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OF MUSICAL CLASSICS

FREDERIC CHOPIN

Complete Works for the Piano

Edited and Fingered,
and provided with an Introductory Note by
CARL MIKULI

Historical and Analytical Comments by
JAMES HUNEKER

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FRÉDÉRIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN

According to a tradition—and, be it said, an erroneous one—Chopin's playing was like that of one dreaming rather than awake—scarcely audible in its continual *pianissimos* and *una cordas*, with feebly developed technique and quite lacking in confidence, or at least indistinct, and distorted out of all rhythmic form by an incessant *tempo rubato!* The effect of these notions could not be otherwise than very prejudicial to the interpretation of his works, even by the most able artists—in their very striving after truthfulness; besides, they are easily accounted for.

Chopin played rarely and always unwillingly in public; "exhibitions" of himself were totally repugnant to his nature. Long years of sickliness and nervous irritability did not always permit him the necessary repose in the concert-hall, for displaying untrammeled the full wealth of his resources. In more familiar circles, too, he seldom played anything but his shorter pieces, or occasional fragments from the larger works. Small wonder, therefore, that Chopin the Pianist should fail of general recognition.

Yet Chopin possessed a highly developed technique, giving him complete mastery over the instrument. In all styles of touch the evenness of his scales and passages was unsurpassed—nay, fabulous; under his hands the pianoforte needed to envy neither the violin for its bow nor wind-instruments for the living breath. The tones melted one into the other with the liquid effect of beautiful song.

A genuine piano-hand, extremely flexible though not large, enabled him to play arpeggios of most widely dispersed harmonies and passages in wide stretches, which he brought into vogue as something never attempted before; and everything without the slightest apparent exertion, a pleasing freedom and lightness being a distinguishing characteristic of his style. At the same time, the tone which he could *draw out* of the instrument was prodigious, especially in the *cantabiles;* in this regard John Field alone could compare with him.

A lofty, virile energy lent imposing effect to suitable passages—an energy without roughness; on the other hand, he could carry away his hearers by the tenderness of his soulful delivery—a tenderness without affectation. But with all the warmth of his peculiarly ardent temperament, his playing was always within bounds, chaste, polished and at times even severely reserved.

In keeping time Chopin was inflexible, and many will be surprised to learn that the metronome never left his piano. Even in his oft-decried *tempo rubato* one hand—that having the accompaniment—always played on in strict time, while the other, singing the melody, either hesitating as if undecided, or, with increased animation, anticipating with a kind of impatient vehemence as if in passionate utterances, maintained the freedom of musical expression from the fetters of strict regularity.

Some information concerning Chopin the Teacher, even in the shape of a mere sketch, can hardly fail to interest many readers.

Far from regarding his work as a teacher, which his position as an artist and his social connections in Paris rendered difficult of avoidance, as a burdensome task, Chopin daily devoted his entire energies to it for several hours and with genuine delight. True, his demands on the talent and industry of the pupil were very great. There were often "de leçons orageuses" ("stormy lessons"), as they were called in school parlance, and many a fair eye wet with tears departed from the high altar of the Cité d'Orleans, rue St. Lazare, yet without the slightest resentment on that score against the dearly beloved master. For this same severity, so little prone to easy satisfaction, this feverish vehemence with which the master strove to raise his disciples to his own plane, this insistence on the repetition of a passage until it was understood, were a guaranty that he had the pupil's progress at heart. He would glow with a sacred zeal for art; every word from his lips was stimulating and inspiring. Single lessons often lasted literally for several hours in succession, until master and pupil were overcome by fatigue.

On beginning with a pupil, Chopin was chiefly anxious to do away with any stiffness in, or cramped, convulsive movement of, the hand, thereby obtaining the first requisite of a fine technique, "souplesse" (suppleness), and at the same time independence in the motion of the fingers. He was never tired of inculcating that such technical exercises are not merely mechanical, but claim the intelligence and entire will-power of the pupil; and, consequently, that a twentyfold or fortyfold repetition (still the lauded arcanum of so many schools) does no good whatever—not to mention the kind of practising advocated by Kalkbrenner, during which one may also occupy oneself with reading! He treated the various styles of touch very thoroughly, more especially the full-toned *legato.*

As gymnastic aids he recommended bending the wrist inward and outward, the repeated wrist-stroke, the pressing apart of the fingers—but all with an earnest warning against over-exertion. For scale-practice he required a very full tone, as *legato* as possible, at first very slowly and taking a quicker tempo only step by step, and playing with metronomic evenness. To facilitate the passing under of the thumb and passing over of the fingers, the hand was to be bent inward. The scales having many black keys (B major, F-sharp, D-flat) were

studied first, C major, as the hardest, coming last. In like order he took up Clementi's Preludes and Exercises, a work which he highly valued on account of its utility. According to Chopin, evenness in scale-playing and arpeggios depends not only on the equality in the strength of the fingers obtained through five-finger exercises, and a perfect freedom of the thumb in passing under and over, but foremostly on the perfectly smooth and constant sideways movement of the hand (not *step* by *step*), letting the elbow hang down freely and loosely at all times. This movement he exemplified by a *glissando* across the keys. After this he gave as studies a selection from Cramer's Études, Clementi's Gradus ad Parnassum, The Finishing Studies in Style by Moscheles, which were very congenial to him, Bach's English and French Suites, and some Preludes and Fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavichord.

Field's and his own nocturnes also figured to a certain extent as studies, for through them—partly by learning from his explanations, partly by hearing and imitating them as played indefatigably by Chopin himself—the pupil was taught to recognize, love and produce the *legato* and the beautiful connected singing tone. For paired notes and chords he exacted strictly simultaneous striking of the notes, an arpeggio being permitted only where marked by the composer himself; in the trill, which he generally commenced on the auxiliary, he required perfect evenness rather than great rapidity, the closing turn to be played easily and without haste.

For the turn (*gruppetto*) and appoggiatura he recommended the great Italian singers as models; he desired octaves to be played with the wrist-stroke, but without losing in fullness of tone thereby. Only far-advanced pupils were given his Études Op. 10 and Op. 25.

Chopin's attention was always directed to teaching correct phrasing. With reference to wrong phrasing he often repeated the apt remark, that it struck him as if some one were reciting, in a language not understood by the speaker, a speech carefully learned by rote, in the course of which the speaker not only neglected the natural quantity of the syllables, but even stopped in the middle of words. The pseudo-musician, he said, shows in a similar way, by his wrong phrasing, that music is not his mother-tongue, but something foreign and incomprehensible to him, and must, like the aforesaid speaker, quite renounce the idea of making any effect upon his hearers by his delivery.

In marking the fingering, especially that peculiar to himself, Chopin was not sparing. Piano-playing owes him many innovations in this respect, whose practicalness caused their speedy adoption, though at first certain authorities, like Kalkbrenner, were fairly horrified by them. For example, Chopin did not hesitate to use the thumb on the black keys, or to pass it under the little finger (with a decided inward bend of the wrist, to be sure), where it facilitated the execution, rendering the latter quieter and smoother. With one and the same finger he often struck two neighboring keys in succession (and this not simply in a slide from a black key to the next white one), without the slightest noticeable break in the continuity of the tones. He frequently passed the longest fingers over each other without the intervention of the thumb (see Étude No. 2, Op. 10), and not only in passages where (e.g.) it was made necessary by the holding down of a key with the thumb. The fingering for chromatic thirds based on this device (and marked by himself in Étude No. 5, Op. 25), renders it far easier to obtain the smoothest *legato* in the most rapid tempo, and with a perfectly quiet hand, than the fingering followed before. The fingerings in the present edition are, in most cases, those indicated by Chopin himself; where this is not the case, they are at least marked in conformity with his principles, and therefore calculated to facilitate the execution in accordance with his conceptions.

In the shading he insisted on a real and carefully graduated *crescendo* and *decrescendo*. On phrasing, and on style in general, he gave his pupils invaluable and highly suggestive hints and instructions, assuring himself, however, that they were understood by playing not only single passages, but whole pieces, over and over again, and this with a scrupulous care, an enthusiasm, such as none of his auditors in the concert-hall ever had an opportunity to witness. The whole lesson-hour often passed without the pupil's having played more than a few measures, while Chopin, at a Pleyel upright piano (the pupil always played on a fine concert grand, and was obliged to promise to practise on only the best instruments), continually interrupting and correcting, proffered for his admiration and imitation the warm, living ideal of perfect beauty. It may be asserted, without exaggeration, that only the pupil knew Chopin the Pianist in his entire unrivalled greatness.

Chopin most urgently recommended ensemble-playing, the cultivation of the best chamber-music—but only in association with the finest musicians. In case no such opportunity offered, the best substitute would be found in four-hand playing.

With equal insistence he advised his pupils to take up thorough theoretical studies as early as practicable. Whatever their condition in life, the master's great heart always beat warmly for the pupils. A sympathetic, fatherly friend, he inspired them to unwearying endeavor, took unaffected delight in their progress, and at all times had an encouraging word for the wavering and dispirited.

CARL MIKULI.

PIANO CONCERTO IN E MINOR

I

THE chronology of the two piano Concertos has given rise to controversy; the trouble arose from the F minor Concerto, it being numbered opus 21, though composed before the Concerto in E minor. The former was published April, 1836; the latter September, 1833. Both works derive from Hummel and Field. The passage-work is superior in design to that of the earlier masters, the general character episodical, but episodes of rare worth and originality. As Ehlert says: "*Noblesse oblige*—and thus Chopin felt himself compelled to satisfy all demands exacted of a pianist, and wrote the unavoidable piano Concerto. It was not consistent with his nature to express himself in broad terms. His lungs were too weak for the pace in seven-league boots, so often required in a score. The Trio and Sonata for piano and violoncello were also tasks for whose accomplishment Nature did not design him. He must touch the keys by himself without being called upon to heed the players sitting next him. He is at his best when, without formal restraint, he can create out of his inmost soul."

"He must touch the keys by himself." Here you have summed up the reason why Chopin never altogether succeeded in conquering the sonata-form or in impressing his individuality upon the masses. His was a lonely soul. George Sand knew this when she wrote: "He made an instrument speak the language of the infinite. Often in ten bars that a child might play he has introduced poems of unequalled elevation, dramas unrivalled in force and energy. He did not need the great material methods to find expression for his genius. Neither saxophone nor ophicleide was necessary for him to fill the soul with awe. Without church organ or human voice he inspired faith and enthusiasm." It might be objected that Beethoven, too, aroused a wondering and worshipping world without the aid of these two wind instruments; but it is needless cruelty to pick at Madame Sand's musical criticisms. She had received no technical education and had so little appreciation of Chopin's peculiar genius for the piano that she could write: "The day will come when his music will be arranged for the orchestra without change of the piano score"—which is disaster-inviting nonsense. Criticism has sounded Chopin's weakness when writing for any instrument but his own, when writing in any form but his own. His Nocturnes, two or three of them, have been arranged for the violin or 'cello, but the general result is not satisfactory. There has even been an opera entitled "Chopin," composed on themes from all of his works. Nevertheless Chopin will always spell piano, only that and nothing more.

In the E minor Concerto I think I best like the Romanza, though it is less flowery than the *Larghetto* of the F minor Concerto. The C sharp minor part is imperious, while the murmuring mystery of the close mounts to the imagination. The Rondo is frolicksome, tricky, genial and genuine music for the piano. It is true that the first movement is too long, too much in one set of keys, and the working-out section too much in the nature of a technical study. I see no reason for amending my views as to the original orchestration which suits the character of the piano part, colorless and slipshod as is this orchestration—said to have been made by Chopin's colleague, Franchomme the violoncellist. But that should not prevent one from admiring the Tausig version, first played in America by Rafael Joseffy. Rosenthal prefers the original version with the first long *tutti* curtailed; but he is hardly consistent when at the close of the Rondo he uses the Tausig interlocking octaves.

II

Mr. Krehbiel once wrote, in discussing the question of rescoring the Chopin Concertos: "It is more than anything else a question of taste that is involved in this matter, and, as so often happens, individual likings, rather than artistic principles, will carry the day." It is admitted by musicians that the orchestration of the two Concertos is meagre and conventional, not to say hackneyed. The *tutti* written in the pre-Beethoven style rob the piano part of some of its incomparable beauty, became a clog in Chopin's fancy, and have done more to prejudice musicians against Chopin than any other compositions he has written. That they were penned by Chopin is more than doubtful, as his knowledge of instrumentation was somewhat slender, and the amazing fact will always remain that, while his solo compositions are ever free and far removed from all that is trite, the orchestral part of his Concertos is uninteresting to a degree. In both, the opening *tutti* are lengthy and skim all the cream and richness of the solos that follow. Now the tone of the piano can scarcely vie with that

of the orchestra, yet in the first movement of the E minor Concerto the plaintive solo of the first subject is played; the audience and pianist must patiently wait till the band is finished and then, an anti-climax, the piano repeats the story, but by comparison dwarfed and colorless. In the Tausig version of the E minor opening the *tutti* omits entirely the familiar version, contenting itself with the small recording subject in E minor that is afterwards played by the piano. Then follow the rich opening chords on the keyboard, and we are plunged into *medias res* without further ado.

The orchestral *tutti* before the piano enters in C major, is in the Tausig version very effective despite the dreaded trombones. It may be admitted that here we get a touch of "Die Meistersinger" color, which is—so the story runs—because Wagner himself had a finger in the Polish pie; certainly Tausig submitted the amended score to him for judgment. That much is history. The orchestral canvas is broadened, the tints brighter, deeper, richer and offering a superior background for the jewelled piano passage-work. The brass choir floats the staccato tone of the piano, lending to it depth and increased sonority. For example, take the horn pedal-point in E, which occurs in the middle of the Romanza, where the piano sounds the delicate crystalline chromatic *cadenza* for three bars only. What a happy stroke for Tausig to introduce brass. It floats the fairy-like progression and in an ethereal hue, though orthodox pianists will say it is not Chopin; which I grant. But the changes in this Concerto are effective, they in no sense mutilate the integrity of Chopin's ideas. Where there is a chromatic scale in unison Tausig breaks it into double-sixths and -fourths, or chordal figures which are not mere pyrotechnics, only "pianistic" and more brilliant. Tausig, if he did alter a few details, did not commit a sin against good taste. He of all piano *virtuosi* penetrated deeper into the meanings of the tone-poet, interpreting his music incomparably; whereas Liszt was often taken to task by Chopin for his altering original texts to suit his own taste. As regards the *coda* of the first movement in the E minor Concerto, Tausig simply takes the rather awkward trill from the left hand, giving it to the 'celli and contrabasso, while the piano plays the passage in unison. Most pianists, Rosenthal excepted, acknowledge that the trill in the original is distracting and not effective. The chromatic work at the end of this movement is broader and more *klaviermässig* than the older version, the piano closing at the same time with the orchestra, the audience not being compelled to listen to cadences of the Hummel type. The piano part of the second movement is hardly touched by Tausig; this Romanza could not be improved, but the orchestration is so delicately colored, so spiritualized, that even a purist cannot groan disapproval.

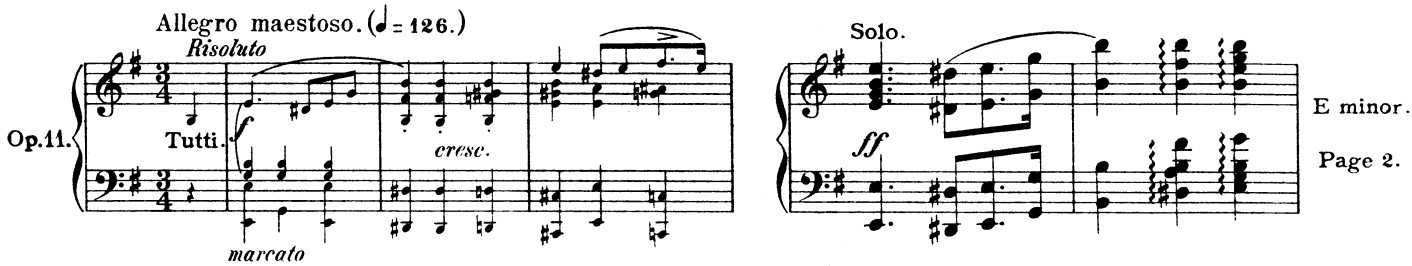
Against the new version of the Rondo the war of complaint is raised. "What, he dares to tamper with the very notes, introducing sixteenths where Chopin wrote eighths!" True, but what an improvement. How much livelier is the rhythm, how much more joyful and elastic, and when the piano enters it is with added zest we listen to its cheerful song. It is a relief, too, when the flute and oboe take up the theme, the piano contenting itself with a trill. The other changes in the solo part throughout this movement are an admirable task and are effective, though they are not easier to play than the original. But the Rondo loses none of its freshness, while it gains in tone and dignity. The octaves at the close disturb in a degree the euphony, adding in brilliancy, and in reality sound better with the Tausig instrumentation, because of its massiveness, than if played with only the fragile Chopin scoring. But in either case these octaves must be delivered with lightness, swiftness, clarity, otherwise they become distressingly monotonous, even cacophonous. If a Concerto is a harmonious relationship between the solo instrument and an orchestra, then the Tausig version of the E minor Concerto fulfills the idea. This holds good in the case of added accompaniments by Robert Franz to Händel, but best of all remains the fact that the Tausig version is more effective than the Chopin, and what pianist can resist such an argument! Mr. Krehbiel justly adds that Tausig's emendations have greatly added to "the stature of the Concerto."

James Huneker

Concerts.

Premier Concert.

(avec accompagnement d'Orchestre.)

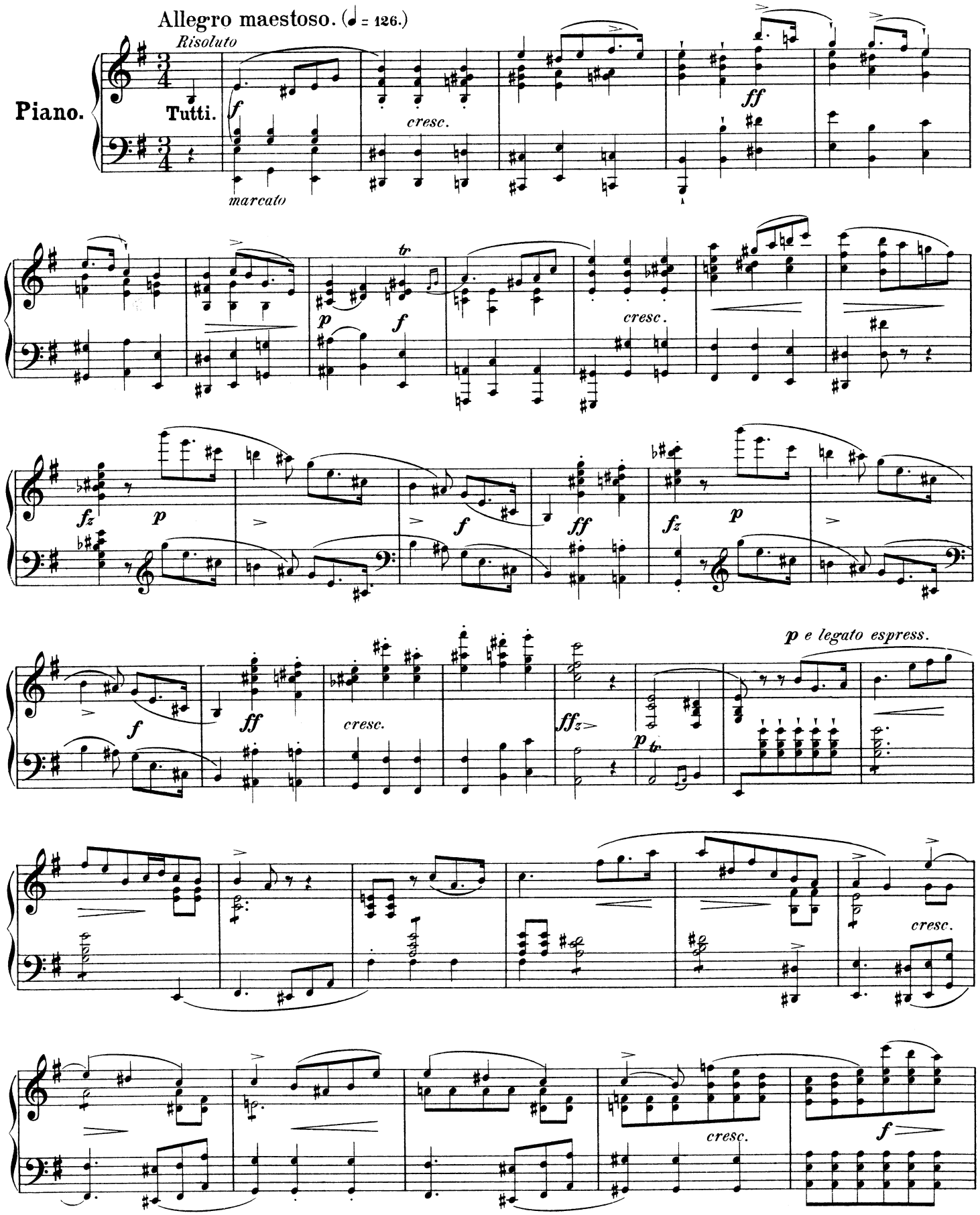


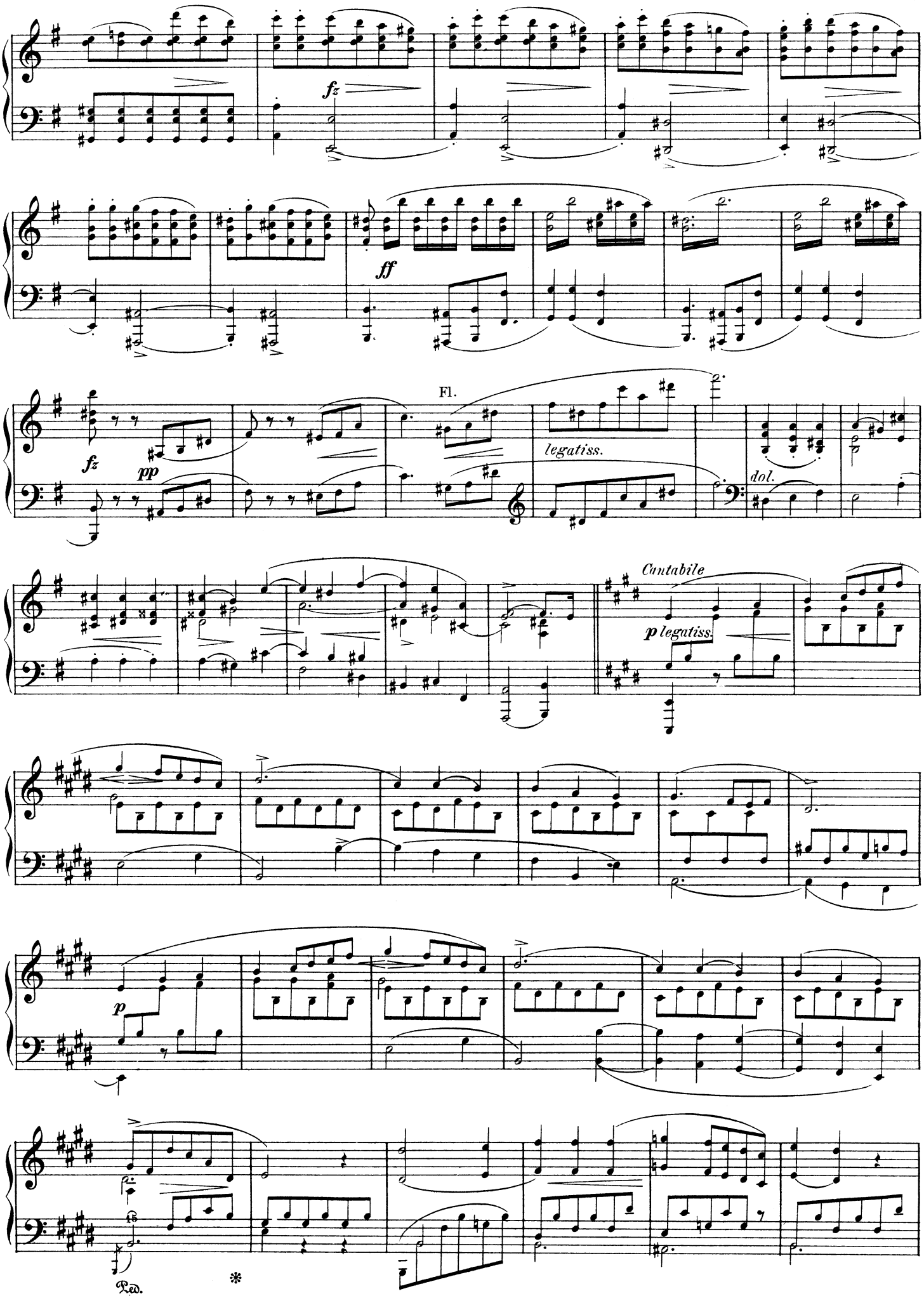
Premier Concert.

