Patrick Harrex

Piano Pie

for piano

Piano Pie

composer's note

The material for this short work is taken largely from Chopin's Nocturne in E flat major, opus 9, no. 2. There are brief quotations from one or two of Chopin's other piano pieces and some of my own additions.

When trying to find a title, the taskbar on my computer screen came to my help – Piano Pie being shown as the abbreviated version of the working name I had adopted. The relevance of this happy coincidence was confirmed when I looked up 'pie' in the New Oxford Dictionary of English. This told me that the origin of the word (meaning a baked dish of fruit, or meat and vegetables, typically with a top and base of pastry) is Middle English: various combinations of ingredients being compared to objects randomly collected by a magpie.

Piano Pie collects together, not really in a random way but certainly organised differently than by Chopin, passages from the Nocturne and elsewhere. Phrases are sometimes fragmented to leave just the skeleton of the original. At other times short phrases and, for example in a waltz-like section towards the end, longer sections are superimposed to create (even more!) harmonically ambiguous or discordant passages. The work is a response to the experience of hearing a quite remarkable Chopin recital in the church of St Julien le Pauvre, Paris, in May 2000. Not being a pianist, I had never before paid much attention to Chopin's music. On this occasion I was repeatedly struck by the adventurous nature of the music – harmonically and technically – as well as by the melodic lines which, perhaps owing as much to the performer as the composer, seemed more like the sounds of the human voice than the piano; at times perhaps superhuman as the sounds floated up and away into the air. Piano Pie is, therefore, a reflection on some of those revelatory moments.

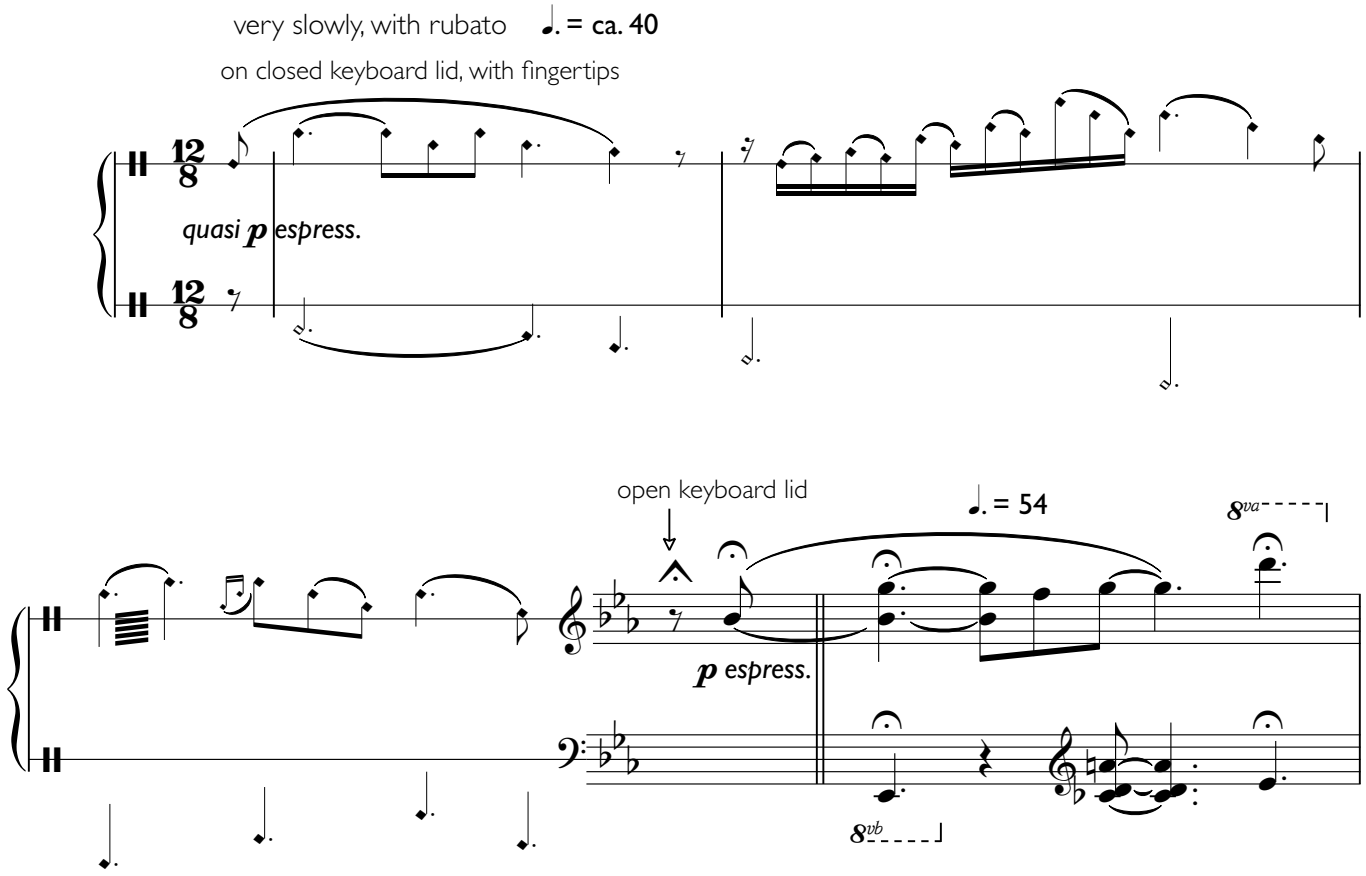
Piano Pie is dedicated to Michael Finnissy who gave the first performance on 21st March 2004 at The Steyning Centre, Steyning, West Sussex.

