SOJOURN

for solo piano

by

John Frederick Paul

John F Paul Music

SOJOURN

There are a few on this earth whose hearts are seized by an unquenchable desire to travel. They seek a country which others claim does not exist, but which they upon arrival hope to claim as their own. Until that time, they will consider themselves aliens and strangers to all other countries. No matter where they settle, these sojourners know their stay is only temporary, for what they seek cannot be found in the material world. They long to see sights which they have heard about but can scarcely begin to imagine; their souls ache for communion with a kindred spirit who understands them and who will never be separated from them, not even by death. The sojourner leads ·a peculiar life. He lives under the influence of two different cultures and must come to grips with the conflicts which arise from considering himself a resident of one though a citizen of another. The demands of the one may be immediate; the demands of the other, though less pressing, may be of greater significance. His mind may be filled with thoughts of the future, it may be fixed upon the things that are eternal, and yet he is forced to live within the confinements of time. His life full of contradictions, he seeks a time when they will all be resolved.

Sojourn is an attempt at capturing the fervency and sense of awe that I imagine one of these persons might have. But the piece goes beyond mere emotional expression. In the process of composing, I found myself wrestling with several structural issues which were amazingly similar to those facing a sojourner: how does one break away from the confines of time? how does one make sense out of apparent unresolved tension? Thus the music became a kind of personal sojourn into realms of rhythm and tonality which I had yet to explore. Each movement, in its own way, stretches at the restrictions of a steady pulse, from that incessant reminder of the passage of time, but it is not until the last movement that complete rhythmic and metric freedom is attained. The dissonance of the work, caused in part by the demands of two tonal regions, reaches its peak in Capriccios, rapprochement comes only in the final moments of the work. Just as a sojourner attempts to reconcile the conflicts in his life by absorbing the smaller conflicting details into a larger vision, so the progression of this work may be heard as the enfolding of the first tonal area into the second.

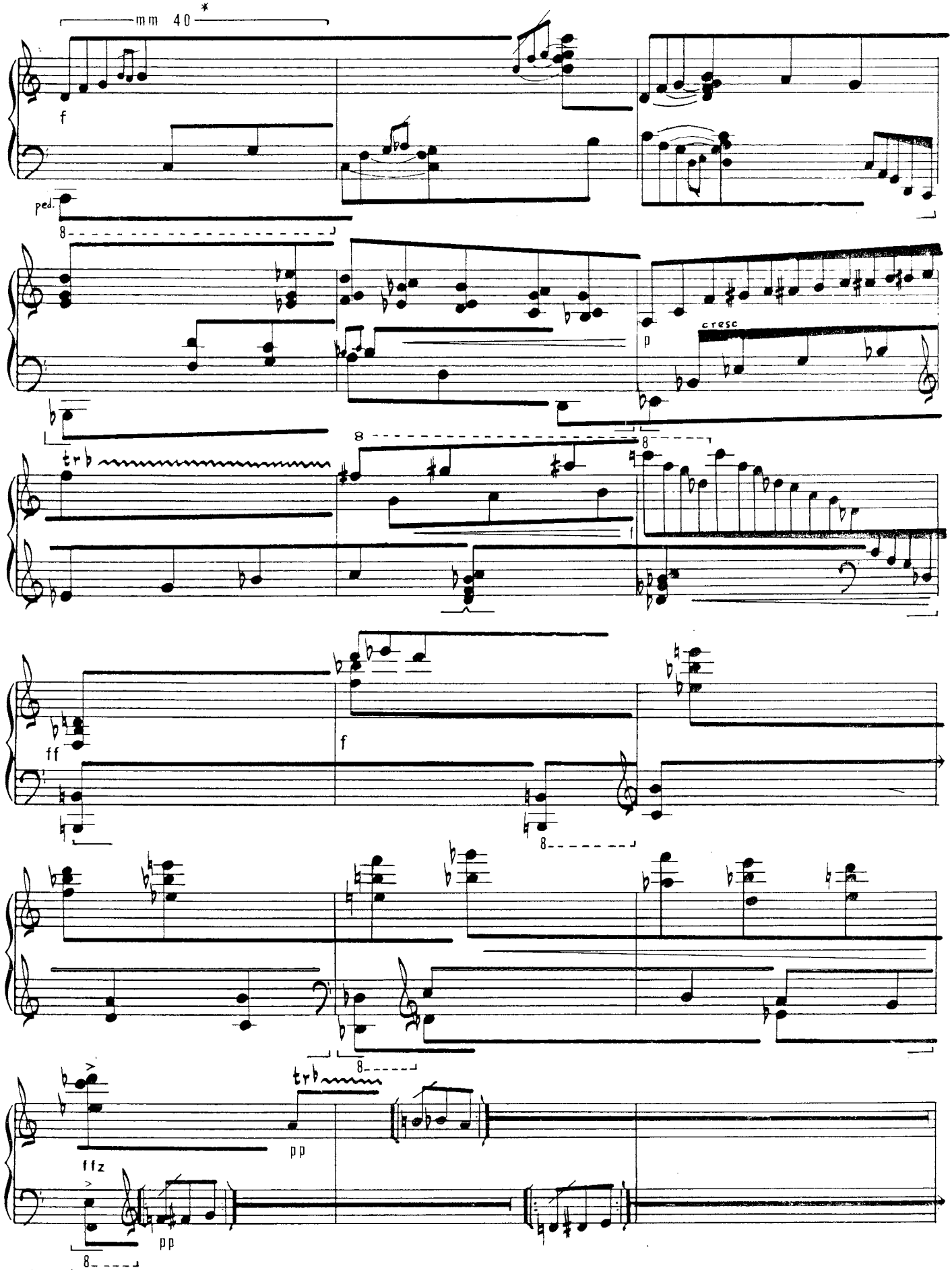
A word needs to be said concerning the use of John B. Dykes' hymn-tune NICAEA. Its presence often obscured within the texture of the music, it occasionally rises into clarity. Beginning with the words "Holy, Holy, Holy", the text by Reginald Heber is based upon a description found in the Revelation of John. It is a glimpse of what one day a sojourner hopes to see with his own eyes. The scene transcends time, it is other-worldly, all else pales in comparison to the object of its focus.

---John F. Paul

for Alan Chow

I. VARIATIONS I

con brio



* Each barline indicates a steady pulse of m.m. = 40 (1 pulse every 1.5 seconds). The events between barlines are to be played freely.