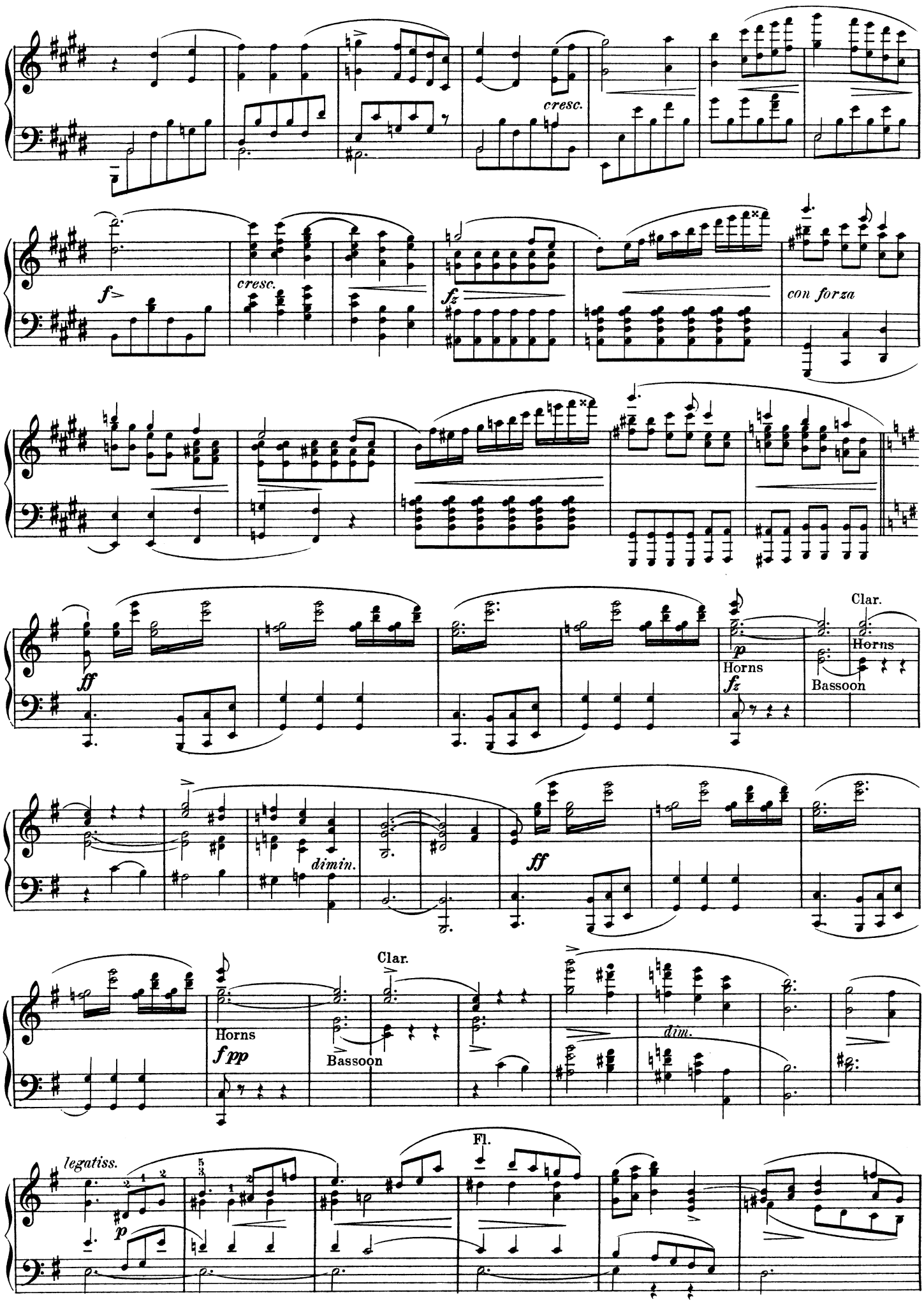
(avec accompagnement d'Orchestre.)

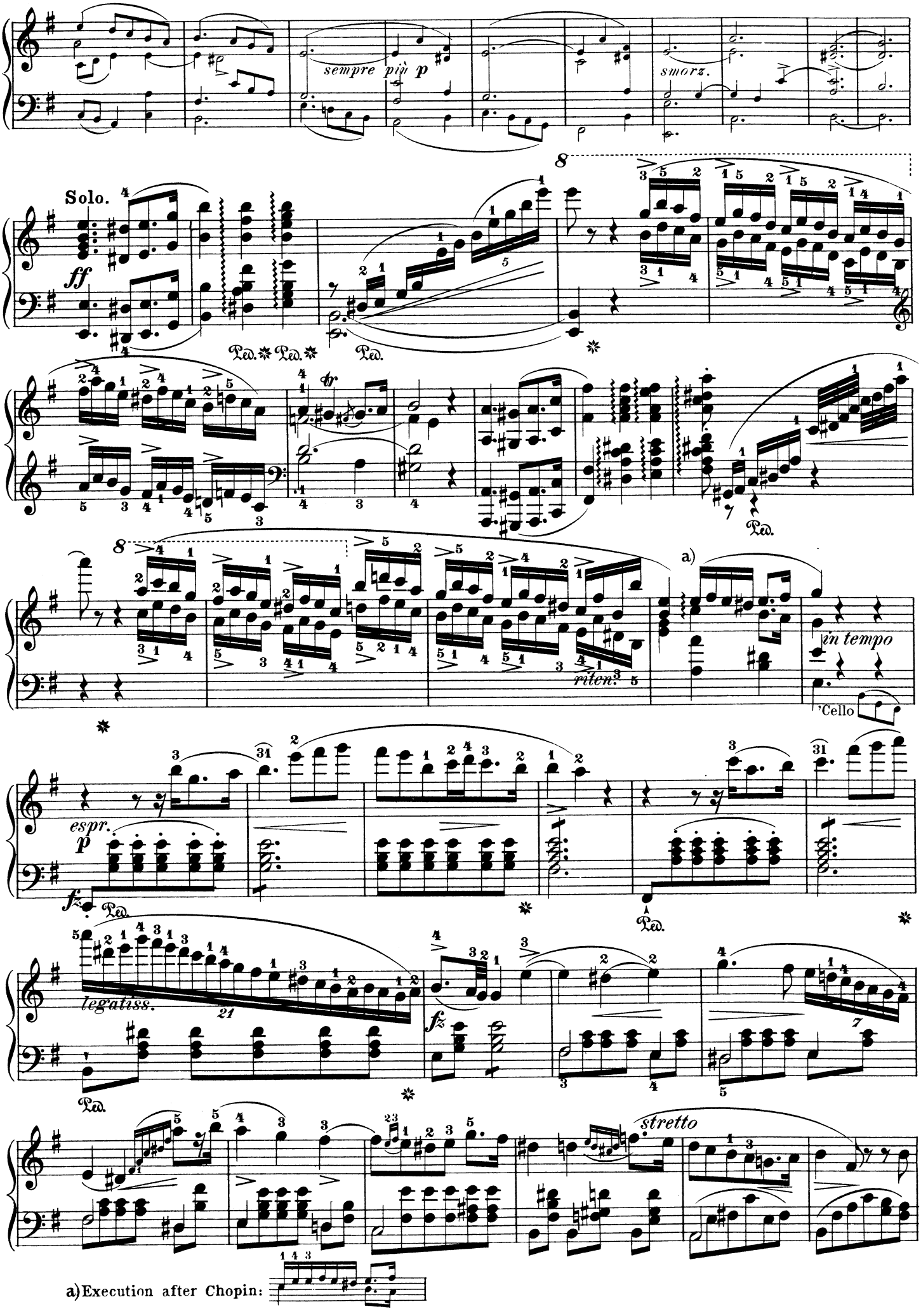
à FR. KALKBRENNER.

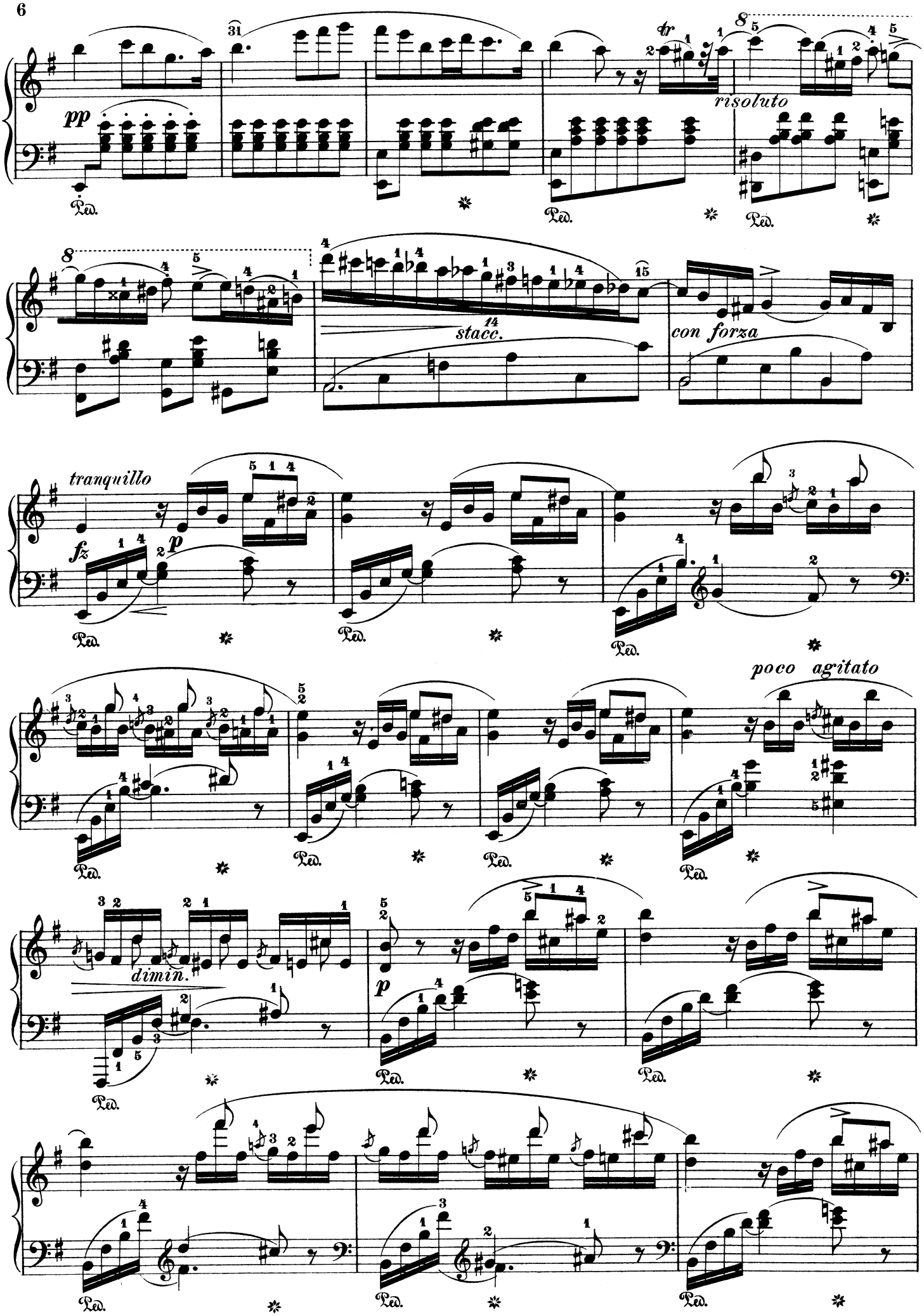
F. CHOPIN. Op. 11.

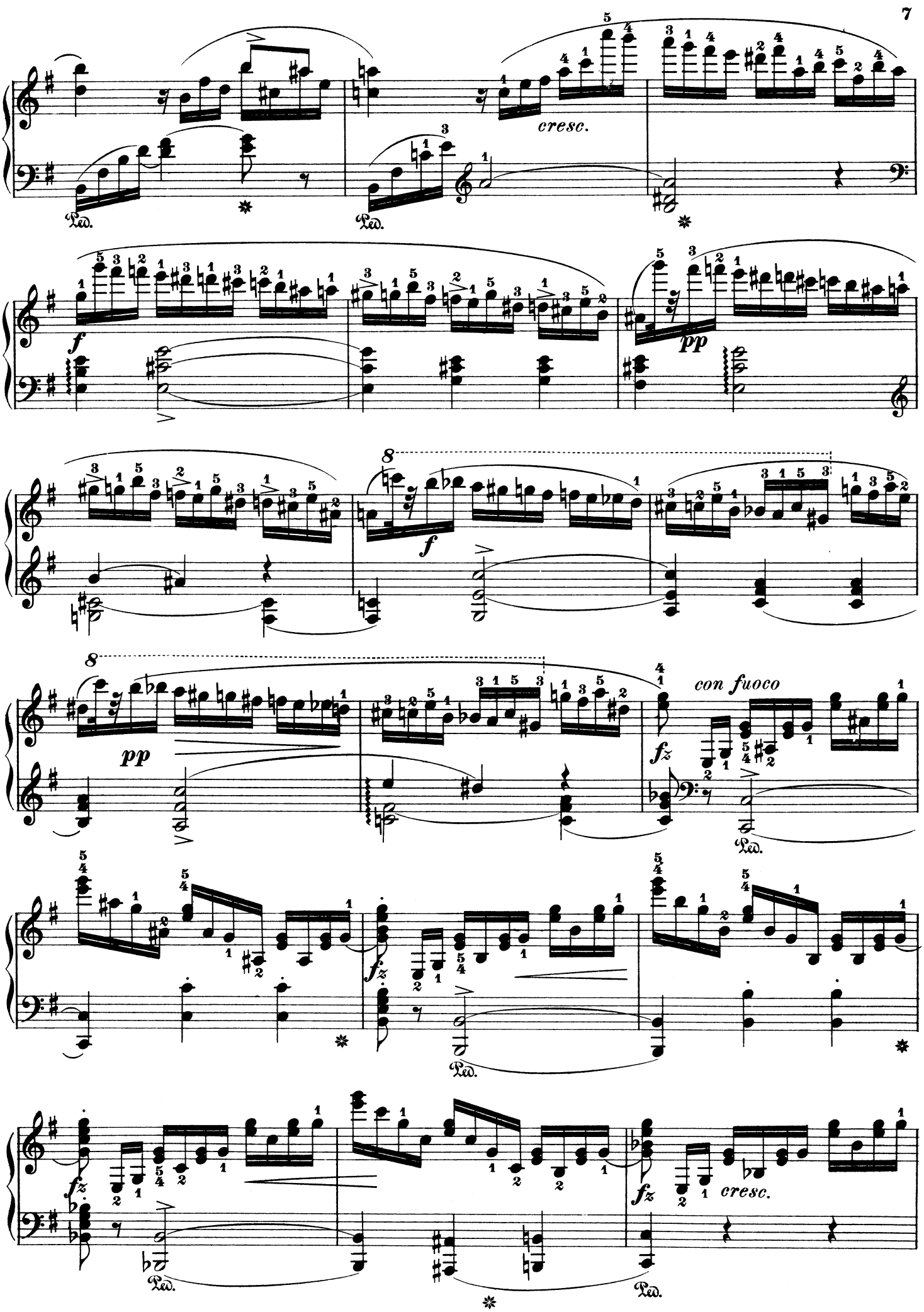


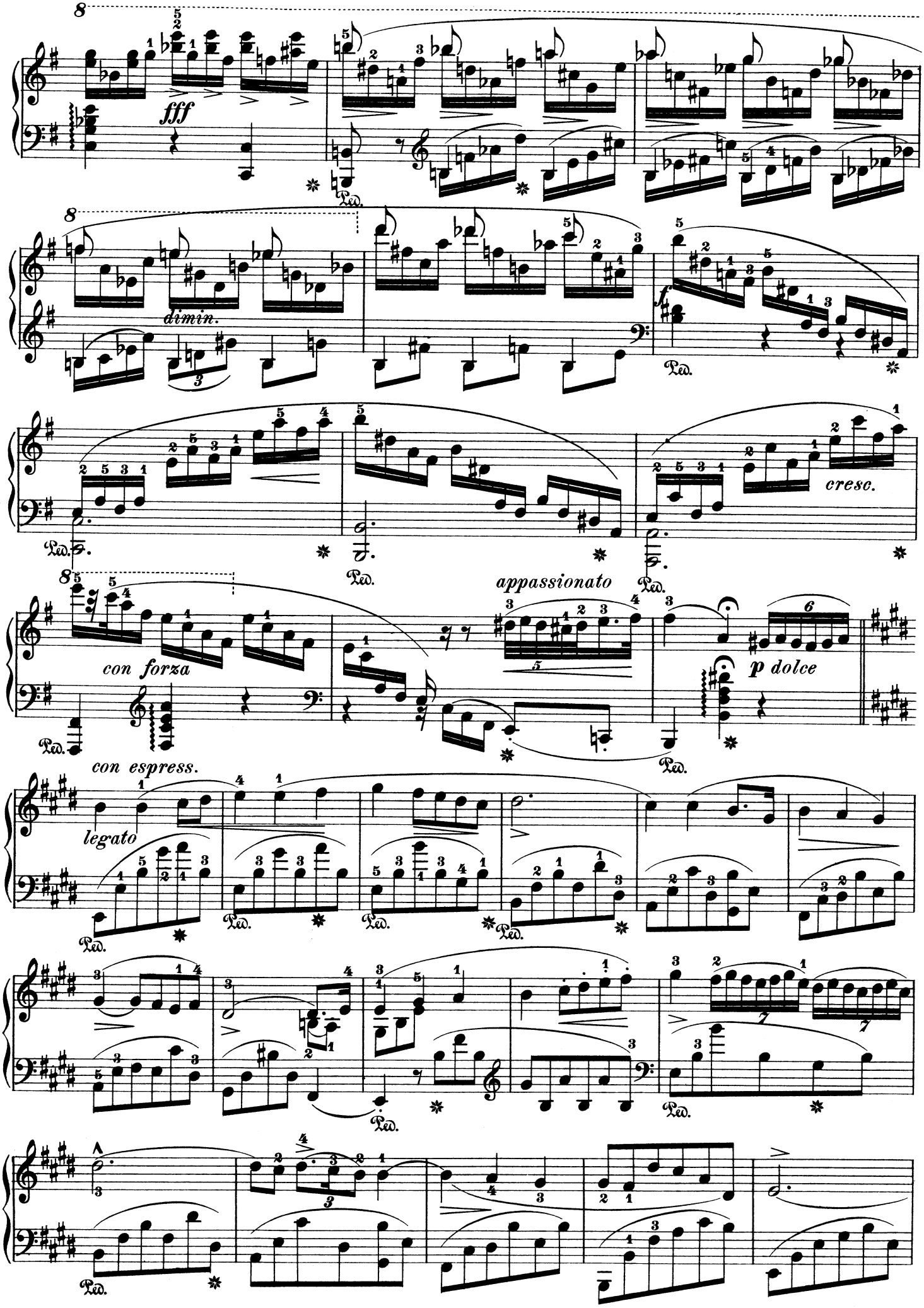

fz
ff
fz
pp
Fl.
legatiss.
dol.
Cantabile
p legatiss.
p
Ped.
*

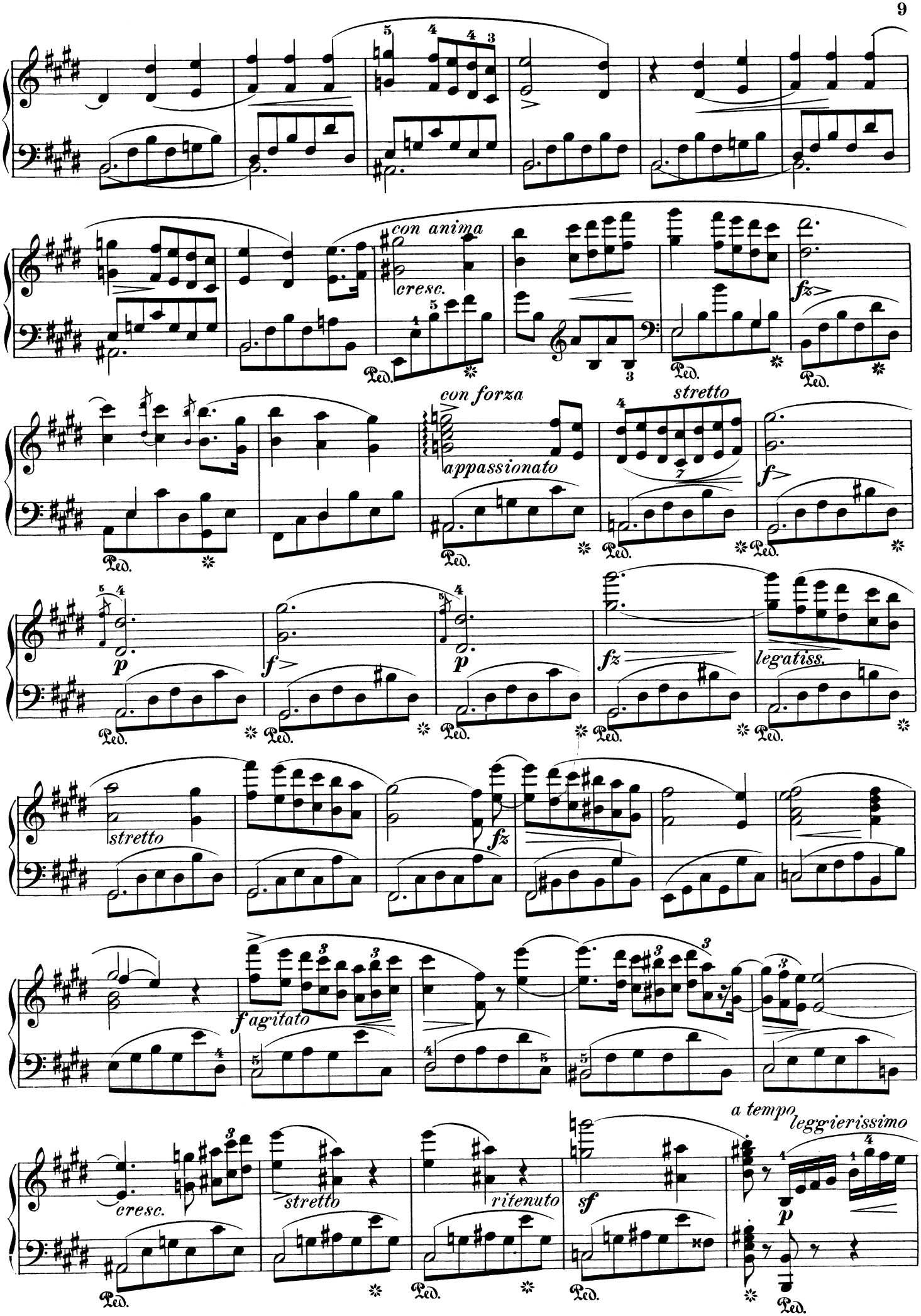

cresc.
f
cresc.
fz
con forza
ff
p
Horns
fz
Clar.
Horns
Bassoon
ff
dimin.
Horns
fpp
Bassoon
Clar.
dim.
legatiss.
p
Fl.

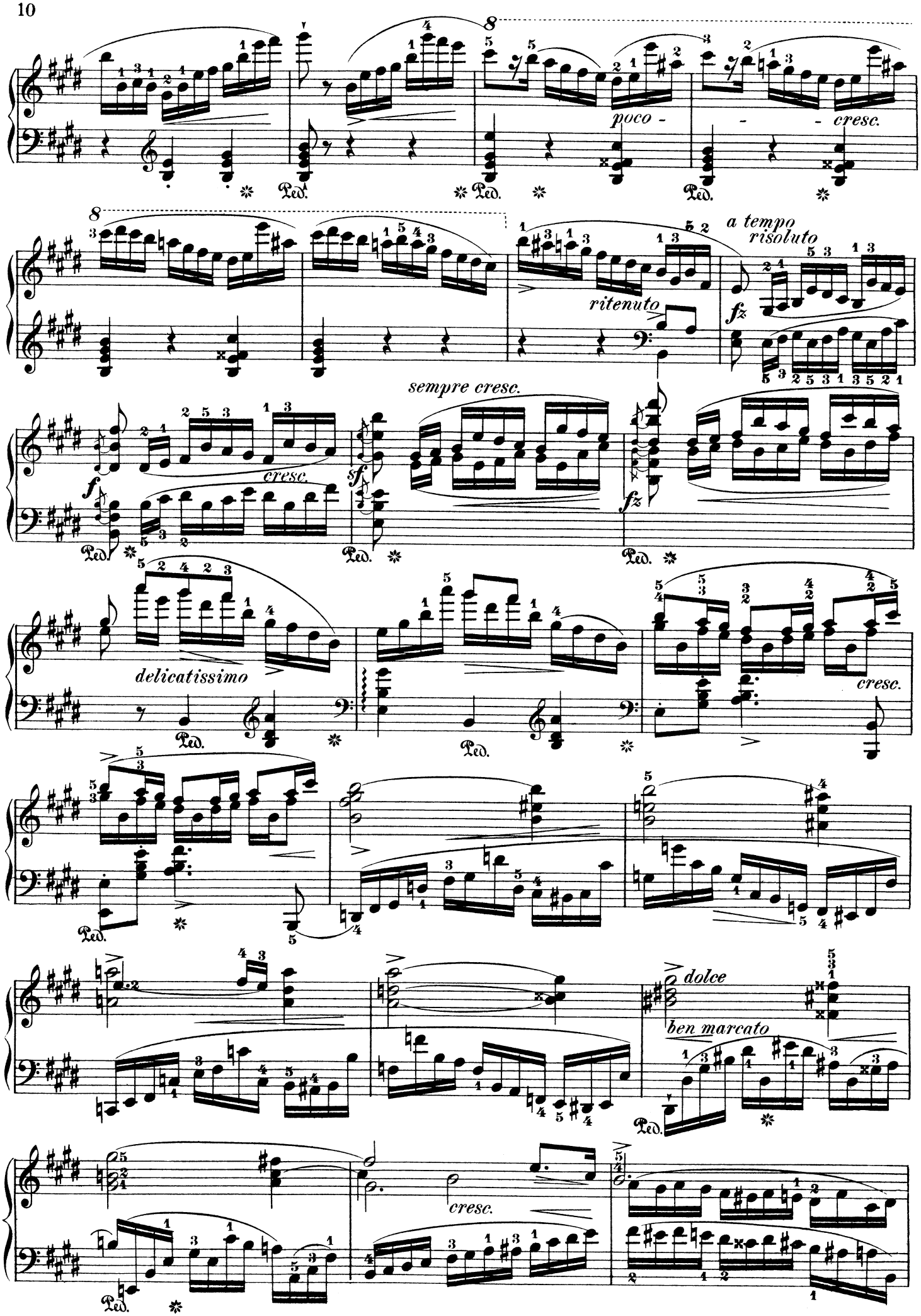

sempre più p
smorz.
Solo.
ff
Ped.
riten.
a)
in tempo
'Cello
espr.
p
fz
legatiss.
stretto
a) Execution after Chopin:

