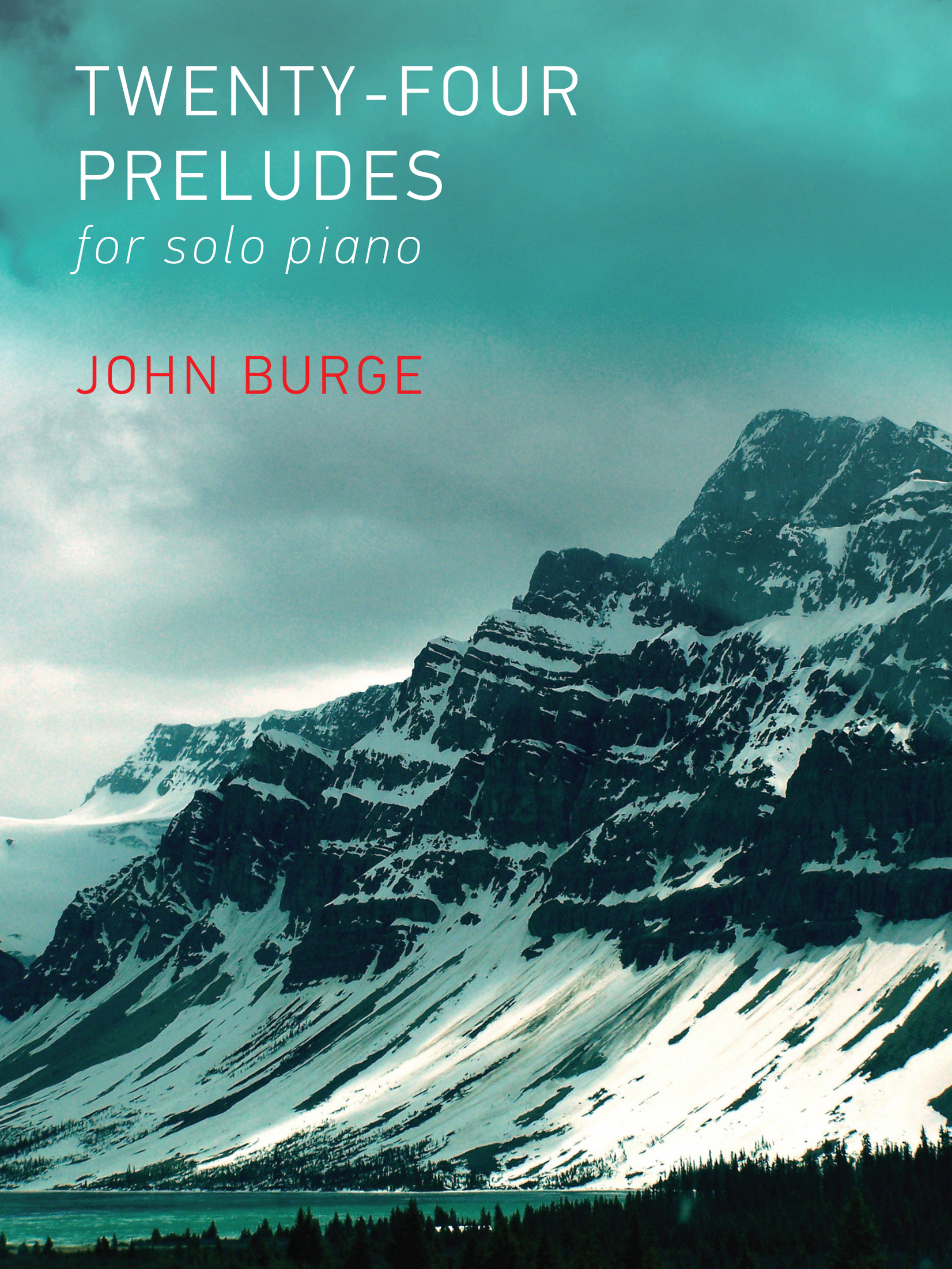
TWENTY-FOUR PRELUDES

for solo piano

JOHN BURGE



Given the number of precedents in the world of Classical music, it is fair to state that there is a long traditional of composing a set of ***Twenty-Four Preludes*** for solo piano. John Burge's preludes draw their primary influence from Chopin's Opus 28 set in that Burge also composes one prelude in each major and minor key, employing the exact same ordering of keys used by Chopin. Beginning with the first two preludes in C major and A minor (the major and minor keys sharing the same key signature) the pattern of keys repeats by ascending Perfect Fifths (Numbers 3 and 4 are in G major and E minor) until reaching the final pair of preludes in F major and D minor. While Chopin was writing music in the highly chromaticized harmonic language of the early 19th century, in 2015, the year that Burge completed his set, the concept of tonality has undergone so many developments since Chopin's time that there are now whole schools of musical techniques that produce music that is quite atonal. As an all-governing principle for his set of preludes though, Burge made it a personal requirement that each prelude had to embrace its tonic key in a decisively audible fashion.

It will be apparent to anyone playing or listening to Burge's preludes that the ones in minor keys are often the most vividly dramatic. Indeed, numbers 6, 12, 18 and 24 are sufficiently expansive that they generate a strong sense of ending which structurally groups the entire work into four blocks of six prelude subsets. It will also be obvious that the higher numbered preludes are generally more technically difficult and longer. The other way that the preludes can be divided is discernable in the arrangement of the eight preludes that use non-traditional piano performance techniques. Numbers 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20 and 23 involve such things as creating bell-like harmonics, strumming strings inside the piano, knocking on the wooden frame and plucking strings. Although the means by which sound is activated in these specific preludes might be somewhat novel, harmonically these preludes are often the most emphatically tonal music of the entire work.

This composition is dedicated to Canadian pianist, Mathew Walton. John Burge had the pleasure of adjudicating Mathew in piano performance competitions in Ontario early in his career and Mathew eventually tracked down some of John Burge's music while studying at the University of Ottawa and then the University of Alberta. A fabulous pianist, Mathew not only performed John Burge's ***Prelude Variations***, for piano and orchestra, with the University of Alberta Symphony Orchestra (a work based on Chopin's Prelude in C minor, Op. 28, No. 20), but he also made a comprehensive study of the first nine installments of Burge's ***Studies for Poetry*** series. Around this time, Mathew also gave John Burge a translation of Czeslaw Milosz's book of poetry entitled, ***Bells in Winter***. Although John had already finished composing Prelude No. 2 in A minor when he received this poetry collection, he found that this title seemed so appropriate for the second prelude's bell-like harmonics that he immediately subtitled the second prelude, "Bells in Winter." Eventually subtitles were added to fourteen of the preludes, in part to help the listener stay more engaged while trying to follow a performance of the complete set.

No. 1 in C Major — The first prelude is based on a simple pattern of gently rocking sixteenth-note chords in the right hand while a slowly moving melody is projected with the thumb of the left hand. The music should not be hurried as this prelude is really the springboard from which everything flows.

No. 2 in A Minor [Bells in Winter] — The subtitle is borrowed from a book of poetry by Czeslaw Milosz and aptly describes both the bell-like harmonic created by activating a node on the lowest string of the piano and the sharply attacked chords at the high end of the keyboard.

No. 3 in G Major [Playground Games] — There is a kind of "racing around the merry-go-round" flavour to this music that demands great velocity. The very simple diatonic motive that makes up the theme sounds a bit like the bantering of a child's taunt in its spunkiness.

No. 4 in E Minor — The main building block of this prelude is a descending chromatic scale played in steady note values that works somewhat aggressively against a double-dotted melodic fragment that is more angular in the way it utilizes leaps of Perfect Fifths.

No. 5 in D Major [Linear Reverberations] — Throughout this prelude the left hand holds down a low-note cluster that generates overtones (sympathetic reverberations) to the right hand passages. The linear aspect of the music can be heard in the scalic design of the sustained pitches.

No. 6 in B Minor [Off-beat Waltz] — The use of cross rhythms and syncopated accents gives the music a slightly demonic quality.

No. 7 in A Major — The five-note figure created by expanding a single pitch with its upper and lower neighbour note is one of the most expressive gestures in all of Western Art Music. The underlying building block of this prelude is the chain-like way that this neighbour-note figure is used in the left hand while the right sustains more melodic material. The middle portion of this short prelude requires a fluid sense of rhythmic freedom between hands as the right hand plays triplets while the left hand maintains the quintuple groupings with which the prelude began.

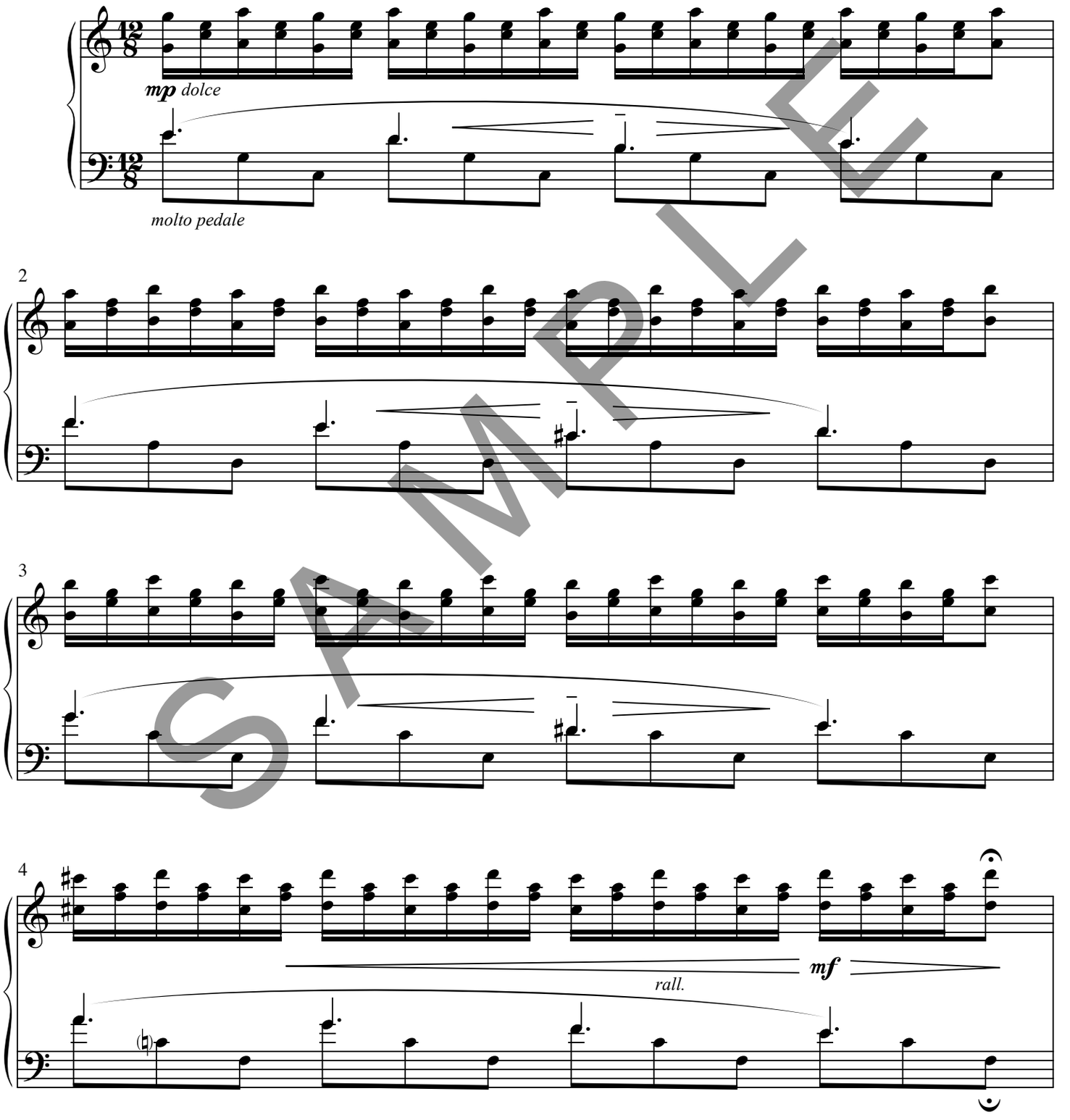
No. 8 in F Sharp Minor — This prelude is perhaps the most minimalistic composition ever written by John Burge in that the work is built entirely around the bass line's repetition of the tonic and dominant pitches while the top voice simply ascends by diatonic steps using a broken-chord pattern. The three-part texture is completed by the addition of a middle voice that simply repeats a four-note motive in whole notes. The music ends with the lower voice's tonic and dominant pattern reactivated by using a stopped string technique inside the piano (an effect that sounds very much like a cello pizzicato).

for Mathew Walton

Twenty-four Preludes
for Solo Piano
No. 1 - C Major

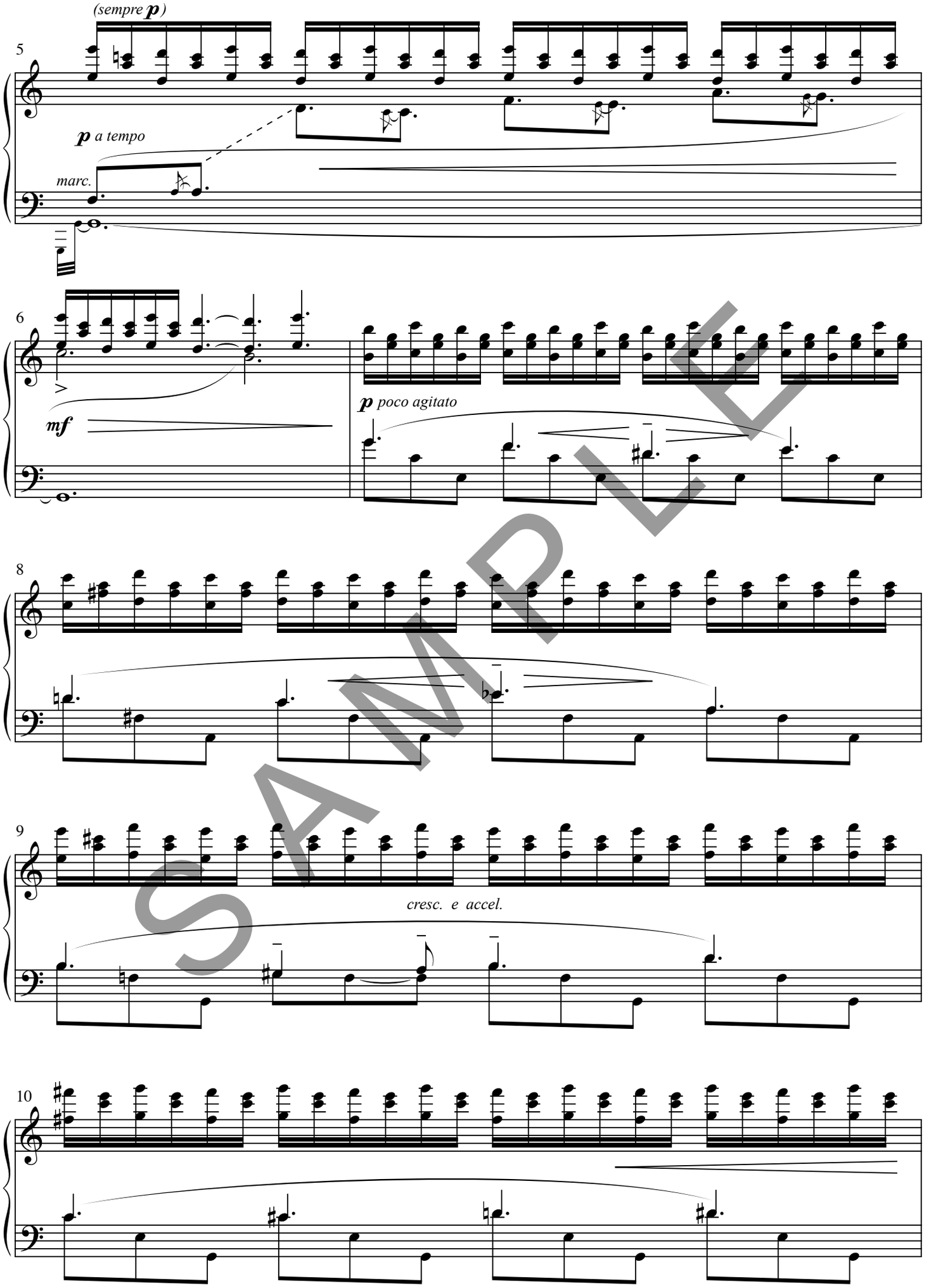
Moderato semplice ♪ = 144

John Burge



SAMPLE

©2015 by John Burge



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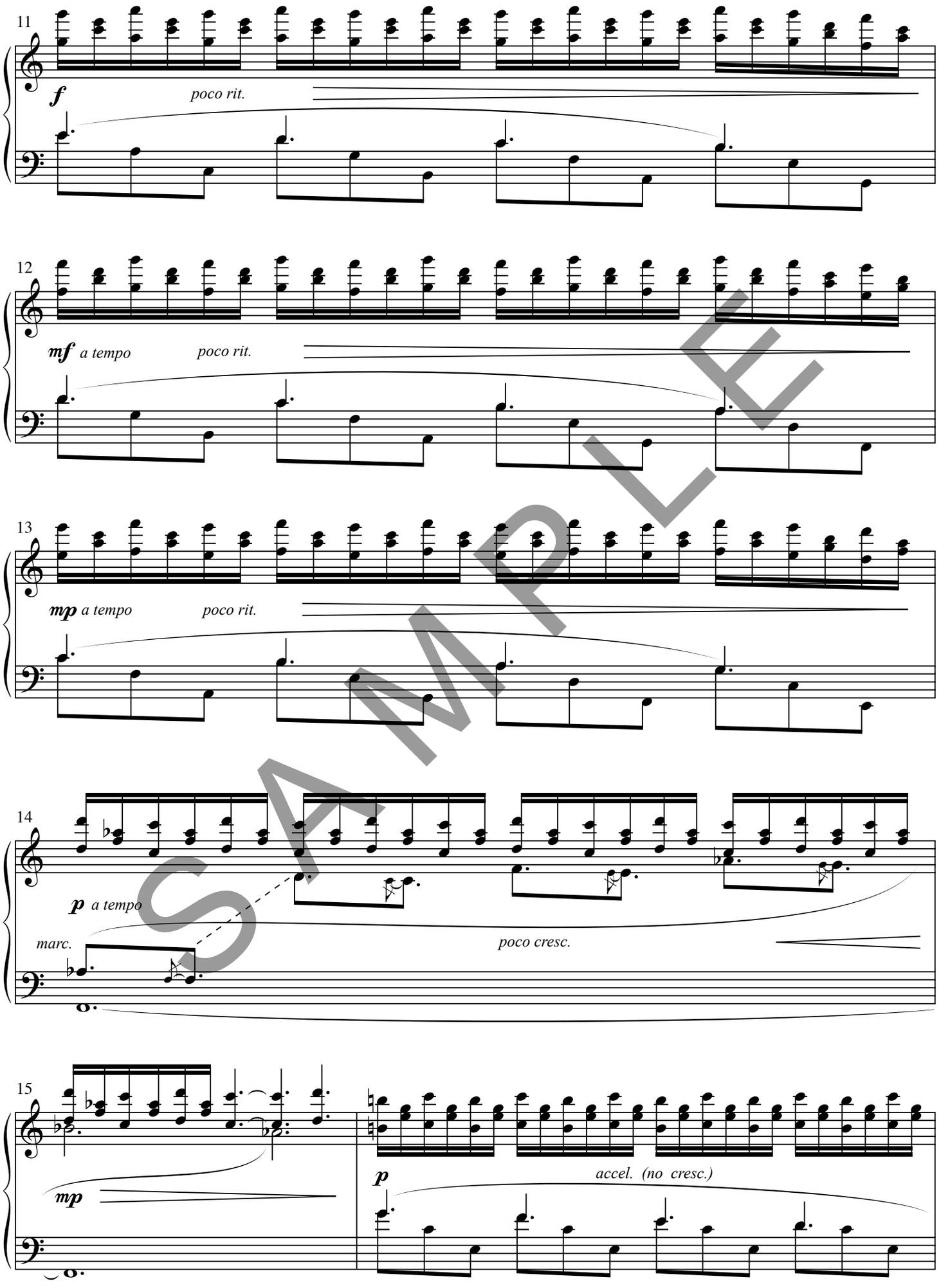
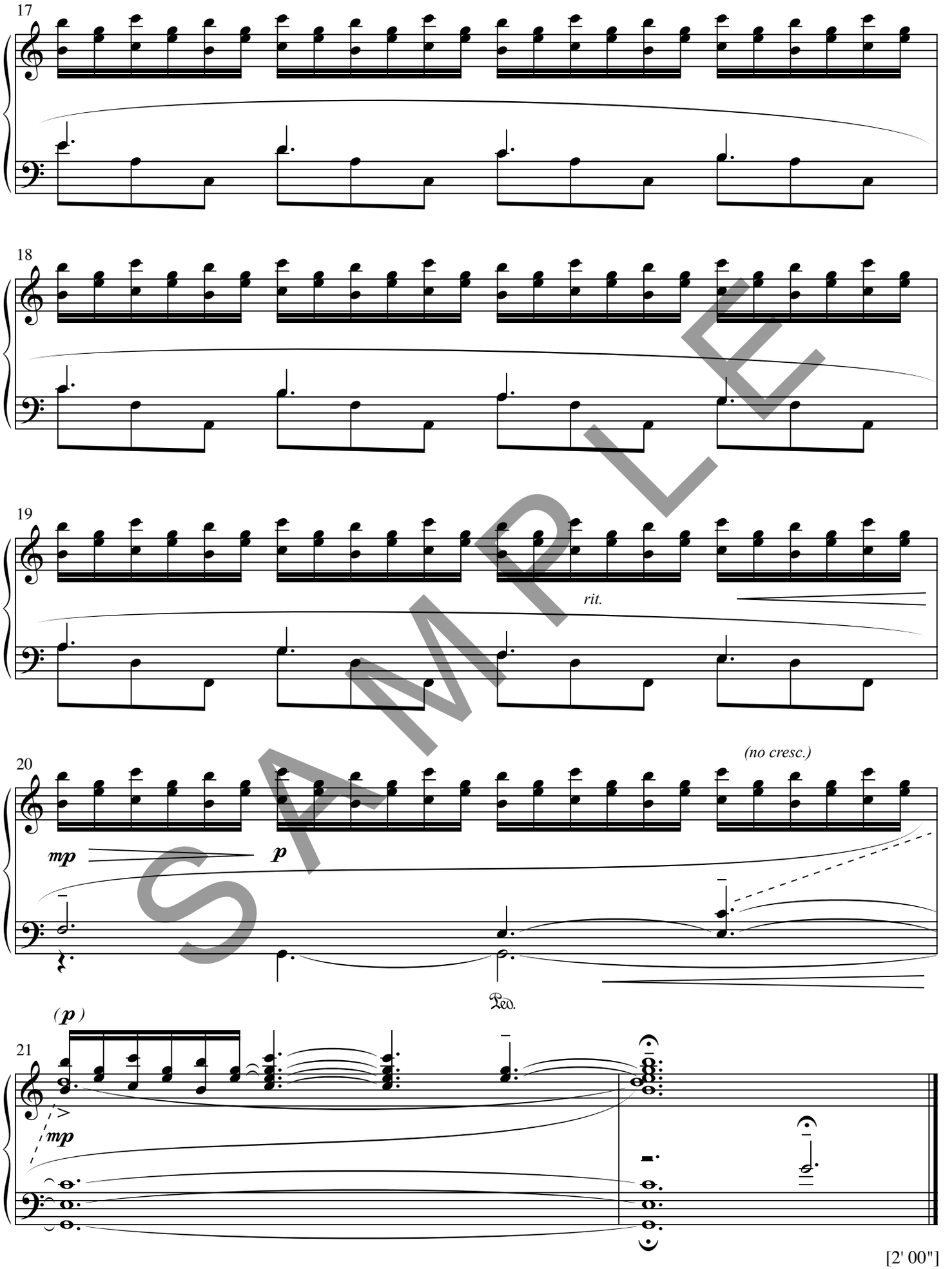

11
f
poco rit.
12
mf a tempo
poco rit.
13
mp a tempo
poco rit.
14
p a tempo
marc.
poco cresc.
15
mp
p
accel. (no cresc.)

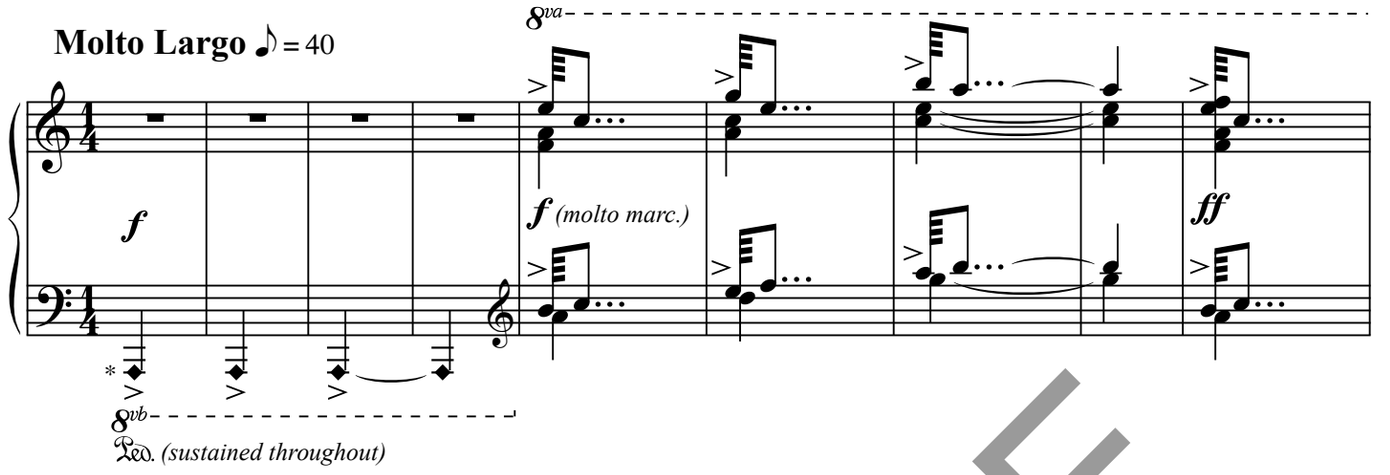
SAMPLE



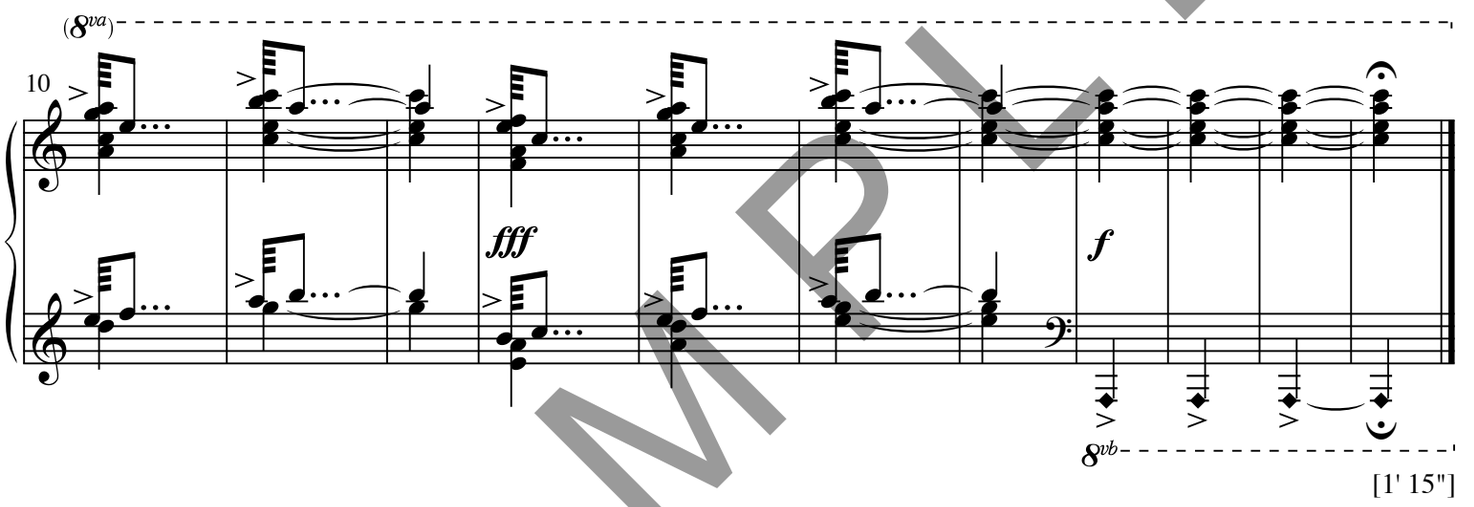
SAMPLE

No. 2 - A Minor

[Bells in Winter]



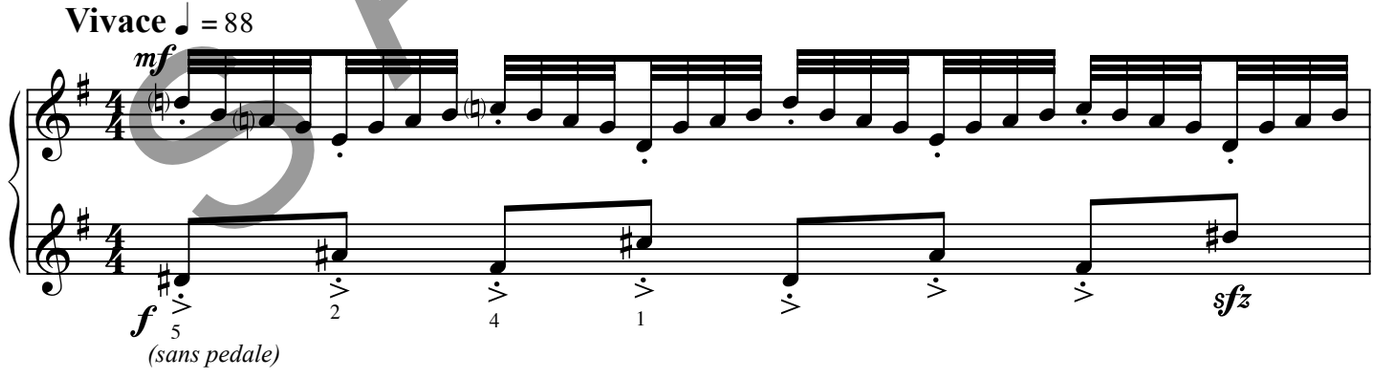
*While seated on the piano bench reach as far as you can inside the piano with the right hand, touching the low A string to create a node that produces a bell-like harmonic when the key is played with the left hand.

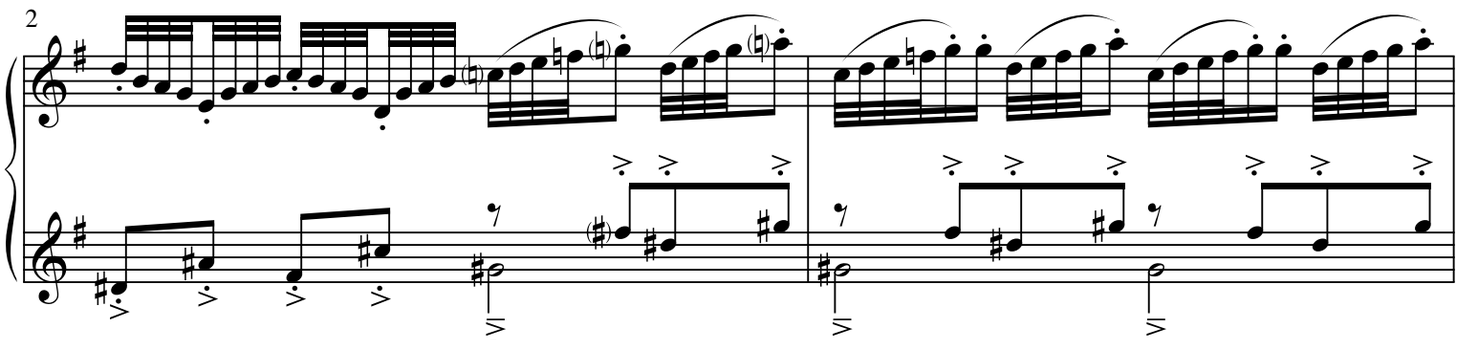


[1' 15"]

No. 3 - G Major

[Playground Games]





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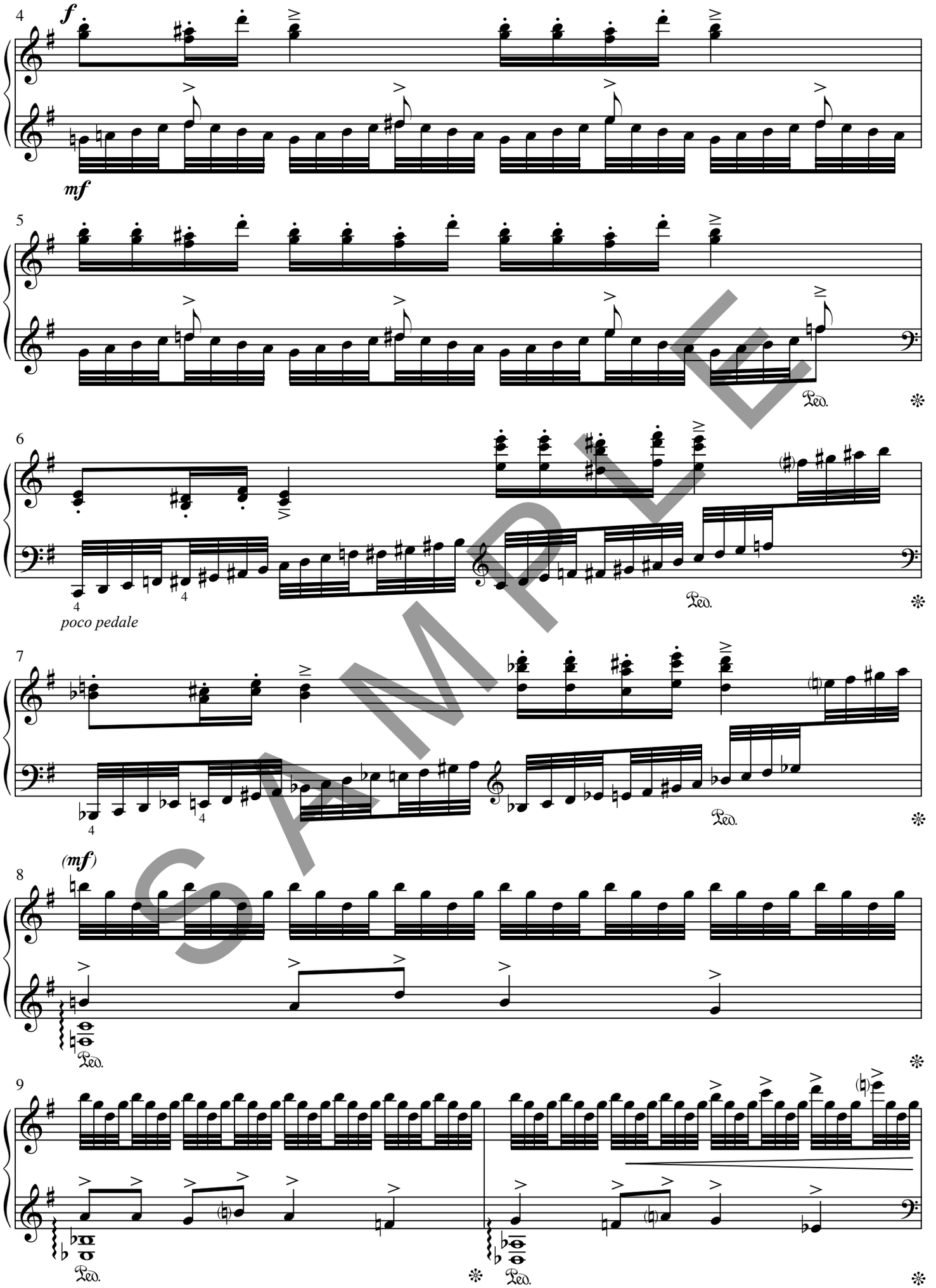

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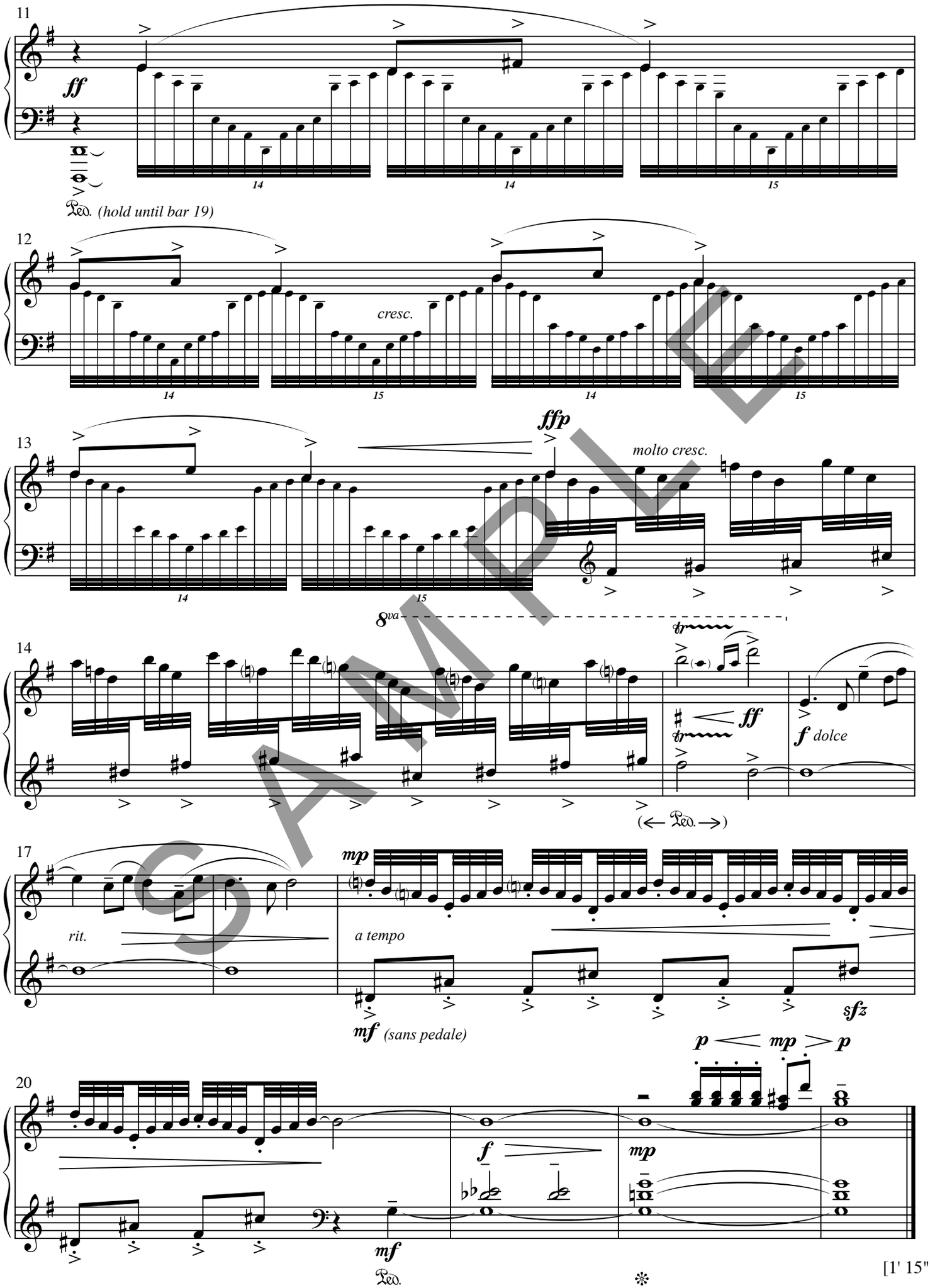
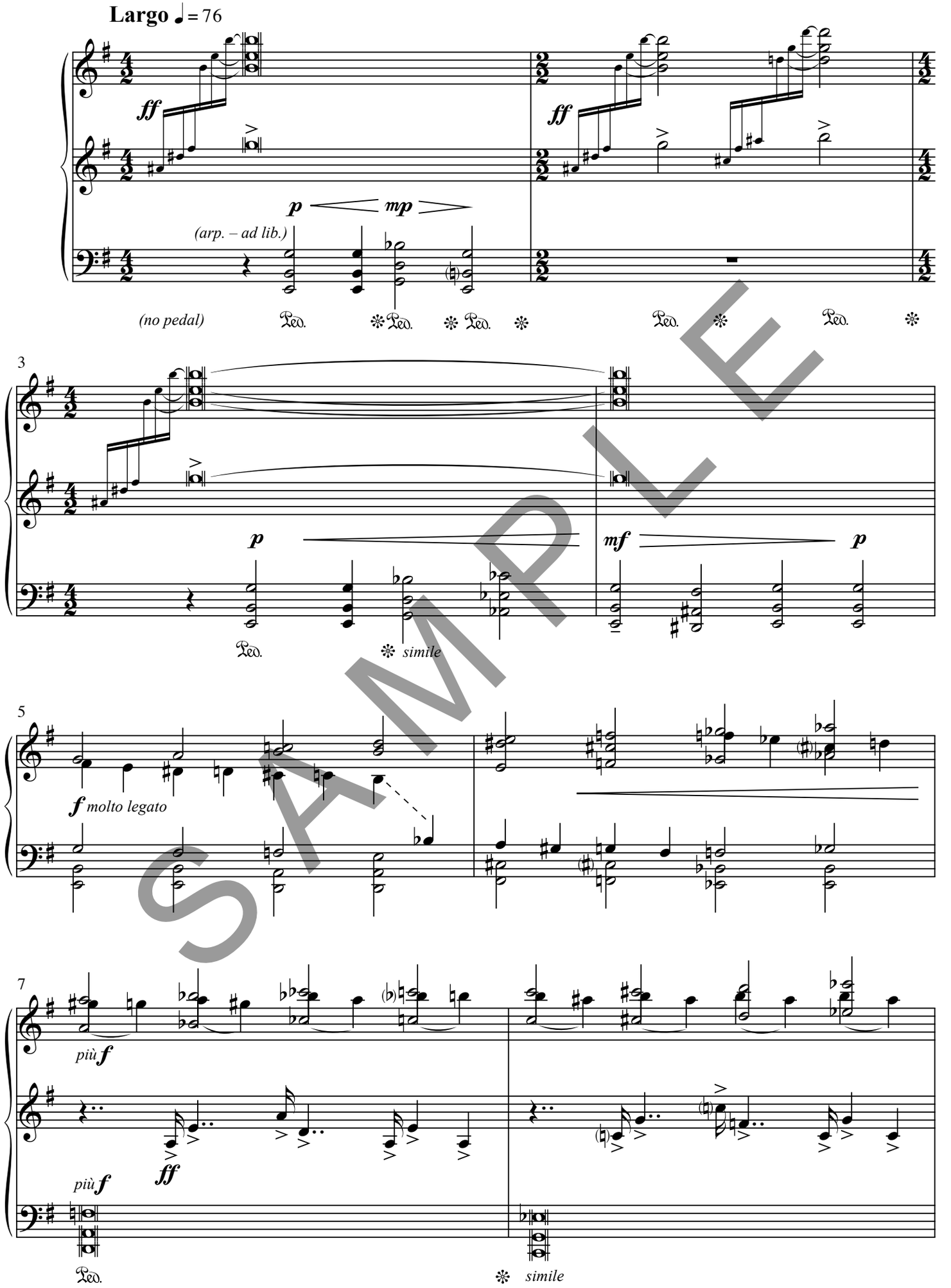

11
ff
Ped. (hold until bar 19)
12
cresc.
13
ffp
molto cresc.
8va
14
tr
ff
f dolce
(← Ped. →)
17
mp
rit.
a tempo
mf (sans pedale)
sfz
20
p < mp > p
f
mp
mf
Ped.
[1' 15"]

