NEU

John Cage

Piano Works 1935–48

Quest

Two Pieces (1935)

Metamorphosis

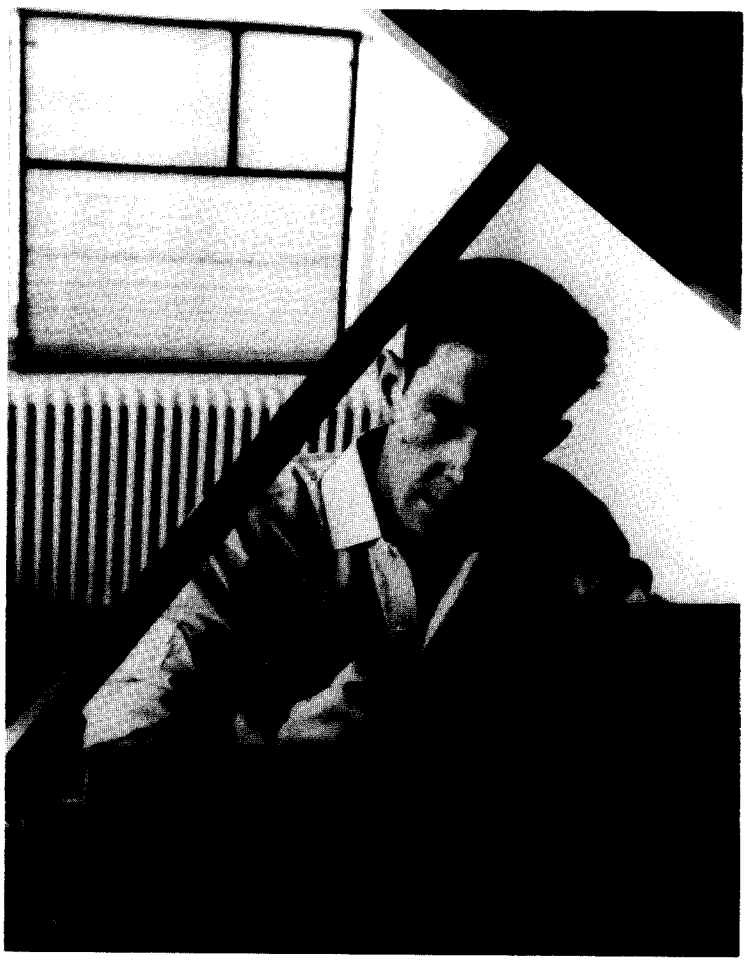
A Room

Ophelia

Two Pieces (1946)

In a Landscape

Dream

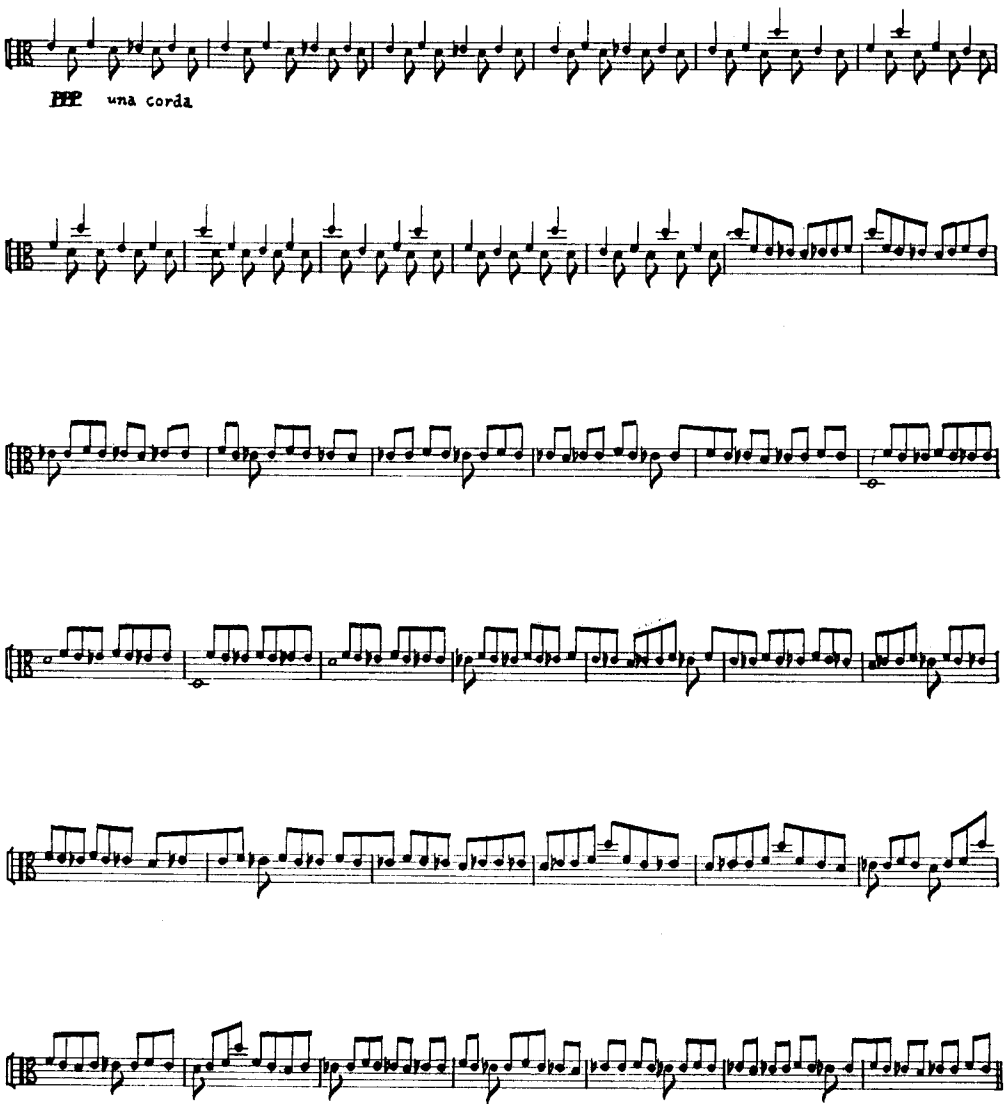


EDITION PETERS

No. 67830

A ROOM

John Cage
NEW YORK CITY, 1943



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PREFACE

Writings about John Cage and pianos usually favor his landmark invention of the *prepared* piano—that radical alteration of the instrument with nuts, bolts, and screws placed in and around its strings that forever changed its persona and potential—and his *magnum opus* composed especially for it, the *Sonatas and Interludes*, completed in 1948. The present volume, however, comprised of pieces predating this monumental work, expands our understanding to include just how sensitive Cage actually was to the piano as it had been handed down. Taken together, these early pieces suggest a wide variety of answers to the question Cage must have posed when writing them: How might this instrument, so emblematic of music of the 19th century, be of interest to us now, here, well into the 20th?

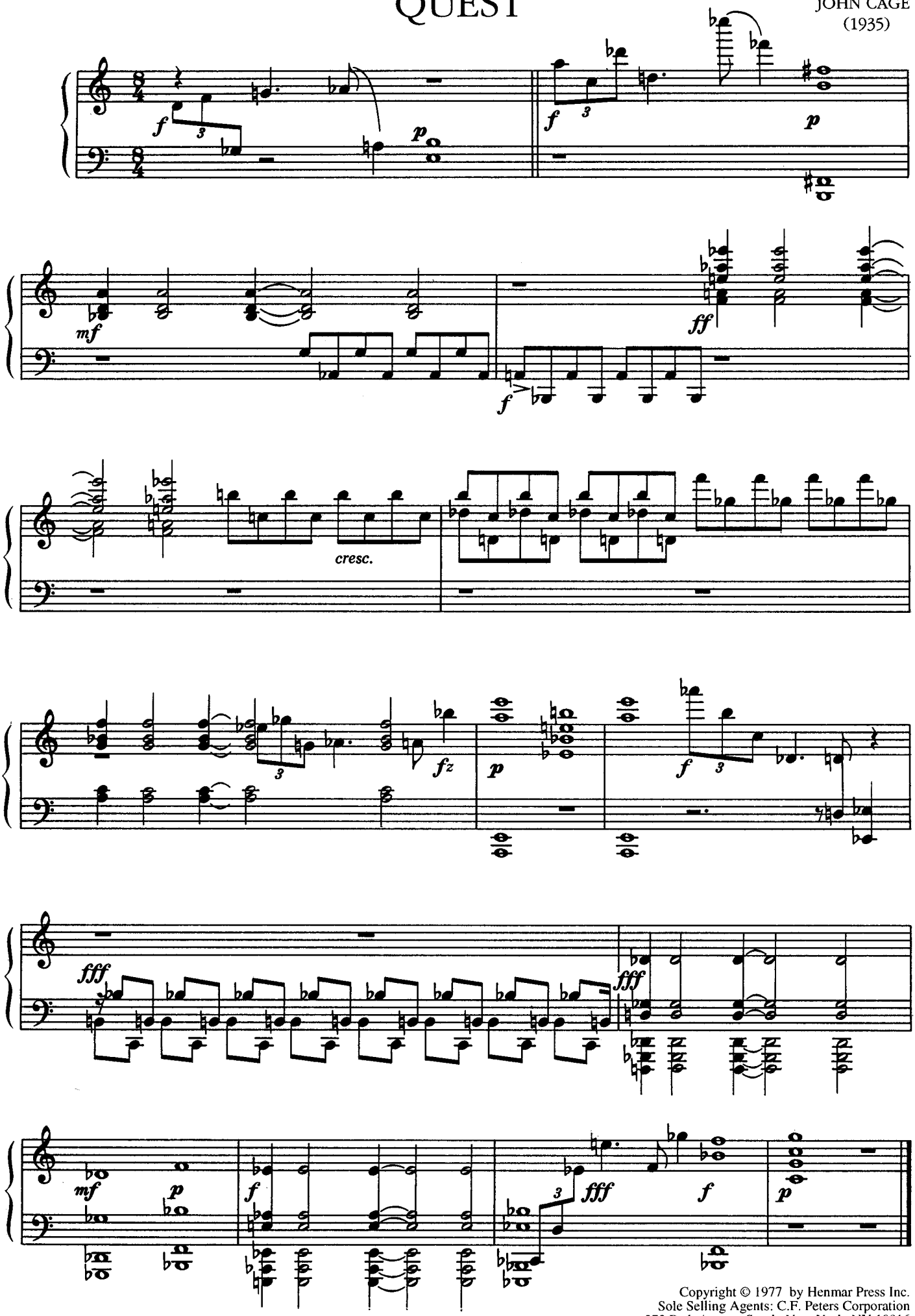
Those answers are, of course, best gleaned by mastering the works themselves, but the barest glance at each deceptively simple page suggests some of the challenges in store: the elegant linearity of *Quest* (c. 1935), the refreshing (*Piece I*) and relentless (*Piece II*) rhythms of *Two Pieces for Piano* (1935), the sustained energy of *Metamorphosis* (1938), the quiet, yet turgid construction of *A Room* (1943), the epic-in-miniature proportions of *Ophelia* (1946), the quixotic dynamics of *Two Pieces for Piano* (1946), the seductive melodic peregrinations of *In a Landscape* (1948), and the unusually expressive, nearly narrative *rubato* of *Dream* (1948).

Any one of these pieces is a meditation upon the piano, and upon the delightful complications inherent in even the simplest of themes. Taken together, they form a landscape of Cage's mind as applied to composing for this most imposing of instruments, with all of the contours and shadows, secret passages, and vistas that we have come to associate with his work in any medium.

Laura Kuhn, Executive Director
John Cage Trust

QUEST

JOHN CAGE
(1935)



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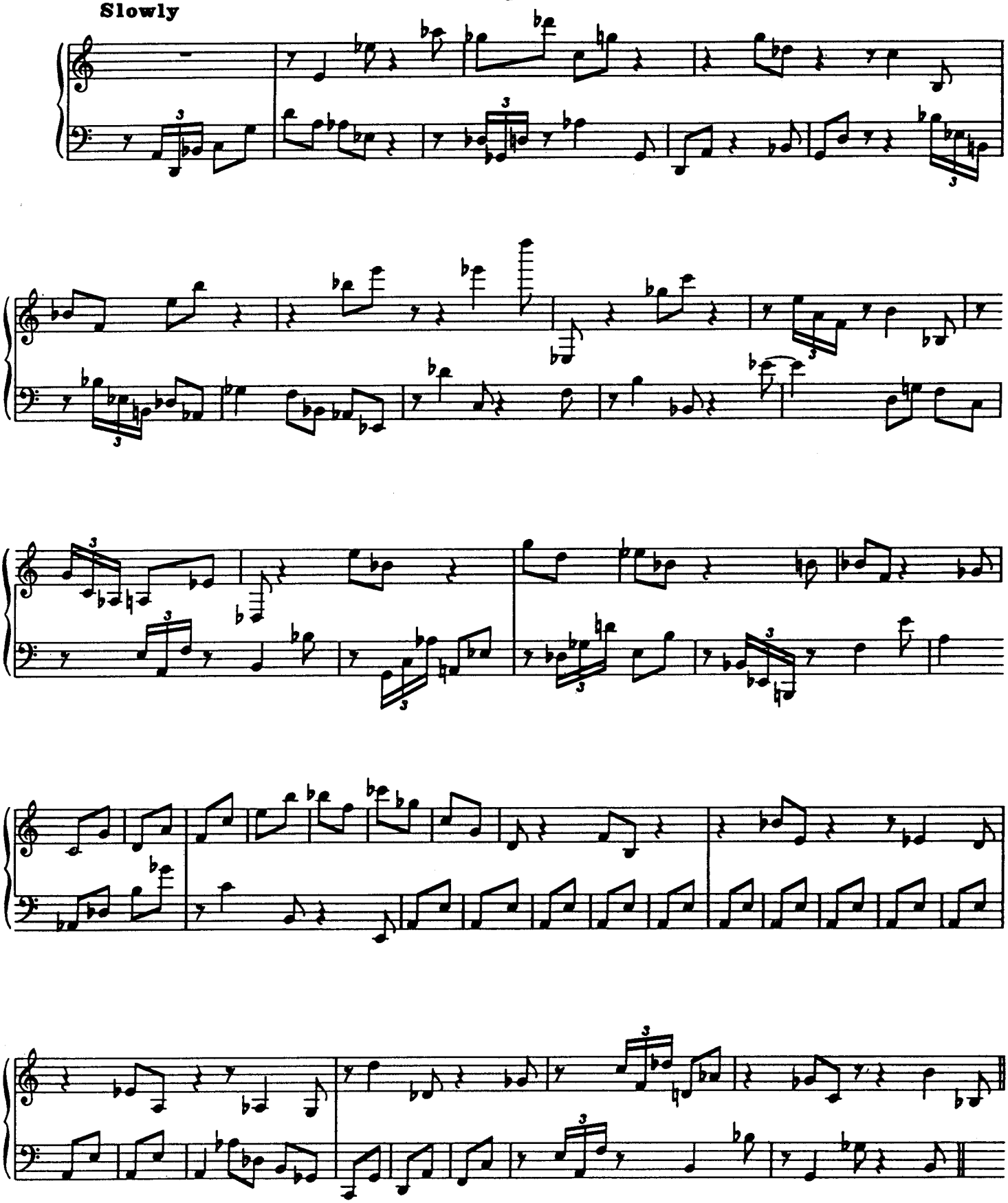
TWO PIECES FOR PIANO

JOHN CAGE
(ca. 1935)
(Revised 1974)

I

Slowly



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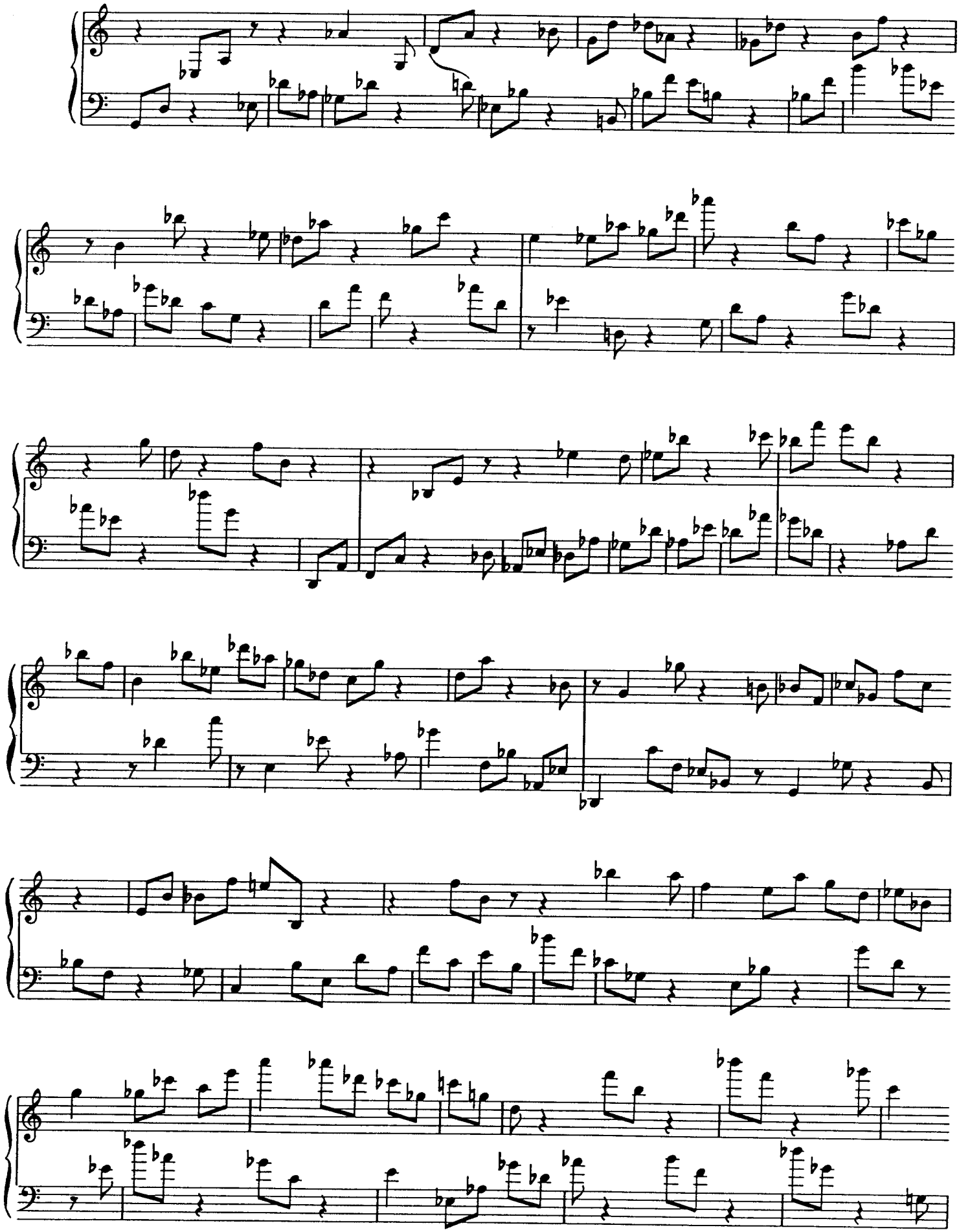
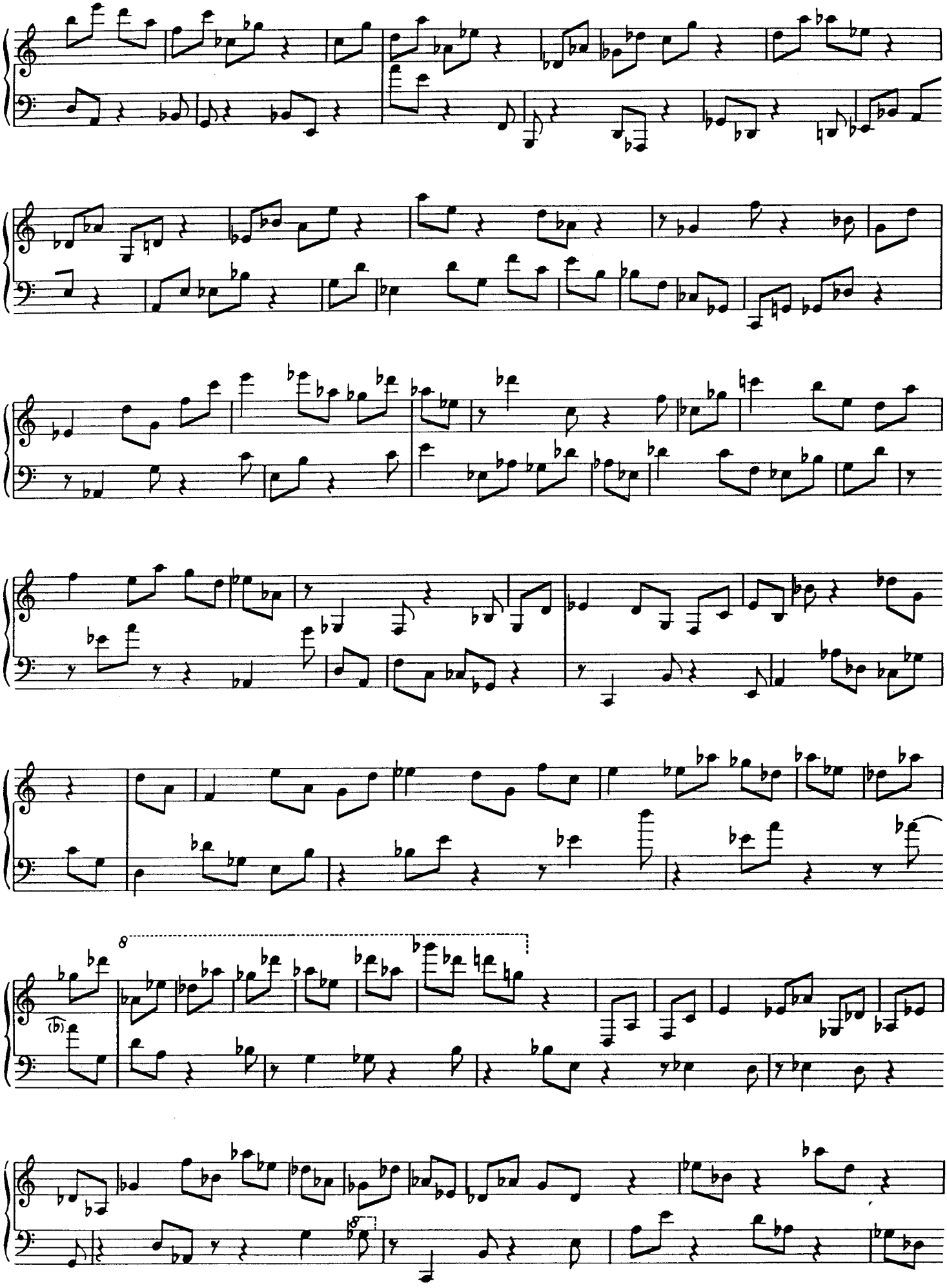
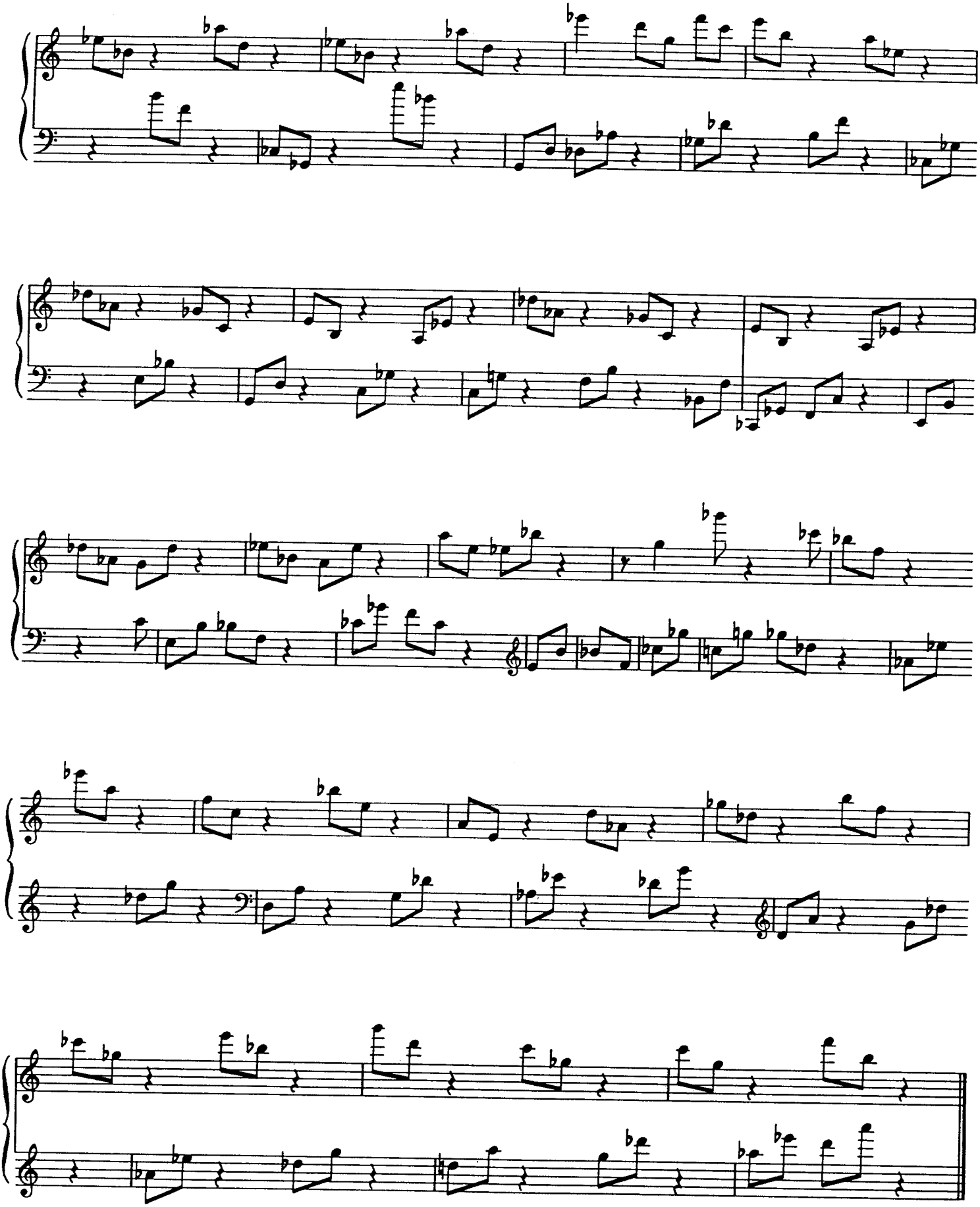
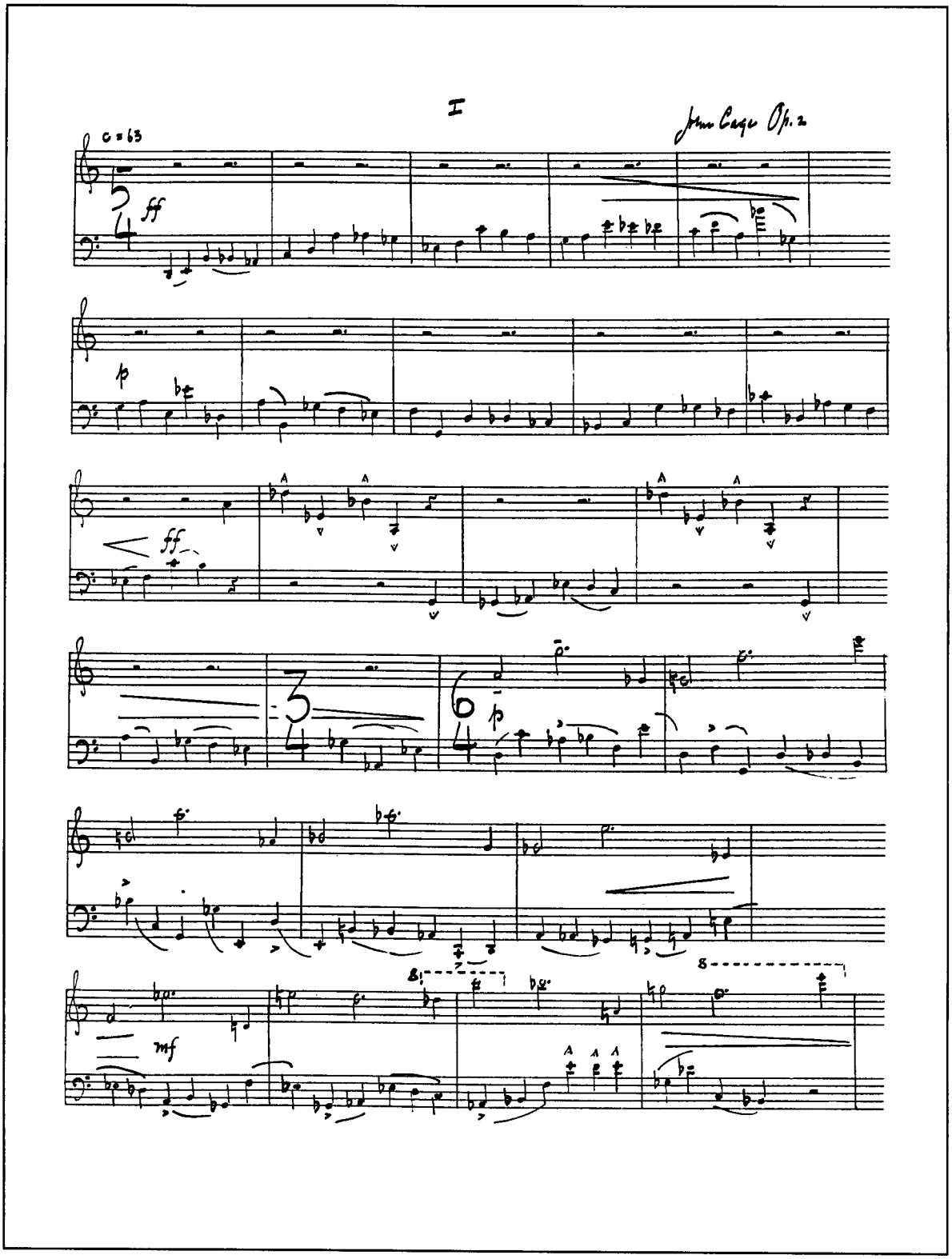
II

