Jolyon Laycock

12 River Preludes for Piano

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12 River Preludes for piano (2011)

Programme note:

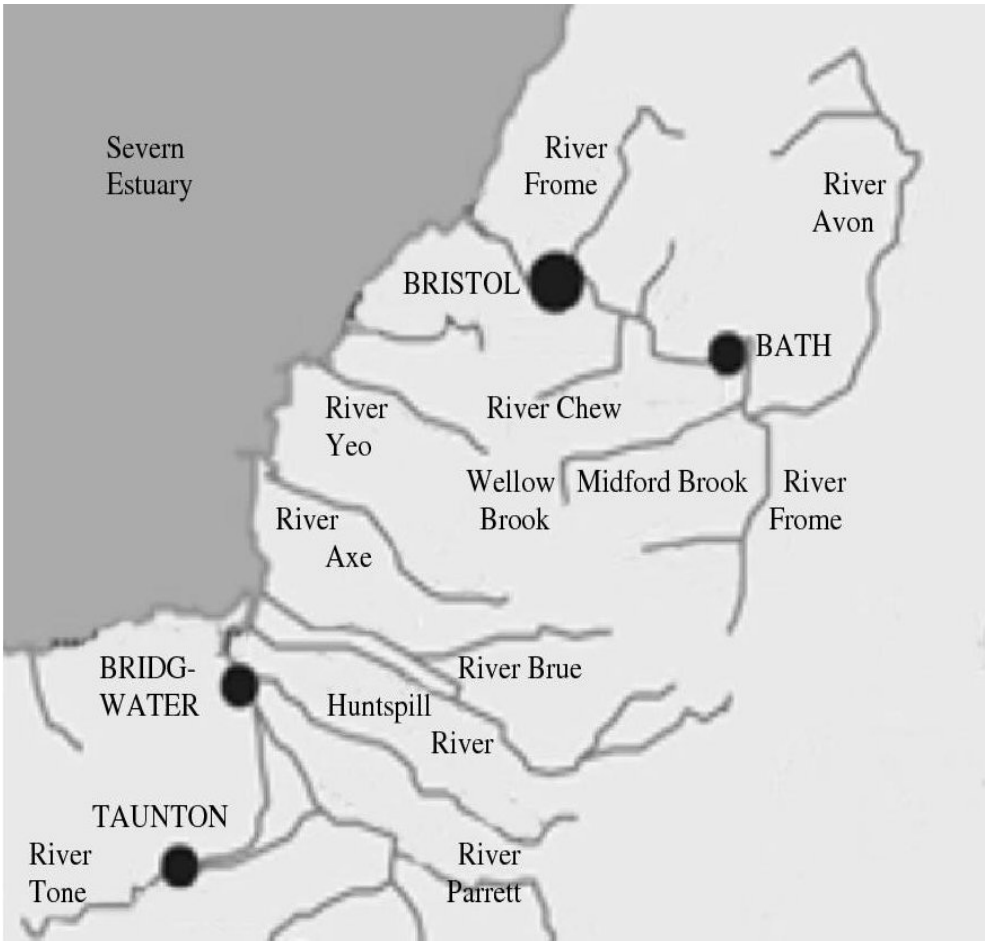
As a set, the twelve River Preludes, written in 2011, is my first complete work to be based entirely on the six-note all-interval fractal sets that I discovered and began to develop in 2009.

These preludes follow in the tradition of Bach and Chopin. Like many of the preludes in Bach's "48 Preludes and Fugues", each short piece is an exploration of a particular texture or pattern in sound, transformed and reworked through a series of harmonic progressions. The main structural points of these fractal forms are usually marked by a pause or a slight ralentando.

All the titles were taken from small rivers and brooks in the region of Bath, Bristol and the Somerset Levels. The Avon is not included because that has been the focus of another of my recent works, the Sinfonia Concertante for piano and orchestra "Among Seven Hills". There are perhaps two contrasting ways of portraying a river in music. Smetana depicted the entire course of the River Vltava from source to sea. My preludes are more like evocations of states of mind induced by sitting on the bank and watching the water flow past. They are not necessarily descriptive of these water-courses themselves in an impressionistic sense. The fractal processes on which they are based tend to create organic open-ended riverine forms.

For a more detailed technical description of the genesis of all-interval fractal sets go to my website to find a downloadable PDF at: http://www.jolyonlaycock.uk/theoretical-writings

Jolyon Laycock
Woollard, June 2015



12 River Preludes for Piano (2011)

Jolyon Laycock

Named after 12 West Country rivers

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Prelude 9 – River Chew 18.

Prelude 10 – River Tone 22.

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Prelude 12 – River Yeo 26.

Cover image: river Frome at Freshford, near Bath

Accidentals apply throughout the length of a bar unless cancelled by a natural sign.
There is extensive use of cautionary accidentals to avoid ambiguity.

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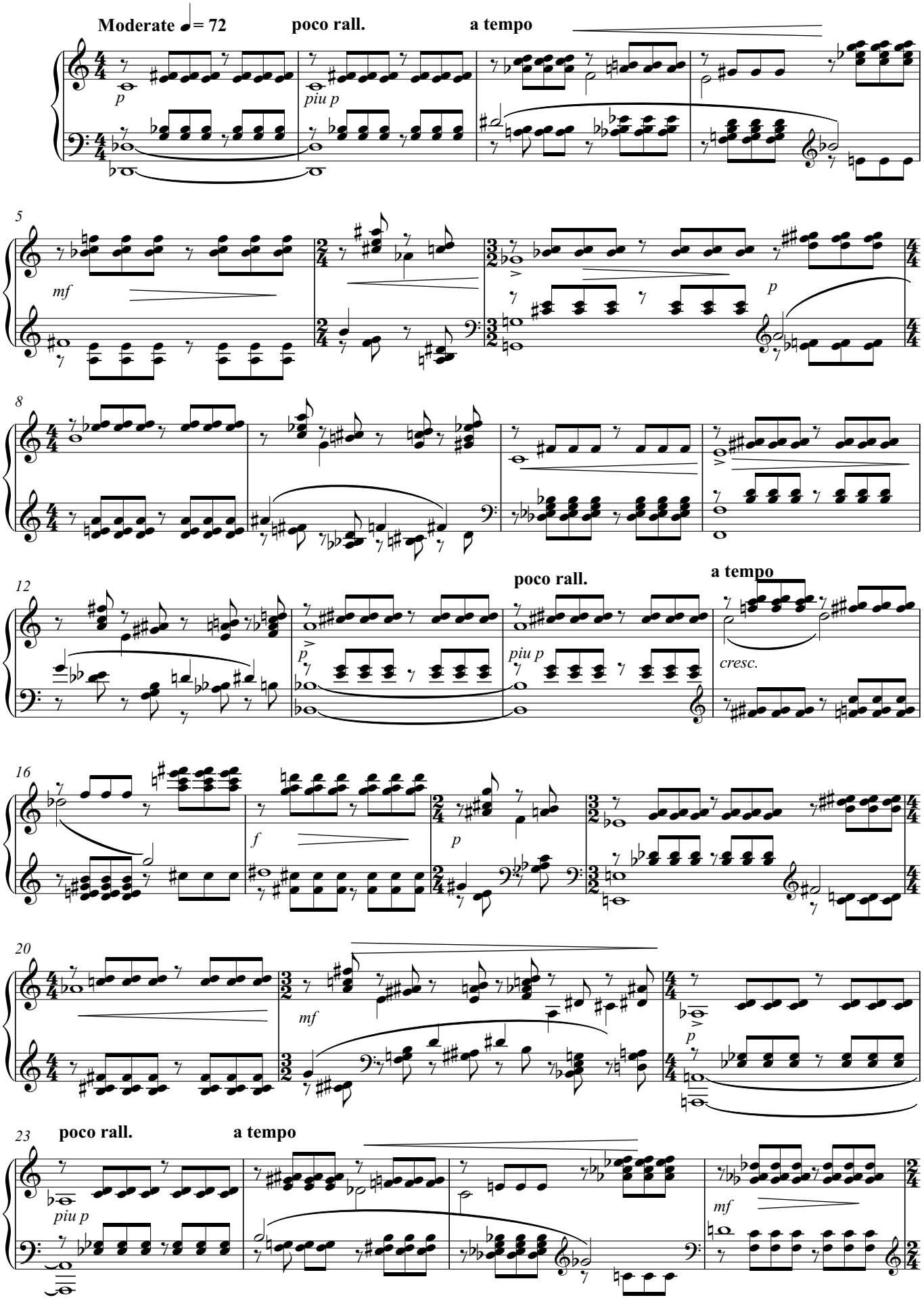
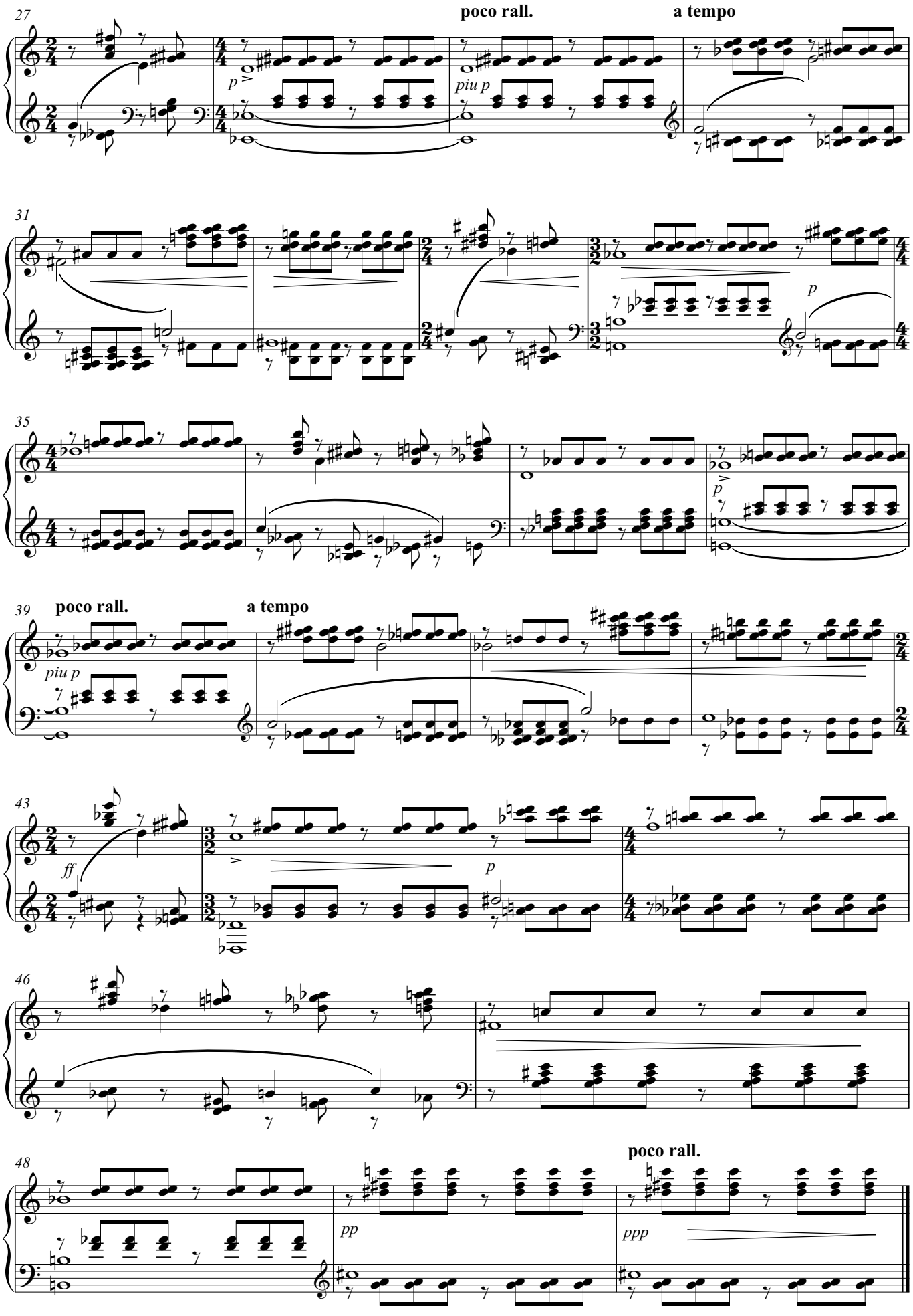
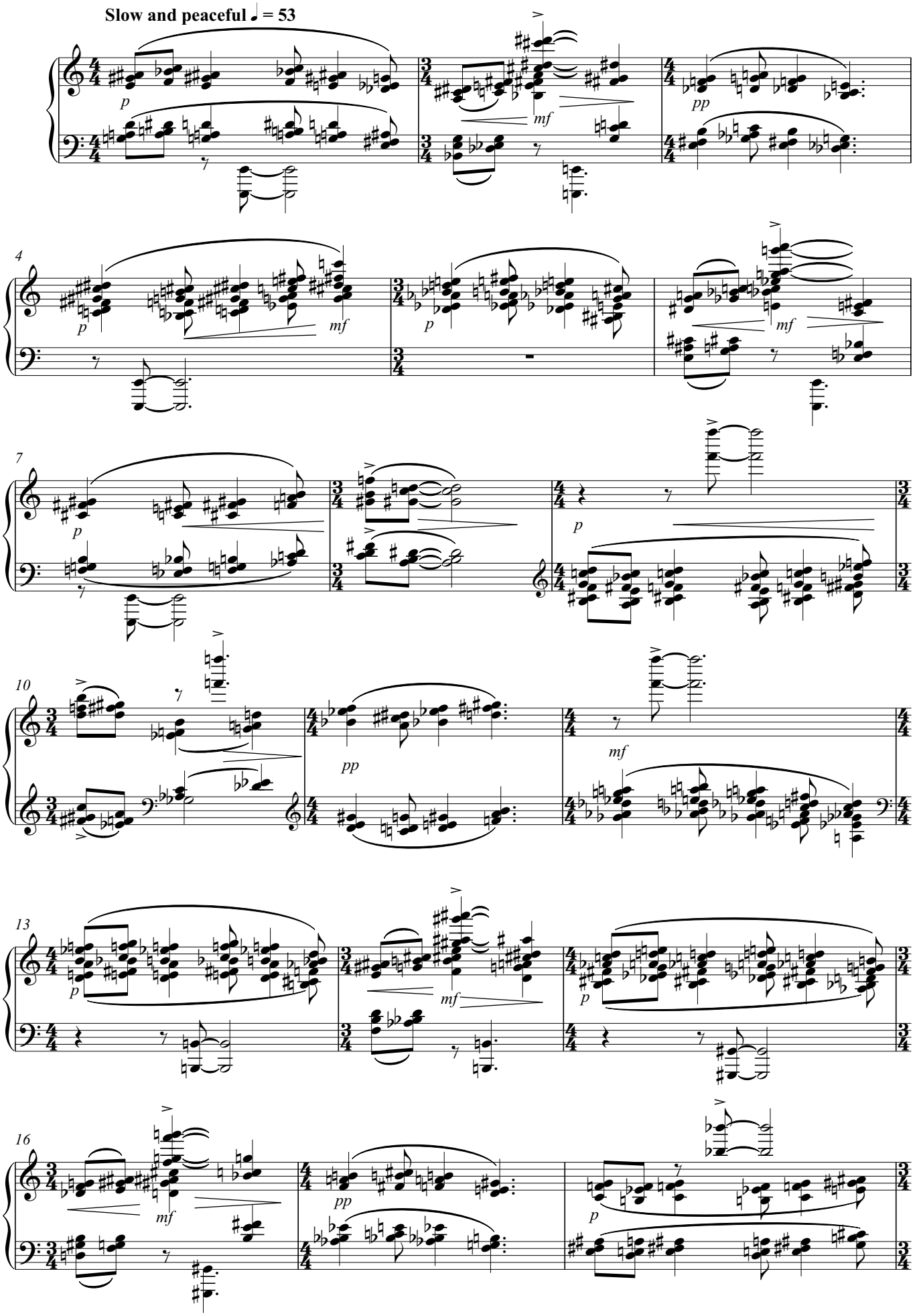
England

