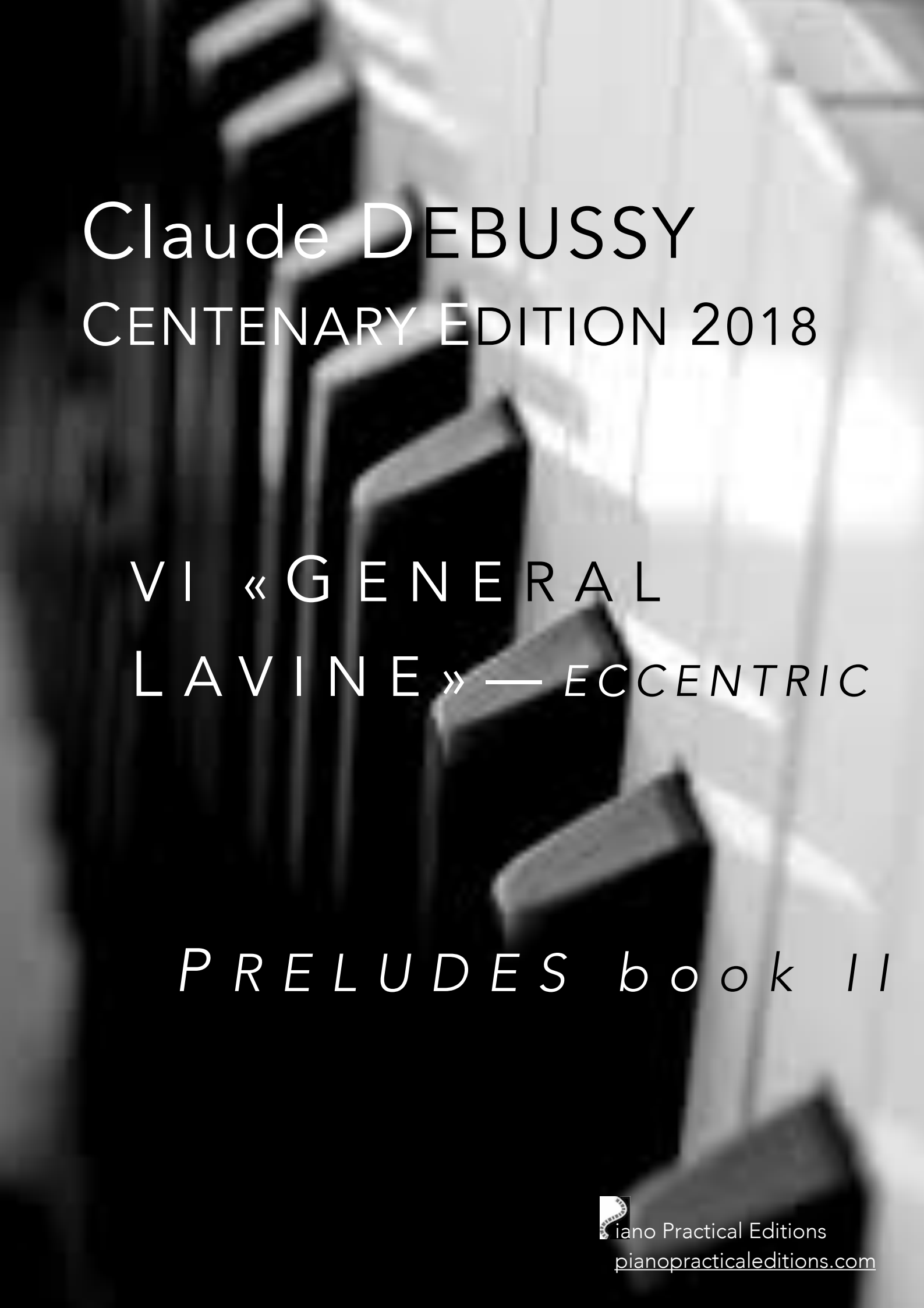

Claude DEBUSSY
CENTENARY EDITION 2018

VI «GENERAL LAVINE» — *ECCENTRIC*

PRELUDES book II

Piano Practical Editions
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Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

Please send comments and error reports to
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Claude DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

