As Children Hear

Six Nursery Rhymes
for Piano

I. Jack be Nimble
II. Ring Around the Rosies
III. Little Miss Muffet
IV. Little Boy Blue
V. Cold and Raw the North Wind Doth Blow
VI. To Market, to Market

Theodore A. Jander

Written for my beautiful children,
Ellie Faith and Evan Kenneth.
I love you so very much!

About the Music:

My six-year-old daughter, Ellie, and my three-year-old son, Evan, both enjoy listening to me read from their Mother Goose books as well as many other stories. Ellie and Evan have brought me a great deal of compositional inspiration over the past six years. They have opened up a whole new way of perceiving the world, especially music. Hence, the title, *As Children Hear*. The main theme of these character pieces is that each is based on a literal interpretation derived from the entire text, a portion of the text or from the nursery rhyme's history.

I. Jack be Nimble – p. 3

Jack, be nimble,
Jack, be quick,
Jack, jump over
The candlestick.

The term "jump" provided the main musical building block for this lighthearted final selection. Within the first three measures, Jack jumps over the candlestick three times, though stumbling a bit after the third attempt. He continues to jump. However, after another few attempts Jack takes quiet a tumble. Even so, he picks himself up, tries three more times and sticks the final landing.

II. Ring Around the Rosies – p. 5

Ring a-round the rosies,
A pocket full of posies,
Ashes! Ashes!
We all fall down!

Made popular as a children's game, "Ring Around the Rosies" may be less than innocent. In the initial stages of research one particular origin served as the perfect concept for interpretation. It has been said this nursery rhyme derives from the bubonic plague outbreak which spread across Europe beginning in the Middle Ages. However, much to my chagrin, several other sources have claimed this story to be an urban legend. Regardless, a lilting melody is developed into a dizzying round (Ring AROUND….they all fall down) and is based on an unconventional octatonic scale.

III. Little Miss Muffet – p. 7

Little Miss Muffet
Sat on a tuffet
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider,
Who sat down beside her
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

Typically recited in a light-hearted demeanor, this poem actually depicts something that every child encounters, fear. In this case, a fear of spiders. Though the music portrays the spider's arrival, the overall mood of the piece is derived from any fear a child may come upon.

IV. Little Boy Blue – p. 9

Little Boy Blue, come blow your horn,
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn.
Where is the boy who looks after the sheep?
He's under a haystack, fast asleep.
Will you wake him? No, not I,
For if I do, he's sure to cry.

Even though Little Boy Blue has drifted off to sleep, a horn call is heard in the first few measures and leads into a cascading melody creating a serene pastoral setting. The movement away from G-flat major during the brief B section provides a glimpse into Little Boy Blue's dreams as he slumbers. As the A section returns, serenity continues in his sleep.

V. Cold and Raw the North Wind Doth Blow – p. 11

Cold and raw the north wind doth blow
Bleak in the morning early,
All the hills are covered with snow,
And winters now come fairly.

A snowy, blustery morning is the scene depicted in "Cold and Raw the North Wind Doth Blow." However, the text "Cold and raw the north wind doth blow," as the foundation for the music, again takes the listener into a fear based mood similar to that of "Little Miss Muffet." As the music begins, a breeze begins to blow in short spurts. These bursts of wind begin to grow stronger and longer as the piece progresses. After a gradual build up, a turbulent wind surges, overcoming the musical landscape as the howling gusts may frighten, but luckily die away to peace and stillness.

VI. To Market, to Market – p. 16

To market, to market, to buy a fat pig,
Home again, home again, jiggety jig.

To market, to market, to buy a fat hog,
Home again, home again, jiggety jog.

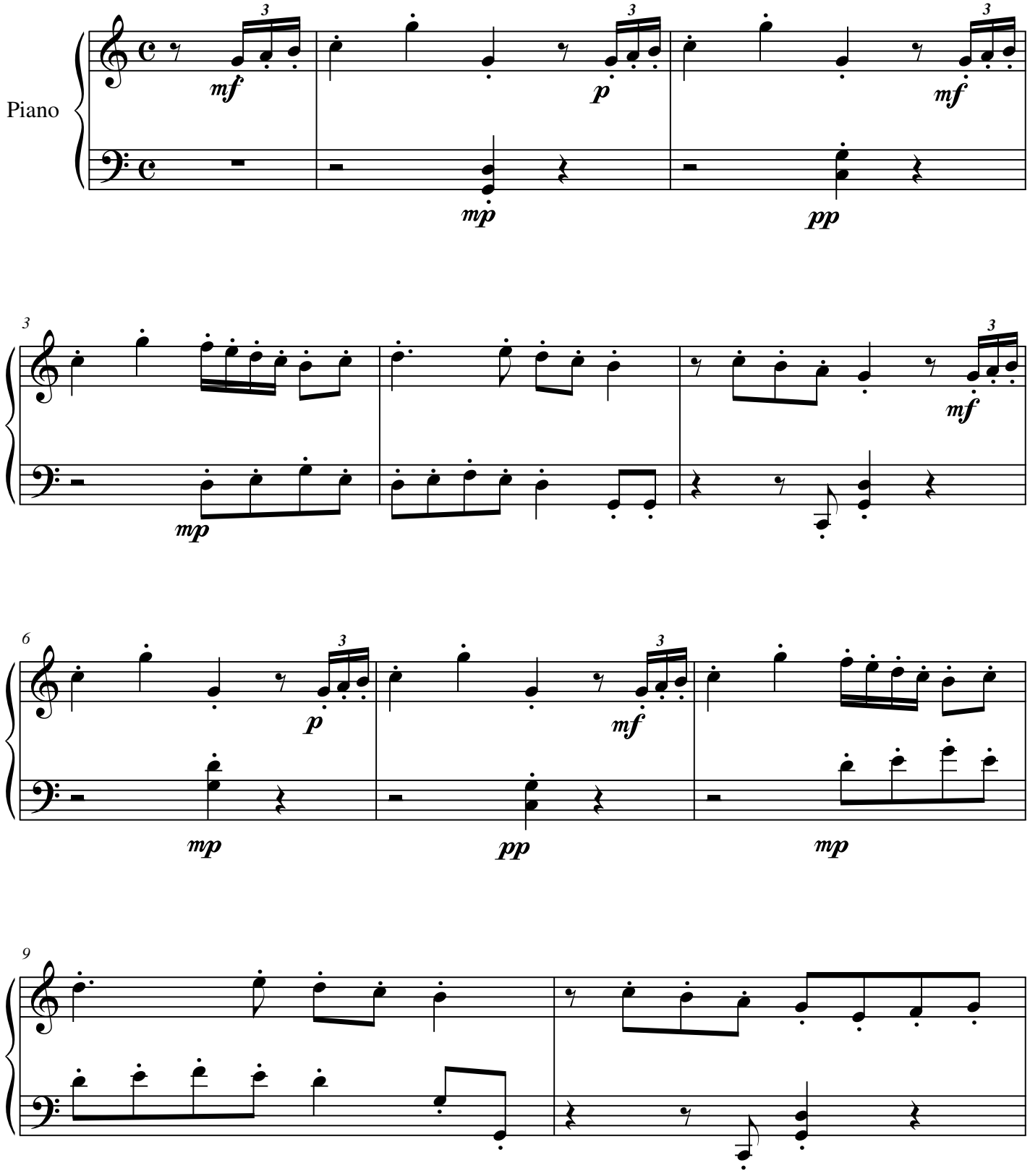
To market, to market, to buy a plum bun,
Home again, home again, market is done.

A fat pig and a jig set the mood for this final selection. The rhythmic movement creates a bouncy, yet asymmetric metered dance or jig. This rhythmic ostinato begins in the bass as a representation of the fat pig and hog.

