Cubic Deviations

from Brahms' ***Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel***

For Piano Quintet

Piano

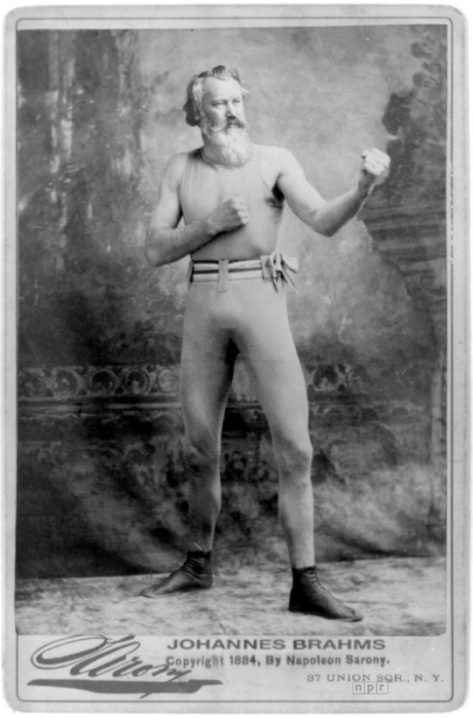
Bill Robinson

Cubic Deviations

from Brahms' *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel*
for Piano Quintet

Duration: about 25 minutes October 24, 2022—April 1, 2023

for Eric Pritchard and the Ciompi Quartet



I finished *Violin Concerto No. 2* for Eric Pritchard in 2018, and then a little cello quartet. After that, I found myself mysteriously unable to compose anything for four years. My muse up and left me, and I assumed that I had retired for good. In spring 2022, I started several months of revising old scores, and had three performances of older chamber music. This got me back in the groove, and in October 2022 I started up again, choosing the ensemble that is easiest for me to write for, piano quintet, and the easiest format, a variation on an existing piece. I've done such a variation twice before, for Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* and for Vivaldi/Bach *Concerto for Four Violins/Harpsichords* (first movement only). This time I picked Brahms' *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel* for piano. That means that this work is *variations on variations on variations*, hence the title *Cubic Deviations*. The piano quintet is the basis of a version for full orchestra.

The original Brahms work is extremely virtuosic. I have toned down the piano technique considerably by adding the quartet. There is a delicate balance in a process like this, where the composition can't be too close to the original, because then it's just a transcription and arrangement, but can't be too far away, because then what's the point?

Handel was in his twenties when he wrote his original theme for harpsichord, and Brahms was 28. I am 68, and find it handy to borrow the youthful energy in my dotage.

This piece follows the format of the Brahms original, although I have skipped three of the 25 variations. The initial statement of the theme is very close to Handel's original, with a few curve balls, and may deceive the audience into thinking this is a retrograde exercise in nostalgia. The first deviation should dispel that notion. This is a work of the 21st Century, written in my own style.

String parts are available in two versions; for printing on paper, or use with electronic music readers. Accidentals hold through the measure and not beyond, and do not apply to other octaves.

Bill Robinson

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Piano

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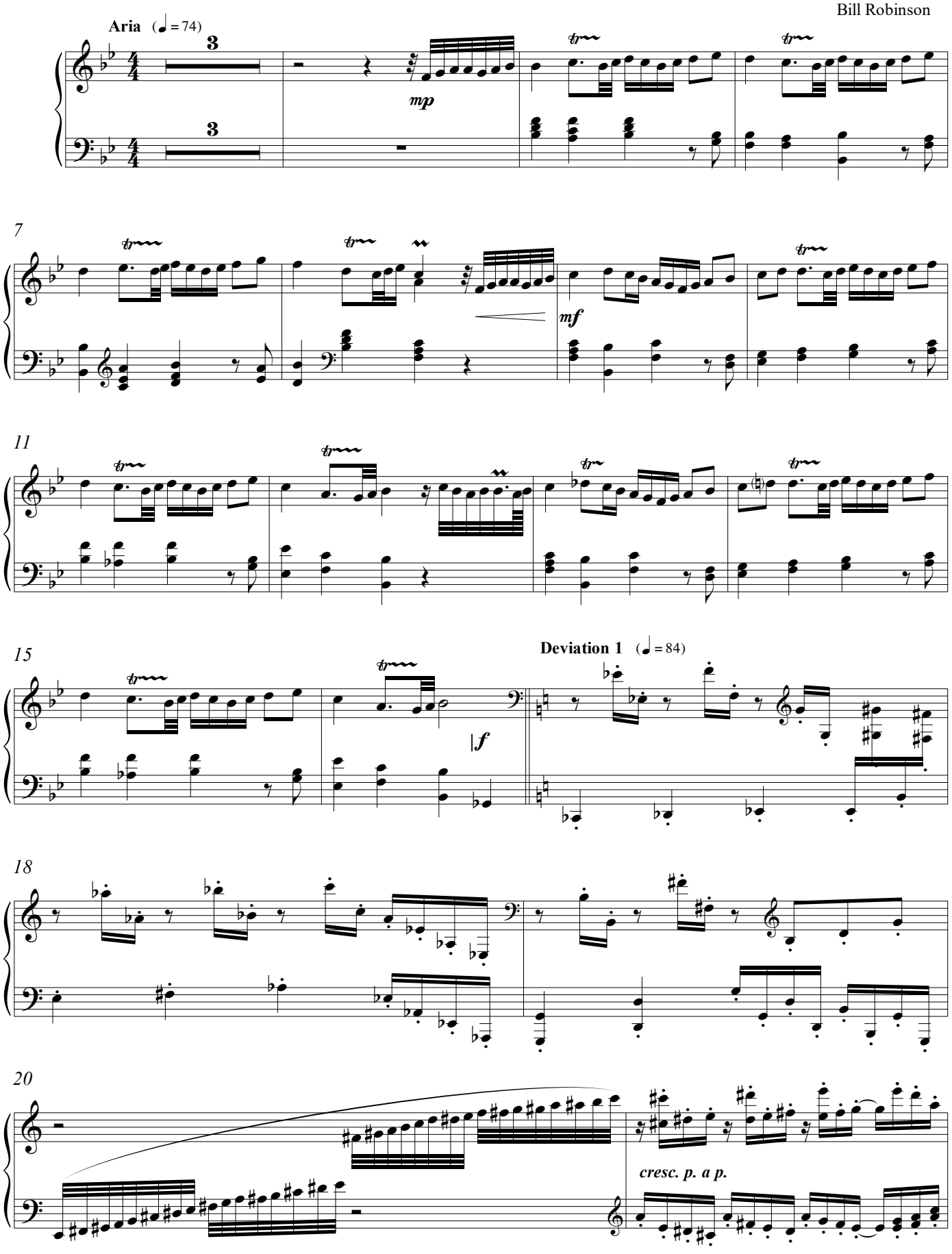
[corrected to 7/21/2023]