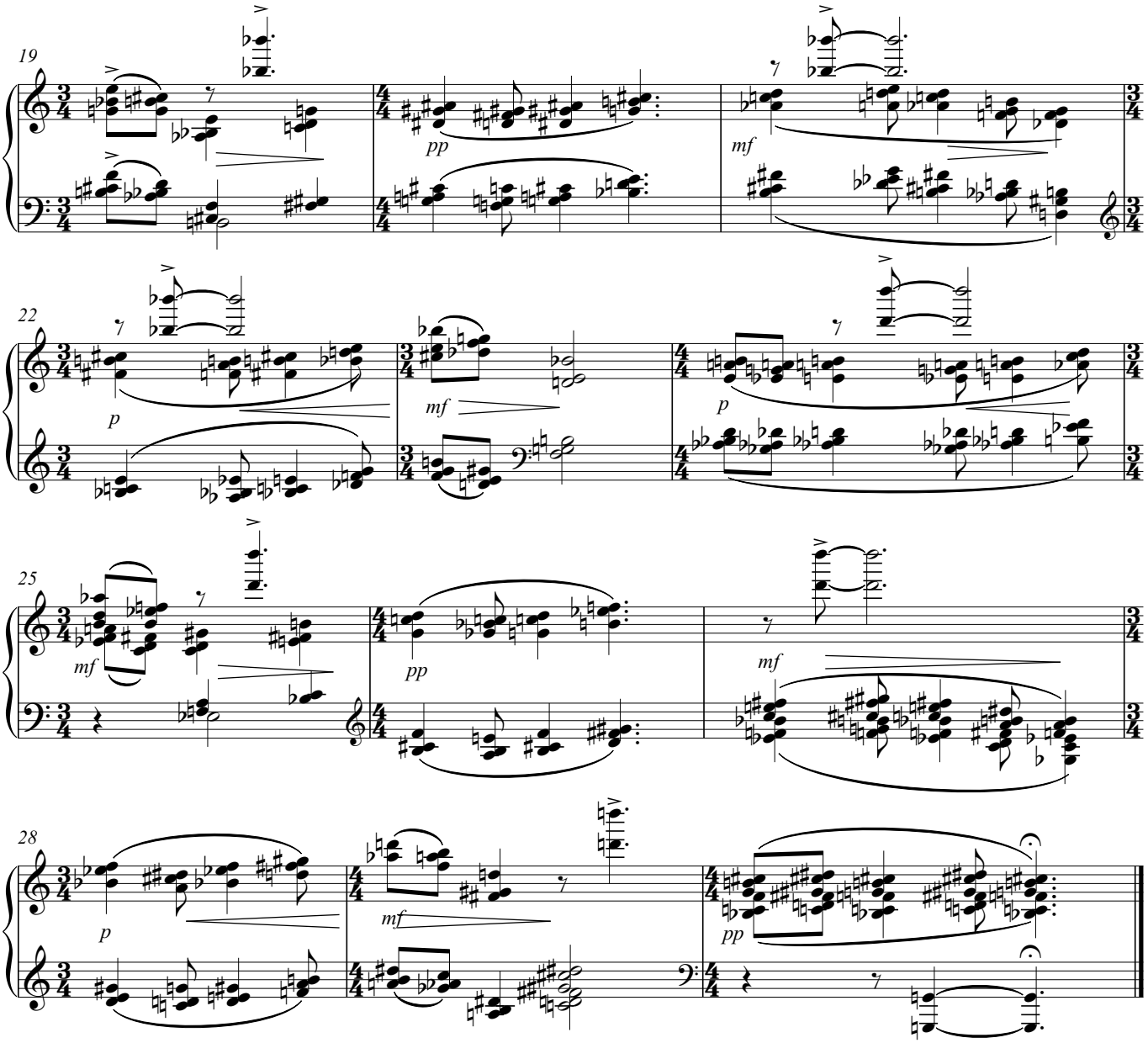
Prelude 1 - River Axe




27
poco rall.
a tempo
p
piu p
31
p
35
p
39
poco rall.
a tempo
piu p
43
ff
p
46
48
poco rall.
pp
ppp

Prelude 2 - River Brue




19
pp
mf
22
p
mf
p
25
mf
pp
mf
28
p
mf
pp

Prelude 3 - Cam Brook

Quick and Flowing ♩ = 120

sempre legato

p

7

mf

dim.

14

p

20

poco rall.

a tempo

27

poco rall.

a tempo

p

34

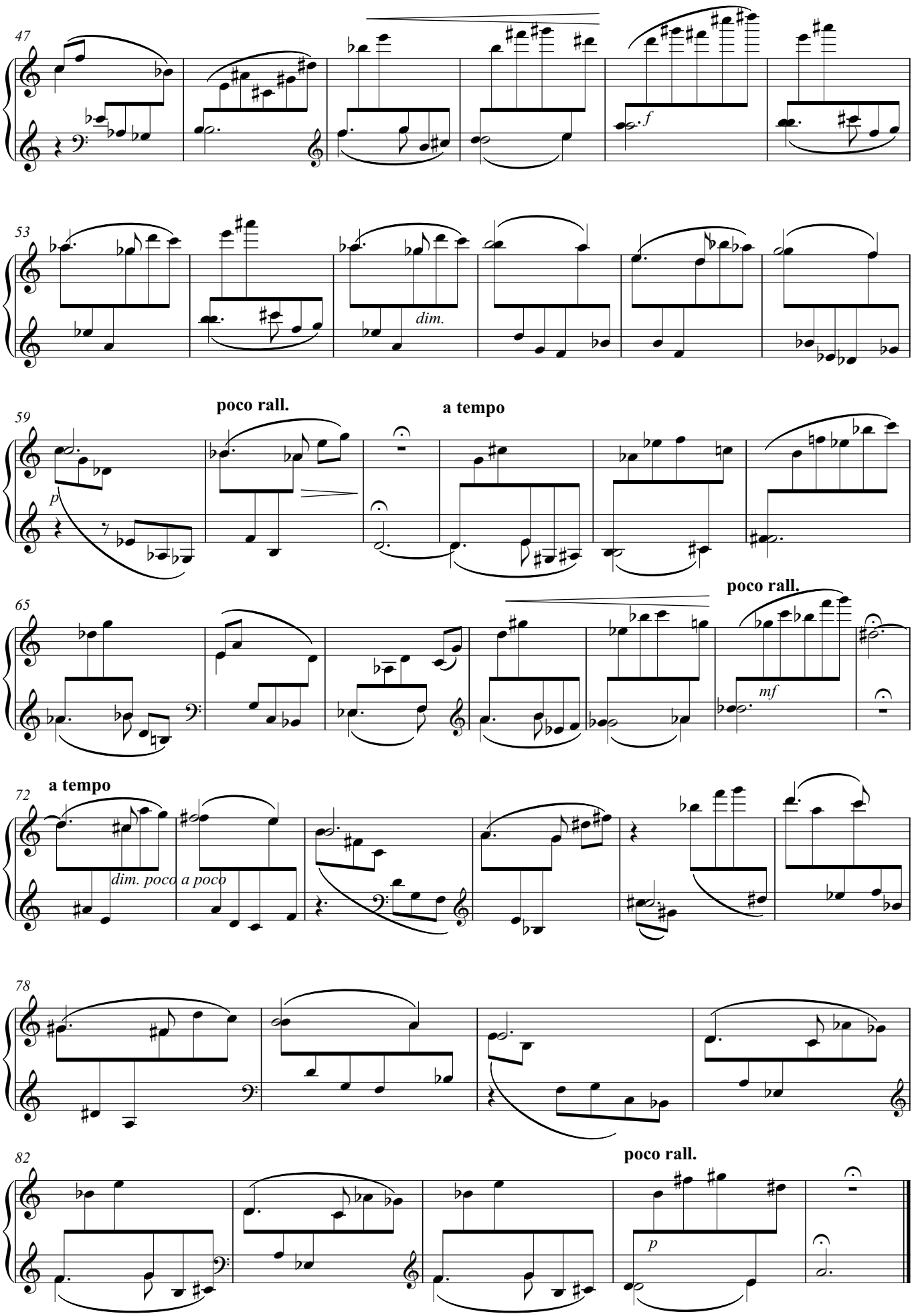
40

poco rall.

