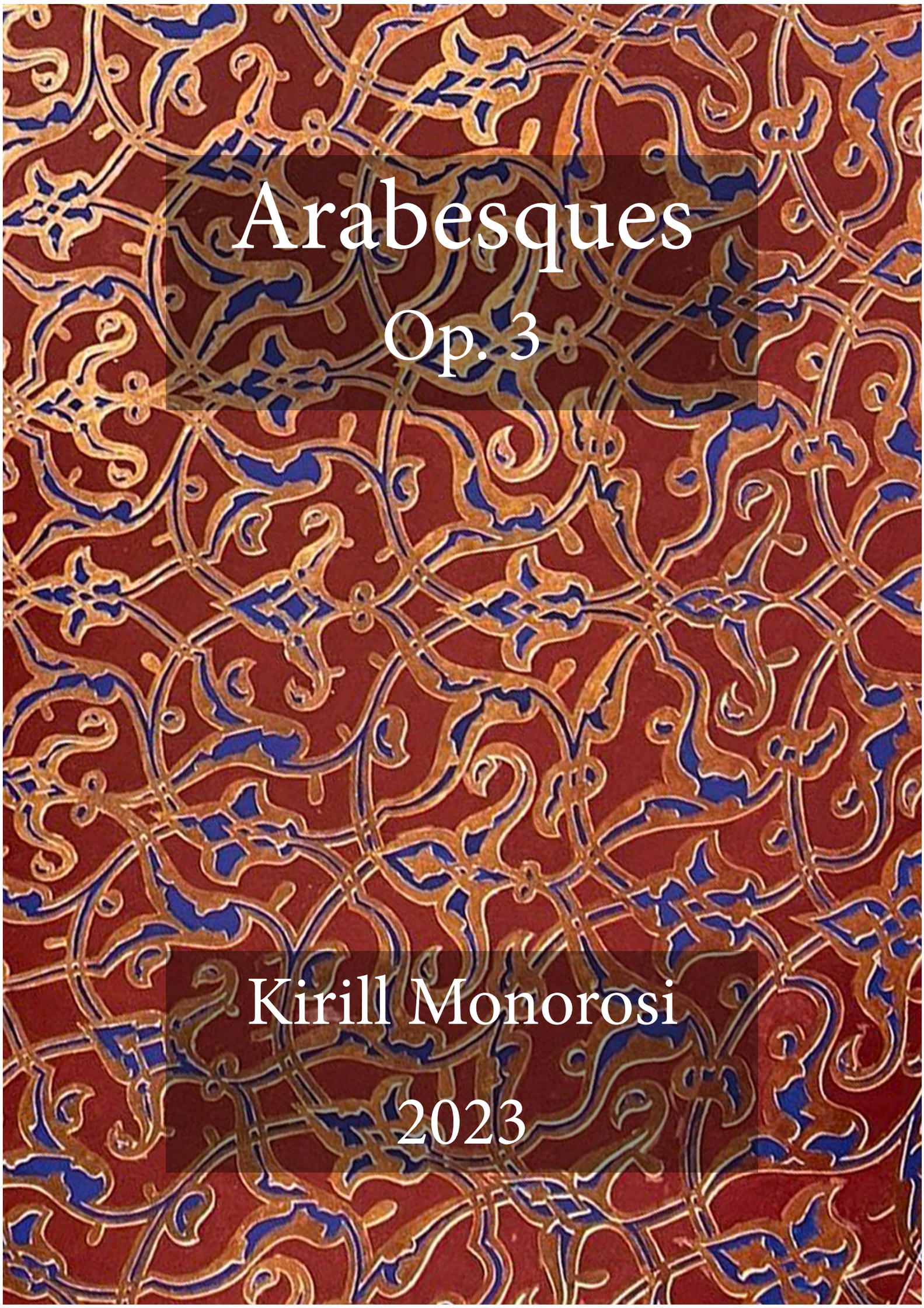
Arabesques
Op. 3
Kirill Monorosi
2023

Arabesques

Op. 3

Kirill Monorosi

2023

LA FOLIA
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SYDNEY

Inge Rosar in Dankbarkeit gewidmet

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Preface

Although geometric patterns were used as decorations by all cultures since prehistoric times, it was during the so-called Islamic Golden Age (between the 8th and the 13th centuries) that artists of the Islamic world reached an unsurpassed level of virtuosity and sophistication in their craftsmanship. The formerly rigid and heavy ornaments that used basic geometric designs gave way to ornaments that used or were inspired by natural elements such as scrolling vines, tendrils, flowers and leaves. These natural motives and the use of vibrant colours imbued decorations with life. The arabesques of the Islamic Golden Age are considered be a pinnacle of decoration in many forms of art: painting, calligraphy and manuscript illumination, textiles, ceramics, metalwork and architecture. These designs found favour in the Western world, and from the Renaissance onwards begin to appear in a myriad of forms, from architectural elements, to gardens, to printing decorations in the West. Today the word arabesque is usually understood as some sort of decoration based on interlacing patterns. These patterns and the overall design can be anything from very simple to highly ornate and complex.

While the term arabesque may also be applied to an oriental-styled work, it is the delicate and intricate ornamentation of arabesques (both in Islamic and Western art), the interlacing, natural motives and seeming endlessness of the filigree, that inspired this cycle. The musical equivalent of the patterns seen in art are figurations – short melodic (or broken-chord) figures that are repeated over different harmonies. Many of J. S. Bach's figurative preludes from the WTC, can be considered arabesques. Incidentally, in the program notes to his recording of the Goldberg Variations, Ralph Kirkpatrick referred to the two-manual variations located after each canon in this cycle as arabesques (these are nos.: 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, and 29).

As in the arabesques of the art world, each of these pieces relies on a single design or musical figure which is tiled, or repeated through *fortspinnung*, that is the spinning out of a single idea – a compositional technique brought to a culmination by J. S. Bach, and used by many other composers, most notably Chopin, Schumann, and Brahms. These musical figures are layered and intertwined to imitate the overlapping motives that can be seen in art works. Many arabesque patterns can be continued perpetually beyond the dimensions of the art work, giving the viewer a sense of the infinite. The heart of the cycle – the *Meditation* – is an example of this, with the canonic melodic voices and the accompaniment forming a shimmering, moving and intertwining whole, seeming to have no beginning or end, and thus creating an atmosphere of timelessness.

The first arabesque – the simplest of the set – sets the atmosphere and serves as a prelude to the cycle. It returns re-imagined and elaborated at the end, bringing the cycle to a close. In this final arabesque, as the parts weave in and out, the overlapping of layers causing the canonic follower to disappear for a bar at a time, as the leader is in the foreground – corresponding to the overlapping or interlacing of motives in the arabesques of the art world.

The unusual notation of arabesque 4 helps clarify the harmonic structure (it is in four-part harmony) and indicates the main voices to be held longer, with the soprano overlapping in the harmony changes.

In this cycle I chose to use German over the customary Italian indications as I found it more important to convey the character and mood of the works, rather than merely indicating the tempo. For convenience, all terms are listed with an English equivalent in the Notes at the back of the volume.