Bill Robinson



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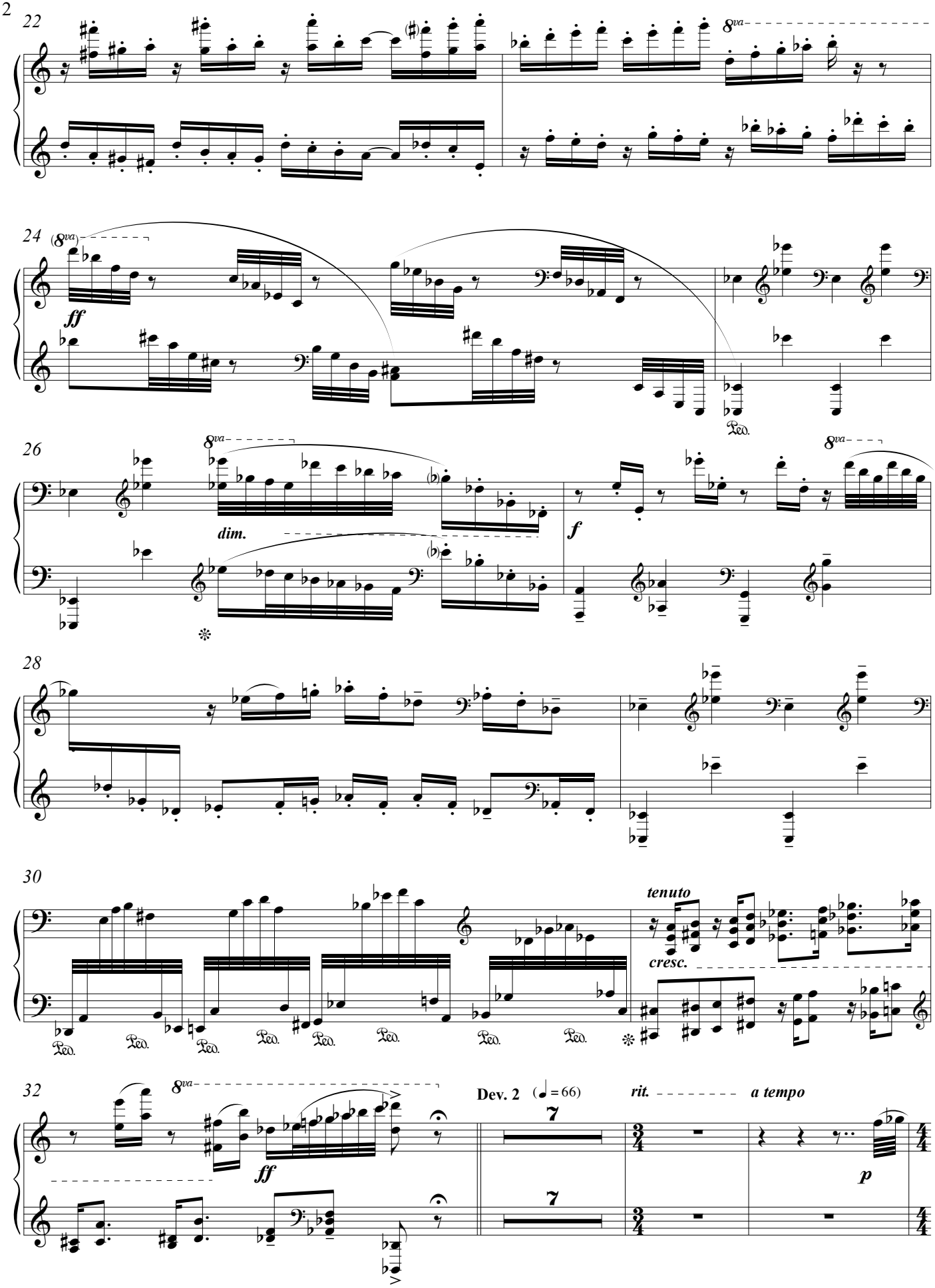
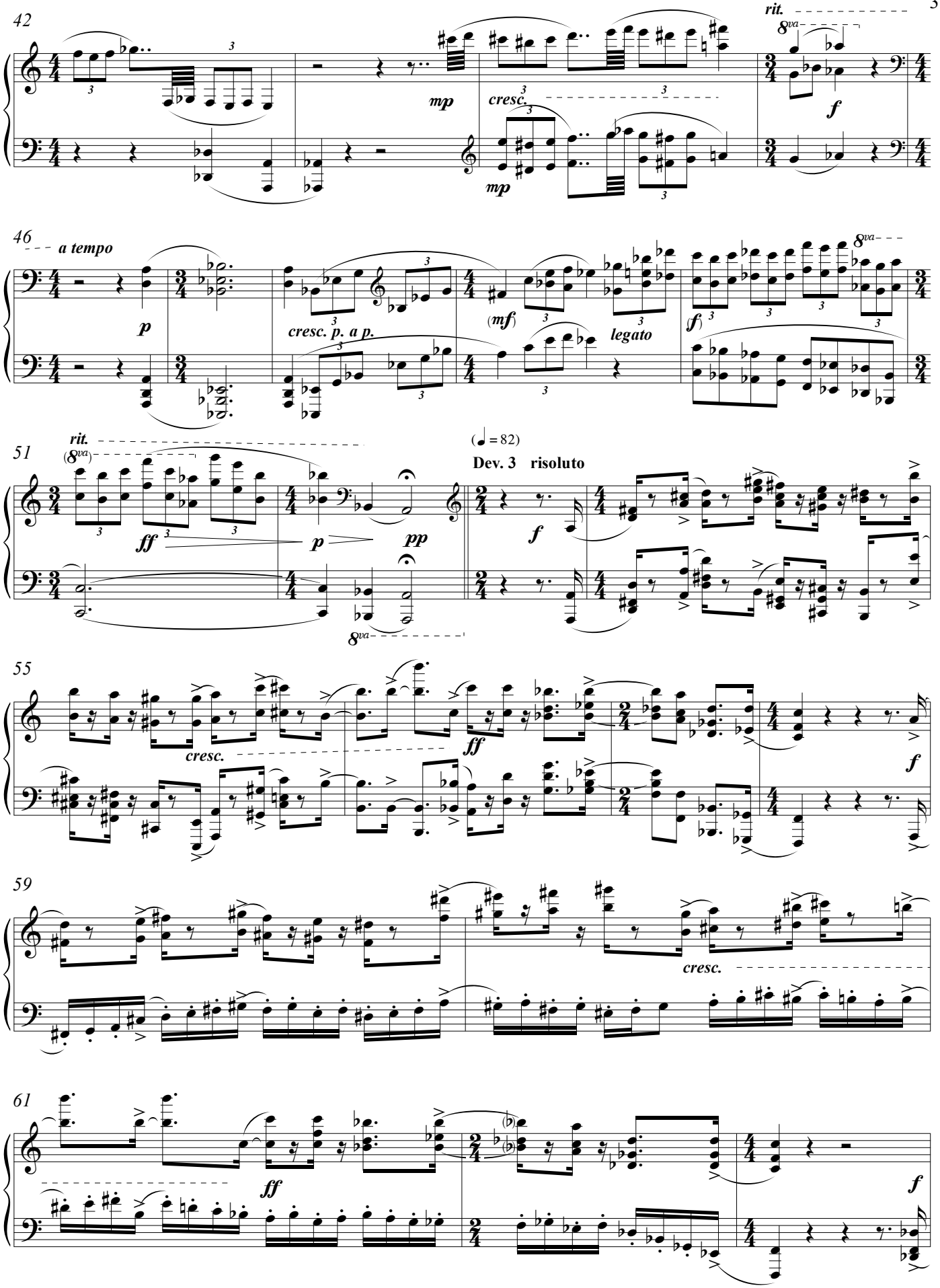
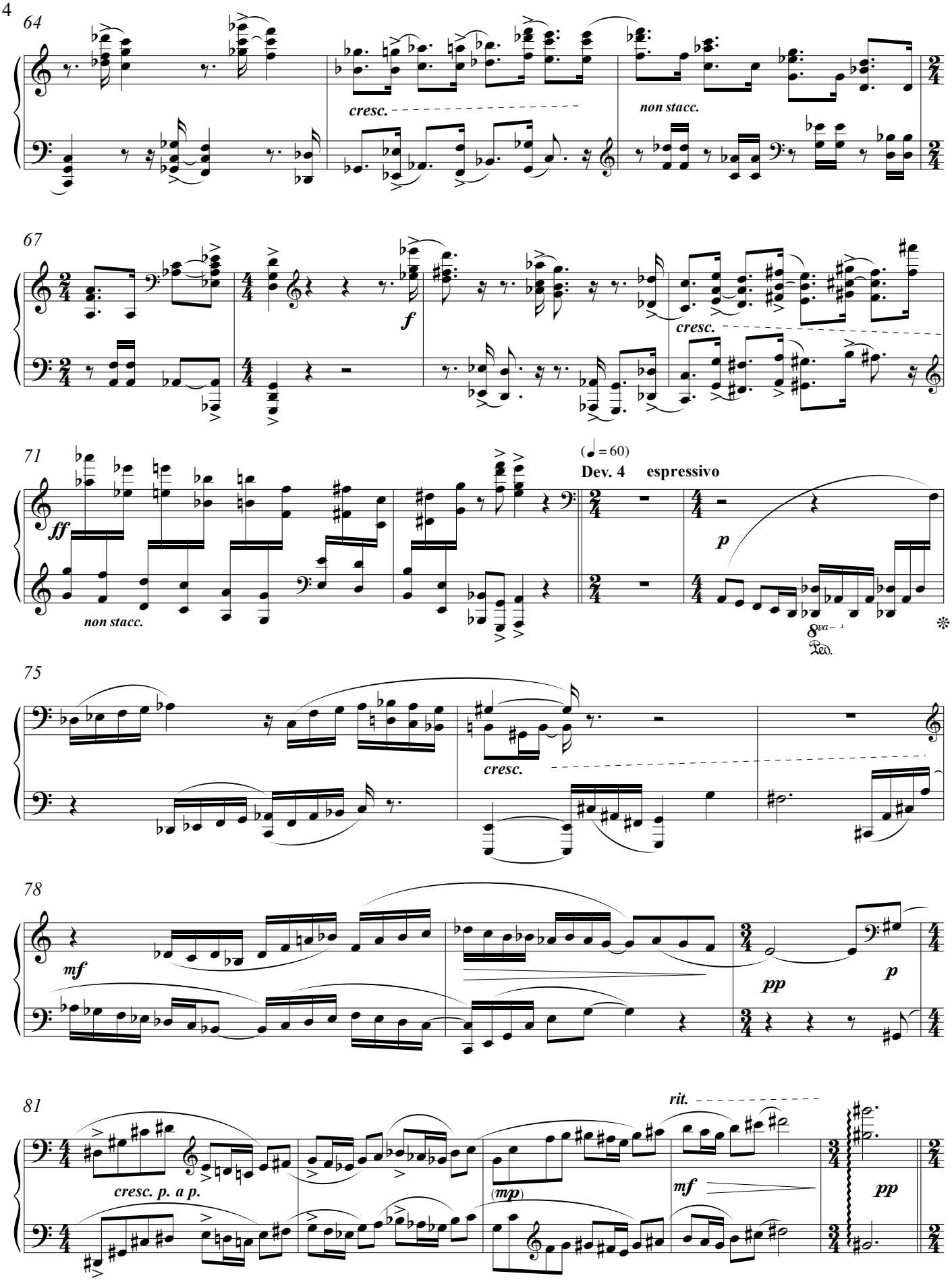
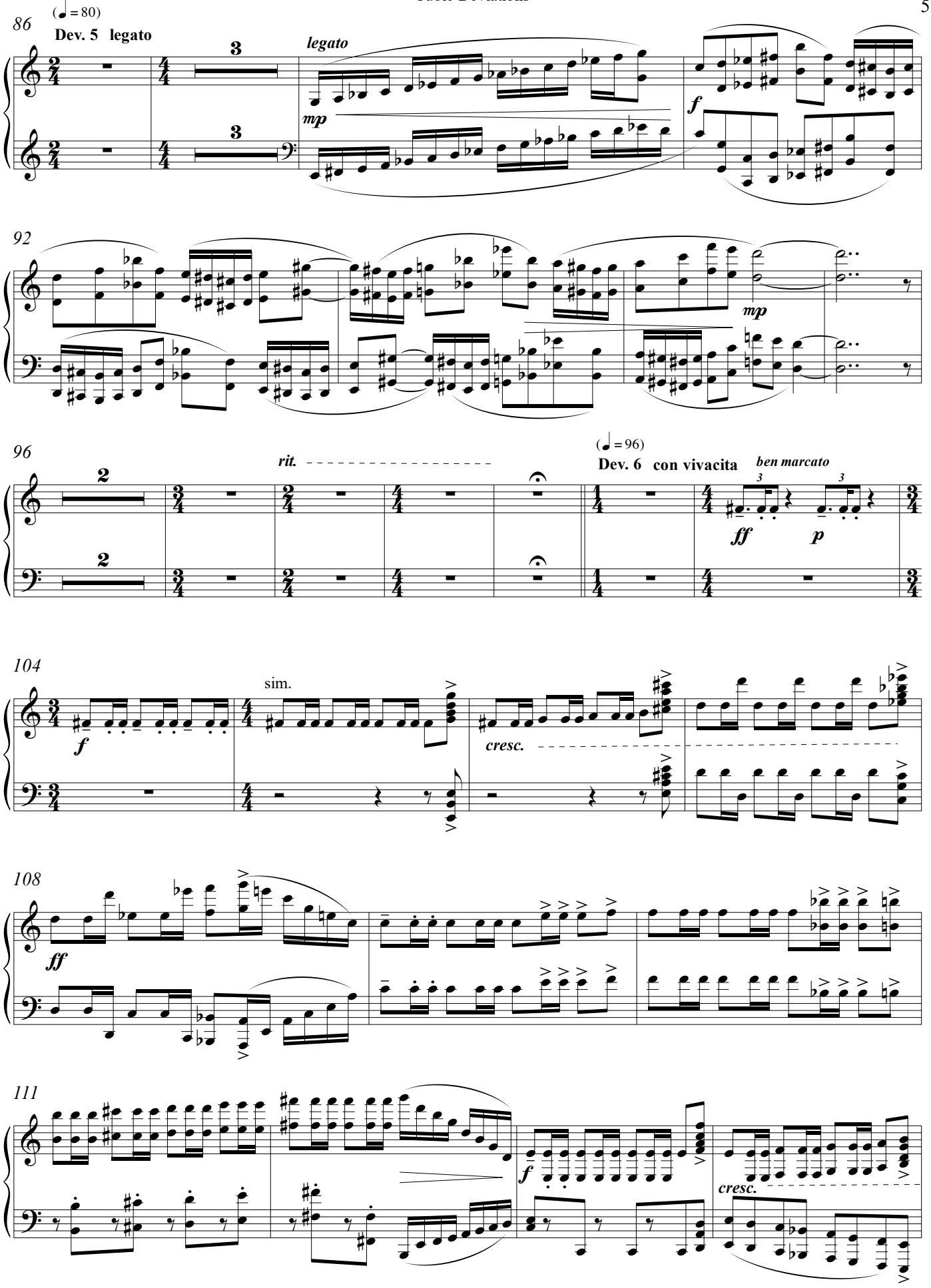
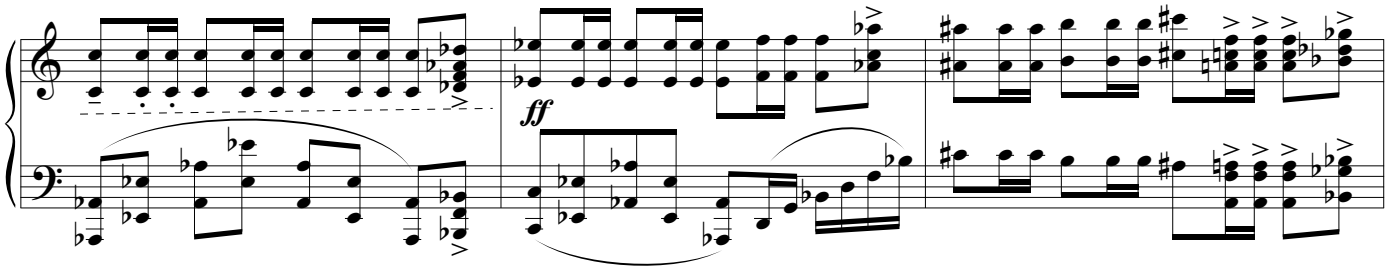

22
8va
24
(8va)
ff
Ped.
26
8va
dim.
f
28
30
tenuto
cresc.
32
Dev. 2
(♩= 66)
rit.
a tempo
p


42
rit.
8va
mp
cresc.
mp
f
46
a tempo
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
legato
(f)
8va
51
rit.
(8va)
(♩ = 82)
Dev. 3 risoluto
ff
p
pp
f
8va
55
cresc.
ff
f
59
cresc.
61
ff
f


64
cresc.
non stacc.
67
f
cresc.
71
ff
non stacc.
(♩ = 60)
Dev. 4 espressivo
p
8va
Ped.
75
cresc.
78
mf
pp
p
81
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
rit.
mf
pp


86
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 5 legato
legato
mp
f
92
mp
96
rit.
(♩ = 96)
Dev. 6 con vivacita
ben marcato
ff
p
104
sim.
f
cresc.
108
ff
111
f
cresc.