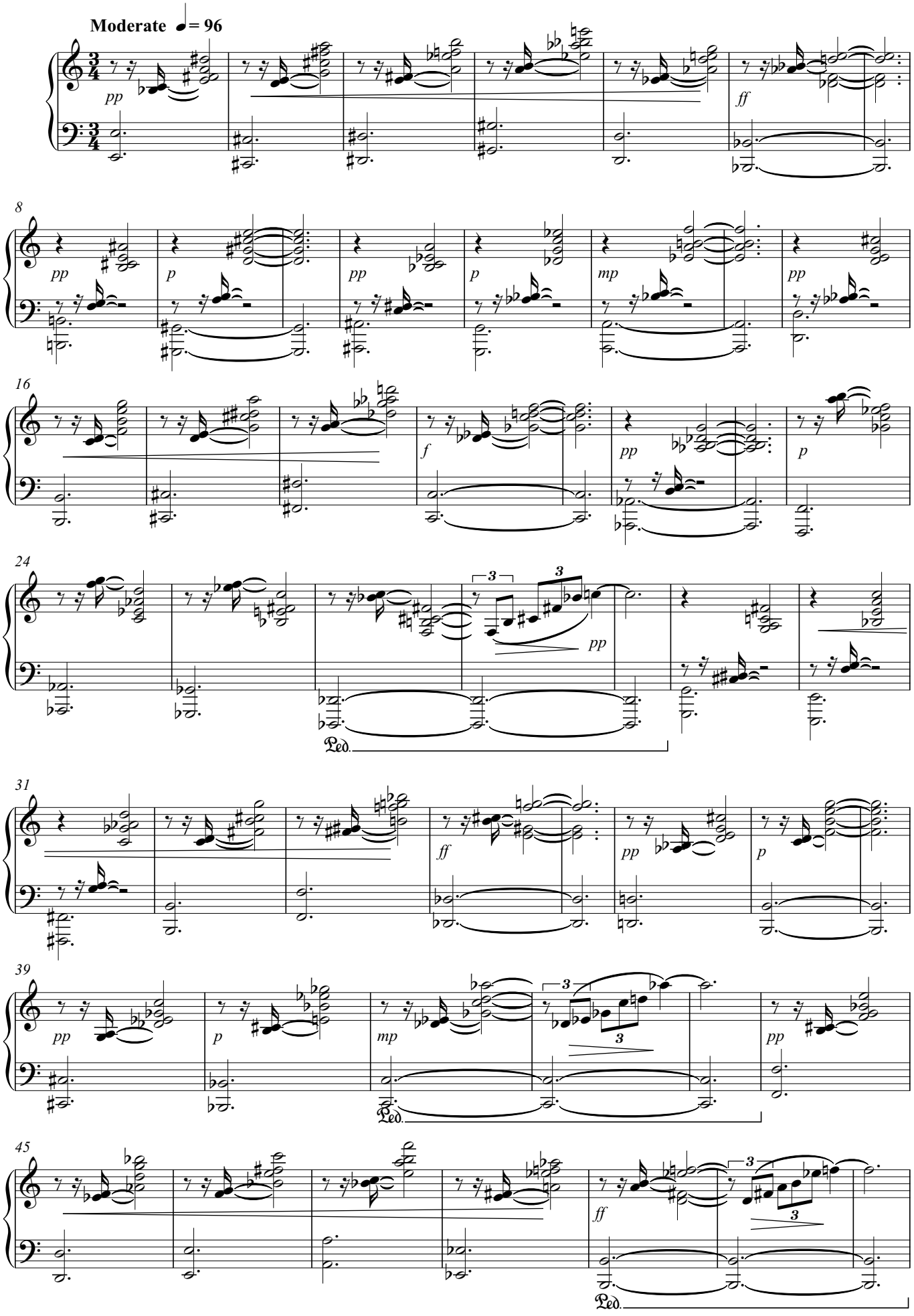
a tempo

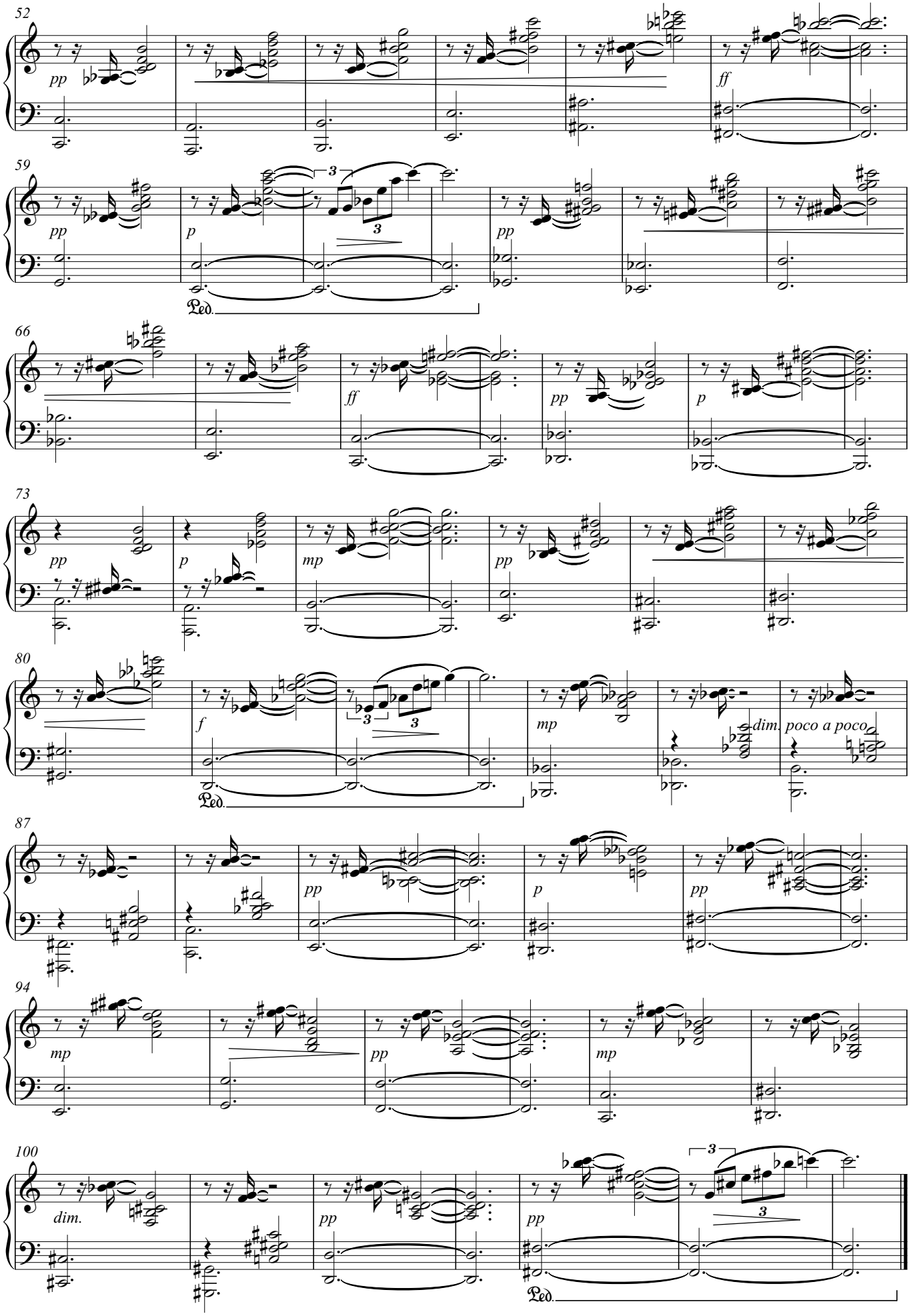
mf

p

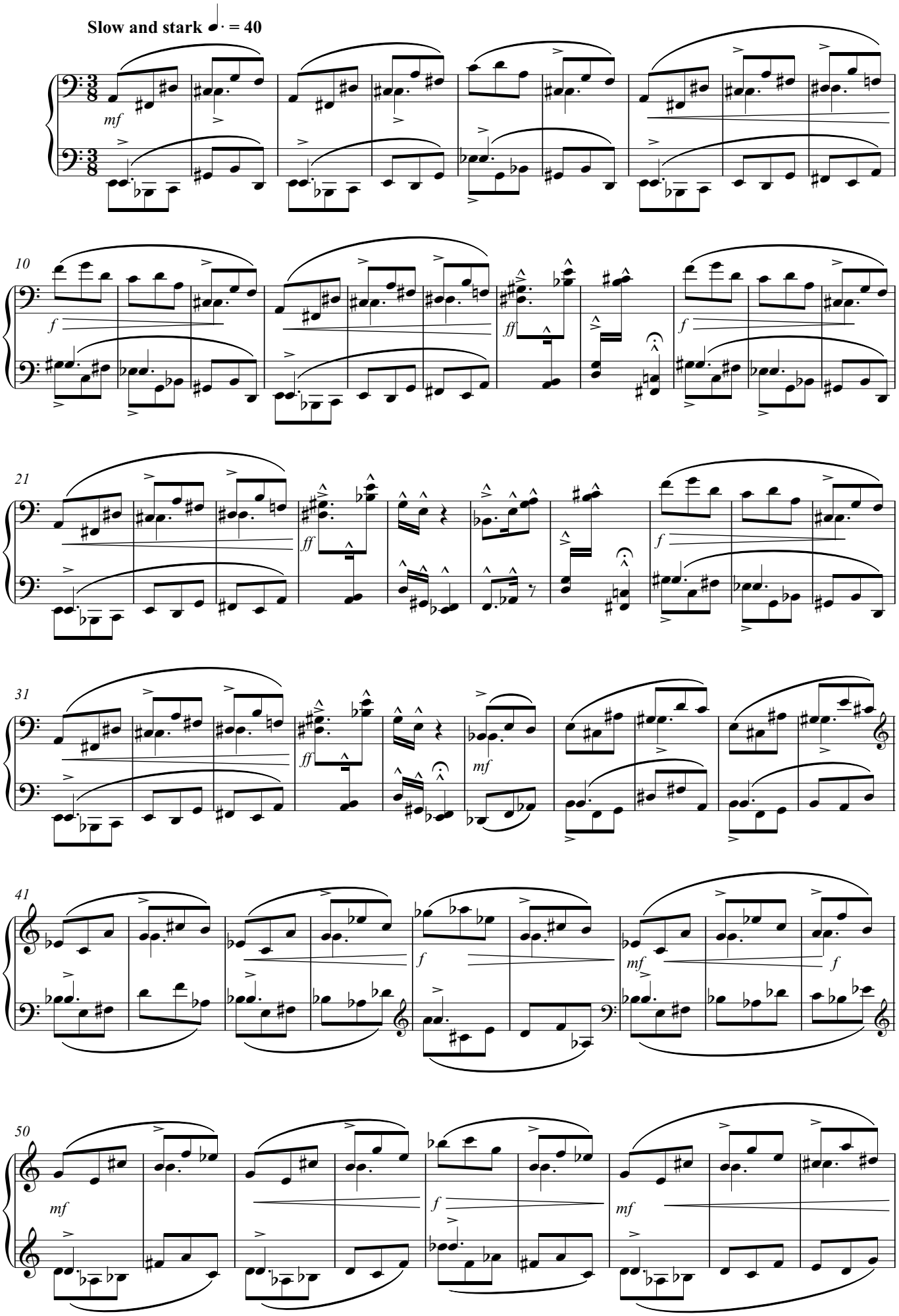

47
f
53
dim.
59
poco rall.
a tempo
p
65
poco rall.
mf
72
a tempo
dim. poco a poco
78
82
poco rall.
p

