Three Rags (1975-76)

1. A New Leaf
2. Greene Street Slow Drag
3. Waverly Stomp

By

David Francis Urrows

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Three Rags (1975-76)

Today, only Americans in their sixties and older can remember the great afflatus for ragtime that swept the nation in the runup to the Bicentennial of 1976. This was driven in large part by a couple of immensely popular recordings. These were, first, my old teacher Joshua Rifkin's three LPs of rags by Scott Joplin, released on Nonesuch Records between 1970 and 1974. Second, the recordings by The New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble, founded by Gunther Schuller in 1972, and released on Angel Records: *The Red Back Book* (1973), and *More Scott Joplin Rags* (1974). The craze reached its apogee with the release of the blockbuster film, *The Sting*, in December 1973, with much of the soundtrack featuring (though anachronistically so for a film set in the Depression Era of the 1930s) Marvin Hamlisch's arrangements of Joplin rags, in particular *The Entertainer*.

The result was that we all played, and some of us wrote ragtime around this date; and as a teenager just starting university in the Fall of 1974, I was no exception (although I did feel the need to use a variety of pseudonyms when I first performed these works.) I did feel then that too much attention was focused exclusively on Joplin, and I was exploring at this time the music of other figures, in particular the much-neglected Arthur Marshall (1881-1968). Marshall was one of Joplin's protégés, and his rags are fascinating, as they are a palpable bridge between the classic ragtime of Joplin and early jazz. If my rags are a tribute to anyone, it is to Marshall. He died when I was 10, and how I would have liked to meet him.

A New Leaf was the last to be composed, in April 1976. This is perhaps the most 'classic' of the three, although it uses only the three-part song form, rather than the song form with Trio that Joplin preferred (and which was necessary to fit the dances of his day.) The title? It refers to my move from New York to Boston in early 1976, and perhaps also to a weariness many of us felt then with endless repetitions of *The Maple Leaf Rag*.

Greene Street Slow Drag and *Waverly Stomp* were both written in 1975. These two New York City streets intersect each other in Greenwich Village, just in the center of the urban campus of New York University, where I was then studying.

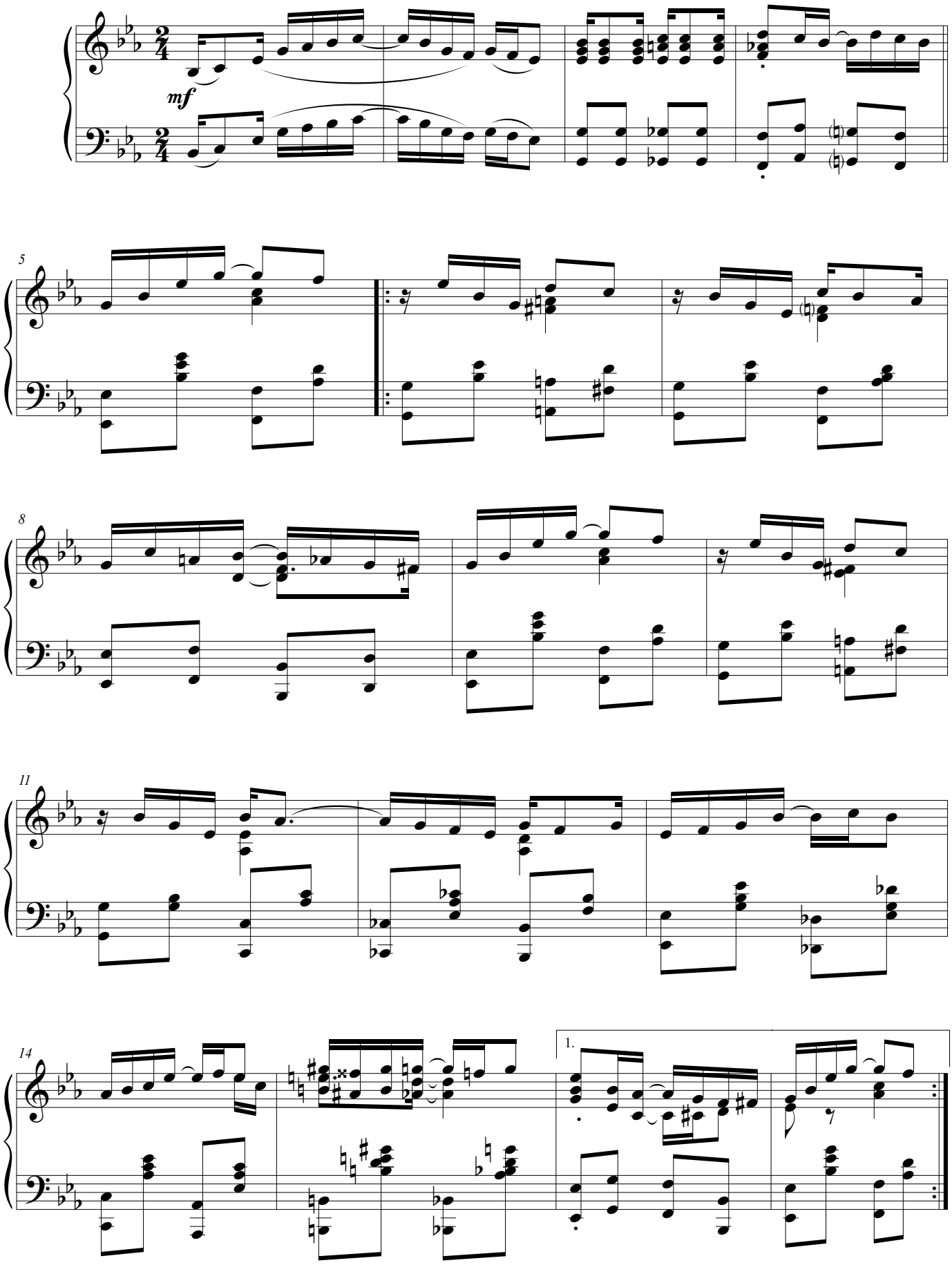
Greene Street was a quiet, cobblestoned backstreet, once the home of TALVJ (Teresa Albertine Luisa von Jakob-Robinson, 1797-1870), author, feminist, and a founder of the field of comparative literature, although we did not know that back then. The west end of Waverly Place, in contrast, was a busy thoroughfare, and always thronged with students coming from and going to lectures. The nostalgia-tinged *Greene Street Slow Drag* uses the shorter form of *A New Leaf*, and the dotted rhythms and syncopations should be 'swung' as jazz triplets. *Waverly Stomp* is in contrast a full-on, slightly frenetic Joplin-style rag.

D.F.U.
Manila, Spring 2023

1. A New Leaf

David Francis Urrows
(1976/2003 revision)

Not Fast (♩ = ca. 74)



