Sergei RACHMANINOV

PRELUDES

Opus 32 N° 10 B minor

Piano Practical Editions
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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° 10 B minor

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. 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.

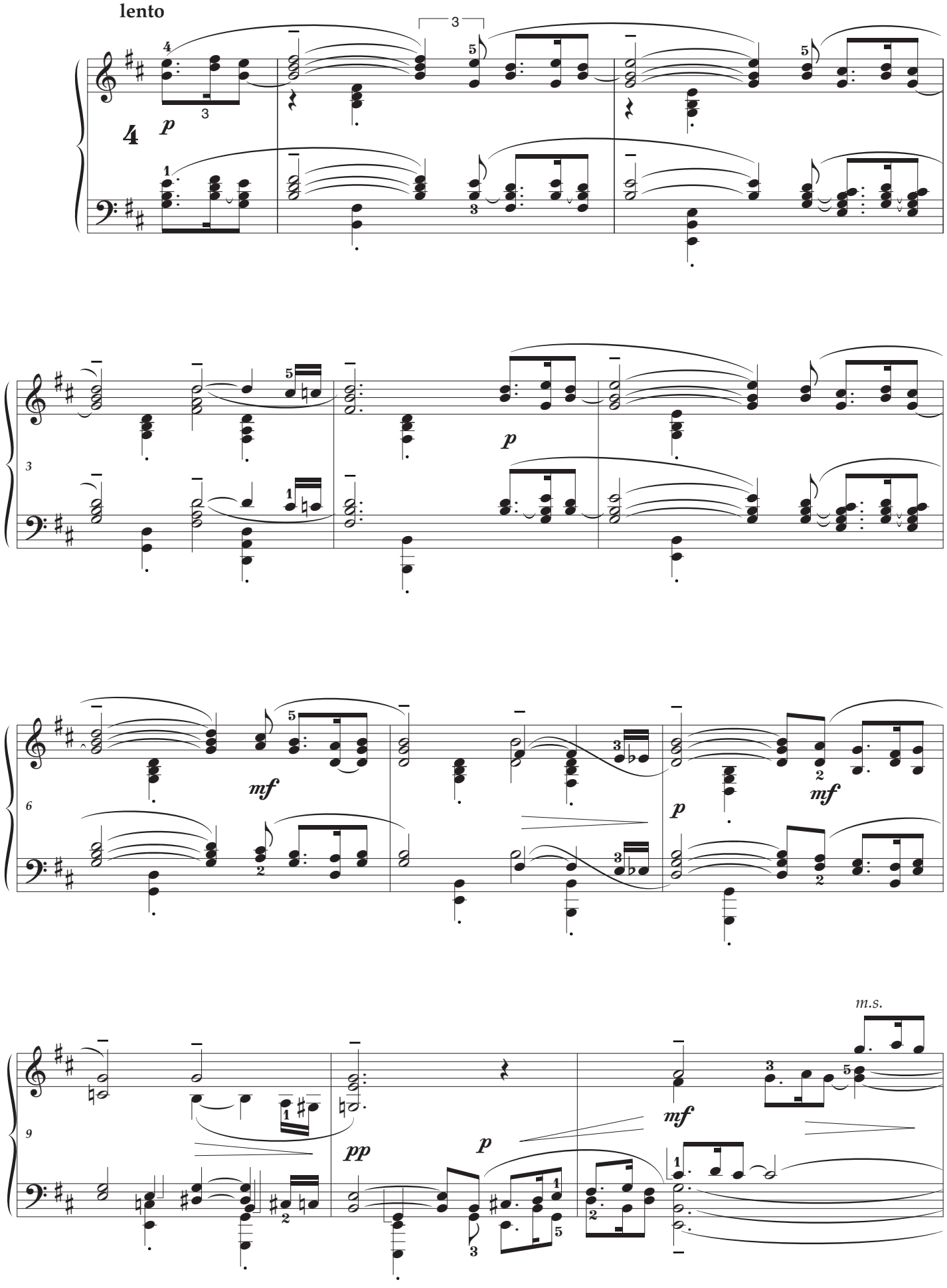
Like the symphonic poem *Isle of the Dead* this prelude, the composer's personal favourite, was inspired by the Swiss symbolist Arnold Böcklin. Confronted by this extraordinary music, alternating between the hypnotically sombre and climactic, we pianists have an enigmatic autumnal picture with which to align our interpretations. The sword-bearing man dressed in a red, military uniform cannot be looking forward to a happy homecoming and the subsequent development of thematic material will prompt us to relive painful memories of inner turmoil and anguish. Perhaps, as Robert Buxton suggests, Rachmaninov is reflecting sadly on his permanent exile and drawing an analogy between this picture and nostalgia for his homeland.

