Sergei RACHMANINOV

PRELUDES

Opus 32 N° 1 C major

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Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

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Sergei RACHMANINOV

1873 - 1843

PRELUDE Opus 32 N° 1 C major

The composition of 24 preludes covering all the major and minor keys is a huge challenge and Rachmaninov's contribution was spread over 20 years. In spite of the demands of an active and successful stage career at the piano and on the podium, with limited time for composing, he rapidly completed Op 32 between August and September 1910. These tone poems created in his middle years reveal an even more improvisatory style, often with an exclusive atmosphere and no precise form. Unlike Op 23, they are without dedication.

At the age of 19 his celebrated C♯ minor prelude gained so much success that his public would not allow him to leave the stage unless he performed it, yet again, as an encore. He believed that any of the 23 preludes following this youthful first essay in the genre were far superior, although one must admit that he had certainly hit upon a unique formula to excite his audiences. However, the "Bells of Moscow" would cause him intense irritation.

In December 1911 Rachmaninov first played pieces from opus 32, and during his subsequent career as a pianist he regularly included individual preludes in concert programmes, especially N° 5, 8 and 12.

Given that the composer was born in 1873, an age of great artistic individuality, it is not surprising that he typically performed without wholly respecting the score. His choice of tempi is quite idiosyncratic and this edition reflects some of the more effective deviations and the editor's preferences, sometimes indicated with an asterisk*.

Some of the phrasing, dynamics and agogic markings have been modified and a zealous student will need to consult the original Russian Gutheil or Robert Threlfall's Boosey & Hawkes 1992 edition.

As Brigitte François-Sappey pertinently states : *"many of these preludes demonstrate the 'new poetic age' of Schumann and the songs without words of Mendelssohn, redefined by a Slavic, post-Chopin sensibility, and the energy of a pianistic force."*

This first prelude in C is marked a*llegro vivace* with minim beats. A brief typically chromatic creation — mostly *forte* with a soft central section moving swiftly through distant harmonies on its short journey back to the home key.