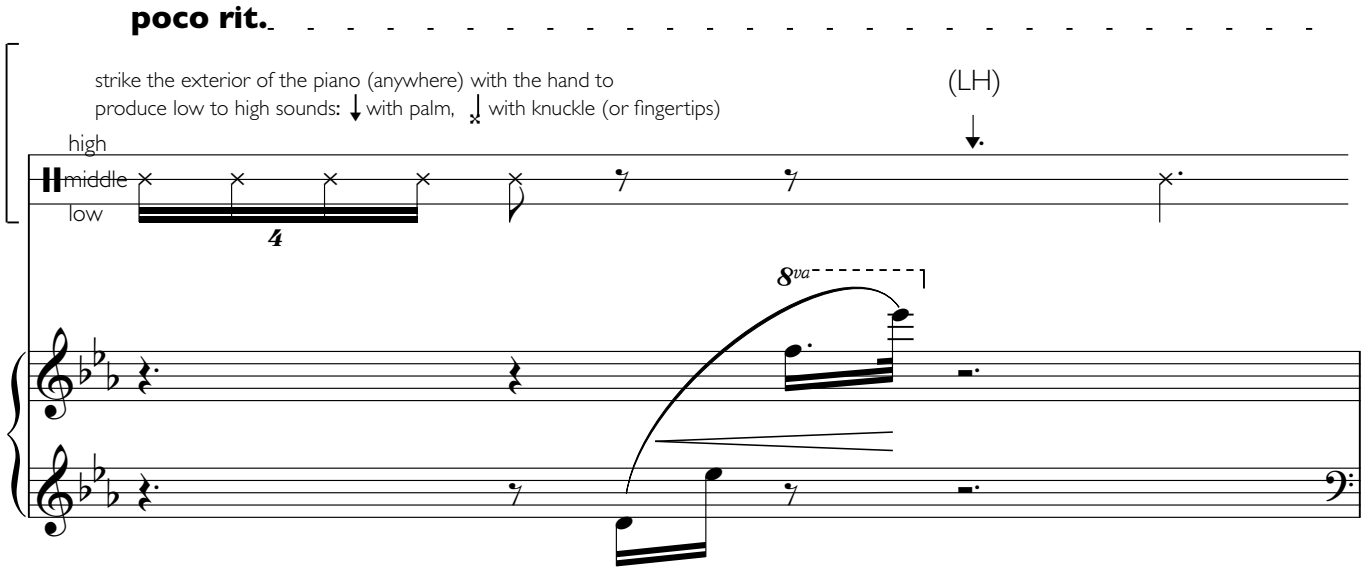
PH

for Michael Finnissy

Piano Pie

Patrick Harrex





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