Four Little Pieces for Piano

for Solo Piano, ~18’

Spencer Klaw Kennedy, 2025

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Accidentals apply through the barline without octave transposition. Courtesy accidentals are sometimes provided for clarification.

Pedaling specifics are left up to the performer. Do not be stingy!

The written rhythmic values in the fourth piece, *Thine Forever*, should be treated as merely loose guidelines. Stretch the tempo as romantically as you reasonably can.

PROGRAM NOTES

This suite for solo piano consists of four pieces:

I. Horns to Wear (~2')
II. Westerhout-5 (~7')
III. Cherenkov (~4')
IV. Thine Forever (~5')

These pieces were composed between the winter of 2024 and summer of 2025, as part of an initiative to take musical inspiration from everyday life. I gathered things—quotes, fragments, concepts—and made a proverbial musical heap of all that I found. Each work contains dozens of "found objects." These were to be put together in a now-defunct large work that portrayed a kind of musical stream of consciousness. These four pieces have been extracted from that heap and refined.

Horns to Wear was written after attending a performance of the midwinter revels. A staple of the show is the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance, a British rite for twelve performers, six of whom are costumed with reindeer horns. This arrangement attempts to keep the spirit of the instrumentation used by the revels (a single recorder) alive. The title is taken from Shakespeare; "What shall he have that kill'd the deer? His leather skin and horns to wear."

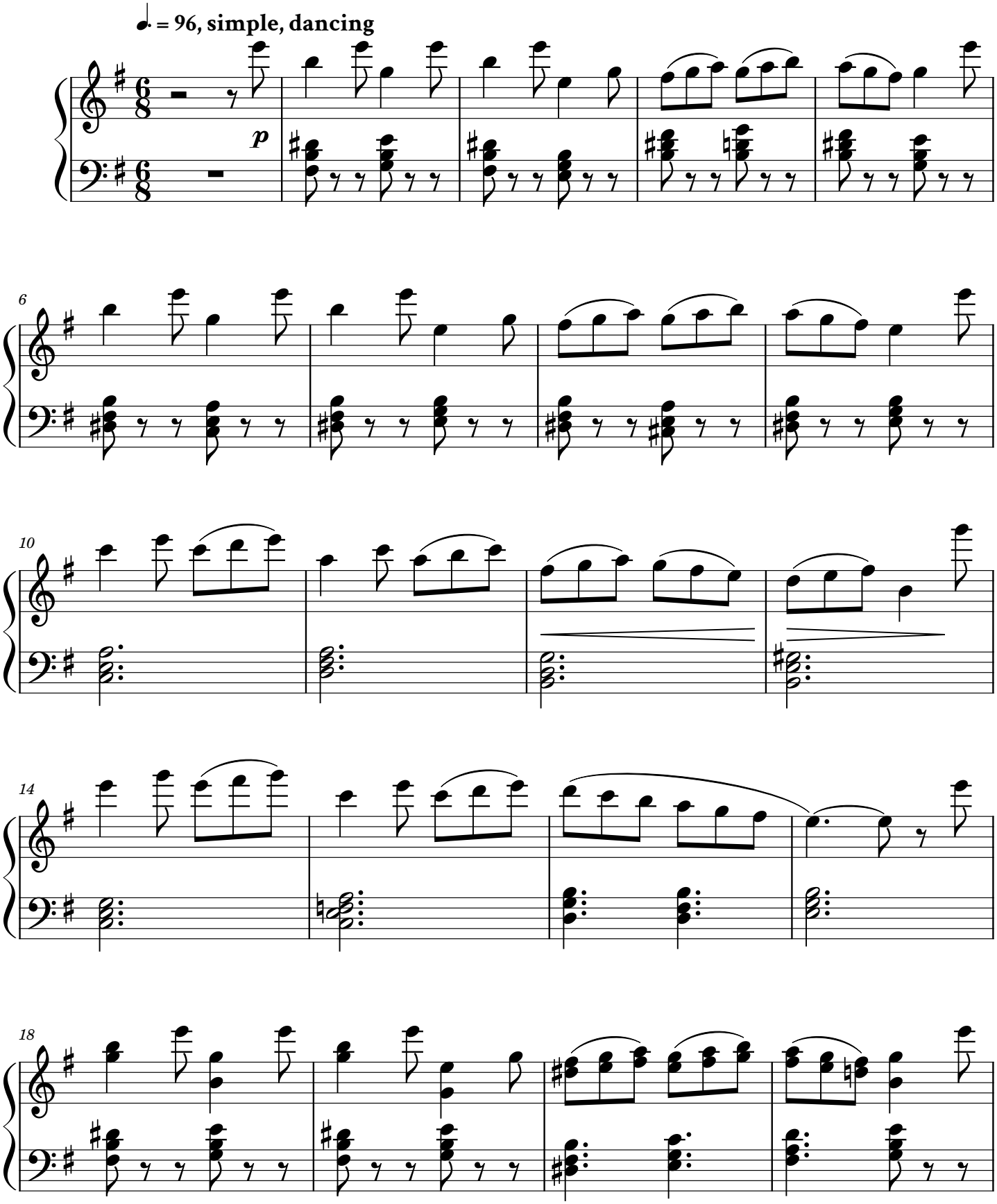
Westerhout-5, better known as the Soul Nebula, is a gigantic cloud of ionized hydrogen in Cassiopeia, which I photographed it on a very cold November night. It is nicknamed the "Soul Nebula" not due to some resemblance to a soul, but rather to match its neighbor the Heart Nebula (which resembles

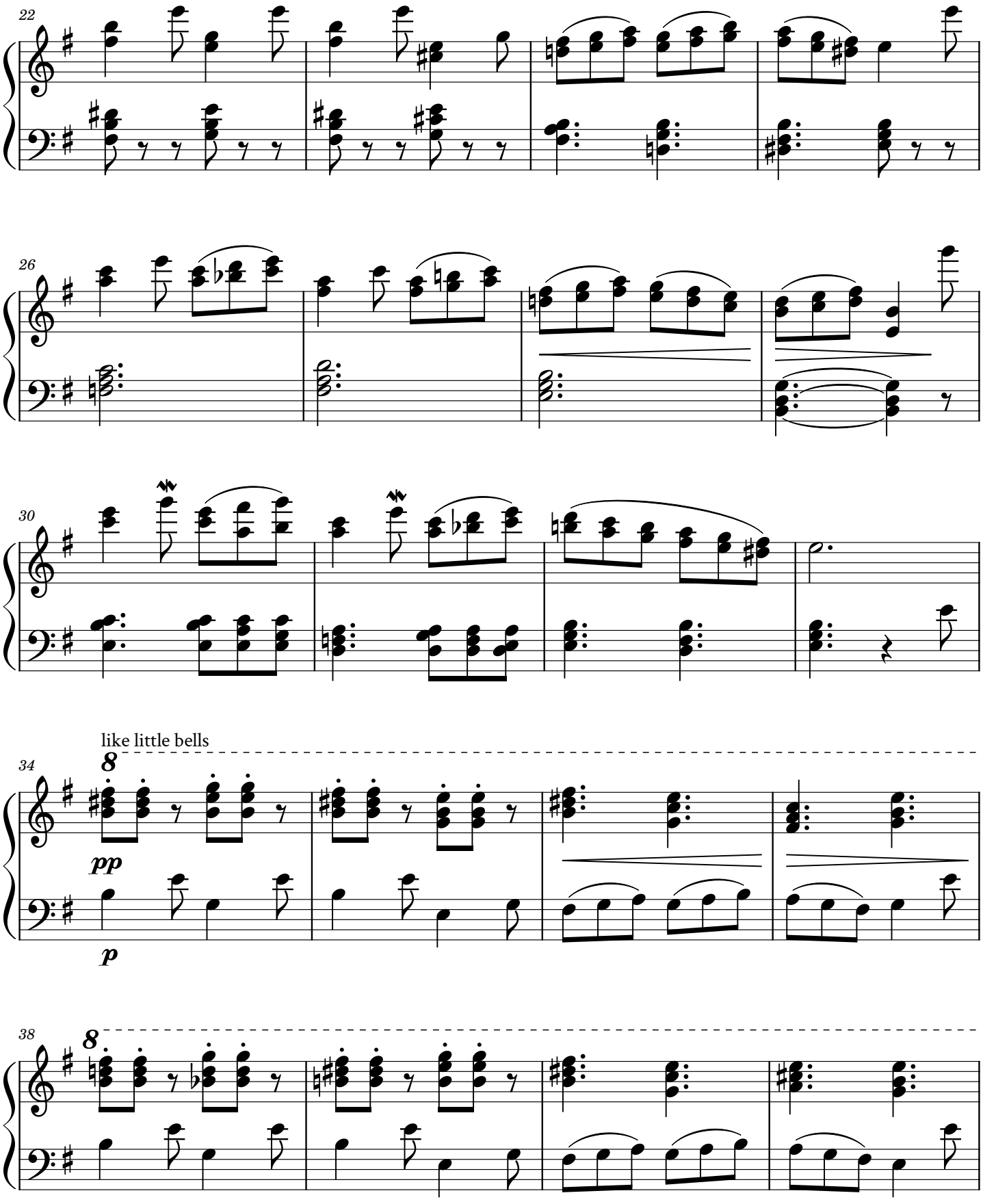
a heart). To me the nebula most resembles a fetus, a gestational chamber for stars. The piano glows, a little drop in the vastness of interstellar space.

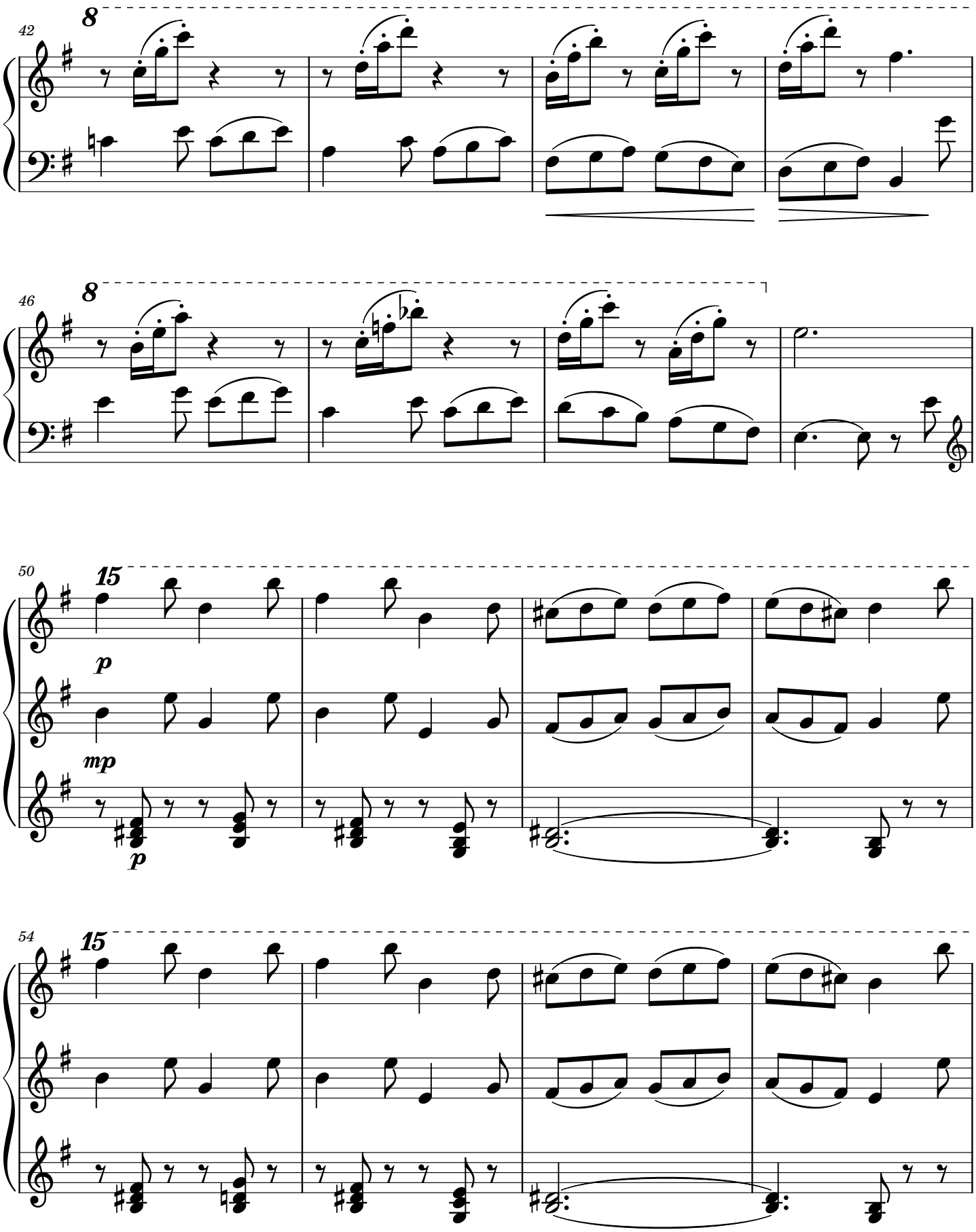
Cherenkov is named for Cherenkov radiation, which occurs under special conditions when a particle travels through a medium faster than the speed of light in that medium. Similar to how something exceeding the speed of sound emits a sonic boom, material going faster than the speed of light emits the titular gentle blue radiation. This movement is built up from miniature melodic cells, fragmented and reoriented into hundreds of permutations, much the same way as the natural world.

