st13.1.15

sumtone

:

michael edwards

Stückchen

for piano

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sumtone
Neckarhalde 38
D-72070 Tübingen
Germany
info@sumtone.com
www.sumtone.com

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programme note

Stückchen is a set of five short piano pieces I wrote during the spring and summer of 1995. They range in length from 1:20 to 6:00 and in style from highly compressed and thematically obsessive to expansive, calm, and, perhaps, even soothing. What they demand of the performer is both an accomplished technique with which to effect the pianistic explosives of the faster, more aggressive pieces, as well as a creative and thoroughly musical imagination to conquer the problems posed by a musical semi-vacuum: it is only through extremely sensitive musicianship that the performer is able to sustain life within the stark musical texture of the final piece, whose purely technical demands, it must be said, would hardly exceed the abilities of an average seven-year-old. Success in performance then, relies on the subtle tonal shading and rhythmic placement of the piece's slowly repeated notes. On the other hand, without a considerable ability to rapidly pound the keyboard (as well as a certain joy in doing so), the visceral urgency of the first and fourth pieces will not be adequately expressed. (The second and third pieces are of an altogether different nature, being concerned, as they are, with matters harmonic and contrapuntal respectively.)

Overall, the set represents five rather diverse views of the piano, albeit views we already know from the abundant, perhaps even saturated, corpulent repertoire that exists for the instrument. But this was my brief: to consciously attempt, in these days of digital technology and organised noise, to extract something expressive from (only!) the keyboard and pedals of the piano, without regard for the grail-like search for the new, and without a grand unifying principle with which to bolster my notes and rhythms, which, after all, add up to just five short pieces of music for piano.

notes

- A concert grand with middle (sostenuto) pedal is required. The lid should be open.
- Notes that appear with diamond heads are to be depressed silently.
- All of the important pedalling is indicated but additional pedalling may be used as seems necessary to the player and the acoustic of the performance space.
- Accidentals carry throughout the bar but are repeated in parentheses as deemed necessary.

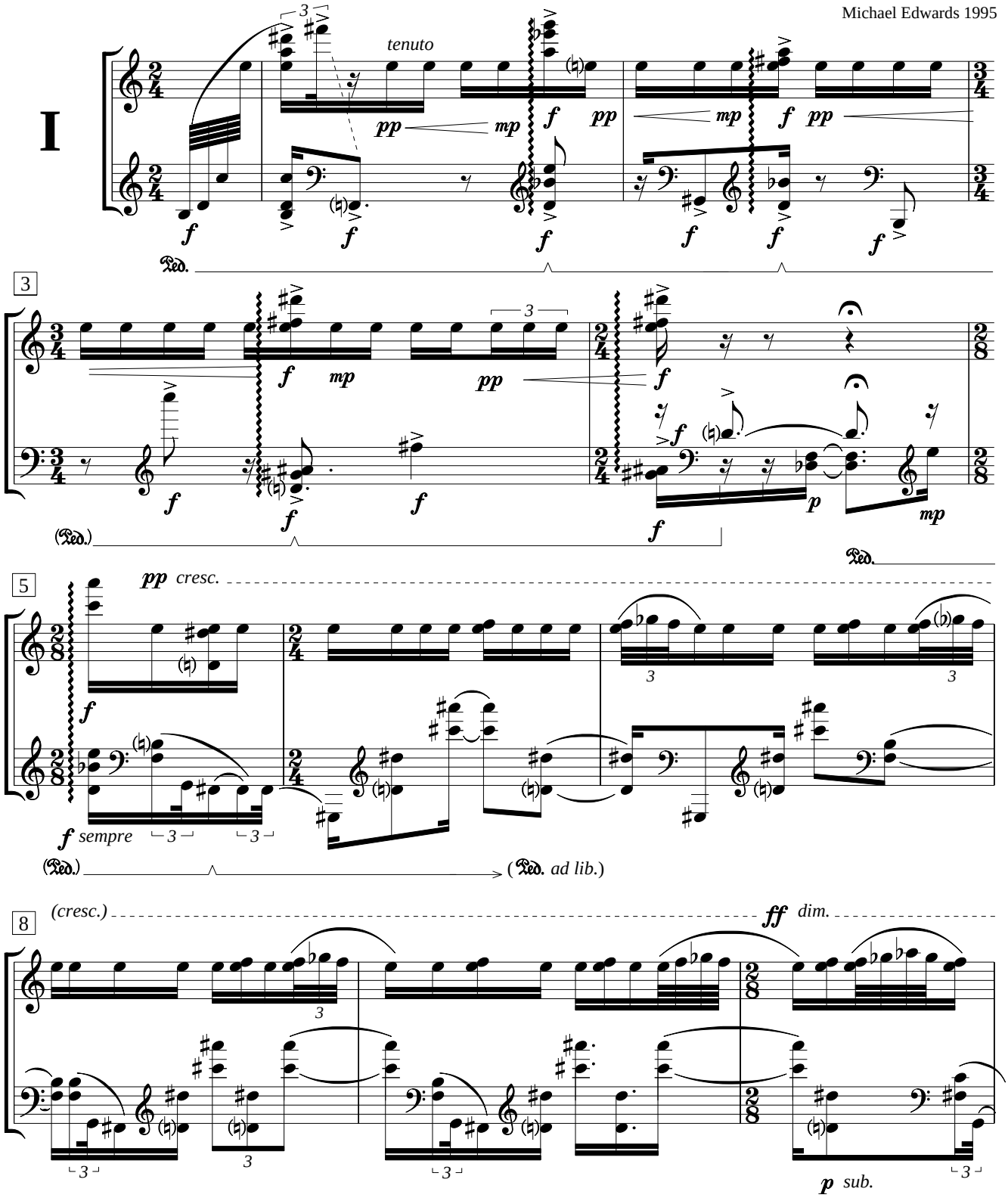
approximate timings

I	1'20"
II	3'00"
III	2'00"
IV	1'30"
V	6'00"
Total	13'50"

Stückchen

Rambunctious (♩ = 52)