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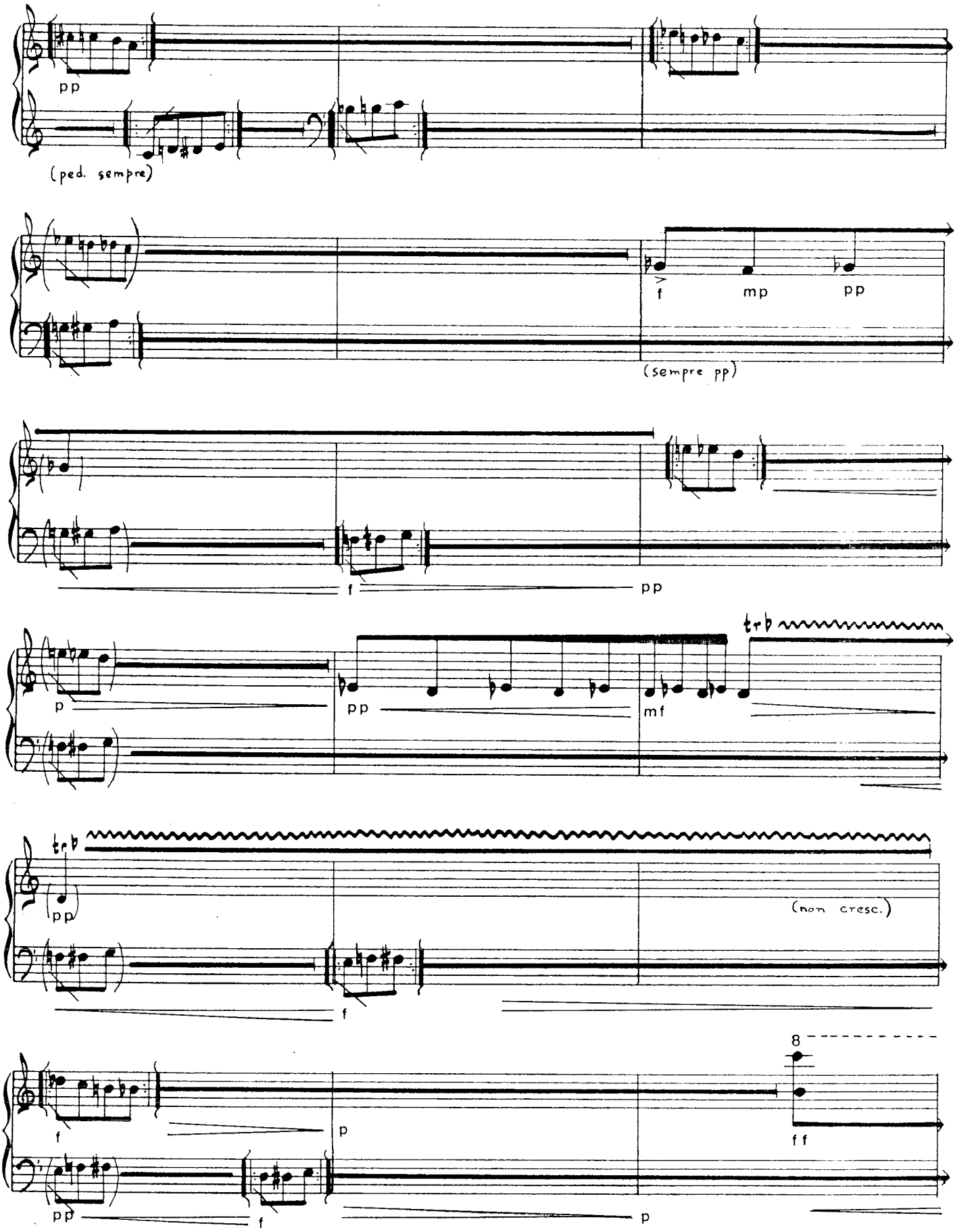
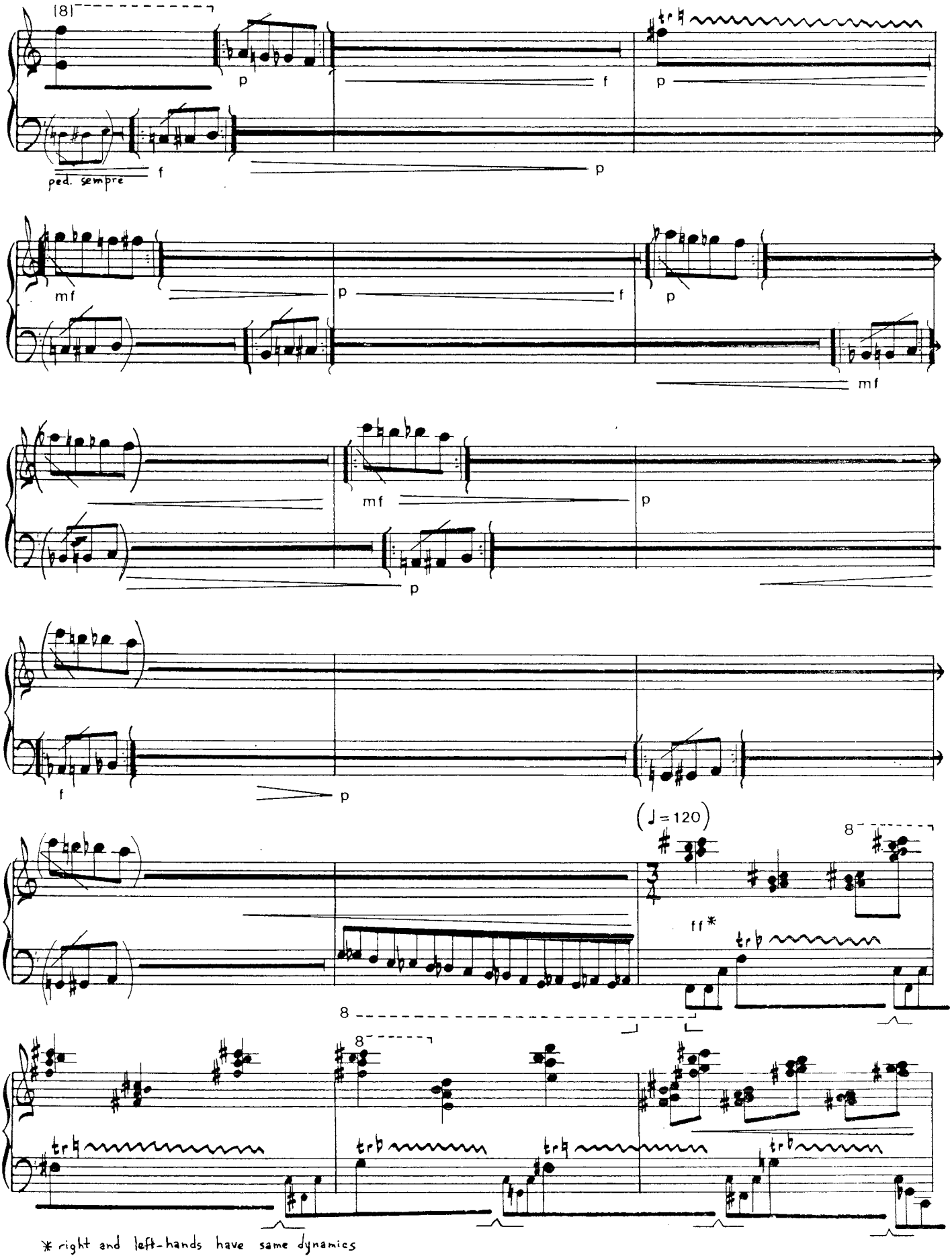
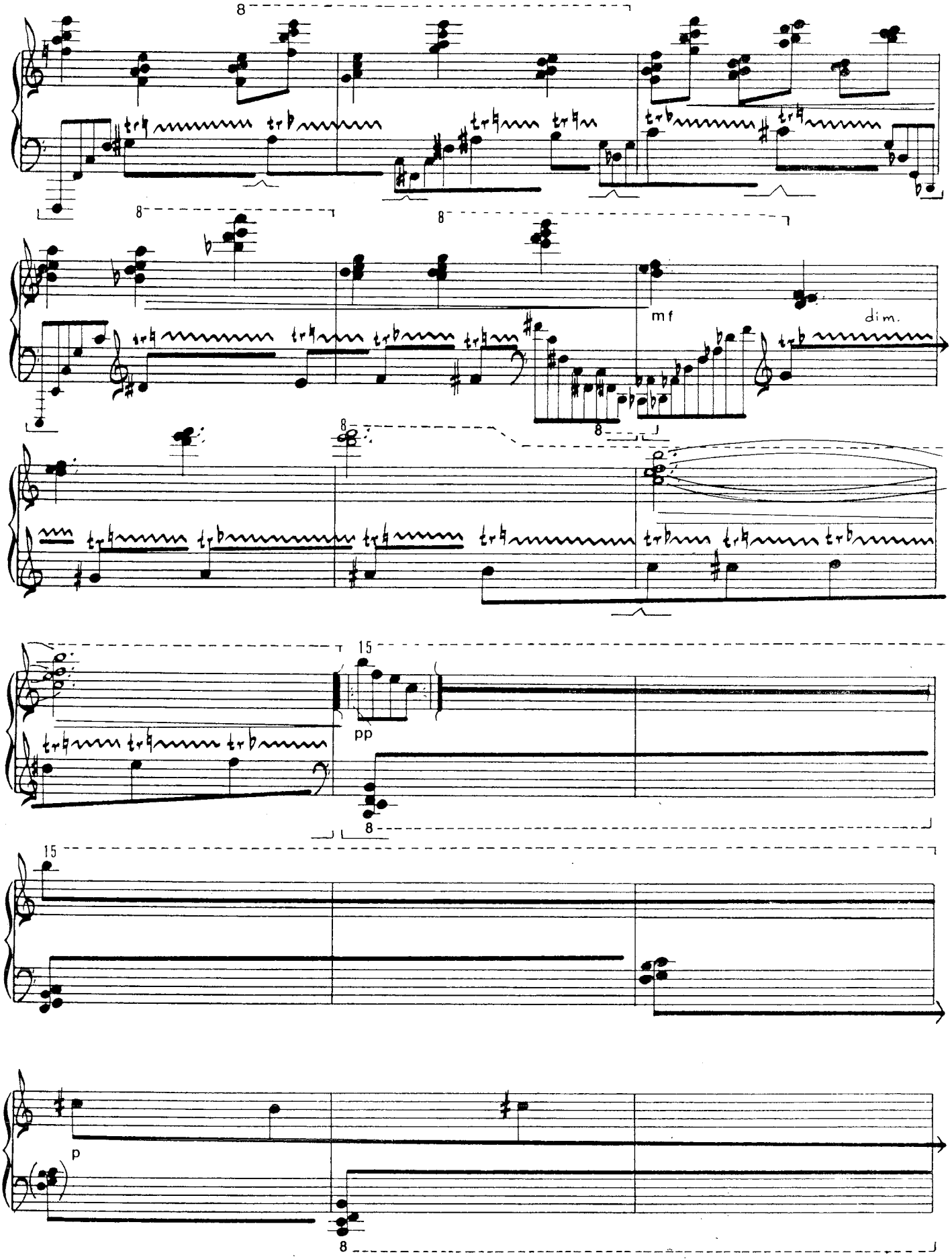

pp
(ped. sempre)
f
mp
pp
(sempre pp)
f
pp
p
pp
mf
trb
pp
f
(non cresc.)
f
p
8
ff
pp
f
p


18
p
f
p
ped. sempre
f
p
mf
p
f
p
mf
mf
p
p
f
p
(♩=120)
ff*
8
8
8
* right and left-hands have same dynamics



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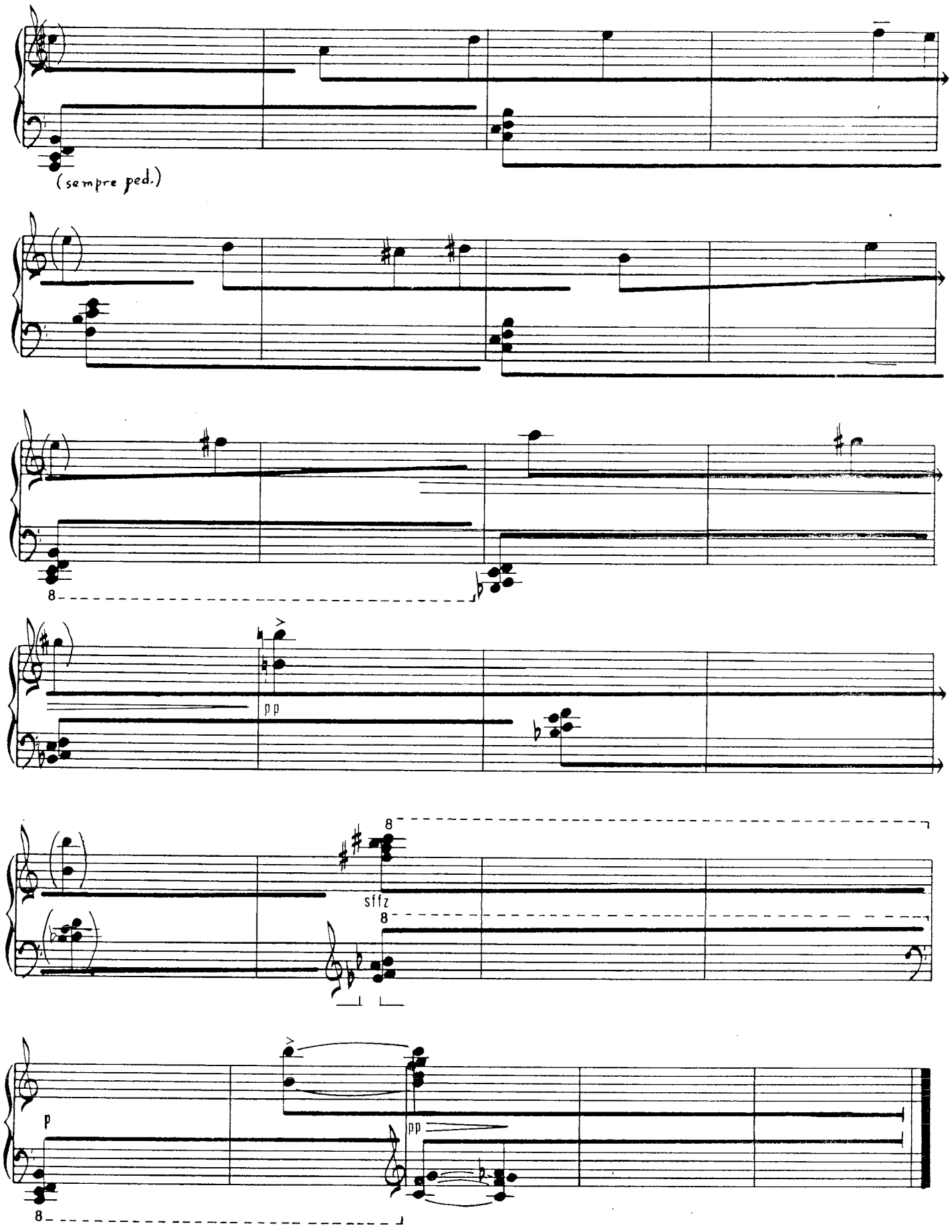