SAMPLE

No. 4 - E Minor



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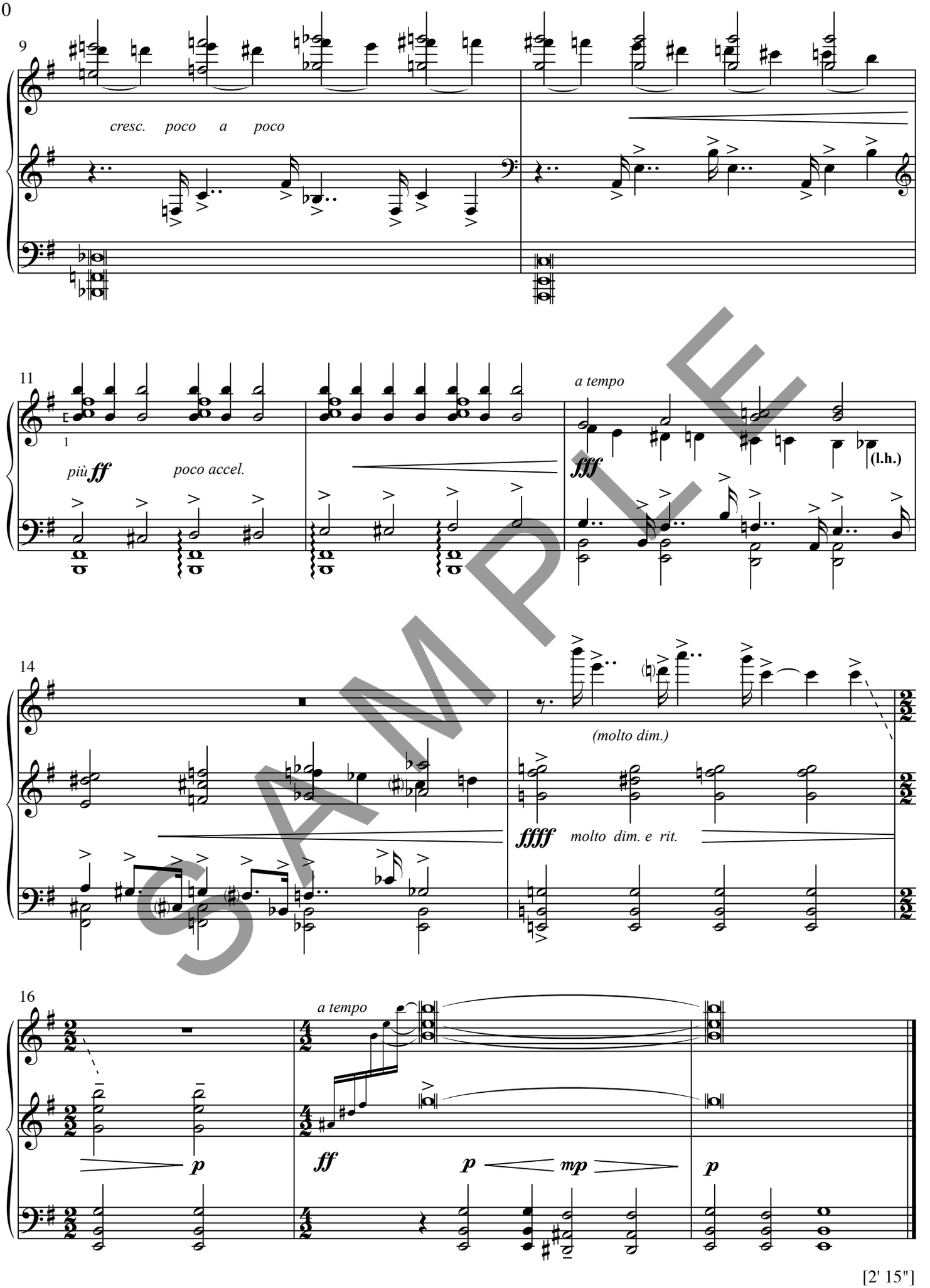
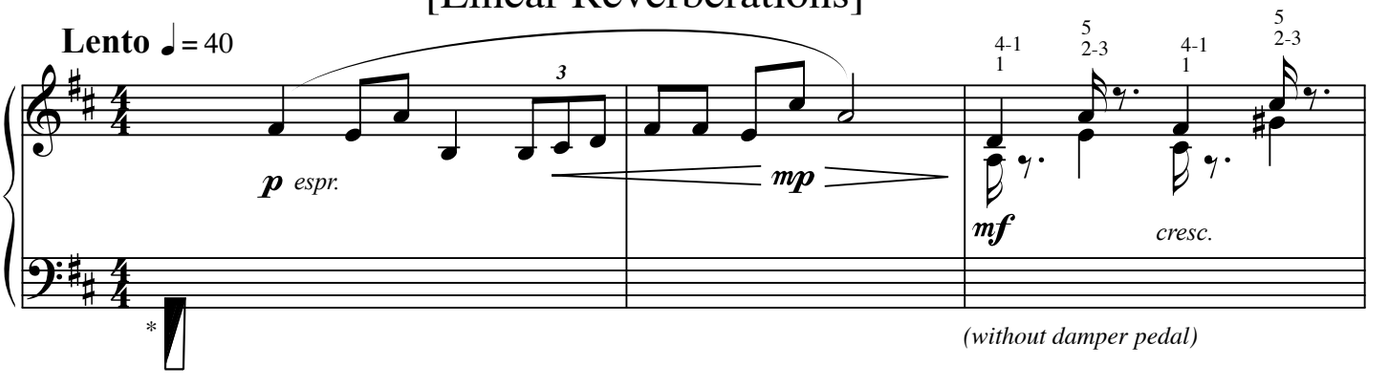

9
cresc. poco a poco
11
più ff
poco accel.
a tempo
fff
(l.h.)
14
(molto dim.)
ffff
molto dim. e rit.
16
a tempo
p
ff
p
mp
p

SAMPLE

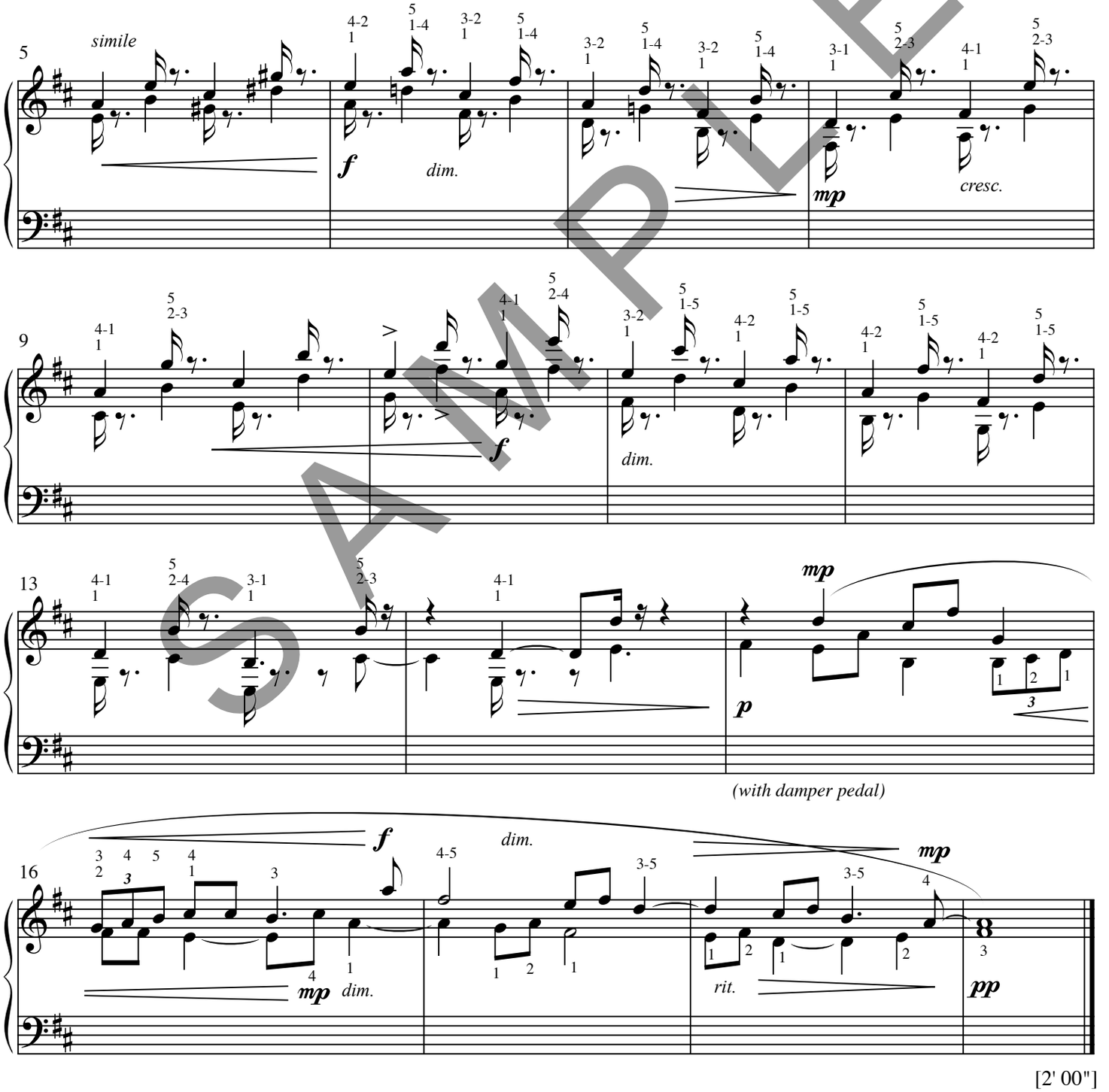
[2' 15"]

No. 5 - D Major

[Linear Reverberations]



*Silently depress as many white and black notes as possible in the range indicated and hold until the end. While it is also possible to use the sostenuto pedal to hold these silently-depressed pitches, it is preferable to play all notes on the top staff with just the right hand as the finger substitution shown by the fingering ensures a satisfying projection of the underlying scalic pattern. Use just a bit of damper pedal to connect the repeated notes in bars 1-2 and again at bar 15-16.



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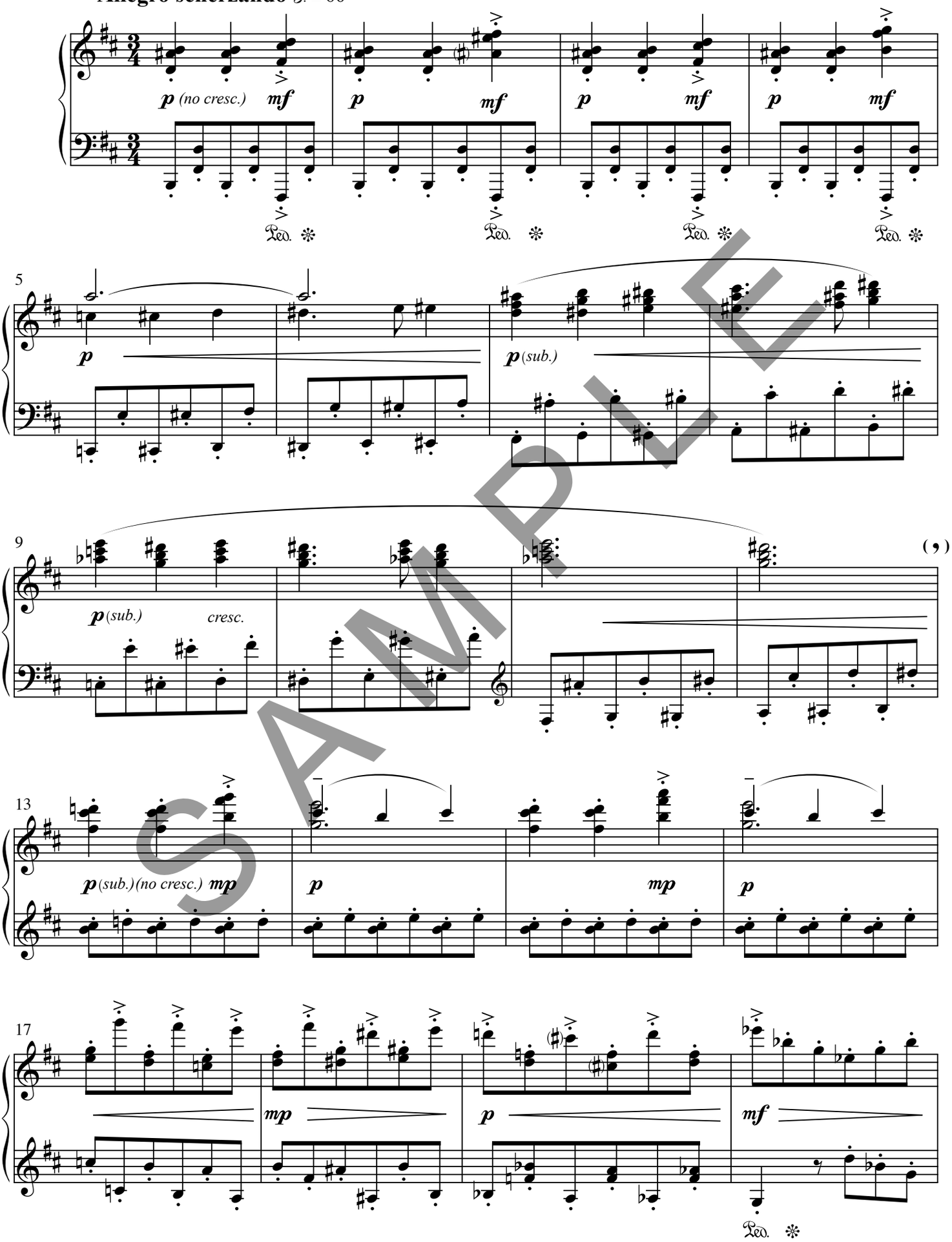
[2' 00"]

No. 6 - B Minor

[Off-beat Waltz]

Allegro scherzando ♩. = 60



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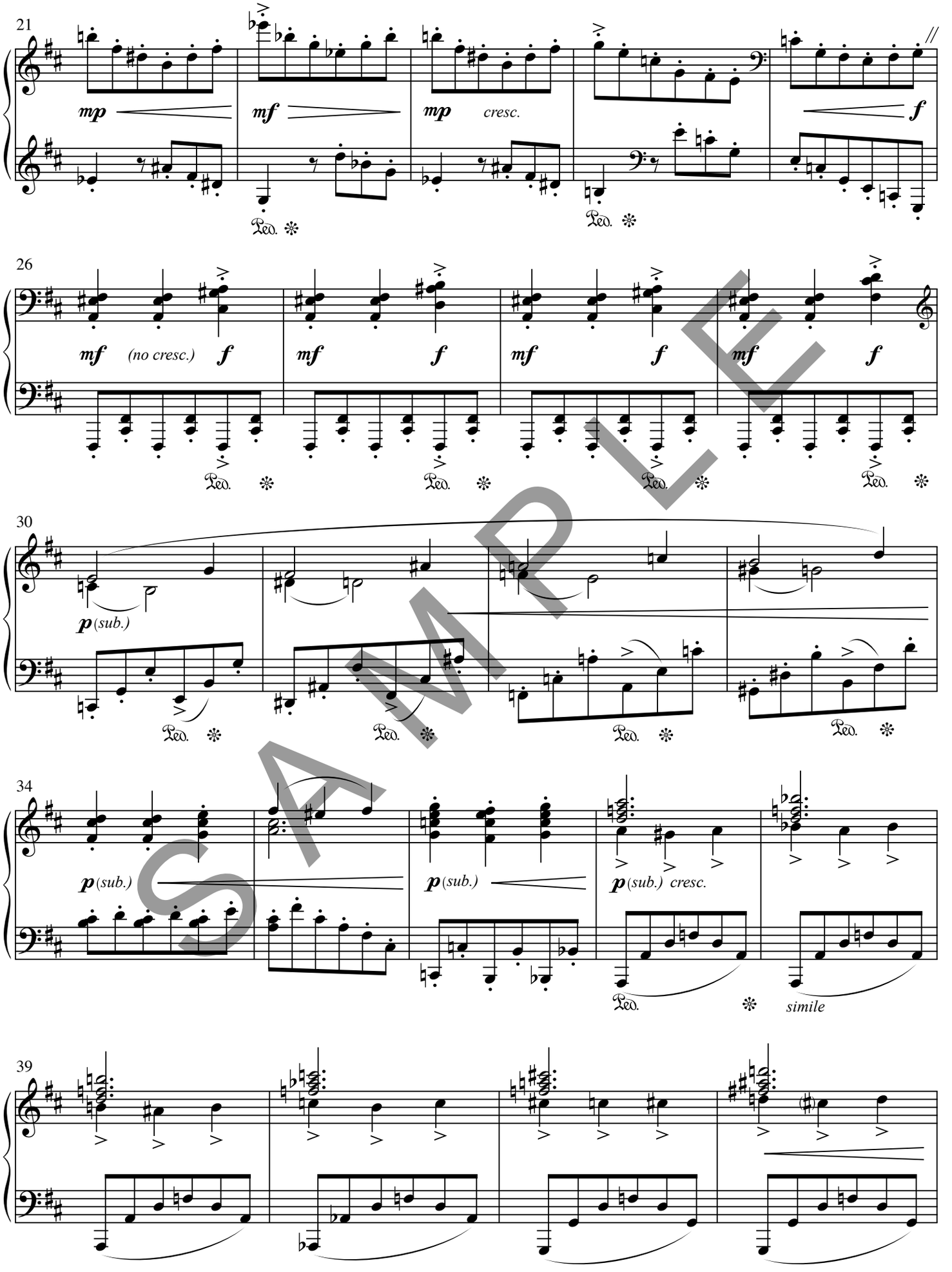
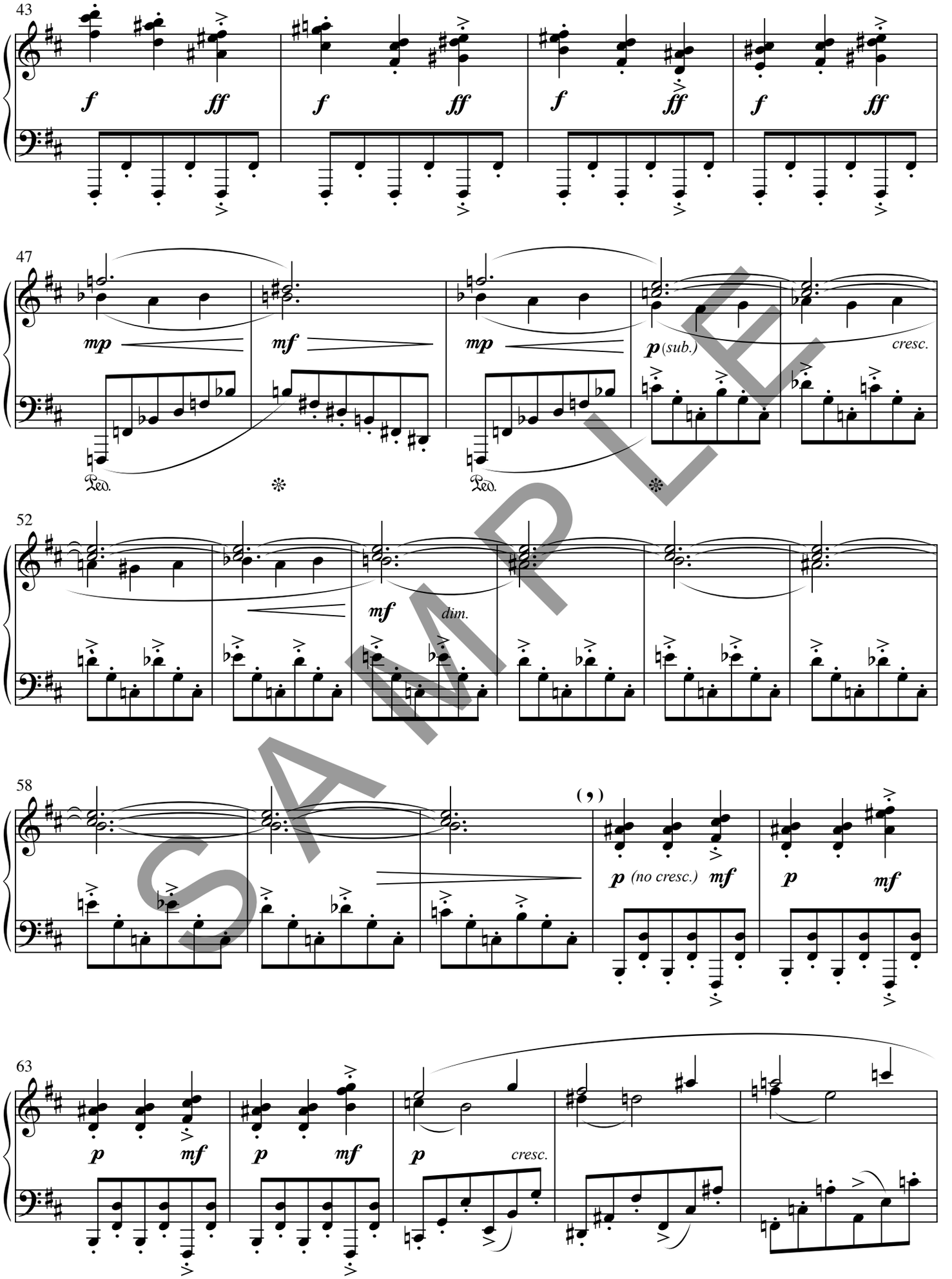

21
mp
mf
mp
cresc.
f
Ped.
26
mf
(no cresc.)
f
mf
f
mf
f
mf
f
30
p (sub.)
34
p (sub.)
p (sub.)
p (sub.)
cresc.
simile
39

SAMPLE



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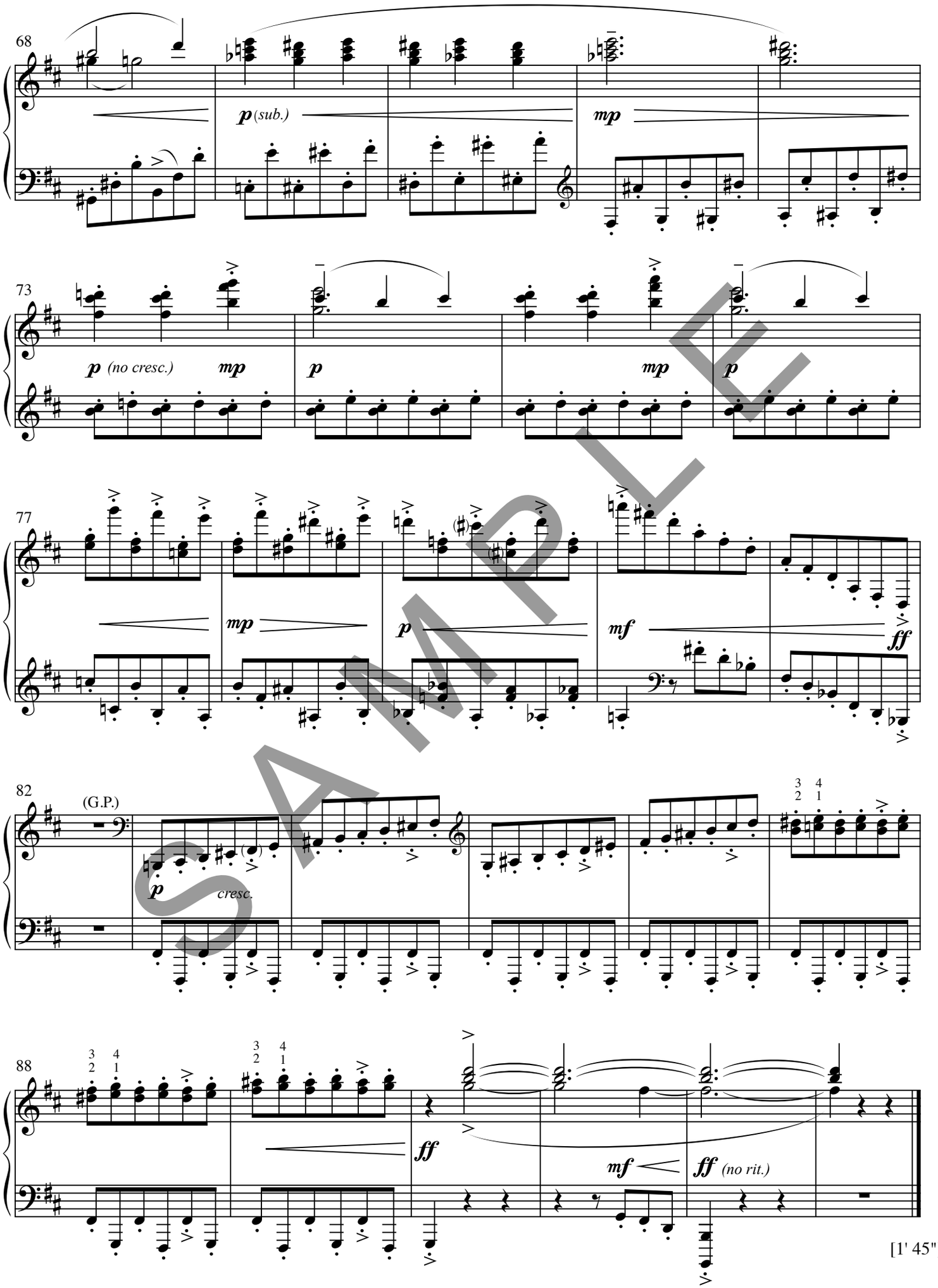
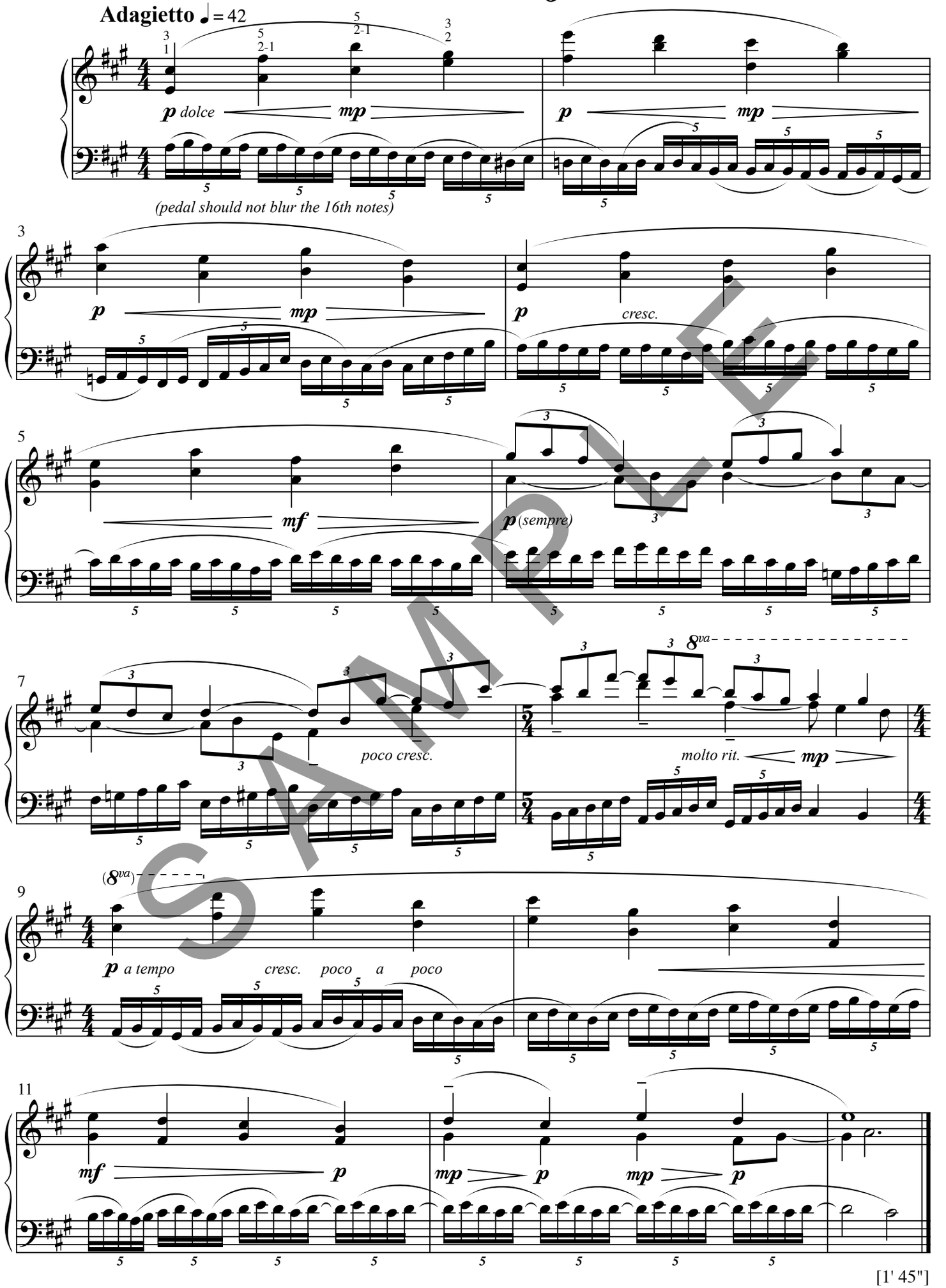

68
p (sub.)
mp
73
p (no cresc.)
mp
p
mp
p
77
mp
p
mf
ff
82
(G.P.)
p
cresc.
88
ff
mf
ff (no rit.)

SAMPLE

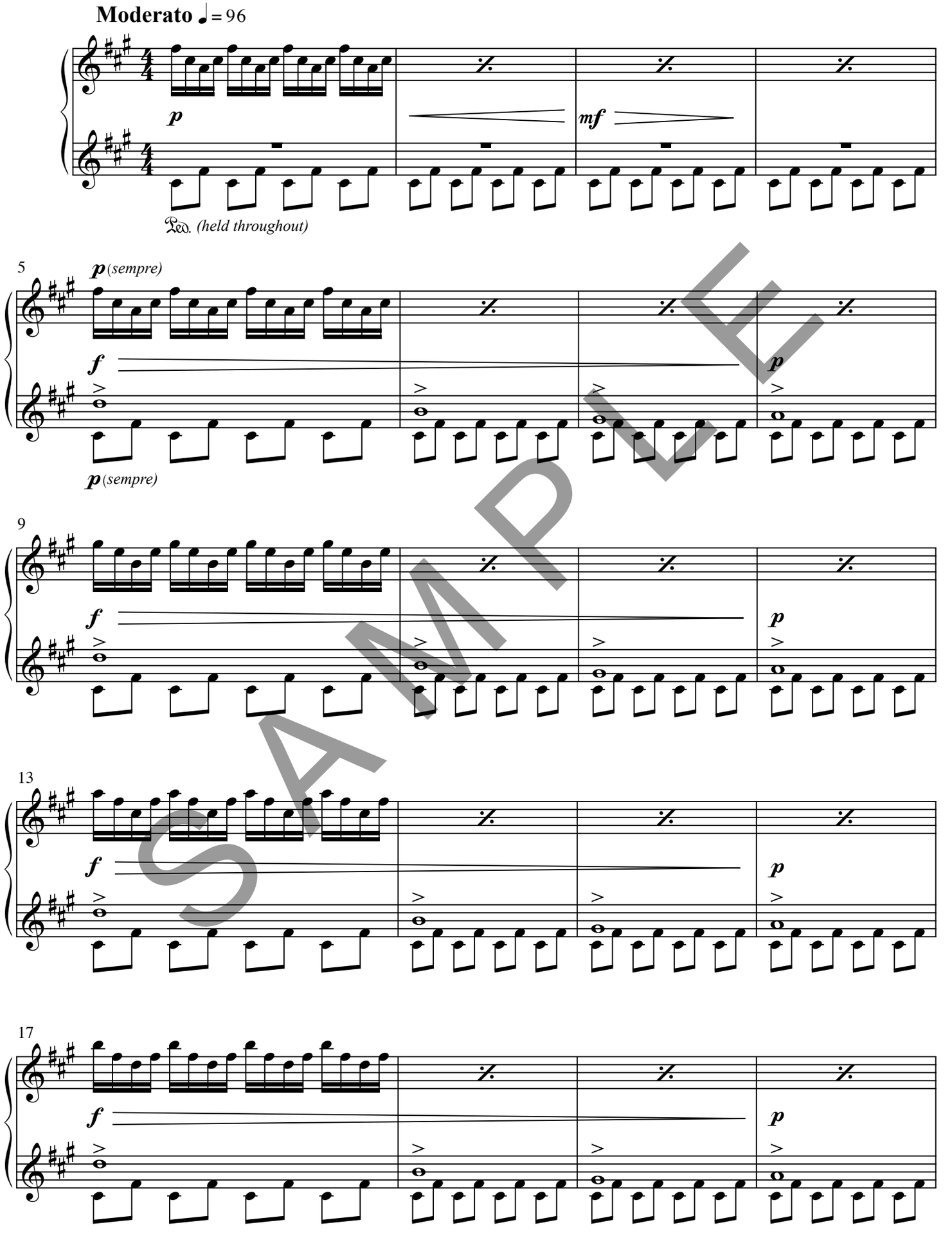
[1' 45"]

No. 7 - A Major



SAMPLE

No. 8 - F♯ Minor



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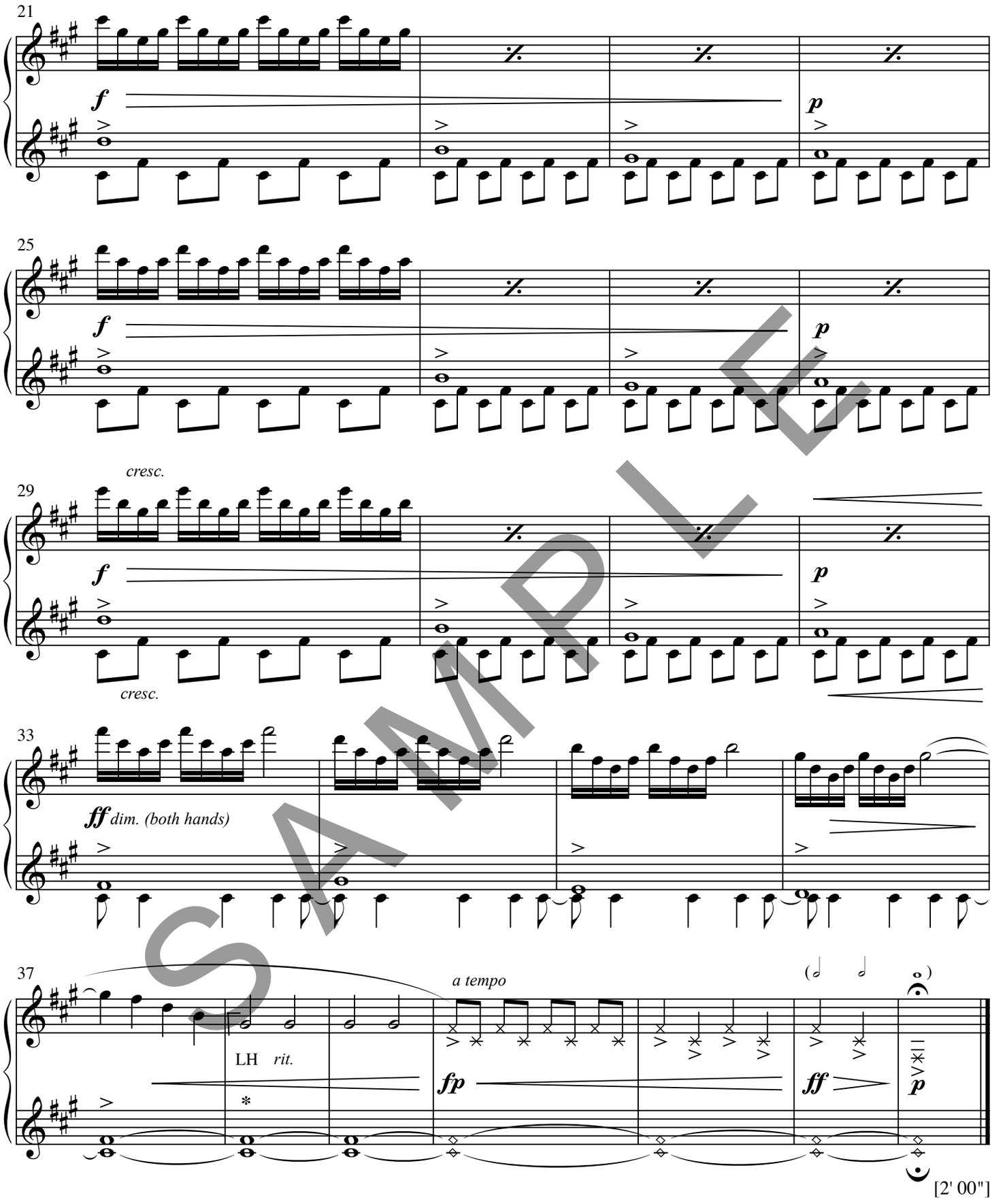
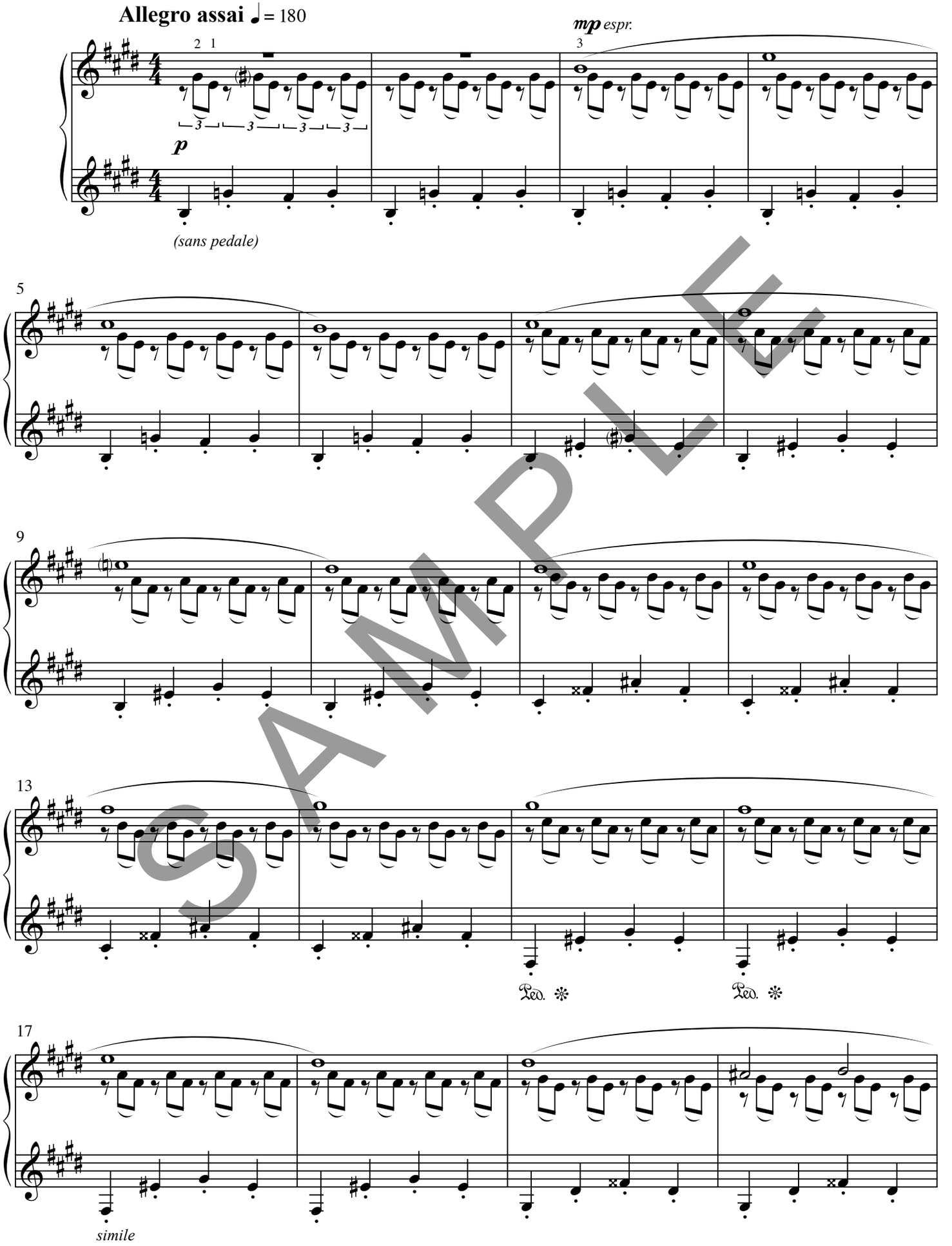


SAMPLE

*If playing on an upright piano, just play the "x" notes as written. If playing a grand piano though, use two fingers of the right hand to finger dampen the strings of these same two notes very close to the keyboard such that when the notes are played by the left hand in the last four bars, the resultant sound is very much like the pizzicato (plucking) of a string instrument. Looking inside the piano, as the L.H. is still holding these same notes (C# and F#), the hammers should be slightly raised making it easy for the R.H. fingers to find the correct notes to finger dampen. Similarly, to find the low F# of the final bar, lightly touch this key with the L.H. 5th finger so that the pianist can observe the note's raised hammer and then use the R.H. thumb to finger dampen the correct note.

No. 9 - E Major

[The Singing Clock]



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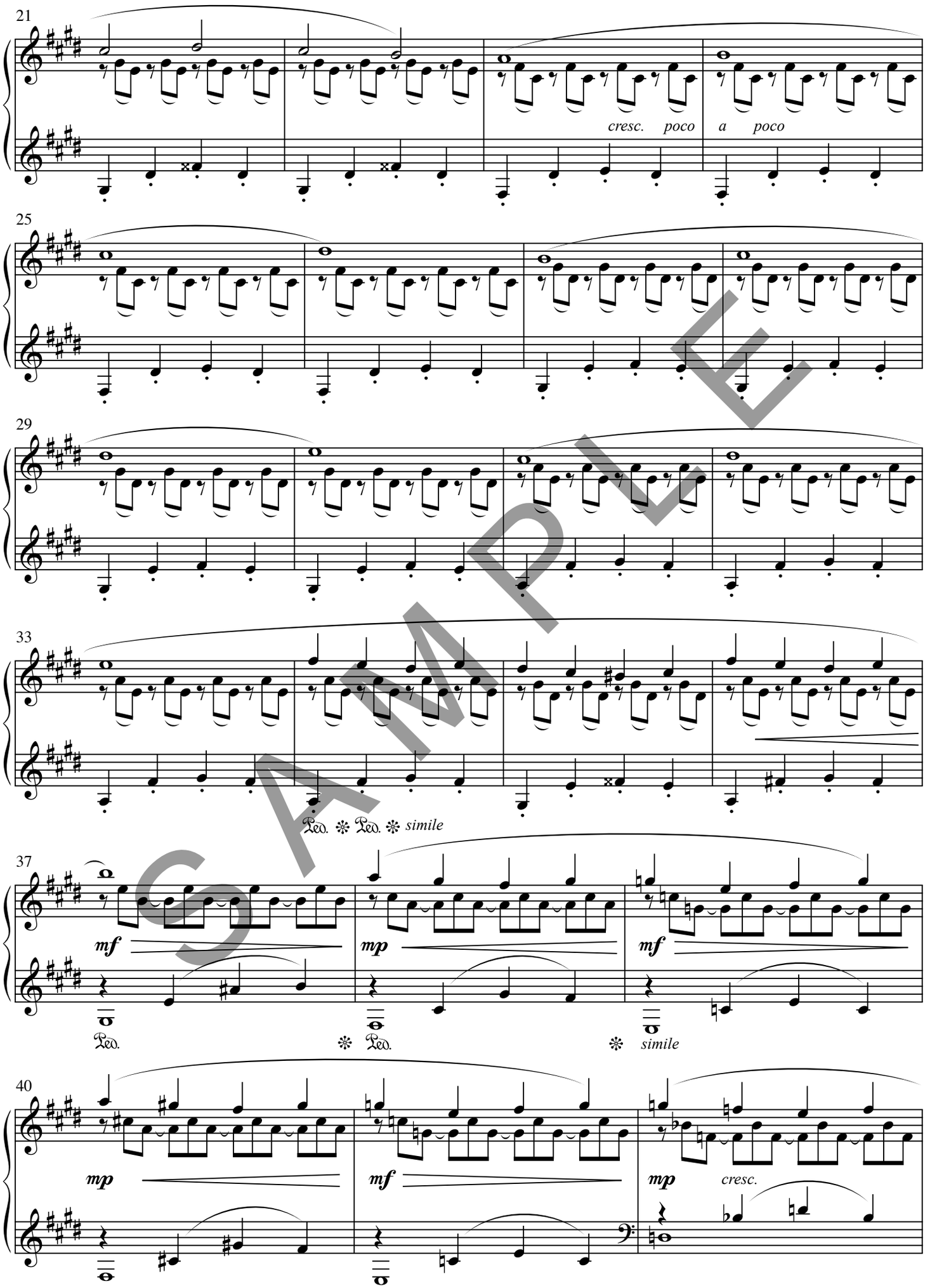
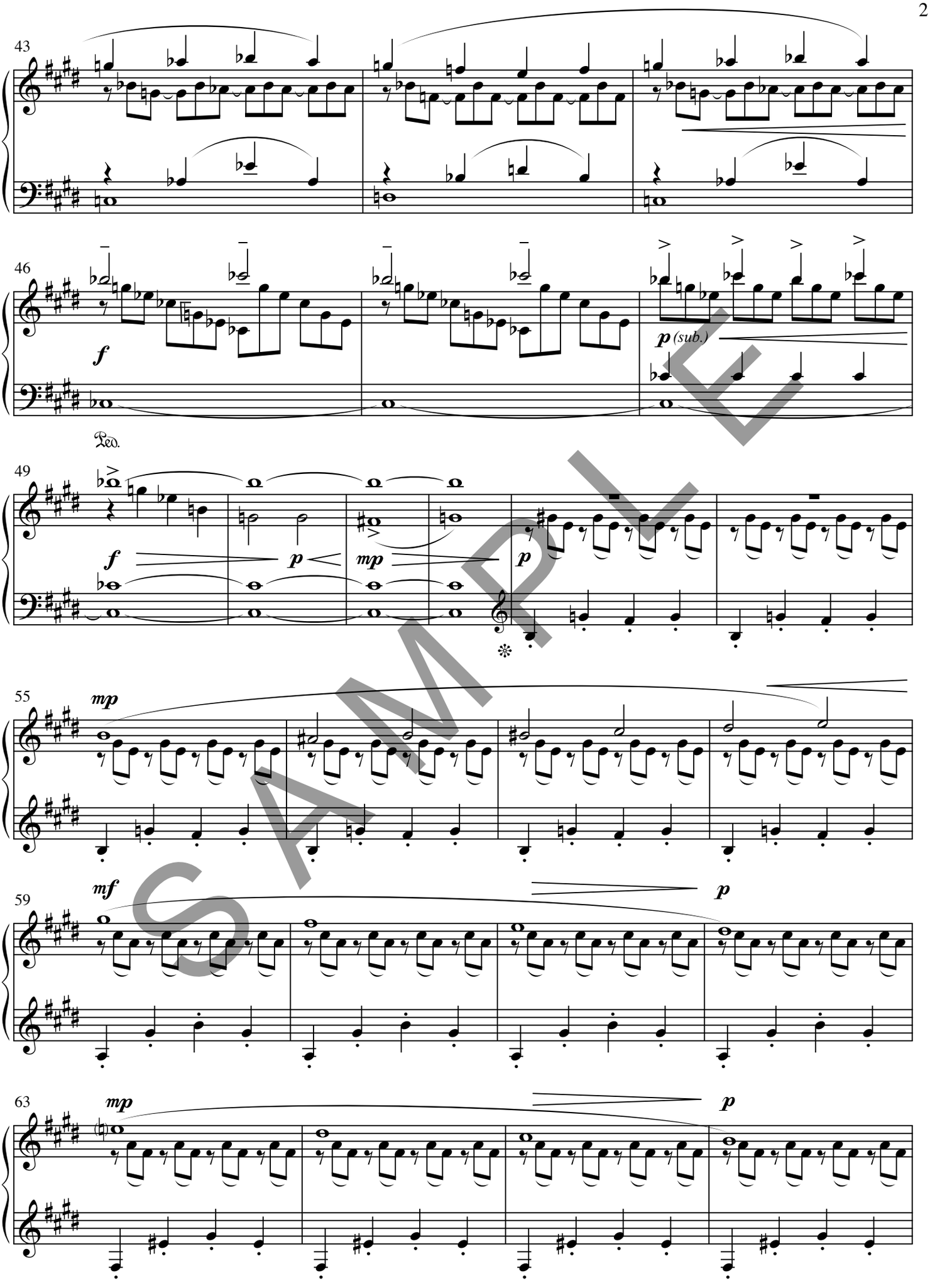

21
cresc. poco a poco
25
29
33
Ped. * Ped. * simile
37
mf
mp
mf
Ped.
* Ped.
* simile
40
mp
mf
mp
cresc.