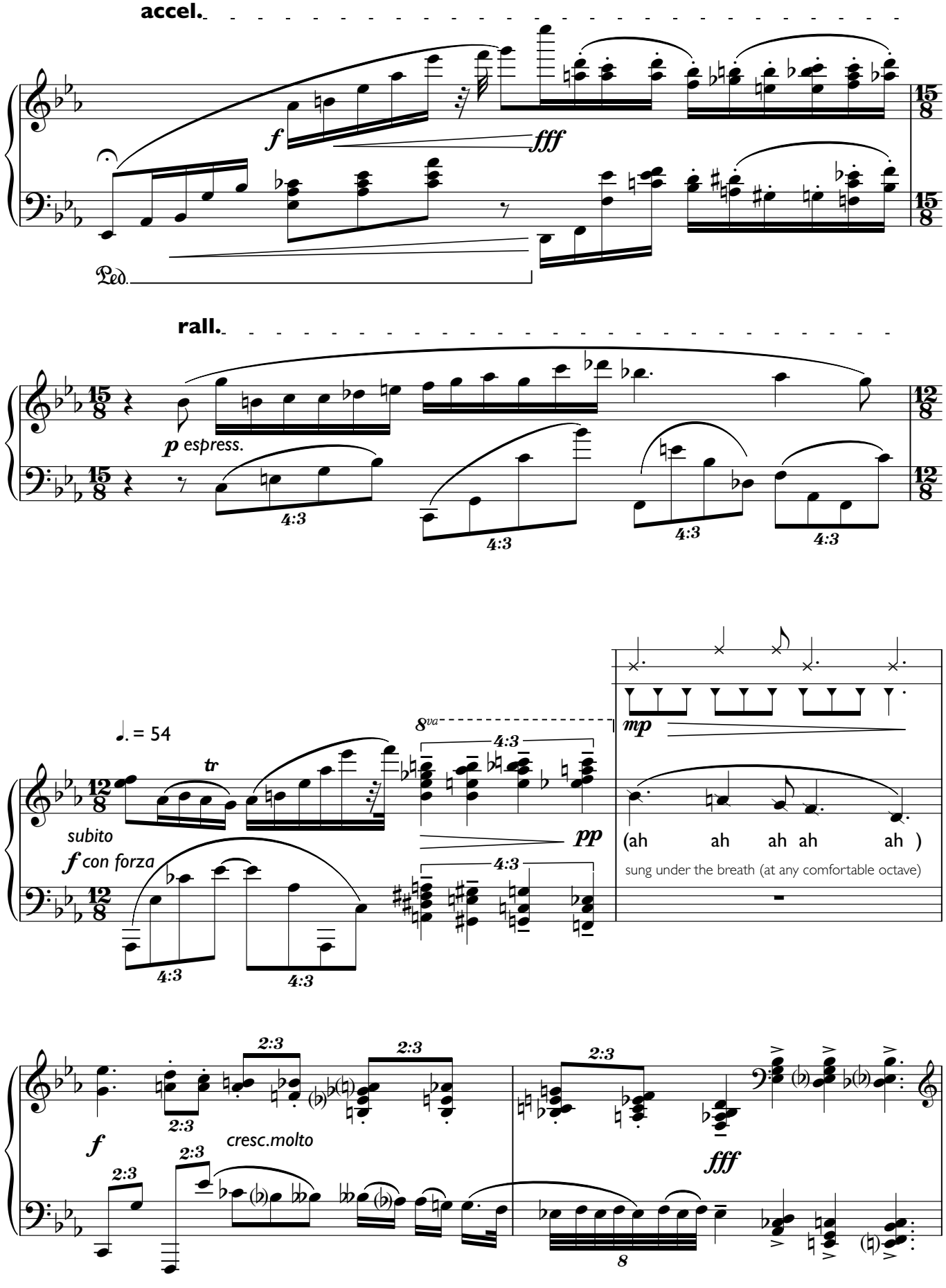
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4:3
4:3
