MARTIN SCHEUREGGER

Be silent

for piano

2012

Be silent is one in a series of three fragmented, intimate chamber works. It is the first, followed by *Be still* for marimba and harp, and *In that solitude* for violin and piano. They may be performed alone, or in a set of two or three.

Be silent was first performed on 30th May 2012 by Emily Scaglioni at the Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York, under its original title of *What you will*.

Duration: 7′30″

Programme Note

This piece uses a constant control of the piano's resonance to evoke a nuanced soundworld, made from a collection of fragmented melodic phrases and rotating harmonies. The player is required to constantly adjust tempo and dynamics to achieve specific sonic relationships: phrases will often end with a chord whose constituent notes have been sounded at different points in that phrase, requiring a high degree of precision to create the right internal dynamic balance when the chord is heard alone. The middle pedal is often employed to facilitate this type of writing, whilst at other times it is used to give a greater degree of control over the piano's resonance.

The first two movements see chords develop, blend into and emerge from each other in different ways, whilst a melodic stream percolates many phrases. Towards the end of each short movement, the music develops into two notionally separate instruments, as parts work vertically with and against each other, aided by the middle pedal.

The third movement is characterized by a constant resonance from simultaneously held chords: E-B and E♭-B♭. Above these clashing fifths, a series of chords emerge as the movement gradually takes on the character of a chaconne, with the subtle but constant variation of voicing and harmony manipulating the resonance in a controlled and precise way. Later, flourishes above these chords once again see the piano split into two instruments, each vying for control over a third murmuring piano below. More middle-pedal and silently depressed key trickery sees this short piece come to a close with a degree of resolution, whilst retaining a curious duality.

This work was written for the a recital by Emily Scaglioni in which E♭ acted as something of a common tonic centre between pieces. E♭ behaves as an omnipresent (event omnipotent) force in the piece and furthermore acts as a convenient signature motif for the work's dedicatee.

Be silent is written for and dedicated to Emily Scaglioni.

Be silent in that solitude,
Which is not loneliness – for then
The spirits of the dead, who stood
In life before thee, are again
In death around thee, and their will
Shall overshadow thee; be still.

from *Spirits Of The Dead*
by Edgar Allan Poe (1827)

