PIANO

Jessica Rudman

A Curious Incident with the Queen

for SATB Chorus and Chamber Ensemble

with Text by Edith Nesbit

2017
ca. 10:00

A Curious Incident with the Queen

SATB with Clarinet in B-flat, Trumpet in C, Cello, and Piano

Performance Notes

- For the trumpet part, a cup mute can be substituted if a bucket mute is not available.
- A piano reduction of the instrumental accompaniment is included for rehearsals purposes. The piece may also be performed using this reduction in place of the full quartet.

Program Notes

A Curious Incident with the Queen is based Edith Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet*. Written in 1906, the novel concludes a trilogy chronicling the fantastical adventures of four siblings while their parents are abroad. In this book, the children find one half of a two-part amulet that promises to give them their greatest desire—the safe return of their parents—and they undertake a quest to find the second half. The amulet has the power to transport people through time, so the children travel to times and places where the second half of the amulet might be found. In the company of a wish-granting creature called the Psammead, the siblings visit a utopian future as well as past civilizations including Egypt, Atlantis, and Babylon. While in Babylon, one of the children reveals to its Queen that the Psammead grants wishes. She wishes to see the children's country and is transported to London circa 1900, where the children show her the city.

This composition dramatizes a small scene from that tour, where the Queen sees the poor people of the city and mistakes them for slaves. The children naively respond that they are not slaves because they have "votes." The interaction, while brief and of no particular consequence in the plot of the story, struck me as particularly relevant to contemporary circumstances, which I was commissioned by The Astoria Choir in 2016.

I selected the text shortly after the American presidential election, seeing in Nesbit's words an expression of both the disparity between the highest and lowest echelons of our economy and also the feeling of political powerlessness many people felt as a result of the election. To me, what seems like a fanciful, even humorous scene in fact brings up a number of serious issues. It calls to attention the question of how or even whether a society that condones economic oppression is any better than one that practices slavery. It also asks us to consider what it means to have a voice in government if it does not seem to make a difference in one's quality of life. These profound undercurrents are what stayed with me after reading Nesbit's story, and I hope that her words will make a similarly lasting impression on audiences hearing this piece.

Composer Contact Information

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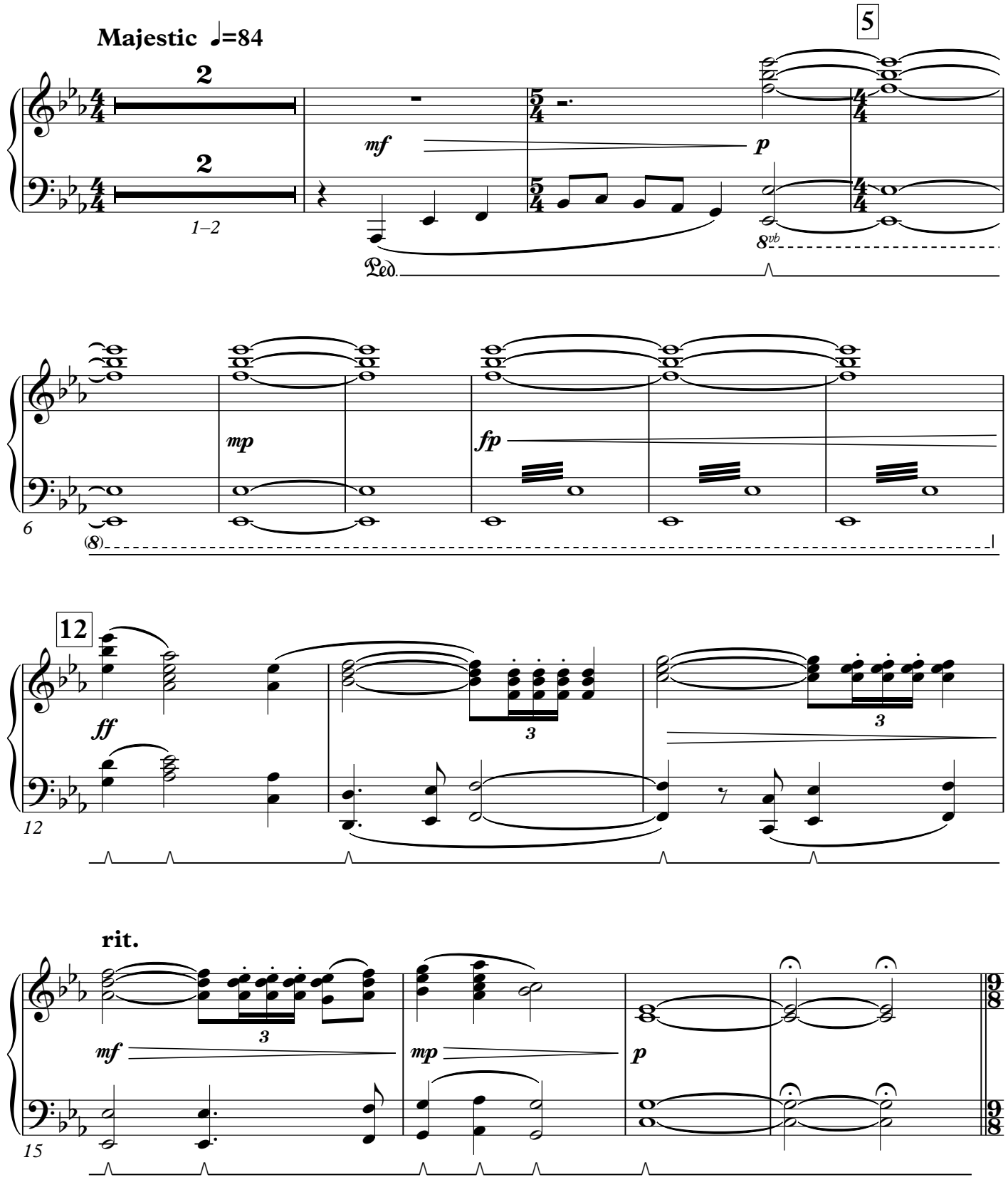
Piano

Commissioned by The Astoria Choir, Adam Eggleston, Director

A Curious Incident with the Queen

Edith Nesbit (1858-1924)

Jessica Rudman (b. 1982)