Michael Edwards 1995



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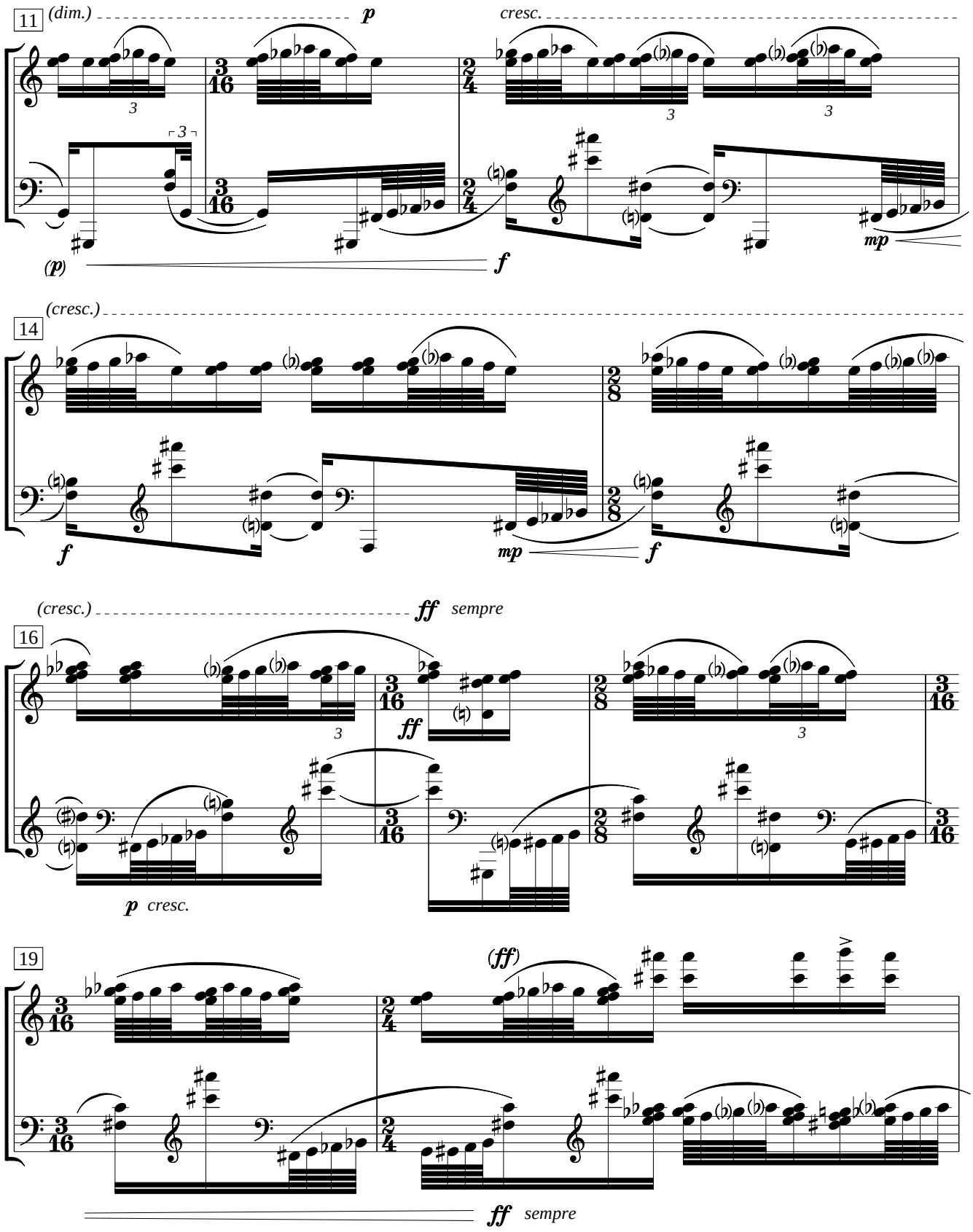
