Chacony was commissioned by the Aldeburgh Foundation with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain. It was first performed by Leon Fleisher on 20th June 1988 at The Maltings, Snape, as part of the 41st Aldeburgh Festival. A recording by Leon Fleisher is available on Sony Classical SK48081.

Duration: c. 6 minutes

COMPOSER'S NOTE

The title, an anglicized variant of the French 'chaconne' used by both Purcell and Britten, describes the basic idea of the music. An ascending whole-tone scale, with the second degree omitted and beginning on the note D, falls at each repetition of a minor third. The fourth descending transposition therefore brings the 'ground' back to the original pitch, D.

The piece begins slowly, the 'ground' being assembled audibly and gradually. At the first descent of a minor third a second part enters at the original pitch level, so that the 'ground' harmonizes itself. By the time the complete process described begins again, the music has speeded up and is now in a low register. It ascends quickly and breaks into a dance, the 'ground' appearing in various registers. Eventually this arrives at a deep, pounding passage which ascends once again and resolves into a slow, sustained coda. The piece ends as the 'ground' reaches D in ringing octaves with the notes F sharp and G sharp. The final three pitches are the first three that were heard, but where the opening was tentative the end is now assertive and bright.

R.S.

Robert Saxton was born in London in 1953. He began composing at the age of six, and studied privately with Elisabeth Lutyens from 1970–74. He took his first degree at Cambridge University in 1975 where he studied composition for one year with Robin Holloway. He then went on to take his B.Mus at Oxford University with Robert Sherlaw Johnson. In 1975 he was awarded first prize for composition at International Gaudeamus Music Week in Holland. In 1985–86 he spent nine months in the U.S.A. where he was the holder of a Fulbright Arts Fellowship and a visiting fellow at Princeton, and in 1992 he was awarded a D.Mus by Oxford University. He was Head of Composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London from 1990–98, and held the same position at the Royal Academy of Music from 1998–99. In October 1999 he will take up a post at Oxford as University Lecturer in music and tutorial fellow at Worcester College.

His works include *Concerto for Orchestra* (1984), *The Circles of Light* (1986), and *I will awake the dawn* (1987). Between 1986 and 1992 there appeared three string concerti for viola, violin and cello, for Paul Silverthorne, Tasmin Little and Mstislav Rostropovich respectively. Other more recent compositions are an opera *Caritas*, in collaboration with playwright Arnold Wesker, *Psalm–a song of ascents*, a work for trumpet and small orchestra for John Wallace, and two anthems, *At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners*, commissioned by the City of London for St Paul's Choir and *O Sing unto the Lord a new song* commissioned by the Musicians Benevolent Fund for the combined choirs of Westminster Abbey and St Paul's and Westminster Cathedrals.

His most recent works include a cantata entitled *Canticum Luminis* for soprano solo, choir and orchestra for Teresa Cahill, Stephen Cleobury and the choir and orchestra of Cambridge University Music Society, *A Yardstick to the Stars* for the Nash Ensemble, *Ring, Time* for Sir Michael Tippett's 90th birthday, *Songs, Dances and Ellipses* for the Chilingirian String Quartet and *Prayer Before Sleep*, written in memory of Rabbi Hugo Gryn. Future plans include *The Wandering Jew*, a dramatic radio operatic fantasy for the millennium, commissioned by BBC Radio 3.

