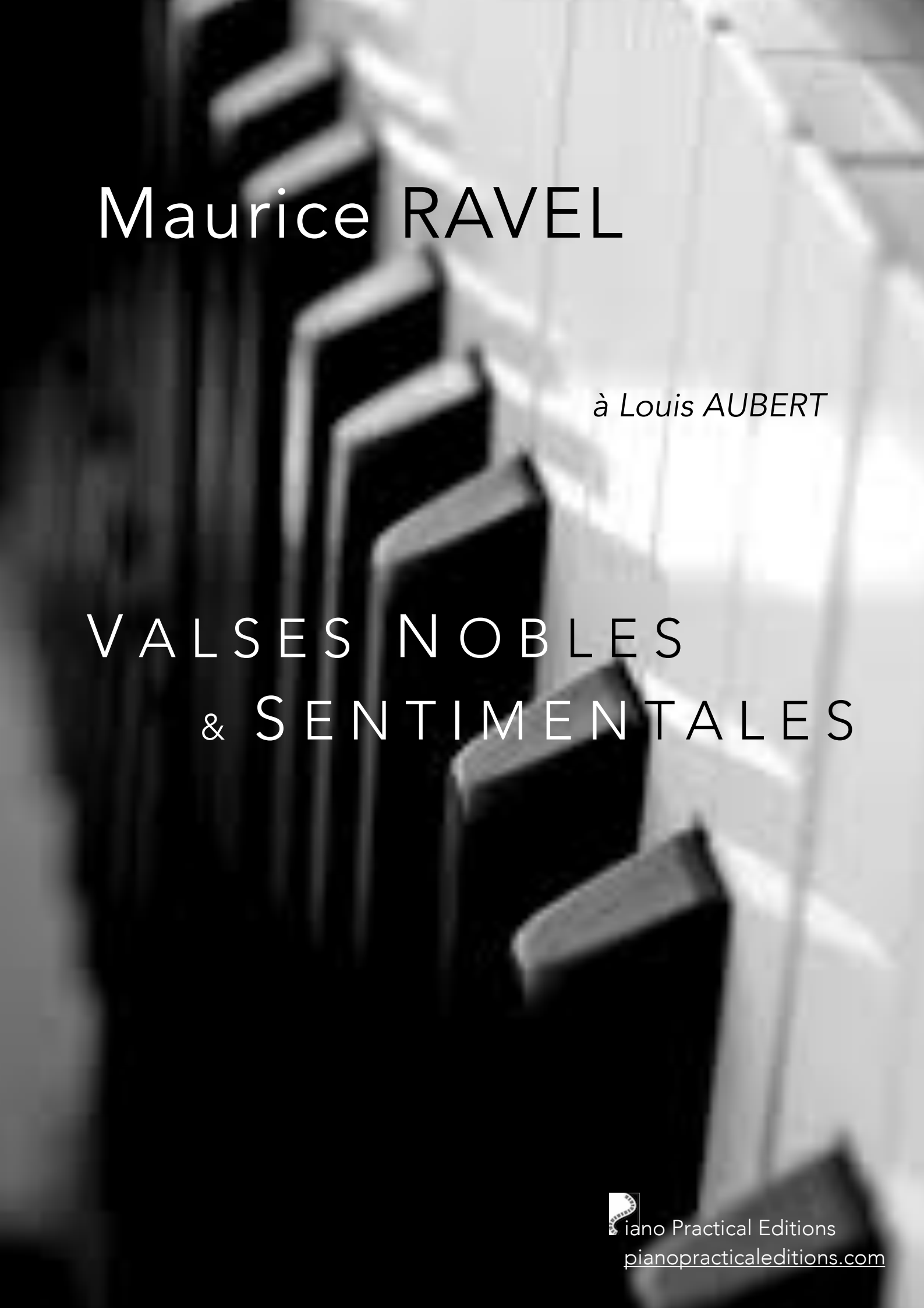

Maurice RAVEL

à Louis AUBERT

VALSES NOBLES & SENTIMENTALES

Piano Practical Editions
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Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

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Maurice RAVEL 1875 - 1937

VALSES NOBLES ET SENTIMENTALES

à Louis Aubert

ADÉLAÏDE "le langage des fleurs"

At the height of its popularity, the waltz in Vienna drew vast crowds and was so popular that huge dance halls were opened to provide space for thousands of dancers. The Strauss family to a great extent contributed the music.

Ravel wrote: "*The title was chosen to indicate my intention of writing a series of waltzes in imitation of Schubert*". During this same period his grand orchestral work *La Valse* was conceived as a symphonic poem "*Wien*" (Vienna) and there is evidence that the genre was already very much in the composer's mind as early as 1906.

In the next quotation, although Ravel is writing about the genesis of *La Valse*, it is equally applicable to *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* composed in 1911: *"at present I am working on a grand waltz, a tribute to the memory of the great Strauss. You know of my profound affinity with these admirable rhythms, and that I value "la joie de vivre" expressed by the dance much more deeply than Franckist* puritanism.*

I love their distinctive Viennese lilt combined with French impressionist flair, rubato, chromaticism, suspensions, and unexpected harmonic subtleties (predating Gershwin) in these wonderful miniatures. Sometimes mildly sarcastic, sometimes delicate, there is little evidence of Schubertian Vienna — perhaps Ravel was merely inspired by the poetic title. *Les Valses* are sophisticated, spirited and sensuous, and the epilogue, where fragments of each waltz drift in and out of a surreal dream, must be one of Ravel's finest creations — Debussy said they were the work of "the subtlest ear that ever existed."

Ravel made an orchestral transcription

Ravel made an orchestral transcription for a ballet first performed in April 1912 at the *Théâtre du Châtelet* in Paris, writing his own scenario and conducting the Lamoureux Orchestra. Many ideas in this edition have been inspired by this adaptation. Adélaïde or "*le langage des fleurs*" was commissioned by the Russian ballerina Natasha Trouhanova.

Although it is unlikely that knowledge of the plot will help students make additional sense of the music, here it is:

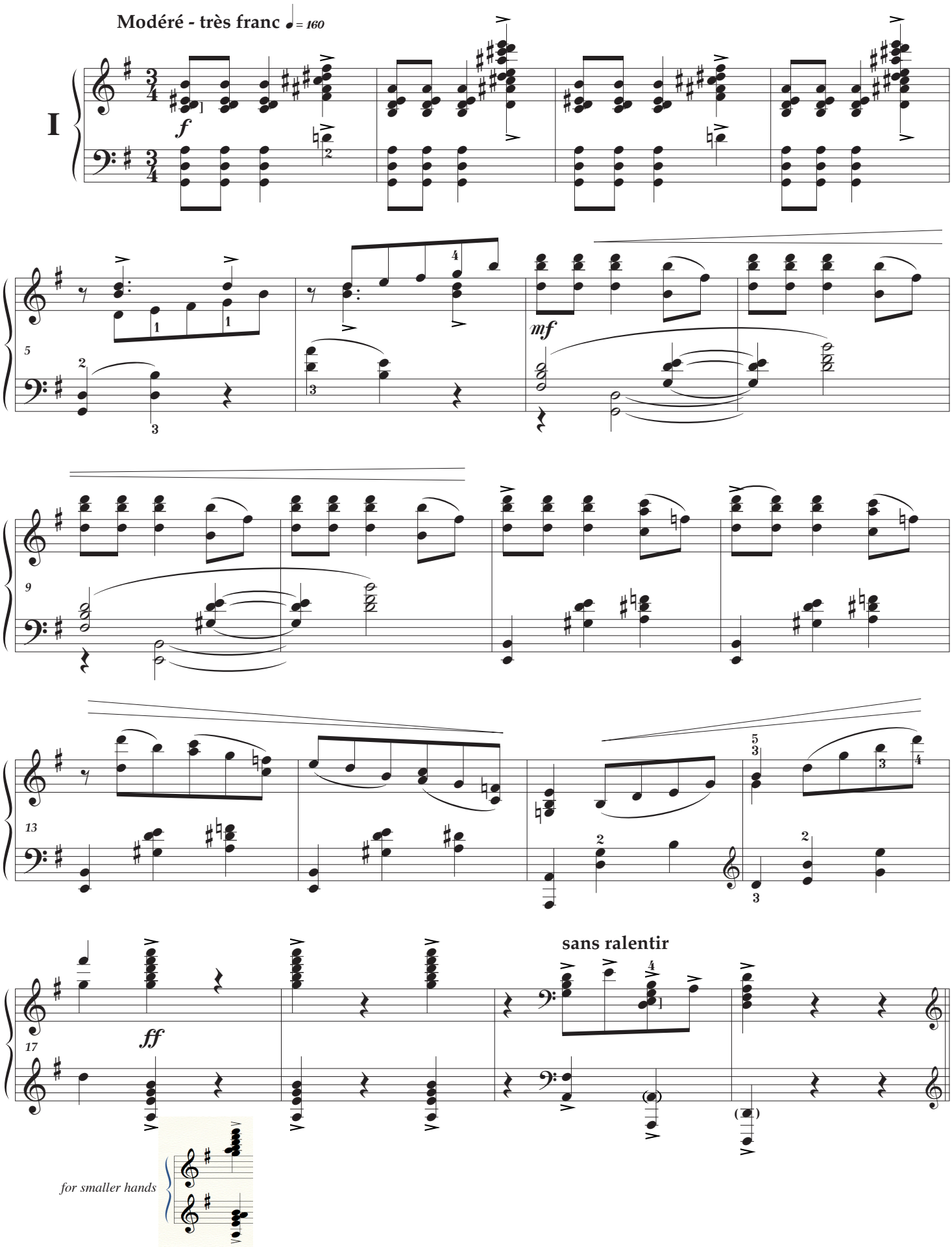
> The scene takes place in Paris, about 1820, chez Adélaïde, a courtesan, in a salon furnished in period style. Rival suitors express emotions of love, hope, and rejection, symbolised by an exchange of flowers.

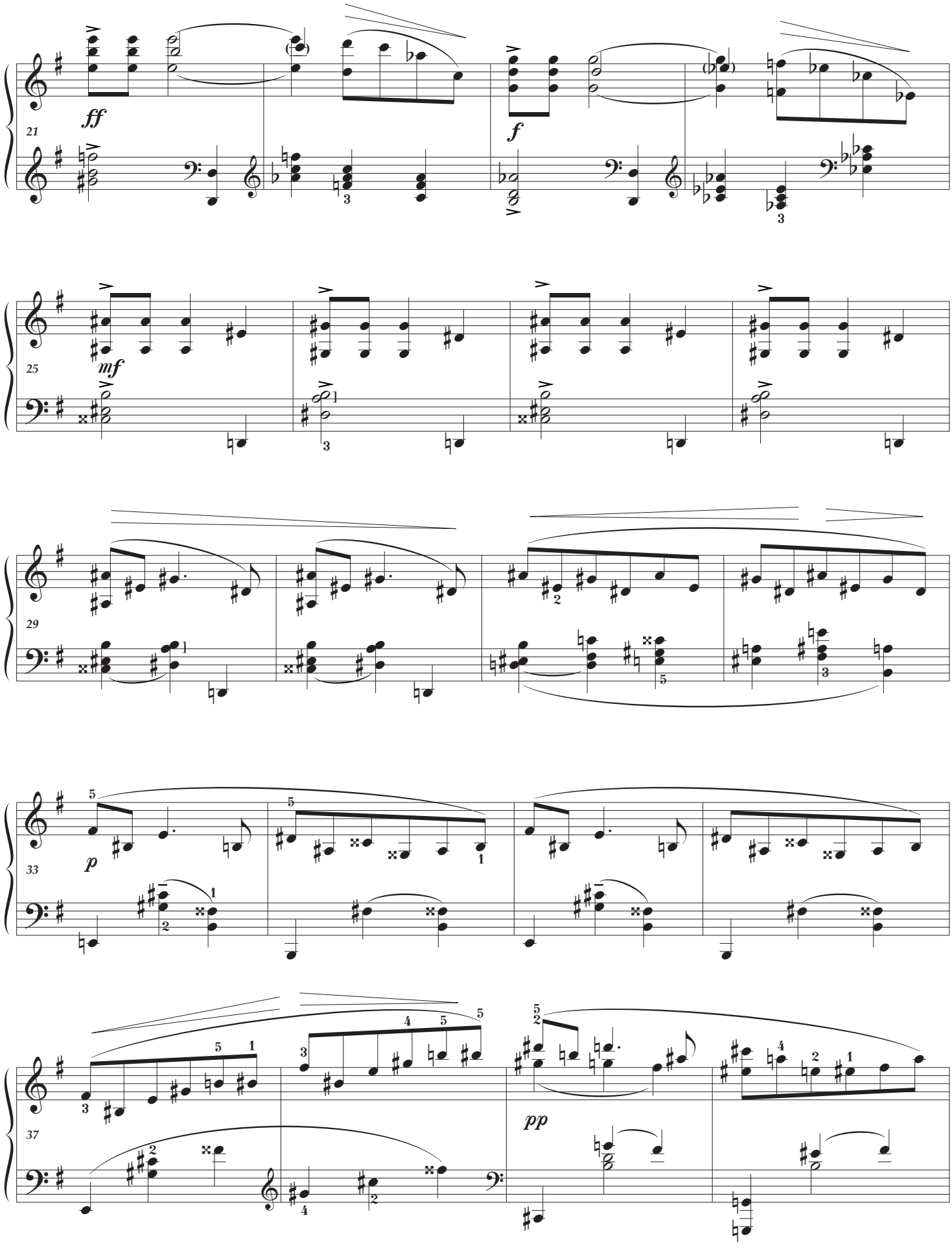
On 9th May 1911, the *Société Musicale Indépendente* presented an unusual recital, in which the audience had to guess the identity of the composers — rather like a blind wine tasting. The work was performed by the dedicatee, Louis Aubert, and generally condemned by a public affronted by "dissonances and wrong notes". When the results were known, it became clear that many "avant-garde" listeners were unable to correctly guess the composer, quoting among others, Satie or Kodály. Artur Rubinstein played them in Spain, and a traditional public feeling cheated of 'tuneful' music, rebelled, particularly after Rubinstein repeated them as an encore!