Kirill Monorosi
March 2023
Sydney

Arabesques

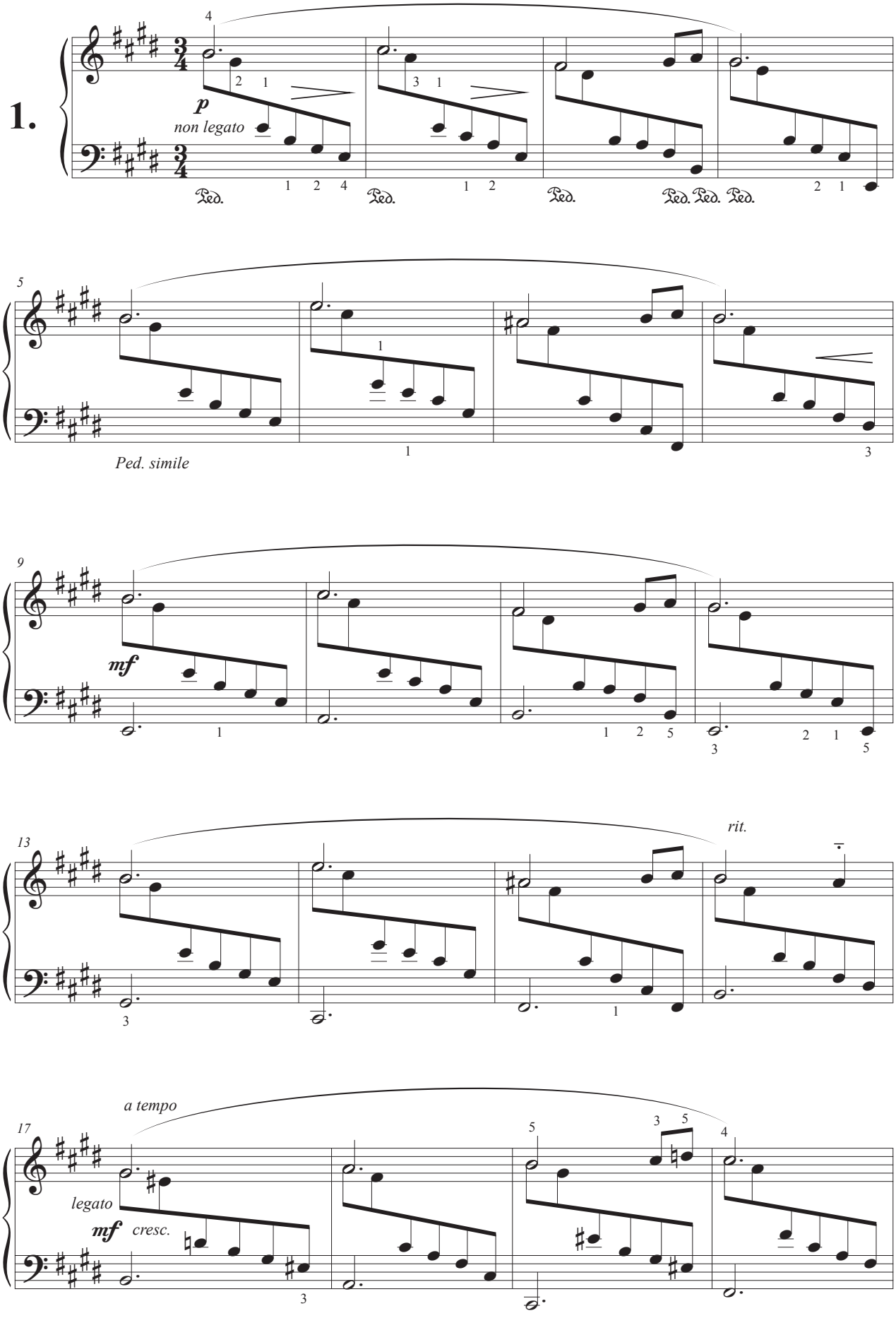
Kirill Monorosi

Op. 3 No. 1

Einfach und gelassen, innig (♩ = 118)

Figuren leicht und schwebend

1.



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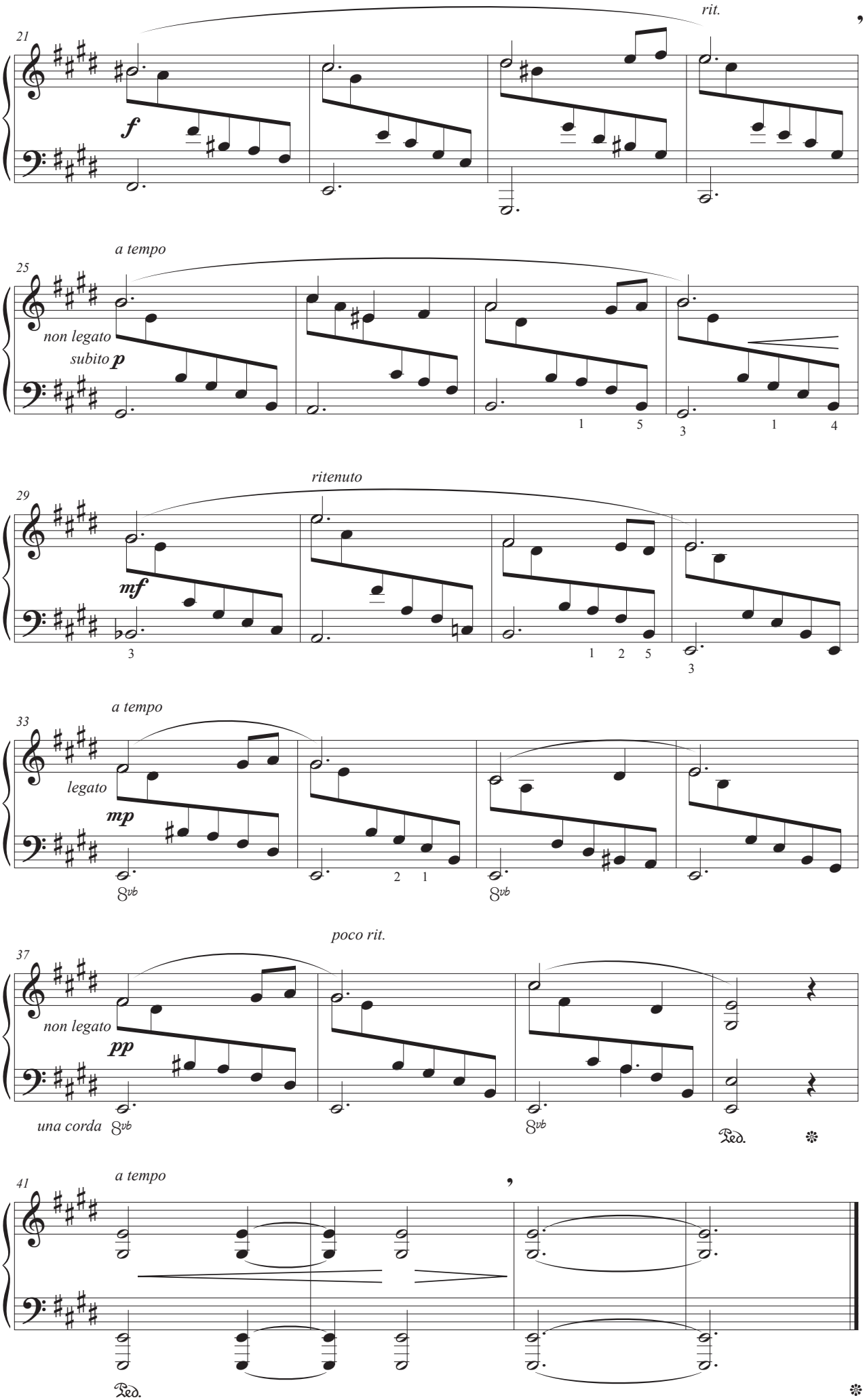
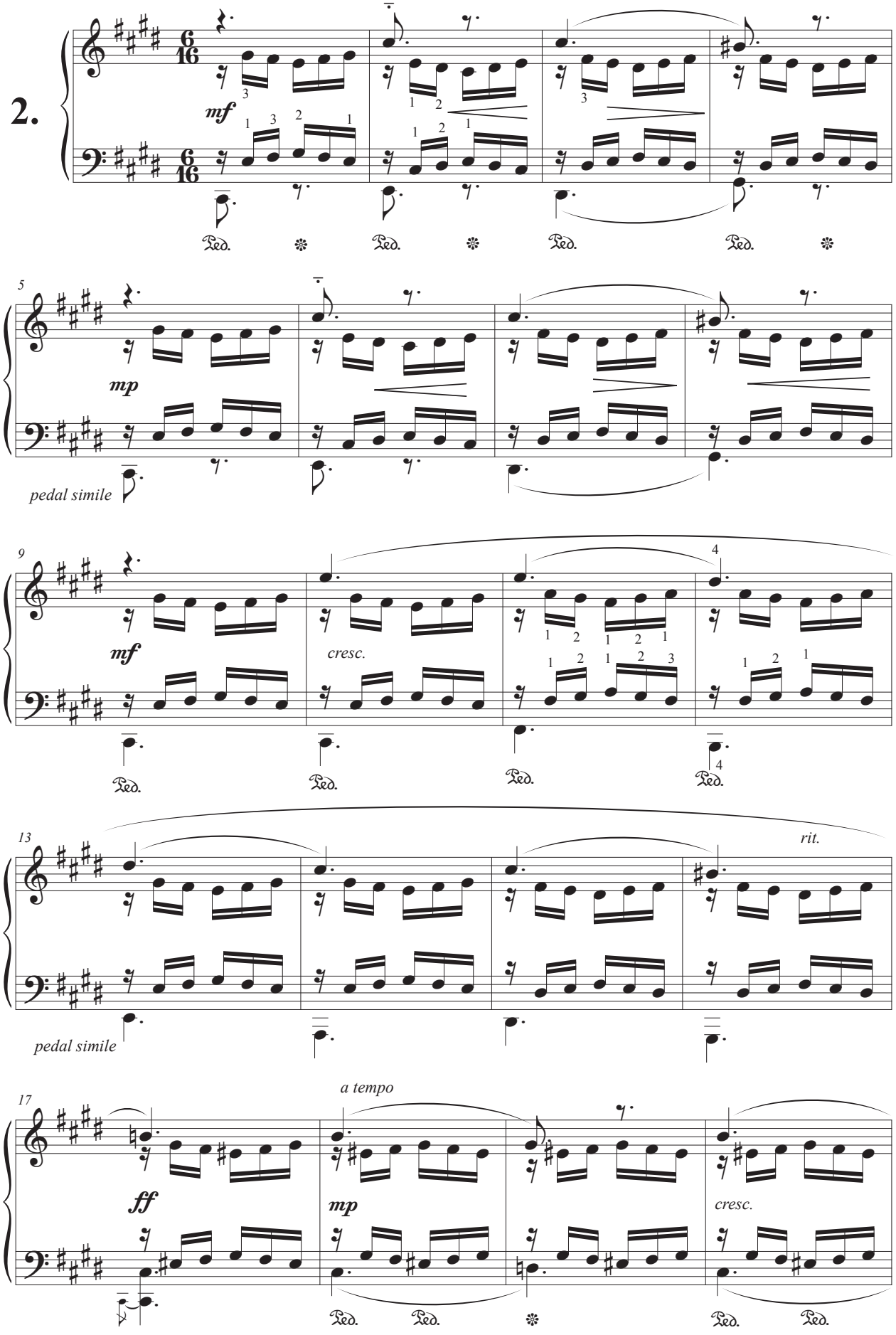