VI « GENERAL LAVINE » — *eccentric*

PRELUDES BOOK II

"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**

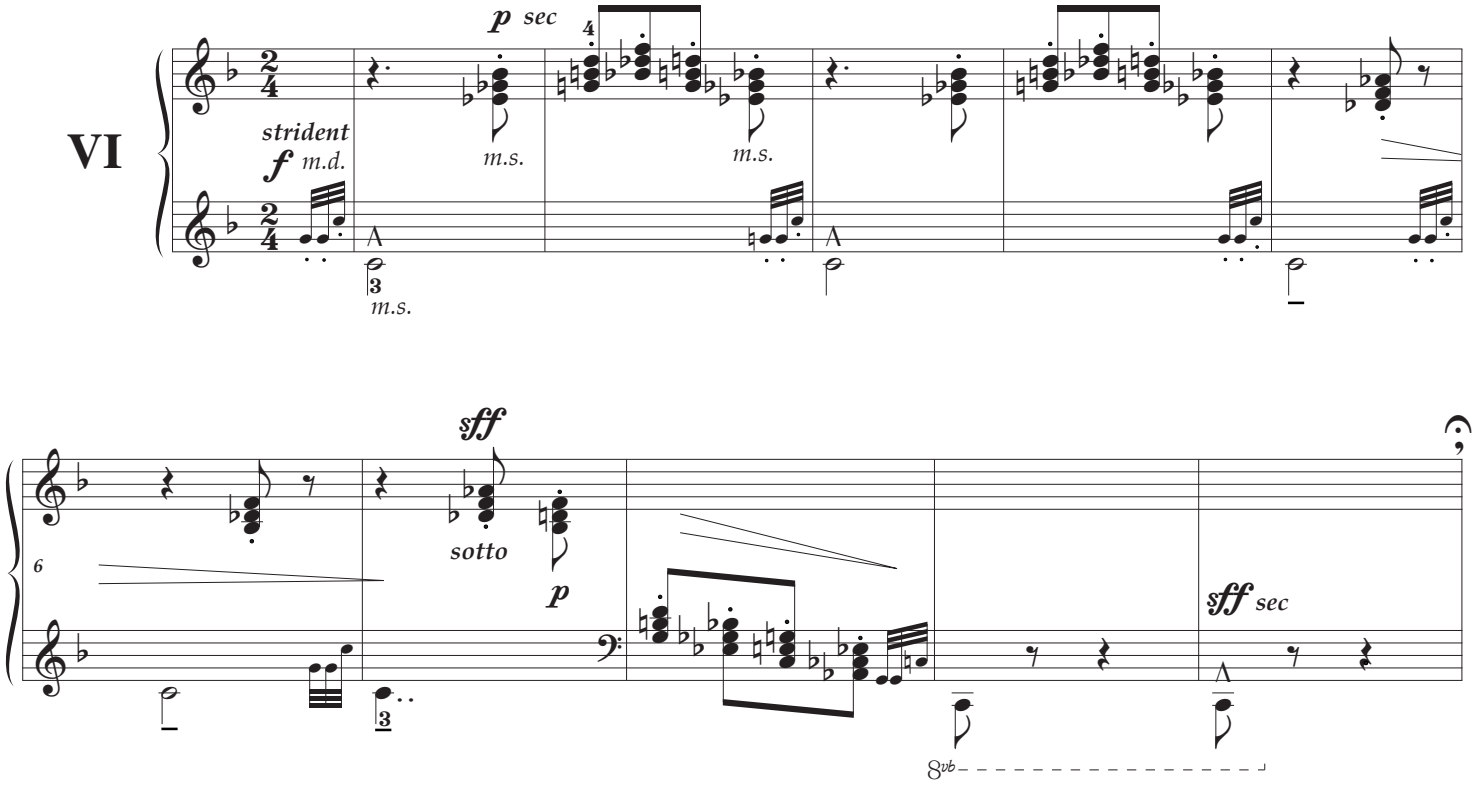
The strong influence of French piano music is surely identified with Chopin and Debussy who share a unique position as masters of an exceptional instrument; through an extensive affinity with the sustaining pedal they each created a personal language conceived to communicate their work with the greatest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

Was there really an eccentric General Lavine? Yes and no — Edward La Vine was not a general but an American juggling clown, half tramp and half warrior, who appeared at the Marigny Theatre in Paris around 1910, greatly entertaining Mr Debussy. It is quite difficult to play with deliberate errors of rhythm and notation, but that is necessary here to imitate Lavine's mischievous character — one moment strutting about and the next acting a buffoonish and eccentric general on parade. The slapstick vaudeville style, playing to the gallery, is in many ways similar to *Minstrels* with which it shares a common theatrical ancestry.