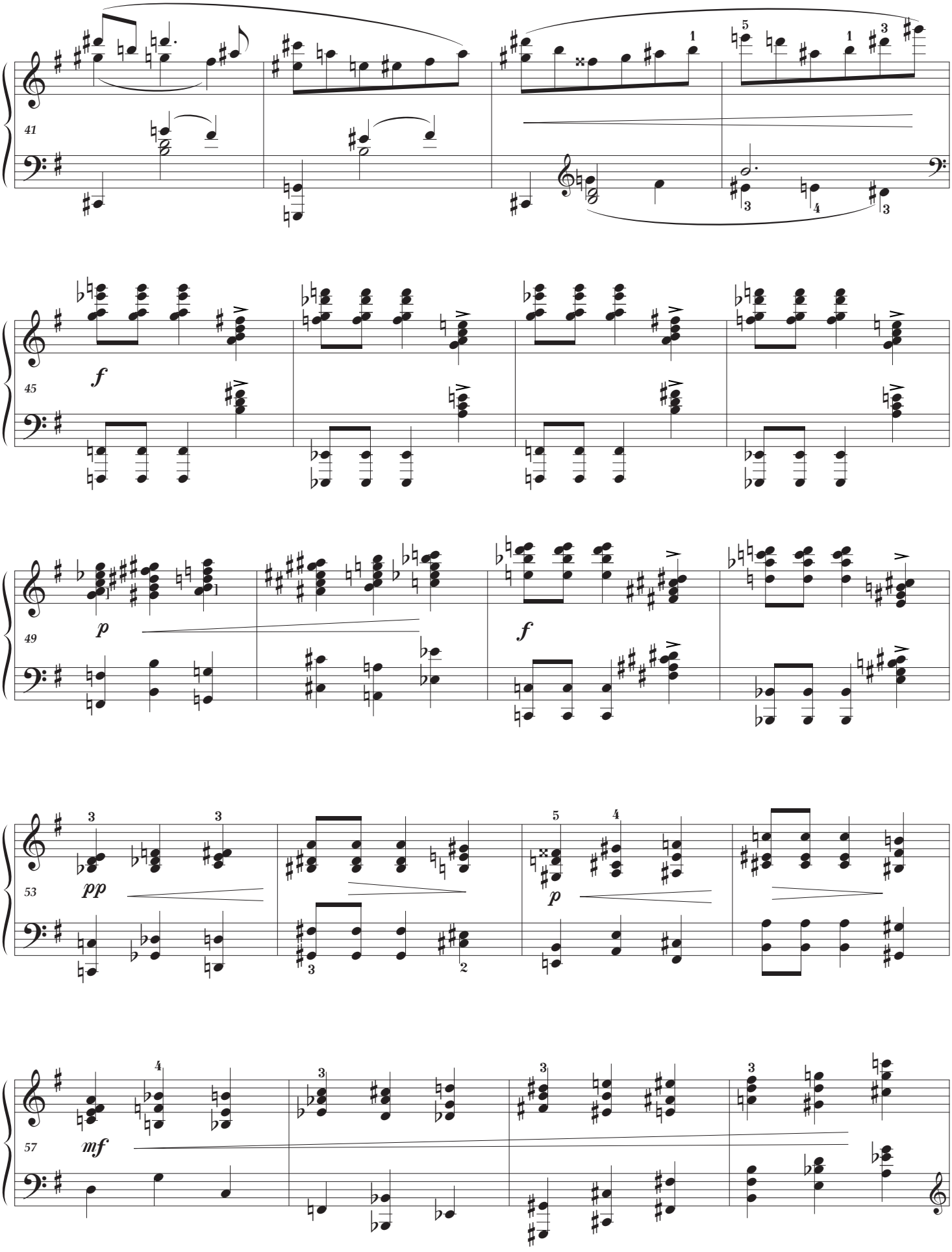
In addition to some suggested fingerings, the appendix contains durations, comments, afterthoughts and a vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more persuasive. Ravel uses the pedal sign sparingly preferring extended ties or long bass notes, impossible to hold otherwise. Combined with the sustaining pedal, it is possible, even desirable, to use the sostenuto pedal effectively throughout these waltzes, although this is entirely editorial.

**Franckists or the Franck gang… a group of composers who followed César Franck*

"... le plaisir délicieux et toujours nouveau d'une occupation inutile." *"...the delectable and always novel delight of a useless pursuit."*




21
ff
f
25
mf
29
33
p
37
pp


41
45
f
49
p
f
53
pp
p
57
mf

61

ff

65

moins fort

69

ff

73

77

un peu pesant

for smaller hands

Assez lent ♩ = 104
avec une expression intense

II

en dehors

p

sopra

81

rit.

a tempo
doux et expressif

pp

86

91

mf

96

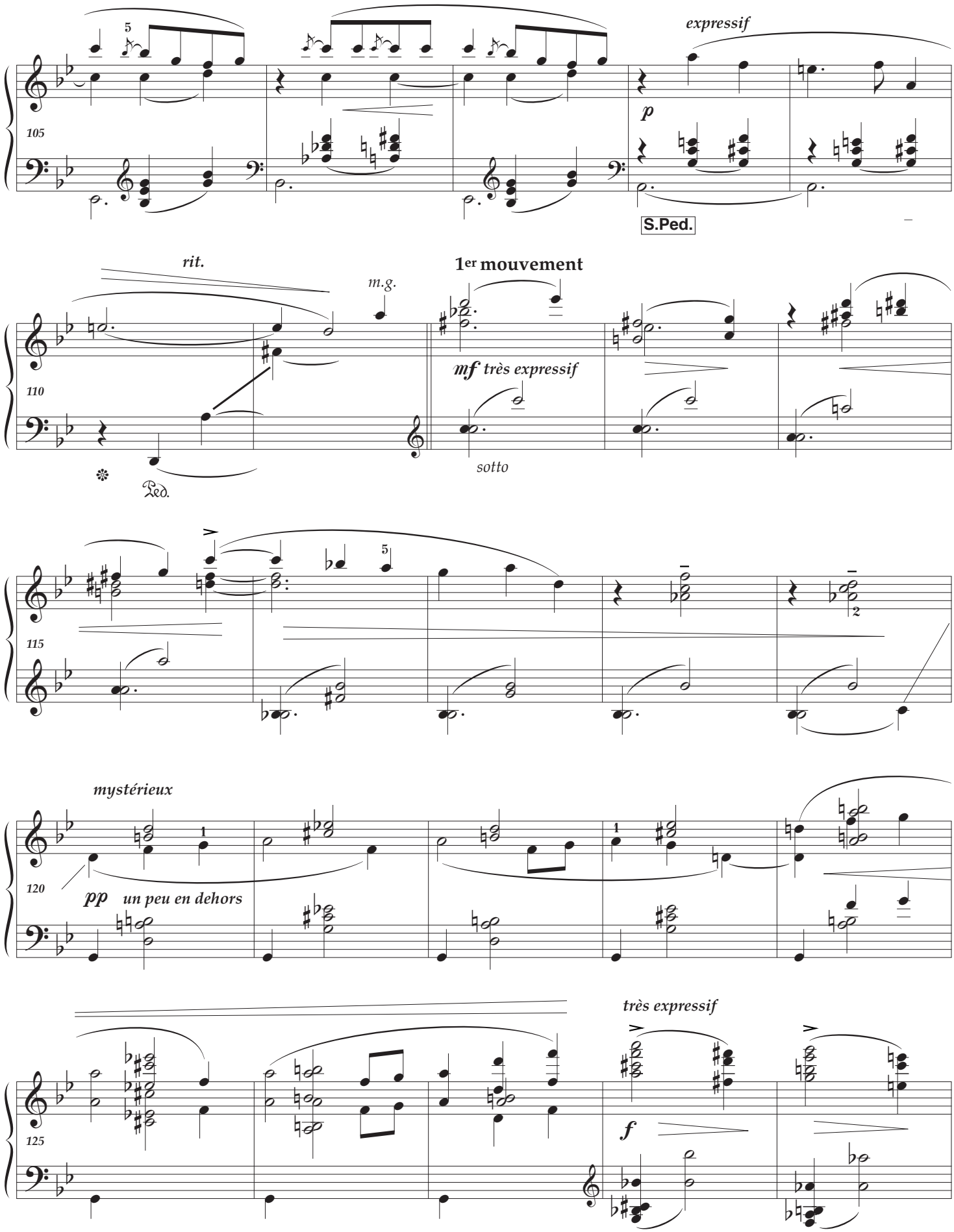
au mouvement
(un peu plus lent et rubato)

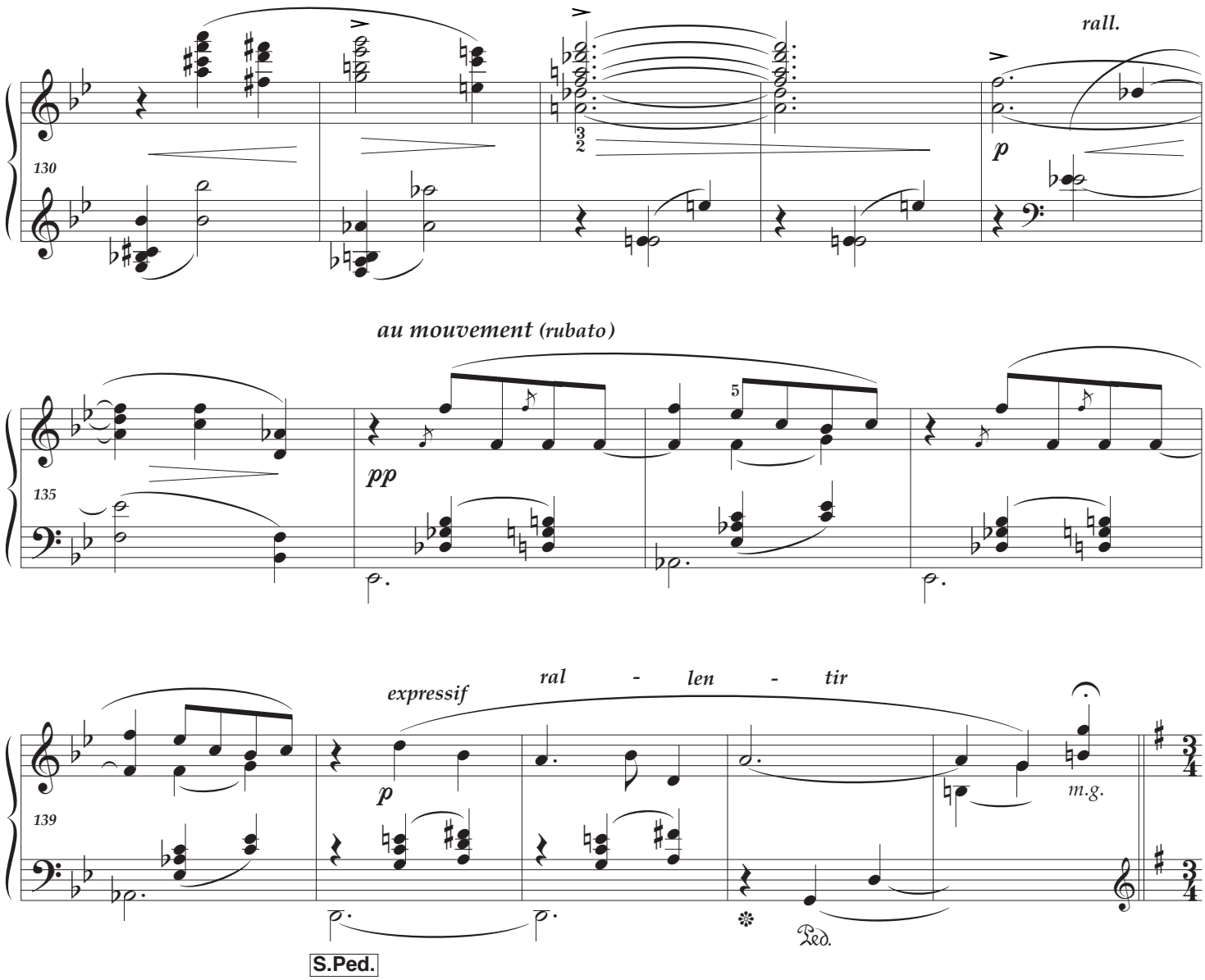
rit.