5-13 sostenuto pedal suggestions are entirely editorial

16 there is a slight modification at the end of the bar

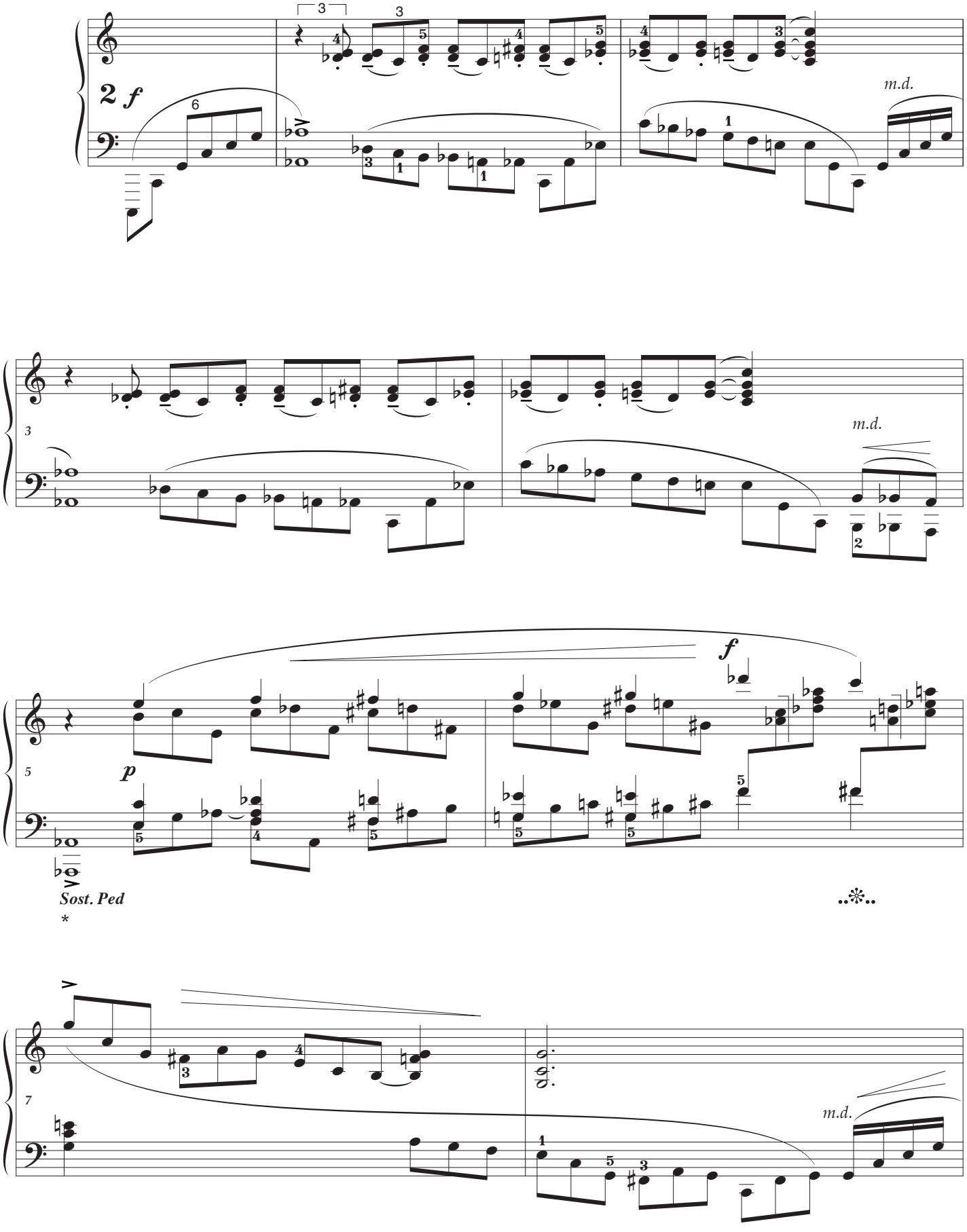
19-25 barlines have been modified

