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BY FRANZ LISZT

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TEN
HUNGARIAN RHAPSODIES
FRANZ LISZT

EDITED BY

AUGUST SPANUTH AND JOHN ORTH

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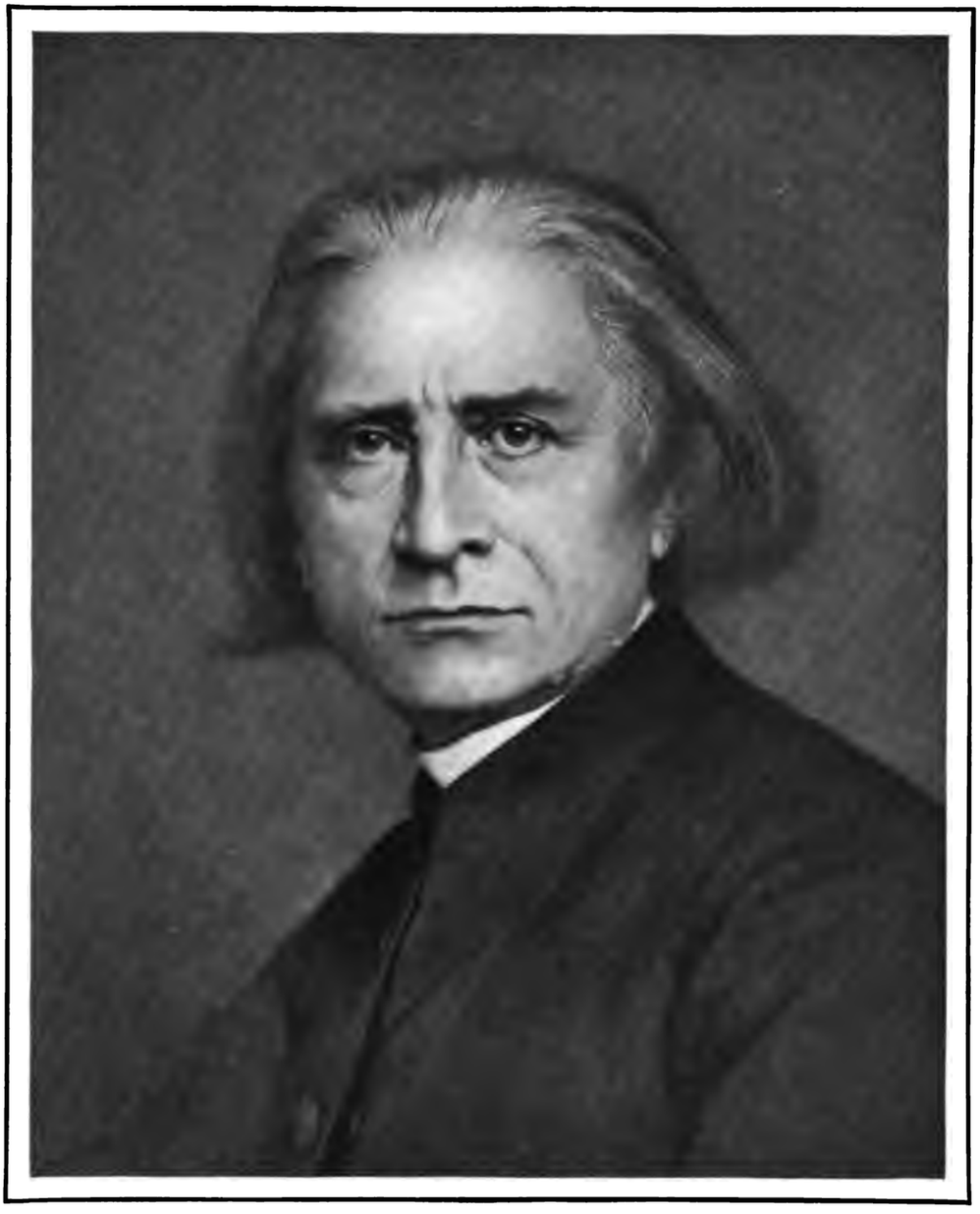

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FRANZ LISZT'S HUNGARIAN RHAPSODIES

FRANZ LISZT[1] was a nine year old boy when he left his native country, and fully two decades had elapsed before he revisited the place of his birth. This was in 1840; the child had become a man, "le petit Liszt" a world-renowned artist; but his country had also undergone an important change. Existing in political obscurity and indifference at the time of Liszt's childhood, the Magyars in the meantime had become restless and ambitious, and the national pride of Hungary was awakened. While the country could not yet boast of brilliant results, political or otherwise, the errant knight of Hungary, the unique Franz Liszt, had conquered what he had set out to do just twenty years before.

One could not have blamed Liszt if his Parisian successes had spoiled him for his native country, so remote from the great musical world; but, no, all the glory of an international career had not been able to extirpate his patriotic devotion. When, in Vienna, he heard the details of Hungary's political struggles, he felt a burning desire to see the land of his birth again. After some unavoidable postponements he went, aiming not so much at new artistic successes, as to prove his loyalty to his old compatriots.

The story of his reception at Pressburg and Pesth is unexampled. Never before, nor after, have such demonstrations of enthusiasm, in which the whole population and the authorities partook, been shown to a musician or any other artist. Liszt responded by assigning nearly all the receipts of his numerous concerts in Hungary to various charitable purposes. All the banquets, balls and other festivities were dictated by patriotic, as well as artistic sentiments; and yet when we read some of the addresses, when we consider that he was given a magnificent sword and that the right of "honorary burgher" of Pesth and other cities was bestowed upon him, we cannot help wondering how such honors could have been prompted as the fitting reward for a brilliant piano virtuoso. Even after making an allowance for the impulsive nature of the Hungarian people, merely musical enthusiasm could never fully account for such boundless demonstrations. Patriotic pride had a hand in it. The thought that he, to whom the whole musical world looked up as a miracle, was a son of the country drove the warm-blooded Hungarians into a frenzy of enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, Liszt's somewhat sudden devotion to his native country might have aroused suspicion as being affected. He did not speak a syllable of the Hungarian language, for, during the time of his childhood, German had been the idiom of the educated people around Oedenburg, and in fact at most parts of the country. When Liszt had to respond to a toast in which his patriotism was praised in glowing terms, he asked the indulgence of the guests for answering "in the French tongue," though "from an Hungarian heart." Moreover, at that time, in 1840, he had only just begun to realize the great artistic possibilities of the Hungarian music. He had played some Hungarian music in his concerts at Vienna, but these were Schubert's compositions. The public, however, in deep ignorance of many of Schubert's treasures, believed them Liszt's own. None of his rhapsodies were written or even conceived at this time, except that he may have improvised occasionally on the one or other Hungarian theme which he later used in their composition. It is known that in Pesth he improvised on the Rákóczy March, and it goes without saying that with his spirited performance the people became frantic. Such proofs of his Hungarian blood were con-

[1] *A biographical sketch of Liszt will be found in the introduction to "Twenty Original Piano Compositions by Franz Liszt" in The Musicians Library.*

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vincing, and his many charitable deeds accomplished the rest.

After this memorable visit to his native country Liszt freely submitted to the influence of the gipsy music. The catholicity of his musical taste, due to his very sensitive and receptive nature as well as his cosmopolitan life, would have enabled him to usurp the musical characteristics of any nation, no matter how uncouth, and work wonders with them. His versatility and resourcefulness in regard to form seemed to be inexhaustible, and he would certainly have been able to write some interesting fantasias on Hungarian themes had his affection for that country been only acquired instead of inborn. Fortunately his heart was in the task, and Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* not only rank among his most powerful and convincing works, but must also be counted as superior specimens of national music in general. It does not involve an injustice towards Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert, who occasionally affected Hungarian peculiarities in their compositions, to state that it was Liszt who with his rhapsodies and kindred compositions started a new era of Hungarian music. "Tunes" which heretofore served to amuse a motley crowd at the czardas on the "Puszta" have through Liszt been successfully introduced into legitimate music. And most wonderful of all, he has not hesitated to preserve all the drastic and coarse effects of the gipsy band without ever leaning towards vulgarity. Who, before Franz Liszt, would have dreamed of employing cymbal-effects in legitimate piano playing? Liszt, such is the power of artistic transfiguration, imitates the cymbal to perfection and yet does not mar the illusion of refinement; while, on the other hand, the cymbal as a solo instrument must still impress us as primitive and rude. Liszt did not conceive the Hungarian music with his outer ear alone, as most of his numerous imitators did. They caught but the outline, some rhythmical features and some stereotyped ornaments; but Liszt was able to penetrate to the very source of it, he carried the key to its secret in his Hungarian temperament.

To speak of Hungarian folksongs is hardly permissible since a song includes the words as well as the music. Hungary is a polyglot country, and a song belonging through its words, as well as its notes, to the vast majority of the inhabitants is therefore an impossibility. The Magyars, of course, claim to be the only genuine Hungarians, and since they settled there almost a thousand years ago and are still indisputably the dominating race of the country, their claim may remain uncontested. Even the fact that the Magyars are but half of the total of a strange mixture, made up of heterogeneous elements, would not necessarily render invalid any pretension that their songs are the genuine Hungarian songs. But the proud Magyar will admit that Hungarian music is first and foremost gipsy music, Hungarian gipsy music. How much the Magyars have originally contributed to this music does not appear to be clear. Perhaps more research may lead to other results, but the now generally accepted conjecture gives the rhythmic features to the Magyars and the characteristic ornaments to the gipsies. It will probably not be denied that this presumption looks more like a compromise than the fruit of thorough scientific investigation. Furthermore, rhythm and ornaments are in Hungarian music so closely knit that it seems incomprehensible that they should have originated as characteristic features of two races so widely divergent. If this is so, however, we may hope that out of our own negro melodies and the songs of other elements of our population real American folk-music will yet after centuries develop, though it is to be feared that neither the negroes nor other inhabitants of the United States will be in a position to preserve sufficient naïveté, indispensable for the production of real folk-music. Otherwise the analogon is promising, the despised gipsy taking socially about the same position in Hungary as our own negro here.

The Hungarian music as known to-day will impress everybody as a unit; so much so that its restrictions are obvious, and likely to produce a monotonous effect if too much of it is offered. Above all, this music is purely instrumental and therefore different from all other folk-music. It is

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based, though not exclusively, on a peculiar scale, the harmonic minor scale with an augmented fourth. Some commentators read this scale differently by starting at the dominant. Thus it appears as a major scale with a diminished second and a minor sixth, a sort of major-minor mode. The latter scale can be found on the last page of Liszt's *Fifteenth Rhapsody*, where it runs from *a* to *a*, thus: *a*, *b* flat, *c* sharp, *d*, *e*, *f*, *g* sharp and *a*. But for every scale of this construction a dozen of the former may be gathered in the *Rhapsodies*. While the notes are identical in both, the effect upon the ear is different, according to the starting note, just as the descending melodic minor scale is *de facto* the same as the relative major scale, but not in its effect. The austerity and acidity of the altered harmonic minor scale is the chief characteristic of the melodious and harmonic elements of Hungarian music. Imbued with a plaintive and melancholy flavor this mode will always be recognized as the gipsy kind. To revel in sombre melodies seems to be one half of the purpose of Hungarian music, and in logical opposition a frolicsome gayety the other half. In the regular czardas, a rustic dance at the wayside inn on the Puszta, the melancholy *lassan* alternates in well-proportioned intervals with the extravagant and boisterous *friska*. The rhythm may be said to be a sort of spite-rhythm, very decisive in most cases, but most of the time in syncopation. This rhythm proves conclusively that the origin of Hungarian music is instrumental, for even in cantabile periods, where the melody follows a more dreamy vein, the syncopations are seldom missing in the accompaniment. At every point one is reminded that the dance was father to this music, a dance of unconventional movements where the dancer seems to avoid the step which one expected him to take, and instead substitutes a queer but graceful jerk. Where actual jerks in the melody would be inopportune, the ornaments are at hand and help to prevent every semblance of conventionality.

Liszt, of course, has widened the scope of these ornamental features considerably. His fertility in applying such ornaments to each and every musical thought he is spinning is stupendous. In all his nineteen rhapsodies—the *Twentieth Rhapsody* is still in manuscript—the style, form, constructive idea and application of these ornaments are different, but every one is characteristic not only of Hungarian music in general, but of the rhapsody in particular.

Both the syncopated rhythm and the rich ornamentation which naturally necessitate a frequent tempo rubato help to avoid the monotony which might result from the fact that Hungarian music moves in even rhythm only. Four-quarter and two-quarter time prevail throughout, while three-quarter and six-eight do not seem to fit in the rhythmic design of Hungarian music. Attempts have been made to introduce uneven rhythm, but they were not successful. Where three-quarter and similar rhythm appears, the Hungarian spirit evaporates. Much more variety is available regarding the tempo, the original *lassan* and *friska* not being indispensable. A moderate and graceful *allegretto* is frequently used by Liszt, and he also graduates the speed of the brilliant finales as well as the languor of the introductions of his *Rhapsodies*.

If some observers find too much of a "pose" in Hungarian music, they will find the same "pose" in the Hungarian people. If they are all the time posing, they are certainly not "poseurs" in the common meaning of the word. The gipsy fiddler does not intend to hide his feelings and subdue their expression in his music; on the contrary, he seems to be unconsciously proud of his ability to let the whole world know through his fiddle what sorrows and joys habitate his bosom. There is nothing affected in this, for his feelings are real, not imagined. If there really is any "pose" connected with the manner in which the gipsy gives way to his feelings in music, it is the manner of the unaffected child that has not learned to control and disguise his emotions. Nor is the Magyar wont to restrain his feelings in ordinary life; he is not ashamed of them, and conventionality does not impose upon him to "smile through tears," or to politely conceal his reckless joy. When in a pathetic mood he will not think it necessary to

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withhold his tears for any æsthetic reason, nor will he approve of moderation in his noisy utterances when in his rage or mirth. His music, however, is nothing if not the true reflection of his mode and conception of life.

But this strange and rich music existed only in fragmentary bits of improvisation, heard here and there, subjected to many variants, and wholly free of strict rules of form and construction. To use some of these bits as thematic material for a movement of symphonic form, as Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert did, would have been of little consequence to Hungarian music in general. Liszt realized that the peculiarities of the gipsy music rendered it unmanageable for symphonic treatment, as has been proven by some compositions of the above-mentioned masters. Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert did not intend to write real Hungarian music; they only endeavored to introduce some of its spirit in their writings, and treated the gipsy themes very much like themes of their own invention. Liszt, however, had a different task in view; he was bound to make Hungarian music an independent and acknowledged factor in modern music. Not as a welcome stimulant for a weary fancy, not as spice for a form that otherwise might have died of sheer conventionality, did Liszt turn upon the gipsy music; but to rescue it for art by giving it a characteristic form to dwell in, a form all its own and filled with nothing but the ingredients of its best features.

And this form Liszt chose to call rhapsody, a happier name than which he could not have chosen. Rhapsodies indeed are these nineteen piano compositions, rhapsodic in their outbursts of passion and stretches of touching dolefulness. Like the bard who moves his listeners first to tears through the recital of a sombre legend and turns to a joyful story after having touched the heart, but binds both elements together with a latent string, so Liszt's *Rhapsodies* are groups of fragments of heterogeneous modes, united through hundreds of secret relations. There is a symmetry of content and form in all of them which becomes more apparent as soon as a virtuoso ventures to distort it by omitting a section or interpolating a portion of one rhapsody into the other. This symmetry is not so much the outcome of wise calculation and experienced judgment, but of the deeply rooted sympathy of the composer's musical nature to the Hungarian character.

Liszt wrote all these *Rhapsodies* after having abandoned the career of the travelling virtuoso. Most of them were composed in Weimar. Some of them he played in public, though only on rare occasions; for instance, he played the *Thirteenth Rhapsody* at a concert in London, only a few months before his death. The ten of the nineteen in print selected for the present volume are the best known of the *Rhapsodies*, each a representative member of this unique musical family. The *Second Rhapsody*, the first in this volume, is one of the most widely known pieces of music ever written. Aside from its musical merits it had the distinction of being the composition most dreaded by the master himself, when an insufficiently prepared pianist tried to play it for him at the Hofgärtnerei in Weimar. Strangely enough the principal subject of the dashing *Finale* is not an original Hungarian melody, but one can safely say that it is of Hungarian extraction. The *Sixth Rhapsody* is remarkable for the prevailing joyous mode, the melancholy section being a short one, sandwiched between a pungent *presto* and a jolly *allegro*. The *Eighth Rhapsody* has the peculiarity of starting off without any defined rhythm; only after the introductory measures does the composer state two quarters as the rhythm. The *Ninth Rhapsody* is subnamed by the composer *Le Carnaval de Pesth*, and the main theme of the first portion, the "sempre moderato a capriccio," is unmistakably of Italian character. However, when it reappears in the *Finale* it seems to have changed its character somewhat, the Hungarian deviltries having left their stamp on it. In its daring this interesting and quite extended rhapsody reminds one indeed of the carnival. The *Tenth* is comparatively simple, its main feature being the graceful glissando scales in ascending and descending direction. The *Eleventh* is one of the shortest rhapsodies, with a drawn-out introduction of changing modes and

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a very striking coda. It starts in A minor, but winds up in F sharp major. The popularity of the *Twelfth Rhapsody* is surpassed only by the *Second*. This is perhaps the most rhapsodic rhapsody, brimming over with a wealth of characteristic melodies. The *Thirteenth Rhapsody* consists of only two sections, an *andante* and a *vivace*. As hinted above, this rhapsody was a piece favored of the composer. The *Fourteenth* is very elaborate and quite long. There are splendid contrasts between the Funeral March at the beginning, the *Allegretto Zingarese* and the dizzy whirl of the *Finale*. Liszt has also arranged this rhapsody for piano with orchestral accompaniment. The *Fifteenth Rhapsody* is hardly a rhapsody in the true meaning of the word, but a rhapsodic treatment of the celebrated *Rákóczy March*.