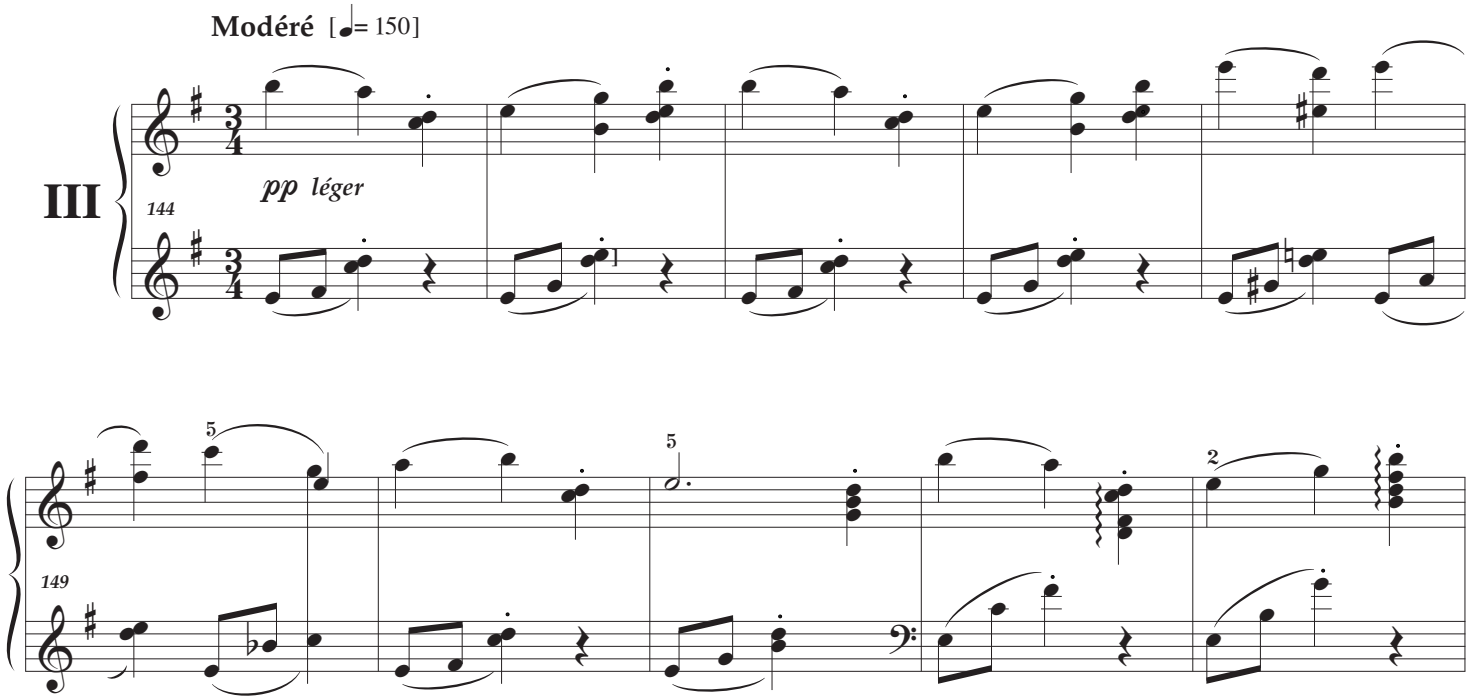
p

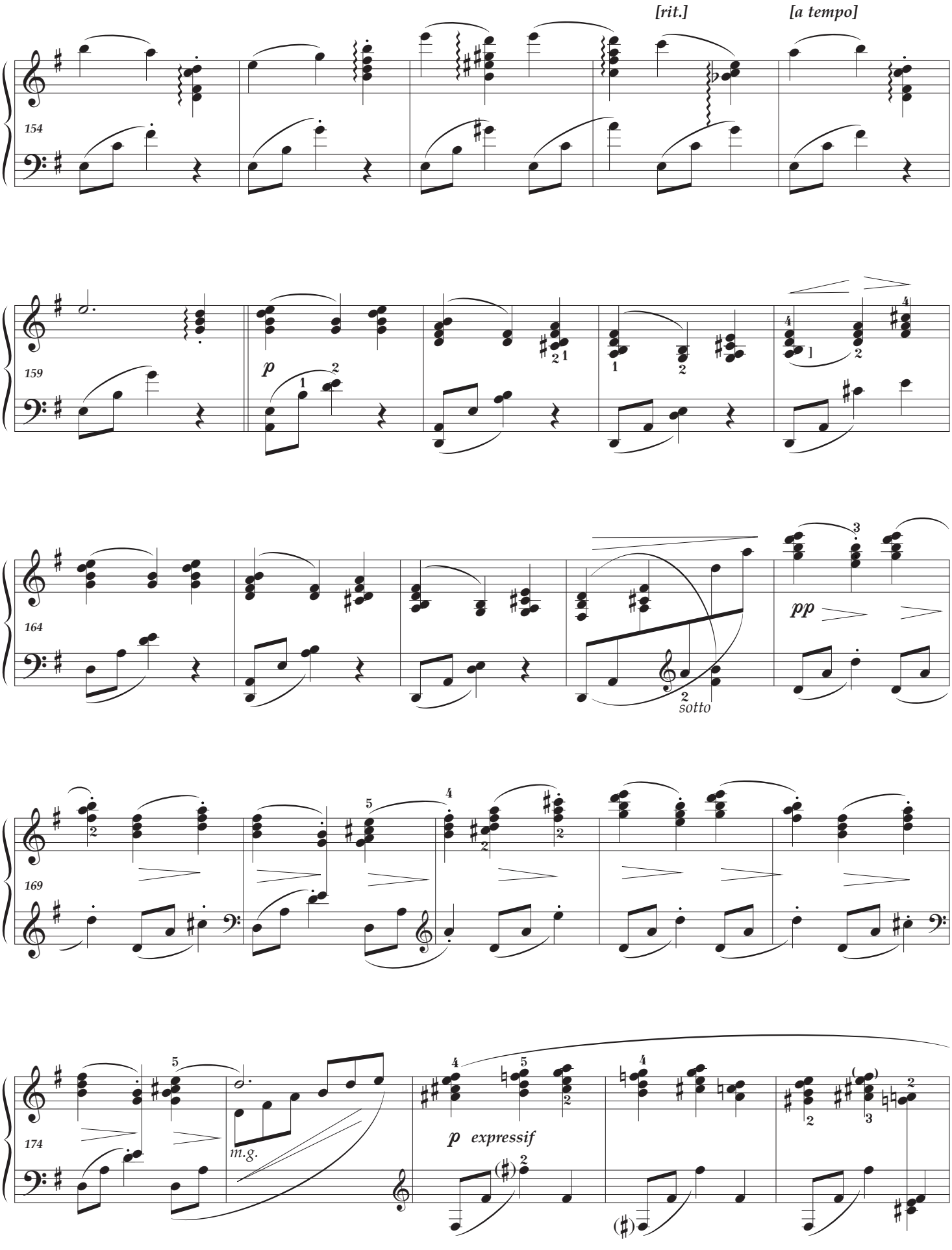
pp

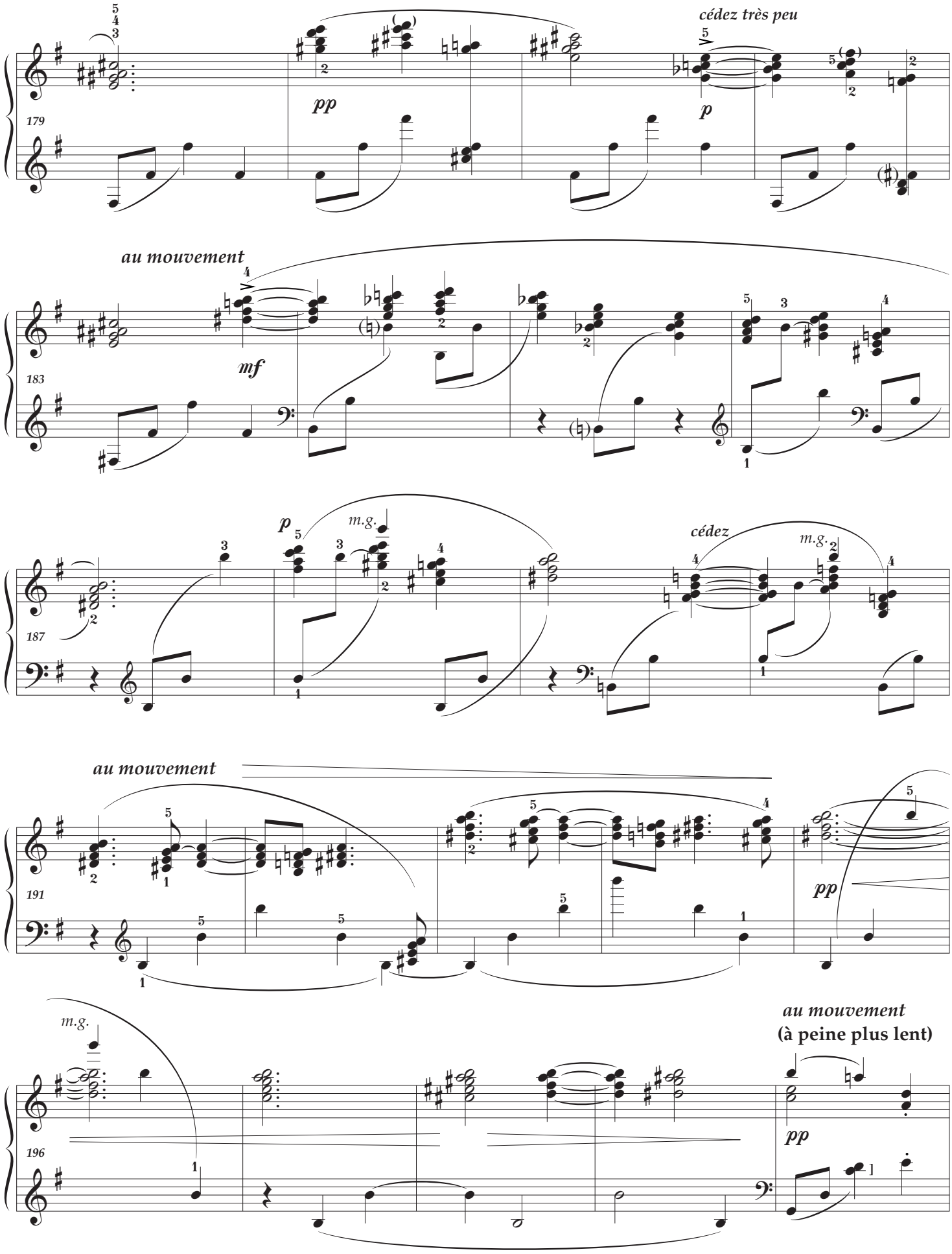
101

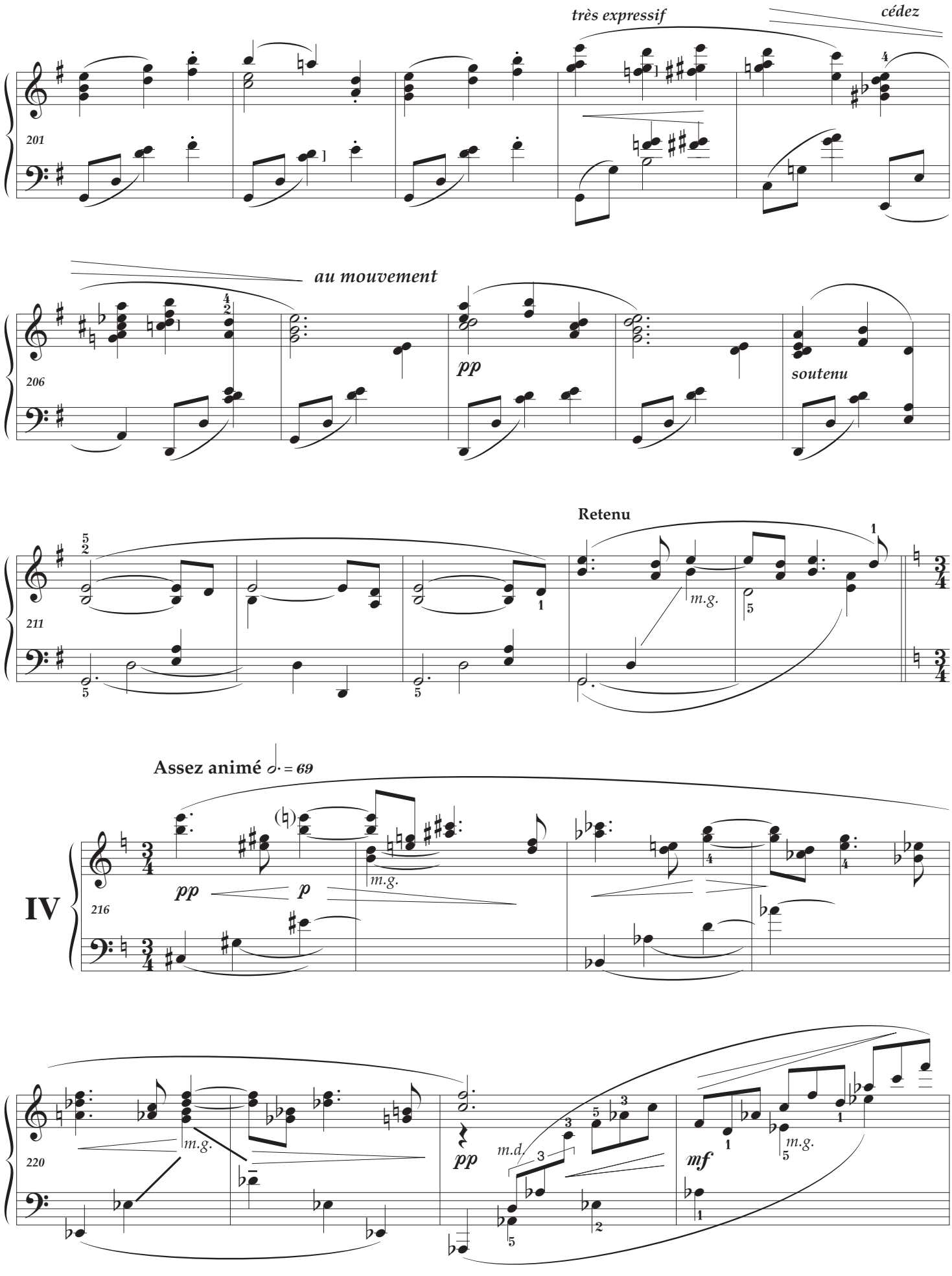

105
expressif
p
S.Ped.
110
rit.
m.g.
1er mouvement
mf très expressif
sotto
Ped.
115
120
mystérieux
pp un peu en dehors
125
très expressif
f

