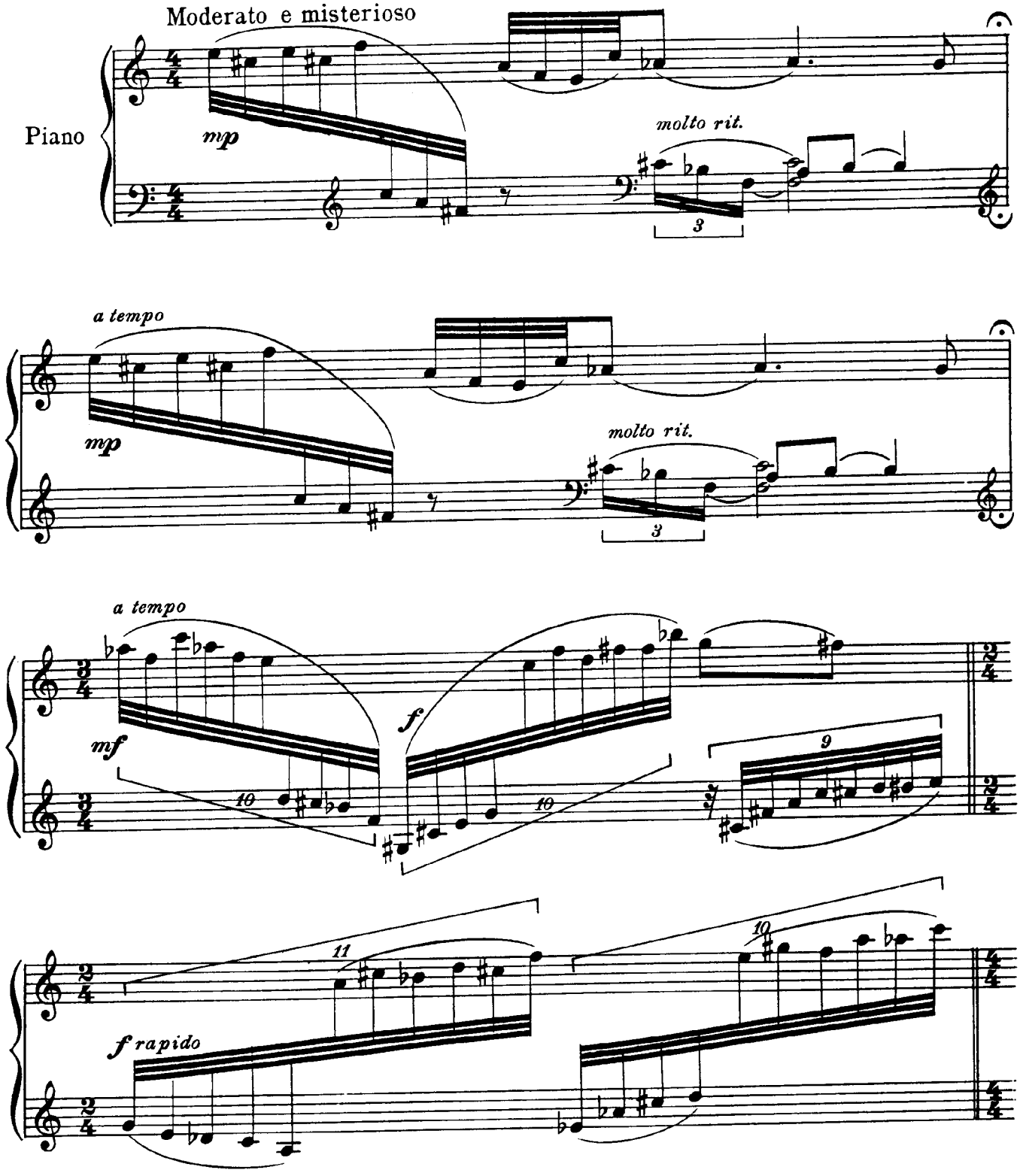

R.H. Tempo Imo
L.H.
molto marcato
R.H.
ff
L.H.
più marcato
ff

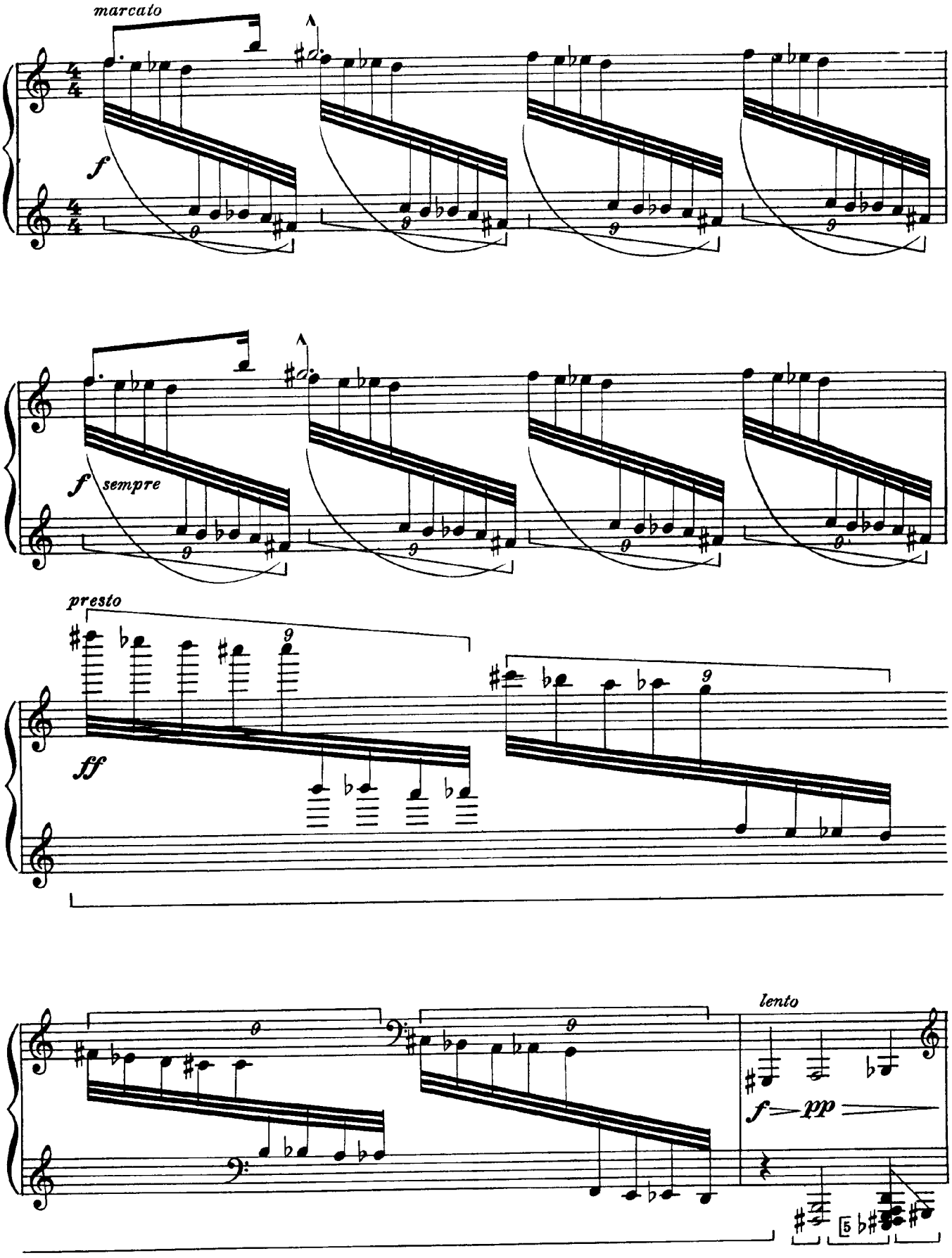

presto e furioso
ff
8
fff
ffff
fff
ffff
8

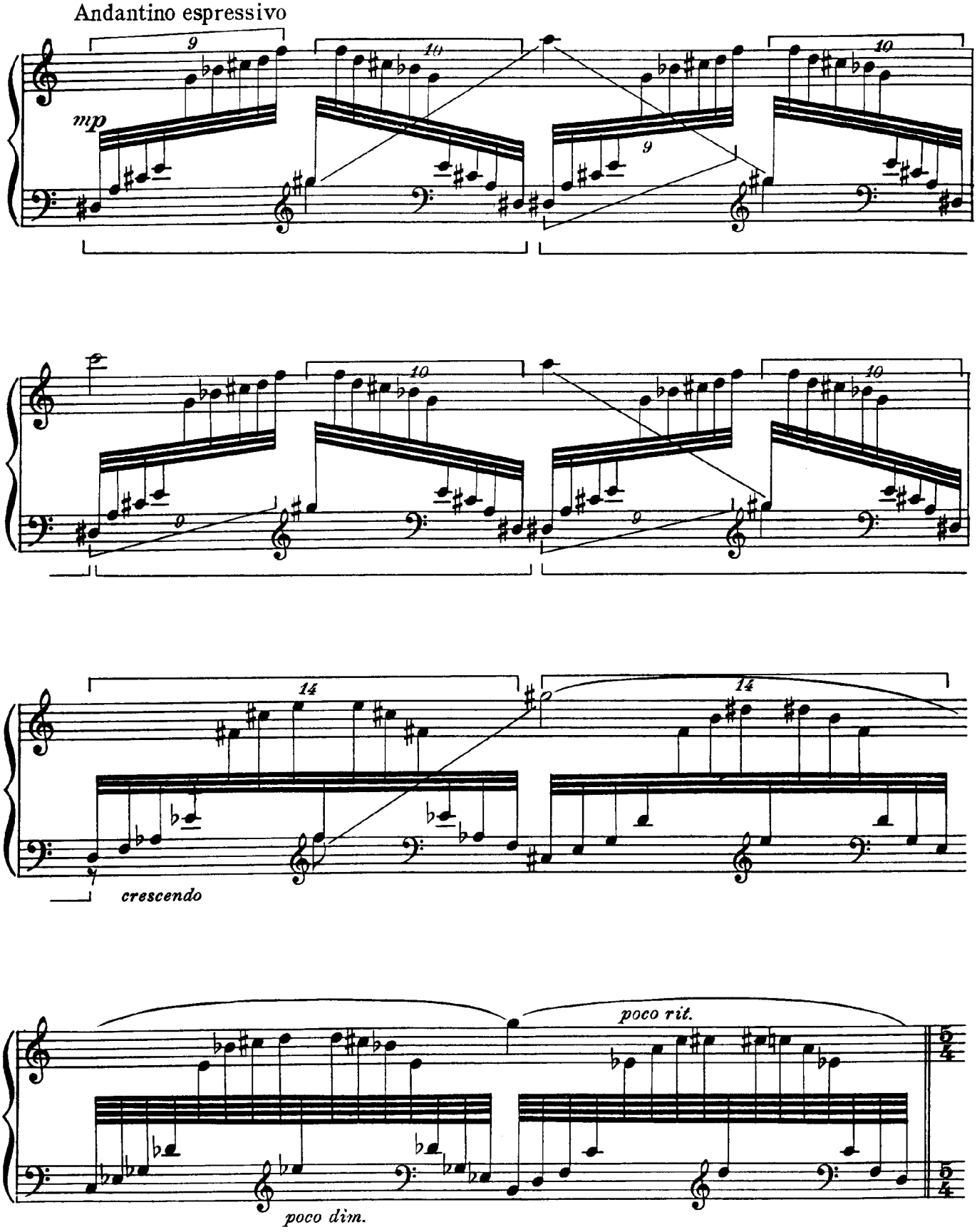

Tempo Imo
R.H.
L.H.
R.H.
fff e sempre marcatissimo
L.H.
R.H.
L.H.

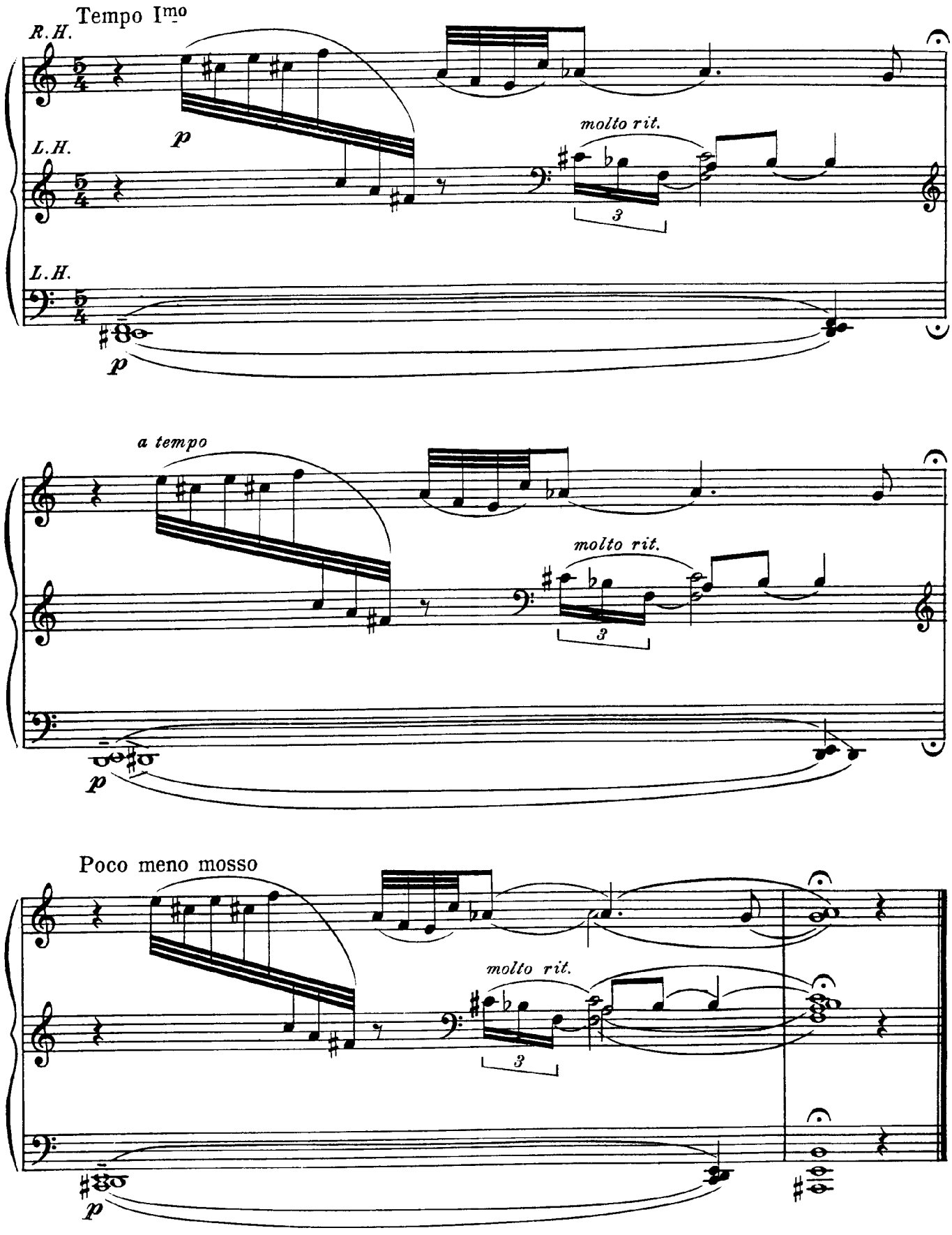

8
sempre più f
3
8
fff
fff

V.