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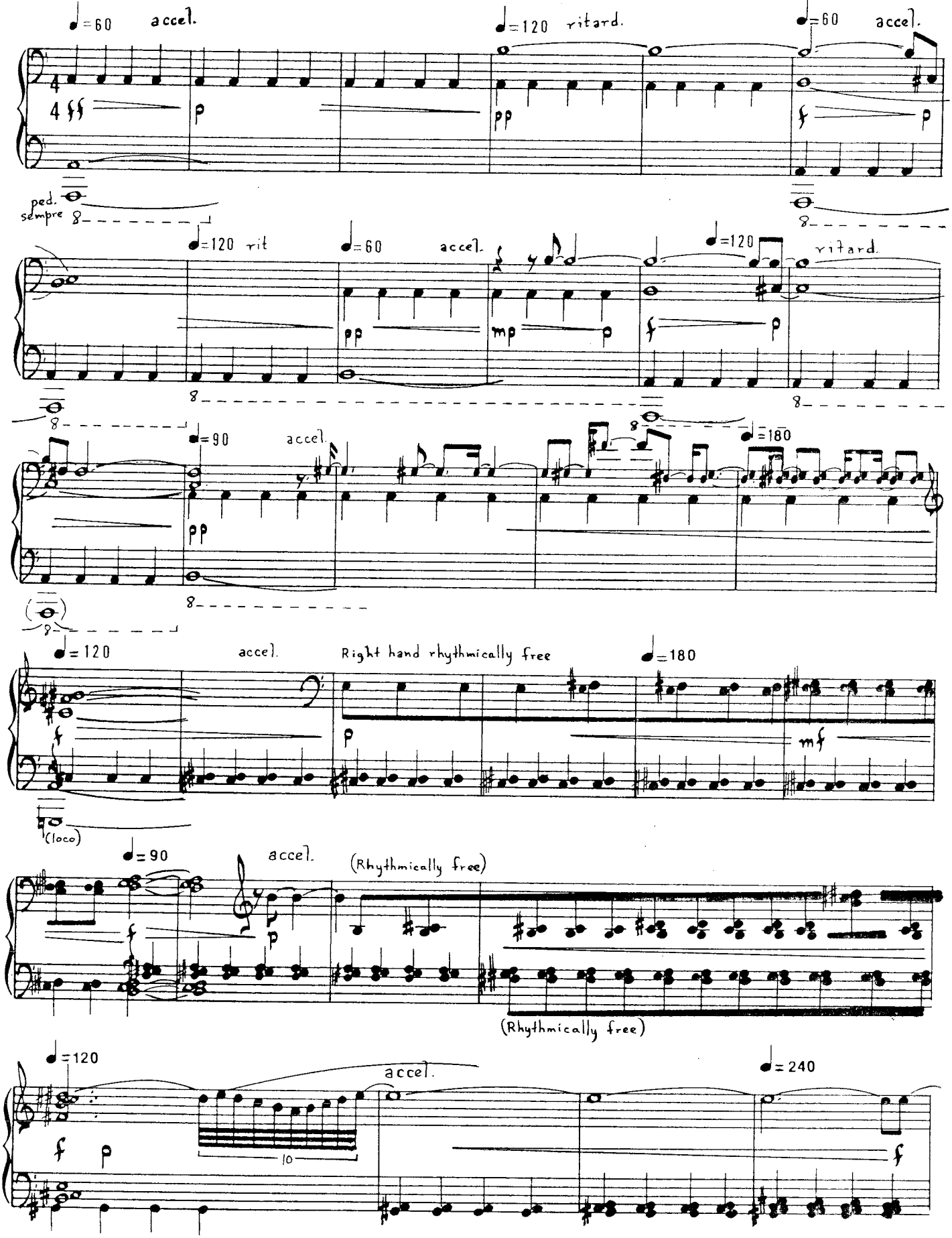
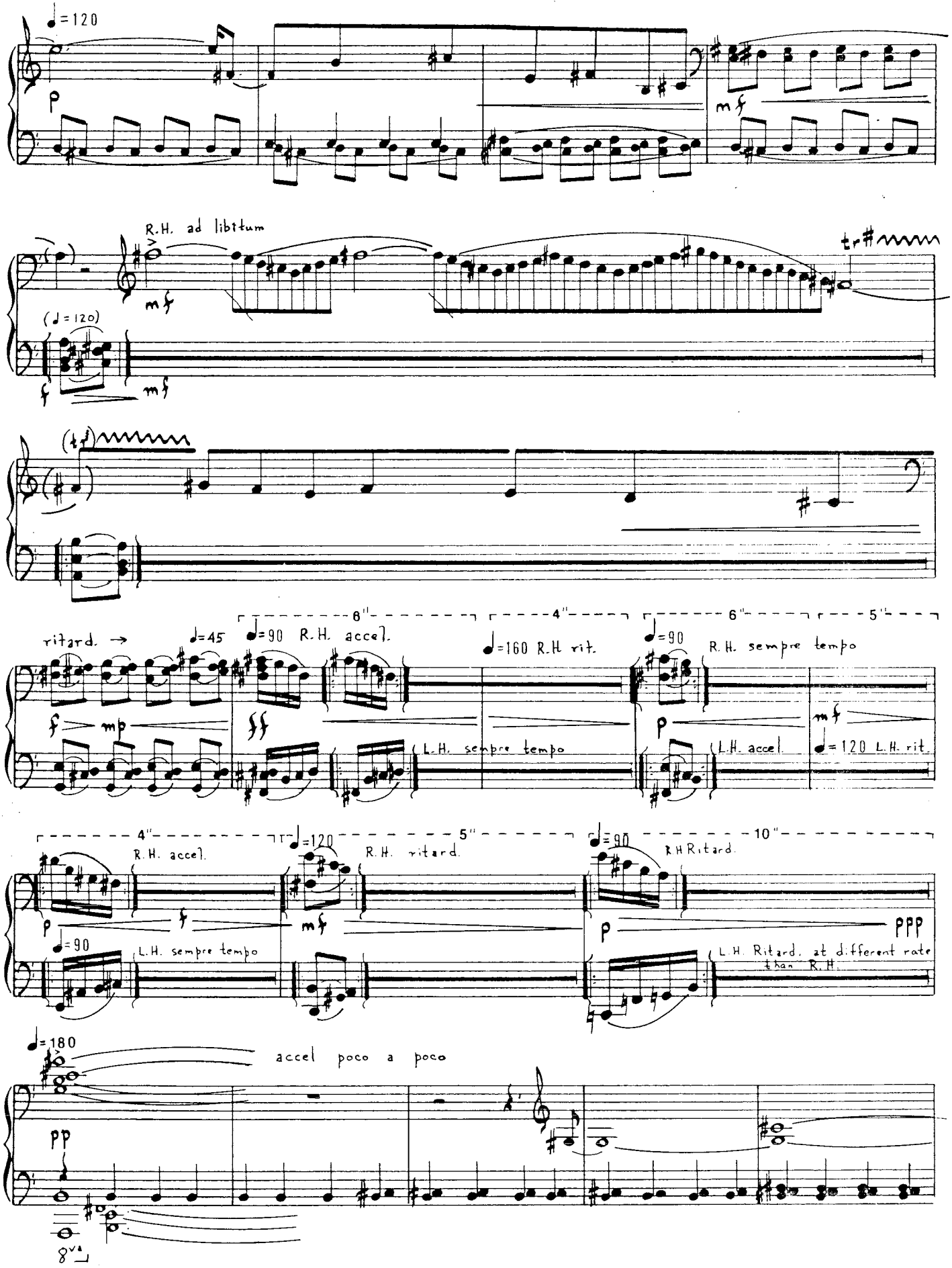
II. INTERMEZZI





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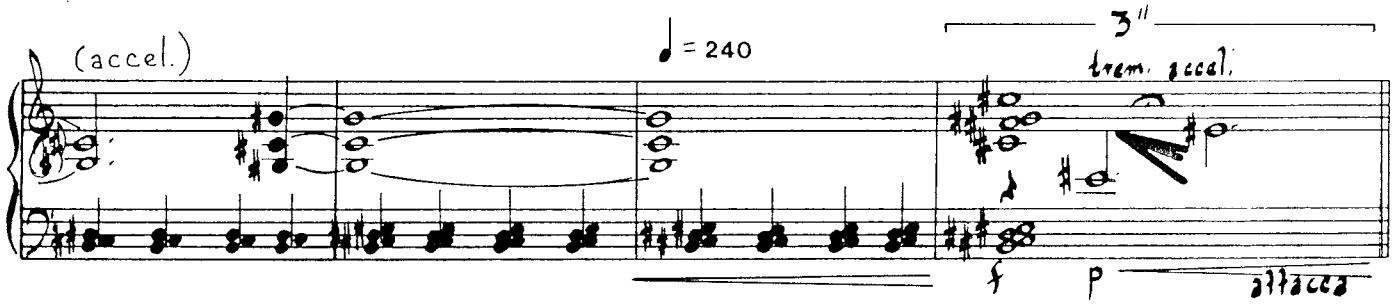
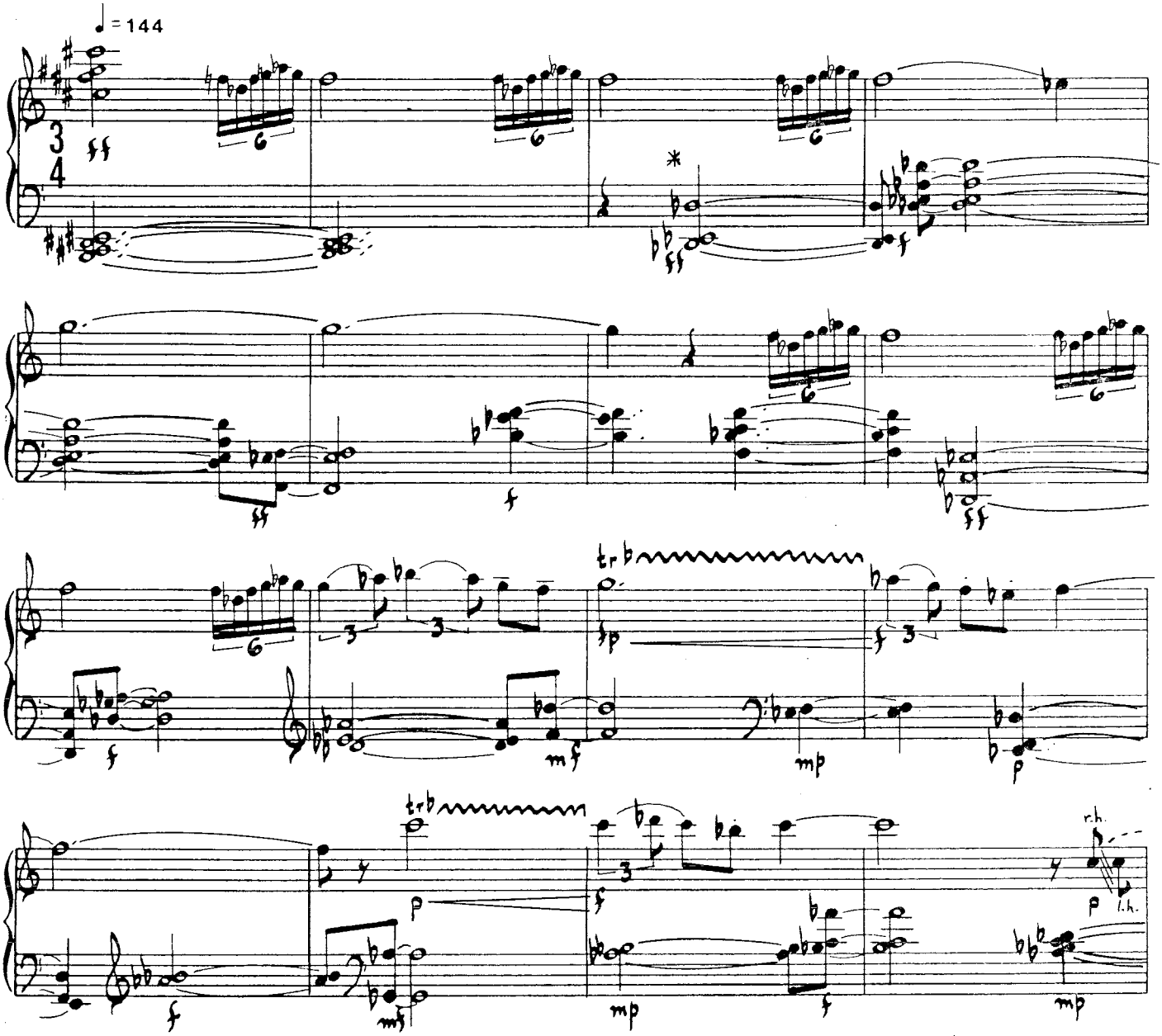


