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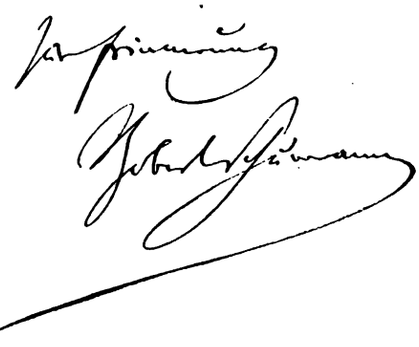

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VOLUME FIVE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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ROBERT AND CLARA SCHUMANN.

ROBERT SCHUMANN

BY

EDVARD GRIEG

SOME years ago, a young lady was sitting at the piano, singing, on board a steamer on the coast of Norway. When she paused a stranger stepped up to her, introducing himself as a lover of music. They fell into conversation, and had not talked long when the stranger exclaimed: "You love Schumann? Then we are friends!" and reached her his hand.

This is characteristic as illustrating the intimate quality in Schumann's art. To meet in quiet comprehension of the master during a mysterious tête-à-tête at a piano—that is genuinely Schumannesque; to swear by his banner in associations and debating clubs, or amid the glare of festal splendor—that is decidedly non-Schumannesque. Schumann has never ostentatiously summoned any body of adherents. He has been a comet without a tail, but, for all that, one of the most remarkable comets in the firmament of art. His worshipers have always been "the single ones." There is something in them of the character of the sensitive mimosa; and they are unhappily so apt to hide themselves and their admiration under the leaves of the "Blue Flower" of romanticism, that it would seem a hopeless undertaking ever to gather them into a closed phalanx, like, for instance, that of the Wagnerians. Schumann has made his way without any other propaganda than that which lies in his works; his progress has therefore been slow, but for that reason the more secure. Without at-

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tempting by artificial means to anticipate the future, he lived and labored in accordance with his own principle: "Only become an ever greater artist and all other things will come to you of their own accord."

That this principle was a sound one has been confirmed by the present generation, by whom Schumann's name is known and loved even to the remotest regions of the civilized world. It is not to be denied, however, that the best years of his artistic activity were passed before the world knew his greatness; and when recognition at last began to come, Schumann's strength was broken. Of this melancholy fact I received a vivid impression when, in the year 1883, I called upon his famous wife, Clara Schumann, in Frankfort-on-the-Main. I fancied she would be pleased to hear of her husband's popularity in so distant a region as my native country, Norway; but in this I was mistaken. Her countenance darkened as she answered dismally, "Yes, *now!*"

The influence which Schumann's art has exercised and is exercising in modern music cannot be overestimated. In conjunction with Chopin and Liszt, he dominates at this time the whole literature of the piano, while the piano compositions of his great contemporary, Mendelssohn, which were once exalted at Schumann's expense, seem to be vanishing from the concert program. In conjunction with his predecessor, Franz Schubert, and in a higher degree than any contemporary,—not even Robert Franz excepted,—he pervades the literature of the musical "romance"; while even here Mendelssohn is relegated *ad acta.* What a strange retribution of fate! It is the old story of Nemesis. Mendelssohn received, as it were, more than his due of admiration in advance; Schumann, less than his due. Posterity balanced their accounts; but, in my opinion, it has, in its demand for justice, identified itself so completely with Schumann and his cause that Mendelssohn has been unfairly treated or directly wronged. This is true, however, only as regards the piano and the musical romance; in orchestral compositions Mendelssohn still maintains his position, while Schumann has taken a place at his side as his equal. I say his equal, for surely no significance can be attached to the circumstance that a certain part of the younger generation (Wagnerians chiefly) have fallen into the habit of treating Schumann as an orchestral composer, *de haut en bas.* These enthusiasts, being equipped with an excess of self-esteem, and holding it to be their duty to level everything which, according to their opinion, interferes with the free view of the Bayreuth master, venture to shrug their shoulders at Schumann's instrumentation, to deny his symphonic sense, to attack the structure of his periods and his plastic faculty. They do not hesitate to characterize his entire orchestral composition as a failure; and in order to justify this indictment they declare frankly that his orchestral works are only instrumentalized piano music. The fact that Schumann did not occupy himself with Mendelssohn's formally piquant effects and was not an orchestral virtuoso

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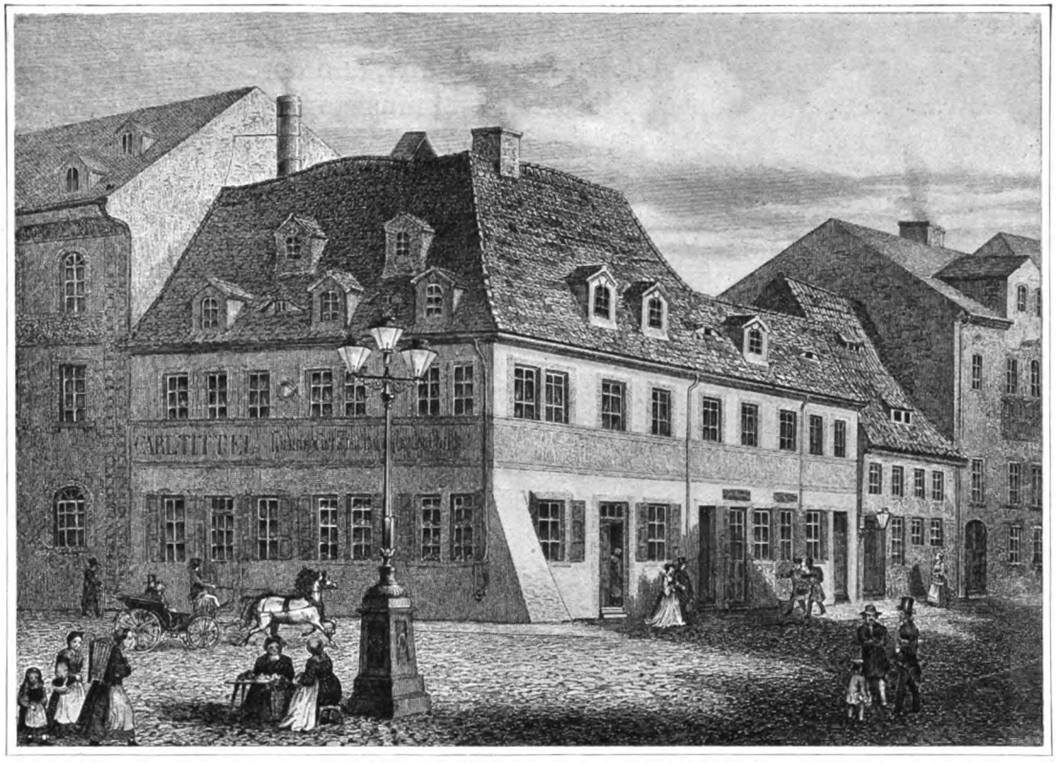

HOUSE IN ZWICKAU WHERE SCHUMANN WAS BORN.

in the style of Wagner is turned upside down in the effort totally to deny him both the plastic sense and the faculty of instrumentation. At the same time they refuse to recognize the idealism which, primarily, makes Schumann the world-conquering force he has now actually become.

All this seems too ridiculous, too stupid, to need refutation. Nevertheless, this propaganda of pure conceit has of late become so prevalent that it has gained a certain authority, and has even found a most sensational expression in the press. It would, therefore, seem to be the appropriate time for investigating it a little closely. It is perfectly well known where the commotion had its origin. It will be remembered that in the year 1879 an article appeared in the "Bayreuther Blätter" entitled "Concerning Schumann's Music," signed Joseph Rubinstein, but (this is an open secret) unquestionably inspired, and probably more than inspired, by no less a man than Richard Wagner. The style, the tone, as well as the inconsiderate audacity with which the writer hurled forth his taunts, the public recognized as truly Wagnerian, and promptly designated the Bayreuth master as the one who must bear the responsibility of its authorship, in spite of the fact that he had attempted to disguise himself by simpler constructions than those which we recognize in his signed writings. In this incredible production Schumann's art is by all possible and impossible means reduced to absurdity. Not a shred of honor is left to it. The

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very greatest qualities of the master — his glowing fancy and his lofty lyrical flights — are dragged down into the dirt, and described as the most monstrous conventionality. His orchestral music, his piano compositions, his songs, are all treated with the same contempt. One does not know which ought to be the greater object of astonishment, the man who did put his name to this pamphlet, or the man who did not. The former is said to have been one of Wagner's piano lackeys, who was contemptible enough to allow himself to be used as a screen. There is nothing more to be said of him, except that he will not even attain the fame of a Herostratos.

Upon Wagner's relation to Schumann, however, this article throws so interesting a light that it cannot well be overlooked. Of course, Wagner as a man is here left out of consideration; but from out of the depth of my admiration for Wagner the *artist*, I can only affirm that he was as one-sided as he was great. As regards Schumann, the very opposite is true. He was anything but one-sided. He is, in many respects, a remarkable counterpart of Liszt. The rare faculty possessed by both these masters of recognizing anything great and new that was stirring about them forms a contrast, as beneficent as it is evident, to that unintelligent and illiberal opinion of the greatest contemporary talents which is so prominent a trait of Wagner, and (in his attitude toward Schumann) also of Mendelssohn. Compare only the harsh judgments of Wagner on Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms — to name only the most important — with Schumann's warm and sympathetic criticism of the great men of his day, as it is found on nearly every page of his collected writings; and it will be necessary to take exception to the poet's declaration, "*Alles grosse ist einseitig.*" Schumann has, indeed, raised a most beautiful monument to himself in his unprejudiced judgment of all that was valuable among his surroundings. I need only refer to his introduction into the musical world of such names as Berlioz, Chopin, Brahms, Gade, etc. We find him in his youth so busily occupied in clearing the way for others that we are left to wonder how, at the same time, he found it possible to develop his own deep soul as he must have done in the first great creative period of his life, which, however, was chiefly devoted to piano music. What a new and original spirit! What wealth, what depth, what poetry, in these compositions! The fantasia in C major, with its daring flight, and its hidden undertone for him who listens secretly (*für den der heimlich lauscht*), as the motto declares; the F sharp minor sonata, with its romantic enthusiasm and its burlesque abandon; Kreisleriana, the Carnaval, Davidsbündlertänze, Novellettes,— only to name a few of his principal works,— what a world of beauty, what intensity of emotional life, are hidden in these! And what bewitching harmony — out of the very soul of the piano — for him who is able to interpret, for him who can and will hear! But the above-mentioned Bayreuth hireling has not taunts enough for Schumann's

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Le Paradis et la Péri (Finale)

R. Schumann

A Monsieur Duchâtel

H. Fantin

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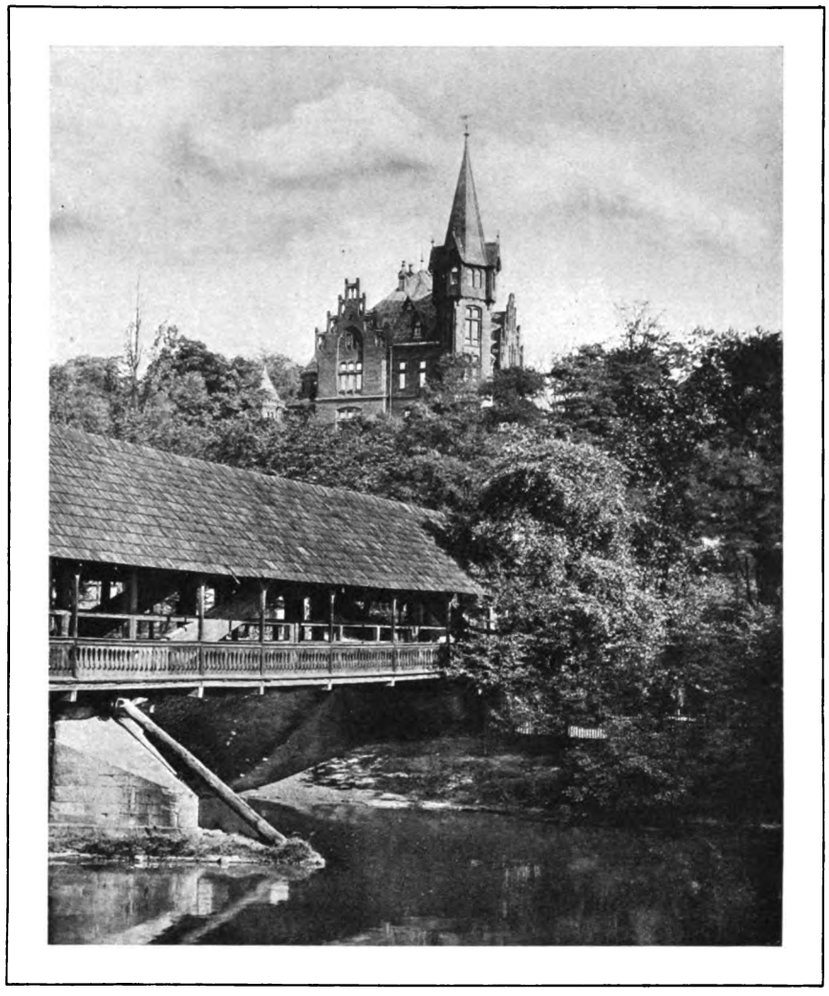
piano music, which he finds to be written in a certain virtuoso style that is absolutely false and on the surface. "The difficult passages in Schumann," he says, "are effective only when, as is mostly the case, they are brought out obscurely and blurred."



ZWICKAU, SCHUMANN'S BIRTHPLACE.

A poor witticism! And then this talk about virtuoso style, falseness, and objectiveness in Schumann's piano-phrasing! Can anything more unjust be imagined? For one ought, rather, to emphasize his moderation in his use of virtuoso methods, as compared, for instance, with Liszt or Chopin. To accuse him of unadaptability for the piano amounts of course to a denial of familiarity with the piano; but it is a fact well known to every genuine piano-player that Schumann could not have written a single one of his many piano compositions without the most intimate familiarity with the subtilest secrets of that instrument. Nor need any

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one be told that he was a most admirable player. One of the best friends of Schumann's youth, the late Ernst Ferdinand Wenzel, teacher at the Leipsic Conservatory, with whom I often talked about the master, used to recall with a sad pleasure the many evenings, in the olden time, when he would sit at twilight in the corner of the sofa in Schumann's den, and listen to his glorious playing.

The attempt to turn the master's greatest and most obvious merits into defects is such sharp practice that one would be justified in attributing to its author an acquaintance with that "jurisprudence" which he flings into Schumann's face, with reproaches for having devoted too much time to it at the expense of his music. However much energy and infernal ingenuity in the invention of charges one may be disposed to concede to the writer, here — in the question of the technic of the piano — he has allowed his zeal to run away with him to such an extent that he has forgotten to cover himself. In wishing to hit Schumann, he hits himself. He openly betrays how destitute he himself is of any idea of the technic of the piano. Liszt, whose judgment on the subject of everything relating to the piano Wagner on other occasions respected, expressed, as is well known, a very different opinion of Schumann's piano compositions, of which he always spoke with the warmest admiration, and in the appreciation of which he was an enthusiastic and powerful pioneer. Liszt advocated Schumann's claims at a time when no one else ventured to do it. Wagner, on the contrary, tried to make an end of him long after his death, when his reputation was as firmly established as that of Wagner himself. If this matter concerned Wagner only as an individual, I should not undertake to discuss it in an article on Schumann. But it concerns, in my opinion, in an equal degree, Wagner the artist. It is possible that Wagner the individual *would* not recognize Schumann's greatness; but it is absolutely certain that Wagner the artist *could* not recognize it. His effort to dethrone Schumann was a total failure, for the simple reason that it was not feasible. Schumann stands where he stood, impregnable — as does Wagner.

So much for Schumann the piano-composer. When I turn to his chamber music, I find here, too, some of his most beautiful inspirations. It has been asserted that he is greatest in the smaller forms. But the quintet, the piano quartet, the trio in D minor, both the sonatas for the violin, and the quartets for stringed instruments in A major and A minor, afford sufficient evidence that where a larger mold was required he had also a wealth of beauty at his command. It is not to be denied that in his tone-blending of piano and stringed instruments he never attained the height which Mendelssohn and Schubert reached. It has also been affirmed that he neglects absolute harmony, that his stringed instruments, carrying the melody, do not always enter in the most appropriate places, etc. But such things are trifles which an intelligent conception and careful study will easily remedy. The principal thing — viz., the splendid im-

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A MELODY OF SCHUMANN.

From the lithograph by Fantin-Latour.

pulse and illusion — is rarely wanting. Minor impracticabilities, which hundreds of smaller spirits easily avoid, are, strange to say, to be met with in Schumann. In the piano quartet, for instance, he has had the delightful idea of uniting the *andante* and the *finale* thematically. But the retuning of the cello from the deep B flat to C, which is here absolutely required, excludes the immediate transition to the last movement, whereby the exquisite effect which has been obviously intended is lost.

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The three quartets for stringed instruments (Op. 41) are conceived with as much originality as love. Schumann, to be sure, often ignores the traditional notion that the character of the quartet for stringed instruments is solely polyphonic.[1] Hence the complaint of want of style in his quartets, as well as the charge that the instruments do not attain their full musical value. But who, having heard, for instance, the distinguished performance of the quartet in A major by Brodsky and his fellow-artists, will forget the flood of harmony which Schumann can entice from stringed instruments when they are in the hands of great artists? It is related by reliable contemporaries that these quartets did not find favor in Mendelssohn's eyes. It was during the intercourse of these masters in Leipsic that Schumann confided to Mendelssohn that he had suddenly been seized with a desire to write quartets for stringed instruments, but that he had just taken steps to carry out a long-cherished plan to visit Italy, and was therefore in a dilemma.

"Remain here and write the quartets," was Mendelssohn's counsel, which Schumann accepted. He remained in Leipsic, and concentrated the whole strength of his soul upon the completion of the task which he had set himself. When Mendelssohn, however, received the quartets, he is reported to have said: "I rather wish now that Schumann had gone to Italy."

We ought not to wonder at this. Mendelssohn never, or at least very rarely, departed in his works for stringed instruments from the severest principles of polyphony, as practised by Haydn, Mozart, and by Beethoven in his earlier works. Schumann had his roots rather in the later works of Beethoven, where the latter, like Schubert, is not afraid of applying homophony, or even symphonic orchestral style, in quartets for stringed instruments. Upon this fact rests, in part, the opinion that Mendelssohn and Schumann, though they may be named as contemporaries, are yet far apart, the former closing a great artistic period, the classic, and the latter preparing and introducing a no less great one, the romantic. Both these masters met, as it were, upon the same threshold. But they certainly did not pass each other coldly by. On the contrary, they paused to exchange many a winged word. It is not to be denied, however, that it would have been better for Schumann if he had listened less to Mendelssohn's maxims and set more store by his own. His admiration for Mendelssohn is beautiful, but there is in this beauty a certain weakness, and this is, perhaps, closely connected with his later tragic fate.

A survey of Schumann's art will disclose the fact that, when emerged from his youth and early manhood, he was no longer able, as it seems, to think his own thoughts with full consistency to the end. He was afraid of himself. It was as if he did not dare to acknowledge the results of the

[1] A method of composition in which two or more voice-parts are simultaneously combined without losing their independent character, but with harmonious effect.

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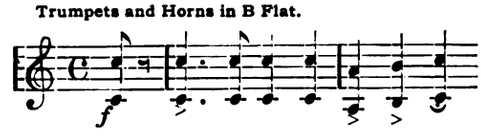
enthusiasm of his youth. Thus it happened that he frequently sought shelter in the world of Mendelssohn's ideas. From the moment he did this he passed his zenith; his soul was sick; he was doomed long before the visible symptoms of insanity set in. It is therefore a futile labor to seek the real Schumann in his latest works, as one may do in the case of Beethoven and Wagner. This is most obvious if we examine his latest choral compositions. But before doing this we have, happily, the satisfaction of cataloguing as masterpieces of imperishable worth a series of orchestral compositions, and, foremost among these, his four symphonies. Who has not been carried away by the youthful freshness of the symphony in B flat major; by the grand form and impulse of the C major symphony, and its wonderful *adagio* with the heaven-scaling altitudes of the violins; by the E flat major symphony, with its mystically medieval E flat minor movement (Schumann is said to have imagined here a procession entering Cologne Cathedral); and finally, who has not marveled at the conception of the D minor symphony, with its tragic exaltation and magnificent unity! Truly, the proud, victorious bugle-blasts which open the first symphony — instinct with a noble self-esteem — are fully justified. About this opening we have, however, an interesting tradition, that it was originally written a third lower, viz.:



But during the first rehearsal it was demonstrated that the old-fashioned instruments then exclusively used could not produce the stopped notes A and B. The practical Mendelssohn was promptly at hand with the suggestion to place this motif a third higher, as we now have it. In this way it came to consist of natural notes only, which could be rendered with all desirable éclat. If Schumann had written his work now, when these instruments have been abandoned, and improved instruments with valves, etc., have taken their places, he would have retained the motif in the tone compass in which it was first conceived, and where, according to the opening of his allegro, it properly belongs. If I were to lead the B flat major symphony at the present time, I should not hesitate to change the passage and carry out Schumann's original intention.

It is this B flat major symphony which the above-mentioned lampooner in the "Bayreuther Blätter" chooses as the target for his most poisonous arrows. Through a long series of musical citations the attempt is made to prove that this work (like all the other orchestral compositions of the master) is made up of an almost uninterrupted succession of what he calls "shoemaker's patches." By this expression he means to indicate "repetitions of musical phrases in related tone intervals, which pupils in composi-

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tion are especially wont to toil over in their first labors." Now, however, in the year 1893, every musician who is not too much of a Philistine will maintain it as an incontestable truth that the means by which a musical effect is produced are of minor consequence compared to the effect itself; and it is a matter of no moment to us if a pupil by "repetitions in related tone intervals" attains only "the deadliest monotony," when Schumann, by dint of his peculiar application of these "shoemaker's patches," woven together by the force of his genius, contrives to enchain and enrapture us. Schumann's repetitions always sustain the flight of his thought; and where he does not reach his own proper level, it is not the fault of a repetition, but it is because his inspiration is running low. These repetitions, so frequently assailed, occur, however, with all the great masters from Bach to Wagner himself. A repetition, applied with intelligence, has the same object in music as in language, viz., to produce an impressive, stimulating effect. It will not do, then, to stamp every repetition in related tone intervals as a "shoemaker's patch."

Before taking leave of the B flat major symphony, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of recalling the performance of this work in the Leipsic Gewandhaus immediately after the appearance of the ominous Bayreuth article. The air of the hall was as if charged with electricity. The work was listened to with strained attention and breathless silence, and as the last chord died away there broke forth a storm of applause more vehement and continued than ever before had greeted an orchestral composition in this famous hall. It was a remarkable ovation. It was musical Leipsic protesting as one man against a biased partizan attack upon the work and the master, whom the nation loves, in spite of all hair-splitting charges of "shoemaker's patches."

A peculiar place among Schumann's productions is occupied by his famous piano concerto. Inspired as it is from beginning to end, it stands without a parallel in musical literature, and arouses our wonder no less by its originality than by its noble avoidance of a "mere objective virtuoso style." It is beloved by all, played by many, well played by few, and ideally comprehended by still fewer — nay, perhaps only by a single one, his wife.

In the series of his choral works, "Paradise and the Peri" stands out in luminous relief, with its enchanting fancies and its Oriental coloring. The entire first part is one uninterrupted inspiration. Whether Schumann constructs greater or smaller forms, everything bears here the stamp of genius. The broadly arranged final chorus is above all praise. Here Schumann is, in truth, architect in a grand style. The second part is likewise dazzling. Only consider the passage where the plague is depicted! It is as if these chords exhaled poisonous fumes. The third part is also rich in beauty; but it appears to me that there is a lack of the breadth of conception which is necessary to conclude so great a work.

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What a pity that his treatment of the text in this part necessitates a cutting up in small forms which, according to my experience, at last run the risk of being tiresome! Nevertheless, I have never, during the performances in my own country, been able to make up my mind to omit a single measure; for every page is teeming with scintillations of genius which we

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MADAME SCHUMANN.

cannot afford to give up. Taking everything into consideration, I am of the opinion that "Paradise and the Peri" is the one of Schumann's choral compositions in which he reached his high-water mark.

From old residents of Leipsic I have heard the account of the first performance of this masterpiece at the Gewandhaus in the year 1845, with Schumann as conductor. The part of the *Peri* was sung by Frau Livia Frege, who enjoyed an equal reputation in the Leipsic of that day for her beauty, her affability, and her glorious voice. Immediately after having

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put down the baton, Schumann, who notoriously was a man of few words, rushed up to Frau Frege, and with an ungentle gesture tore some flowers out of her hair, mumbling dryly, "I should like one of these." That was his way of thanking.

Both Mendelssohn and Schumann were great admirers of Frau Frege. Some years ago I met both her (she was then a stately and handsome old lady) and her husband, and could not forego the opportunity to subject the latter to an inquiry regarding the personal relations of Schumann and Mendelssohn. But if I had suddenly stabbed the old gentleman, it could not have affected him more unpleasantly. He abruptly broke off the conversation, and left me. There was no doubt that I had unwittingly touched upon a theme which was not agreeable to him, but into which, nevertheless, from an artistic point of view, it was of importance to gain an insight. As both Herr and Frau Frege, in whose hospitable house all artistic Leipsic of that day held rendezvous, are now dead, and all the friends of Schumann's youth have also departed, there is little prospect of ever clearing up the dusk of this interesting interior.

Much is being whispered in corners about the attitude of Schumann and Mendelssohn toward each other. One thing is, however, likely to impress the unprejudiced observer as being curious, viz., that Schumann's writings furnish numerous and striking evidences of his boundless admiration for Mendelssohn, while the latter in his many letters does not once mention Schumann or his art. This cannot be due to accident. Whether Mendelssohn was really silent, or whether the editor of his letters, out of regard for his memory, has chosen to omit all references to Schumann, is of slight consequence. This, however, is beyond dispute: his silence speaks, and we of posterity have the right to draw our inferences from this silence. We arrive at the conclusion that here we have the clue to a judgment of the opinions which the two masters entertained of each other. Of petty envy on Mendelssohn's part there can be no suspicion. He was of too pure and noble a character to be animated by such a sentiment; and, moreover, his fame was too great and too well established in comparison with Schumann's. But his horizon was too contracted to enable him to see Schumann as the man he was. How perfectly comprehensible! He had his forte in clear delineation, in classical harmony; and where Schumann fell short of his requirements in this respect, his honesty forbade him to feign a recognition which he could not candidly grant.

Another musical and warm-hearted family in whose house Schumann was a constant guest during his residence in Leipsic was that of Herr Voigt, to whose wife, Henrietta Voigt, his intimate friend, Schumann dedicated his beautiful G minor piano sonata. The silent Schumann loved this peaceful home. It is told that he was in the habit of daily entering the drawing-room unannounced, giving a friendly nod to the "lady of the house," walking the length of the room, and departing by the op-

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posite door, without having uttered a single word. All he wanted was to see her.

But to return to the choral works. Besides "Paradise and the Peri," Schumann's music to Byron's "Manfred" must be reckoned among his most glorious compositions, in spite of the fact that it belongs to his last period. The overture is a tragic masterpiece cast entire in one mold. His music to Goethe's "Faust" also contains many a stroke of the purest inspiration; but, as a whole, it is unequal, and can scarcely, in the same sense as the preceding ones, be characterized as a monumental work.

If we now turn to his later choral compositions,—"Der Königssohn," "Des Sängers Fluch," "Vom Pagen und der Königstochter," "Das Glück von Edenhall," "Neujahrslied," "Requiem,"—we must admit that it is easy for those who wish to make an end of Schumann to find points of attack; for these productions indicate, almost uniformly, soaring will and failing power. His self-criticism is lax, and the greater part of this work is unclear in color as in drawing.

Here we have melancholy evidence that the master's strength was forever broken. It would be far better to pay no attention to these and similar productions of his later years bearing the mark of his decadence. But as regards the derogatory judgment of Schumann which has of late become the fashion in certain influential cliques, I may be permitted to ask: Why should not he, like other creative spirits, have the right to be judged by the best that he has done? Homer, as we all know, nods. But I fancy that no one need search long in Schumann's production before finding its core. Although his later activity resulted in such glorious things as "Manfred," the violin sonatas, and the symphony in E flat major, it is easy, if one prefers, to leave this entire period out of account, and to judge Schumann by his opera 1 to 50. There is to be found among these a sufficient treasury of priceless jewels to entitle Schumann to a seat among the immortals of music. If we are to judge Mozart by his "Concert Arias"; Beethoven by his "Prometheus," "Christ on the Mount of Olives," and the "Triple Concerto for Piano, Violin, and Cello"; Mendelssohn by his "Antigone," "Ruy Blas," "Lobgesang," and the "Reformation Symphony"; Schubert by his dramatic attempts; Wagner by "Rienzi"—in short, if we are to hunt high and low for the weak moments of strong souls—then, considering the imperfection of everything human, we shall find no lack of material for a very unprofitable labor. But such a search would not be in the interest of justice. Happily, in art, as in life, it is the good that is cherished; mistakes are consigned to oblivion.

A beautiful conclusion of Schumann's chamber music is his two sonatas for violin, particularly the first (A minor, Opus 105,—and in this the first movement, especially, has always appeared to me highly significant). Every time I read or play them, I hear in their tones the master's forebod-

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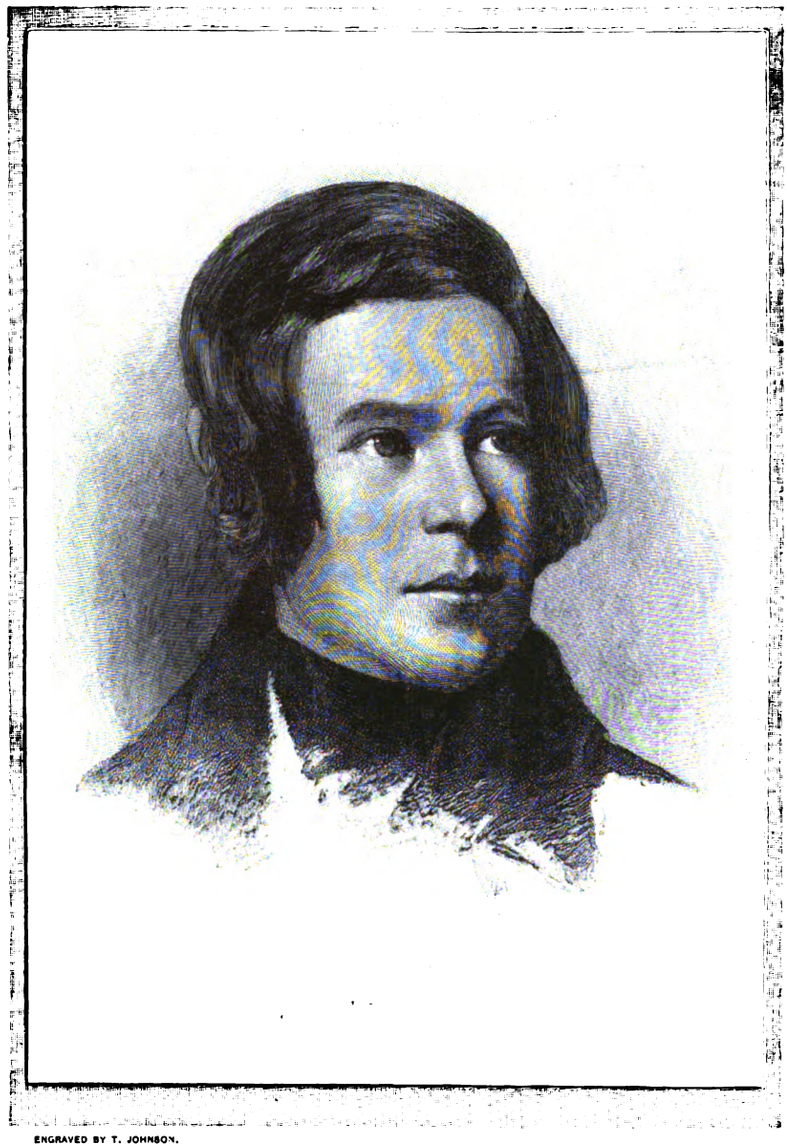
ing of the heavy fate which was soon to overtake him. The first marvelously singing motif of the violin is instinct with an overpowering melancholy, and the surprising return of the first motif in the last move-



ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

ROBERT SCHUMANN.

From a water-color made in Vienna in his youth; in possession of Dr. M. Abraham of Leipsic.

ment shows what importance Schumann attached to it. It is the worm gnawing at his mind, which lifts its head afresh in the midst of the passionate toil of the fancy to banish it. In enchanting contrast to all this gloomy soul struggle are the suddenly emerging, bright, sweet, appealing — nay, entreating — melodies. Is it not as if one heard the cry, "Let this cup pass from me"? But in the council of fate the terrible

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thing has been decreed; and the work closes in manly, noble resignation, without a sign of the unclearness and groping upon which I have commented as occurring in much of Schumann's production belonging to this period.

I have also referred to the slowness with which Schumann's popularity spread during his lifetime. This is the more remarkable because of the many advantages which he enjoyed. He lived in the very center of the musical world; occupied important positions, being at one time a teacher at the Leipsic Conservatory; and was married to one of the most soulful and famous pianists of his day. With his wife he even made musical tours, from which he brought home with him many evidences of his unpopularity. Thus, in the year 1843 he accompanied his wife to Russia, where in many of the principal cities she was received with great enthusiasm, and where, also, she endeavored to introduce the works of her husband. Let it not be forgotten that in 1843 Schumann had already written and published much of his most beautiful chamber music,— piano works, songs,— and even his symphony in B flat major. Nevertheless, it is said that at a court soirée where Clara was greatly fêted, one of the most exalted personages addressed him in this wise, "Well, Mr. Schumann, are you, too, musical?" The story bears the stamp of truth. What artist is there who could not relate similar incidents? The reigning princes and their hangers-on seem to possess a peculiar aptitude for uttering stupidities when they have the misfortune to stray within the pale of art.

That after such an experience Schumann could dedicate his C major symphony to a prince — though this time really a musical one, viz., Oscar I of Norway and Sweden — is an evidence that he had not yet achieved his emancipation from the naïve notion of an earlier time, that the king is the best guardian of art. In spite of the abnormal relation of King Louis of Bavaria to Richard Wagner, our age is happily on the point of outgrowing this great misconception.

The chief impediment to Schumann's popularity was his total lack of that faculty of direct communication which is absolutely indispensable to the making of a good conductor or a beloved teacher. I fancy, however, that he troubled himself very little about this. In fact, he was too much of a dreamer. Proofs are not wanting that he actually took pride in his unpopularity. Thus, in a letter to his mother he writes, "I should not even wish to be understood by all." He need give himself no anxiety on that score. He is too profound, too subjective, too introspective to appeal to the multitude.

I cannot take leave of Schumann's larger labors without pausing for a moment at the opera "Genoveva," a work which has rightly been called his "child of sorrows." He expended upon it much of his best power, and it prepared for him the bitterest disappointments. So many pens

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have been set in motion against this composition, especially by Wagnerians, that it seems almost foolhardy to lift up one's voice in its defense. Nevertheless, I must maintain as my unalterable opinion that Schumann's music cannot be briefly dismissed as undramatic: there are too many passages in the opera which furnish incontestable proof that Schumann was not without dramatic talent — but wanting, indeed, in knowledge of the requirements of the drama. The most excellent dramatically inspired things stand side by side without transitions, demanding frequently only a few bars to bring them into harmonious relations. On the other hand, there seems occasionally to be a little too much transition. The external apparatus is not always practically applied. The rare skill of Wagner on this point furnishes a striking contrast. But, as I have said, the dramatic flight is often enough evident; and I am convinced that the day will come when a performance, by skilled and affectionate hands, will yield at least a portion of that which the master, in certain passages, has hinted and indicated, but which he had not sufficient technic to express with clearness and force. If Schumann in his youth had had experience as leader of the orchestra in a theater, we should probably have lived to see him admired even as a dramatist. The great public will not put up with mere dramatic spirit, if this spirit is not incorporated in a dramatic body. It demands the spirit plainly presented, as it were upon a tray. And this is exactly what Schumann could not do — or perhaps would not do, if this conclusion may be inferred from his own words: "German composers usually suffer shipwreck in wishing to please the public. But only let somebody offer, for once, something individual, deep, and German, and he will see if he does not achieve something more." No one will deny that Schumann's reasoning is here esthetically correct; but being what he was, he would have acted more prudently, at all events, in not running counter to the legitimate demand of the public for clear dramatic characterization. To descend to the level of a foolish public would to him have been an impossibility; while, on the other hand, a stricter regard for the requirements of the drama, a greater accuracy and sobriety in scenic calculations, unquestionably would have enabled him to compass far greater achievements.

Intentionally I have chosen to consider last that portion of Schumann's work which proves him to be what, according to his innermost nature, he really was — a poet. I refer to his songs. Even all the demons of hate which possess the Bayreuth critic do not here suffice to reduce the composer to a nonentity. In order to disparage, however, and minimize even this expression of his genius, he resorts to far-fetched humor. I cannot refrain from quoting literally the following choice effusion:

> Since nowadays one does not find it ridiculous when, in our salons, a lady, holding a fan and a fragrant lace handkerchief between her gloved fingers, sings of her former lover as a "lofty star of glory who must not know her, the lowly maid,"

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or when a gentleman in swallow-tail coat assures us that he has seen in his dream a serpent feeding on the gloom-engulfed heart of a certain miserable person who shall not be mentioned,— then certainly one ought not, primarily, to be angry with the composer because in his illustration of such poems, popular in our higher circles of society, he has, in his effort not to be outstripped by the poet, sounded all the depths and heights of musical expression.

What a quantity of genuine Wagnerian gall is concentrated in this long-winded monster of a sentence! But — it goes too far. Schumann's songs emerge from this mud-bath as pure as they were before they were dipped into it. If there is anything at all that Schumann has written which has become, and has deserved to become, world literature, it is surely his songs. All civilized nations have made them their own. And there is probably in our own day scarcely a youth interested in music to whom they are not, in one way or another, interwoven with his most intimate ideals. Schumann is the *poet*, contrasting in this respect with his greatest successor, Brahms, who is primarily *musician*, even in his songs.

With Schumann the poetic conception plays the leading part to such an extent that musical considerations technically important are subordinated, if not entirely neglected. For all that, even those of his songs of which this is true exert the same magic fascination. What I particularly have in mind is his great demand upon the compass of the voice. It is often no easy thing to determine whether the song is intended for a soprano or an alto, for he ranges frequently in the same song from the lowest to the highest register. Several of his most glorious songs begin in the deepest pitch and gradually rise to the highest, so that the same singer can rarely master both. Schumann, to be sure, occasionally tries to obviate this difficulty by adding a melody of lower pitch, which he then indicates by smaller notes placed under the melody of his original conception. But how often he thereby spoils his most beautiful flights, his most inspired climaxes! Two instances among many occur to me,— "Ich grolle nicht" and "Stille Thränen,"— for which one will scarcely ever find an interpreter who can do equal justice to the beginning and the end. But if, on the other hand, a singer has a voice at his command capable of such a feat, he will produce the greater effect. Thus, I remember as a child, in 1858, having heard Frau Schröder-Devrient, then fifty-five years old, sing "Ich grolle nicht," and never shall I forget the shiver that ran down my spine at the last climax. The beautiful timbre of the voice was of course lacking; but the overwhelming power of the expression was so irresistible that every one was carried away.

To be able to sing Schumann is a special faculty which many excellent singers do not have. I have heard the same singer render Schubert to perfection, and Schumann absolutely badly. For with Schubert the most of what is to be done is explicitly expressed; while with Schumann

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INTERIOR OF THE MARIENKIRCHE, ZWICKAU.

one must understand the art of reading between the lines — of interpreting a half-told tale. A symphony, too, of Schubert plays itself, as it were; but a symphony of Schumann has to be studied with a subtile perception in order to uncover and bring out what is veiled in the master's intentions. Otherwise it would lose much of its effect. In speaking above of the excessive demands upon the compass of the voice in Schumann's songs, I refer chiefly to those more broadly composed. The smaller and more delicate ones do not usually strain a voice of ordinary register.

A quite peculiar stamp of genius is impressed upon Schumann's epic romances and ballads. In this genre he has created unequaled masterpieces. I will cite as instances Chamisso's "Die Löwenbraut," and (from Opus 45) Eichendorff's "Der Schatzgräber," and Heine's "Abend am Strande." In the last named Schumann attains a realistic effect of great intensity How pictorial is here the description of the different peoples, from the dweller on the banks of the Ganges to the "dirty Laplanders" who in a truly impressionistic style "quack and scream"! Strangely enough, there are as yet not many who both feel and are able to render these effects, and they are accordingly scarcely ever heard in a concert-hall. A ballad the popularity of which (according to E. F. Wenzel) vexed Schumann was Heine's "Two Grenadiers," because he regarded it, and perhaps rightly, as belonging to his weakest productions. A volume

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which contains things of the very highest order, and which for some incomprehensible reason is almost unknown, is Opus 98, "Lieder und Gesänge aus Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister.'" Once in a while one may, to be sure, stumble upon the magnificent, grandly molded ballad, "Was hör' ich draussen vor dem Thor!" but one almost never hears the most beautiful of all, "Kenn'st du das Land wo die Citronen blüh'n?" with which I have seen a gifted vocalist move an audience to tears.

It is rarely the happiest inspirations of a creative spirit that win the hearts of the many. In that respect the musical intelligence of the so-called cultivated society leaves much to be desired. However, the other arts are scarcely more favorably placed. Everywhere it is cheap art which has a monopoly of appeal to the general intelligence.

It cannot be maintained that Schumann was the first to accord a conspicuous rôle to the accompaniment of his songs. Schubert had anticipated him as no other of his predecessors had done in making the piano depict the mood. But what Schubert began, Schumann further developed; and woe to the singer who tries to render Schumann without keeping a close watch of what the piano is doing, even to the minutest shades of timbre. I have no faith in a renderer of Schumann's songs who lacks appreciation of the fact that the piano has fully as great a claim upon interest and study as the voice of the singer. Nay; I would even venture to assert that, up to a certain point, he who cannot play Schumann cannot sing him either. In his treatment of the piano, Schumann was, furthermore, the first who in a modern spirit utilized the relation between song and accompaniment, which Wagner has later developed to a degree that fully proves what importance he attached to it. I refer to the carrying of the melody by the piano, or the orchestra, while the voice is engaged in the recitative. Heaven preserve me, however, from insinuating that Wagner consciously could have received an impulse from Schumann! A dyed-in-the-wool Wagnerian would, of course, regard even a hint of such a possibility as an outrageous, almost insulting want of respect for the master of Bayreuth. But, for all that, it is a fact that contemporaries do influence each other whether they wish to or not. That is one of nature's eternal laws, to which we are all subject. You will perhaps ask, Where is, then, the mutual influence of Rossini, Beethoven, and Weber? And my response is, "It is of a negative character, and accordingly still present." But in the above-mentioned particular case — that of Schumann and Wagner — it is absolutely positive. It is, however, true that Schumann only hints at the things out of which Wagner constructs a perfect system. But Schumann is here the foreseeing spirit who planted the tree which later, in the modern musical drama, was to bear such glorious fruit.

That gradually increasing conservatism which, in the case of an artist, is usually a mark of failing powers, was never noticeable in Schumann.

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Even though his creative force went out in the darkness of insanity, this in no wise affected his views of art, which remained fresh and youthful to the very last. His enthusiasm for the young Brahms is a striking proof of that receptivity as regards the new which did not desert him even on the downward incline of his scantily allotted career. We gain hereby a glimpse of the beautiful purity of his character, quite as it revealed itself in his younger years in his relation to Mendelssohn and others. And just as Schumann was the first interpreter in modern music of the profounder emotions and true intensity of sentiment who could exclaim with Beethoven, when the latter had finished his "Missa Solennis," "From the heart it has come, to the heart it shall go," so now, the spirit of unreason, pettiness, and envy having passed away, all hearts, old and young, respond jubilantly to Schumann's art, and honor him as a man, pioneer, and artist. Schumann's conceptions of art will again come to their right when that legion of inflated arrogance which has adopted, wrongfully, the title of "Wagnerians" and "Lisztians" shall have lost their influence. I discriminate, however, expressly between the true and genuine admirers of these two mighty masters and the howling horde which calls itself "——ians." These patentees of speculative profundity do not know the most priceless jewel of art — naïveté. How, then, are they to love Schumann, who possessed this rare gift in so rich a measure? Many of the so-called Liszt performers render Schumann in a manner which is most significant. In most cases they will, indeed, give you the genuine Liszt, but, on the other hand, Schumann falsified beyond recognition. No attempt at artistic treatment and well-studied execution of details can compensate for the lack of that warm, deep tone which a real interpreter of Schumann knows how to produce. As different as Mendelssohn's art of orchestration is from that of Wagner, so different is the coloring of Schumann from that of Liszt; and to give this a vivid expression on the piano imposes so great a task upon the performer that it calls his whole personality into play. He must be able to orchestrate upon the piano. Only then will he become a "Schumann-player" in the sense in which we speak, for instance, of "Chopin-players" — that is to say, performers who, to be sure, are able to play a good deal besides, but play Chopin to perfection. Wagner somewhere expresses the opinion that a sympathetic nature is required even to comprehend his meaning: this is no less true of Schumann, who, in his demands upon the player's comprehension, ventures to propound this proposition, "Perhaps only genius can completely understand genius."

That these lines, while embodying much of my own personal conception of Schumann, also in a considerable degree are concerned with Mendelssohn and Wagner, was in the nature of the case, and thus scarcely to be avoided. These masters stand in a peculiar relation of reciprocity to one another. Each has, as above shown, either sought to be influenced

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R Schumann
Nuit de Printemps

by the other, or purposely sought to avoid being influenced. Like mighty planets in the firmament, each either attracted or repelled the other. Each owes the other much, both positively and negatively. As regards Schumann, he failed, perhaps, of the full achievement which his rare gifts entitle us to expect, because his openness to influences is intimately connected with that germ of early decay which prevented him from consistently pressing on to his goal. But whatever his imperfections, he is yet one of the princes of art, a real German spirit to whom Heine's profound words concerning Luther may well apply:

> In him all the virtues and all the faults of the Germans are in the grandest way united; so that one may say that he personally represents the wonderful Germany.

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THE SCHUMANN MONUMENT AT BONN.

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CHARACTERS FROM THE PANTOMIME INTRODUCED IN SCHUMANN'S CARNAVAL.

FROM THE PAINTING BY WATTEAU.

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EDVARD GRIEG AND HIS WIFE.

EDVARD HAGERUP GRIEG

BY

WILLIAM MASON

EDVARD HAGERUP GRIEG — he omits the middle name in his published compositions, and in his private correspondence — was born at Bergen, Norway, June 15, 1843. His great-grandfather was a native of Scotland who emigrated to Norway. His first musical training was from his mother, a woman of great accomplishments, and a fine musician and pianist. He began his musical studies at the age of six, and composed his first piece when nine years old. It is related that he carried this for examination to the teacher who at that time had charge of his studies. This man must have been of a non-progressive and pedantic disposition, for he had nothing but fault to find with the boy's work, and emphatically advised him not to waste his time on "such trash." By the advice of Ole Bull, Grieg was sent in 1858 to the Leipsic Conservatory, where he received instruction in composition, orchestration, and pianoforte playing from Moscheles, Hauptmann, Richter, Reinecke, and Wenzel. Moscheles, at that time somewhat advanced in years, was very conservative, and held tenaciously to old ideas. He was deservedly one of the most celebrated pianists of his day, and was especially admirable in his Bach playing, although he held exclusively to the old up-and-down, hammer-like finger-stroke, and stiff, rigid-wrist style of playing. He was distrustful of modern tendencies and innovations, and especially did he look with disfavor on the compositions of Chopin, which he regarded as bizarre, affected, and anomalous, and his advice to his pupils was to let such music severely alone, lest they might be led away from the path of musical rectitude. He would not permit the playing of Chopin's music by members of his family; but after a while one of his daughters married and removed to London, where she could play the works of her favorite author to her heart's content. In this she was perhaps unwittingly

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following the example which her father had given her some forty years before, when he was a lad of about fourteen, studying in Prague under the direction of Dionys Weber, the well-known theoretician, composer, and music-teacher. This was about the year 1810, at which time Beethoven was actively engaged in composing, and new and fresh works of his were being published from time to time. Dionys Weber seems to have resembled

IGNAZ MOSCHELES (1794-1870).

Moscheles in his tendency to consider novel and fresh notions as unwarrantable innovations, inasmuch as, regarding Beethoven's compositions as wholly unorthodox, he forbade his pupils, Moscheles among the number, to play them; but Moscheles — who, by the way, was fond of telling this story — avowed in a spirited way that his fondness for Beethoven's music was so great that, whenever he could get a chance, he played nothing else.

It is easy to conceive that Grieg did not sympathize with the unprogressive views of his Leipsic teacher, and doubtless he in turn devoted a large part of his time to the music of Schumann and Chopin. The antiquated and old fogy atmosphere of Leipsic was distasteful to him, and he became depressed and discouraged. He was graduated from the conservatory in 1862, and the following year he went to Copenhagen, and began his studies under Gade, who was more congenial to him, and who was not without influence in his further development. While in Copenhagen, however, he became acquainted with Rikard Nordraak, a young, enthusiastic, and genial Norwegian composer, and this event exercised the strongest influence in bringing out his personality and revealing to him his true nature. The two young men met, talked of patriotism, of folk-lore, and swore an oath of fealty to Norwegian art. Grieg says: "It was as though scales fell from my eyes; for the first time I learned through him the northern folk-songs and to understand my own nature. We abjured the Gade-Mendelssohn insipid and diluted Skandinavismus, and bound ourselves with enthusiasm to the new path which the northern school is now following." In this way Grieg became the exponent of the musical side of Norwegian art.

While original and spontaneous, his music is imbued with the old Norse melodies and folk-songs, which are distinguished from those of other Scandinavian nations by a certain robustness, ruggedness, and abruptness in harmonic changes, that are for the most part in the minor key, and abound in peculiar rhythms so irregular as to be almost without periodicity, or, in other words, almost without rhythm. Some of the older melodies are crude, harsh, and barbarous. Many of them present such a succession of rough and abrupt rhythms, without appreciable melody, as almost to prevent faithful and accurate notation. Grieg is always true to the Norwegian coloring, and the freedom of gesture and motion characteristic of peasant life is in his music. The strong contrast produced by marked emphasis and rhythm combined with syncopation, the constant recurring effects of light and shade through proper attention to dynamics, are very marked. He is, however, always within the bounds of good taste, and is never excessive or extravagant.

Grieg has been likened to Chopin — indeed, he has been called the "Chopin of the North"; but if this designation is intended to suggest the idea that he is in any sense an imitator, the comparison is unjust. Both composers belong in general to the same type and genius, and both have written almost exclusively in the smaller art-forms; but the individuality and personality of each is as distinct as his nationality. As writers for the pianoforte pure and simple, who thoroughly understand the

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BEHIND THE SAIL.

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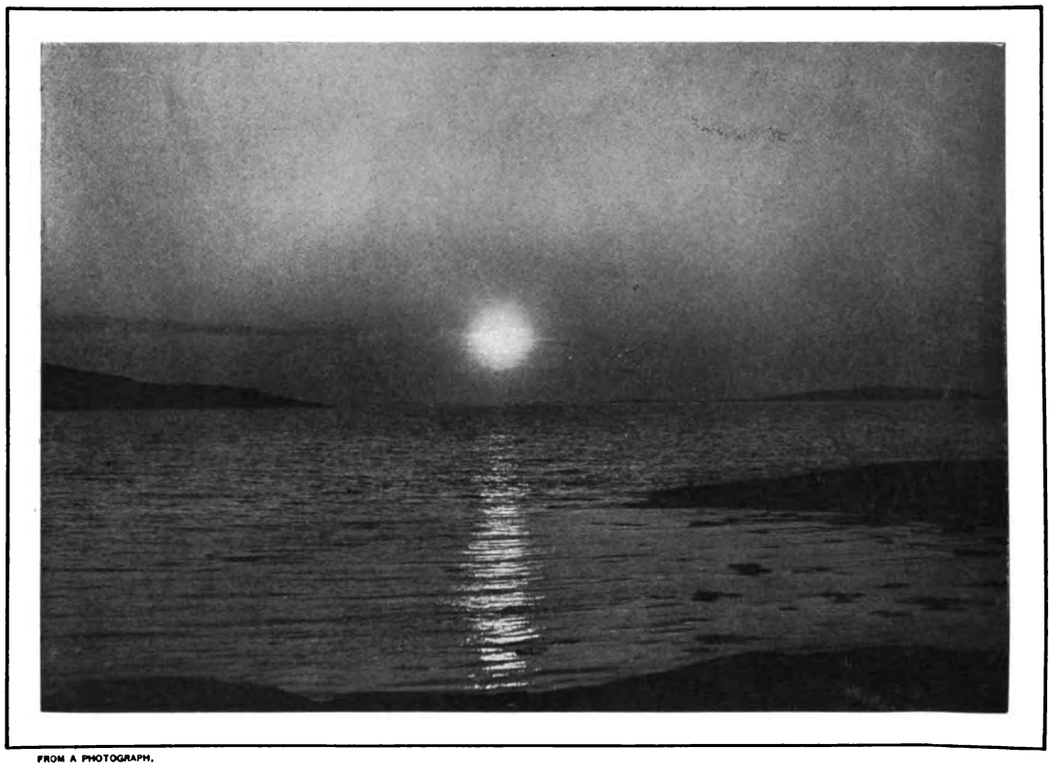
nature and the possibilities of the instrument, and invariably conform to its idiomatic requirements, they both, with Schumann, stand at the head; but Grieg, like Schumann, is more than a pianist-composer, and is far ahead of Chopin in the matter of instrumentation for the orchestra. He understands the art of musical polyphony, and thus his treatment of the orchestra is euphonic and harmonious, as well in accompaniments for pianoforte pieces as in compositions exclusively orchestral. In this respect the work of most pianist-composers is unsatisfactory and disappointing — so much so that it is the opinion of many musicians that the concertos of Chopin and Henselt, for example, are more euphonious and satisfying with a second piano accompaniment than with that of an orchestra. For this reason, doubtless, as well as for the purpose of shortening the long and tiresome orchestral *tuttis*, Tausig was influenced to reinstrument the accompaniments of Chopin's E minor Concerto. Arthur Friedheim has lately completed a similar service for the Henselt Concerto in F minor.



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

THE MIDNIGHT SUN.

Chopin did not write any large grand dramatic work in symphonic form. Perhaps Grieg's most successful orchestral works in dramatic style are the Peer Gynt Suite and the Pianoforte Concerto (Op. 16) in which the composer shows an originality which is especially attractive because it is unconscious, natural, and spontaneous. This composition is justly entitled to a place among the seven or eight representative and most celebrated concertos written by pianist-composers, as, for instance, those of Chopin, Schumann, Rubinstein, Henselt, Saint-Saëns, and latterly Paderewski. The concertos of Beethoven are not here included because they are more in the nature of symphonies in conception, design, and treatment than in the nature of pianoforte solos with accompaniment. Chopin recognized the fact that the pianoforte is an instrument which lacks the power of prolonging its tone and therefore constructed a series of charming sequences, arabesques, and dainty musical embroideries on a basis of scales and arpeggios, the effects of which are charming and delightful in the extreme.

