Christopher Best

Still Beating

Op.52

for Scottish Lever Harp (Clarsach)

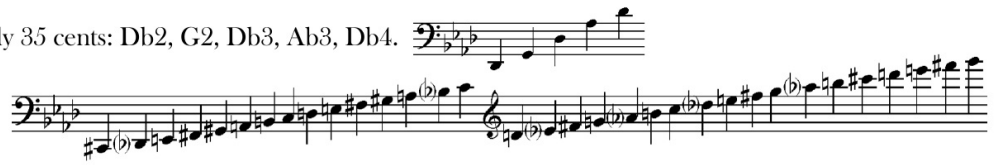
2006

(Revised edition 2020)

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS AND SYMBOLS

SET-UP:

- Initial tuning Ab Major.
- Tune down approximately 35 cents: Db2, G2, Db3, Ab3, Db4.
- Pre-set levers as follows:

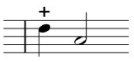


KEY:

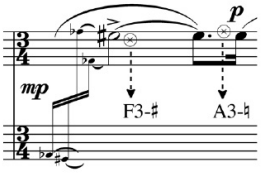
A3-♮ Lever change information is based on the naming convention that C4 = Middle C. Levers are changed with the left hand except where marked.

E4-♭
D4-♭ Where two or three lever changes can be made simultaneously due to their proximity and common direction they are bracketed together and shown one above the other.

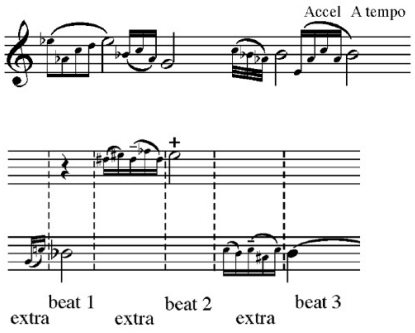
This symbol means damp all ringing notes other than the current note (e.g. bar 1), or damp everything if occuring at a rest (e.g. bar 13) or over a bar line (e.g. bar 27).



The cross symbol means damp the note to which it is attached as soon as the *next* note is played (e.g. bar 6) or at the next rest (e.g. bar 13).

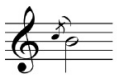


The circle with a black cross inside indicates to damp the *specific* marked pitches (left ringing from notes previously played) at the precise moment at which this should happen. If this is in order to effect a silent lever change then a dotted arrow joins the circle with the relevant lever change symbol.

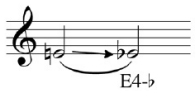


Smaller notes, without a cross-slash and with stems pointing the **correct** way (or correct in the lower stave in the case of cross-stave notaton – e.g. bars 14 or 354), occupy a duration taken neither from the previous beat nor from the subsequent one. Rather they are *additional* to the surrounding music and thereby effectively push that music apart slightly (see example below). Single beams (e.g. bar 333) are a little slower than double (e.g. bar 1), which in turn are slower than triple (e.g. bar 57). If marked *accel* or feathered, the player should shape the ornamentation accordingly.

This example (bar 53) shows how this ornamentation adds to the duration of the bar, thus making the two minims longer than they would normally be (the crotchet rest in beat 1 and crotchet in beat 3 are unaffected).



Grace notes, with stems pointing the **wrong** way and with a cross-slash (e.g. bars 70 or 203) follow the common practice of taking their duration from the *preceding* beat.



The arrow between two notes joined by a slur means do not pluck the second note but let the lever change alone effect the pitch change.

Harmonics are written at string pitch, therefore sounding an octave higher than written (e.g. bar 168).

COMPOSER'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Still Beating' was written for the harpist Ruth Wall, who plays a 33 string lever harp built by Mark Norris. The project was instigated by the S.P.N.M. for a performance on 6th March 2007 at Wapping Power Station in London. I am grateful both to Ruth for her enthusiasm and invaluable guidance and to the S.P.N.M. for giving me this opportunity.

The 2020 revision recognises that the number of lever changes originally required was prohibitively large. The new version has allowed the changes to be reduced in number, re-grouped or given more time to be affected. It has also afforded the work more breathing space, being around a minute longer than the original 2006 version.

Duration: 14' 30"

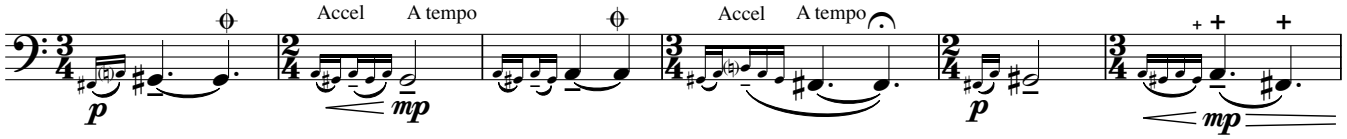
Still Beating

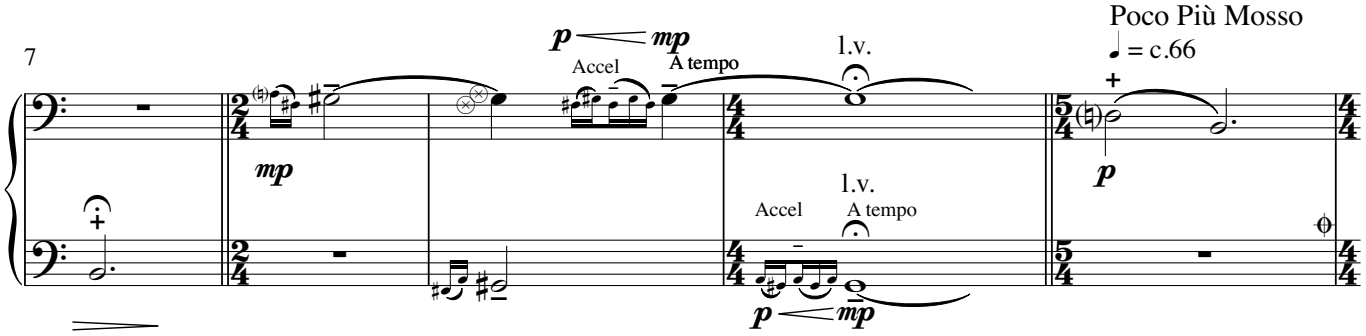
for lever harp

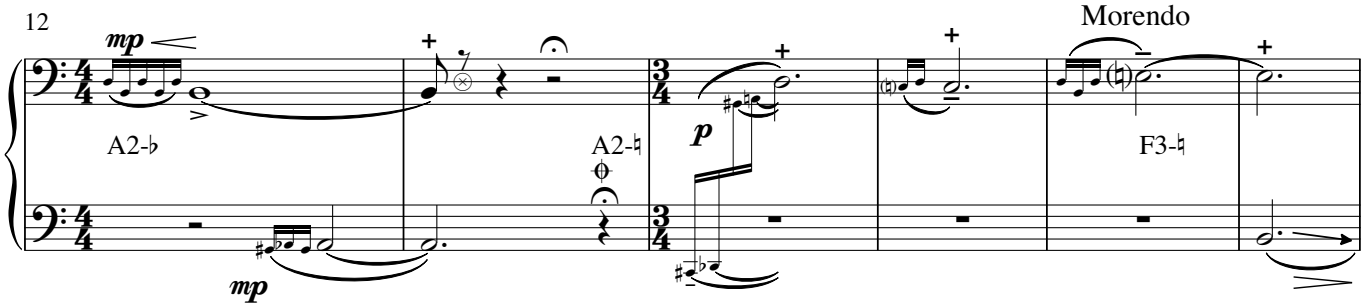
Christopher Best

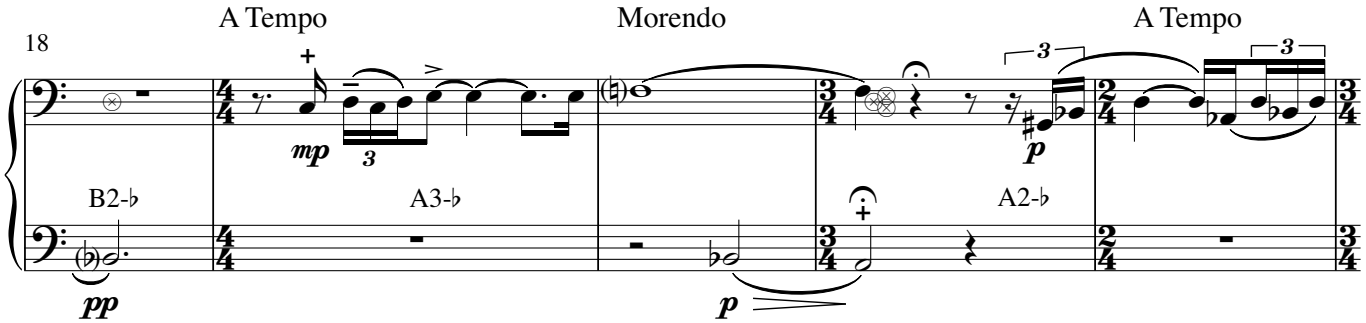
Largo Poco Rubato (quasi cadenza)