NICAEA: Verse I

Allegro



* the left hand is actually grouped metrically into a slower 3, the beat of which equals d. of the right hand.

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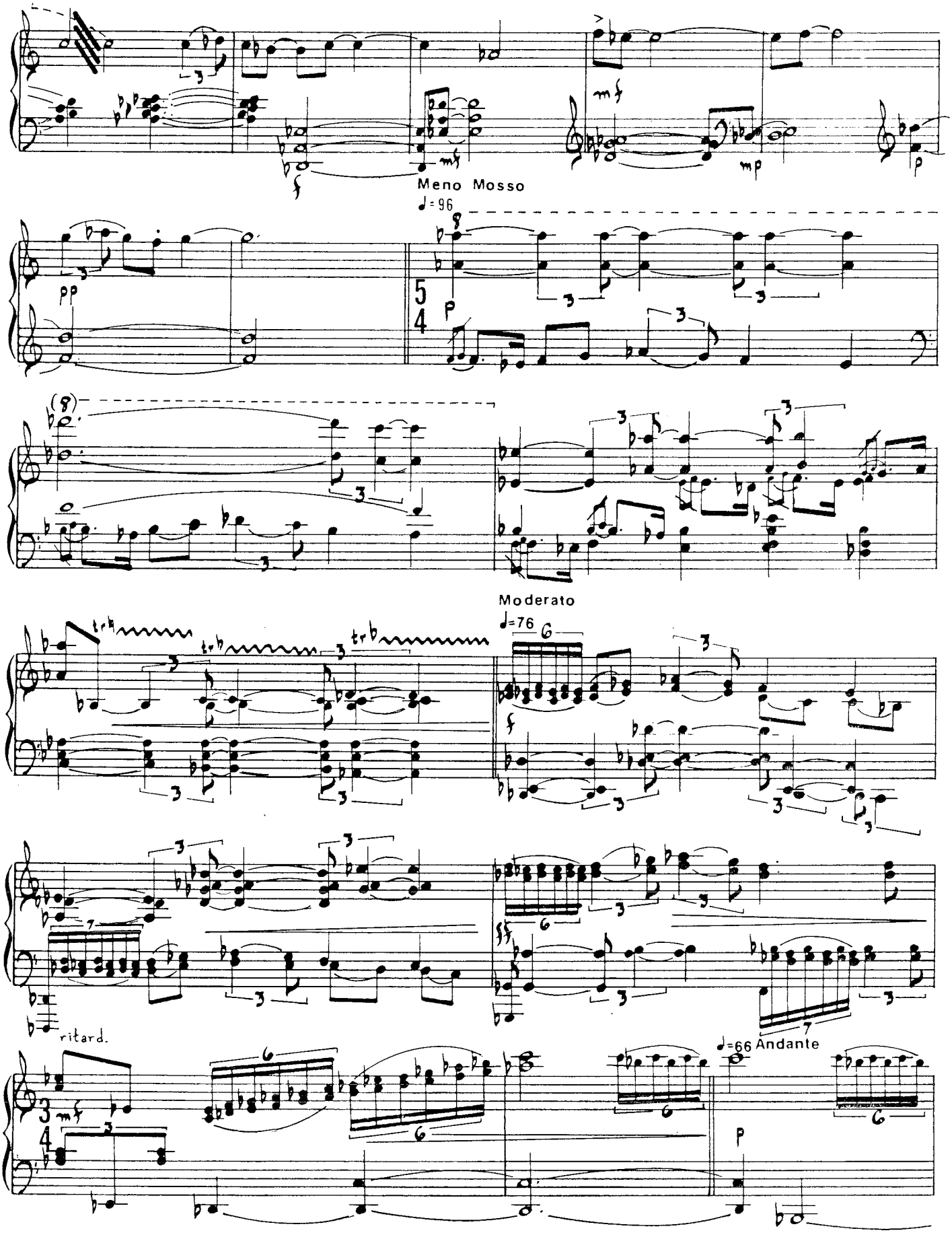

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attacca

CAPRICCIOS

Vivace

♪= 144

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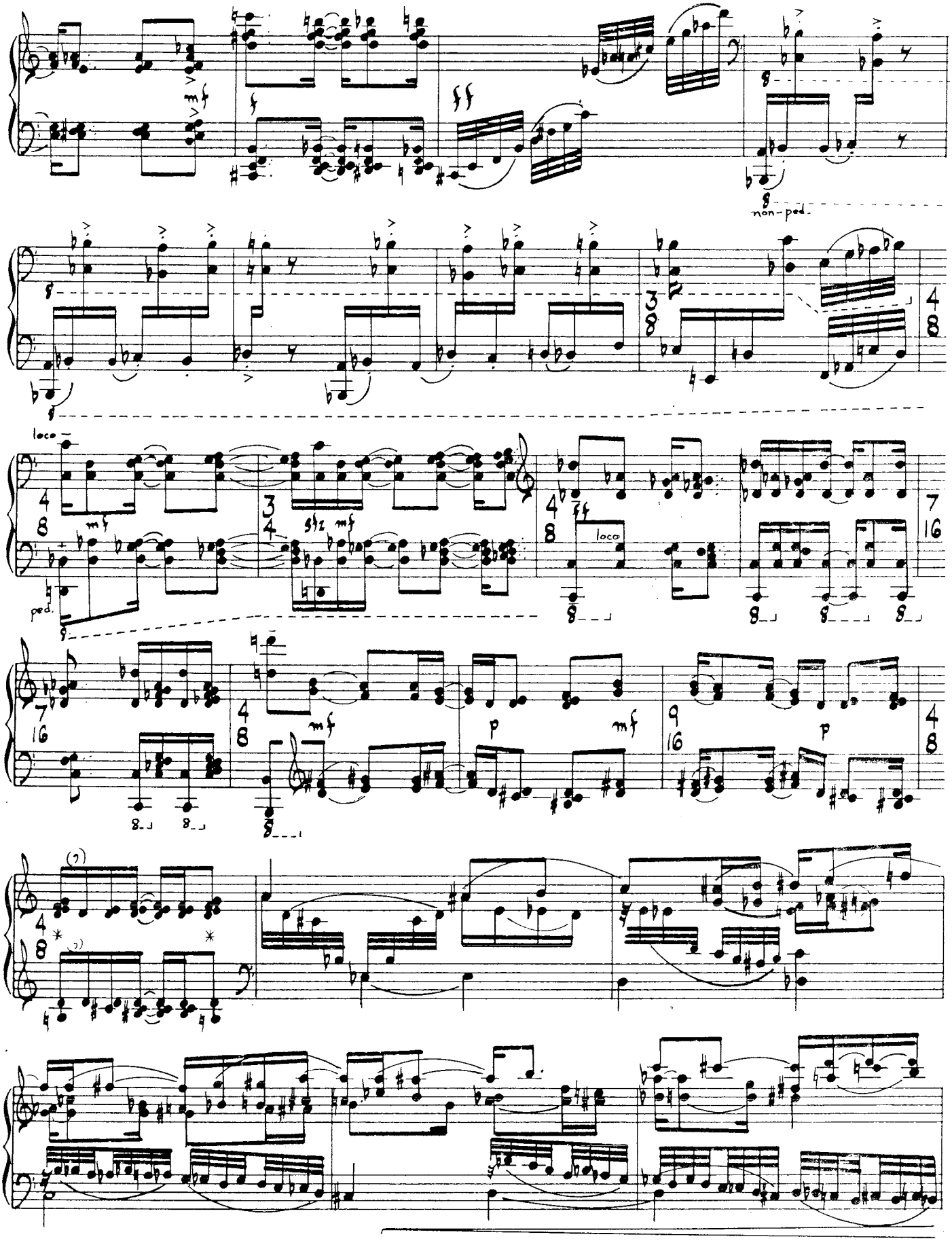
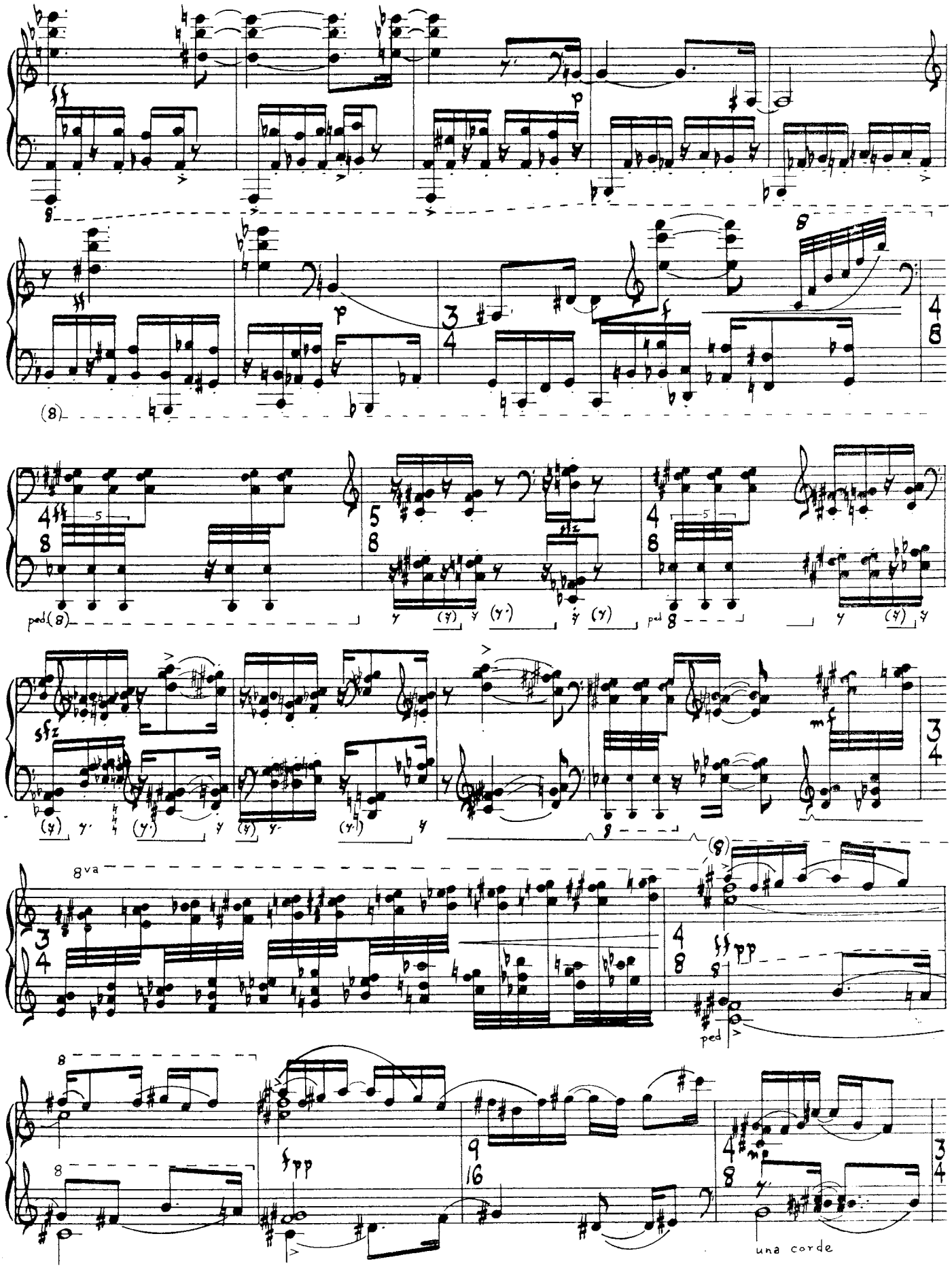


