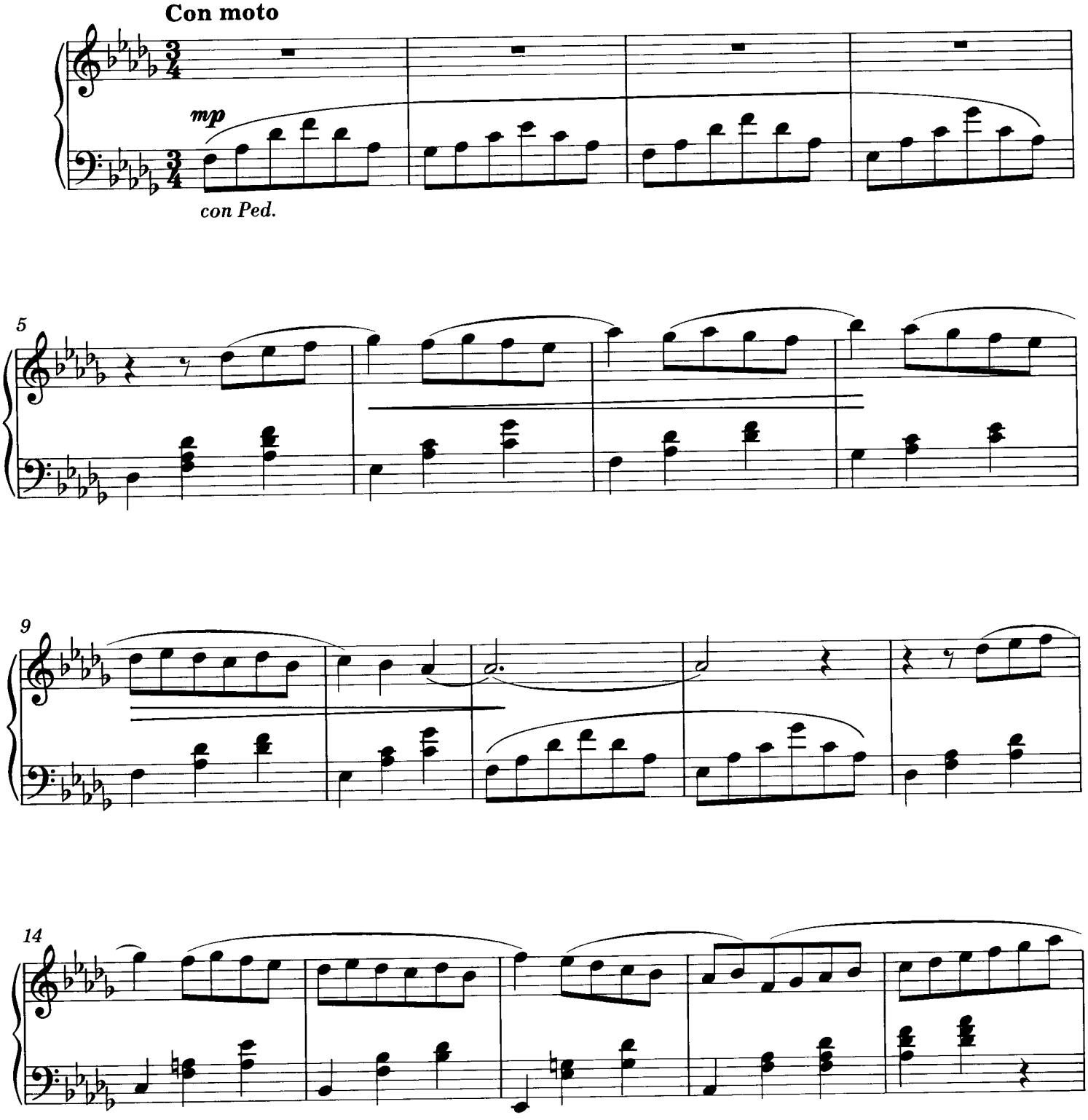
Bagatelles

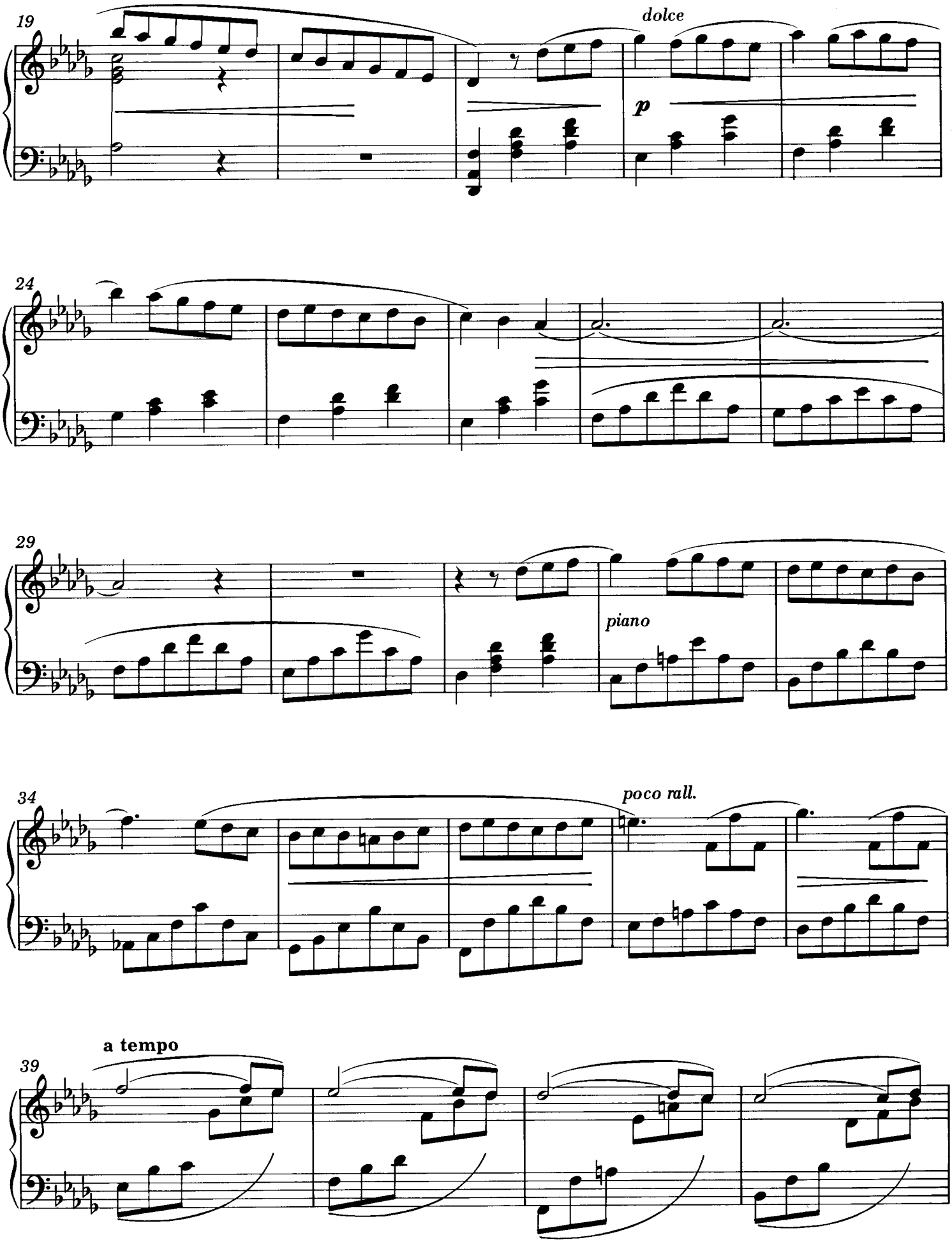
Jean Sibelius op. 34
herausgegeben von Fabian Dahlström