Quite fast







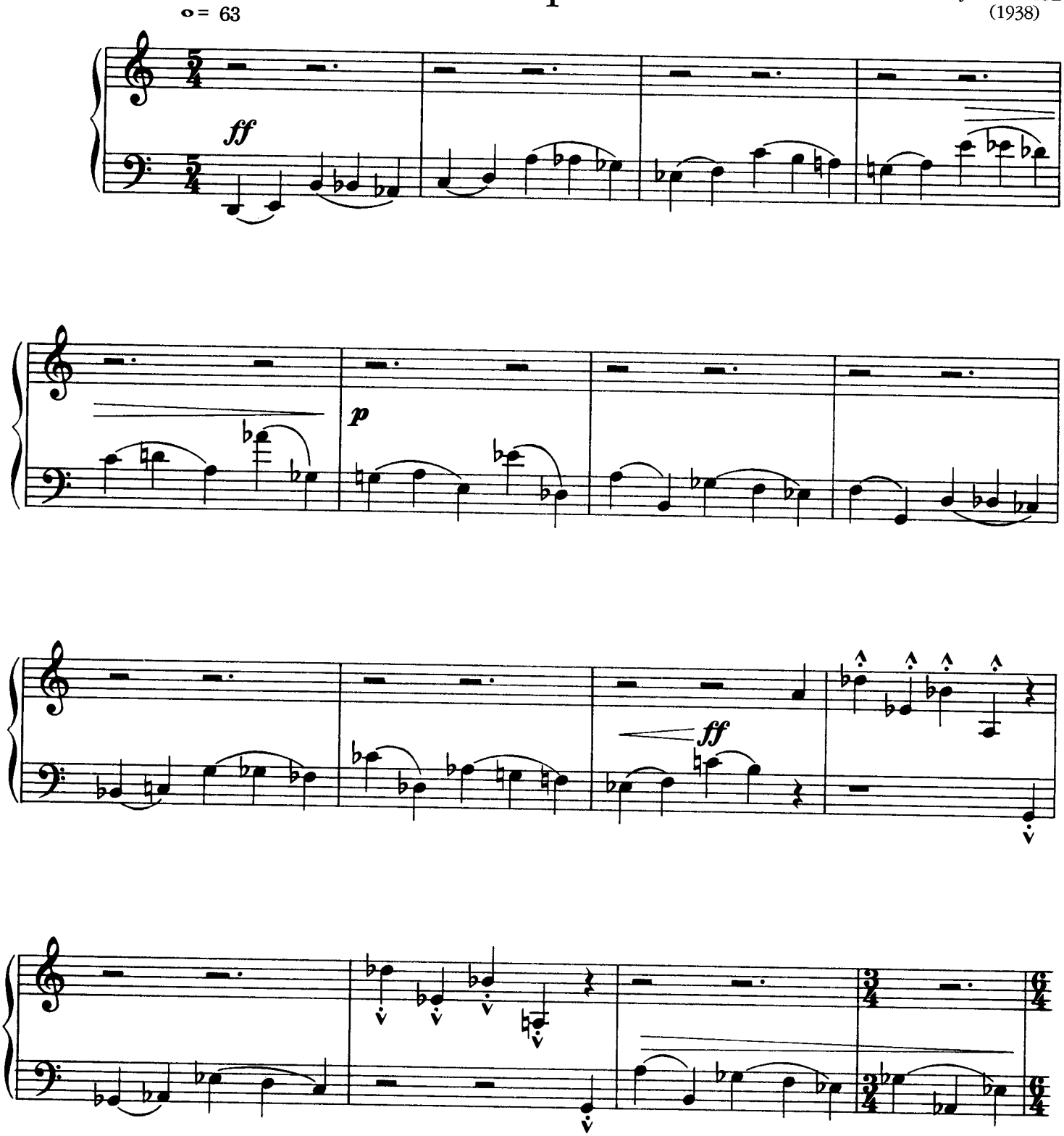


Metamorphosis by John Cage. Autograph of first music page, courtesy of the John Cage Music Manuscript Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

METAMORPHOSIS

I

JOHN CAGE
(1938)



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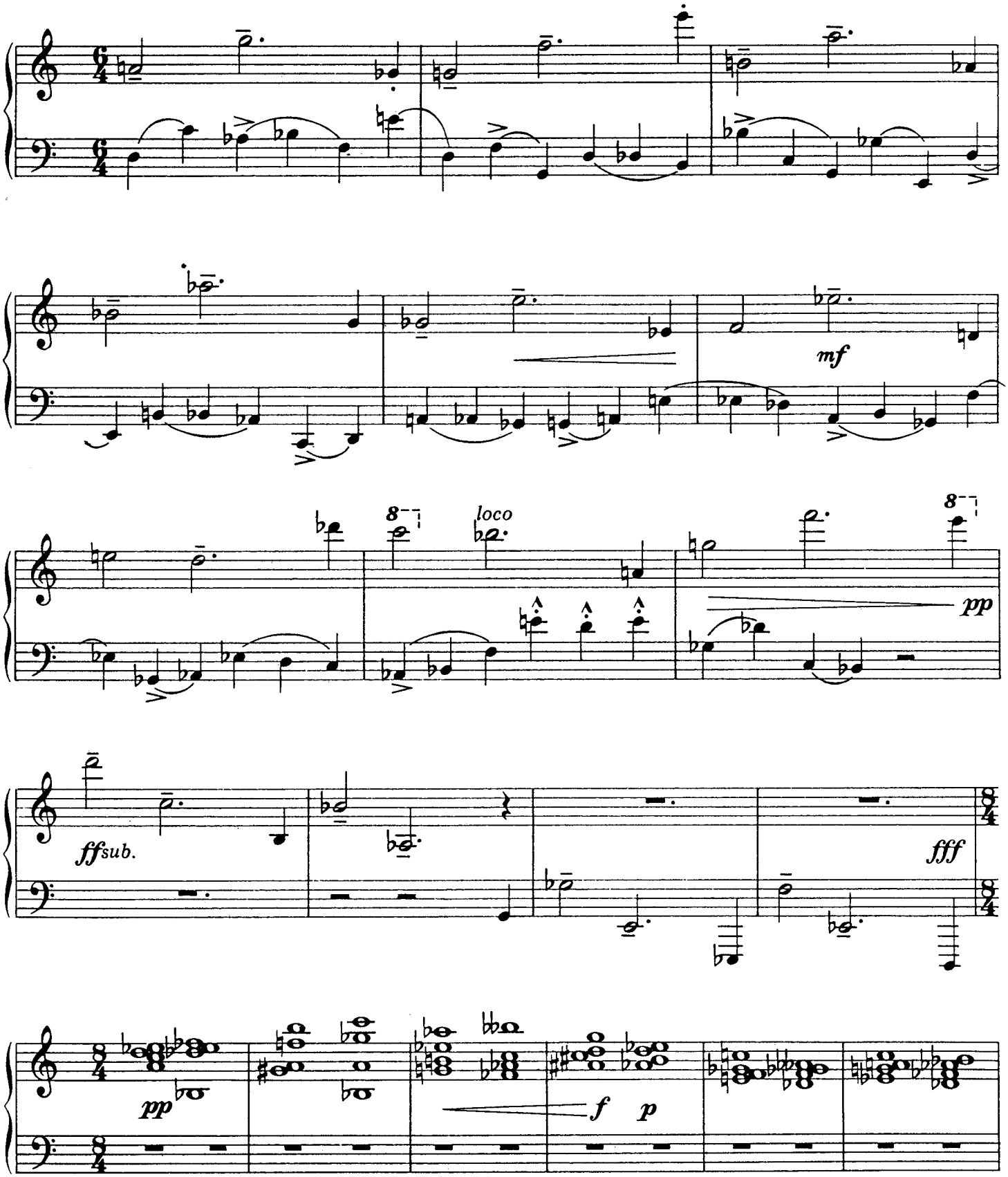
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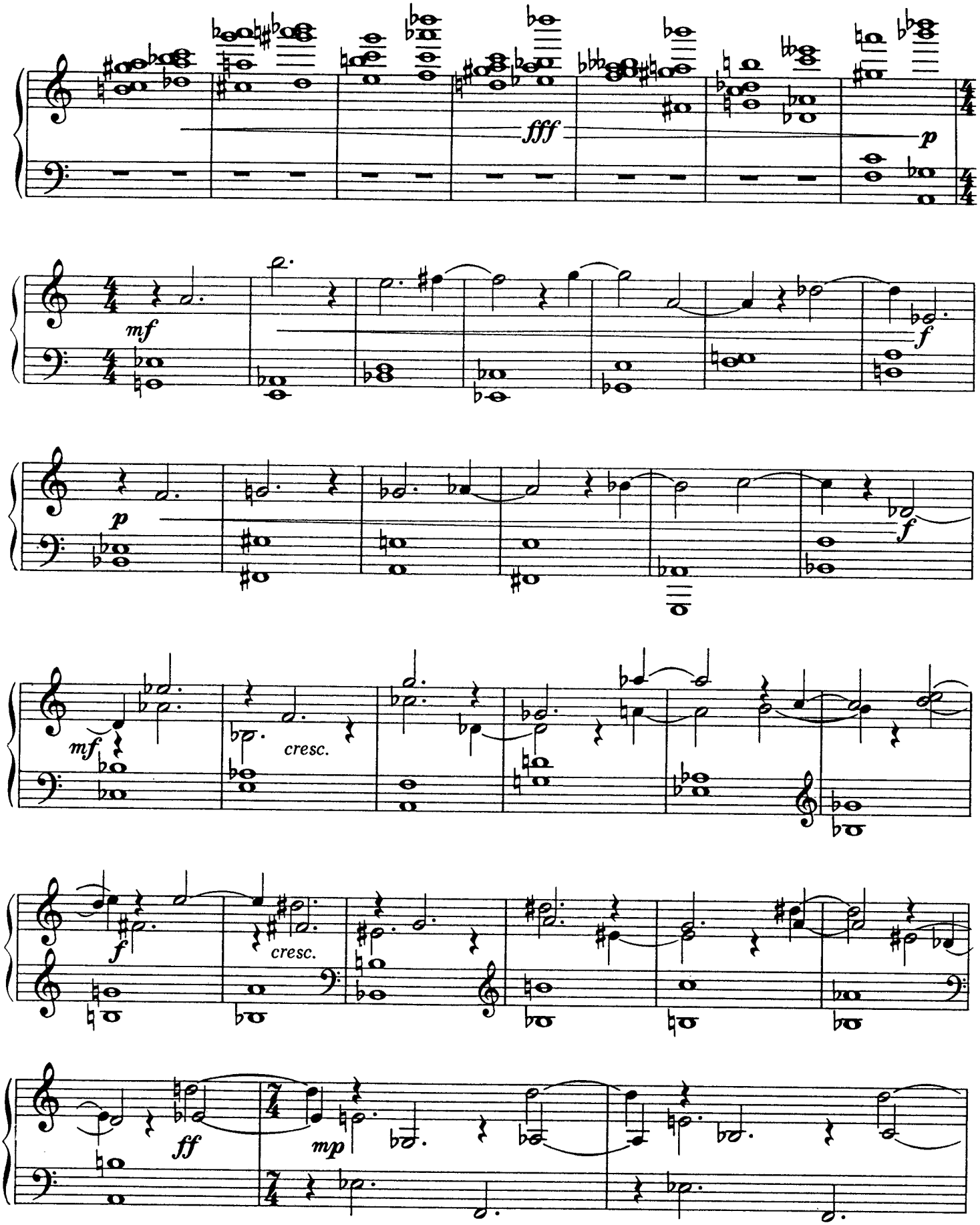
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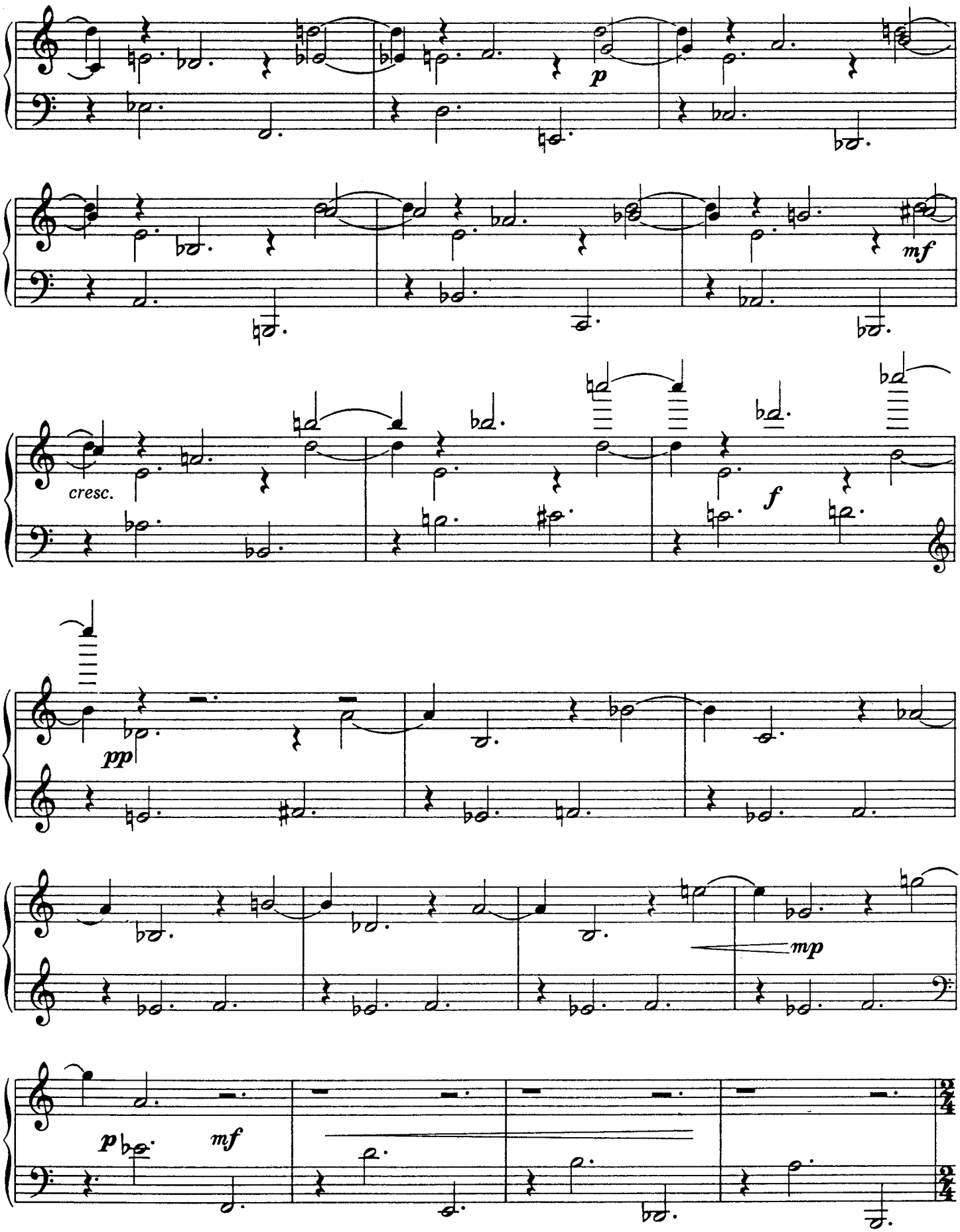
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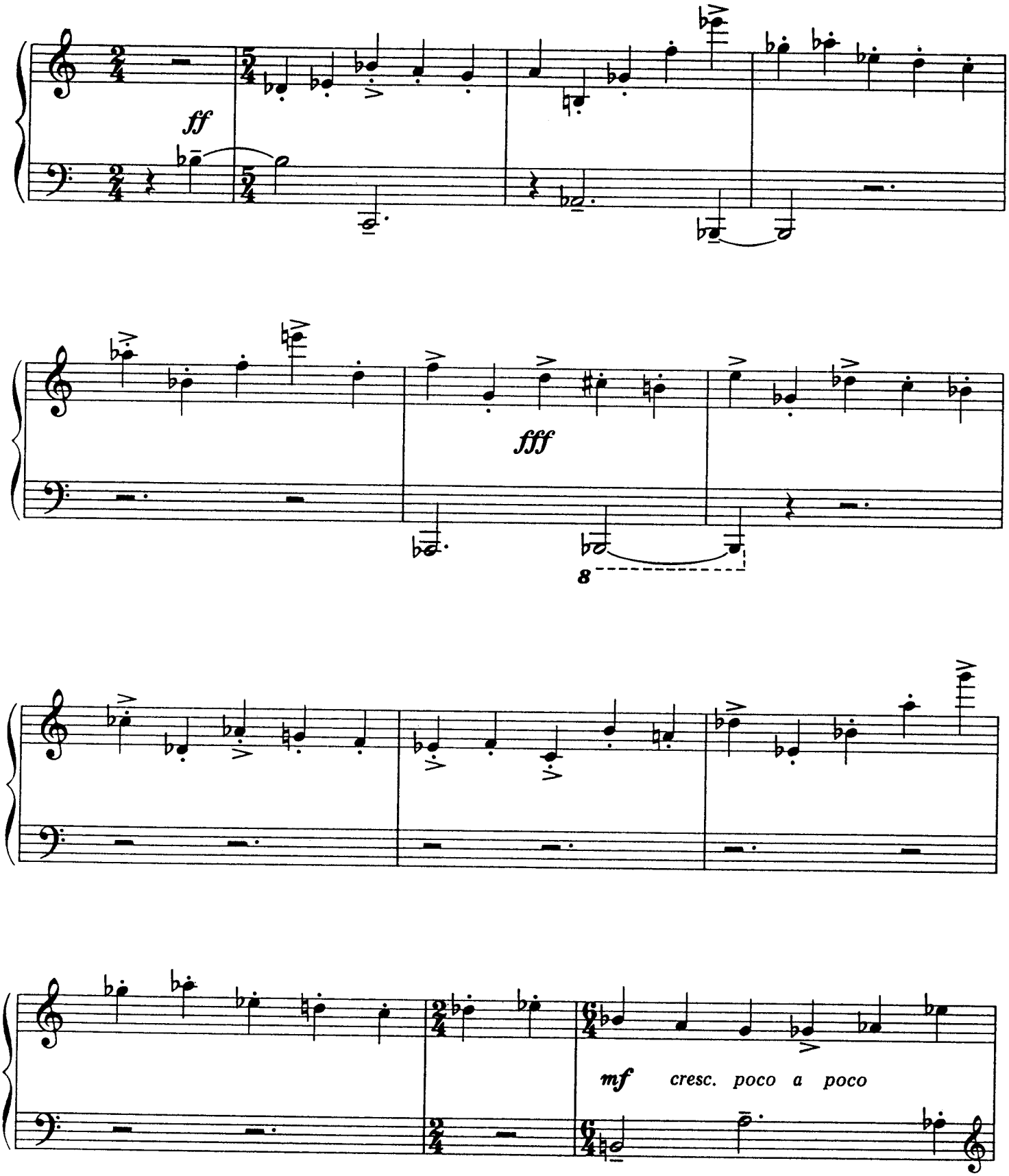
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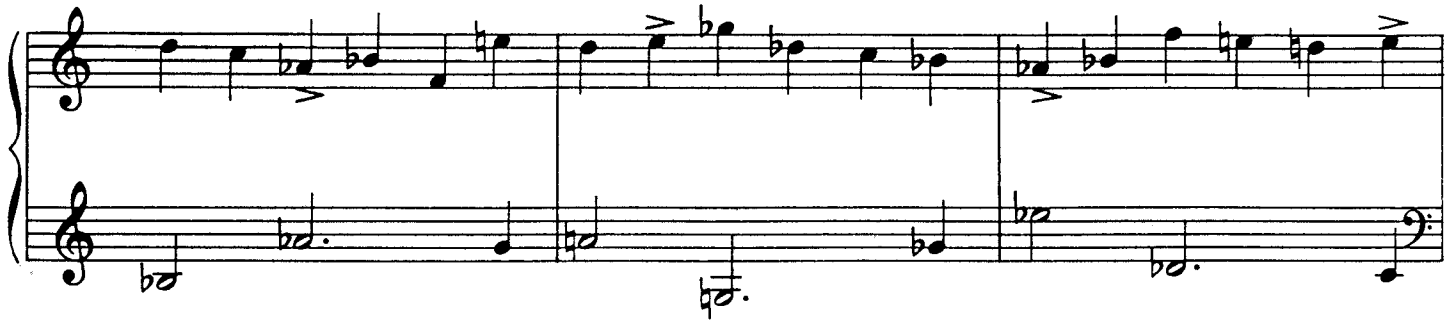
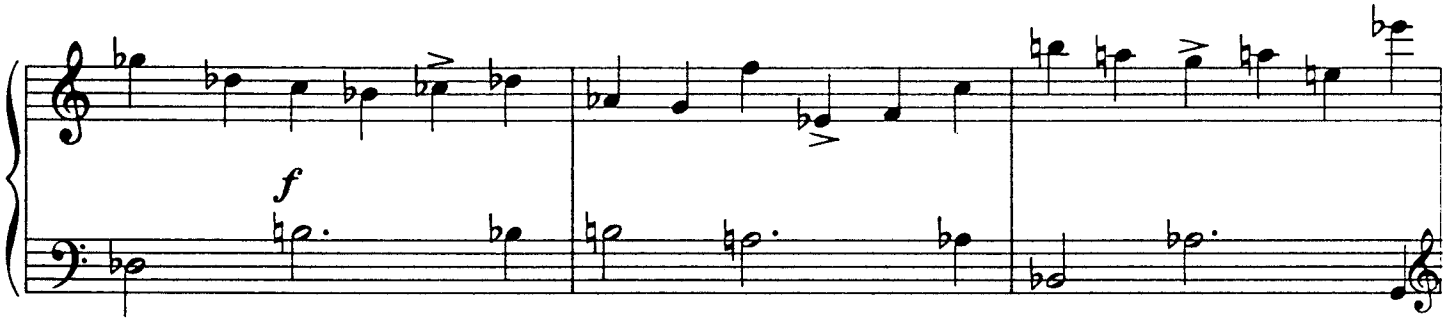
cresc. poco a poco

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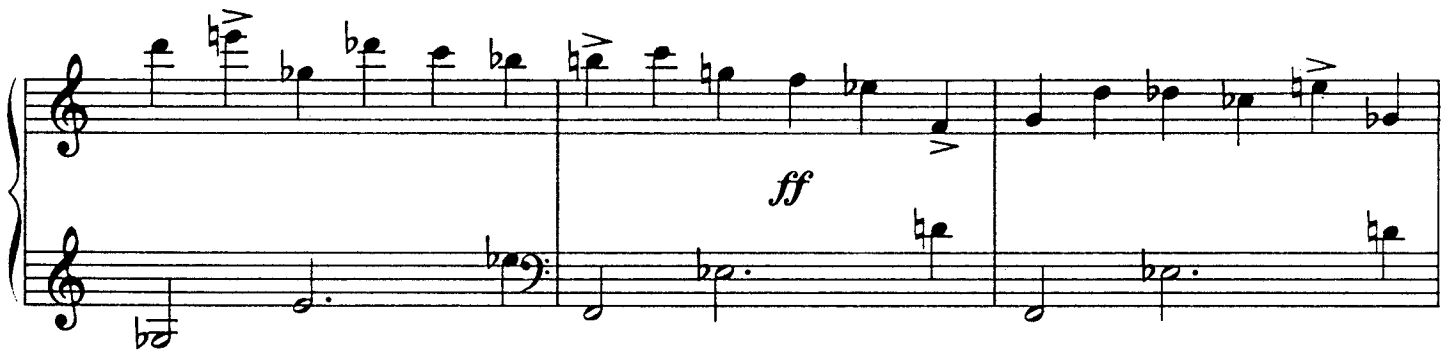
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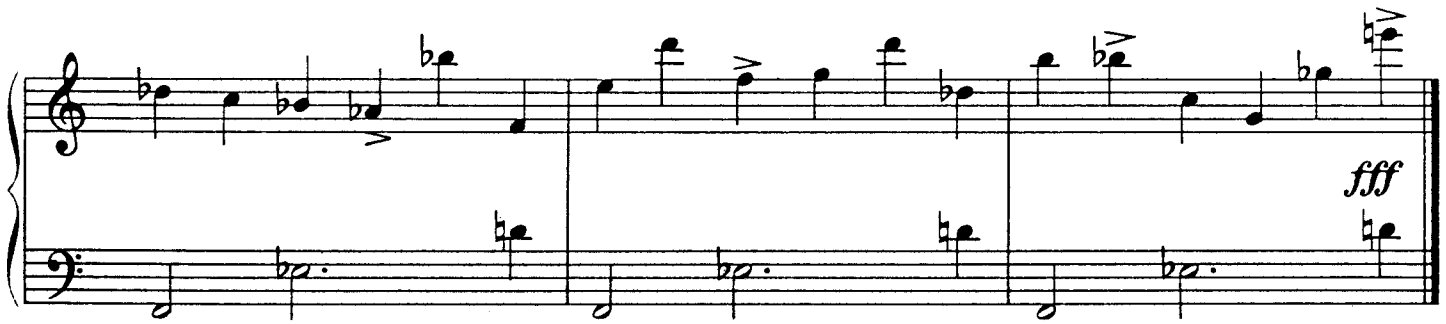
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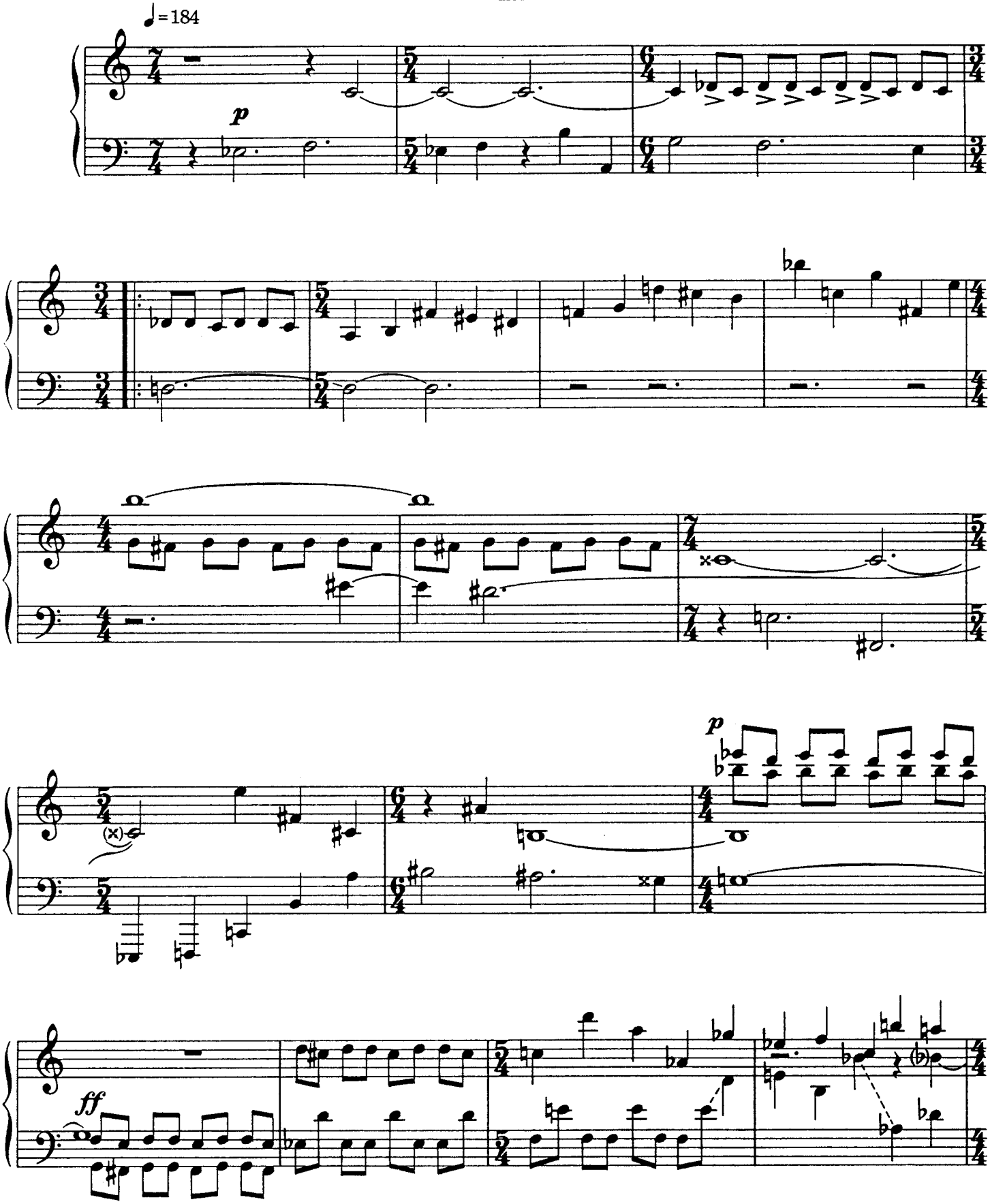

