Hebridean Seascape

for
piano solo

by
Frank Merrick
transcribed
by
Ronald Stevenson

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Frank Merrick 1886-1981

At the age of 9 Frank Merrick made his concert debut and at the age of 12, sponsored by Paderewski, became a pupil of Leschetizky. Thus began a dual association that was to have a profound impact on the rest of his life. His last recital was given in 1978 when he was 92. At that time he could still play from memory Reger's *Bach variations* of which he had many years before given the first British performance.

Although devoted throughout his career to the classics, especially Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Brahms and John Field, all seven of whose piano concertos were in his repertoire, he also took an active interest in the works of his contemporaries. He gave the British premiere of Prokofiev's Sonata No. 7 and regularly played the music of Bax, Ireland and other British composers of his time.

As a composer Frank Merrick won both a Diploma of Honour at the 1910 Anton Rubinstein Competition in Petrograd and a prize from Columbia Records for his completion of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*.

A man of wide interests and sympathies derived in part from his mixed English and Irish parentage, he espoused many once unfashionable causes such as pacifism, women's suffrage and Esperanto. It has been said of him that 'it is hard to think of anyone who possessed such kindness and gentleness of character, and yet who had so much personality'. Thus he is warmly remembered by his many pupils and all who knew him; and this publication is issued not only for its intrinsic worth but also in tribute to a musician who evoked widespread affection and was deeply respected for his integrity and consistency of conviction.

Transcriber's note

It was in the greenroom after a London recital of mine in 1971 that my friend Frank Merrick suggested that I make a solo piano transcription of the slow movement (*Seascape*) of his second Piano Concerto (composed c. 1935). It wasn't until the Merrick Centenary Concert in the Purcell Room, London (30 April 1986) that I honoured my promise.

Frank Merrick told me that in the first decade of our century he heard a Skye fisherwoman's sea-chant, taken down from the actual sea-borne singing of a woman off the coast of the Isle of Skye. This heroic melody is used in the central section of the *Hebridean Seascape*.

A Skye fisherwoman was (and is) a rarity. Indeed, the Skye poet Aonghas MacNeacail informs me that his great aunt, the late Miss Malcolmina (known as 'Galina') Stewart, was perhaps unique in being a Skye fisherwoman with her own boat within living memory. The fishermen frowned on female invasion of their province and were also mindful of the occupational hazards. Miss Stewart was born in the 1870s, so, in the first decade of this century, she would have been a mature working woman. She also sang, as nearly all Hebridean women did. It is a conjecture, but she may well have been the anonym who supplied the great, shouting tune. If not, let her name stand for that valiant, peaceful legion of women who fostered the perpetuity of Hebridean folksong; who were tradition-bearers as well as child-bearers.

Ronald Stevenson

September 1986

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for piano solo

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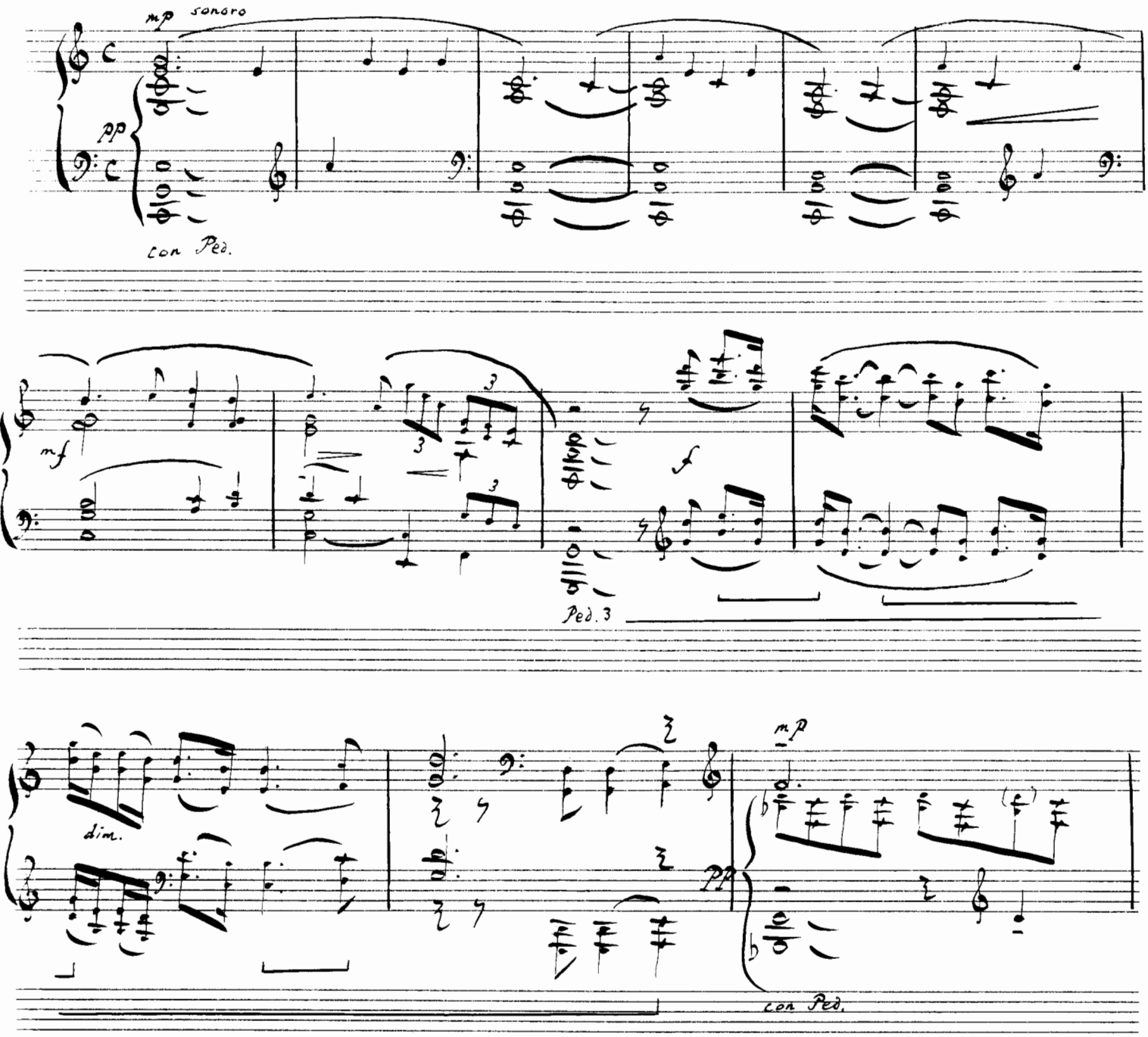
Largo (♩ = c. 66)



