In Praise of Vivid Existence

Suite for Piano

(Duration: 9-10 minutes)

Edward Green

© 2024

edgreenmusic@gmail.com

In Praise of Vivid Existence has six short movements. Each, in its own way, reflects my study of Eli Siegel's great principle of Aesthetic Realism, which explains what beauty is, and what it means for our lives: "All beauty," he stated, "is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves."

The title of the suite arises from this idea.

The first movement, "On Deeper Reflection," is a canon. But surprisingly the lead part is already a duet of two independent lines--so the result is a "harmonic canon." Every canon says: past and the present can make a beautiful one, because we hear something fresh and something familiar in every measure.

The playful second movement, "Chasing Its Tail," is a slightly off-kilter mazurka. Can awkwardness and charm work well together?

"3 A.M." brings in a touch of eeriness. It is a study in persistence (16 repetitions of a four note melodic pattern) and change--because every fifth note in the melody is unexpected; moreover, its bitonal harmonies are always shifting.

The fourth movement, "Bonfire," contrasts sharply. "3 A.M." was the slowest movement: almost immobile. "Bonfire" is by far the fastest. Marked "Allegro con fuoco," it sounds dangerous, angry.

Emotional turmoil continues--but so very differently--in the fifth movement: a Blues, a "song of lamentation," titled "How Long?"

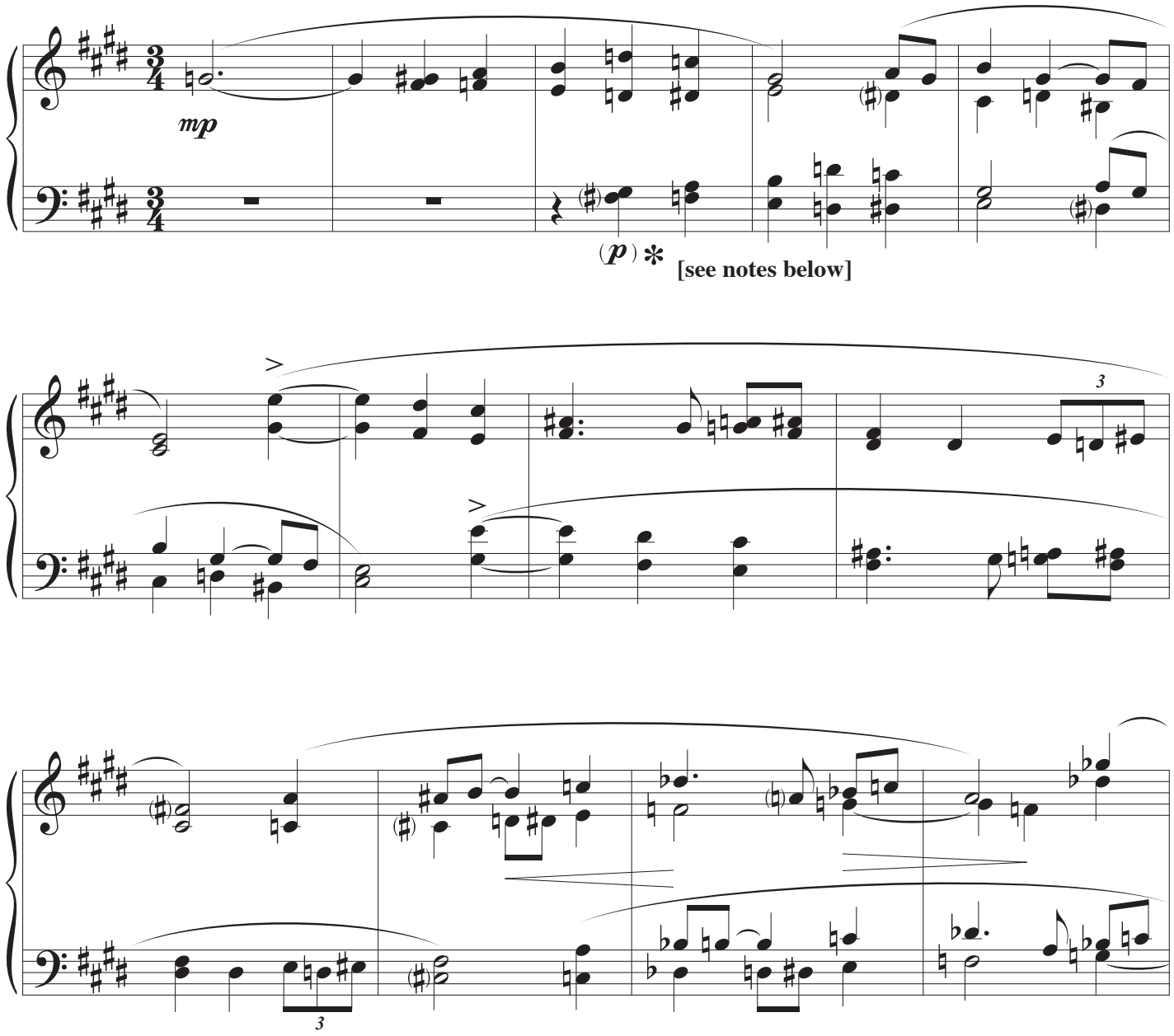
From turbulence to joy: that is the basic design of the suite. Movements one and two comprise the first journey. The next journey is longer: movements three, four, and five are all emotionally turbulent; then we hear "Pentimento."

Like the second, this sixth movement it is also a dance--only now largely in 5/8 time. There is, moreover, a hidden theme, as its title suggests. "Pentimento" is a paraphrase, measure by measure, of one of the most famous and deeply joyful pieces ever. But that piece is never directly quoted; it is for the listener to discover it.

And isn't a central element making for "vivid existence" the fact that reality is always fact *and* mystery?—what we see, hear, and meet right on the surface; and the hidden depths, never exhausted, which are always to be sought after.

(I) "On Deeper Reflection"

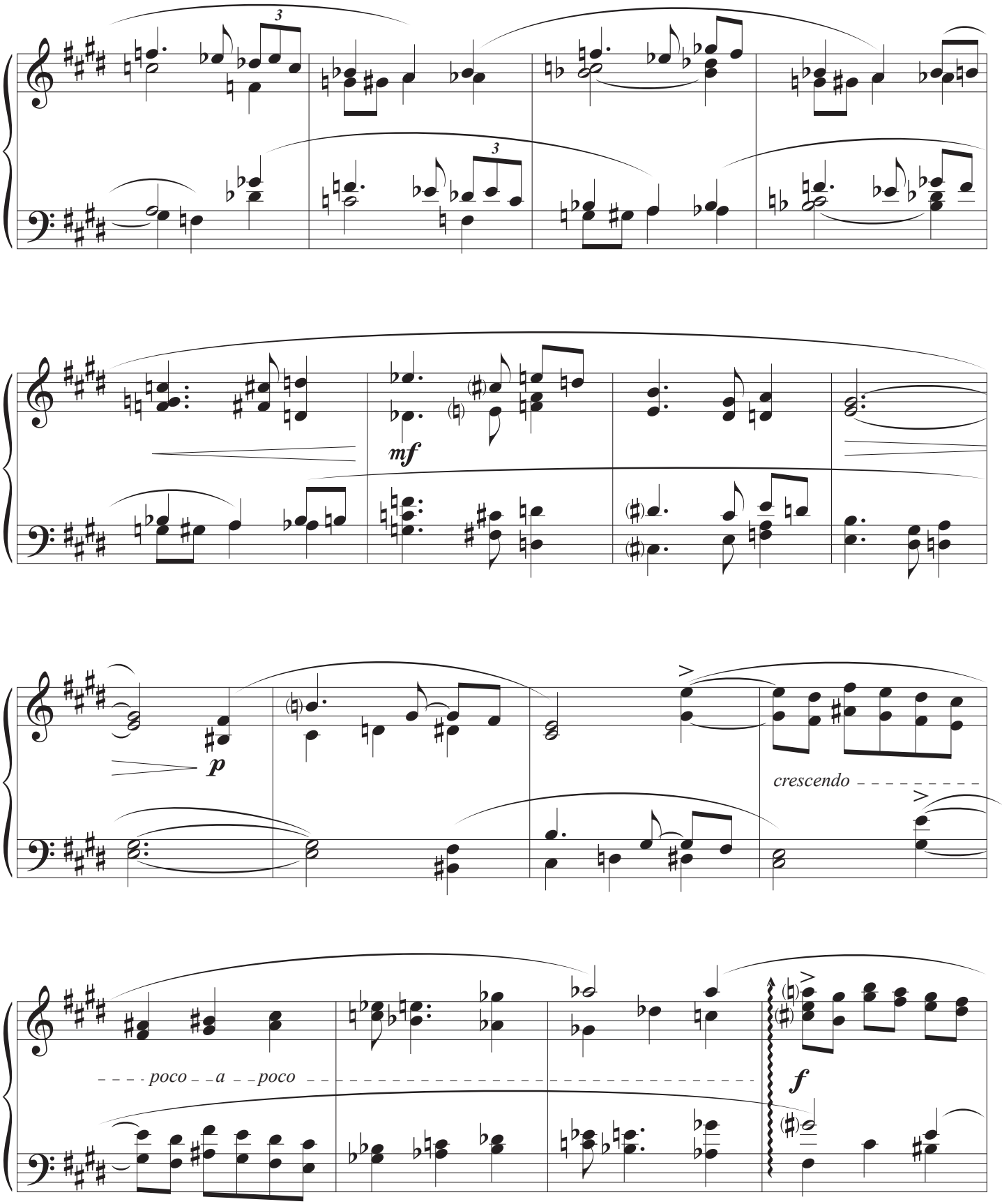
Moderato - lyrical and tender. Feel free to stretch the meter.

