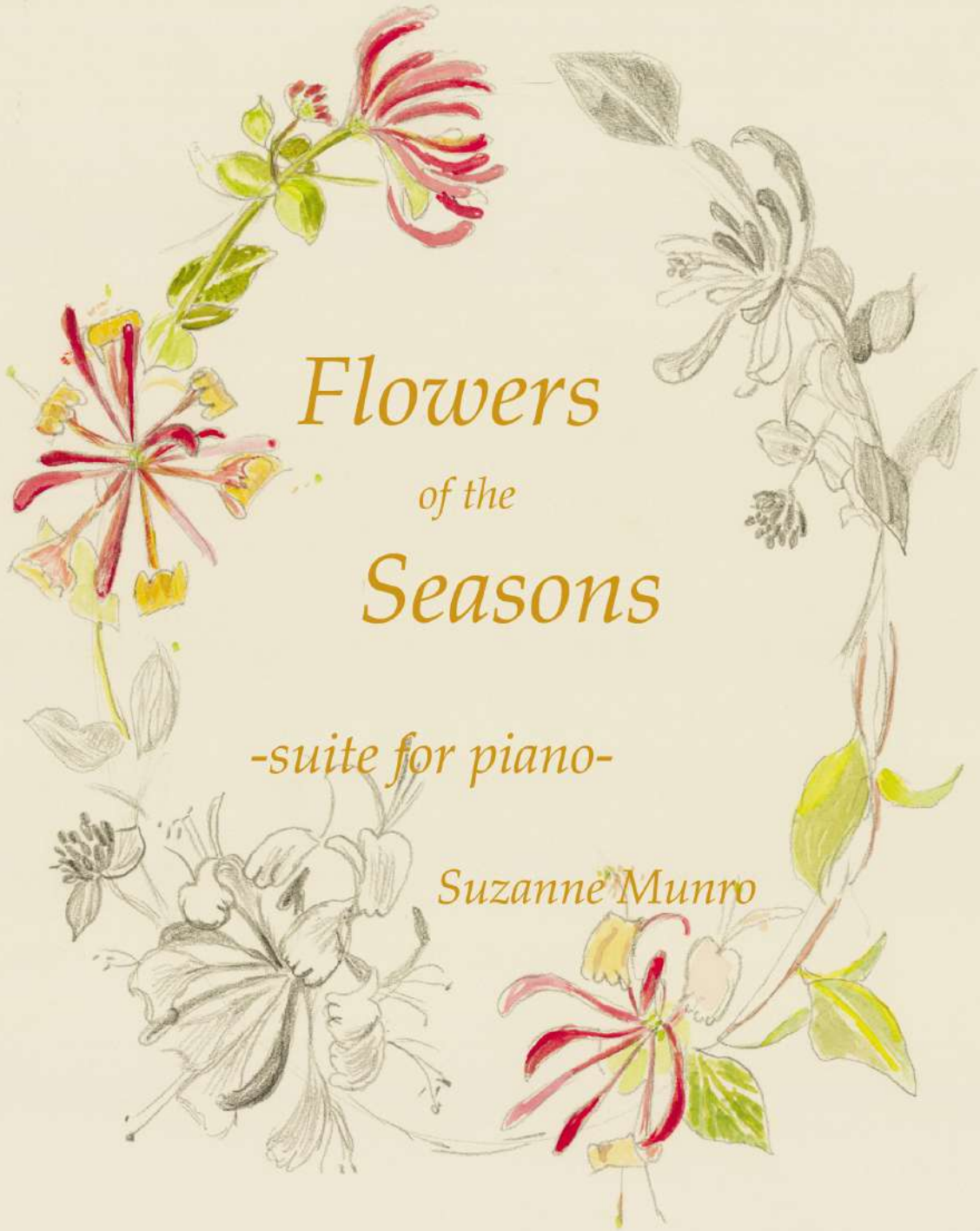


Flowers of the Seasons

-suite for piano-

Suzanne Munro

Flowers of the Seasons

Suzanne Munro

cover illustration: Suzanne Munro

Flowers of the Seasons - programme notes

This suite of pieces was commissioned by Stephen Baister in January 2002 as a birthday gift. Knowing little about the recipient of the gift, except that it was for a lady who was a good amateur pianist, I chose flowers as my subject. The suite is comprised of six movements and follows the months from March to August, with English wild flowers as the inspiration. Each movement has a subtitle - there are also short quotations and descriptions written throughout the score, as a guide to the performer as to the inspiration behind the music.

The Daffodil *- March - "The joyous trumpets burst forth , and herald the coming spring."*

The movement opens with a bright fanfare-like motive which represents the " joyous trumpets" of daffodils and their early appearance after winter. After the fanfare-like opening, there is a delicate section: the "*March breeze; and the wild groups of daffodil heads nodding in the wind."* The fanfare motive then returns.

Fritillary *- April - "Delicately nodding heads: this little flower, floating on its fragile stem, blooms silently among the meadow grasses of the spring."*

Again, this a short movement. There is no regular time or pulse, which gives a feeling of "a free spirit." Much of the music uses the higher ranges of the piano with both hands playing in the treble, which creates a delicate feeling, and lots of irregular groupings of notes and ornaments represent the flower's delicacy as it nods in the breeze.

Gorse *- May - "A sea of billowing gold....."*

Inspiration for this movement, with its lush harmonies and key changes, came from the down-lands cliff top near Lyme Regis one May, where there were seas of billowing gold gorse bushes. The melody sings above a ripple of semiquavers and the key ranges from warm E flat to the open-ness of F sharp major.

Honeysuckle *- June - ".....what sight is an English hedgerow, filled with flowers of the fragrant honeysuckle....."*

This movement is almost fugue-like in style. It opens with a single melodic line - "a delicate single stem of honeysuckle*." "A single stem entwines itself through the hedgerows, the delicate perfume hangs in the air around the entwining climbing stems and leaflets....."* Almost imperceptibly other parts creep in, and interweave, to represent the upward twining of honeysuckle as it grows up through the summer hedgerows. All of a sudden, a lush melody breaks forth - the glories of a June hedgerow smothered in honeysuckle flowers - *"a single stem entwines itself through the hedgerows, the delicate perfume hangs in the air. An English hedgerow, filled with flowers of the fragrant honeysuckle....."*

Scabious *- July - "Little flower of sapphire blue, nestling among the chalkland grasses; fragile on your slender stems, little free spirit of the wild open places."*

In contrast, this tiny one-page movement, a single melodic line for right hand alone, takes us to the chalk downland, with a melody that is wistful and delicate, like the little blue scabious. Once again, the freedom from a time signature allows the music a natural, free feeling.

The Fuchsia *- August - " The whole bush - amassed with thousands of delicate hanging bells. Stand back, - a billowing sea of flame against a rich azure sky....."*

This was the month of the recipient's birthday, so I wanted to make this one of the longer movements. Again, the inspiration came from a wonderful sight of a profusion of wild fuchsia bushes along the cliff path on Cromer cliffs. Thousands of tiny brilliant red flowers against the blue sky.....Irregular rhythms between the hands and a profusion of semiquavers, musically reflect the mass of tiny flowers and yet the over-all effect of "a billowing sea of flame." A short way in, there is a rising passage which leads to a sudden key change (from E major to E flat major,) and a central melody with lush harmony ensues.....the gloriousness of this wonderful sight..... At this point in the score the performer will find the quote. "*a billowing sea of flame against a rich azure sky....."*

