Full Score

Powehi:
The Darkest Heart of the Galaxy
for actor and 2 pianists (2 pianos)

I. Gravity
II. Dark Matter
III. Dark Energy
IV.
V. Powehi

Text and music by
Anna Rubin

POWEHI: THE DARKEST HEART OF THE GALAXY

Powehi: The Darkest Heart of the Galaxy was commissioned by the Piano on the Rocks International Festival in 2021 and is dedicated to festival director and pianist, Sandrine Erdely-Sayo.

1. From a distance,
From a space and time
So remote from our own---
Torrents of light swirl in vast galaxies,
embedded in a scaffold of invisible matter.
Each star, planet, meteor and comet is held in a nest of intricate orbits. (pause)
At the center of each galaxy throbs a black hole, an invisible presence.
Gravity of gravities, the dark source of unending creation.

2. Gravity of gravities, ring mistress of the cosmic circus of the stars,
She twirls and whirls her carousel of heavenly bodies.
She snaps her infinite whip across the universe and all obey.
She is a jealous, covetous lover.
She yearns for the core of things and gathers them into herself, cradling all in a tender net.
Spread across light-years of space-time,
she snaps her impossibly long whip against the forces that would fling all into a formless chaos.

3. Ahh, but what the eye cannot see, the mind can conjure:
What the eye cannot see, the mind can reveal. Dark matter!
The puzzle is that there aren't enough stars to account for the huge pull holding this swirling carousel together.
Dark matter is the transparent yearning of gravity, strewn throughout the universe,
The invisible yearning that grasps galaxies beyond galaxies beyond
galaxies—
What the eye cannot see, the mind can reveal.
Dark matter.
(whispered)
Dark matter.

4. Another energy opposes gravity's pull and stretches the magnitude of curved space-time - dark energy –
Dark energy drives the universe to accelerate as galaxies speed away from us into the seeming infinite.
The Universe is not static—it is expanding
And every galaxy embraces a Black Hole at its core,
the dark source of unending creation and destruction.

5. Now we come to the darkest heart of matter.
Here, density and gravity fuse together.

Now – the tissue of space and time, stretched and formed anew --
Not an absence of matter, but the most profound presence of matter–
not an absence of space –but a point of ultimate singularity, a point of maximum density, from which no light can escape.
At the center of every galaxy,
at the center of every collection
of planets, meteors, comets and astral dust –
at the center is a black hole.

6. And how do you find a black hole from which no light can escape?
Astronomers recently detected a ripple in space-time called a gravitational wave. Born of the cataclysmic collision of two black holes, this wave traveled 1.3 billion light years through time and space; it registered here on earth as a mere gasp, a tiny echo of cosmic birth and death.
The first photograph of a black hole revealed a halo of glowing golden gas, framed in red, around a dark central shadow – the black hole that came to be named Powehi.

7. Powehi is a name coined from the Hawaaian wisdom tradition by linguist Larry Kimura. It links us to the ancient lore of the sea-faring South Pacific Islanders, who used the stars to navigate vast distances across the Pacific Ocean. The name Powehi also embodies the concept of unending creation. It captures an understanding of the genesis of planets, stars, cosmic dust and comets. It is a portal for our finite minds to glimpse the seeming infinity of space and time – some say to the beginning even of creation. Some say Powehi is a one-word poem about the cycle of endless birth and death.

7. We ache for darkness, the black onyx of night, the ebony night sky of the night side of the planet. We ache for light….The heavens are studded with jewels of light and clouds of stellar dust -- the same star stuff of which we are made.
We ache for both darkness and light. But light exists almost nowhere in the universe,
and the blackness itself is also pure and blazing and fierce."*
We ache for darkness! We ache for light!
Priests, shamans and star gazers -- astronomers, astronauts and artists-- all – all bring a shard of understanding to the mysteries of the cosmos…. to the celestial merry-go-round of galaxies, where our lives are but a mere gasp.

Powehi, dark source of unending creation, dark source of unending destruction.
Powehi, Powehi, Powehi.

*Quoted from Carl Sagan.

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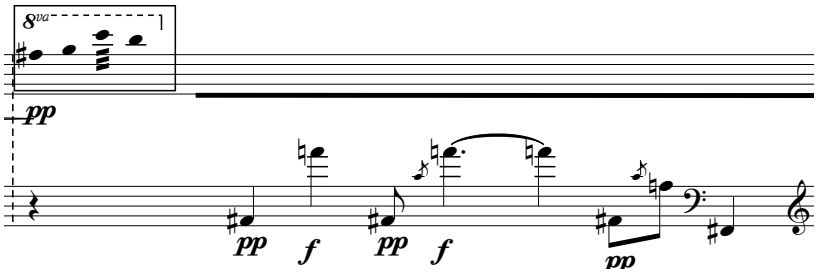
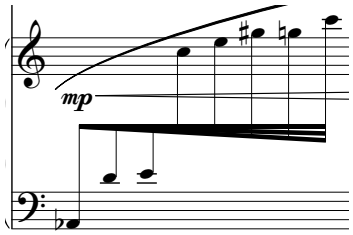
Performance Notes - *Powehi: The Darkest Heart of the Galaxy*

Accidentals apply to the beat.

The boxed notes are played for the duration indicated. Rapidly repeat 4-note figure rapidly over left-hand notes



A timpani beater is required for Piano I. An adequate substitute would be a large yarn mallet. The larger the mallet head, the more diffuse the sound. The palm of the hand could also be used.



Slow accelerating across beat.

Prelude

Dolce, misterioso
♩ = ca. 60

Narrator

From a distance,
from a space and time
so remote from our own--

torrents of light
swirl in vast galaxies,
embedded in a scaffold
of invisible matter.

Each star, planet, meteor
and comet,

Piano I

p

8vb

pedal liberally
= ca. 60

Piano II

p

pp

6

is held in a nest of intricate orbits.

At the center of each galaxy throbs a black hole,

pp

Ped.

mf

pedal liberally

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9

Ped.

Release una corda

10

an invisible presence, gravity of gravities, the dark source of unending creation.

pp

pp

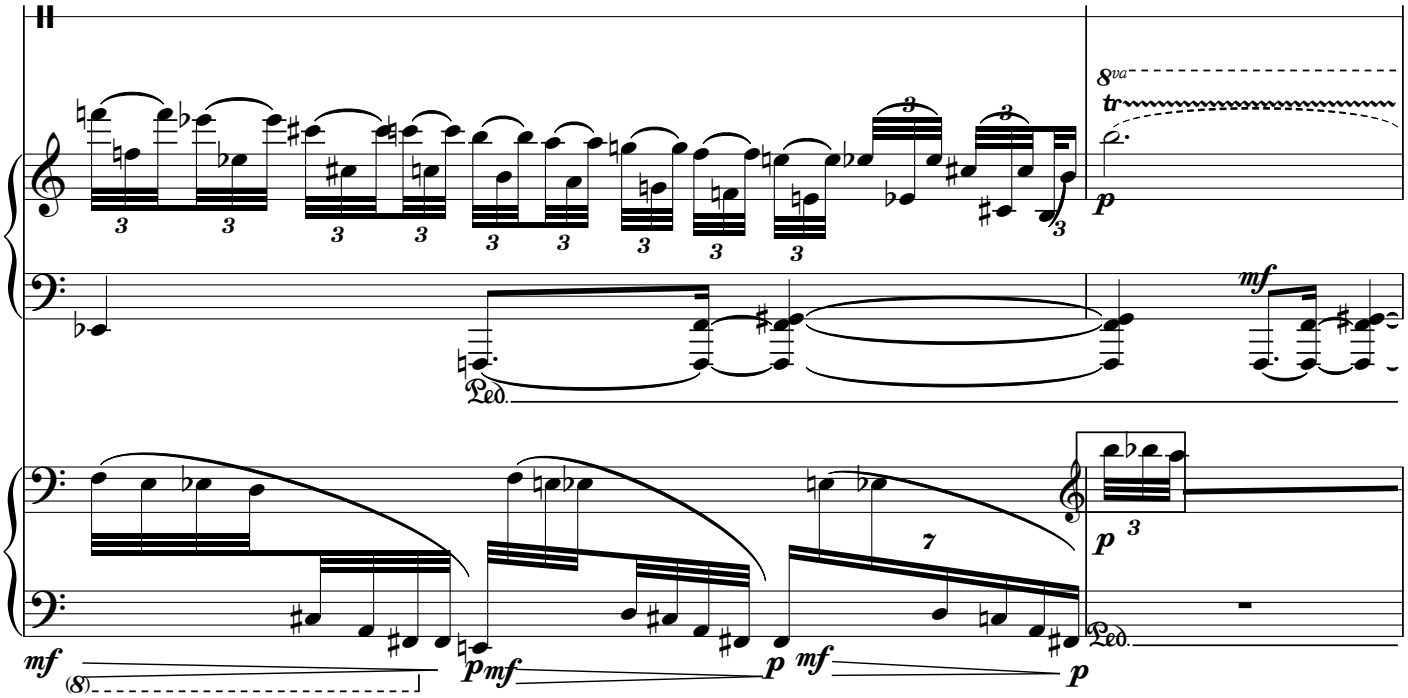
11

p *mf* *p*

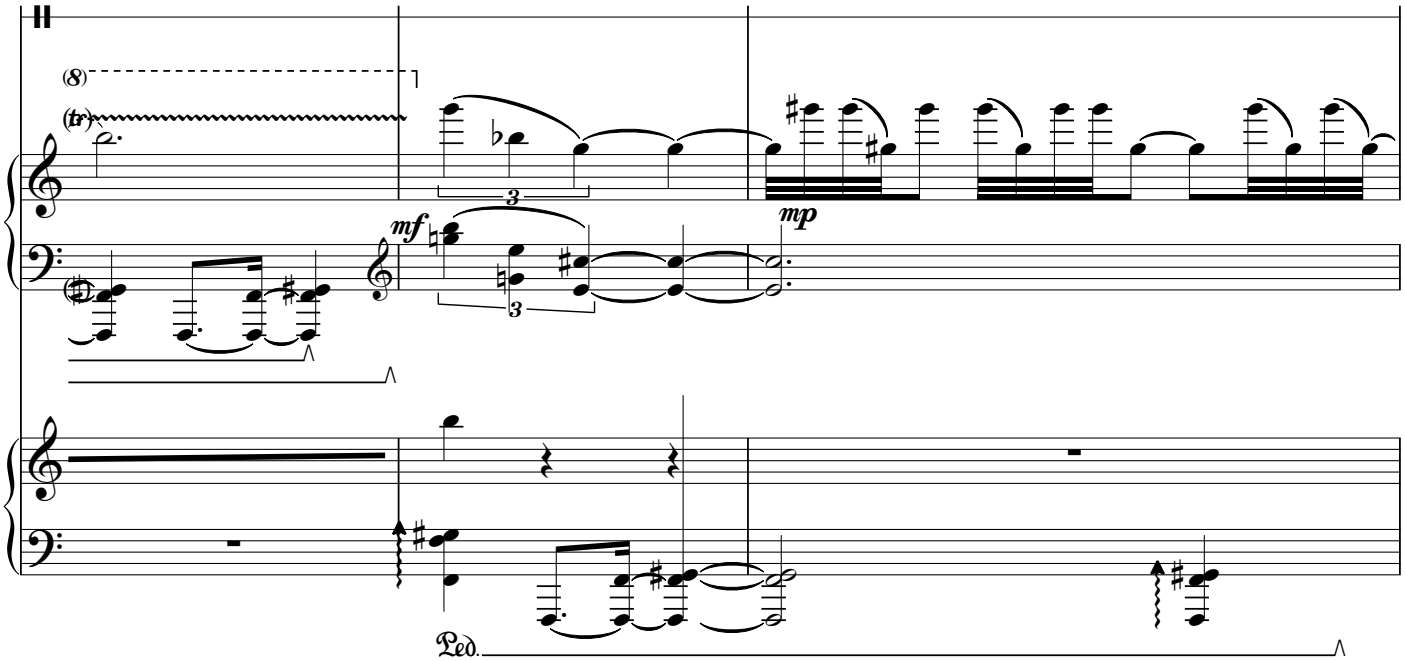
8vb

p *p*

12

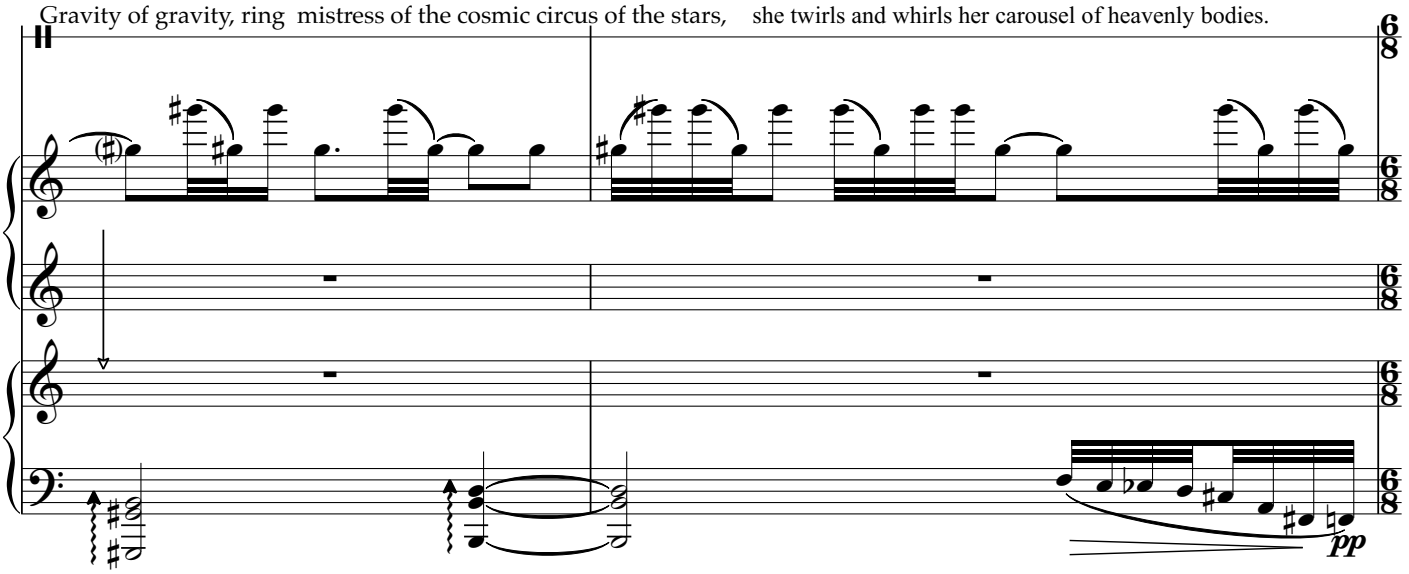


14



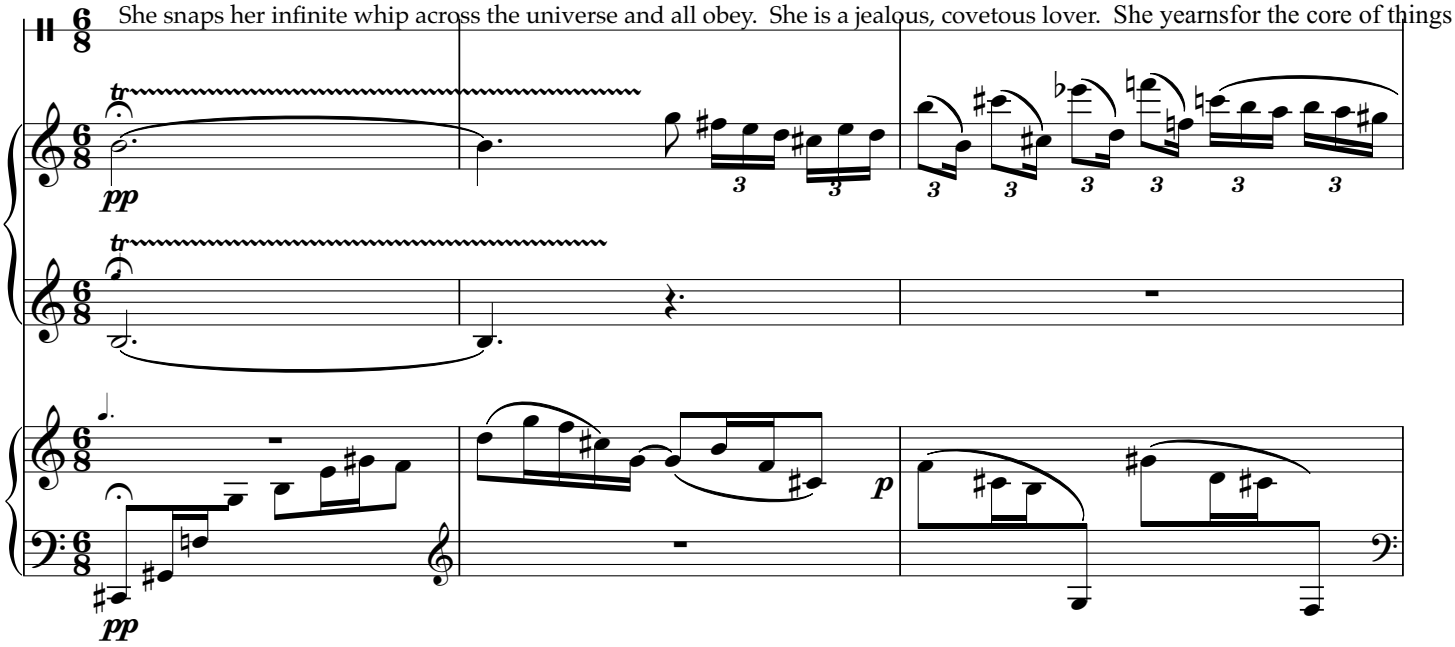
17

Narr. Gravity of gravity, ring mistress of the cosmic circus of the stars, she twirls and whirls her carousel of heavenly bodies.



19

She snaps her infinite whip across the universe and all obey. She is a jealous, covetous lover. She yearnsfor the core of things



22

and gathers them into herself, cradling all in a tender net.

Spread across light-years of space-time,

26

She snaps her impossibly long whip against the forces

Circus-like music

♩.= ca. 62

that would fling all into a formless chaos.