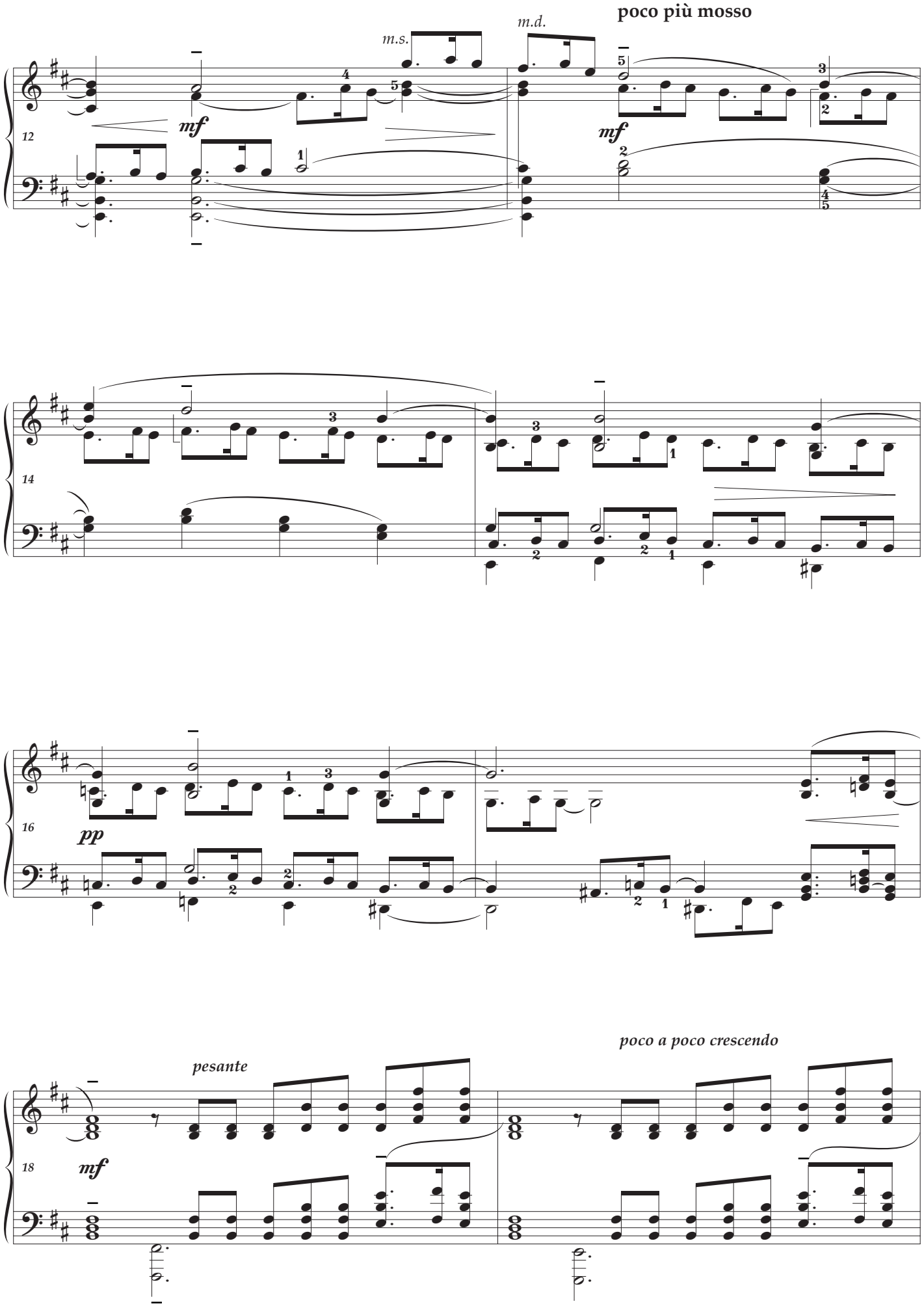
One must resist the urge to perform too loudly the central accompanying triplet chords; they can so easily submerge the melodic line (re-written on the middle stave).

