NOCTURNE

for piano solo

Lo Ting-cheung

2015

Structure and content of the composition

The composition, written in open form, comprises three movements. In the set of score, pages 1, 2 & 3 contain "events" to be used for the three movements. All the "events" need to be performed. The "fragments" (including "gestures" and "chords") for fill-in purposes are found on pages 4, 5 & 6. NOT all the "fragments" need to be used in a single performance. It may come about that certain "fragments" are not performed at all. But the pianist should try to perform as many different "fragments" as possible.

The notated register of the "fragments" is only referential. The pianist may perform the "fragments" in any register. In movement I, the "fragments" should be performed mostly on the lower register of the keyboard. In movement II, the "fragments" should be performed mostly on the middle and the lower register of the keyboard. In the last movement, the "fragments" are to be performed across the keyboard.

The duration of the performance is flexible. The minimum length of each movement should be 3 minutes.

Mode of performance

Movement I

The pianist starts the performance by performing any "event" in the movement. He is then free to perform any number of "fragments" before proceeding to the next "event". A "fragment "can be used as many times as the pianist wishes.

The pianist may choose to perform the "events" in any order. Moreover, occasional silences should be inserted between different materials. The duration of such silences may vary from 8 to 14 seconds. Silence should be *substantial* and become a presence.

The process is repeated until all the "events" have been performed. For the purpose of this movement, 80% of the "fragments" should be chosen from the "gestures". Movement I ends when the pianist has finished performing all the "events" in the movement. A pause of 30 seconds should then follow.

Movement II

The pianist starts the movement II by performing any "event" in the movement. He is then free to perform any number of "fragments" before proceeding to the next "event". A "fragment "can be used as many times as the pianist wishes.

The pianist may choose to perform the "events" in any order. As in movement I, occasional silences should be inserted between different materials. The duration of such silences may vary from 8 to 14 seconds. Silence should be *substantial* and become a presence.

The process is repeated until all of "events" have been performed. For the purpose of this movement, 80% of the "fragments" should be chosen from the "chords". Movement II ends when the pianists has finished performing all the "events" in the movement. A pause of 30 seconds should then follow.

Movement III

The pianist starts to perform any "event" in the movement and follows the same process prescribed in the previous movements. For the purpose of this movement, however, the pianist is free to choose any "fragment" he thinks suitable.

This movement includes three unwritten "events". The pianist is expected to perform fragments from any of Chopin's Nocturnes. The maximum length of the fragment should be no more than 4 bars. The pianist may distort the fragment in whatever way he thinks suitable (e.g. changing the registers/tempos/articulations, performing with single hand etc.).

The performance ends when all the "events" in movement III have been performed.

Score

It is suggested that the pianist has the score unbound to facilitate page-turning.

General comments

The conception of the work is that the score only provides basic materials with different musical characteristics. These materials may be subject to different modifications in the form of combining, sequencing, or any other modification process spontaneously created in the performance.

The structure is NOT dependent upon improvisation, but there is a high degree of flexibility in the form. Spontaneity is important throughout the performance. The performers should be aware of the flexibility within the composed materials as well as within the predetermined framework.

Given that the structure and content are clearly understood, it is possible for the pianists to achieve smooth transitions and well-connected lines. The first impression of the score is that it contains a large collection of sporadic fragments.

These fragments can be seen as beads of all shapes and colours which can be stringed together into numerous different forms. The collection offers a wealth of formal possibilities inherent in this piece. It is the realization of such possibilities, not the fragmentation, that should become the dominant characteristic of the performance.

The musical materials are rehearsed; the performances are not. While no two performances will arrive at the same formal outcome, the work will retain its identity from performance to performance through the unchanging basic characters of the musical materials.

The pianist should familiarize himself with the character of each material so that he can perform with a high degree of flexibility to ensure the ongoing continuity of the performance.