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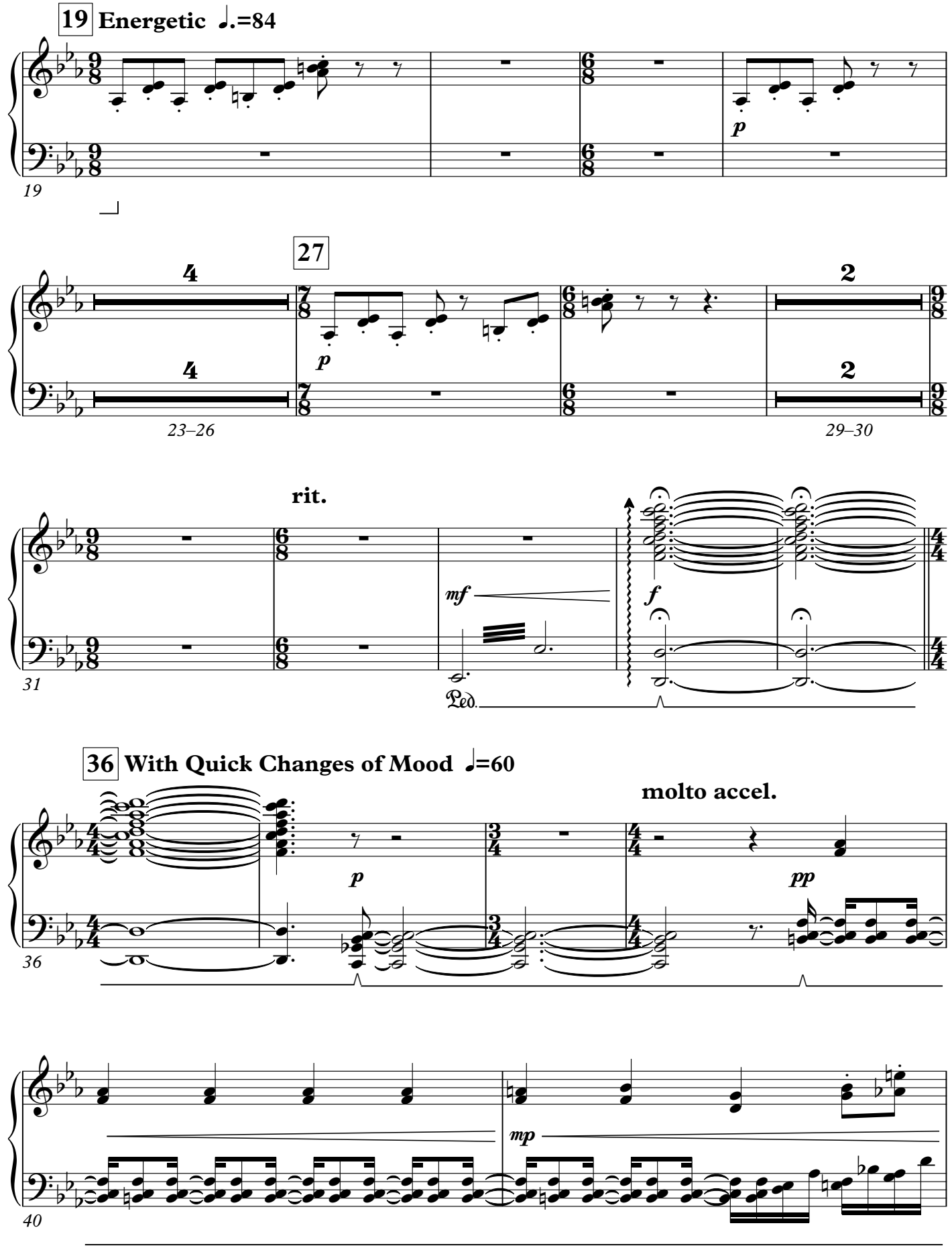
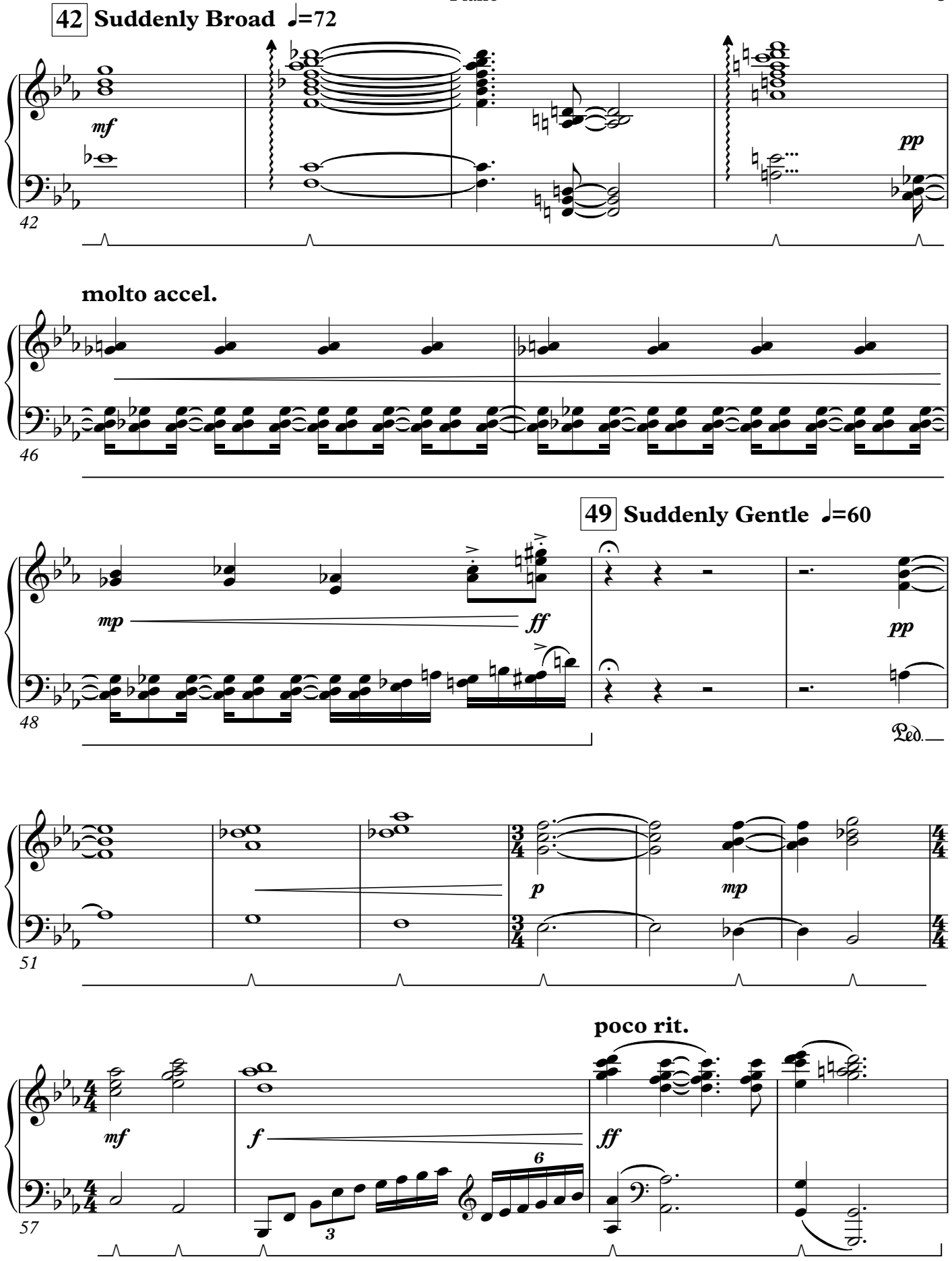
