CELESTIAL BODIES

Piano

DORIAN CRIMMINS

Celestial Bodies is a suite containing three pieces based on Chinese Folk Tales.

15/8

Chang'e is the goddess of the moon and the archer Hou Yi's wife. After Hou Yi shot the nine suns, he became a King and married Chang'e, a girl from a local village. On his way to meet a friend one day, he encountered the "Queen Mother of the West." This deity gifted him an elixir of immortality which would cause his ascension to heaven and give him a saintly status. As he wished to not be parted from his wife, he gave her the elixir for safe keeping. A jealous courtier, or apprentice, happened to see this exchange and wanted the elixir for himself. He confronted Chang'e when Hou Yi was away, and tried to steal the elixir from her. As she was defenseless, she drank the elixir. She rose from the earth and ascended towards the heavens. She was apprehensive in leaving her husband, she landed on the nearest celestial body to Earth; the moon. Hou Yi returned and learned of what had happened to Chang'e, and as he sorrowfully observed the bright harvest moon, he saw Chang'e upon it. When other villagers learned of Chang'e's story, they began to burn incense and prayed to Chang'e, the moon goddess, for safety and luck.

9/10

Hou Yi is a character in Chinese mythology known by many names and by contrasting characterizations. Scholars have proposed that there were two separate men who went by the same name with differing personas. The Hou Yi described by the Huainan zi is the mythic archer who performed Herculean tasks for Emperor Yao, and the tyrannical Hou Yi (from the You qiong tribe) from the Chu ci assumed the name of the famed hero. In one of the feats he achieved for Emperor Yao, he shot nine sun-laden ravens that were scorching the Earth, and spared a final raven, the Sun. This is the story I address in 9/10.

7/7

A cowherd, Niulang discovered seven fairy sisters bathing. He stole their clothing and waited to see what they would do. The sisters sent the youngest, Zhinu, to find their clothing. As Niulang saw Zhinu naked, she accepted his wish to marry her. They were a happy couple and had two children. Zhinu's mother, the Goddess of Heaven, disapproved of the union between her divine daughter and the mortal cowherd. The Goddess forced Zhinu to return to heaven. Niulang was bewildered at the disappearance of his wife when his ox began to speak to him. The ox said that if Niulang killed him and wore its hide, he would be able to go to heaven and search for Zhinu. He killed the ox, wore its hide, and took his two children with him to search for Zhinu. The Goddess, displeased by Niulang once again, took her hairpin and scratched a river (the Milky Way) between Zhinu (Vega) and Niulang (Altair) in the sky. Niulang took care of the children on his side of the river, watching Zhinu weave at her loom from across the Milky Way. Every year, on the seventh day of the seventh month, all of the magpies in the world take pity on them and form a bridge across the Milky Way to reunite the family. This date is commemorated by the Qixi Festival.

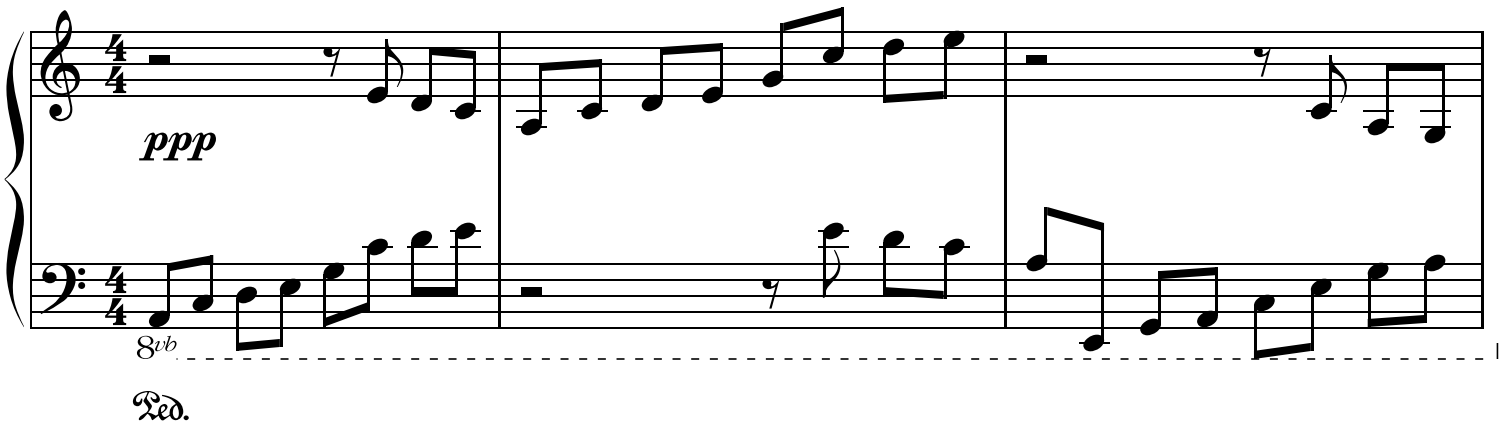
15/8

The Ascension of Chang'e

Dorian Crimmins

Soft and intense

♩=120



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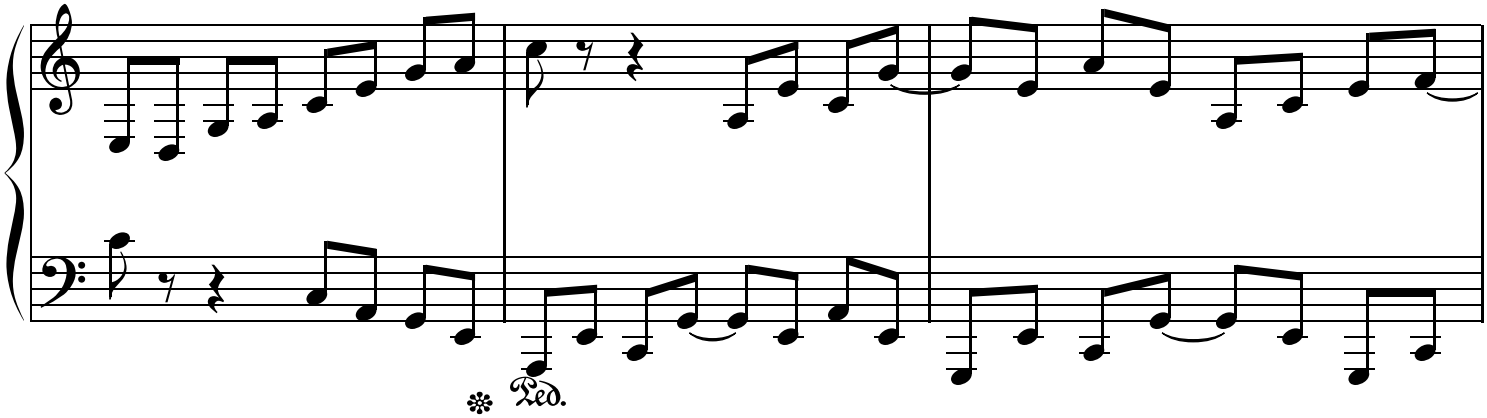

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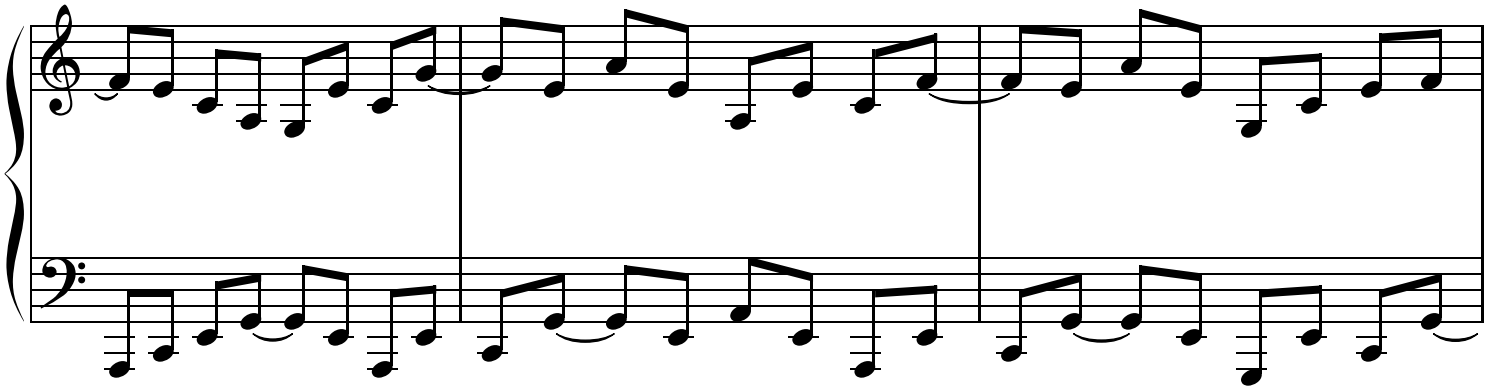