for Emily Scaglioni

Be silent

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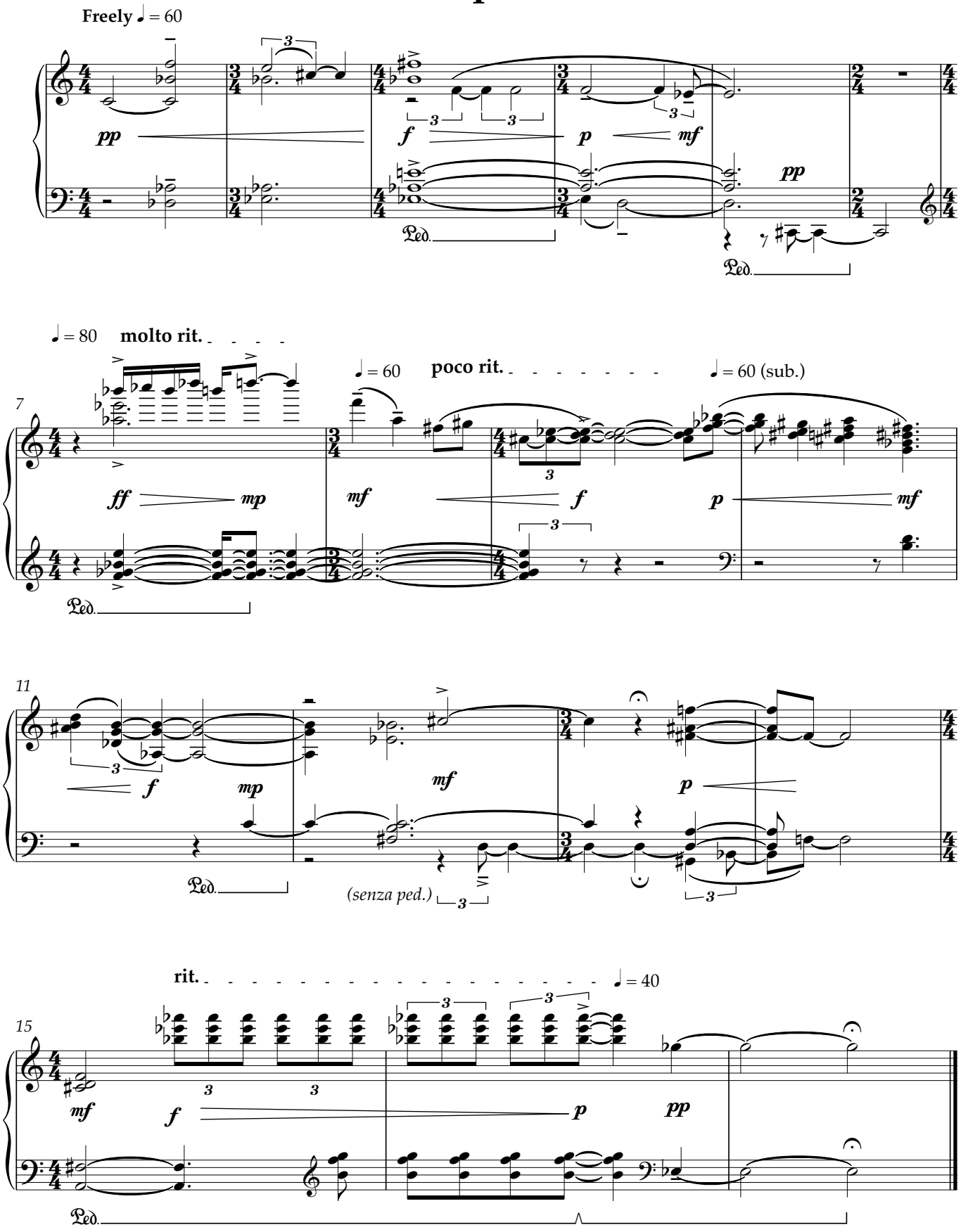