Die Heimkehr Arnold Böcklin

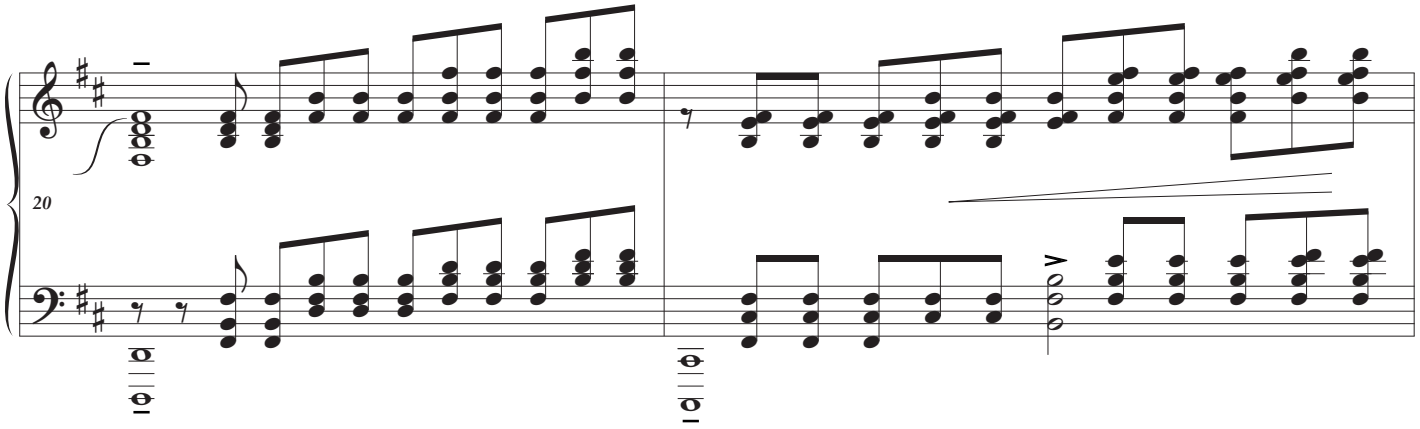
PRELUDE

Op 32 Nº 10

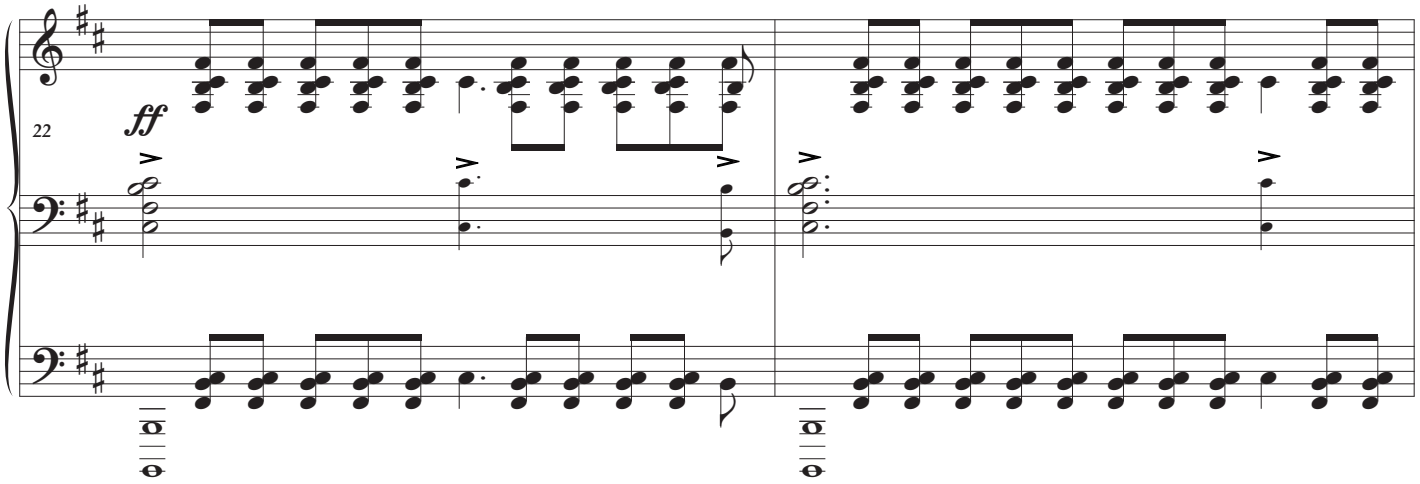


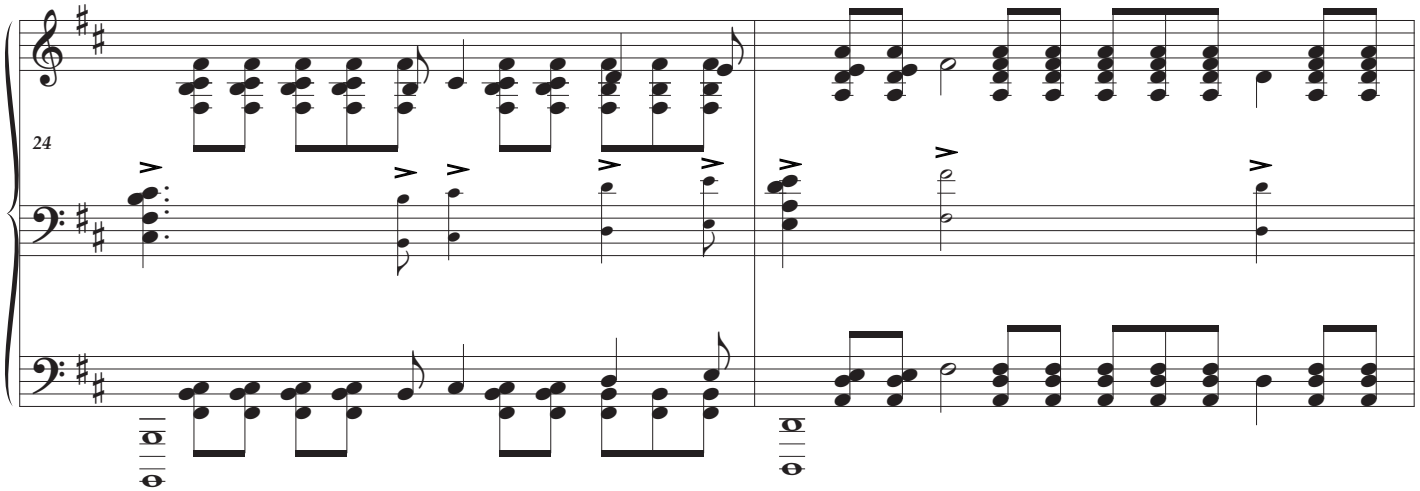

poco più mosso
m.s.
m.d.
12
mf
mf