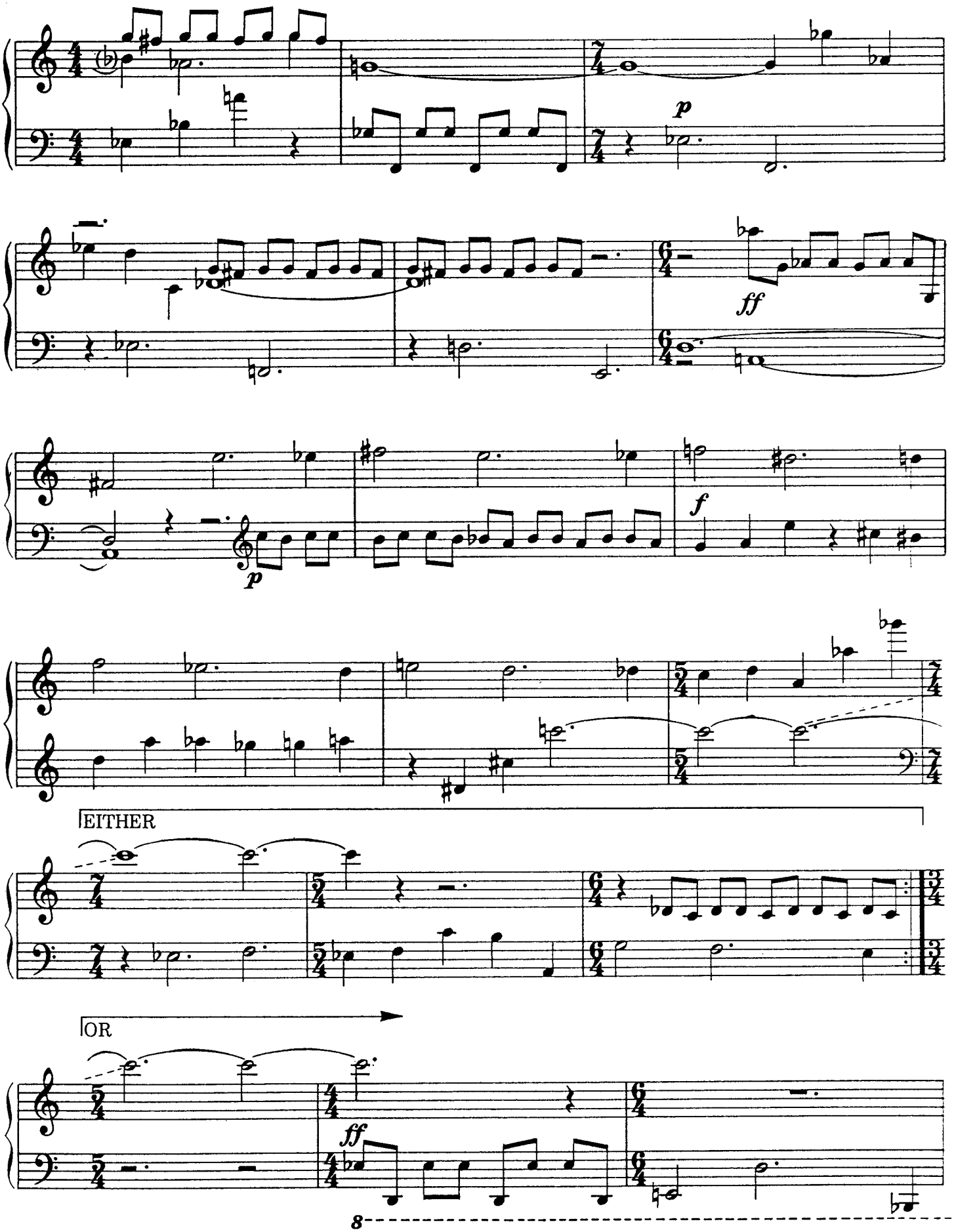
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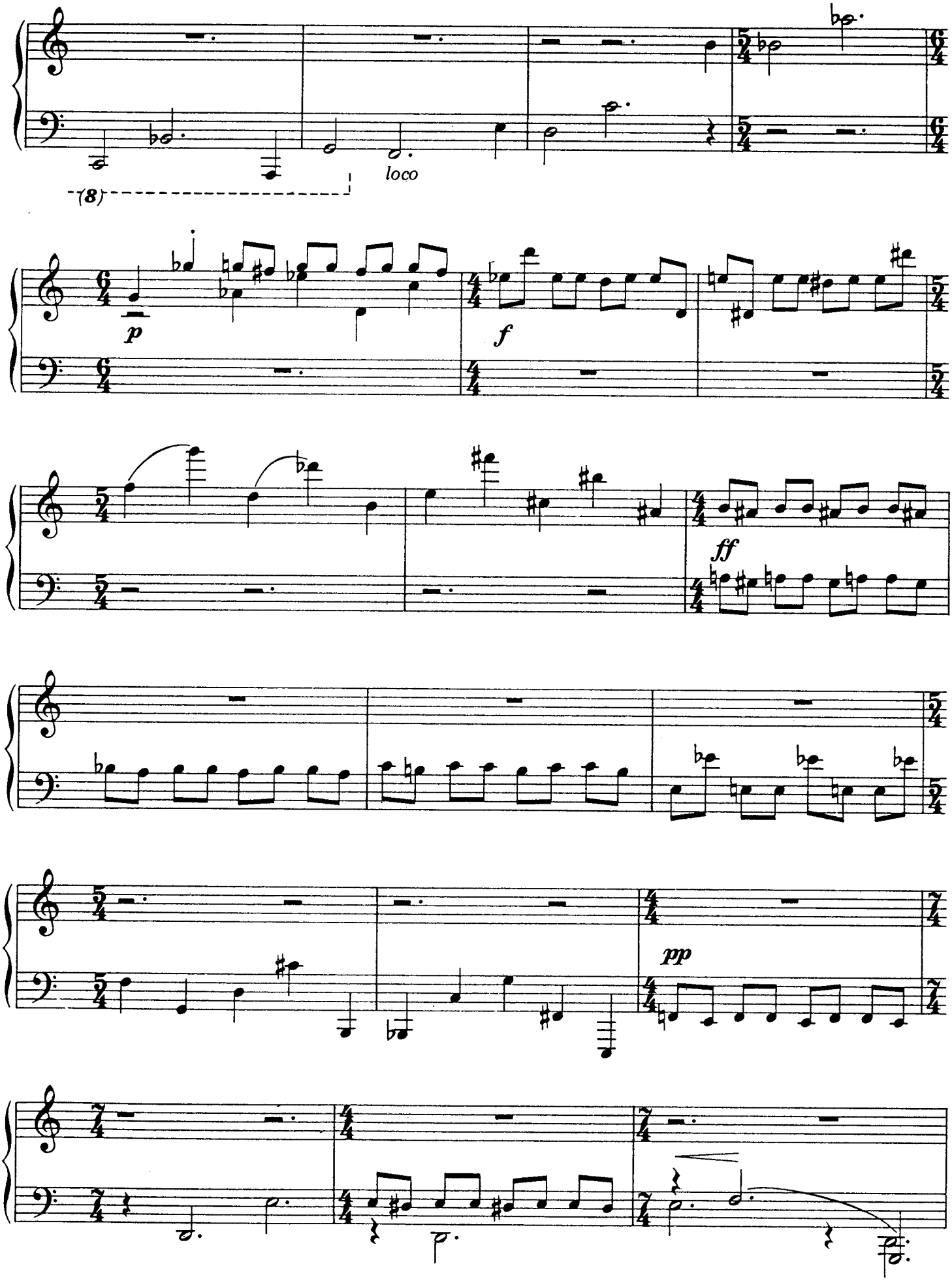
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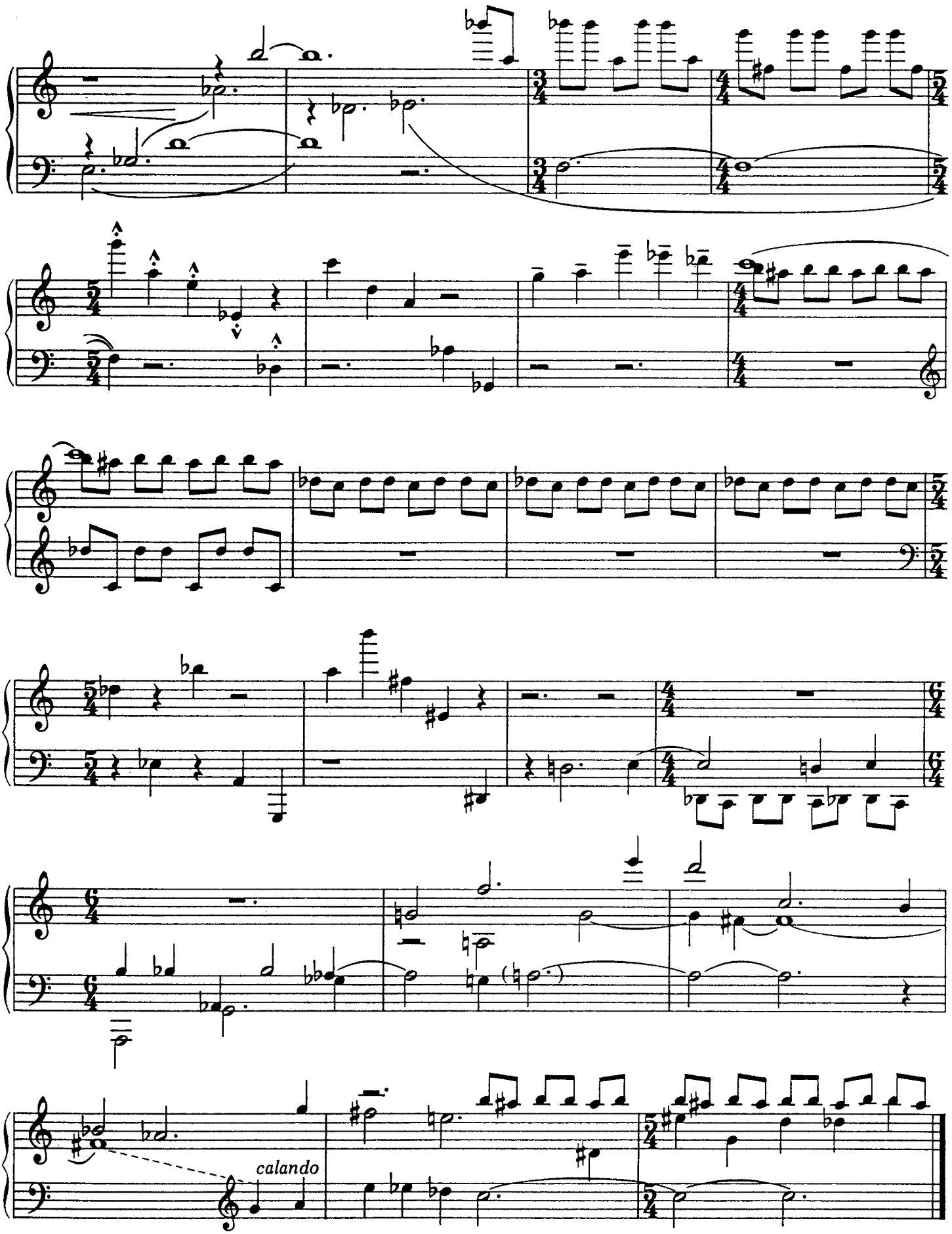
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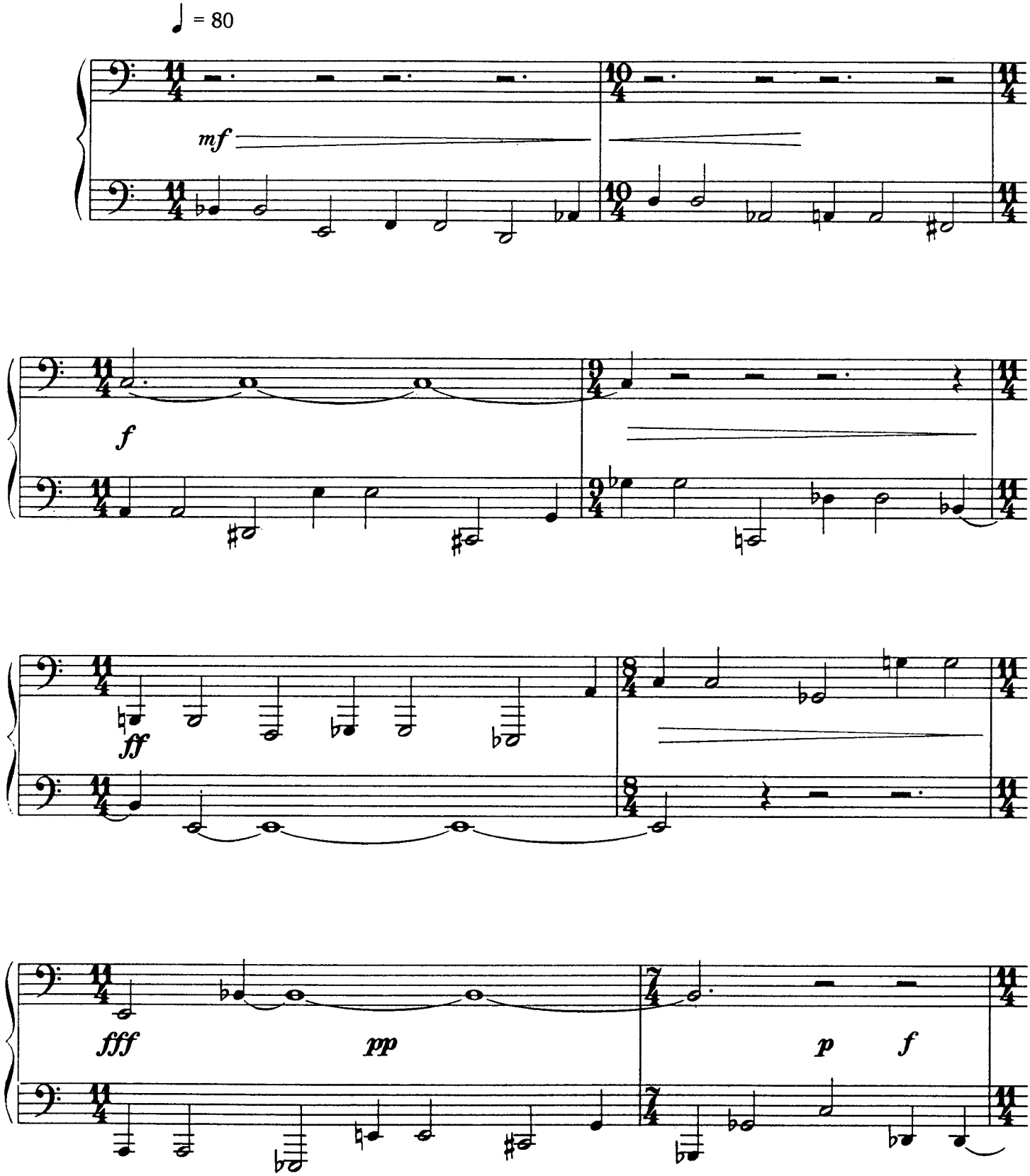

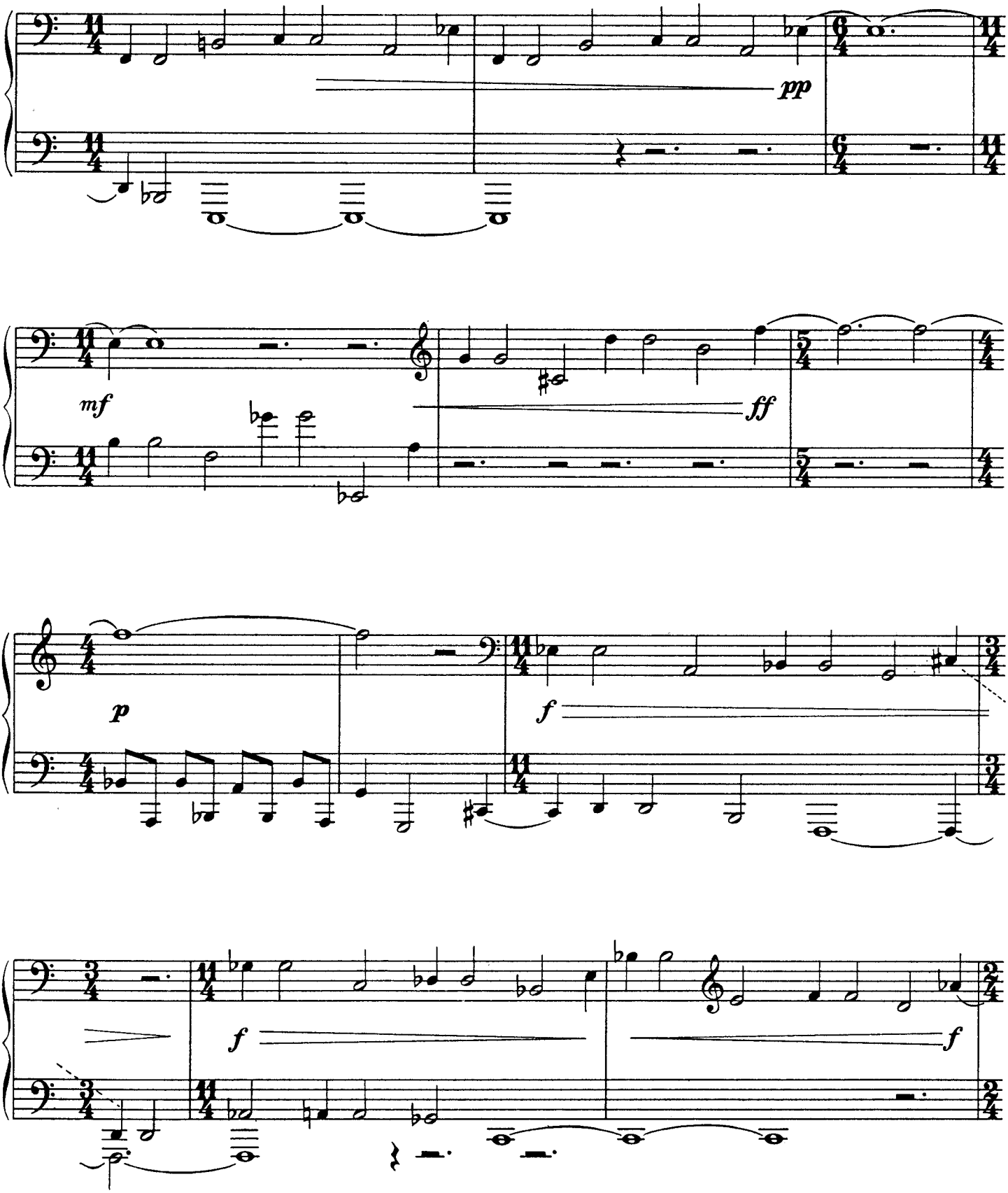
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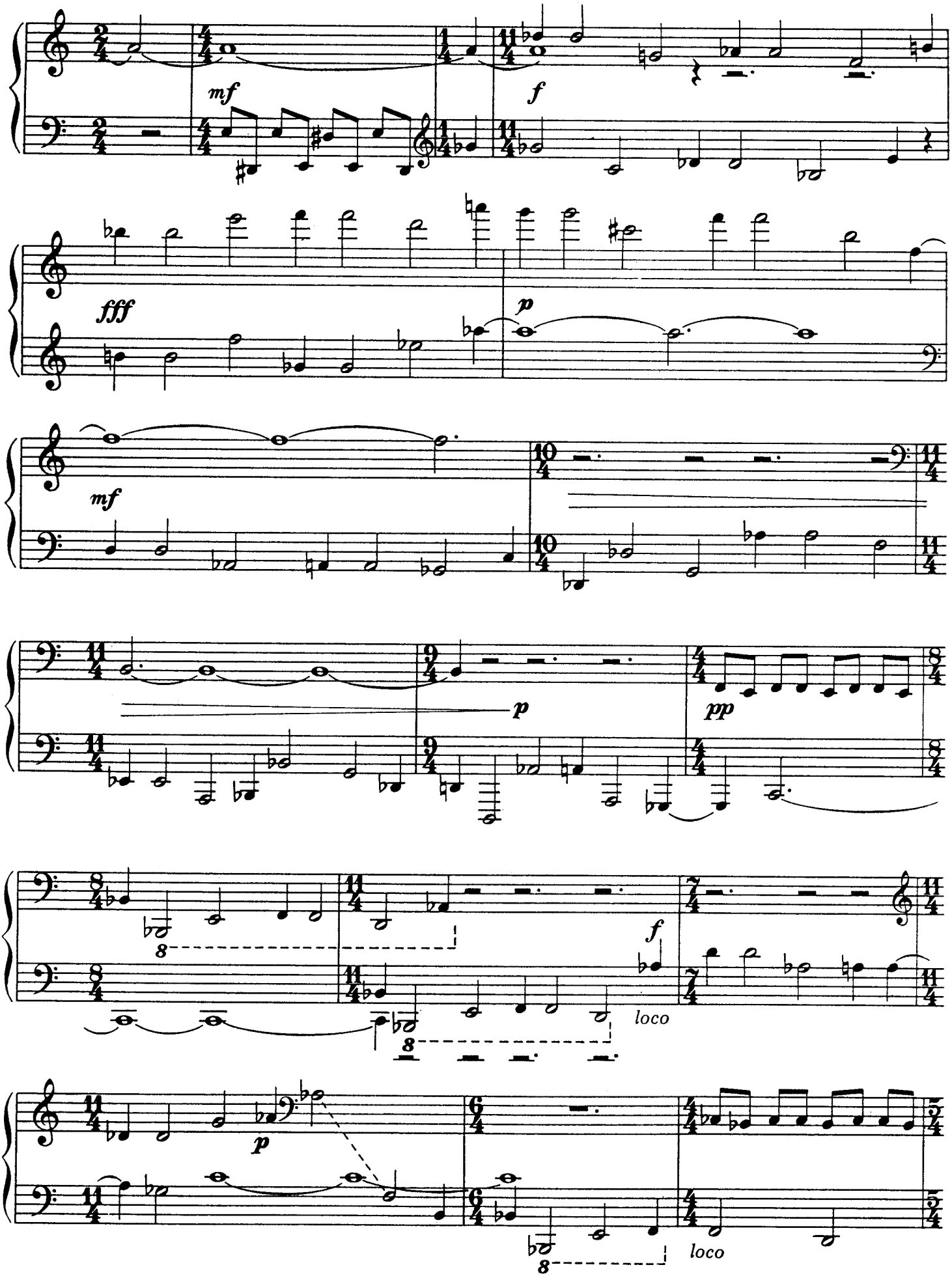
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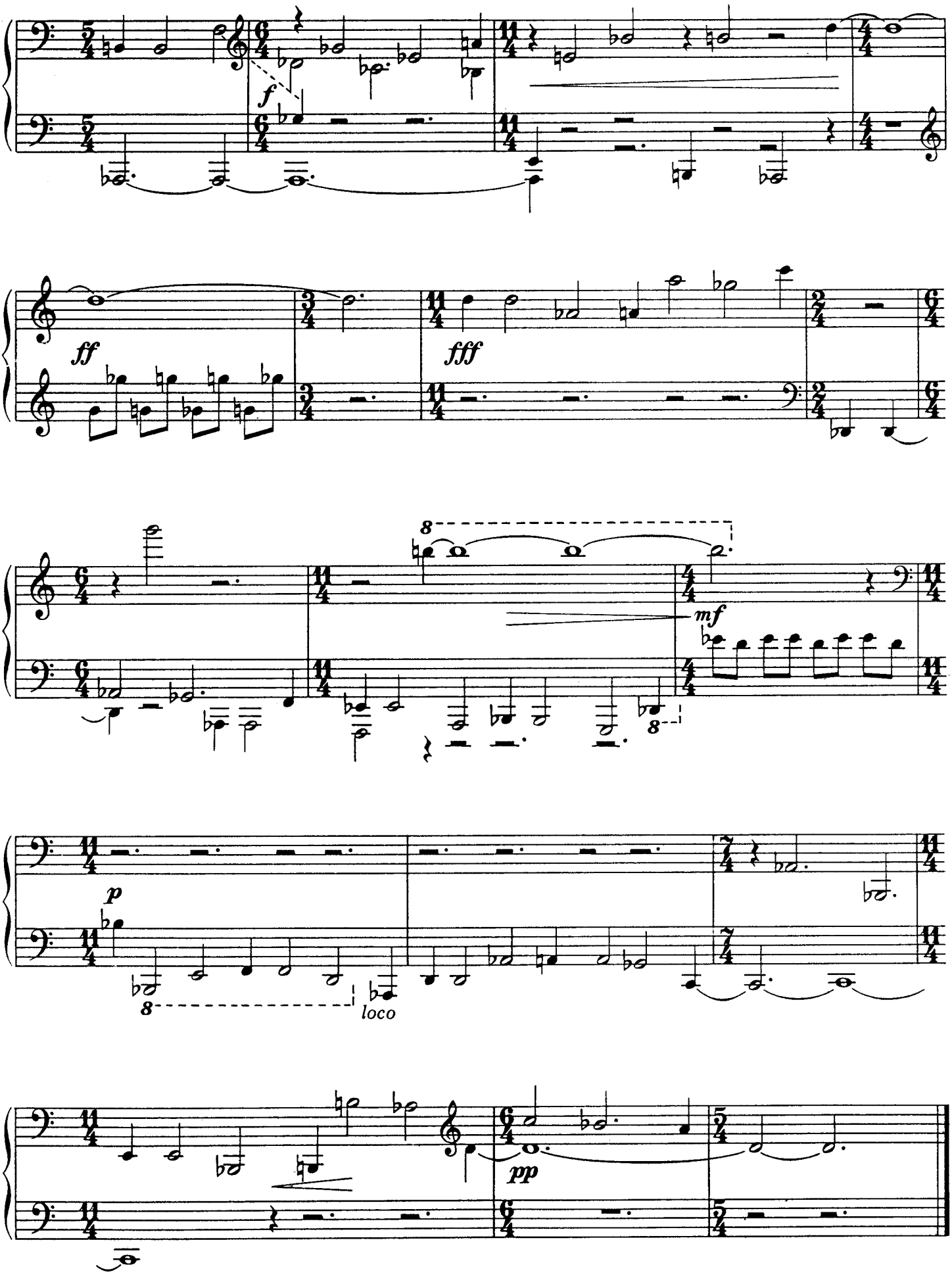
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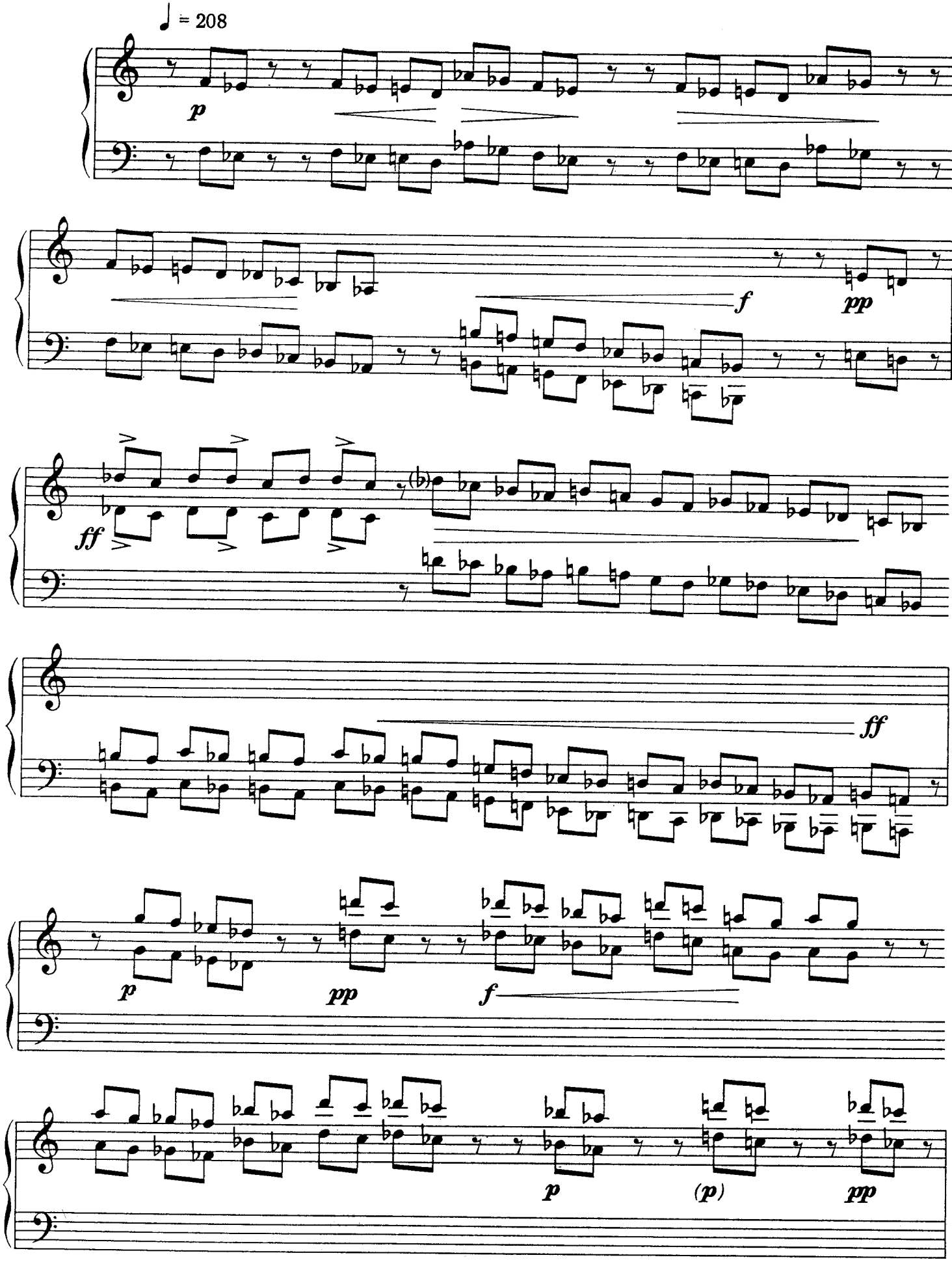