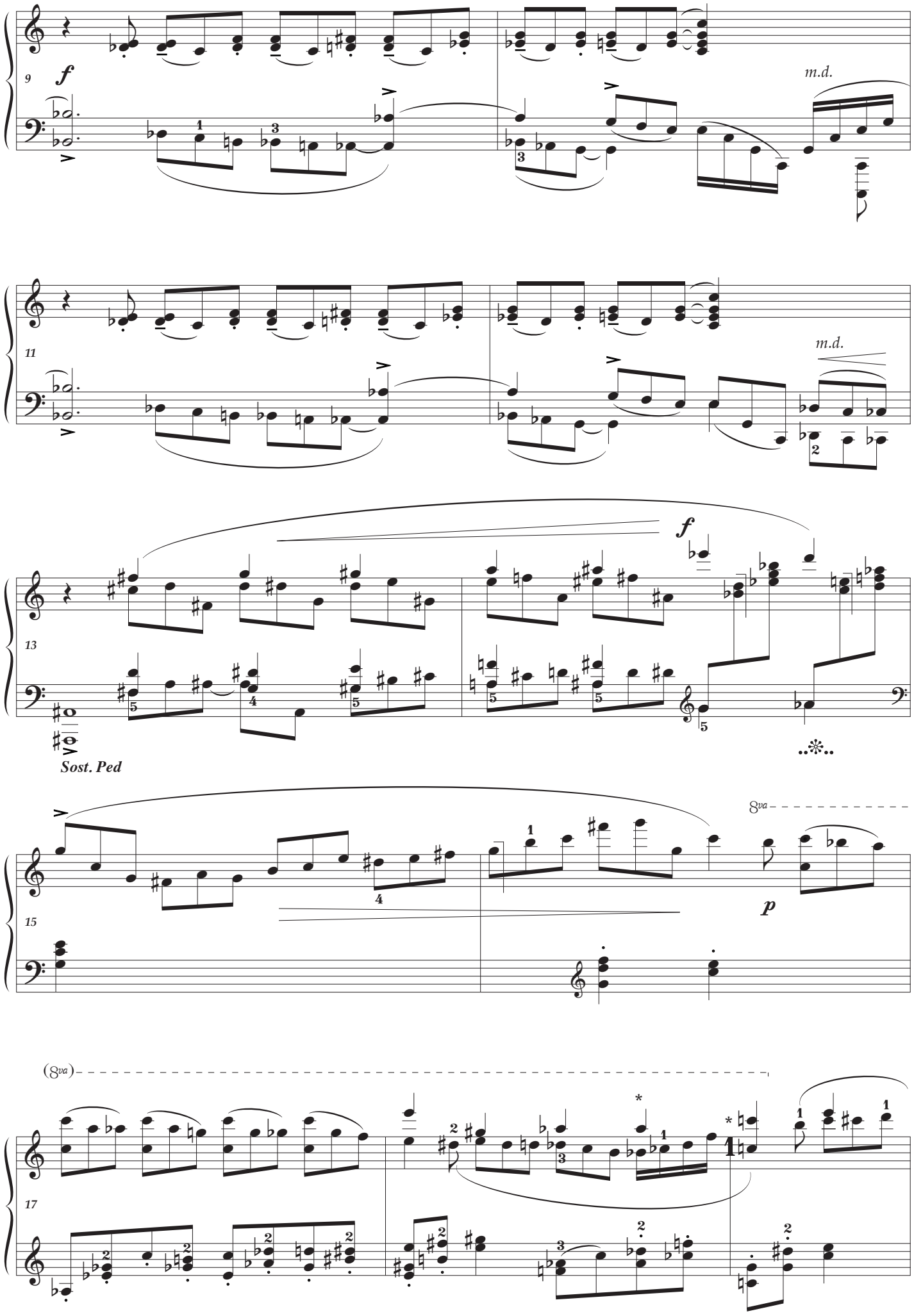
34-35 acciaccaturas are editorial

PRELUDE

Op 32 Nº 1

allegro vivace

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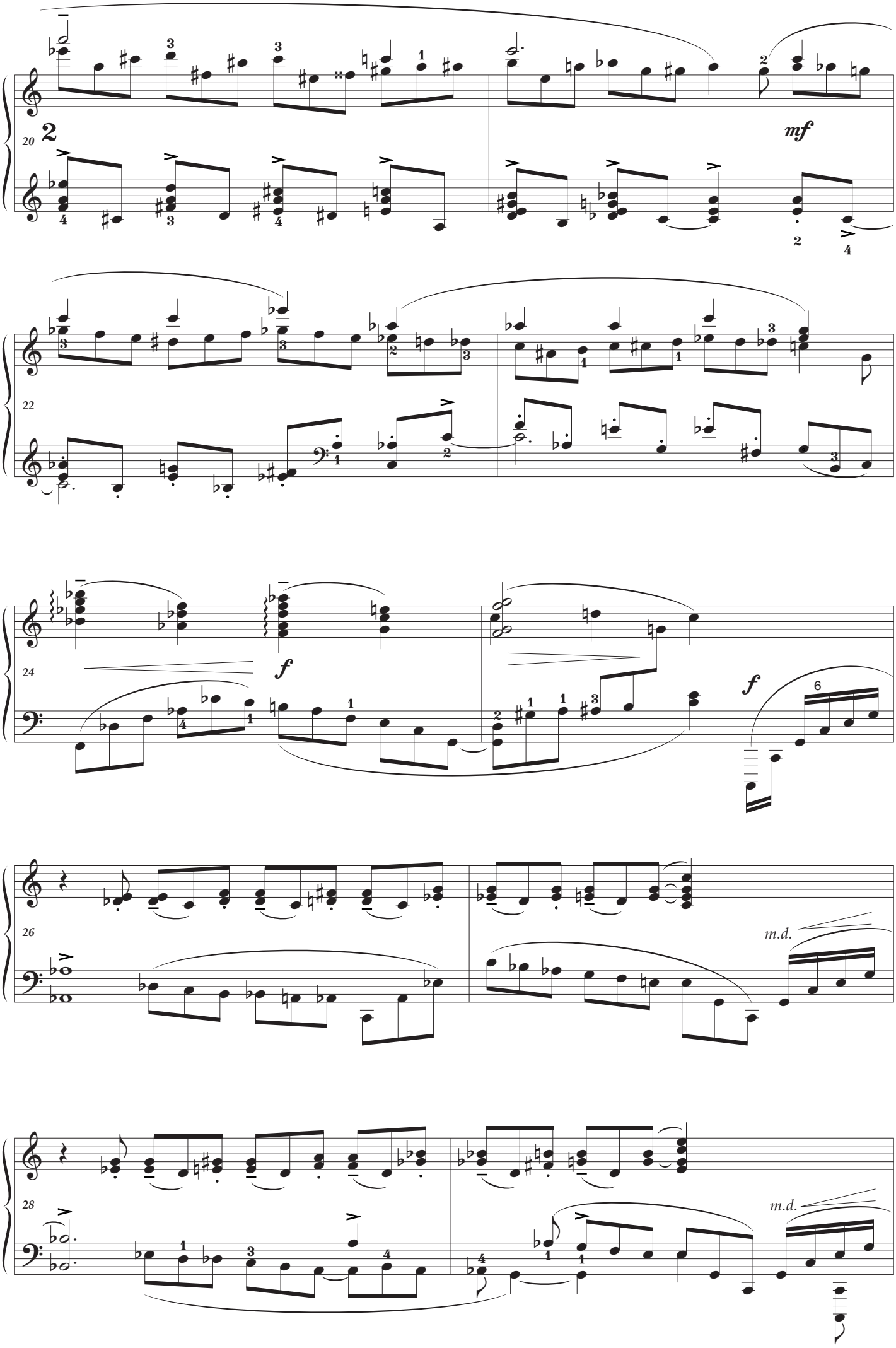
