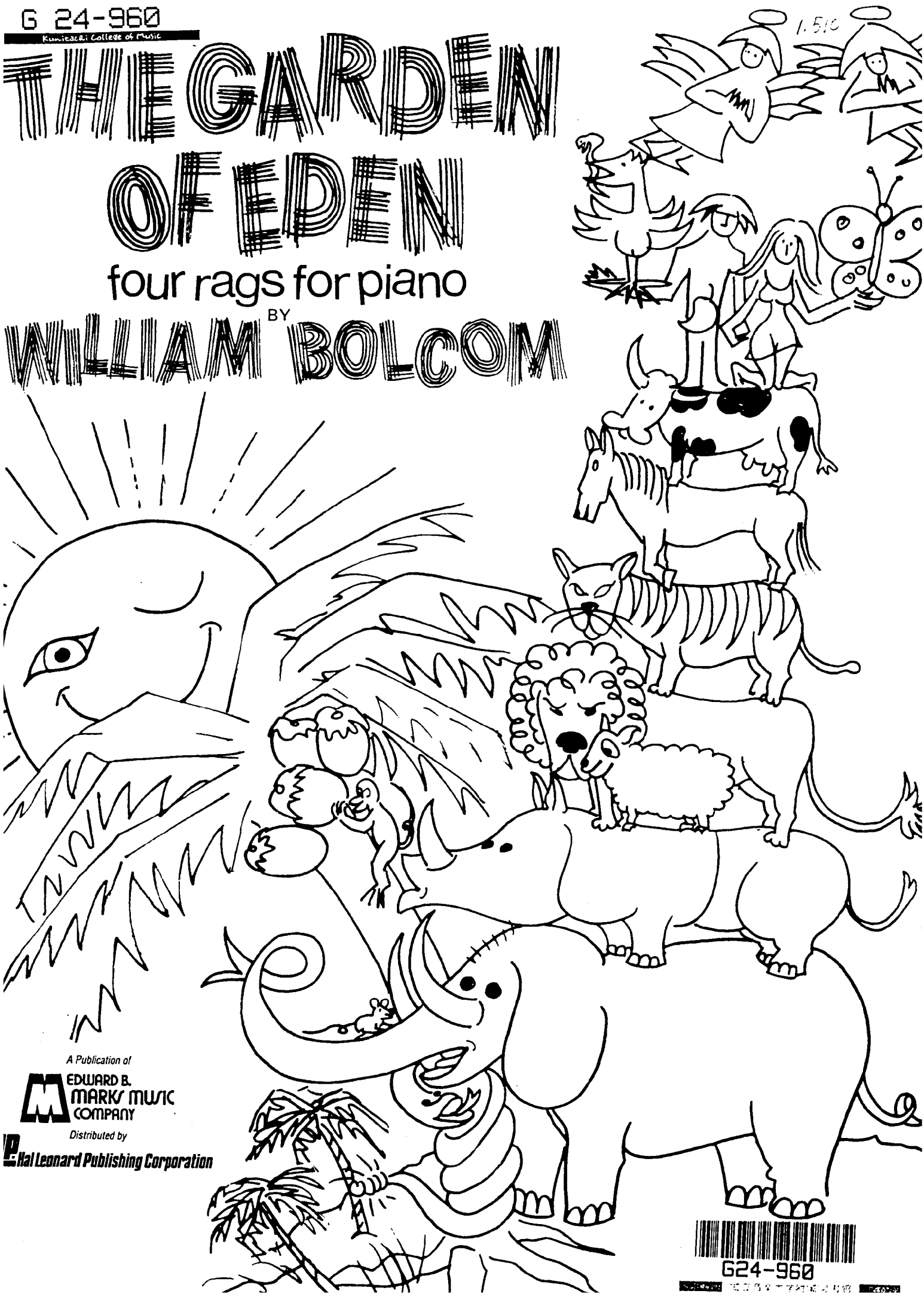
G 24-960
Kunitachi College of Music

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

four rags for piano

BY

WILLIAM BOLCOM



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Preface

"The Garden of Eden" tetralogy derives from several different styles of what may be loosely titled rag piano.

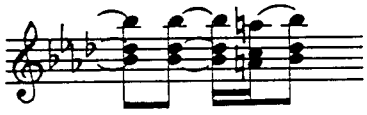
Few ragtime publications have shown points of style in the text, and we have attempted to indicate more than the usual here. Metronomic markings are as exact as possible (always allowing for inevitable changes in mood from day to day), but more specific indications of touch changes, accents, and dynamics are found throughout. Where two dynamics are indicated in a repeating section, follow the first dynamic the first time, the second dynamic on the repeat.

"Old Adam" is closer to Harlem stride in its approach to rhythm; the last chorus is reminiscent of "Ballin' the Jack." Here the rhythm becomes almost , actually closer to . The actual or dotted rhythms in the score are merely a little *more* unequal than the .

In the first measure, the left-hand articulation marks show that it is common to dot the pedal lightly on the strong beats in most ragtime; the pedal must be so light that the wedge-shaped articulation marks ▾ in the right hand are not blurred, however. The ∧ accent is supposed to be strongly marked, out of context of the dynamic, unlike the more common > .

"The Eternal Feminine" is much closer to Scott Joplin style; the 's are almost equal, the 's are between a and what is on the score. Here there is slightly more pedal, but preserve the basic on-the-beat pedaling of "Old Adam." Classically-trained pianists must understand that the rhythmic outline of ragtime must always be strictly adhered to — avoid the rubato that "just cries to be done," as it will destroy the dance-quality of ragtime. Sometimes a slight ritard is possible in the last measure of a strain, but be very discreet even about this. In all the printed ragtime I know, variations are usually avoided the first time through a strain (unless the score is a "simplified" one; there the player has to reconstruct the music as best he can), but the repeat can often be varied effectively,

e.g. the repeat of the second strain on page 6, 2nd measure after second ending:



similarly at measures 4, 8, 10

"The Serpent's Kiss," owing to its fast tempo, is best played in straight sixteenths, except perhaps in the *Langorous* section, where some slight dotting is permissible, but not necessary. The heel stomps (indicated throughout by a × attached to the bass note stem) are optional, but the other non-pitched noises in the *Stoptime* section should be performed. The tendency with this piece is to let the tempo run away with you, and here, as elsewhere in ragtime, I urge you to forget what your teachers told you about foot-stamping while playing — here it helps in keeping time.

"Through Eden's Gates" is a pure classic rag, and the sixteenths are always played straight. (A good rule of thumb about sixteenths: when there is a melody in sixteenths, it is usually in straight rhythm; when the figure is less melodic, it is permissible to dot the rhythm more.)

I would like to quote the wise words of George Gershwin (in his preface to the 1932 *Song Book*) in closing because they apply equally here: "Most pianists with a classical training fail lamentably in the playing of ragtime or jazz because they use the pedaling of Chopin when interpreting the blues of Handy.... The rhythms of American popular music are more or less brittle; they should be made to snap, and at times to crackle. The more sharply the music is played the more effective it sounds."

William Bolcom

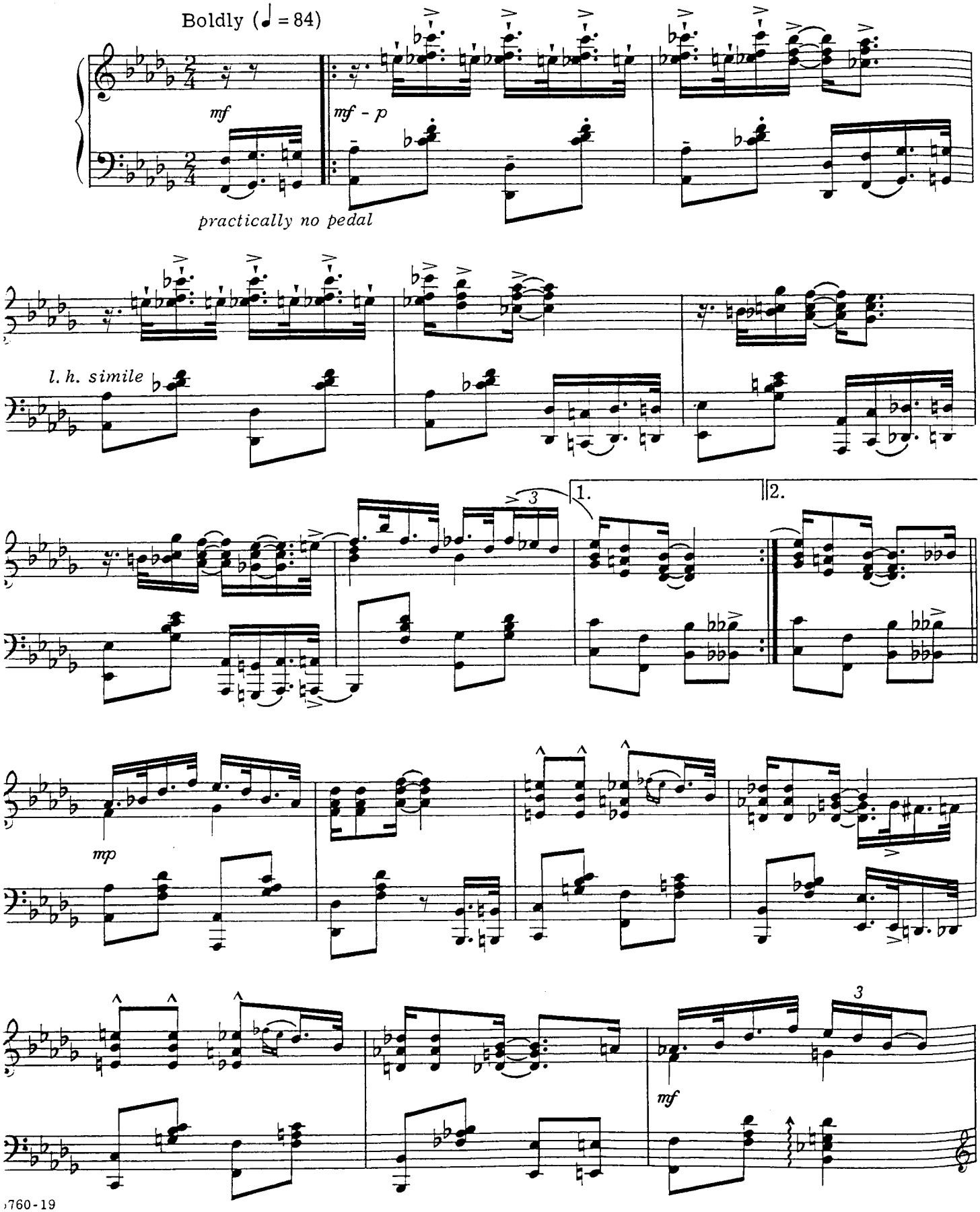
THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Four Rags for Piano