Duration: 12 minutes

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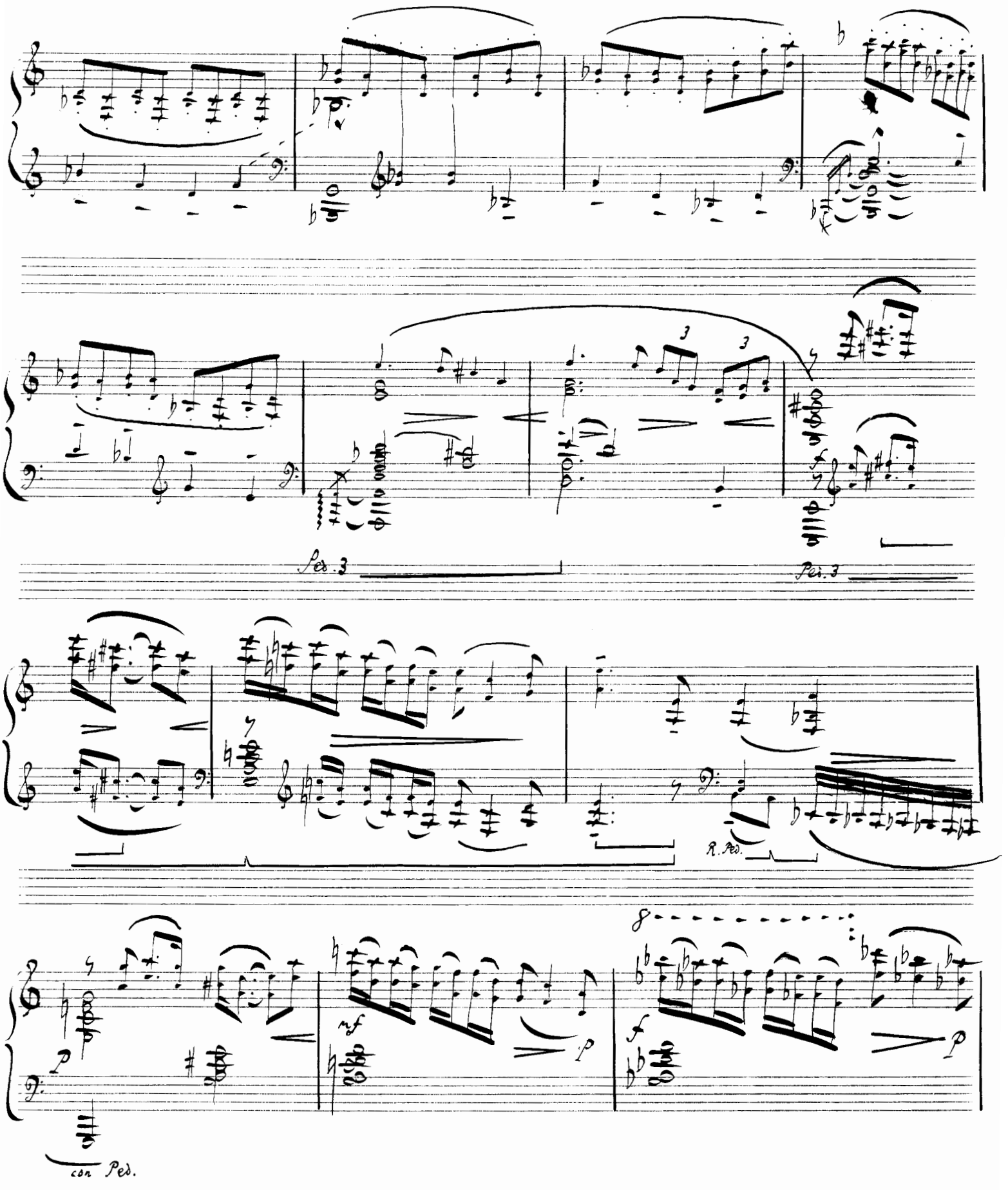
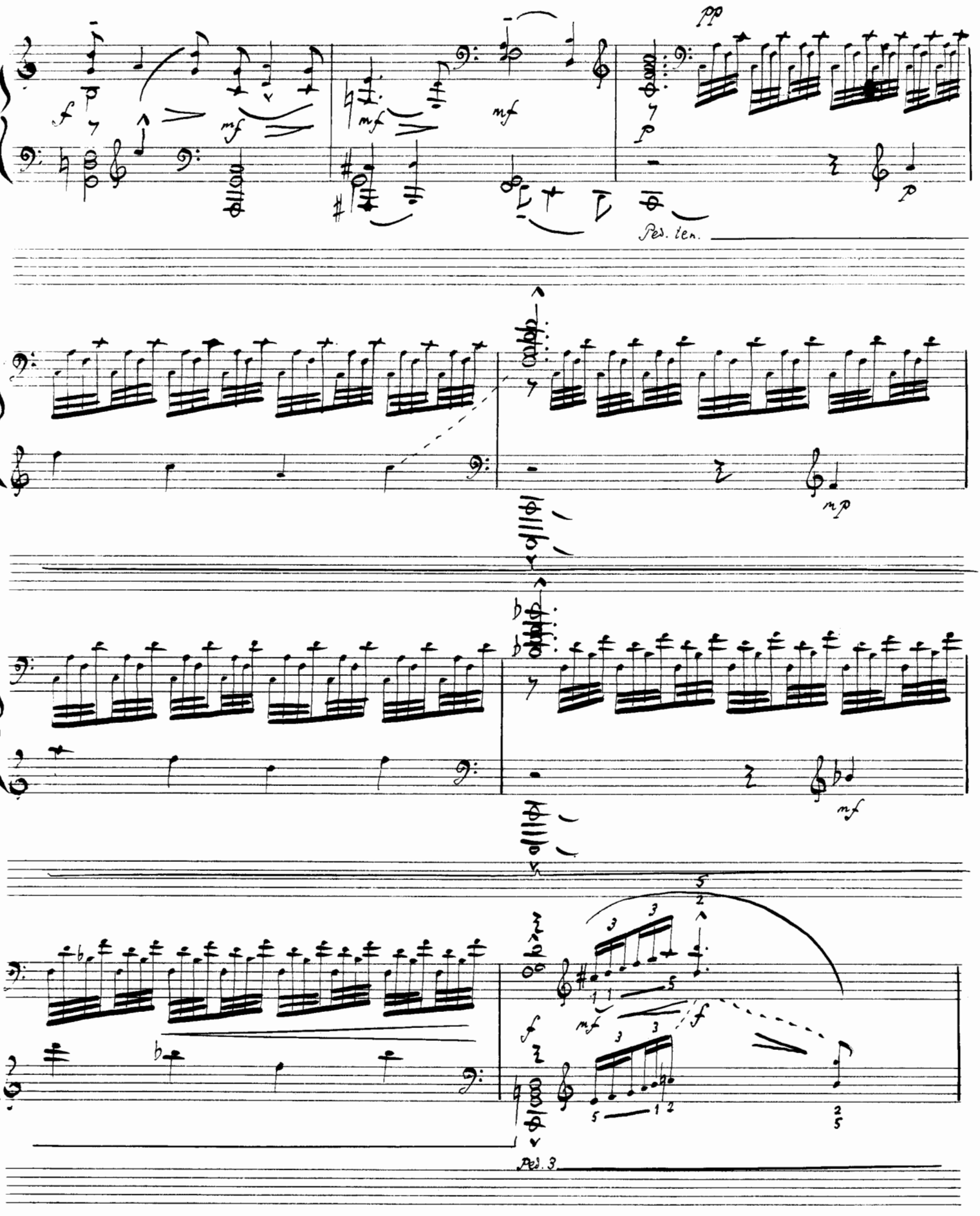