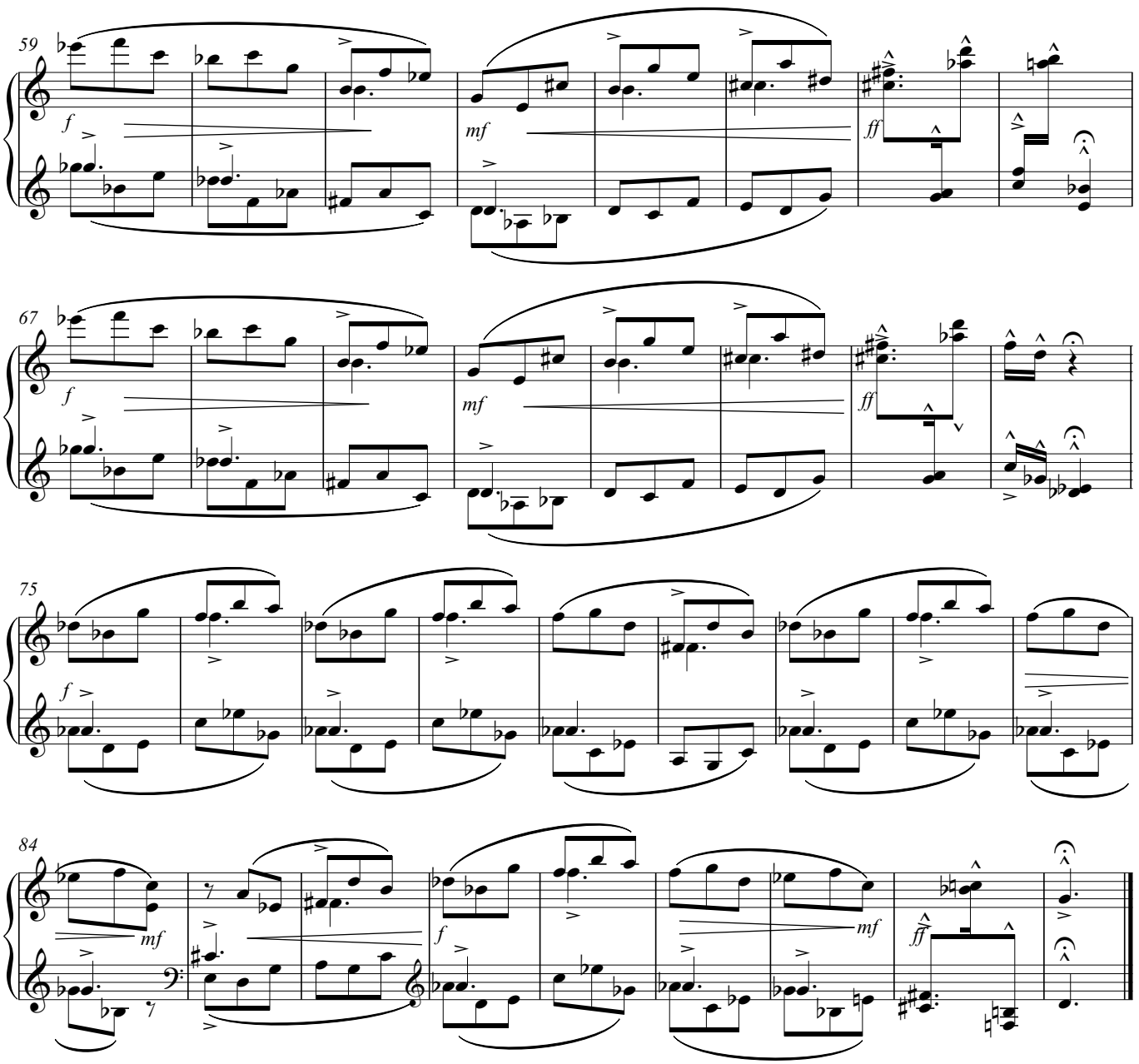
Prelude 4 - River Frome



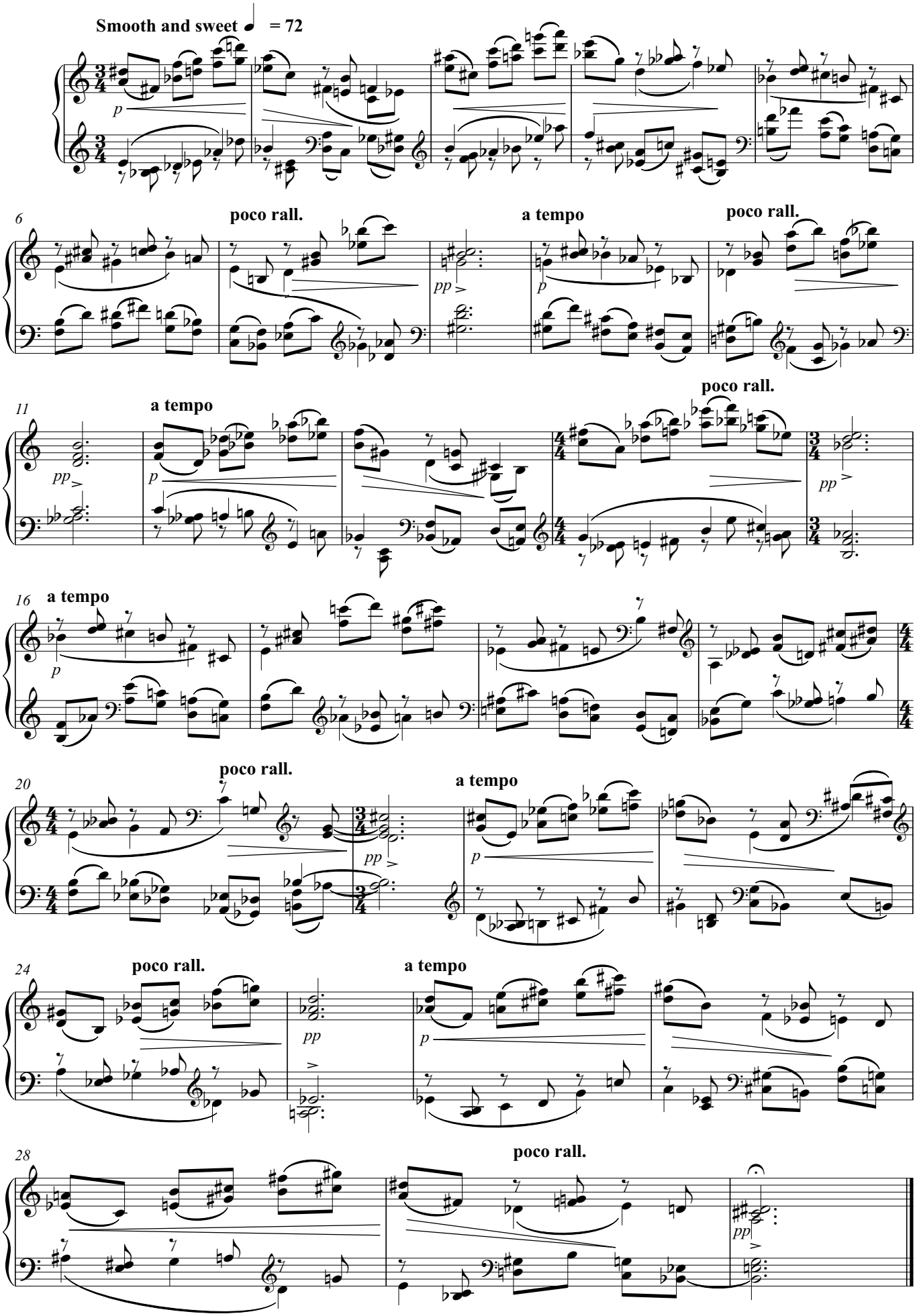

52
pp
ff
59
pp
p
pp
Ped.
66
ff
pp
p
73
pp
p
mp
pp
80
f
mp
dim.
poco a poco
Ped.
87
pp
p
pp
94
mp
pp
mp
100
dim.
pp
pp
Ped.

