No. 7233

FERNEYHOUGH

LEMMA-ICON-EPIGRAM

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Solo Piano

BRIAN FERNEYHOUGH

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SOLO PIANO

EDITION PETERS

LONDON FRANKFURT NEW YORK

PREFACE

The title of this work refers to a poetic form, the *Emblema,* developed most notably by the Italian poet Alciati during the first half of the sixteenth century. In general usage, the term is taken to mean an epigram which describes something so that it signifies something else. Later developments distinguish three components: a superscription (or adage), an image, and a concluding epigram in which the preceding elements are commented upon or explained.

Lemma-Icon-Epigram was given its first performance during the La Rochelle Festival on 28th. June 1981, by Massimiliano Damerini. The work was commissioned by the Venice Biennale.

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Performance Notes

An adequate interpretation of this work presupposes three distinct learning processes: (1) an overview of the (deliberately relatively direct) gestural patterning without regard to exactitude of detail in respect of rhythm; (2) a 'de-learning' in which the global structures are abandoned in favour of a concentration upon the rhythmic and expressive import of each individual note (as if the composition were an example of 'punctualistic' music); (3) the progressive reconstruction of the various gestural units established at the outset on the basis of experience gained during the above two stages of preparation.

The rhythmic notation reflects the composer's views concerning the 'psychologising' of interpretative reaction, seen as an integral component of the work-structure; 'rubato' interpretation of the indicated values should therefore be rigorously rejected in favour of an attempt to evolve strategies permitting as close an approach as possible to the specificities of the musical text.

Unconventional bar-length notation is encountered in the later sections of the piece (2/10, 3/12 etc.). In each case, the principle applicable to the derivation of more customary lengths (understood as equal subdivisions of a breve) is maintained. For example, 2/10 signifies two beats to a bar, each being equal to one-tenth of a breve. All such passages in this piece have an internal beat faster than the original quaver beat.

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Duration: c. 14 minutes

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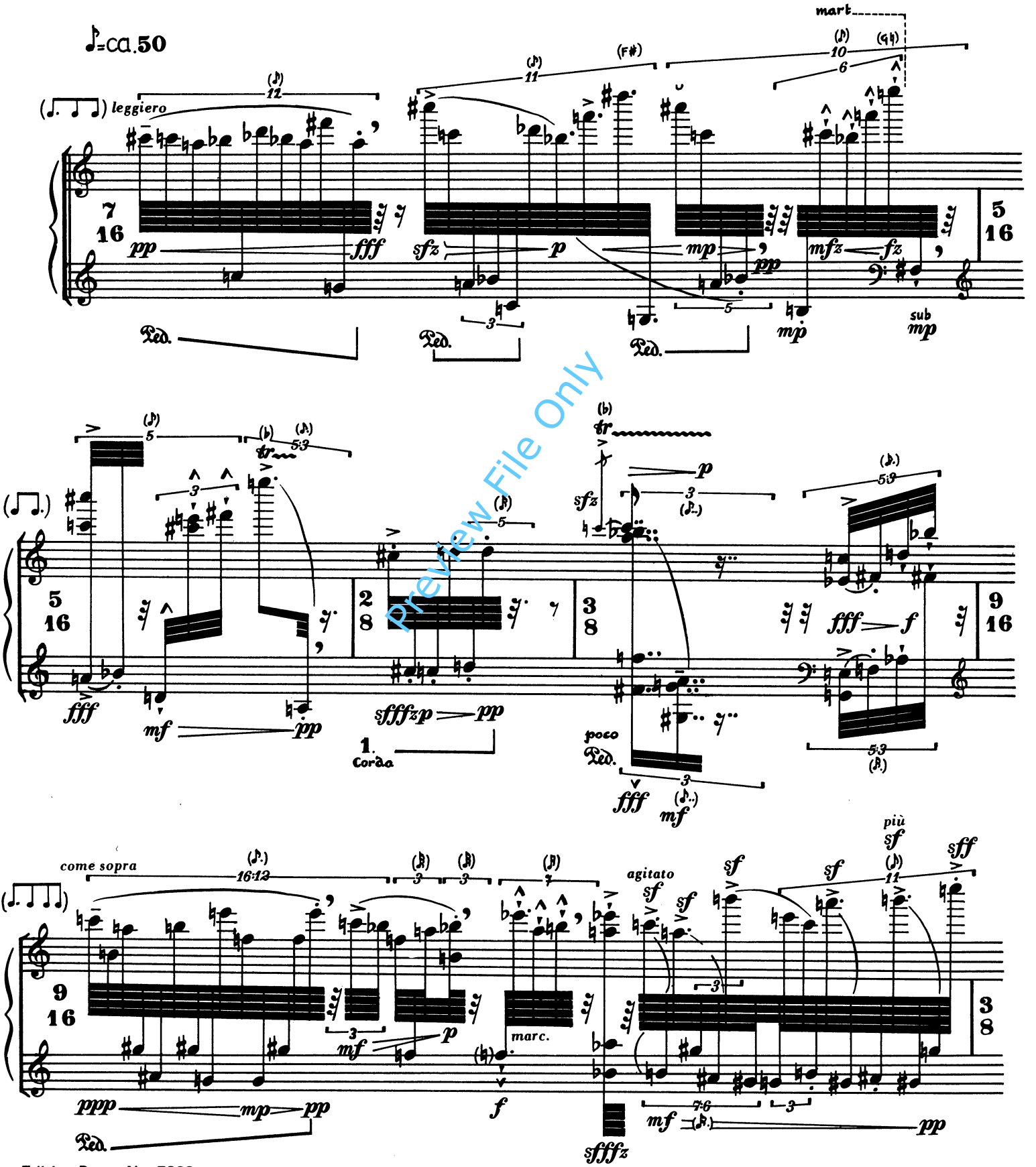
"Tout est hiéroglyphique" (Baudelaire)