Jack be Nimble

Theodore A. Jander
(2007/2008)

Buoyantly, yet with rubato (♩= 120)



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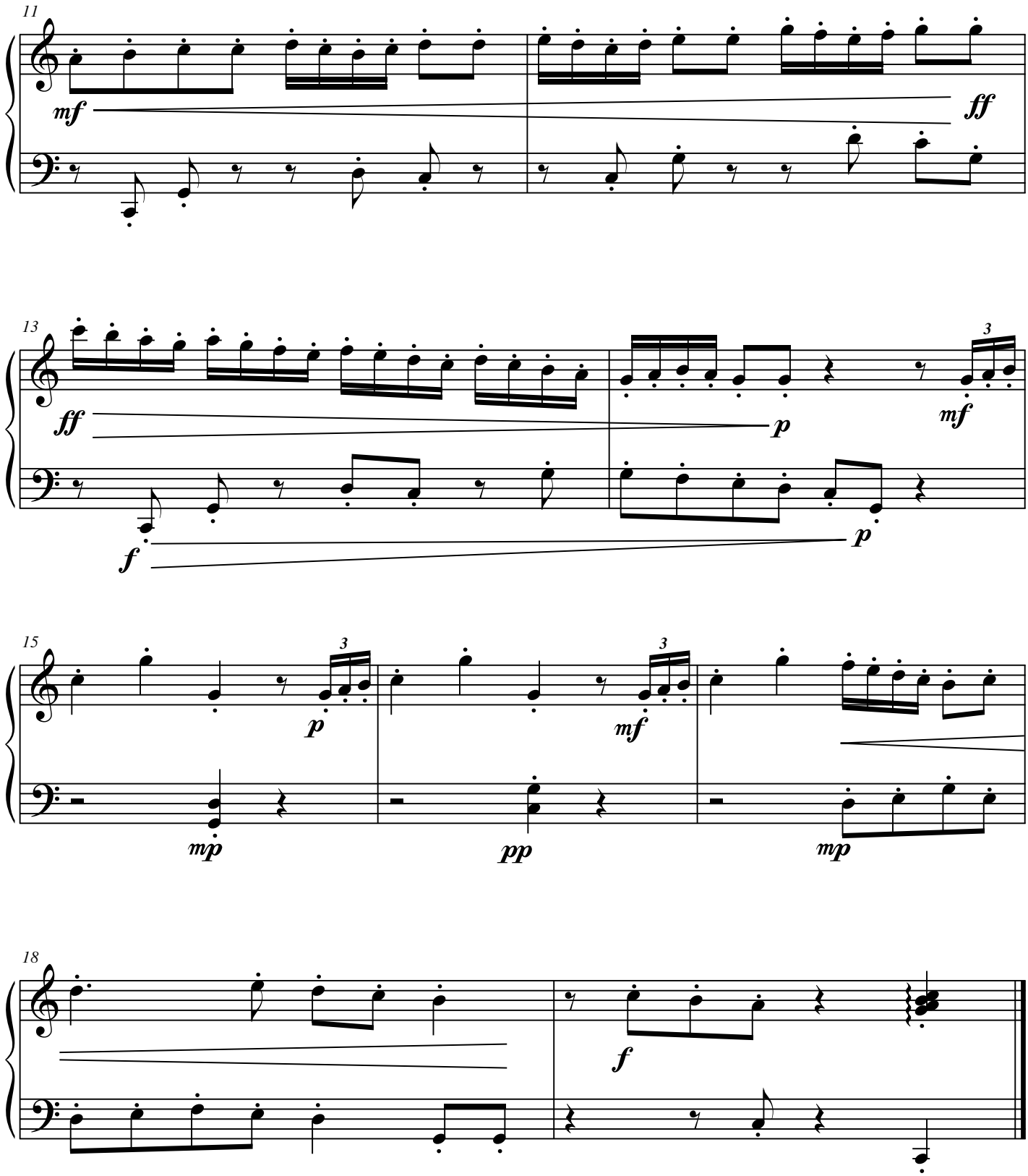
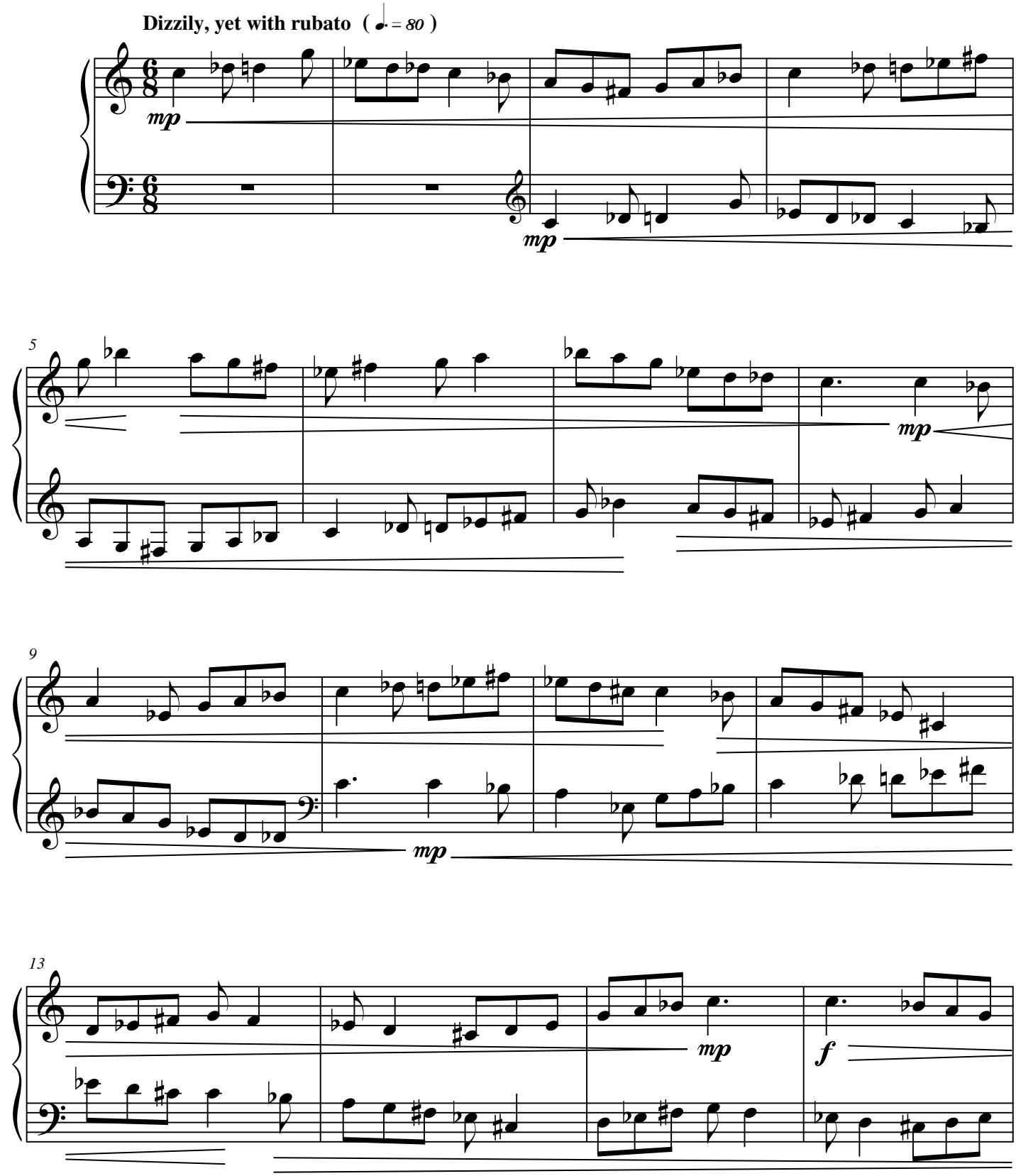
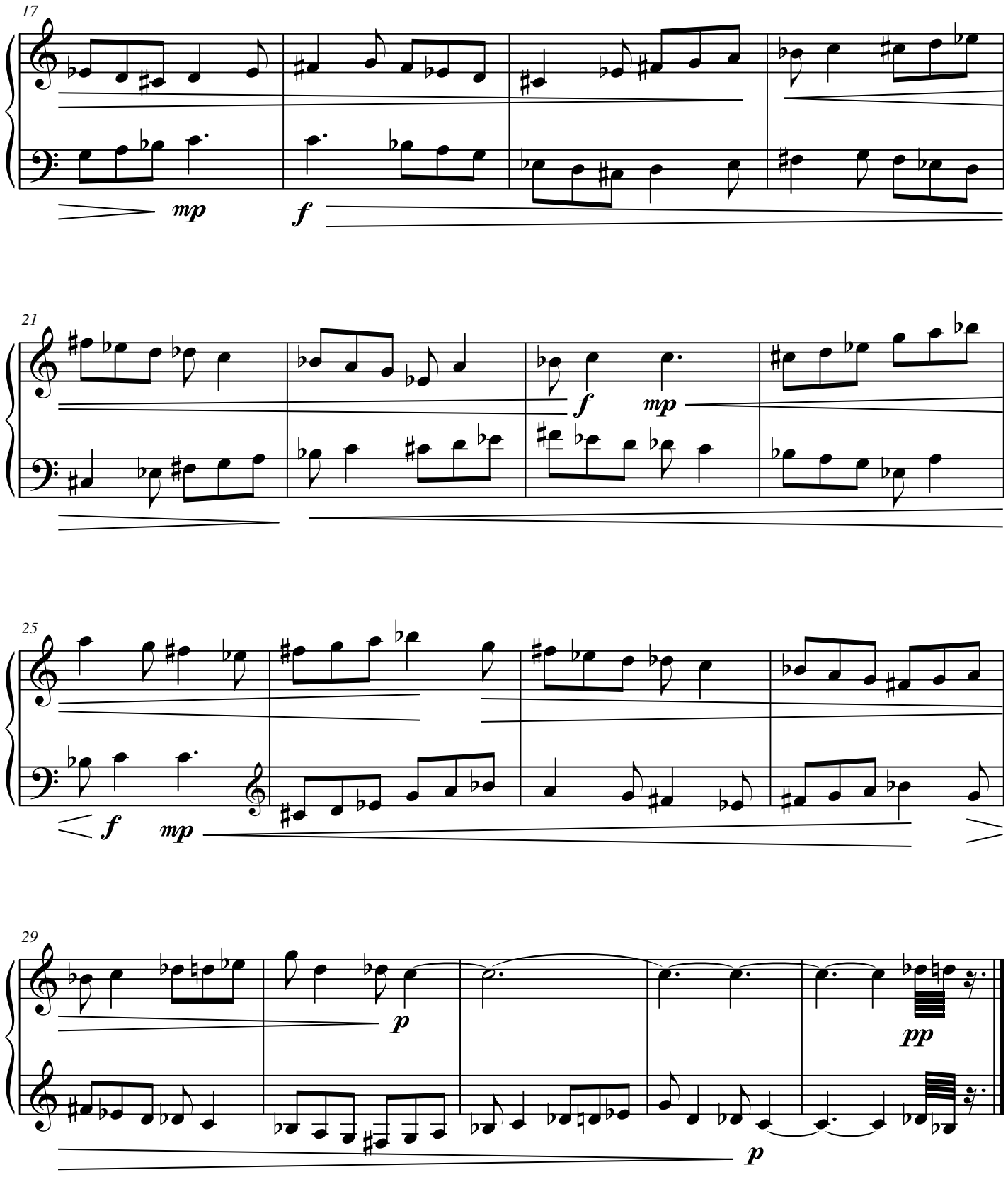
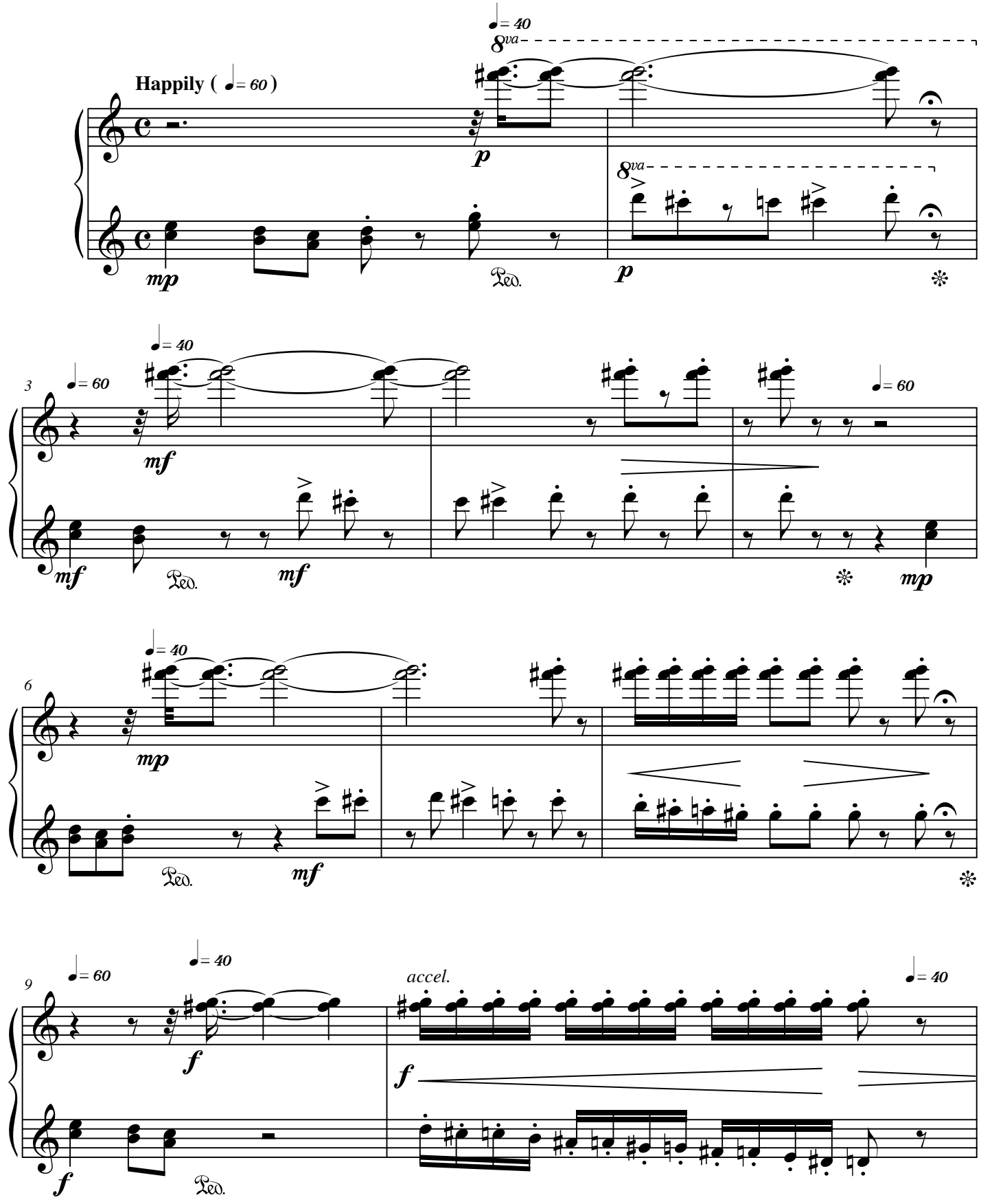

