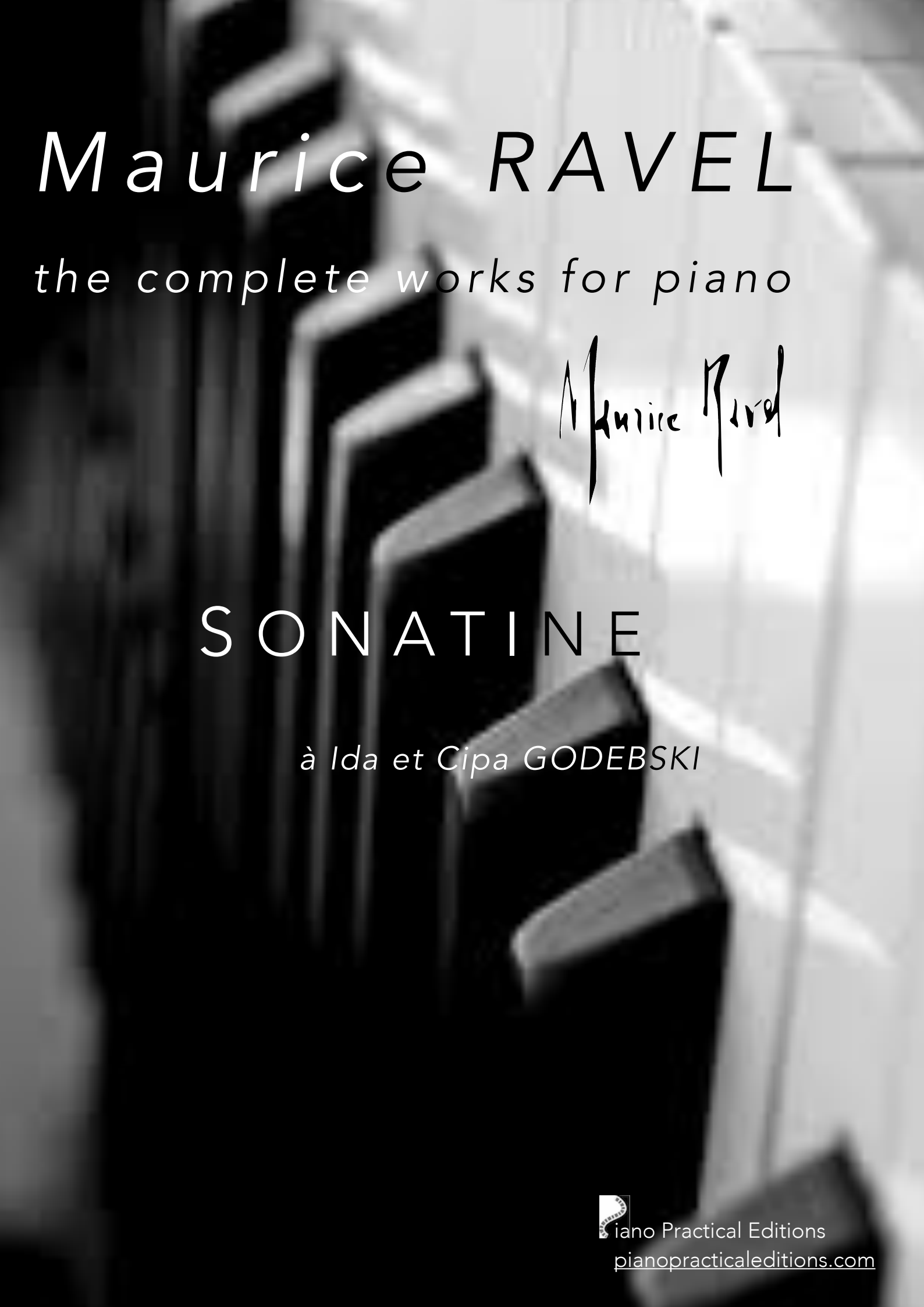

Maurice RAVEL

the complete works for piano

Maurice Ravel

SONATINE

à Ida et Cipa GODEBSKI

Piano Practical Editions
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Piano Practical Editions

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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Maurice RAVEL 1875 - 1937

SONATINE

à Ida et Cipa GODEBSKI

In 1903 an Anglo-French magazine, the *Weekly Critical Review*, promoted a competition for the composition of a piano sonata first movement. The rules stipulated the key (F# minor) and the length (no more than 75 bars). There was a prize of 100 francs (now worth less than 400€) and the anonymous manuscript had to be received by 31st March; the six adjudicators included d'Indy and Widor. Facing bankruptcy, the competition was cancelled and 28-year old Ravel became the only competitor; curiously, his entry was also over-long. Mystery surrounds the competition — did he really exceed the number of bars and was he really the only competitor? In any event it became one of his most popular piano pieces and led to the illustrious publishers Durand offering him a contract and an annual salary.

By August 1905 two further movements had been added and its classification was demoted to *sonatine**. This 'downgrading' in no way demeans a work which demonstrates the composer's harmonic and melodic originality. Its unassuming virtuosity demands much pianistic inventiveness and it little resembles the sonatinas of Mozart and Beethoven; with other similar works of the period, it shares neoclassical credentials — balance, clarity, economy, emotional restraint combined with 'antique' modes and cadences. Dedicated to the *salonniers* Ida and Cipa Godebski, the *sonatine* was performed by the composer during his American tour.

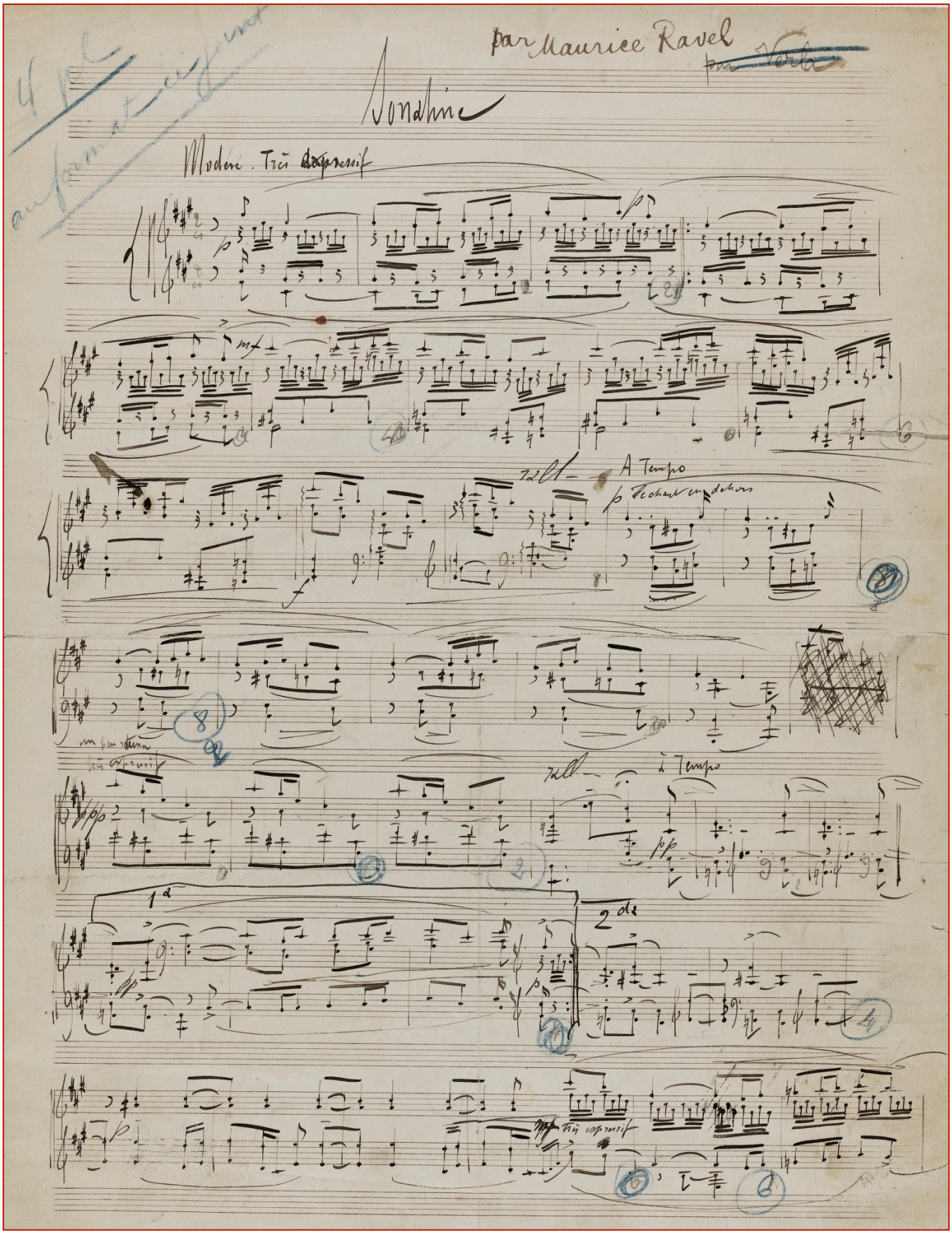
A unique problem is presented throughout the work with both hands having to work intricately, in particularly close proximity. The second movement recreates the character of his *menuet antique*, Ravel's first published composition, written eight years earlier in 1895 while still a student at the Paris Conservatoire. The third movement predicts future bravura in the Toccata from the *Tombeau de Couperin*, published some nine years later during the first world war.

In addition to some suggested fingering, the appendix contains durations, comments, afterthoughts and a vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more persuasive. Ravel uses the pedal sign sparingly, preferring extended ties or long bass notes, impossible to hold otherwise. It is possible to employ the *sostenuto* pedal effectively, although this is entirely editorial.

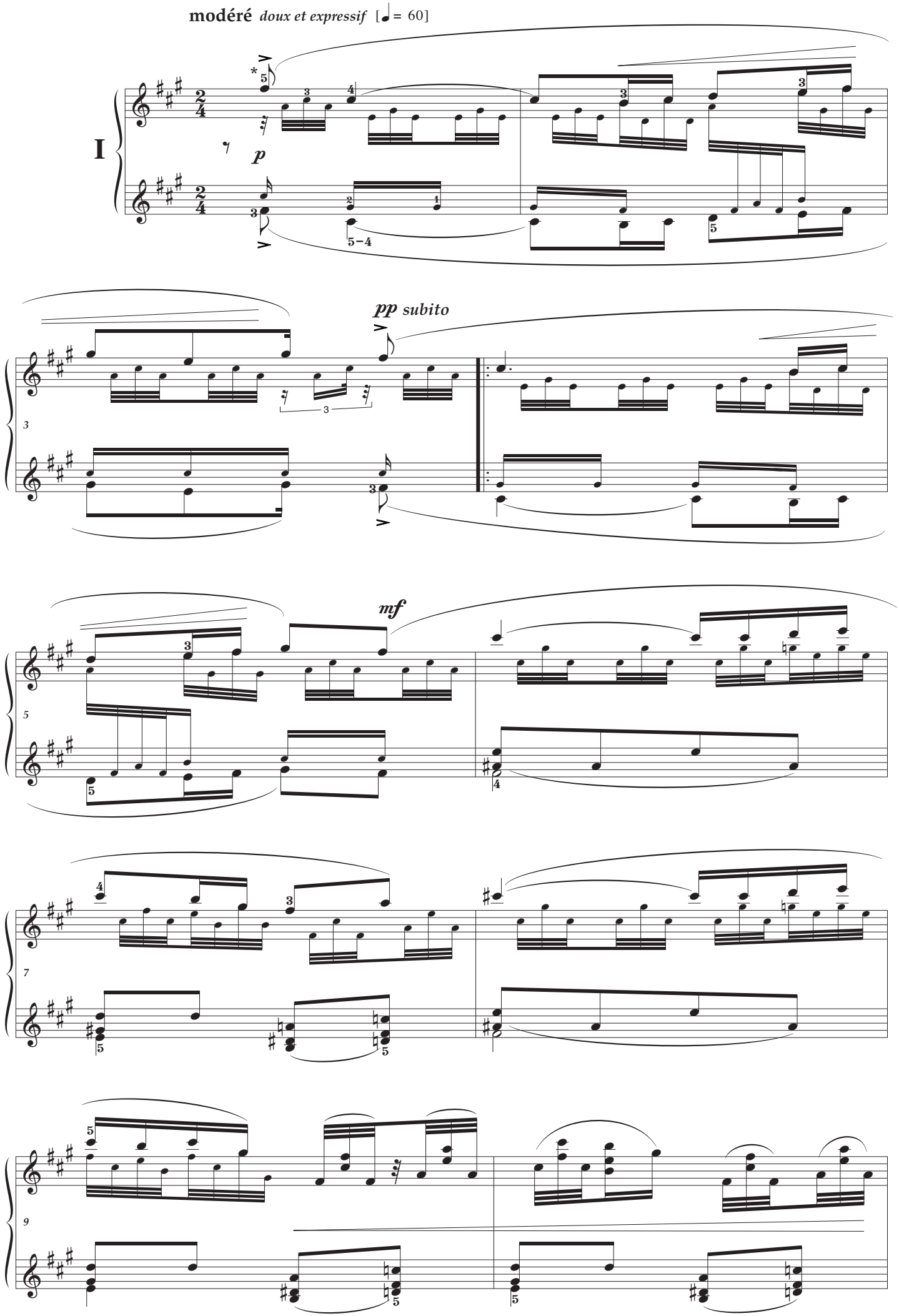
Ray Alston (revised December 2023)