Prelude 5 - Huntspill River

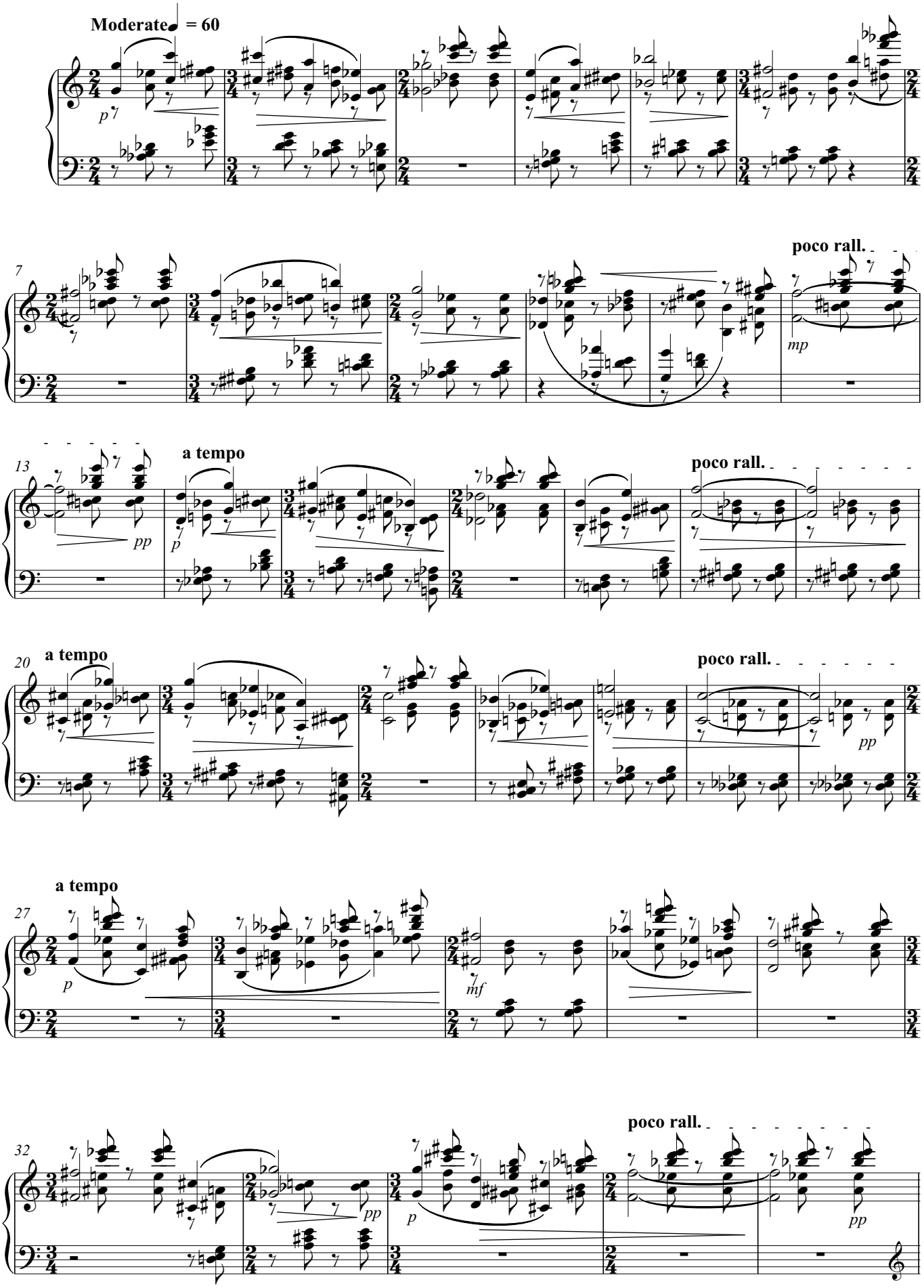


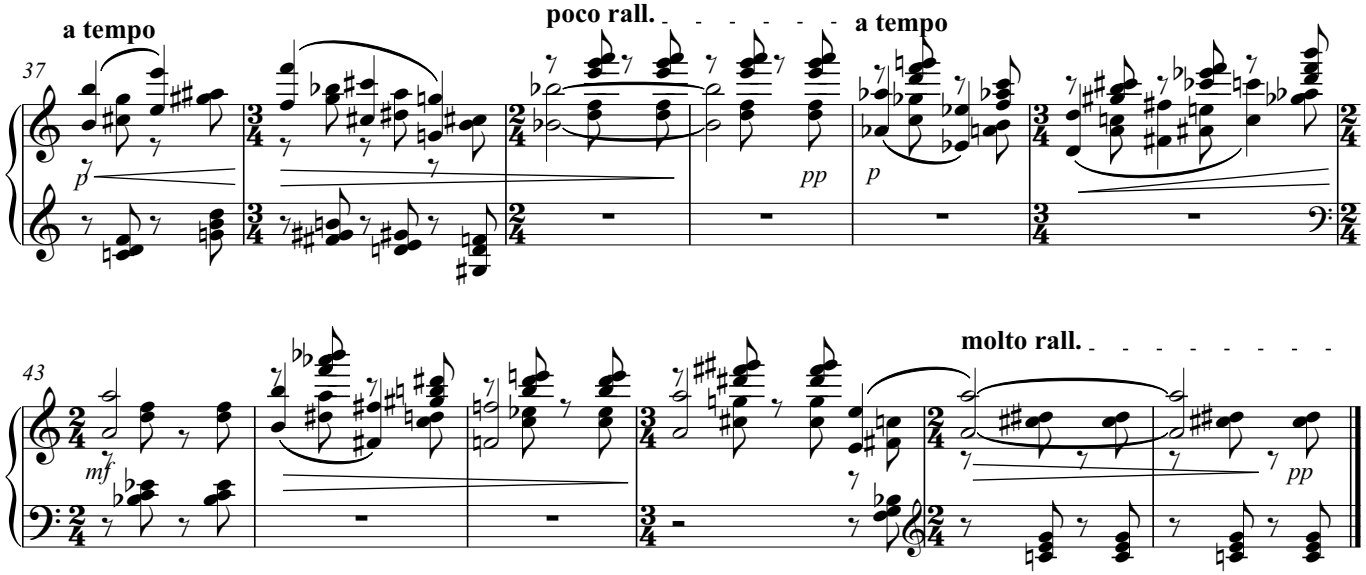

59
f
mf
ff
67
f
mf
ff
75
f
84
mf
f
mf
ff

Prelude 6 - Midford Brook



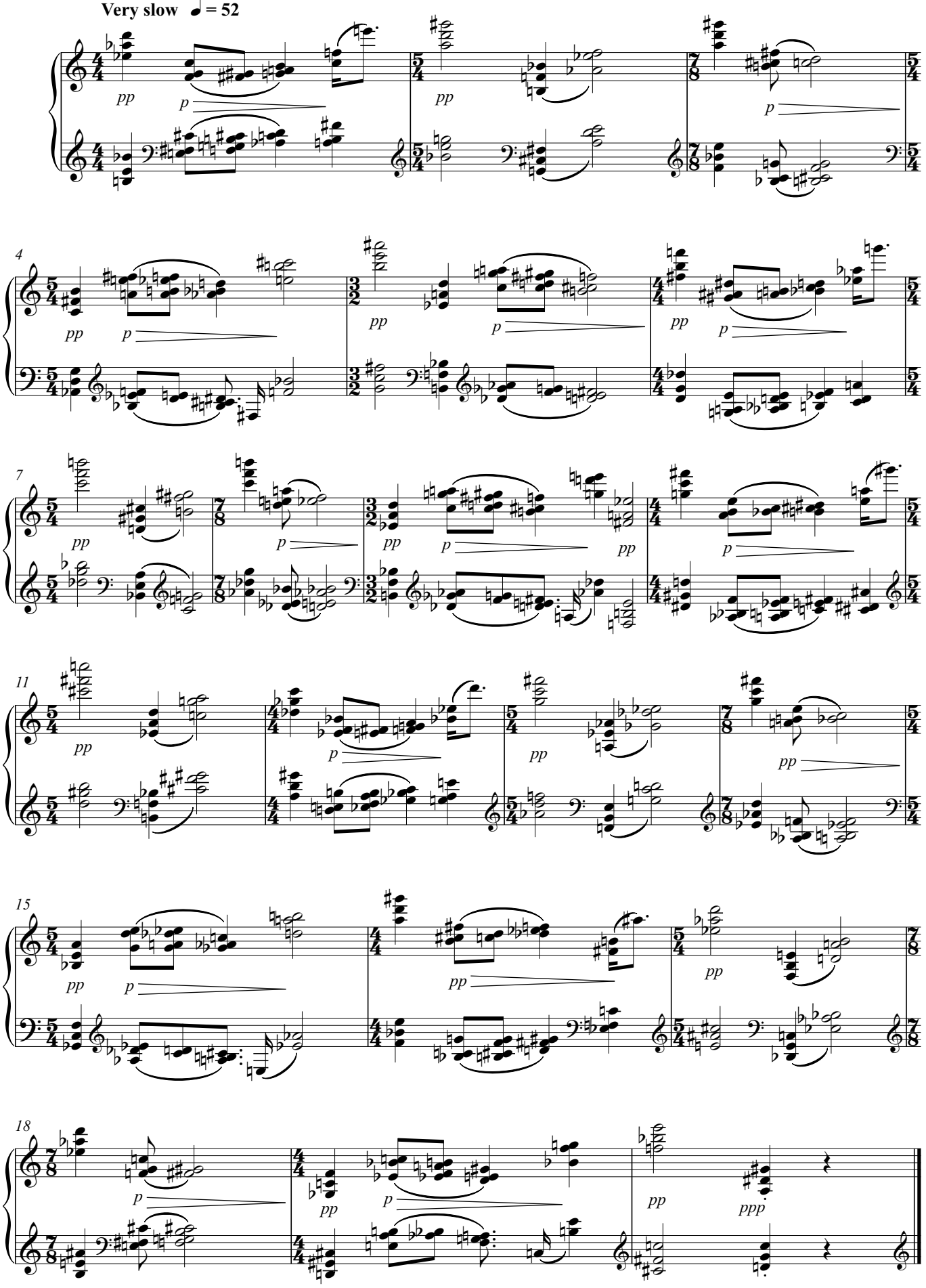
Prelude 7 - Newton Brook



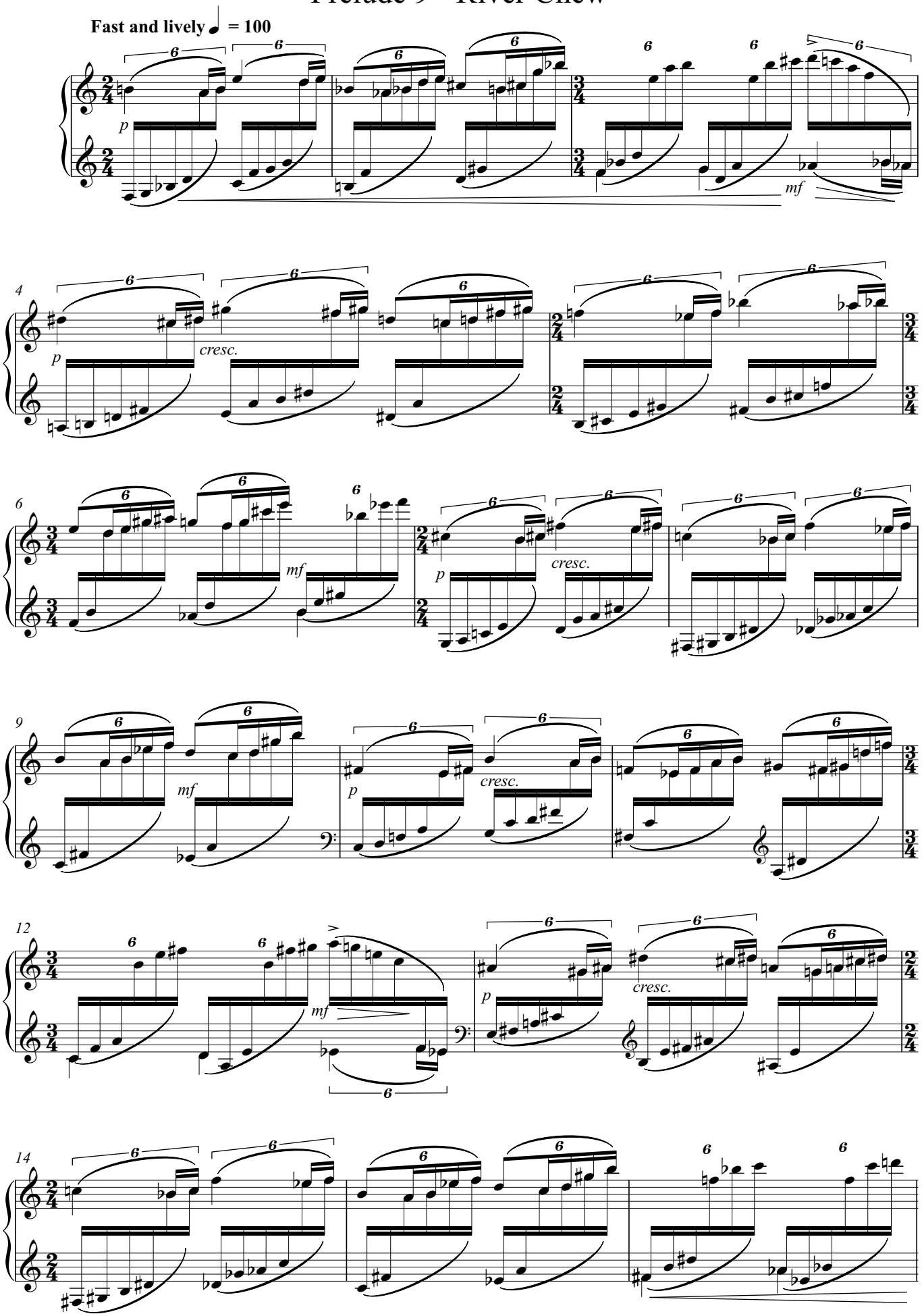

a tempo