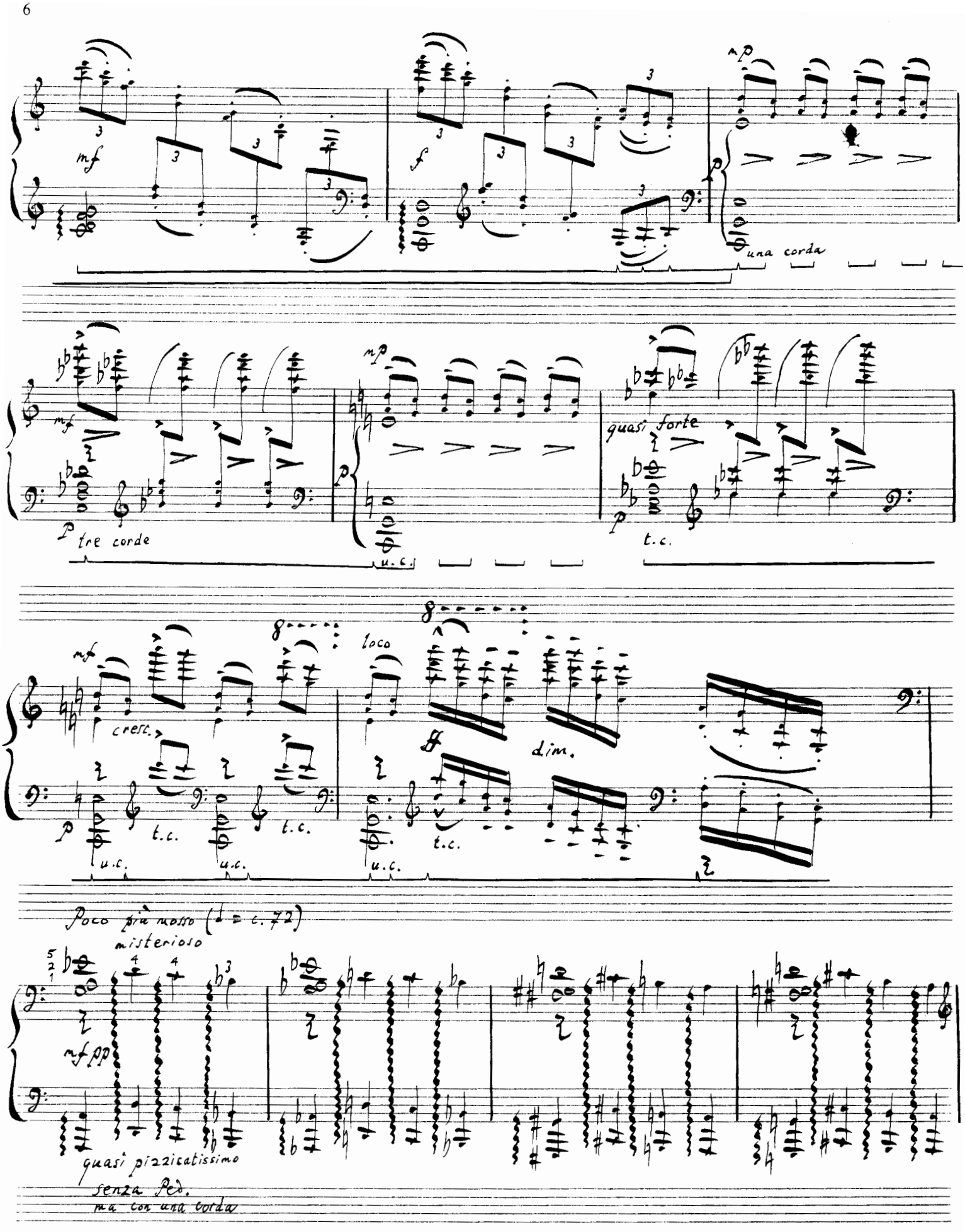
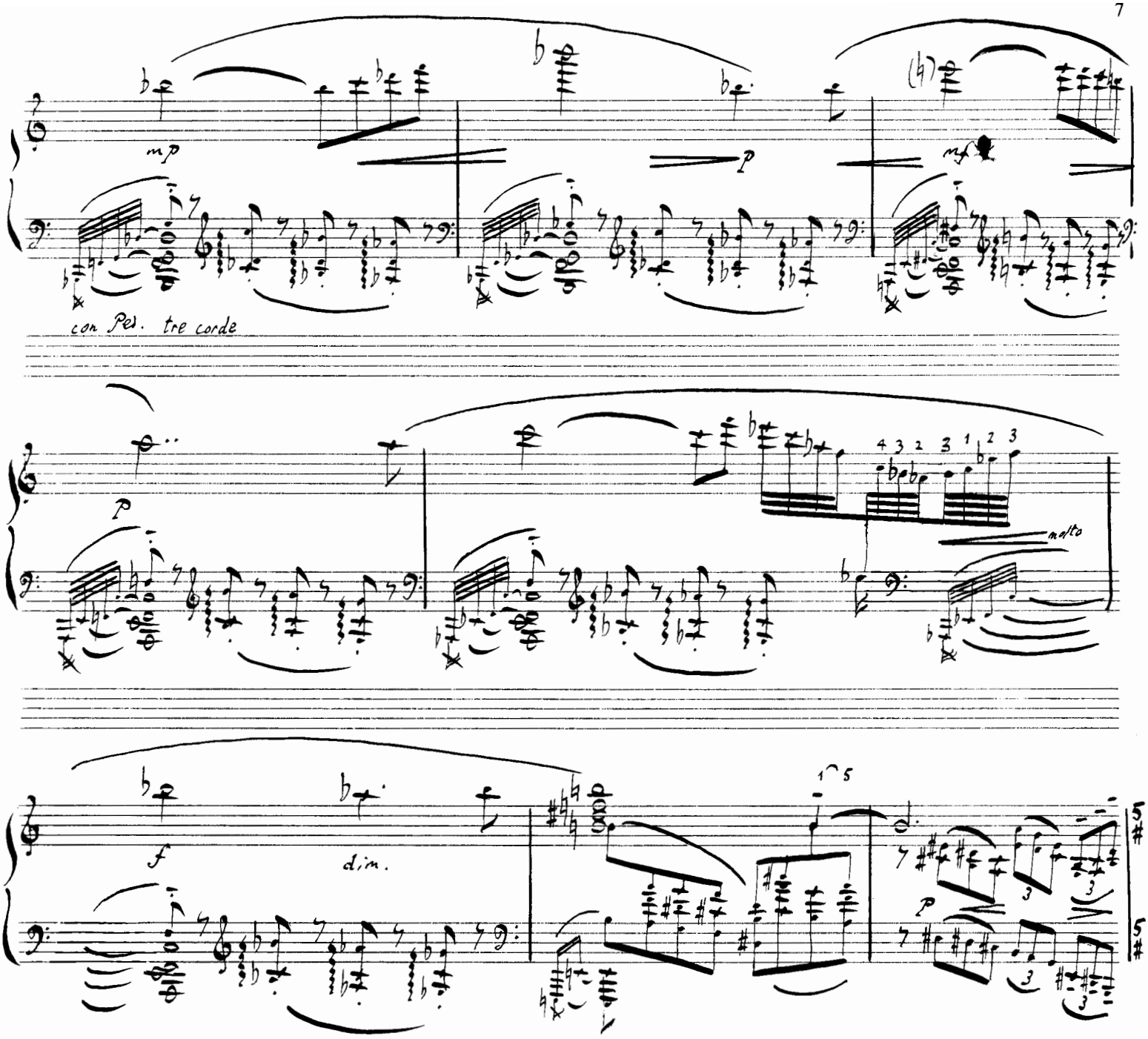
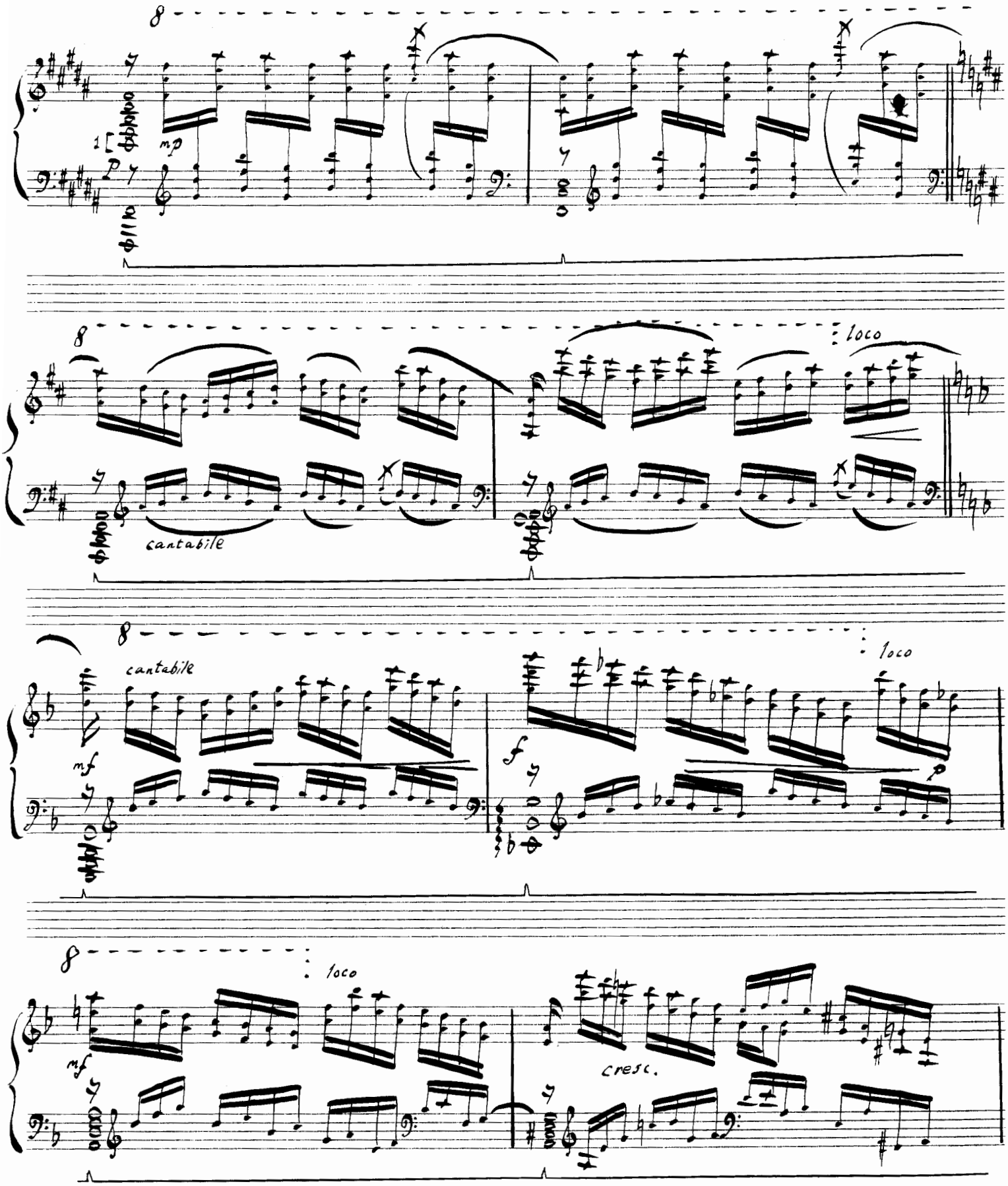
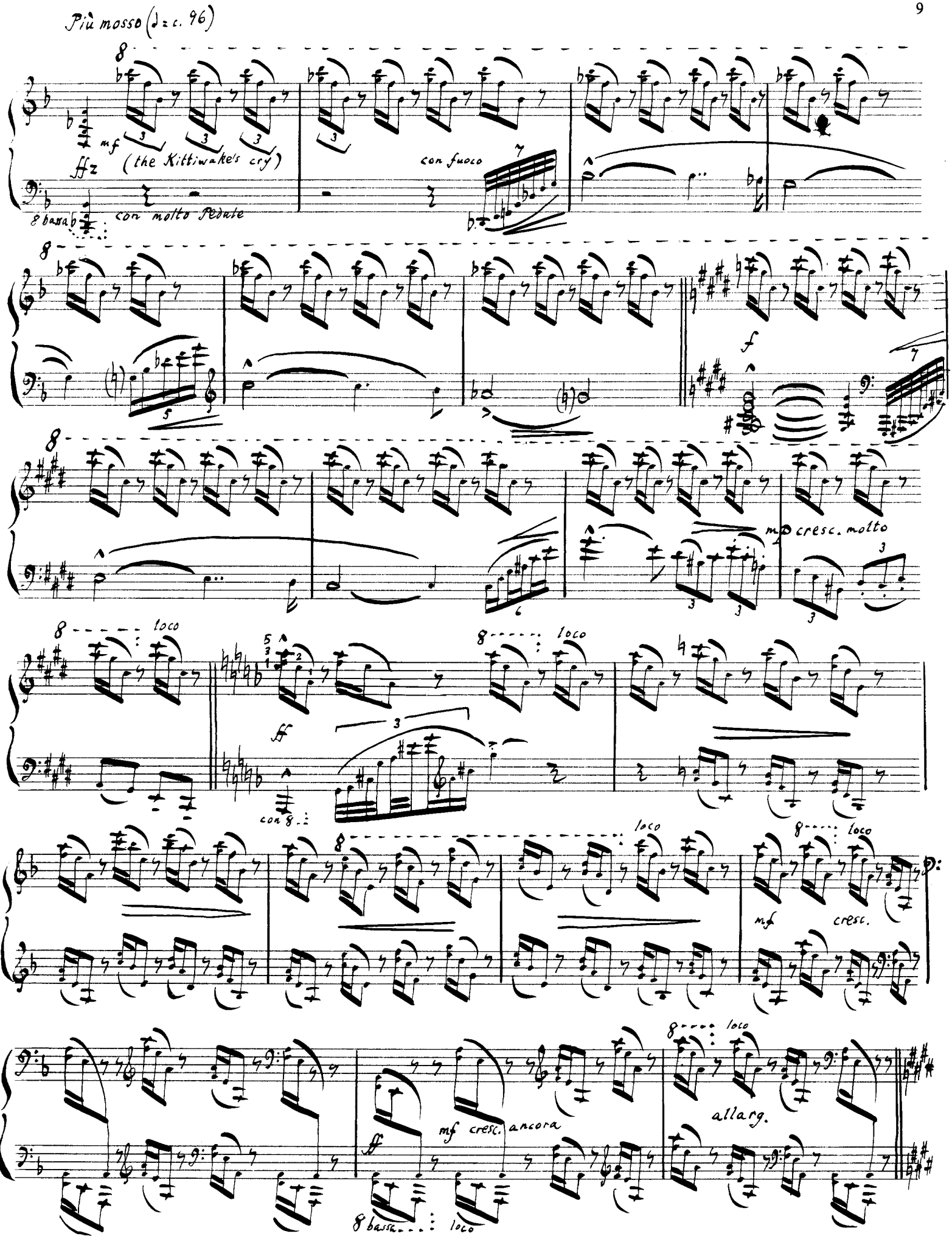