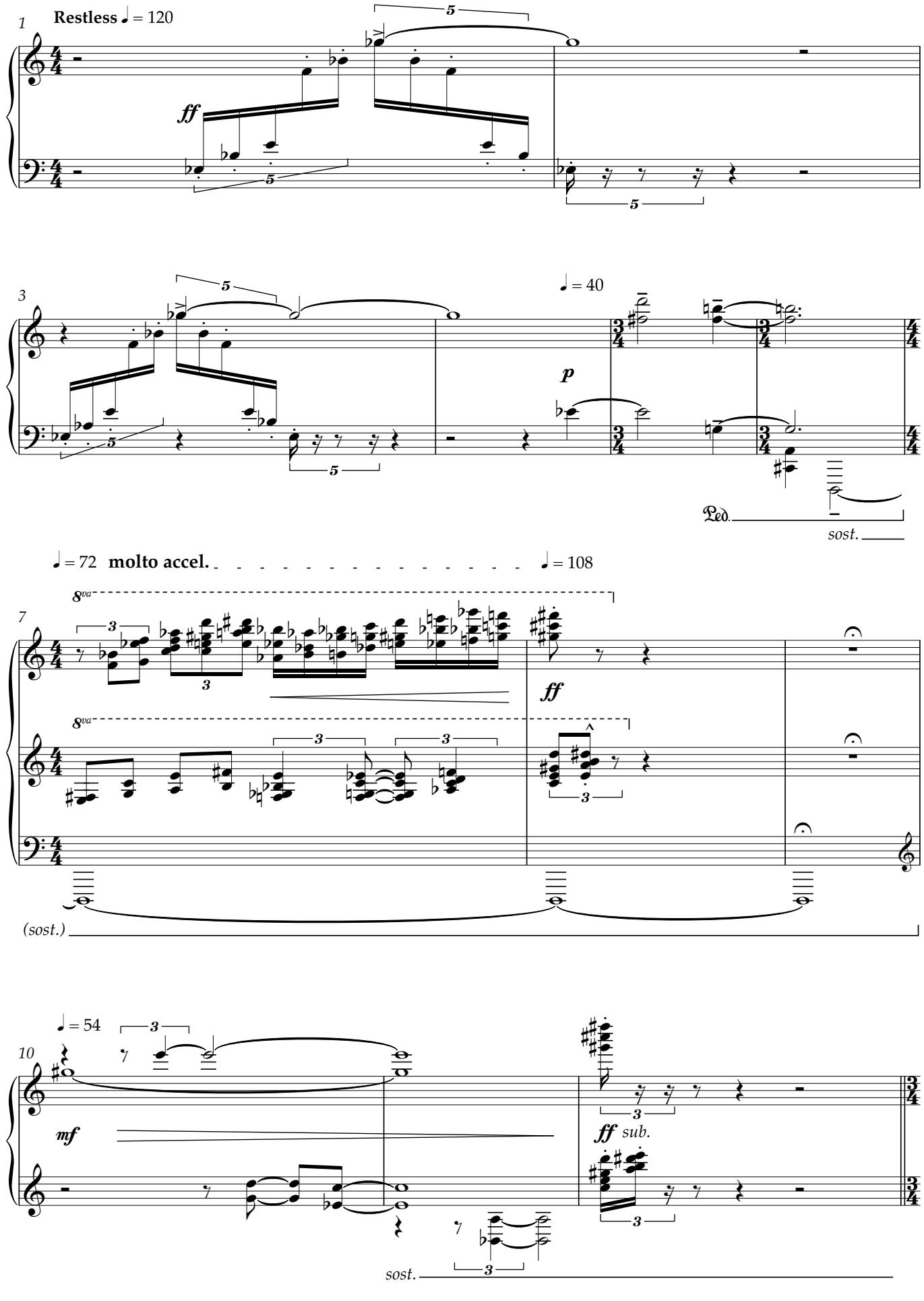
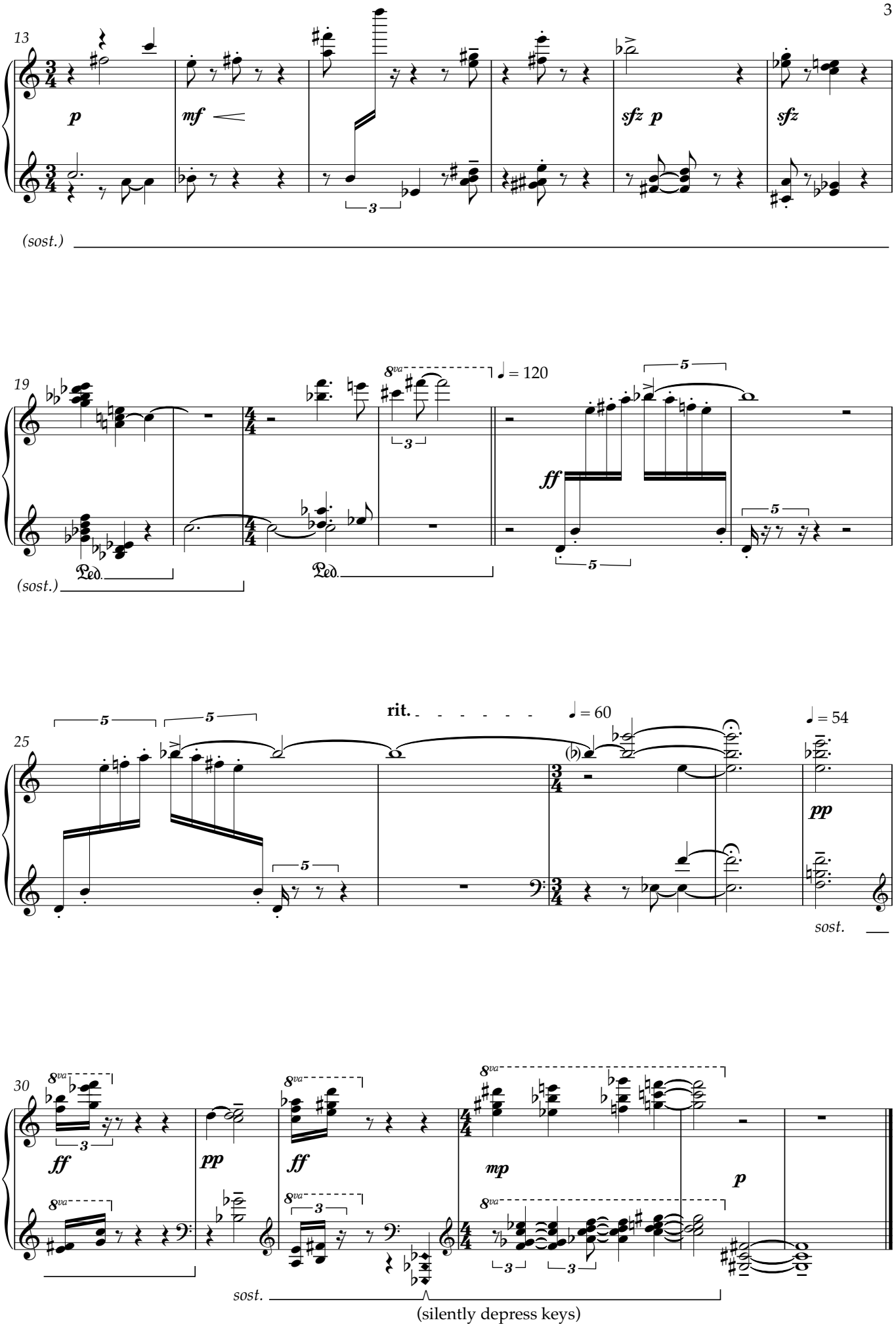
2012