Suzanne Munro

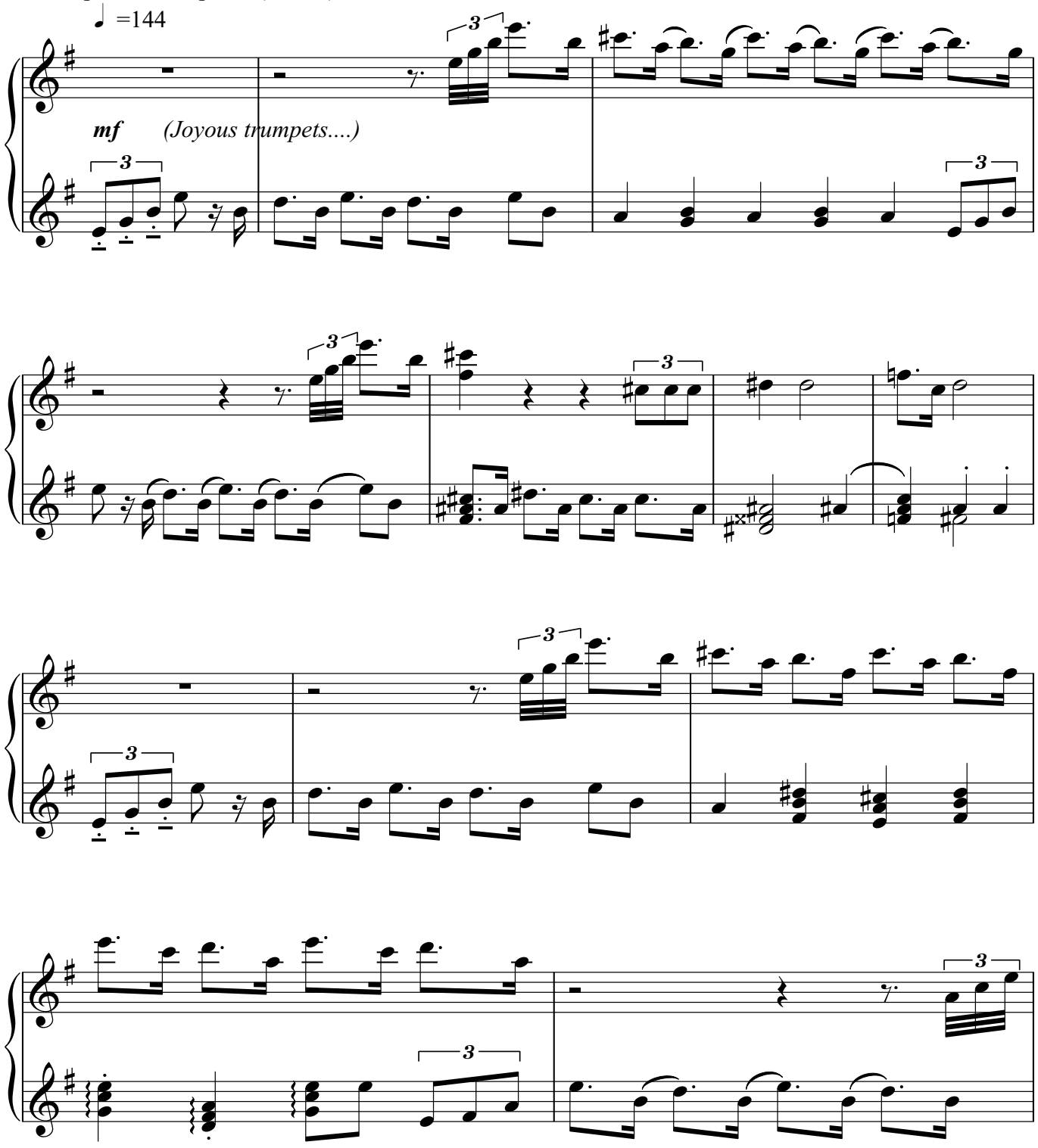
The Daffodil

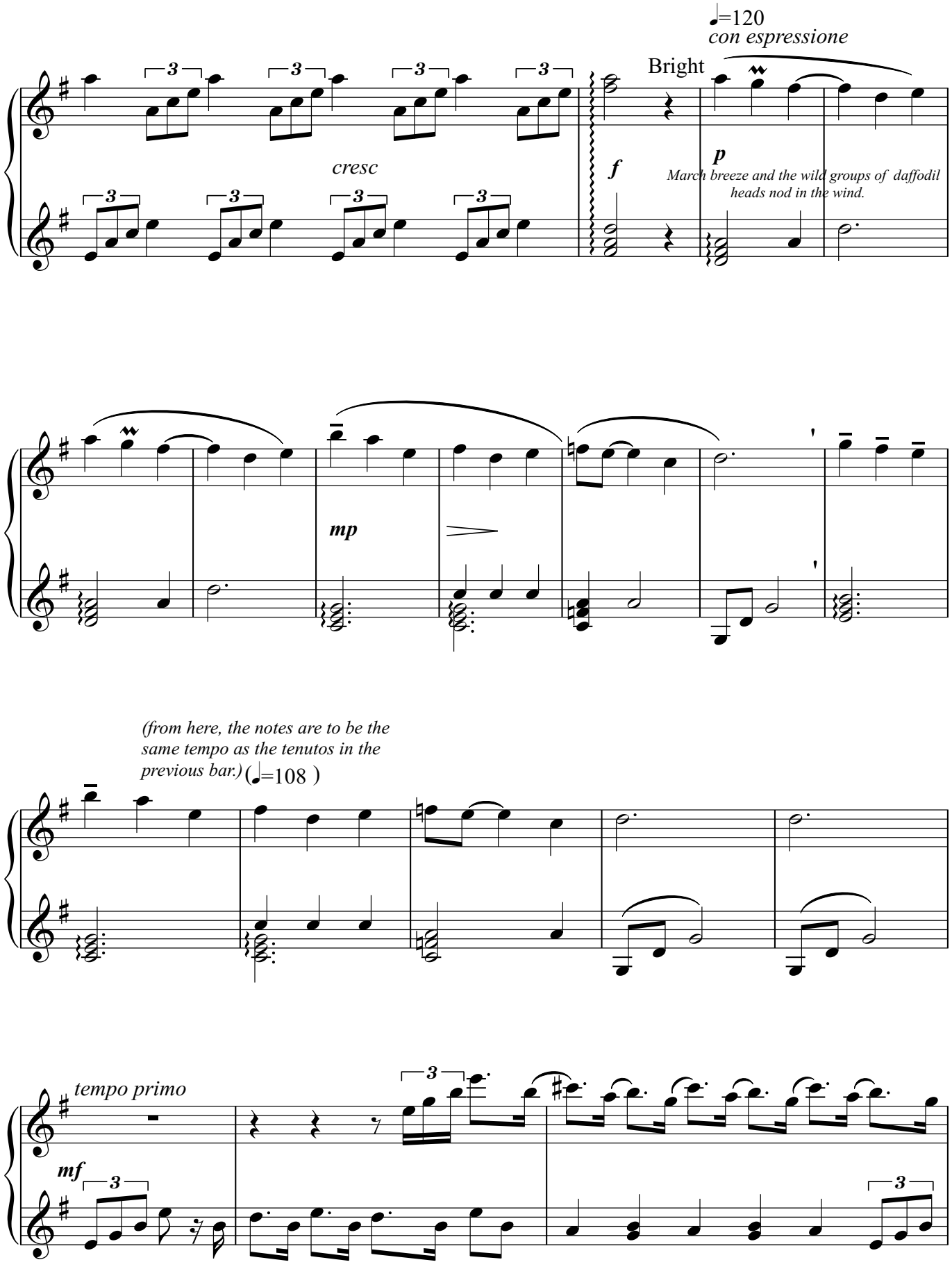
The joyous trumpets burst forth, and herald
the coming Spring.

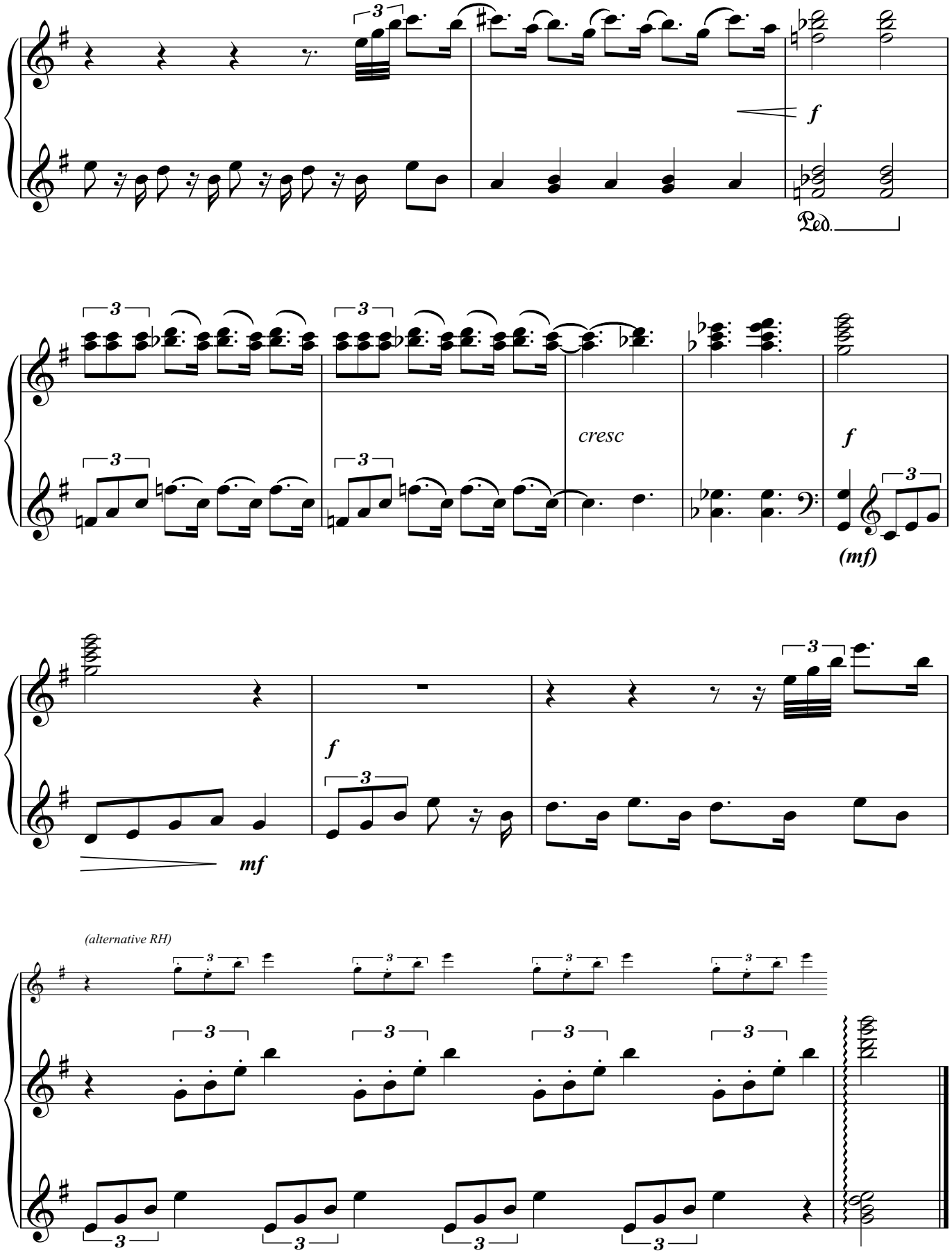
Suzanne Munro

presto con spirito (vivace)

♩ =144

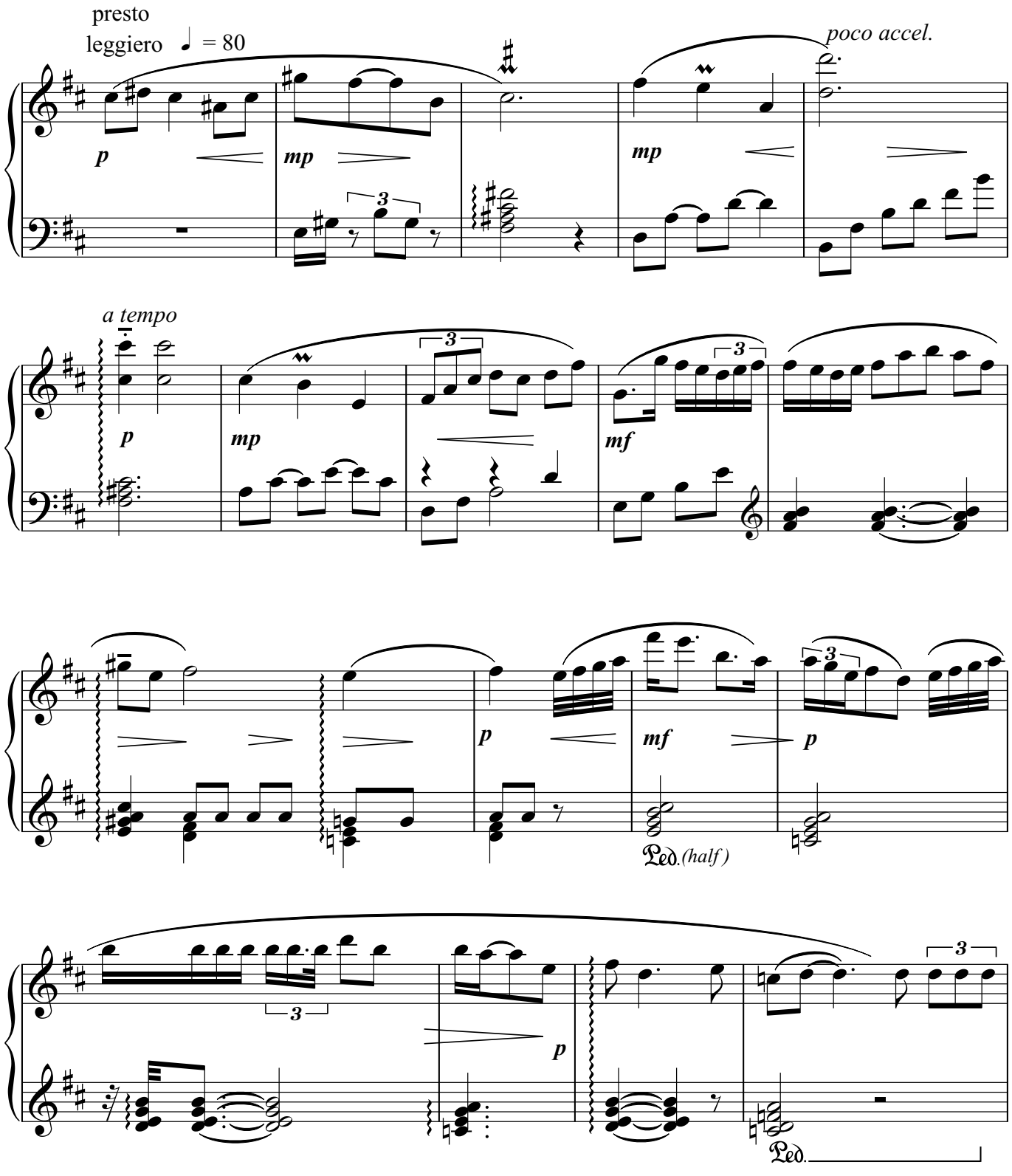


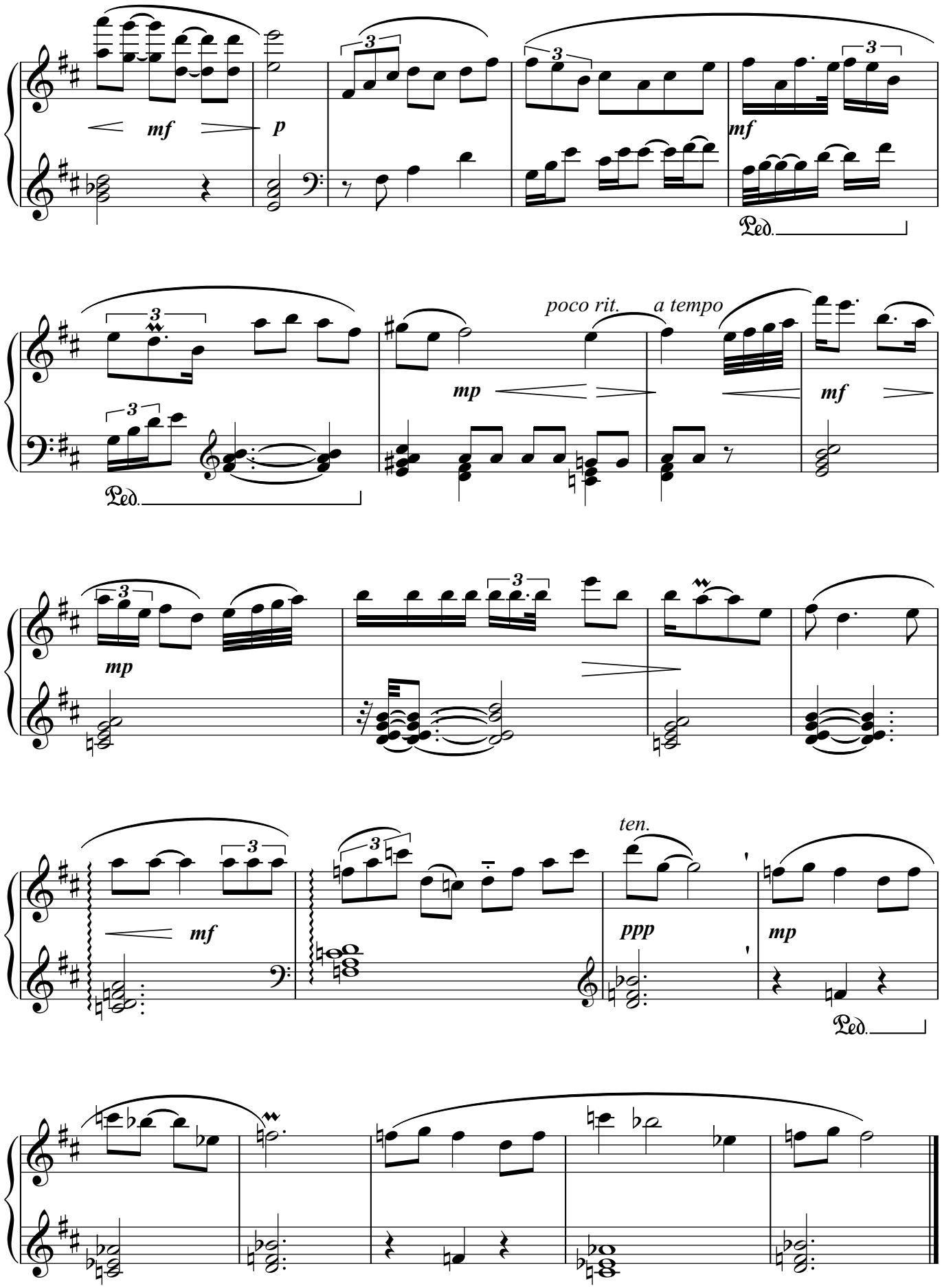

♩=120
con espressione
Bright
cresc
f
p
March breeze and the wild groups of daffodil heads nod in the wind.
mp
(from here, the notes are to be the same tempo as the tenutos in the previous bar.)
(♩=108)
tempo primo
mf


f
Ped.
cresc
f
(mf)
f
mf
(alternative RH)