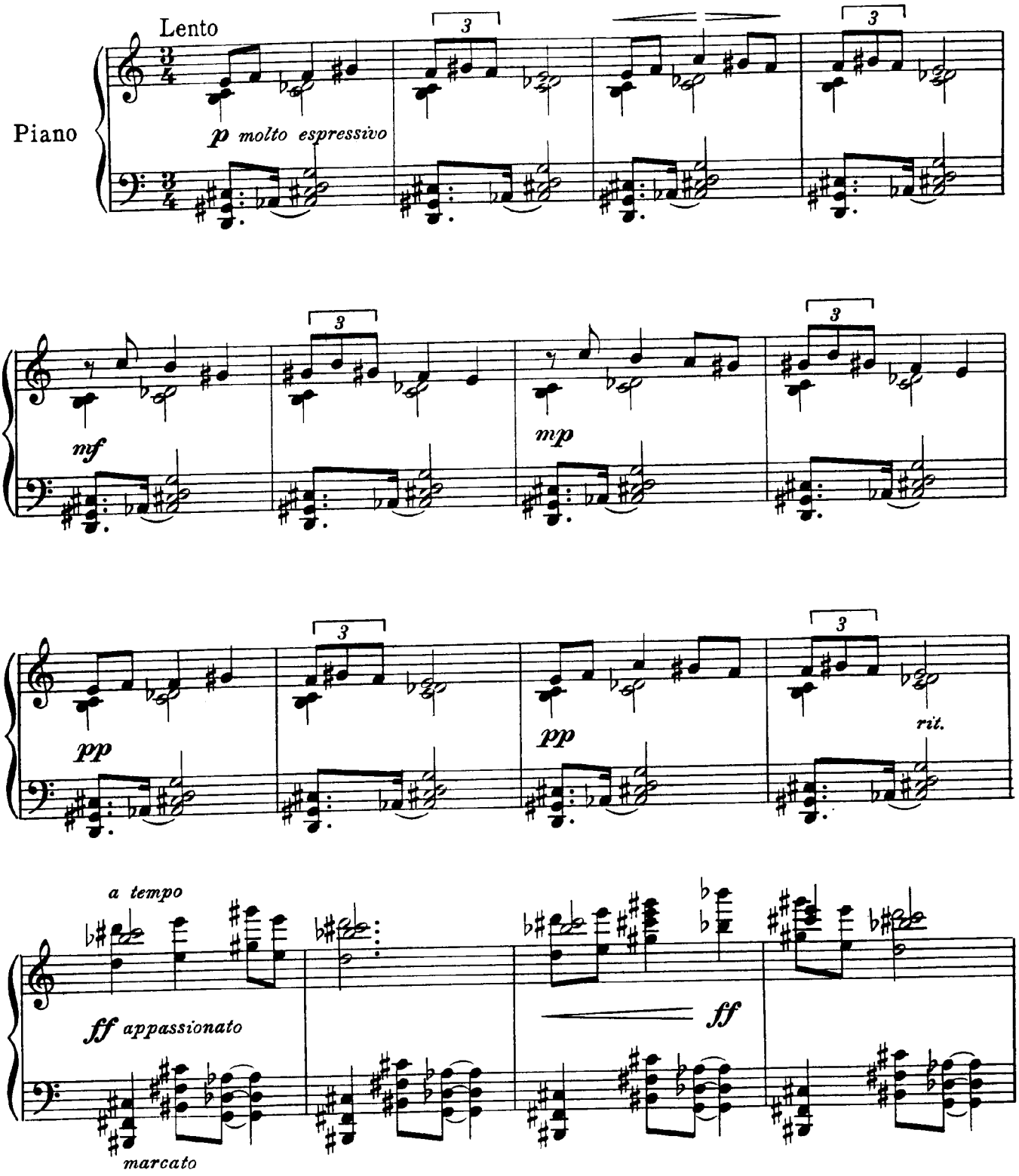

Moderato e misterioso
Piano
mp
molto rit.
3
a tempo
mp
molto rit.
3
a tempo
mf
f
10
10
9
11
10
f rapido

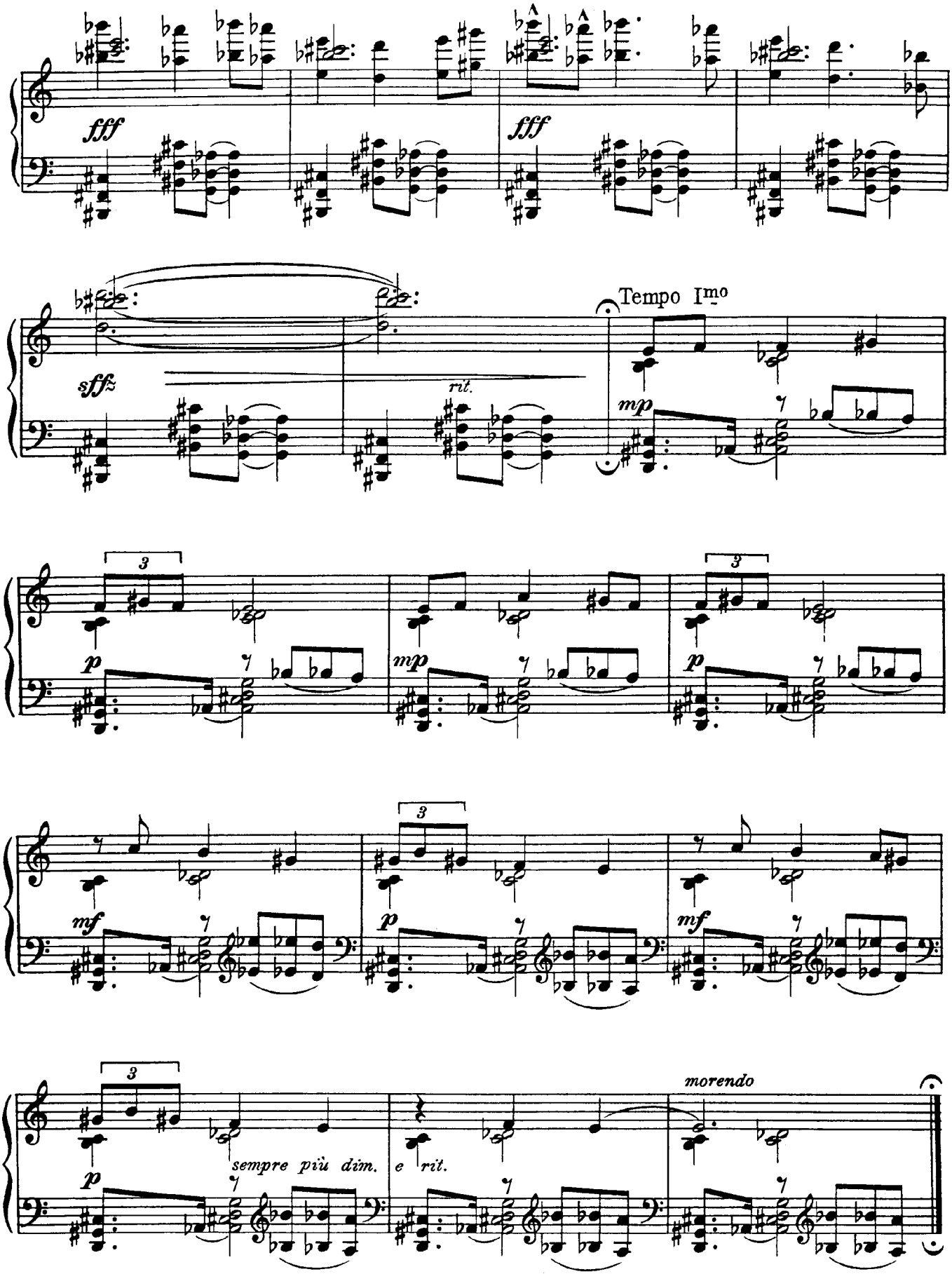

marcato
f
f sempre
presto
ff
lento
f pp


Andantino espressivo
mp
crescendo
poco rit.
poco dim.

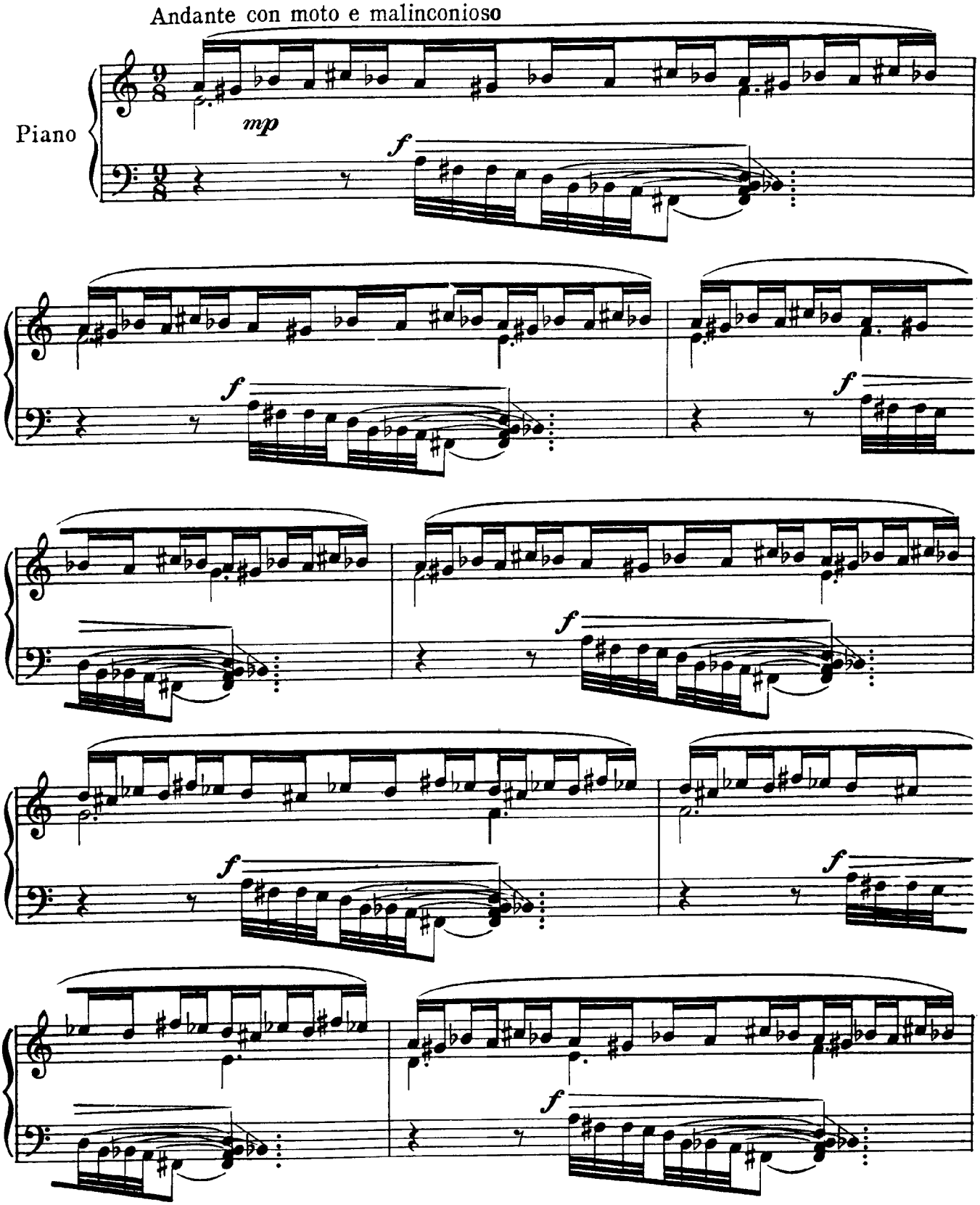

Tempo Imo
R.H.
L.H.
L.H.
molto rit.
3
p
p
a tempo
molto rit.
3
p
Poco meno mosso
molto rit.
3
p

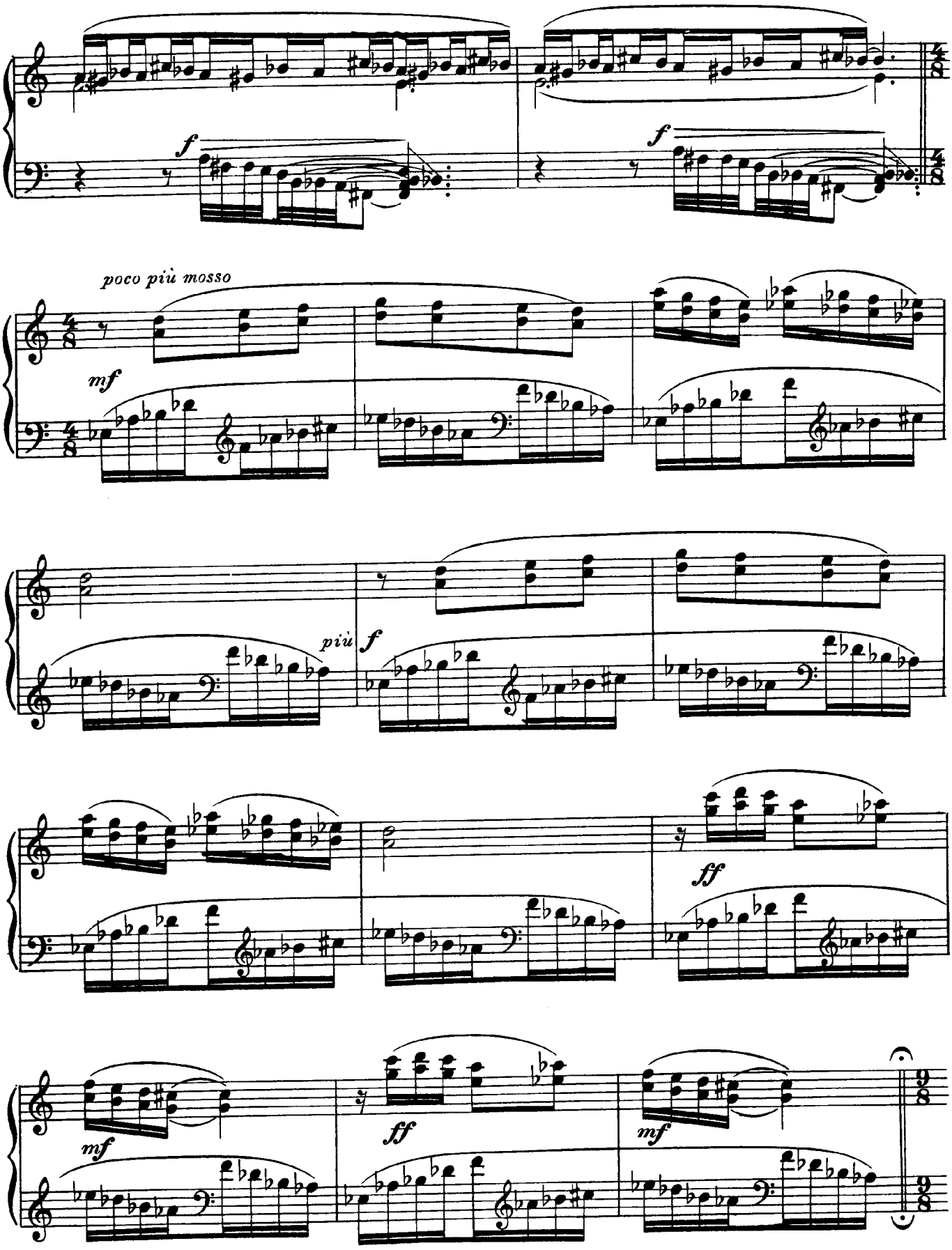
VI.