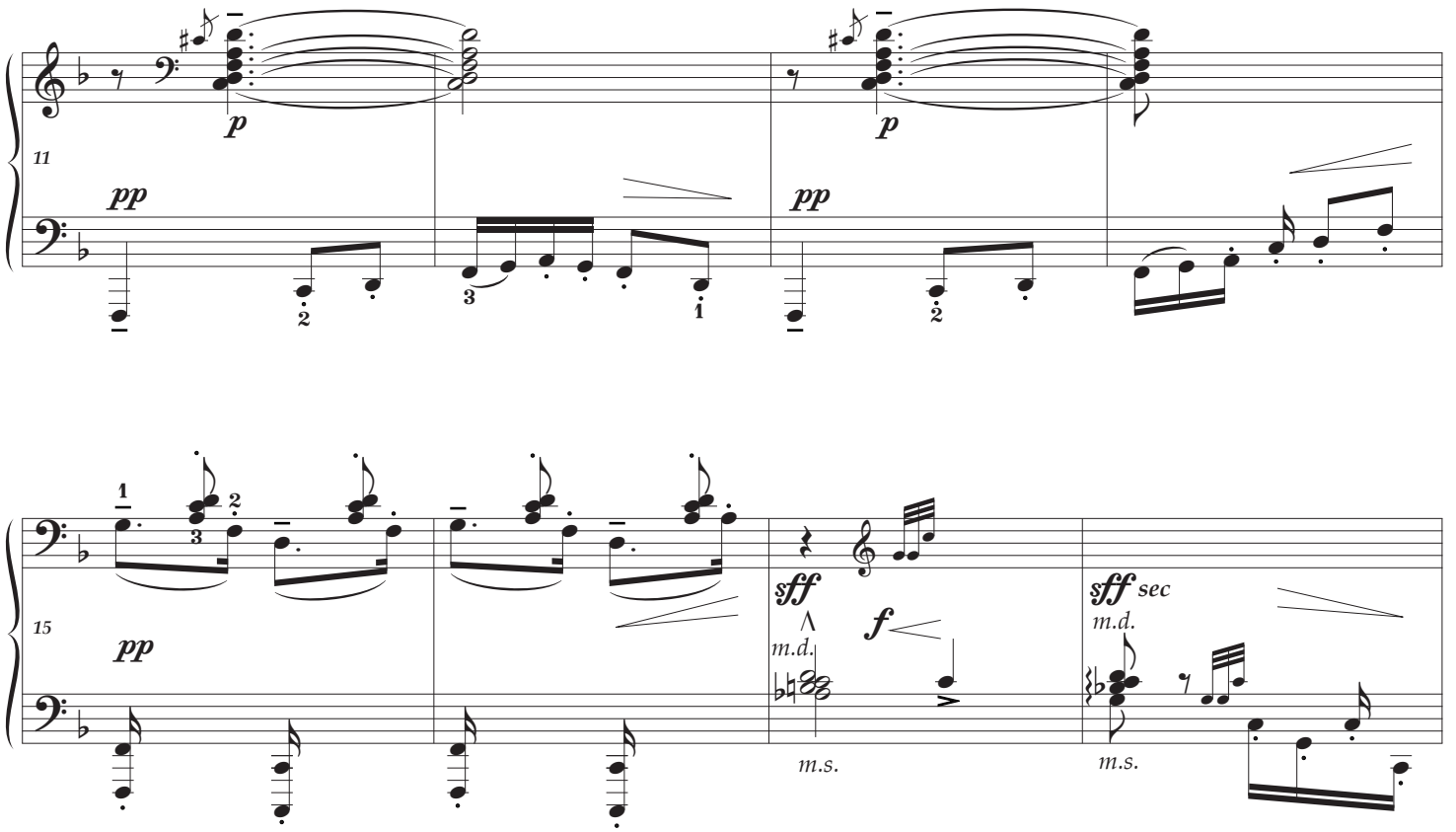
During the course of this centenary year *Piano Practical Editions* has become a creative and critical working publication; in addition to a few suggestions of fingering and hand arrangement, you will find significant modifications to the general layout in an effort to eliminate inconsistencies and improve visual impact. The sostenuto pedal can be used for a few bars.

