Fitful Slumbers

for

Piano

By

Brandon Vaccaro

Program Notes

Fitful Slumbers was composed for María Fernanda Nieto-Pulido during the spring of 2006 and was premiered on September 21 of the same year. The collaboration between performer and composer is one of the more exciting aspects of writing music, and it has been a joy to work with Fernanda on this project.

The piece is a set of four character sketches based on sleep disorders. The first movement is called Somniloquy, or the act or habit of talking in one's sleep. It consists of a series of declamatory gestures imitating the outbursts of someone talking in their sleep. It also serves to establish the harmonic language that is used throughout the piece.

The second movement is called Somnambulism, or the act or an instance of walking or performing another activity associated with wakefulness while asleep or in a sleeplike state. It is a dreamy march, though in a compound duple meter rather than the traditional simple duple.

The third movement is called Insomnia or the chronic inability to fall asleep or remain asleep for an adequate length of time. It is a slow movement that expresses the boredom and frustration of insomnia. Was there a hint of the Brahms' Wiegenlied (Lullaby)? The movement ends as our subject finally drifts off.

The final movement is titled Bruxism or the habitual, involuntary grinding or clenching of the teeth, usually during sleep, as from anger, tension, fear, or frustration. The movement is a *moto perpetuo* that expresses grinding tension and stress. The harmonic language is dense and biting (no pun intended) at the beginning. As the section ends, our subject begins to wake up, and the harmonic language becomes more sonorous and relieved.

Biography

Brandon Vaccaro (b. 1976) is a composer and performer based in Denver, Colorado. He has received awards, commendations, and commissions from The Experimental Playground Ensemble (formerly TEPE), the Iowa State University Carillon Festival, the University of Denver, and the University of Colorado.

He has worked with a number of ensembles including the Tosca String Quartet, The Experimental Playground Ensemble (TEPE), Kallisti, Free Love Ensemble, and Coefficient of Friction, Ground, Shutter Trio, and the Vinca Quartet. His works have been performed throughout the United States and in Greece.

He has studied composition with Carter Pann, Donald Keats, Malcolm Lynn Baker, William Hill, Chris Malloy, and Michael Theodore. His principal guitar teachers were Masakazu Ito and David DiMichaelis.

Mystery Cabal
Denver CO
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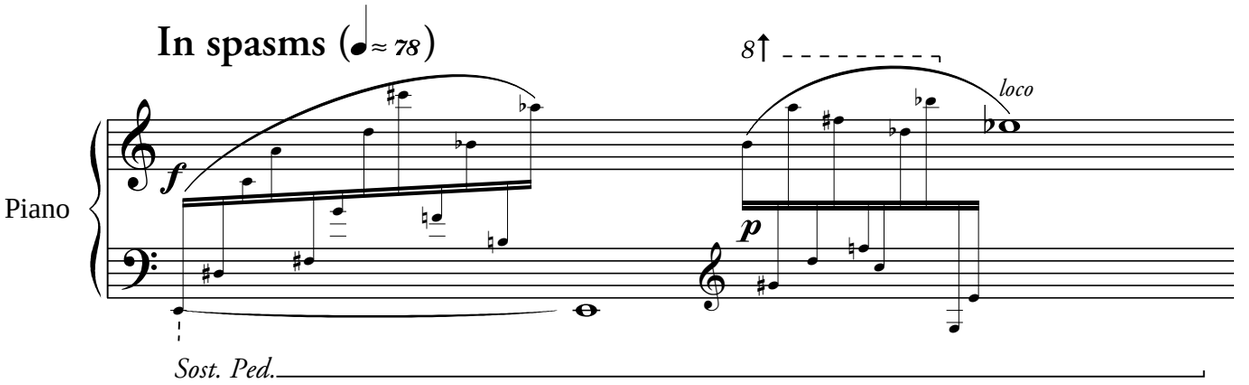
for María Fernanda Nieto-Pulido

FITFUL SLUMBERS

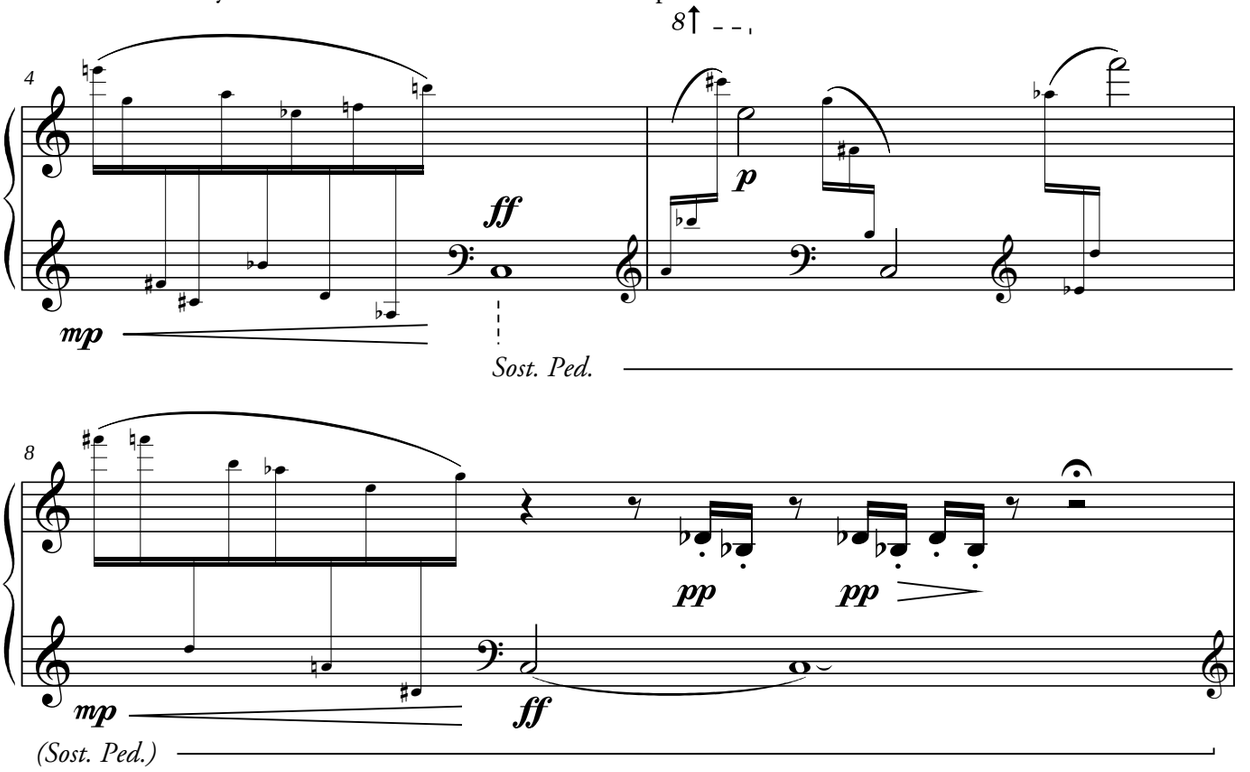
Brandon Vaccaro
(2006)

I.
Somniloquy

n. The act or habit of talking in one's sleep.



Grace notes should be played very fast and *a bit* rubato.
They do not count towards the time of the previous or next note.