14
16
pp
18
mf
pesante
poco a poco crescendo

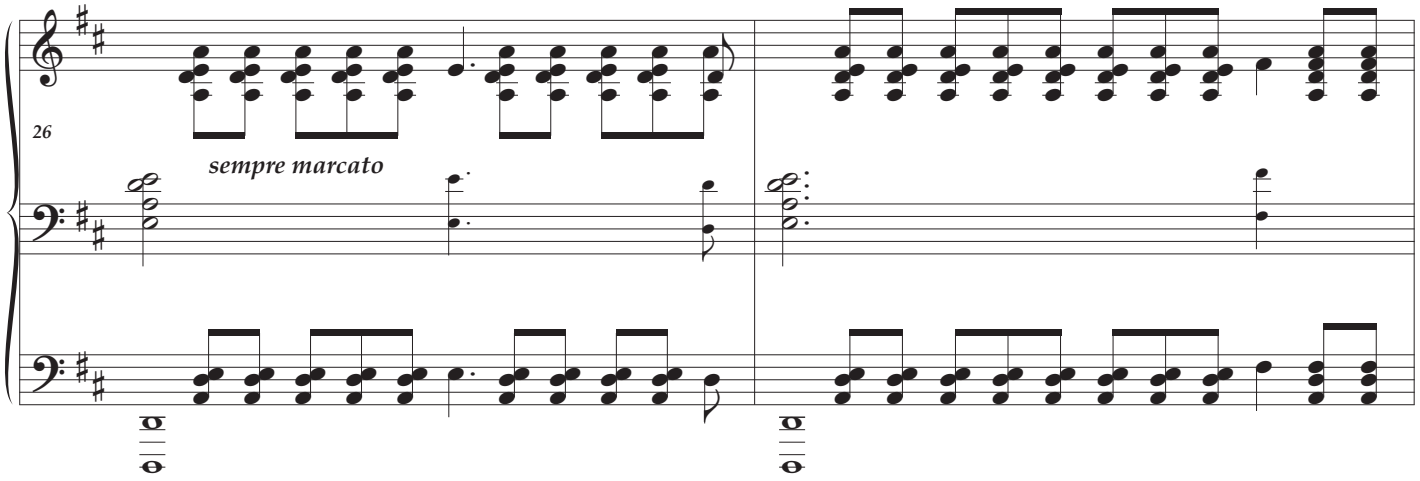
rit



Tempo I



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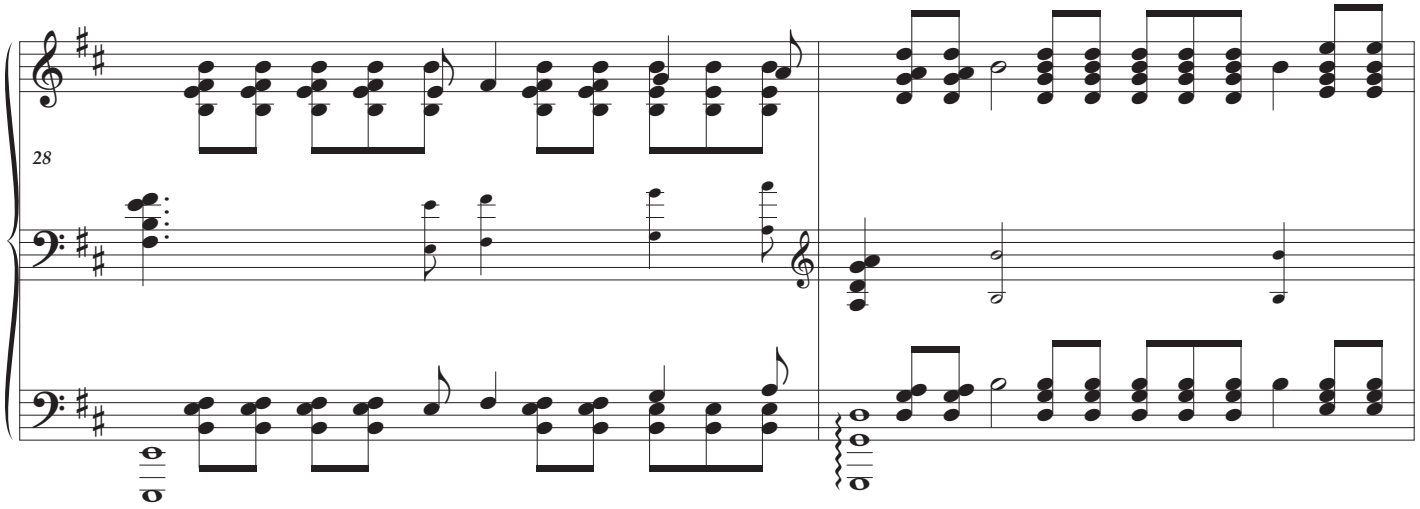