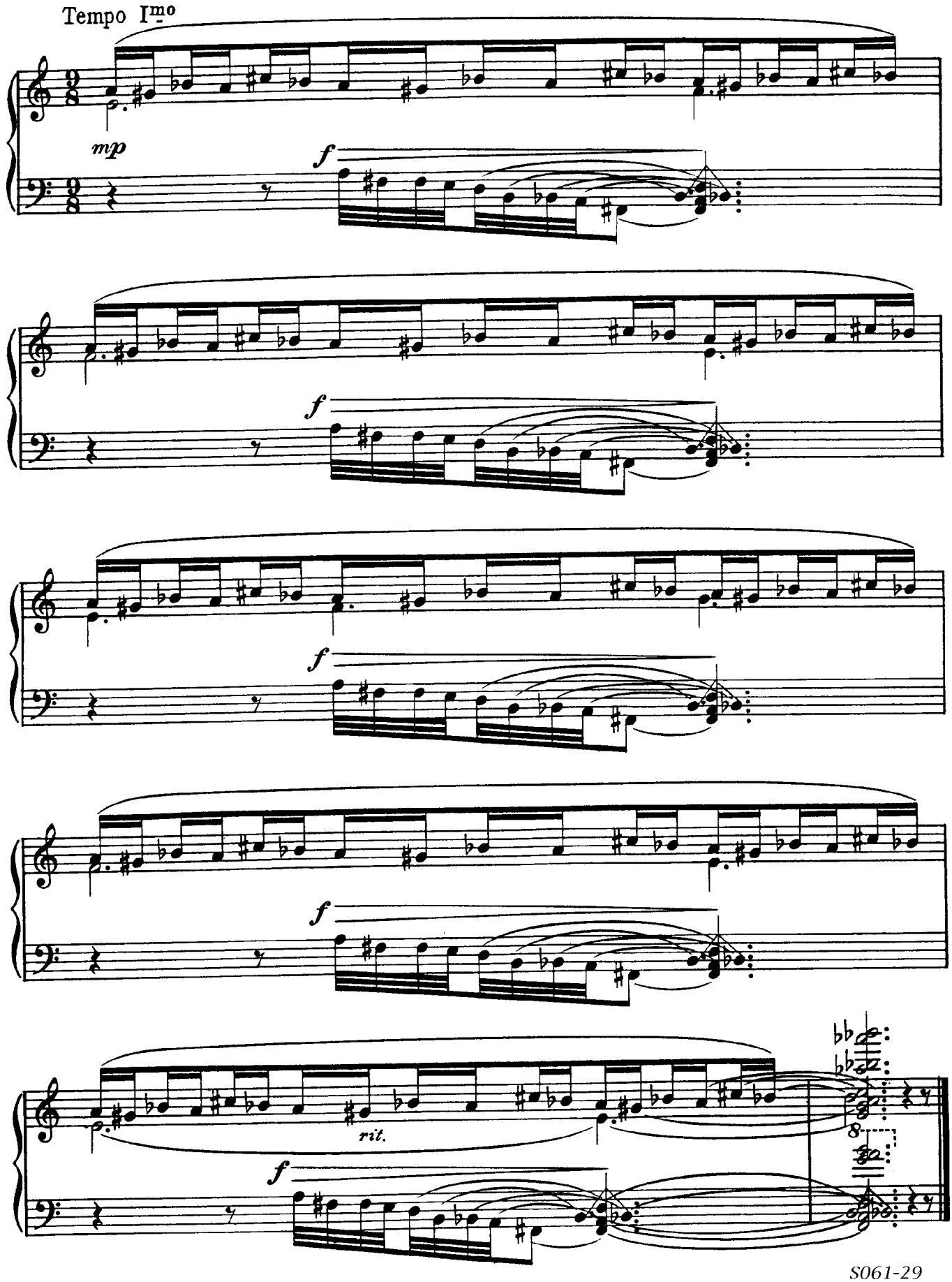

Lento
Piano
p molto espressivo
mf
mp
pp
pp
rit.
a tempo
ff appassionato
marcato
ff


fff
fff
sffz
rit.
Tempo Imo
mp
3
p
mp
3
p
3
mf
p
mf
3
p
sempre più dim.
e rit.
morendo

VII.