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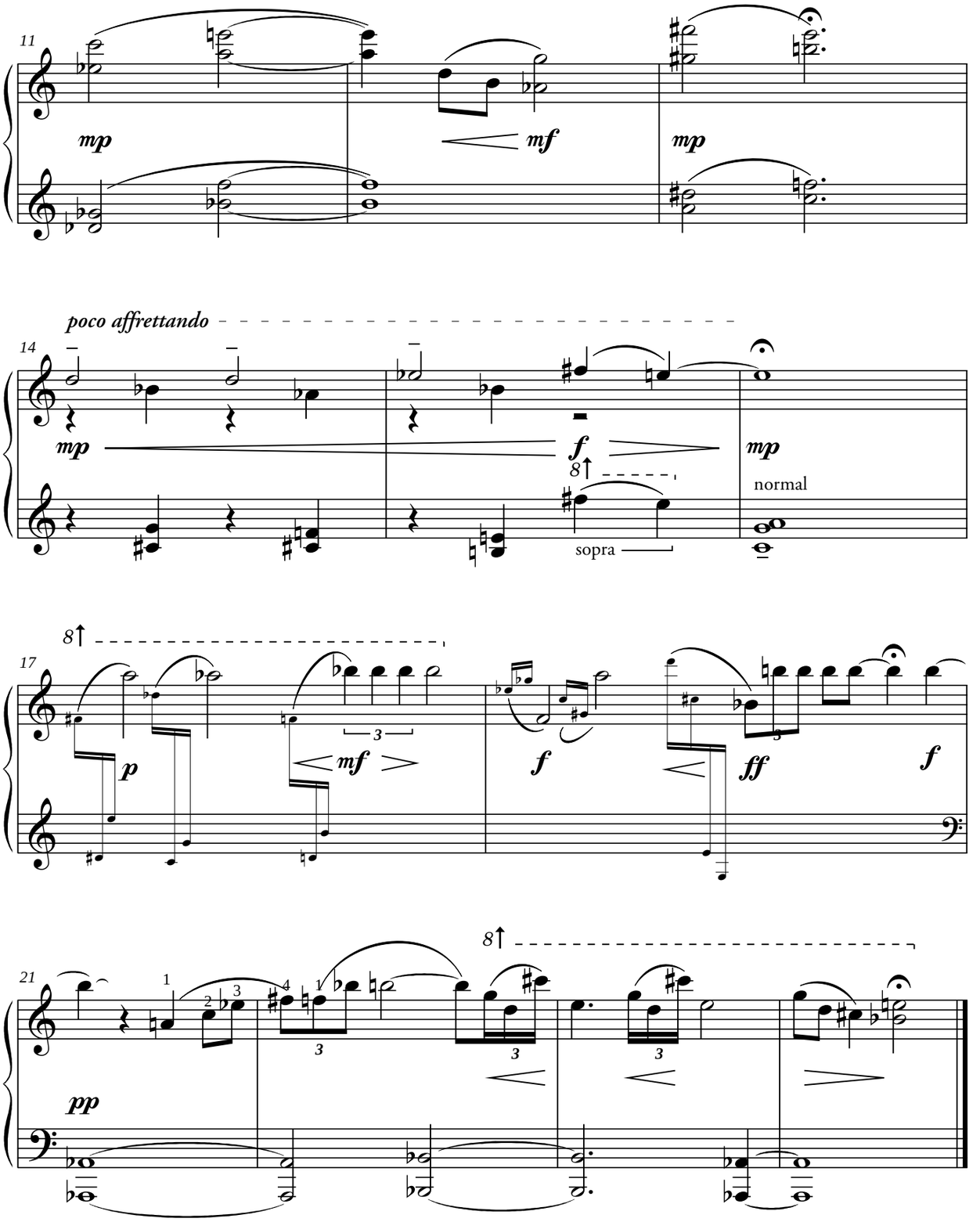
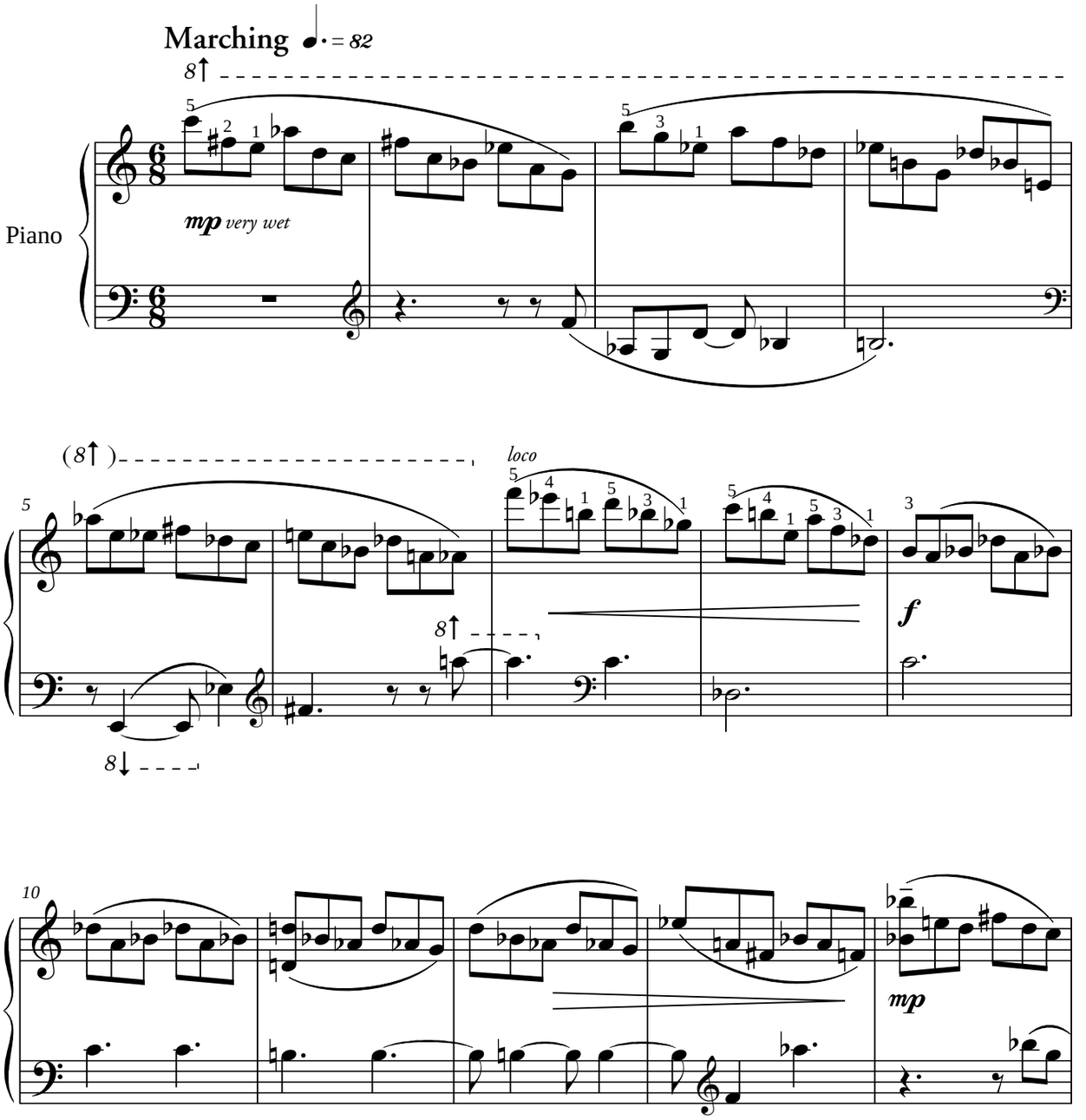
I