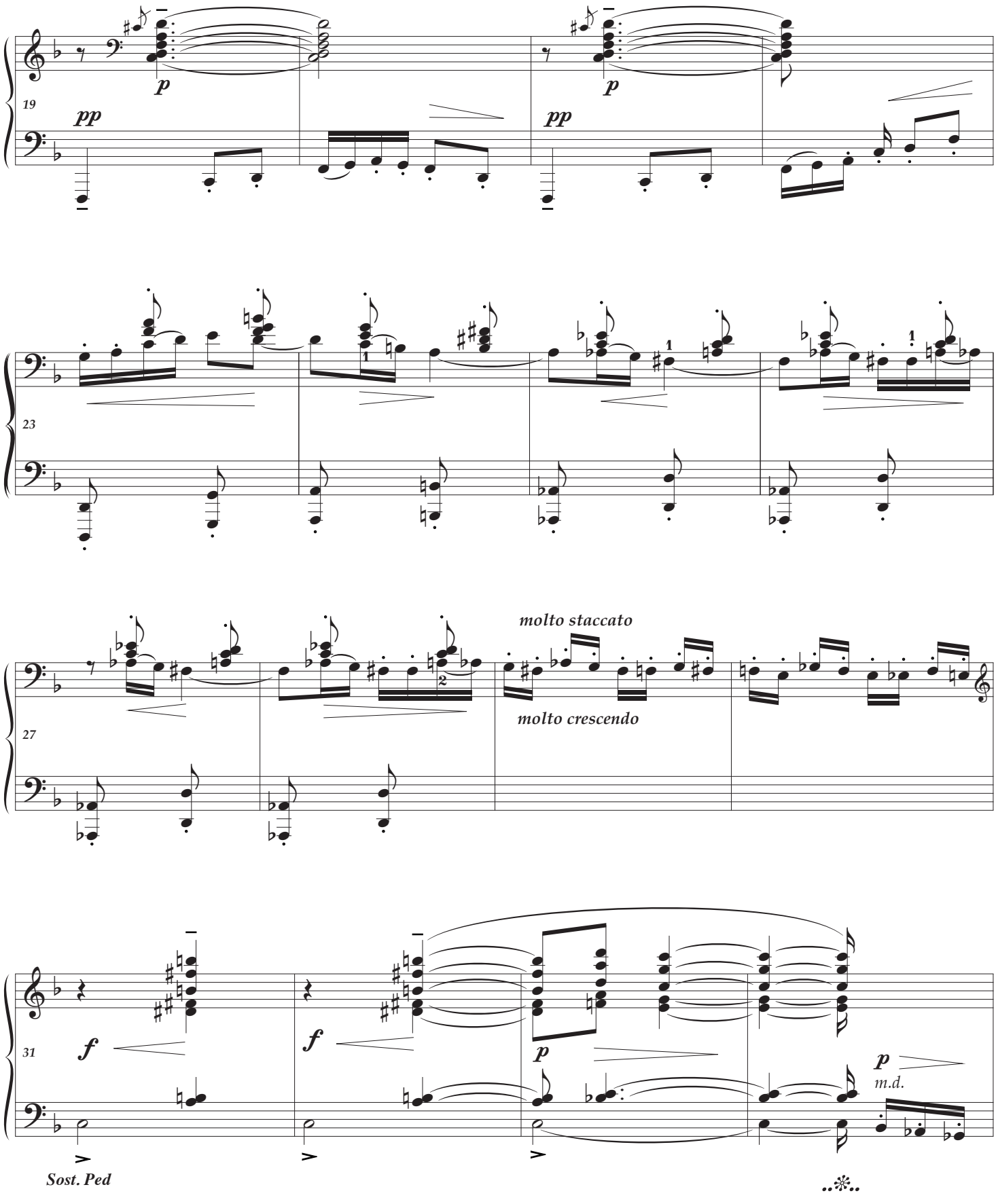
Here is an apt quotation by the composer :"Absence of fingering is an excellent exercise, negating musicians' perverse desire to completely dismiss the composer's (and editor's), and thereby vindicating words of eternal wisdom: 'If you want something done well, do it yourself'". Let us seek our own fingering!

