Robert Percy

Places

8 Solo Pieces for Piano

La Punta
São Martinho
Chesil Bank
Lisbon
Mont Blanc
Start Point
Circle Line
Close Reach

Places

by Robert Percy

This collection is inspired by places that are special to me. It fulfils an ambition to compose a set of solo pieces adapted for a wide variety of instruments; completing it has been an inspiring and consuming experience. With each piece, I found myself thinking in the idiom of a specific instrument, a flute, perhaps, or maybe a trumpet, or cello, or clarinet, etc.; this is the way I usually compose. But I also wanted to keep in mind how each of these pieces would work on other instruments. The result is a collection of pieces that balances broad instrumental considerations. This is a first for me.

Each instrument, or instrument type, has its own version of the collection that takes into account register and special characteristics. The pieces are not tailored for any particular ability, but should be playable by musicians at or above mid-level grades.

I would love to hear from musicians with any recordings (audio or video) of any of these pieces being played. Please share at robertpercy555@gmail.com or WhatsApp (+44) 07950 209747.

Thank you,
Robert Percy

This collection is also currently available for: flautist, clarinettist, oboist, bassoon, saxophonist, trumpeter, trombone, alto trombone, hornist, euphonium, violin, viola, cello, vibraphone, alto recorder, and classical guitar.
More instruments will be added!

La Punta

is the only place in this collection
that I haven't been to. It's somewhere along Mexico's
Pacific Coast and it is the favourite place of two people very close to
me. The piece was composed for and performed at their wedding;
its rising arpeggios are suggestive of the waves that
lap the shore. By the end of the piece, the
arpeggios are eroded to a leave
a gentle lullaby

.

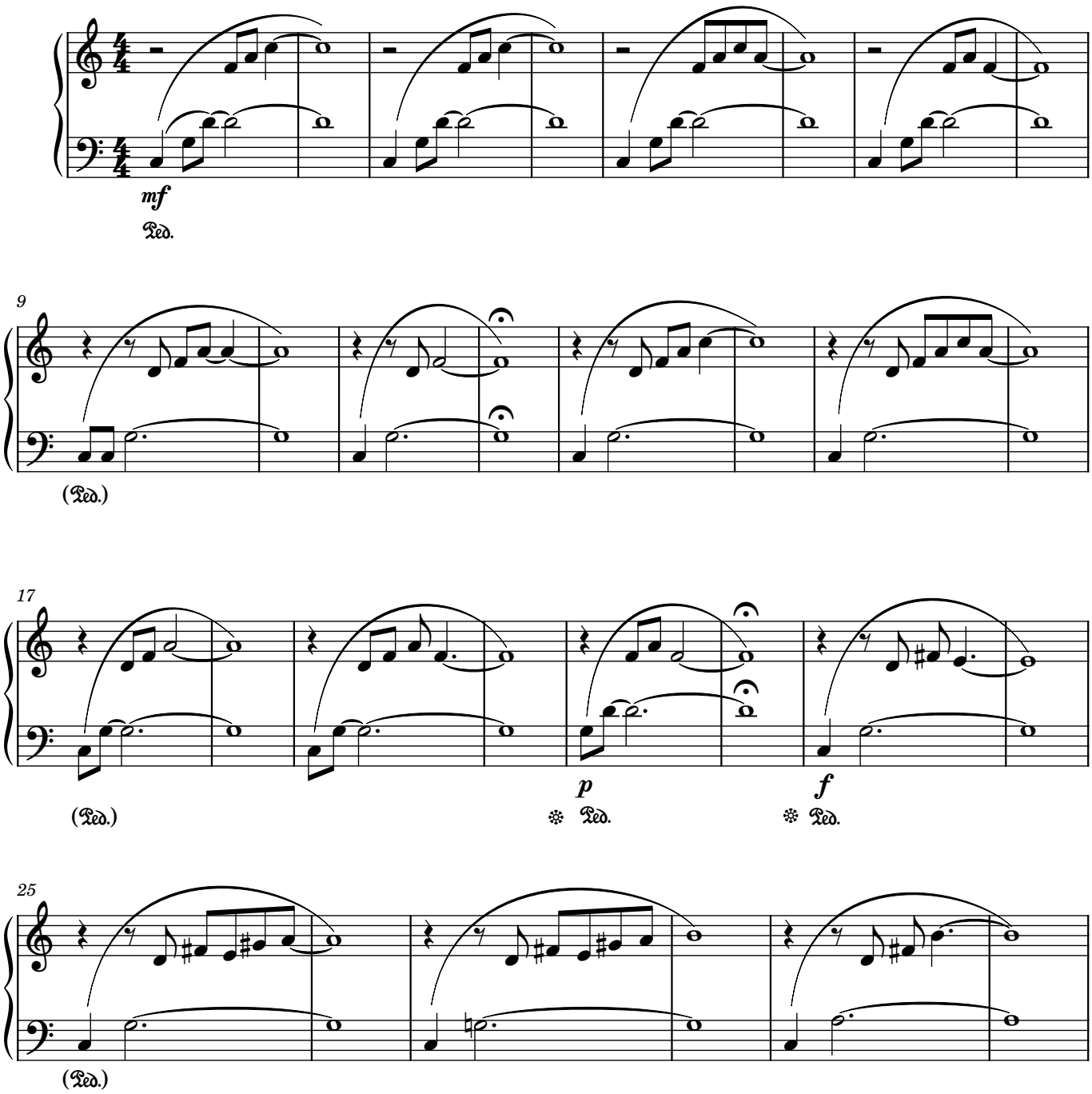
La Punta

by the sea

Robert Percy

Andante, ♩ = 84

elegant & exuberant



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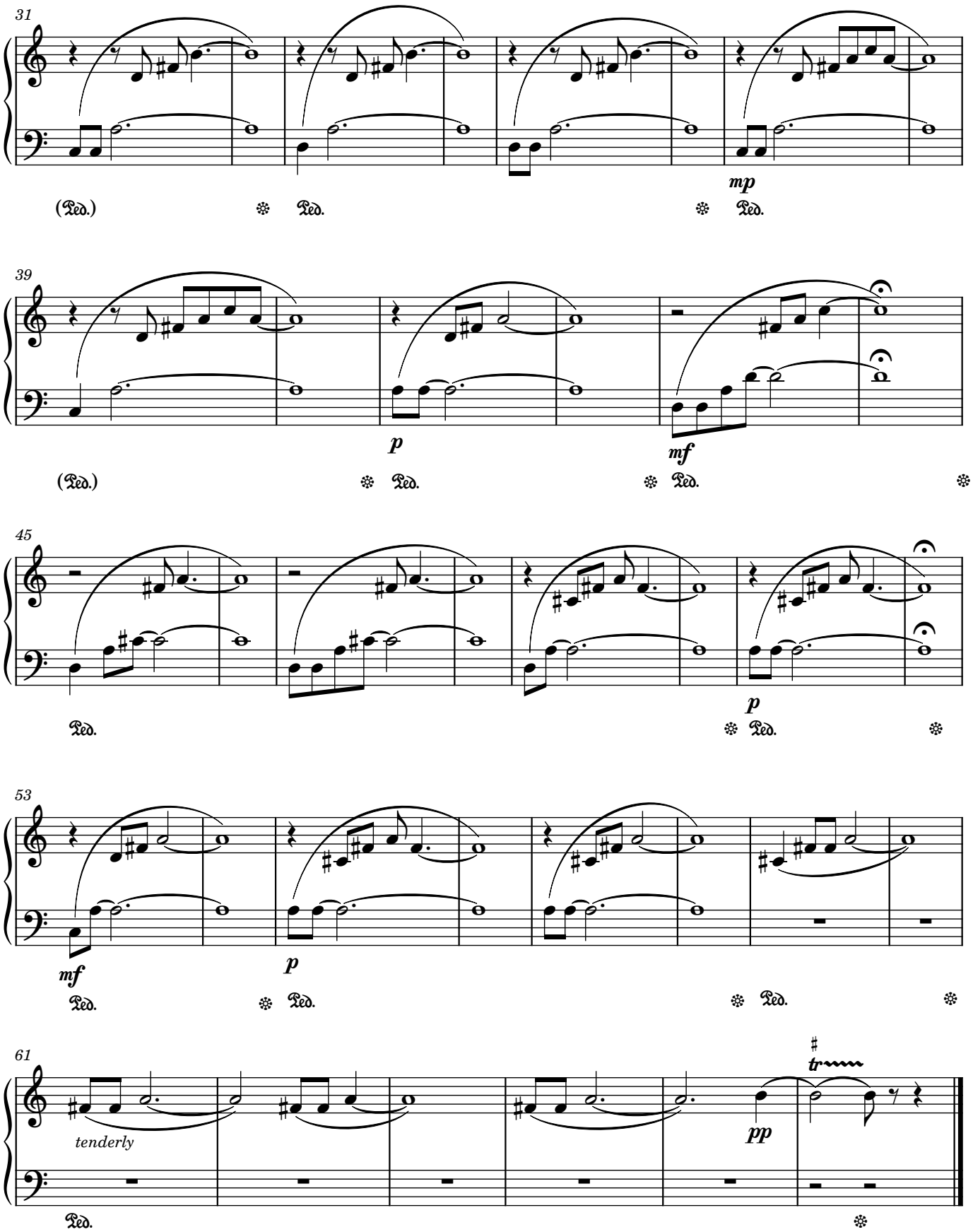

31
mp
(Ped.)
Ped.
Ped.
39
p
mf
(Ped.)
Ped.
Ped.
45
p
Ped.
Ped.
53
mf
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
61
tenderly
pp
tr
Ped.

an isolated cottage surrounded by hills and
sheep, an hour's walk from
São Martinho
in the
southern
centre of Portugal
.
I wrote this piece while watching
the hot afternoon wind play with the twisting
branches of the holly oak, and in the evenings I sat
beneath it as the wind gave way to a
soft evening breeze
.