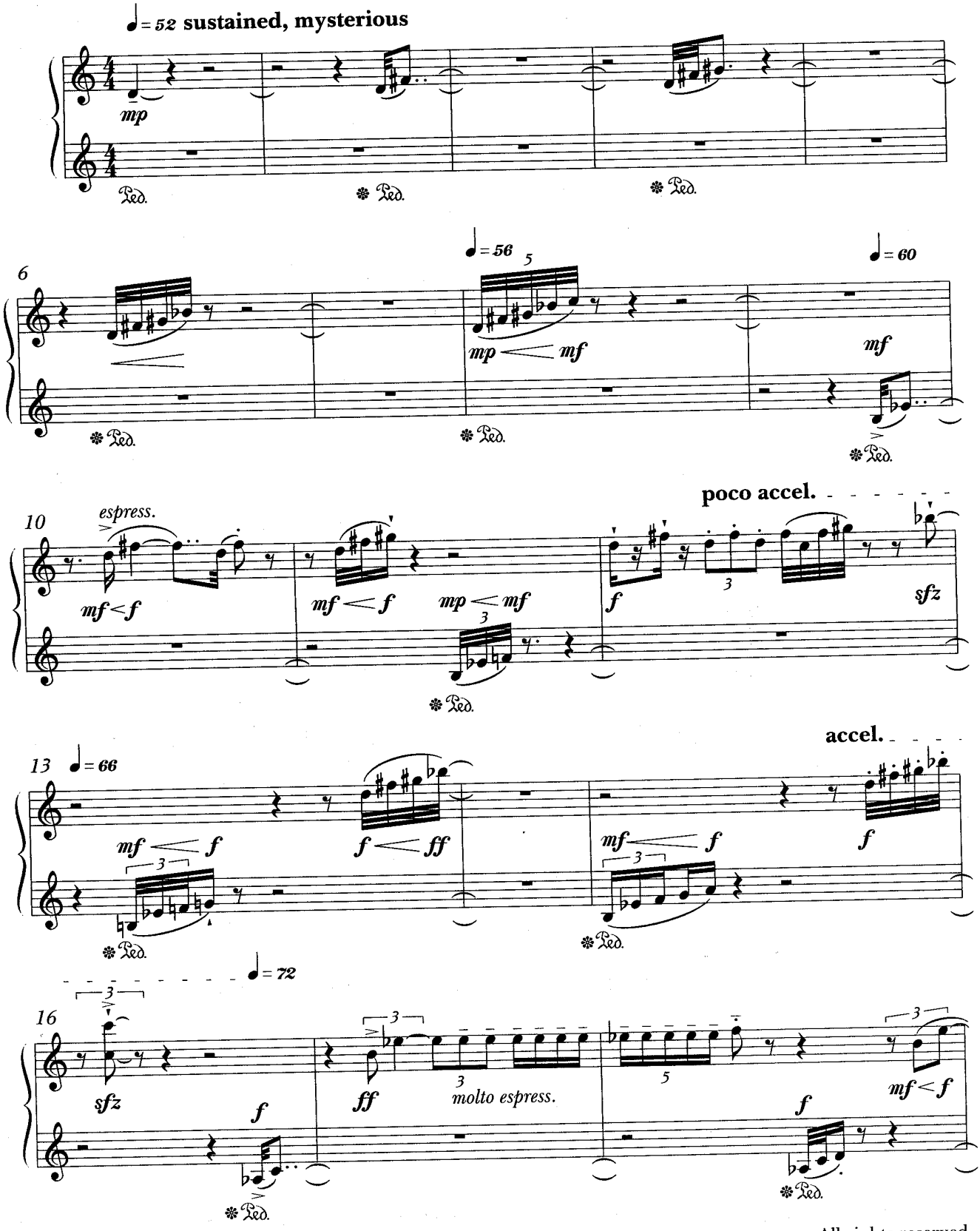
for Leon Fleisher

CHACONY

for

Piano left hand

Robert Saxton (1988)