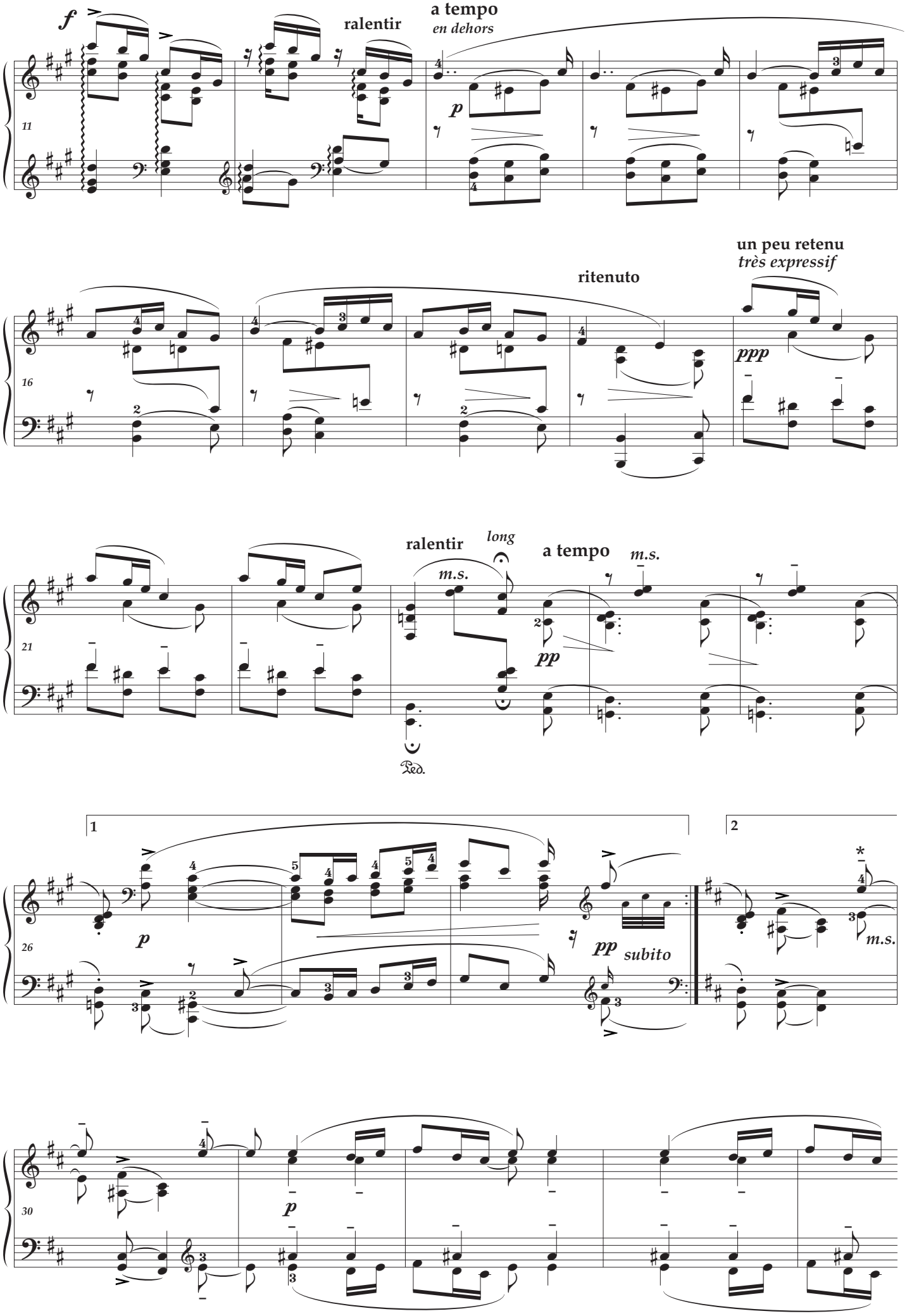
* The title may well suggest brevity, paying homage to late eighteenth-century musical elegance and classical structure — a watchmaker's** miniaturist response to the large-scale German sonatas of Beethoven or Brahms.

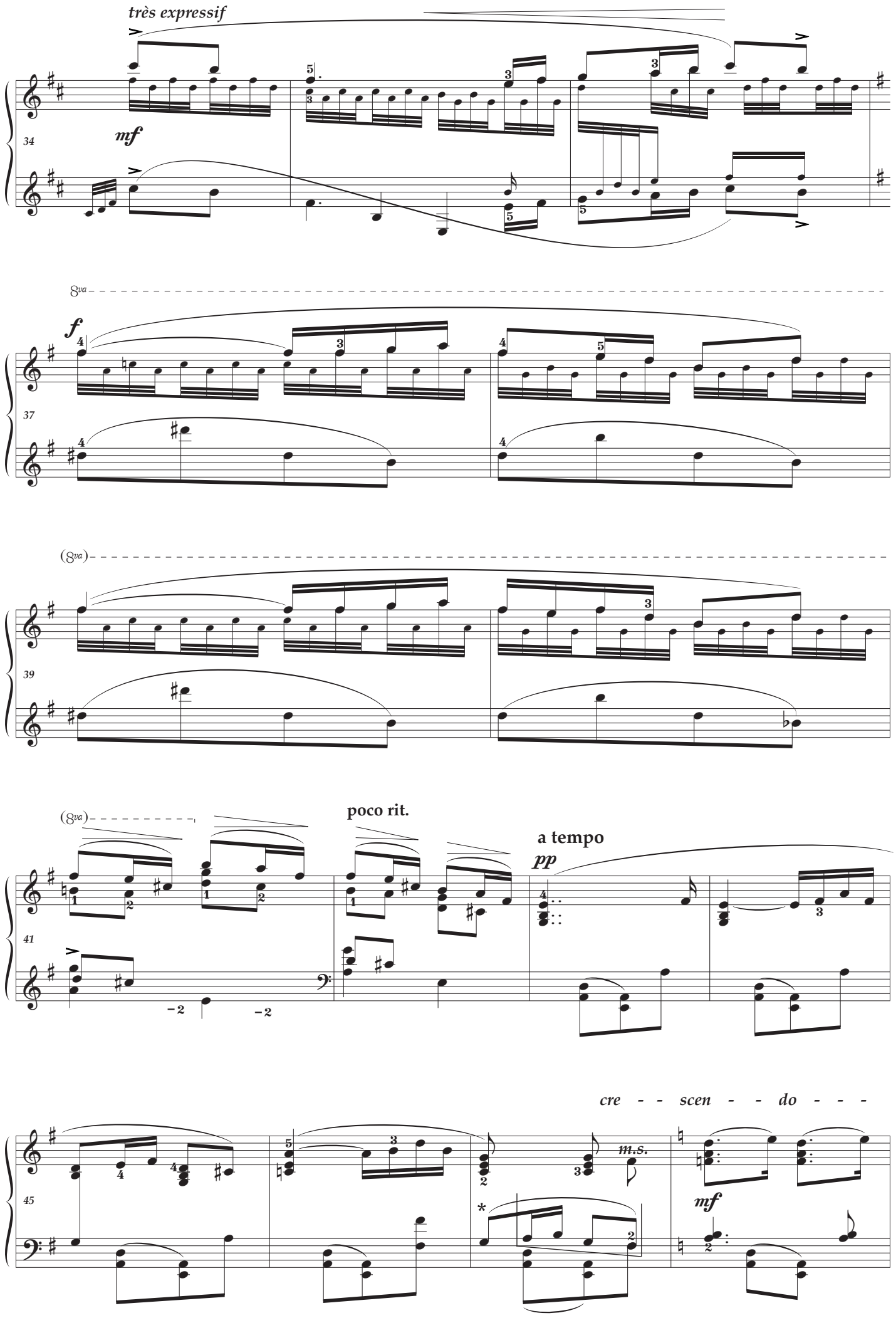
** A reference to Stravinsky who referred to Ravel as 'the most perfect of Swiss watchmakers'.