11
mf
ff
13
ff
f
p
p
mf
15
p
mf
mp
pp
mp
18
f

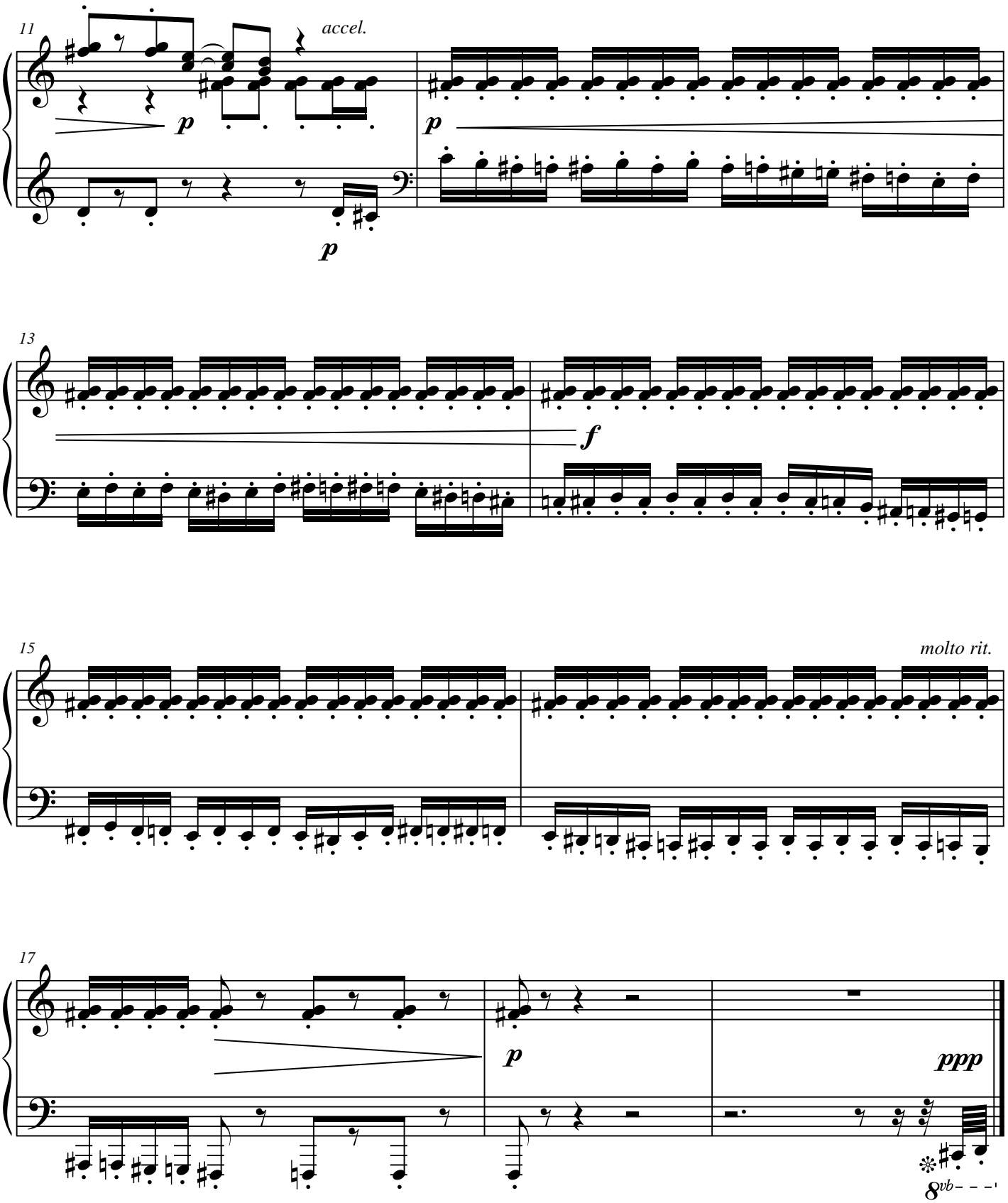
Ring Around the Rosies



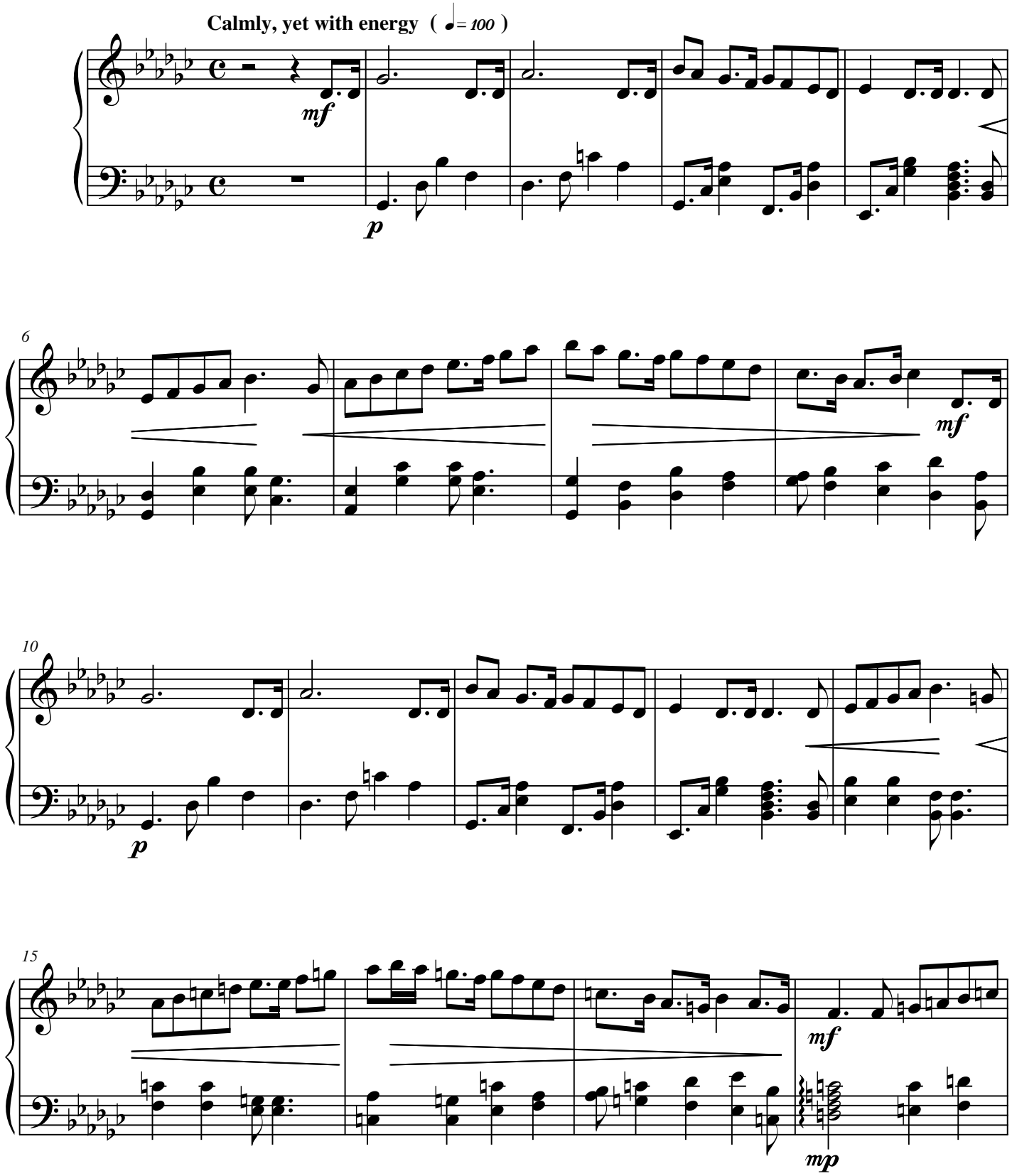

17
mp
f
21
f
mp
25
f
mp
29
p
pp
p