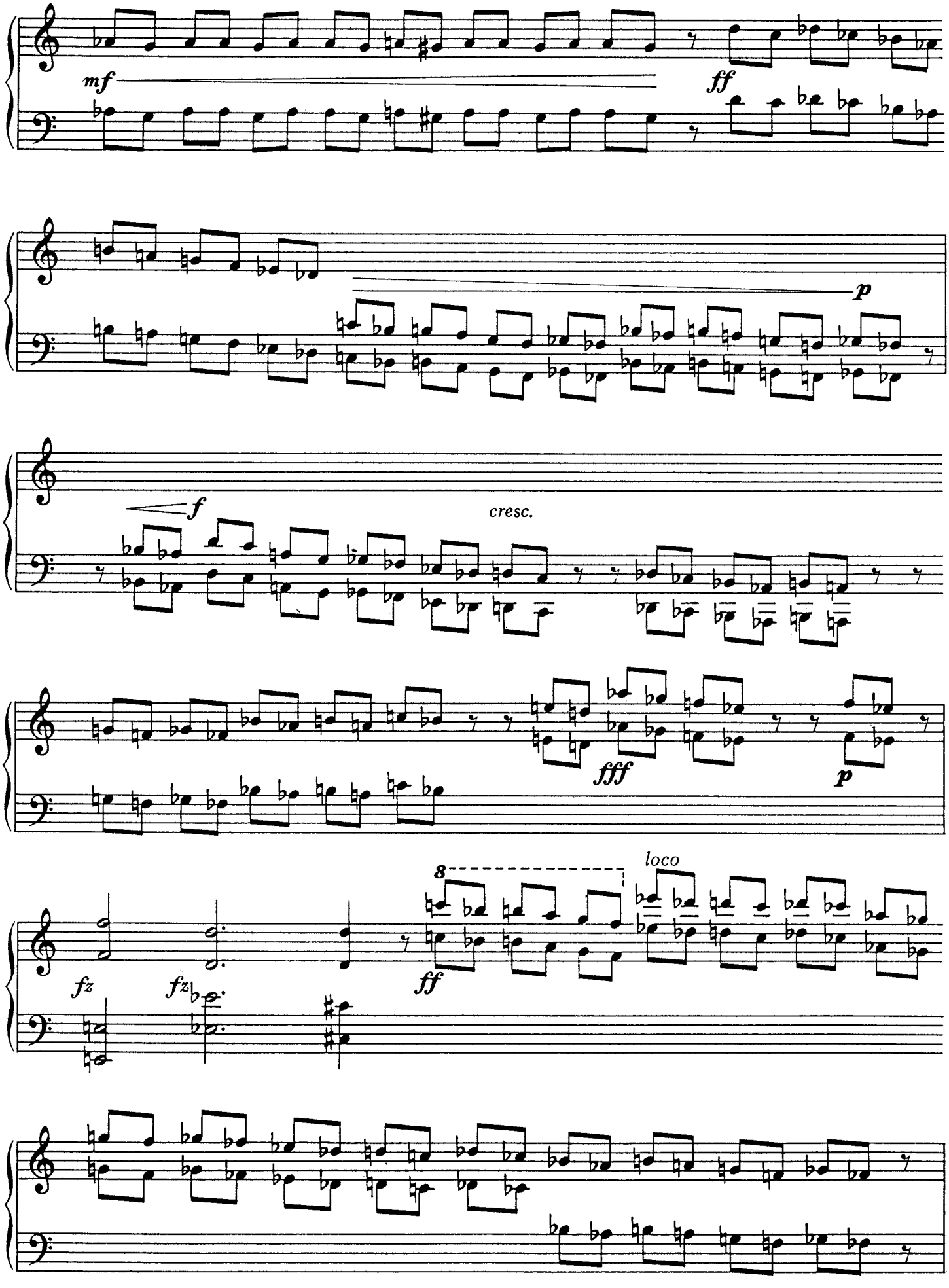
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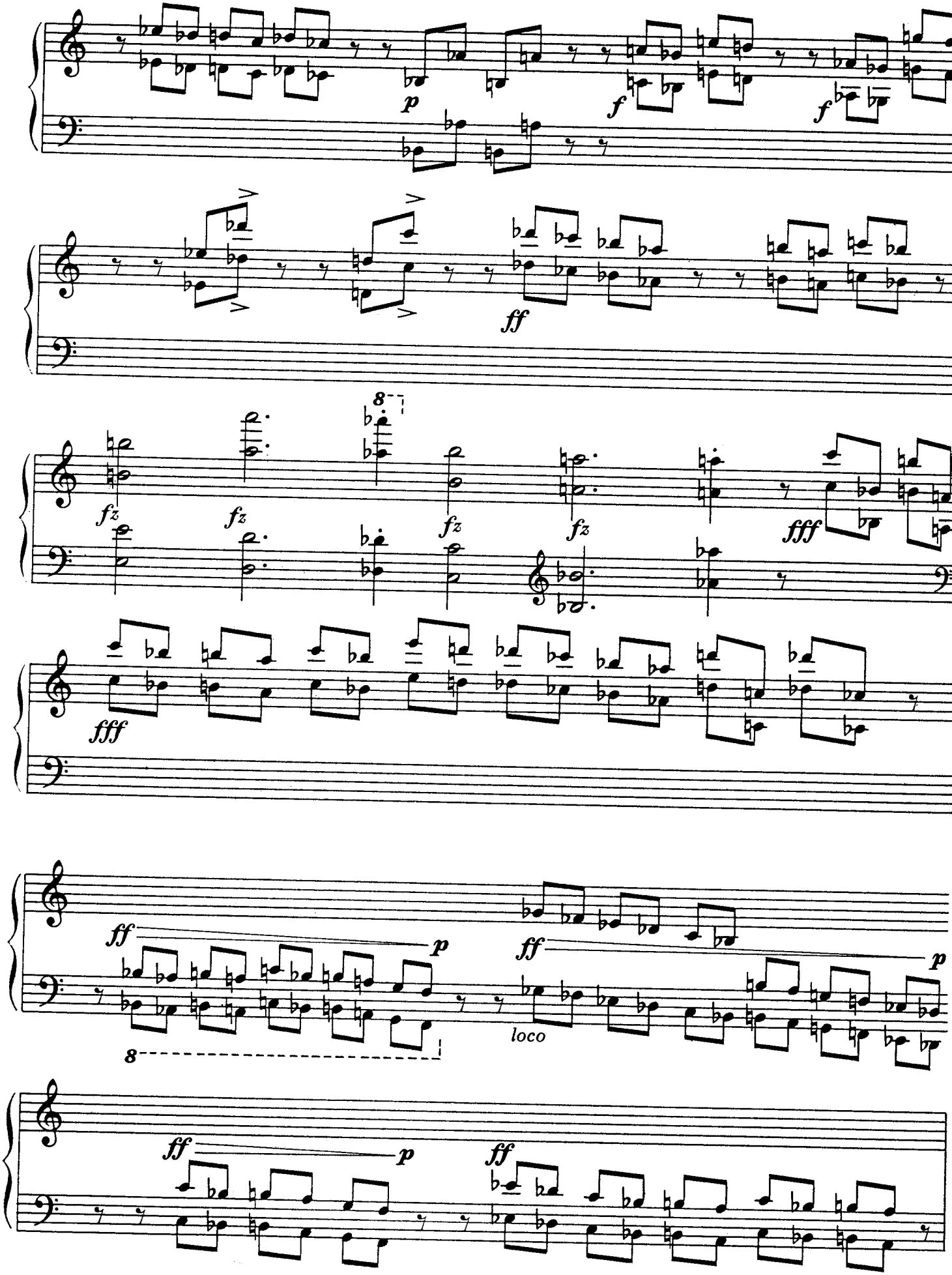
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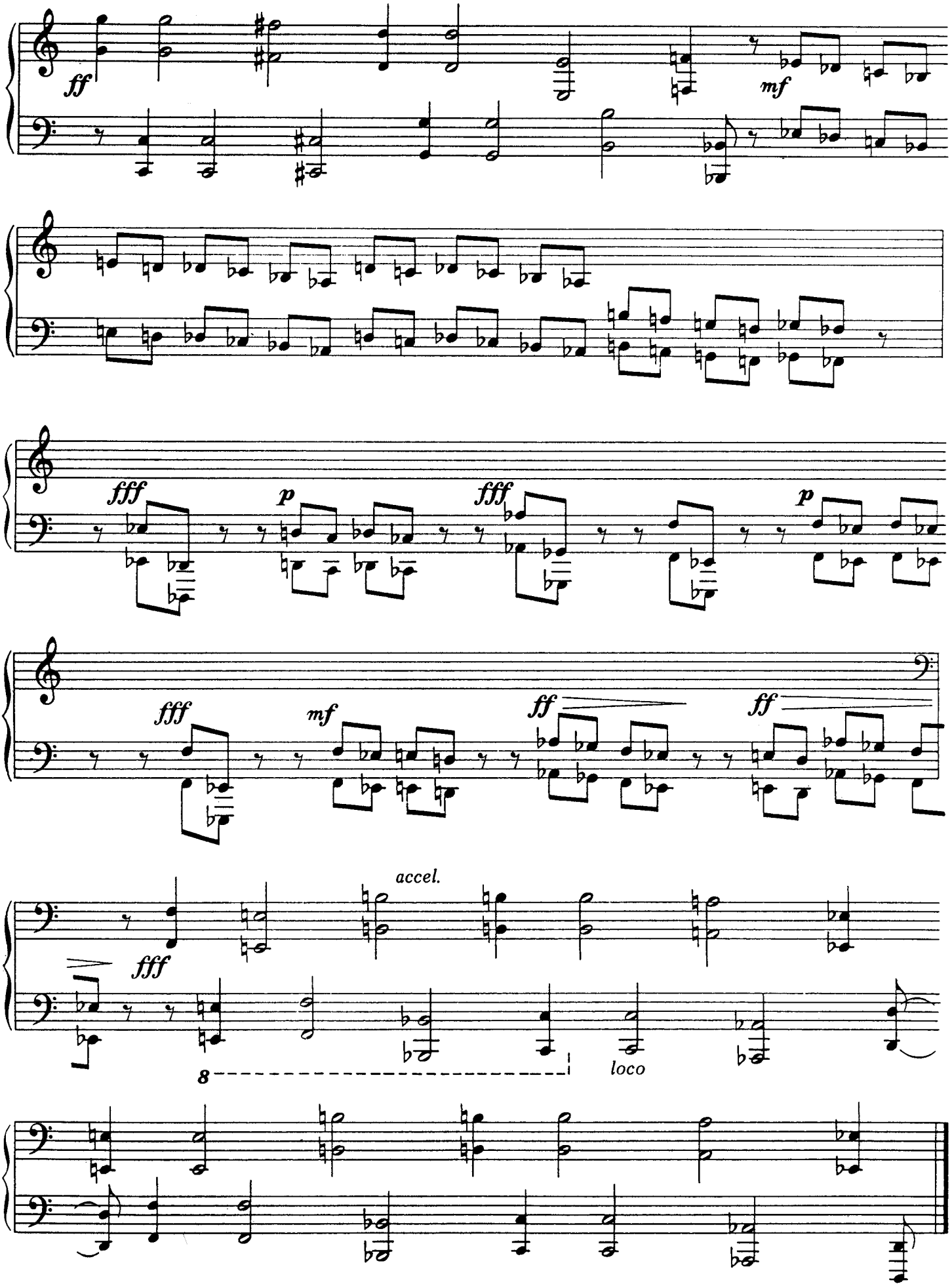
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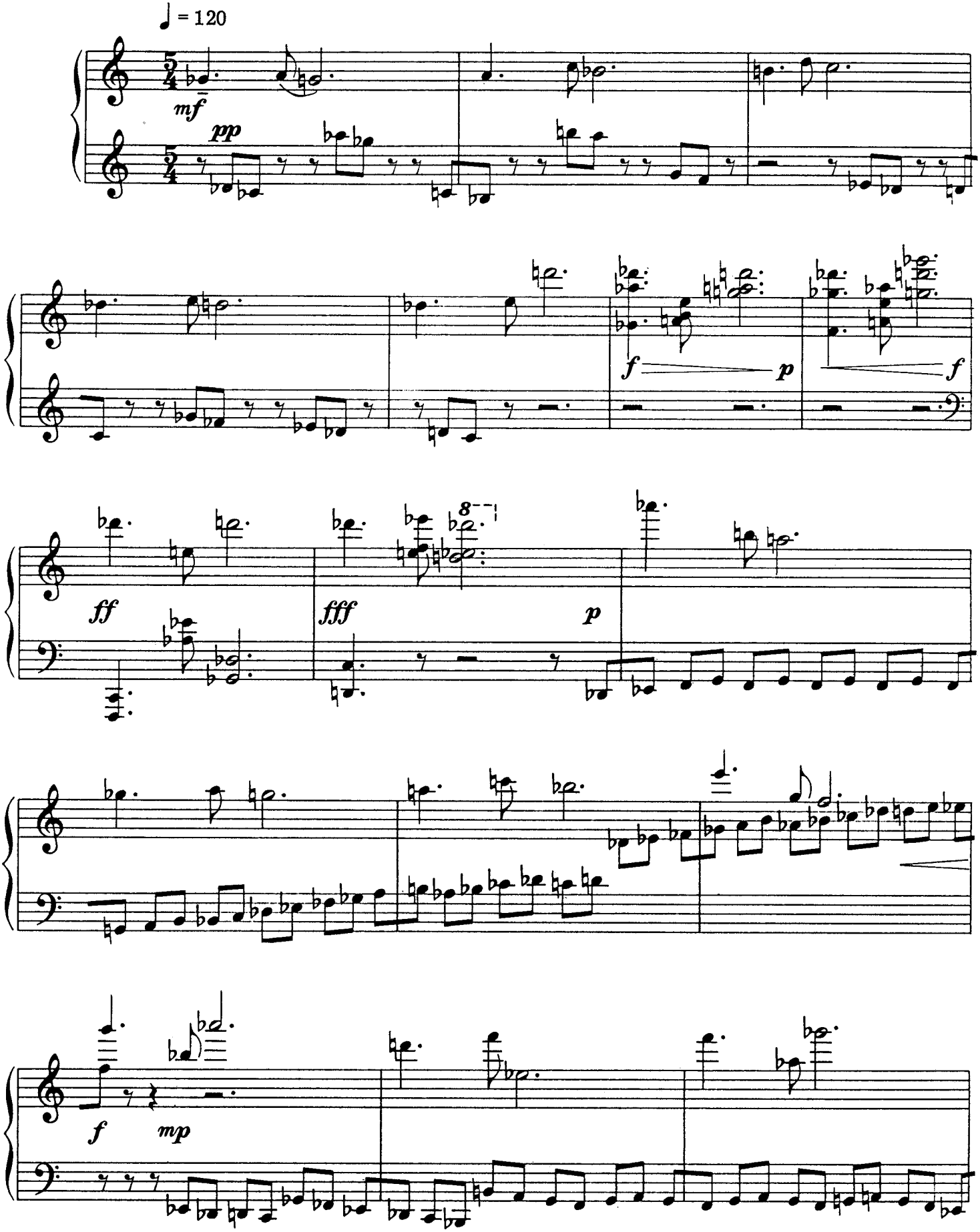

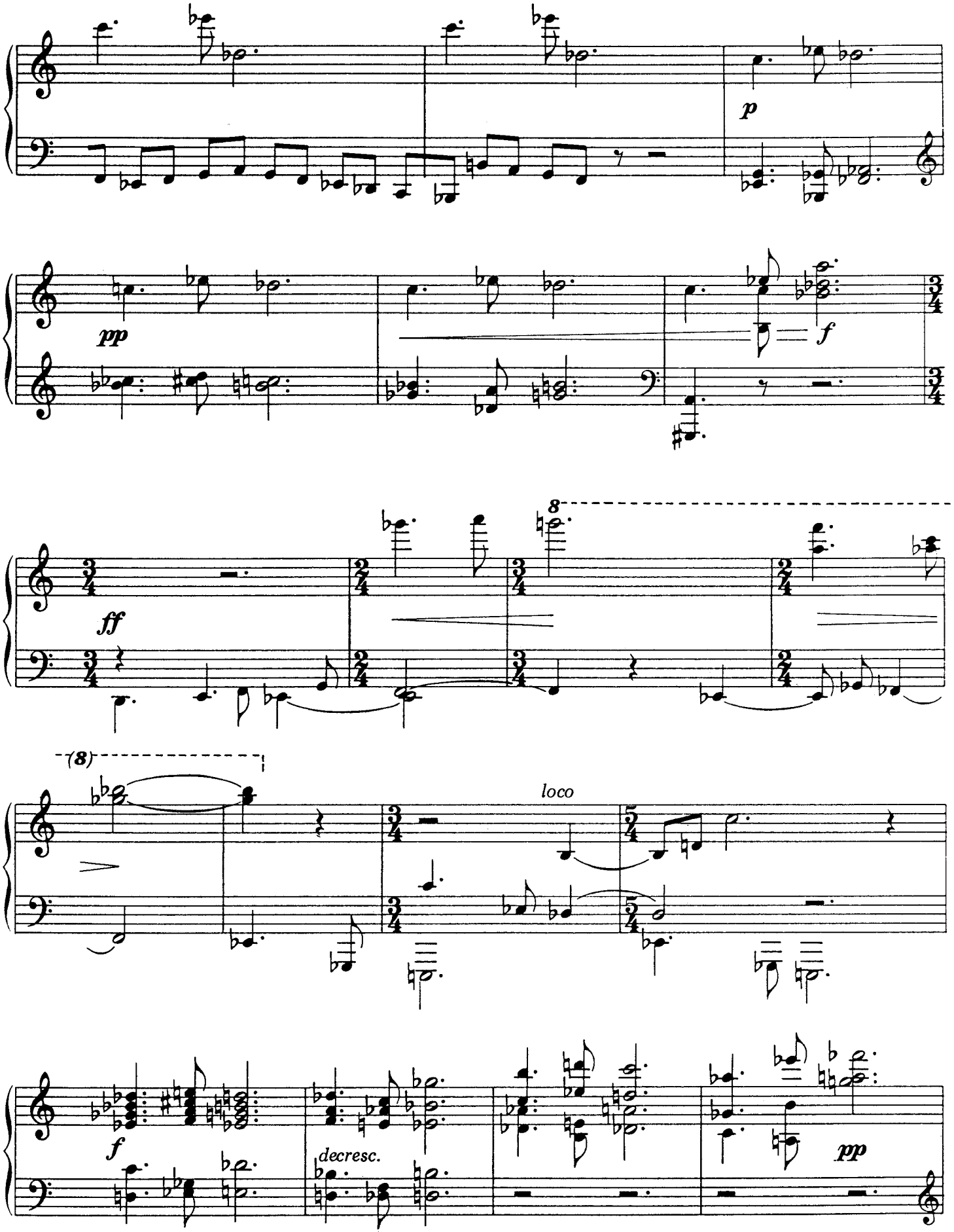
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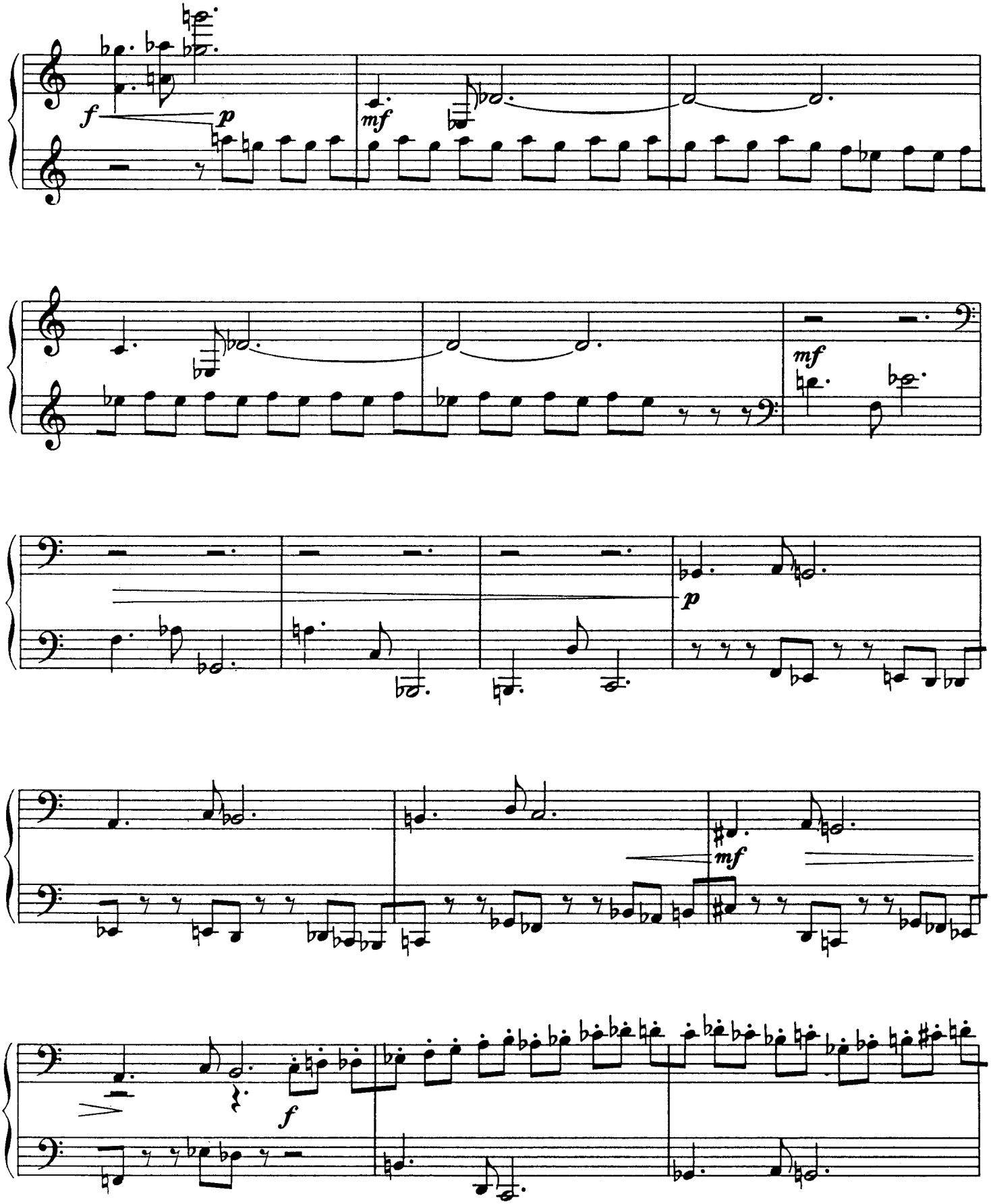
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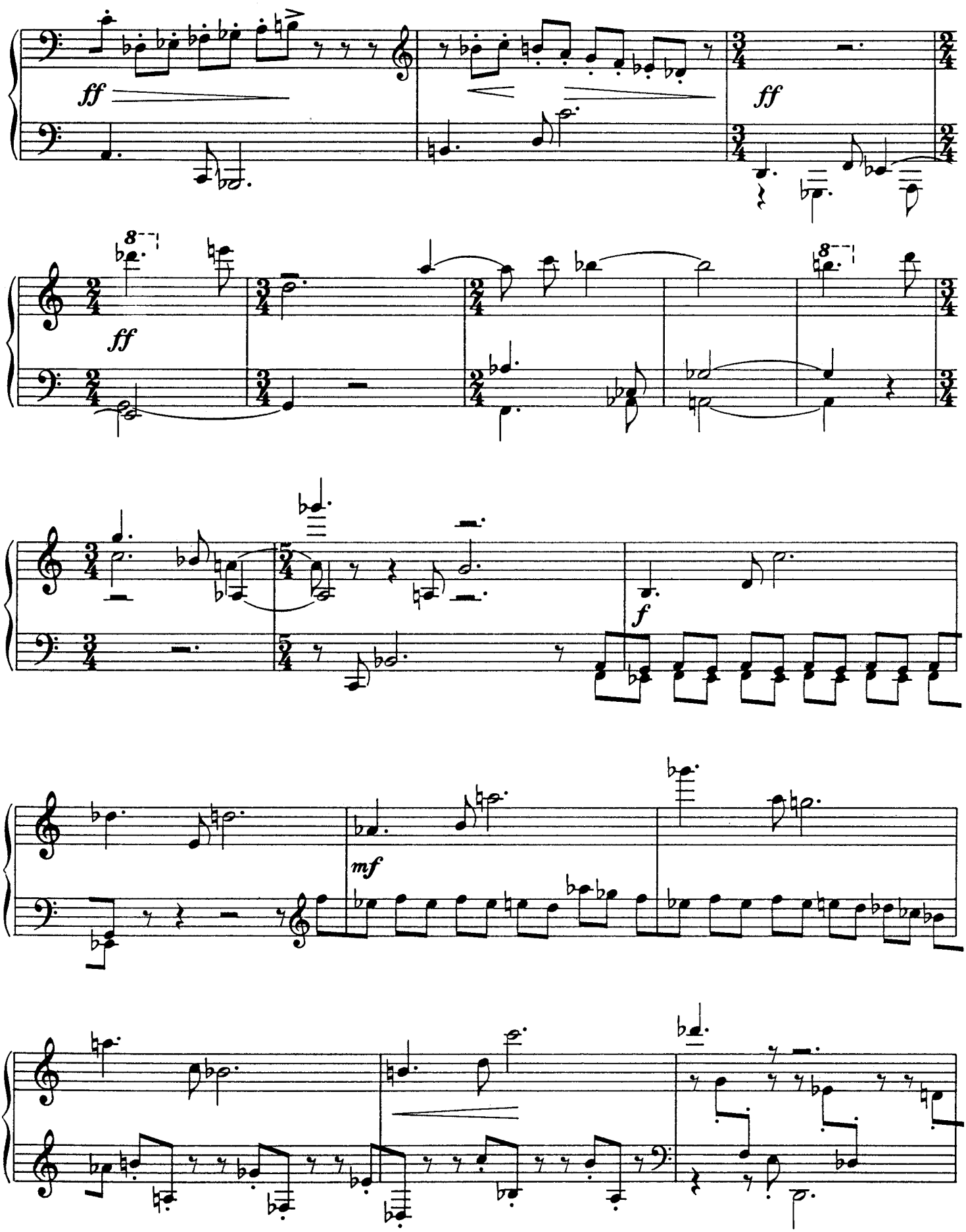
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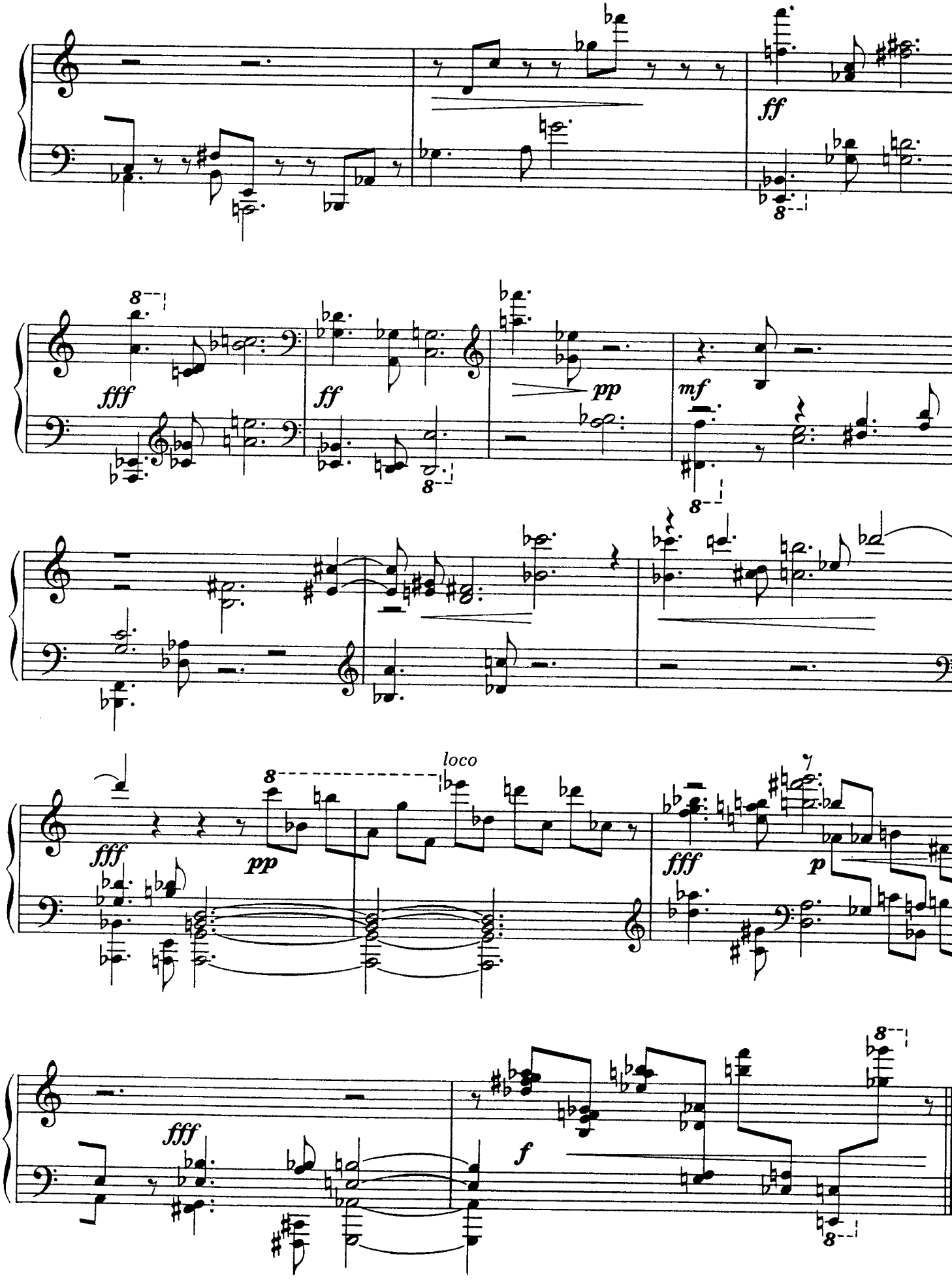
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loco
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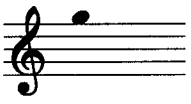
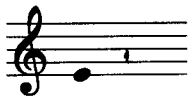
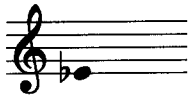
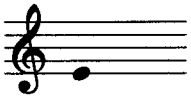
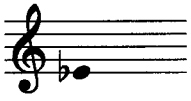
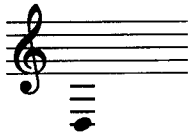
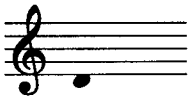
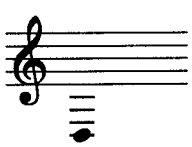
A ROOM

Performance Notes

This piece may also be performed with or without the preparations. The rhythmic structure is 2 (4, 7, 2, 5, 4, 7, 2, 3, 5). The piece is the third part of "SHE IS ASLEEP."

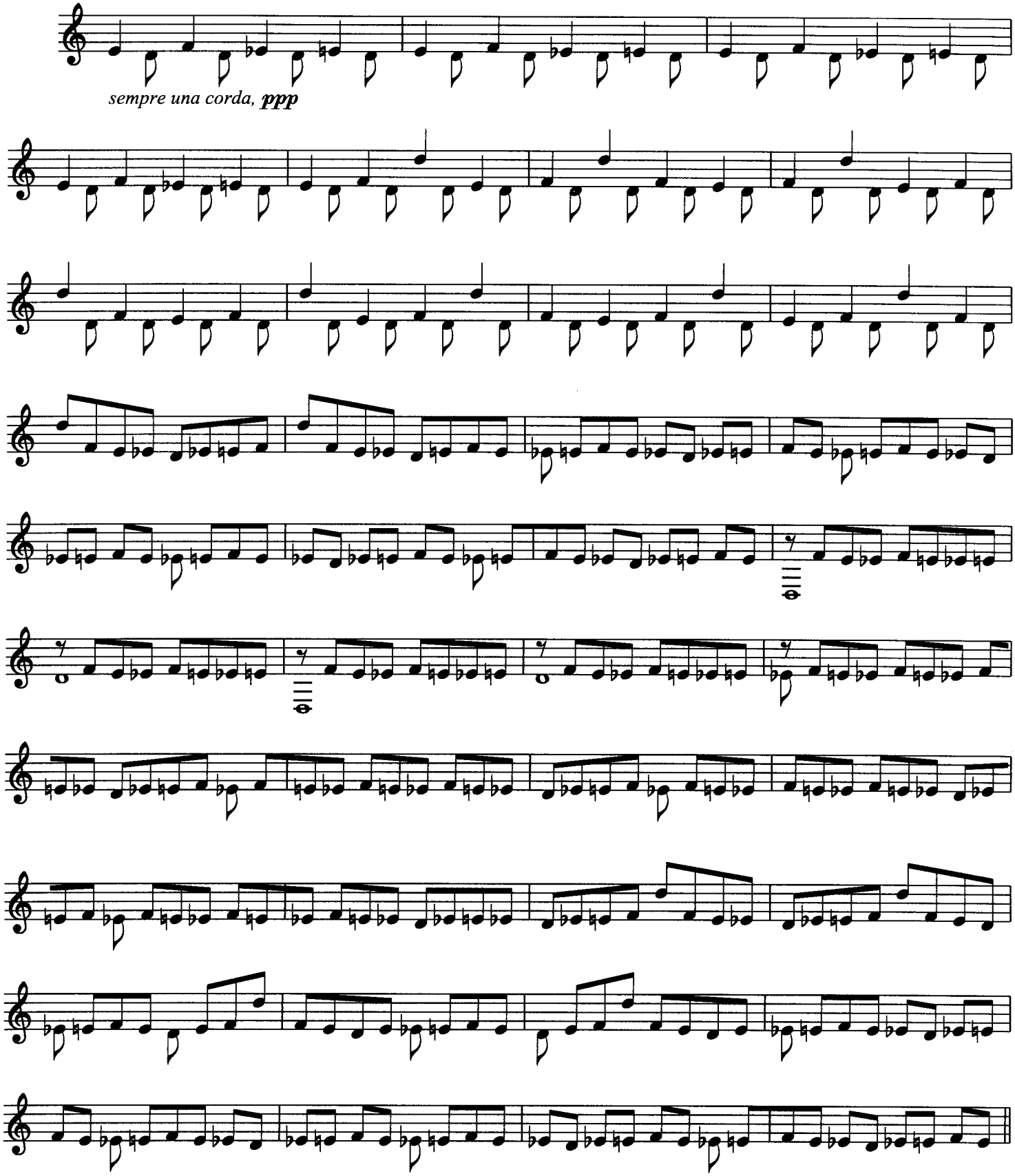
Table of Preparations

Objects may be placed between the strings of a grand piano, transforming the sounds with respect to all of their characteristics.