sempre marcato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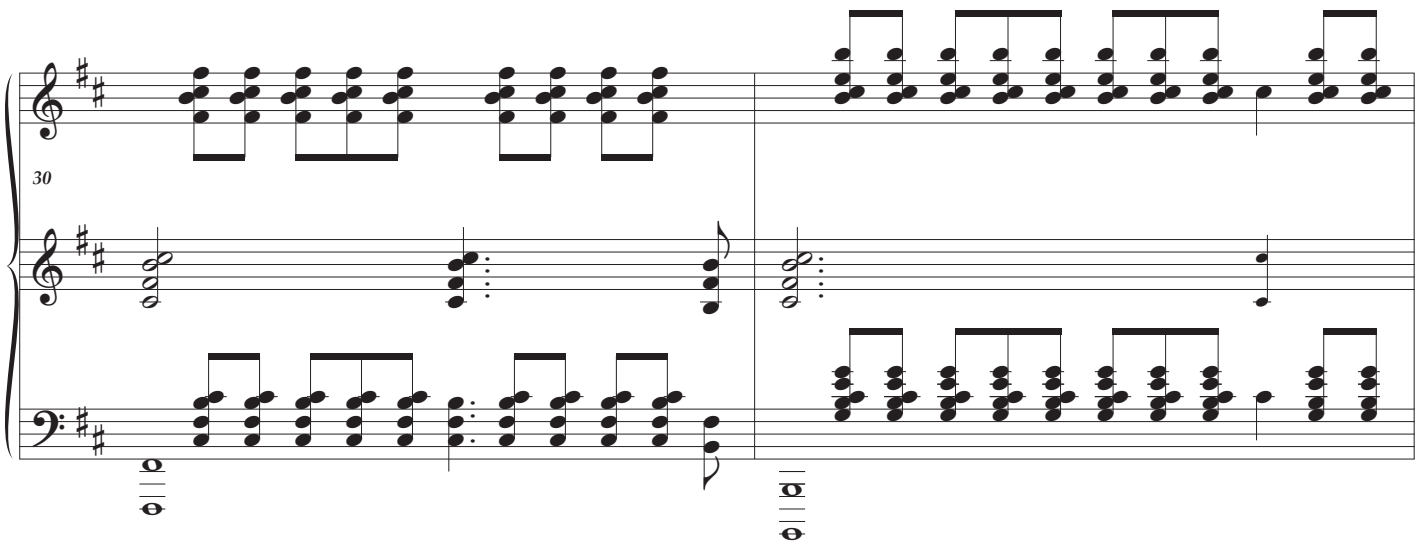
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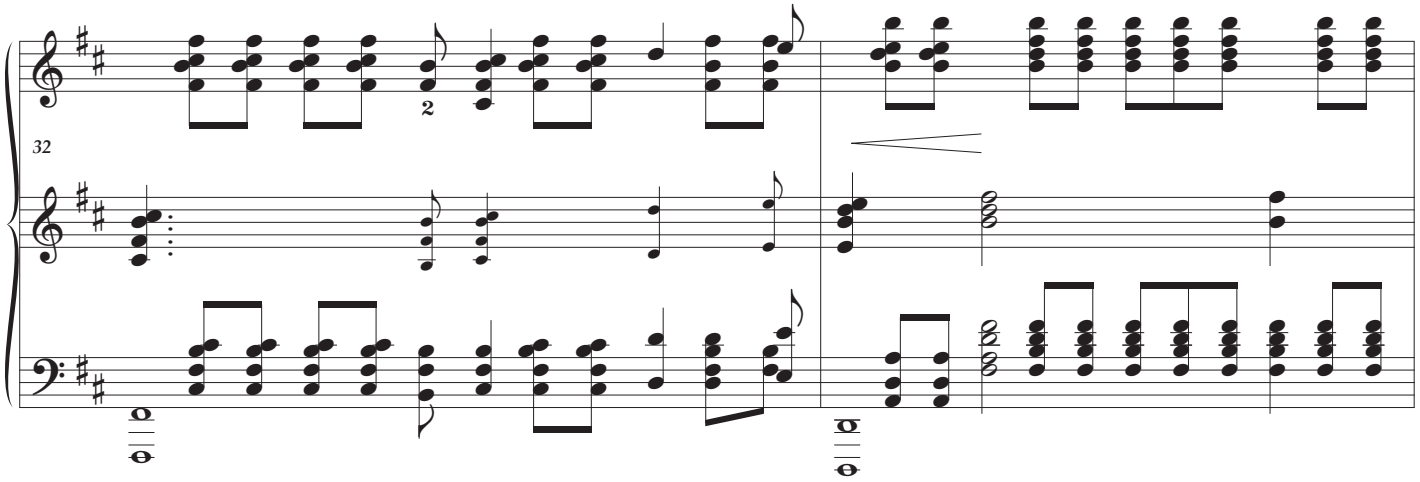