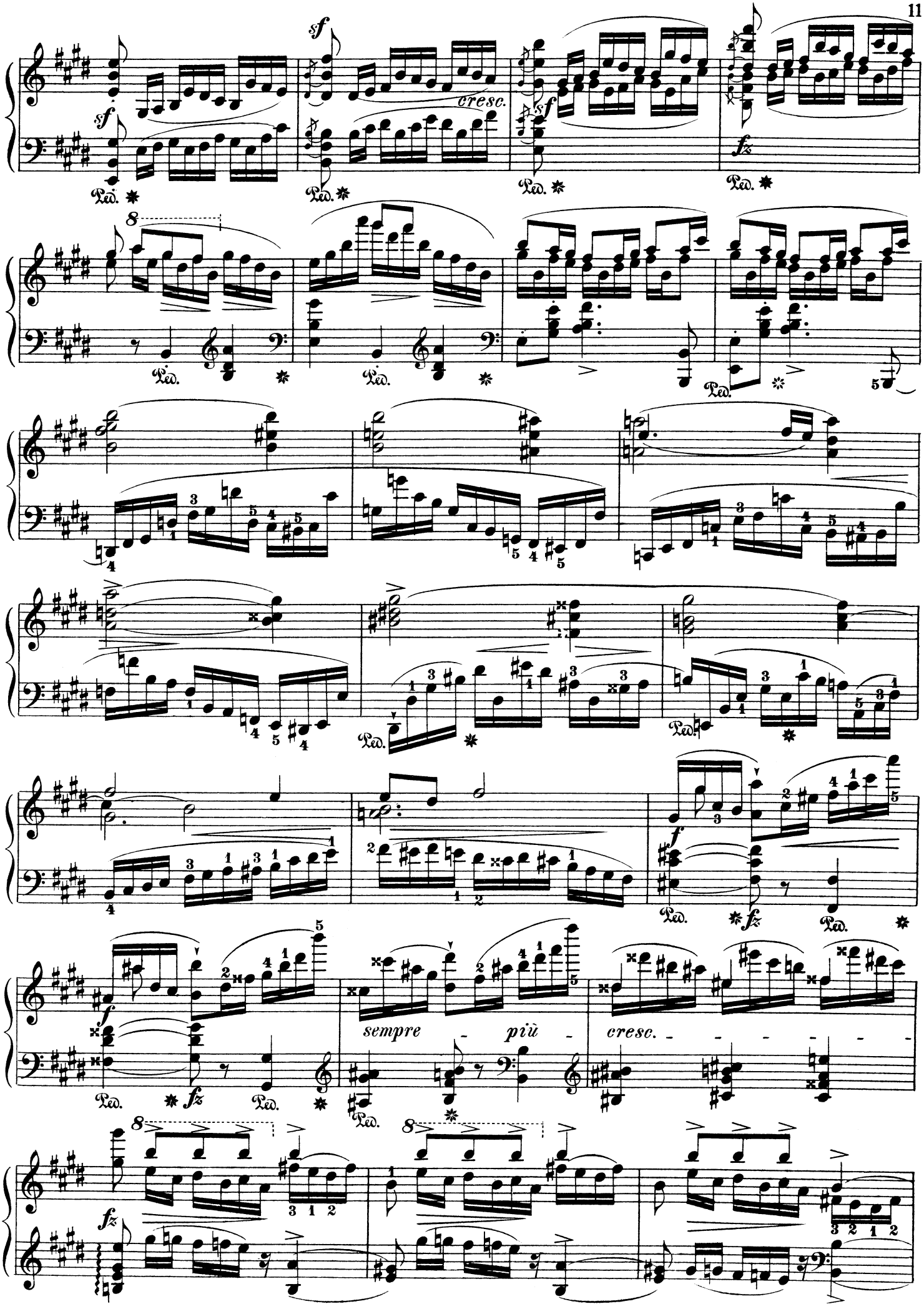

pp
risoluto
stacc.
con forza
tranquillo
fz
p
poco agitato
dimin.
p


cresc.
f
pp
f
pp
con fuoco
fz
fz
fz
cresc.


fff
dimin.
cresc.
appassionato
con forza
p dolce
con espress.
legato
Ped.


con anima
cresc.
fz
con forza
appassionato
stretto
f
p
f
p
fz
legatiss.
stretto
fz
f agitato
cresc.
stretto
ritenuto
sf
a tempo
leggierissimo
p
Ped.


poco -
- - cresc.
a tempo
risoluto
ritenuto
fz
sempre cresc.
cresc.
f
sf
fz
delicatissimo
cresc.
dolce
ben marcato
cresc.
Ped.


sf
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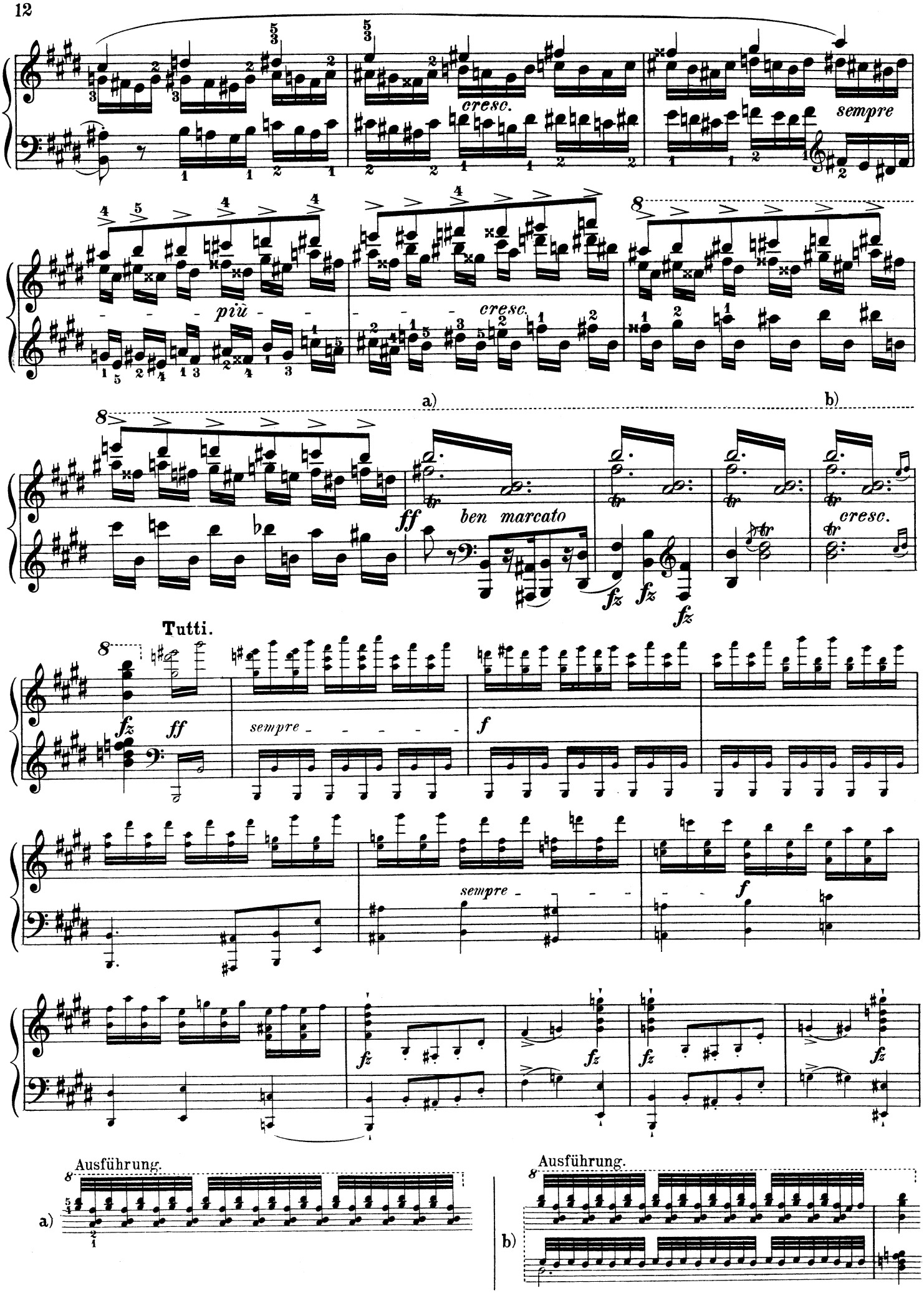
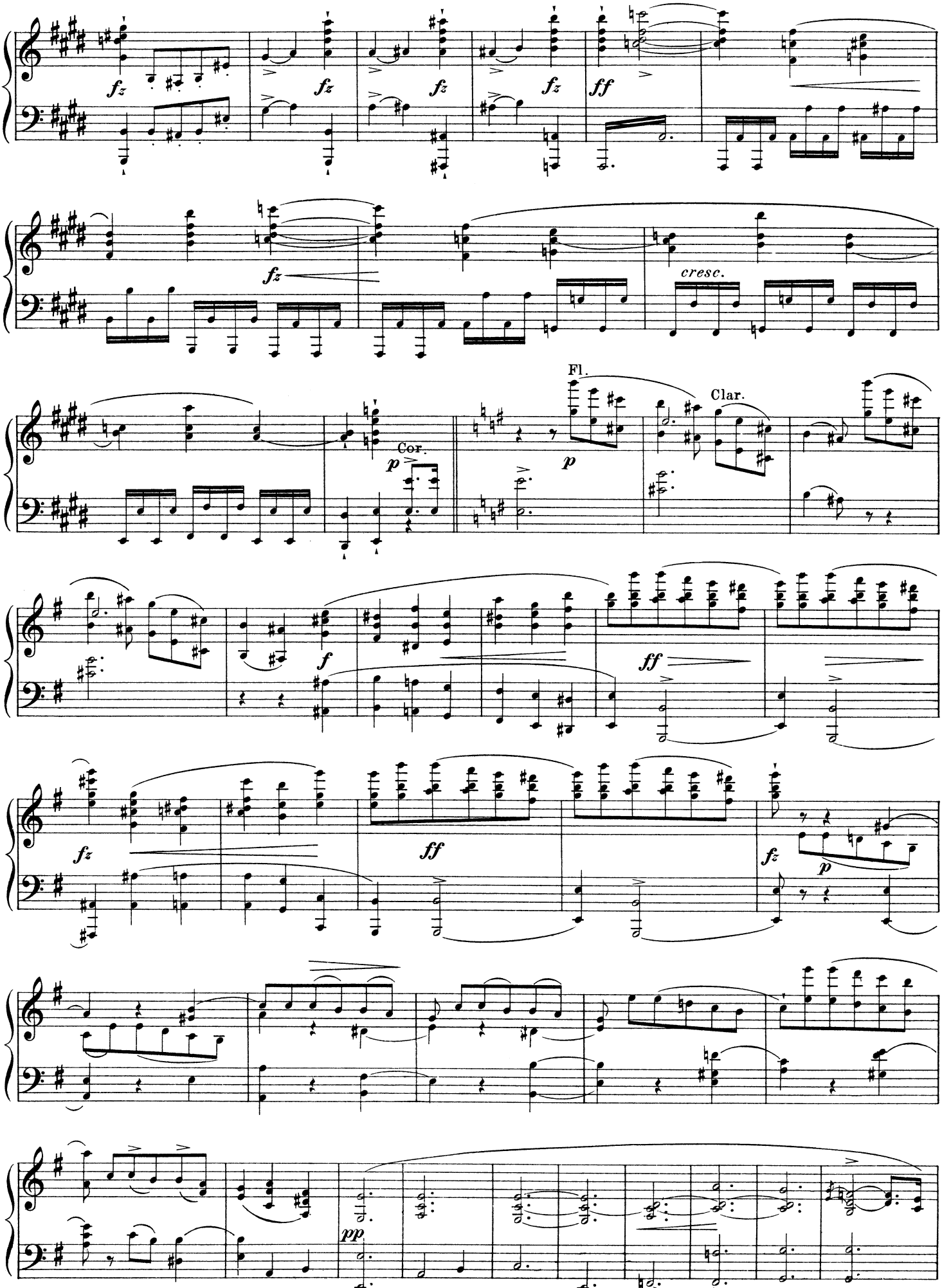
cresc.


cresc.
sempre
più
cresc.
a)
b)
ff
ben marcato
cresc.
Tutti.
sempre
f
sempre
f
fz
Ausführung.
a)
Ausführung.
b)


fz
fz
fz
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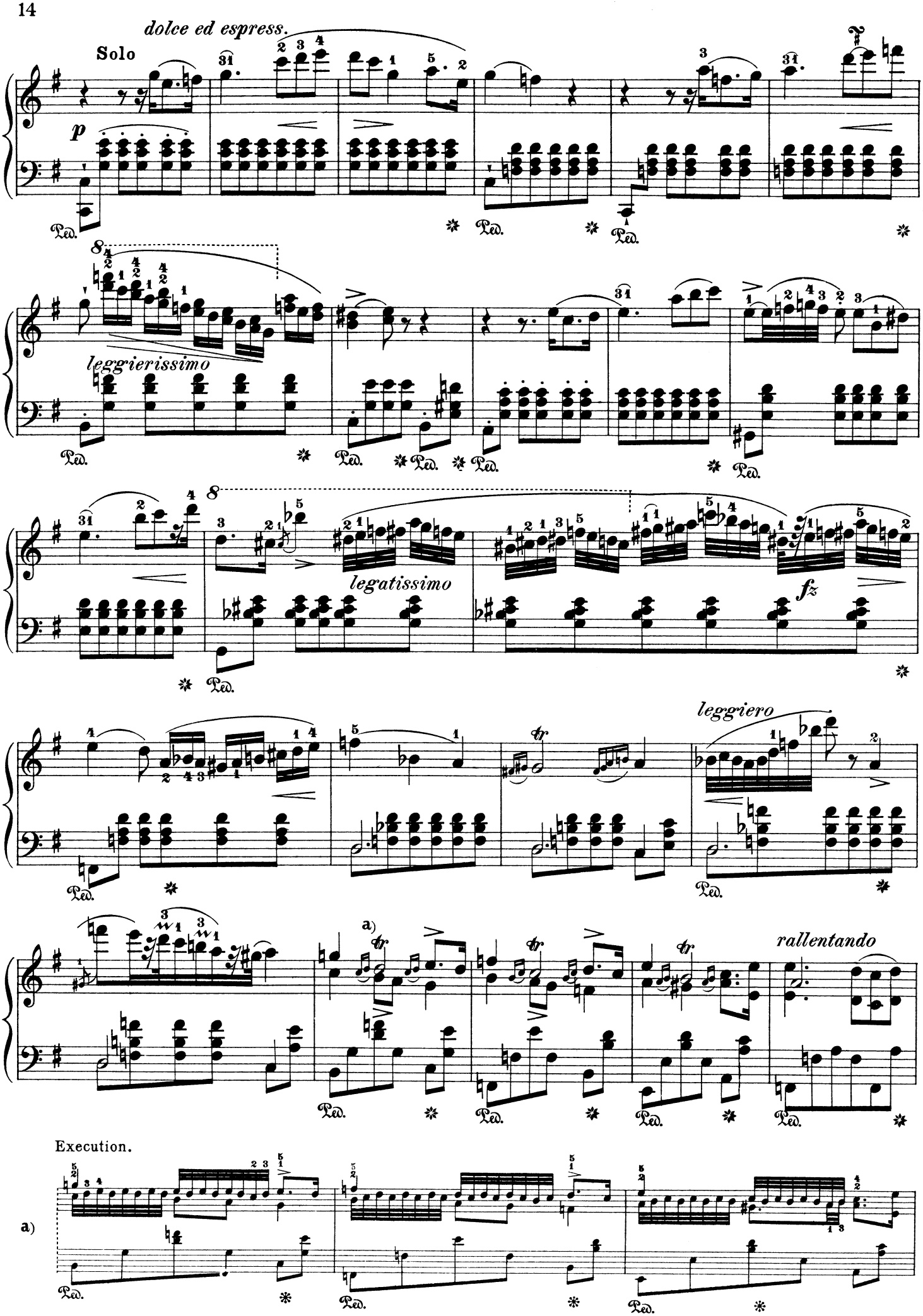
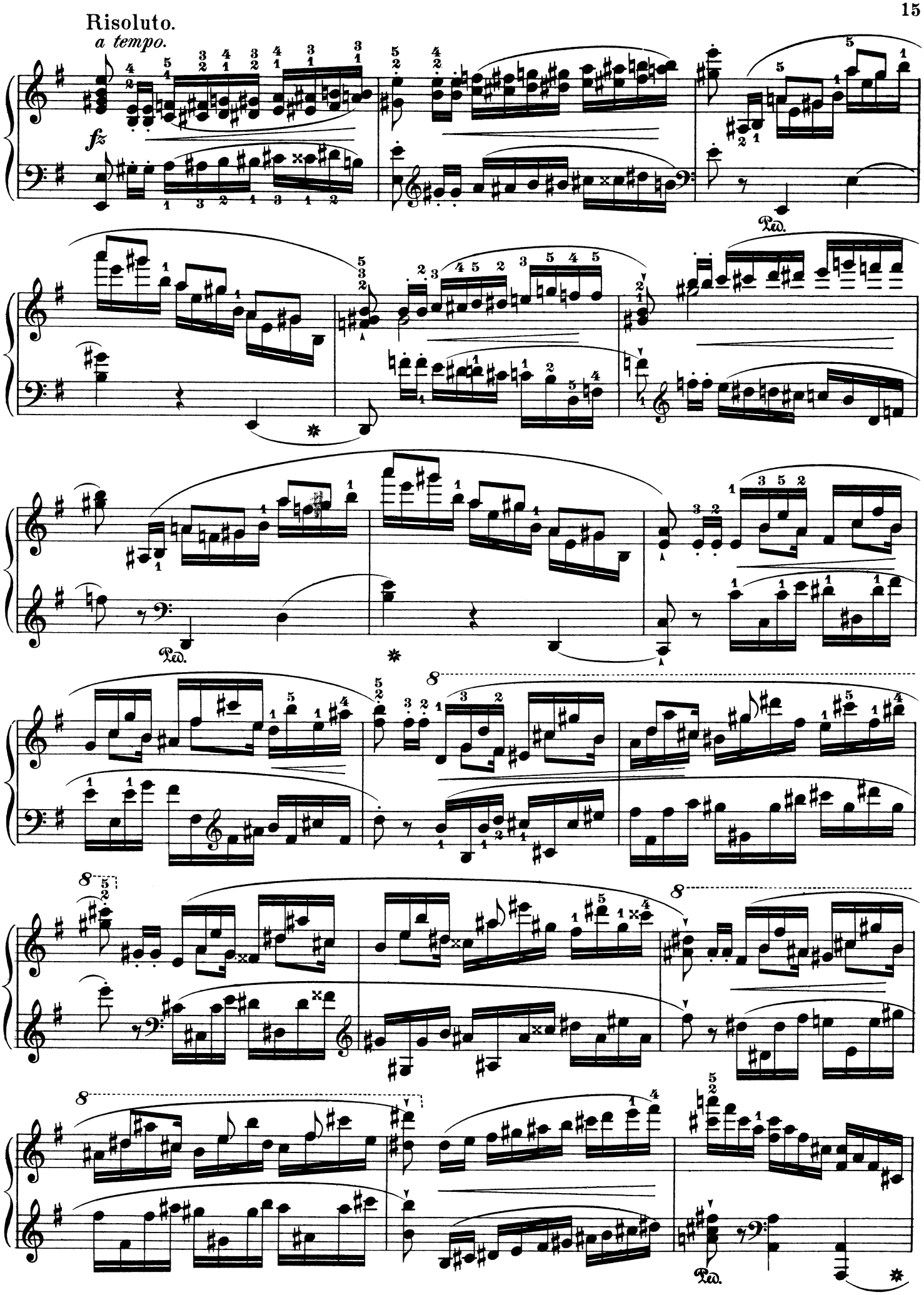
fz
cresc.
Cor.
p
Fl.
p
Clar.
f
ff
fz
ff
fz
p
pp

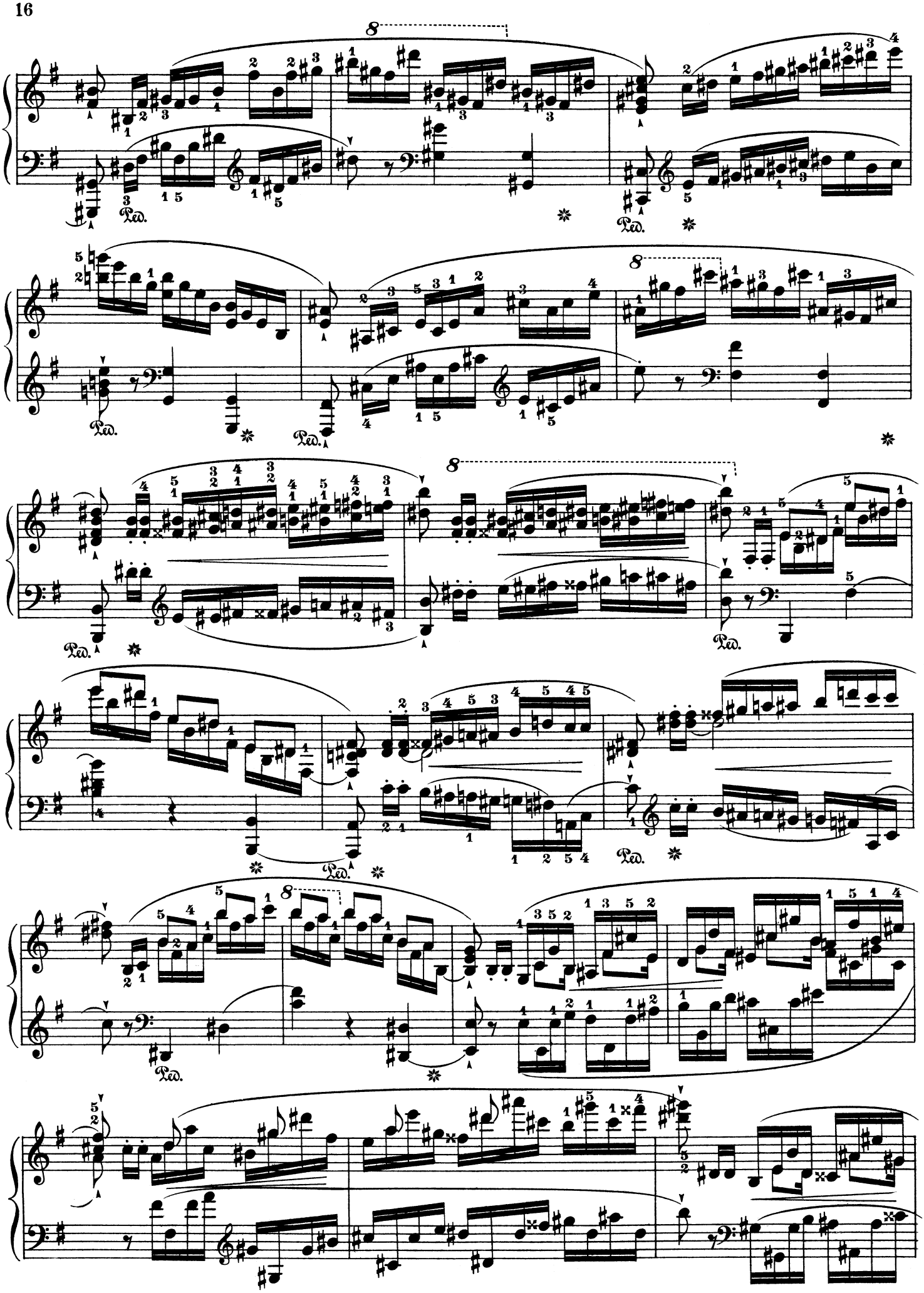

dolce ed espress.
Solo
p
leggierissimo
legatissimo
fz
leggiero
a)
rallentando
Ped.

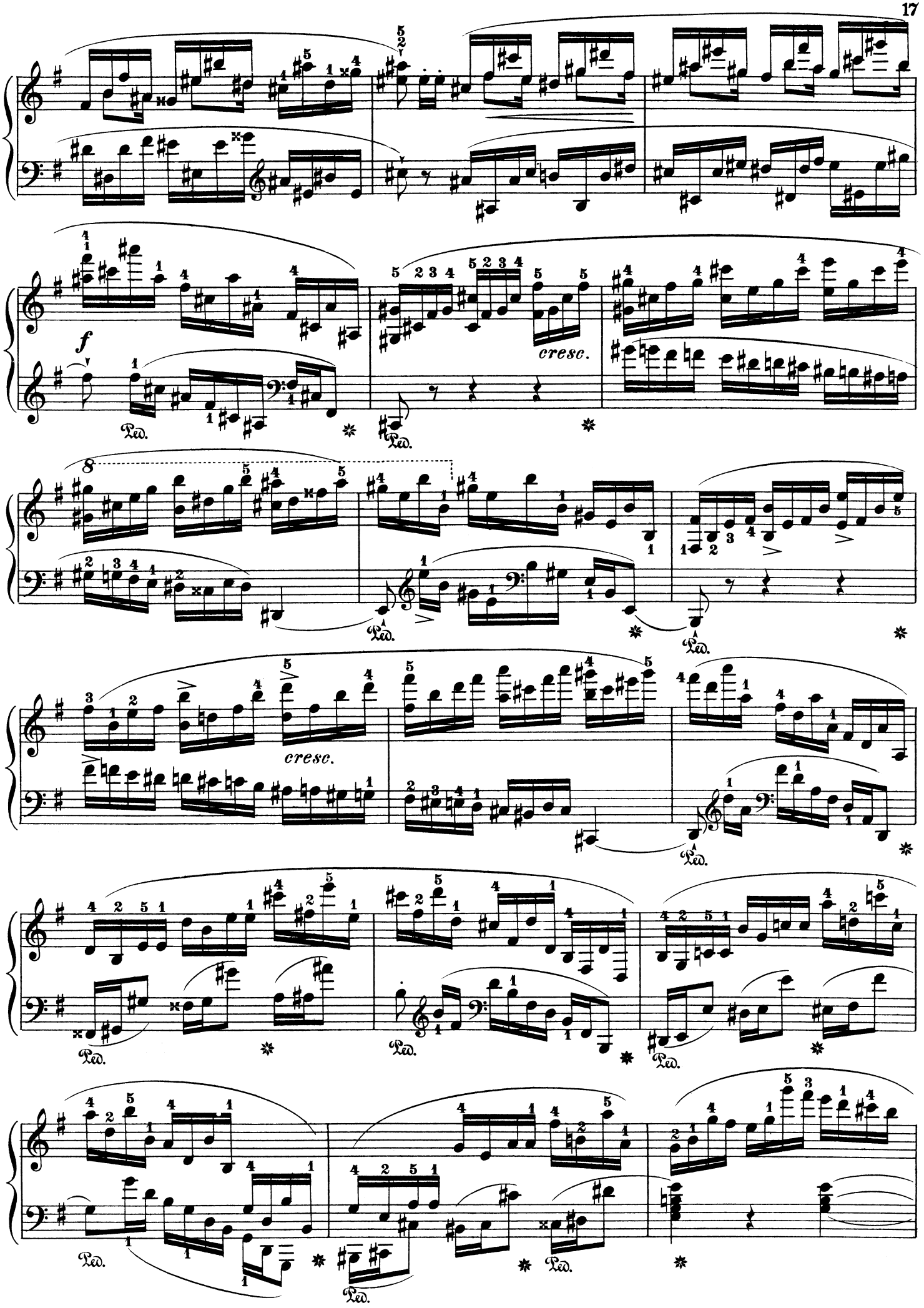
Execution.