I

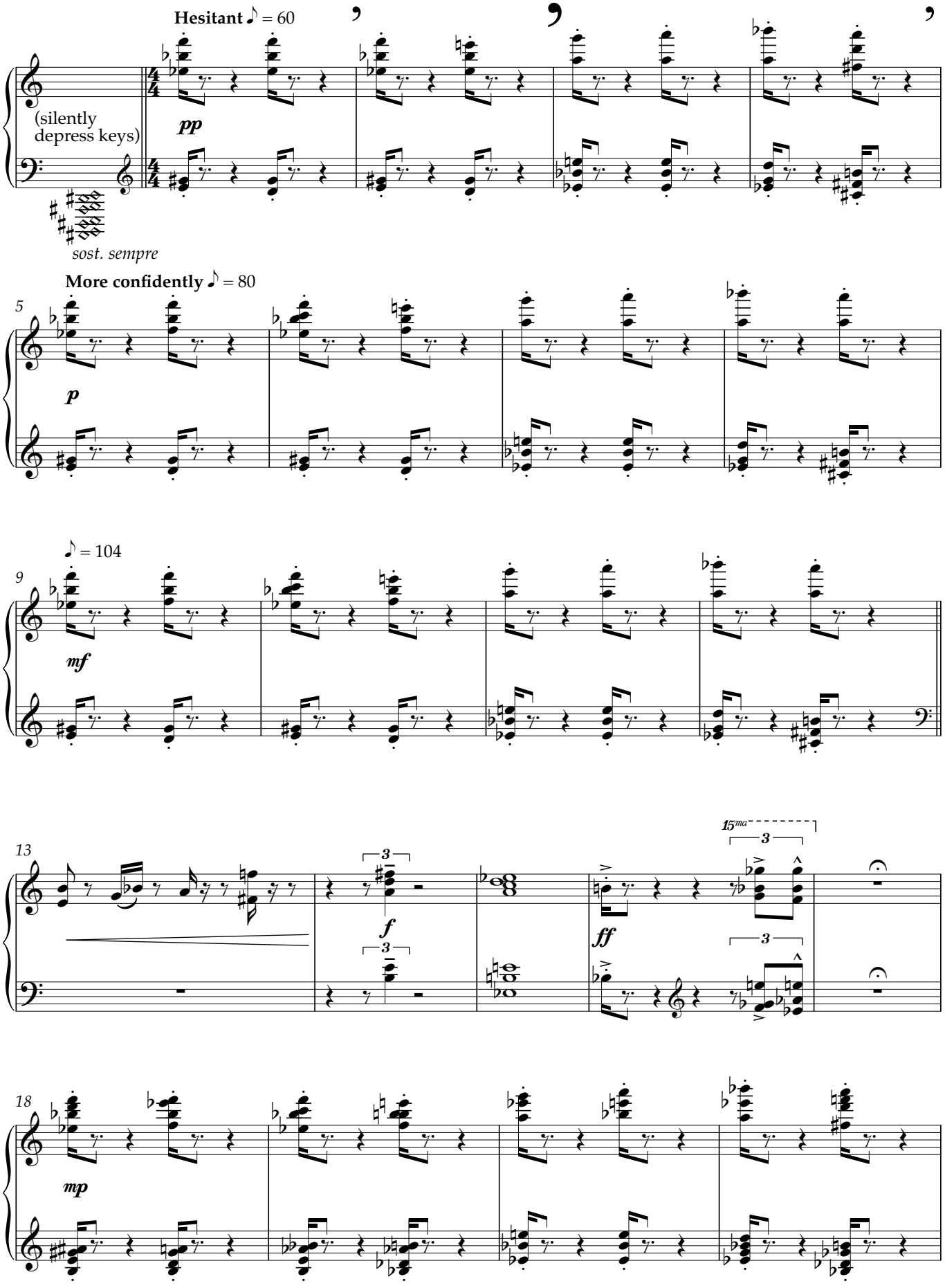


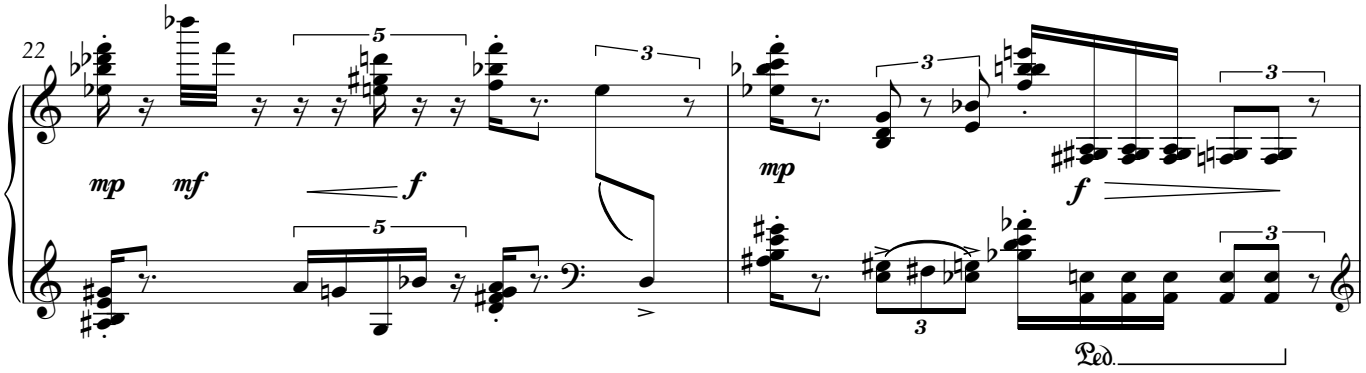
II

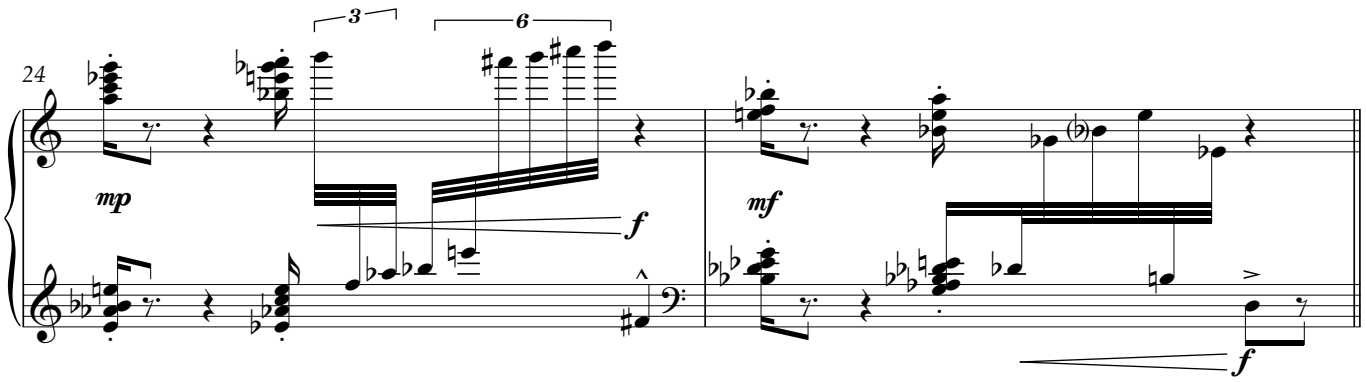

1
Restless ♩ = 120
ff
3
♩ = 40
p
Ped.
sost.
♩ = 72 molto accel.
♩ = 108
8va
ff