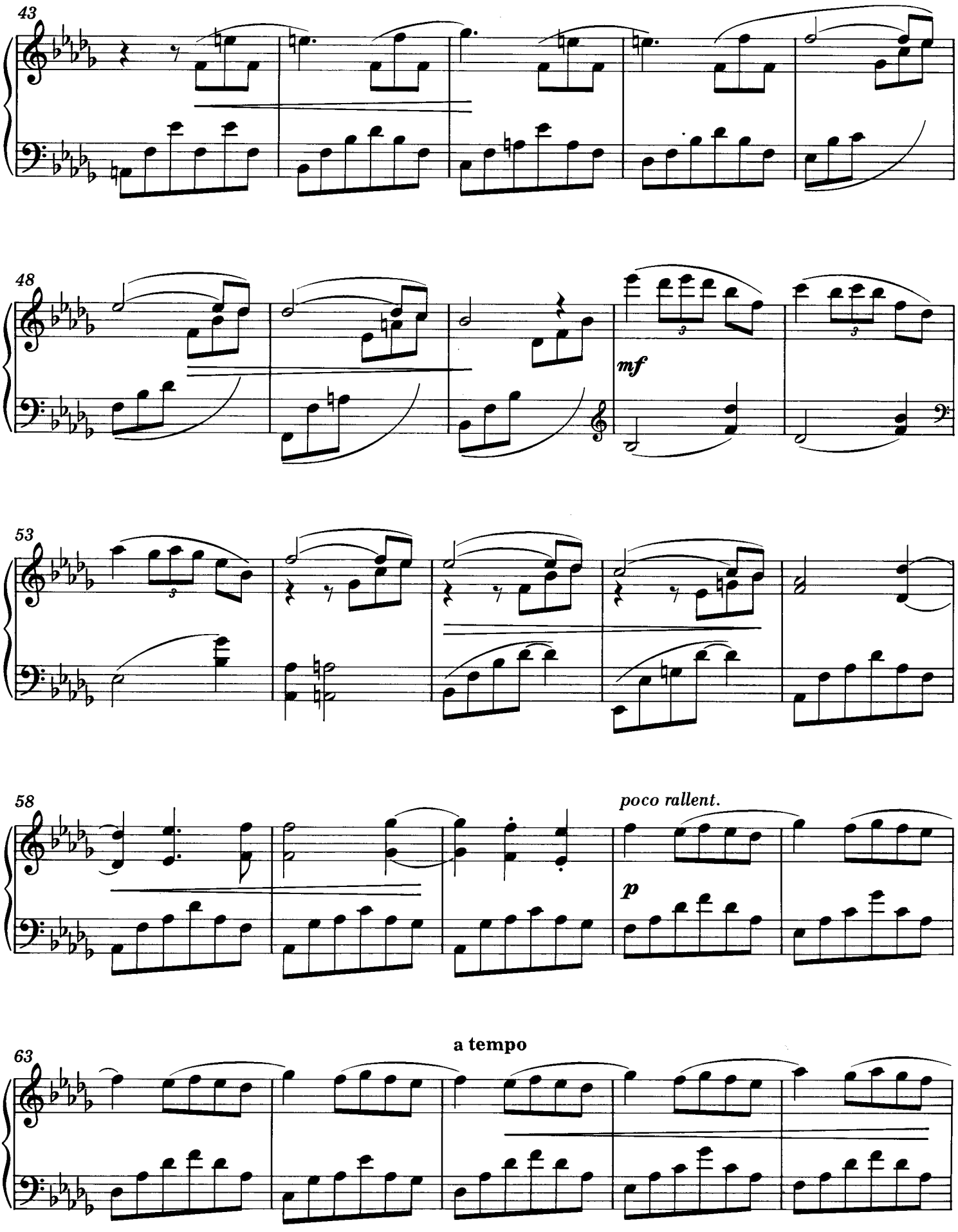
1 Valse

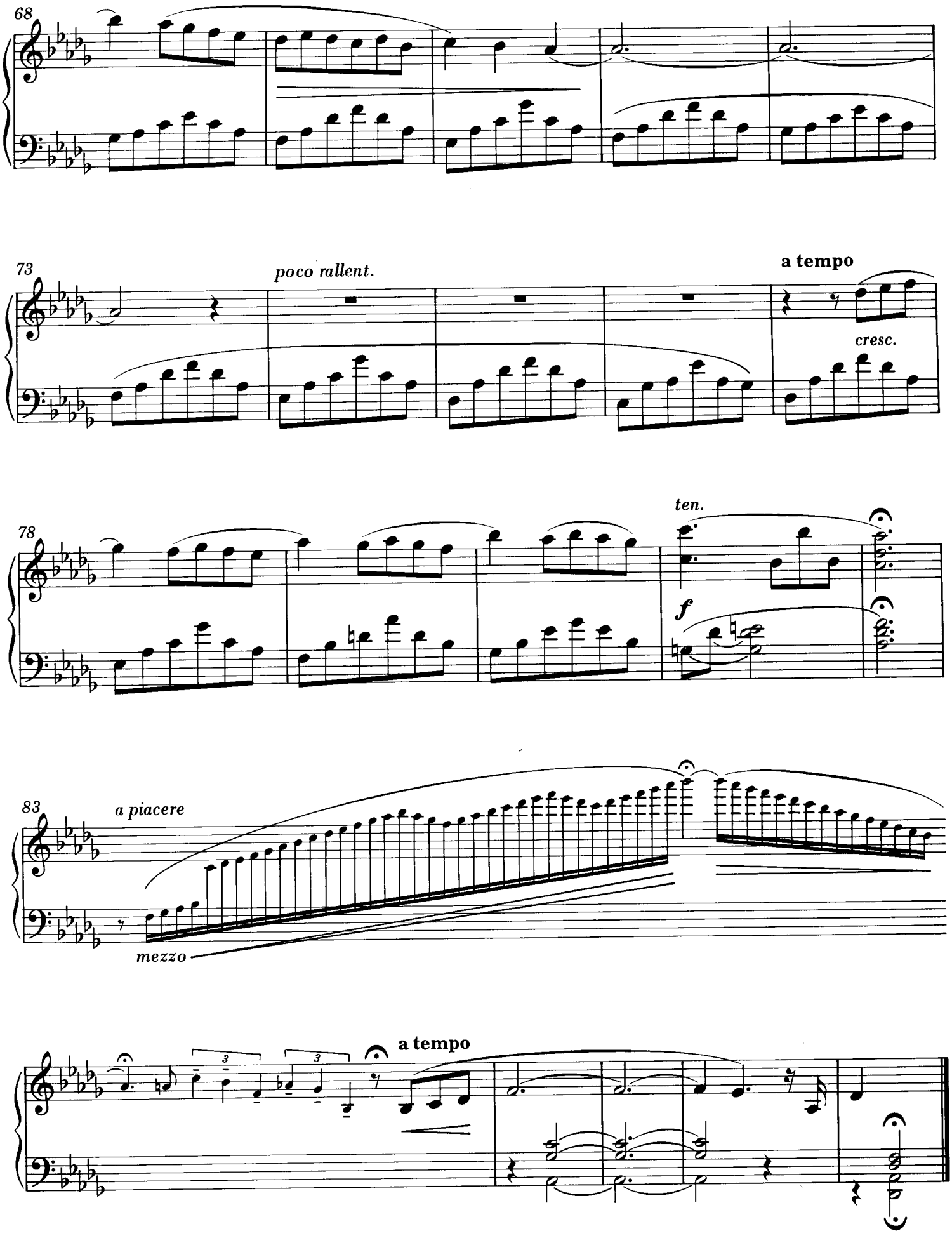


Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

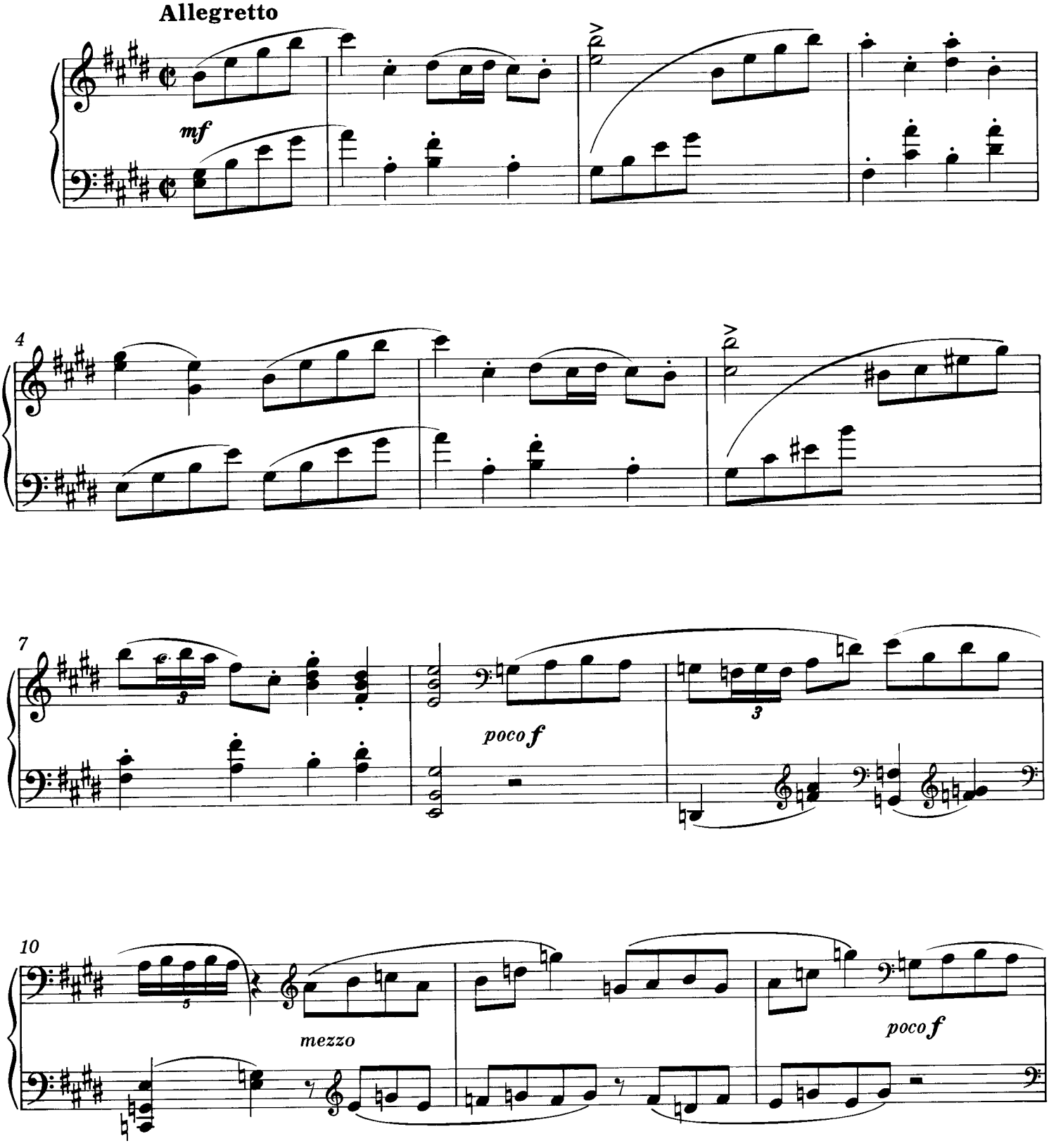
Edition Breitkopf 8156

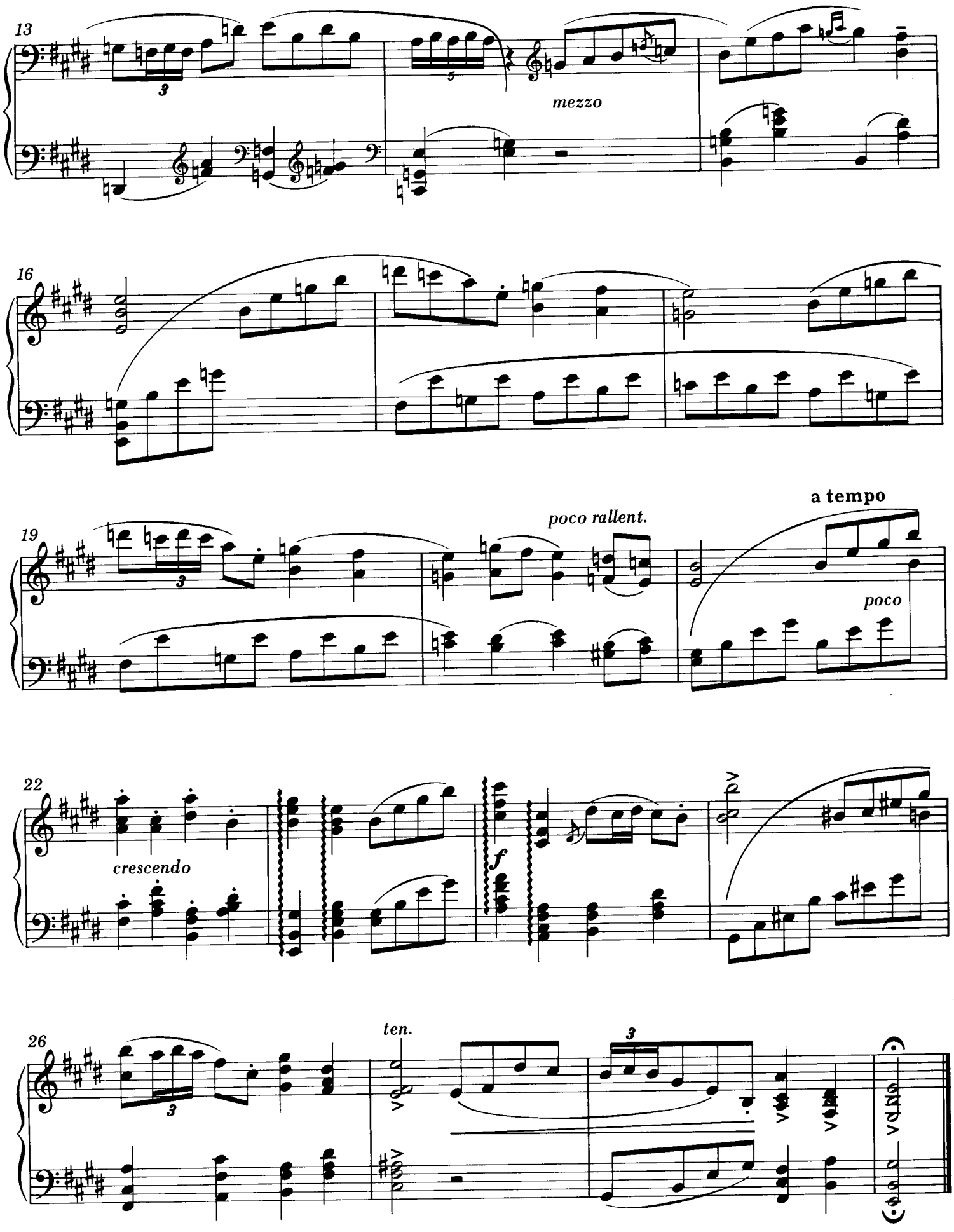

19
dolce
p
24
29
piano
34
poco rall.
a tempo
39


43
48
mf
53
58
poco rallent.
p
63