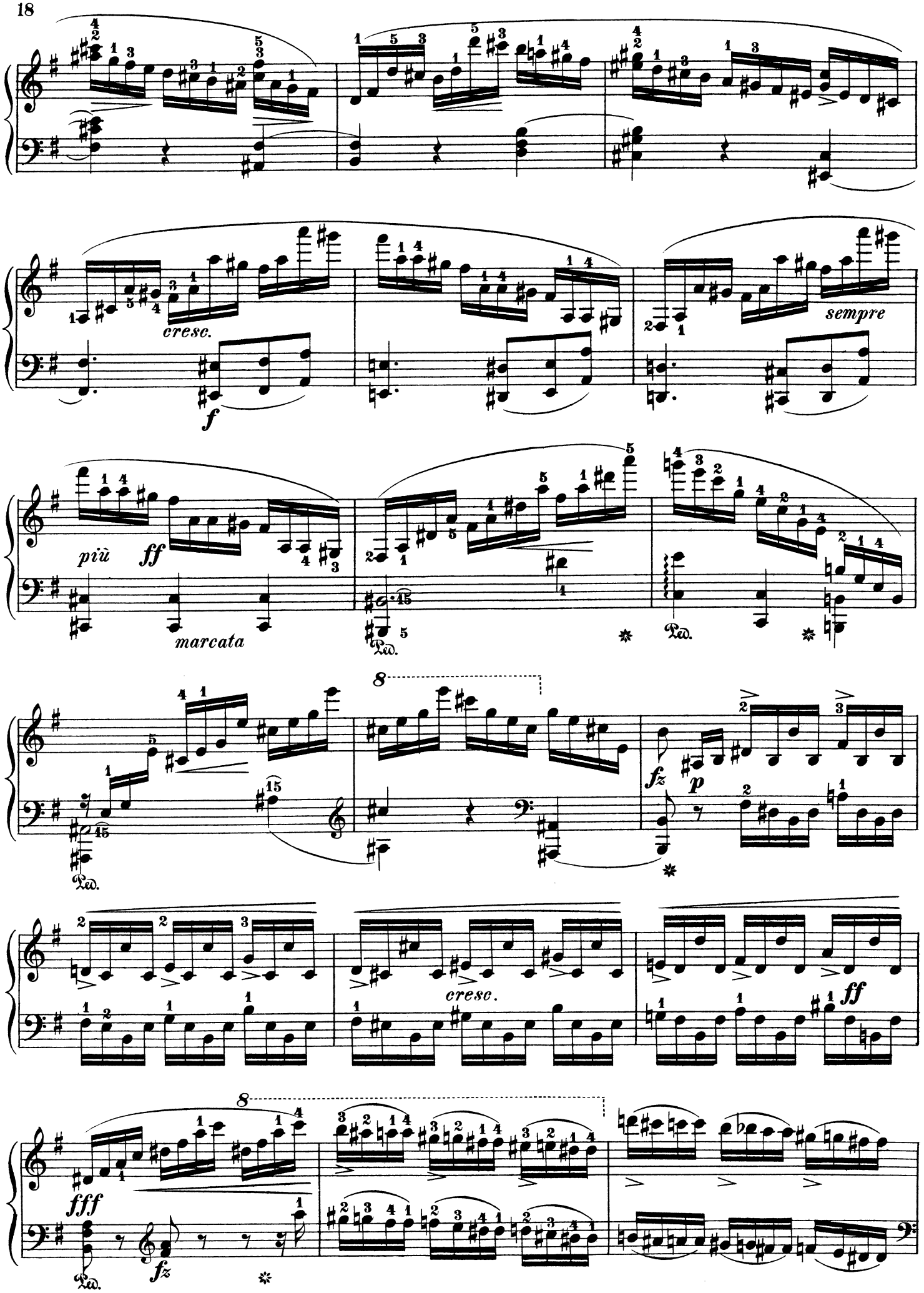
a)

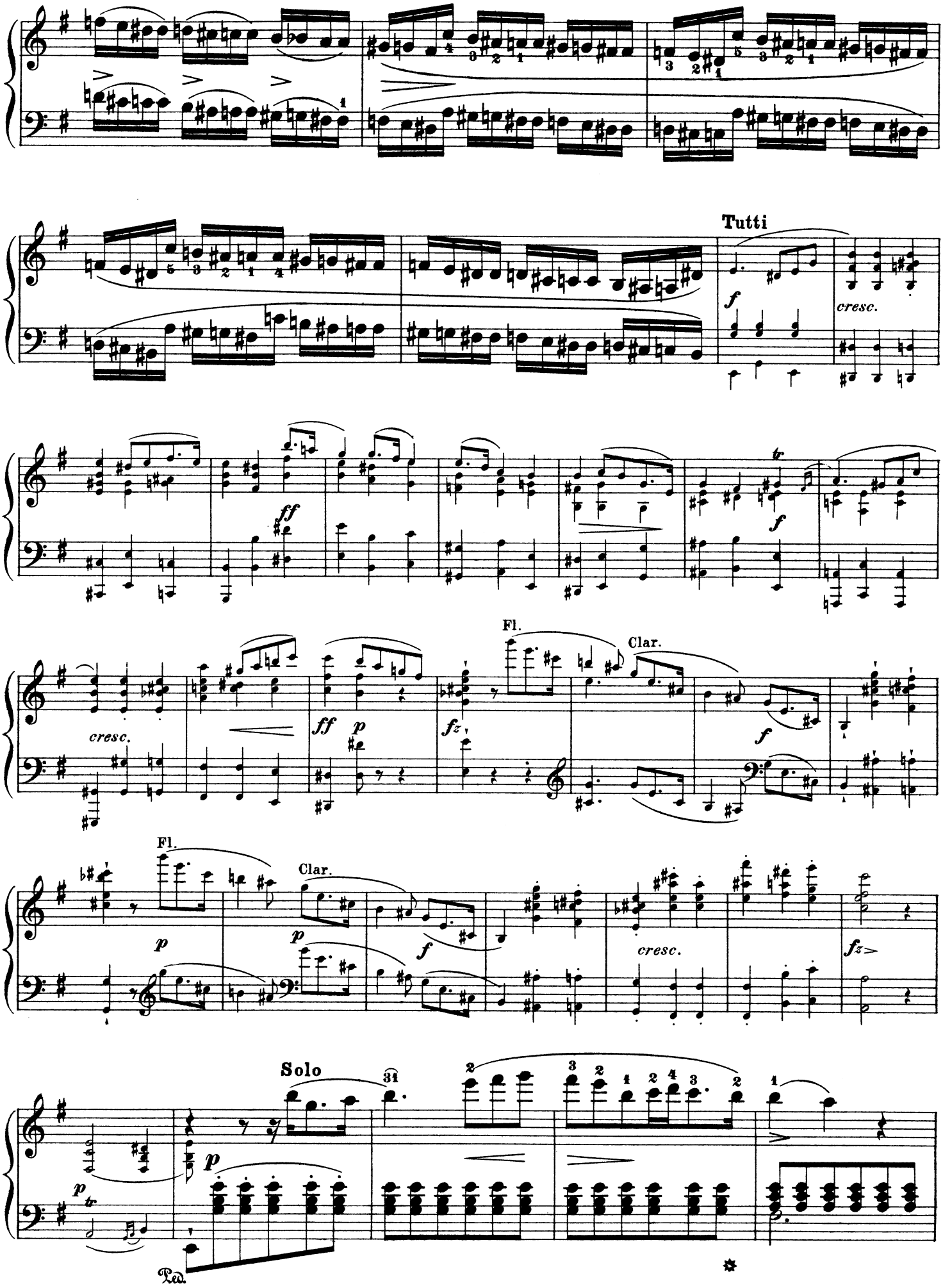
Ped.

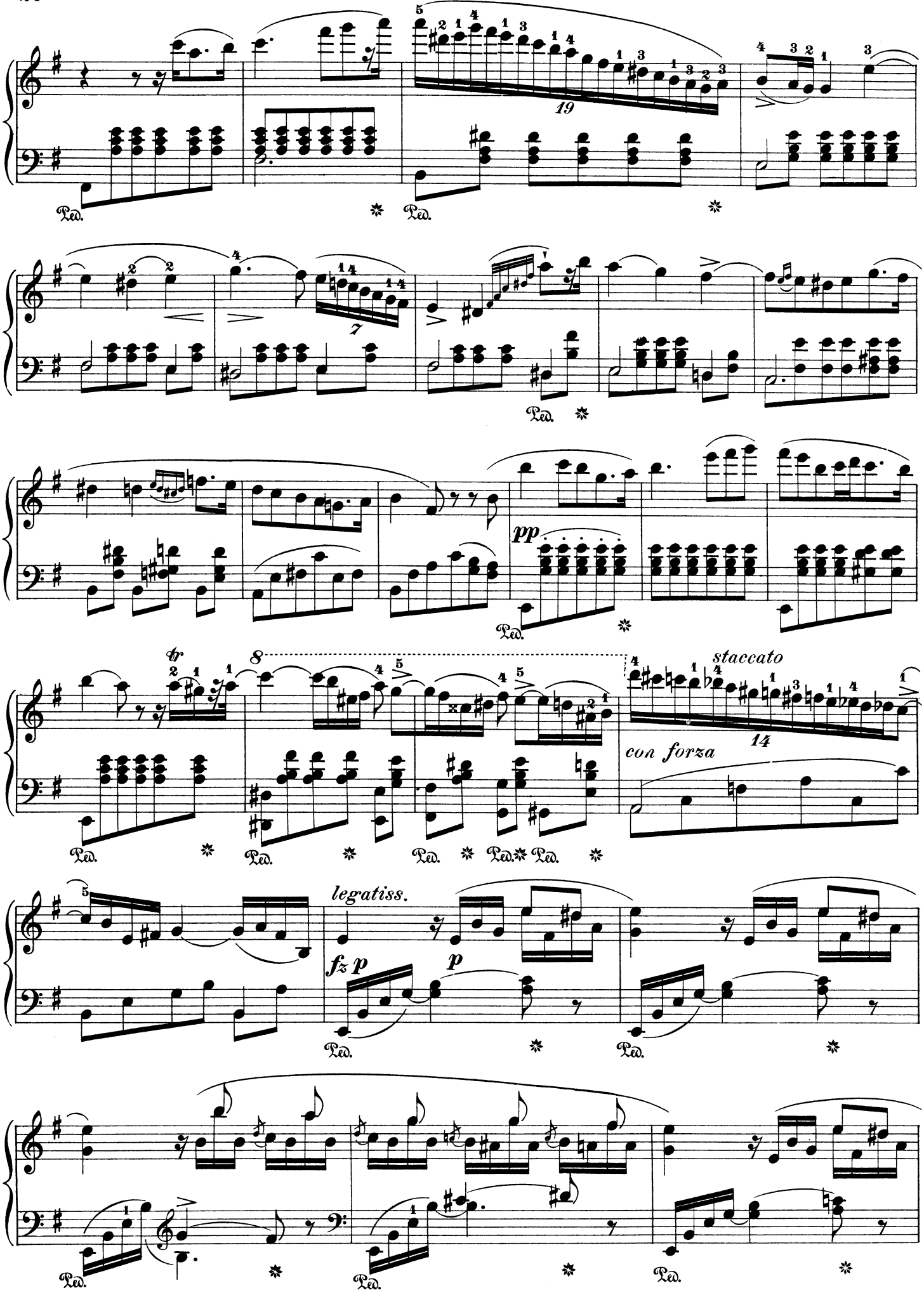

Risoluto.
a tempo.
fz
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

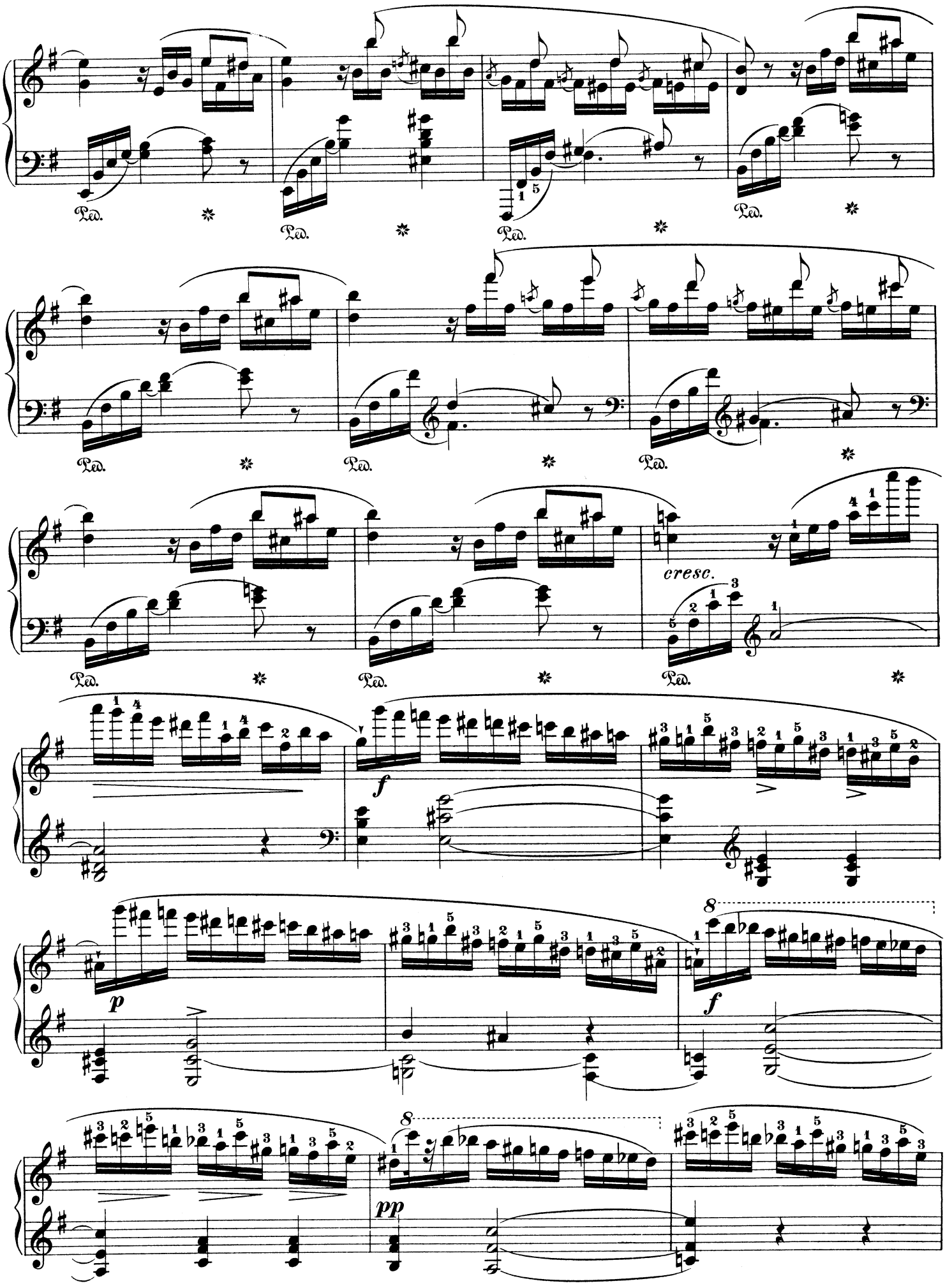

8
Ped.
Ped.
8
Ped.
Ped.
8
Ped.
Ped.
8
Ped.
Ped.

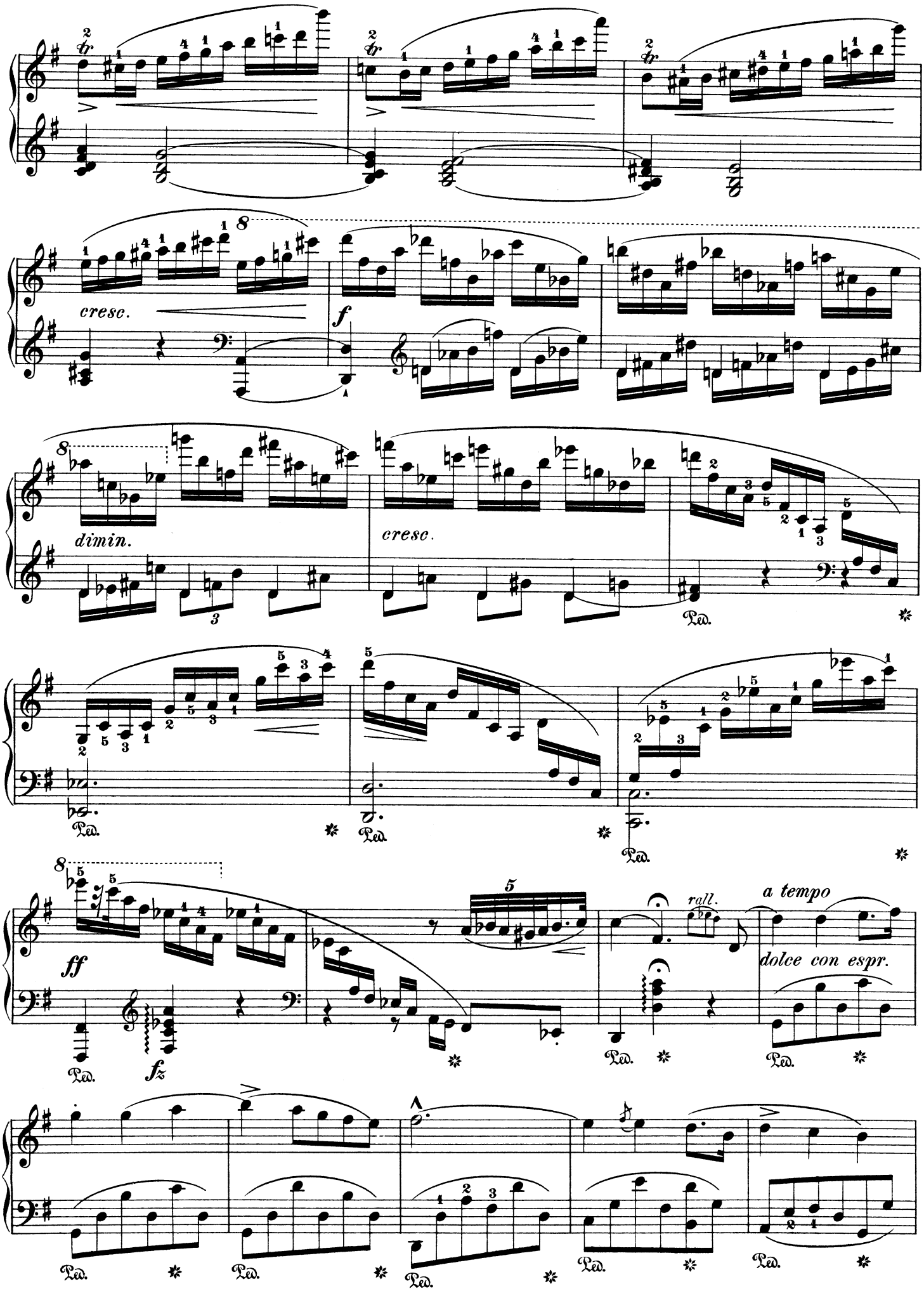

f
cresc.
Ped.
cresc.
Ped.


cresc.
f
sempre
più
ff
marcata
Ped.
8
fz
p
cresc.
ff
8
fff
fz
Ped.


Tutti
cresc.
ff
f
tr
cresc.
ff
p
fz
Fl.
Clar.
f
Fl.
p
Clar.
p
f
cresc.
fz
Solo
31
p
p
tr
Ped.


19
7
pp
tr
8
staccato
14
con forza
legatiss.
fz p
p
Ped.


Ped.
cresc.
f
p
f
8
pp


cresc.
f
dimin.
cresc.
ff
fz
rall.
a tempo
dolce con espr.
Ped.

a)

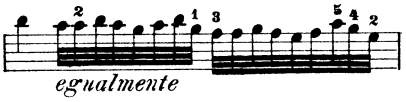
legatiss.