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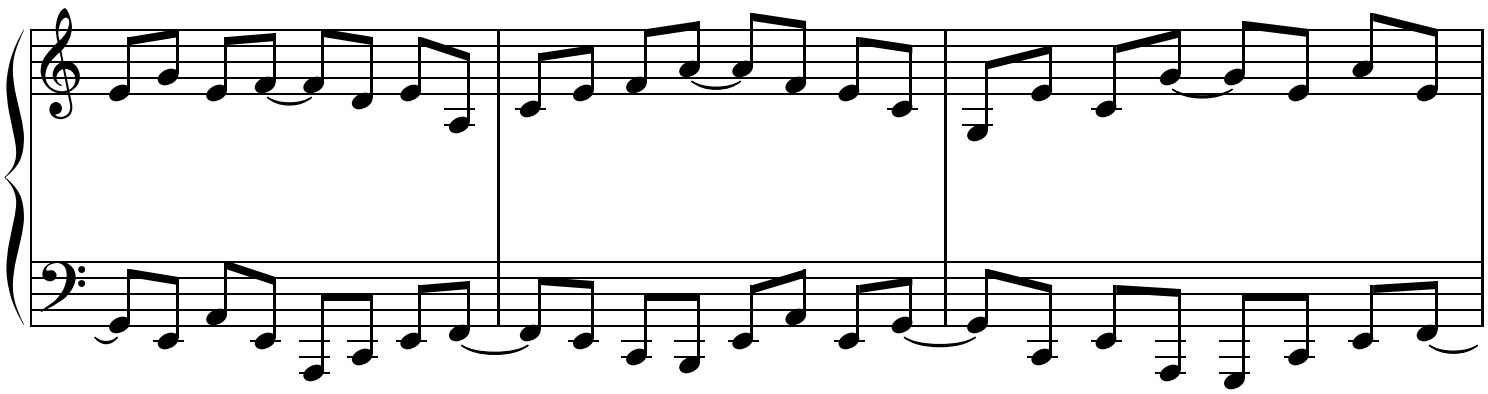
10



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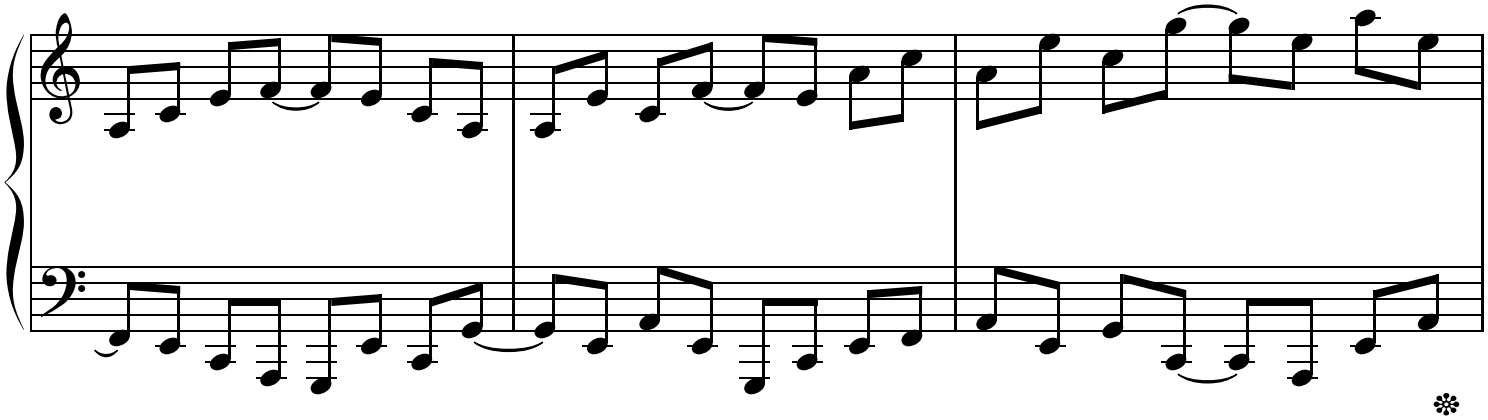
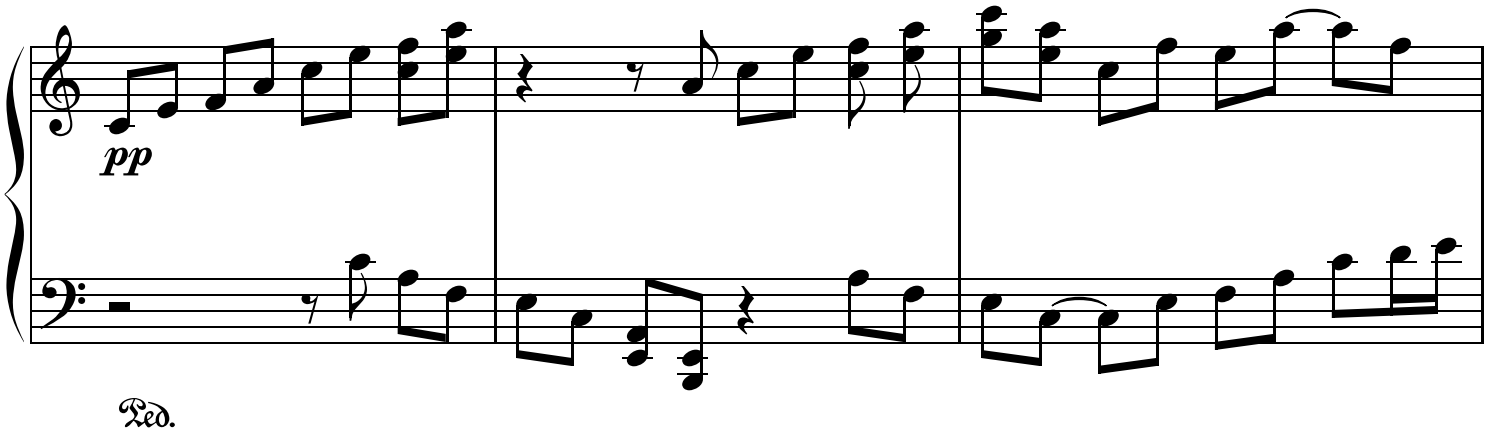


16

Still soft, slowly growing louder



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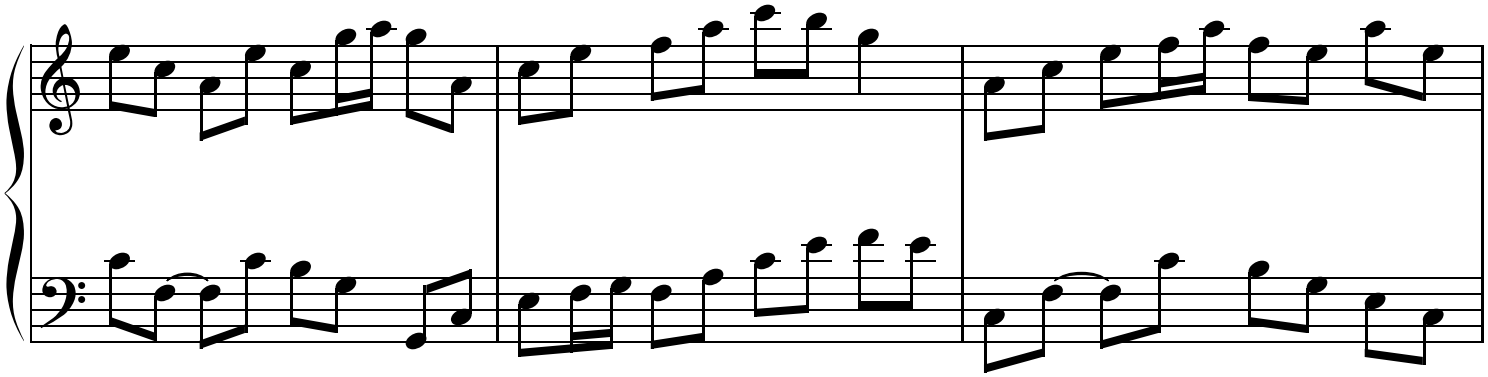