WILLIAM BOLCOM (1969).

I. OLD ADAM

Two Step



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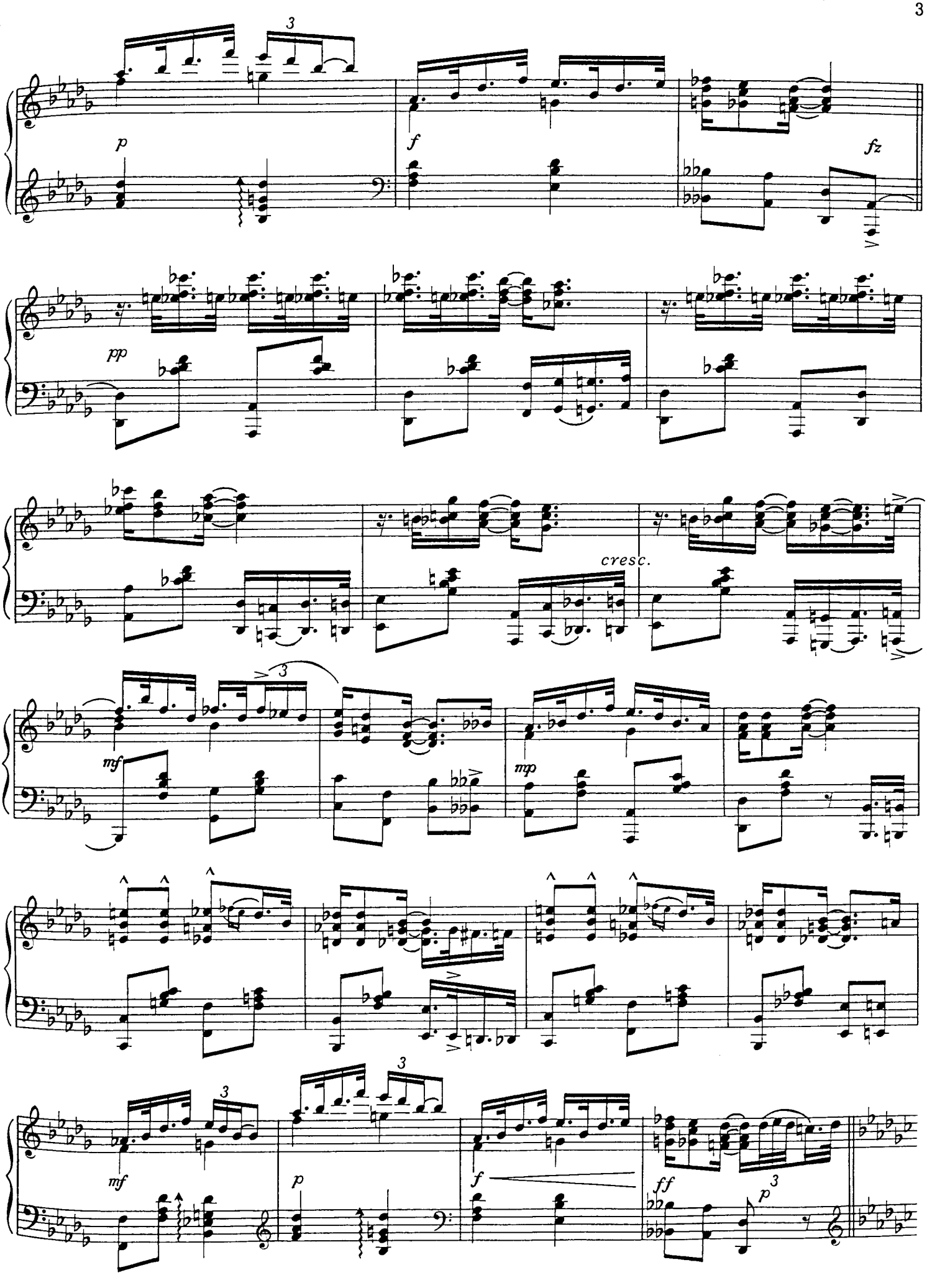
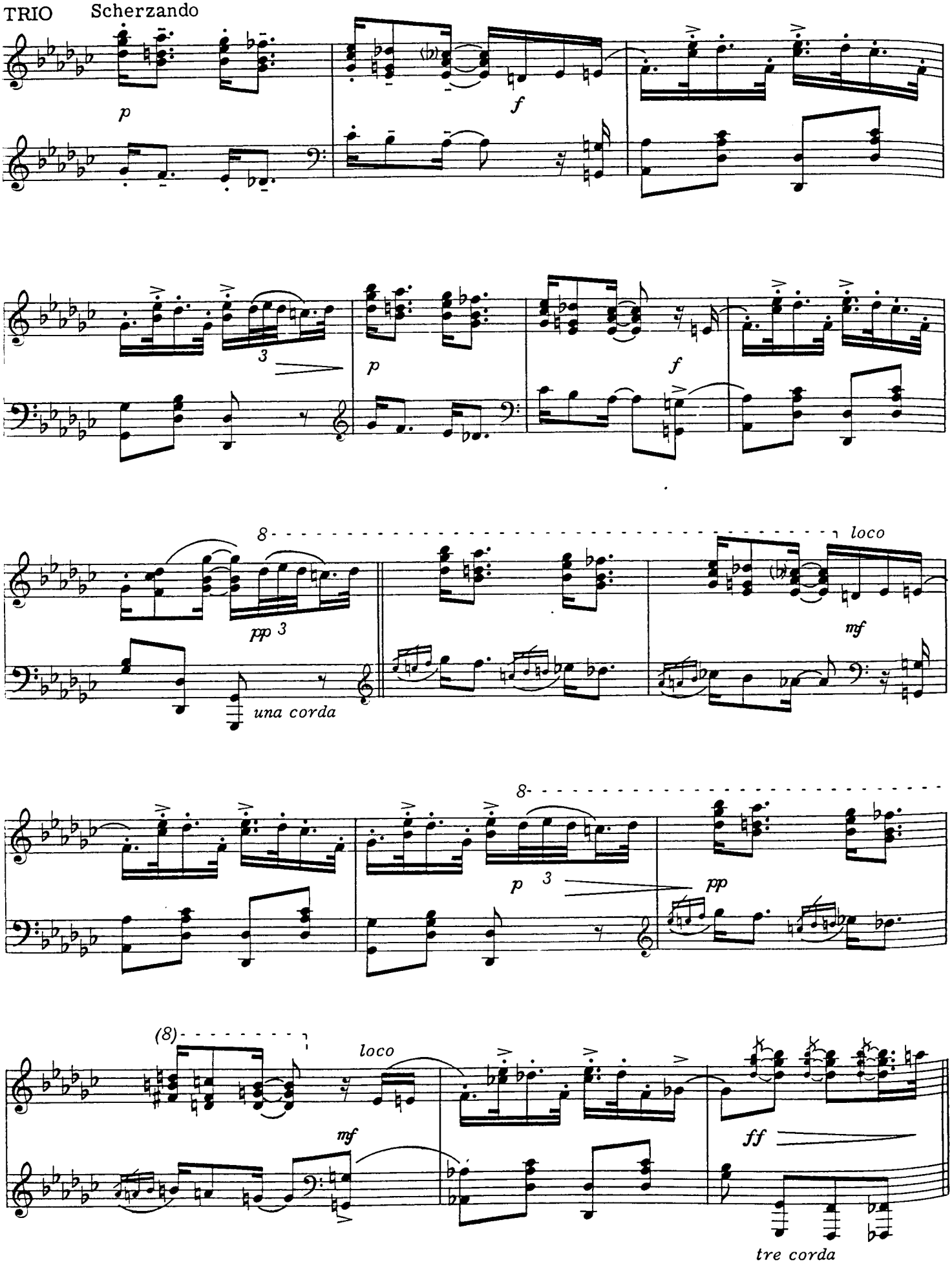
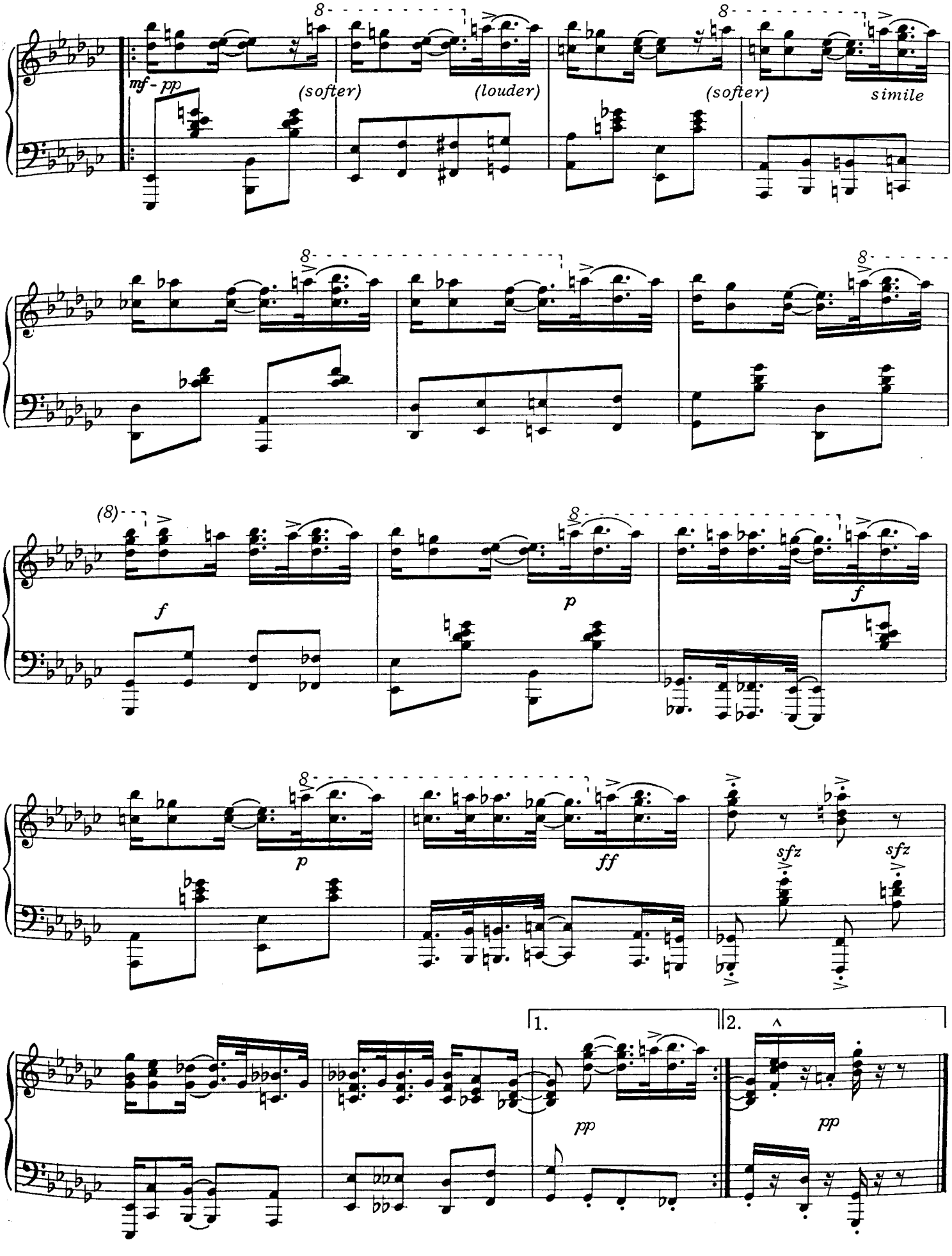
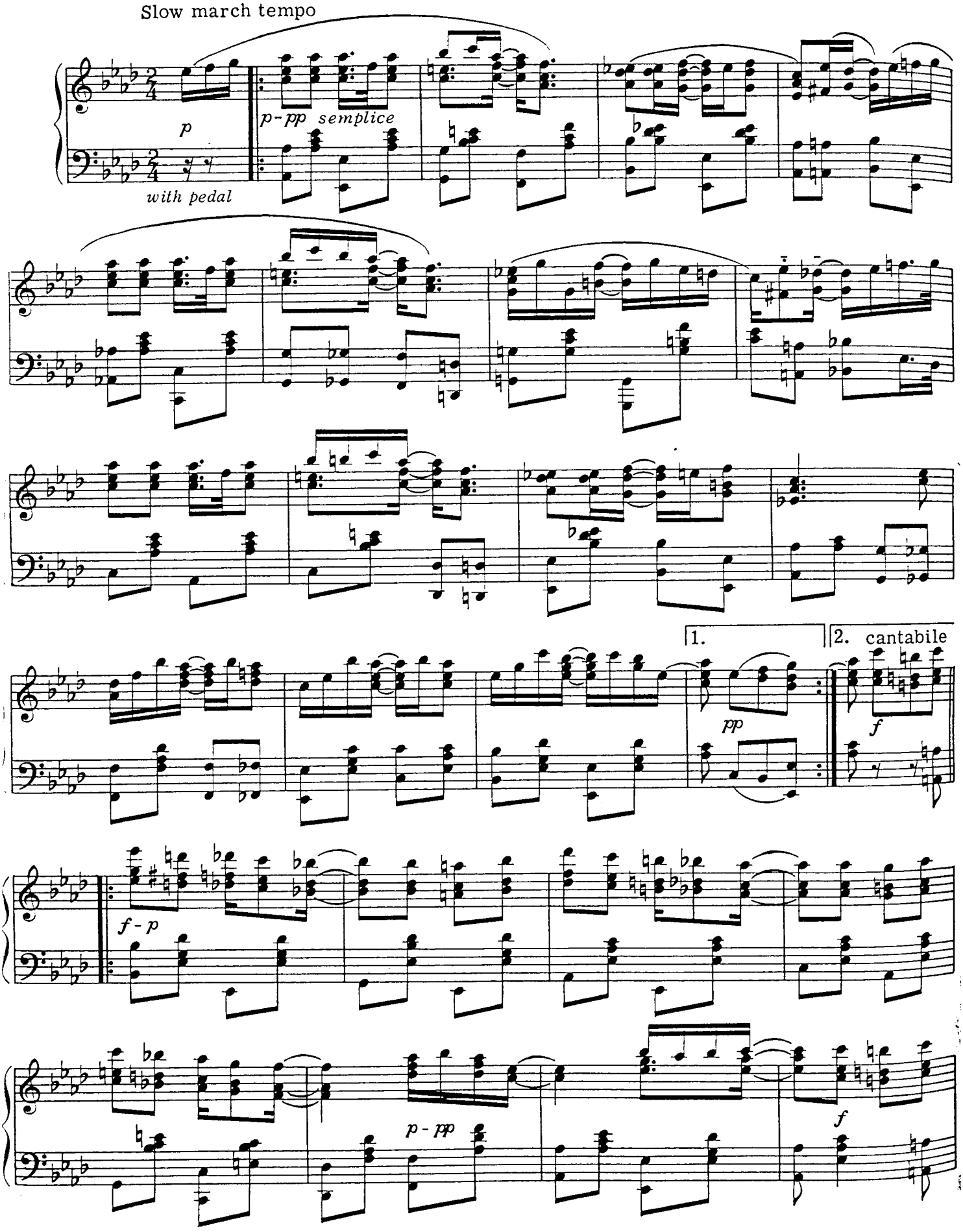