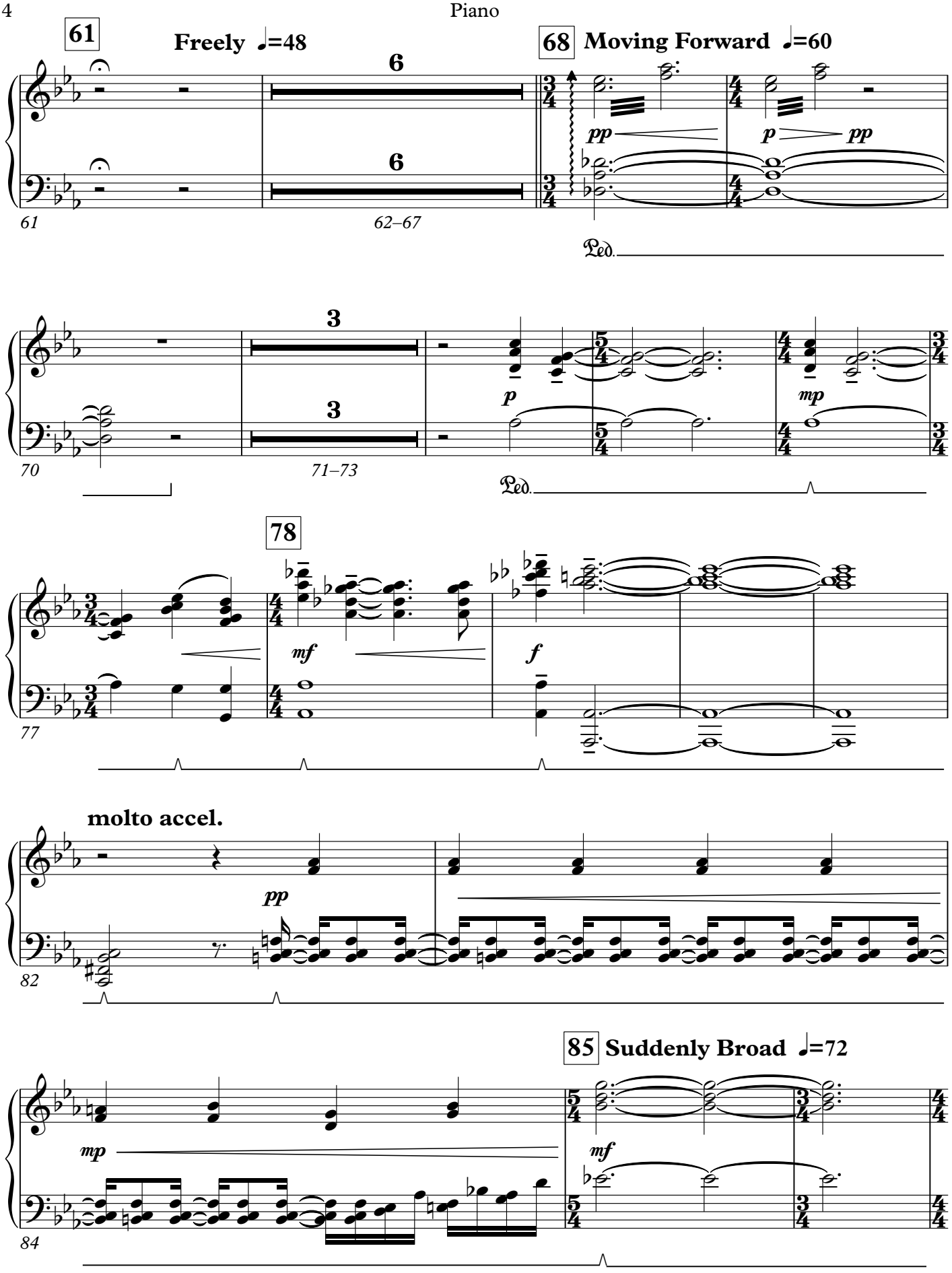
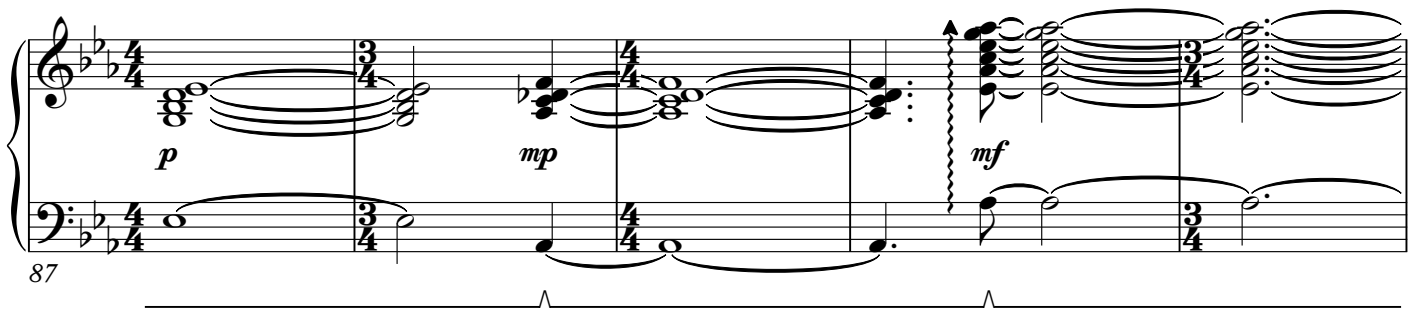
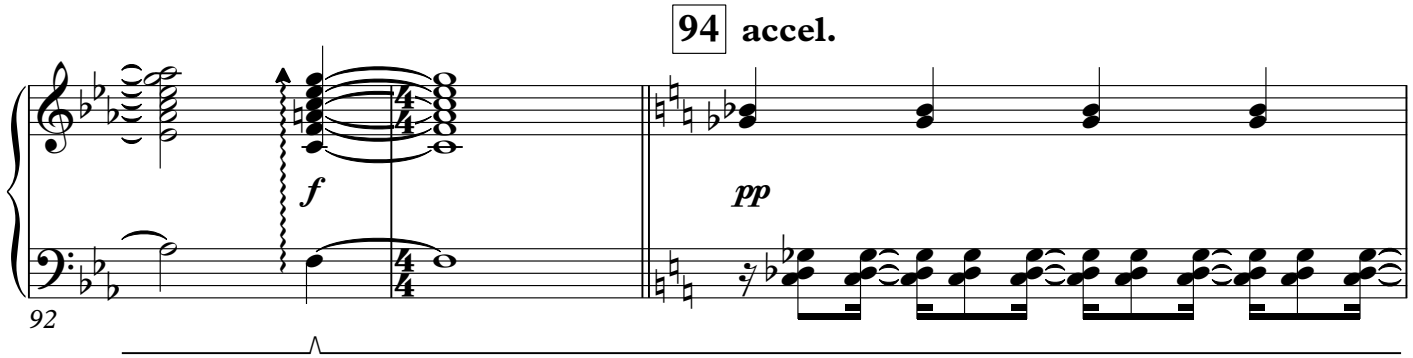
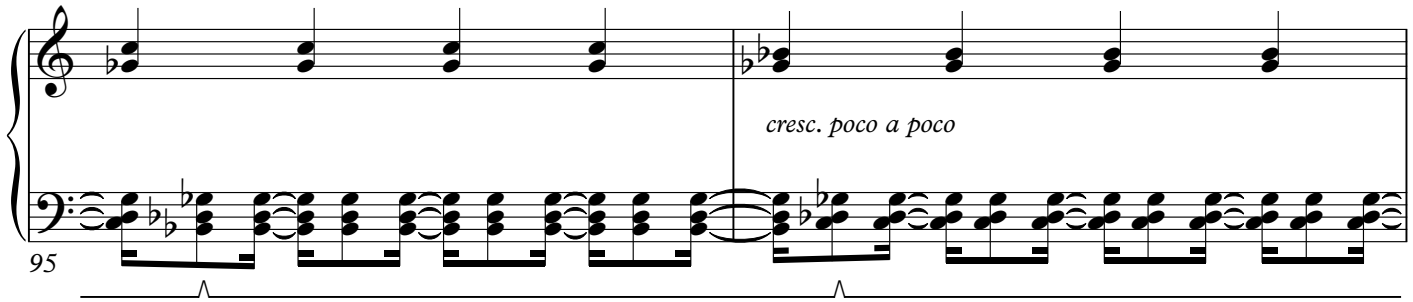