For the convenience of concert-goers I have appended below a list of the orchestrated rhapsodies which to the confusion of many bear, with one exception, different numbers from the original piano set. In translating the piano rhapsodies into orchestral form, Liszt transposed four of the number, leaving two in their original keys.

Orchestrated Rhapsodies

No. 1. In F minor is No. 14 of the original piano set; the original key being preserved.
No. 2. Transposed to D minor from No. 12 in C sharp minor of the original piano set.
No. 3. Transposed to D major from No. 6 in D flat of the original set.
No. 4. Transposed to D minor from No. 2 in C sharp minor of the original set.
No. 5. In E minor is No. 5 of the original set, the original key being preserved.
No. 6. *Le Carnaval de Pesth*, transposed to D major from No. 9 in E flat of the original set.

New York, July, 1904.

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ADVICE TO THE PLAYER

Much could be said about the style in which Liszt's compositions ought to be performed, but it is difficult to give detailed and definite rules, for to be "exceptional" is one of the composer's chief characteristics. It may be said in general, however, that the performance should impress the hearer as a spontaneous and momentary inspiration of the player. To this end the player will have to treat the tempo in a somewhat elastic and liberal way, without falling into the abyss of a reckless *tempo rubato*. Liszt always hesitated to nail down the tempo through metronomic marks, and the editor of these volumes has desisted from adding them, because he is convinced that it would be absolutely wrong to make every player, regardless of temperament, sex, age, and technical ability, execute all these pieces in exactly the same tempo. A technically weak player will certainly get nearer to the intrinsic beauty of a difficult composition by Liszt when he moderates the tempo than when he rushes through the piece with unclean haste. Discretion, of course, must be exercised, and if the student lacks sufficient experience in musical æsthetics the teacher will have to decide the question of tempo. At the same time warning must be given against an over-indulgence in tempo-vacillations. This would spoil the artistic symmetry, so essential to all musical performances.

A certain freedom and impulsiveness in the employment of dynamic lights, shades, and accents may also be recommended in order to obtain the impression of a free improvisation. But again: discretion must not degenerate into license. Remember, those who heard Liszt in his younger years, at the height of his virtuoso career, tell us that he never "pounded" the piano.

More than ordinary care must be used in the treatment of the pedal. The pedal marks, as they are now in universal use, are sadly lacking in precision and variety. For the numerous orchestral effects in Liszt's piano compositions many nuances of pedalling are required—so many in fact that it would seem wholly impracticable to mark them in the score. There are various gradations in releasing the damper pedal. There must be discrimination between a sudden and a hesitating release, and a peculiar treatment is necessary to carry over a single melody-note from one chord to another. It is plain, therefore, that so many pedal marks of different character would rather irritate than help the player. Furthermore, the acoustic effect of the pedal is different on the different makes of pianos, as it is on grands and on uprights. Let the player bear in mind, therefore, that the ordinary pedal marks have many different meanings, and in case of doubt let him appeal to his ear.

THE EDITOR.

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TEN HUNGARIAN RHAPSODIES
BY FRANZ LISZT

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To Count Ladislaus Teleky

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY № 2

Edited and fingered by
John Orth

(Published in 1851)

FRANZ LISZT

Lento a capriccio

PIANO

f marcato

poco rit.

più rit.

LASSAN

Andante mesto

l'accompagnamento pesante

cresc.

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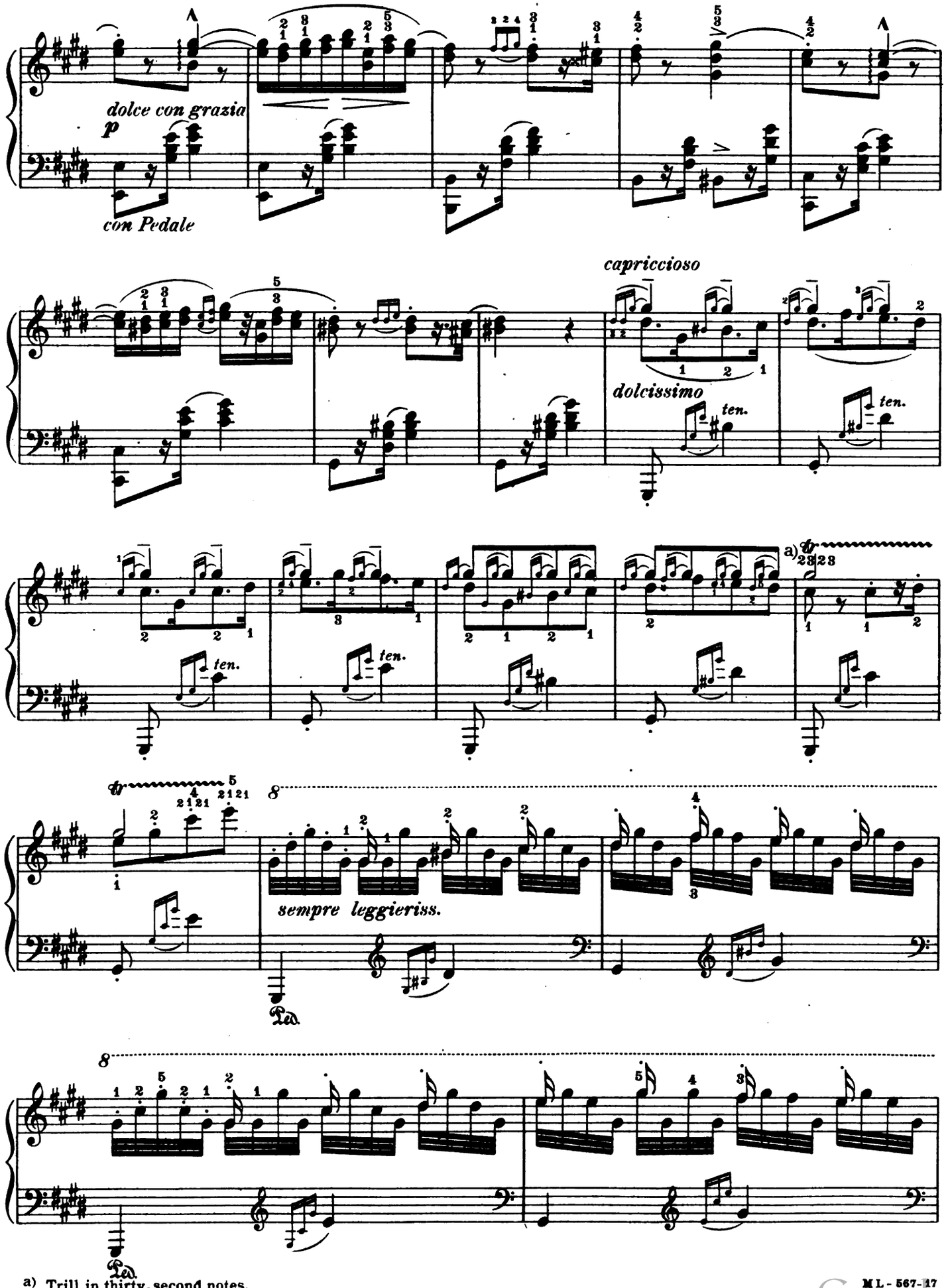

a) Trill in thirty-second notes.

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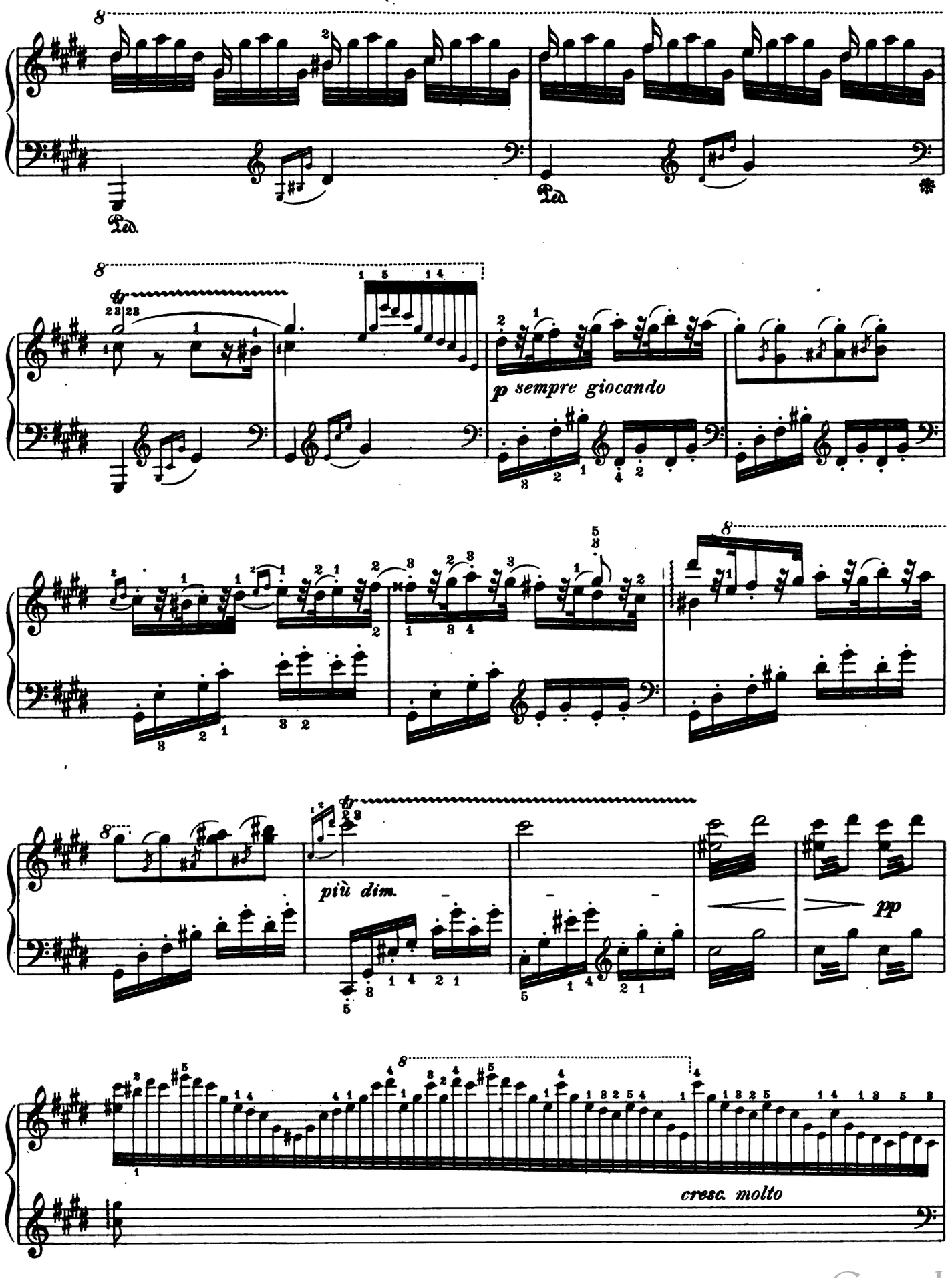

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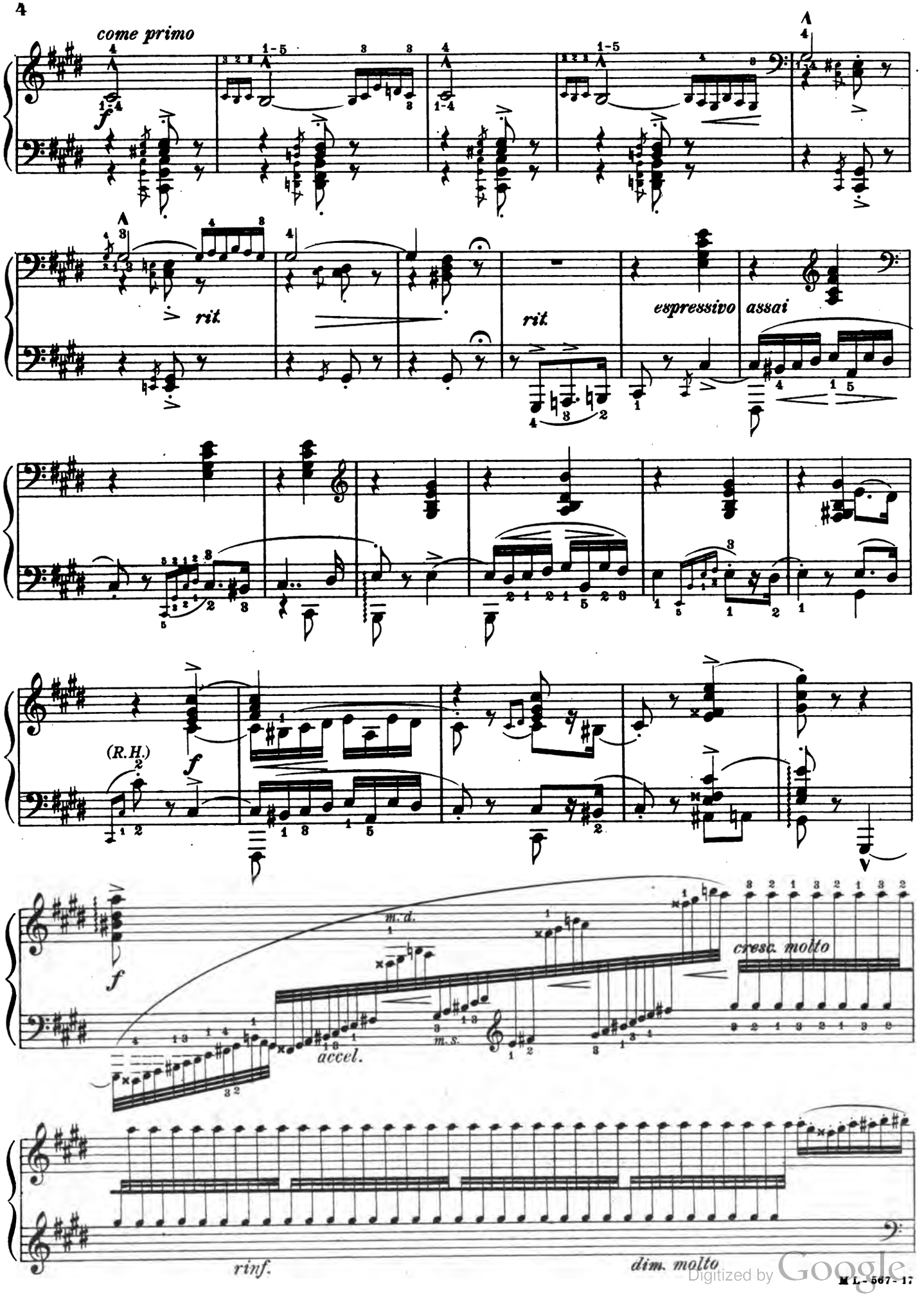

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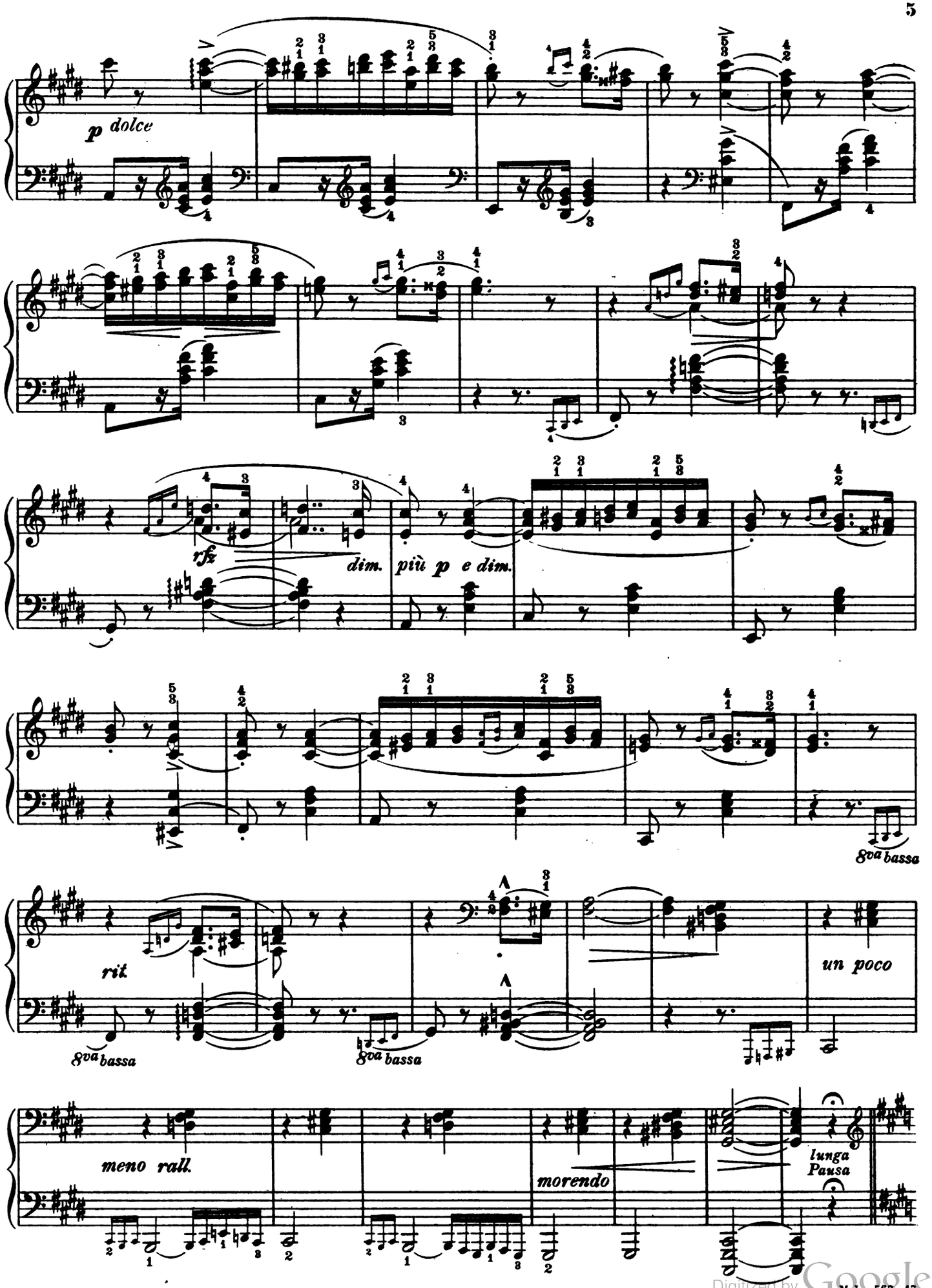