* chromatic cluster in the left hand



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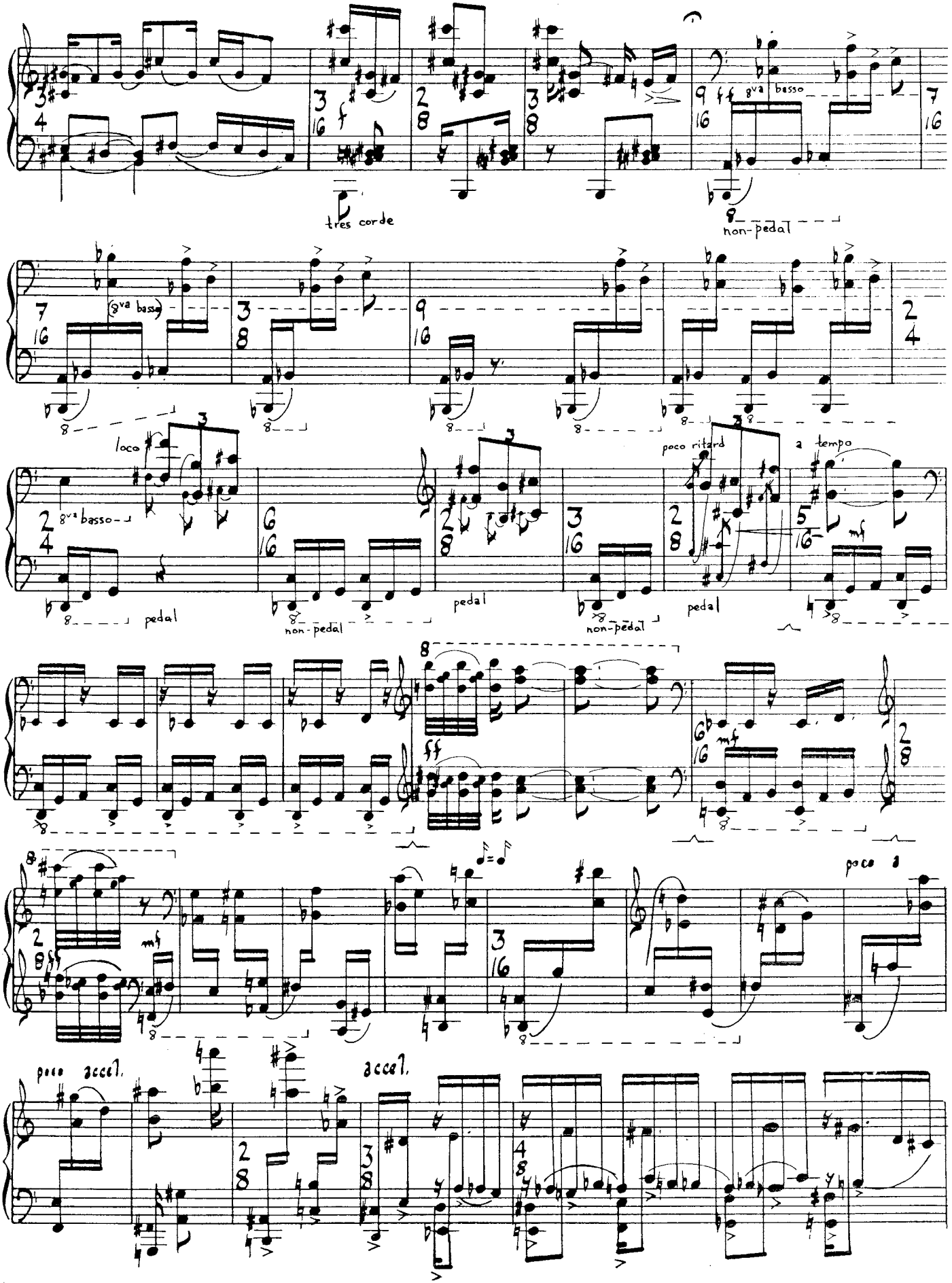

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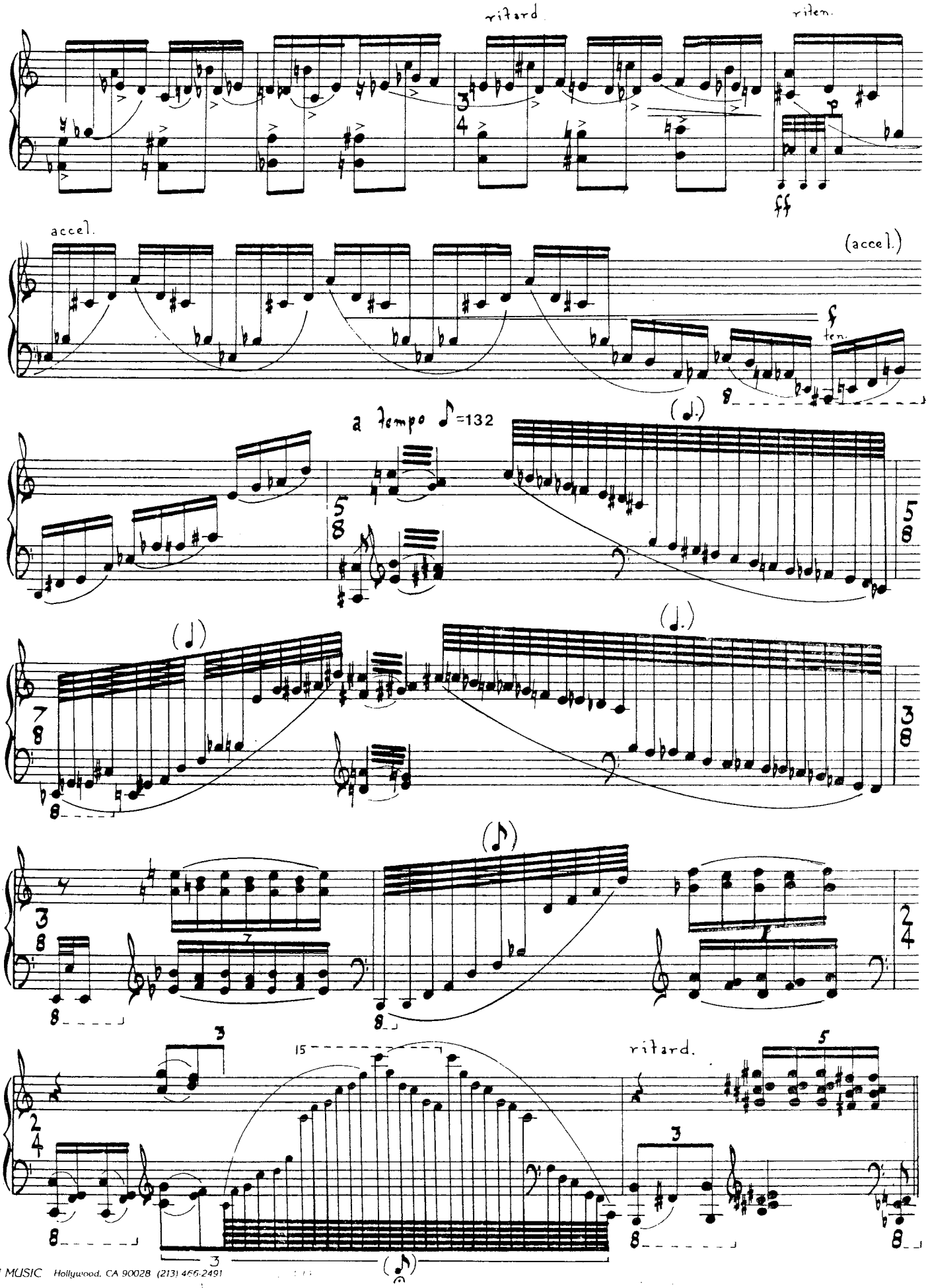