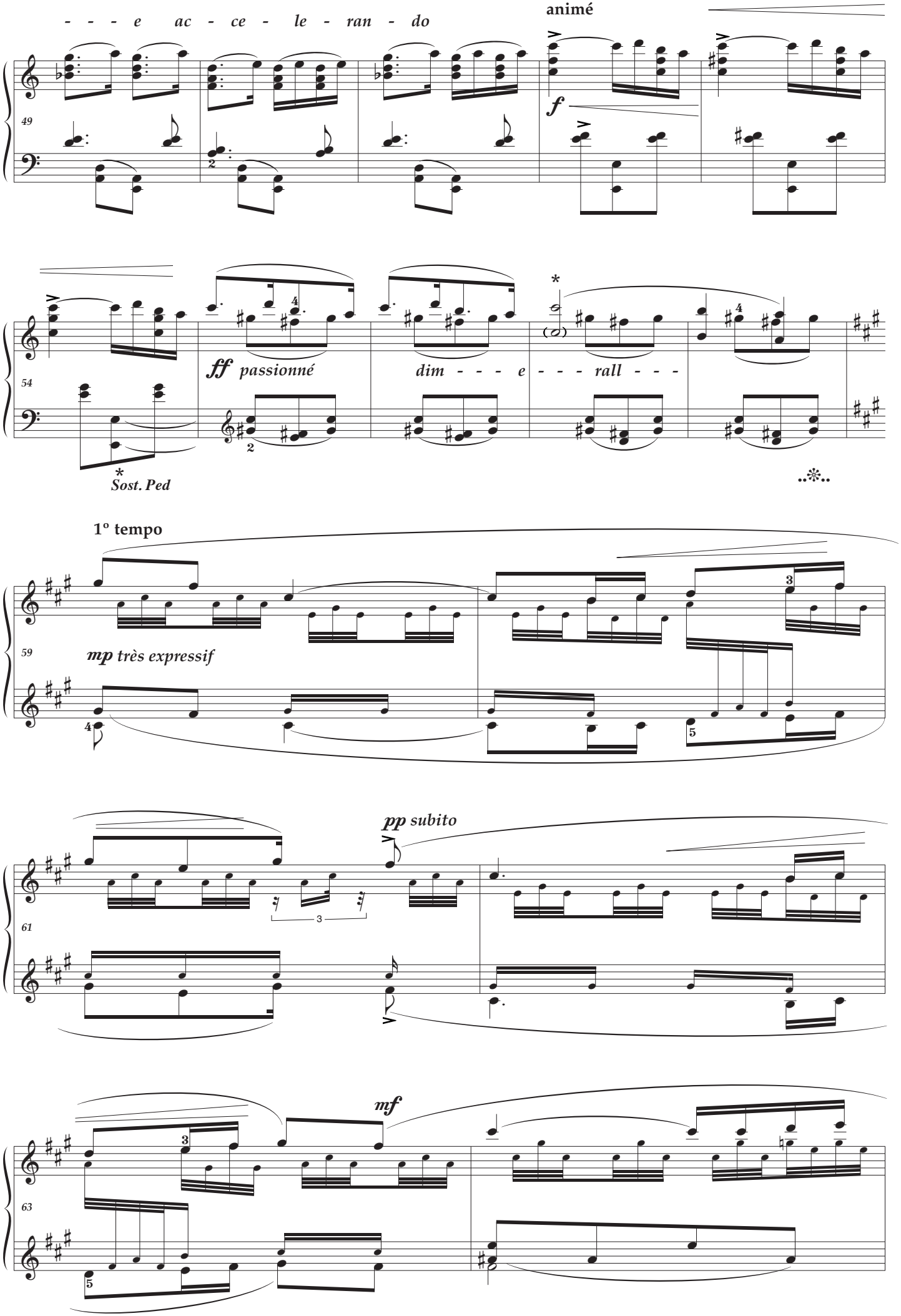


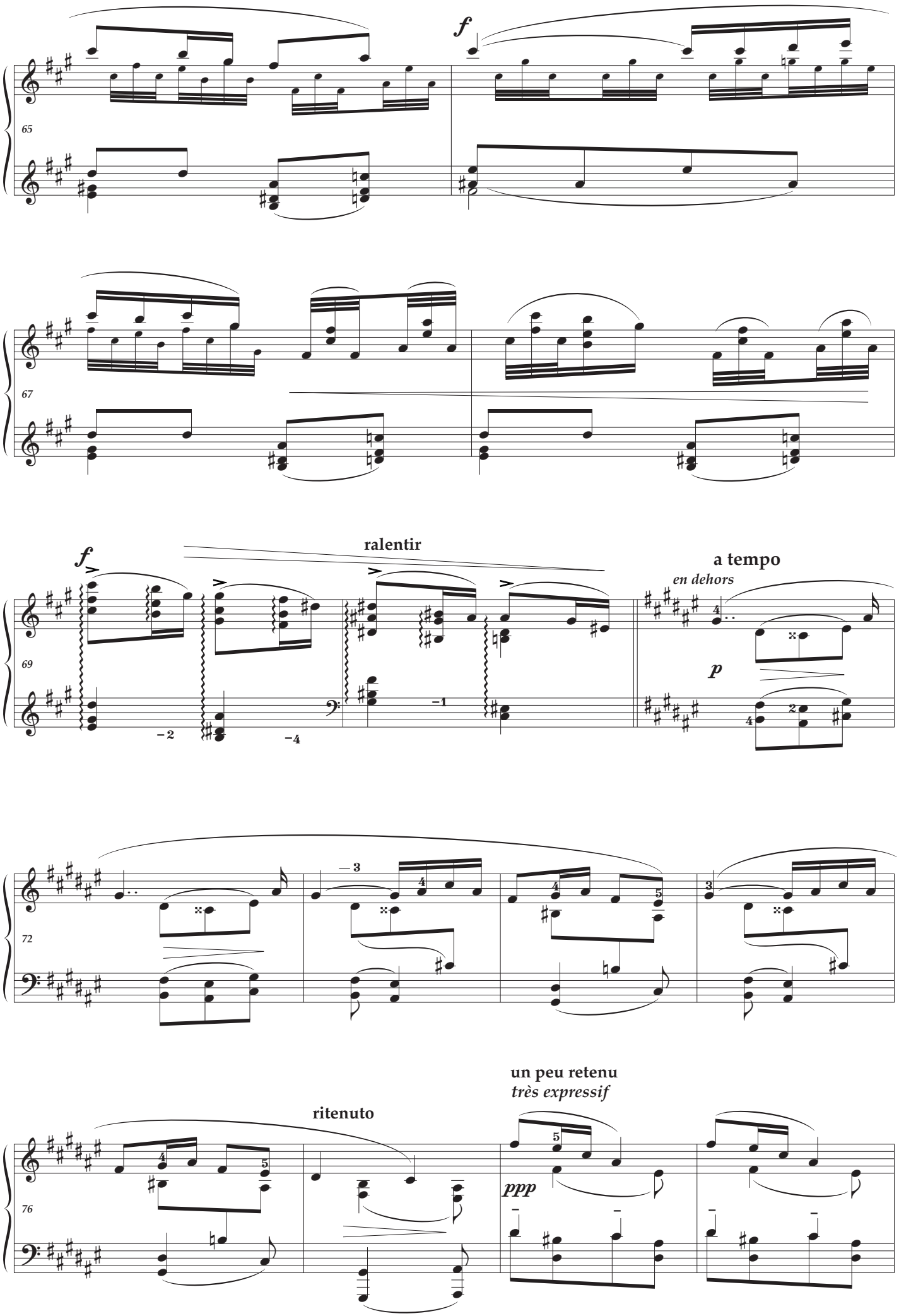
RRRRRRRRRRR

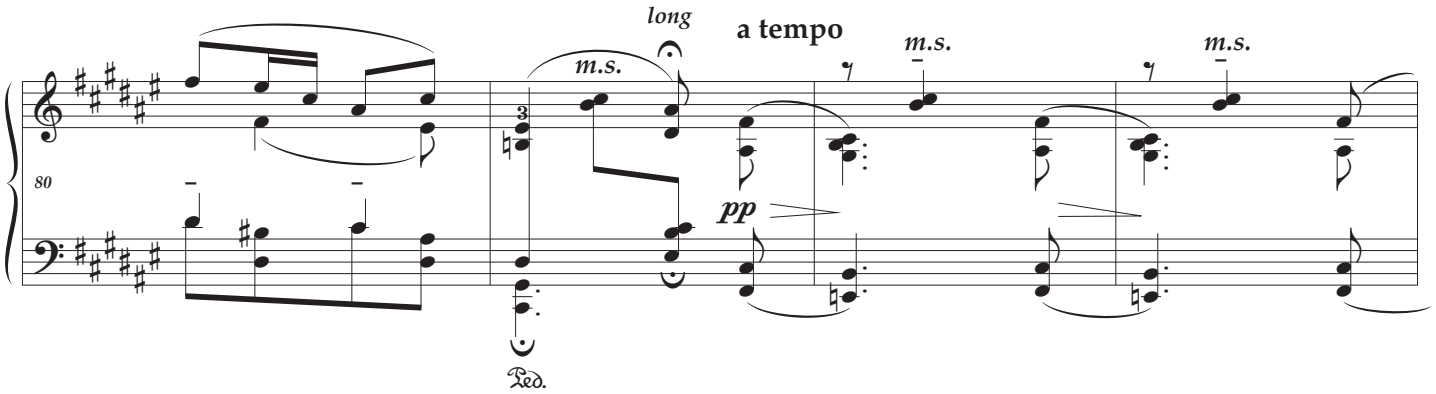

modéré doux et expressif [♩= 60]
I
p
pp subito
mf

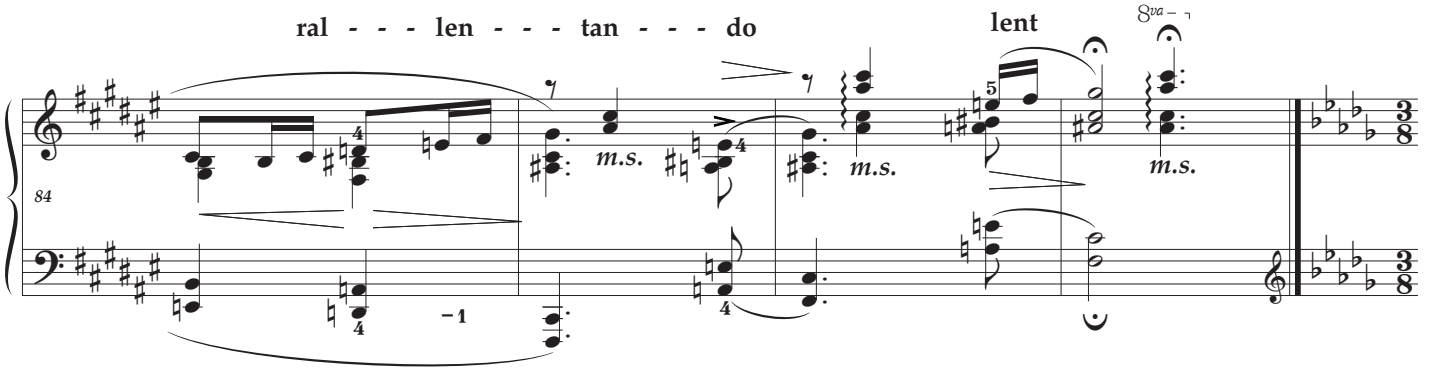

f
ralentir
a tempo
en dehors
p
11
un peu retenu
très expressif
ritenuto
ppp
16
ralentir
long
m.s.
a tempo
m.s.
pp
21
Ped.
1
2
p
pp
subito
m.s.
26
p
30

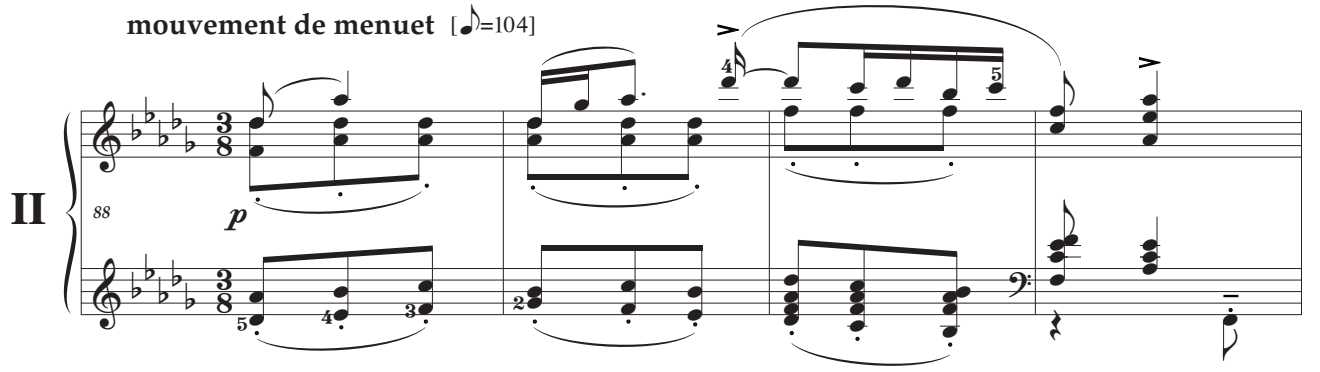

très expressif
mf
34
8va
f
37
(8va)
39
(8va)
poco rit.
a tempo
pp
41
cre - - scen - - do - - -
m.s.
mf
45

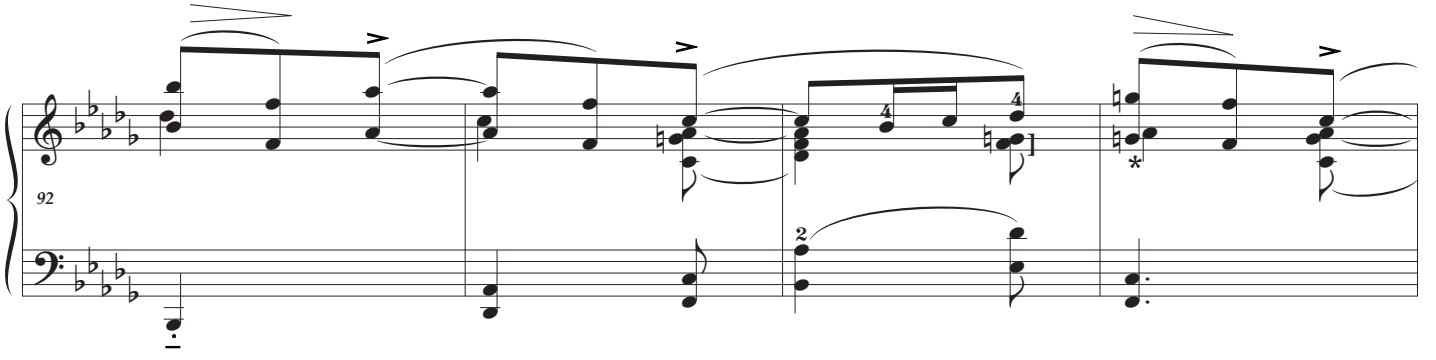

- - - e ac - ce - le - ran - do
animé
49
f
54
ff passionné
dim - - - e - - - rall - - -
Sost. Ped
1º tempo
59
mp très expressif
pp subito
61
mf
63