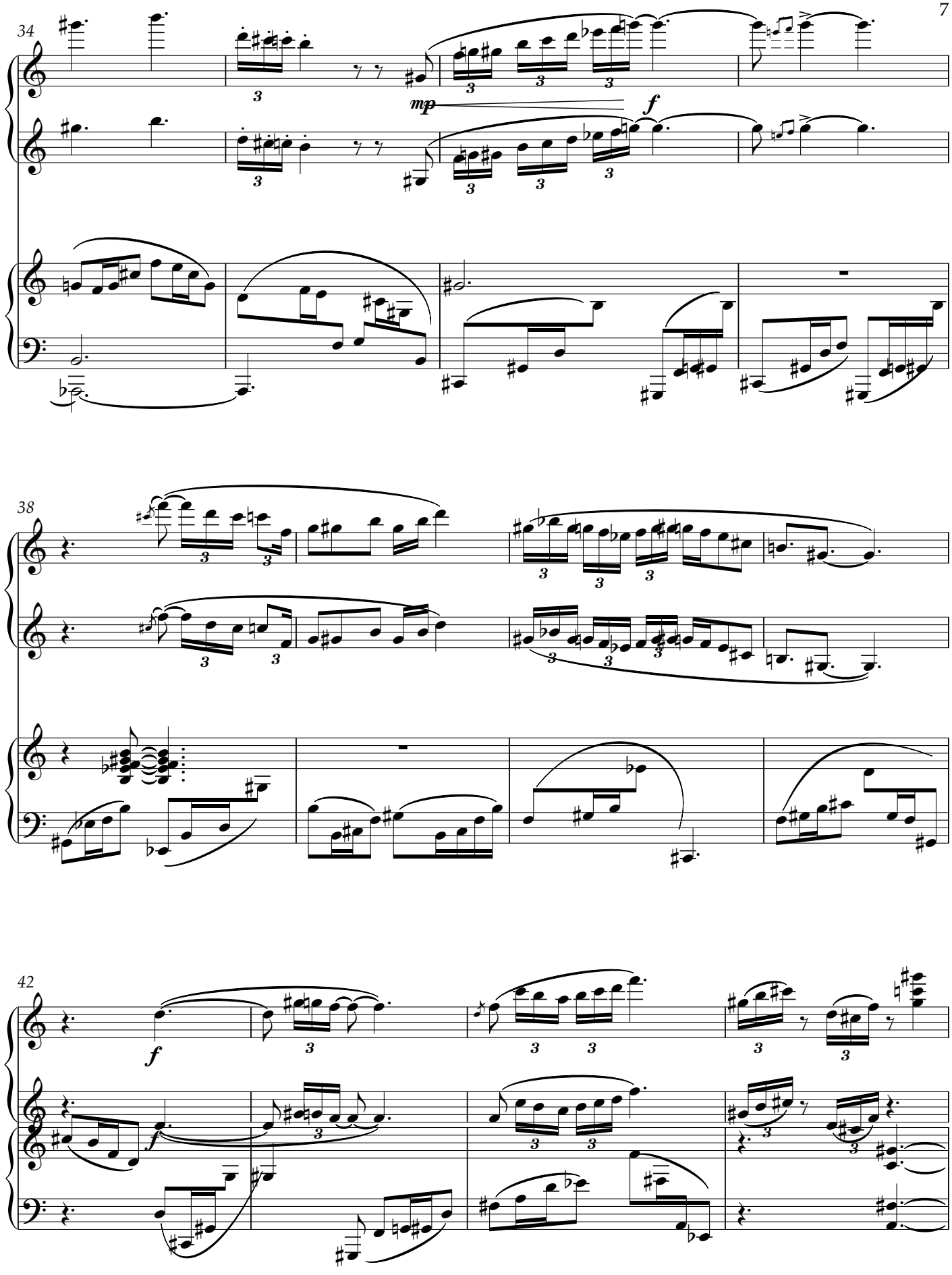
♩.= ca. 62

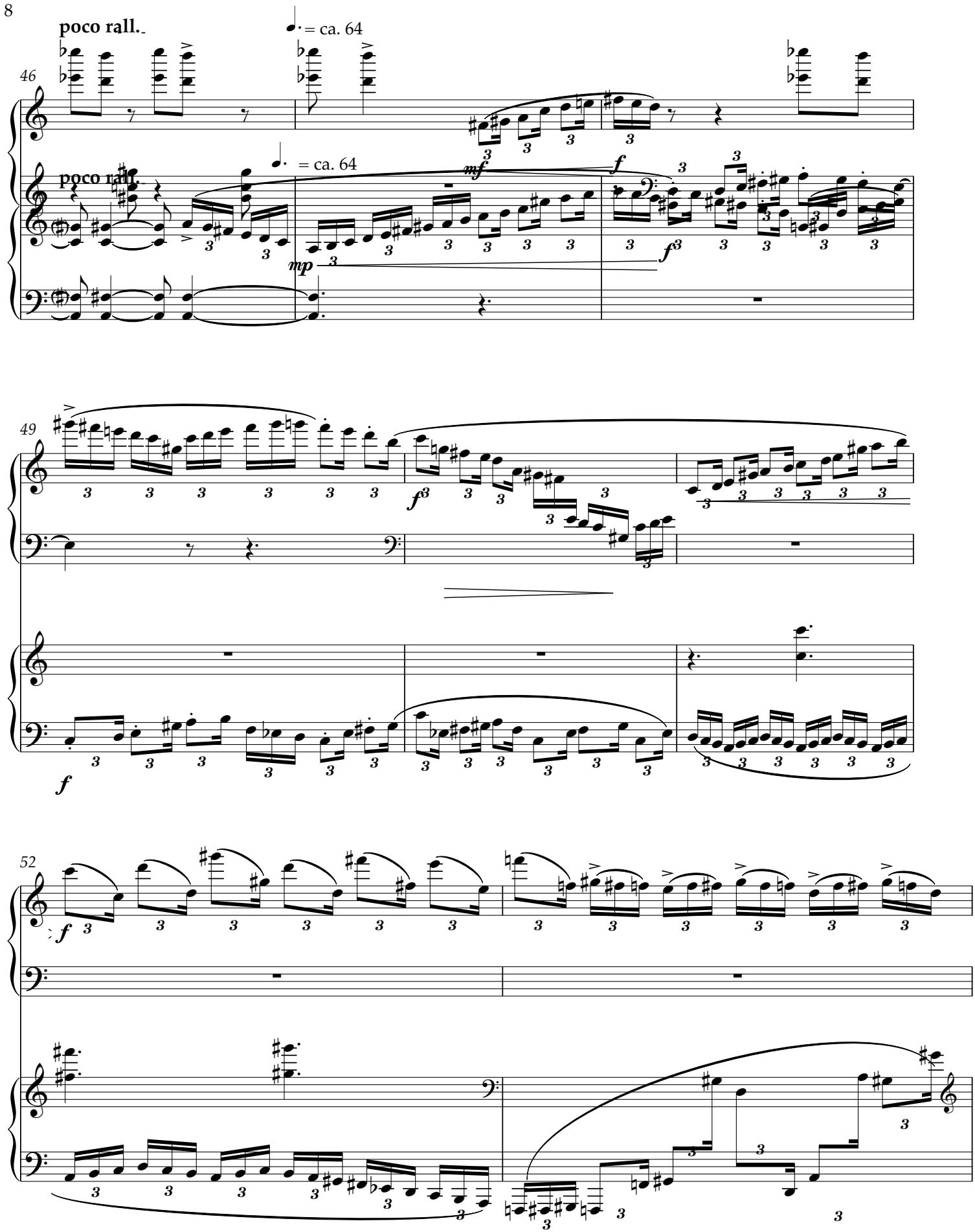
mf

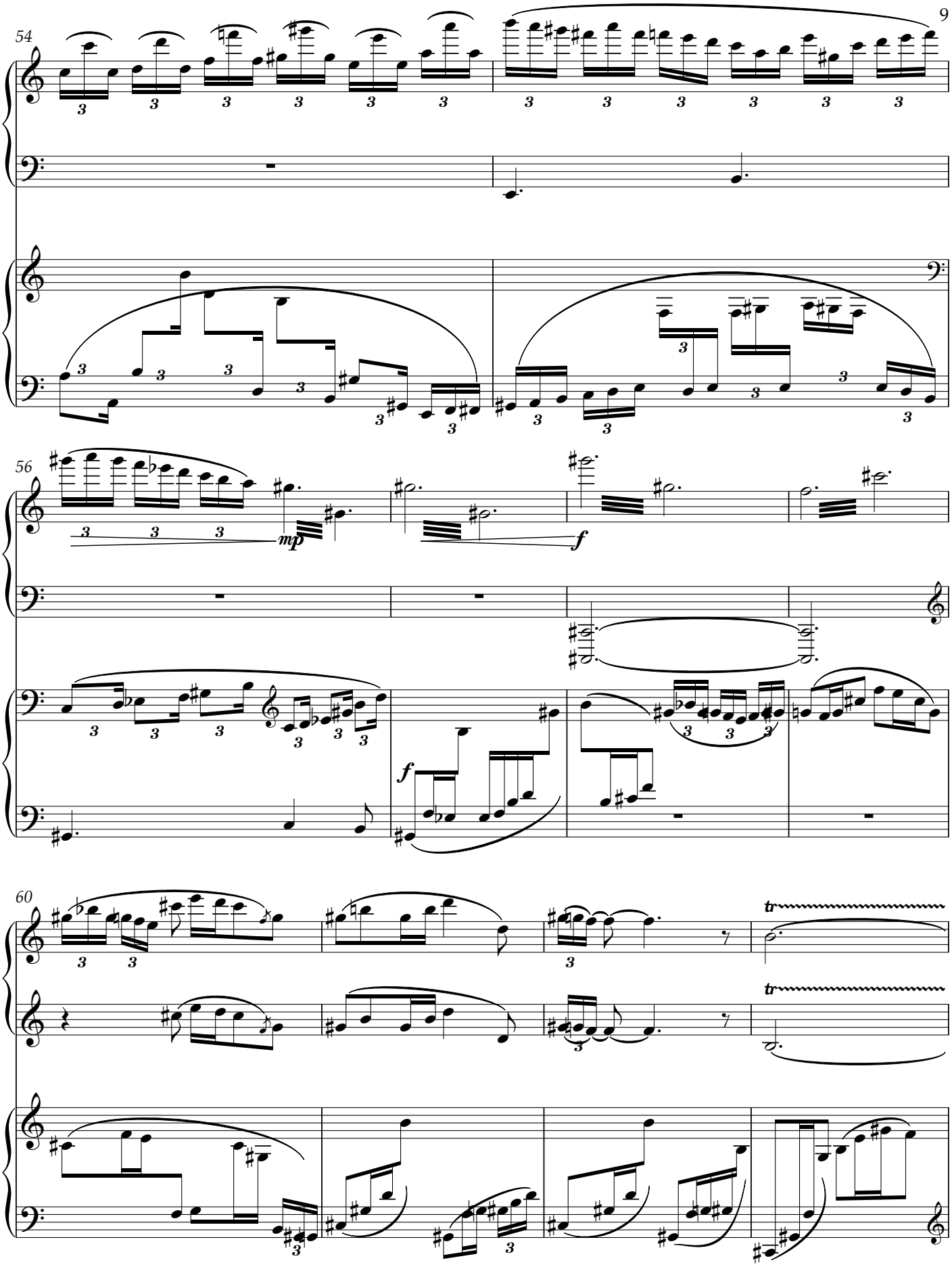
Lightly pedal in this section

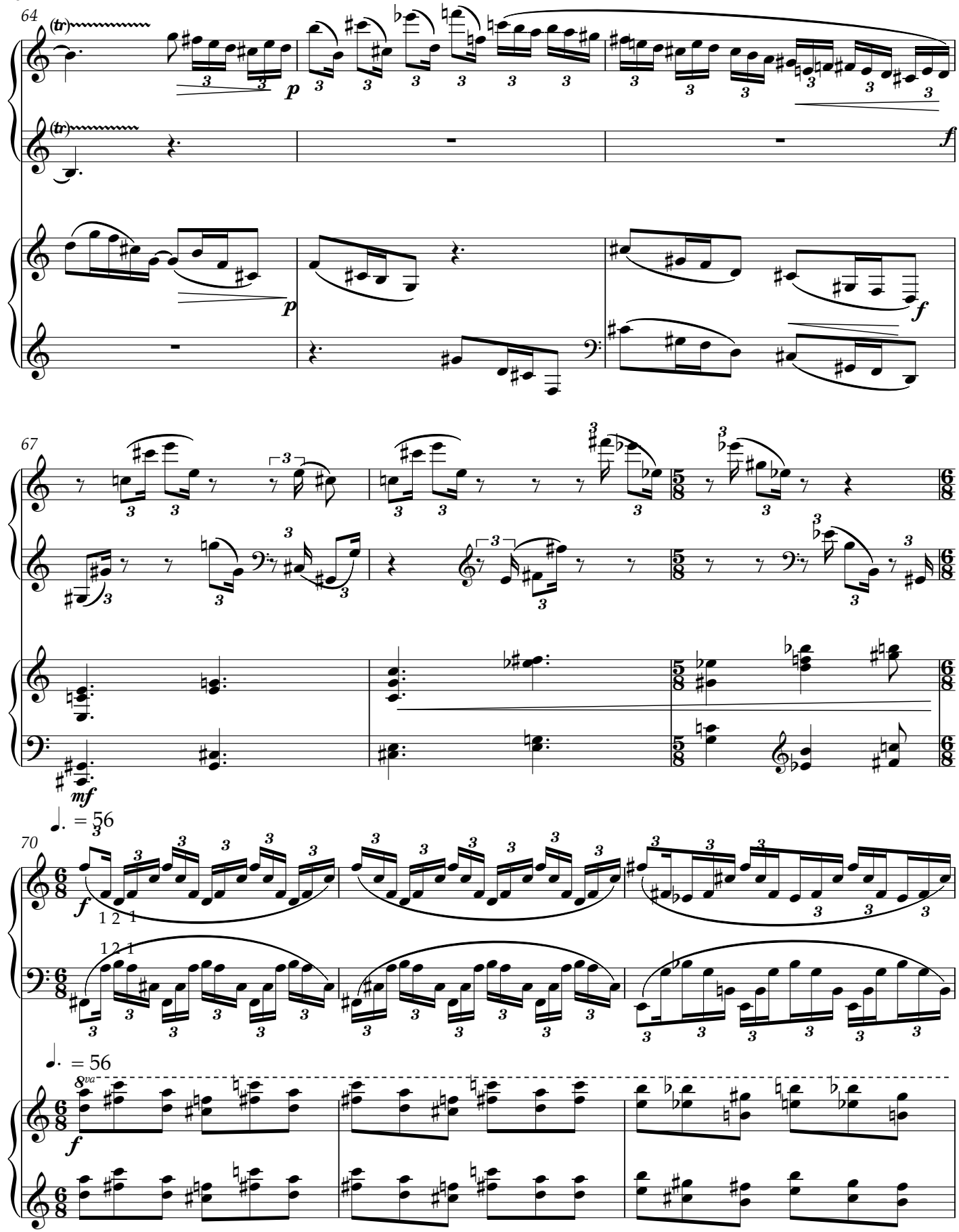
30

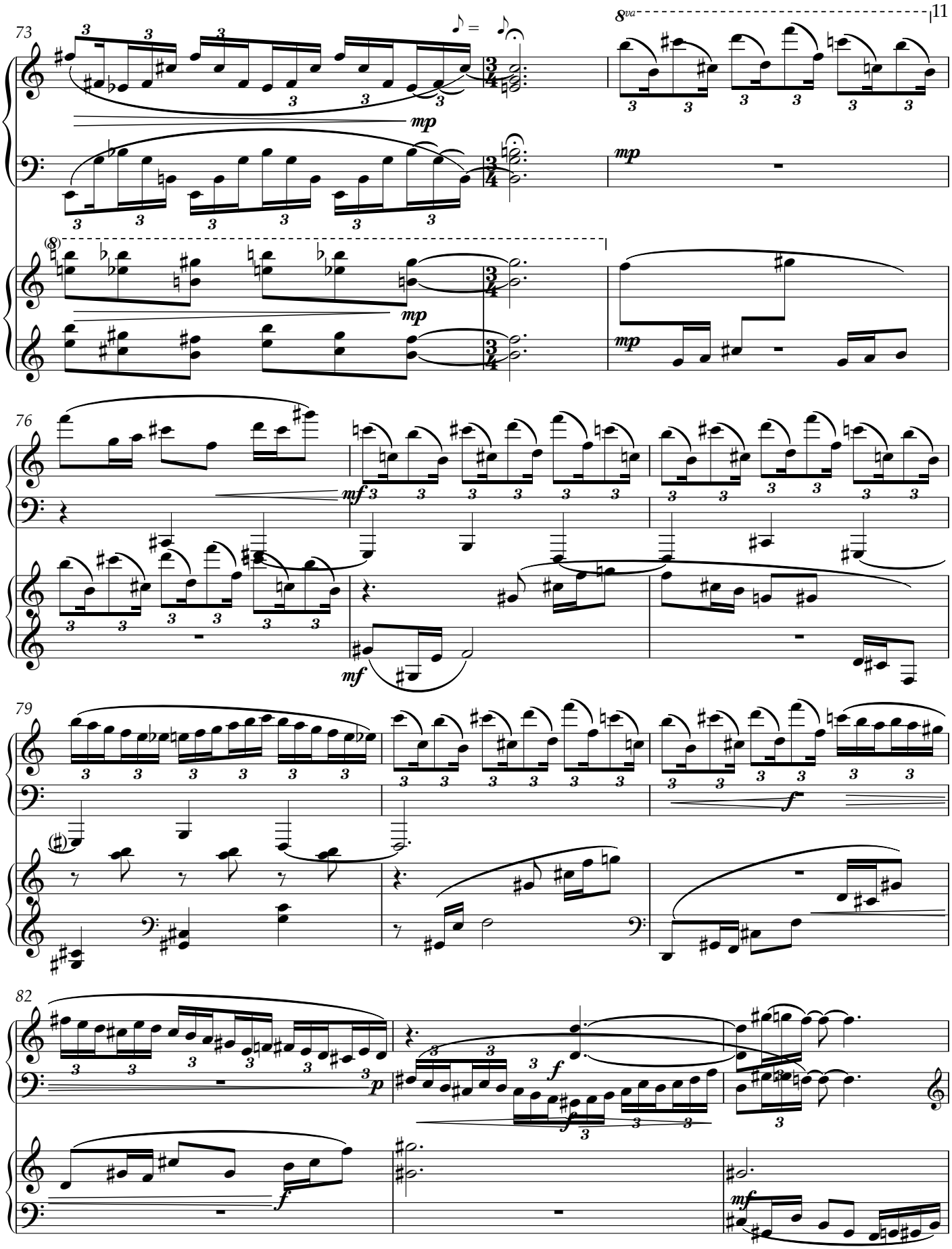
mf

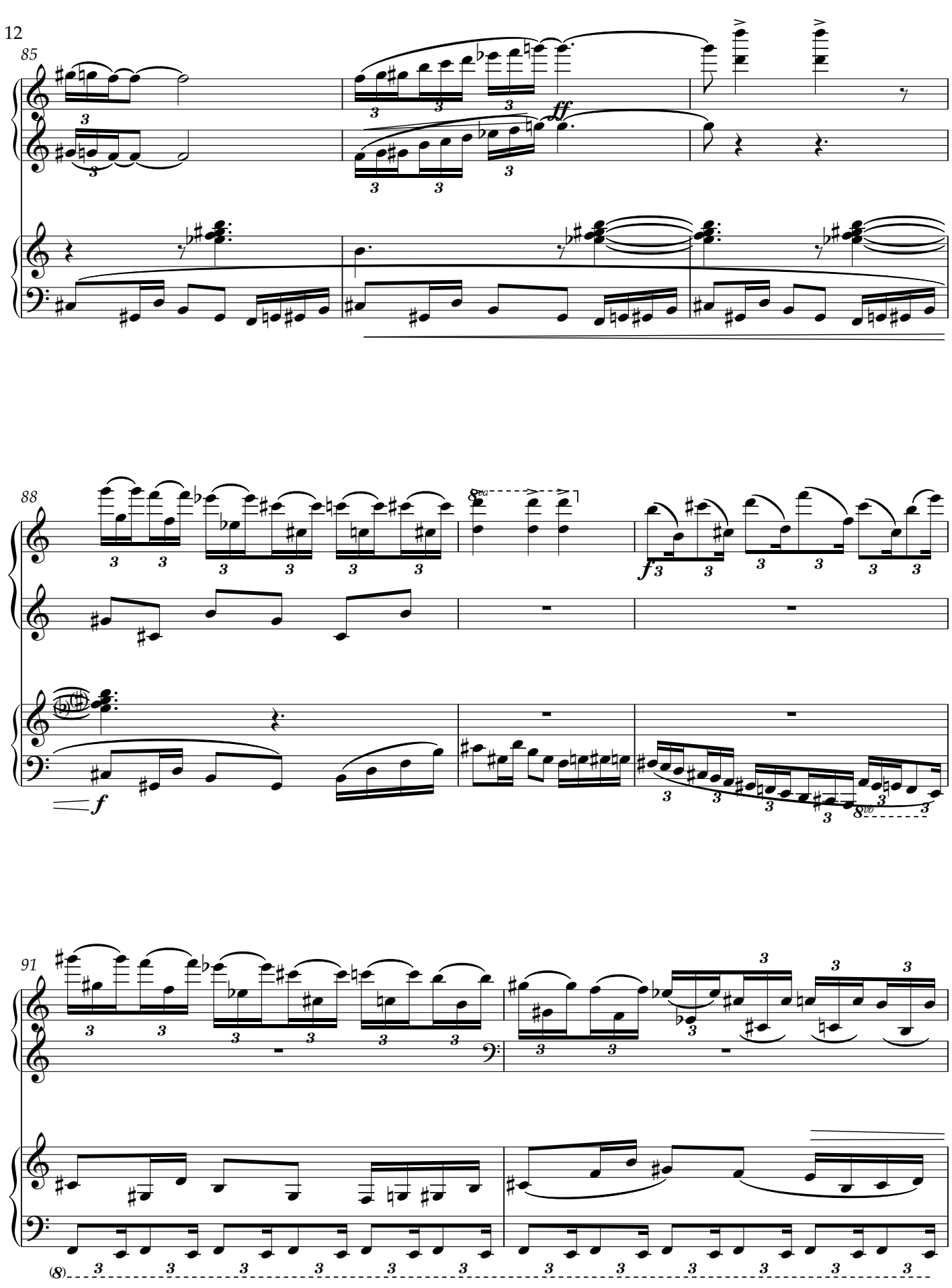

34
mp
f
38
42
f
f


poco rall.
= ca. 64
46
poco rall.
= ca. 64
mf
f
mp
f
49
f
f
52
f


54
56
mp
f
f
60
tr
tr


64
(tr)
p
f
67
mf
70
♩. = 56
1 2 1
8va


73
8va
mp
76
mf
79
f
82
p
f
mf


85
ff
88
f
91

93

rit.

Ahh, but what
the eye cannot see,

Blusey, lazy improv feel

rit.

97

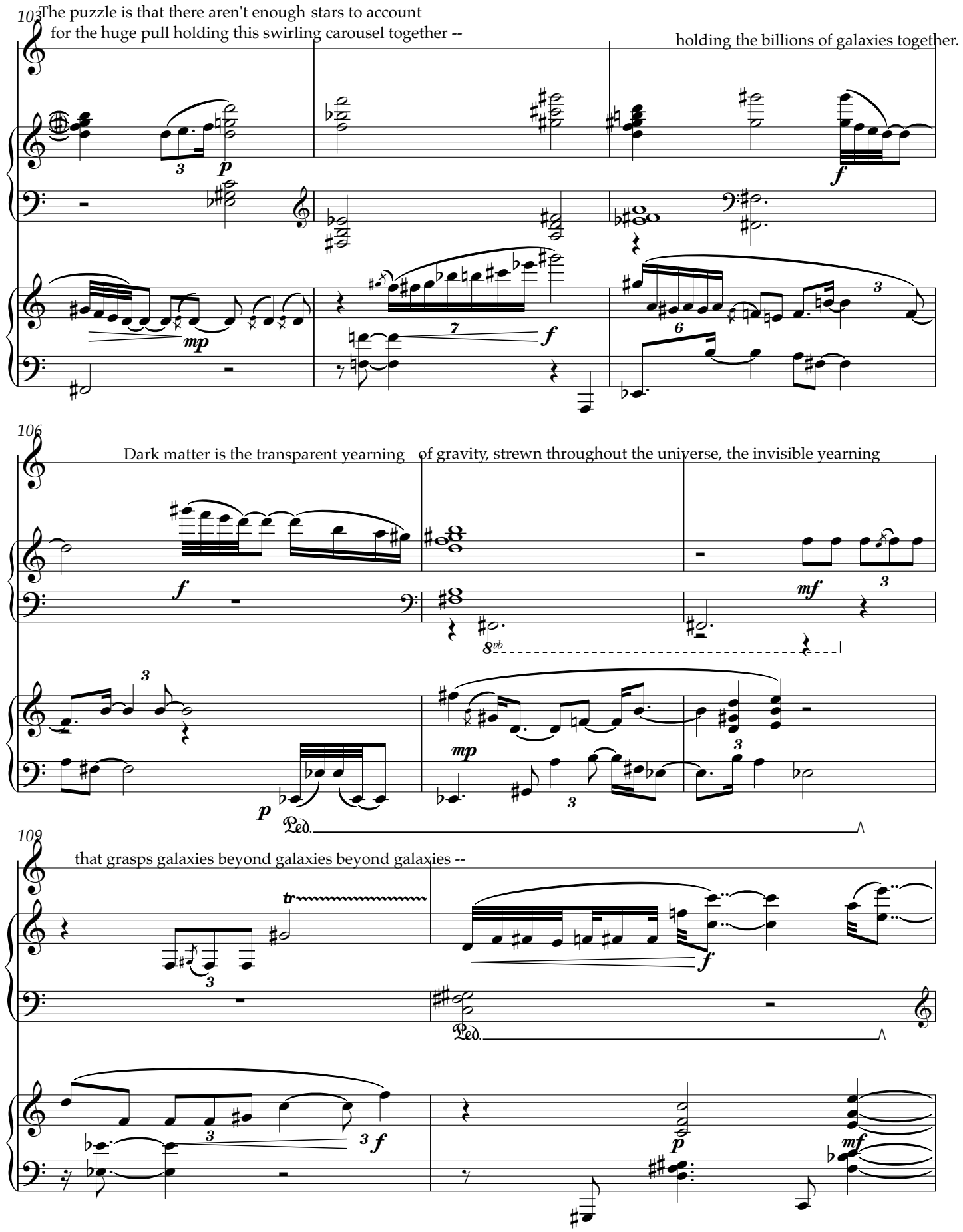
the mind can conjure,

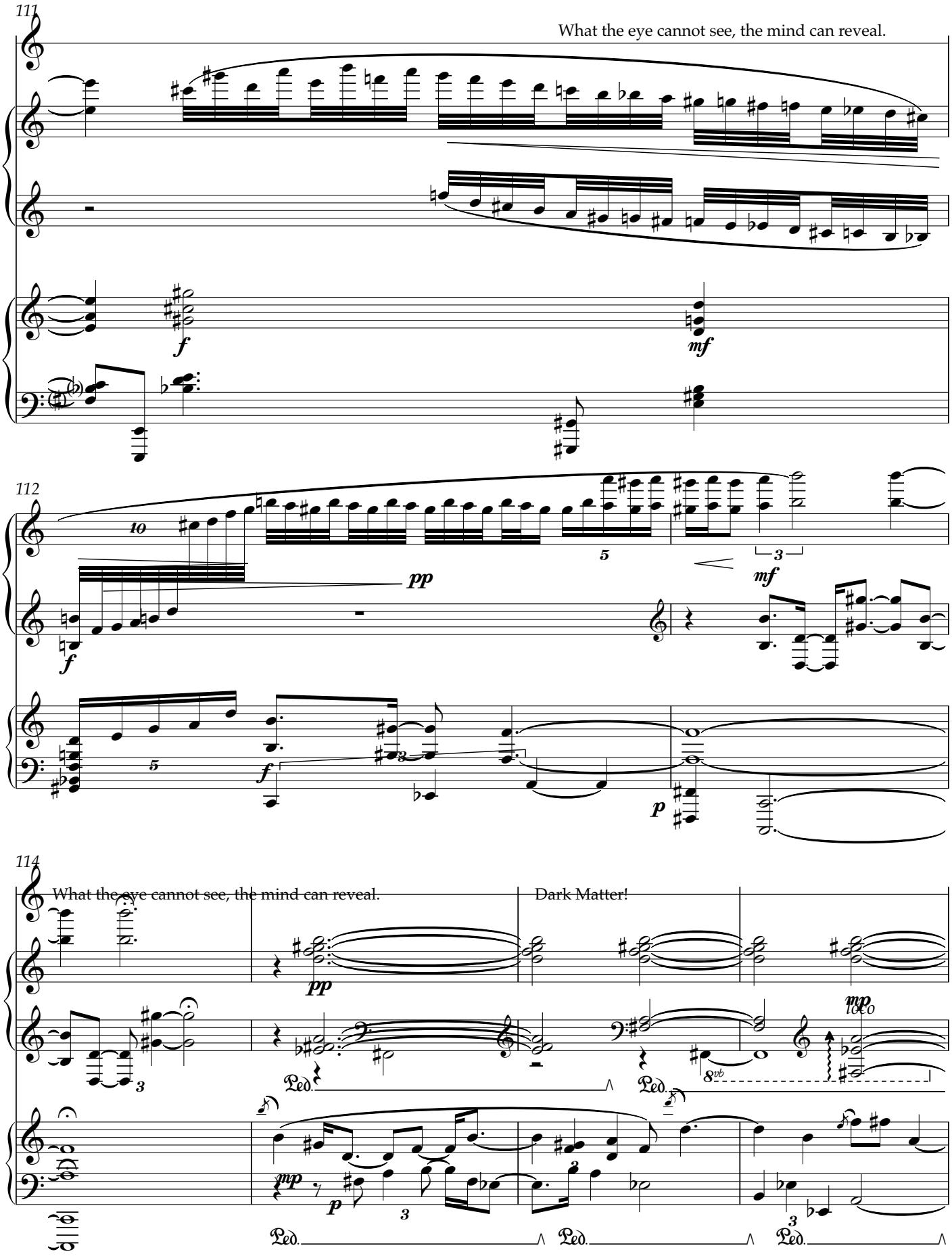
what the eye cannot see, the mind can reveal.