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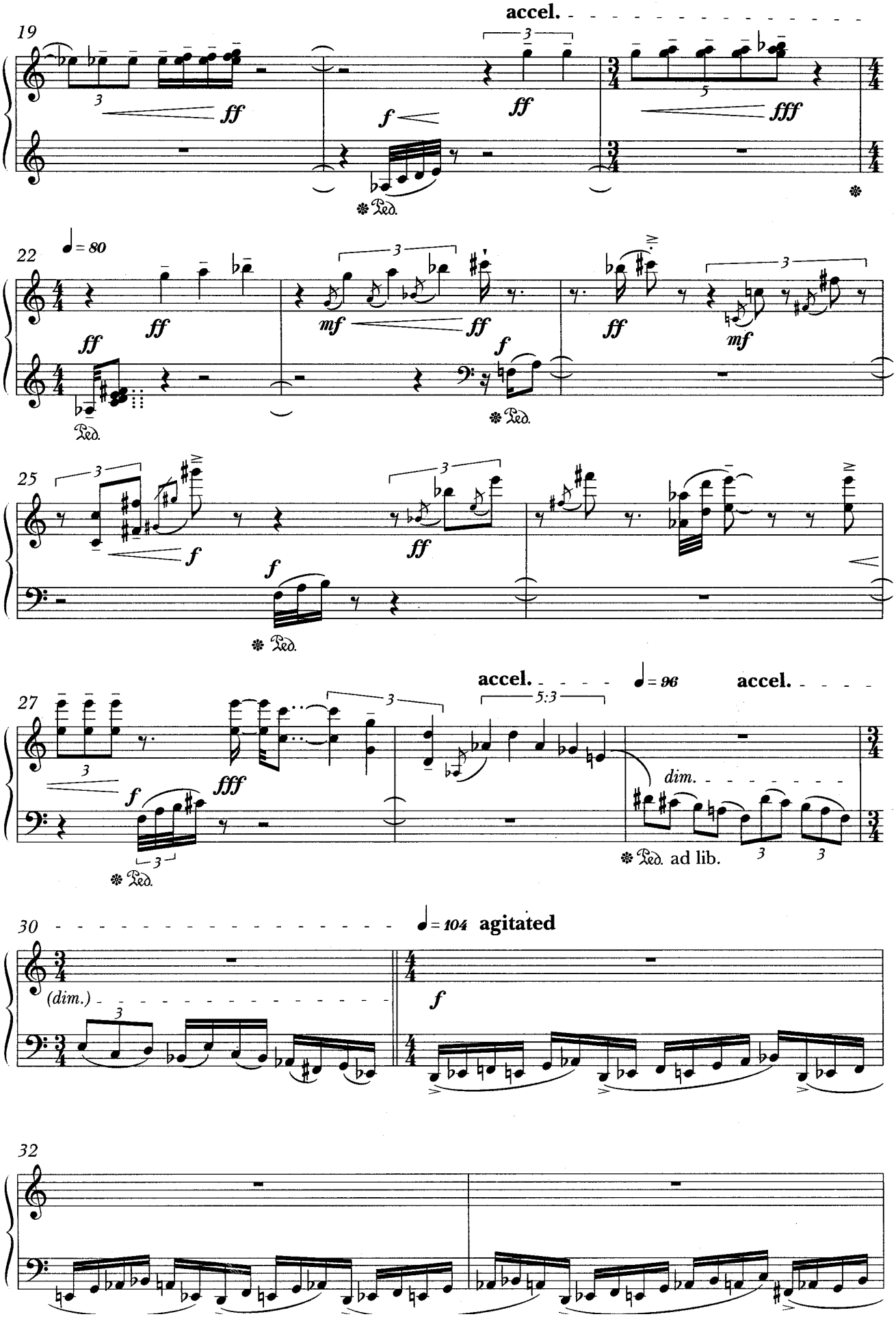