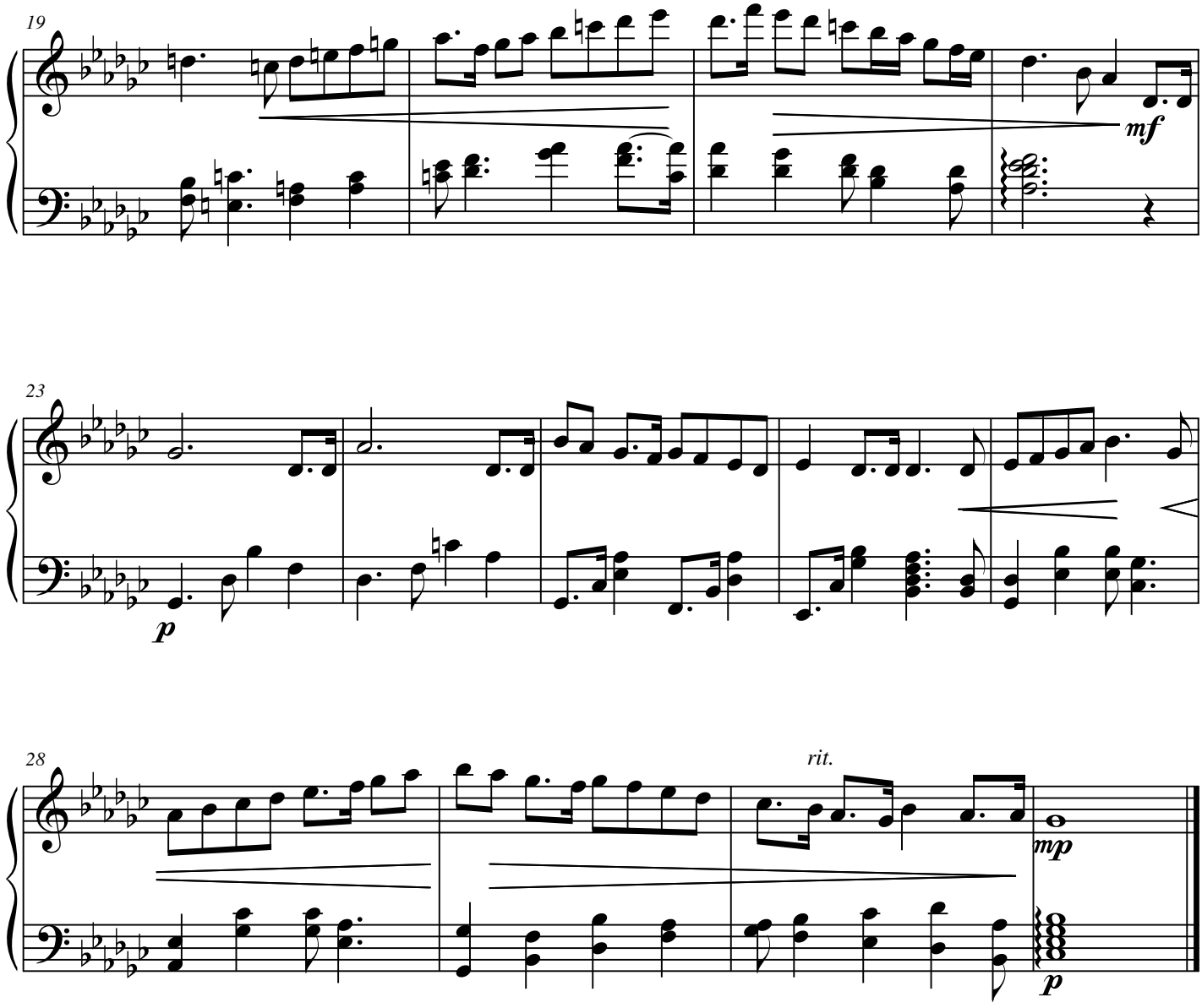
Little Miss Muffet



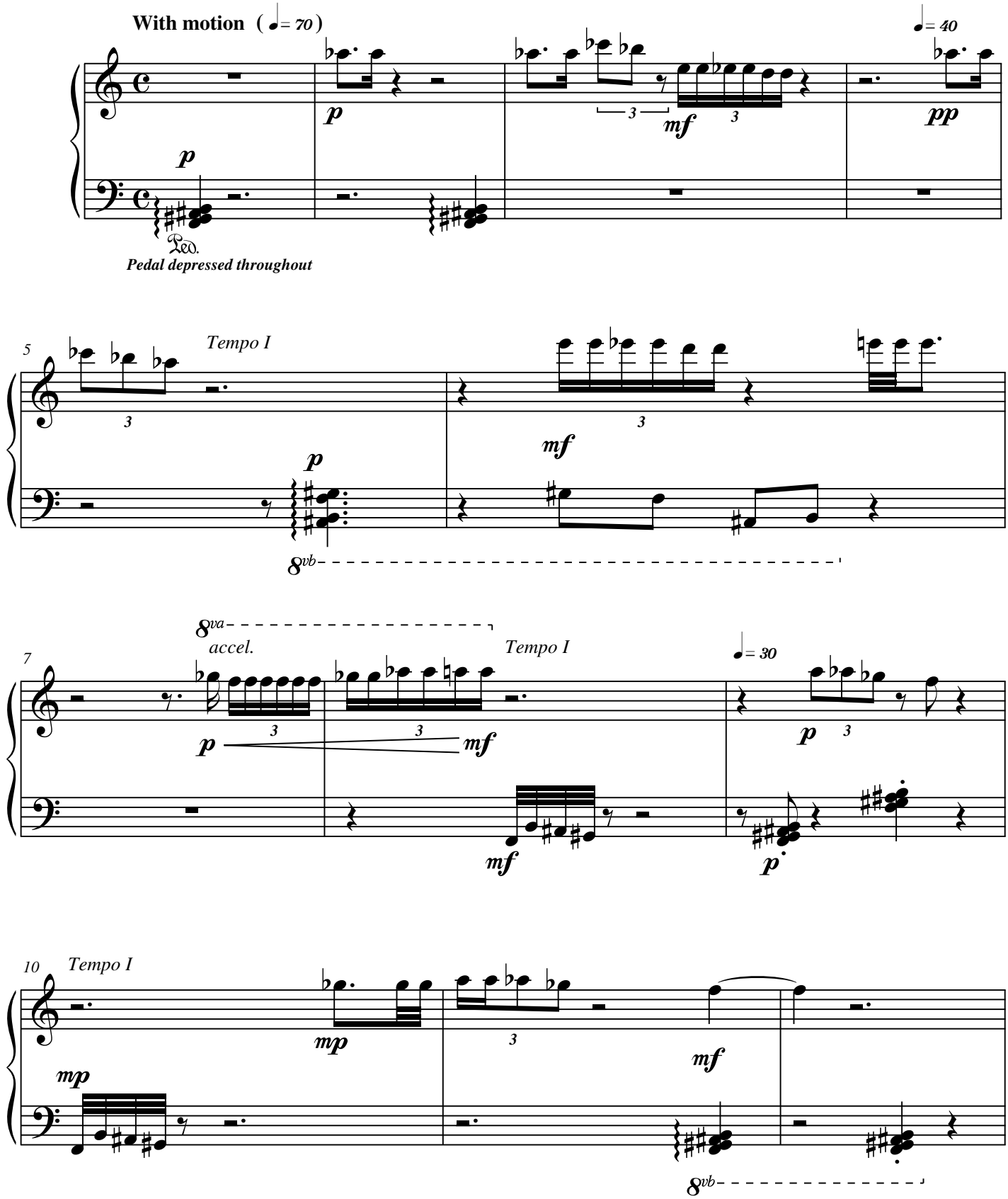

11
accel.
p
p
p
13
f
15
molto rit.
17
p
ppp
8vb

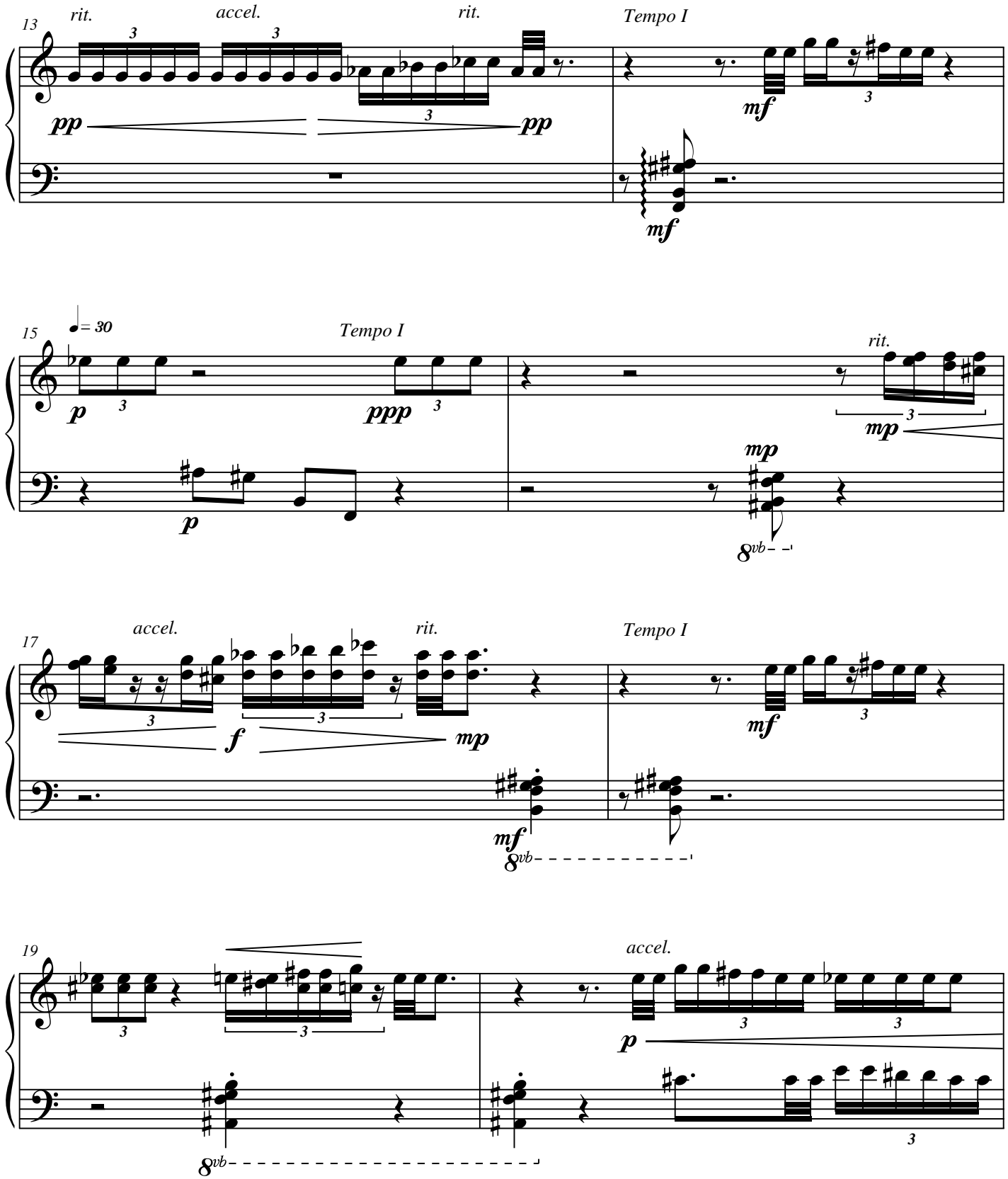
Little Boy Blue