115



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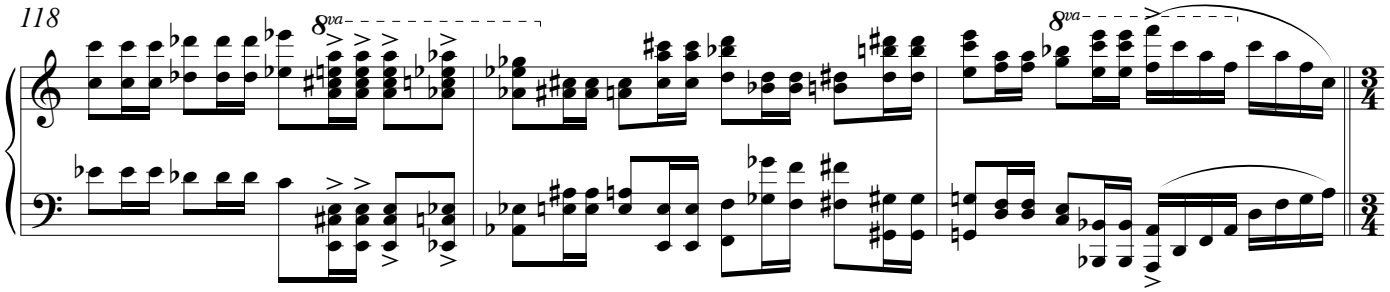
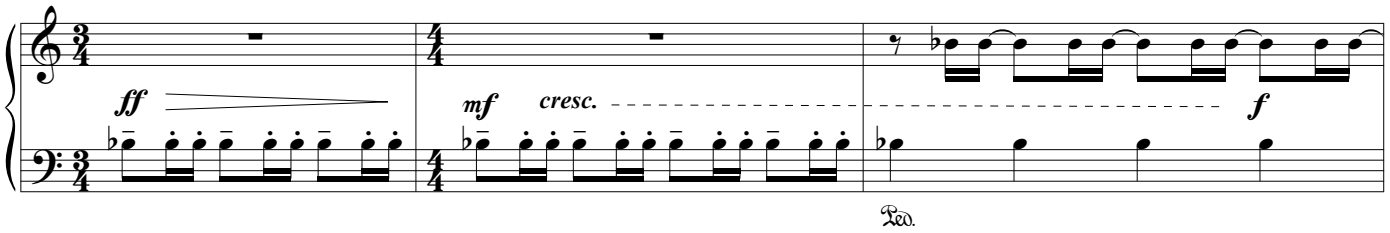


121 **Dev. 7**



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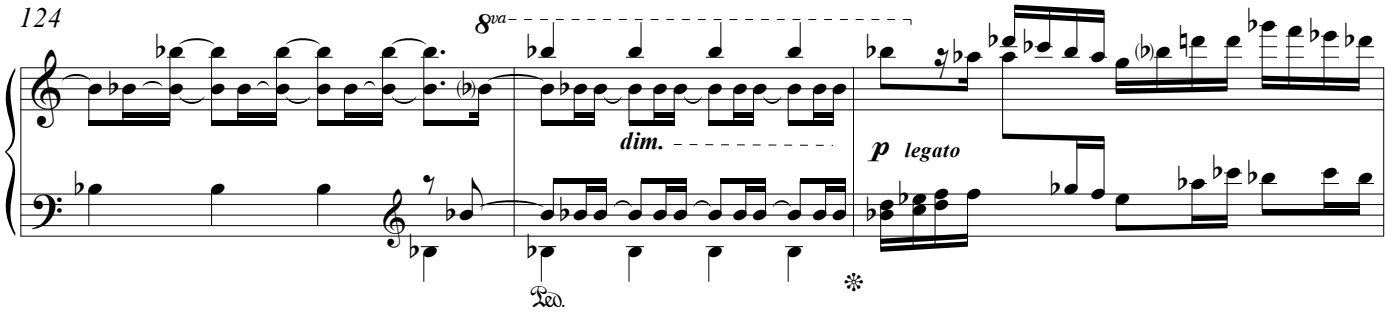
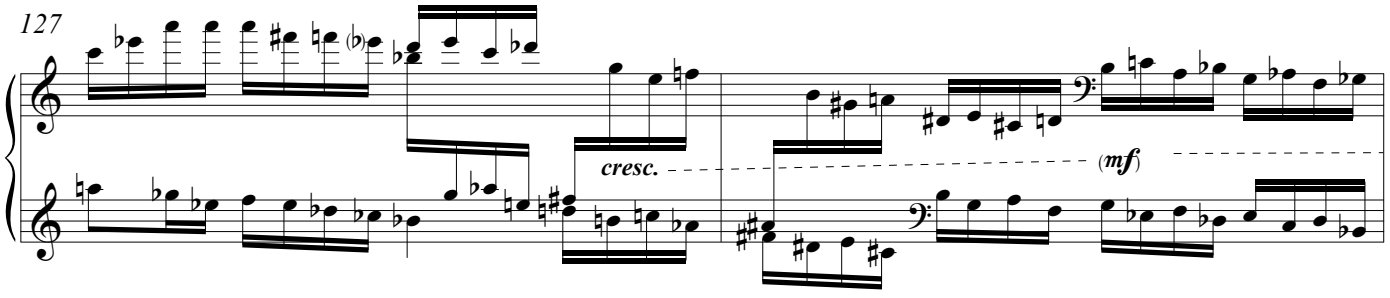