SAMPLE



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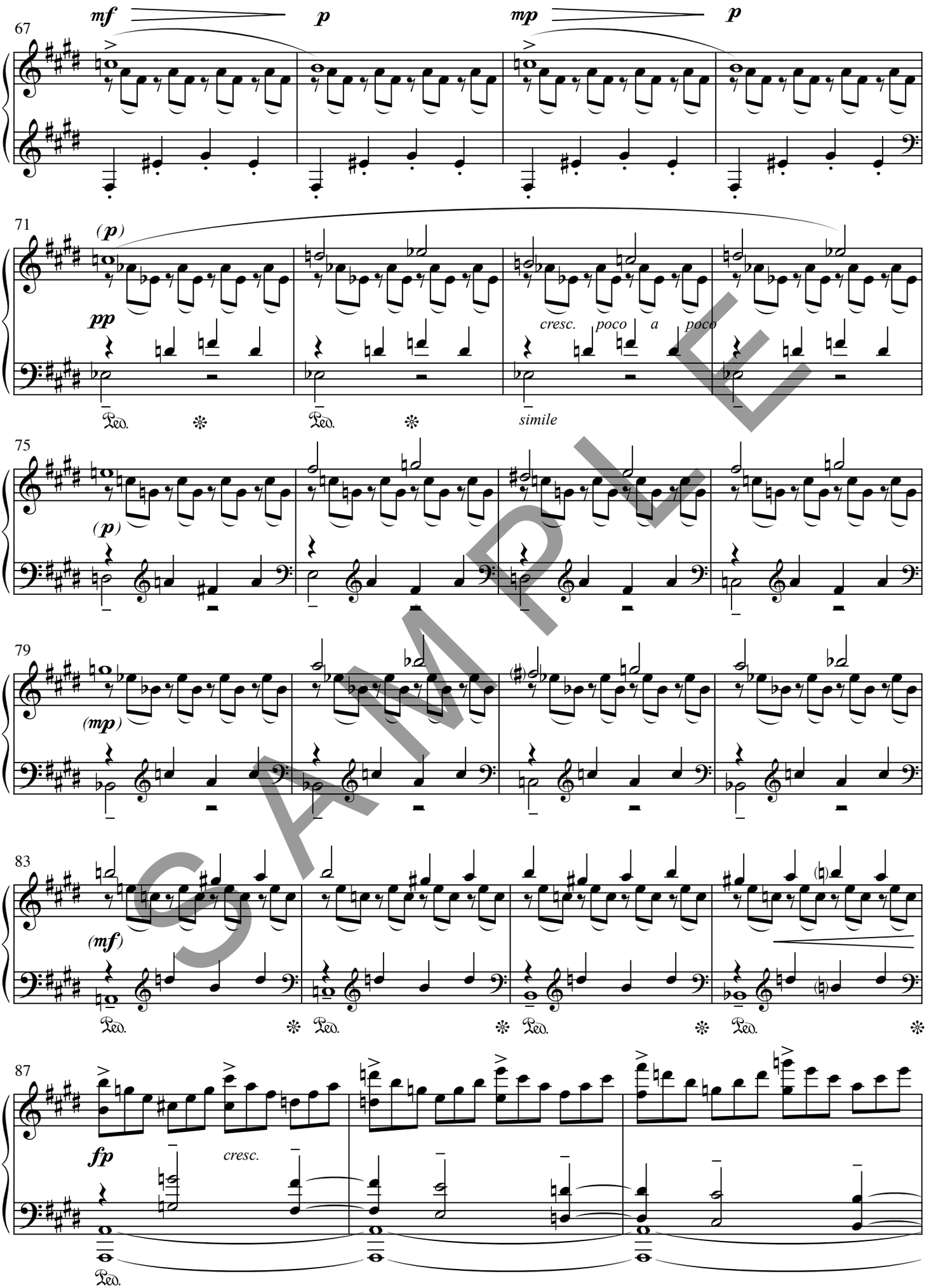
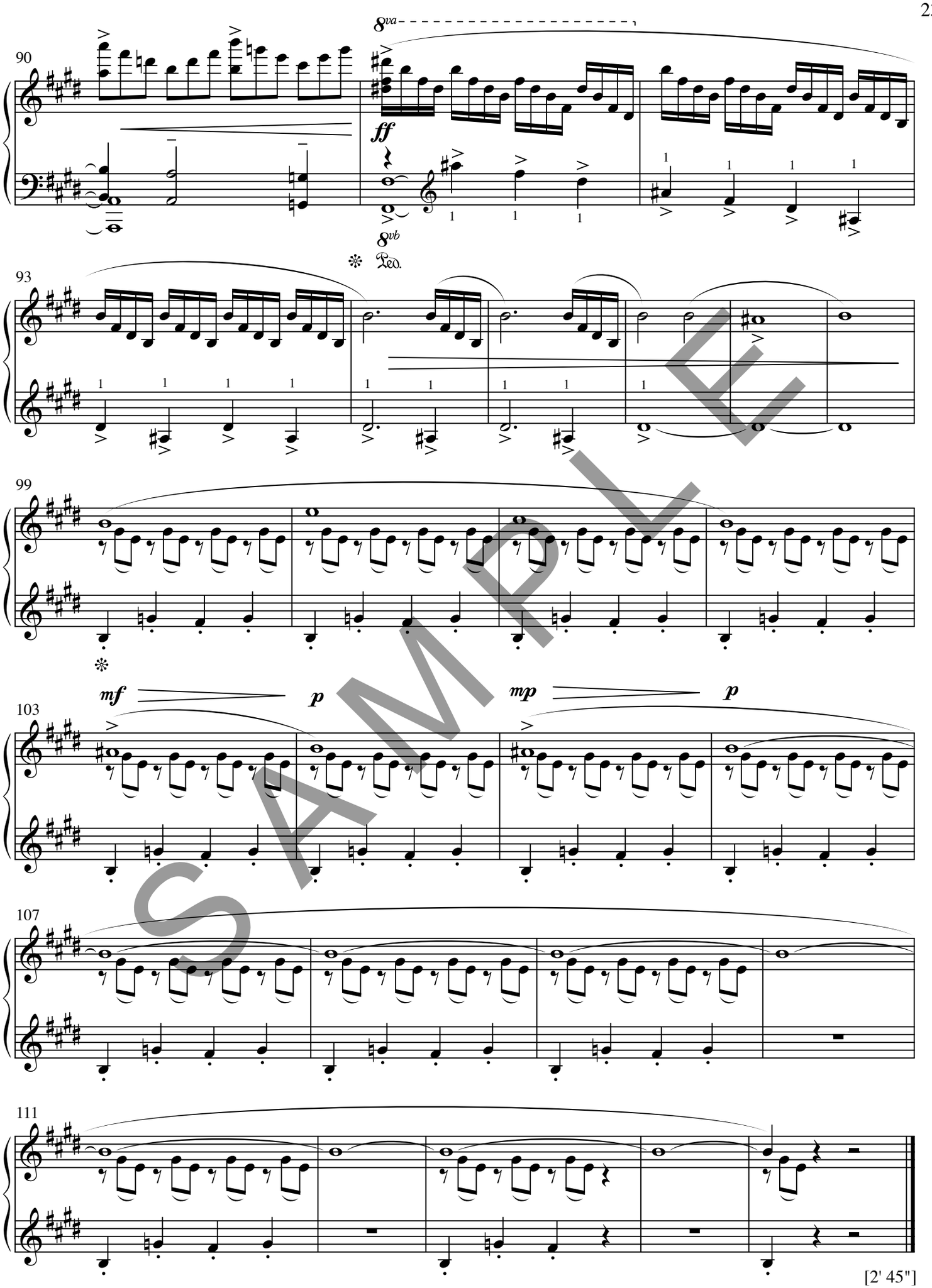
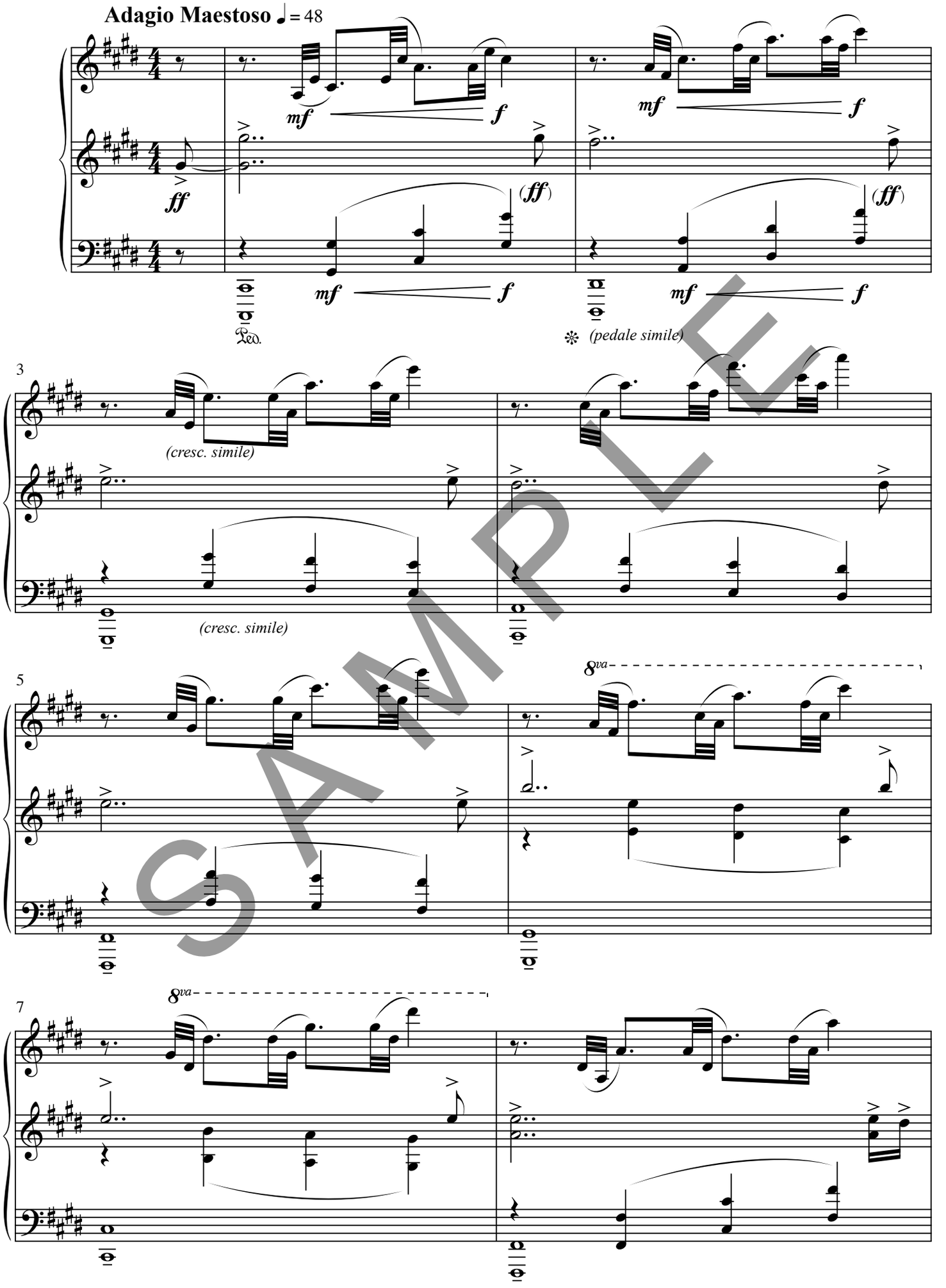

67
mf
p
mp
p
71
(p)
pp
cresc.
poco
a
poco
simile
75
(p)
79
(mp)
83
(mf)
87
fp
cresc.

SAMPLE



SAMPLE

No. 10 - C Sharp Minor



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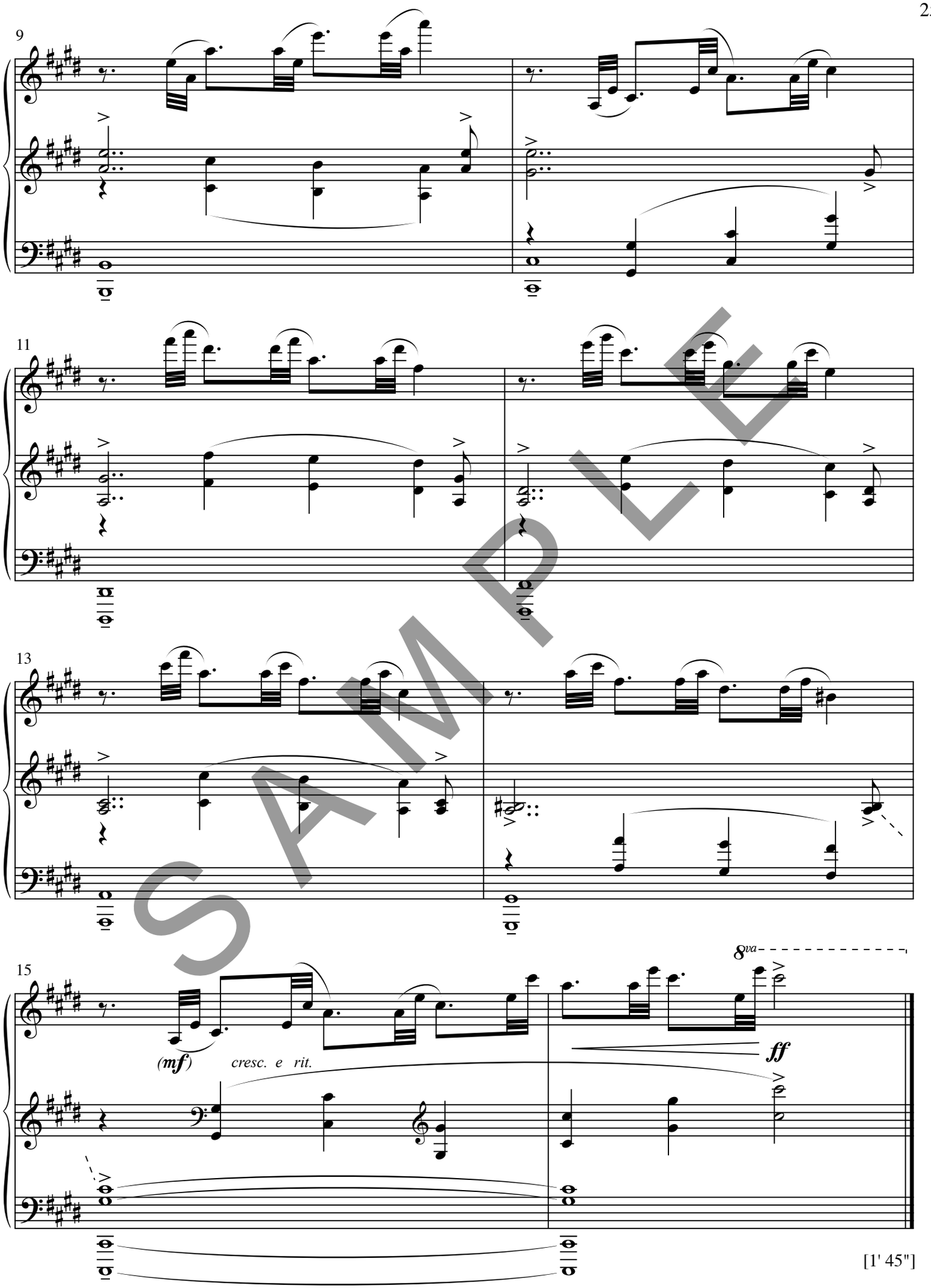
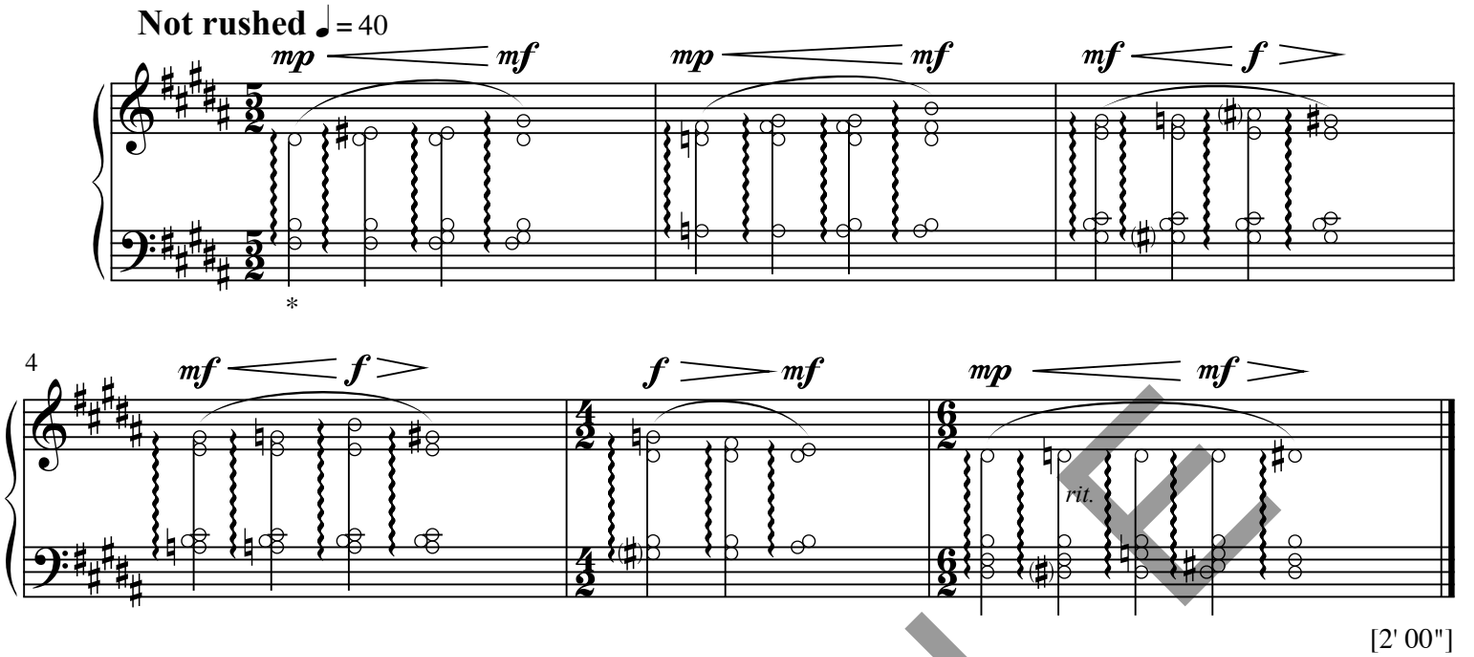


SAMPLE

No. 11 - B Major

[The Autoharp]

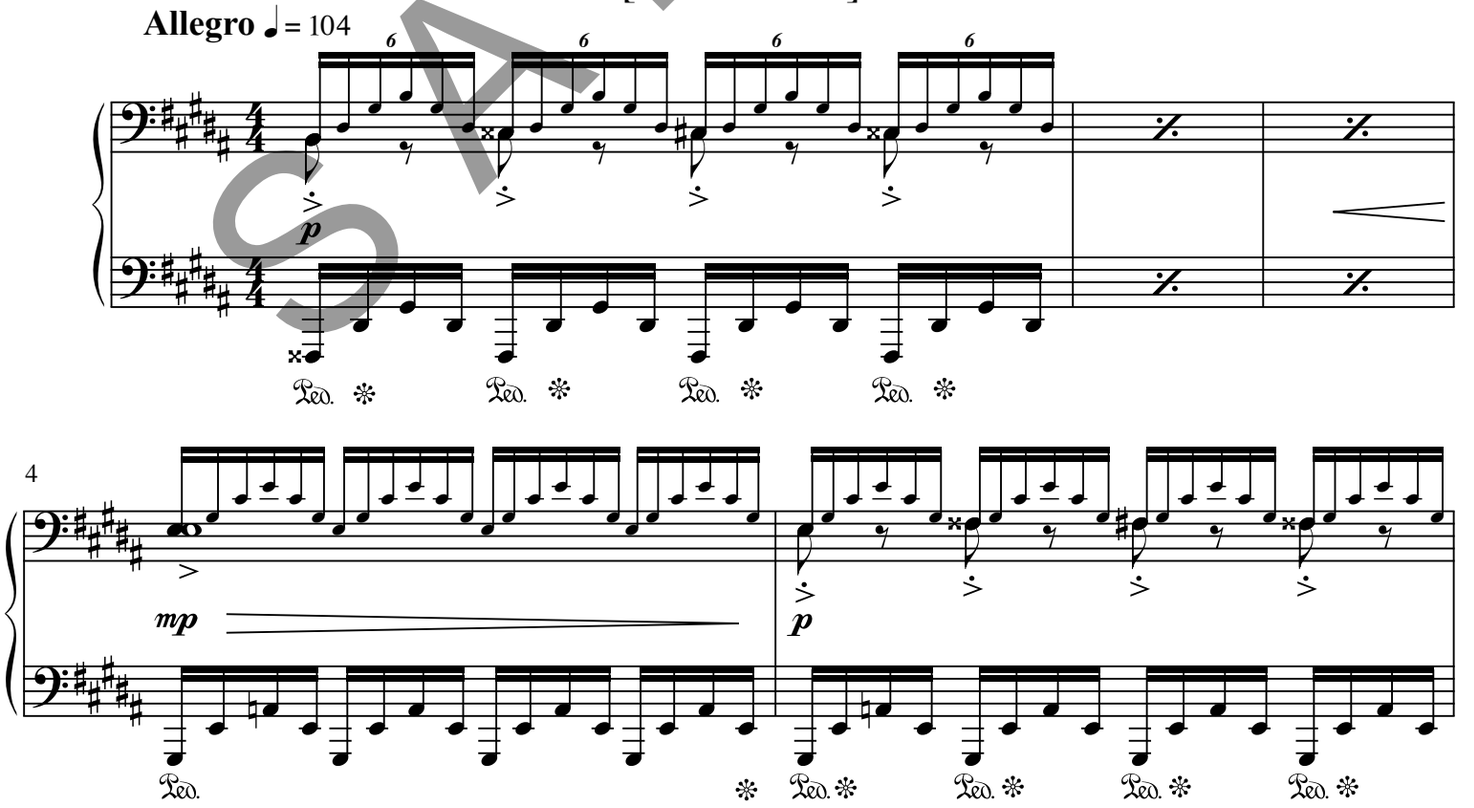


[2' 00"]

*All notes in this Prelude are silently depressed with the left hand and activated by strumming the strings with the back of the finger nail(s) on the right hand. Once the chord is ringing, use the damper pedal to catch the ringing notes so that the left hand is free to silently shift to the notes of the next chord. The strumming motion can start with low notes and rise or with high notes and fall at the liberty of the performer. On some pianos there might be a cast iron bar in the way in which case the performer is free to rearrange the left hand notes as needed or have the right hand jump over the metal bar as smoothly as possible. It is worth pointing out that depending on the size of the performing space, the effect that the pianist hears might not sound that loud while seated at the piano but will sound louder to the audience due to the increased resonance heard coming off the lid of the piano. Asking a listener to guage the effect in rehearsal is adviseable. It is also possible to use a plectra or guitar pick for the strumming.

No. 12 - G# Minor

[Das Thema]



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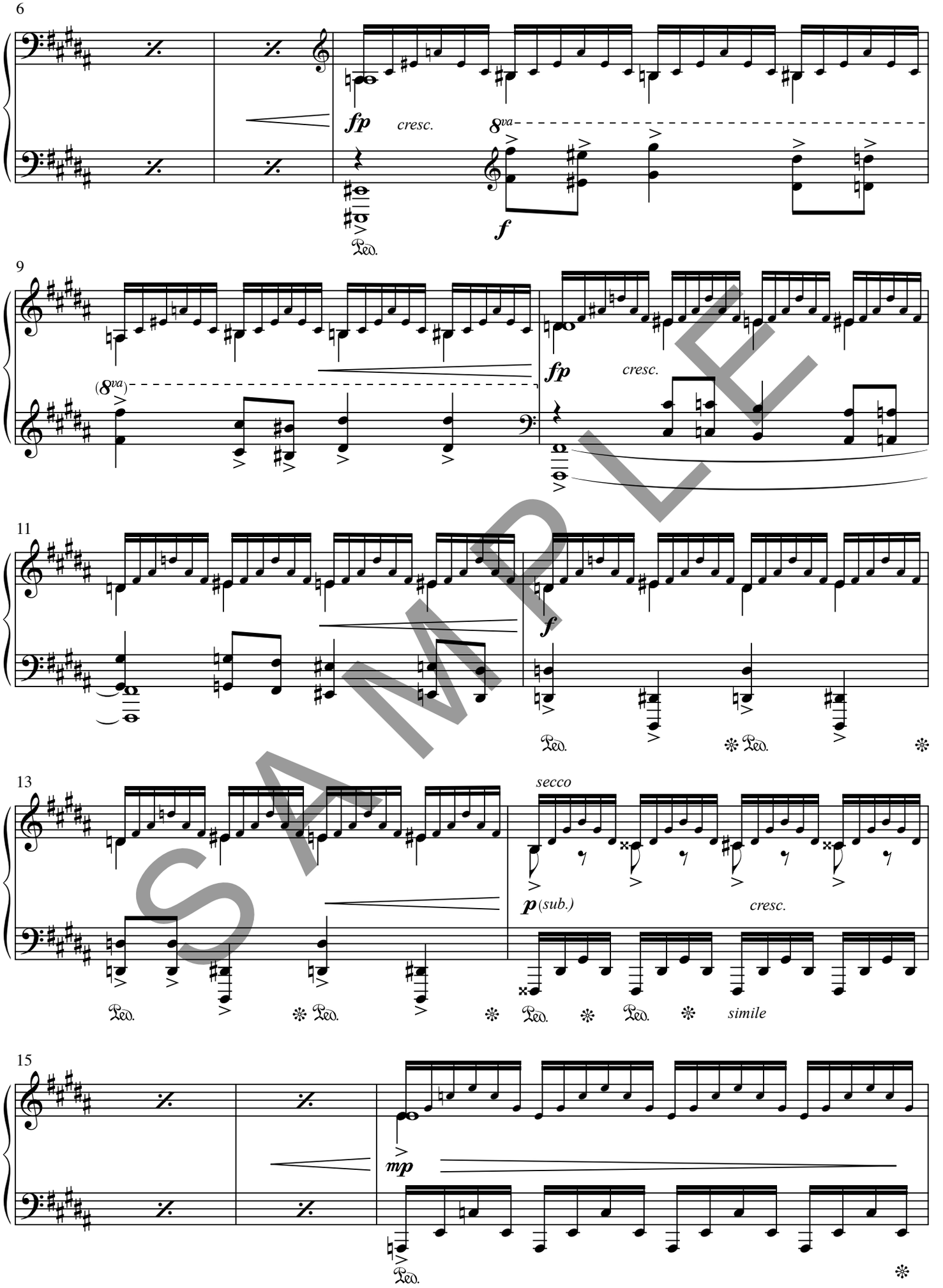
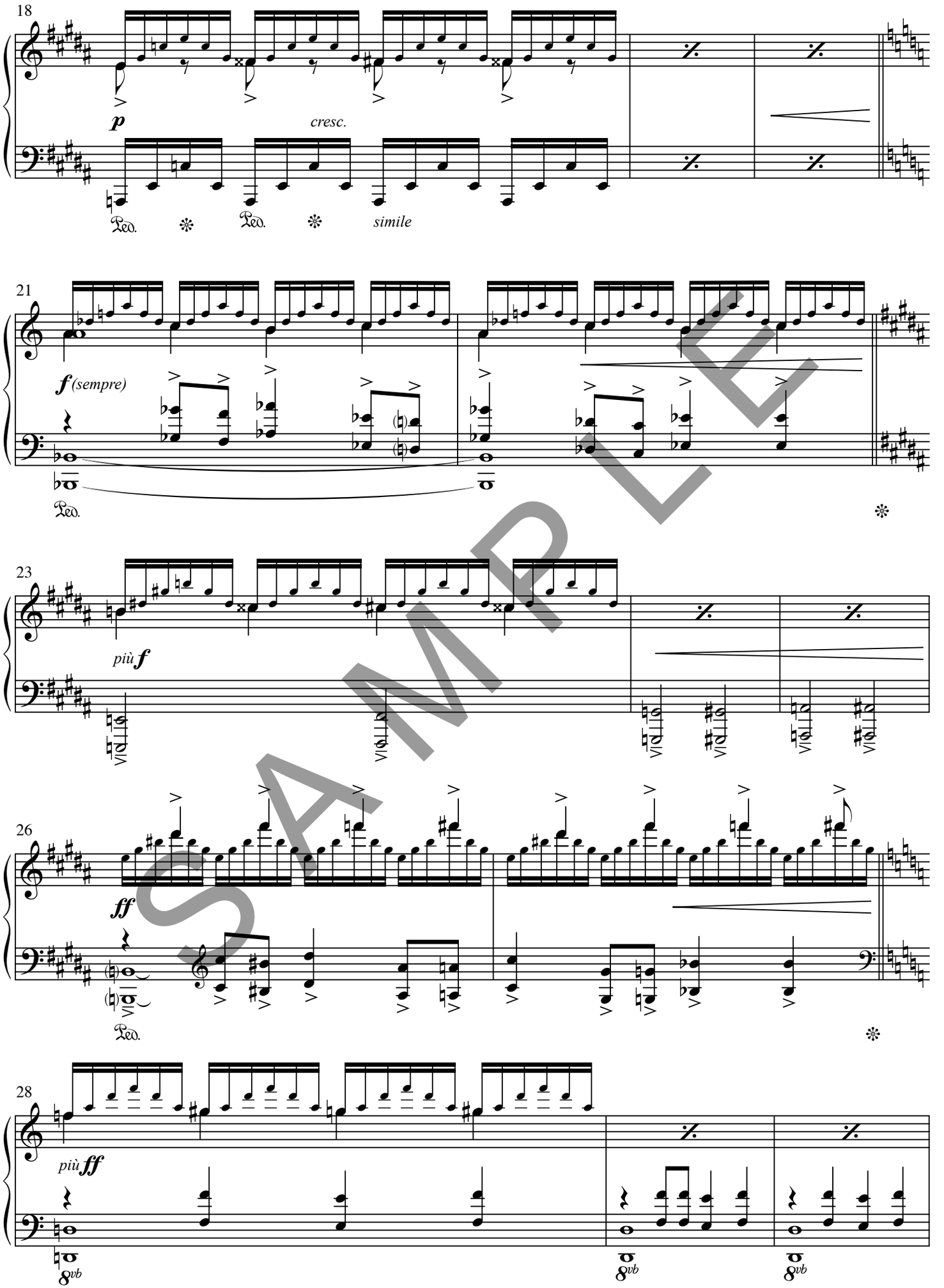
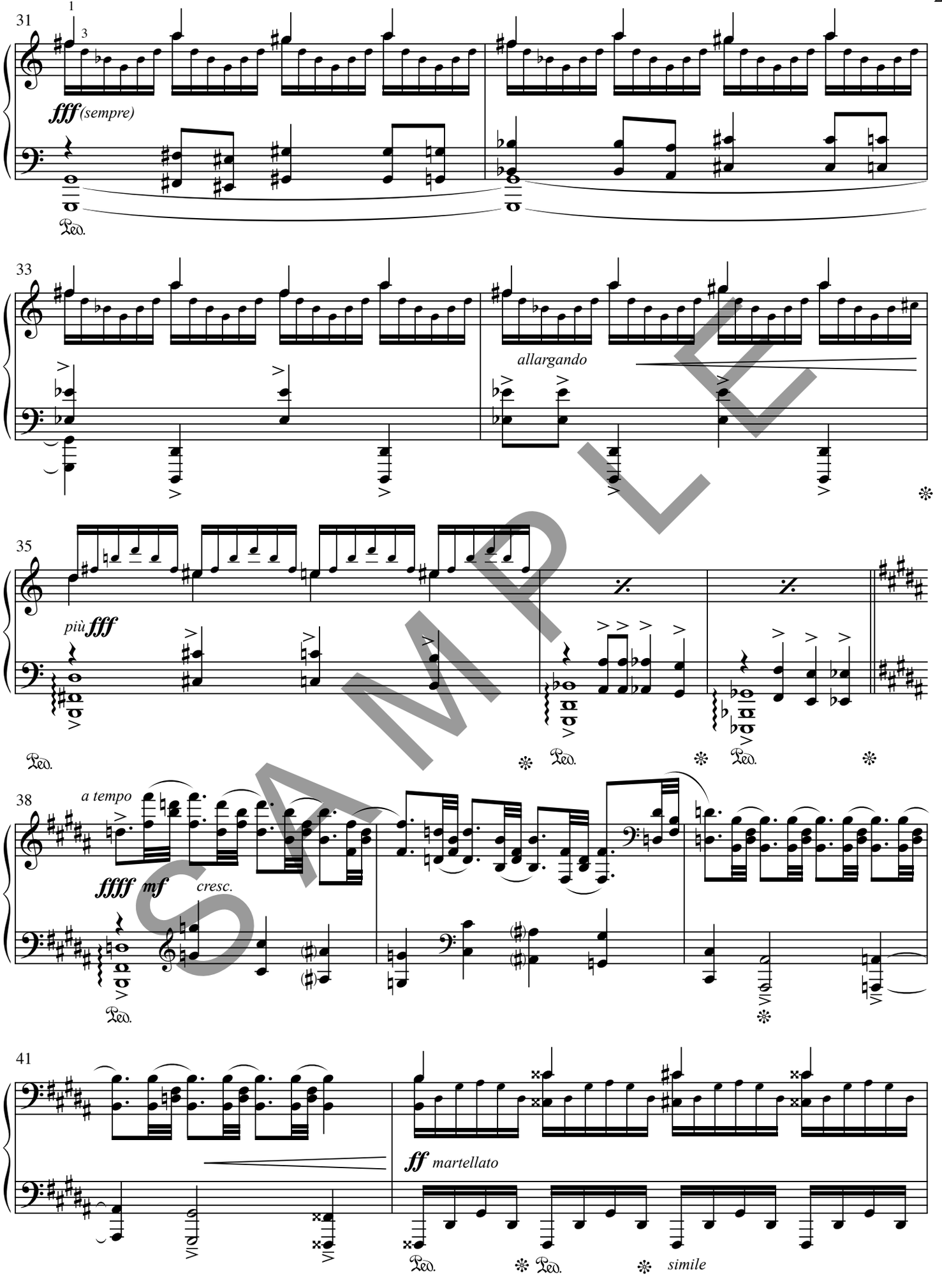

6
fp
cresc.
8va
f
Ped.
9
(8va)
fp
cresc.
11
f
Ped.
13
secco
p (sub.)
cresc.
simile
15
mp

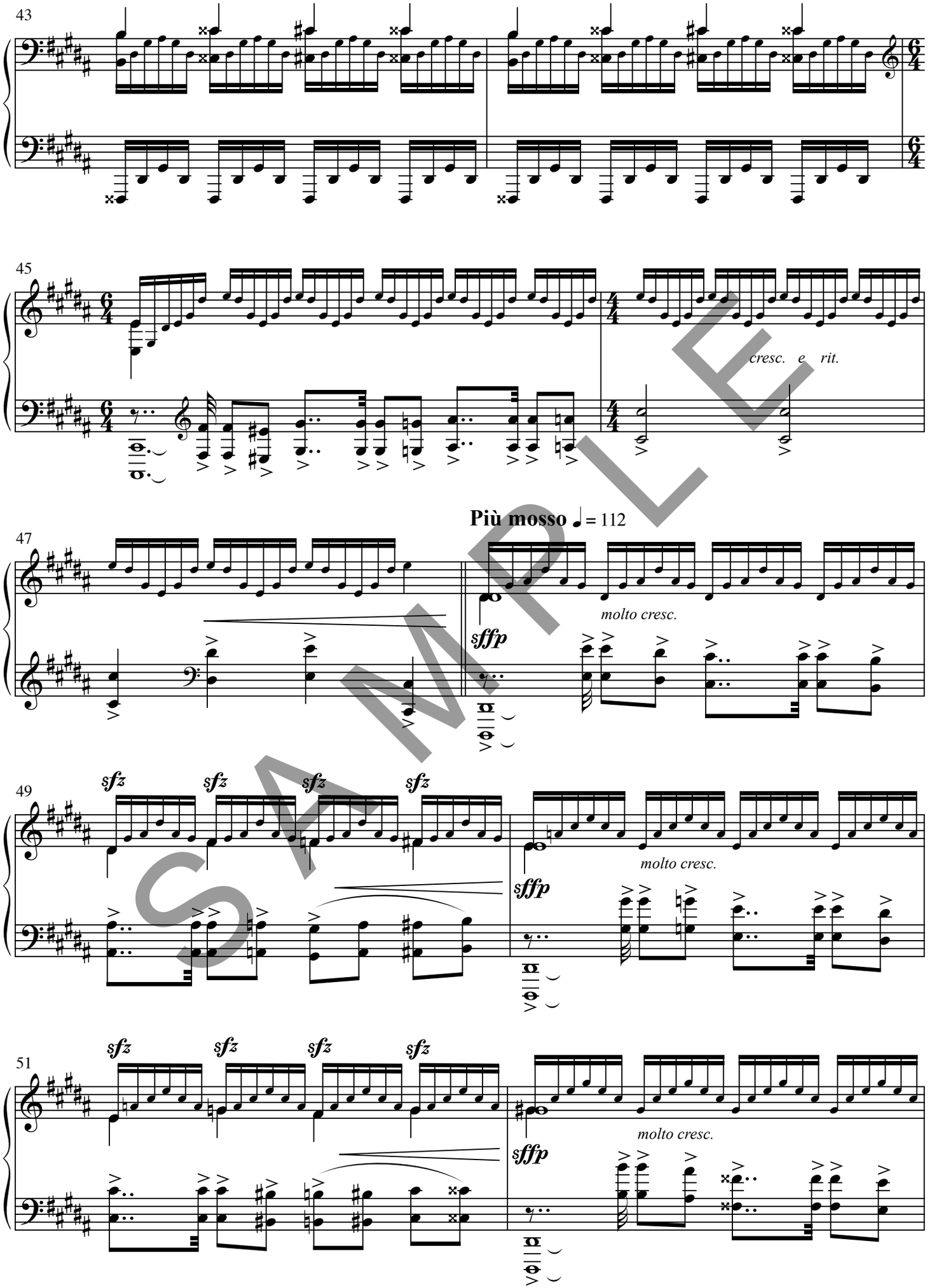
SAMPLE


18
p
cresc.
Ped.
Ped.
simile
21
f (sempre)
Ped.
23
più f
26
ff
Ped.
28
più ff
8vb
8vb
8vb

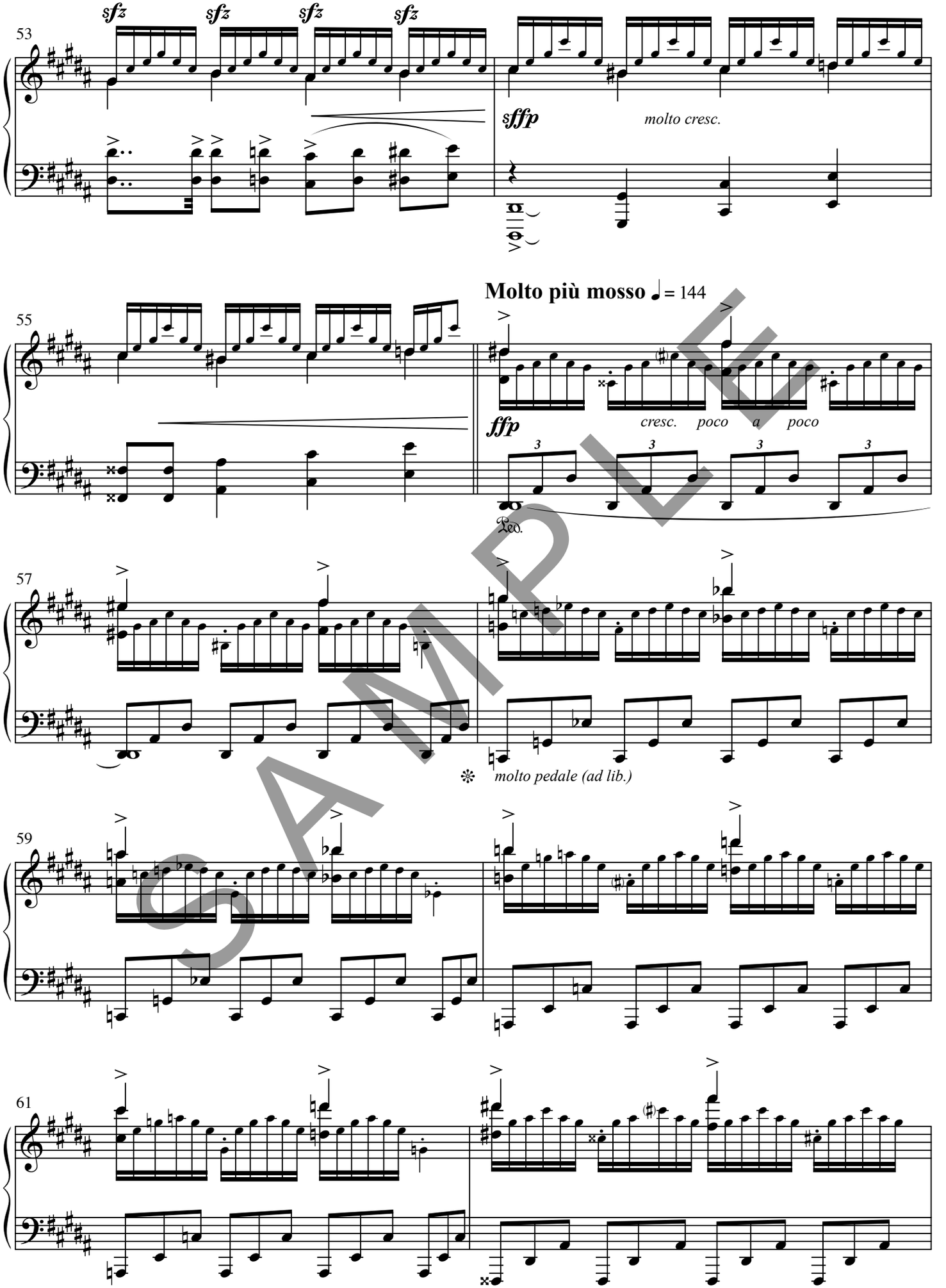
SAMPLE


31
1
3
fff (sempre)
Ped.
33
allargando
35
più fff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
38
a tempo
ffff mf cresc.
Ped.
41
ff martellato
Ped.
Ped.
simile