21
rit.
f
25
a tempo
non legato
subito p
1 5
3 1 4
29
ritenuto
mf
3
1 2 5
3
33
a tempo
legato
mp
8vb
2 1
8vb
37
poco rit.
non legato
pp
una corda
8vb
8vb
Ped.
41
a tempo
Ped.

Rauschend (♩. = 90 *con rubato*)
Sopran und Bass hervorheben, Alt und Tenor leggiero

Kirill Monorosi
Op. 3 No. 2



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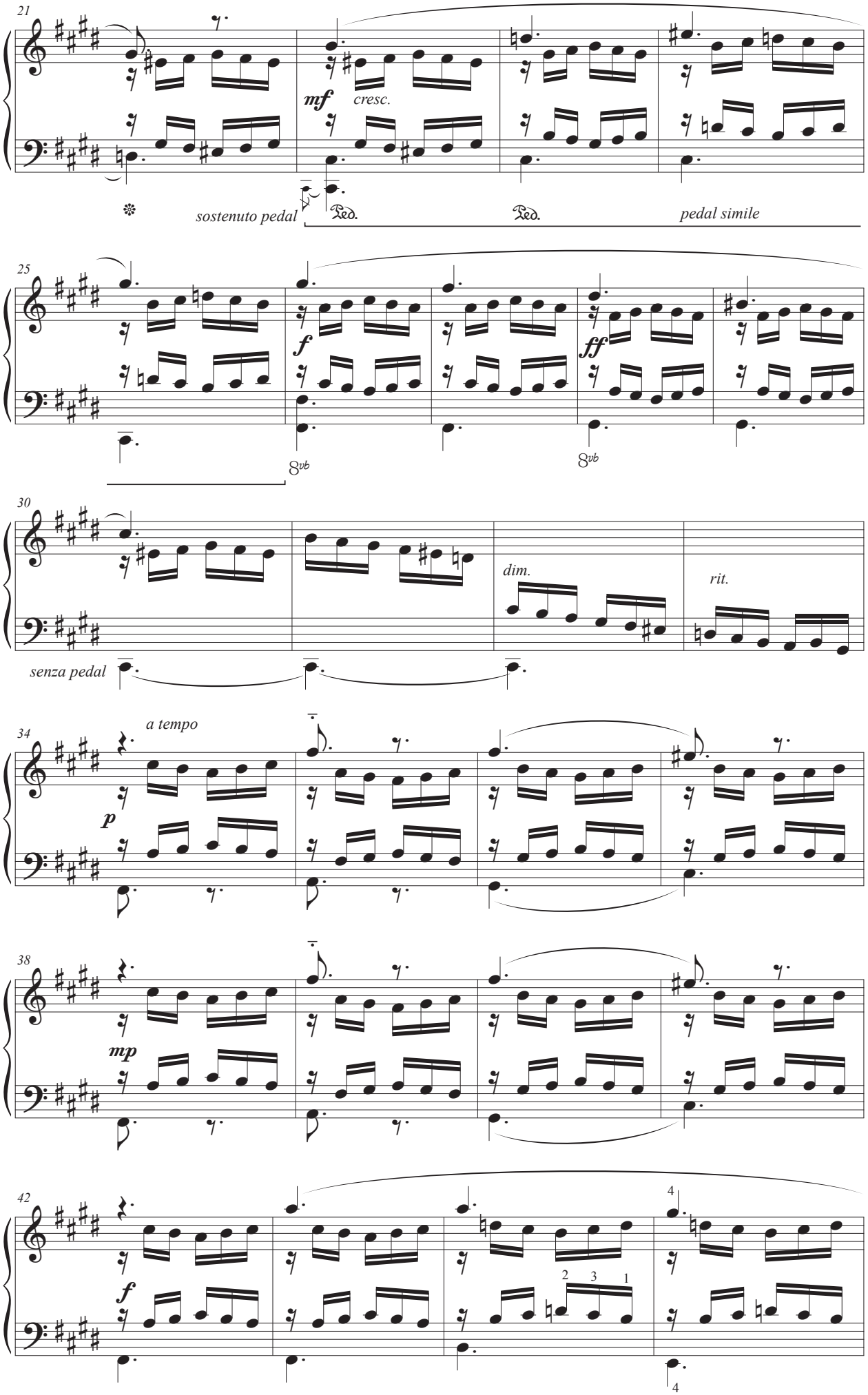
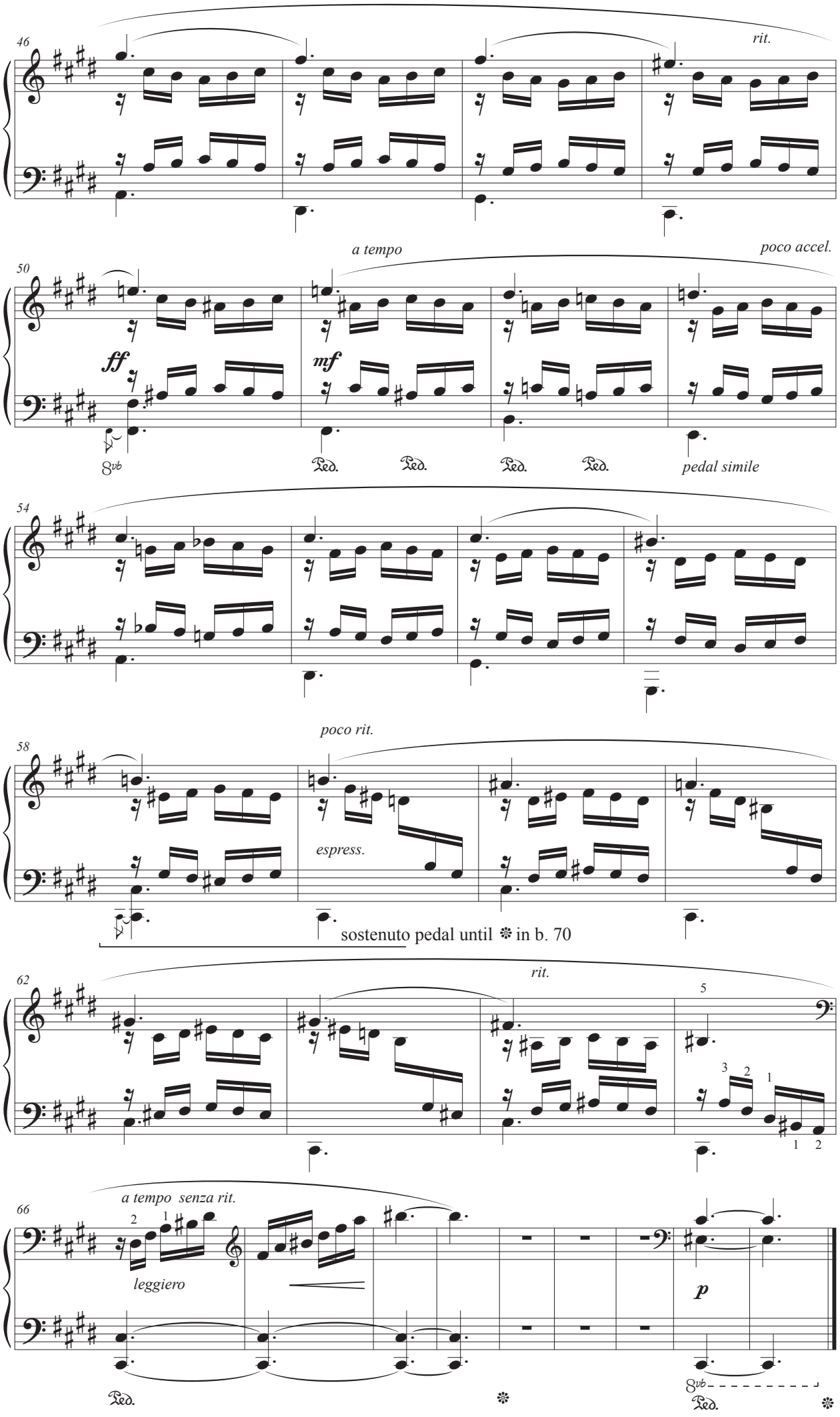
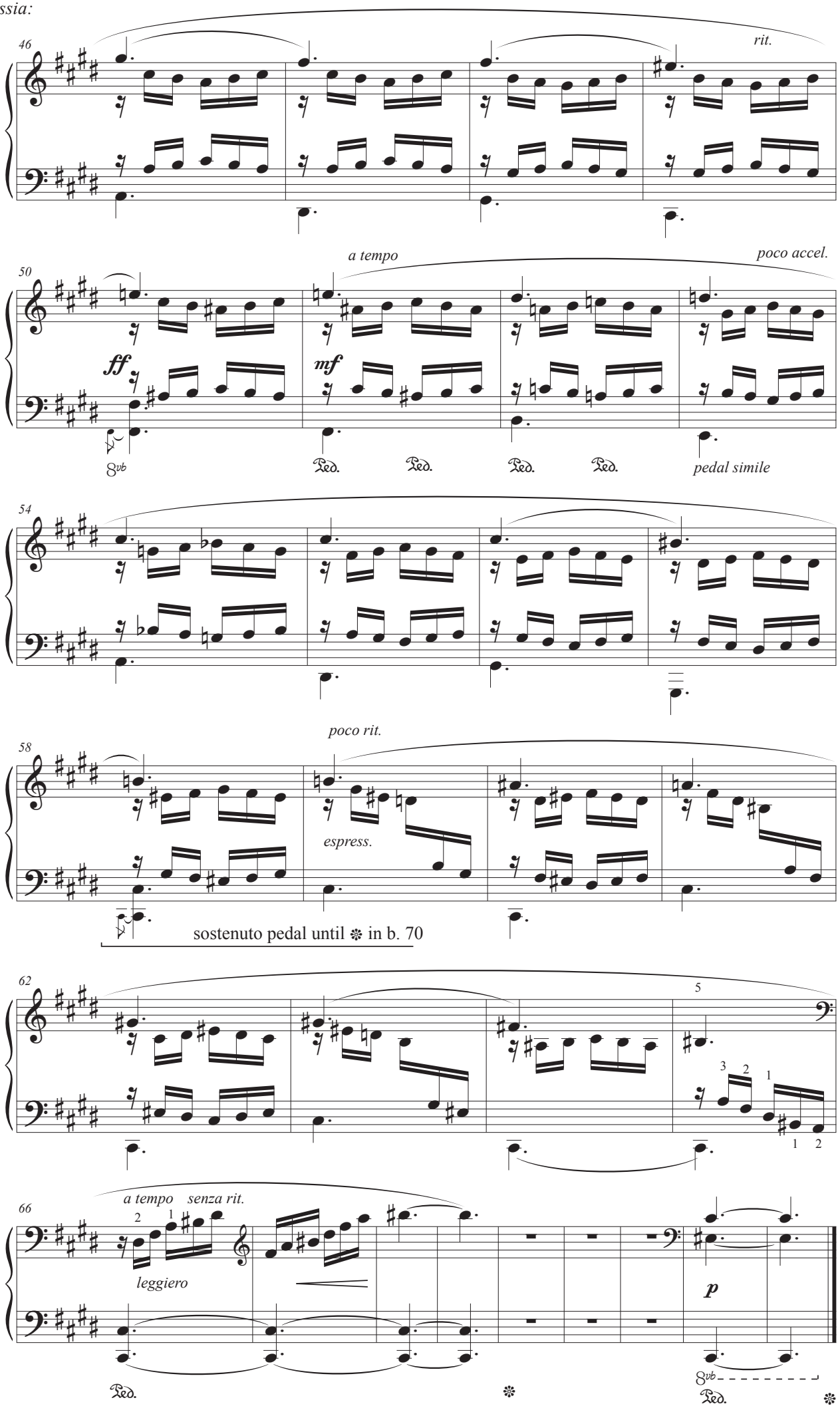

21
mf
cresc.
sostenuto pedal
Ped.
Ped.
pedal simile
25
f
ff
8vb
8vb
30
dim.
rit.
senza pedal
34
a tempo
p
38
mp
42
f
2 3 1
4
4