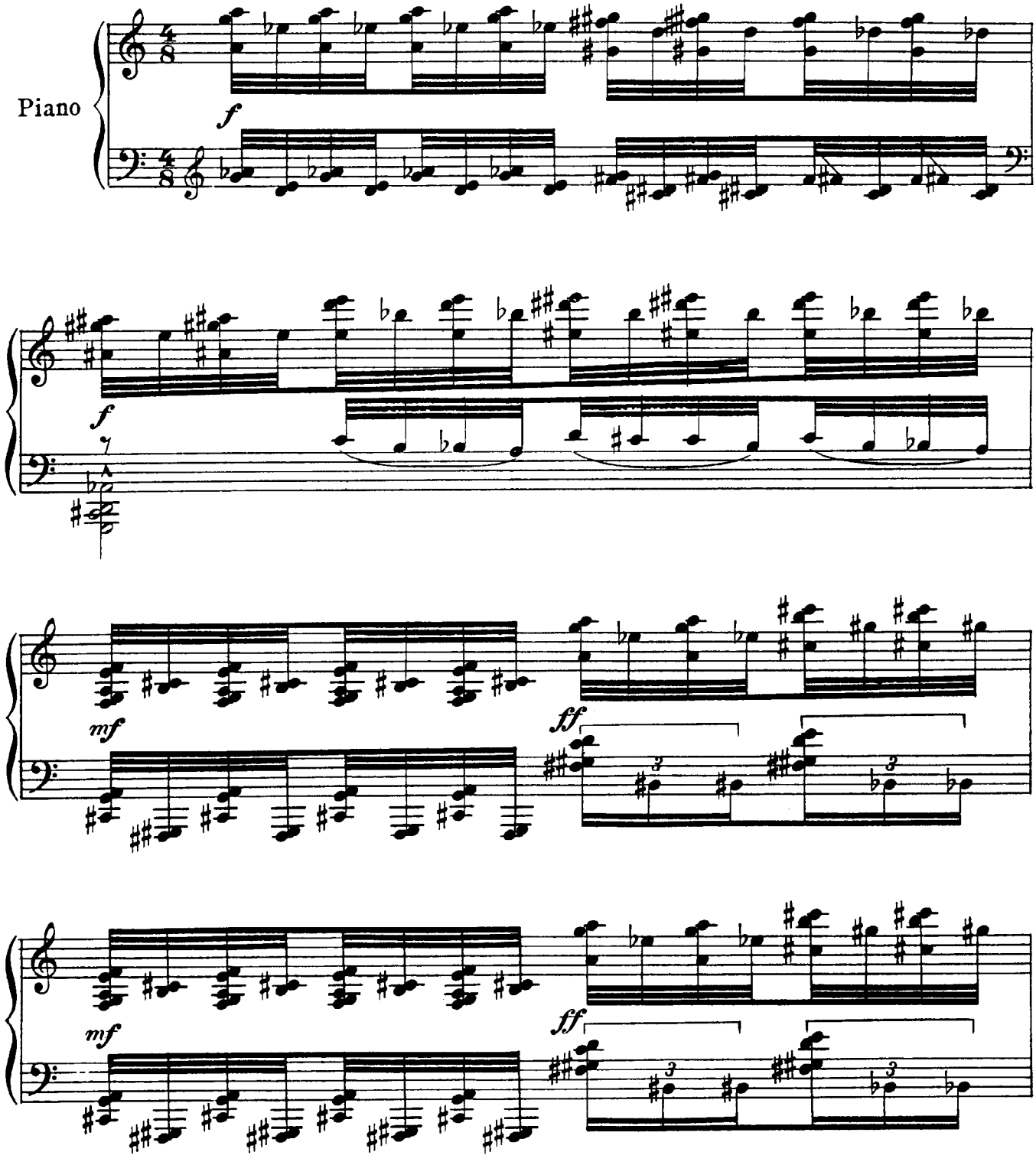


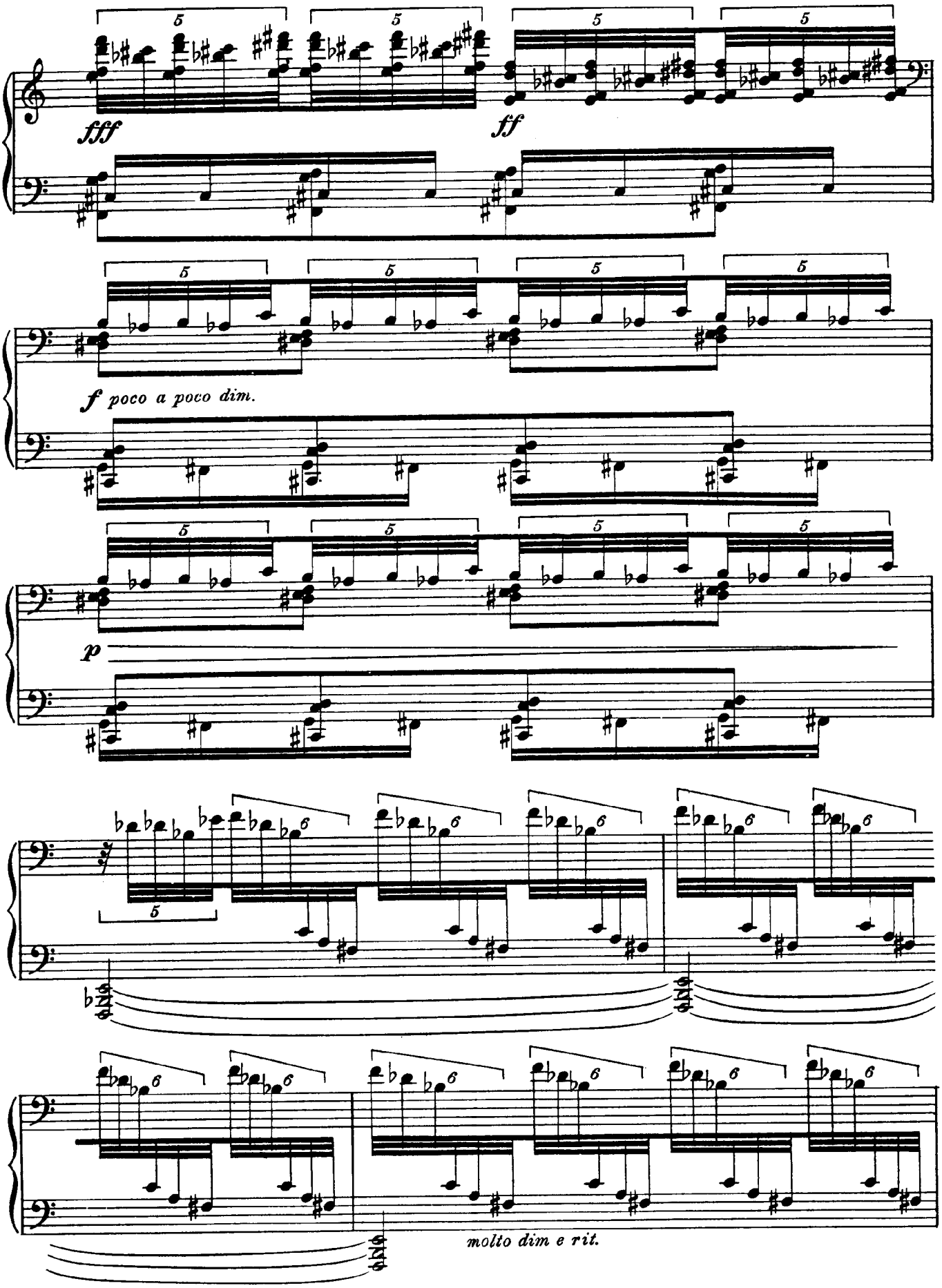

f
f
poco più mosso
mf
più
f
ff
mf
ff
mf

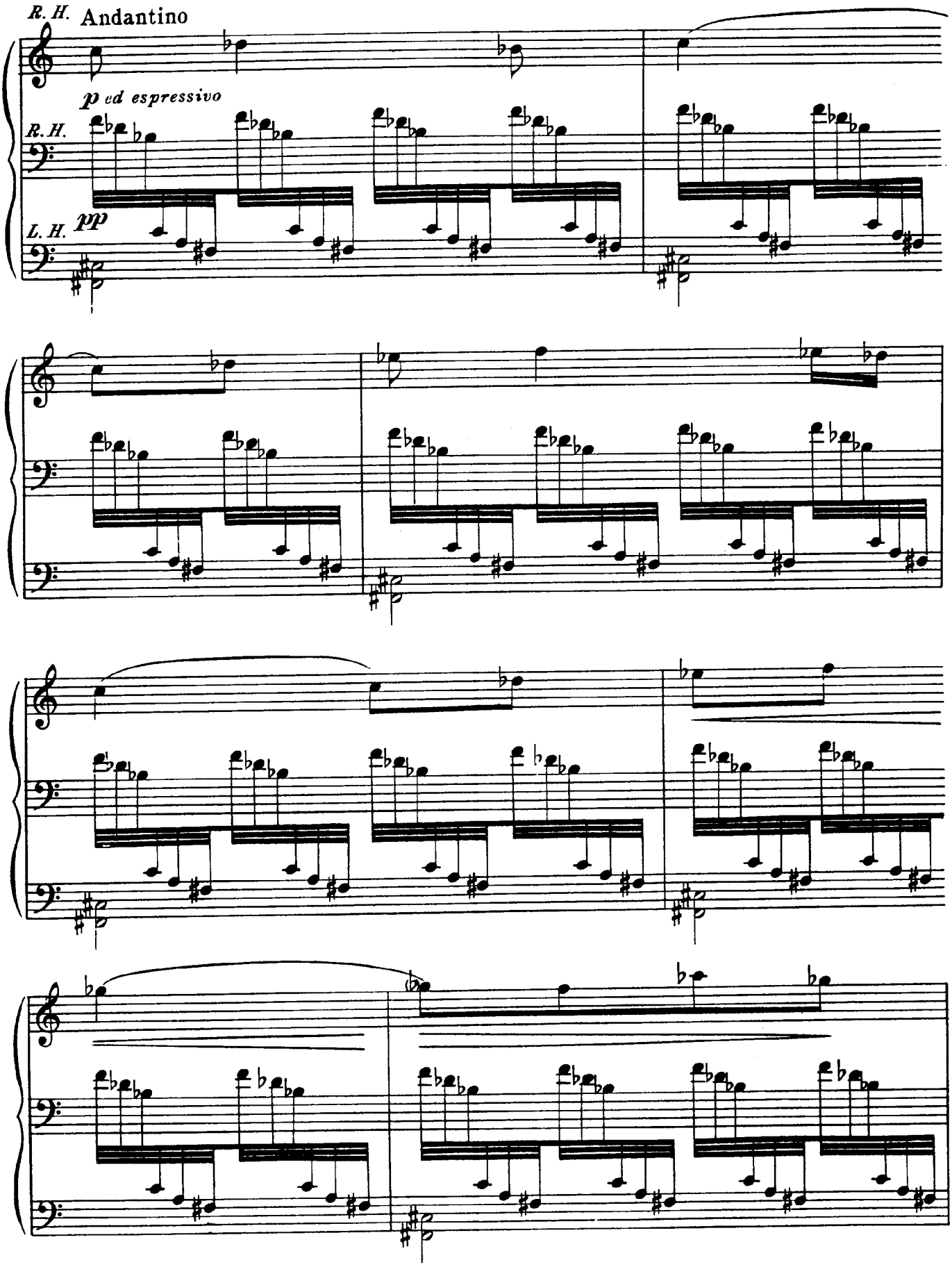

Tempo I^mo
mp
f
f
f
f
rit.
f

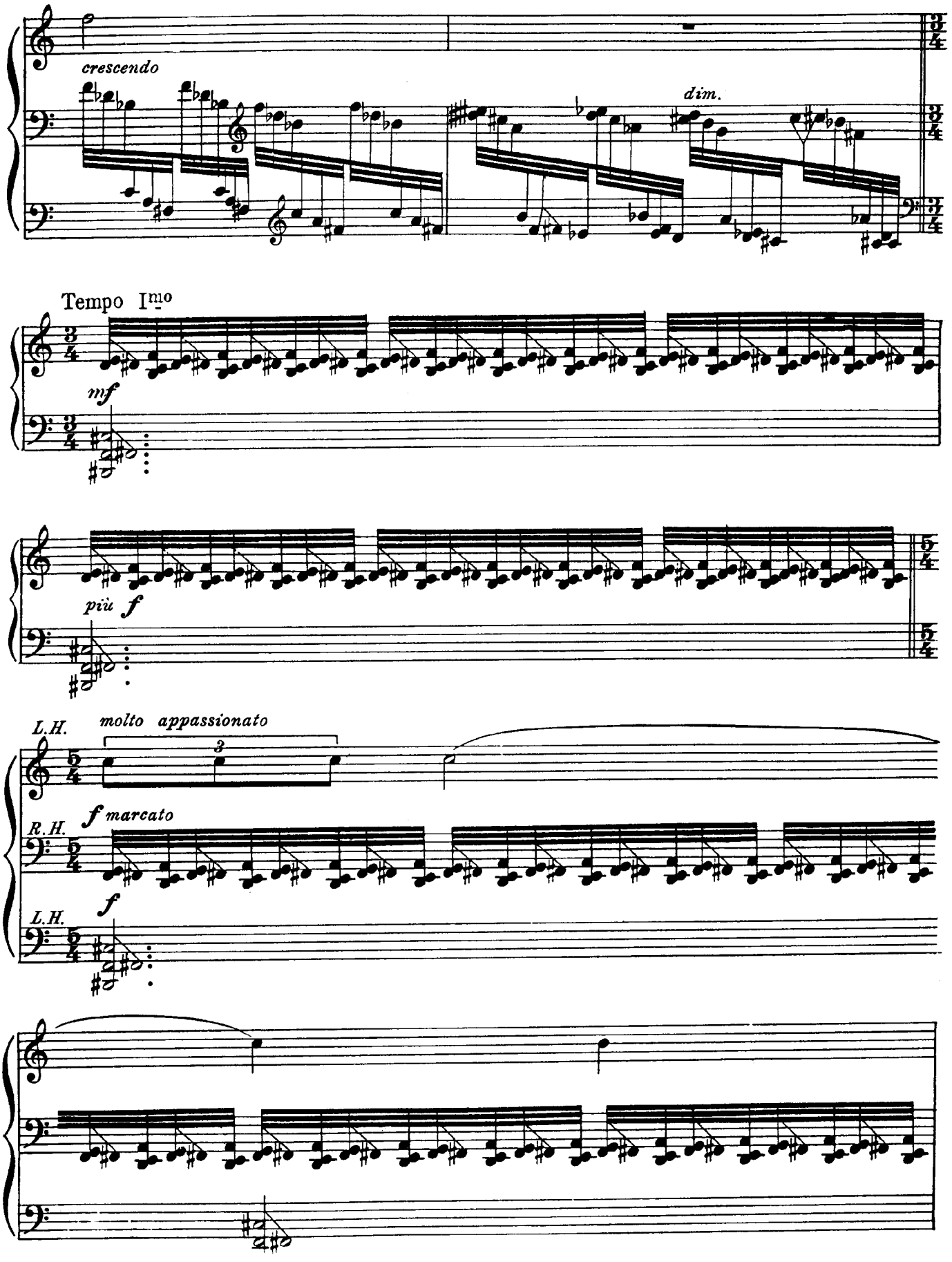
VIII.

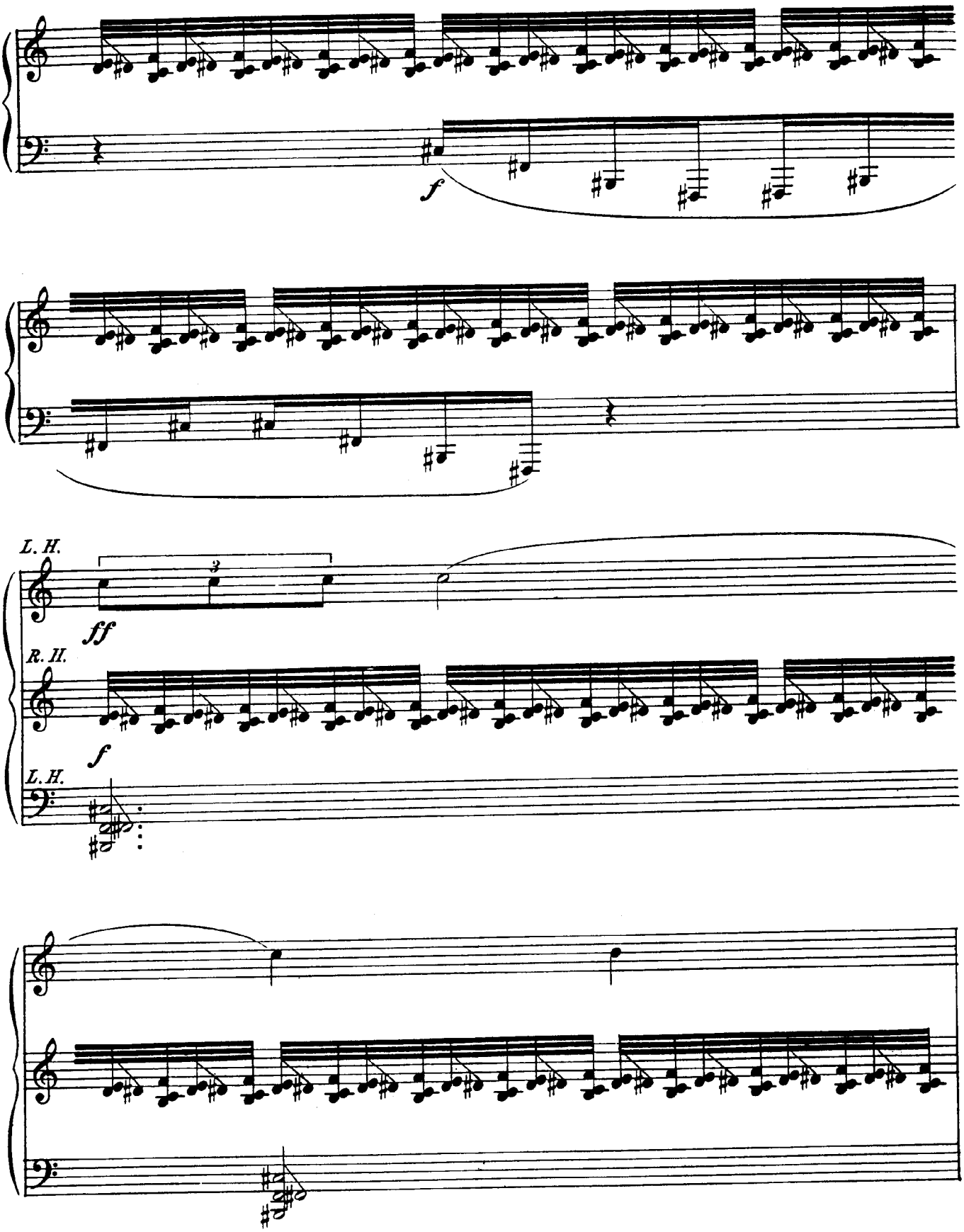
Allegro e molto appassionato

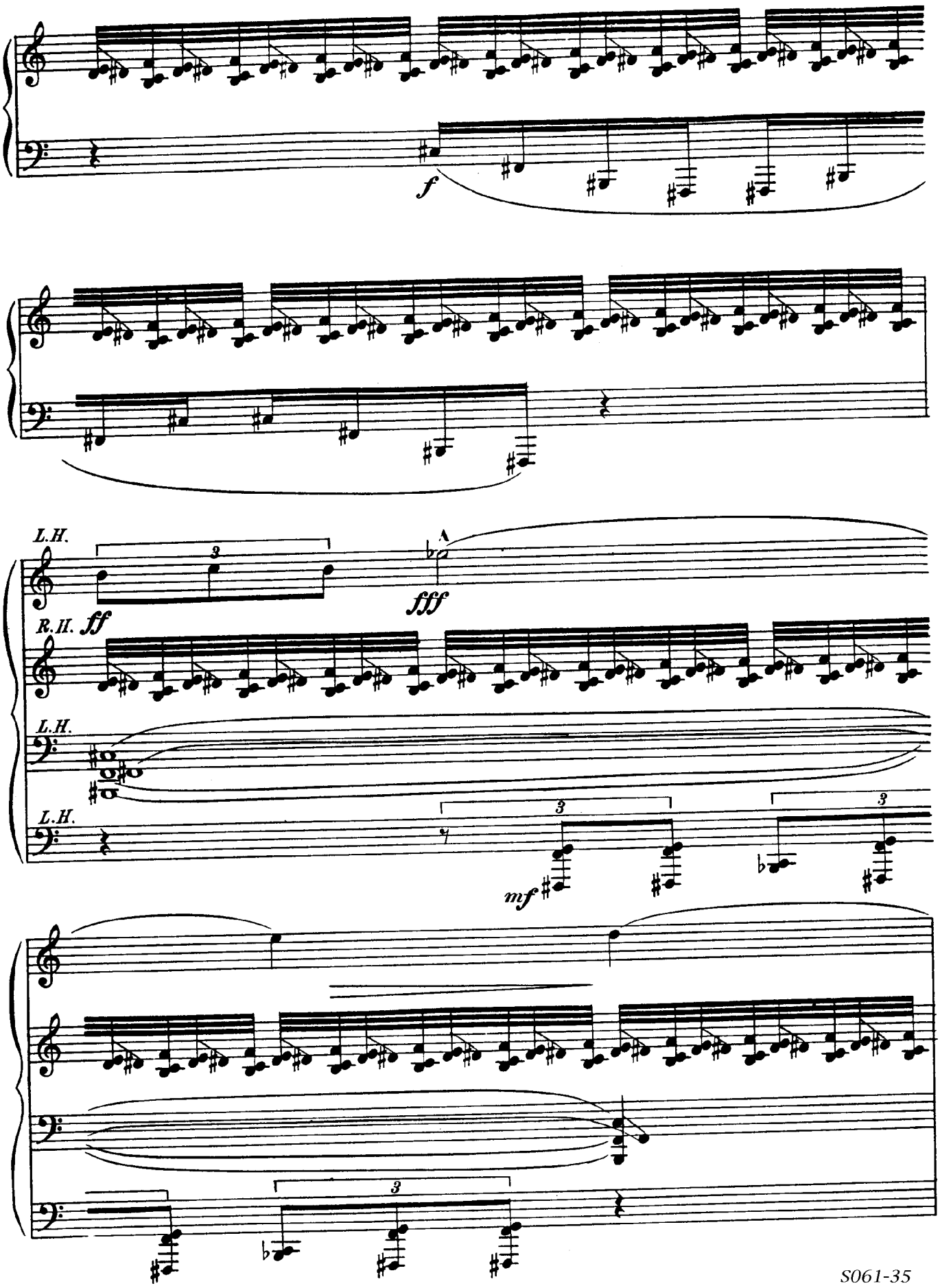


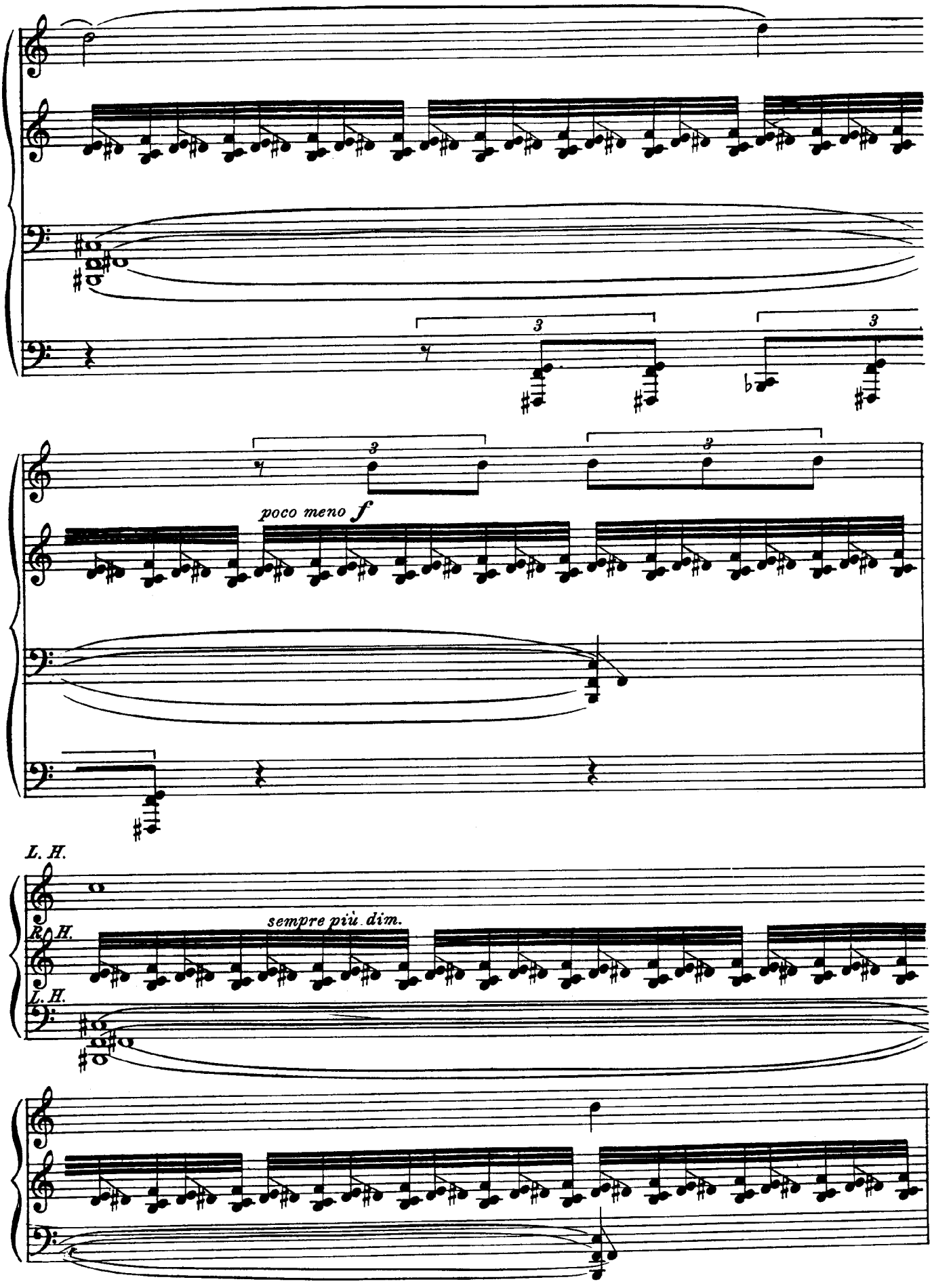

fff
ff
f poco a poco dim.
p
molto dim e rit.