Programme note

I've always been fascinated by the sounds of the night, even more so since I came to study in the UK. Many a night when I was sitting up late, I could hear music, from just outside the window, played by nature's own ensemble. The chirping of birds, the humming of insects, the sighing of the wind joined to make an enchanting tune. The different sounds rose and subsided in a seemingly random way but the combined effect was mesmerizing.

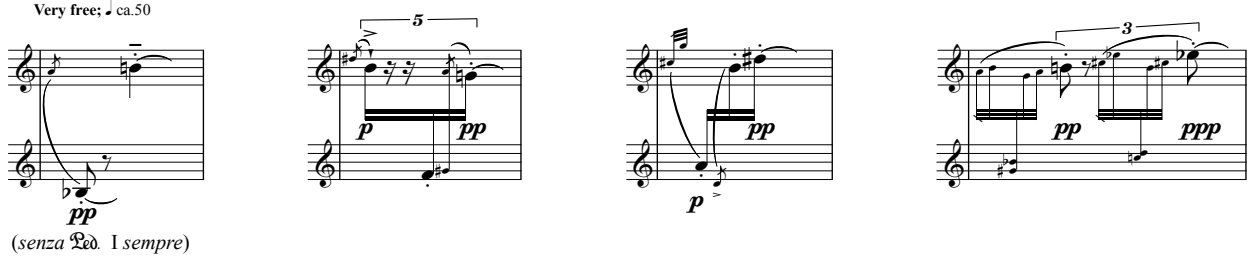
In an attempt to capture the intricacies of the nocturnal sound world, I've written this piece in open form, allowing spontaneous decision made by the performer. Unlike the traditional nocturne, the music is gestural rather than lyrical in character. The score basically contains a collection of sporadic musical events and fragments which can be stringed together into larger aesthetic forms.

The work comprises three movements over the course of which the music becomes increasingly lyrical. The last movement includes quotation fragments from some of Chopin's nocturnes. This is intended to give the idea of hearing intermittently piano melodies amid all the nocturnal sounds of nature.