22

25

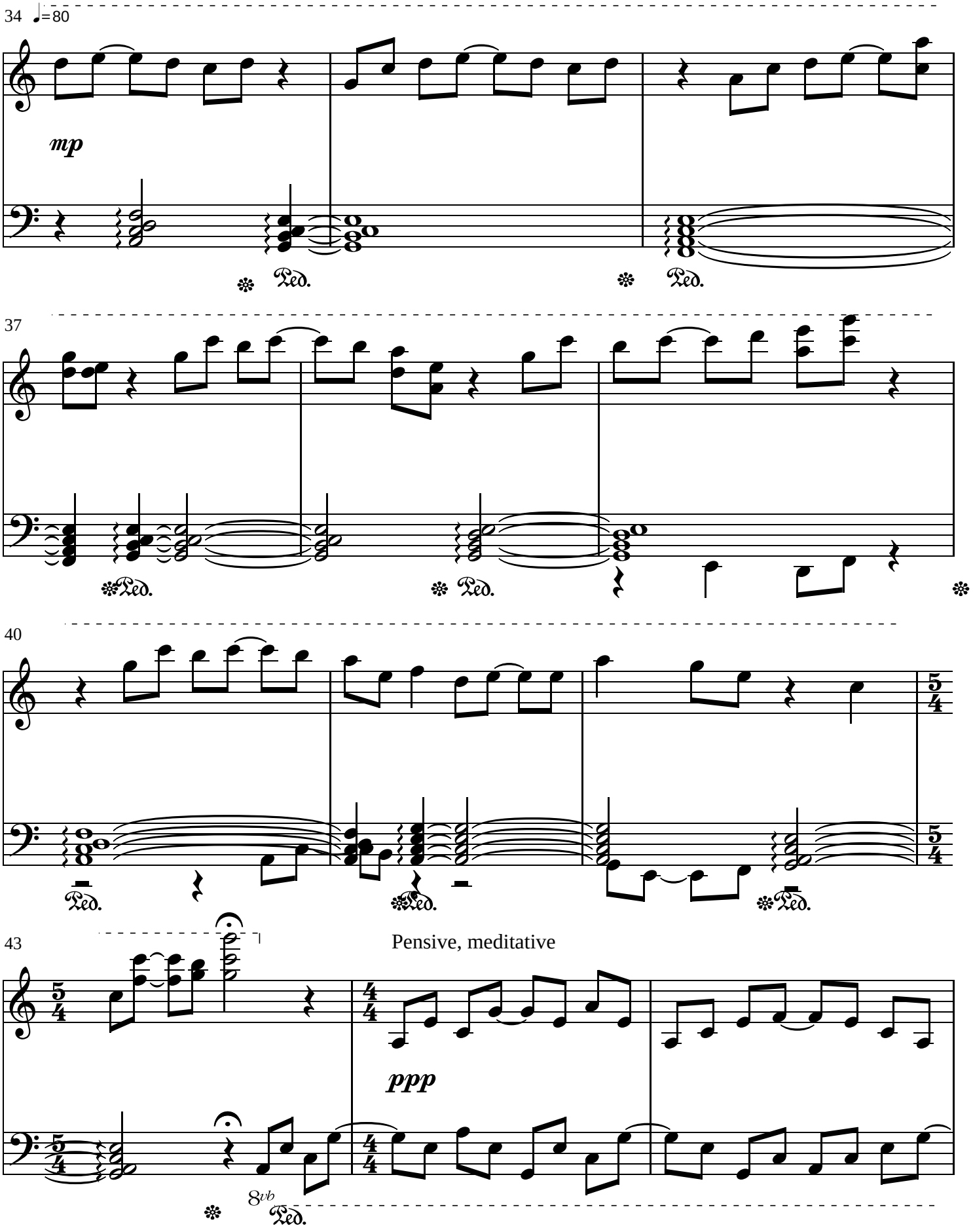
p

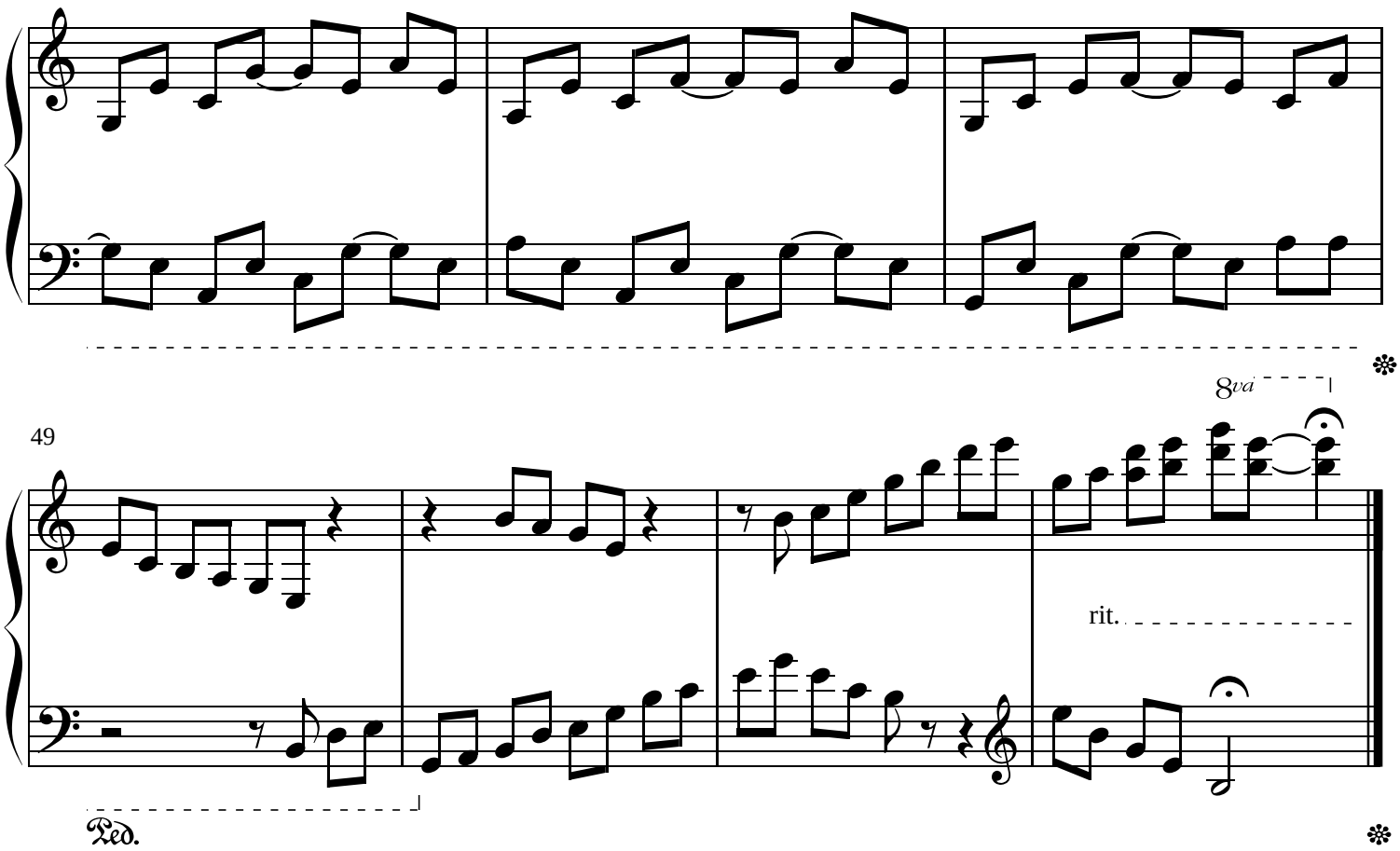
Ped.

28

31

8va


34
♩=80
mp
Ped.
Ped.
37
Ped.
Ped.
40
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
43
Pensive, meditative
ppp
8vb
Ped.

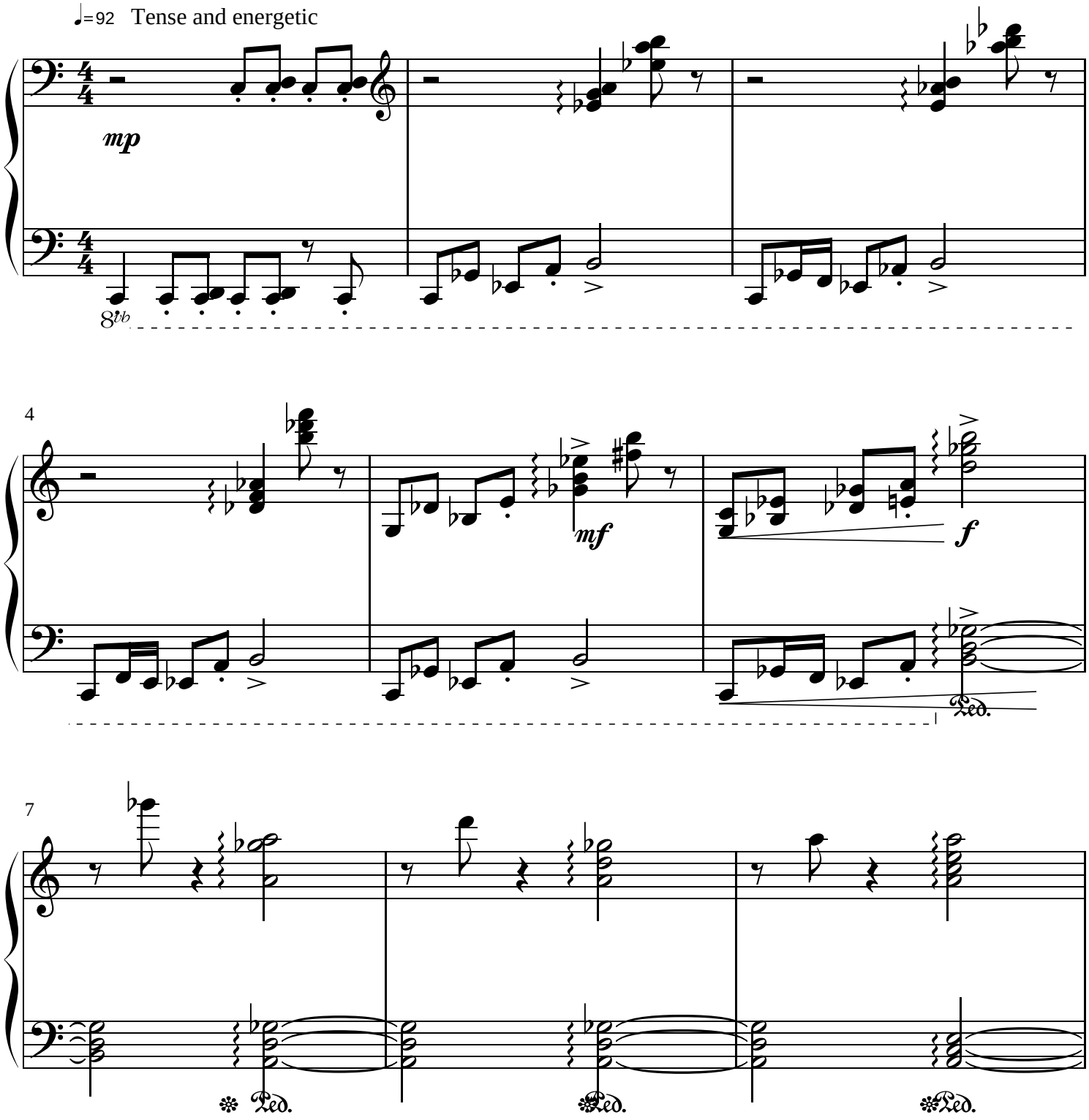


8va
49
rit.
Ped.