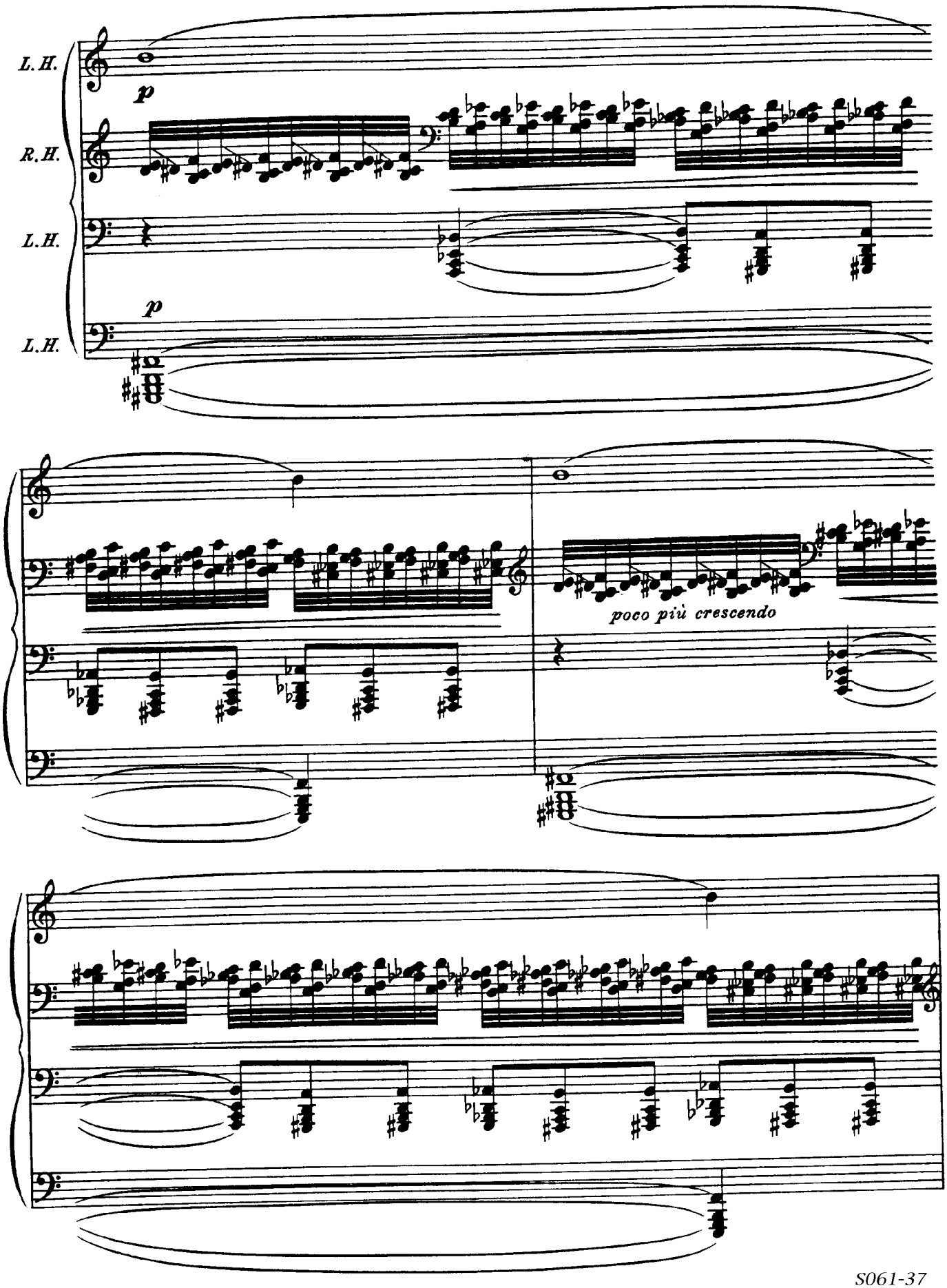

R. H.
Andantino
p ed espressivo
R. H.
L. H.
pp

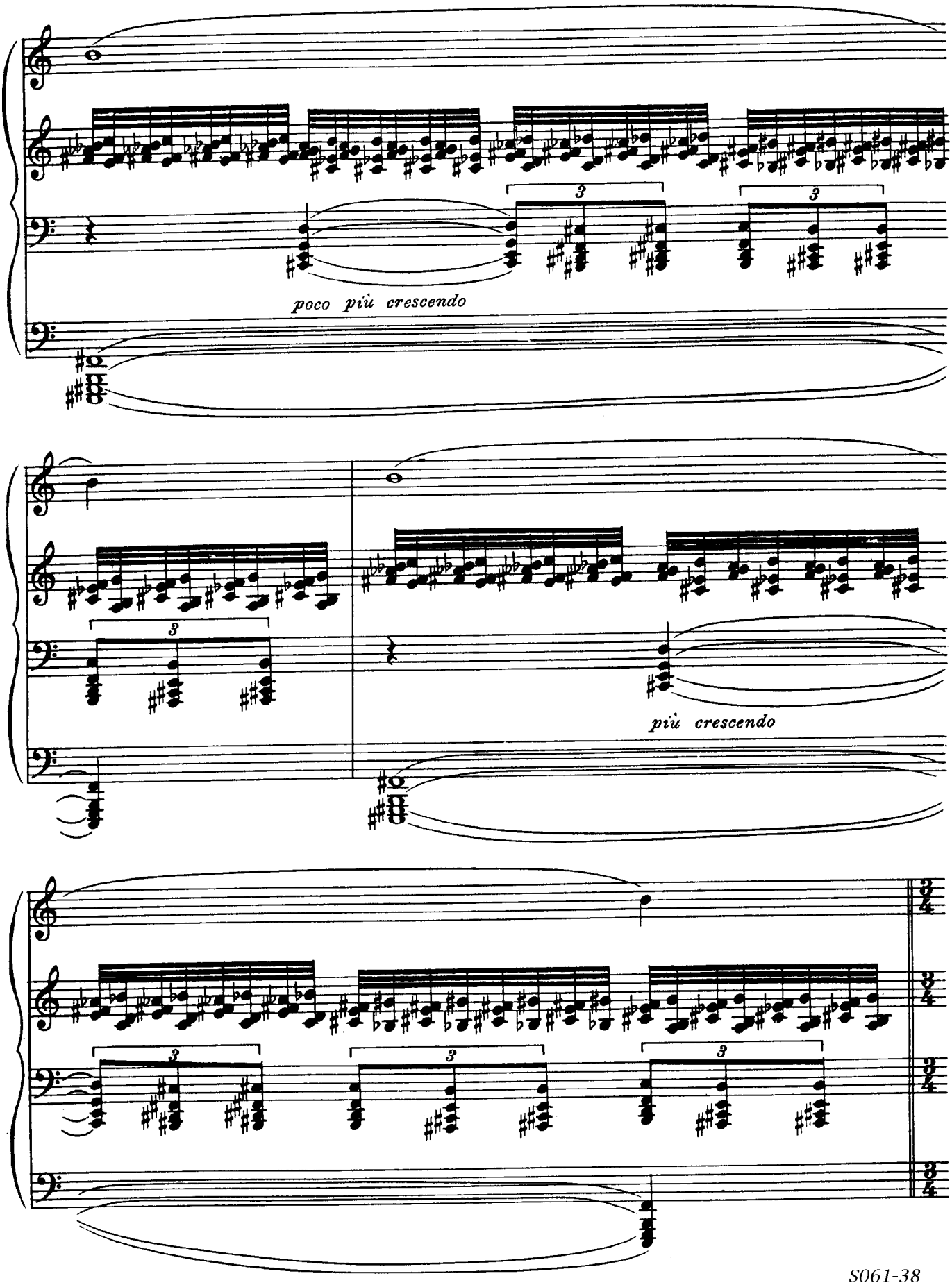

crescendo
dim.
Tempo Imo
mf
più f
L.H.
molto appassionato
3
f marcato
R.H.
f
L.H.

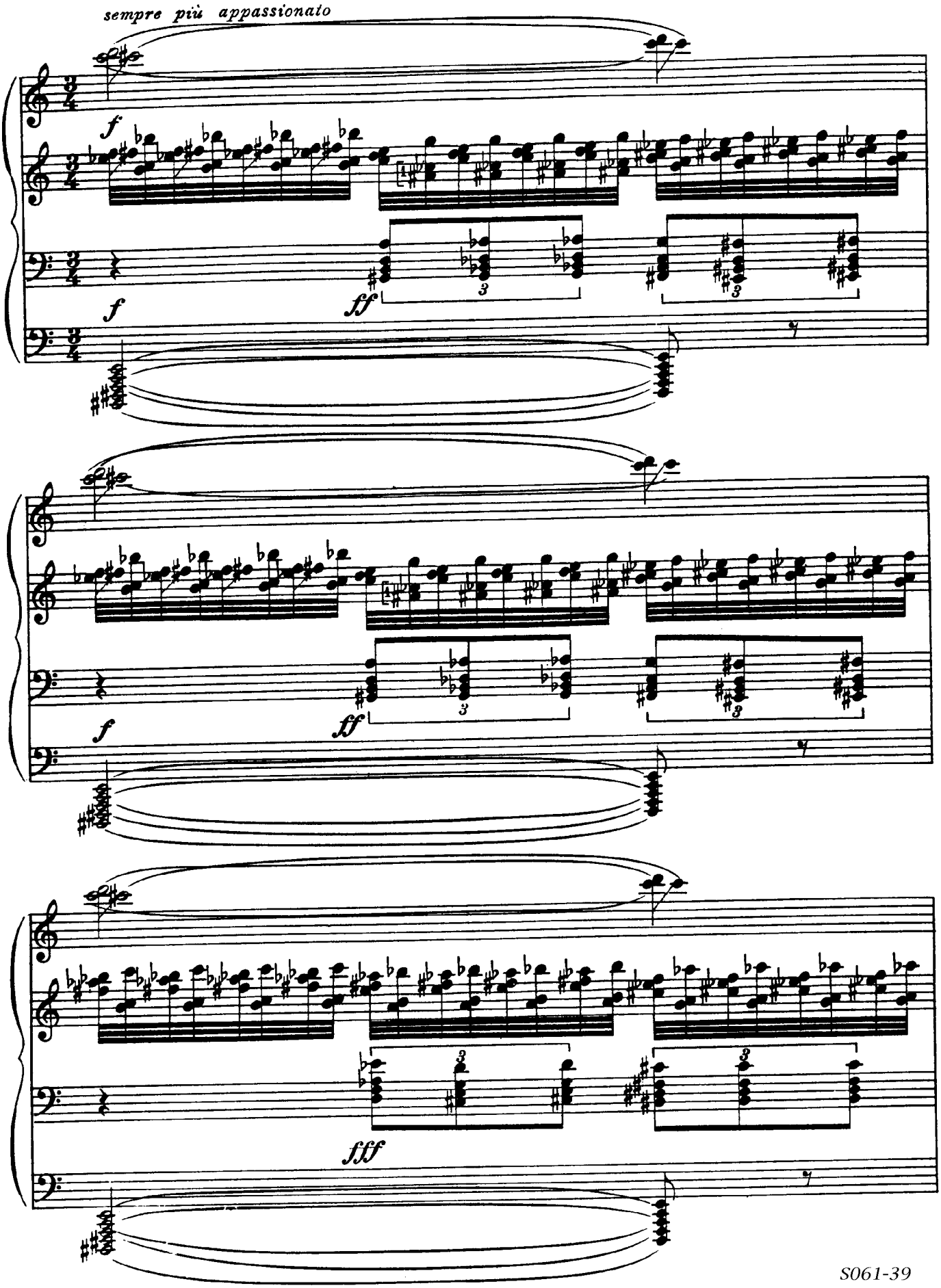

f
L. H.
3
ff
R. H.
f
L. H.