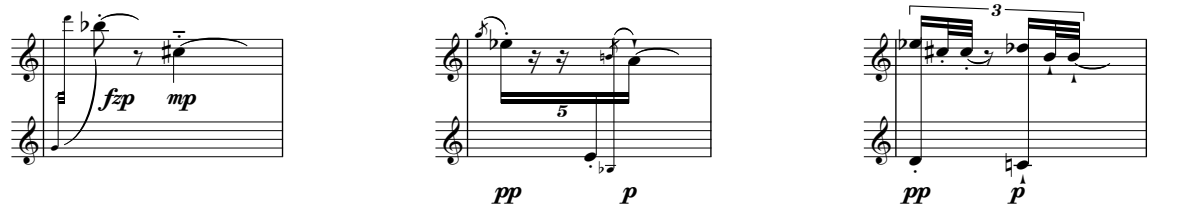
1

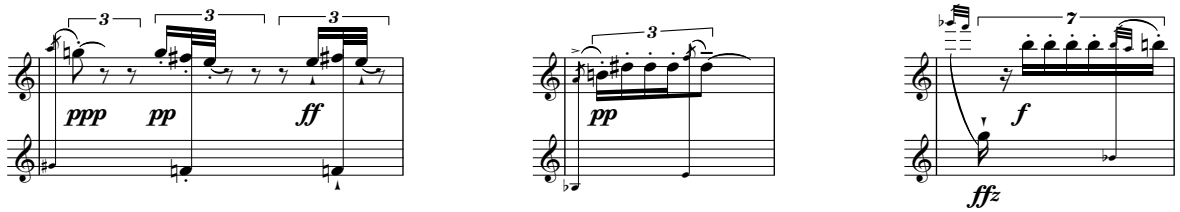
I

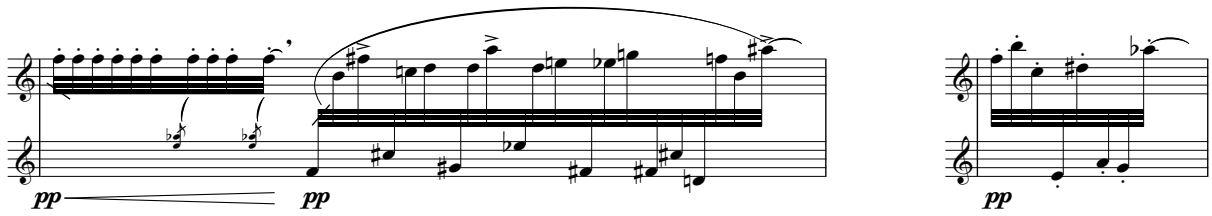
Very free; ♩ ca.50

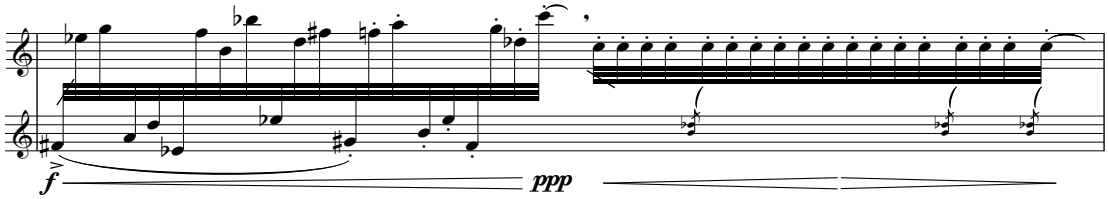


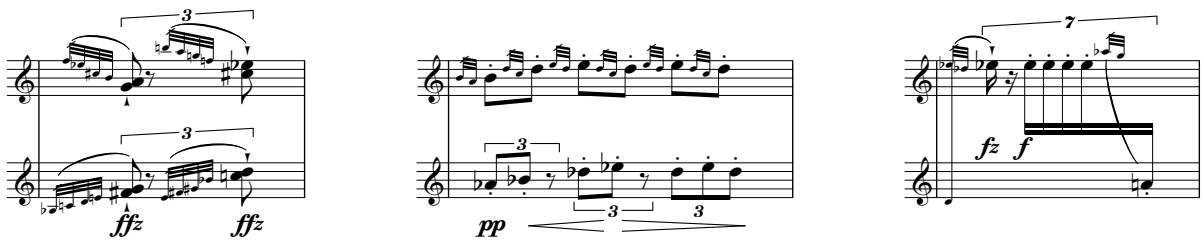
(*senza* Ped. I *sempre*)