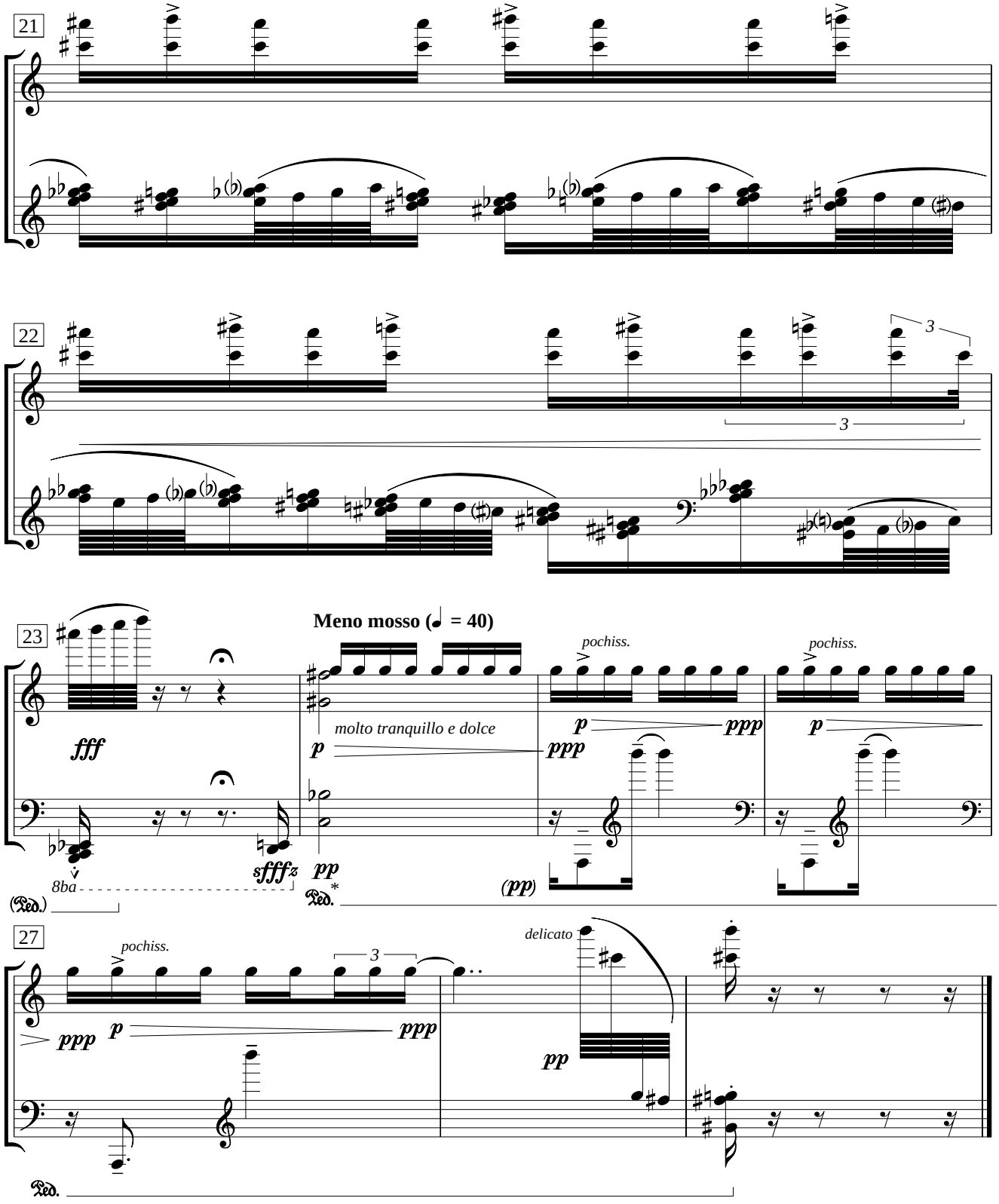
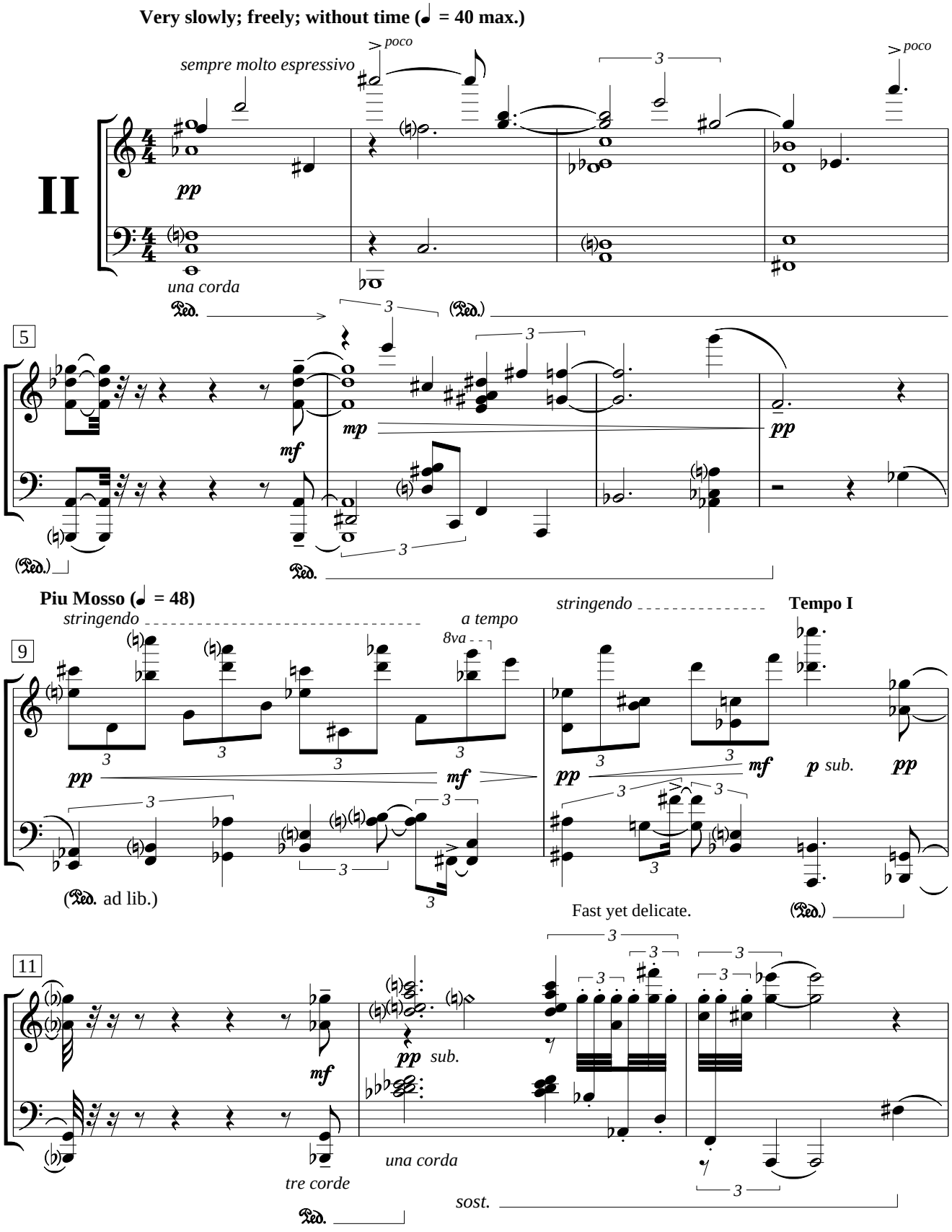
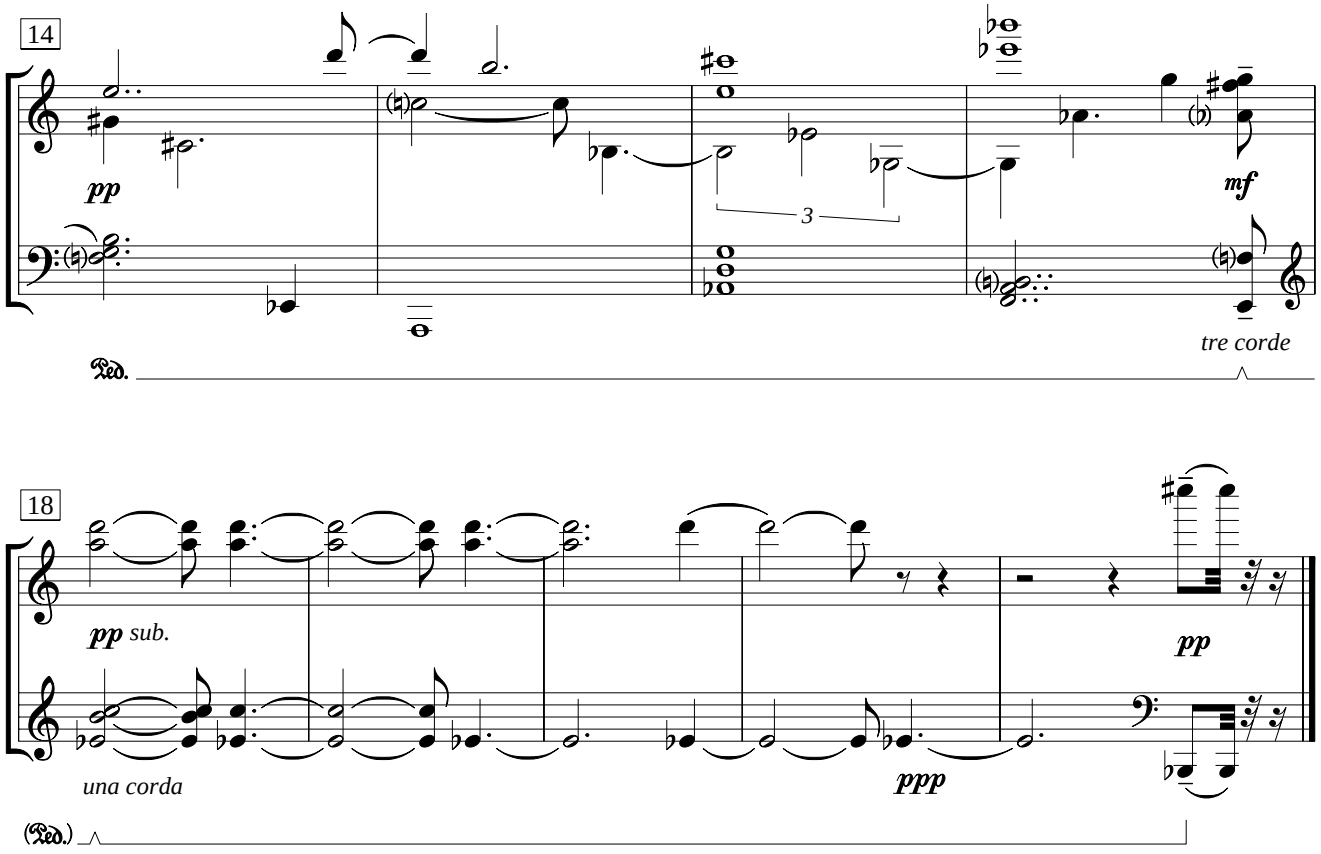