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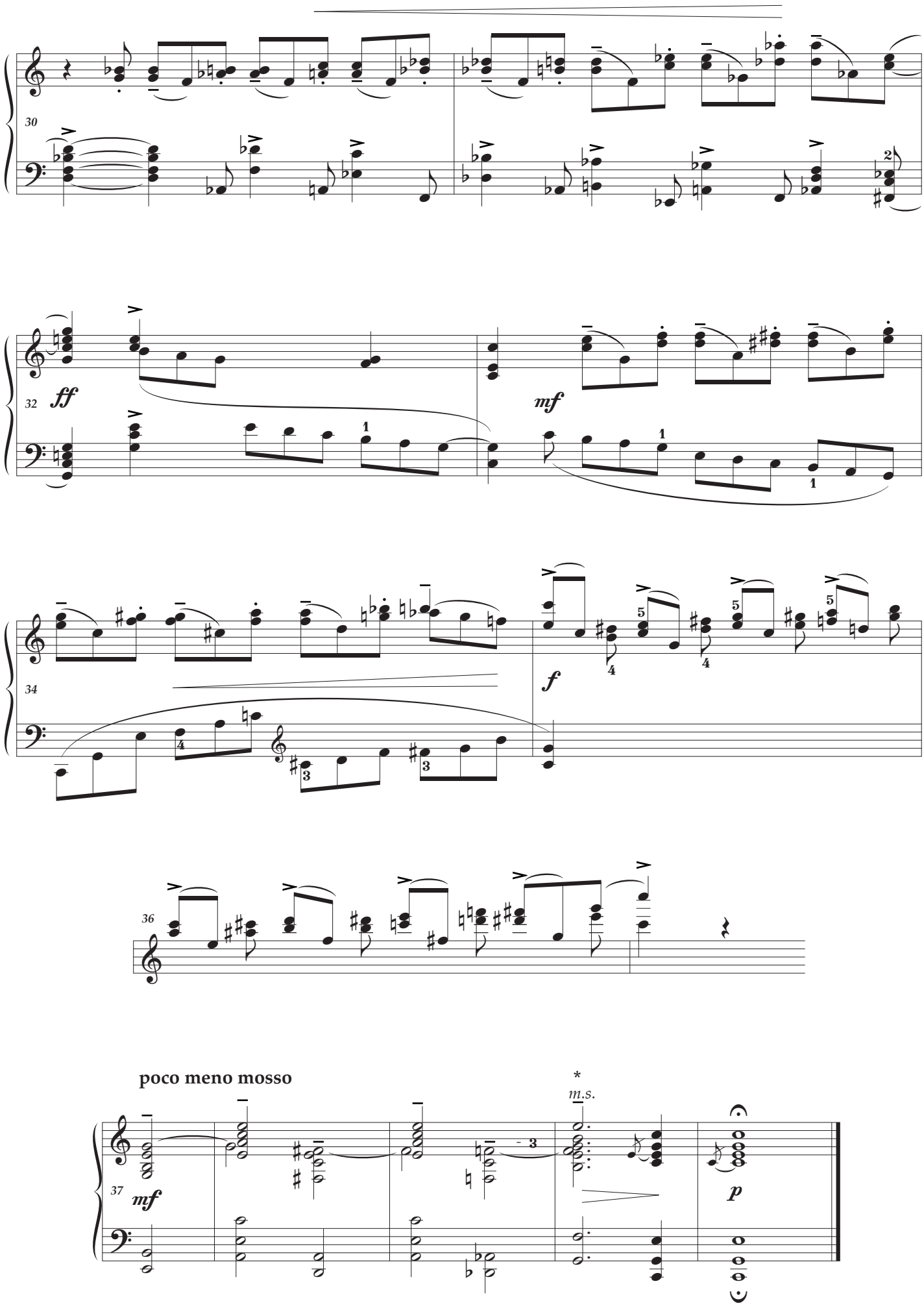
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RACHMANINOV

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