a tempo

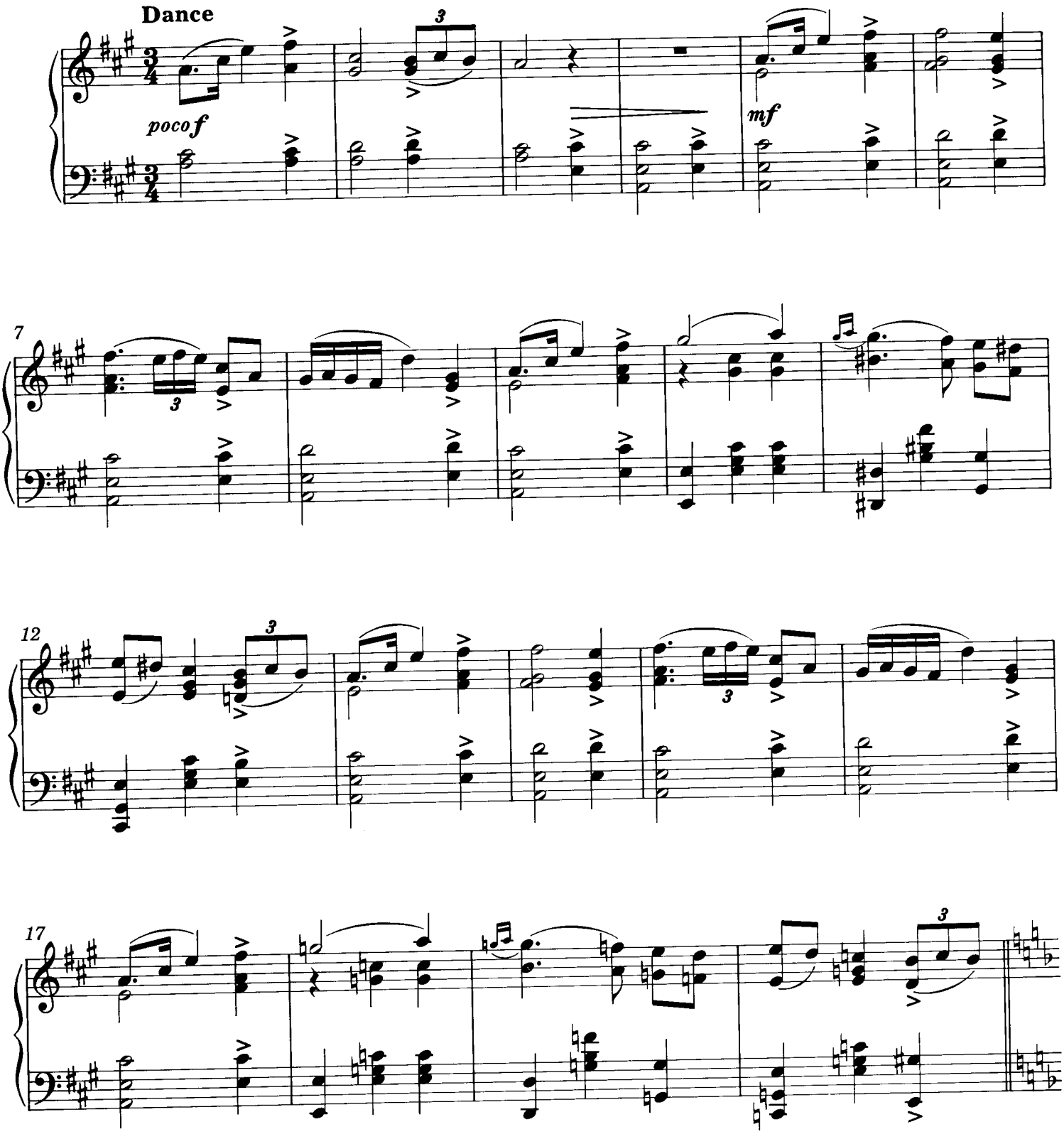

68
73
poco rallent.
a tempo
cresc.
78
ten.
f
83
a piacere
mezzo
a tempo

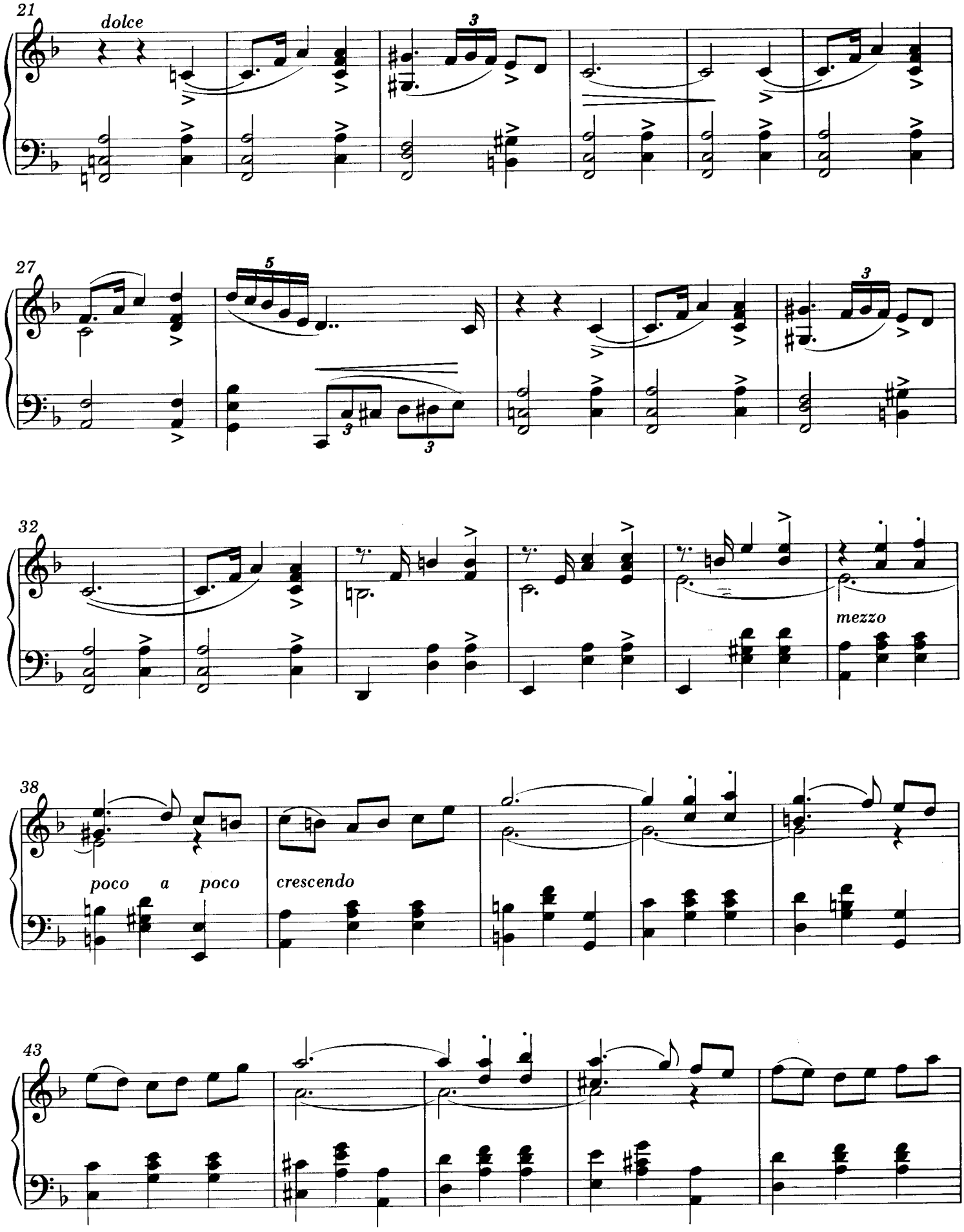
2 Air de danse

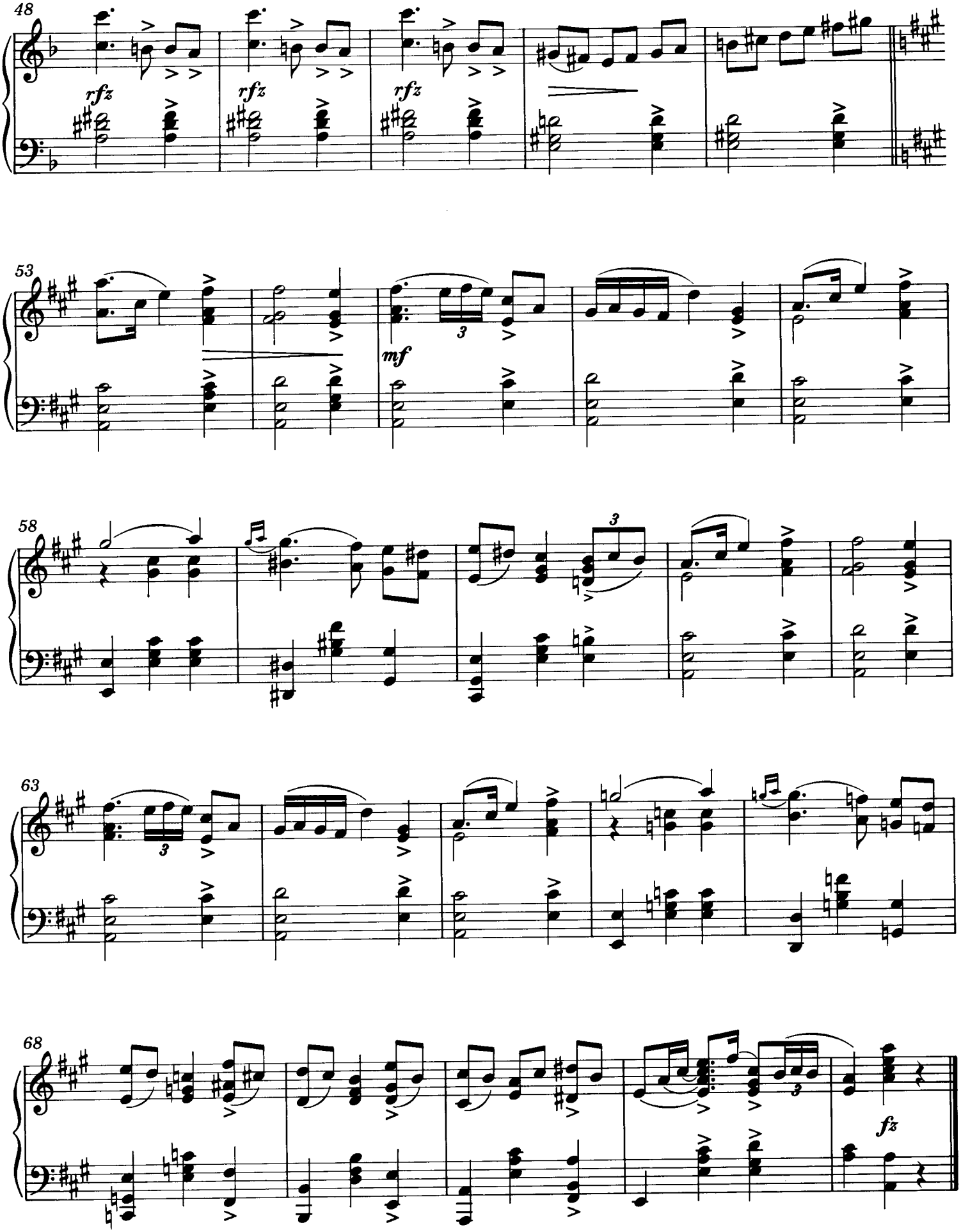



13
mezzo
16
19
poco rallent.
a tempo
poco
22
crescendo
f
26
ten.
VOLTA

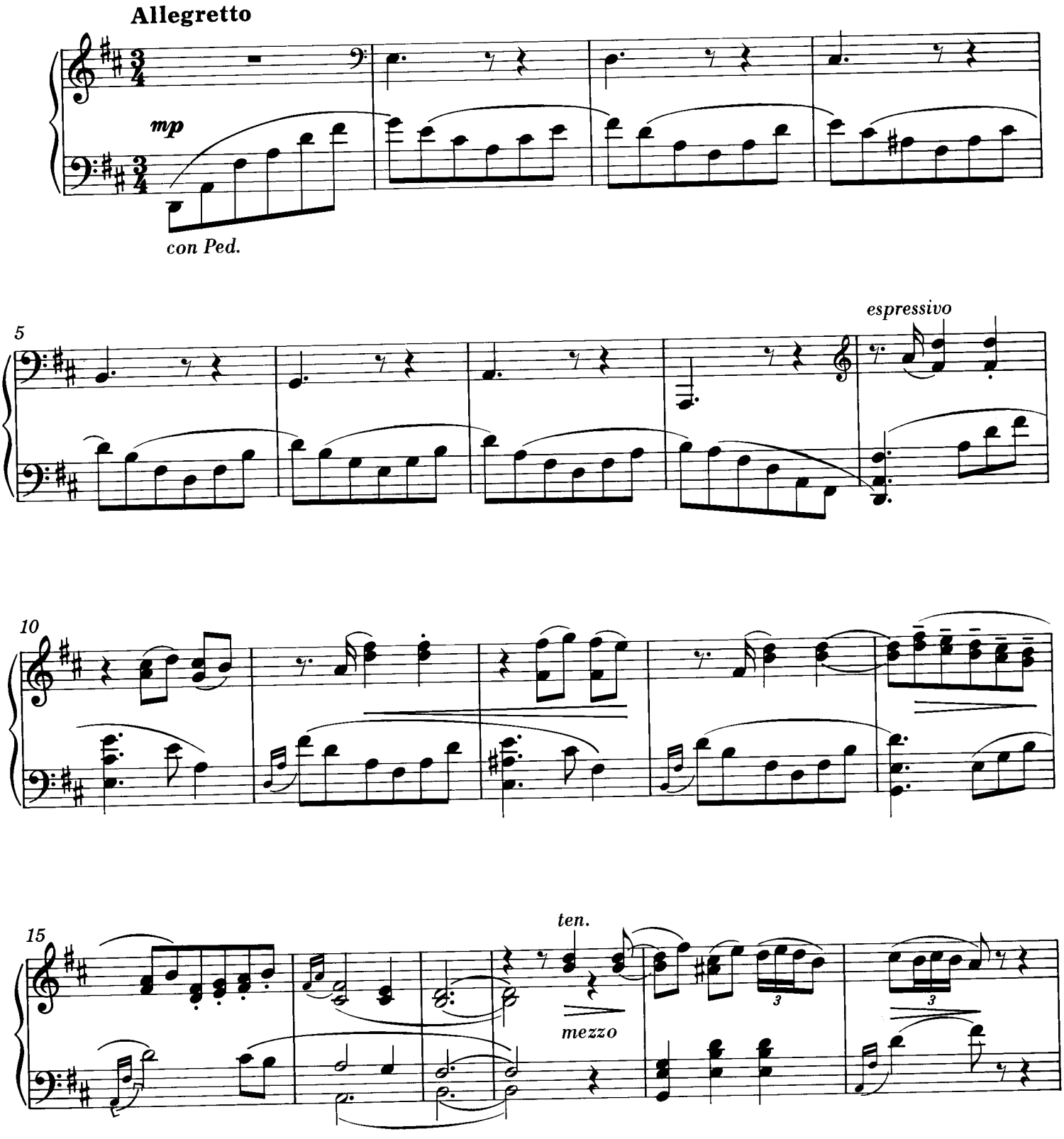