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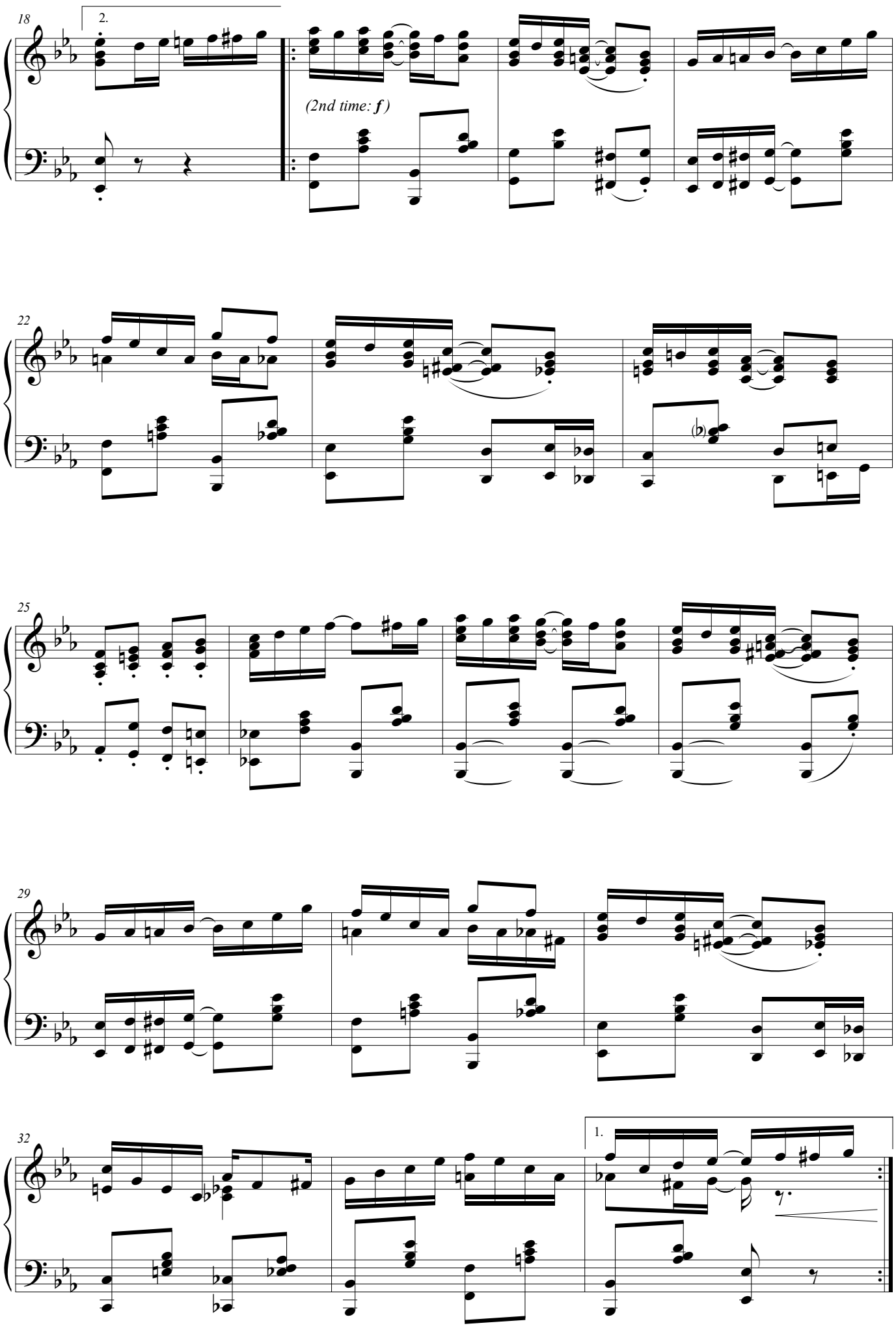
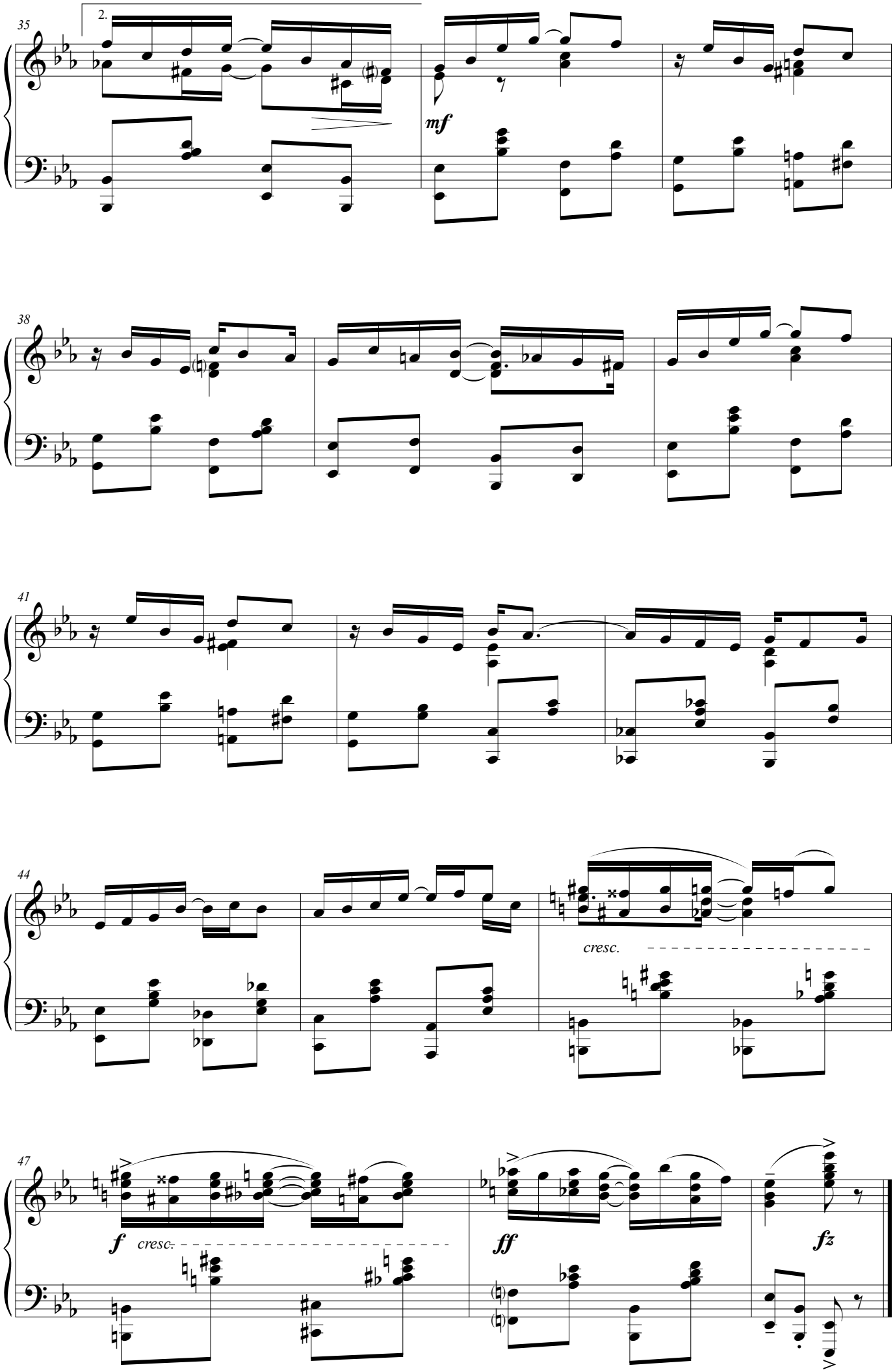
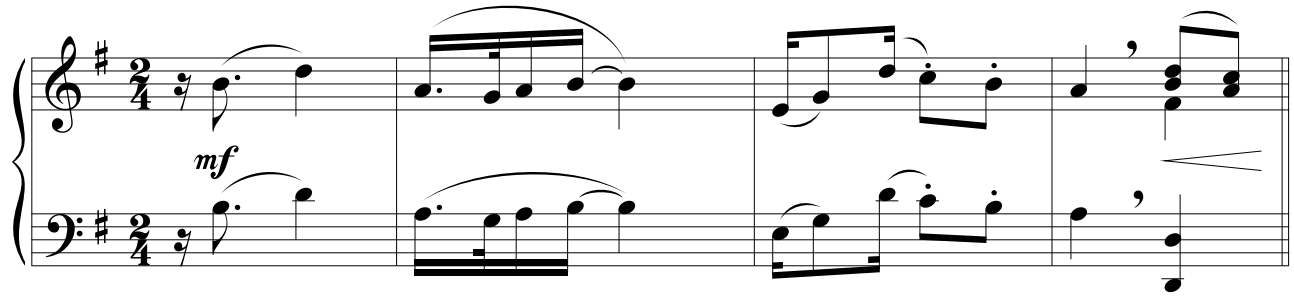

18
2.
(2nd time: f)
22
25
29
32
1.