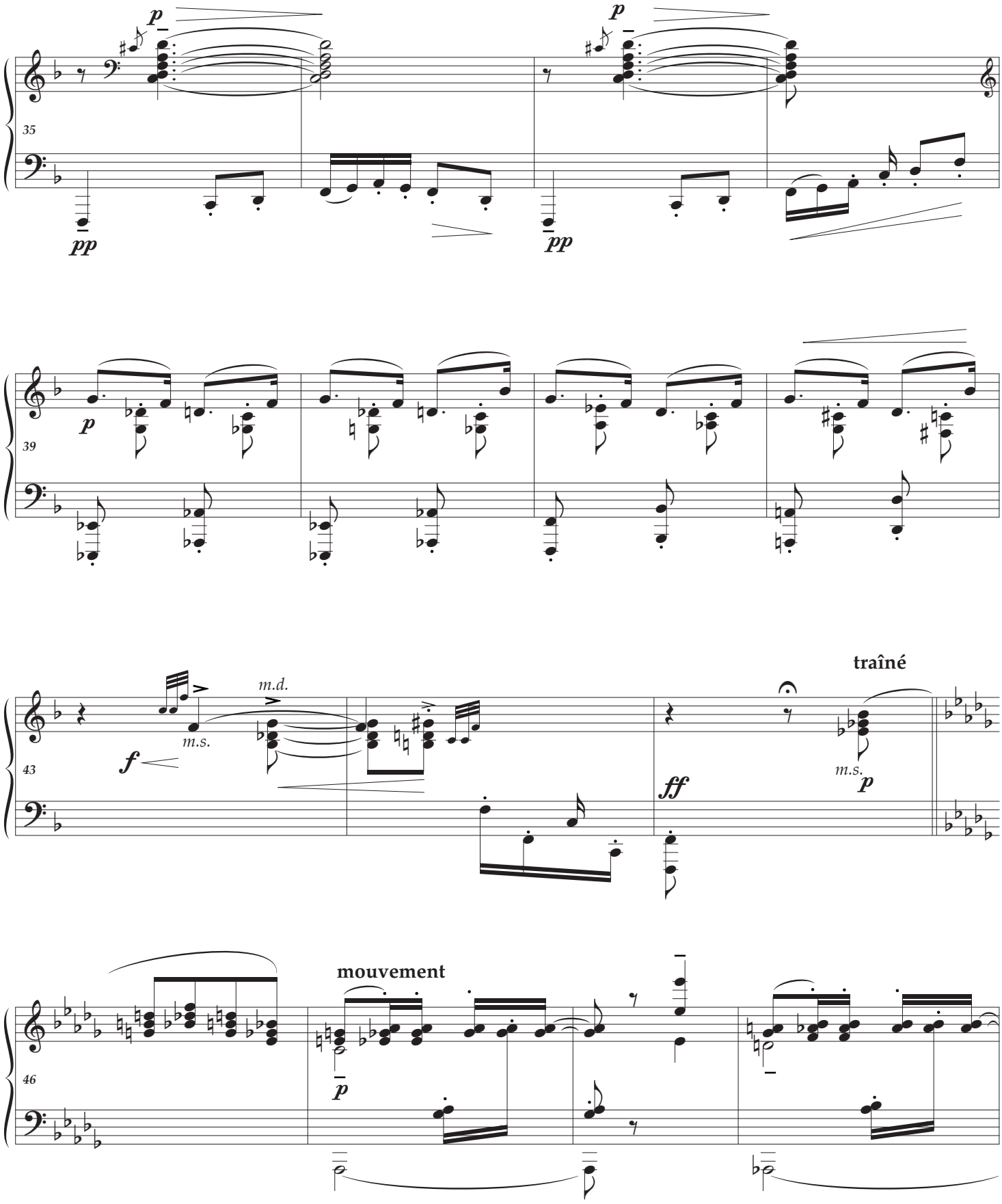
Dans le style et le mouvement d'un Cake-Walk