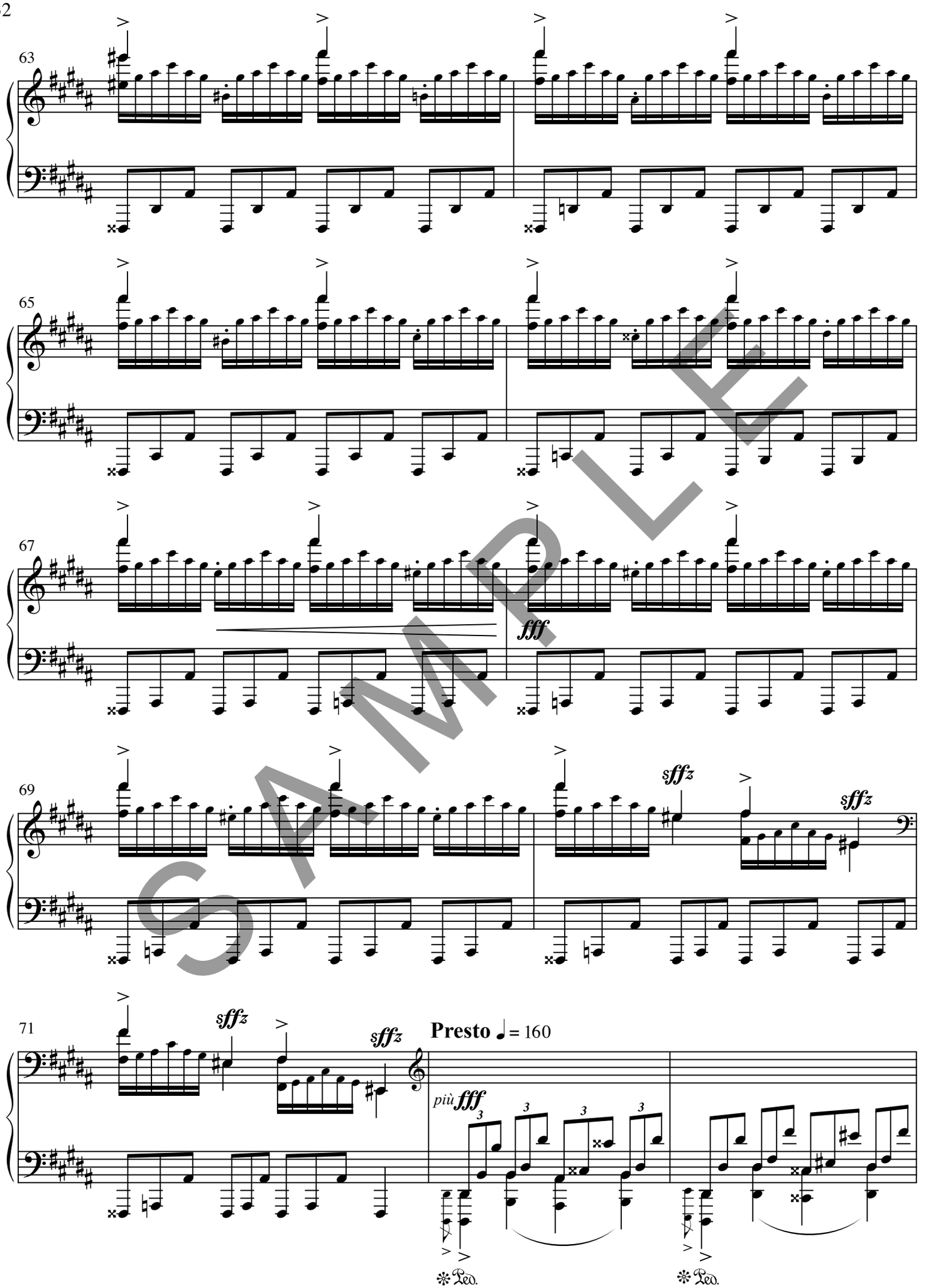
SAMPLE


43
45
cresc. e rit.
Più mosso ♩ = 112
47
molto cresc.
sffp
49
sfz
molto cresc.
sffp
51
molto cresc.
sffp

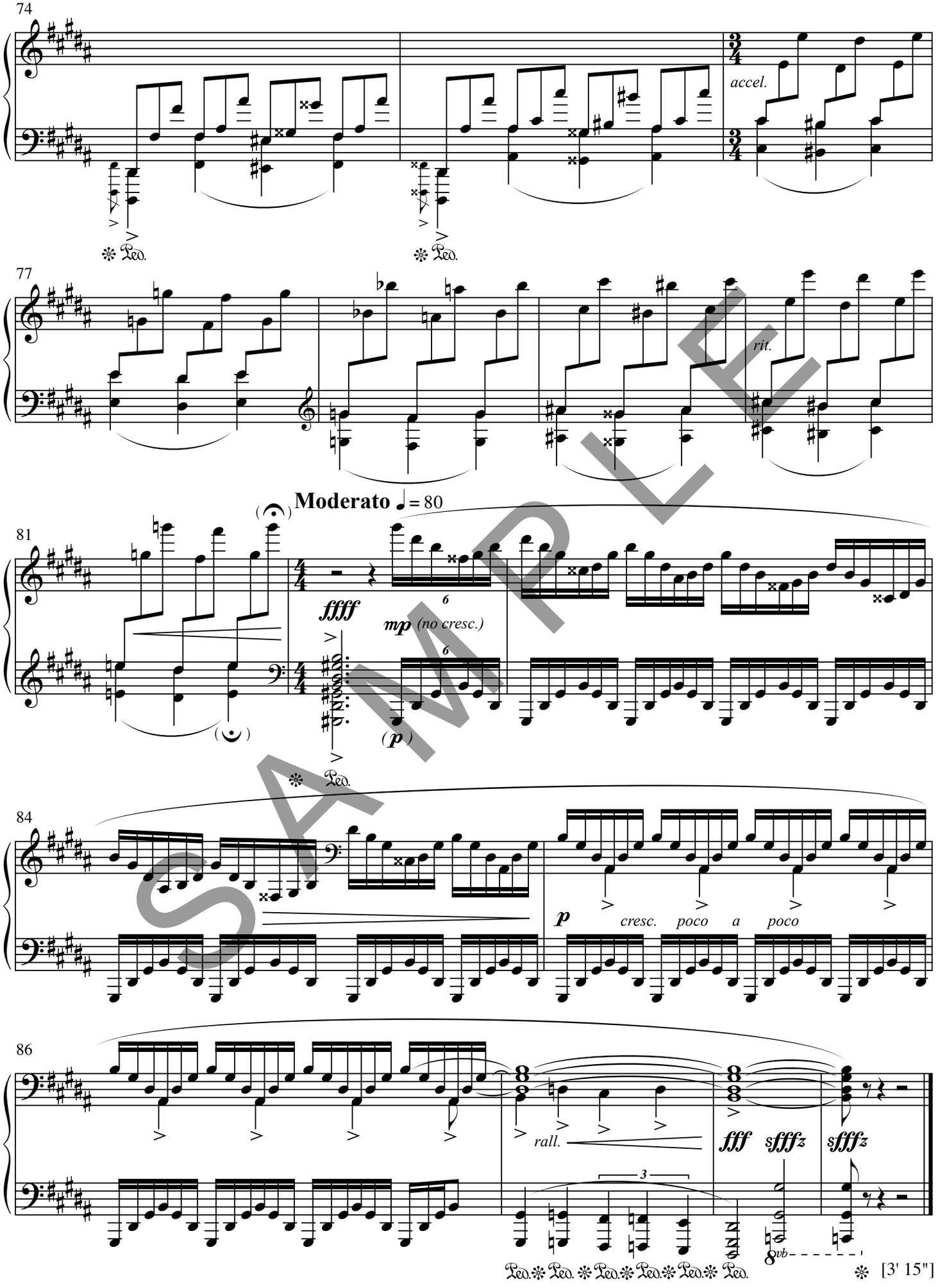
SAMPLE


53
sfz
sfz
sfz
sfz
sffp
molto cresc.
55
Molto più mosso ♩ = 144
ffp
cresc. poco a poco
Ped.
57
molto pedale (ad lib.)
59
61

SAMPLE


63
65
67
fff
69
sffz
sffz
71
sffz
sffz
Presto ♩= 160
più fff
Ped.
Ped.

SAMPLE

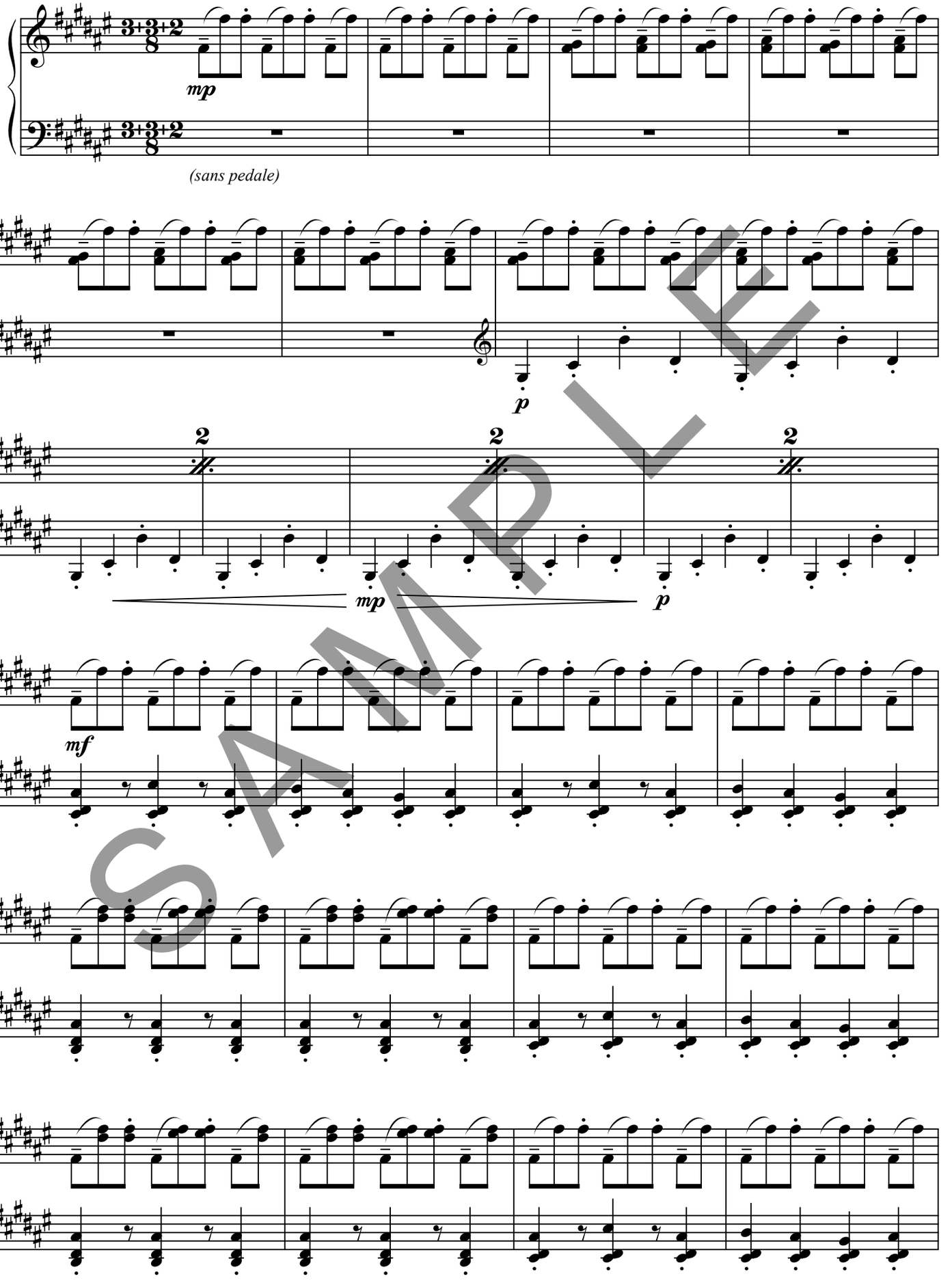

74
accel.
77
rit.
Moderato ♩= 80
81
ffff
mp (no cresc.)
(p)
84
p
cresc. poco a poco
86
rall.
fff
sffz
sffz
8vb
[3' 15"]

SAMPLE

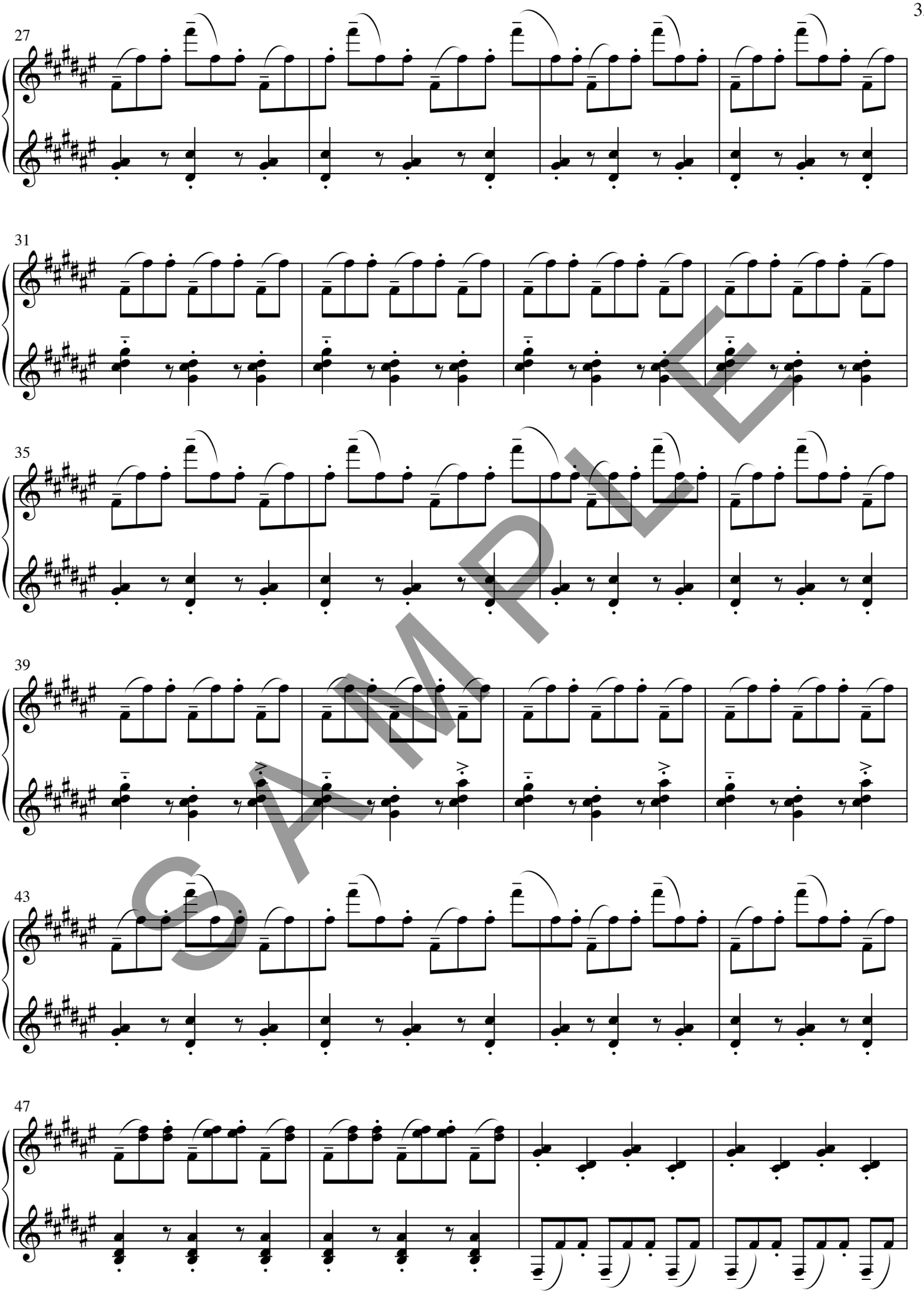
No. 13 - F♯ Major

[One-Note Ostinato]

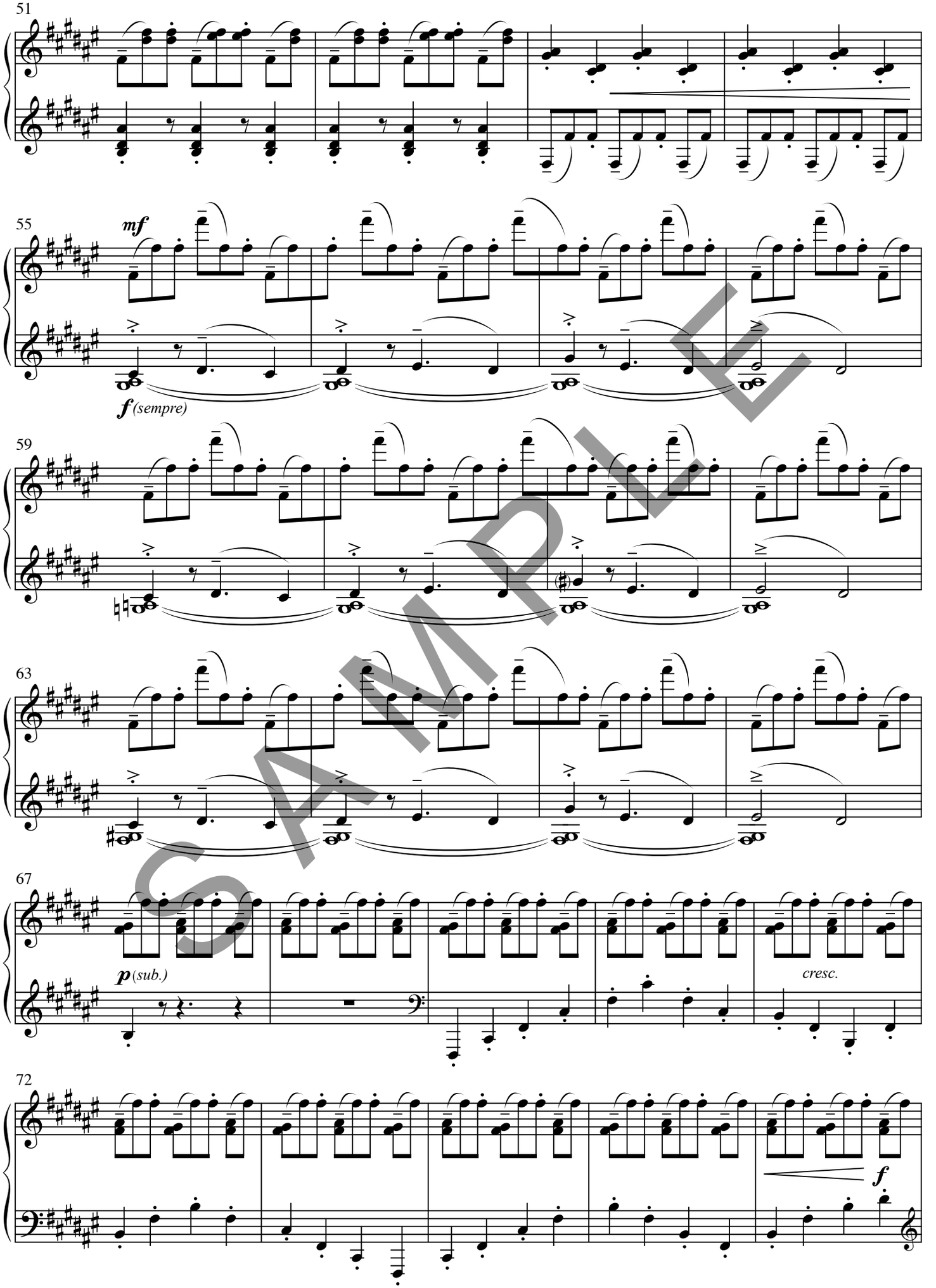
Poco presto ♩. = 169



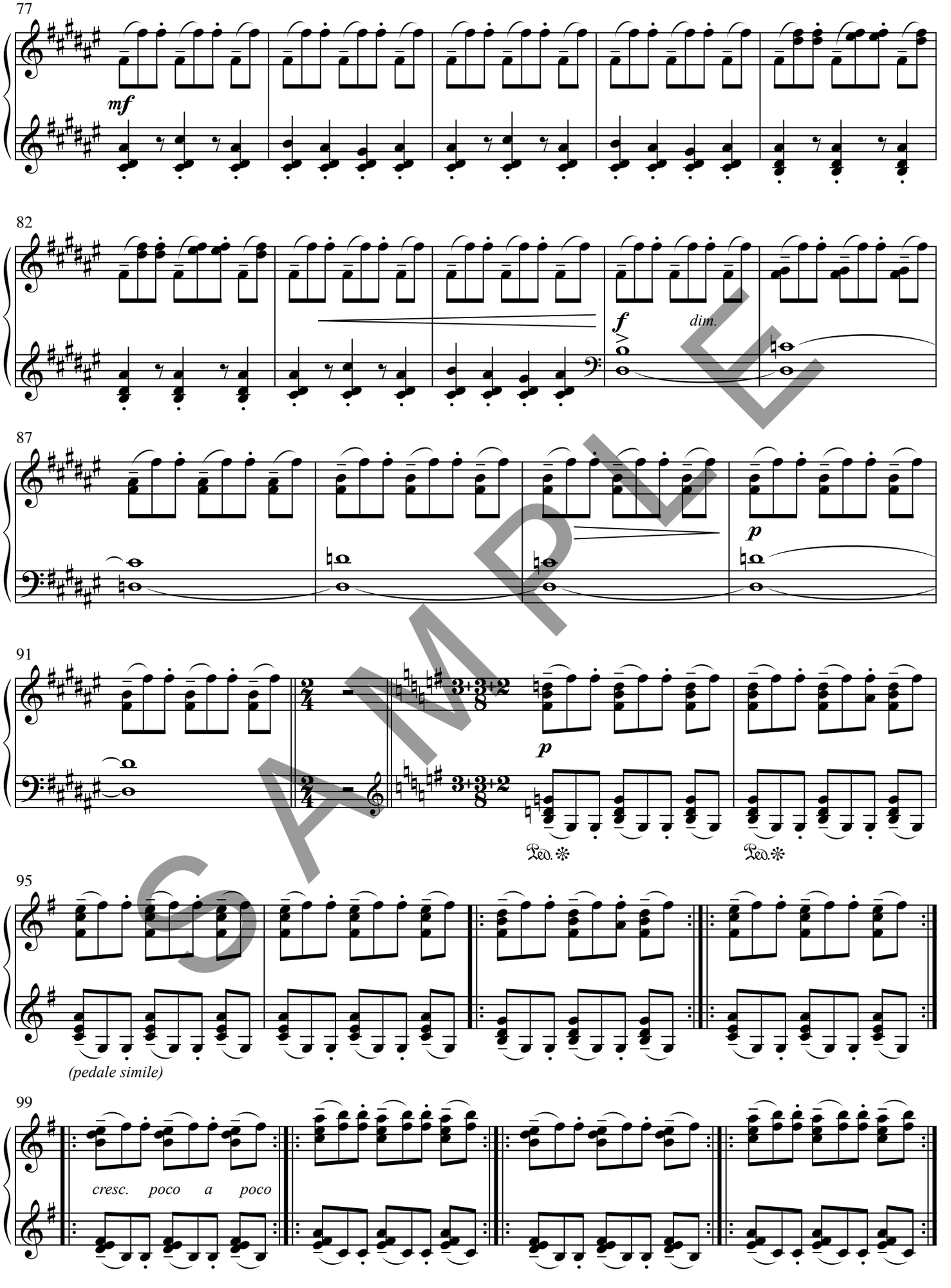
SAMPLE



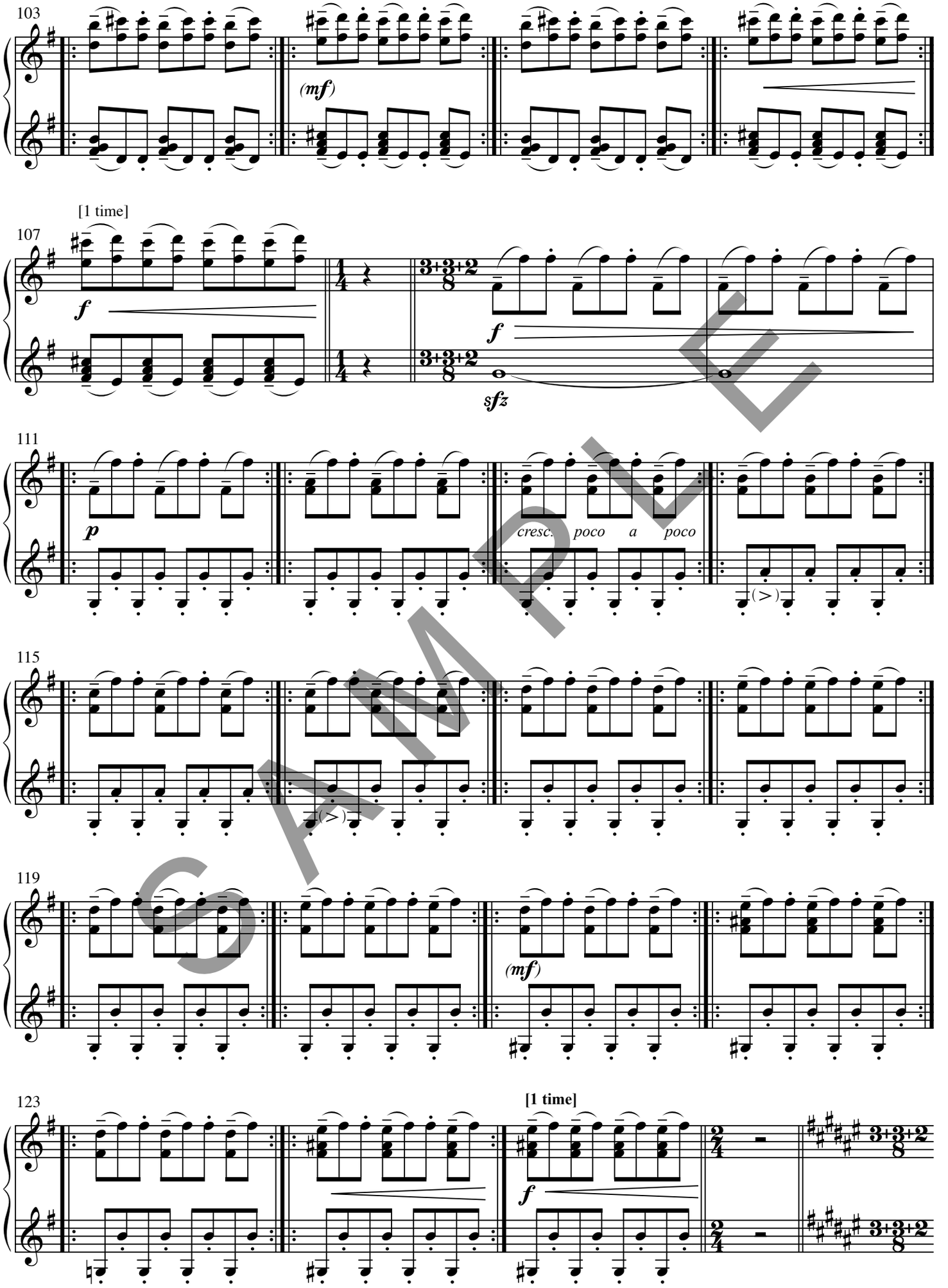
SAMPLE



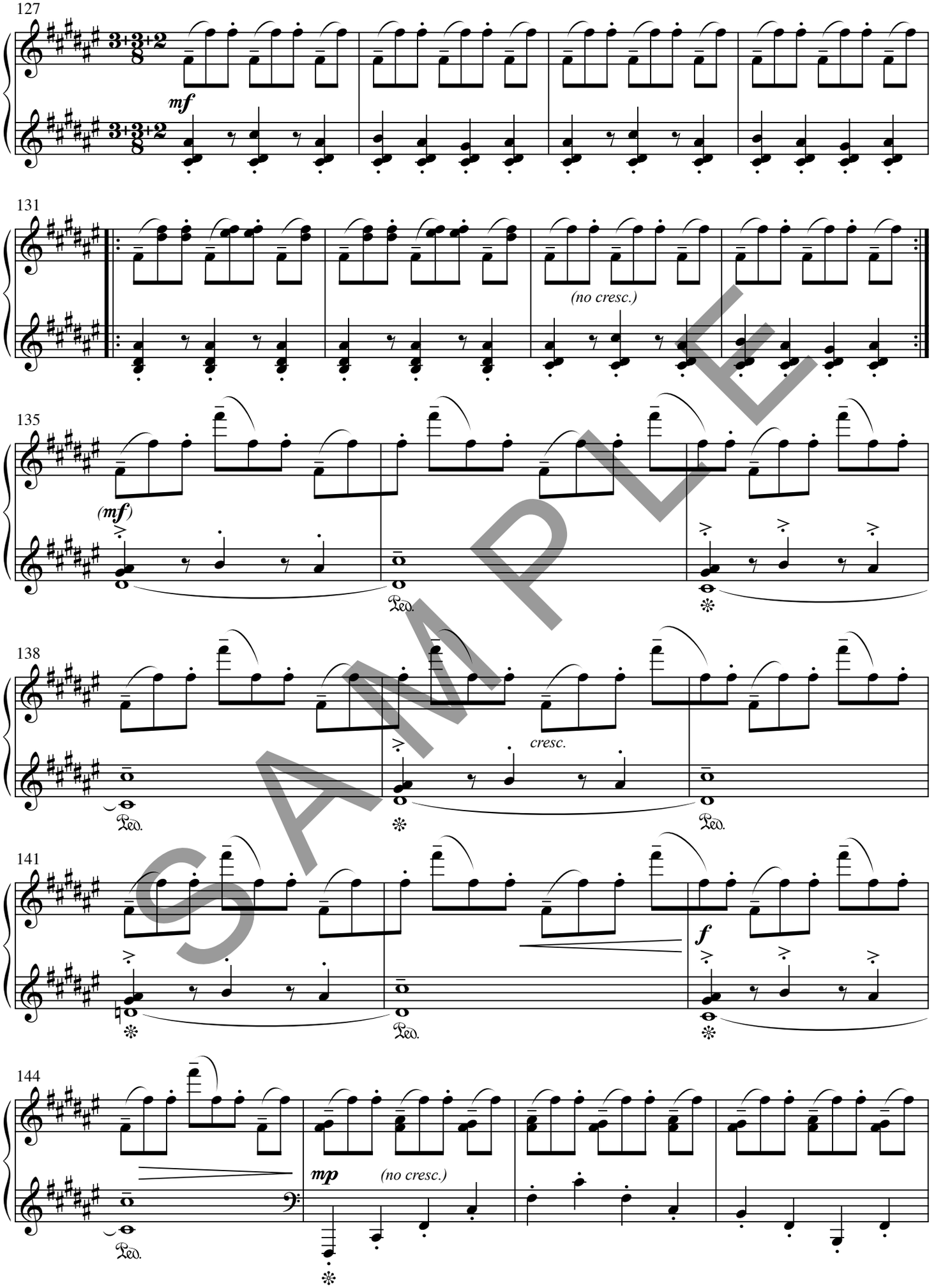
SAMPLE


77
mf
82
f
dim.
87
p
91
3+3+2
8
p
Ped.
Ped.
95
(pedale simile)
99
cresc. poco a poco

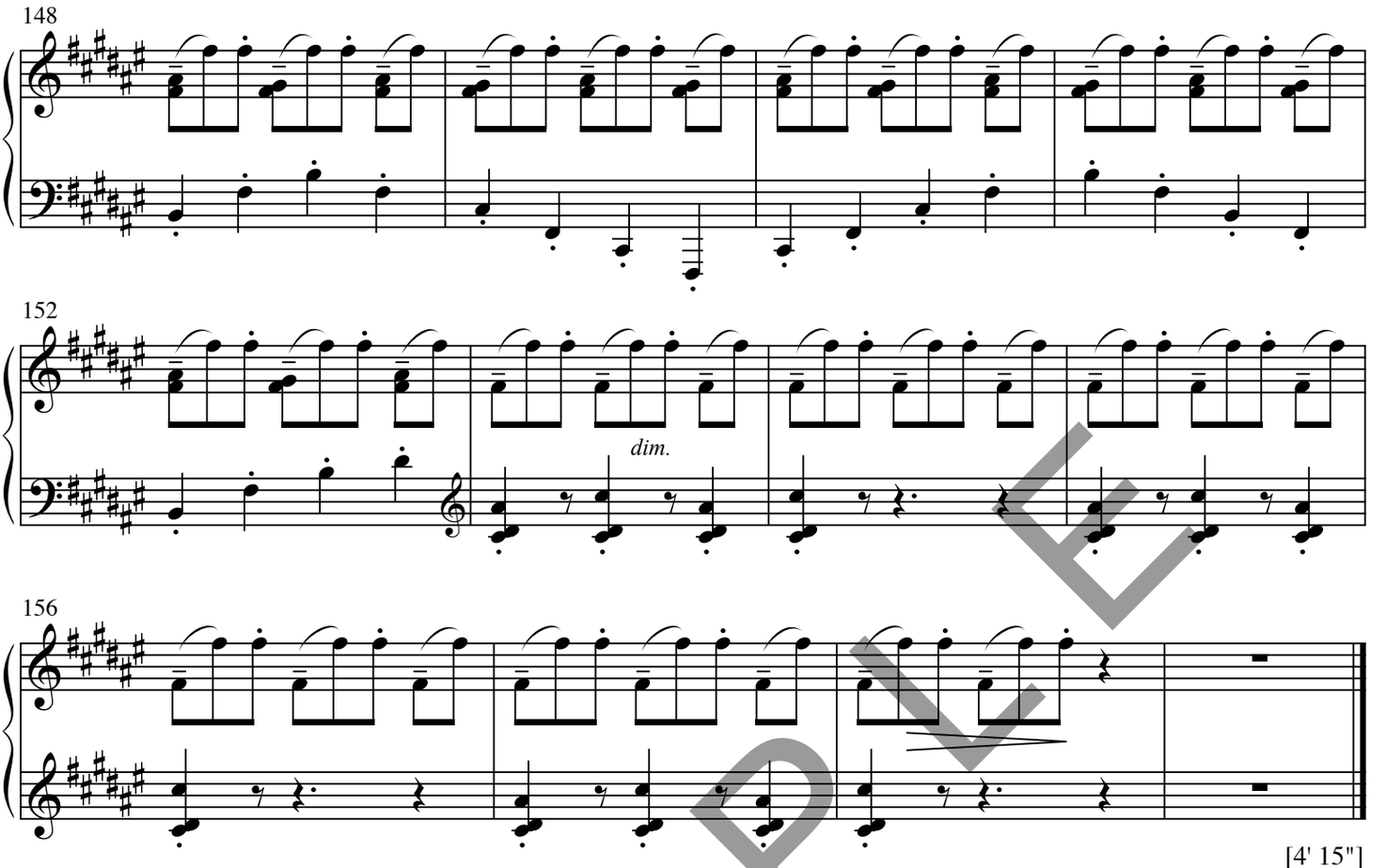
SAMPLE


103
(mf)
[1 time]
107
f
f
sfz
111
p
cresc. poco a poco
(>)
115
(>)
119
(mf)
123
[1 time]
f

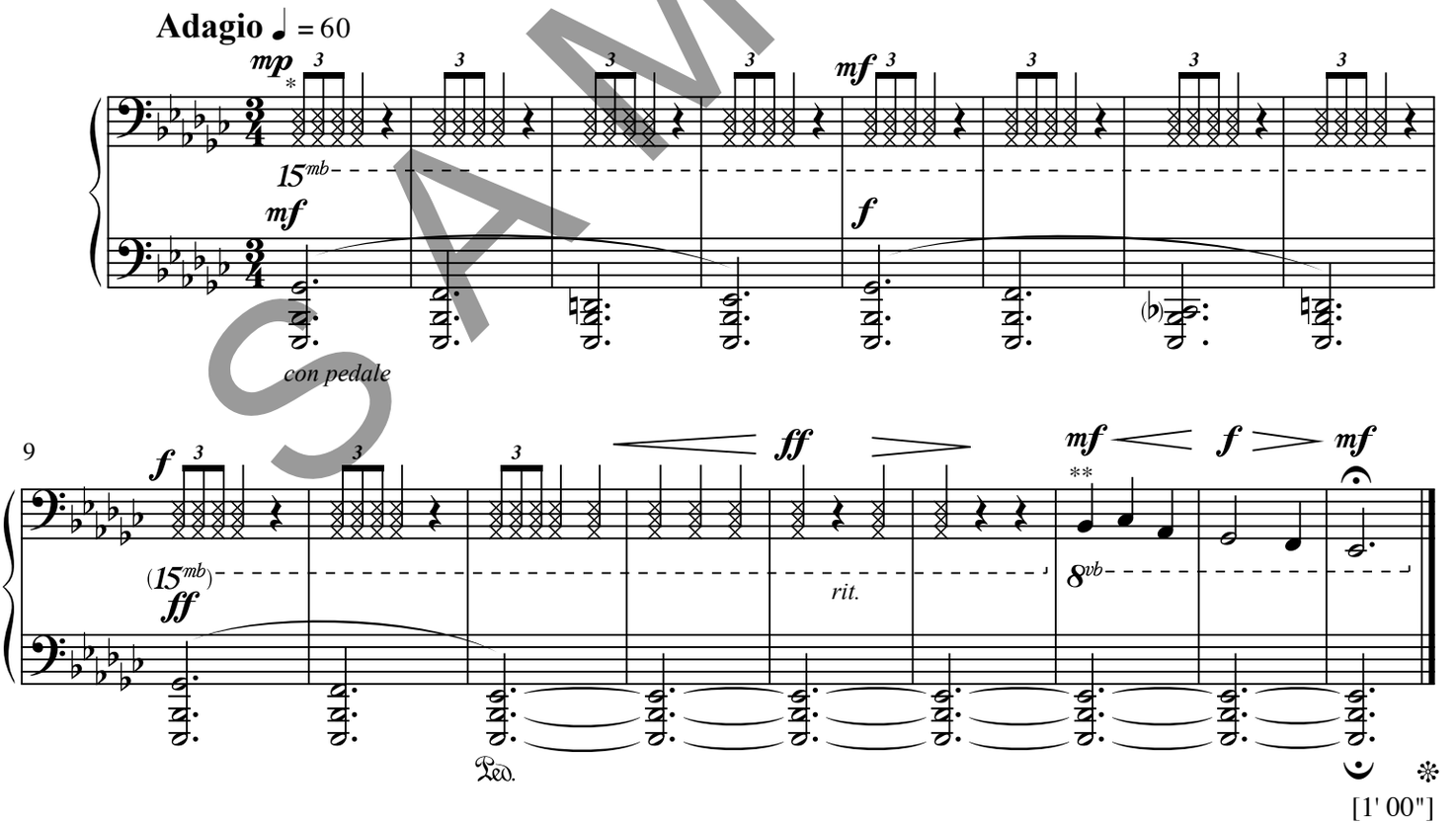
SAMPLE


127
mf
131
(no cresc.)
135
(mf)
Ped.
138
cresc.
Ped.
Ped.
141
f
Ped.
144
mp
(no cresc.)
Ped.

SAMPLE



No. 14 - E♭ Minor



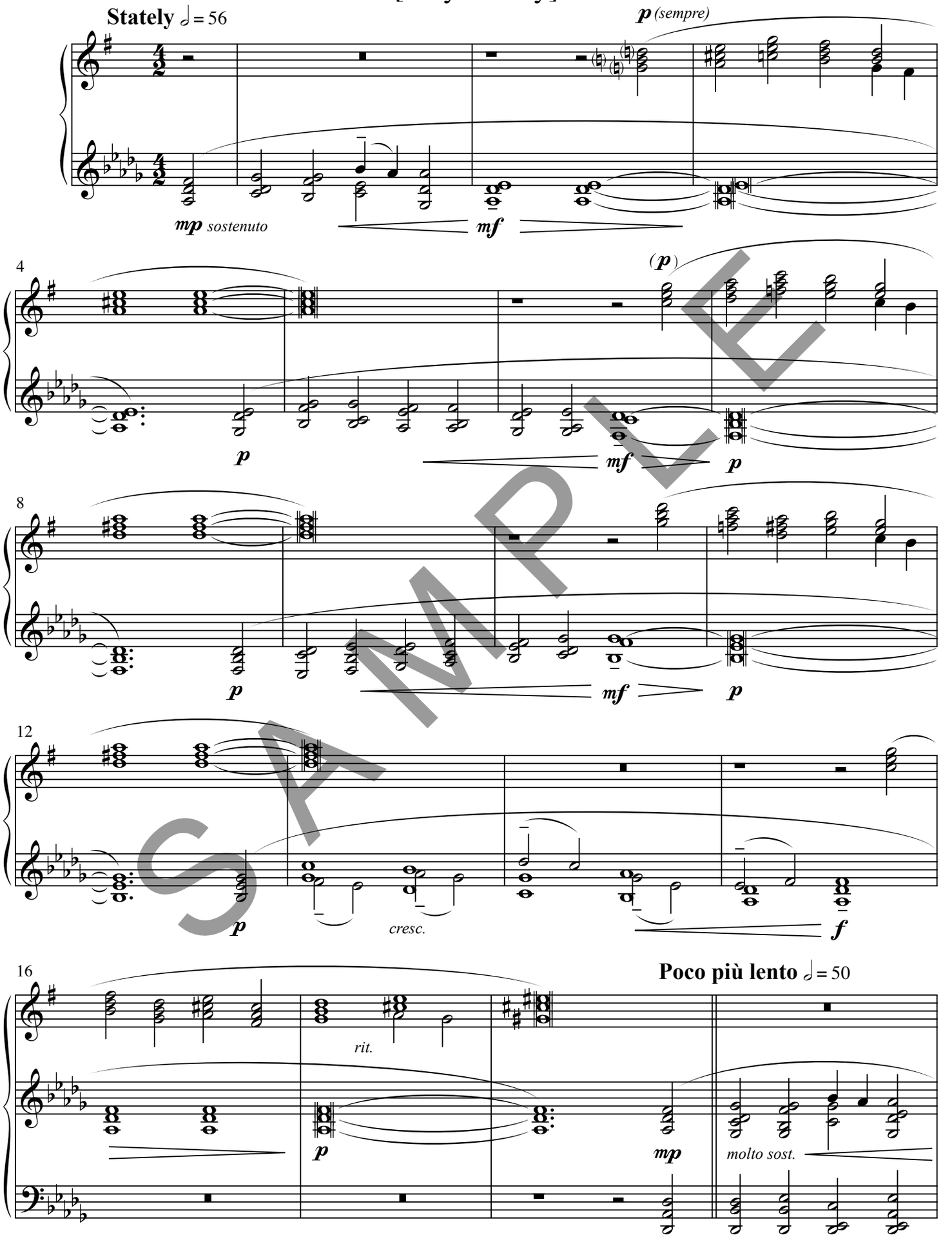
*With the palm of the right hand slap the lowest strings inside the piano like a bass drum.

**Slide the back of the finger nail of right thumb along the ridges of the strings for the notes indicated. Find the starting note by observing the hammers of the notes held be the left hand and starting on B flat, go up 1 string, then down 3 strings, 2 strings, 1 string and 2 strings respectively.