127



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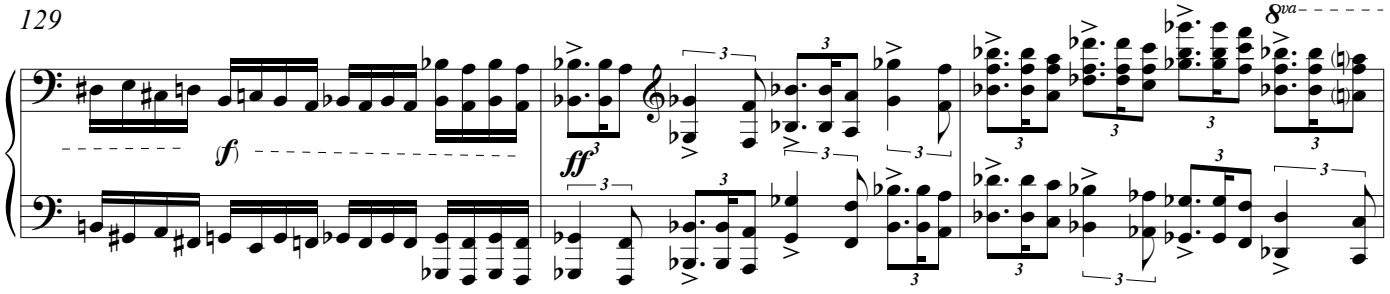
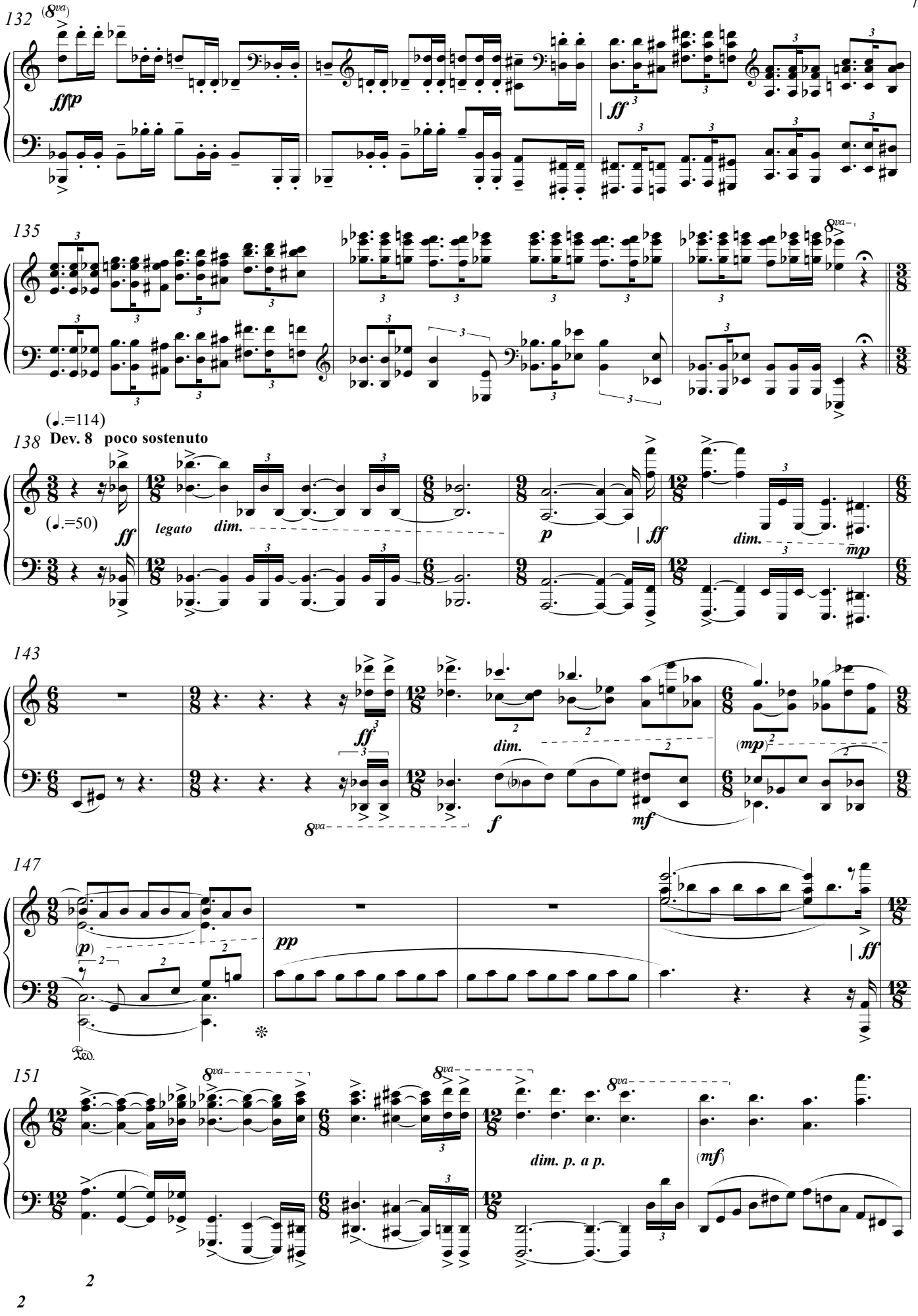
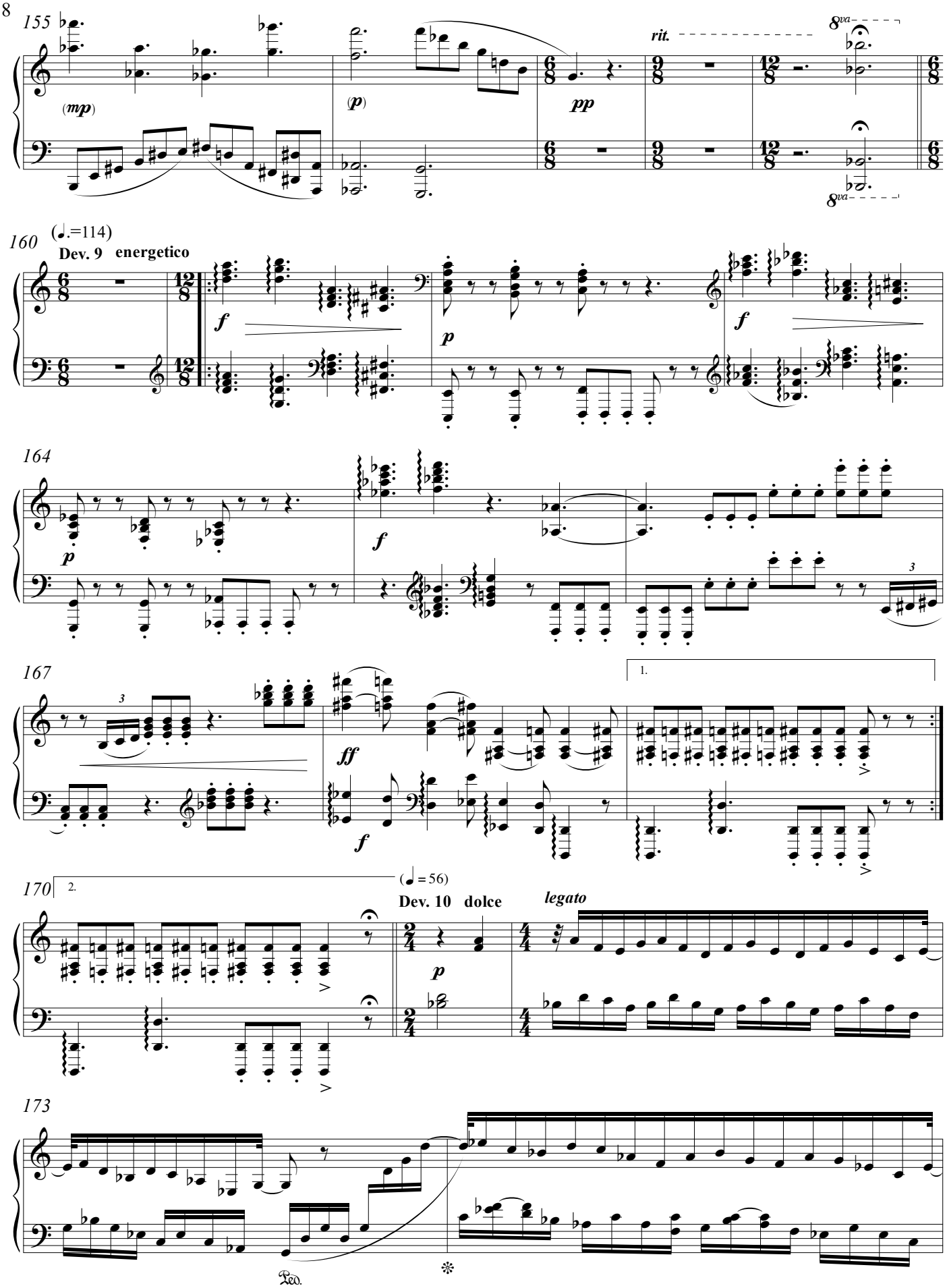
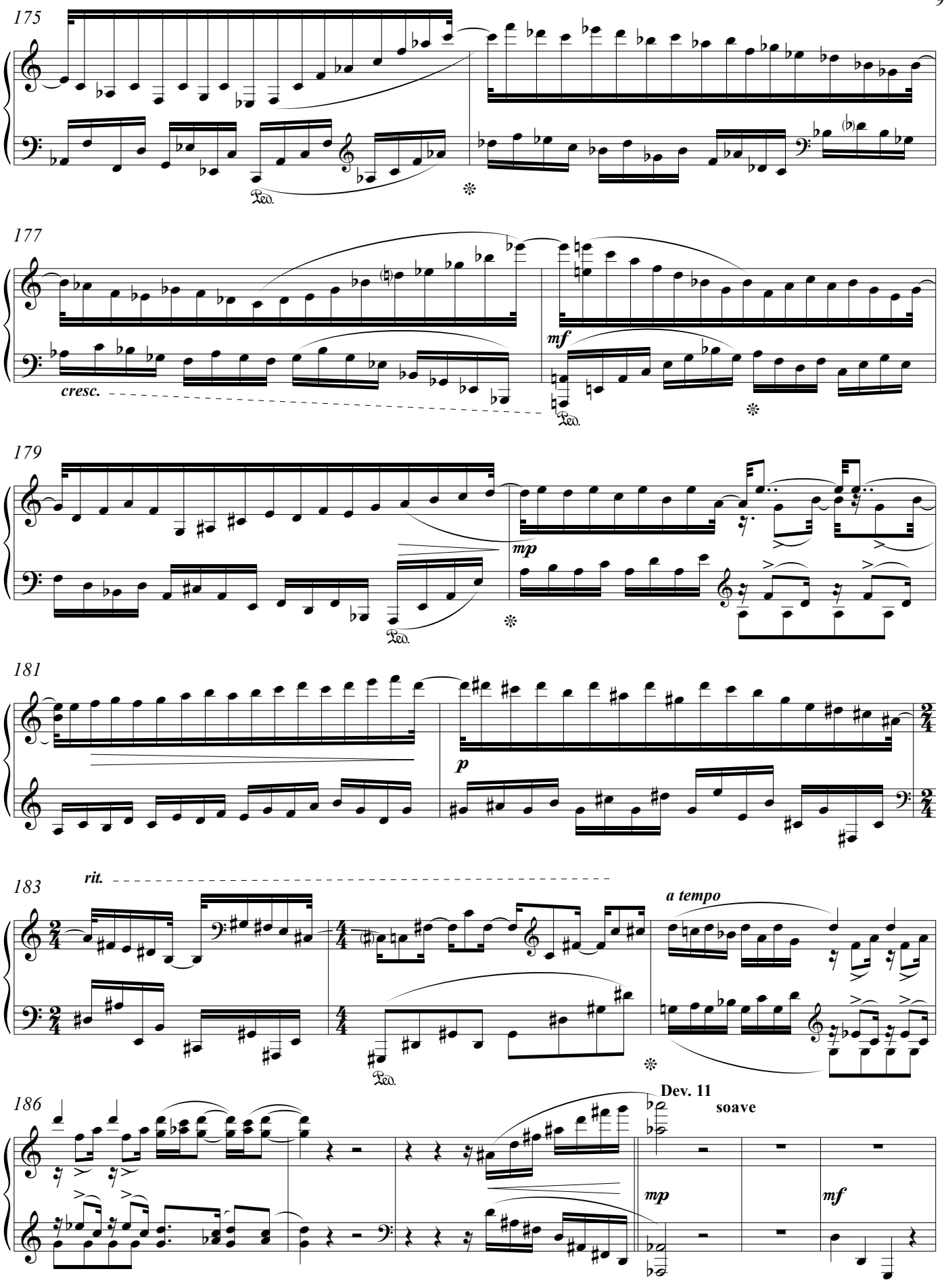
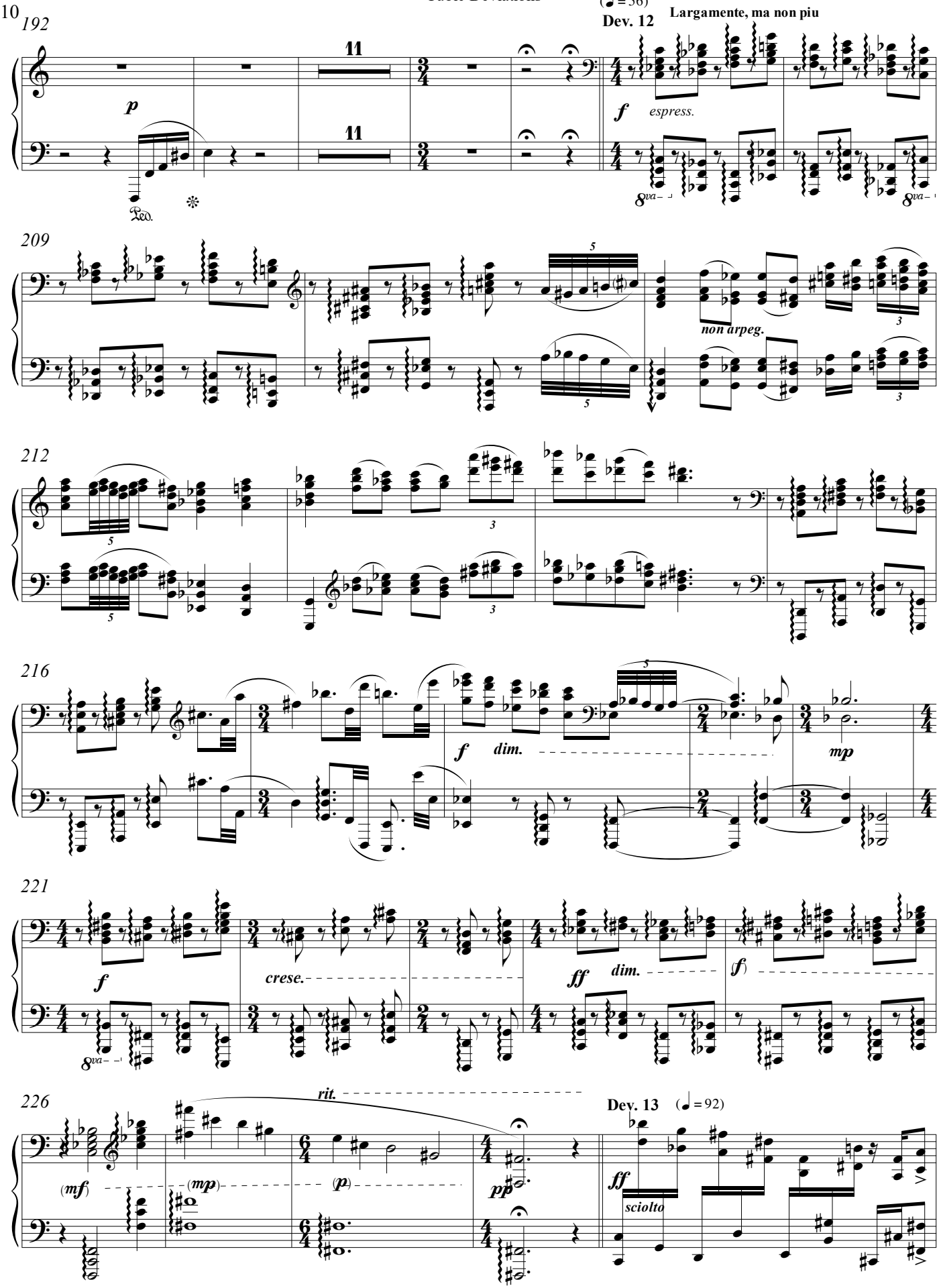
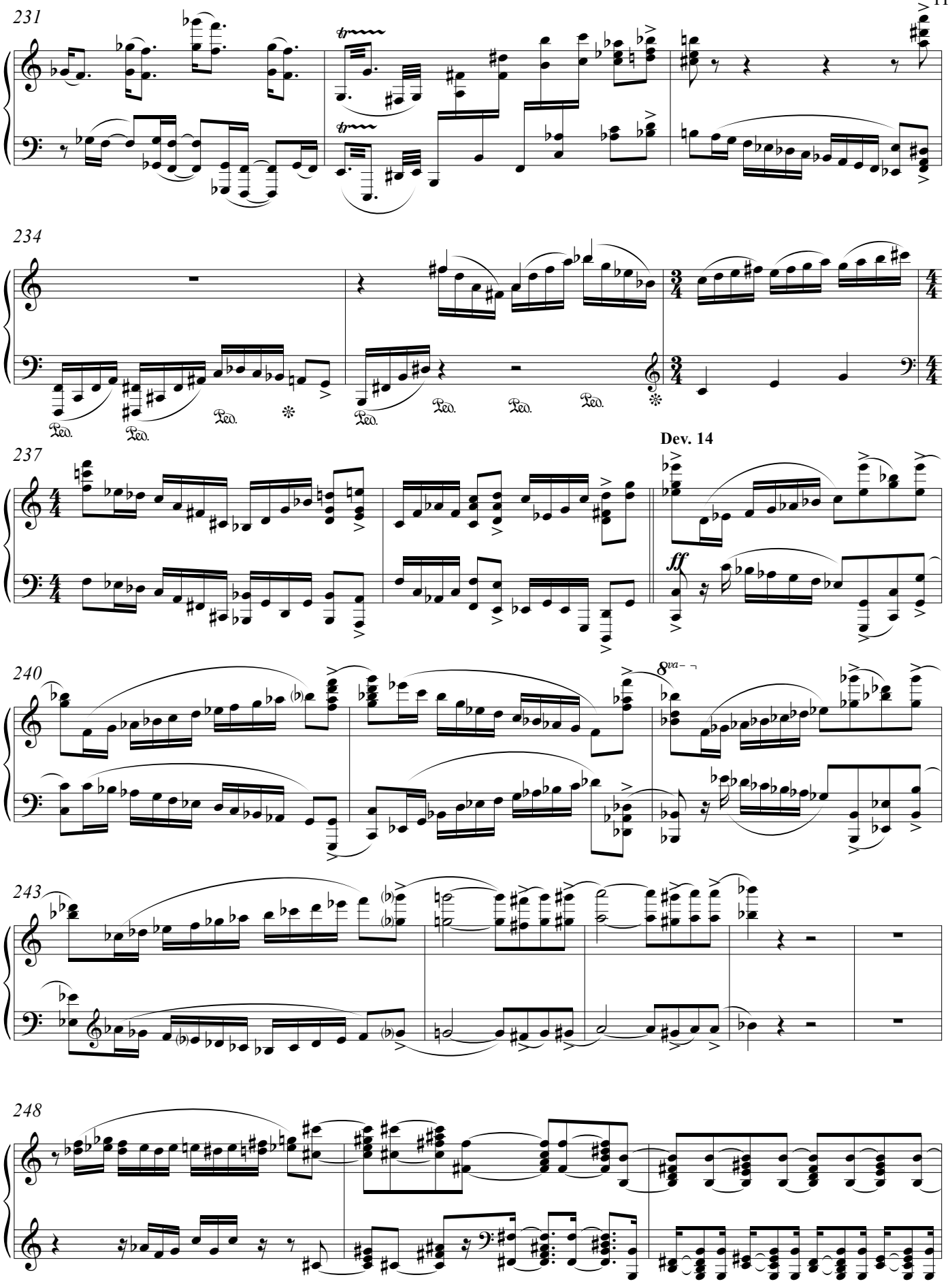