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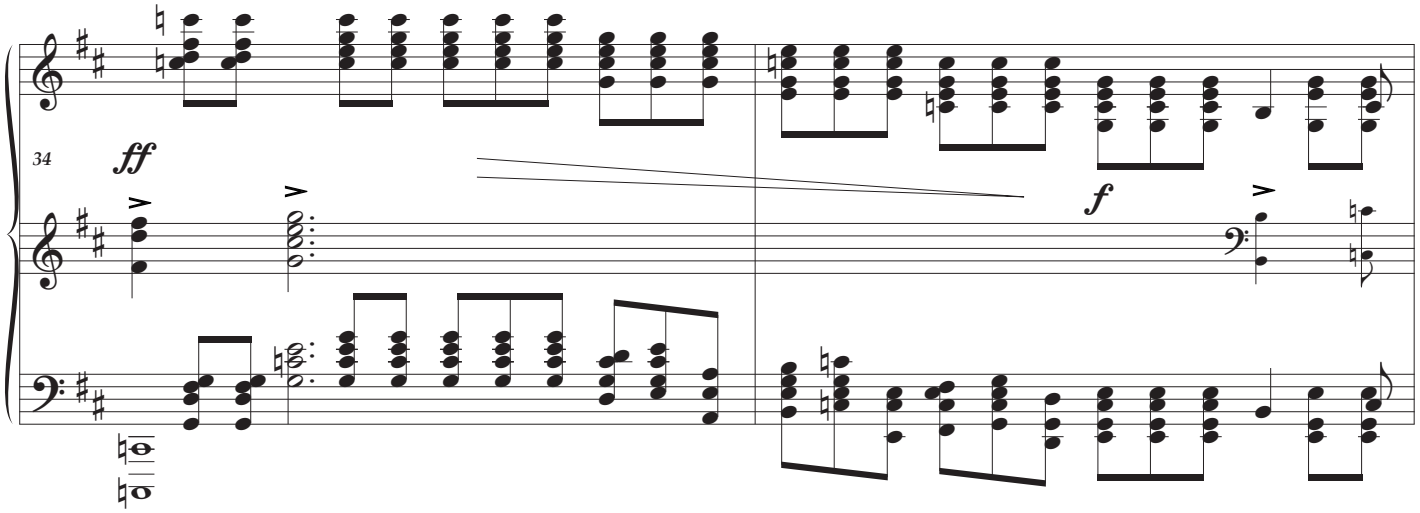
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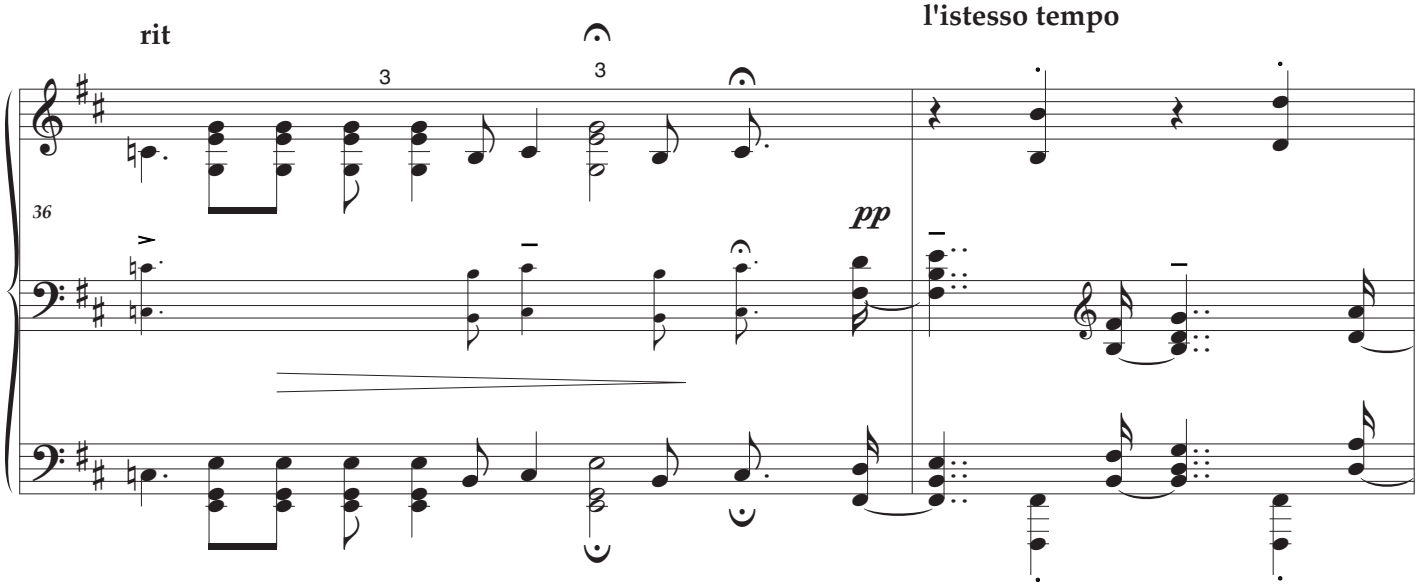
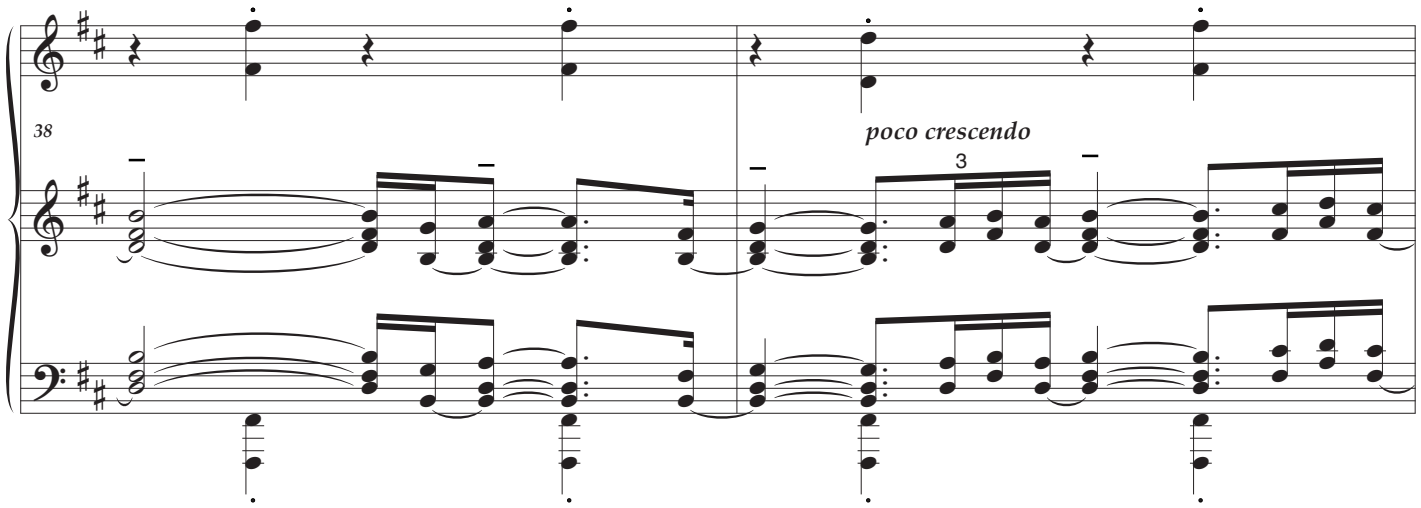
ff
f