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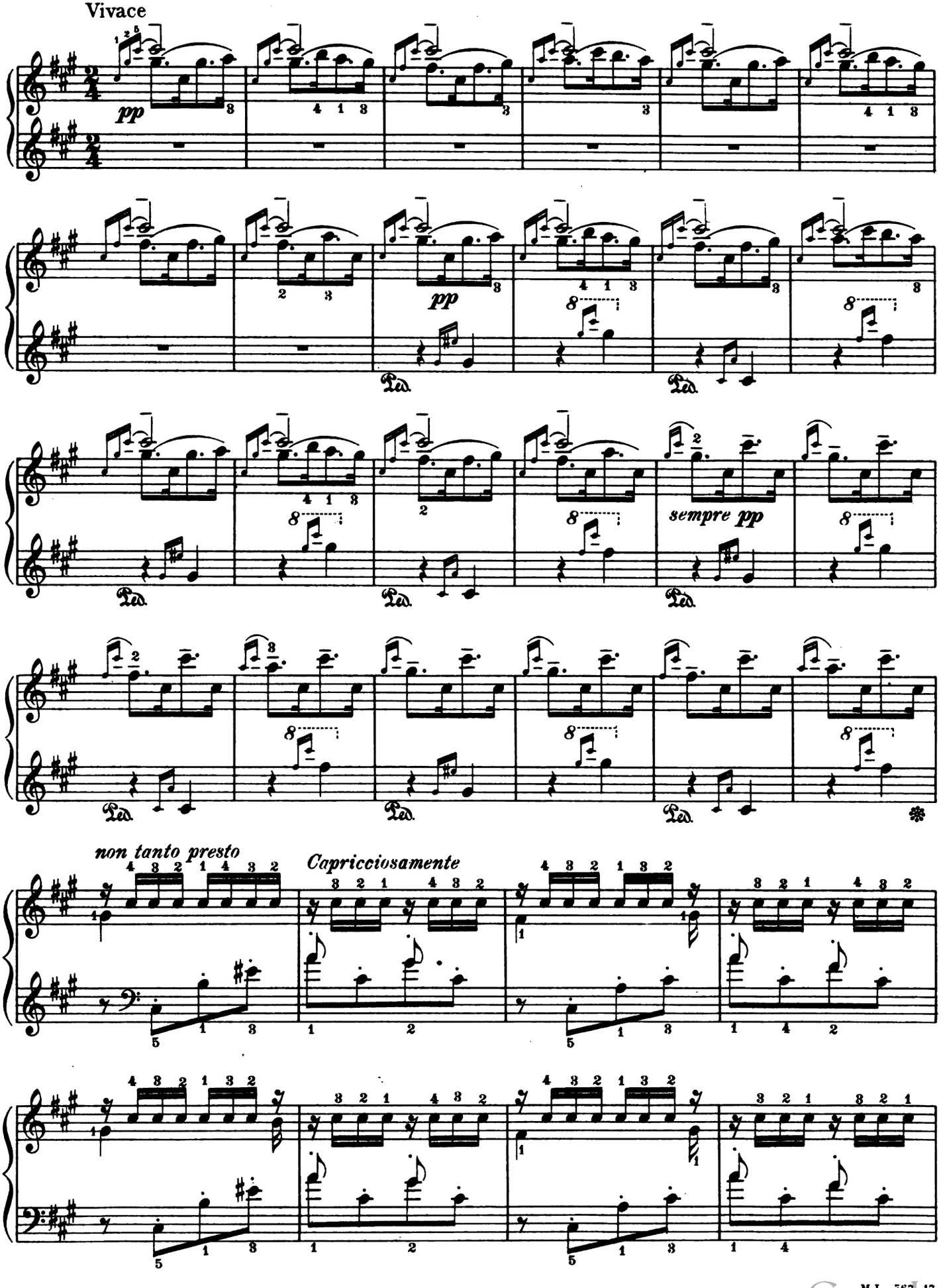

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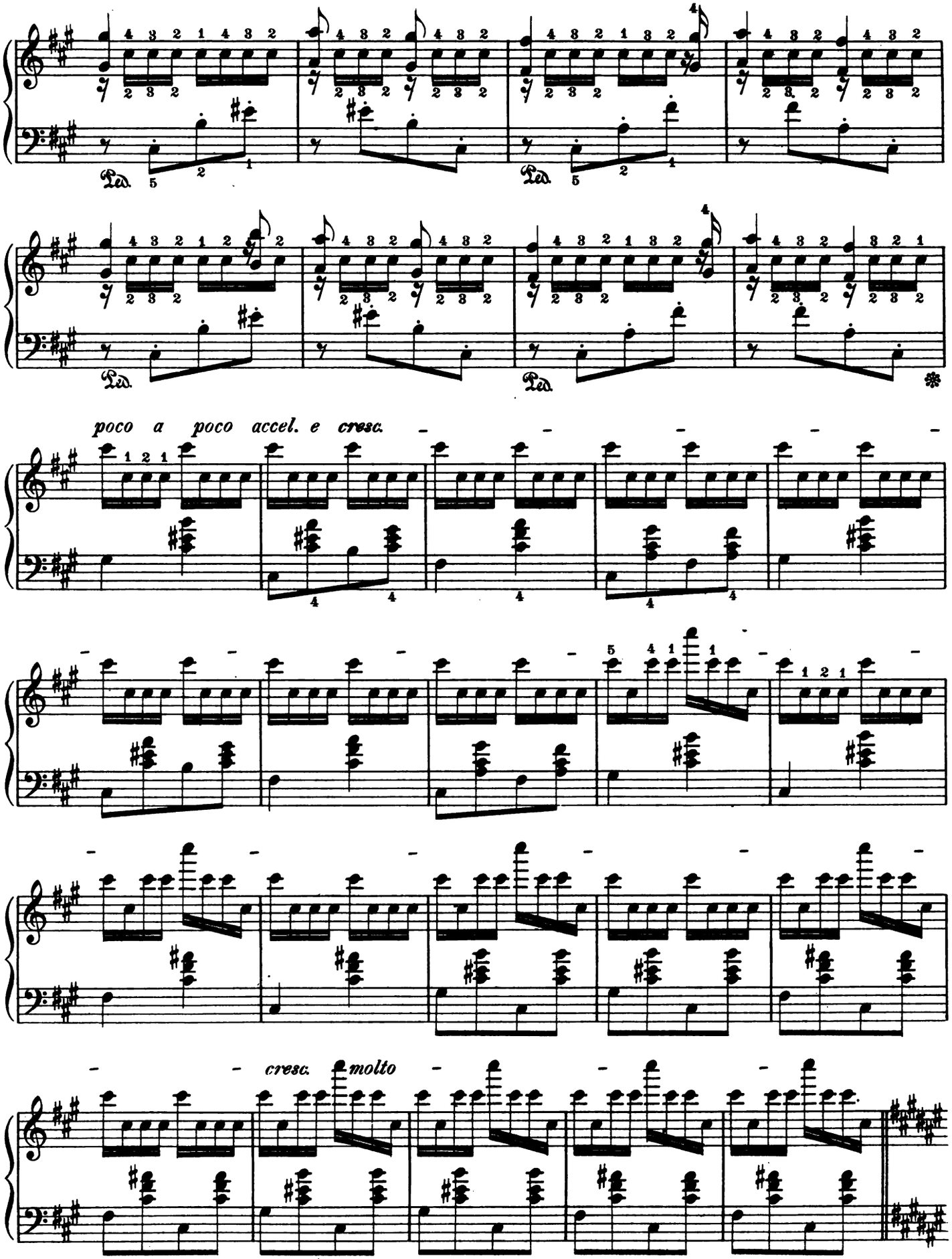

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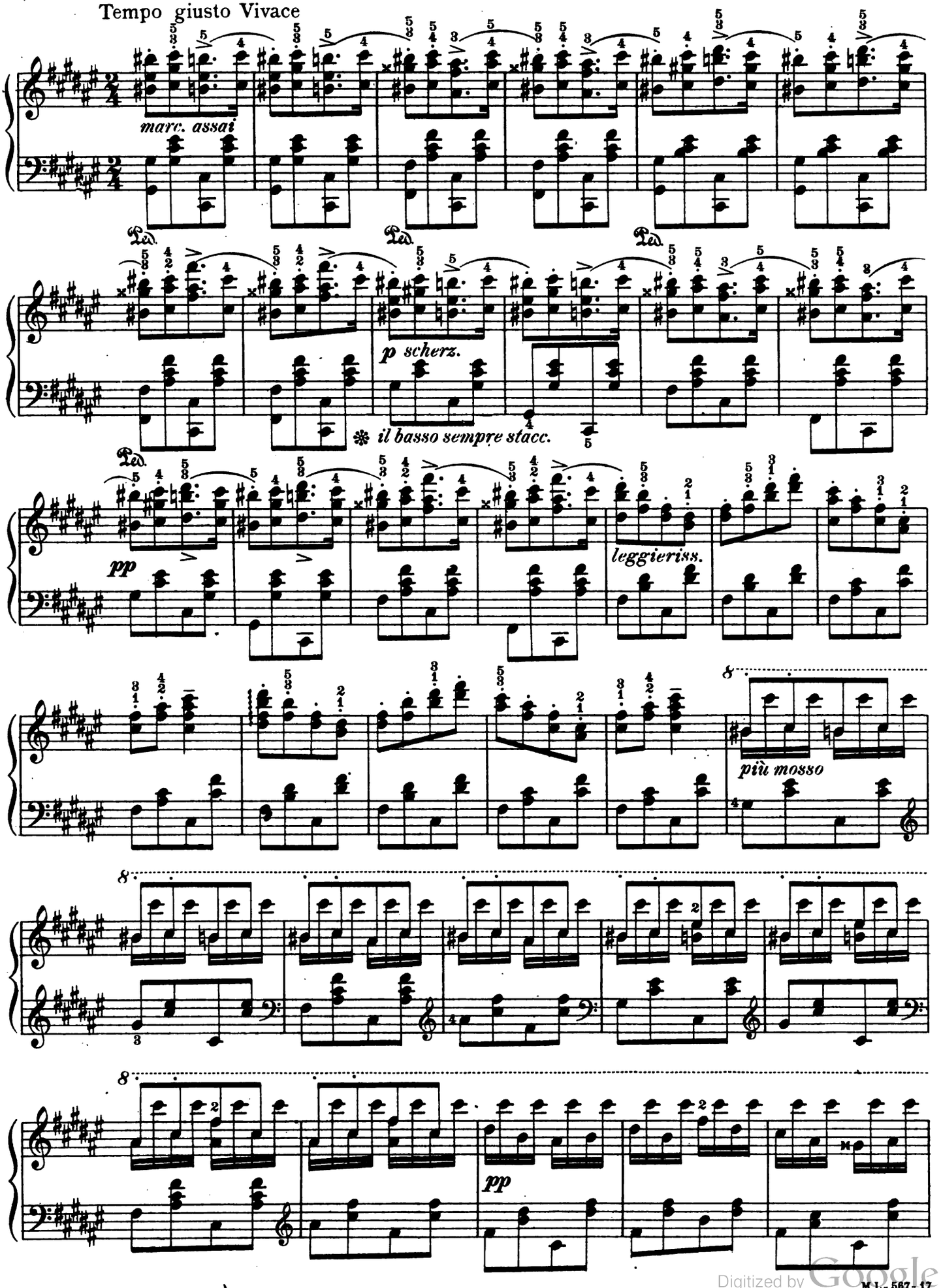

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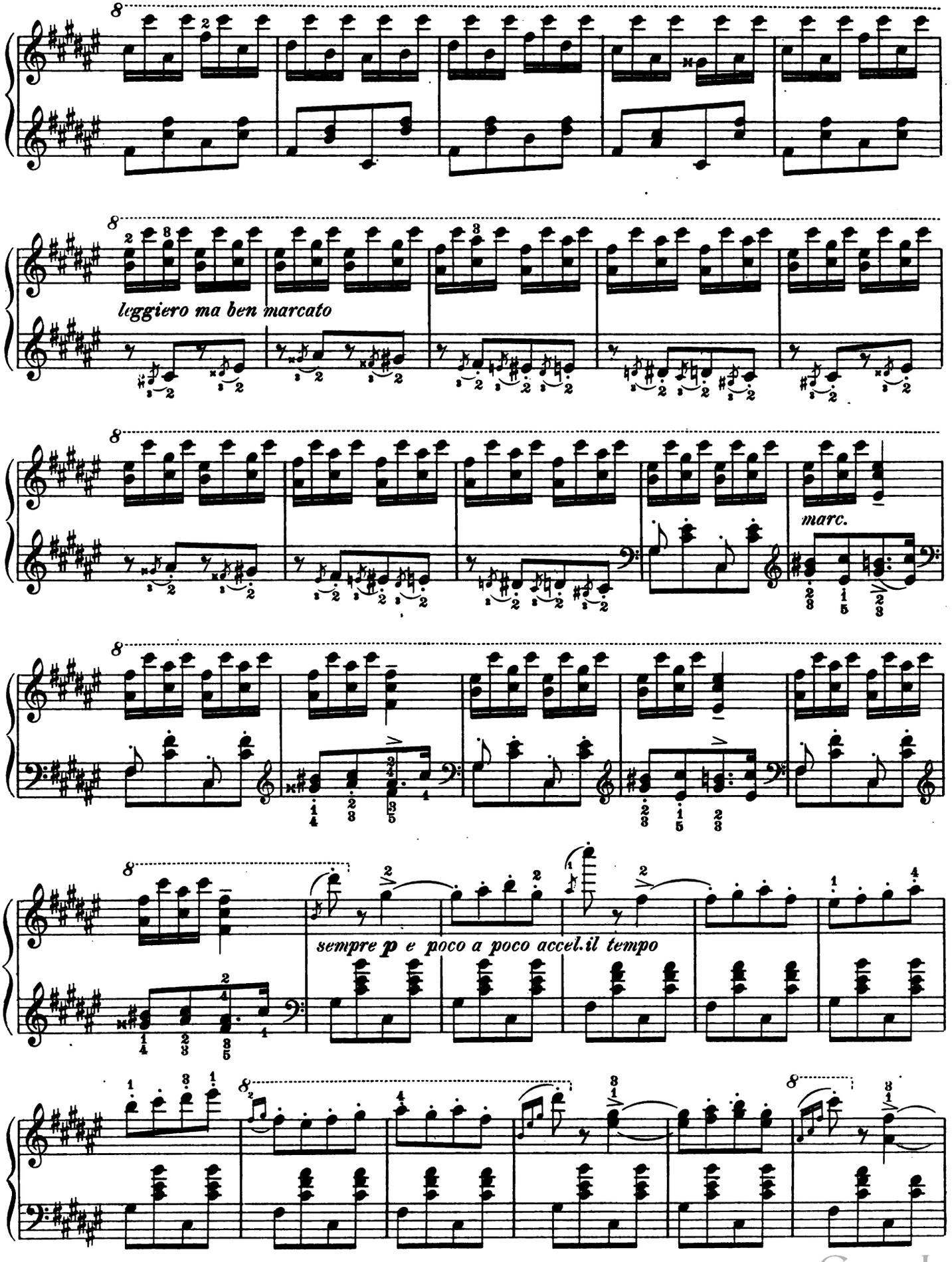