9/10

Hou Yi's Theme

Dorian Crimmins



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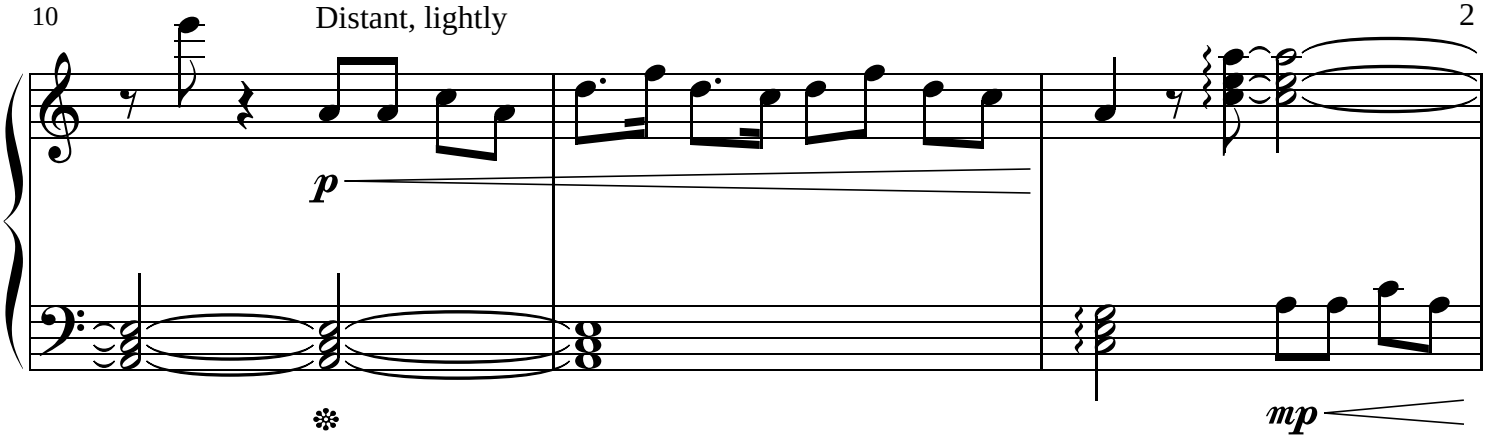
10 Distant, lightly



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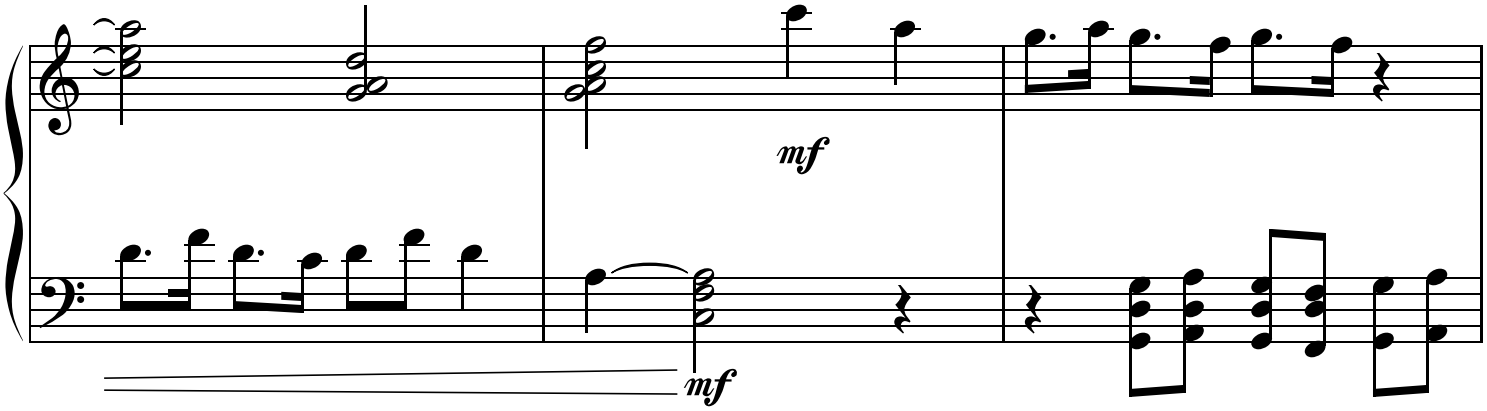

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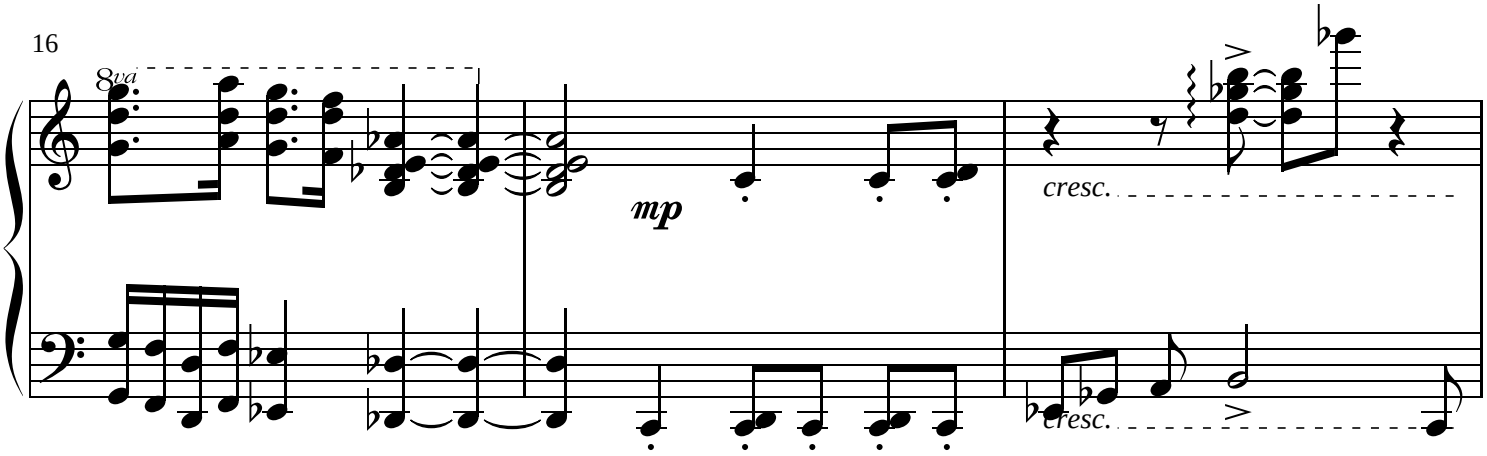

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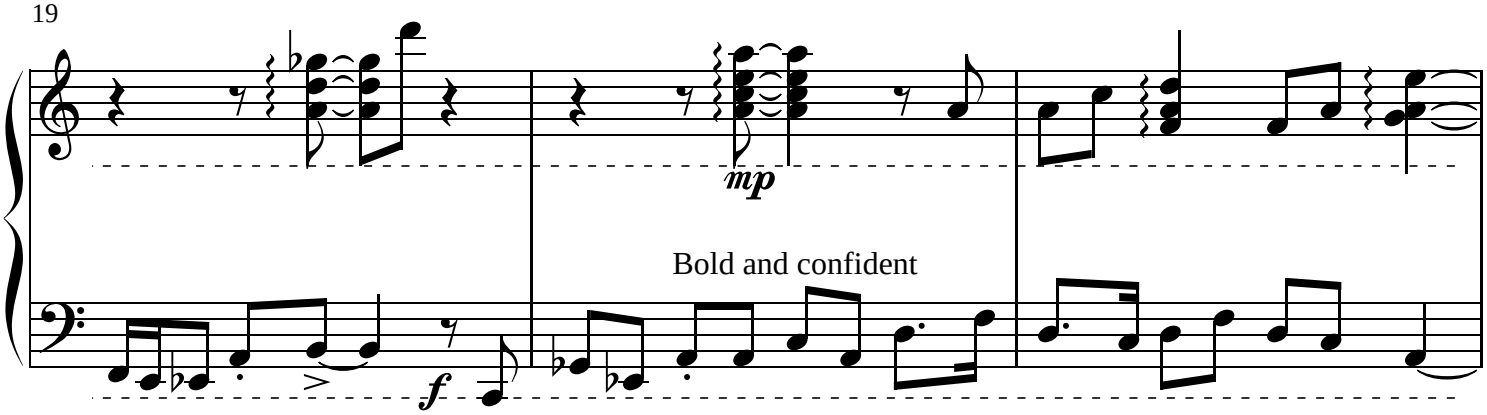


22

mf

Manic and brash

25

8va

f

f

28

mf

8va

f

31

8va

ff

33

♩=60 Distant and mysterious

pizz

Kangding Love Song

mp

Ped. ✻ Ped.