46
rit.
50
a tempo
poco accel.
ff
mf
8vb
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
pedal simile
54
58
poco rit.
espress.
sostenuto pedal until ❋ in b. 70
62
rit.
5
3
2
1
1
2
66
a tempo senza rit.
2
1
leggiero
p
Ped.
❋
8vb
Ped.
❋

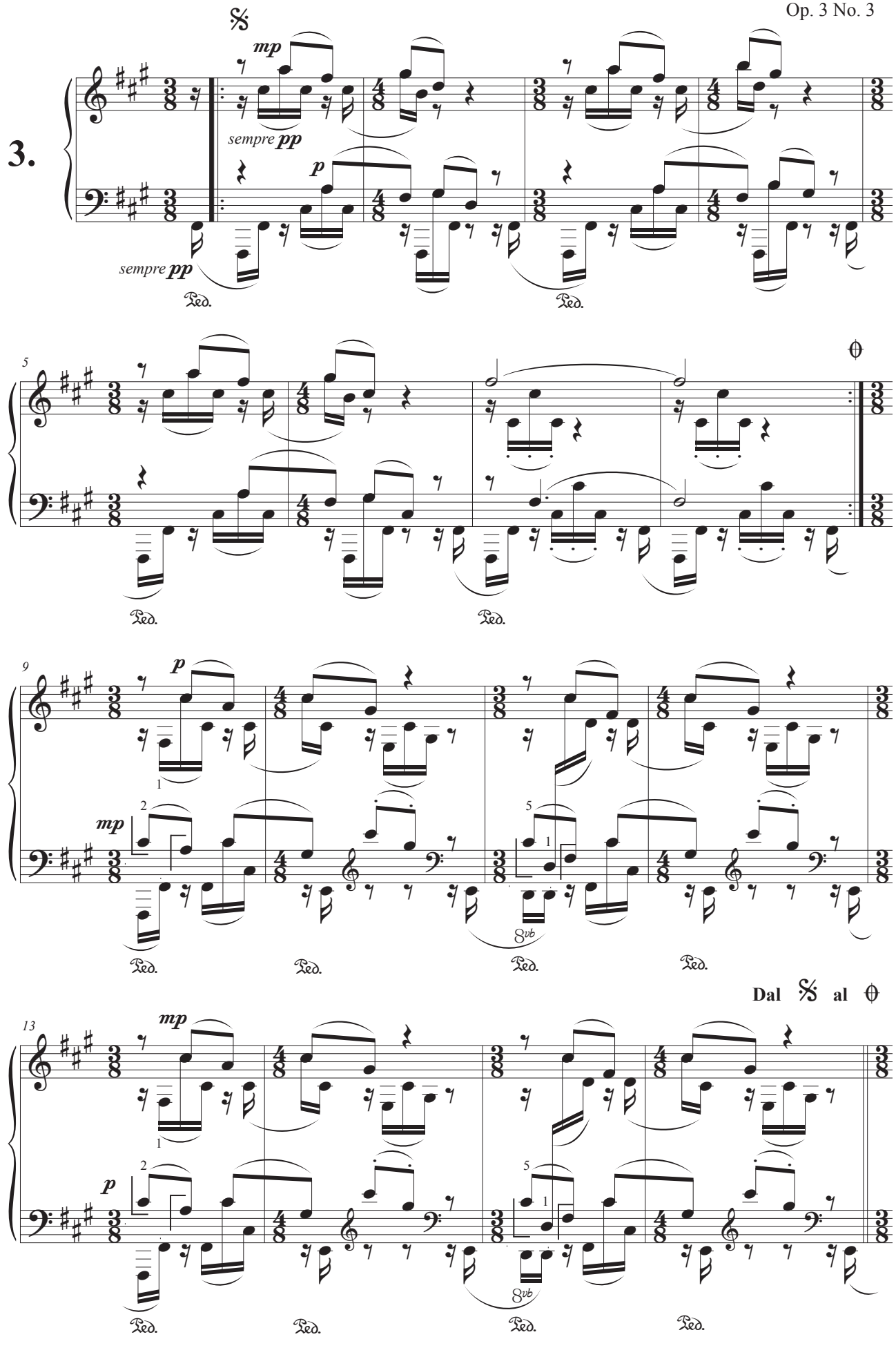
Ossia:


46
rit.
50
a tempo
poco accel.
ff
mf
8vb
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
pedal simile
54
58
poco rit.
espress.
sostenuto pedal until ❋ in b. 70
62
5
3 2 1
1 2
66
a tempo senza rit.
2 1
leggiero
p
Ped.
❋
8vb
Ped.
❋

Meditation

Ruhig und klangvoll (♪ = 60 - 64 *con rubato*)