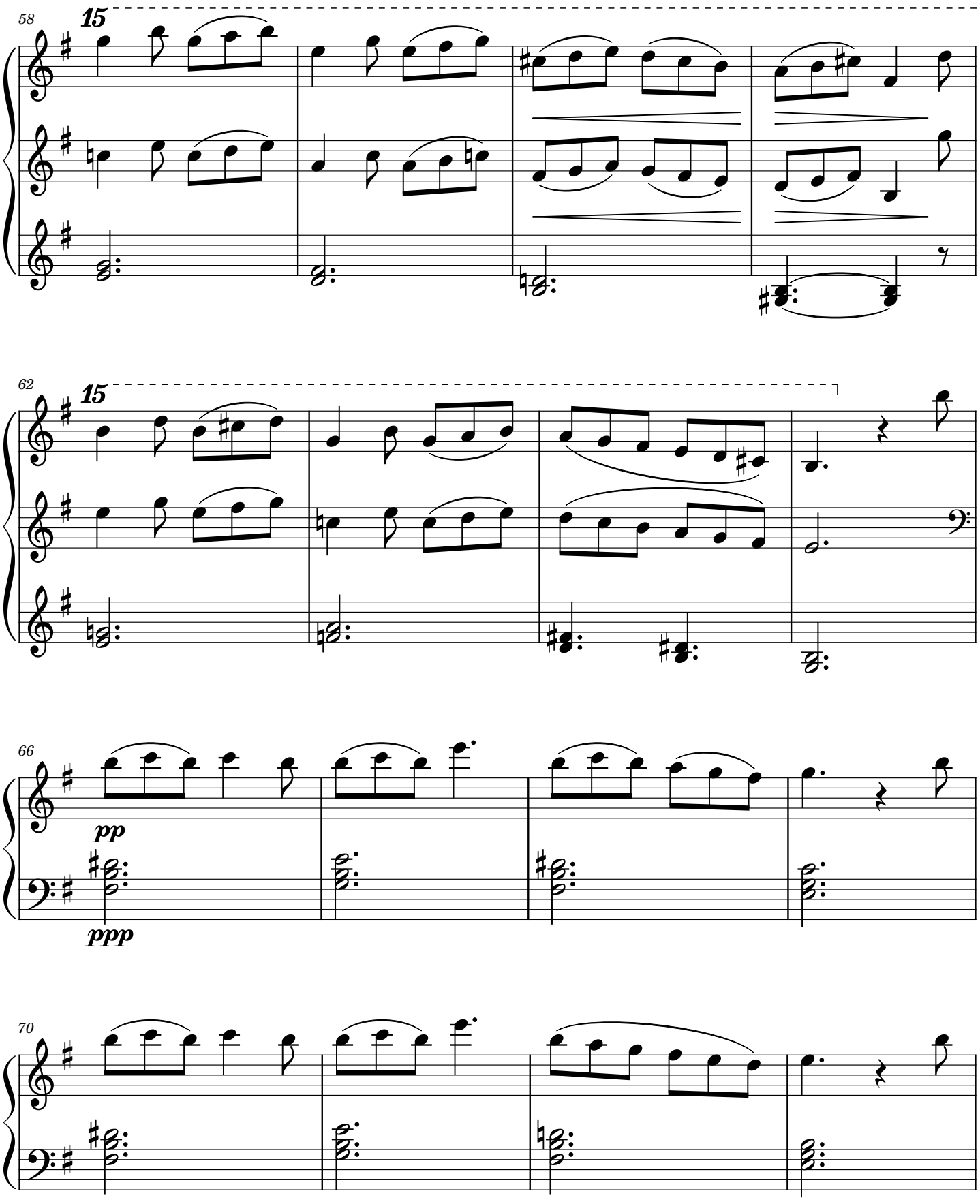
Thine Forever has its title taken from a fragment of Robert Browning's *Pauline;* "life and light be thine for ever," a sentence in memoriam found in a larger work of love. Slow and somber and quiet, this is the pianist's escape from the rhythmic prison of Cherenkov, into a free and gentle field.