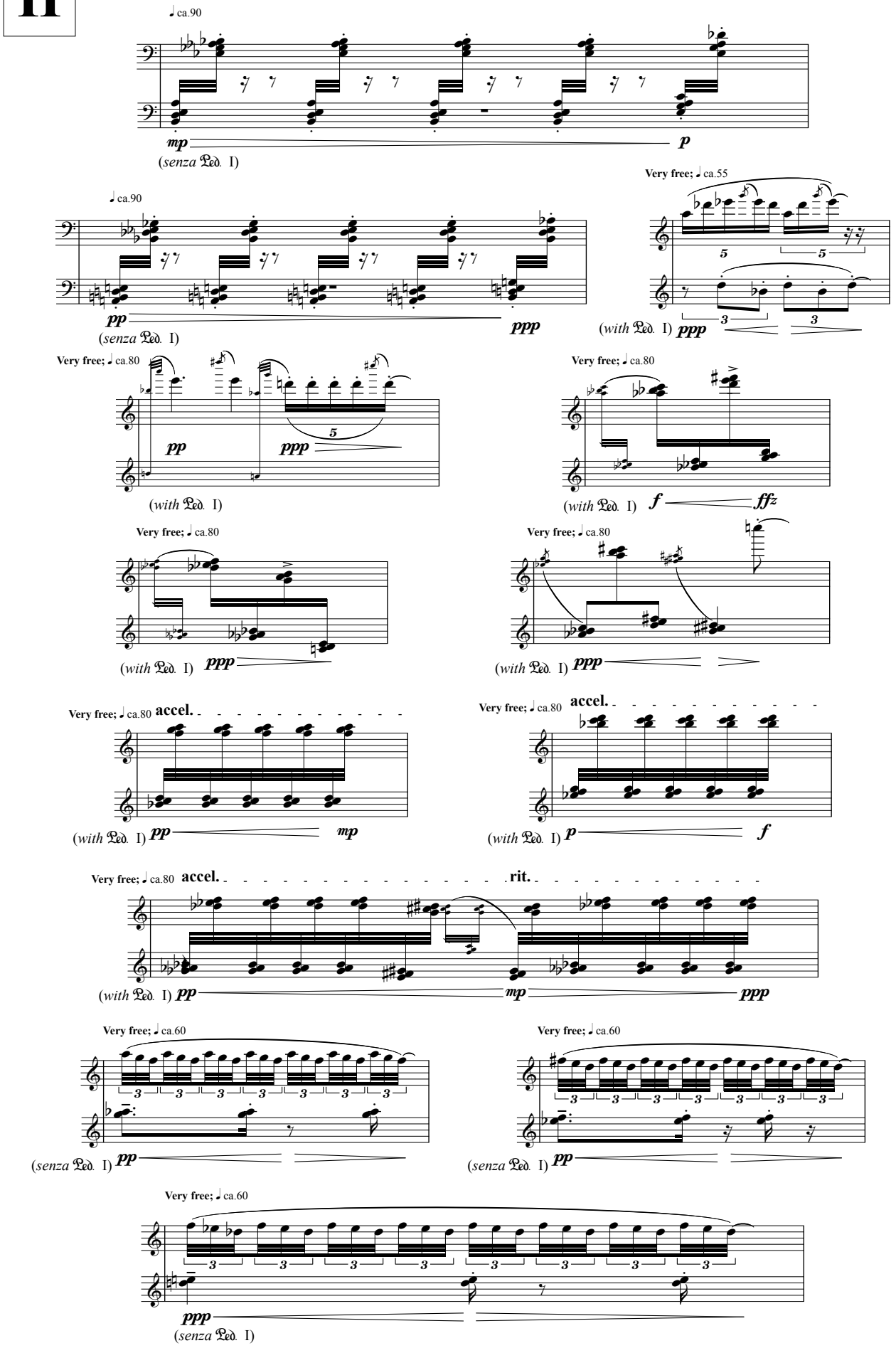








II


♩ ca.90
mp
p
(senza Ped. I)
♩ ca.90
pp
ppp
(senza Ped. I)
Very free; ♩ ca.55
(with Ped. I) ppp
Very free; ♩ ca.80
pp
ppp
(with Ped. I)
Very free; ♩ ca.80
(with Ped. I) f
ffz
Very free; ♩ ca.80
(with Ped. I) ppp
Very free; ♩ ca.80
(with Ped. I) ppp
Very free; ♩ ca.80 accel.
(with Ped. I) pp
mp
Very free; ♩ ca.80 accel.
(with Ped. I) p
f
Very free; ♩ ca.80 accel.
rit.
(with Ped. I) pp
mp
ppp
Very free; ♩ ca.60
(senza Ped. I) pp
Very free; ♩ ca.60
(senza Ped. I) pp
Very free; ♩ ca.60
ppp
(senza Ped. I)

III

Very free; ♩ ca.70

(*with* Ped. I *sempre*) ***ppp***

Very free; ♩ ca.70

ppp

Very free; ♩ ca.70

ppp

Very free; ♩ ca.70

ppp

rit.