3 Mazurka




21
dolce
27
32
mezzo
38
poco a poco
crescendo
43


48
rfz
rfz
rfz
53
mf
3
58
3
63
3
68
fz

4 Couplet



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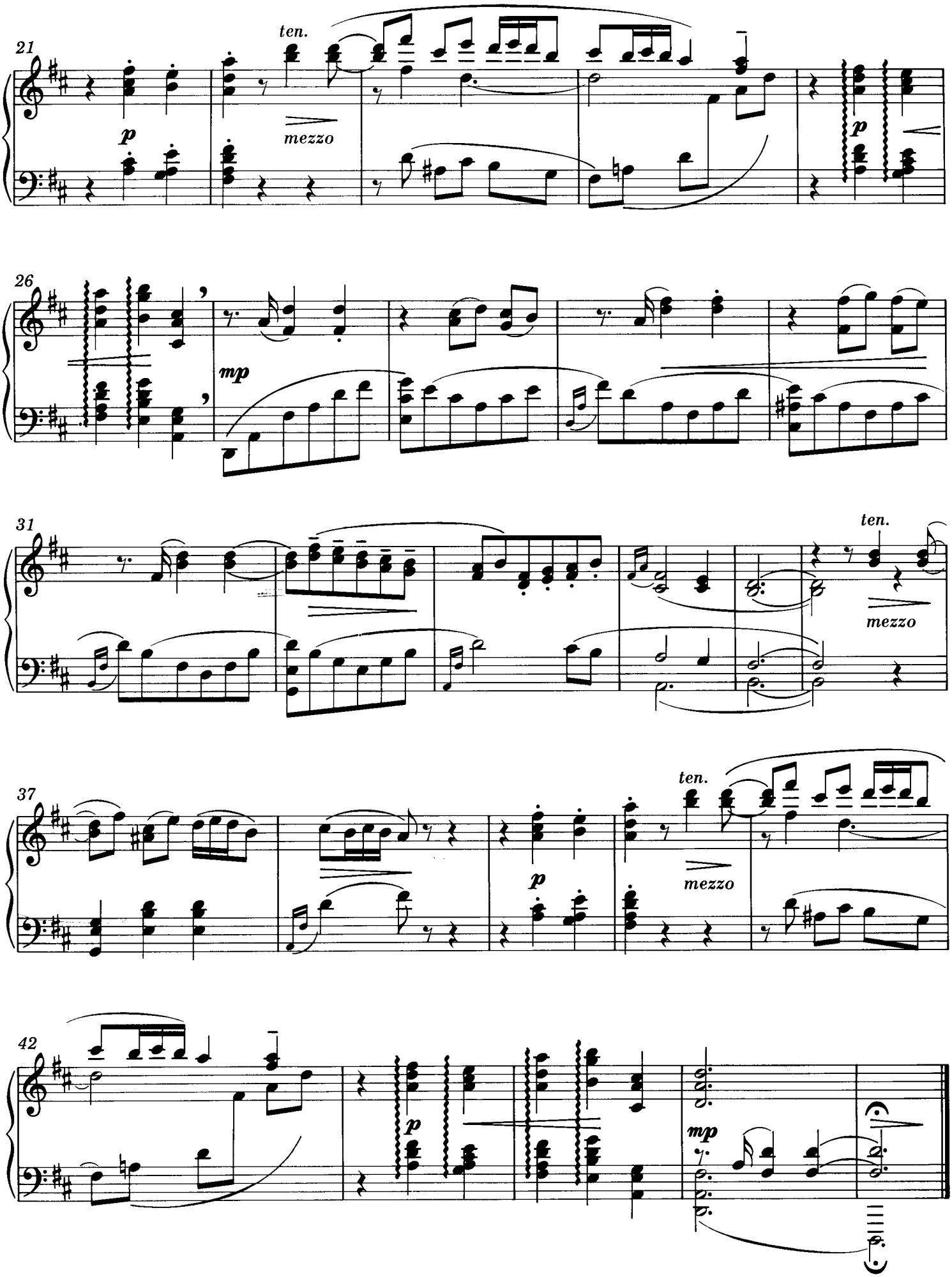
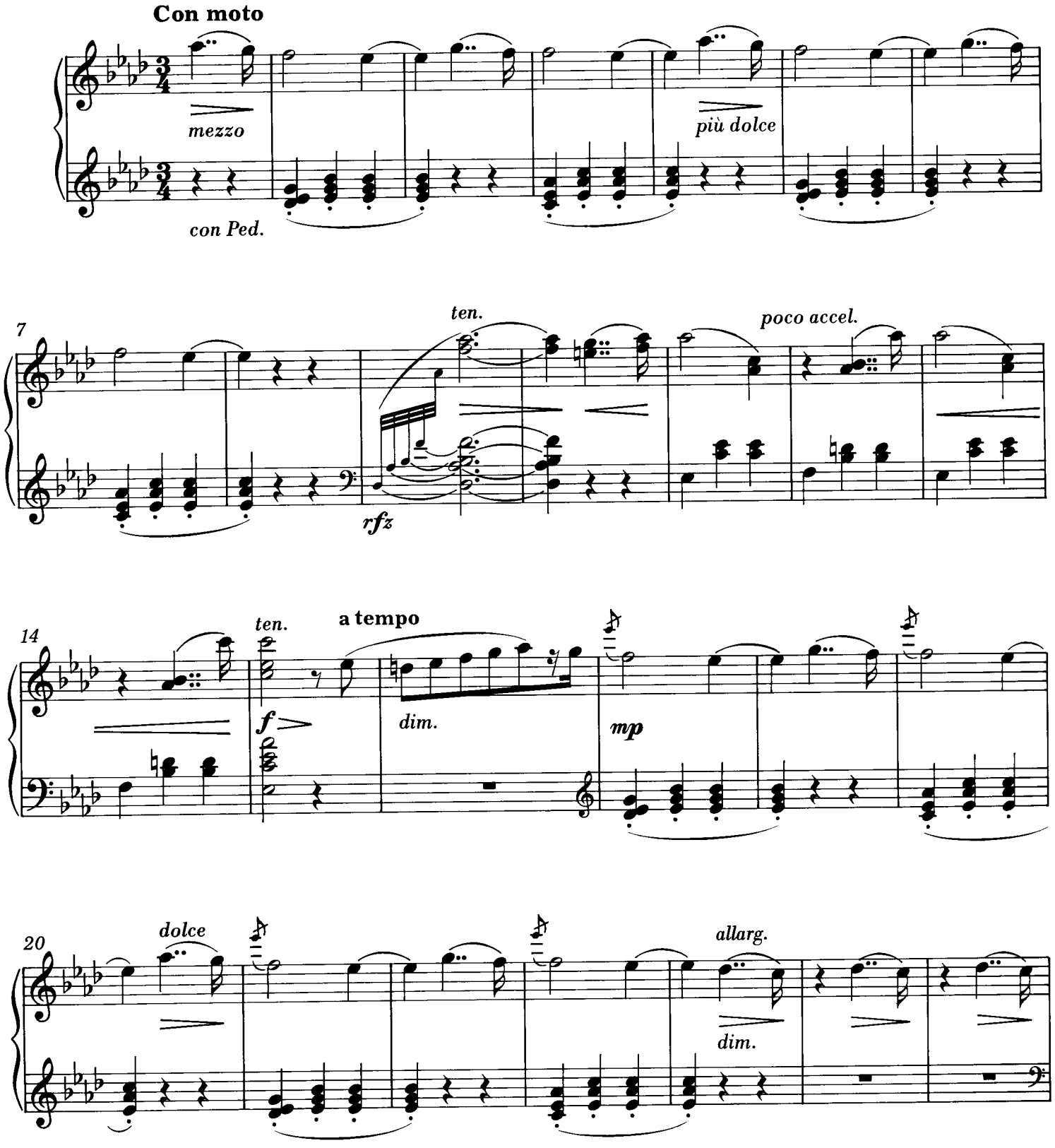
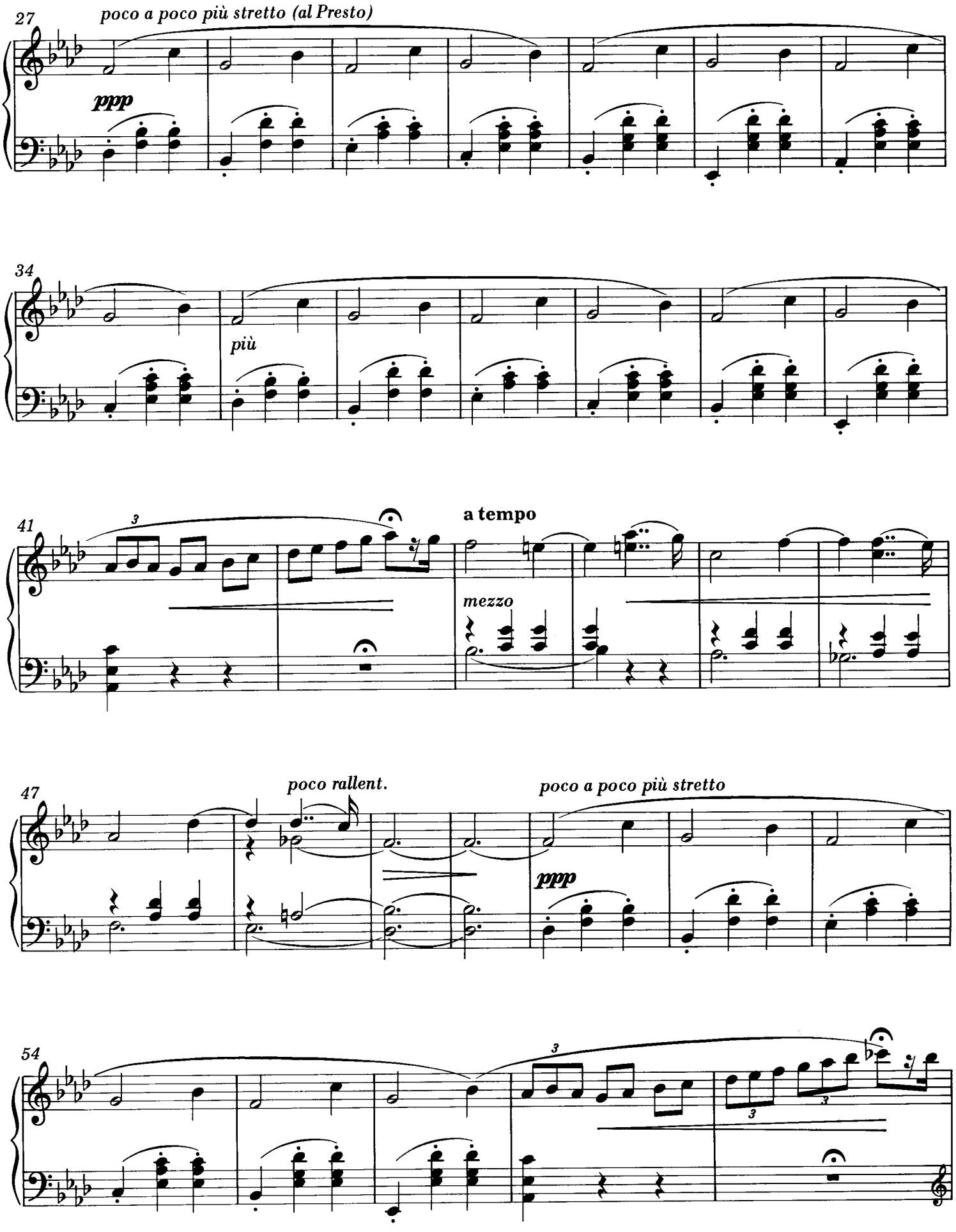
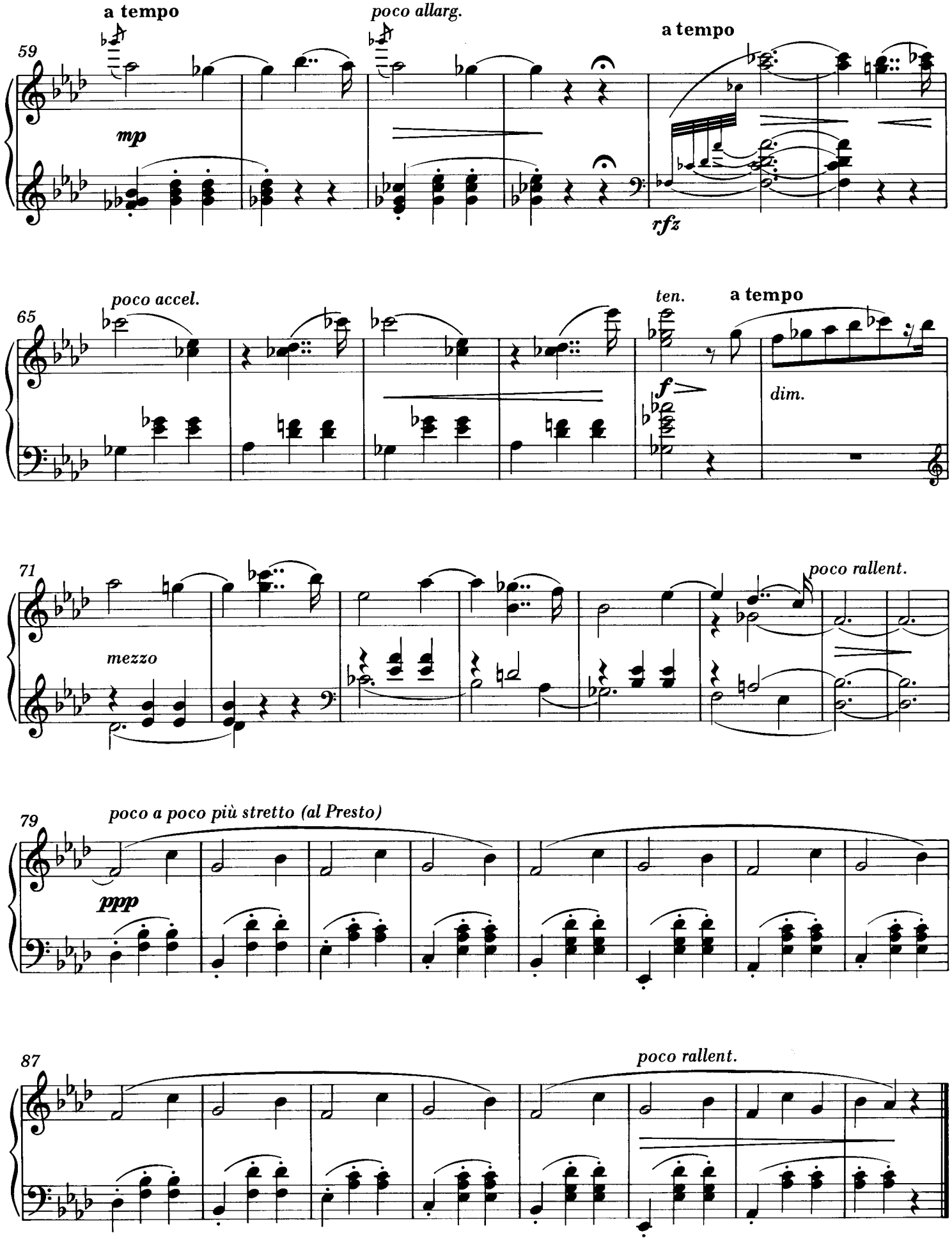