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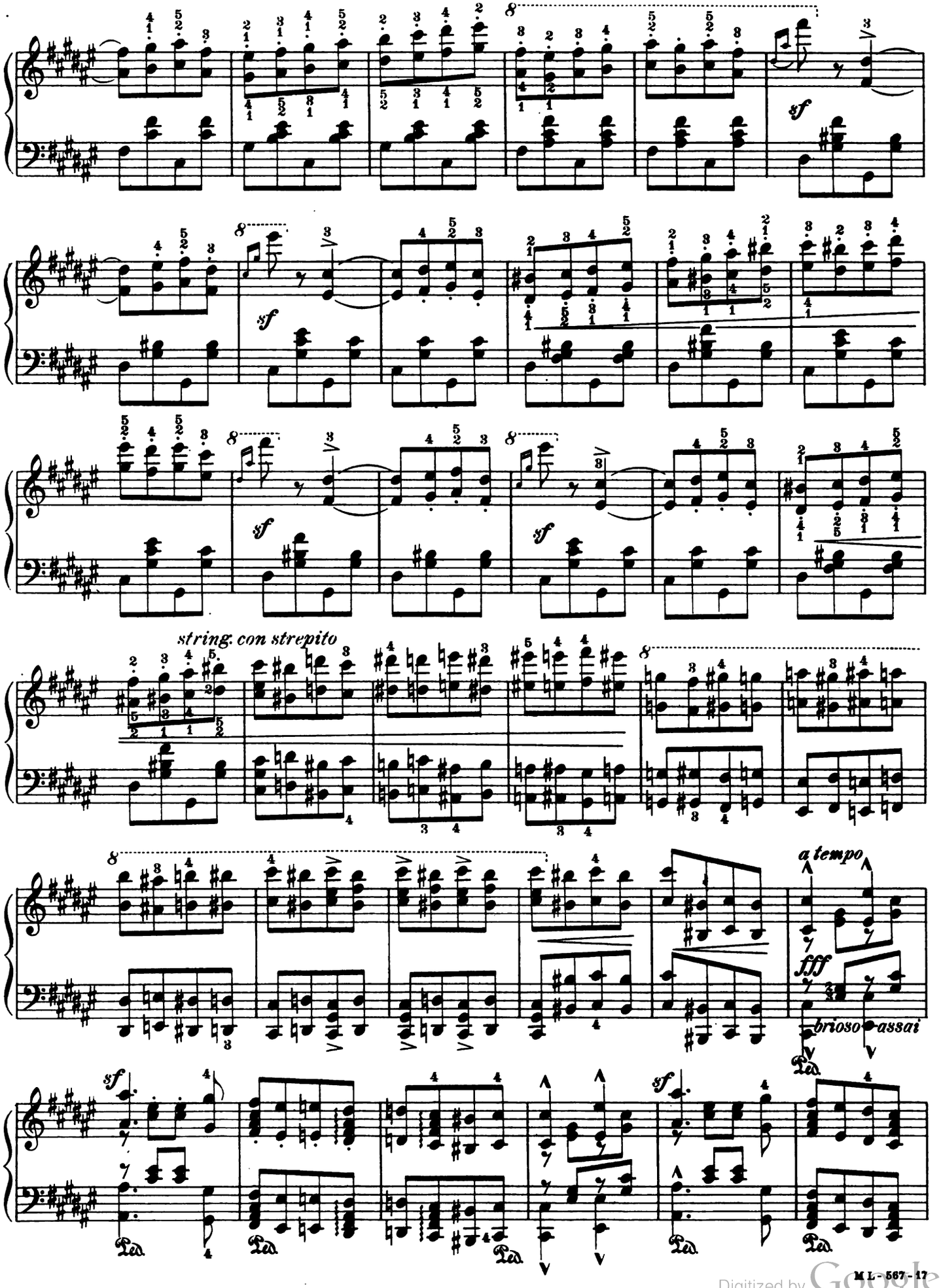

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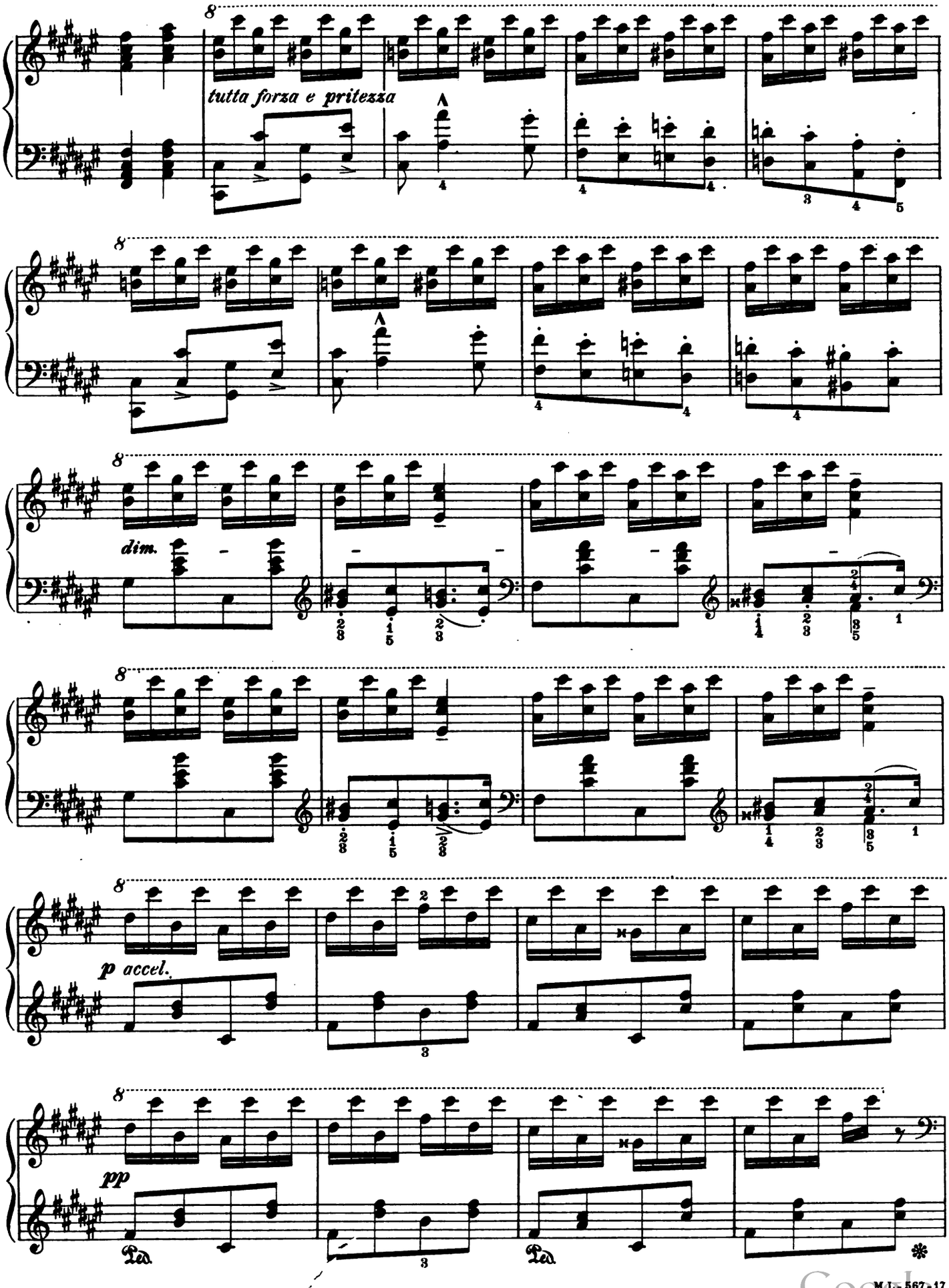

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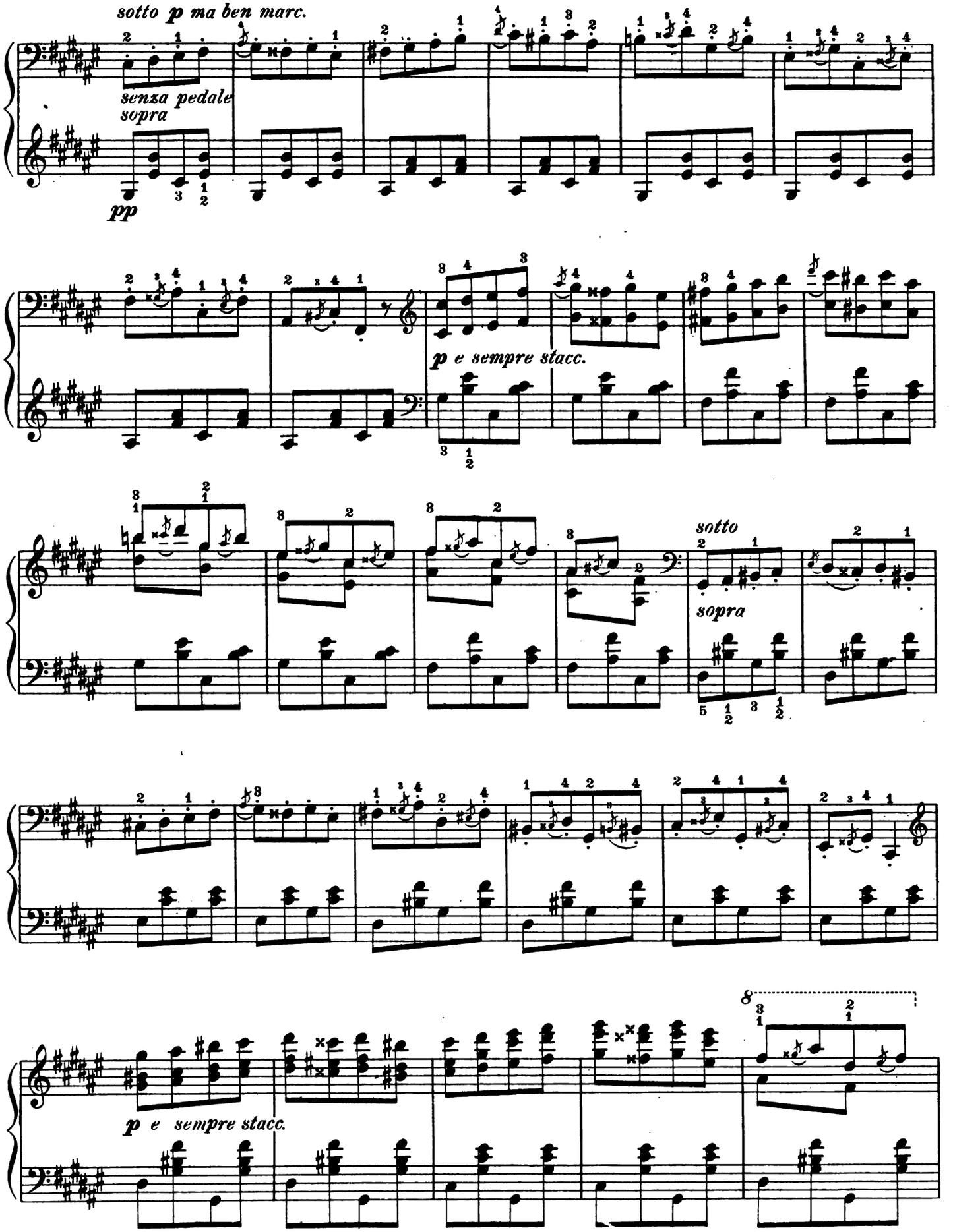

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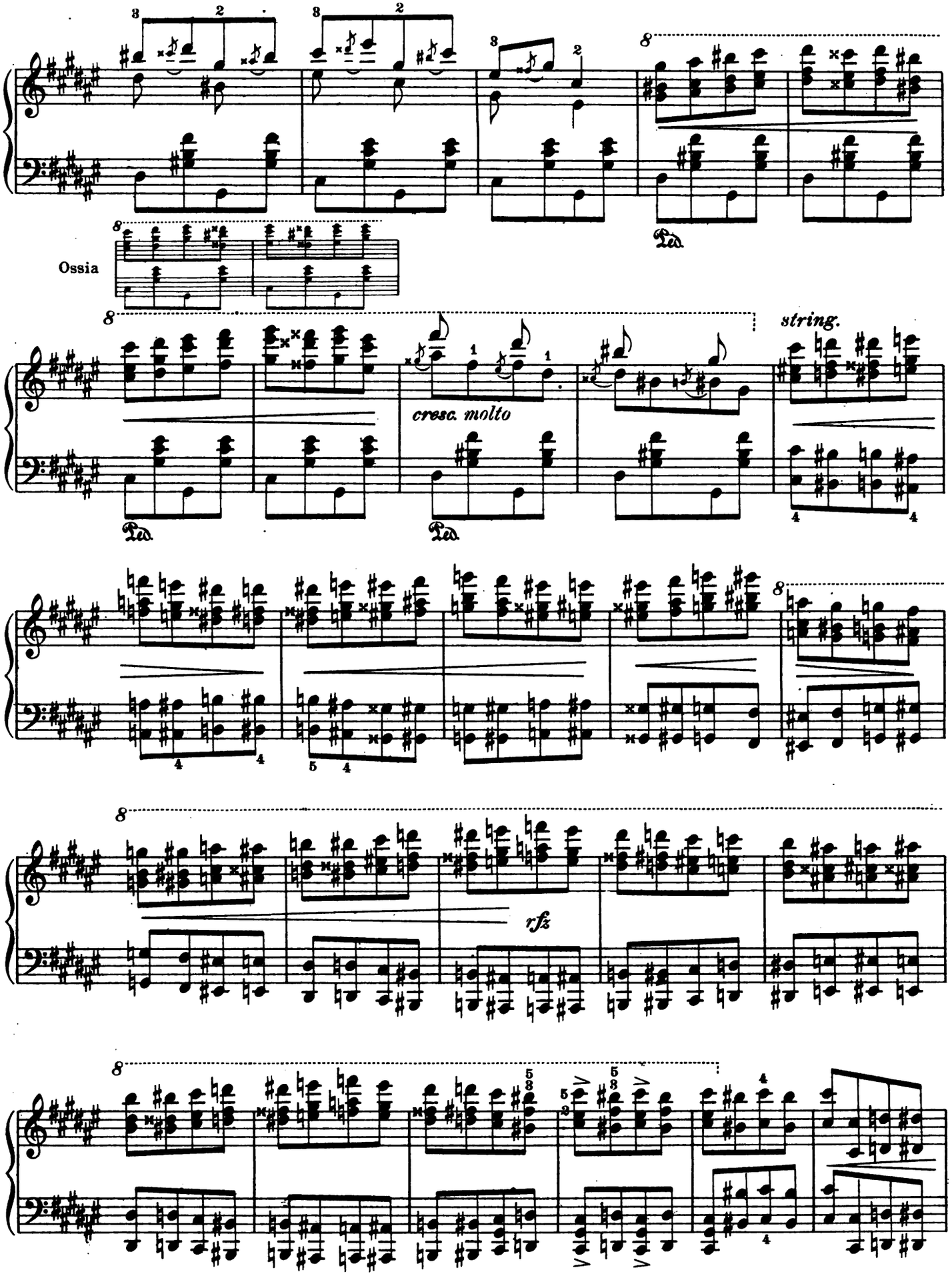

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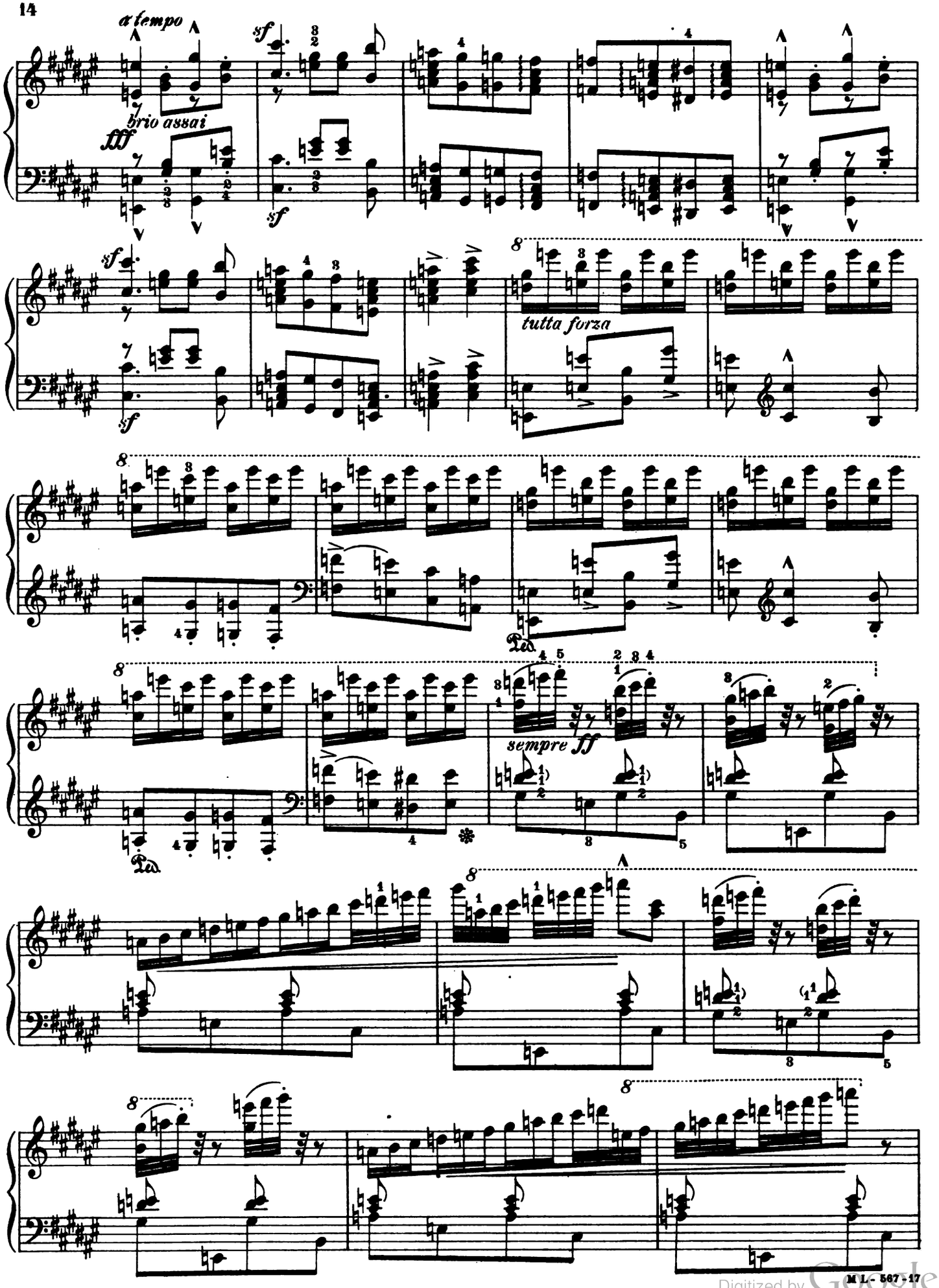