From damper in inches strings 2 - 3	Material	From bridge in inches strings 1 - 2	Material
2	long bolt	near bridge 	rubber (over 2, under 1, 3)
8 	large bolt	$5\frac{1}{4}$	bolt
2 	long bolt	$1\frac{3}{8}$ 	bolt with rubber
6	large bolt	$4\frac{1}{2}$ 	medium bolt
$6\frac{7}{8}$ 	penny (under 2, over 1, 3)	2 	medium bolt
8 	weather stripping (over 2, under 1, 3)		

A ROOM

JOHN CAGE
(1943)



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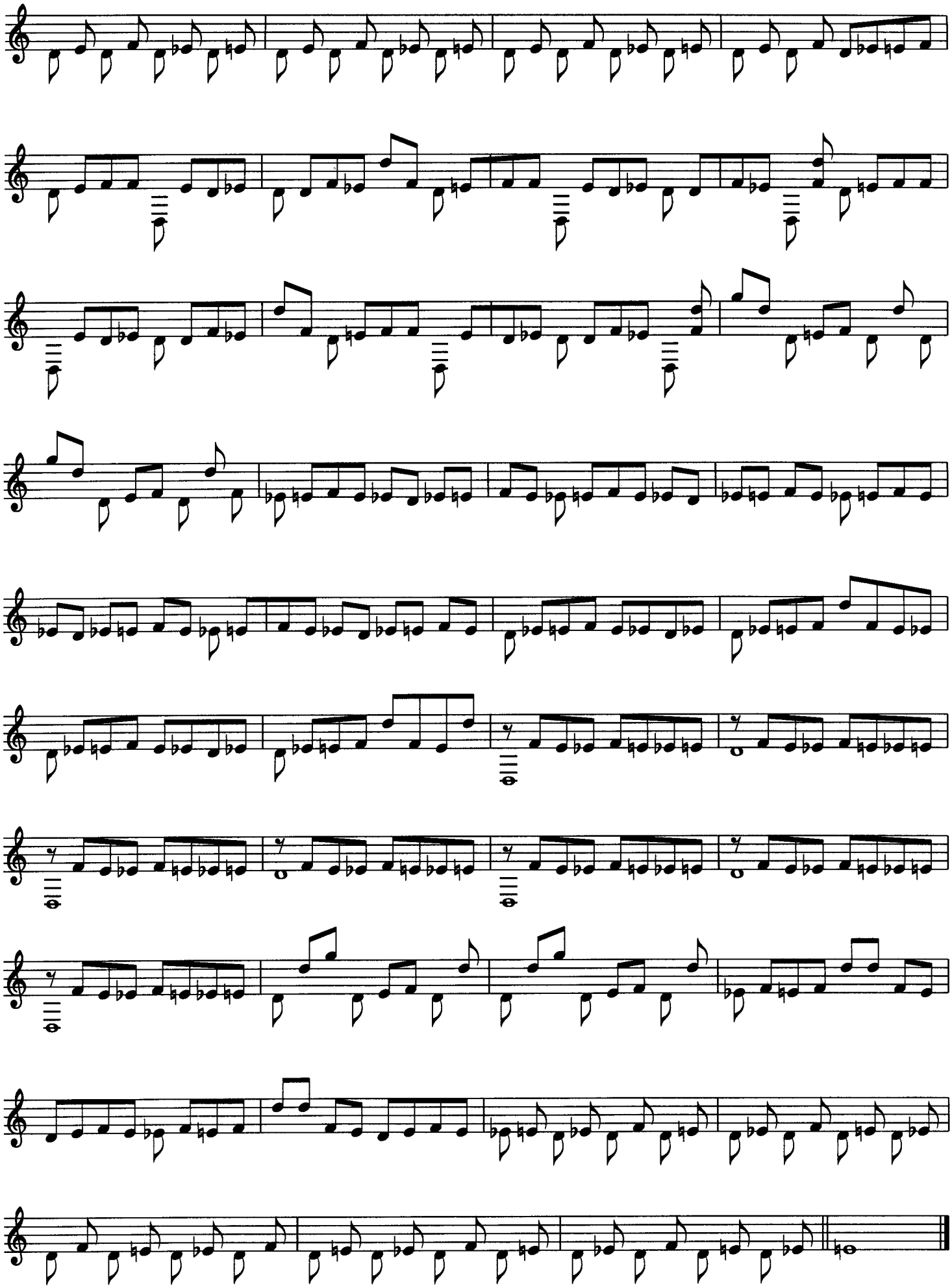
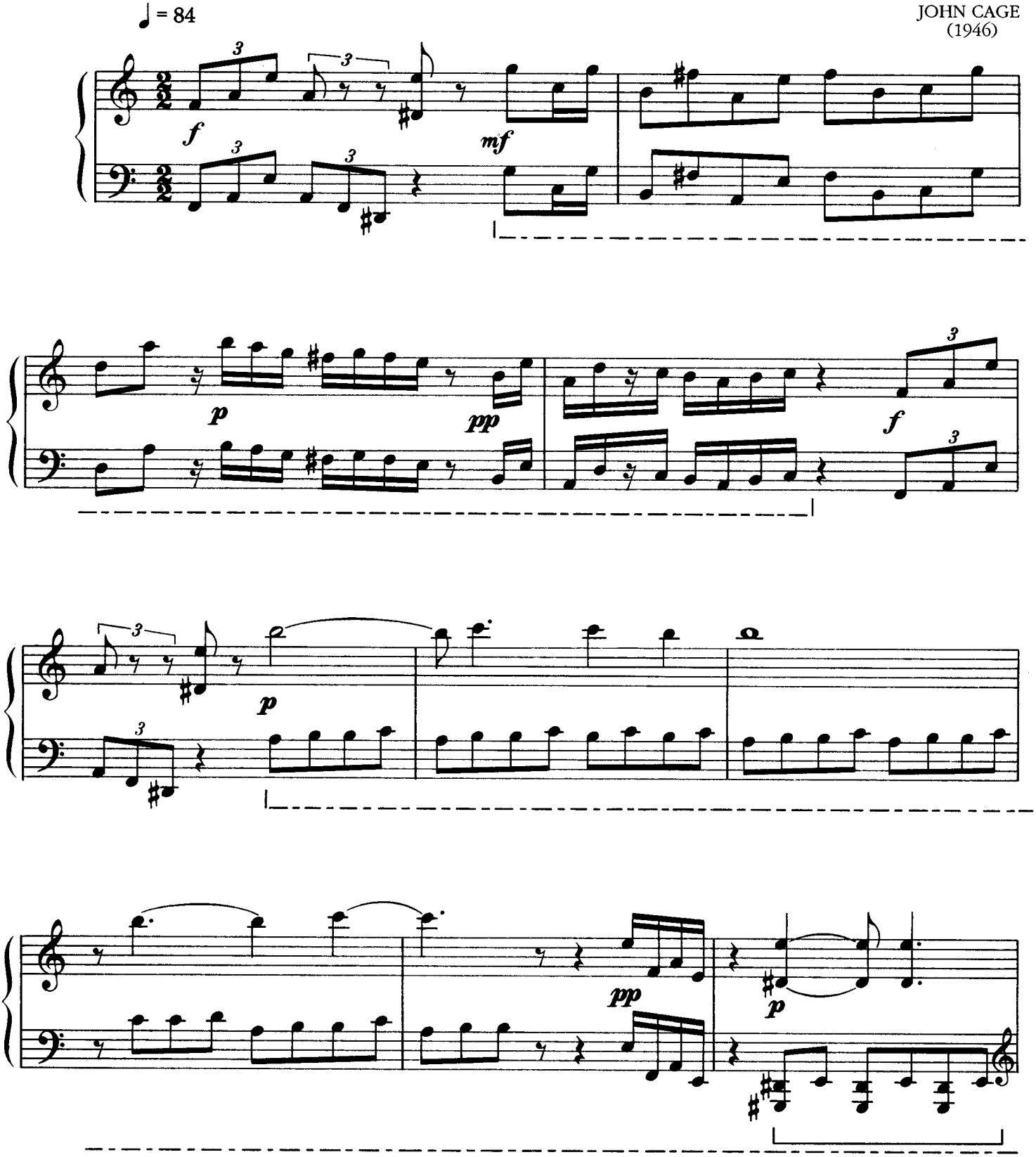


OPHELIA

JOHN CAGE
(1946)



|_ _ _ _ _ = *una corda*
|_____ = Ped.

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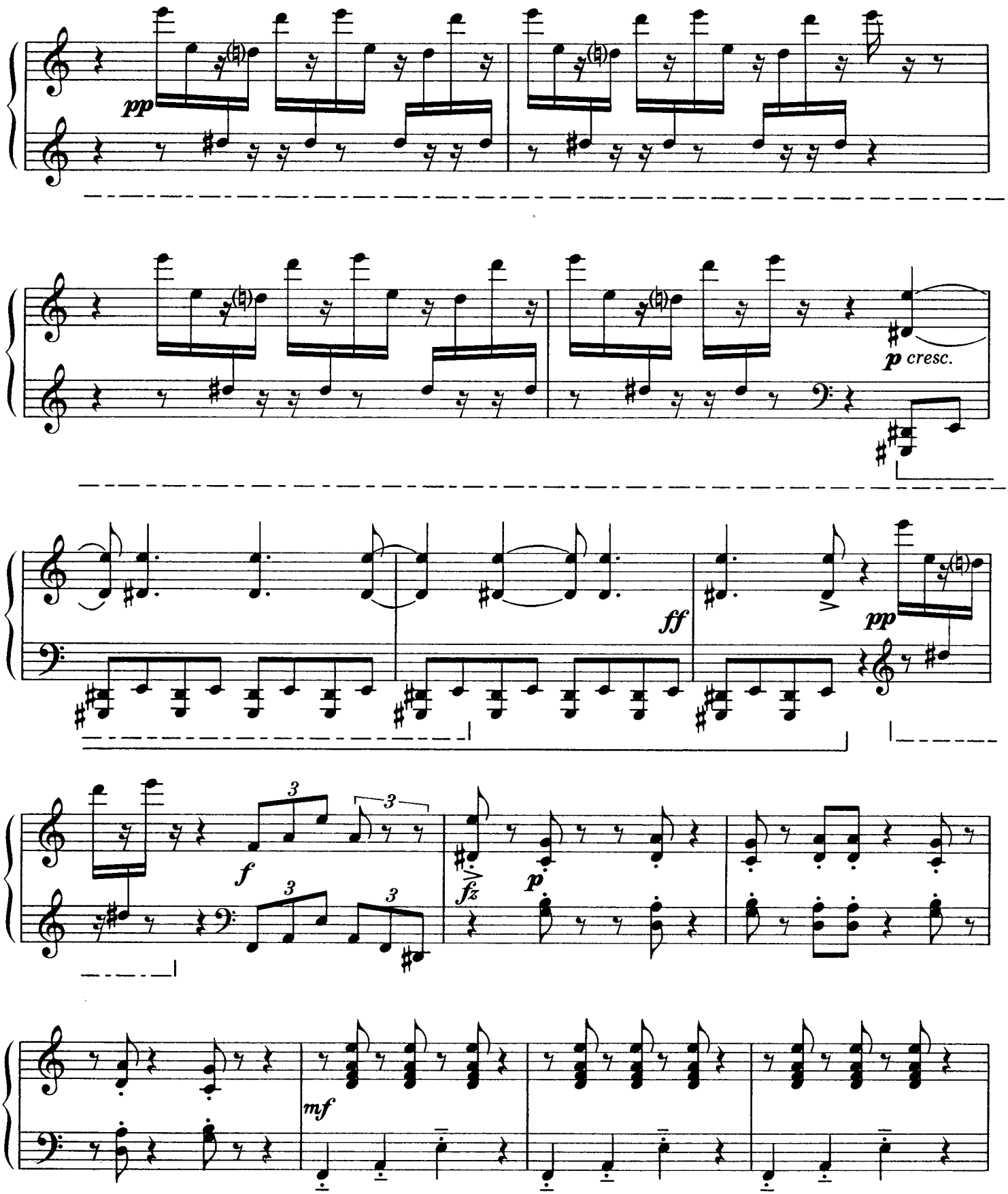
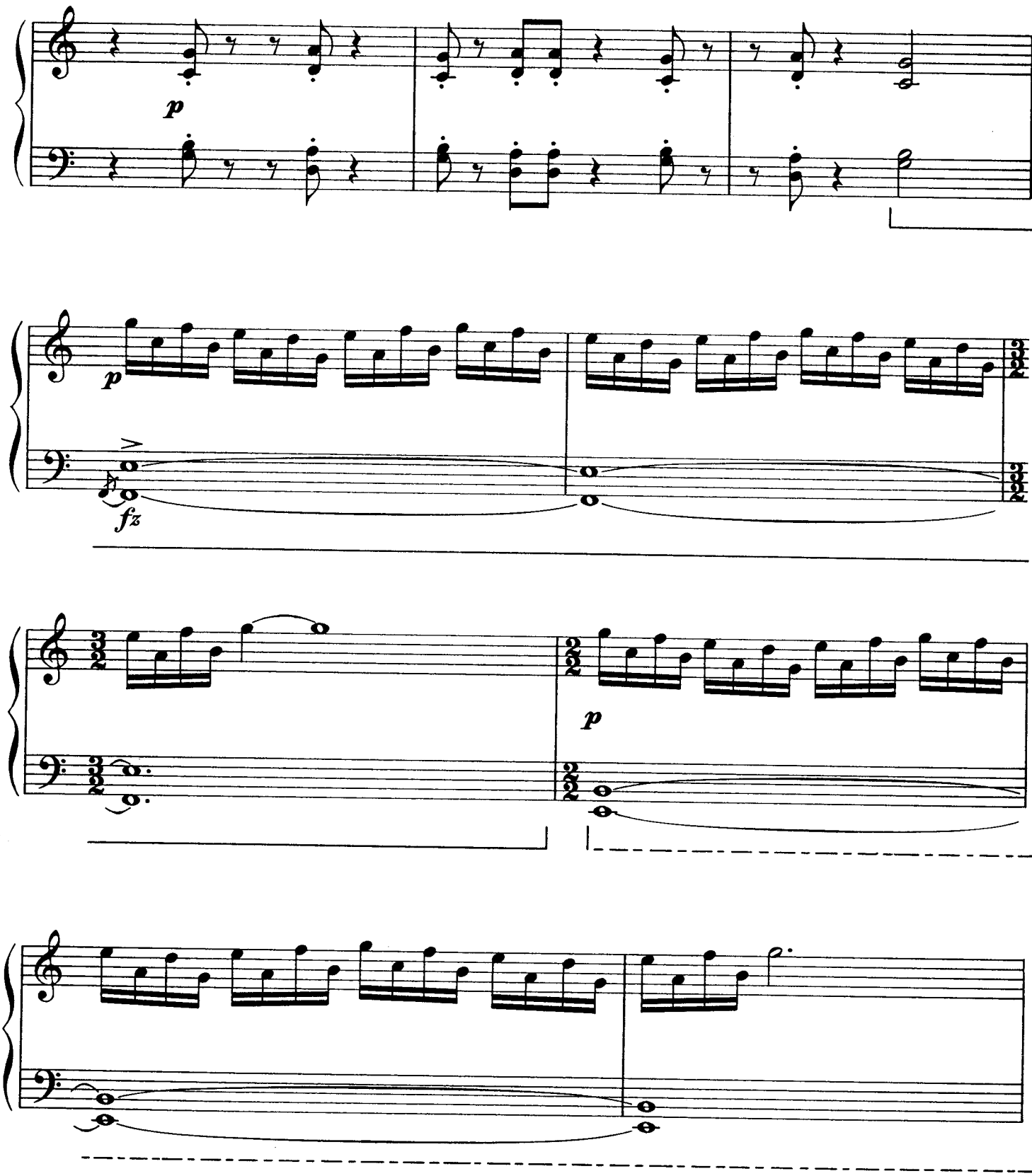
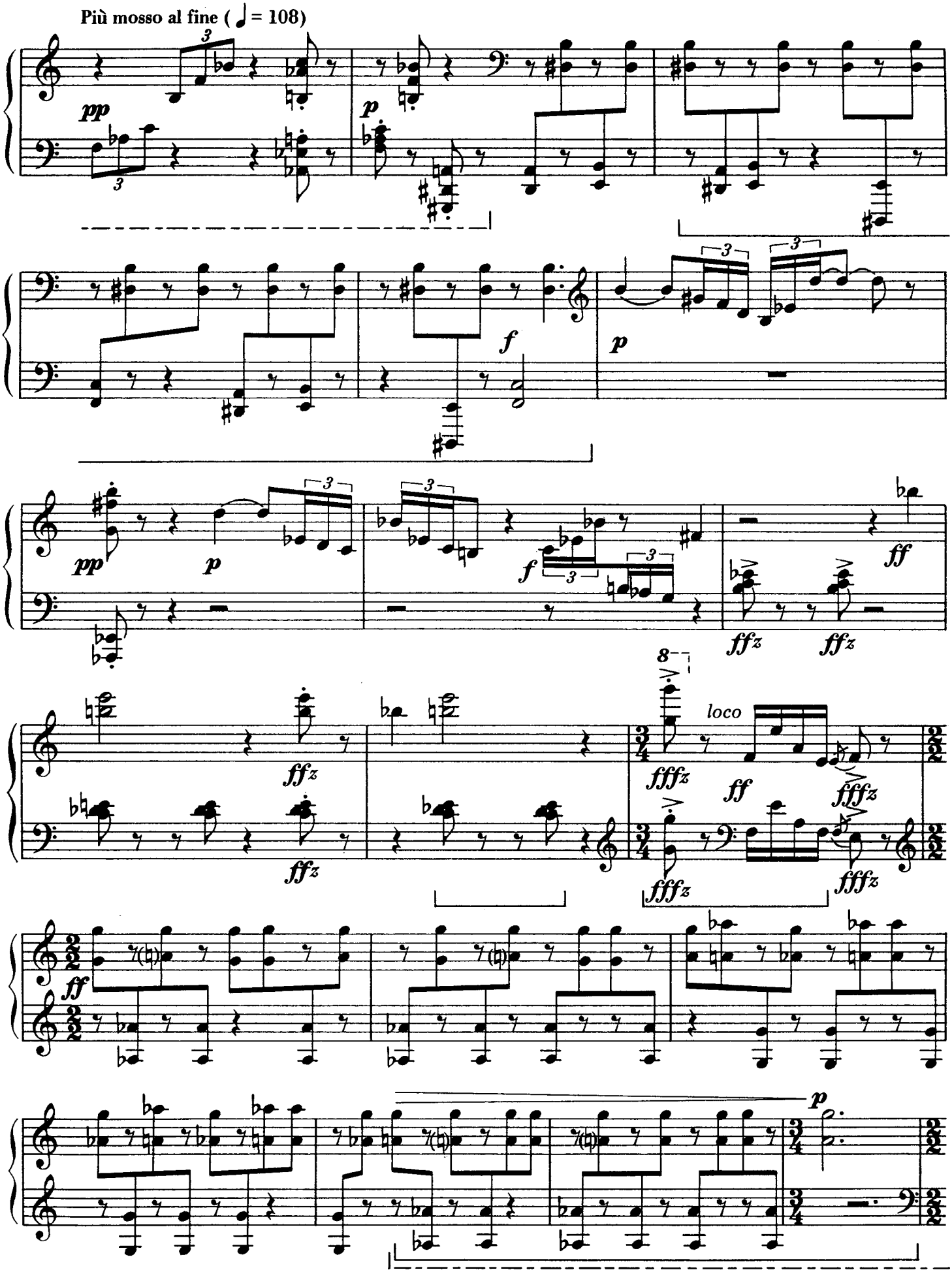
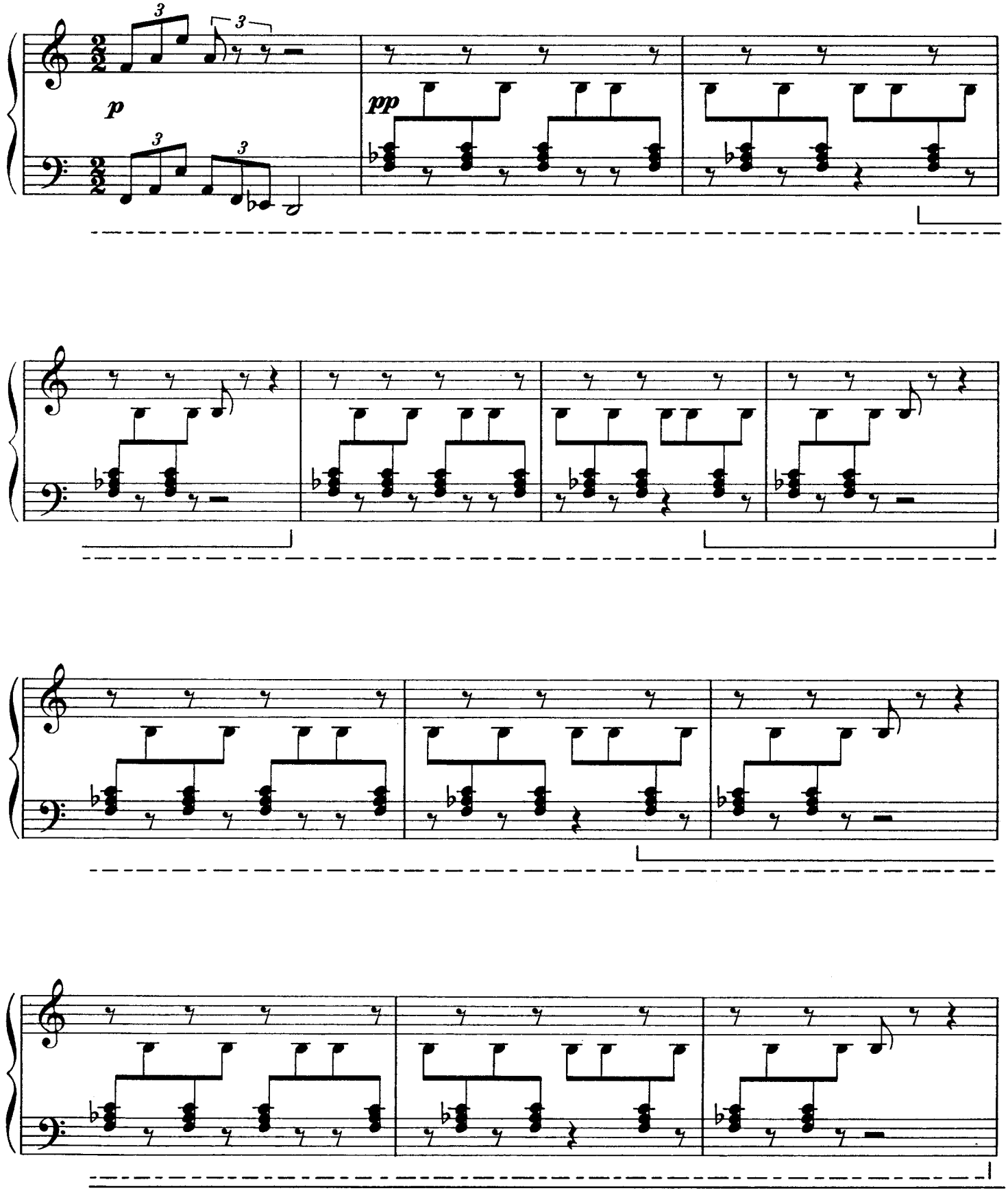
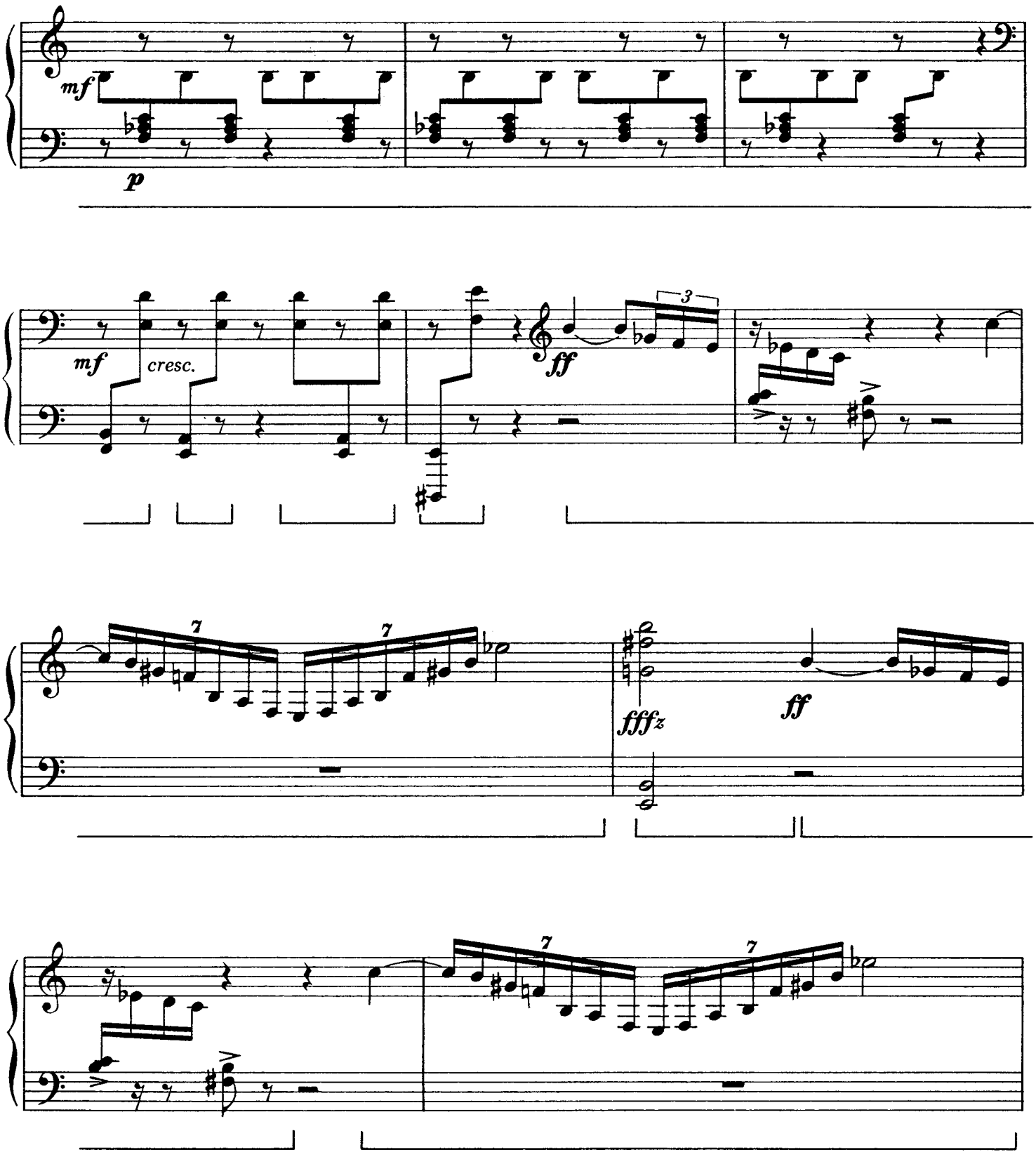
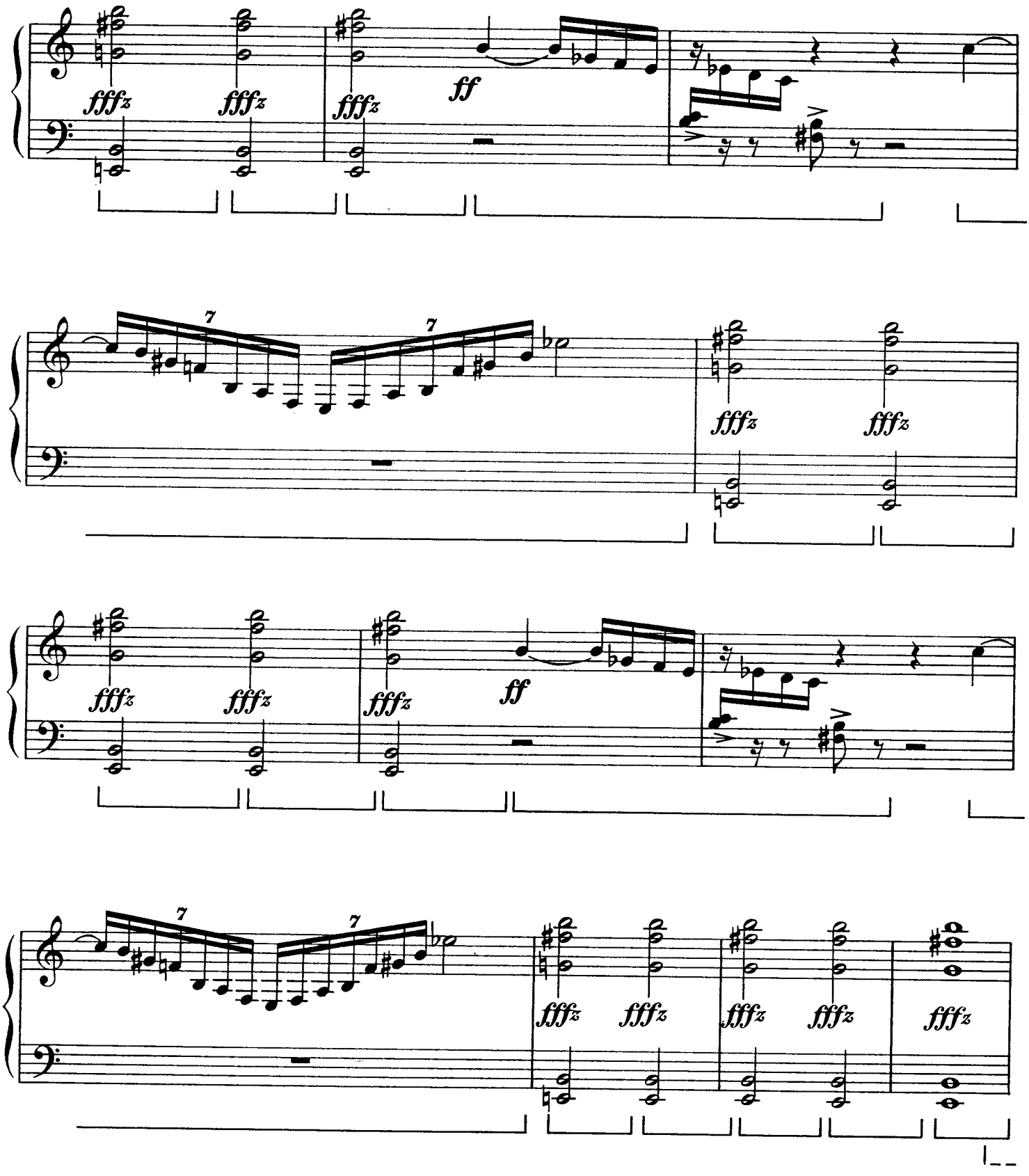

pp
p cresc.
ff
pp
f
fz
p
mf

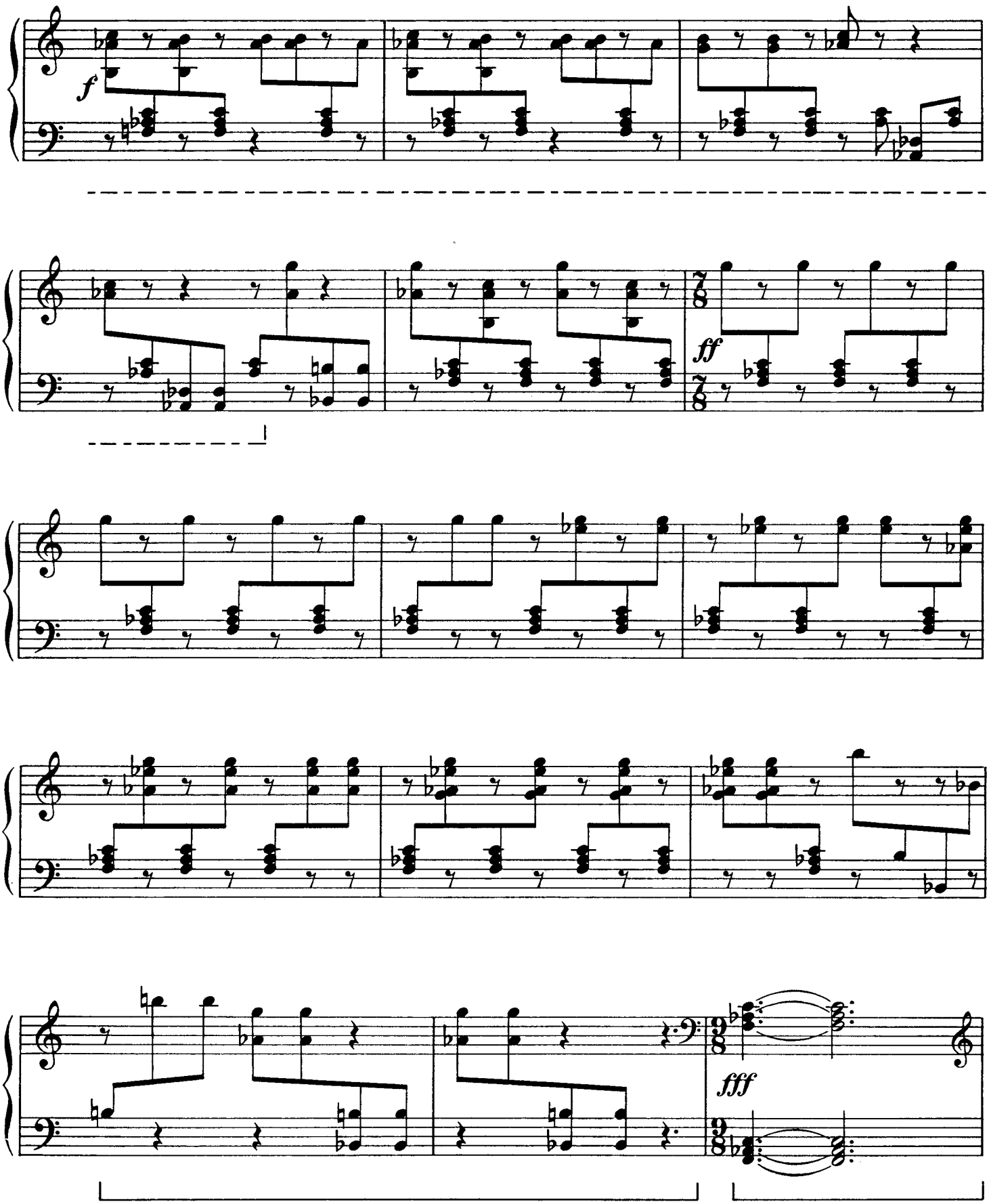

p
p
fz
p

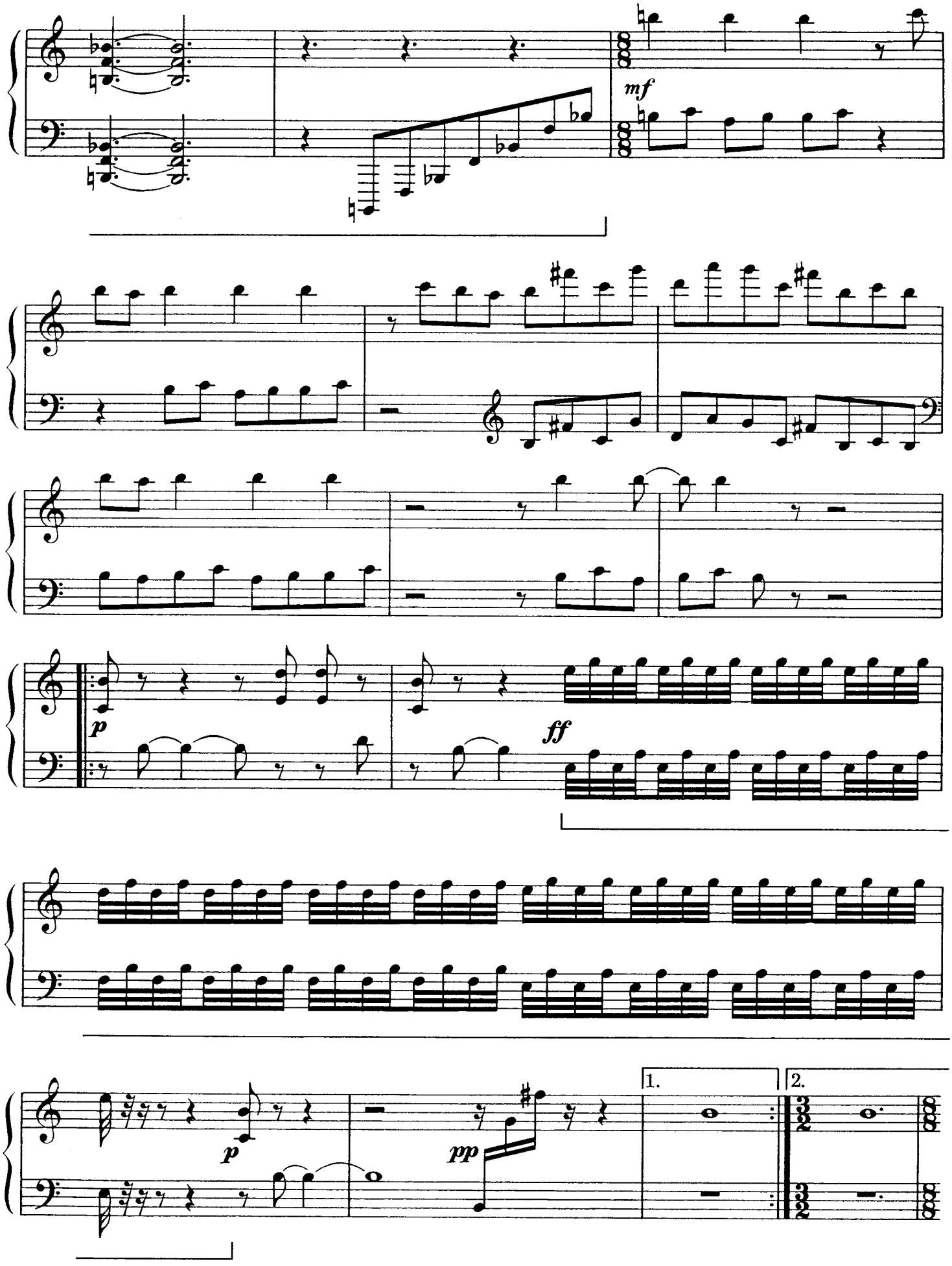

Più mosso al fine (♩ = 108)
pp
p
f
p
pp
p
f
ff
ffz
ffz
ffz
ffz
8
loco
fff
ff
fff
fff
fff
ff
p