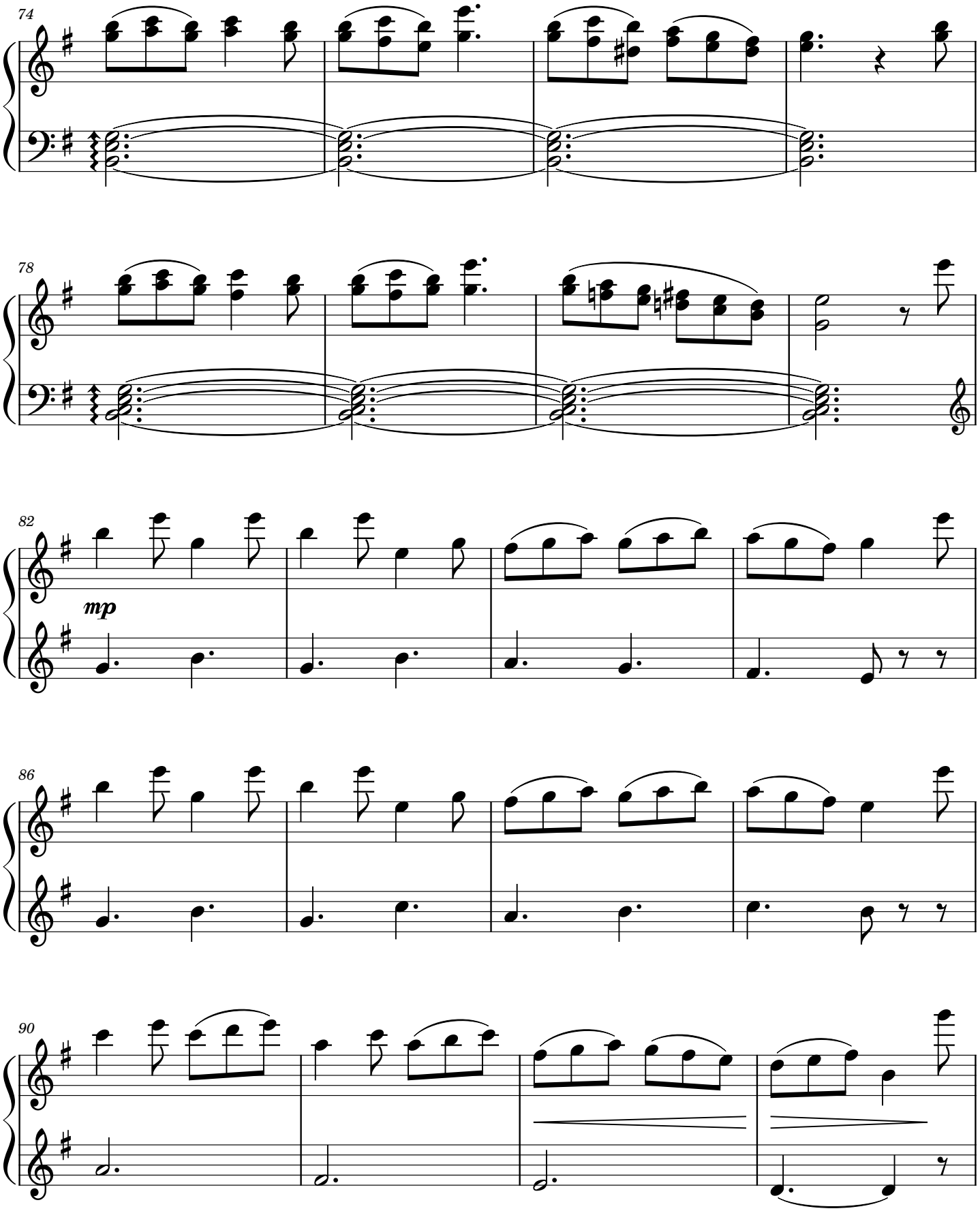
I. Horns to Wear

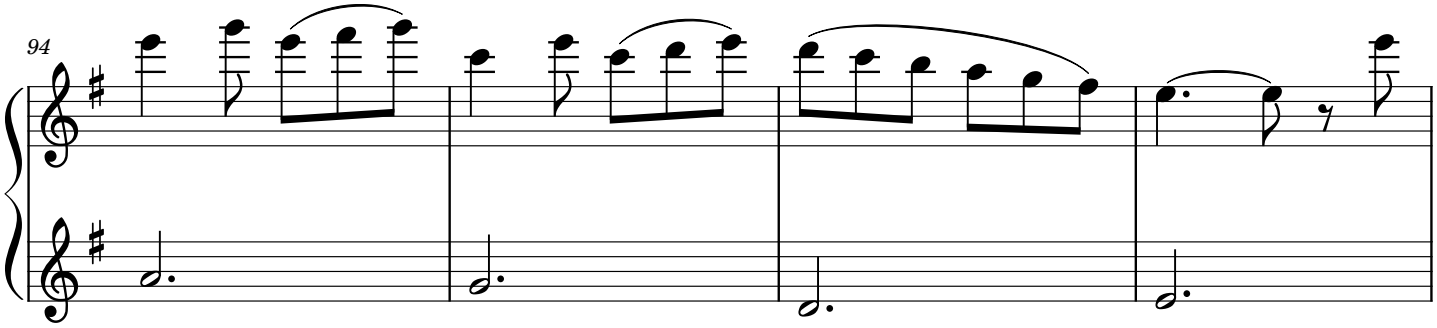



22
26
30
like little bells
34
8
pp
p
38
8

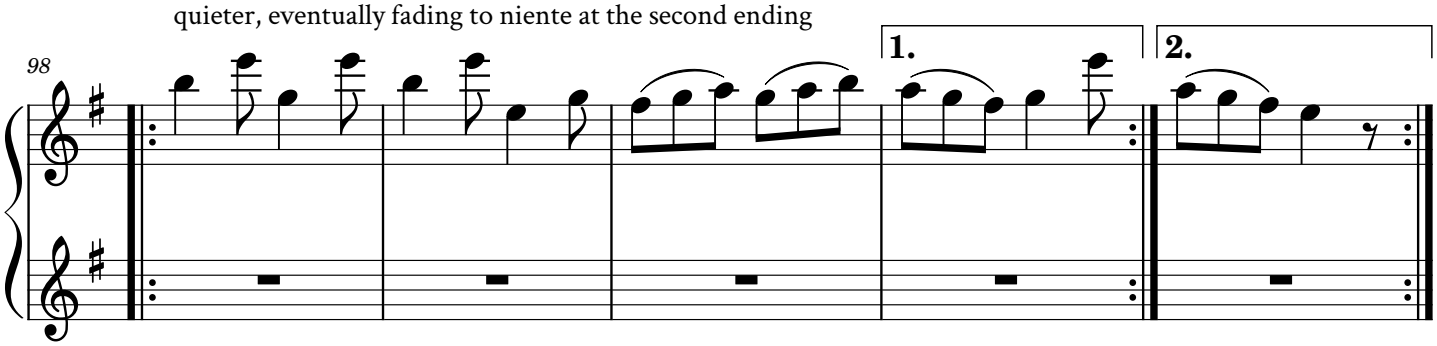

42
8
46
8
50
15
p
mp
p
54
15


58
15
62
15
66
pp
ppp
70

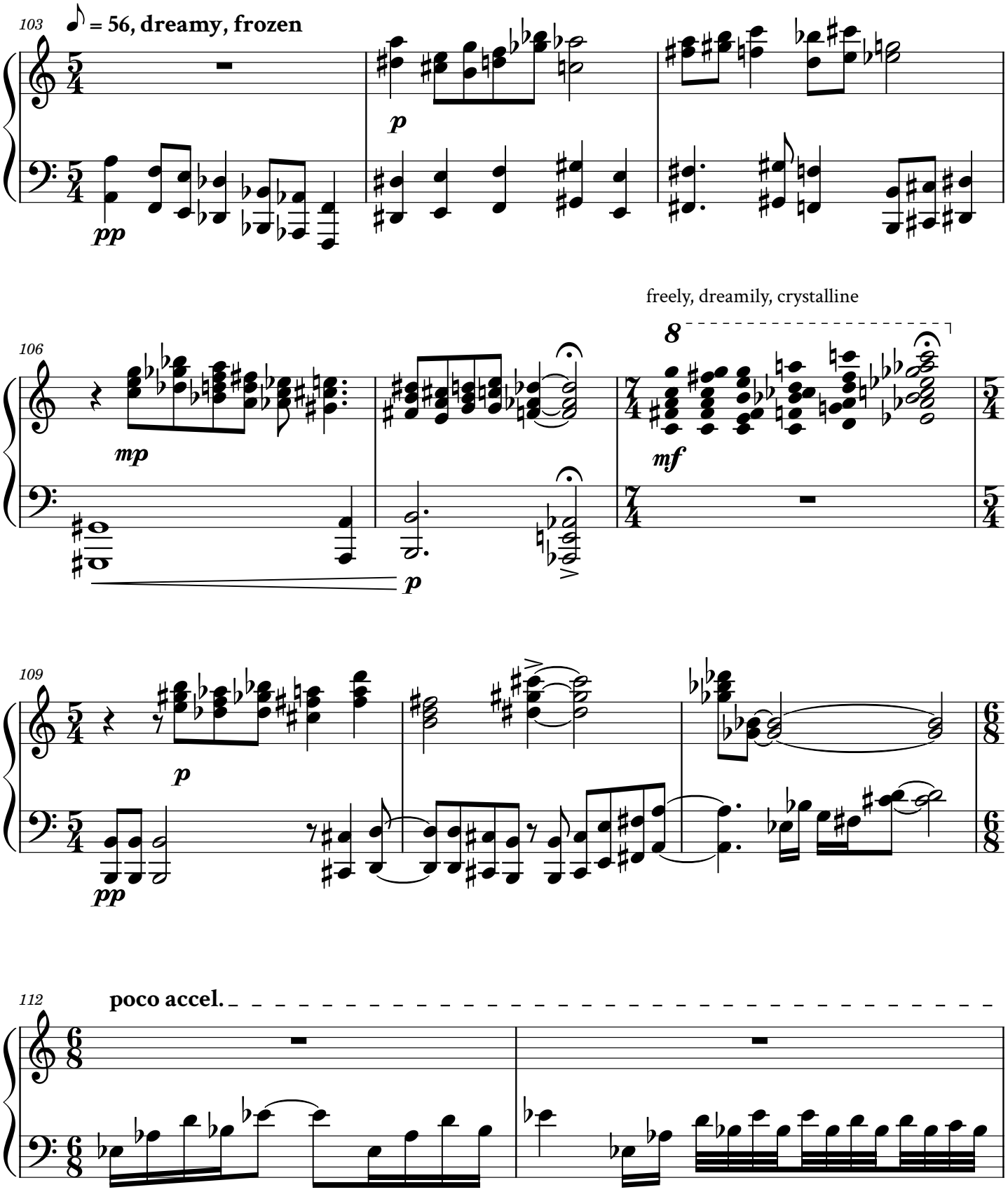

74
78
82
mp
86
90



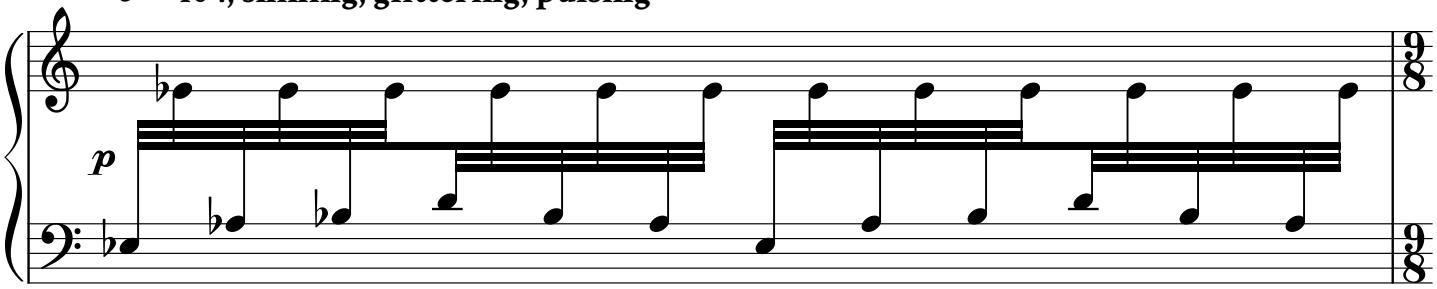
repeat the first ending indefinitely, getting quieter and quieter, eventually fading to niente at the second ending



II. Westerhout-5

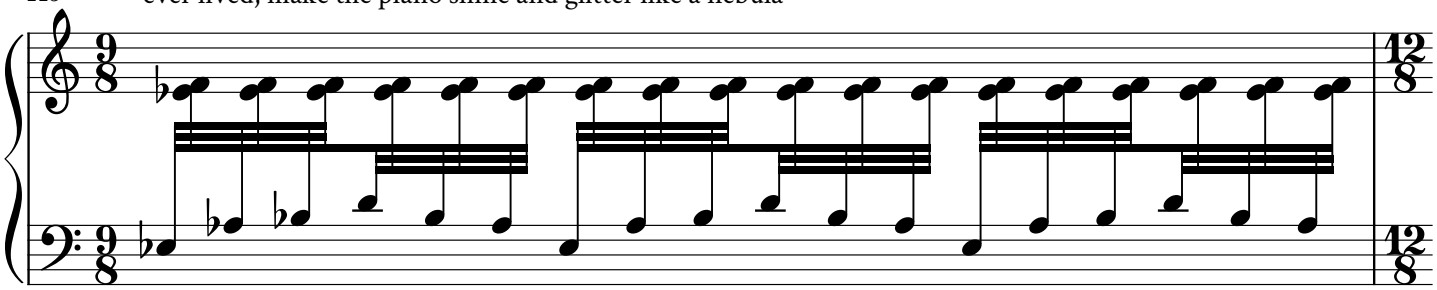


114 ♪ = 104, shining, glittering, pulsing



stretch and vary the tempo and the dynamics until mm. 132
like you are the most romantic piano soloist to have
ever lived; make the piano shine and glitter like a nebula

115



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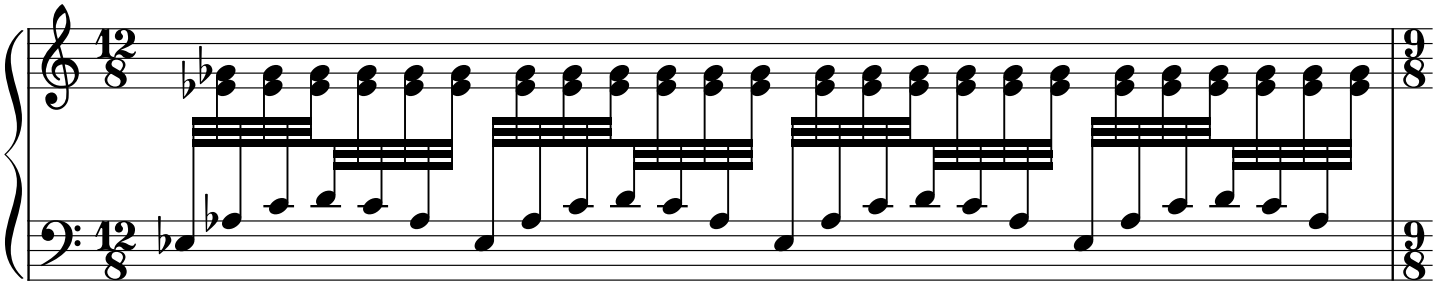

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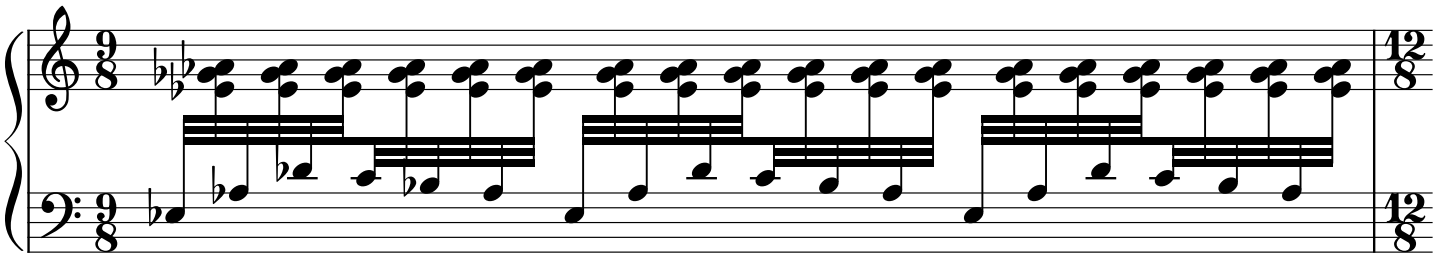

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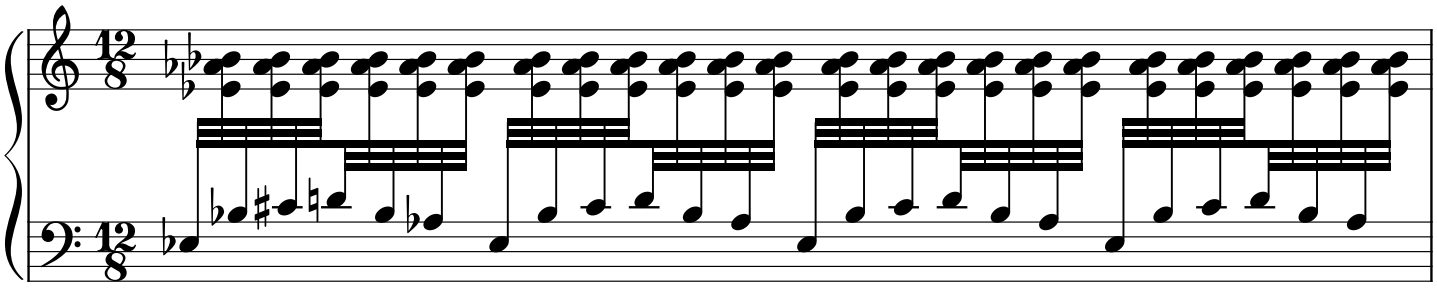

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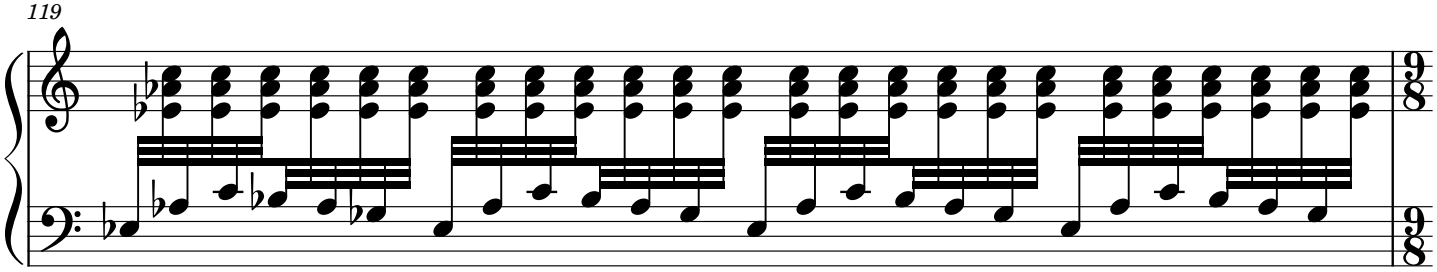