Lemma-Icon-Epigram

For Massimiliano Damerini



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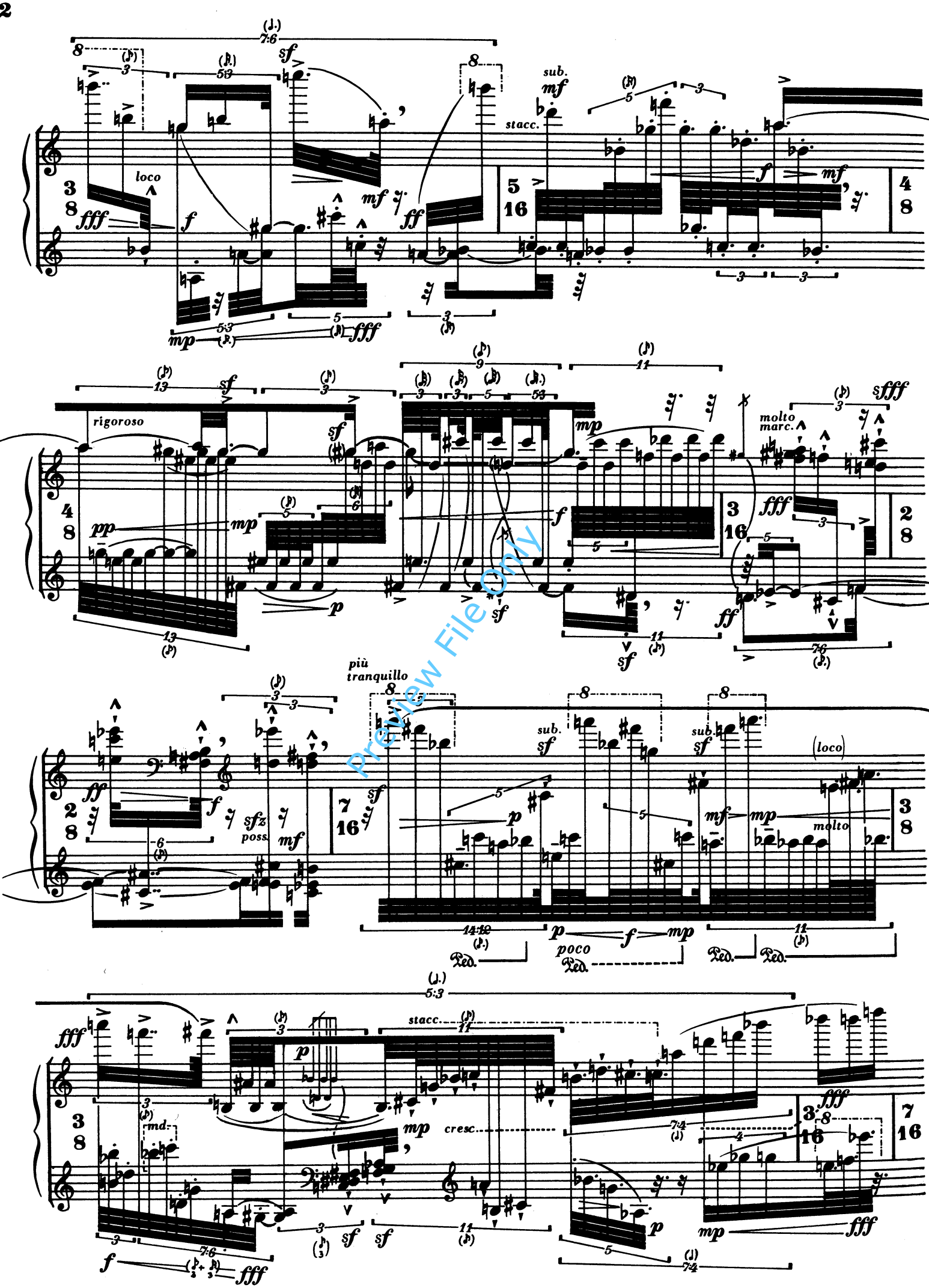

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