Fritillary

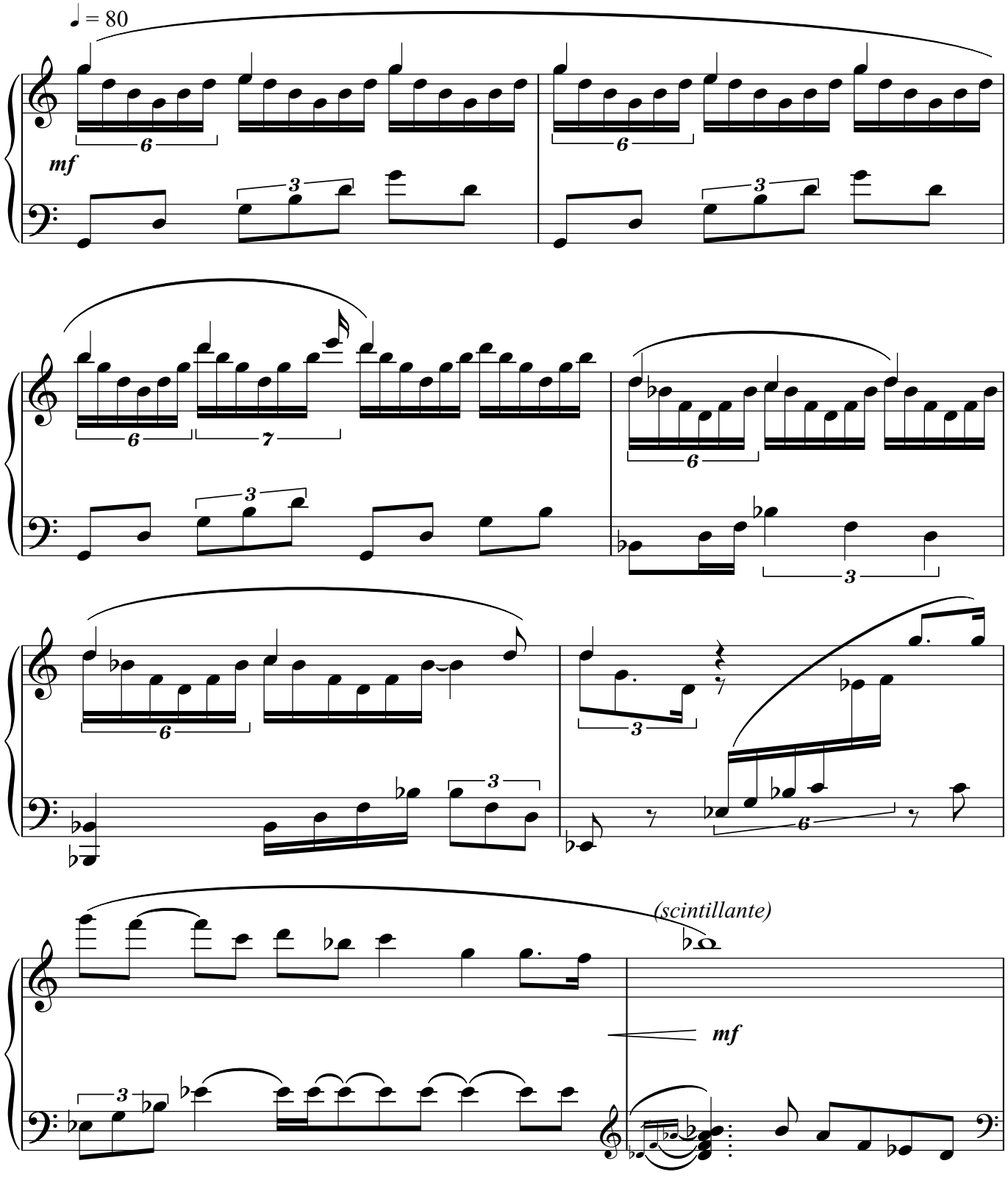
Delicateley nodding heads: this little flower, floating on its
fragile stems, blooms silently among
the meadow grasses of the spring.

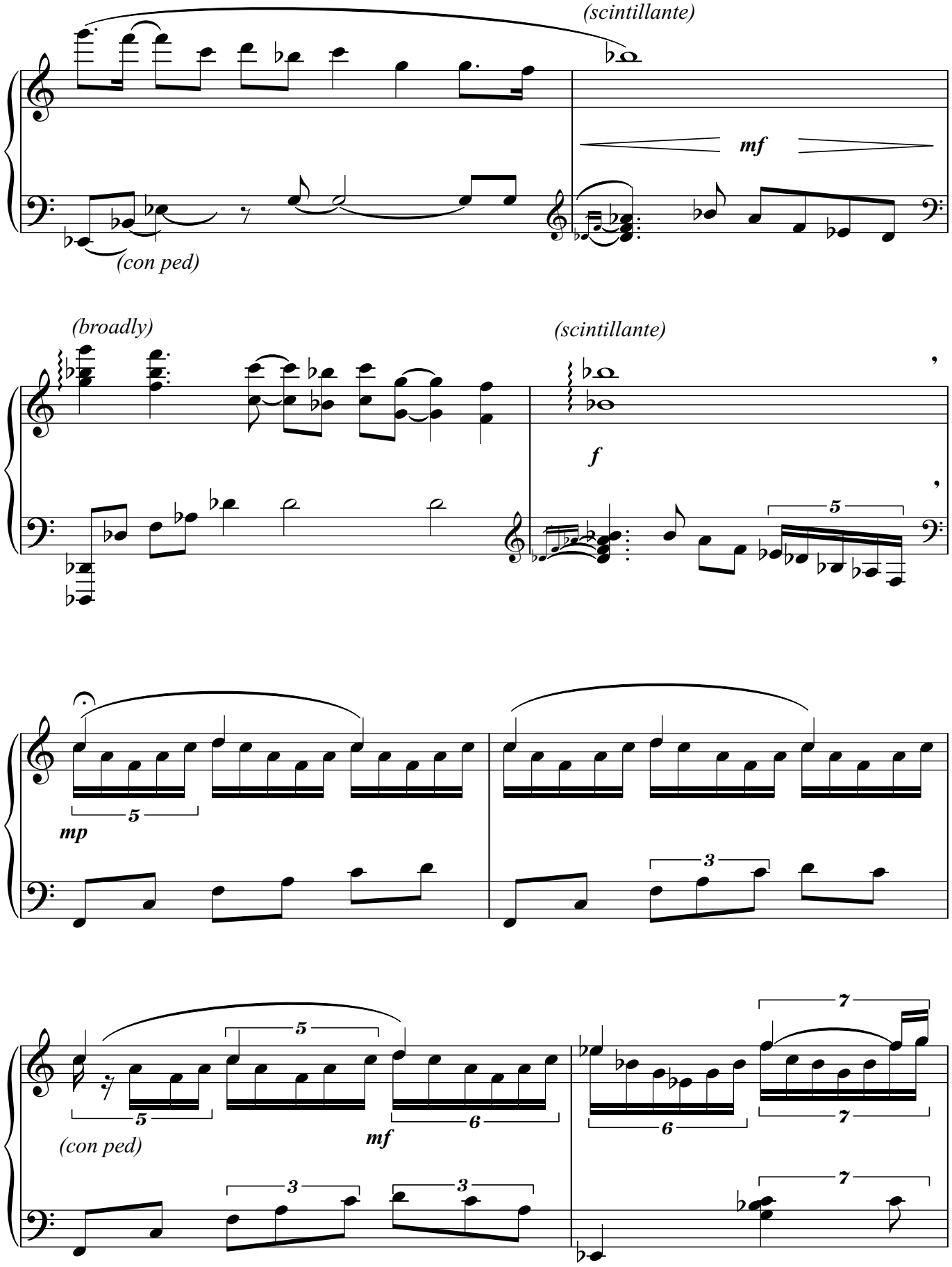


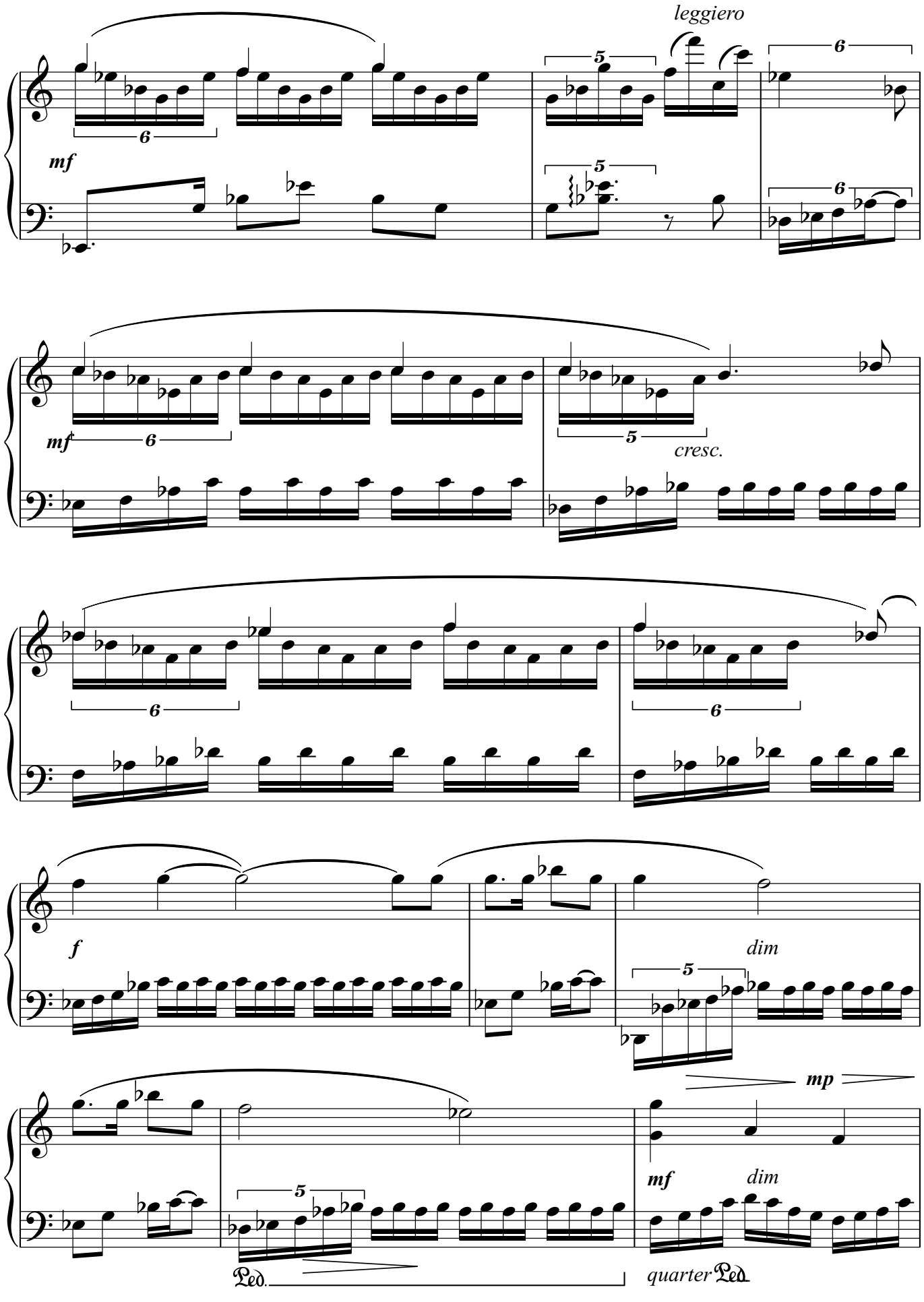

mf
p
mf
Ped.
poco rit.
a tempo
mp
mf
Ped.
mp
mf
ten.
ppp
mp
Ped.