36

✻Ped. ✻

39

Stopped

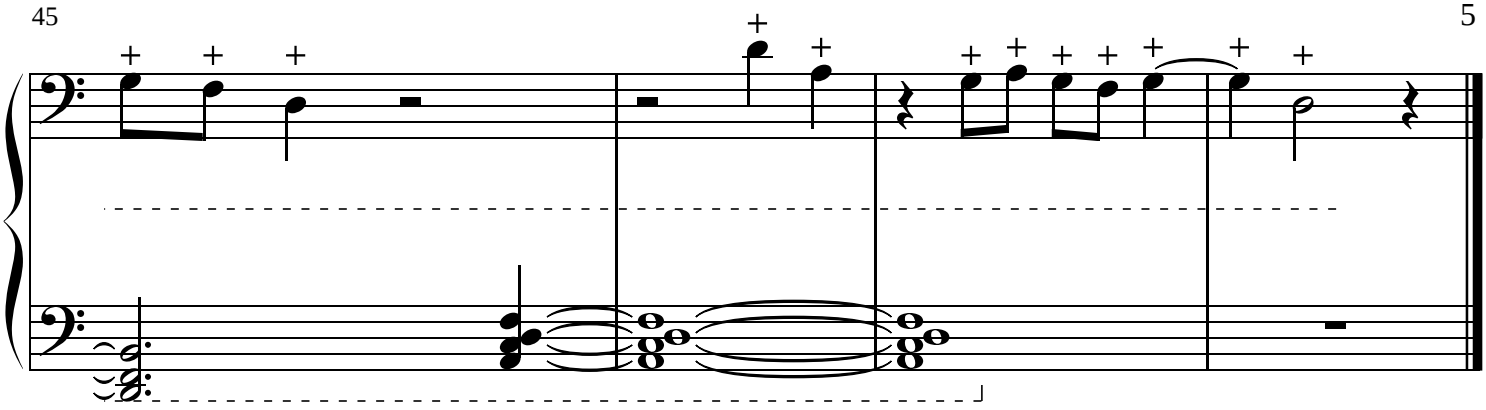
+ +

p rit.

Ped. ✻ 8vb

42

+ + + + +

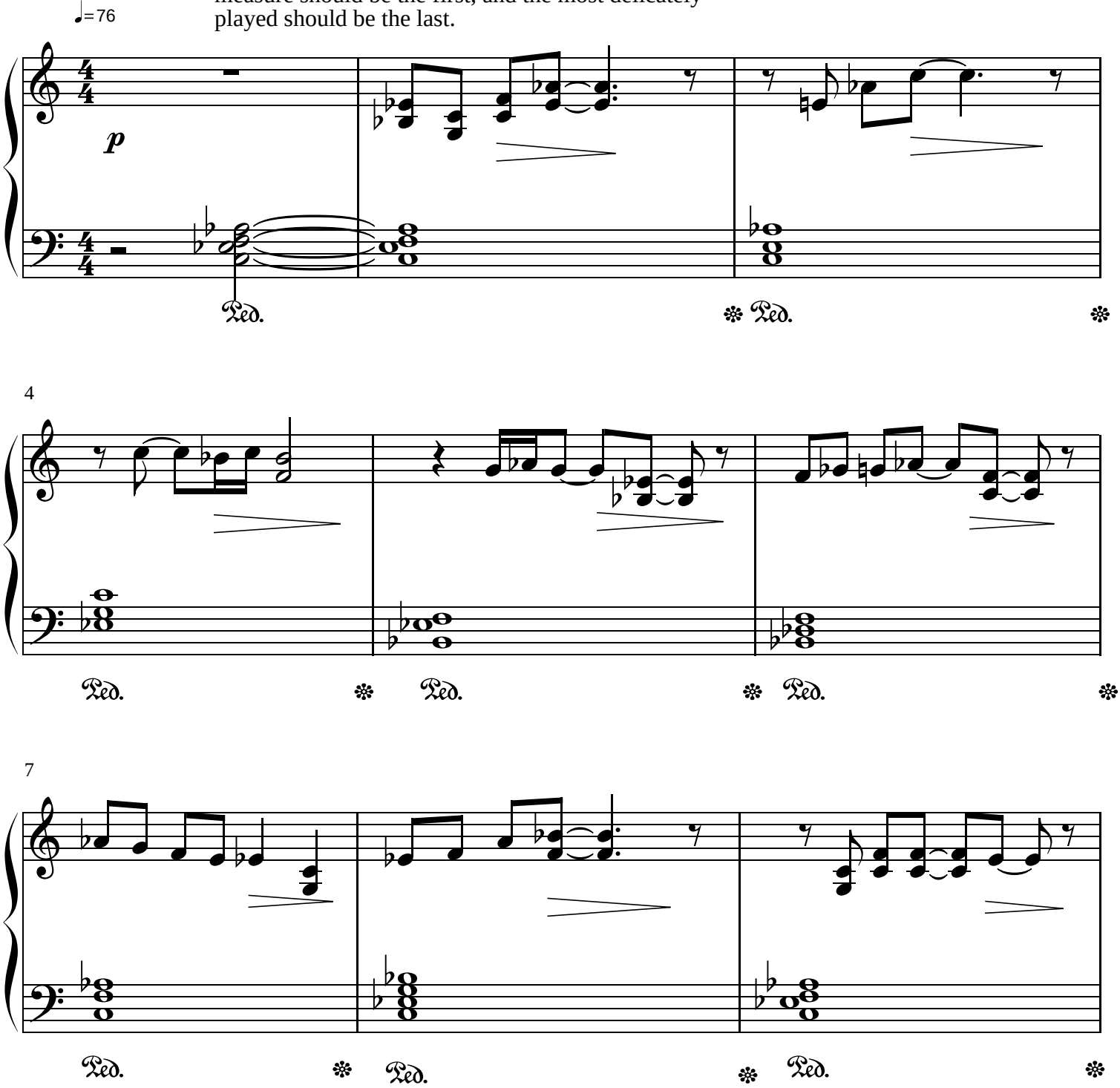


7/7

the Cowherd and the Weaver Girl

Dorian Crimmins

In this first section, the strongest note of any given measure should be the first, and the most delicately played should be the last.