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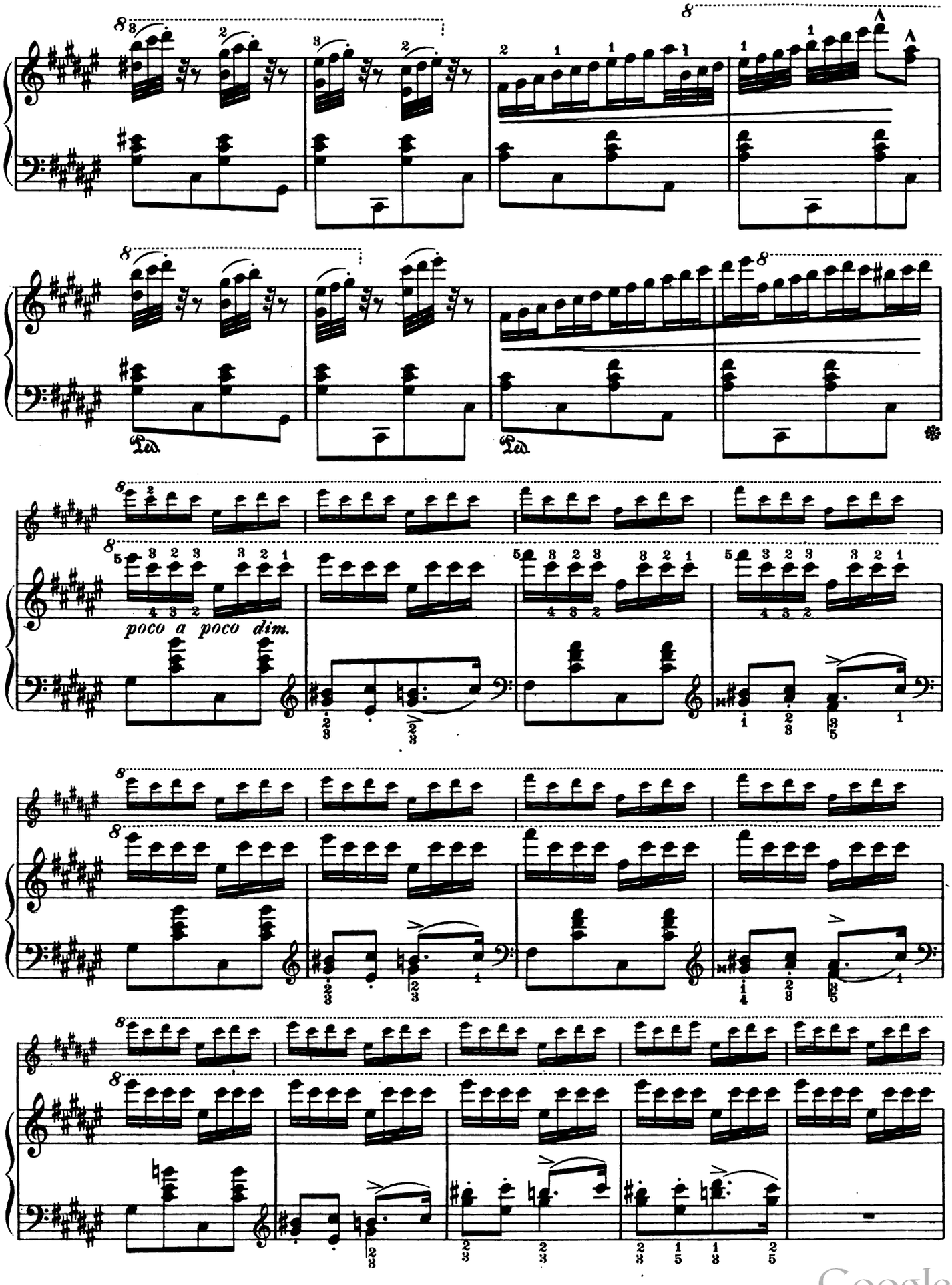

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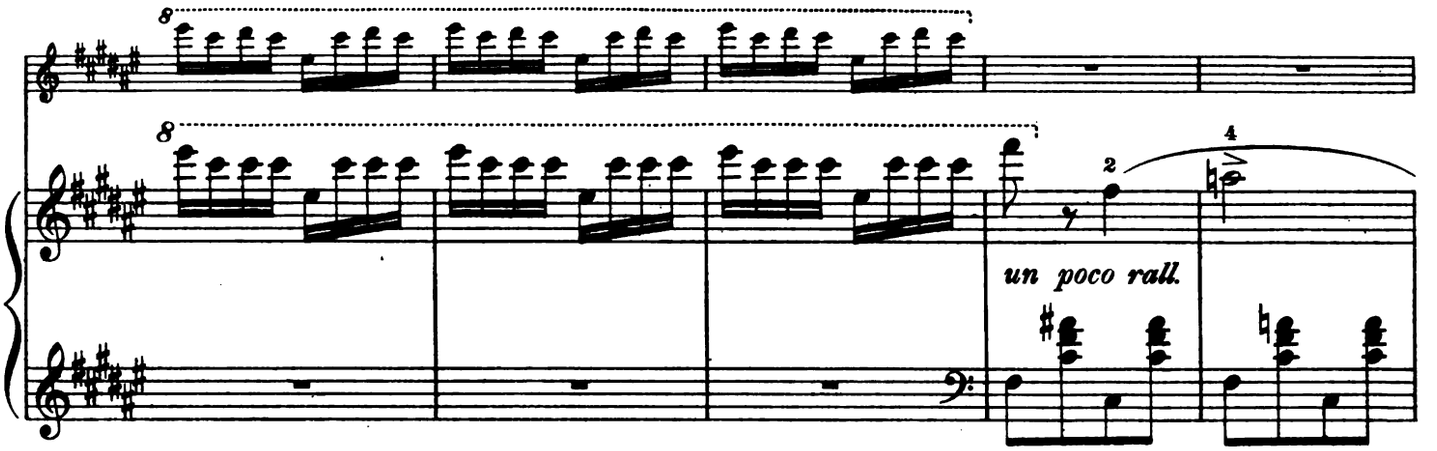

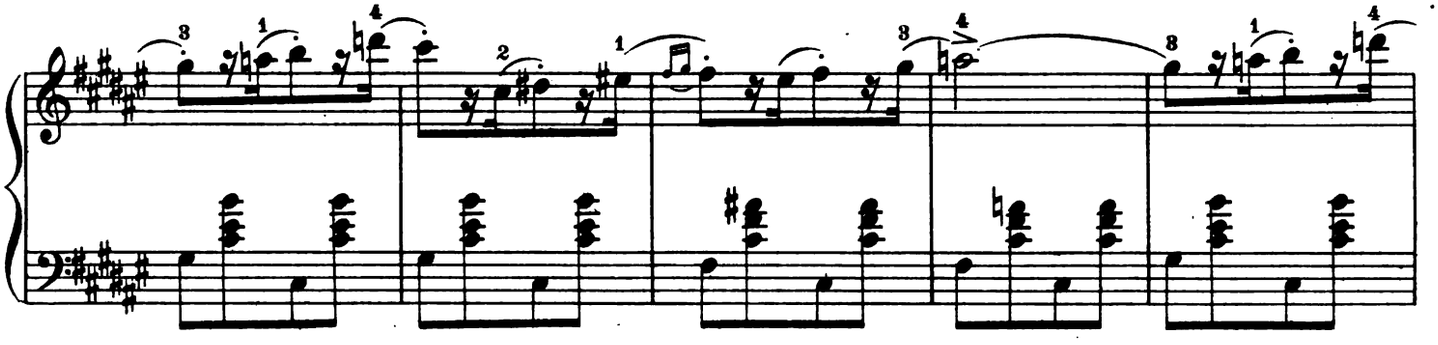

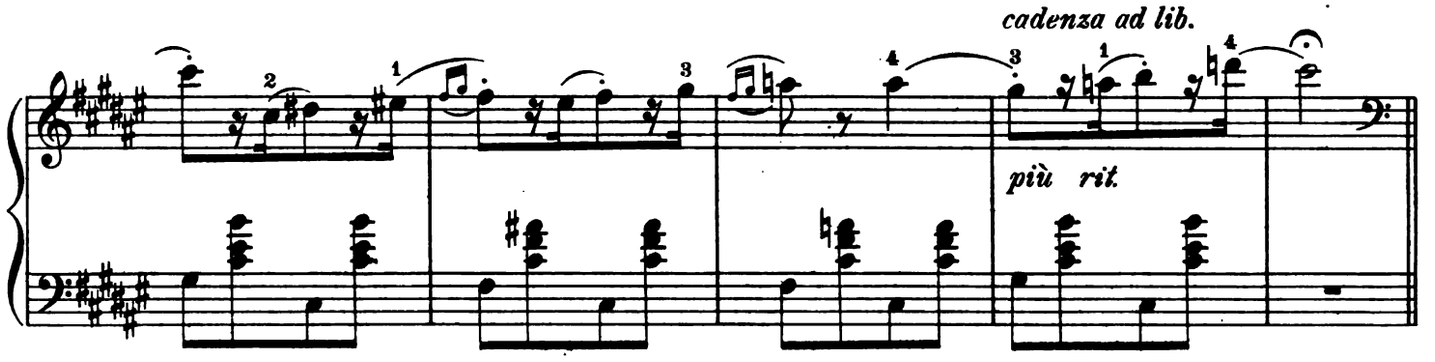

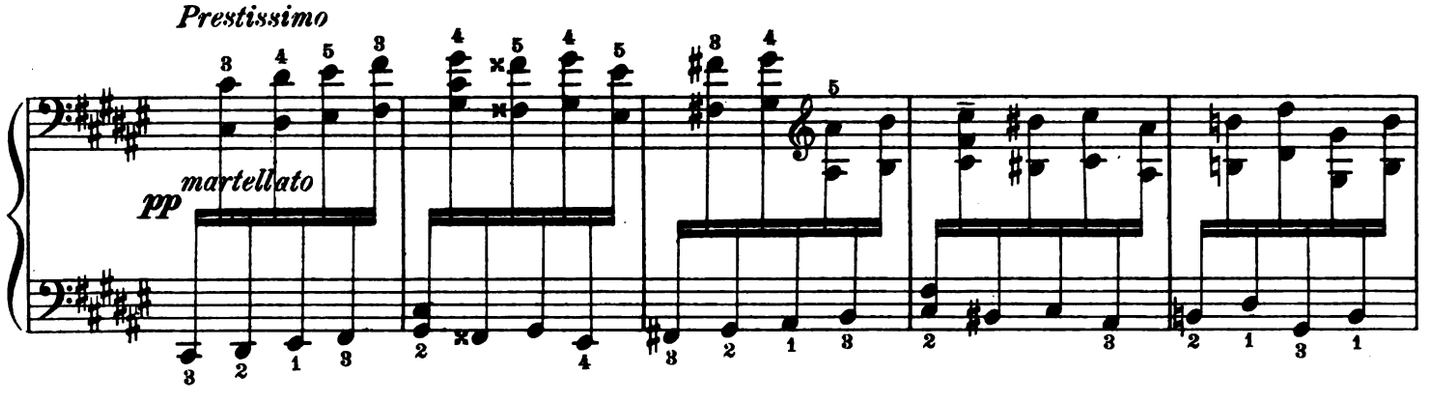

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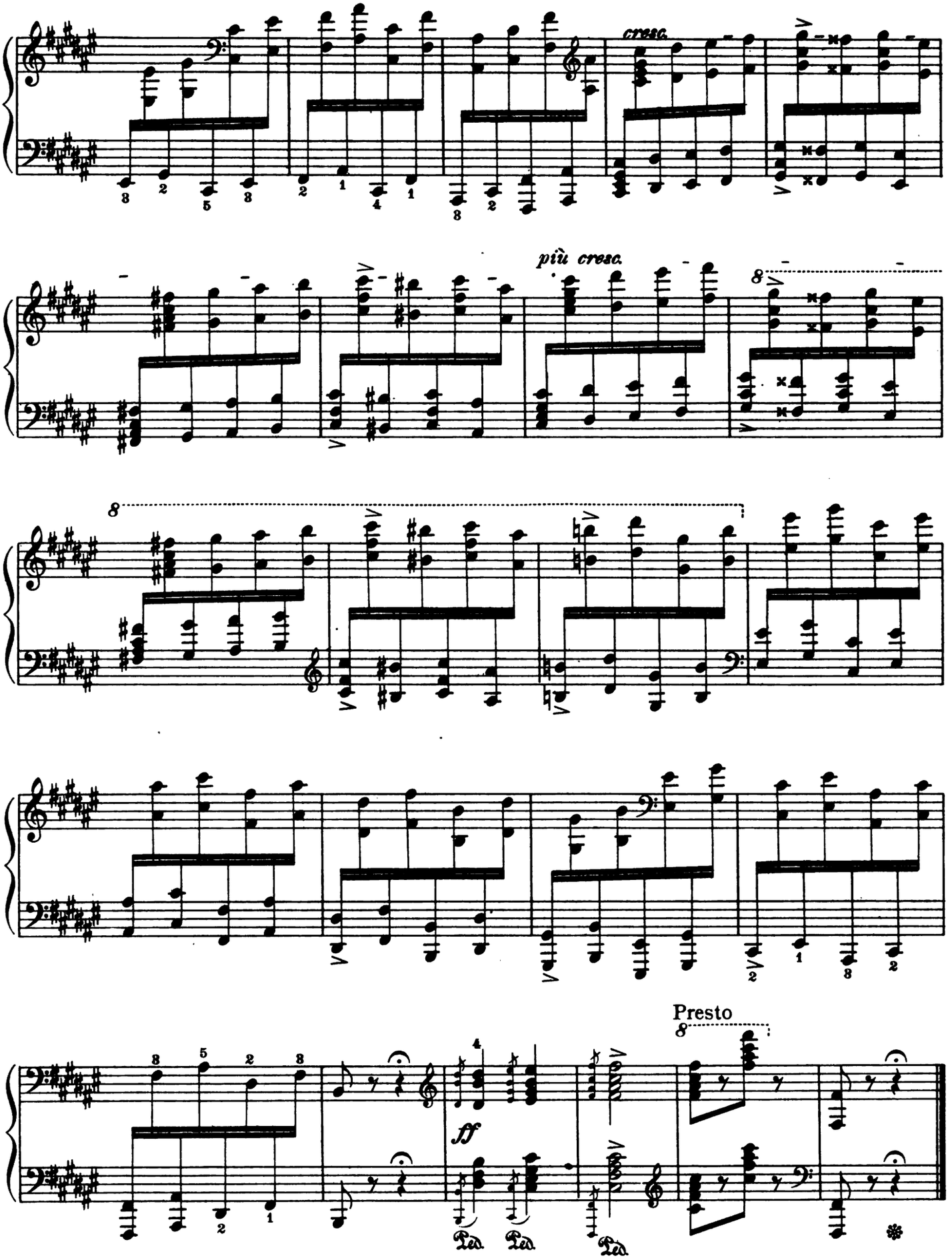