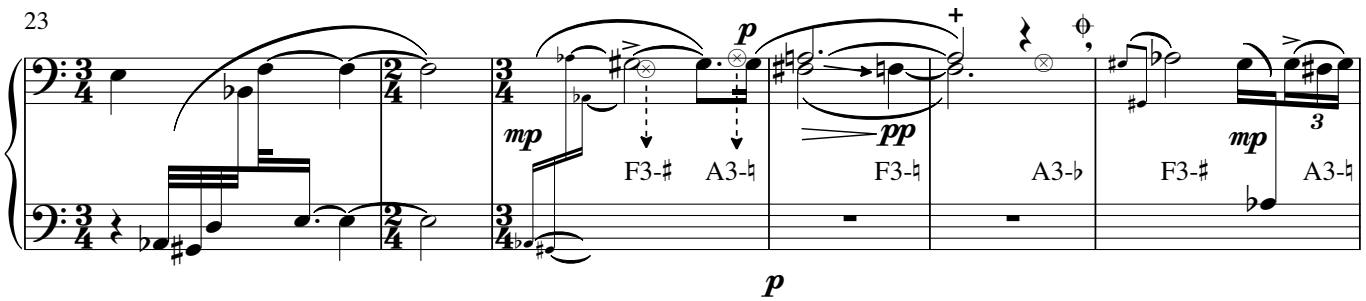
♩ = c.54











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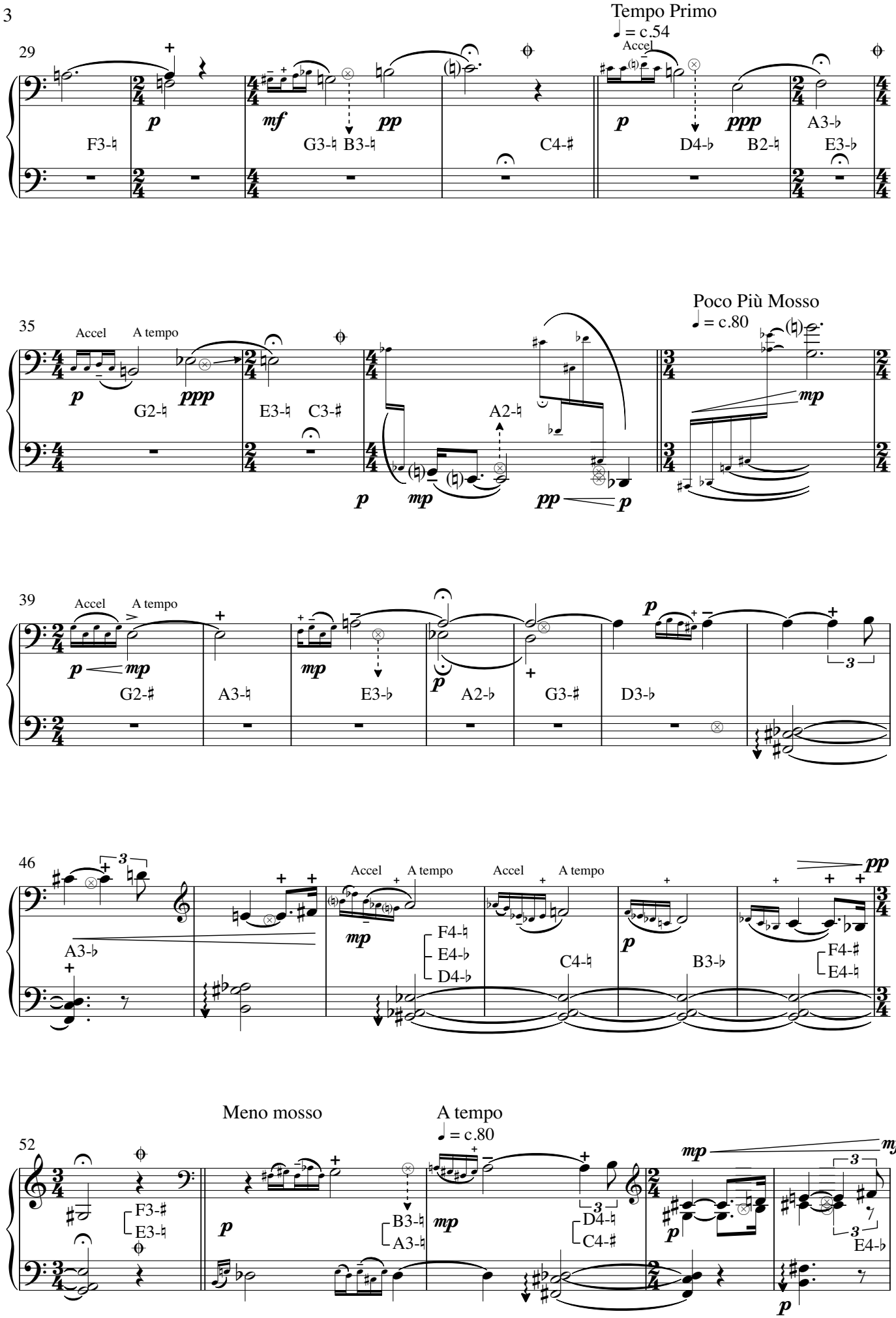
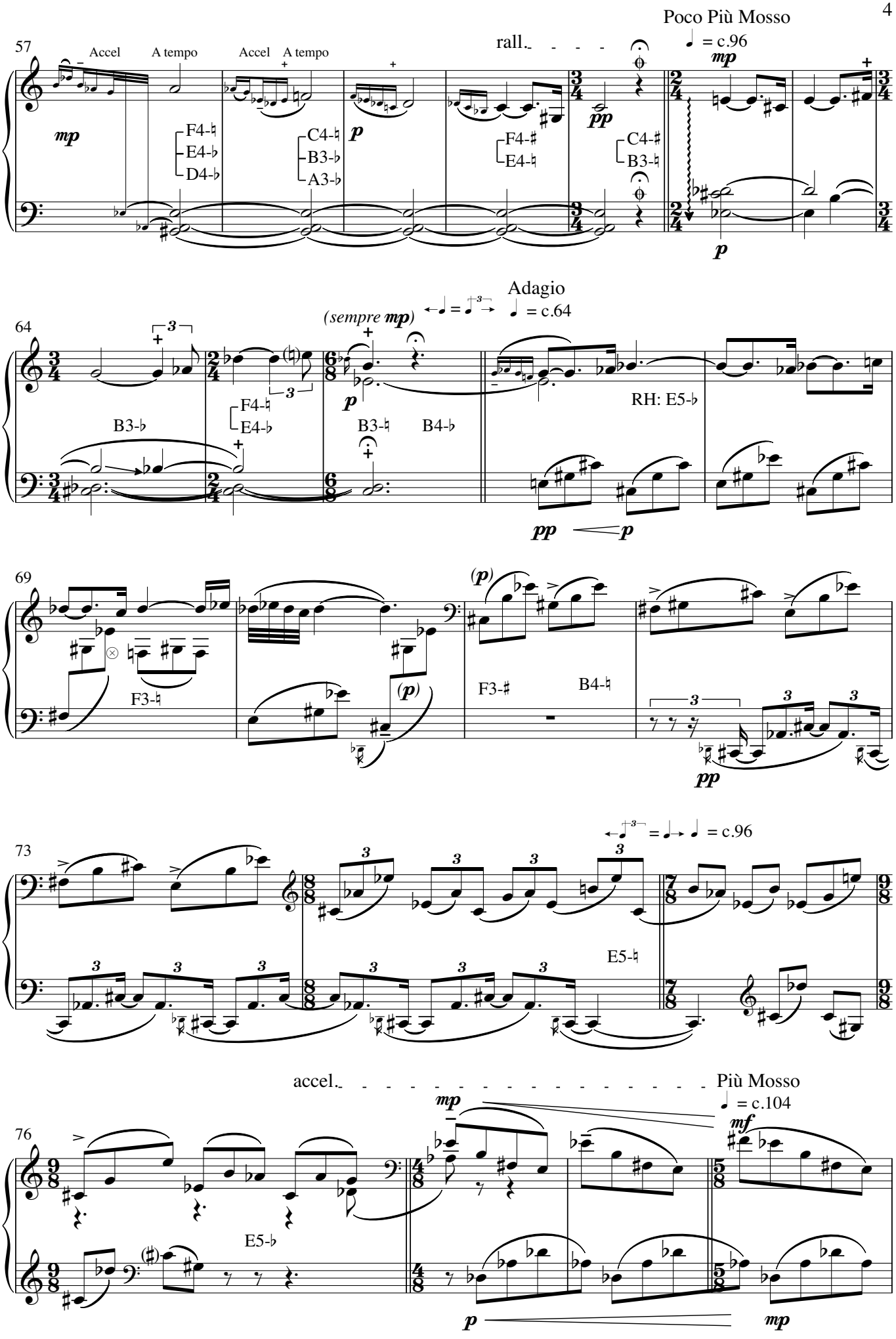
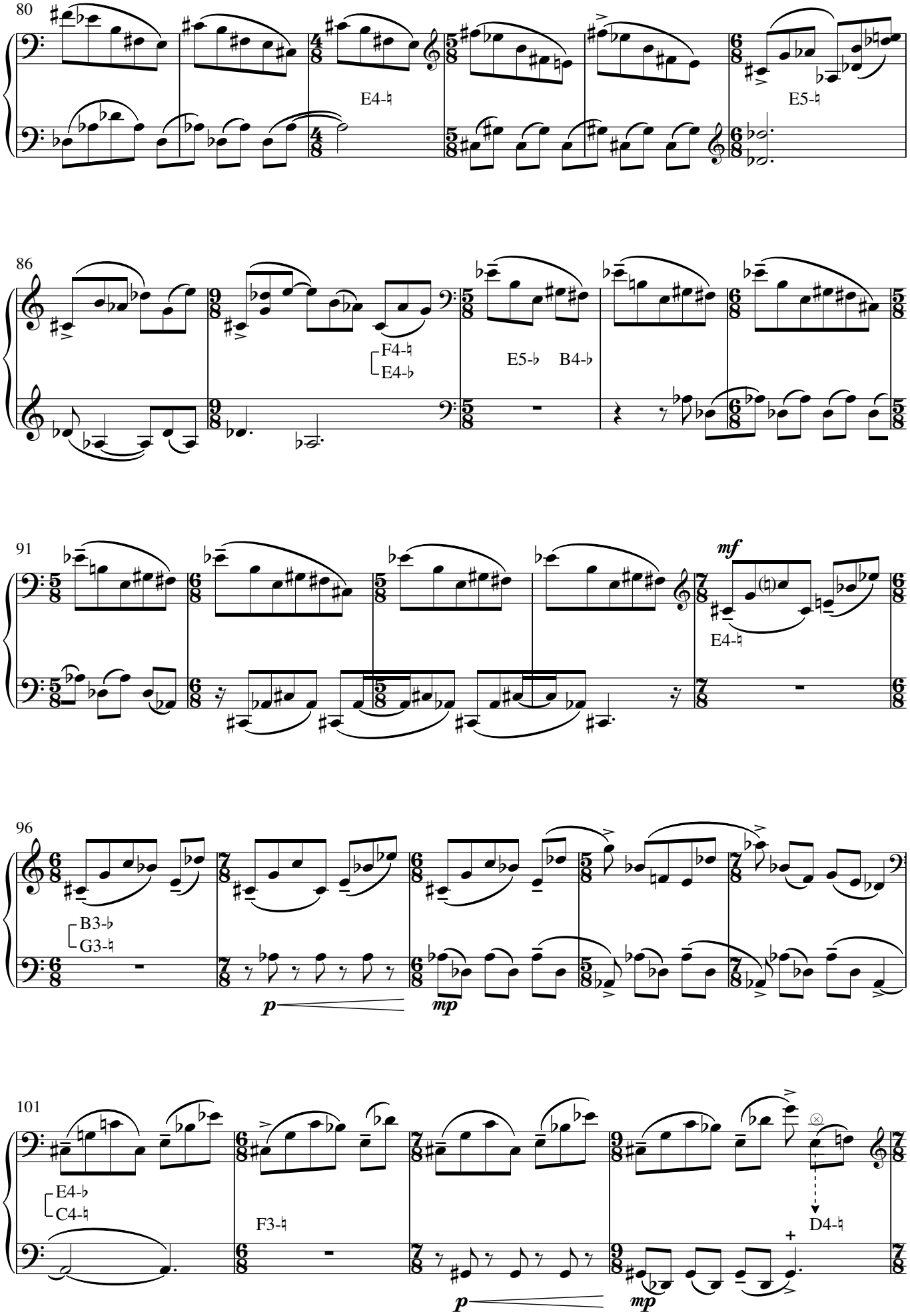
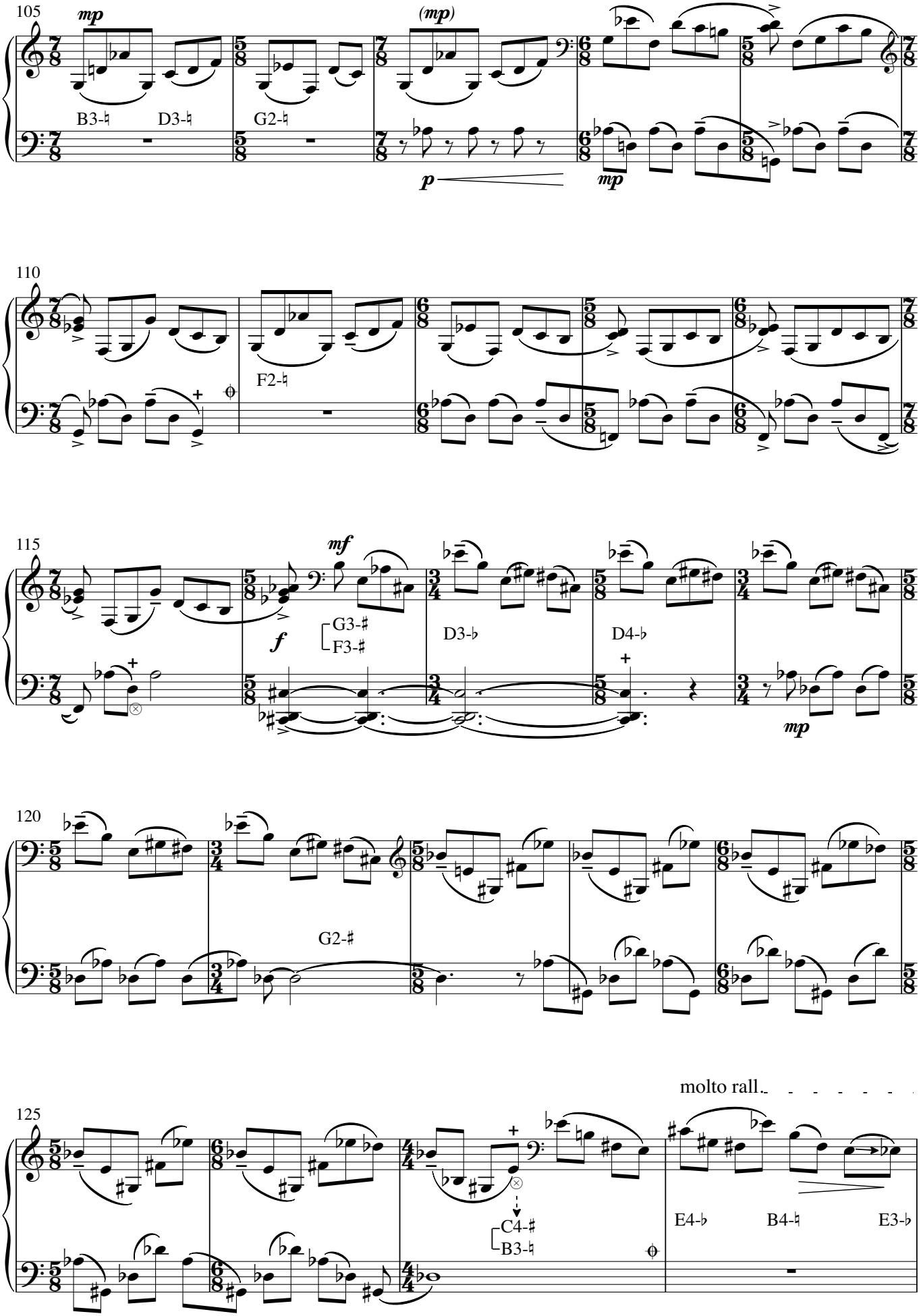