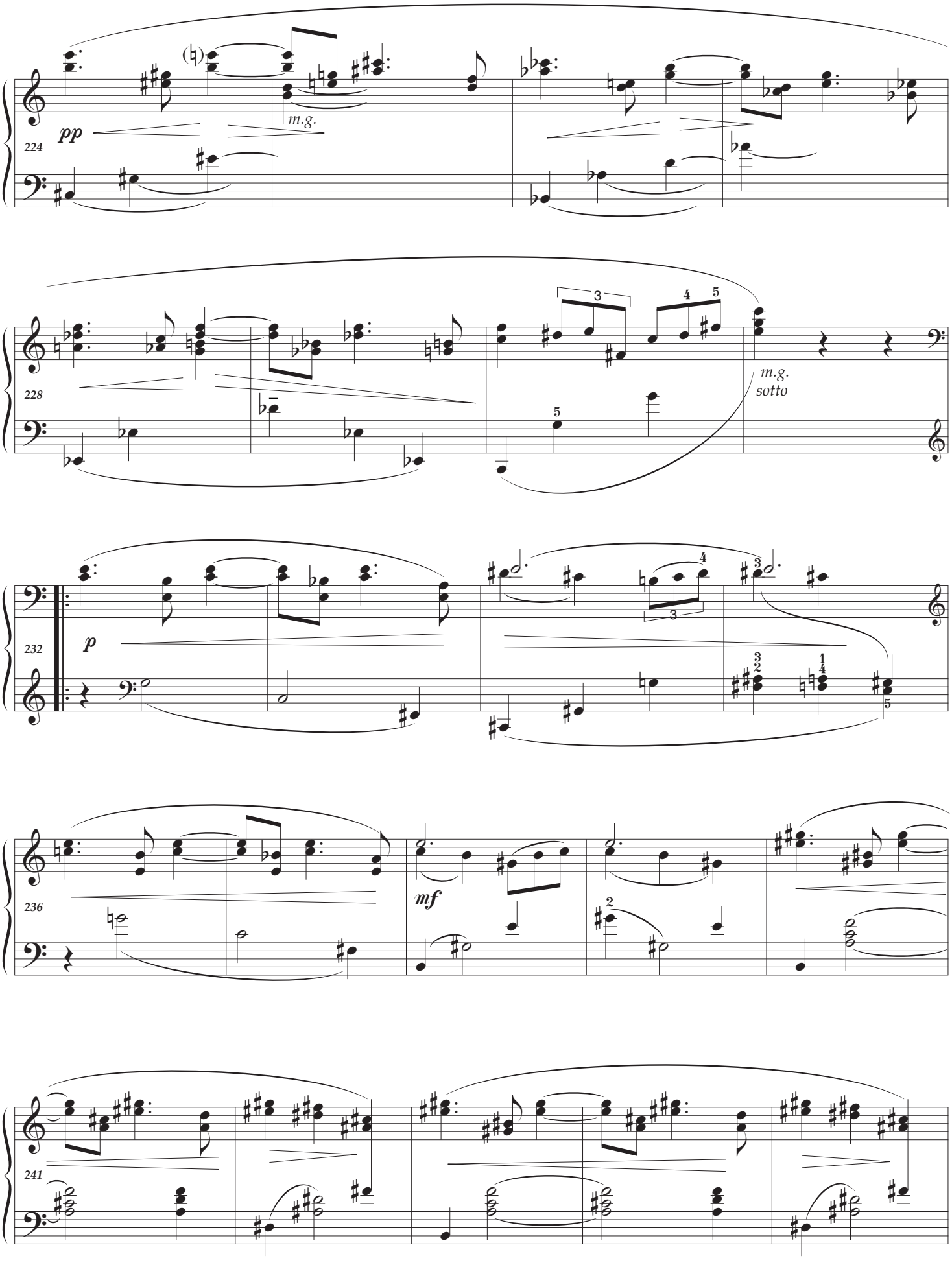

rall.
130
p
au mouvement (rubato)
135
pp
5
expressif
ral - len - tir
139
p
m.g.
S.Ped.
Ped.

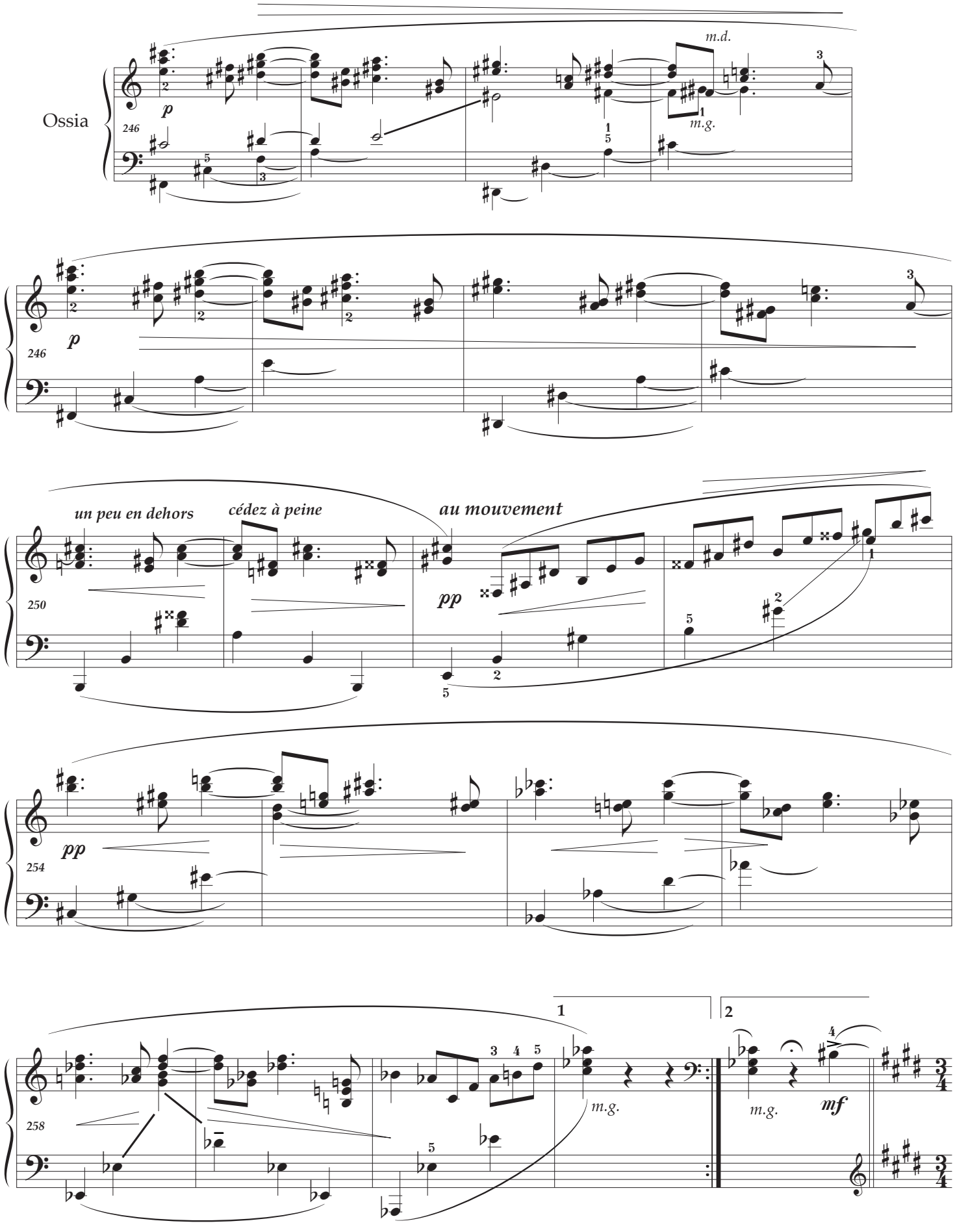

Modéré [♩= 150]
III
144
pp léger
5
5
2
149

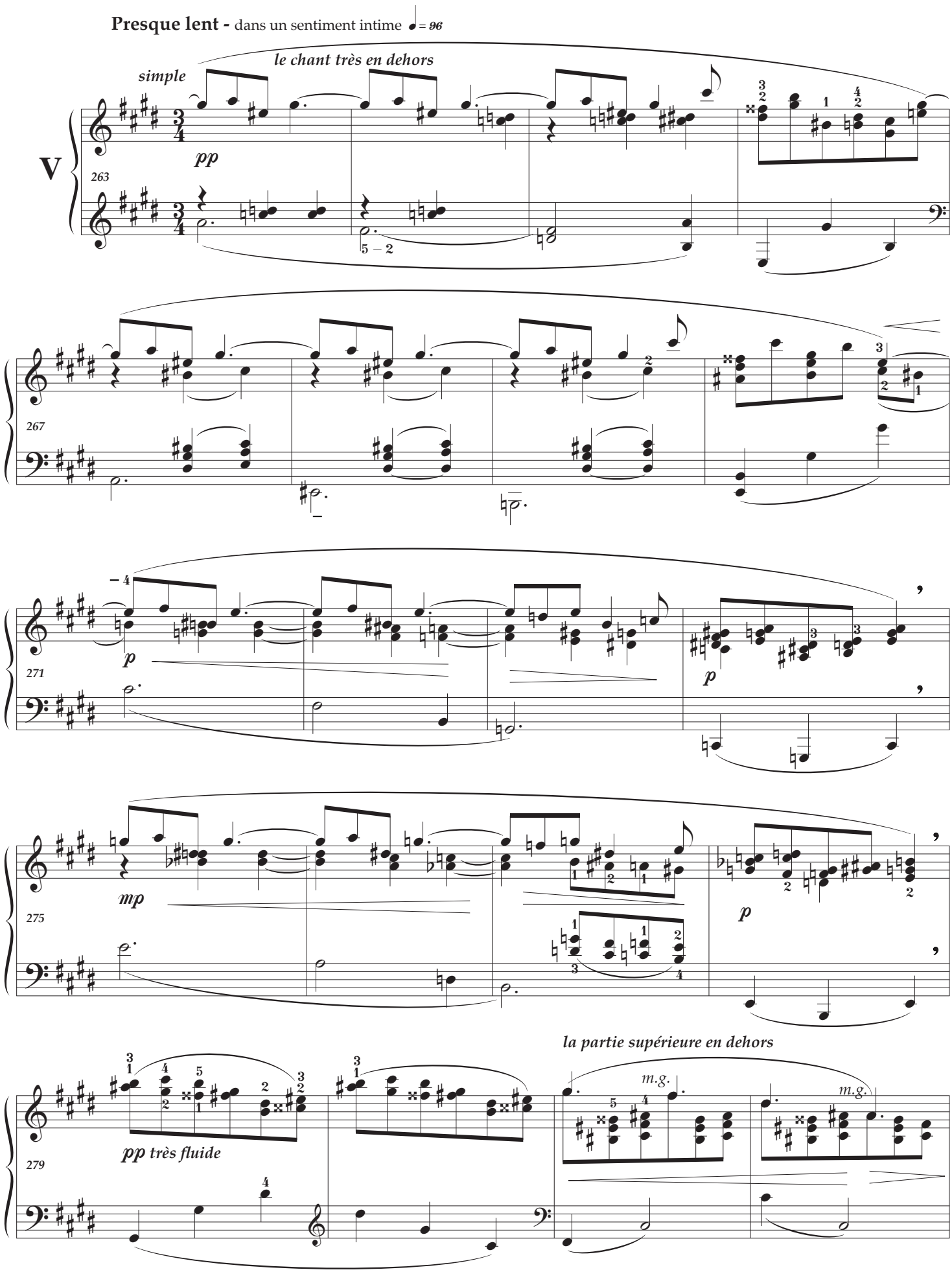

[rit.]
[a tempo]
154
159
p
164
pp
sotto
169
174
m.g.
p expressif

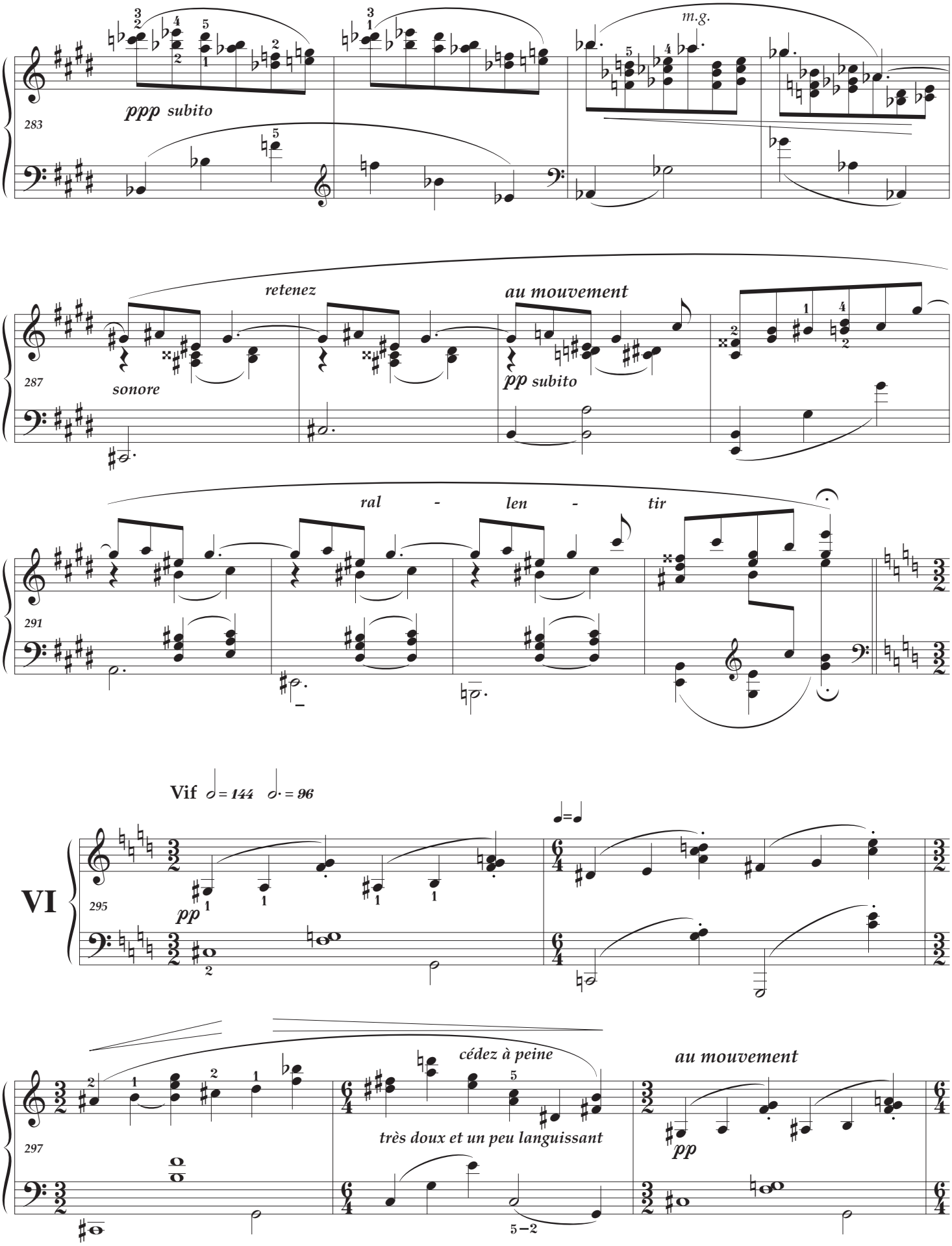

179
pp
cédez très peu
p
au mouvement
183
mf
187
p
m.g.
cédez
m.g.
au mouvement
191
pp
m.g.
au mouvement
(à peine plus lent)
196
pp