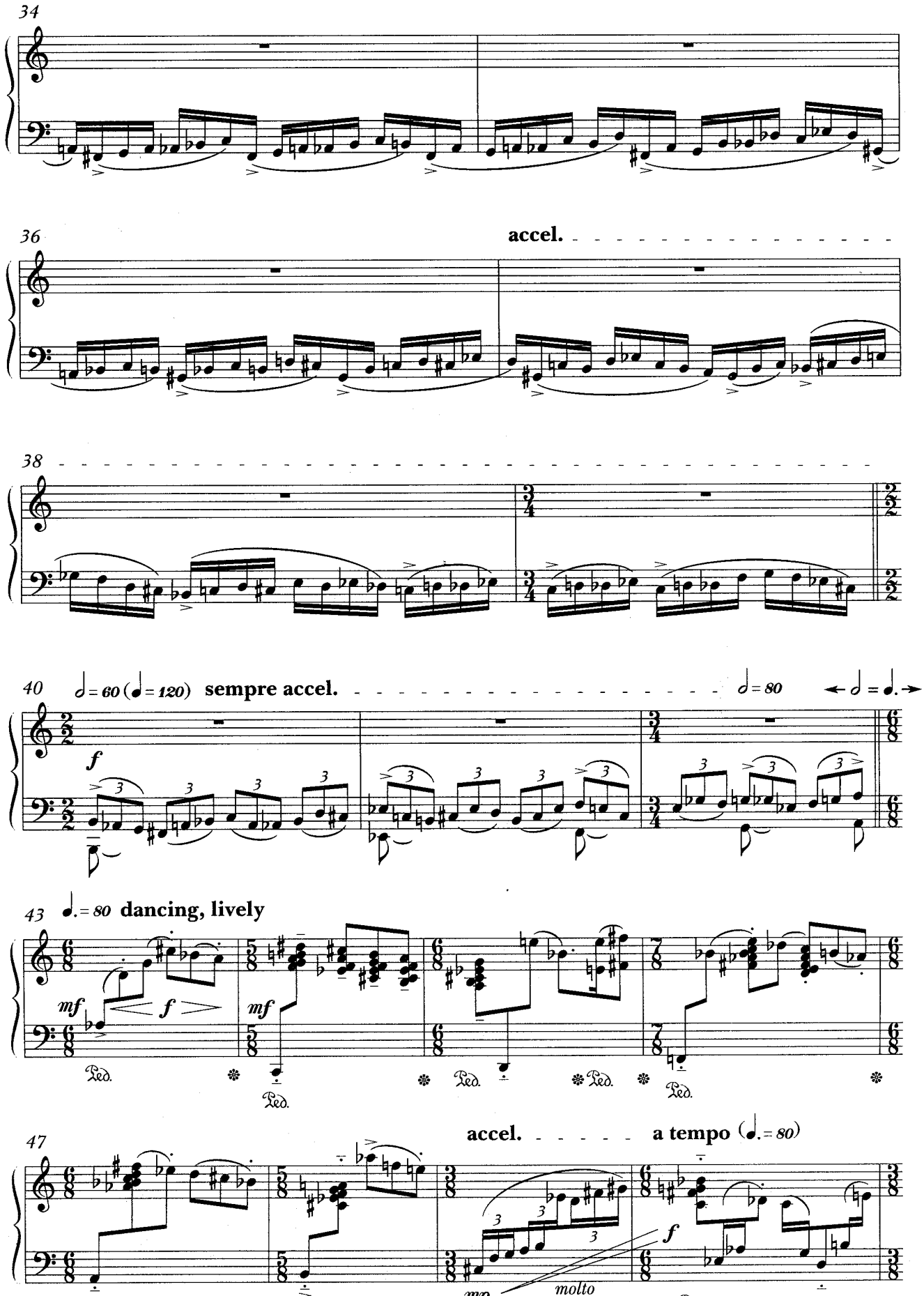