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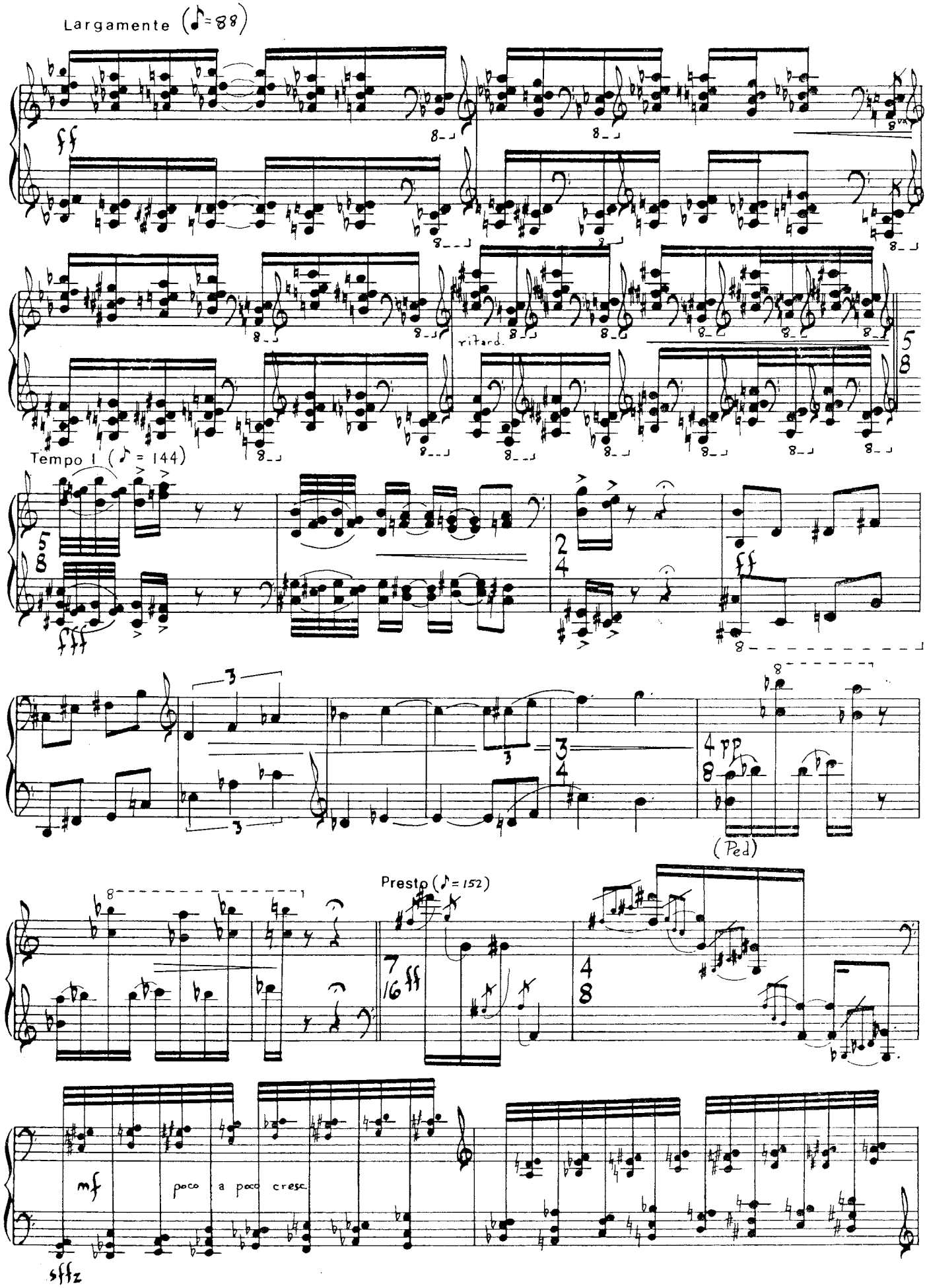
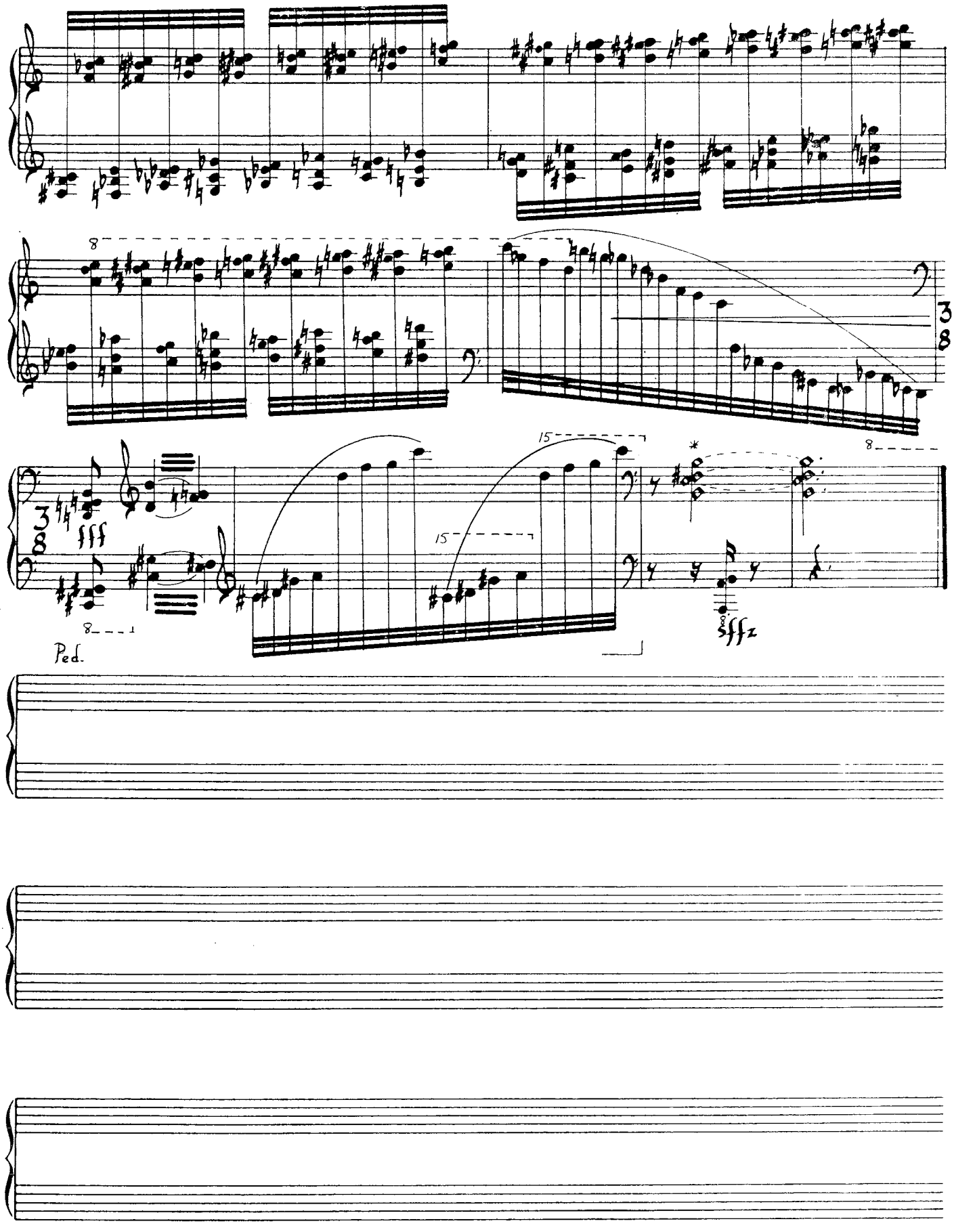

Largamente (♪=88)
ff
ritard.
Tempo I (♪ = 144)
fff
pp
(Ped)
Presto (♪=152)
ff
mf
poco a poco cresc.
sffz



* Right hand: press down keys silently

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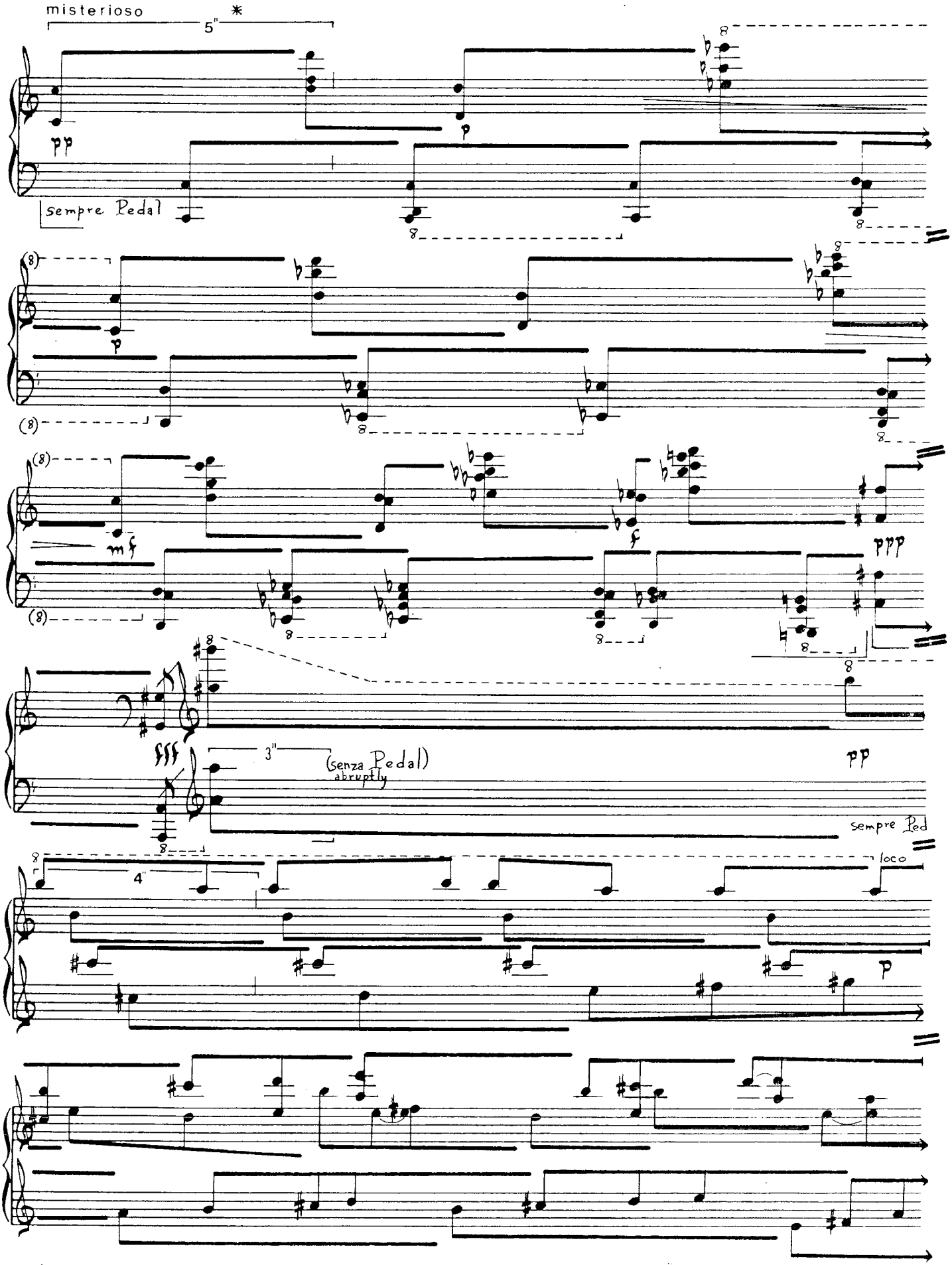
III. VARIATIONS II



* To be played freely, with no sense of pulse. Time indications are approximate.