11
mp
mf
mp
poco affrettando
14
mp
f
mp
8
normal
sopra
8
17
p
mf
f
ff
f
8
21
1
2
3
4
1
3
3
3
pp

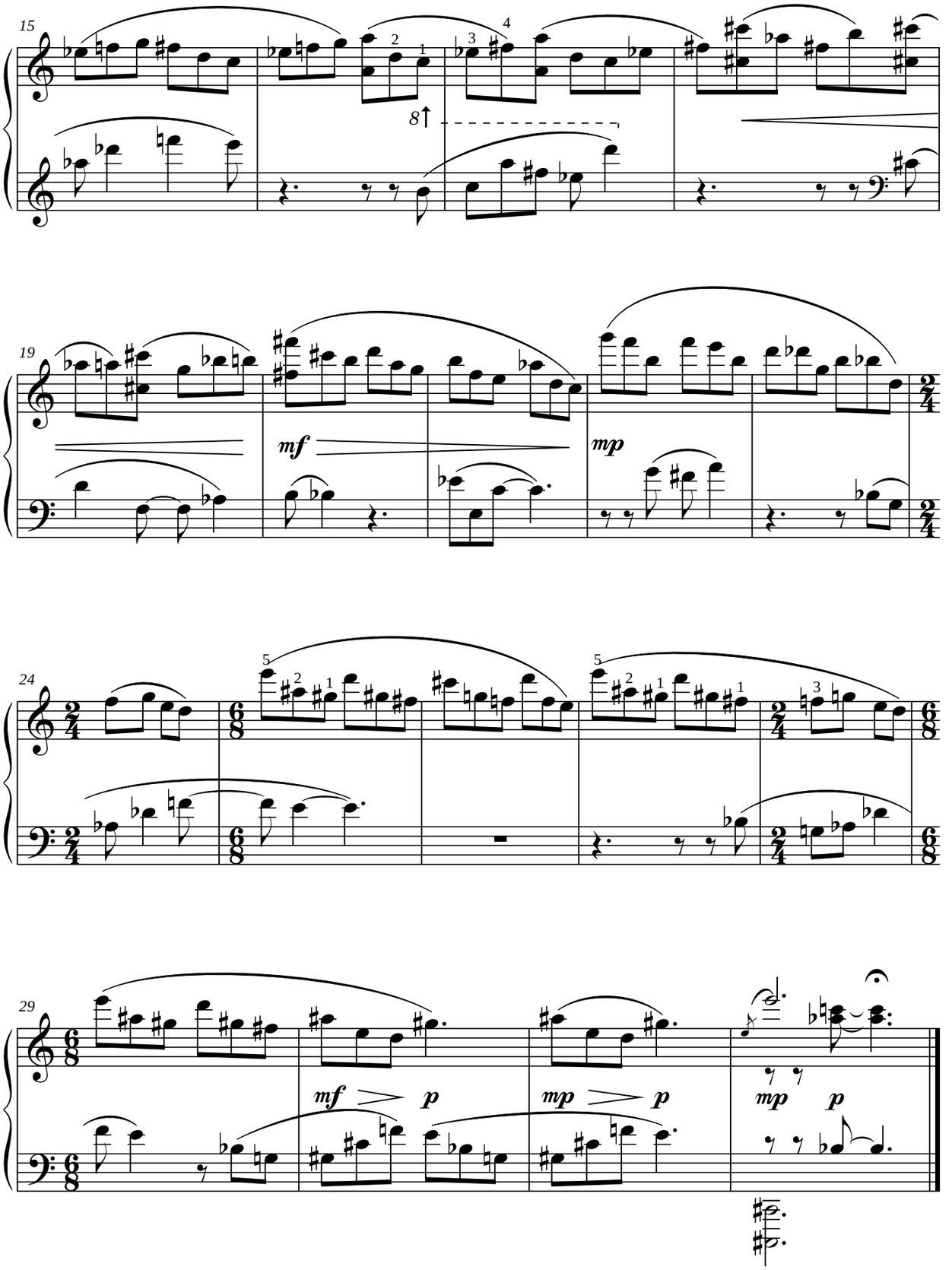
II.

Somnambulism

n. The act or an instance of walking or performing another activity associated with wakefulness while asleep or in a sleeplike state.