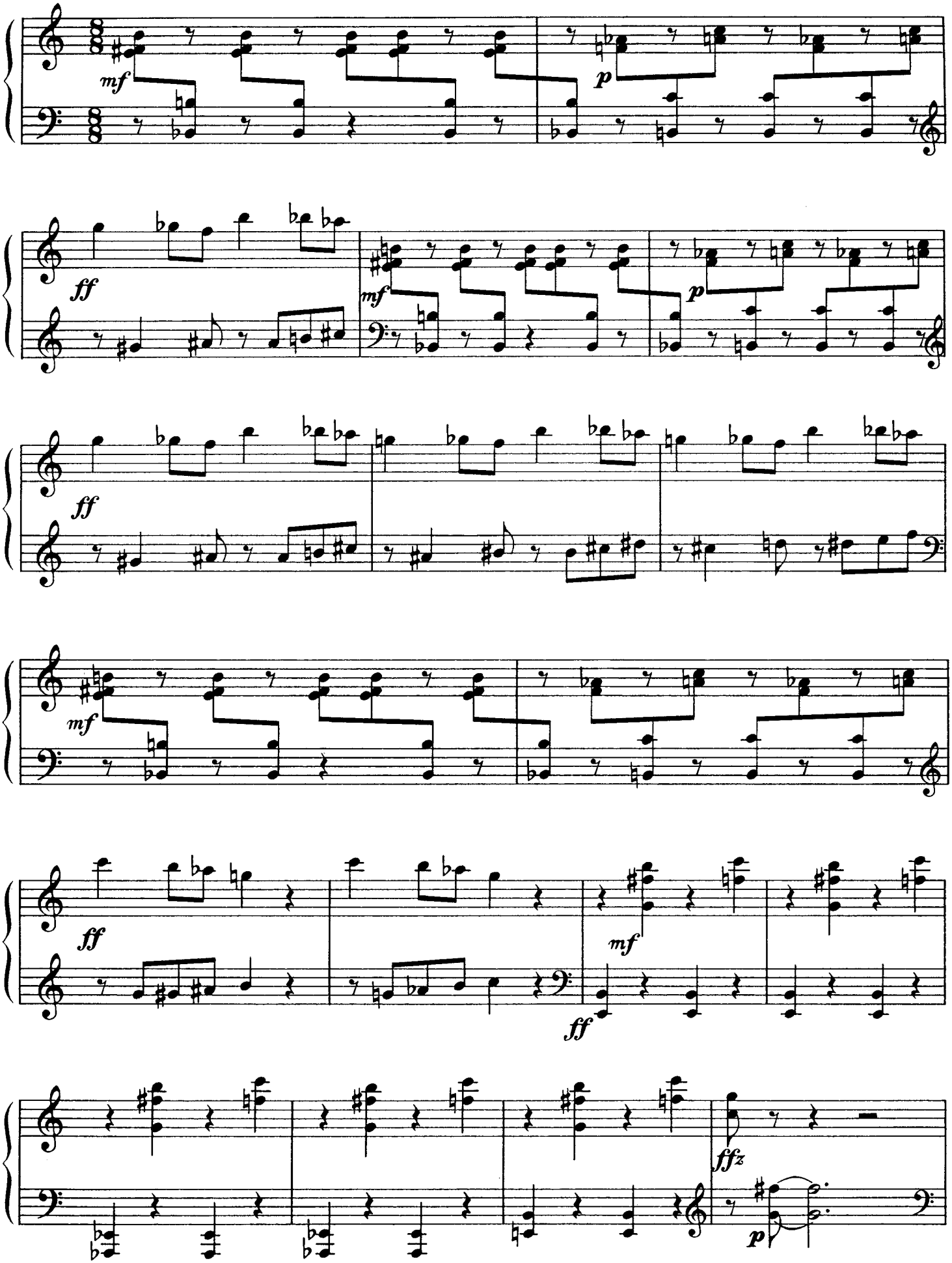

p
pp

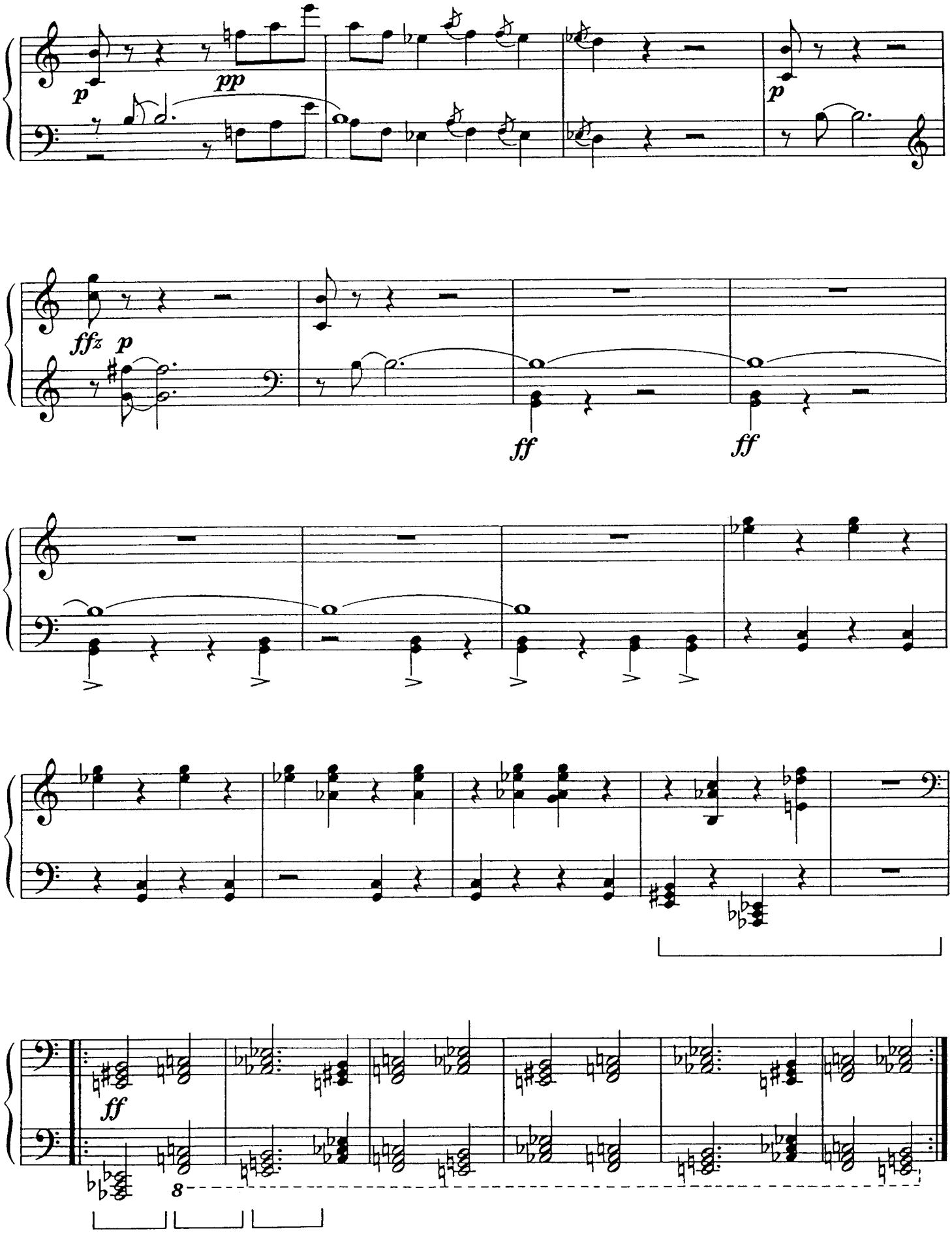

mf
p
mf
cresc.
ff
3
7
7
fffz
ff
7
7

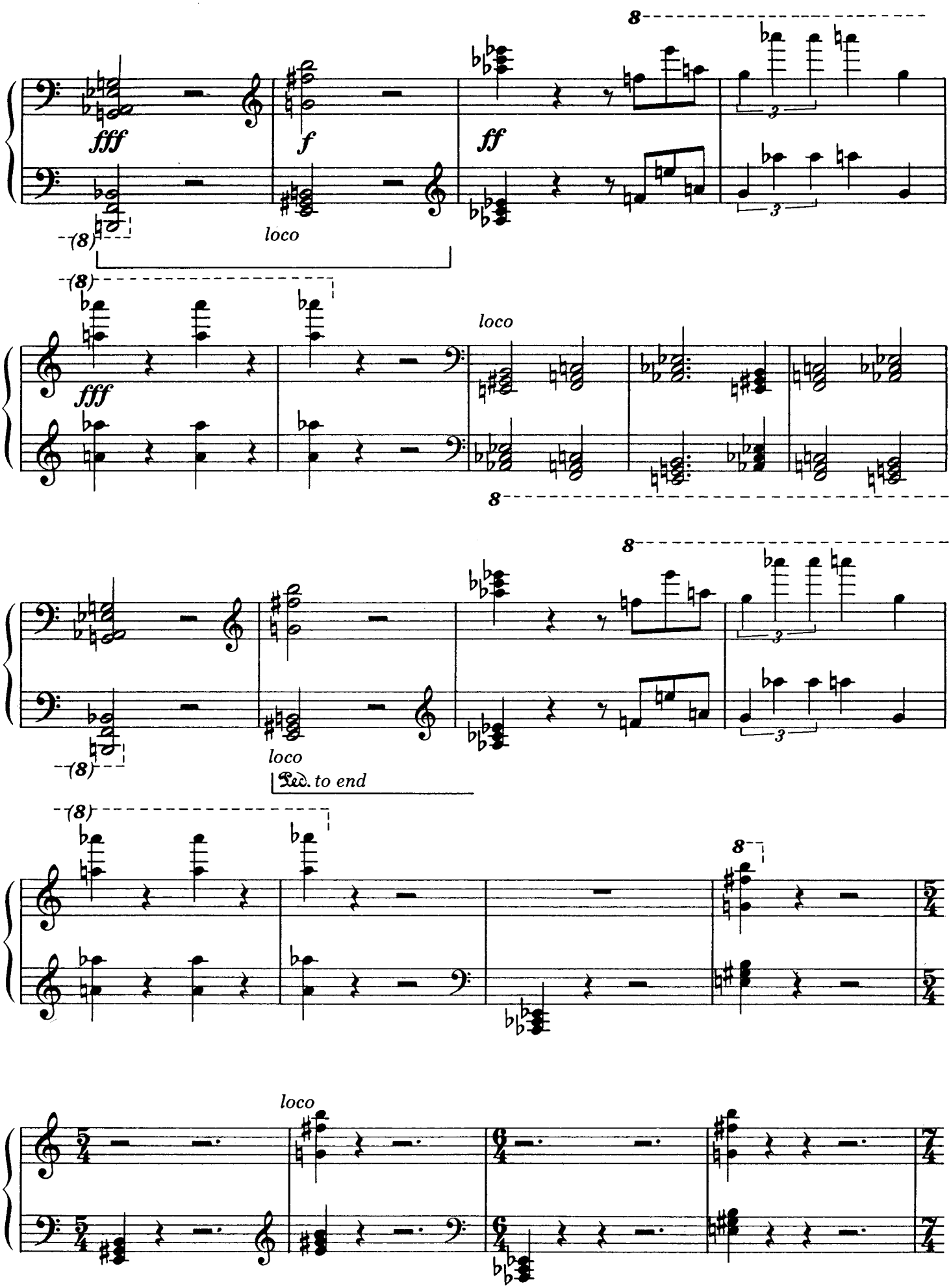

fffz
ff
7

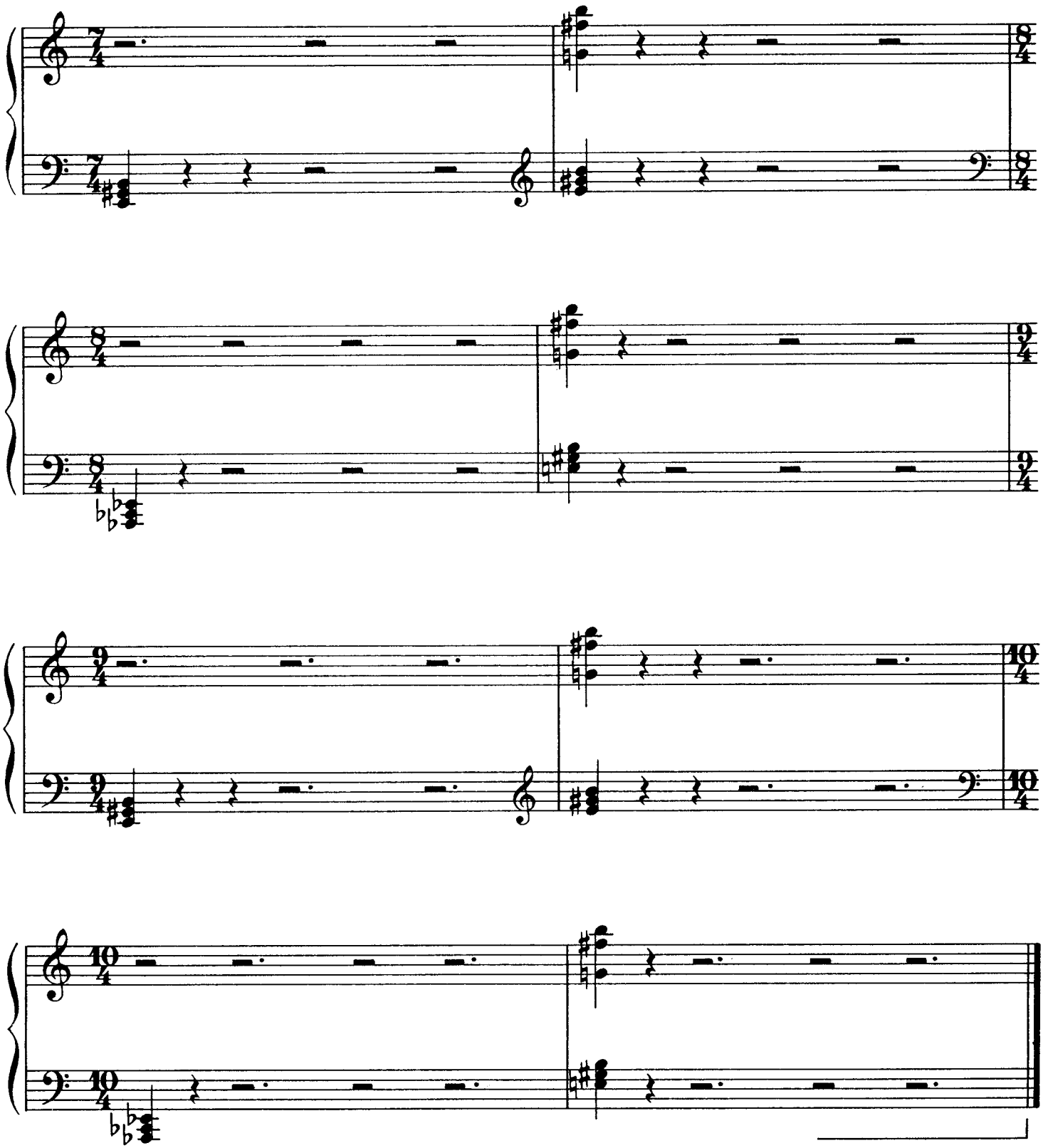

f
ff
fff

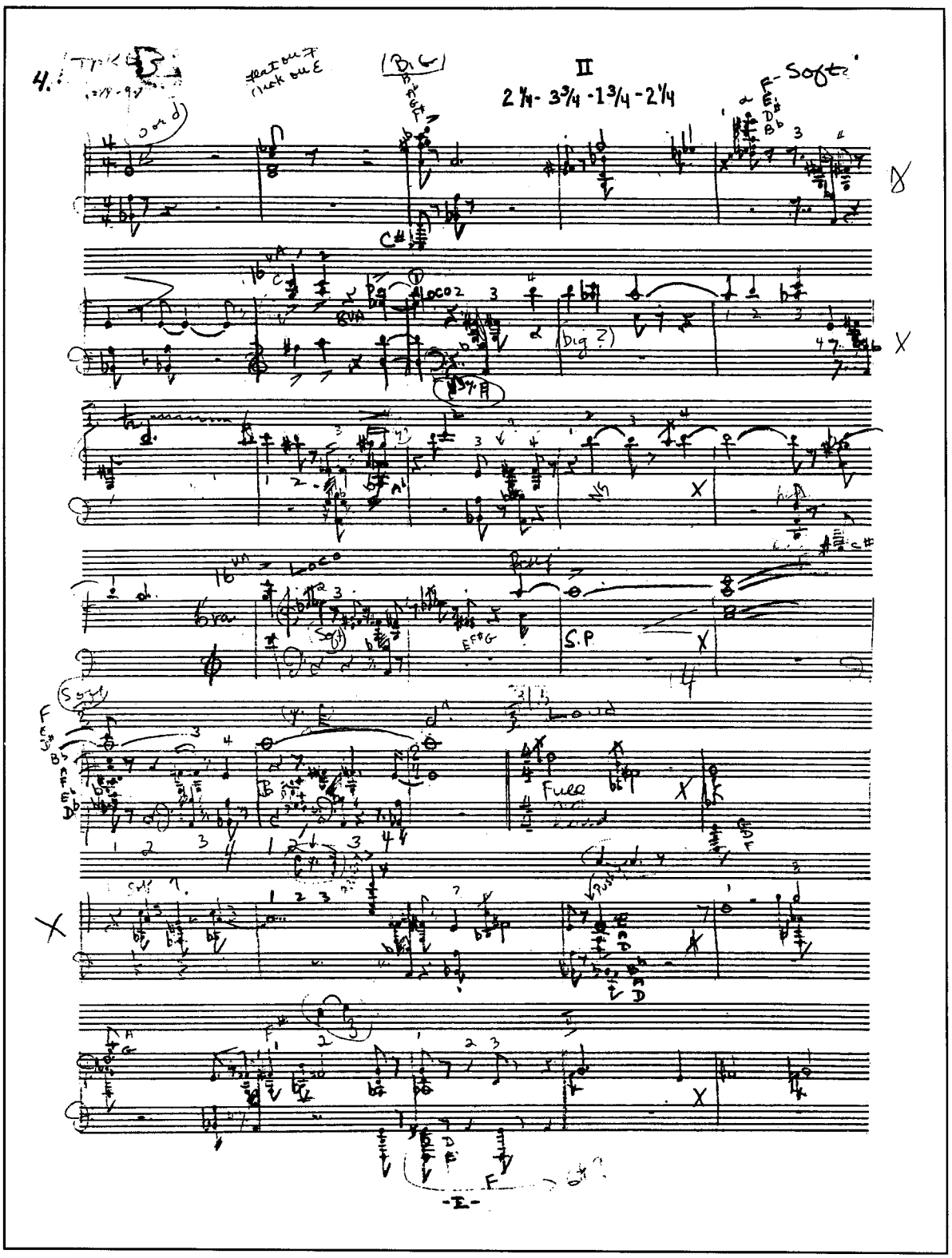

mf
p
ff
p
pp
1.
2.


mf
p
ff
mf
p
ff
mf
ff
mf
ff
fffz
p


p
pp
p
ffz
p
ff
ff
ff
8


8
fff
f
ff
(8)
loco
(8)
fff
loco
8
8
(8)
loco
Ped. to end
(8)
8
loco



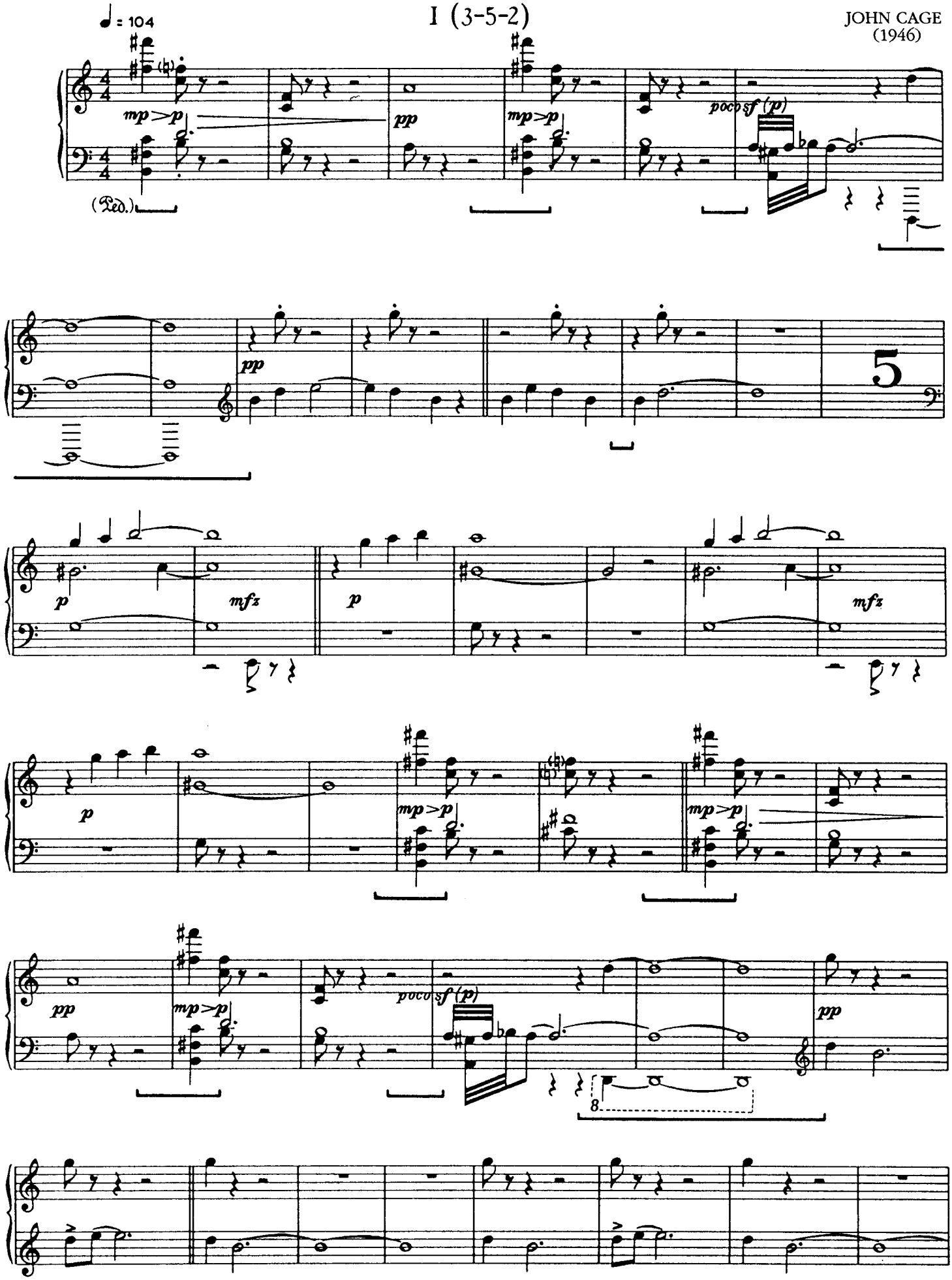


Two Pieces for Piano (1946) by John Cage. Autograph of first music page (second piece), courtesy of the John Cage Music Manuscript Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

TWO PIECES FOR PIANO

I (3-5-2)

JOHN CAGE
(1946)