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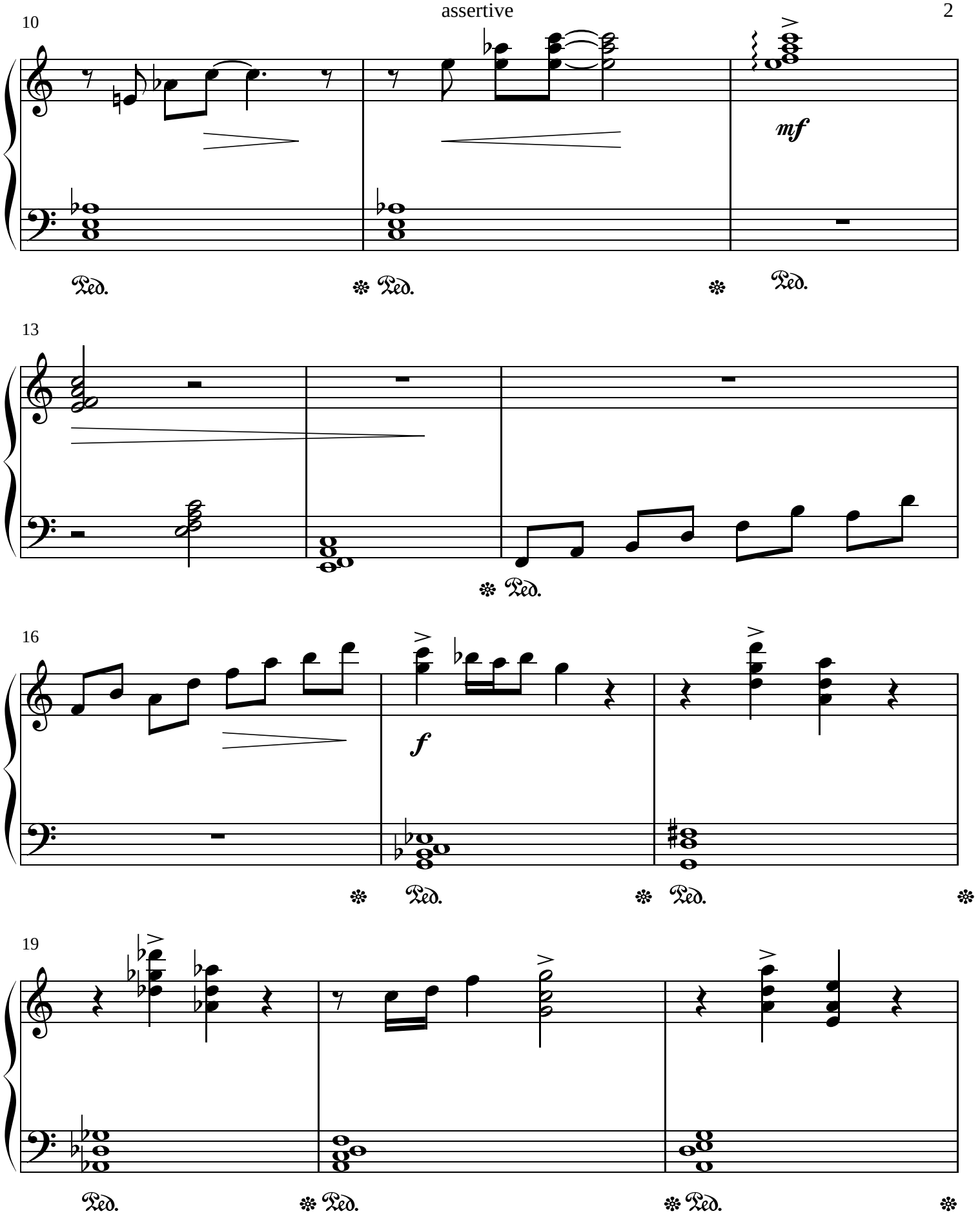
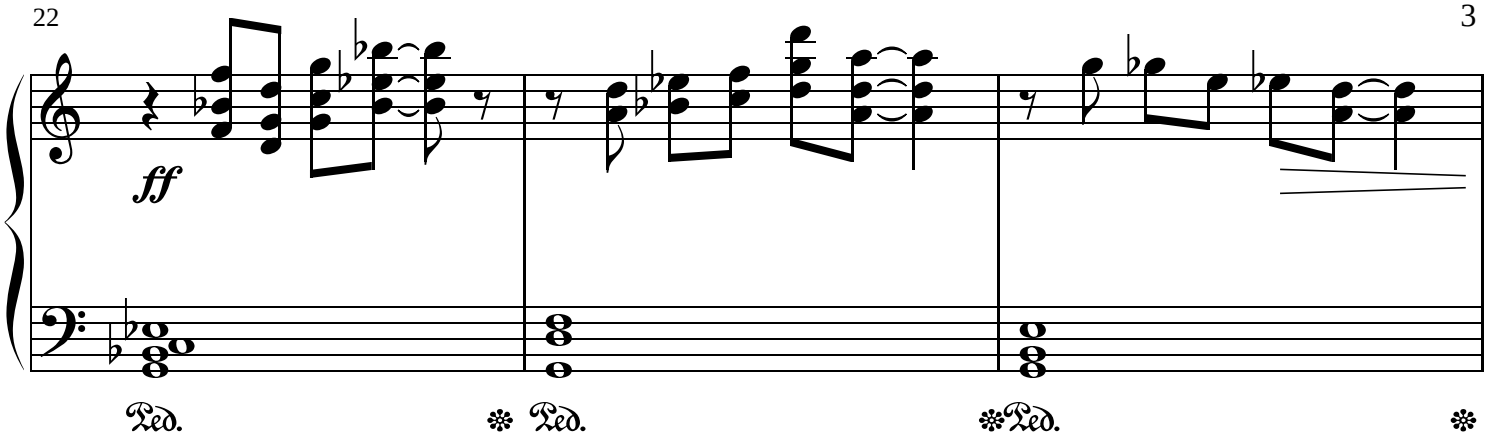
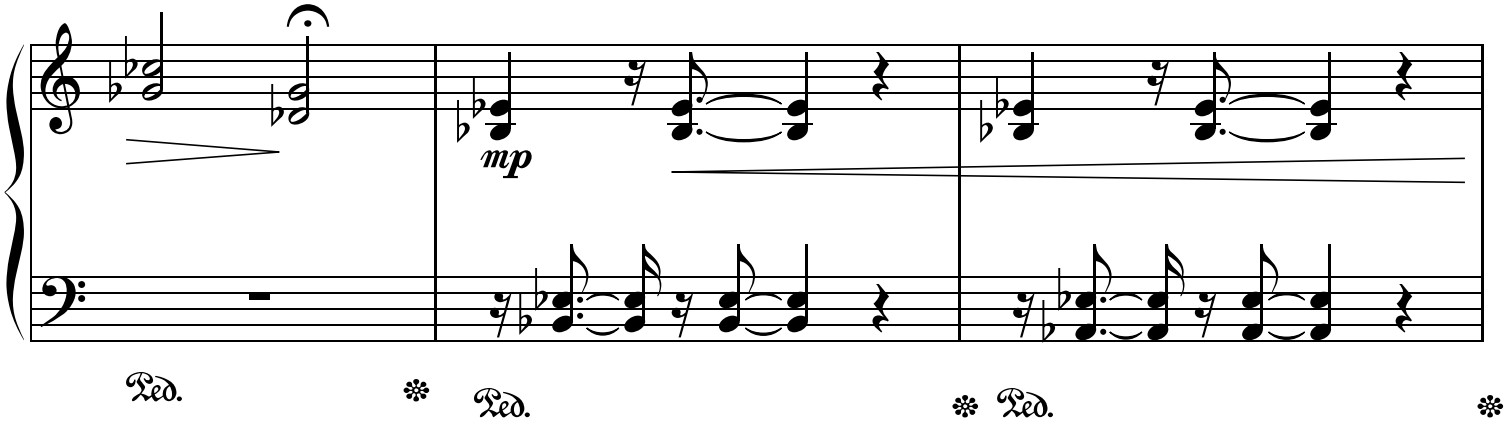

10
mf
Ped.
13
Ped.
16
f
Ped.
19
Ped.

22



In this section, start soft and build intensity

25



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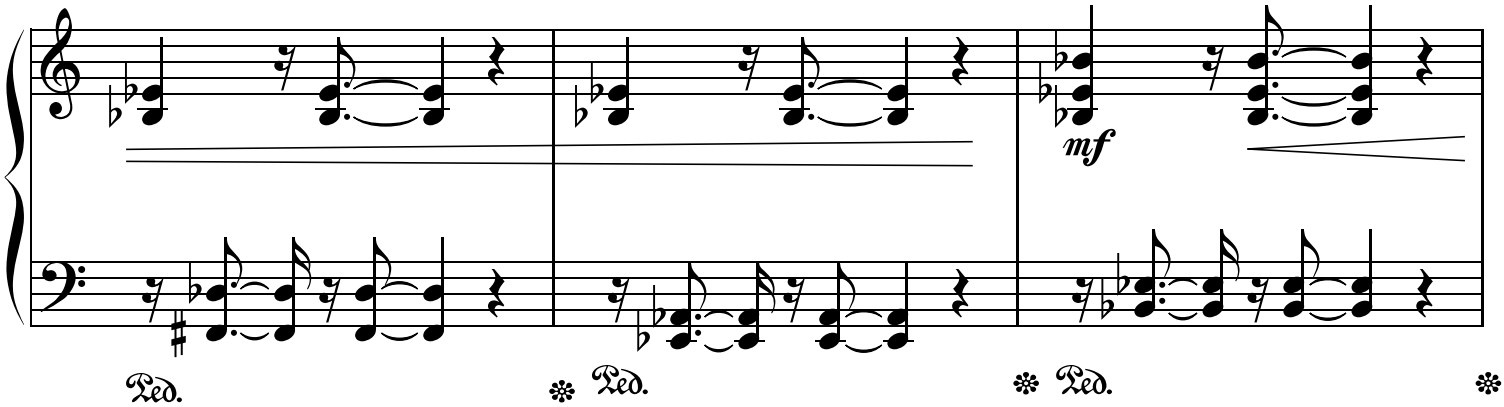

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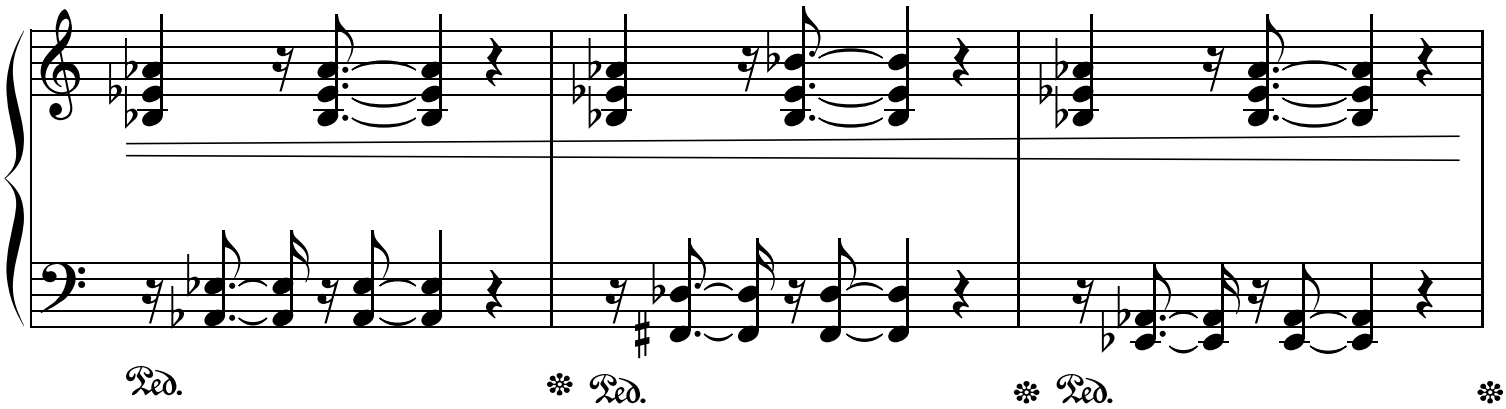