(sost.)
♩ = 54
mf
ff sub.
sost.

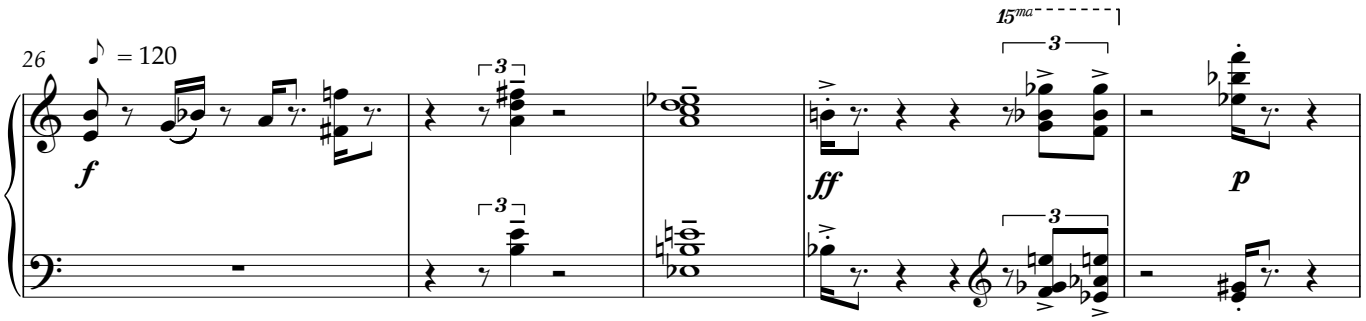

13
p
mf
sfz p
sfz
(sost.)
19
8va
♩ = 120
ff
Ped.
Ped.
(sost.)
25
rit.
♩ = 60
♩ = 54
pp
sost.
30
8va
ff
pp
ff
mp
p
sost.
(silently depress keys)