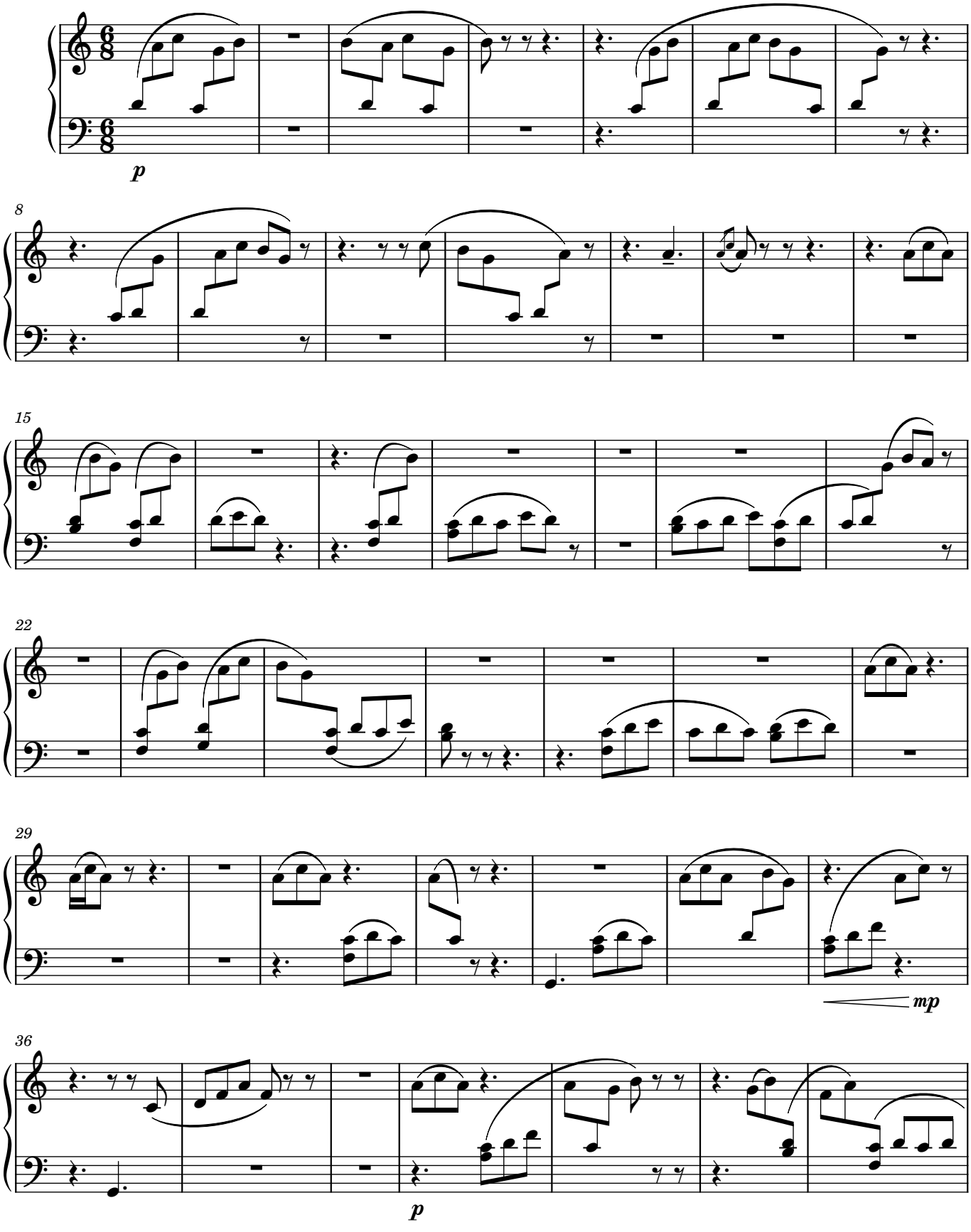
São Martinho

shaded by the holly oak

Robert Percy

Adagio, ♩. = 72

flowing, curious



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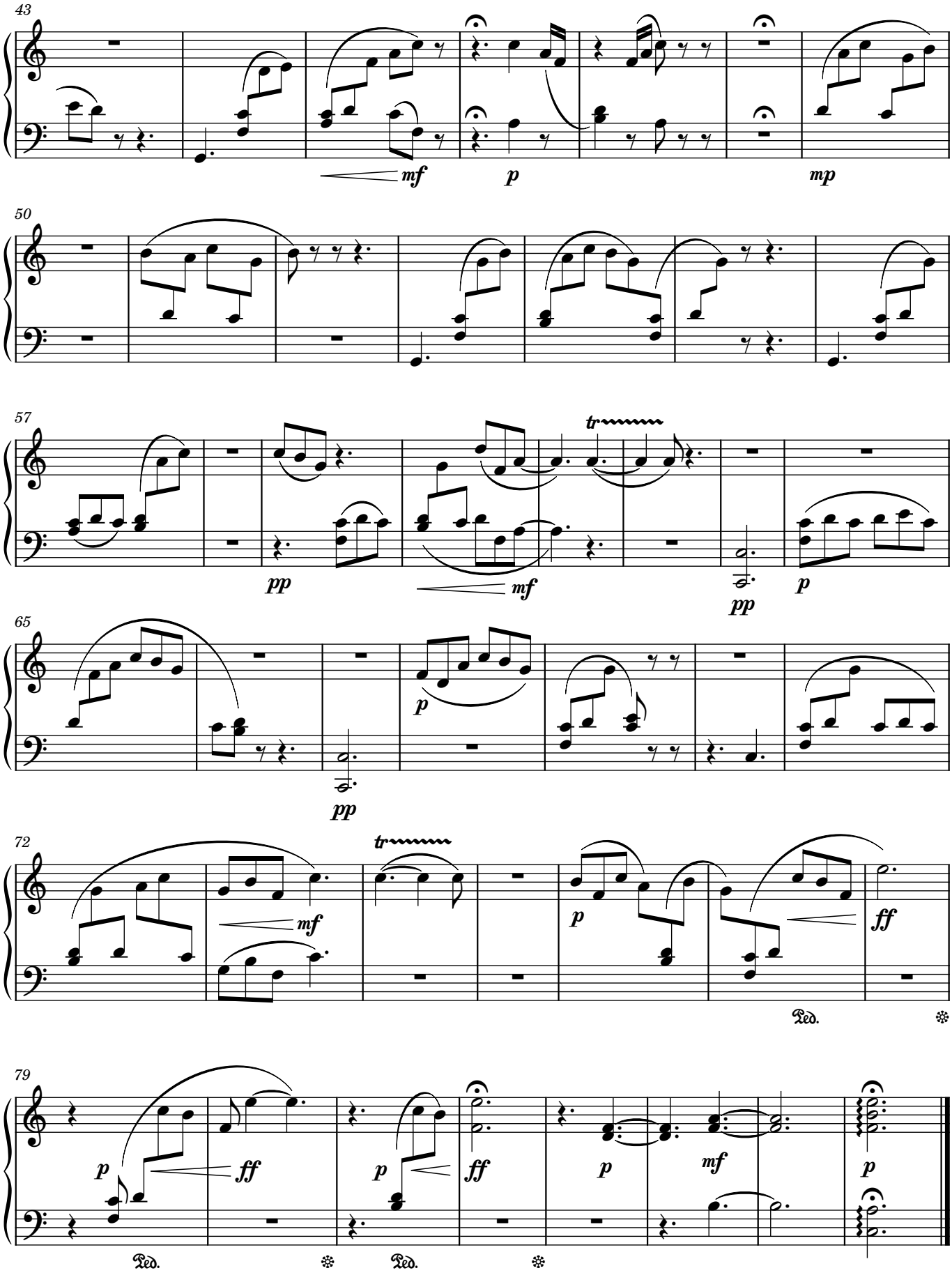

43
mf
p
mp
50
57
pp
mf
pp
p
65
p
pp
72
mf
p
ff
79
p
ff
p
ff
p
mf
p

Chesil Bank
is an eighteen-mile long
natural shingle barrier beach that
stands up to 15 meters high along a section of the Dorset coast.
The seaward side faces west and takes the brunt of the storms
that visit the English Channel. On the landward side,
protected by the bank, is the serene
lagoon of the Fleet.