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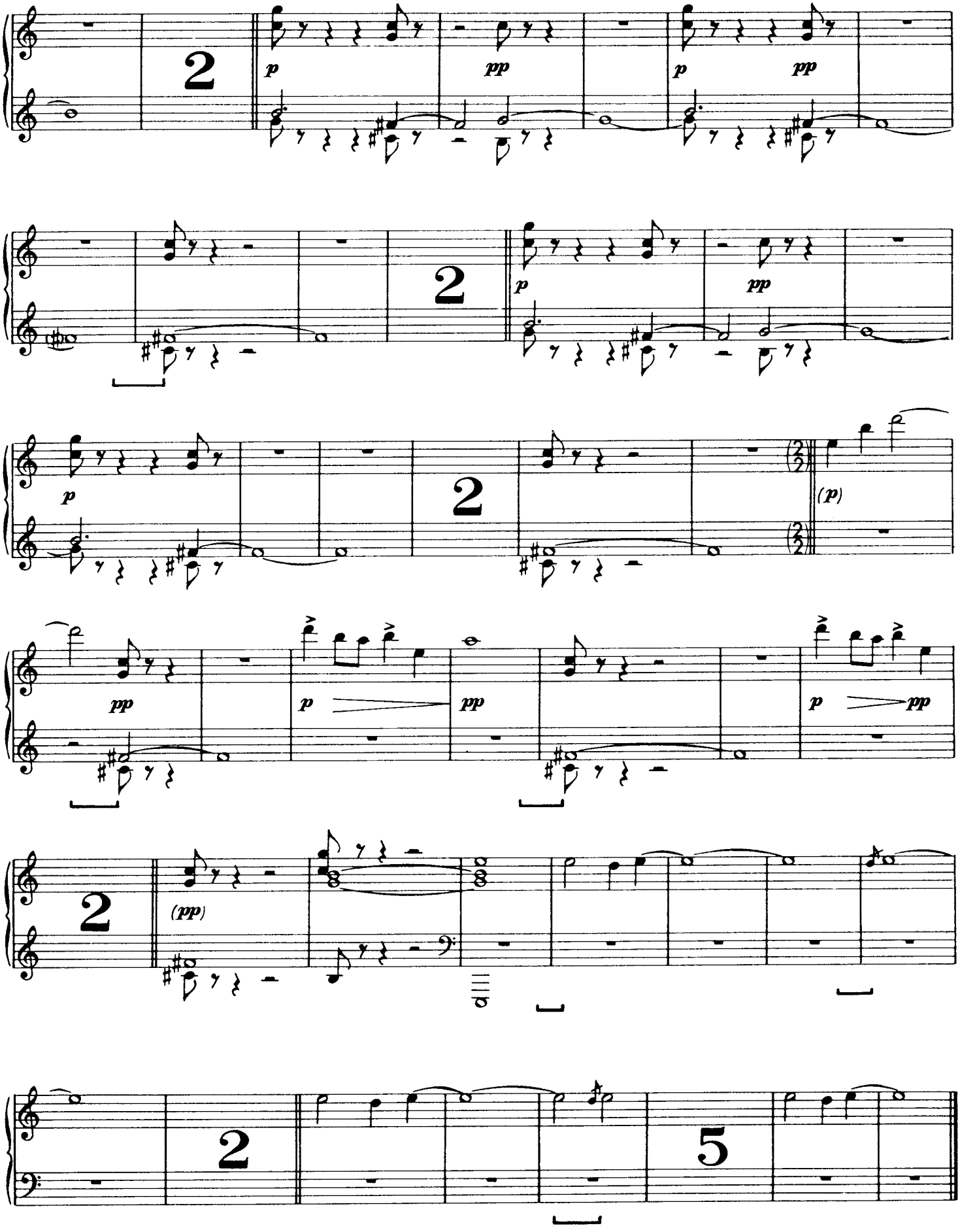
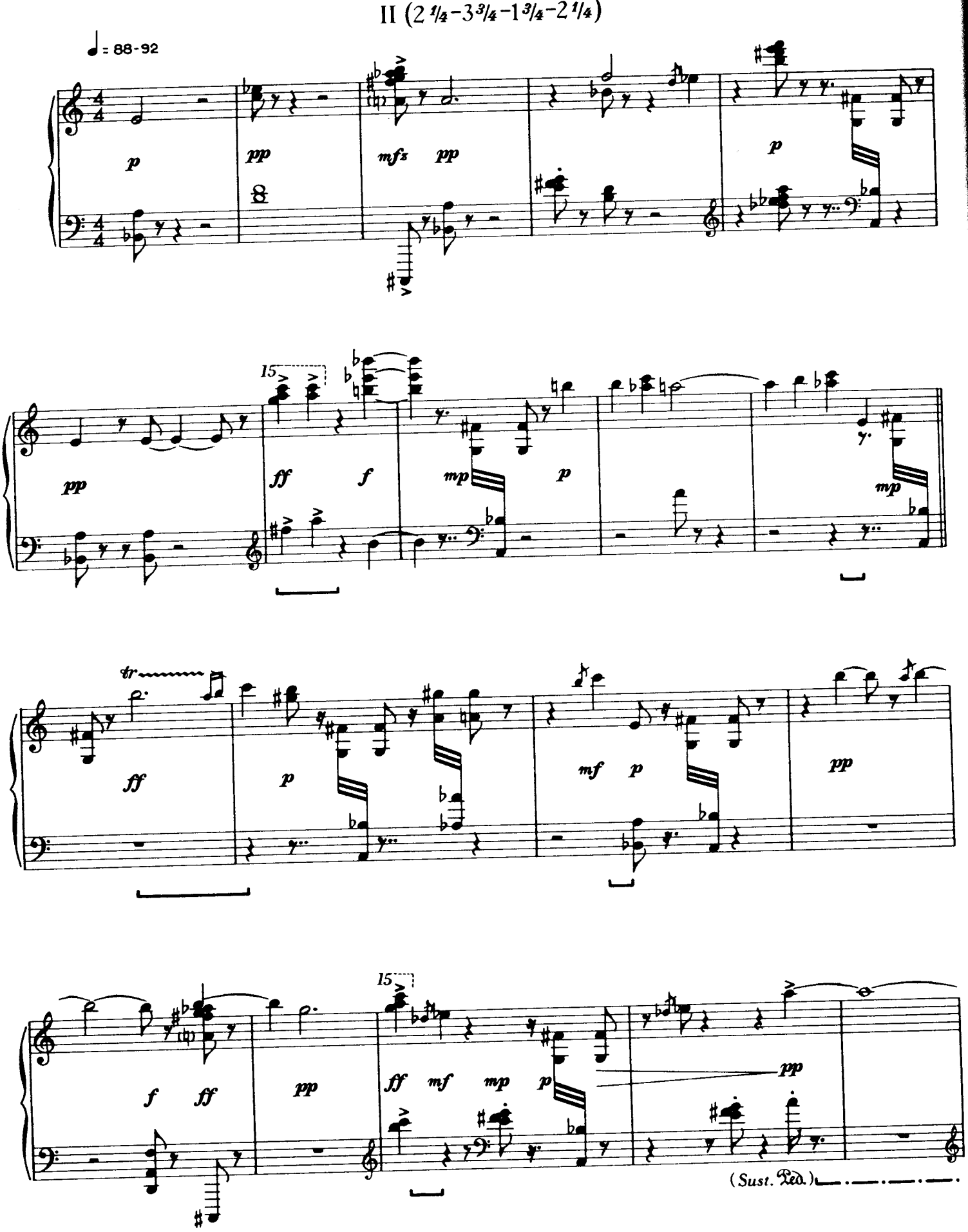
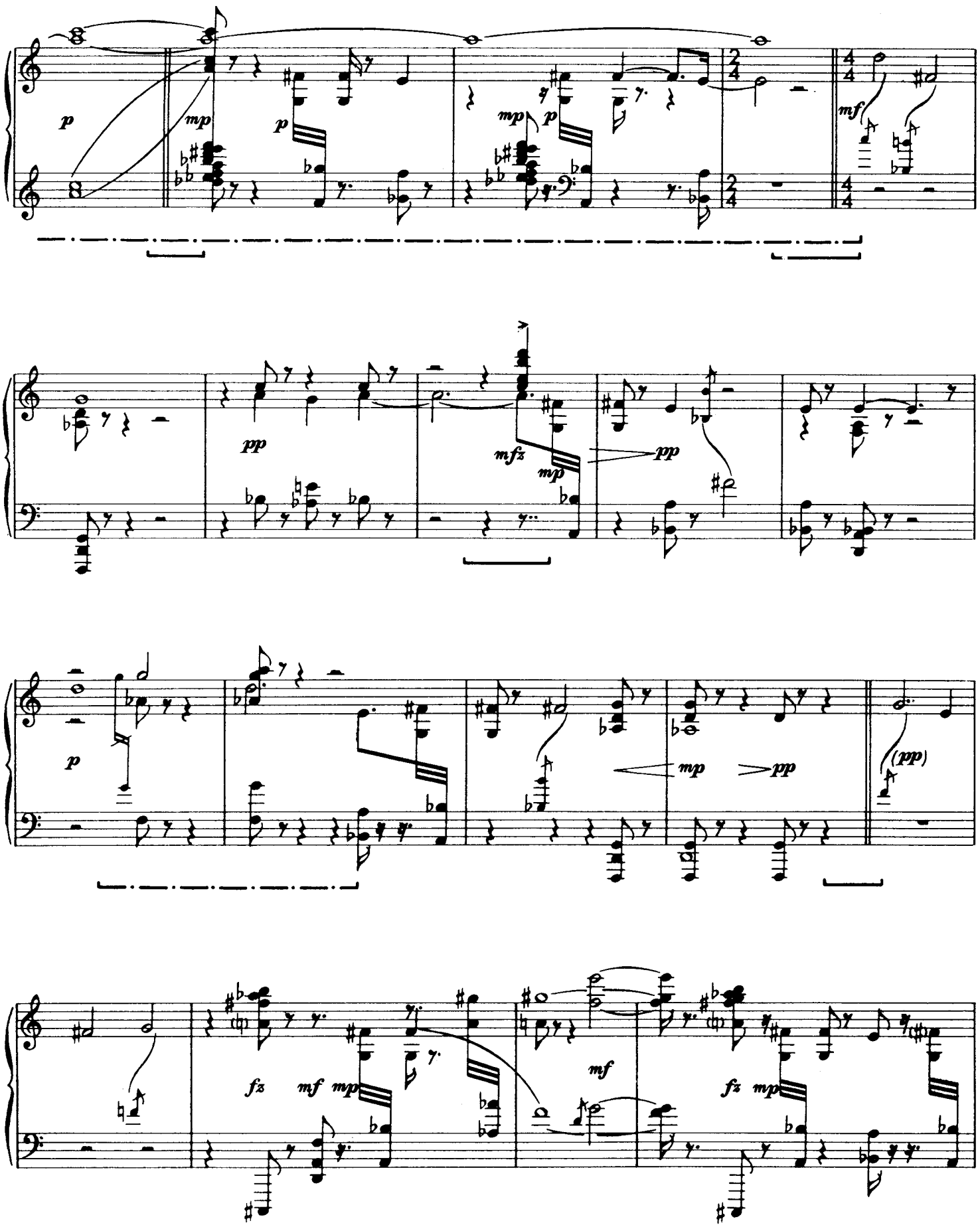
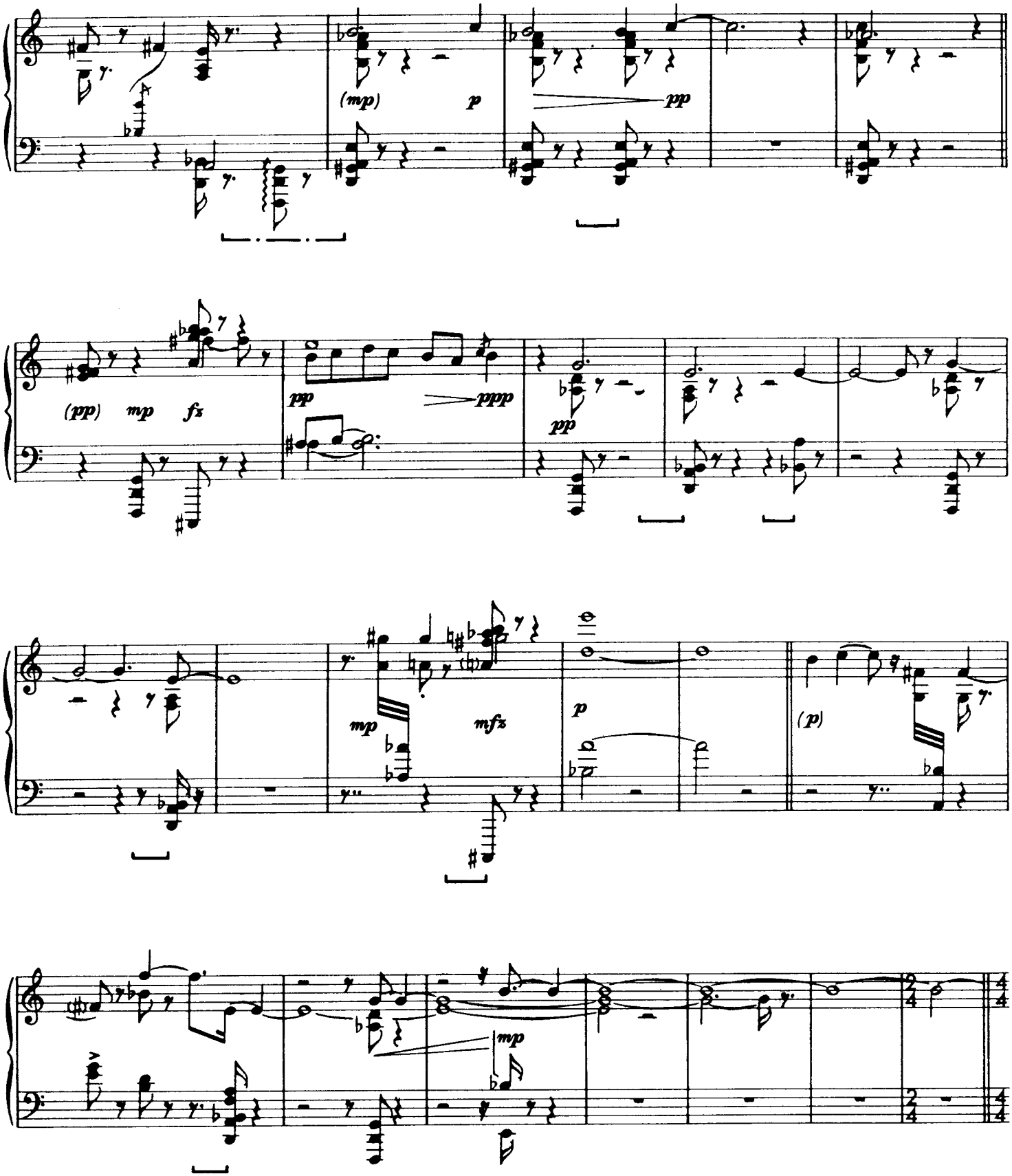
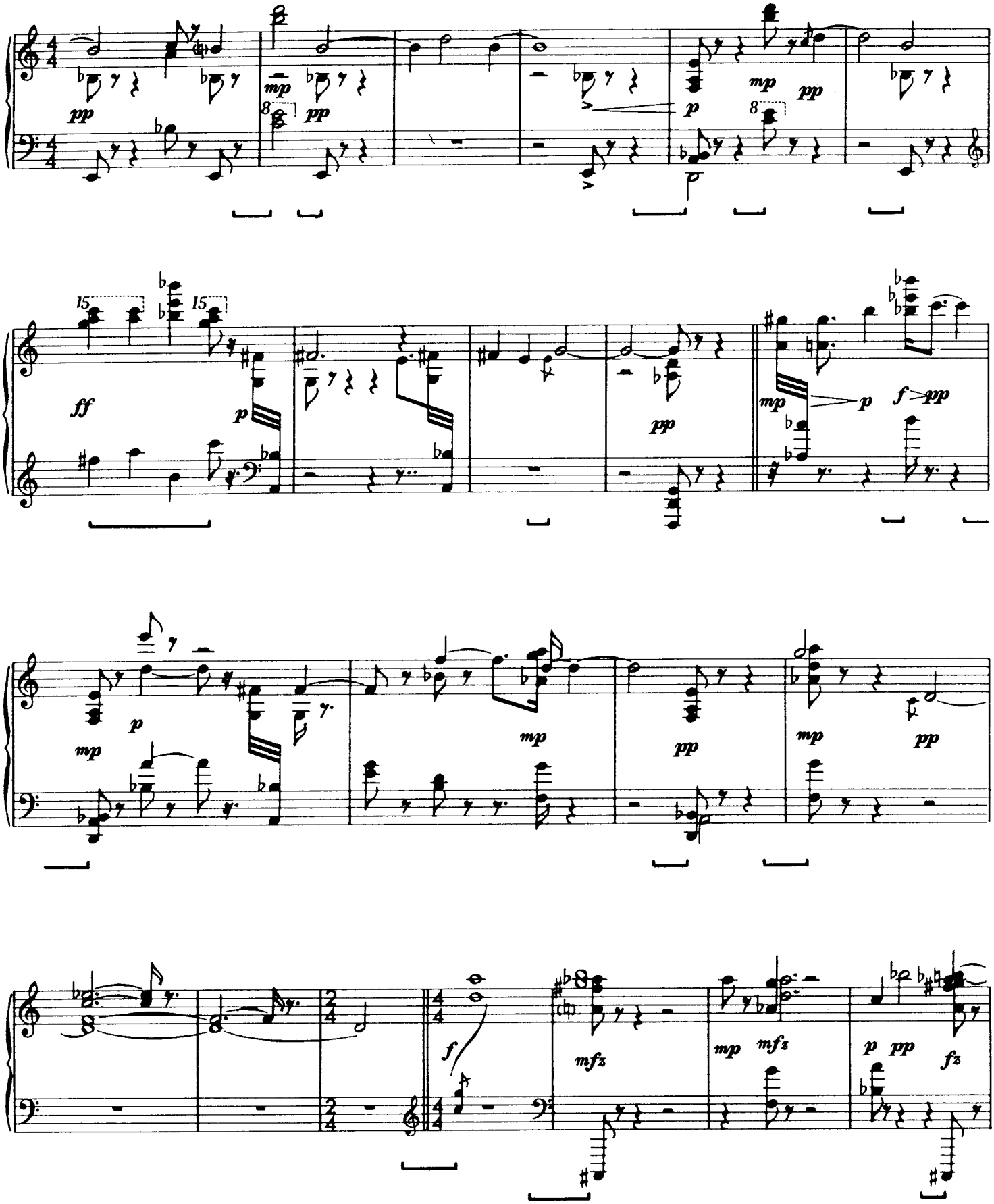


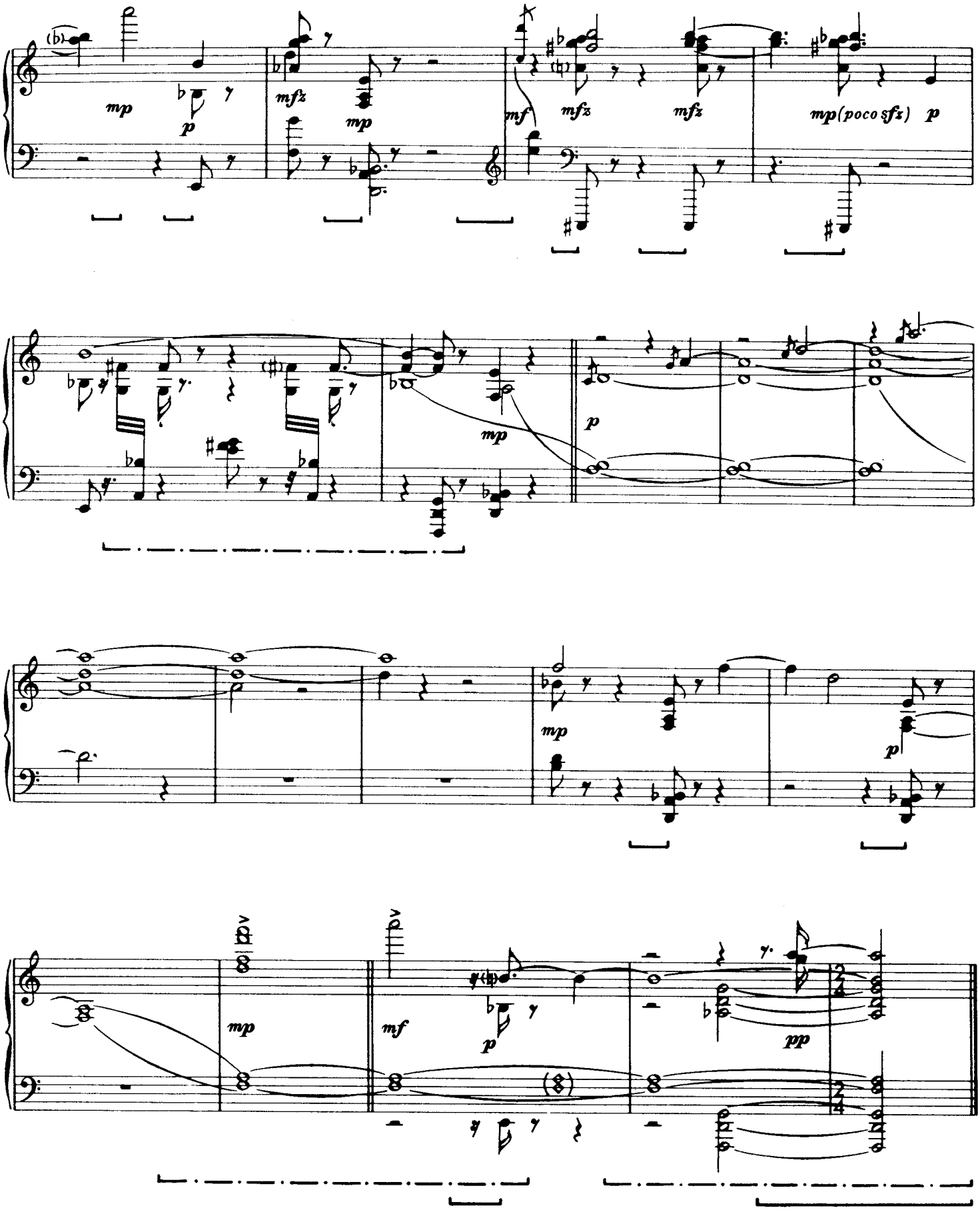
July 1946


II (2 1/4 - 3 3/4 - 1 3/4 - 2 1/4)
♩ = 88-92
p
pp
mfz
pp
p
15
pp
ff
f
mp
p
mp
tr
ff
p
mf
p
pp
15
f
ff
pp
ff
mf
mp
p
pp
(Sust. Ped.)


p
mp
p
mp
p
mf
pp
mfz
mp
pp
p
mp
pp
(pp)
fz
mf
mp
mf
fz
mp


(mp)
p
pp
(pp)
mp
fz
pp
pppp
pp
mp
mfz
p
(p)
mp


pp
mp
pp
p
mp
pp
ff
p
pp
mp
p
f
pp
mp
p
mp
pp
mp
pp
f
mfz
mp
mfz
p
pp
fz



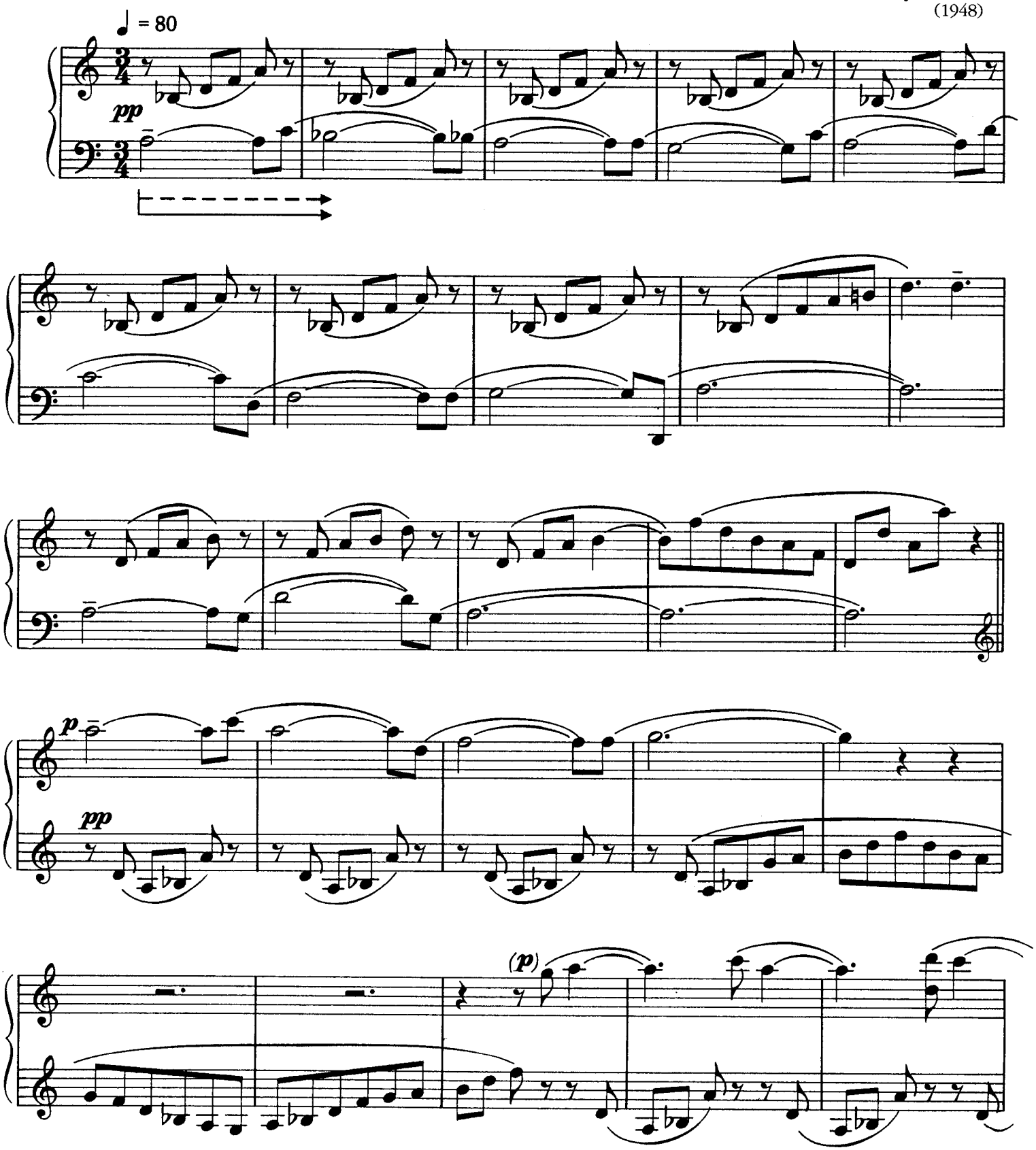
May - August 1946

for Louise Lippold

IN A LANDSCAPE

for Piano or Harp Solo

JOHN CAGE
(1948)



Rhythmic structure = 15 x 15 (5. 7. 3.)