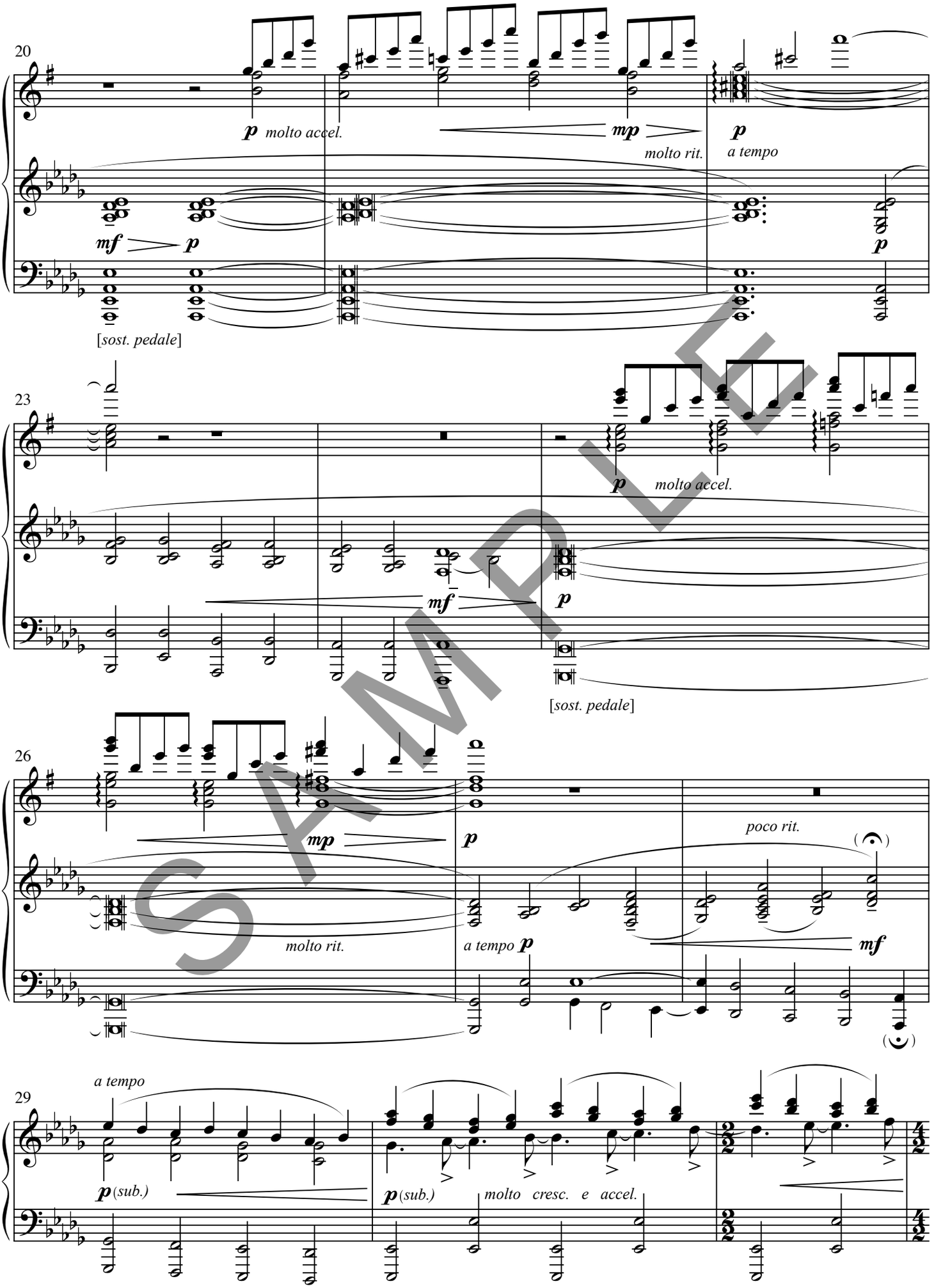
SAMPLE

No. 15 - D♭ Major

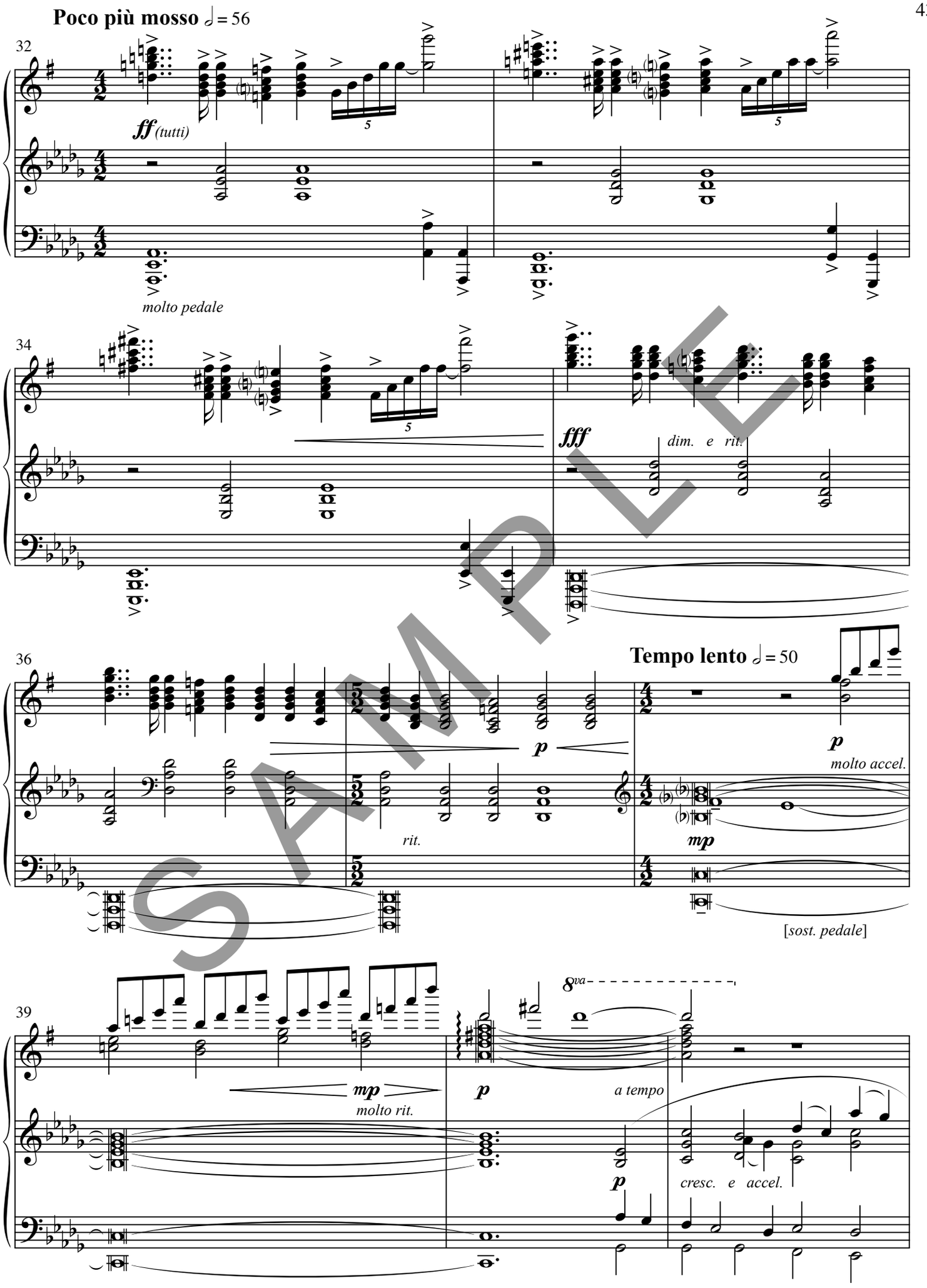
[Polytonality]



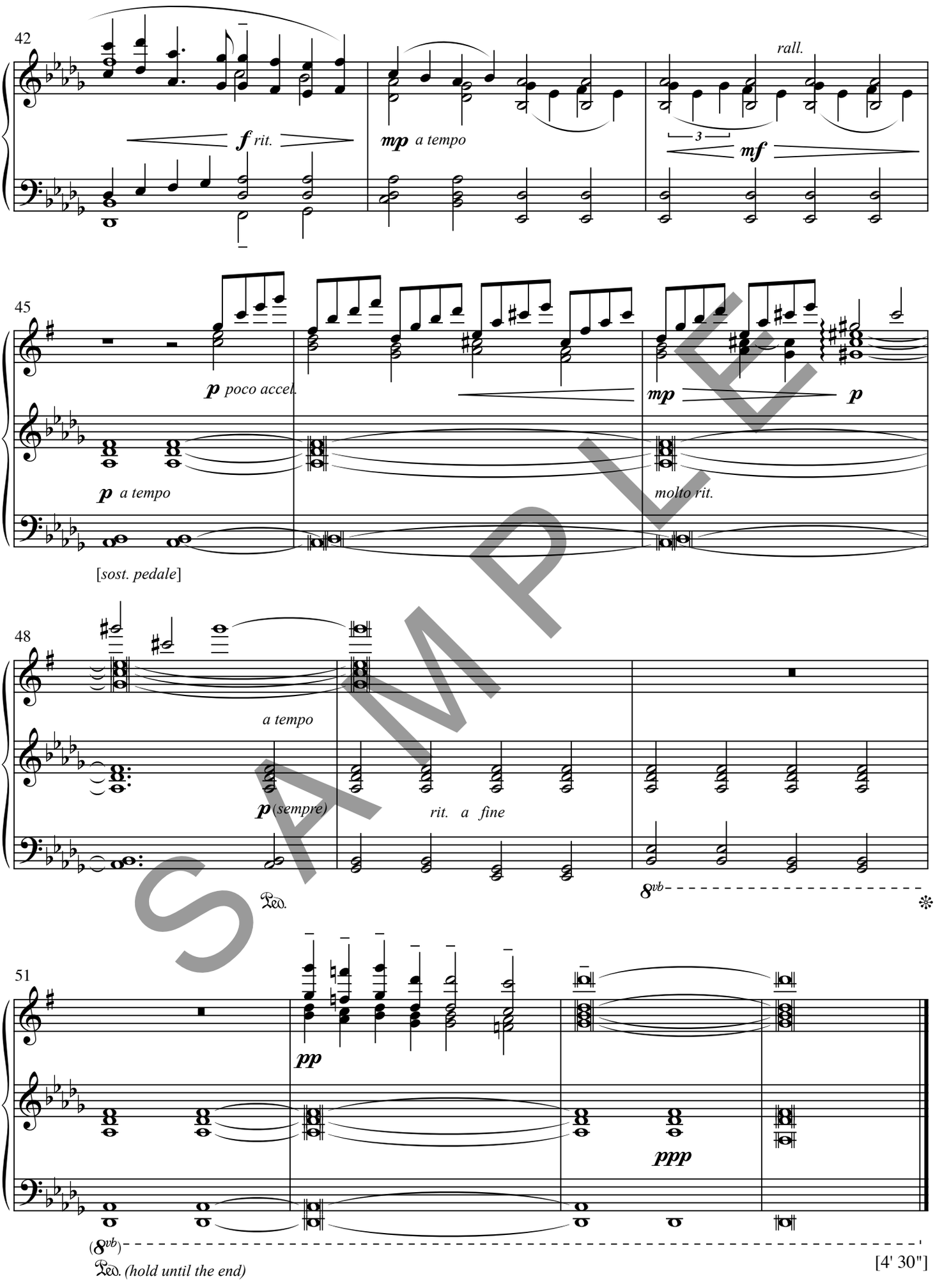
SAMPLE


20
p molto accel.
mp
molto rit.
p
a tempo
mf
p
p
[sost. pedale]
23
p molto accel.
mf
p
[sost. pedale]
26
mp
p
poco rit.
molto rit.
a tempo p
mf
a tempo
29
p (sub.)
p (sub.)
molto cresc. e accel.

SAMPLE


Poco più mosso ♩= 56
32
ff (tutti)
molto pedale
34
fff
dim. e rit.
36
Tempo lento ♩= 50
p
molto accel.
rit.
mp
[sost. pedale]
39
mp
molto rit.
p
8va
a tempo
p
cresc. e accel.

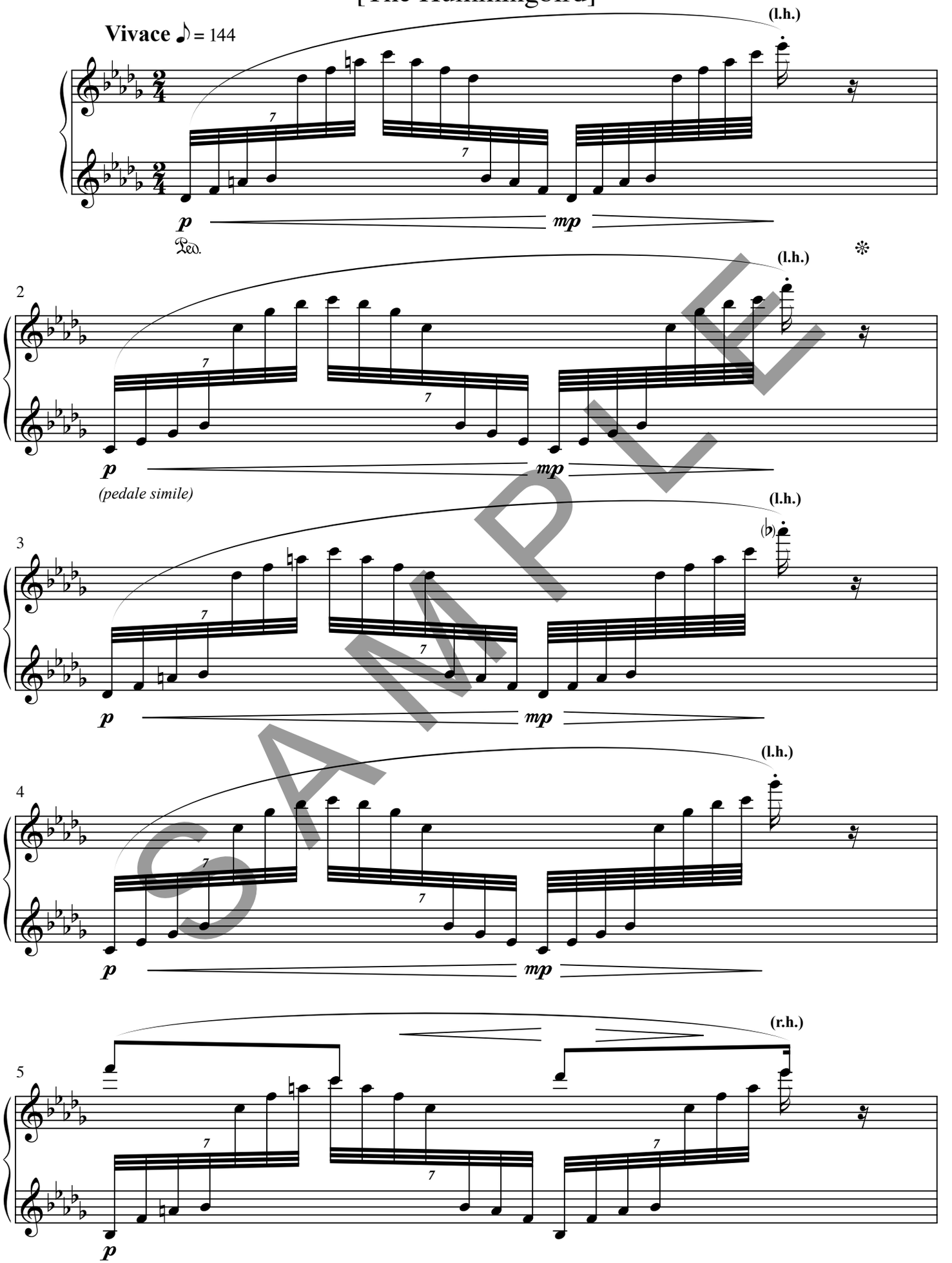
SAMPLE


42
f rit.
mp a tempo
rall.
3
mf
45
p poco accel.
mp
p
p a tempo
molto rit.
[sost. pedale]
48
a tempo
p (sempre)
rit. a fine
Ped.
8vb
51
pp
ppp
(8vb)
Ped. (hold until the end)
[4' 30"]

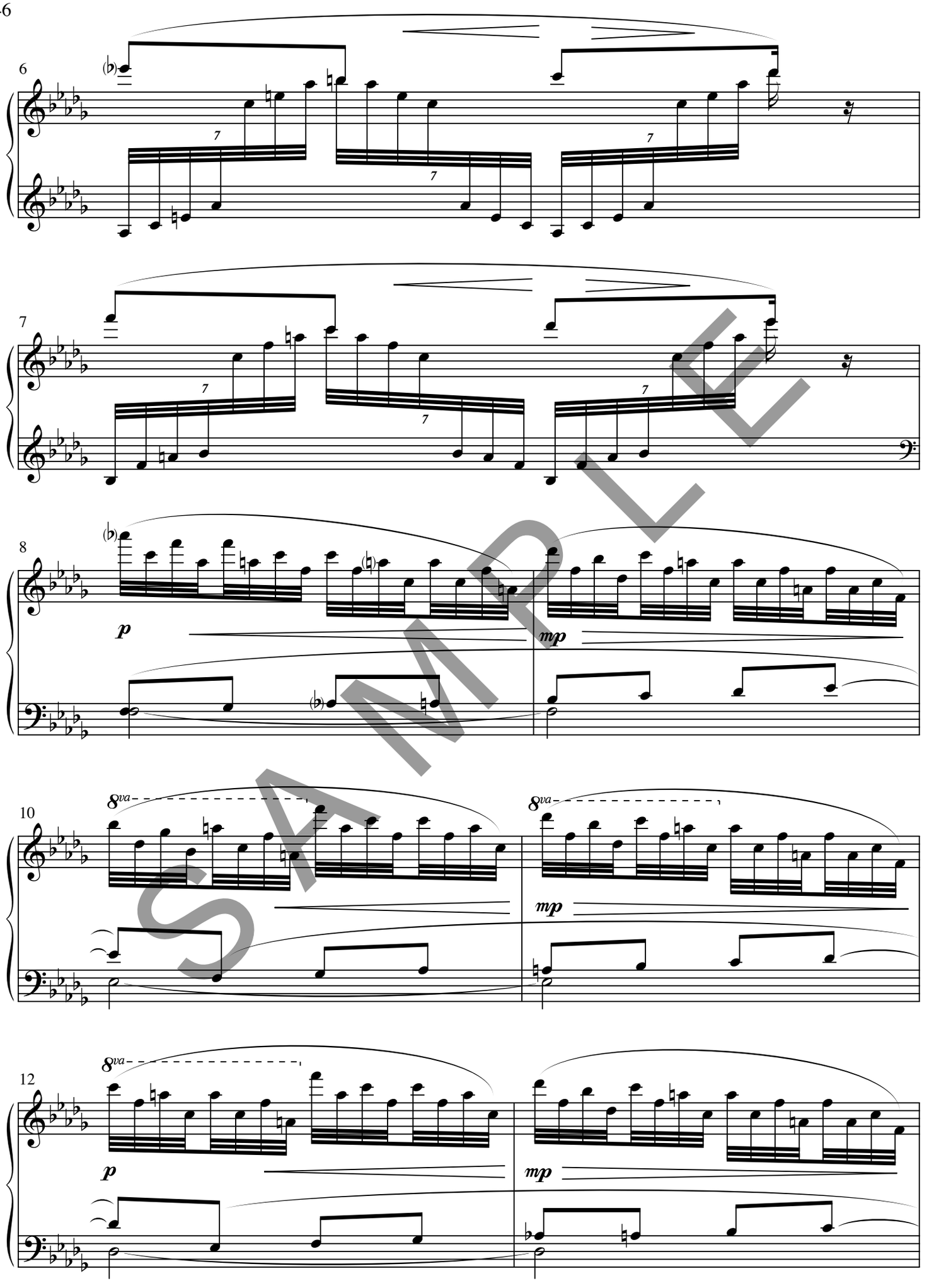
SAMPLE

No. 16 - B♭ Minor

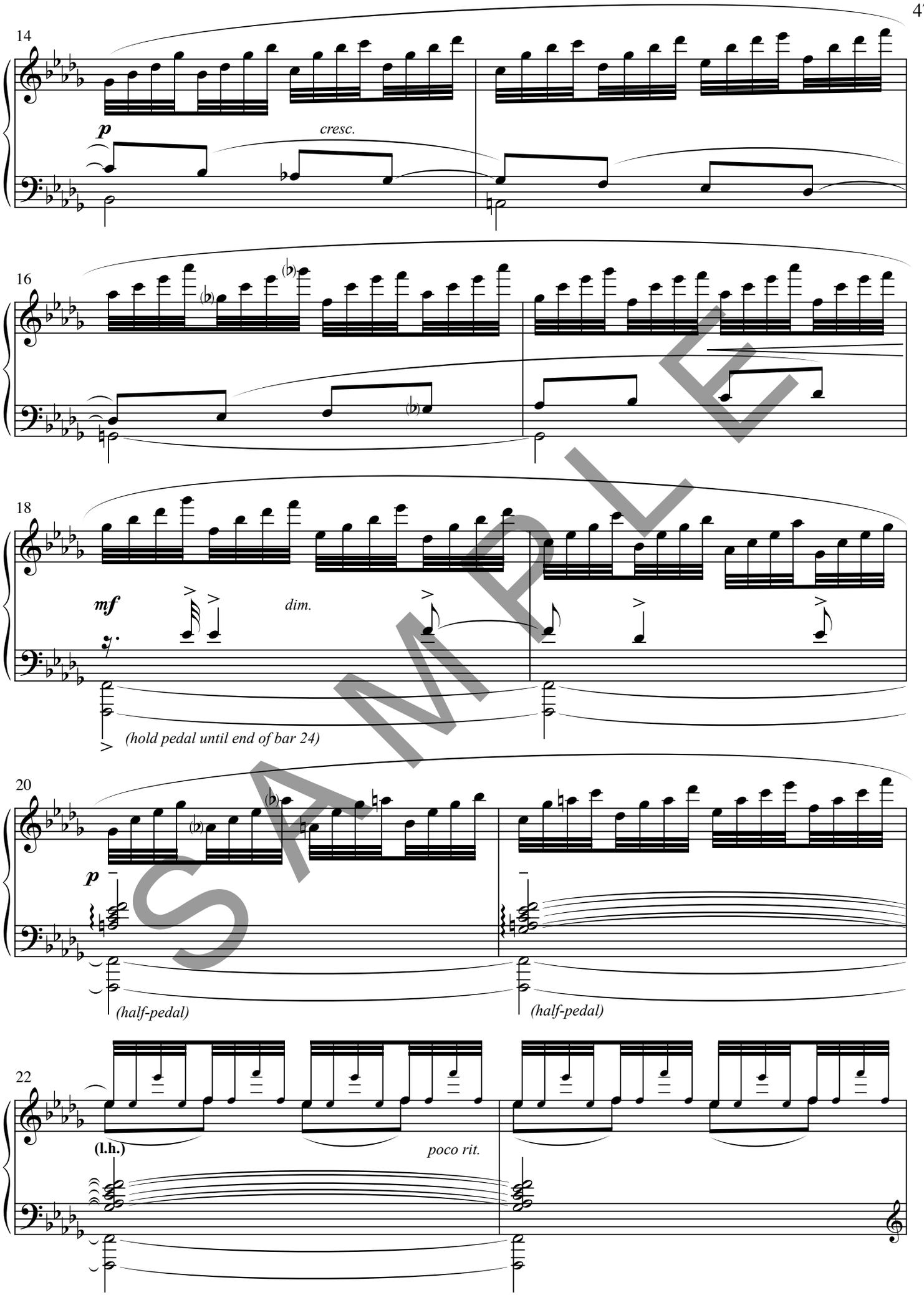
[The Hummingbird]



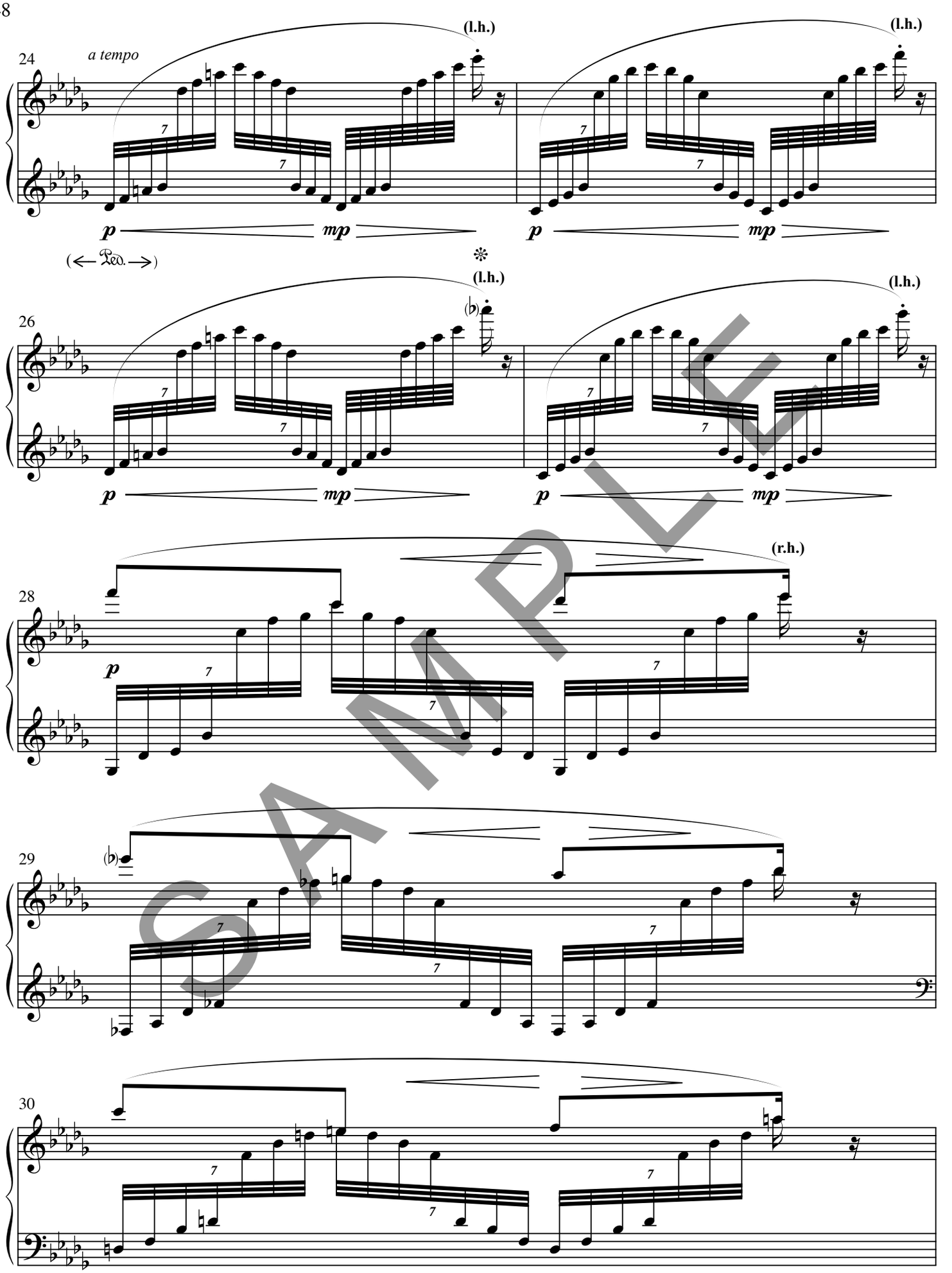
SAMPLE



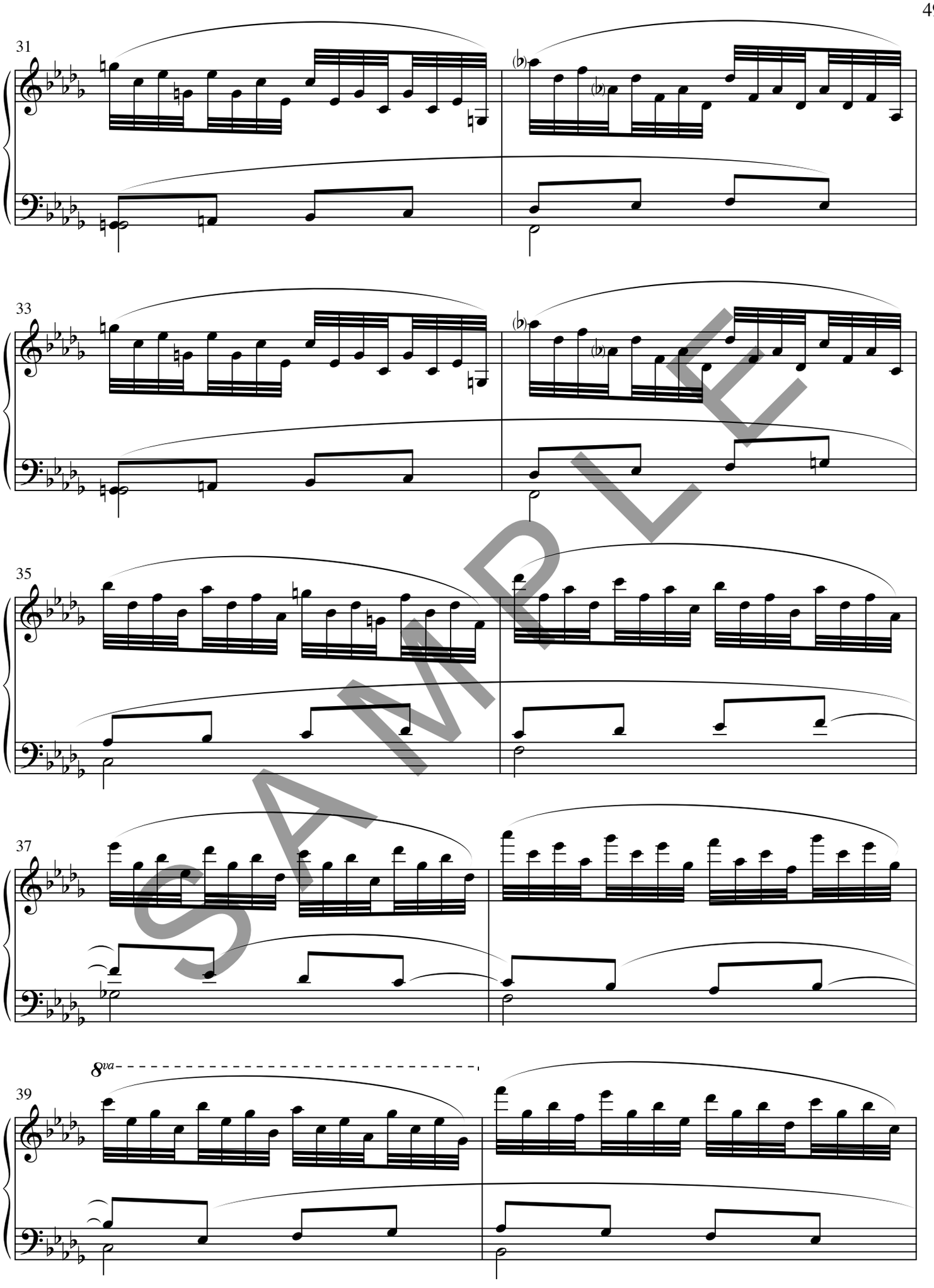
SAMPLE


14
p
cresc.
16
18
mf
dim.
(hold pedal until end of bar 24)
20
p
(half-pedal)
(half-pedal)
22
(l.h.)
poco rit.

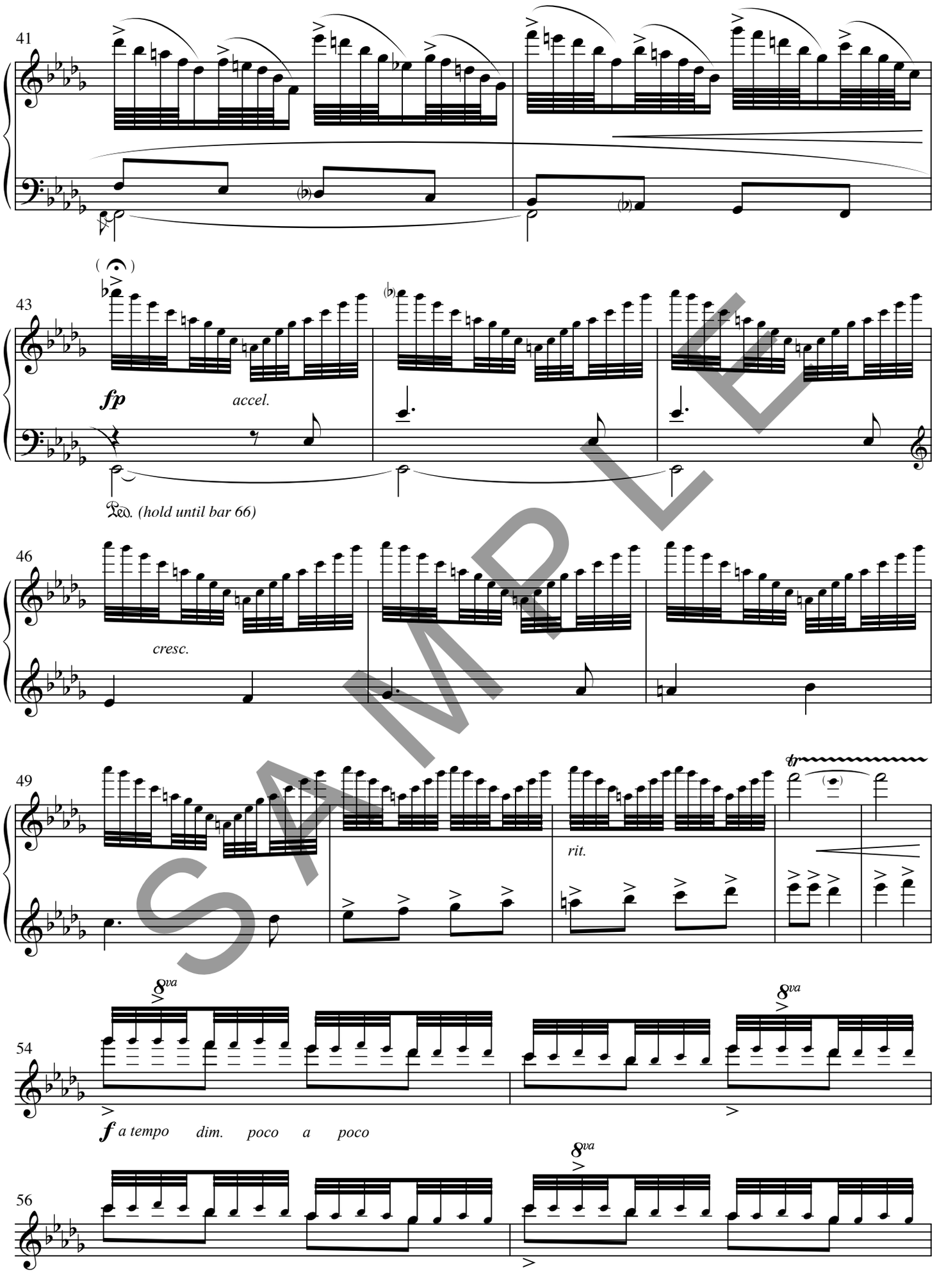
SAMPLE



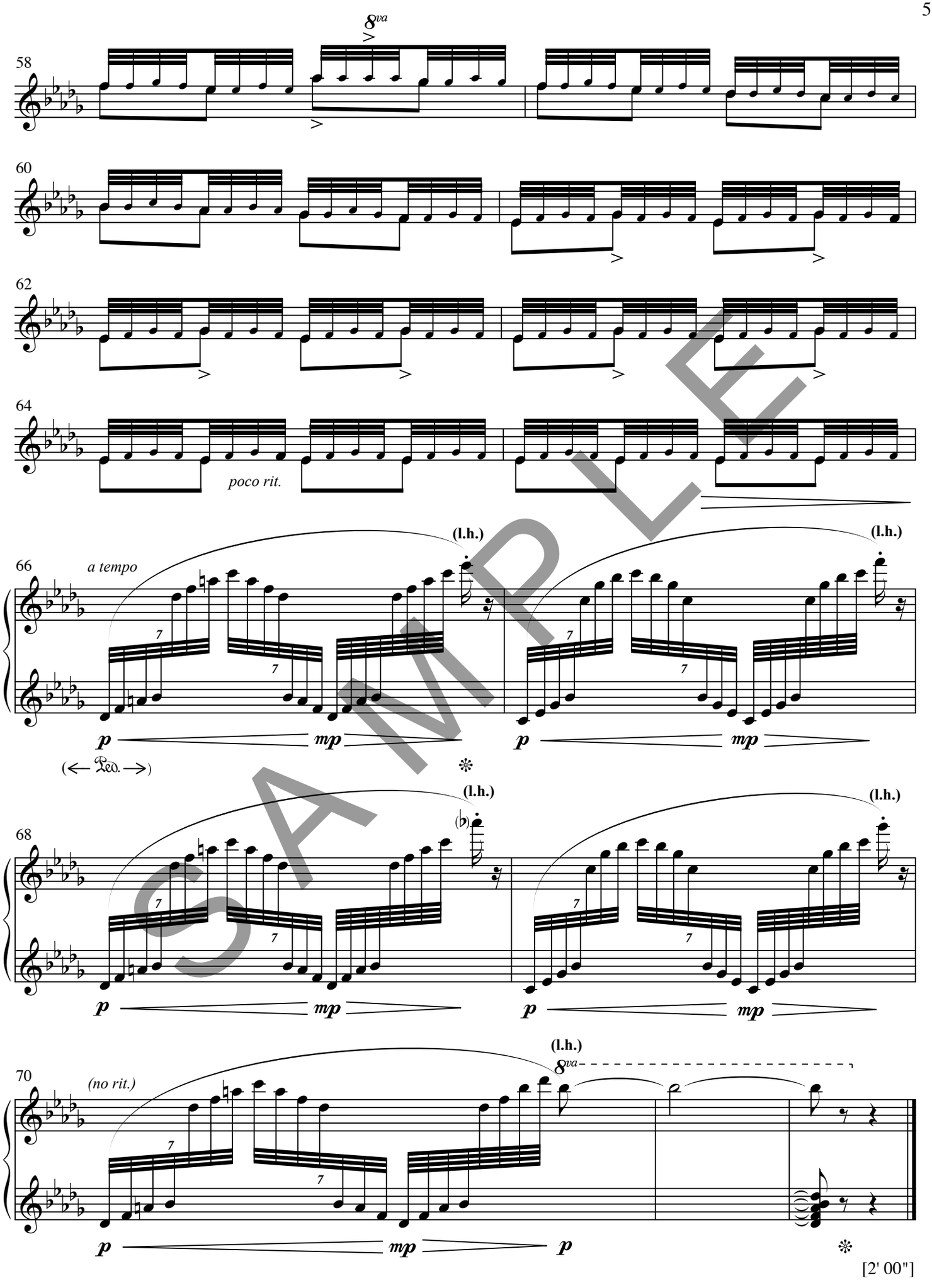
SAMPLE



SAMPLE


41
43
fp
accel.
Ped. (hold until bar 66)
46
cresc.
49
tr
rit.
54
8va
f a tempo dim. poco a poco
56

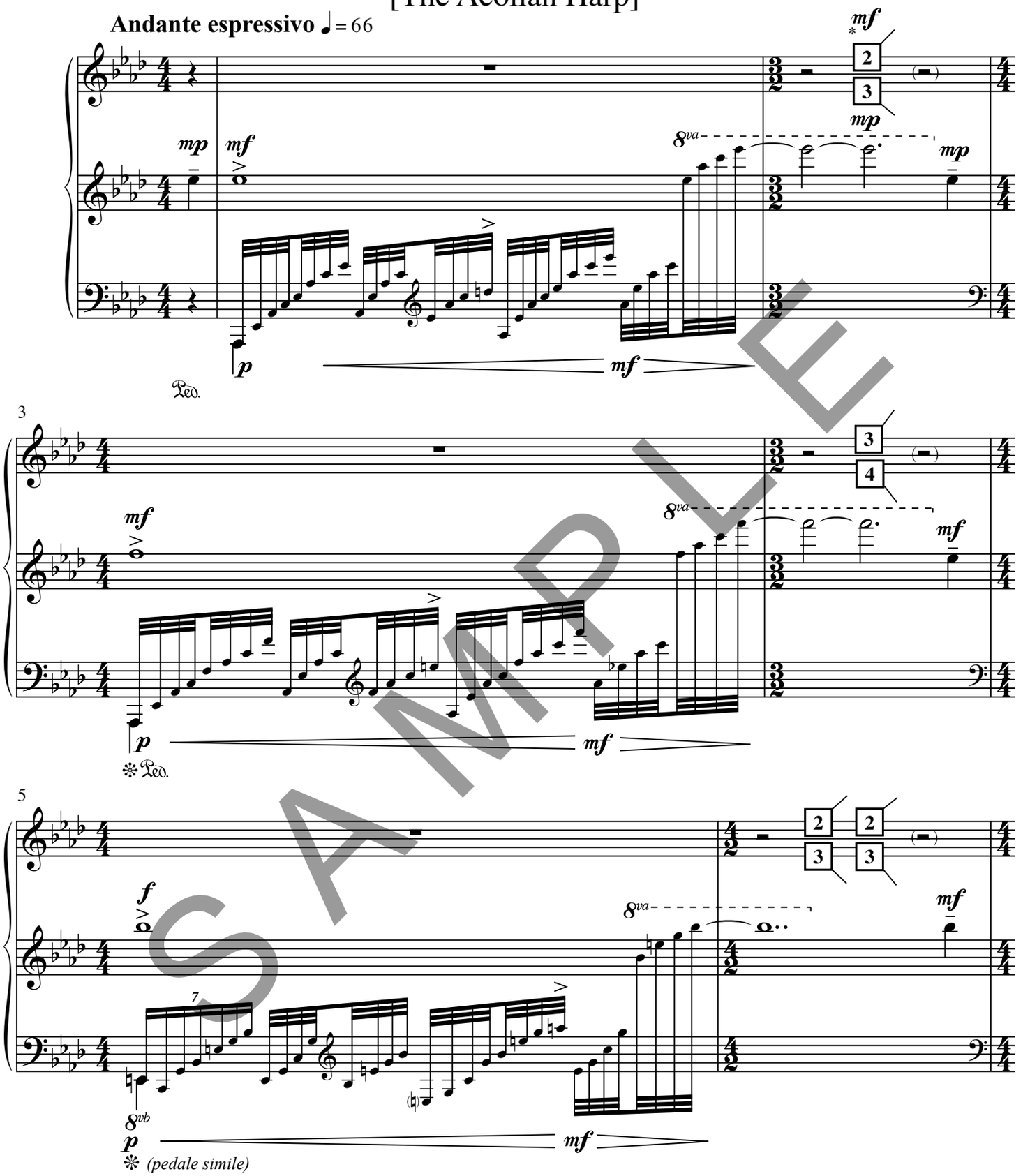
SAMPLE


8va
58
60
62
64
poco rit.
66
a tempo
(l.h.)
(l.h.)
p
mp
p
mp
(← Ped. →)
68
(l.h.)
(l.h.)
p
mp
p
mp
70
(no rit.)
(l.h.)
8va
p
mp
p
[2' 00"]

SAMPLE

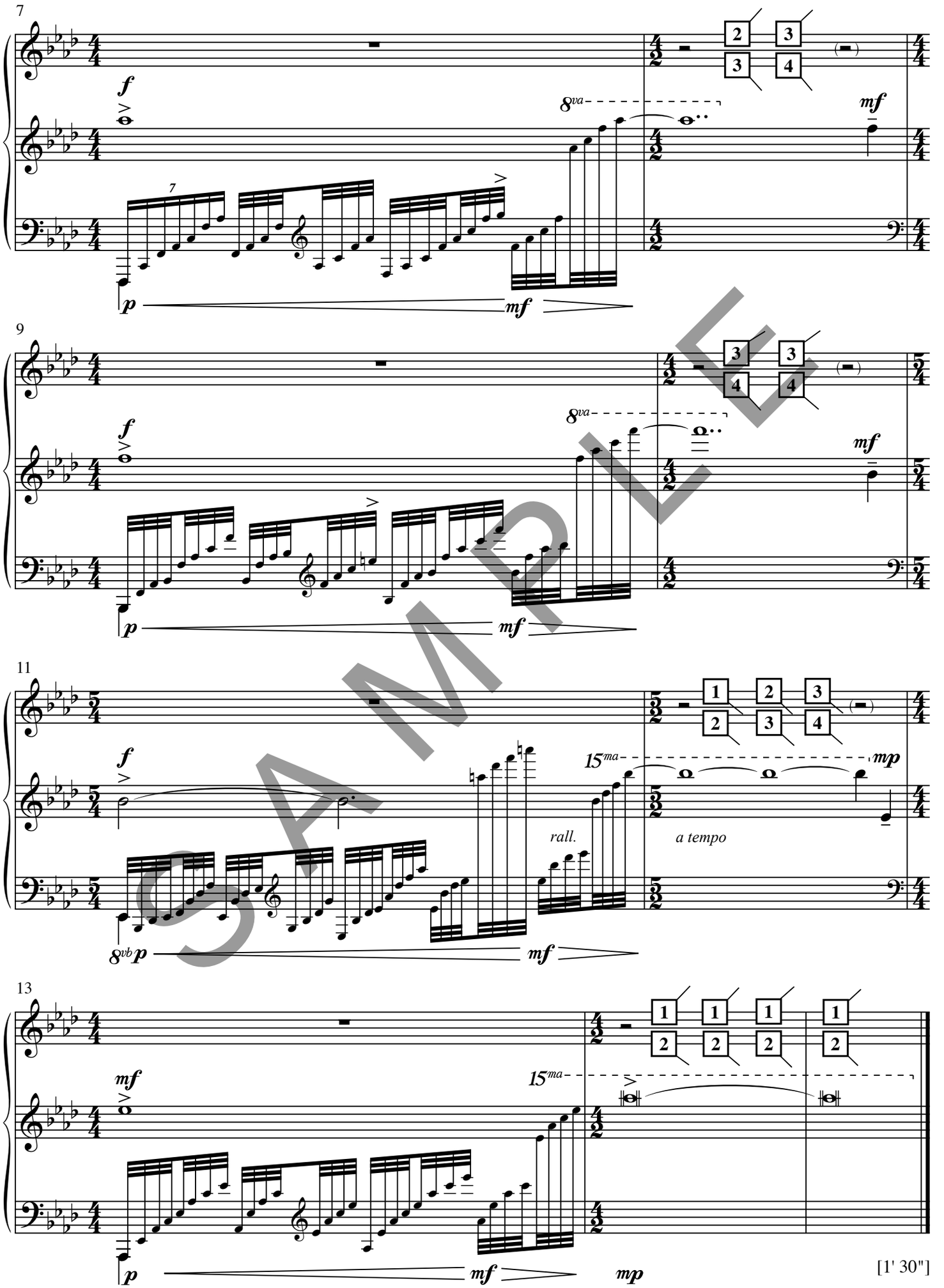
No. 17 - A♭ Major

[The Aeolian Harp]



SAMPLE

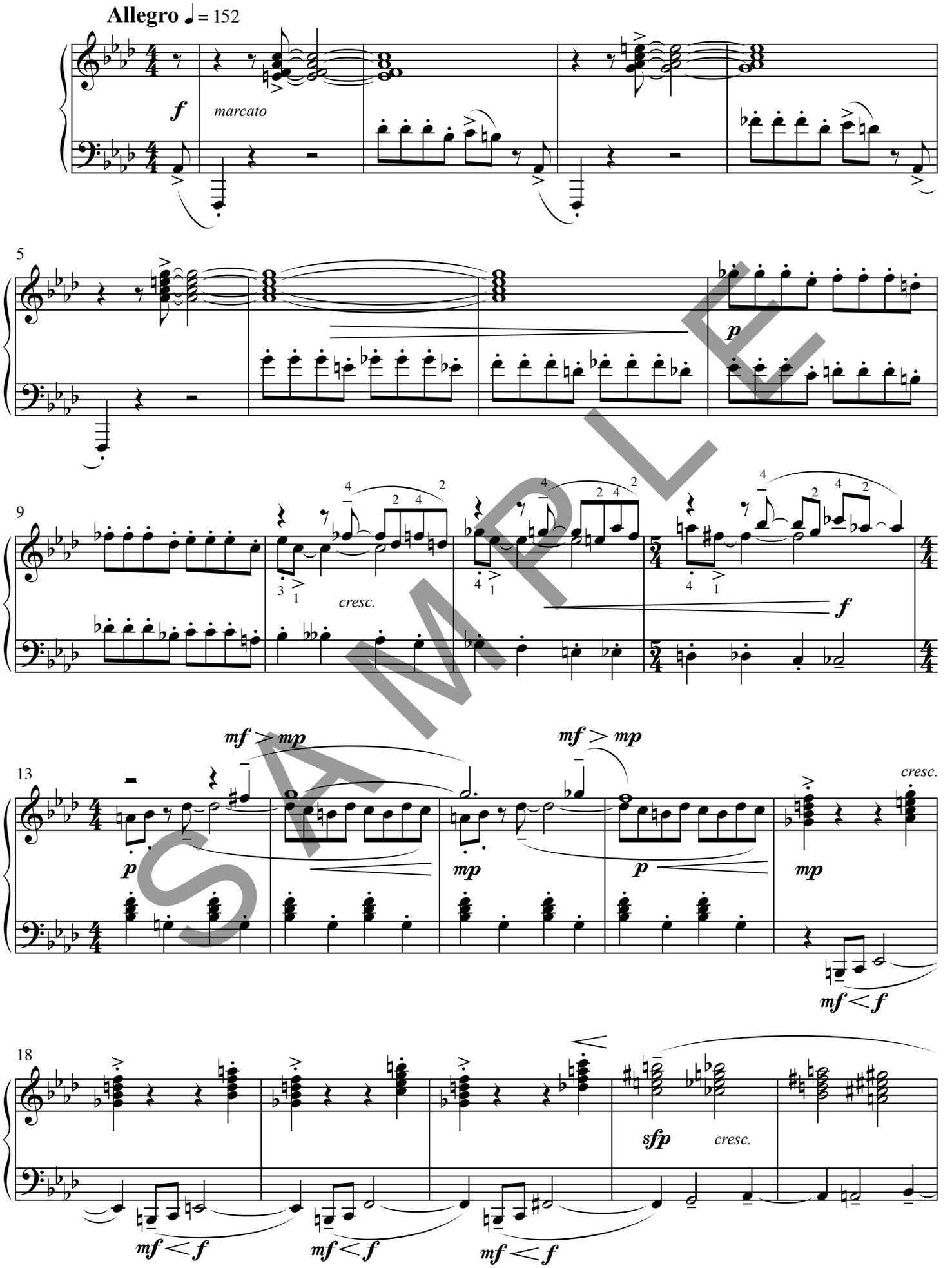
*The harmonic design of this Prelude is modelled directly on Chopin's A Flat Major Etude, Opus 25, No. 1 and is really a tribute to Chopin's inspiration and genius. This Chopin Etude has been nick-named, "The Aeolian Harp," and the reimagining provided here actually adds harp-like gestures strummed with the back of the hand between each short melodic statement. The numbers refer to the division of the inside the piano into four ranges moving from high (Number 1) to low (Number 4). On many grand pianos these areas are created by the cast iron frame. The lines from the numbered boxes indicate the direction to strum the strings and usually move in contrary motion between the hands. As it is always good to play with a musical balance between hands, it is suggested that the right hand strum a bit louder than the left as the lower strings are inherently more resonant.