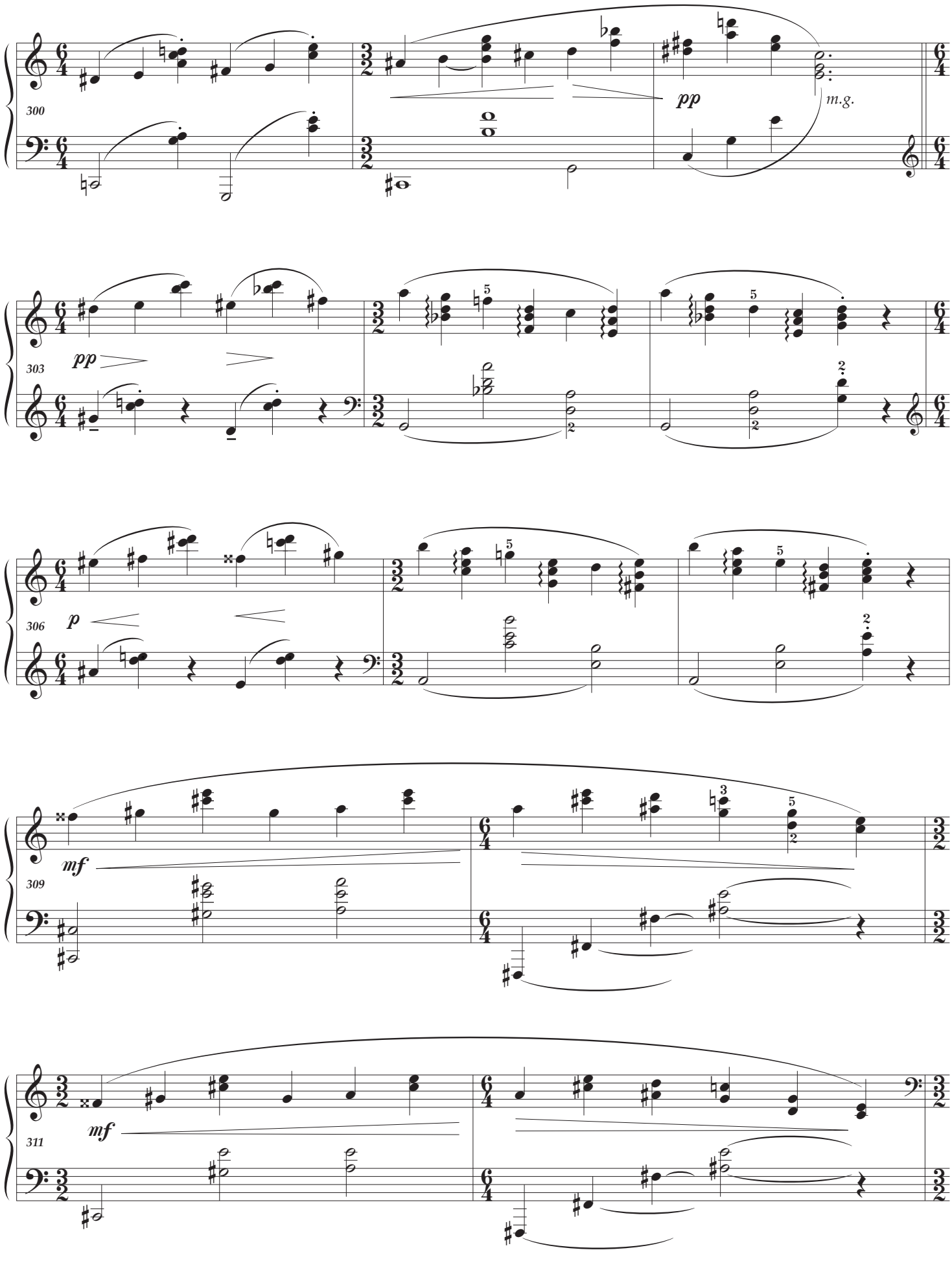

très expressif
cédez
201
au mouvement
206
pp
soutenu
Retenu
211
m.g.
Assez animé ♩. = 69
IV
216
pp
p
m.g.
220
m.g.
pp
m.d
mf
m.g.

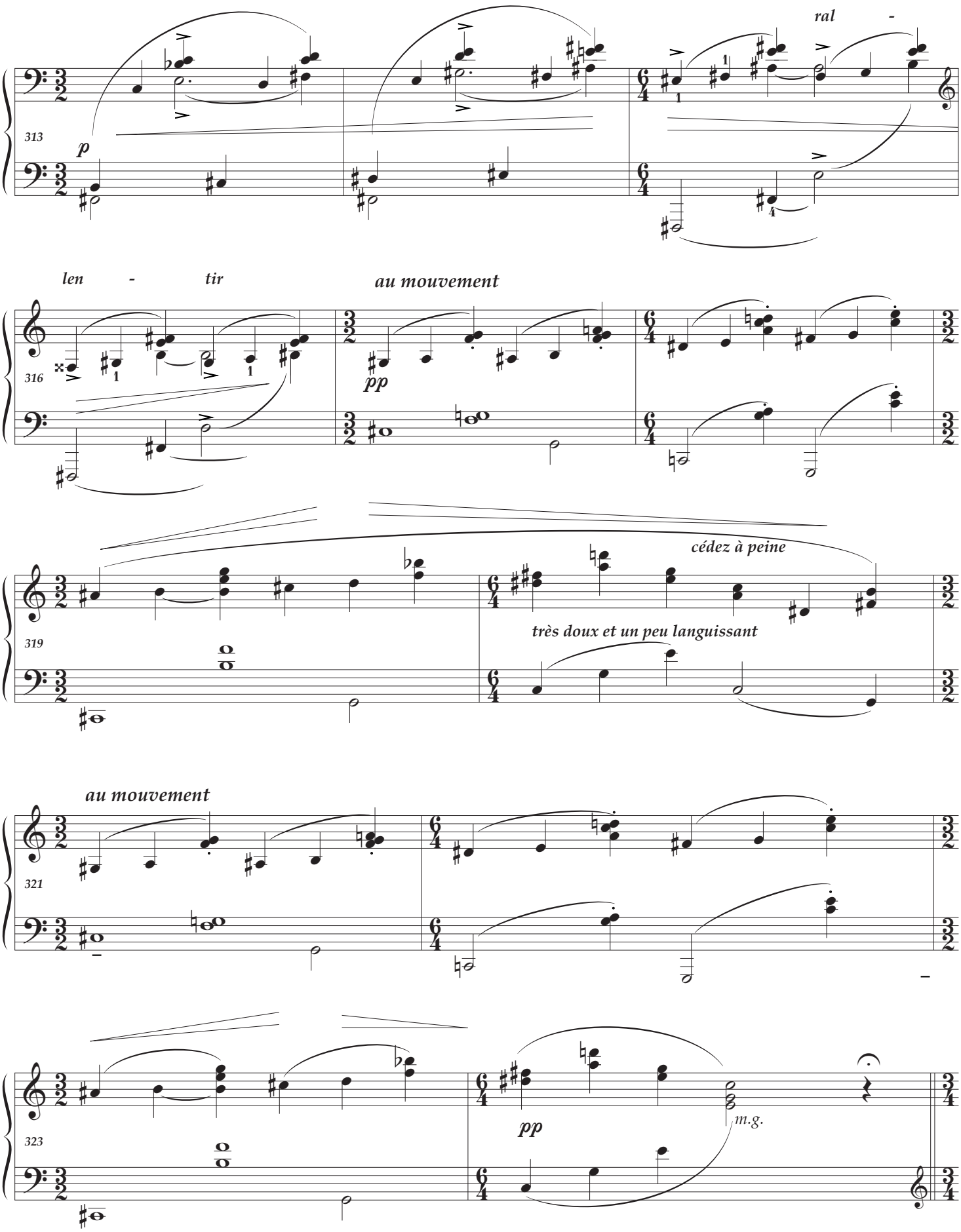

224
pp
m.g.
228
m.g.
sotto
232
p
236
mf
241

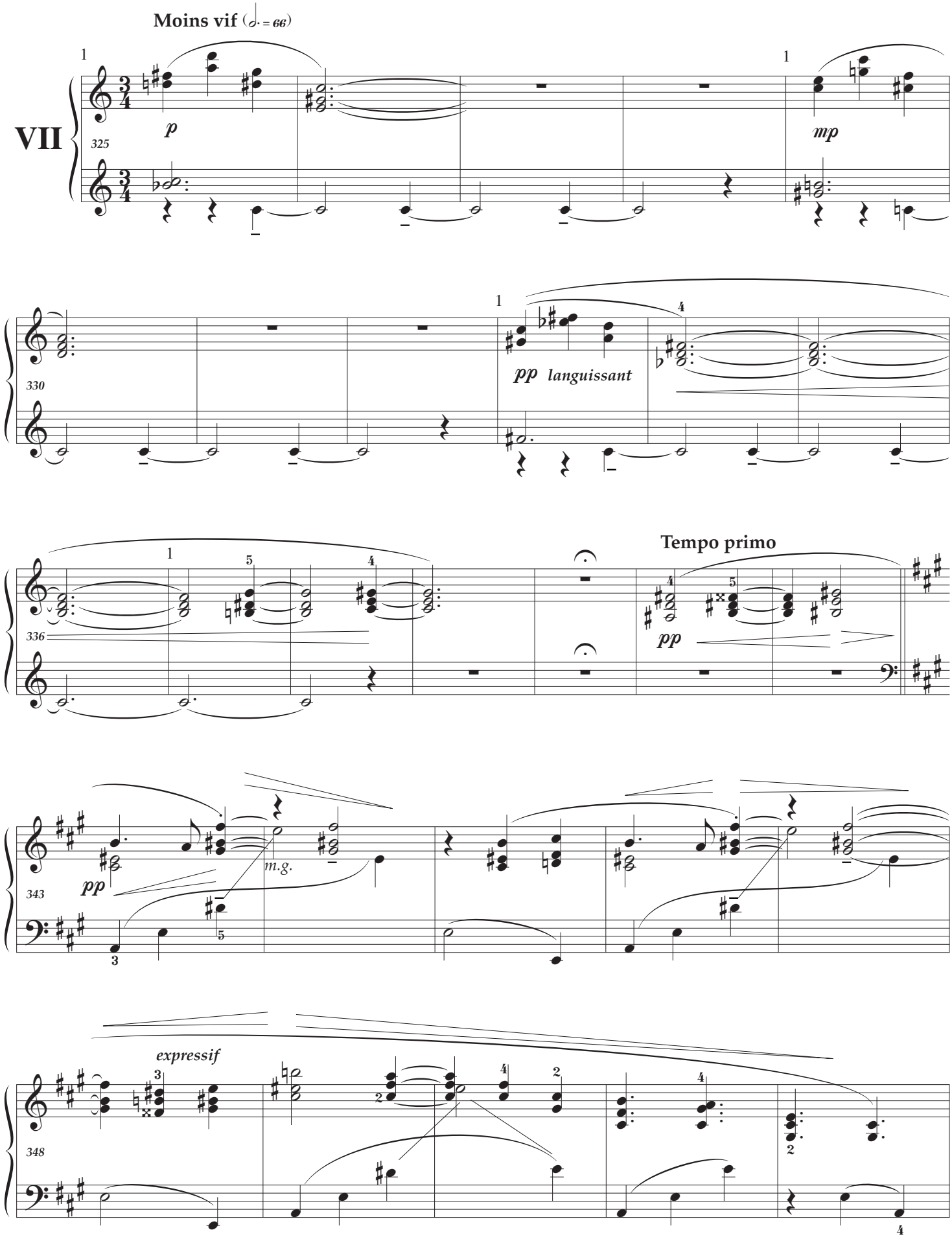

Ossia
246
p
m.d.
m.g.
246
p
250
un peu en dehors
cédez à peine
au mouvement
pp
254
pp
258
1
2
m.g.
m.g.
mf