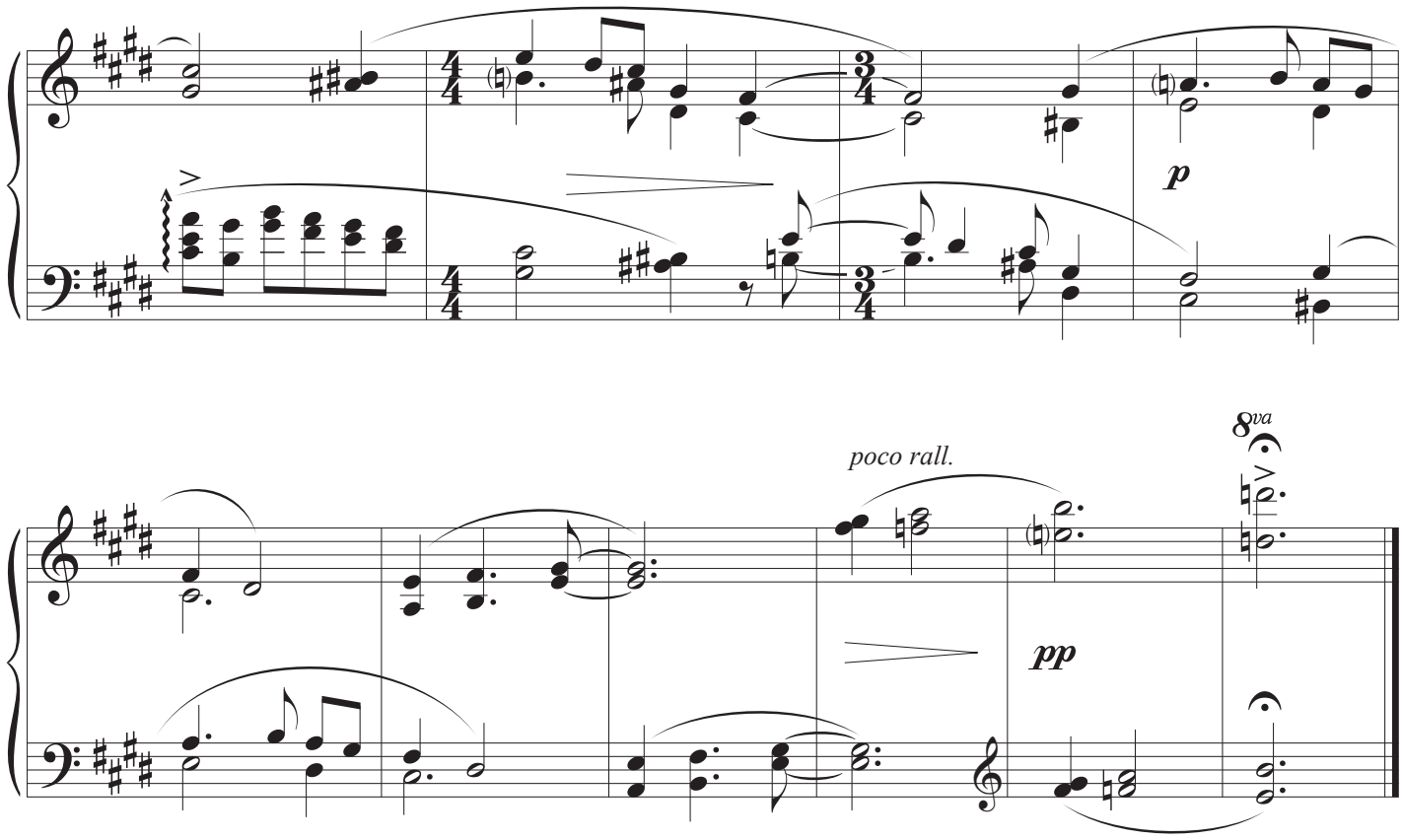


* (1) In this contrapuntal texture, make sure always to bring out the soprano voice; meanwhile, use the pedal richly.

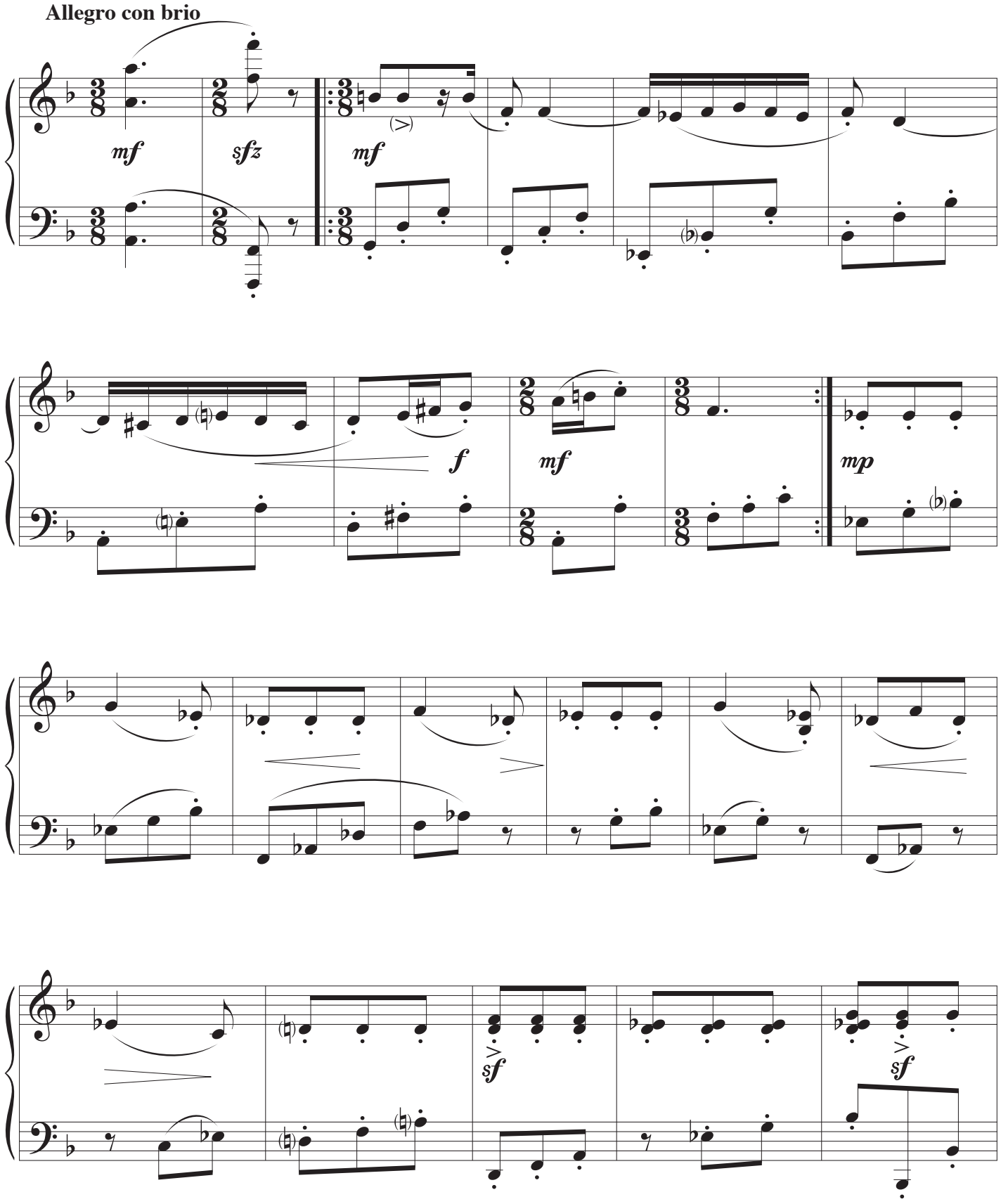
(2) The canonic echo in the left hand should always be quieter than the right hand model.

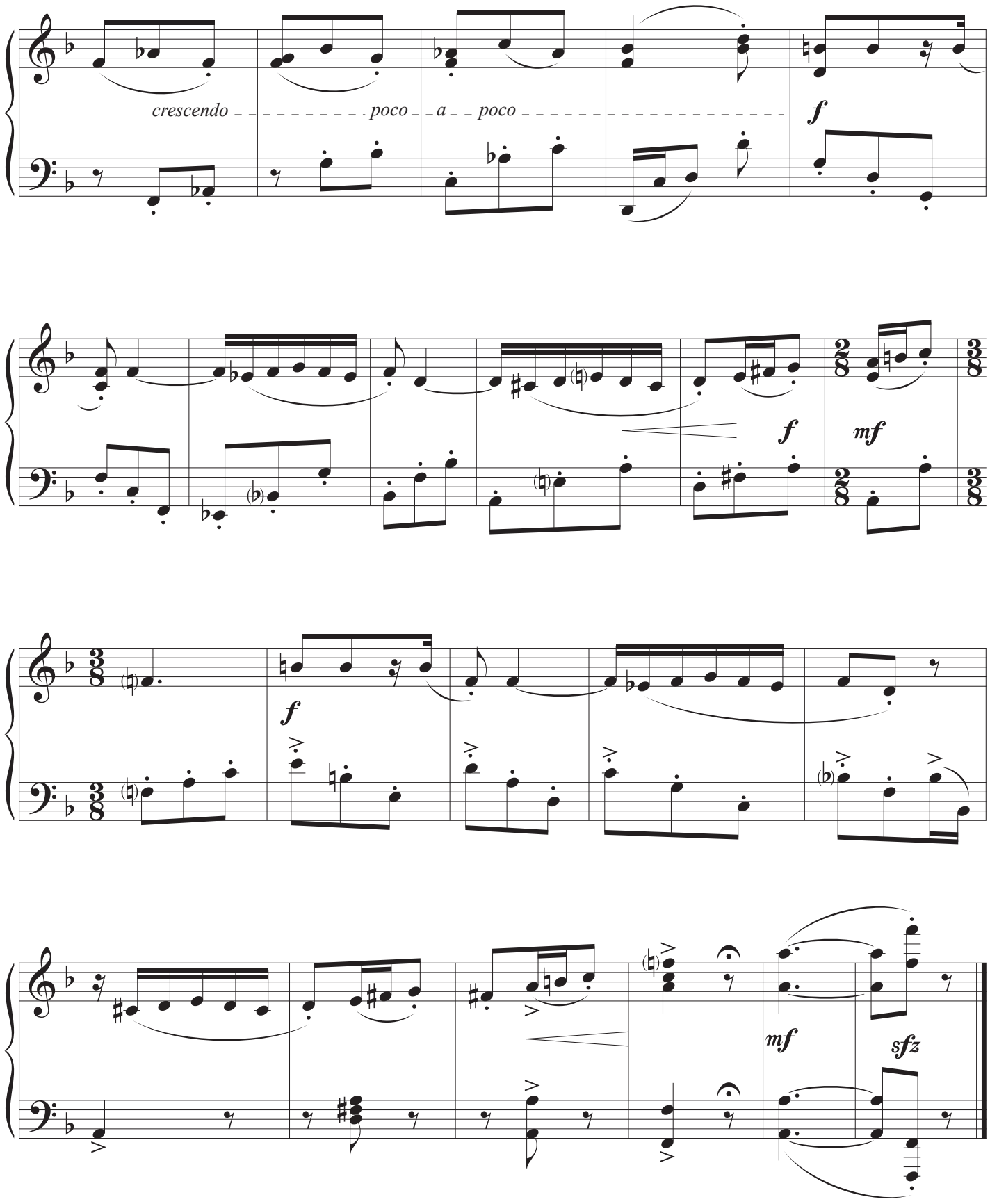
(3) The notated dynamics pertain to the right hand only; the echo is always a dynamic unit quieter. Thus the left hand entrance is at *piano*.