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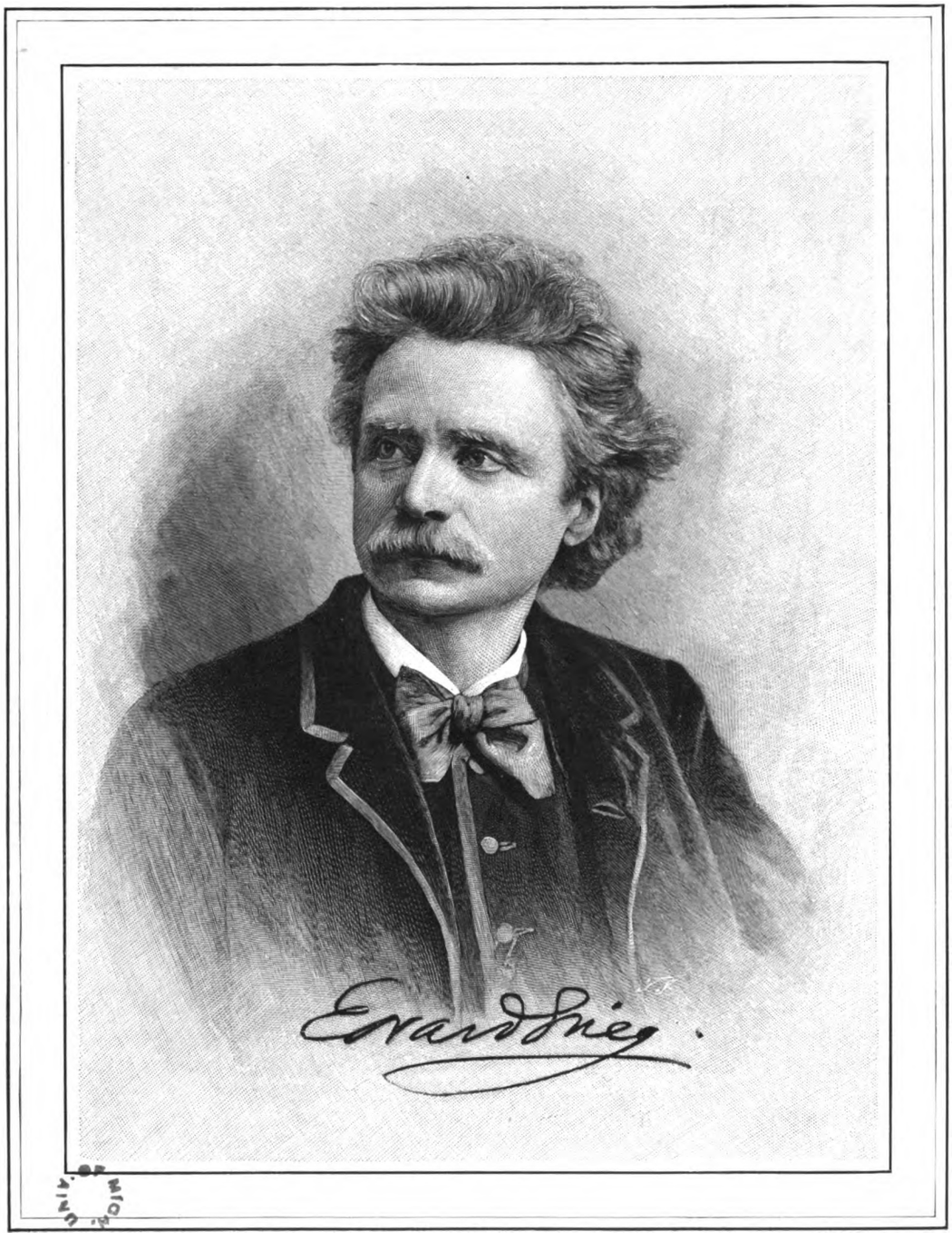

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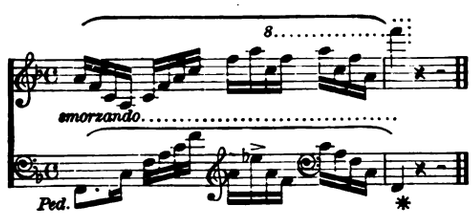
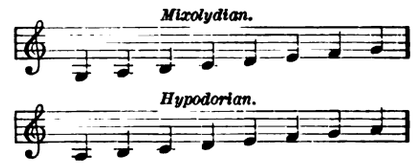
Grieg, on the other hand, while conforming equally to the nature of the instrument, is fonder of polyphony and part-writing, and so gets his effects in a different, but just as legitimate, way.

It used to be said of Chopin, that he always seemed to be listening to the wind blowing over the strings of an Æolian harp, and that he constantly endeavored to produce similar effects in his music by means of the prolonged and, indeed, almost never-ending dominant, or minor seventh chord, characteristic of that instrument.[1] There is some color of reason in this assertion, as will be seen on reference to his Berceuse, Op. 57, and the Nocturne, Op. 62, No. 1, near the close of both compositions, the passages in each case being in the nature of an organ point.[2] In one instance Chopin closes a prelude, Op. 28, No. 23, with an unresolved dominant seventh chord, leaving the hearer in the expectation of something yet to come, viz.:



The composer has indicated a special emphasis on the minor seventh, E flat.

While Chopin is so partial to the effect produced by a long-delayed resolution of the dominant seventh chord,[3] Grieg is no less fond of some of the old ecclesiastical modes, in which the leading tone, characteristic of our modern scale, is lacking, and its place supplied by a minor instead of a major seventh. He frequently uses harmonic and melodic progressions based upon the tones of the mixolydian and hypodorian forms,[4] viz.:



The hypodorian mode conforms note for note to the descending series of tones of our modern so-called melodic minor scale.

The following examples from Grieg's works, taken offhand as they occur to the writer, afford good illustrations.

[1] The dominant is the fifth note of the modern diatonic scale, so called because it, and the chord built on it are the ruling elements of the tonality.

[2] Organ-point, *i. e.*, organ-note: a single tone sustained by one part in the harmony, while the other parts progress freely without reference to it except at the beginning and end of the passage. It is usually sustained by a pedal in organ playing, and hence called "pedal-point." Its use has sometimes been traced to the drone of a bagpipe. The bagpipe in France is known as the *cornemuse*, or the *musette*. Pianists will recall the "musette" which forms the second number of the gavotte — usually written over an organ-point.— THE EDITORS.

[3] The following incident related in Ferdinand Hiller's "Mendelssohn" illustrates the force of the unresolved seventh: "A large number of friends have been invited to hear Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann among them. He played Beethoven's great F minor Sonata ("Apassionata"); at the end of the andante he let the final chord of the diminished seventh ring on for a long time as if he wanted to impress it very forcibly on all present; then he quietly got up, and, turning to Madame Schumann, said, 'You must play the finale.' She strongly protested. Meanwhile all were waiting the issue with the utmost tension, the chord of the diminished seventh hovering over our heads all the time like the sword of Damocles. I think it was chiefly the nervous, uncomfortable feeling of this unresolved discord which at last moved Madame Schumann to yield to Mendelssohn's entreaties and give us the finale."— THE EDITORS.

[4] These names are inherited from Greek music. Each of its several modes, like the major and minor of modern music, possessed its own peculiar emotional character. For example, the Spartans directed that their youth should be educated exclusively in the use of the Doric (E to E), as the only one calculated to inspire self-respect and courage. The Phrygian, in which the familiar church tune "Windom" was originally written, was supposed to confer inspiration; while the Lydian, our major mode, was considered enervating and sensuous (*vide* Milton's reference in "L'Allegro" to "soft Lydian airs"). The ecclesiastical scales, the notation of which, associated with the names of Ambrose and Gregory, was the work of the early Christian Church, do not correspond exactly to the Greek originals whose names they borrow, but possess characters equally energetic. Since harmony and modulation have displaced polyphony, many of them have dropped out of popular use, except in the service of the Church, where they survive in the chants. But an examination of the people's music of Europe as late as the 17th century reveals a wealth of melody in these almost forgotten keys. It is only necessary to open a volume of Norwegian melodies to recognize one after another in spite of the alterations time has brought them, as having originated in these ancient tonalities.— THE EDITORS.

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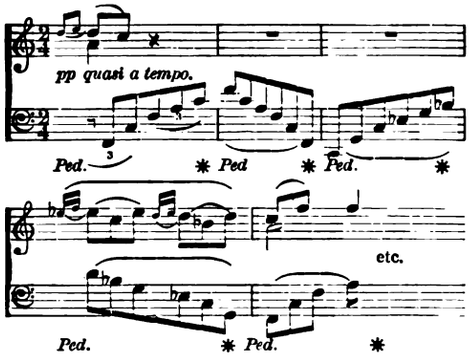
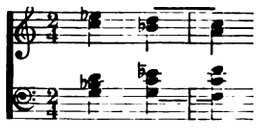
From the concerto Op. 16, last movement:



This passage, as it occurs in the concerto, produces in contrast with what has preceded it, a somewhat vague and dreamy effect, which is extremely beautiful, and suggestive of perfect repose. If the harmonies upon which it is constructed are presented in their simplest form, together with the chord progressions, the effect is harsh indeed, viz.:

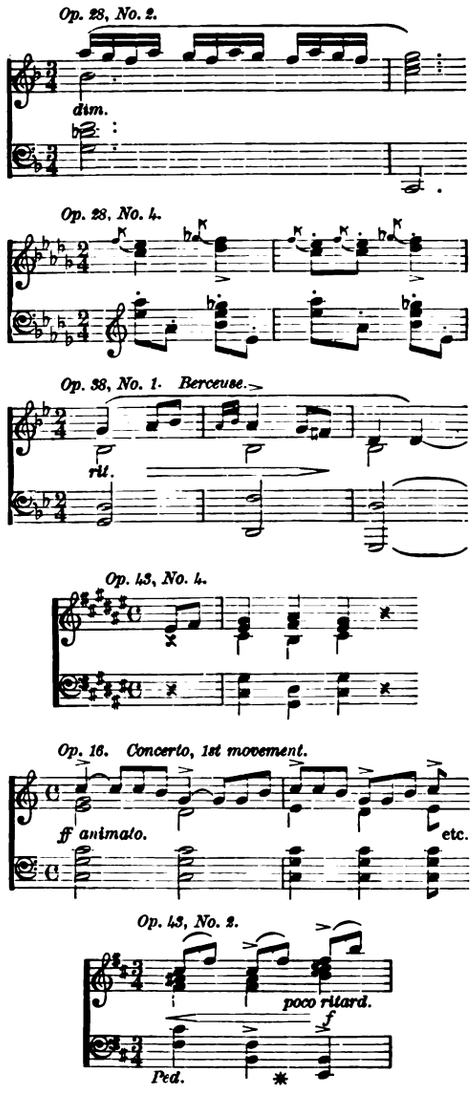


The consecutive fifths, occurring in the outer voices of the last two chords, are bald in the extreme.

"TROLDHANGEN."

The home of Edvard Grieg, near Bergen, Norway.

The following are illustrations of similar progressions. Observe that in examples from Op. 28, No. 4, and Op. 38, No. 1, Grieg has, for the sake of precaution, placed accidentals before certain notes, although they are not really necessary, because already indicated in the key signature.



Grieg's works abound with such progressions, but these will suffice to illustrate.

Both Chopin and Grieg have written cradle songs, each characteristic of his individual style, and a comparison of the two is interesting. Chopin's Berceuse, Op. 57, suggests a blue-blood baby of aristocratic heredity and tendency, exceedingly well-bred and proper in behavior, who passes through her existence in a passive, ladylike way, without encountering any obstacle to her desires. She is an unruffled, quiet, peaceable, sweet-dispositioned baby, without a touch of restlessness. Her cradle is rocked in a conventional way throughout, and with an unvarying uniformity of rhythm. Grieg's baby,—Berceuse, Op. 38, No. 1,—a robust little fellow, with a

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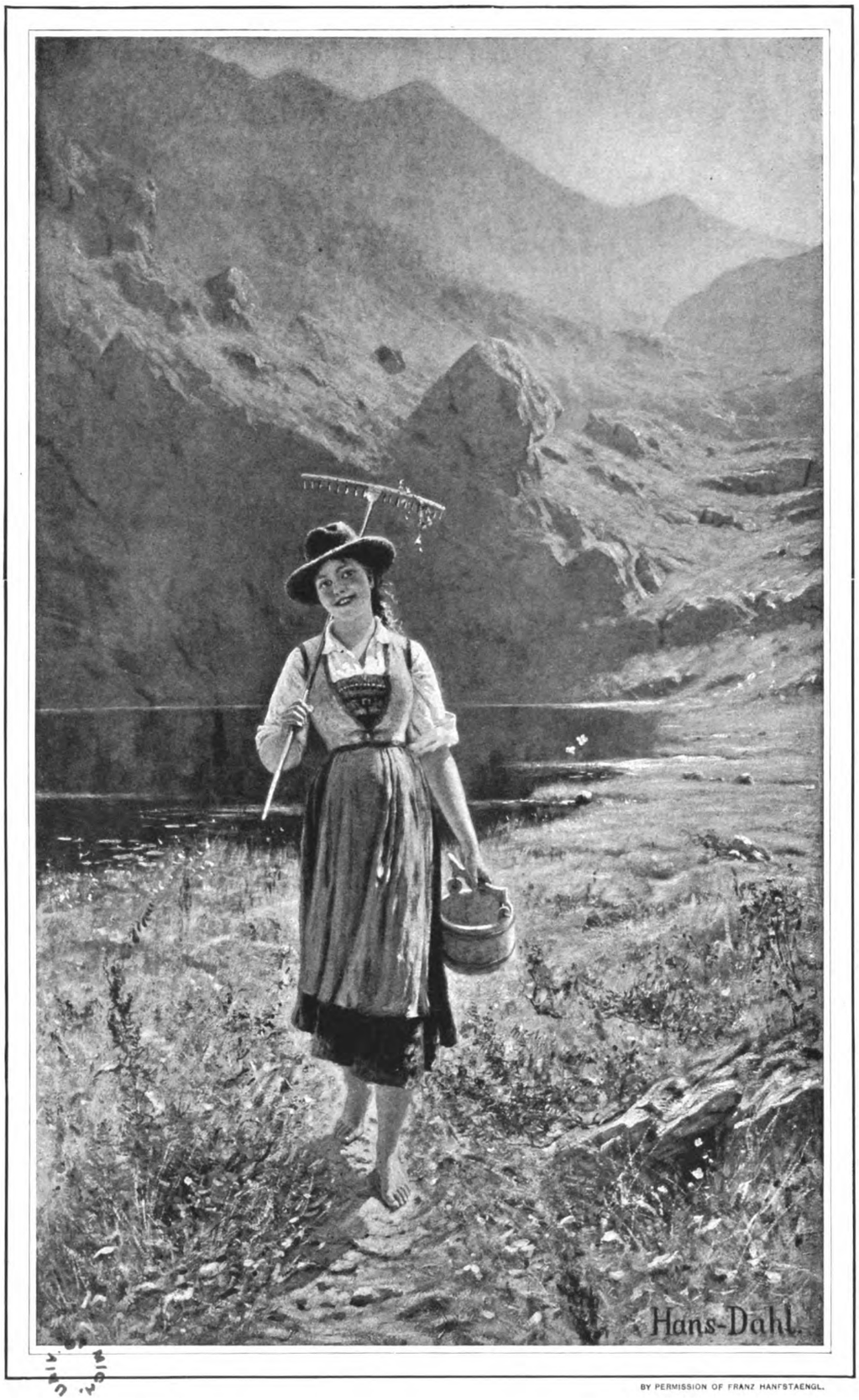

BY PERMISSION OF FRANZ HANFSTAENGL.

AMONG THE NORWEGIAN MOUNTAINS.

FROM THE PAINTING BY HANS-DAHL.

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EDVARD GRIEG'S STUDY IN LOFTHUS, HARDANGER, NORWAY, FROM 1878 TO 1881.

touch of temper, and a pair of healthy lungs which he does not hesitate to use upon occasion, is evidently at home in the cottage of a peasant. He may or may not have a more lovely and unselfish spirit than the other baby, but is of rougher externals, and somewhat more subject to the vicissitudes of life. In the beginning his slumber is quiet enough, but presently there are signs of approaching disturbance, which gradually increase until they finally culminate in a nightmare, as evidenced by a shriek of pain from the baby, who, however, recovers himself in a very short time, ceases his misbehavior, and falls again into quiet and peaceful slumber. The cradle is rocked here in a different manner. Binary and ternary rhythms combined, and strong melodic and harmonic contrasts of sudden occurrence, bear the impress of Grieg's personality.

Grieg's revolt against German classicism was the healthy instinct of a man who has a message to deliver, and seeks for it the most natural means of expression. His esteem for the highest and best in German music was none the less, and he would doubtless be among the first to acknowledge how much he has profited by its influence; but his imagination and feeling were imbued with the legends, the traditions, the folk-songs, and poetry of the peasant, and the scenery of Norway. He has expressed and translated these into music, and thus has directed the attention of the outside world to his native land, and brought its distinguishing characteristics more clearly into view. There are other Scandinavian composers of great talent and merit who have contributed to this result, but as Norway is bolder and more rugged than Sweden and Denmark, so Grieg in his music discloses corresponding qualities to a greater degree than do his Scandinavian confrères. This is his special mission, and well has he accomplished it, or rather is in the process of accomplishing it, for he is yet in the prime of life, and, being still engaged in composing, there is reasonable expectation that the world may continue to be enriched by the productions of his genius.

On the afternoon of July 1, 1890, having

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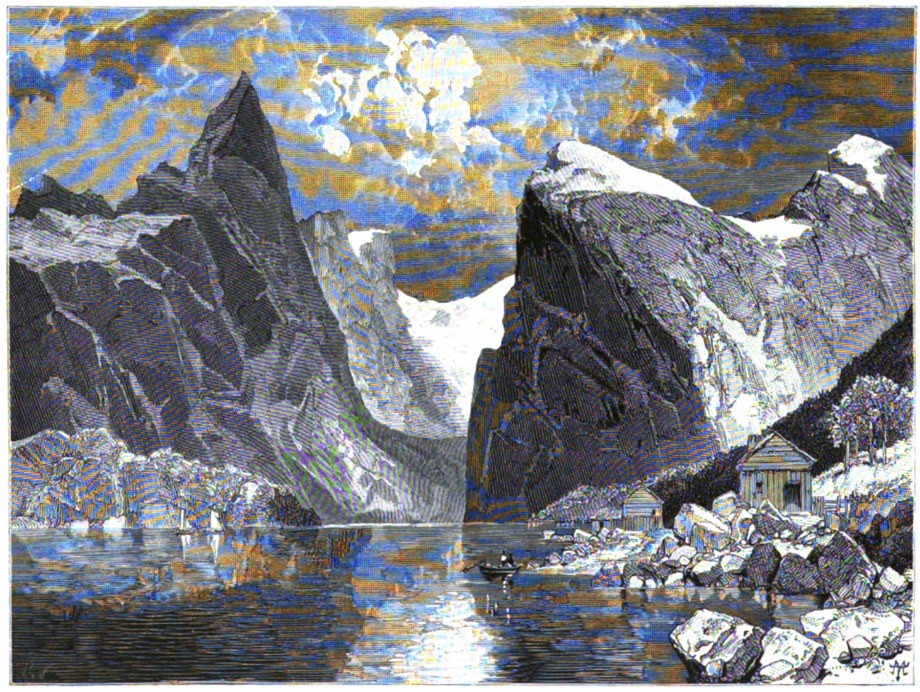
received an invitation from Grieg, I made him a short visit at Villa Troldhangen, his summer home, situated on the borders of the Nordsvand, a drive of about an hour and a half from Bergen. His house is of hard wood throughout, very substantial, and at the same time cozy and comfortable. The front door opens from the sitting- or music-room directly upon the lawn without any intermediate hallway. The grounds are beautiful, and in many places are thick with forest trees and shrubs, while here and there a clearing brings to view the waters of the fjord. The wild flowers, with their bright, rich colors, were especially attractive. Mrs. Grieg, a very charming woman of bright and cheerful disposition, entertains in a genial way. She is an excellent musician and singer, and has accompanied her husband on most of his concert tours. Her earnest and heartful singing, enhanced and supplemented by her husband's exquisite accompaniments on the pianoforte, has an effect of spontaneity as though improvised, and the result is in every way a genuine musical delight. Grieg himself is genial, cultured, and unaffected. He has a keen intelligence, and a cheerful disposition, which he retains notwithstanding the necessity of constant care of his health occasioned by a serious pulmonary affection contracted while studying at Leipsic. He is short in stature, and has a large and imposing head. His expression is serious, earnest, and artless, and he is by nature repugnant to anything like posing. He leads a very retired life, rarely going out, and then only on extraordinary occasions. He is patriotic and public-spirited, takes a constant interest in whatever affects his country's welfare, and he has felt much concerned about the political changes now going on in Norway. His intense nationality and marked individuality find constant expression in his music, the originality and style of which are unmistakable.



A NORWEGIAN FJORD.

After a painting by G. Munthe.

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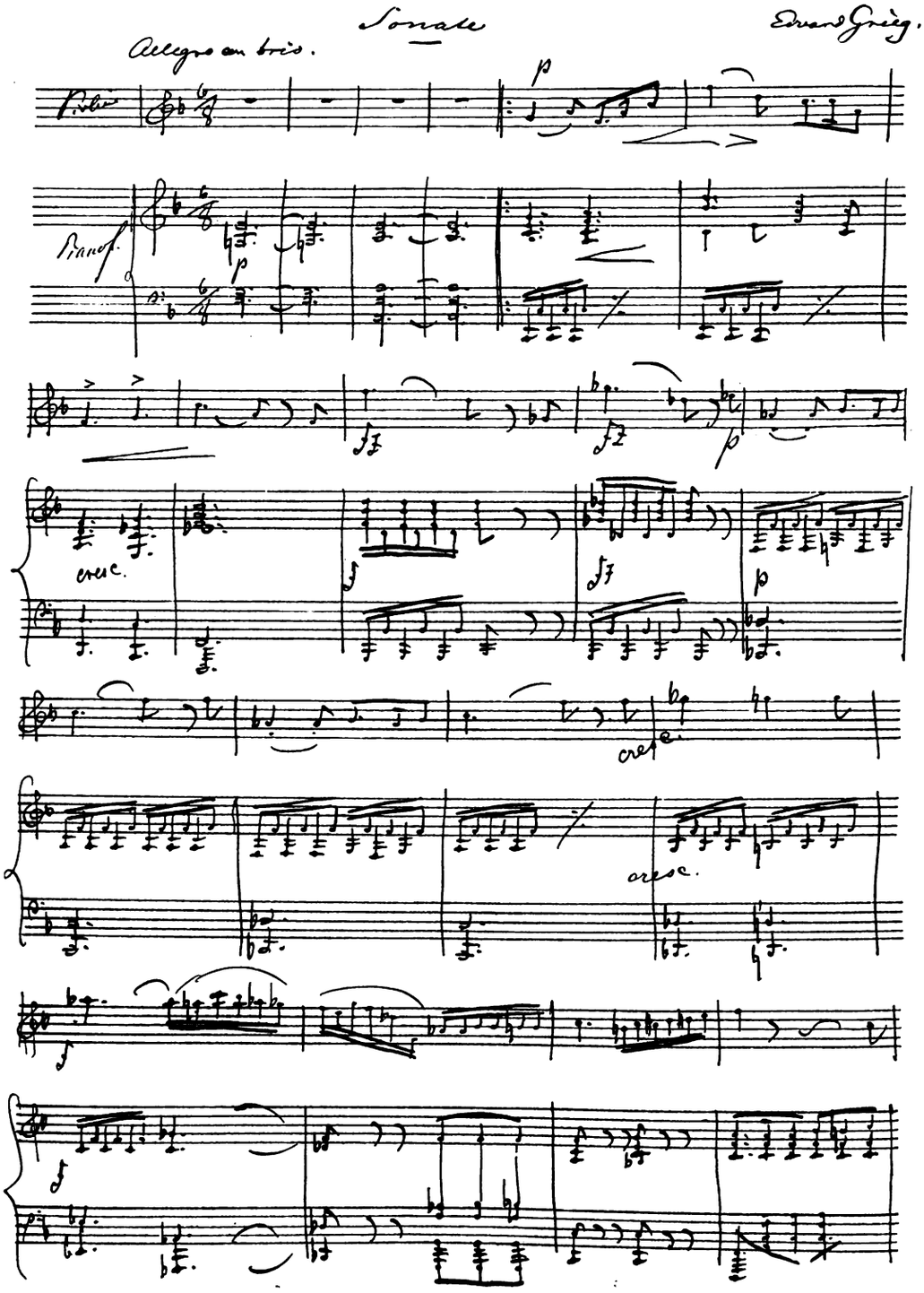

A MANUSCRIPT OF EDVARD GRIEG.

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WHAT, FINALLY, IS PHRASING?

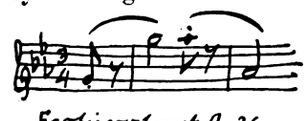
BY

HUGO RIEMANN

IT has been a long journey from the initial attempts to indicate phrasing to the present scientific system of defining the motif and the construction of the musical period. Since Robert Schumann first ventured to indicate the relation of tones separated by rests, but belonging to the same motif, by drawing a slur above them,

Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6 No 18, comp. 1837

and



Faschingsschwank, Op. 26

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there has arisen in music a something before unknown in the art of notation, which has continually grown in scope until to-day it has assumed paramount importance. In the editions of the classics by Hans von Bülow and Lebert and Stark this new something took the form of alterations in the limits of the slurs which indicated the execution; and this species of rectification was well received, thanks to an essay by Louis Köhler in the "Neuen Zeitschrift für Musik," which forcibly arraigned the very frequent incorrectness of the terminations of such slurs.

My own phrased editions published since 1884 have done away with such easy half corrections, and have added one essentially new element of notation to those heretofore current, in the thoroughly worked out indications of the meanings of the subordinate members of the phrase (*Sinngliederung*). Because this system in part availed itself of the signs long in common use, and especially of the slurs (in the manner initiated by Schumann), it naturally aroused a storm of indignation against a presumption which dared to meddle with the texts of the classical masters. The misunderstanding which occurred on this account is pardonable. But those who objected to the new system of notation overlooked the fact that I had preserved the signs above the notes for legato and non legato, by means of a method of indication which is painfully exact, viz., points for breaking off, and strokes for the legato close. Besides, by the new system of slurring, and the little perpendicular stroke,—the punctuation mark which indicates clearly what the former phrasing marks never showed,—the limits of the larger and smaller independent members of the melody are defined. In short, the phrasing stands out in its totality.

Although I had undertaken to lay down exhaustively in my musical "Dynamik und Agogik" (Hamburg, D. Rahter, 1884) the principles which must be authoritative in indicating the boundaries of the motif, the first Phrased Edition aroused lively opposition. But the chief reason for this did not arise from disapproval of the new theory of the science of musical form, no attempt having ever been made to confute it. It was merely dislike to the unaccustomed and opposition to new ideas. Rudolph Westphal's frightful discovery that modern musicians universally read from one measure bar to the next ("Allgemeine Theorie der Musikalischen Rhythmik seit J. S. Bach," 1880) had made but little impression; but the beginning of the science of phrasing was the general fact exploited by Westphal that what stands between two measure bars never has the value of a musical motif, but that the measure bars, especially when properly employed, cut through the motif. The measure bar indicates the ictus (*Schwerpunkt*) which falls on the note which follows the bar.

The theory of phrasing took an important step forward in self-understanding when Friedrich Nietzsche well summed up its results as "an endeavor to present to the eye in a striking way the individual *gestures* of musical effects." This is the golden word which will lead the theory of phrasing on to victory.

HUGO RIEMANN.

From a photograph by Georg Brokesch, Leipsic.

Now we know at last what a motif, what a phrase is: it is, in music, the tone equivalent of a gesture in acting.

In my "Elements of Musical Esthetics," just published (Stuttgart, Spemann, 1900), this idea is established in detail, and made useful for further deductions. When it becomes generally acknowledged that the tones belonging together and bound to each other by legato delivery correspond to a dramatic musical gesture, the further question arises whether the opposite is also possible; for if not, a melody played staccato throughout would not consist of motifs, but only of unrelated single tones. Yes; one

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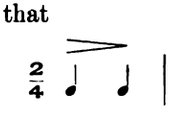
learns at last that motifs cut up by rests may not only be possible gestures, but are very specially expressive ones.

Though at first the theory of phrasing and phrasing notation found its chief interest in determining the extent of individual motifs, the reassembling of these individual motifs into a greater picture constitutes a step in advance. The more the science of phrasing becomes conscious that it is the science of musical form, the more burning becomes the question of the jointing together of the single members into the greater unit of construction — the musical period. It is a result of the agitation of the phrasing question that a way was found which led from the mere defining of the measure-motif to the settled limitation of the period complete in itself, and the collection of the periods into themes; and, ultimately, to working out their development collectively, grouping the latter together into the completely developed piece of music. This is a triumph of which the phrasing movement may well be proud.

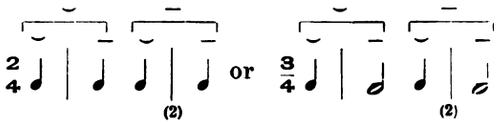
The very simple principle from which all the elements of the building up of form, from the smallest to the greatest, are evolved is the discrimination between the different weights of the time values — the discrimination between *light* and *heavy* (arsis and thesis). This distinction is usually made for the capital divisions of the measure only (the first beat in the measure is heavy; the second, or in triple time the second and third, light); but as soon as it is applied successively to the time units of larger and larger denominations it yields the key to the construction of the period. This key was found the moment when the knowledge was arrived at that the heavy (pulse) in music is equivalent to an answer; that

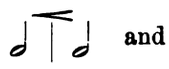
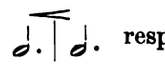


is not the germ of all musical building, but

The principle may be formulated thus: every light pulse is really the up-beat (*auftakt*) of a following heavy pulse, and not, as is usually supposed, the second half of a preceding heavy pulse.

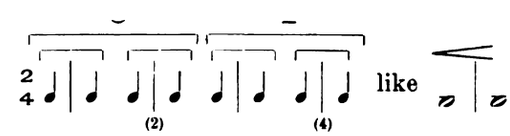
By applying this distinction of light and heavy to the next greater denomination of time units, the distinction between light and heavy measures results (⌣ = light, — = heavy):



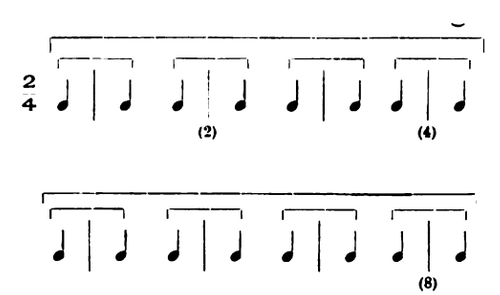
like  and  respectively.

Here the second measure-motif answers the first, just as among the single measures the light and heavy beats (arsis and thesis) answer each other, the second being the heavier in each case.

In the Phrased Edition the numbers 2, 4, 6, 8 placed under the measure bars show clearly the statement and answer of the motif, by indicating the less or greater stress; in this case the even numbers 2, 4, 6, 8 show measures which in relation to the foregoing uneven 1, 3, 5, 7 receive the ictus, because they are the answering measures (measures of the antithesis). Further, measure 4 is heavier than measure 2, and stands in special answering relations to it.



And, finally, 8 is the special answer to 4.



As far as the so-called thesis and antithesis into which the regular eight-measure period subdivides, this property of answer has been long known and universally acknowledged. The only novelty is in making the answering section (antithesis) the heavy one. That

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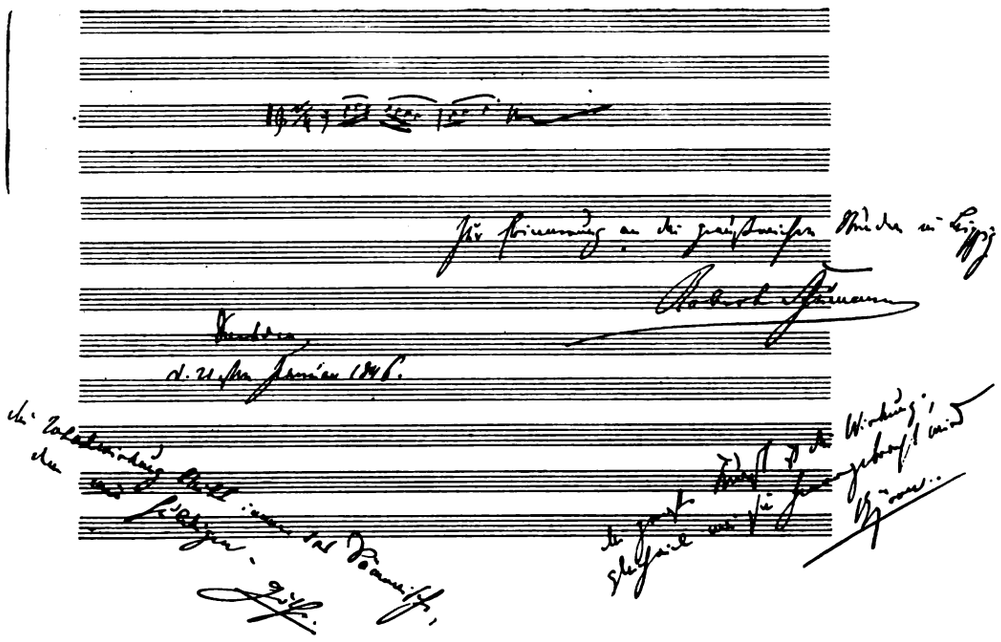
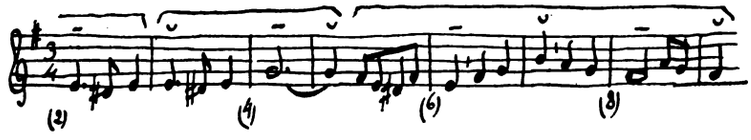


AN AUTOGRAPH OF SCHUMANN.

From Carl Reinecke's Autograph Album.

this corresponds to the strongest demands of logic is plain from studying the problem.

If all periods could be divided into eights, the extraordinary simplicity of the theory would be convincing at a glance. But as the up-beat (*auftakt*) is sometimes wanting in the beginning of a melody, so the light measure of the next higher series of time units may also be missing, and thus the piece begins at once on the heavy unit, viz.: the second measure,—for example (Beethoven, Sonata Op. 14, 1):



The manifold complications of this sort which the harmonic and melodic contents entail cannot well be discussed here; but if one holds fast to the idea that the measure beats are not to be told off mechanically, but are to be built up through the distinct relationship of statement and answer (arsis and thesis), whereby the increasing ictus upon the values 1, 2, 4, 8 is kept in view, then we can understand that by means of these numbers will be achieved a clearness in the reading of the figures of the theme in its entirety, before unknown.

This is done by recognizing and supplying the missing links where the formal numbers have been broken off, and by elisions where the larger units of form begin with values which already possess the ictus of a still higher order,—all this made directly visible to the naked eye.

This indication of the phrases certainly goes far beyond any working over of the original text of the composition. Its single aim is a much deeper penetration into the laws of weight (stress) in the building of form,—a thorough knowledge of the elements of the science of musical form. Were such a thorough schooling in the elements of the science of phrasing and delivery according to the plain principles here briefly indicated universal, the complaint of the often hurtful overloading of the Phrased Edition with

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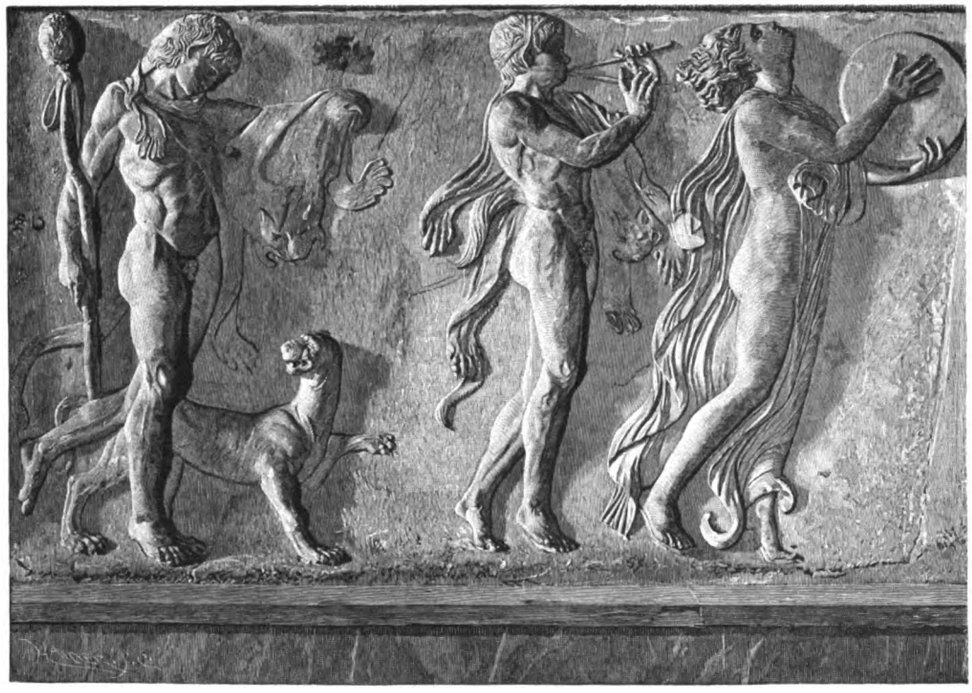
signs for delivery, till now frequent, would be superfluous. The writer would certainly be the last to lament such a consummation, inasmuch as the object of his labors would thereby be attained.

NOTE.—According to the original Greek usage, *arsis* denoted the raising of the foot in dancing, or of the hand in beating time, and therefore the unaccented part of the metrical foot; and *thesis*, the fall of the foot or of the hand in dancing or beating time, and therefore the accented part of the metrical foot.

THE EDITORS.

revidirt und richtig befunden

Leipzig, 14. Juli 1900. Hugo Riemann



A GREEK MURAL TABLET.

Showing the rhythmic and melodic origin of metric motion.

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LADY PLAYING THE HARPSICHORD.

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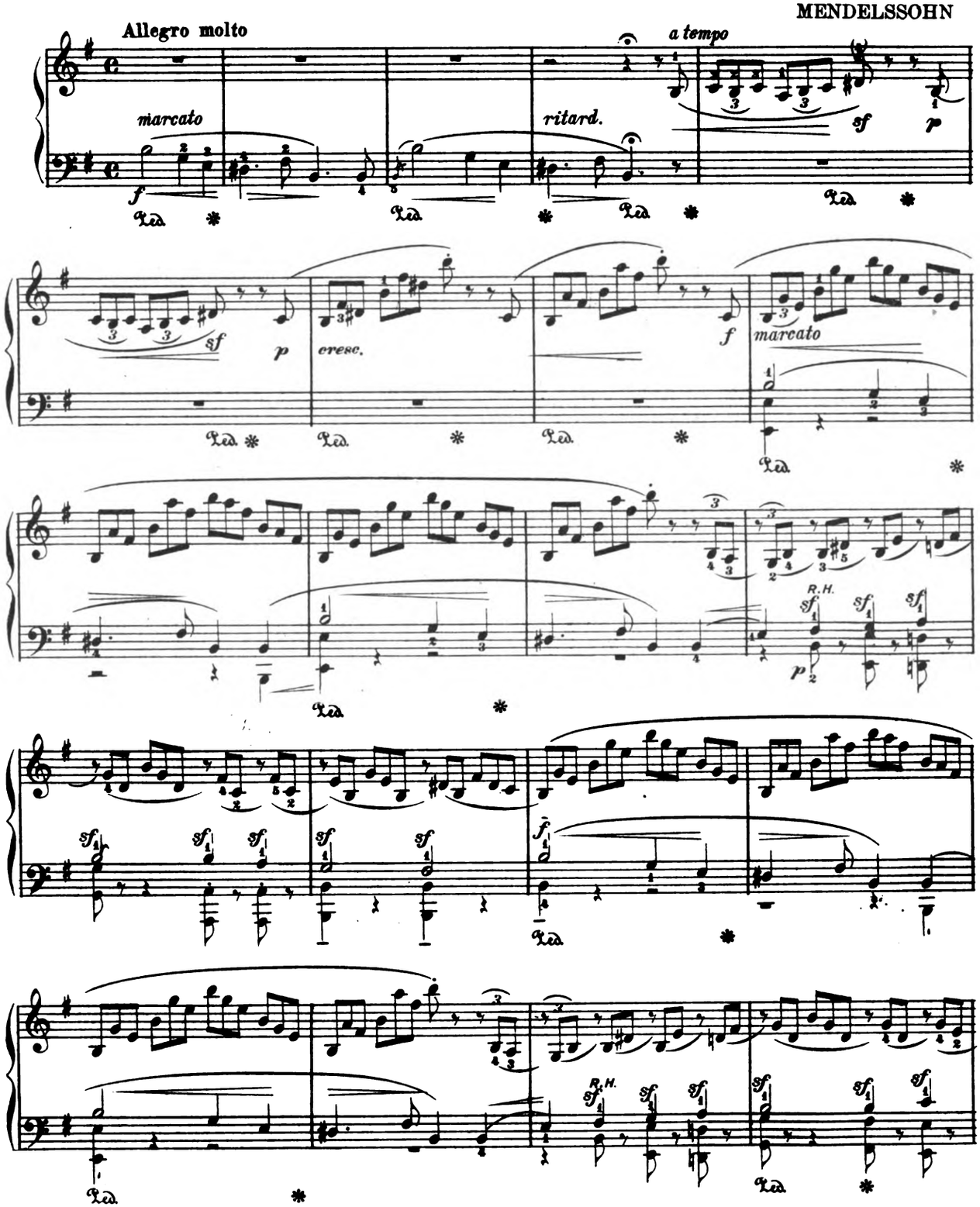
PRELUDE AND FUGUE

E MINOR

MENDELSSOHN



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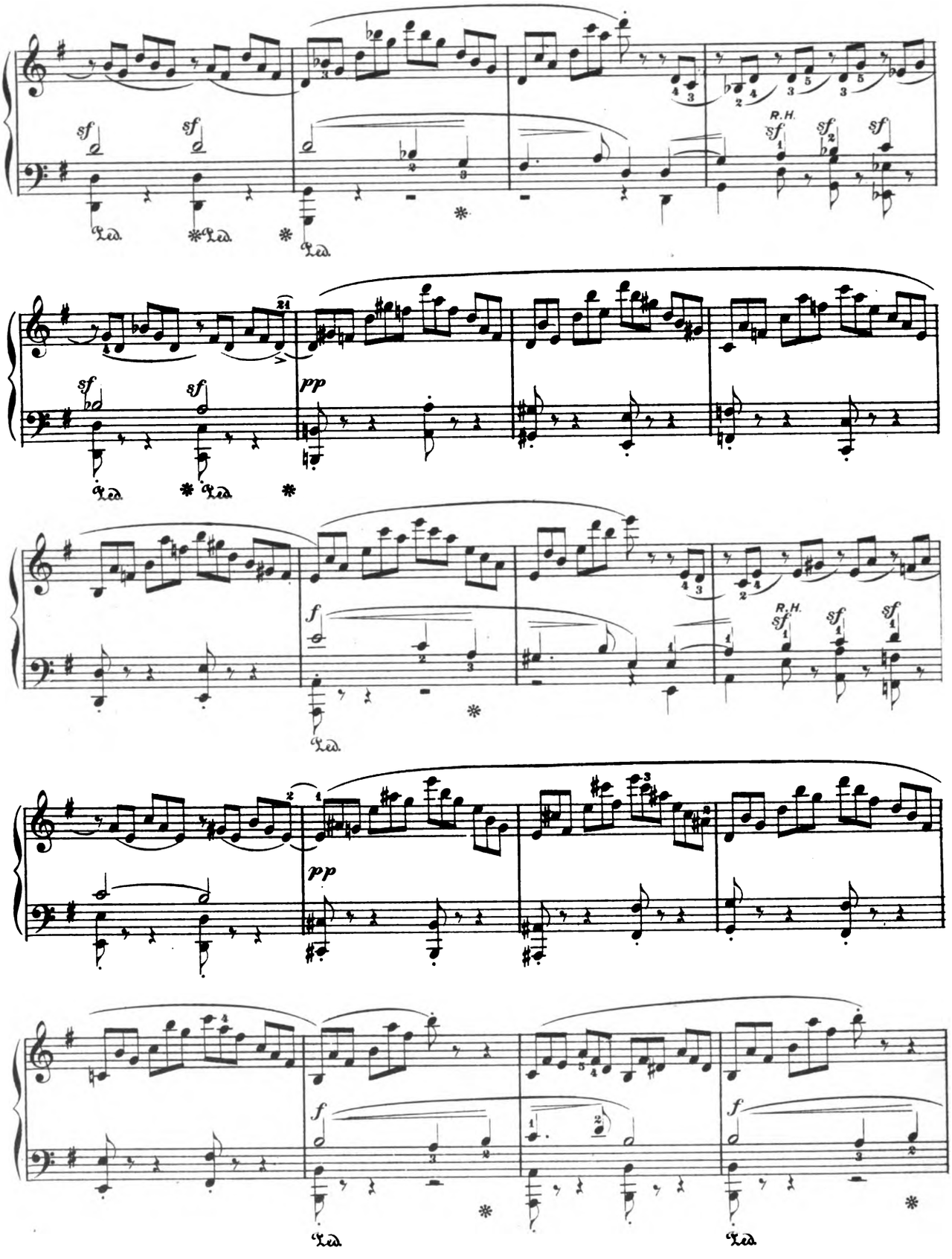

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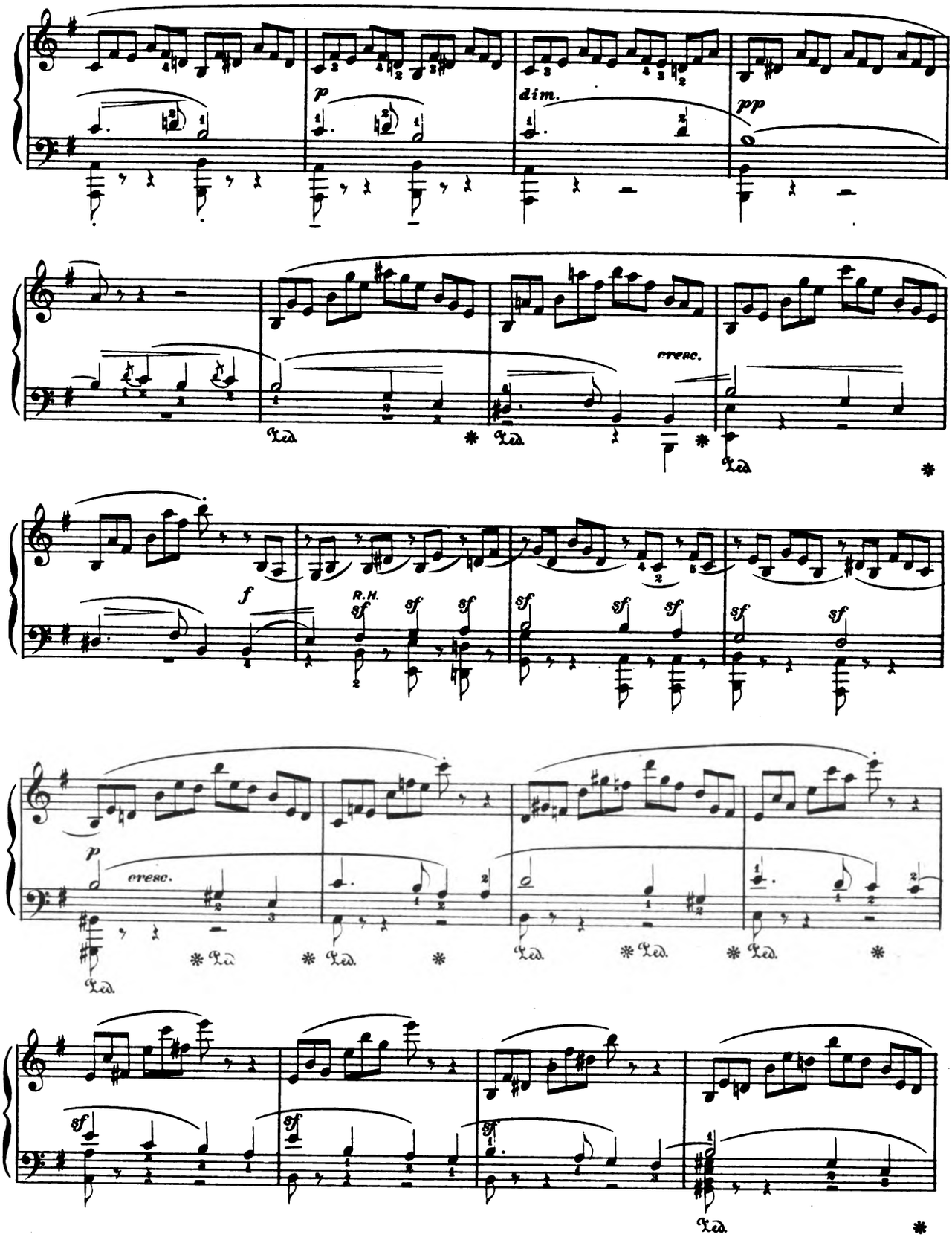

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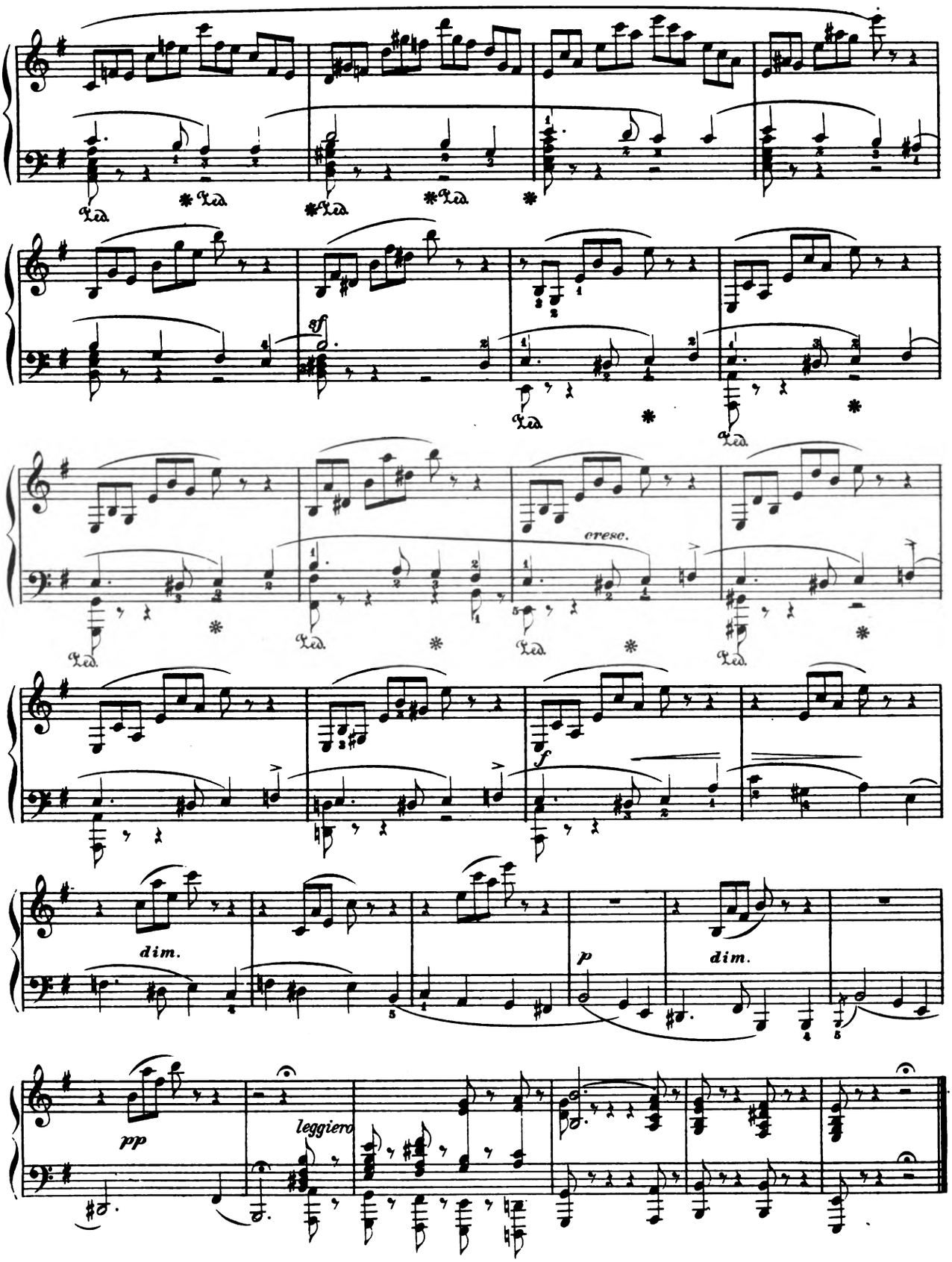

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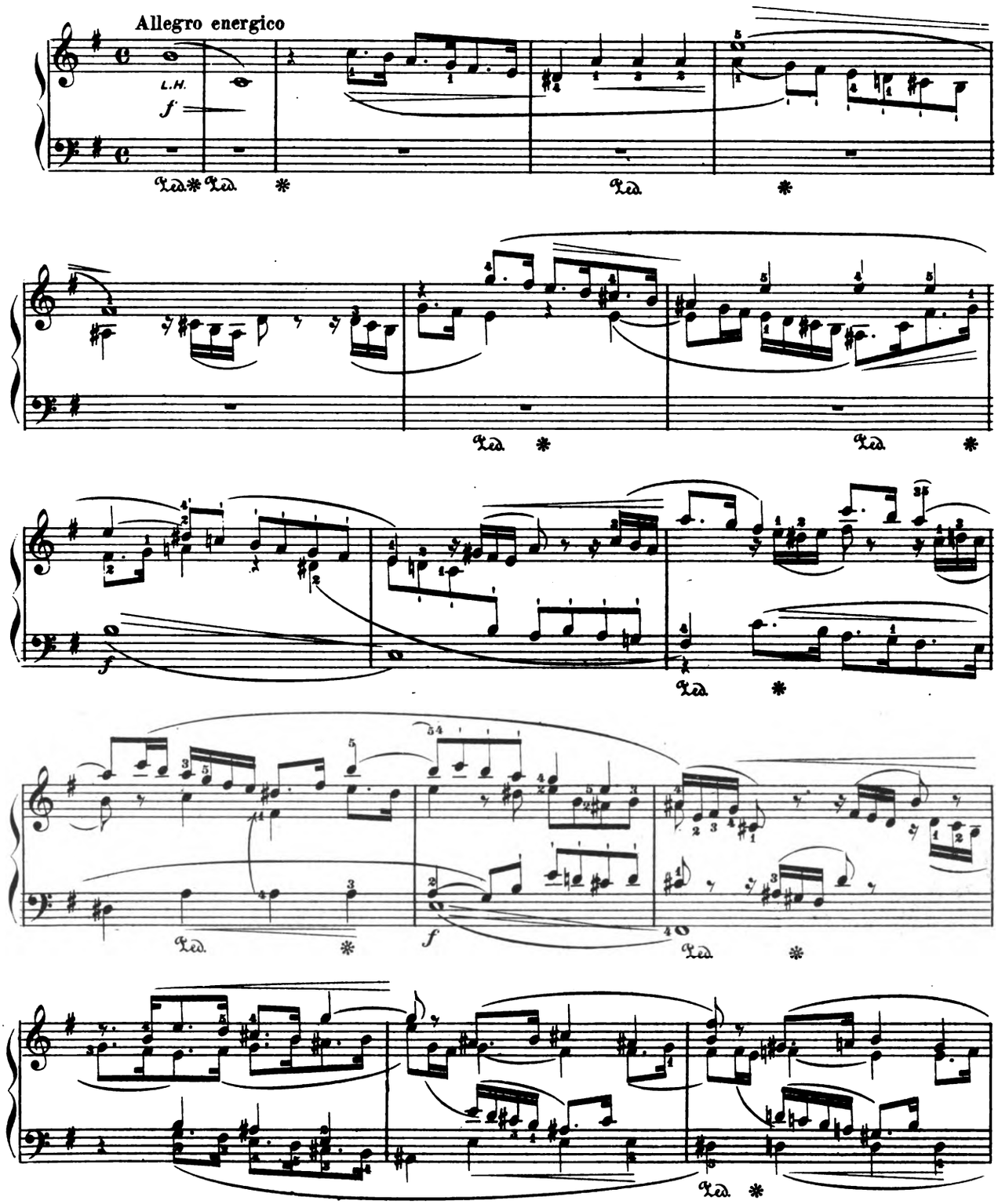
FUGUE