7
f
8va
mf
p
mf
9
f
8va
mf
p
mf
11
f
15ma
mp
rall.
a tempo
8vb p
mf
13
mf
15ma
p
mf
mp

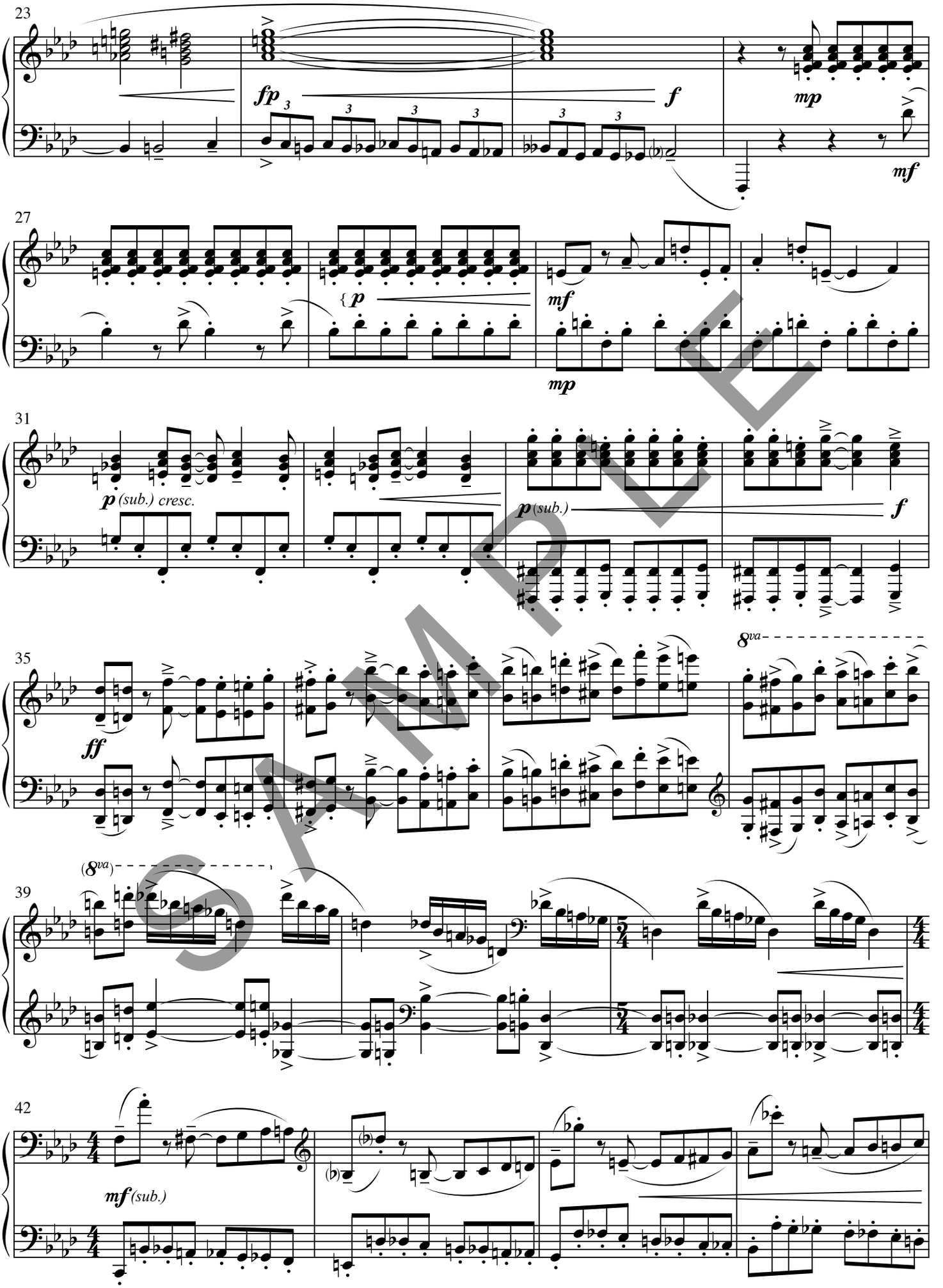
SAMPLE

[1' 30"]

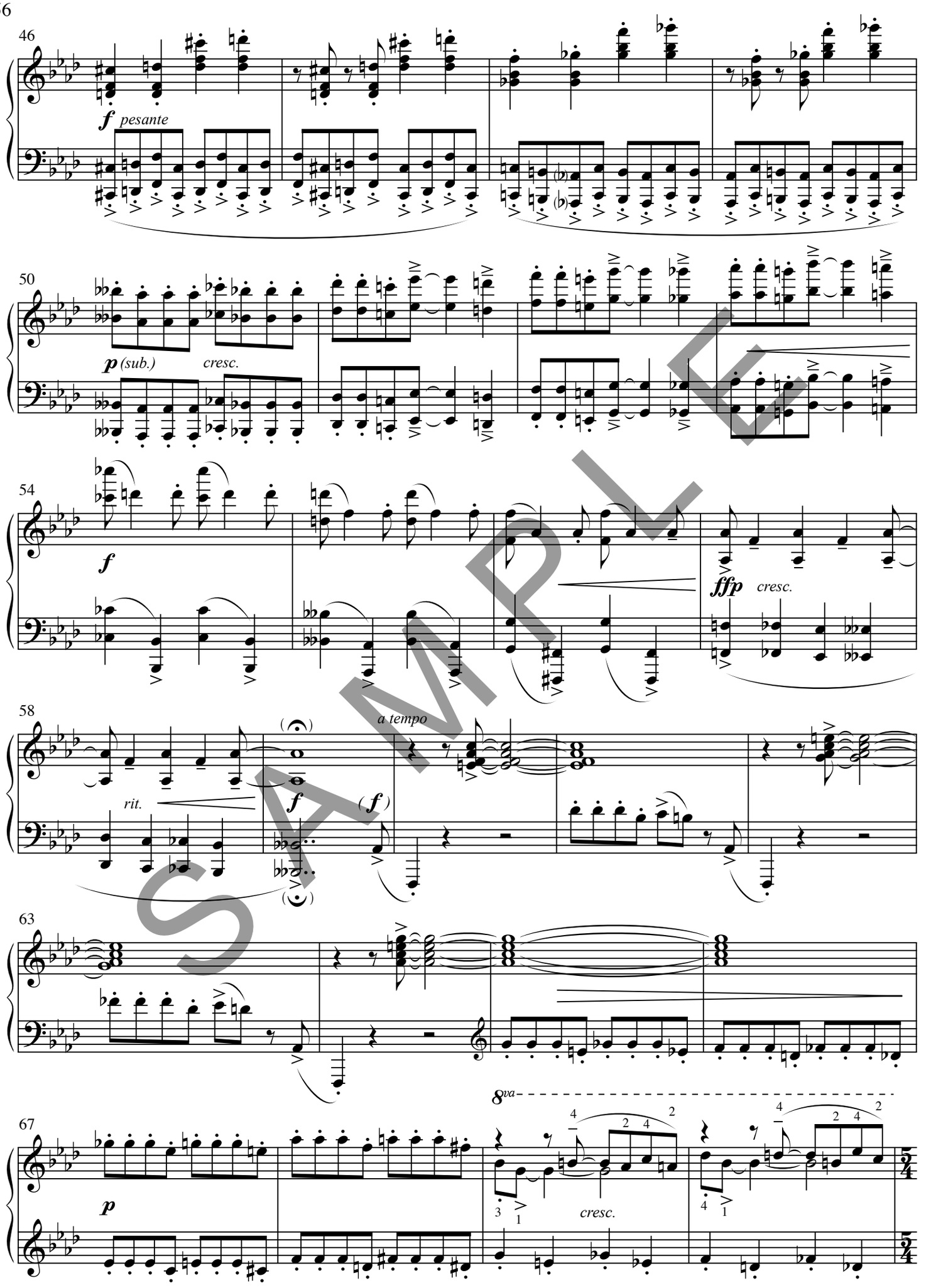
No. 18 - F Minor



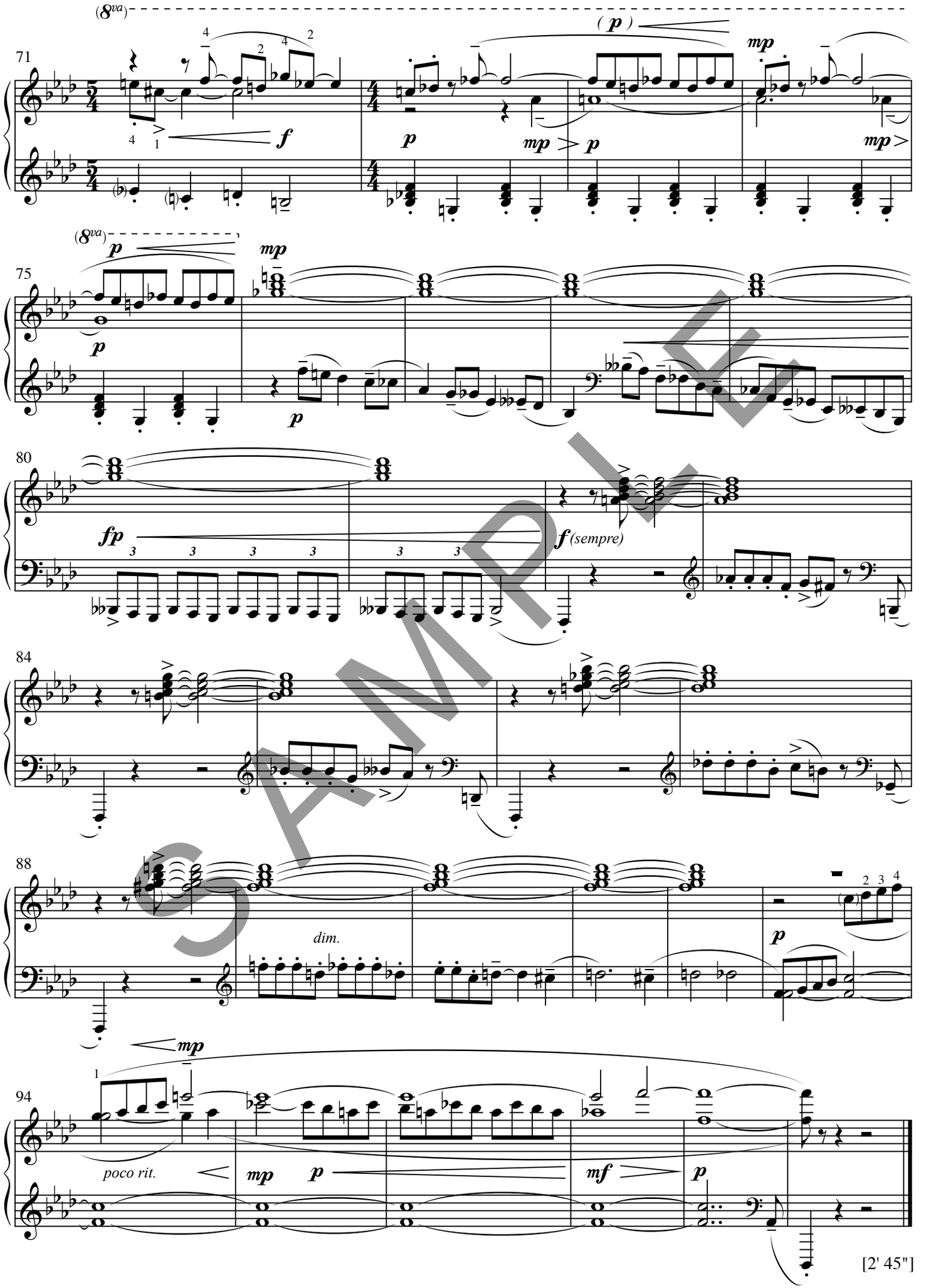
SAMPLE


23
fp
f
mp
mf
27
p
mf
mp
31
p (sub.) cresc.
p (sub.)
f
35
ff
8va
(8va)
39
42
mf (sub.)

SAMPLE


46
f pesante
50
p (sub.)
cresc.
54
f
ffp
cresc.
58
a tempo
rit.
f
(f)
63
67
8va
p
cresc.
5/4

SAMPLE

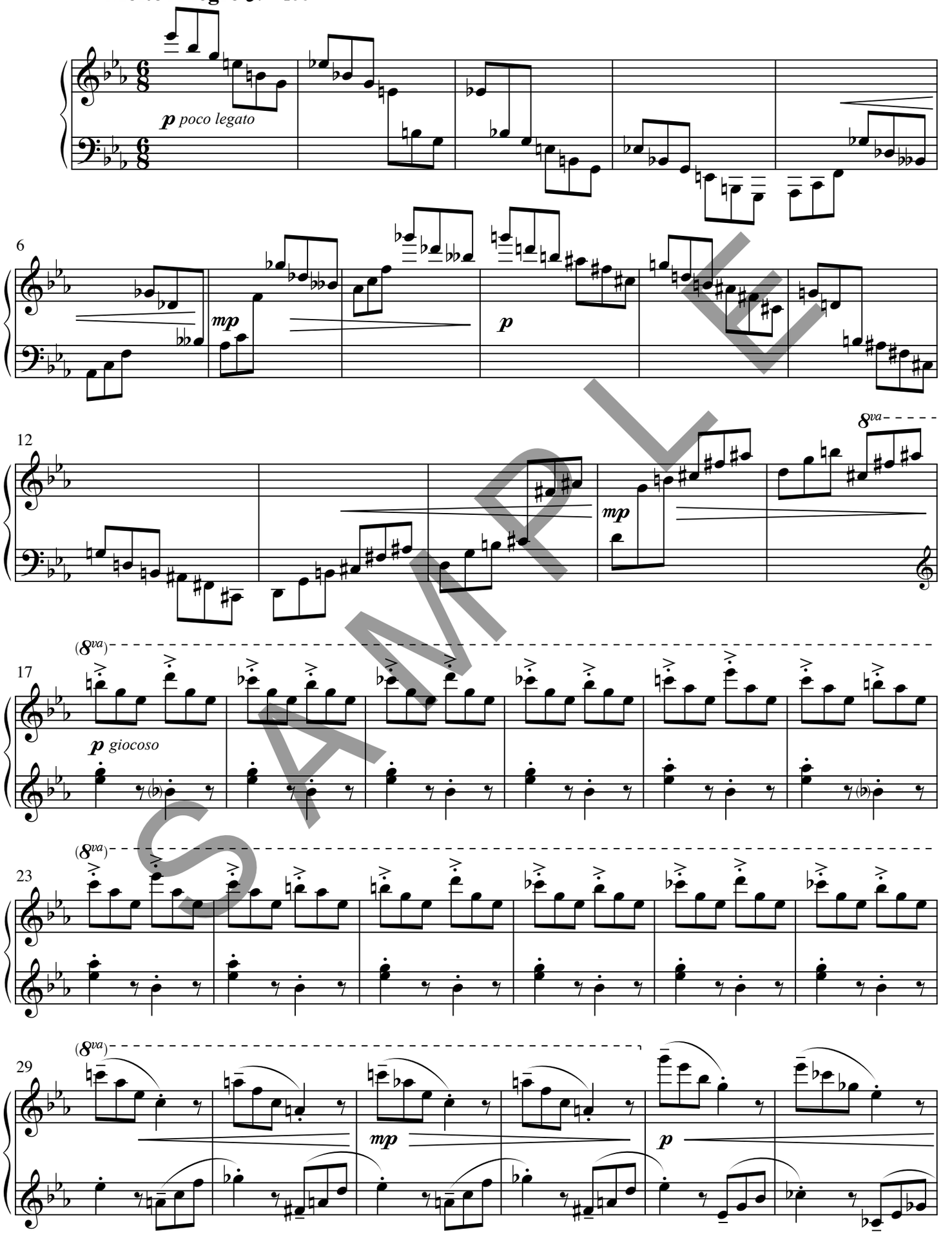


SAMPLE

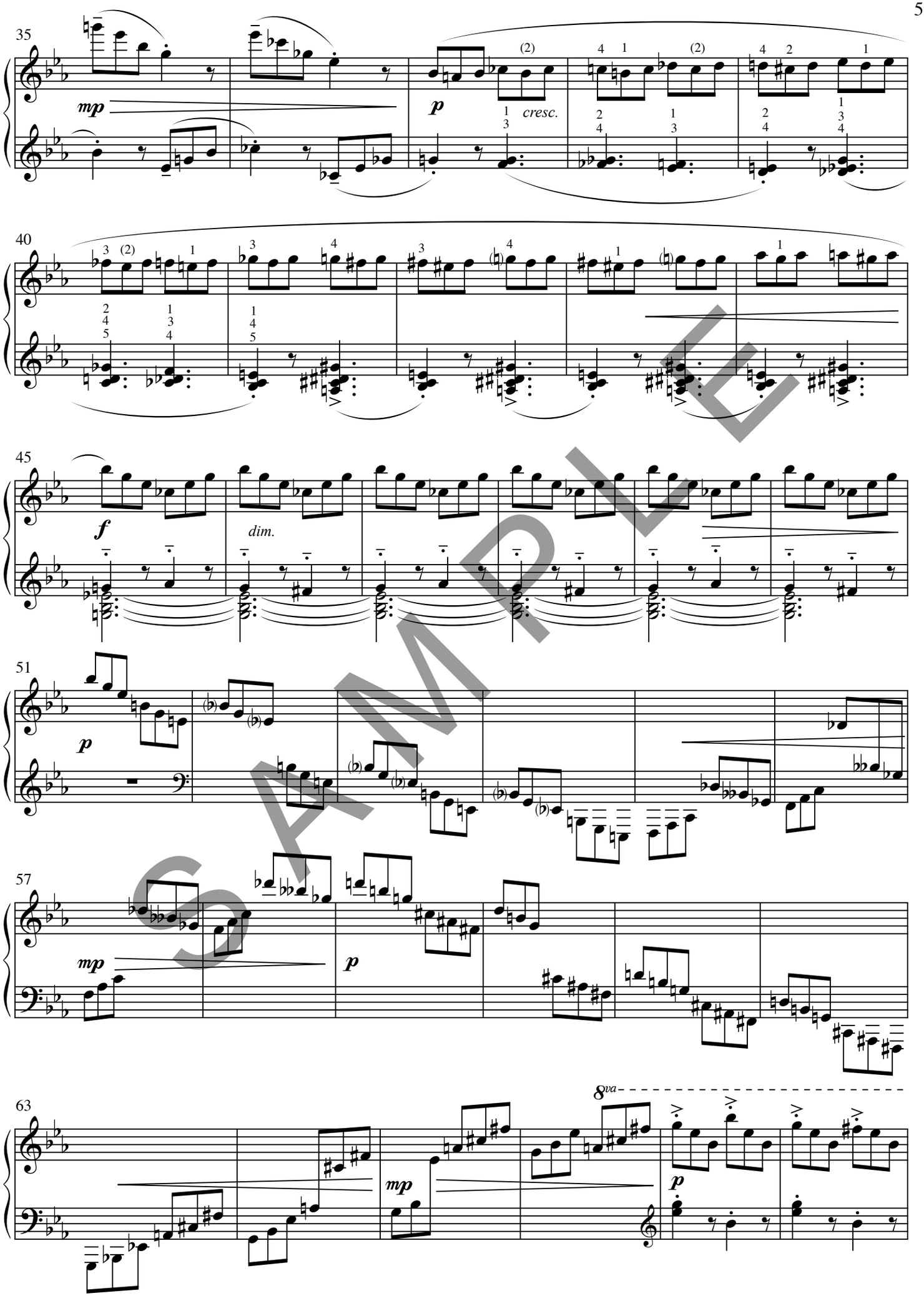
No. 19 - E♭ Major

[Deadlines]

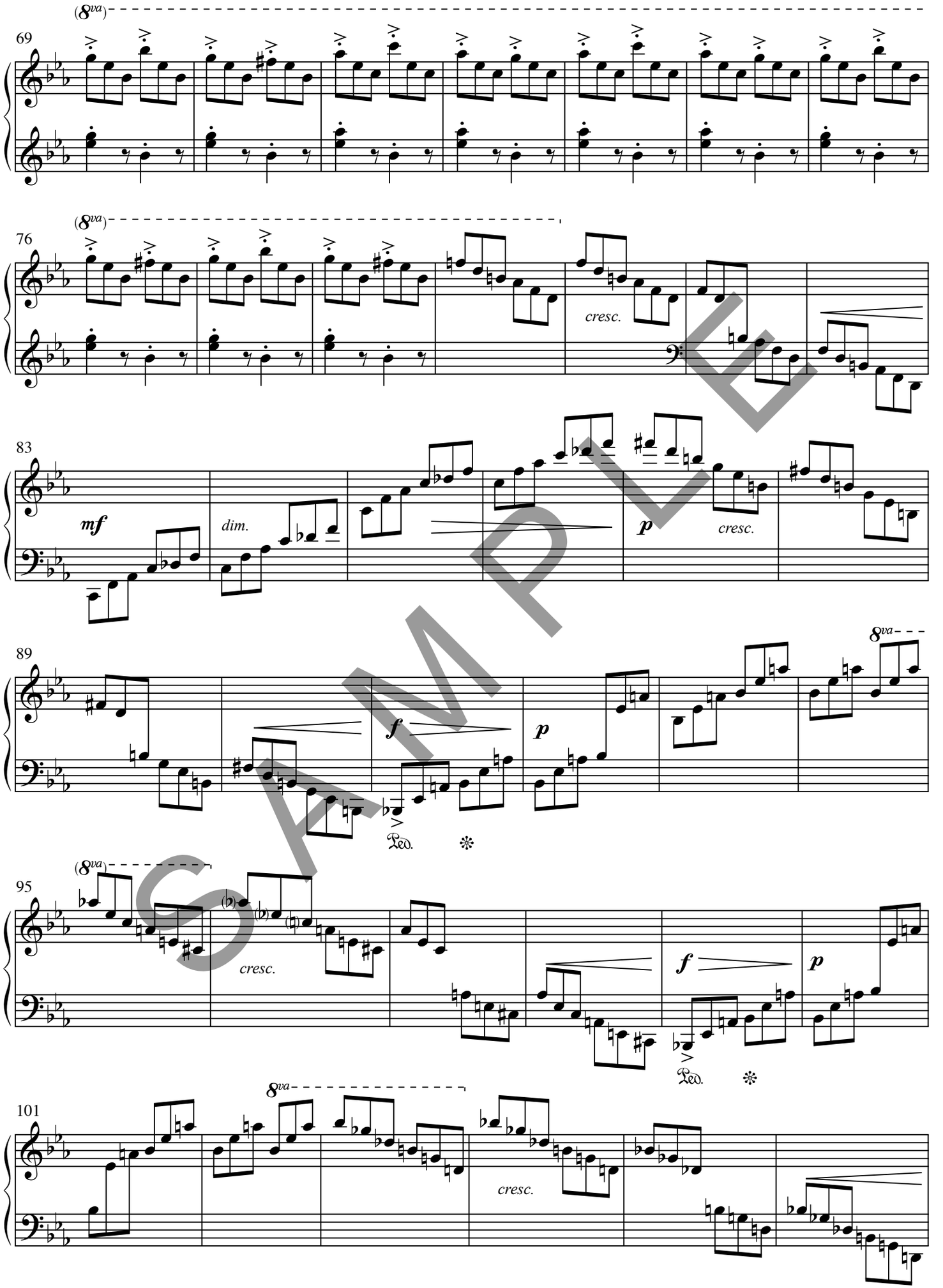
Molto Allegro ♩. = 188



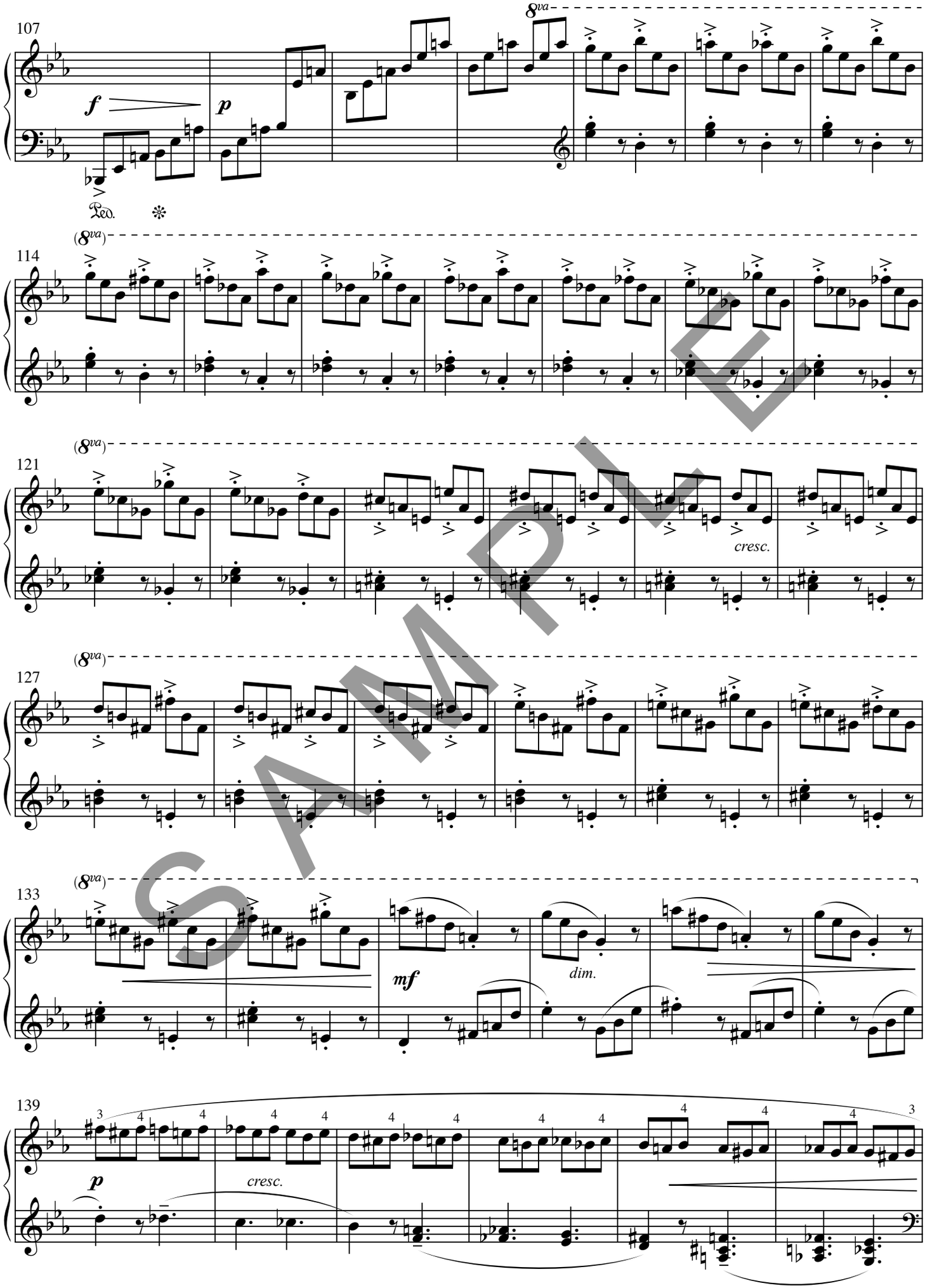
SAMPLE



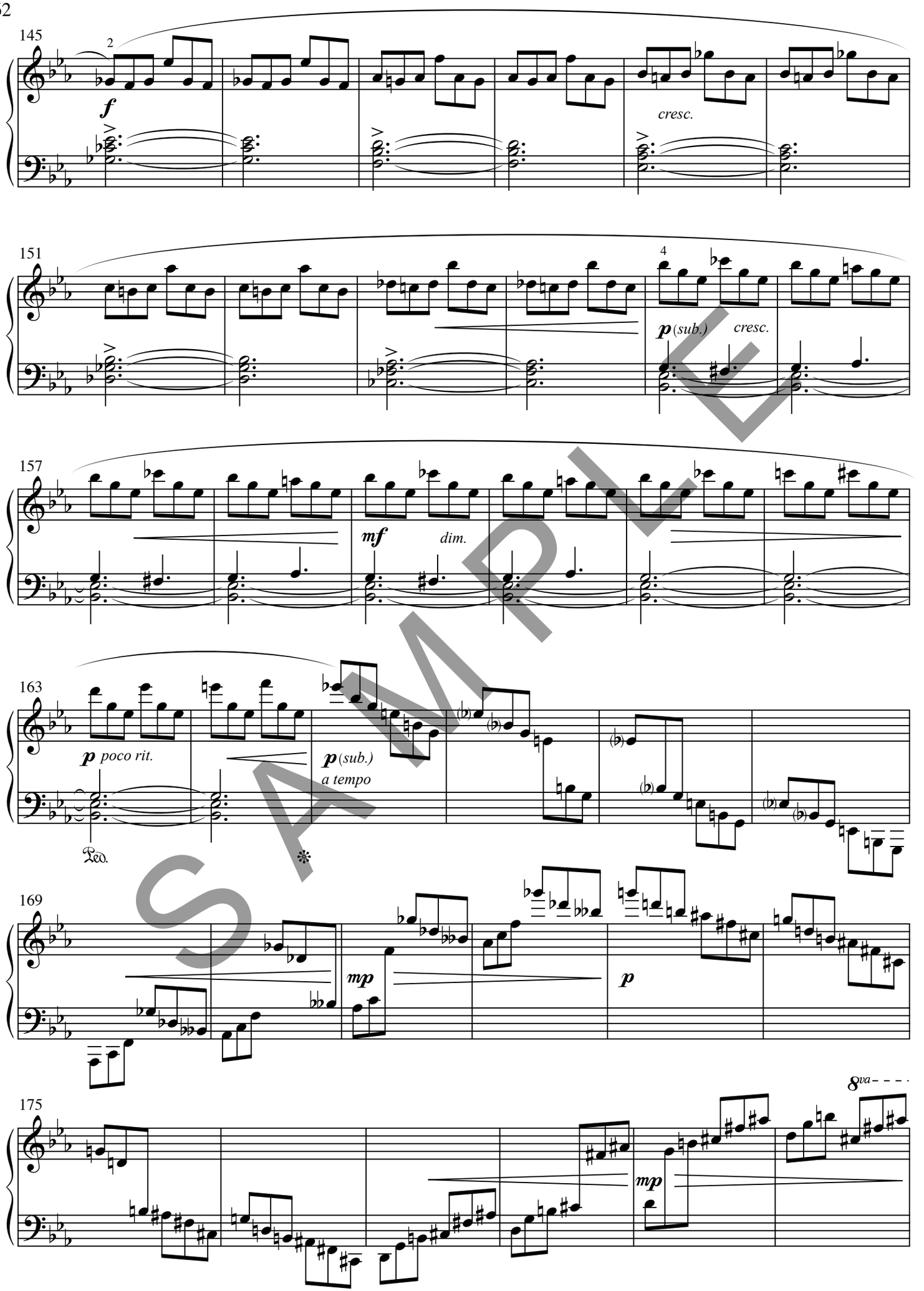
SAMPLE


(8va)
69
(8va)
76
cresc.
83
mf
dim.
p
cresc.
89
8va
f
p
Ped.
(8va)
95
cresc.
f
p
Ped.
8va
101
cresc.

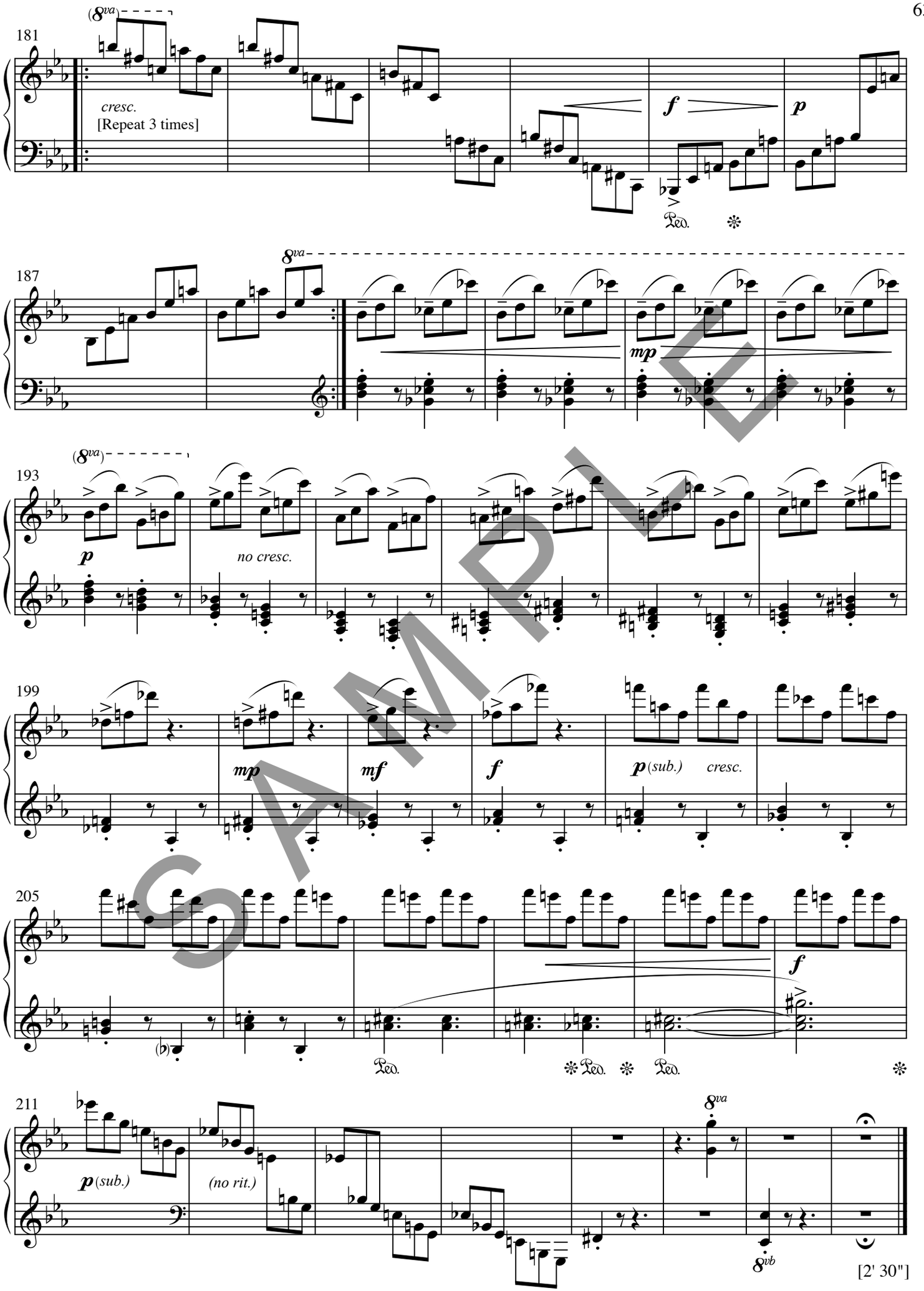
SAMPLE


107
8va
f
p
Ped.
(8va)
114
(8va)
121
cresc.
(8va)
127
(8va)
133
mf
dim.
139
p
cresc.

SAMPLE

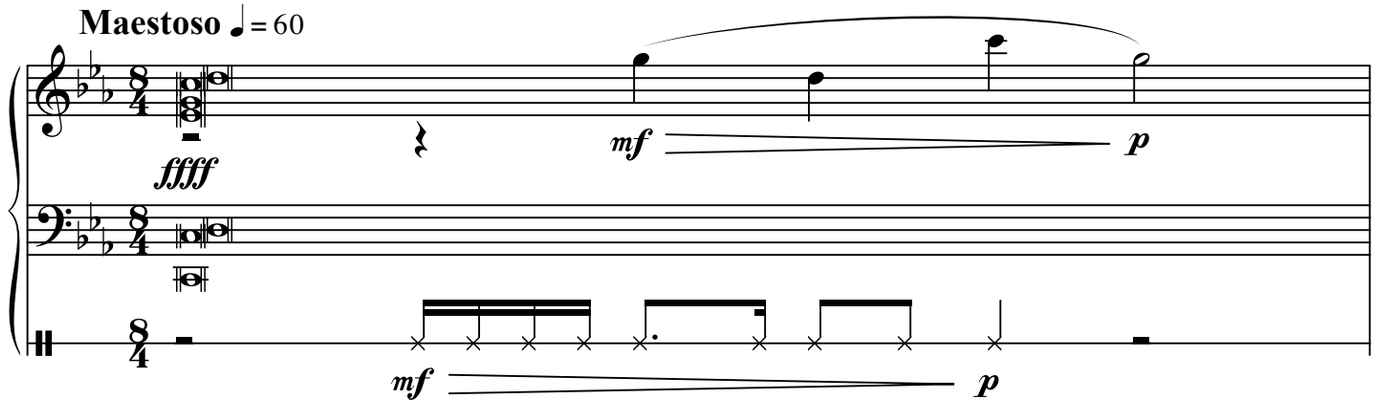

145
2
f
cresc.
151
4
p (sub.)
cresc.
157
mf
dim.
163
p poco rit.
p (sub.)
a tempo
Ped.
169
mp
p
175
8va
mp

SAMPLE


181
(8va)
cresc.
[Repeat 3 times]
f
p
Ped.
187
8va
mp
193
(8va)
p
no cresc.
199
mp
mf
f
p (sub.)
cresc.
205
f
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
211
p (sub.)
(no rit.)
8va
8vb
[2' 30"]

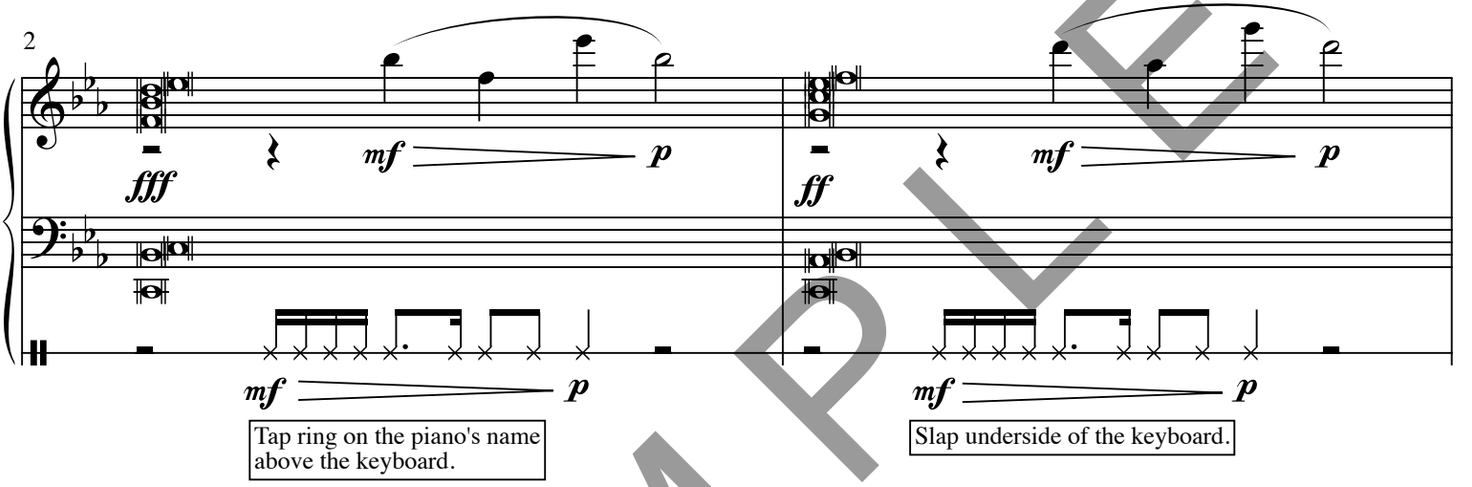
SAMPLE

No. 20 - C Minor



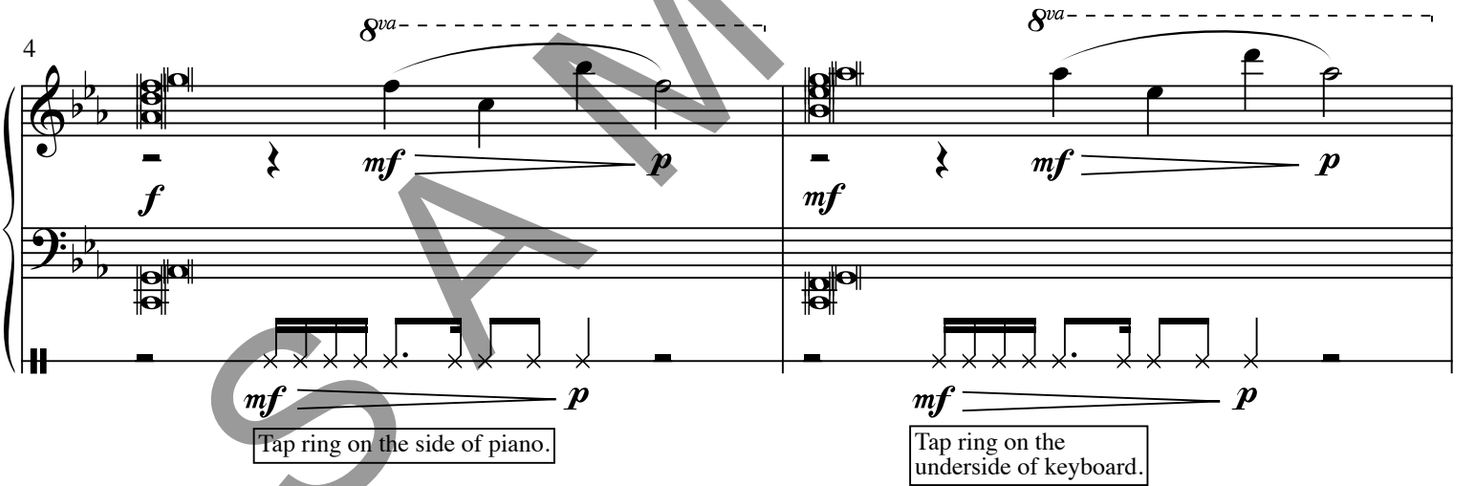
* Tap ring on top of fallboard.