3
3
mf
p
crescendo
poco a poco
f


p
poco rall.
8va
pp

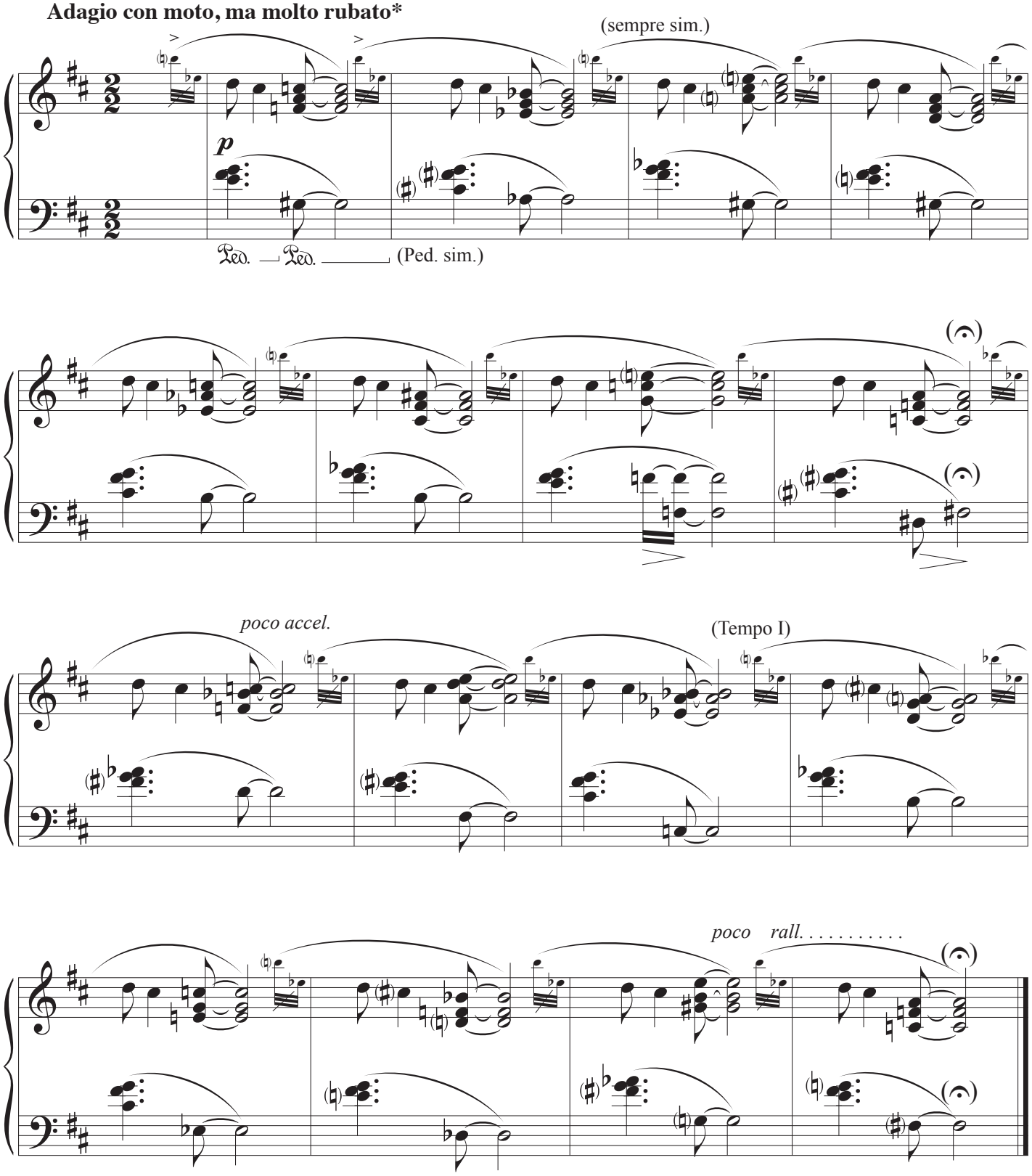
(II) "Chasing Its Tail"




crescendo
poco
a
poco
f
f
mf
f
mf
sfz

(III) "3 A.M."