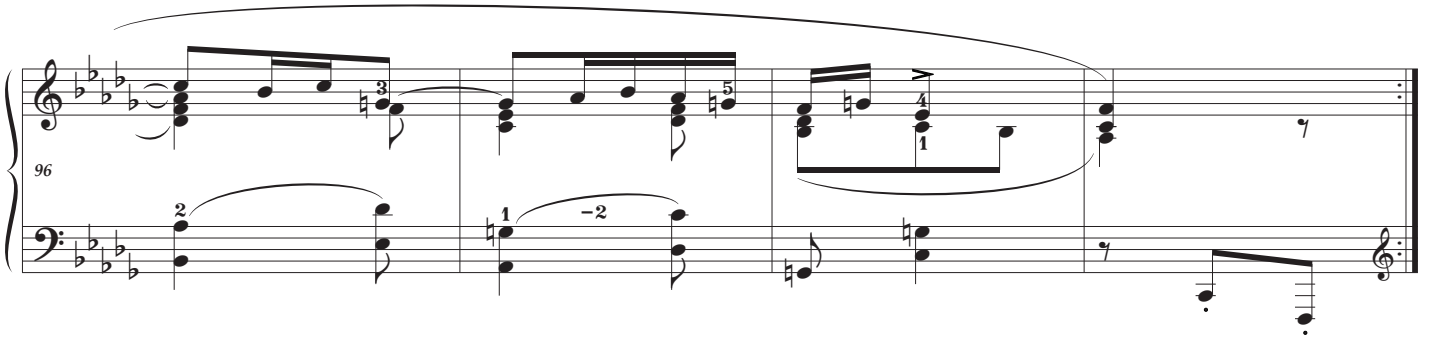

f
65
67
f
ralentir
a tempo
en dehors
p
69
72
ritenuto
un peu retenu
très expressif
ppp
76

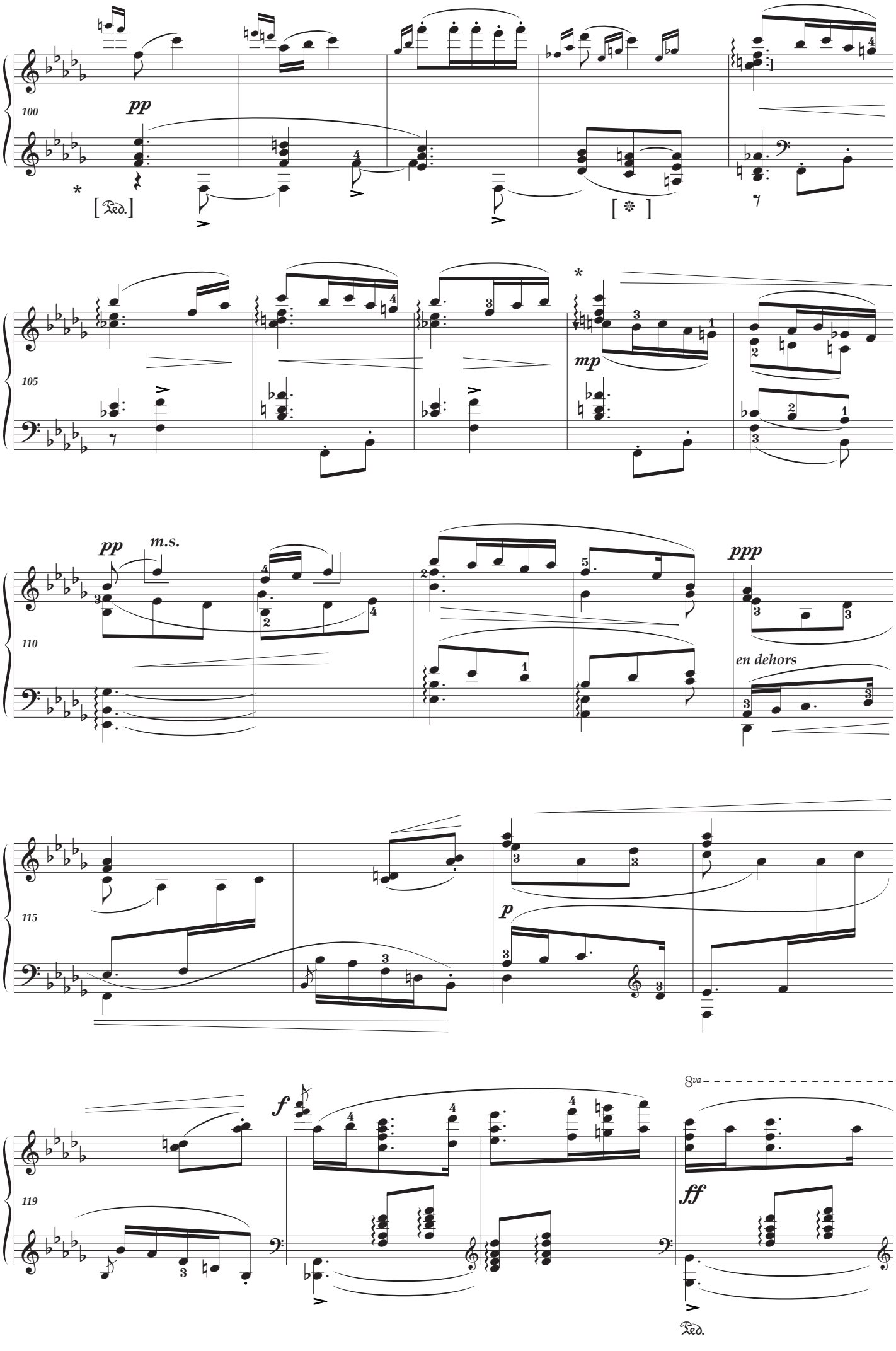

long
a tempo
m.s.
m.s.
m.s.
pp
Ped.

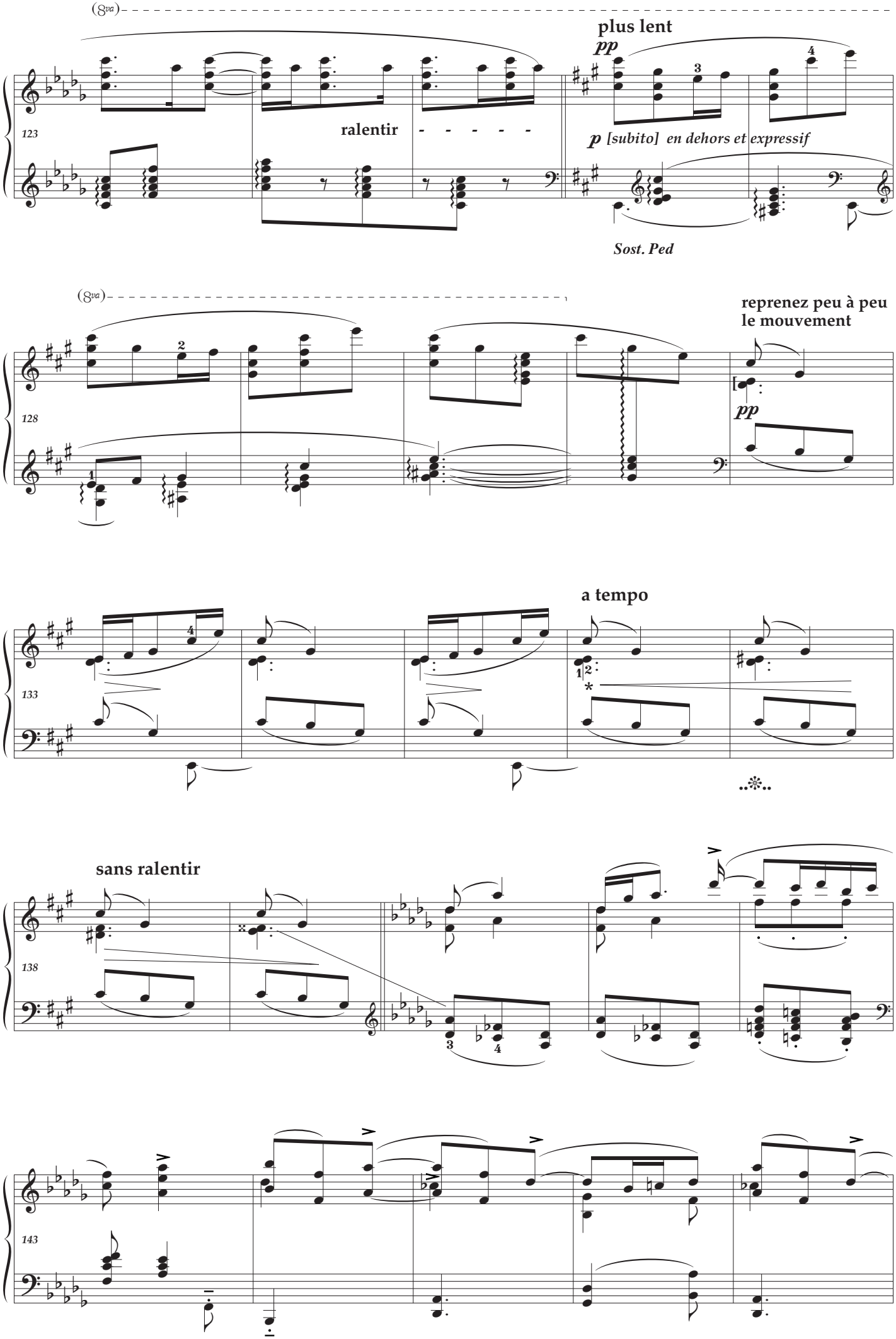

ral - - - len - - - tan - - - do
lent
8va
m.s.
m.s.
m.s.