poco rall.
a tempo
37
p
pp
p

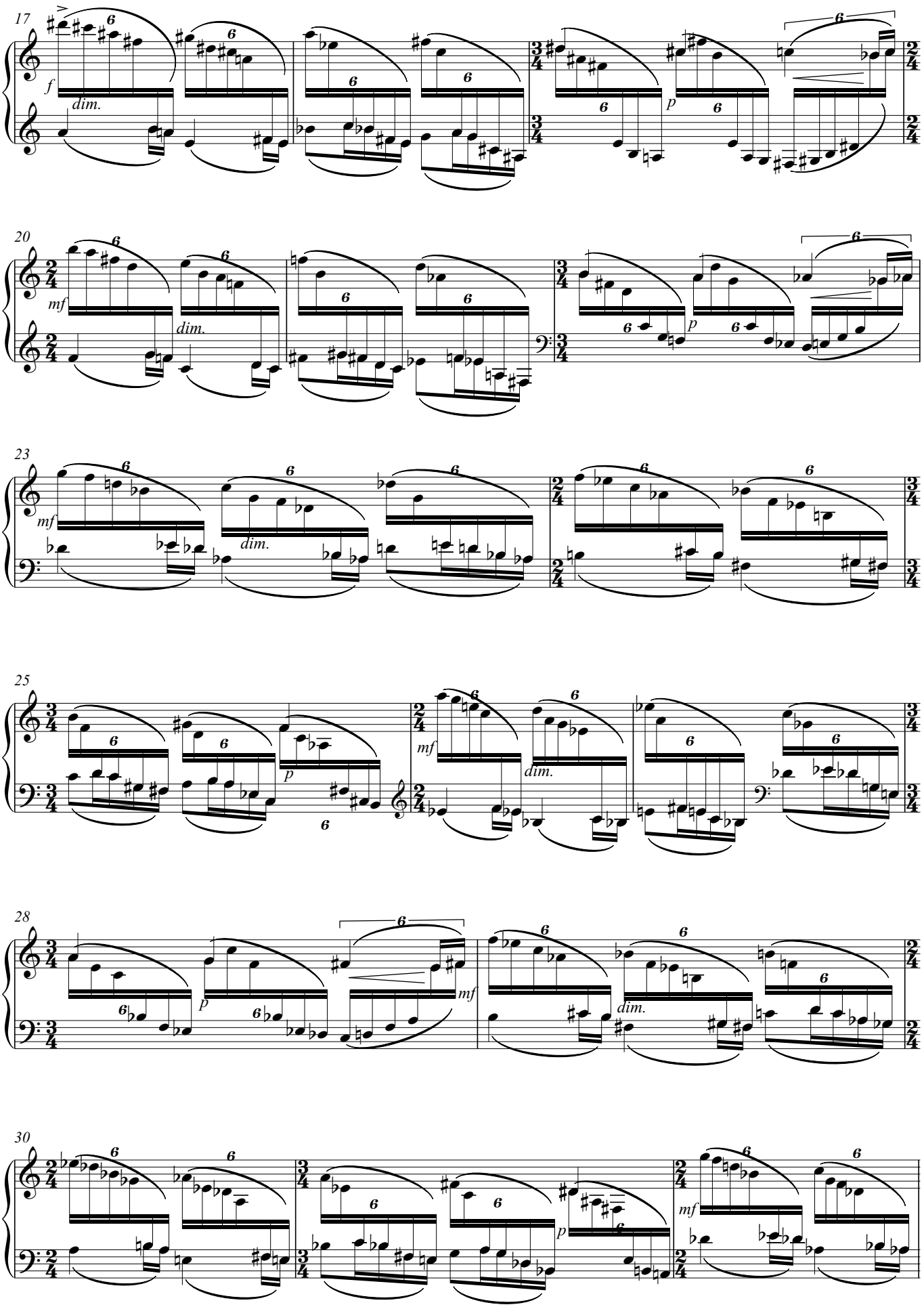
molto rall.
43
mf
pp

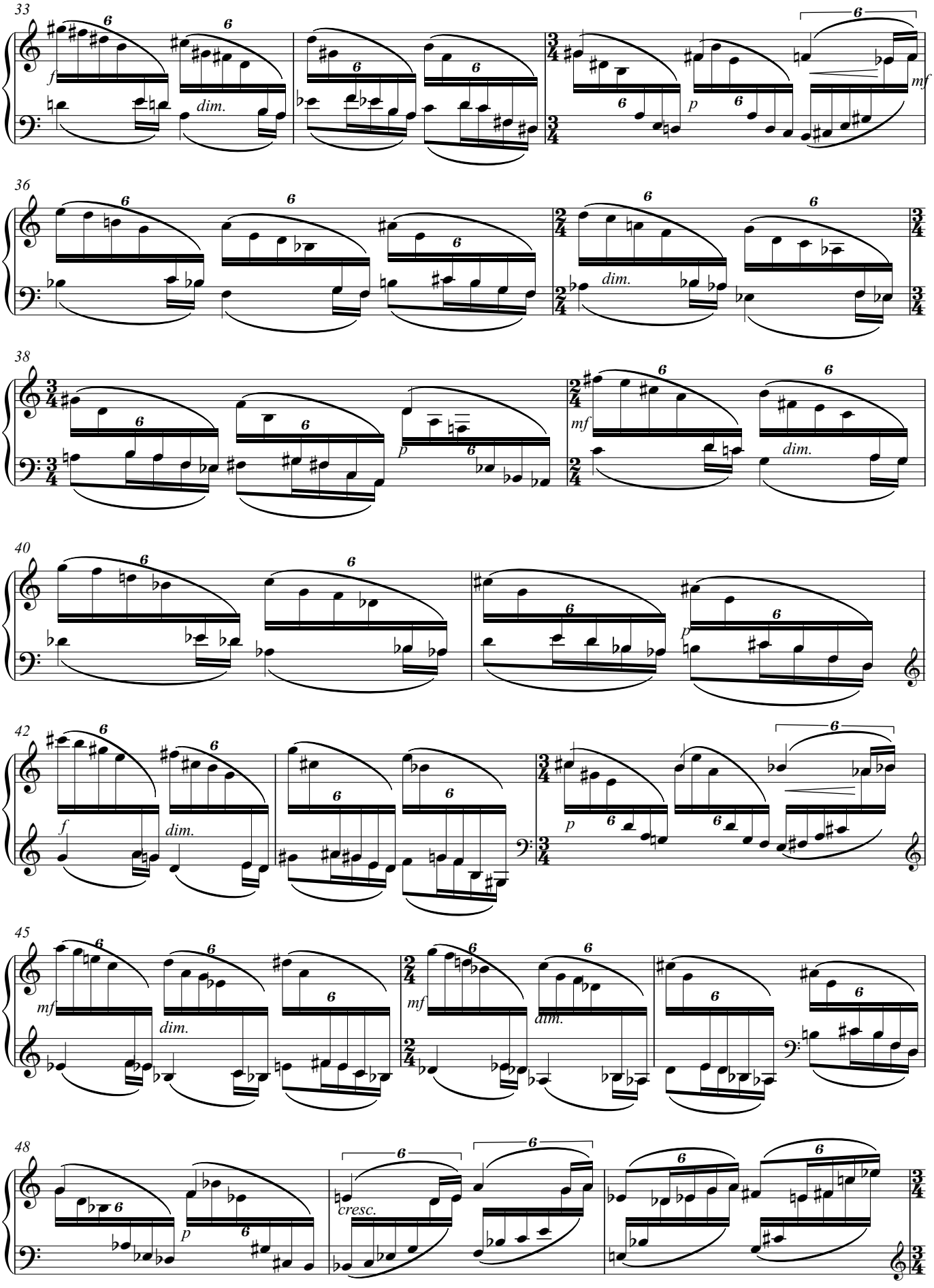
Prelude 8 - River Parrett

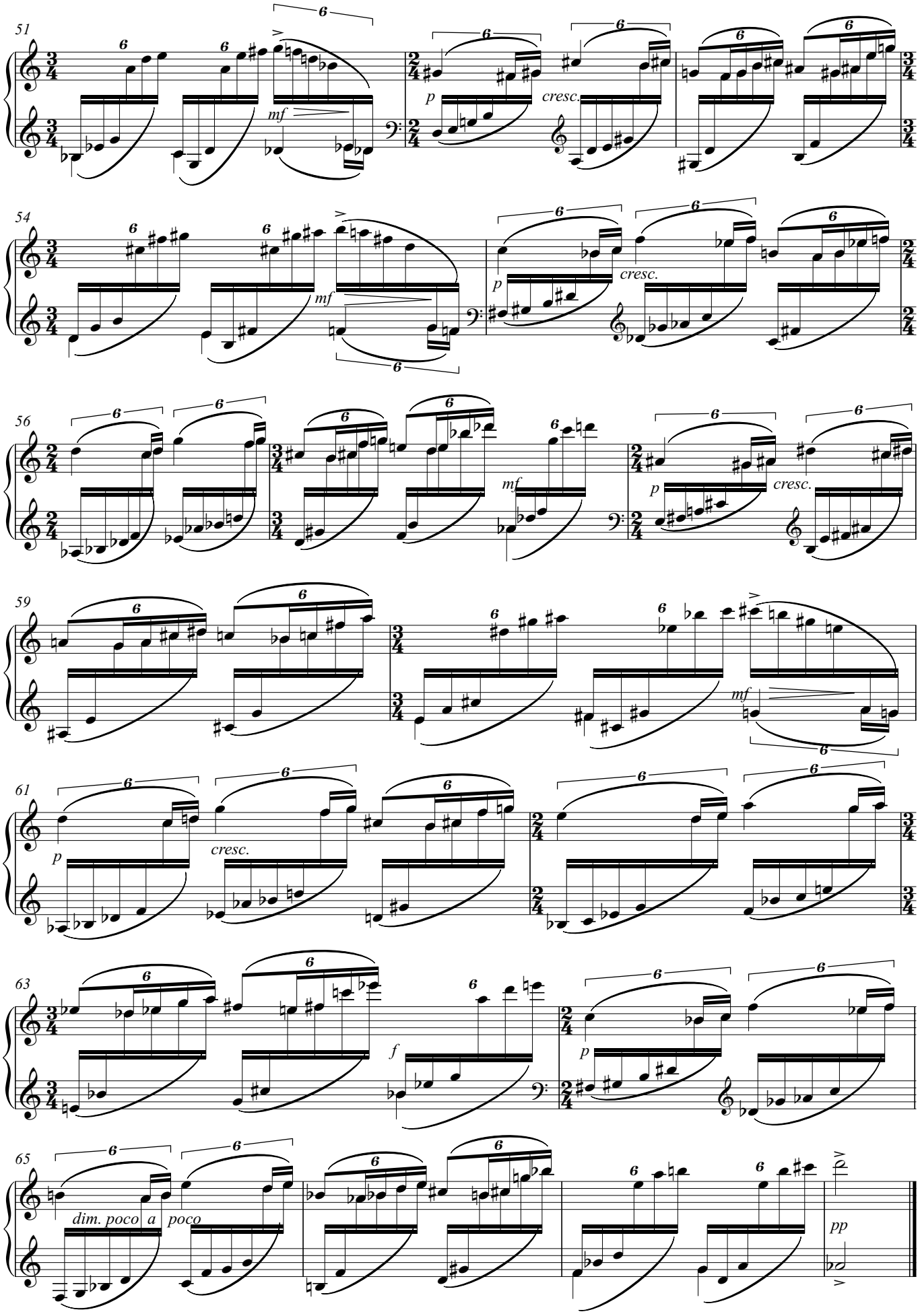


Prelude 9 - River Chew

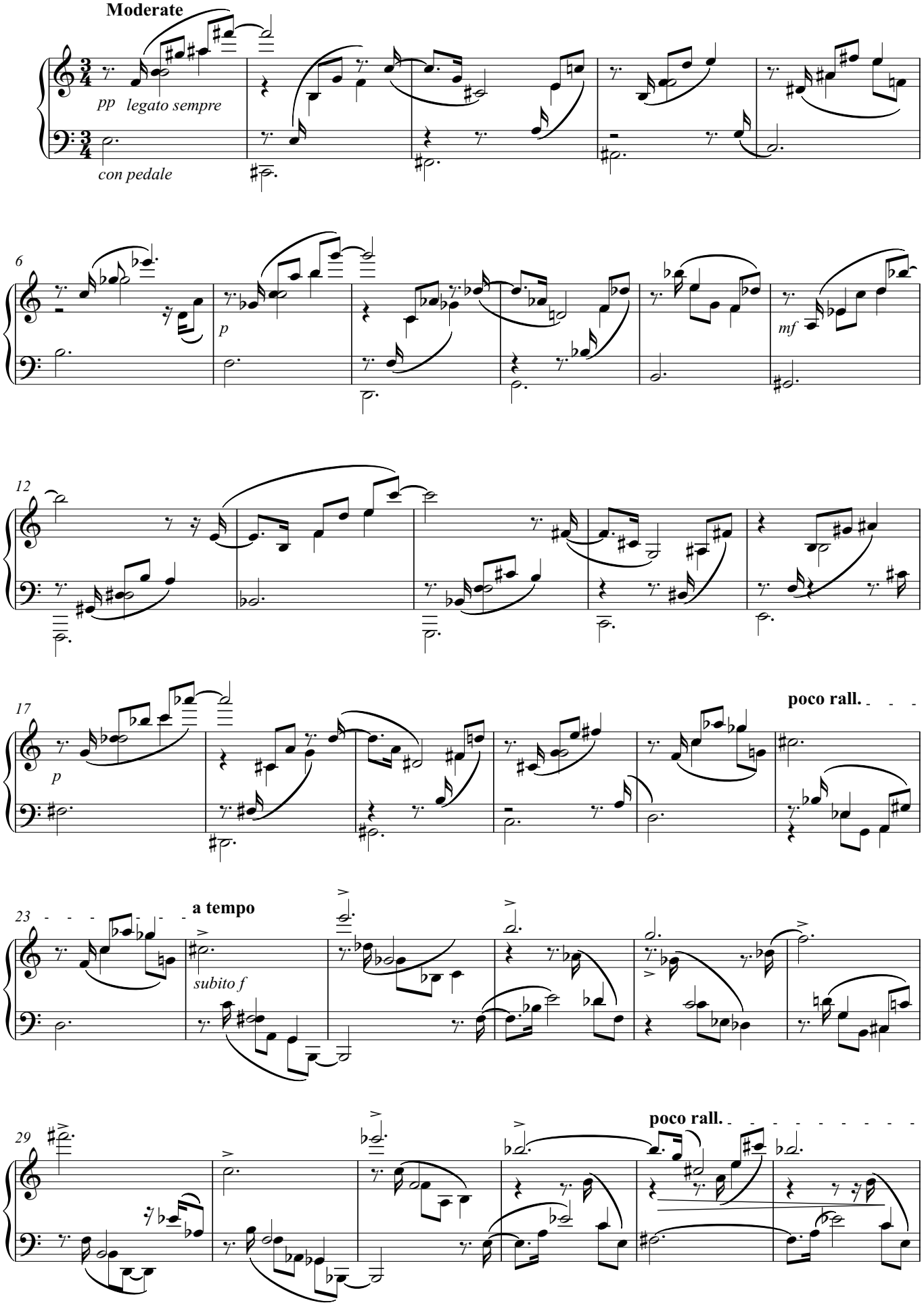


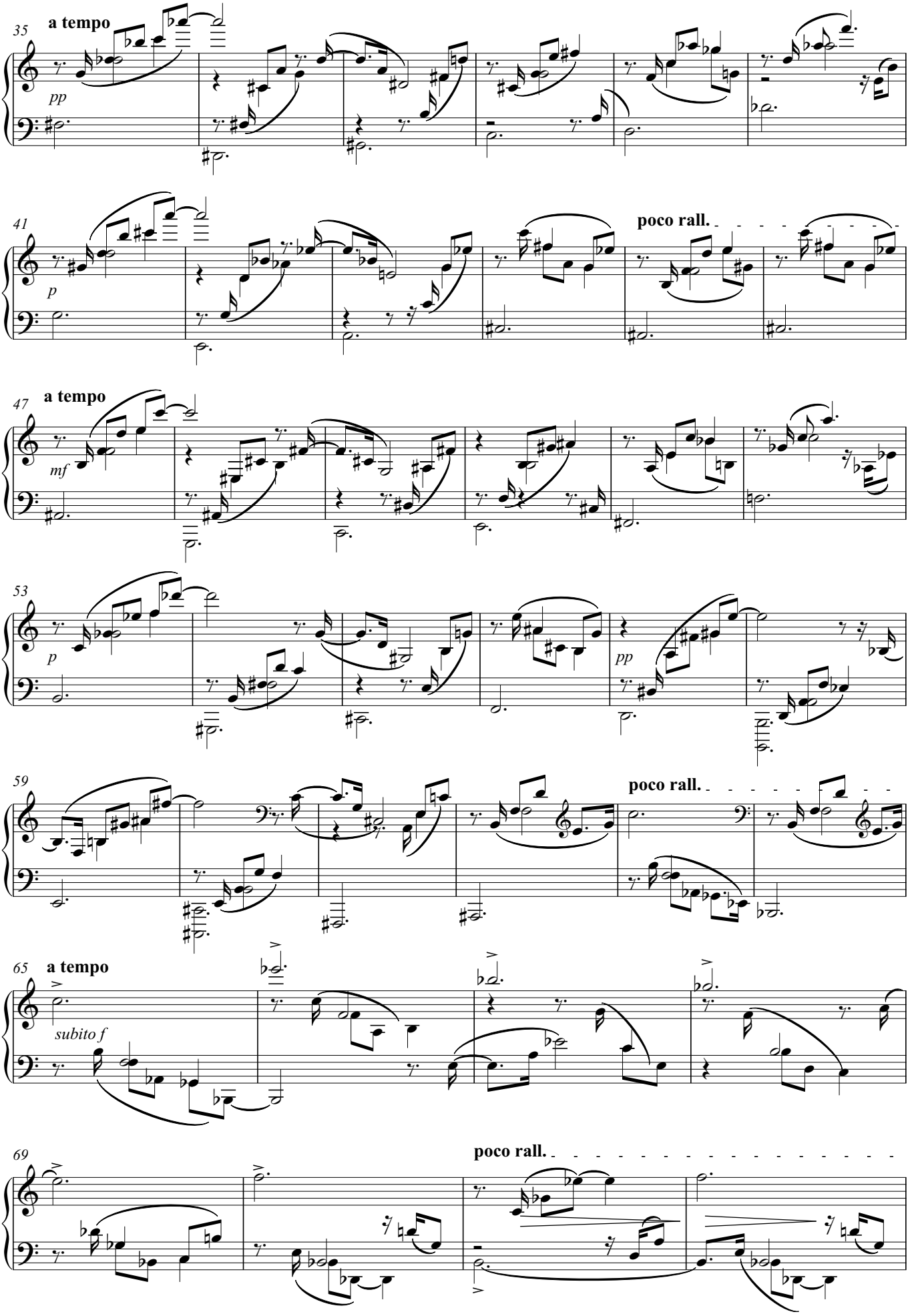