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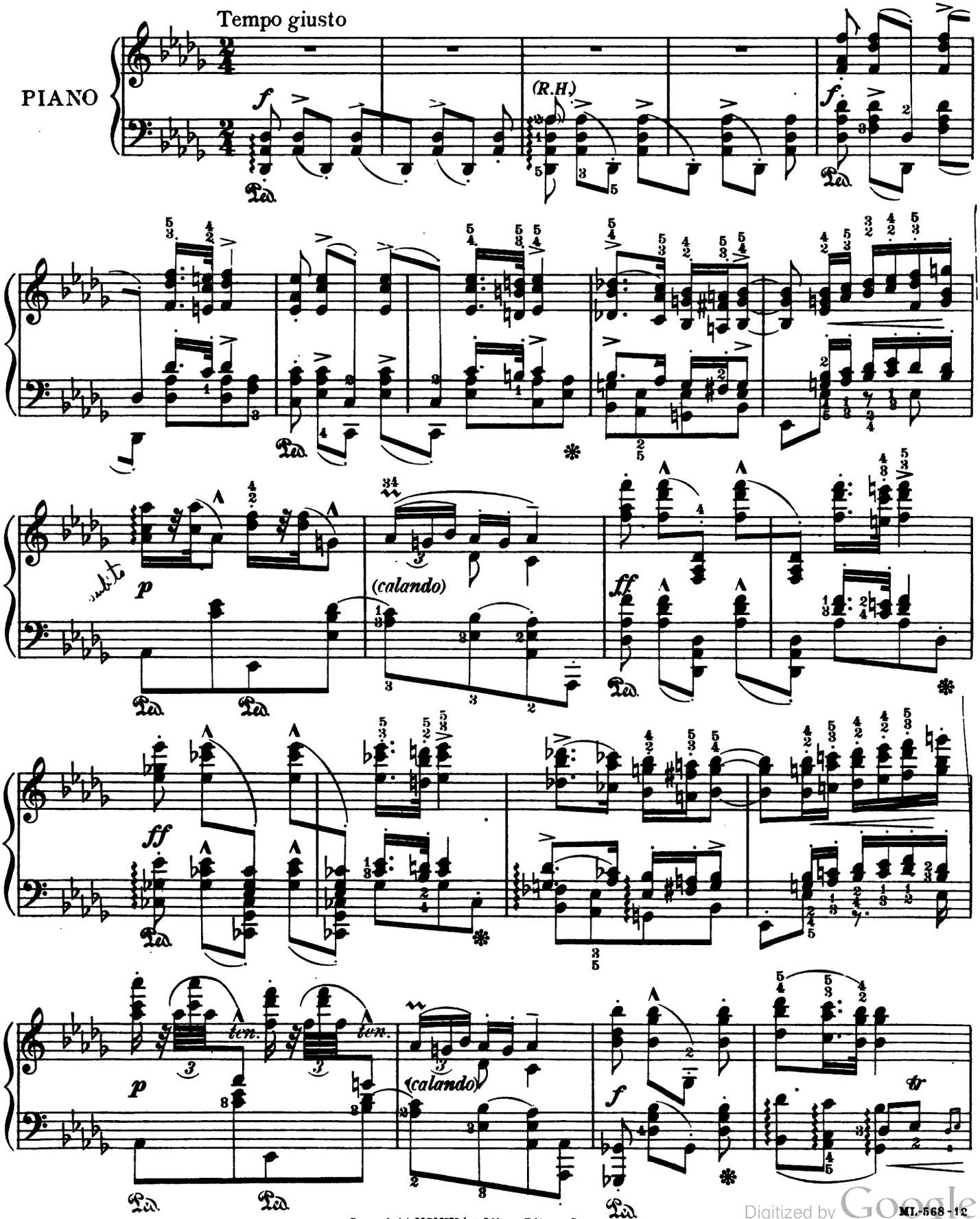
To Count Antoine d'Apponyi

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No 6

(Published in 1854)

Edited and fingered by
John Orth

FRANZ LISZT



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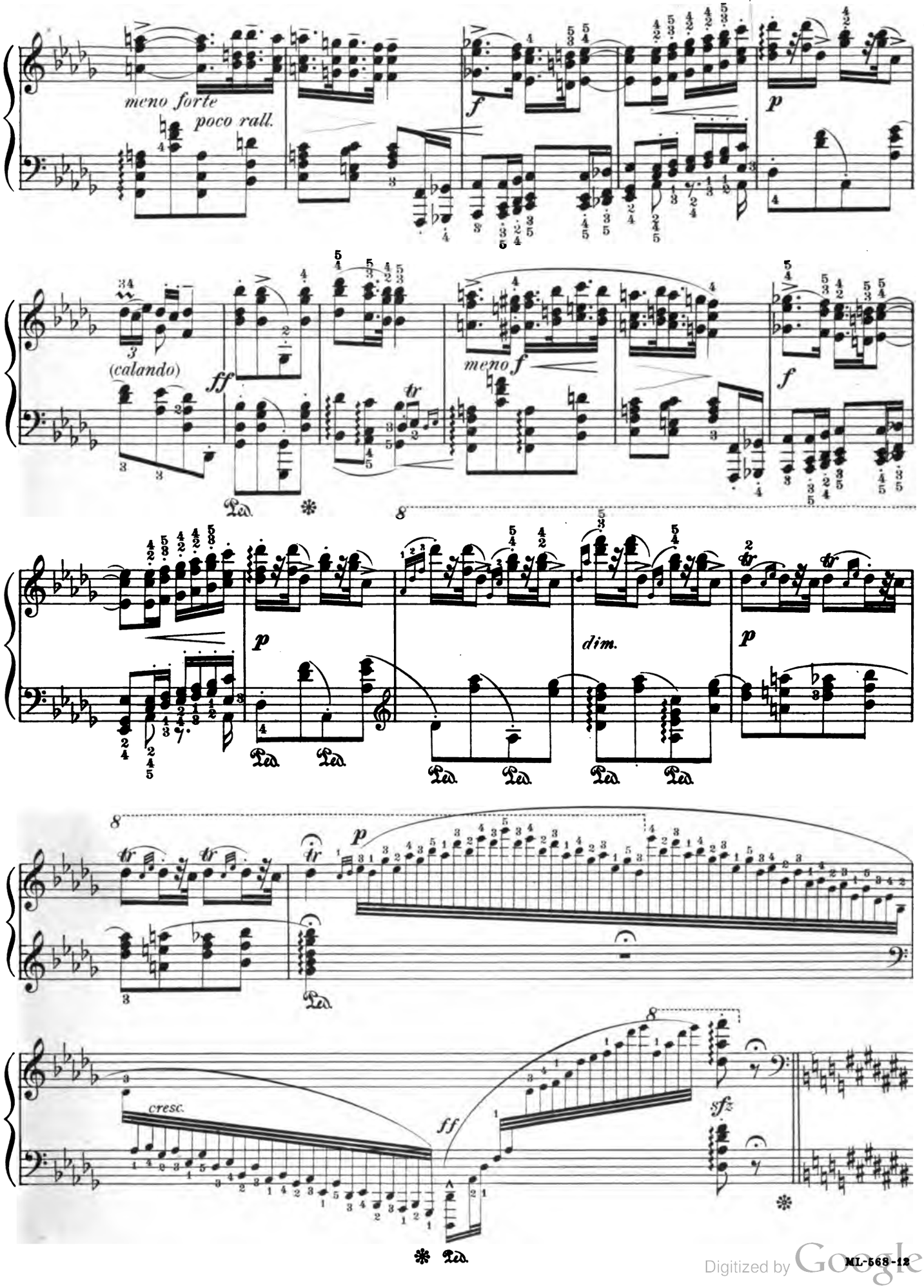

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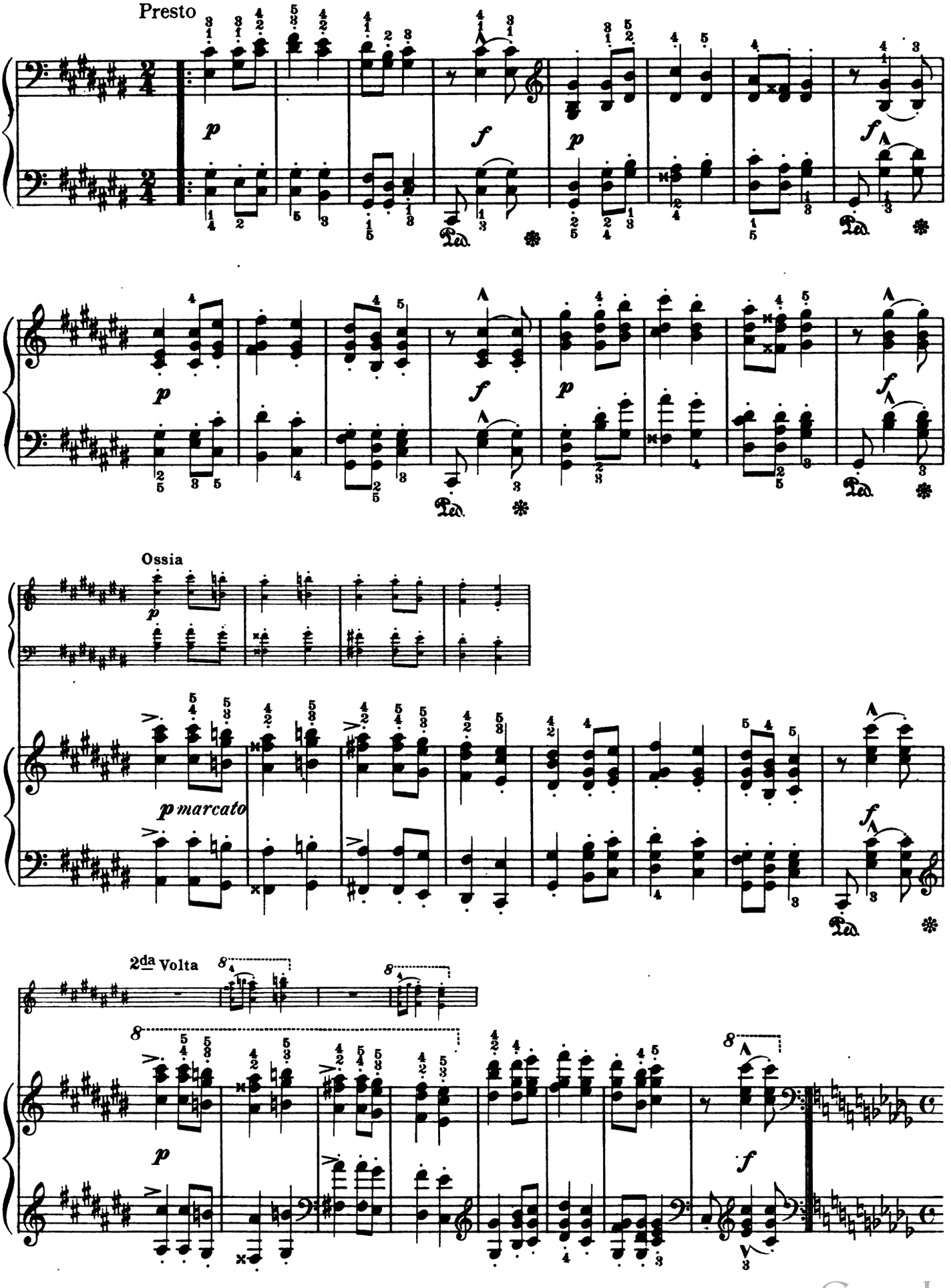

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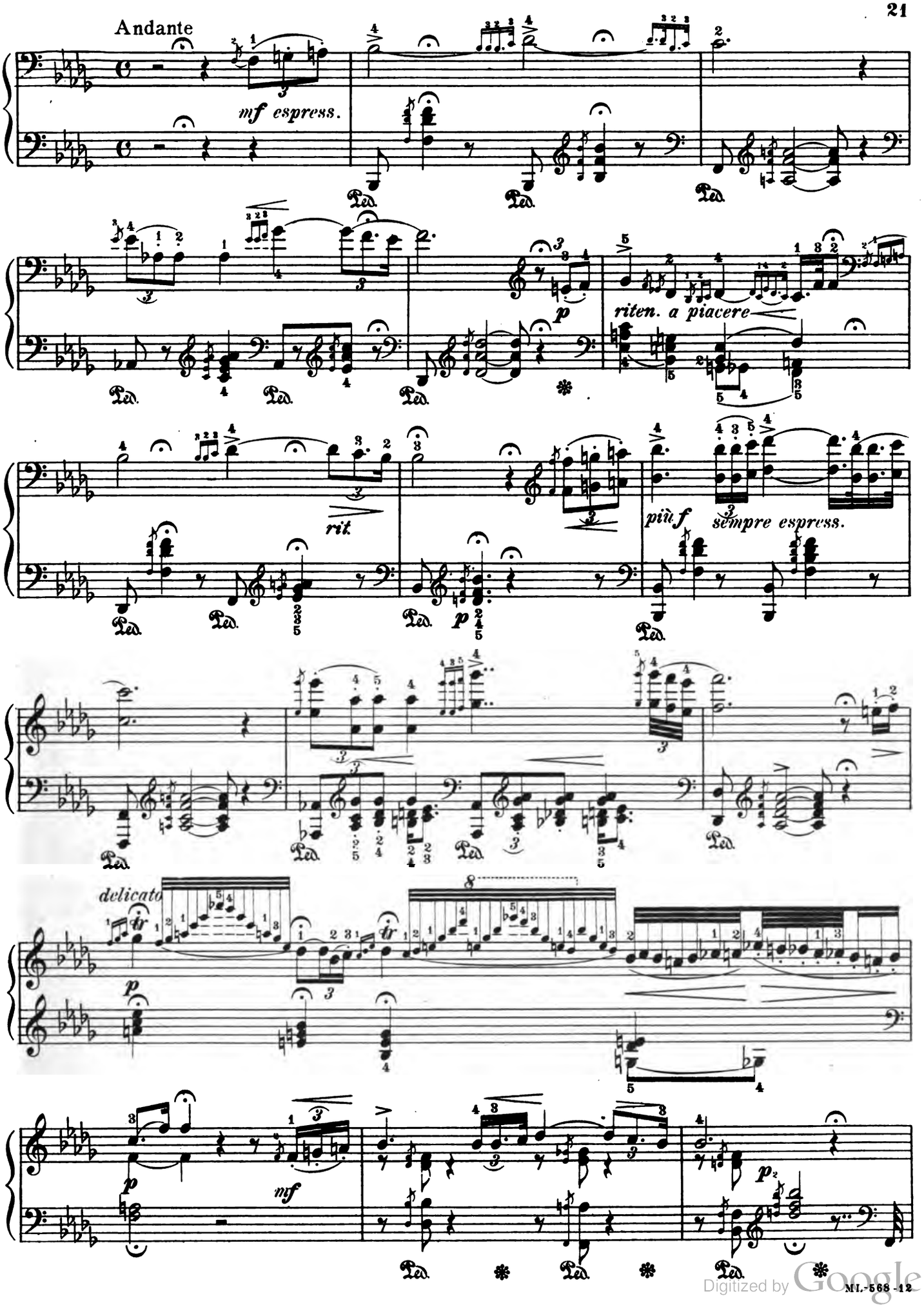

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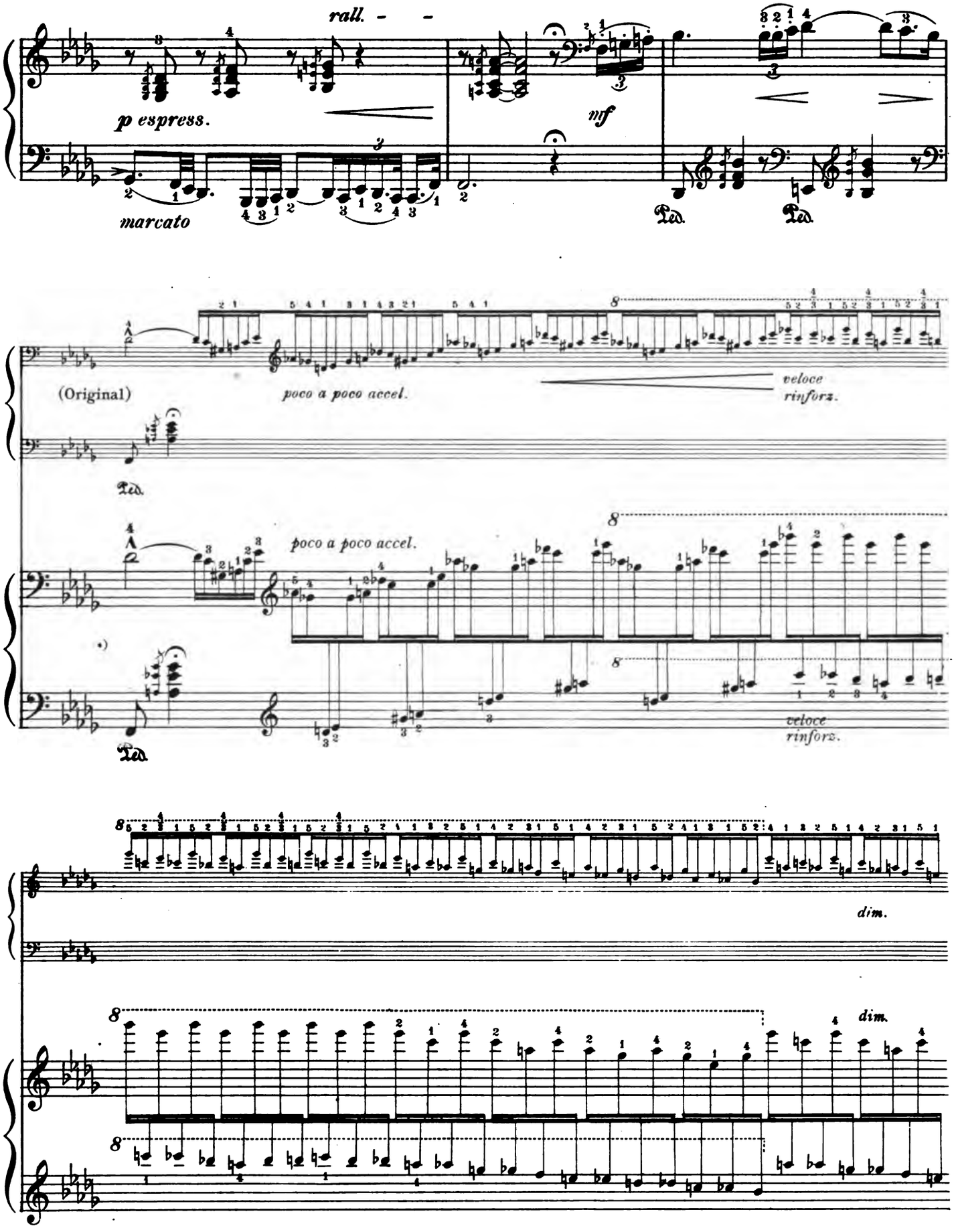

*) This treatment of this cadenza will be found more convenient and effective than the original printed as above.