35
2.
mf
38
41
44
cresc.
47
f
cresc.
ff
fz

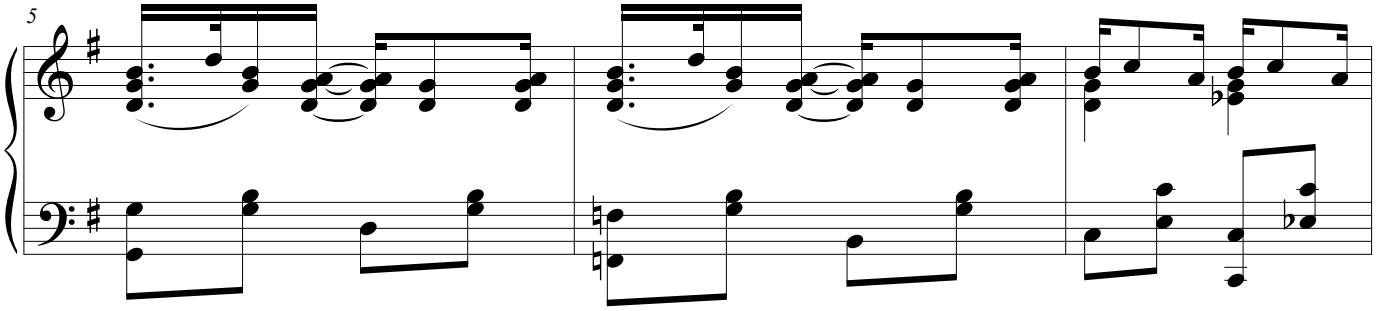
2. Greene Street Slow Drag

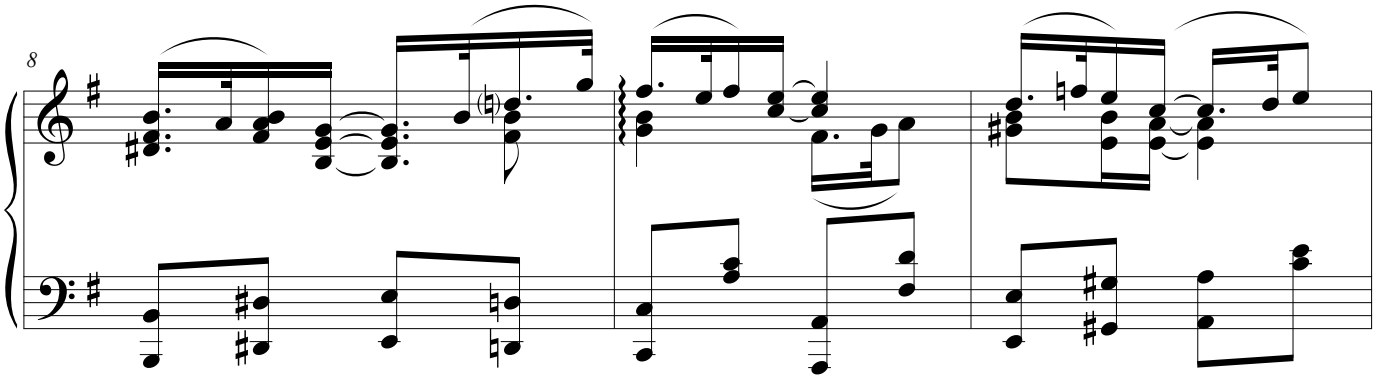
David Francis Urrows
(1975/2023 revision)

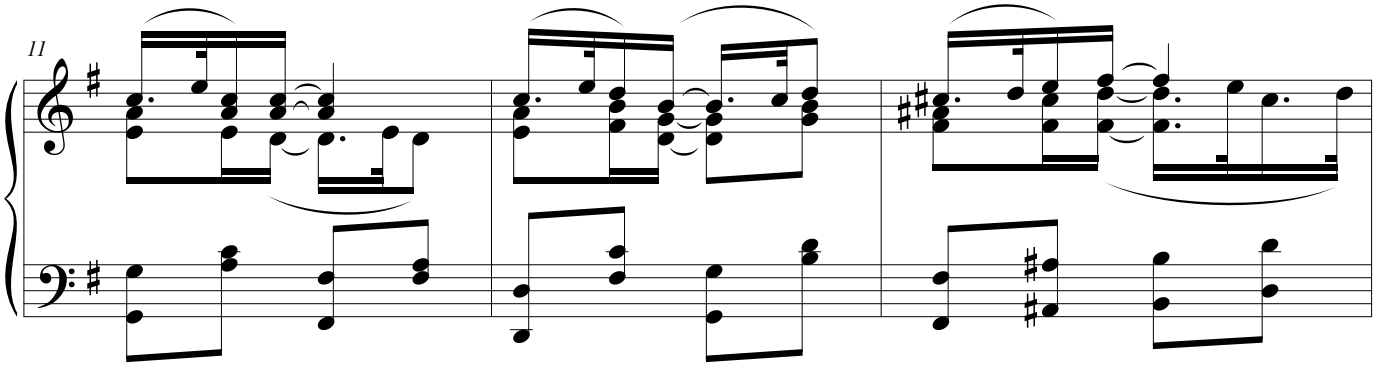
(Very) Slow Drag tempo (♪ = ca. 105)



Dotted 16th+32 rhythms are always to be played as Jazz triplets.