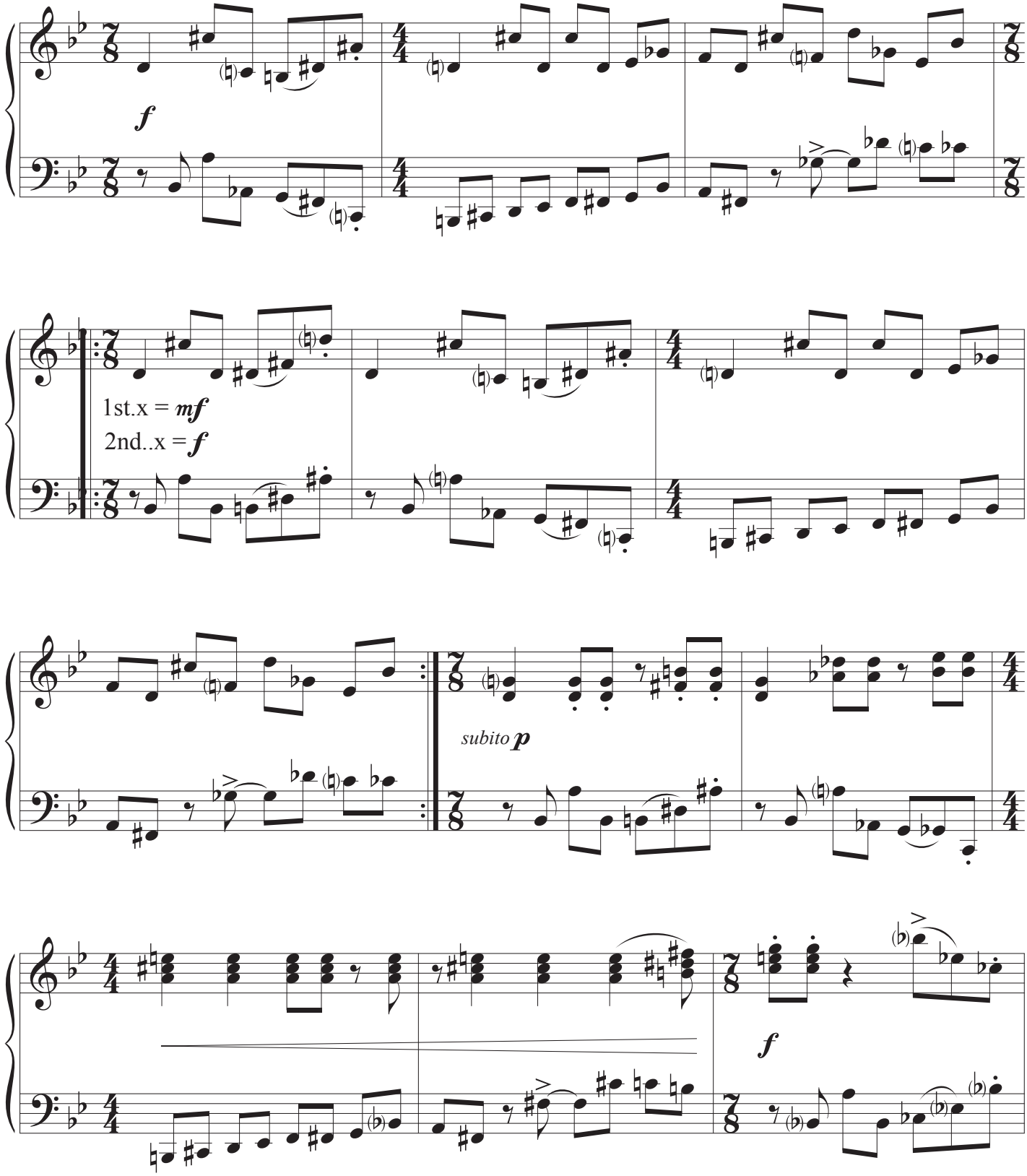
Adagio con moto, ma molto rubato*

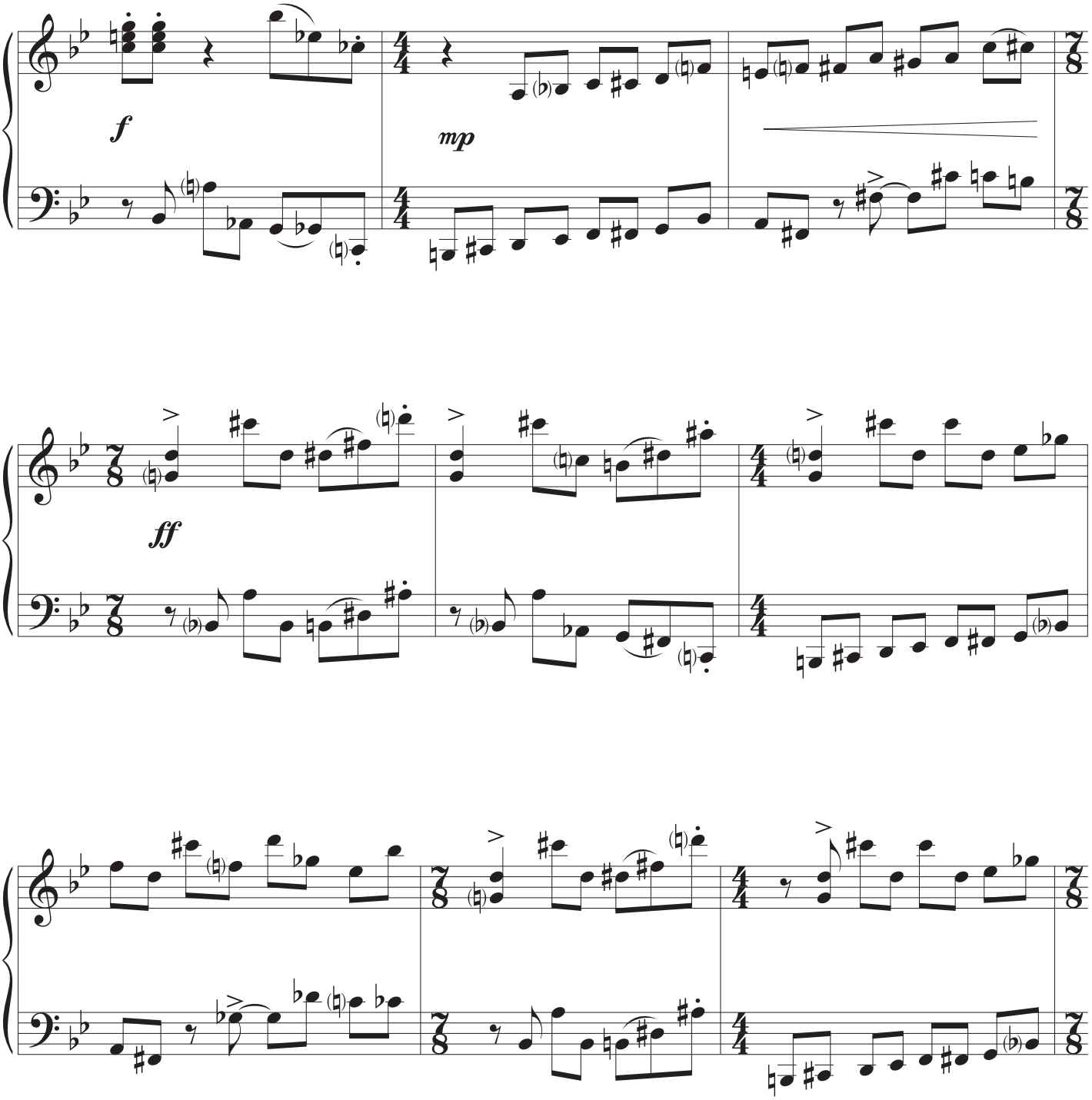


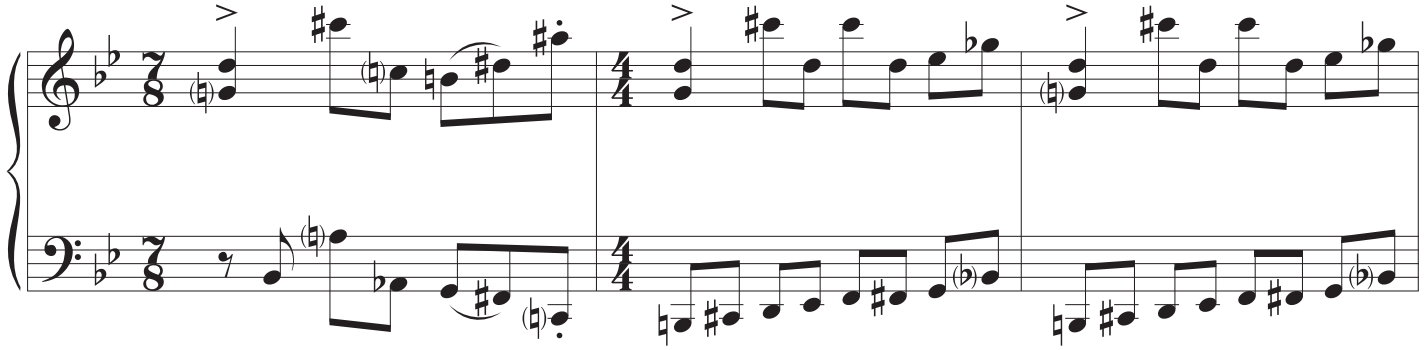
*The right hand should generally be stronger than the left, but everything in this movement happens in a very quiet context. Please feel free to vary, and extend at times, the lengths of the sustained chords.

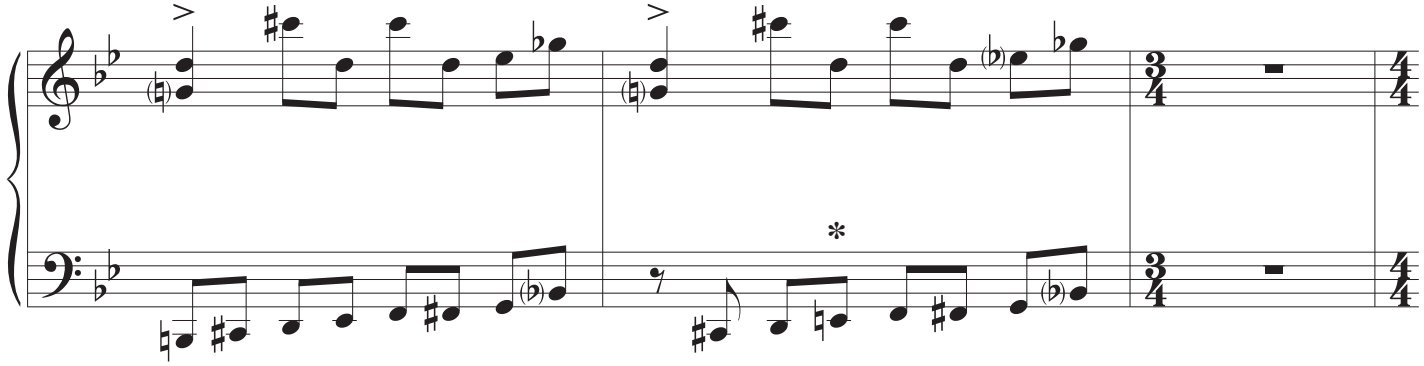
(IV) "Bonfire"

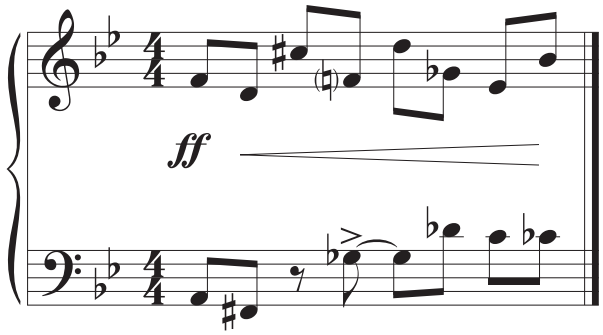
Allegro *con fuoco* (as if beginning in the middle of the action)