34

f

Ped. ❊ Ped. ❊ Ped. ❊

37

8va

ff

Ped. ❊ Ped. ❊ Ped. ❊

40

Ped. ❊ Ped. ❊ Ped. ❊

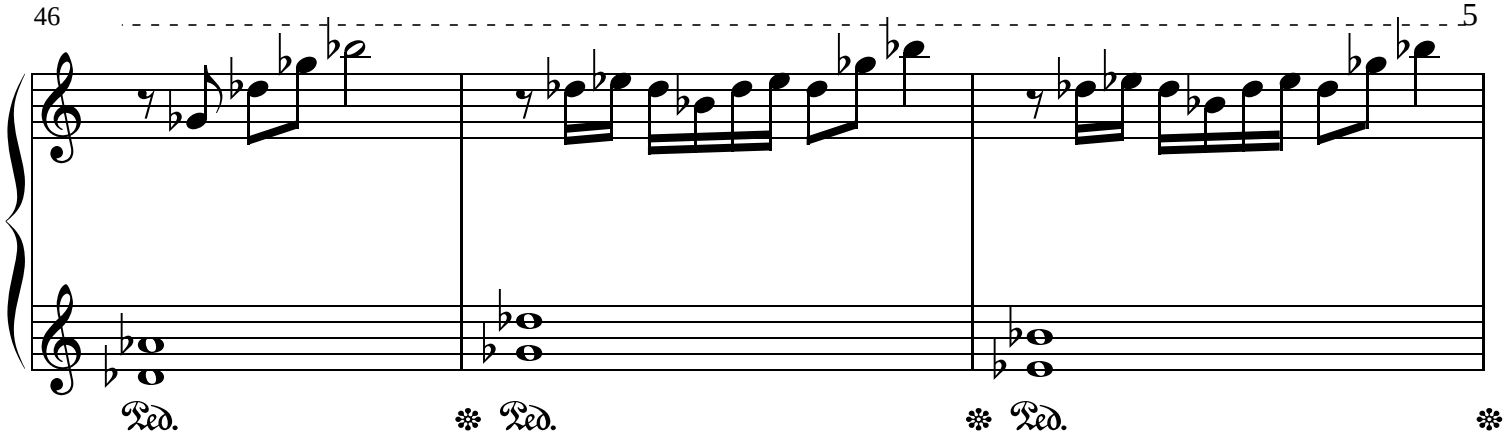
Delicate & curious. Let the higher notes be softer than the lower ones

43

mp

Ped. ❊ Ped. ❊ Ped. ❊

46



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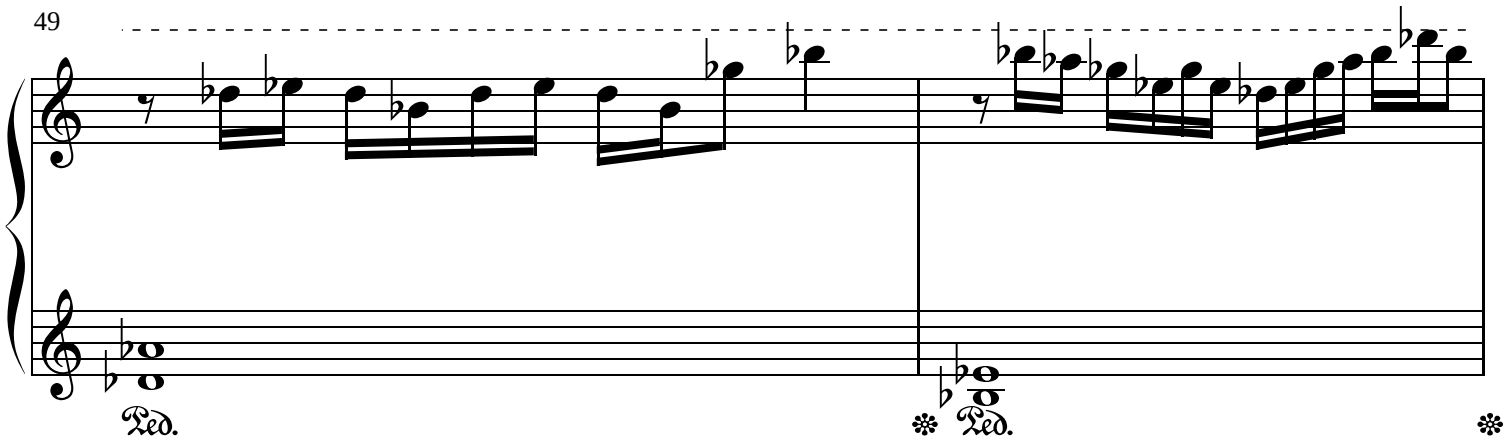

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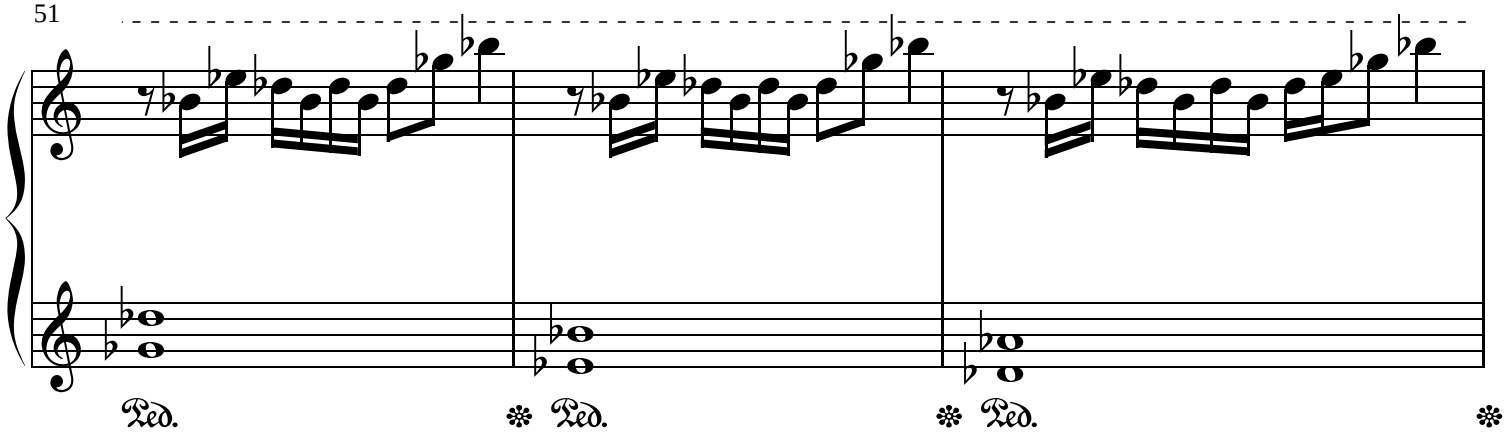