Ped. 3
Ped. 3
R. Ped.
con Ped.

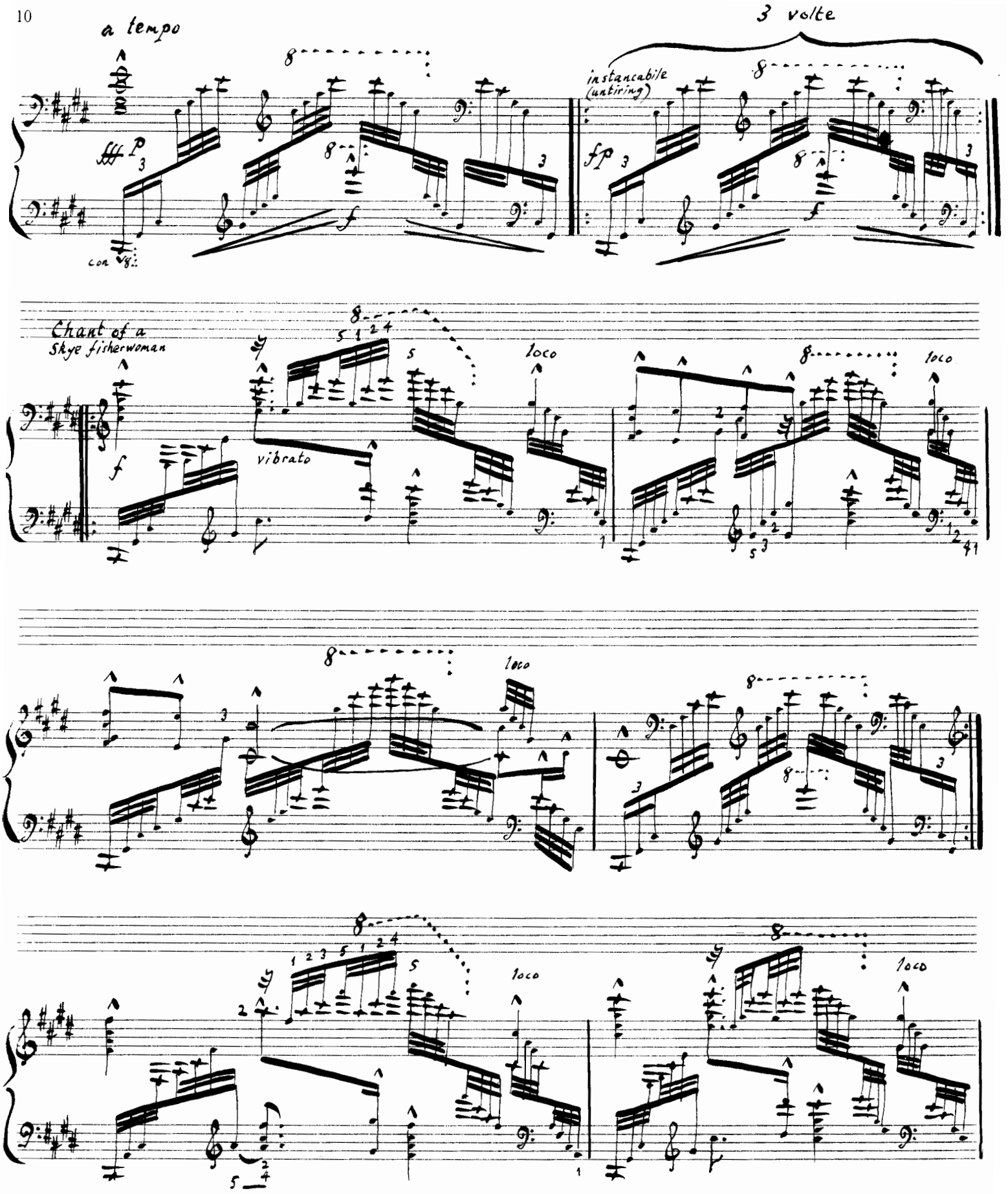

pp
f
mf
mf
mf
f
p
Ped. ten.
mp
mf
mf
f
f
Ped. 3

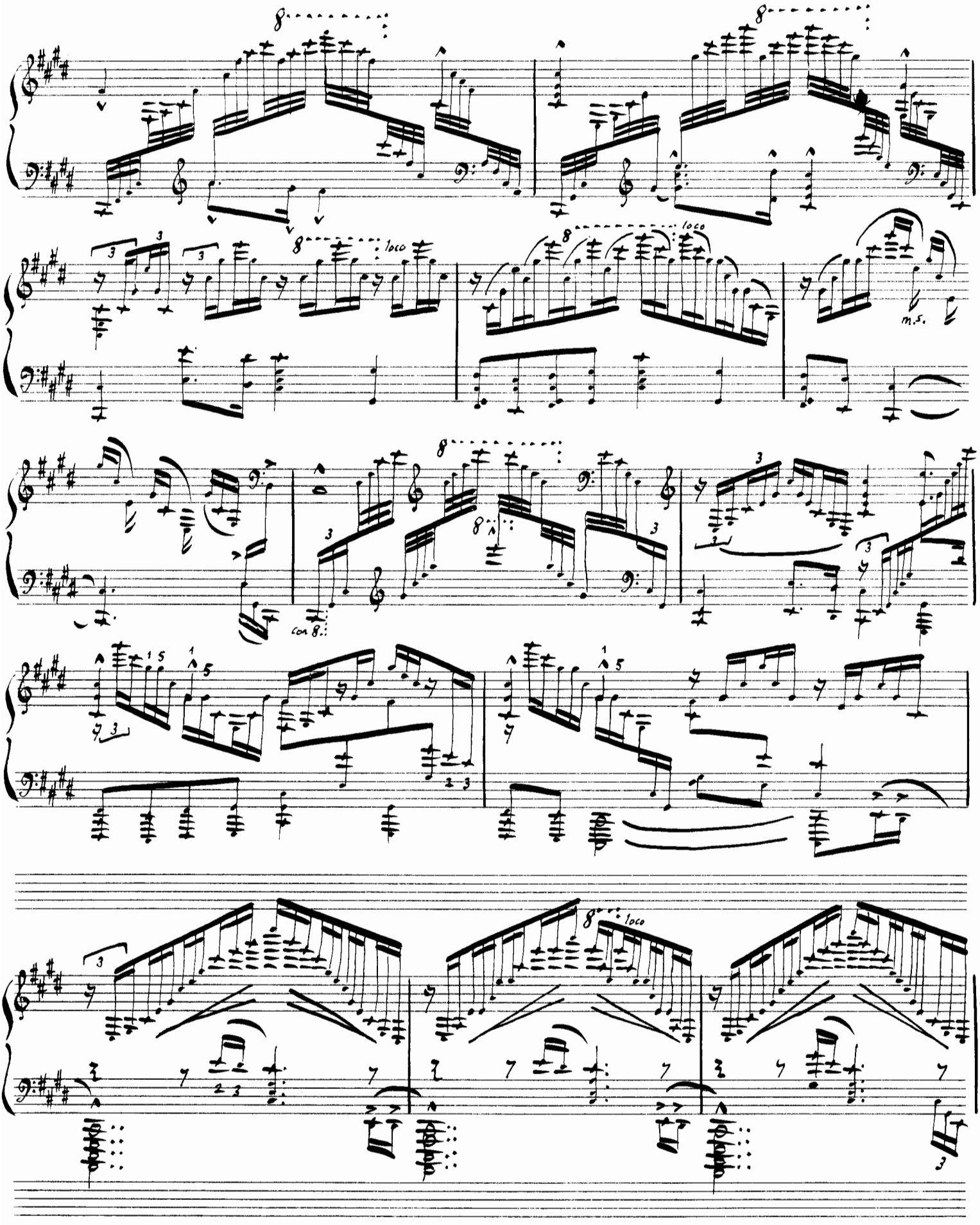

mf
una corda
tre corde
quasi forte
t.c.
u.c.
cresc.
loco
dim.
Poco più mosso (♩ = c. 72)
misterioso
quasi pizzicatissimo
senza Ped.
ma con una corda