p
f
fz
pp
cresc.
mf
mp
mf
p
f
ff
p

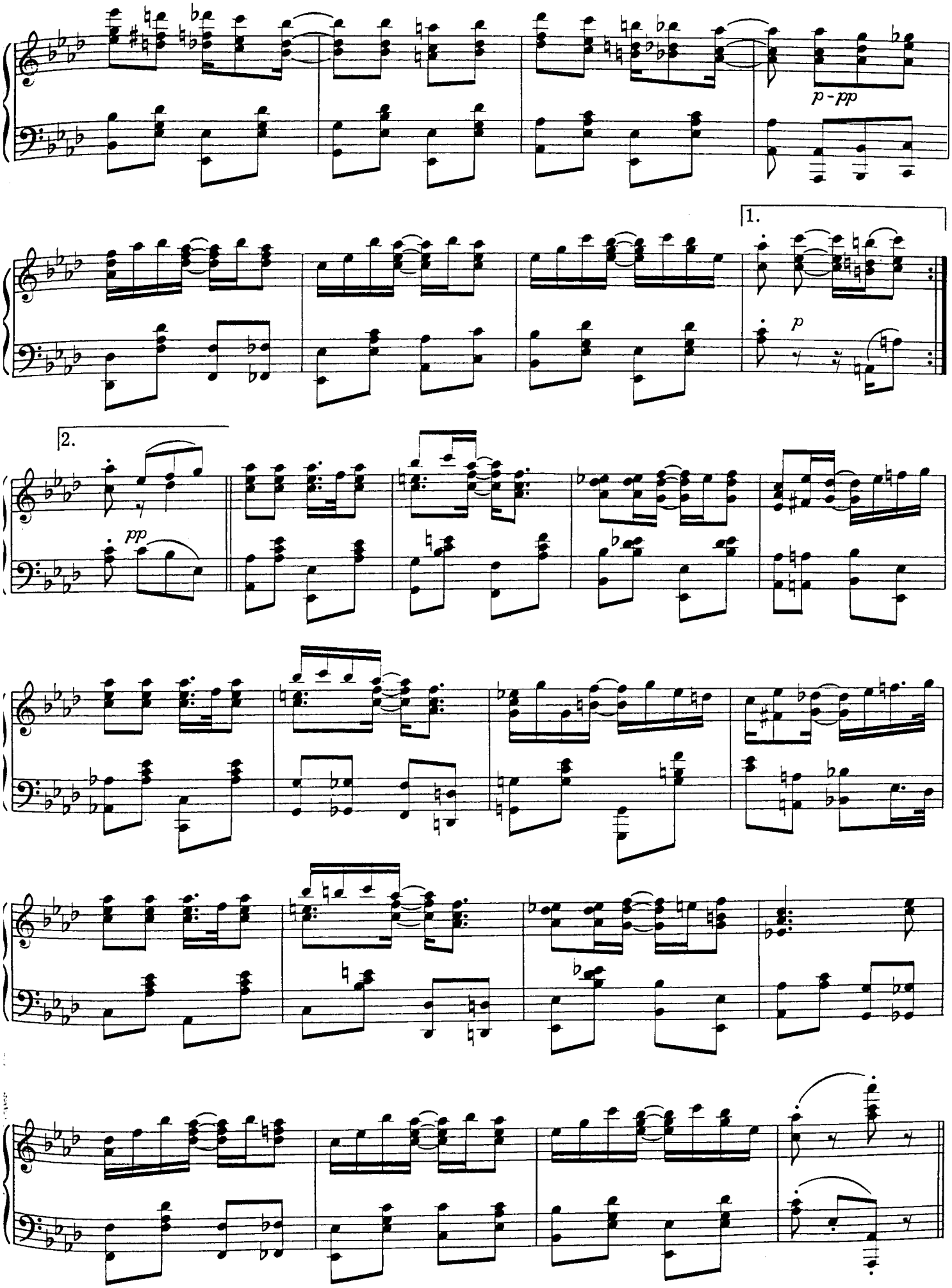

TRIO
Scherzando
p
f
3
p
f
8
loco
pp 3
una corda
mf
8
p 3
pp
(8)
loco
mf
ff
tre corda