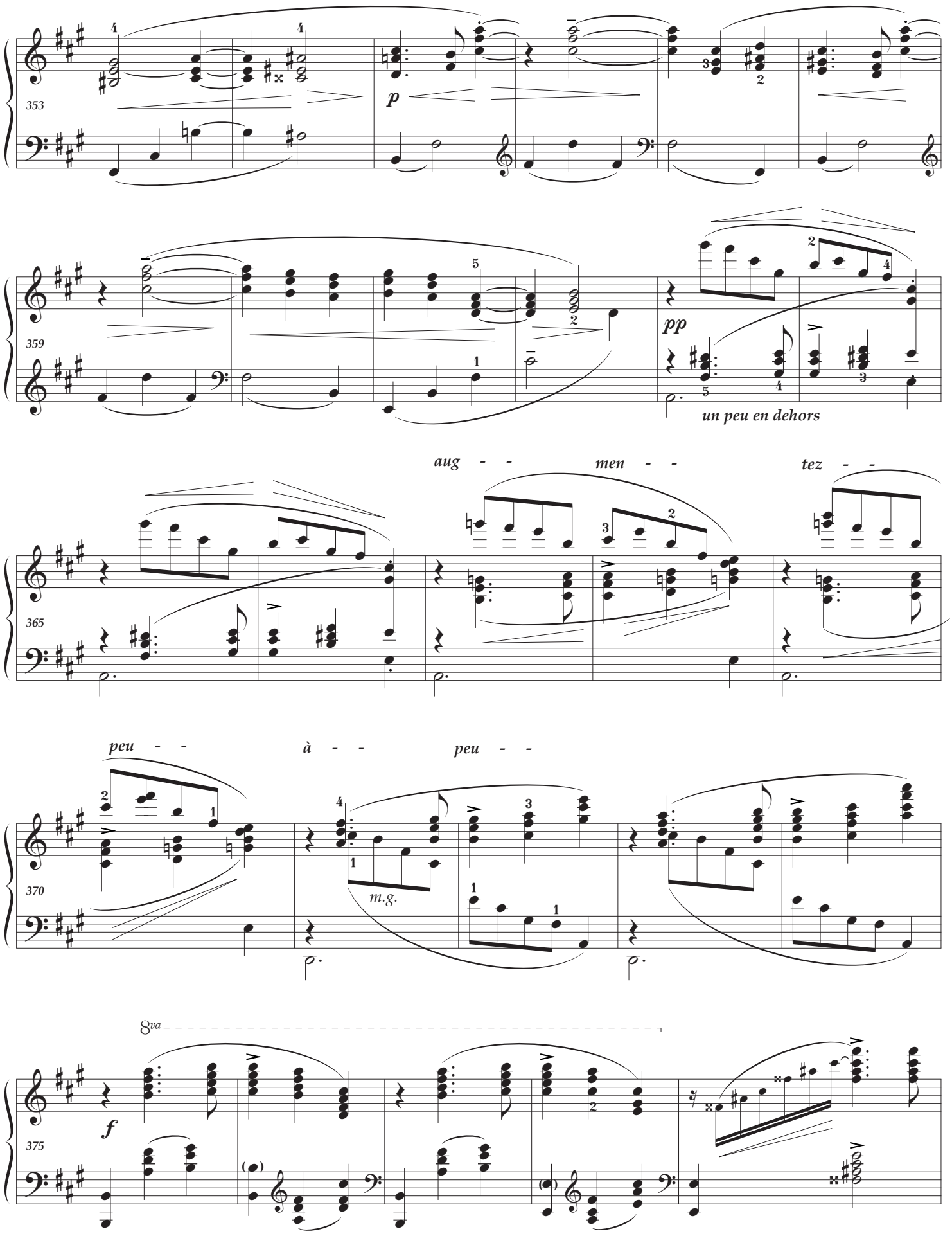

Presque lent - dans un sentiment intime ♩= 96
simple
le chant très en dehors
pp
V
263
5 – 2
267
271
p
p
275
mp
p
la partie supérieure en dehors
279
pp très fluide
m.g.
m.g.

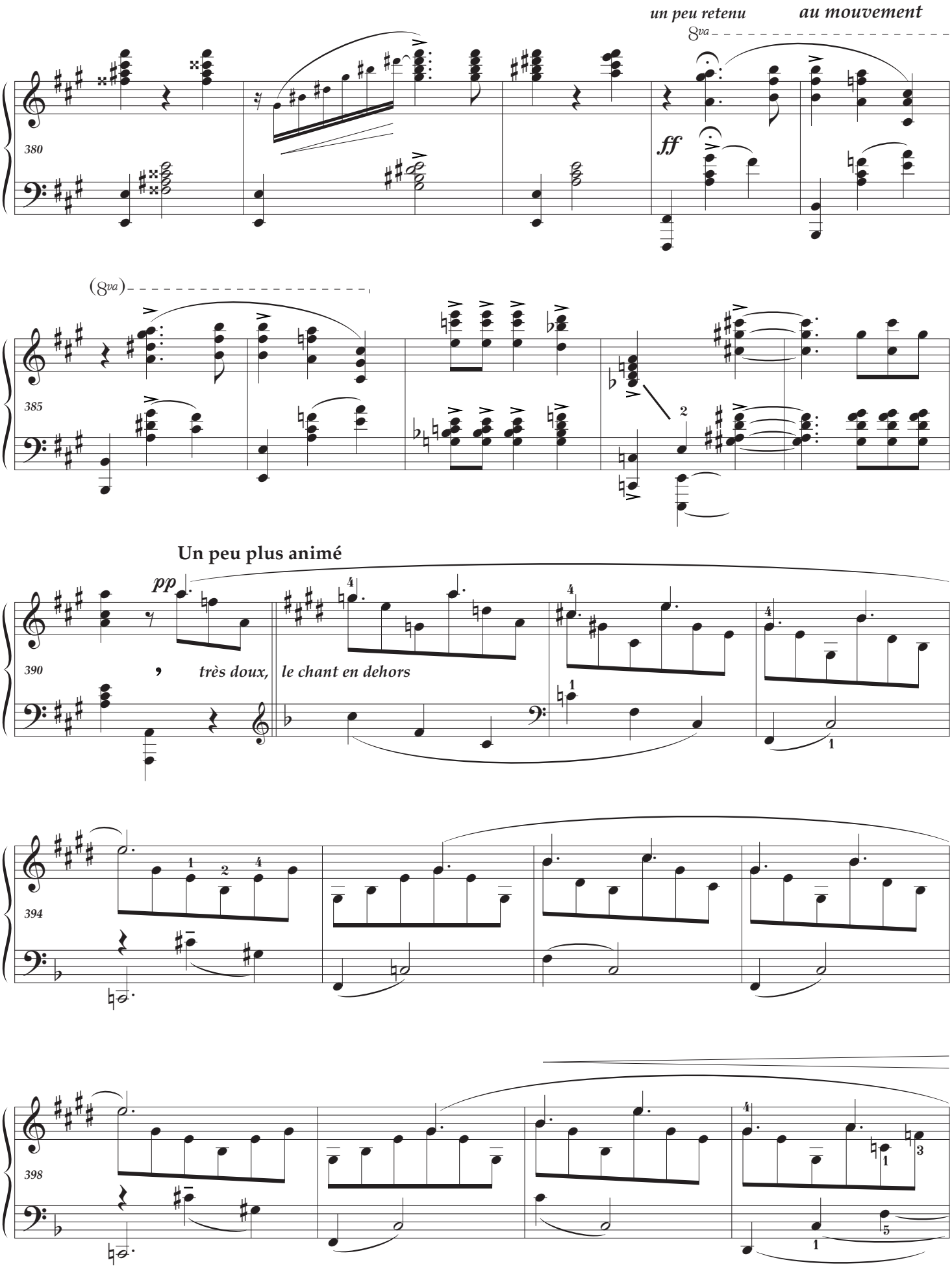

m.g.
ppp subito
283
retenez
au mouvement
sonore
pp subito
287
ral - len - tir
291
VI
Vif 𝅗𝅥 = 144 𝅗𝅥. = 96
pp
295
cédez à peine
au mouvement
très doux et un peu languissant
pp
297