21
ten.
mezzo
p
p
26
mp
31
ten.
mezzo
37
ten.
mezzo
p
42
p
mp

5 Boutade

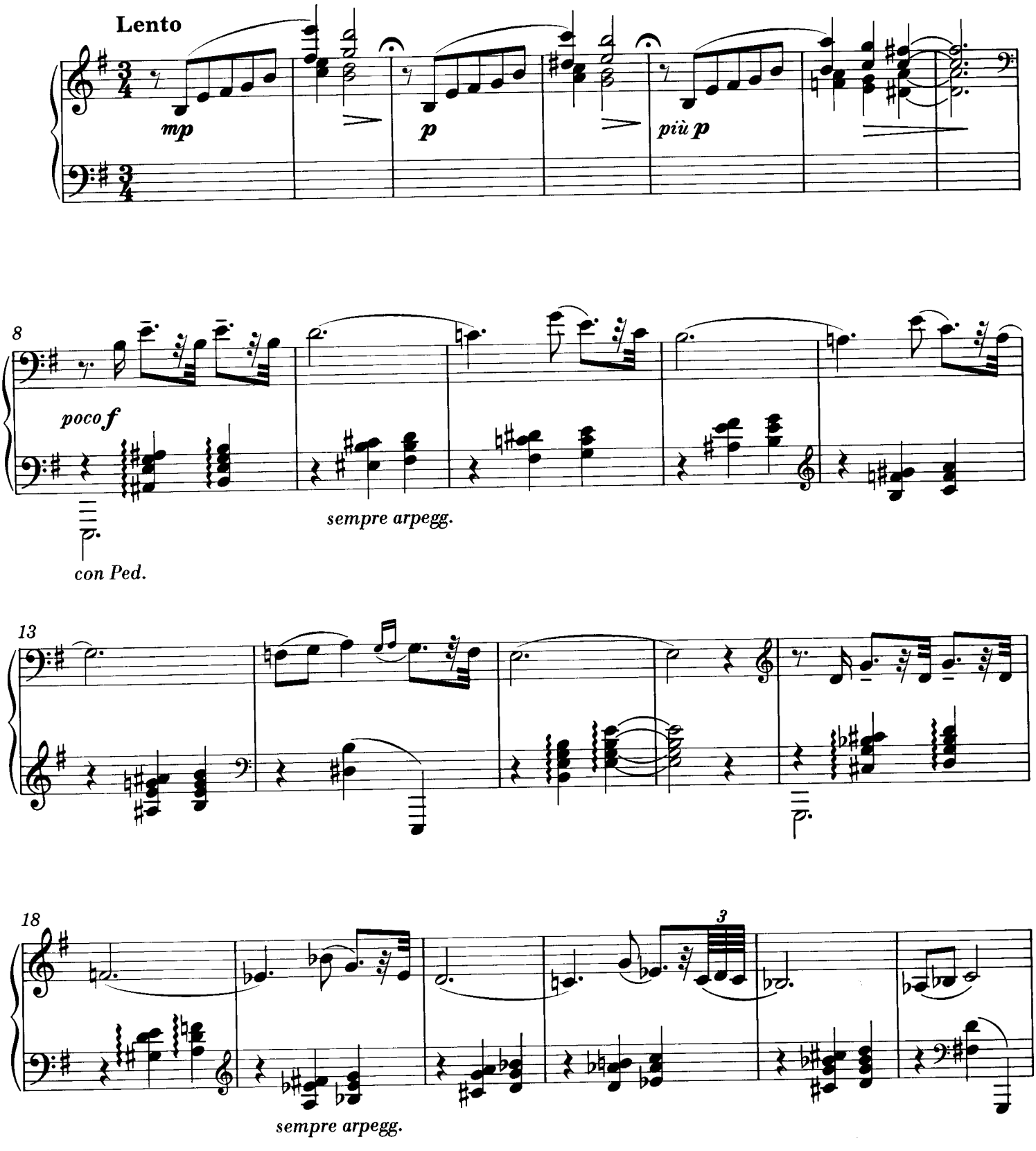


Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

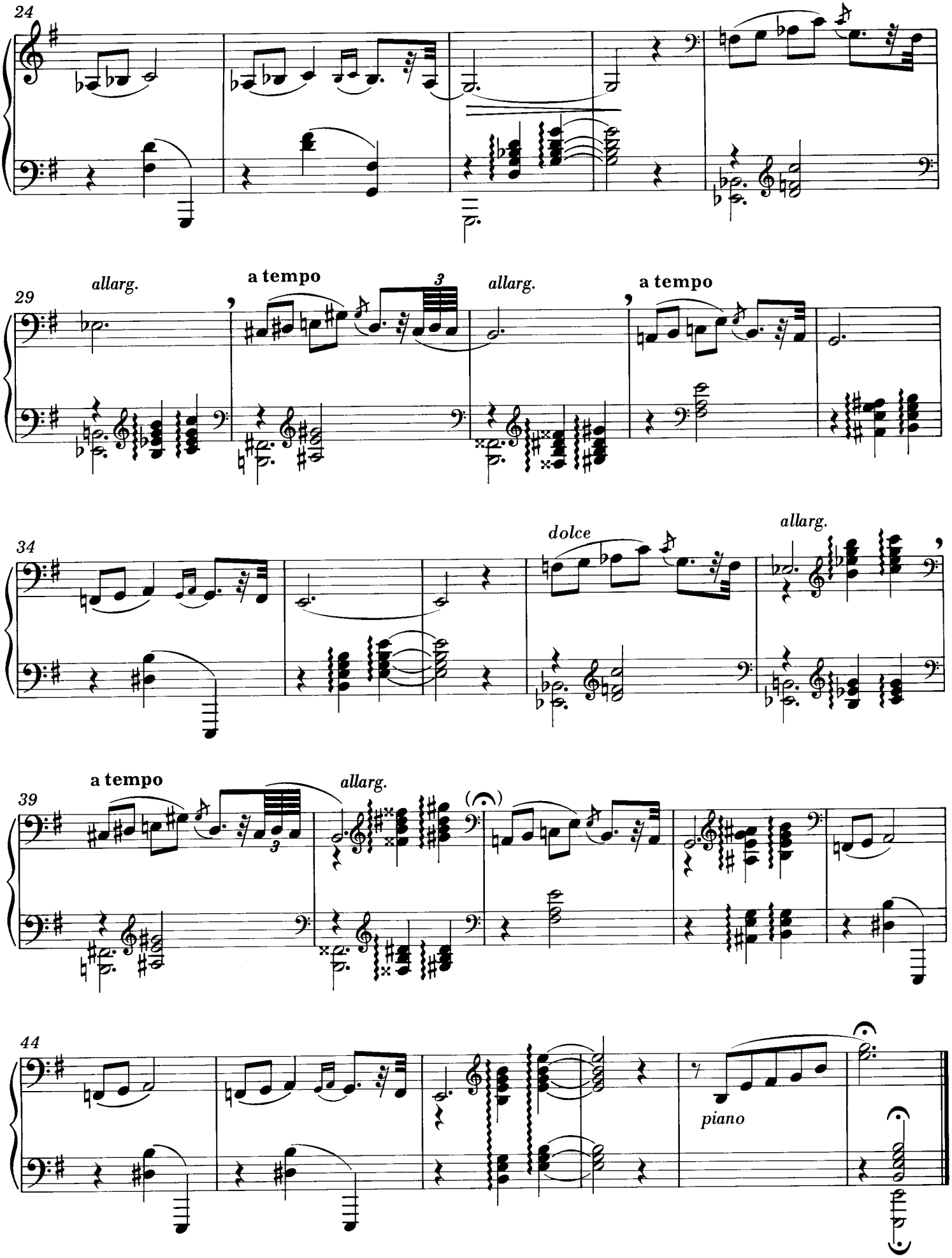

27
poco a poco più stretto (al Presto)
ppp
34
più
41
3
a tempo
mezzo
47
poco rallent.
poco a poco più stretto
ppp
54
3
3
3


a tempo
poco allarg.
a tempo
59
mp
rfz
poco accel.
65
ten.
a tempo
f
dim.
71
mezzo
poco rallent.
poco a poco più stretto (al Presto)
79
ppp
87
poco rallent.