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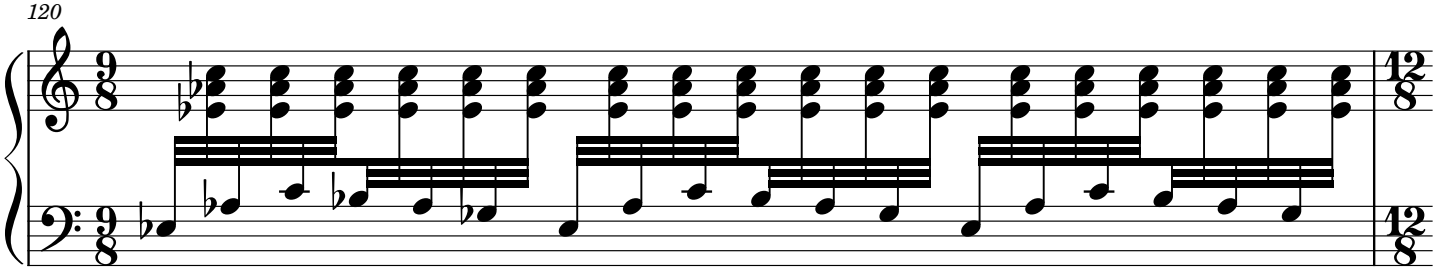

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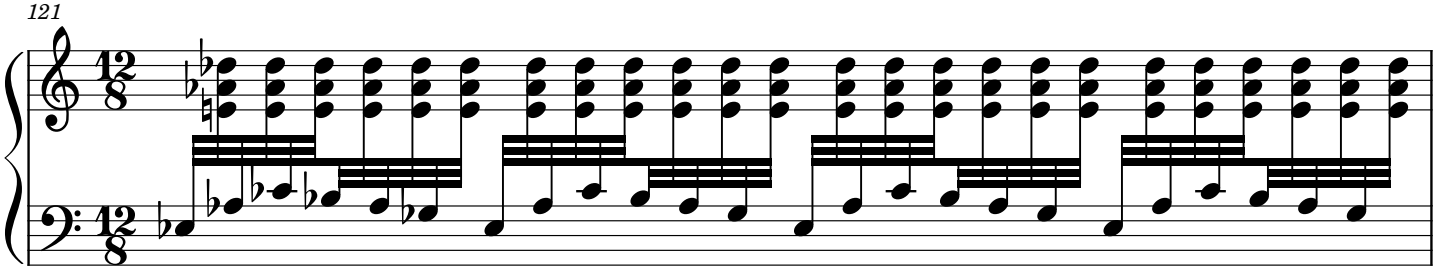

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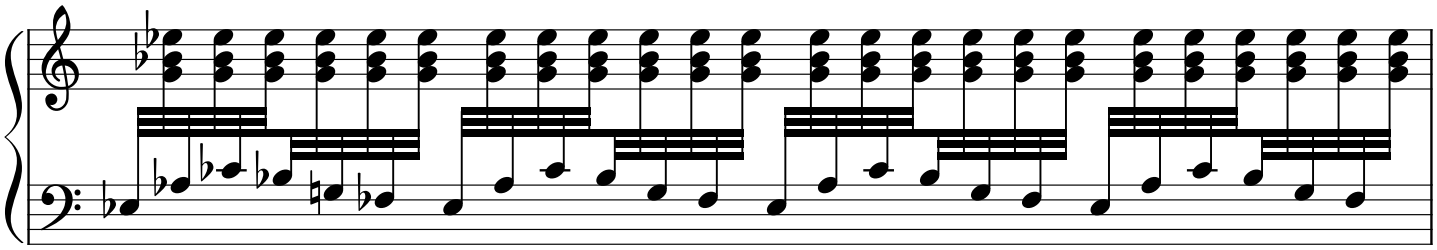

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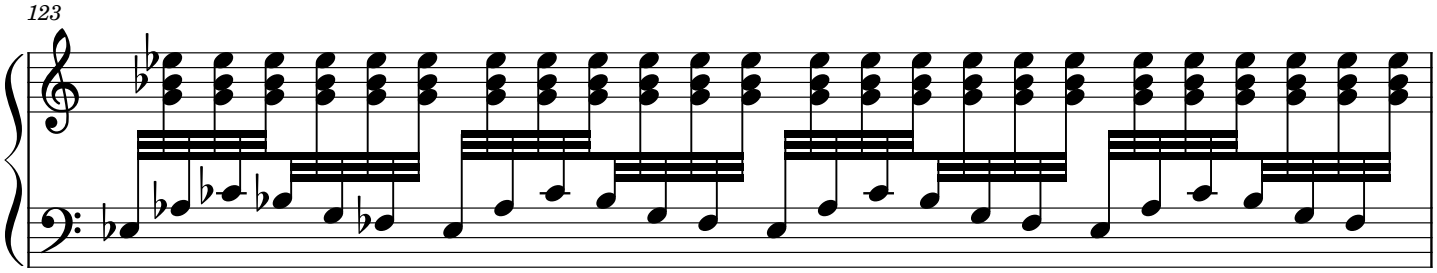

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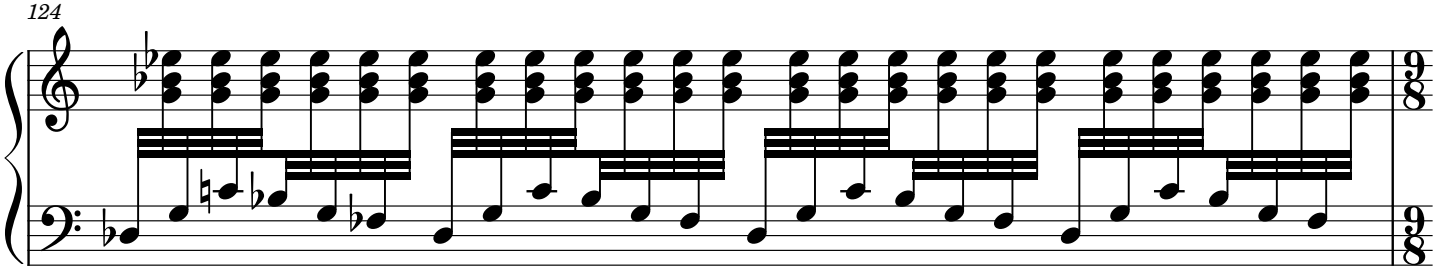
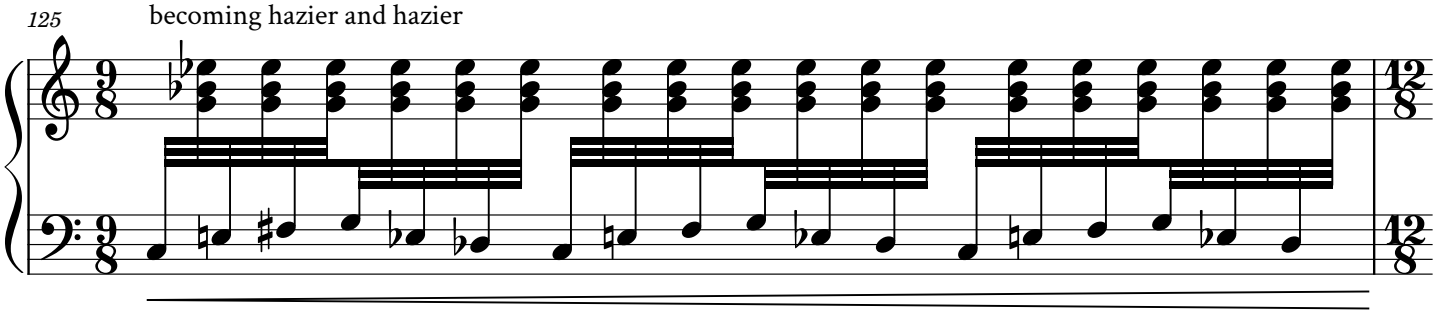
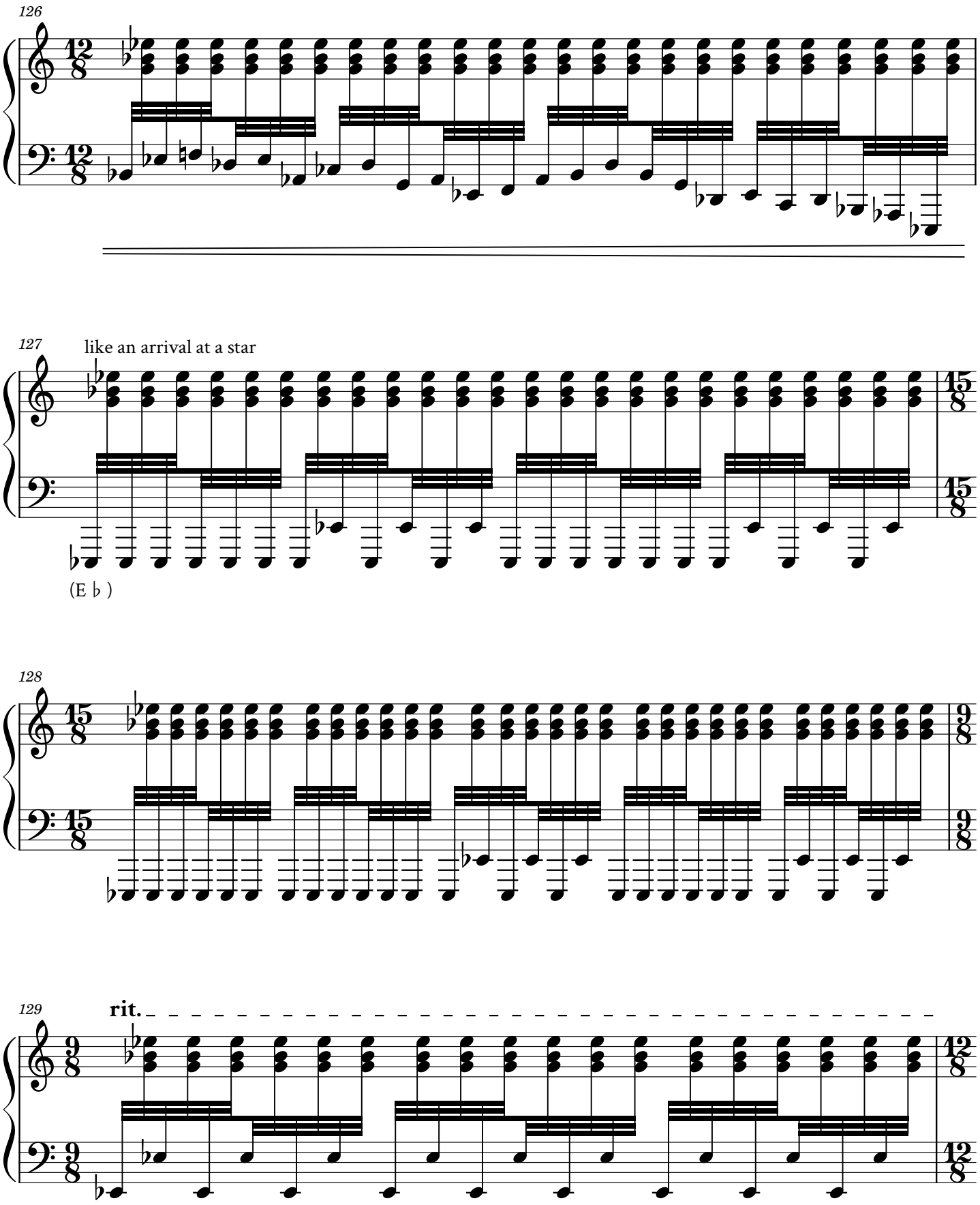
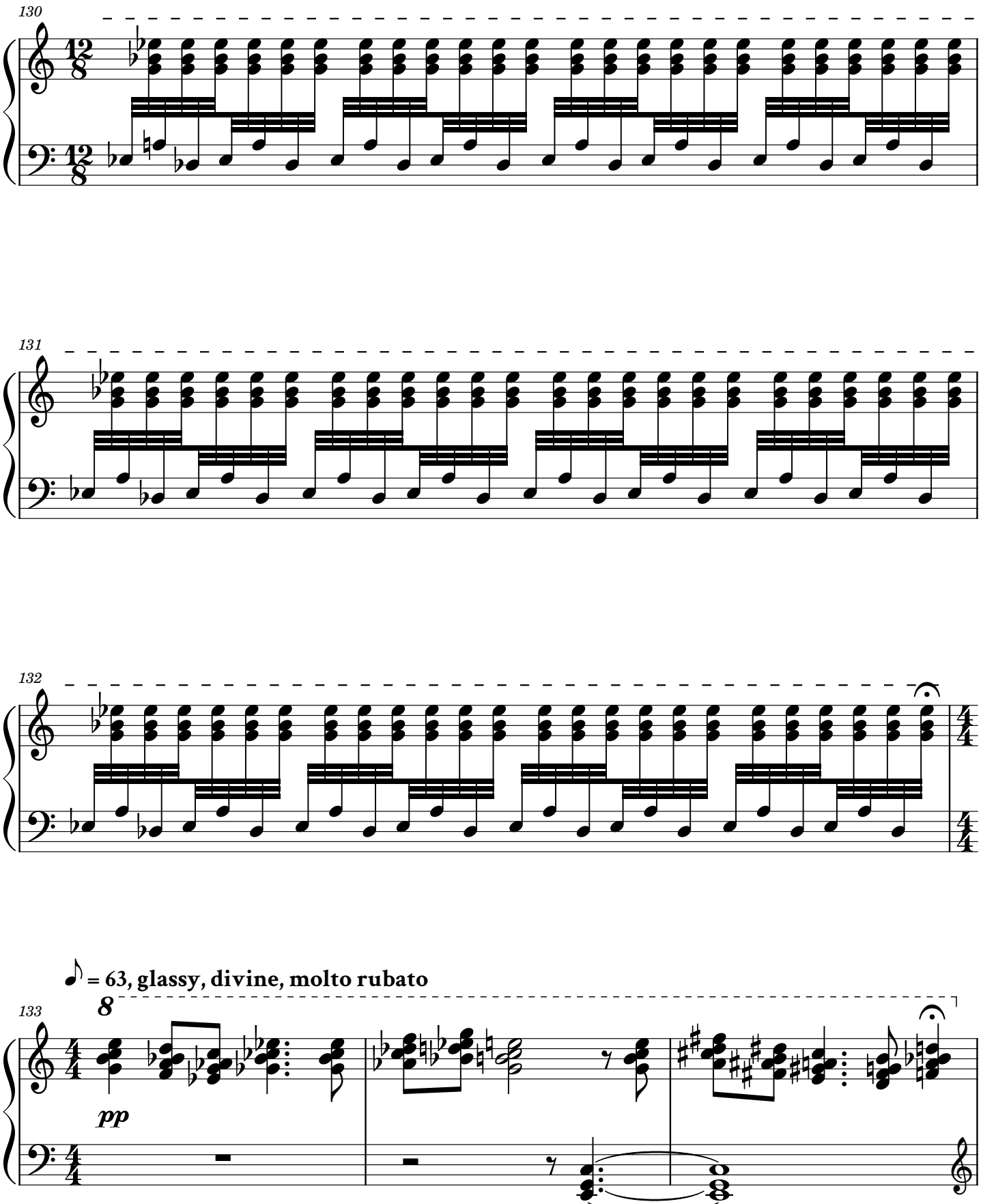