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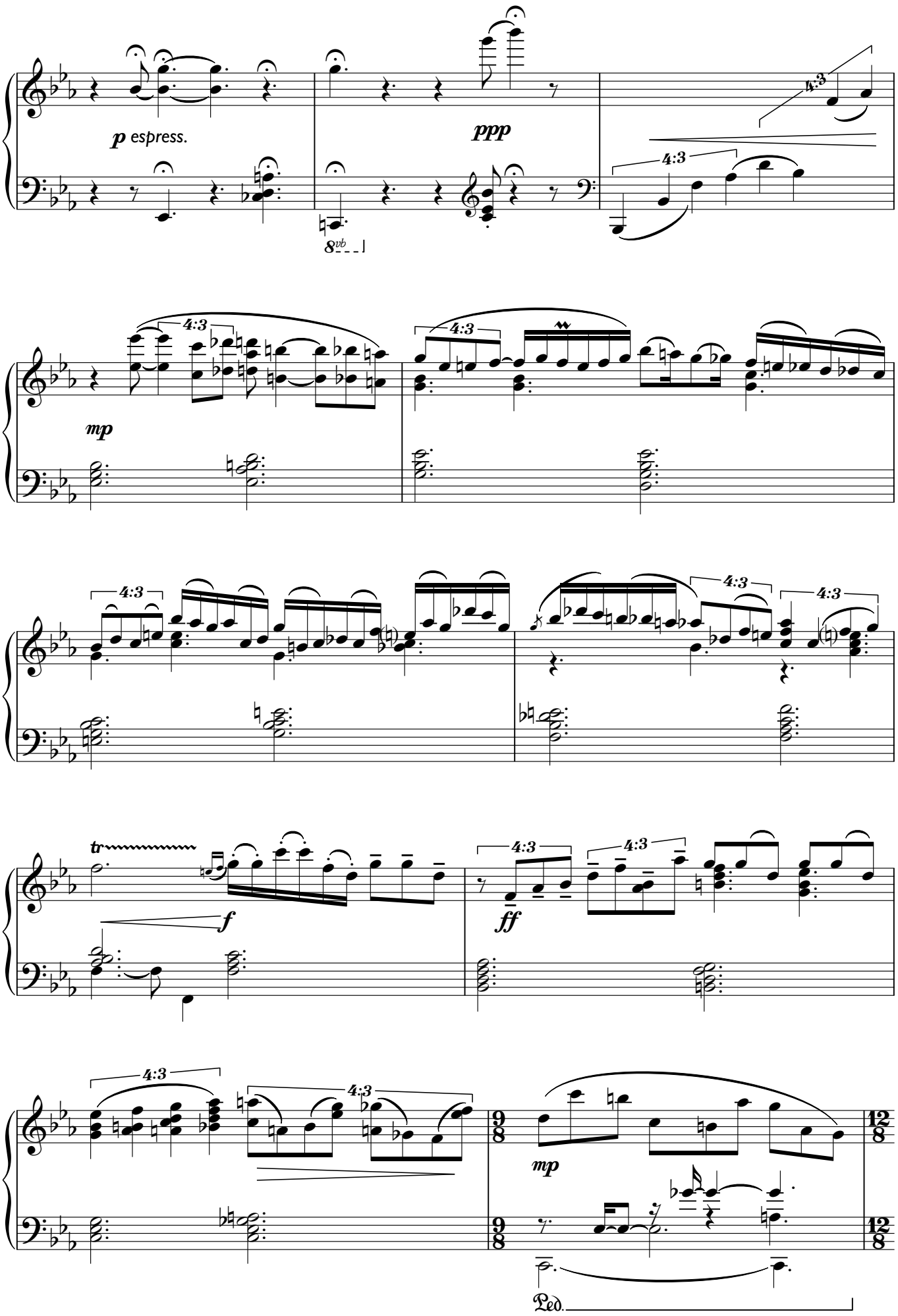
sung under the breath (at any comfortable octave)