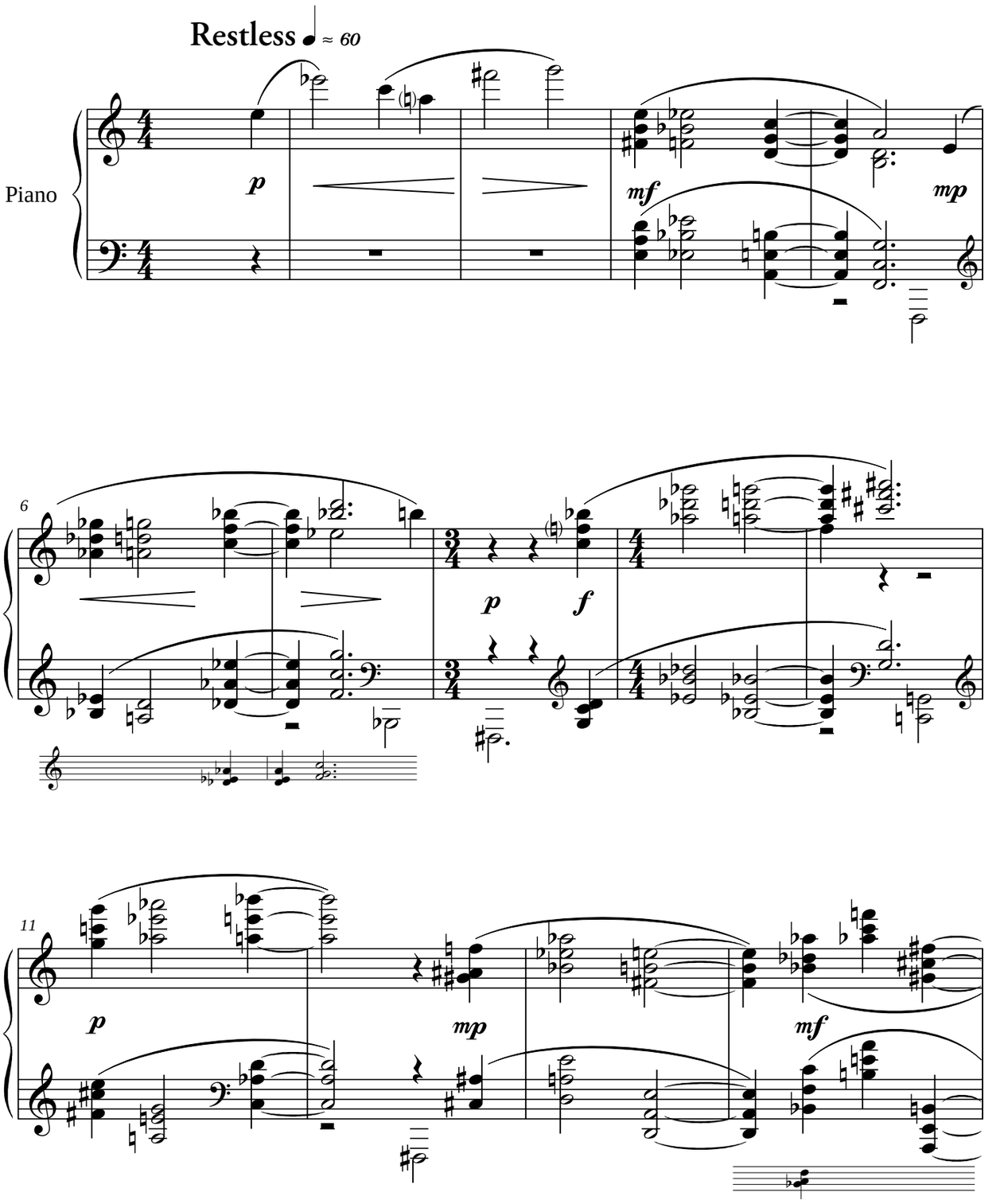
Fitful Slumbers
II



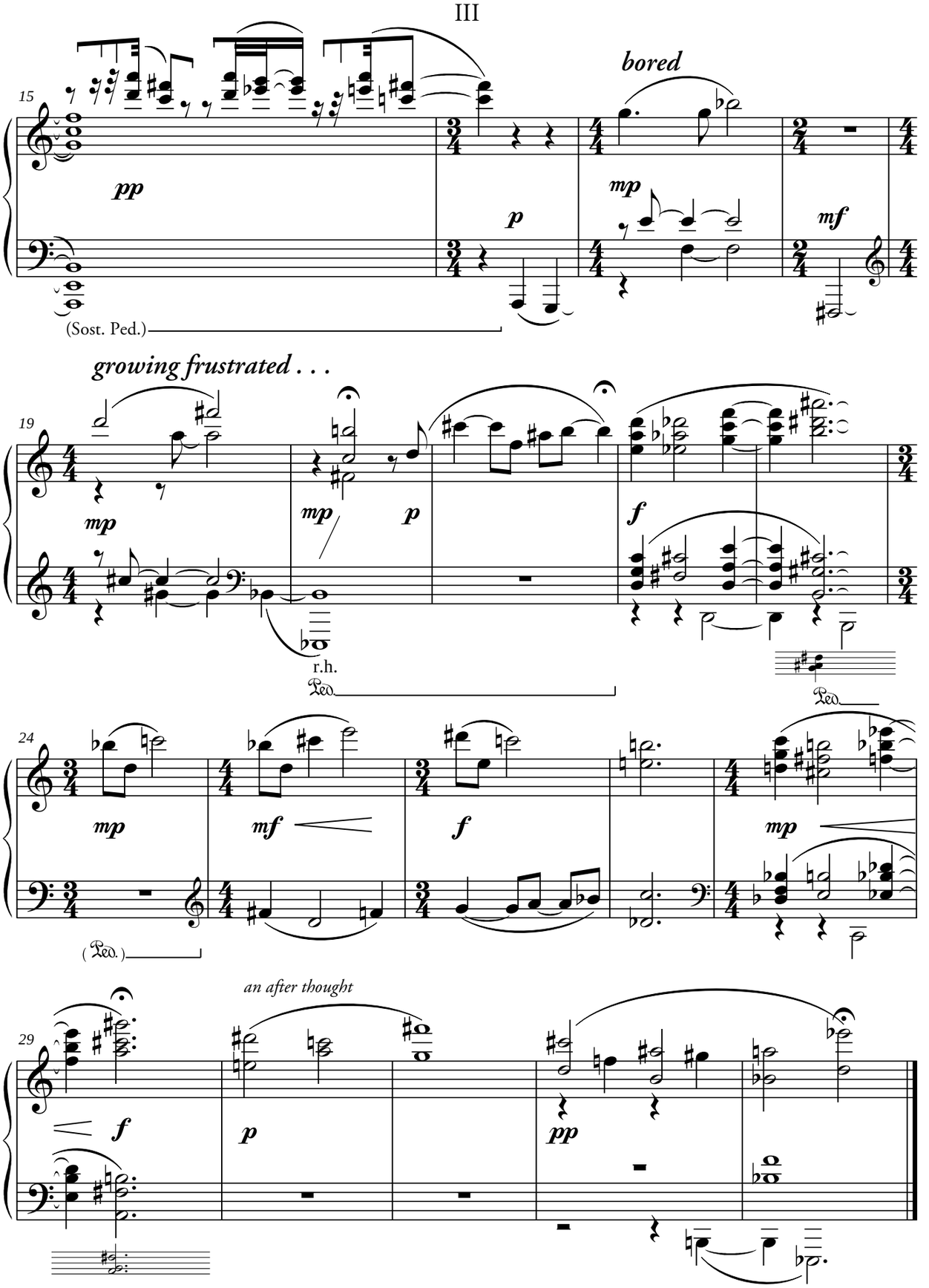
III.

Insomnia

n. Chronic inability to fall asleep or remain asleep for an adequate length of time.



Fitful Slumbers
III

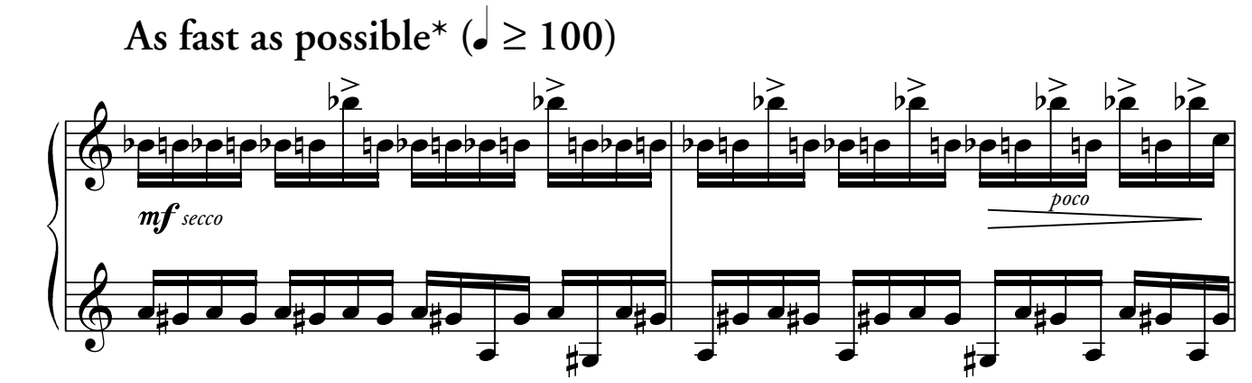


IV.