19
Energetic ♩.=84
p
19
27
4
4
p
2
2
23–26
29–30
rit.
mf
f
31
Ped.
36
With Quick Changes of Mood ♩=60
molto accel.
p
pp
36
mp
40

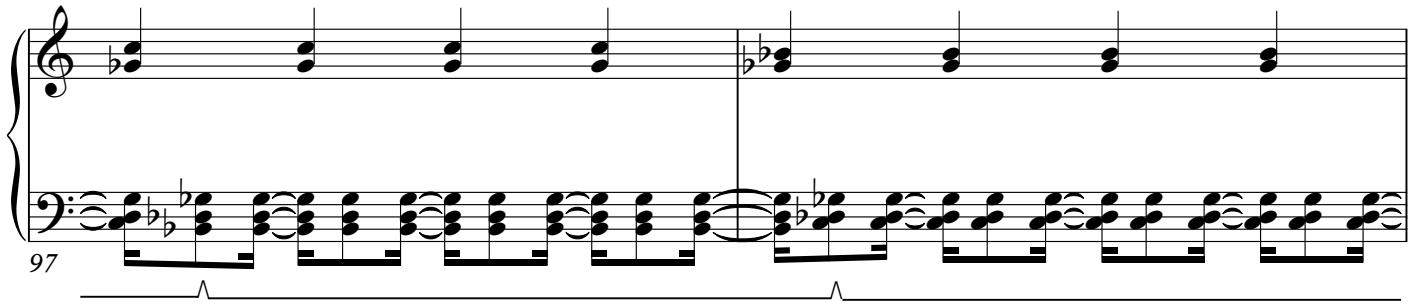

42 Suddenly Broad ♩=72
mf
pp
42
molto accel.
46
49 Suddenly Gentle ♩=60
mp
ff
pp
Ped.
48
p
mp
51
poco rit.
mf
f
ff
6
3
57

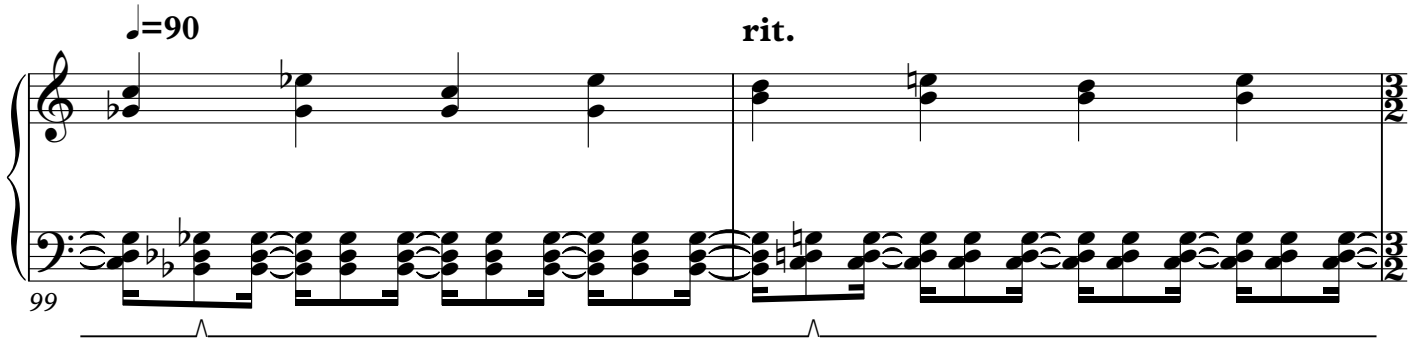

61
Freely ♩=48
6
6
61
62–67
68
Moving Forward ♩=60
pp
p
pp
Ped.
3
3
70
71–73
p
mp
Ped.
78
mf
f
77
molto accel.
pp
82
85
Suddenly Broad ♩=72
mp
mf
84