2:3
2:3
2:3
2:3
f
cresc.molto
2:3
2:3
fff
8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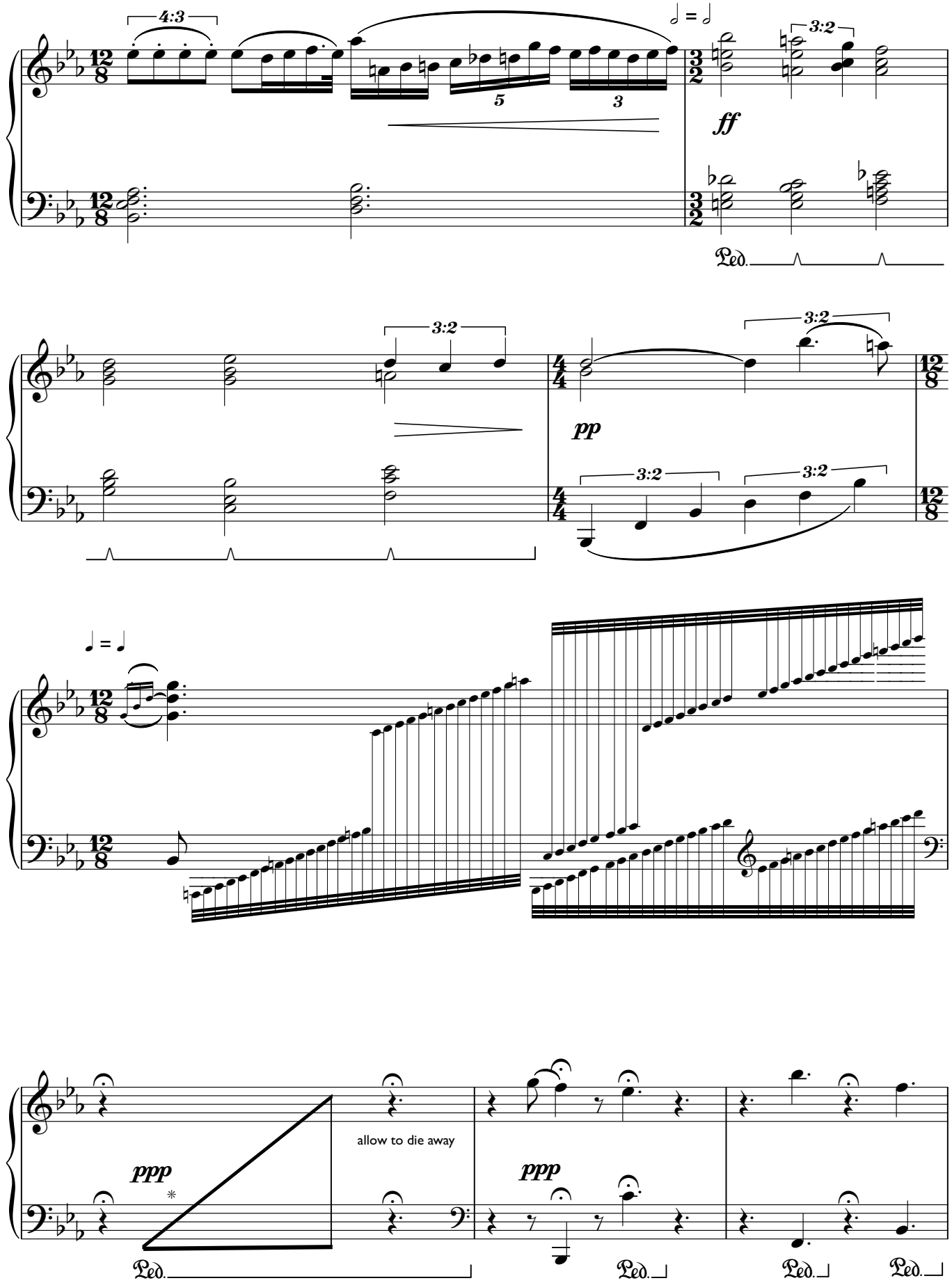