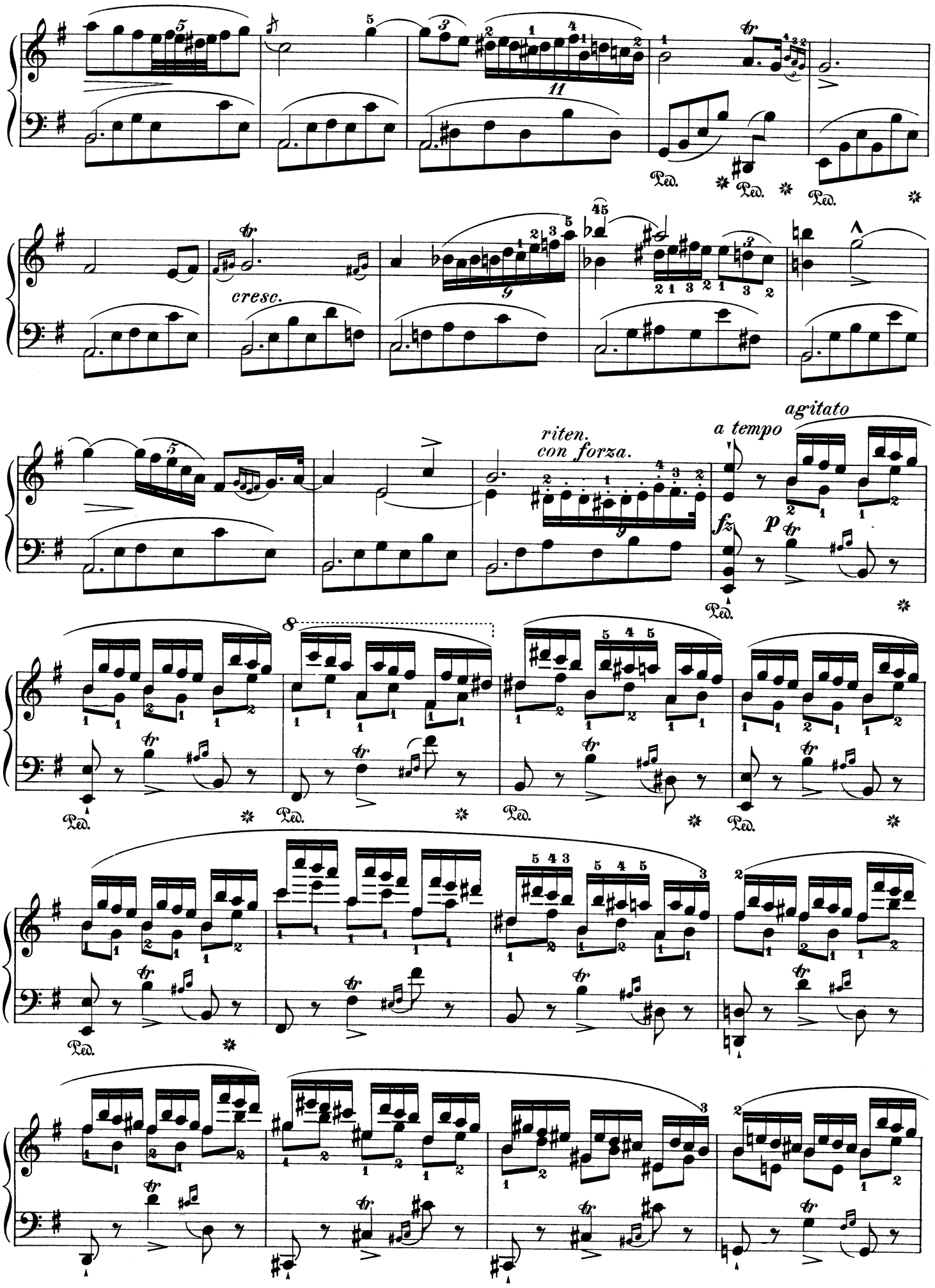
ffz

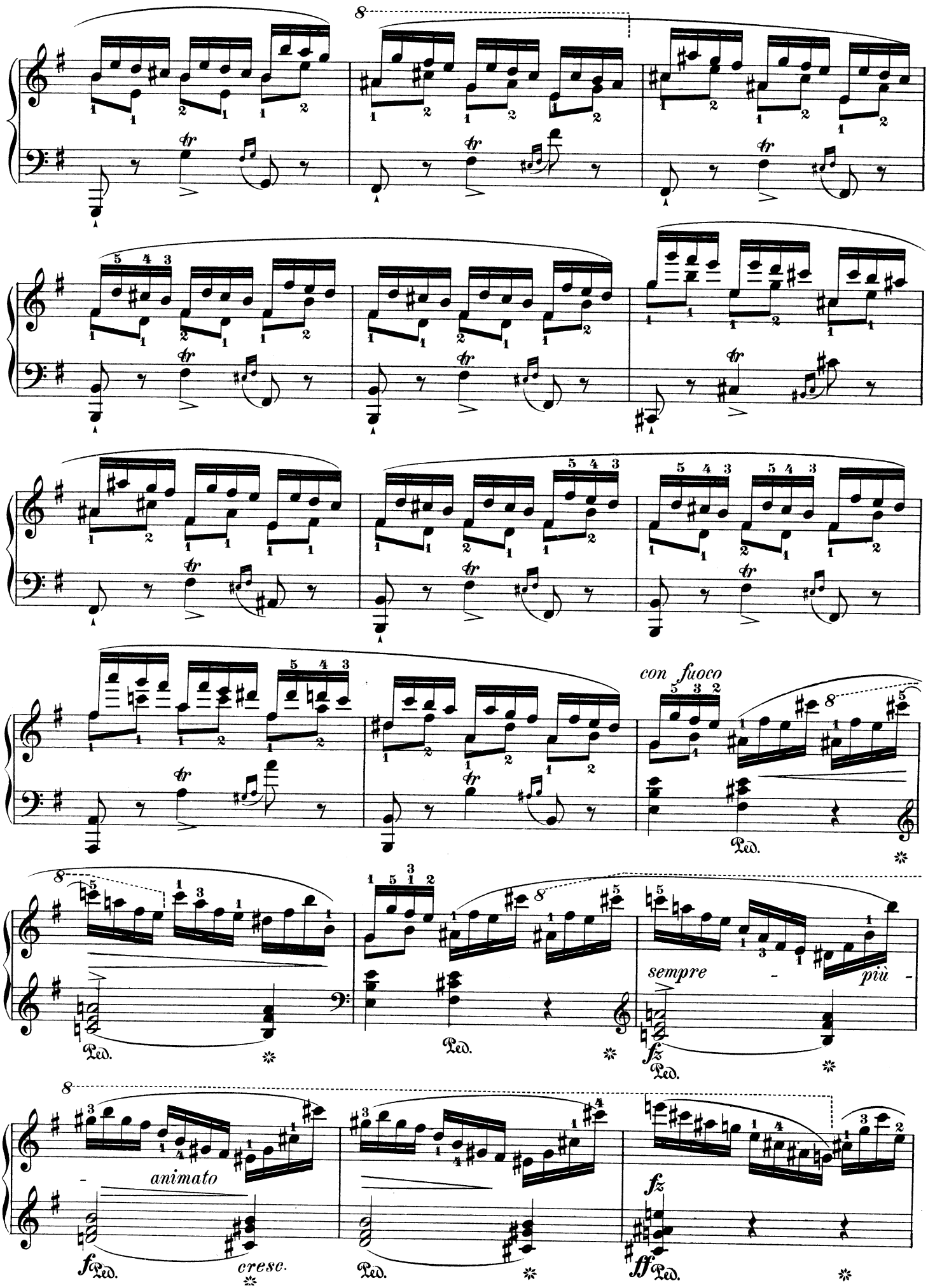
stretto

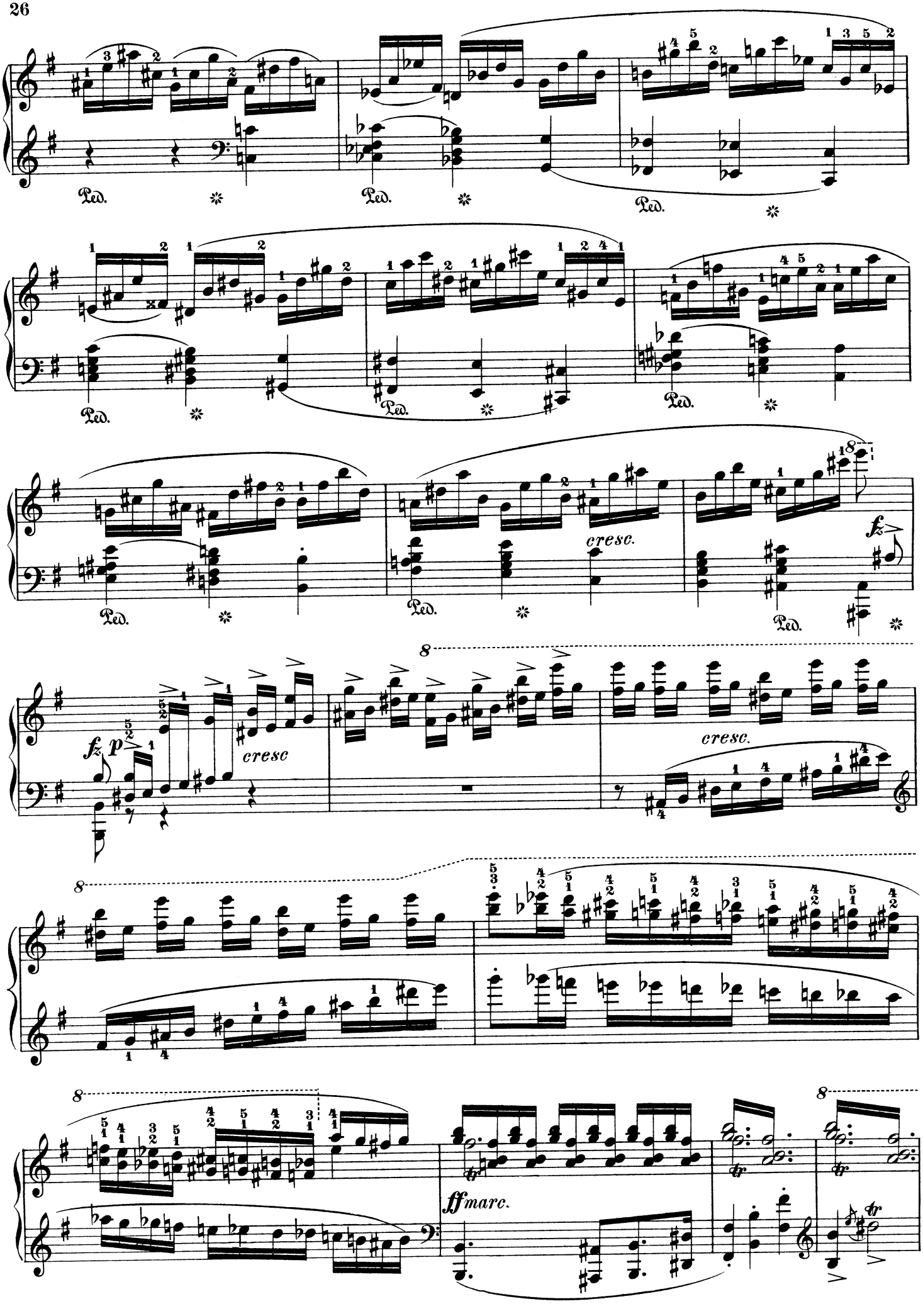
sempre stretto

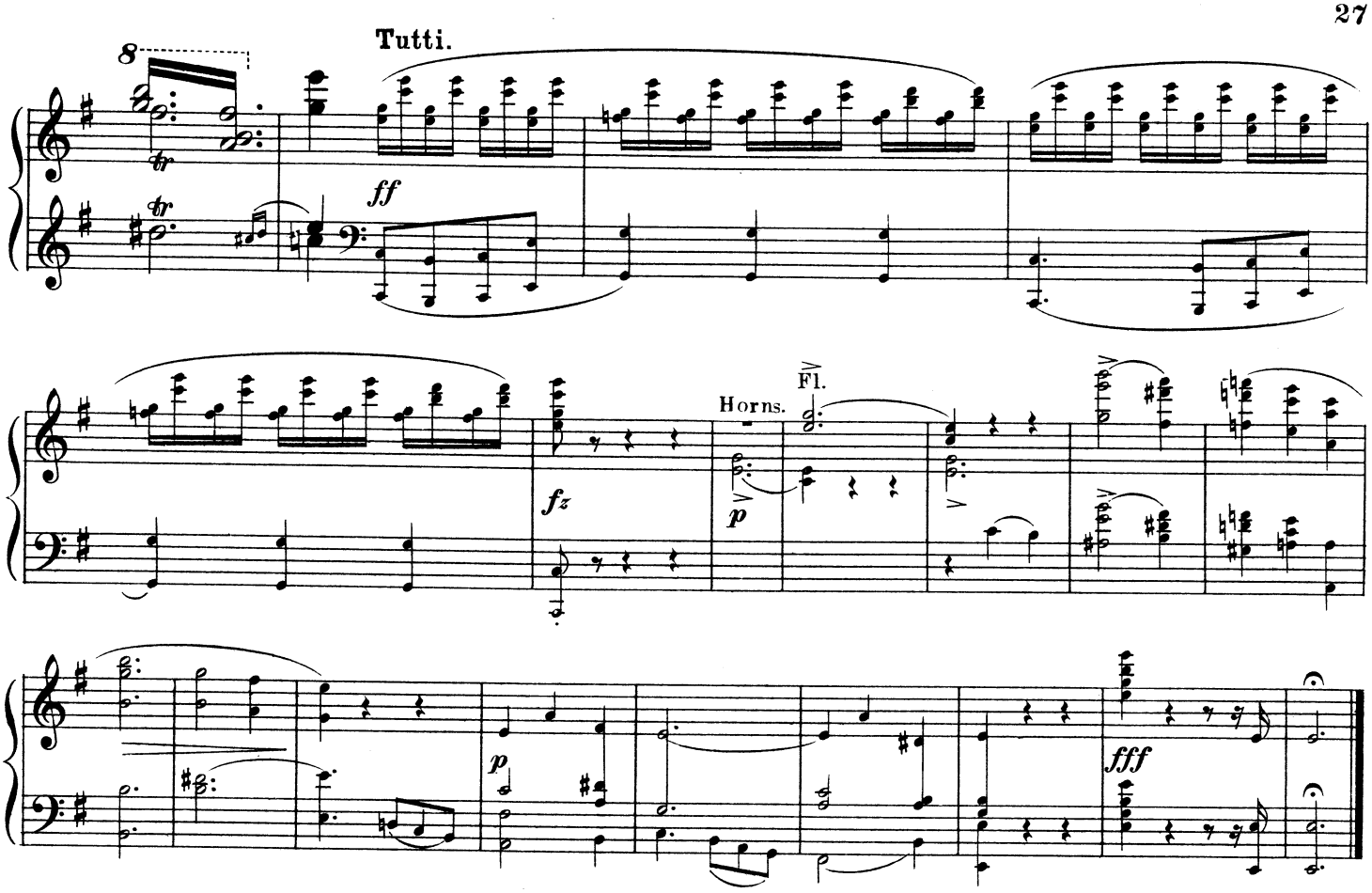
a) Variante by Chopin




cresc.
riten.
con forza.
a tempo
agitato
fz
p
Ped.

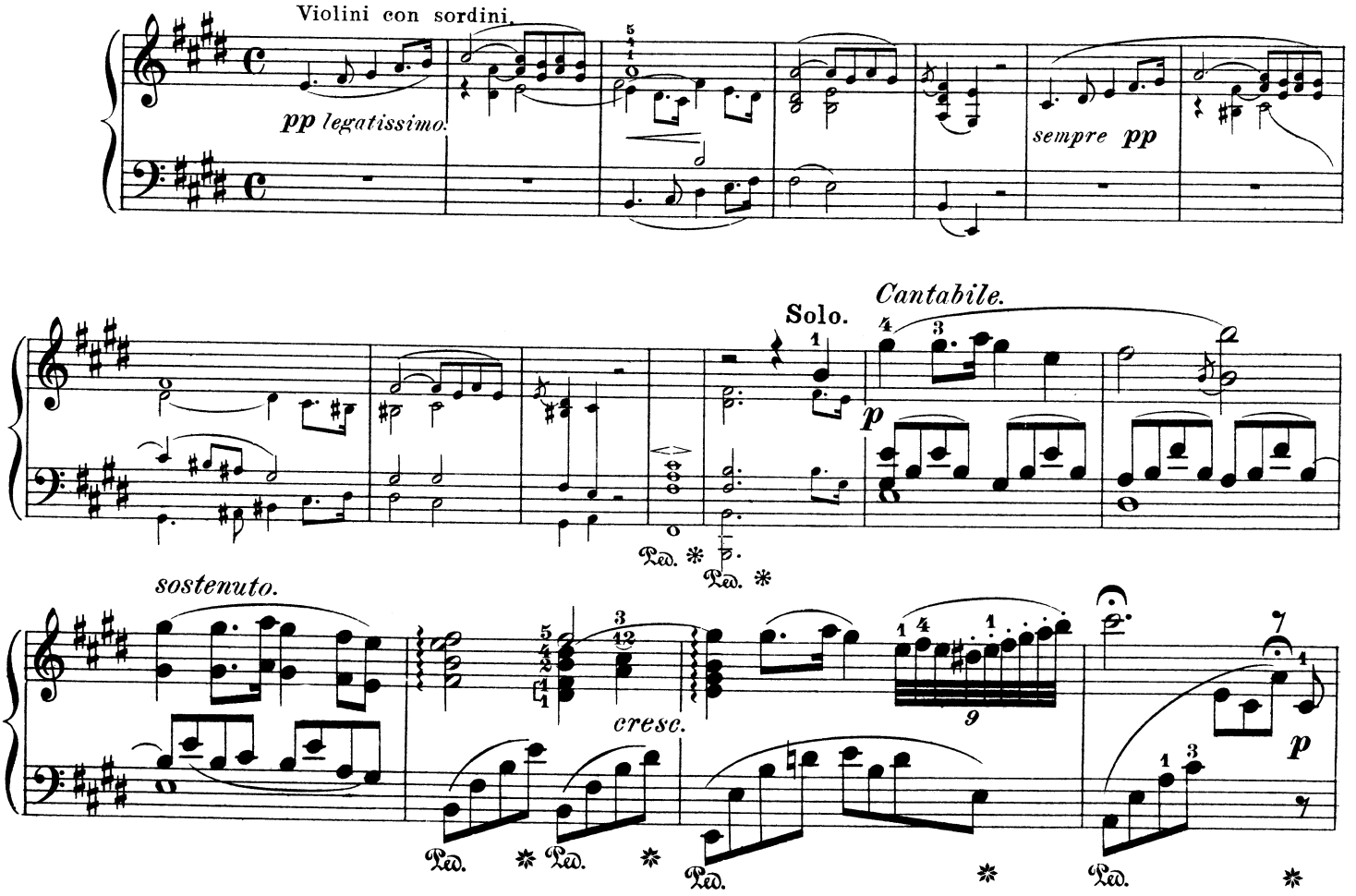

con fuoco
sempre - più -
animato
cresc.

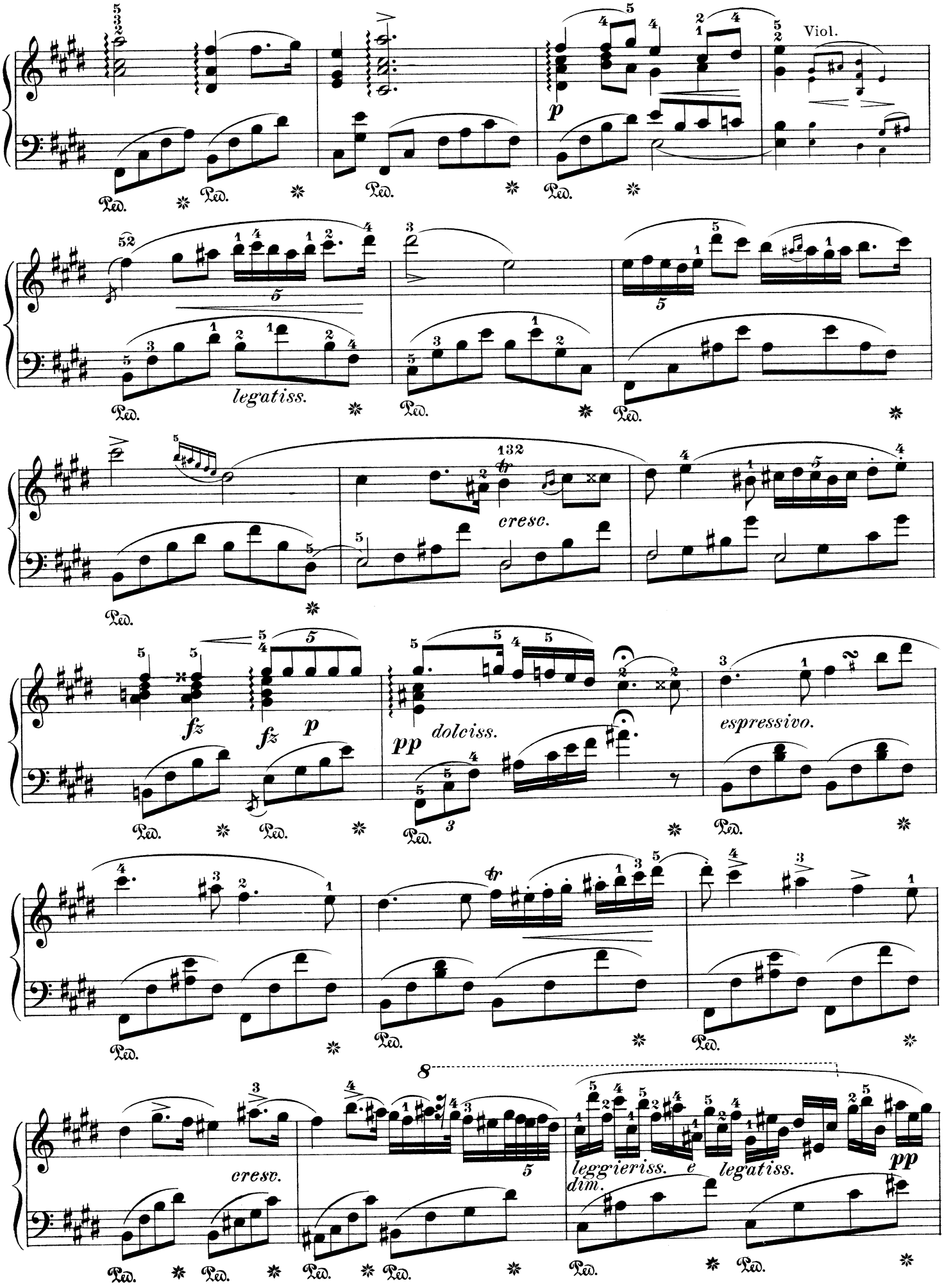

Ped.
cresc.
fz
fz p
cresc
cresc.
ff marc.

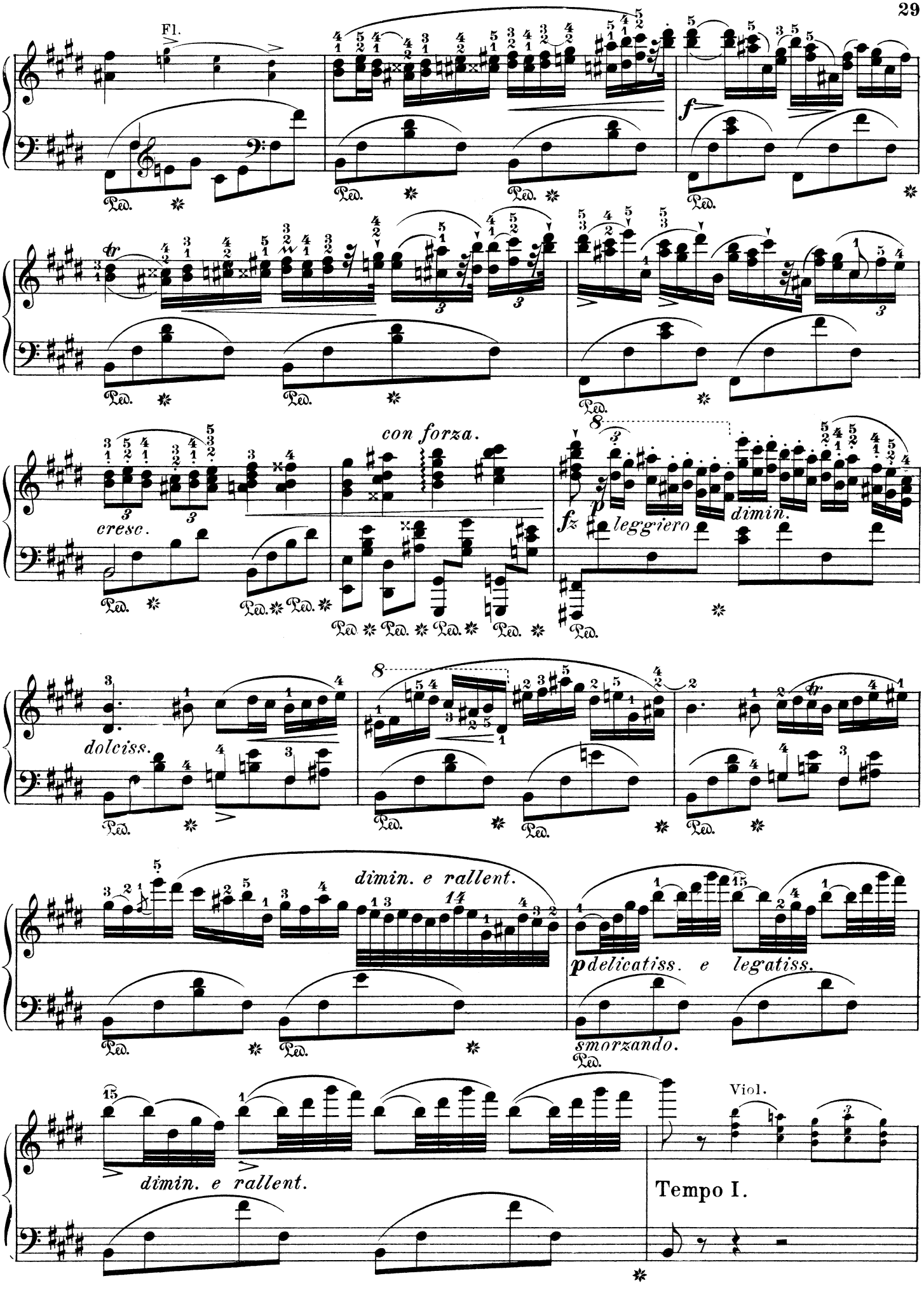


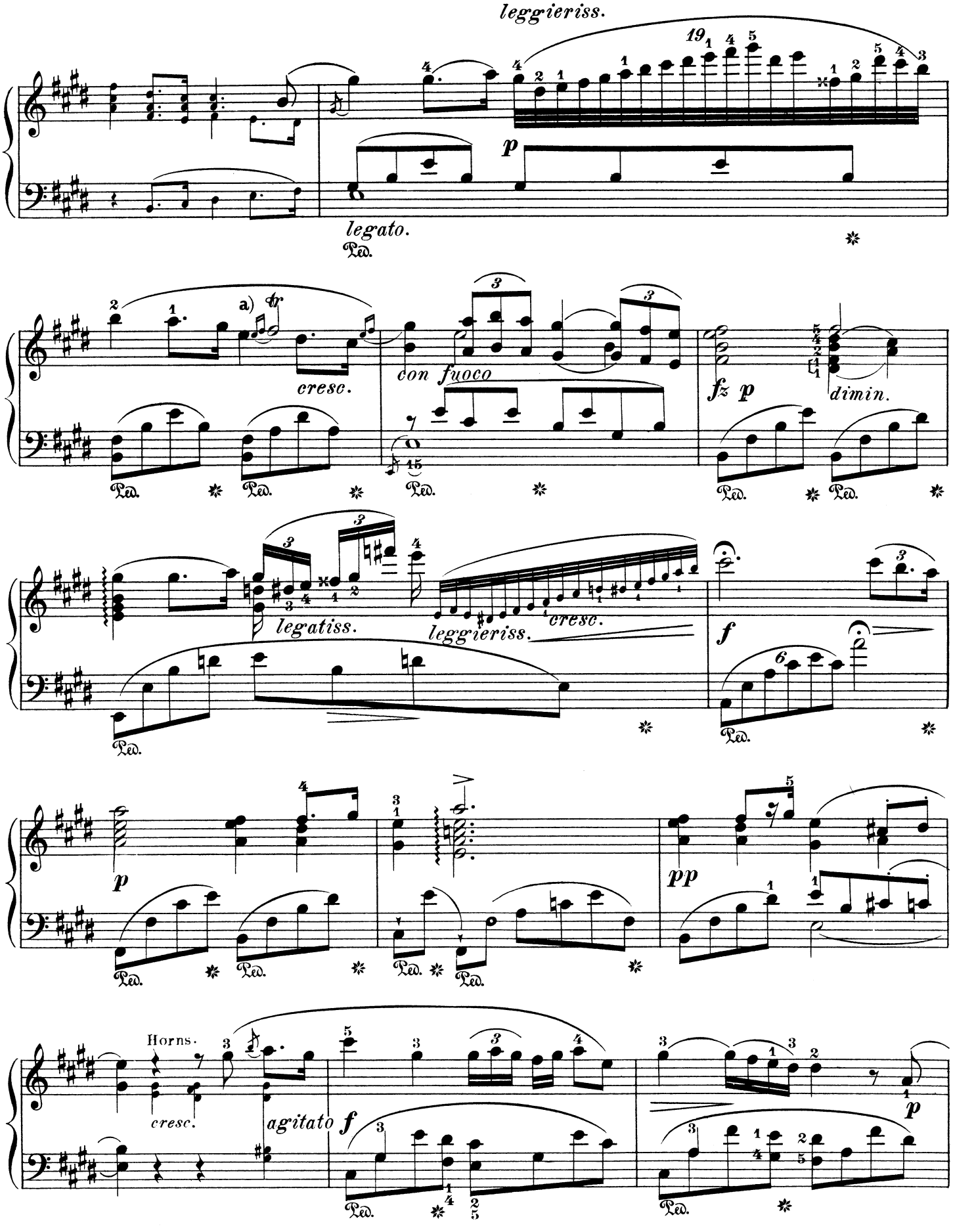
Romance.