This piece evokes
both the magnificence of
Chesil Bank and the tranquillity of the Fleet,
and it hints at a storm on the seaward side. A sequence of eleven
pitches is repeated in different ways and is eroded, like the cliffs that
made the shingle. The twelfth pitch, missing throughout,
is added to the remaining four and finishes the piece
with a nod to Benjamin Britten's
Peter Grimes
.

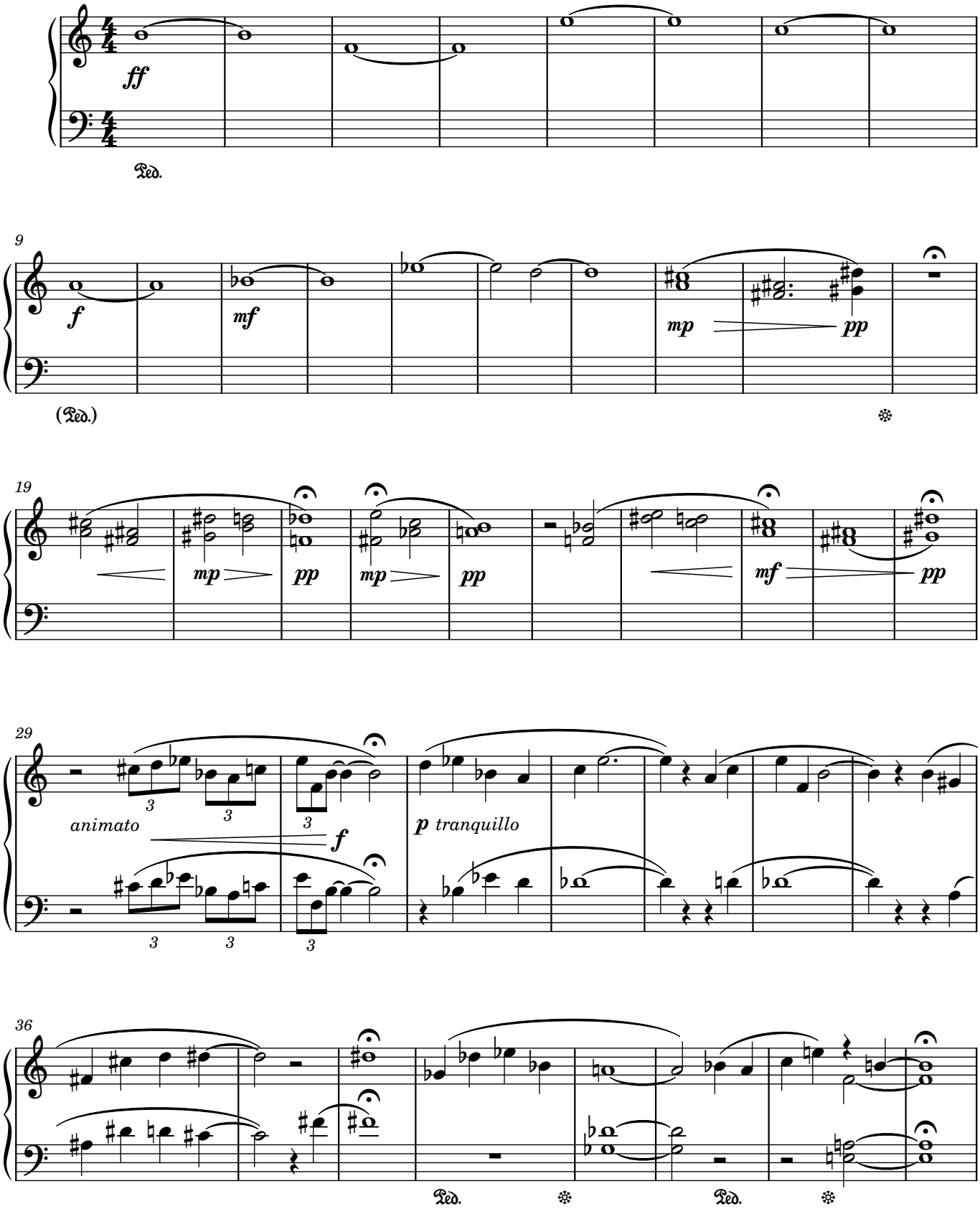
Chesil Bank

from the still side

Robert Percy

Andantino, ♩ = 104

maestoso



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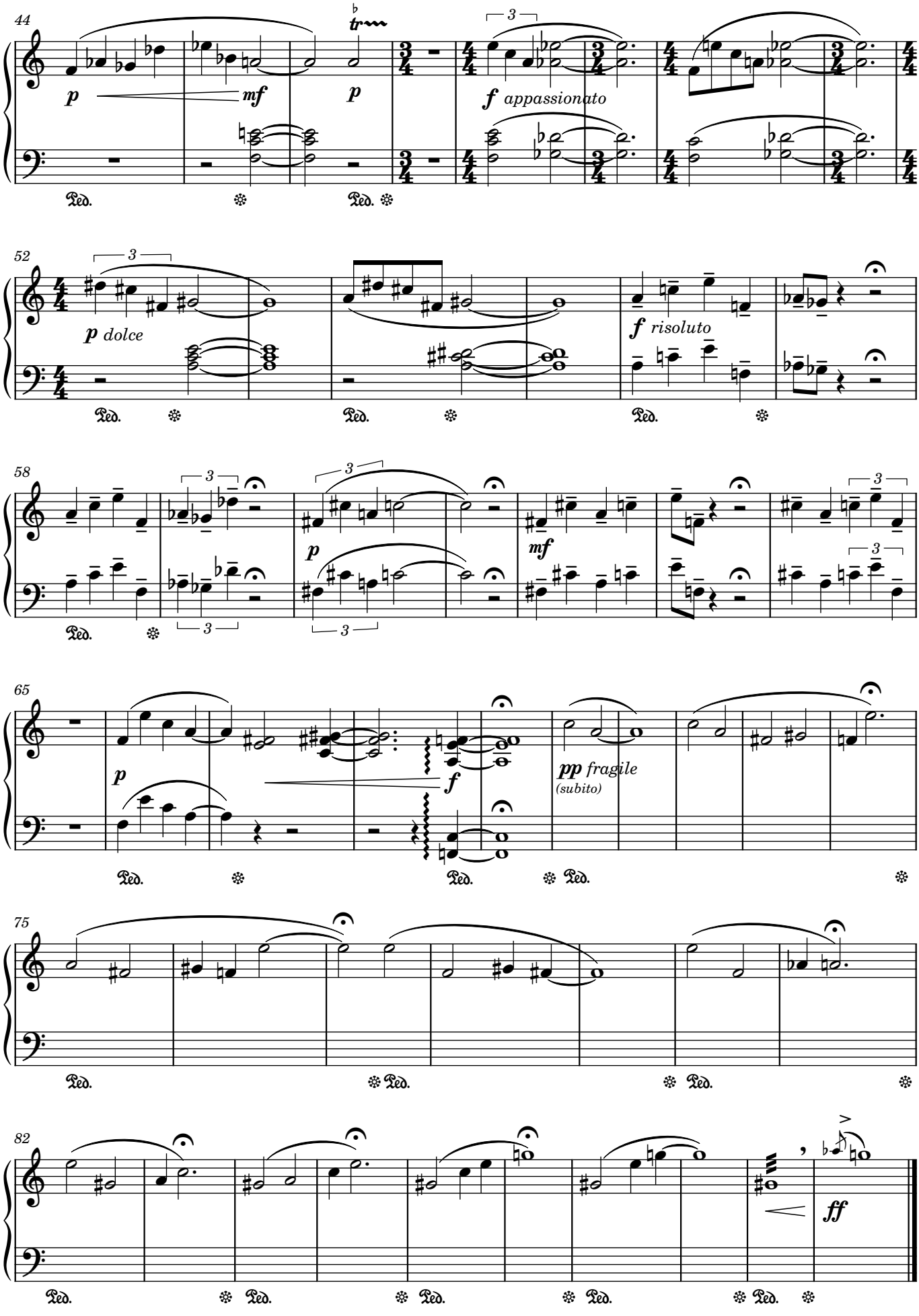

44
p
mf
p
f appassionato
52
p dolce
f risoluto
58
p
mf
65
p
f
pp fragile
(subito)
75
82
ff

I spent a day in **Lisbon**
and was charmed, as many are, by
its streets, its trams, buildings and rolling topography,
and by the feeling of space that the bay creates.
I loved its blend of exotic and European
and its wonderful sense of
tarnished opulence.