29
Tempo Primo
♩ = c.54
Accel
p
mf
pp
p
ppp
F3-♮
G3-♮ B3-♮
C4-♯
D4-♭ B2-♮
A3-♭ E3-♭
35
Poco Più Mosso
♩ = c.80
Accel
A tempo
p
ppp
G2-♮
E3-♮ C3-♯
A2-♮
p
mp
pp
p
mp
39
Accel
A tempo
p
mp
G2-♯
A3-♮
mp
E3-♭
p
A2-♭
G3-♯
D3-♭
46
A3-♭
Accel
A tempo
mp
F4-♮
E4-♭
D4-♭
Accel
A tempo
C4-♮
p
B3-♭
pp
F4-♯
E4-♮
52
Meno mosso
A tempo
♩ = c.80
F3-♯
E3-♮
p
B3-♮
A3-♮
mp
D4-♮
C4-♯
mp
mf
p
E4-♭
p


57
Accel
A tempo
Accel
A tempo
rall.
Poco Più Mosso
♩ = c.96
mp
F4-♮
E4-♭
D4-♭
C4-♮
B3-♭
A3-♭
p
F4-♯
E4-♮
pp
C4-♯
B3-♮
64
(sempre mp)
Adagio
♩ = c.64
B3-♭
F4-♮
E4-♭
B3-♮
B4-♭
RH: E5-♭
pp
69
(p)
F3-♮
F3-♯
B4-♮
73
♩ = c.96
E5-♮
76
accel.
Più Mosso
♩ = c.104
mf
E5-♭


80
E4-♮
E5-♮
86
F4-♮
E4-♭
E5-♭
B4-♭
91
mf
E4-♮
96
B3-♭
G3-♮
p
mp
101
E4-♭
C4-♮
F3-♮
D4-♮
p
mp


105
mp
(mp)
B3-♮
D3-♮
G2-♮
p
mp
110
F2-♮
115
mf
f
G3-♯
F3-♯
D3-♭
D4-♭
mp
120
G2-♯
molto rall.
125
C4-♯
B3-♮
E4-♭
B4-♮
E3-♭