f
mp
ff

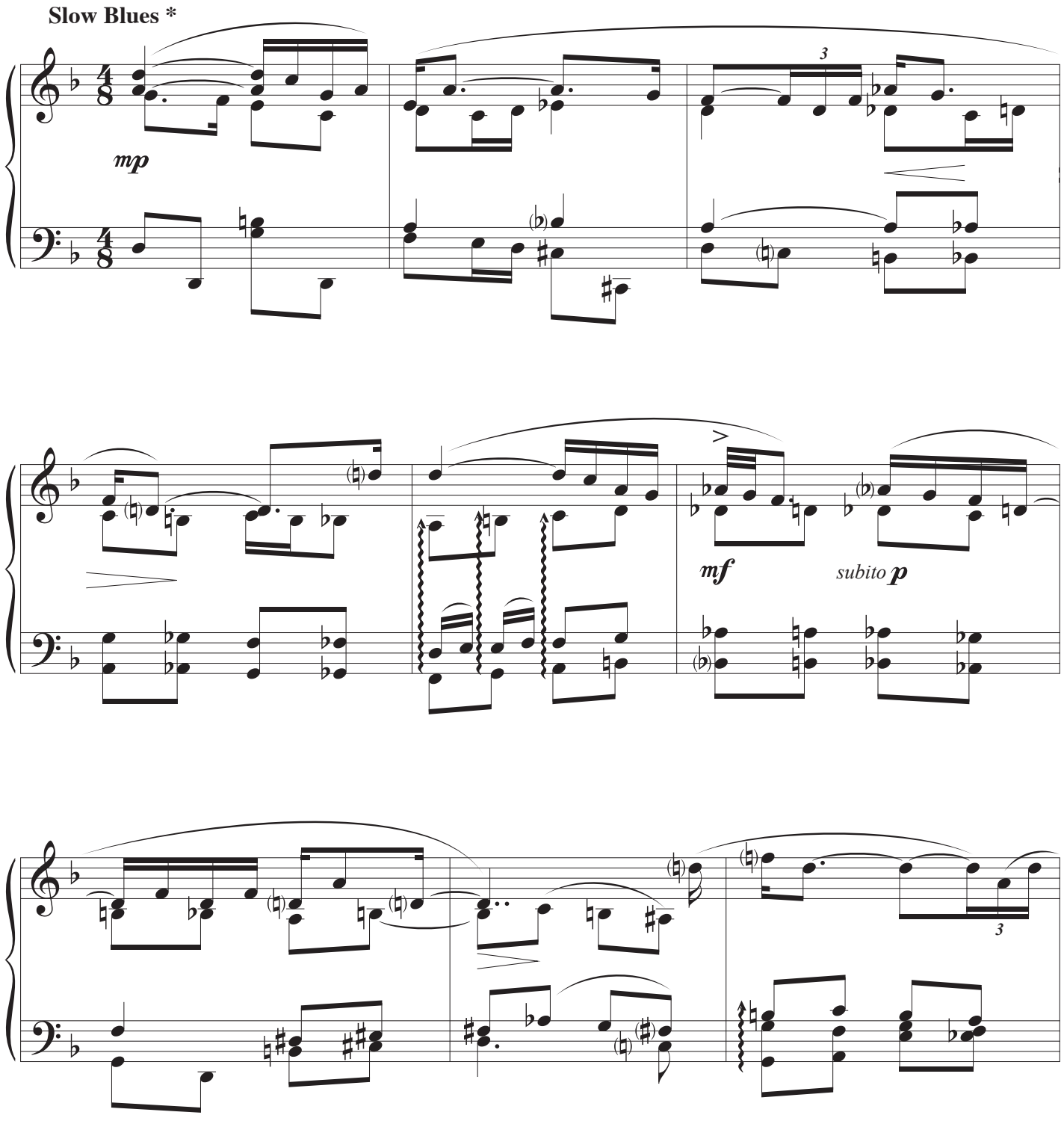




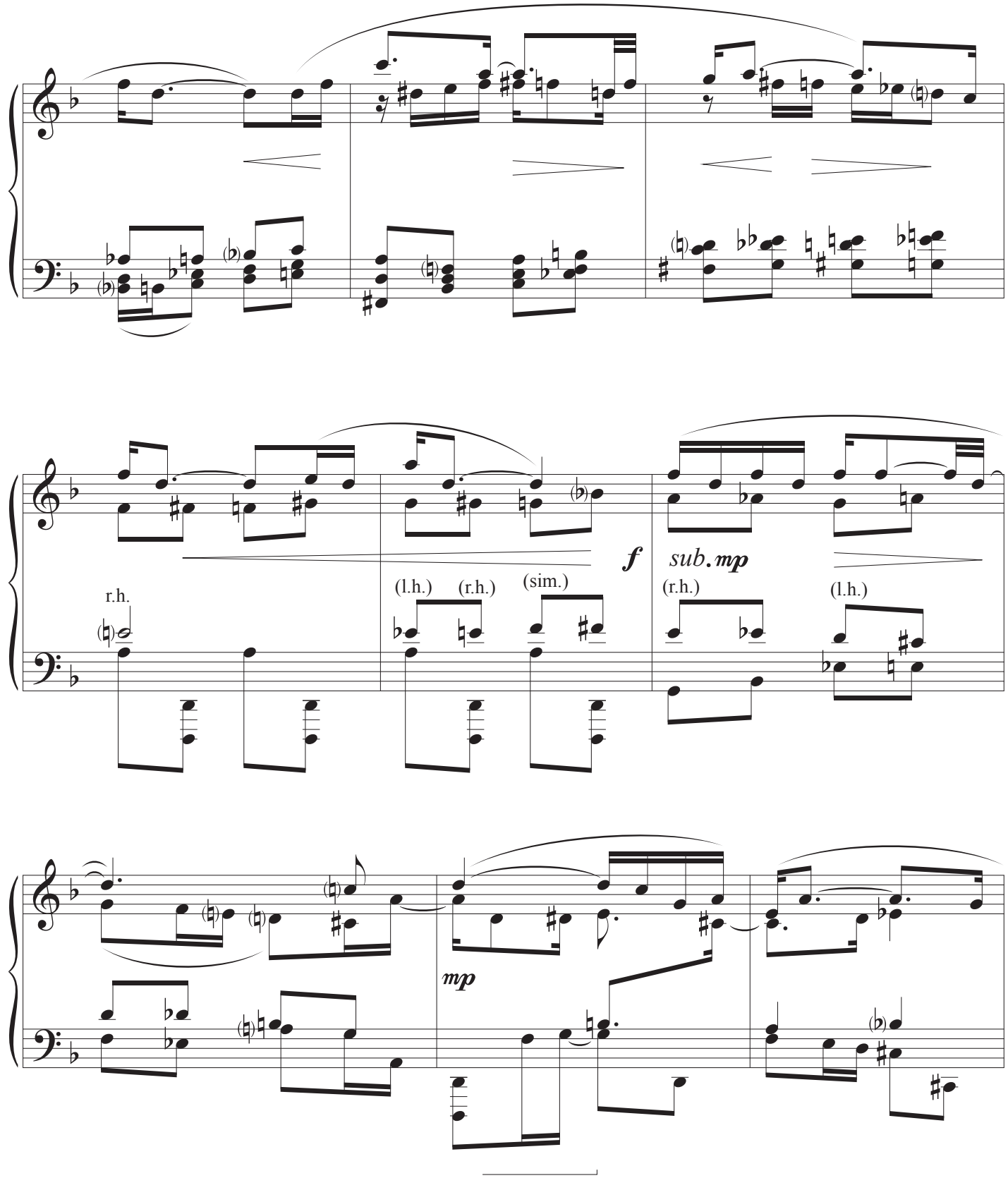


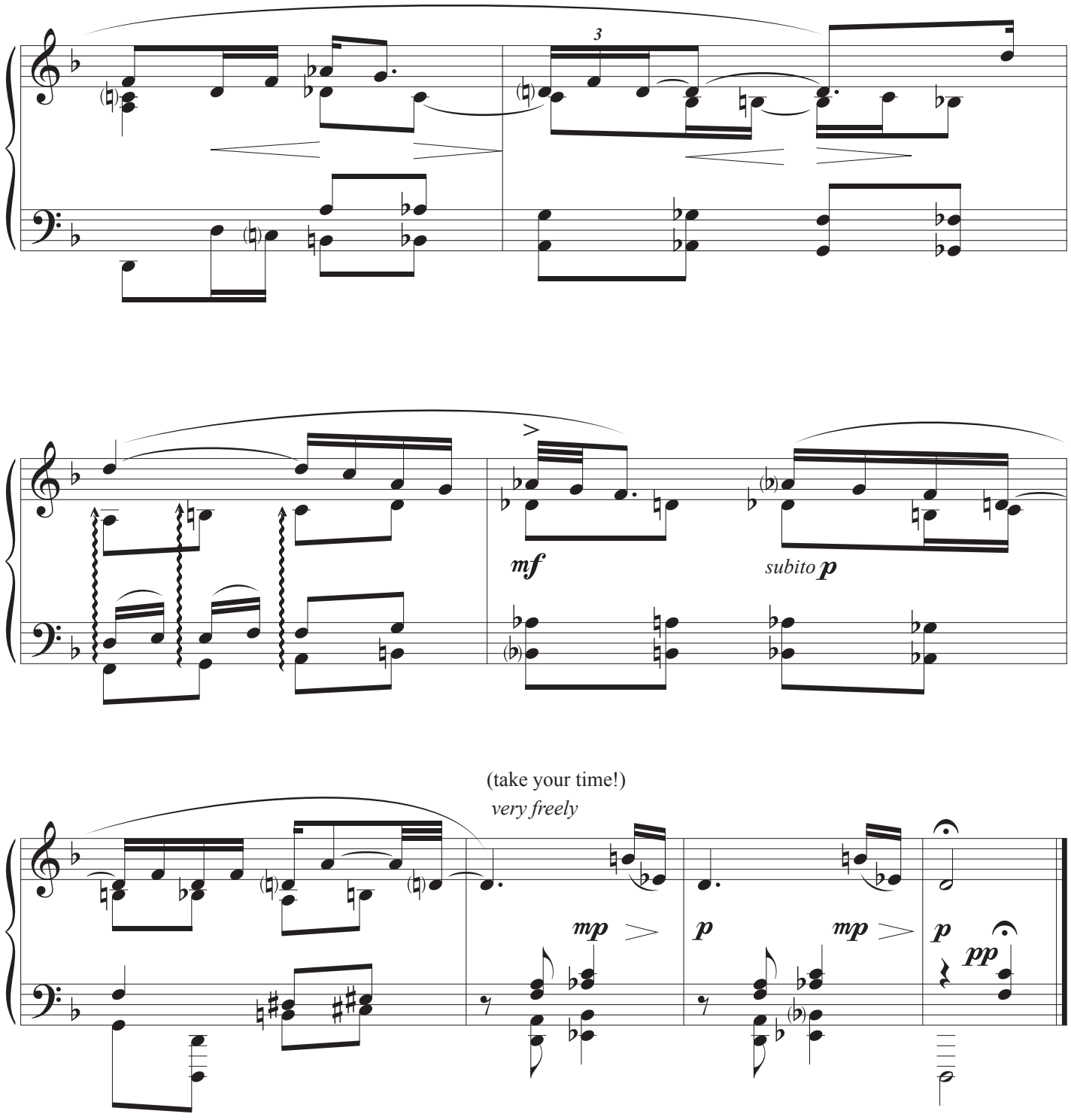
* Yes, E-natural.

(V) "How Long?"



*Take your time, use lots of pedal, and always keep the melody distinctly in the foreground.