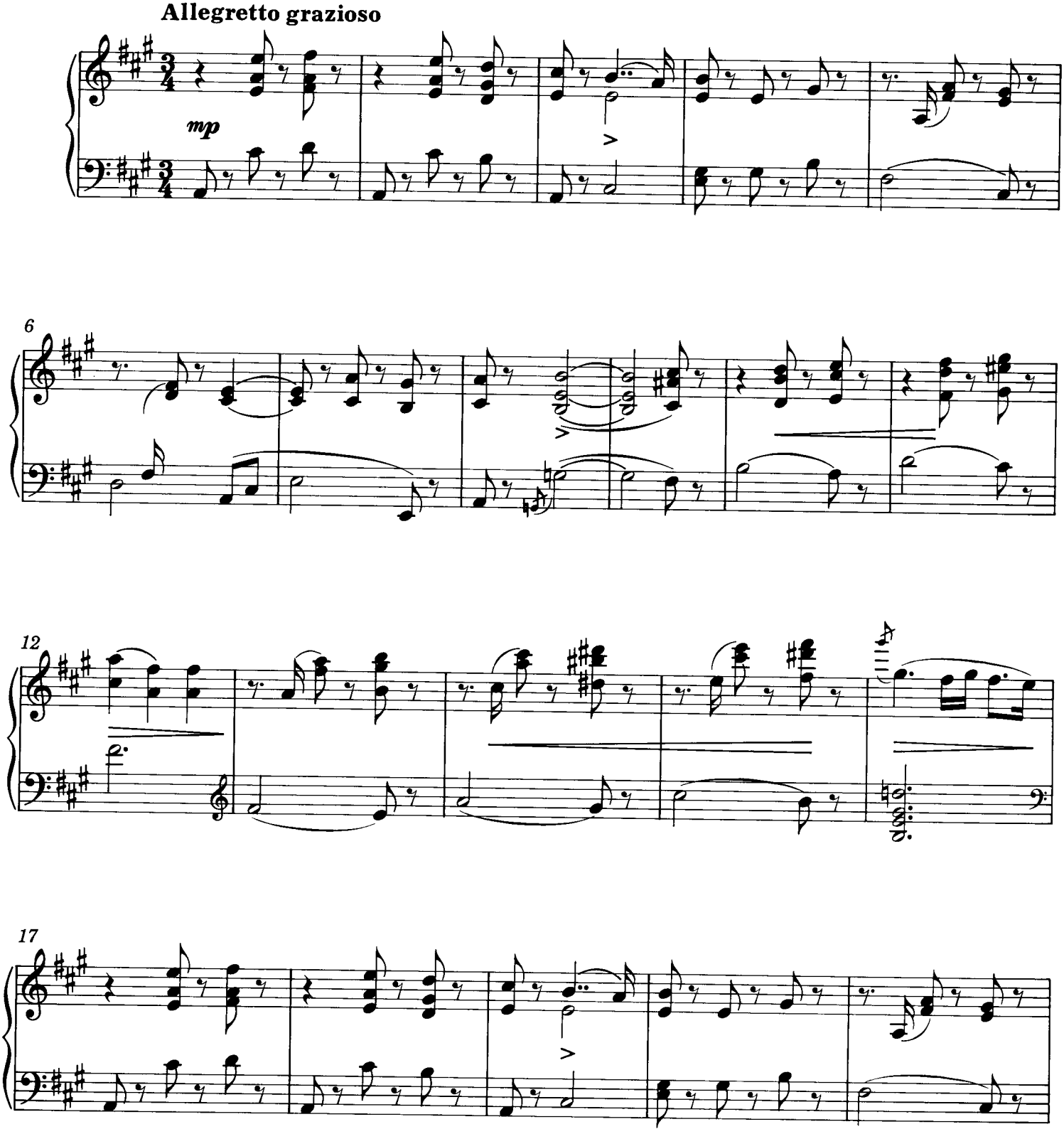
6 Rêverie



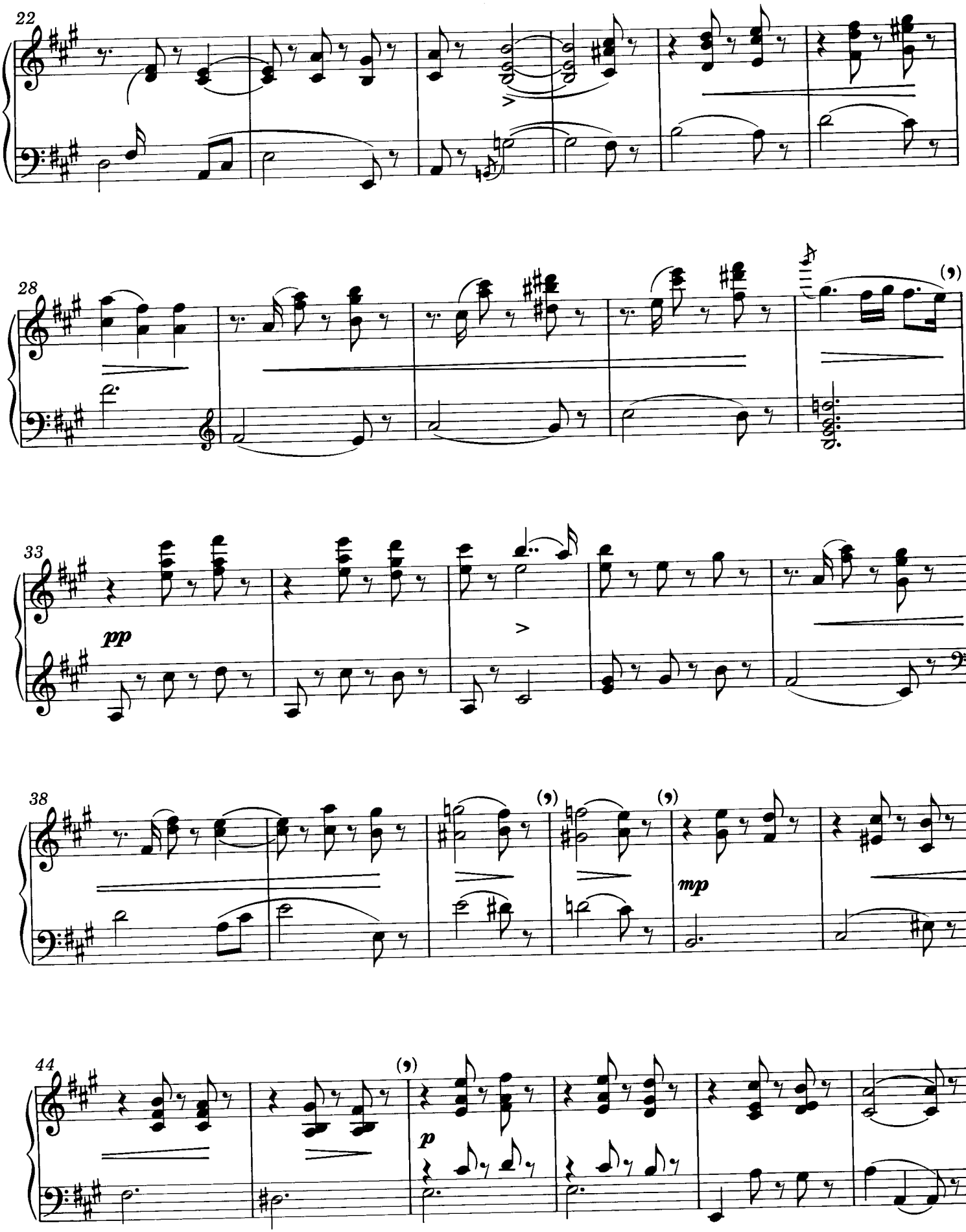
Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden


24
29
allarg.
a tempo
3
allarg.
a tempo
34
dolce
allarg.
39
a tempo
allarg.
3
44
piano