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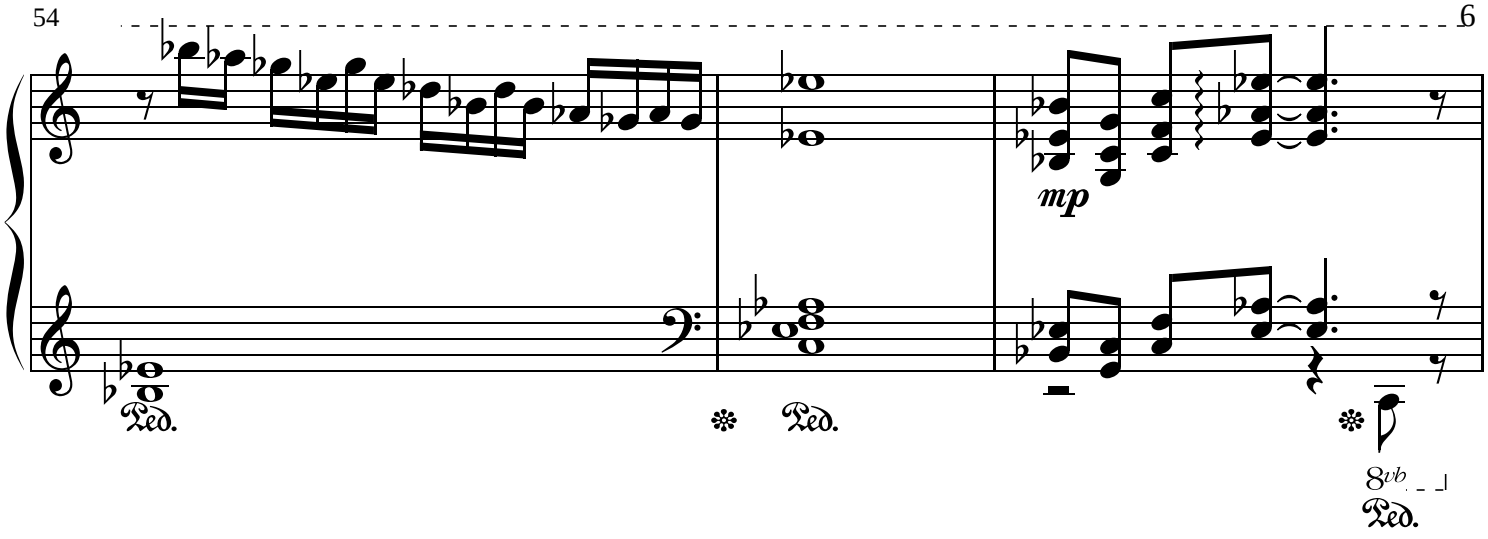
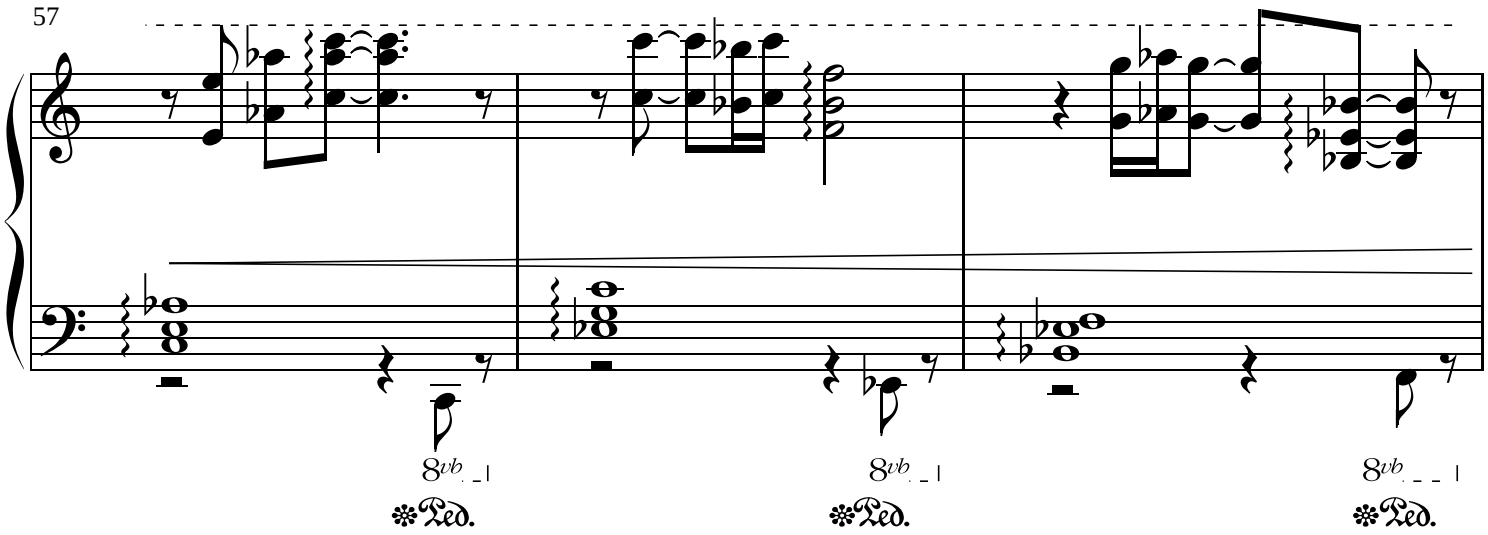
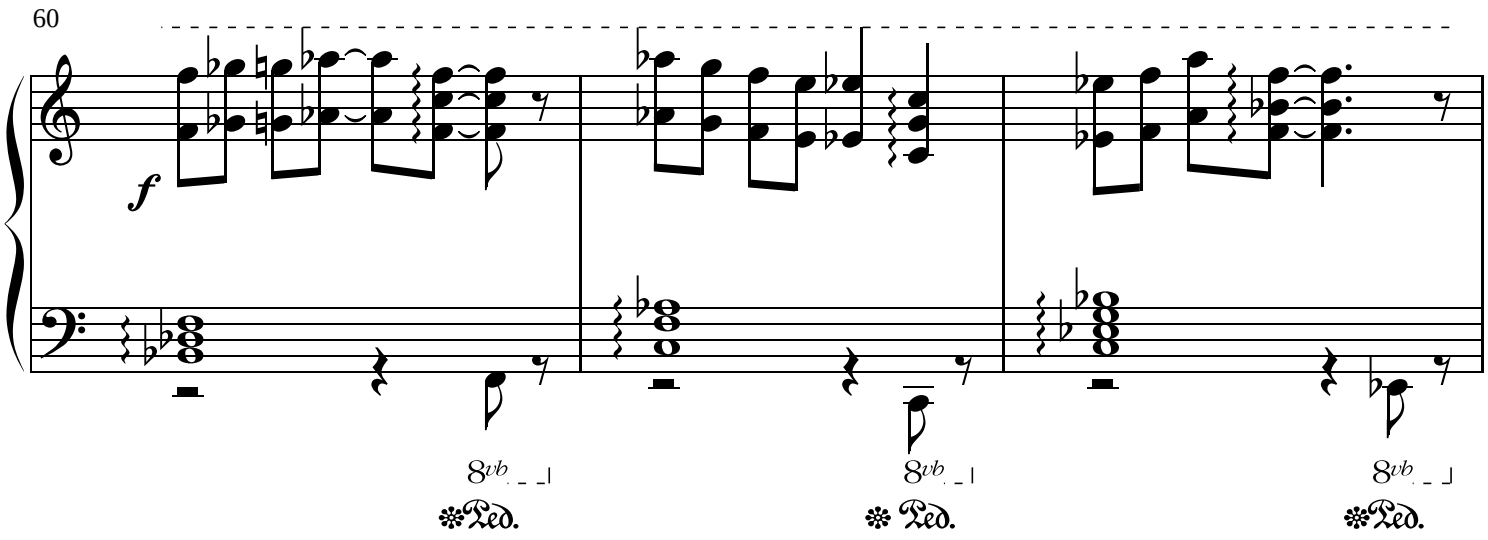
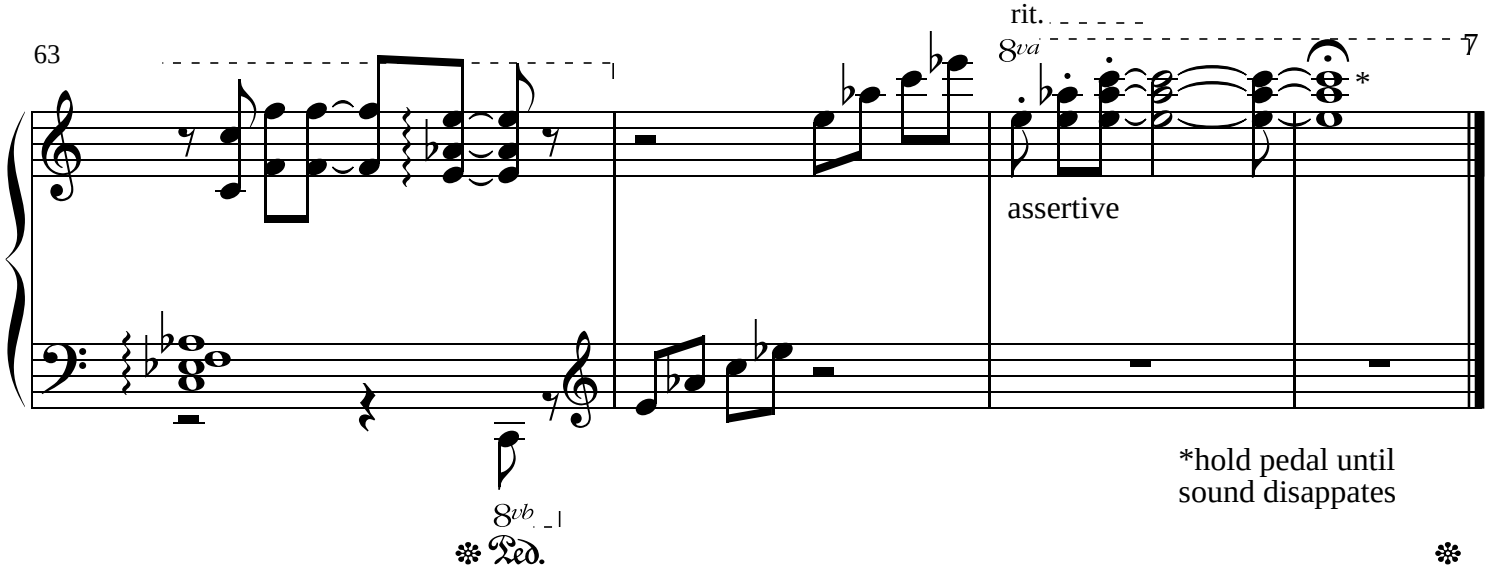

mp
Ped.
Ped.
8vb
Ped.

57


8vb
Ped.
8vb
Ped.
8vb
Ped.

60


f
8vb
Ped.
8vb
Ped.
8vb
Ped.


63
rit.
8va
assertive
8vb
Ped.
*hold pedal until
sound disappates