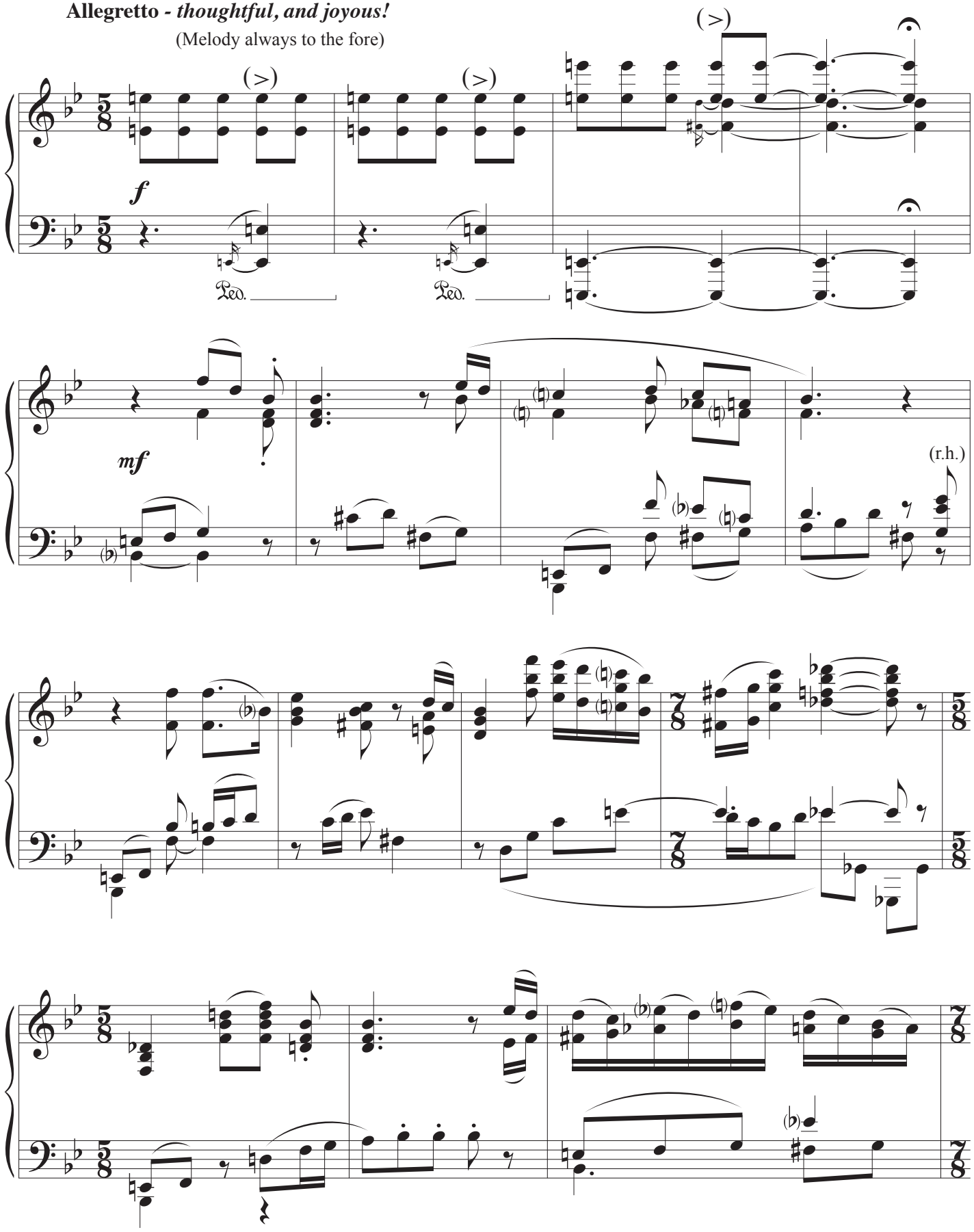

r.h.
(l.h.)
(r.h.)
(sim.)
f
sub. mp
(r.h.)
(l.h.)
mp

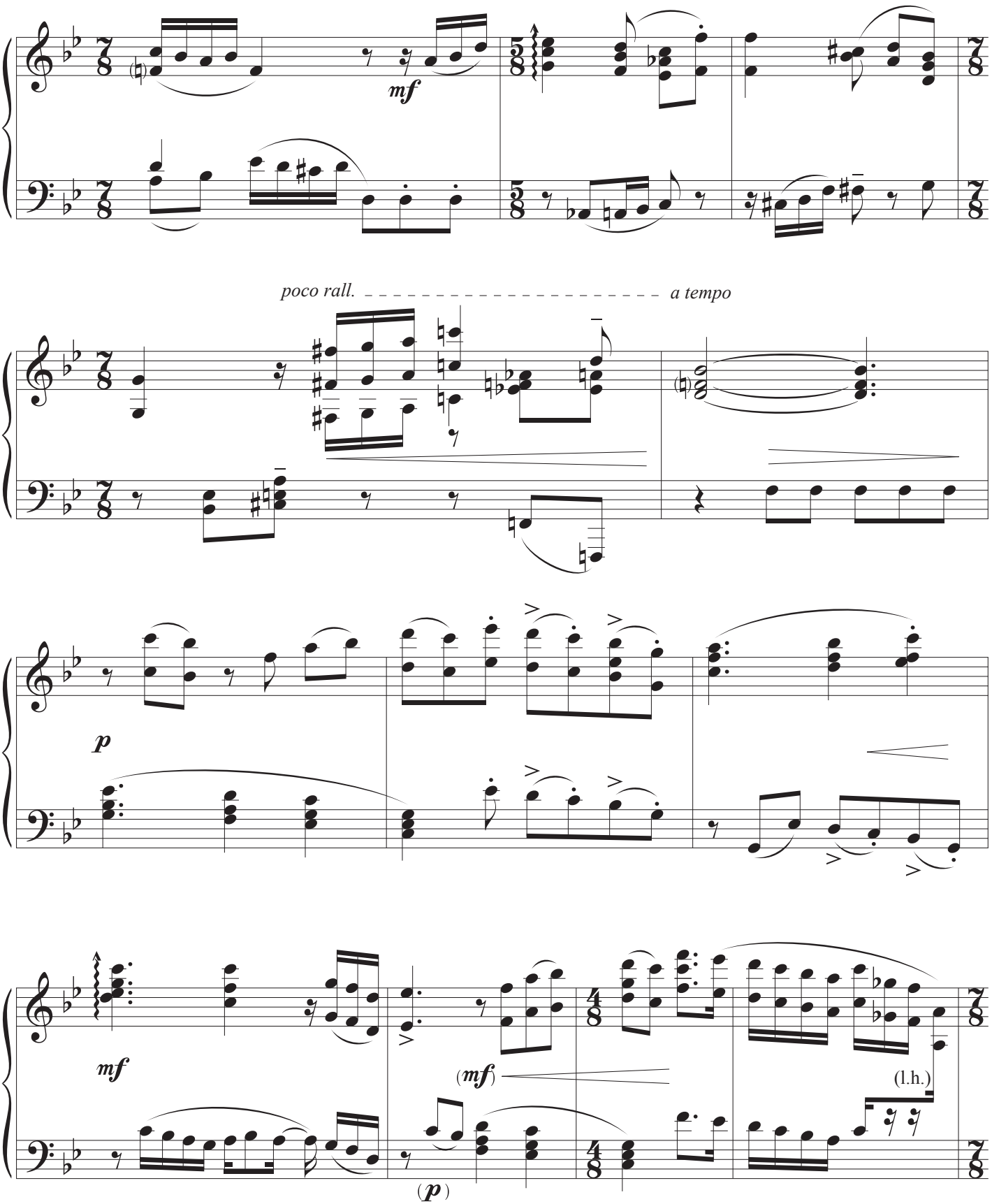

3
mf
subito p
(take your time!)
very freely
mp
p
mp
p
pp

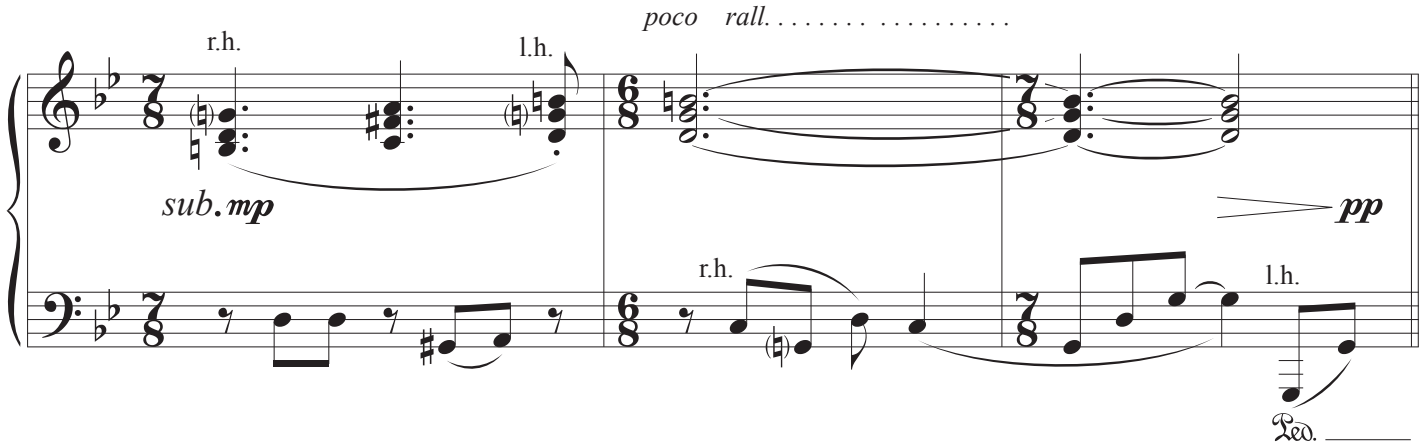
(VI) "Pentimento"