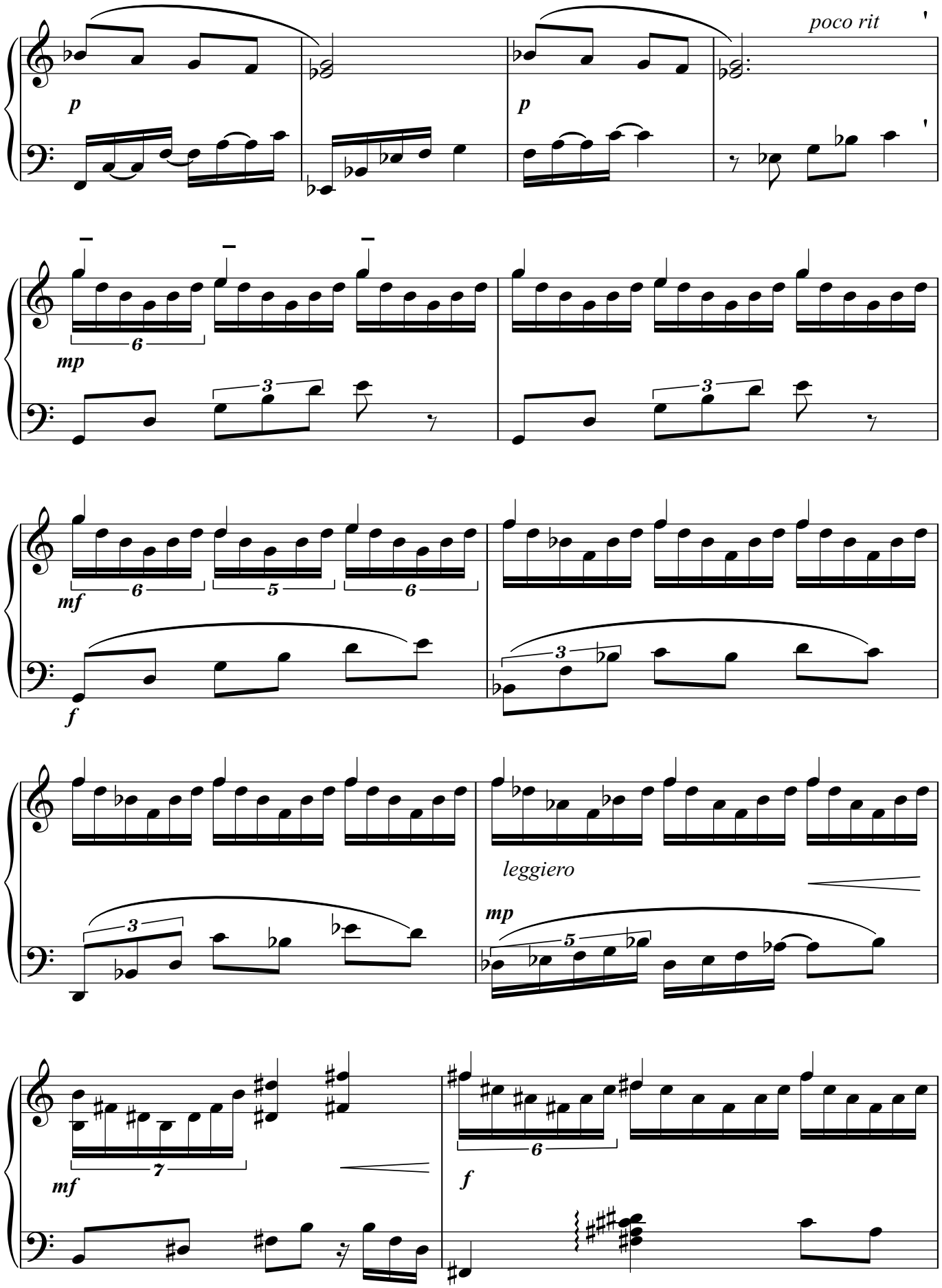
Gorse

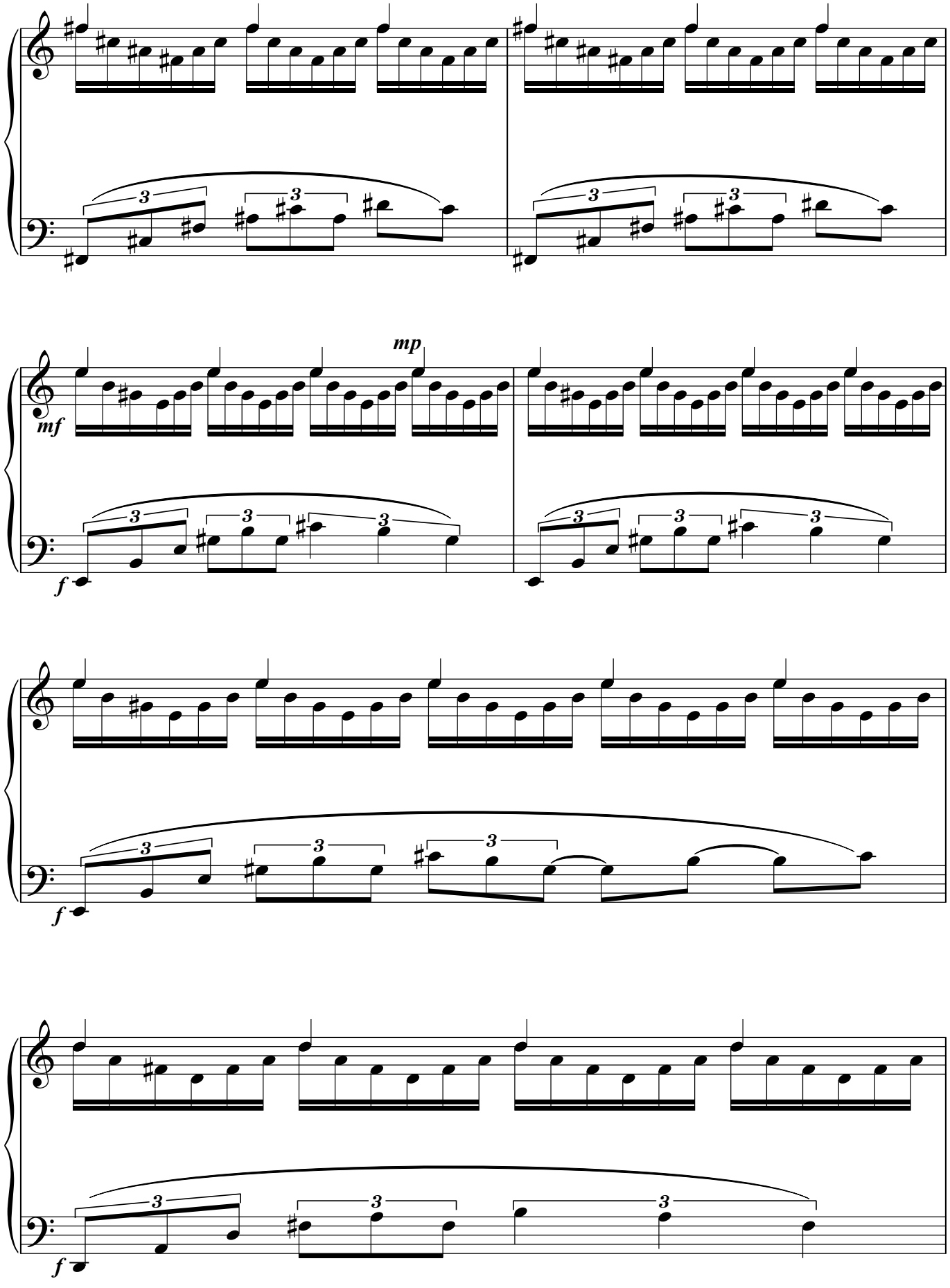
A sea of billowing gold...