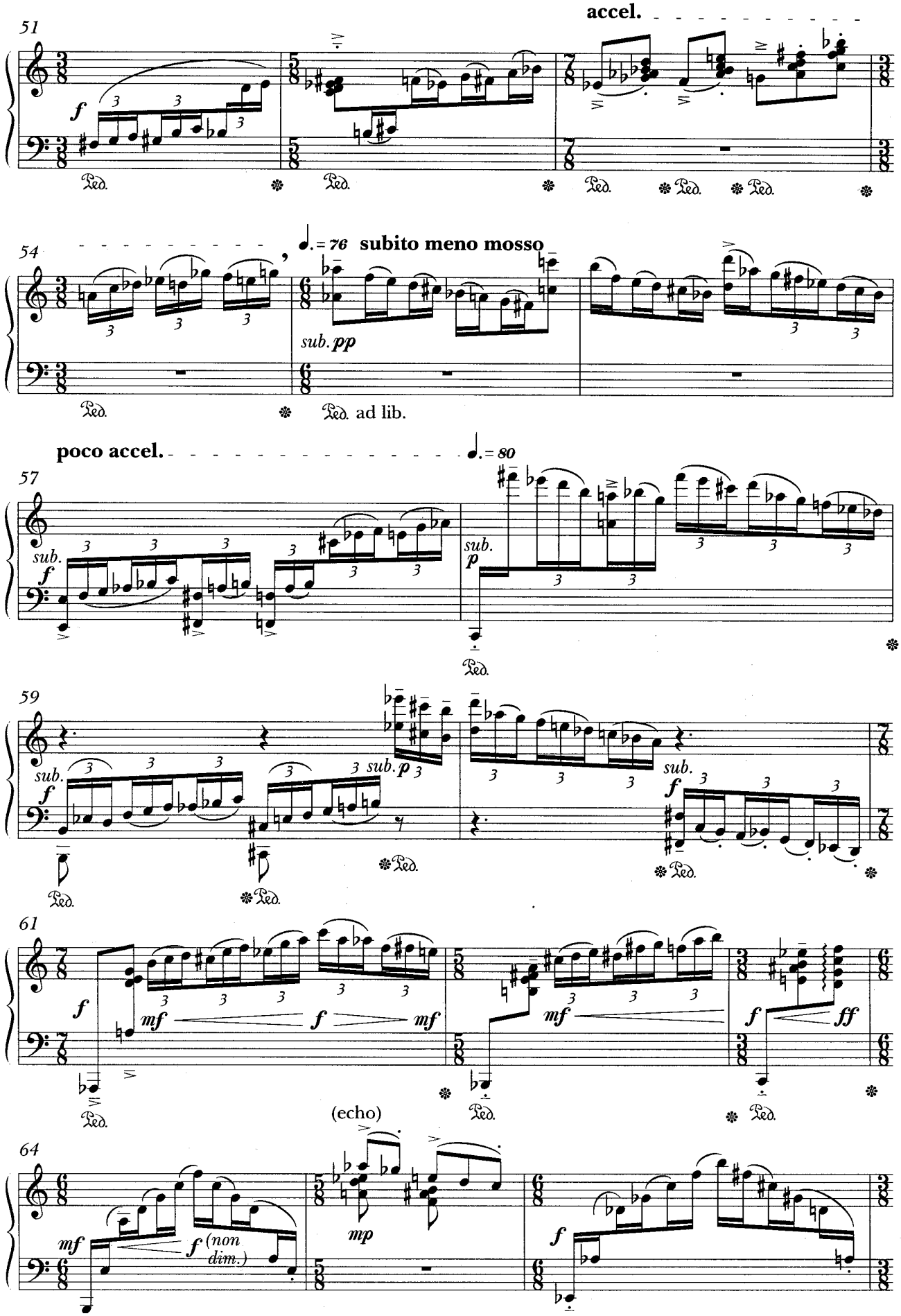
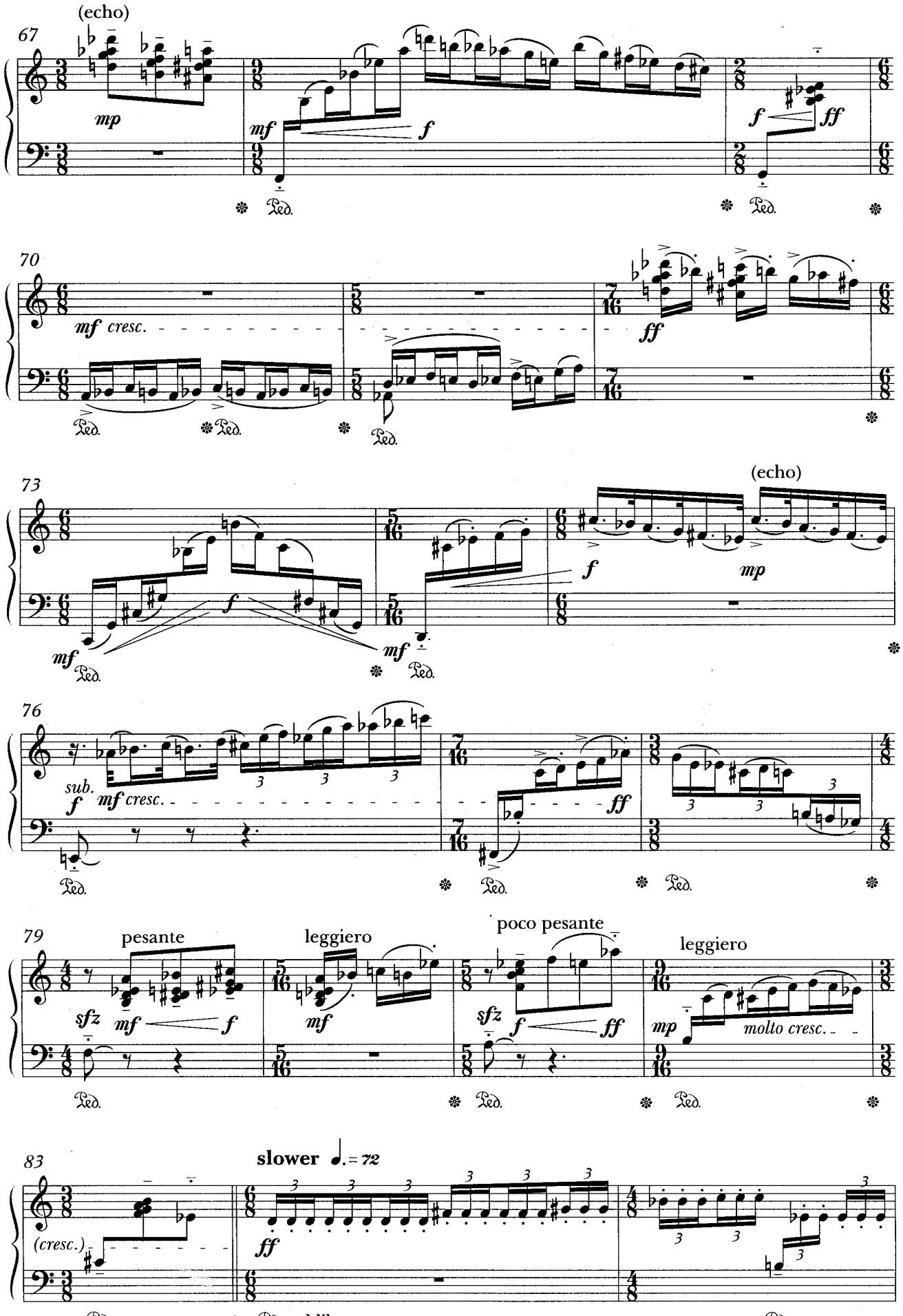