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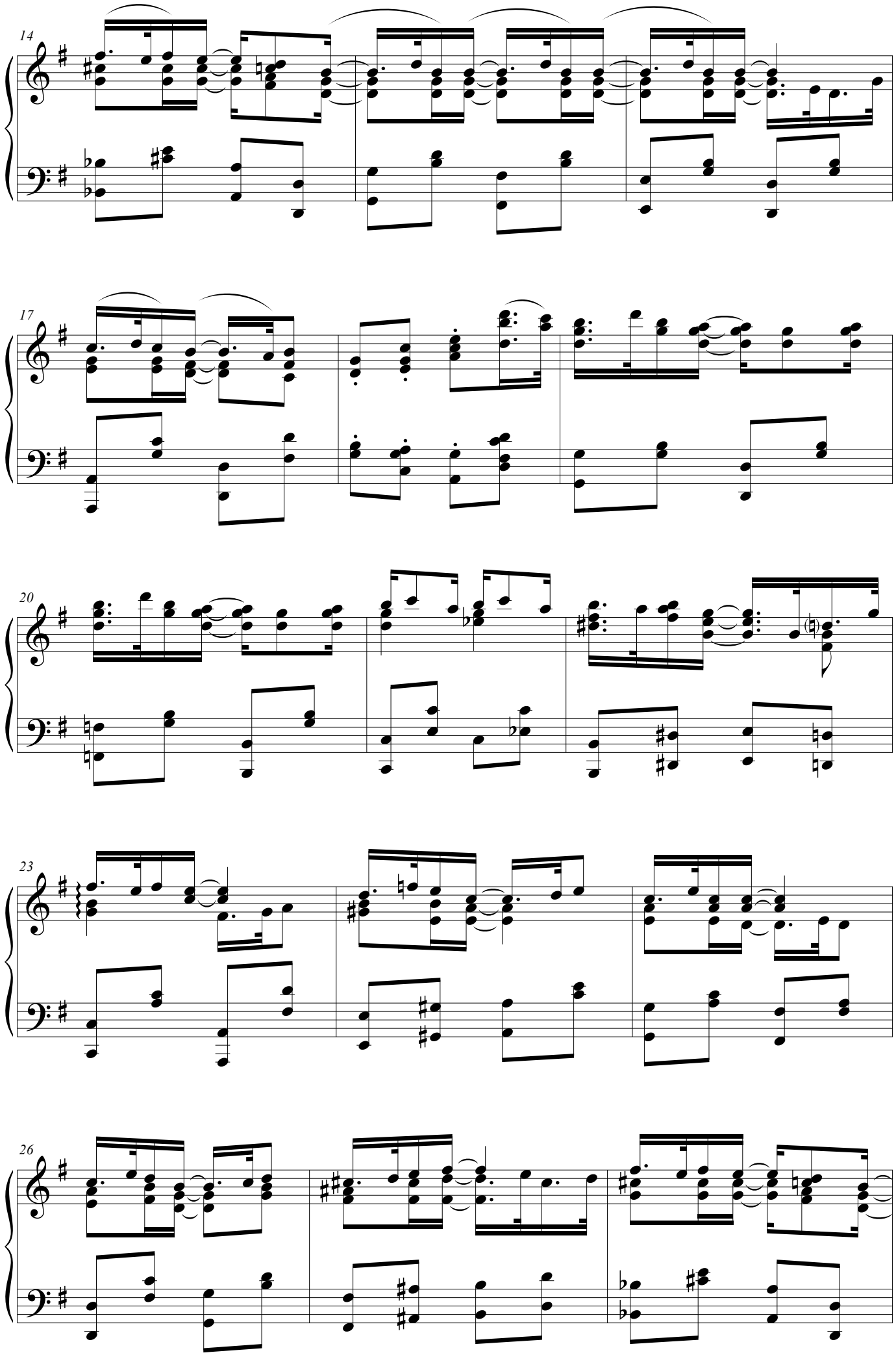
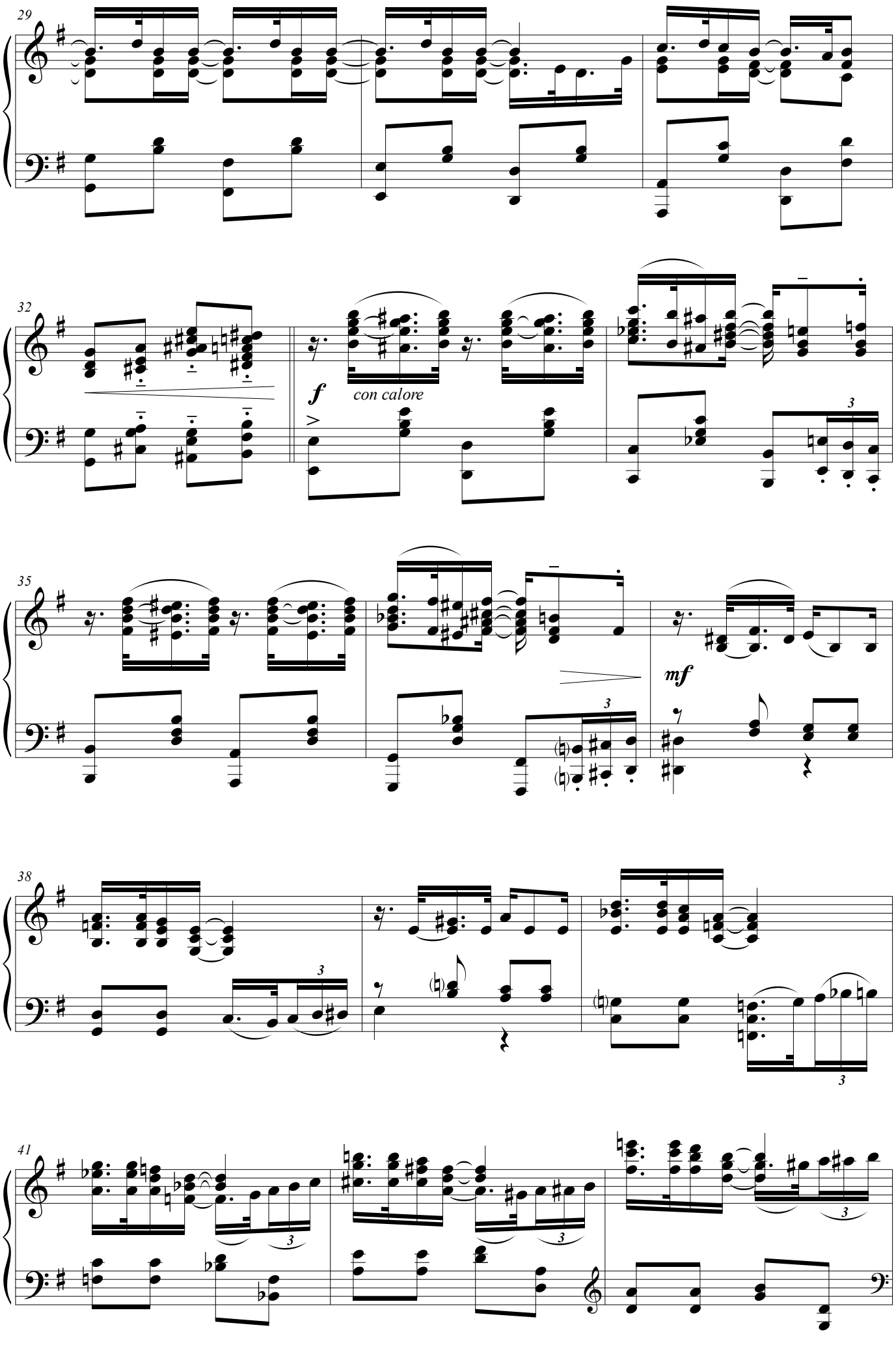