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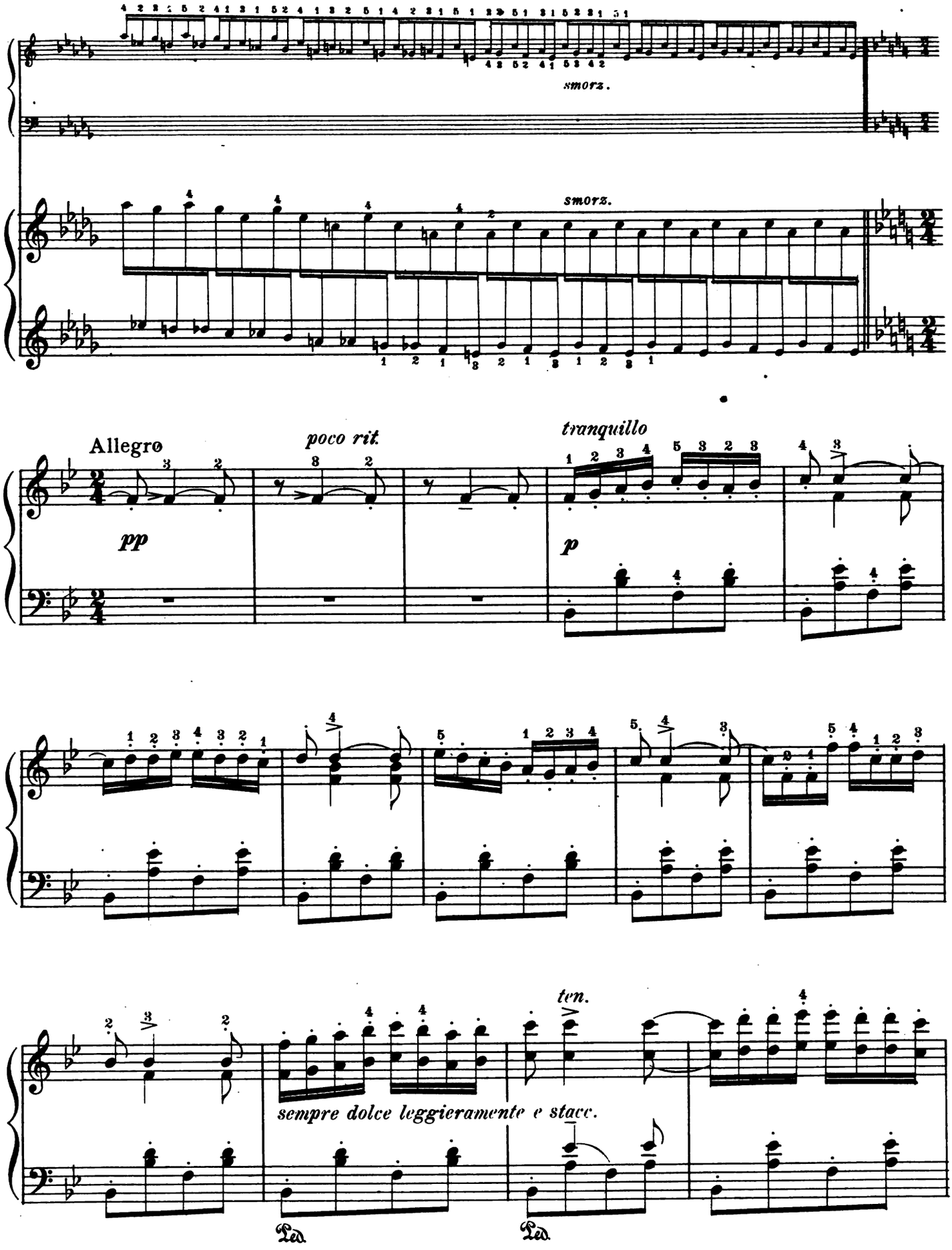

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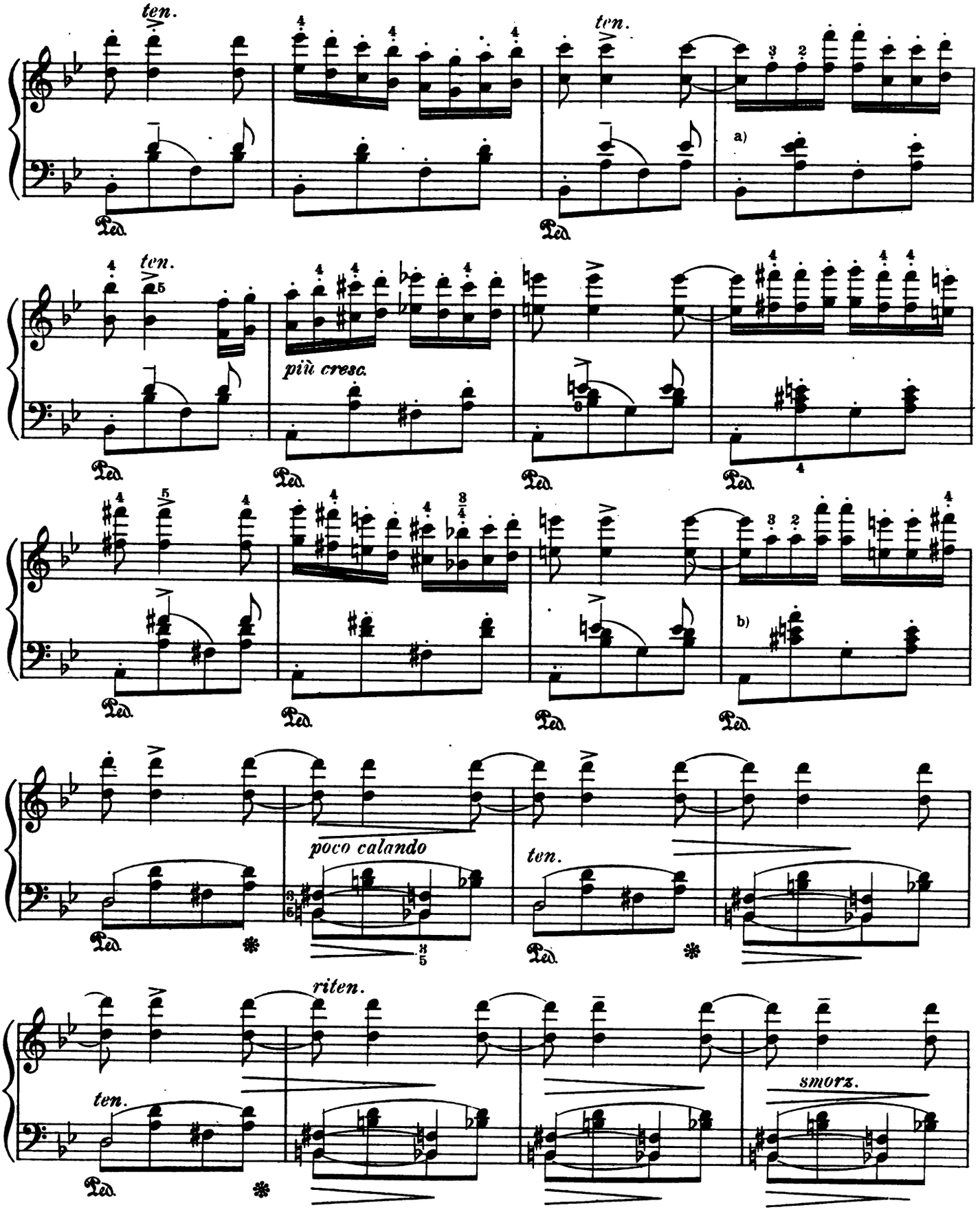

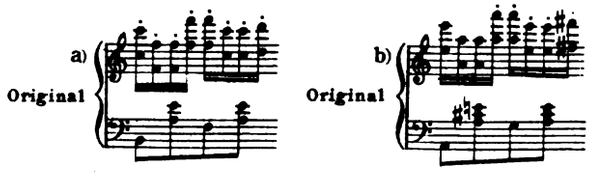

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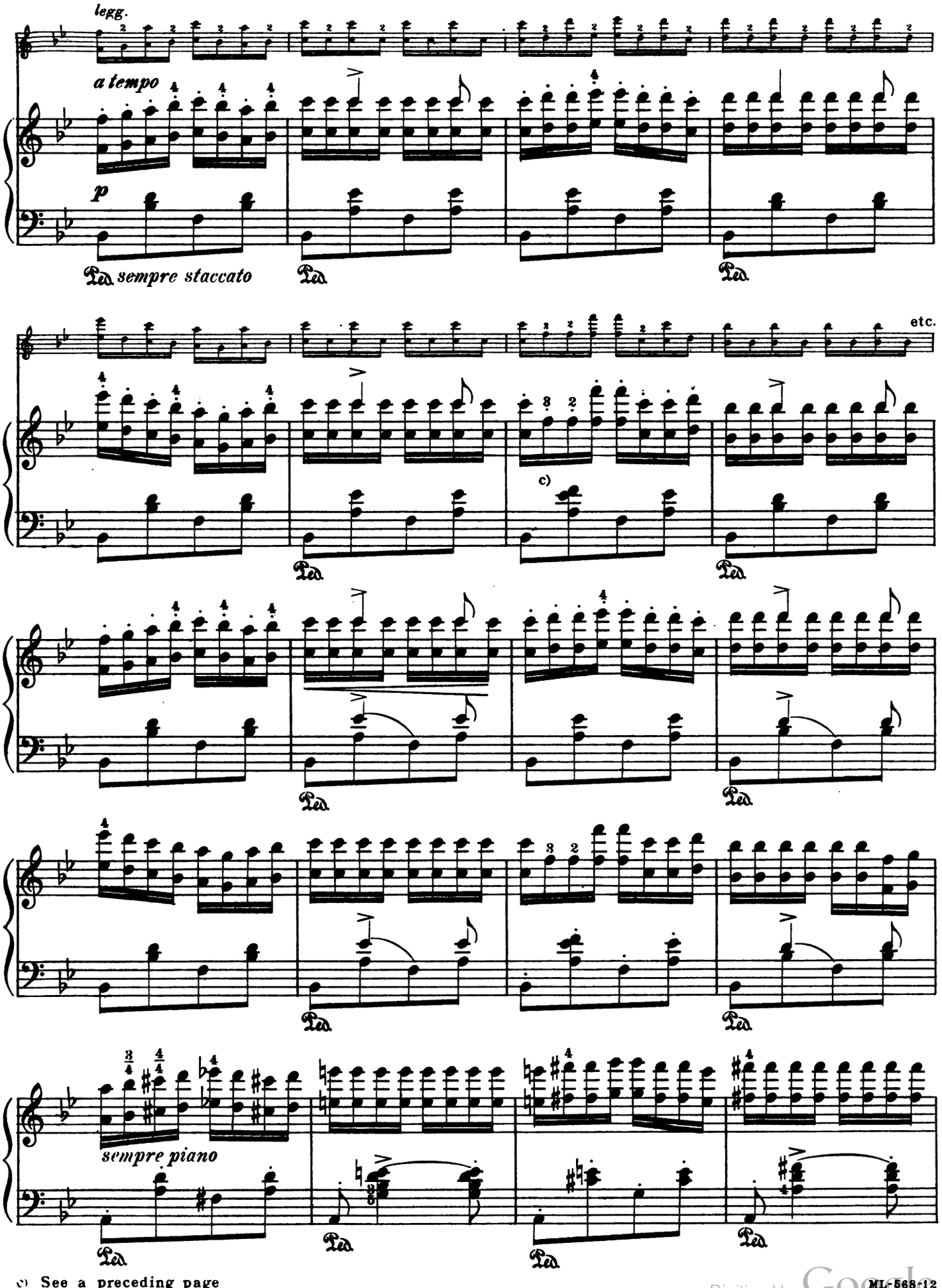

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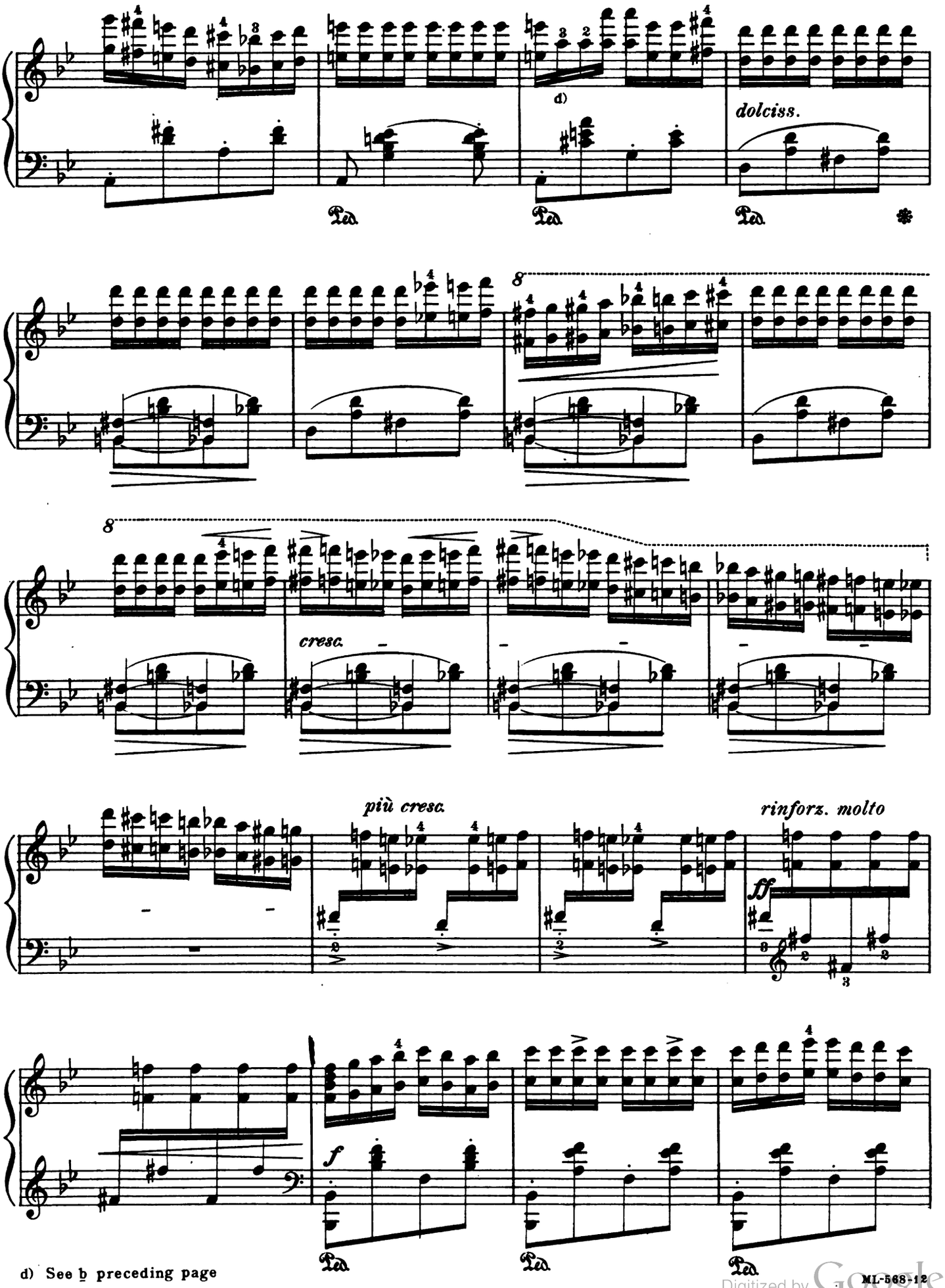