11
(dim.)
p
cresc.
(p)
f
mp
14
(cresc.)
f
mp
f
16
(cresc.)
ff
sempre
ff
p
cresc.
19
(ff)
ff
sempre



* Catch resonance of previous attack.

(16th April)

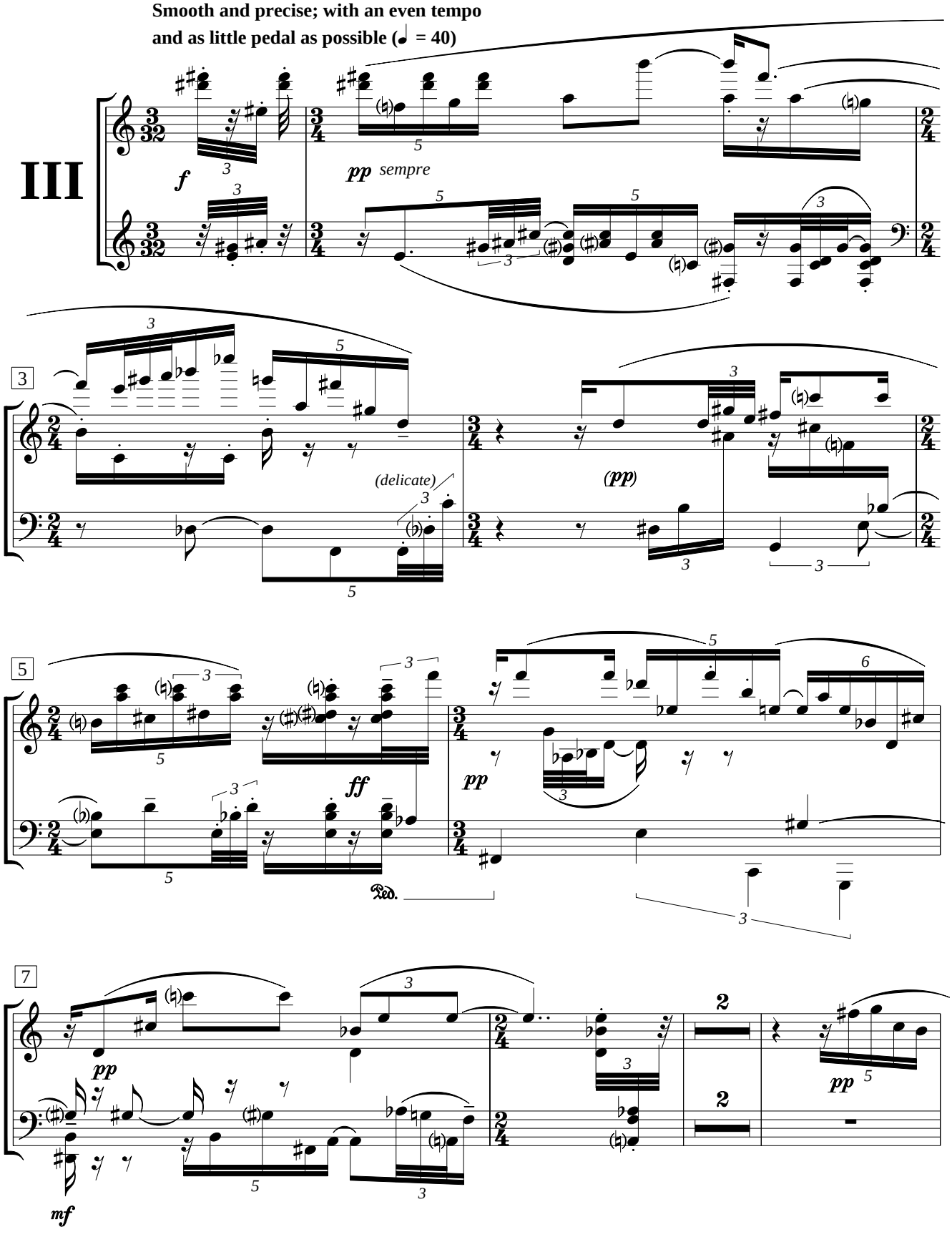

Very slowly; freely; without time (♩ = 40 max.)
II
sempre molto espressivo
poco
poco
pp
una corda
Ped.
5
mf
mp
pp
Piu Mosso (♩ = 48)
stringendo
a tempo
8va
stringendo
Tempo I
9
pp
mf
pp
mf
p sub.
pp
(Ped. ad lib.)
Fast yet delicate.
(Ped.)
11
mf
pp sub.
una corda
tre corde
sost.
Ped.

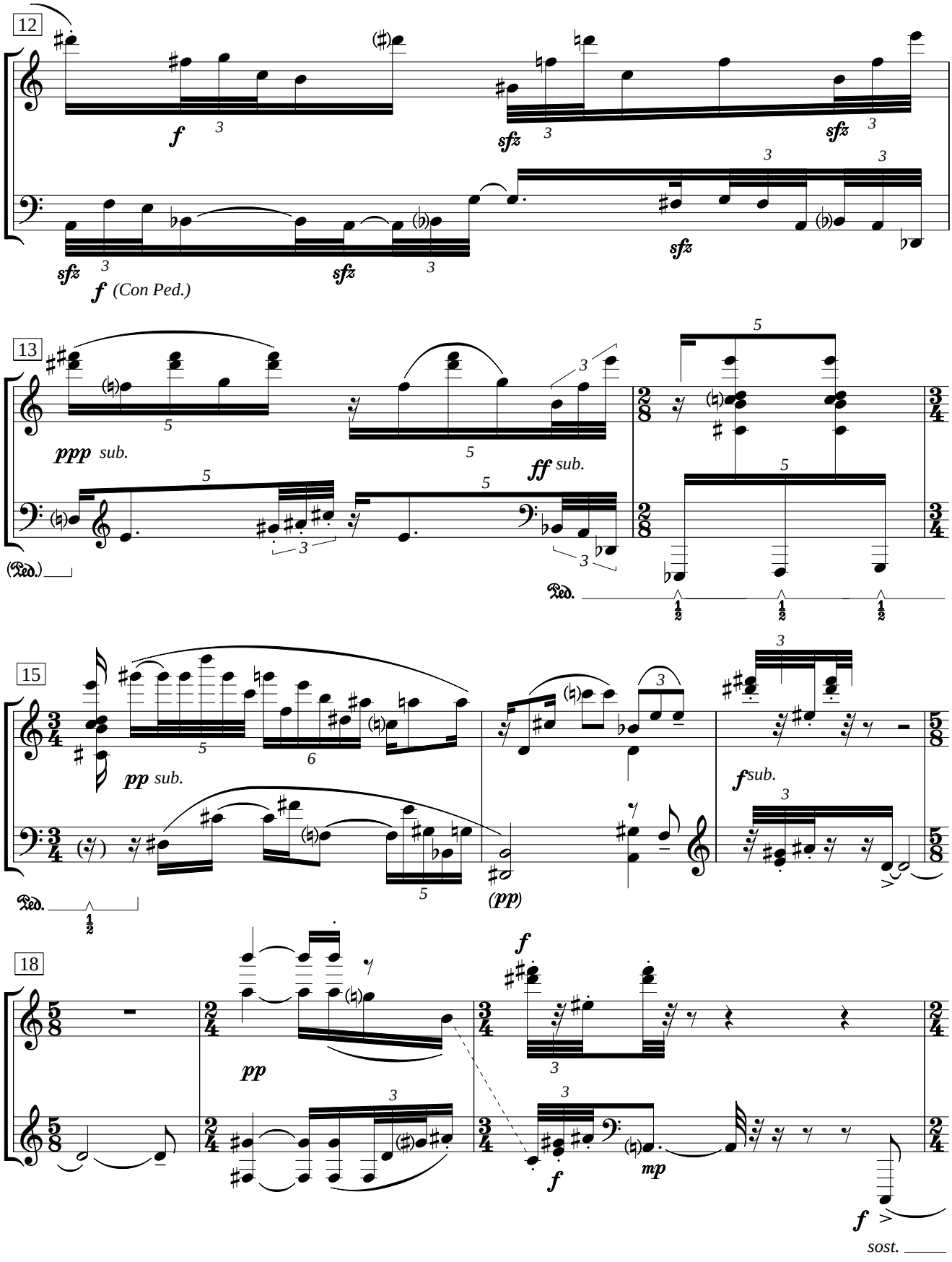


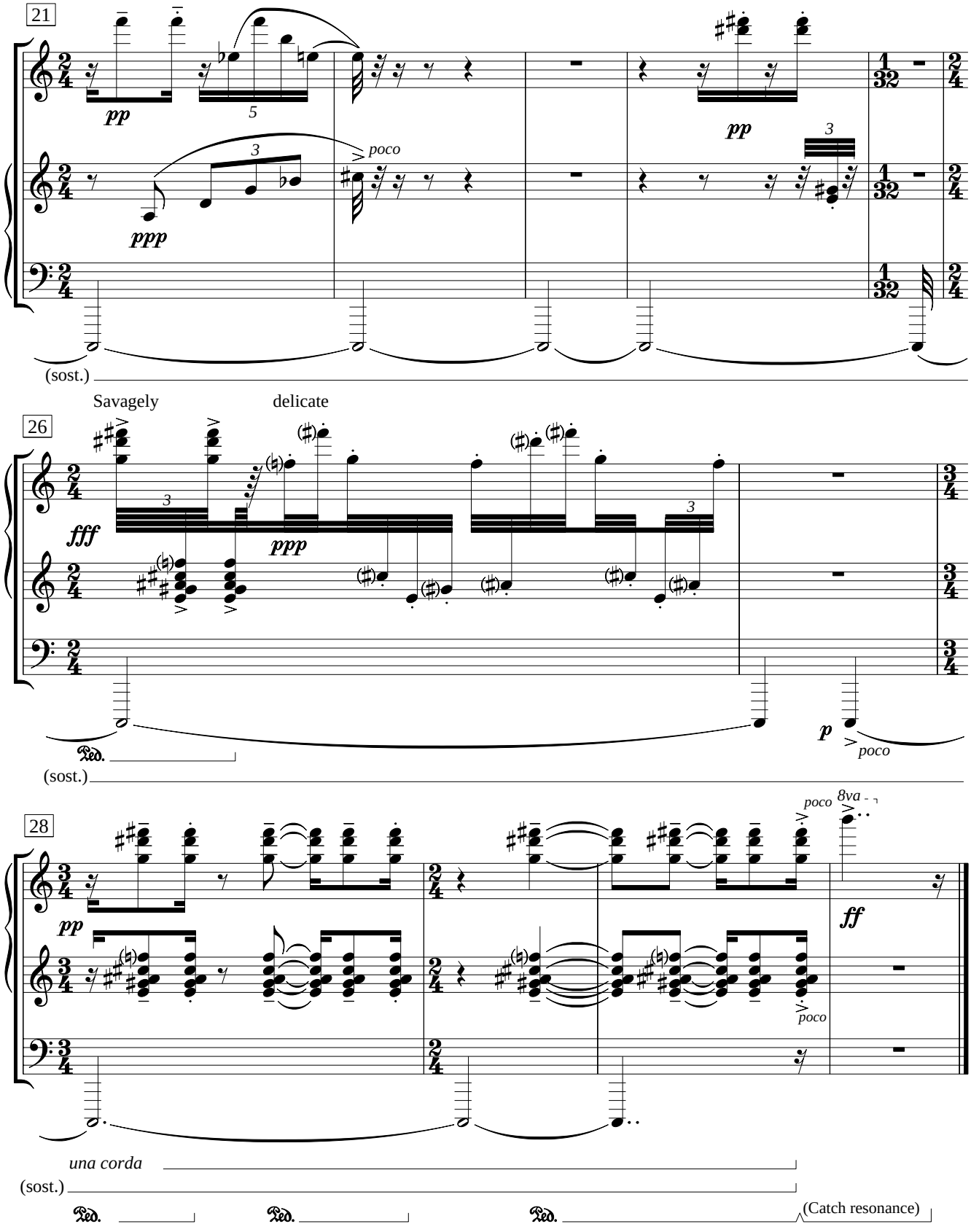
(1st May)