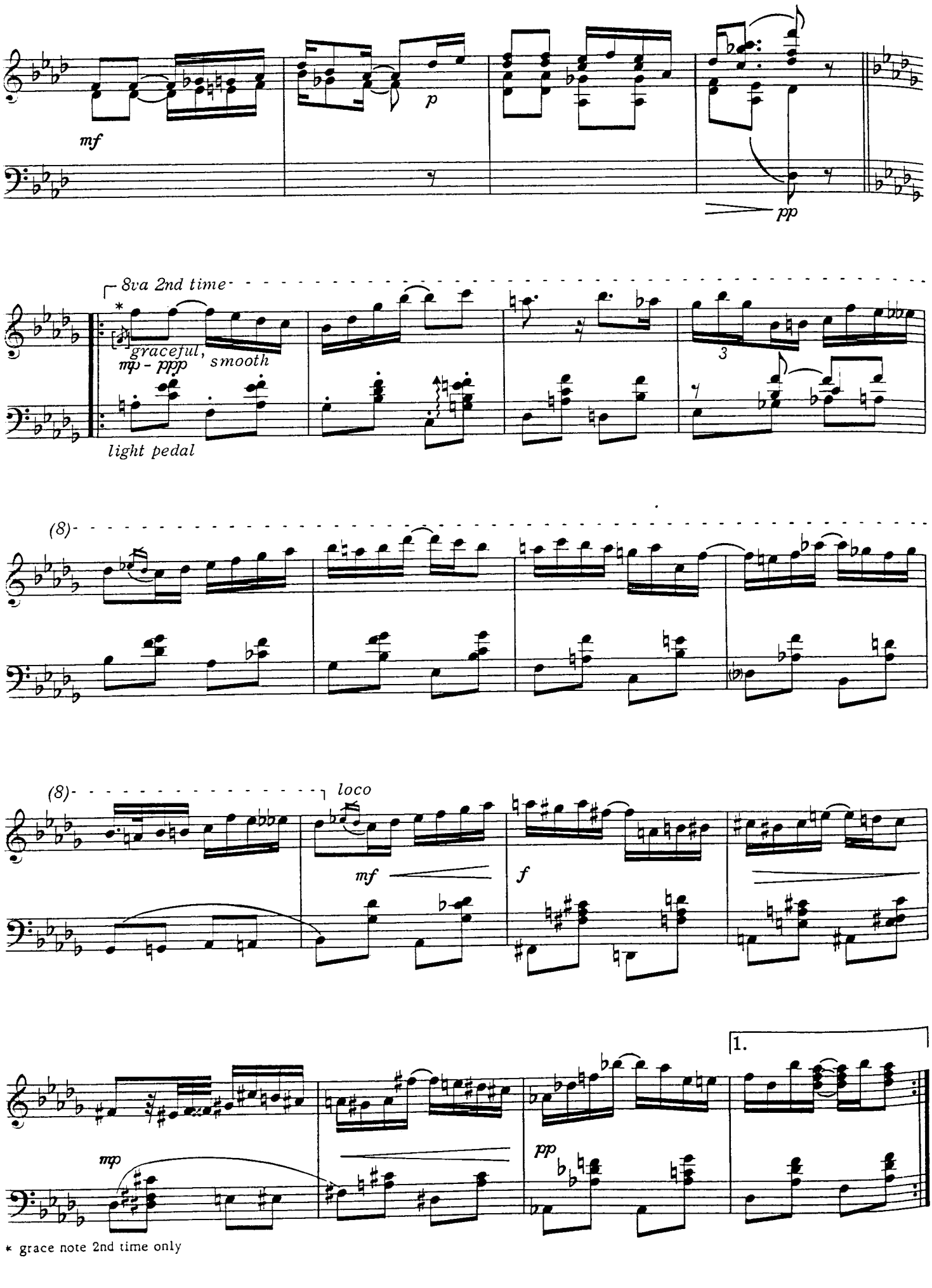

mf - pp
(softer)
(louder)
(softer)
simile
f
p
f
p
ff
sfz
sfz
1.
2.
pp
pp

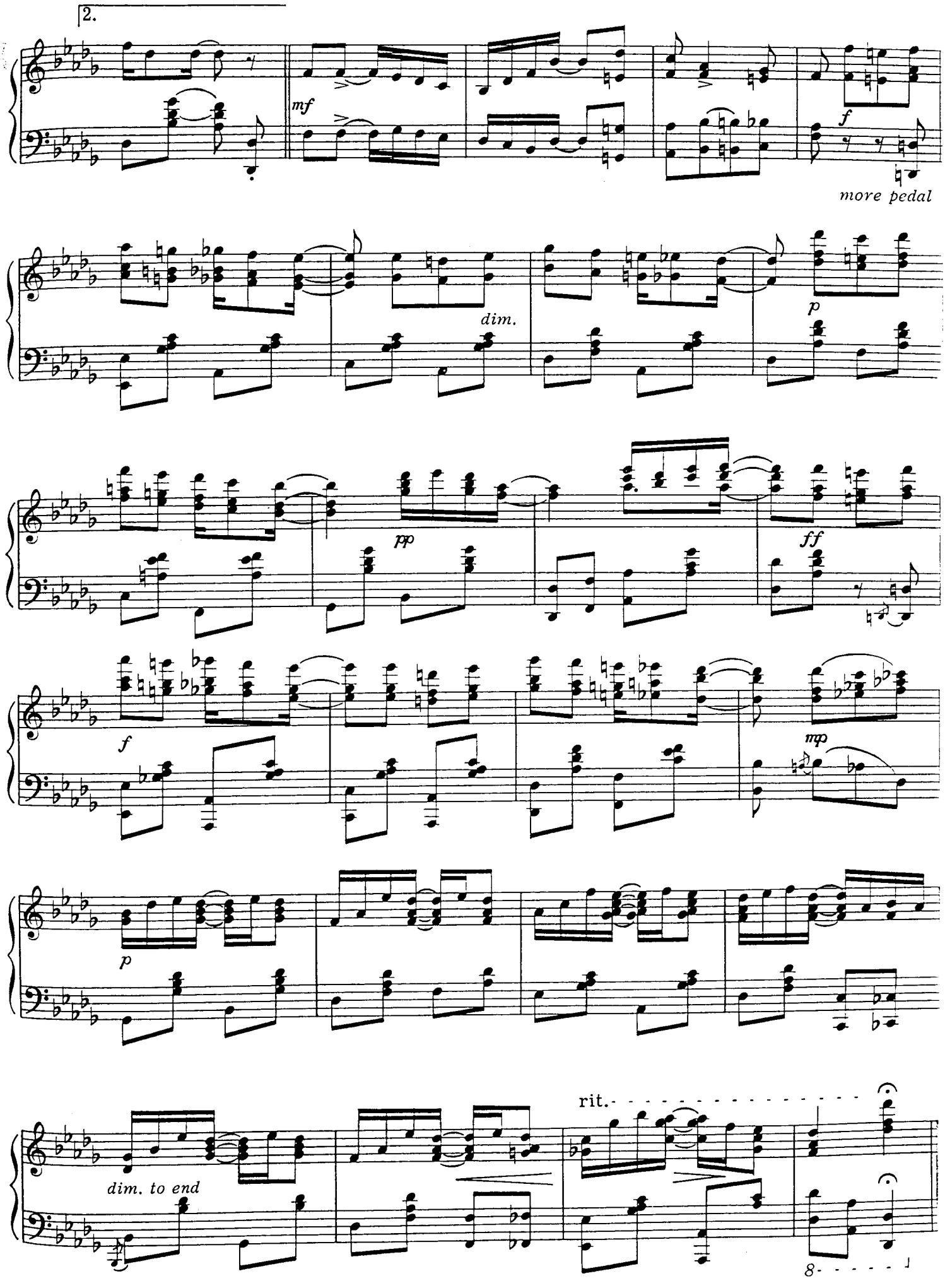
II. THE ETERNAL FEMININE

Slow Drag




p - pp
1.
p
2.
pp

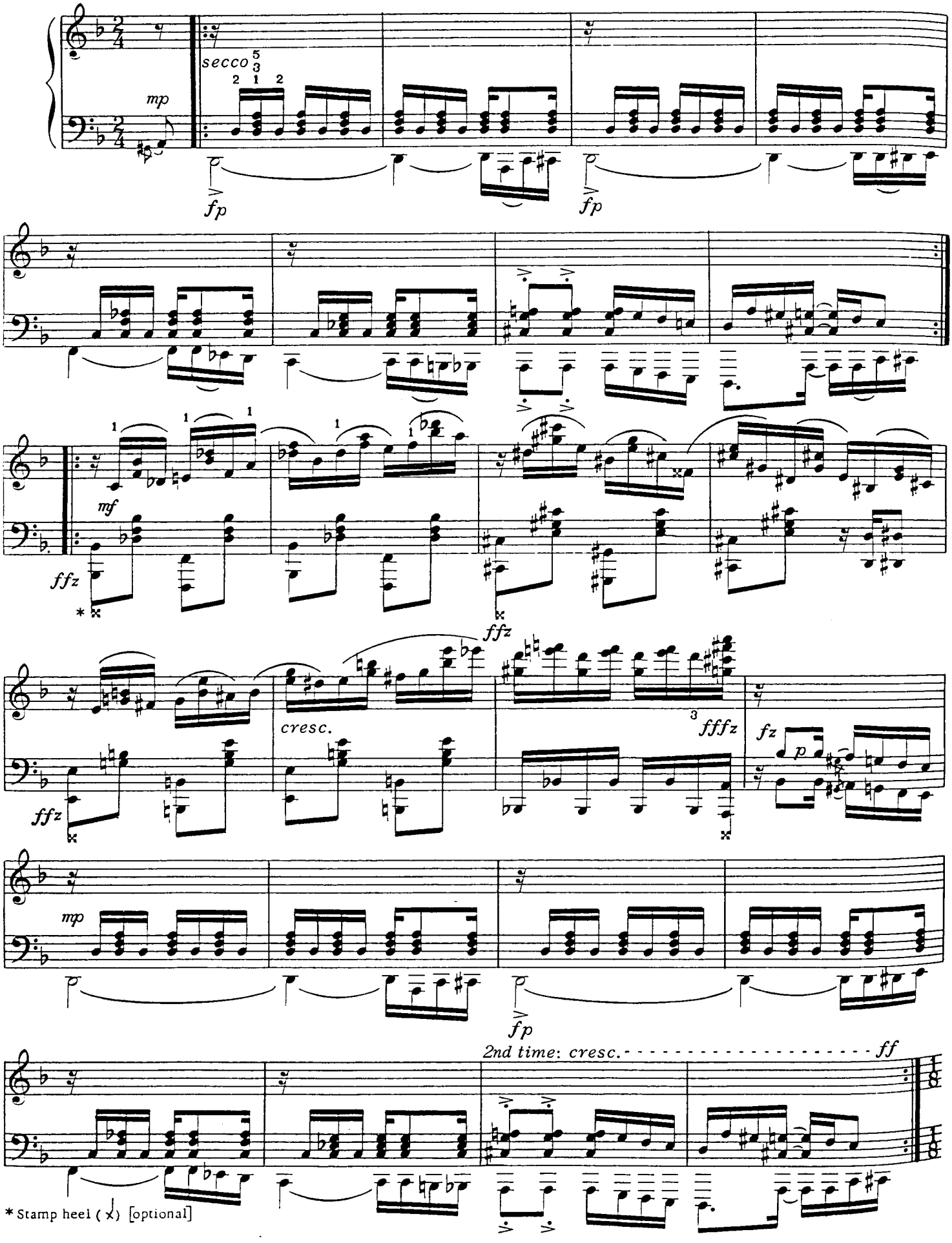

mf
p
pp
8va 2nd time
graceful, smooth