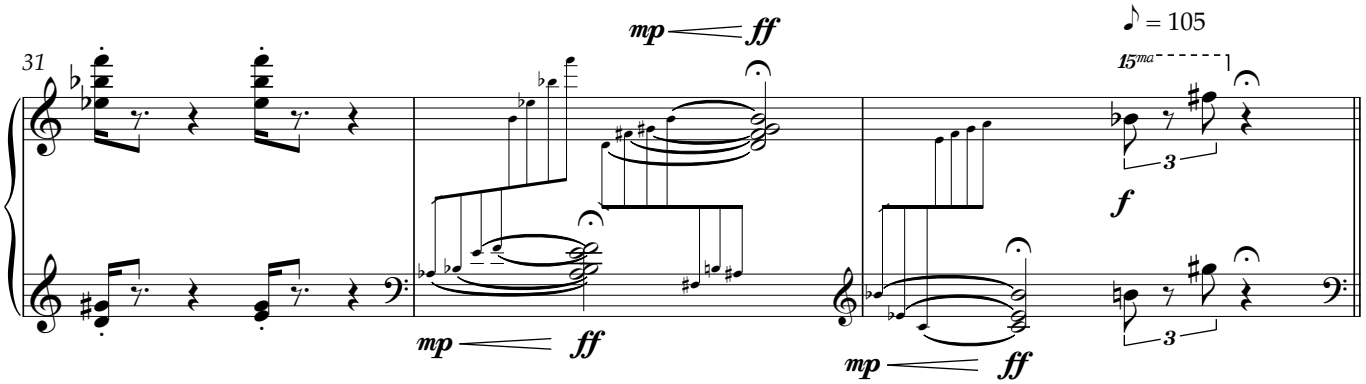
III

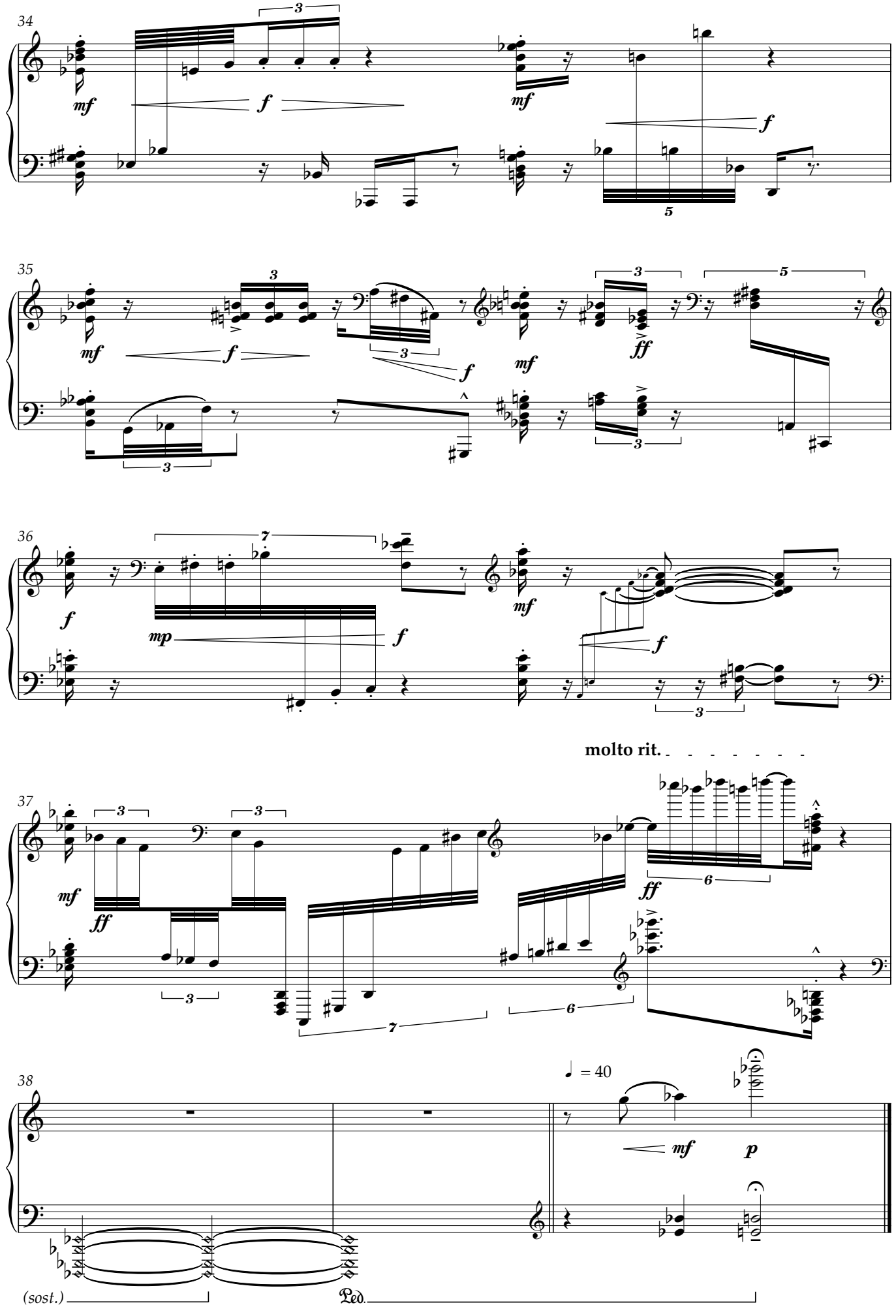

Hesitant ♪ = 60
(silently depress keys)
pp
sost. sempre
More confidently ♪ = 80
5
p
♪ = 104
9
mf
13
3
f
ff
15ma
18
mp


22
mp
mf
f
mp
f
Ped.


24
mp
f
mf
f


26
♪ = 120
f
ff
p


31
mp
ff
mp
ff
♪ = 105
f
mp
ff


34
35
36
molto rit.
37
38
= 40
(sost.)
Ped.