Very free; ♩ ca.60

ppp

Very free; ♩ ca.60

ppp

Very free; ♩ ca.60

ppp

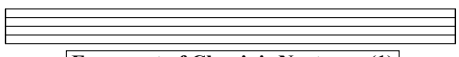
Very free; ♩ ca.90 **accel.**

pp ***mp***

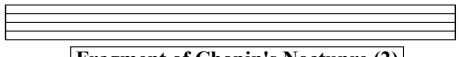
Very free; ♩ ca.90

pp

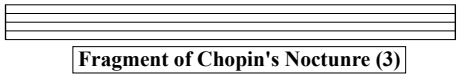
ppp ***ppp***



Fragment of Chopin's Noctunre (1)



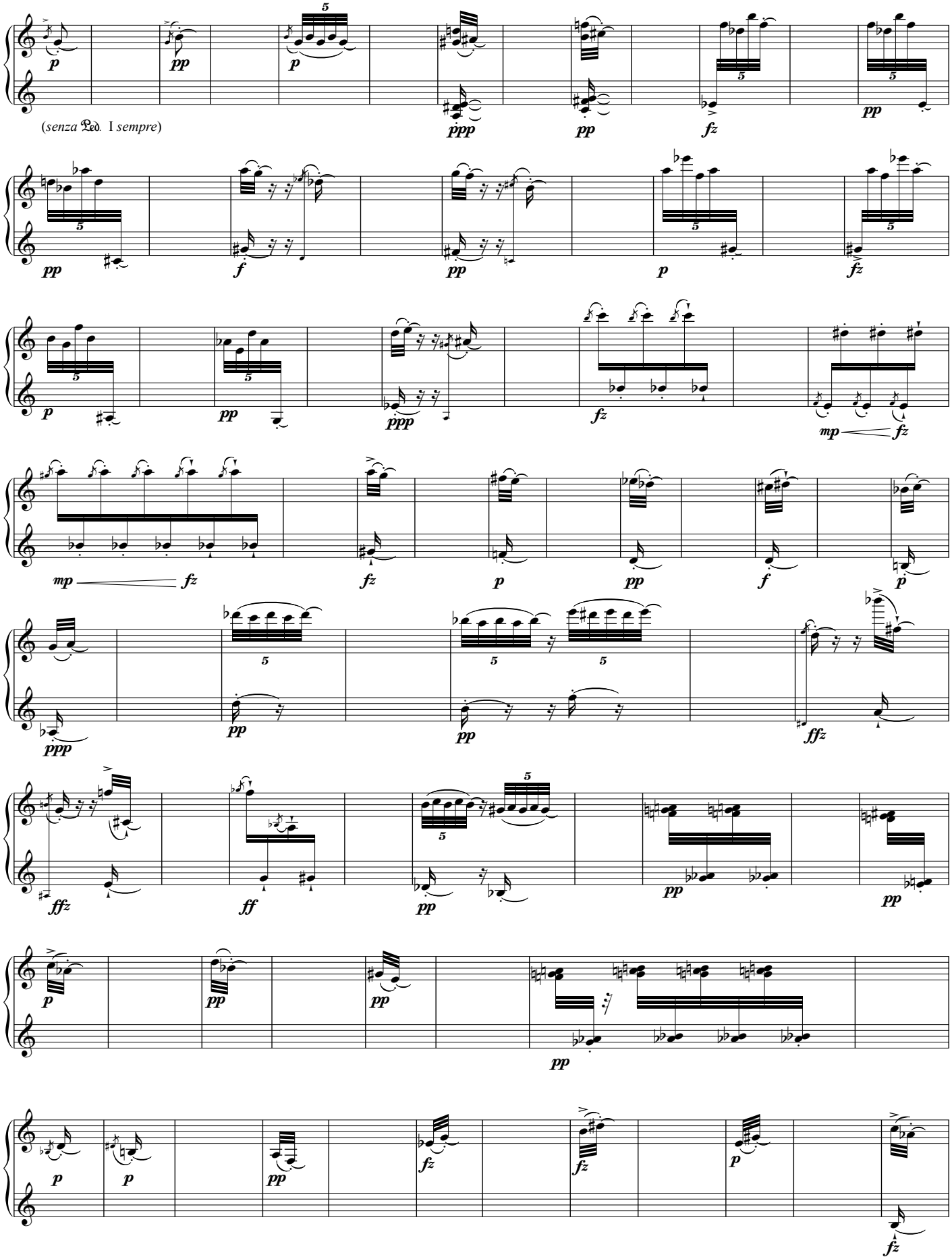
Fragment of Chopin's Noctunre (2)