mp - ppp
light pedal
3
(8)
(8)
loco
mf
f
mp
pp
1.
* grace note 2nd time only

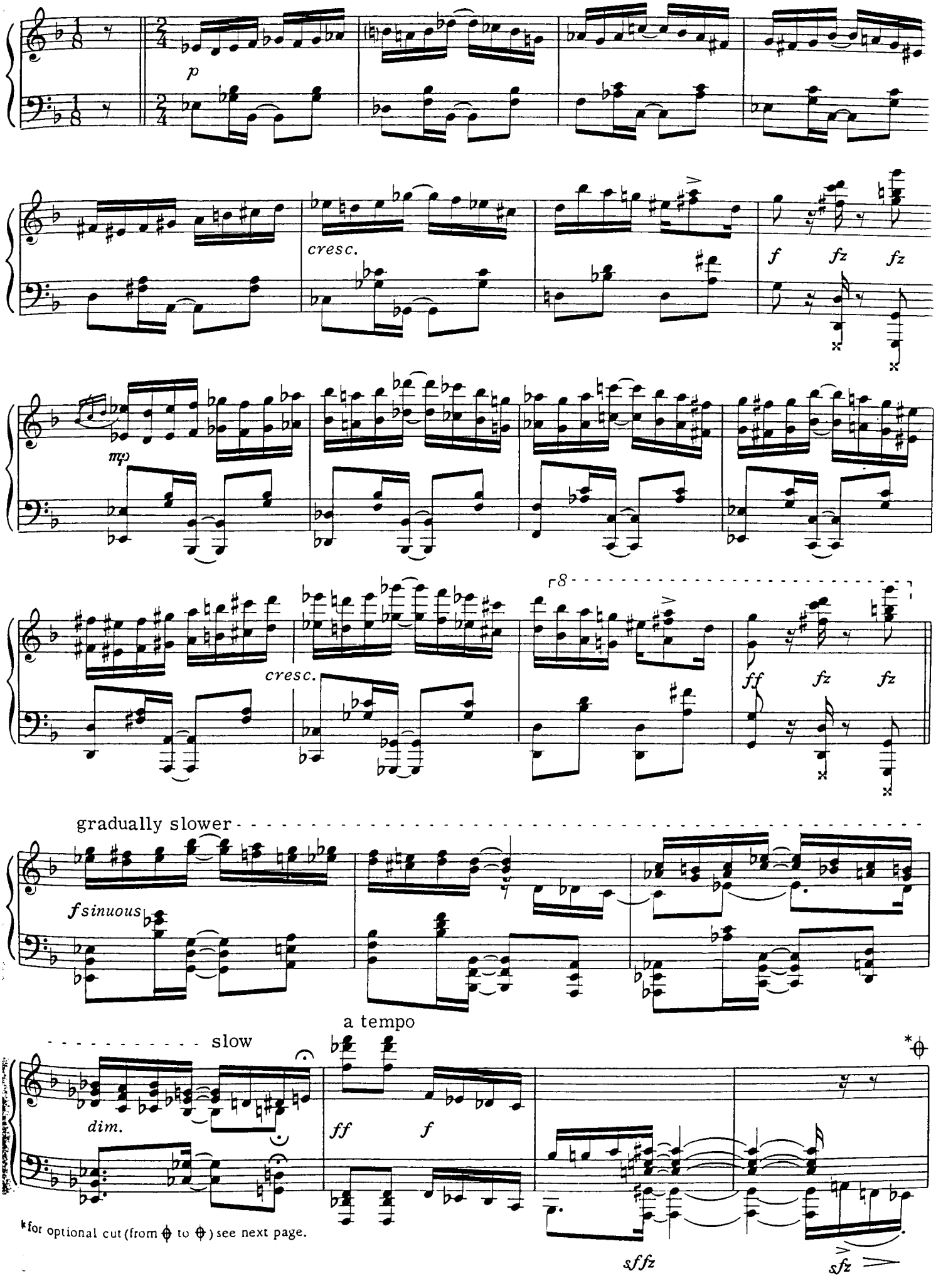

2.
mf
f
more pedal
dim.
p
pp
ff
f
mp
p
dim. to end
rit.

III. THE SERPENT'S KISS

Rag Fantasy

Fast, diabolical (♩ = 96, or faster)





*for optional cut (from ⊕ to ⊕) see next page.