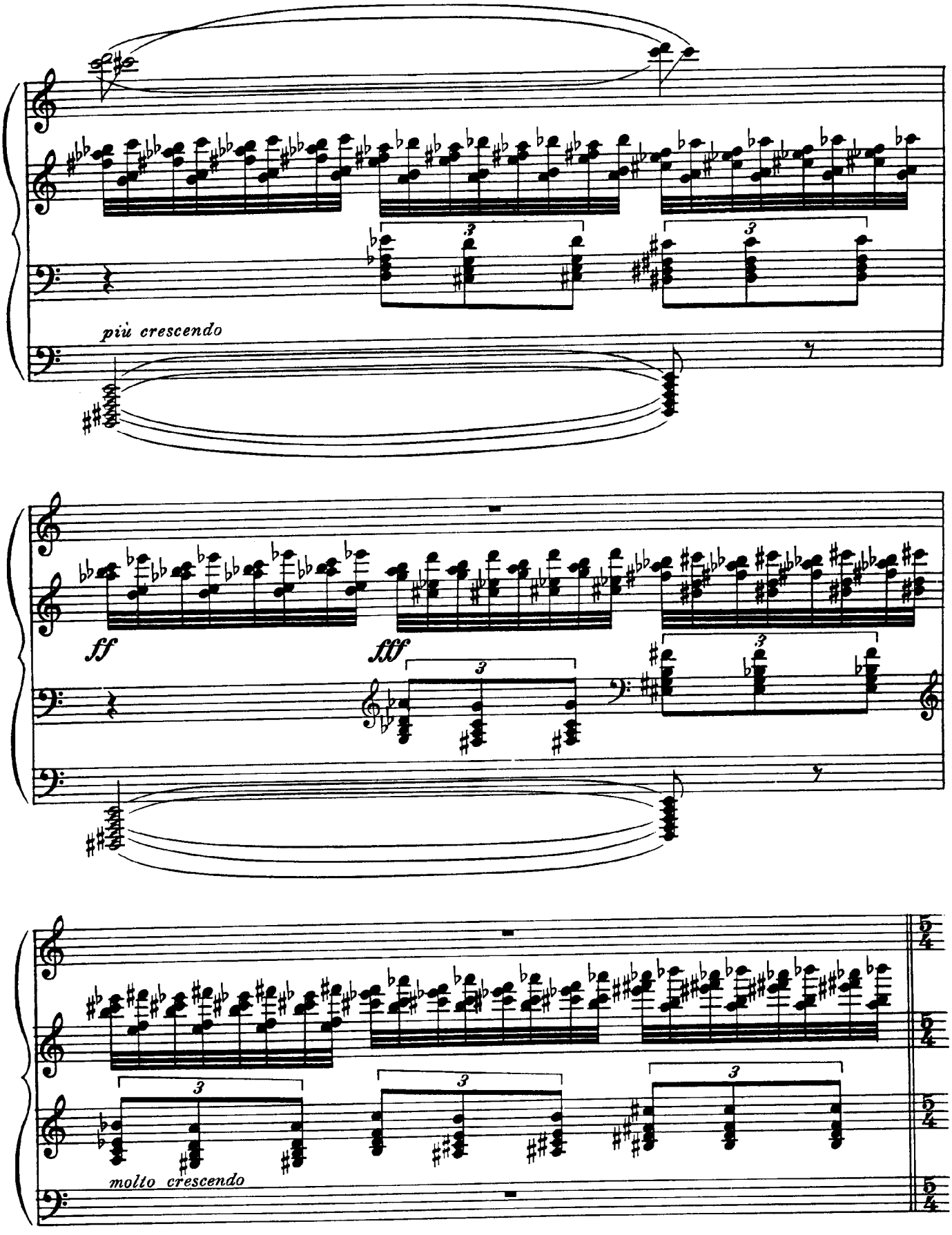

f
L.H.
3
fff
R.H. ff
L.H.
L.H.
3
3
mf
3

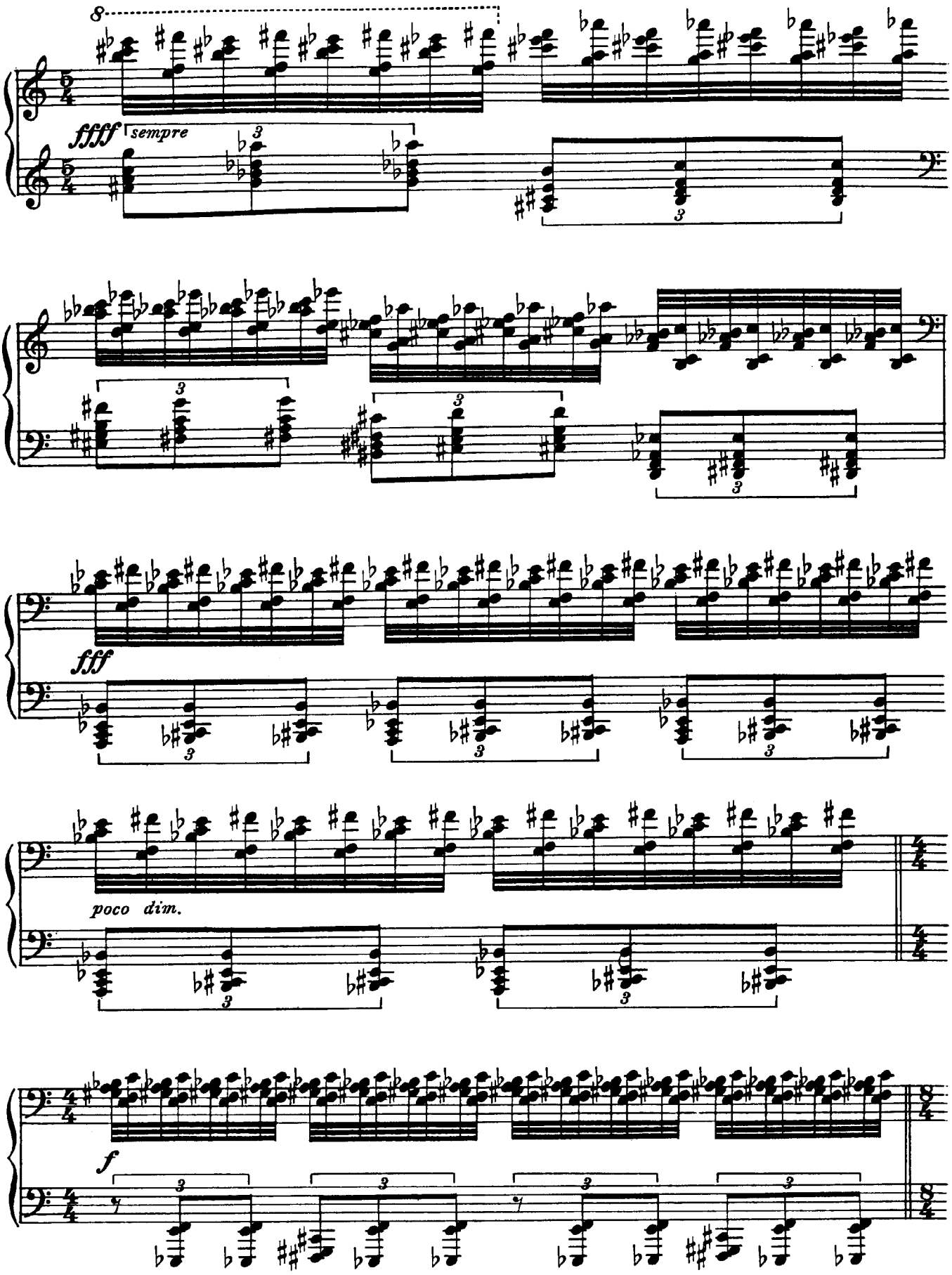

poco meno f
L. H.
R. H.
L. H.
sempre più dim.