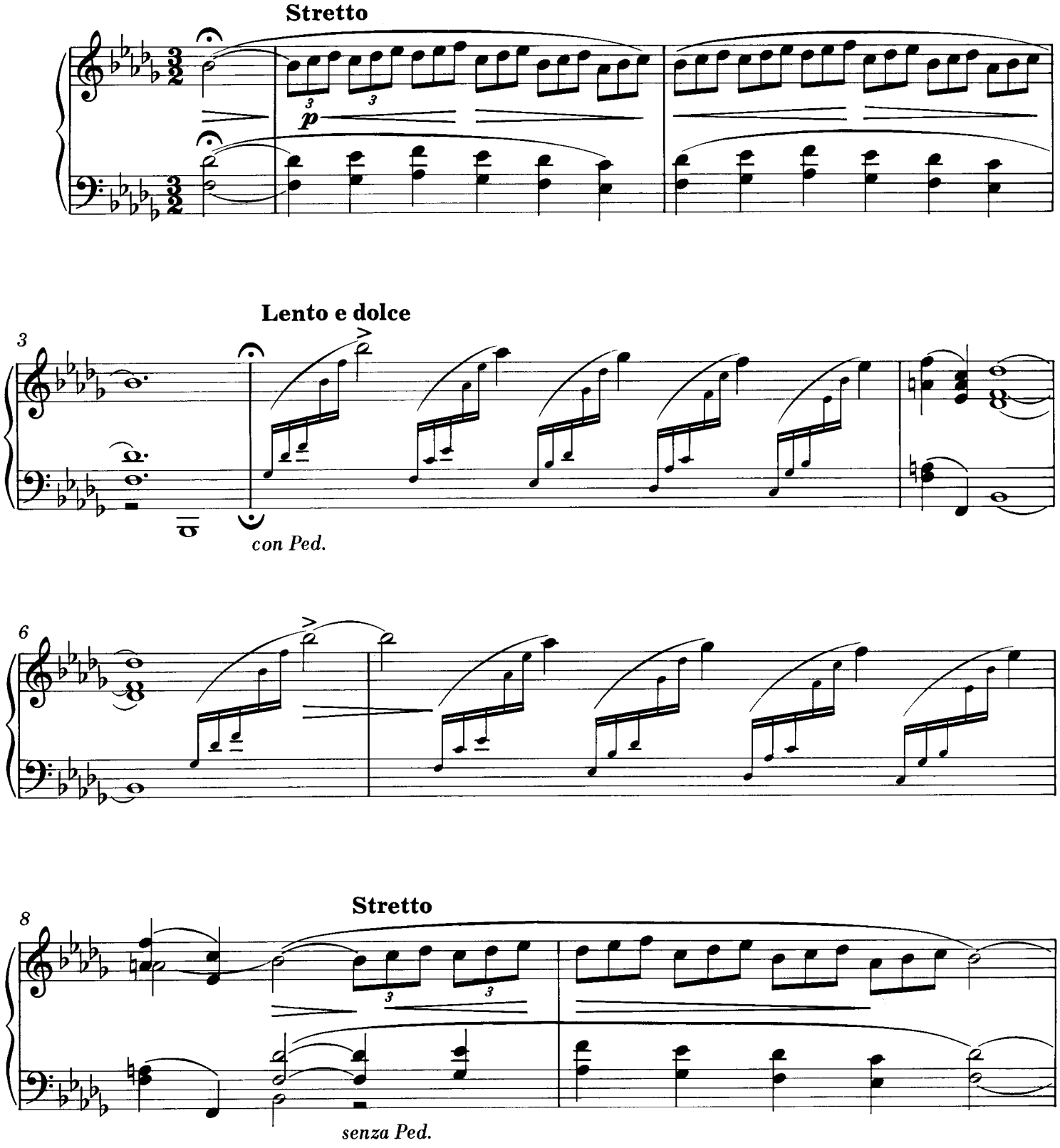
7 Danse pastorale

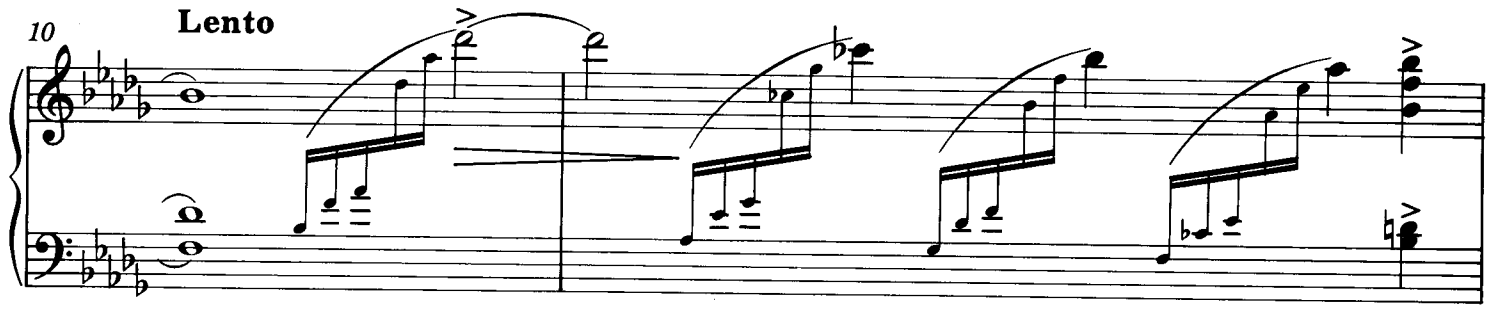


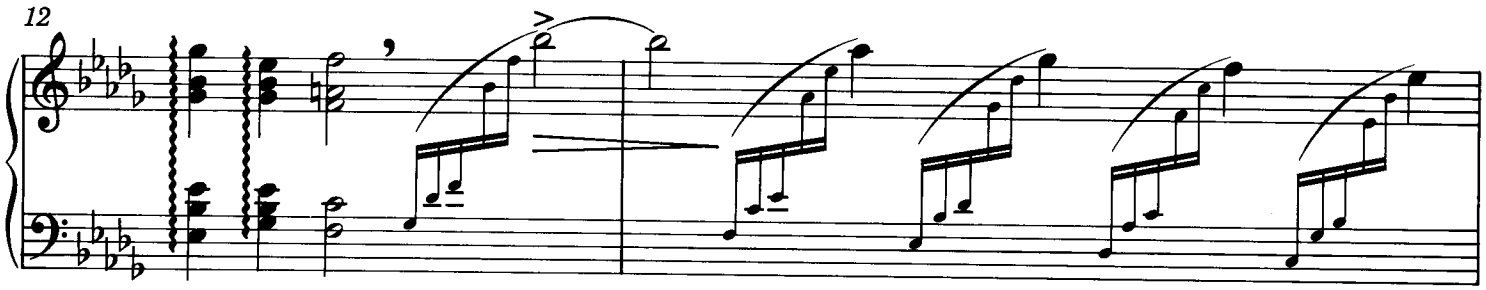
Fazer Music Inc., Helsinki

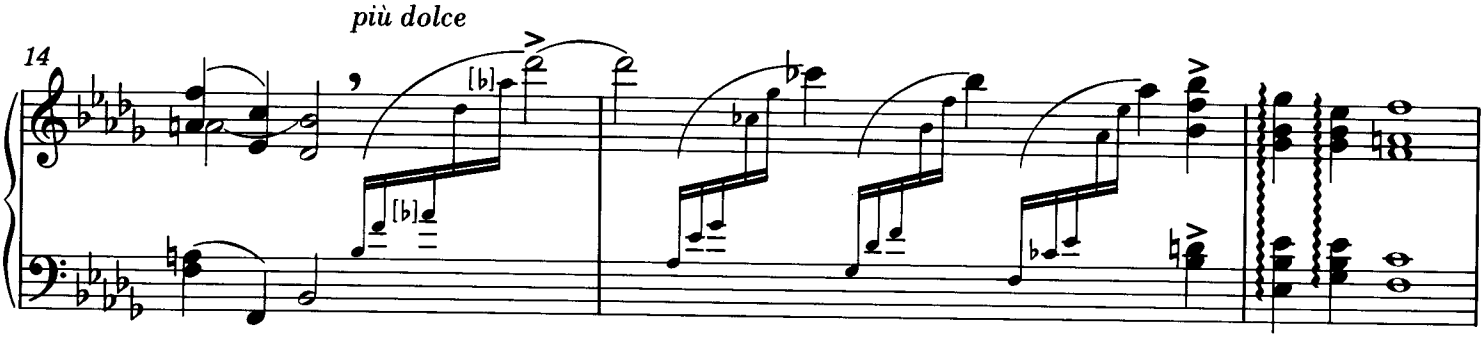

22
28
33
pp
38
mp
44
p

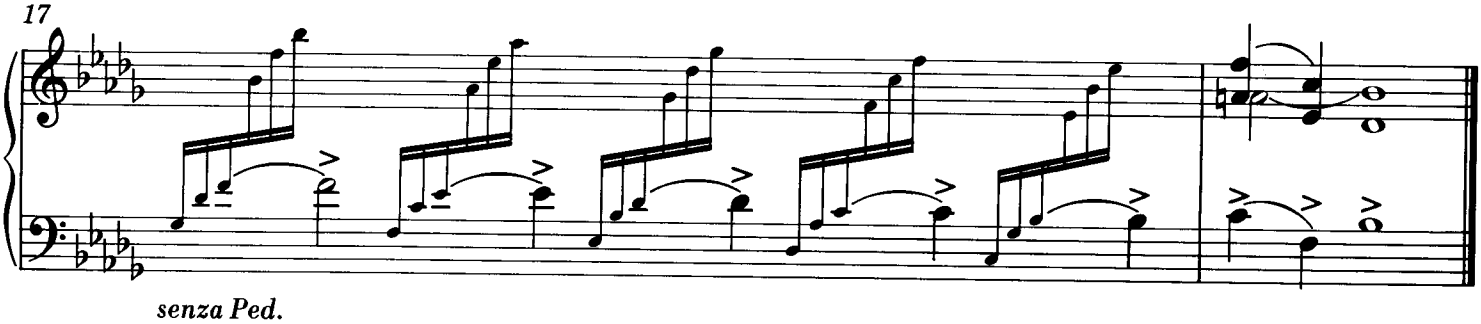
8 Joueur de harpe



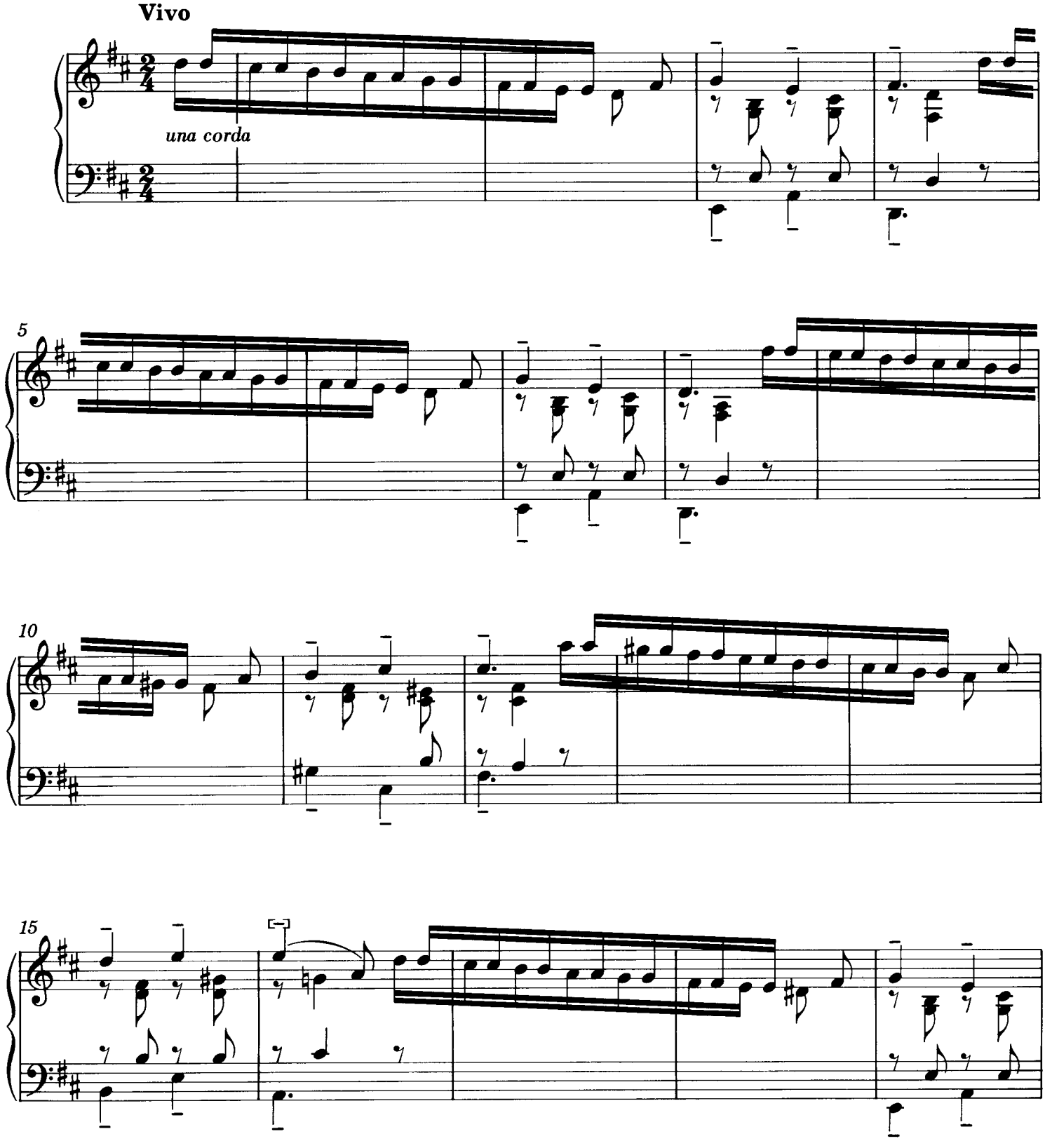

10
Lento
con Ped.

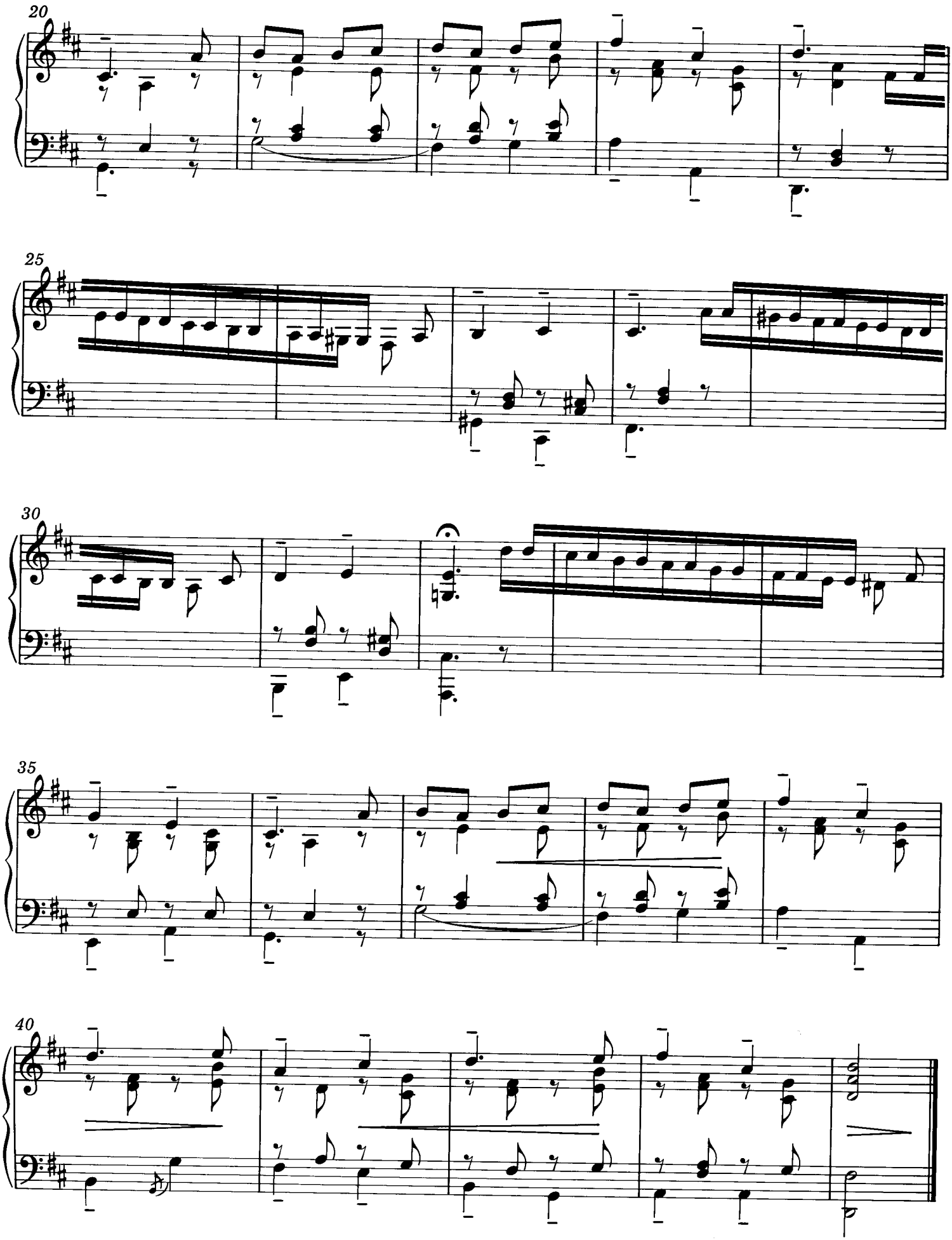

12


più dolce
14

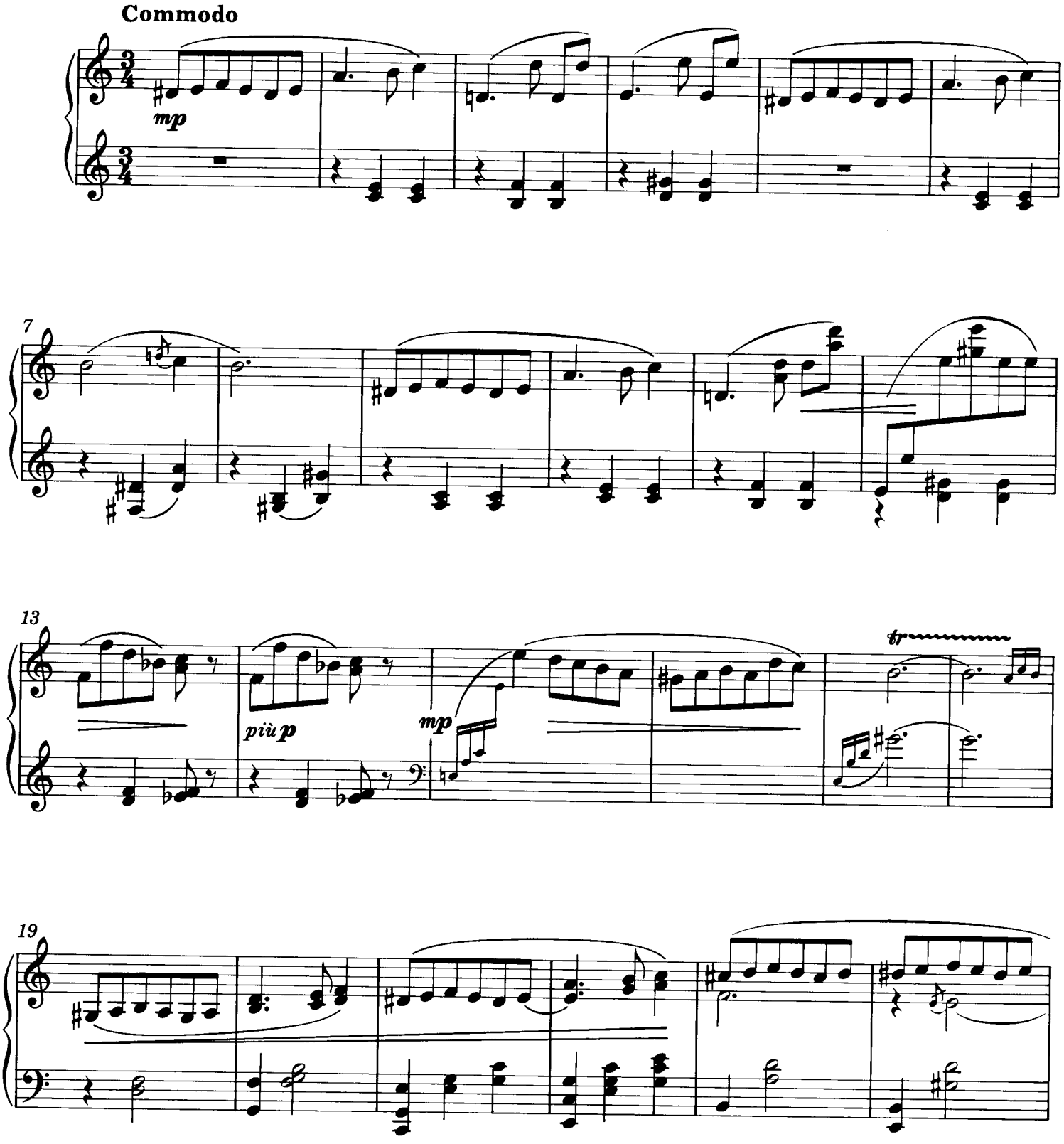

17
senza Ped.