This piece takes on
the feel of a Latin dance,
a Bolero or Habanera, perhaps.
This arises from my emotional response to the city,
rather than to its musical culture, which as far as I know doesn't
include these Spanish-Latin dances. The semiquaver melody
that recurs throughout the piece is inspired by streets
that wind up and down. It repeats the same notes
each time, but continually gains new notes
at its end and loses ones at its beginning
and, in doing so, presents the entire
melody in fragments, with
a long step forwards
and a short step
backwards
.

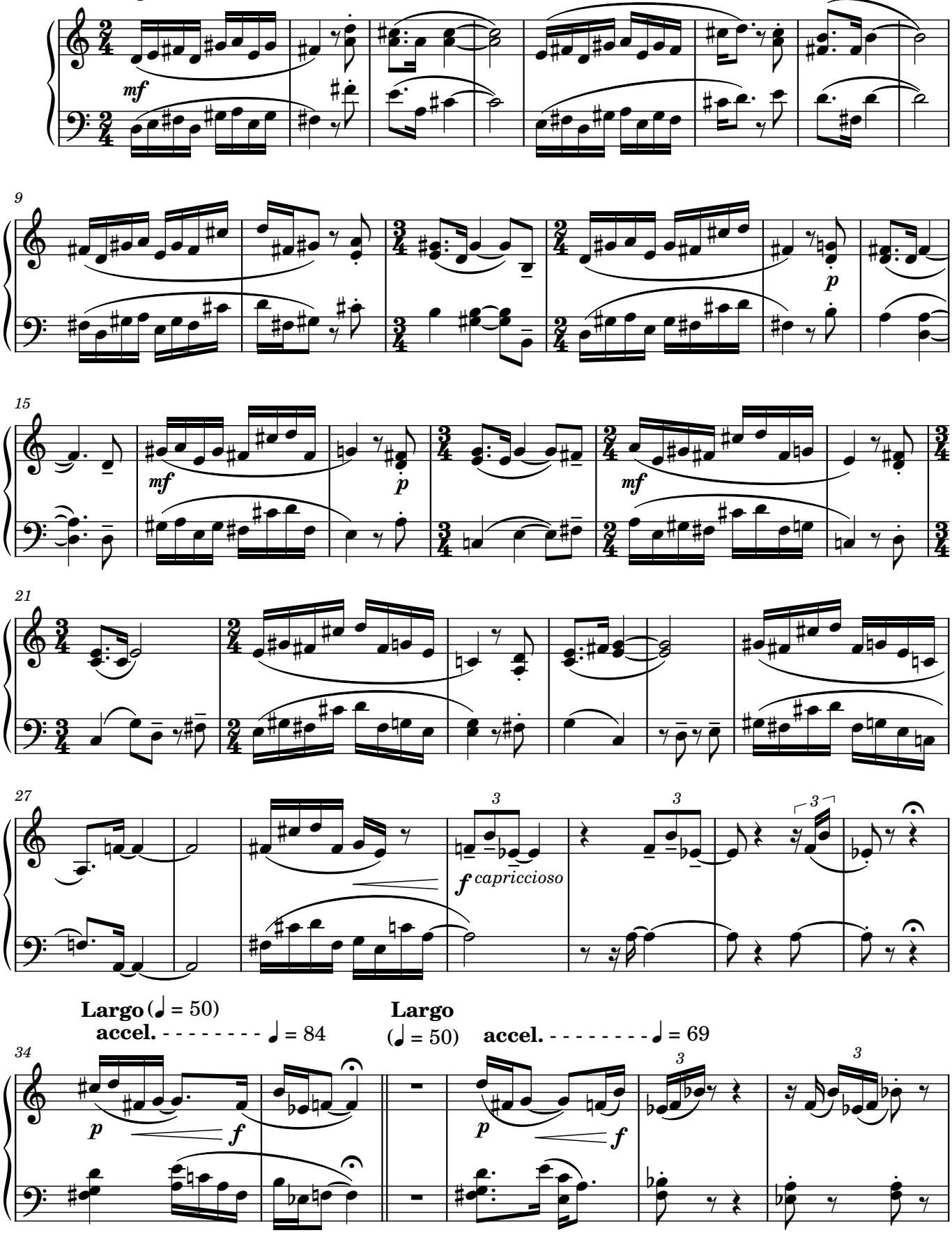
Lisbon

hand in hand

Robert Percy

Larghetto, ♩ = 60

elegante



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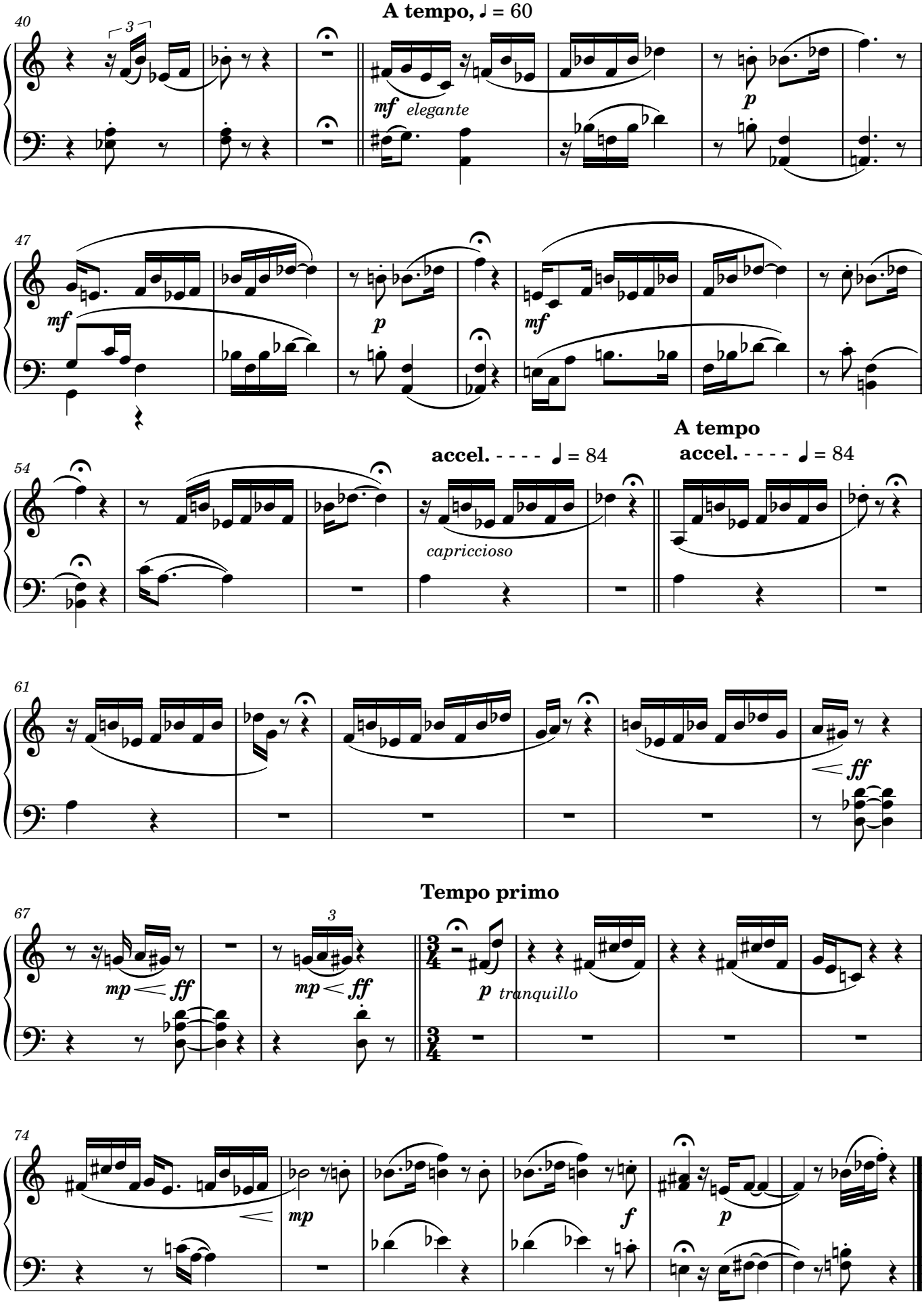

A tempo, ♩ = 60
40
3
mf elegante
p
47
mf
p
mf
A tempo
accel. - - - - ♩ = 84
54
accel. - - - - ♩ = 84
capriccioso
61
ff
Tempo primo
67
3
mp ff
mp ff
p tranquillo
74
mp
f
p

The Tour
du Mont Blanc
is a circular hike around the
Mont Blanc massif. Its 165 kilometres
of length, and 10 kilometres of ascent,
passes through Switzerland,
Italy and France, allowing
the mountain, and
its glaciers, to be
viewed from all sides.