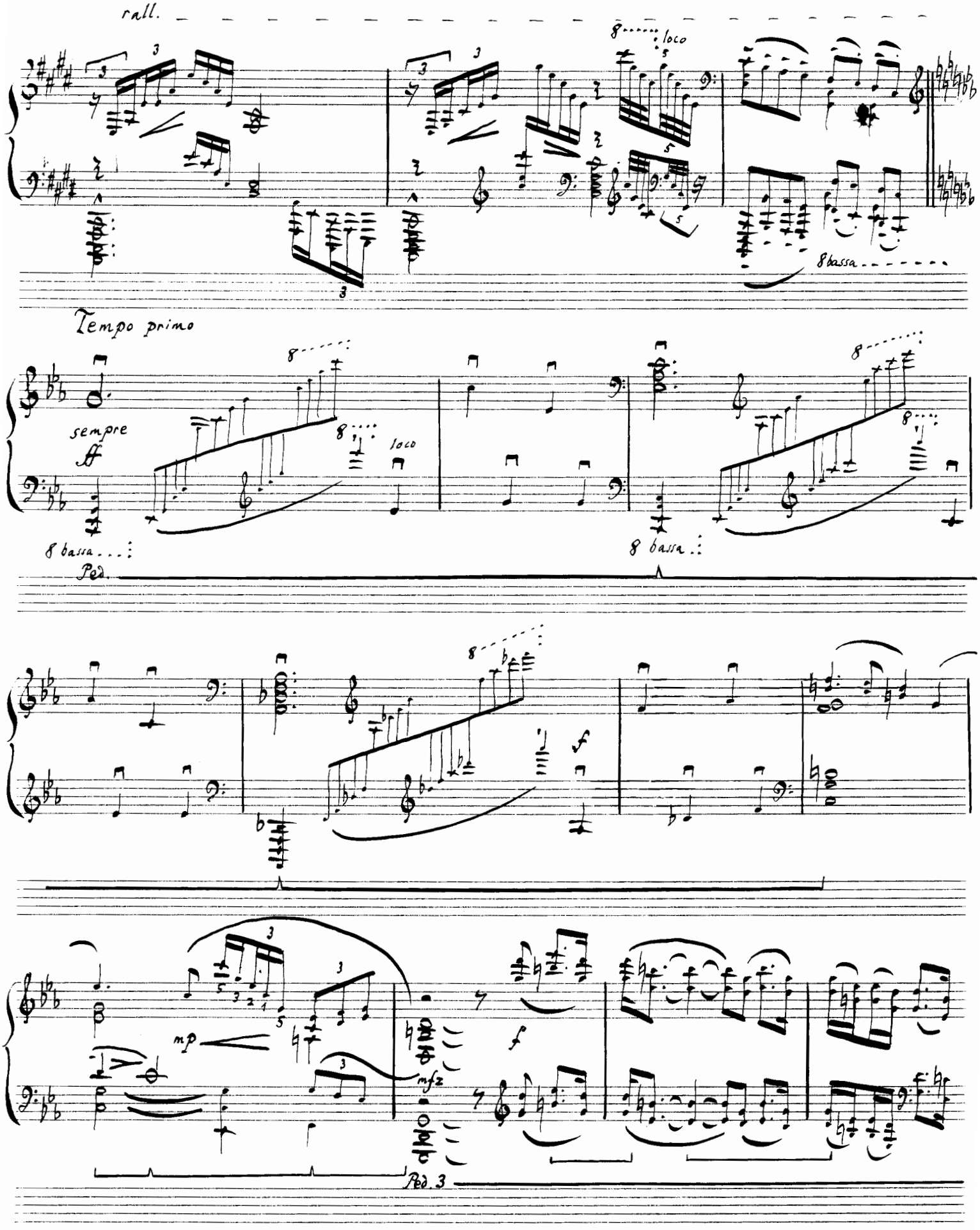

mp
p
mf
con Ped. tre corde
p
molto
f
dim.
p

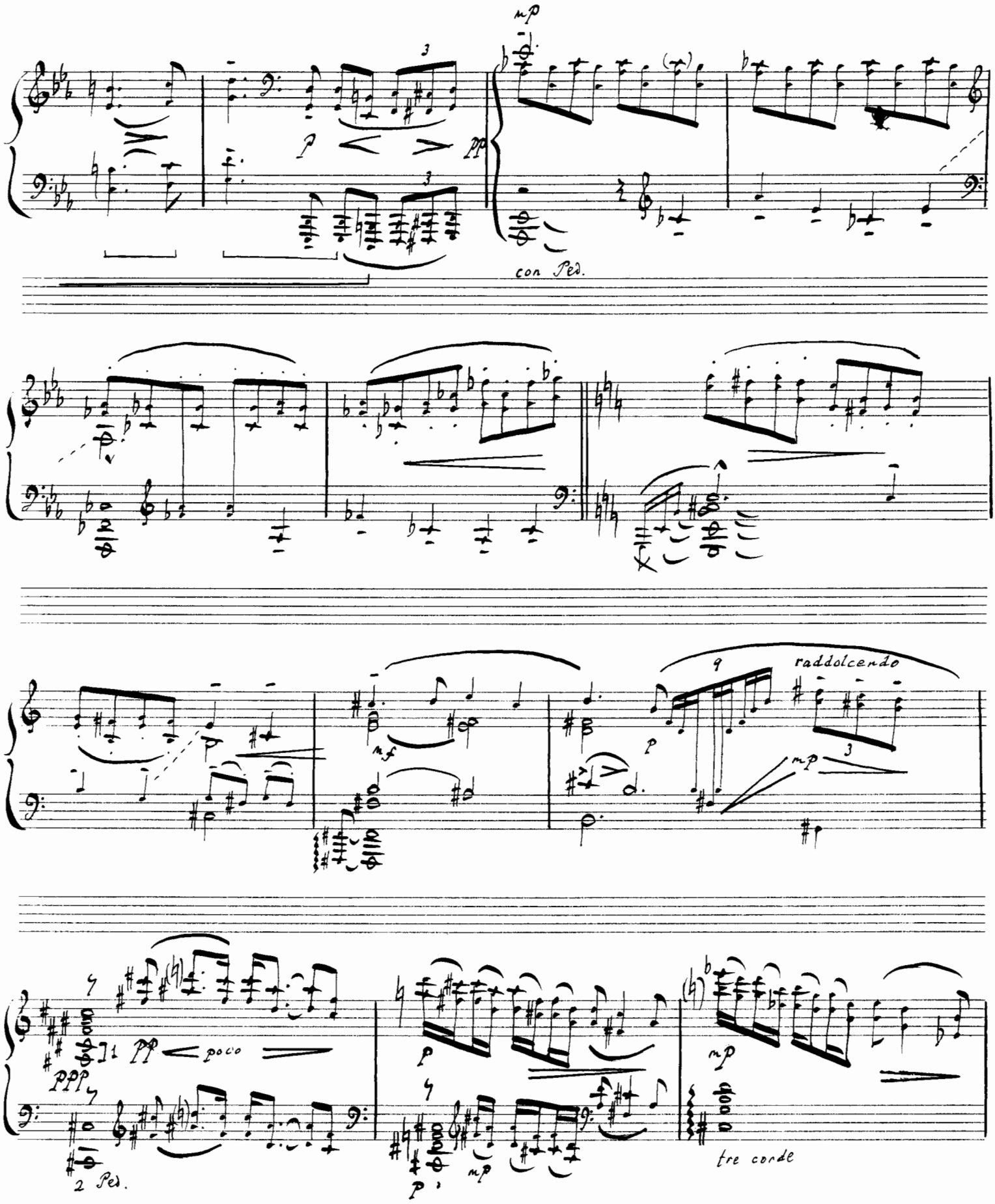

8
mp
8
loco
cantabile
8
cantabile
mf
f
loco
8
mf
loco
cresc.