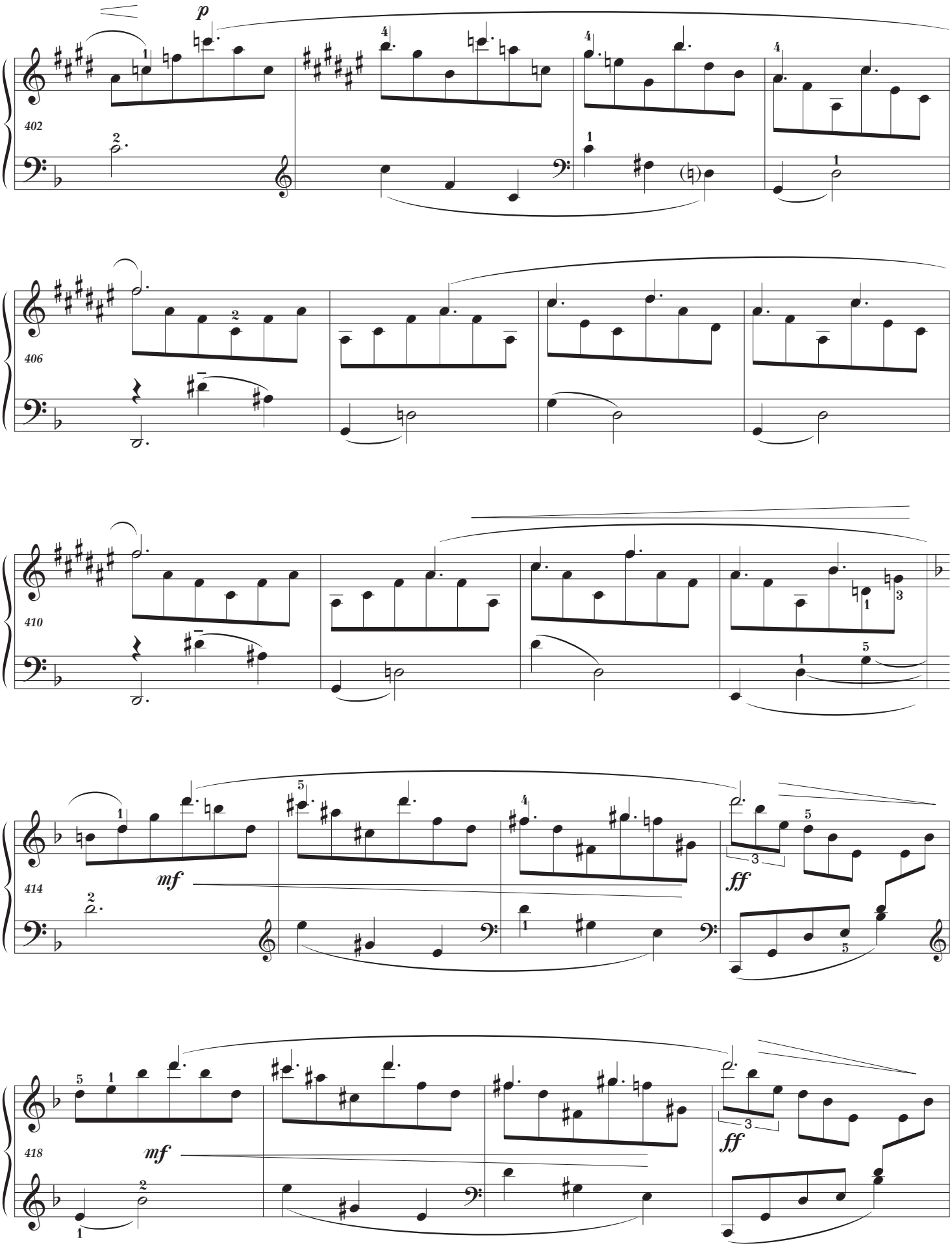

300
pp
m.g.
303
pp
306
p
309
mf
311
mf

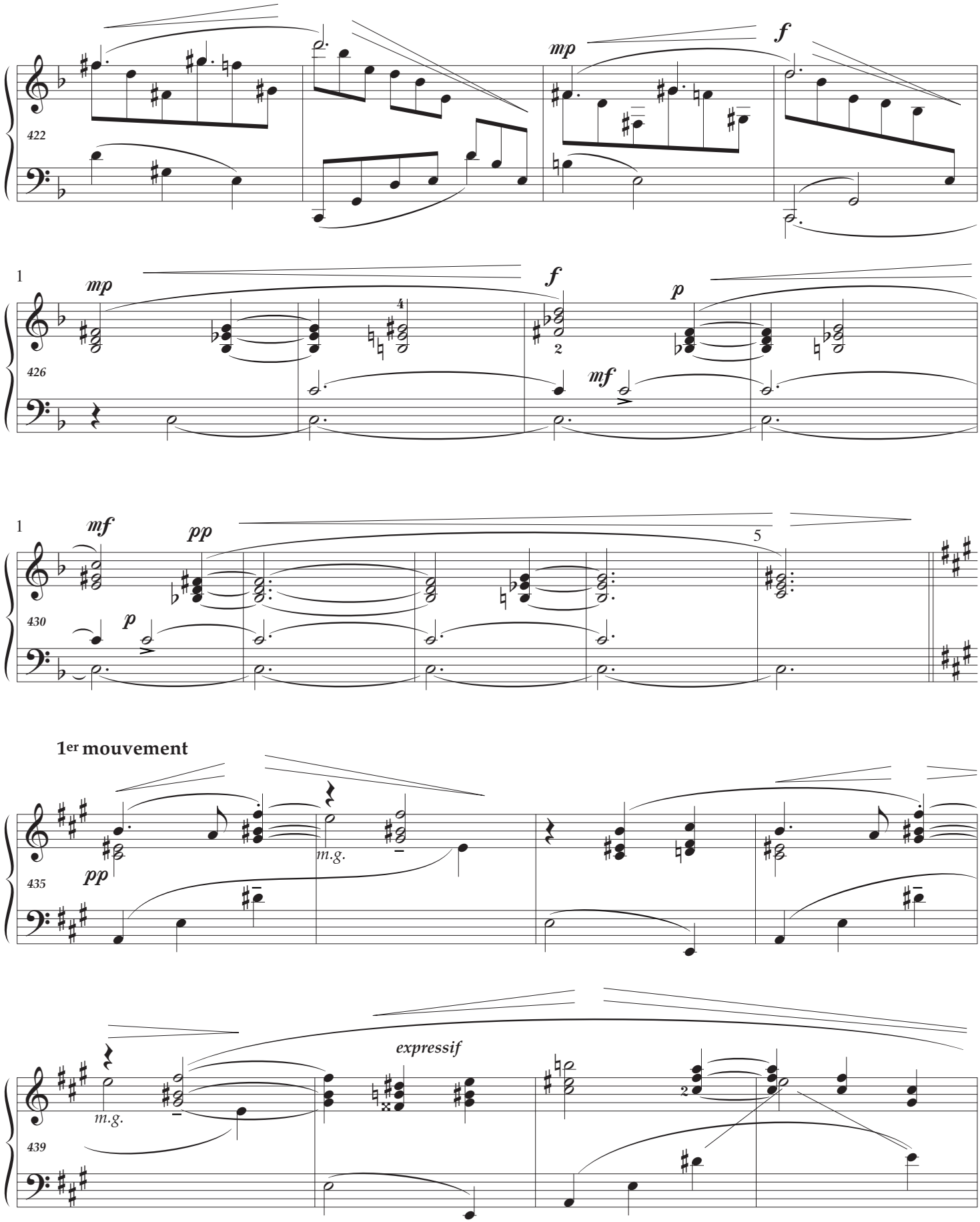

313
p
ral -
len - tir
au mouvement
316
pp
319
cédez à peine
très doux et un peu languissant
au mouvement
321
323
pp
m.g.

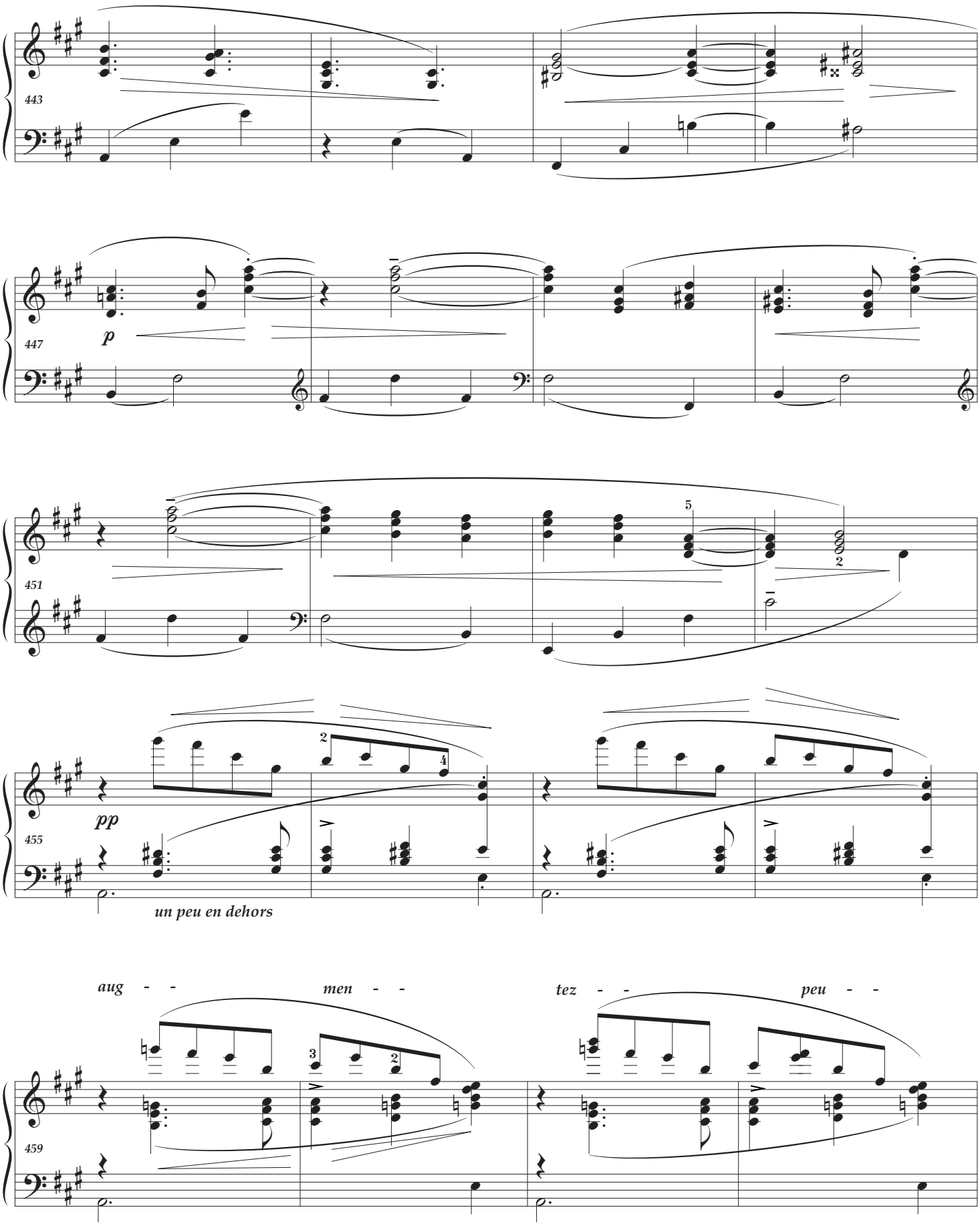

Moins vif (𝅗𝅥. = 66)
VII
325
p
mp
330
pp languissant
336
Tempo primo
pp
343
pp
m.g.
348
expressif

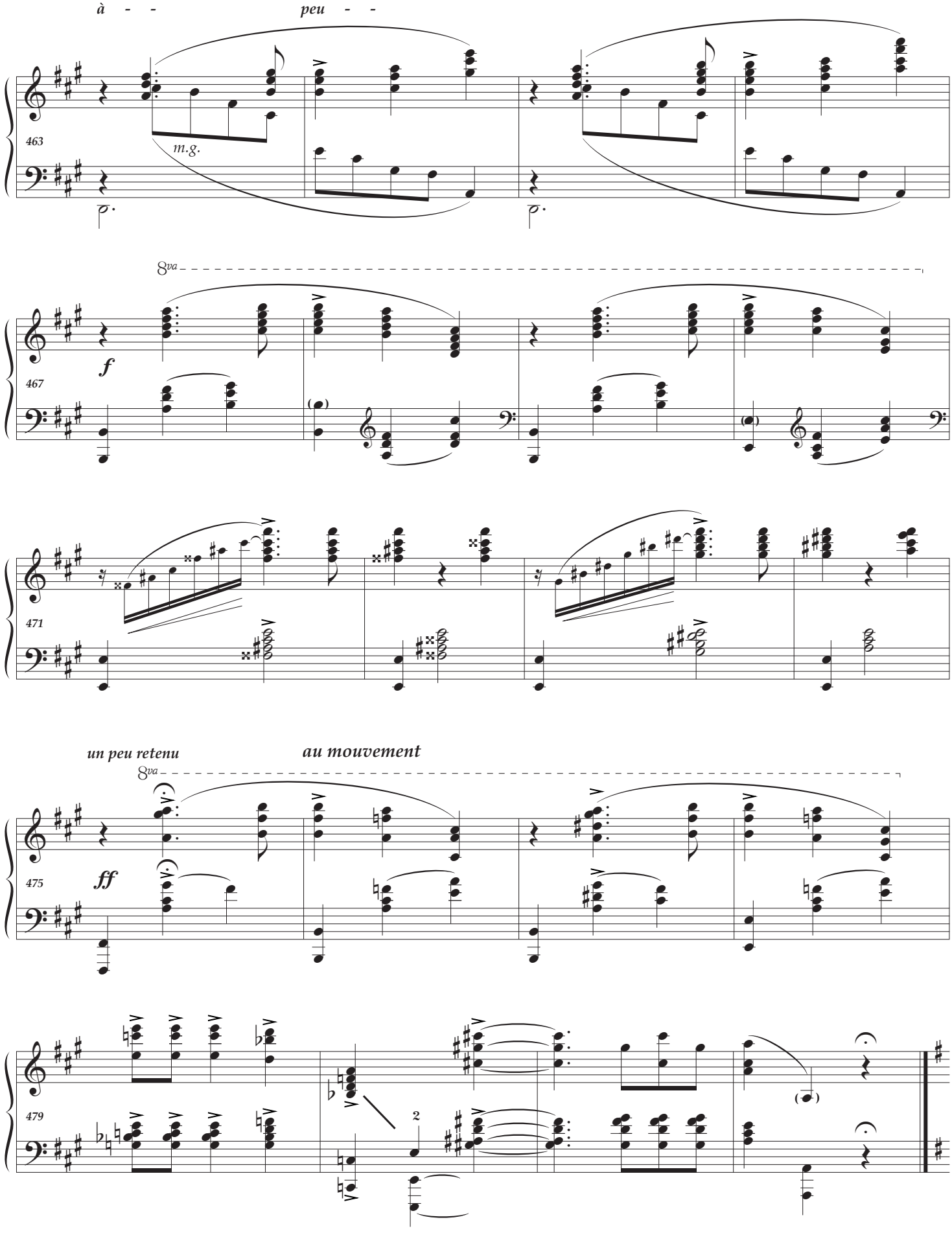

353
p
359
pp
un peu en dehors
aug - - men - - tez - -
365
peu - - à - - peu - -
370
m.g.
8va
f
375


un peu retenu
au mouvement
8va
ff
380
(8va)
385
Un peu plus animé
pp
très doux, le chant en dehors
390
394
398


p
402
406
410
414
mf
ff
418
mf
ff


422
mp
f
1
426
mp
f
p
mf
1
430
mf
pp
5
p
1er mouvement
435
pp
m.g.
439
m.g.
expressif


443
447
p
451
5
2
455
pp
2
4
un peu en dehors
aug - - men - - tez - - peu - -
459
3
2


à - -
peu - -
463
m.g.
8va
f
467
471
un peu retenu
au mouvement
8va
ff
475
479
2

EPILOGUE

Lent ♩= 76

VIII

483 *pp expressif*

S.Ped.

487 *pp*

sourdine

3 cordes

491 *p*

m.g.

mp

S.Ped.

S.Ped.