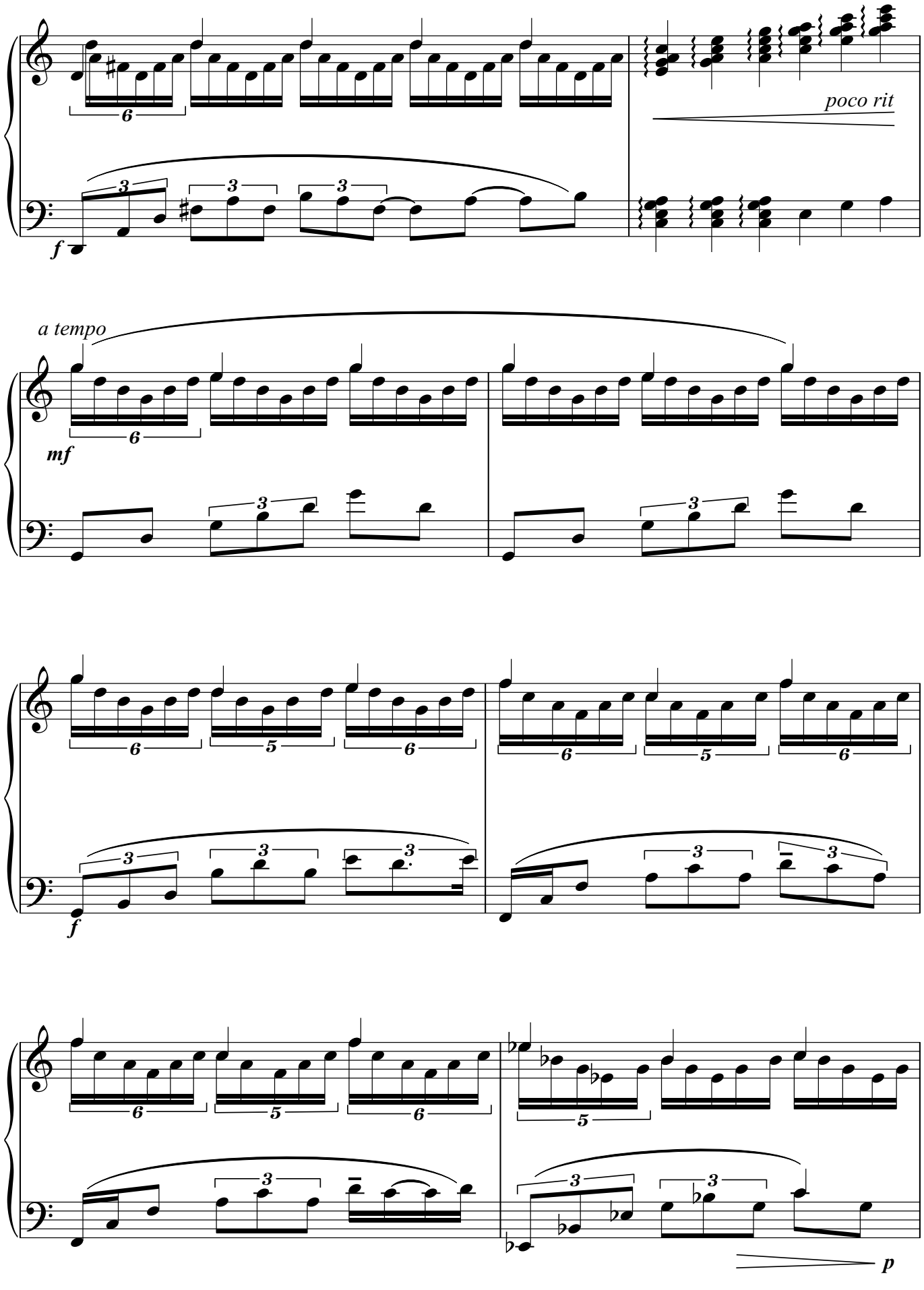


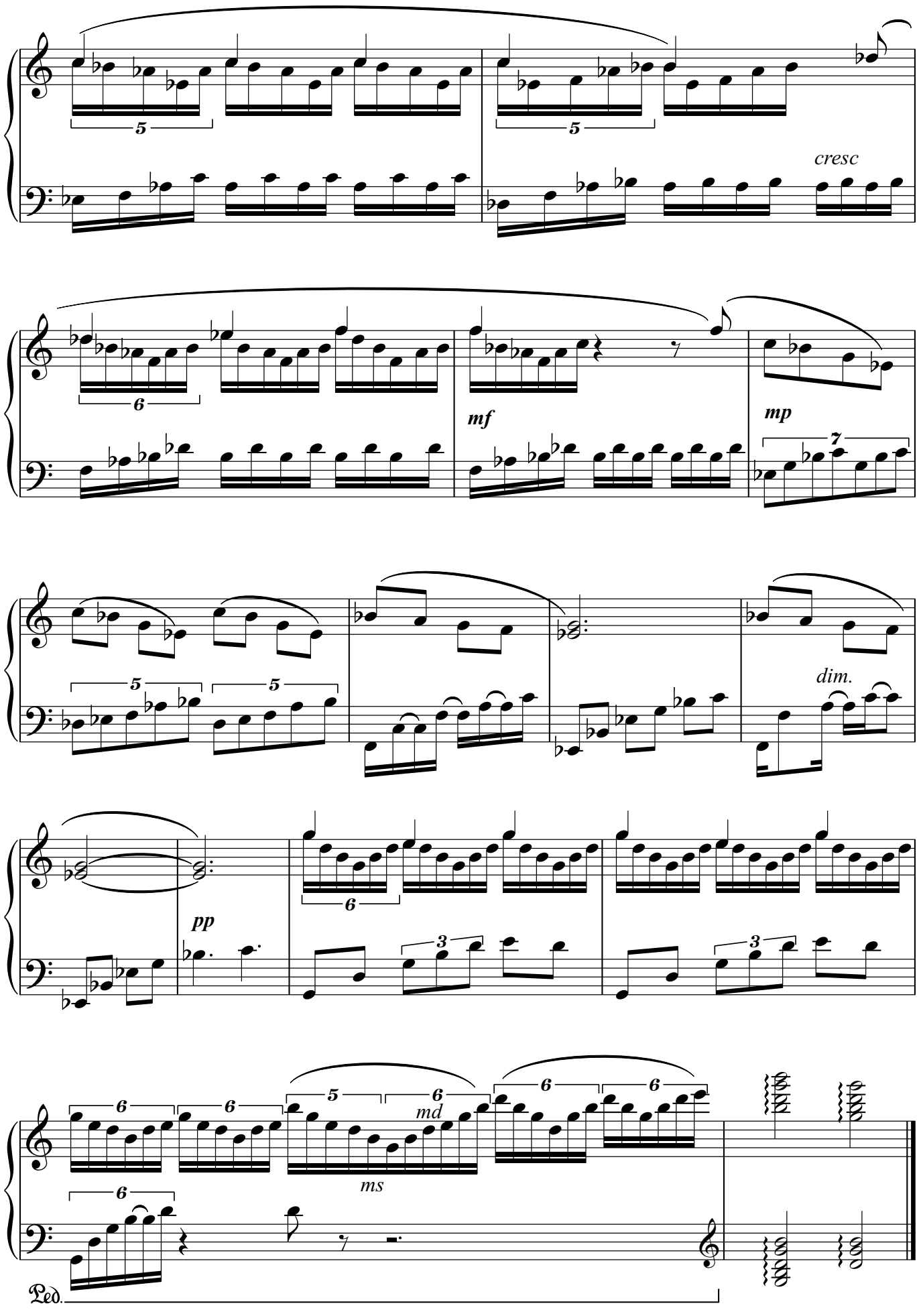

(scintillante)
mf
(con ped)
(broadly)
(scintillante)
f
mp
(con ped)
mf


leggiero
mf
cresc.
f
dim
mp
mf
dim
Ped.
quarter Ped.


poco rit
p
p
mp
mf
f
leggiero
mp
mf
f

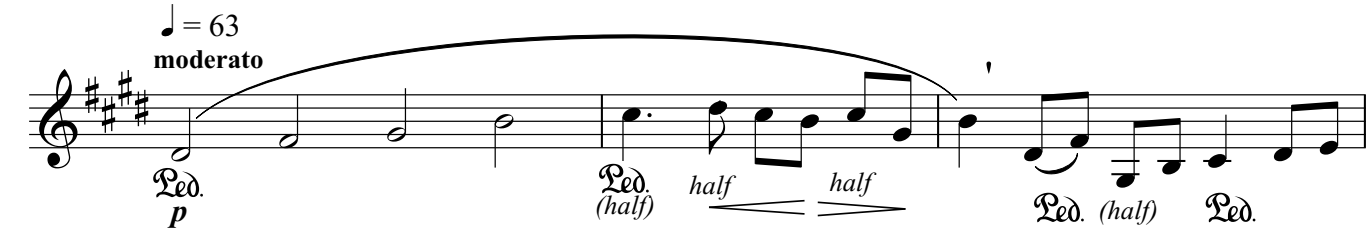

mp
mf
f
f
f


poco rit
a tempo
mf
f
p

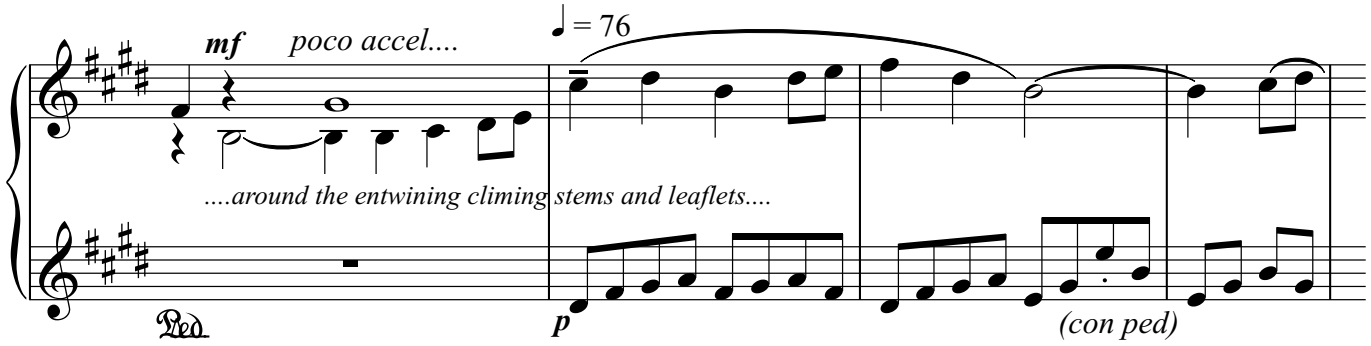

cresc
mf
mp
dim.
pp
md
ms
Ped.

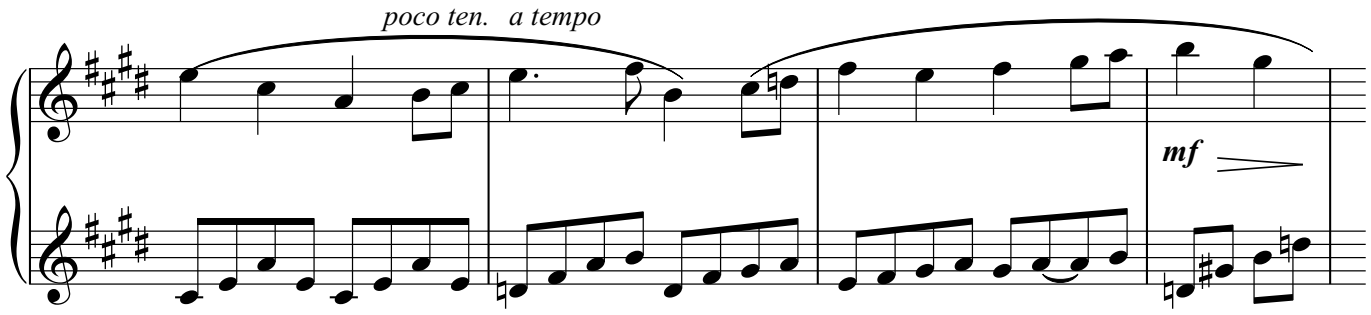
Honeysuckle

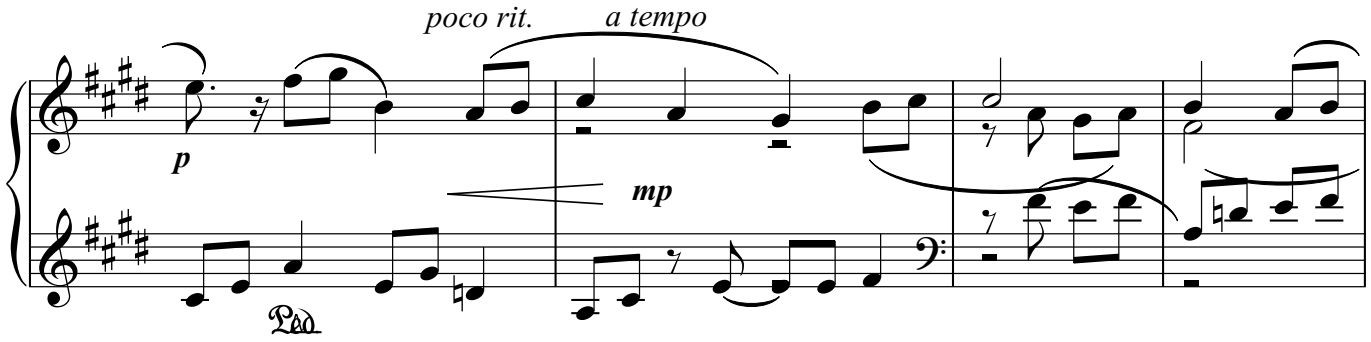
...what sight is an English hedgerow, filled
with flowers of the fragrant honeysuckle...