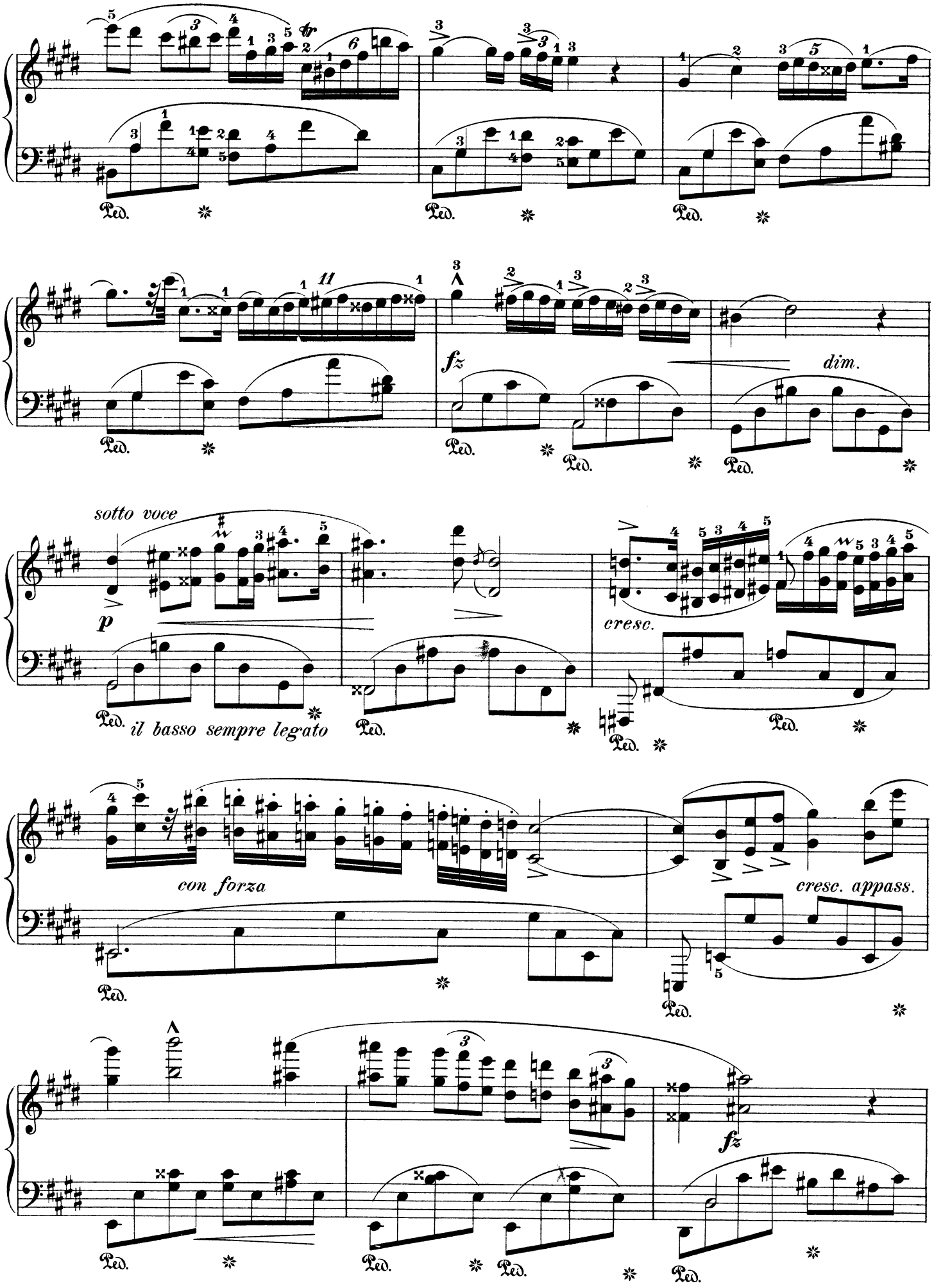
Larghetto. (♩ = 80)

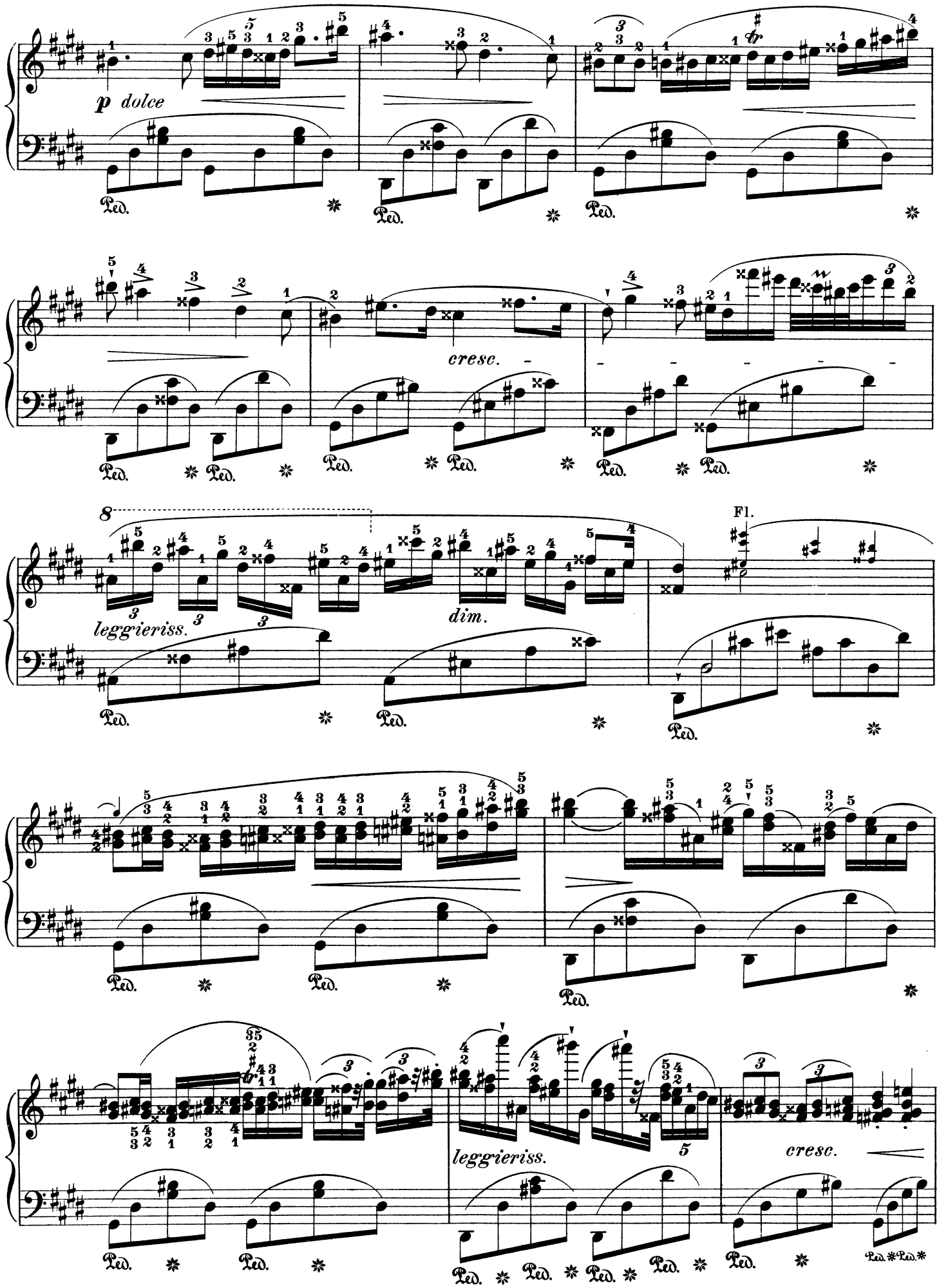


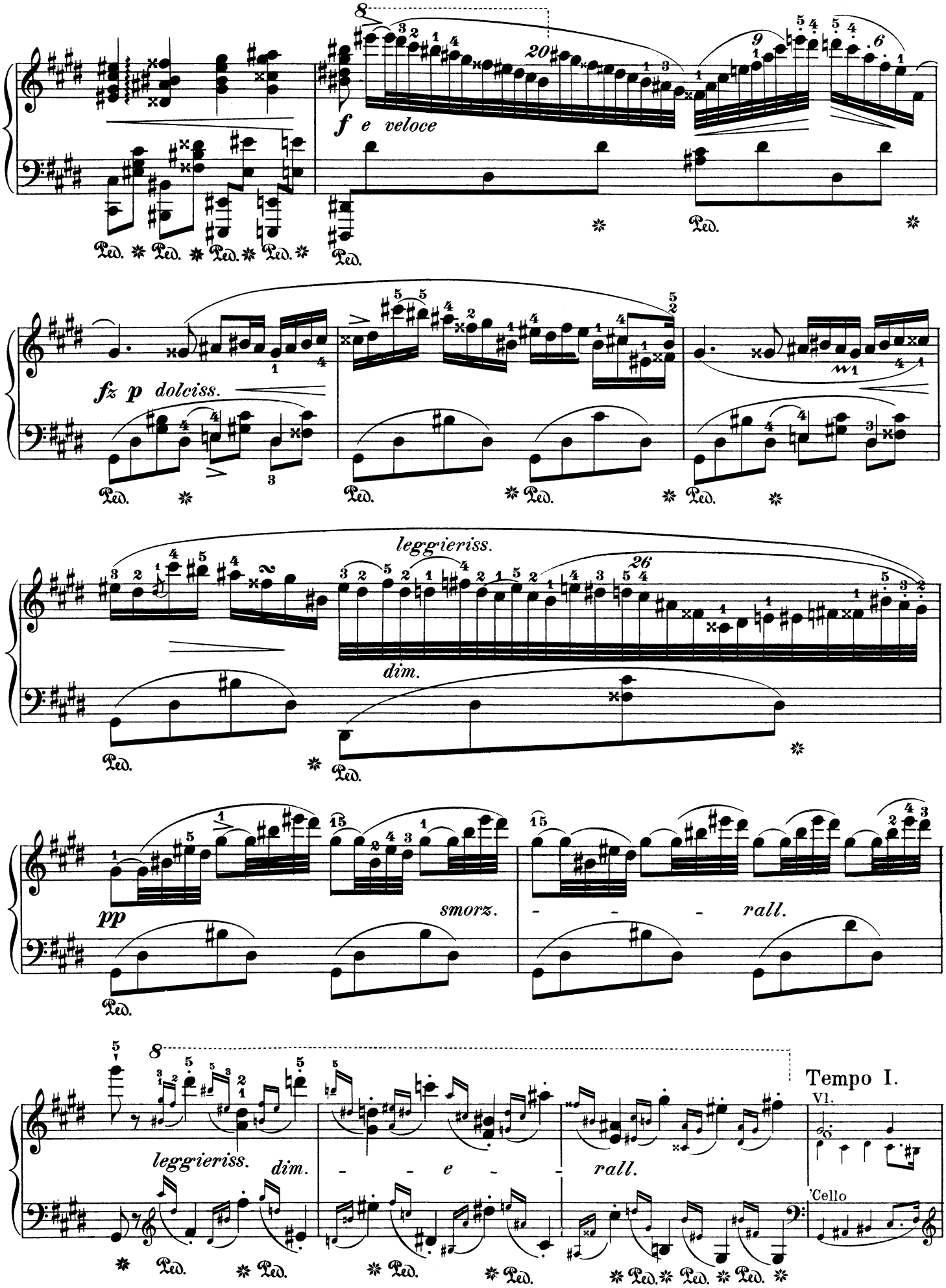

Viol.
p
legatiss.
cresc.
fz
fz
p
pp
dolciss.
espressivo.
cresc.
leggieriss.
dim.
e
legatiss.
pp
8

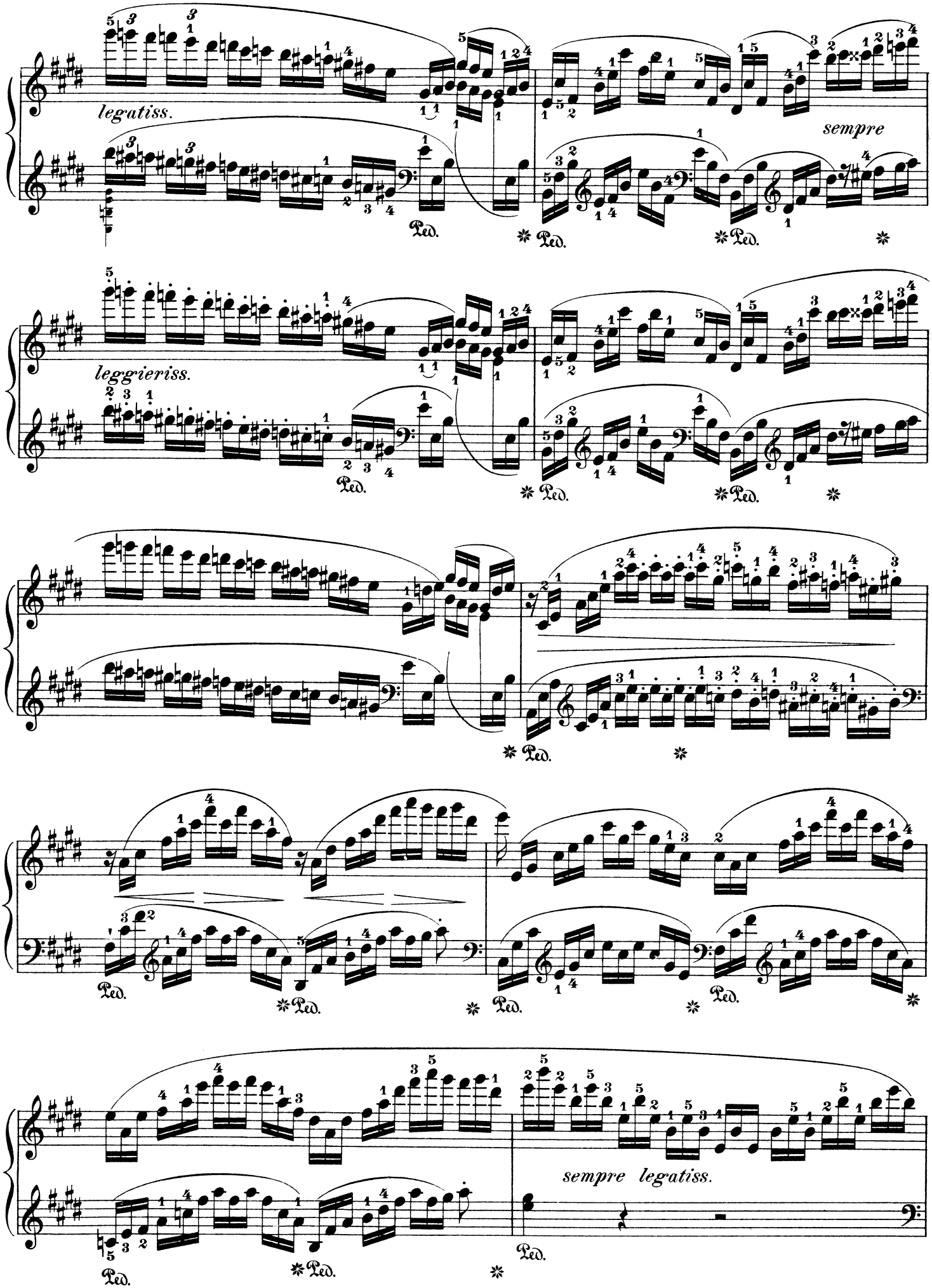

Fl.
Ped.
f
cresc.
con forza.
fz
p leggiero
dimin.
dolciss.
dimin. e rallent.
14
pdelicatiss. e legatiss.
smorzando.
dimin. e rallent.
Viol.
Tempo I.

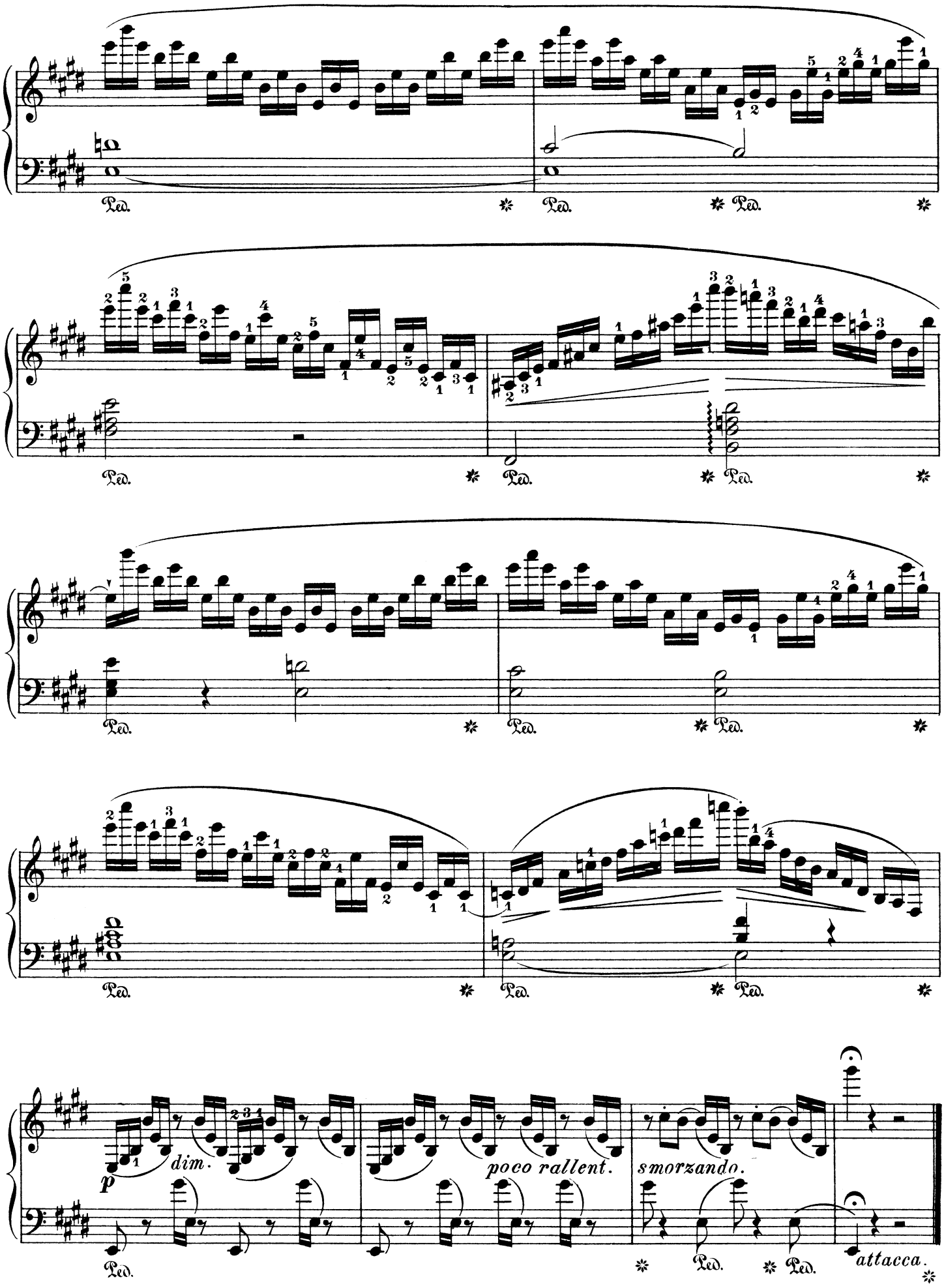

leggieriss.
p
legato.
Ped.
a)
cresc.
con fuoco
fz p
dimin.
legatiss.
leggieriss.
cresc.
f
p
pp
Horns.
cresc.
agitato
f
p
Execution.
a)


Ped.
fz
dim.
sotto voce
p
il basso sempre legato
cresc.
con forza
cresc. appass.
fz


p dolce
Ped.
cresc.
8
leggieriss.
dim.
Fl.
leggieriss.
cresc.


f e veloce
fz p dolciss.
leggieriss.
dim.
pp
smorz.
rall.
leggieriss. dim.
- - e - -
rall.
Tempo I.
Vl.
Cello
Ped.


legatiss.
sempre
leggieriss.
Ped.
sempre legatiss.

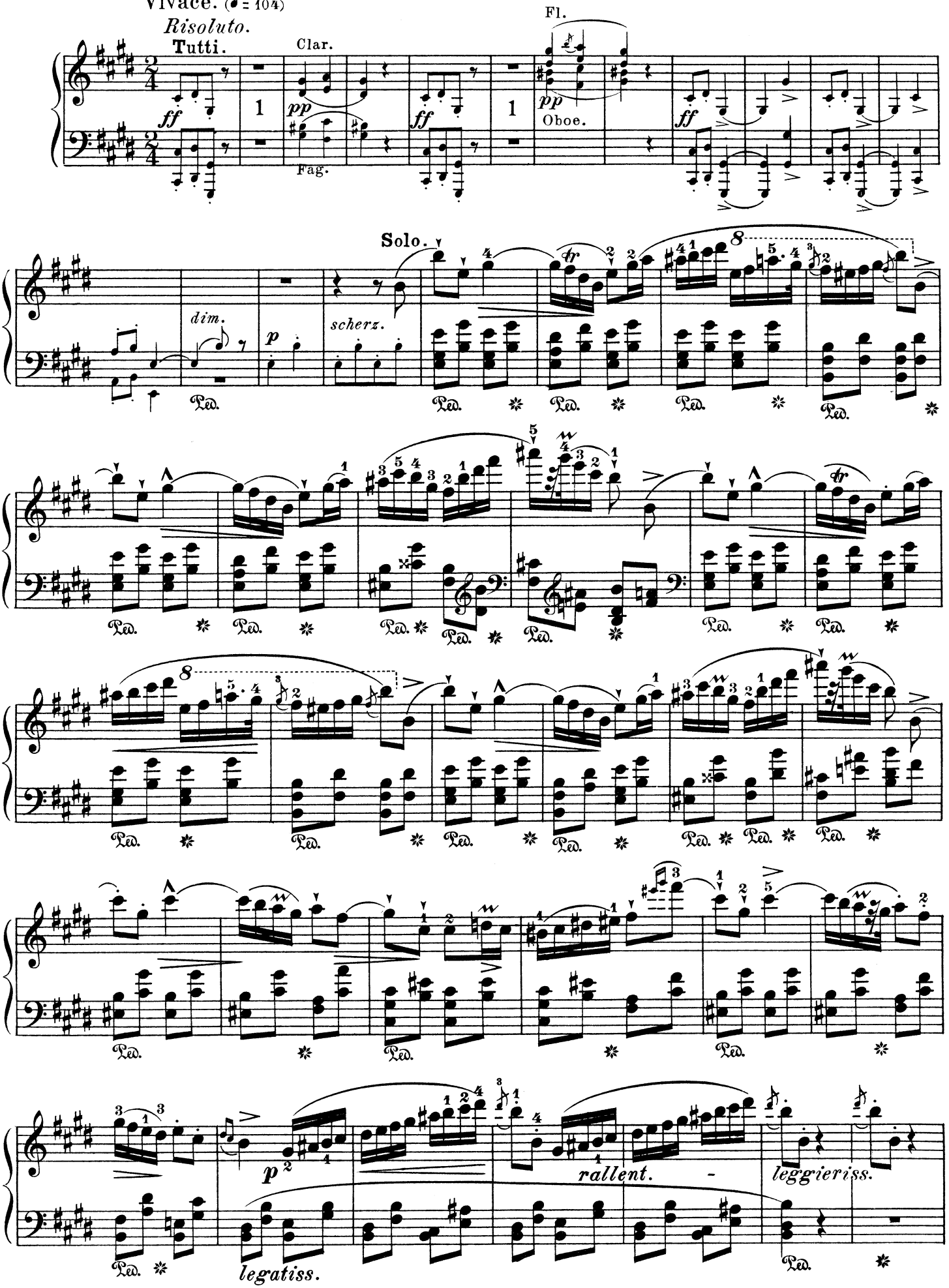

Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
p
dim.
poco rallent.
smorzando.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
attacca.

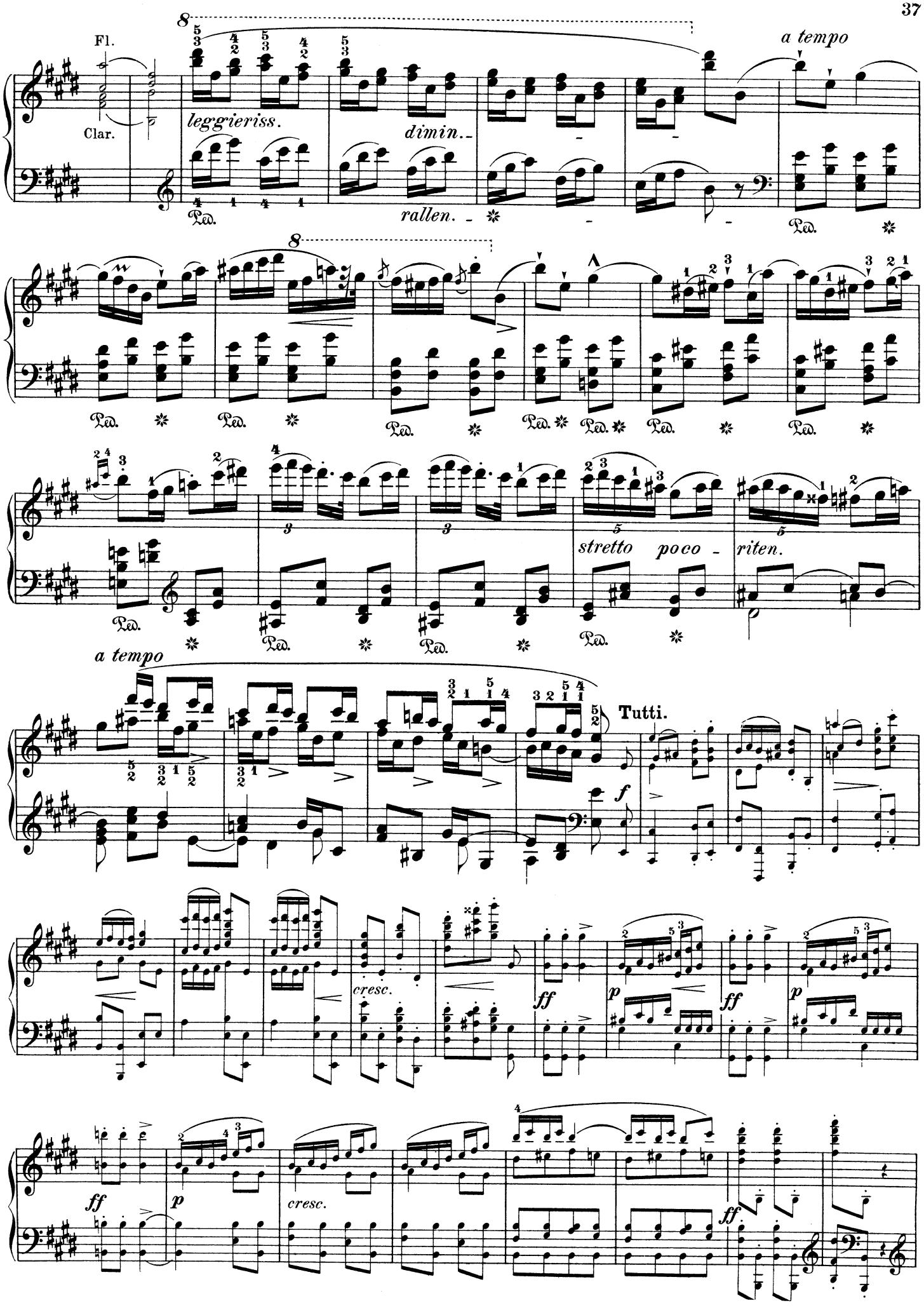
Rondo.