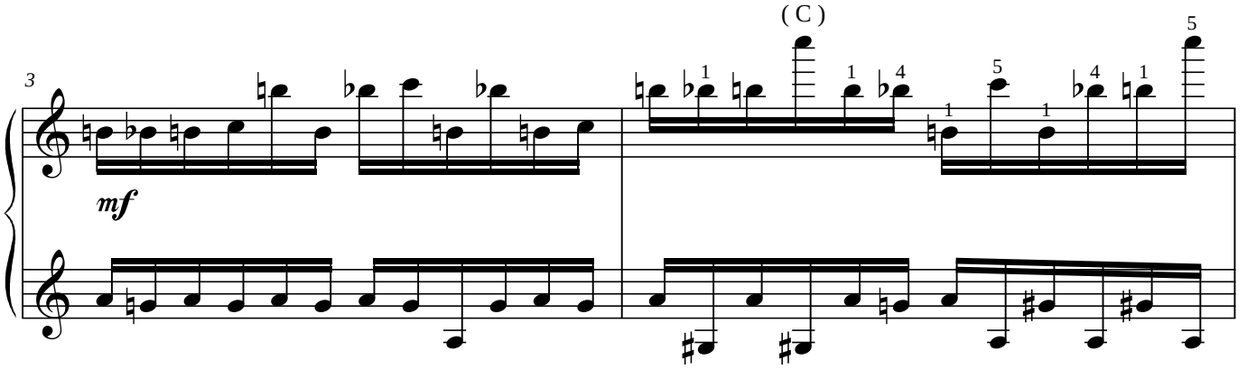
Bruxism

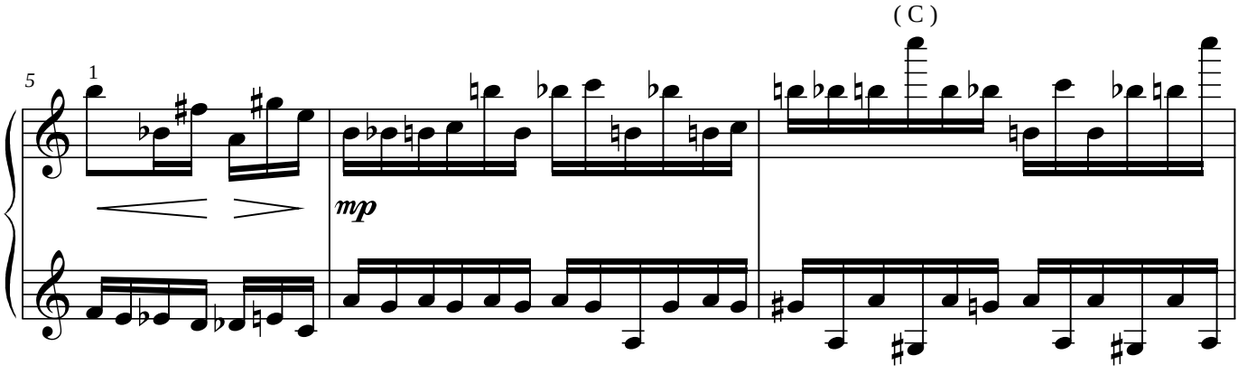
n. The habitual, involuntary grinding or clenching of the teeth,

usually during sleep, as from anger, tension, fear, or frustration.