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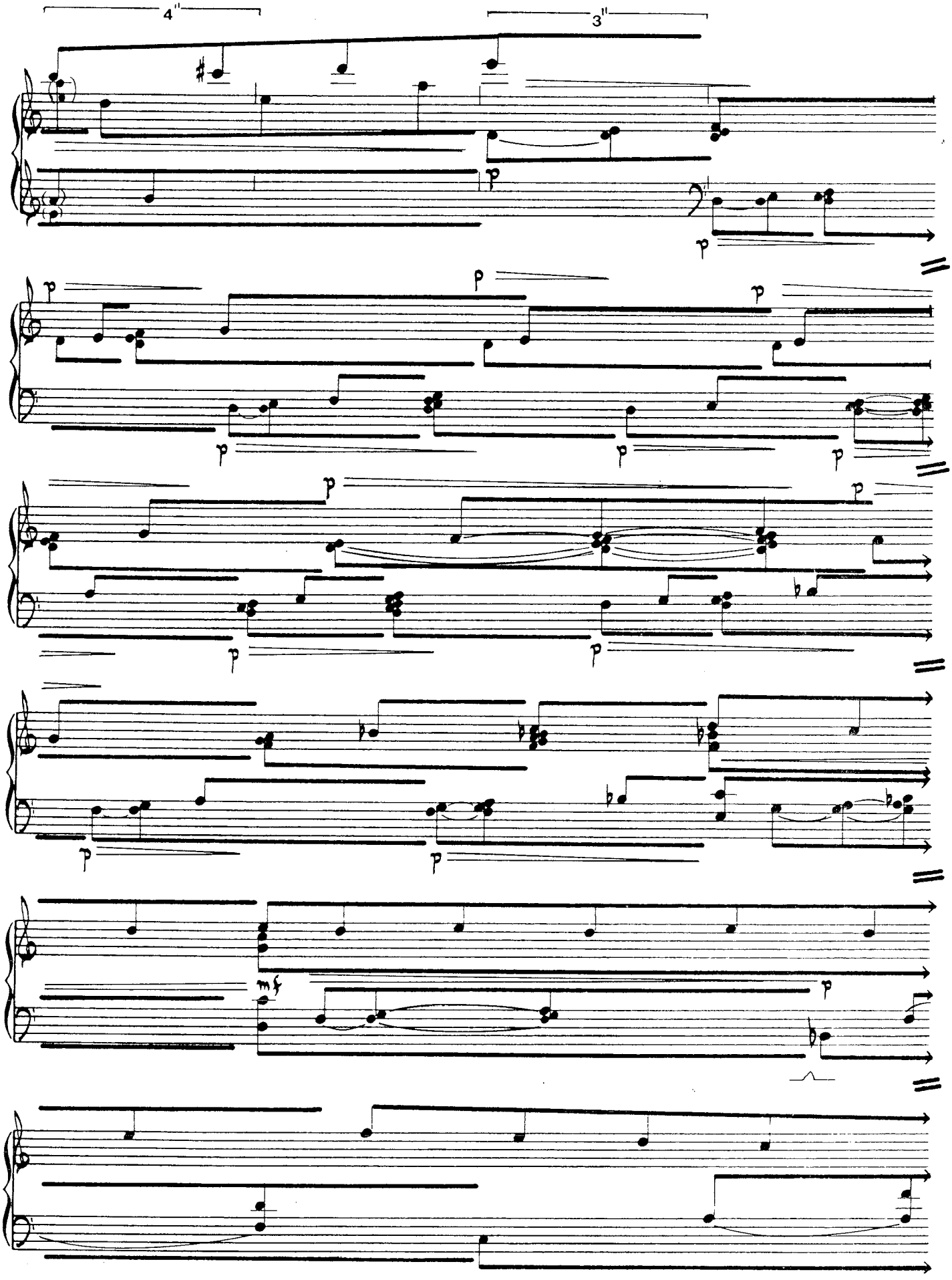

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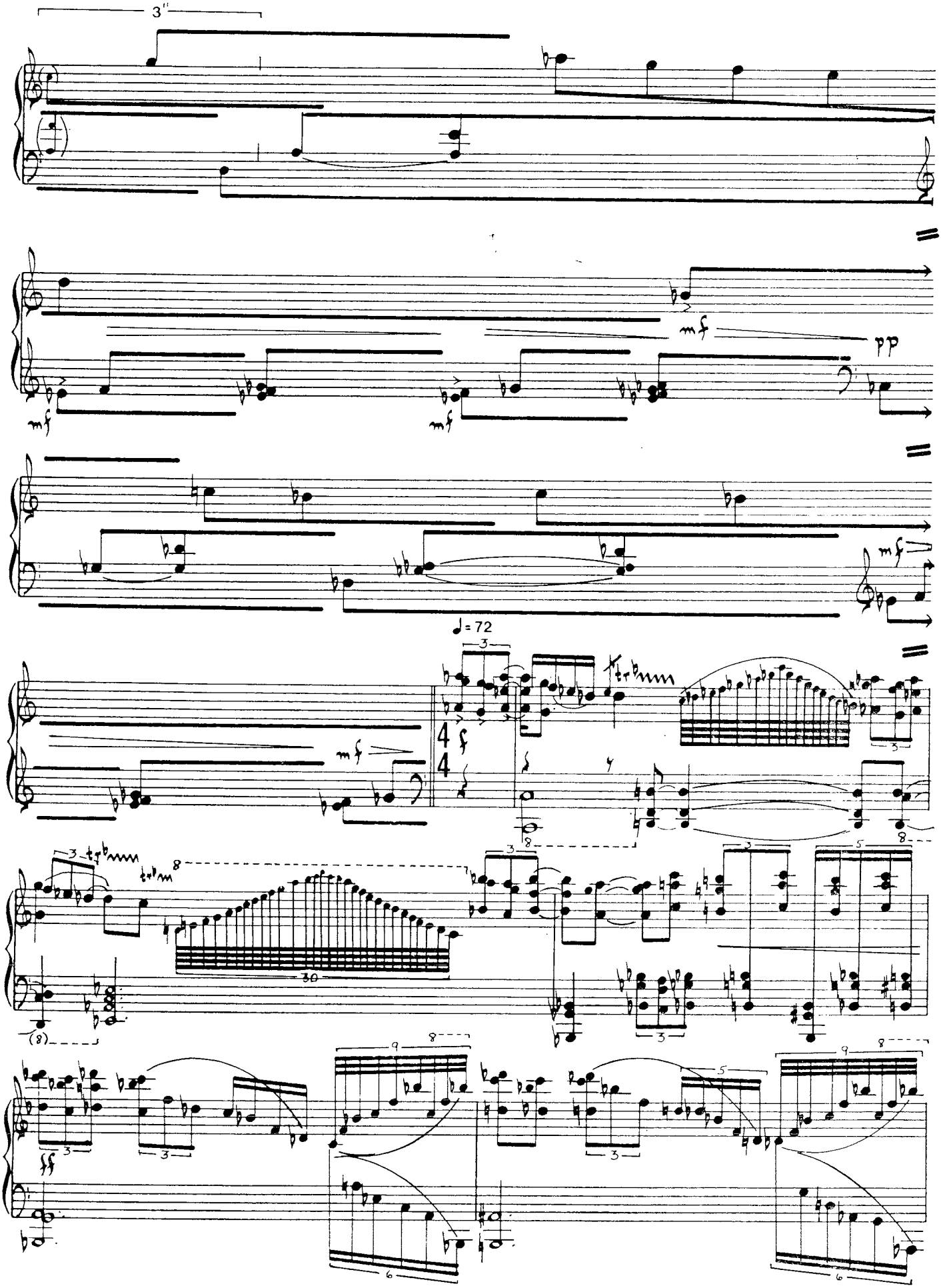