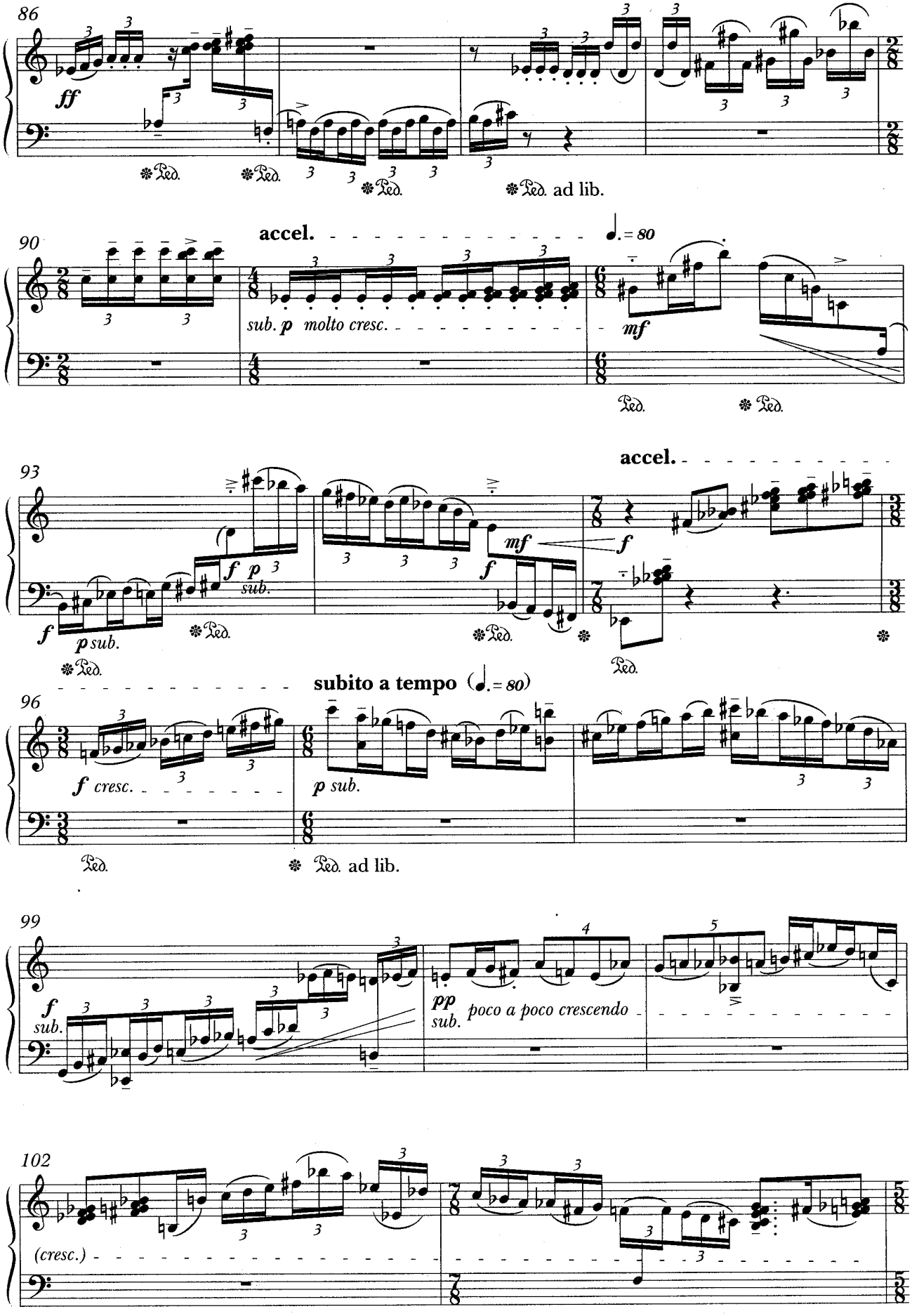
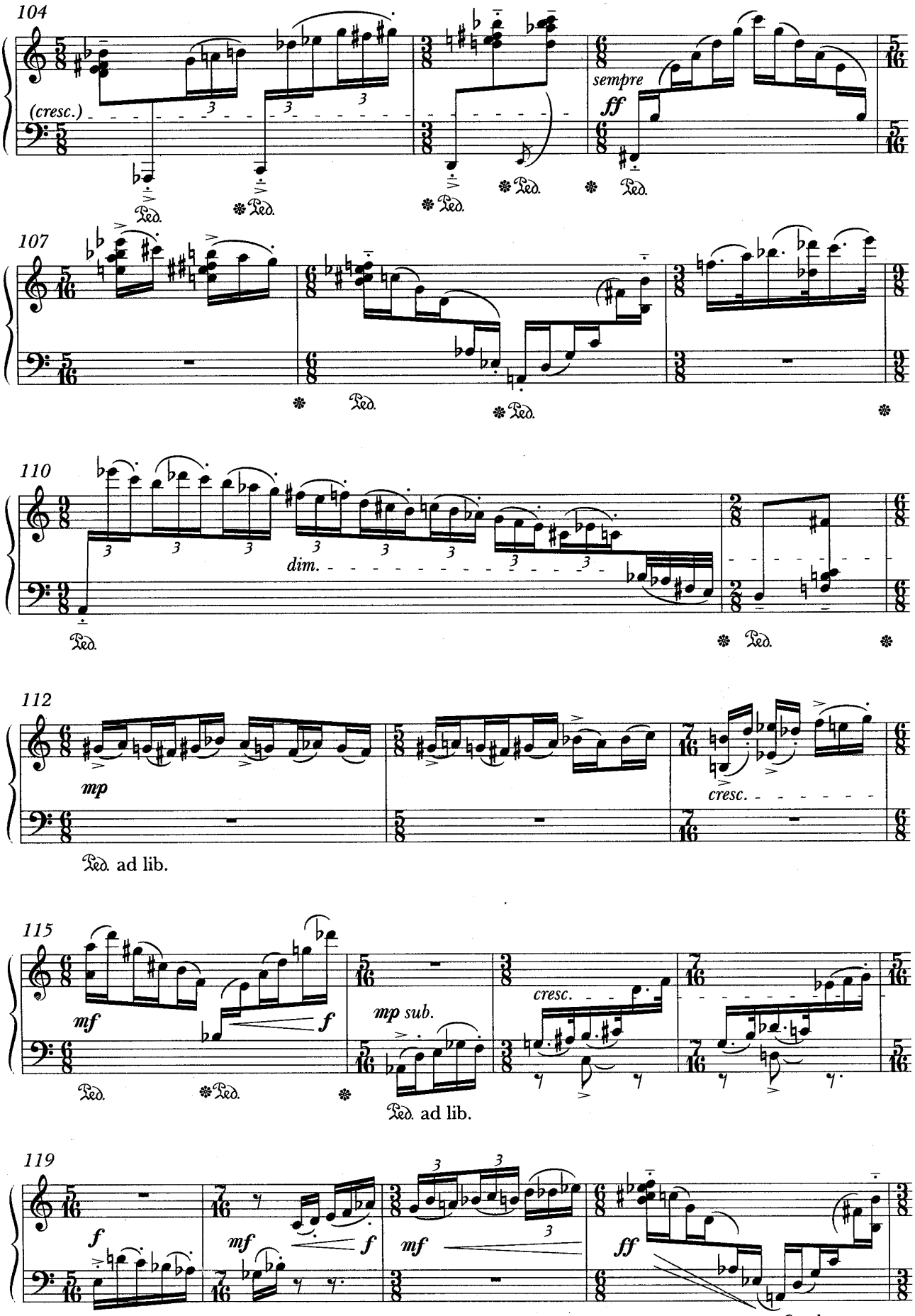