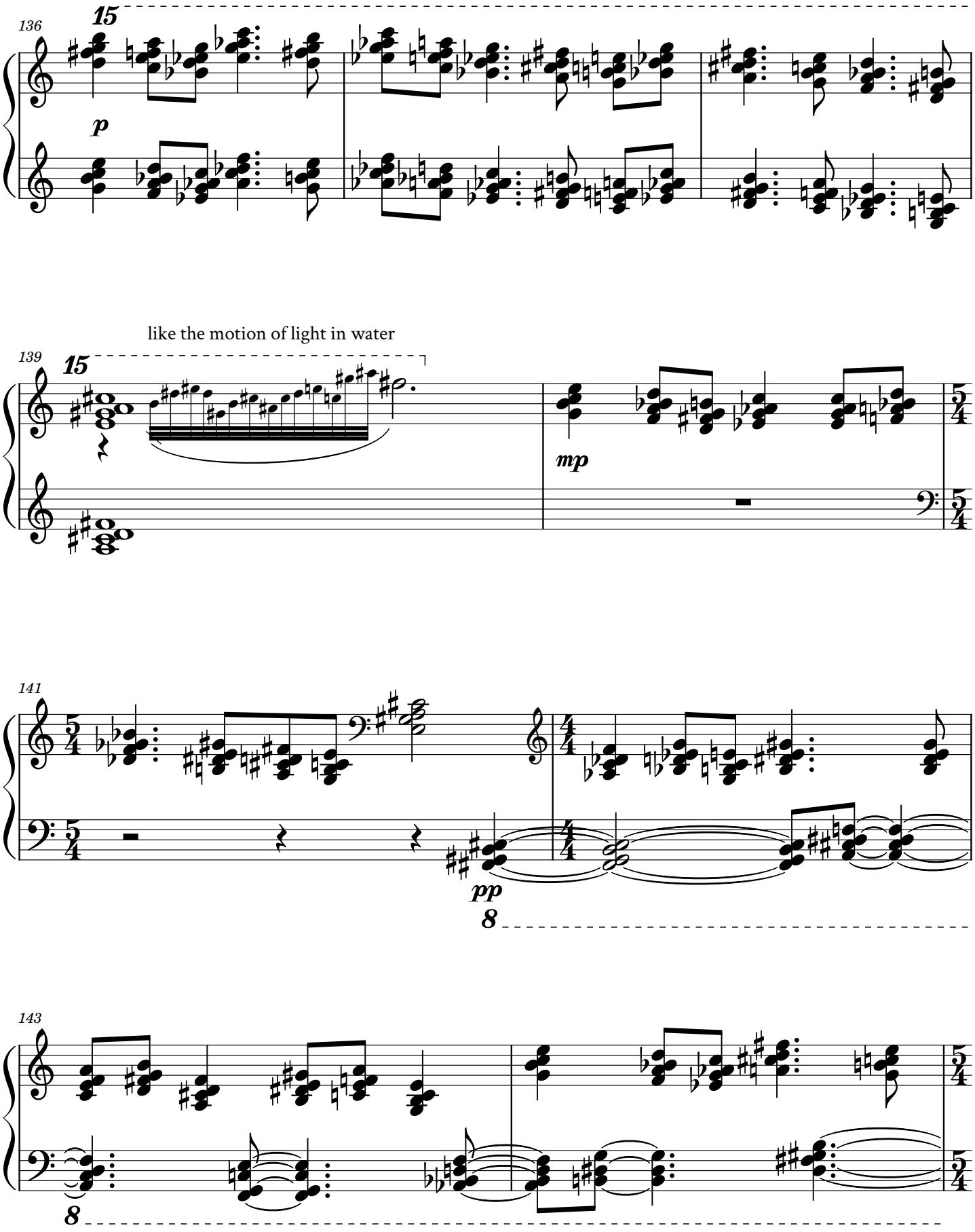
125

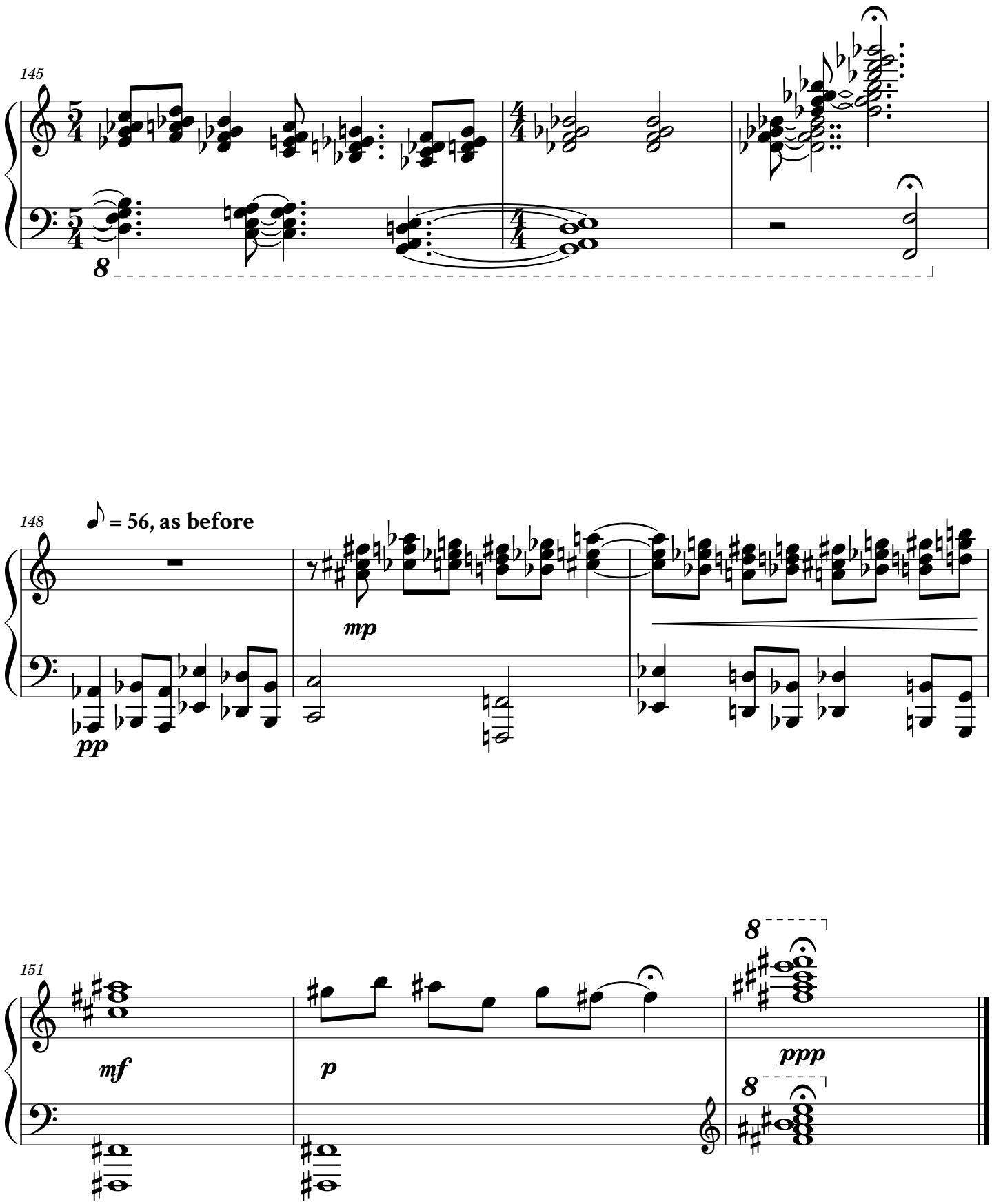
becoming hazier and hazier



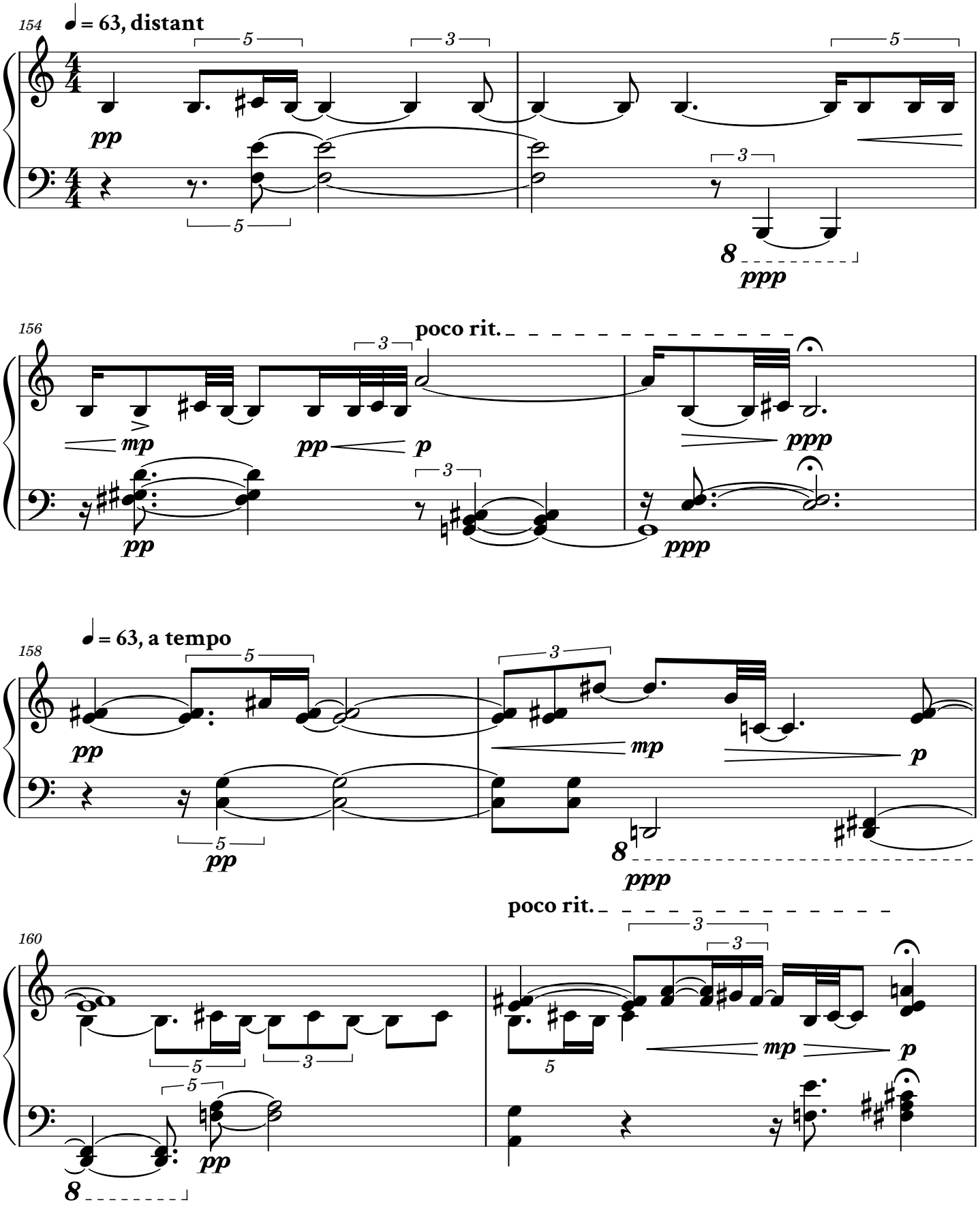

126
127
like an arrival at a star
(E ♭)
128
129
rit.