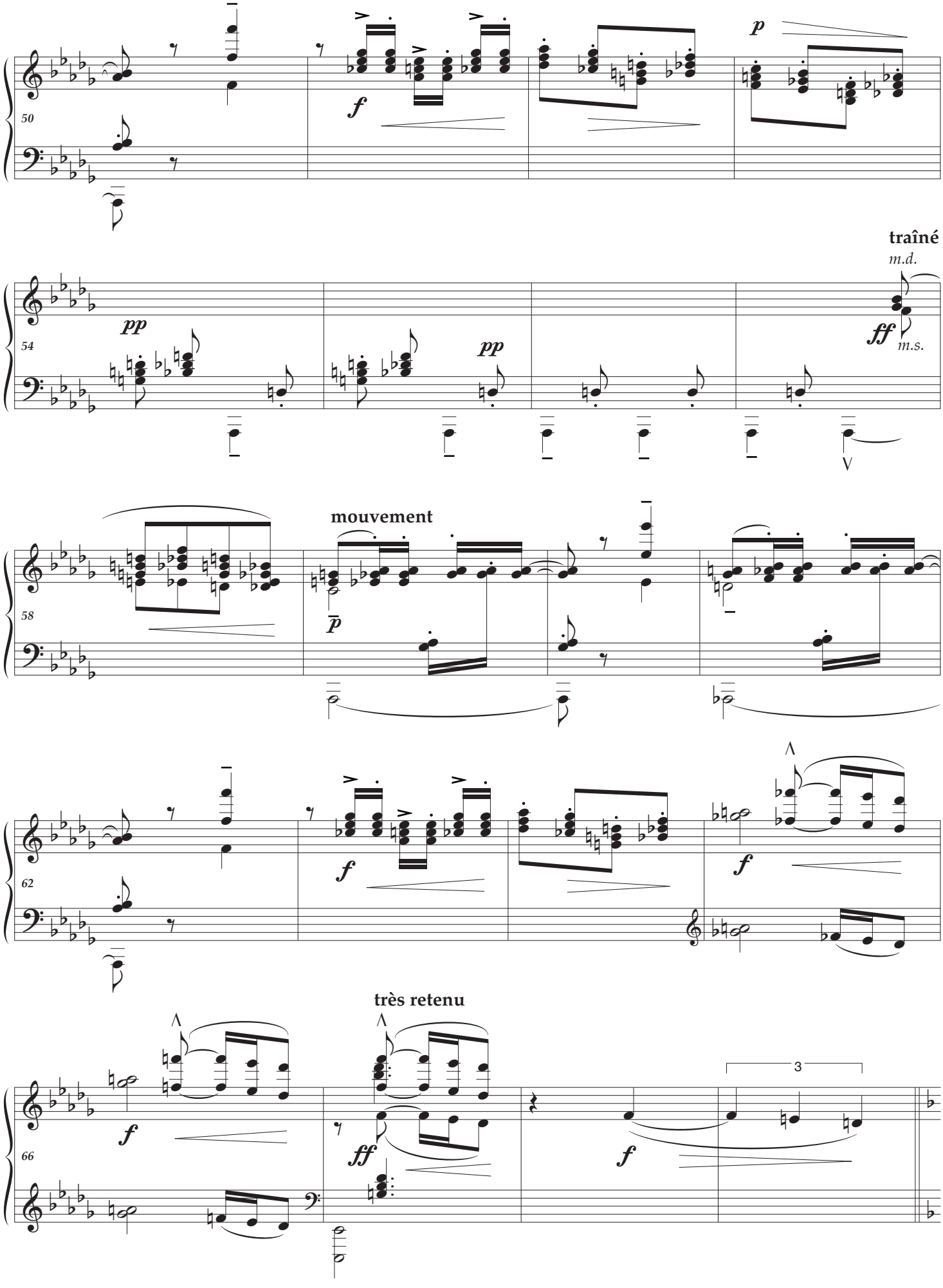


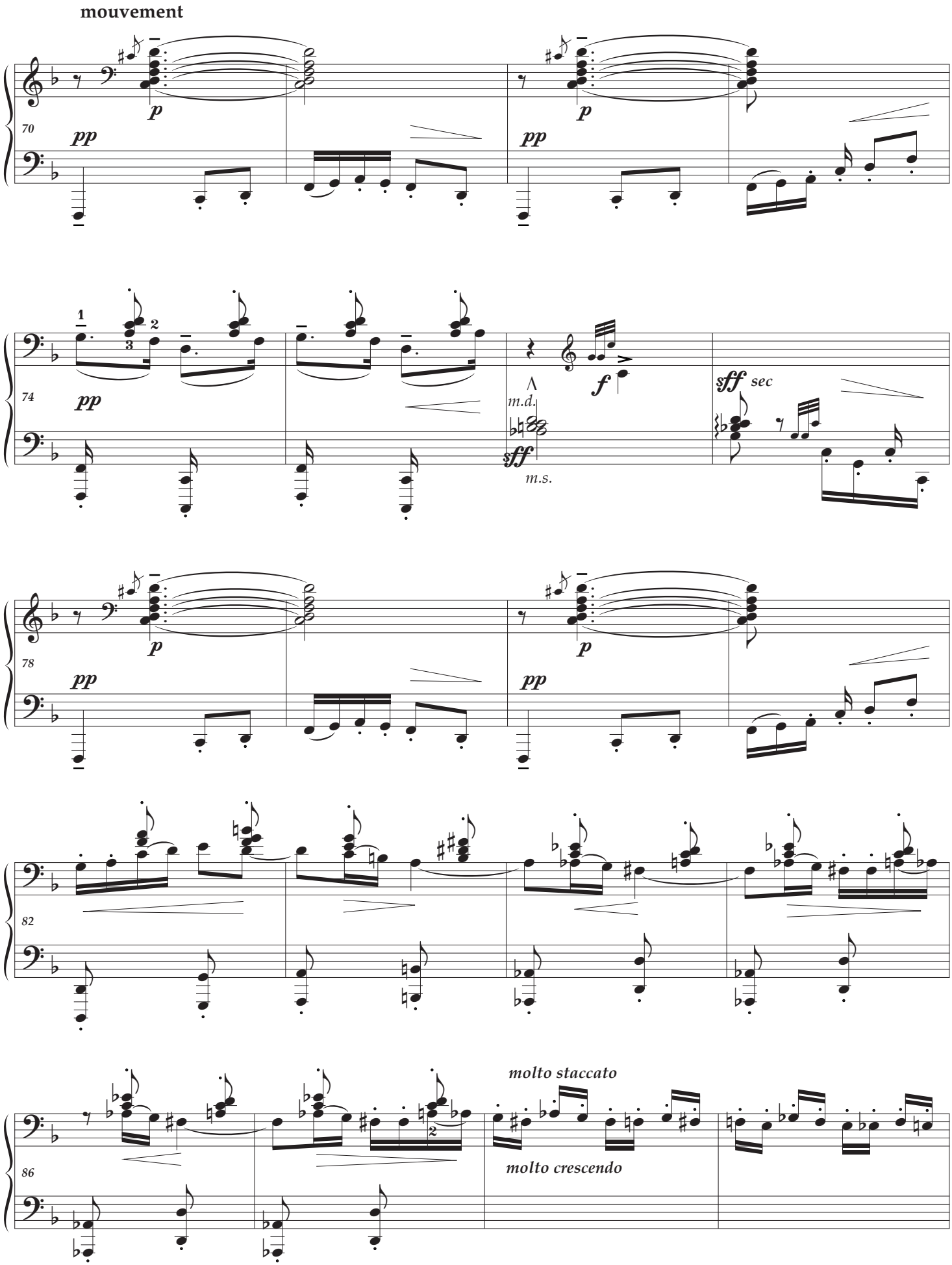
spirituel et discret

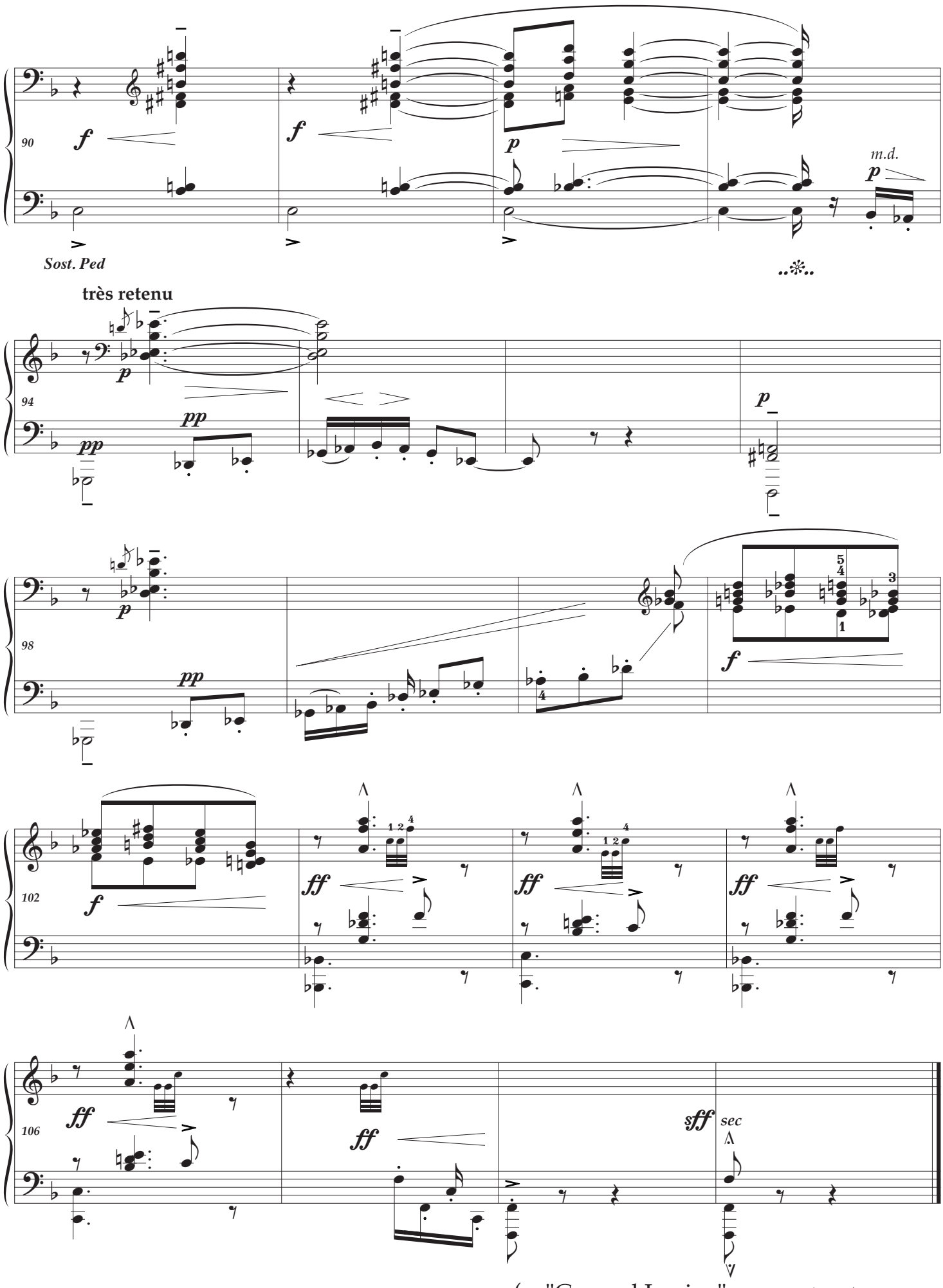



19
p
pp
p
pp
23
27
molto staccato
molto crescendo
31
f
f
p
p
m.d.
Sost. Ped


35
p
pp
p
pp
39
p
43
m.d.
m.s.
f
ff
traîné
m.s.
p
46
mouvement
p


50
f
p
54
pp
pp
traîné
m.d.
ff
m.s.
58
mouvement
p
62
f
f
66
très retenu
ff
f
3


mouvement
70
pp
p
74
1
2
3
m.d.
m.s.
f
sff
sec
78
82
86
molto staccato
molto crescendo



(... "General Lavine" — *eccentric* —)

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Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & French vocabulary

Duration: 3'

- In the first book of Preludes, the composer indicated some 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?
- **101-102** phrasing missing in the original
- **103-106** For an unusual effect, at the second quaver, Debussy writes the dotted crotchets to be held to the end of the bar, which is possible by replaying the missing notes silently and changing the pedal at the final quaver rest.

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strident	*strident*
sec	*abrupt*
spirituel et discret	*witty and understated*
traîné	*dragging*
très retenu	*seriously held back*