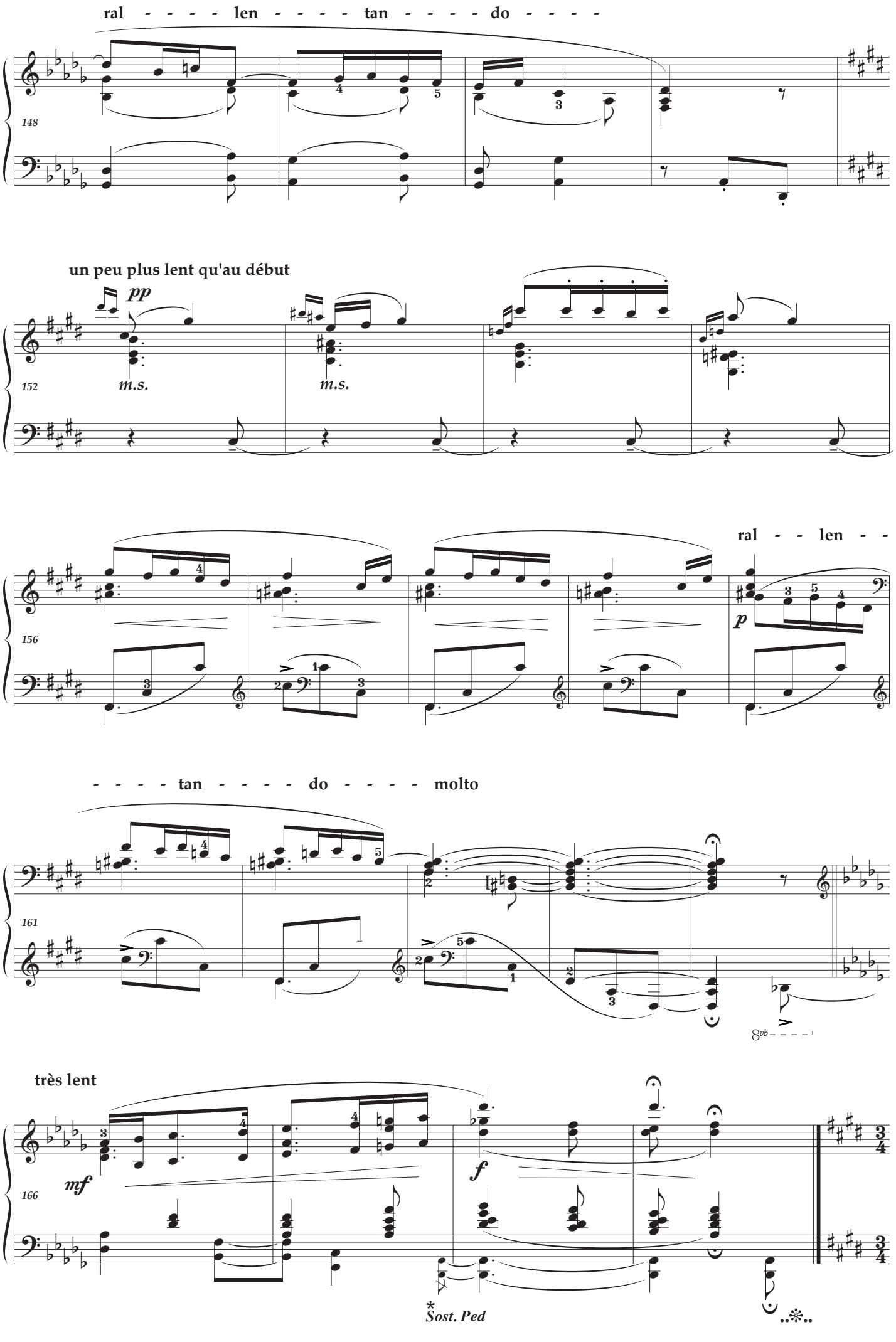

mouvement de menuet [♪=104]
II
p

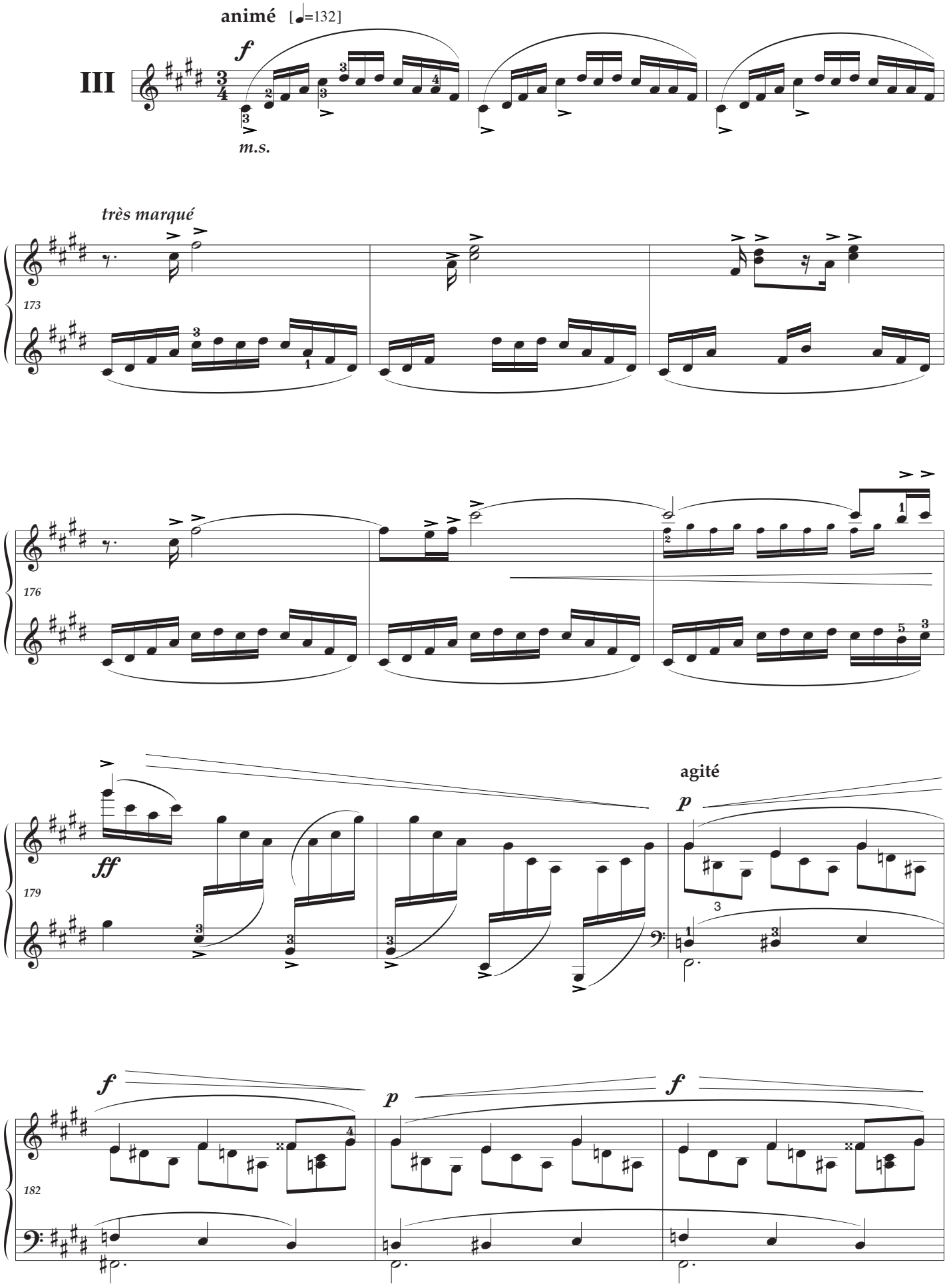


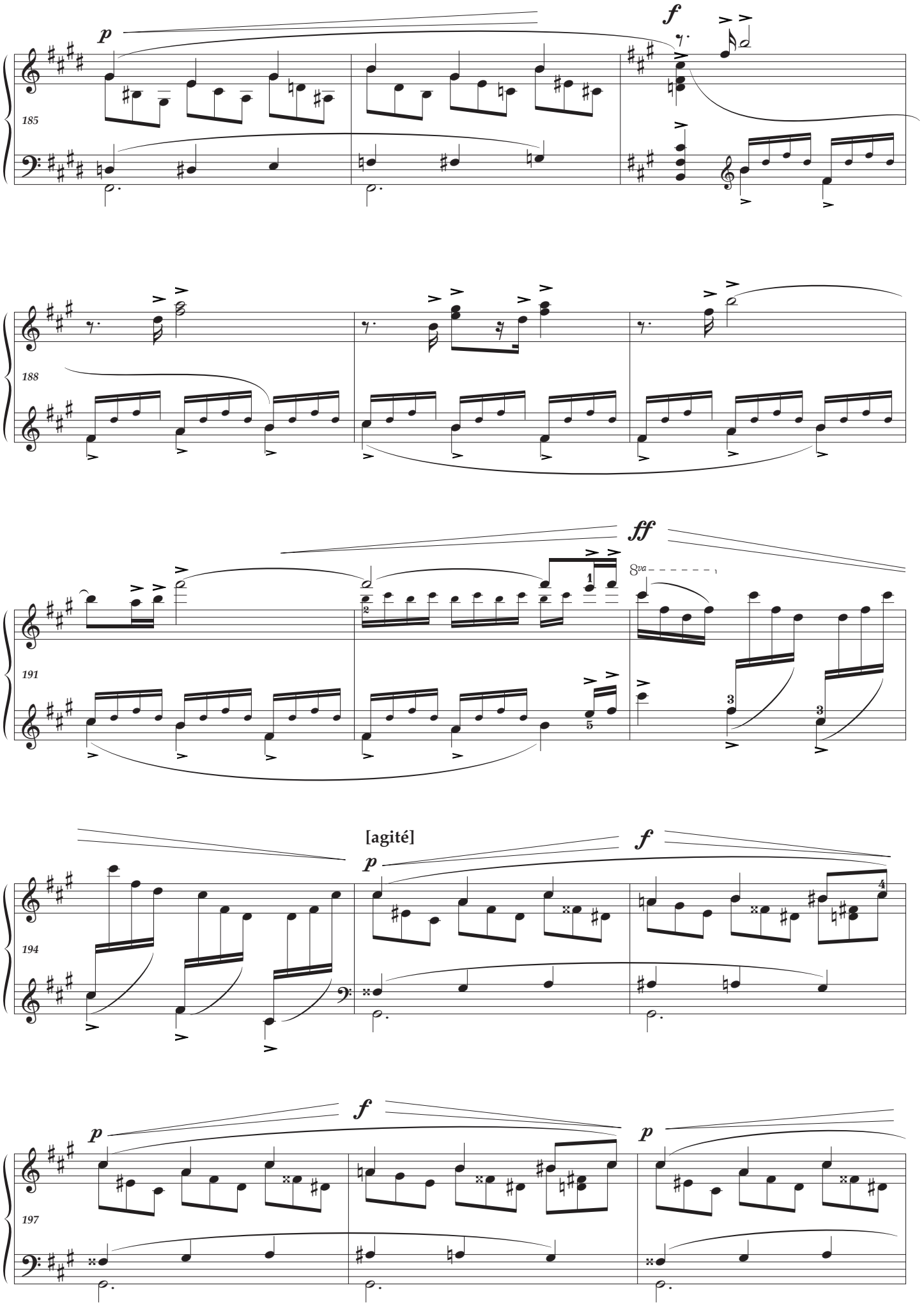


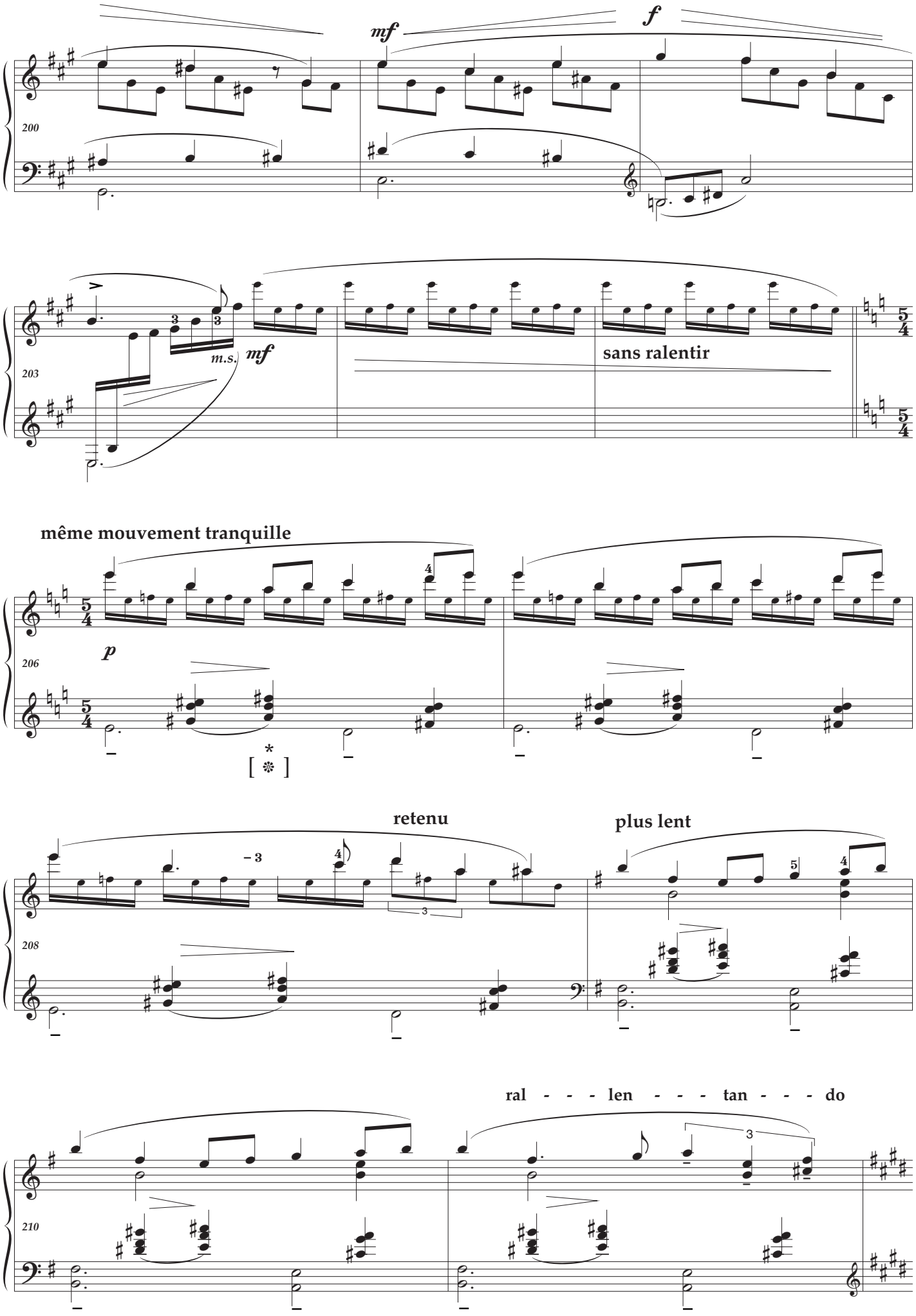

100
pp
[Ped.]
[✻]
105
mp
110
pp
m.s.
ppp
en dehors
115
p
119
f
8va
ff
Ped.