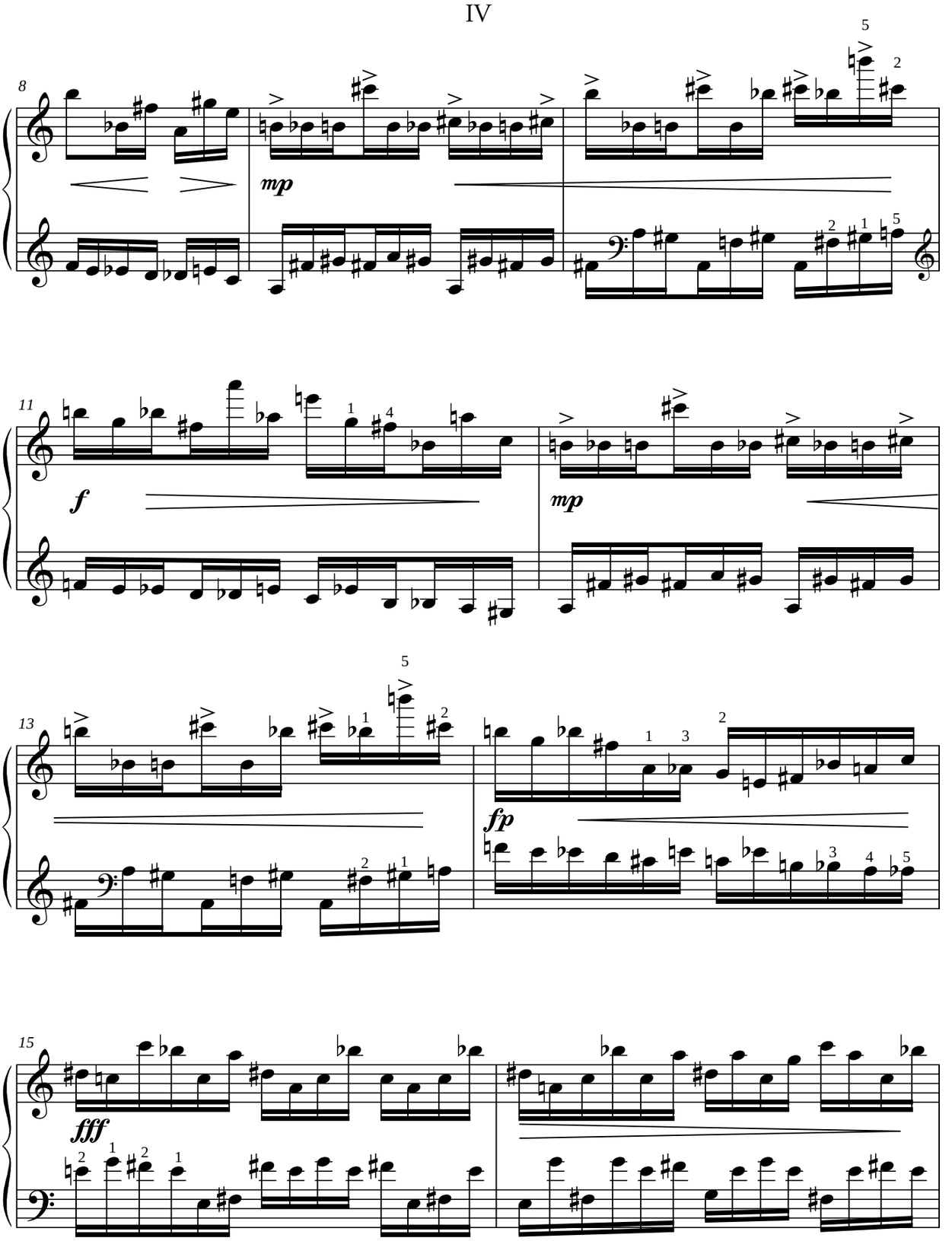


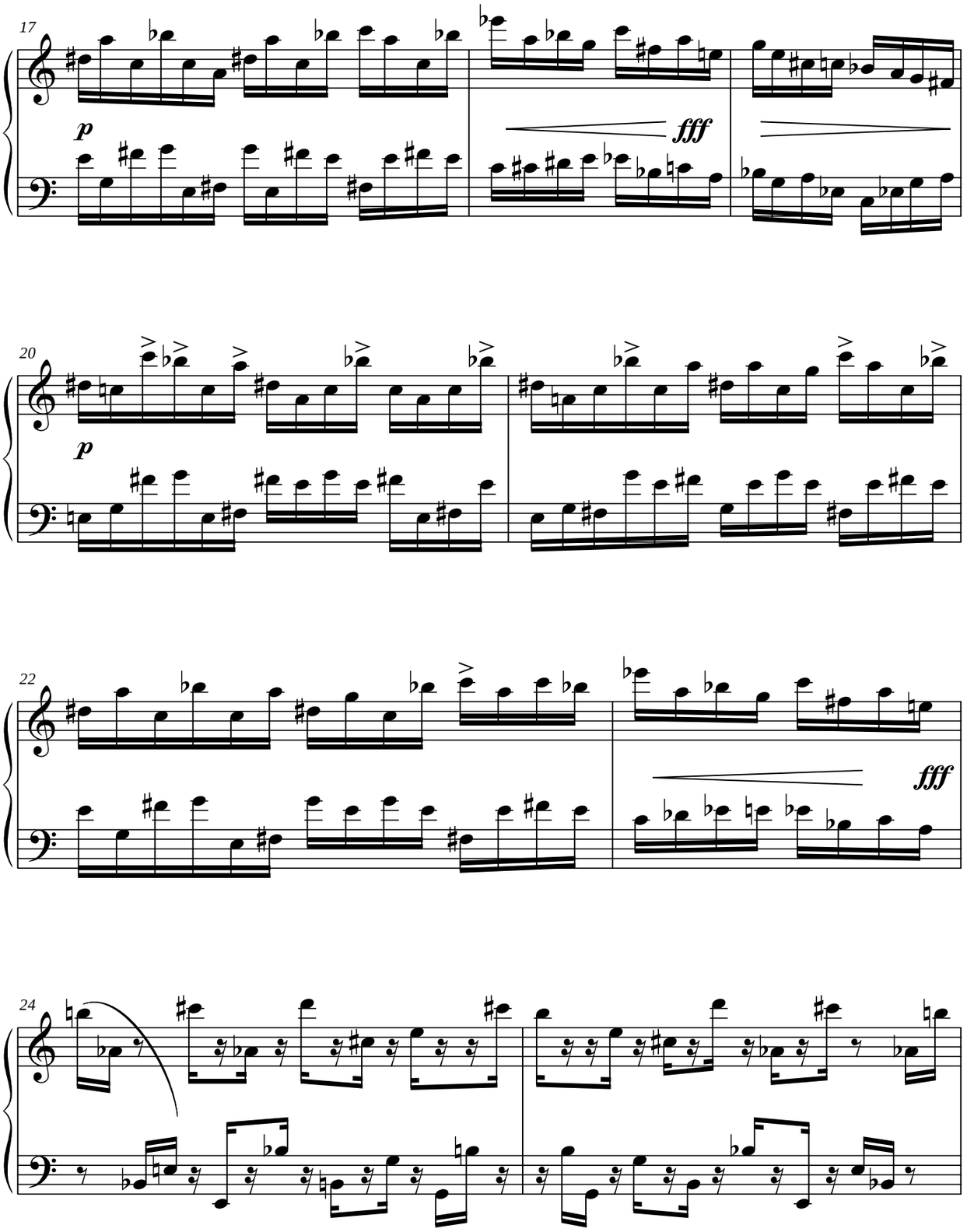
* For you personally (not as fast as is theoretically possible).