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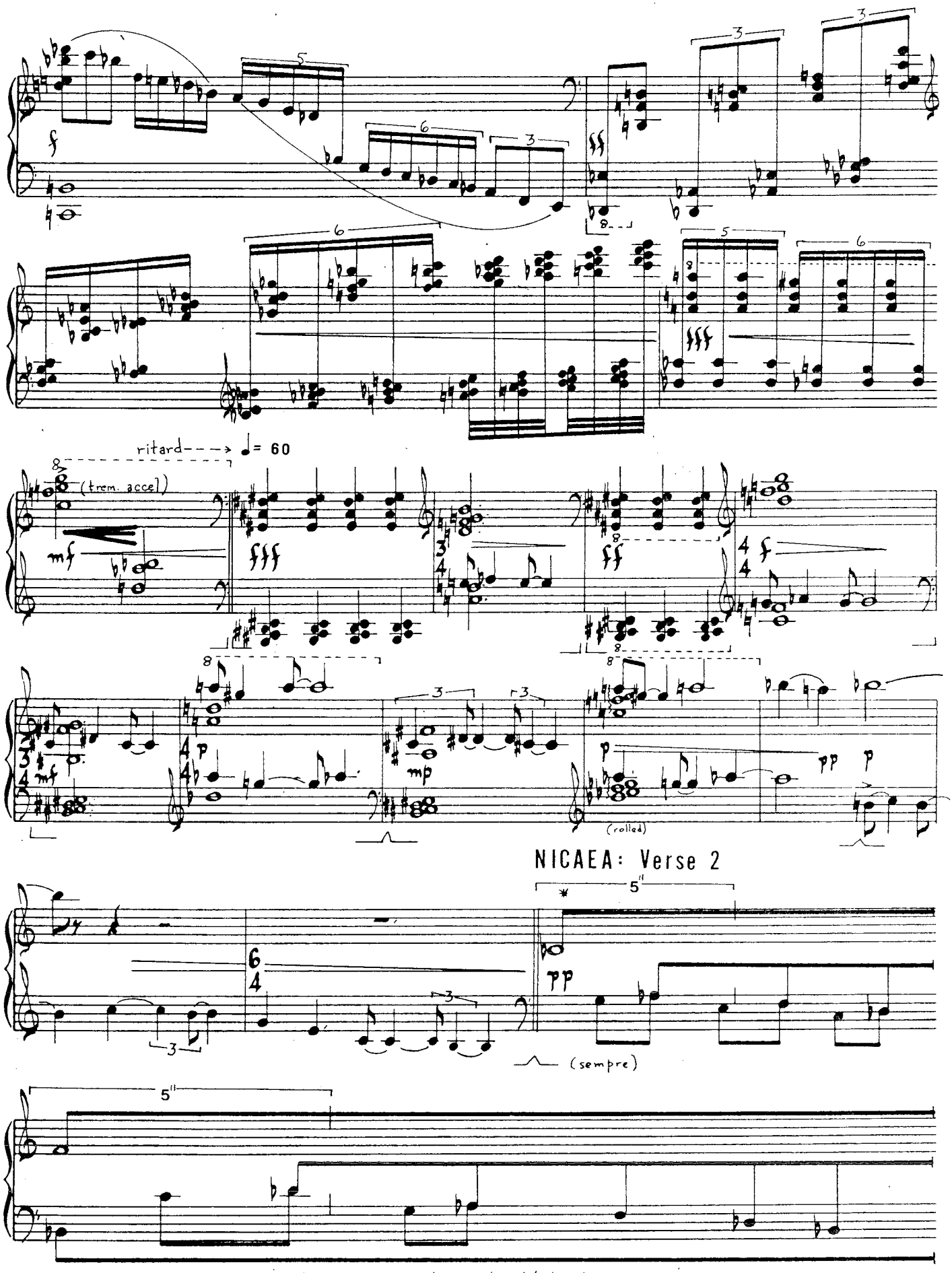
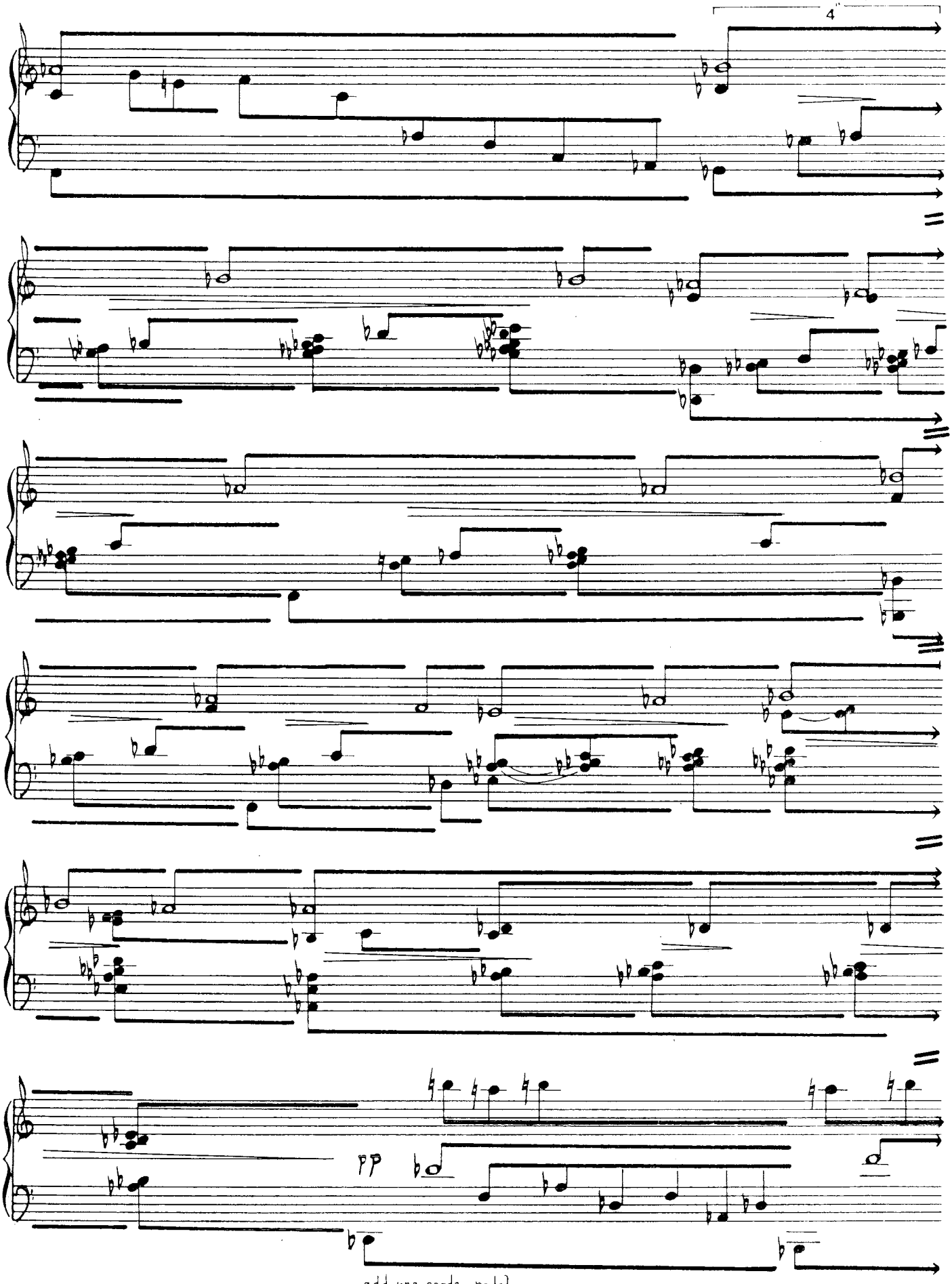


*White notes indicate the hymn tune, these should be brought out.



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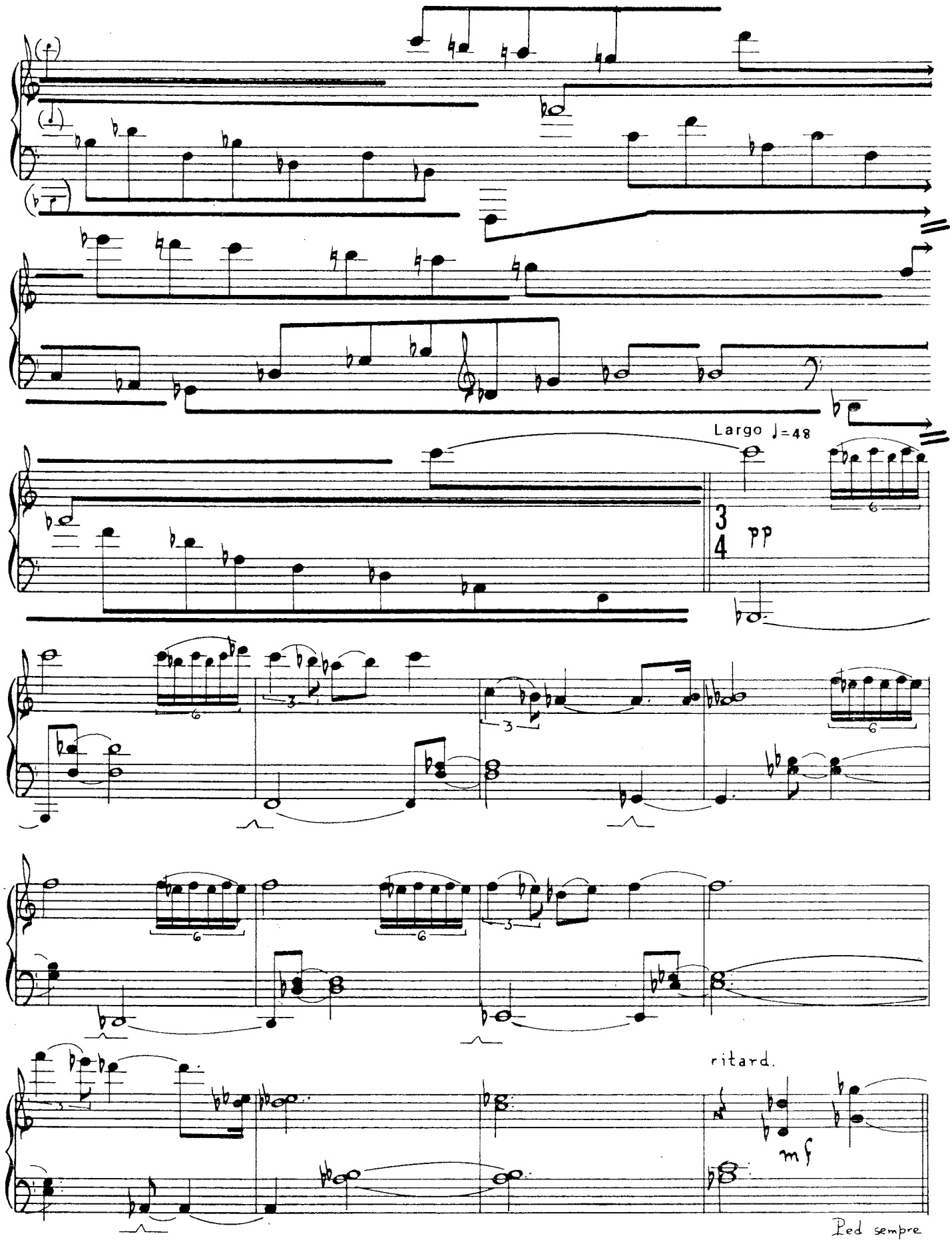

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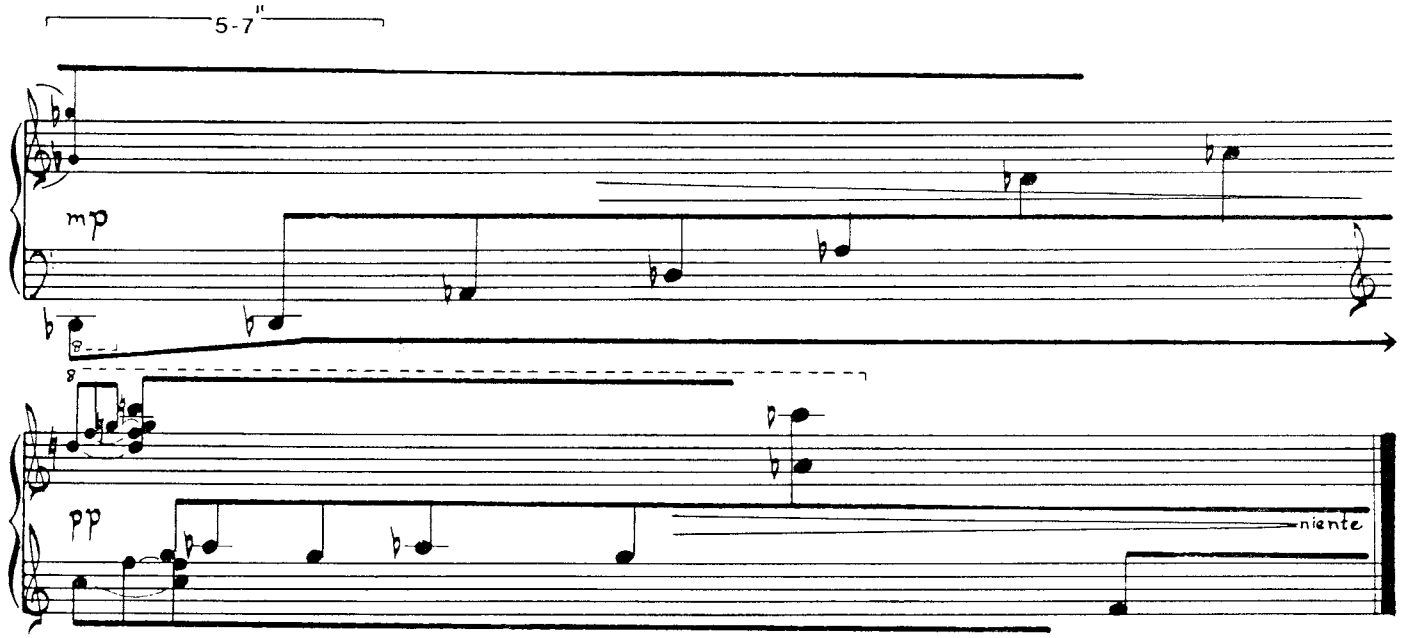

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