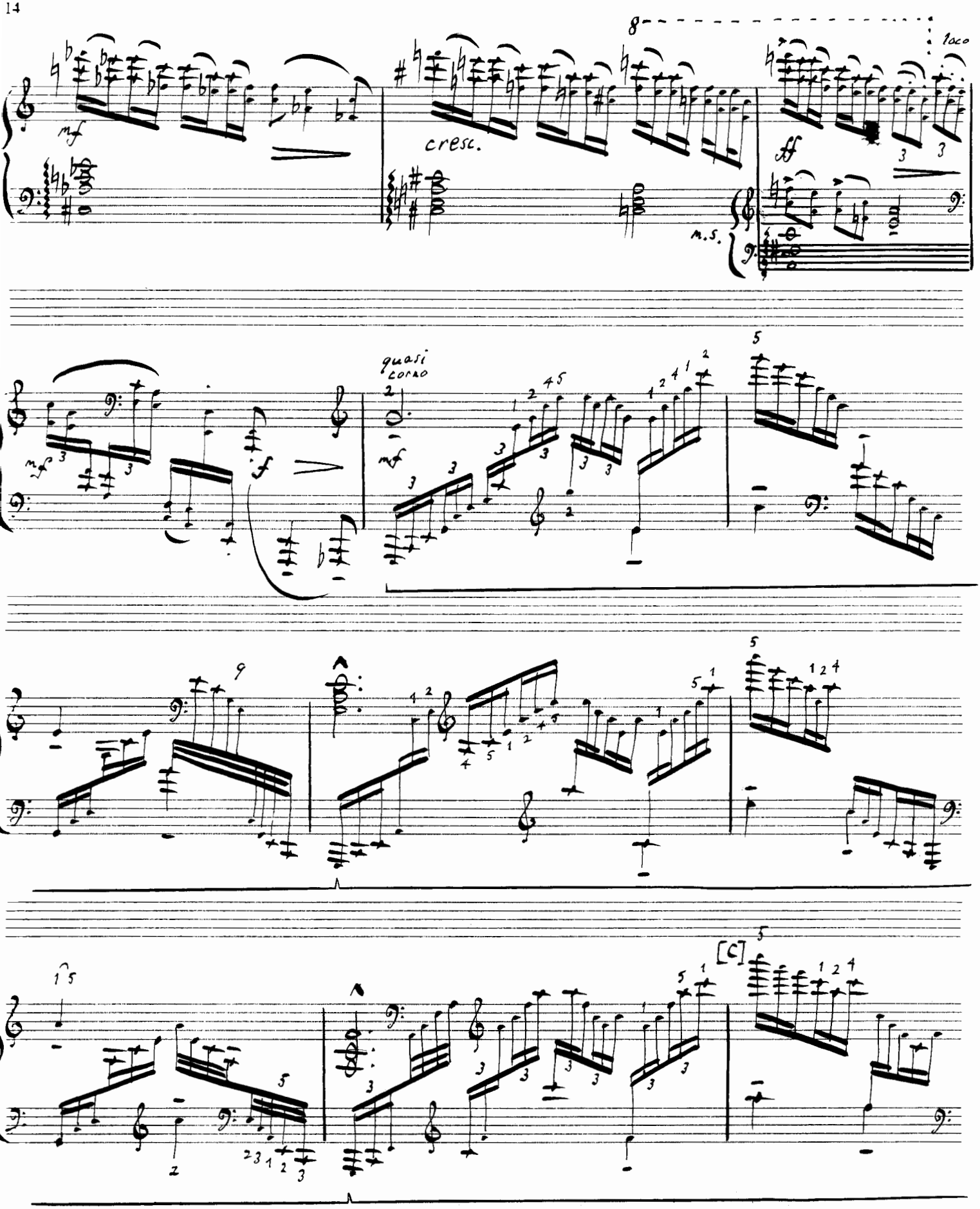

Più mosso (♩= c. 96)
mf
(the Kittiwake's cry)
ffz
con molto pedale
8 bassa
con fuoco
f
mp cresc. molto
loco
ff
con 8
mf cresc.
allarg.
mf cresc. ancora
8 bassa loco

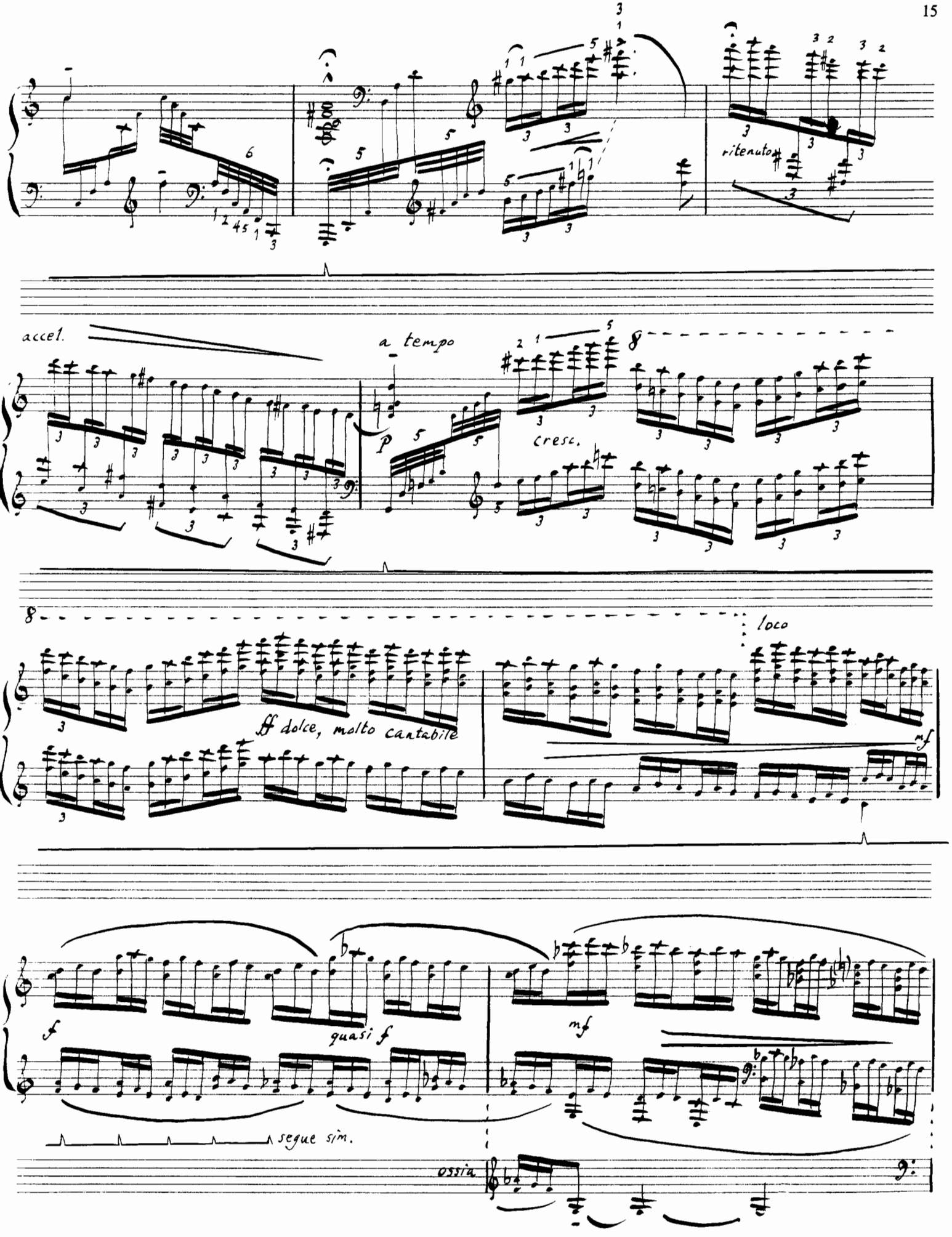

a tempo
3 volte
instancabile
(untiring)
con 8va
Chant of a
Skye fisherwoman
vibrato
loco