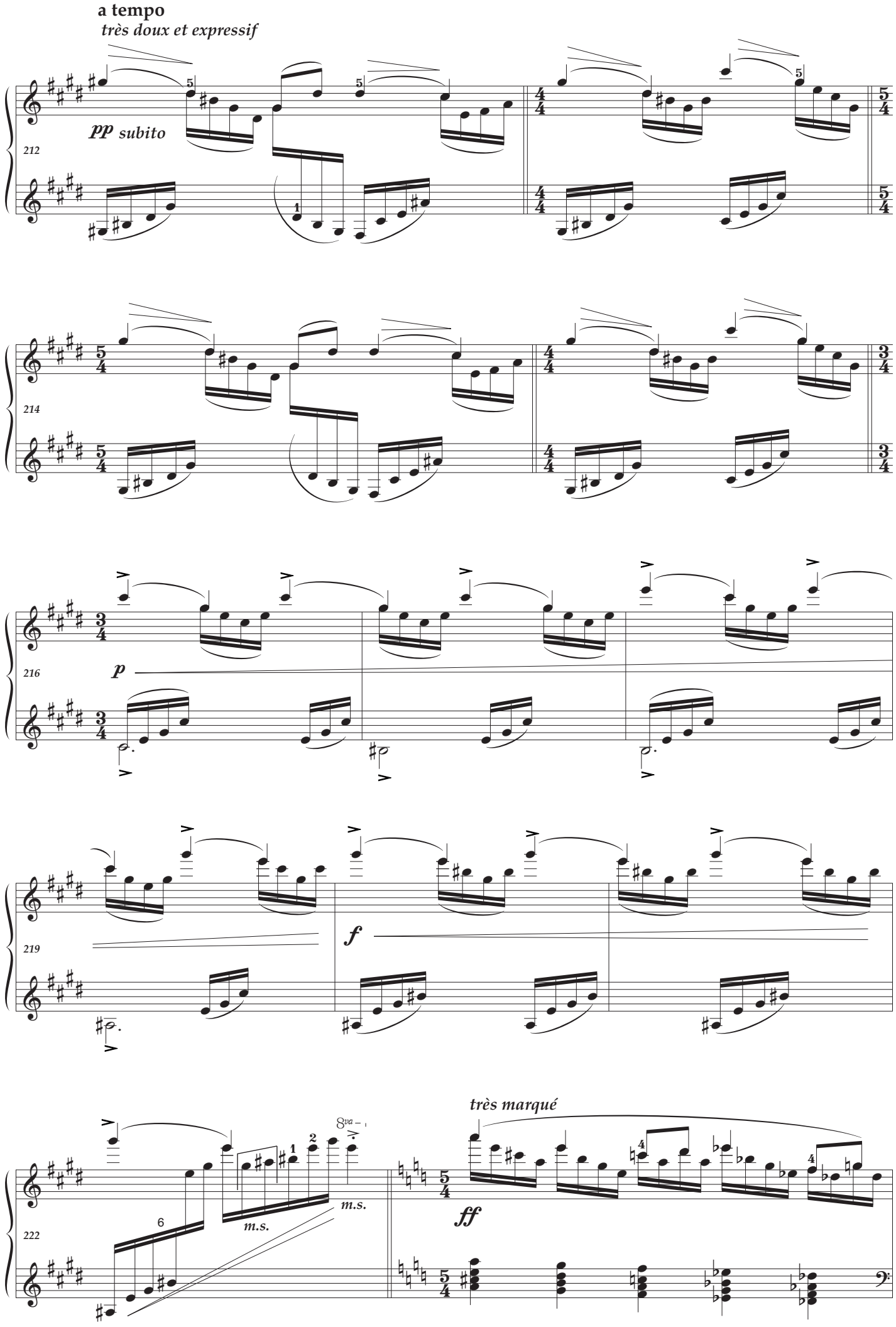

(8va)
plus lent
pp
123
ralentir - - - - -
p [subito] en dehors et expressif
Sost. Ped
(8va)
reprenez peu à peu
le mouvement
128
pp
a tempo
133
sans ralentir
138
143

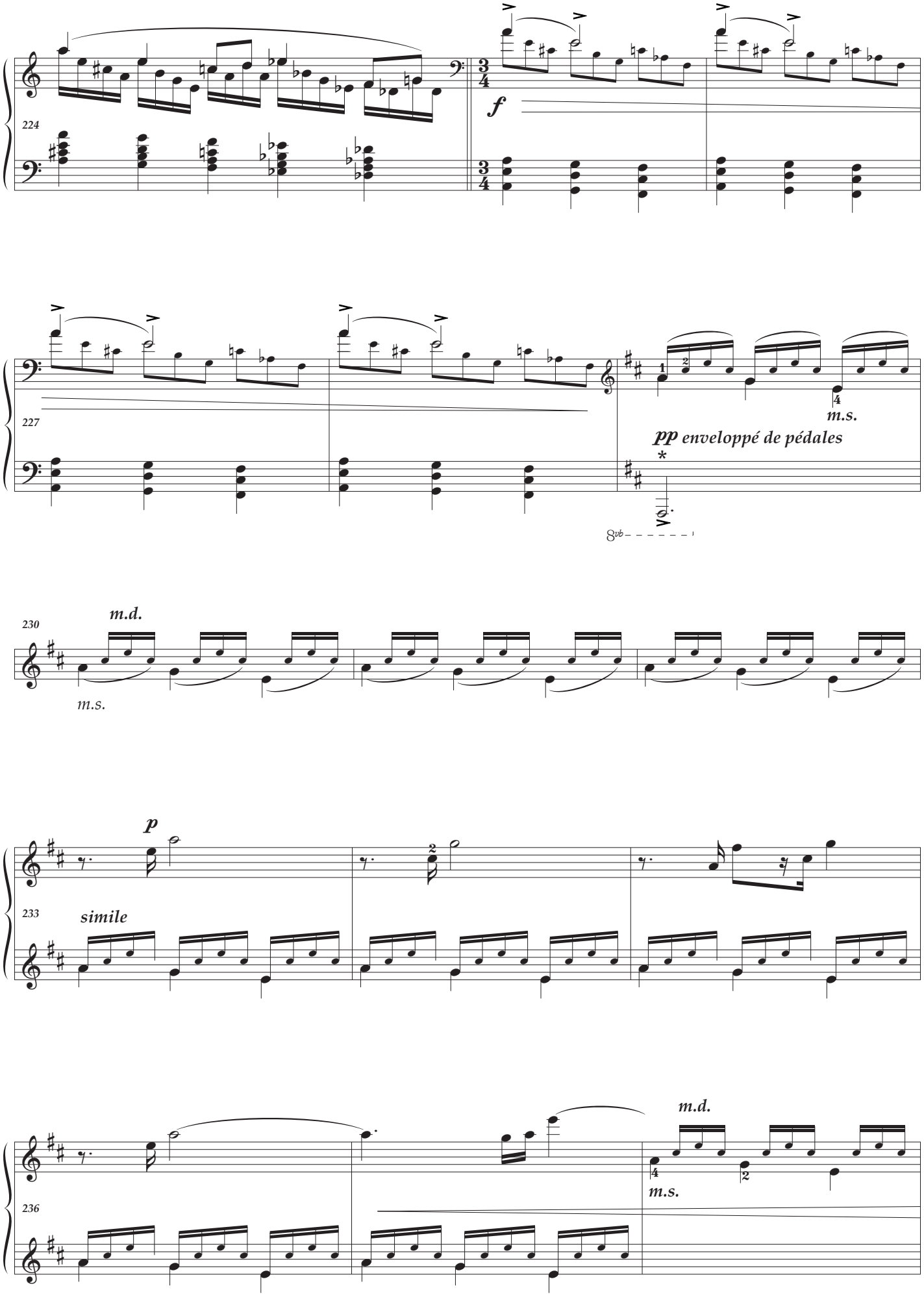

ral - - - - len - - - - tan - - - - do - - - -
148
un peu plus lent qu'au début
pp
m.s.
m.s.
152
ral - - len - -
p
156
- - - - tan - - - - do - - - - molto
161
8vb
très lent
mf
f
166
Sost. Ped