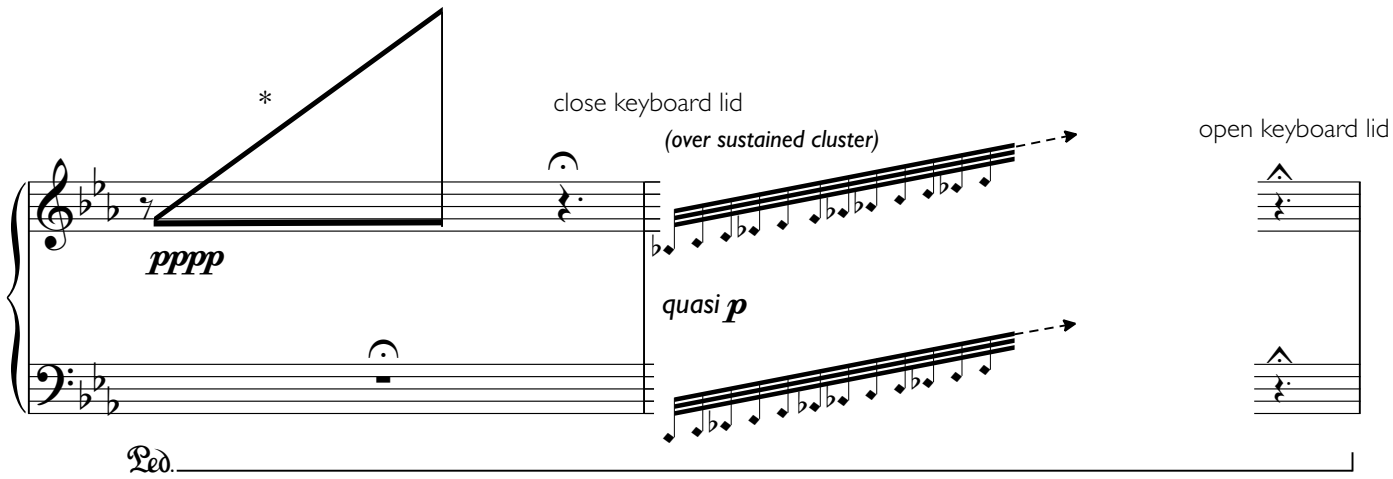
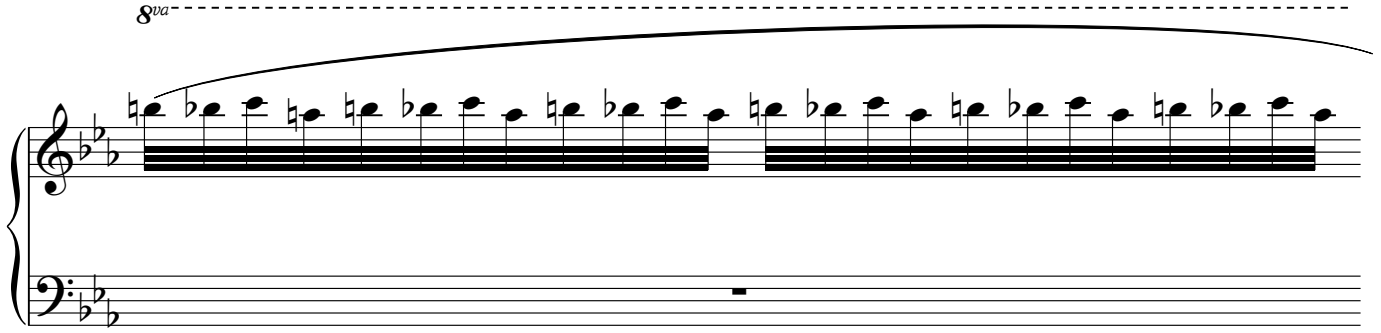
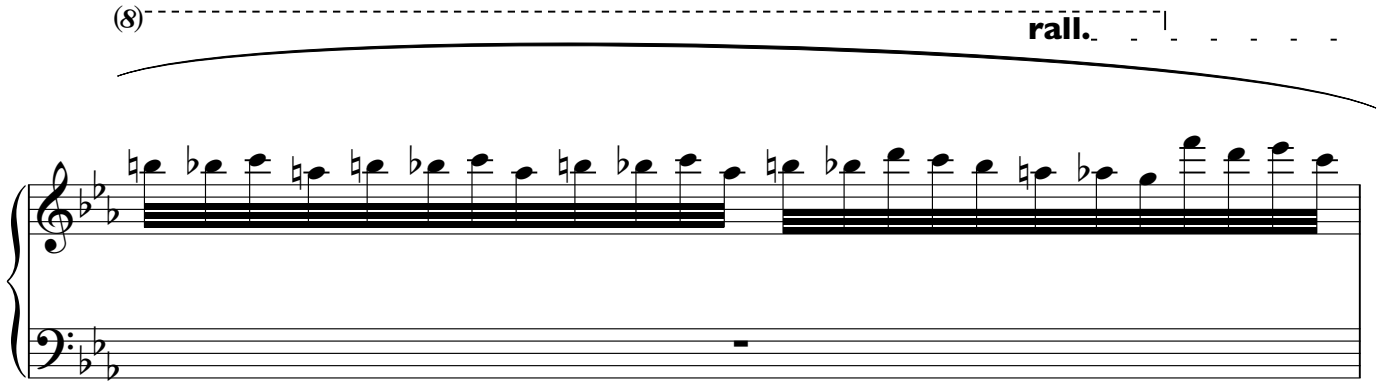