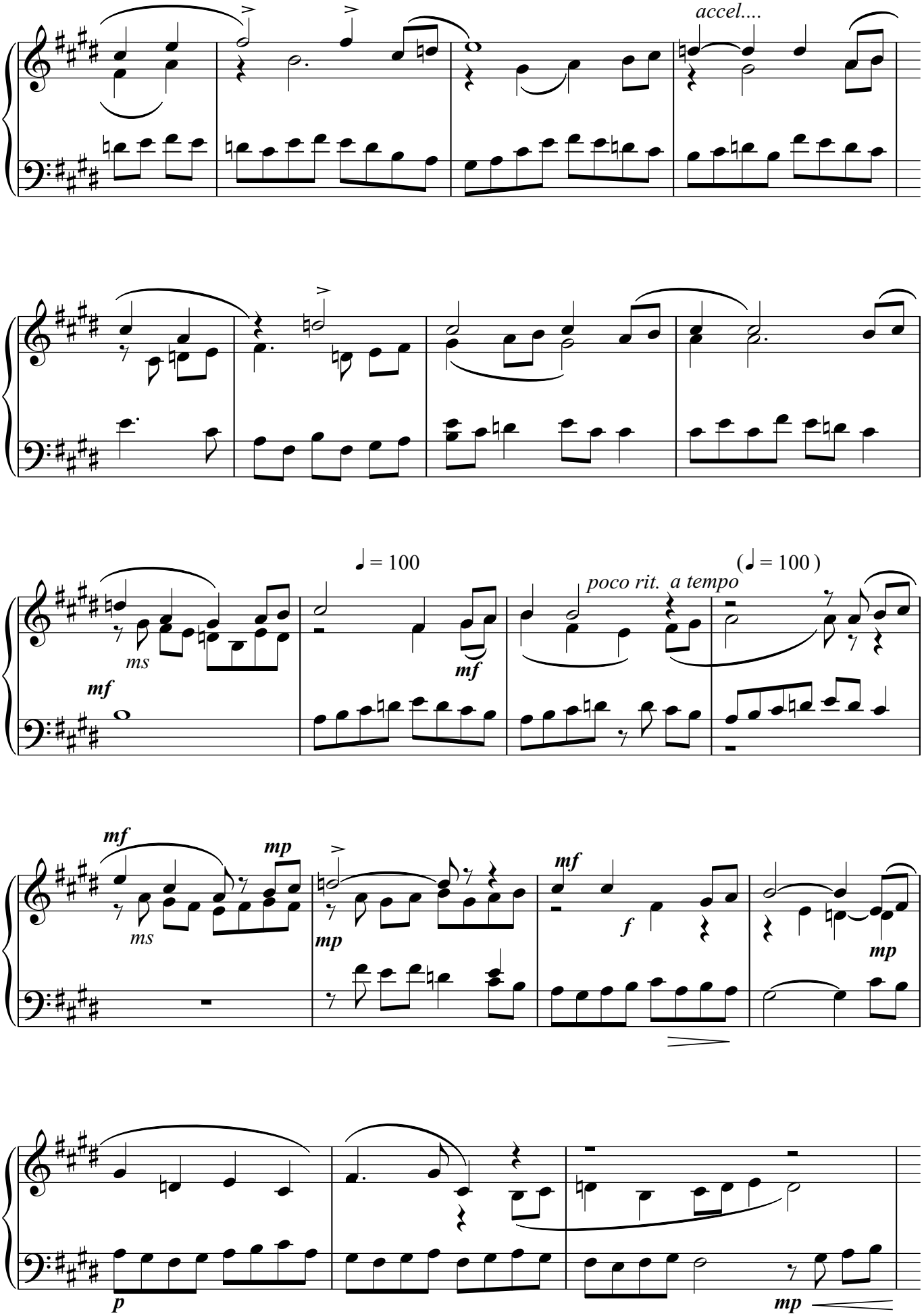


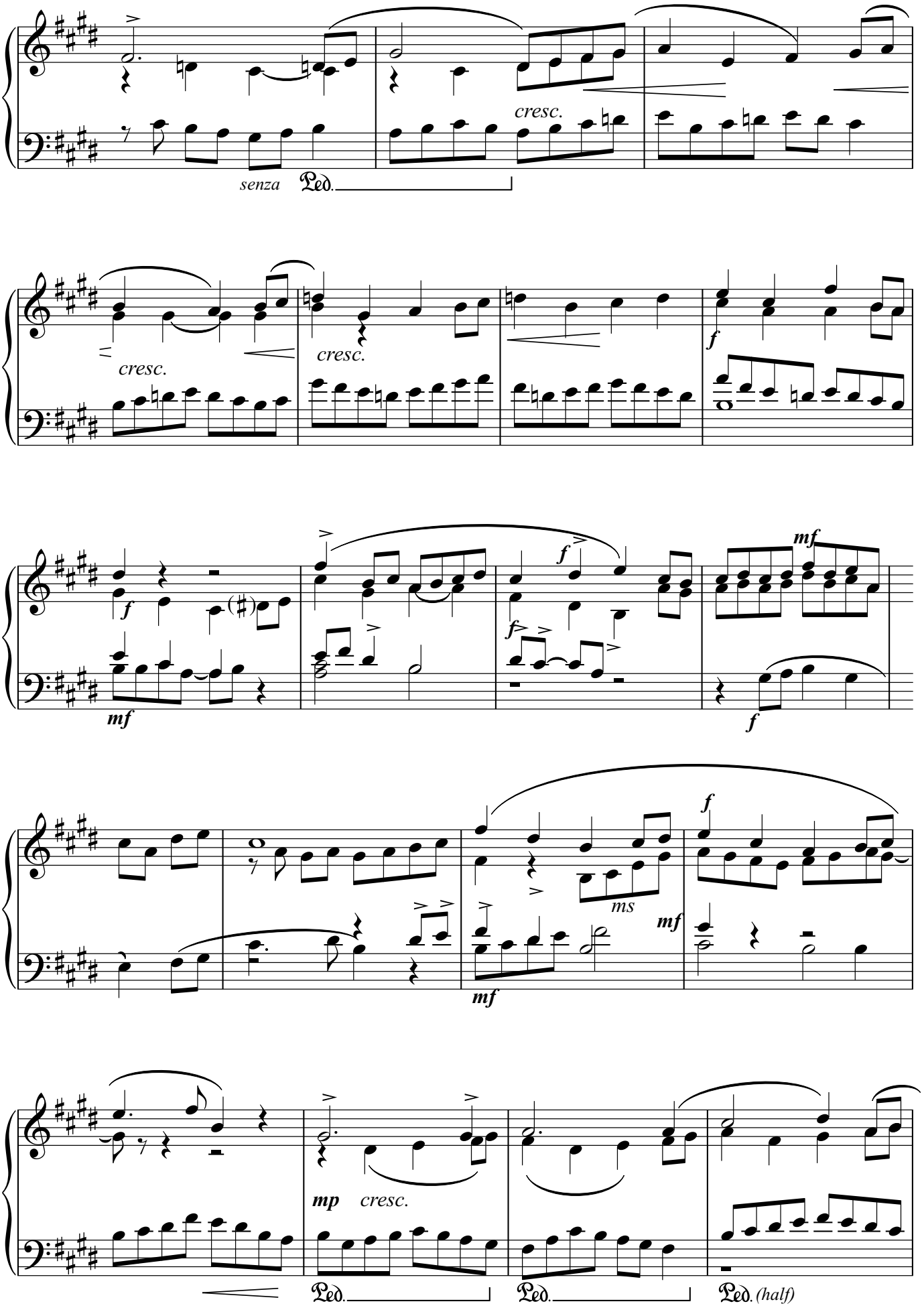
a single stem entwines itself through the hedgerows, the delicate perfume hangs in the air.....