rit
l'istesso tempo
36
3
3
pp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poco crescendo
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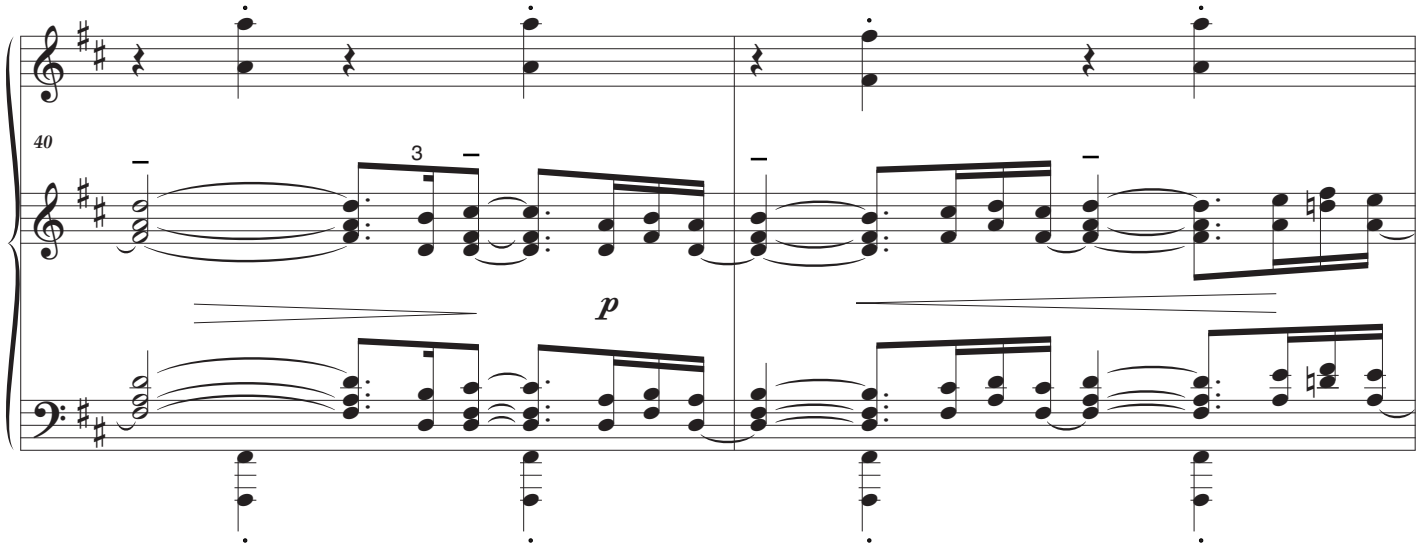
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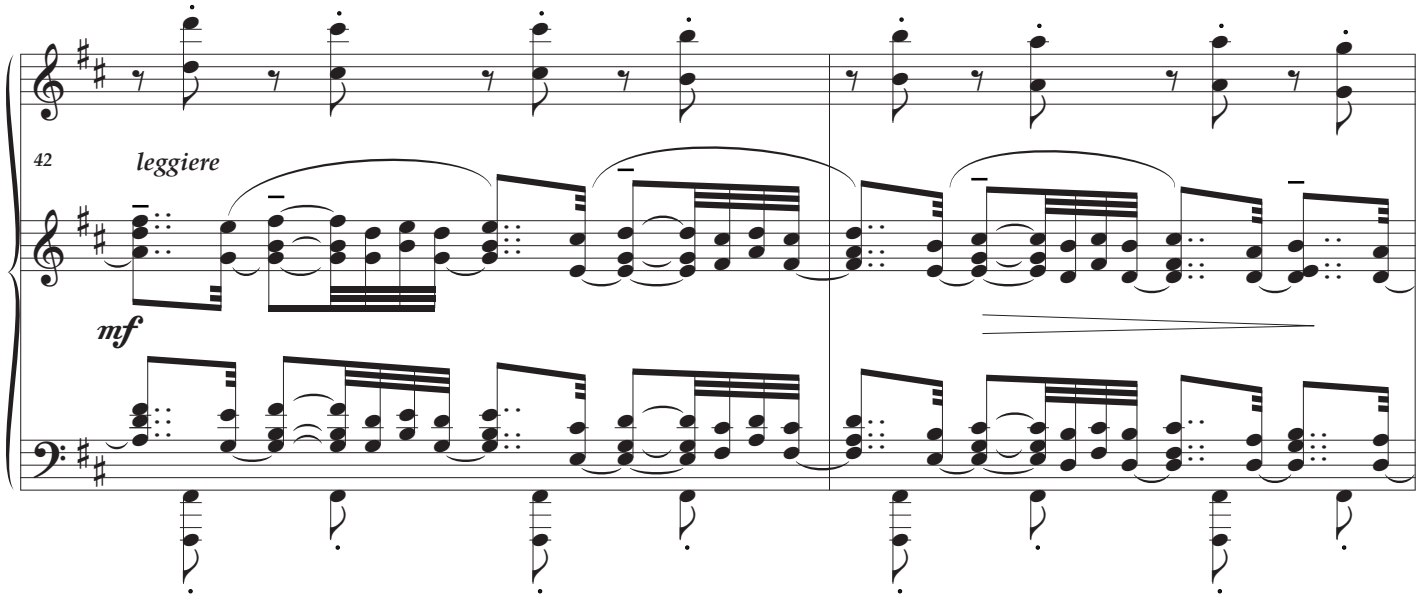