17
f
dim.
p
20
mf
dim.
p
23
mf
dim.
25
p
mf
dim.
28
p
mf
dim.
30
p
mf

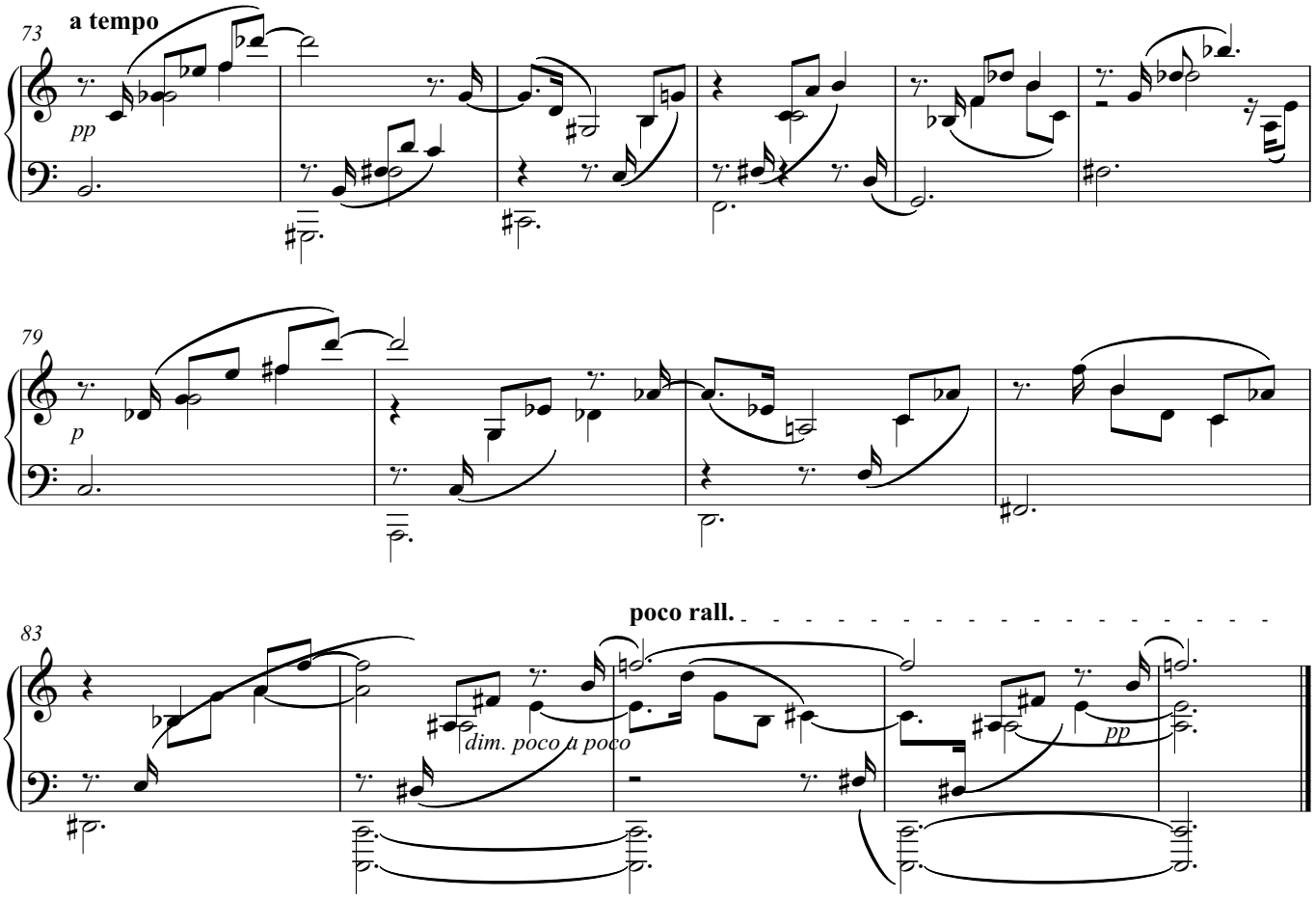

33
f
dim.
p
mf
36
dim.
38
mf
p
dim.
40
p
42
f
dim.
p
45
mf
dim.
mf
dim.
48
p
cresc.


51
mf
p
cresc.
54
mf
p
cresc.
56
mf
p
cresc.
59
mf
61
p
cresc.
63
f
p
65
dim. poco a poco
pp