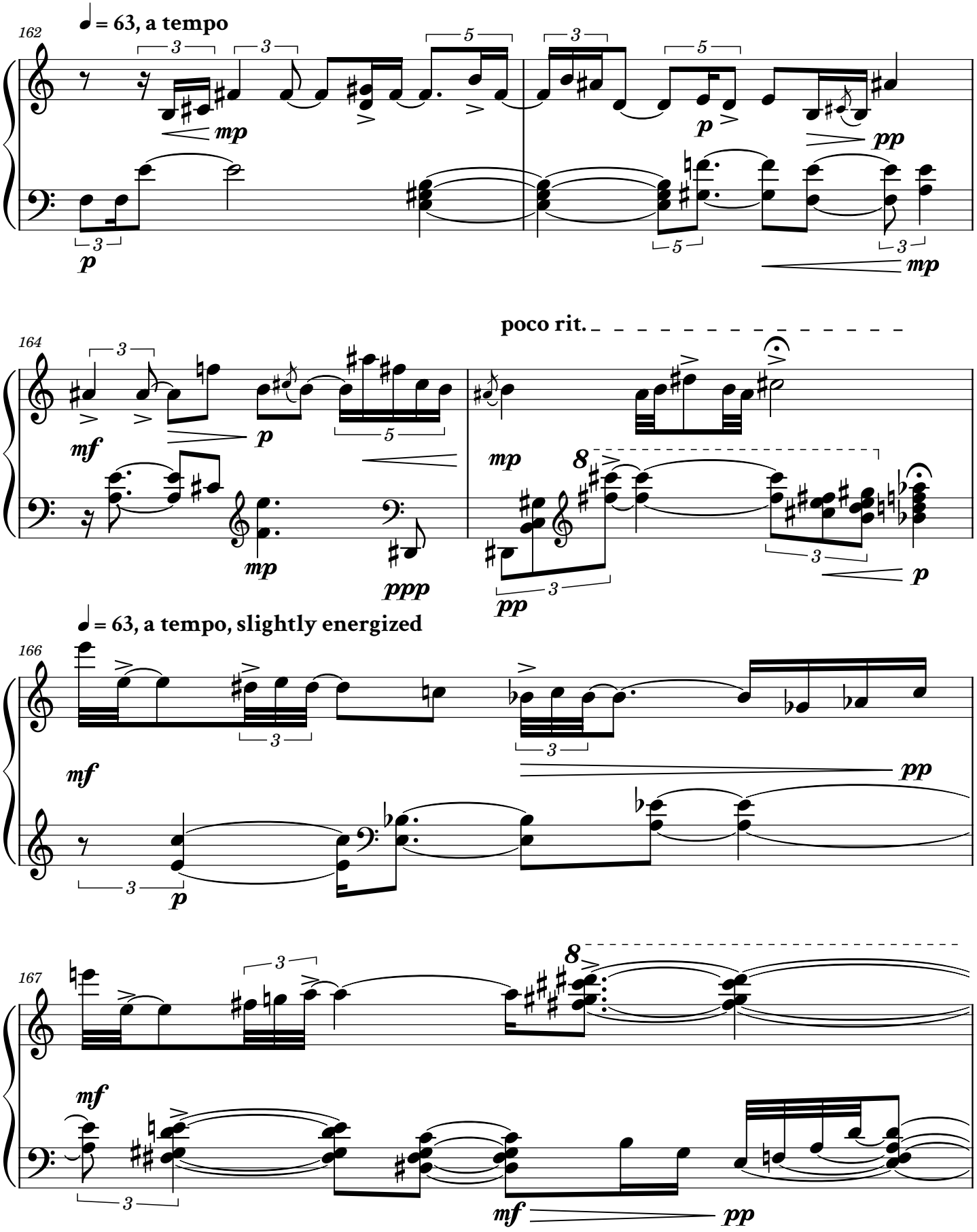

130
131
132
133
8
pp
♪ = 63, glassy, divine, molto rubato

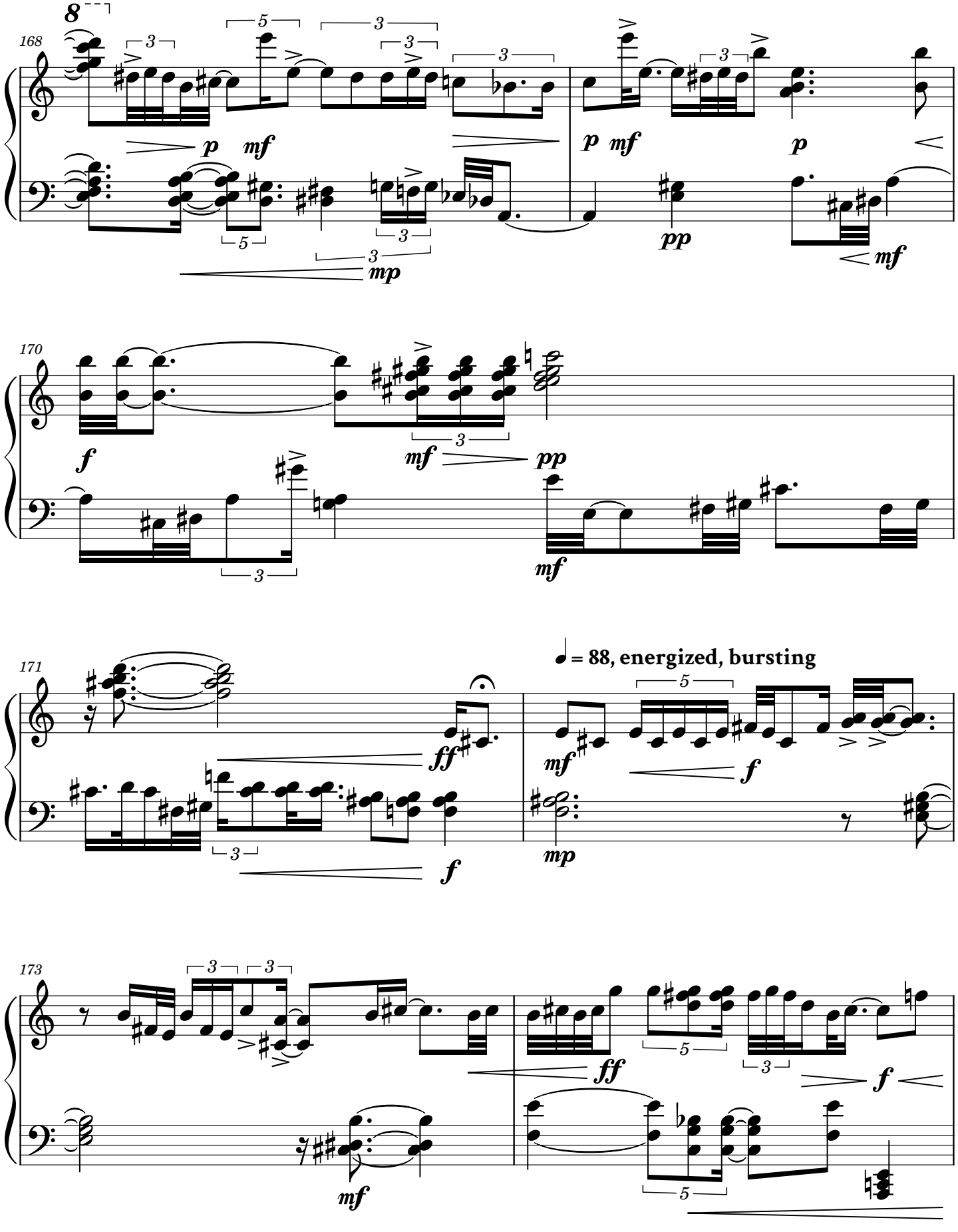

136
15
p
like the motion of light in water
139
15
mp
141
pp
8
143
8

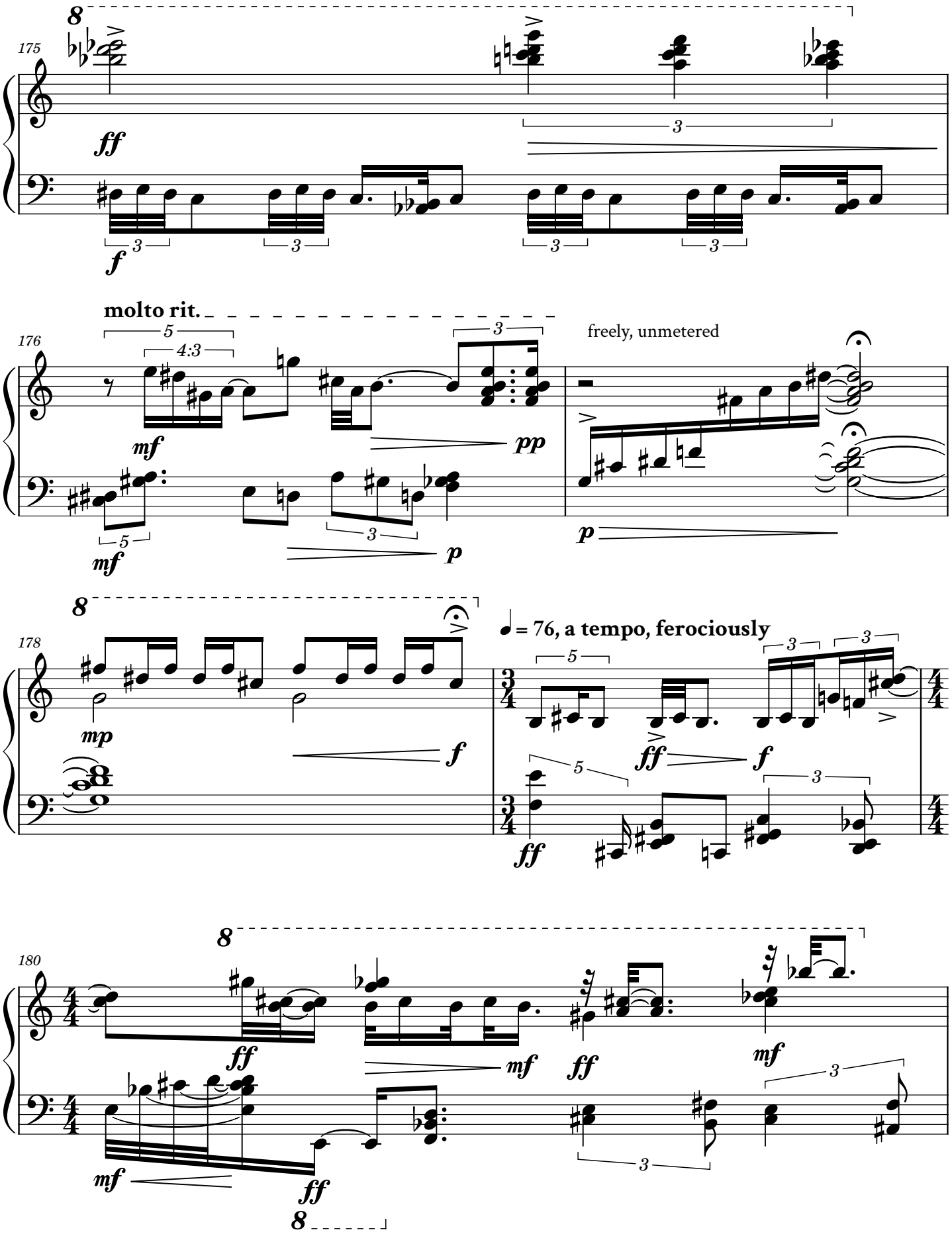

145
8
148
♪ = 56, as before
mp
pp