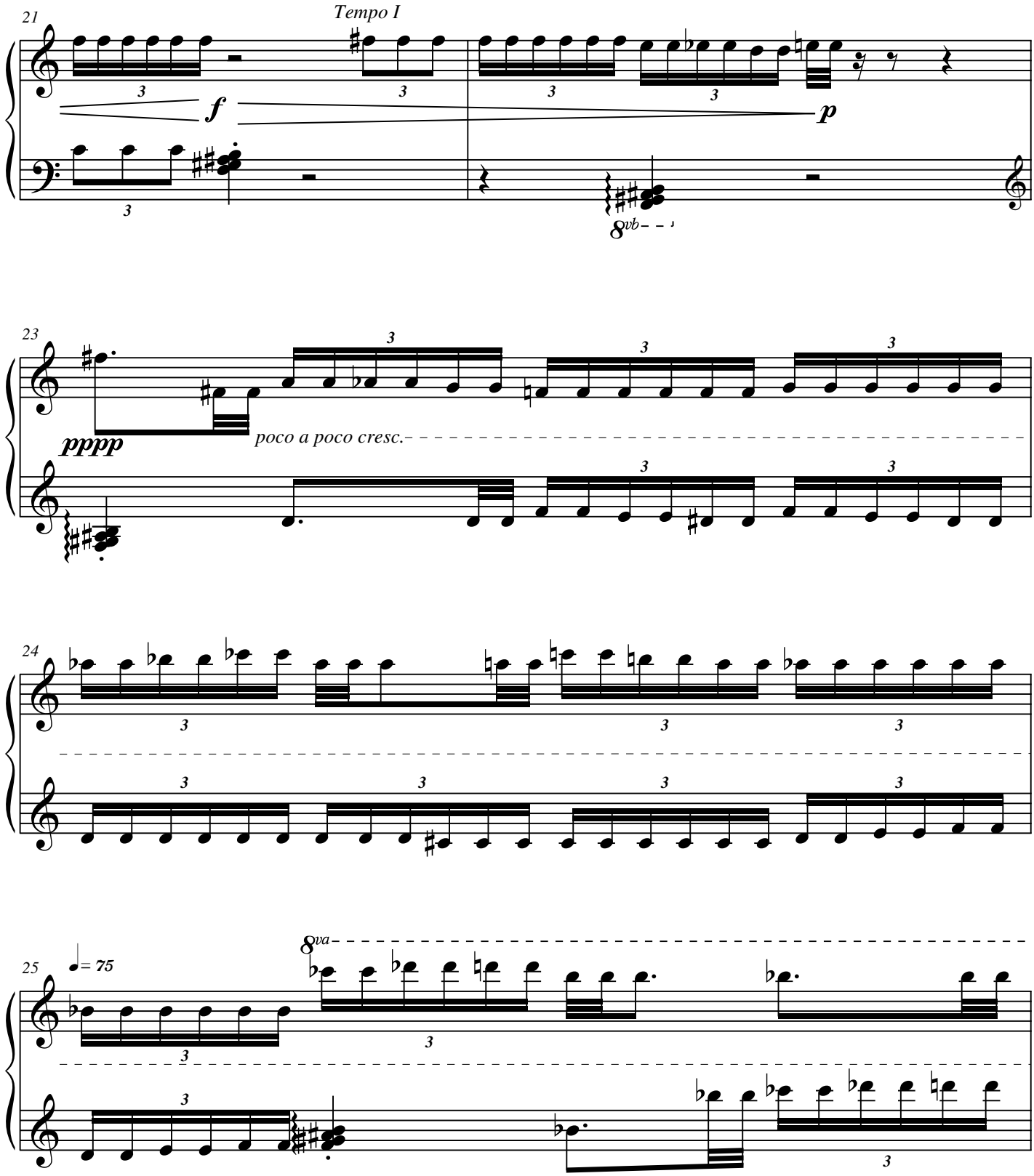


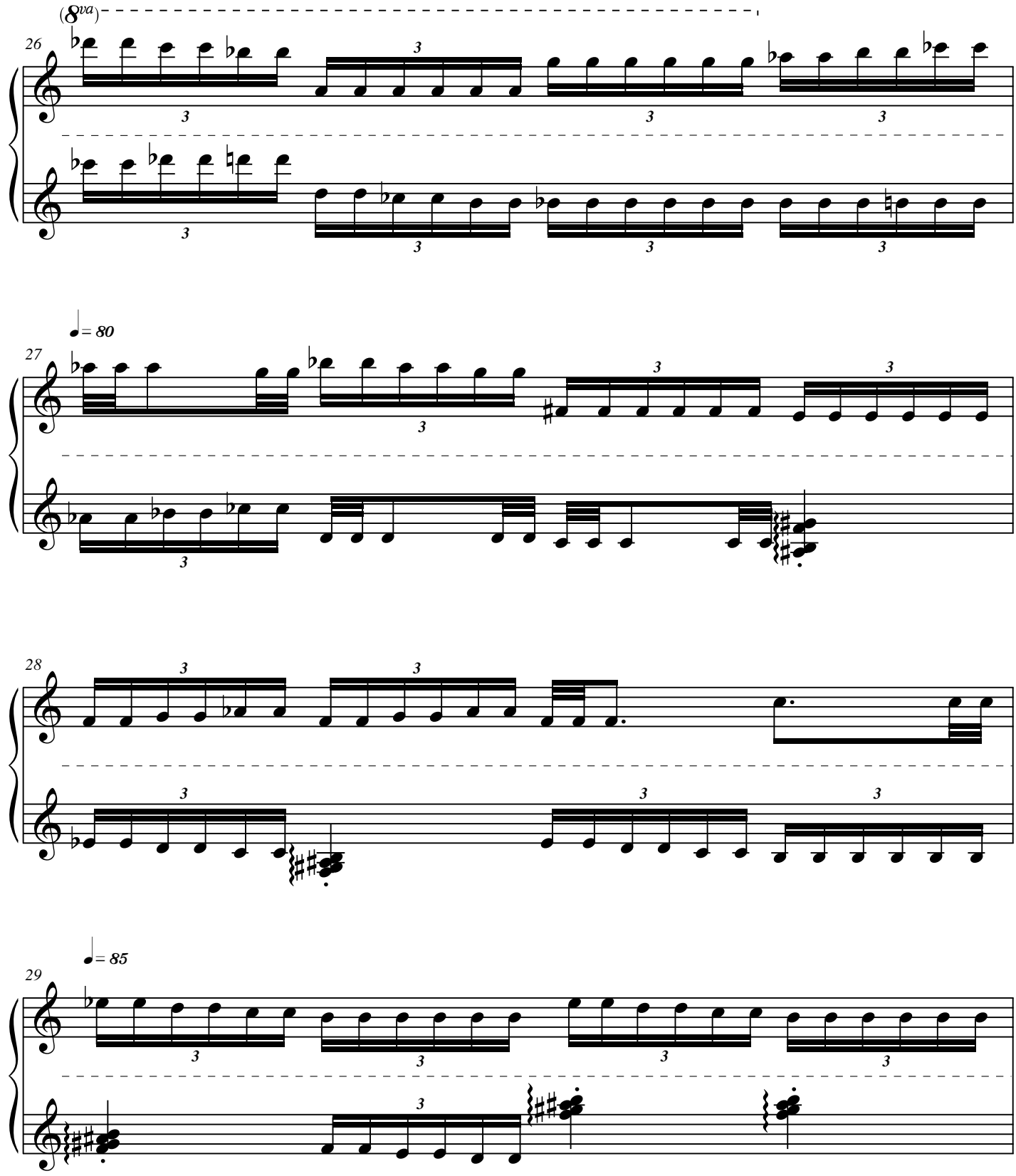

19
mf
23
p
28
rit.
mp
p

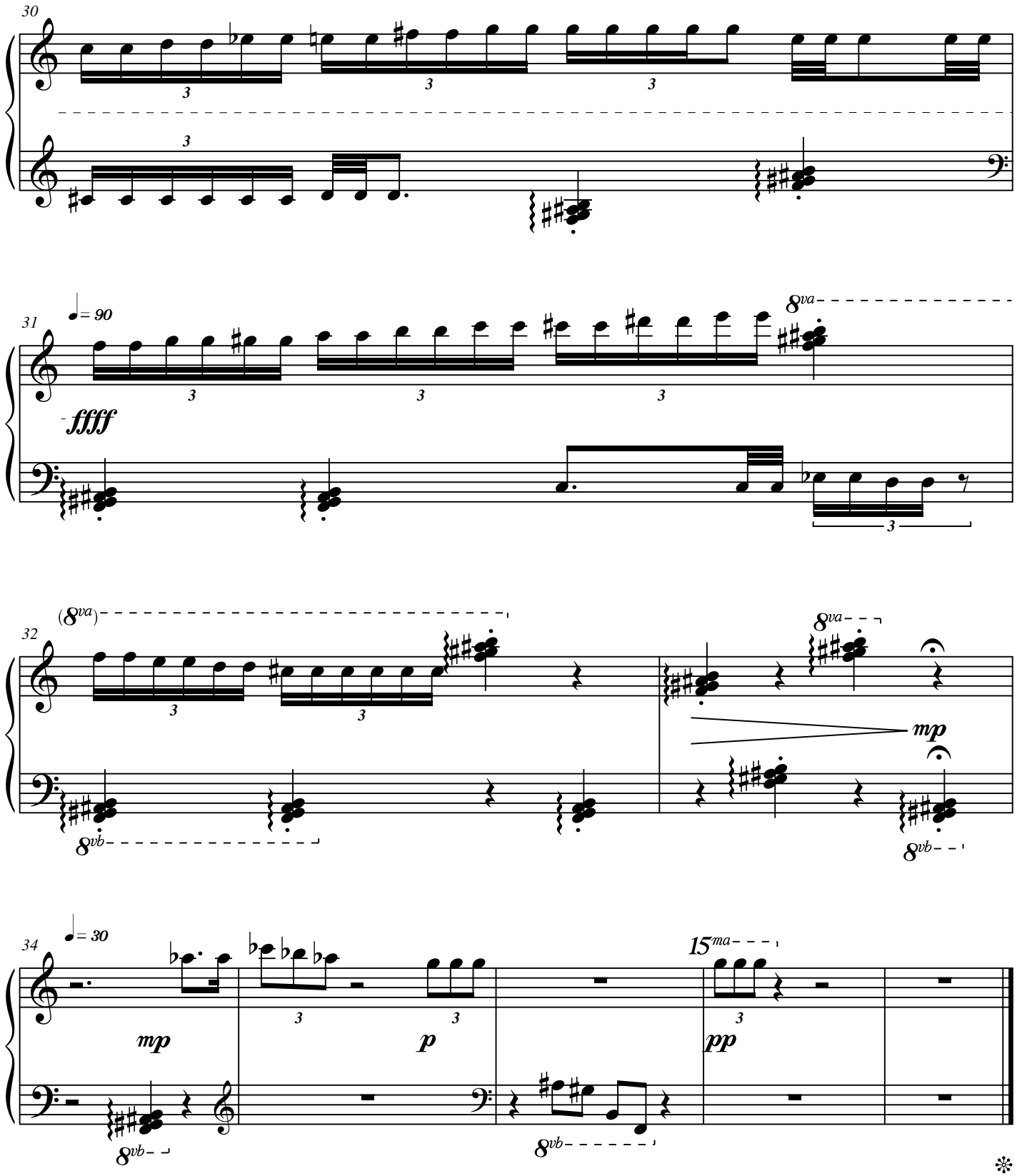
Cold and Raw the North Wind Doth Blow