*The use of a ring for tapping is optional but does provide great contrast to the alternative of tapping with the knuckles.



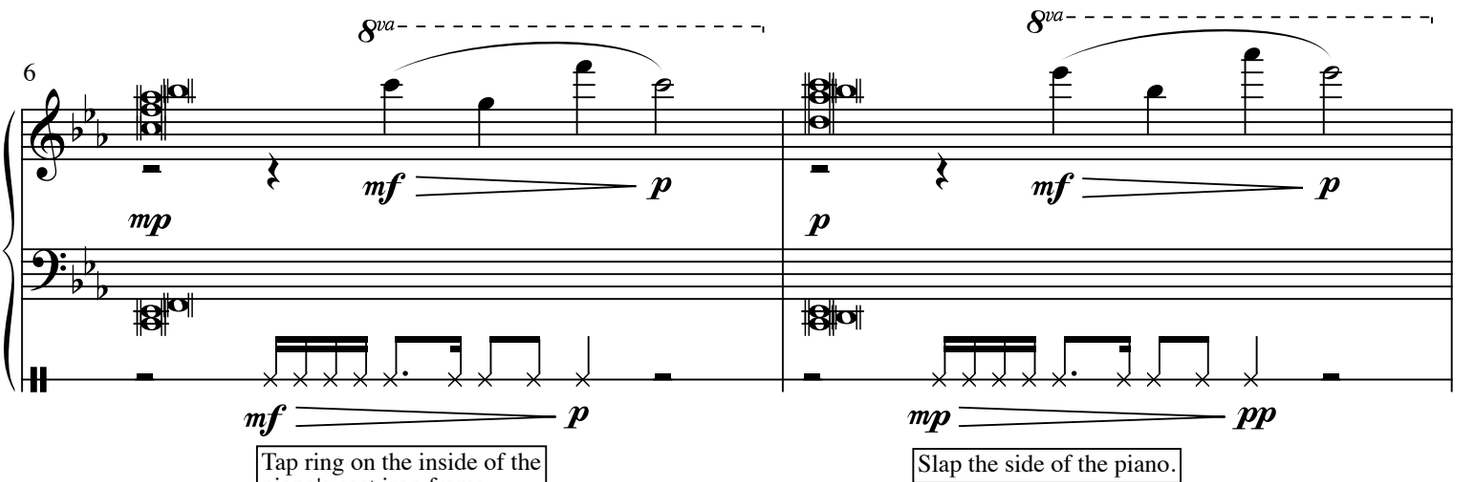
Tap ring on the piano's name above the keyboard.

Slap underside of the keyboard.



Tap ring on the side of piano.

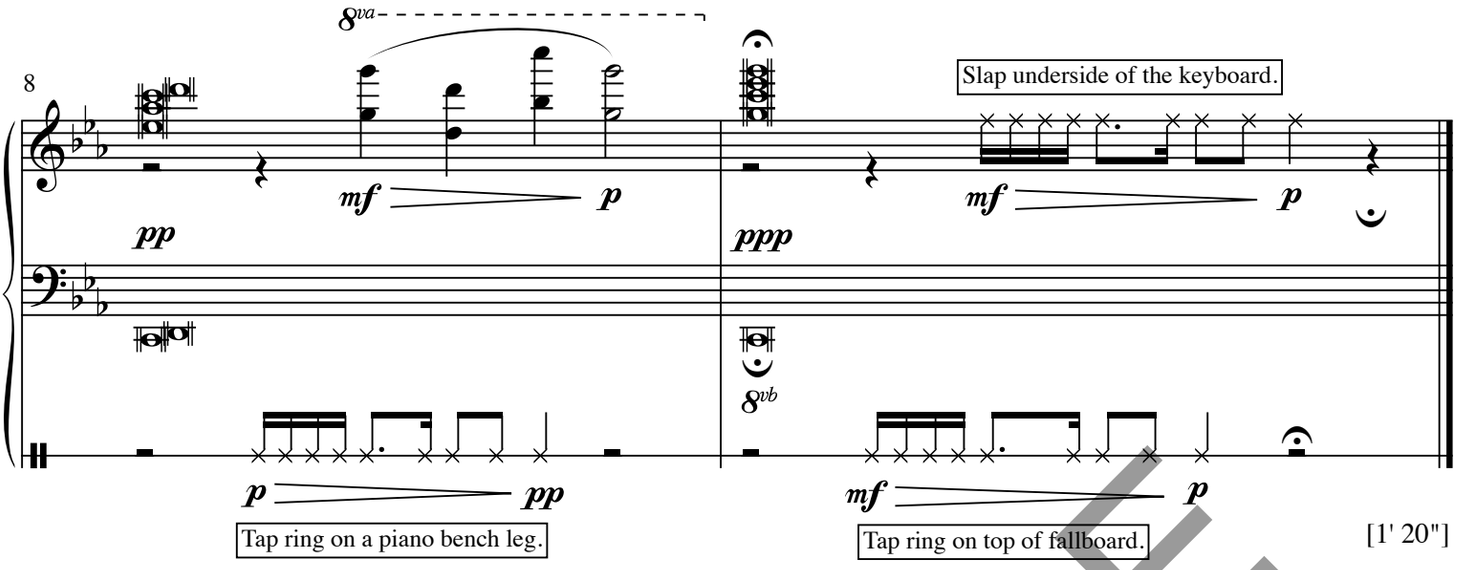
Tap ring on the underside of keyboard.



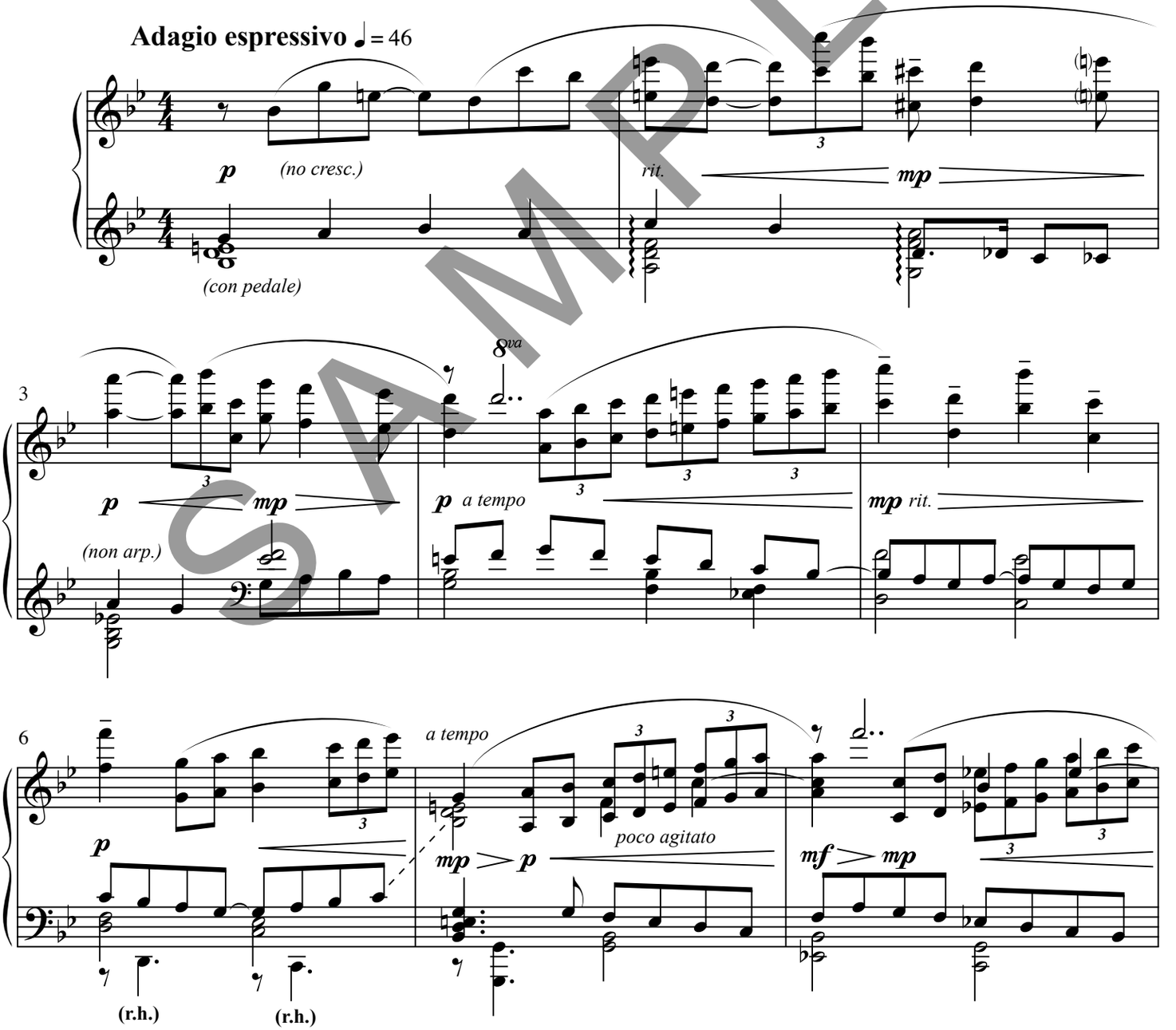
Tap ring on the inside of the piano's cast iron frame.

Slap the side of the piano.

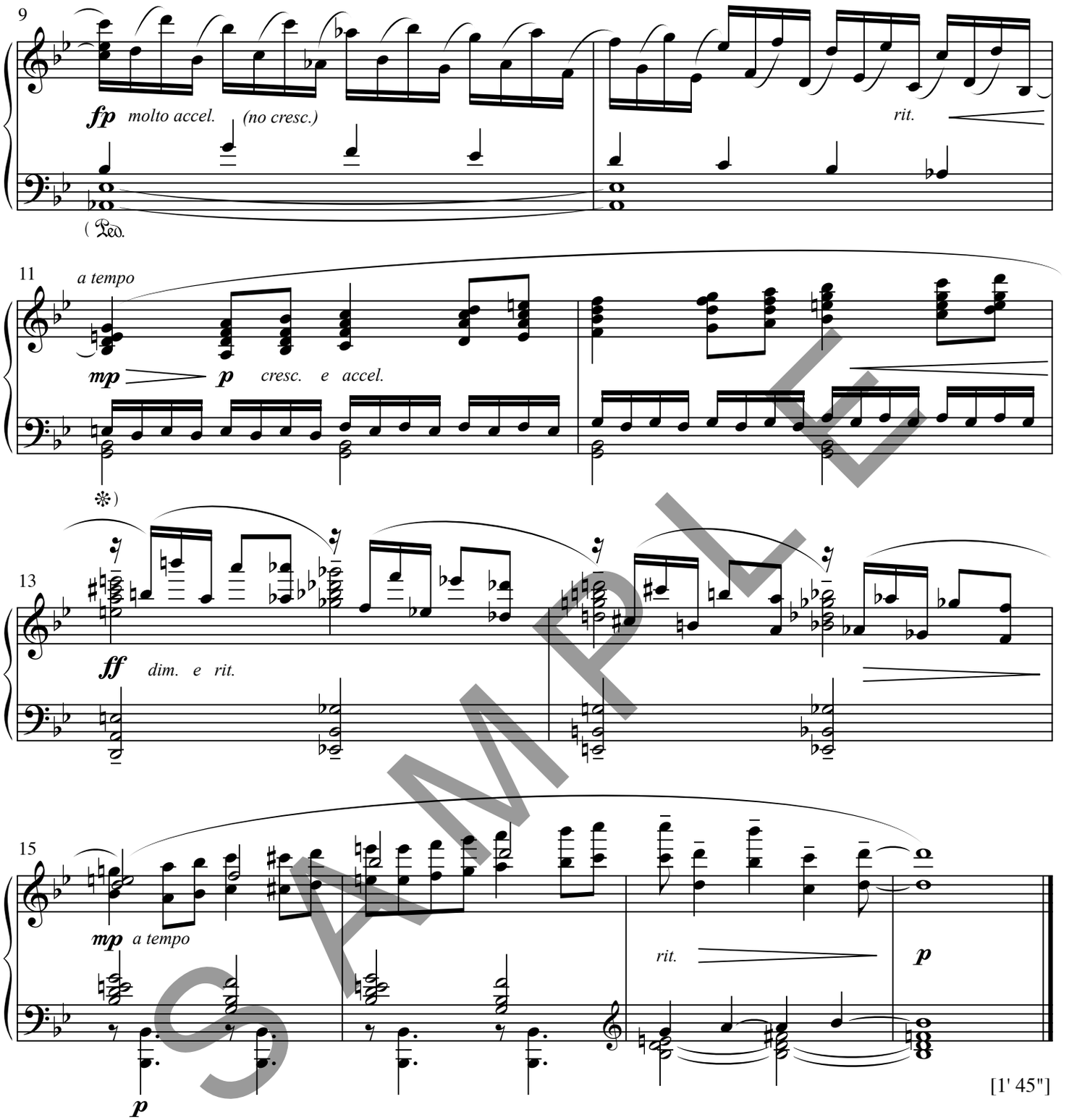
SAMPLE



No. 21 - B♭ Major

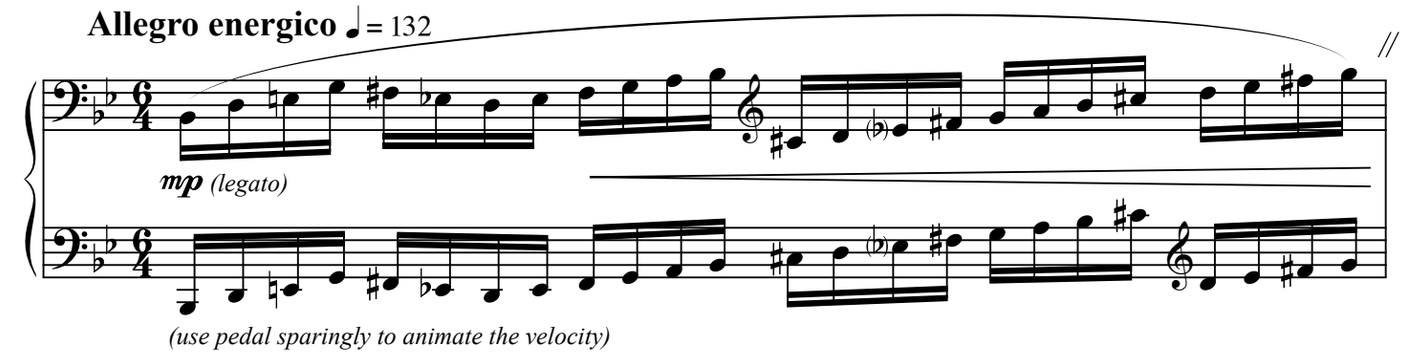


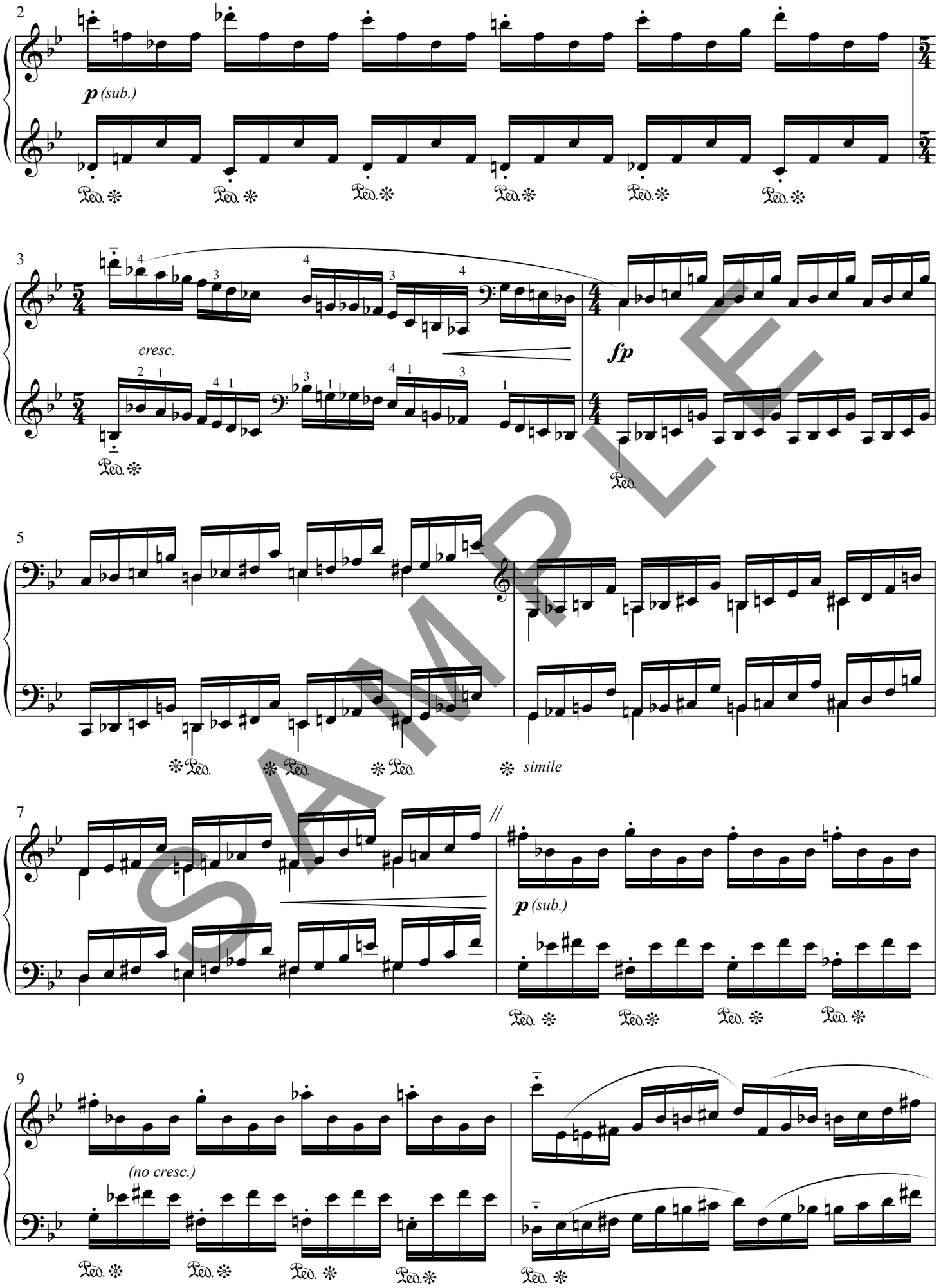
SAMPLE



SAMPLE

No. 22 - G Minor





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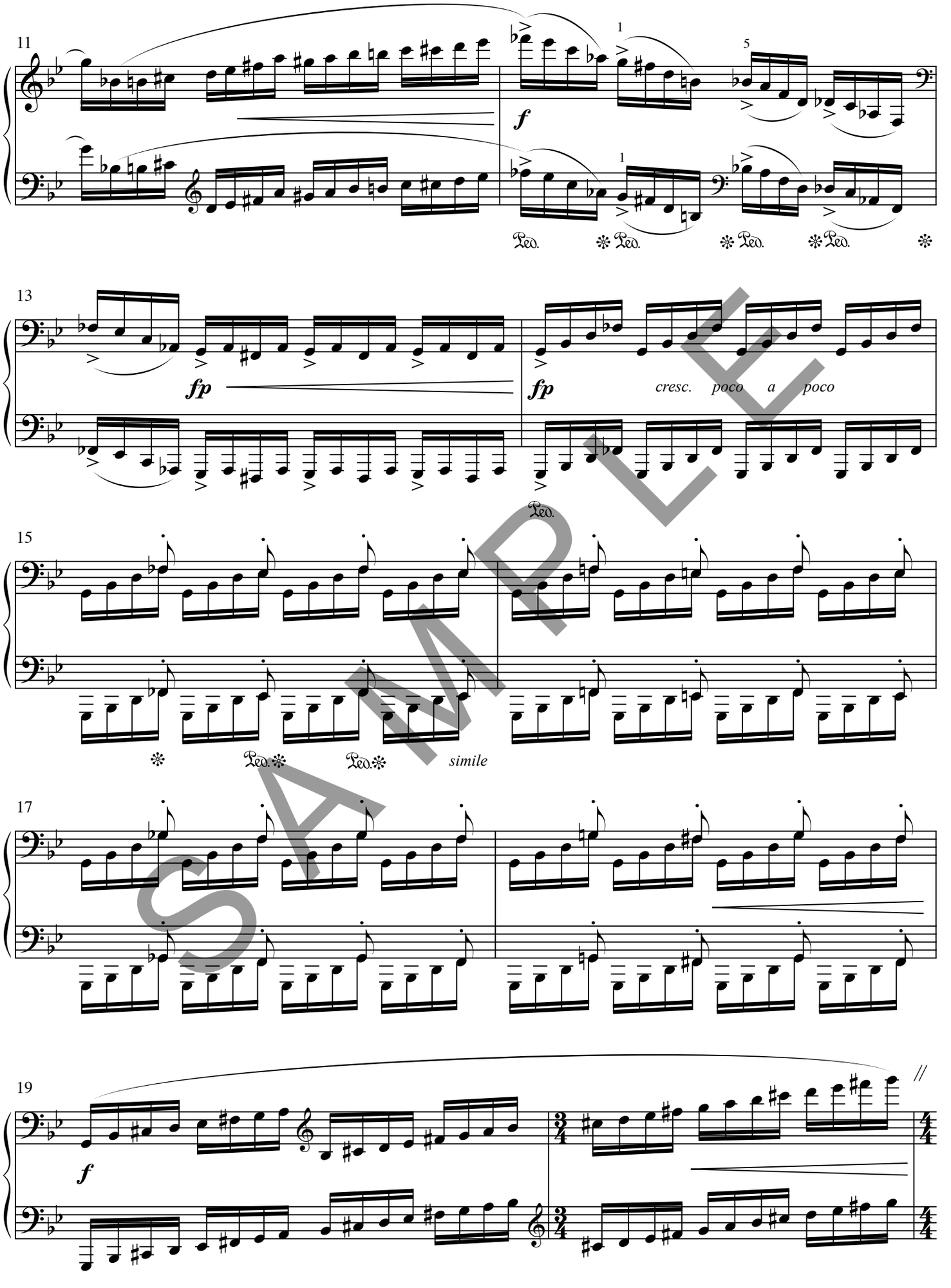

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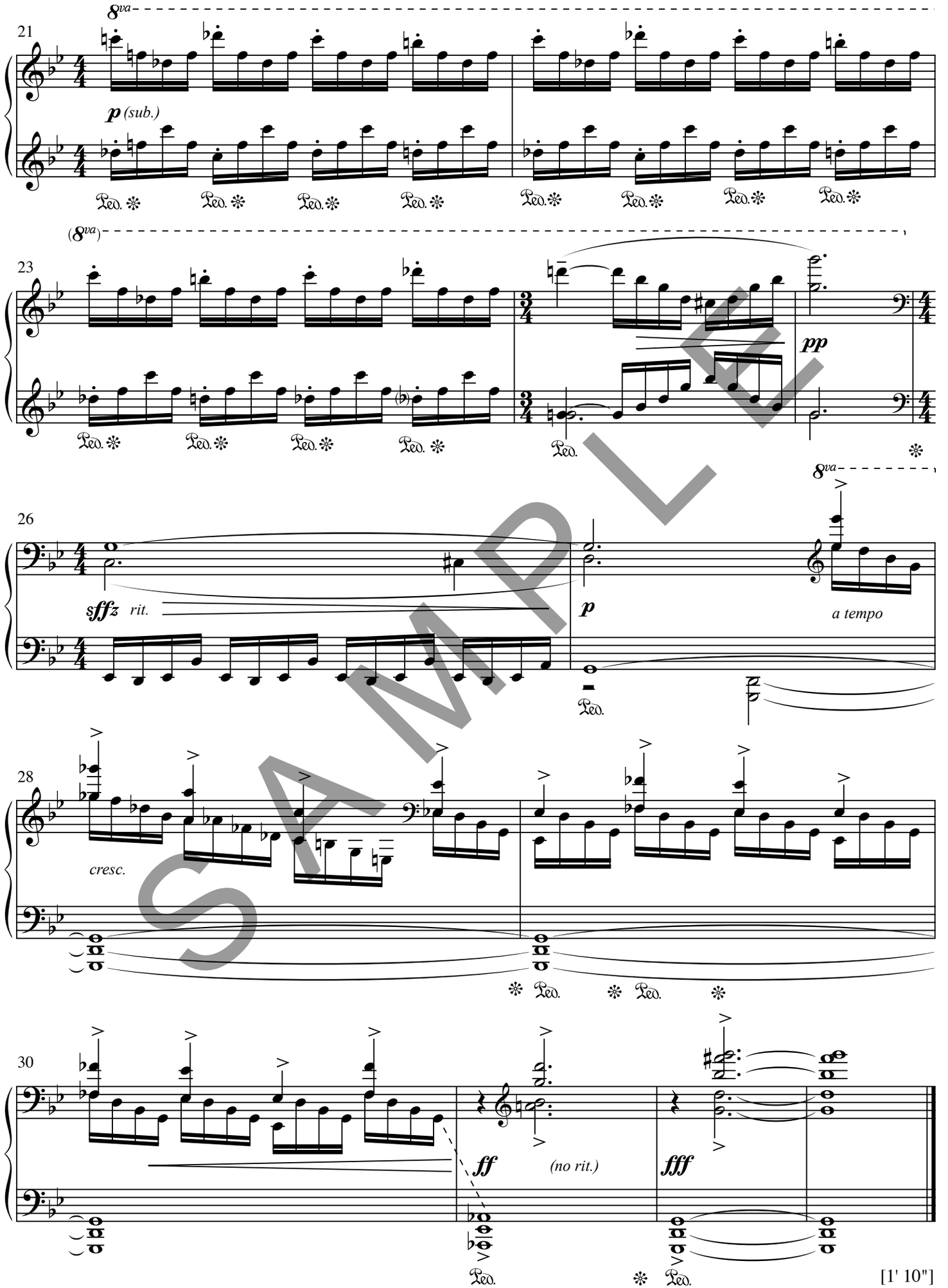
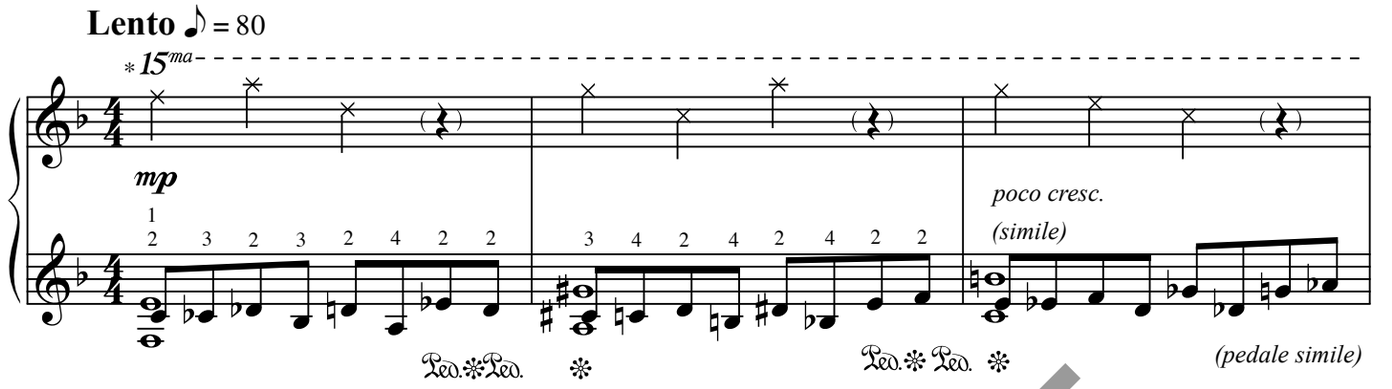

8va
21
p (sub.)
Ped.
(8va)
23
pp
26
sfffz rit.
p
8va
a tempo
28
cresc.
30
ff
(no rit.)
fff
[1' 10"]

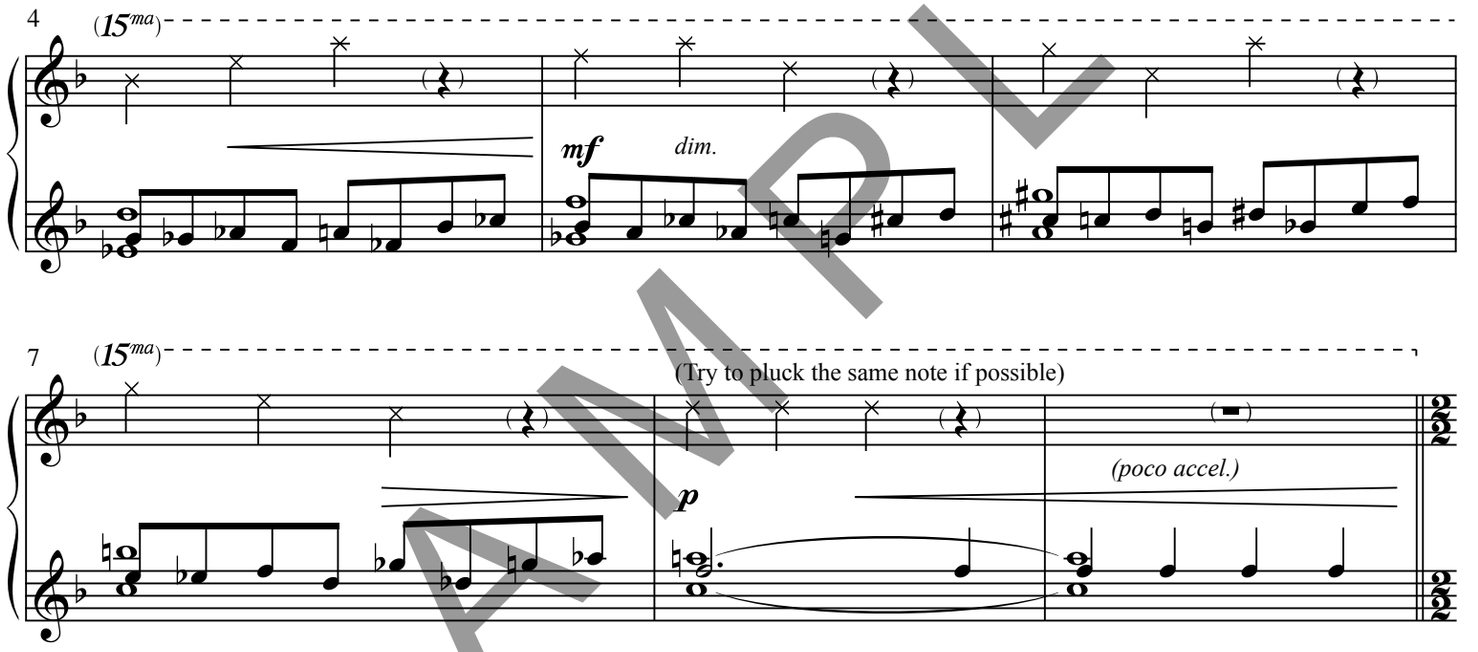
SAMPLE

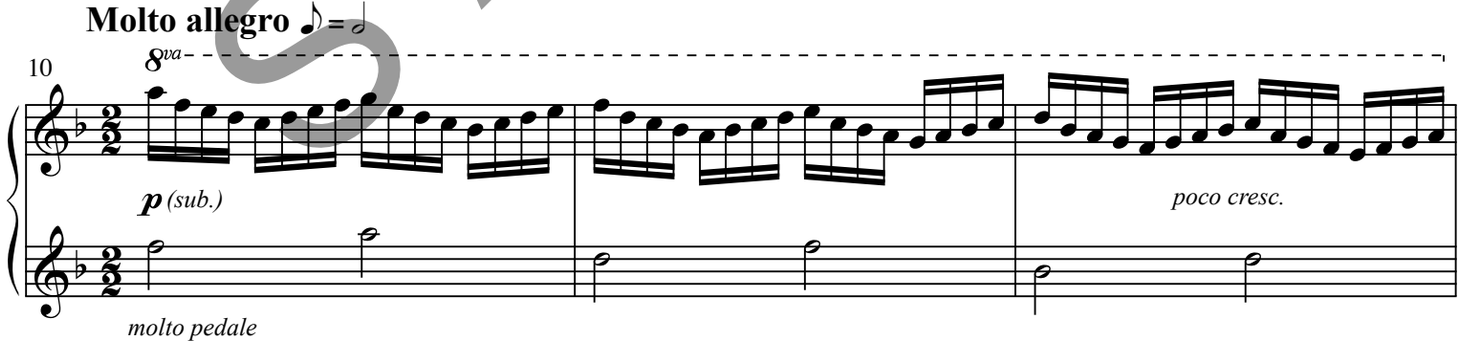
No. 23 - F Major

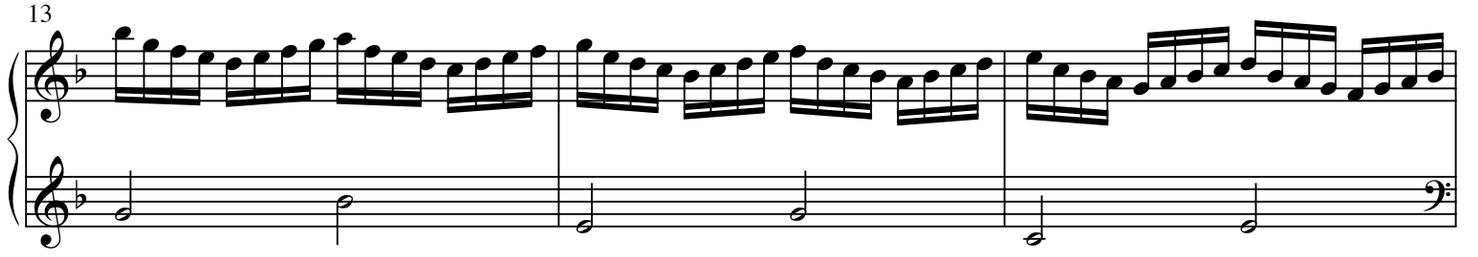
[Spring Thaw]



*Randomly pluck different strings inside the piano in the rhythm indicated with the right hand finger nails using the highest range of the piano. These strings do not have dampers and will resonate well. Do note that it is often difficult for the pianist to gauge how loud these plucked strings sound while seated at the piano and it is advisable to ask a listener to comment on the balance. If the inside of the piano is not accessible, high random notes can be played on the keyboard.







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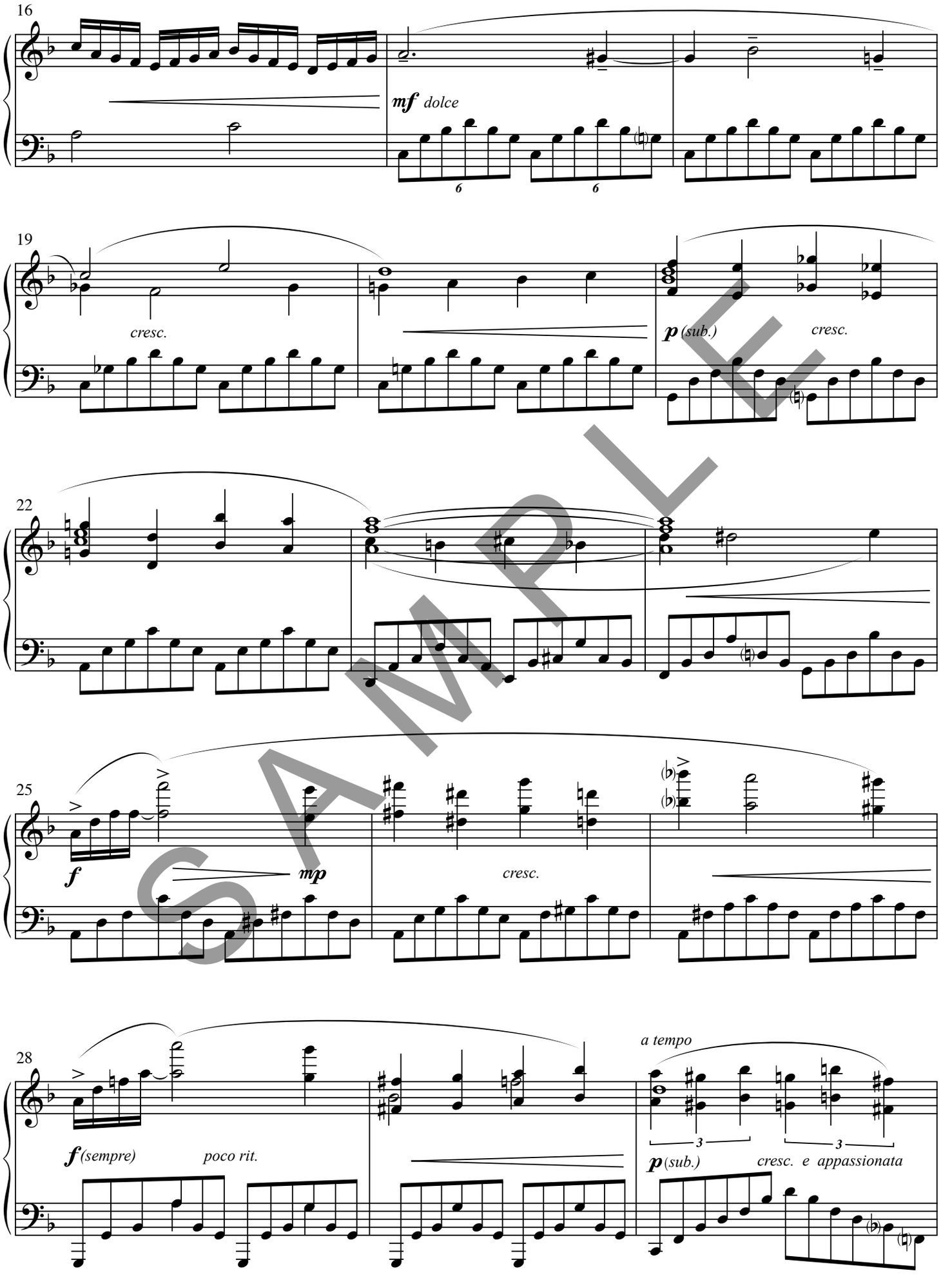
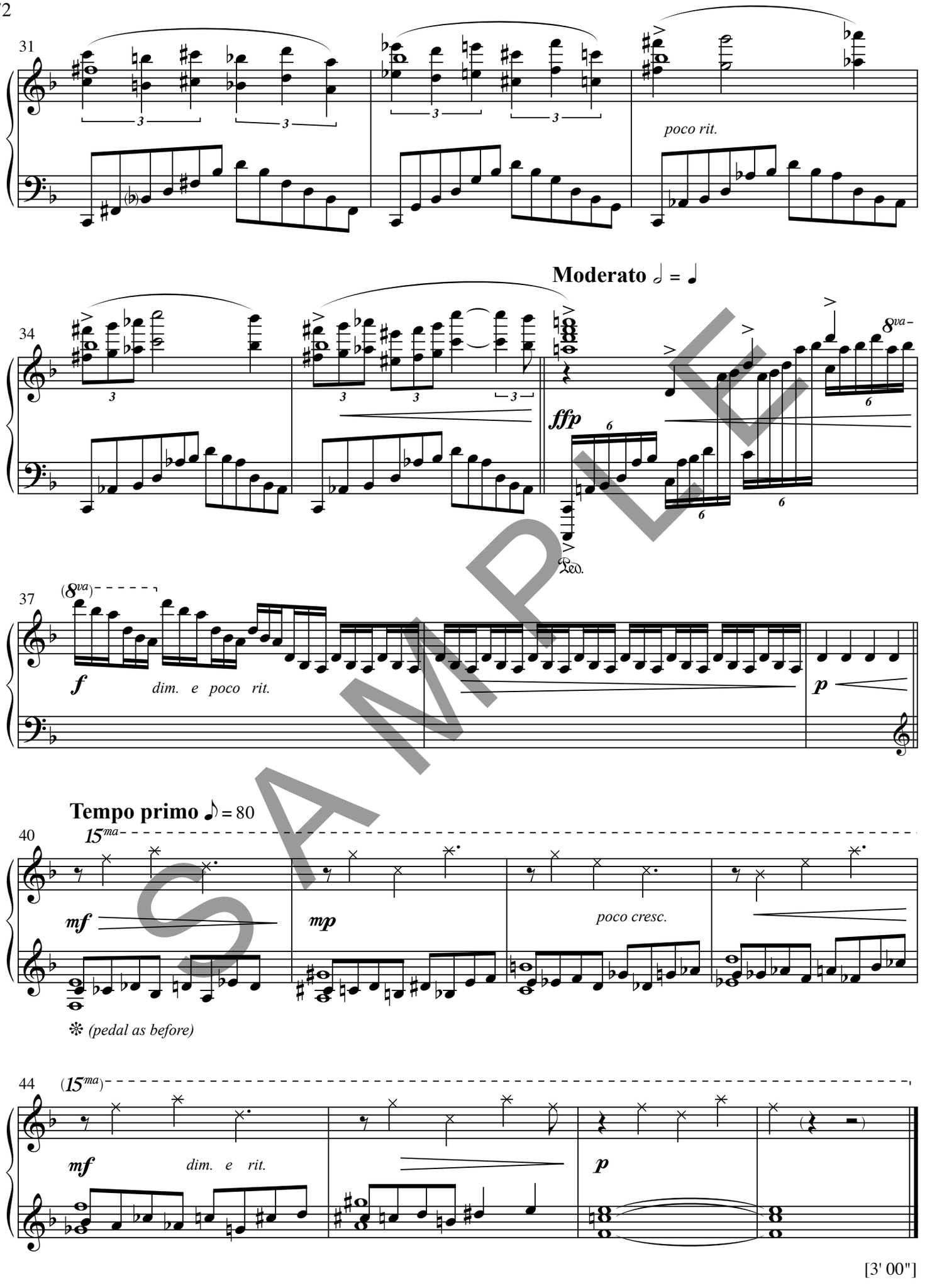

16
mf dolce
19
cresc.
p (sub.)
cresc.
22
25
f
mp
cresc.
28
f (sempre)
poco rit.
a tempo
p (sub.)
cresc. e appassionata

SAMPLE


31
poco rit.
Moderato ♩ = ♩
34
fff
Ped.
37
f
dim. e poco rit.
p
Tempo primo ♪ = 80
40
mf
mp
poco cresc.
(pedal as before)
44
mf
dim. e rit.
p

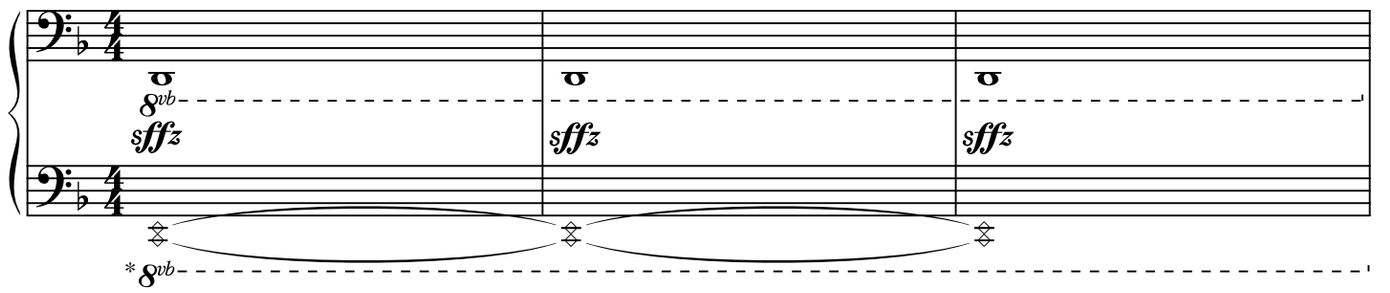
SAMPLE

[3' 00"]

Prelude No. 24 - D Minor

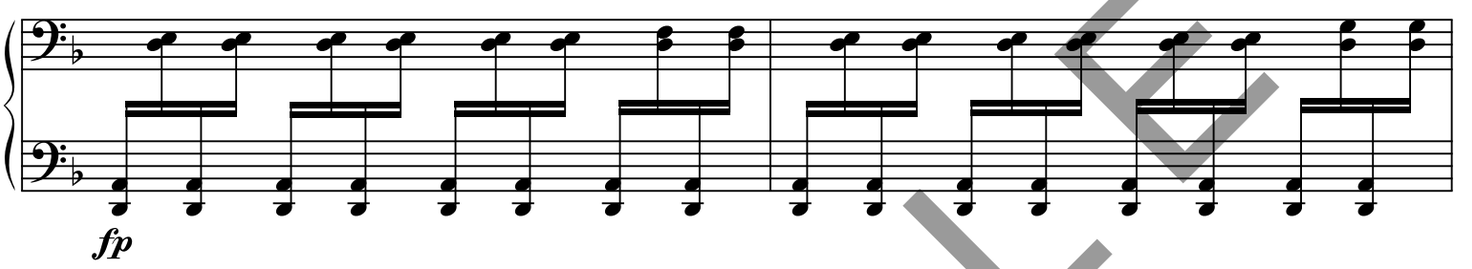
[Le Fini]

Poco allegro ♩ = 96



*Silently depress these keys first so that the RH does not inadvertently strike these notes while playing the low D.

