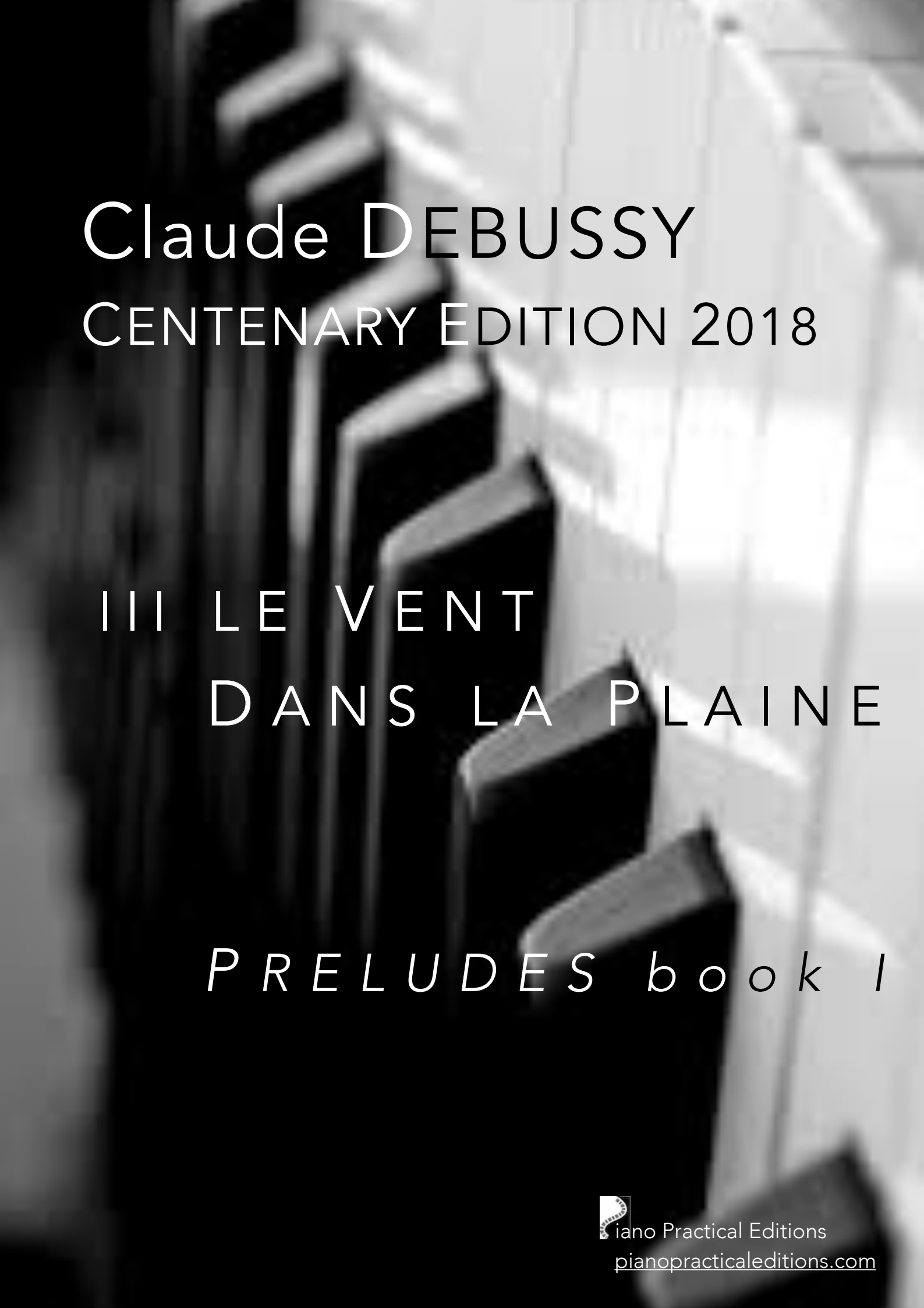

Claude DEBUSSY

CENTENARY EDITION 2018

III LE VENT DANS LA PLAINE

PRELUDES book I

Piano Practical Editions
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Ray Alston : contact@pianopracticaleditions.com

Claude DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

III LE VENT DANS LA PLAINE

PRELUDES BOOK I

"I believe more and more that music in its essence is not a thing that can be poured into a rigorous and traditional mould. It is made of colours and rhythmical beats. Music is a mysterious mathematical process whose elements partake of infinity, capturing mysterious relations between nature and the imagination". — **Claude Debussy**

The strong influence of French piano music is surely identified with Chopin and Debussy who share a unique position as masters of an exceptional instrument; through an extensive affinity with the sustaining pedal they each created a personal language conceived to communicate their work with the greatest authenticity.