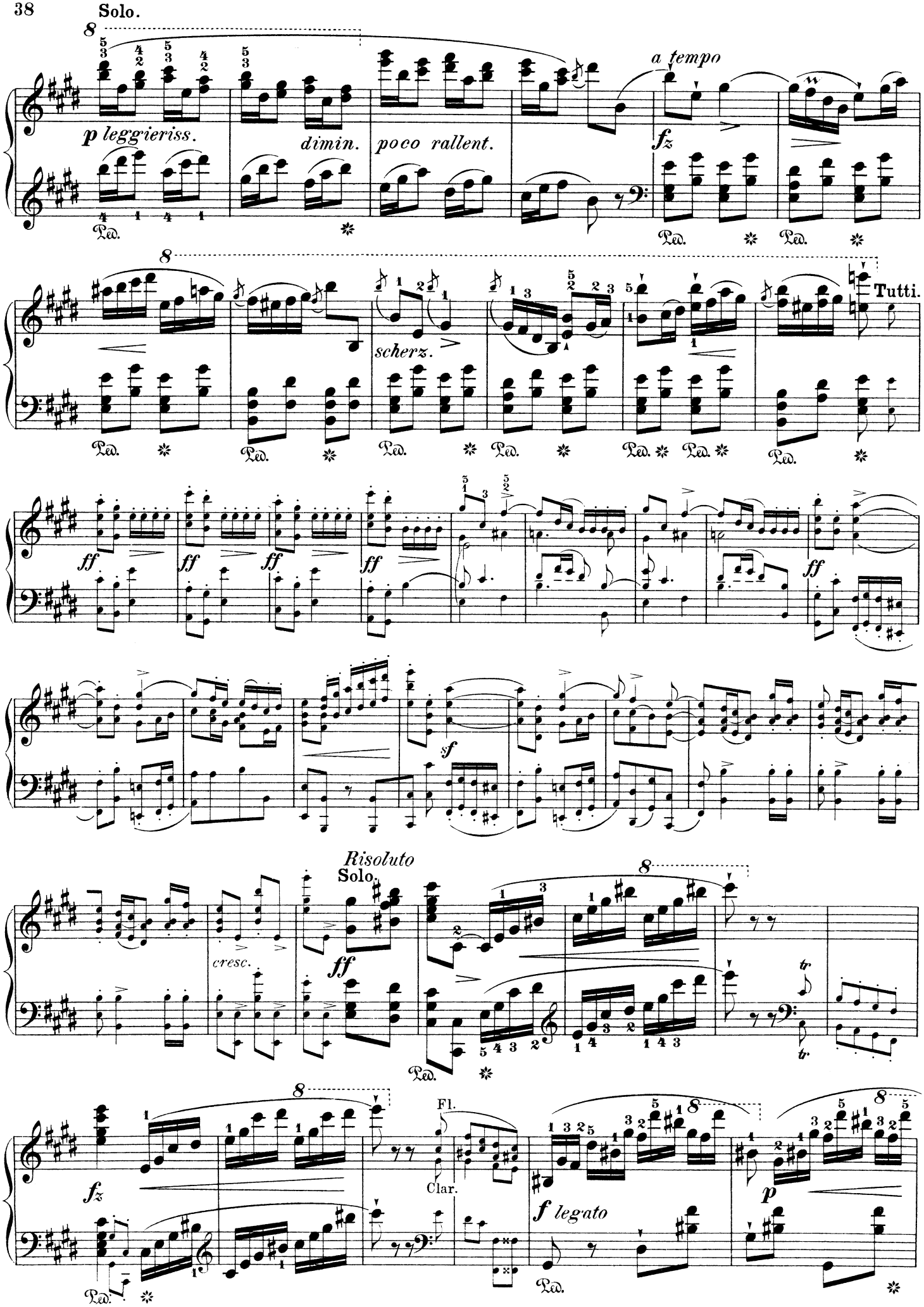
Vivace. (♩ = 104)

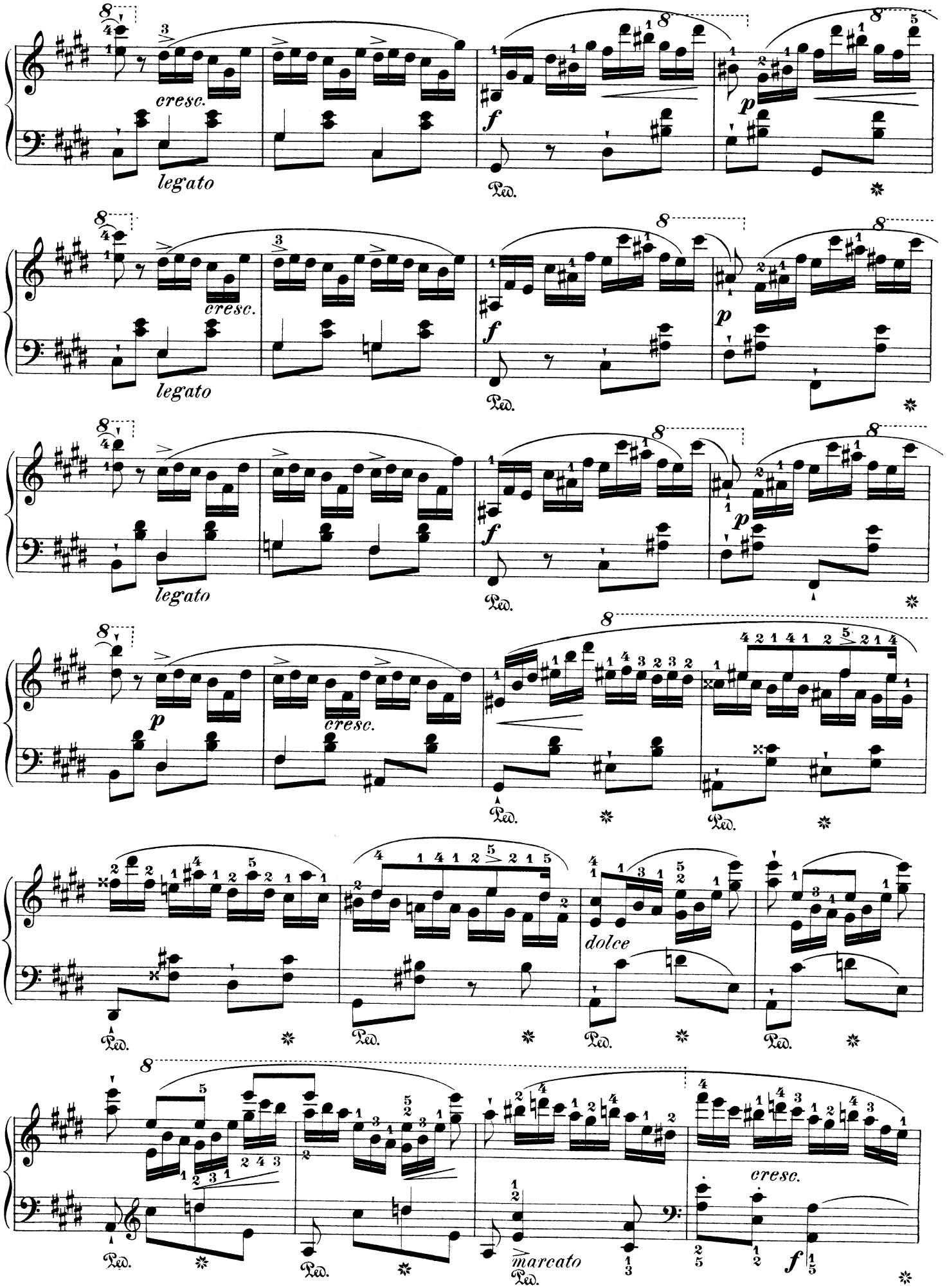
Risoluto.

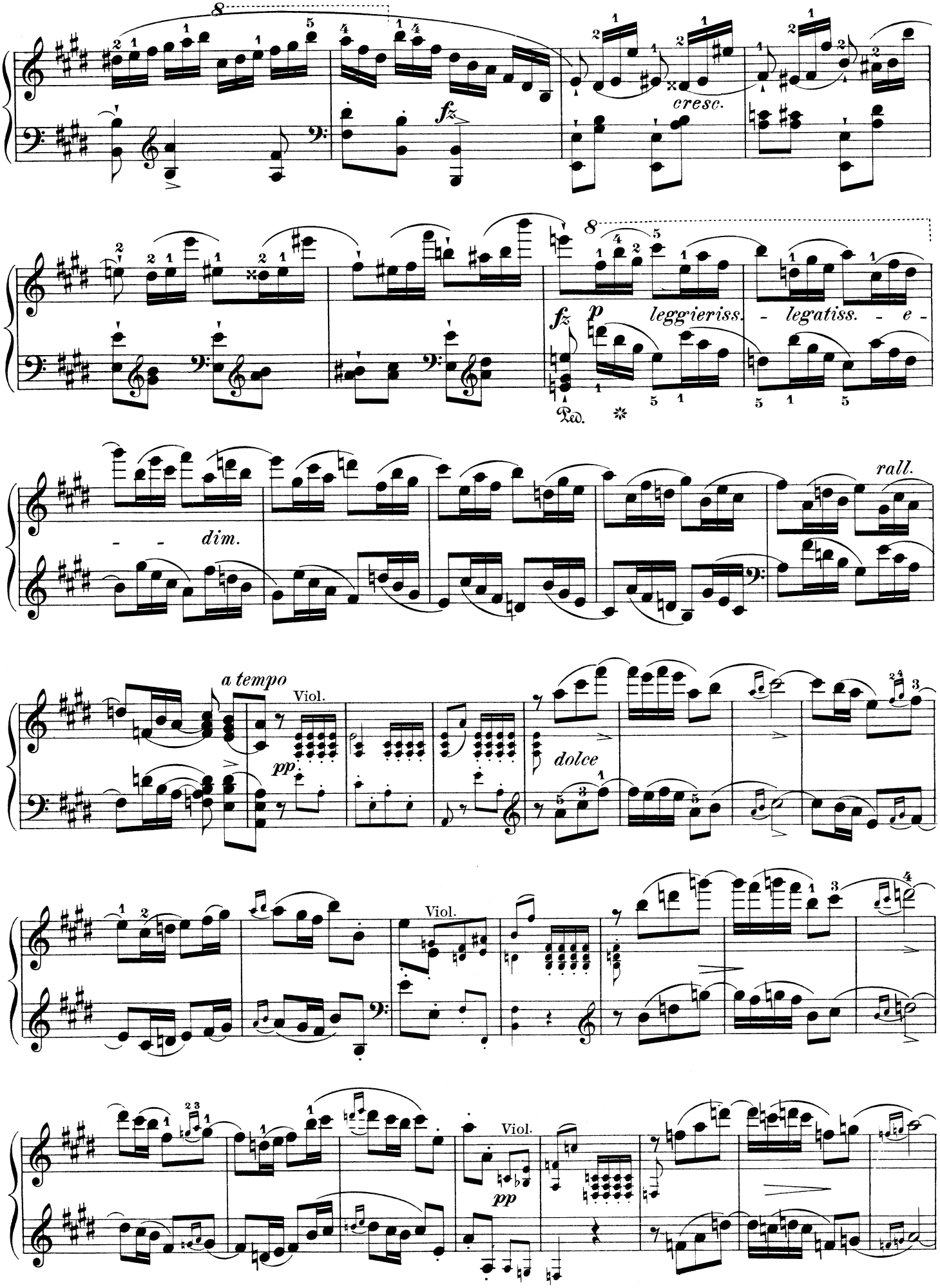
Tutti.

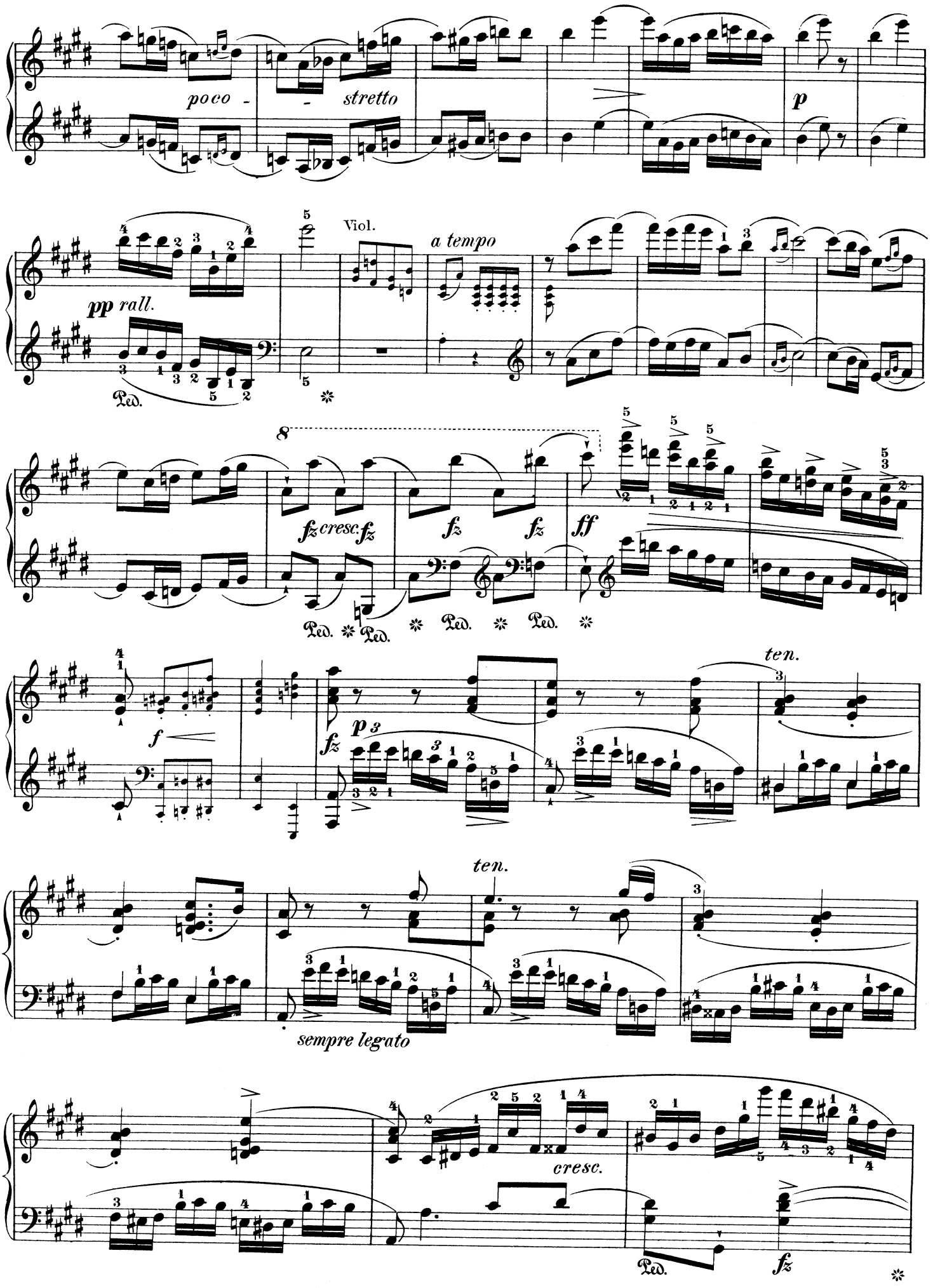


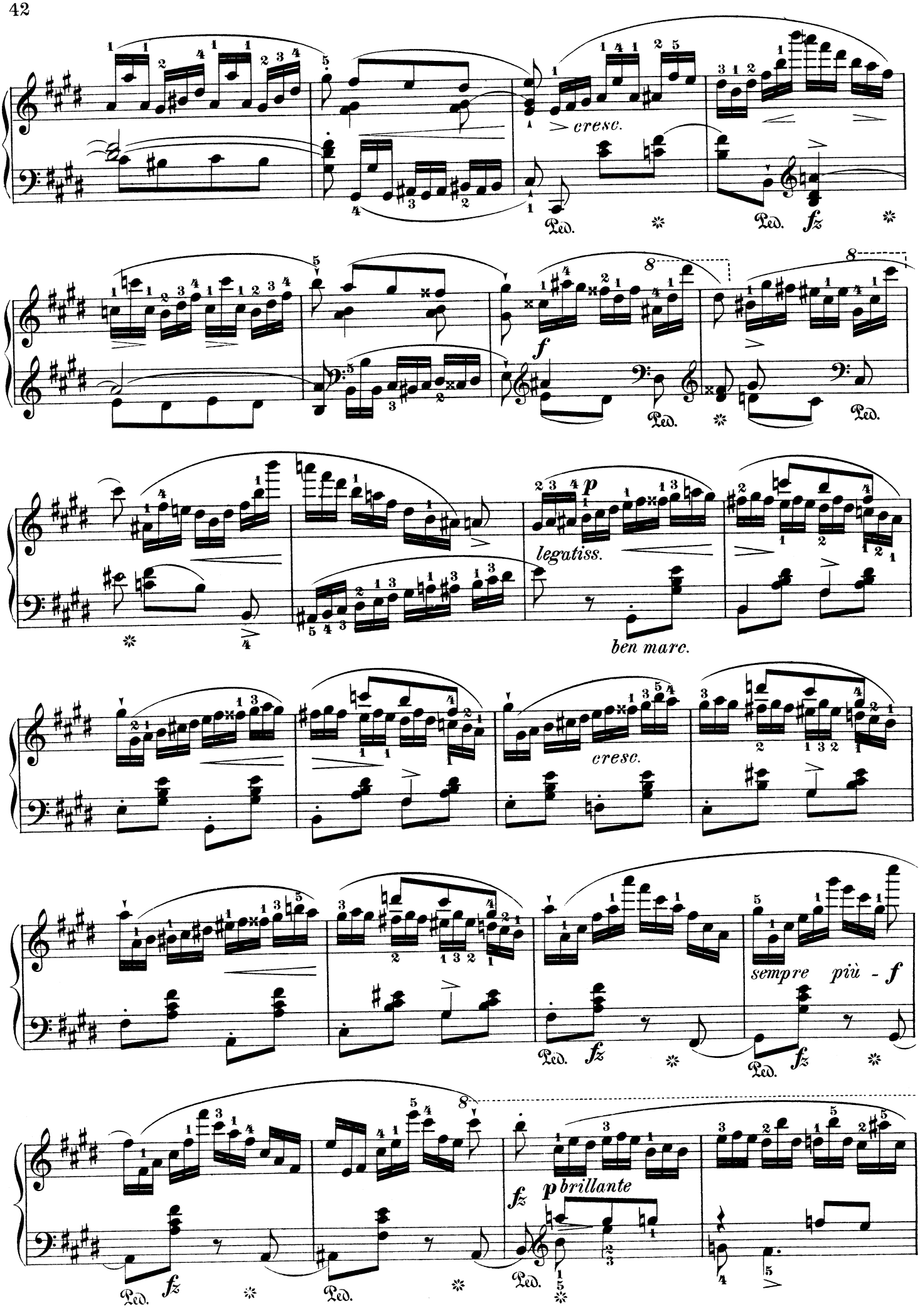

Fl.
Clar.
leggrieriss.
dimin.
rallen.
a tempo
stretto poco -
riten.
a tempo
Tutti.
cresc.
cresc.

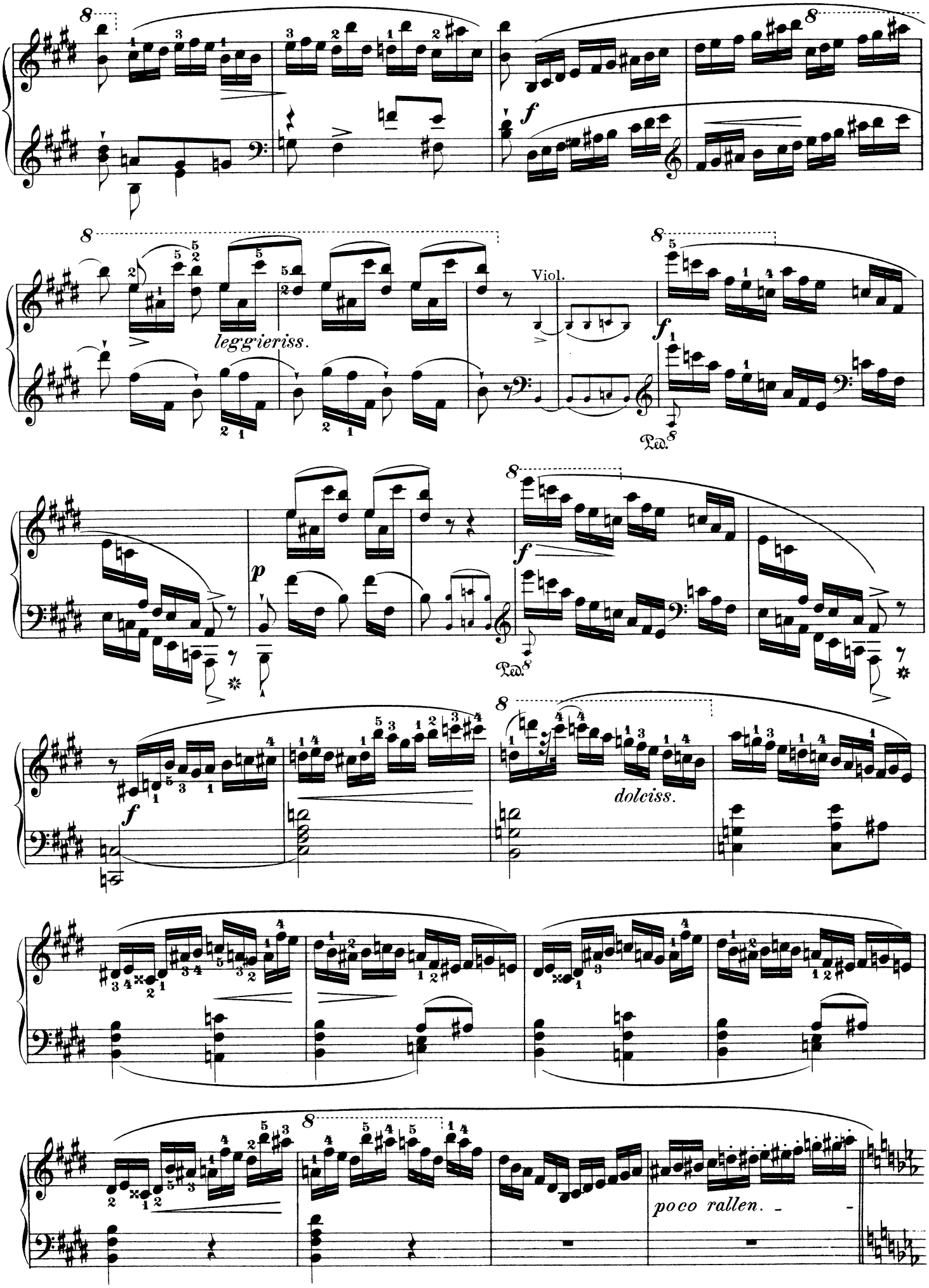

Solo.
a tempo
p leggieriss.
dimin.
poco rallent.
fz
Ped.
scherz.
Tutti.
ff
sf
Risoluto
Solo.
cresc.
Fl.
Clar.
f legato
p

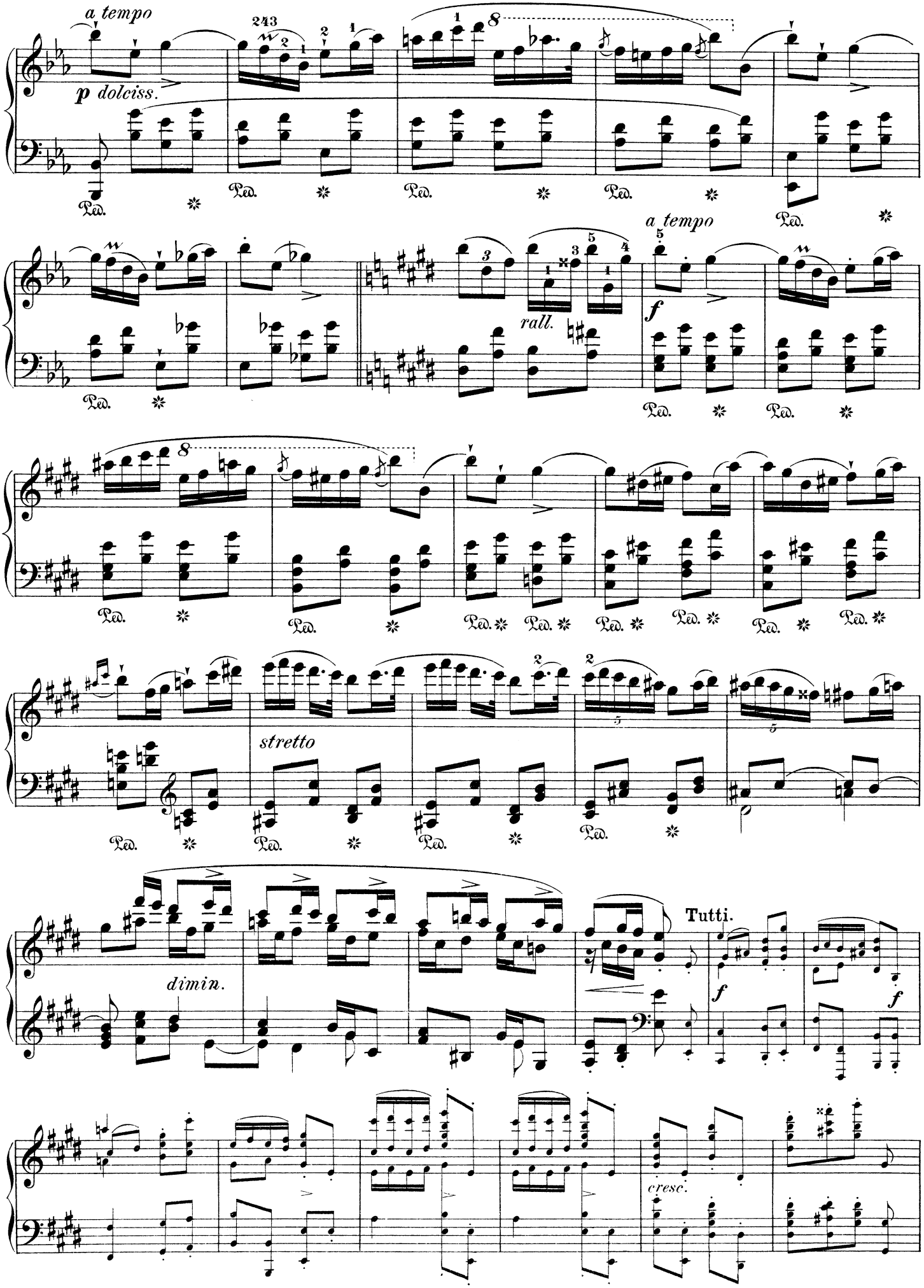

cresc.
legato
f
Ped.
p
cresc.
legato
f
Ped.
p
legato
f
Ped.
p
p
cresc.
Ped.
Ped.
dolce
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
marcato
Ped.
cresc.
f