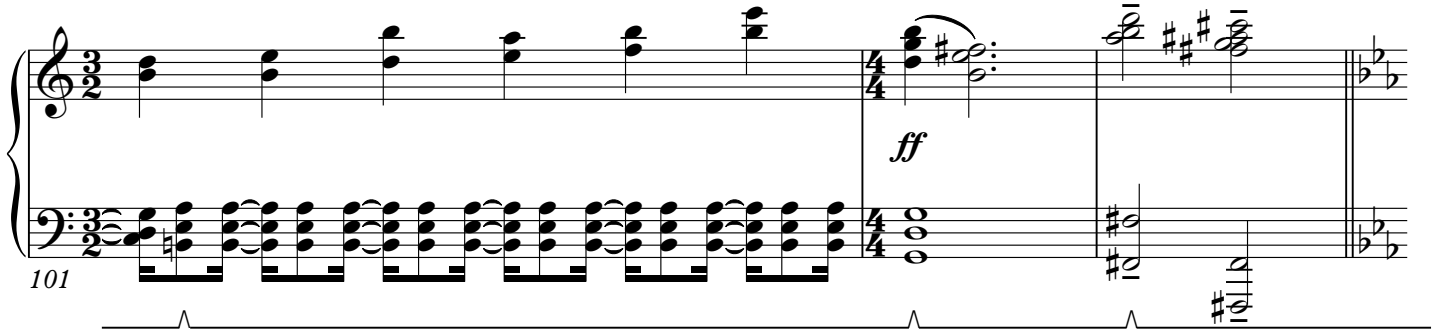

p
mp
mf
87


94 accel.
f
pp
92

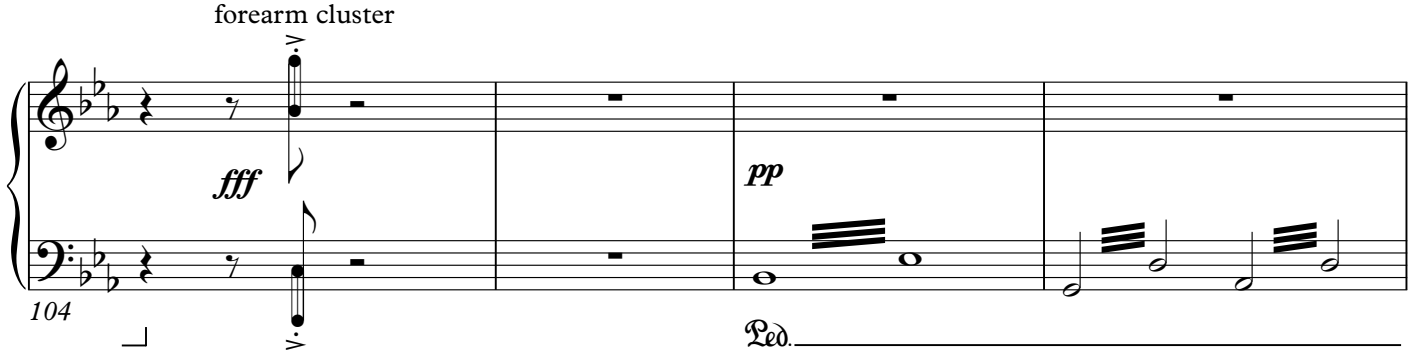

cresc. poco a poco
95

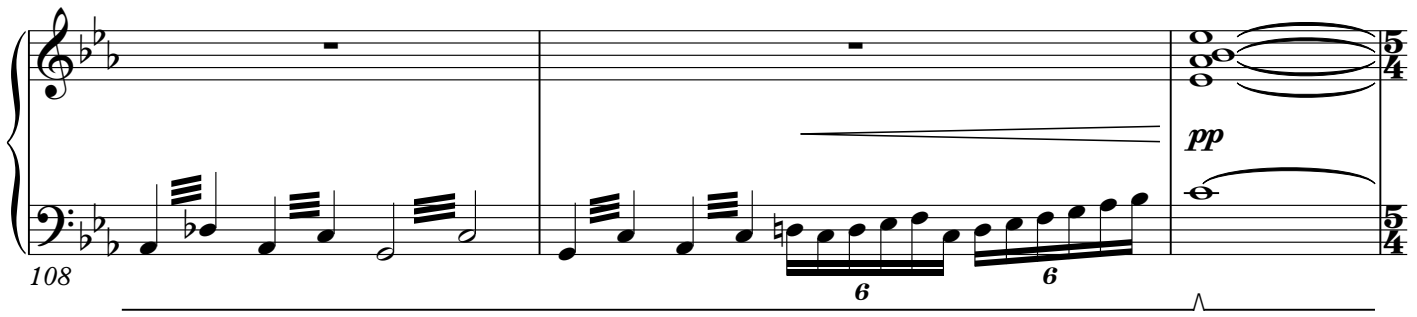

97

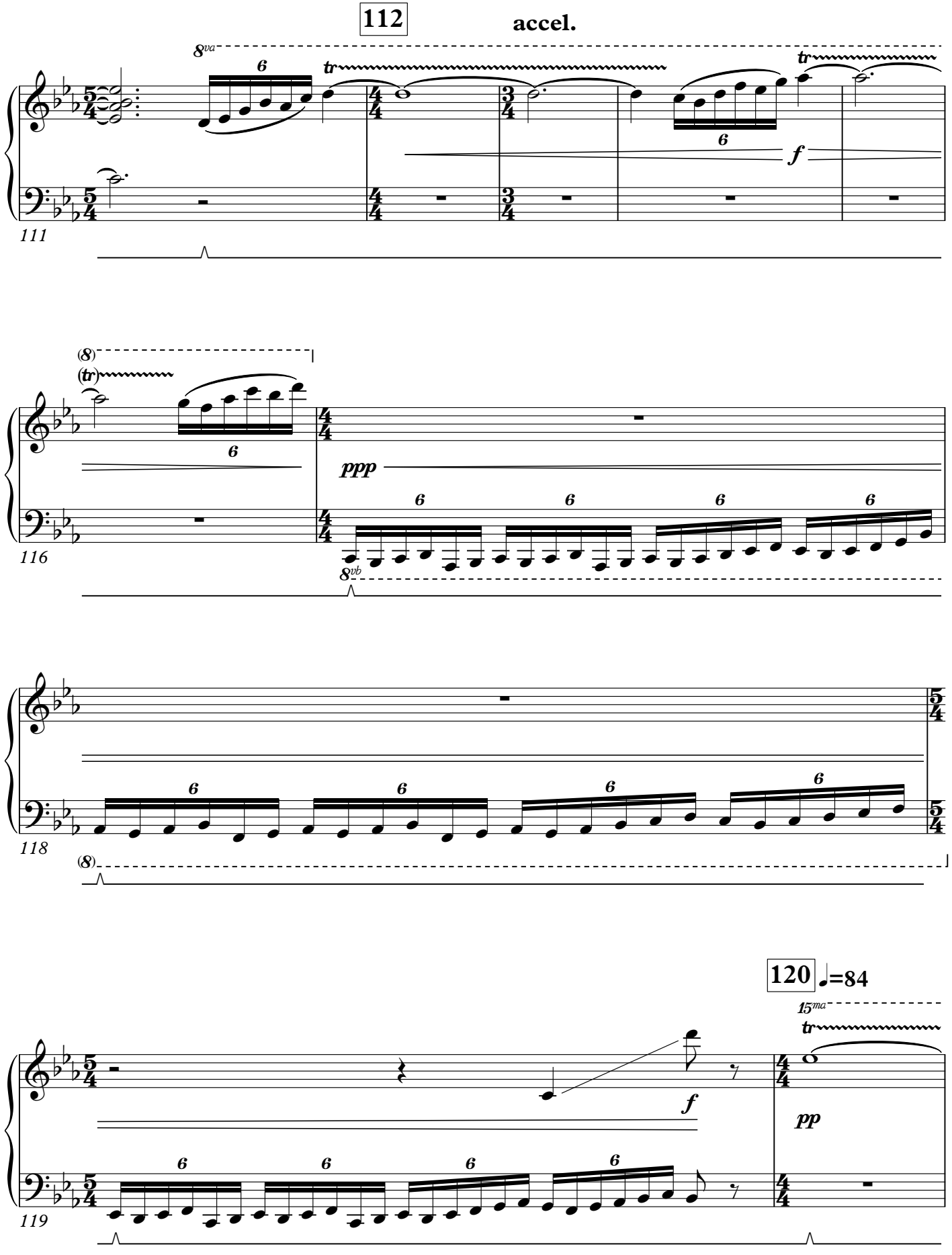