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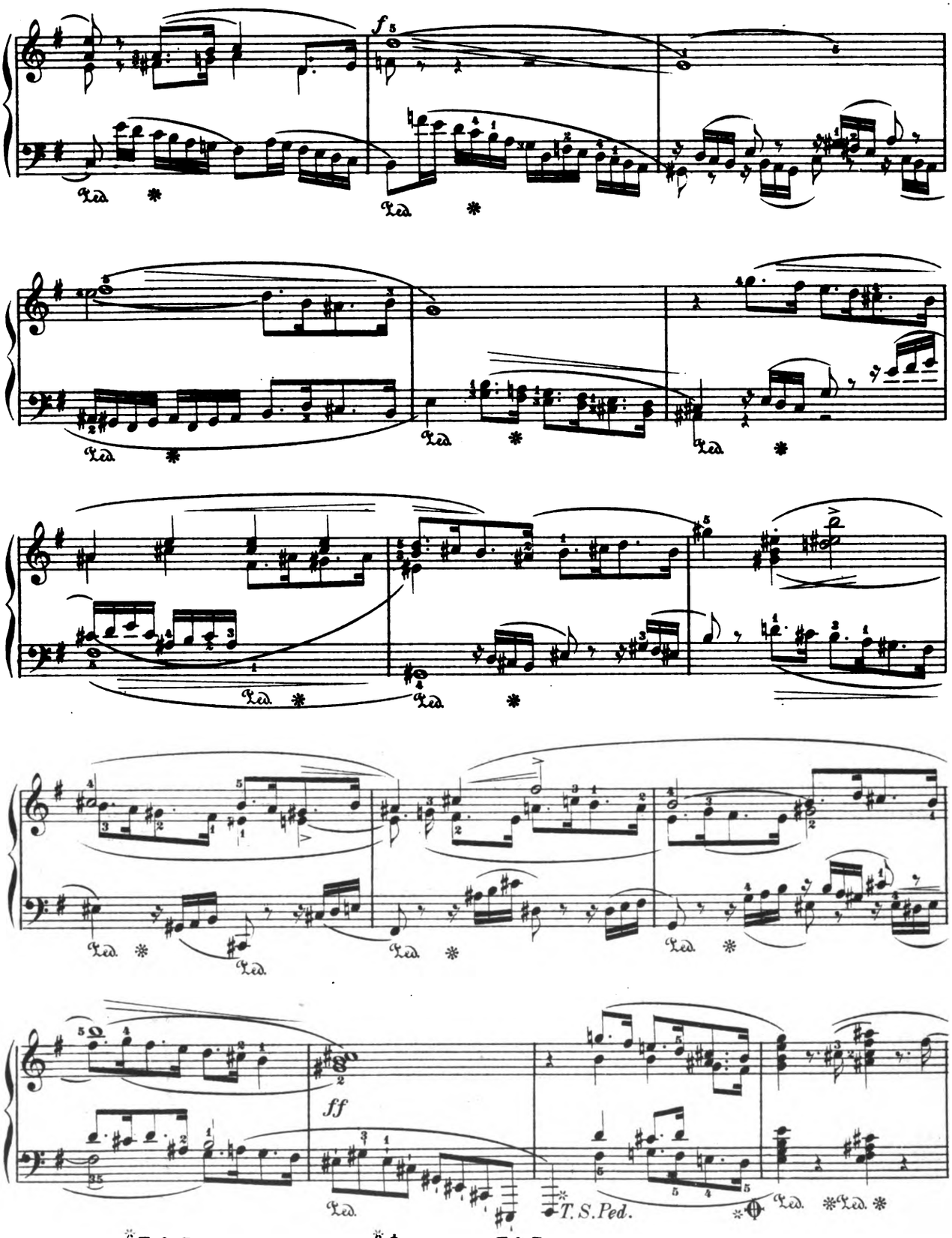

* *T.S.P.* Tone sustaining Pedal. * ⊕ Release for *T.S.P.*

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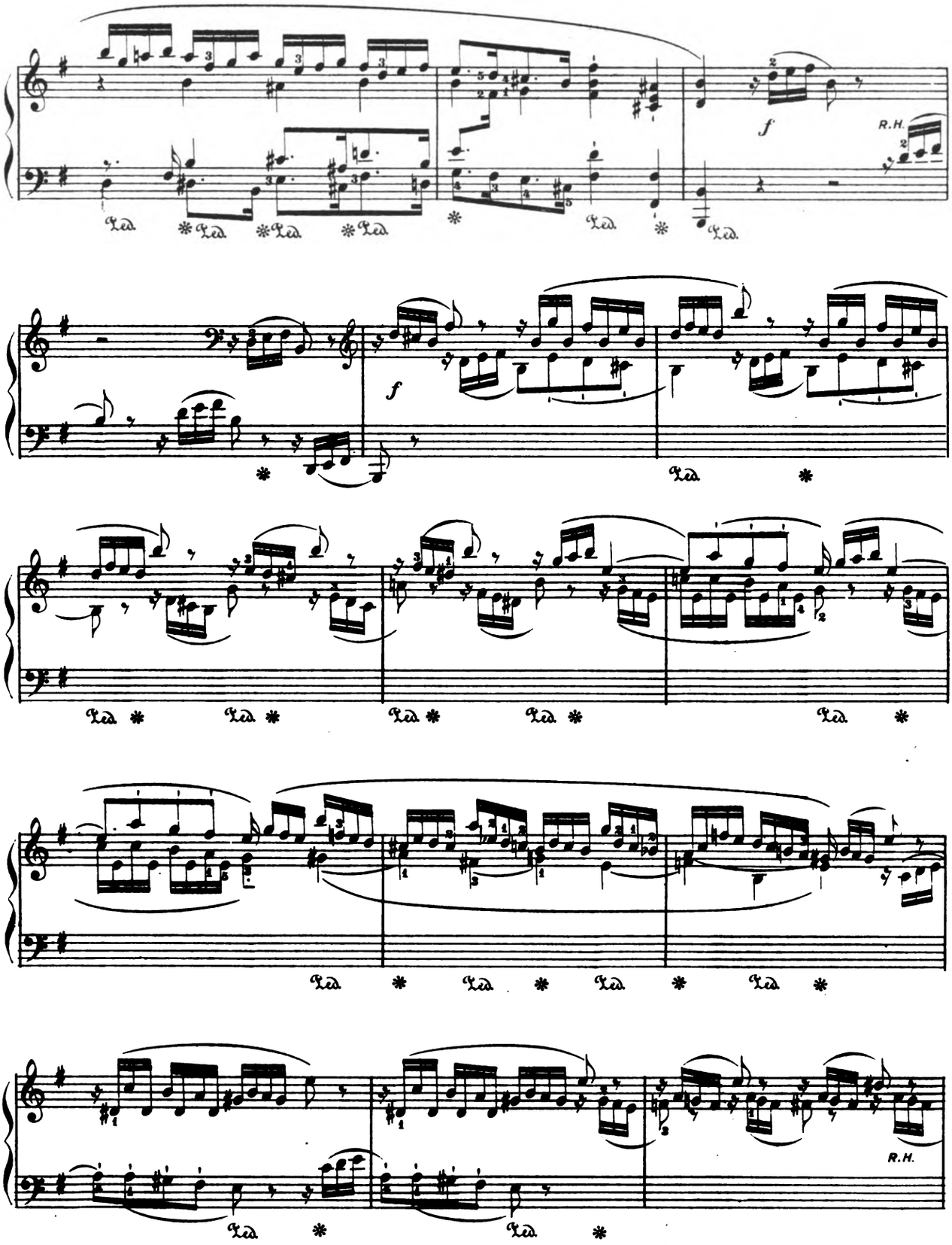

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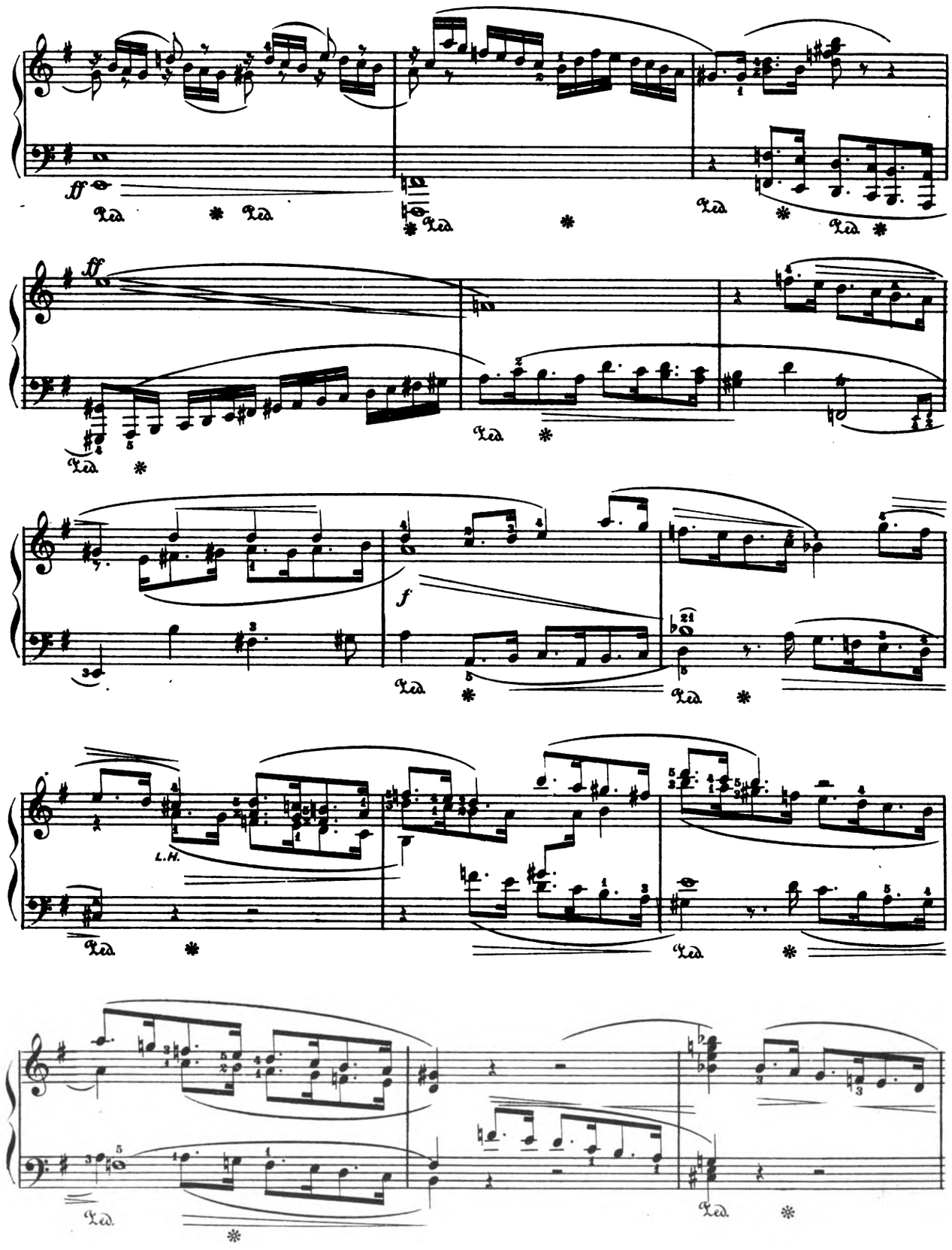

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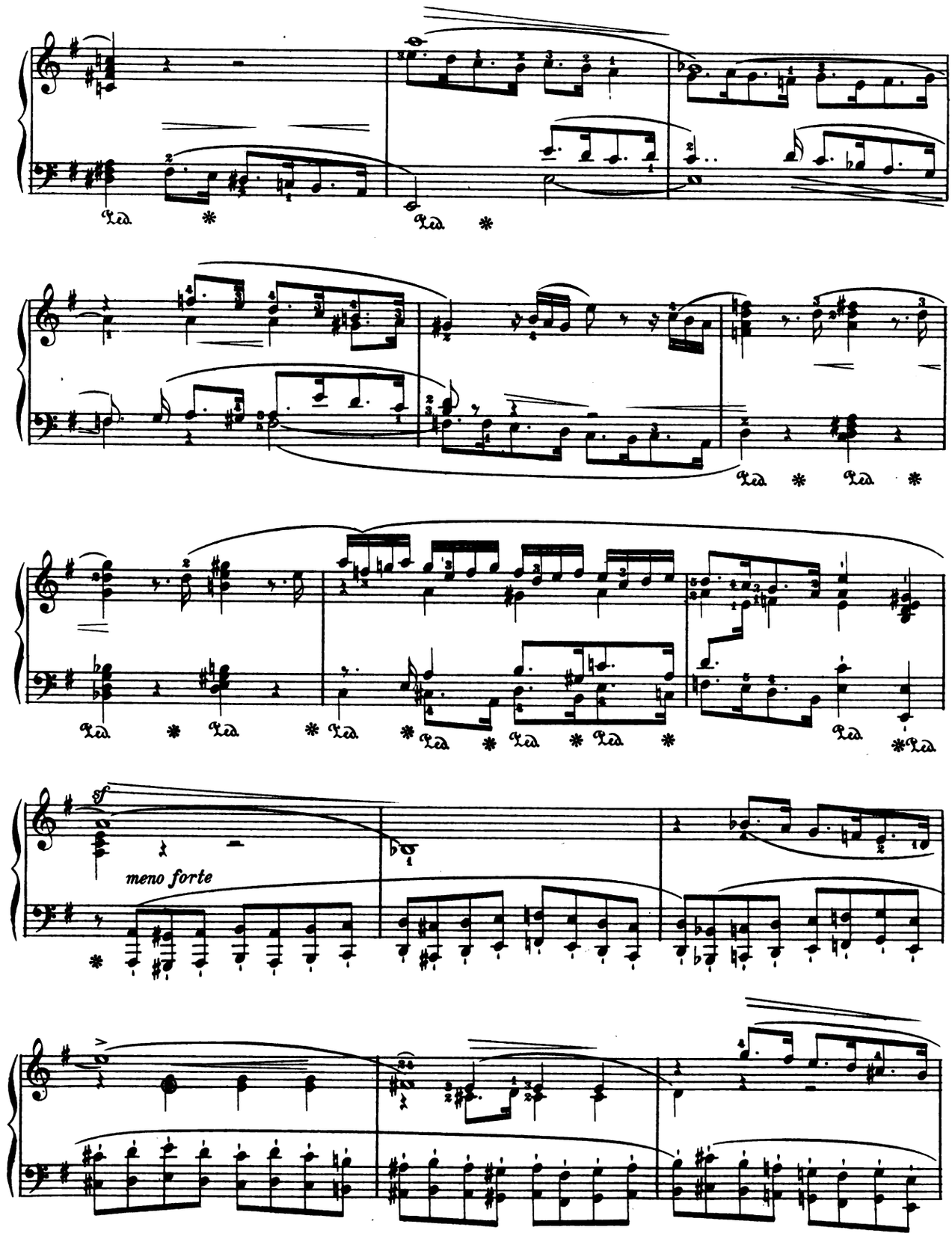

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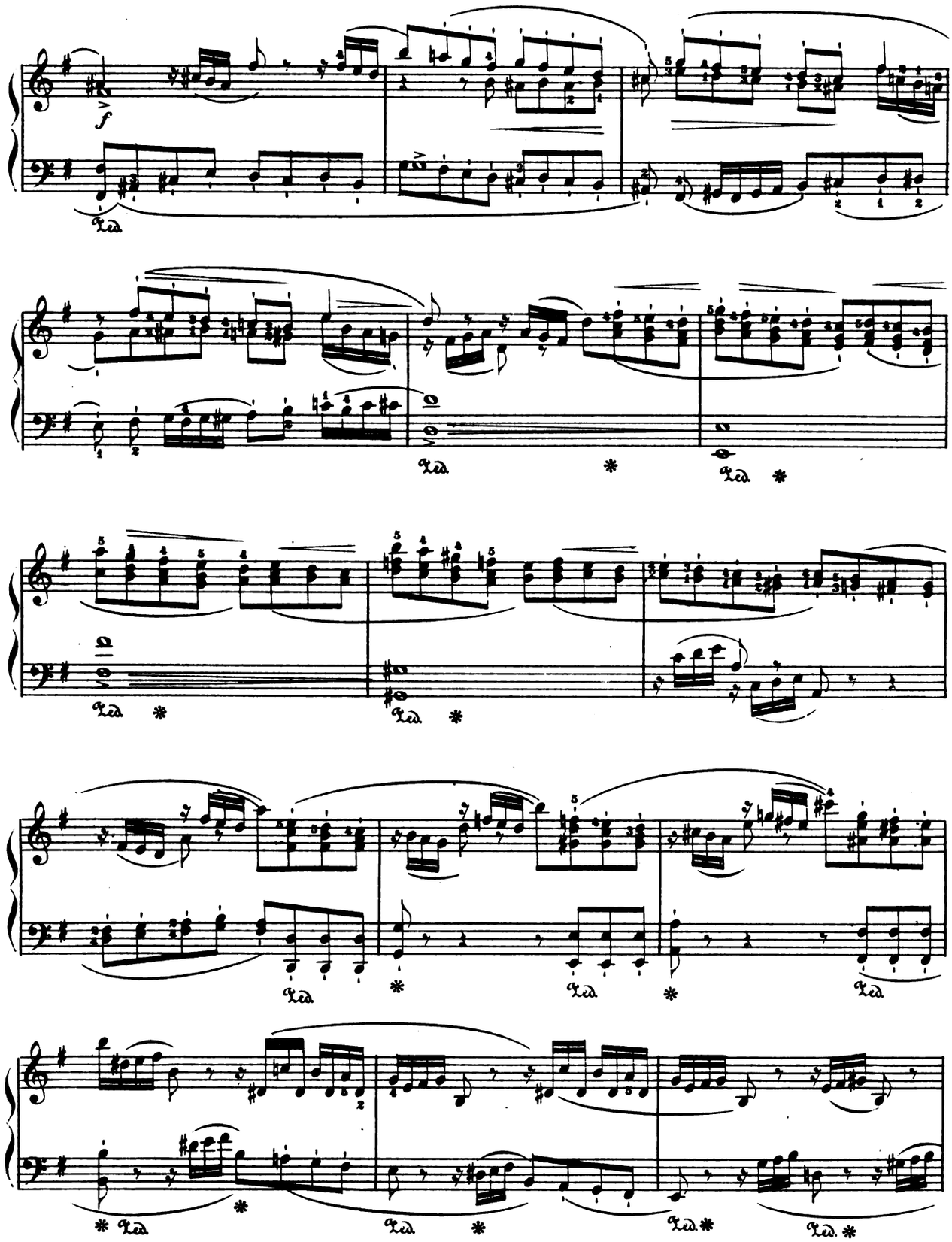

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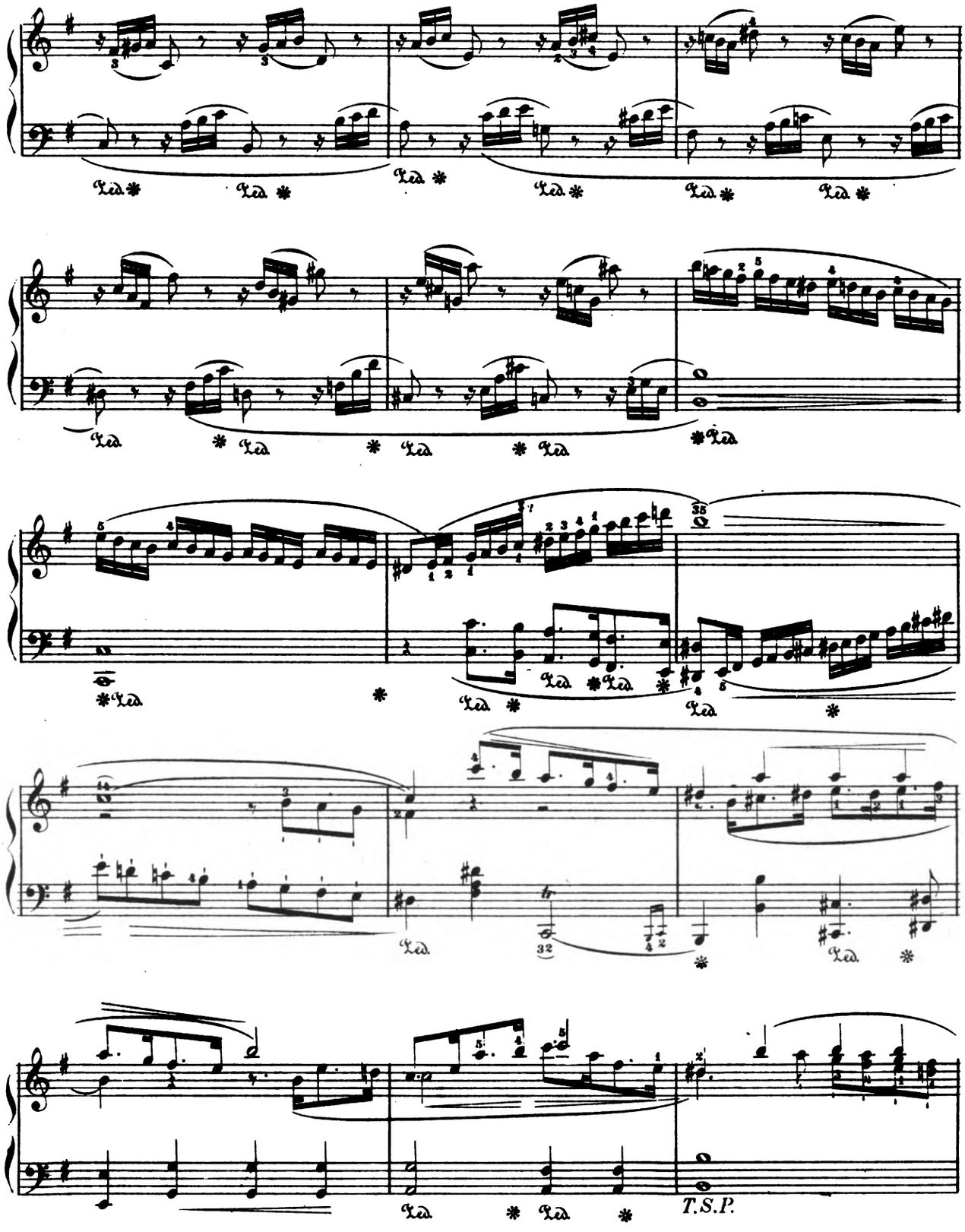

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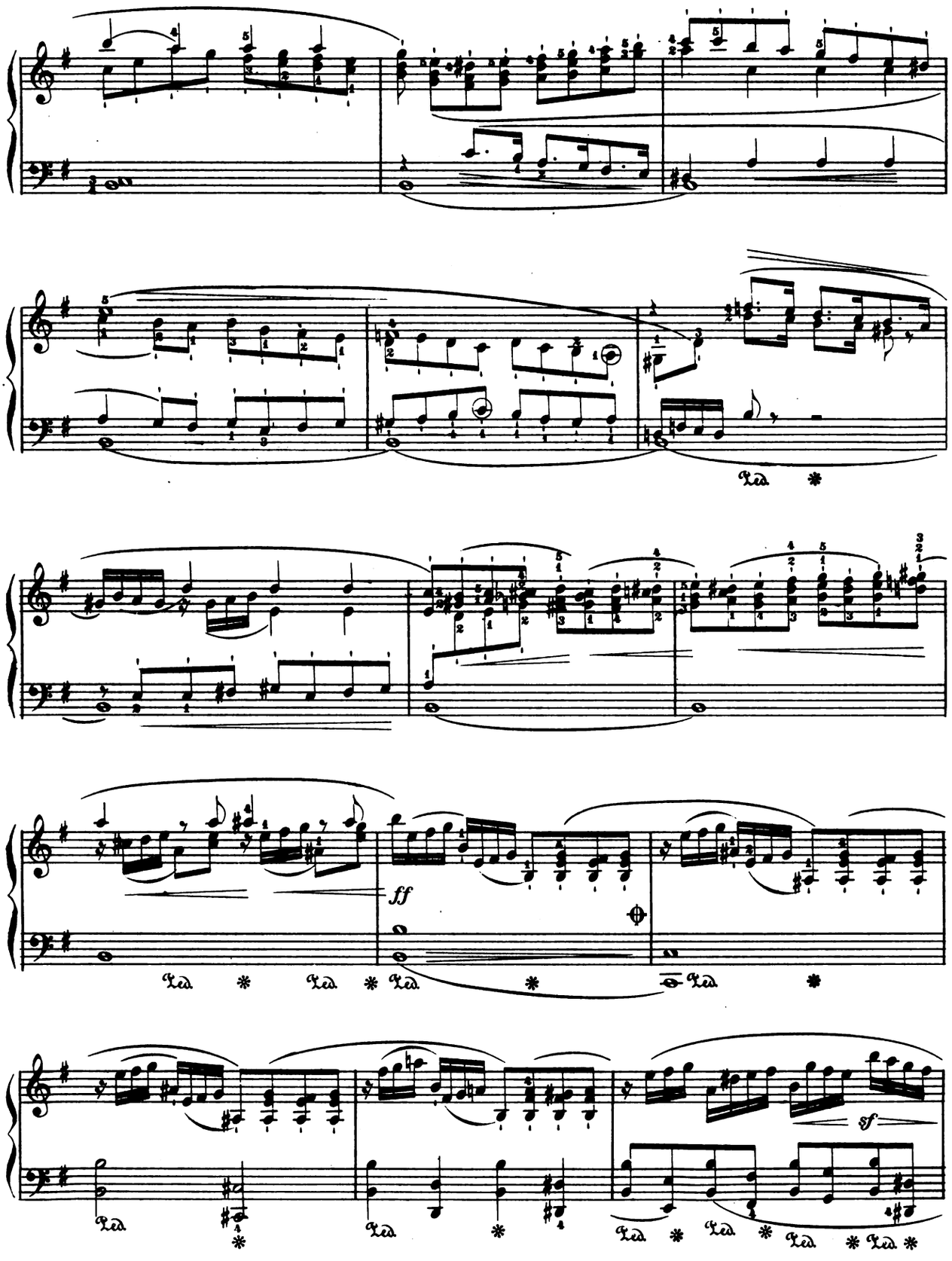

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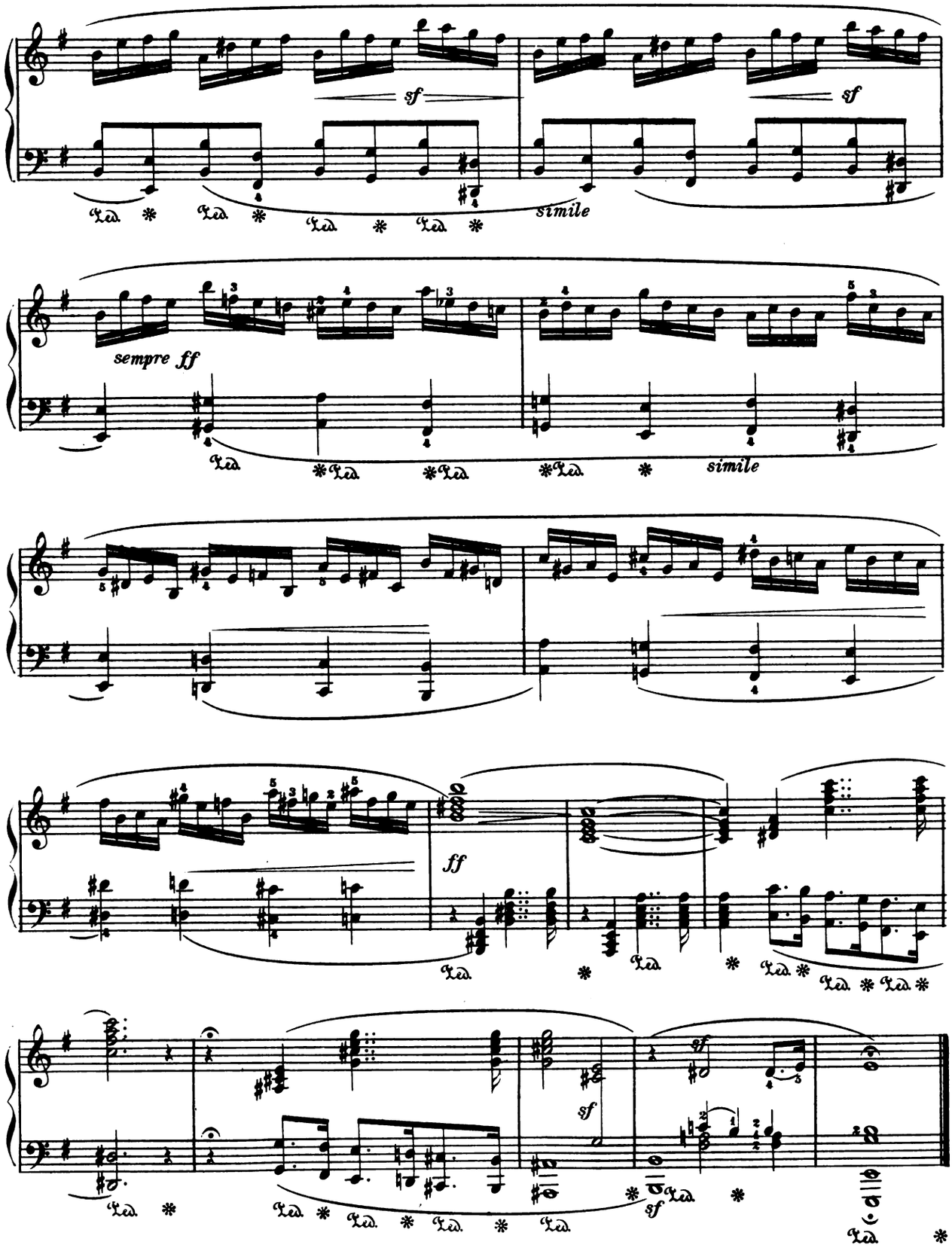

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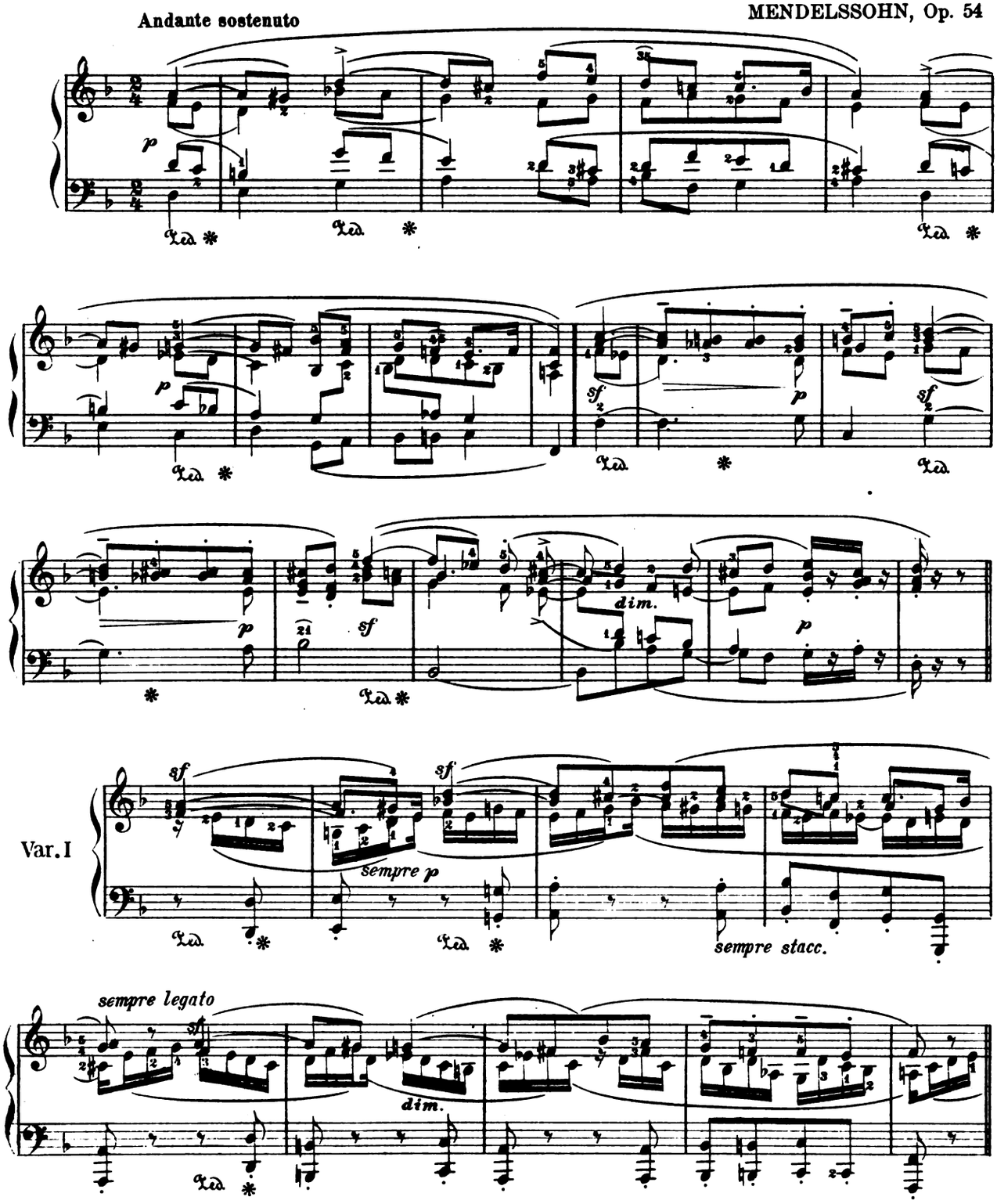
VARIATIONS SÉRIEUSES

Andante sostenuto

MENDELSSOHN, Op. 54



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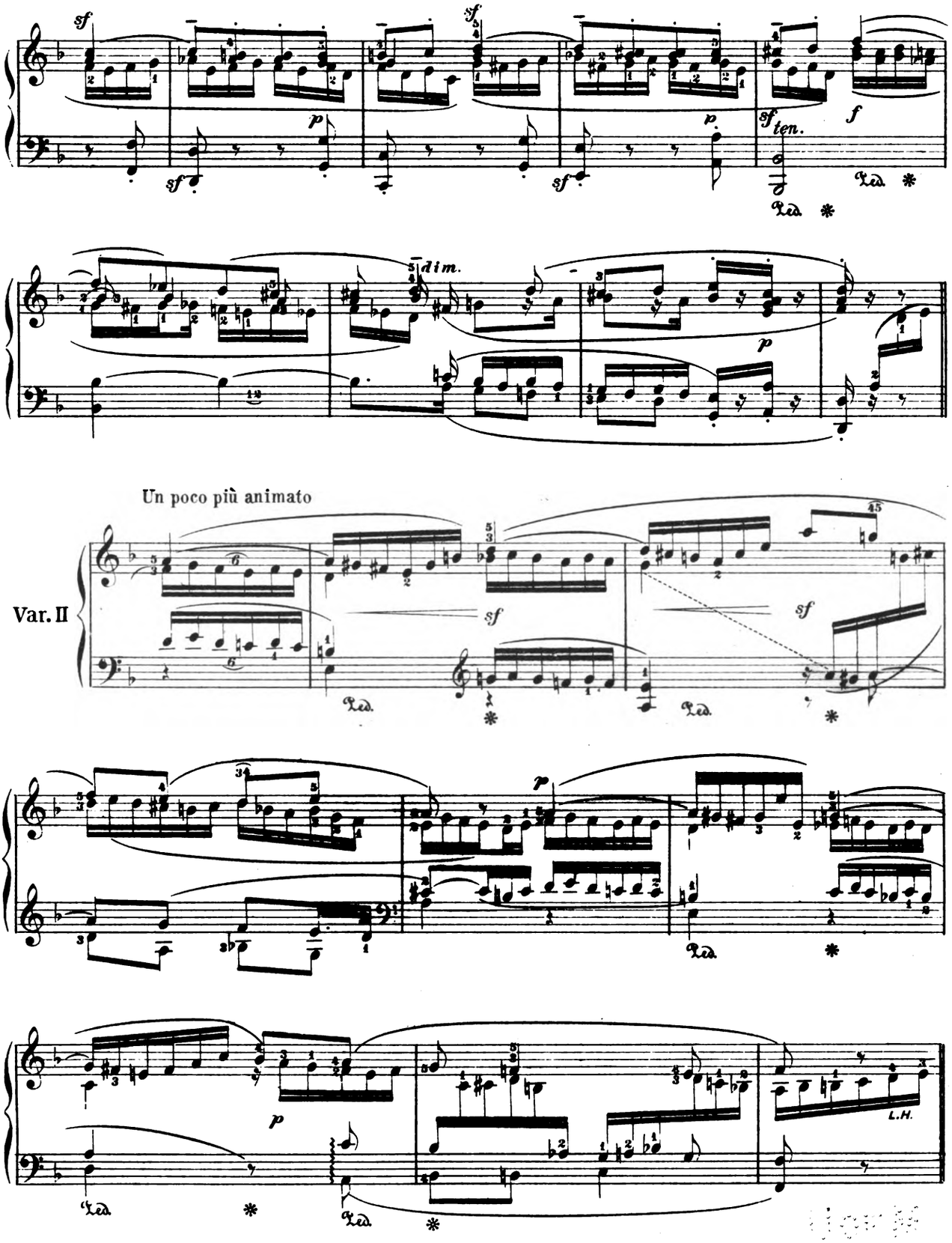

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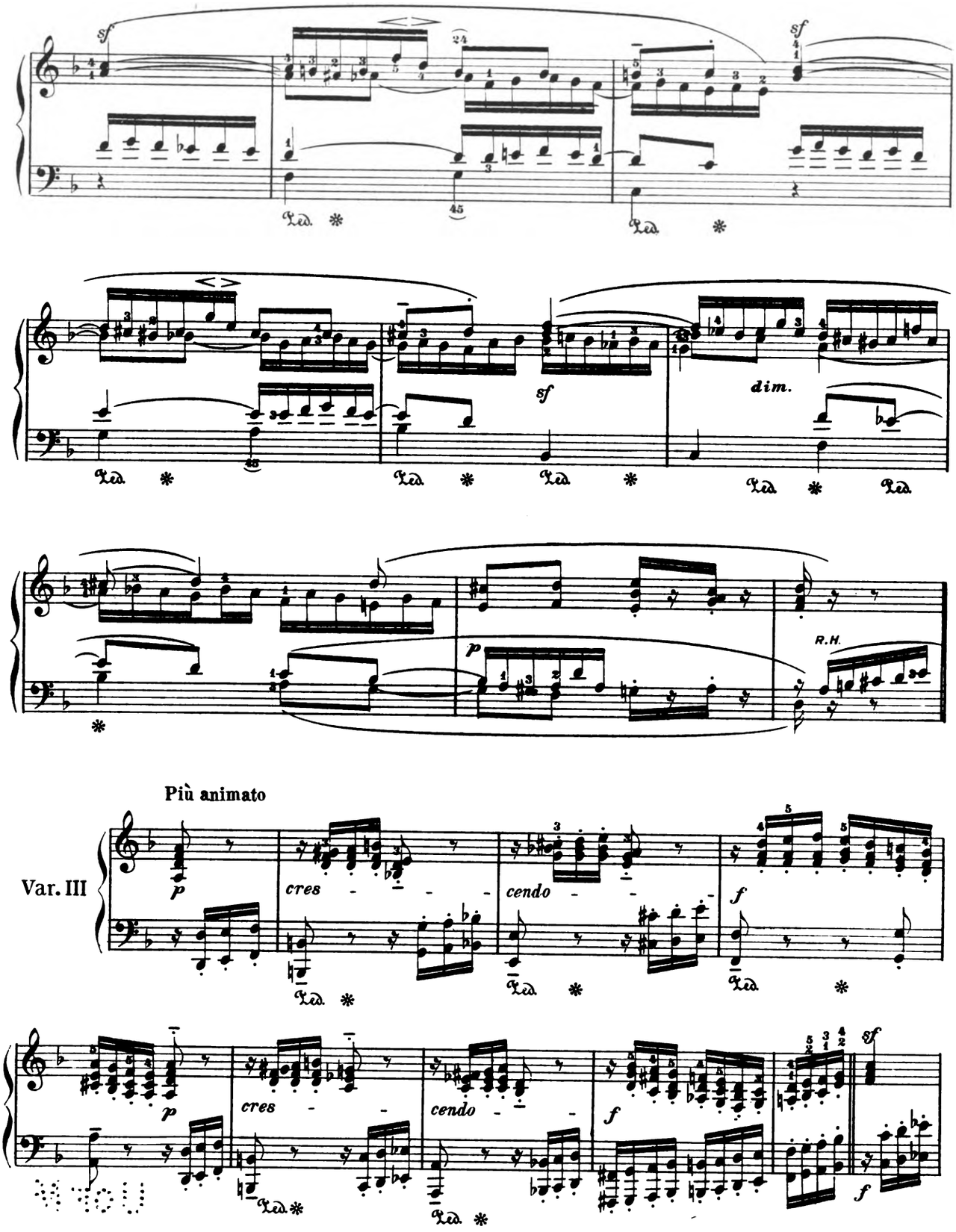

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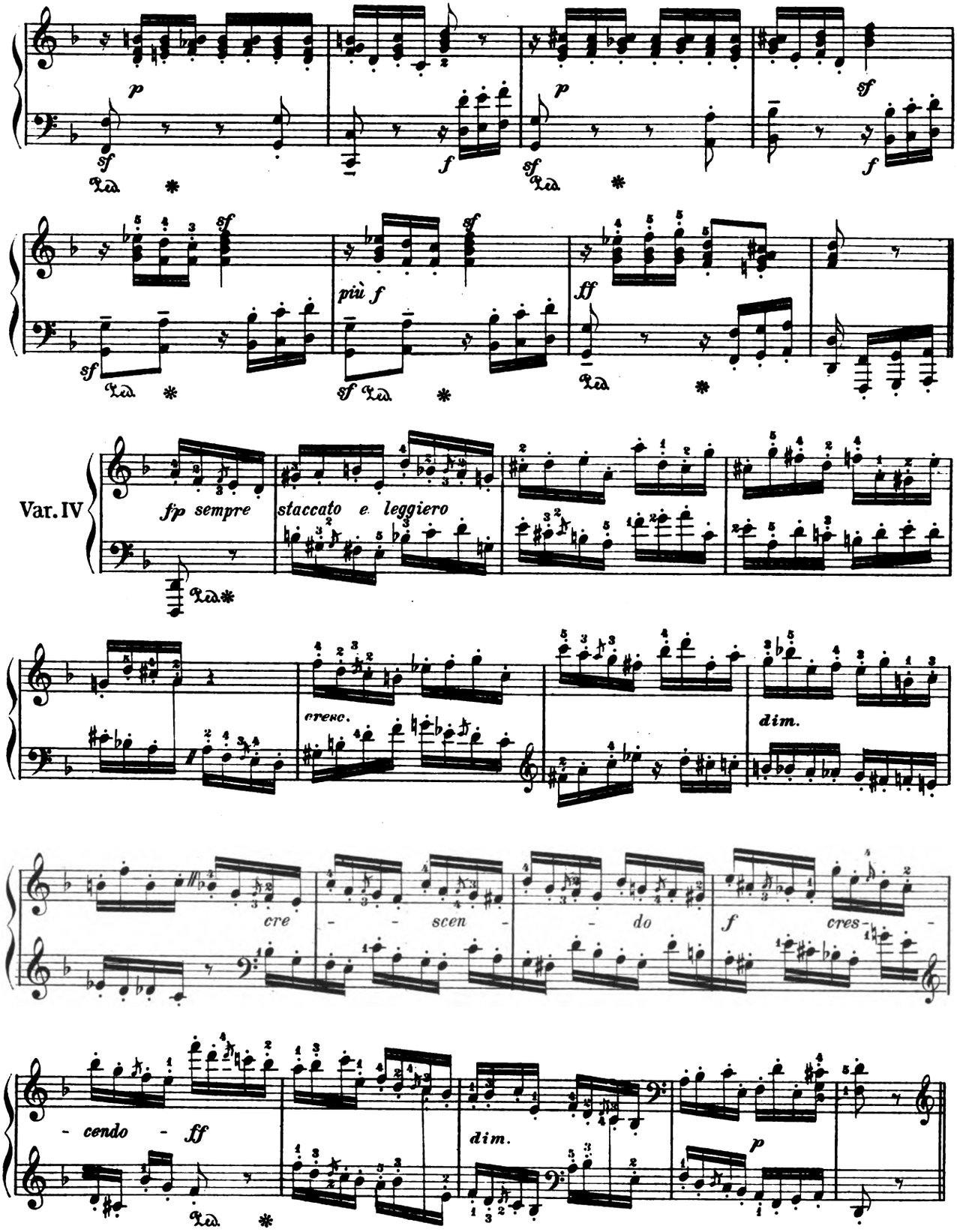

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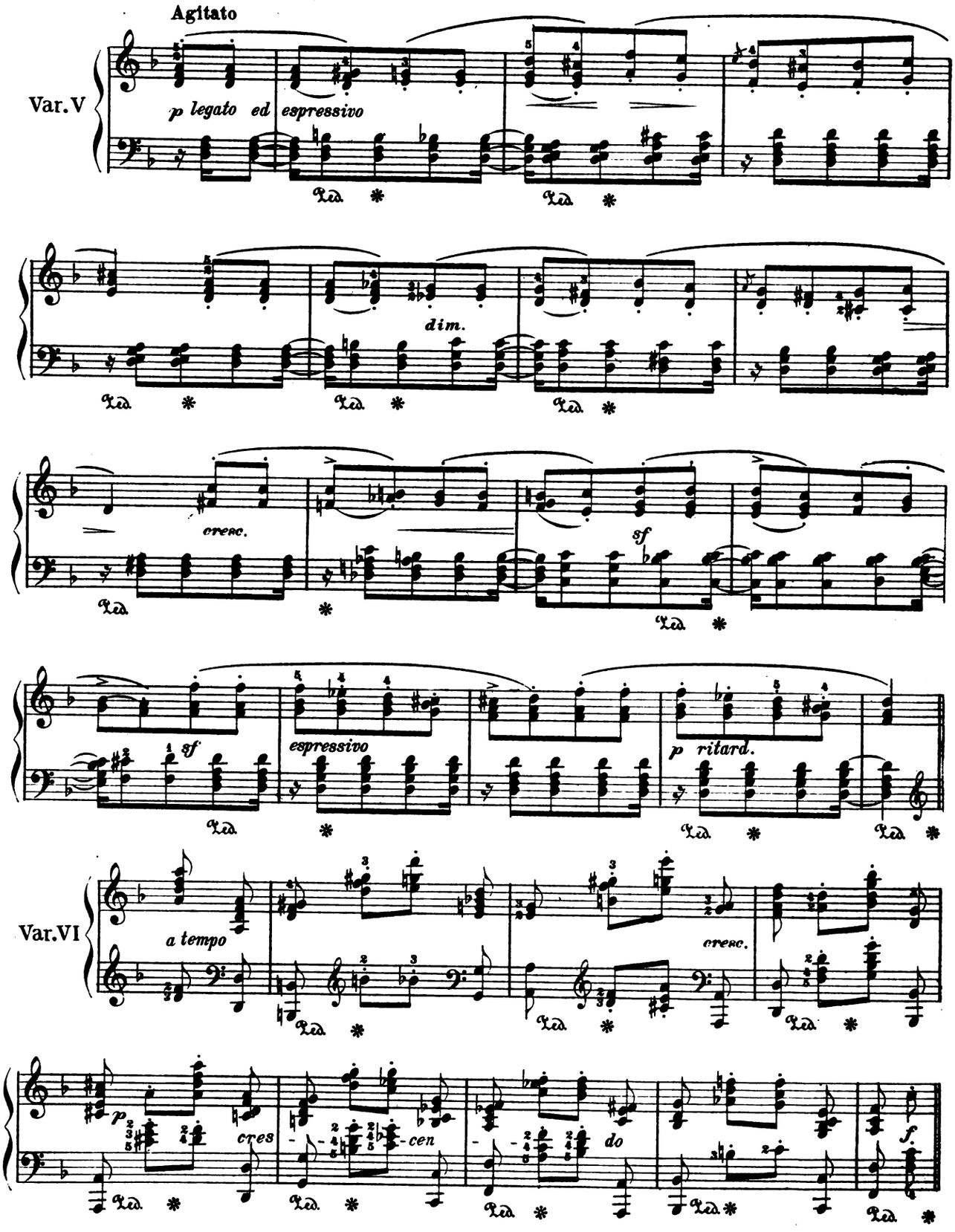

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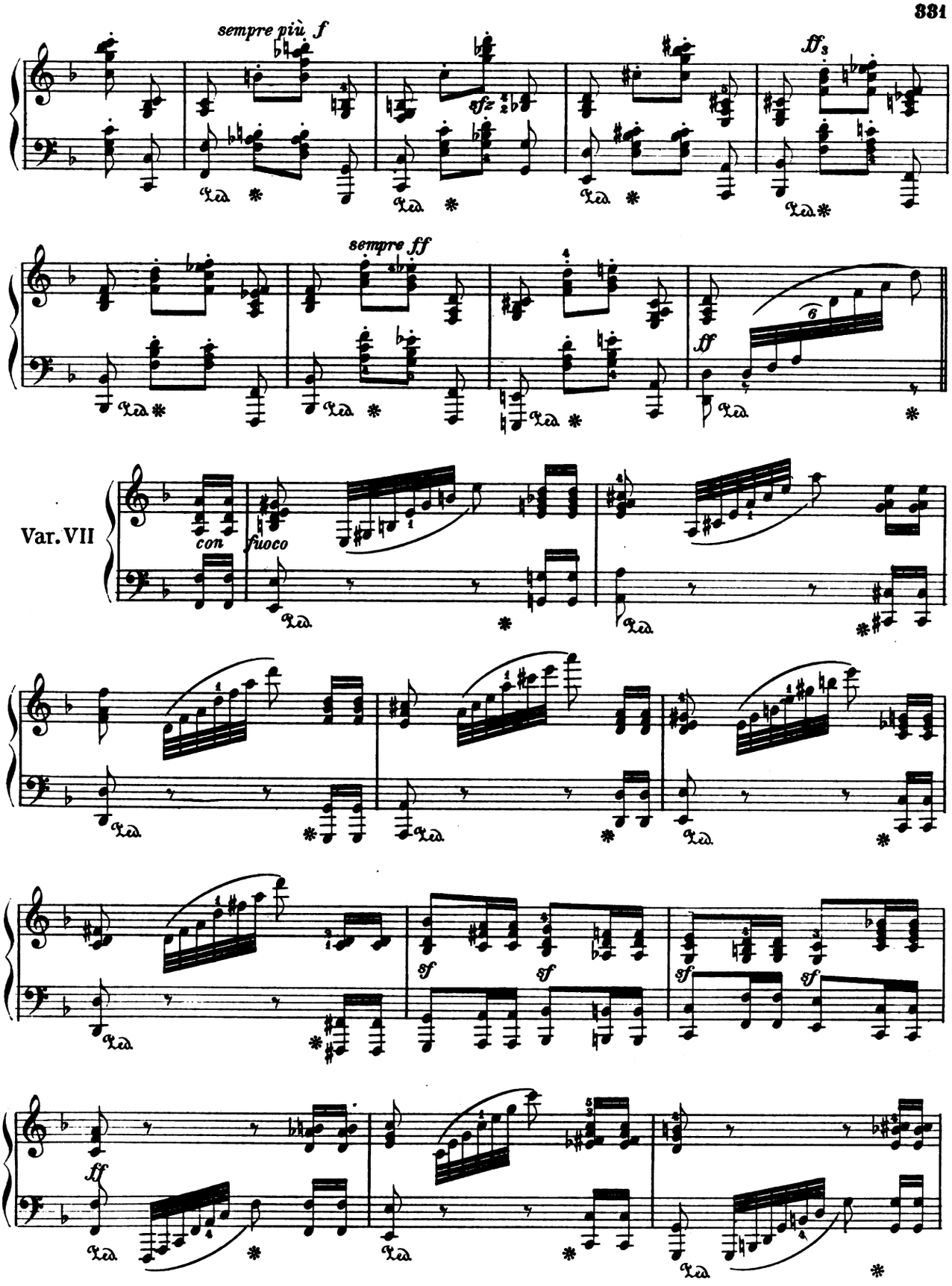

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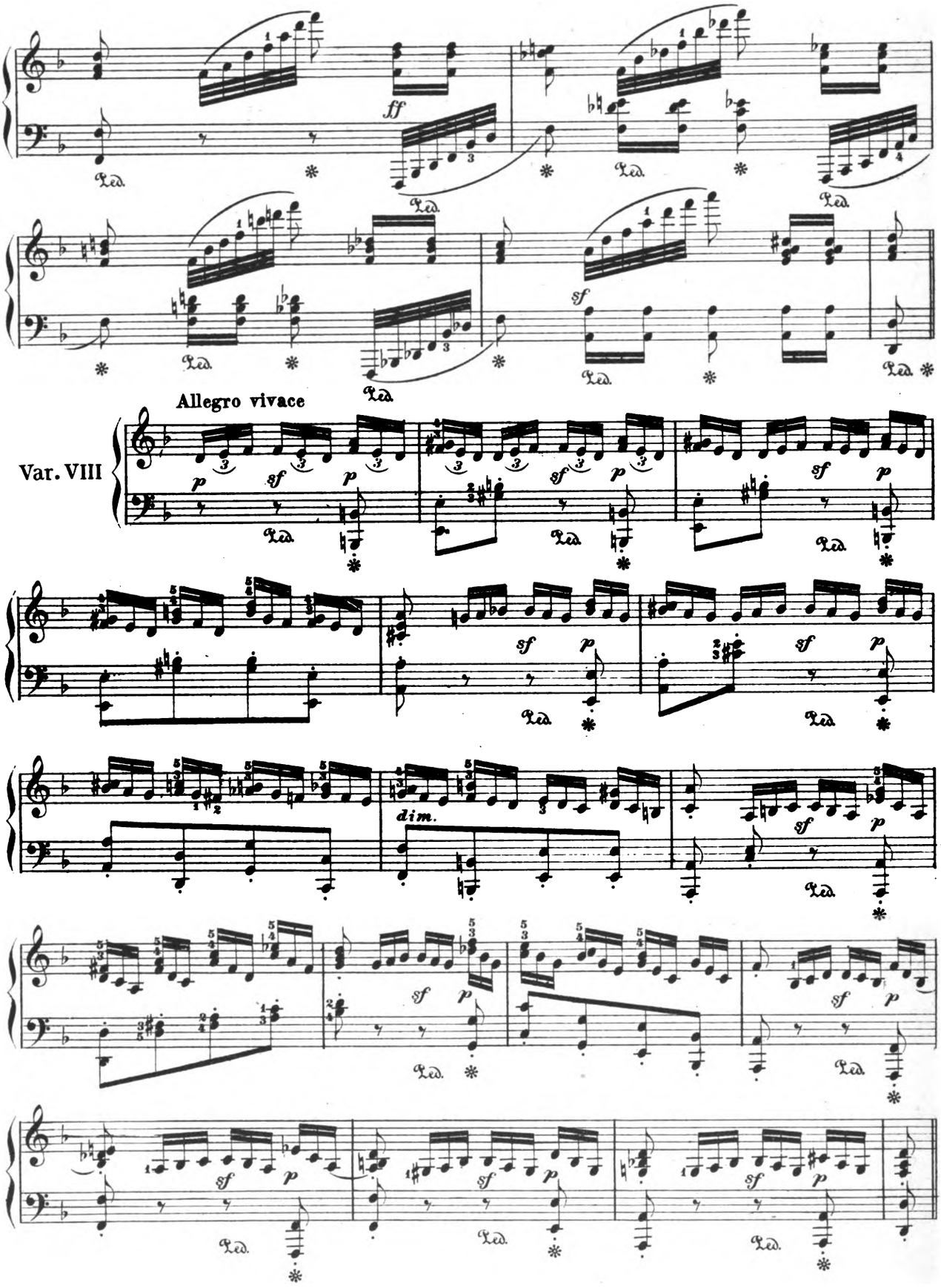