151
mf
p
8
ppp
8

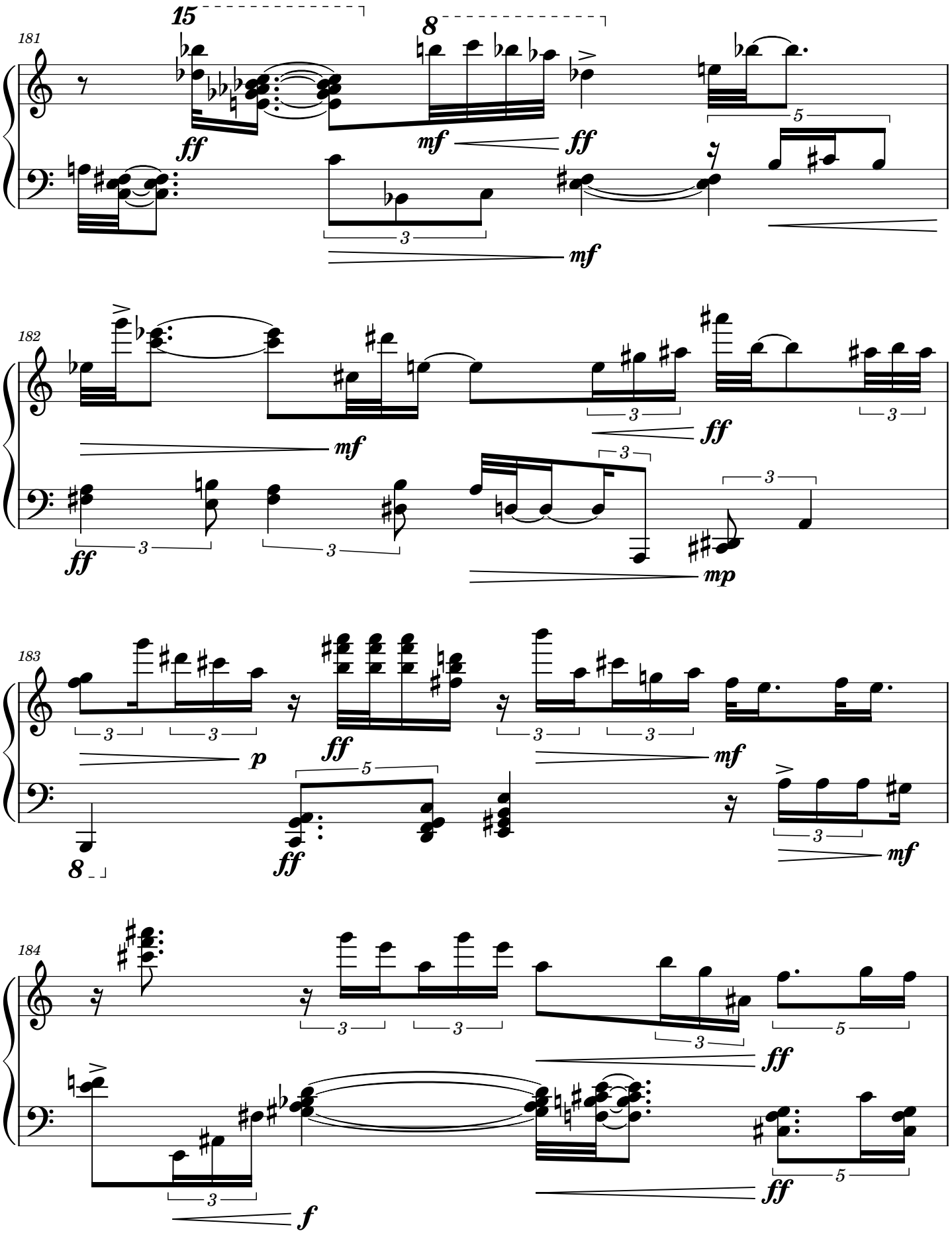
III. Cherenkov

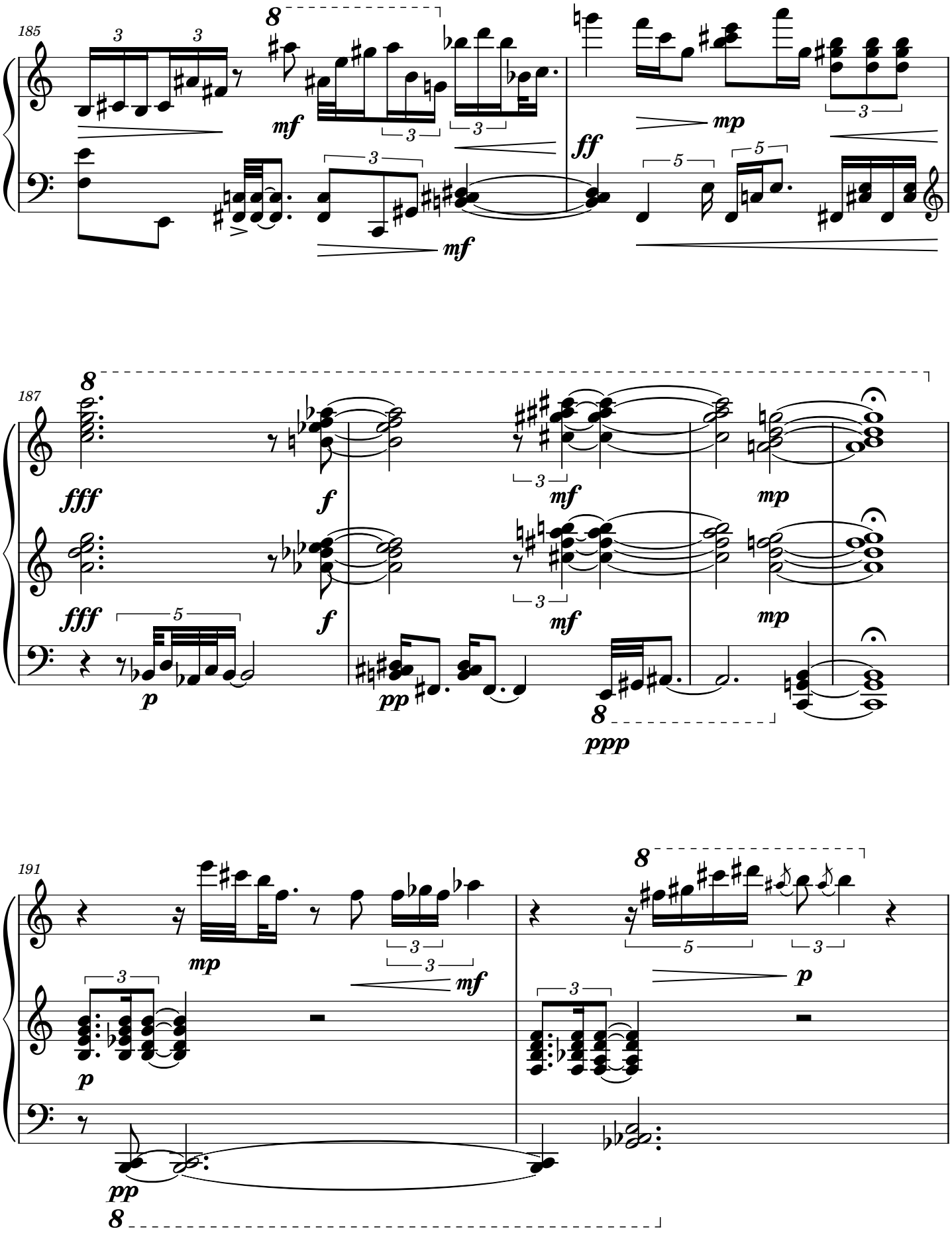


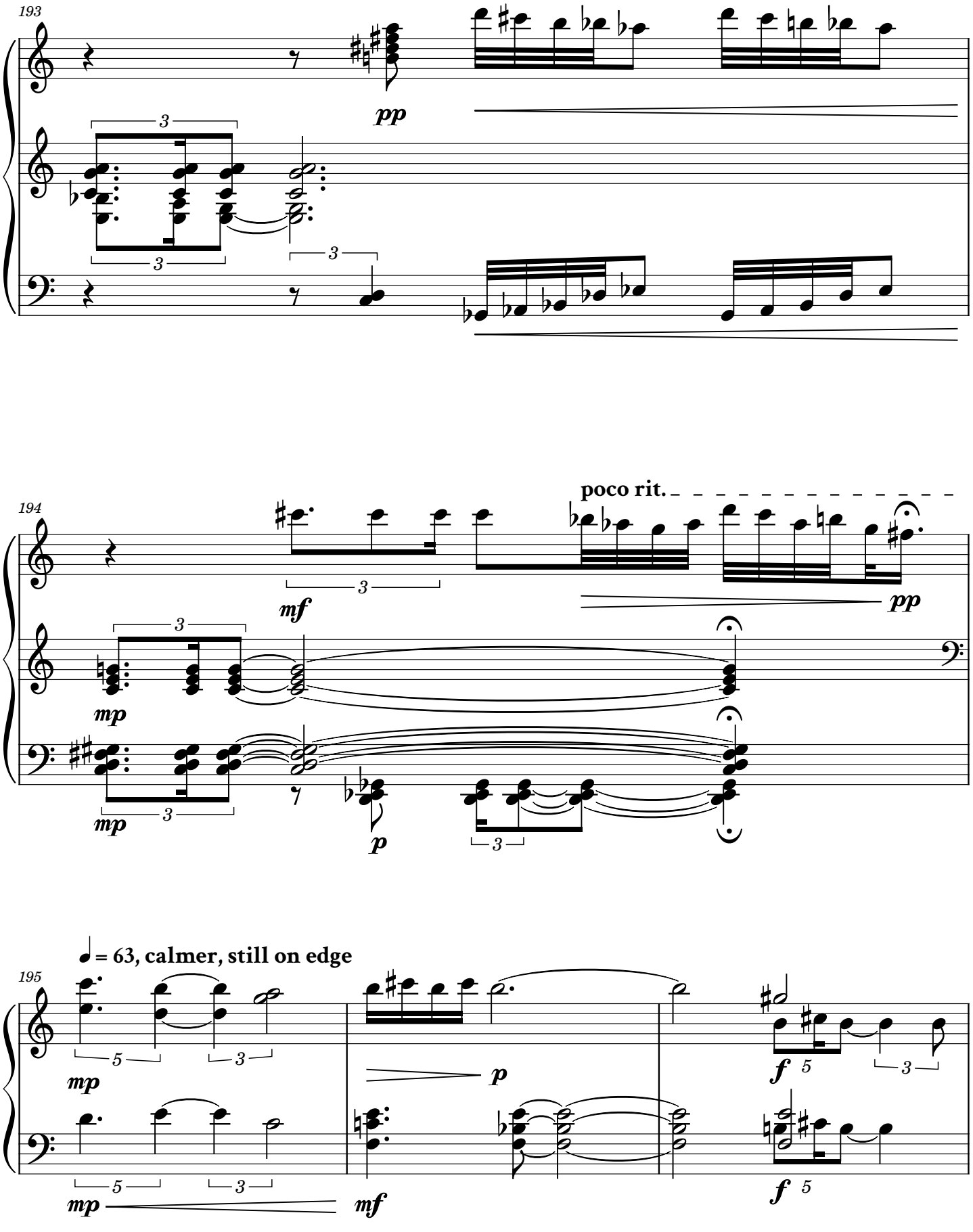

162
♩ = 63, a tempo
mp
p
pp
mp
164
poco rit.
mf
p
mp
ppp
mp
pp
p
♩ = 63, a tempo, slightly energized
166
mf
pp
p
167
mf
mf
pp