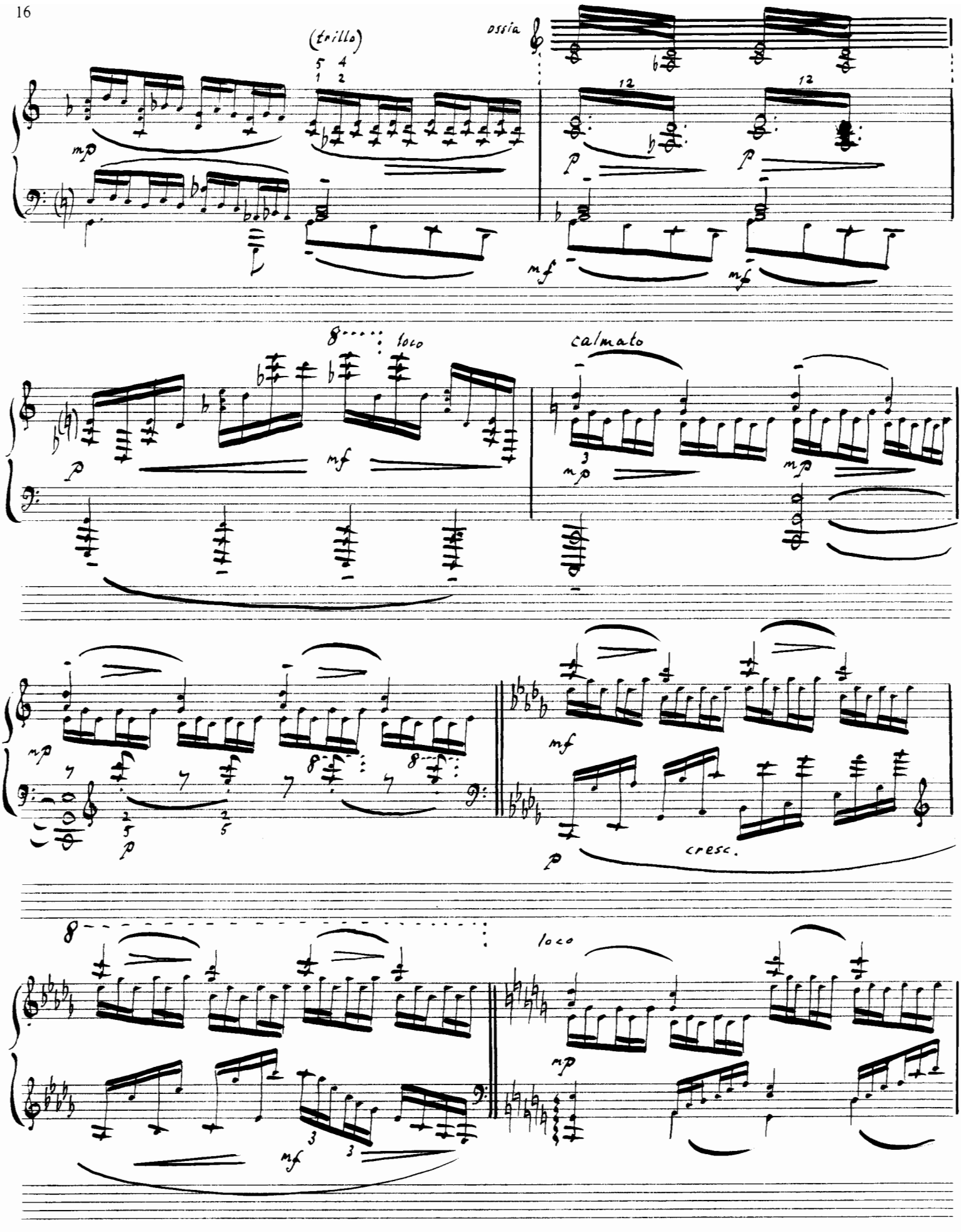

8
loco
m.s.
con 8.