This piece was written
with the majesty of the mountain
in mind, along with the effort of walking
around it. On long-distance walks, I often have a
song or piece of music vividly lodged in my inner ear.
On this walk, for a while, it was Bill Frisell's
Remedios the Beauty. Its opening motif
appears at the start of my piece
and is developed
throughout
.

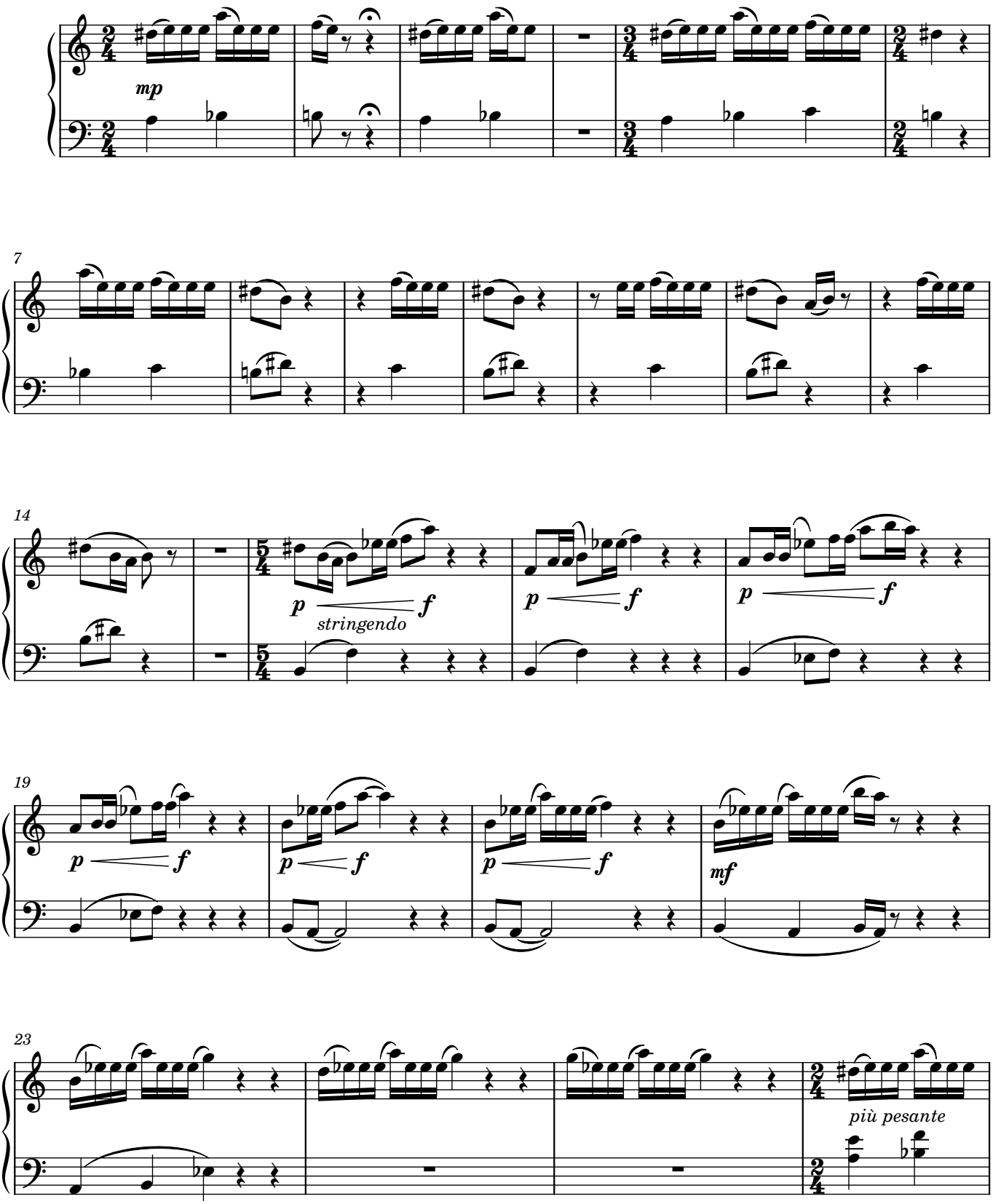
Mont Blanc

viewed from all sides

Robert Percy
July 2024

Larghetto rubato, ♩ = 50-70

espressivo



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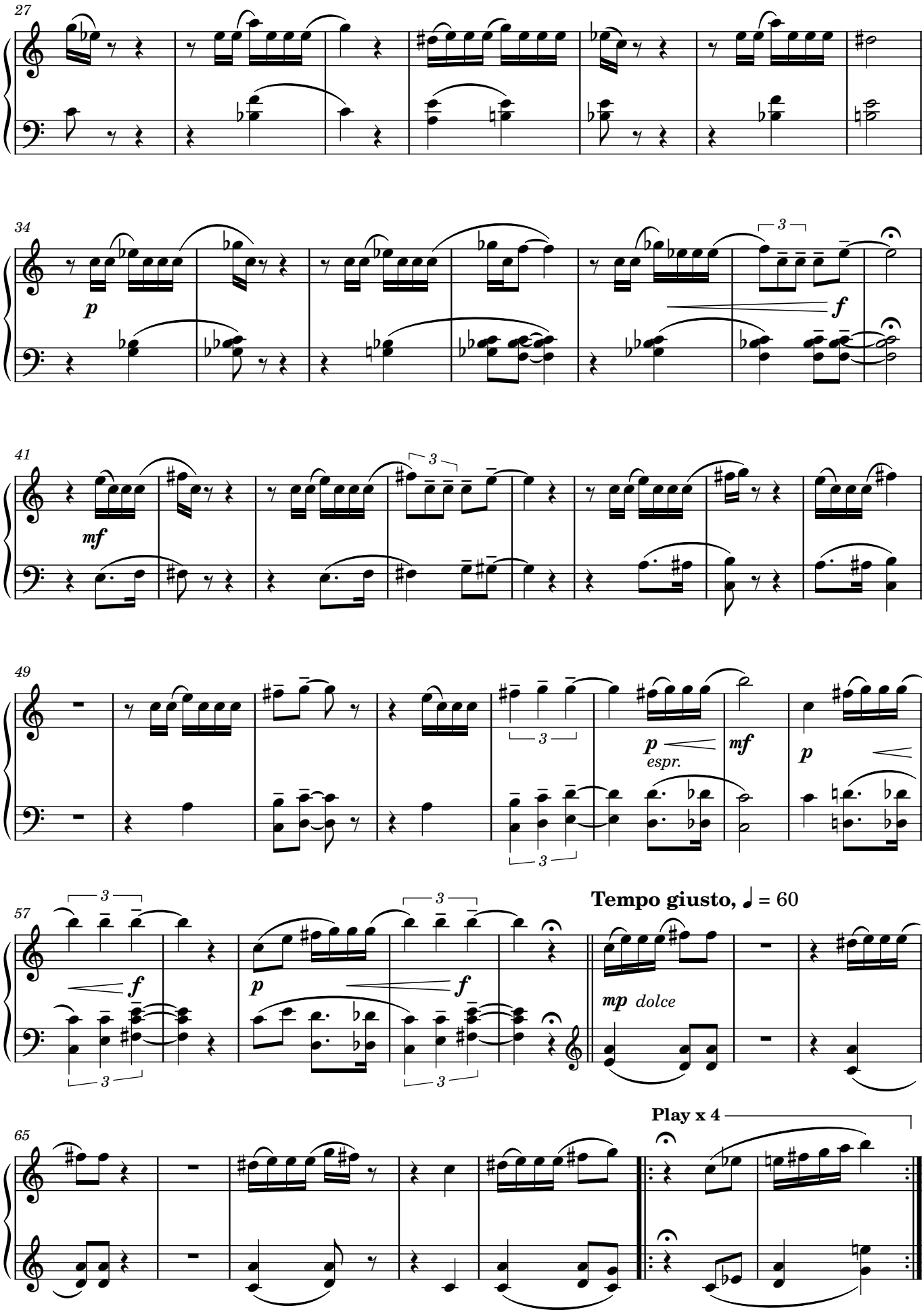

27
34
p
f
41
mf
49
p
espr.
mf
p
57
f
p
f
Tempo giusto, ♩ = 60
mp dolce
65
Play x 4

Start Point

is a headland on
the South Devon Coast
and is one of the most southerly
place in England. I wild-camped beside it
one night while walking the coast path
and I dozed off to the pulse
of its lighthouse
beam
.
Each
lighthouse
has a distinct flash
pattern, or 'characteristic'.
The lighthouse at Start Point
has a pattern of three flashes and a
duration cycle of ten seconds. This precise
pattern repeats throughout the piece, represented
by three notes of the same pitch followed by a
pause, filled with what could be a foghorn.
Gradually, ideas are added, like flotsam
accumulating on the shore,
and there is a hint of
rough seas and
a storm
.