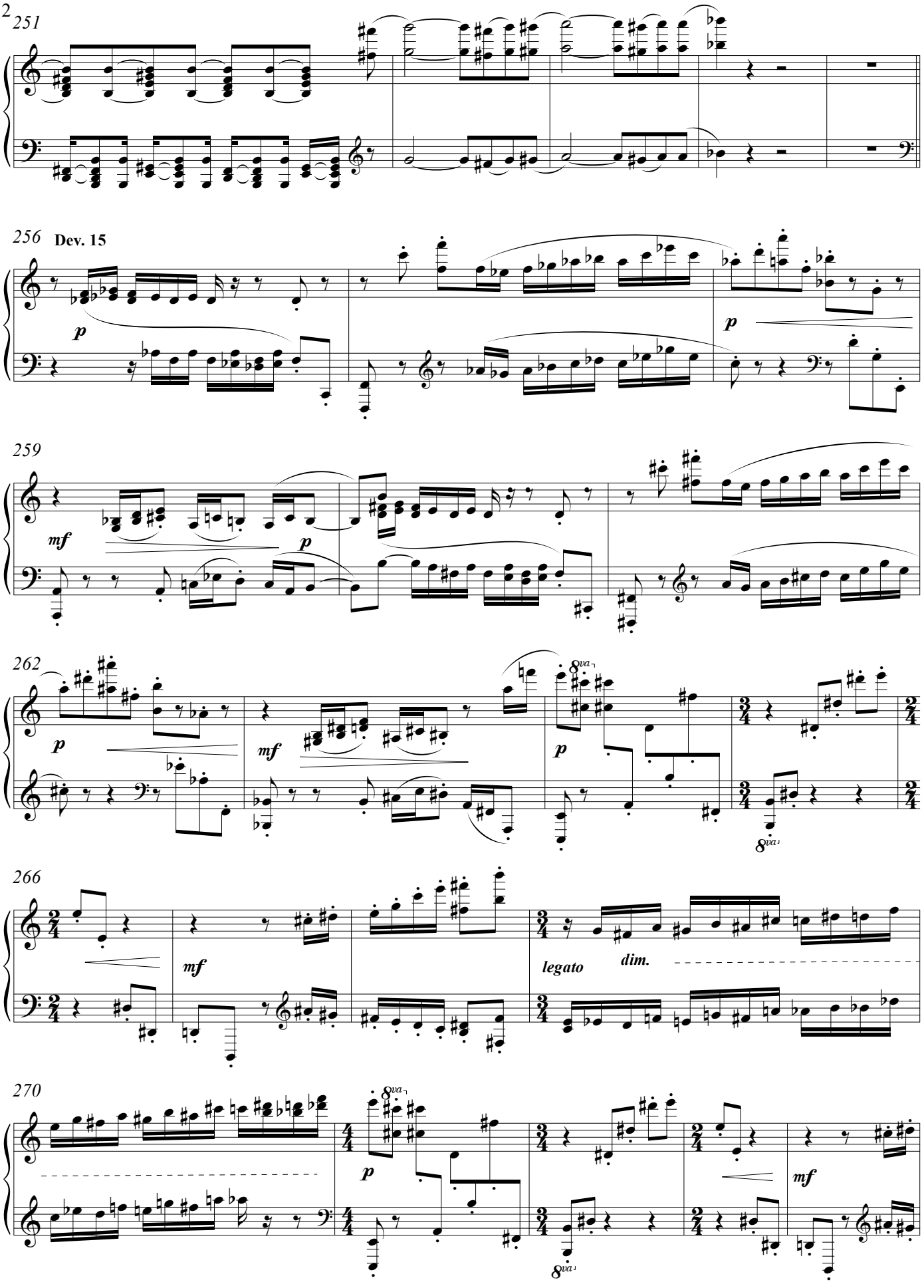

132
(8va)
fffp
ff
135
8va
(♩.=114)
138
Dev. 8 poco sostenuto
(♩.=50)
ff
legato
dim.
p
ff
dim.
mp
143
ff
dim.
(mp)
8va
f
mf
147
(p)
pp
ff
Ped.
151
8va
8va
8va
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
2
2
2

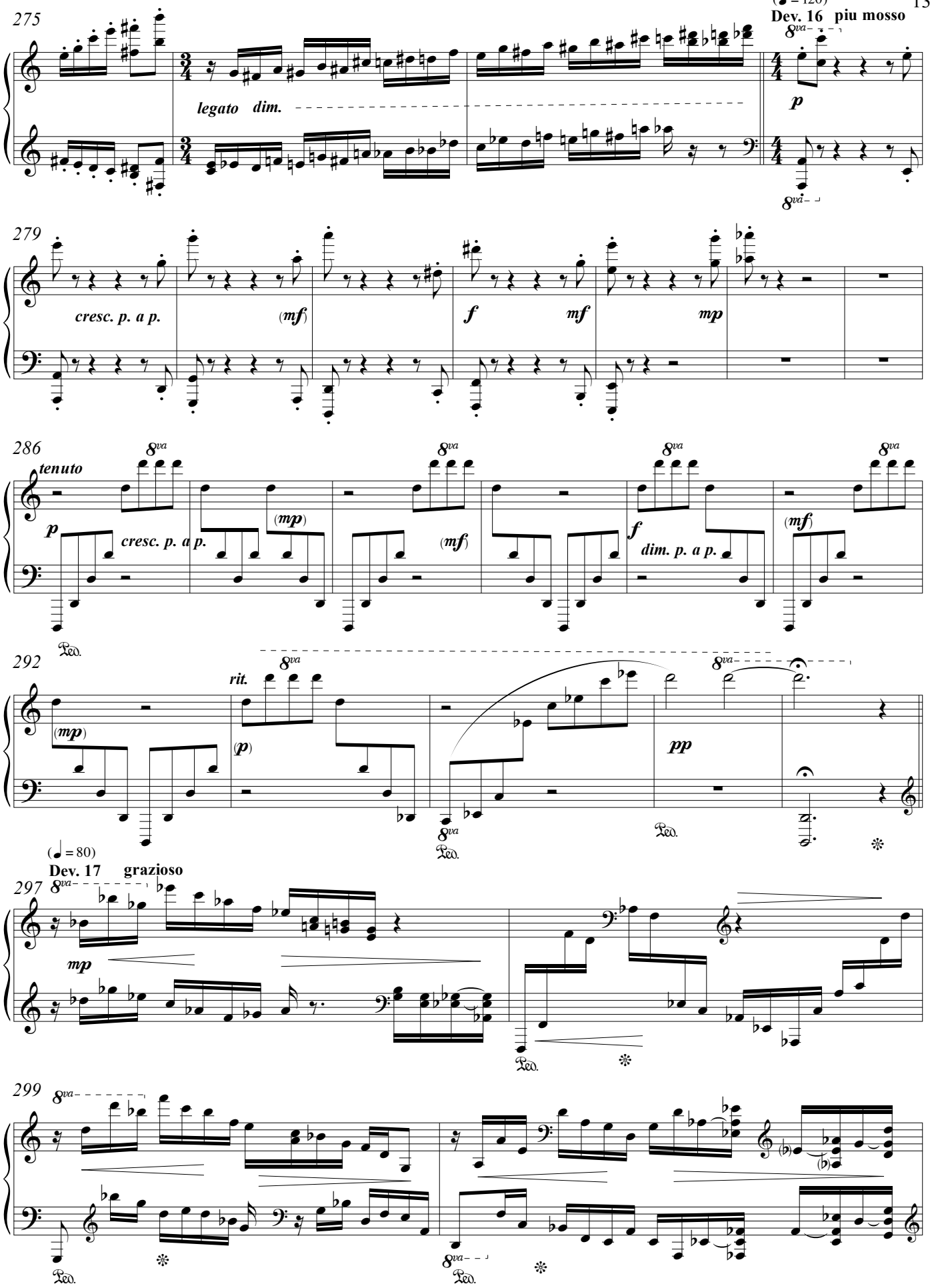

155
(mp)
(p)
pp
rit.
8va
8va
160
(♩.=114)
Dev. 9 energetico
f
p
f
164
p
f
3
167
3
ff
f
1.
170
2.
(♩ = 56)
Dev. 10 dolce
legato
p
173
Ped.