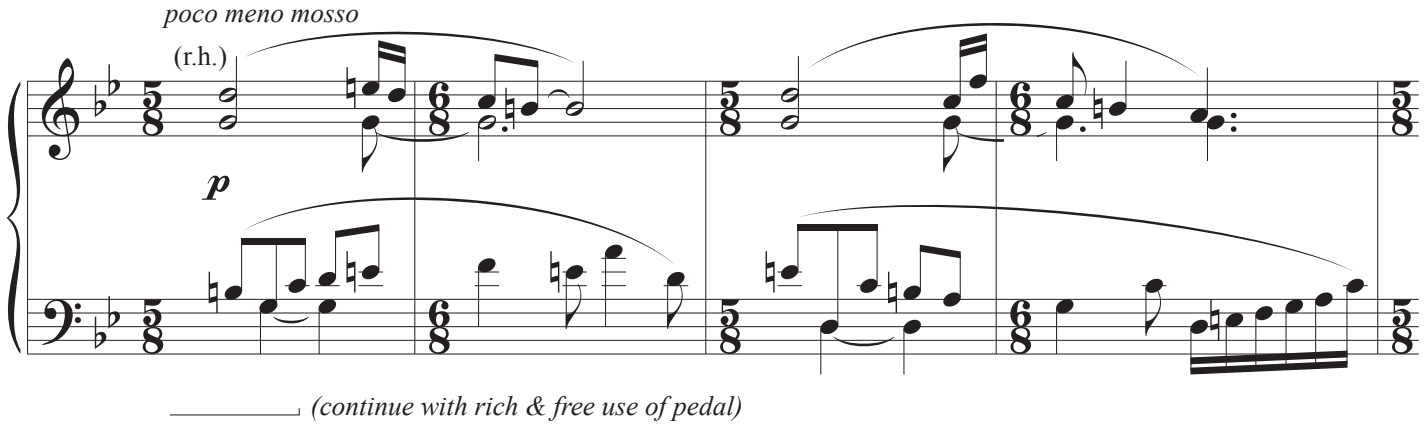
Allegretto - ***thoughtful, and joyous!***

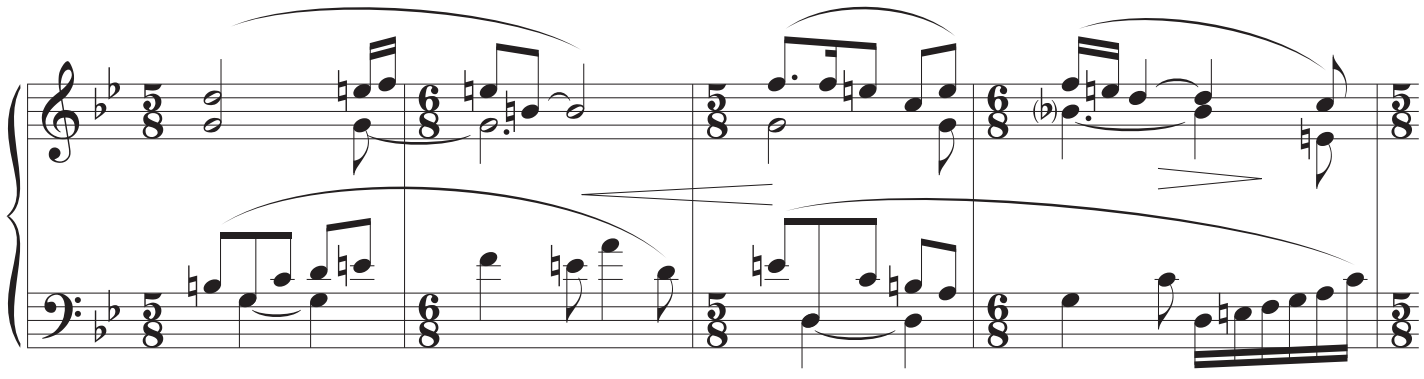
(Melody always to the fore)