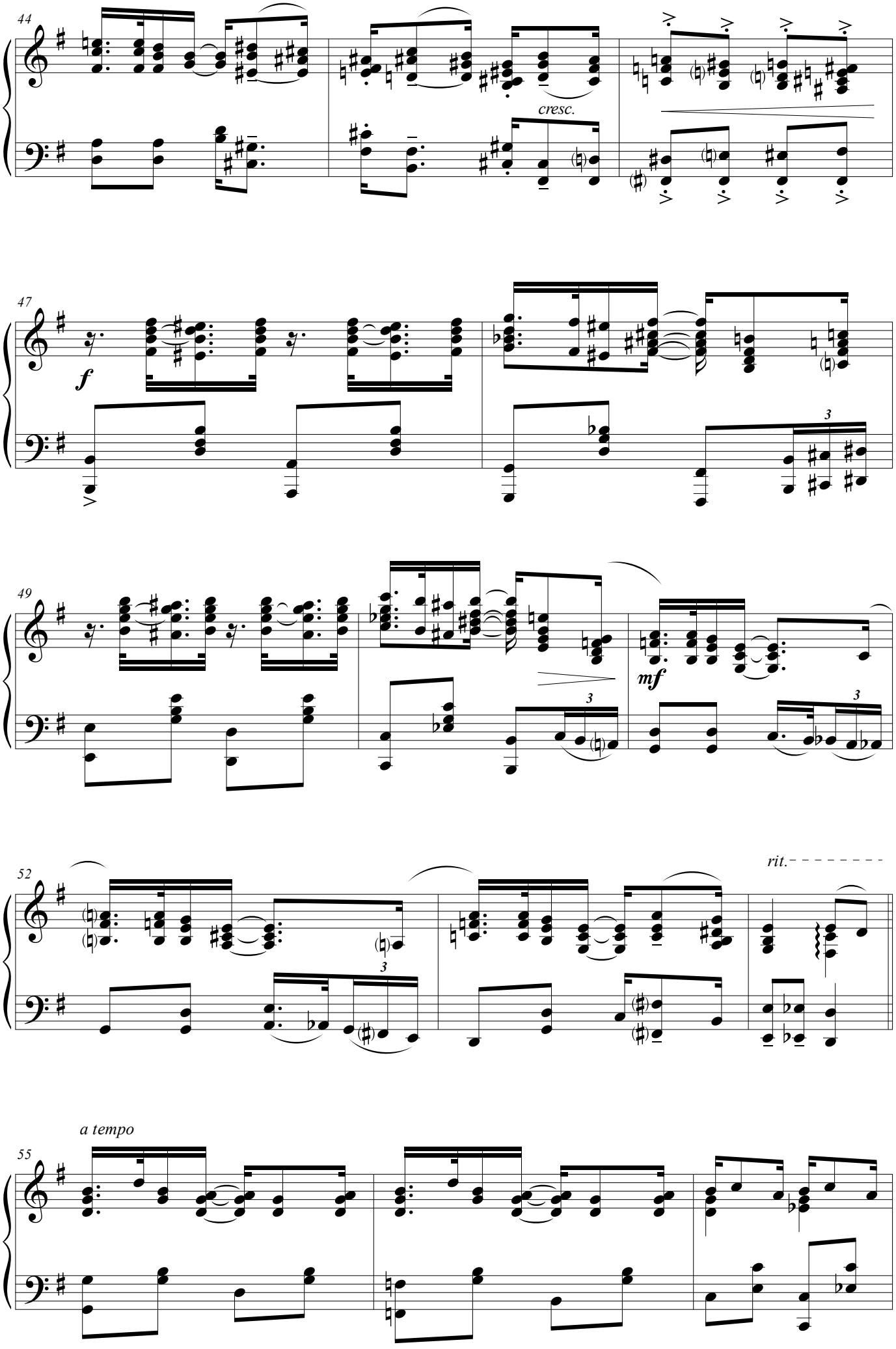
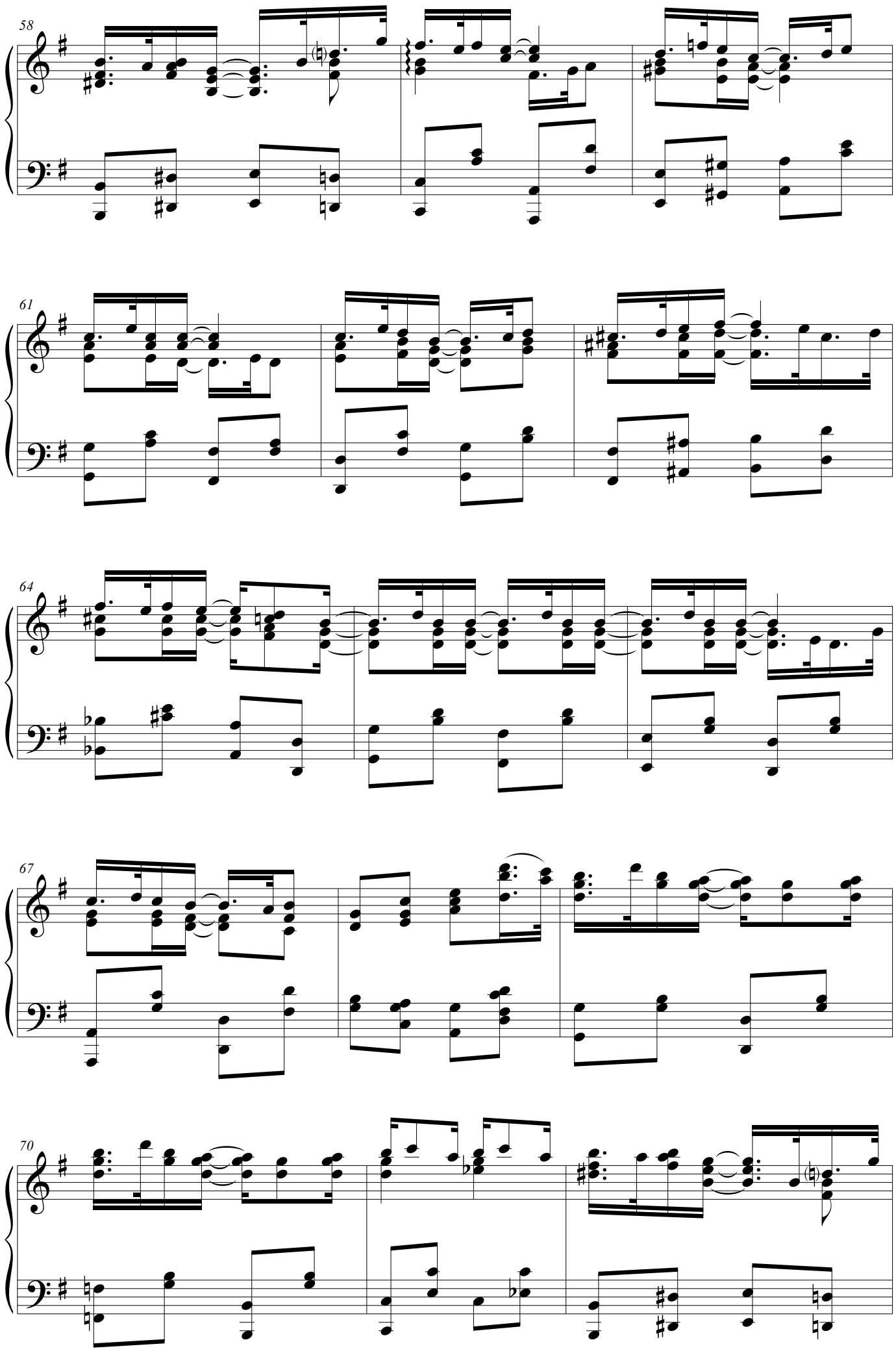
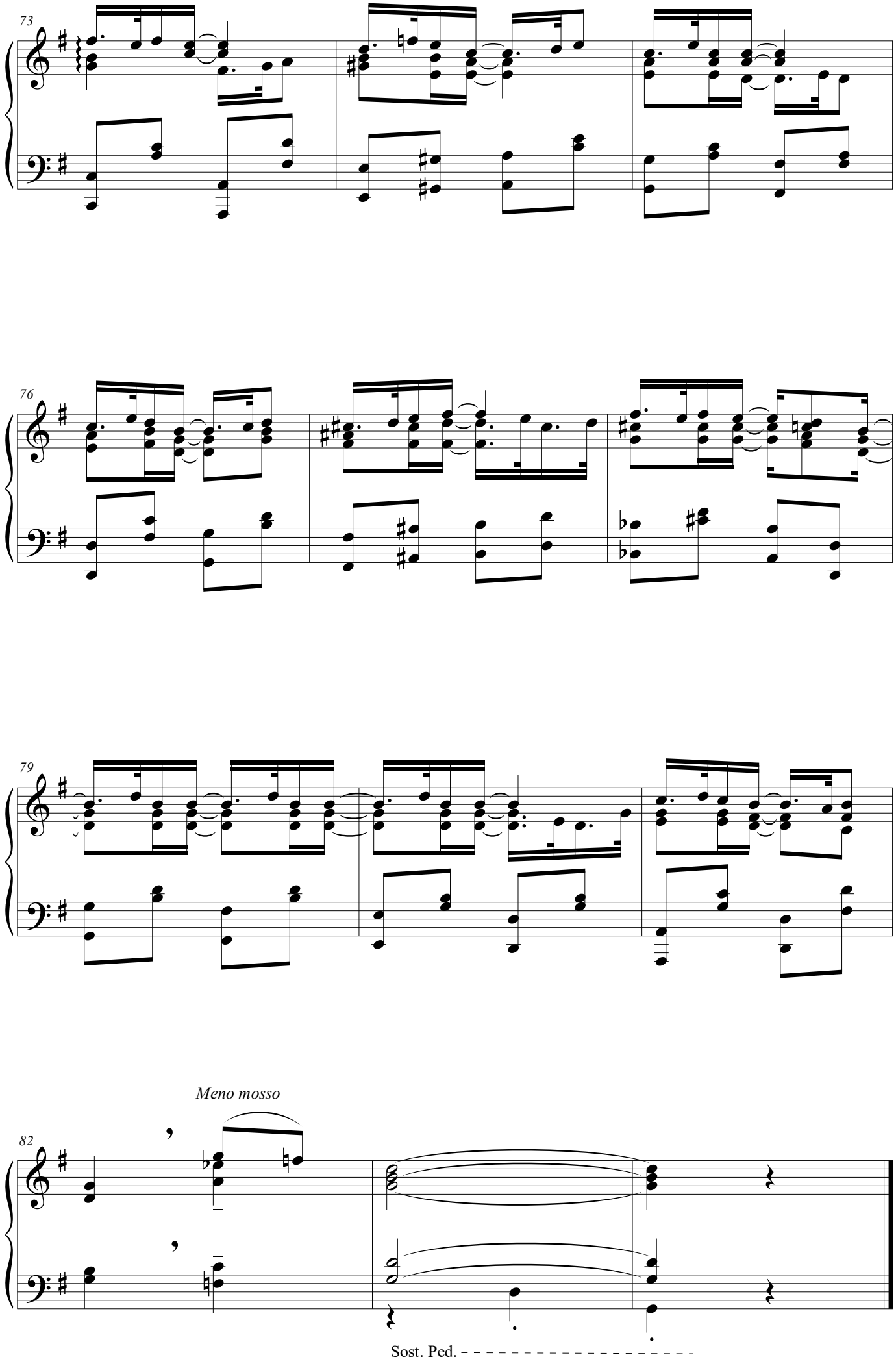