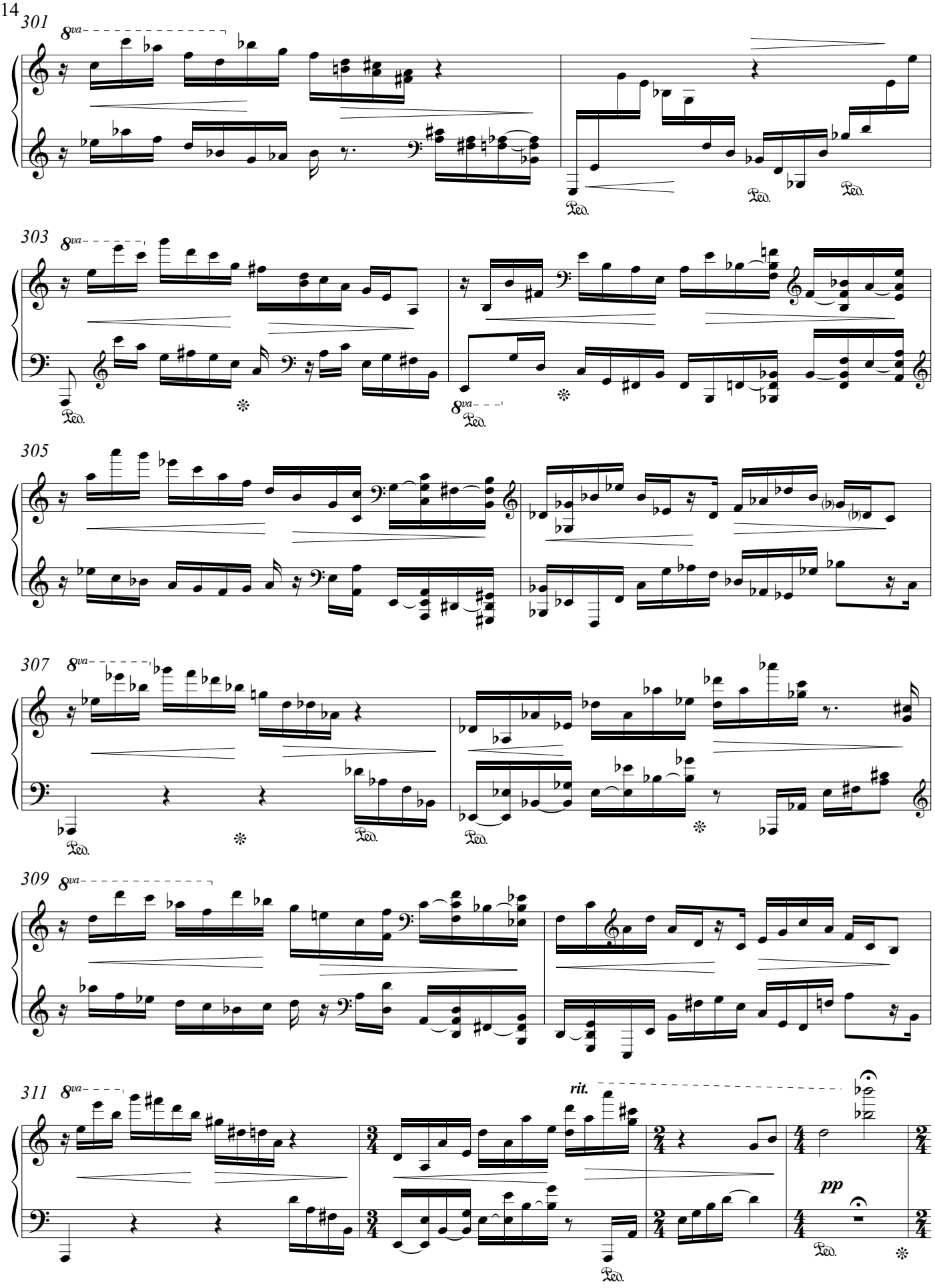

175
Ped.
177
cresc.
mf
Ped.
179
mp
Ped.
181
p
183
rit.
a tempo
Ped.
186
Dev. 11
soave
mp
mf

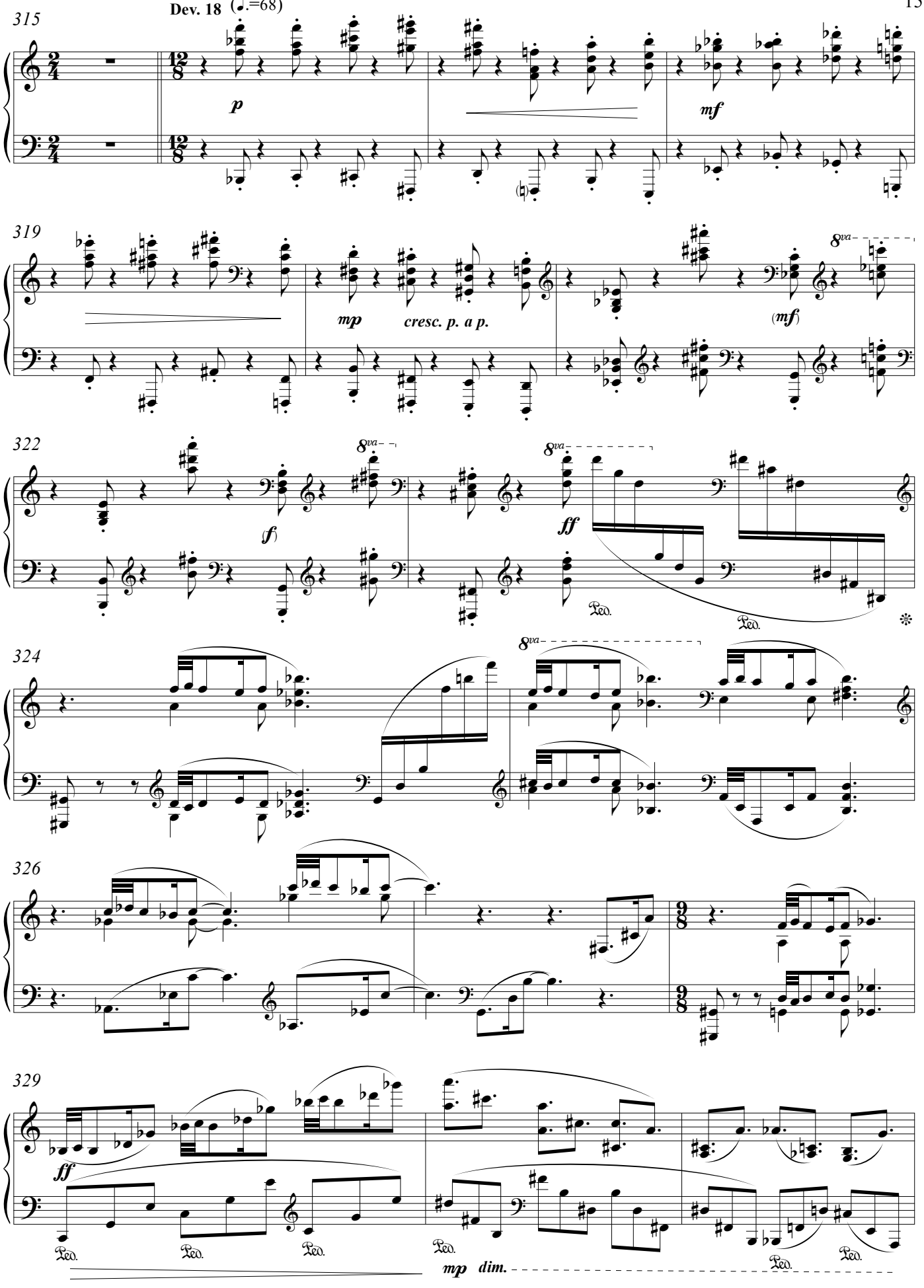

192
(♩ = 56)
Dev. 12
Largamente, ma non piu
p
f
espress.
11
11
Ped.
8va
209
non arpeg.
212
216
f
dim.
mp
221
f
crese.
ff
dim.
f
226
rit.
(mf)
(mp)
(p)
pp
Dev. 13
(♩ = 92)
ff
sciolto

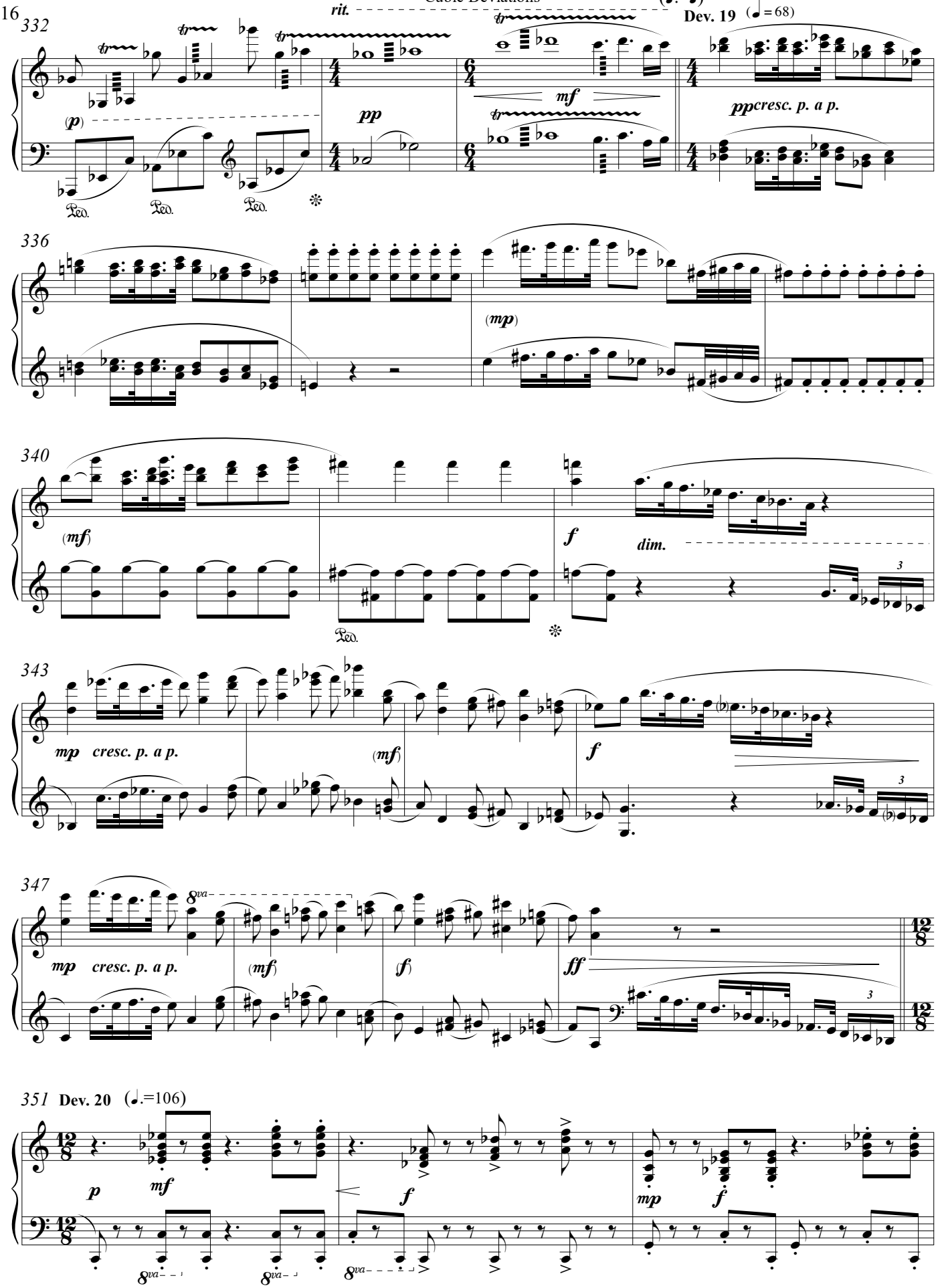

231
234
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
237
Dev. 14
ff
240
8va
243
248

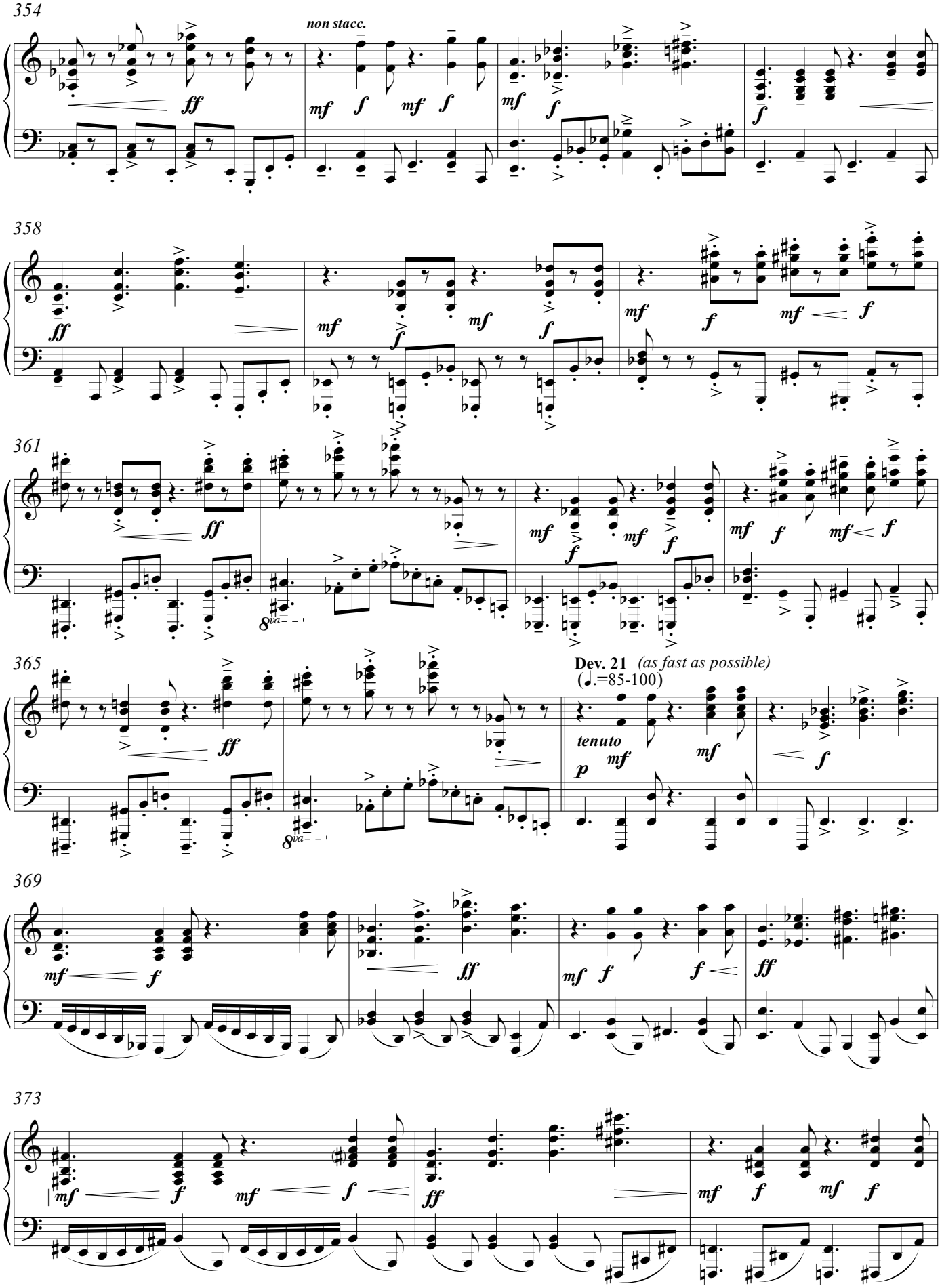

251
256
Dev. 15
p
p
259
mf
p
262
p
mf
p
8va
8va
266
mf
legato
dim.
270
8va
p
8va
mf