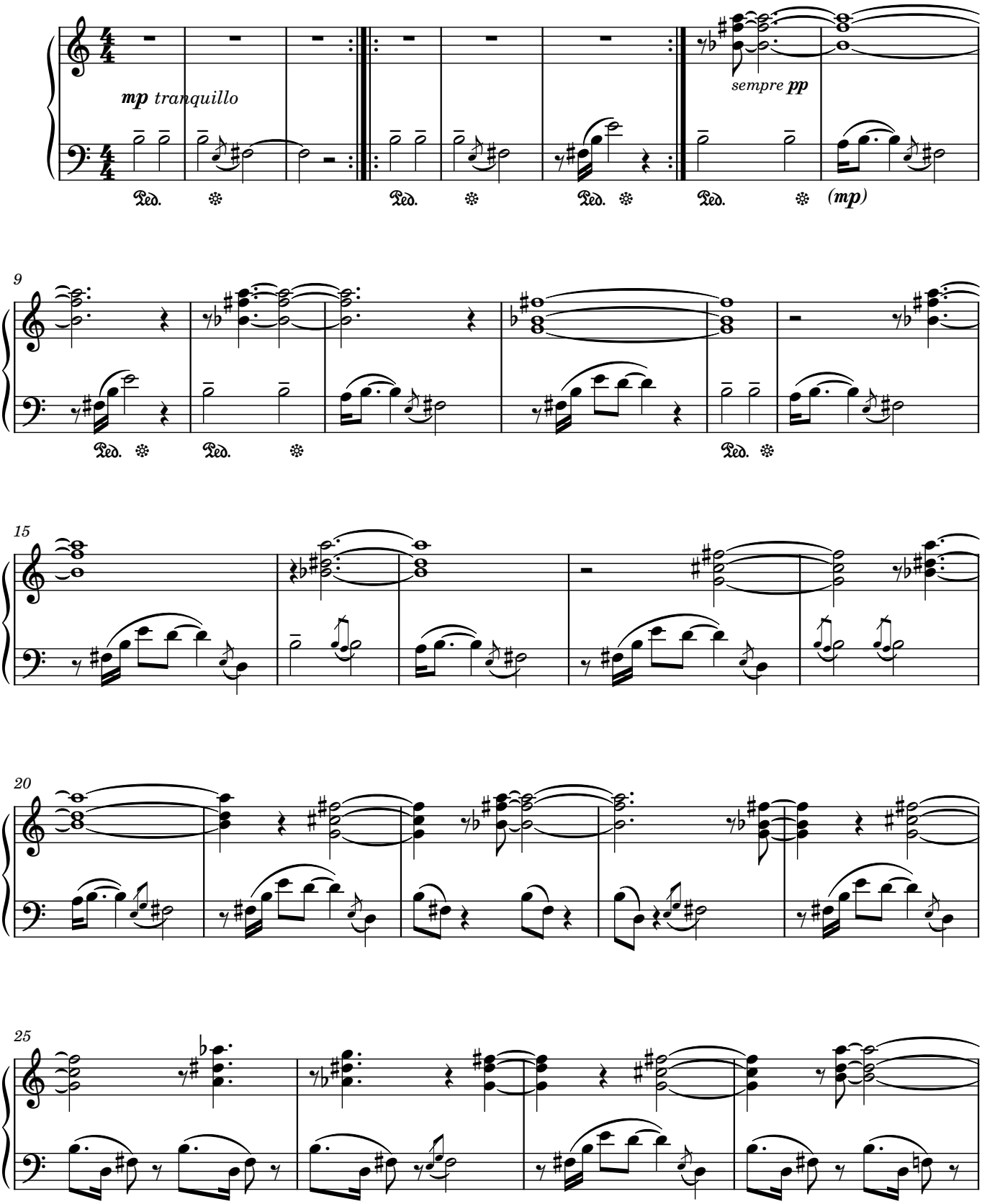
Start Point

three flashes, ten seconds

Robert Percy

Tempo giusto, ♩ = 72

looking out to sea at night



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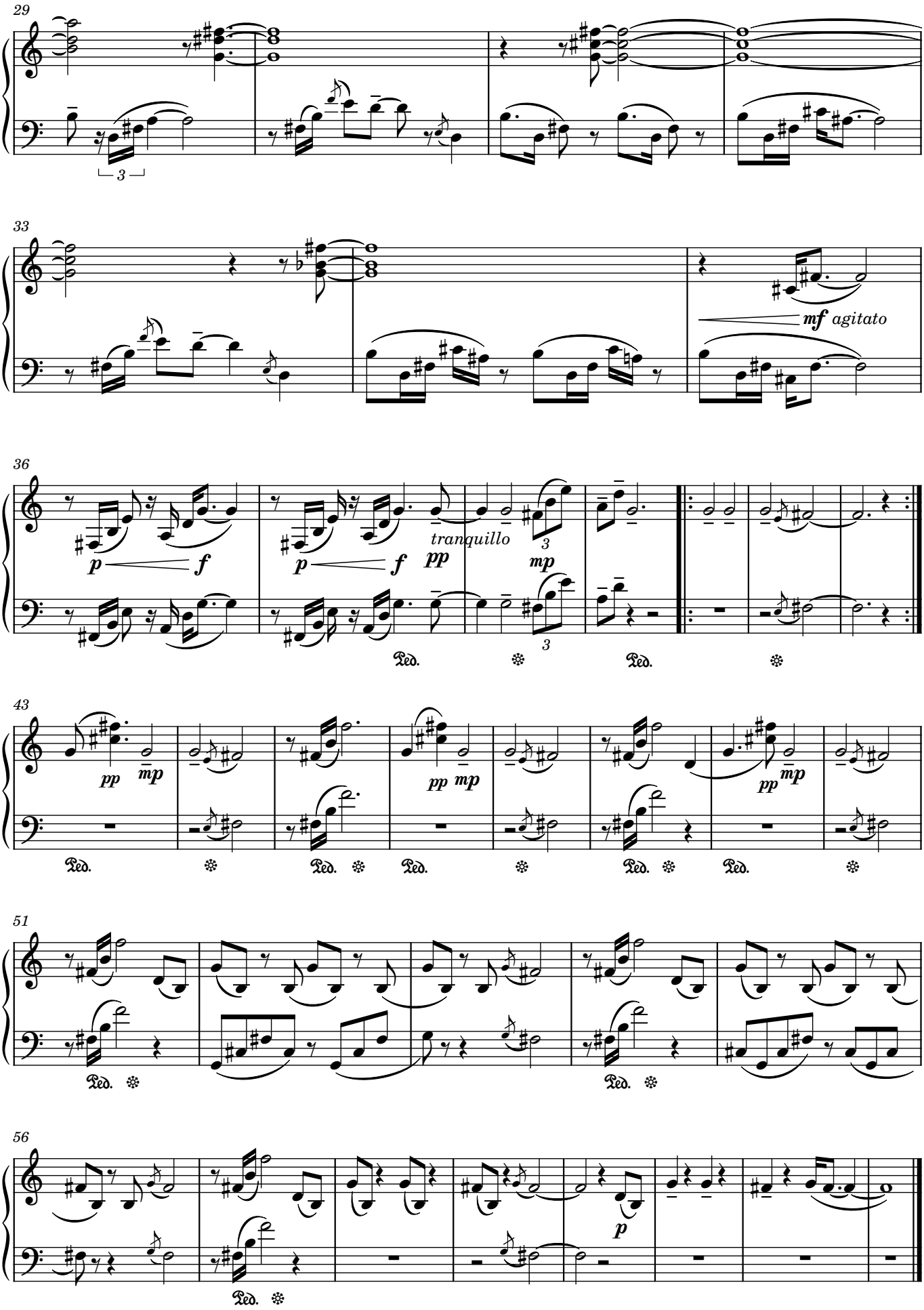

29
33
mf agitato
36
p
f
tranquillo
pp
mp
Ped.
43
51
56

With its simple
design of a circle bisected by a line,
the London Underground logo must be one the
most familiar icons of London life. The **Circle Line** is also
the name of the only line on the Underground, or 'tube' network
to form a loop, making it possible to travel on it for the whole day,
something I've never attempted). From Saturday trips to my dad's
office in the city, spellbound by the scale of everything, to
commuting as an adult, I have spent countless hours on
the tube network; the Circle Line, District Line,
Northern Line, Central Line,
and the rest of
them
.