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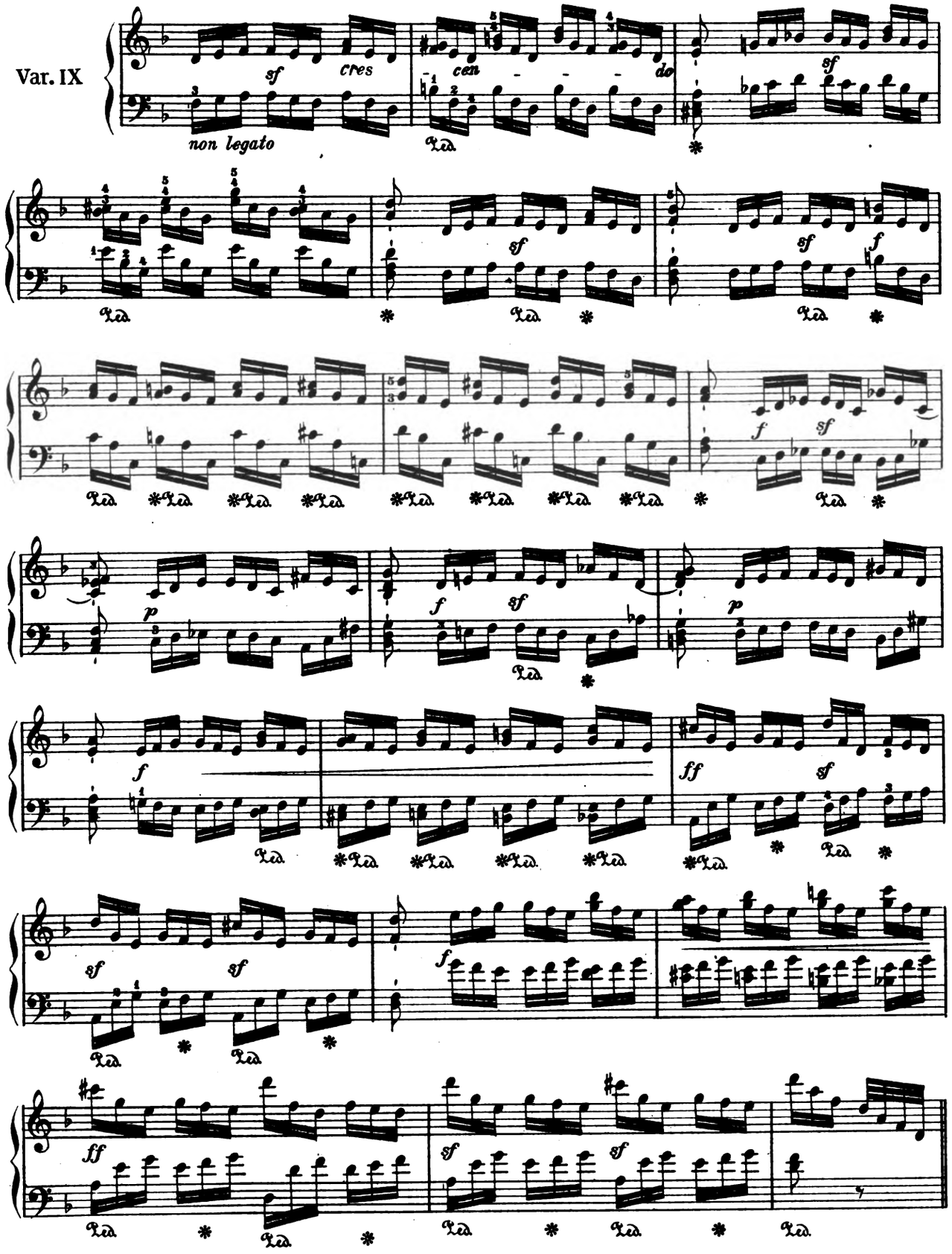

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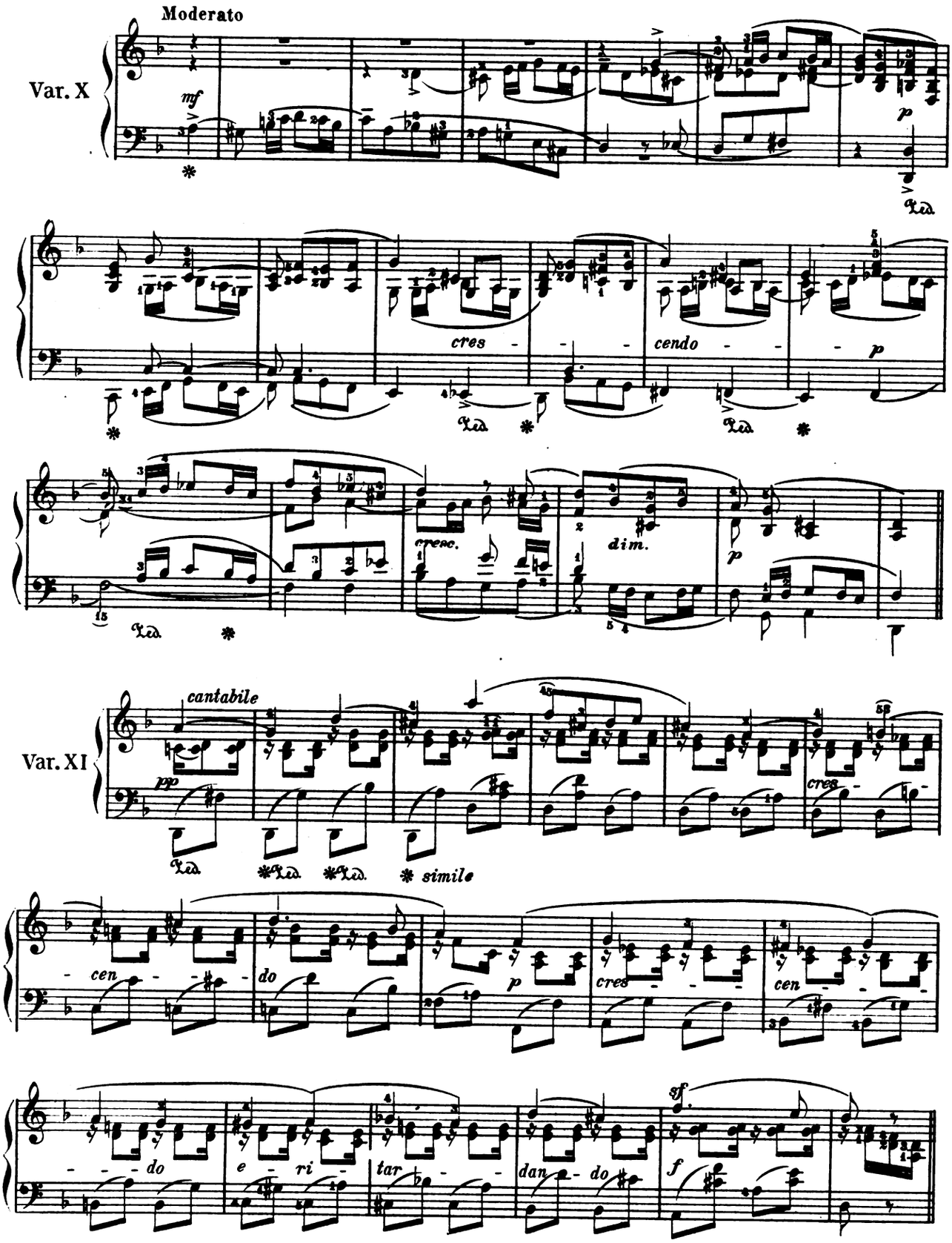

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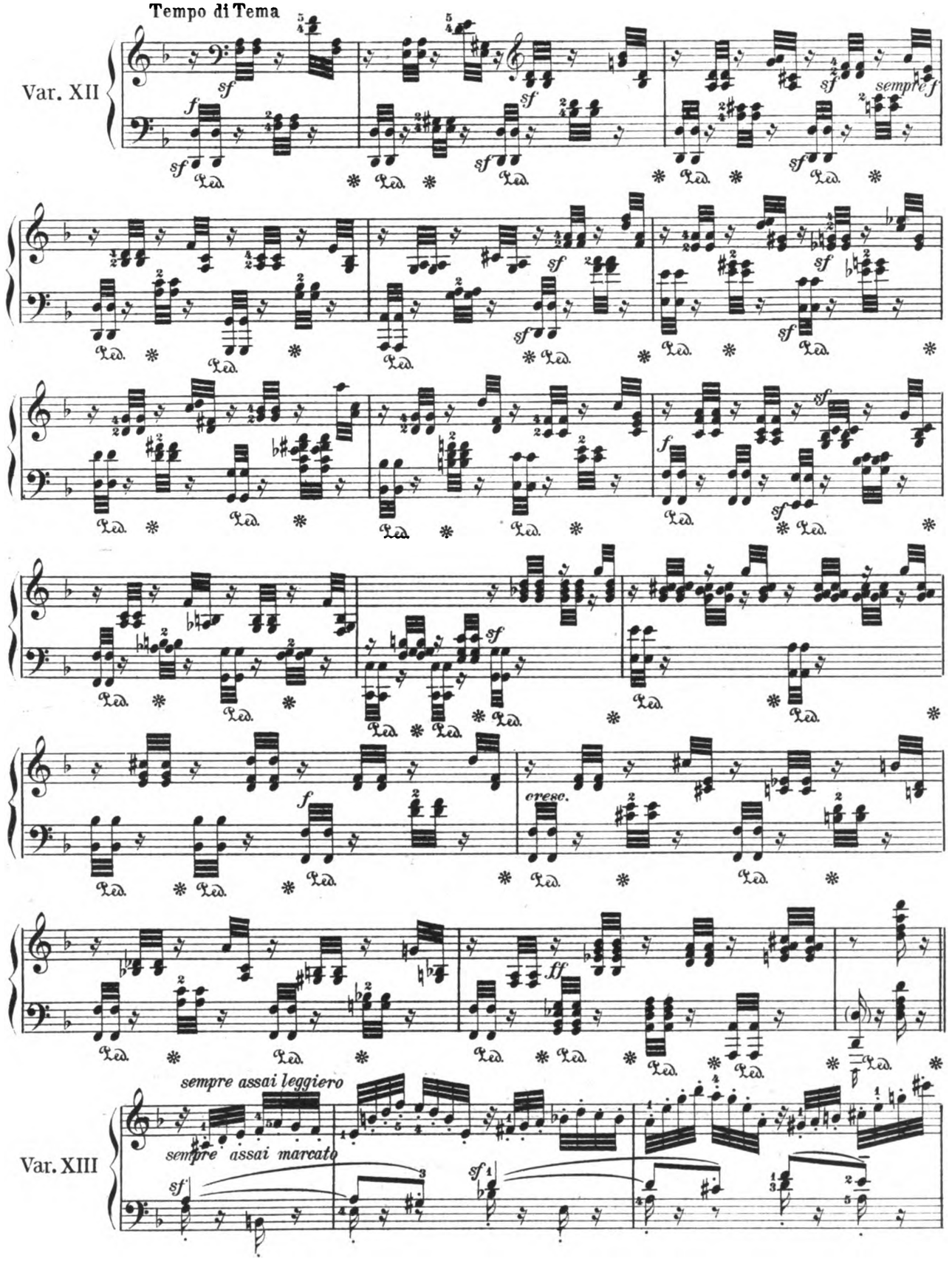

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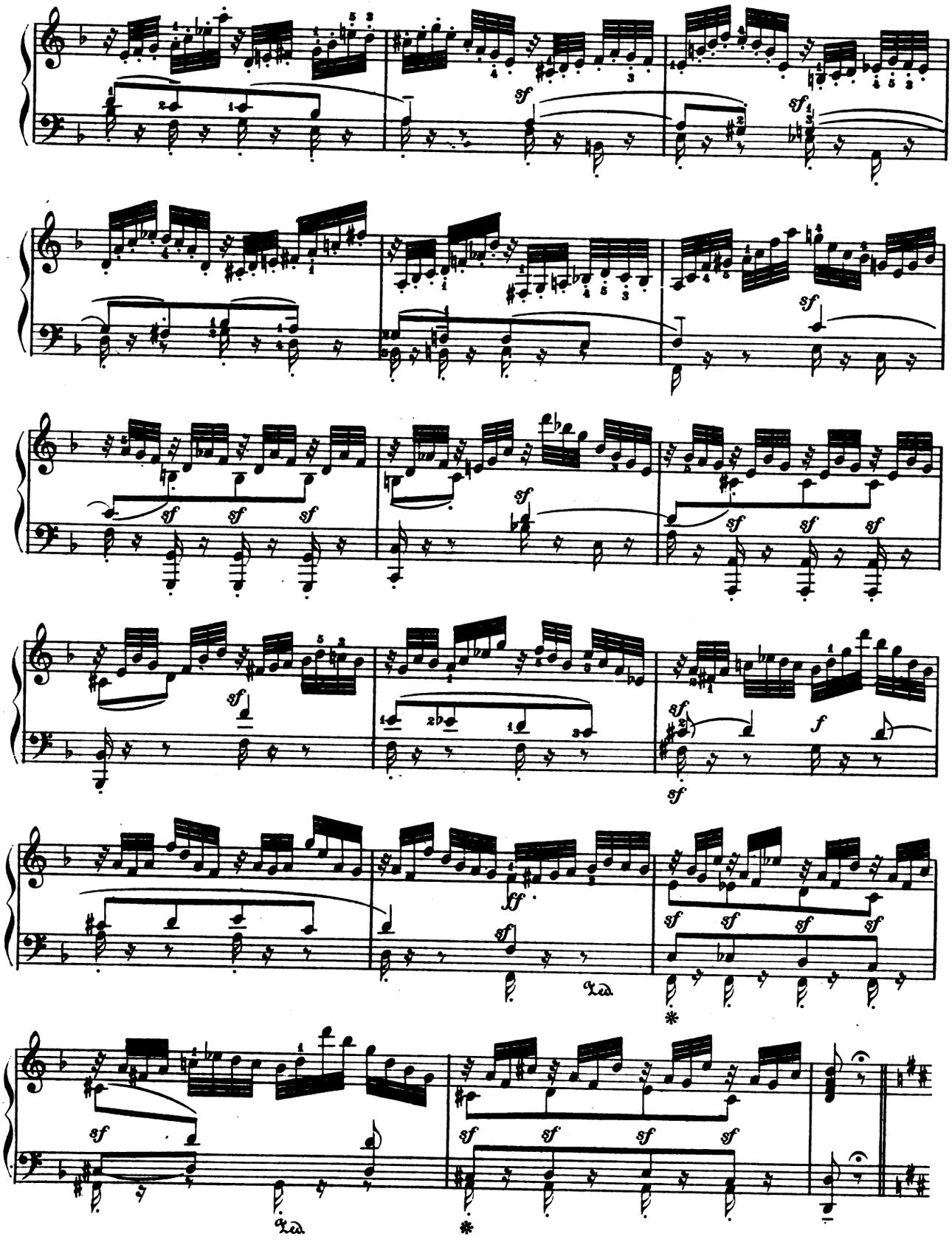

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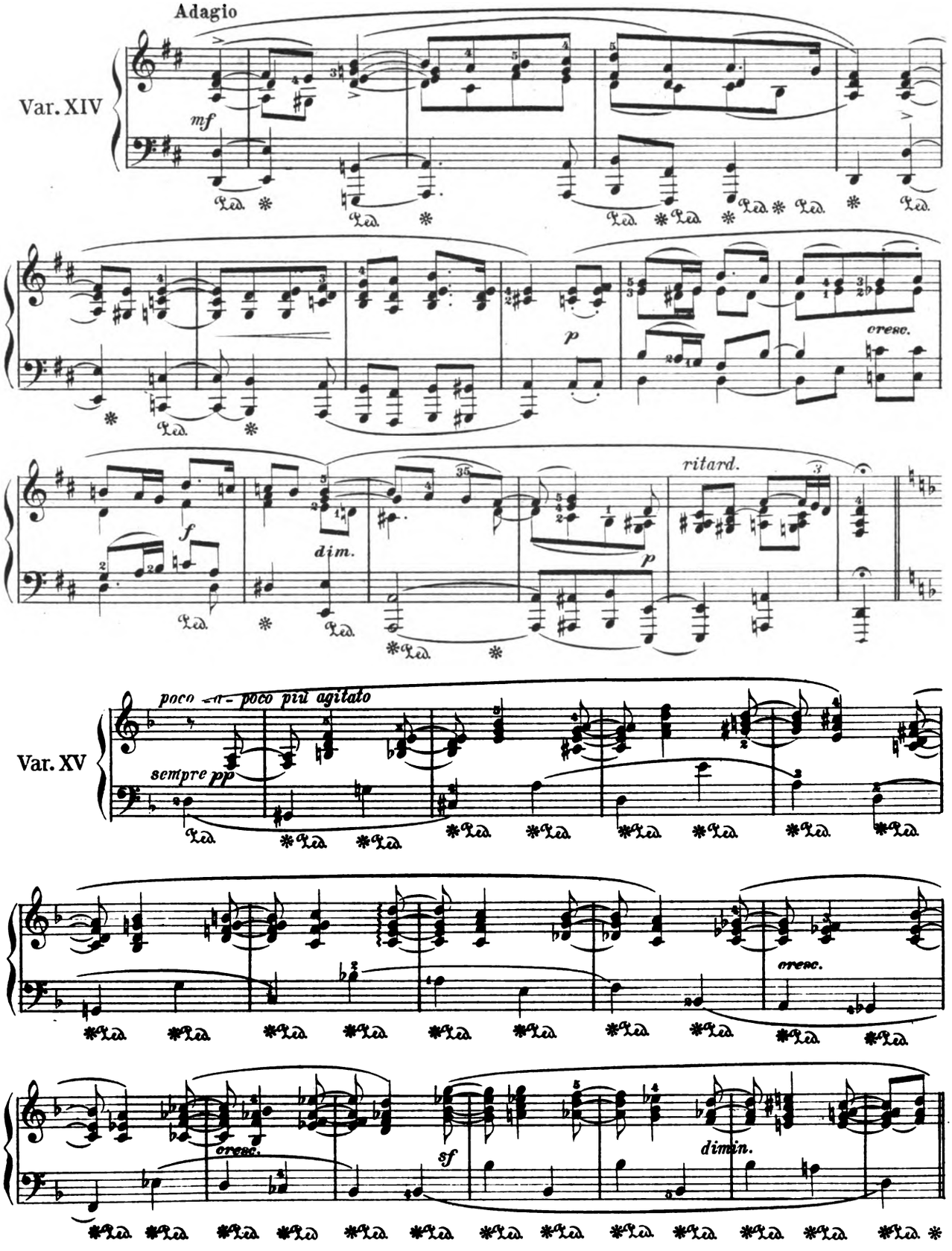

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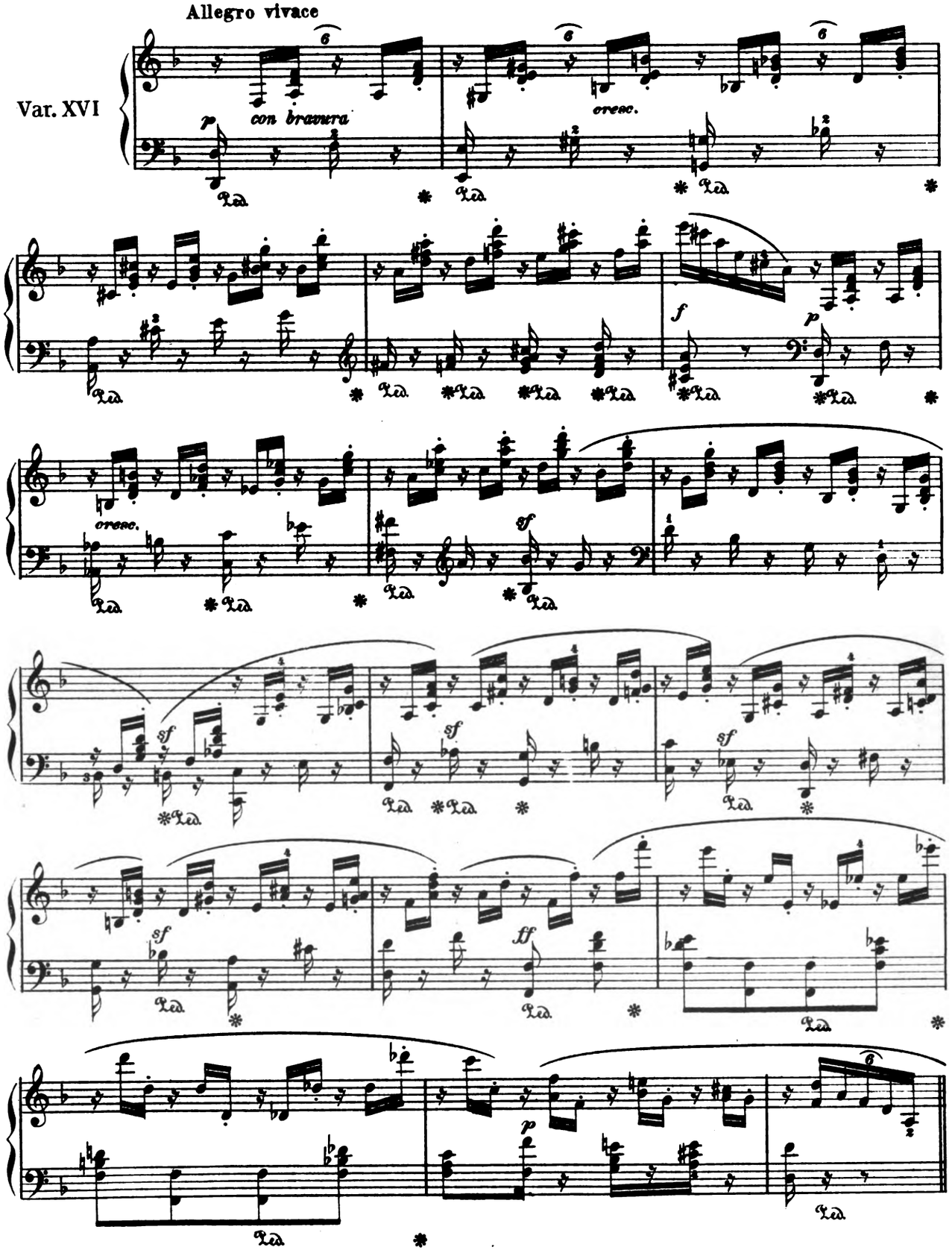

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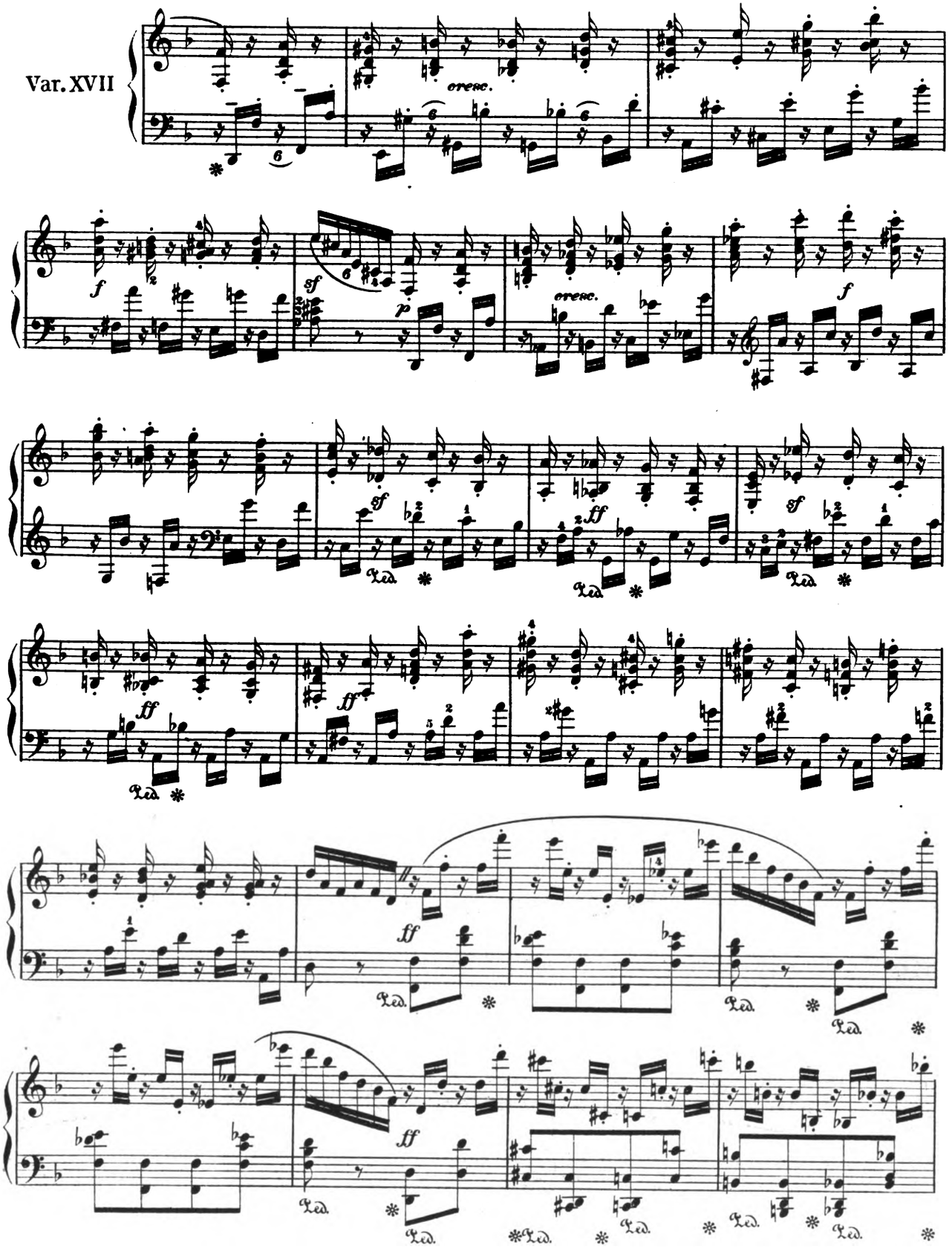

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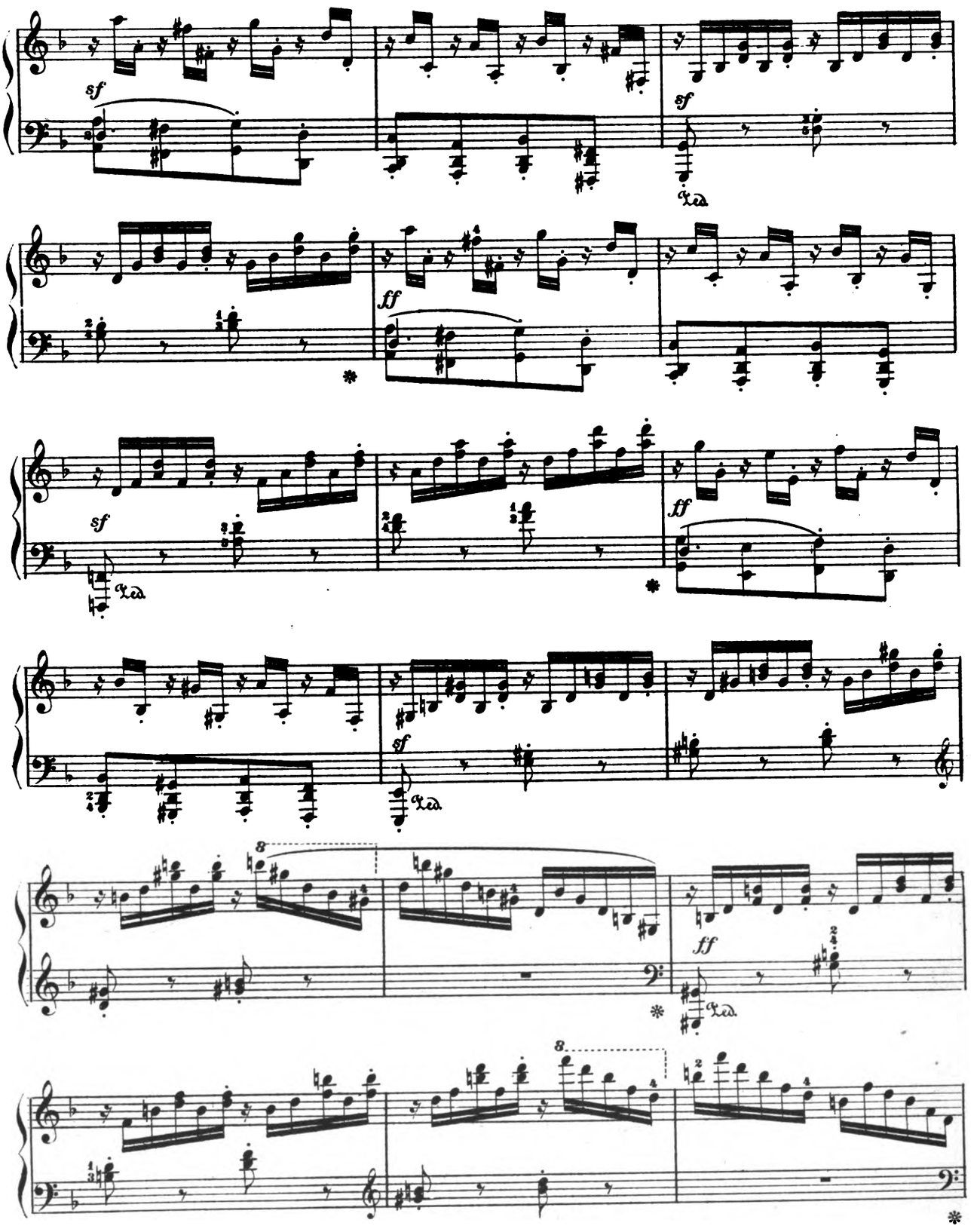

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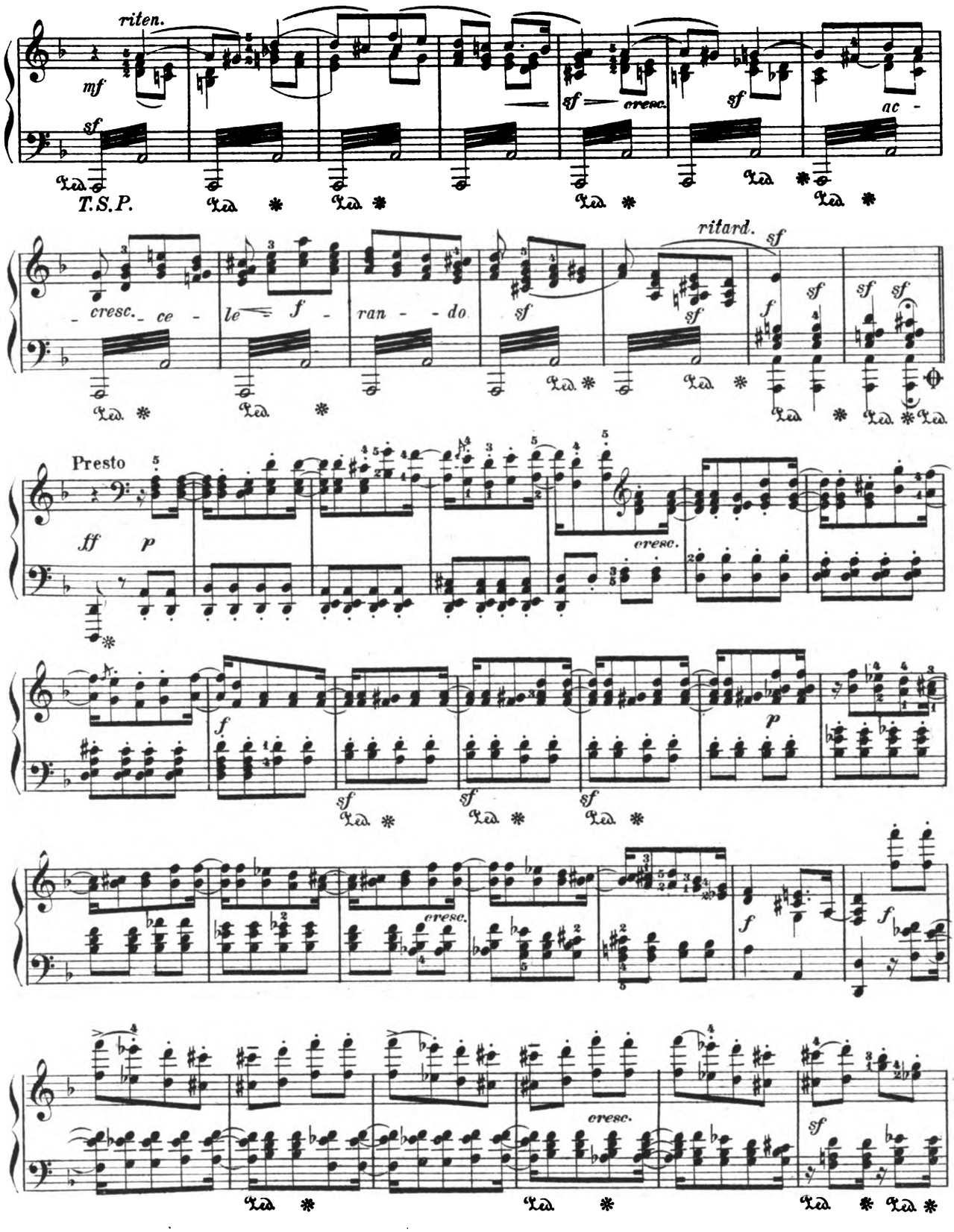

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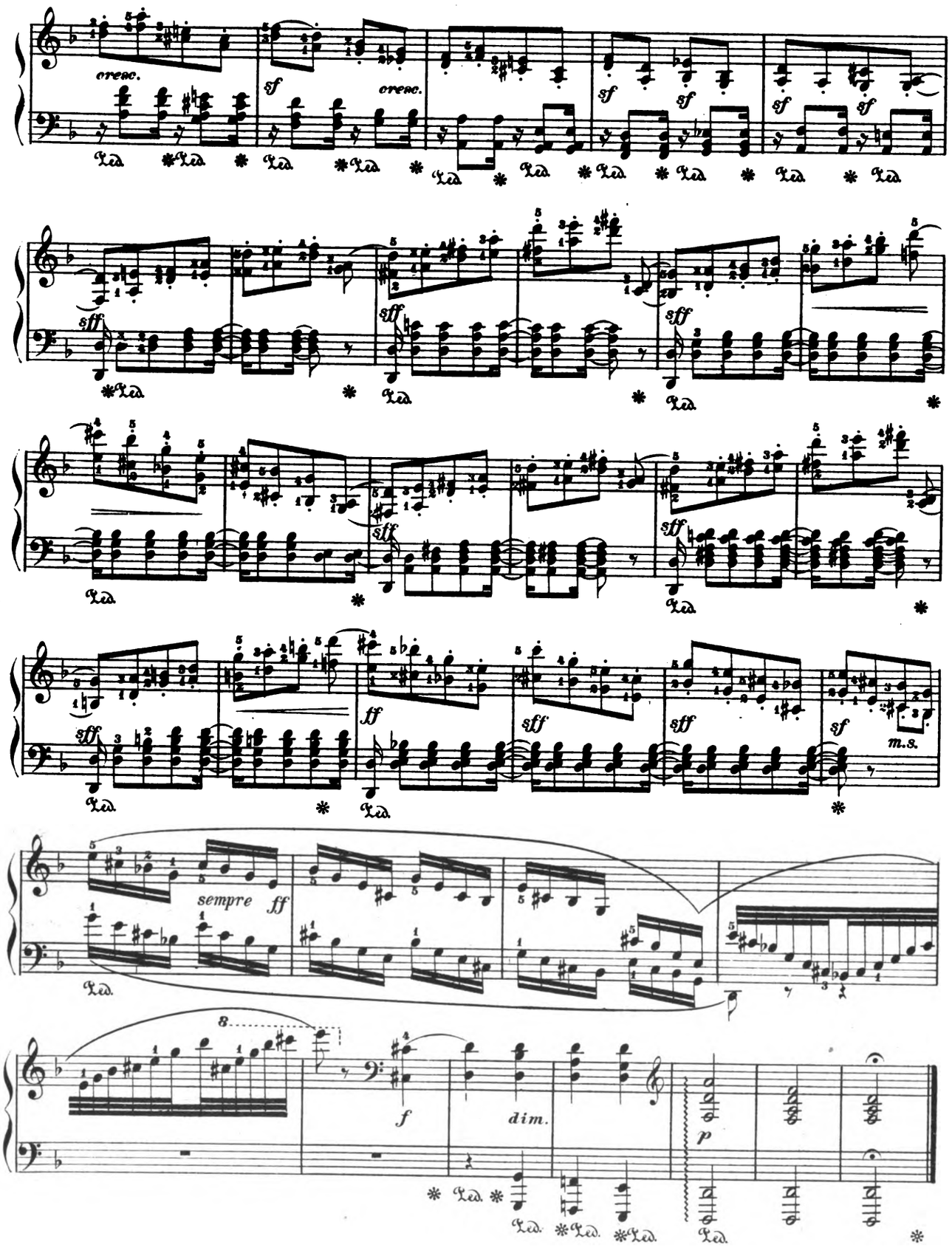

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Dernier thème de R. Schumann H. Fantin

DES ABENDS

SCHUMANN, Op. 12, No. 1

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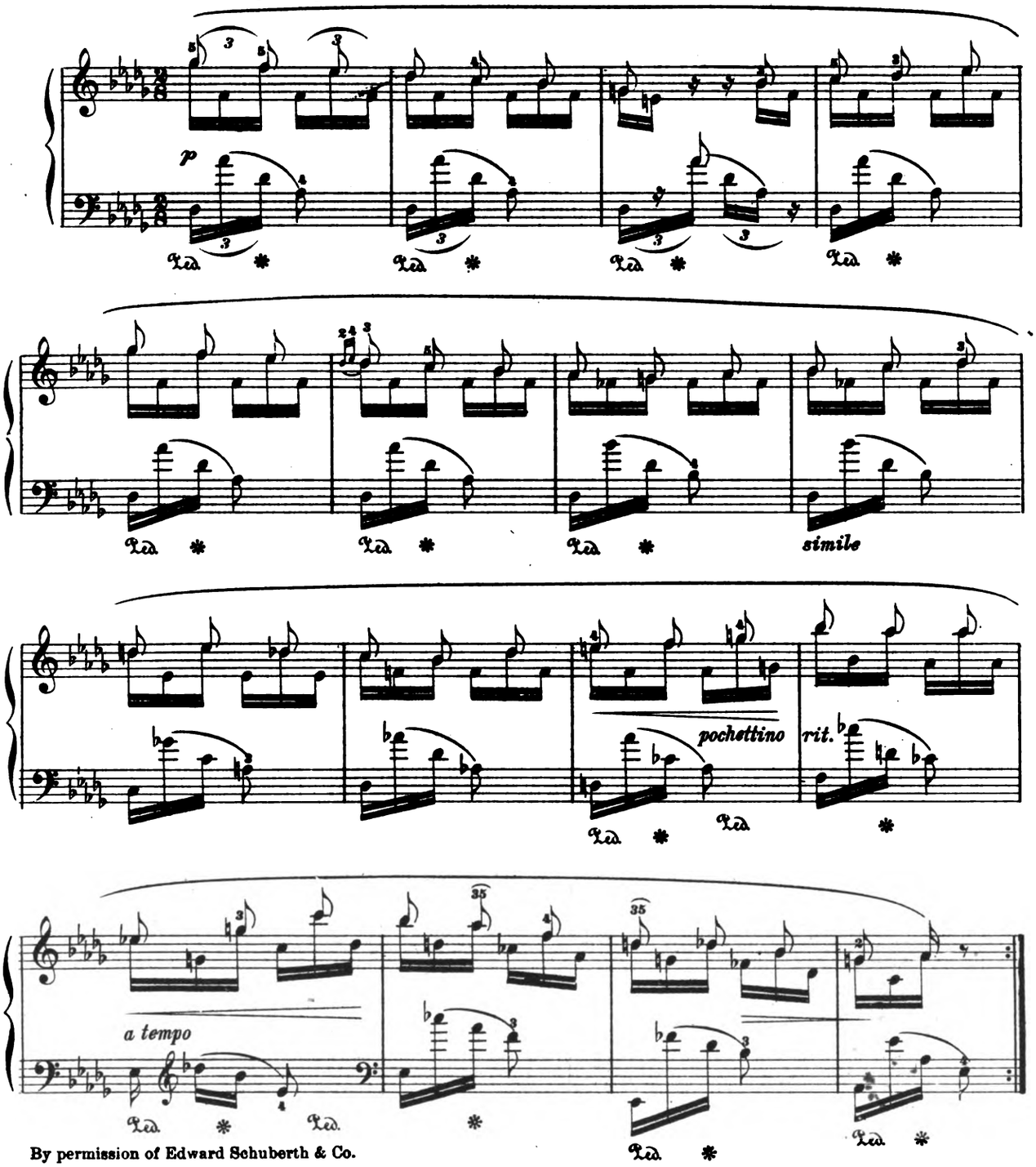

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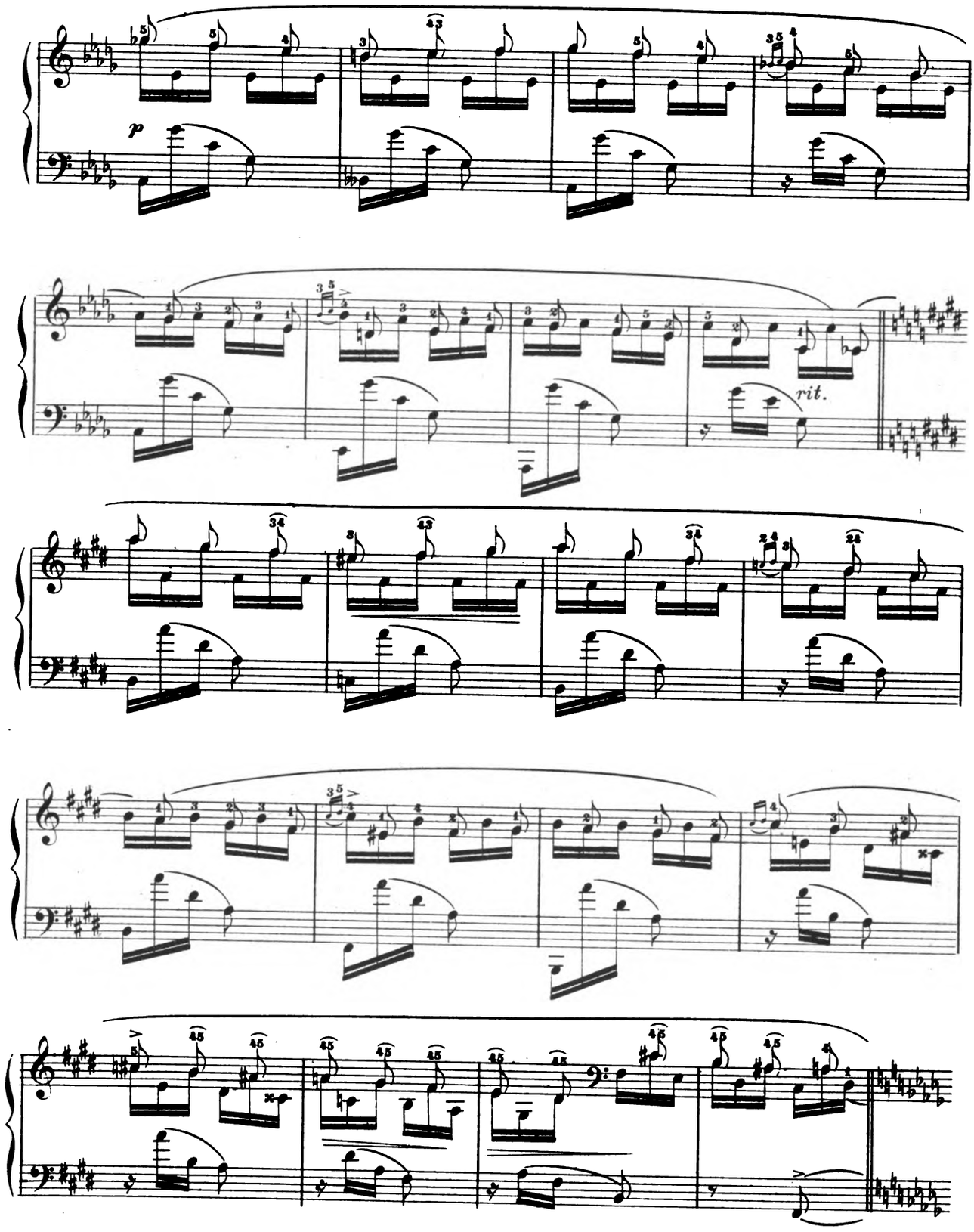

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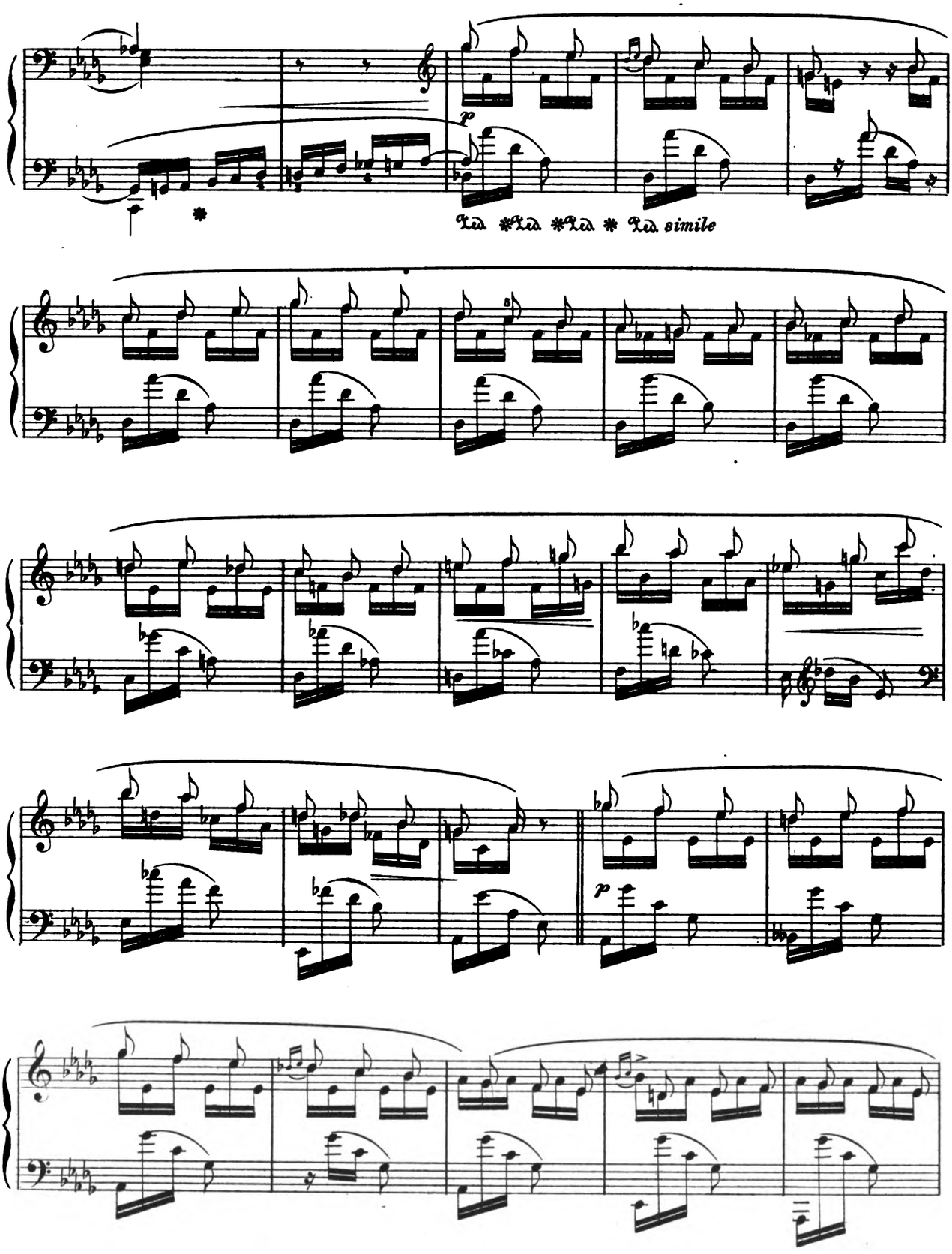

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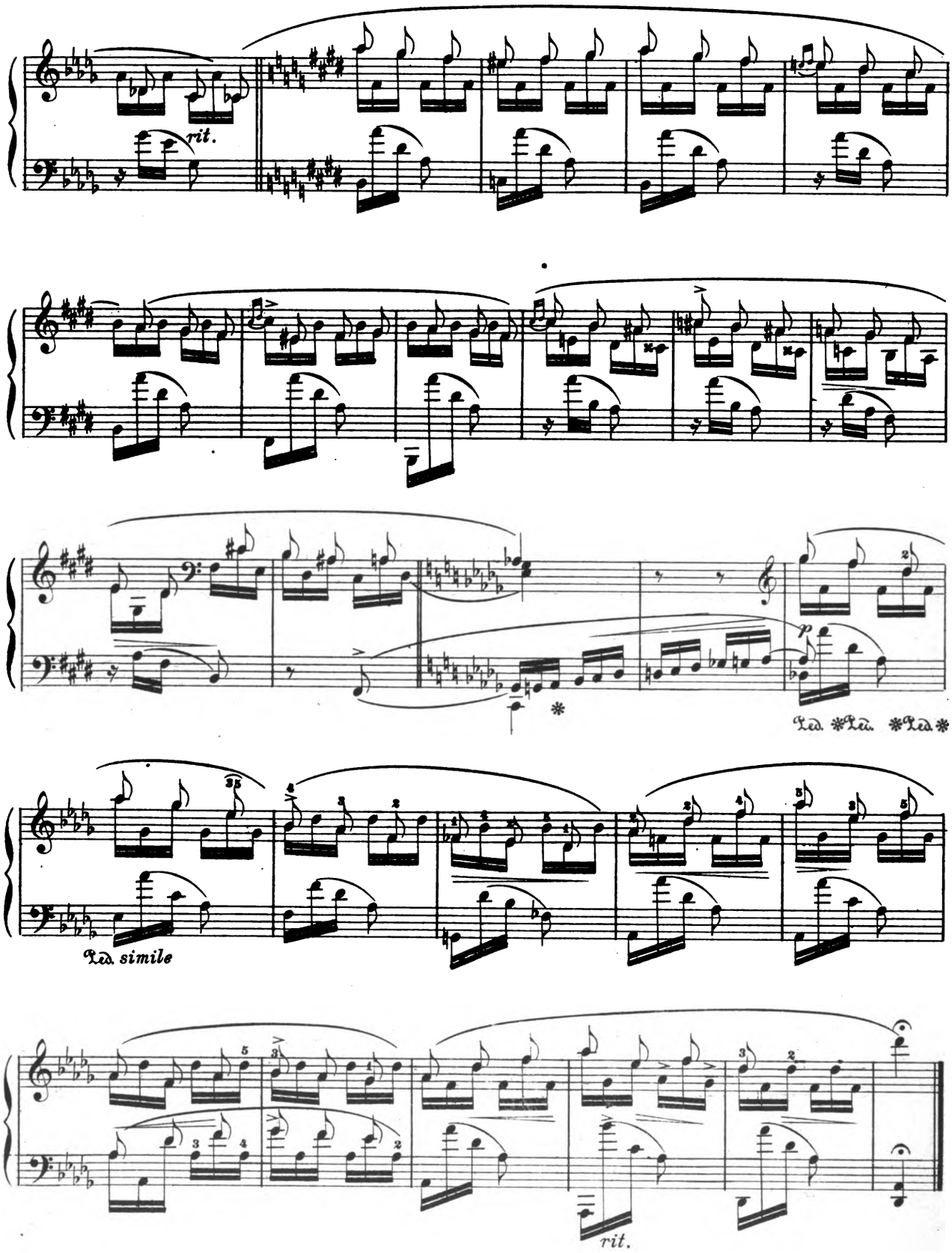

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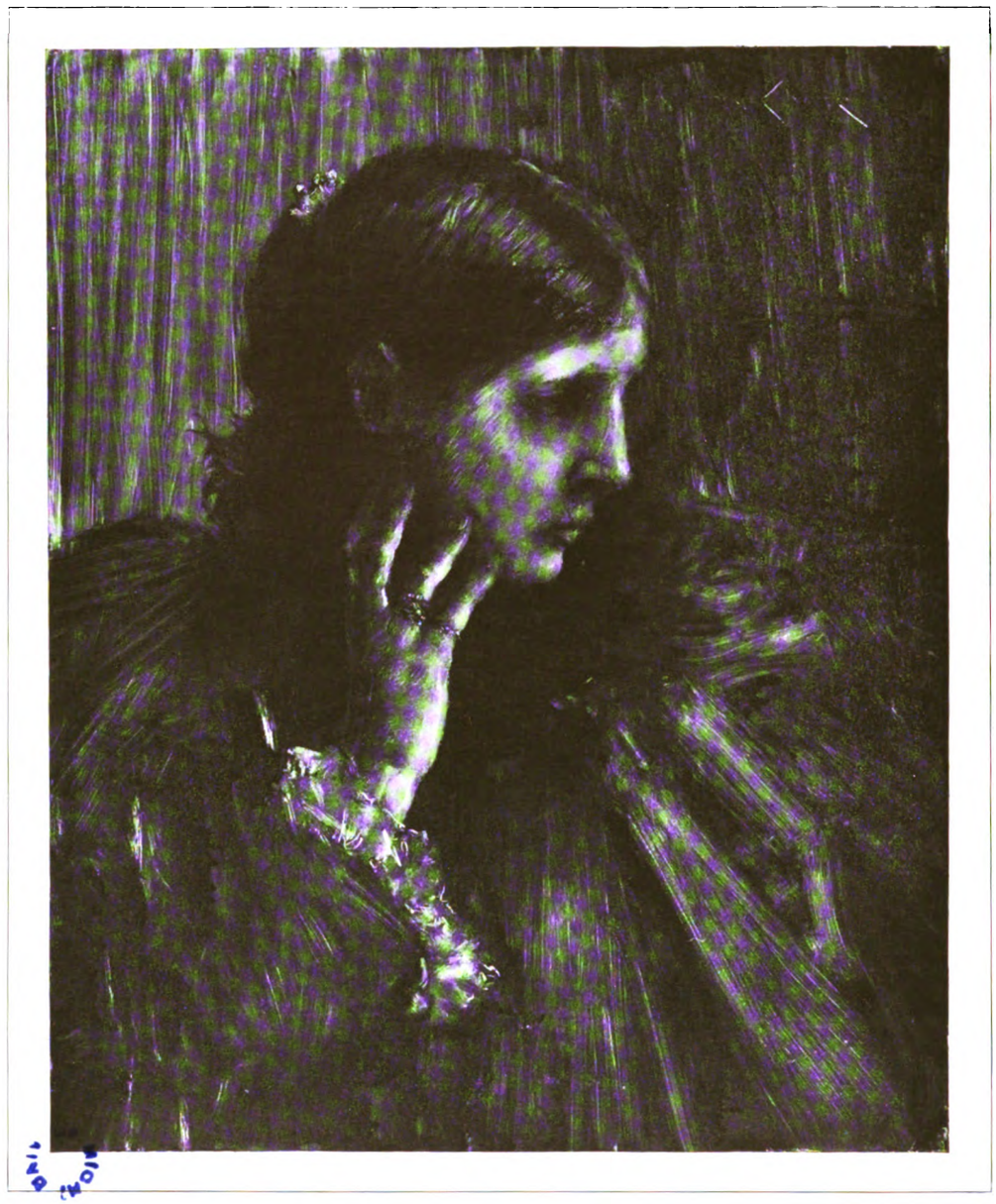

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A MONOTYPE BY WILLIAM M. CHASE.