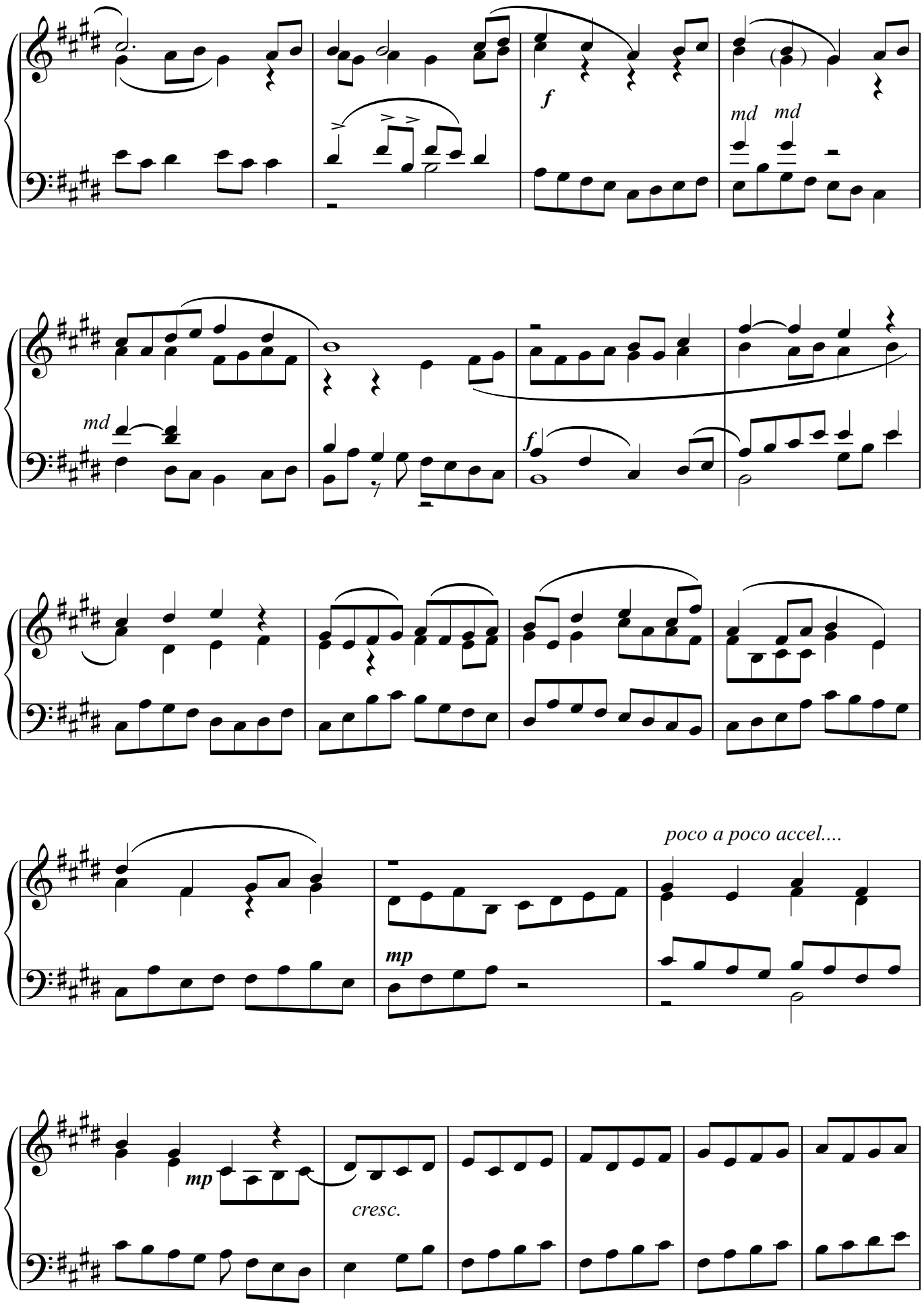


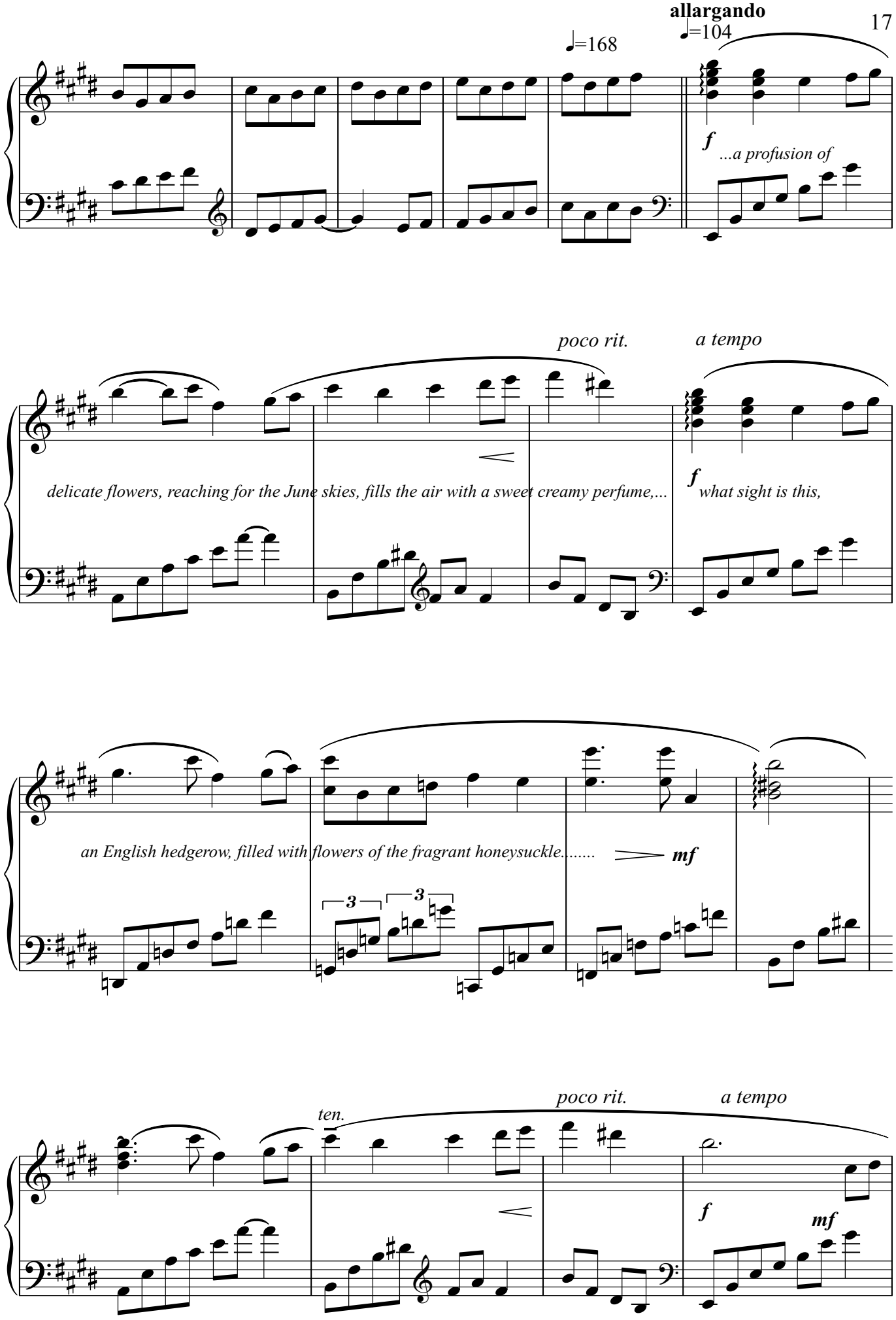


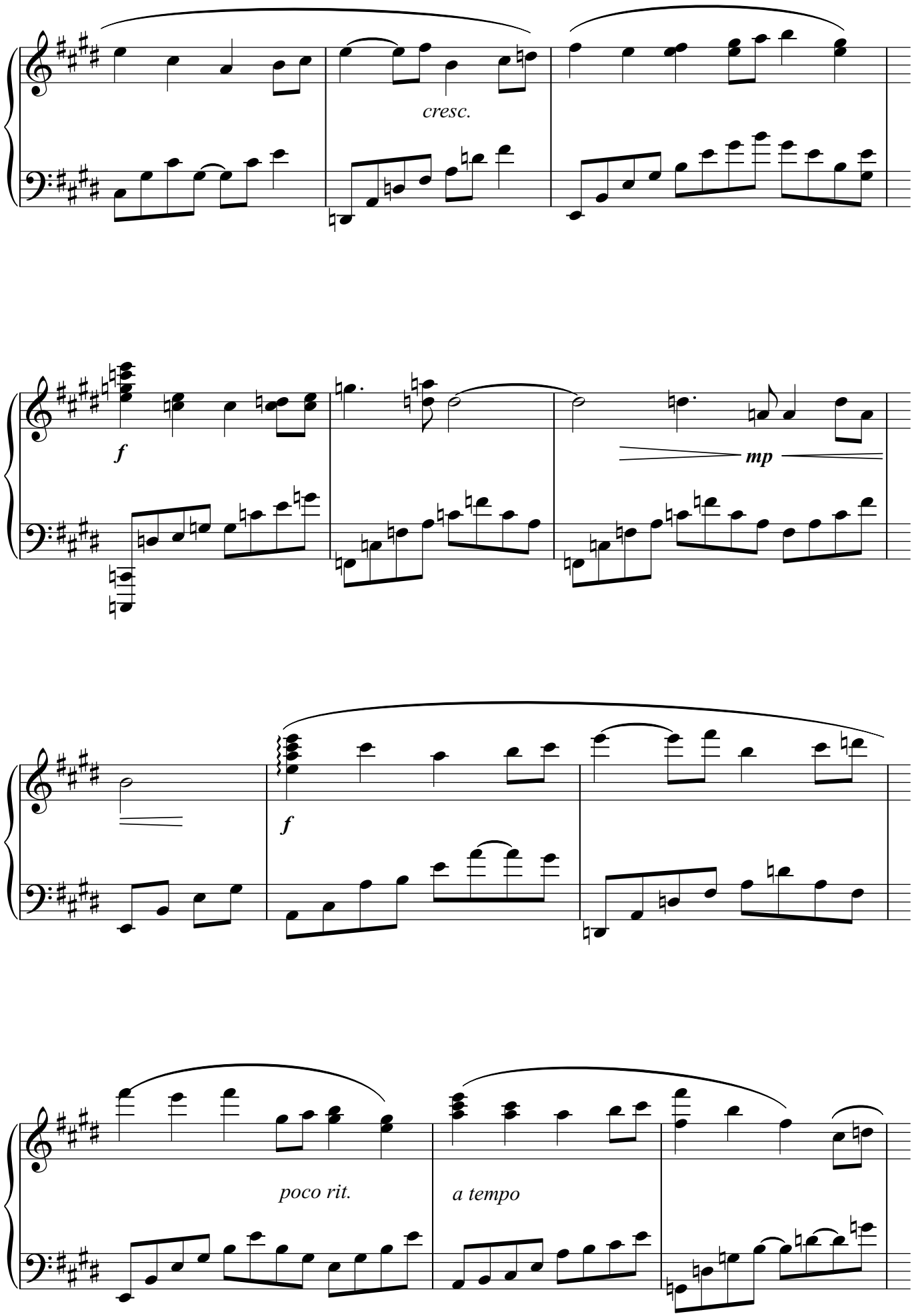


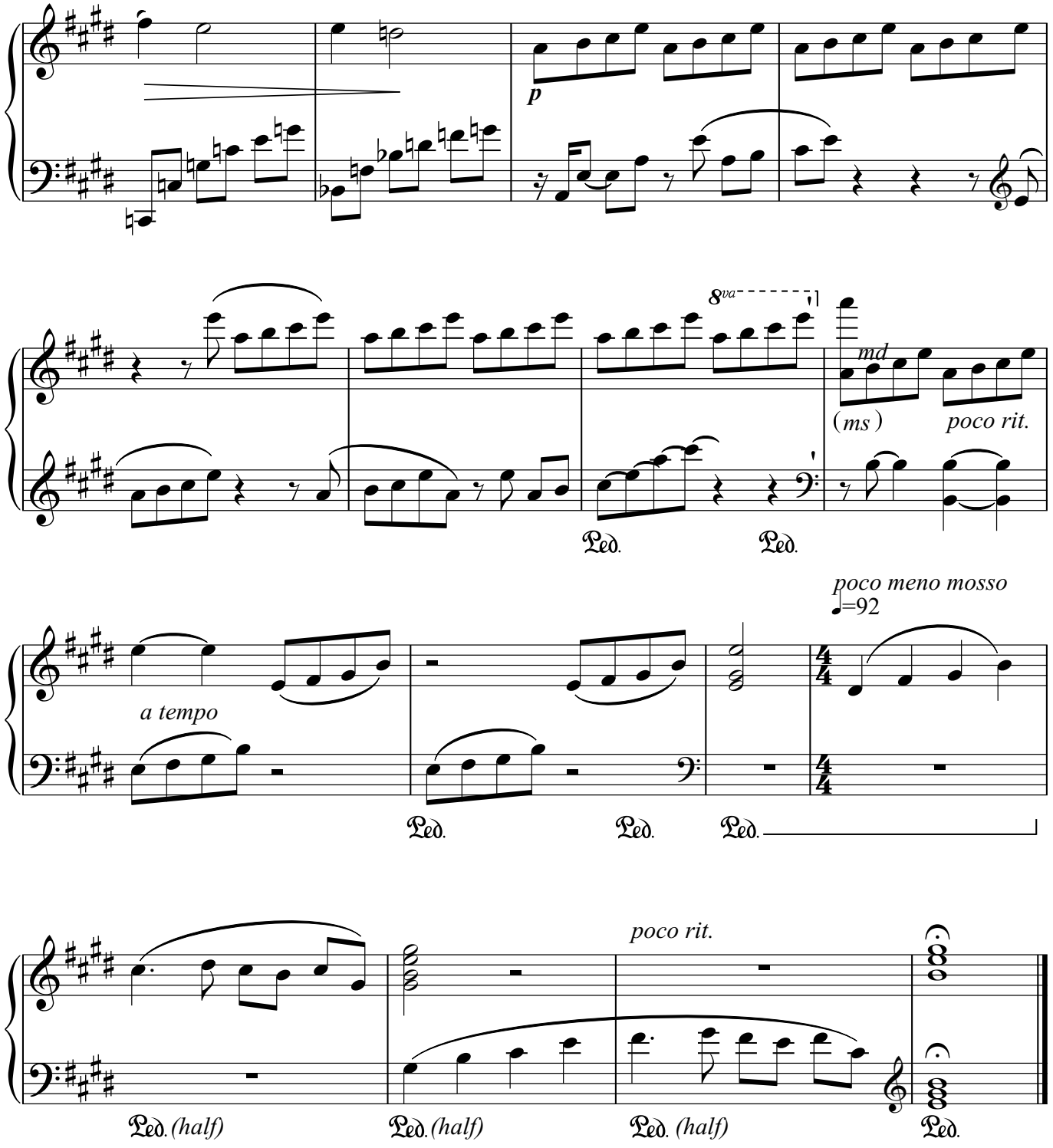

accel....
♩ = 100
(♩ = 100)
poco rit. a tempo
ms
mf
mp
f
p


cresc.
senza
Ped.
cresc.
cresc.
f
f
f
mf
mf
f
mf
f
ms
mf
mf
mp
cresc.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped. (half)


f
md
md
md
f
poco a poco accel....
mp
mp
cresc.


allargando
♩=104
♩=168
f
...a profusion of
poco rit.
a tempo
delicate flowers, reaching for the June skies, fills the air with a sweet creamy perfume,...
f
what sight is this,
an English hedgerow, filled with flowers of the fragrant honeysuckle.....
mf
3
3
ten.
poco rit.
a tempo
f
mf

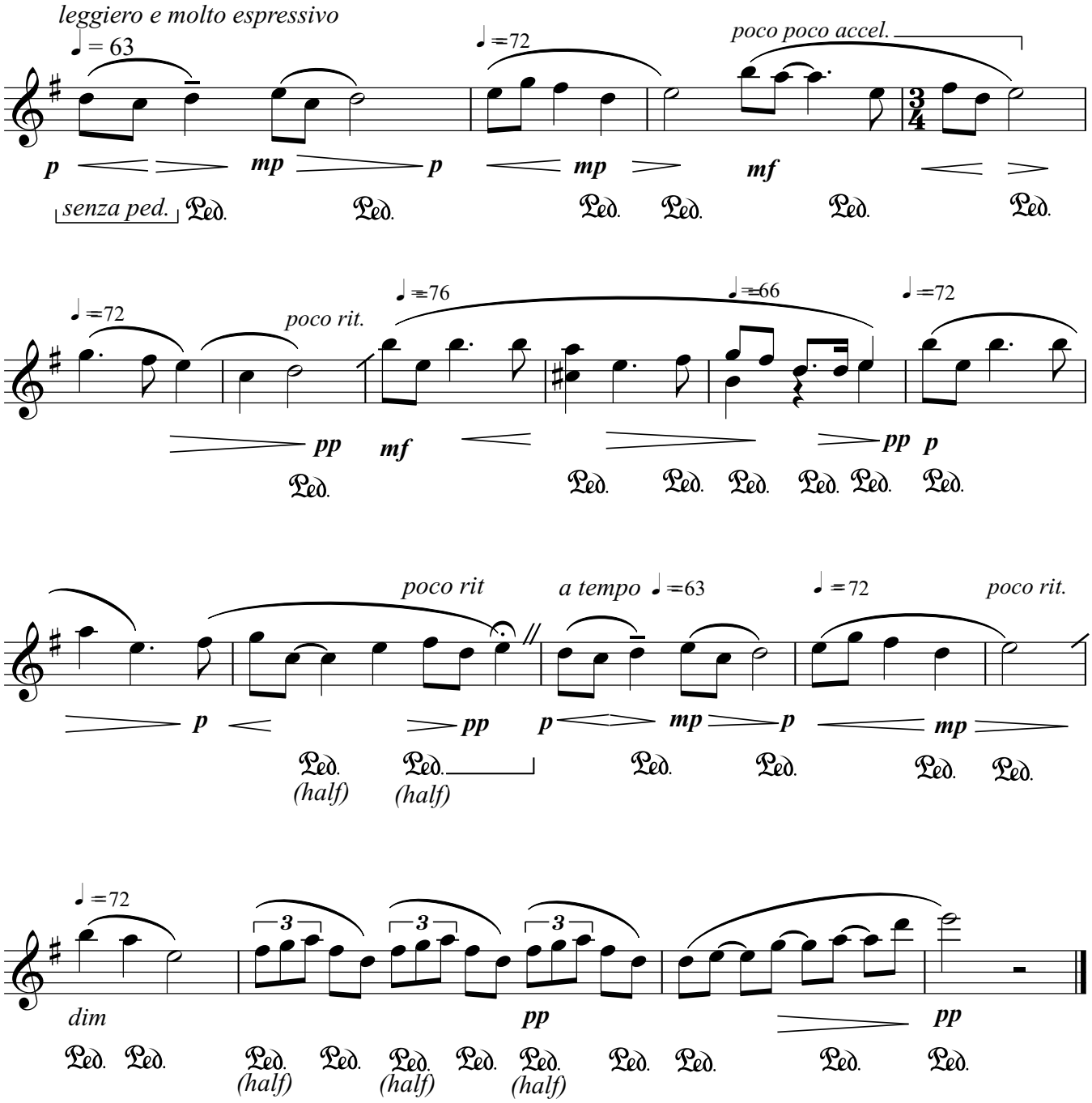

cresc.
f
mp
f
poco rit.
a tempo



Pedal should be used: where not specifically marked, the performer should pedal at their discretion.

Scabious

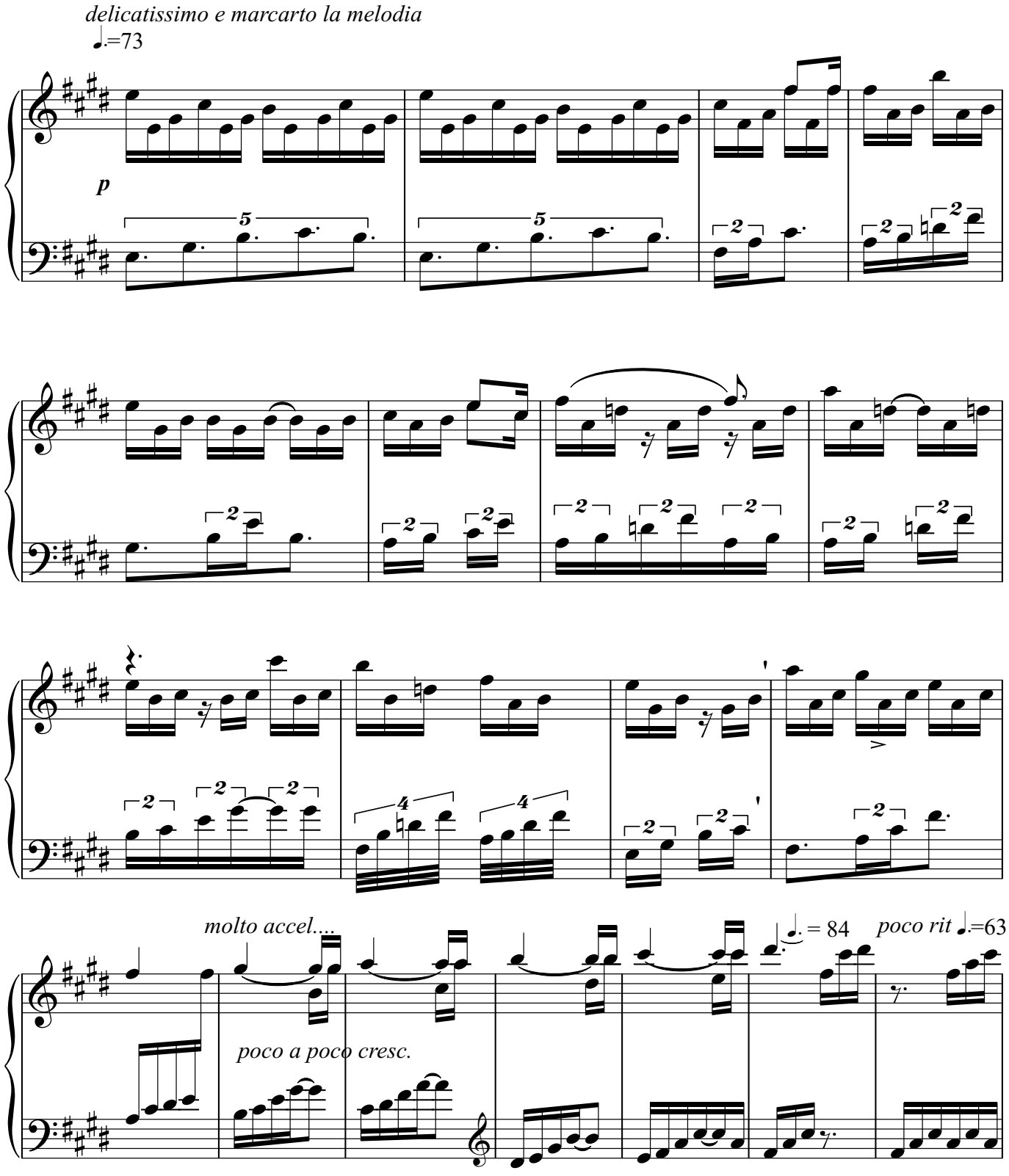
Little flower of sapphire blue, nestling among the
chalkland grasses; fragile on your
slender stems, little free spirit of the wild open places.