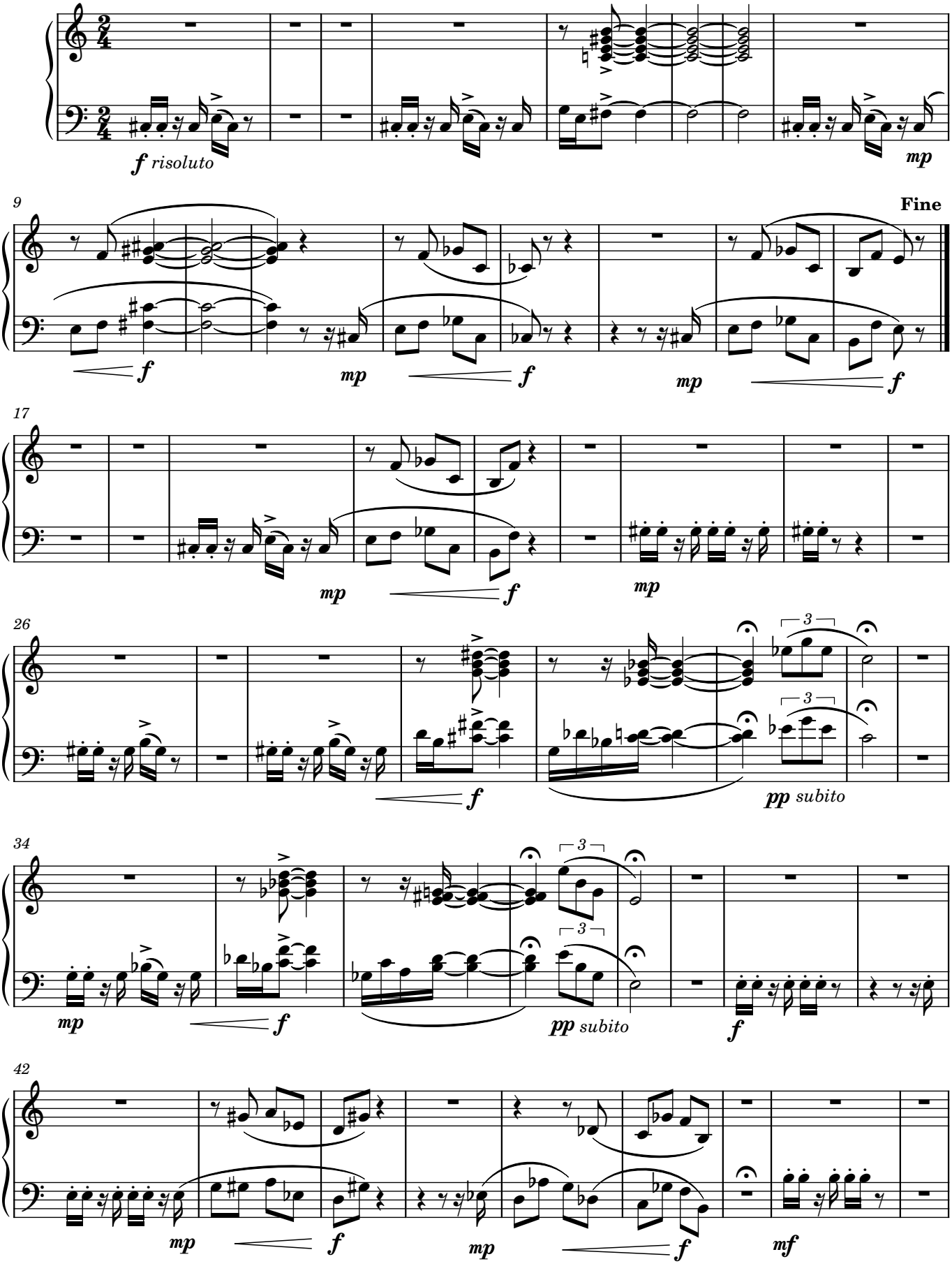
This piece evokes
the rhythm and bustle of tube travel.
During this journey, the bustle gives way to
calmer moments: daydreams, reflections, and ideas.
Rather than reaching a final destination, the
piece circles back to the beginning
to start the journey
over
.

Circle Line

underground logo

Robert Percy

Andantino con moto, ♩ = 96



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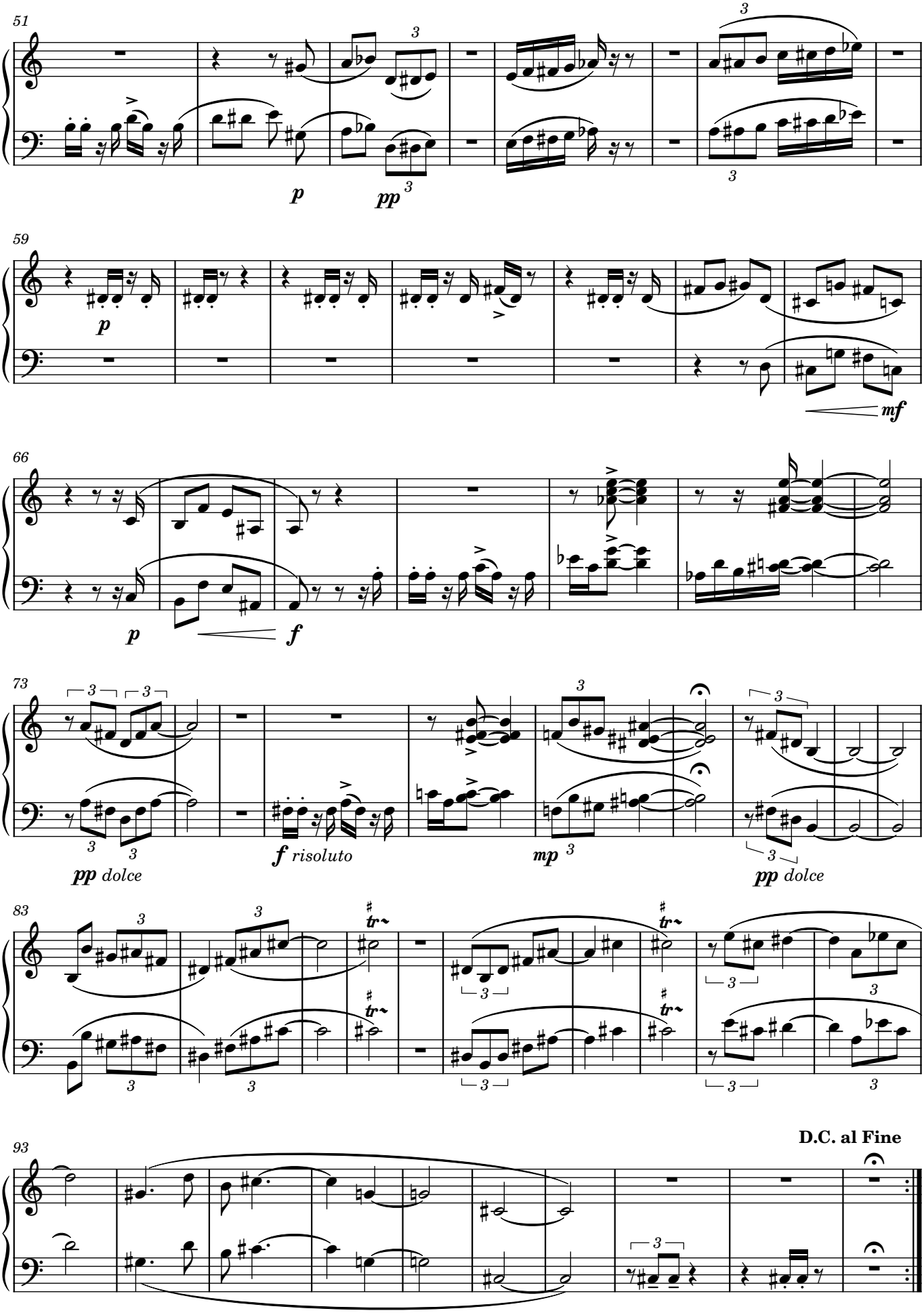