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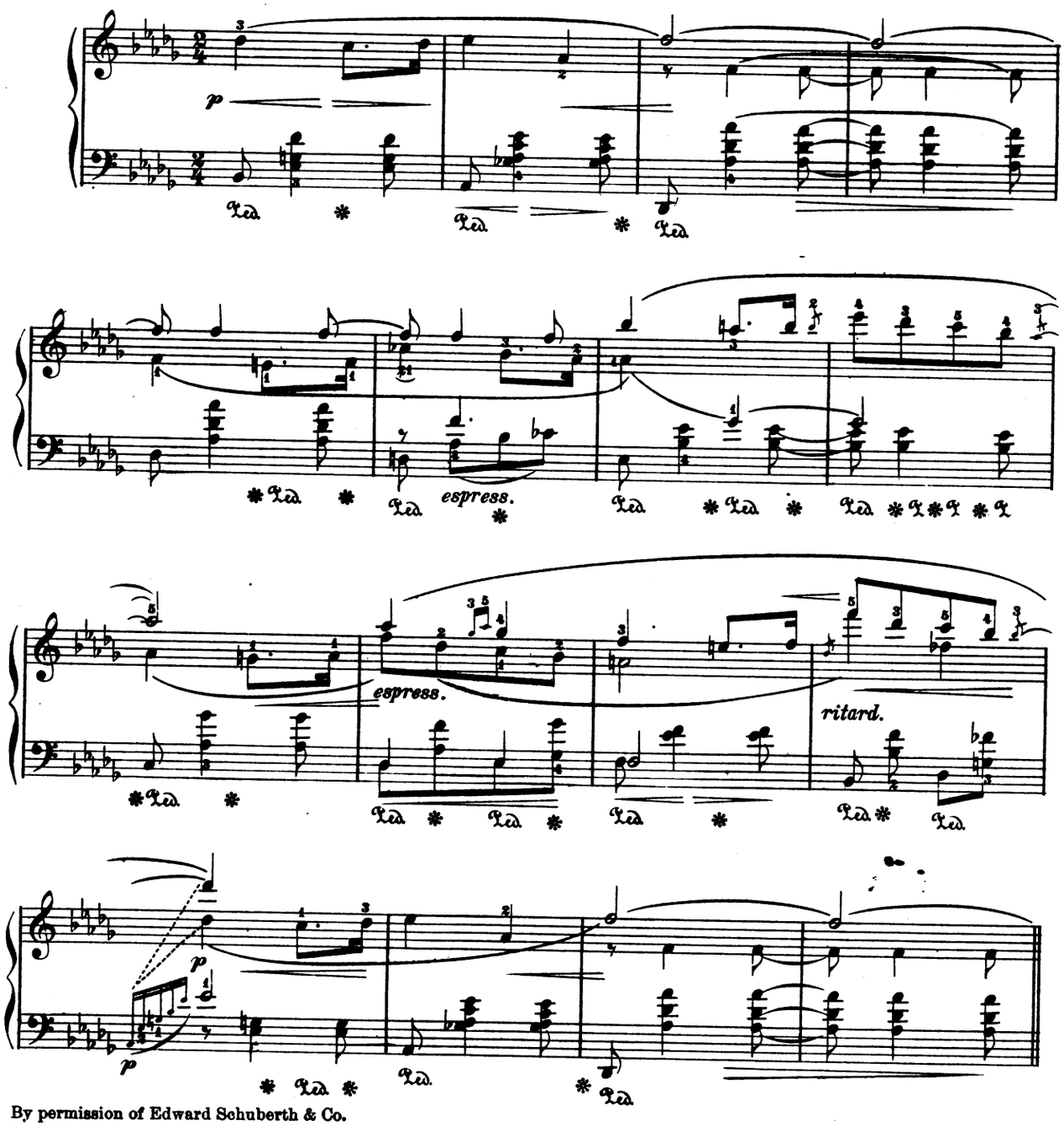
Langsam und zart

SCHUMANN, Op. 12, No. 3



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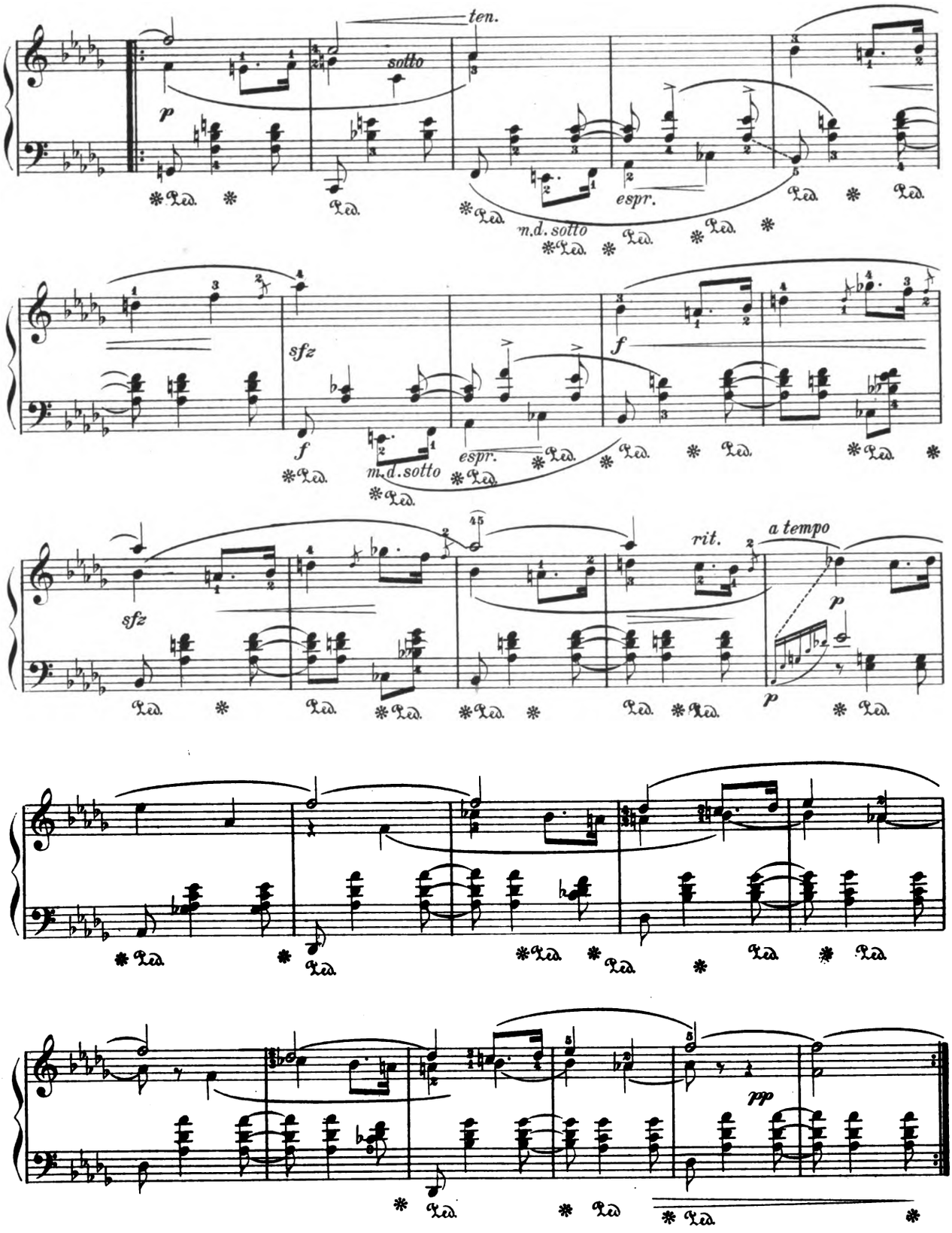

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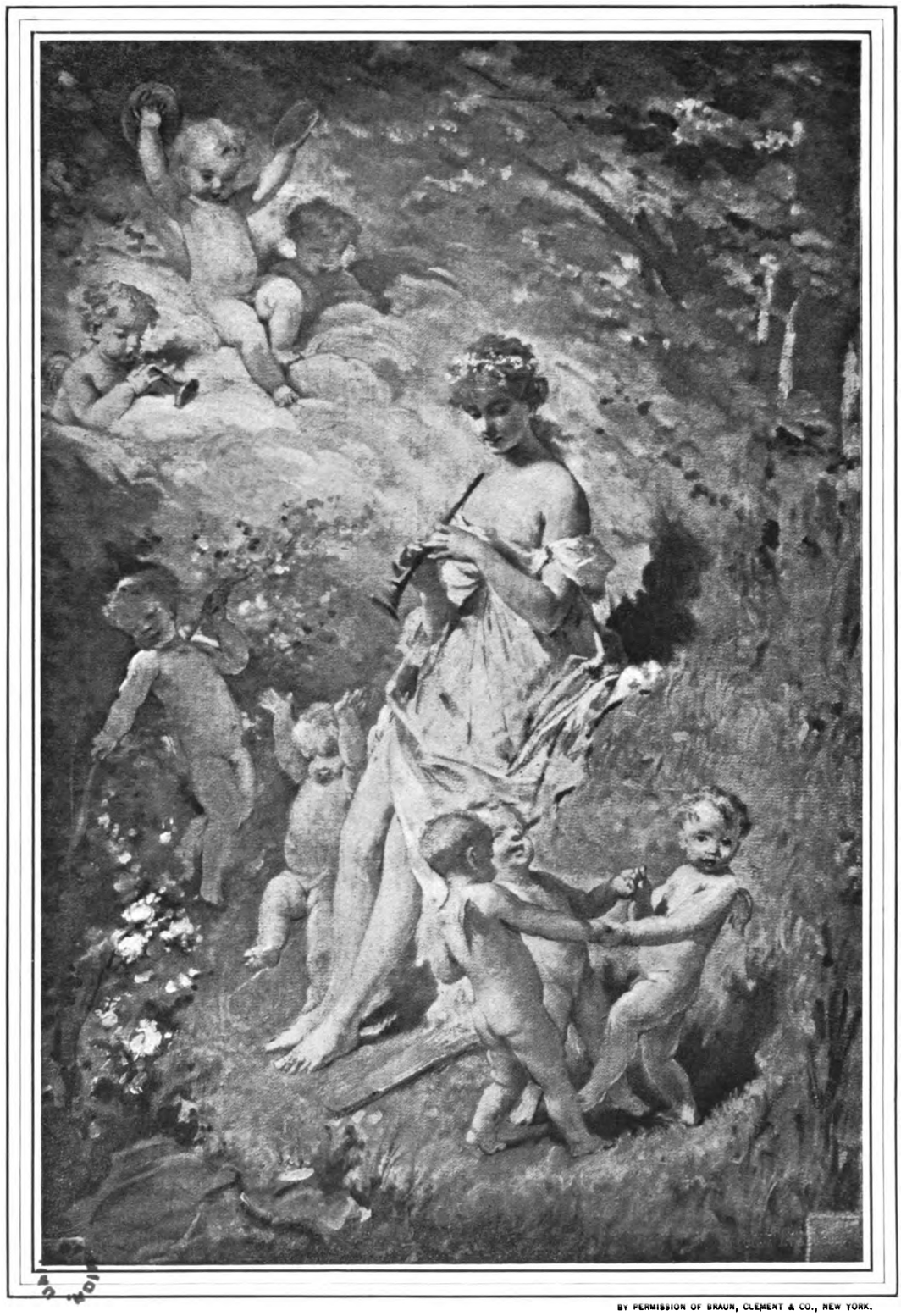

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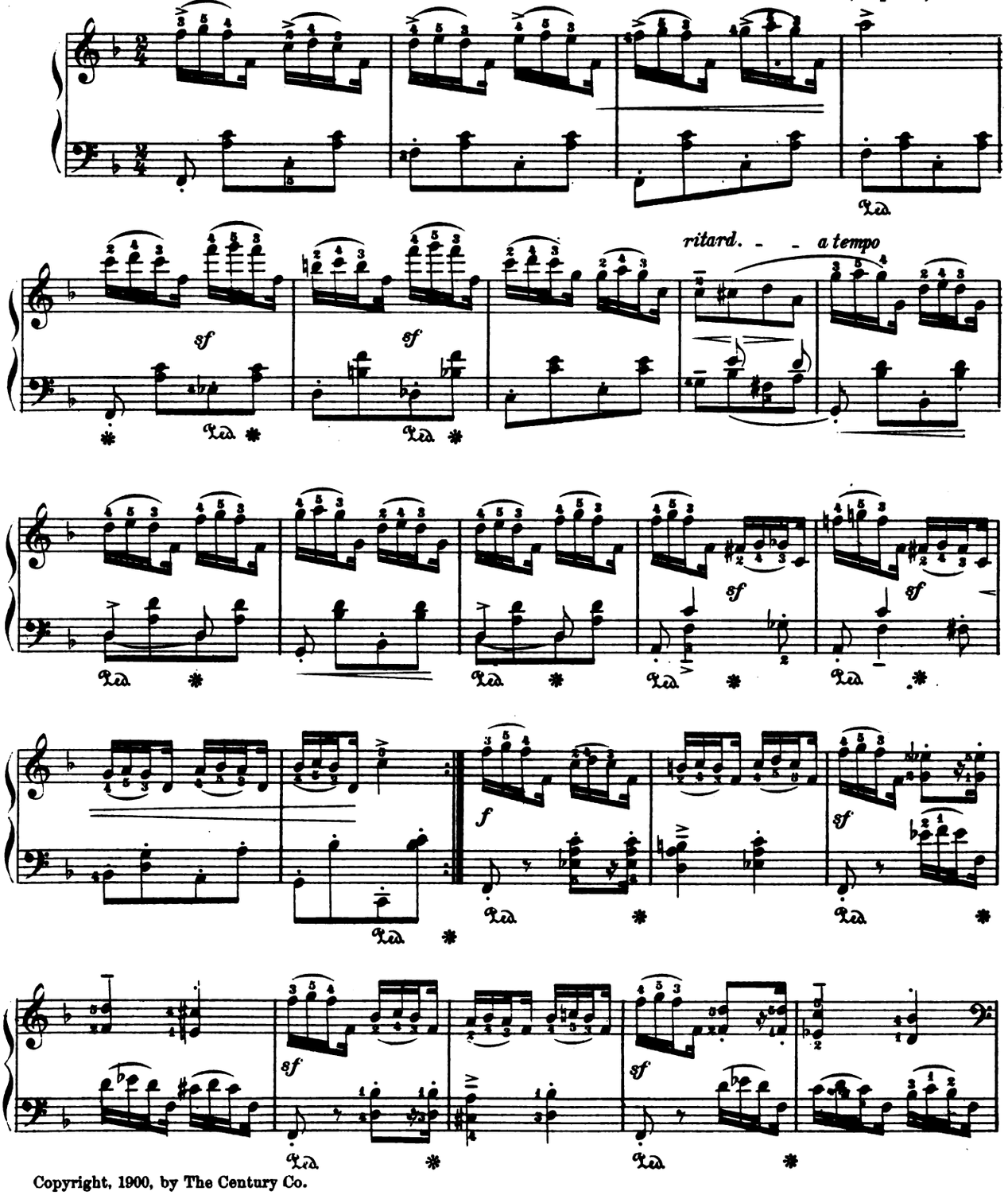

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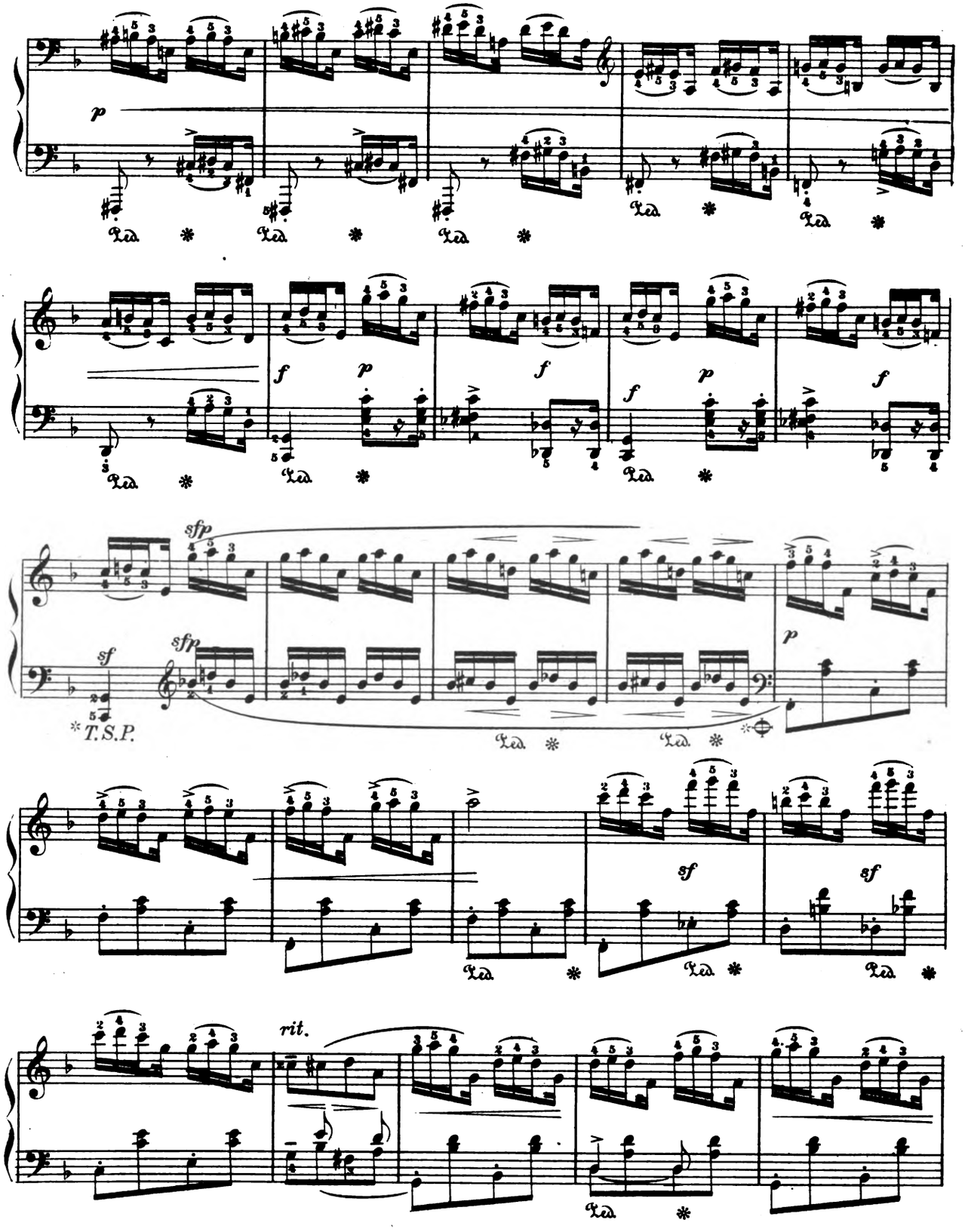

* *T.S.P.* Tone-sustaining Pedal. * Release from *T.S.P.*

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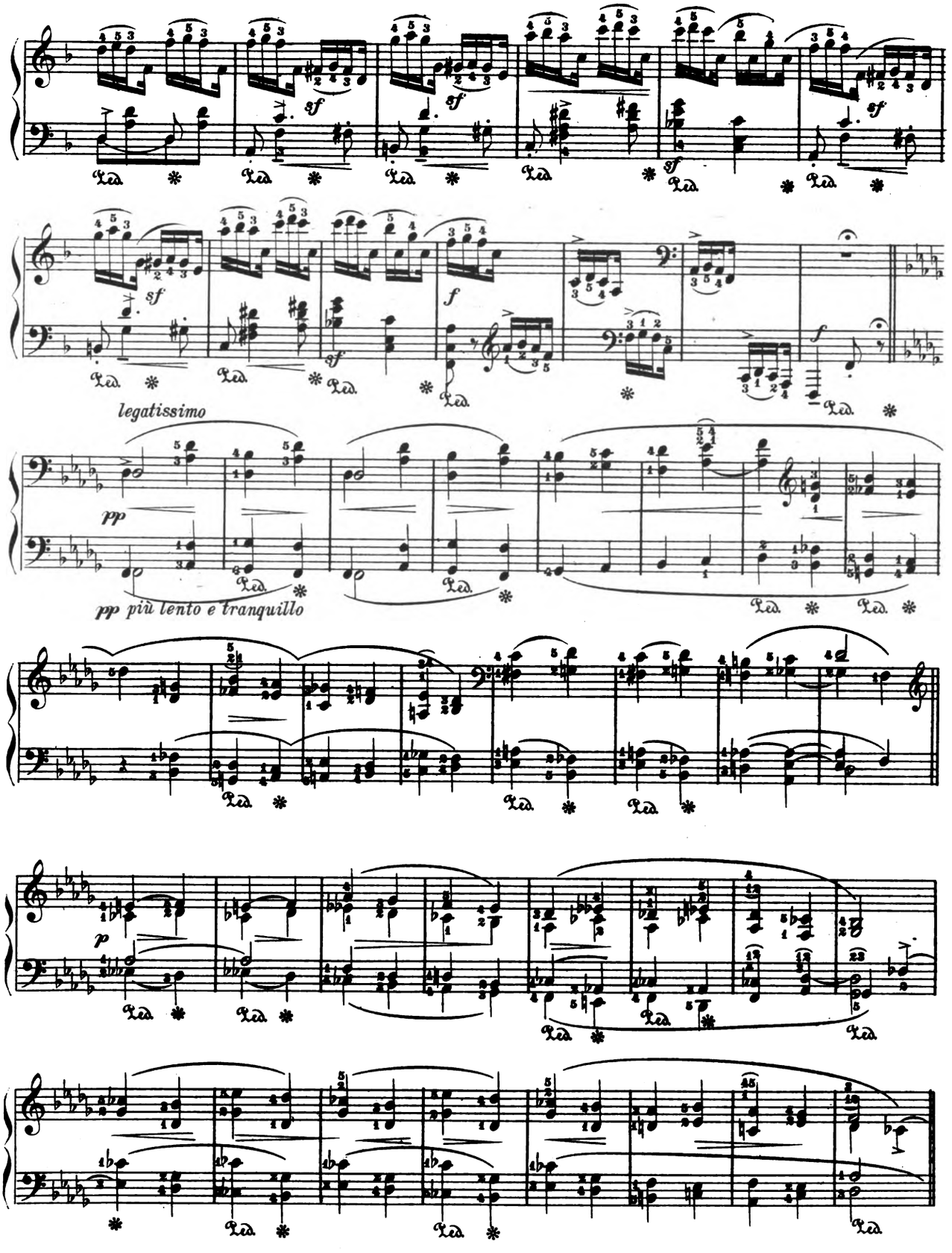

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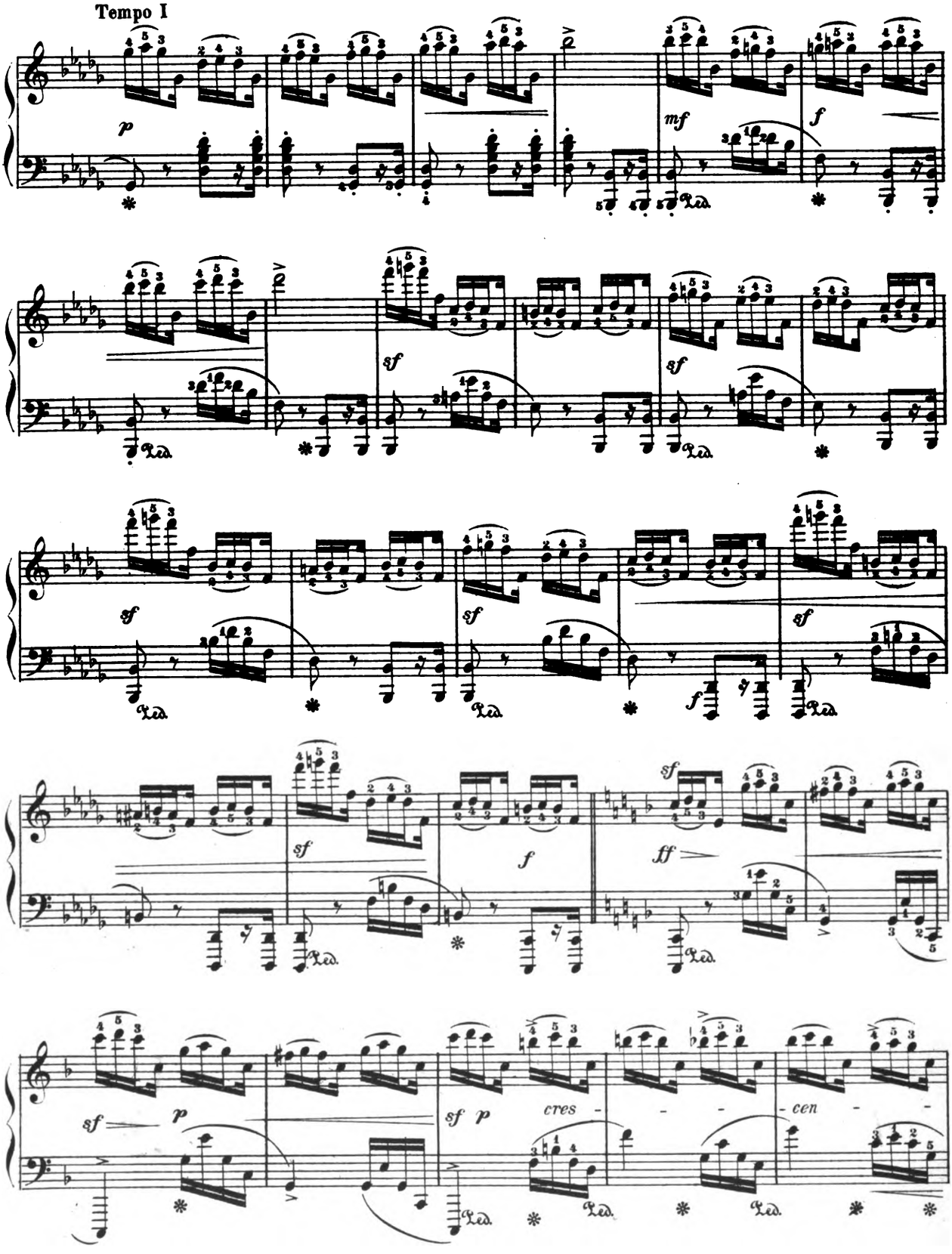

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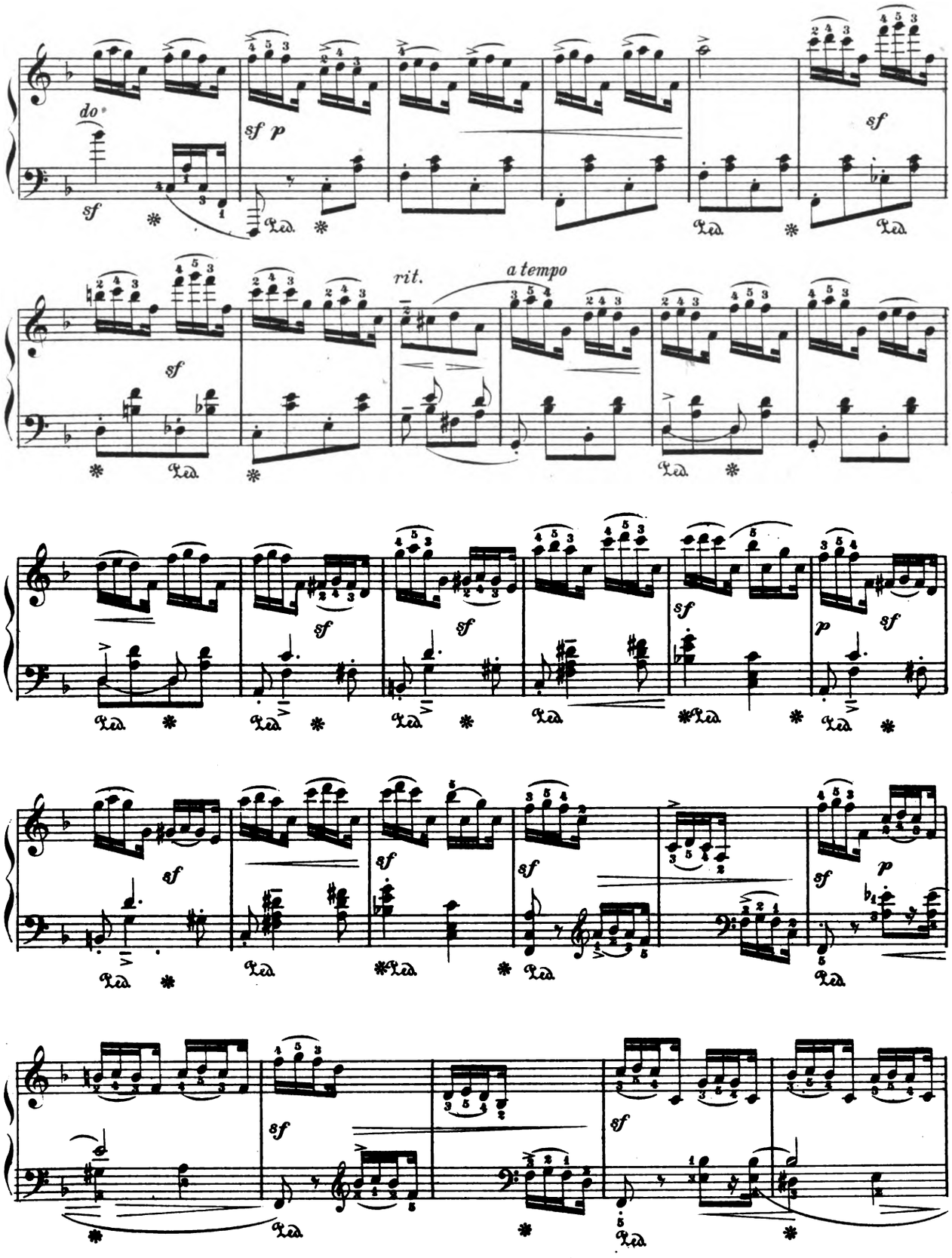

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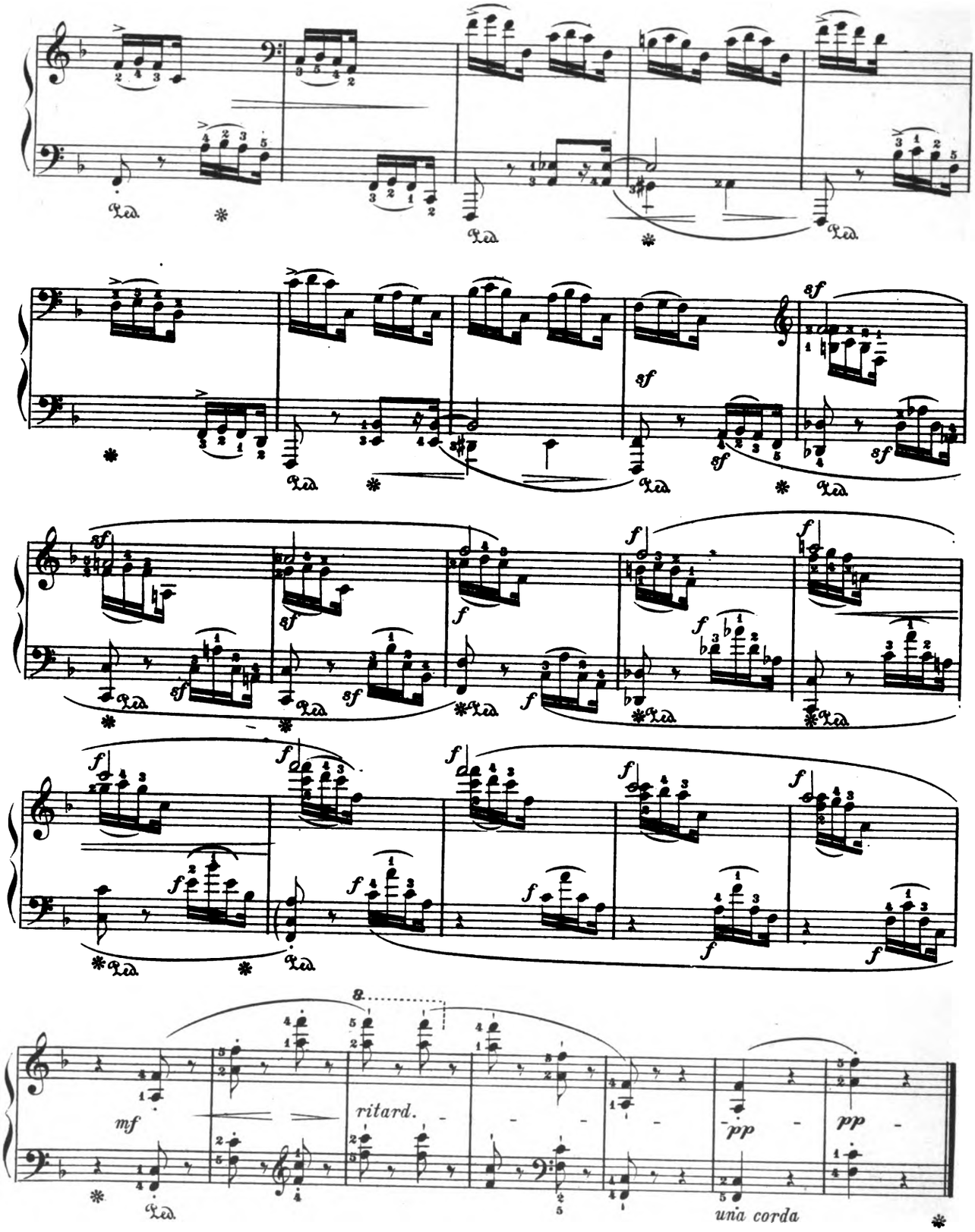

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"VOGEL ALS PROPHET."

DRAWN BY ALFRED PARSONS.

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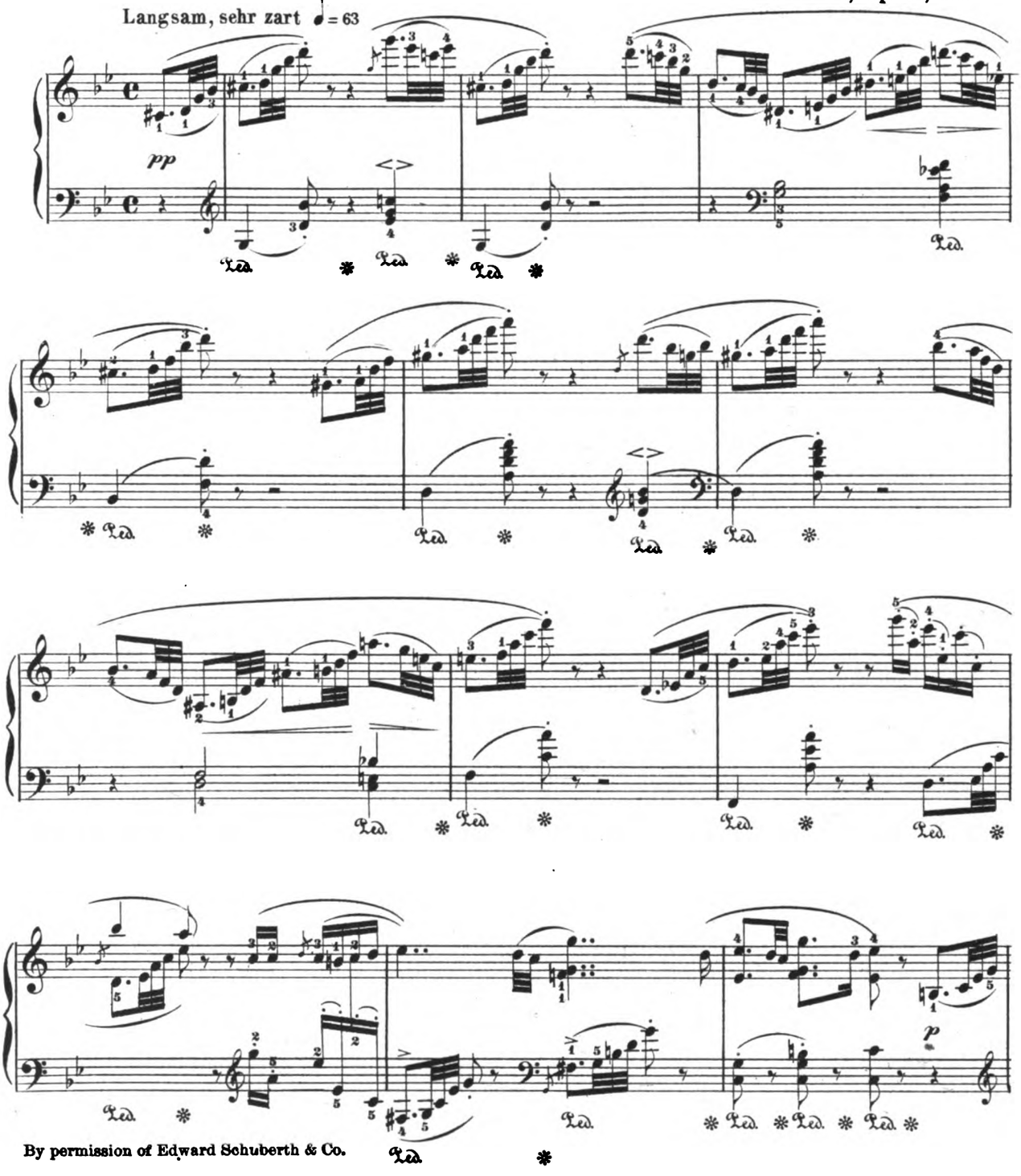
VOGEL ALS PROPHET

SCHUMANN, Op. 82, No. 7



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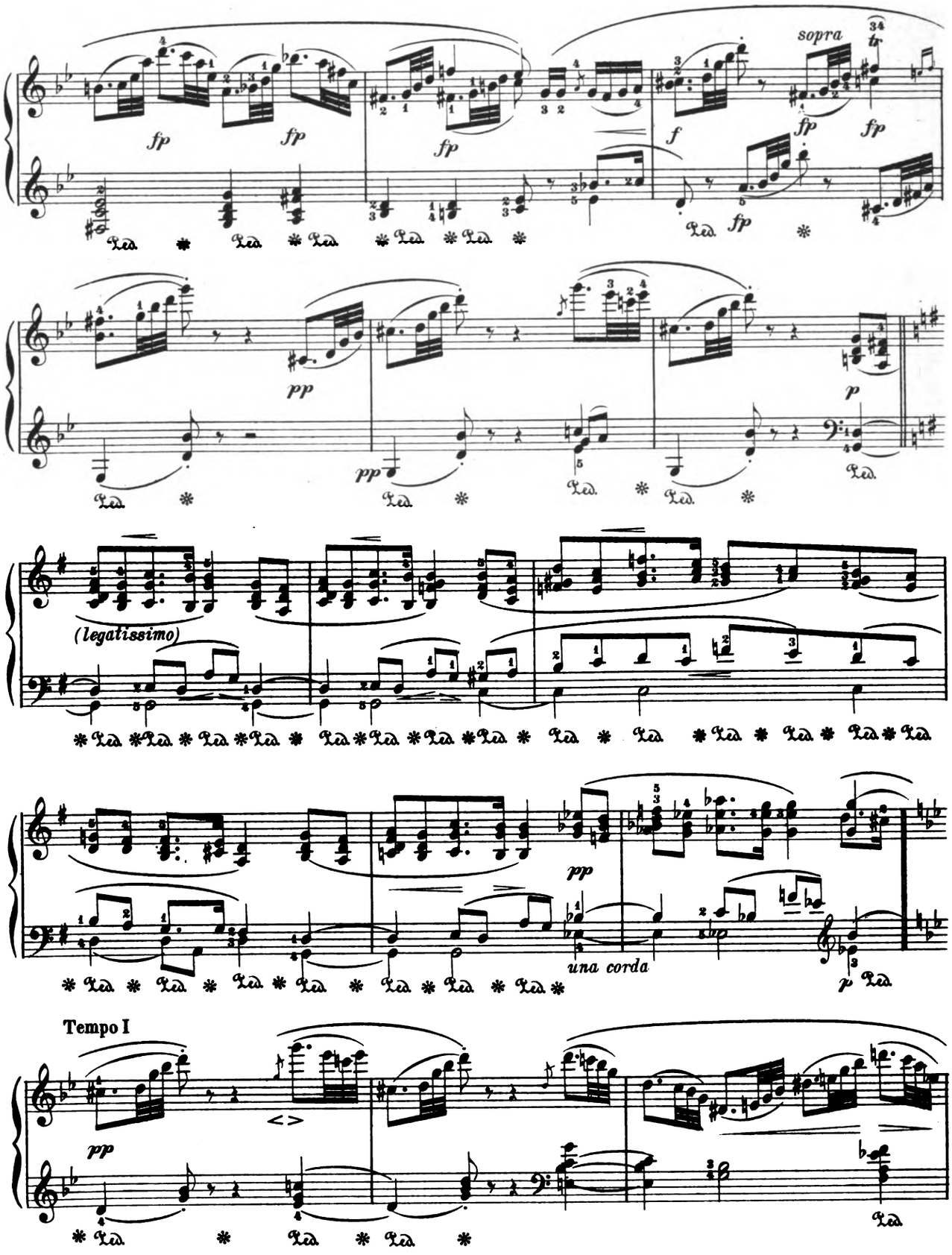

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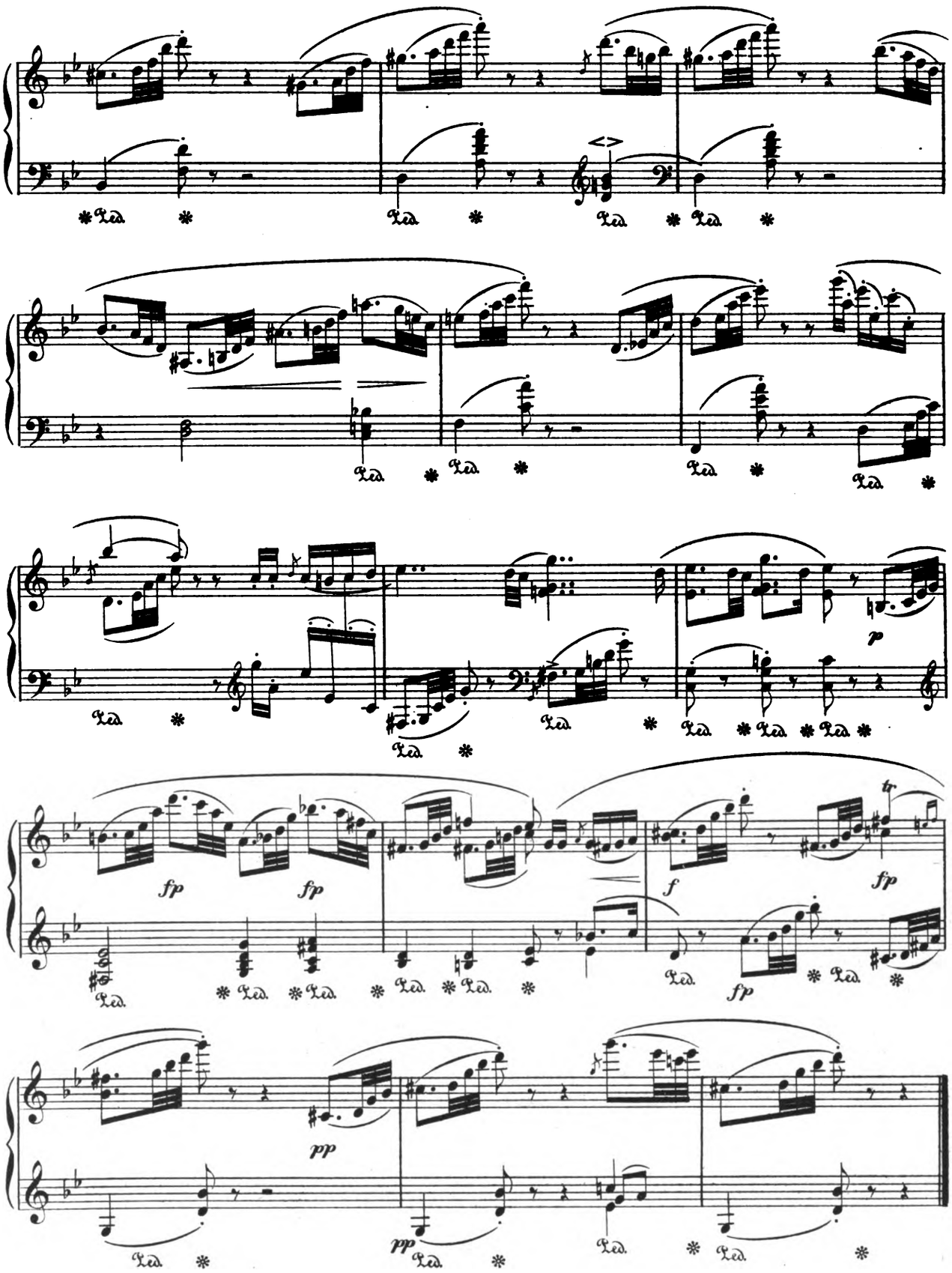

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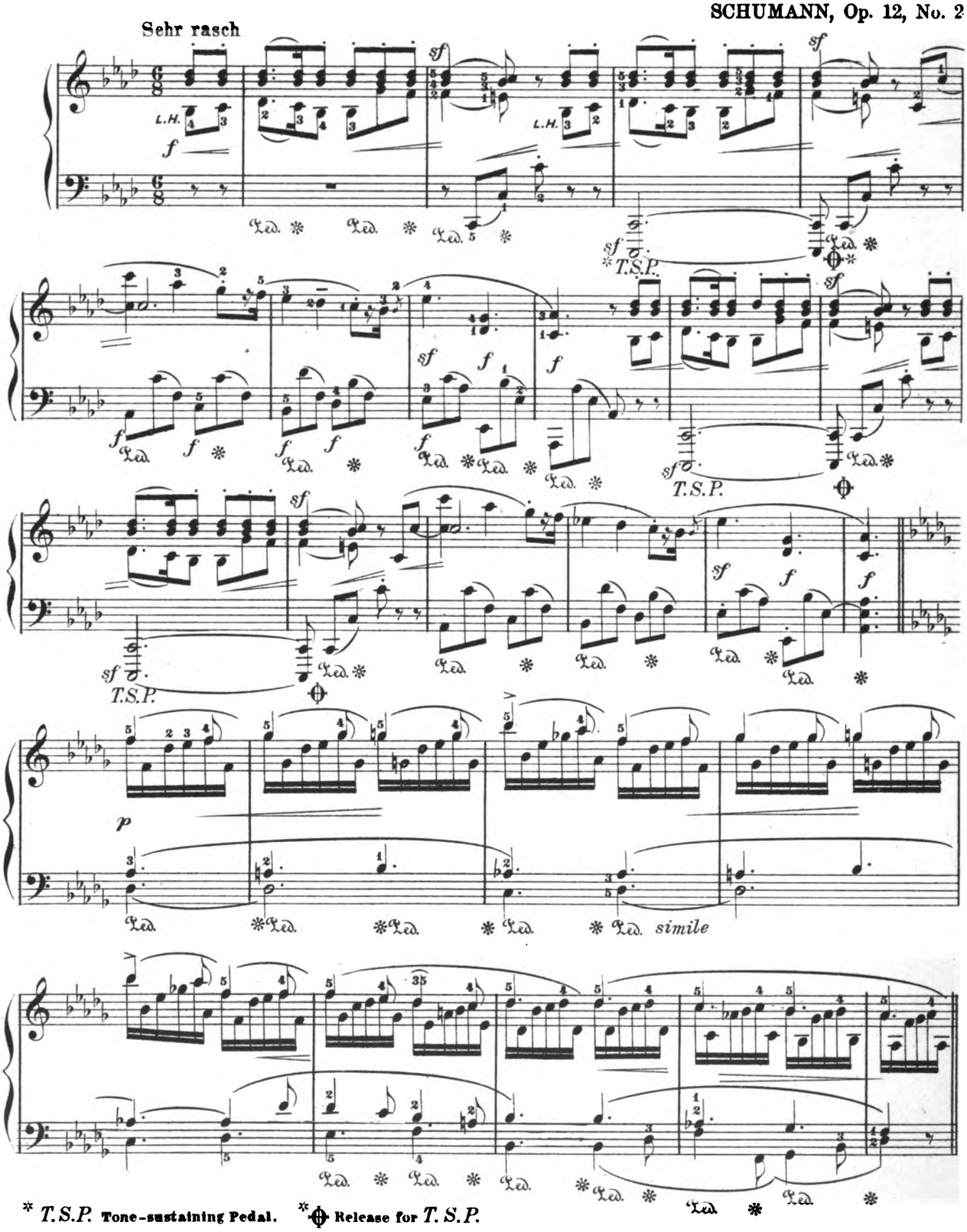
SCHUMANN, Op. 12, No. 2



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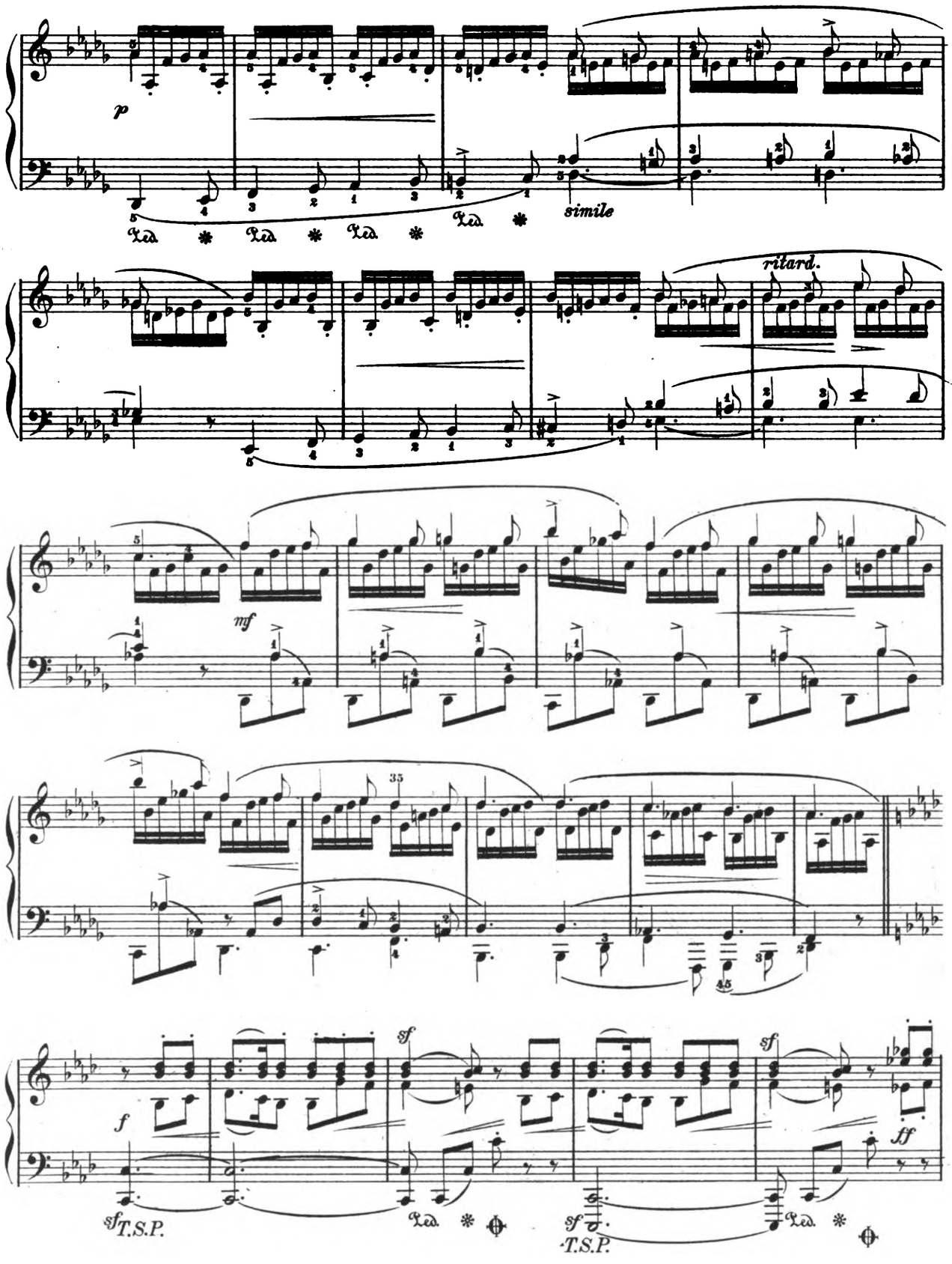