Kirill Monorosi
Op. 3 No. 3



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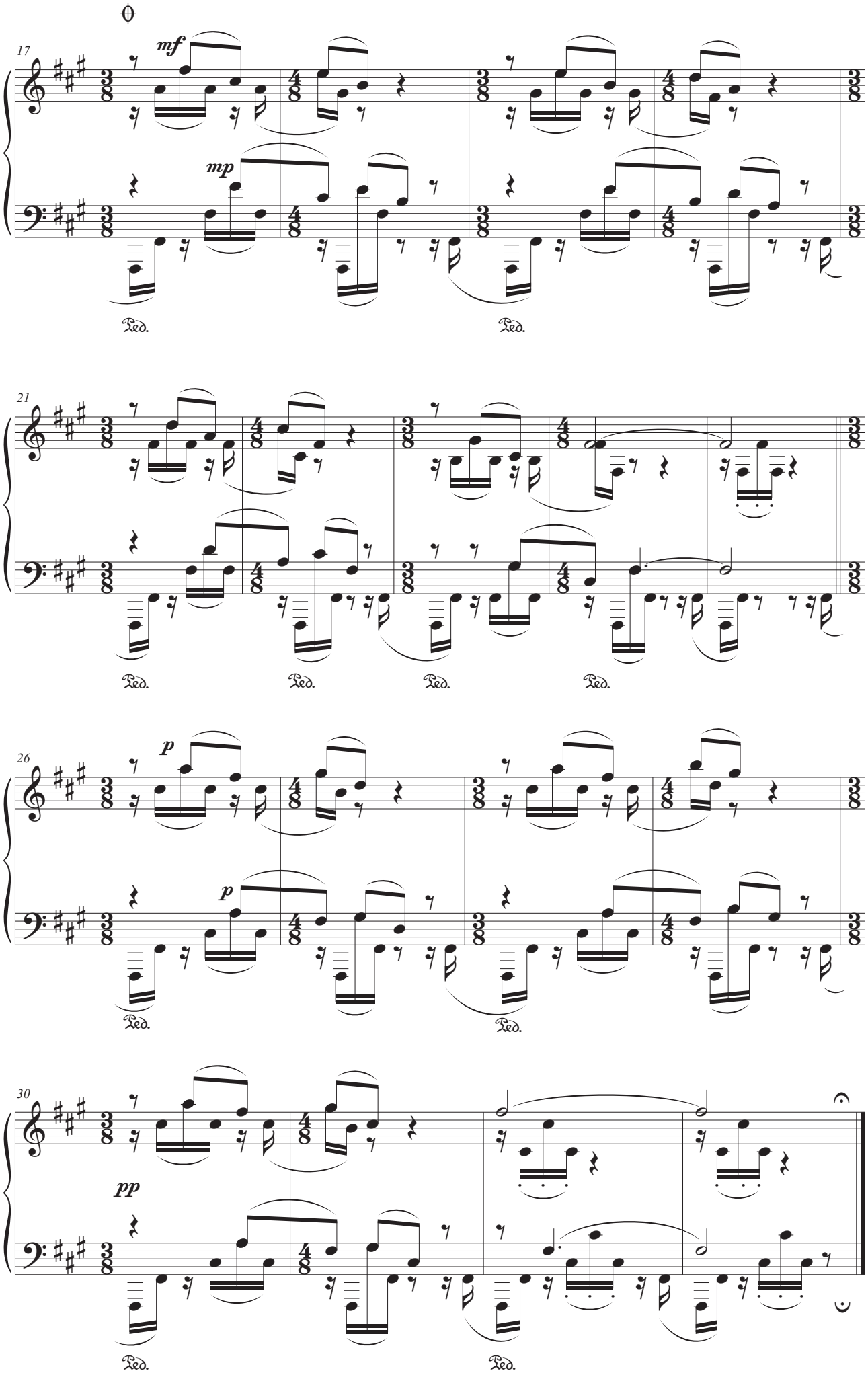
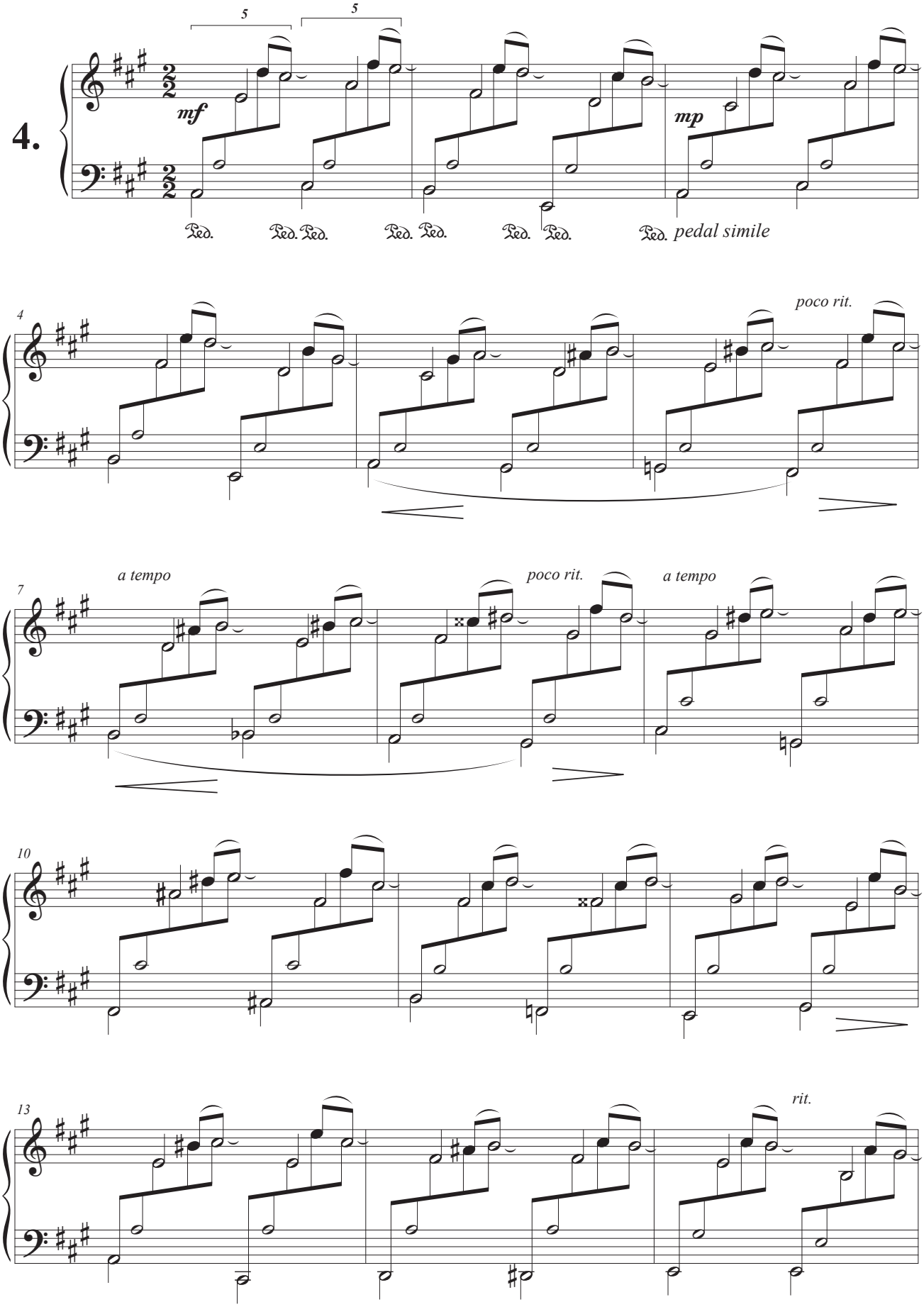

17
mf
mp
Ped.
Ped.
21
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
26
p
p
Ped.
Ped.
30
pp
Ped.
Ped.

Kirill Monorosi
Op. 3 No. 4

Mit Bewegung (𝅗𝅥 = 78 - 82)

4.