51
p
pp
59
p
mf
66
p
f
73
pp dolce
f risoluto
mp
pp dolce
83
93
D.C. al Fine

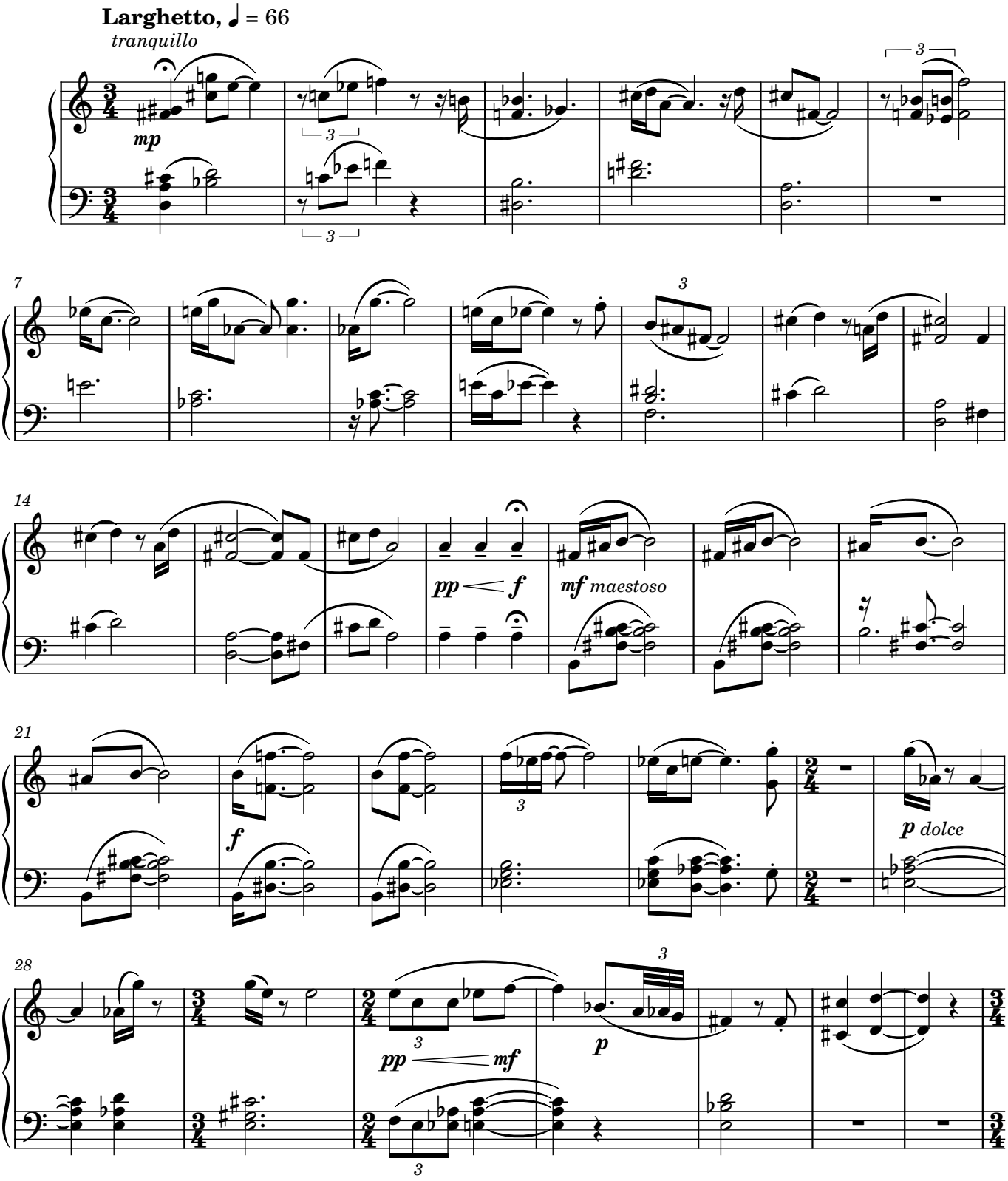
I
once
was at the
helm of a sailing
yacht; a fourty-seven
foot Beneteau. The power
of the forces that propelled it,
the lightness of touch, the connection
with the elements, and the engine-less sounds
are still with me. **Close Reach** is the point of sail in
which the boat is turned into the wind by an angle of around thirty
degrees. Pointing further into the wind brings the boat to close-hauled position.

This piece is a response to texture of the wind and the sea, the elegance of the yacht's
movement, and the equilibrium it holds between the forces that act upon it.
A sequence of twelve different pitches is played forwards, then in
reverse, repeatedly. Each time, the pitches are presented
differently, sometimes with fragments repeated.
Pitches gradually disappear from the
sequence, leaving just three,
before the twelve pitches
tentatively return to
conclude the
piece
.

Close Reach

gentle breeze

Robert Percy



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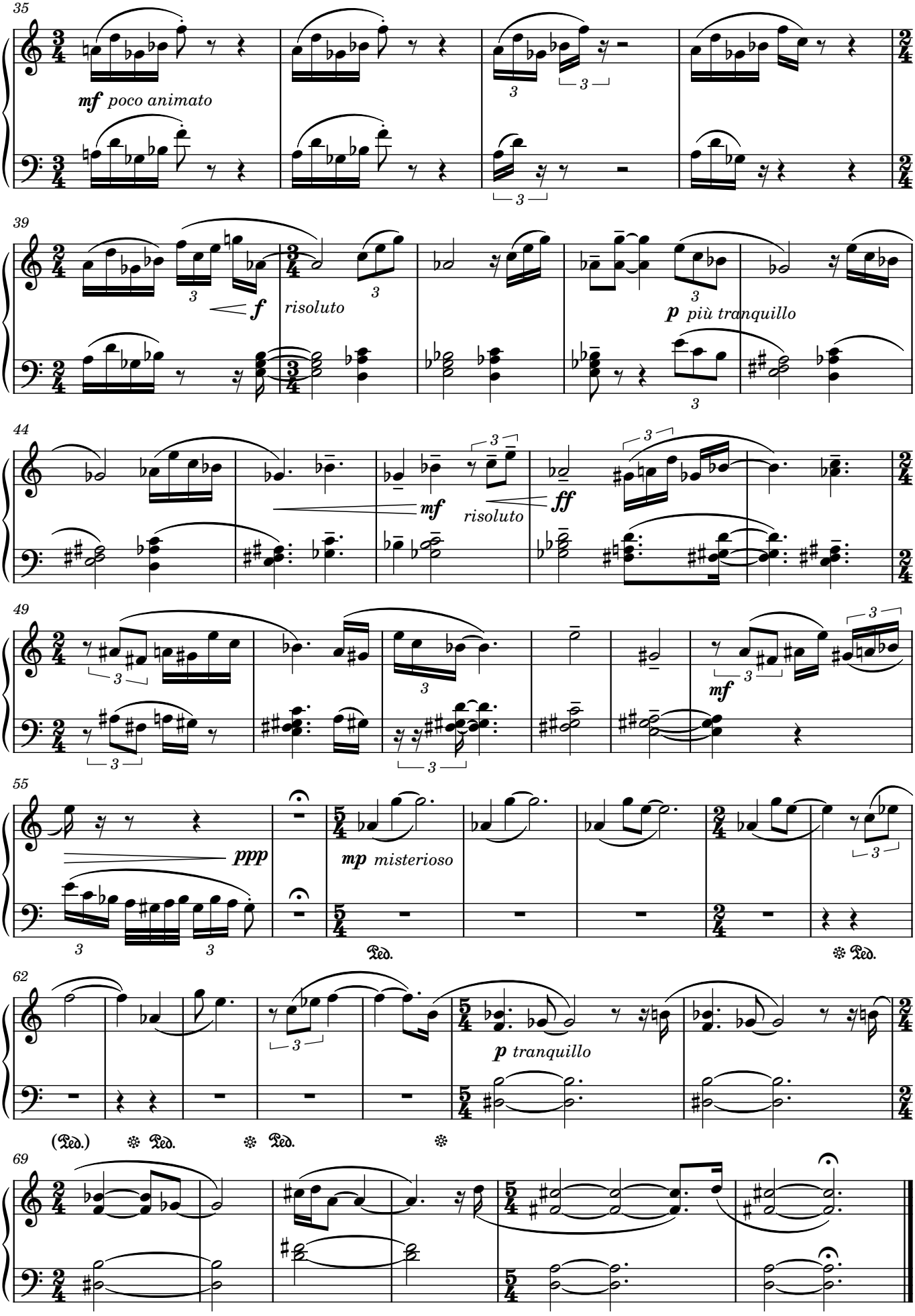
35
mf poco animato
39
f risoluto
p più tranquillo
44
mf
ff
risoluto
49
mf
55
ppp
mp misterioso
Ped.
62
p tranquillo
(Ped.)
69