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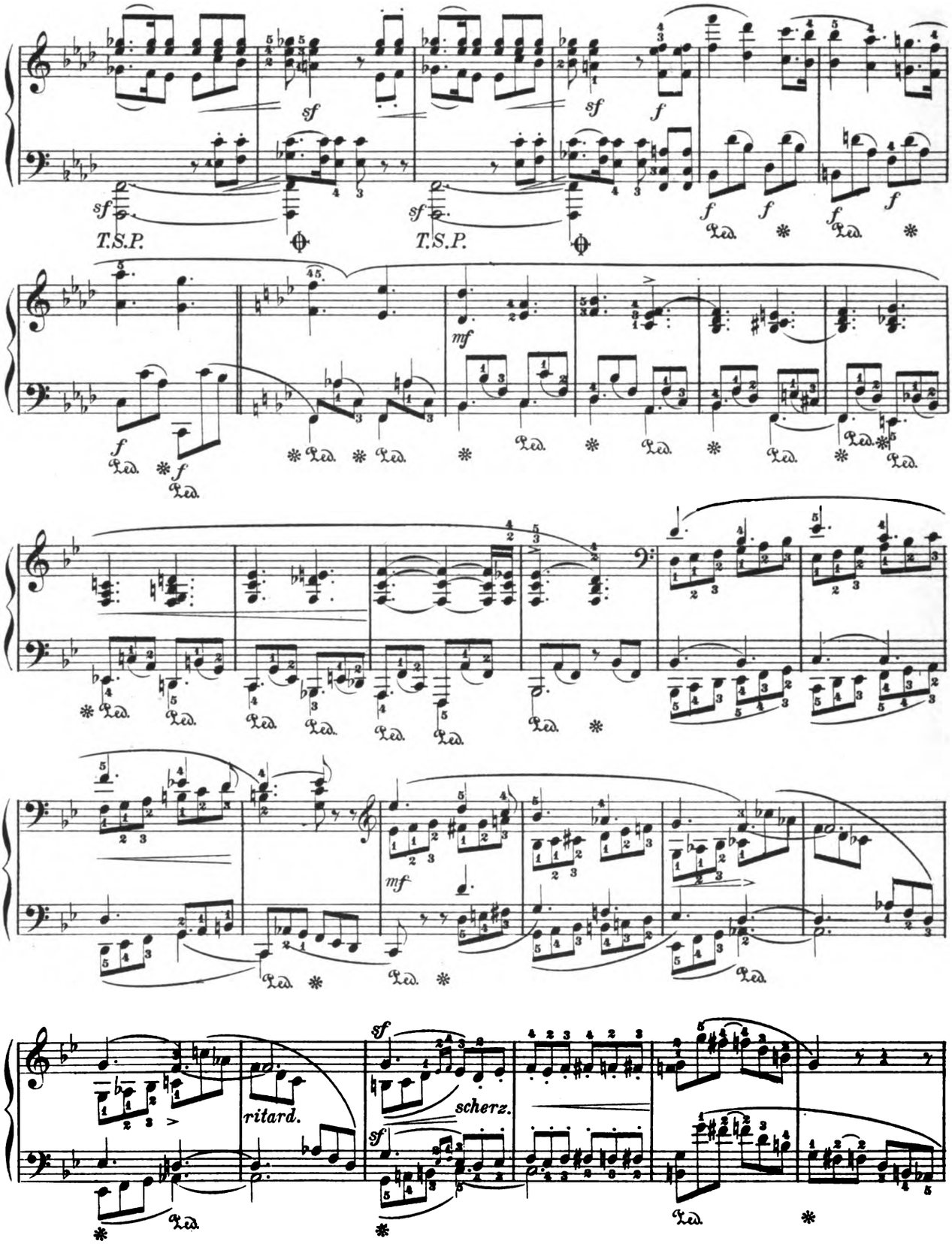

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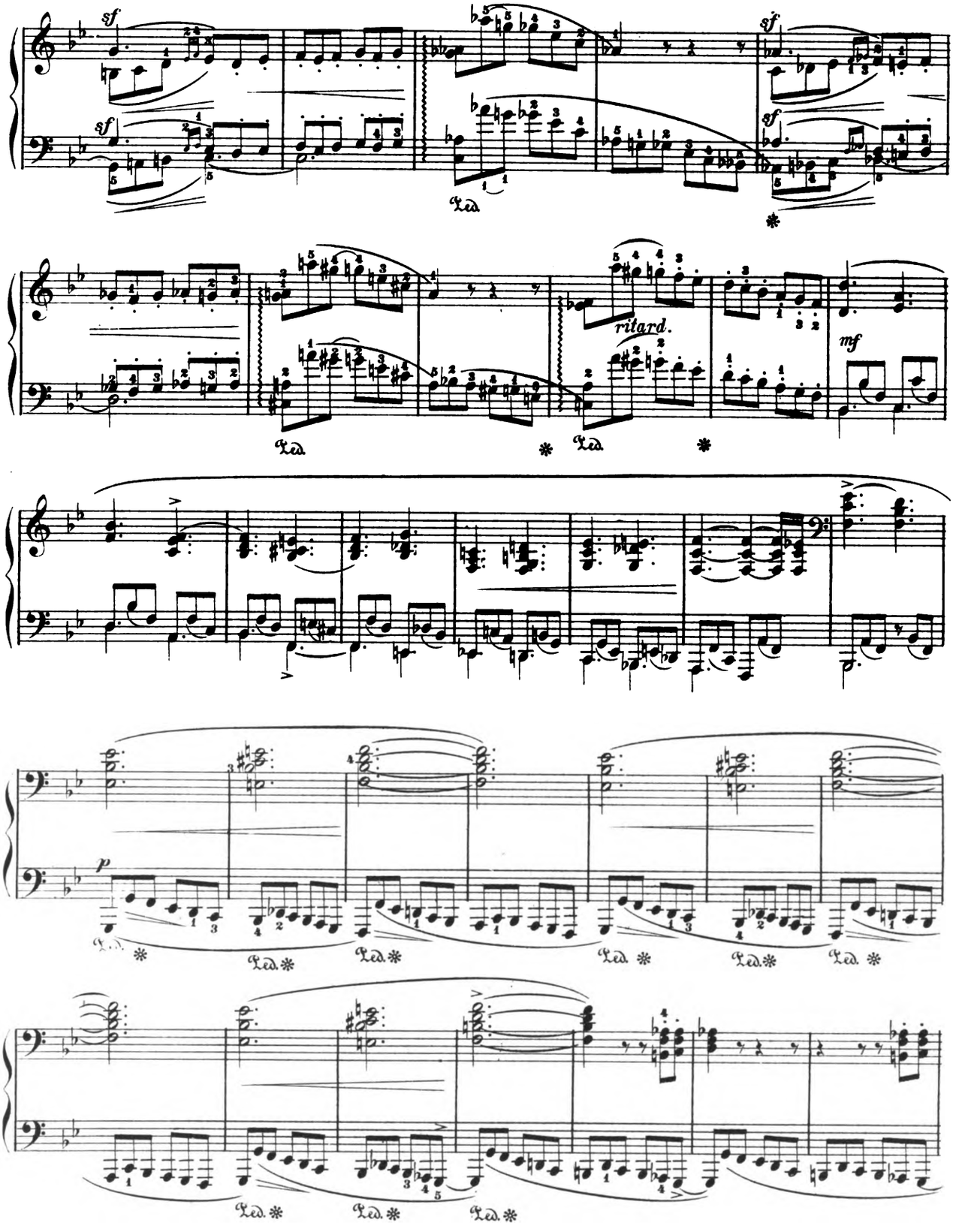

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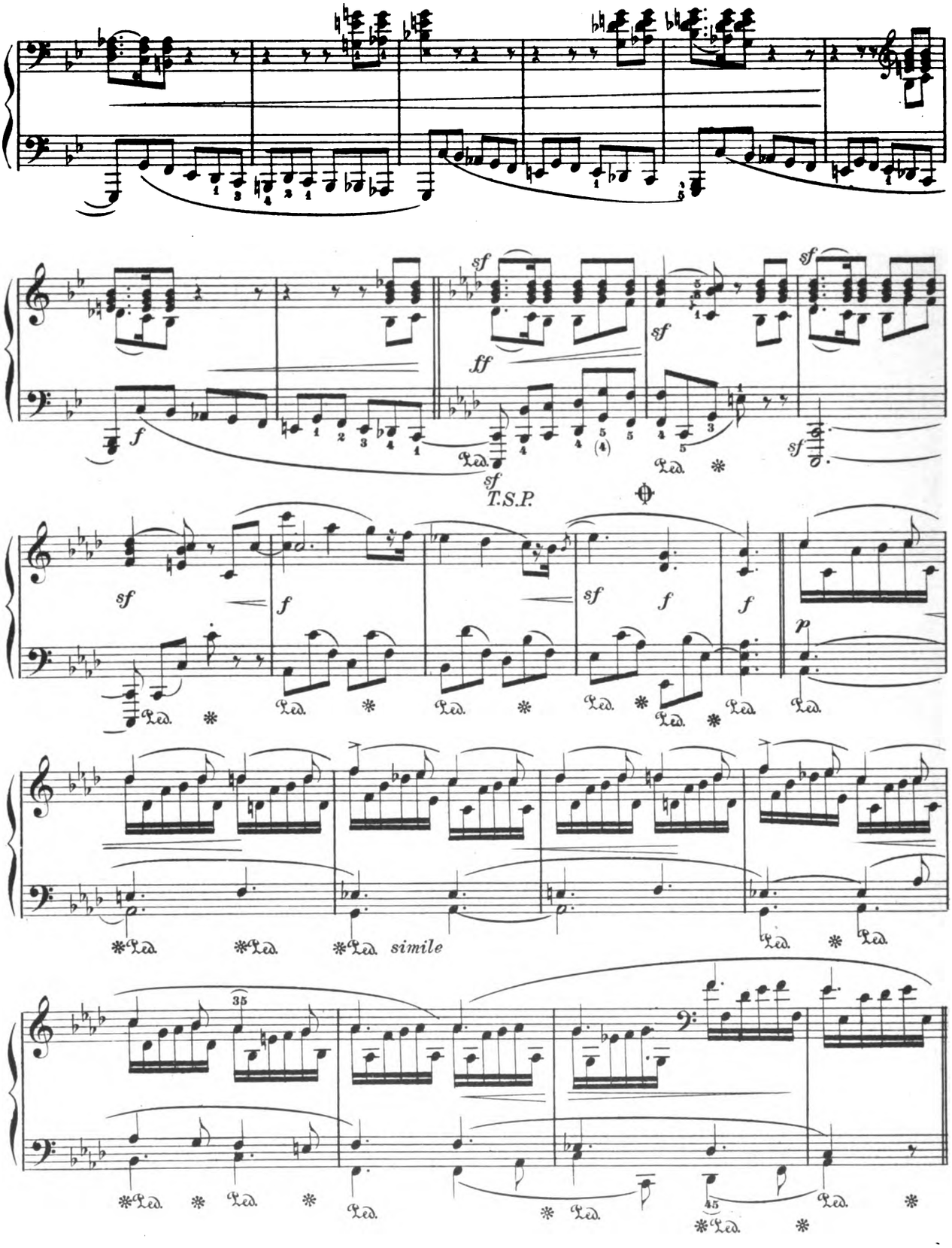

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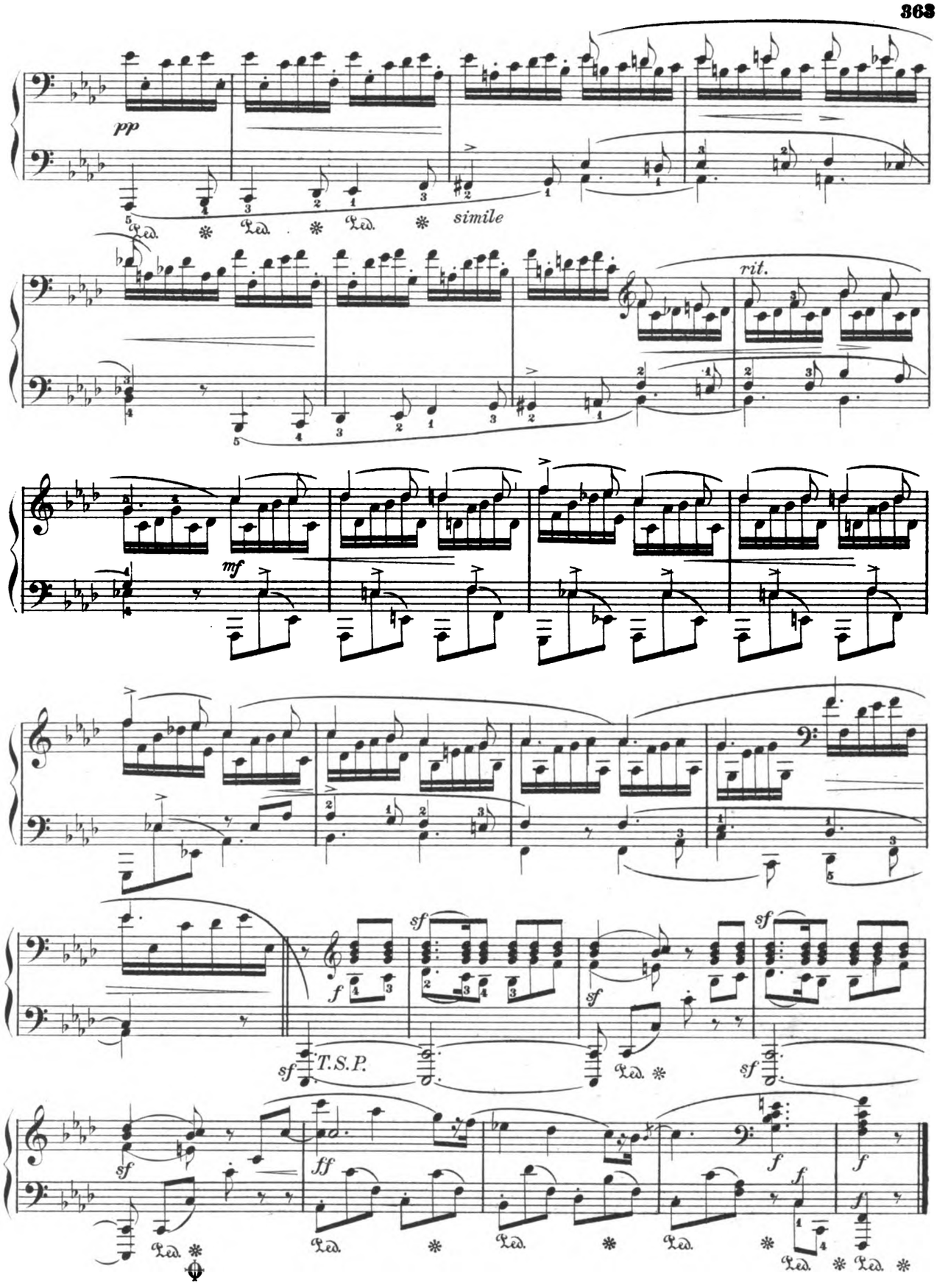

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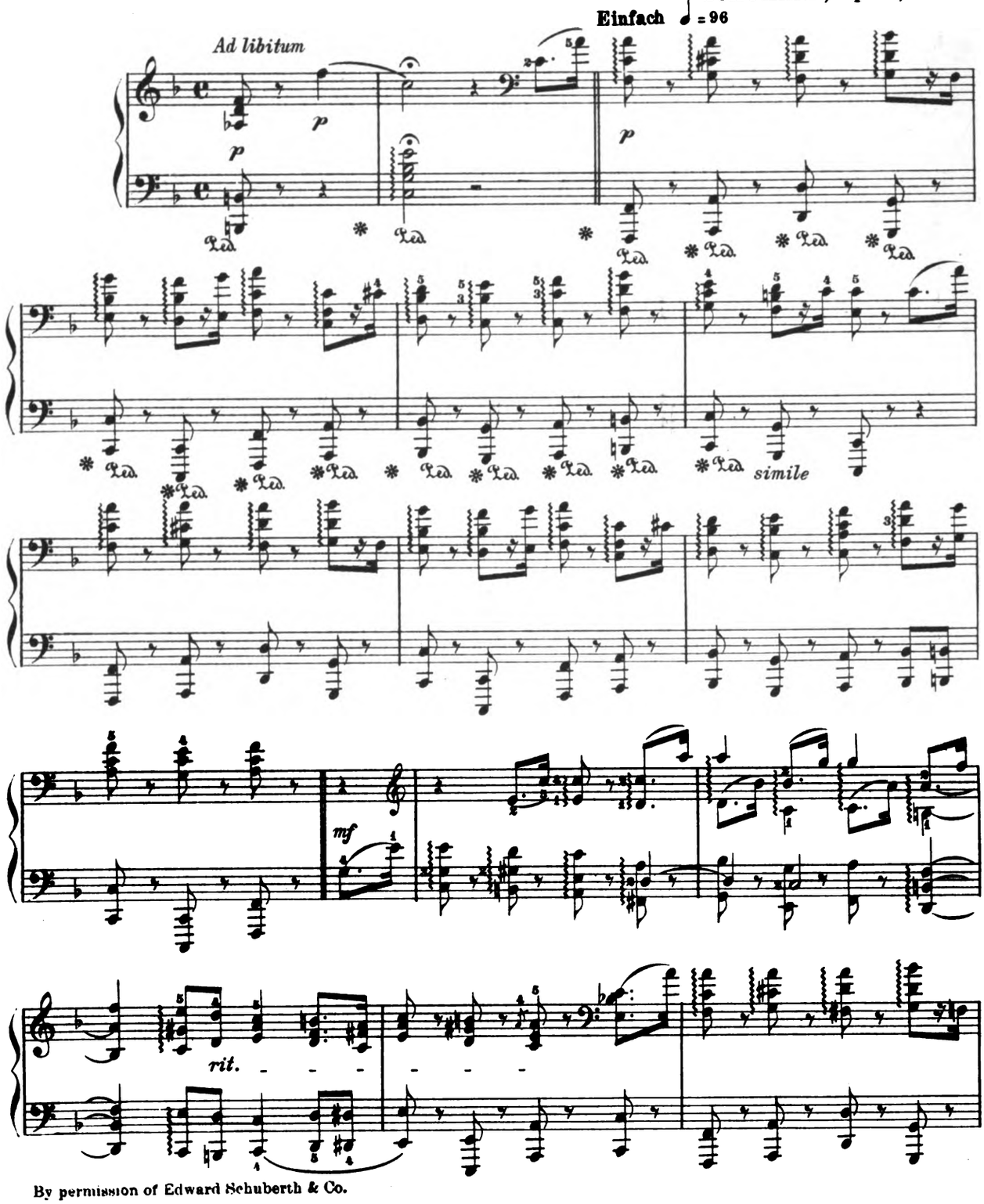

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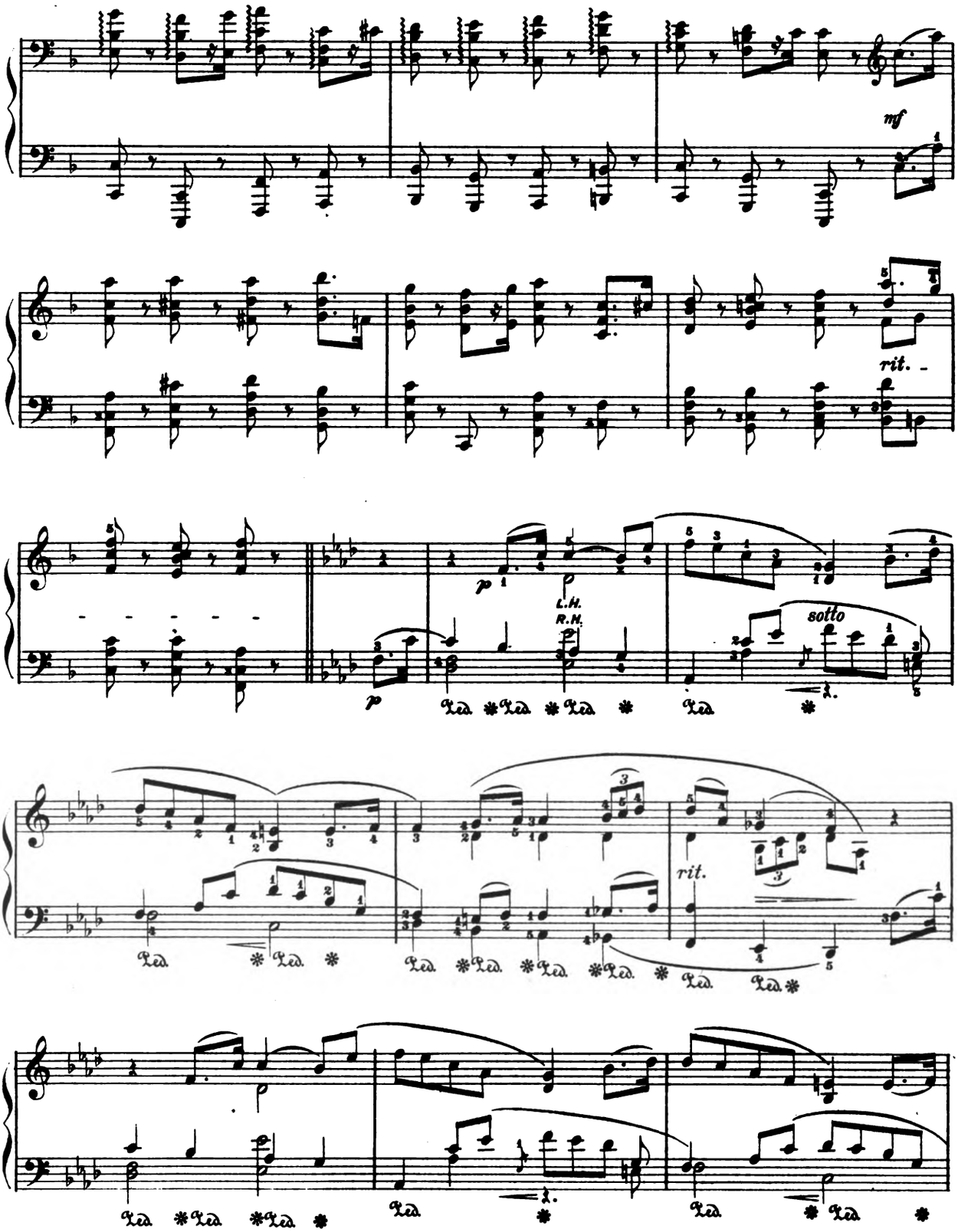

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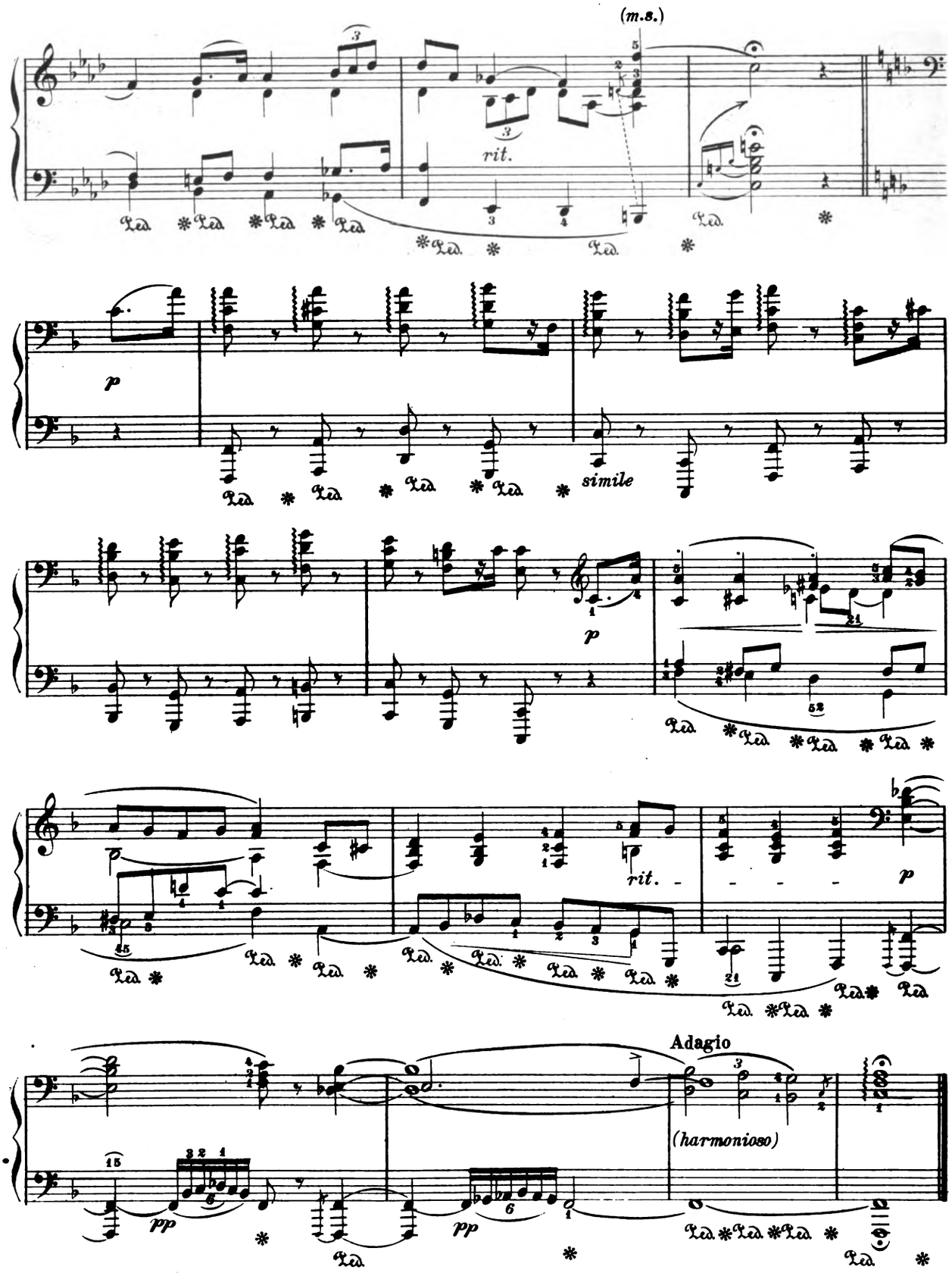

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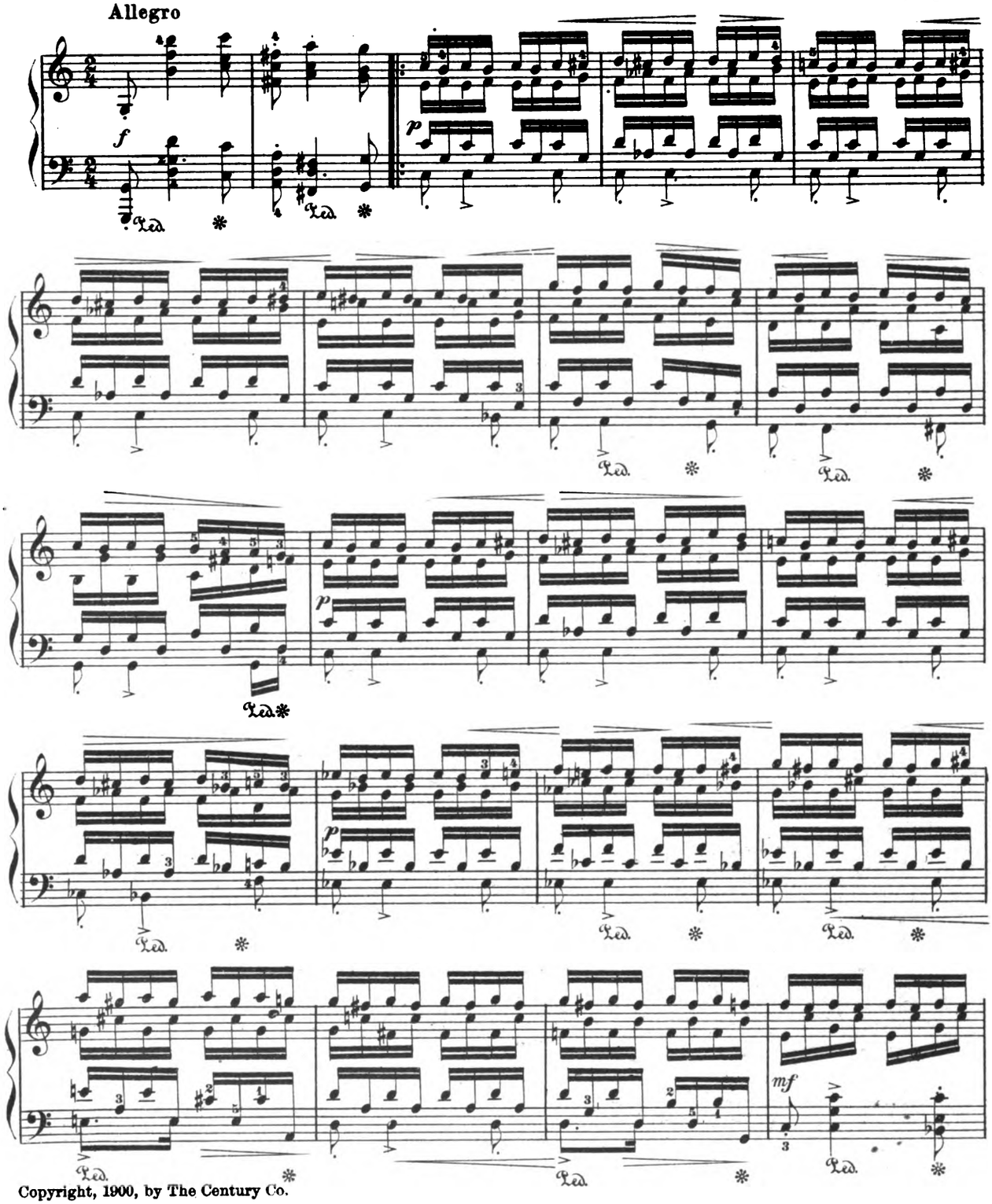
SCHUMANN, Op. 7



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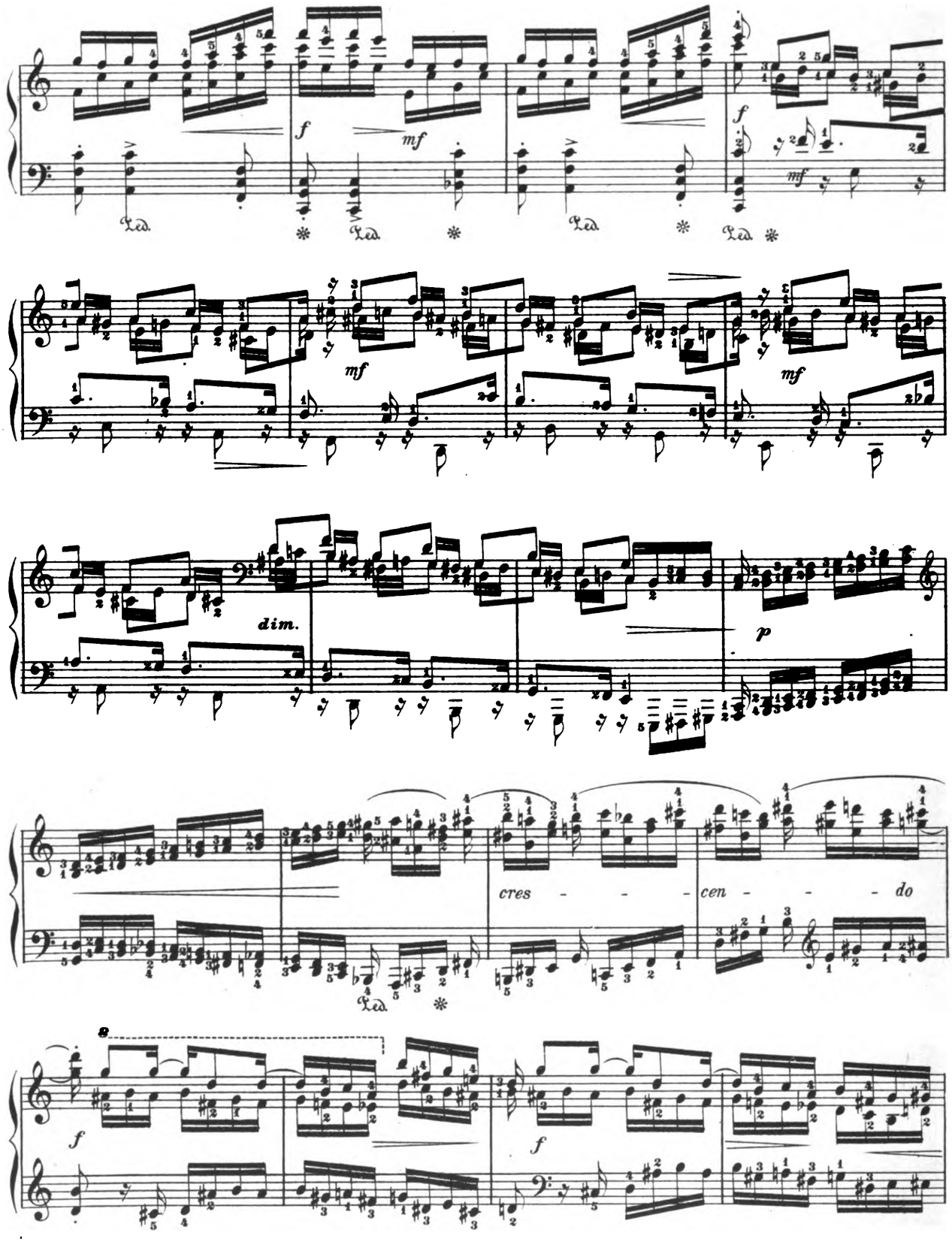

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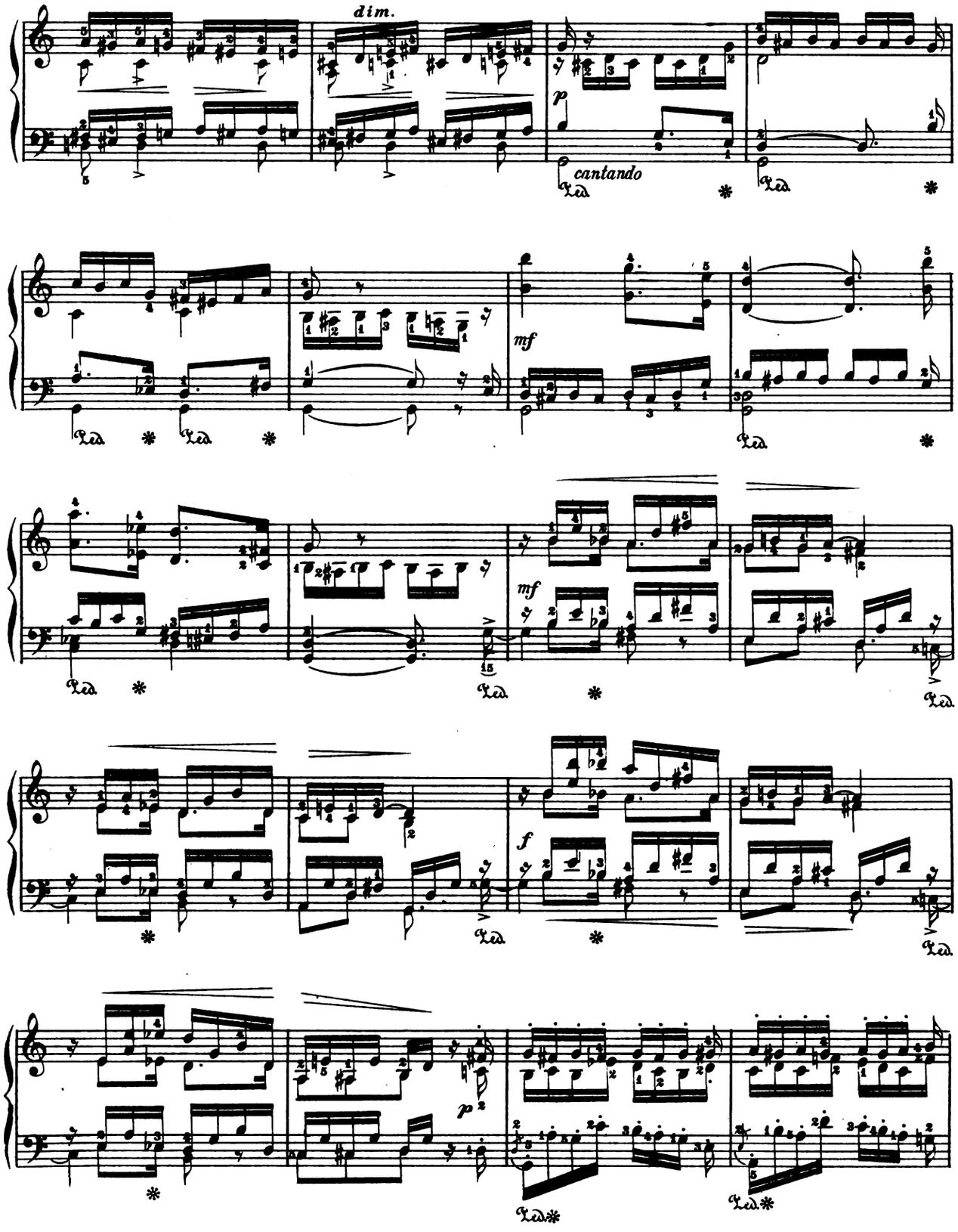

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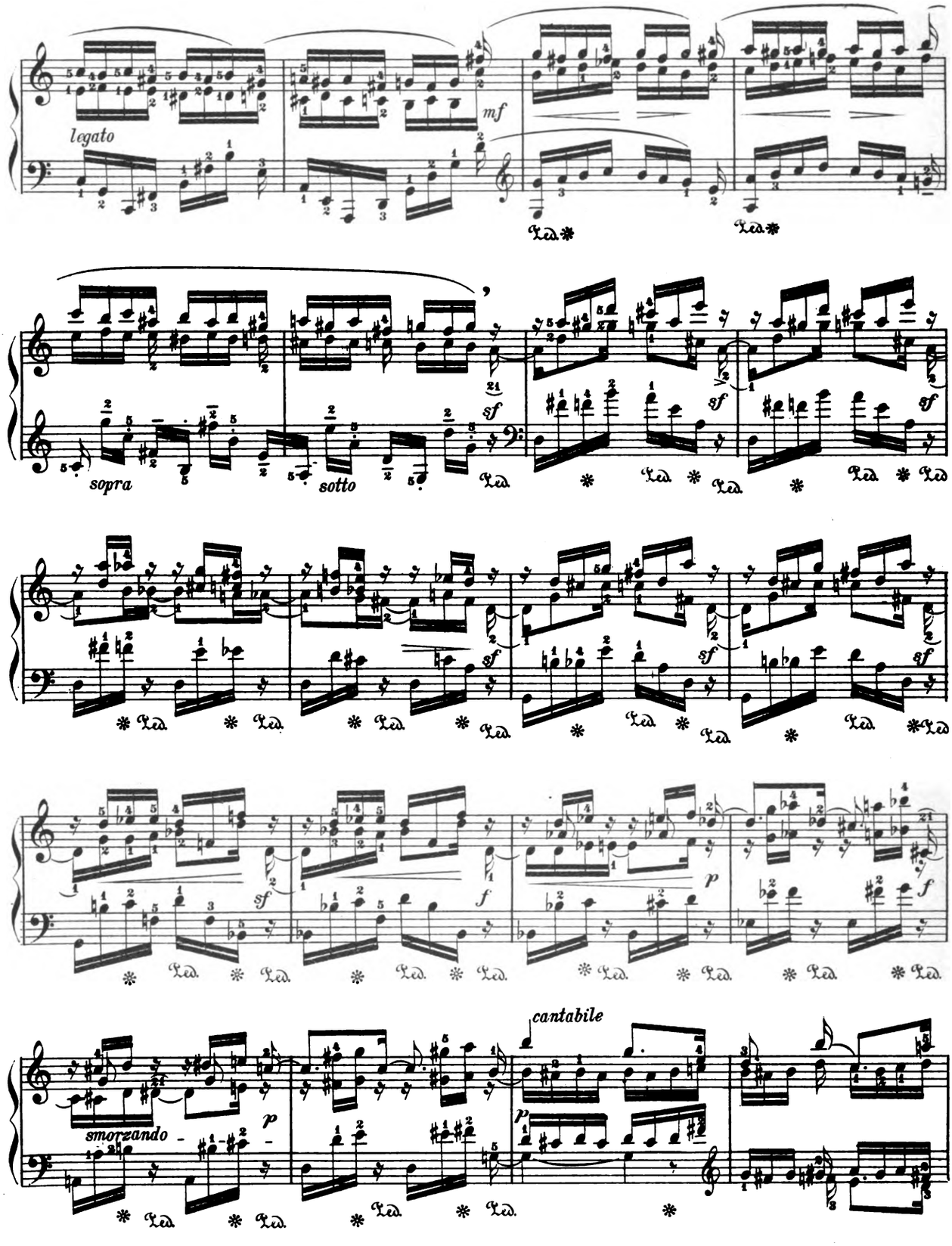

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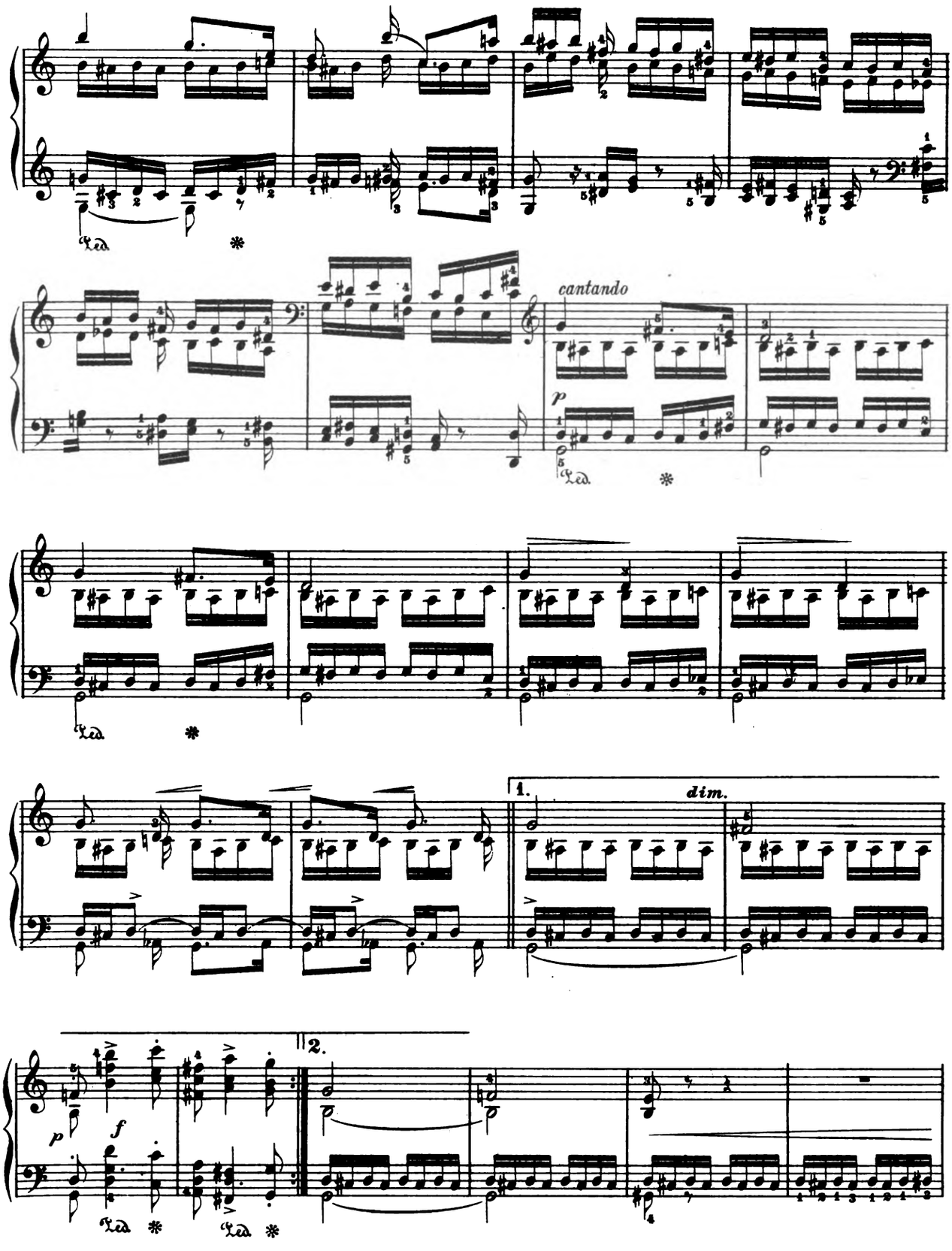

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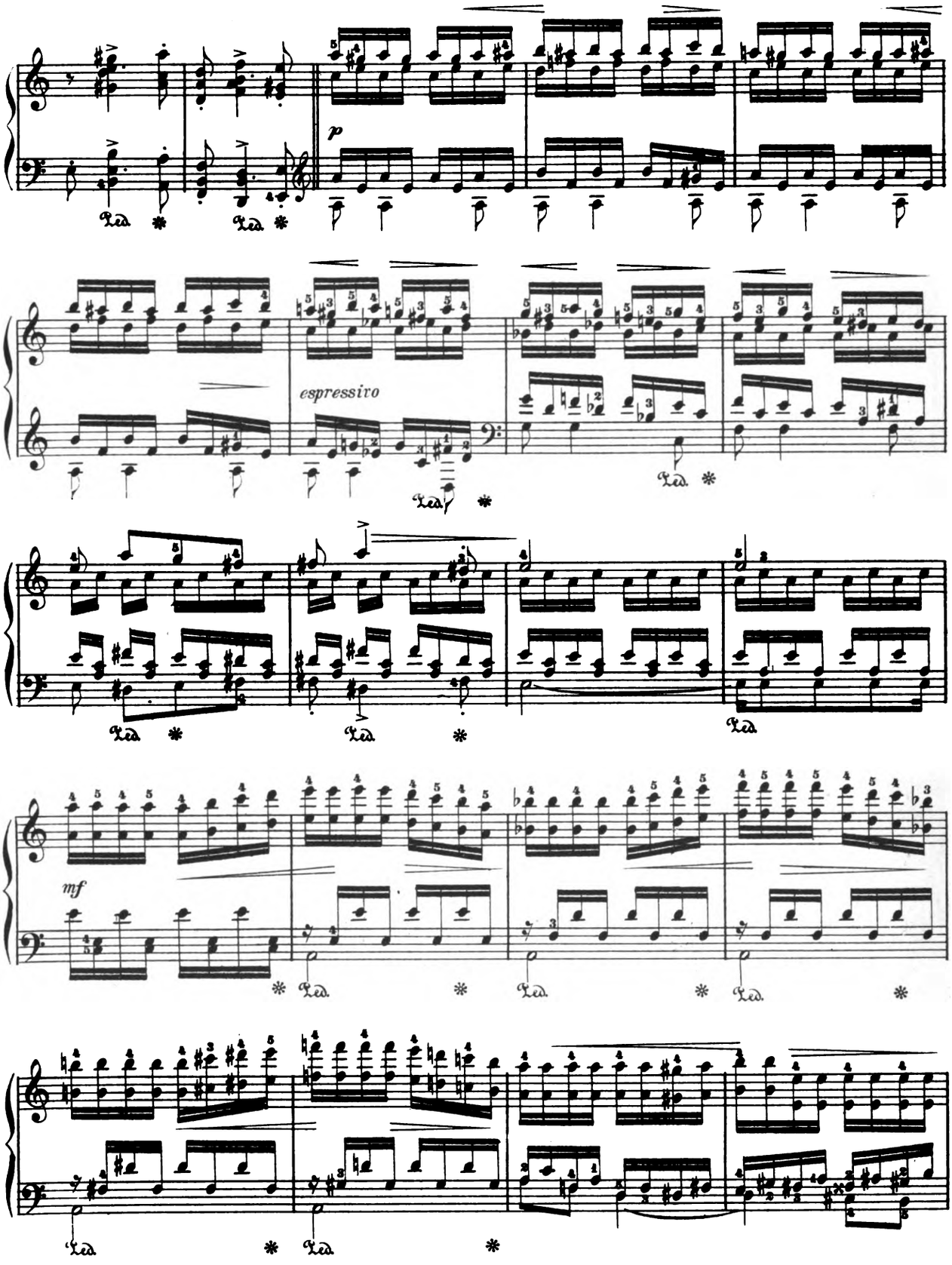

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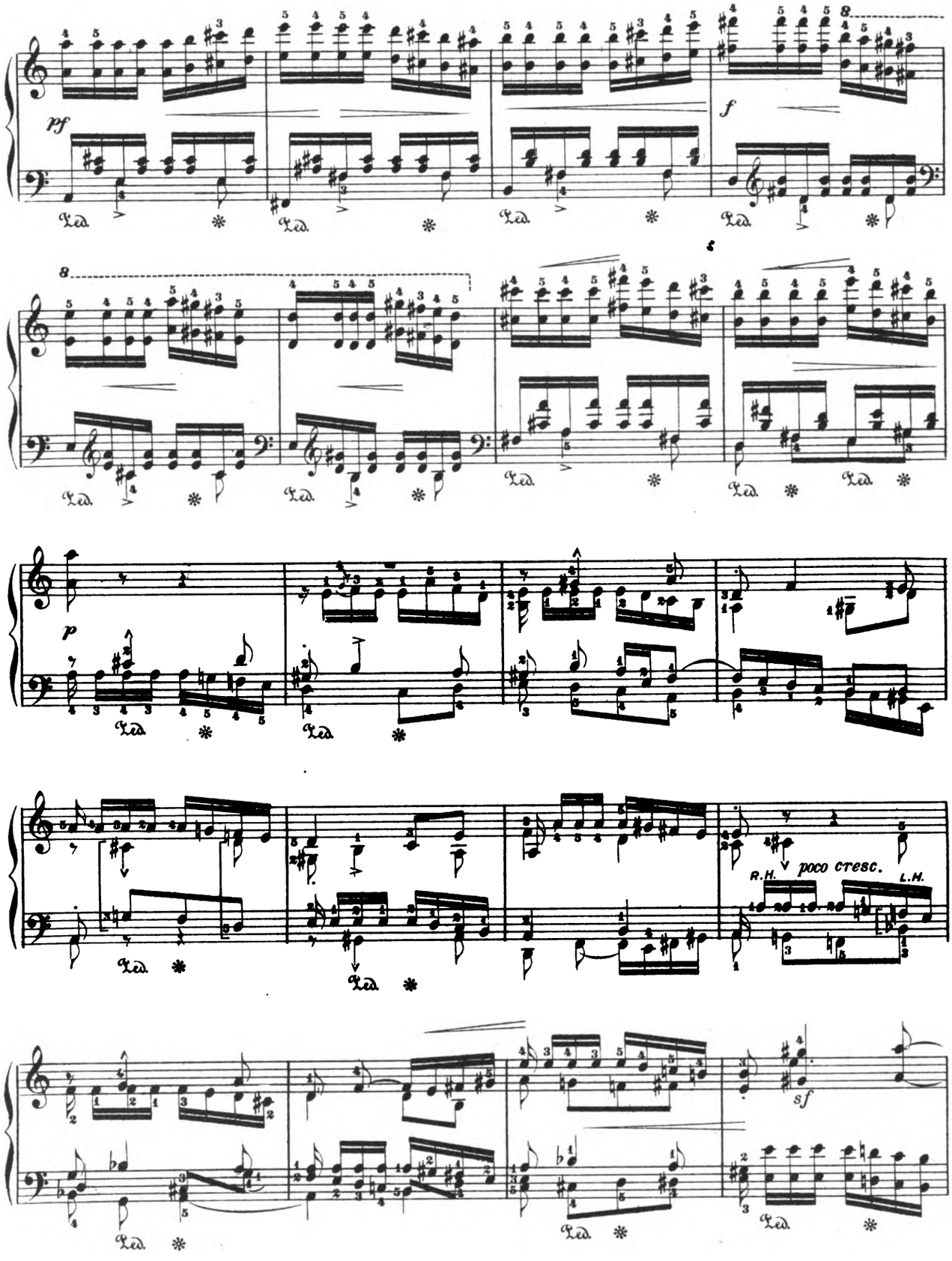

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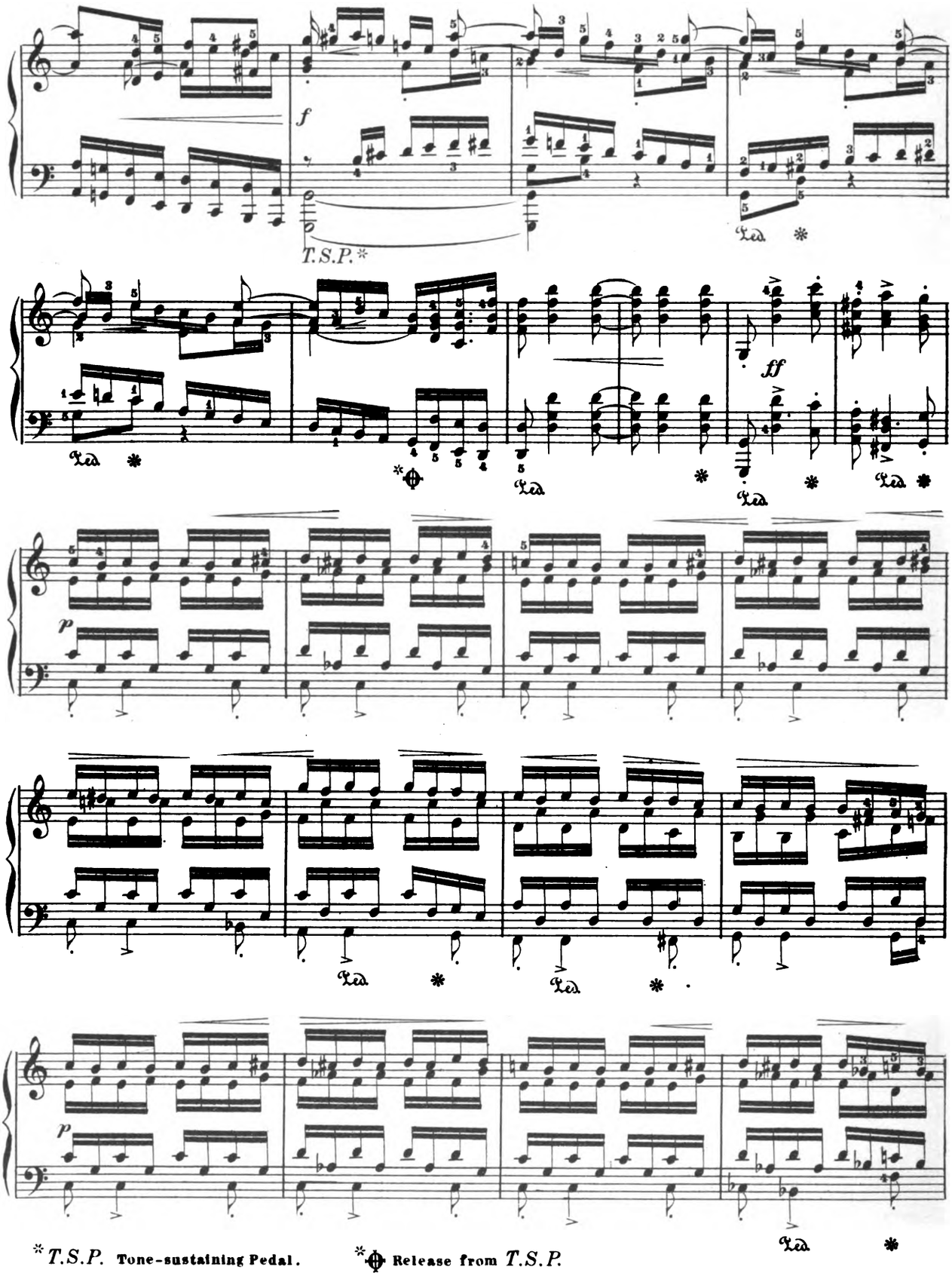

*T.S.P. Tone-sustaining Pedal. *⊕ Release from T.S.P.