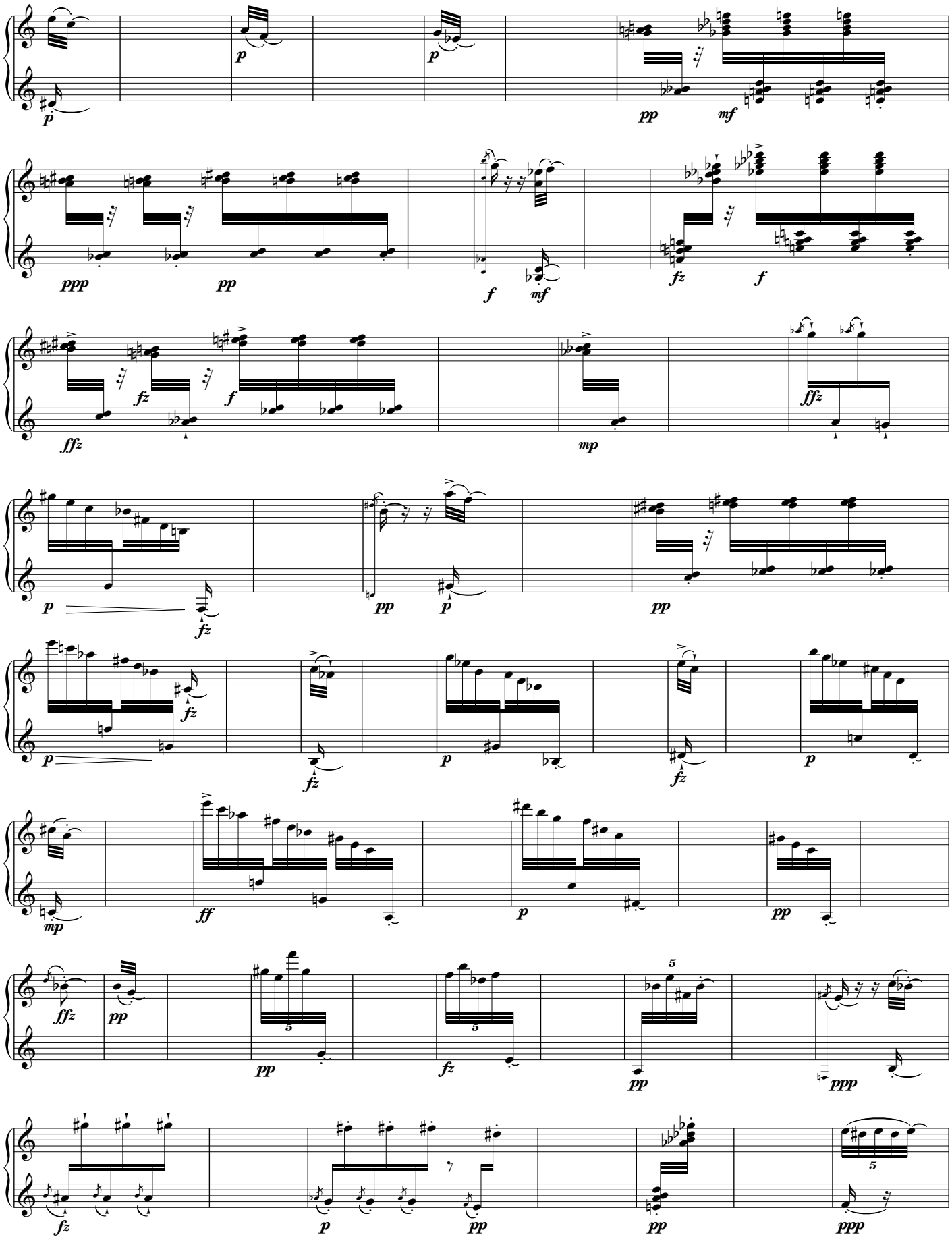


Fragment of Chopin's Noctunre (3)