_____ = Pedal

– – – – – = una corda

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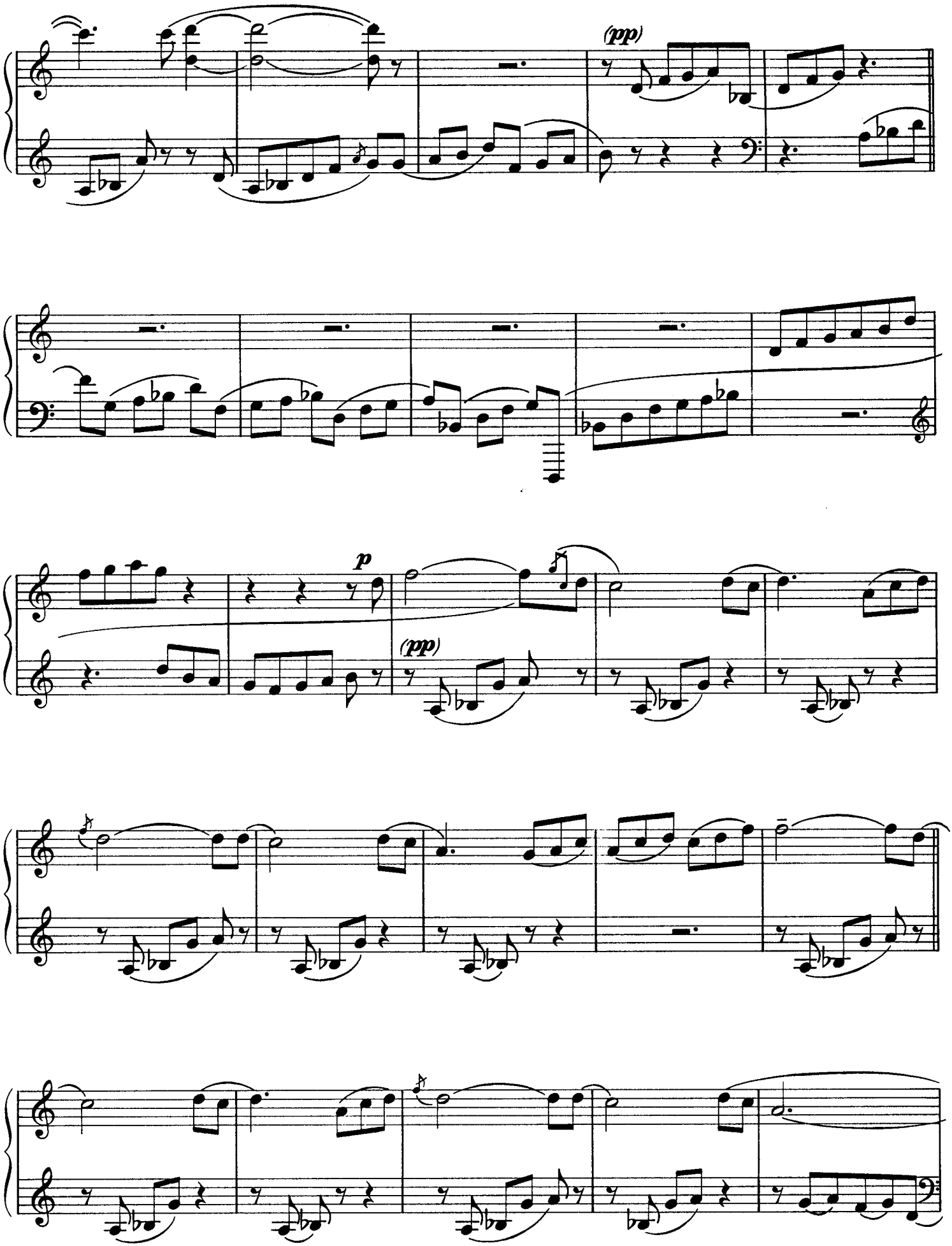
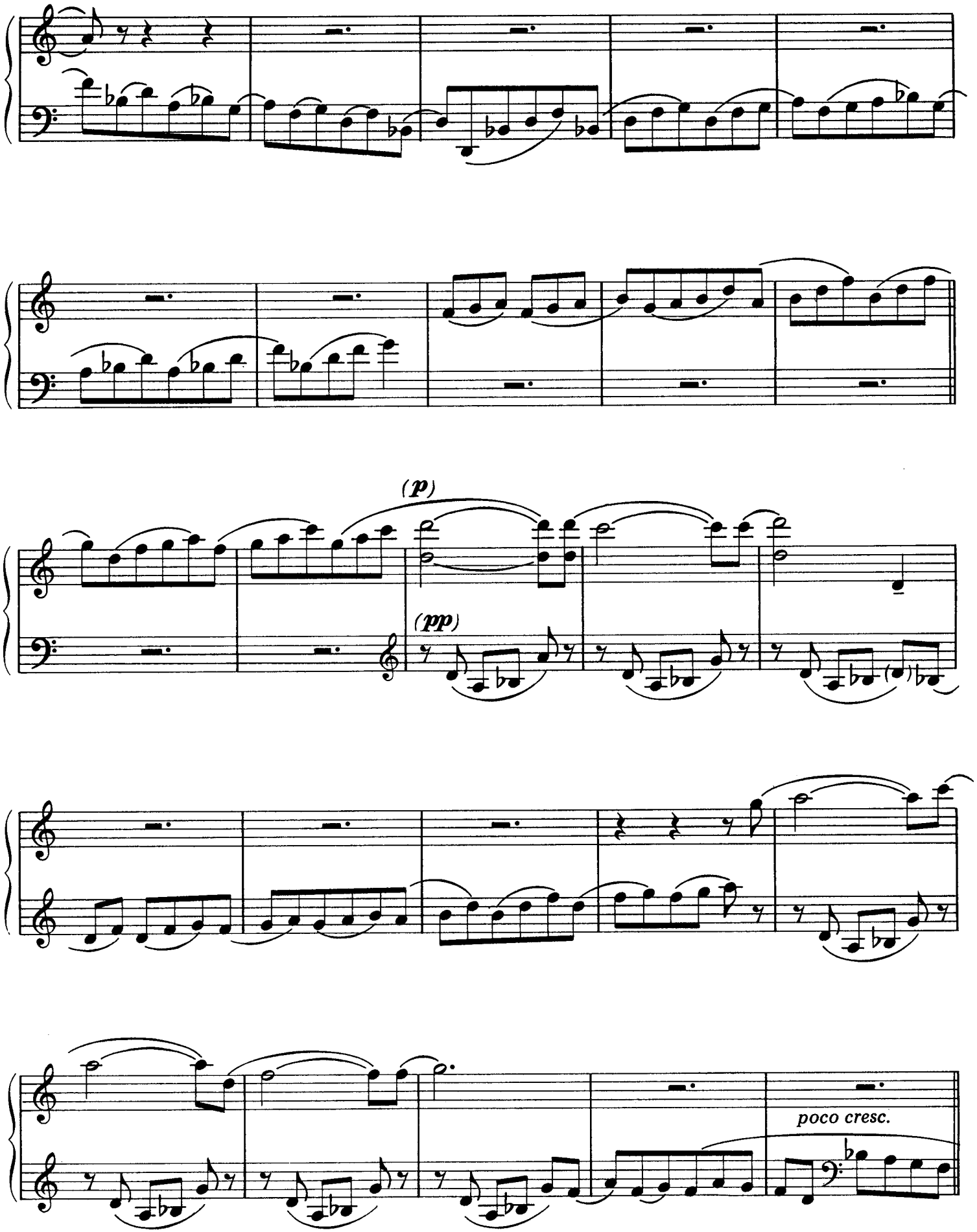
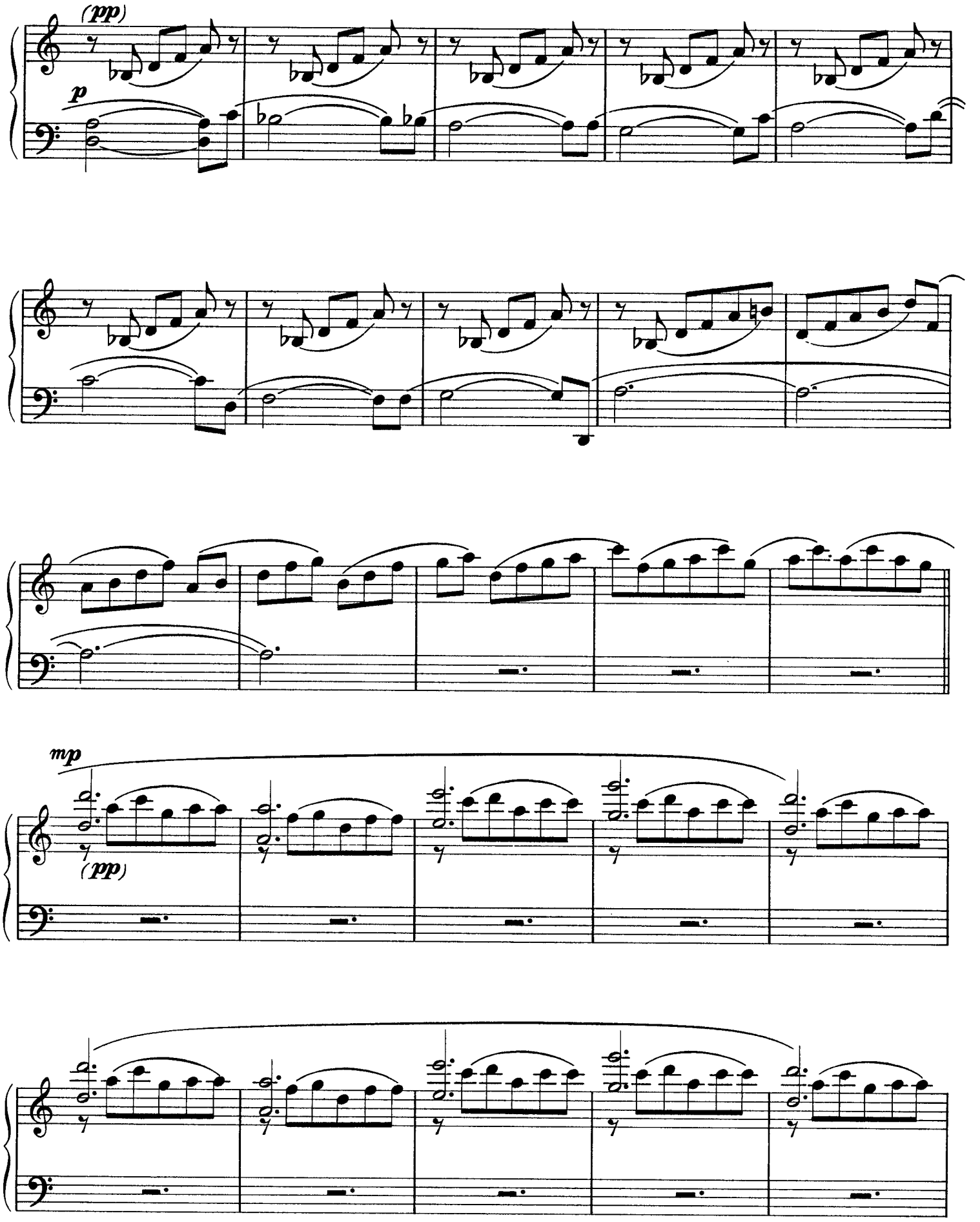
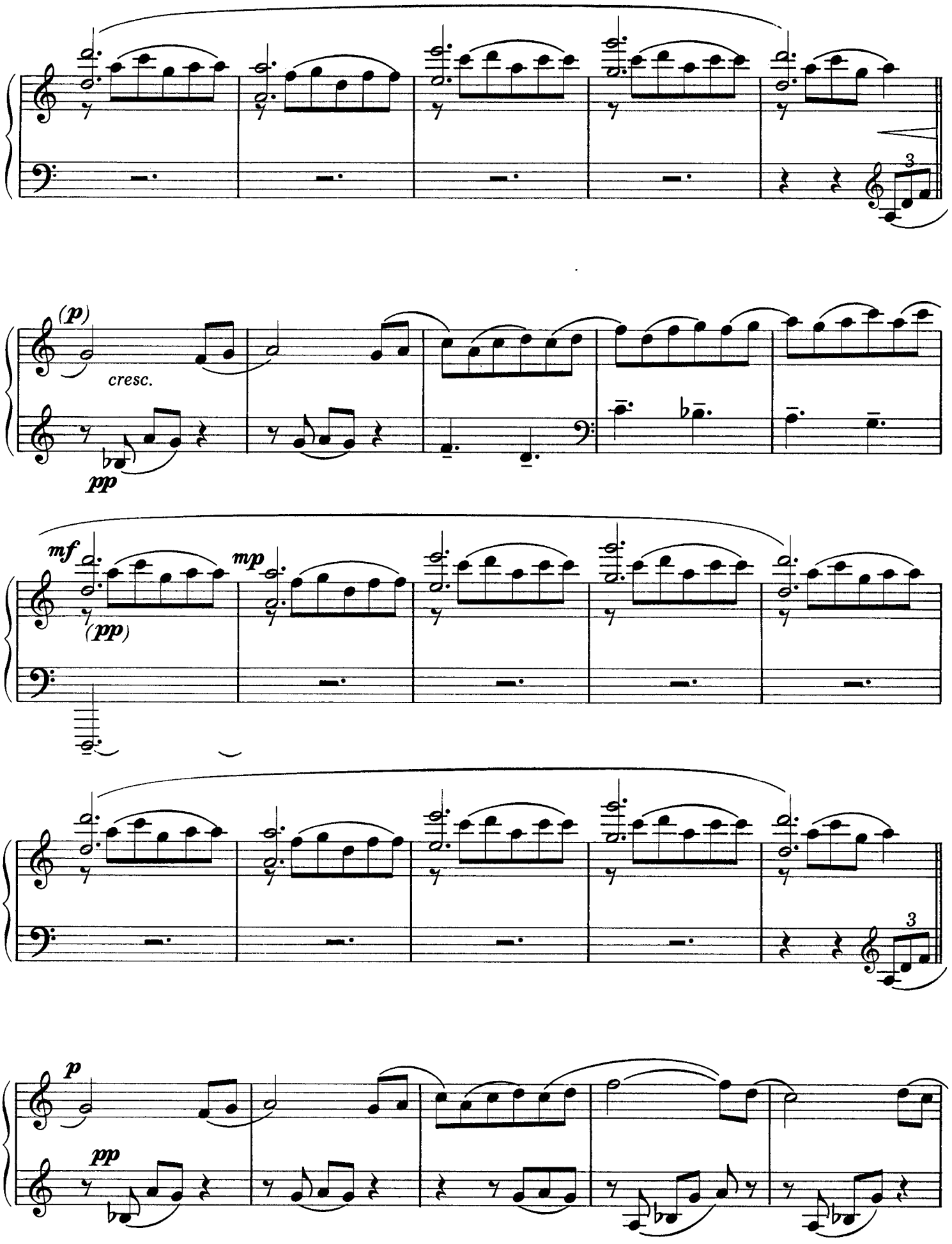
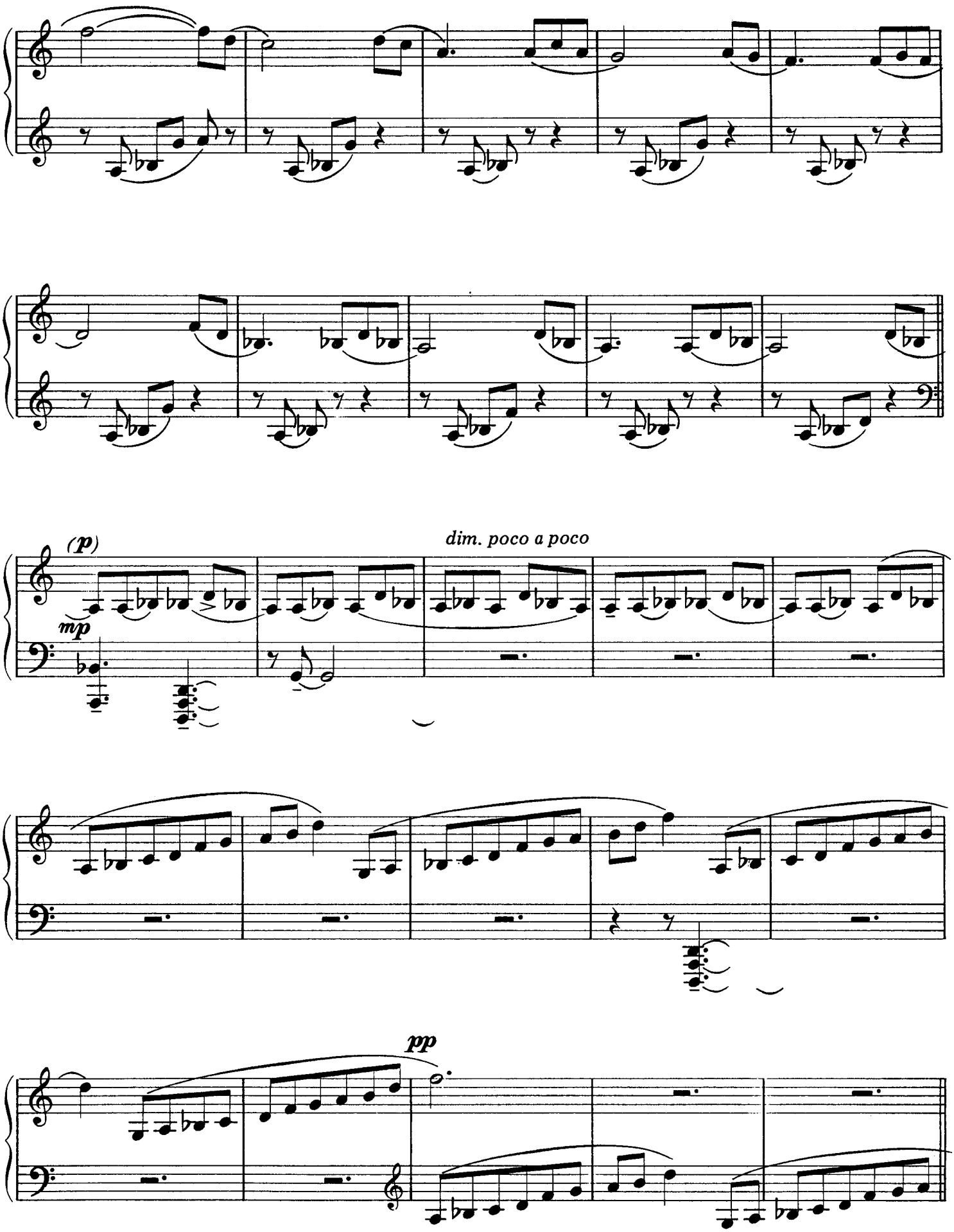
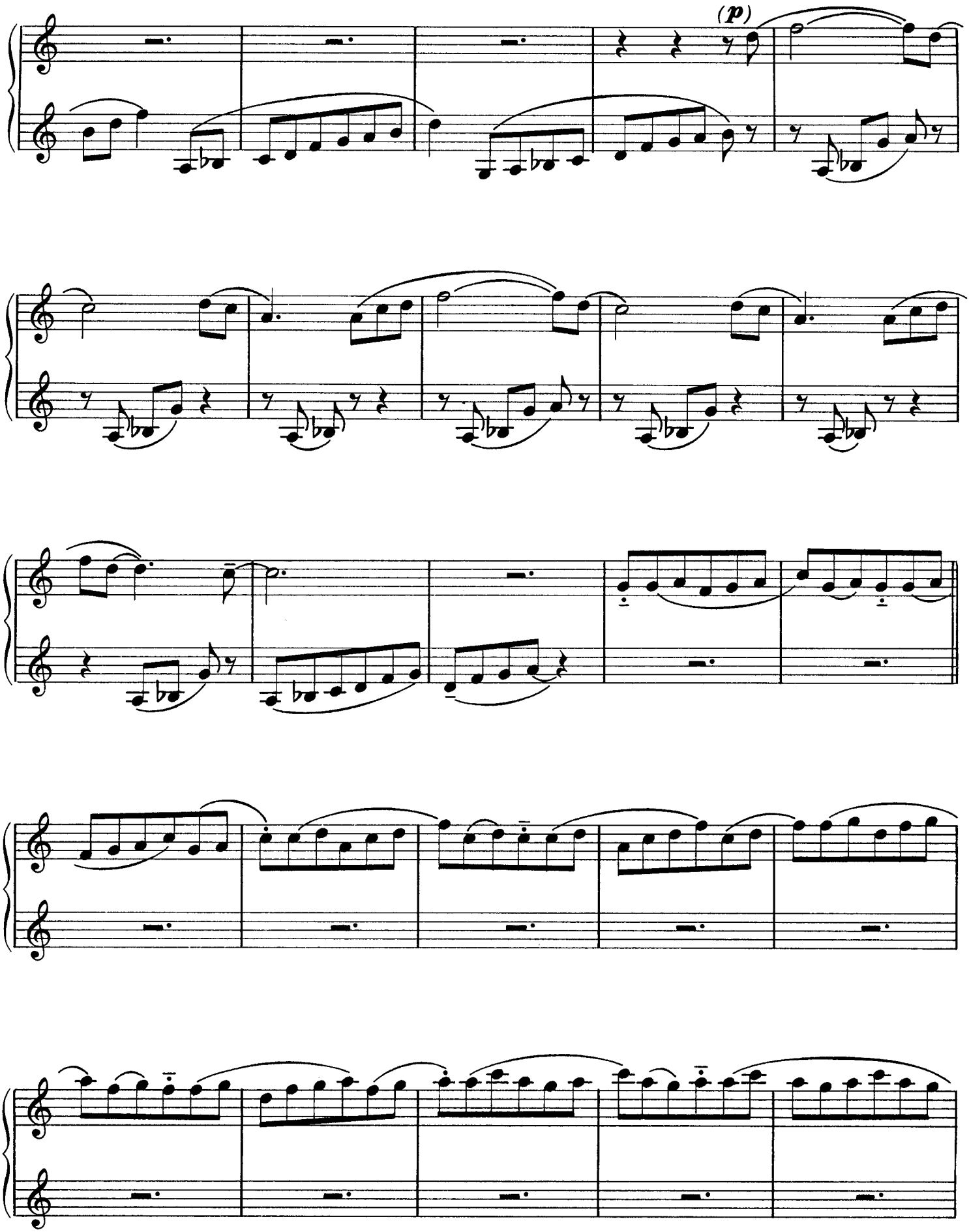

(pp)
p
(pp)


(p)
(pp)
poco cresc.


(pp)
p
mp
(pp)


(p)
cresc.
pp
mf
mp
(pp)
3
p
pp
3


(p)
dim. poco a poco
mp
pp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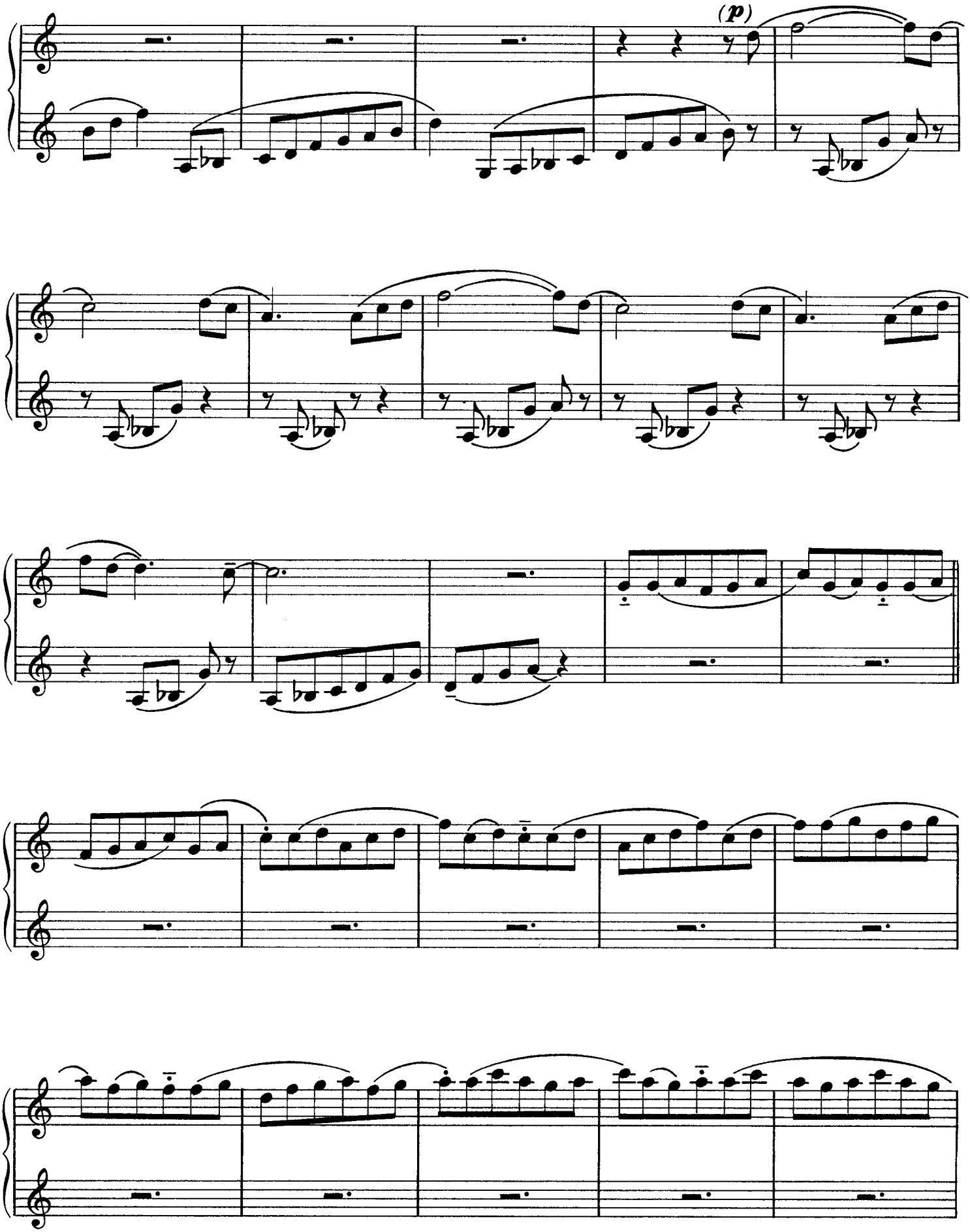
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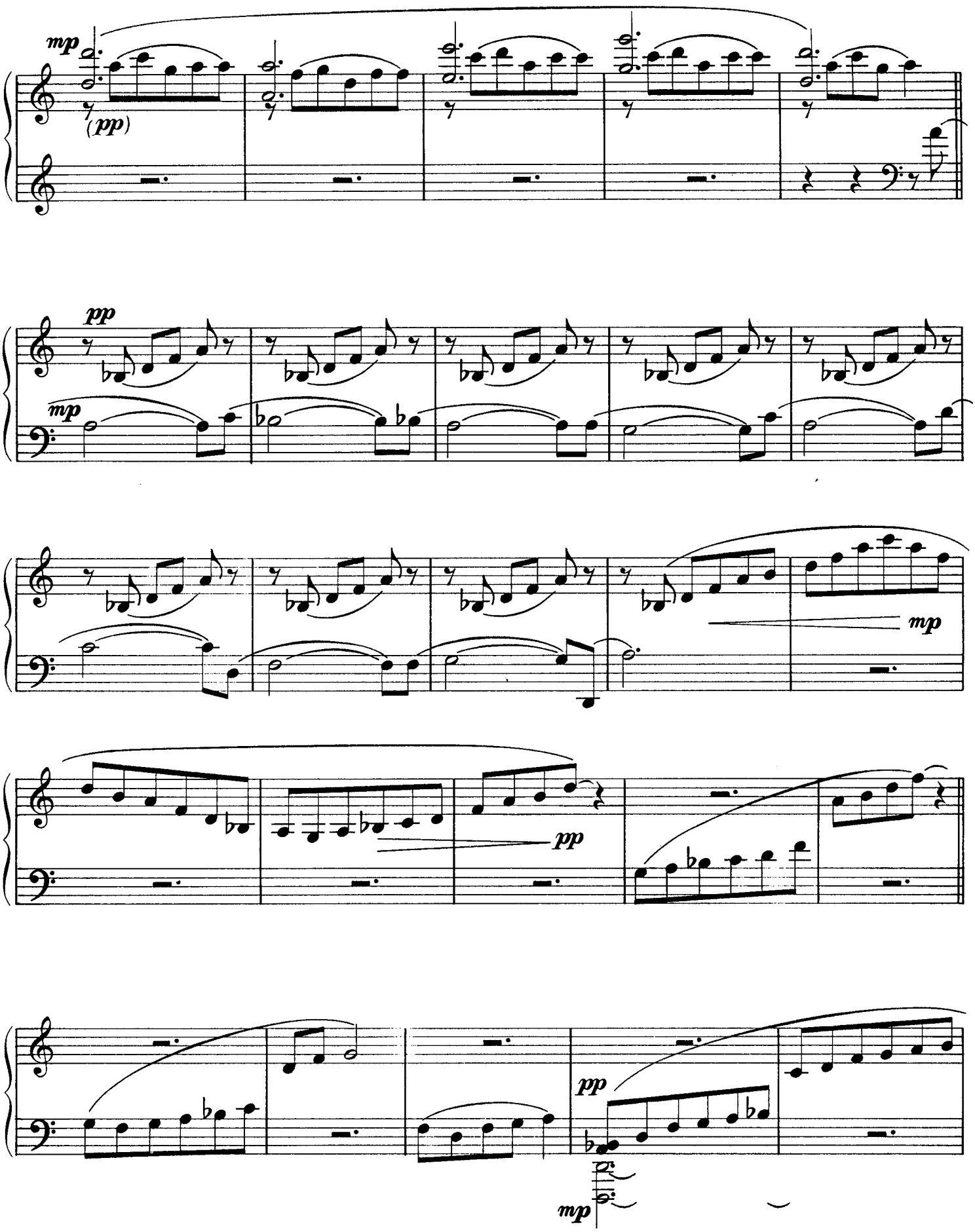
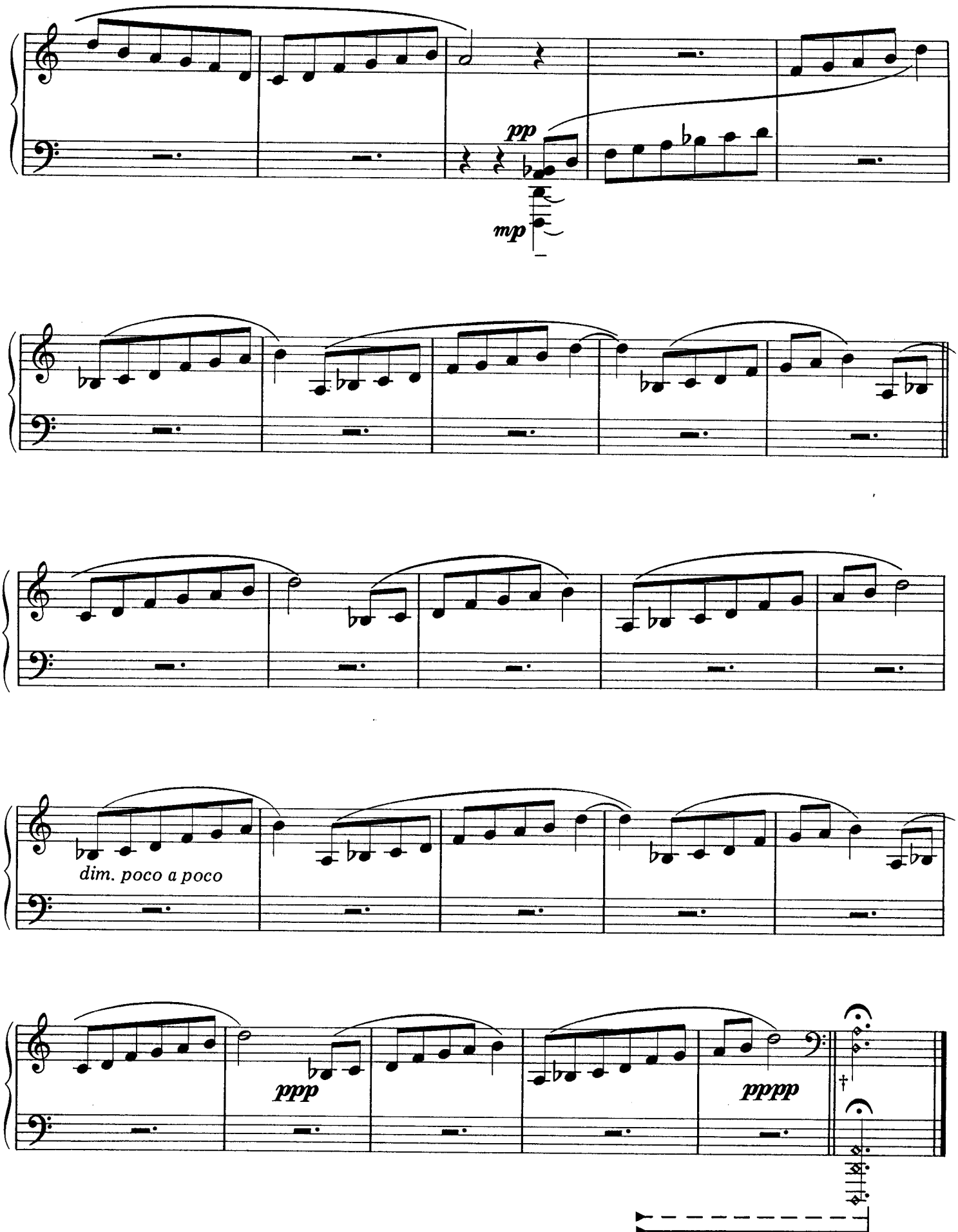
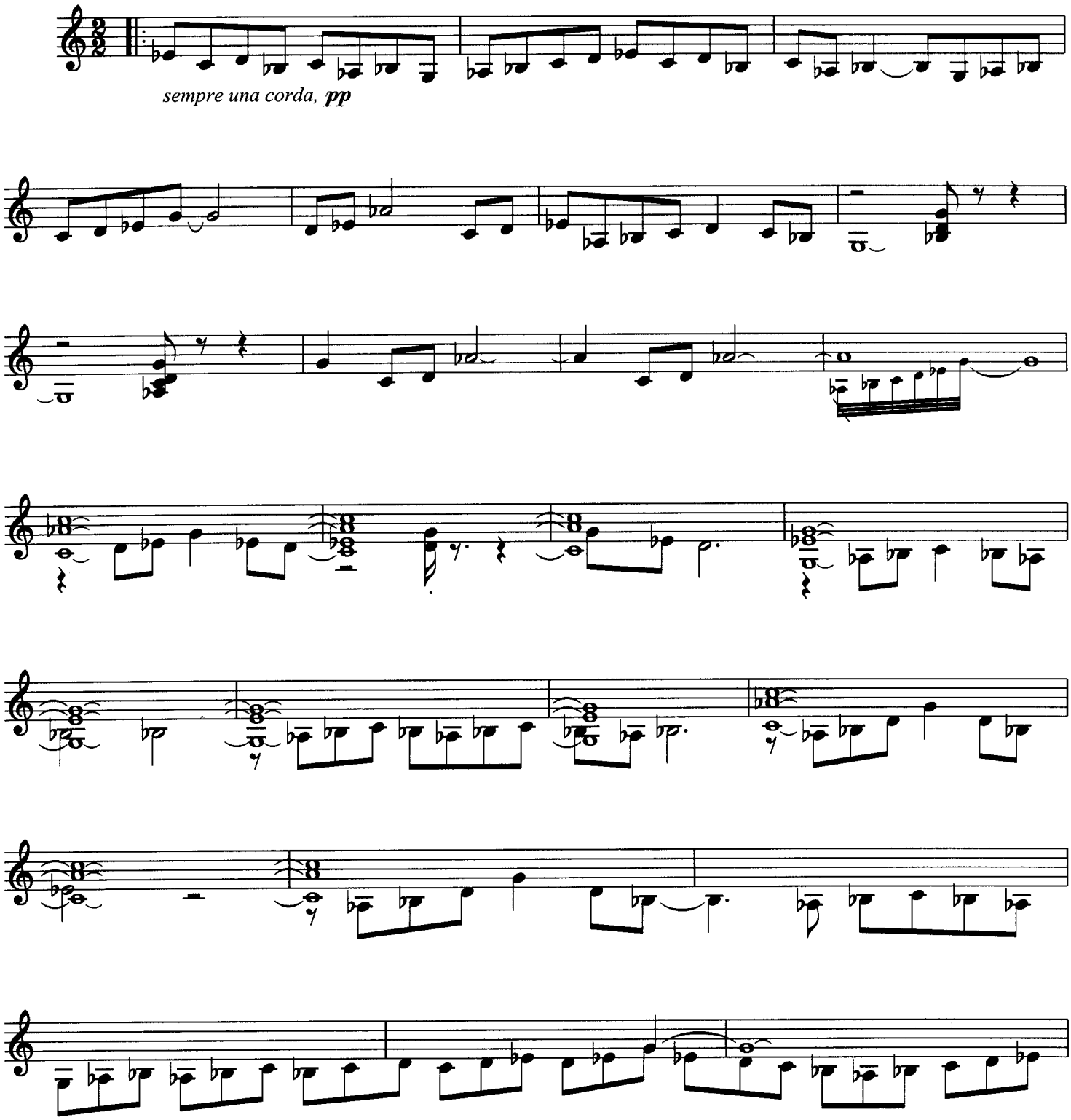

mp
(pp)
pp
mp
mp
pp
pp
mp


pp
mp
dim. poco a poco
ppp
ppppp
†
† = play without sounding, release pedals
(thus obtaining harmonics).

DREAM

JOHN CAGE
(1948)

♩ = 88 Rubato
Always with resonance; no silence; tones may be freely sustained,
manually or with pedal, beyond notated durations



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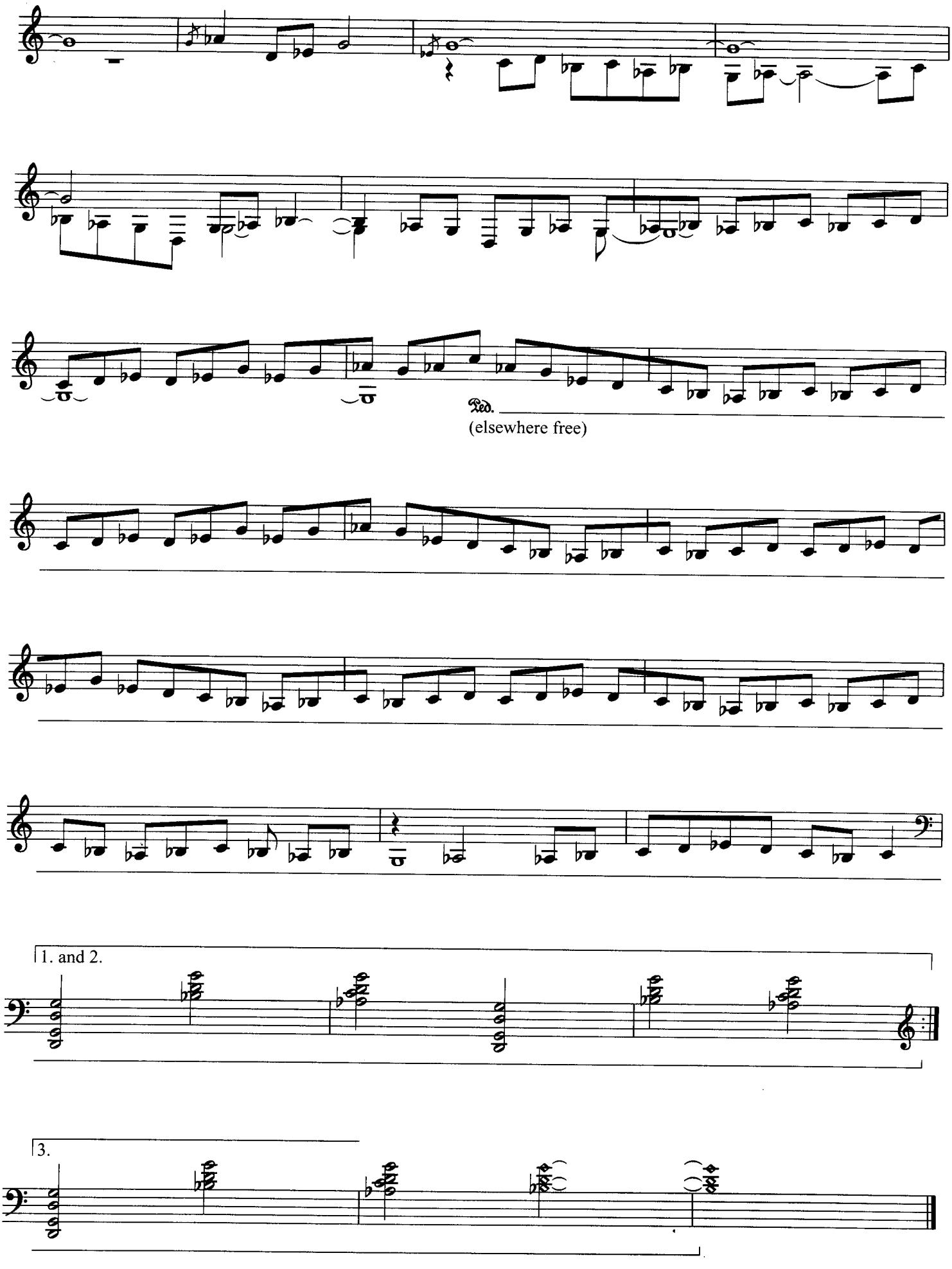
Ped.
(elsewhere free)
1. and 2.
3.