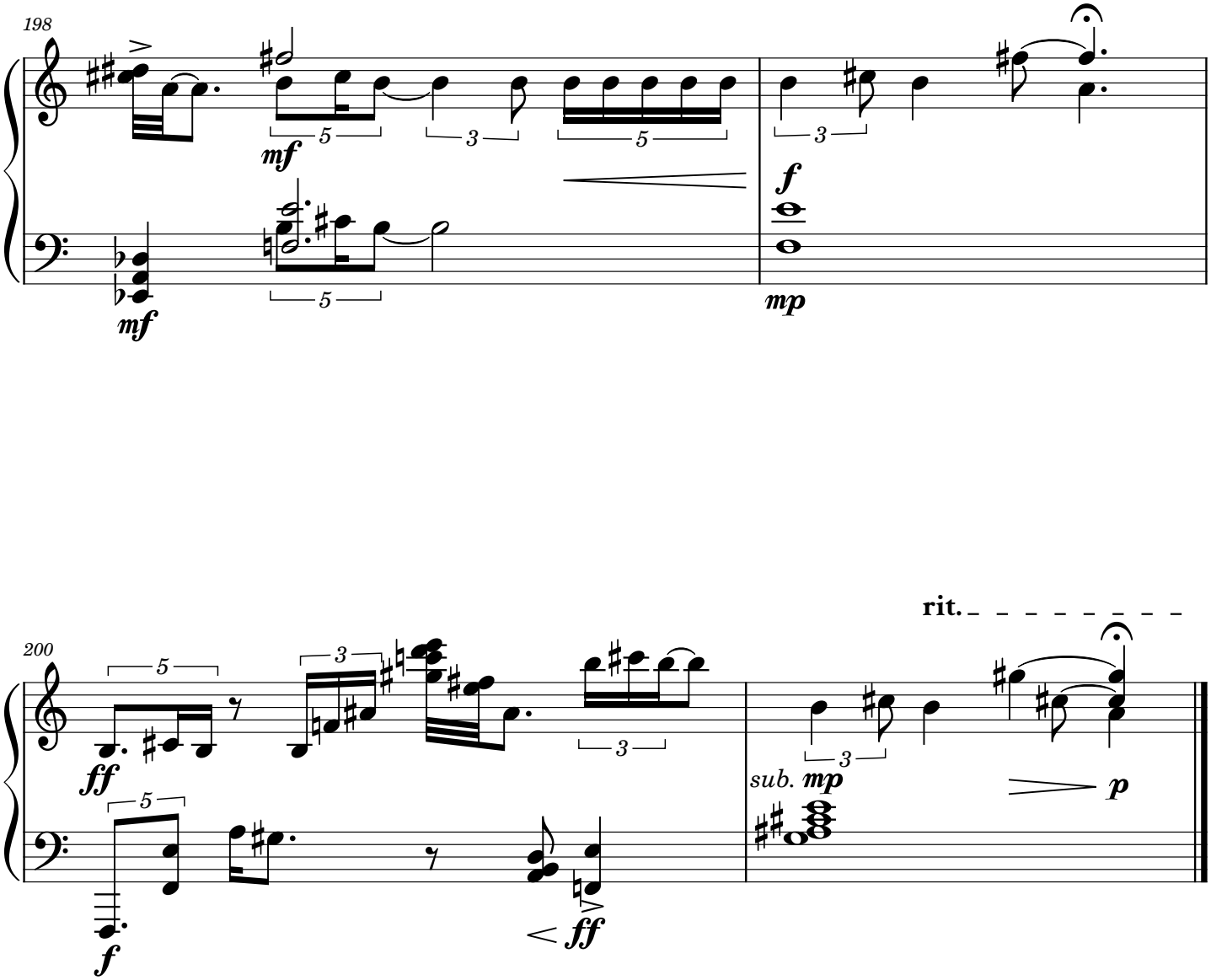

8
168
p
mf
mp
pp
mf
170
f
mf
pp
mf
171
ff
f
mp
= 88, energized, bursting
mf
f
173
mf
ff
f


175
ff
f
molto rit.
176
mf
pp
mf
p
freely, unmetered
p
178
mp
f
♩ = 76, a tempo, ferociously
ff
f
ff
180
ff
mf
ff
mf
mf
ff

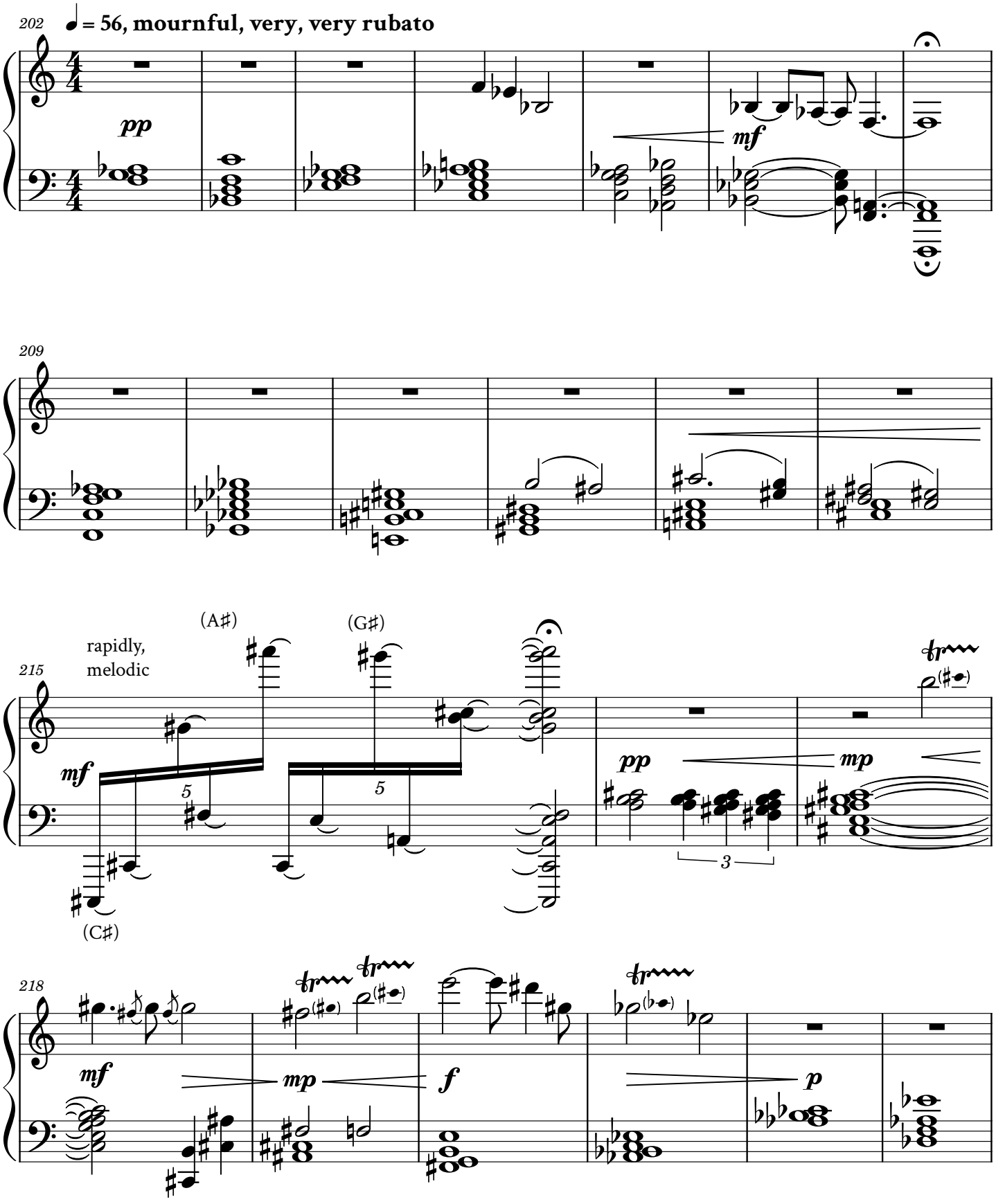

181
15
8
ff
mf
ff
5
3
mf
182
mf
ff
3
3
ff
3
3
3
3
mp
183
3
3
p
ff
5
3
3
mf
8
ff
3
mf
184
3
3
3
ff
5
3
f
ff
5

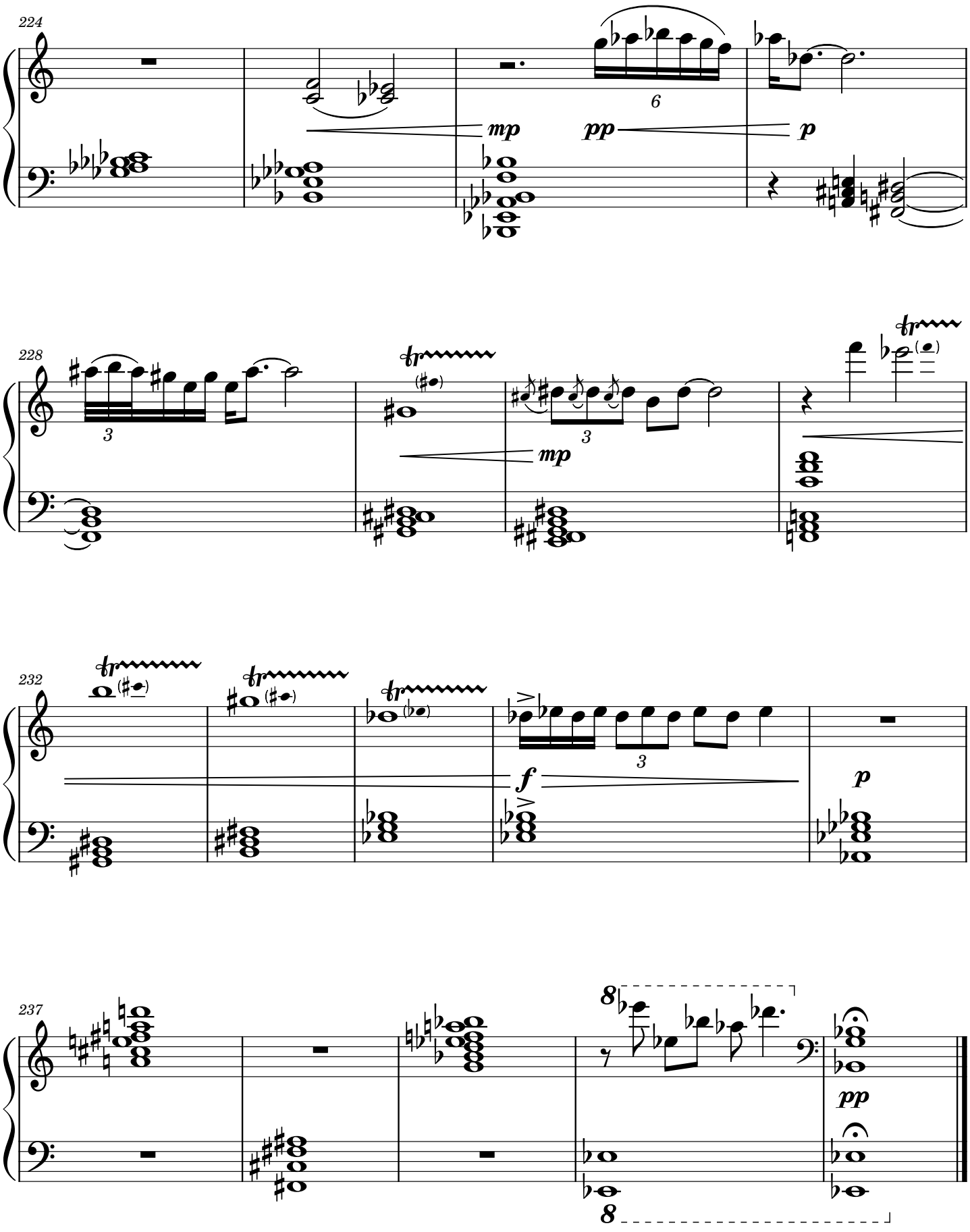

185
187
191
mf
ff
mp
fff
f
p
pp
ppp


193
pp
194
poco rit.
mf
pp
mp
mp
p
195
♩ = 63, calmer, still on edge
mp
p
f
mp
mf
f


198
mf
mf
f
mp
200
ff
f
ff
rit.
sub. mp
p

IV. Thine Forever




224
6
mp
pp
p
228
3
3
mp
232
f
p
237
8
8
pp