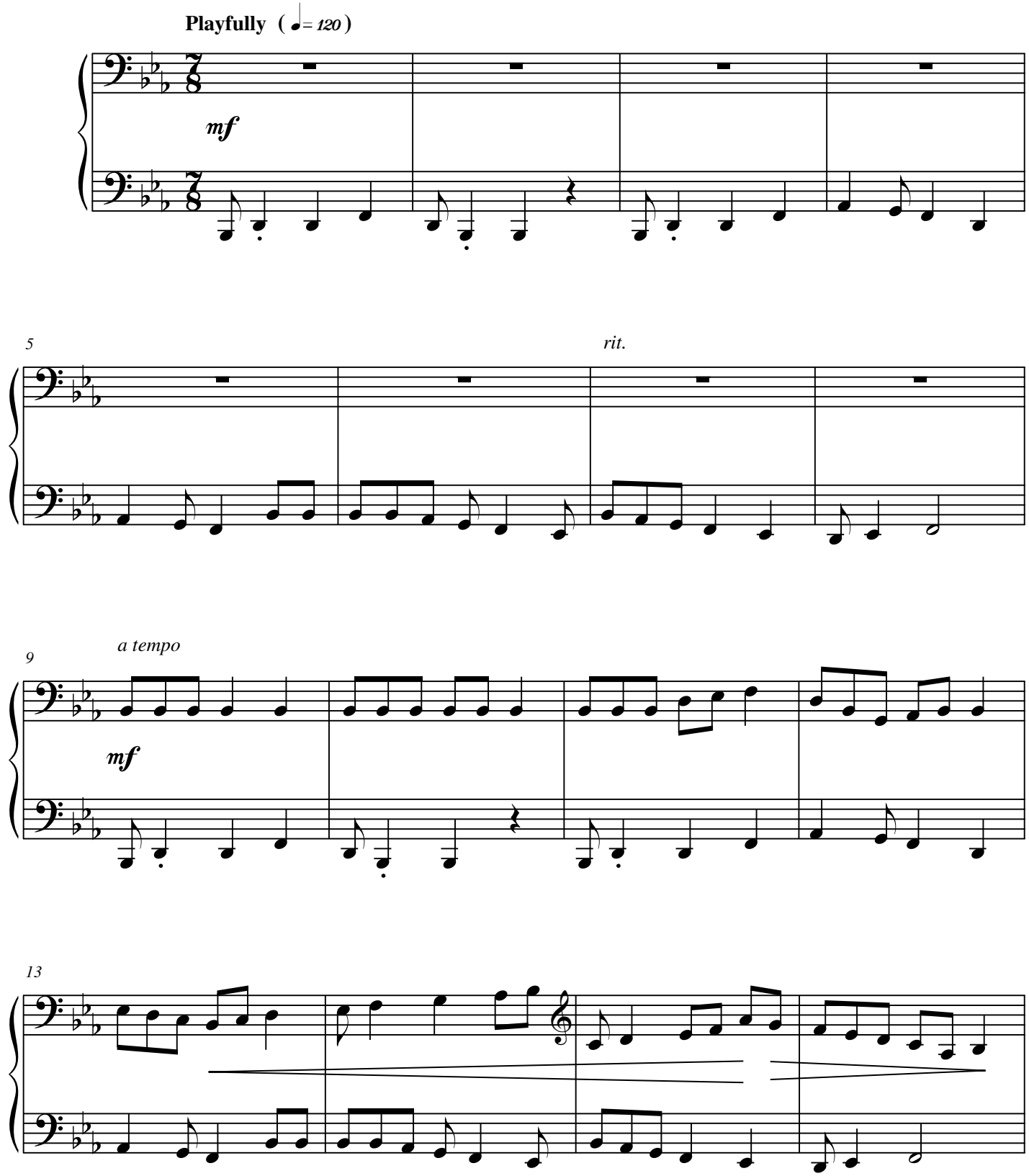


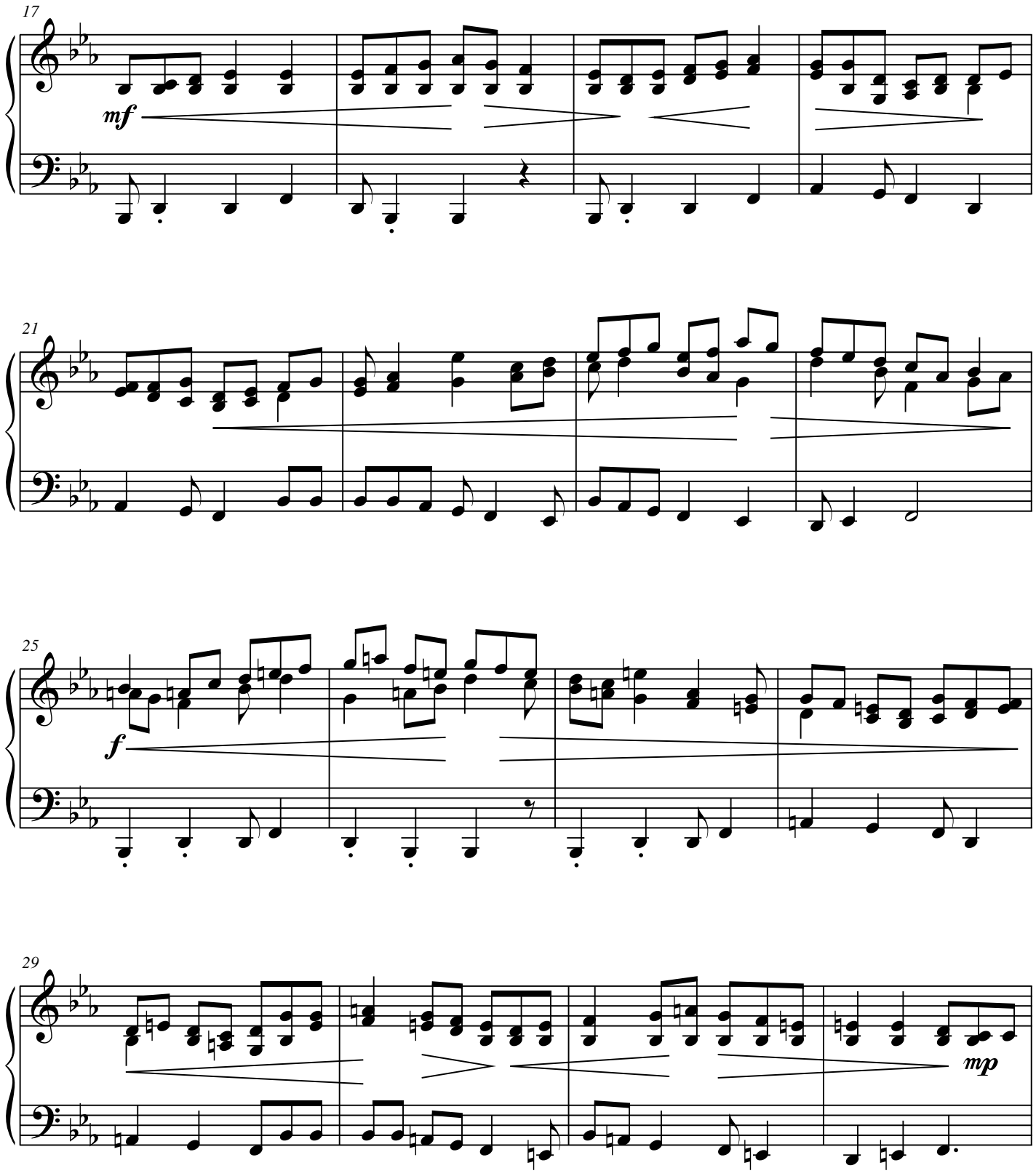

13
rit.
accel.
rit.
Tempo I
pp
pp
mf
mf
15
♩= 30
Tempo I
rit.
p
ppp
mp
p
mp
8vb
17
accel.
rit.
Tempo I
f
mp
mf
mf
8vb
19
accel.
p
8vb