A Tempo
♩ = c.104

129

mp *p*

E3-♮ E3-♭ F3-♮ E3-♮

132

F3-♯

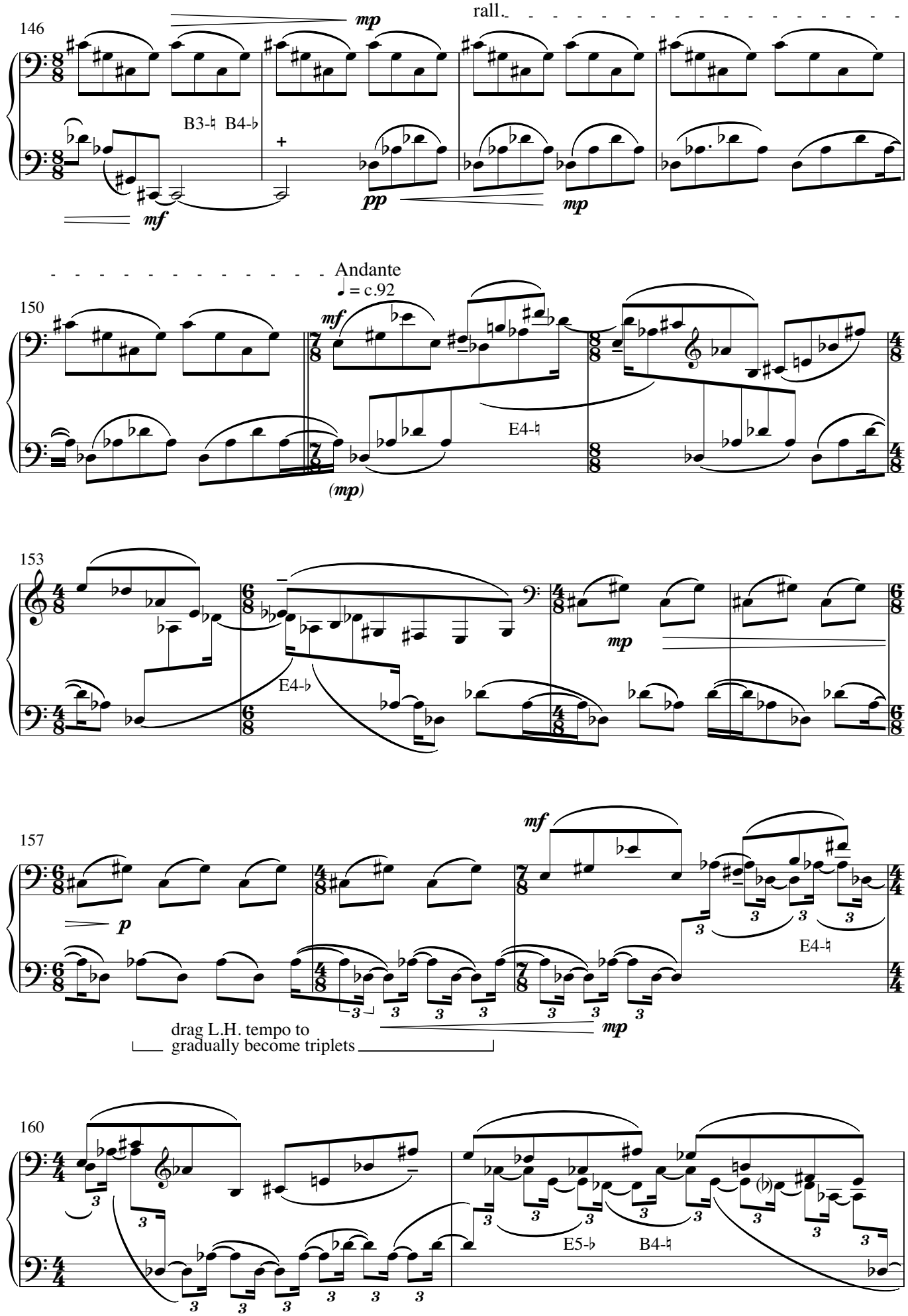
136

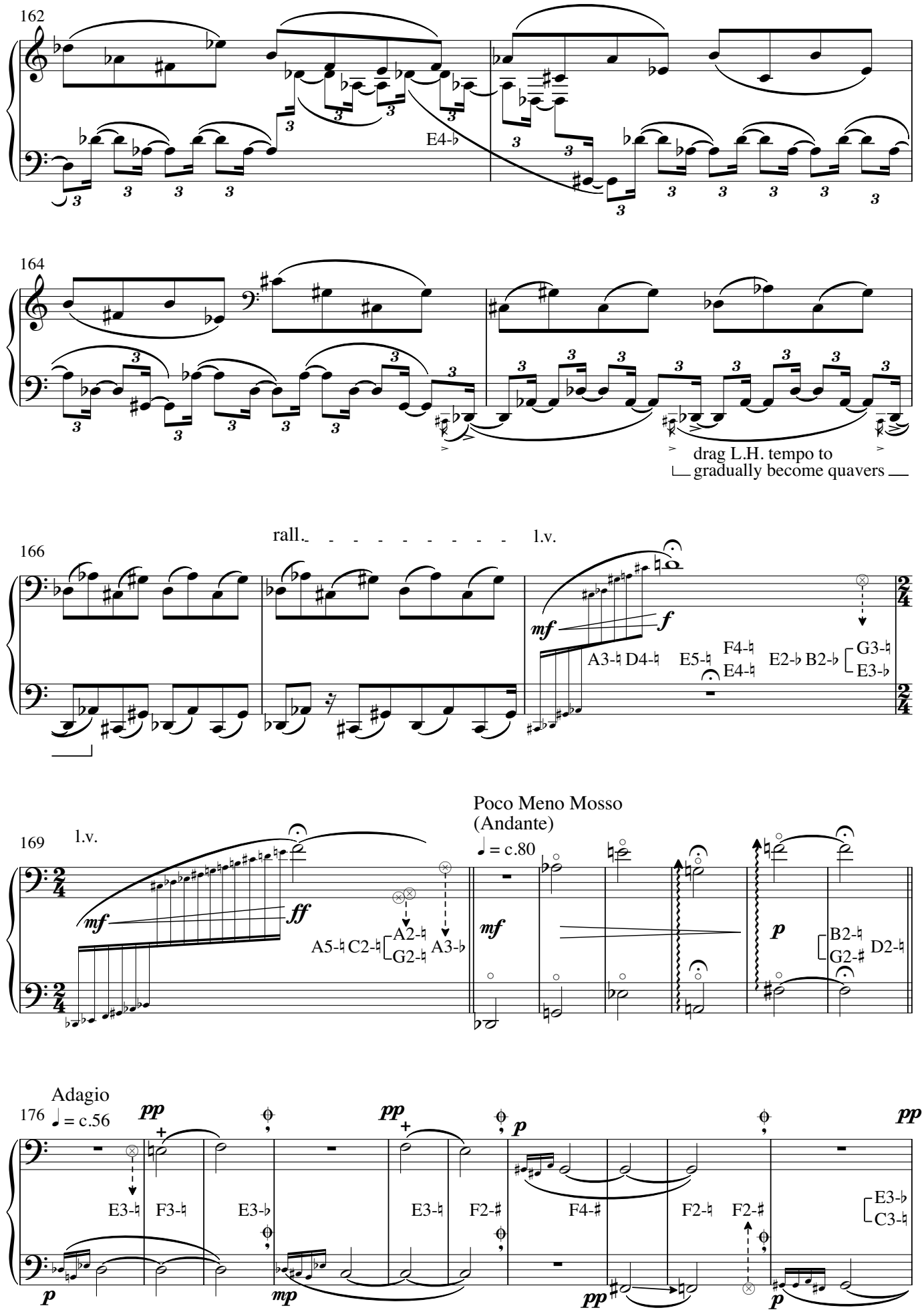
f *(mf)* E5-♮ *mf*

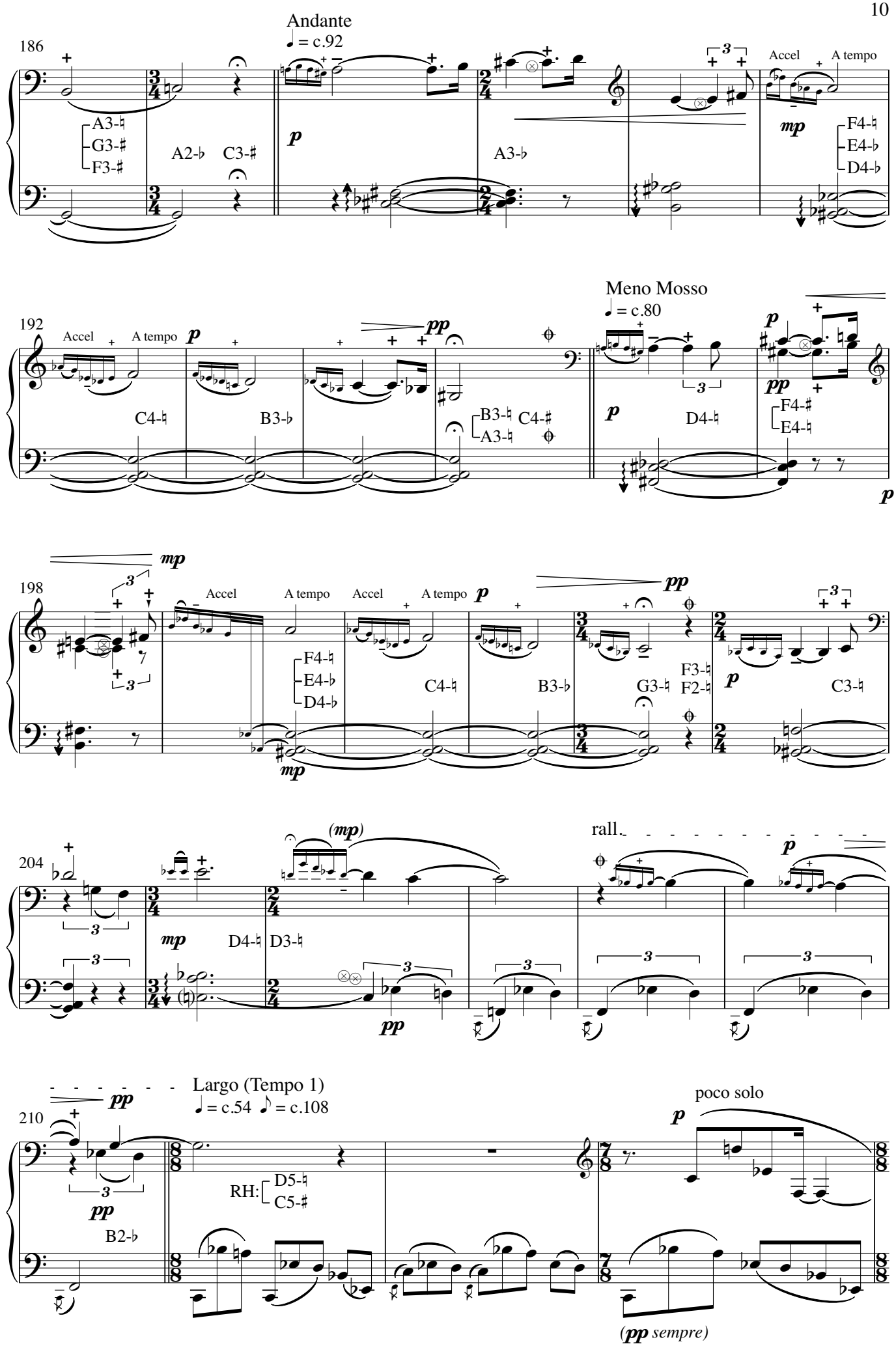
139

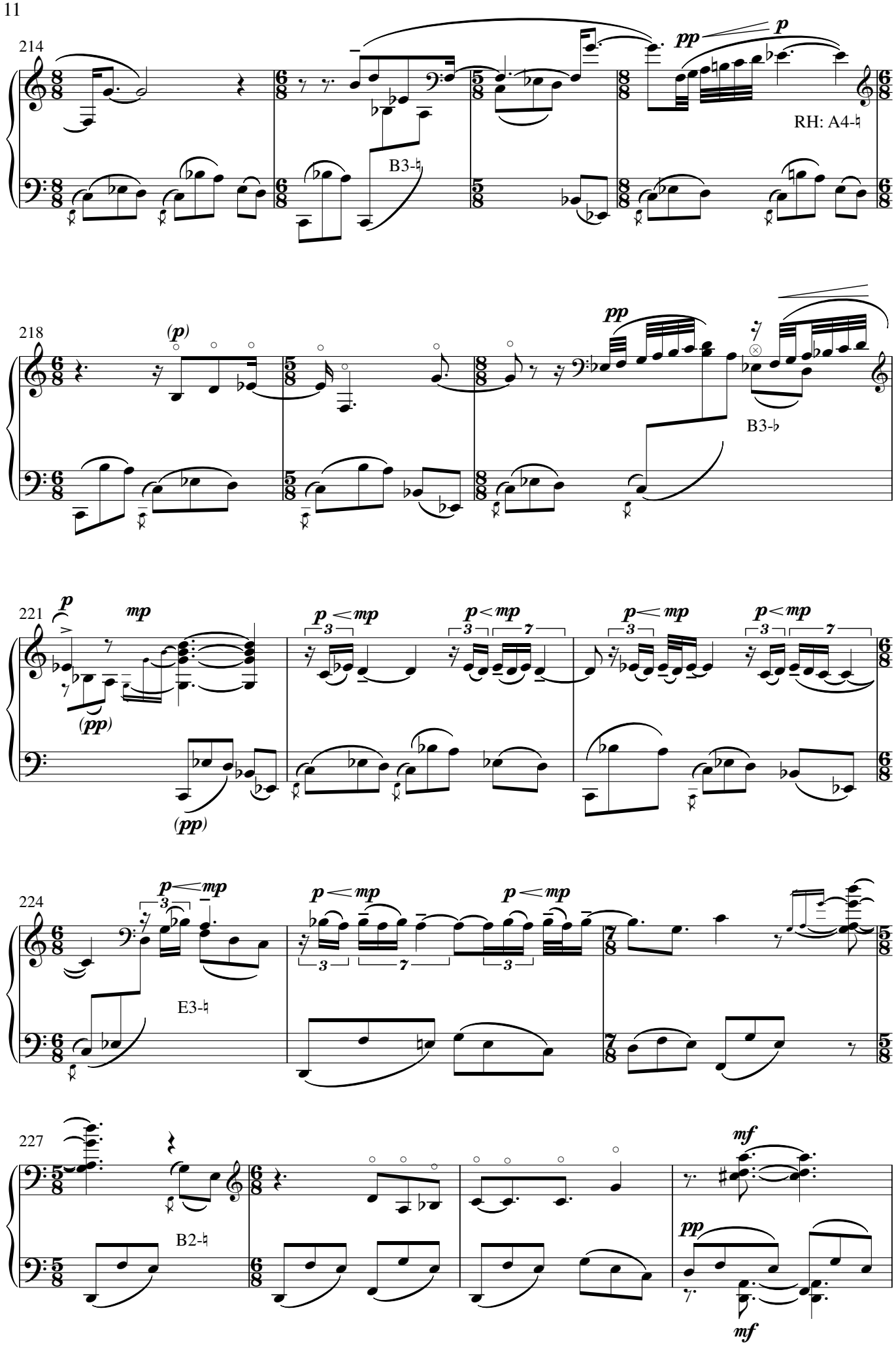
142

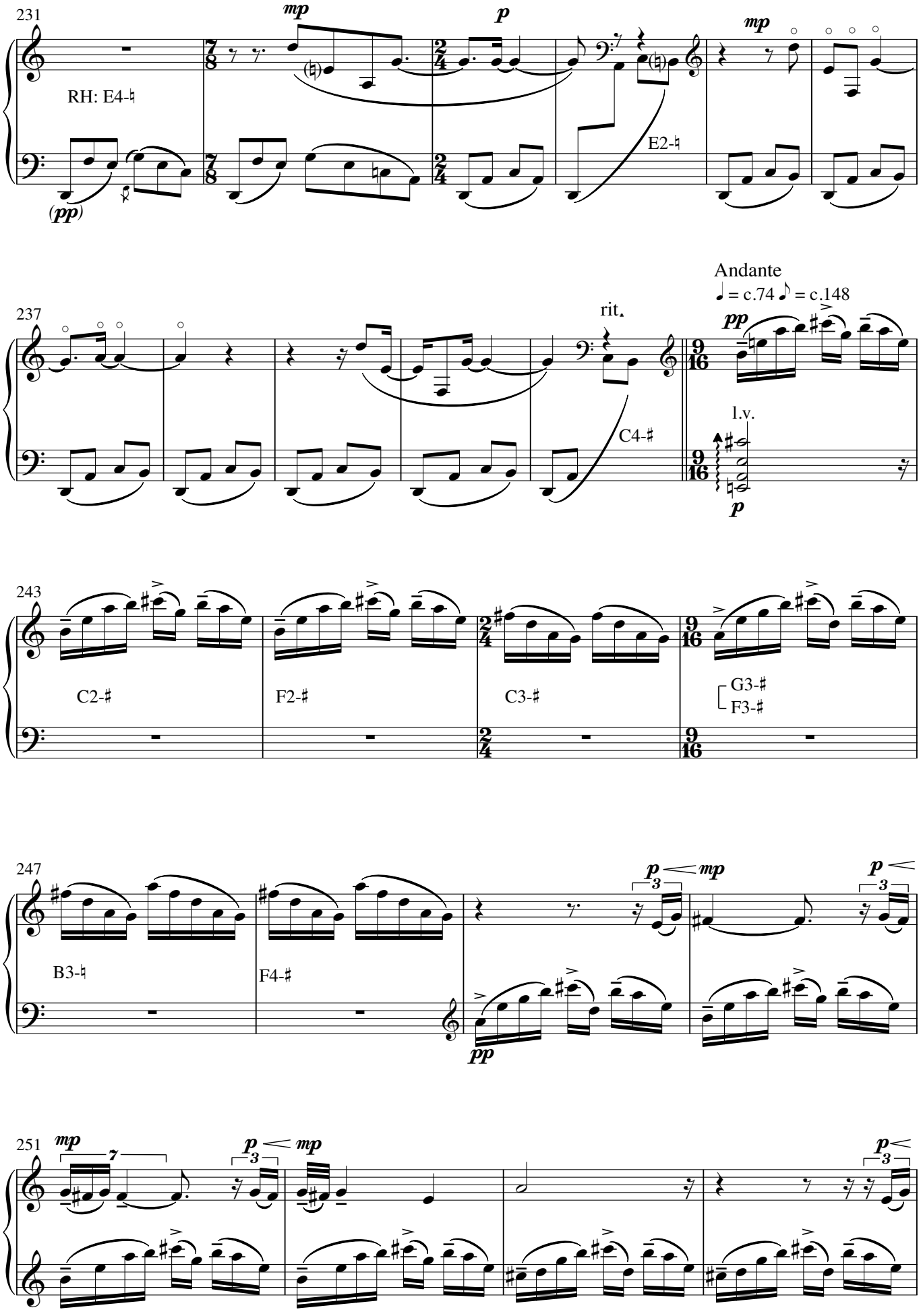