The first book of preludes has two wind-driven pieces and while this is more of a fresh breeze than a gale, there are a few moments of tension and unease. A quotation from the playwrite Favart inspired the full title — *Le vent dans la plaine suspend son haleine* (the wind in the plain is holding its breath). Debussy and Verlaine became inevitably entwined as one of the composer's early piano teachers was the poet's mother-in-law. *The Ecstasy* was set to music by the composer in 1888 and this prelude dates from about 1910 with a first performance in 1911.

C'est l'extase langoureuse

Romances sans paroles 1902

Le vent dans la plaine
Suspend son haleine.
— Favart

C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
Le chœur des petites voix.

Ô le frêle et frais murmure !
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire...
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.

Cette âme qui se lamente
En cette plainte dormante,
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas ?
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas ?

Paul Verlaine

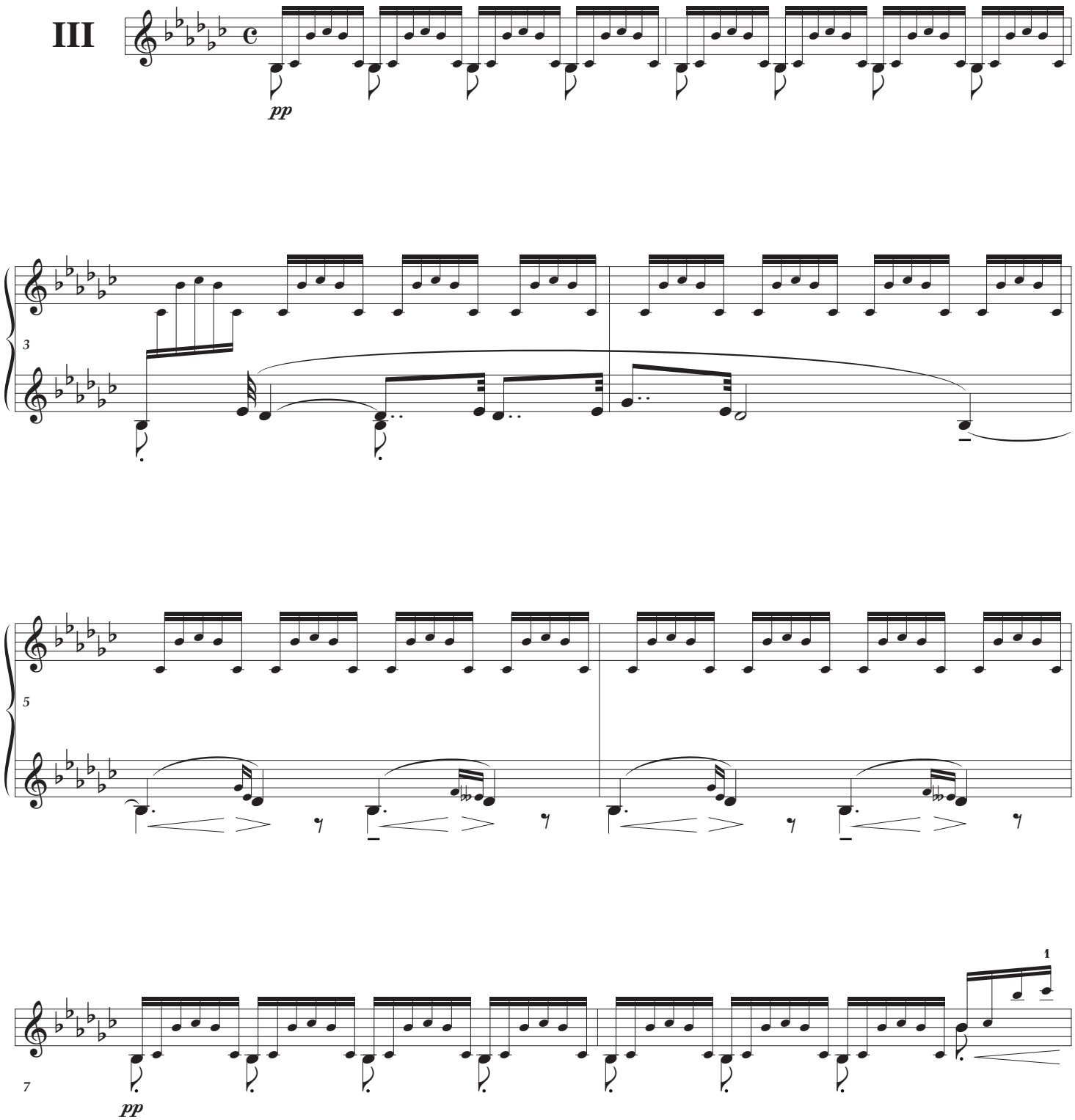
During the course of this centenary year Piano Practical Editions has become a creative and critical working publication, although in this particular piece apart from the general layout there is little to modify from the original.