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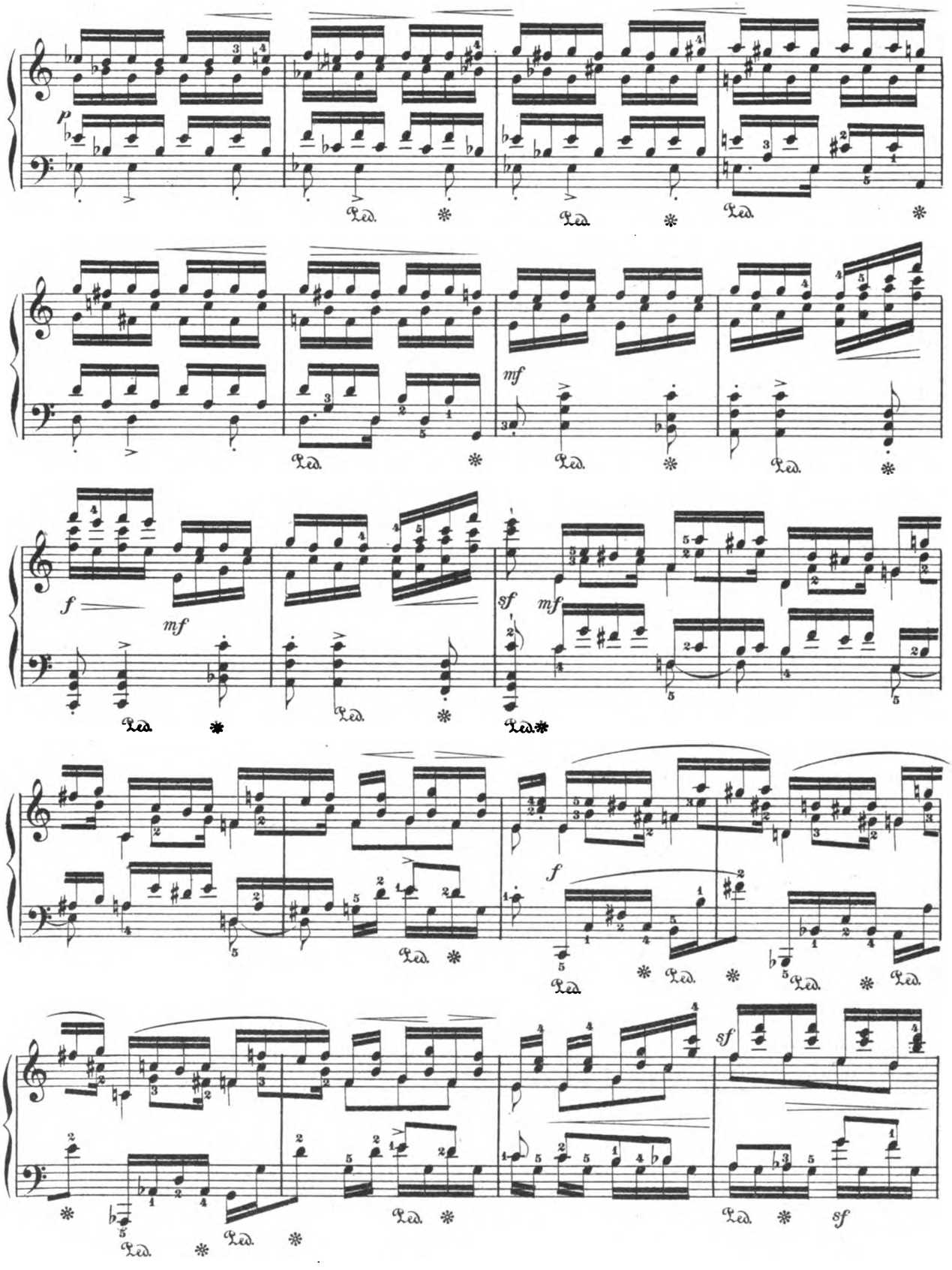

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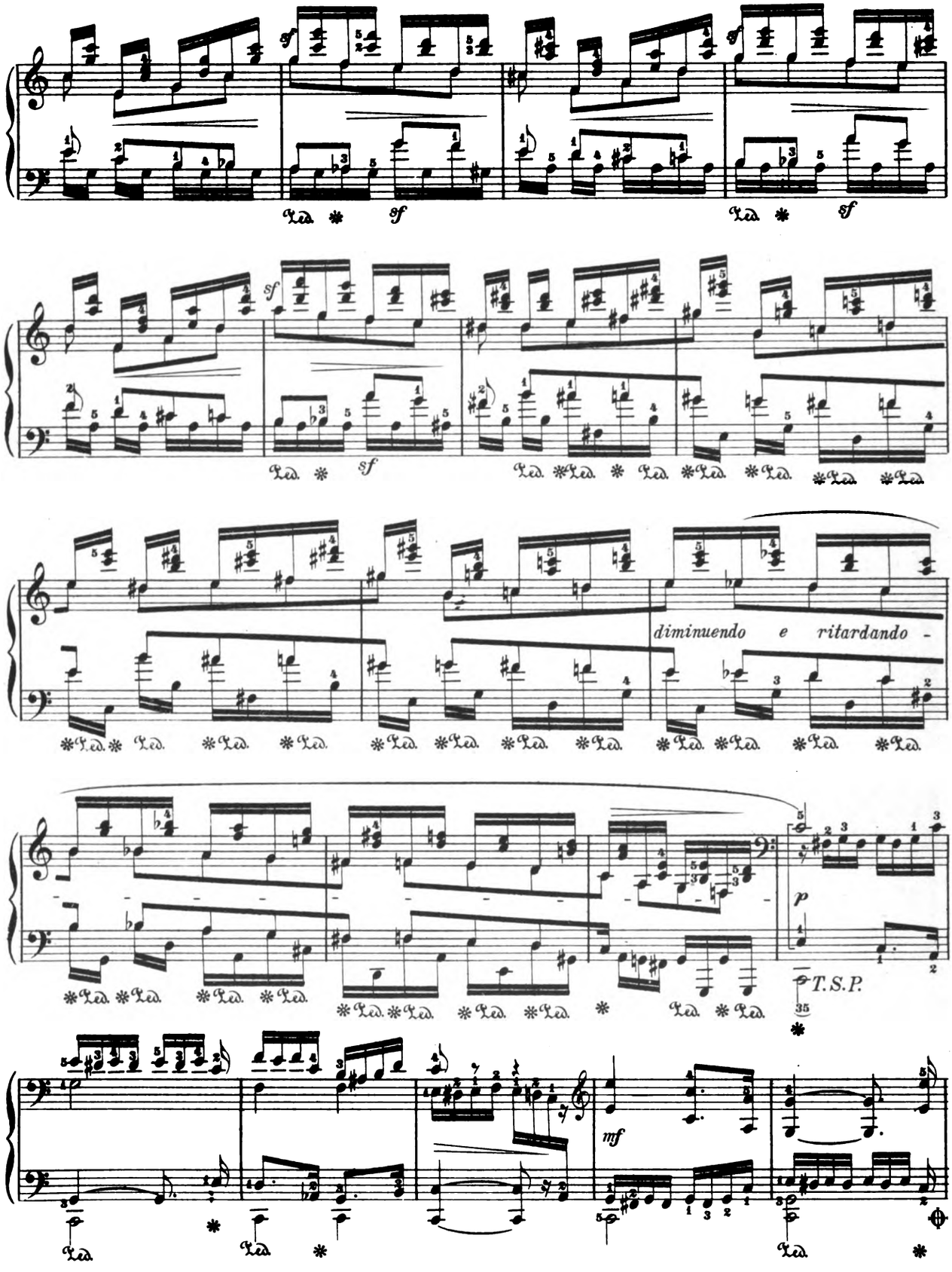

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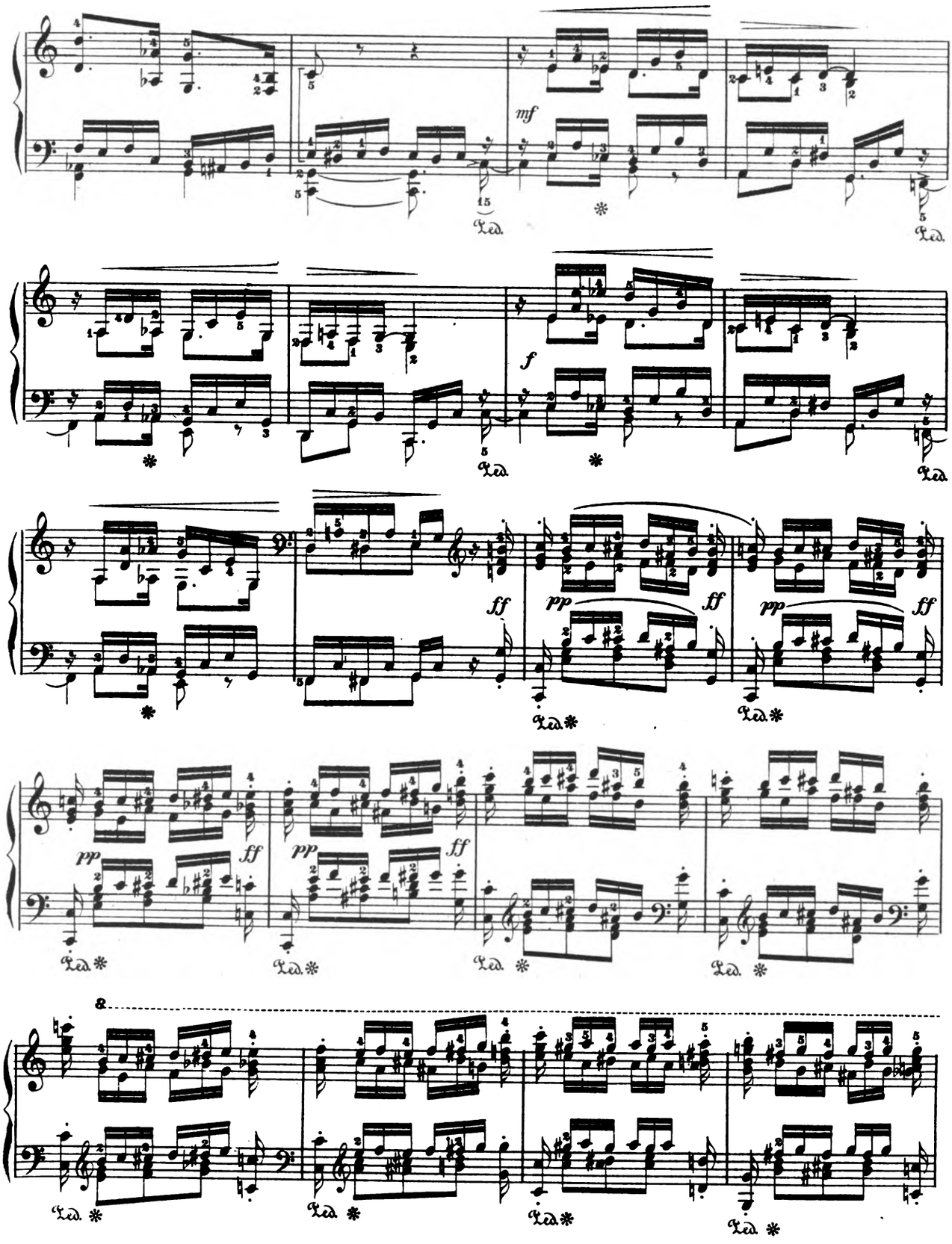

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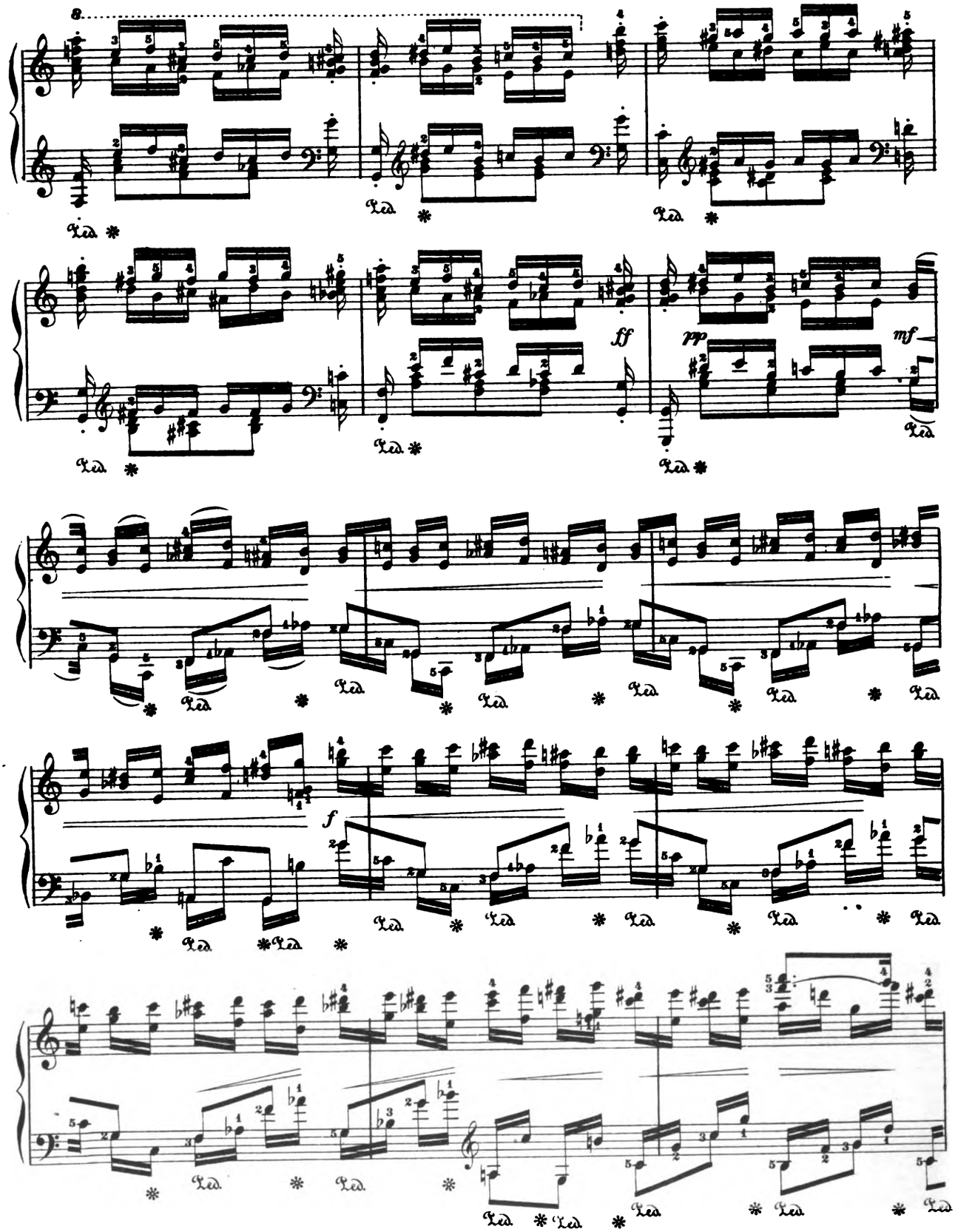

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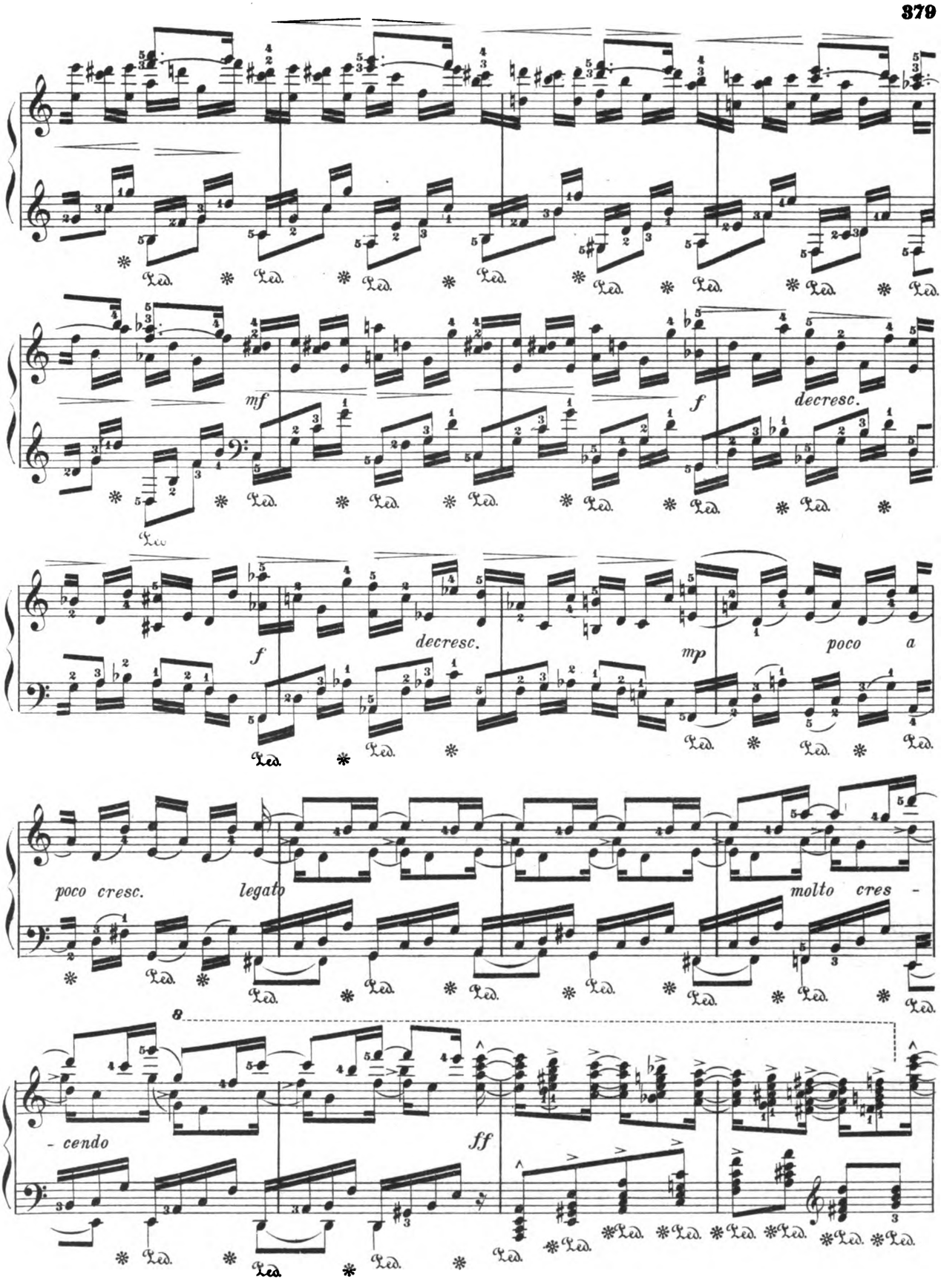

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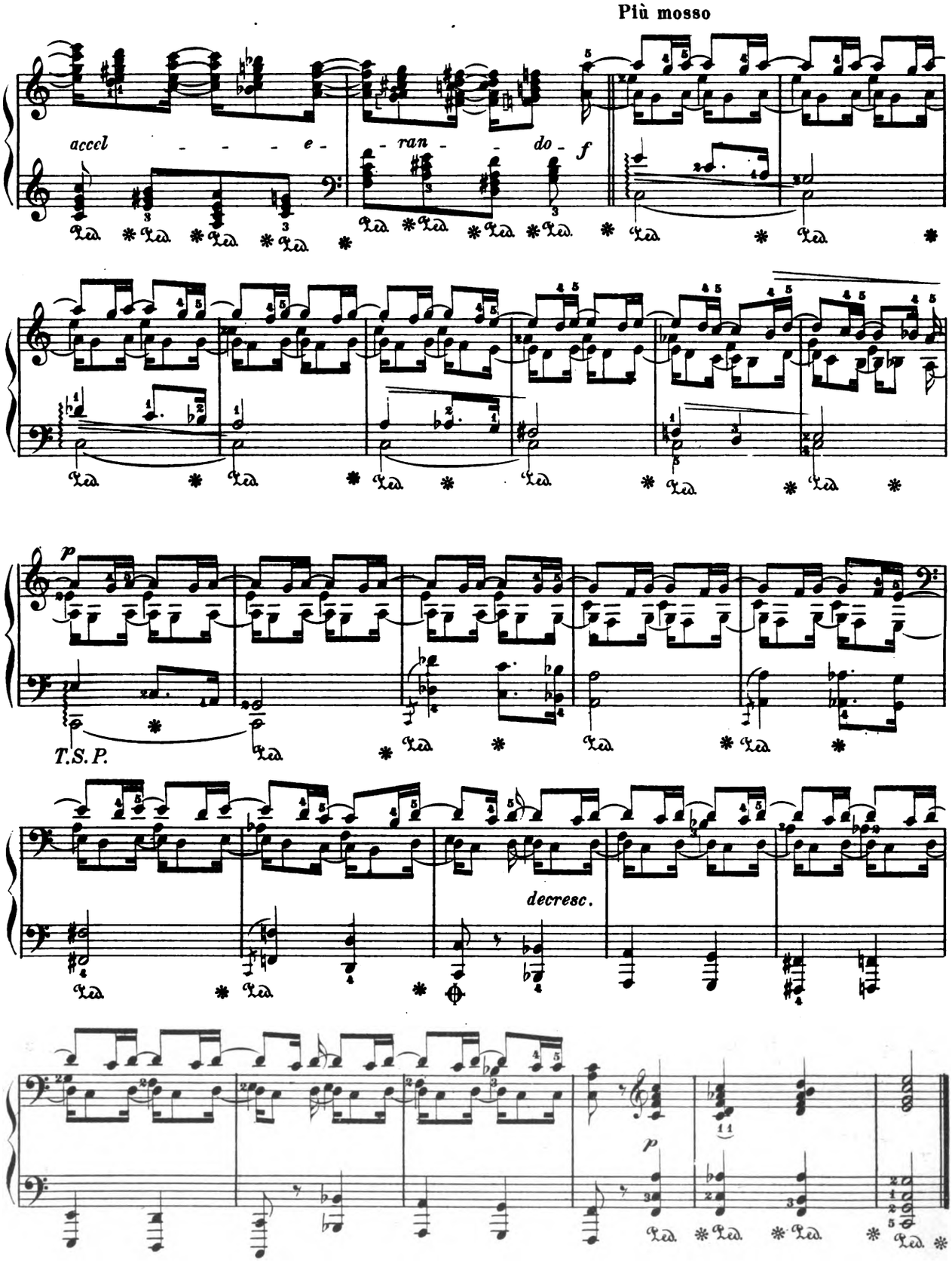

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COSSACKS AWAITING A CAVALRY CHARGE.

FROM THE AQUARELLE BY IAN V. CHELMINSKI.

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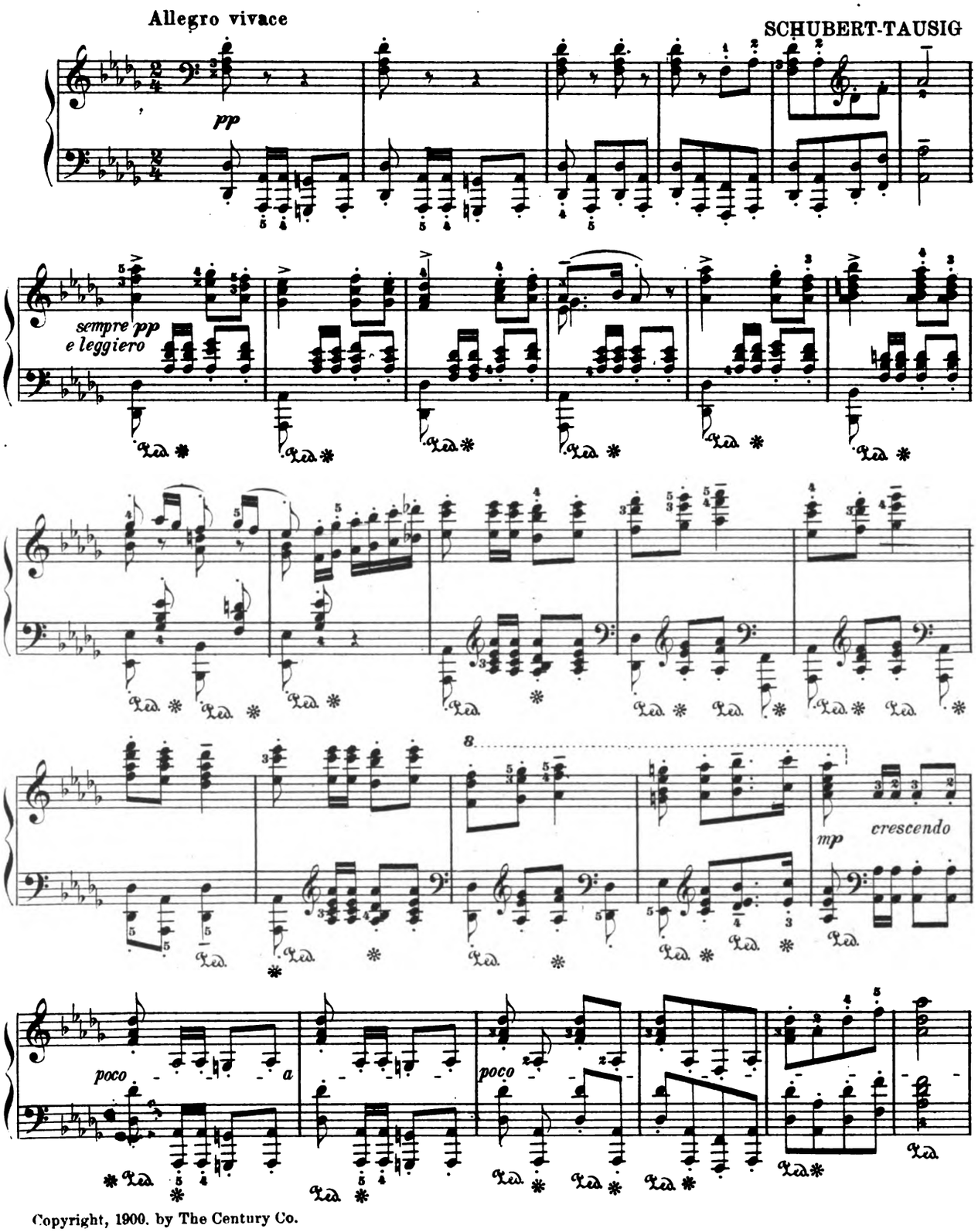

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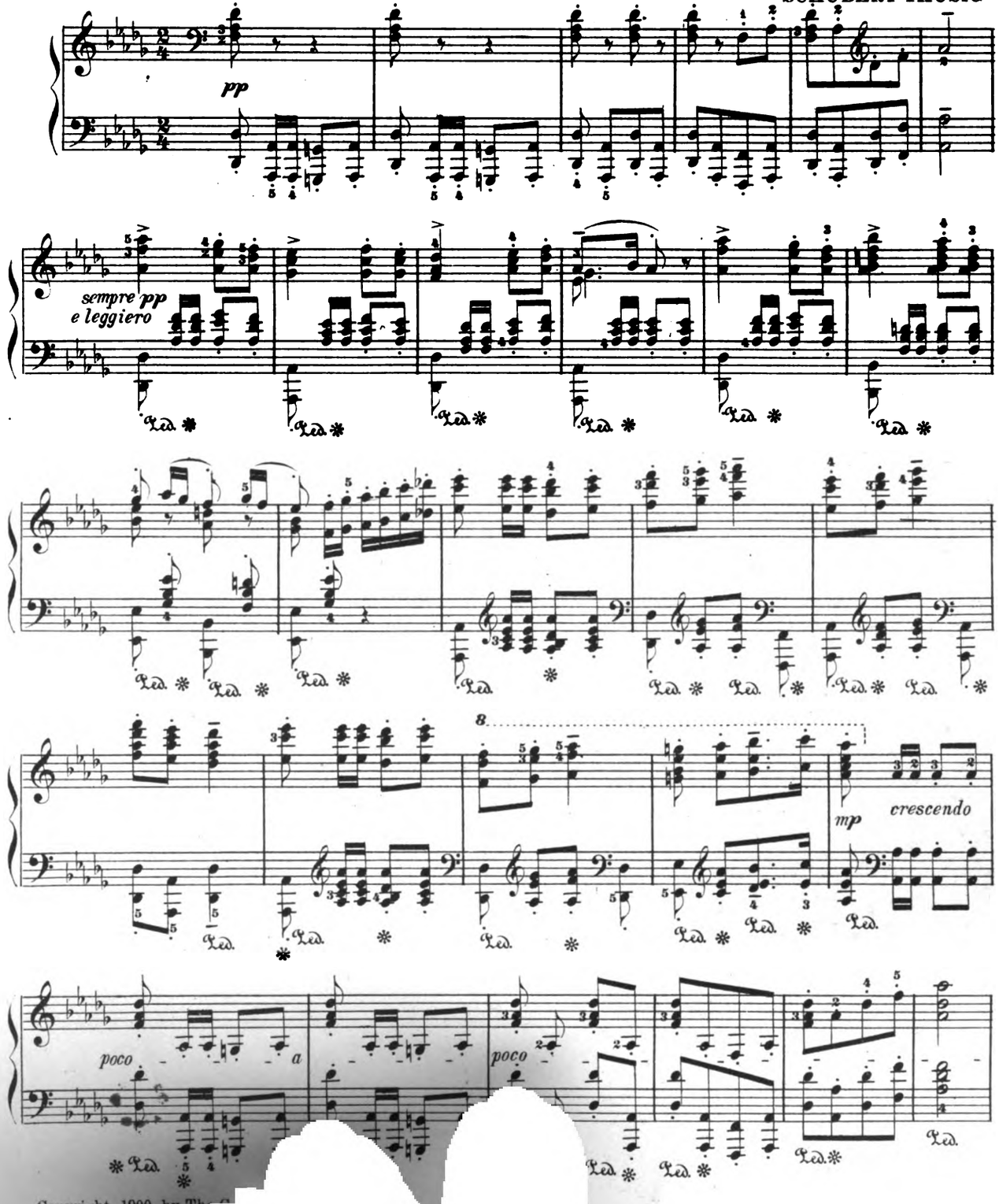

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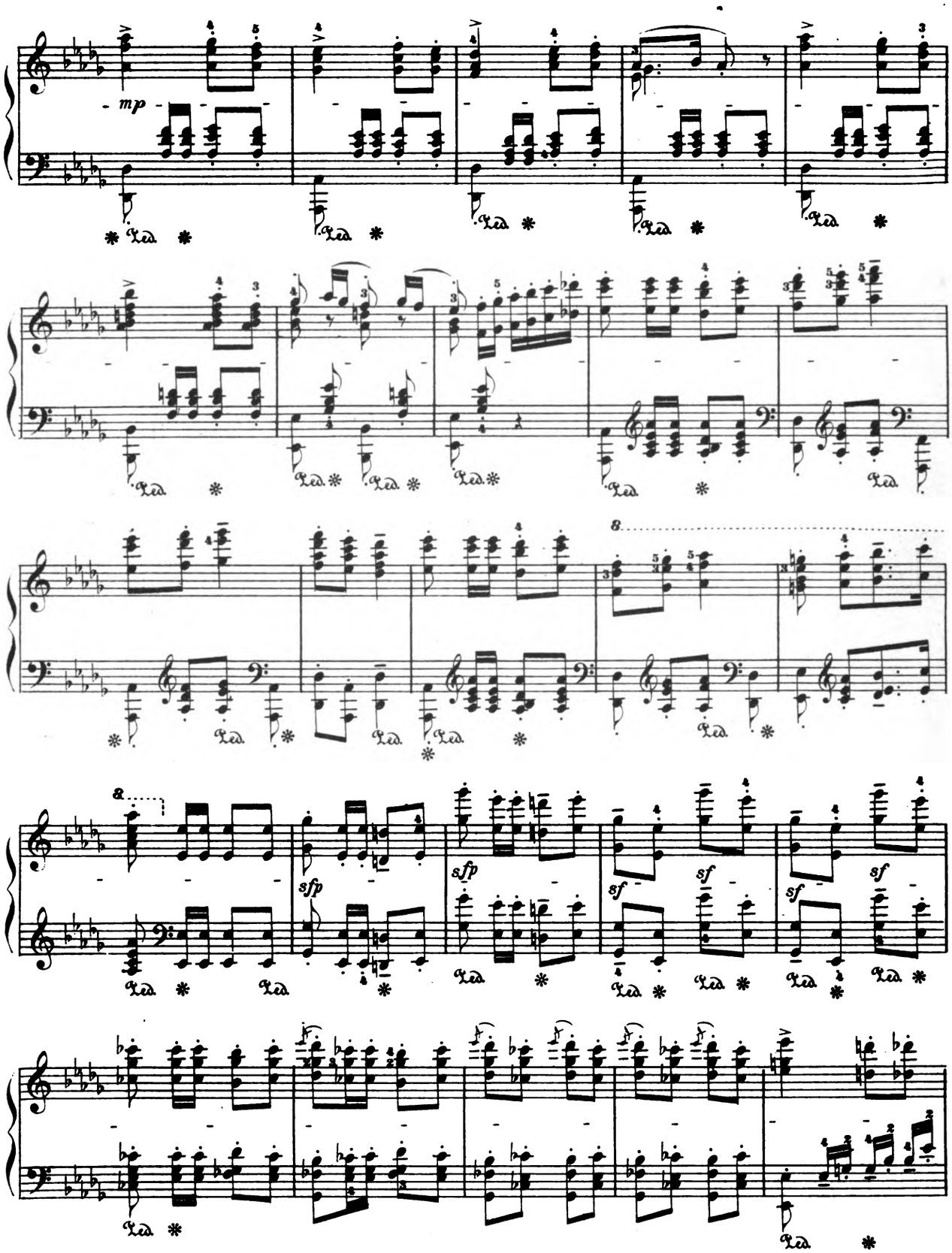

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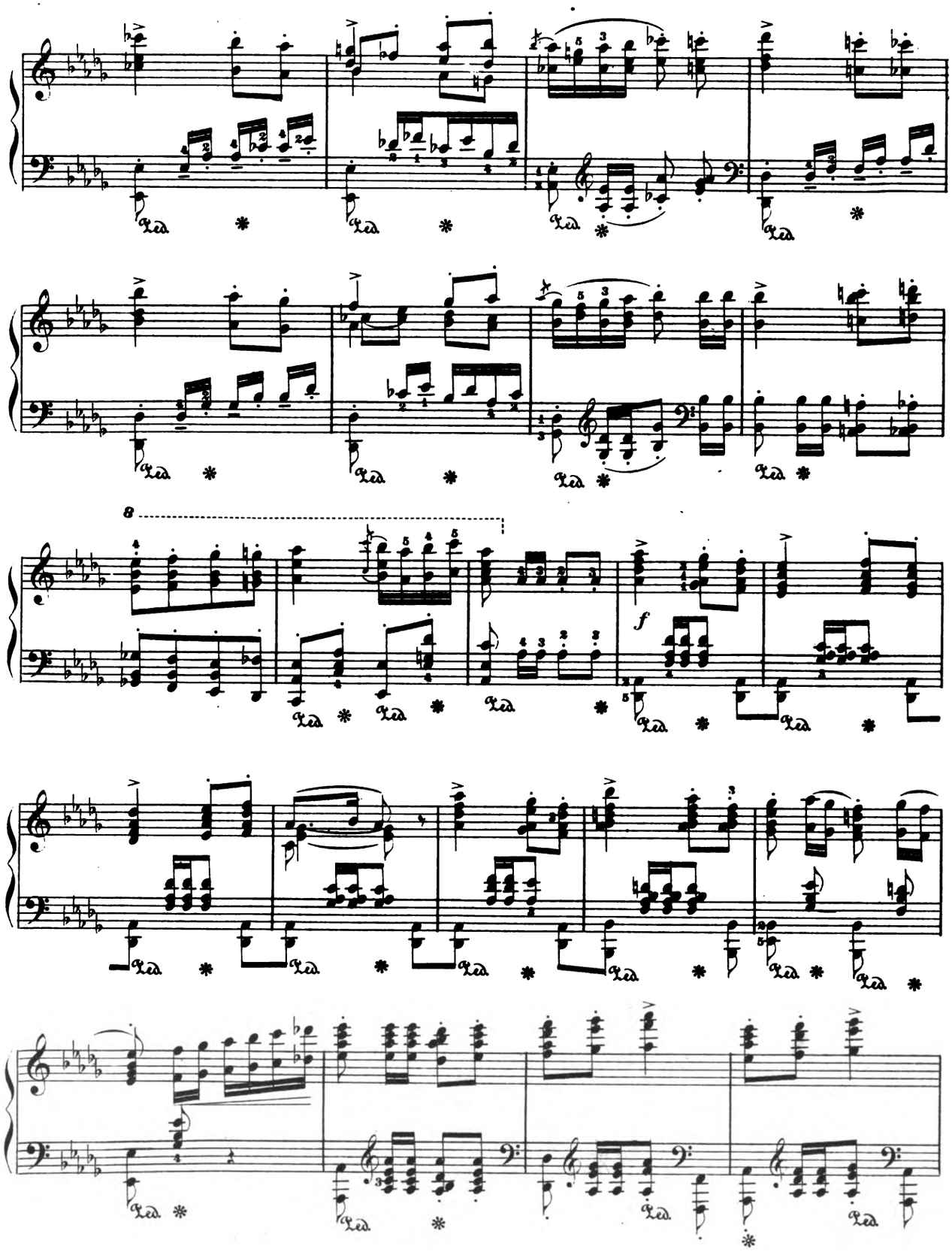

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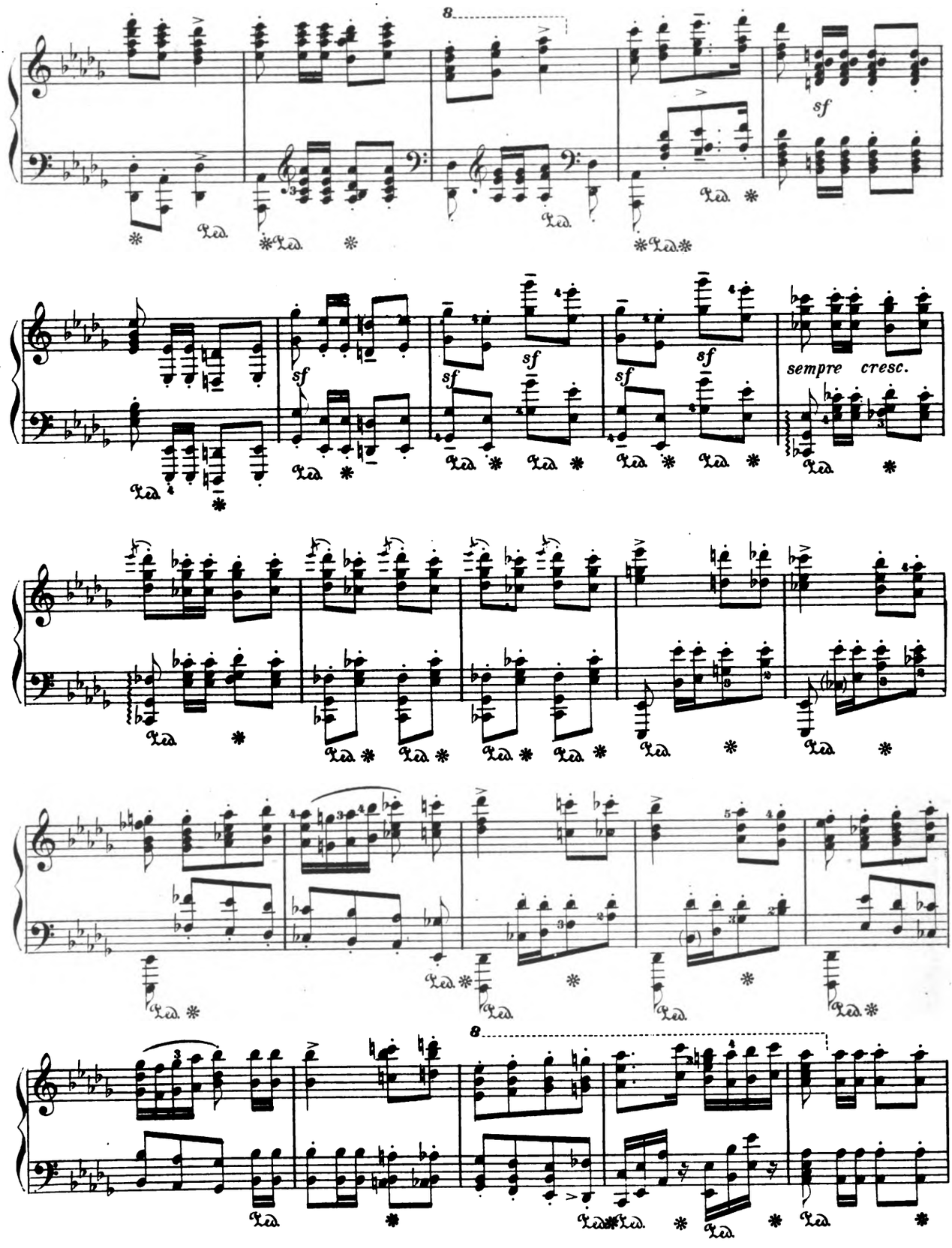

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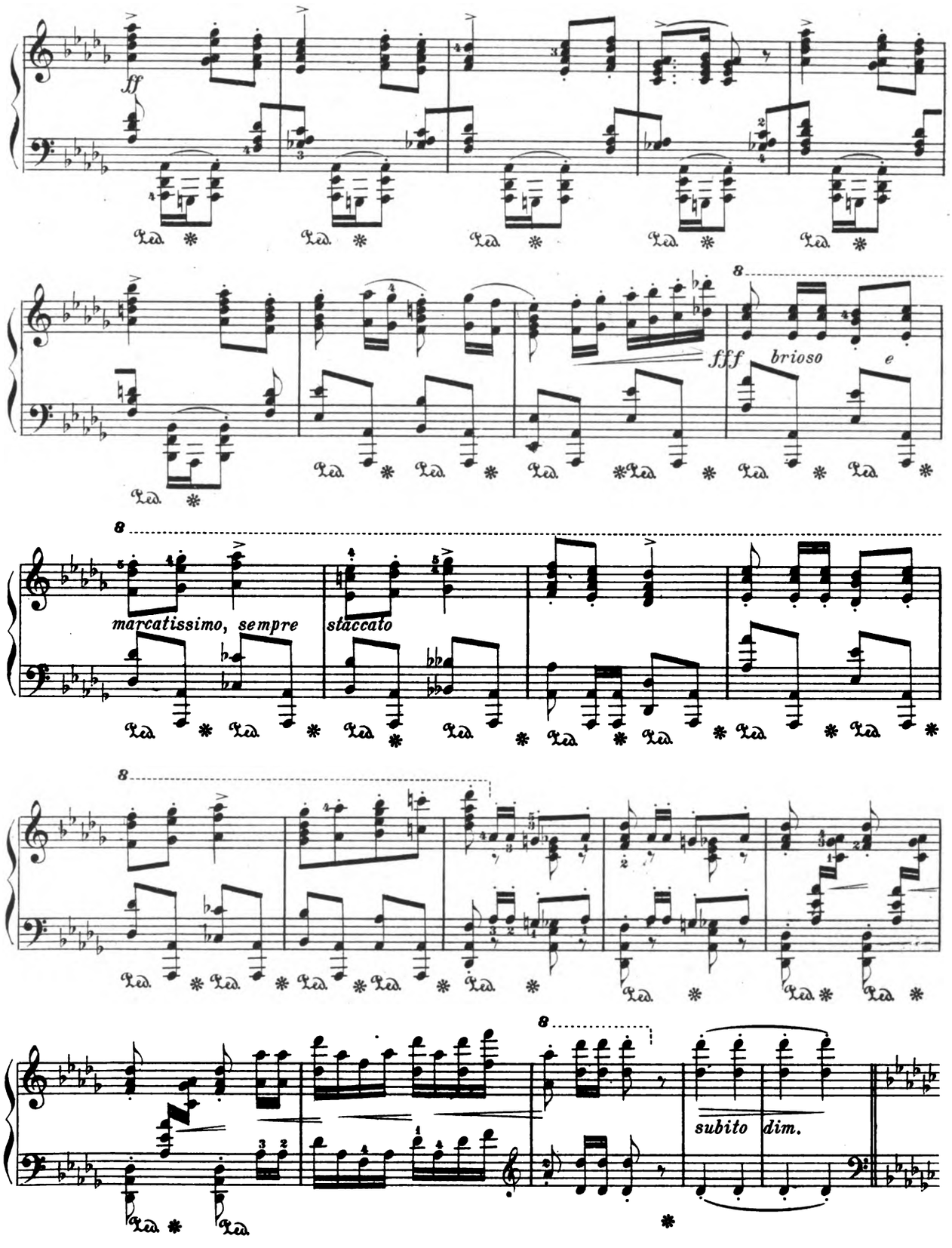

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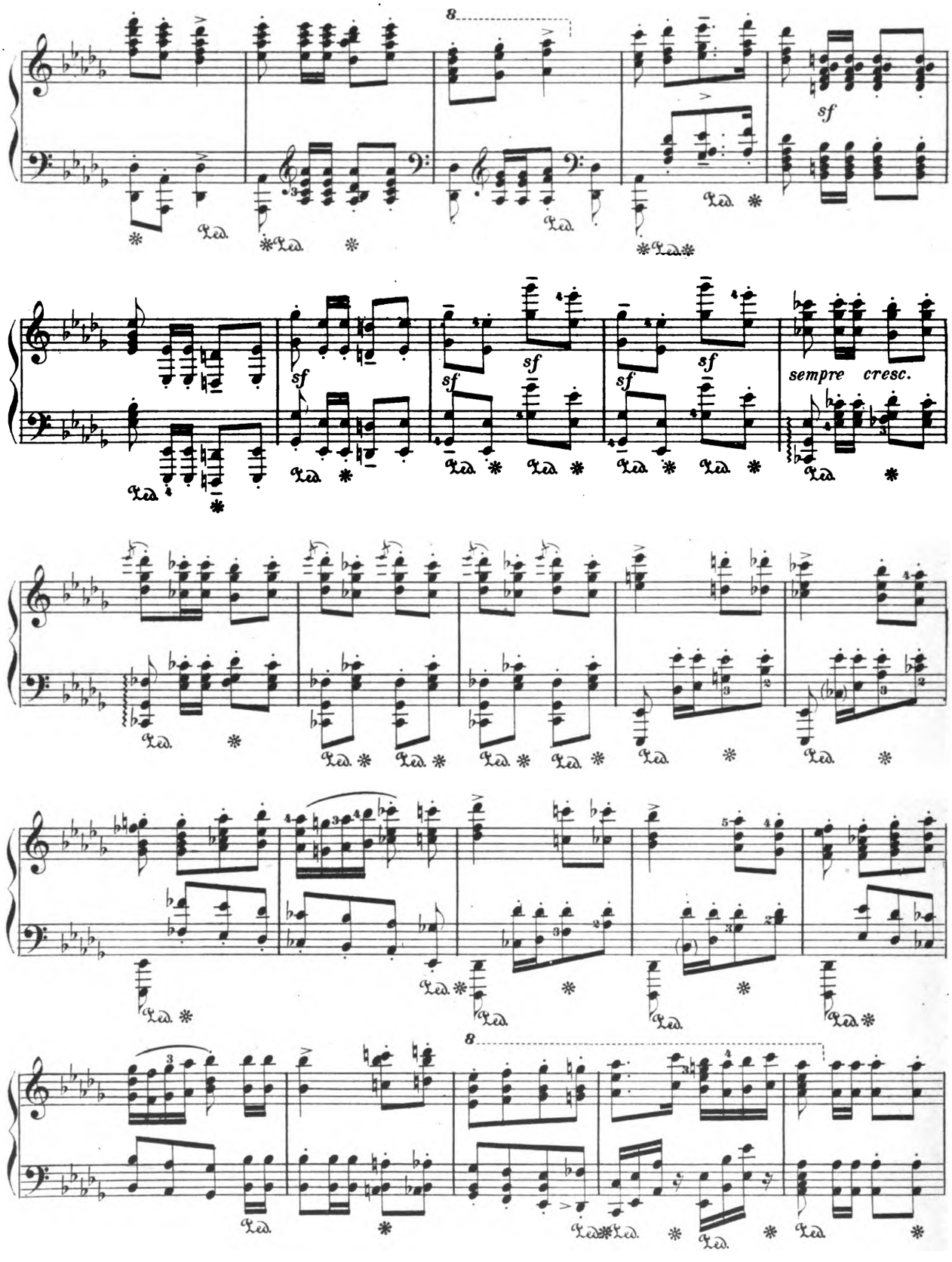

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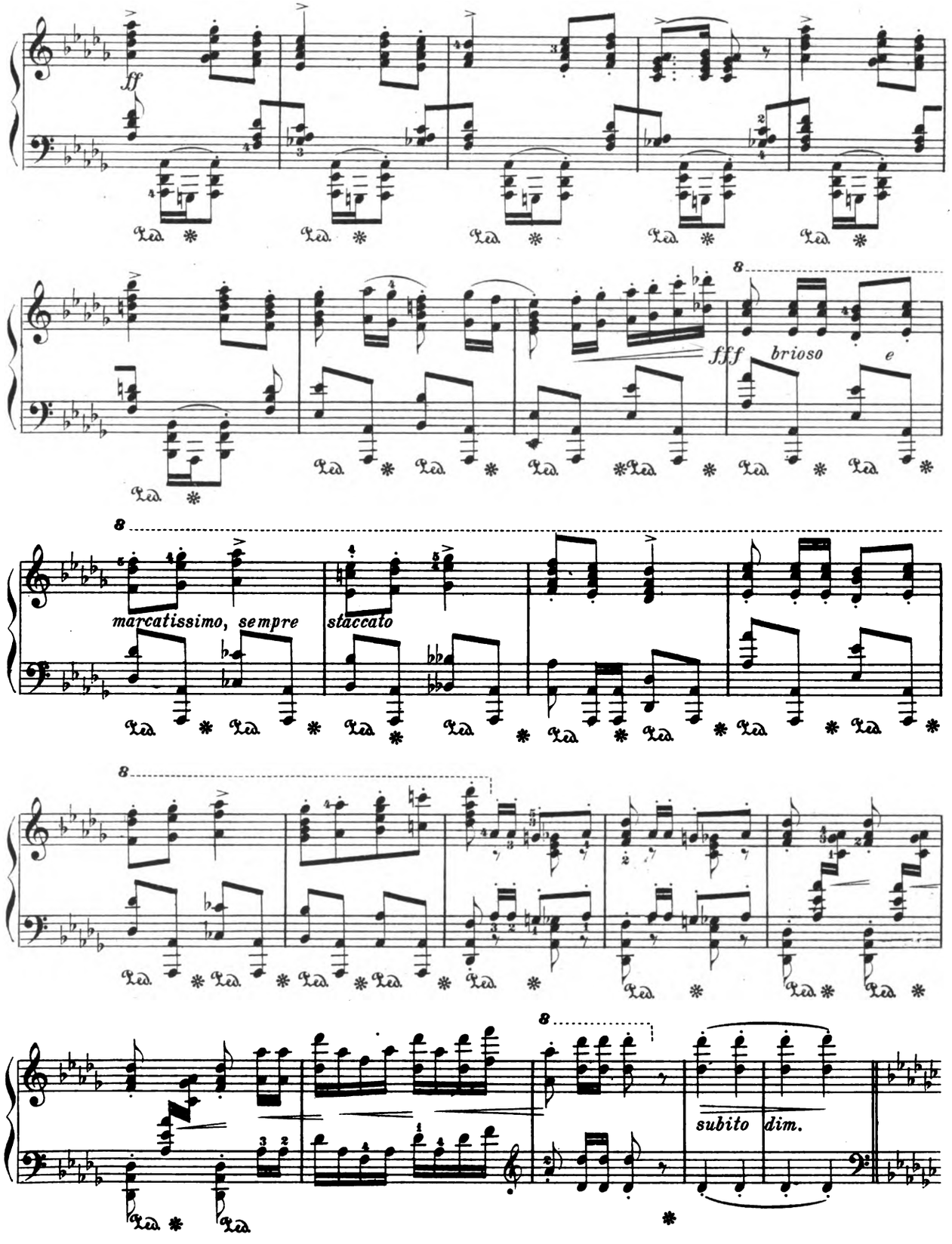

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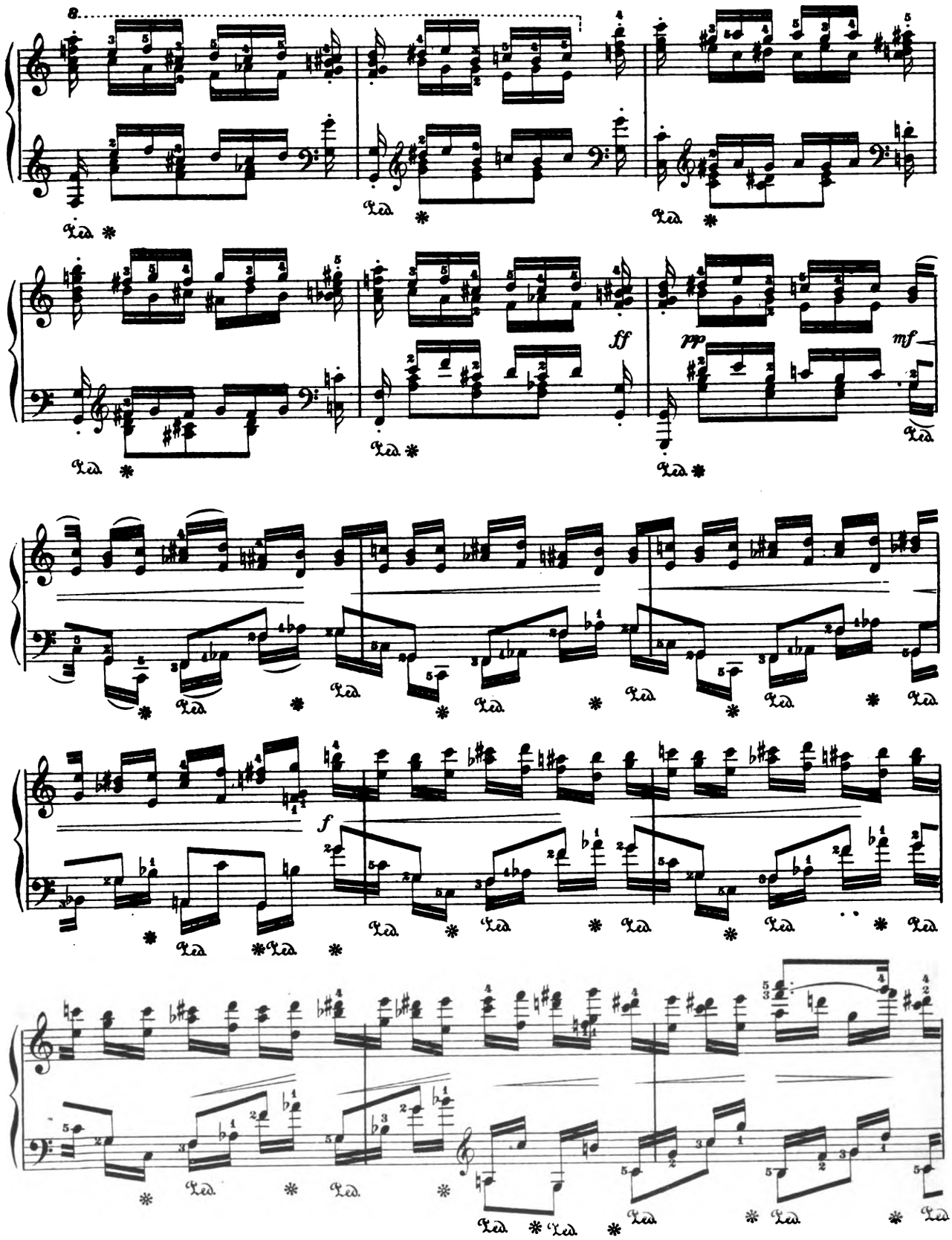