III

Smooth and precise; with an even tempo and as little pedal as possible (♩ = 40)



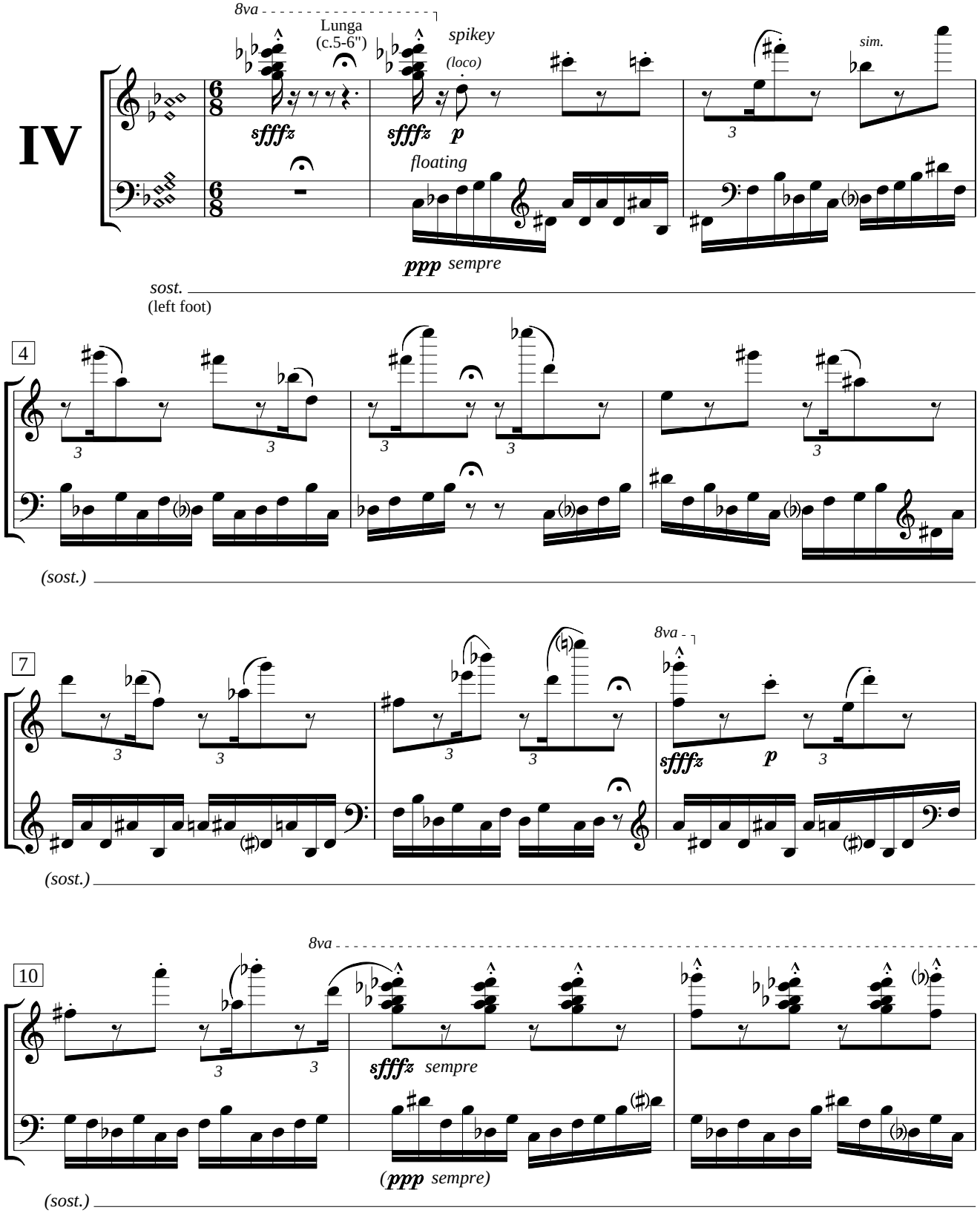

12
f
sfz
sfz
sfz
sfz
f (Con Ped.)
13
ppp sub.
ff sub.
Ped.
15
pp sub.
(pp)
f sub.
Ped.
18
pp
f
mp
f
sost.