"GESTURES"

Very free; ♩ ca.90




p
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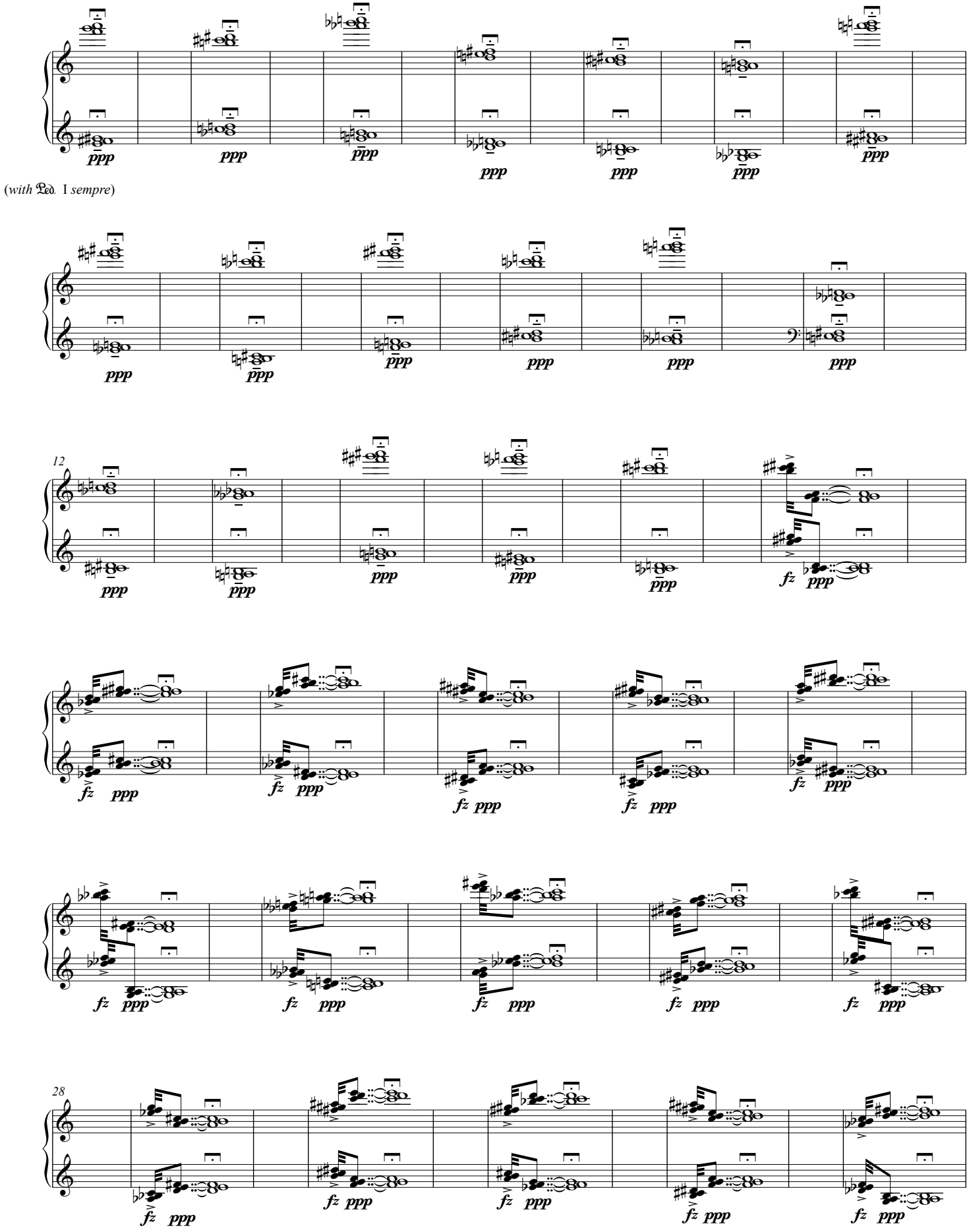
"CHORDS"

Very long; ♩ ca.55