14
17
20
23
26


29
32
f
con calore
35
mf
38
41


44
cresc.
47
f
3
49
mf
3
3
52
3
rit.
a tempo
55

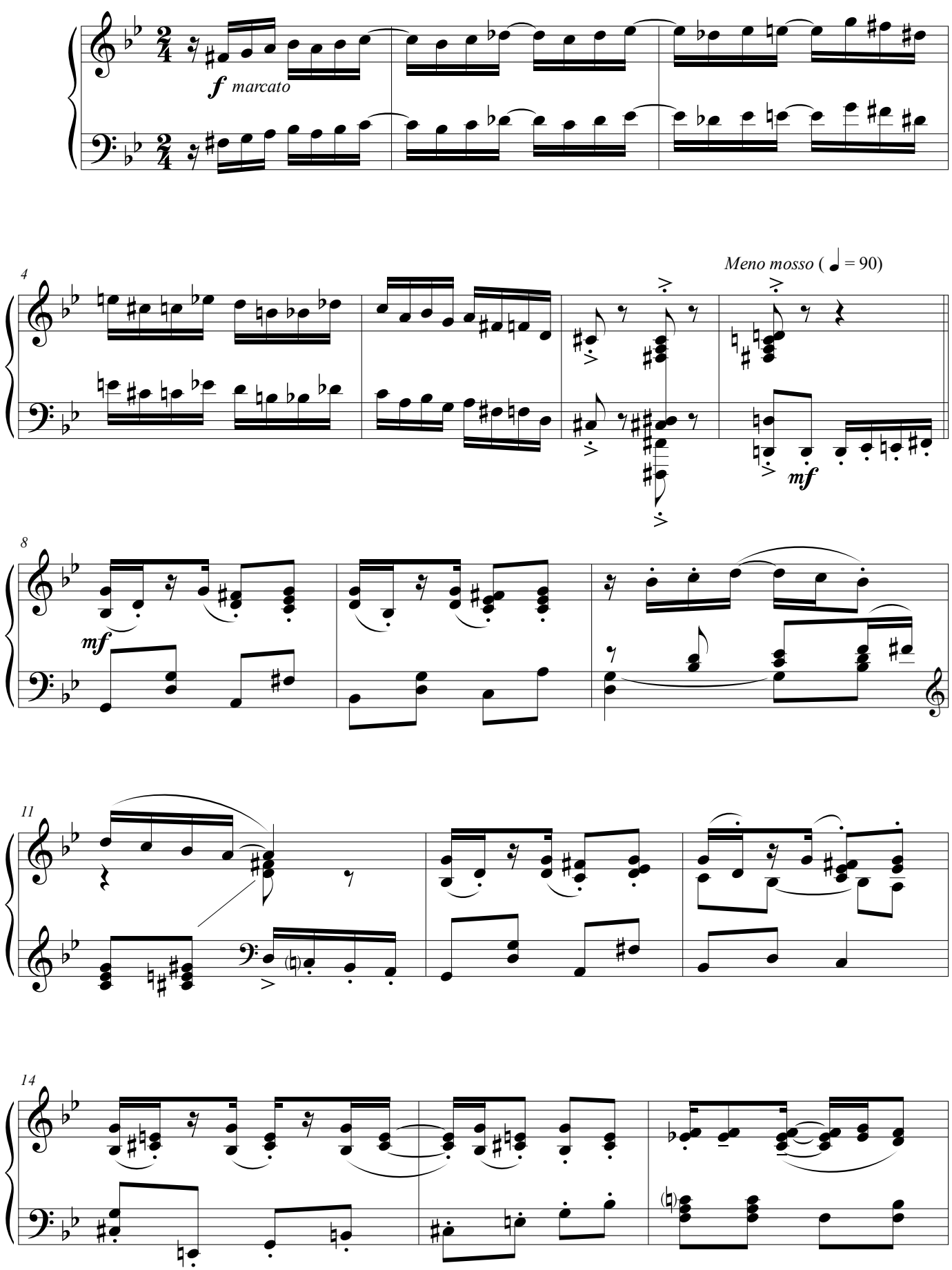

58
61
64
67
70


73
76
79
Meno mosso
82
Sost. Ped.

3. Waverly Stomp

David Francis Urrows
(1975/2023 revision)