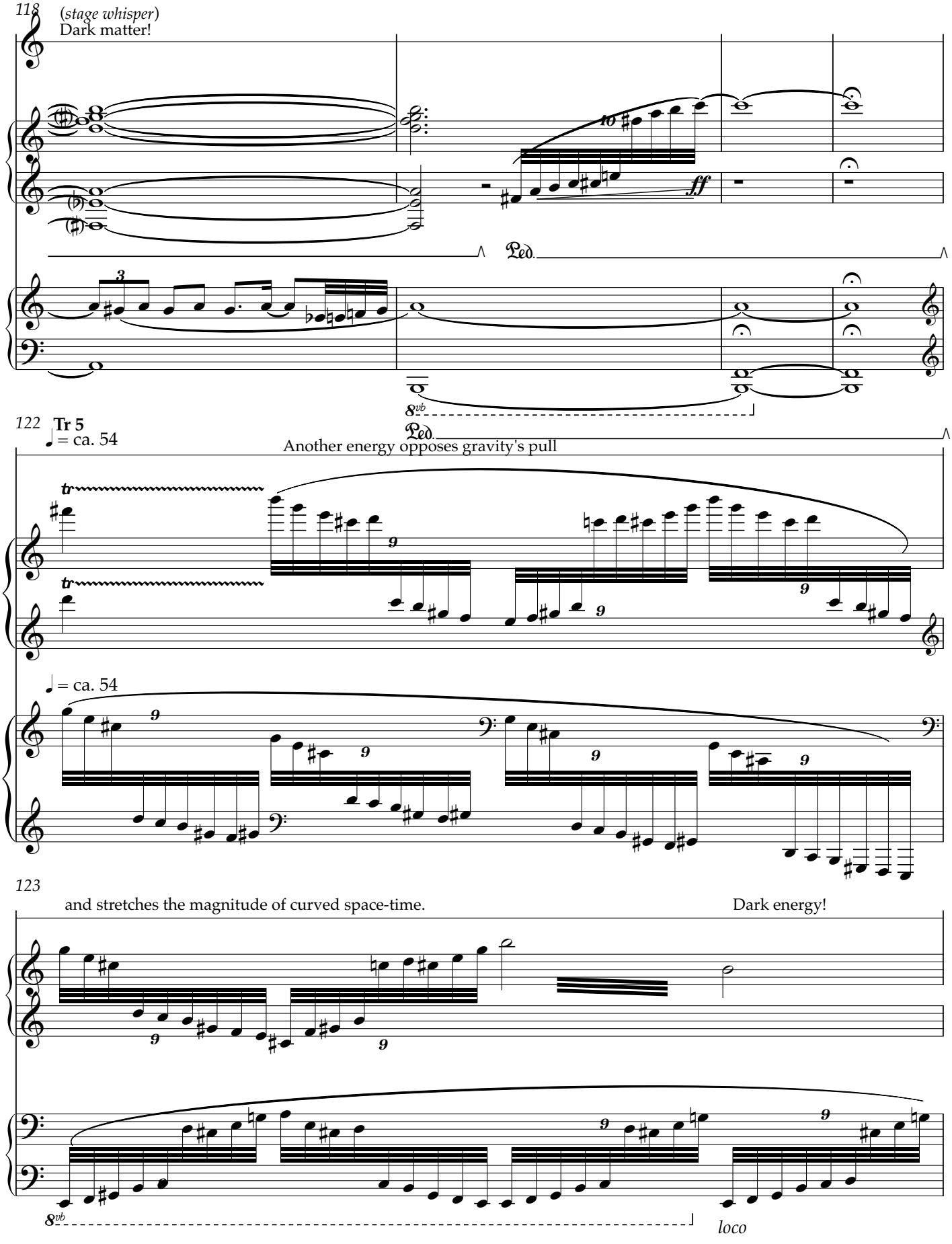
Pedal throughout this section

101

Dark matter!


103
The puzzle is that there aren't enough stars to account
for the huge pull holding this swirling carousel together --
holding the billions of galaxies together.
106
Dark matter is the transparent yearning
of gravity, strewn throughout the universe, the invisible yearning
109
that grasps galaxies beyond galaxies beyond galaxies --

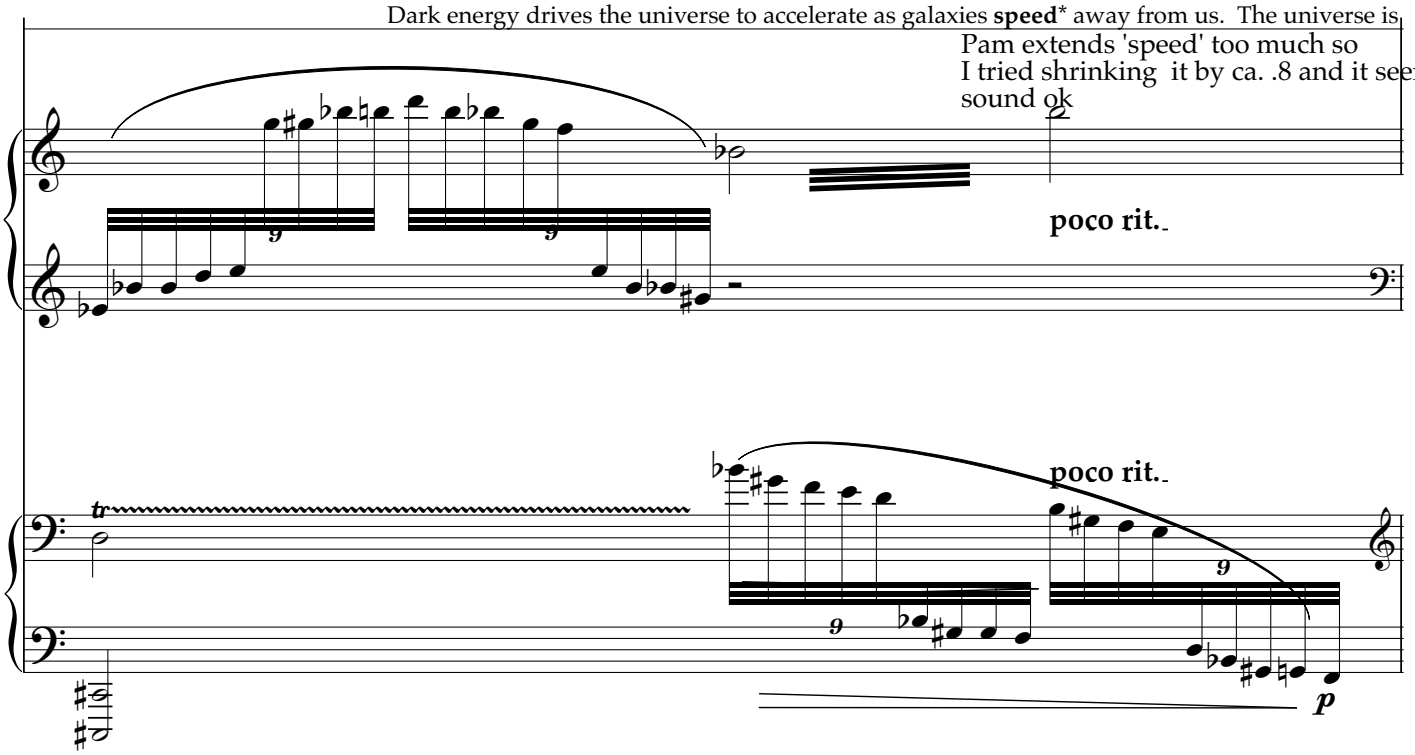

111
What the eye cannot see, the mind can reveal.
112
114
What the eye cannot see, the mind can reveal.
Dark Matter!


118
(stage whisper)
Dark matter!
ff
Ped.
8vb
122
Tr 5
♩ = ca. 54
Another energy opposes gravity's pull
♩ = ca. 54
123
and stretches the magnitude of curved space-time.
Dark energy!
8vb
loco

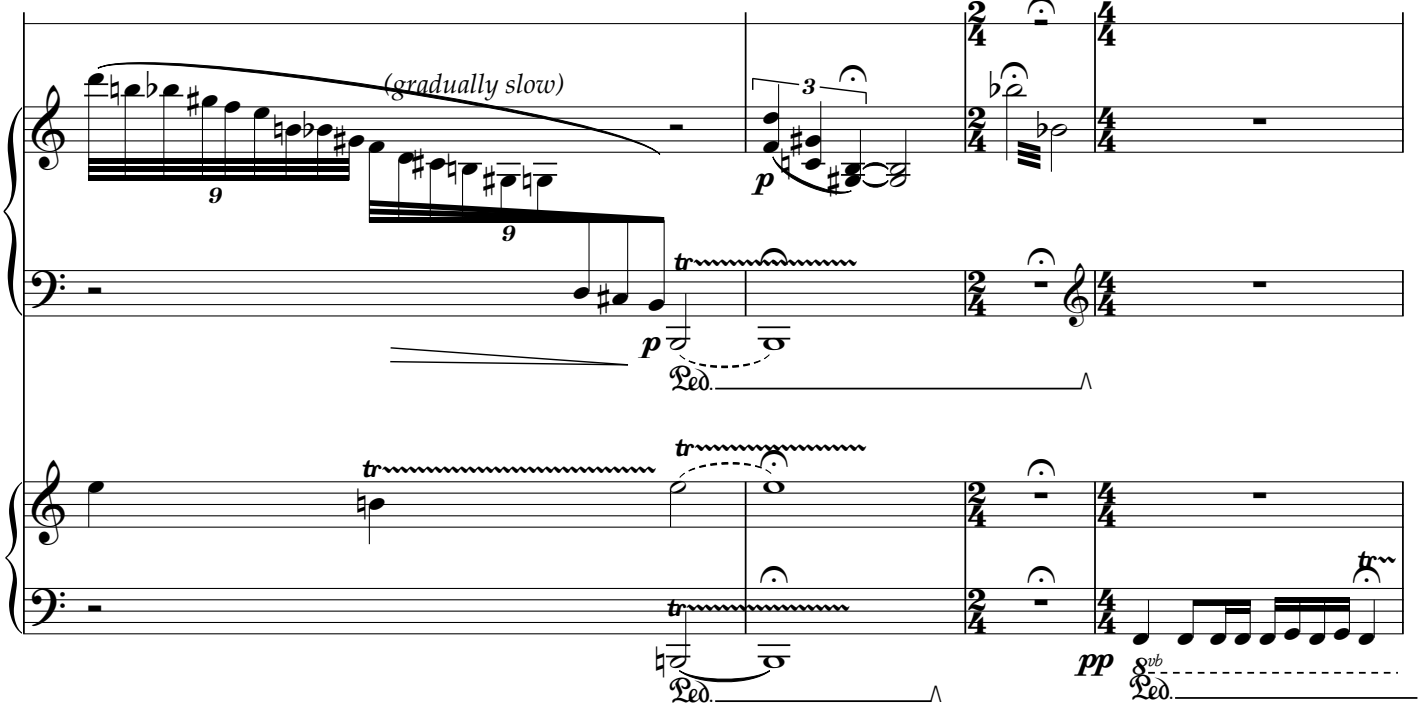
124

Dark energy drives the universe to accelerate as galaxies **speed*** away from us. The universe is

Pam extends 'speed' too much so
I tried shrinking it by ca. .8 and it seems to sound ok



125 not static, it is expanding. And every galaxy embraces a black hole of unending creation and destruction.



With energy and force

129

♩ = ca. 60

8va

f 3

Ped.

♩ = ca. 60

(tr)

(8)

*

f

pp

Ped.

Blurred pedalled notes contrast with secco articulation

131

With energy and force

8va

f 3 (loco)

3

3

Ped.

With energy and force

(8)

Ped.

Ped.

133

8va

8va

(loco)

3

3

3

Ped.

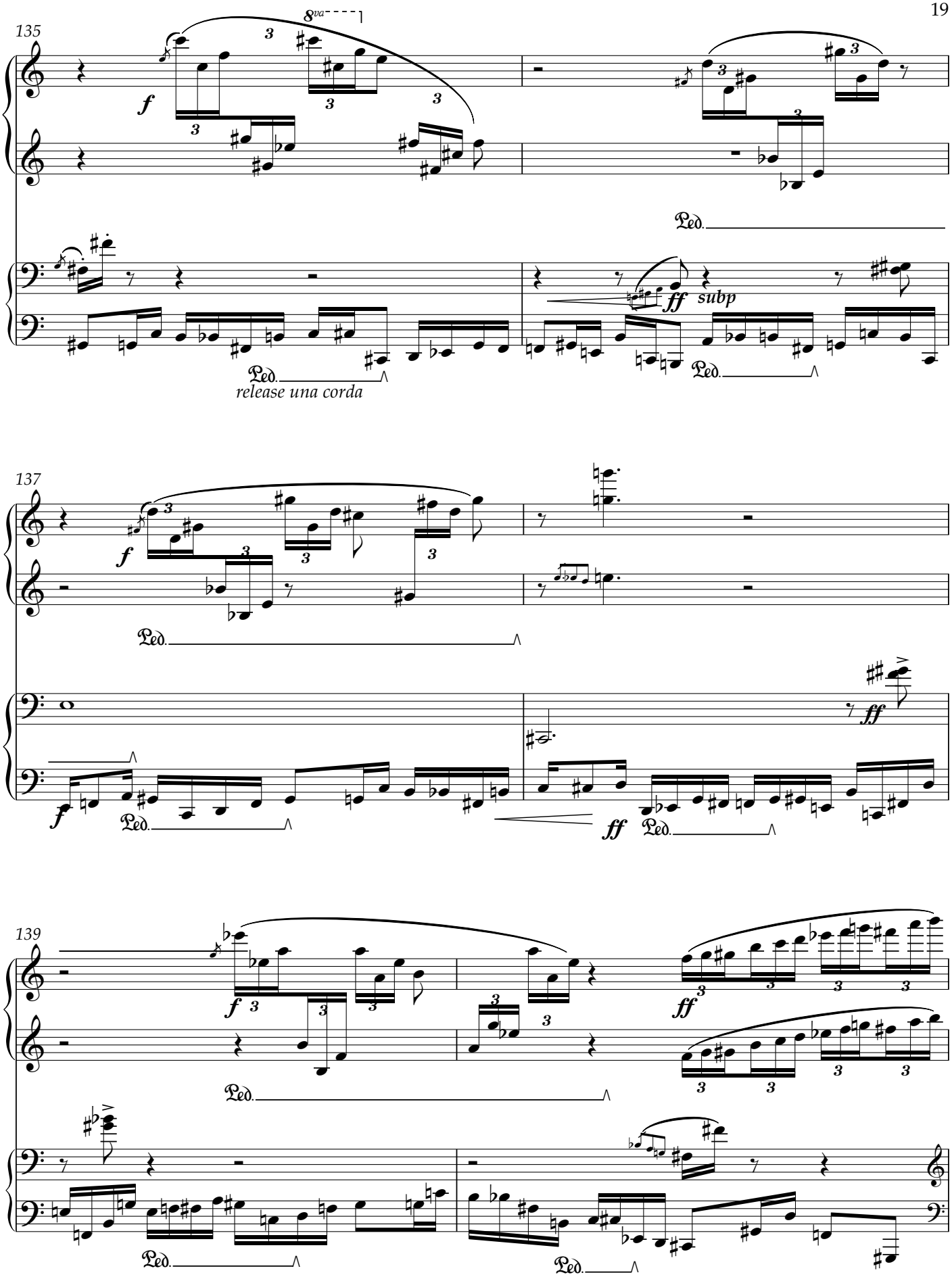
ff

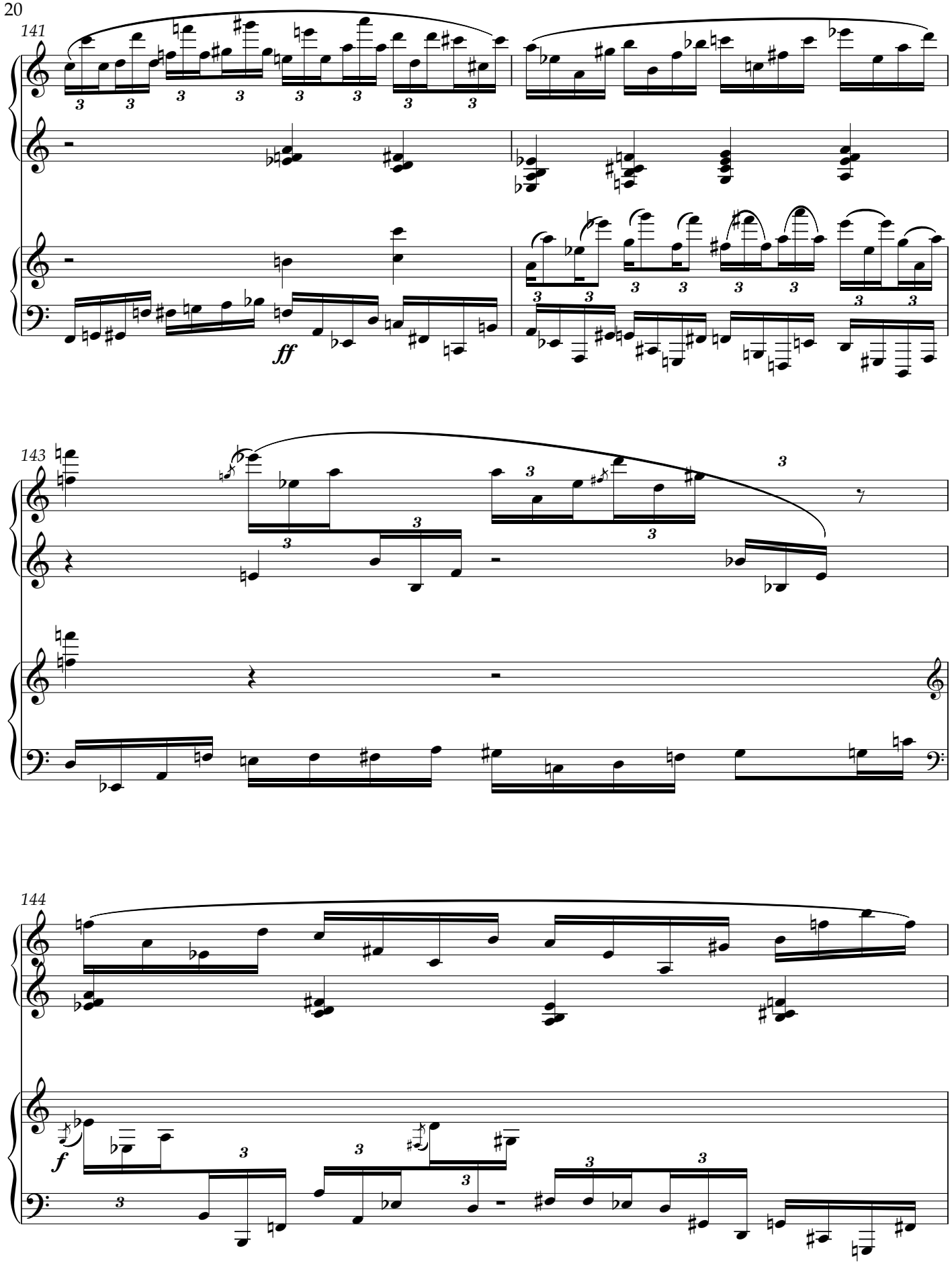
(8)

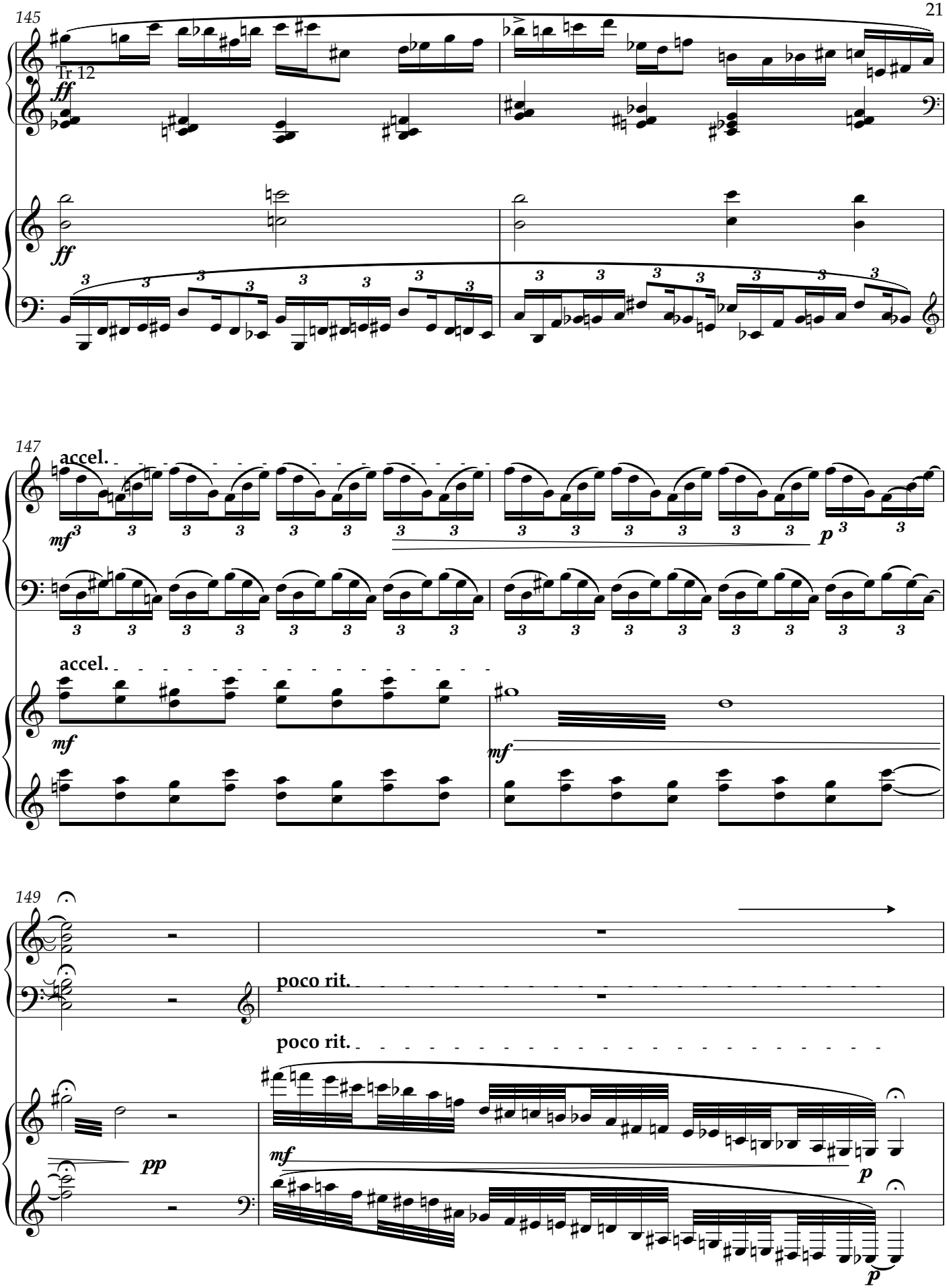
Ped.