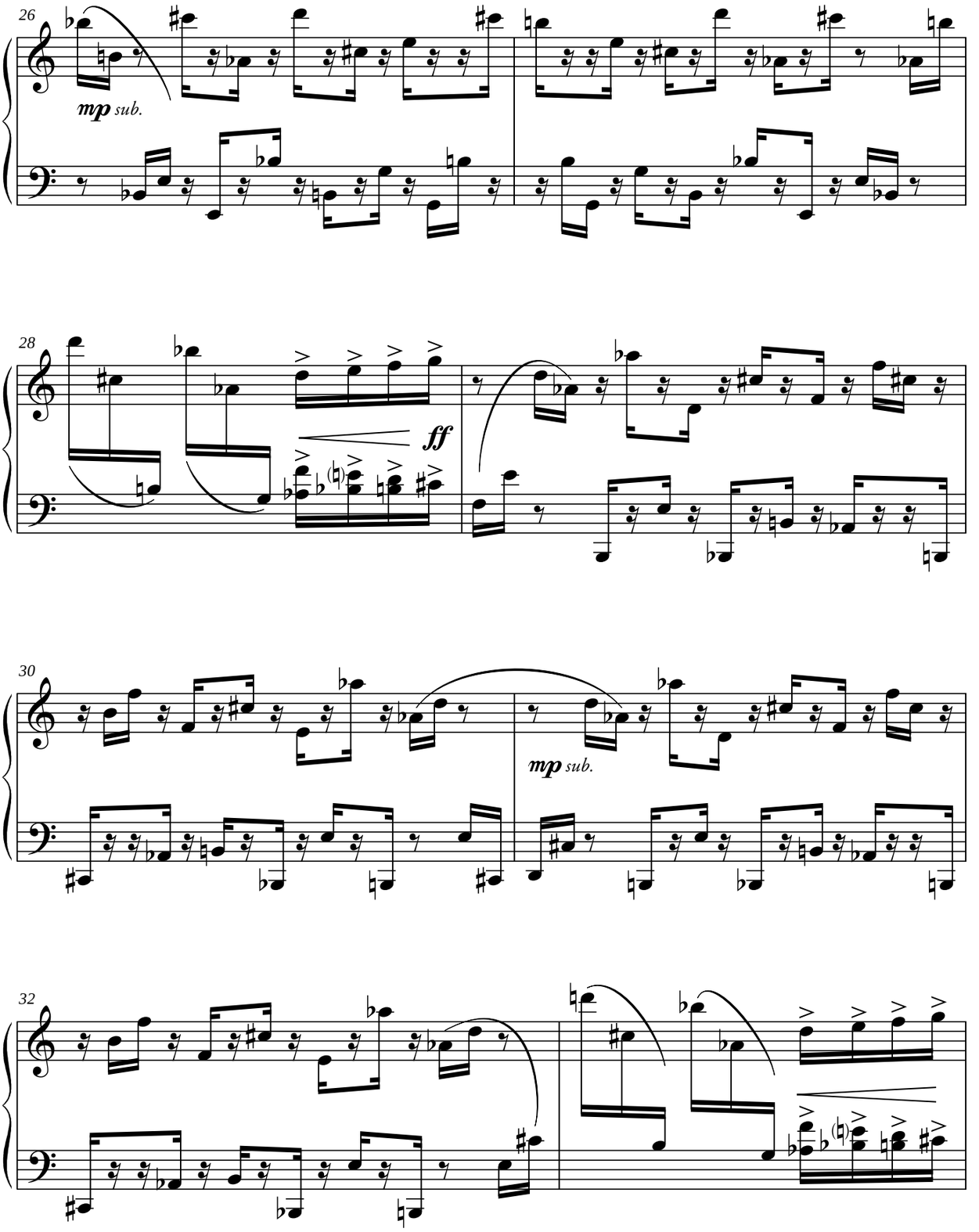


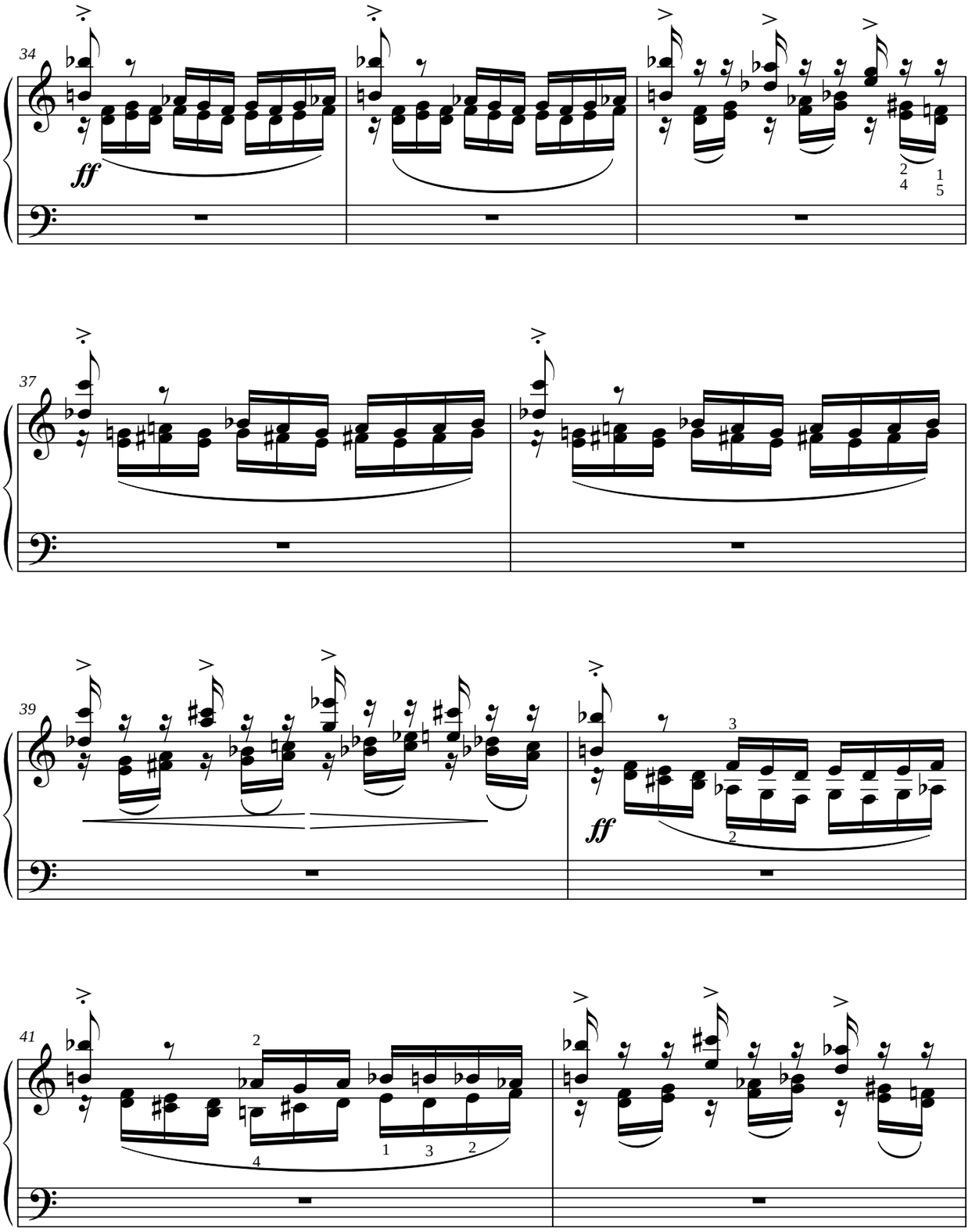


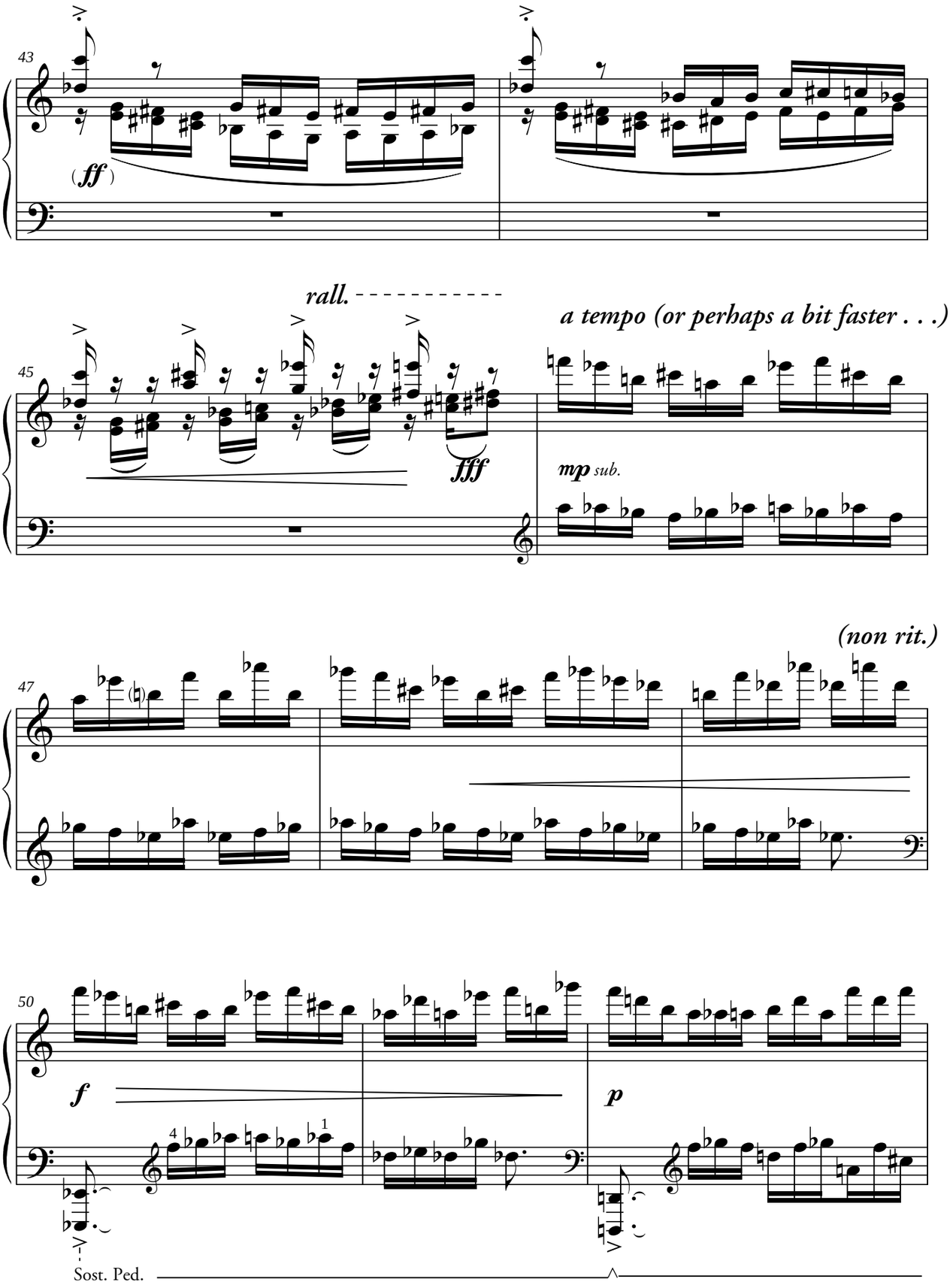
Fitful Slumbers
IV

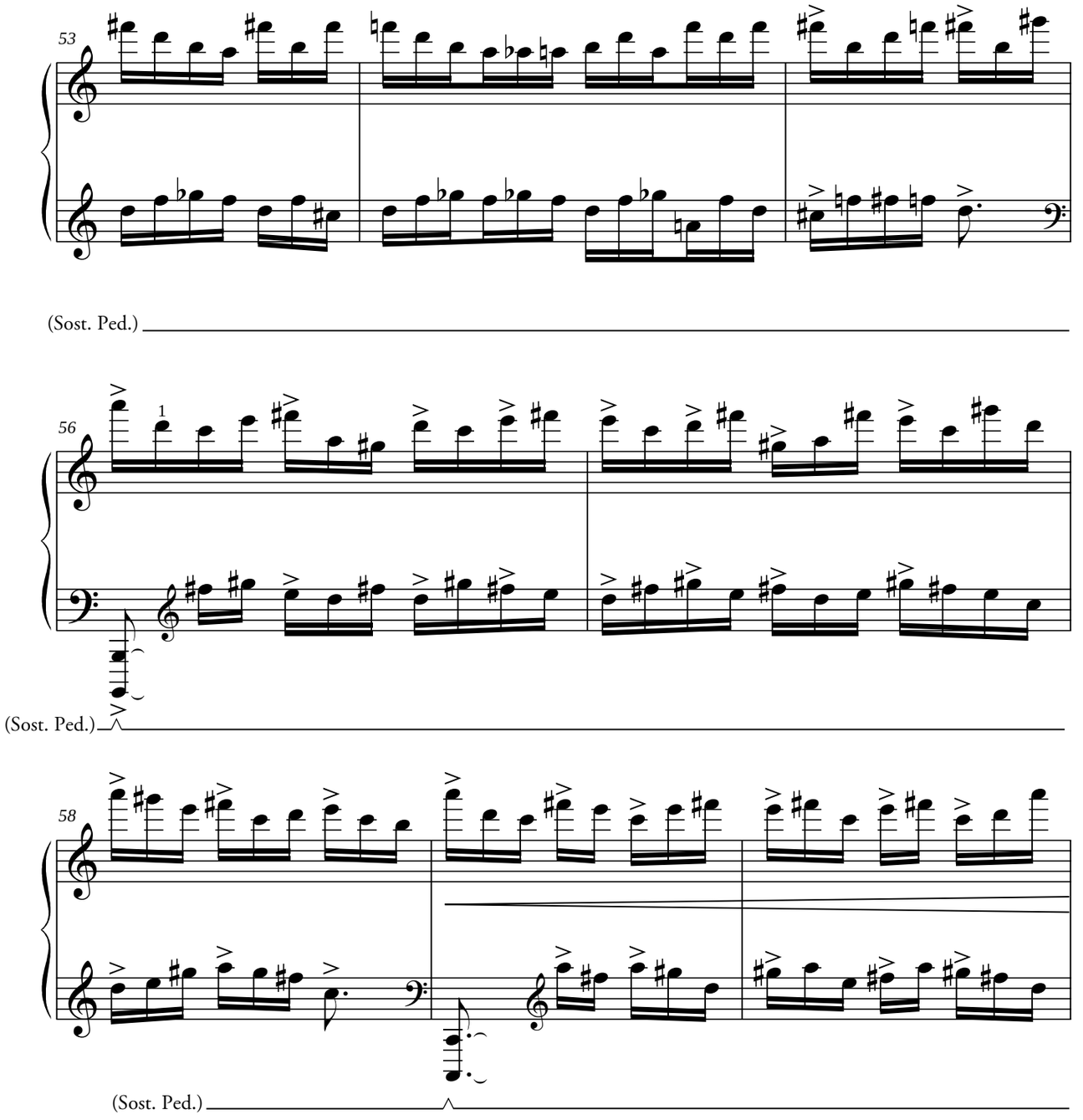


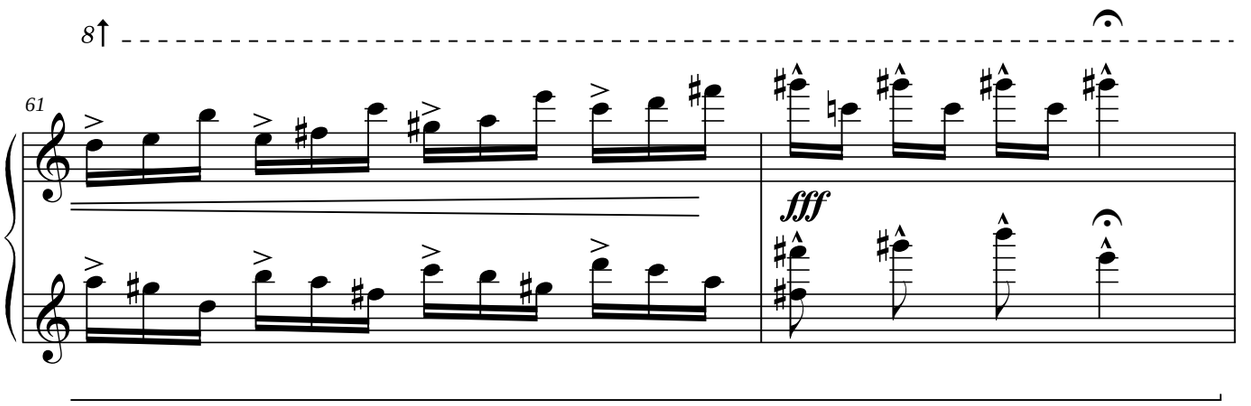
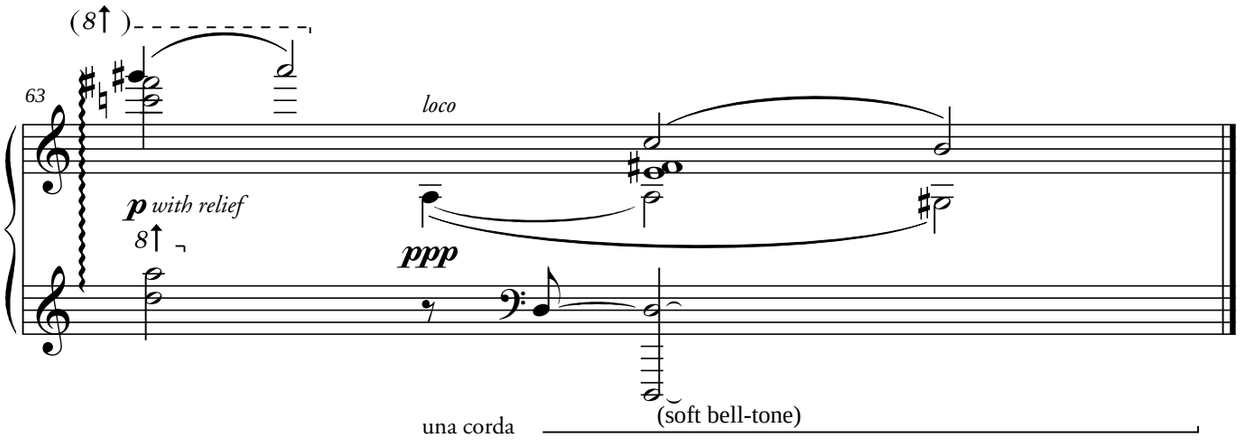

17
p
fff
20
p
22
fff
24


26
mp sub.
28
ff
30
mp sub.
32


34
ff
37
39
ff
41


43
(ff)
rall.
a tempo (or perhaps a bit faster . . .)
45
fff
mp sub.
(non rit.)
47
50
f
p
Sost. Ped.


53
(Sost. Ped.)
56
1
(Sost. Ped.)
58
(Sost. Ped.)



Freely, expansive