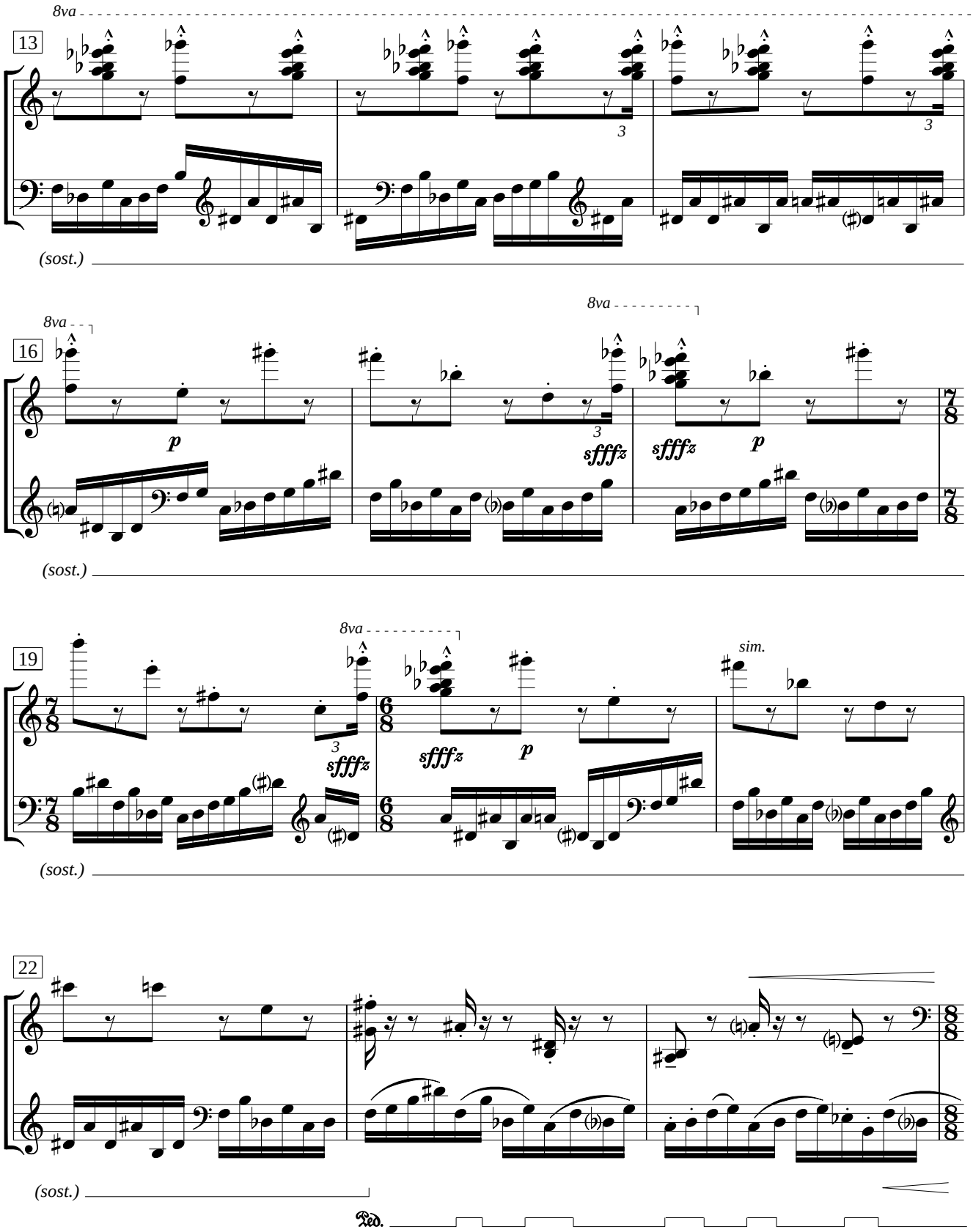

21
pp
5
ppp
3
poco
pp
3
(sost.)
Savagely
delicate
26
fff
3
ppp
3
p
poco
Ped.
(sost.)
28
poco
8va
pp
ff
poco
una corda
(sost.)
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
(Catch resonance)

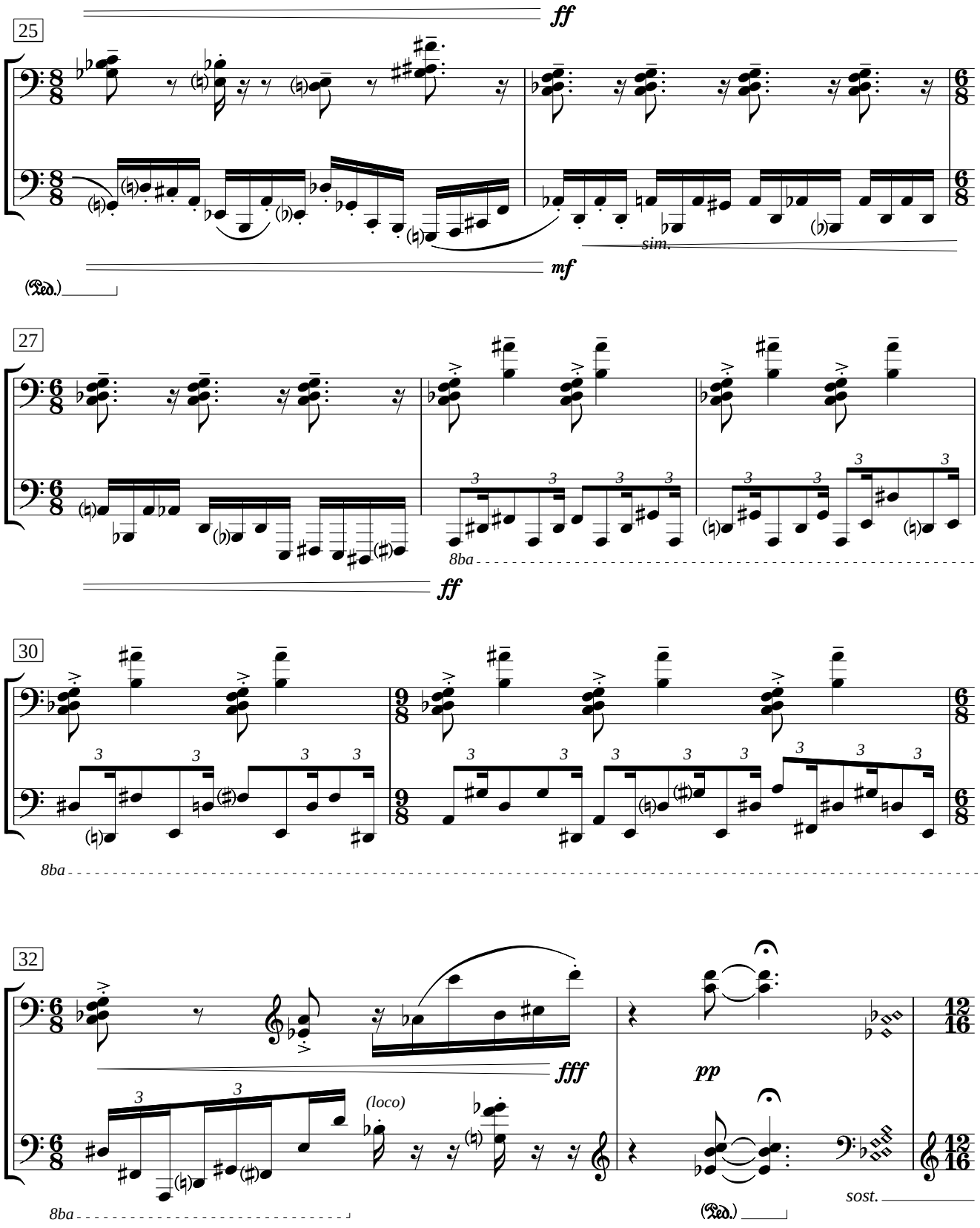
(7th August)