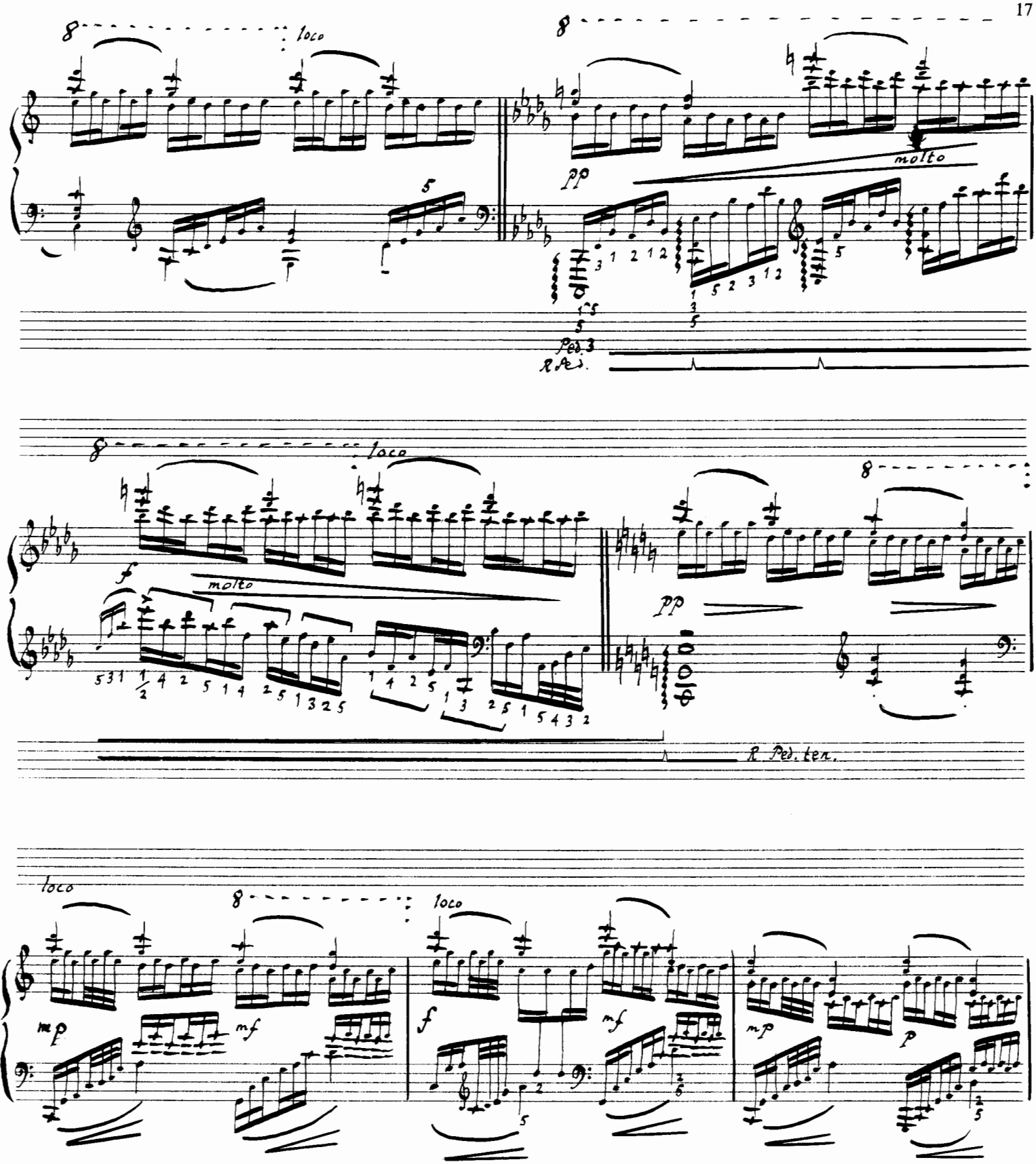

rall.
8 loco
8 bassa
Tempo primo
sempre
ff
8 bassa
Ped.
f
mp
mfz
Ped. 3

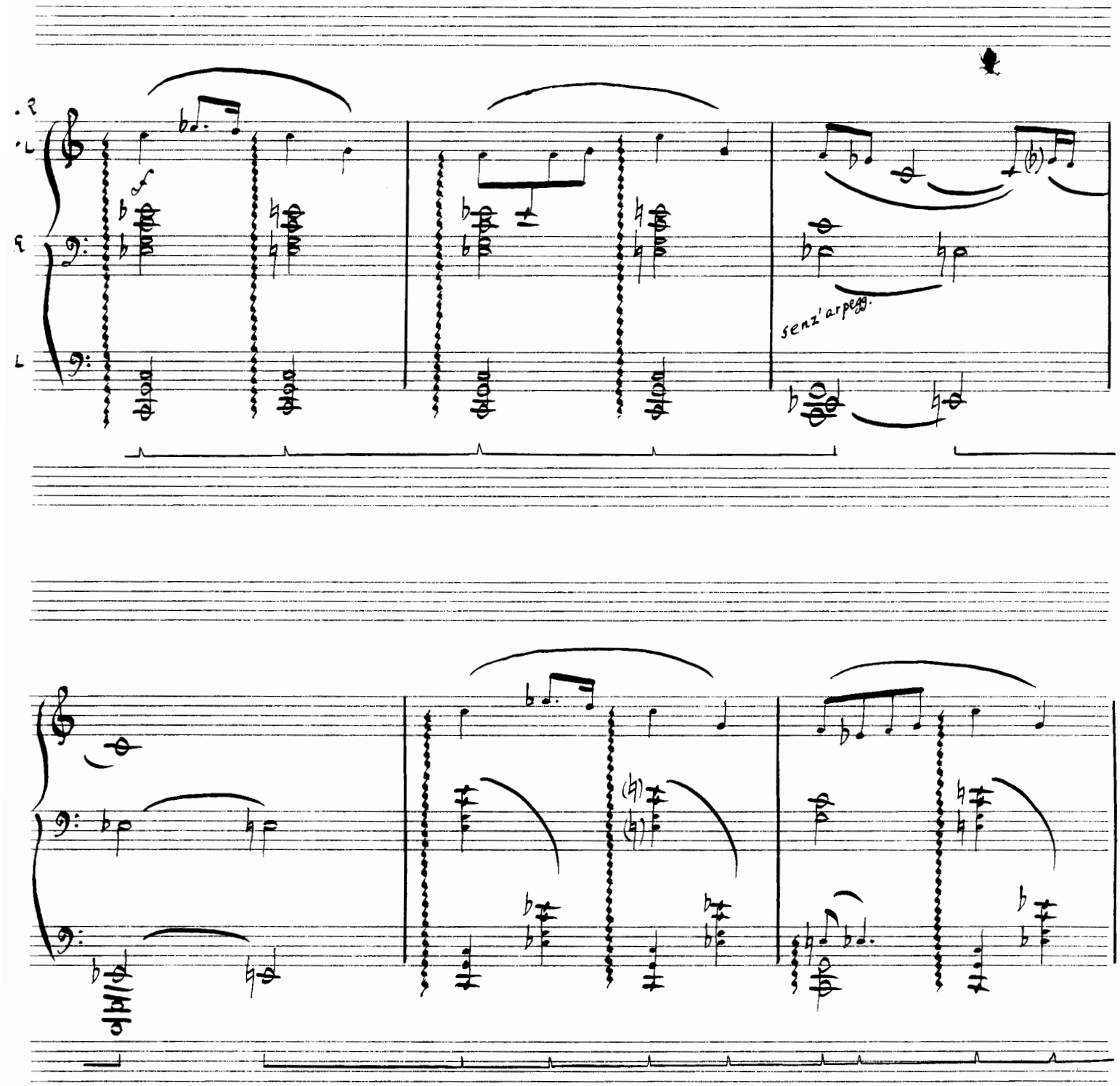

mp
con Ped.
raddolcendo
poco
2 Ped.
tre corde

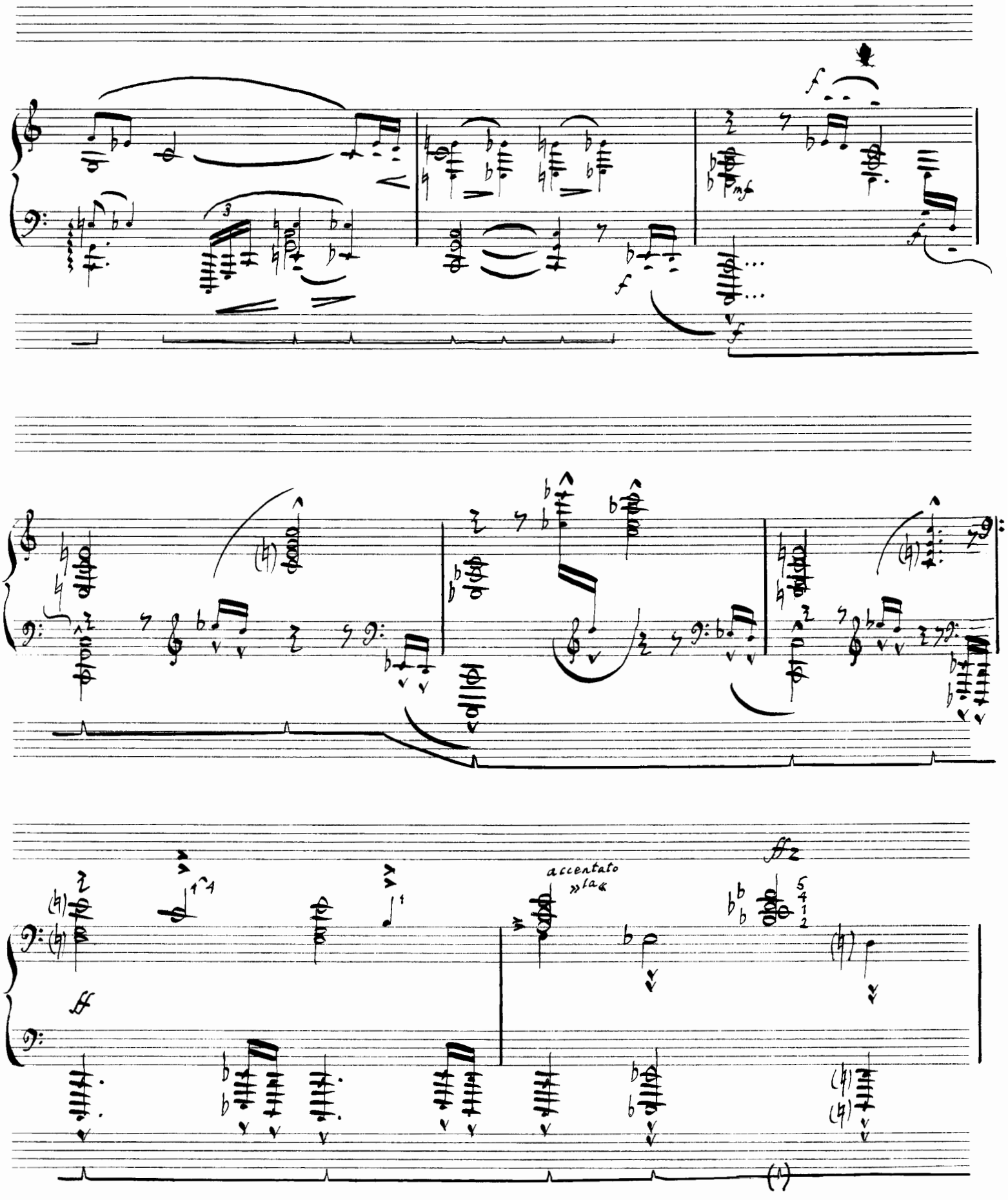

8
loco
mf
cresc.
ff
m.s.
quasi corno
mf
mf
f
9
[C]

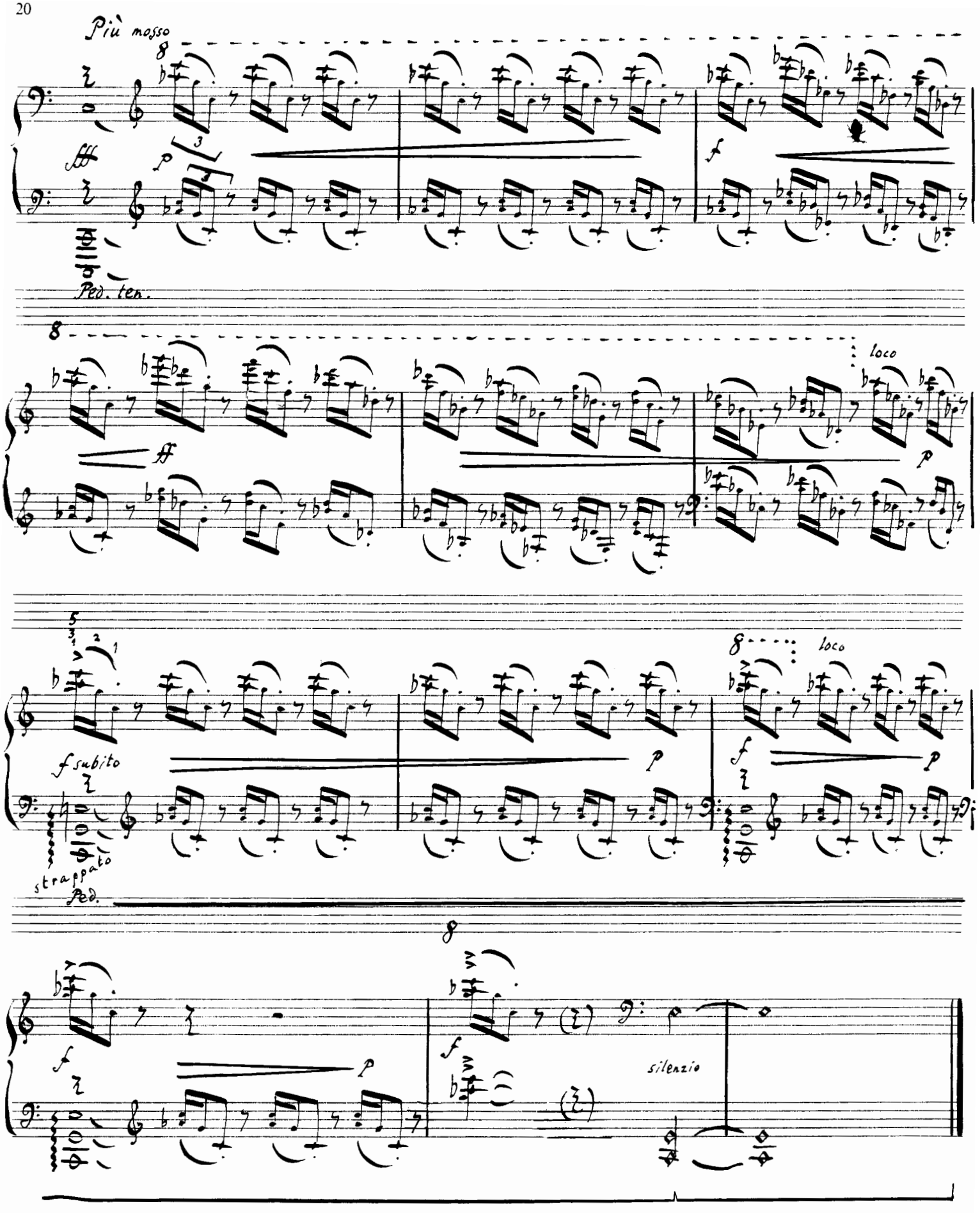

ritenuto
accel.
a tempo
cresc.
loco
ff dolce, molto cantabile
mf
f
quasi f
mf
segue sim.
ossia


(trillo)
ossia
mp
p
mf
8
loco
calmato
cresc.


loco
pp
molto
Ped. 3
R. Ped.
loco
f
molto
pp
R. Ped. ten.
loco
mp
mf
loco
f
mf
mp
p


senz' arpegg.


accentato
»la«



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