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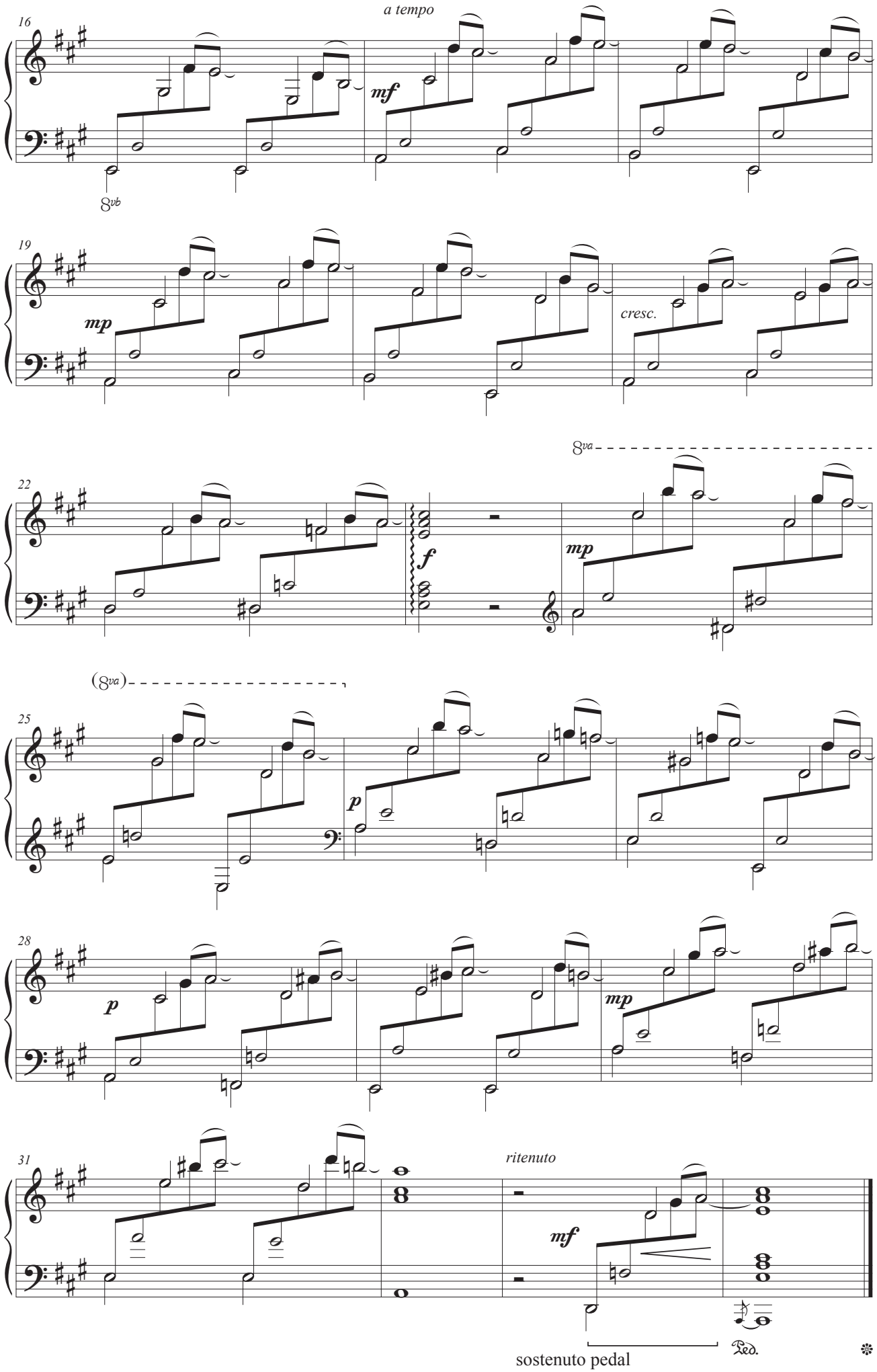
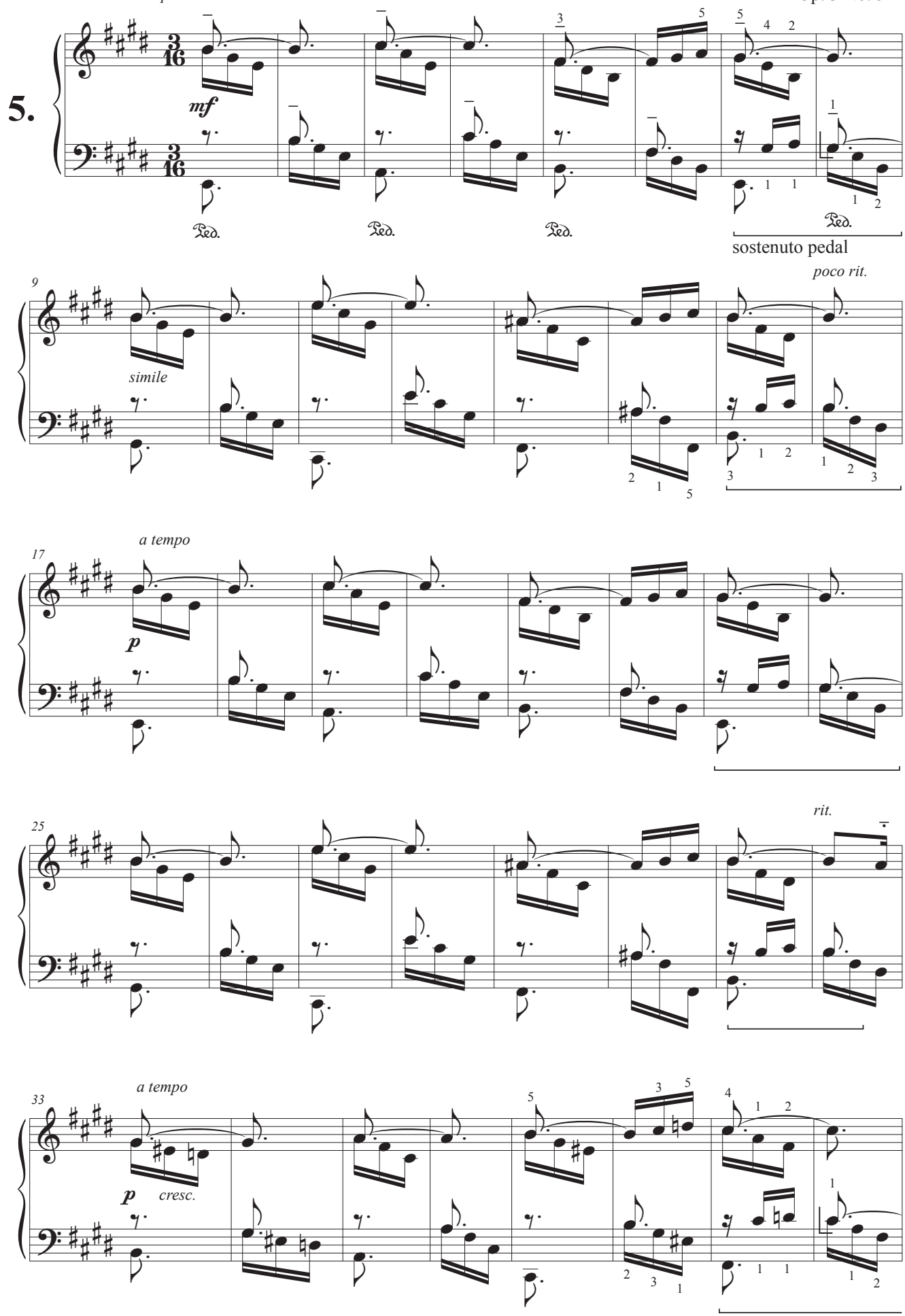

16
a tempo
mf
8vb
19
mp
cresc.
22
8va
f
mp
(8va)
25
p
28
p
mp
31
ritenuto
mf
sostenuto pedal
Ped.

Heiter und mit Schwung (♩. = 124)

Sopran und Tenor hervorheben

Kirill Monorosi
Op. 3 No. 5



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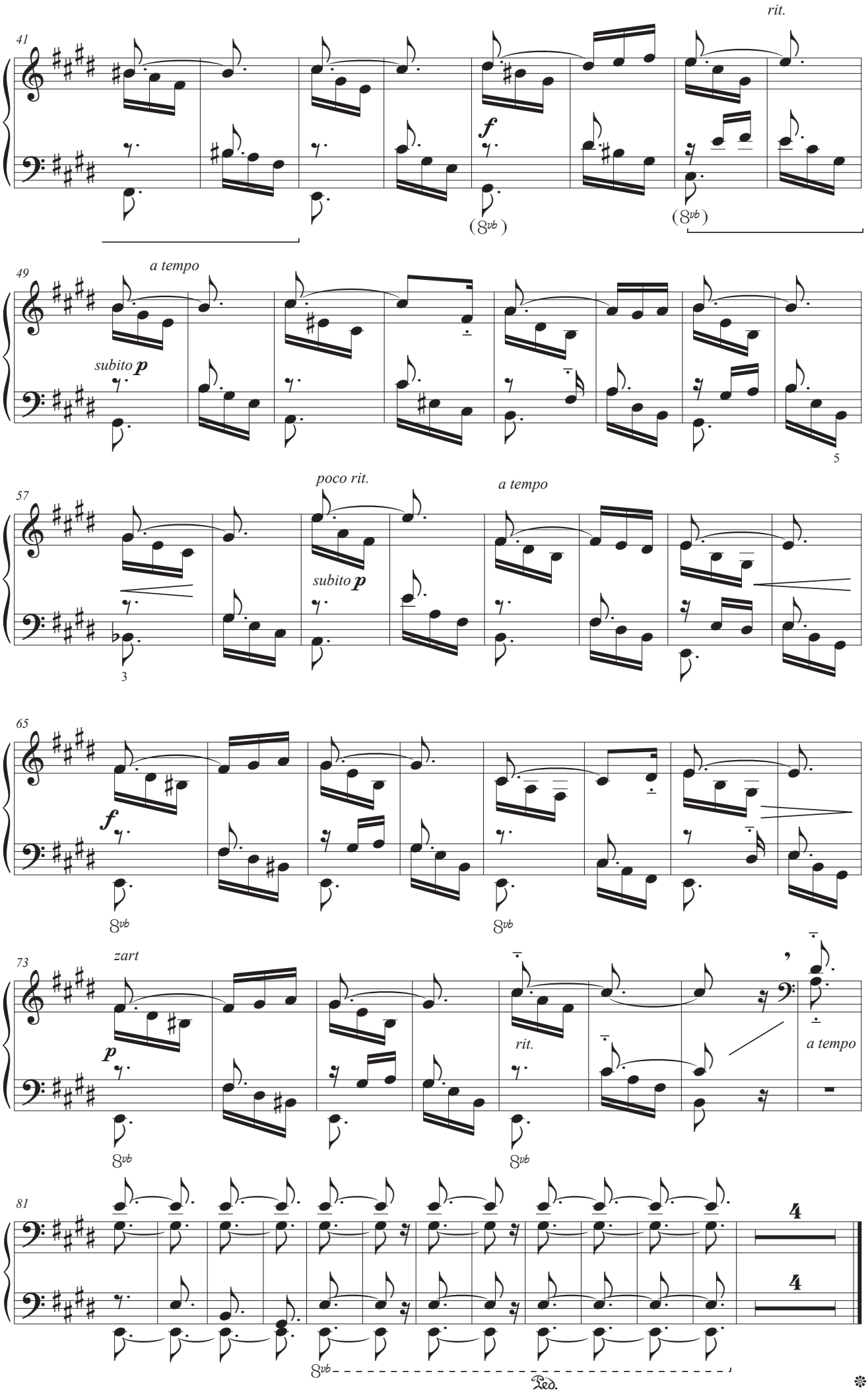