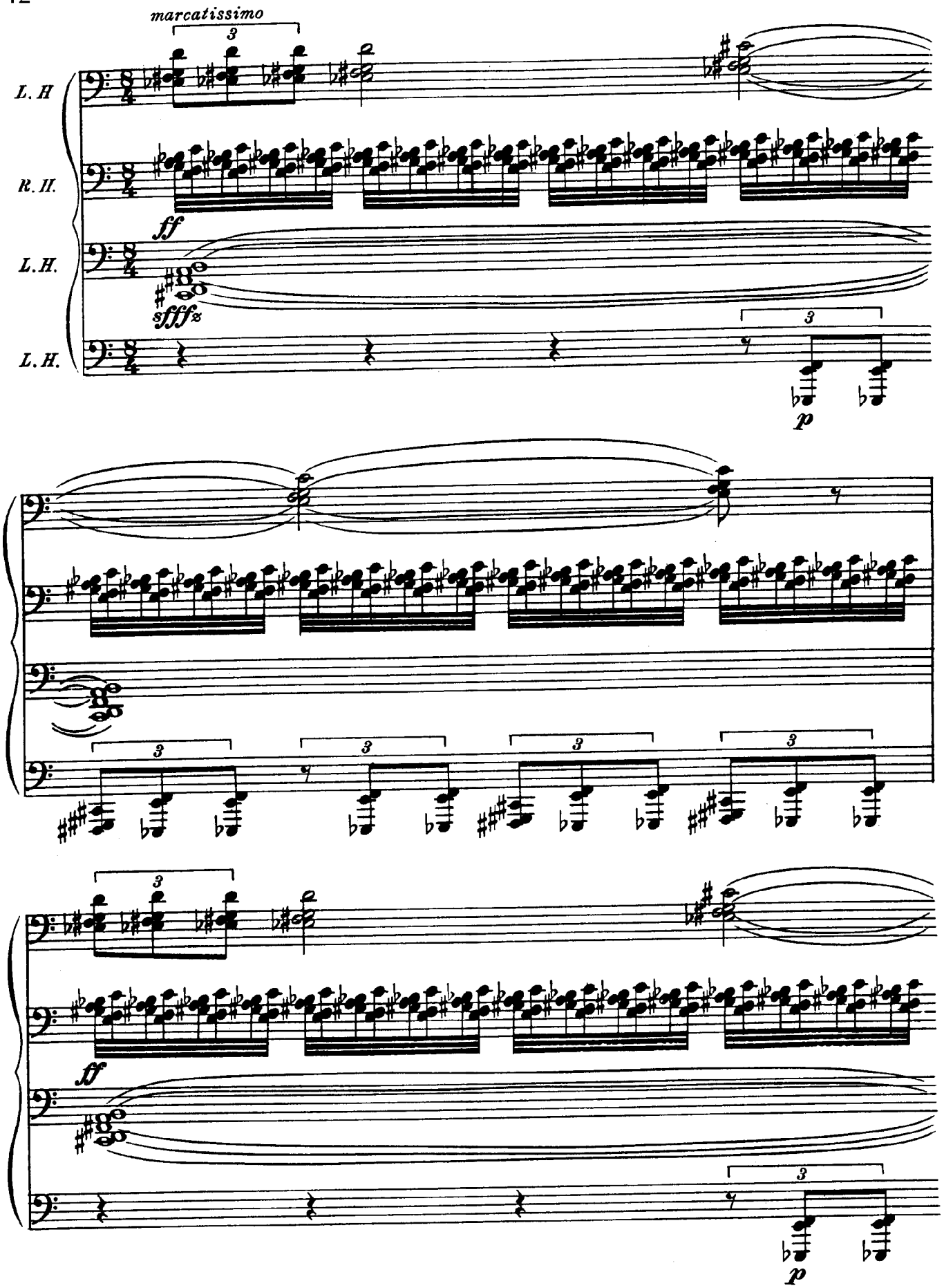

L.H.
p
R.H.
L.H.
p
L.H.
poco più crescendo

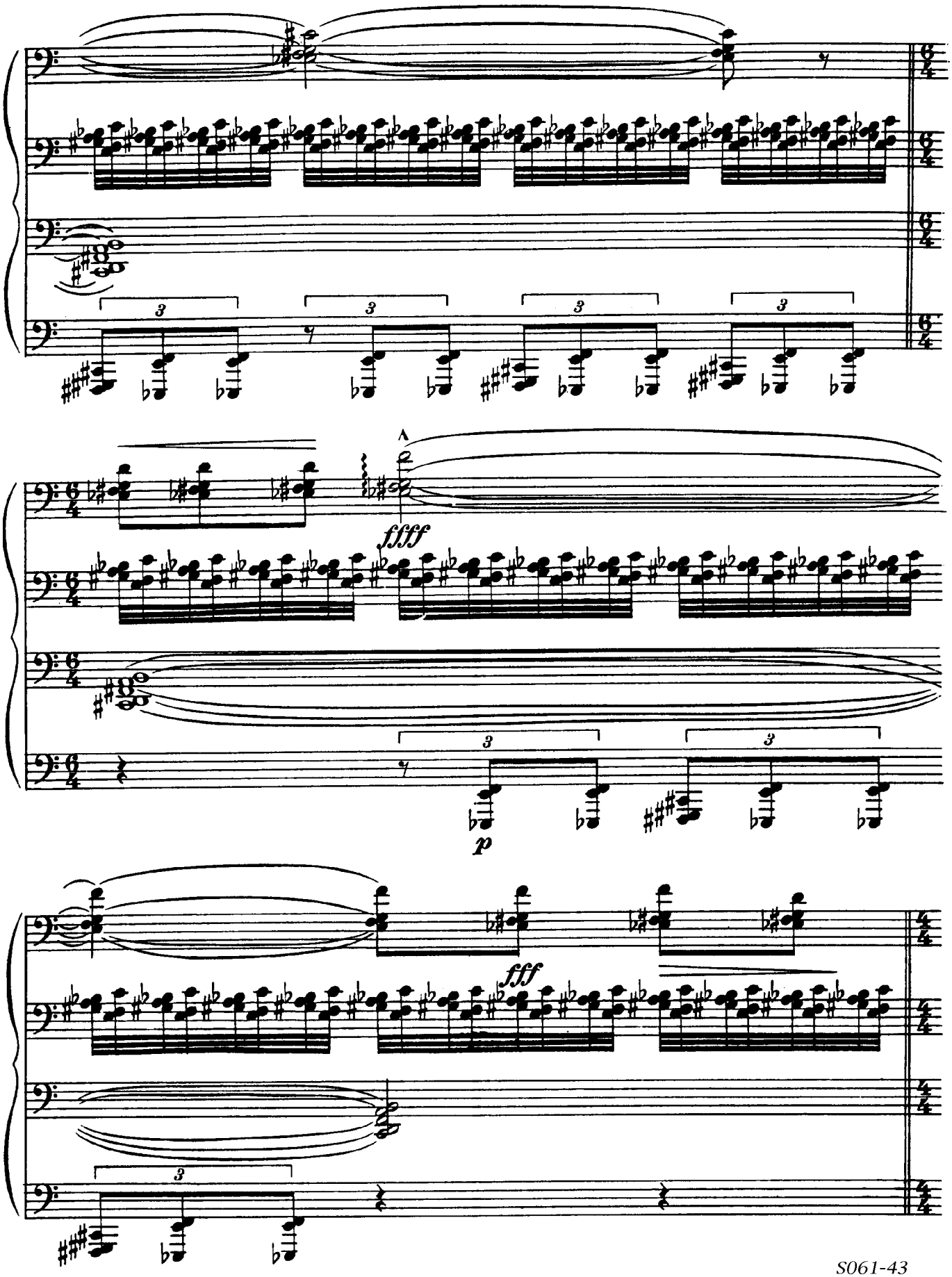

poco più crescendo
più crescendo


sempre più appassionato
f
f
ff
3
3
f
ff
3
3
fff
3
3


più crescendo
ff
fff
molto crescendo


8
ffff
sempre
fff
poco dim.
f


marcatissimo
3
L. H
R. H.
ff
L. H.
sfffz
L. H.
3
p
3
3
3
3
3
ff
3
p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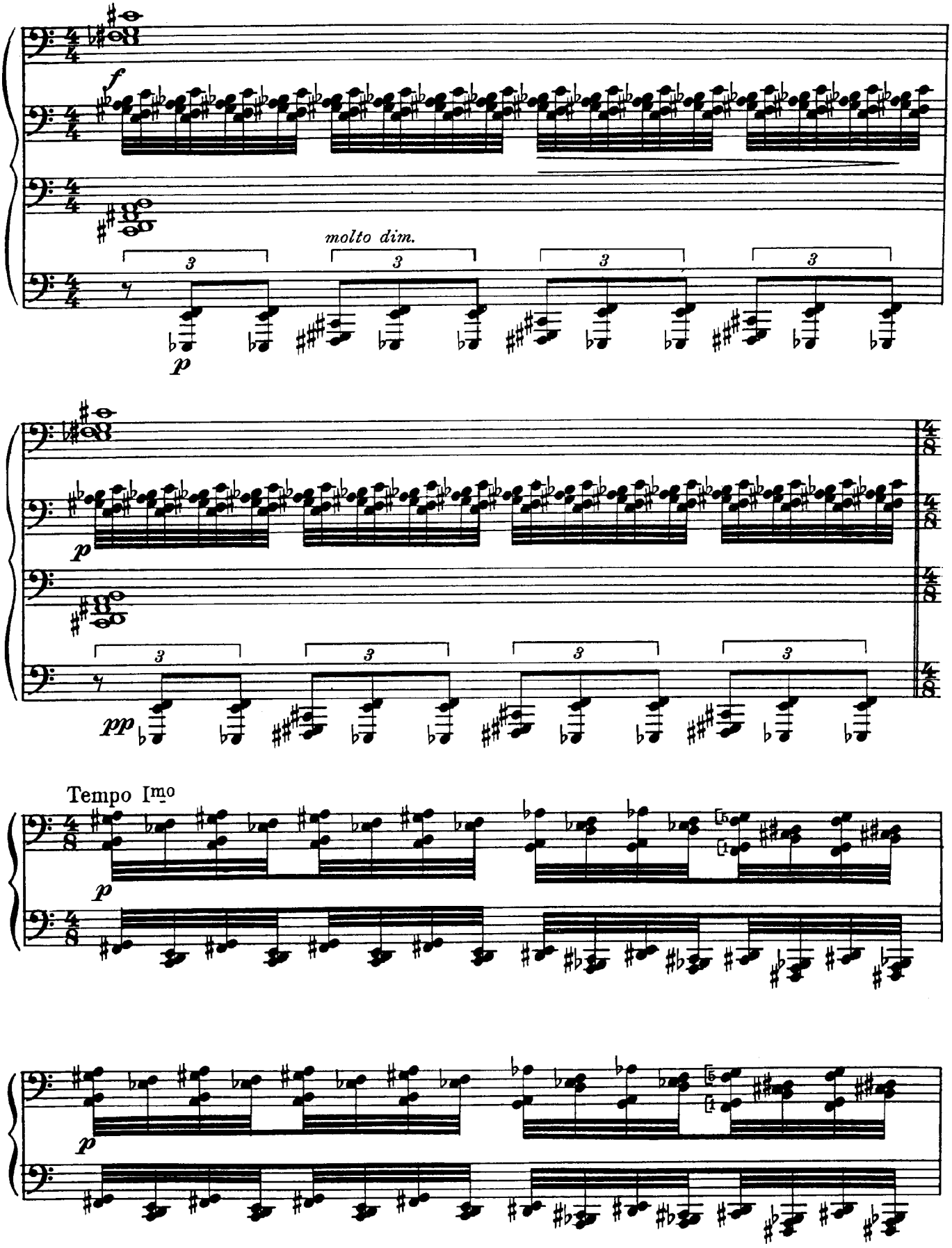
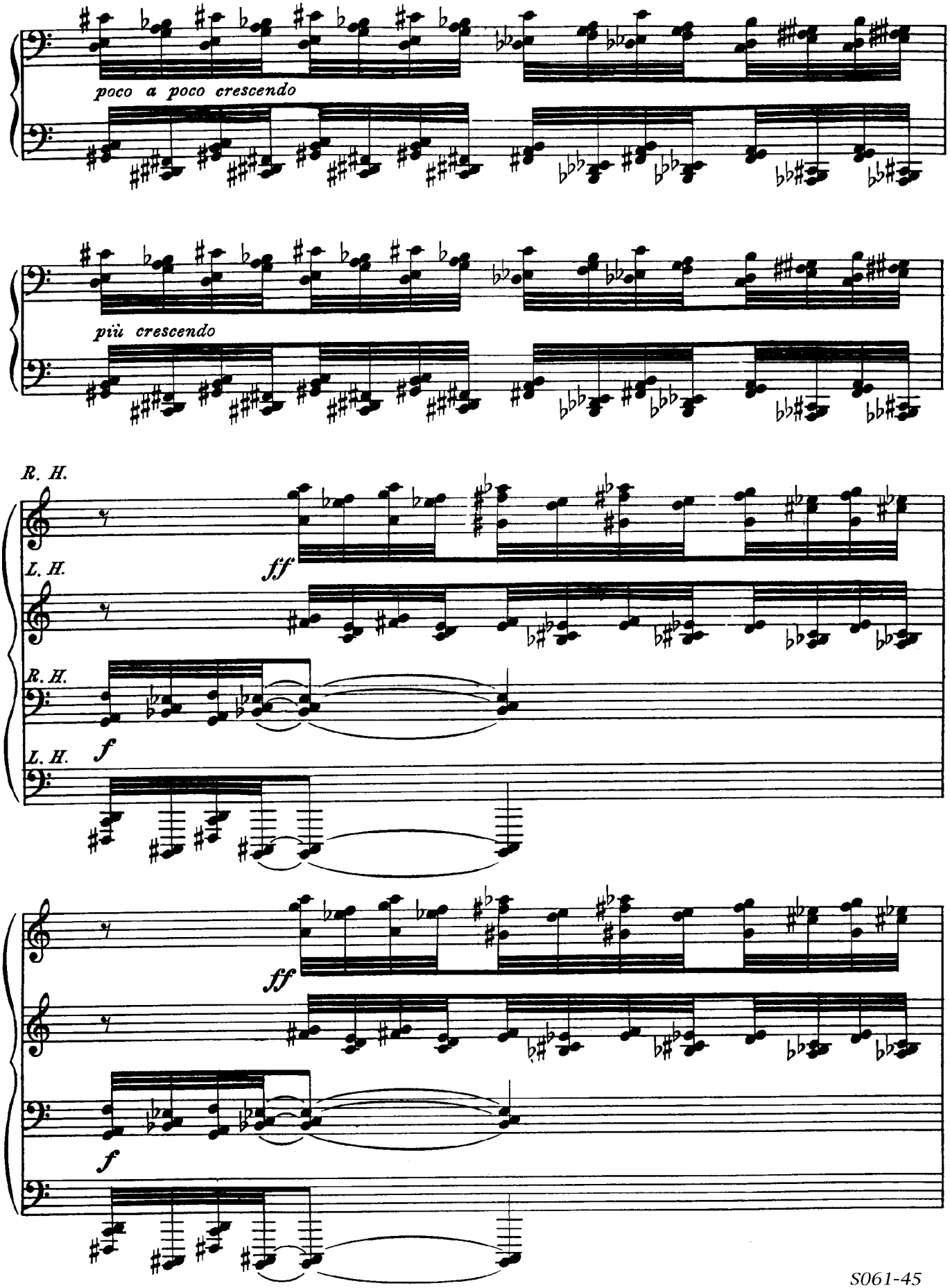
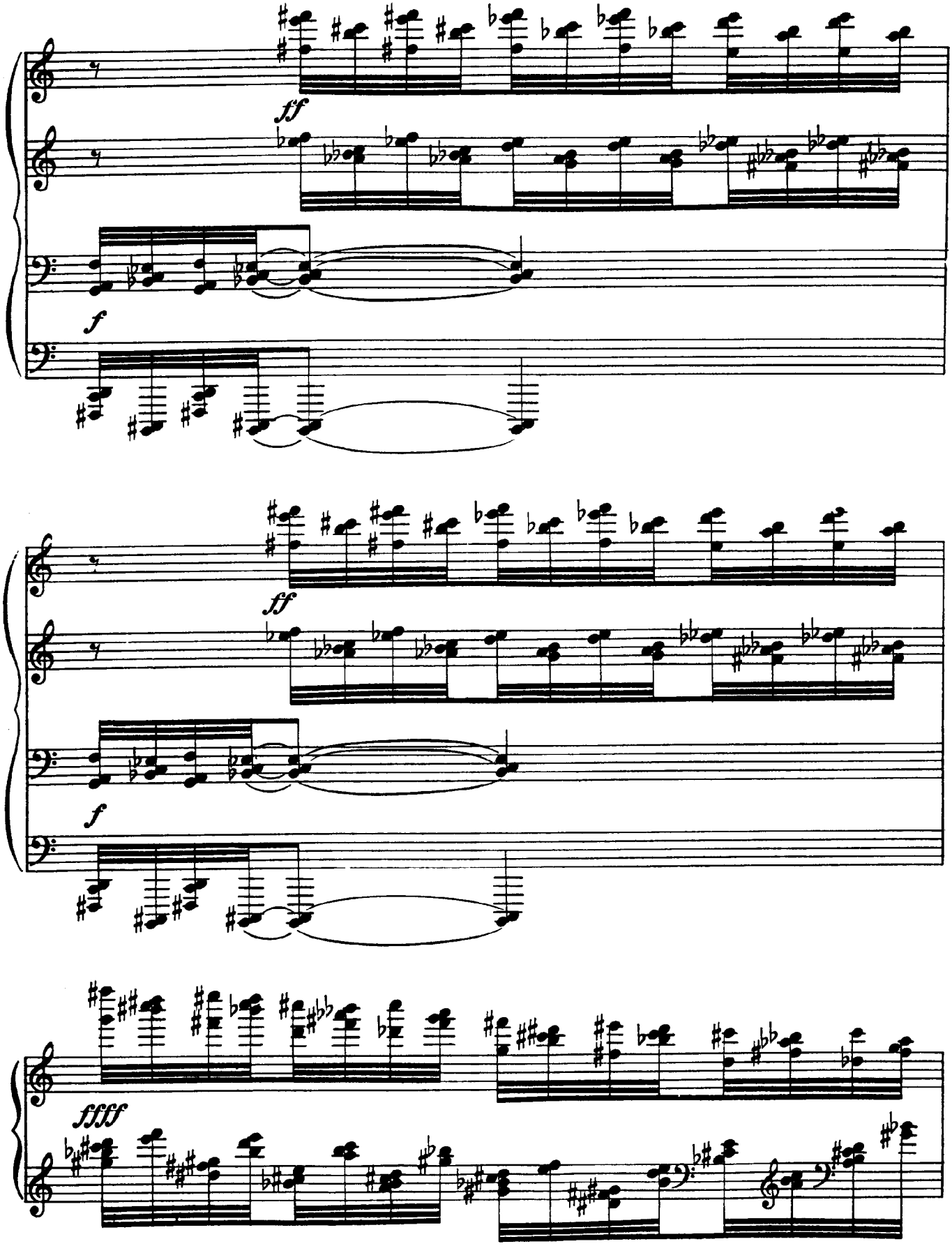
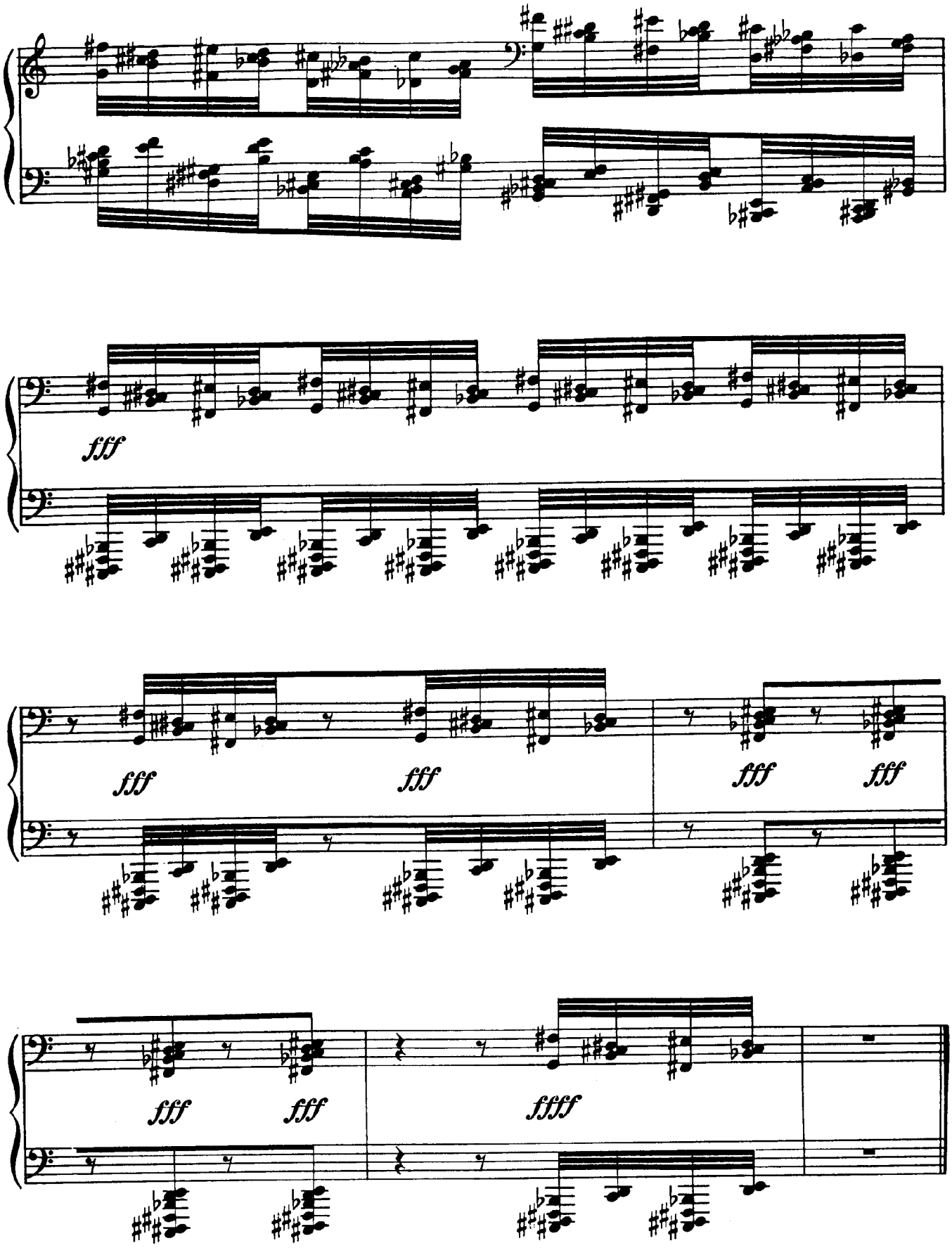
3
3
3
ffff
p
fff