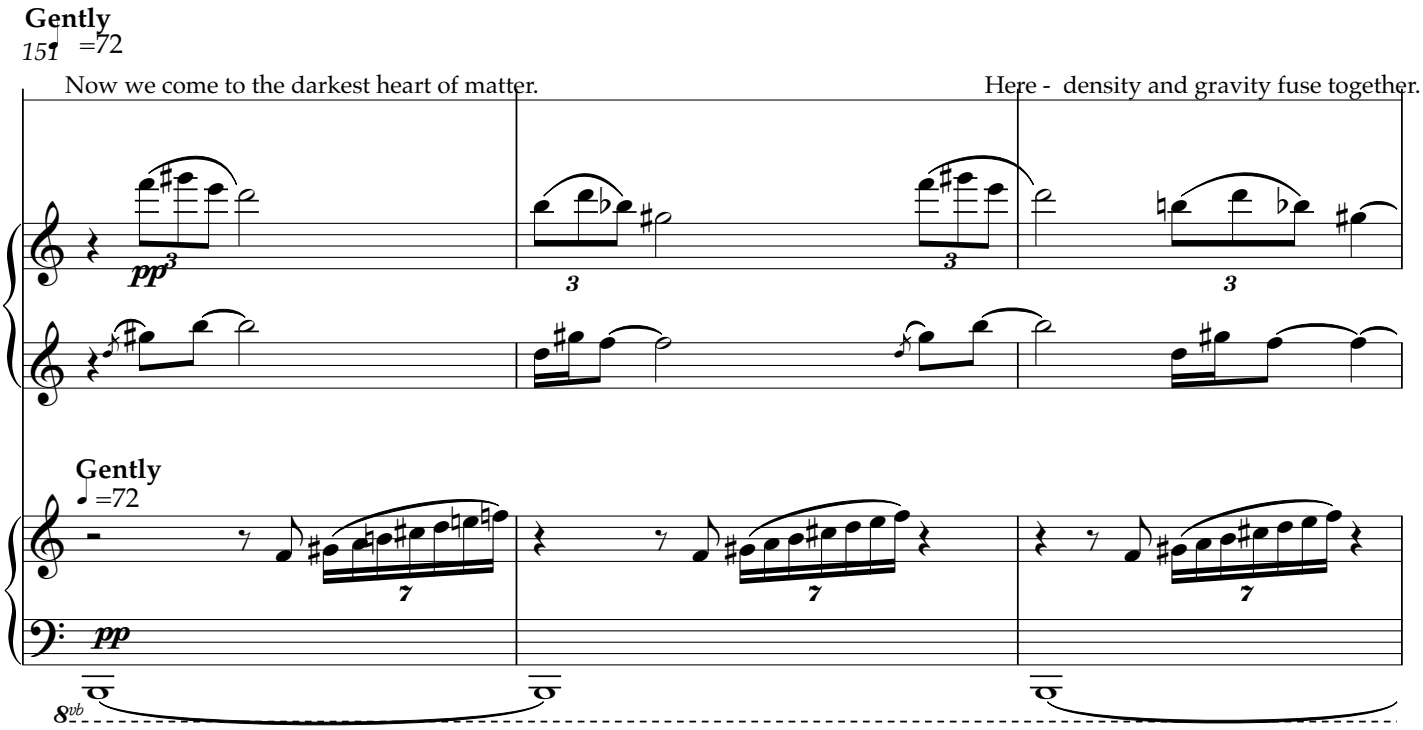
p una corda

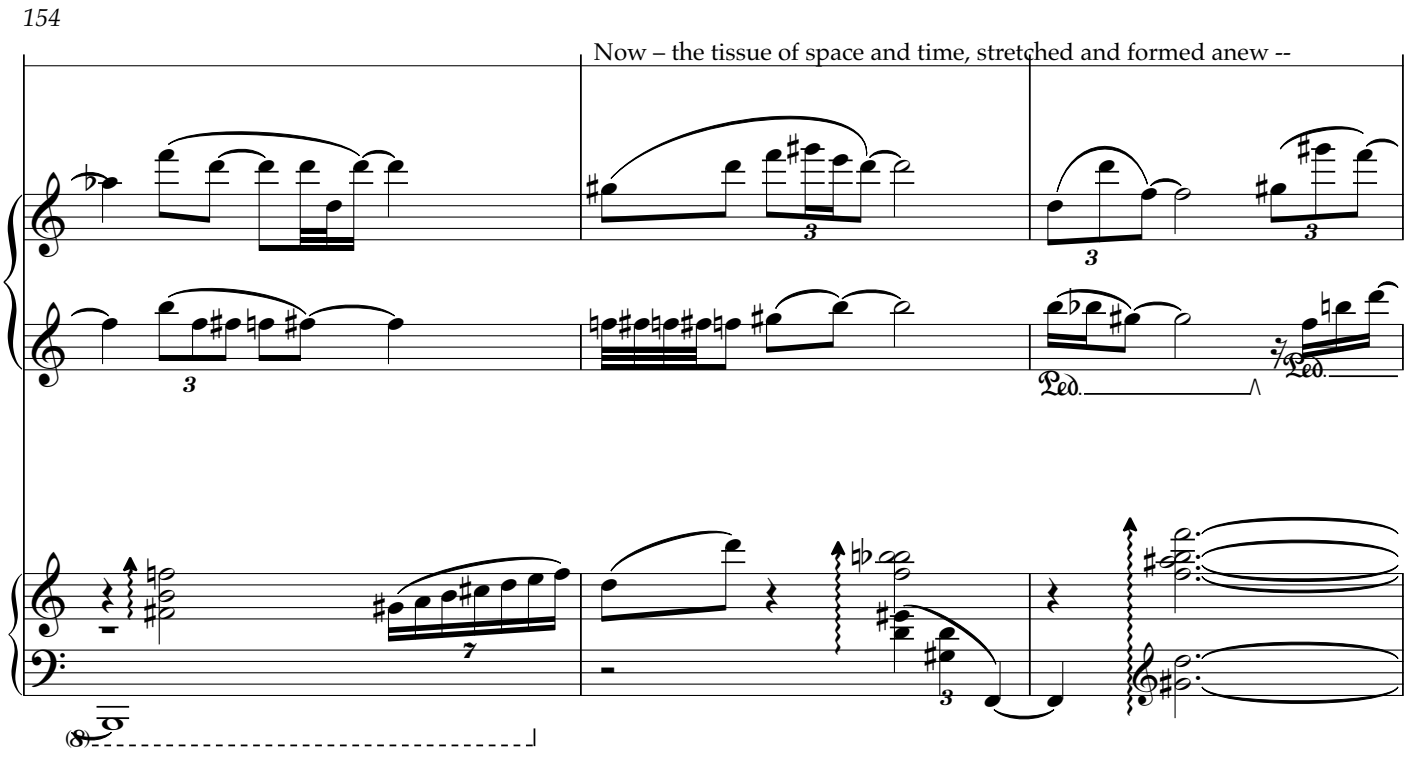
Ped.


135
8va
f
Ped.
release una corda
ff
subp
137
f
ff
139


141
ff
143
144
f


145
Tr 12
ff
ff
147
accel.
mf
p
accel.
mf
mf
149
poco rit.
poco rit.
pp
mf
p
p


Gently
151
♩ =72
Now we come to the darkest heart of matter.
Here - density and gravity fuse together.
pp
Gently
♩ =72
pp
8vb


154
Now – the tissue of space and time, stretched and formed anew --
Ped.
Ped.
8vb

157

not an absence of matter but the most profound presence of matter -

8va (loco) l.v.

Ped.

159

not an absence of space - but a point of ultimate singularity, a point of maximum density, from which no light can escape.

8va mf p mf poco

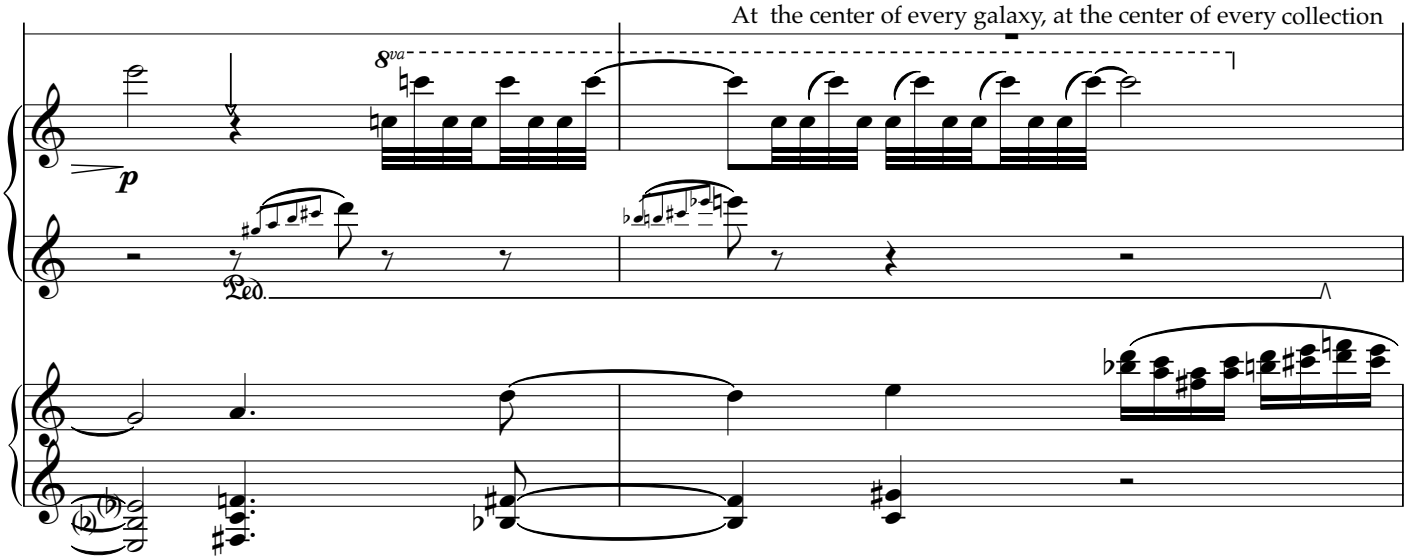
161

8va mf p

p mf p mf p

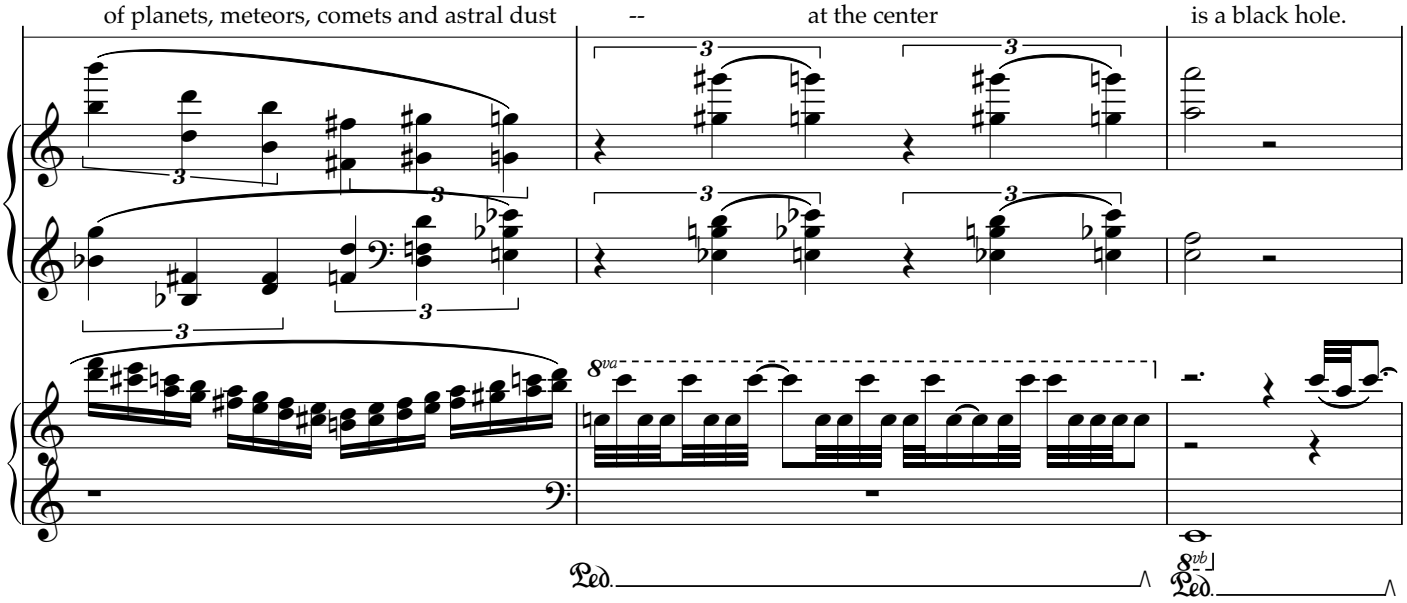
163

At the center of every galaxy, at the center of every collection

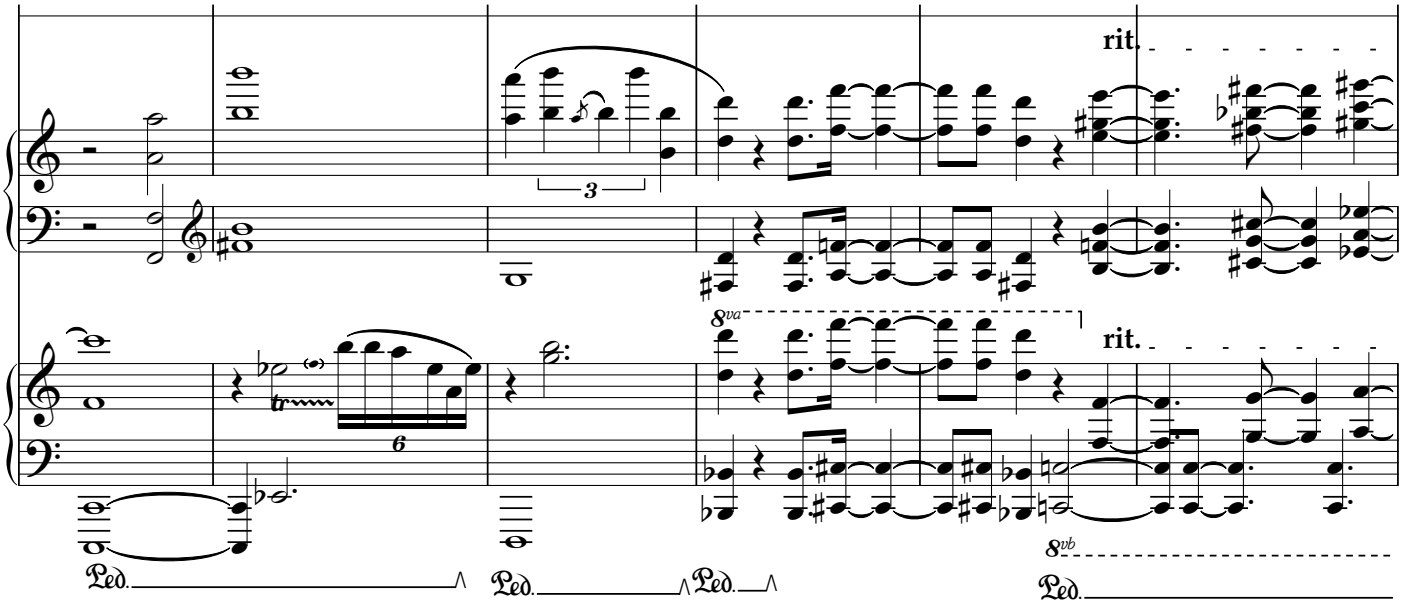


165

of planets, meteors, comets and astral dust -- at the center is a black hole.



168



Hold until end of narrative if needed.

Dramatically

=72-80

174

172

8va

mf

mf

Hold until end of narrative

Dramatically

=72-80

mf

(8)

Ped.

173

Ped.

mf

mp

mf

174

mp

mf

ff

)

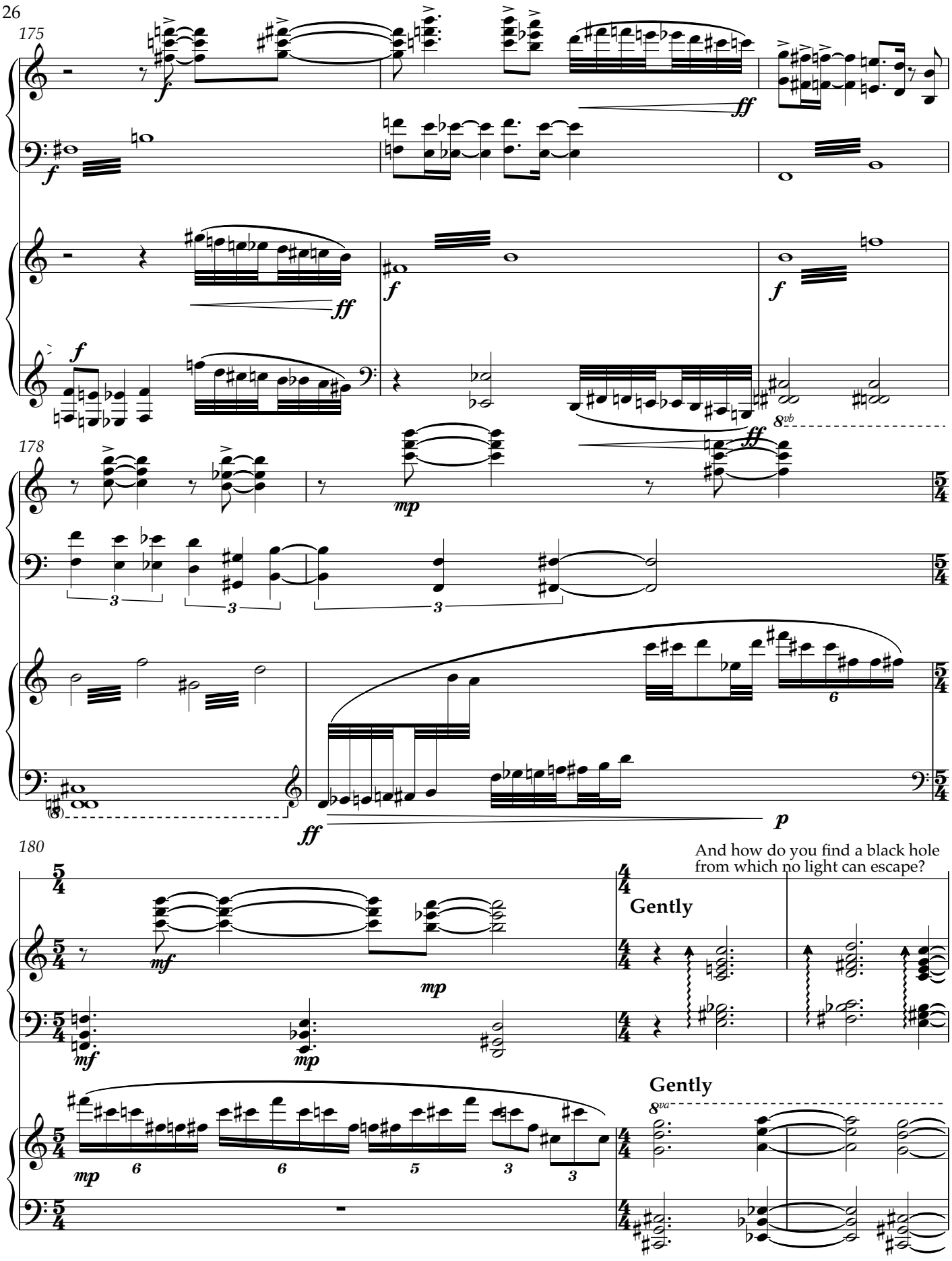
mf

)

mp

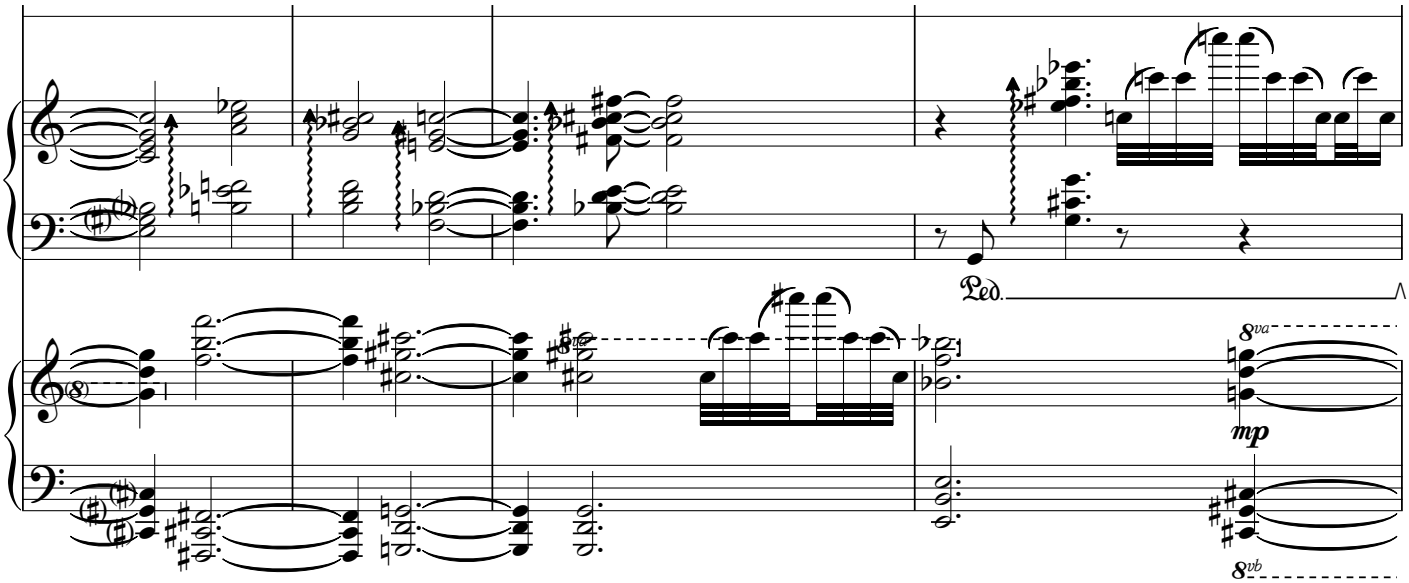
mf

ff


175
178
180
And how do you find a black hole
from which no light can escape?
Gently
Gently

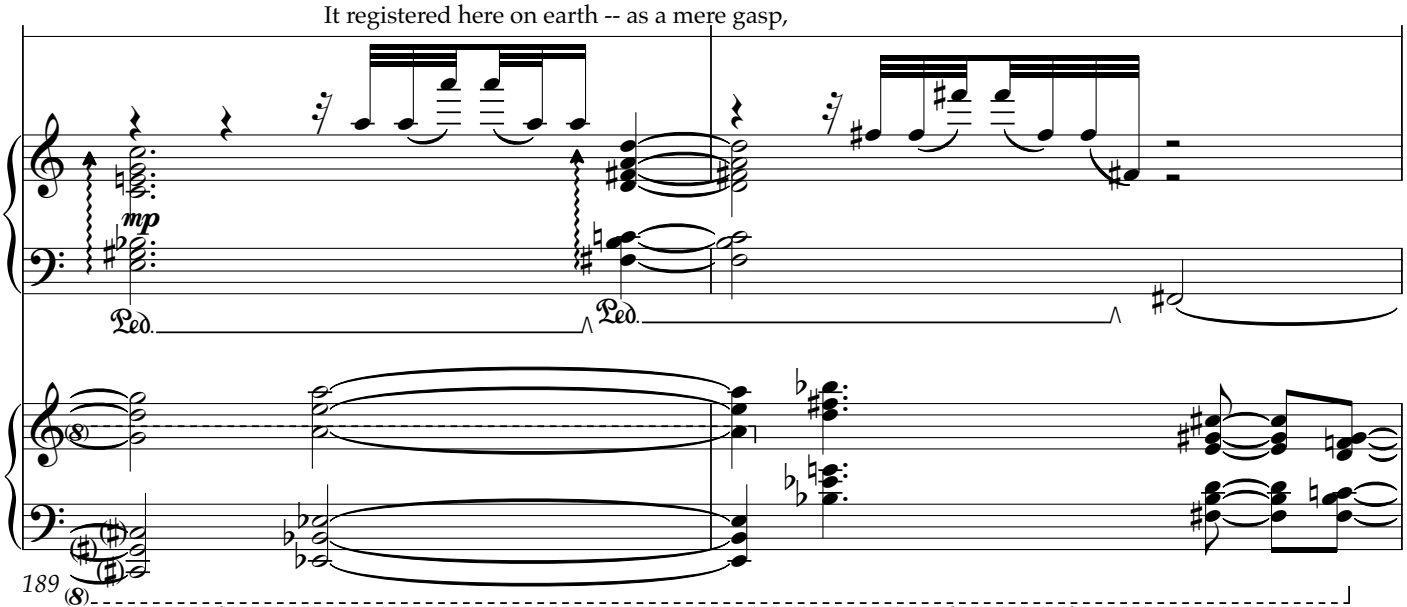
183

Astronomers recently detected a ripple in space/time called a gravitational wave. Born of the cataclysmic collision of two black holes, this wave traveled 1.3 billion light years through time and space.