[optional cut to next ⊕]

p fp

pp cresc. fz fz mf fz

p molto cresc. fffz

5

fffz mp p fp mp

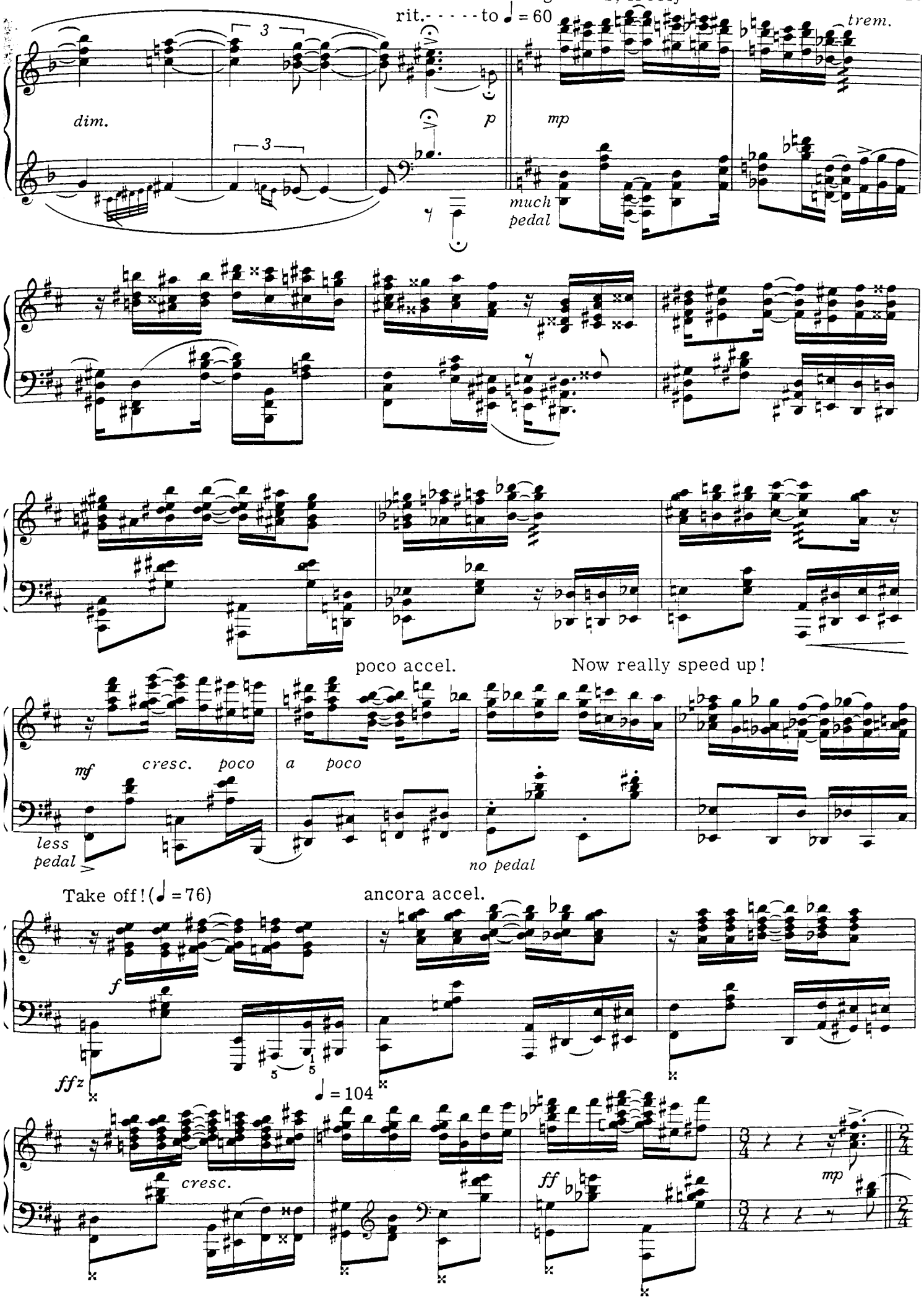
cresc. mf dim. pp f

slower a tempo

pp ff r.h. f ffz f

slower

pp cresc. mf


Languorous; freely
rit. - - - - - to ♩ = 60
trem.
dim.
p
mp
much pedal
poco accel.
Now really speed up!
mf
cresc. poco a poco
less pedal
no pedal
Take off! (♩ = 76)
ancora accel.
f
ffz
♩ = 104
cresc.
ff
mp

Stoptime *)(♩ = 104)

2nd time both hands 8va

p - pp

loco (or stay up if you like)

1.

2.

8

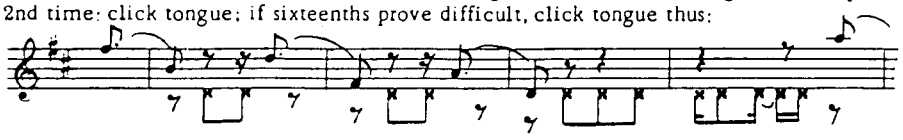
pp

(click tongue)