Allegro molto ♩ = 100



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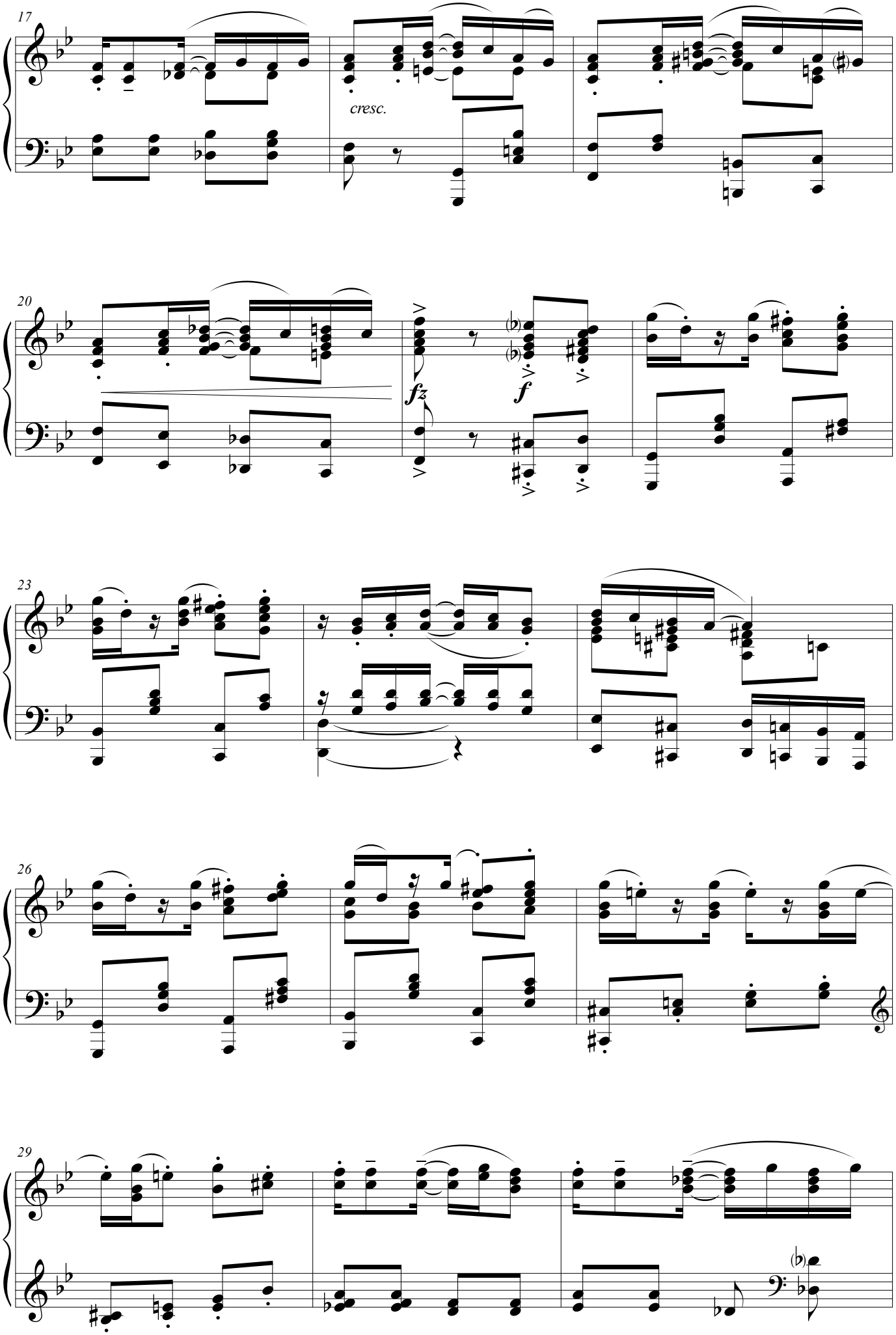
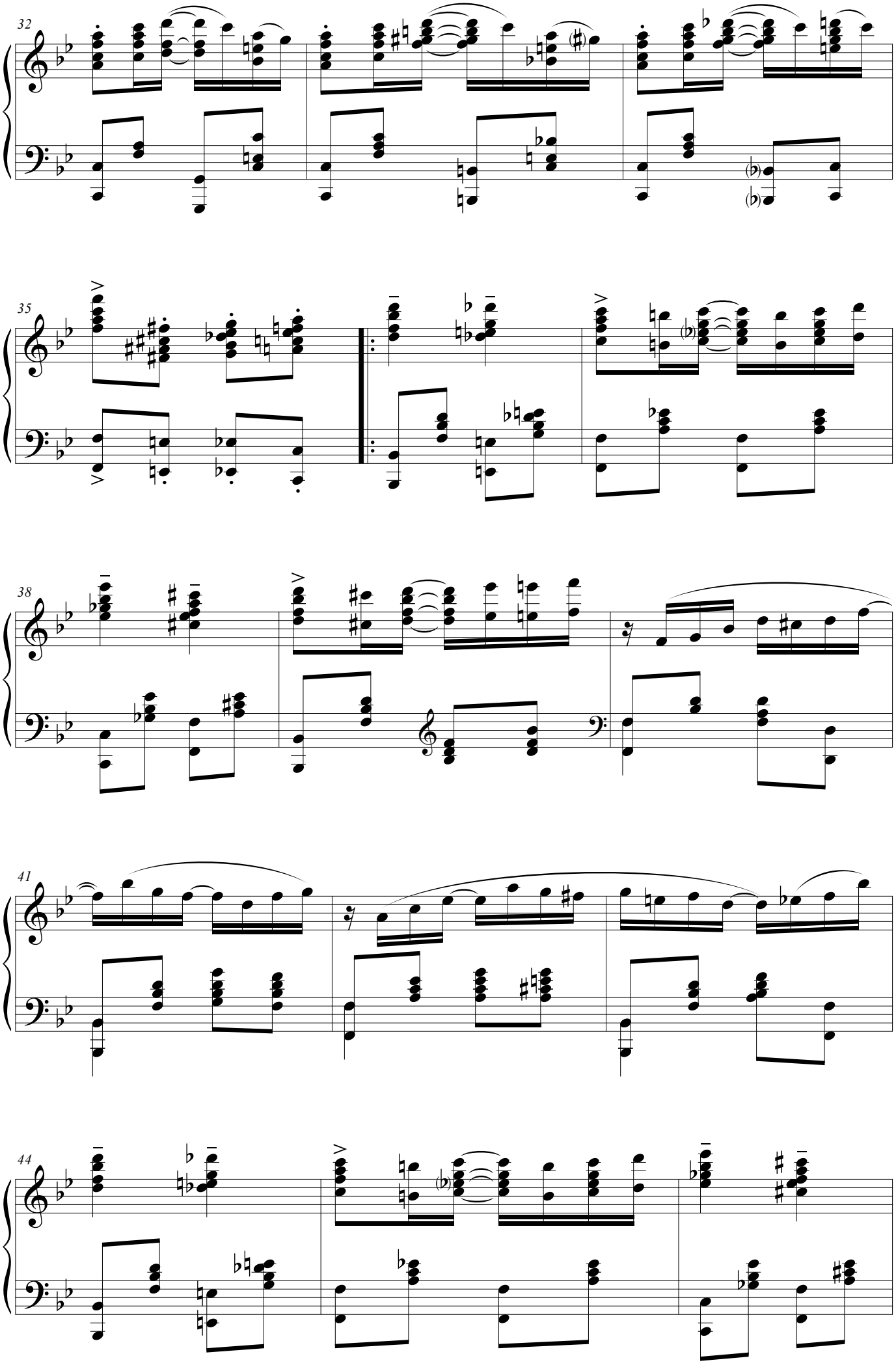
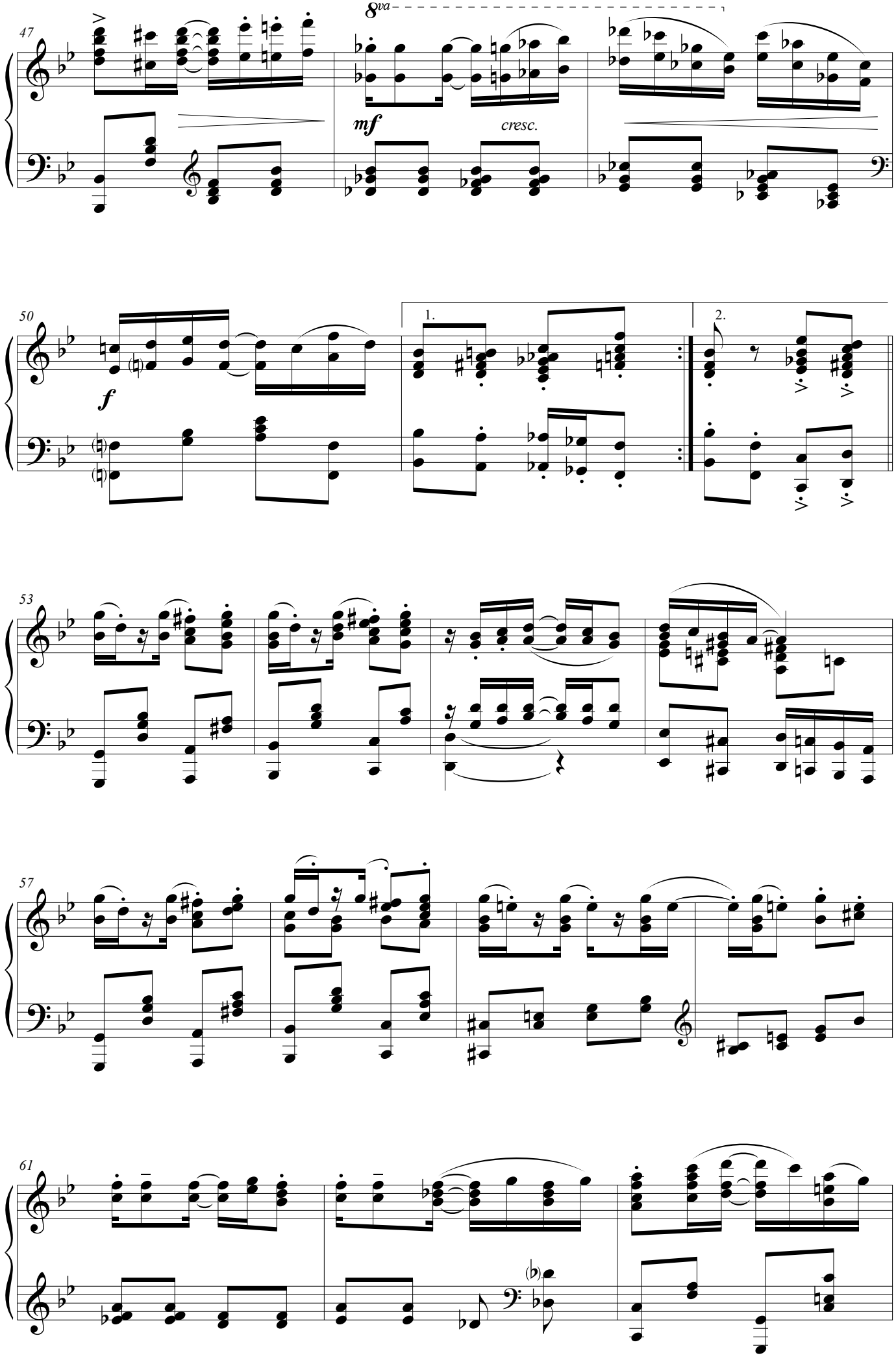
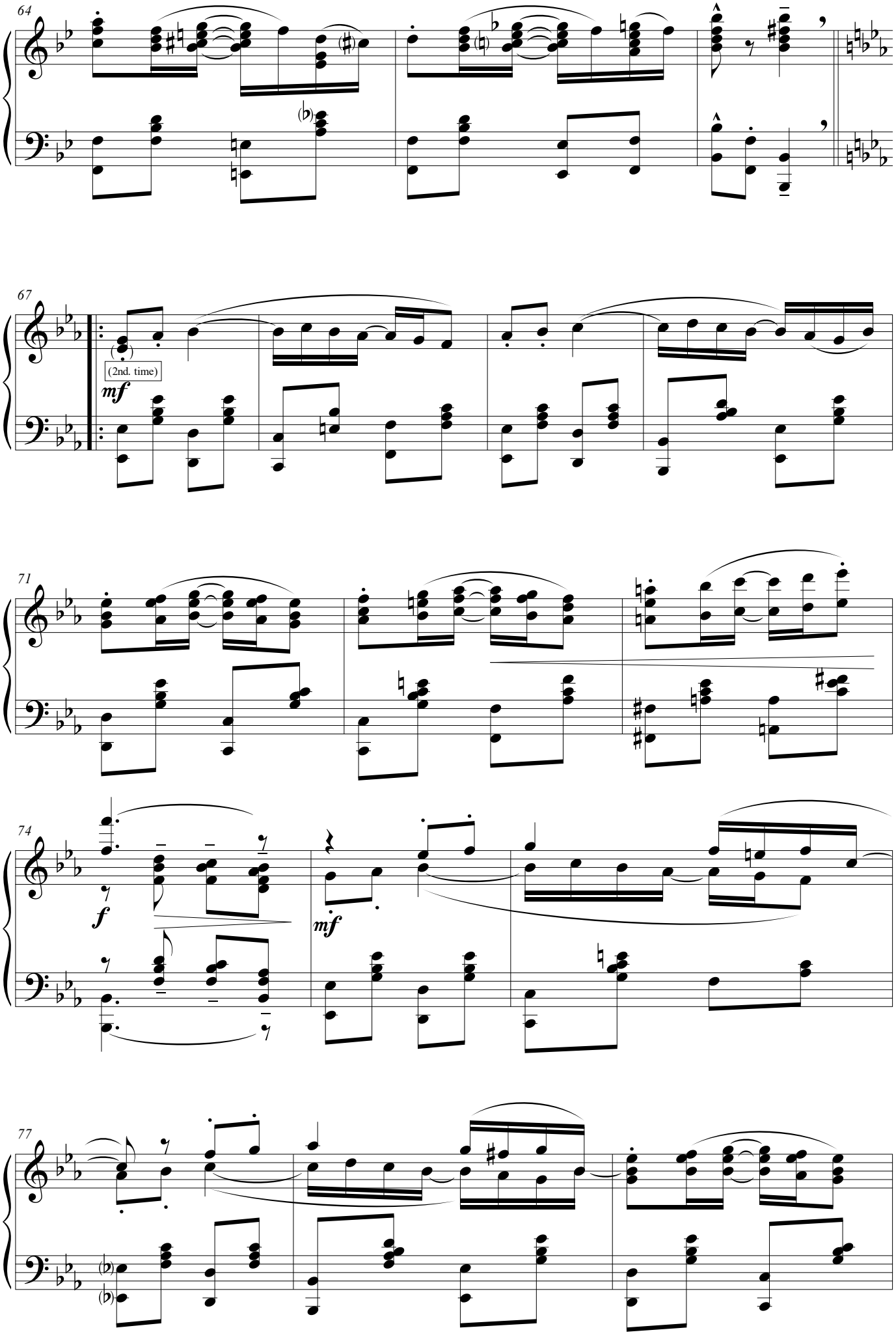
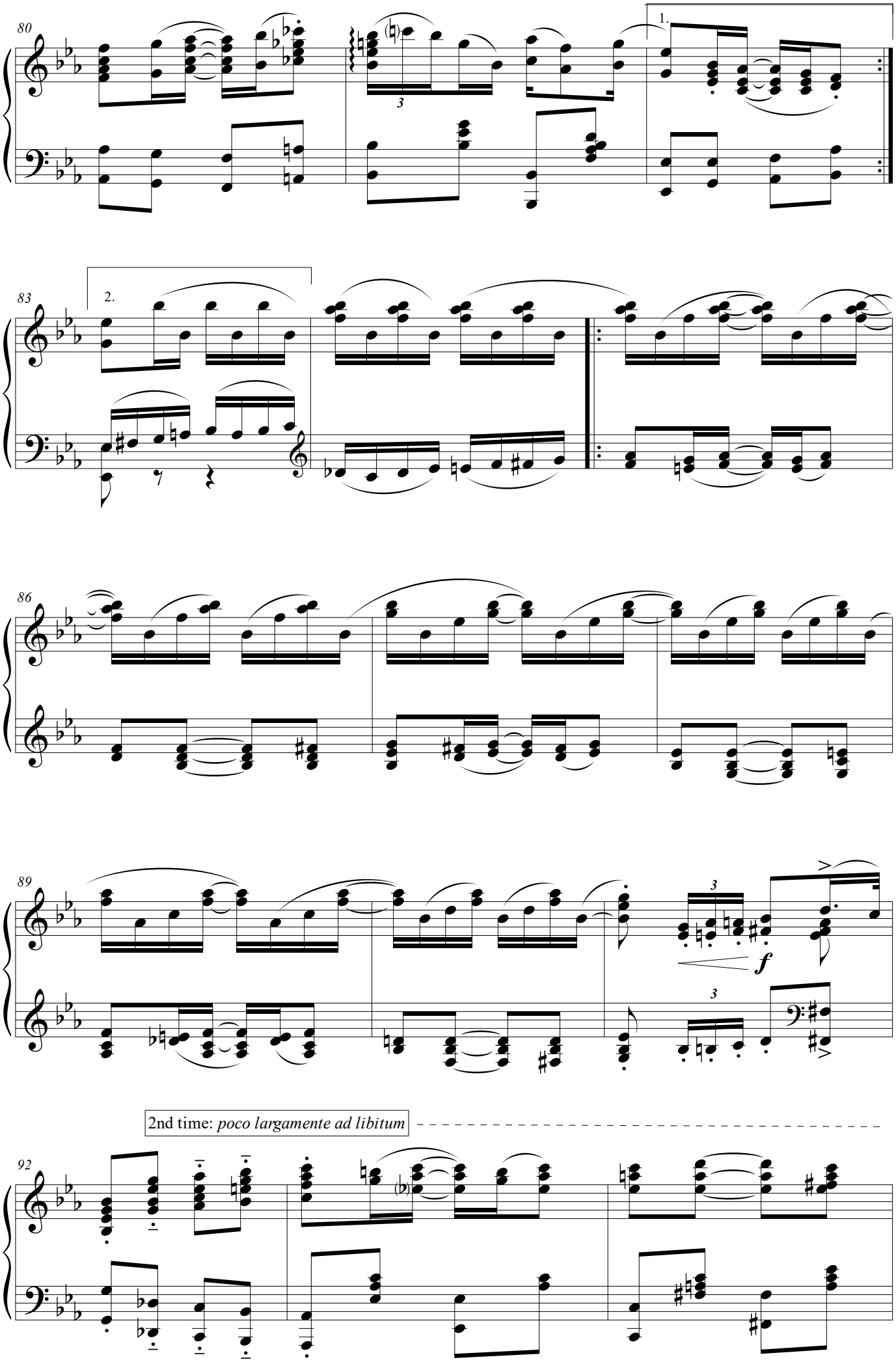