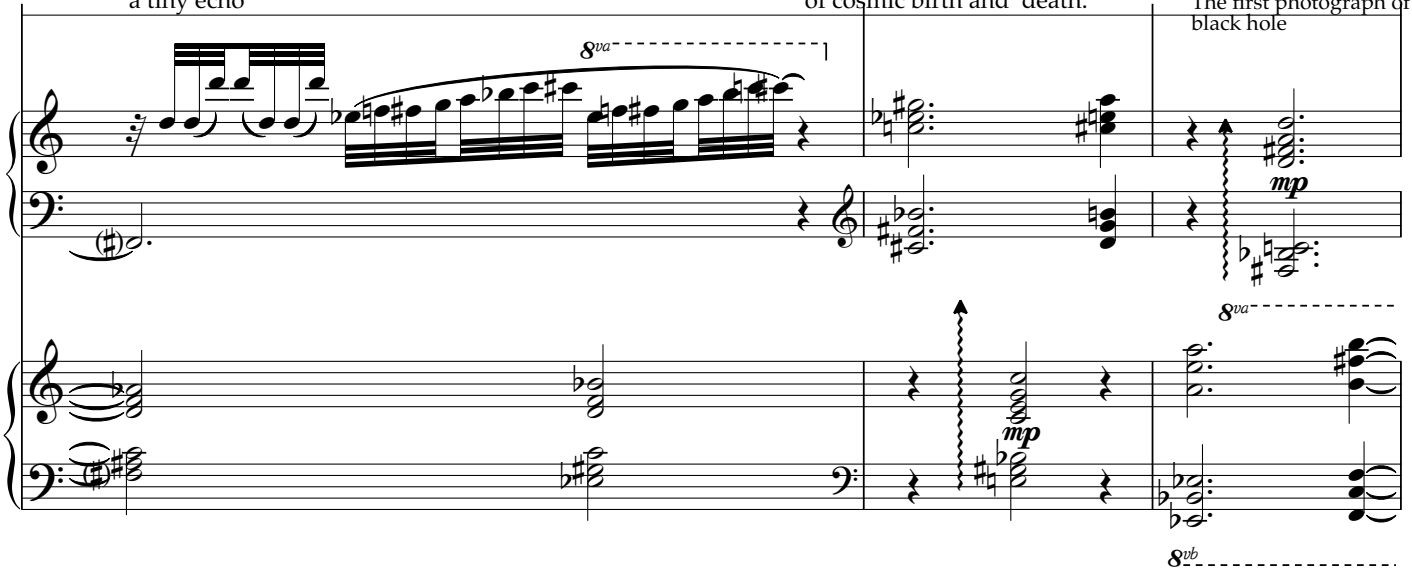
187

It registered here on earth -- as a mere gasp,



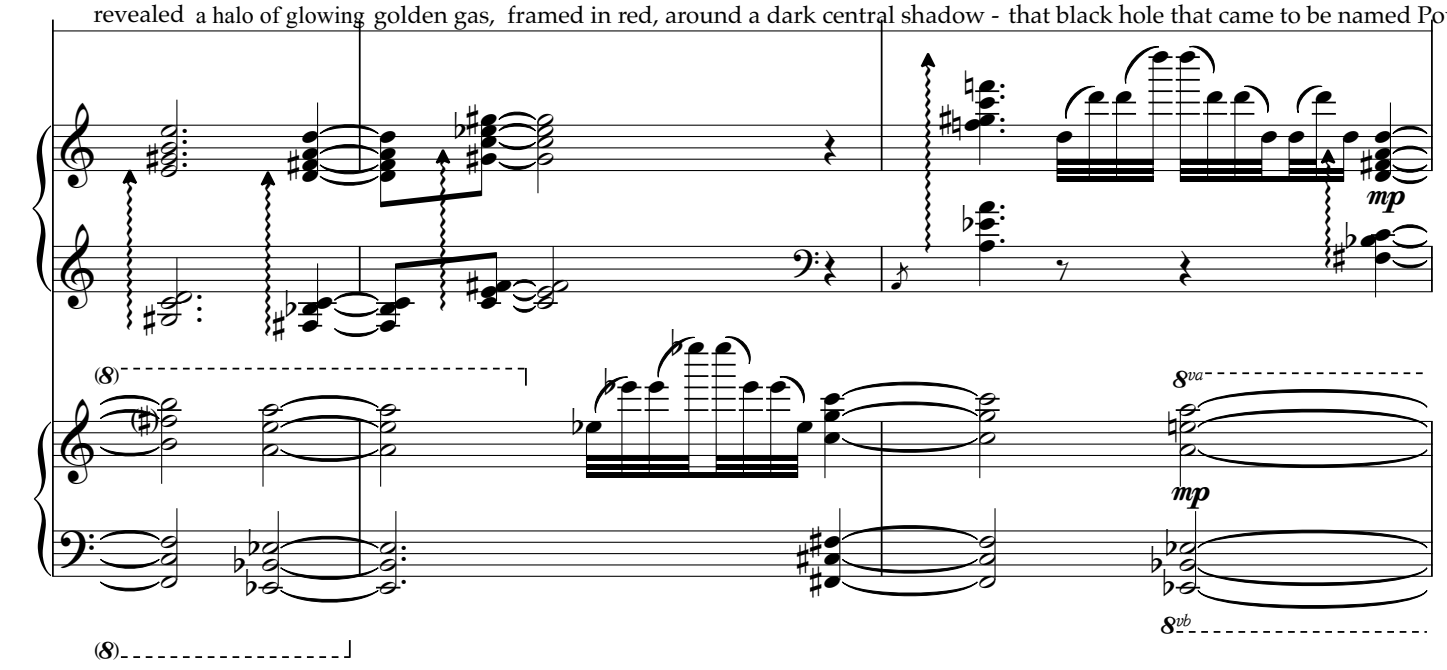
189

a tiny echo of cosmic birth and death. The first photograph of a black hole



192

revealed a halo of glowing golden gas, framed in red, around a dark central shadow - that black hole that came to be named Powehi.



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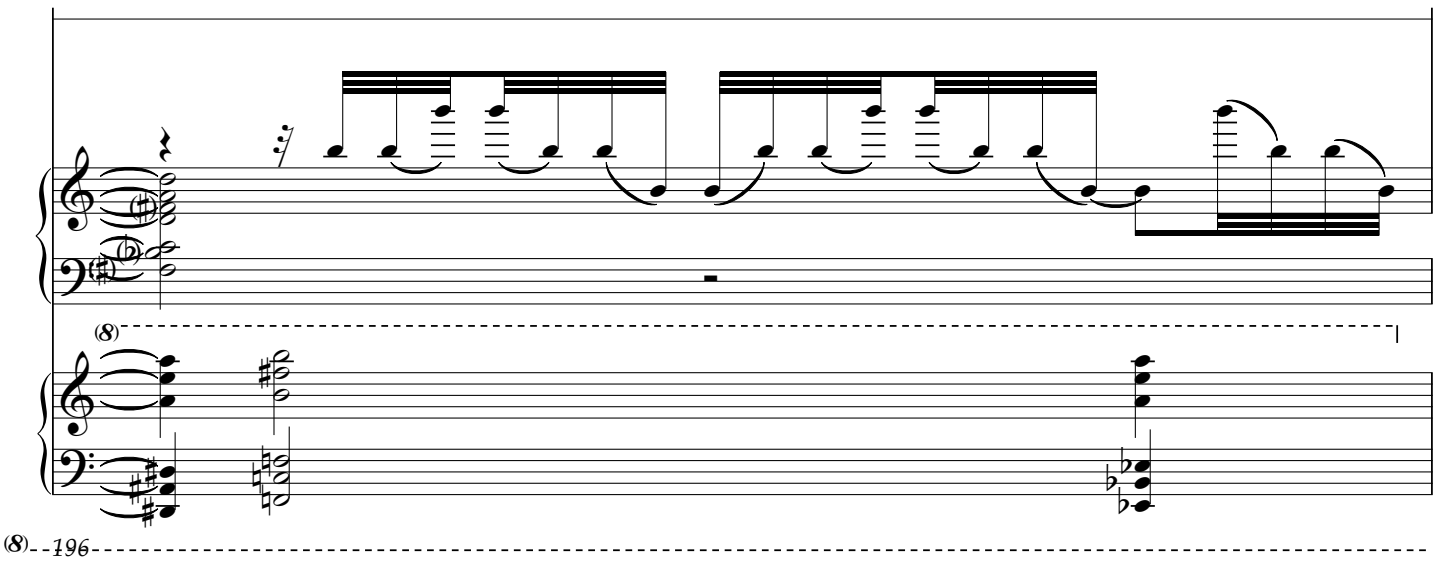
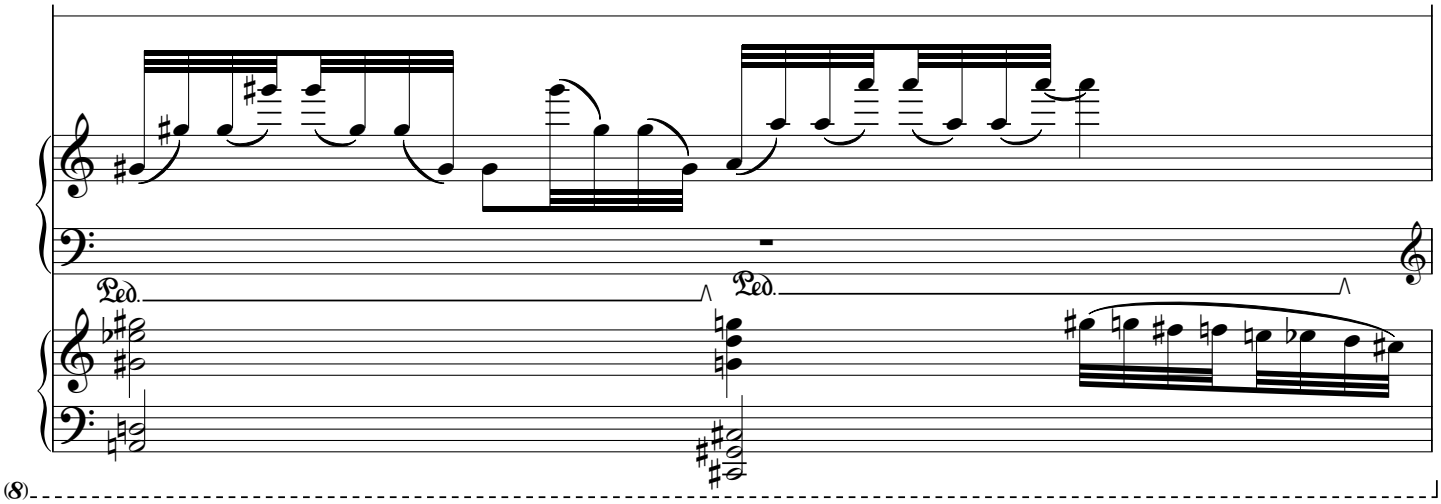
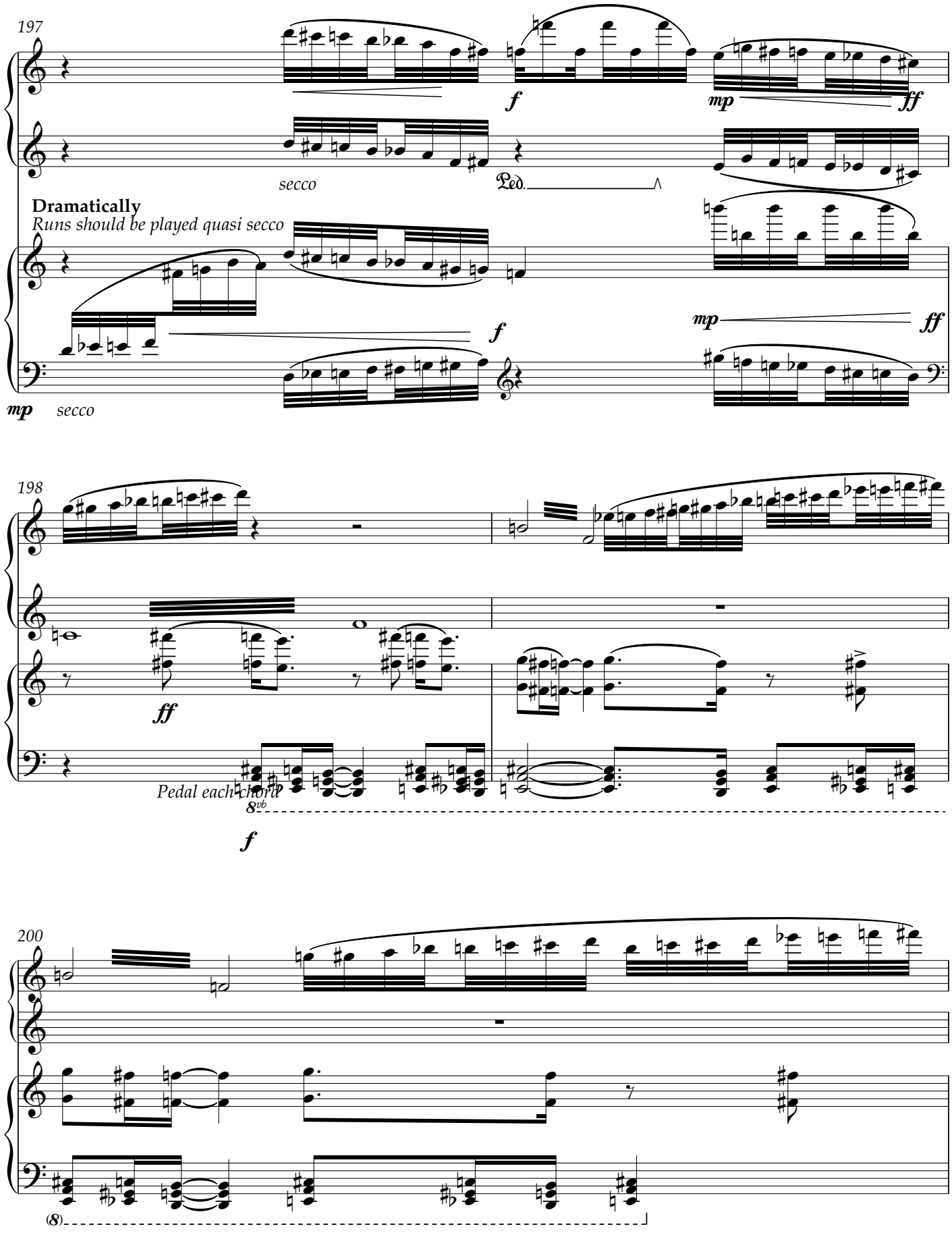