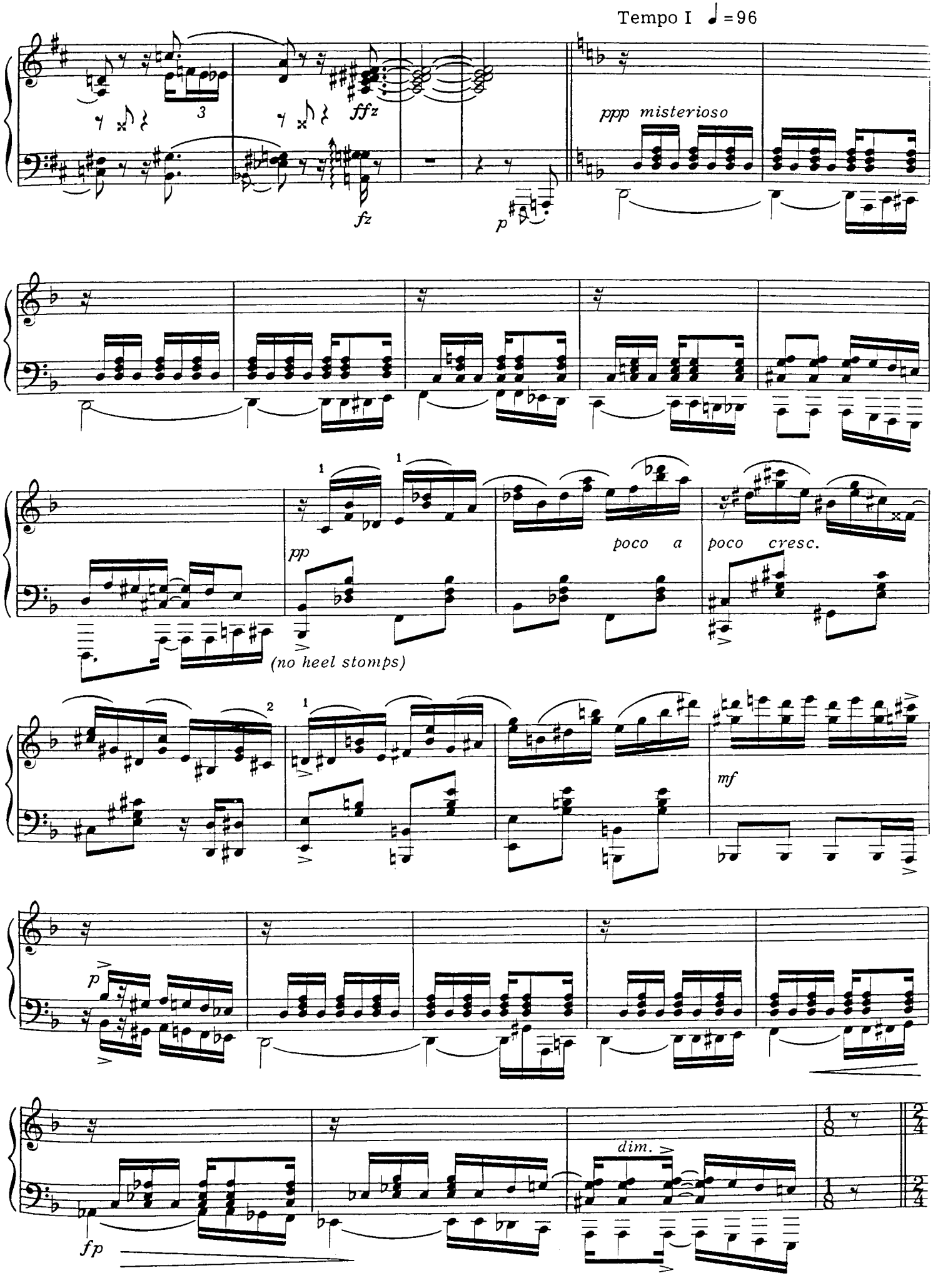
loco

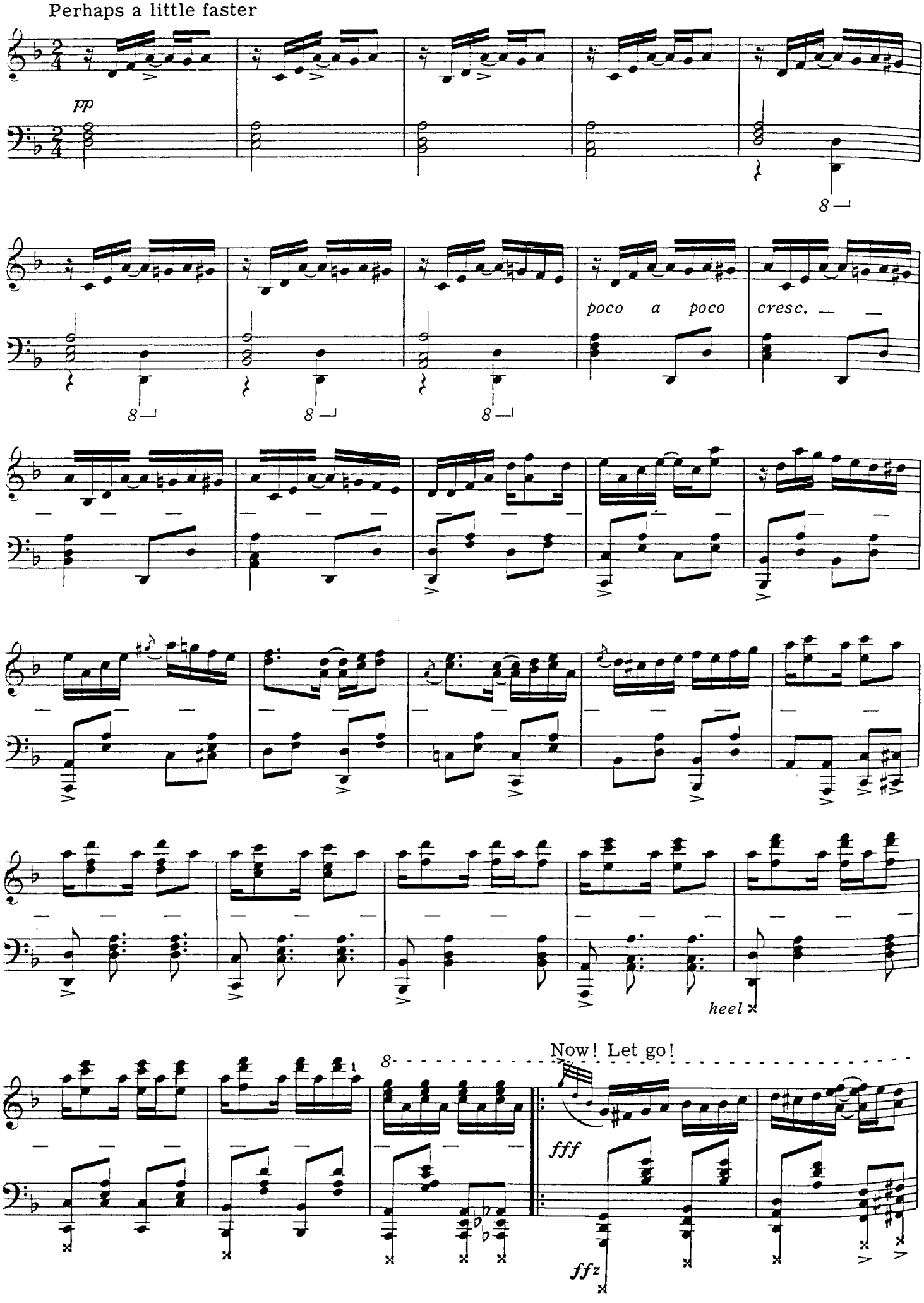
dimin.

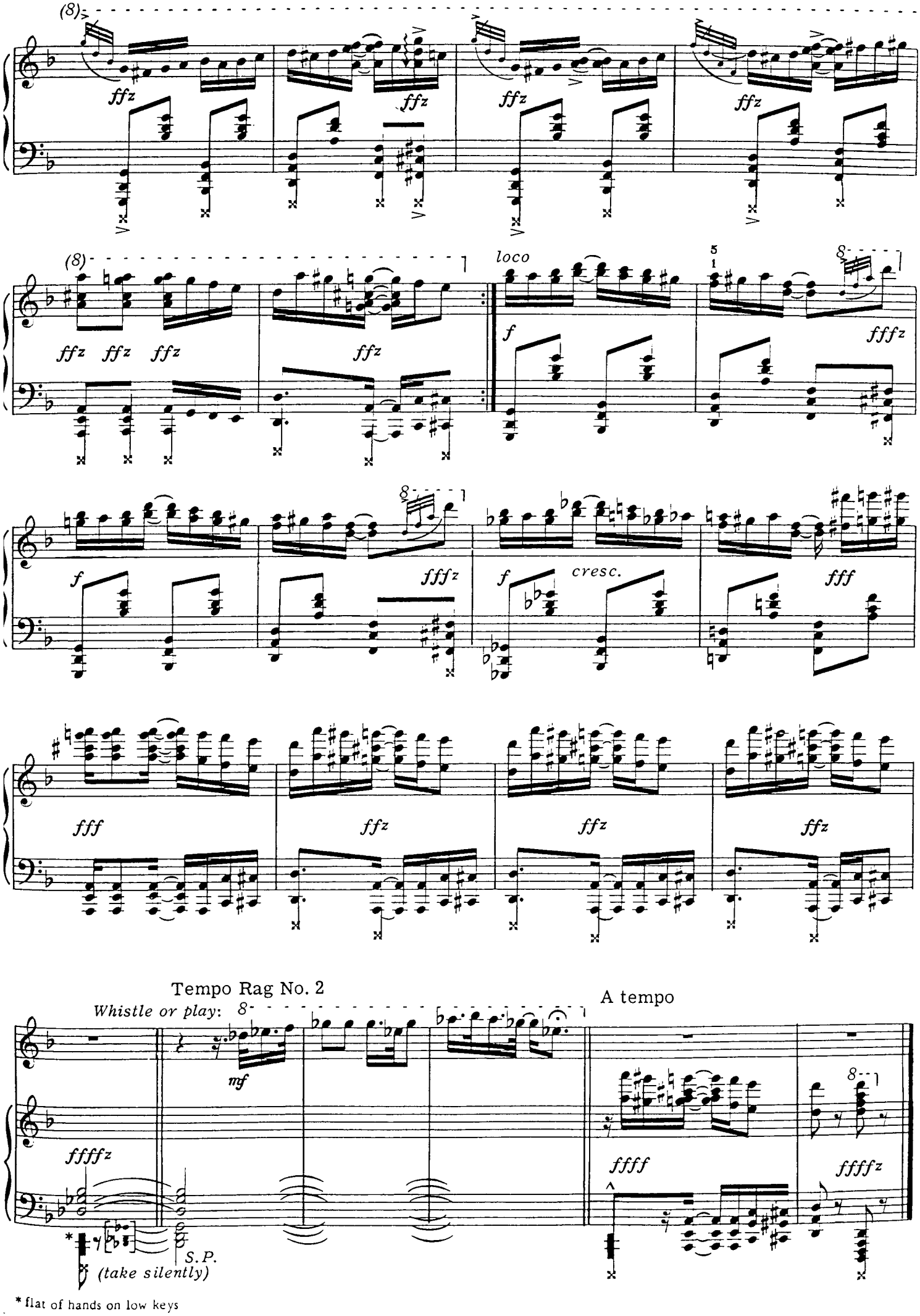
* 1st time: slap piano or "tap dance"; use two fingers of l.h. if alternating the hands proves too difficult.
2nd time: click tongue; if sixteenths prove difficult, click tongue thus:



etc.


Tempo I ♩=96
ffz
fz
p
ppp misterioso
pp
poco a poco cresc.
(no heel stomps)
mf
p
fp
dim.