B3-♭ *mf* *mp*

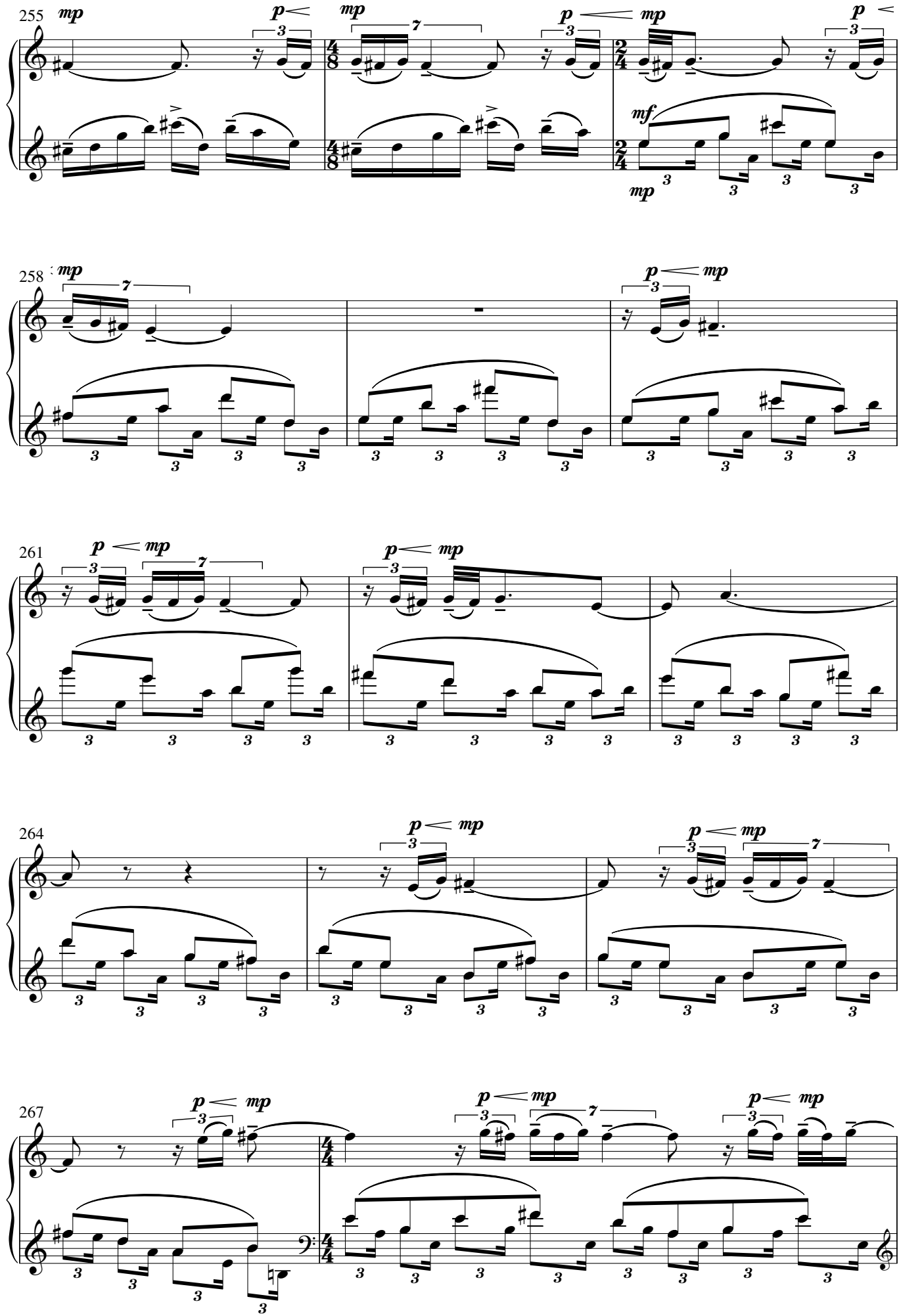

146
rall.
mp
B3-♮ B4-♭
mf
pp
mp
Andante
♩ = c.92
150
mf
E4-♮
(mp)
153
mp
E4-♭
157
mf
p
E4-♮
mp
drag L.H. tempo to
gradually become triplets
160
E5-♭
B4-♮

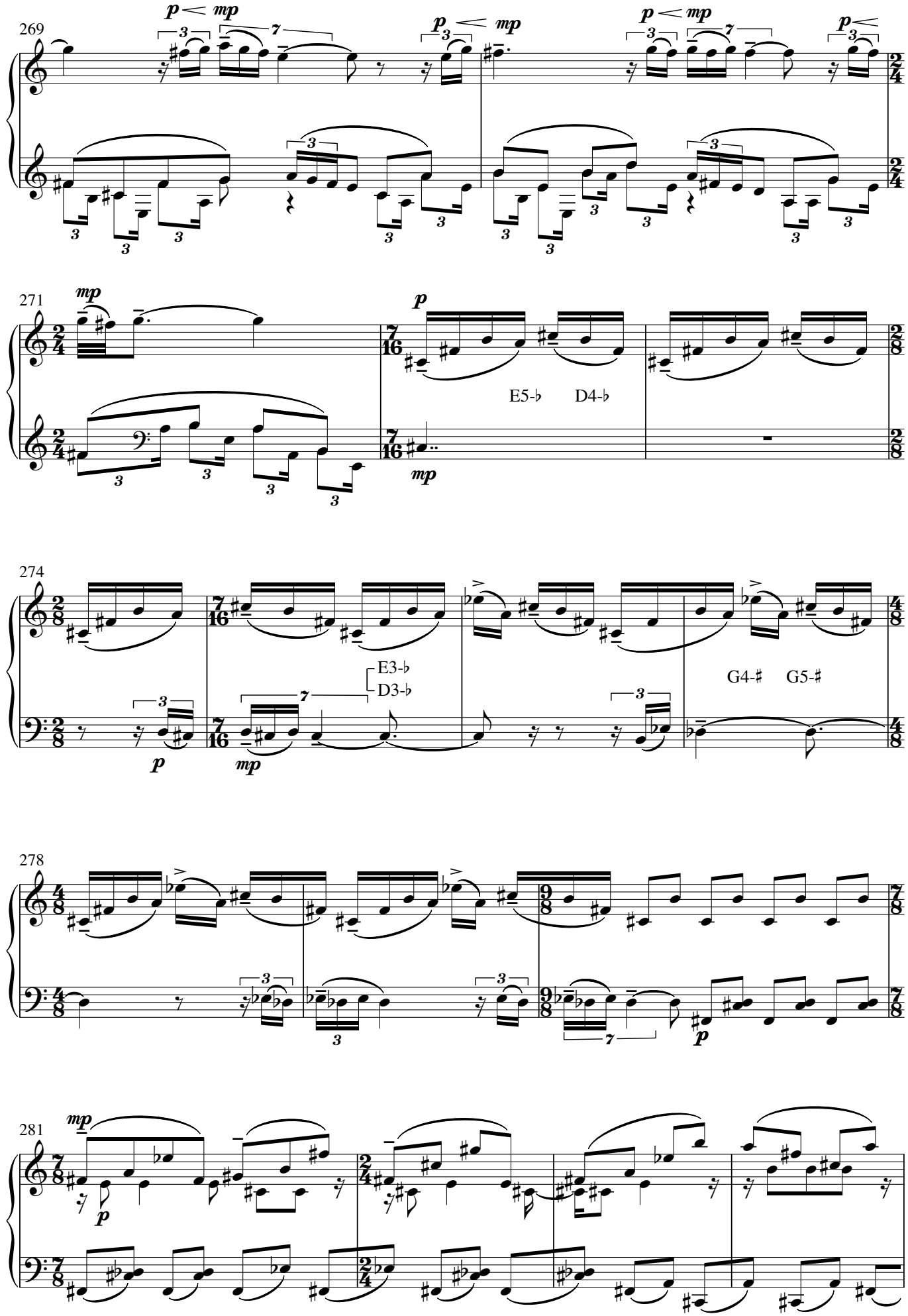

162
E4-♭
164
drag L.H. tempo to
gradually become quavers
rall.
l.v.
166
mf
f
A3-♮ D4-♮
E5-♮
F4-♮
E4-♮
E2-♭ B2-♭
G3-♮
E3-♭
Poco Meno Mosso
(Andante)
169
l.v.
♩ = c.80
mf
ff
A5-♮ C2-♮
A2-♮
G2-♮
A3-♭
mf
p
B2-♮
G2-♯
D2-♮
Adagio
176
♩ = c.56
pp
pp
p
E3-♮
F3-♮
E3-♭
E3-♮
F2-♯
F4-♯
F2-♮
F2-♯
E3-♭
C3-♮
p
mp
pp
p
pp