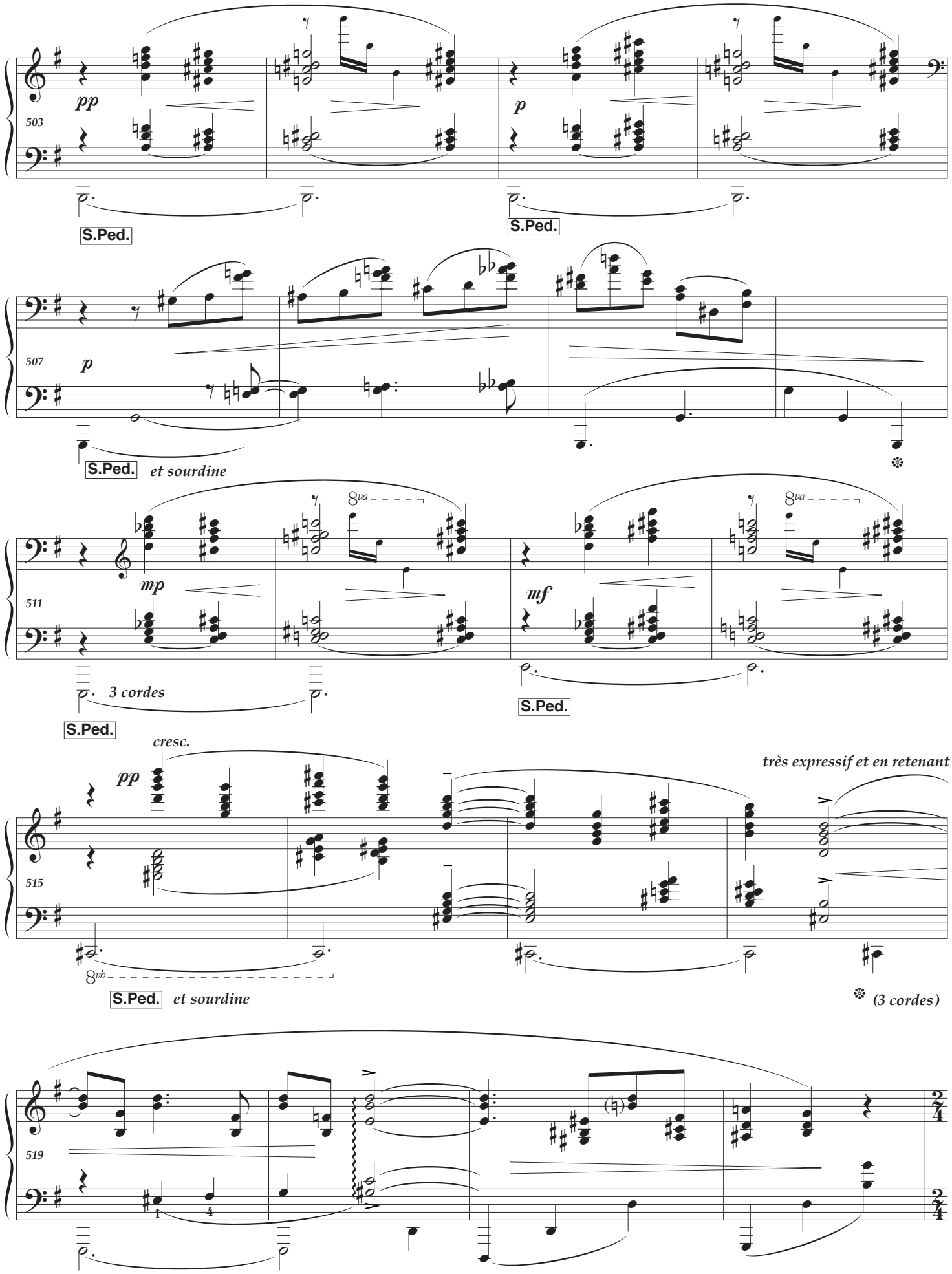
495 *pp*

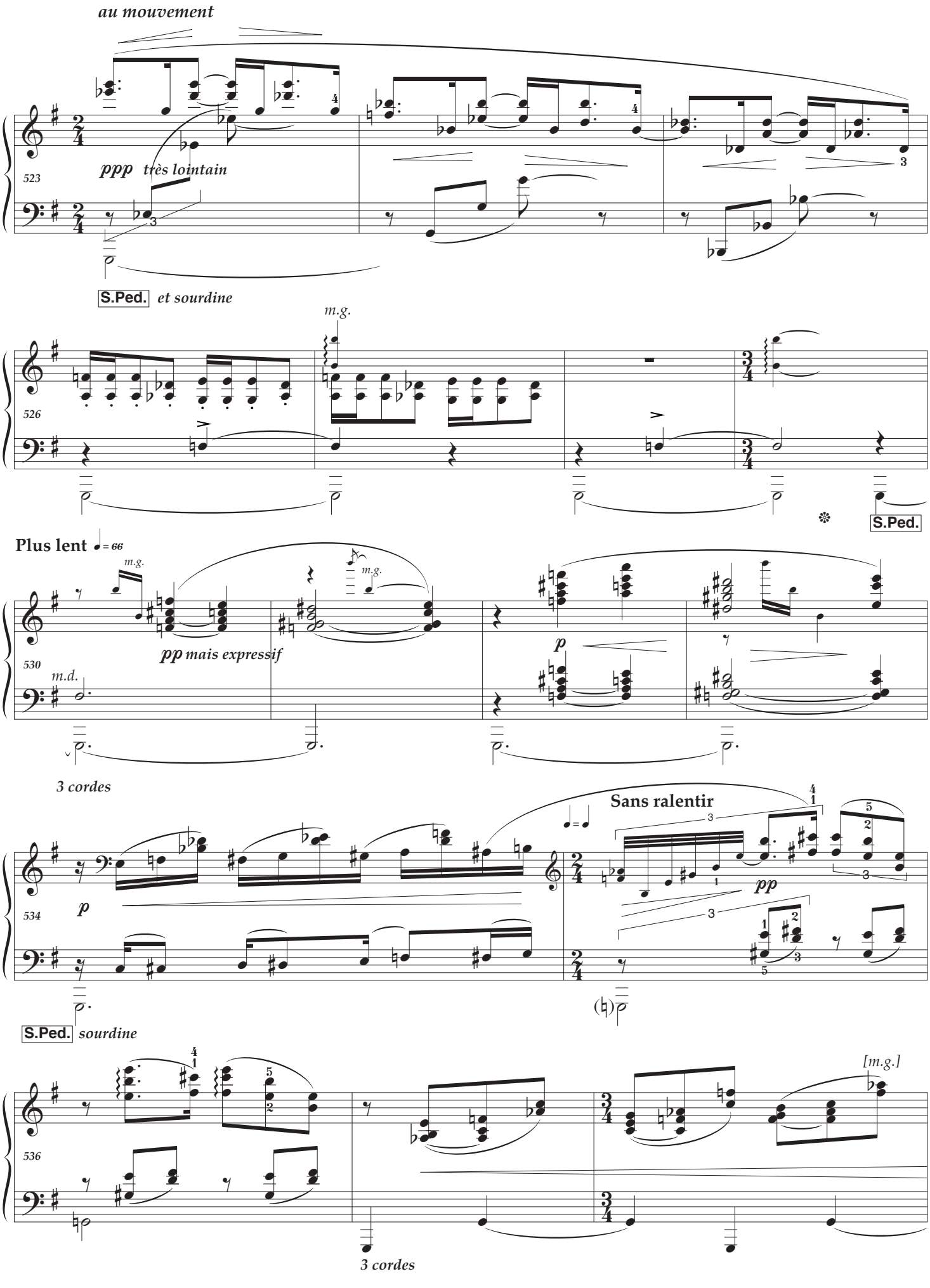
mf très expressif

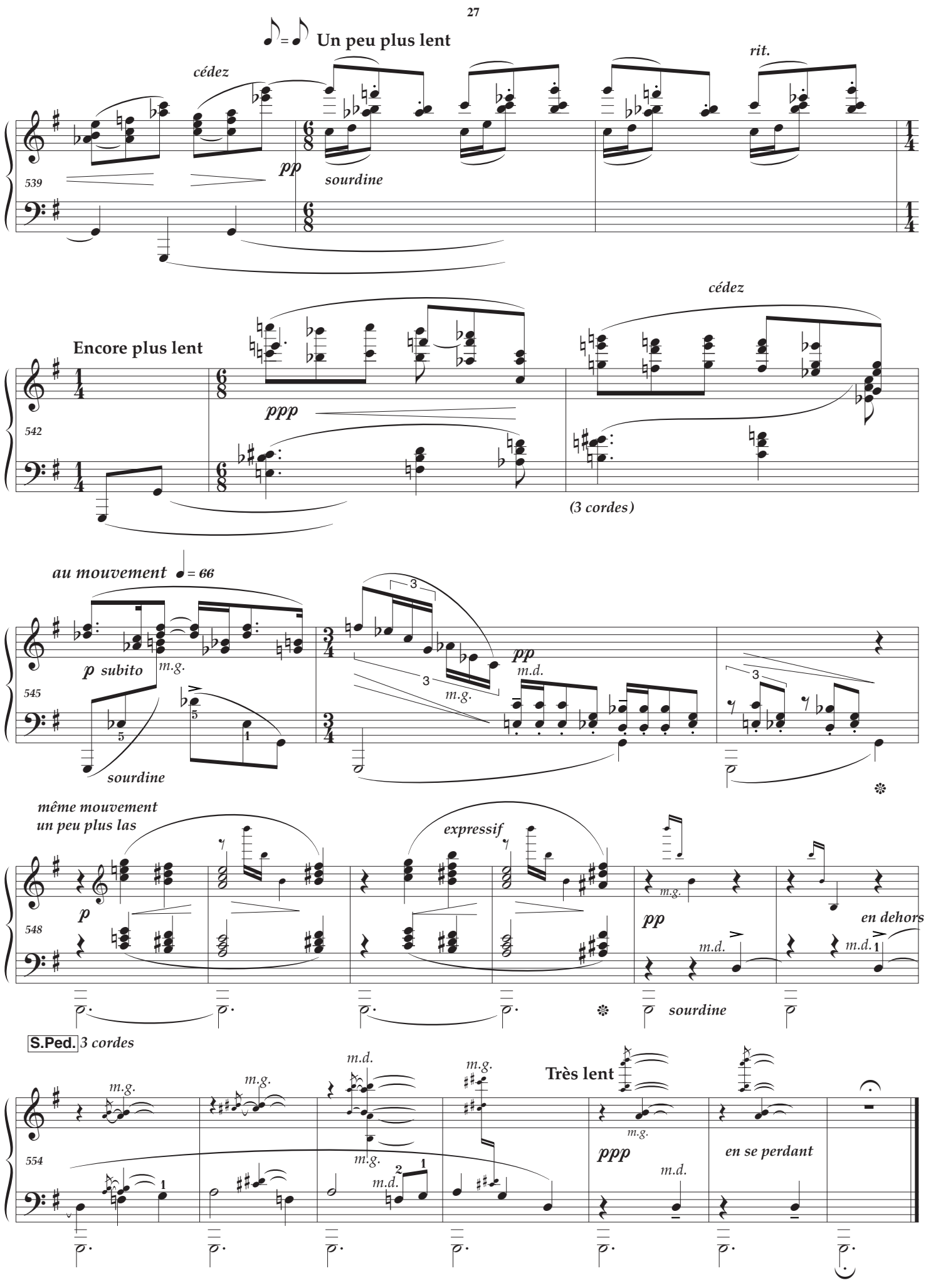
S.Ped. *et sourdine*

3 cordes

499


503
pp
p
S.Ped.
S.Ped.
507
p
S.Ped.
et sourdine
511
mp
8va
3 cordes
S.Ped.
mf
8va
S.Ped.
515
cresc.
pp
très expressif et en retenant
8vb
S.Ped.
et sourdine
(3 cordes)
519


au mouvement
ppp très lointain
S.Ped. et sourdine
m.g.
S.Ped.
Plus lent ♩= 66
m.g.
m.g.
pp mais expressif
m.d.
p
3 cordes
Sans ralentir
p
pp
S.Ped. sourdine
[m.g.]
3 cordes


Un peu plus lent
cédez
rit.
pp
sourdine
539
Encore plus lent
ppp
cédez
(3 cordes)
542
au mouvement ♩= 66
p subito
m.g.
sourdine
pp
m.d.
m.g.
545
même mouvement
un peu plus las
p
expressif
m.g.
pp
m.d.
en dehors
m.d.
548
sourdine
S.Ped. 3 cordes
m.g.
m.g.
m.d.
m.g.
m.g.
m.d.
Très lent
m.g.
ppp
m.d.
en se perdant
554

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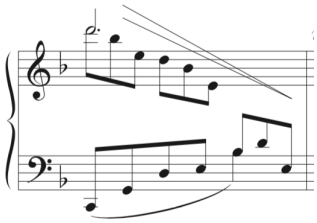
Appendix

Durations, comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

- Ravel's metronome speeds do seem generally rather quick and he is reported to have once admitted : "if I put ♩ = *92* it means not *120* and equally not *72*" !
- Ravel used the pedal sign very sparingly, preferring elongated ties and extended notes, impossible to hold otherwise.
- None of the sostenuto pedal suggestions are attributed to Ravel. With practice it is possible to combine the sostenuto and soft pedals with the left foot. However, the result should seldom be "clean", bearing in mind that the overall goal should be "pianistic" and the impressionist harmonies as within a dreamlike "cloud".

Valse I	**Page 1**	**Duration: 1'25**
		Durand metronome speed ♩ =*176*
	15, 16	Durand : the slur extends to the following bar (1st beat). Compare with bars 75 and 76.
	19/20, 79/80	Bass octave (in brackets) added for tone
	22, 24	Alto inspired by the orchestral score
Valse II	**Page 5**	**Duration: 2'05**
	81-82	Two slurs in accord with similar phrases
Valse III	**Page 7**	**Duration: 1'35**
		Durand : no metronome speed
	160-166	Slurs in the treble from the orchestral score. Durand : each slur extends to the 3rd beat
	160	Durand : dynamic missing
	188	Durand : tie missing
	200	*à peine plus lent* - from the orchestral score
	211/215	Suggestion for the bass pedal point G (orchestral score)
Valse IV	**Page 10**	**Duration: 1'05**
		Durand metronome speed 𝅗𝅥. = *80* Some respelling to facilitate reading
	234/235	Tied dotted minim E (soprano) from the orchestral score
	241, 244	Durand : the last treble quaver is written as D double # — a misprint corrected in the orchestral score.
	247-250	Ossia - this tenor countersubject figures in the orchestration and was written in Vlado Perlemuter's score by the composer
Valse V	**Page 13**	**Duration: 1'10**
	263	"Simple" written by the composer in Perlemuter's score
	277	2nd treble quaver F# in the orchestral score

Valse VI	**Page 14**	**Duration: 0'35**
		Durand metronome speed 𝅗𝅥. = *100*
		Durand : the time signature is 3/4 throughout — the orchestral version alternates between 3/2 and 3/4 as here — perhaps therefore easier to understand the metre
	313-316	Modifications from the orchestral score
Valse VII	**Page 17**	**Duration: 2'15**
		Durand : no metronome speed
		In the central section two changes of key signature have been introduced in the treble to underline bitonality.
	376/378	Bass octave (in brackets) added for tone and accuracy
	390	It is felt that a slight pause is necessary here before commencing the central section
	405	The 3rd alto quaver is a suspected misprint (see bar 409)
	423	3rd beat change of note order. Here is the Durand original : 
	425-434	Pedal point C from the orchestral score
	482	A added (in brackets) — from the orchestral score
Valse VIII	**Page 24**	**Duration: 3'45** *EPILOGUE*
	523-528	Durand : 3/4 throughout — changes of time signature to facilitate reading of metre.
	527	The sustained bass G is taken from the orchestral score
	535-544	Durand : 3/4 — changes of metre to facilitate reading
	544	Durand : *3 cordes* missing
	546	Durand : each pair of quavers is slurred — RH staccato from the orchestral score

Overall duration : 13'30 (from a Ravel piano roll recording) — very fast!

Vlado Perlemuter : 14' — most recordings are 15' plus : i.e. Louis Lortie 15'15

franc	forthright	simple	without affectation
sans	without	dans un sentiment intime	with innermost feeling
pesant	heavy	doux	gentle
en dehors	in relief	languissant	languid
léger	light	sourdine	soft pedal
cédez	slower	3 cordes	soft pedal off
soutenu	sustained	S.Ped	middle sostenuto pedal
assez animé	sufficiently lively	lointain	distant
à peine	almost	las	weary
presque	slightly	se perdant	dying away