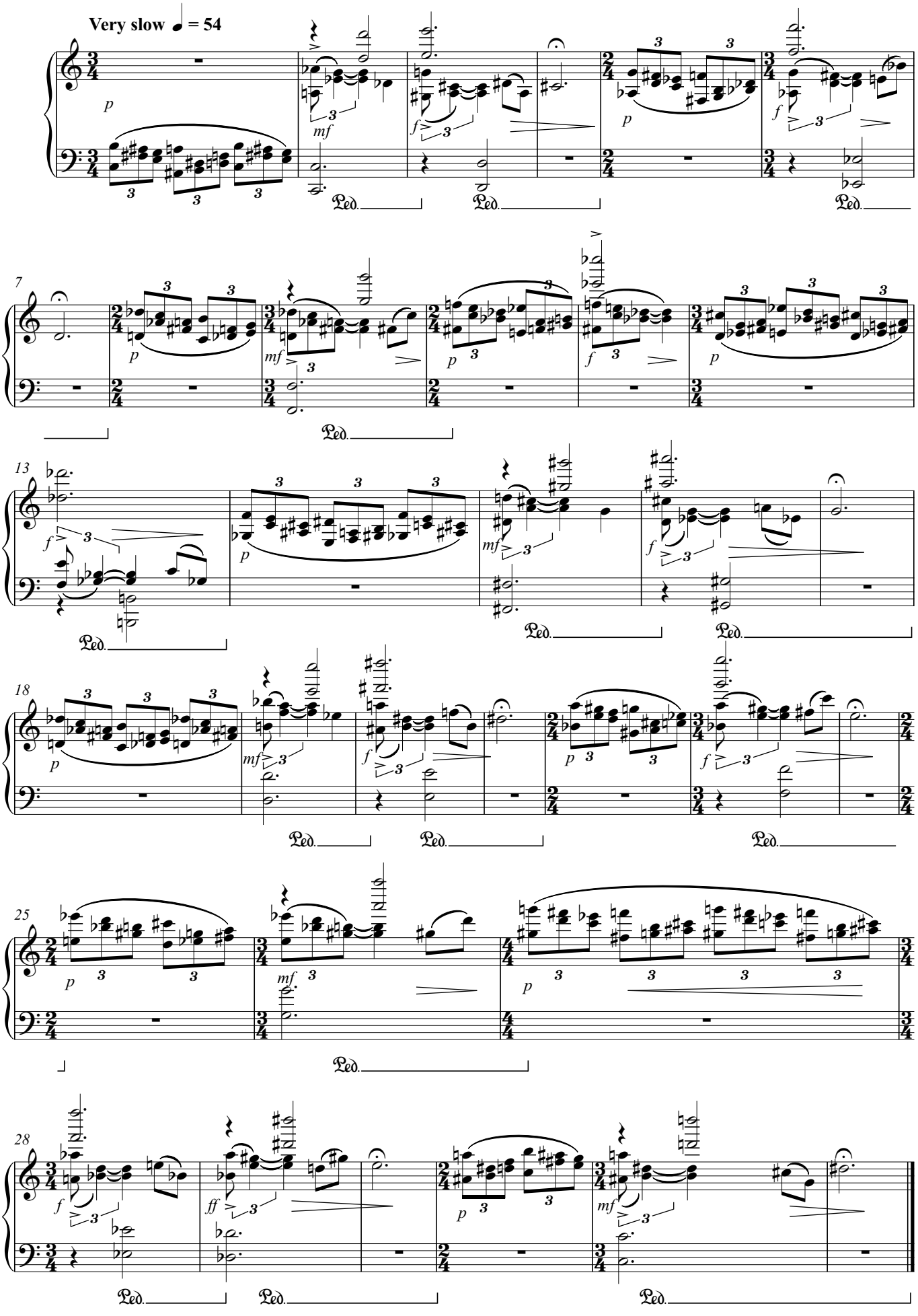
Prelude 10 - River Tone



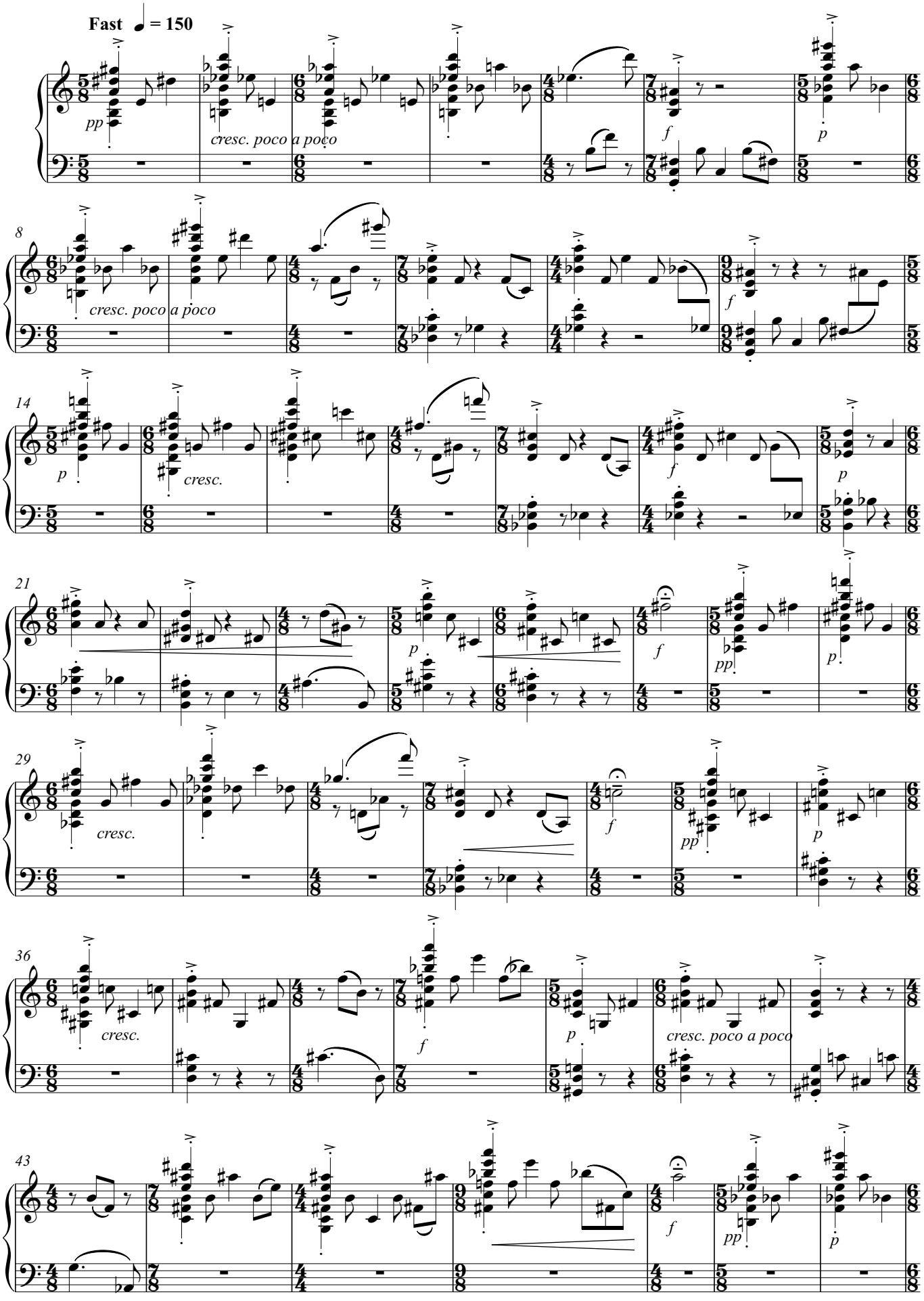

35
a tempo
pp
41
poco rall.
p
47
a tempo
mf
53
p
pp
59
poco rall.
65
a tempo
subito f
69
poco rall.

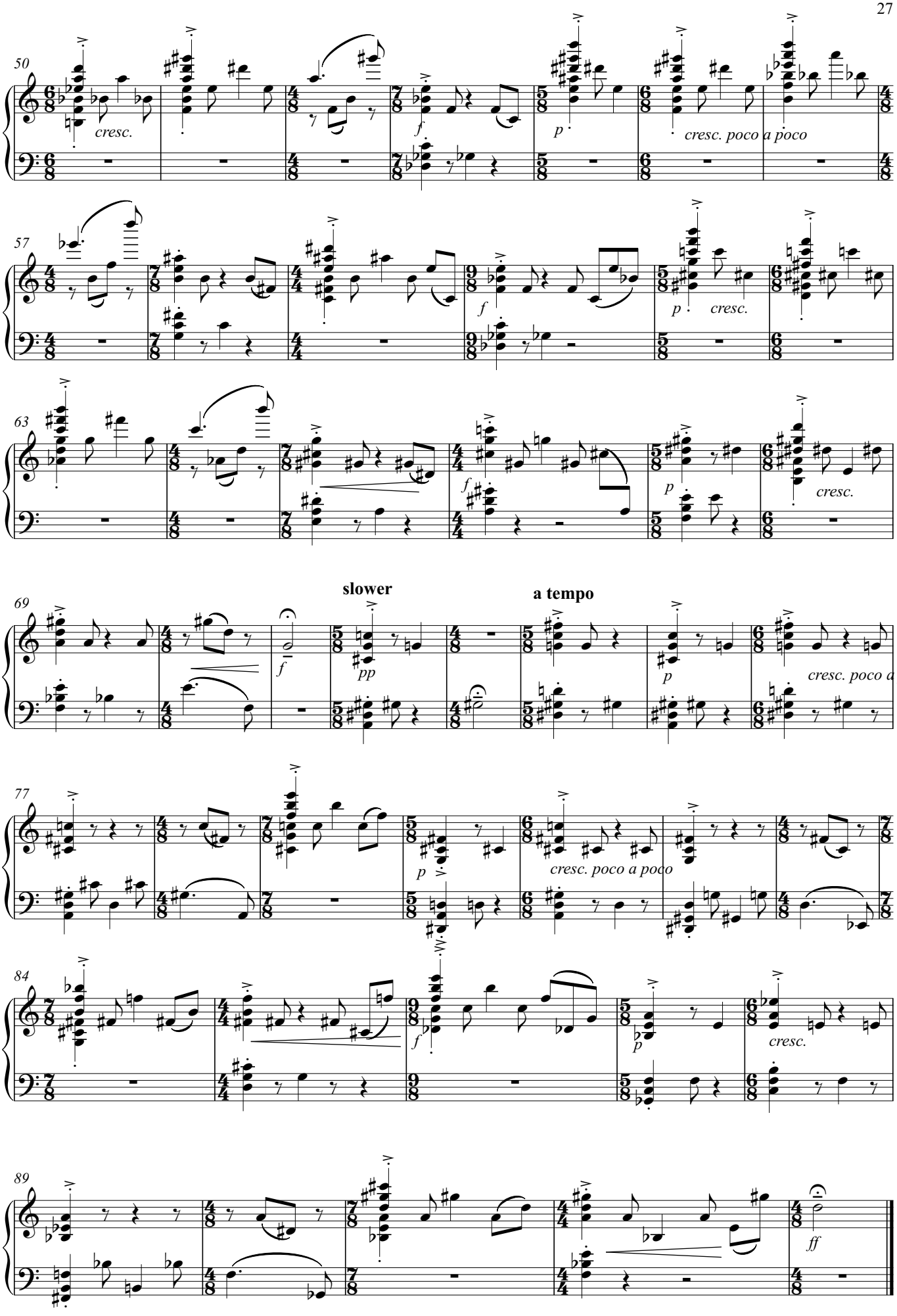

73
a tempo
pp
79
p
83
poco rall.
dim. poco a poco
pp

Prelude 11 - Wellow Brook



Prelude 12 - River Yeo




50
cresc.
f
p
cresc. poco a poco
57
f
p
cresc.
63
f
p
cresc.
69
slower
a tempo
f
pp
p
cresc. poco a poco
77
p
cresc. poco a poco
84
f
p
cresc.
89
ff

Music by Jolyon Laycock

Four Times Four for 16 actors/dancers/singers with electronics (1971)
Locations I, II, III, and IV - sound sculptures (1970 rev. 1973)
***Lattice* - for 12 solo strings and electronics** (1972 - Commissioned by the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham)
Pluramusic - electronic sound installation (1972-1977)
This Could Happen to You - participatory audio-visual installation (1974-1976)
Tyrannos - 12 audio-visual cycles on the myth of Oedipus (unfinished) - Earth Cycle, Moon Cycle, Uranus Cycle, Pluto Cycle, and Equinox Cycle first performed 1977
***Bladud* - a wordscape with music** - commissioned by Bathampton Primary School (1985)
Woden's Dyke - music-theatre for school and community performance based on the story of the Anglo-Saxon chieftain Ceawlin of Wessex. Commissioned by Wansdyke Arts Council (1987).
Hetty Pegler - music theatre piece commissioned by Prema Arts Centre, Uley, Gloucestershire (1988)
High Wood - solo oboe (1988)
In Bruton Town - Fantasia of a Somerset folk song for double string orchestra (1988)
Seven Stars - Community opera based on Thomas Clarkson's investigations into the Bristol slave trade in 1787. Bristol City Commission.(1994)
A Dream of Flying - for clarinet, horn, bassoon, string trio, double bass and piano (1995).
Eadgar Cyning - settings for soloists, choir and orchestra in the original language of three poems from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle about the coronation and death of King Edgar at Bath. (1996).
***Un Tiento Rasguado* (homage to Joaquin Rodrigo)** junior competition test piece for the Bath International Guitar Festival 1996.
Sinfonietta for String Orchestra (1998) revised and re-issued as ***Tetraktis*** (2014)
Mengjiang Weeping at the Wall Music-theatre piece for soprano, choir, small ensemble, Chinese instruments and junior school children; Commissioned by the Corsham Festival (2002).
Die! A-One Sparrow for piano duet (2002)
Among Seven Hills Sinfonia Concertante for piano and orchestra (2009)
12 Landscape Studies for piano (1996-2010)
12 River Preludes for piano (2011)
6 Sonnets of Edna St. Vincent Millay for mezzo soprano and piano (2011)
3 Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins for tenor or baritone and piano (2012)
String Quartet (2012)
An Entangled Bank A setting for 8 part *a cappella* choir of the final paragraph of *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin (2013).
Cantilena for solo cello and open score ensemble (2013)
Clarion Call for solo bass clarinet and open score ensemble (2014)
Dark Seas 5 poems of Philip Larkin for coloratura soprano, clarinet and piano (2014)
***The Swan* - after Camille Saint-Saëns** for cello and two pianos (2014)
Trilithon for orchestra (begun 1968 – completed & revised 2015)

Book publication:
A Changing Role for the Composer in Society
A Study of the Historical Background and Current Methodologies of Creative Music-Making
Peter Lang, European Academic Publishers, Switzerland (2005)
http://www.peterlang.com/all/index.cfm

Poetry:
To Tolverne - a Riddle A poem inspired by the D-day museum at Tolverne, Cornwall (2001)
Berliner Schnauze A collection of poems in the form of an entertainment in words and music inspired by a visit to Berlin ten years after the fall of the Berlin wall (1999).
A Mendip Ploughing Match at Priddy and other Mendip poems
Estrildis an operatic libretto in blank verse based on a story from Geoffrey of Monmouth *The History of the Kings of Britain*.

For more details visit: http://www.jolyonlaycock.uk/