9 Reconnaissance

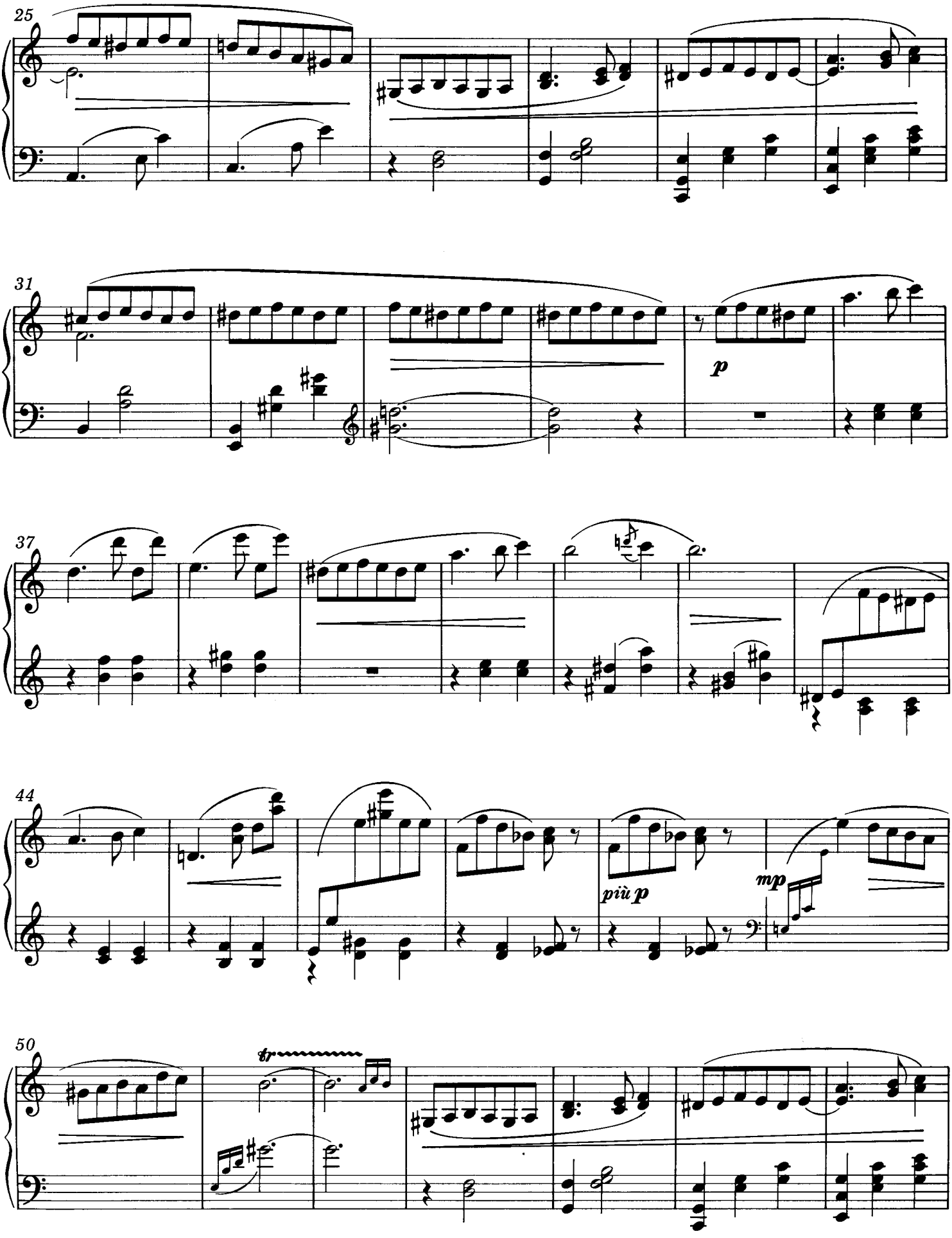


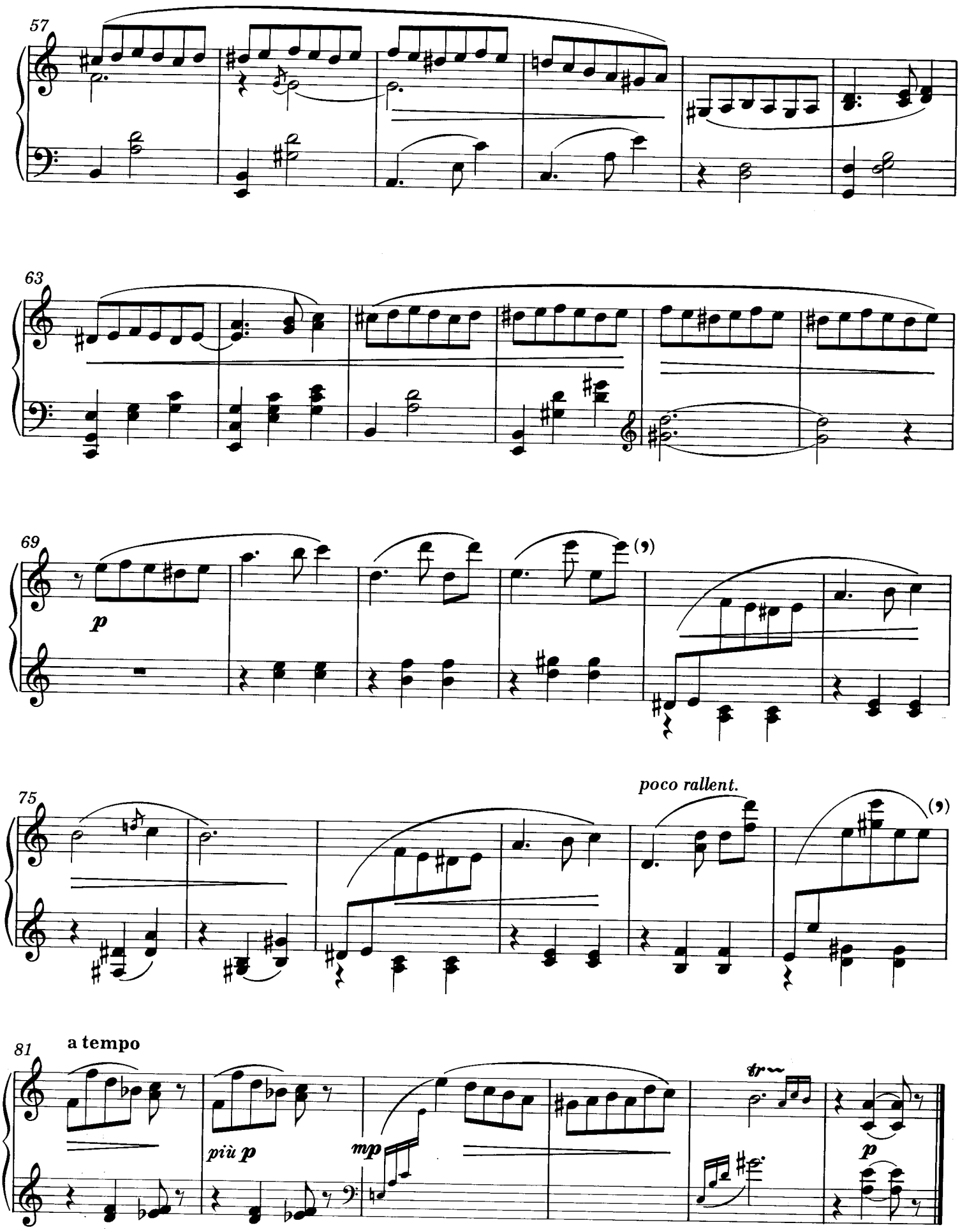

20
25
30
35
40

10 Souvenir



Fazer Music Inc., Helsinki


25
31
p
37
44
più p
mp
50
tr


57
63
69
p
75
poco rallent.
81
a tempo
più p
mp
tr
p

Preface

In a conversation with the composer Bengt von Törne, one of his pupils, Jean Sibelius once said: *"I am an orchestral man. You must judge me on the basis of my orchestral works."* He then jokingly added: *"I write piano pieces in my leisure time."* Then, seriously again: *"Actually, the piano does not interest me since it can't sing. And I never go to piano concerts unless they are given by a true genius like my friend Busoni."*

Indeed, Sibelius's orchestral works constitute the backbone of his compositional oeuvre: the seven symphonies (1899–1924), the violin concerto (1903–1905), the tone poems "Kullervo" (with chorus, 1892), "Finlandia" (1899–1900), "The Oceanides" (1914), "Tapiola" (1926) and others, incidental music like the "Karelia Suite" (1893), "King Kristian II" (1898), "Scènes historiques" (in 2 parts, 1899/1911) and "The Tempest" (1925). Sibelius also composed solo songs, choral works, chamber music (including the string quartet "Voces intimae" in 1909), and various shorter works for violin and piano.

In the light of Sibelius's opinion of the piano, it is surprising that piano music occupies such an important position in his output. Piano works are even more numerous than works for violin, the only instrument Sibelius commanded with proficiency. Noteworthy among his piano works are the Sonata in F major Op. 12 (1893–1895), "Kyllikki" Op. 41 (1904), the two Rondinos Op. 68 (1911) as well as the three Sonatinas Op. 67 (1912). Also very well known are the pieces that belong to the collection Op. 75 (1914). The titles refer to trees: "When the Roan Tree Flowers", "The Lonely Pine", "The Aspen", "The Birch" and "The Spruce". The piano collection Op. 85 (1922) has flower titles: "Bellis", "Oeillet", "Iris", "Aquileja" and "Campanula". In these latter groups – as well as in other piano pieces – Jean Sibelius developed a personal piano style which differs distinctly from the massive blocks of sound preferred by his contemporaries. Indeed, his works stand out for their simplicity and directness, and for an unmistakable predilection for two-part textures. This is unusual for the time. Notwithstanding, Sibelius's piano pieces, including the miniatures, are not in the least banal or trifling. The composer's greatness reveals itself here too, even if these are only shavings from the work table of a symphonist. Incidentally, Sibelius never wrote a piano concerto, although he had been invited to do so.

The "Bagatelles" Op. 34 and the "Pensées lyriques" Op. 40 (Edition Breitkopf 8157) were composed during the years 1912–1916, a period during which Jean Sibelius completed some of his larger works like "Luonnotar" Op. 70 for soprano and orchestra (1913), the music to the pantomime "Scaramouche" Op. 71 (1913), the tone poem "The Oceanides" Op. 73 (1914), the first version of the Fifth Symphony Op. 82 (revised in 1916 and 1919), and the incidental music to Hofmannsthal's "Jedermann" Op. 83 (1916).

Despite the opus numbers 34 and 40, we are not able to infer when and in what order the pieces were written (this is often the case with Sibelius). The 20 miniatures were not composed as two self-contained cycles, but independently of each other. We are very far removed from Sibelius's symphonic world here. These compositions are intimate bagatelles, intended more for the salon than the concert hall.

The "Valsette" Op. 40 No. 1 is the first piece to have been written; it was composed in 1912 especially for the Christmas journal "Lucifer" and printed there in facsimile. The well-known critic K. F. Wasenius ("Bis") immediately reviewed the little work in a daily newspaper. His judgement reflects the opinion that was soon to be generally held of both Opera 34 and 40: *"No heaviness, no great chords, and yet such a rich play of colors – indeed, this is precisely why there is so much grace in the music created by Sibelius's master hand. The more one hears it, the more one is beguiled by it."*

In 1913, Sibelius composed "Rêverie" Op. 34 No. 6, "Chant sans paroles" Op. 40 No. 2, "Humoresque" Op. 40 No. 3, "Minuetto" Op. 40 No. 4, and "Berceuse" Op. 40 No. 5. In his diary, he considered these pieces as belonging to *"the light style that I have reserved for Pelle* (Robert Emil) *Westerlund"*, a publisher in Helsinki who bought the manuscripts (including the "Valsette"). Nothing further is known about these pieces. After Sibelius corrected the proofs, he noted in his diary: *"They are fresh"*. The choice of a Finnish publishing house suggests that Sibelius did not want to jeopardize his reputation as a symphonist at this time. He apparently did not want these pieces to become known in other countries through his Leipzig publisher Breitkopf & Härtel, for example. But Westerlund immediately sold them to Breitkopf & Härtel at a good profit. Sibelius most likely suffered a considerable financial loss through this transaction, since the Breitkopf edition soon became known throughout the world.

The "Valse" Op. 34 No. 1, "Air de danse" Op. 34 No. 2, "Mazurka" Op. 34 No. 3, "Couplet" Op. 34 No. 4, "Boutade" Op. 34 No. 5 (called "Badinage" in a manuscript), "Pensée mélodique" Op. 40 No. 6 as well as the "Rondoletto" Op. 40 No. 7 were written the following year. Here, too, we know nothing precise about their origin. Some of the pieces were perhaps the results of Sibelius's home music making; one can almost imagine him improvising dance pieces at the piano. The "Rondoletto" is undoubtedly the most dance-like piece in the 1914 cycle, and was apparently called "Walpurgis Dance" by the composer's daughters.

Two pieces – the "Scherzando" Op. 40 No. 8 and the "Petite sérénade" Op. 40 No. 9 – were composed in 1915. The two collections were finally completed in 1916 with "Danse pastorale" Op. 34 No. 7, "Joueur de harpe" Op. 34 No. 8 (printed as a facsimile in 1916 in a Christmas journal), "Reconnaissance" Op. 34 No. 9, "Souvenir" Op. 34 No. 10 and the "Polonaise" Op. 40 No. 10.

The works were soon widely enjoyed in home music making. But some of them were also heard in concerts, for example in Helsinki. The pianist Helene Trohimowsky played "Pensée mélodique" in 1917, and Sigrid Schnéevoigt had at least "Valsette" and "Boutade" in her repertoire the same year. And it is hardly surprising that the "Rondoletto" was taken as the basis for choreographies; Hertta Idman, for example, used it at a dance matinee she gave in Helsinki in 1917.

The Edition

Jean Sibelius often revised his works during the printing process, changing various details here and there. It is thus all the more regrettable that the corrected proof sheets for Opus 34 and Opus 40 have not survived. Unlike earlier editions, this new edition incorporates certain corrections and emendations found in the two facsimile prints ("Valsette", "Joueur de harpe") and several manuscripts, which are all preserved today in the University library in Helsinki, and which were examined by the editor for this edition. We have added a few caesuras and fermatas in parenthesis that are found in the aforementioned sources. However, it cannot be excluded that Sibelius removed them when correcting the proofs. Moreover, the editor added certain signs that are logical within the musical context, but which are not contained in the manuscripts. These additions are pointed out by smallprint or brackets.

Turku, Spring 1990 Fabian Dahlström