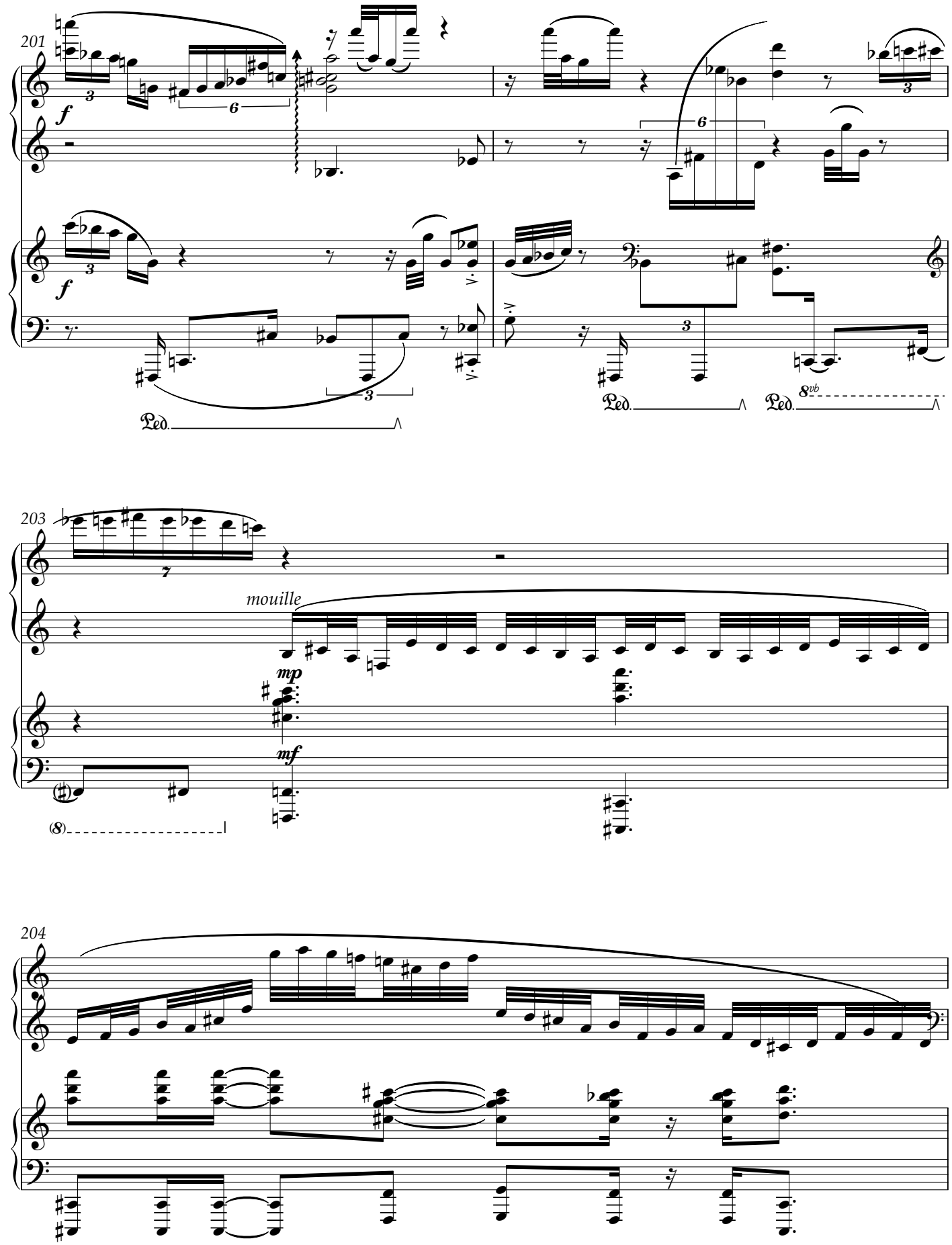
196

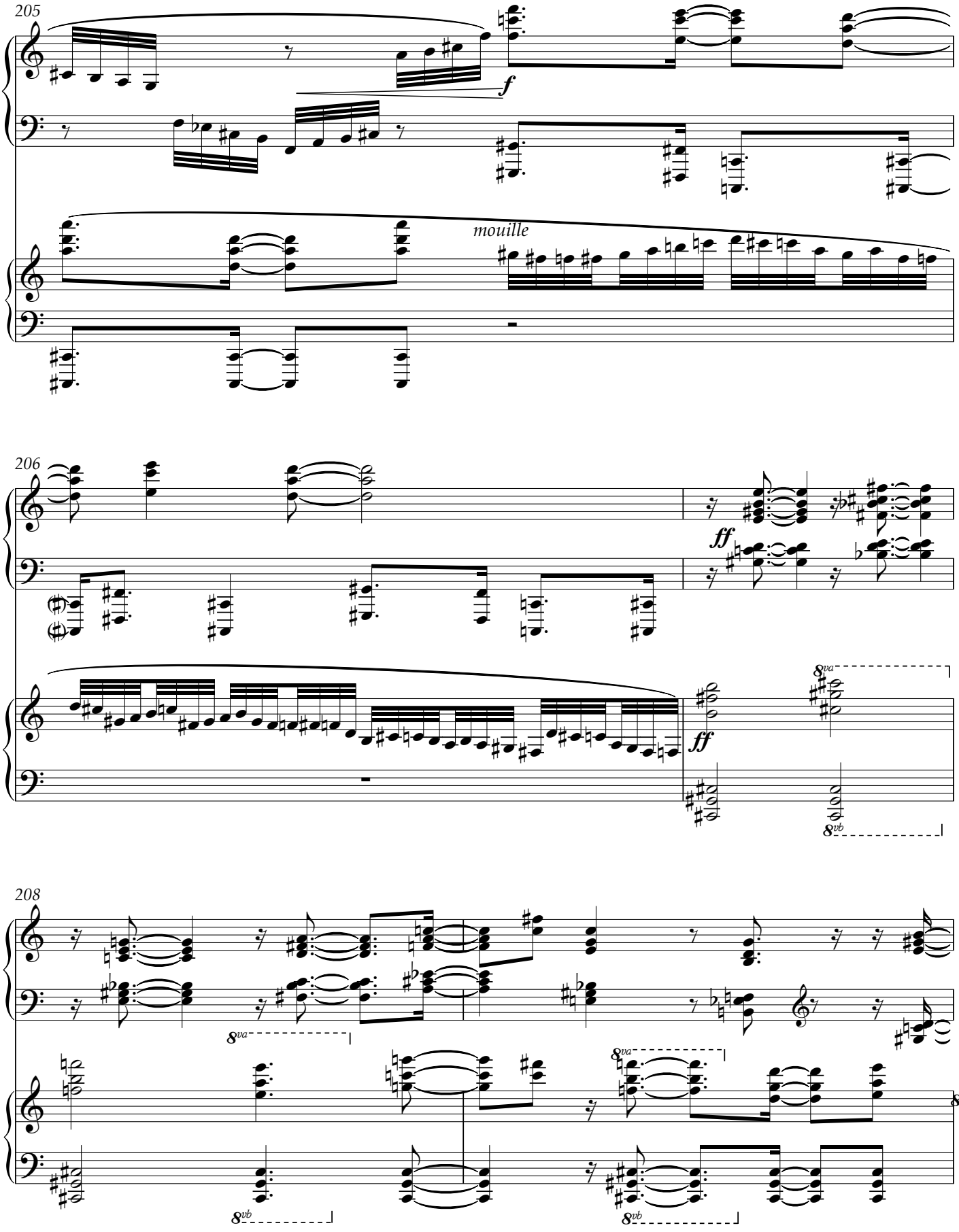


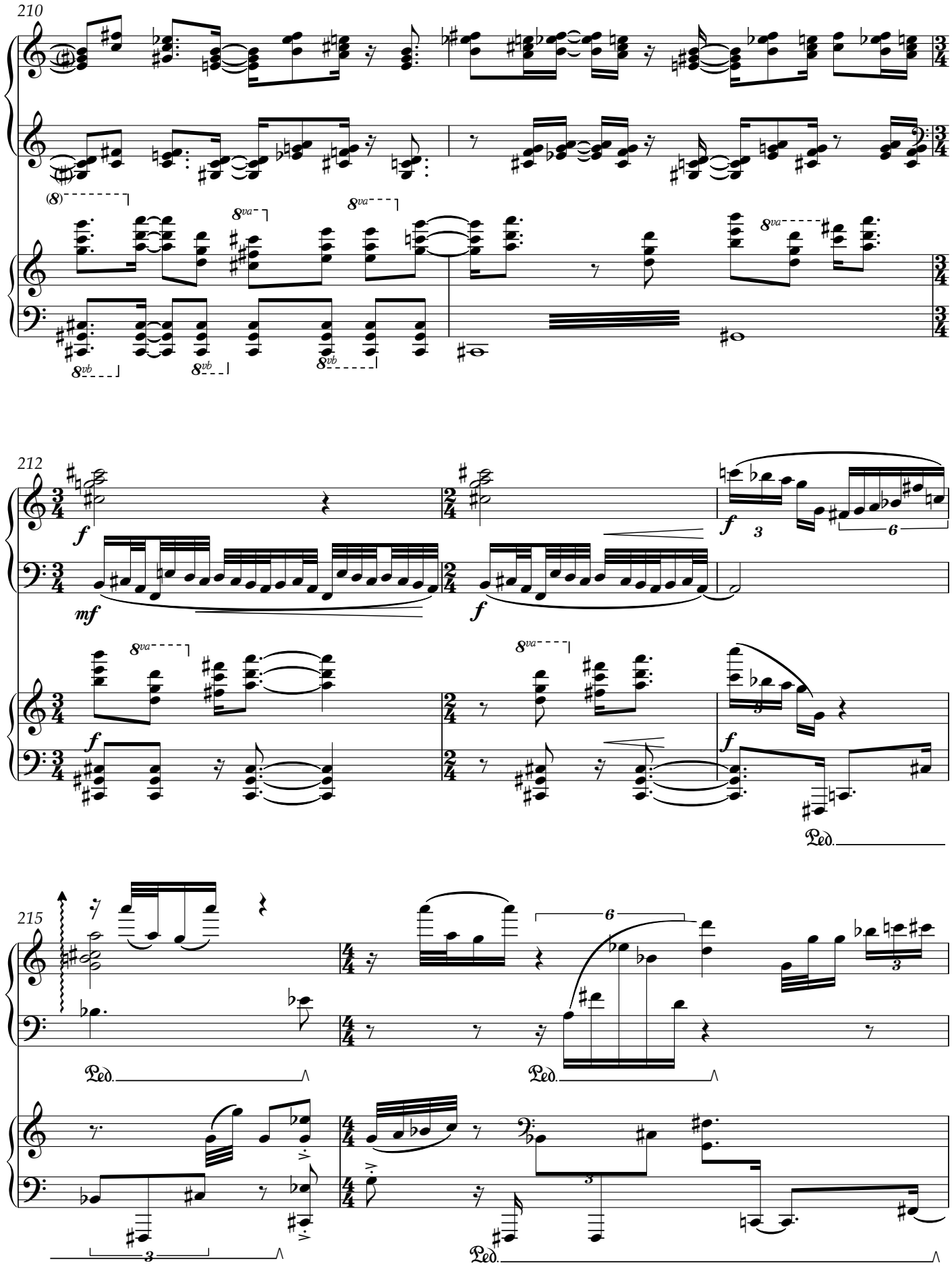
Dramatically

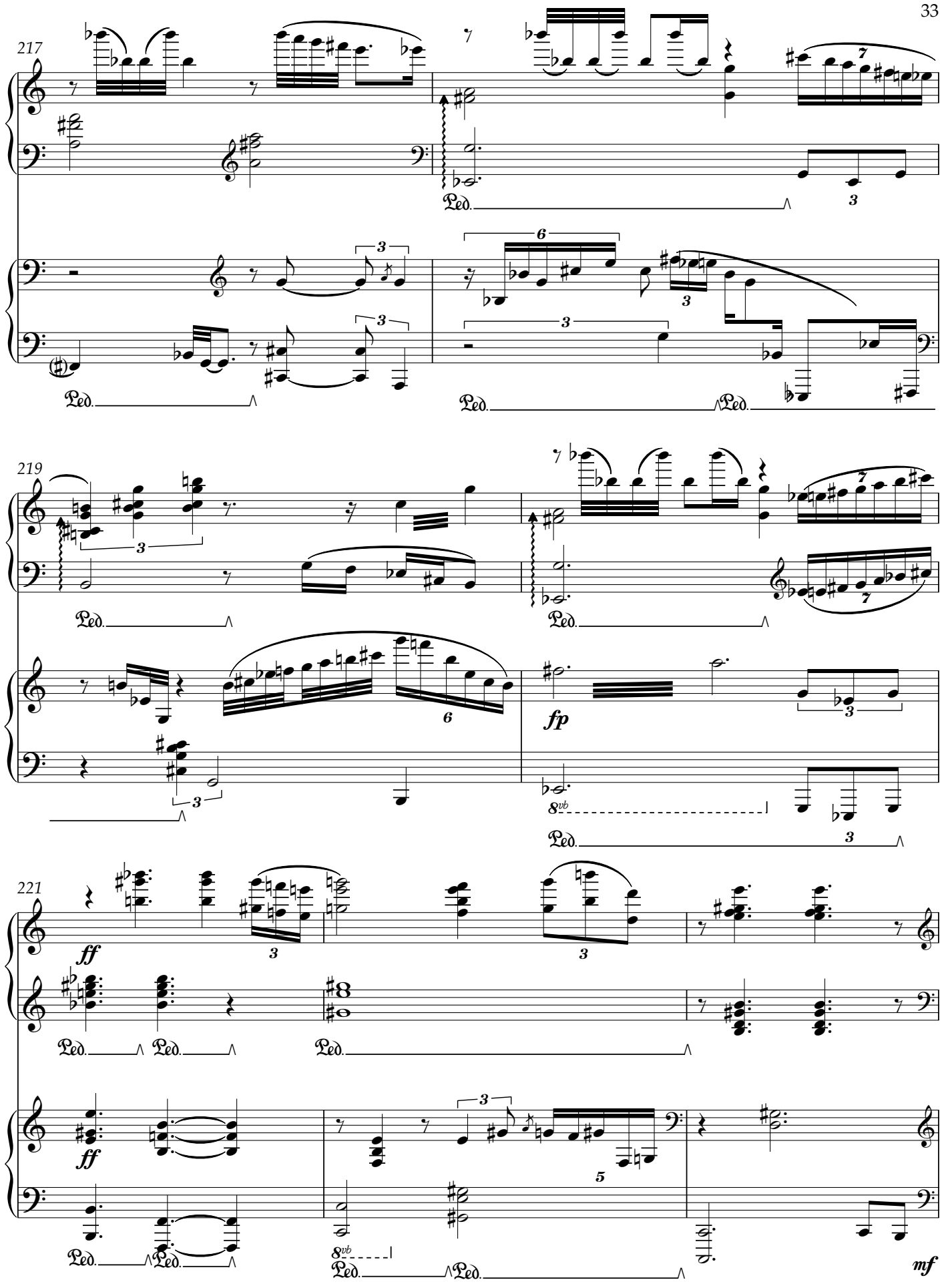
Runs should be played quasi secco

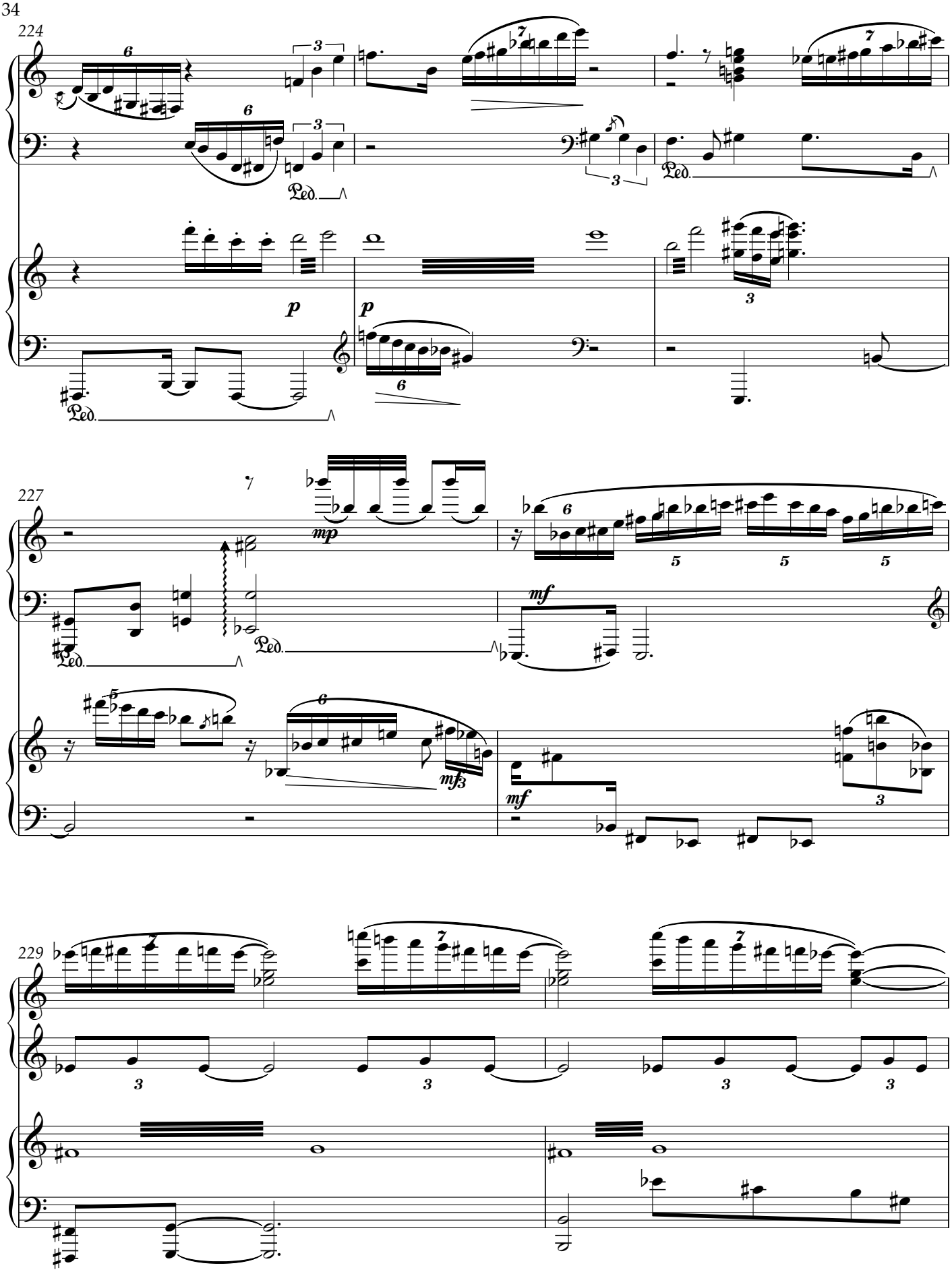

197
f
mp
ff
secco
Ped.
Dramatically
Runs should be played quasi secco
f
mp
ff
mp
secco
198
ff
Pedal each chord
8vb
f
200
(8)

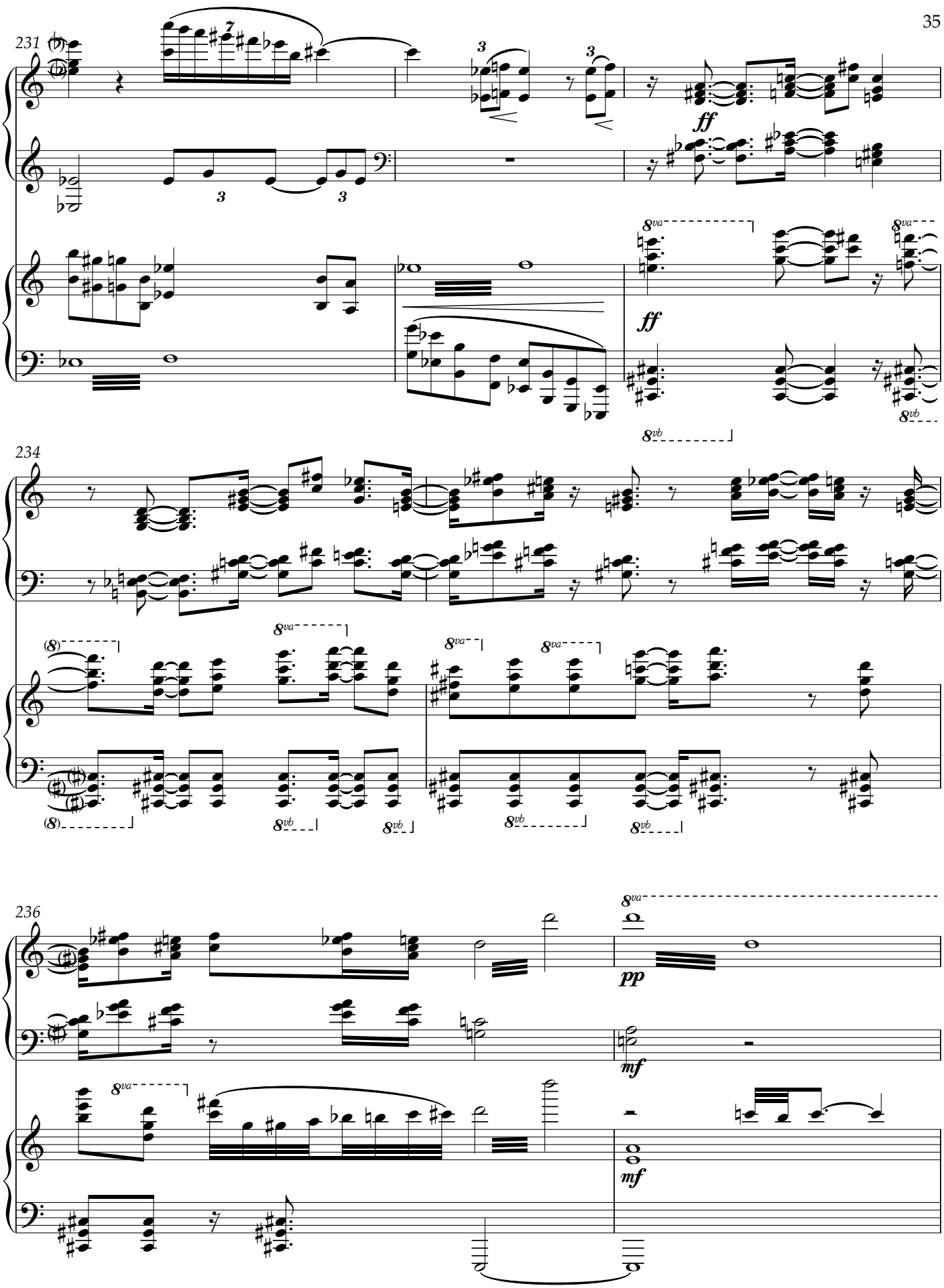

201
f
Ped.
Ped.
8vb
203
mouille
mp
mf
(8)
204

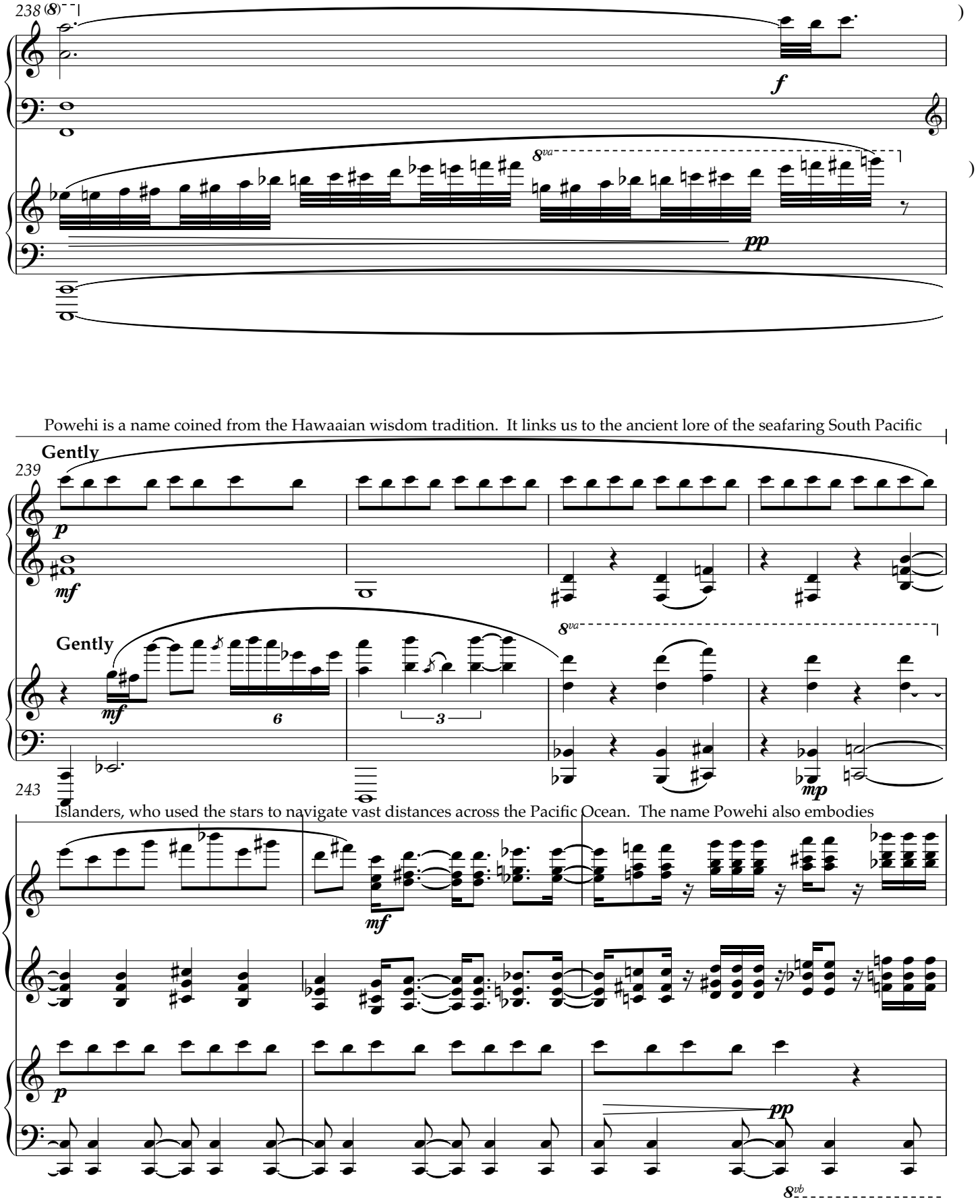

205
f
mouille
206
ff
ff
8va
8vb
208
8va
8vb
8va
8vb
8va


210
212
215
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.


217
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
219
Ped.
Ped.
fp
8vb
Ped.
221
ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
ff
8vb
Ped.
Ped.
mf


224
227
229
Ped.
p
mp
mf
mf3

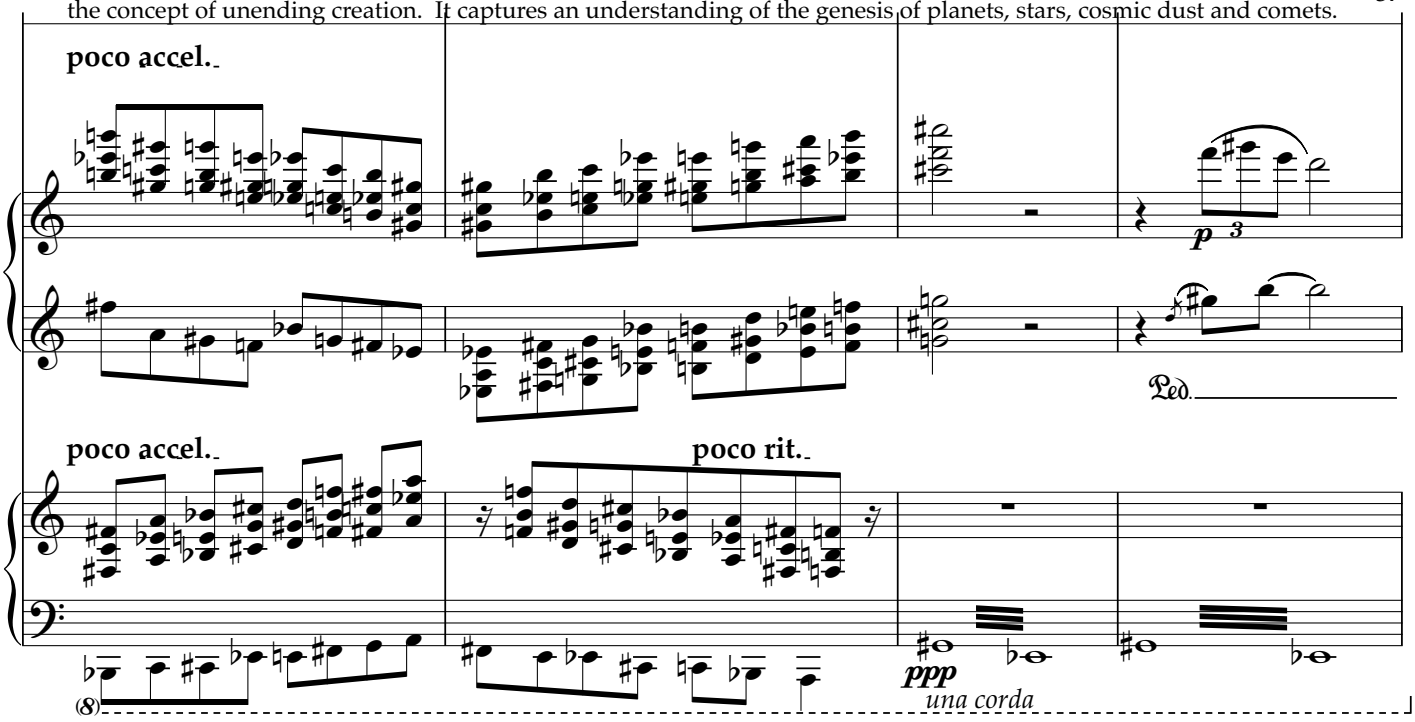

231
234
236
ff
ff
pp
mf
mf


238
f
pp
Powehi is a name coined from the Hawaaian wisdom tradition. It links us to the ancient lore of the seafaring South Pacific
Gently
239
p
mf
Gently
mf
6
3
243
Islanders, who used the stars to navigate vast distances across the Pacific Ocean. The name Powehi also embodies
mf
p
pp

poco rit.

246

the concept of unending creation. It captures an understanding of the genesis of planets, stars, cosmic dust and comets.