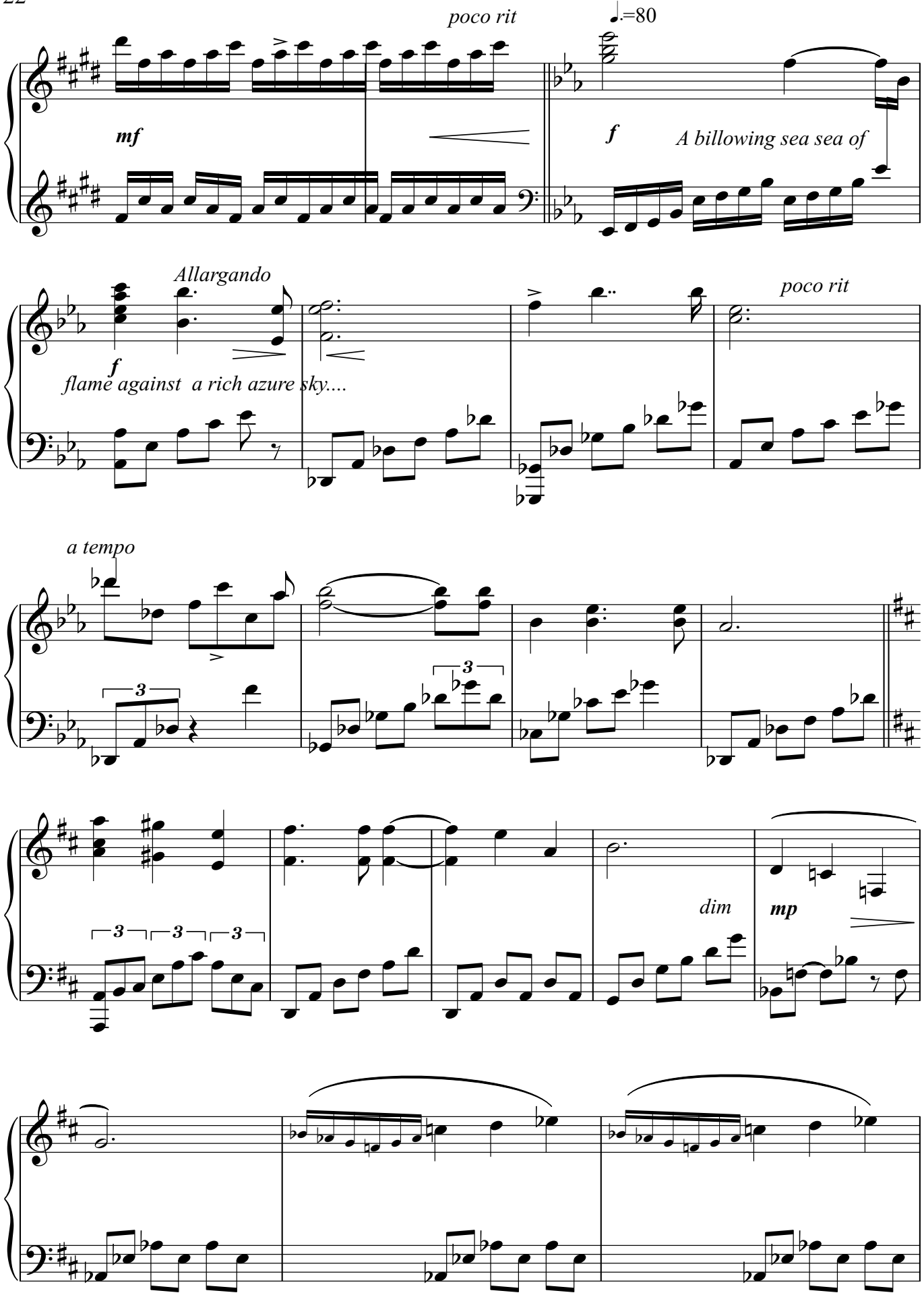


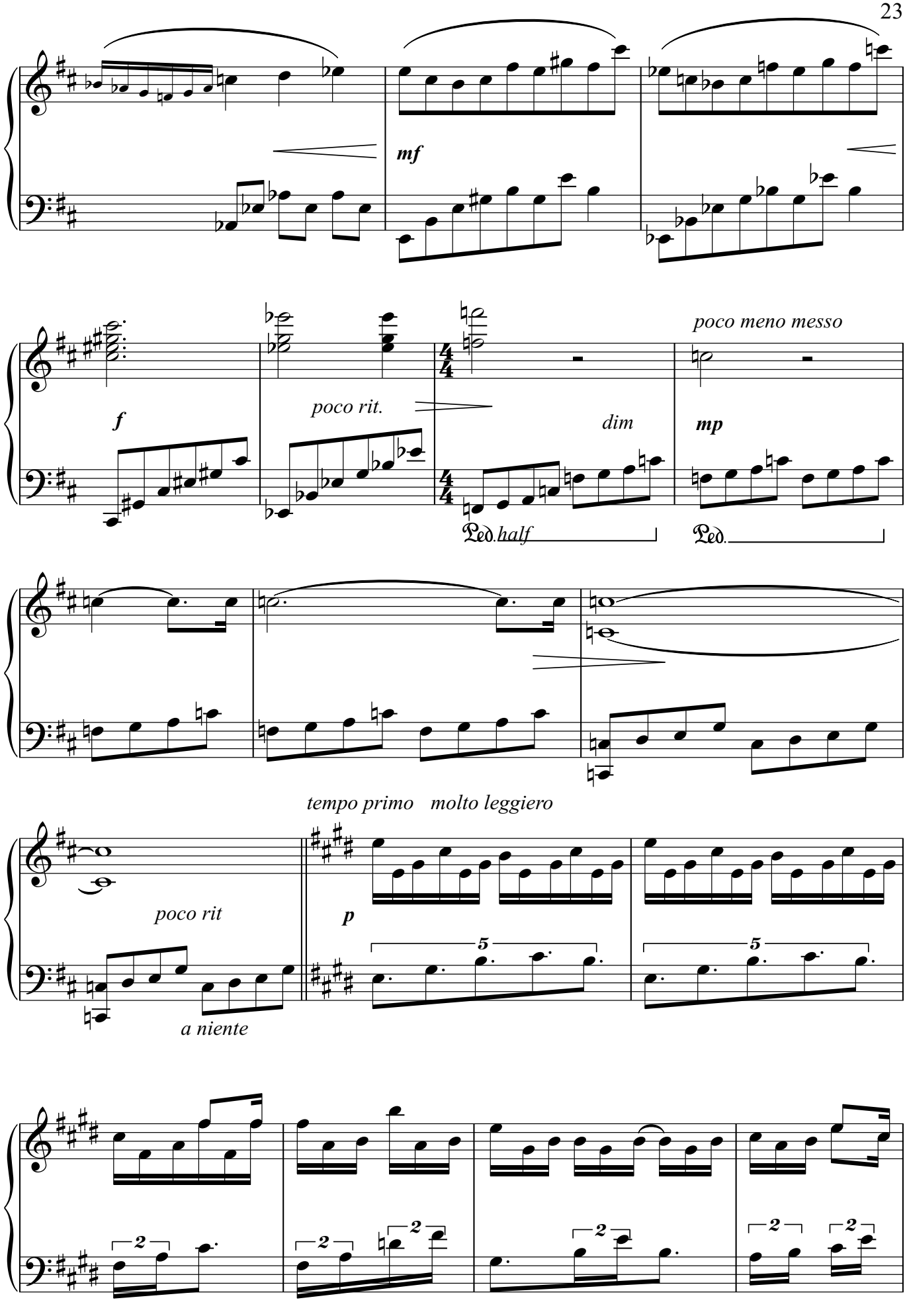
In this movement, the pedal should be left down in between full pedal-change markings (Ped.) (unless otherwise indicated by ⌐¬) when it should as normal, be released at the end of this line and depressed again at next pedal indication. All half pedal marks indicate that the pedal should be lifted only half way up, to catch some overtones of the previous chord. Metronome speeds are given as an indication as to the subtle rubato in the piece.

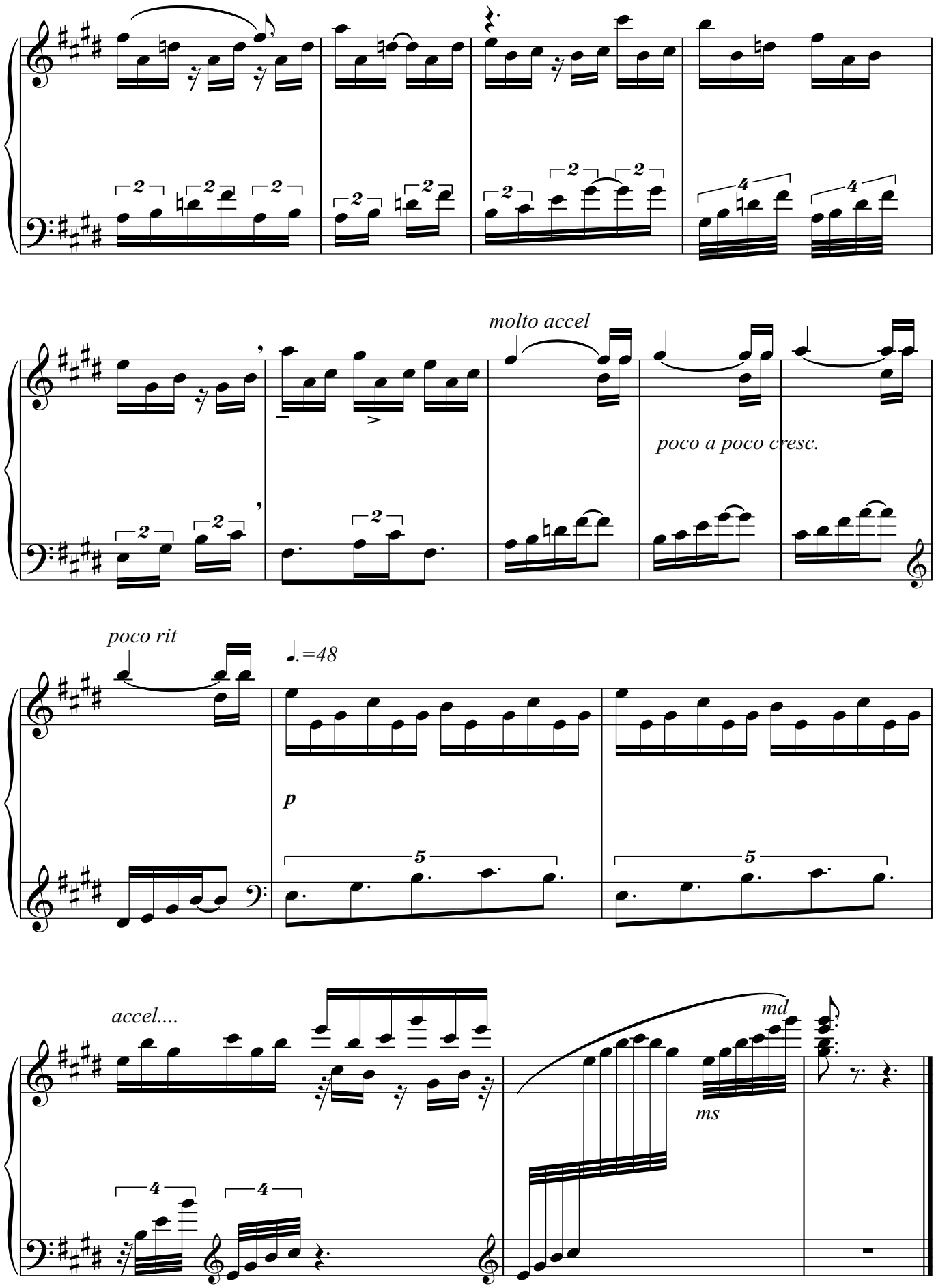
The Fuchsia

The whole bush - amassed with thousands
of delicate hanging bells. Stand back, - a
billowing sea of flame against a rich azure sky....




poco rit
♩.=80
mf
f
A billowing sea sea of
Allargando
f
flame against a rich azure sky....
poco rit
a tempo
3
3
3
3
3
dim
mp


mf
f
poco rit.
dim
mp
poco meno messo
Ped. half
Ped.
tempo primo molto leggiero
poco rit
p
a niente


molto accel
poco a poco cresc.
poco rit
♩.=48
p
accel....
md
ms