accel.
ff
f
fff
Ped.
♩= 80
mf
accel.
♩= 96
5:3
dim.
ad lib.
(dim.)
♩= 104 agitated

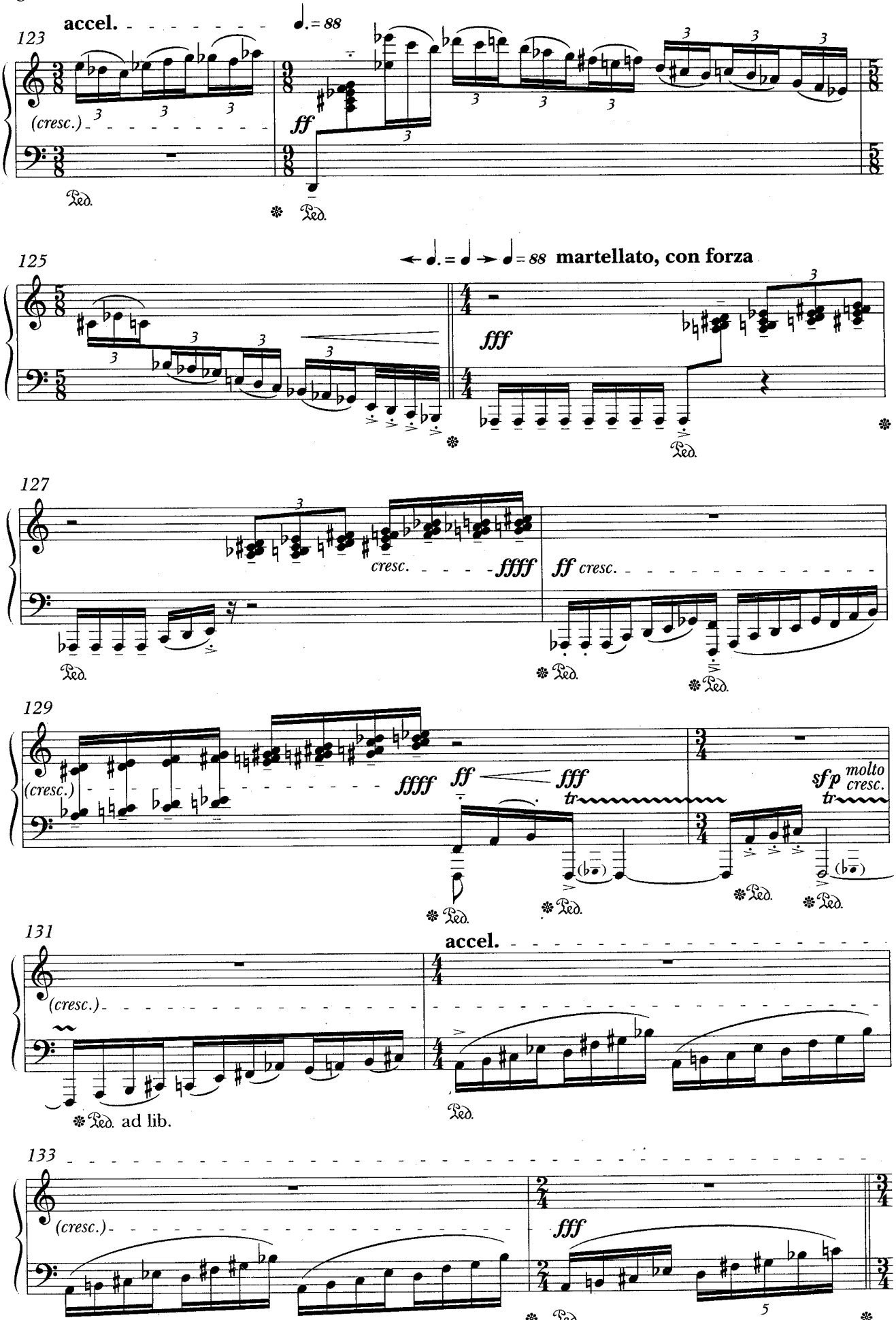

34
36
accel.
38
40
♩ = 60 (♩ = 120)
sempre accel.
♩ = 80
f
43
♩. = 80
dancing, lively
mf
f
mf
Ped.
47
accel.
a tempo (♩. = 80)
f
molto