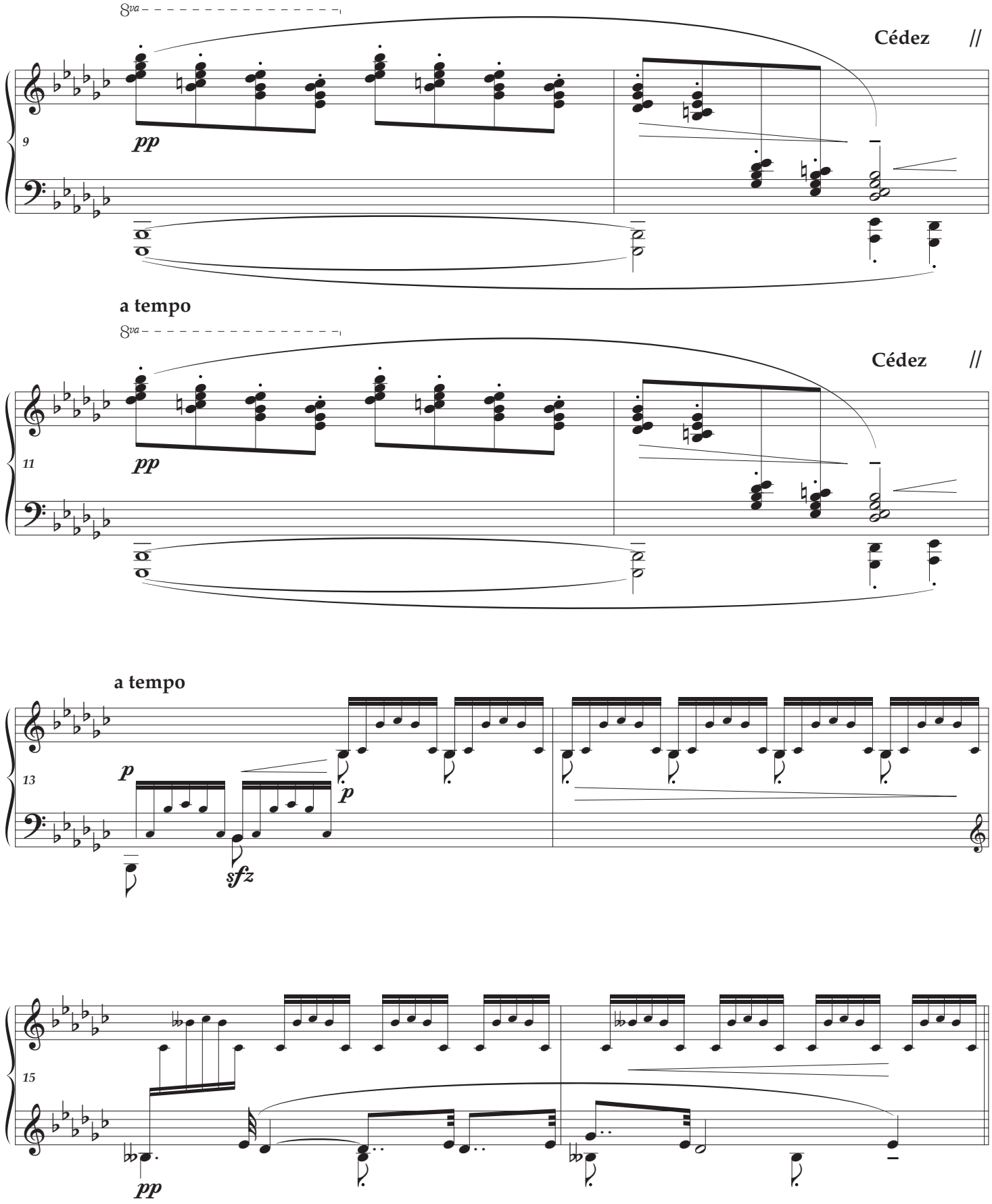
Here is an apt quotation by the composer : "*Absence of fingering is an excellent exercise, negating musicians' perverse desire to completely dismiss the composer's* (and editor's), *and thereby vindicating words of eternal wisdom: 'If you want something done well, do it yourself'". Let us seek our own fingering!*