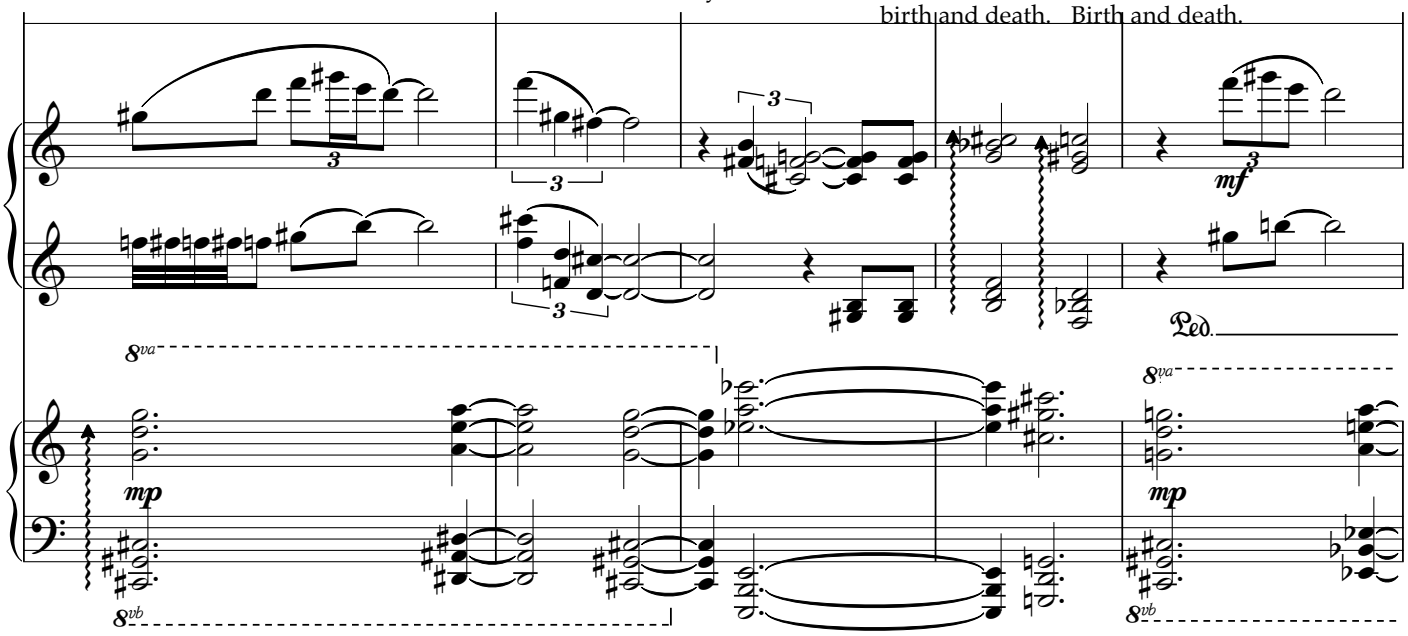


250

It is a portal for our finite minds to glimpse the seeming infinity of space and time -

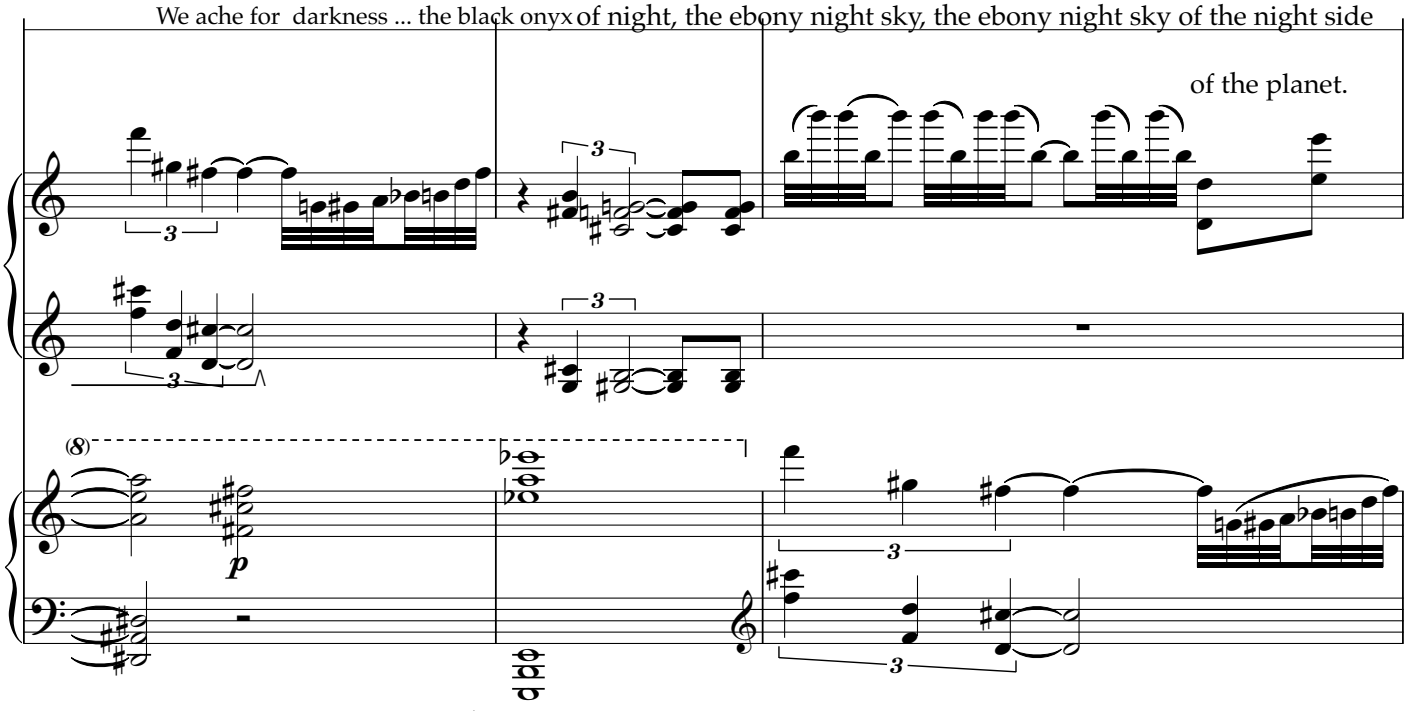
253

some say to the beginning even of creation. Some say that Powehi is a one-word poem about the cycle of endless birth and death. Birth and death.



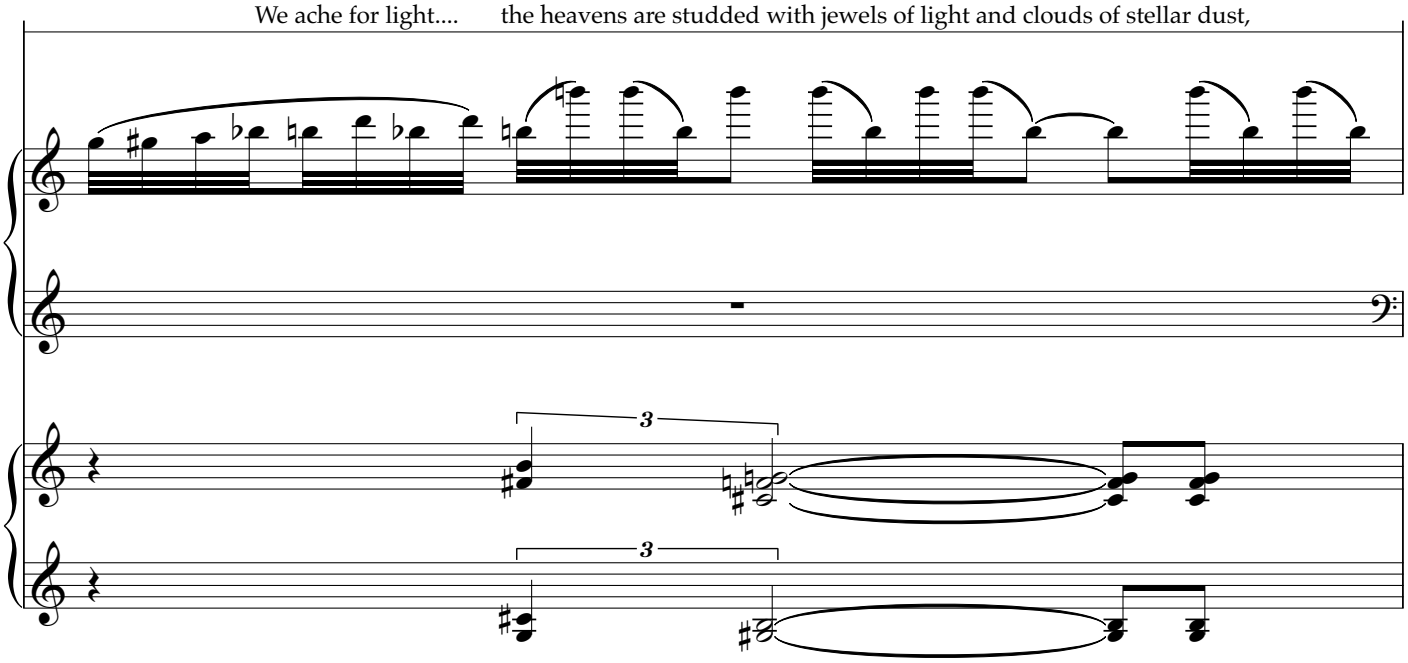
258

We ache for darkness ... the black onyx of night, the ebony night sky, the ebony night sky of the night side of the planet.



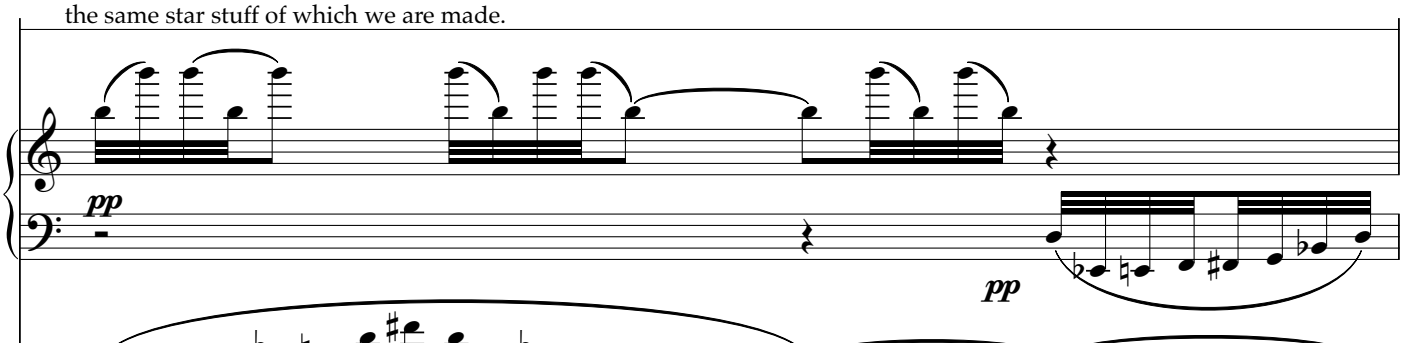
261

We ache for light.... the heavens are studded with jewels of light and clouds of stellar dust,

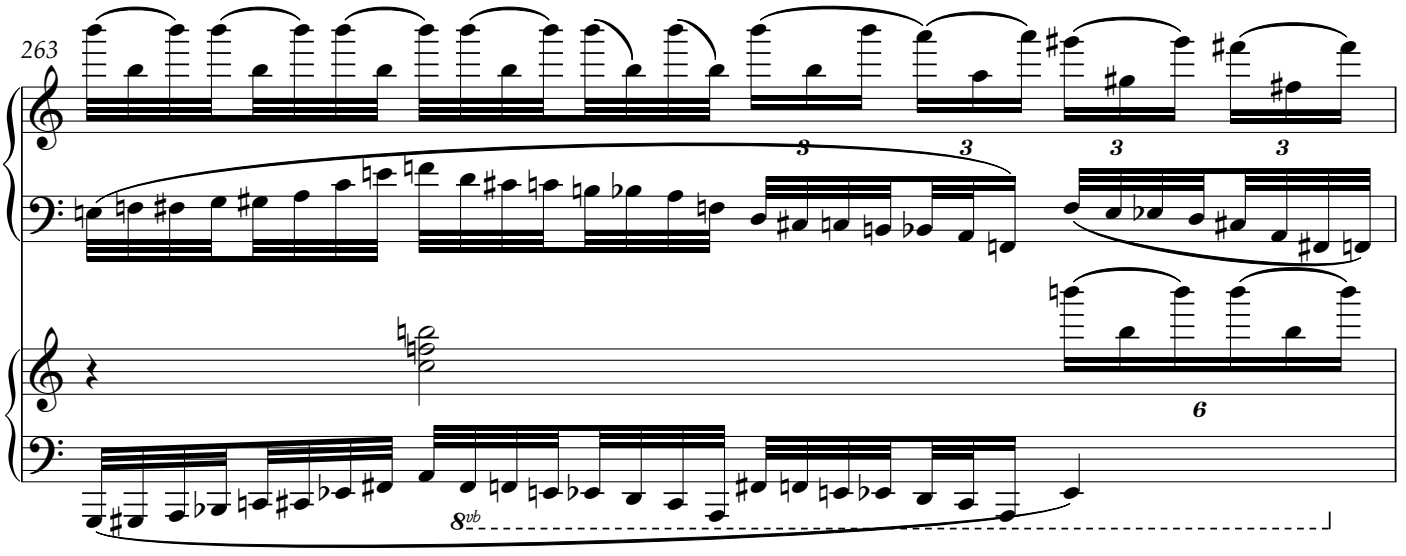


262

the same star stuff of which we are made.



263



264

We ache for both darkness and light.

mf 3 *mp*

7 5 3

6 6 6 6

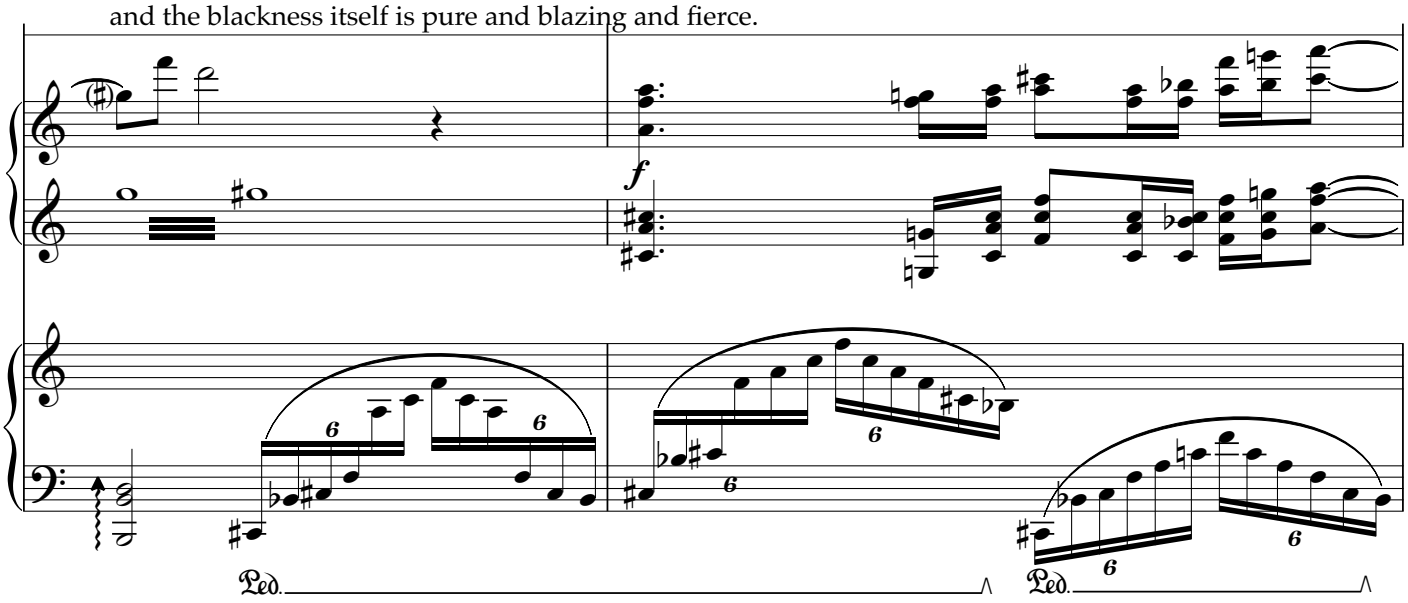
Ped.

266 T But light exists almost nowhere in the universe

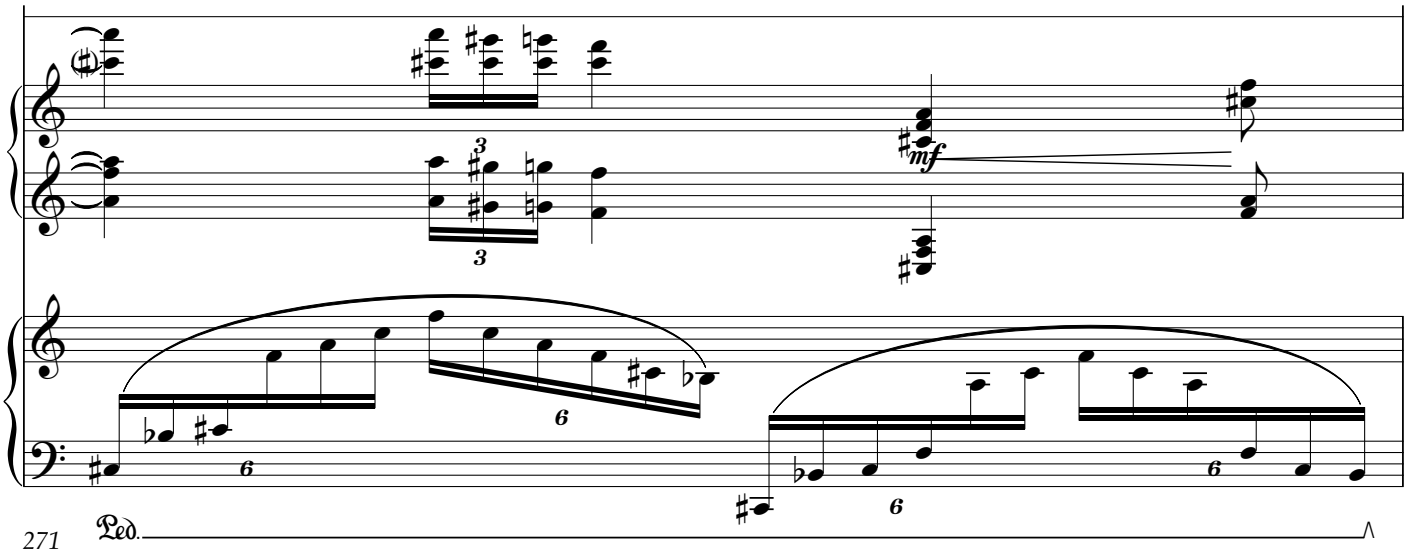
p

268

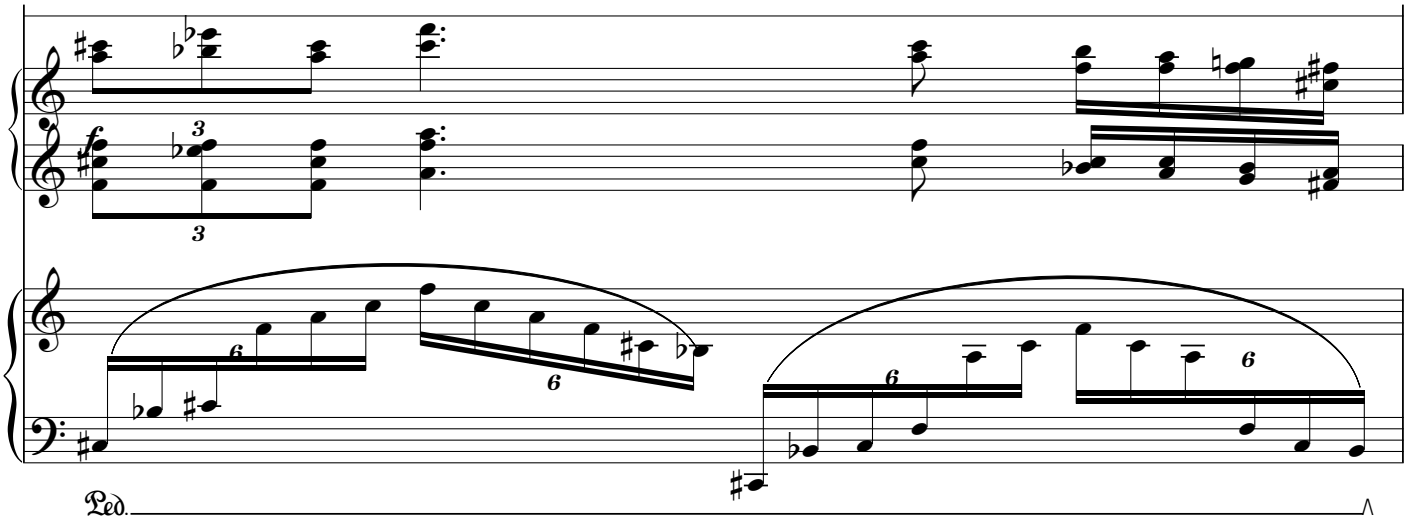
and the blackness itself is pure and blazing and fierce.