3
p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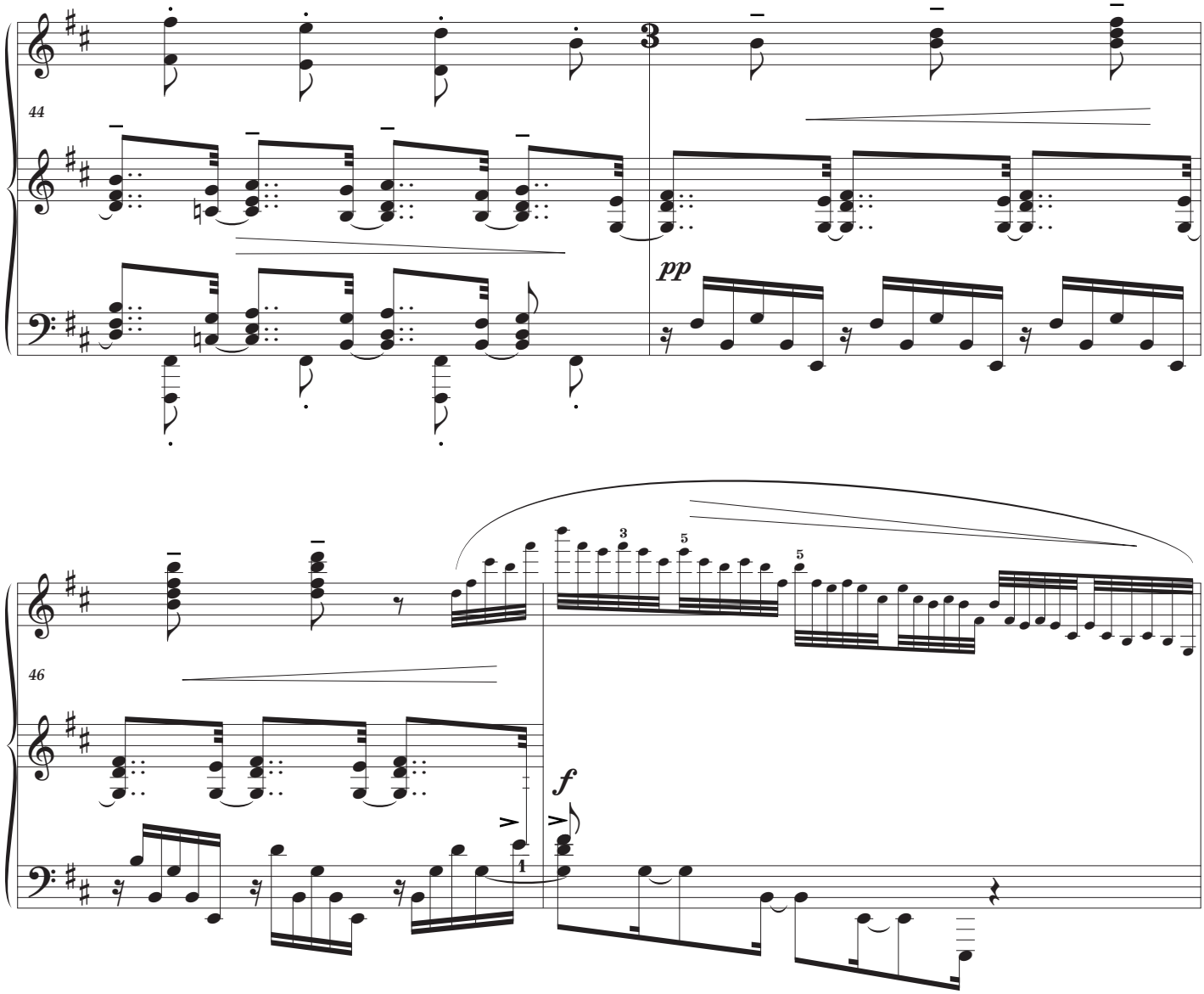
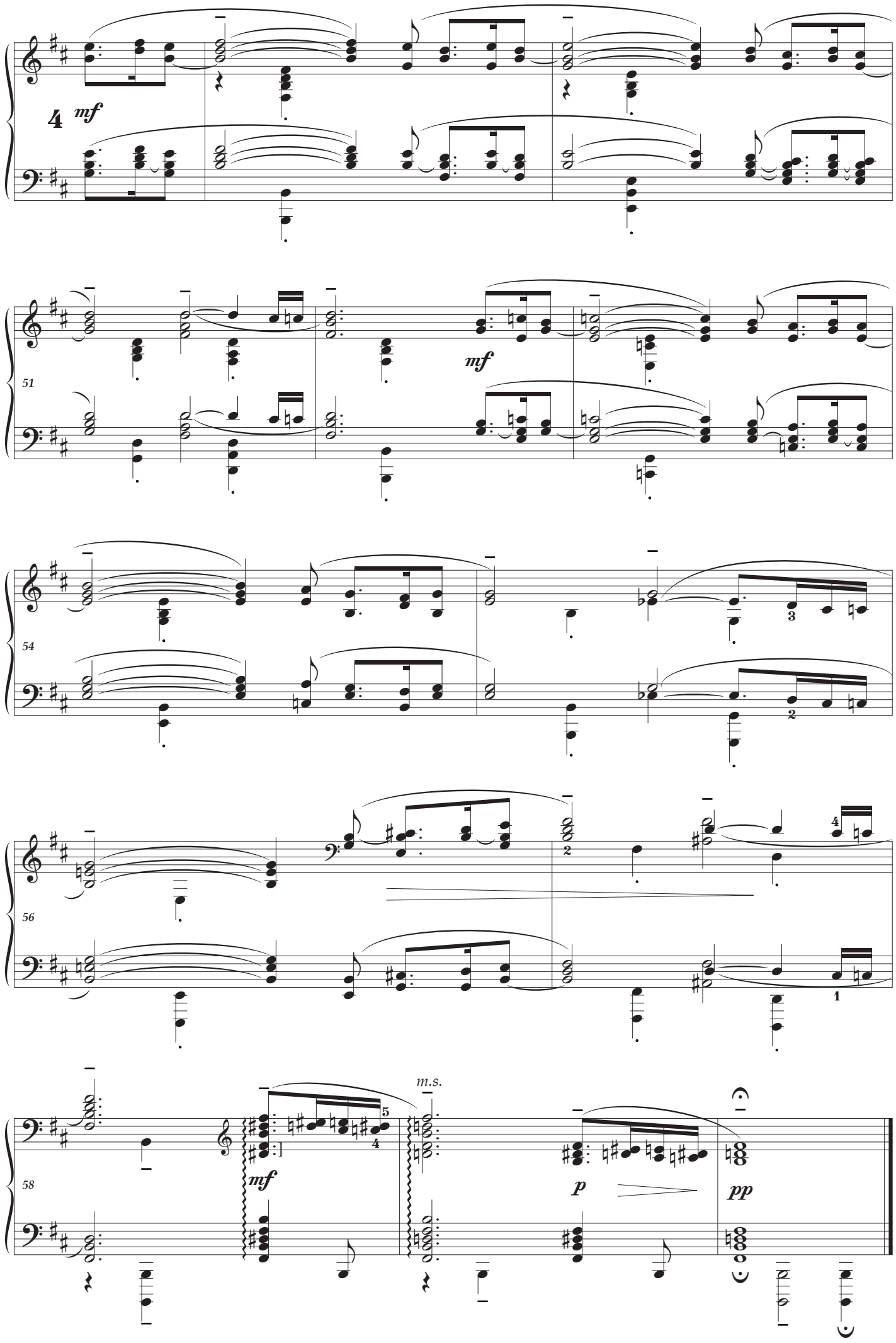
leggiere
mf


44
pp
46
f
veloce
48
48
pp
8va
m.s.
m.s.

a tempo come prima



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