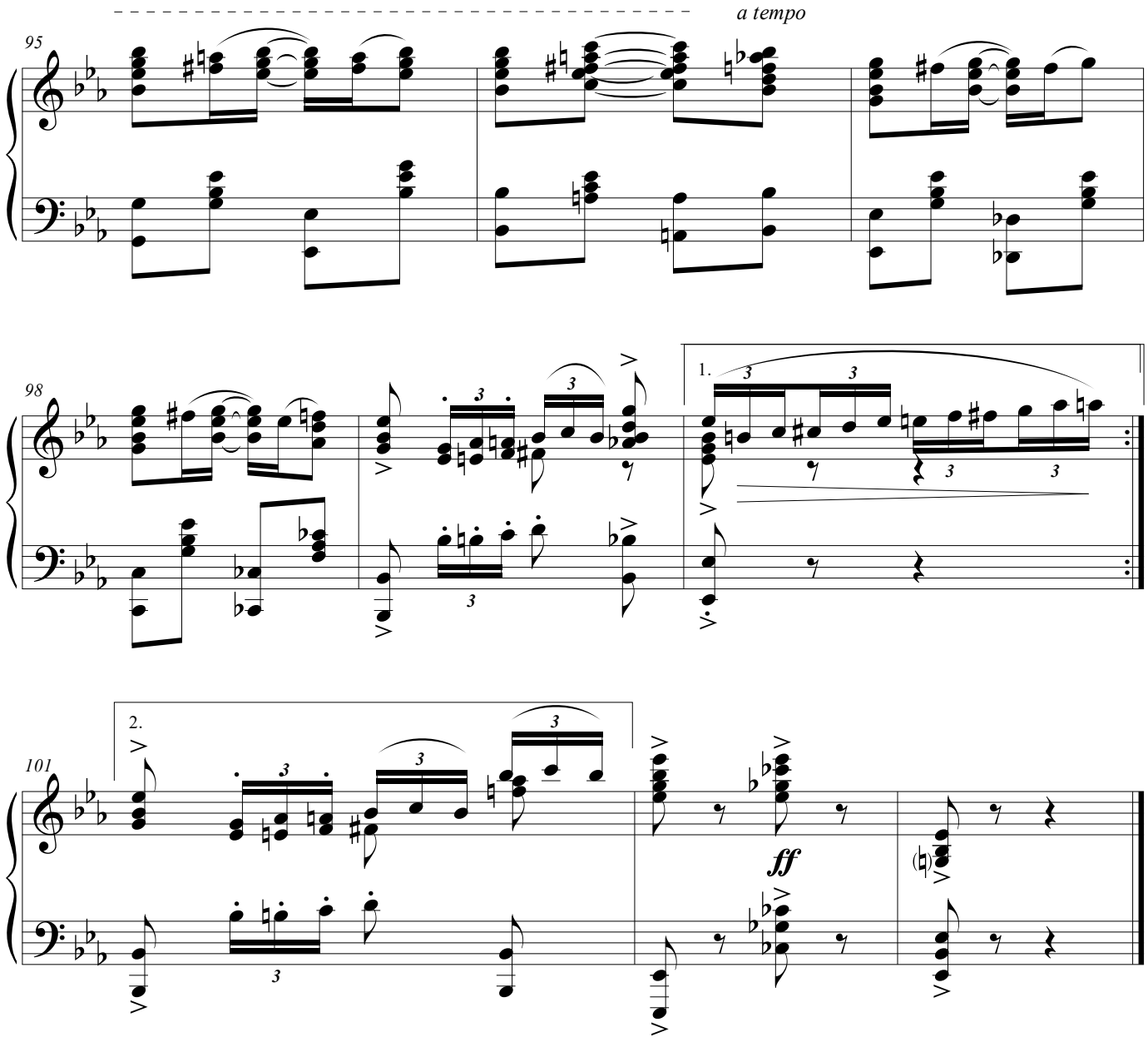

17
cresc.
20
fz
f
23
26
29


32
35
38
41
44


47
8va
mf
cresc.
50
f
1.
2.
53
57
61


64
67
(2nd. time)
mf
71
74
f
mf
77


80
1.
3
83
2.
7
86
89
3
f
3
2nd time: poco largamente ad libitum
92


a tempo
95
98
1.
101
2.
ff