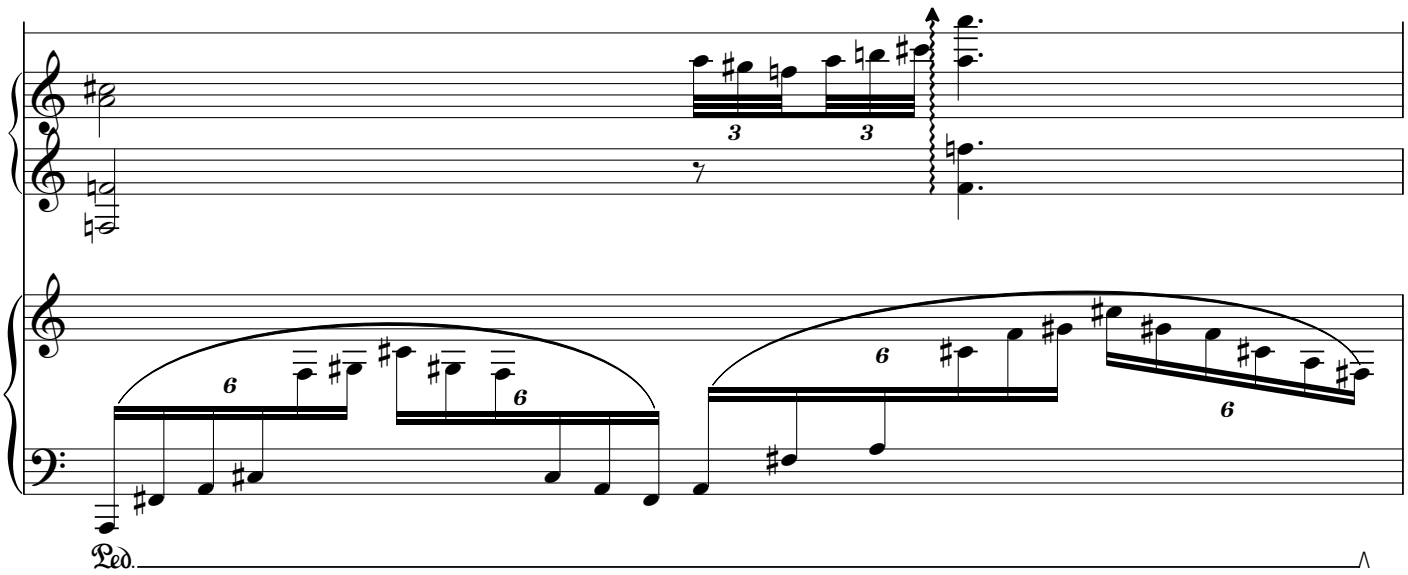
270



271

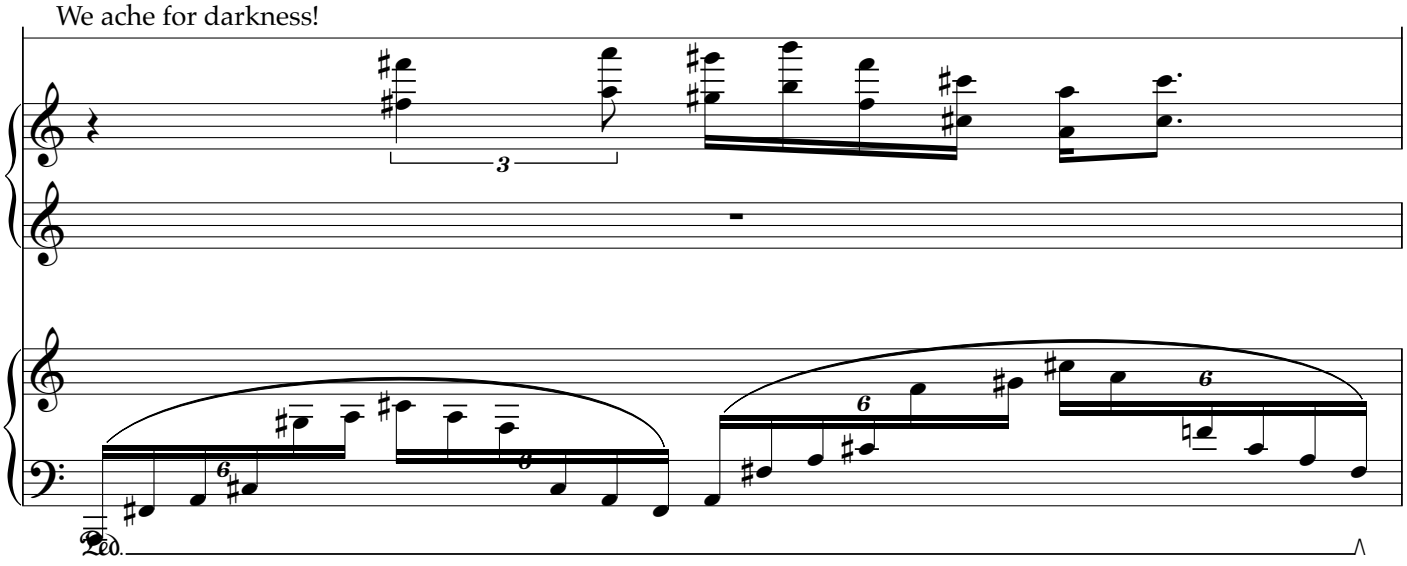


272



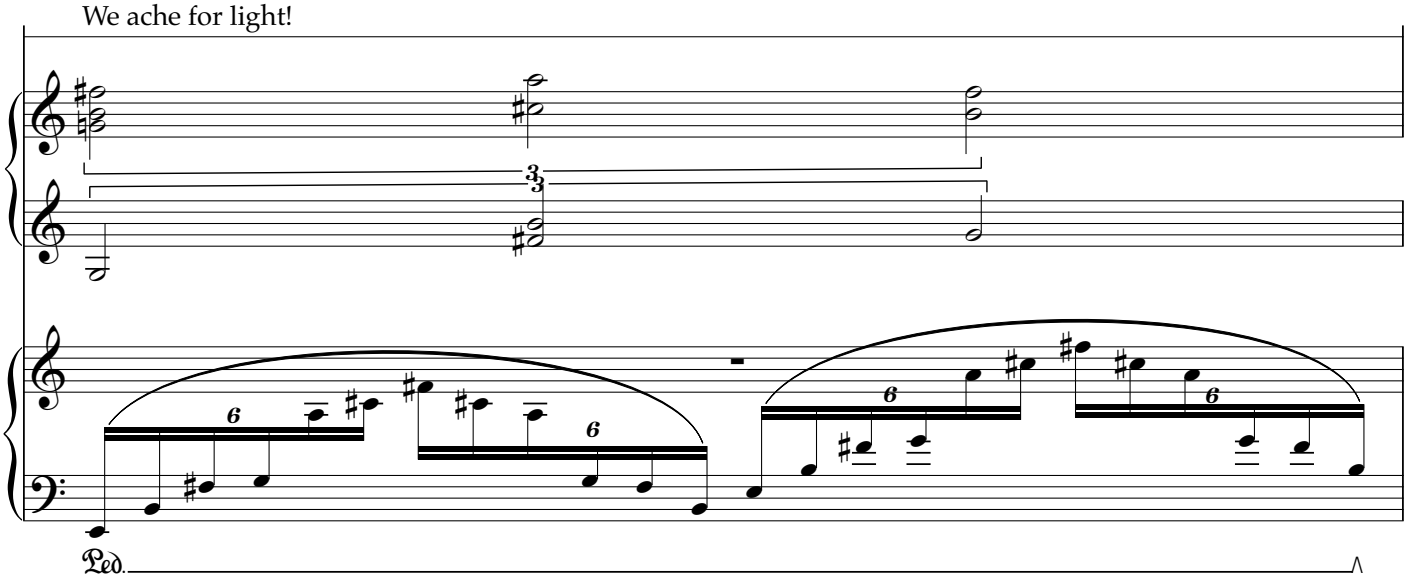
273

We ache for darkness!



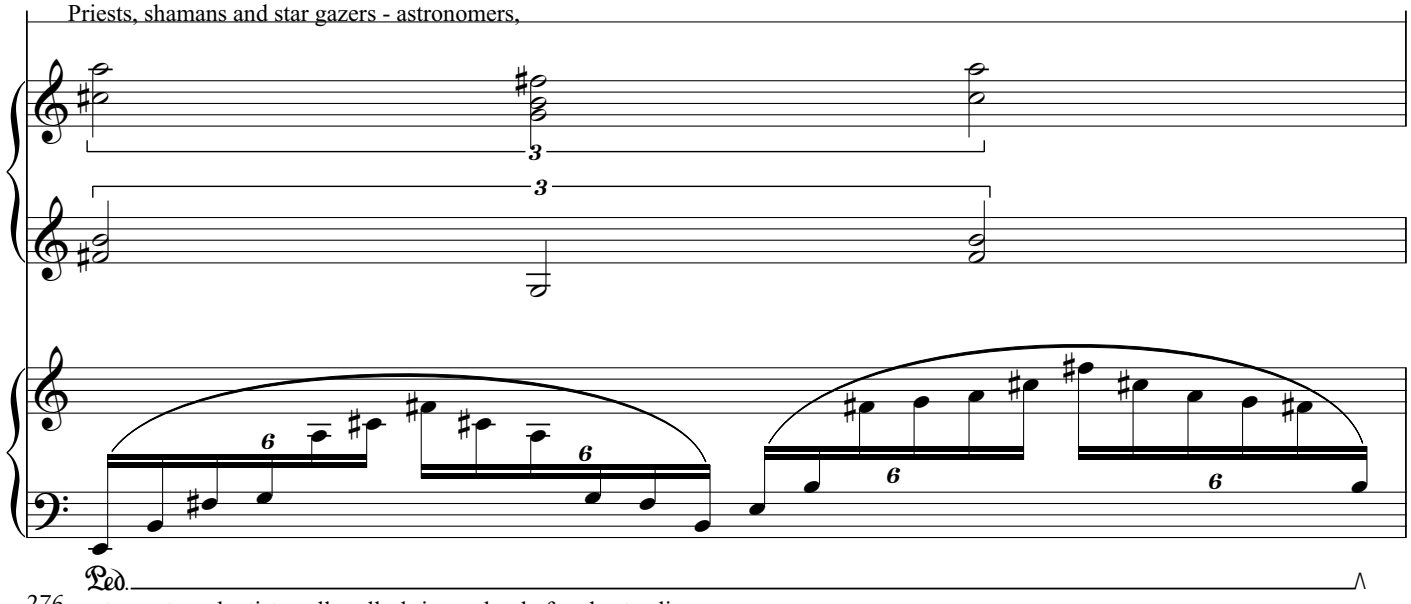
274

We ache for light!



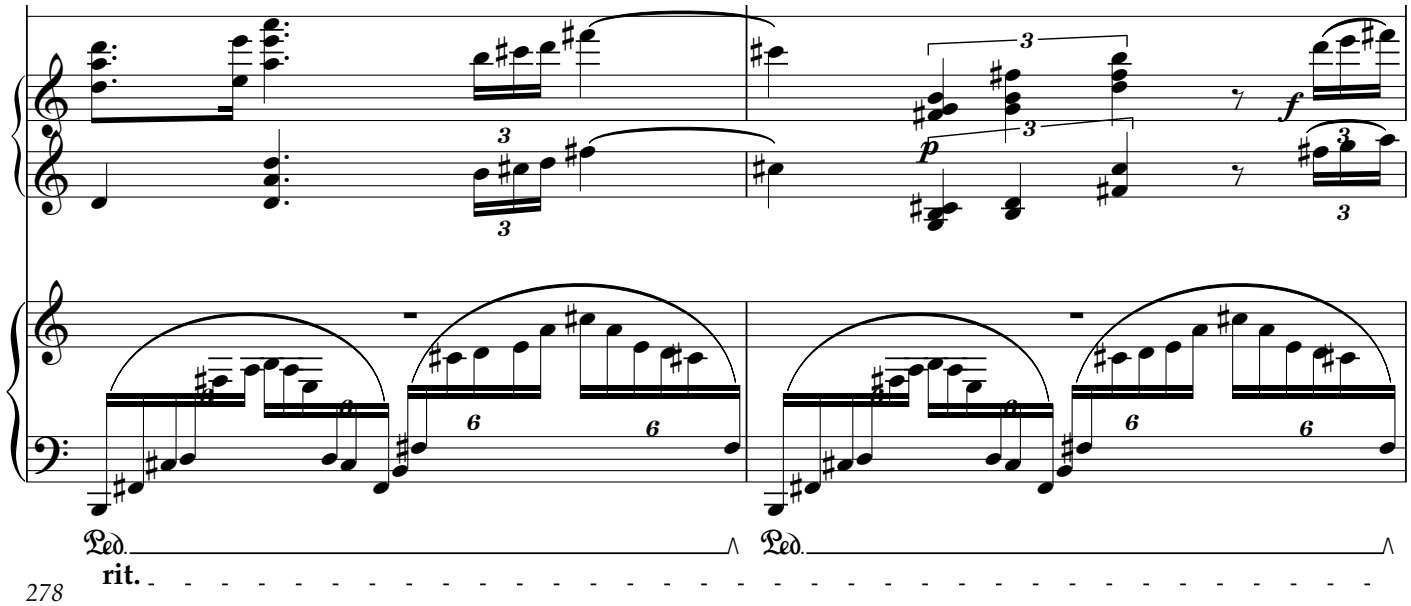
275

Priests, shamans and star gazers - astronomers,



276

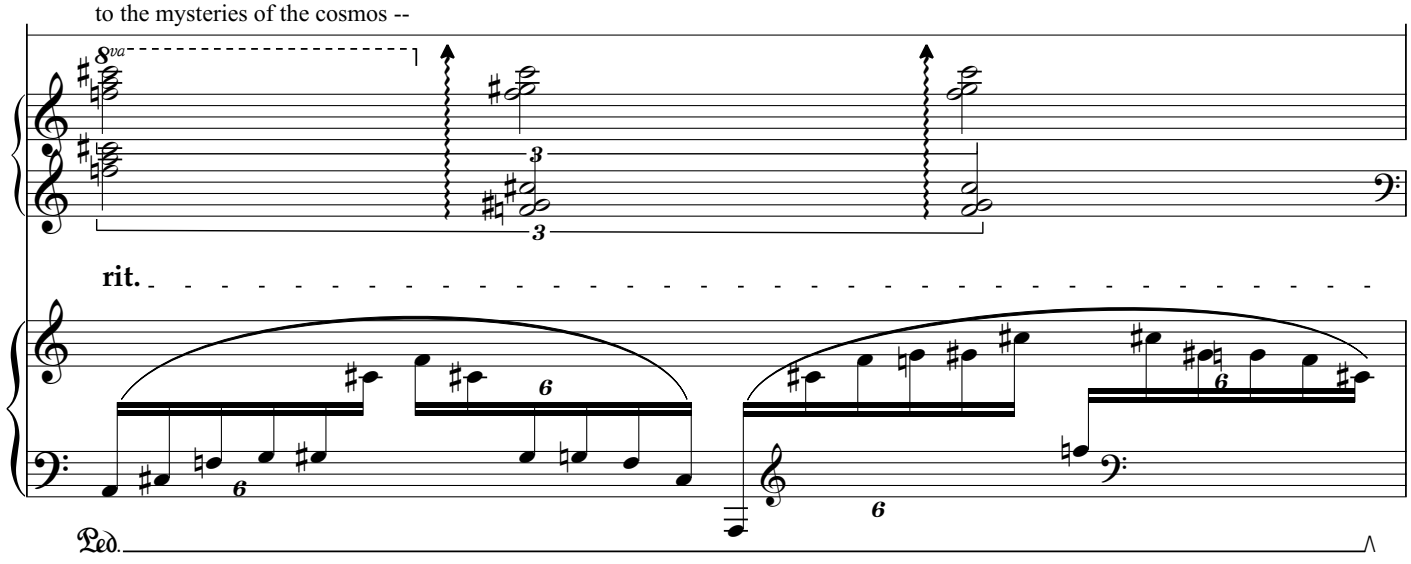
astronauts and artists - all - all - bring a shard of understanding



rit.

278

to the mysteries of the cosmos --



279 to the celestial merry-go-round of galaxies
and our lives are but a mere gasp.

♩ = 72

Powehi,

mp

♩ = 72

8va

mp

6

5

Ped. Ped.

8vb

284

Dark source of unenging creation.

TR14-05

Ped.

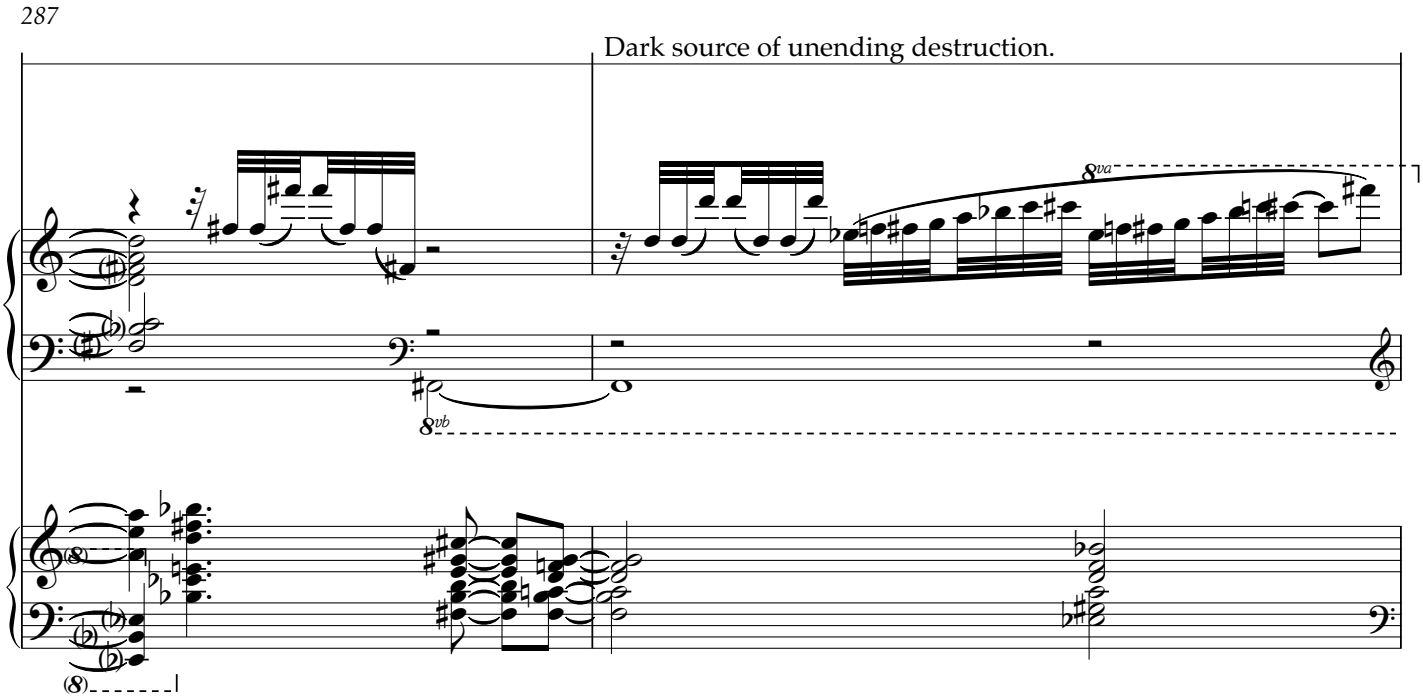
mp

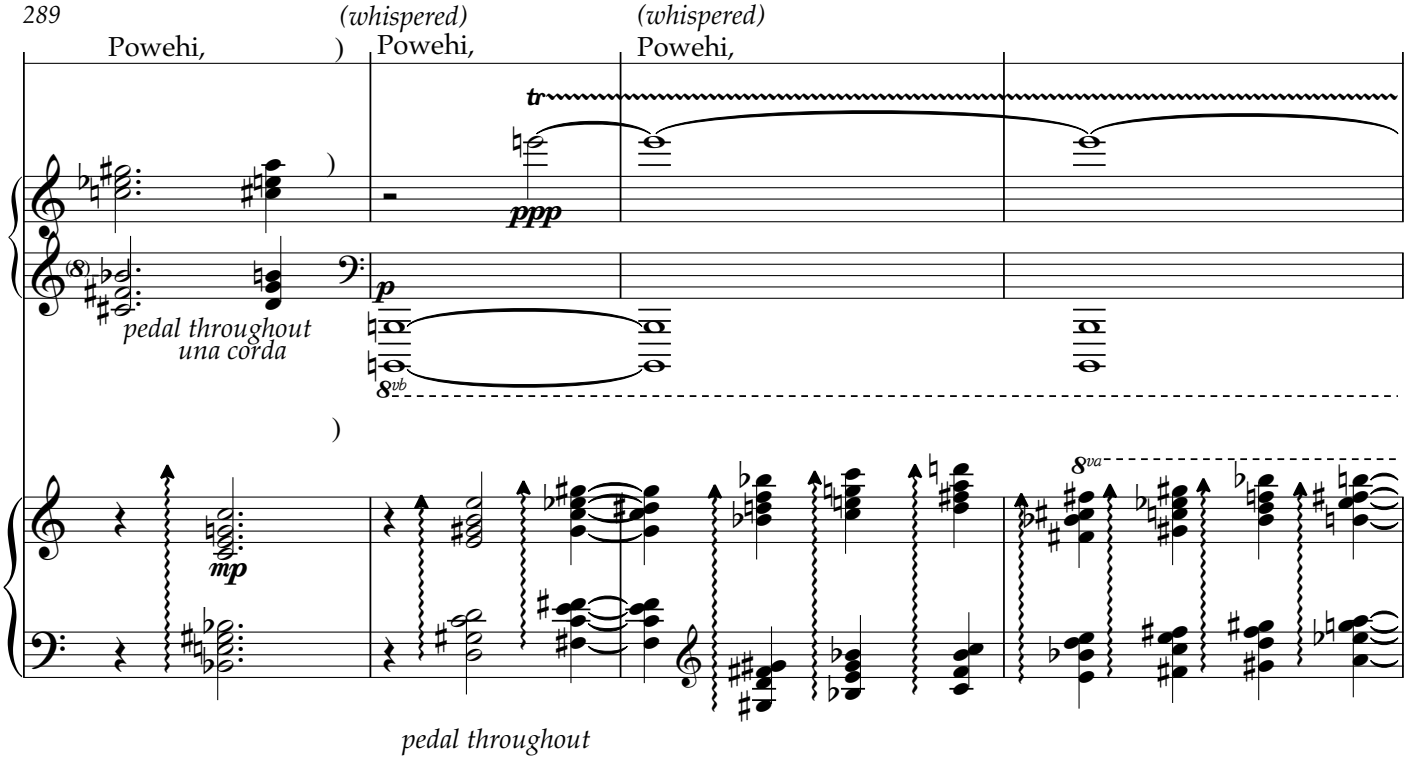
8va

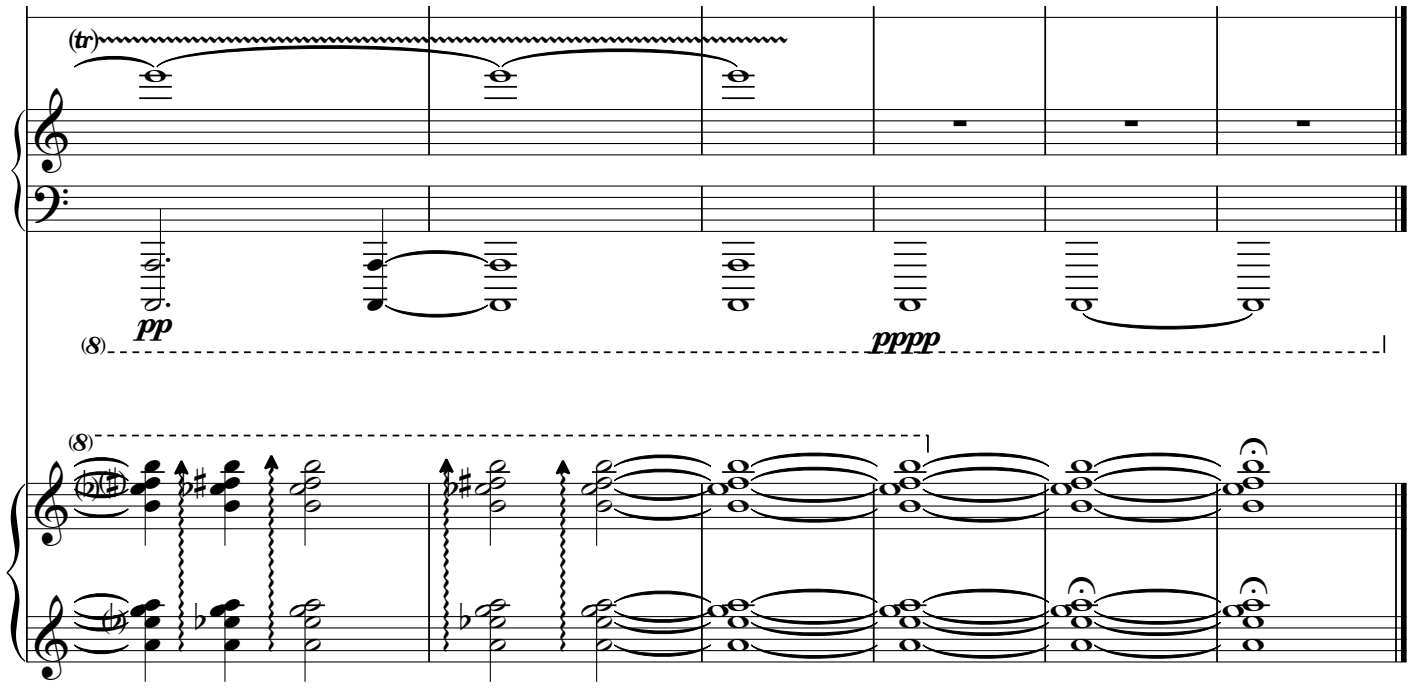
mp

Ped.

8vb


287
Dark source of unending destruction.
8va
8vb
8


289
Powehi,
(whispered)
Powehi,
(whispered)
Powehi,
tr
ppp
p
pedal throughout
una corda
8vb
mp
8va
pedal throughout


(tr)
pp
(8)
pppp
(8)