IV

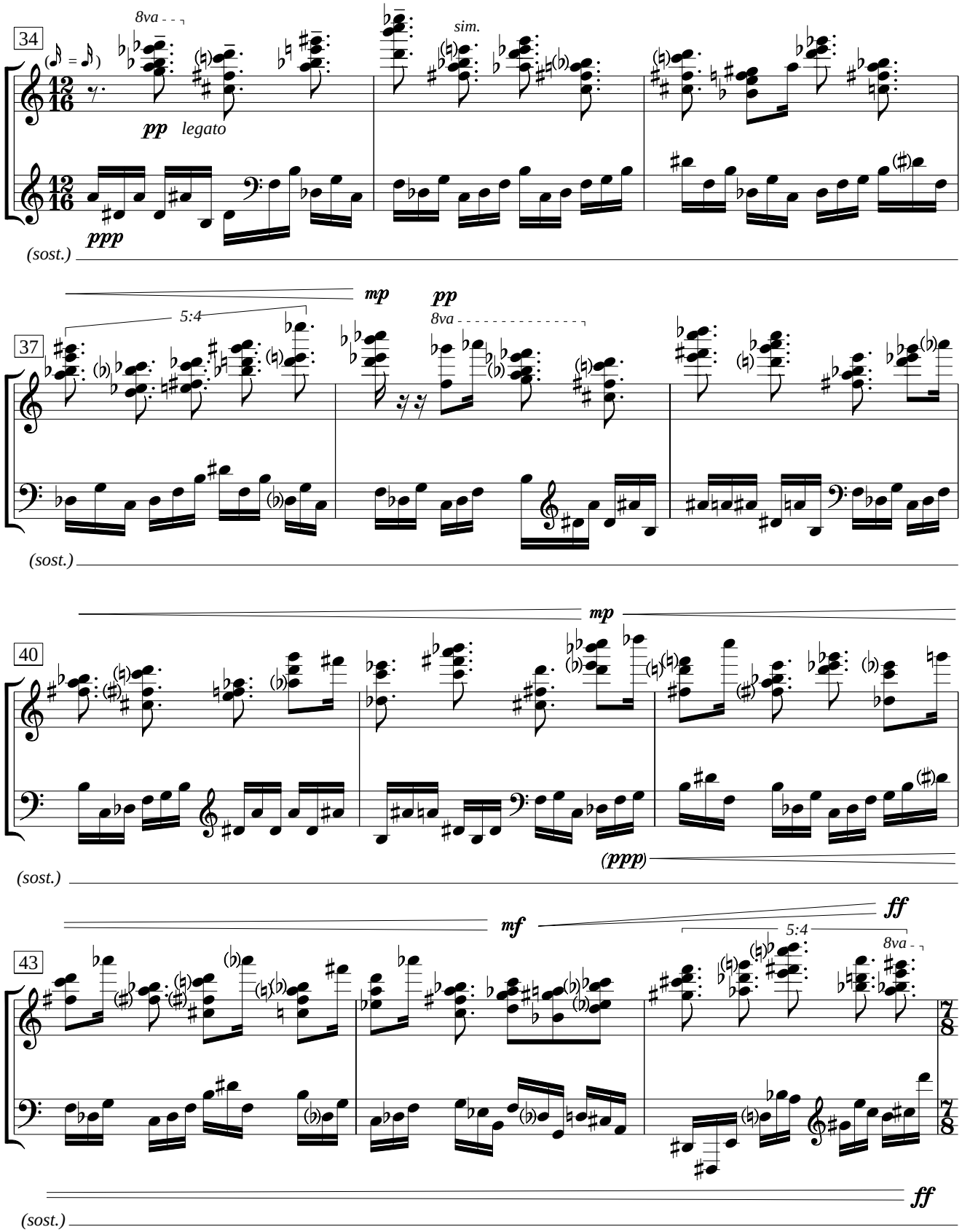
Nimble (♩. = 84)

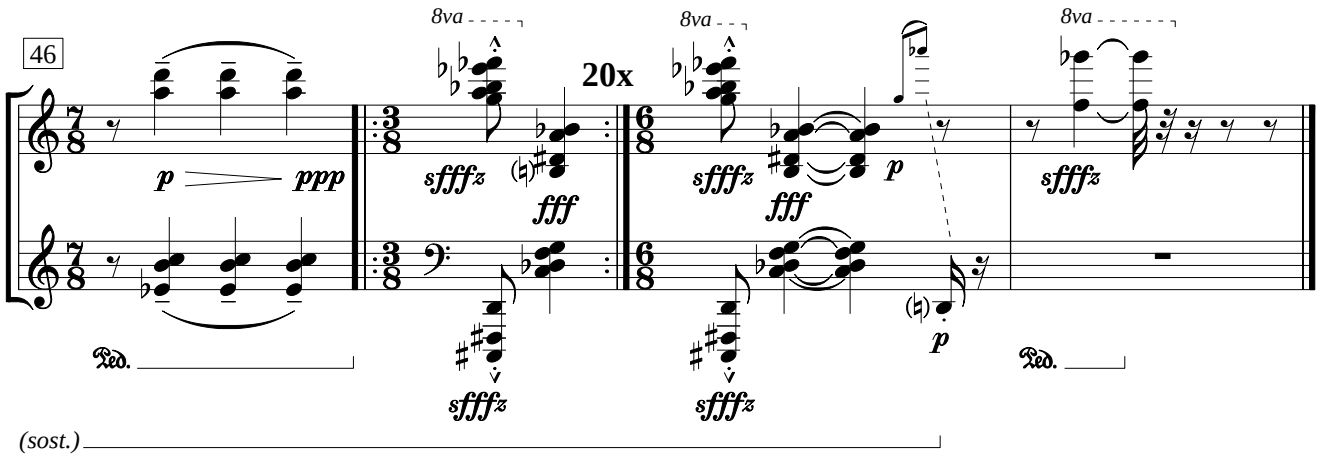

8va
Lunga
(c.5-6")
spikey
(loco)
sim.
sfffz
sfffz
p
floating
ppp sempre
sost.
(left foot)
4
(sost.)
7
8va
sfffz
p
(sost.)
8va
10
sfffz sempre
(ppp sempre)
(sost.)


8va
13
3
3
(sost.)
8va
8va
16
p
3
sffffz
sffffz
p
(sost.)
8va
19
3
sffffz
sffffz
p
sim.
(sost.)
22
(sost.)
Ped.



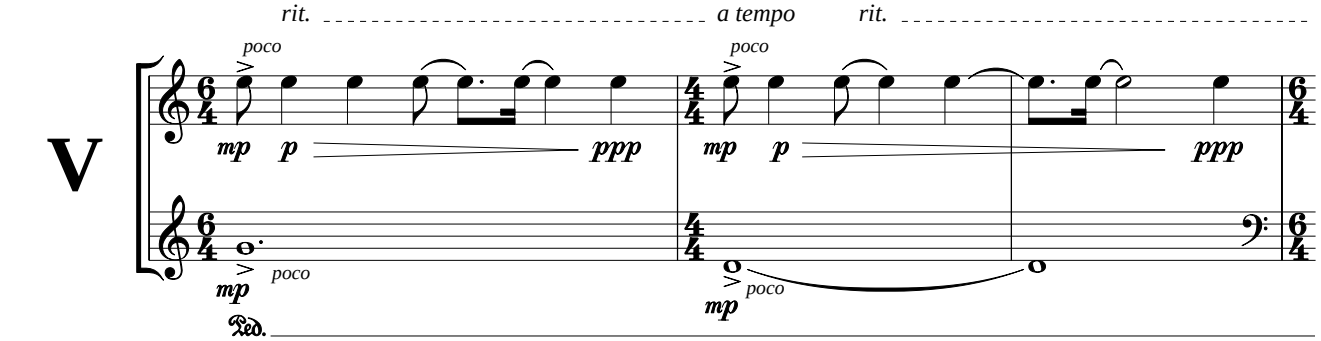
(Move on as quickly as possible after release of the damper pedal.)

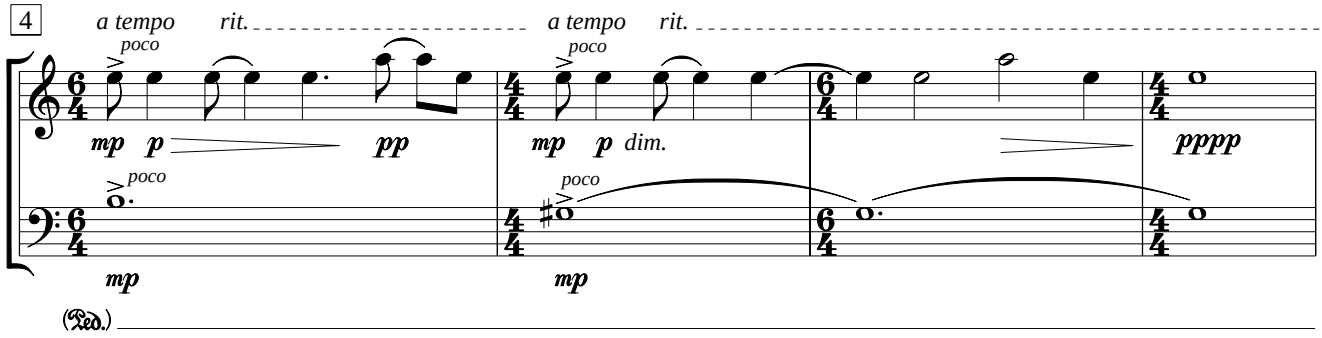

34
8va
sim.
pp
legato
ppp
(sost.)
mp
pp
8va
5:4
37
(sost.)
mp
40
(ppp)
(sost.)
mf
ff
5:4
8va
43
ff
(sost.)