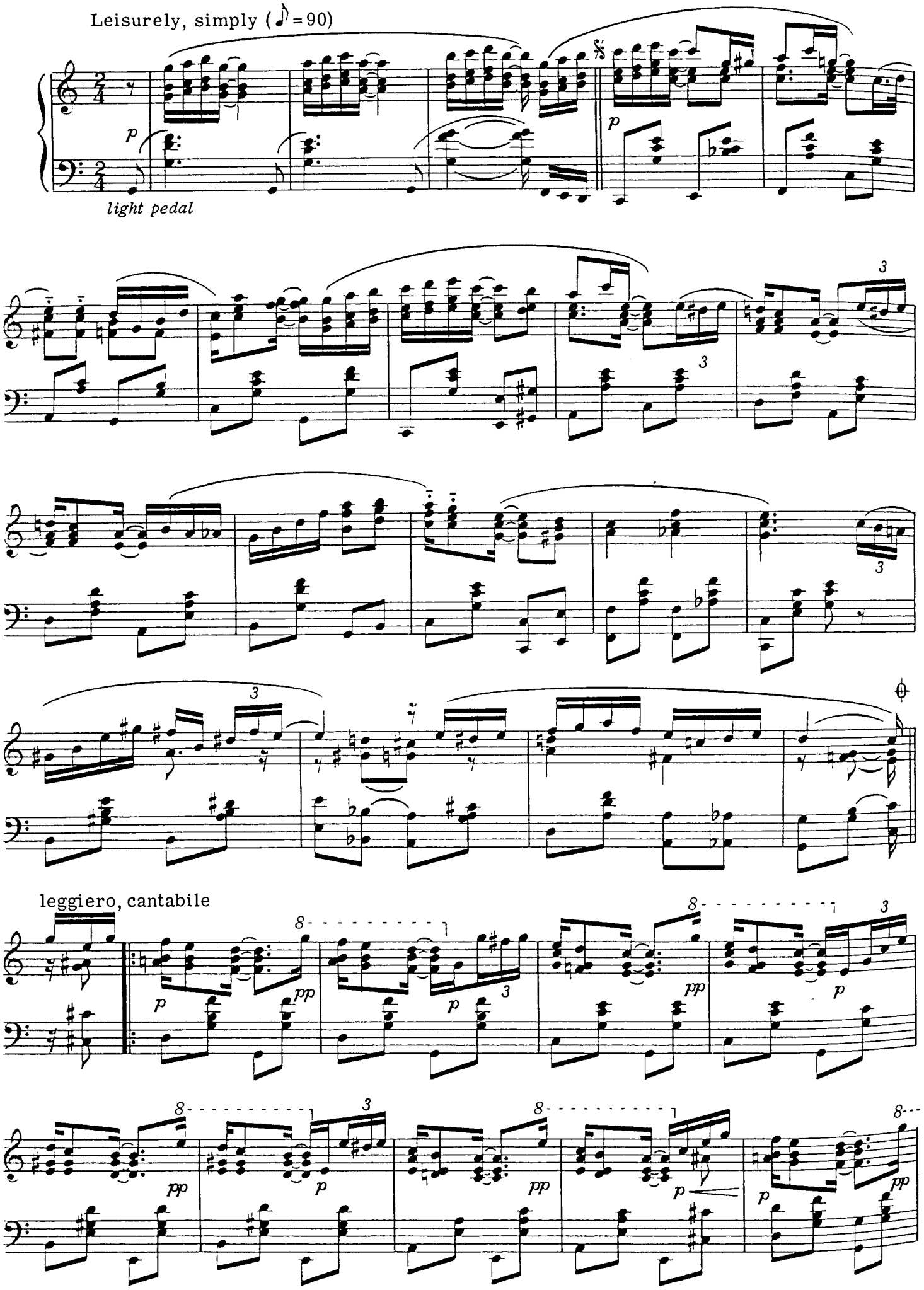

Perhaps a little faster
pp
poco a poco cresc.
heel
Now! Let go!
fff
ffz

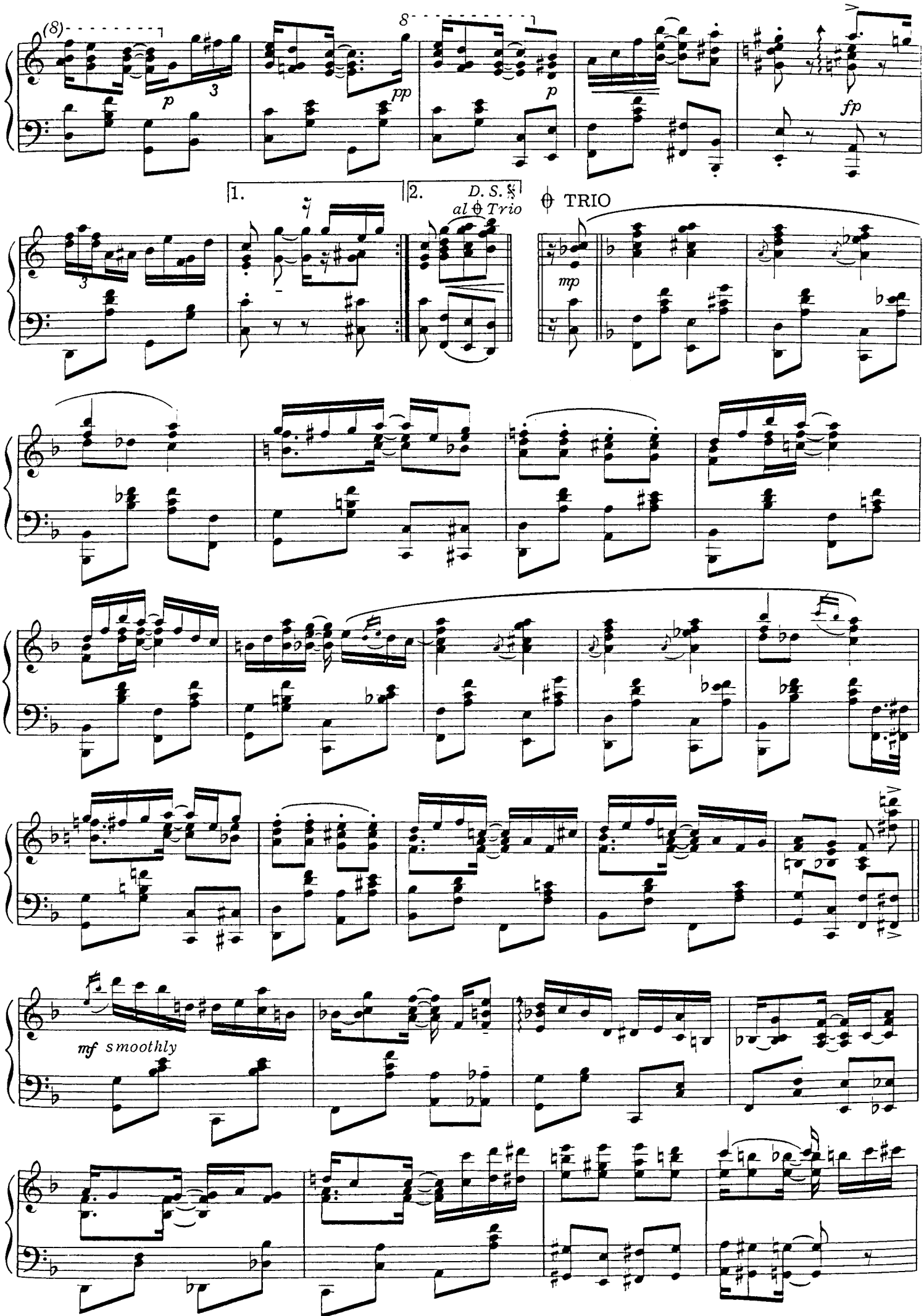


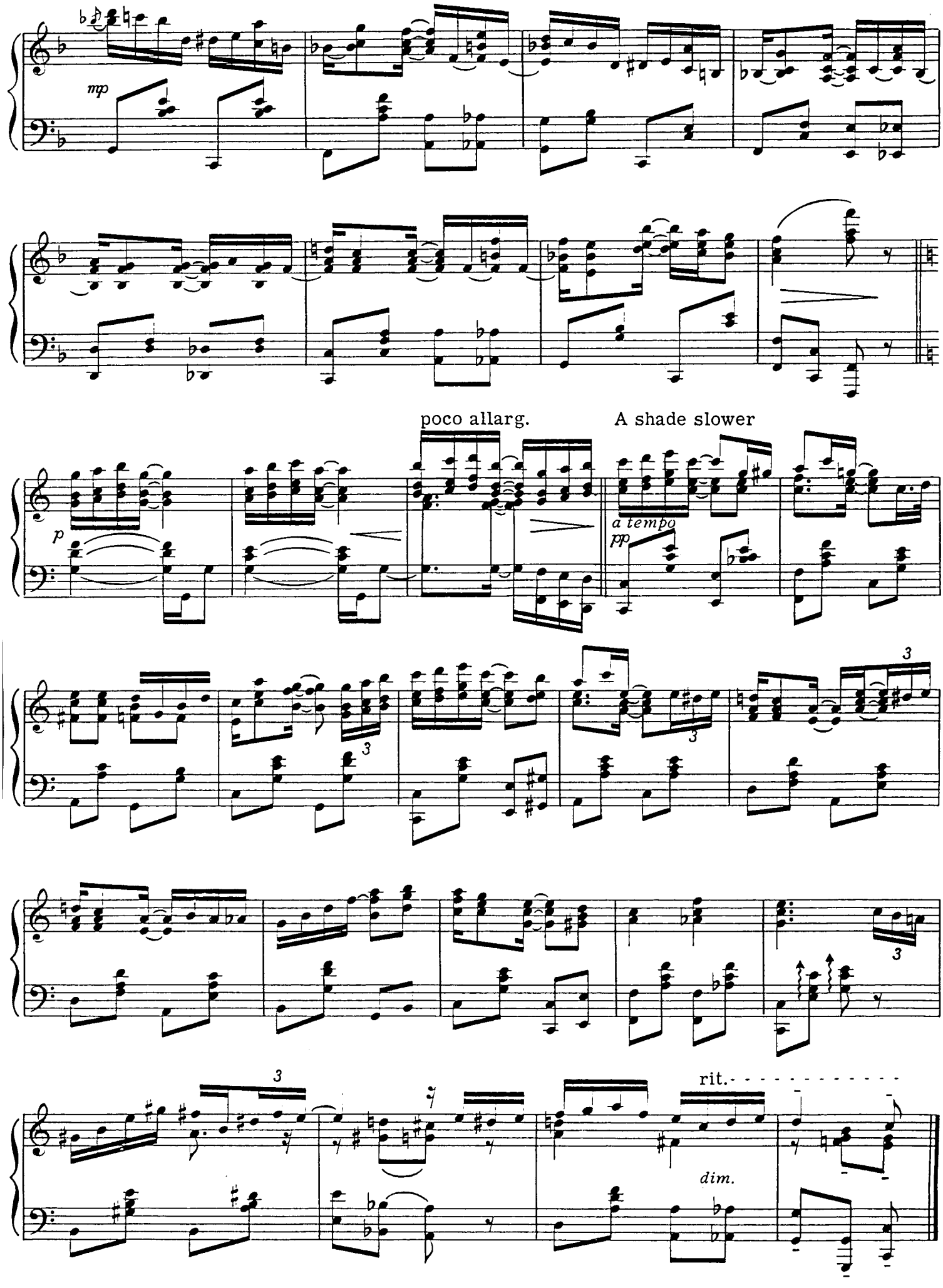
* flat of hands on low keys

IV. THROUGH EDEN'S GATES

Cakewalk




(8)
p
3
8
pp
p
fp
1.
2.
D. S. 𝄋 al ϕ Trio
ϕ TRIO
mp
mf smoothly


mp
poco allarg.
A shade slower
p
a tempo
pp
3
3
3
3
rit.
dim.