Animé [♩ = 126]

aussi légèrement que possible

III

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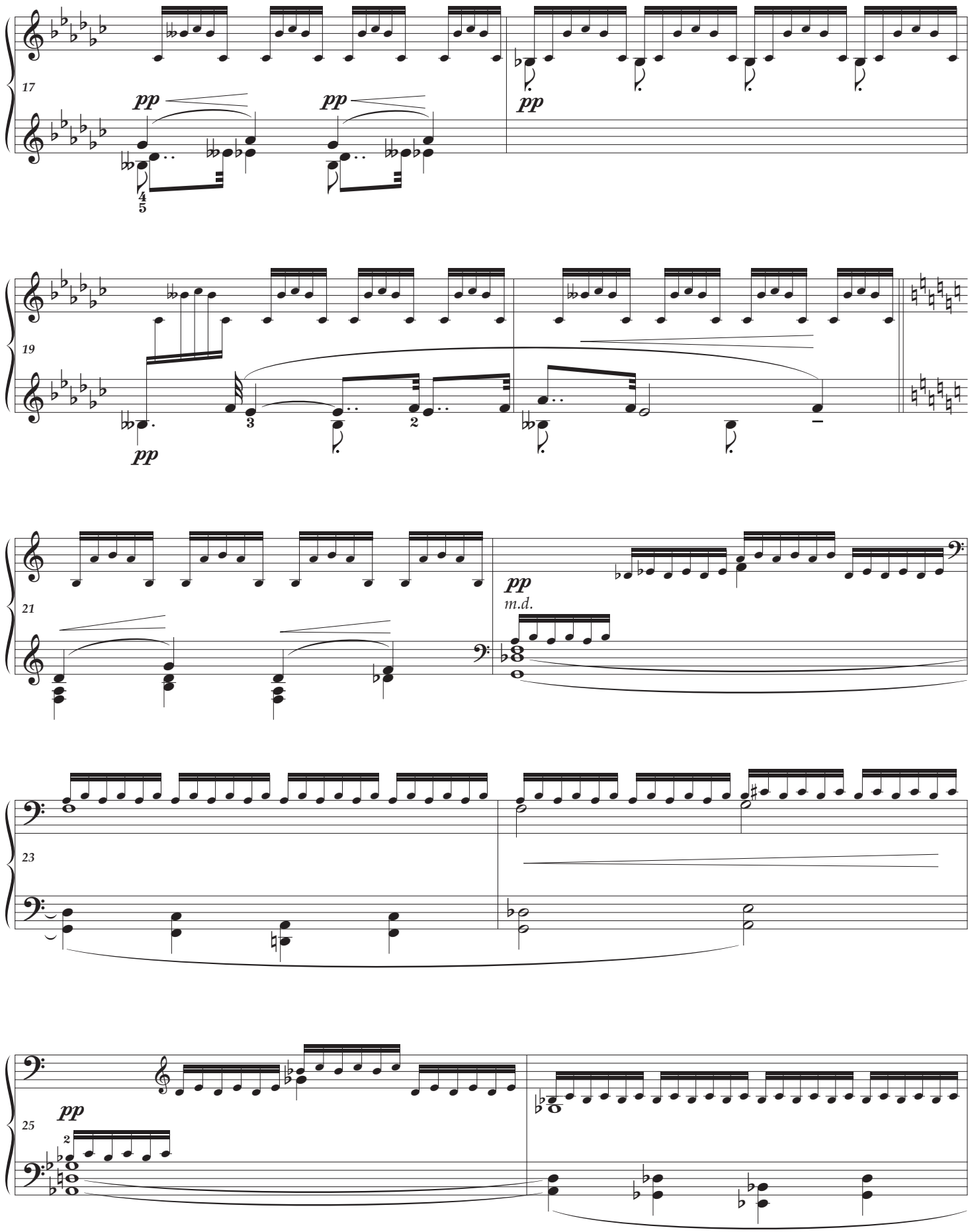
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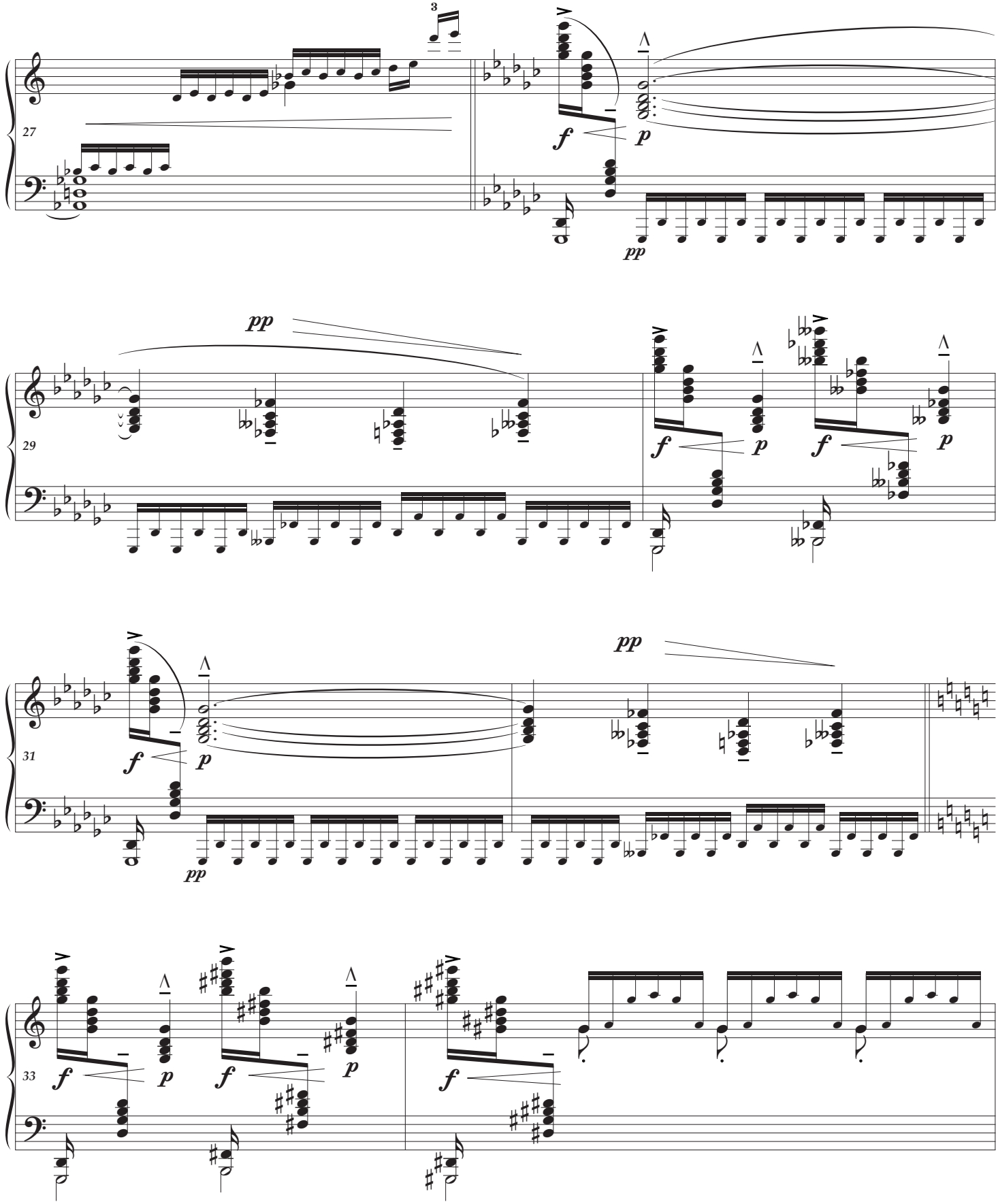