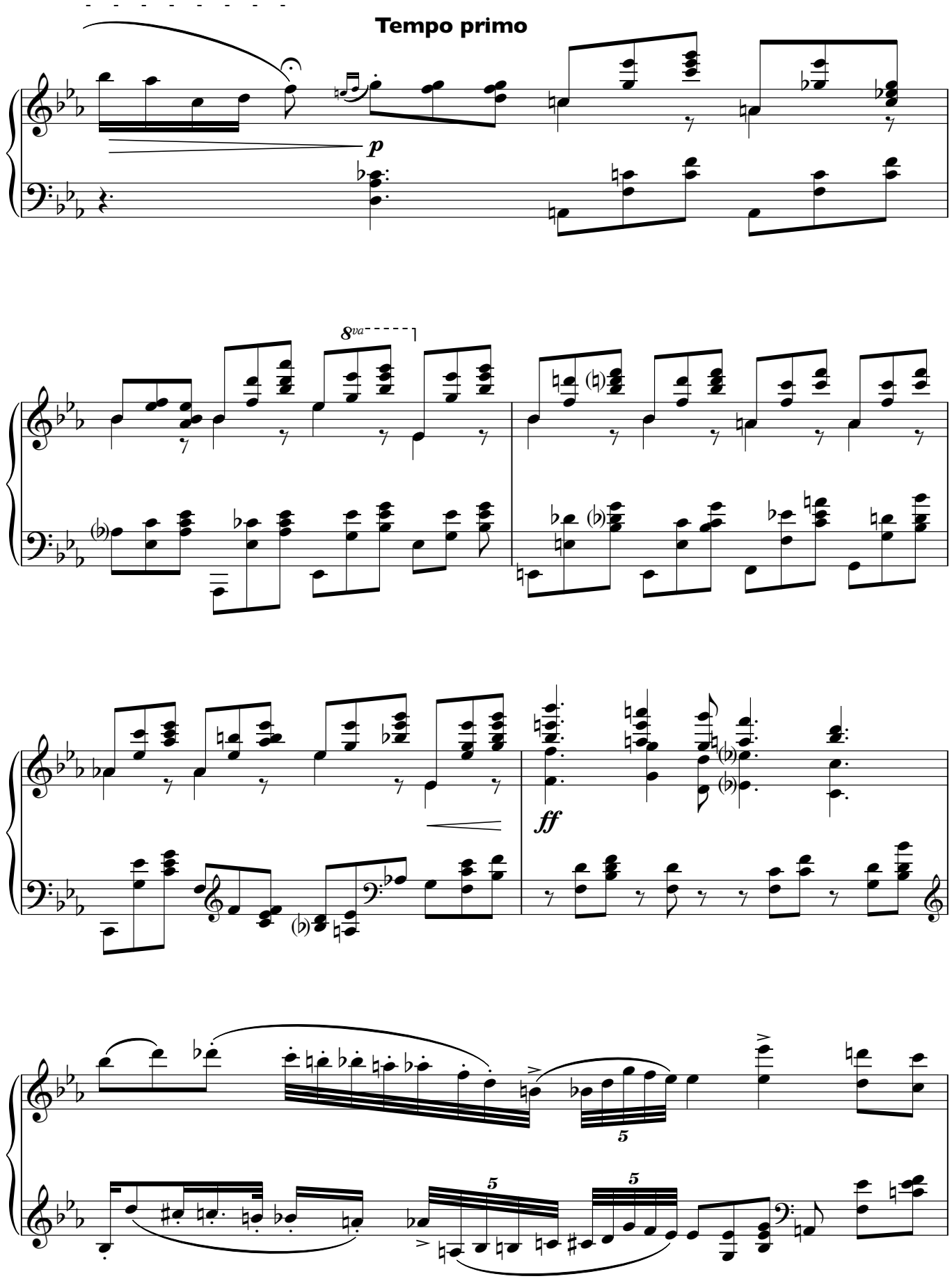
* forearm cluster (chromatic): drop arm gently onto keys