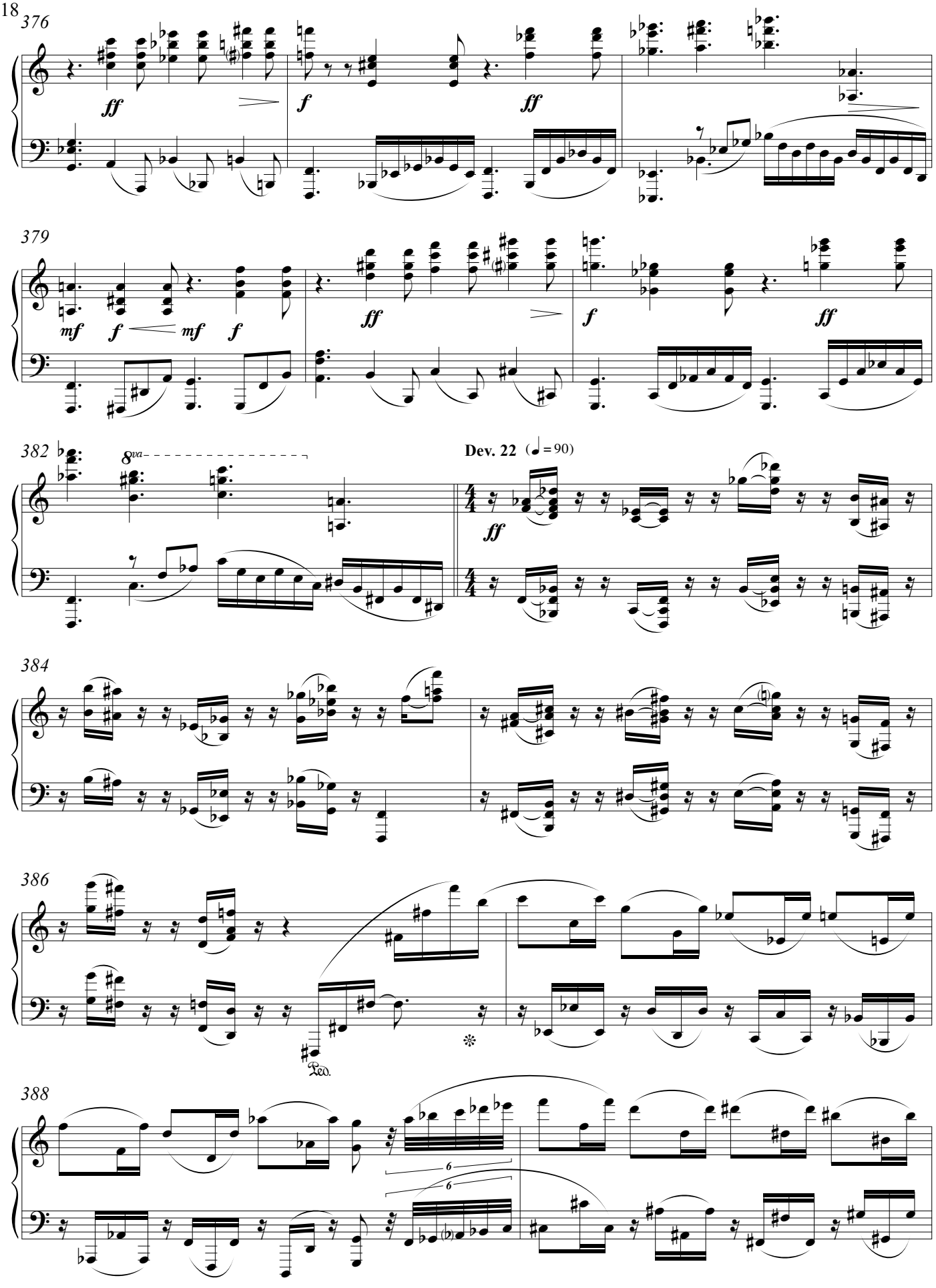

275
legato dim.
(♩ = 120)
Dev. 16 piu mosso
8va
p
279
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
f
mf
mp
286
tenuto
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
(mf)
f
dim. p. a p.
(mf)
Ped.
292
rit.
(mp)
(p)
pp
(♩ = 80)
Dev. 17 grazioso
297
mp
299

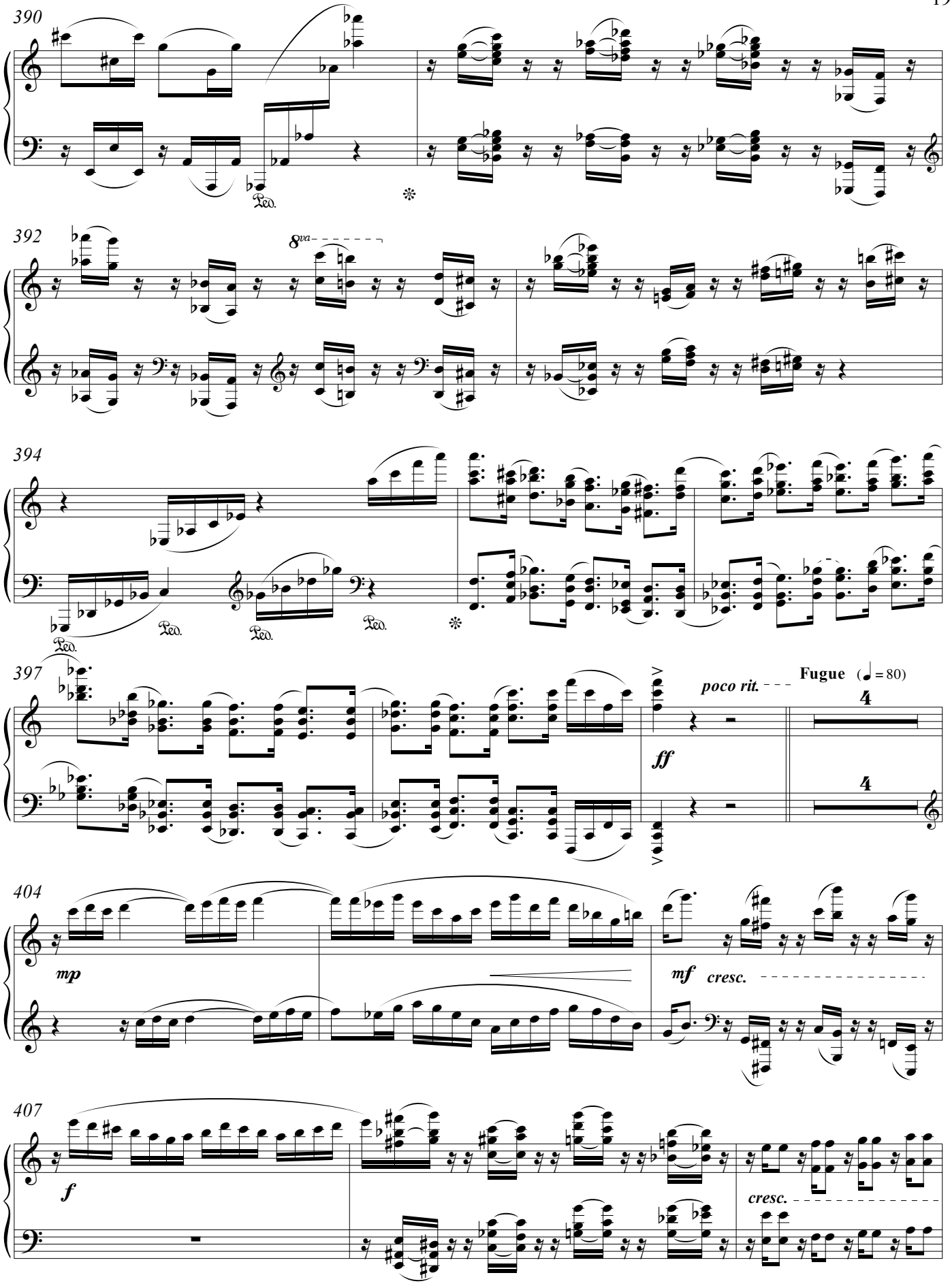

301
8va
Ped.
303
8va
Ped.
305
307
8va
Ped.
309
8va
311
8va
rit.
pp
Ped.

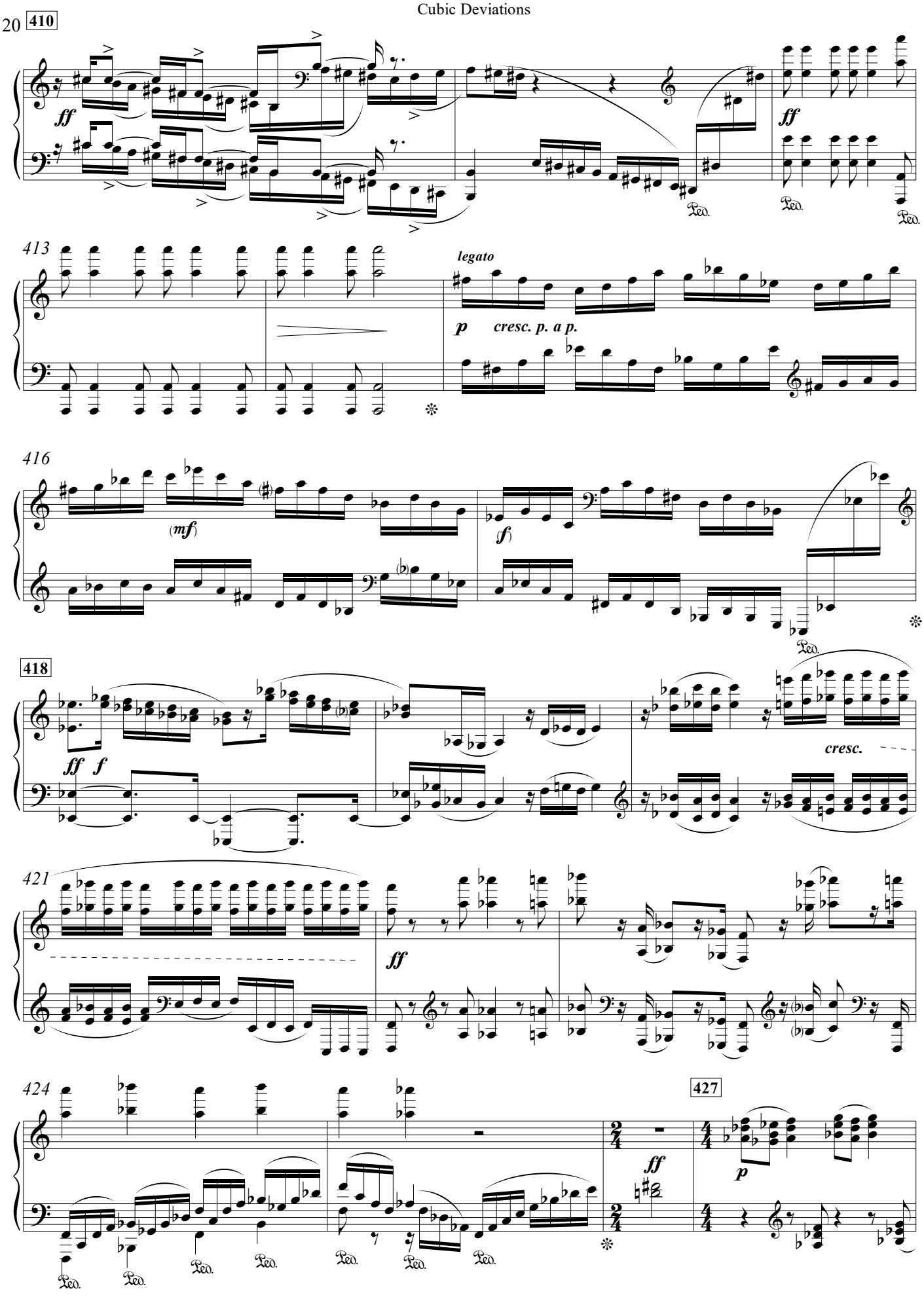

315
Dev. 18 (♩.=68)
p
mf
319
mp
cresc. p. a p.
8va
(mf)
322
8va
f
8va
ff
Ped.
Ped.
324
8va
326
329
ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
mp dim.
Ped.
Ped.