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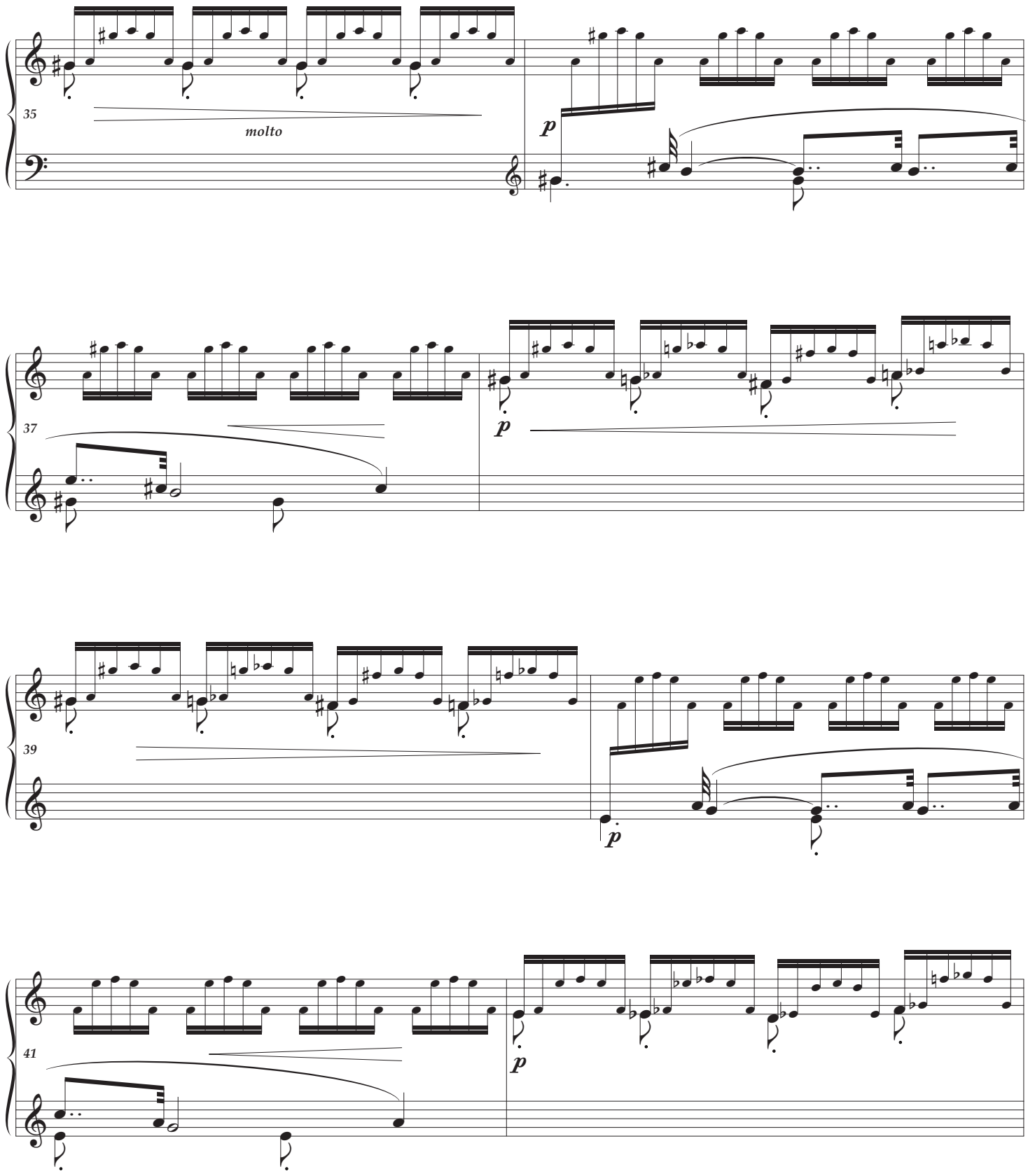
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molto
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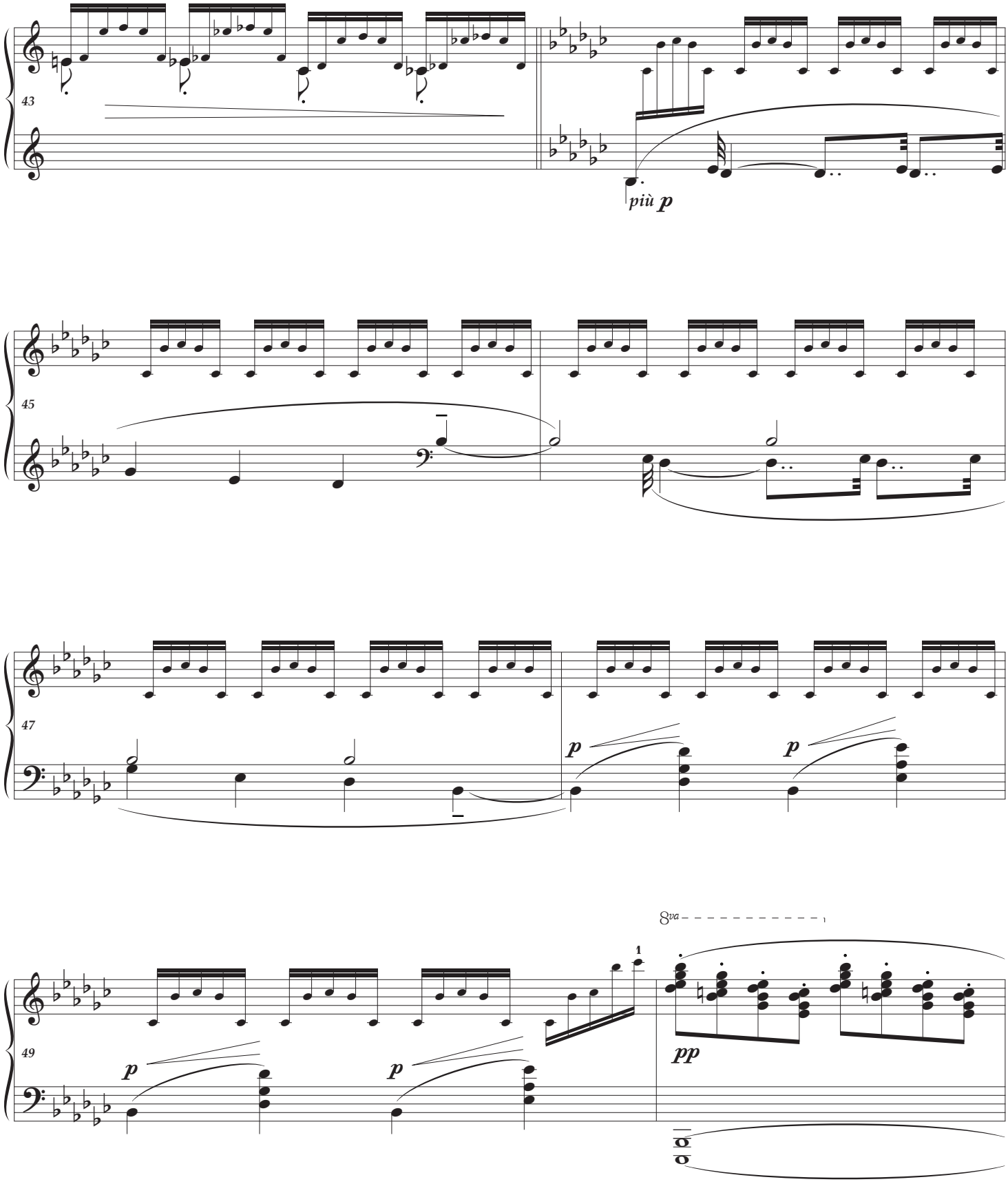