* forearm cluster (chromatic): drop arm gently onto keys






Tempo primo
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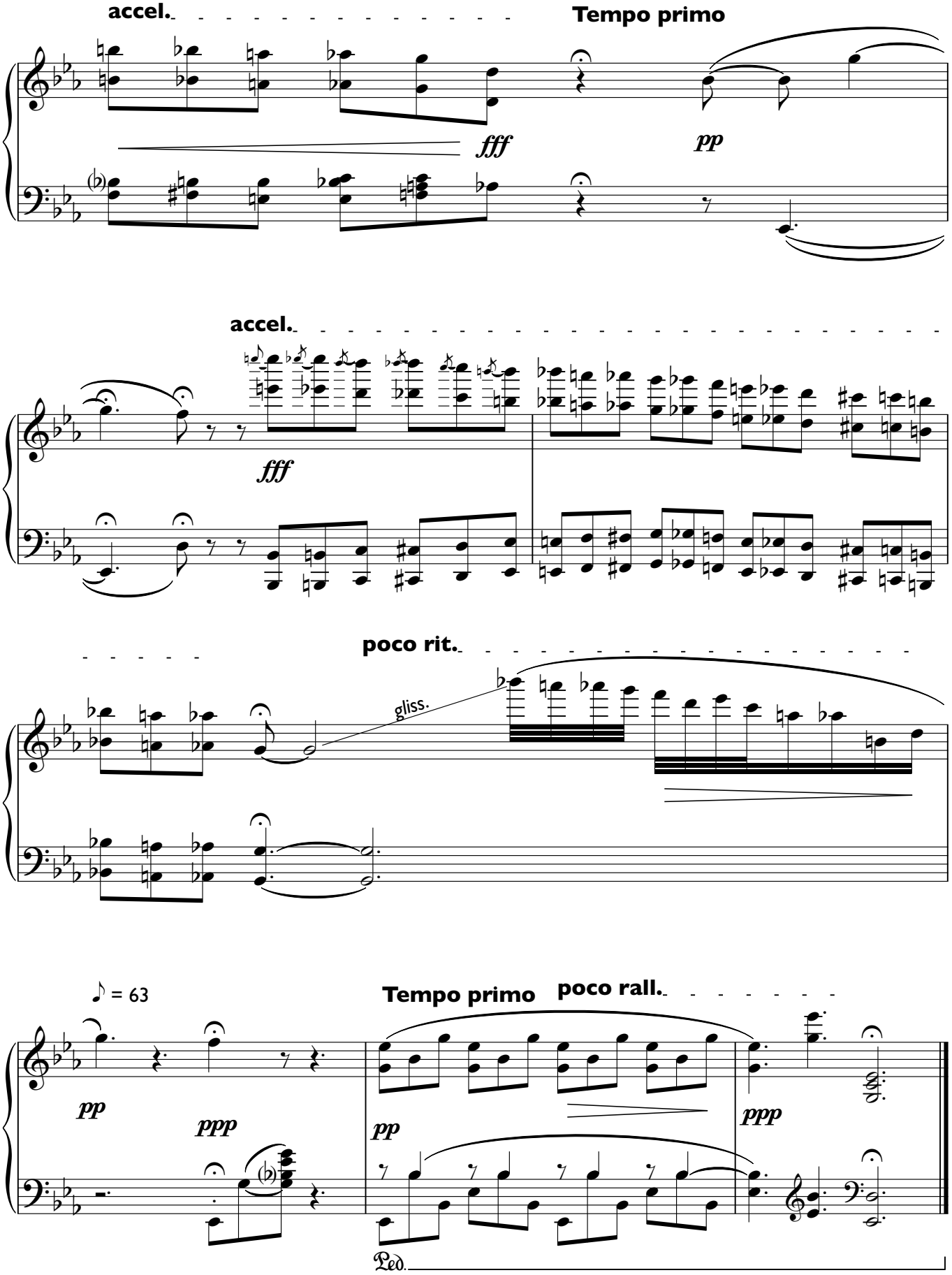
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Tempo primo
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accel.
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poco rit.
gliss.
♪ = 63
Tempo primo
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