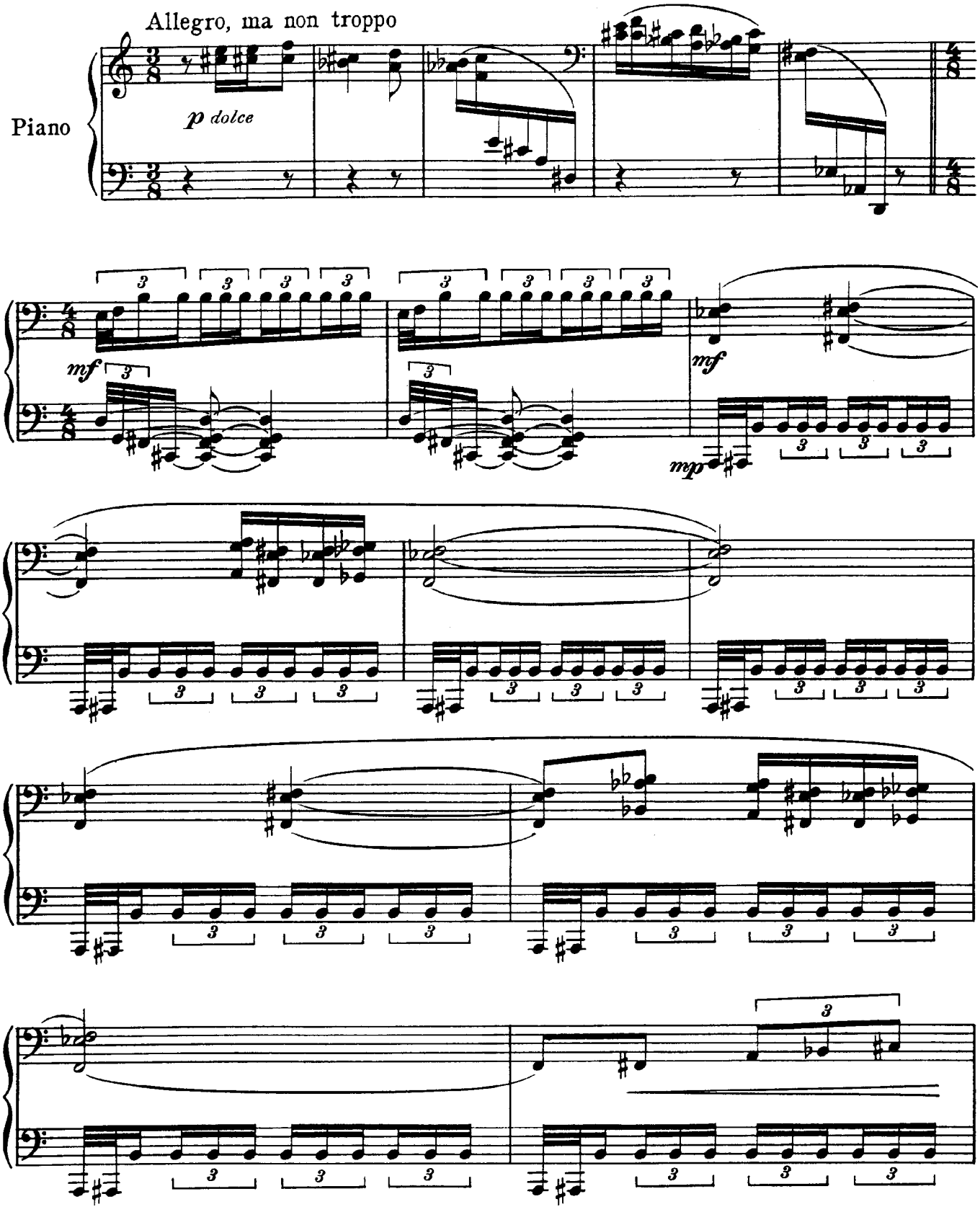

f
molto dim.
3
p
pp
Tempo Imo

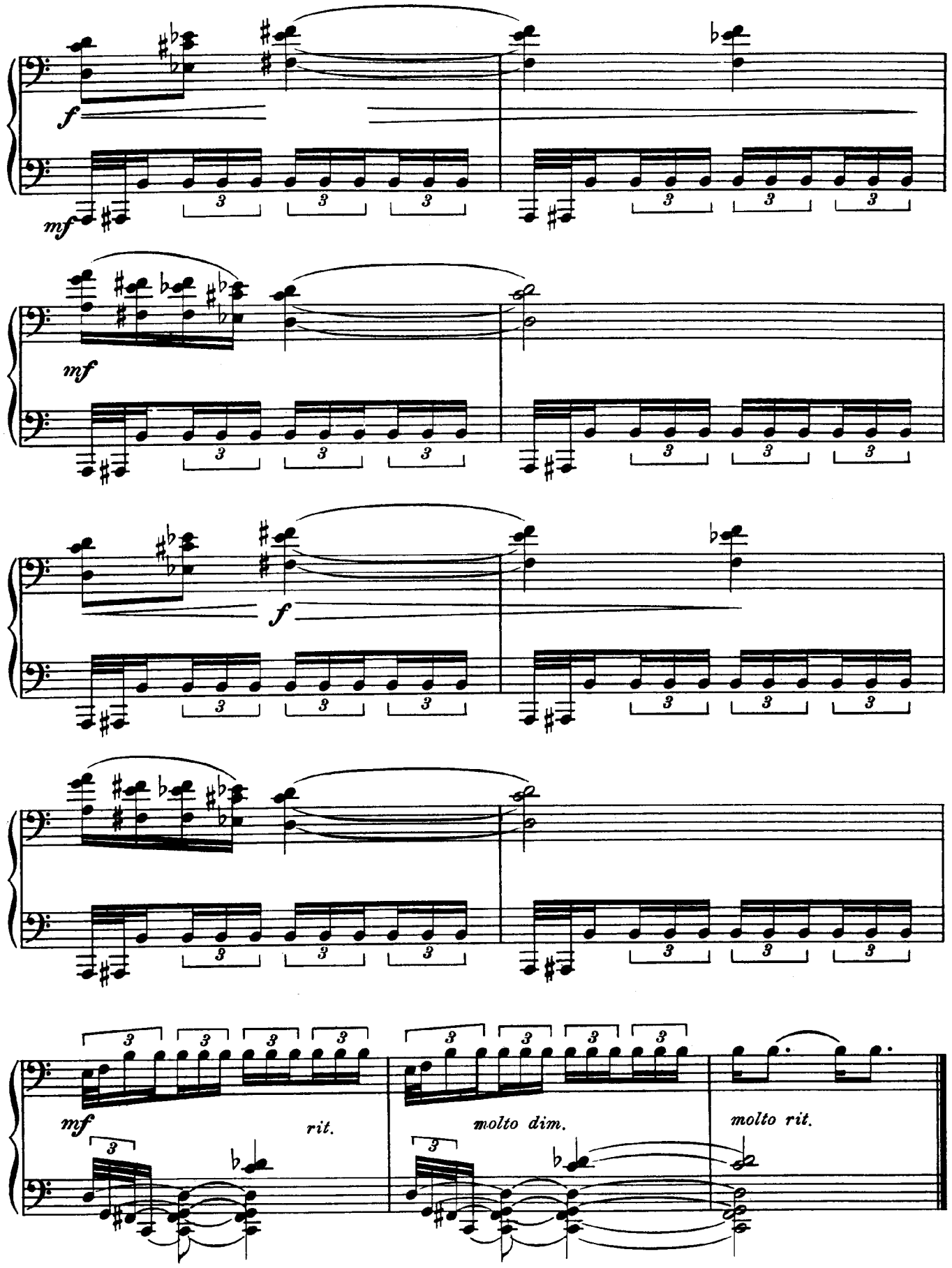

poco a poco crescendo
più crescendo
R. H.
L. H.
ff
R. H.
f
L. H.
ff
f


ff
f
ff
f
ffff

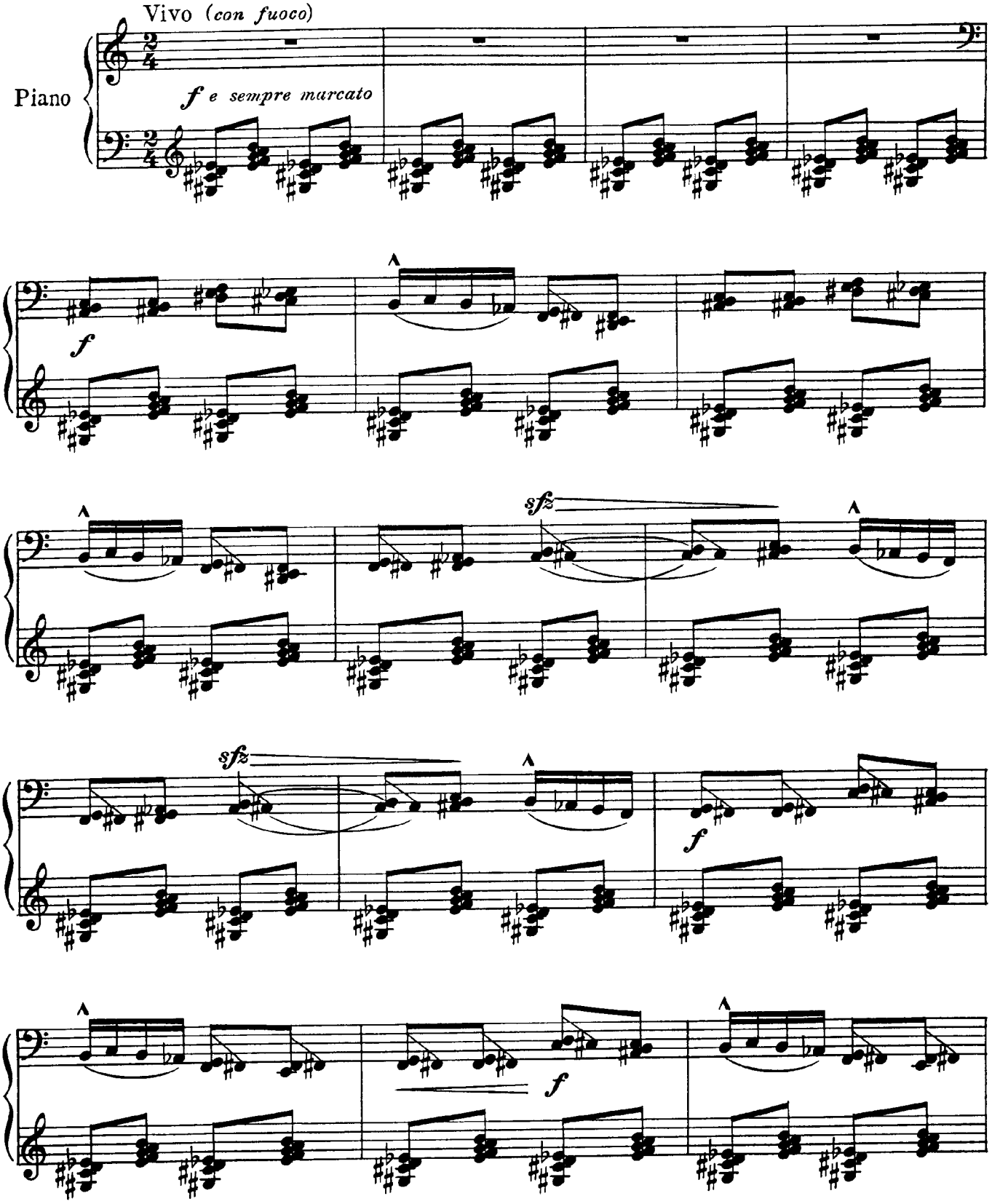

fff
fff
fff
fff
fff
fff
fff
ffff

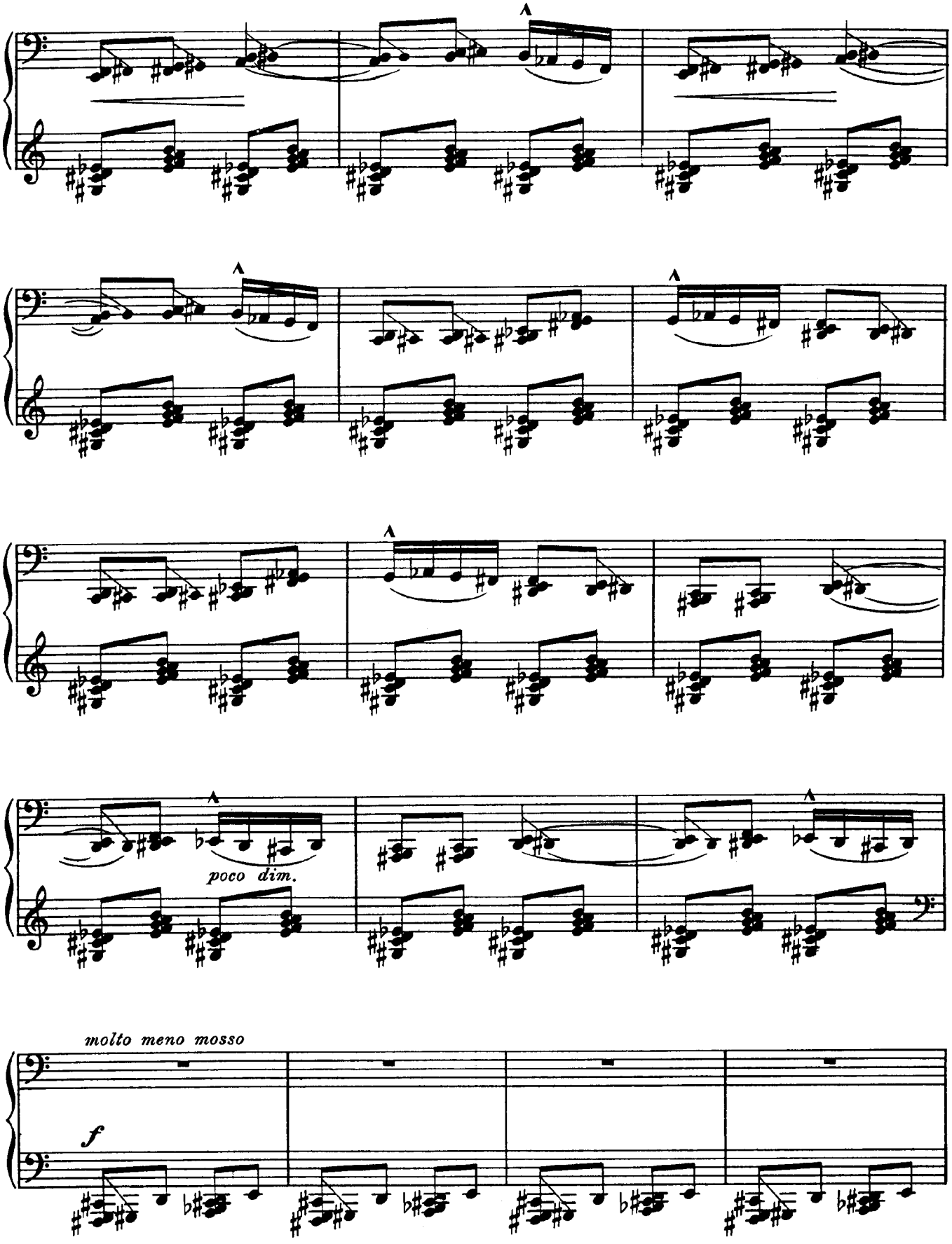
IX.

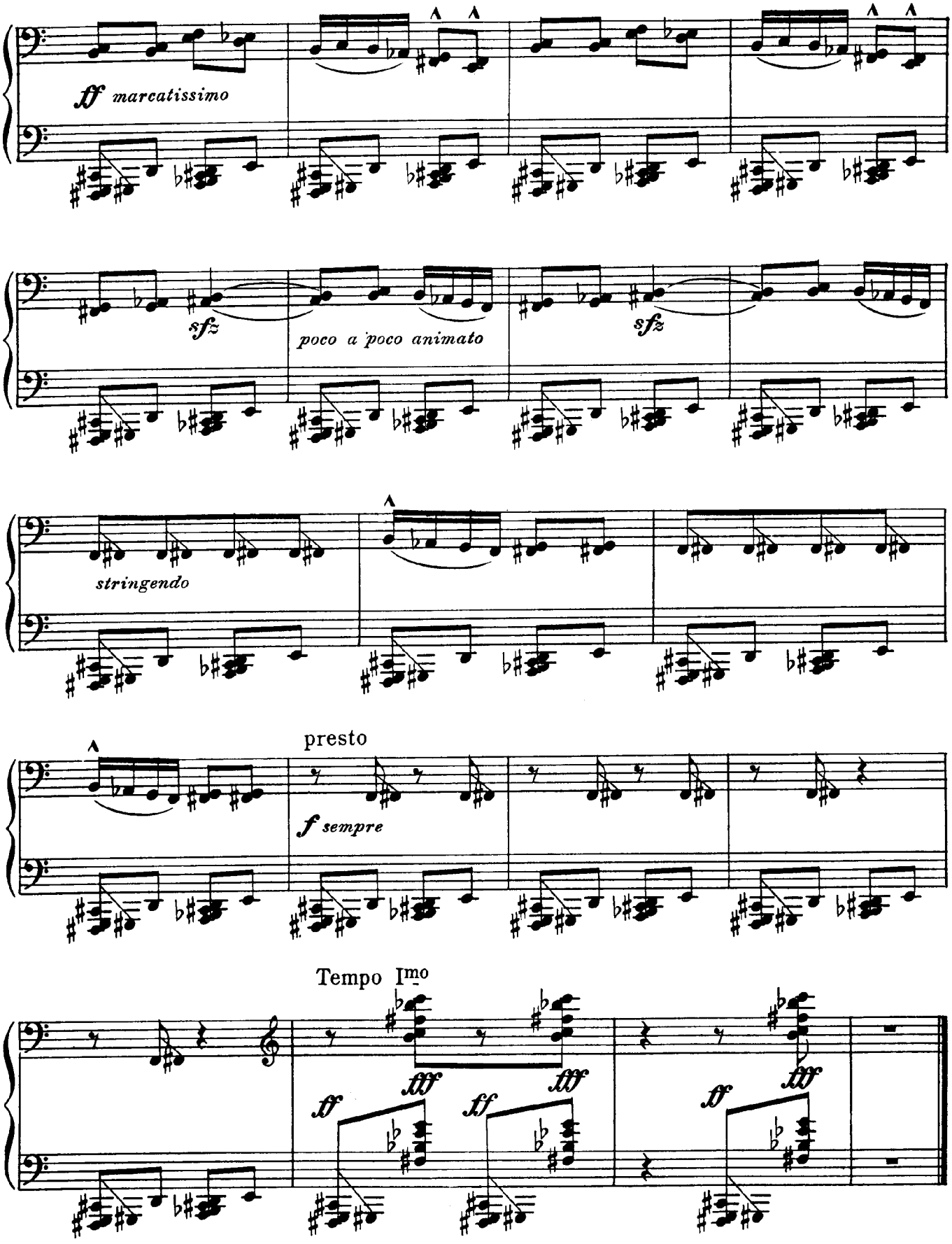
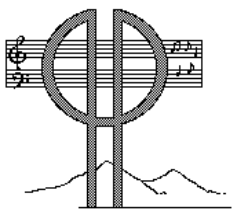
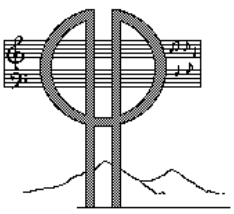



f
mf
mf
f
mf
rit.
molto dim.
molto rit.

X.




poco dim.
molto meno mosso
f


ff marcatissimo
sfz
poco a poco animato
sfz
stringendo
presto
f sempre
Tempo Imo
fff
ff
fff
ff
fff
ff
fff