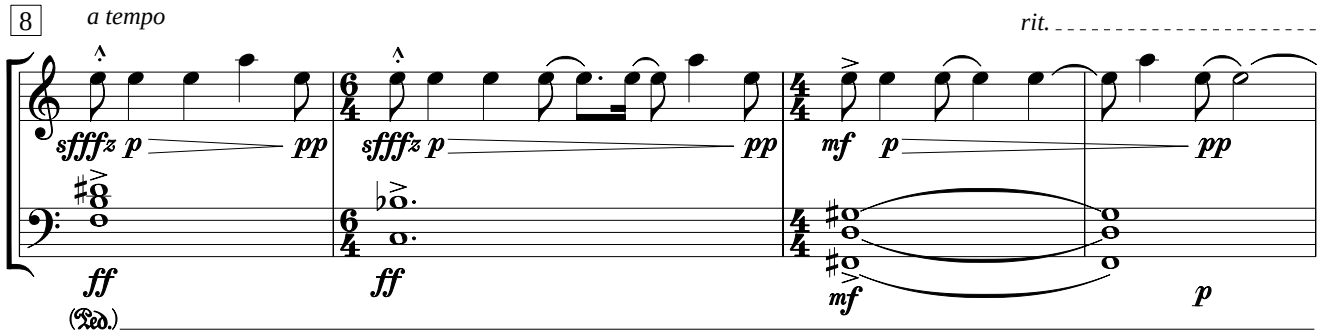

46
8va
20x
8va
8va
p
ppp
sfffz
fff
sfffz
fff
p
sfffz
Ped.
sfffz
sfffz
p
Ped.
(sost.)

(19th May)

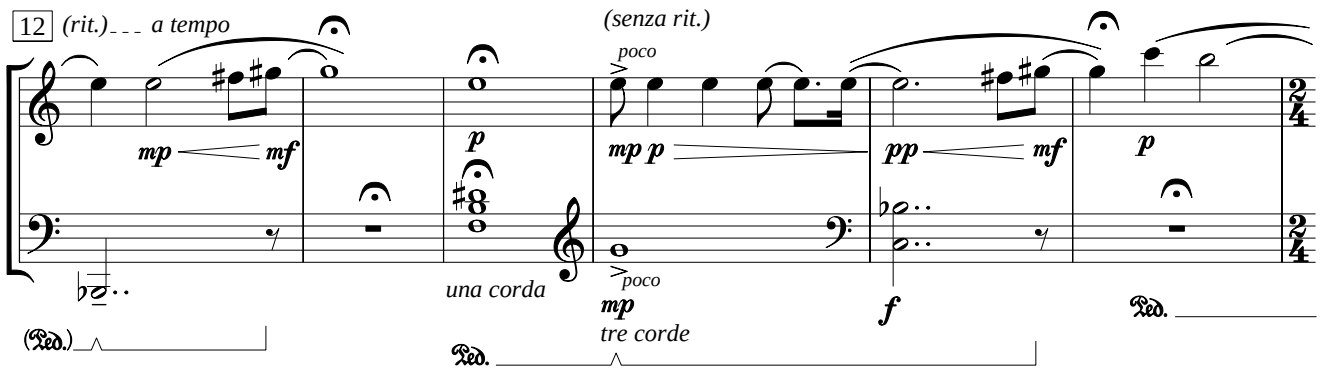
Very Simply (♩ = 52)

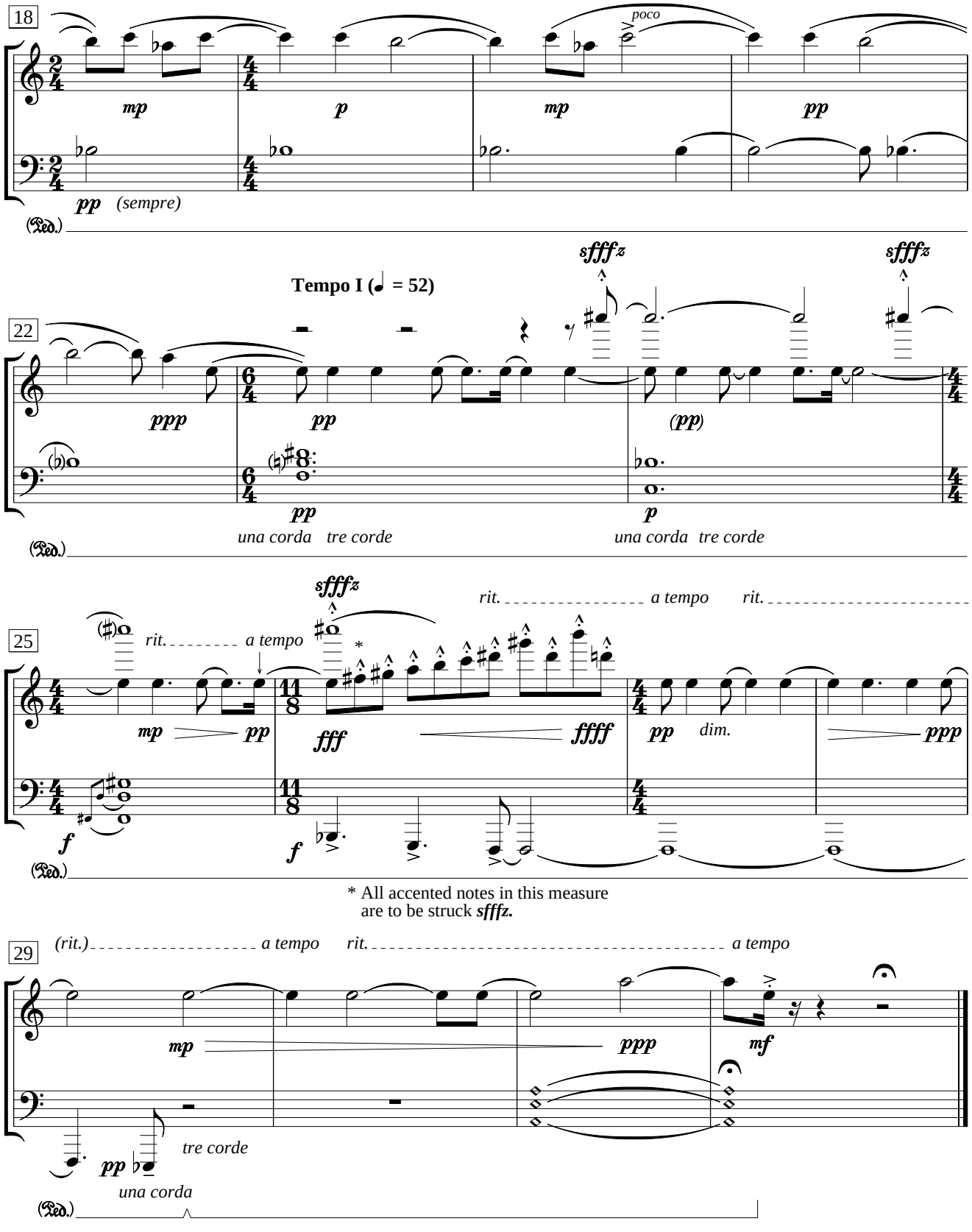






Meno Mosso (♩ = 42)




18
poco
mp
p
mp
pp
pp (sempre)
(Ped.)
Tempo I (♩ = 52)
22
sfffz
sfffz
ppp
pp
(pp)
pp
una corda tre corde
p
una corda tre corde
(Ped.)
25
sfffz
rit.
a tempo
rit.
rit.
a tempo
mp
pp
fff
ffff
pp
dim.
ppp
f
f
(Ped.)
* All accented notes in this measure are to be struck sfffz.
29
(rit.)
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
mp
ppp
mf
pp
tre corde
una corda
(Ped.)

(25th July)