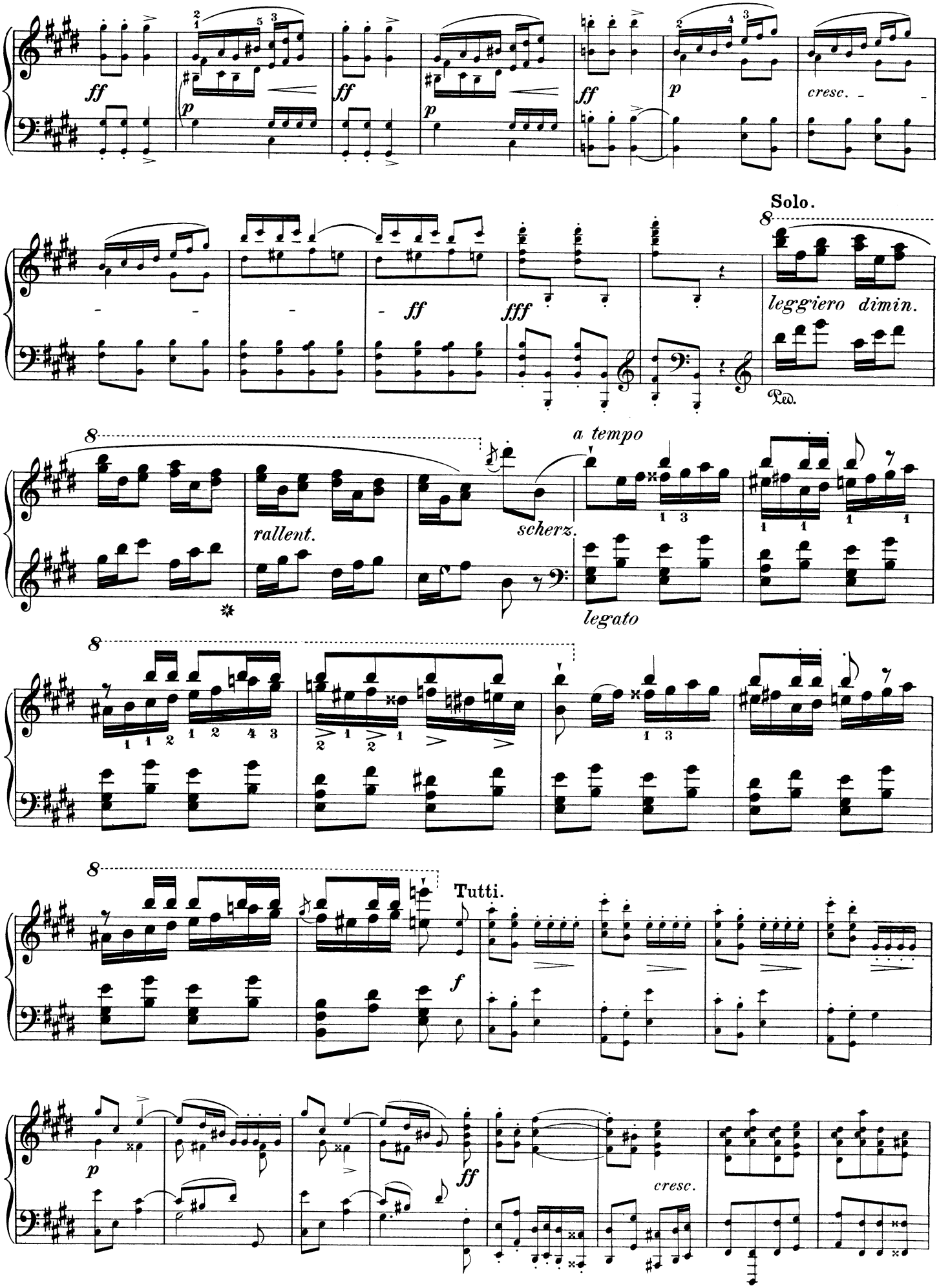

cresc.
fz
fz
p
leggieriss. - legatiss. - e -
Ped.
dim.
rall.
a tempo
Viol.
pp
dolce
Viol.
Viol.
pp

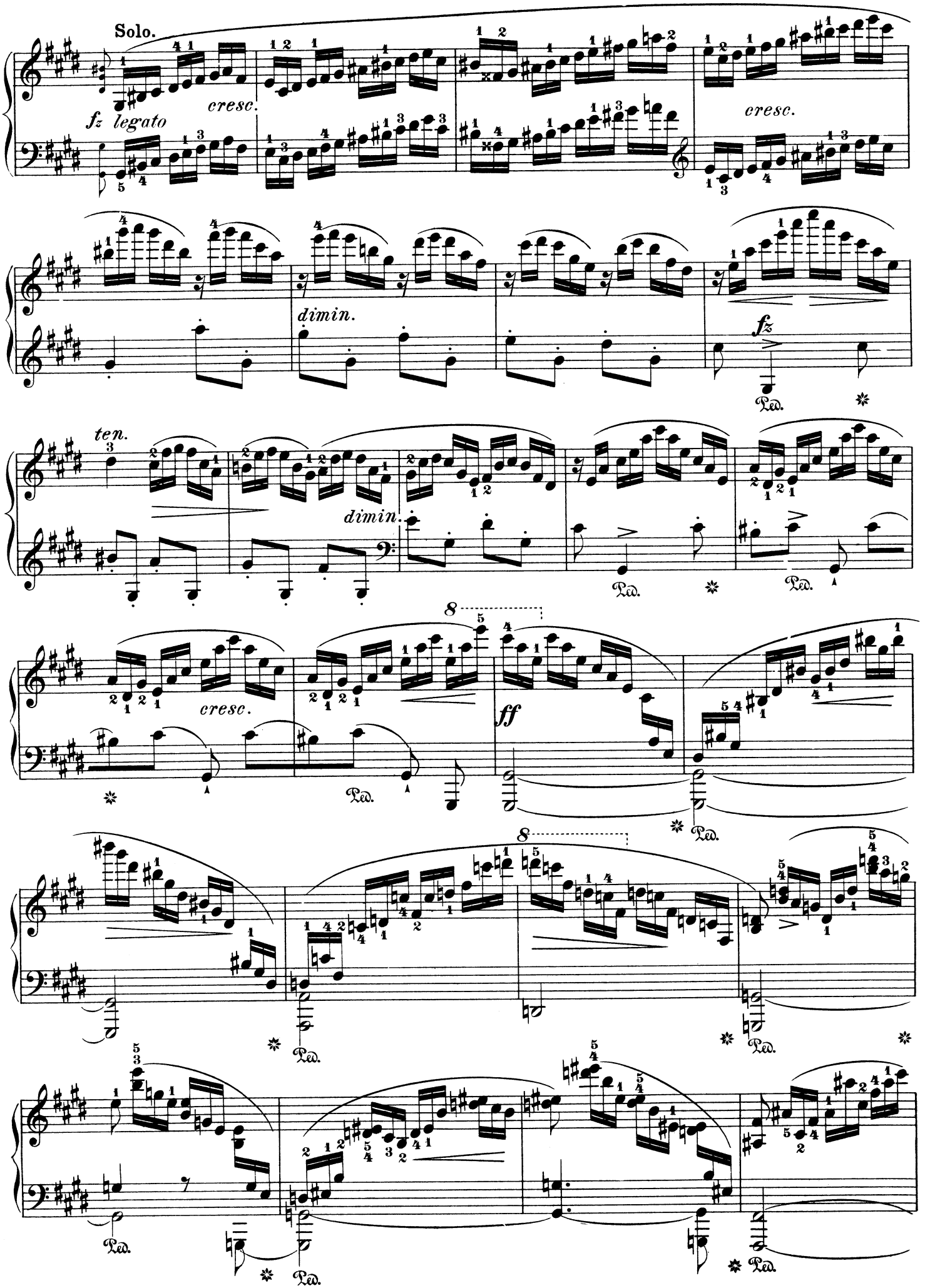

poco - - stretto
p
pp rall.
Ped.
Viol.
a tempo
8
fz cresc. fz
fz
fz
ff
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.
f
p
fz
ten.
ten.
sempre legato
cresc.
Ped.
fz

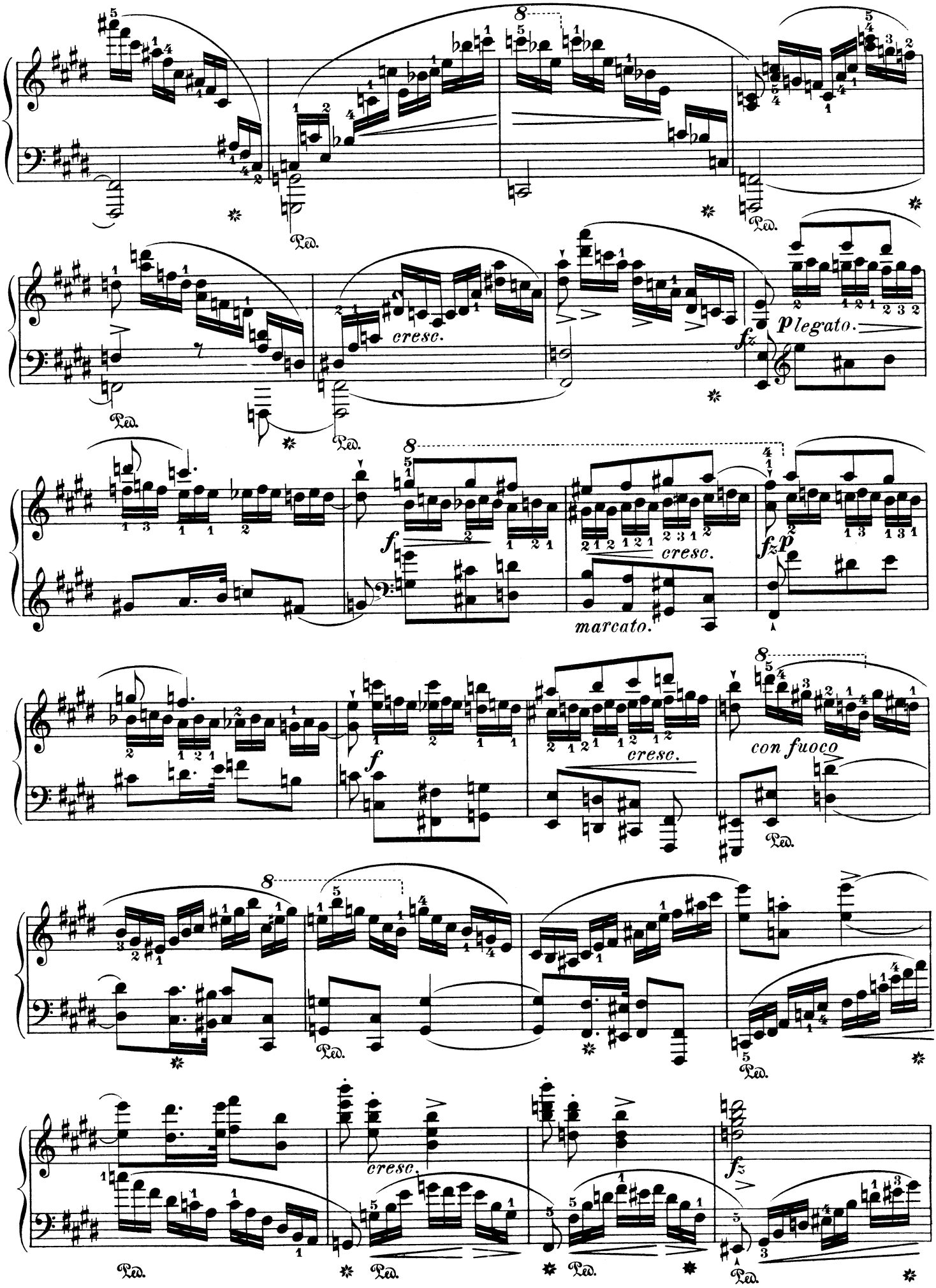

cresc.
Ped.
fz
f
p
legatiss.
ben marc.
cresc.
sempre più - f
brillante

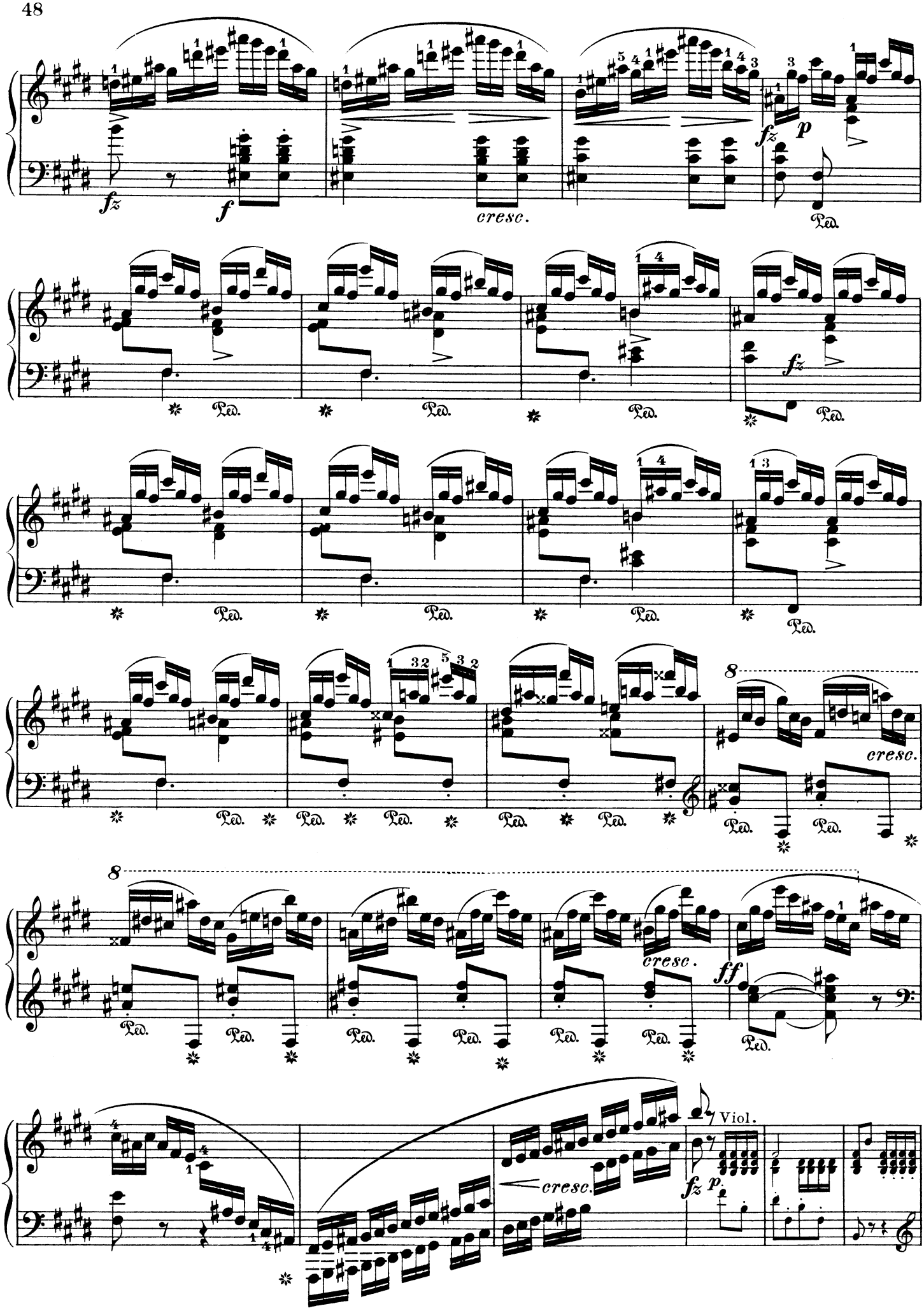

leggieriss.
Viol.
dolciss.
poco rallen.

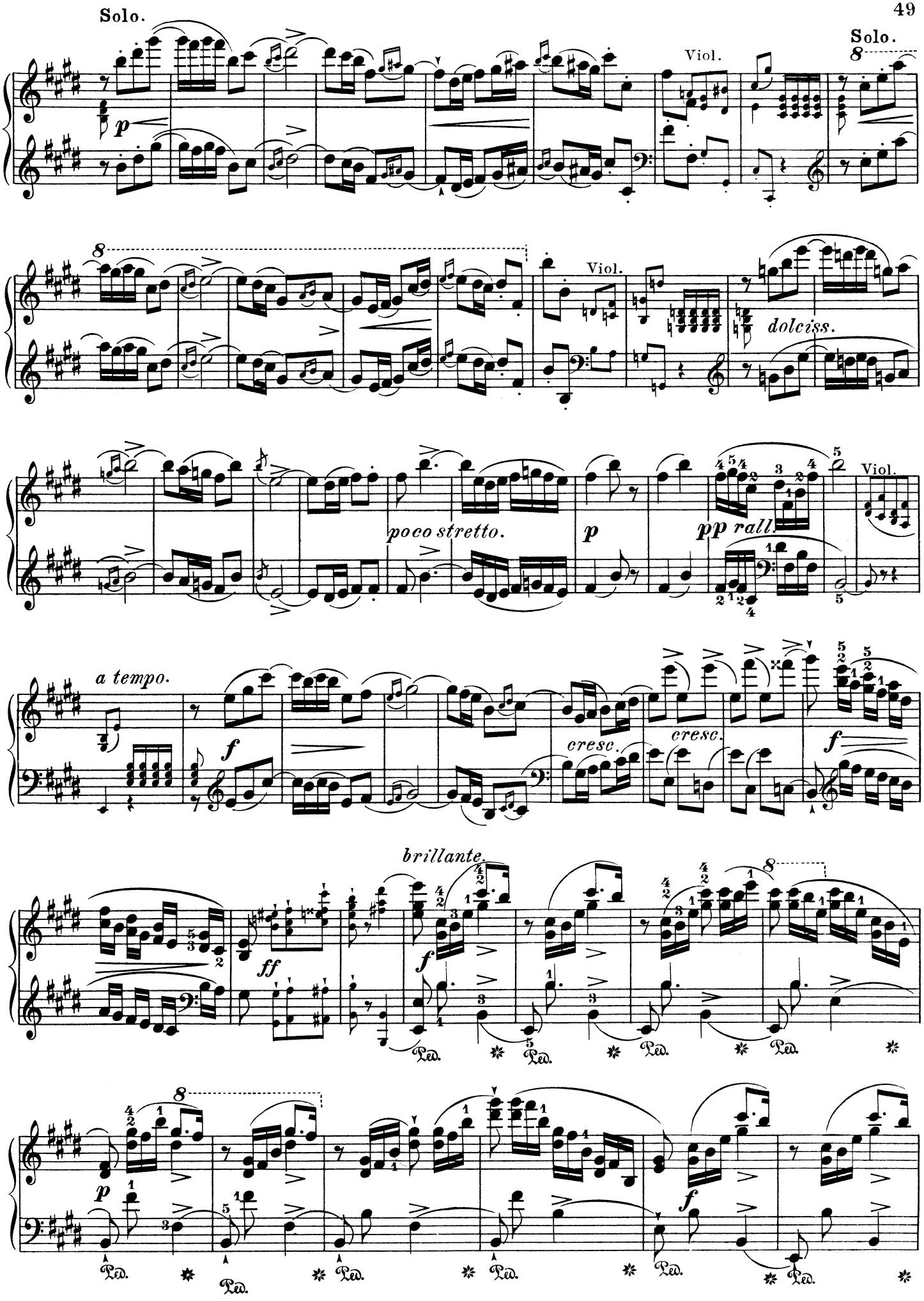

a tempo
p dolciss.
Ped.
rall.
a tempo
f
stretto
dimin.
Tutti.
f
cresc.

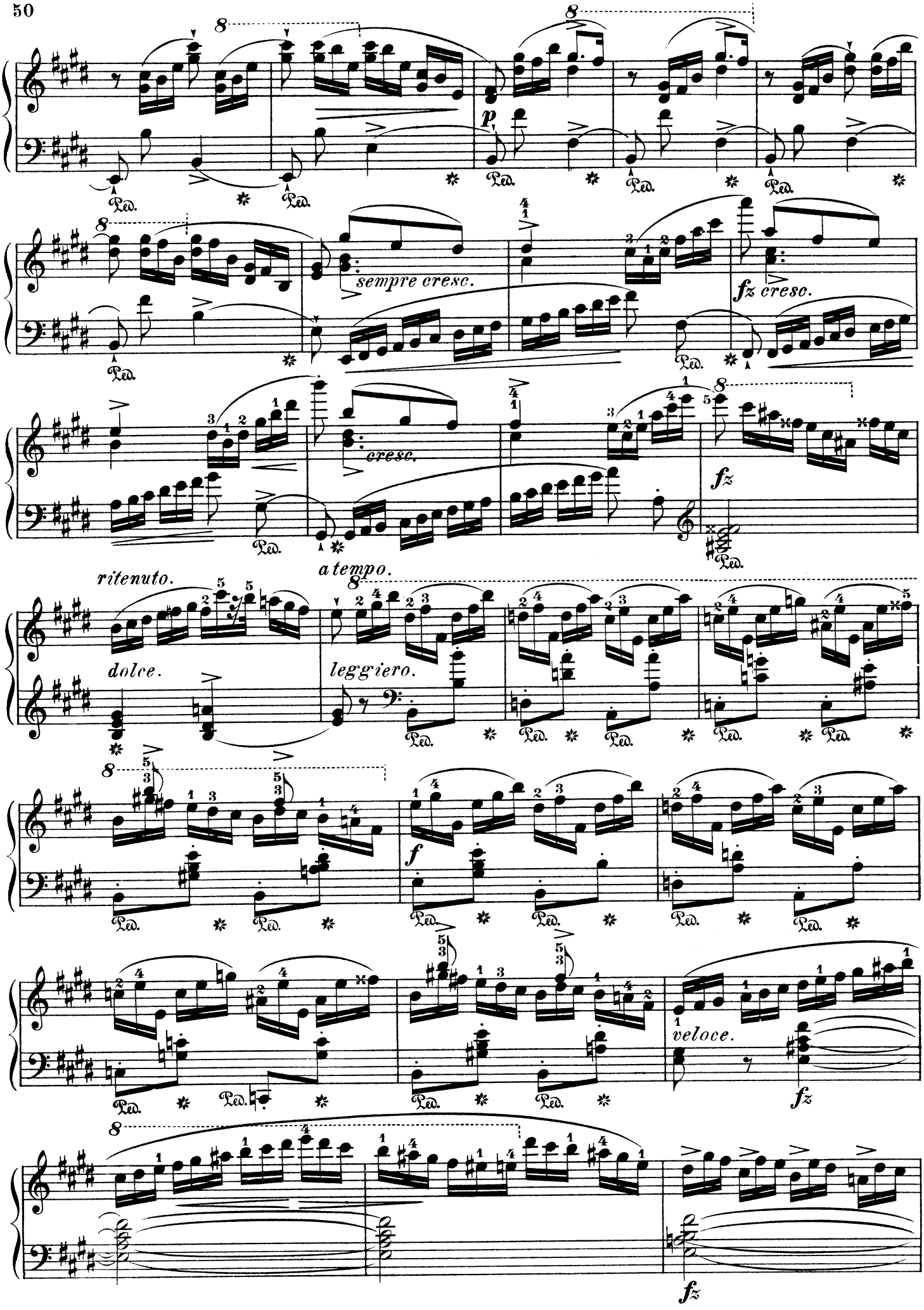

ff
p
cresc.
Solo.
leggiero dimin.
Ped.
rallent.
a tempo
scherz.
legato
Tutti.
f
ff

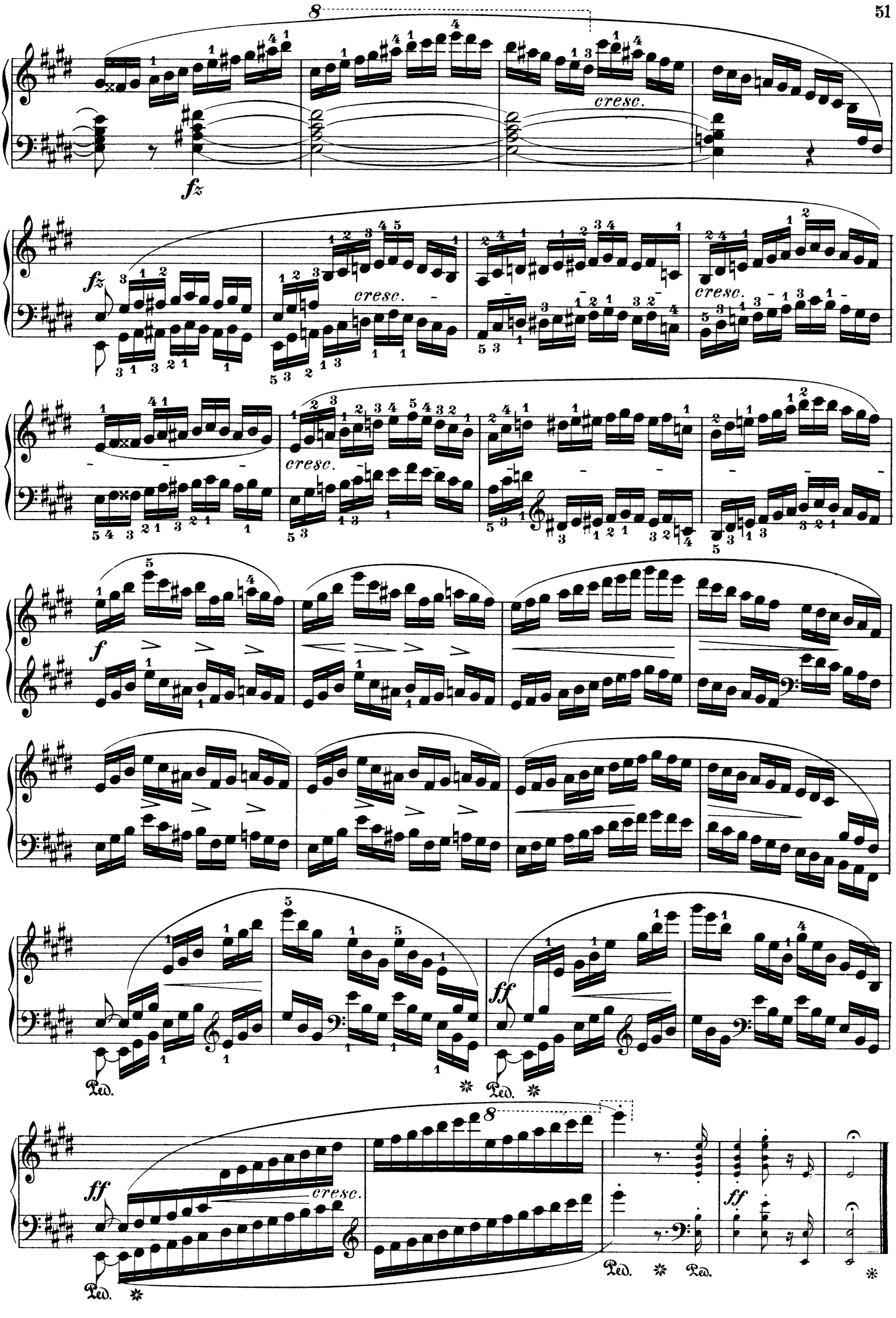

Solo.
fz legato
cresc.
cresc.
dimin.
fz
ten.
dimin.
cresc.
ff
8
8
Ped.


cresc.
plegato.
cresc.
marcato.
cresc.
con fuoco
cresc.


fz
f
cresc.
fz
p
Ped.
fz
8
cresc.
ff
Viol.
fz
p.


Solo.
Solo.
Viol.
Viol.
dolciss.
poco stretto.
pp rall.
Viol.
a tempo.
cresc.
cresc.
brillante.
Ped.


sempre cresc.
fz cresc.
cresc.
fz
ritenuto.
a tempo.
dolce.
leggiero.
f
veloce.
fz
fz


8
cresc.
fz
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
f
ff
Ped.
Ped.
8
cresc.
ff
Ped.
Ped.
ff