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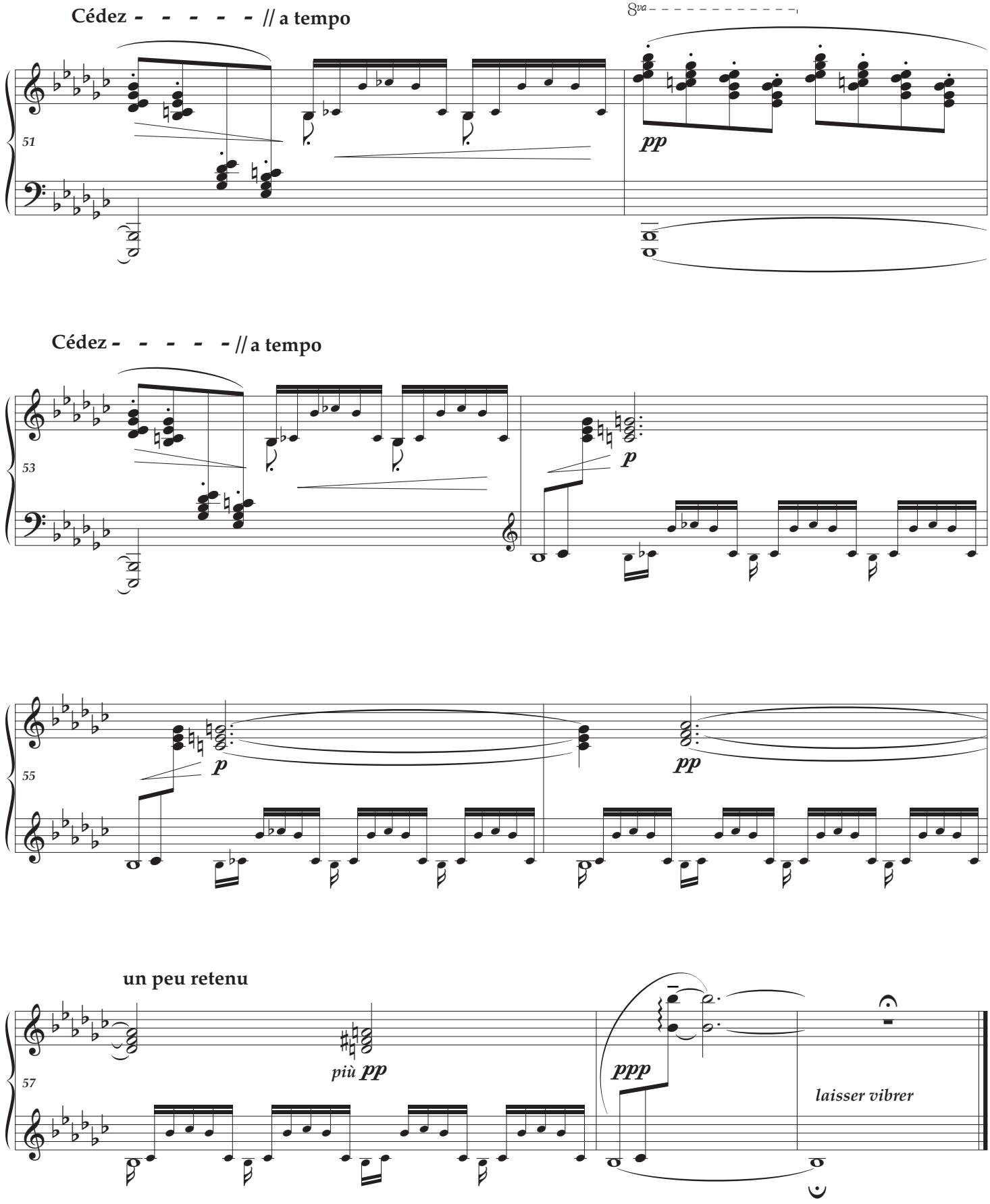

(... Le vent dans la plaine)

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Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

Duration: 2'20

- In the first book of Preludes, the composer indicated metronome speeds in brackets, and once wrote: *"as a rose which might only last for one morning, a metronome speed might only work for one bar."* Might this explain why there are no metronome speeds in the second book?

- **28-34** these large RH leaps are of course quite challenging, but become slightly more manageable with the bass modified as here

---

aussi légèrement que possible	*as light as possible*
cédez	*slow down*
un peu retenu	*held back a little*
laisser vibrer	*hold the pedal*