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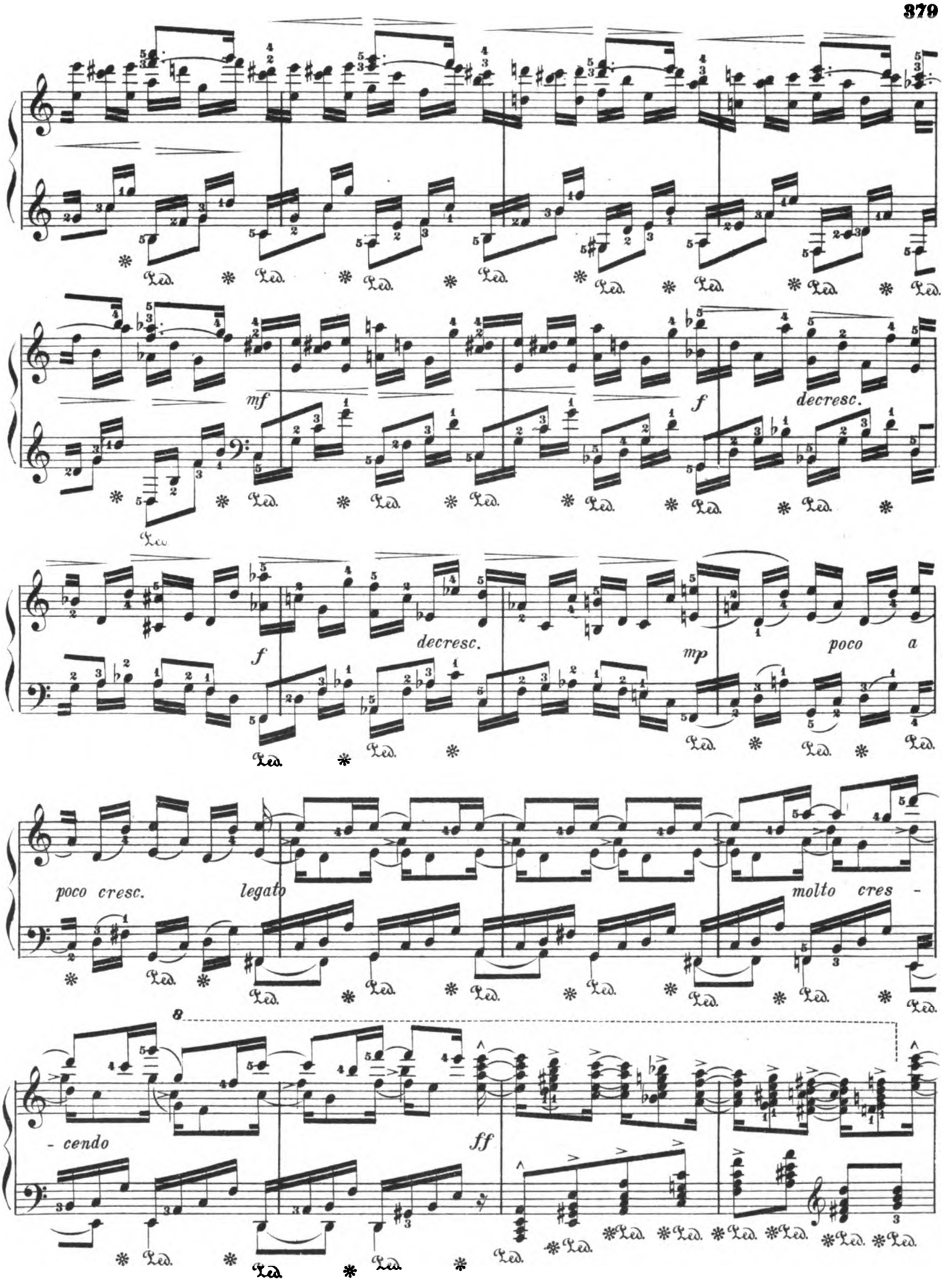

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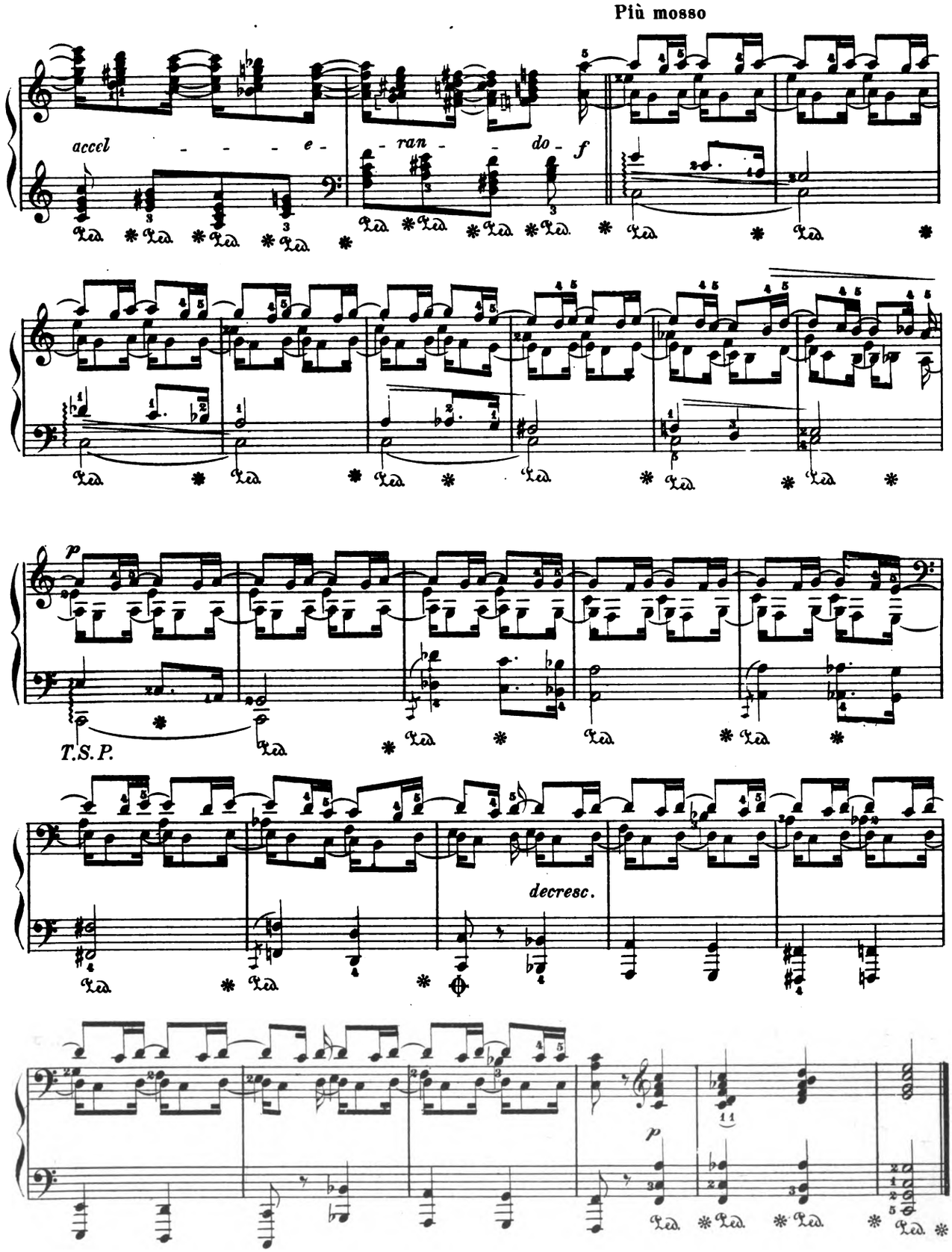

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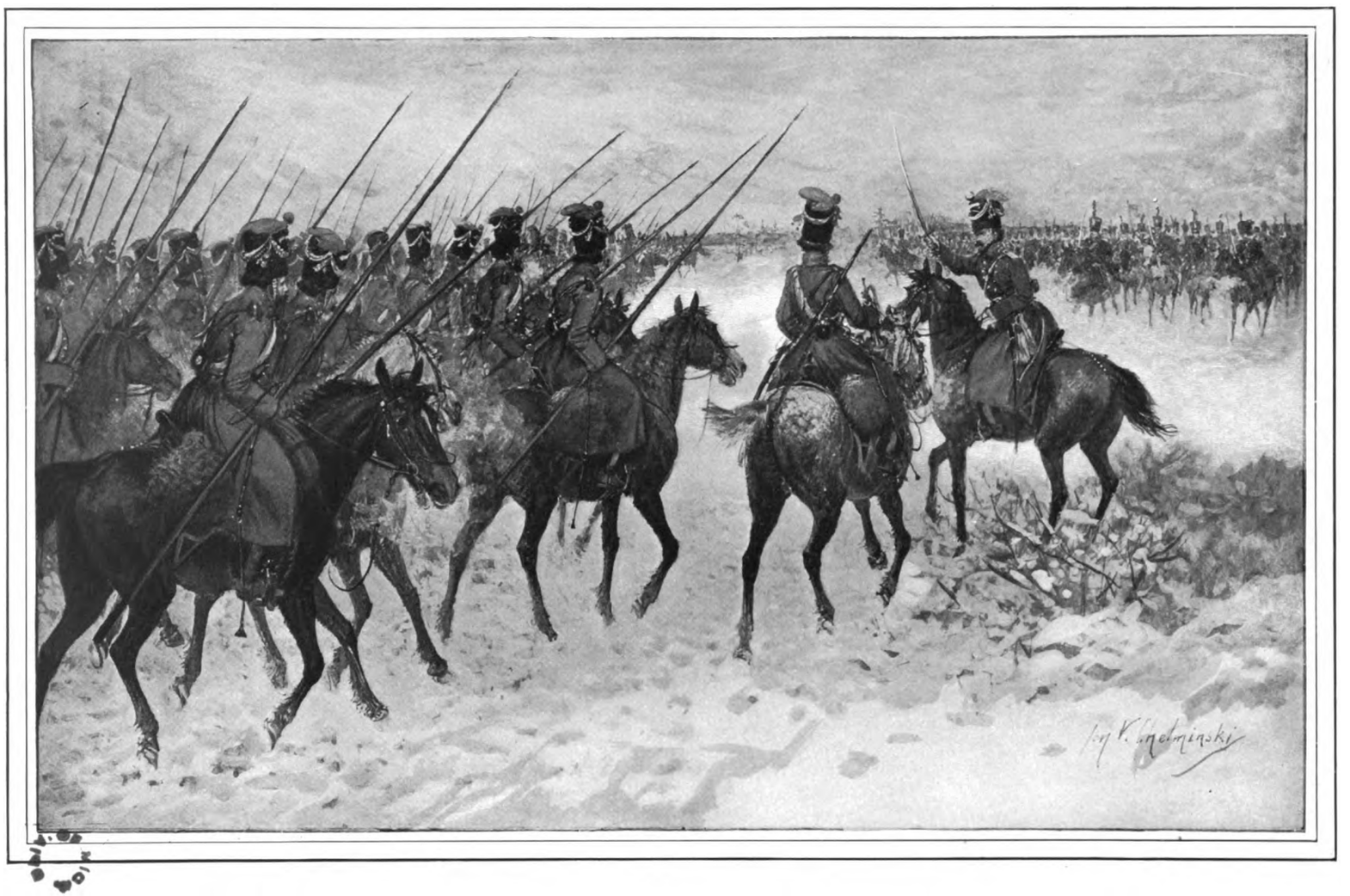

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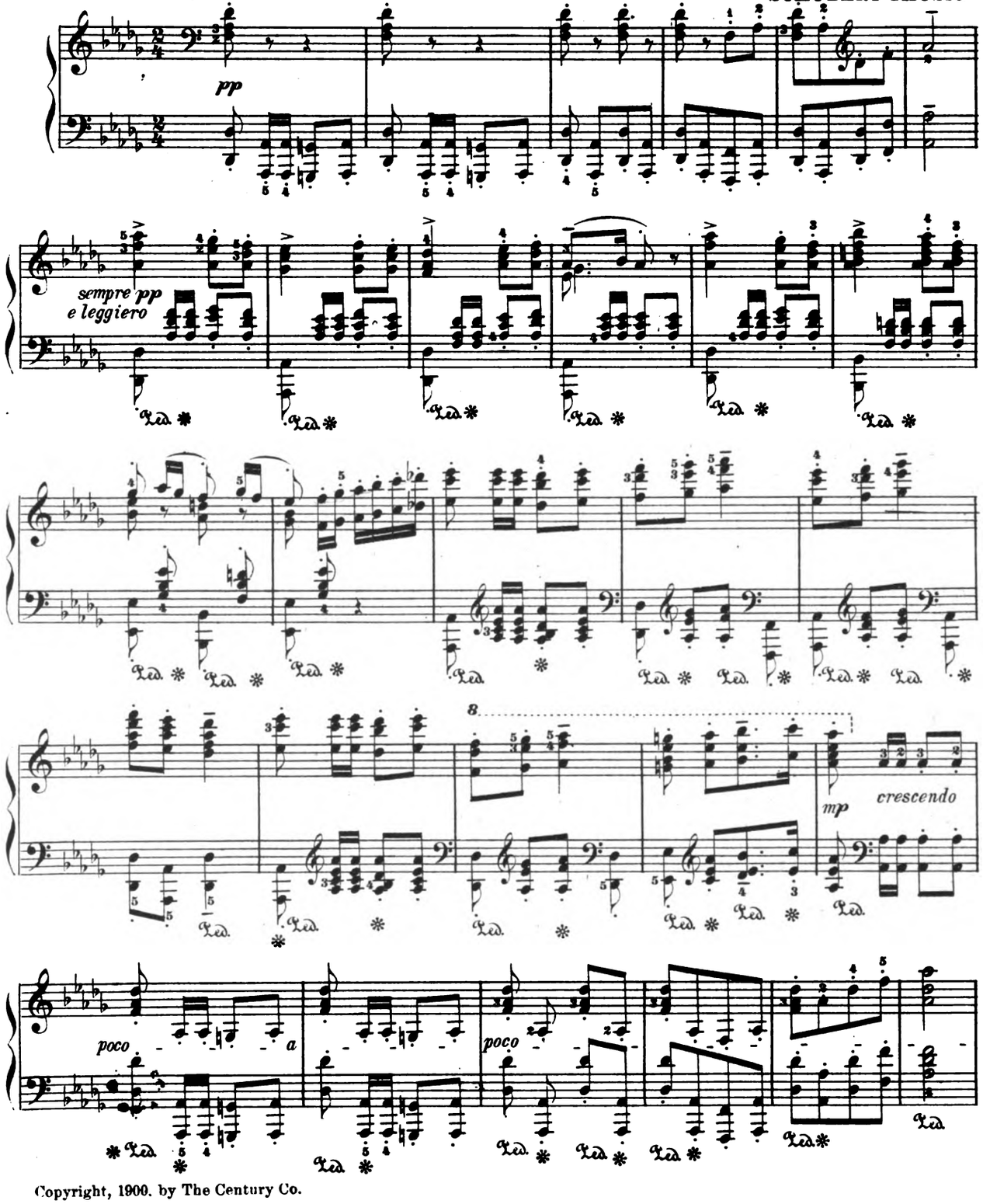

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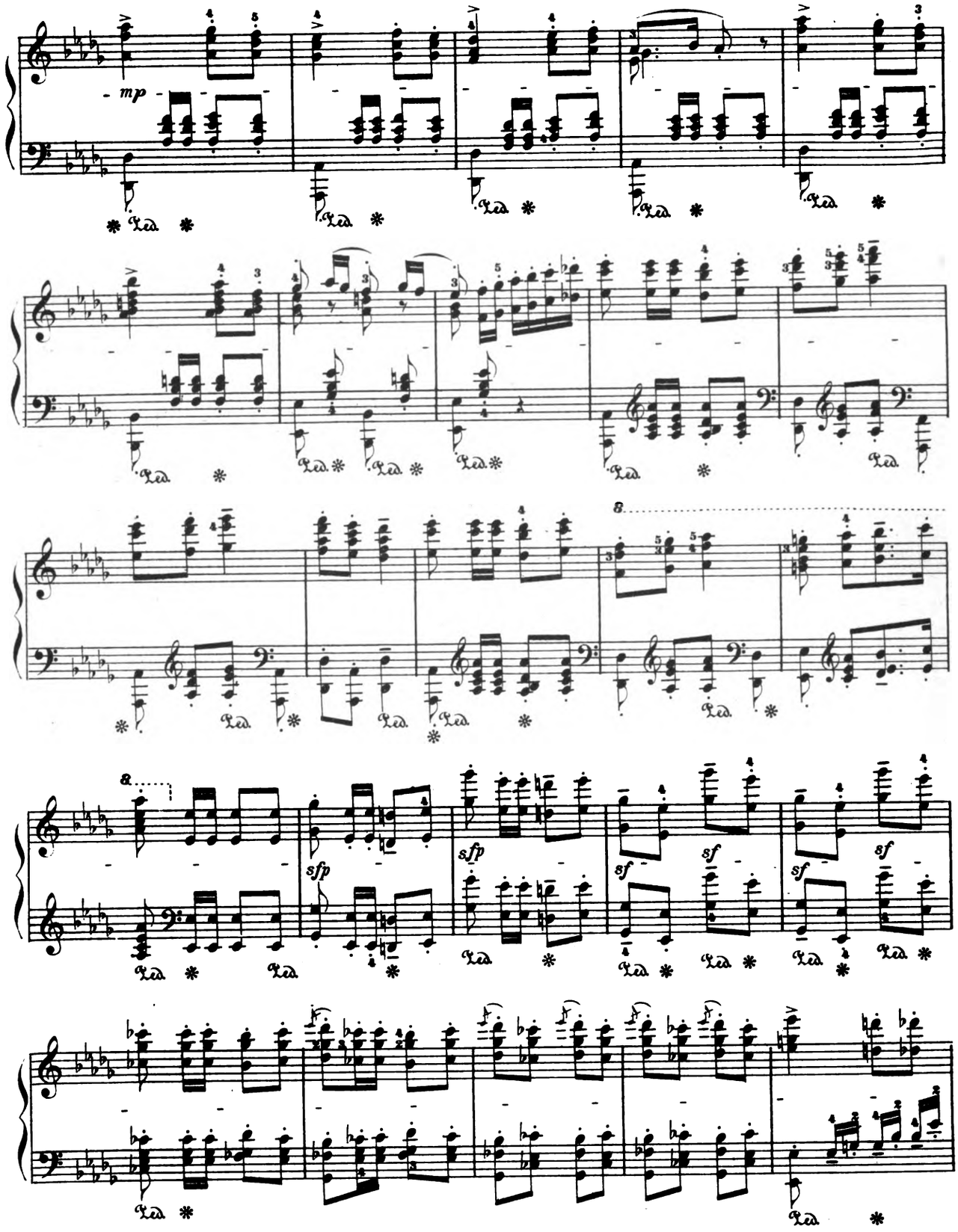

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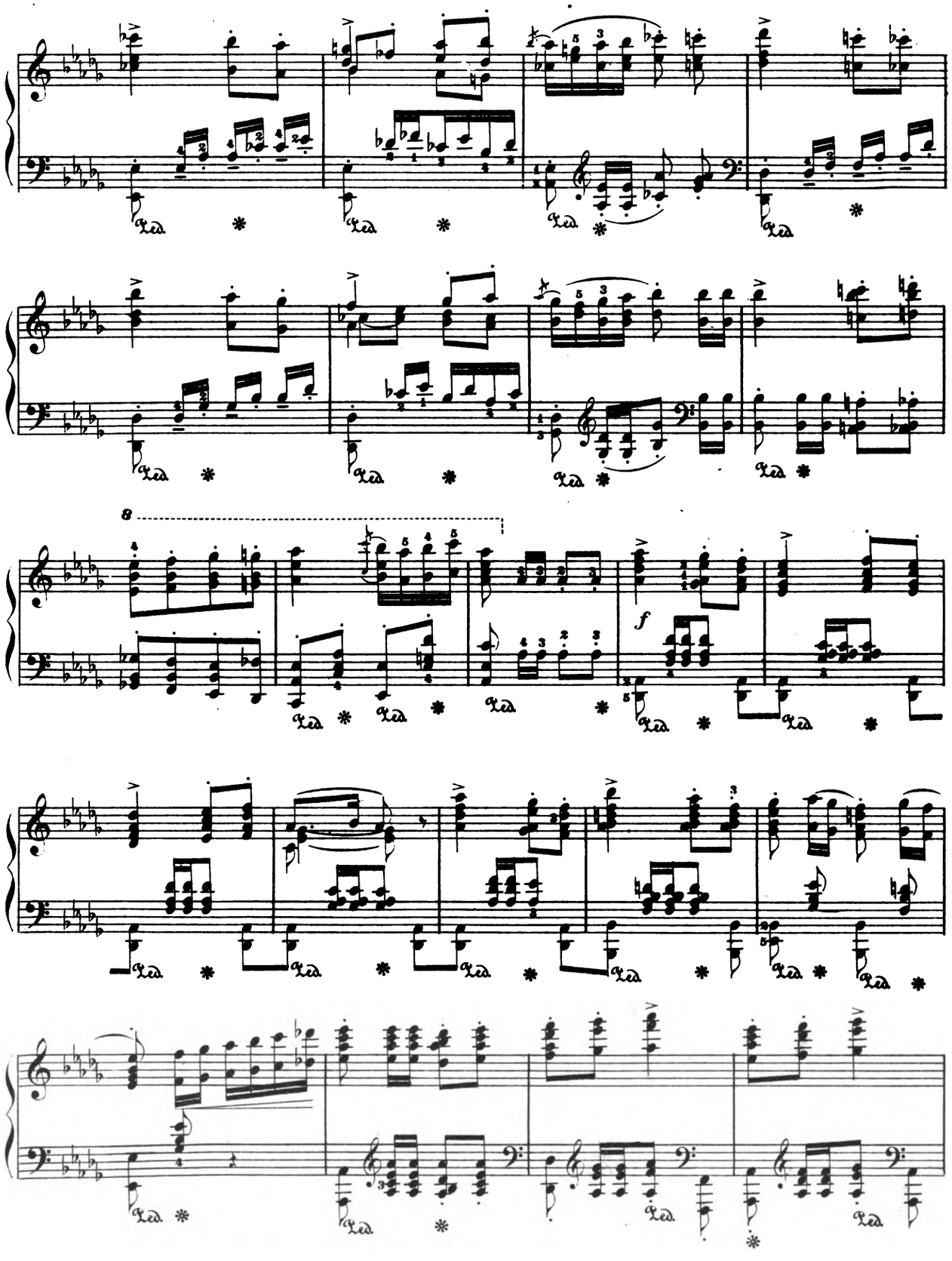

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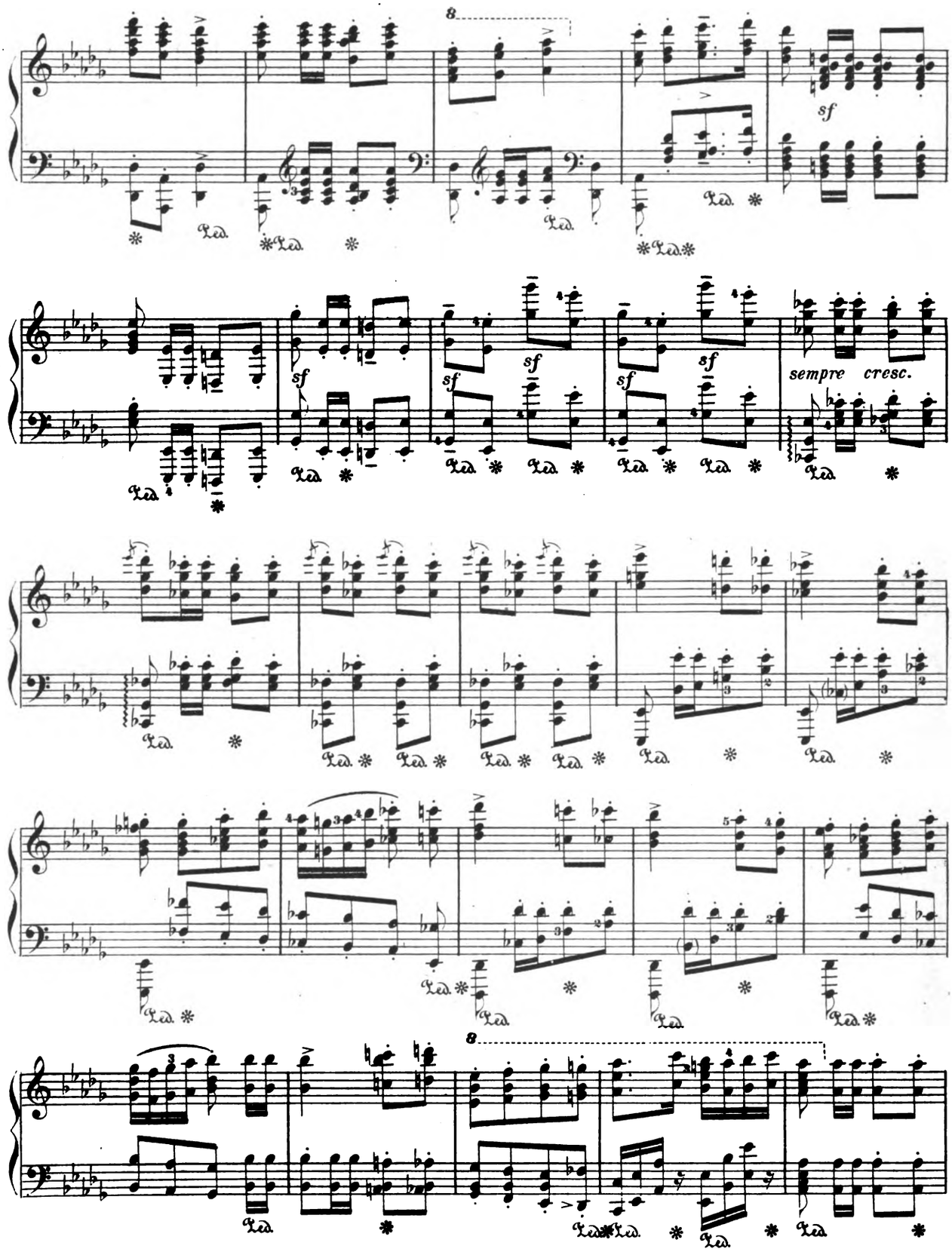

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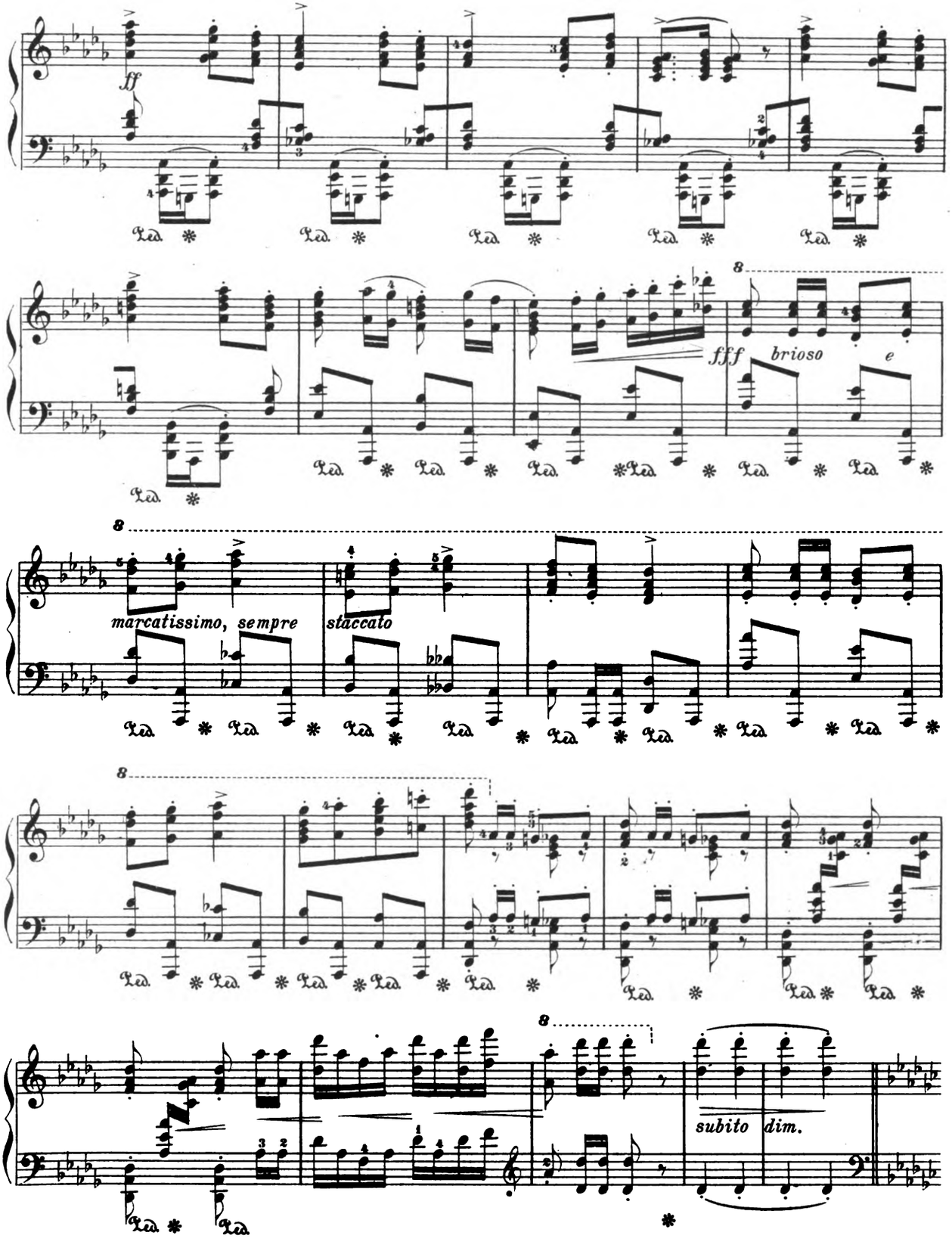

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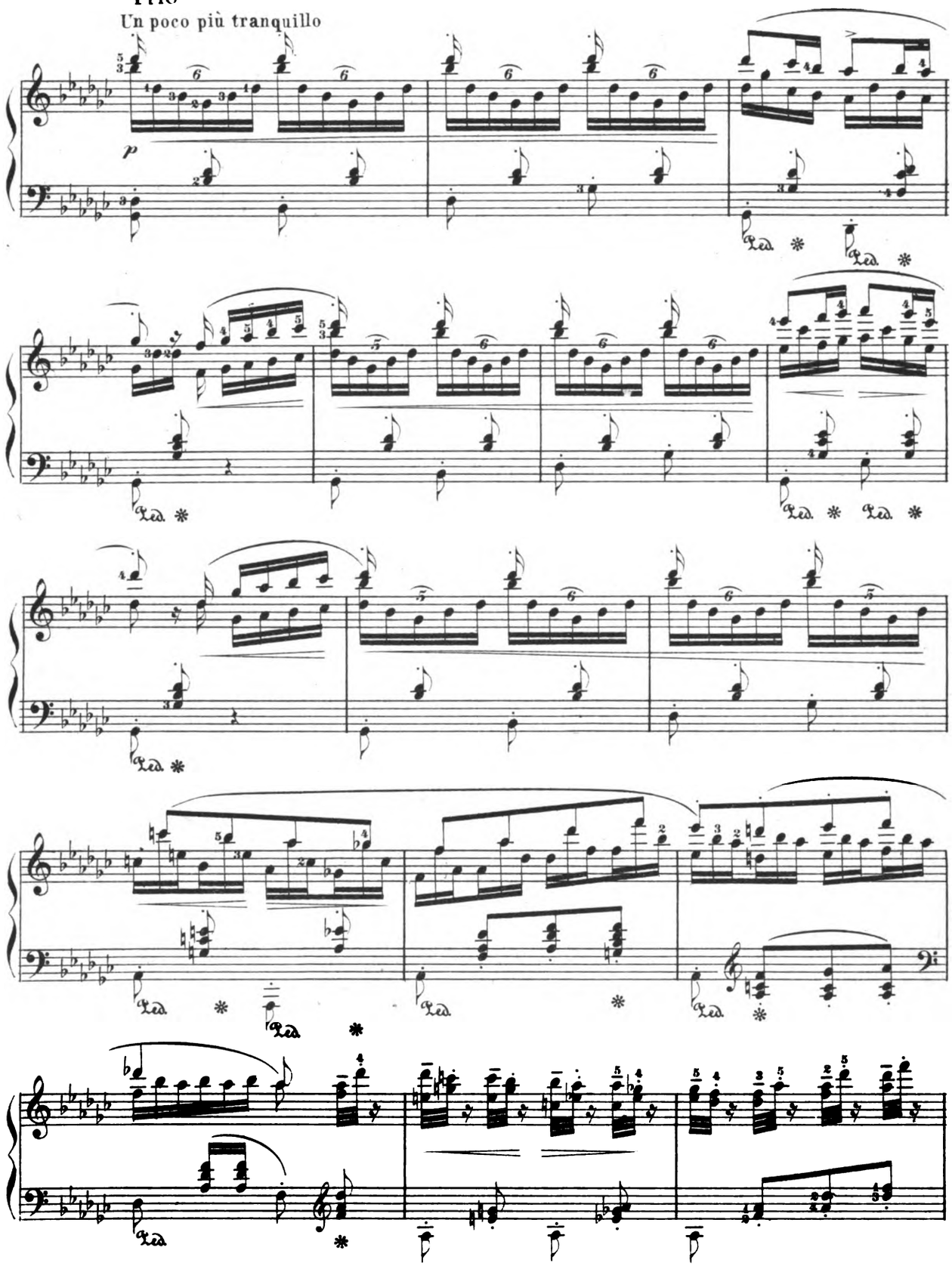
Trio

Un poco più tranquillo



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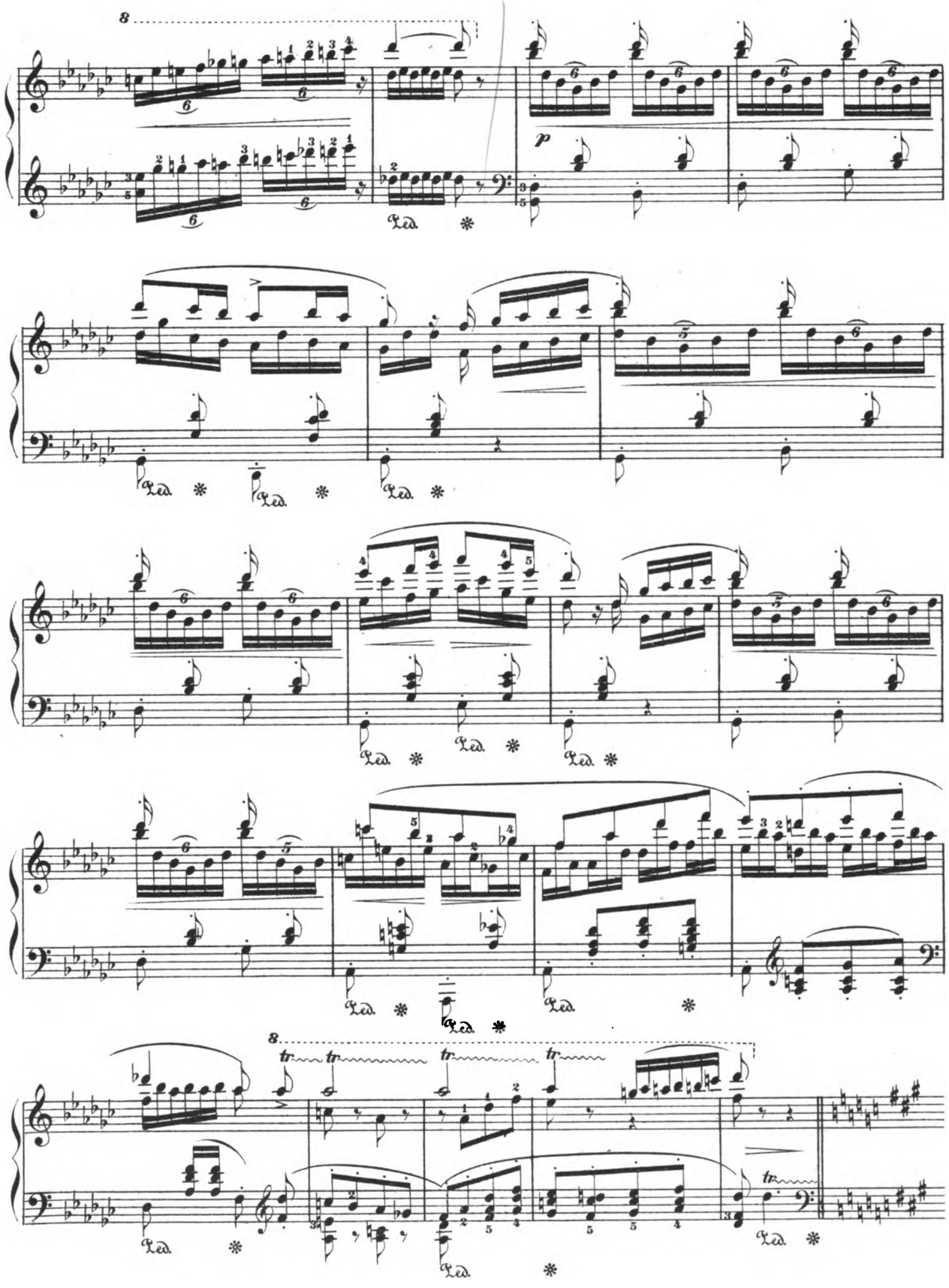

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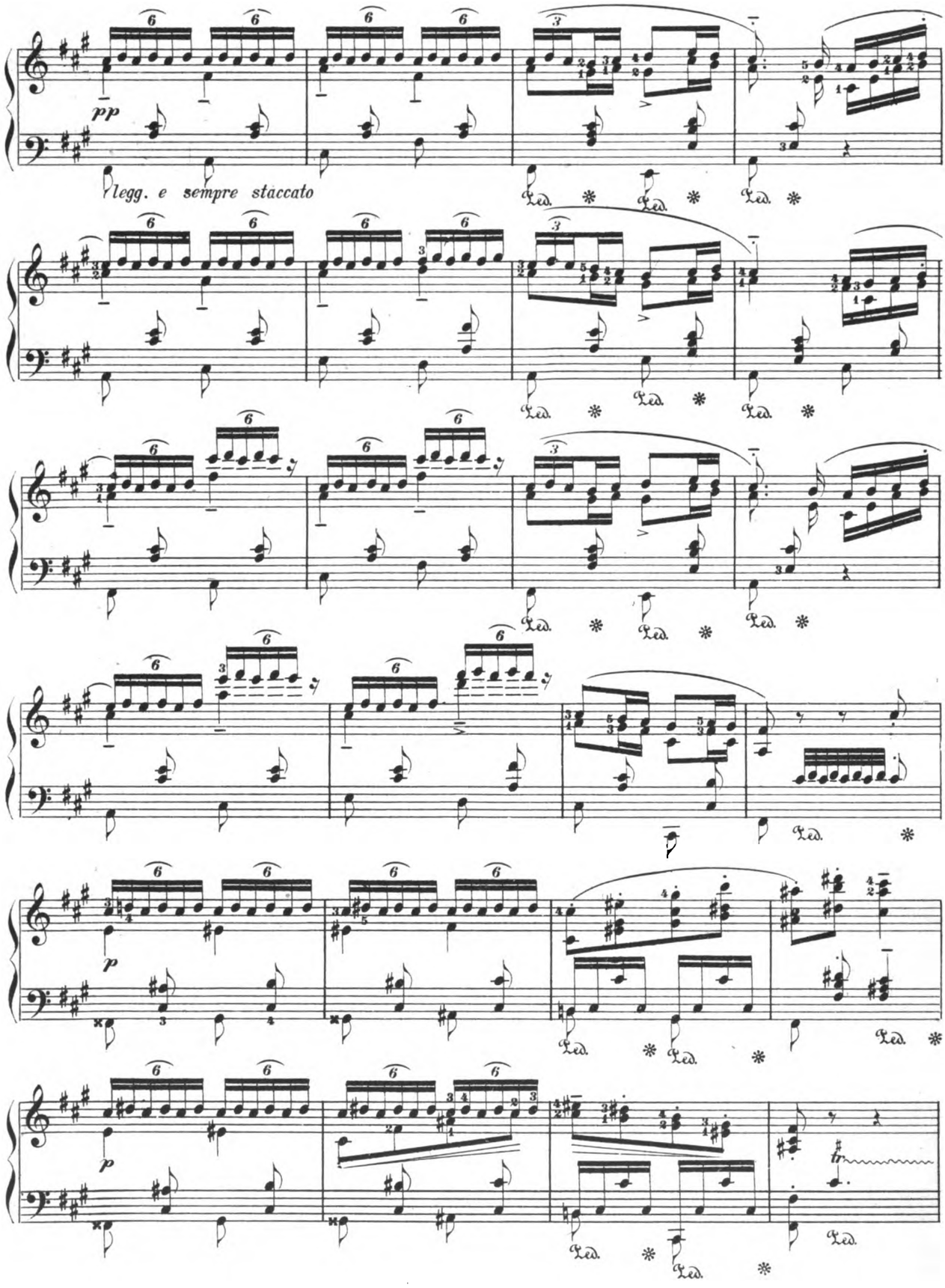

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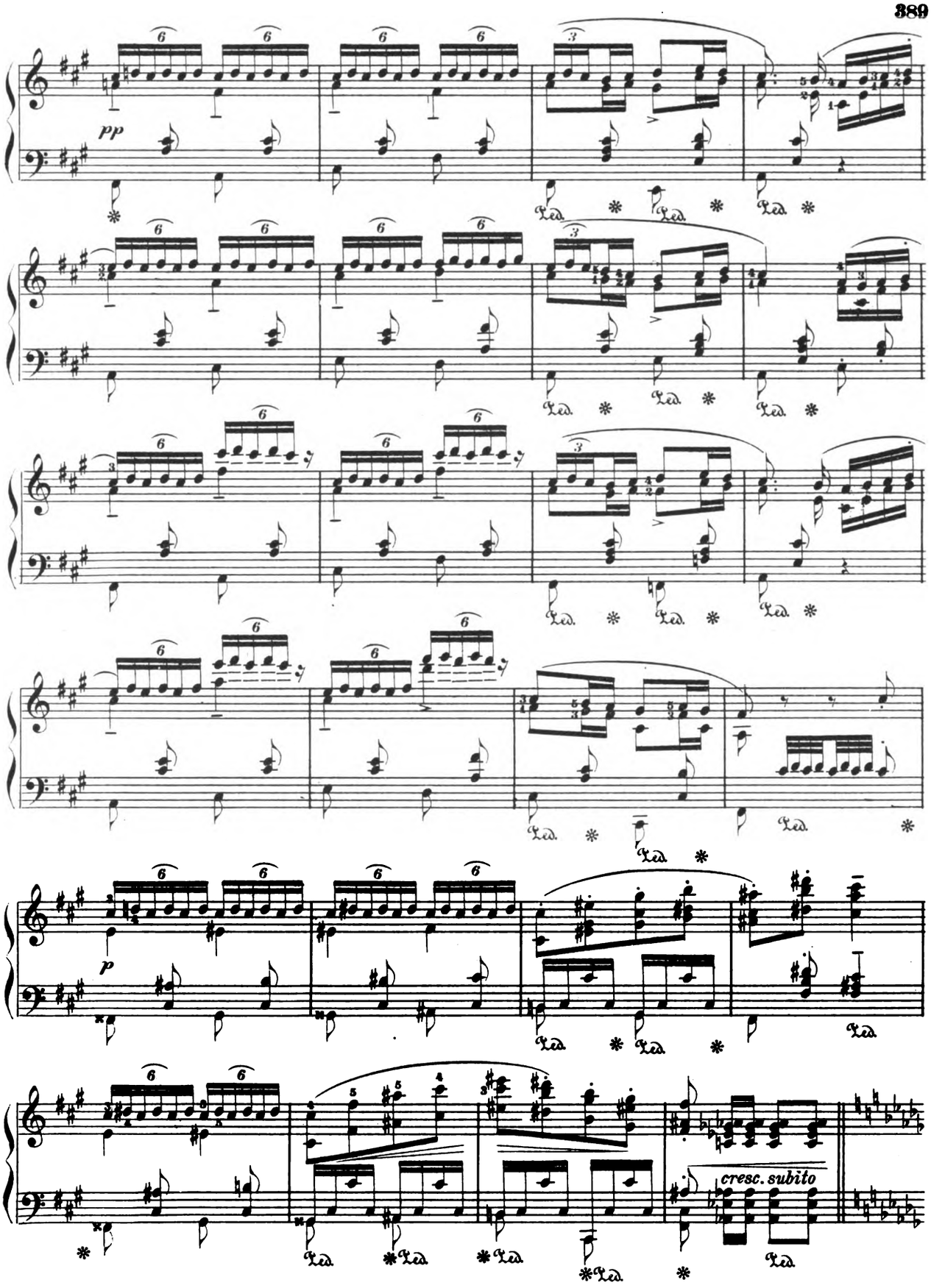

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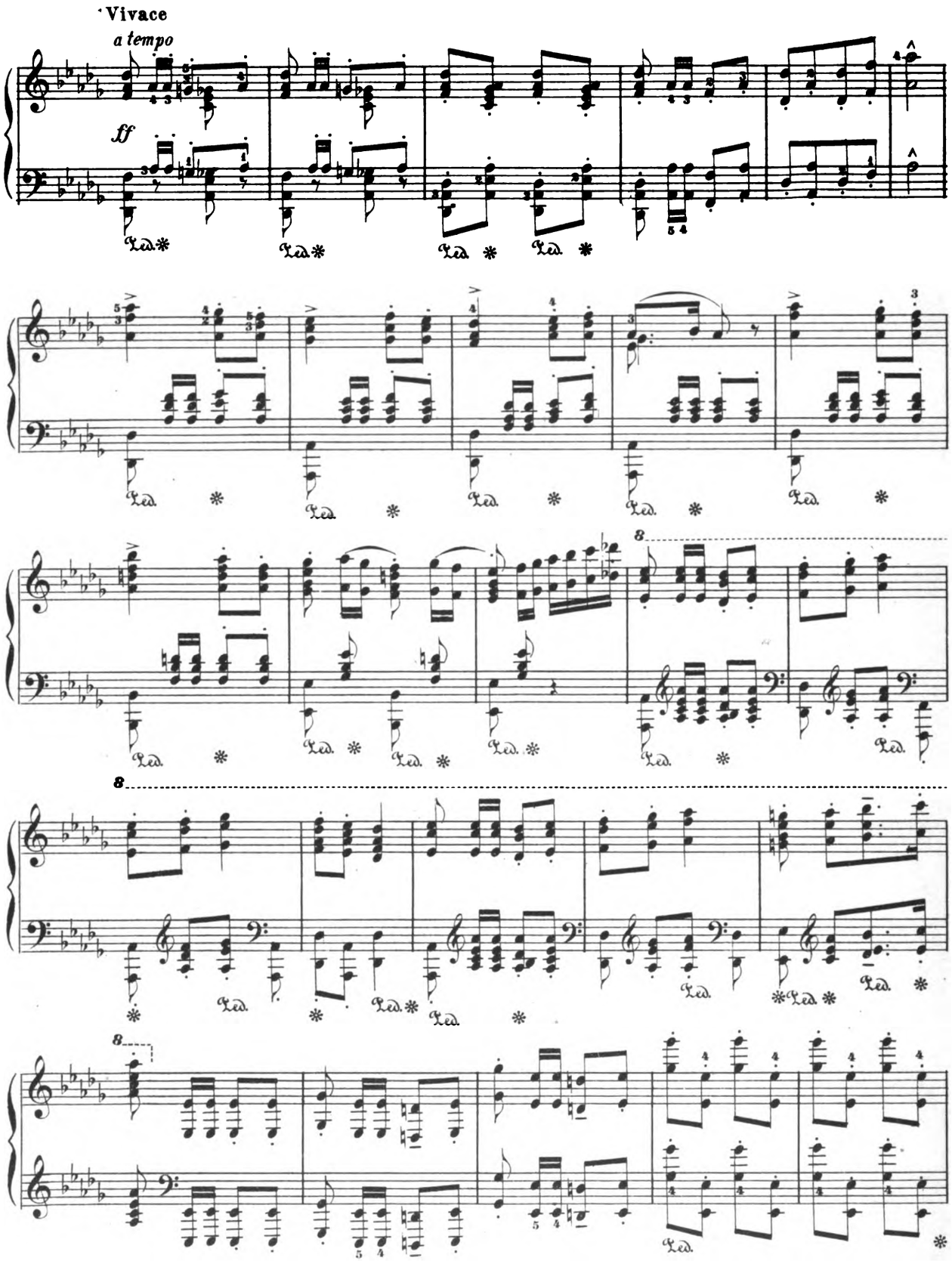

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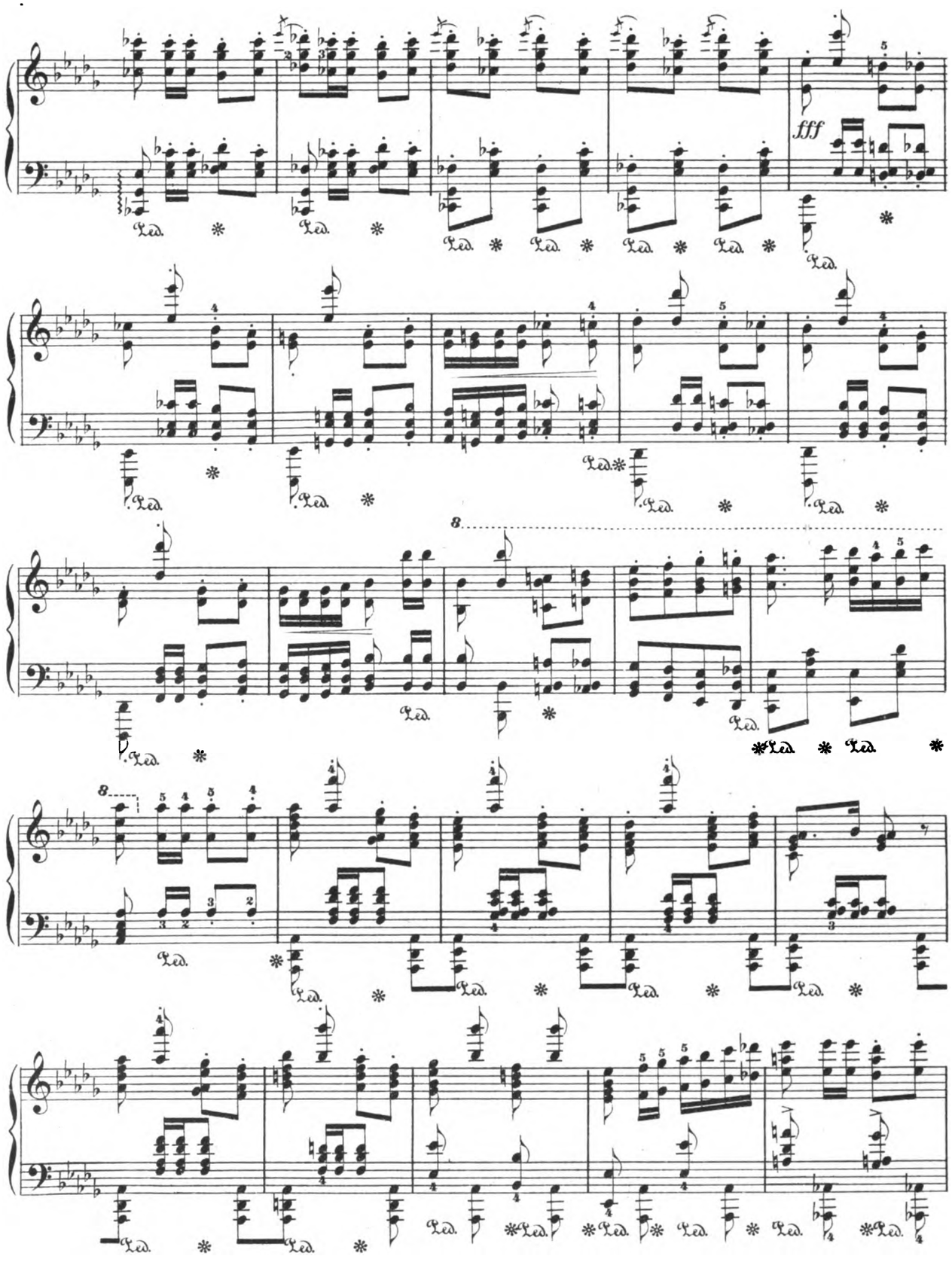

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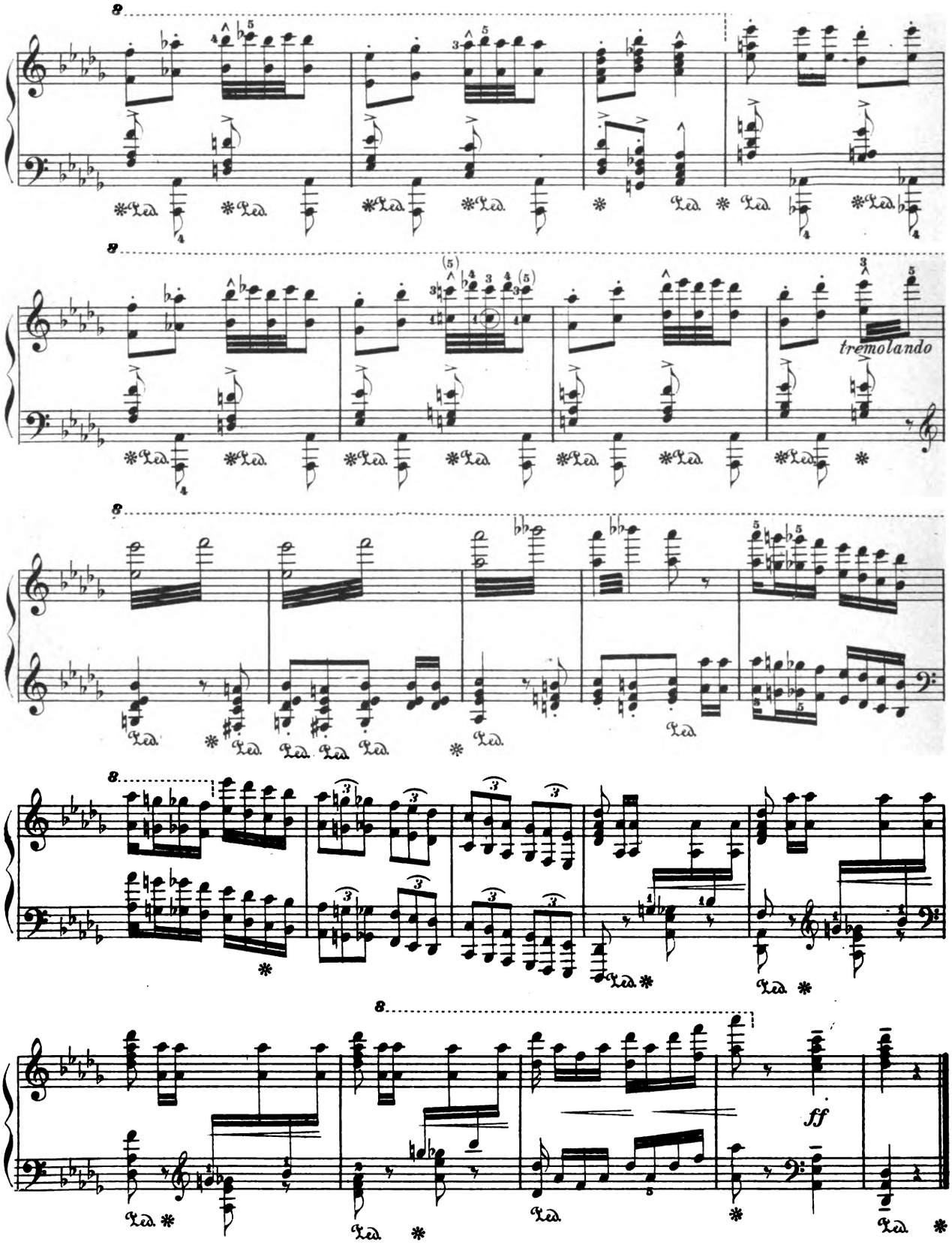

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