4



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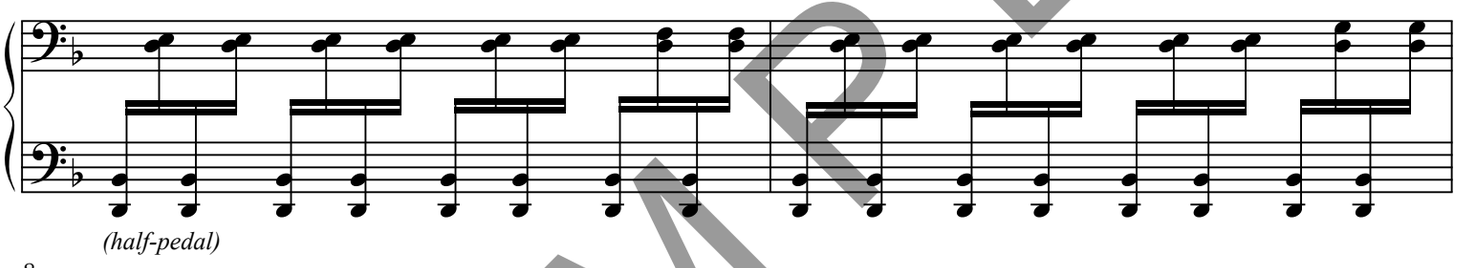

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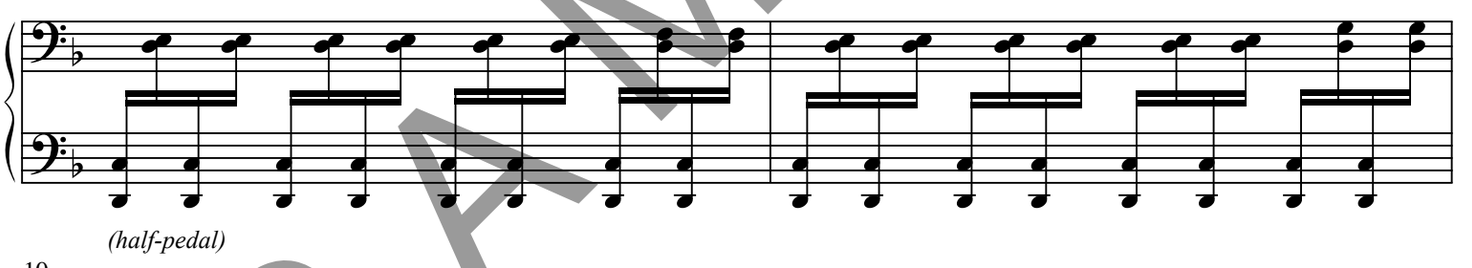

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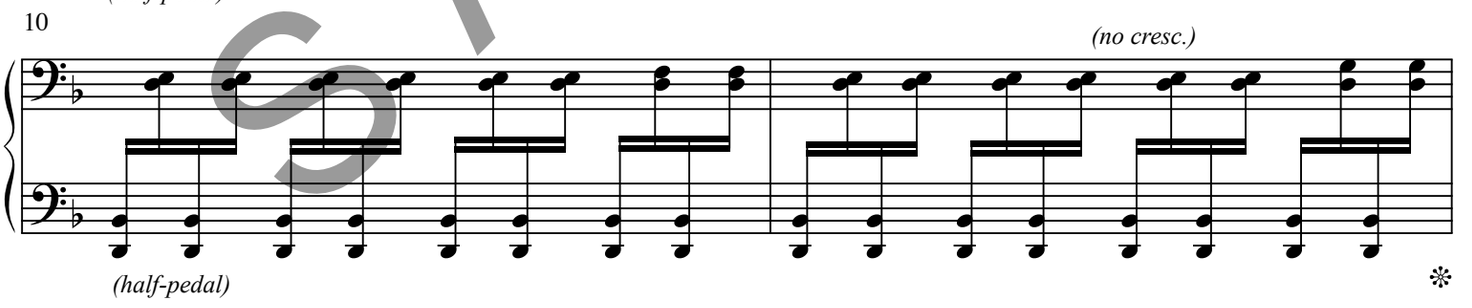
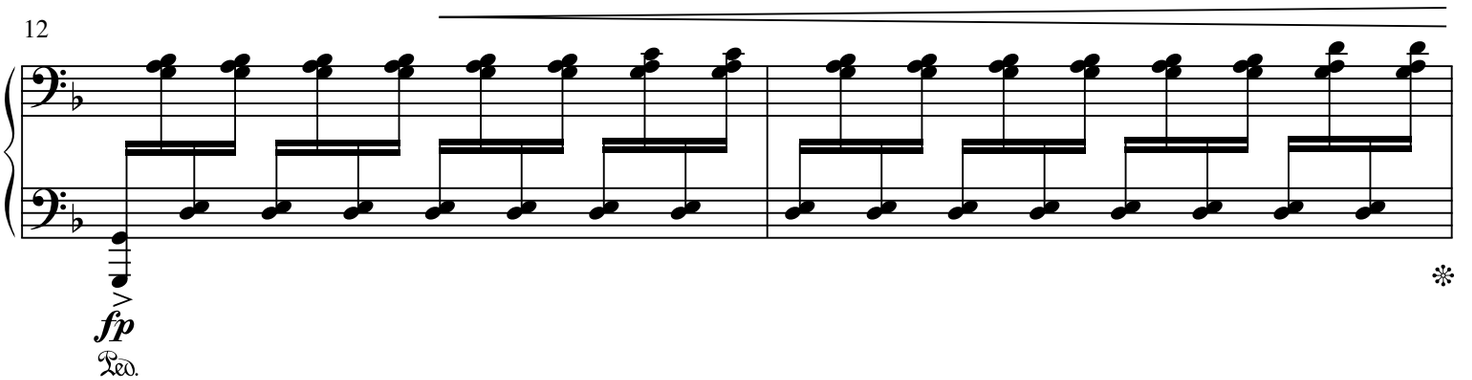


12



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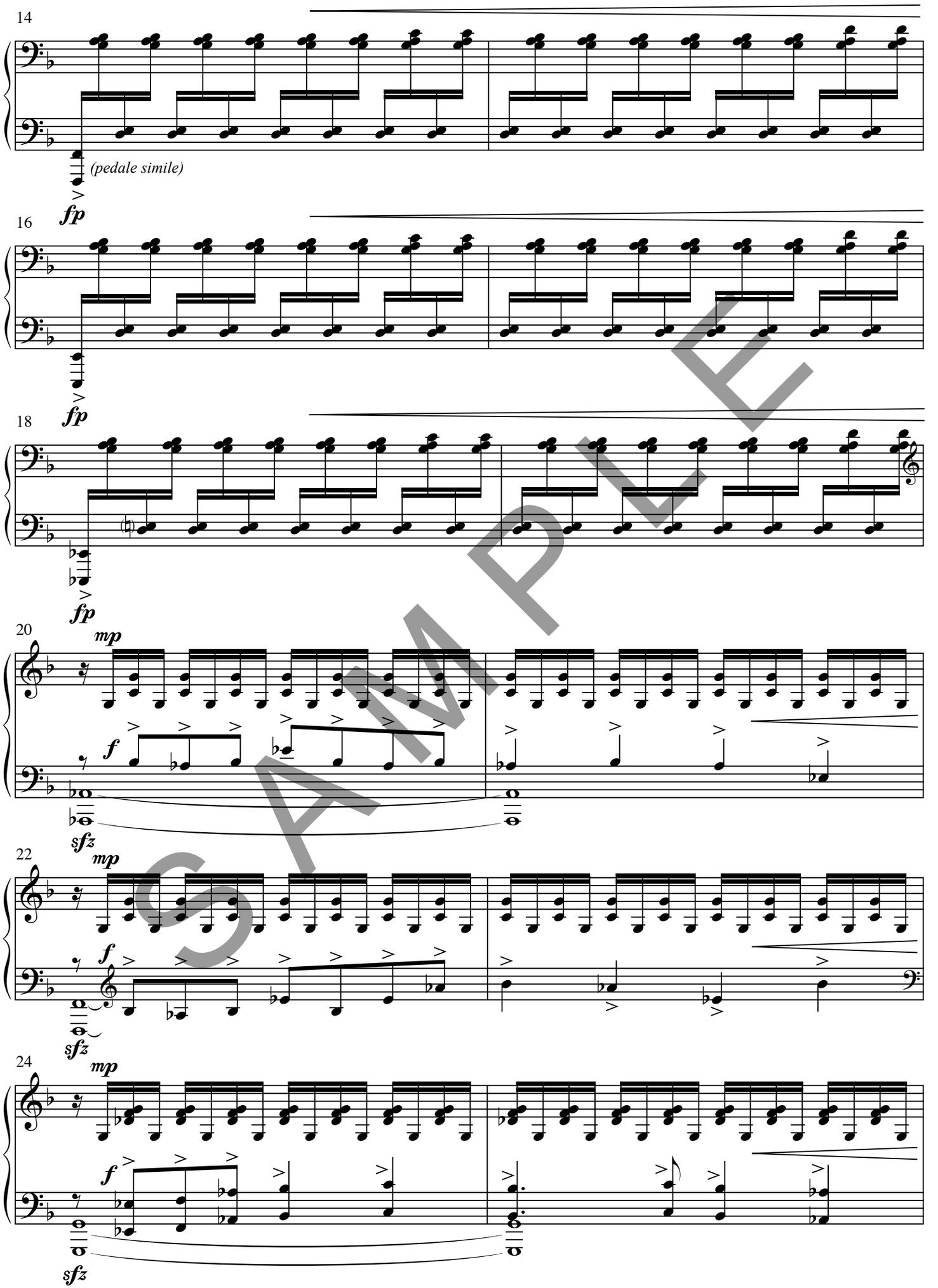

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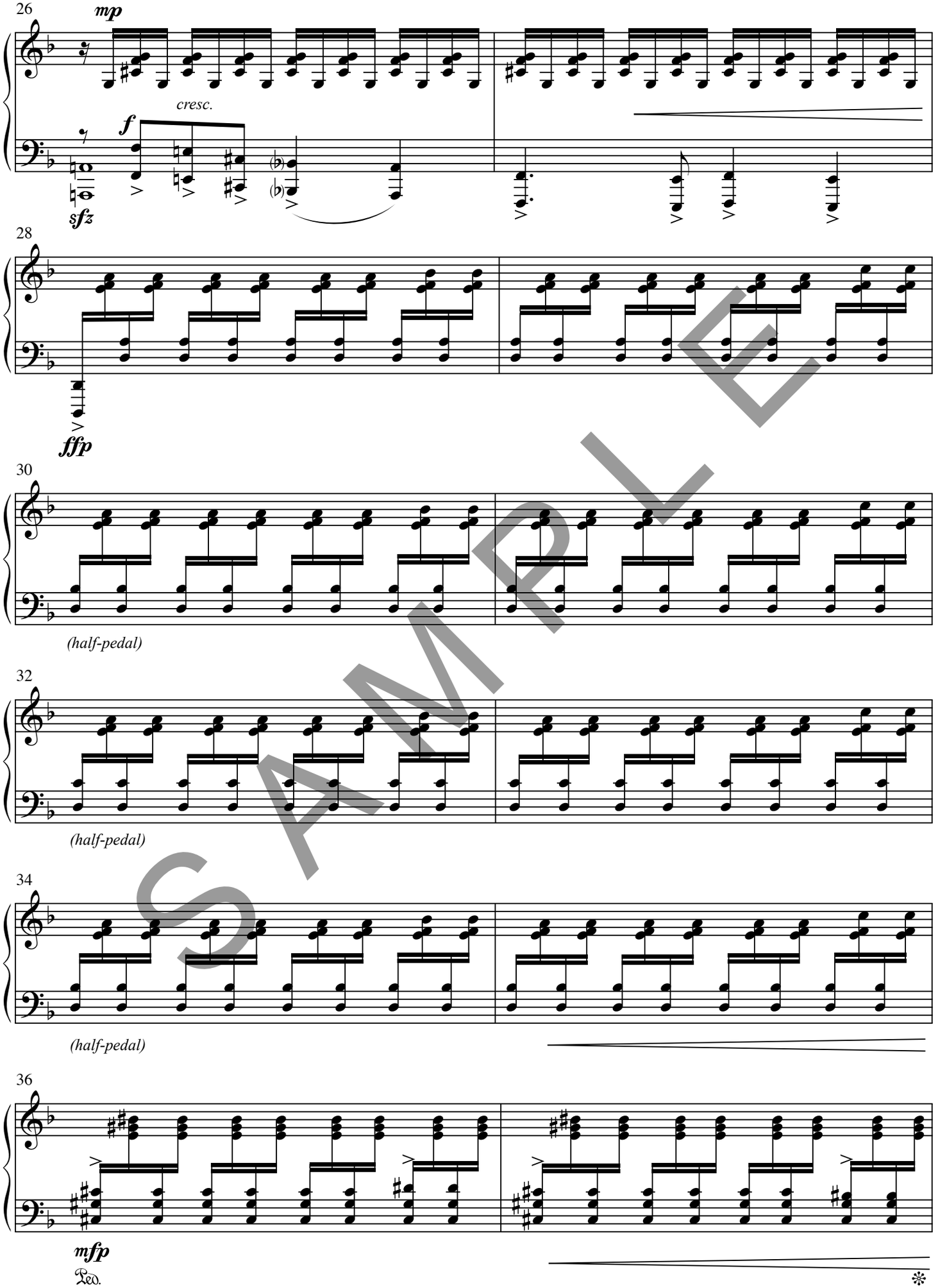
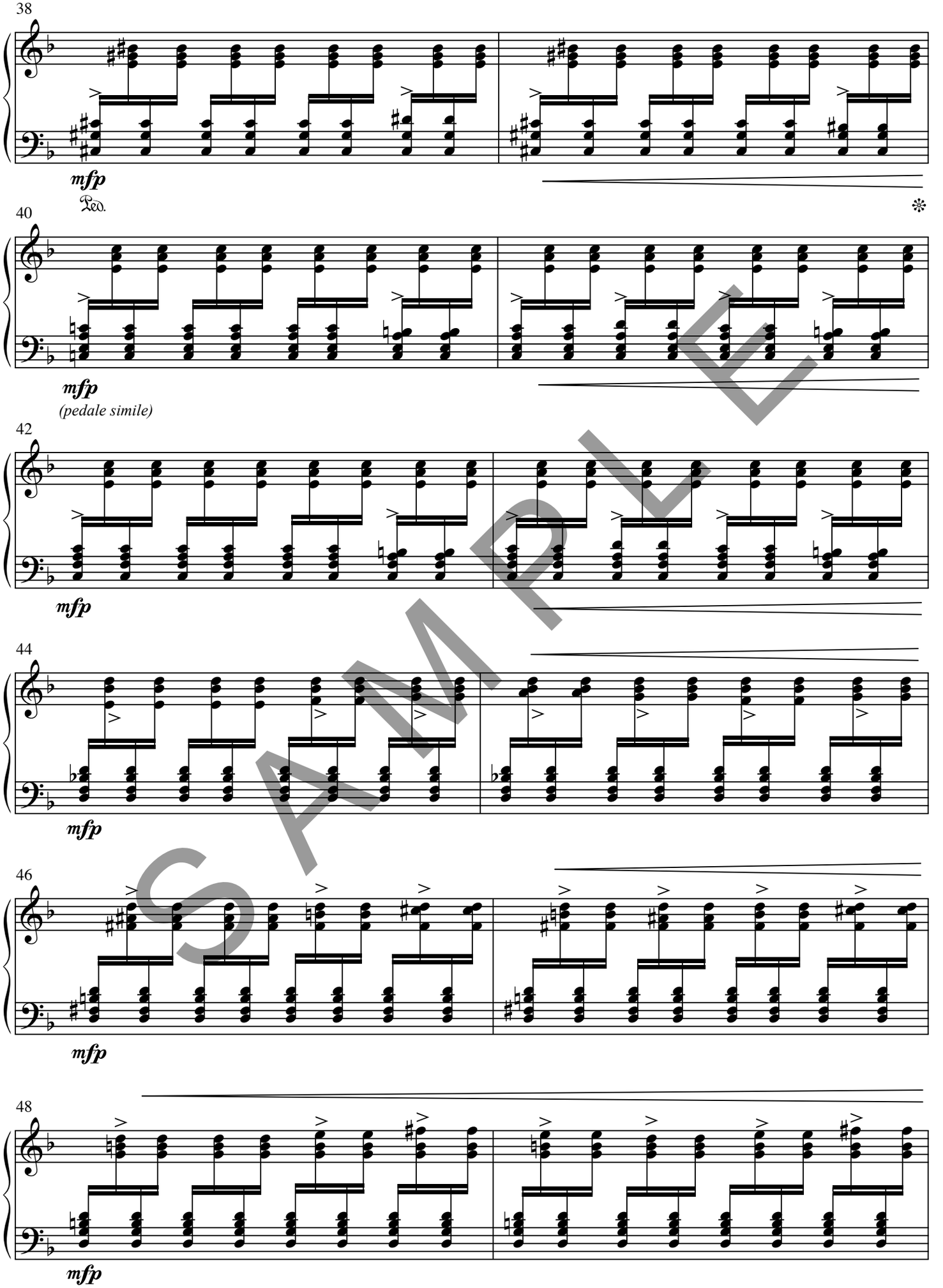

26
mp
cresc.
f
sfz
28
ffp
30
(half-pedal)
32
(half-pedal)
34
(half-pedal)
36
mfp
Ped.
*

SAMPLE



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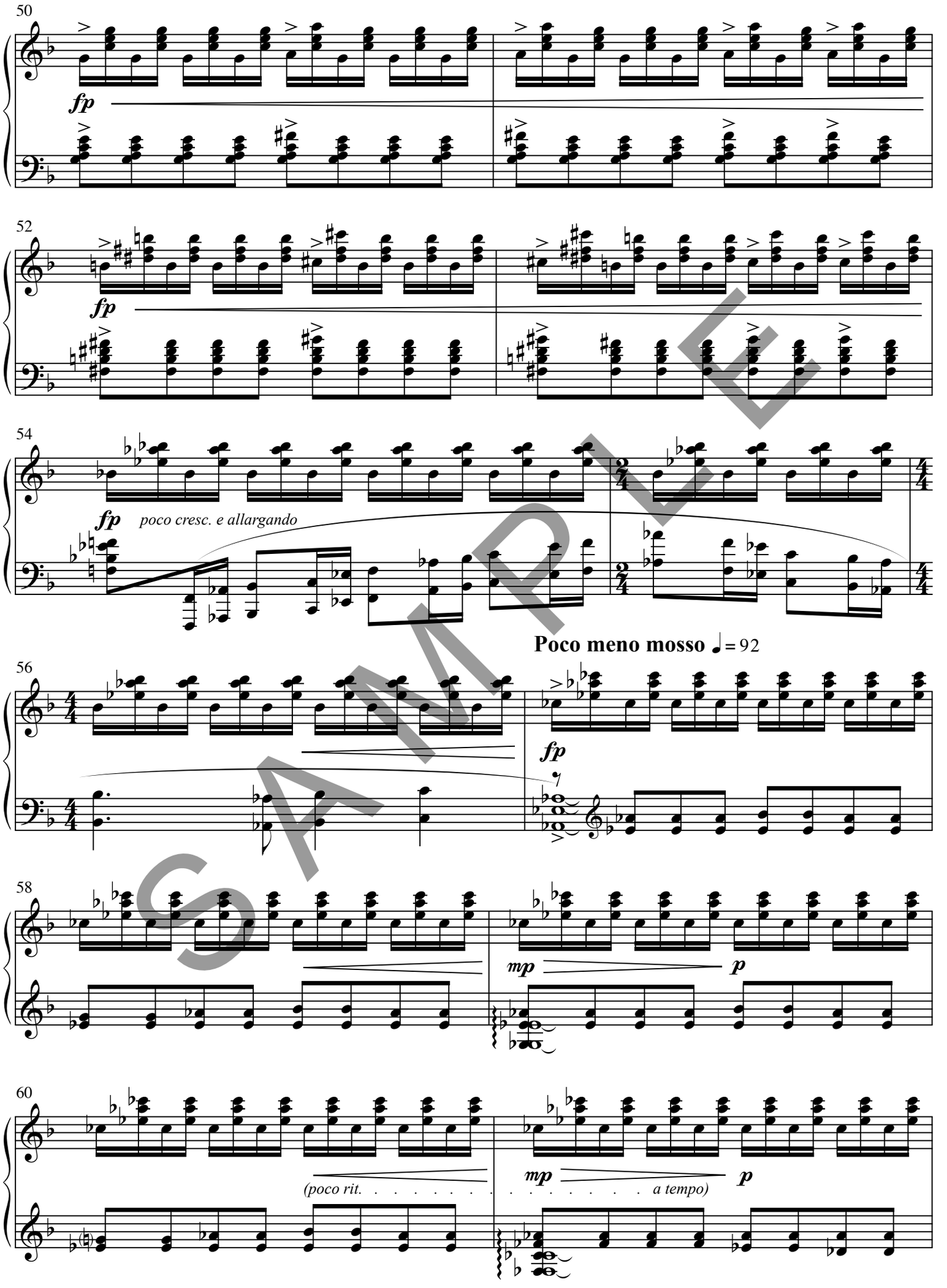
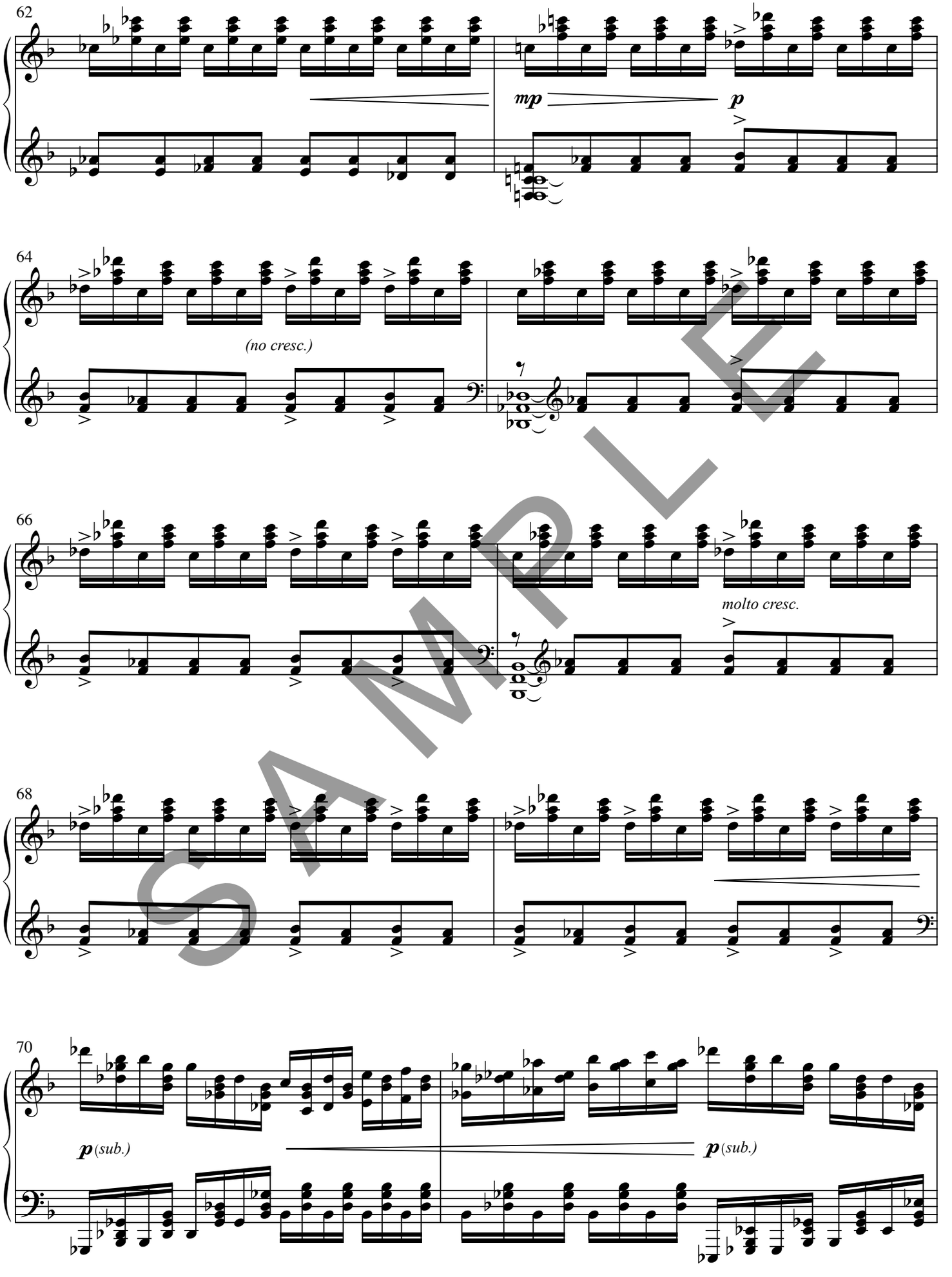
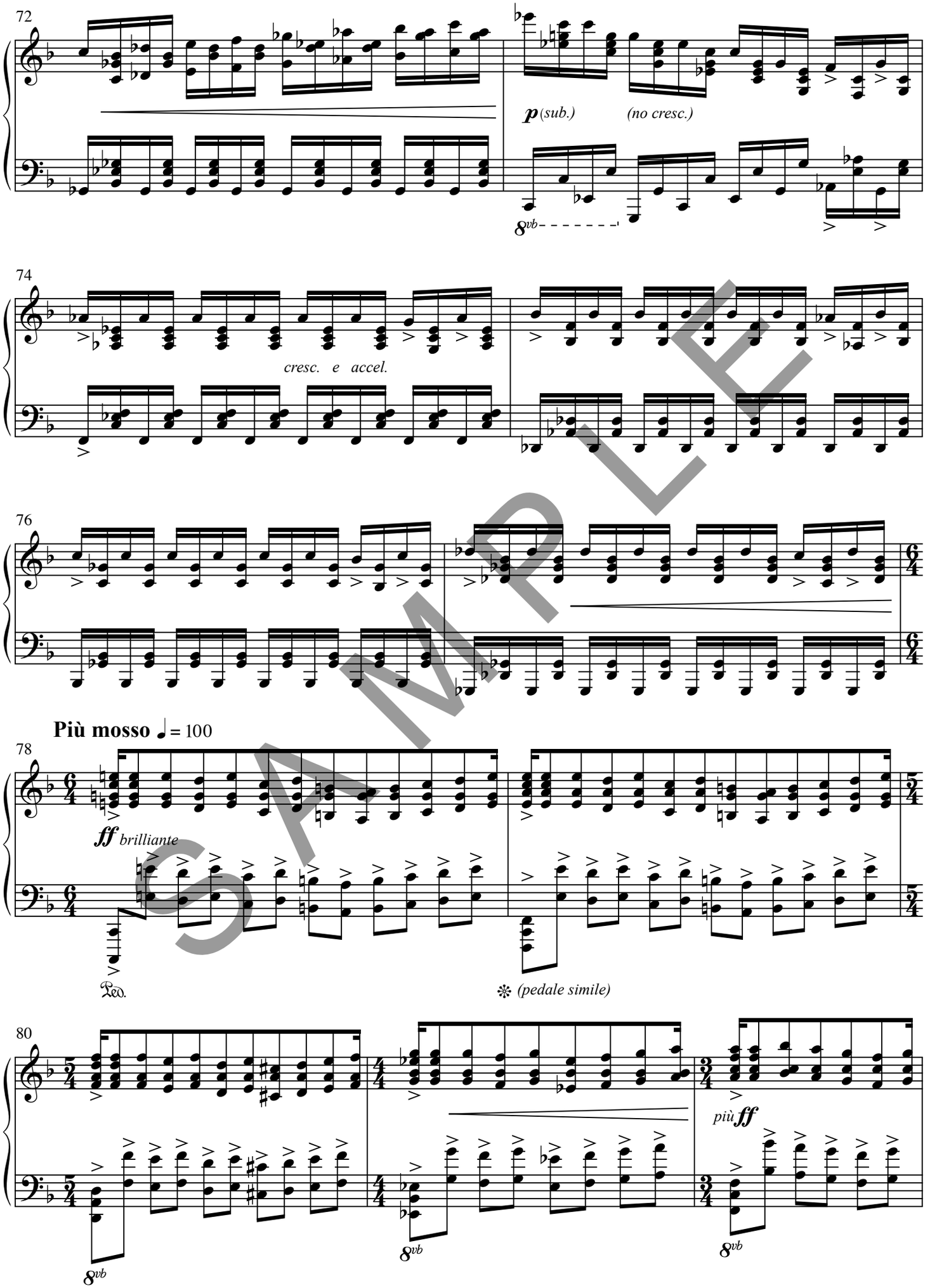

50
fp
52
fp
54
fp
poco cresc. e allargando
Poco meno mosso ♩= 92
56
fp
58
mp
p
60
(poco rit.
mp
a tempo)
p

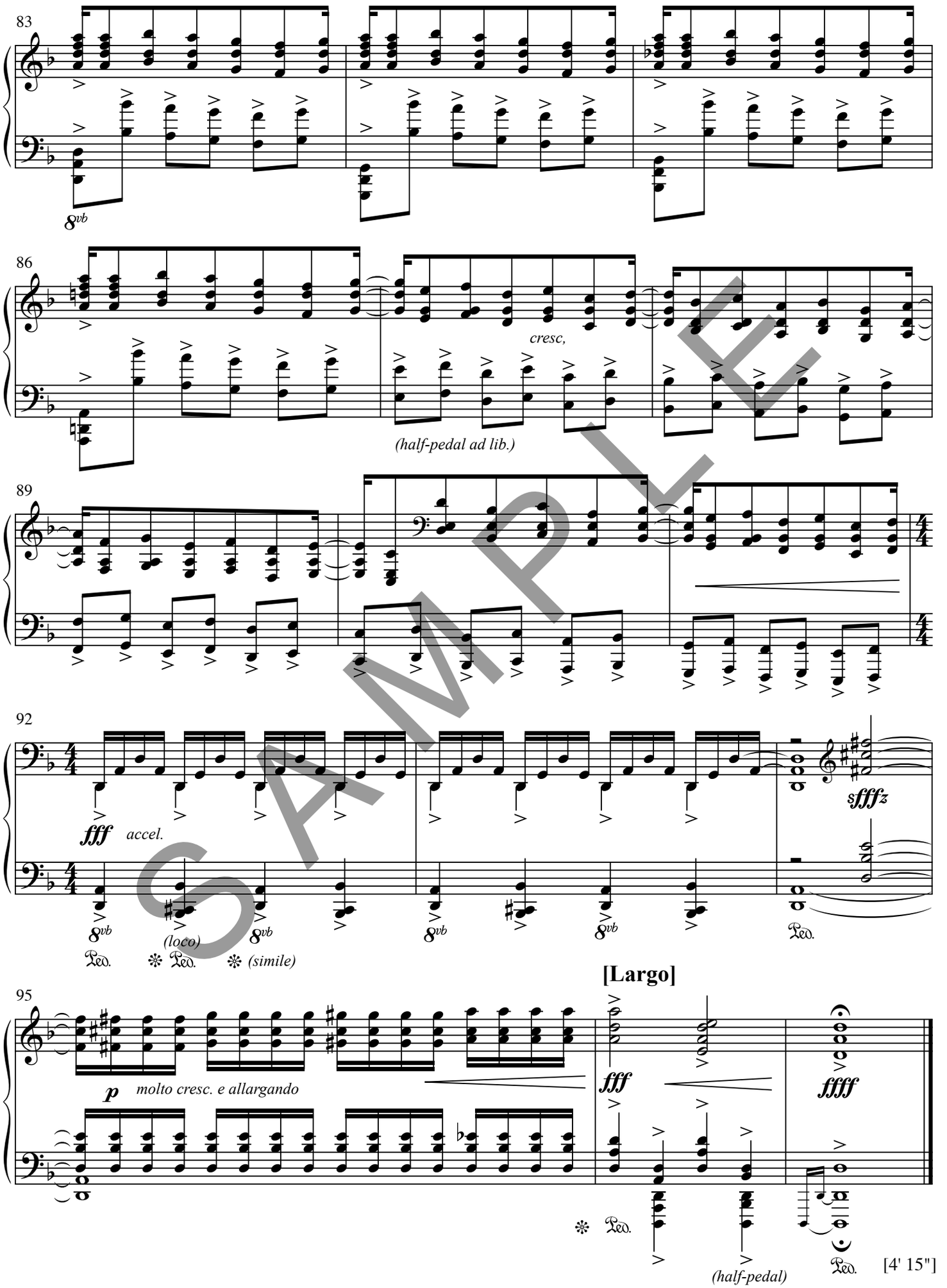
SAMPLE



SAMPLE


72
p (sub.)
(no cresc.)
8vb
74
cresc. e accel.
76
Più mosso ♩ = 100
78
ff brilliant
Ped.
(pedale simile)
80
8vb
8vb
più ff
8vb

SAMPLE


83
8vb
86
cresc,
(half-pedal ad lib.)
89
92
fff
accel.
sffffz
8vb
(loco)
Ped.
(simile)
[Largo]
95
p
molto cresc. e allargando
fff
ffff
(half-pedal)
[4' 15"]

SAMPLE

No. 9 in E Major [The Singing Clock] — The subtitle for this prelude is really an instruction to play the melody as expressively as possible while keeping the accompanimental fabric mechanically exact.

No. 10 in C Sharp Minor — The four-part texture of this prelude is almost orchestral in the way that the part-writing moves expansively across the entire keyboard in loud, forceful strokes.

No. 11 in B Major [The Autoharp] — At just six bars in length, this is the shortest prelude of the set. As all the sounds are created by strumming the strings inside the piano, it is certainly the most evocatively distinctive of the preludes and performers should strive to give the phrases an expressive musical shape.

No. 12 in G Sharp Minor [Das Thema] — This is one of the hardest pieces in the collection, requiring stamina and precision to capture the driving rhythmic energy while always projecting the four-note motive that is heard in virtually every bar. In many ways, Prelude No. 12 is the companion to Prelude No. 24 in that both works are quite unrelenting in their organic expansion of a single idea, culminating in a powerful ending.

No. 13 in F Sharp Major [One-Note Ostinato] — The very simple materials used in Prelude No. 13 give the music a sense of 'freshness' and 'new beginnings'. This quality was intentionally applied by the composer to delineate the location of this prelude as the half-way point in the set. There is a kind of "pop" music feel to the grove that is created by the octave repetitions of the tonic pitch in a 3+3+2 rhythmic grouping. Playing this music with a relaxed right-hand wrist is crucial to avoiding fatigue or a repetitive stress injury.

No. 14 in E Flat Minor — This prelude is a short exploration of the piano as a substitute for a bass drum.

No. 15 in D Flat Major [Polytonality] — By duration, this is the longest Prelude in the set and one of the most expressive. The piece is organized around the juxtaposition of D Flat Major with G Major such that both key signatures are used at the same time, one for each hand. The opening 18-bar theme becomes the basis for a variation-like treatment in the second half of the Prelude.

No. 16 in B Flat Minor [The Hummingbird] — Of all the subtitled preludes, the allusion to the hummingbird is significant in the way that this image inspires a performance of the music that is both fast and fleeting. The broken-chord figuration can almost be played as fast as possible, taking just a bit of time at the important cadential moments.

No. 17 in A Flat Major [The Aeolian Harp] — The first etude of Chopin's Opus 25 set of twelve Etudes is also in the key of A Flat Major. Due to the fast broken-chord patterns in both hands, this etude has been given the nickname, "The Aeolian Harp." Burge's Prelude No. 17 is a kind of gloss on the first phrase of this Chopin Etude. Additionally though, Burge incorporates harp-like interruptions played inside the piano between each chord change in an attempt to really underscore the music's harp-like influence.

No. 18 in F Minor — As this was the final prelude composed of the twenty-four, its fast, syncopated character and motivic emphasis on the interval of a falling or rising minor tenth, strongly reflects the desire on the composer's part to include a prelude that is quite different from the others.

No. 19 in E Flat Major [Deadlines] — Somewhat like a scherzo, this prelude is organized around a very fast compound triple meter through which two-handed, interlocking gestures traverse the entire range of the piano. The slight hints of melodic material provide brief moments of calm, as if one is just catching their breathe before rushing along to the next pressing deadline.

No. 20 in C Minor — Like many of the other short preludes in this set, there is a strong procedural element in the overall design of this prelude. The music of Prelude No. 20 is really just one long diminuendo as the chords and melodic material gradually move into higher registers. A layer of rhythmic counterpoint is added to the music in the way that the pianist's left hand taps the same pattern on different parts of the piano.

No. 21 in B Flat Major — This prelude consists of just five expressive phrases that all begin with the same half-diminished seventh chord (B flat-D-E-G). Each phrase is pulled in a different harmonic direction until the last phrase finally shifts towards a B flat major triad at the end. Indeed, the only tonic triad heard in root position in this prelude is found in the last bar.

No. 22 in G Minor — This prelude picks up the same half-diminished seventh sonority that dominates Prelude No. 21, but in Prelude No. 22 it is now treated in a G minor context. Throughout most of this prelude, both hands play the same fast 16th-note passages an octave apart.

No. 23 in F Major [Spring Thaw] — This really is the only prelude of the set that has a clear ABA structure. The outer sections require the pianist to pluck high strings with the right hand while the left hand expands a wedge-like melodic figure. This figure becomes the melodic building block for the more passionately written middle portion of the prelude. In the same way that the second prelude captured a sonic picture of "Bells in Winter," this second-last prelude musically represents the melting of winter into spring. The title, "Spring Thaw," is a tribute to Canadian poet, Margaret Avison, who in her poetry often drew spiritual significance from the changing of the seasons and whose poetry is an oft-used source for John Burge.

No. 24 in D Minor (Le Fini) — Chopin's Preludes end with three, very strongly accented low D's. John Burge shifts this around by starting his last prelude with these same three notes. Thereafter, the music introduces a pattern of alternating chords between hands that steadily increases in intensity as the music modulates through a variety of different keys. The ending is percussively loud, thereby projecting a strong conclusion for not just this prelude, but for the entire set of preludes as well.

John Burge (b. 1961, Dryden, Ontario) is a Canadian composer who has been teaching at Queen's University in Kingston since 1987. Like many composers he counts the piano as his primary instrument and his life has been greatly enriched by the study and performance of music written for the piano. The overall design of John Burge's ***Twenty-Four Preludes*** for solo piano (one in each of the possible 24 major and minor keys) reveals his affinity to the music of Chopin. This connection is further underscored by a couple of rather specific allusions to two of Chopin compositions (heard in Burge's Preludes Number 17 and 24). Equally though, the Preludes of Debussy, with their expressive textural sonorities and colour, can also be considered touchstones, especially in the way that Burge provides subtitles for fourteen of his Preludes (Debussy added a descriptive title to each of his Twenty-four Preludes).

Burge composed this set of preludes over five years (2011-2015) trying to personally premiere a few at a time, so that the music had a long period of gestation. A sabbatical leave from teaching during the 2014/15 academic year provided an opportunity to polish the preludes and premiere the set in its entirety (a complete performance takes about one hour). The most unusual aspect of these Preludes is that eight of them use extended instrumental techniques such as strumming strings inside the piano. These techniques are very simple to execute and do not require any advance preparation of the piano but in most cases can only be realized successfully on a grand piano with the music stand removed. As a guiding principle, Burge tried to embrace each Prelude's tonic key in an audibly recognizable fashion so that at times the music is emphatically tonal, even in the Preludes that involve non-traditional performance practices.

Given the shortness of many of these preludes there is quite a bit of potential for the music to be useful for teaching purposes and as possible repertoire for performance competitions. Although assigning levels of difficulty can be very subjective, John Burge suggests the following grade levels. Please note that many of the consecutively numbered preludes sharing the same key signature have a natural connection and flow easily one into the other. As such, these pairs have often been joined together in the list below, requiring that both preludes be performed as a unit to satisfy the indicated level of difficulty. However, some of the preludes are so short (especially Numbers 2, 11 and 14) that they have simply been listed as optional preludes to perform with the Prelude sharing the same key signature, although it is always stronger to play two contrasting preludes to demonstrate a performer's musicianship and technical facility.

Grade 8:	-Prelude No. 5 in D
	-Prelude No. 8 in F Sharp Minor
Grade 9:	-Prelude No. 1 in C Major (optional to add No. 2 in A minor)
	-Prelude No. 7 in A Major
Grade 10:	-Preludes No. 3 in G Major AND No. 4 in E Minor
	-Prelude No. 6 in B Minor
	-Prelude No. 13 in F Sharp Major (optional to add No. 14 in E Flat Minor)
	-Preludes No. 17 in A Flat Major AND No. 18 in F Minor
	-Preludes No. 21 in B Flat Major AND No. 22 in G Minor
Diploma:	-Preludes No. 9 in E Major AND No. 10 in C Sharp Minor
	-Prelude No. 12 in G Sharp Minor (optional to add No. 11 in B Major)
	-Preludes No. 15 in D Flat Major AND No. 16 in B Flat Minor
	-Preludes No. 19 in E Flat Major AND No. 20 in C Minor
	-Preludes No. 23 in F Major AND No. 24 in D Minor

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John Burge photo: Corin Laflamme

www.johnburge.ca

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