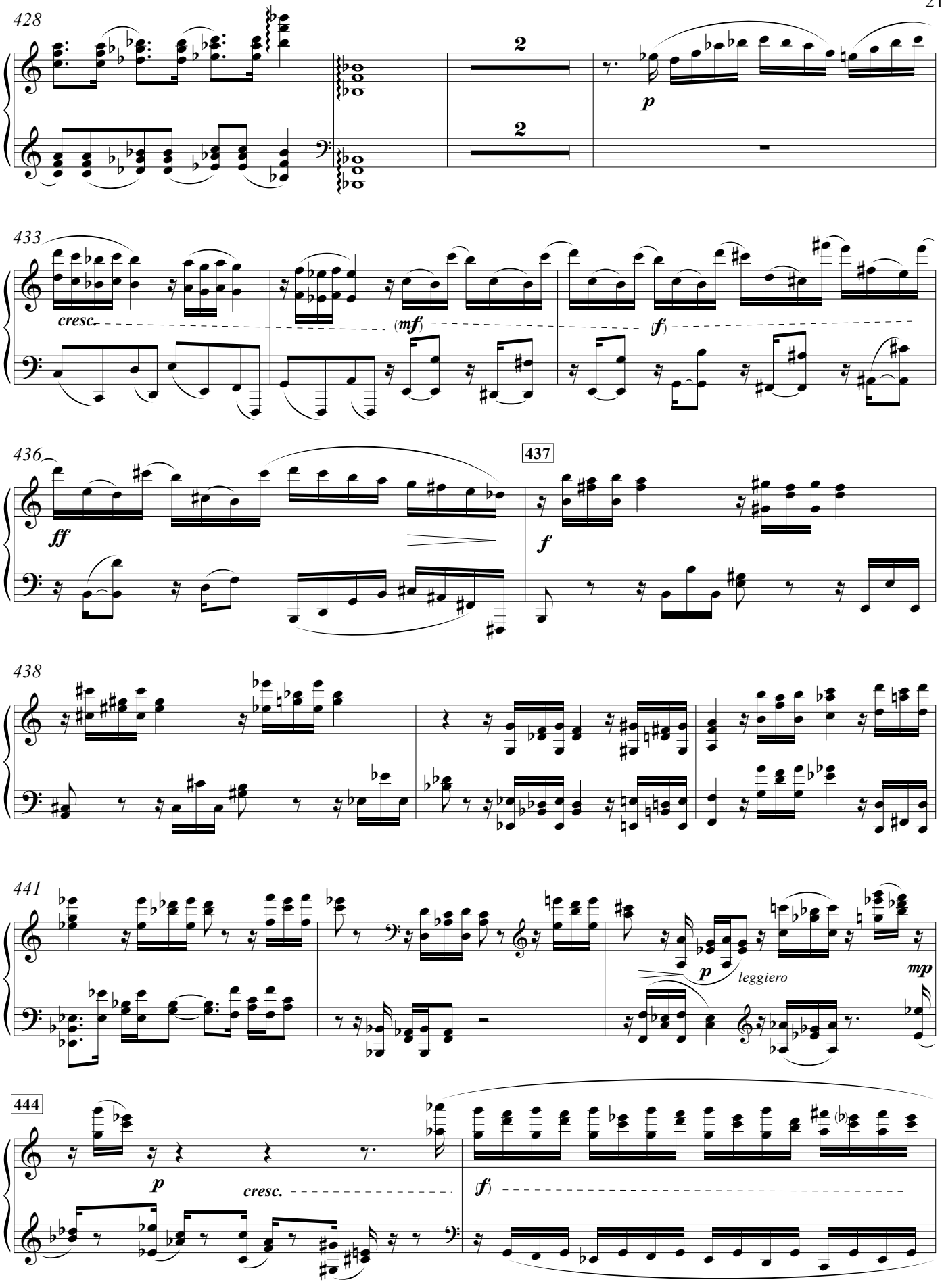

rit.
(♩.=♩)
Dev. 19 (♩=68)
332
(p)
pp
mf
ppcresc. p. a p.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
336
(mp)
340
(mf)
f
dim.
Ped.
343
mp cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
f
347
8va
mp cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
(f)
ff
351 Dev. 20 (♩.=106)
p
mf
f
mp
f
8va
8va
8va

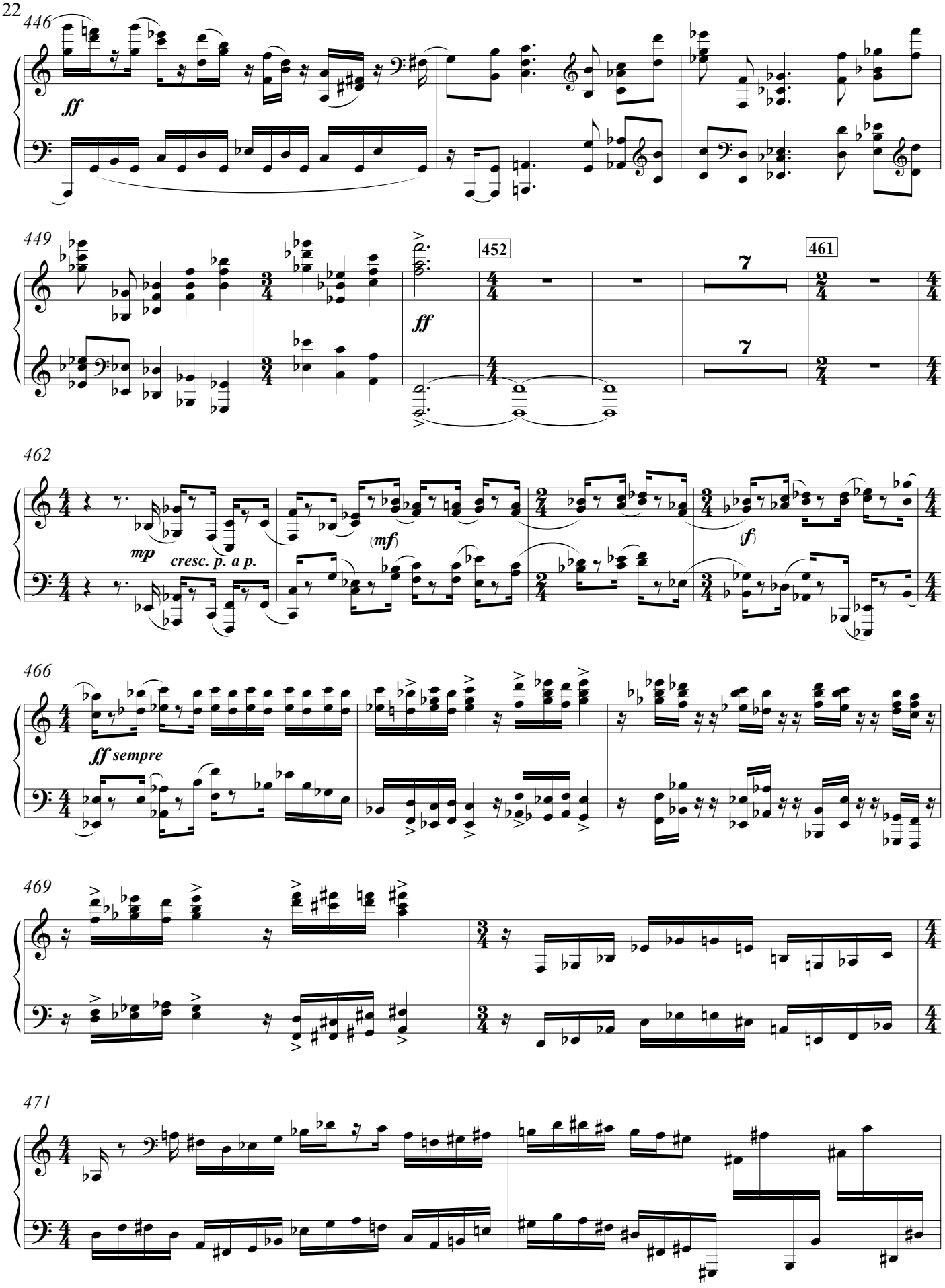

354
non stacc.
358
361
365
Dev. 21 (as fast as possible)
(♩.=85-100)
tenuto
369
373

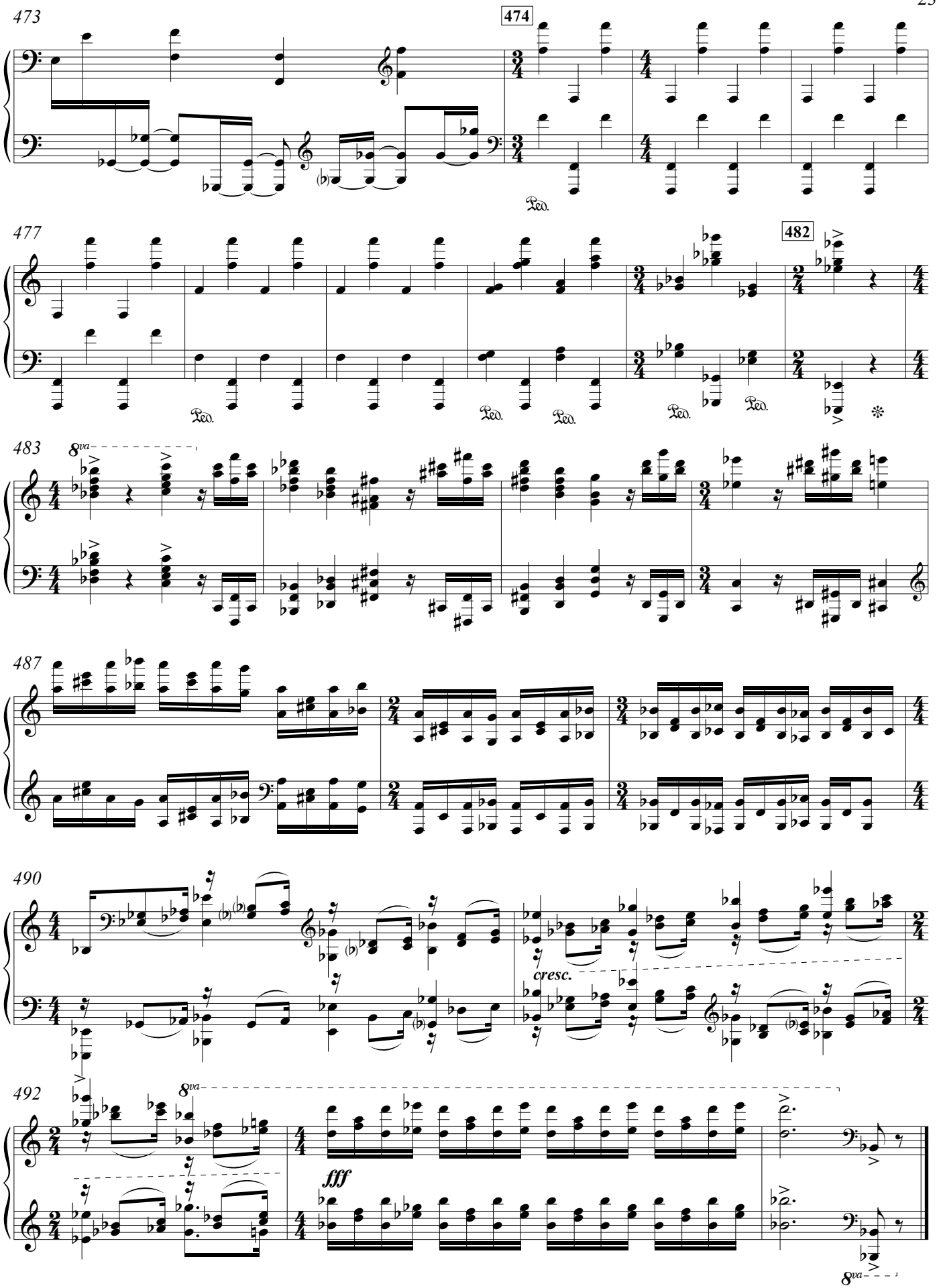

376
379
382
8va
Dev. 22 (♩ = 90)
384
386
Ped.
388
6
6


390
Ped.
392
8va
394
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
397
poco rit.
Fugue (♩ = 80)
4
4
ff
404
mp
mf
cresc.
407
f
cresc.


410
ff
ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
413
legato
p
cresc. p. a p.
416
(mf)
f
Ped.
418
ff f
cresc.
421
ff
424
427
ff
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.


428
2
2
p
433
cresc.
(mf)
f
436
437
ff
f
438
441
p
leggiero
mp
444
p
cresc.
f


446
ff
449
452
ff
7
461
7
462
mp
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
(f)
466
ff sempre
469
471


473
474
Ped.
477
482
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
483
8va
487
490
cresc.
492
8va
fff
8va