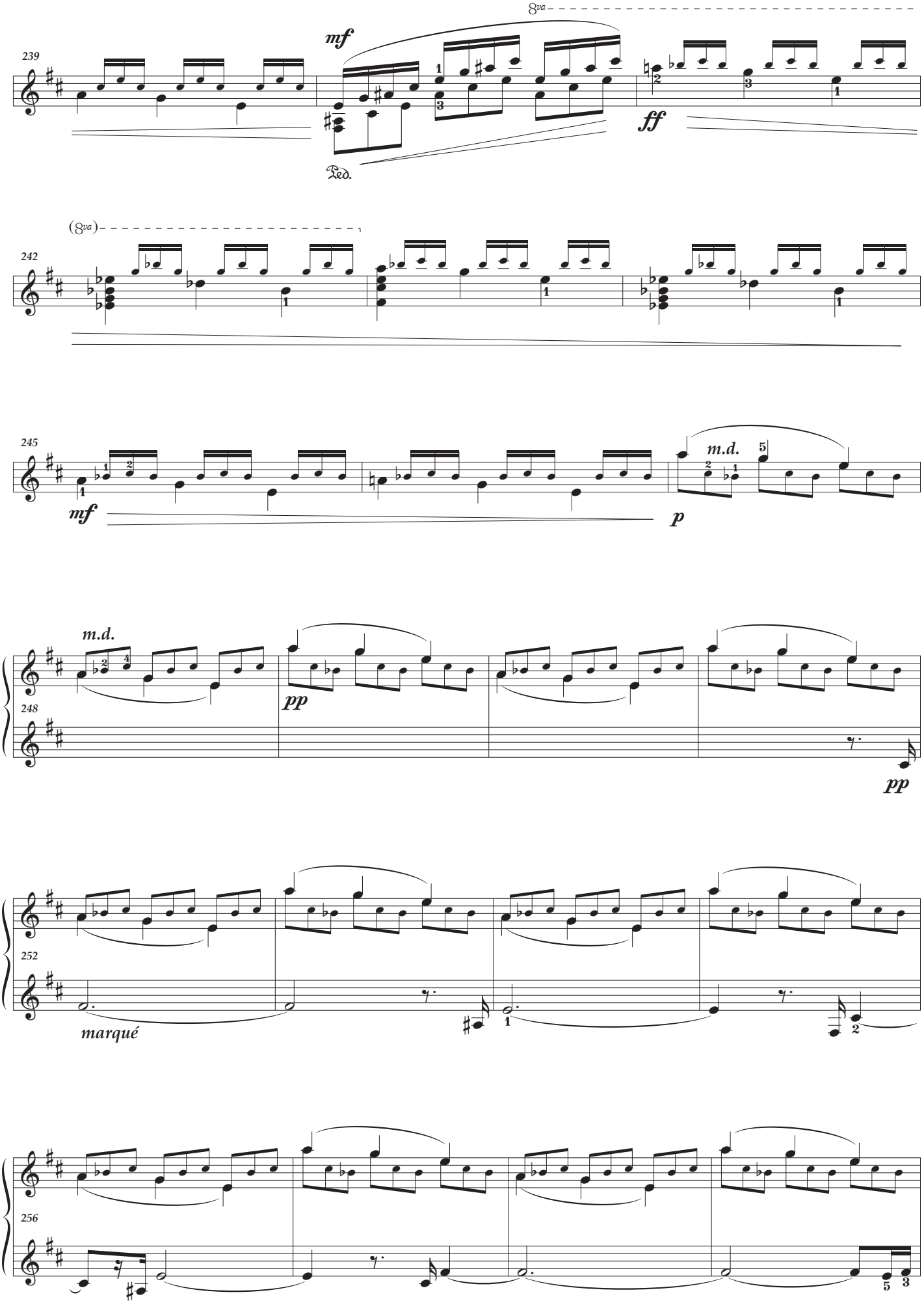

animé [♩=132]
III
f
m.s.
très marqué
173
176
ff
agité
p
179
f
p
f
182

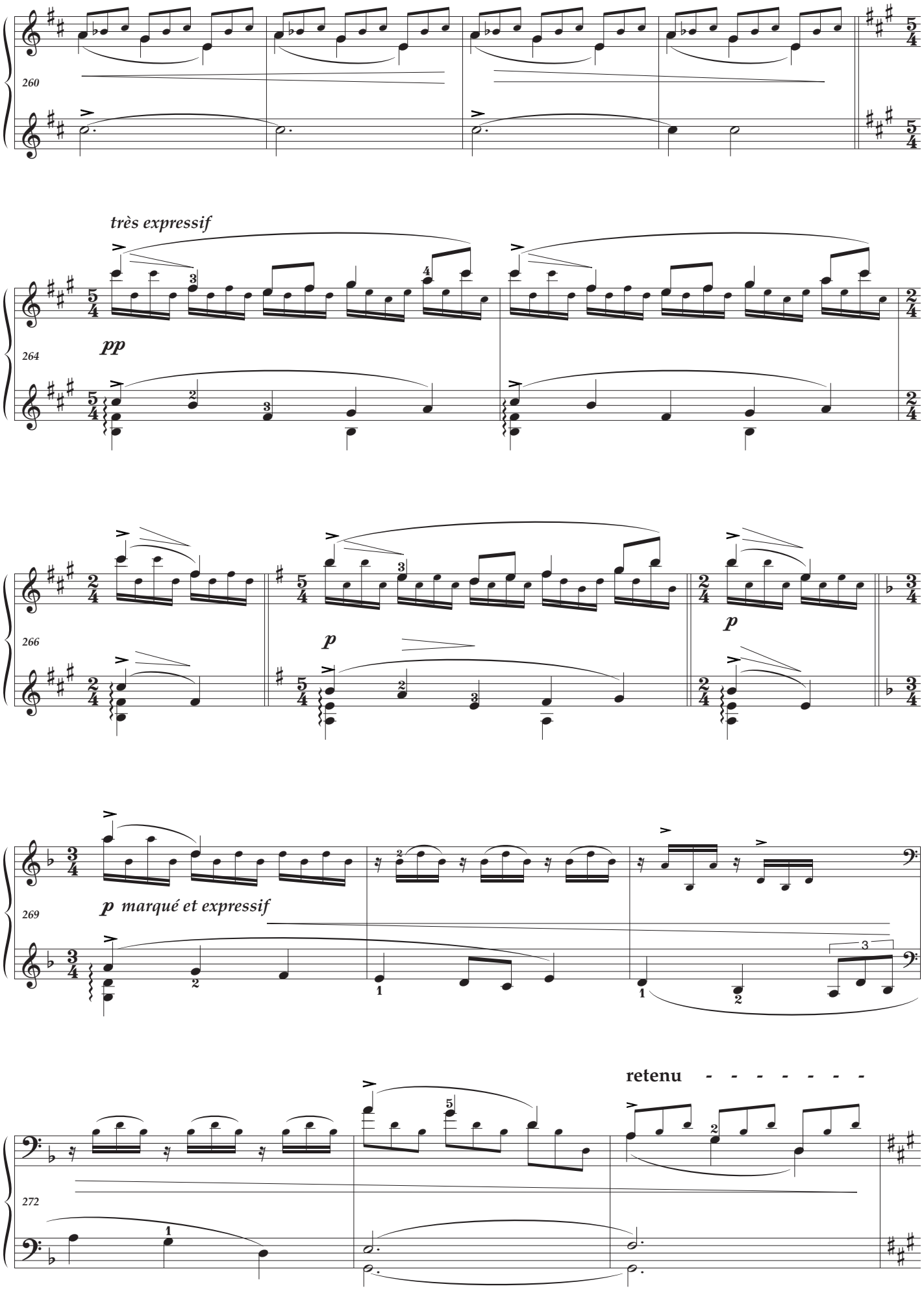

p
f
185
188
ff
8va
191
[agité]
p
f
194
p
f
197
p

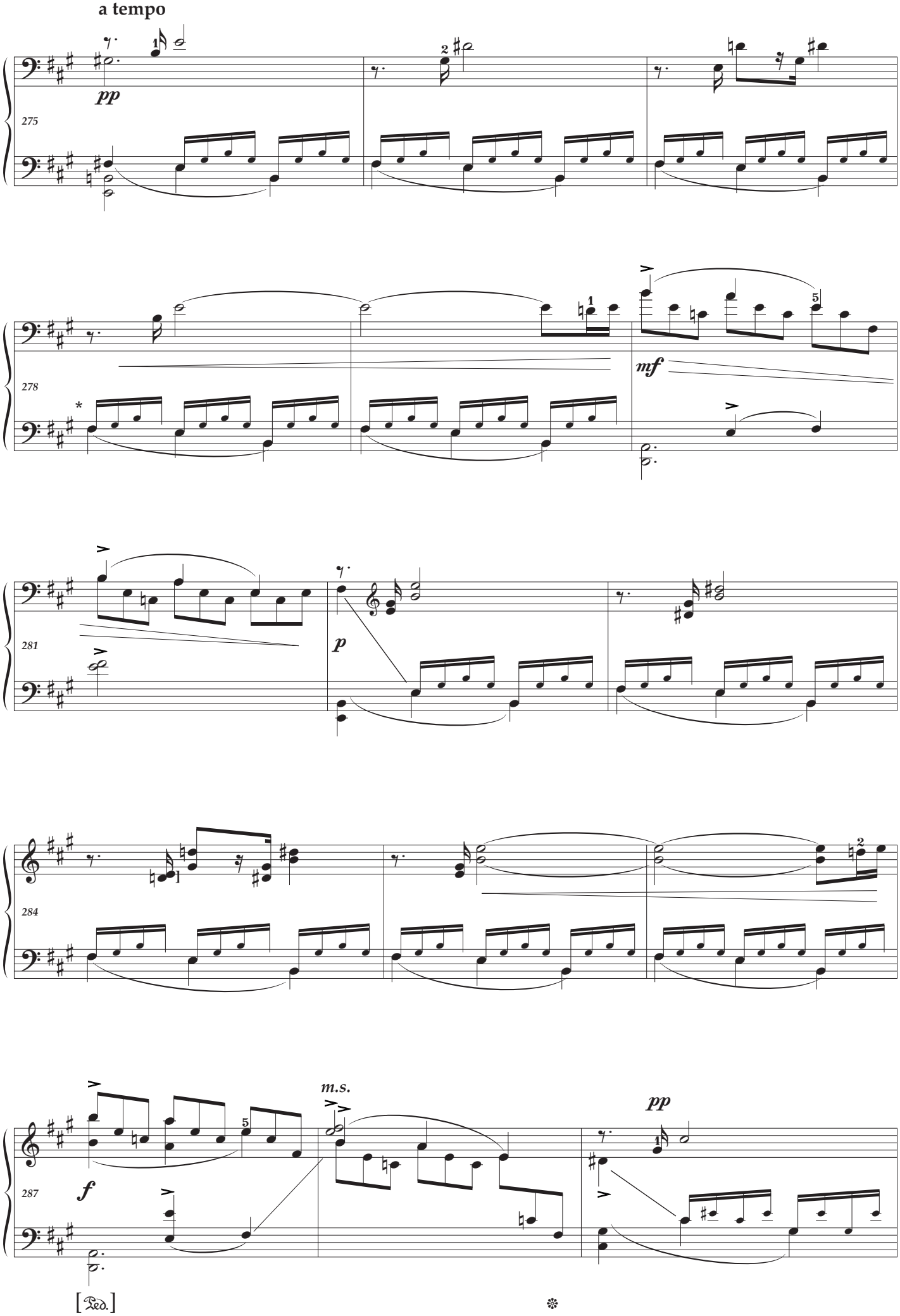

mf
f
200
m.s.
mf
sans ralentir
203
même mouvement tranquille
p
206
[❊]
retenu
plus lent
208
ral - - - len - - - tan - - - do
210

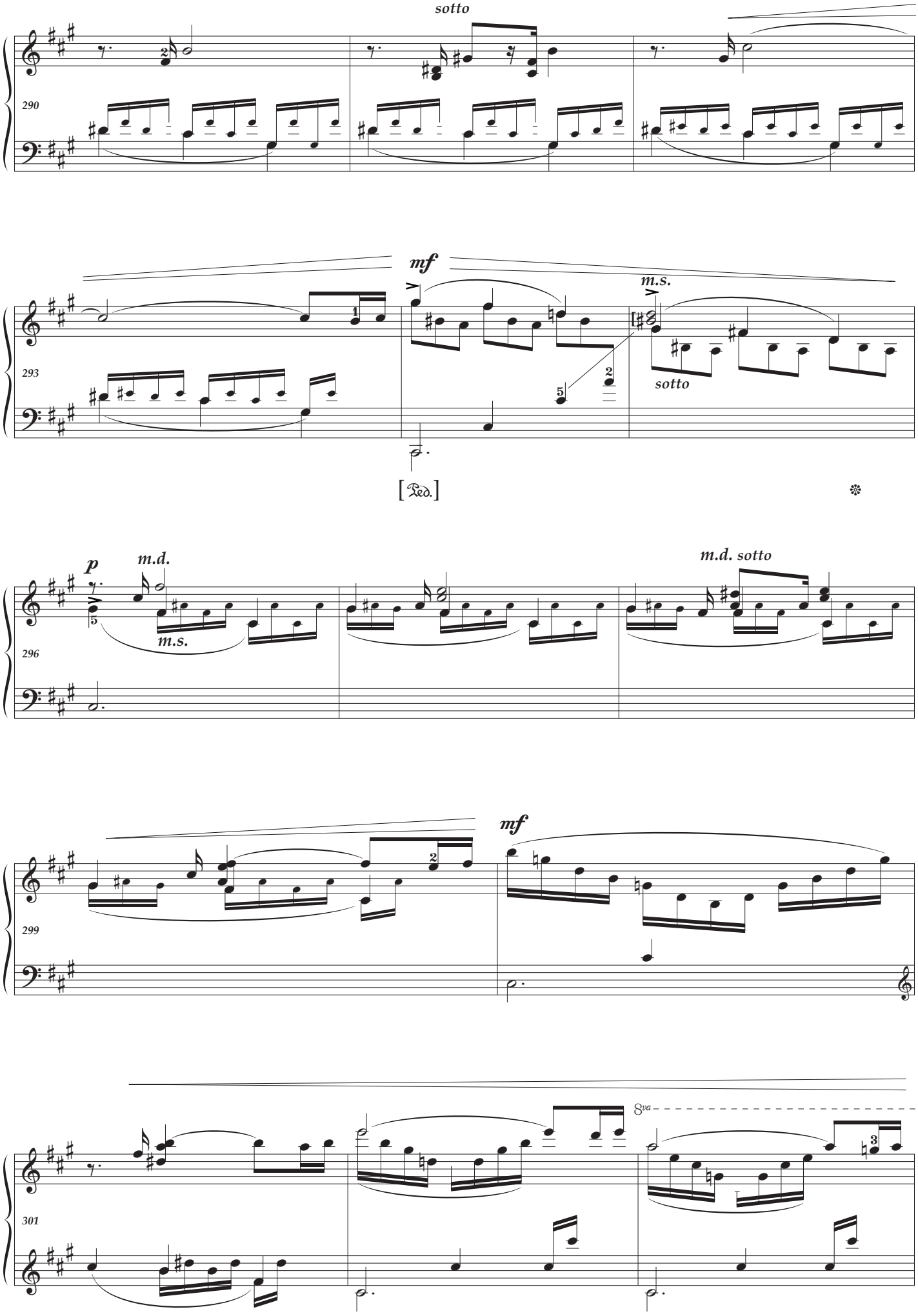

a tempo
très doux et expressif
pp subito
212
214
216
p
219
f
très marqué
ff
222
m.s.
m.s.
8va