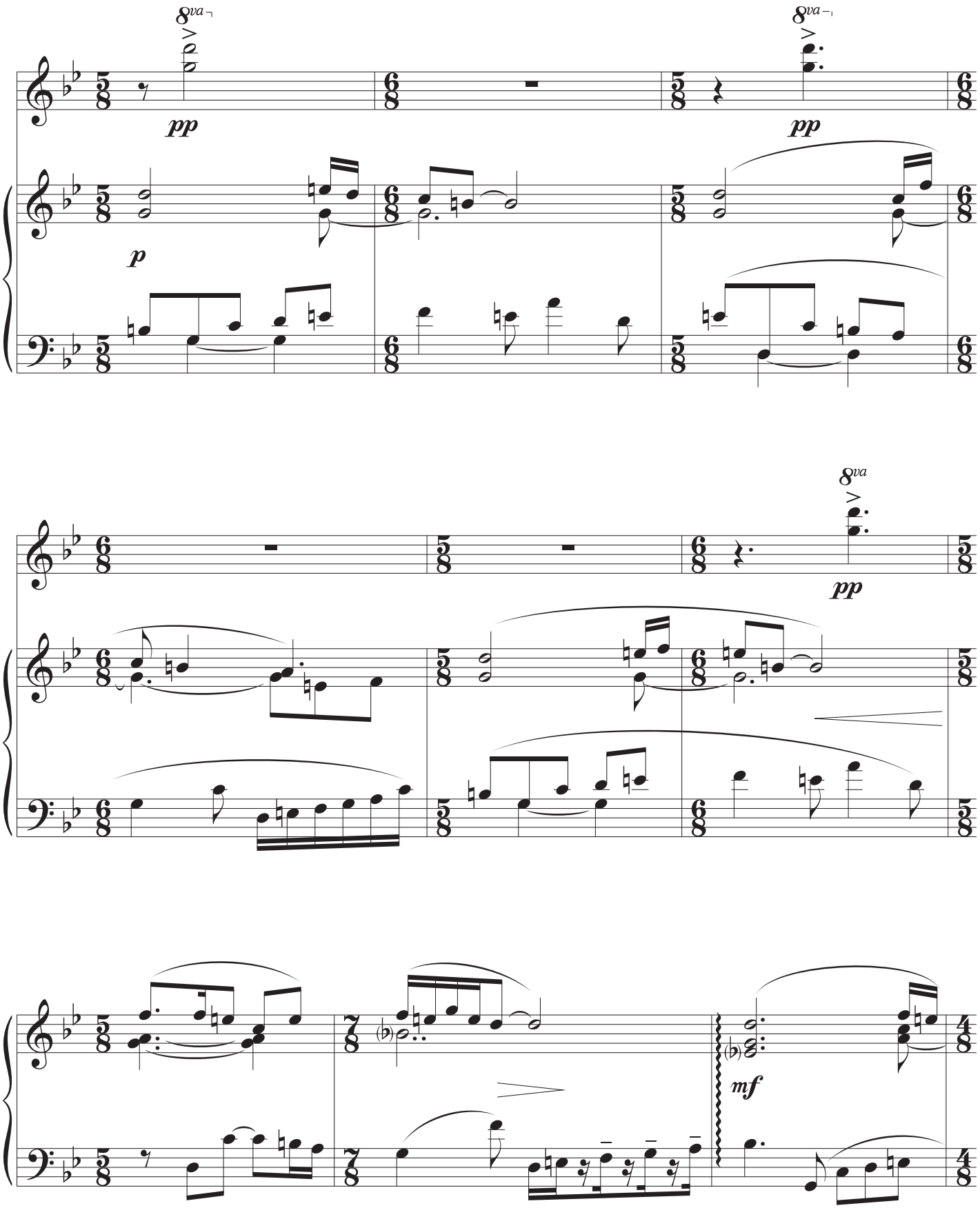


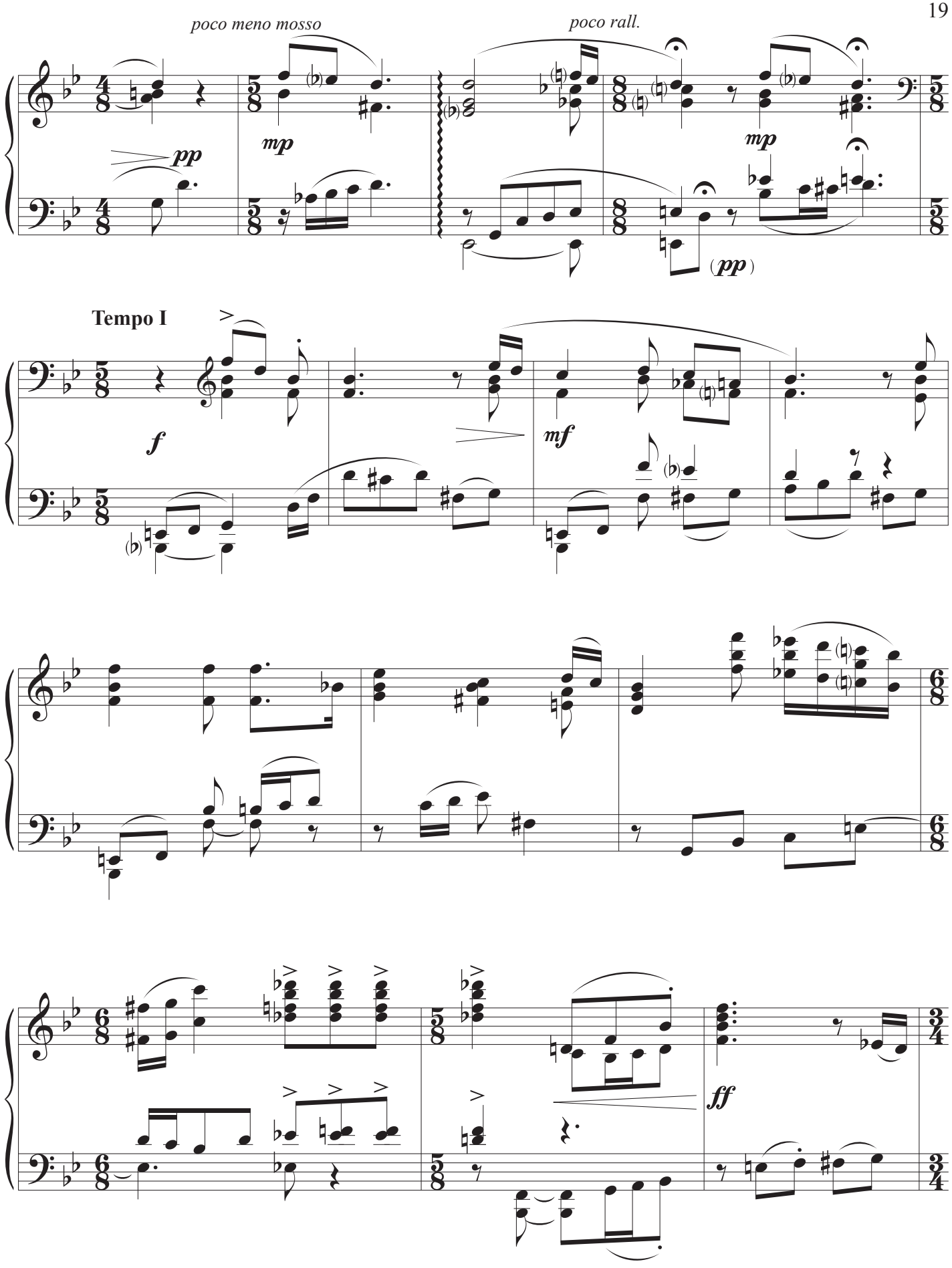

mf
poco rall.
a tempo
p
mf
(mf)
(l.h.)
(p)

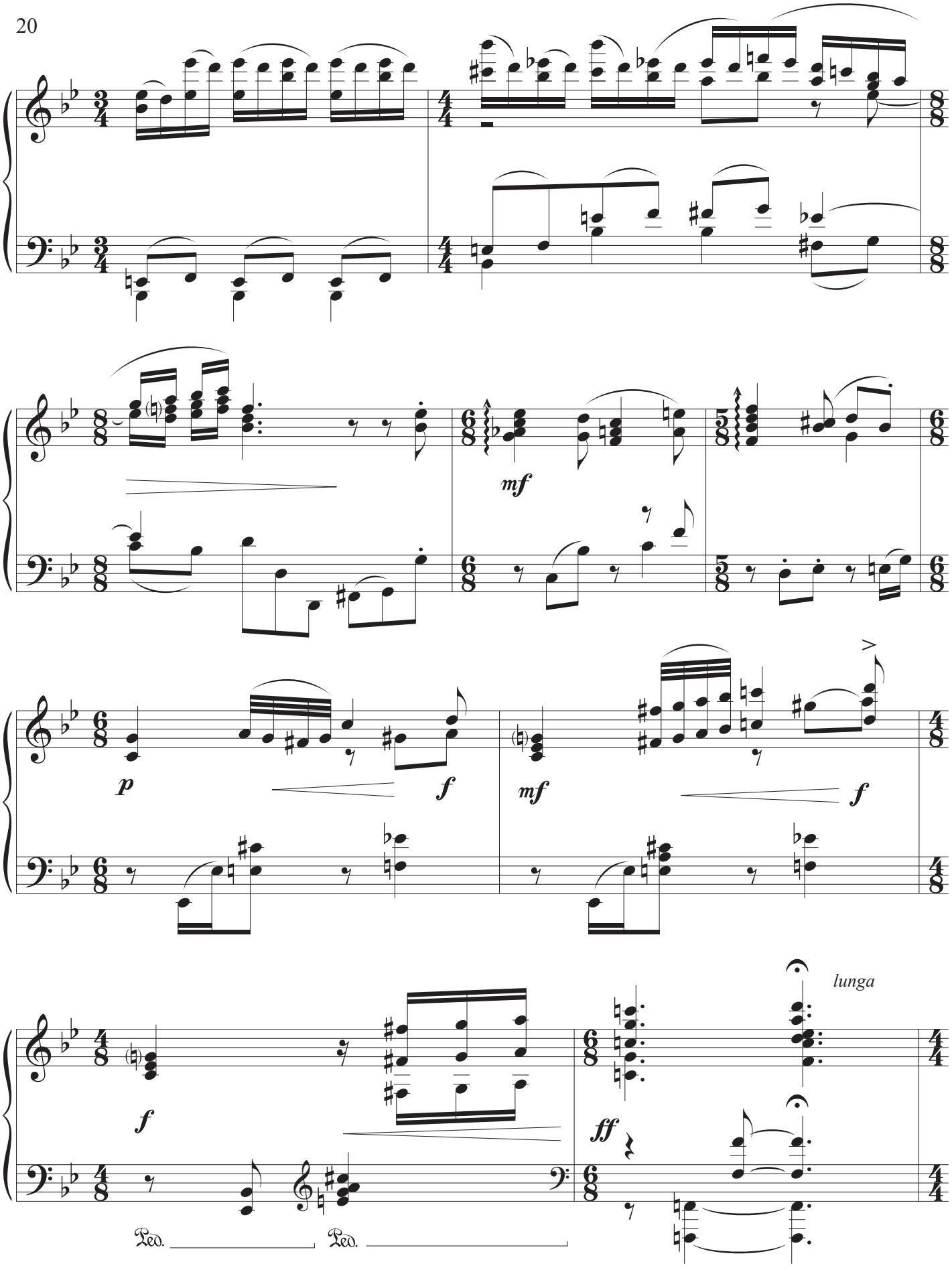

poco rall. . . . . .
r.h.
l.h.
sub. mp
pp
r.h.
l.h.
Ped.

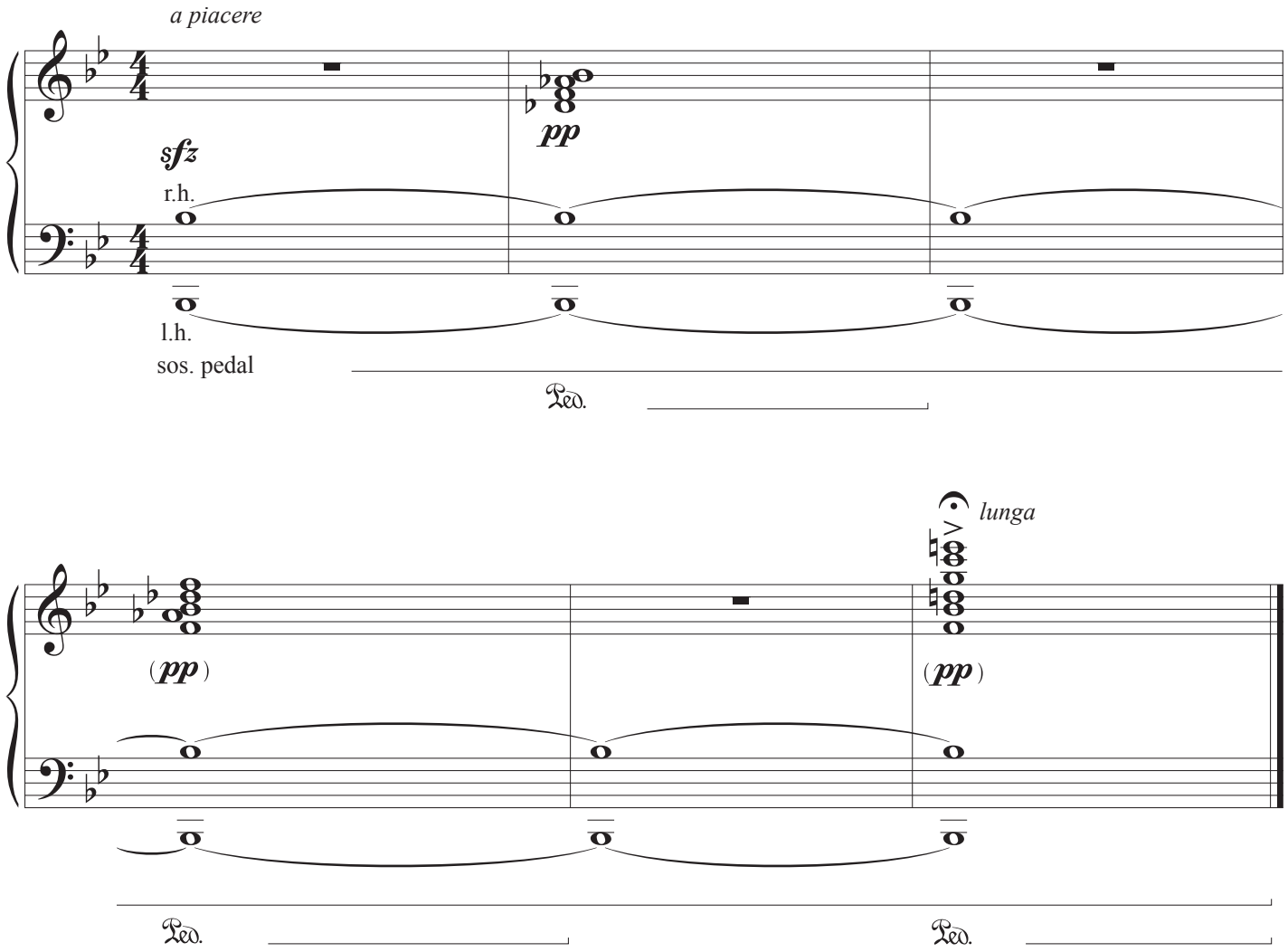

poco meno mosso
(r.h.)
p
(continue with rich & free use of pedal)




8va
pp
8va
pp
p
8va
pp
mf


poco meno mosso
poco rall.
pp
mp
mp
(pp)
Tempo I
f
mf
ff


mf
p
f
mf
f
f
ff
lunga
Ped.
Ped.


a piacere
sfz
r.h.
pp
l.h.
sos. pedal
Ped.
lunga
(pp)
(pp)
Ped.
Ped.