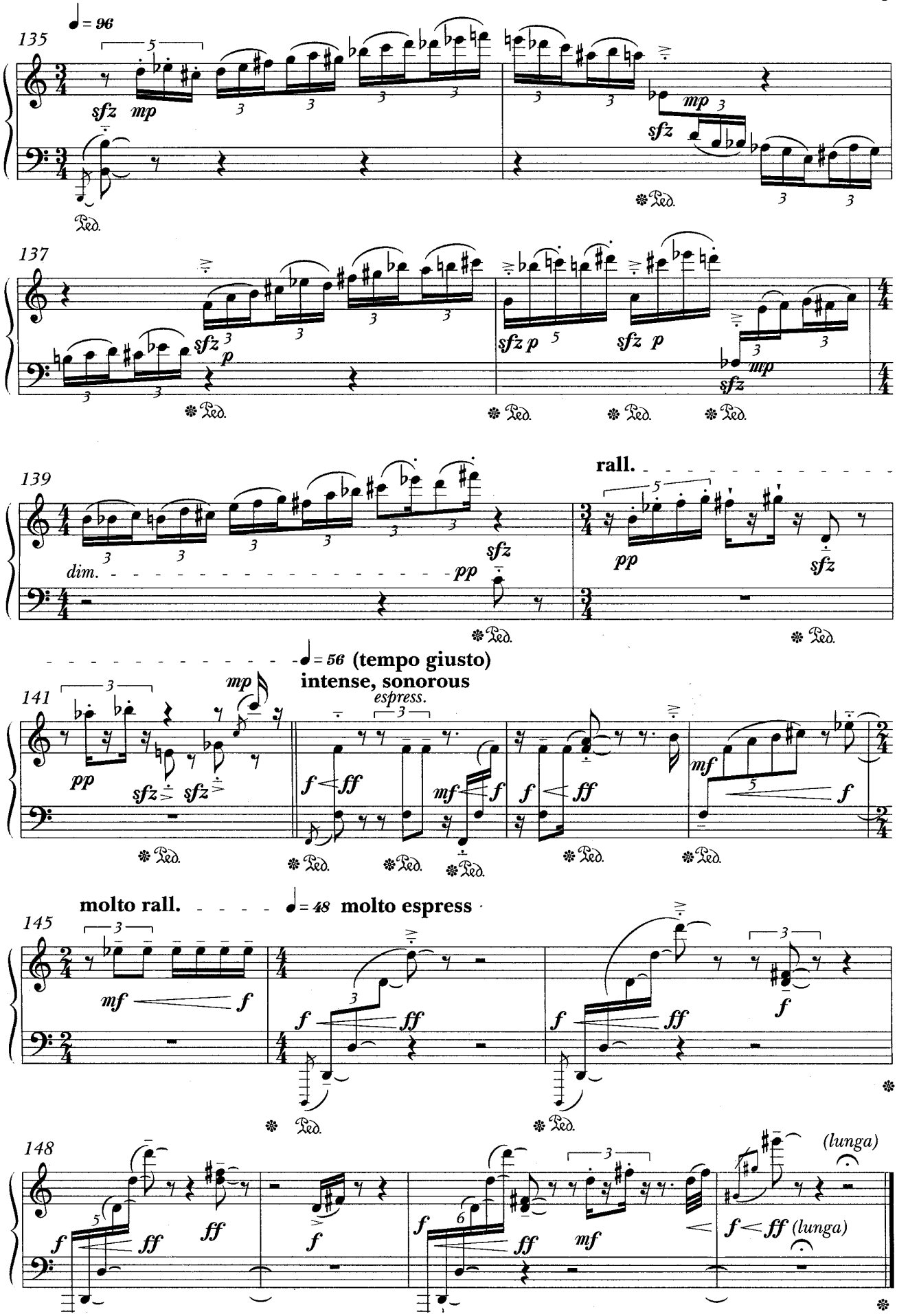

accel.
51
f
Ped.
54
♩. = 76 subito meno mosso
sub. pp
Ped. ad lib.
poco accel.
♩. = 80
57
sub. f
sub. p
59
sub. f
sub. p
sub. f
61
f
mf
f
mf
mf
f
ff
(echo)
64
mf
f (non dim.)
mp
f


(echo)
67
mp
mf
f
f
ff
Ped.
70
mf cresc.
ff
73
(echo)
f
mp
mf
mf
76
sub.
f
mf cresc.
ff
79
pesante
leggiero
poco pesante
leggiero
sfz
mf
f
mf
sfz
f
ff
mp
molto cresc.
83
slower ♩. = 72
(cresc.)
ff
ad lib.


86
ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped. ad lib.
90
accel.
♩. = 80
sub. p molto cresc.
mf
Ped.
Ped.
93
accel.
f
p sub.
mf
f
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
subito a tempo (♩. = 80)
96
f cresc.
p sub.
Ped.
Ped. ad lib.
99
f sub.
pp sub.
poco a poco crescendo
102
(cresc.)


104
(cresc.)
sempre
ff
107
110
dim.
112
mp
cresc.
Ped. ad lib.
115
mf
f
mp sub.
cresc.
Ped. ad lib.
119
f
mf
f
mf
ff


123
accel.
♩. = 88
(cresc.)
ff
Ped.
125
♩. = ♩ → ♩ = 88
martellato, con forza
fff
127
cresc.
ffff
ff cresc.
129
(cresc.)
ffff
ff
fff
tr
sf p molto cresc.
131
accel.
(cresc.)
Ped. ad lib.
133
(cresc.)
fff
5


♩= 96
135
sfz mp
mp
sfz
137
sfz p
sfz p
mp
sfz
139
dim.
pp
sfz
rall.
pp
sfz
♩= 56 (tempo giusto)
intense, sonorous
141
mp
pp
sfz sfz
espress.
f ff
mf f
mf
f
molto rall.
♩= 48 molto espress
145
mf f
148
(lunga)
f ff
ff
f
mf
f ff (lunga)