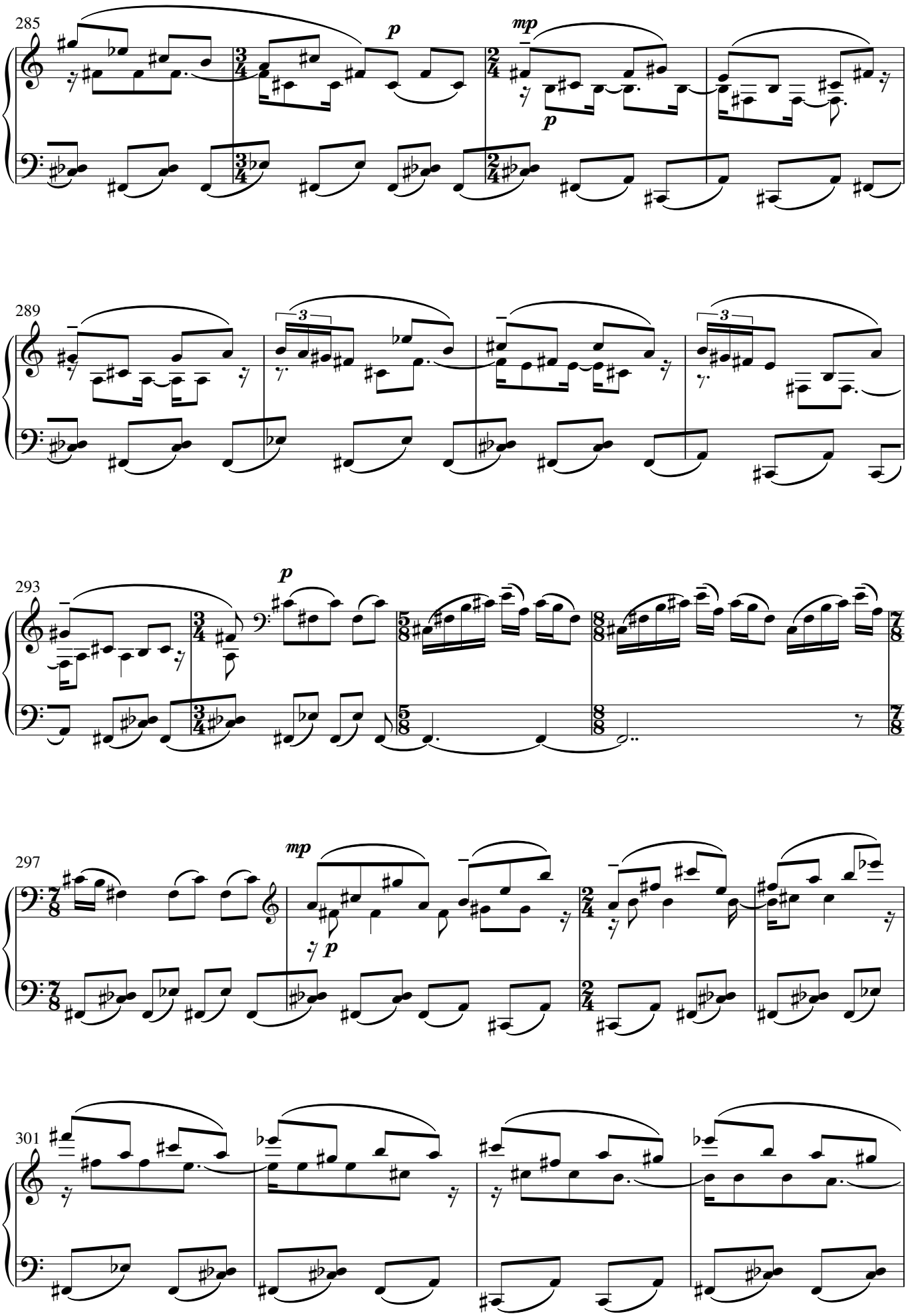

Andante
♩ = c.92
186
A3-♮
G3-♯
F3-♯
A2-♭
C3-♯
p
A3-♭
3
Accel
A tempo
mp
F4-♮
E4-♭
D4-♭
Meno Mosso
♩ = c.80
192
Accel
A tempo
p
pp
C4-♮
B3-♭
B3-♮
C4-♯
A3-♮
p
D4-♮
3
pp
F4-♯
E4-♮
p
198
mp
3
Accel
A tempo
Accel
A tempo
p
pp
F4-♮
E4-♭
D4-♭
C4-♮
B3-♭
G3-♮
F3-♮
F2-♮
p
C3-♮
mp
204
(mp)
rall.
mp
D4-♮
D3-♮
pp
p
Largo (Tempo 1)
♩ = c.54 ♪ = c.108
210
pp
pp
B2-♭
RH:
D5-♮
C5-♯
poco solo
p
(pp sempre)

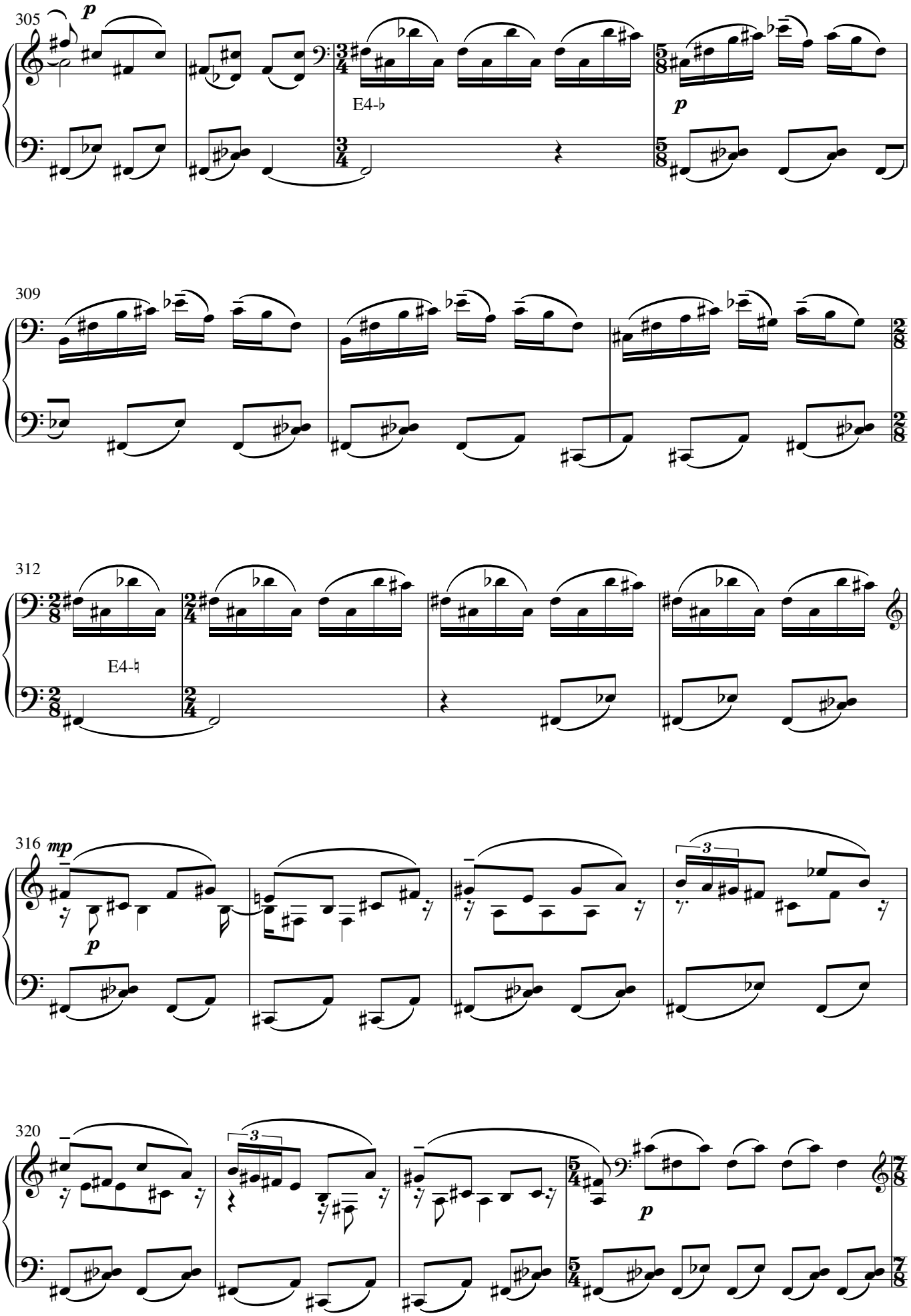

214
pp
p
RH: A4-♮
B3-♮
218
(p)
pp
B3-♭
221
p
mp
(pp)
p < mp
224
E3-♮
227
mf
pp
B2-♮
mf