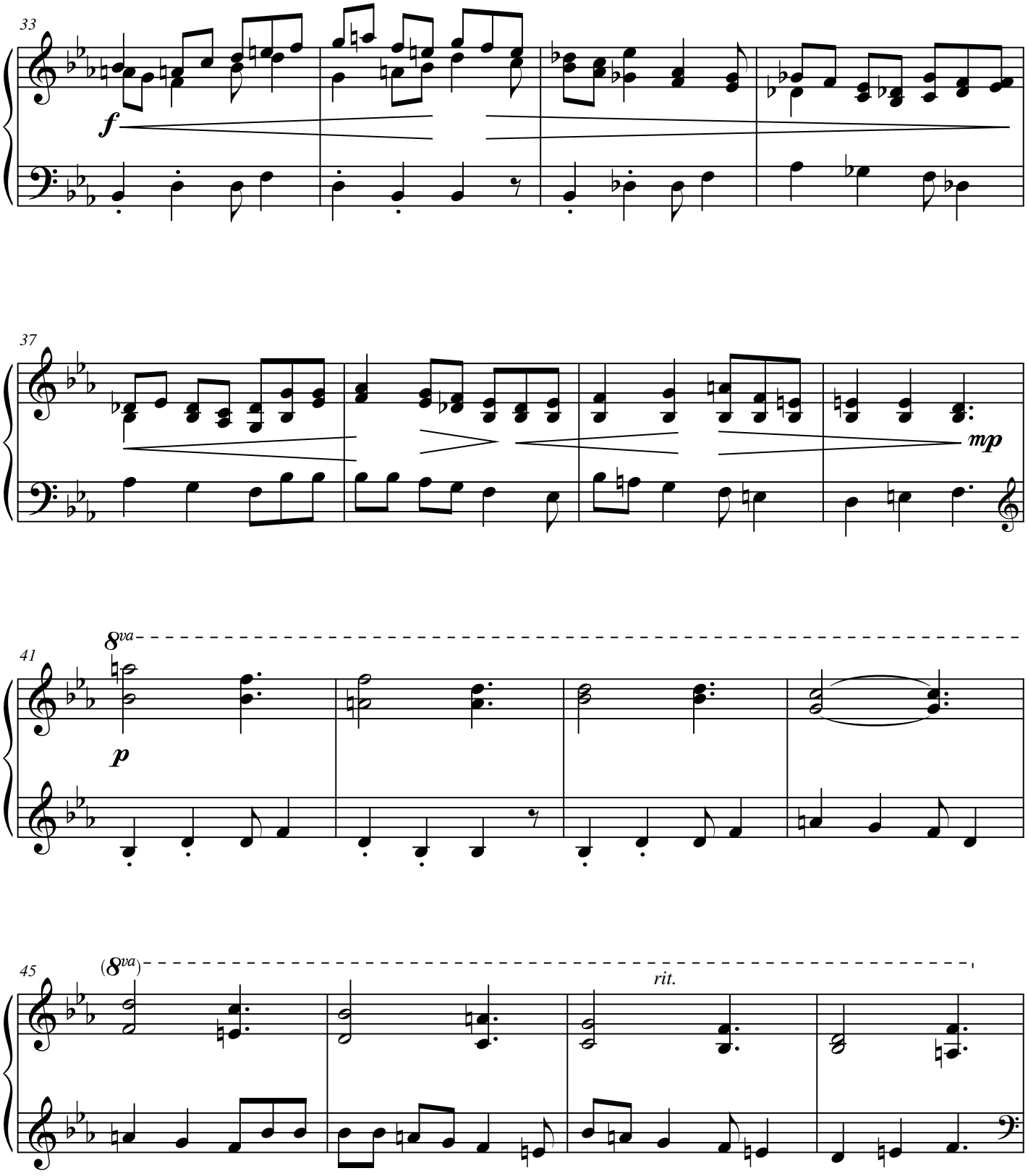

21
Tempo I
f
p
8vb
23
pppp
poco a poco cresc.
24
25
♩= 75
8va

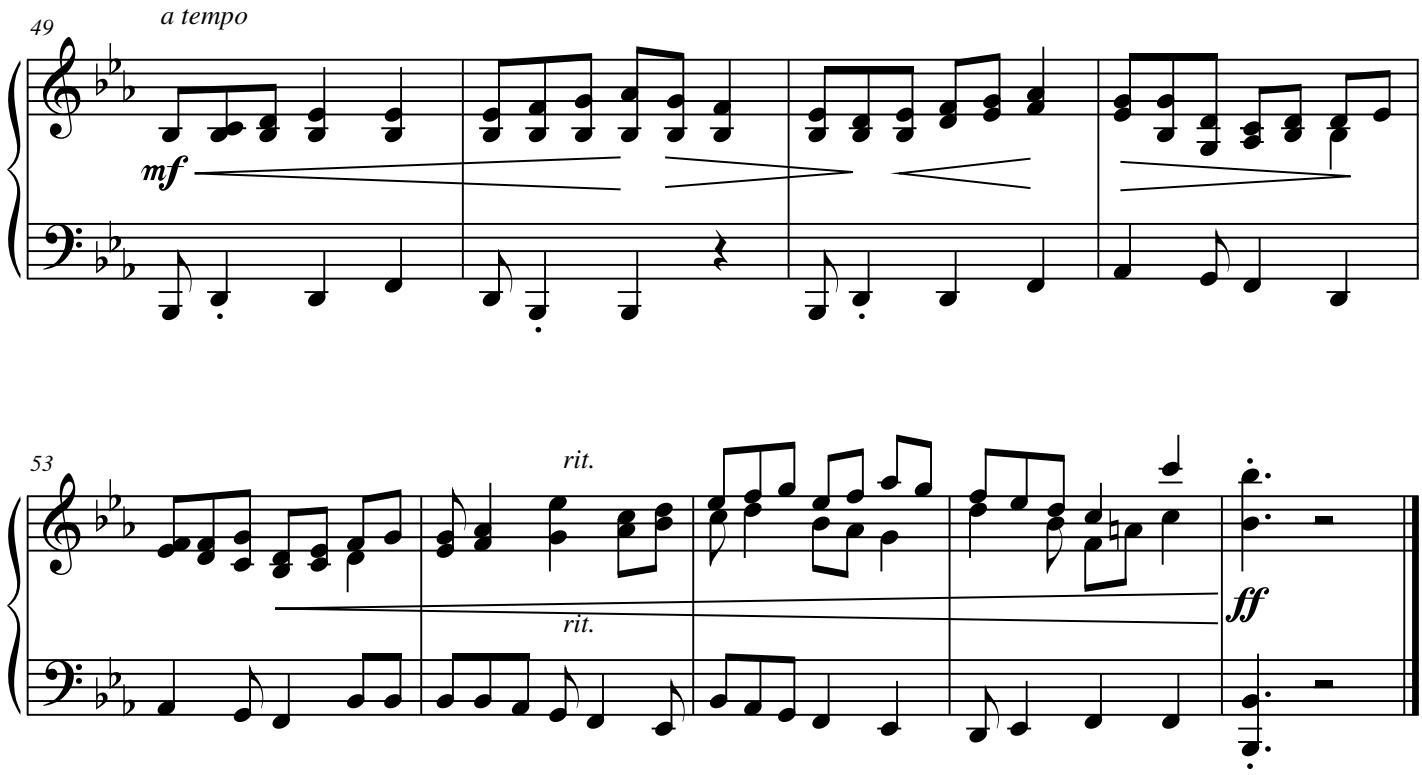

(8va)
26
27
♩= 80
28
29
♩= 85


30
31
♩= 90
ffff
8va
32
(8va)
8vb
mp
34
♩= 30
mp
p
pp
15ma


Playfully (= 120)
mf
5
rit.
9
a tempo
mf
13


17
mf
21
25
f
29
mp


33
f
37
mp
41
8va
p
45
(8va)
rit.


49
a tempo
mf
53
rit.
rit.
ff