41
rit.
f
(8vb)
(8vb)
49
a tempo
subito p
5
57
poco rit.
a tempo
subito p
3
65
f
8vb
8vb
73
zart
p
rit.
a tempo
8vb
8vb
81
4
4
8vb
Ped.

NOTES

In an architectural analogy, this cycle can be seen as an exploration of an ornate building, with each space (chamber, hall, room) decorated using different patterns and colour schemes that create a different feeling and mood. On returning to the first chamber at the end of the tour, one sees the decoration differently – noticing details not seen previously.

An important consideration in performing any cycle is the connection between individual movements. While the time taken between movements can only be judged by the performer during the performance due to the number of variables, the timing and note/rest values of the endings of pieces should be observed precisely. The endings of the Arabesques may seem to have some unusually long notes and rests in proportion to the rest of the pieces - particularly the coda of number 5. This notation ensures correct proportions in phrase structure. An alternative, such as using fermatas as a means of prolonging these notes, would be vague and unspecific. The fermata at the end of Arabesque 3 on the other hand is needed to allow the audience some time to process the work before moving on to the next piece.

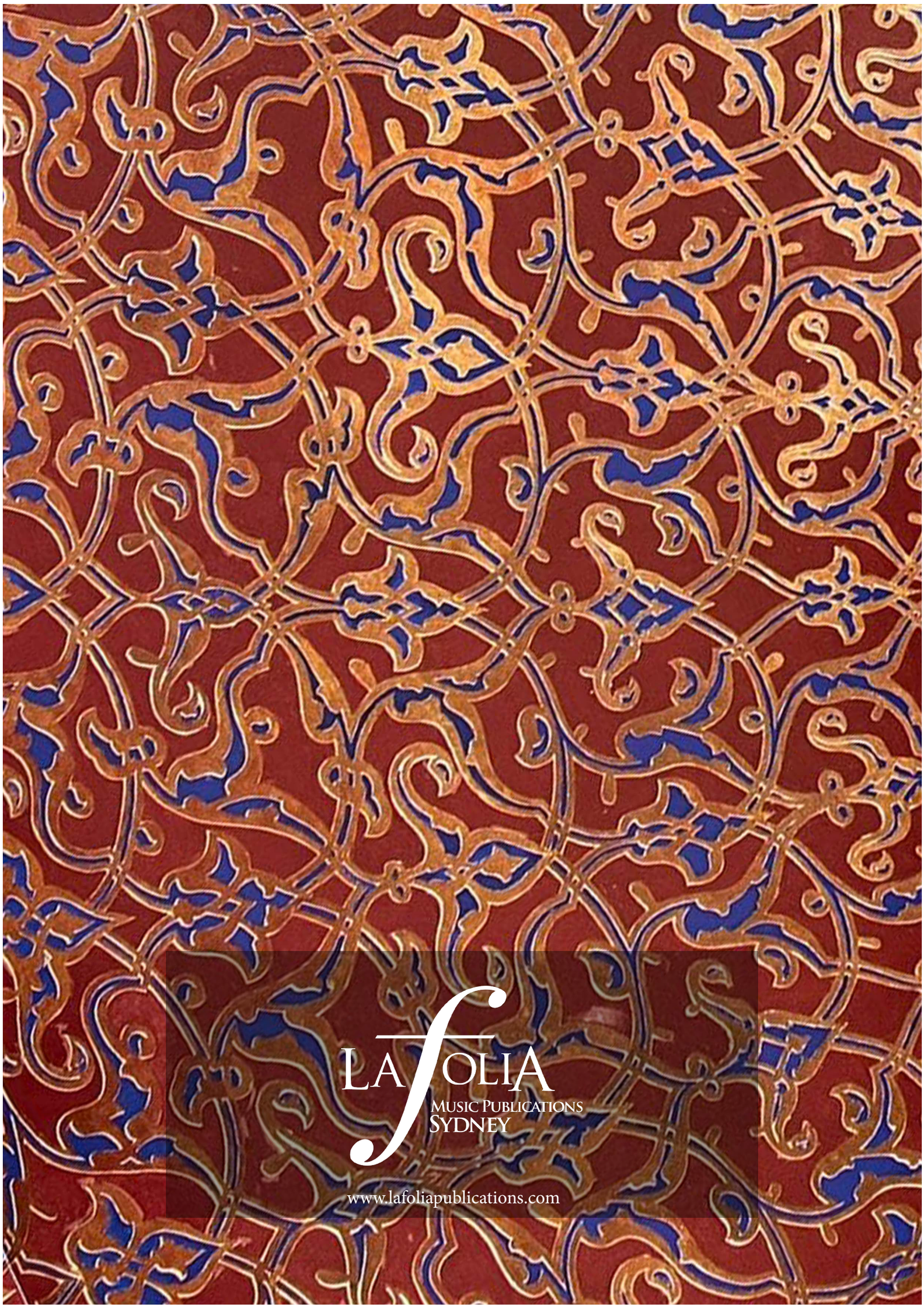
Arabesque 1
Einfach und gelassen, innig - Simply and calmly, intimately
Figuren leicht und schwebend – The figurations should be light, as though floating
In playing the whole cycle it is important to differentiate between the rhythmical accentuation of this and the last Arabesque. The three crotchet beats per bar should be clearly felt. I would press the pedal down before beginning the piece (not at the same time as the first note).

Arabesque 2
Rauschend – swirling / surging
Sopran und Bass hervorheben, Alt und Tenor leggiero - Bring out the Soprano and Bass, playing Alto and Tenor lightly
A dramatic, virtuosic work that needs much forward momentum in performance.

Arabesque 3 - *Meditation*
Ruhig und klangvoll – Calmly and sonorous
A subtle difference in voicing in each repeat of the A section will help achieve more variety.
I would press the pedal down before beginning the piece (not at the same time as the first note).

Arabesque 4
Mit Bewegung – With movement
The performer should use their discretion to decide which layer is to be in the foreground at any given time – the soprano ornamented by the melodic auxiliary notes, the alto, or bass. The balance between these layers can also be adjusted to achieve different effects.

Arabesque 5
Heiter und mit Schwung – Cheerful and *w*ith momentum / impetus
Sopran und Tenor hervorheben – Bring out the Soprano and Tenor
zart – tenderly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