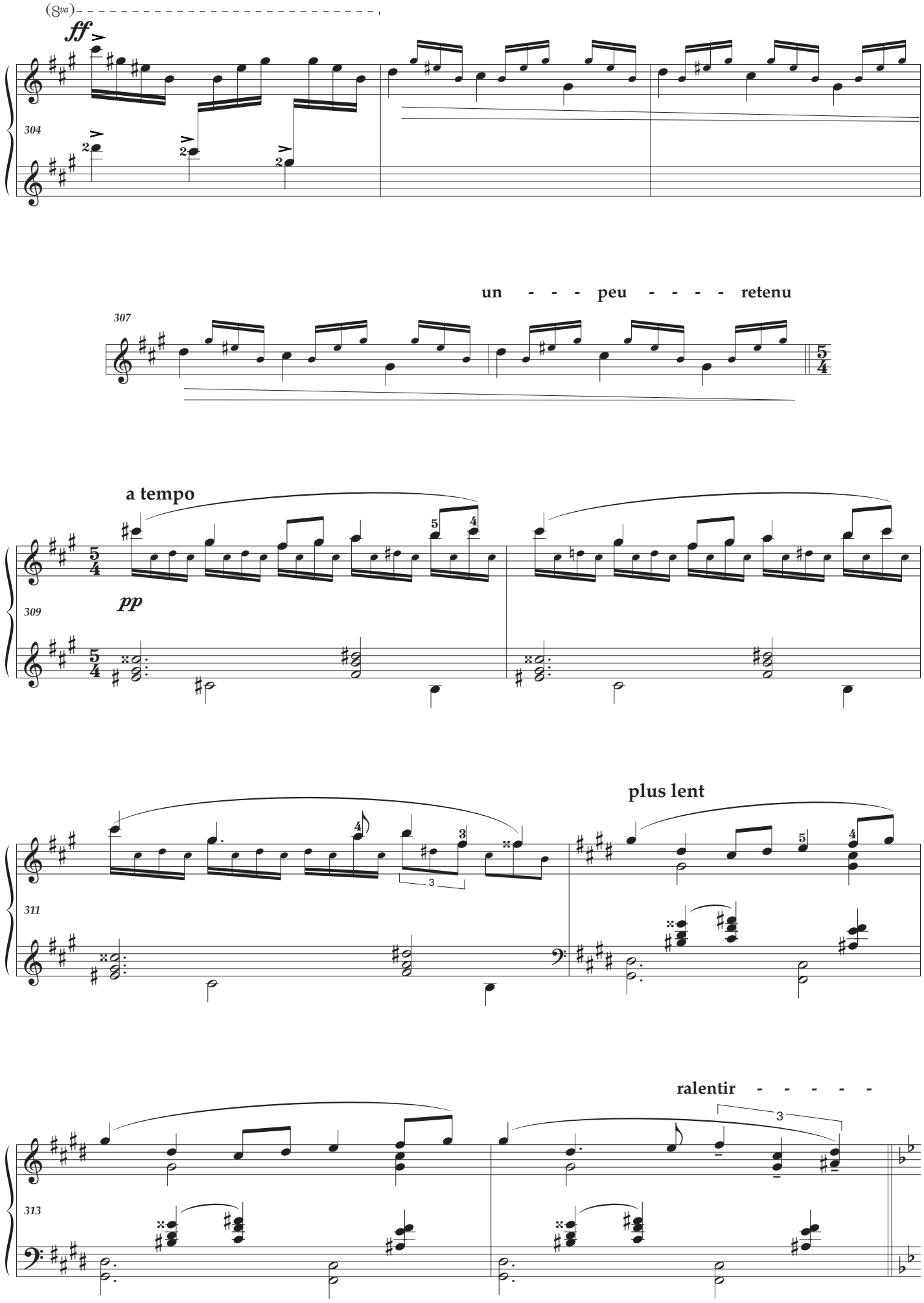

224
f
227
m.s.
pp enveloppé de pédales
8vb
230
m.d.
m.s.
p
233
simile
236
m.d.
m.s.


8va
mf
239
Ped.
ff
(8va)
242
245
mf
m.d.
p
m.d.
248
pp
pp
252
marqué
256


260
très expressif
264
pp
266
p
p
269
p marqué et expressif
retenu
272

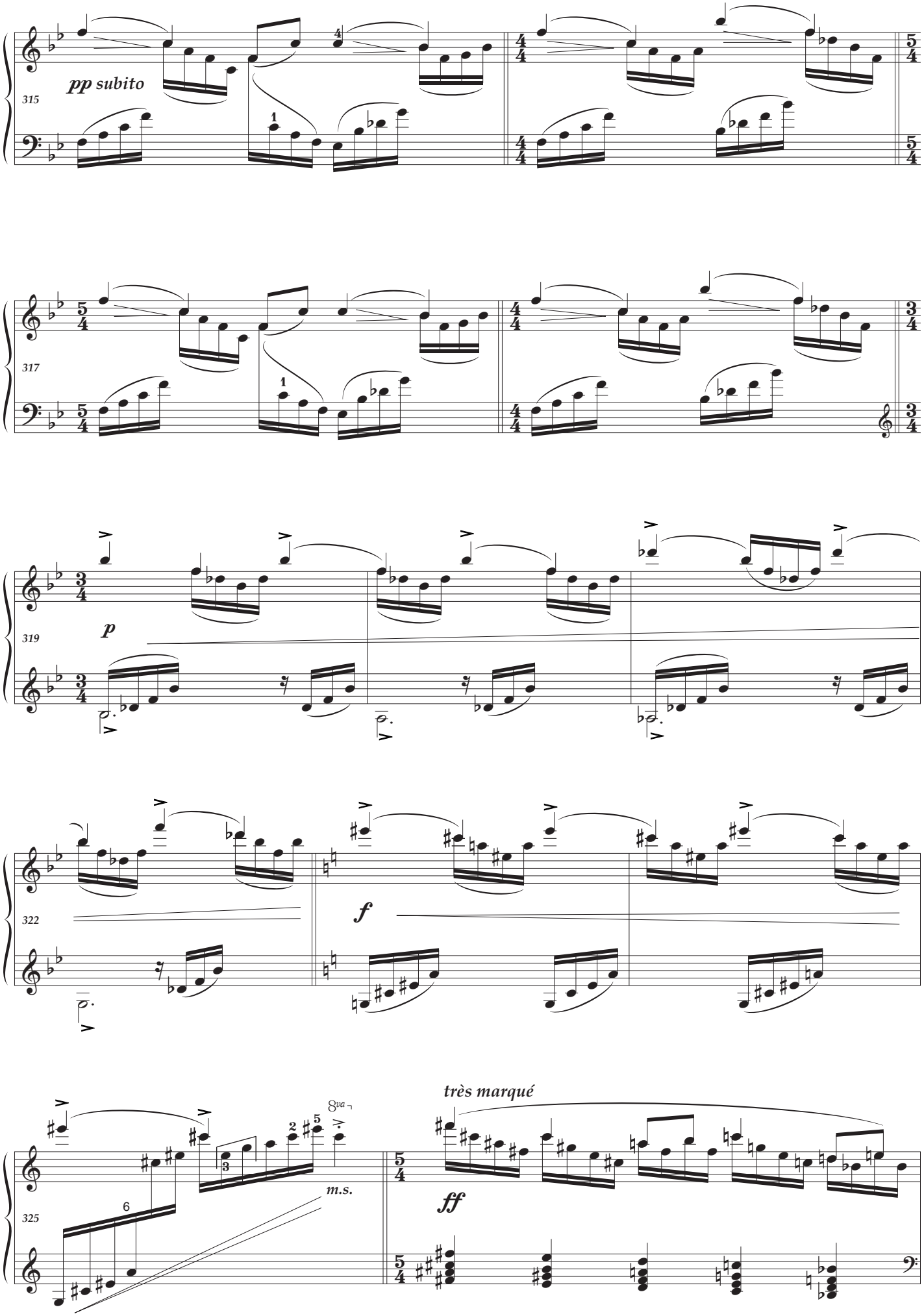

a tempo
pp
275
278
mf
281
p
284
287
f
m.s.
pp
[Ped.]

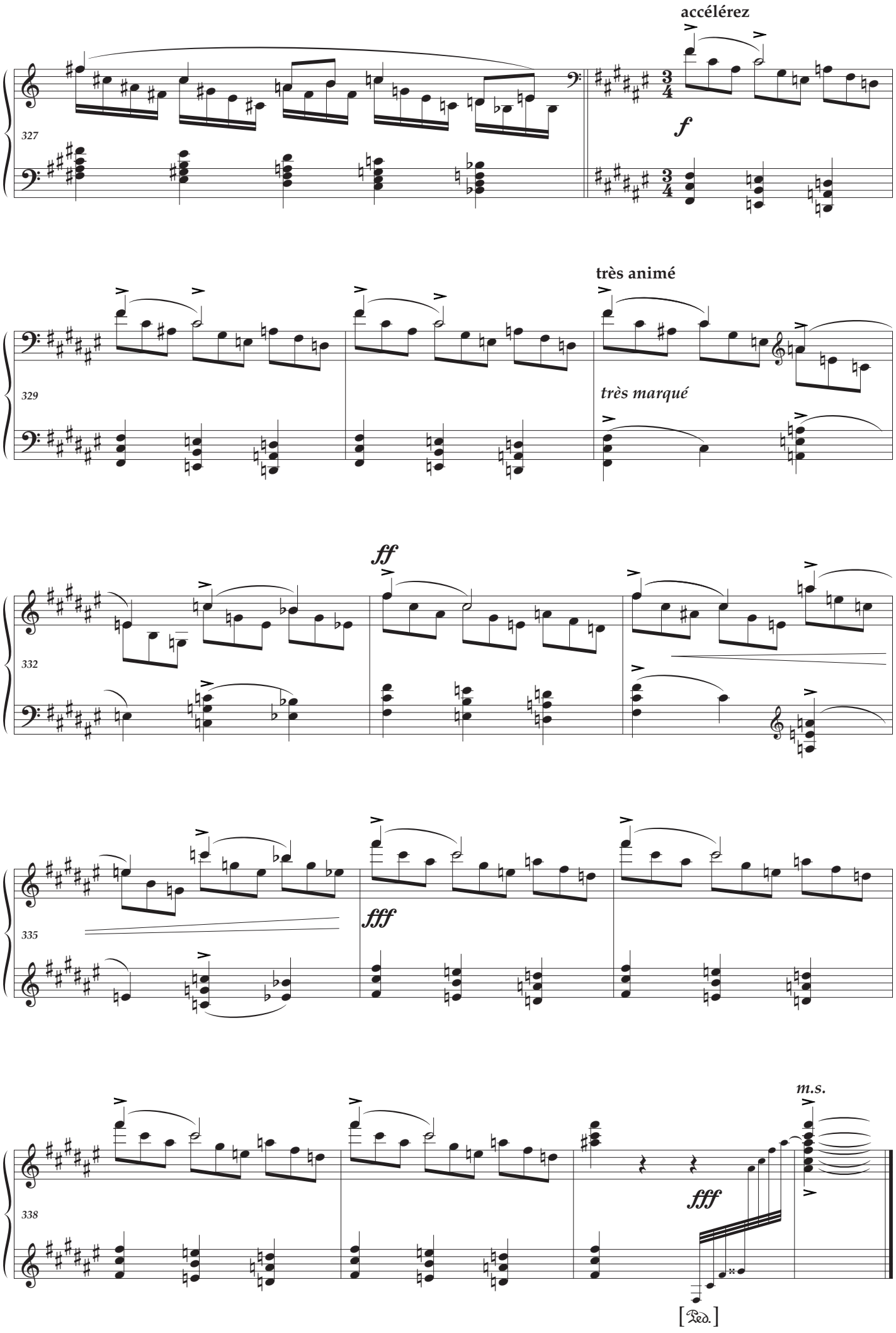

sotto
290
mf
m.s.
293
sotto
[Ped.]
p
m.d.
m.s.
296
m.d. sotto
mf
299
8va
301


(8va)
ff
304
un - - - peu - - - - retenu
307
a tempo
pp
309
plus lent
311
ralentir - - - - -
313

un peu retenu

très doux et expressif




accélérez
f
très animé
très marqué
ff
fff
m.s.
fff
[Ped.]

Appendix

durations, comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

- Édition Durand : there are no metronome speeds
- editorial changes of key-signature and reduced font
- Ravel's piano writing poses many complications for the pianist, often caused by the hands' close proximity. This edition addresses some of those problems and offers solutions, often involving hand swapping and alternative notation.
- Ravel used the pedal sign very sparingly, preferring elongated ties and extended notes, impossible to hold otherwise. Use of the *sostenuto* pedal is entirely an editorial suggestion.
- When chords and arpeggiated chords are combined I find this useful: LH arpeggiated — connect the **top** note with RH chord; RH arpeggiated — connect the **lower** note with LH.

First movement		**Page 1** **Duration: 4'**
	1	Durand : accents missing (see repeat)
	29-36	this section has been seriously modified
	47	alto voice "re-written"
	54	it is suggested to use the pedal generously for an impassioned sustained E pedal point here
	57	alto C in brackets added for tone
Second movement		**Page 6** **Duration: 2'40**
	95	it is possible to play G♮ and A♭ simultaneously with the thumb
	100	the magic of this passage can be best served by a long unchanged pedal, observing Ravel's bass accentuation and highlighting the descending alto counter melody
	108	descending arpeggiation suggestion
	168-169	combined *sostenuto* and sustaining pedals work well here
	136-140	the alto ascending chromatic scale is rather lovely
Third movement		**Page 10** **Duration: 3'50**
	206-222	this subtle change of harmony calls for a pedal change
	229-263	Perlemuter : "*enveloppé de pédales*" (plenty of pedal) but rhythmical
	278-299	LH accompaniment slightly modified
		Overall duration : Vlado Perlemuter : 10'30

doux et expressif	gentle and expressive
en dehors	in relief
un peu retenu	slight *ritardando*
très expressif	very expressive
animé	lively
passionné	impassioned
reprenez peu à peu le mouvement	gradually *a tempo*
sans ralentir	without slowing down
un peu plus lent qu'au début	slightly slower than the opening
agité	troubled
très marqué	well marked
même mouvement tranquille	same tempo but calm
plus lent	slower tempo
enveloppé	plenty of pedal

RAVEL

SONATINE

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RRRRRRRRRR

Please send comments and error reports to
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