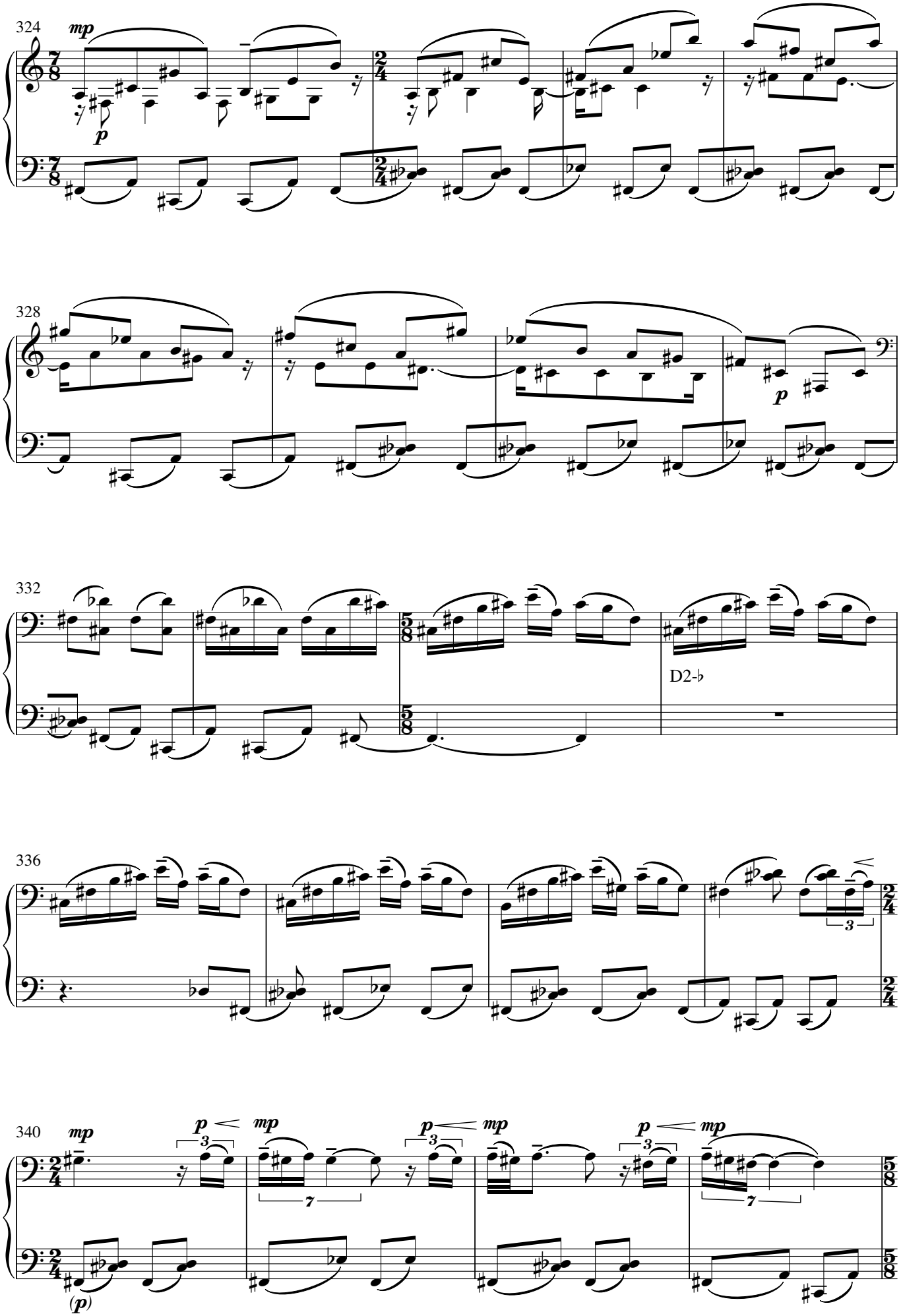

231
mp
p
mp
RH: E4-♮
(pp)
E2-♮
237
rit.
Andante
♩ = c.74 ♪ = c.148
pp
l.v.
C4-♯
p
243
C2-♯
F2-♯
C3-♯
G3-♯
F3-♯
247
B3-♮
F4-♯
p
mp
p
pp
251
mp
p
mp
p

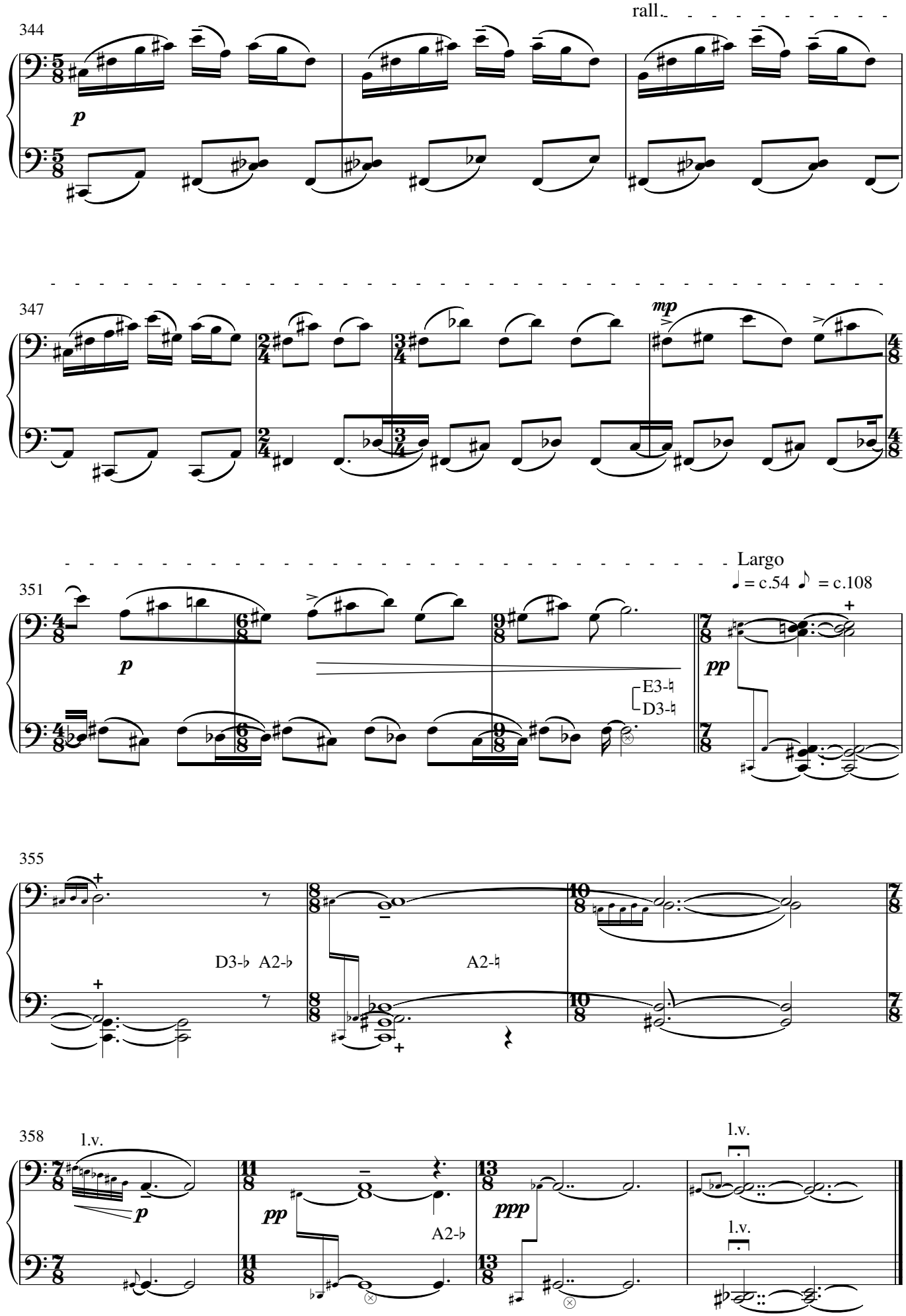

255
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
mf
mp
258
mp
p
mp
261
p
mp
p
mp
264
p
mp
p
mp
267
p
mp
p
mp
p
mp


269
271
E5-♭
D4-♭
274
E3-♭
D3-♭
G4-♯
G5-♯
278
281


285
p
mp
p
289
3
3
293
p
297
mp
p
301


305
p
E4-♭
p
309
312
E4-♮
316
mp
p
3
320
3
p


324
mp
p
328
p
332
D2-♭
336
3
340
mp
p
3
7
(p)



18th December 2006
17th August 2020

...unique sonorities and an engaging sound world... a major opus in terms both of its evocative musical content and its duration, ...representing an important contribution to the body of music for low flutes...

Will Sleath (flautist) **'Fragilities'**

*...**'How Great, How Fall'n'** created a lot of interest from both audience and performers alike. [It] was exactly the type of new music that JAM prides itself on supporting...*

Edward Armitage, Chairman John Armitage Memorial Concert Series

...An idiosyncratic blend of stylistic types- Gamelan/folk...the music comes across vividly...

SPNM Reading panel **'Dolya Nash Krai'**

*...**'Playfall'** is a mature and powerful work, able to portray the dark shadows of loss that can unexpectedly creep into even the most joyful moments in life...*

Dance Europe

*...**'Night Walking'** impressed me because it combined lightness and warmth. Here was proof that contemporary music can succeed on all fronts; it required concentration but was also exhilarating....*

Artistic Director SPNM

*...**'Another Kind of Air'** is courageous in its simplicity and deserves to be heard...The sharp focus of the thematic material combines with the transparent medium to make for a piece that proclaims an unambiguous space...*

SPNM Reading panel

...This is lovely music for dance and it develops in a delightful way... I particularly liked the pizzicato section...

(composer Howard Skempton) **'Life Before Birth'**

...The piano command is impressive... the pieces make a satisfying arch in terms of mood...

SPNM Reading panel, **'Then Again...'**

*...**'Triaphony'** showed competence in the handling of a difficult medium... the climax to the third movement was highly effective...*

Cambridge Evening Telegraph

*...Best has previously written, with verve, for traditional forces... **['Cue-Play-Review']** seemed so clearly bound up with human responses... but the finale to this concert was his electronic tape **'From Steel to Stone'**. In the darkened studio, its shifting layers made a shapely and animating effect.*

Nottingham Evening Post

Christopher Best is a freelance composer based in the South West of England. Major works have been commissioned by *'Emilyn Claid and Co'*, *'Scottish Dance Theatre'*, *'Bimba Dance Theatre'*, *'Jamaican National Dance'* and the *'SPNM'*. Works have been especially written for ensembles including *'Aquarius'*, *'Jane's Minstrels'*, *'Kokoro'*, the choir of Selwyn College Cambridge and *'Onyx Brass'*, plus a host of distinguished soloists. His compositions have received considerable critical acclaim and been performed all over the world.

Recent output includes; *'Scending'* for flutes and accordion and *Fragilities'* for flutes and cello (both commissioned by William Sleath, generously funded by the Britten Pears Foundation), *'Terra al Sol'* for voices, string trio and accordion (commissioned by the Fisarchi Ensemble of Florence), *'How Great, How Fall'n'* (orchestral version premiered by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2011 at the Teatru Manoel, Valletta, original version for brass, voices and organ given by JAM in 2004), *'Echoes of a Lost Music'* for electric guitar (UK tour 2011-12, New Zealand tour 2009), *'Still Beating'* for Clarsach harp (premiered by Ruth Wall in 2007 at Wapping Power Station, London) and *'Panaura'* for orchestra (premiered by the Kokoro ensemble in 2006 at Dartington Hall).

Since 2010, Chris has held a senior lectureship in music composition at Falmouth University, having formerly been Reader in music composition at Dartington College of Arts in Devon. He has taught extensively abroad, and co-directed residential music and dance exchanges in Devon, London and Madrid.

Further information, scores, parts and recordings of music by Christopher Best can be obtained from the composer.

Christopher Best
e: chrisbestmusic@aol.com