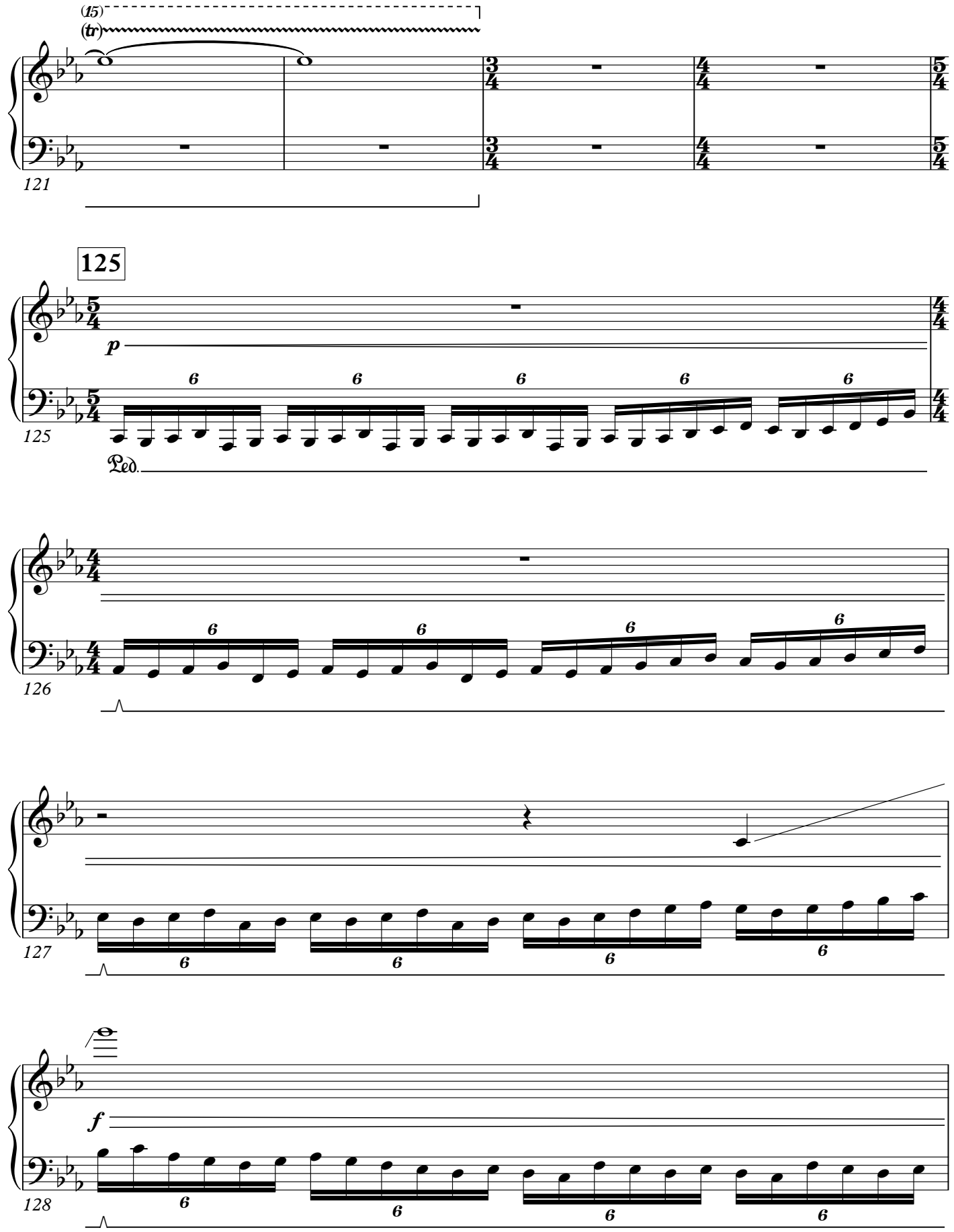


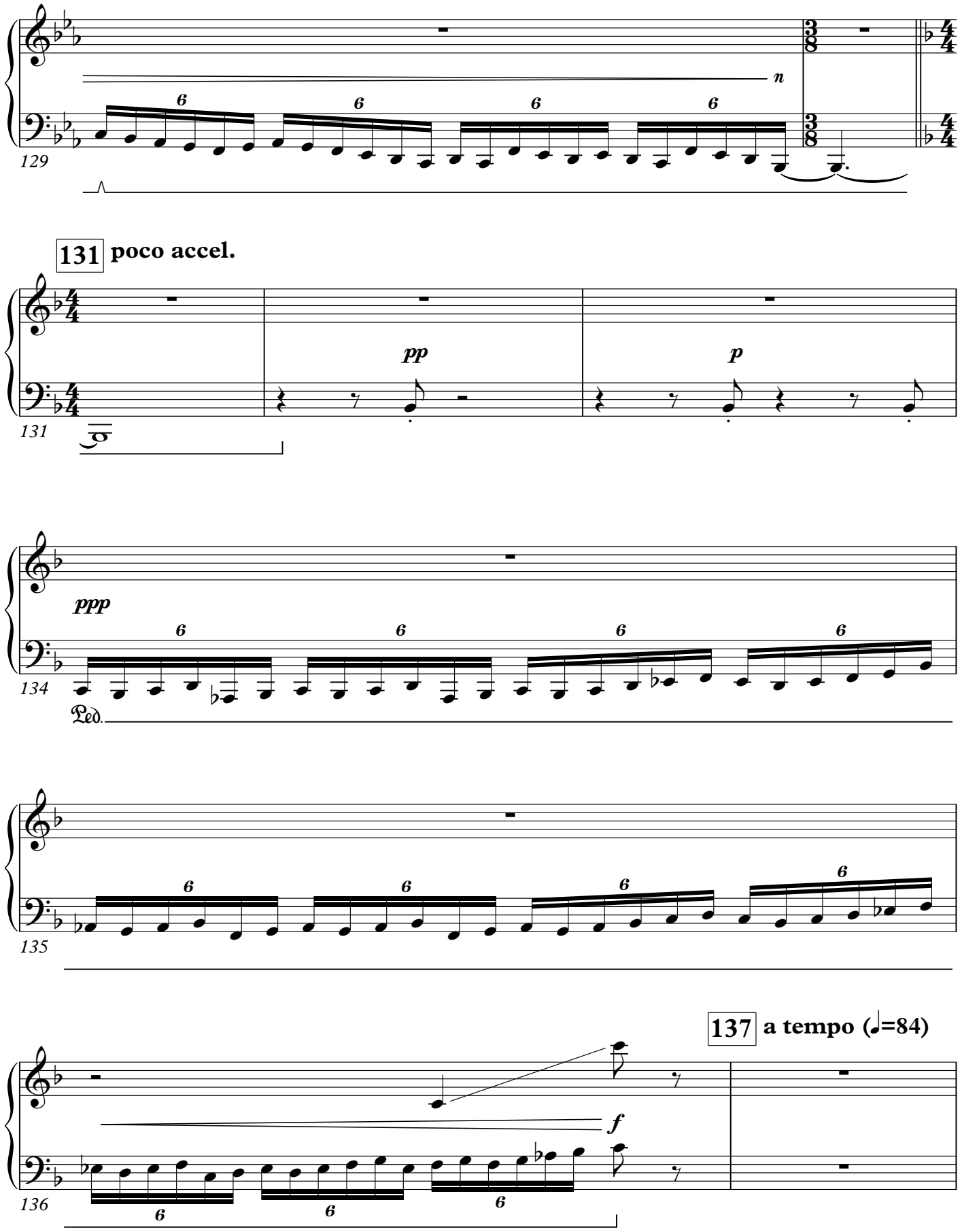
104 **Moving Forward** ♩=72

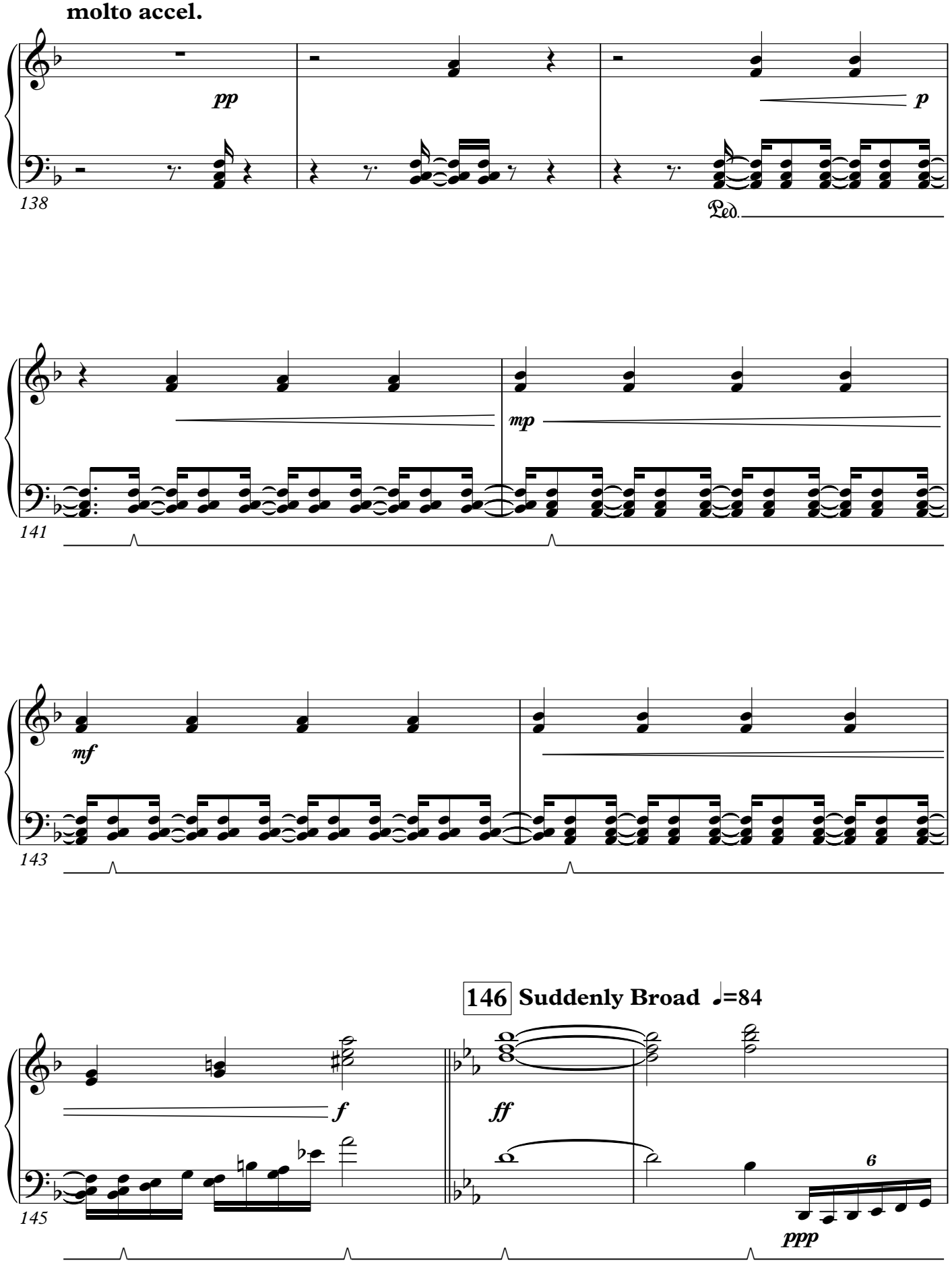


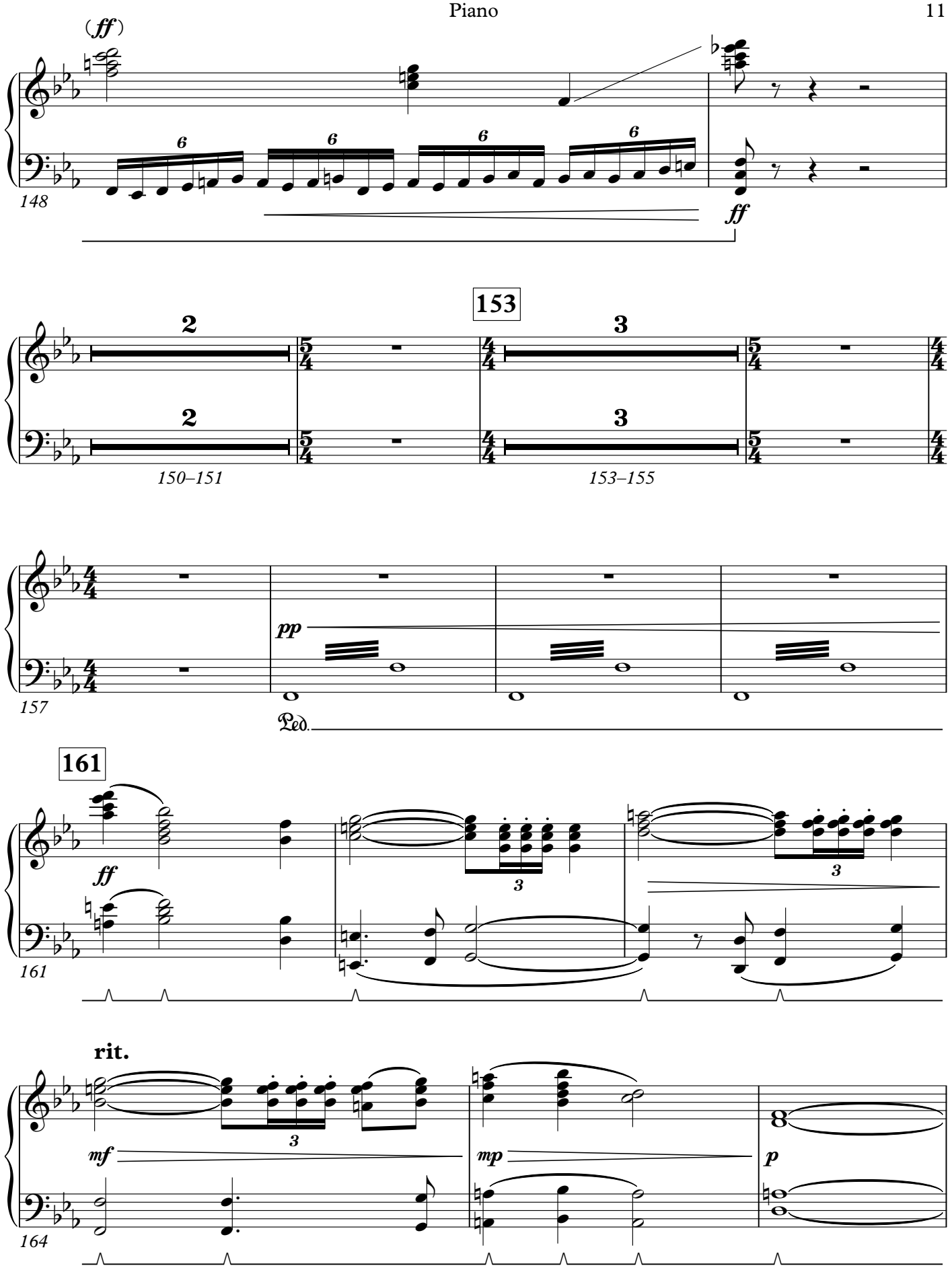


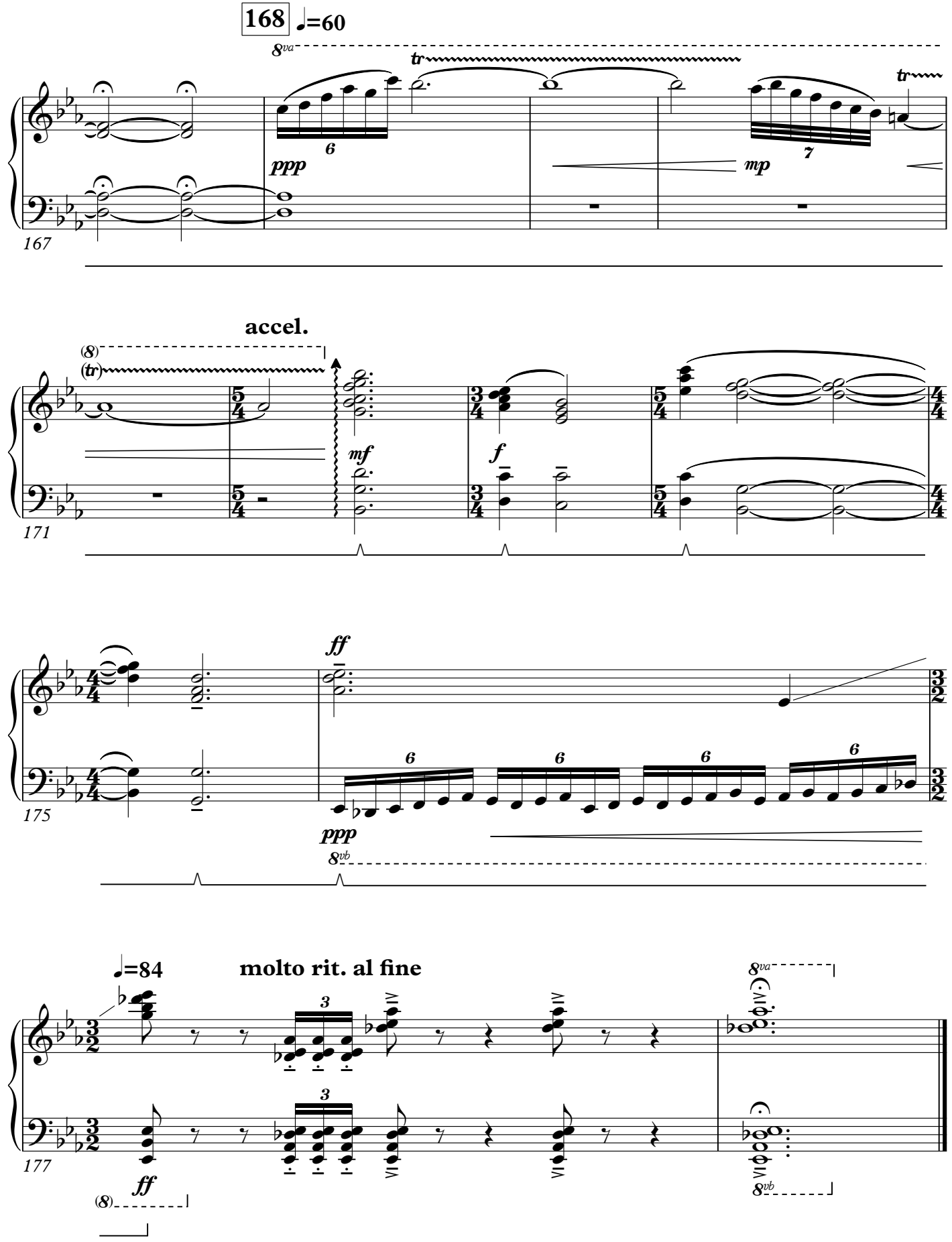

112
accel.
8va
tr
f
111
(8)
(tr)
ppp
116
8vb
118
(8)
120
♩=84
15ma
pp
119


(15)
(tr)
121
125
p
6
125
Ped.
126
127
f
128


n
129
131 poco accel.
pp
p
131
ppp
134
Ped.
135
137 a tempo (♩=84)
f
136


molto accel.
pp
p
138
Ped.
mp
141
mf
143
146 Suddenly Broad ♩=84
f
ff
145
6
ppp


(ff)
148
ff
153
150–151
153–155
157
pp
Ped.
161
ff
161
rit.
mf
mp
p
164


168
♩=60
8va
tr
ppp
mp
167
accel.
(8)
(tr)
mf
f
171
ff
175
ppp
8vb
♩=84
molto rit. al fine
177
ff
(8)
8vb