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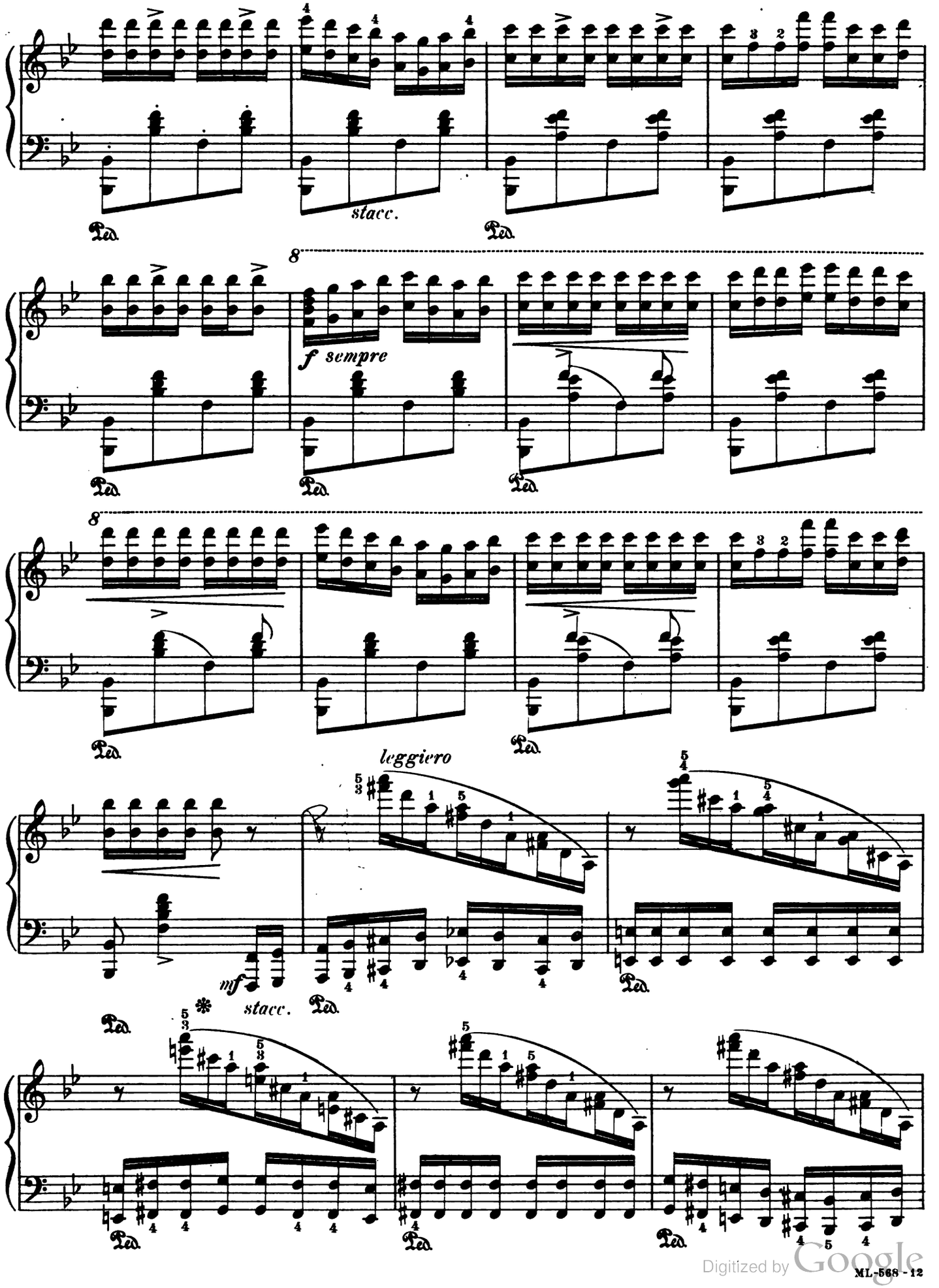

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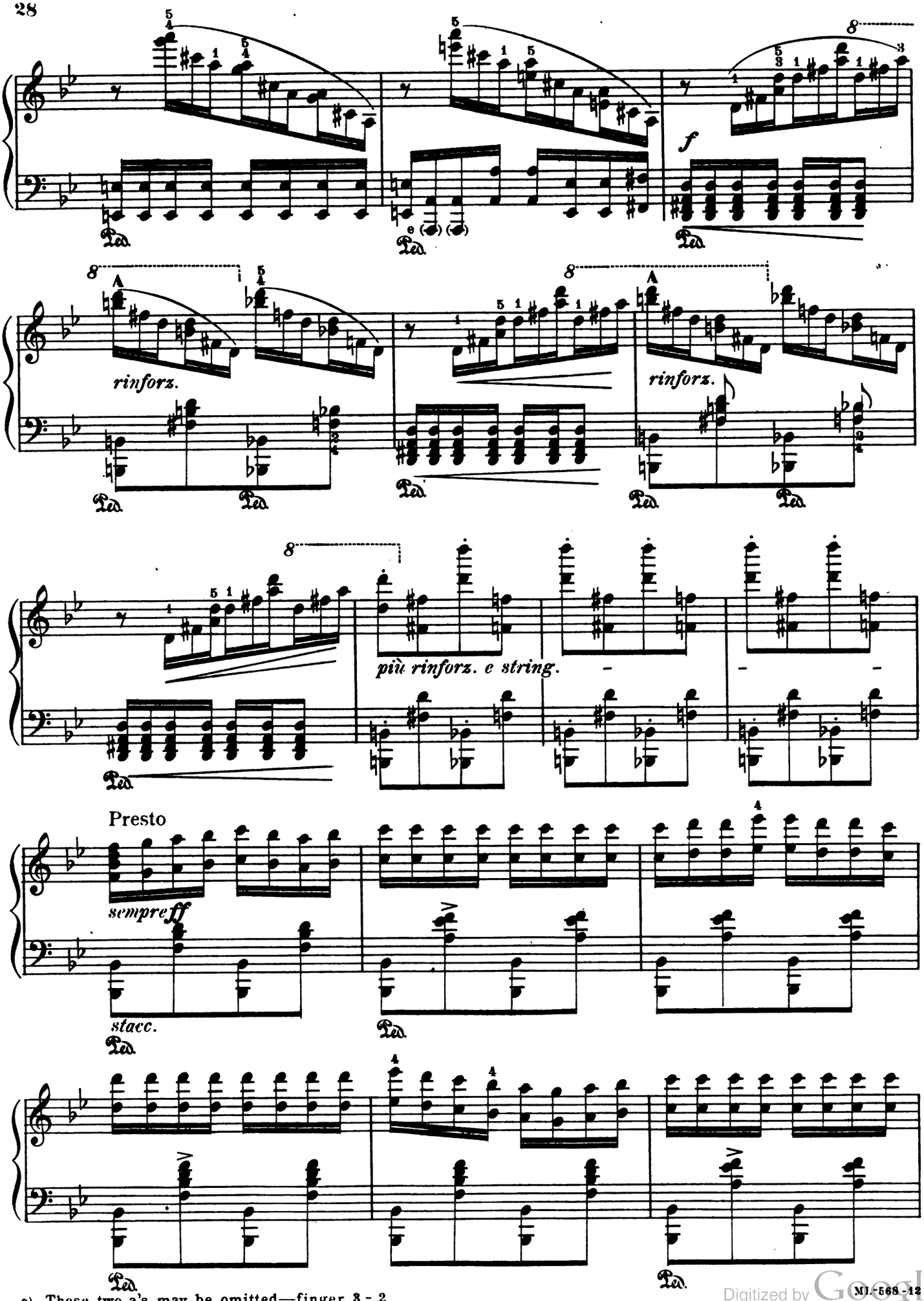

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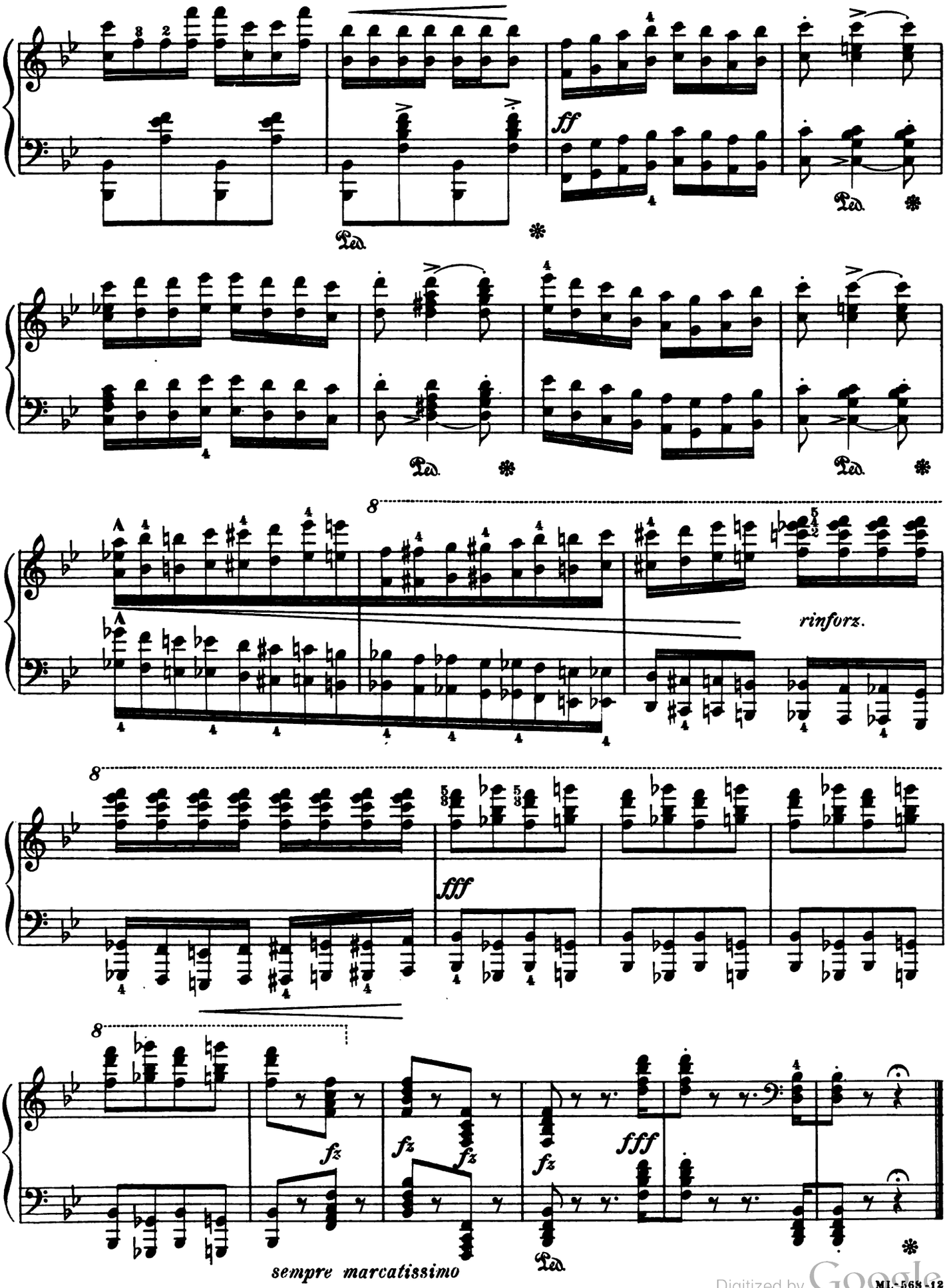

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To Antos d'Augusz

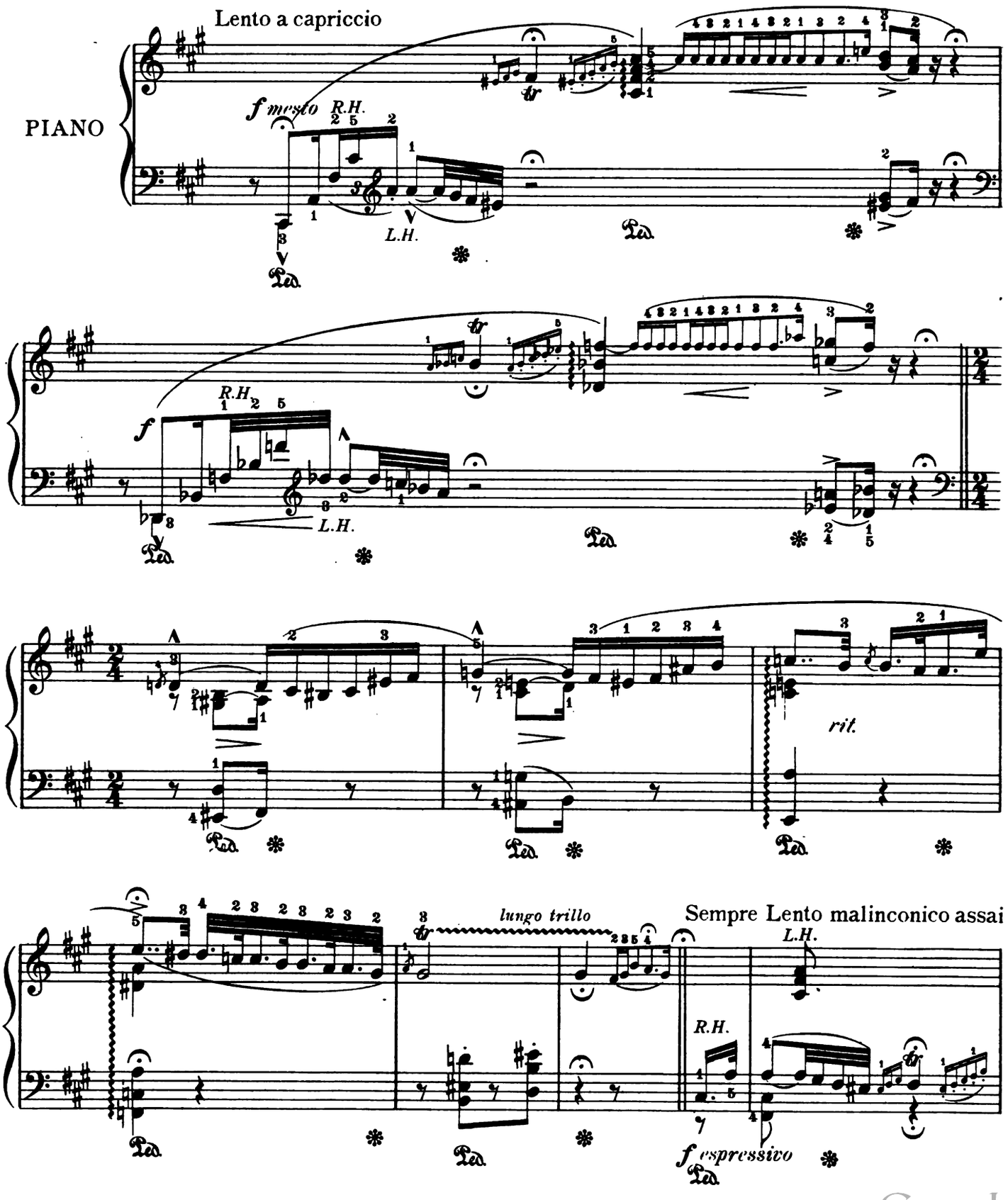
HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No8

(CAPRICCIO)

(Published in 1858)

Edited and fingered by
August Spanuth

FRANZ LISZT



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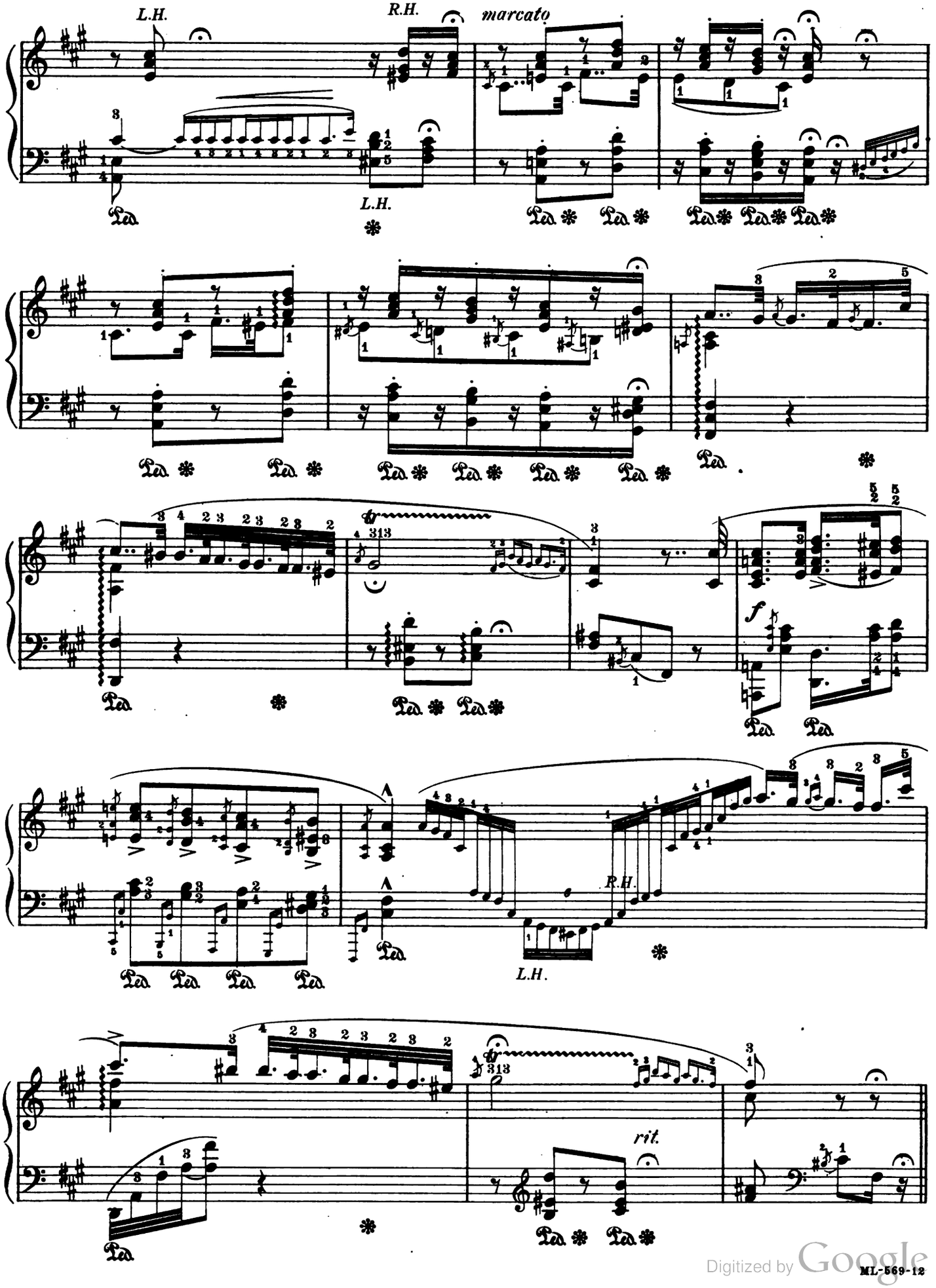

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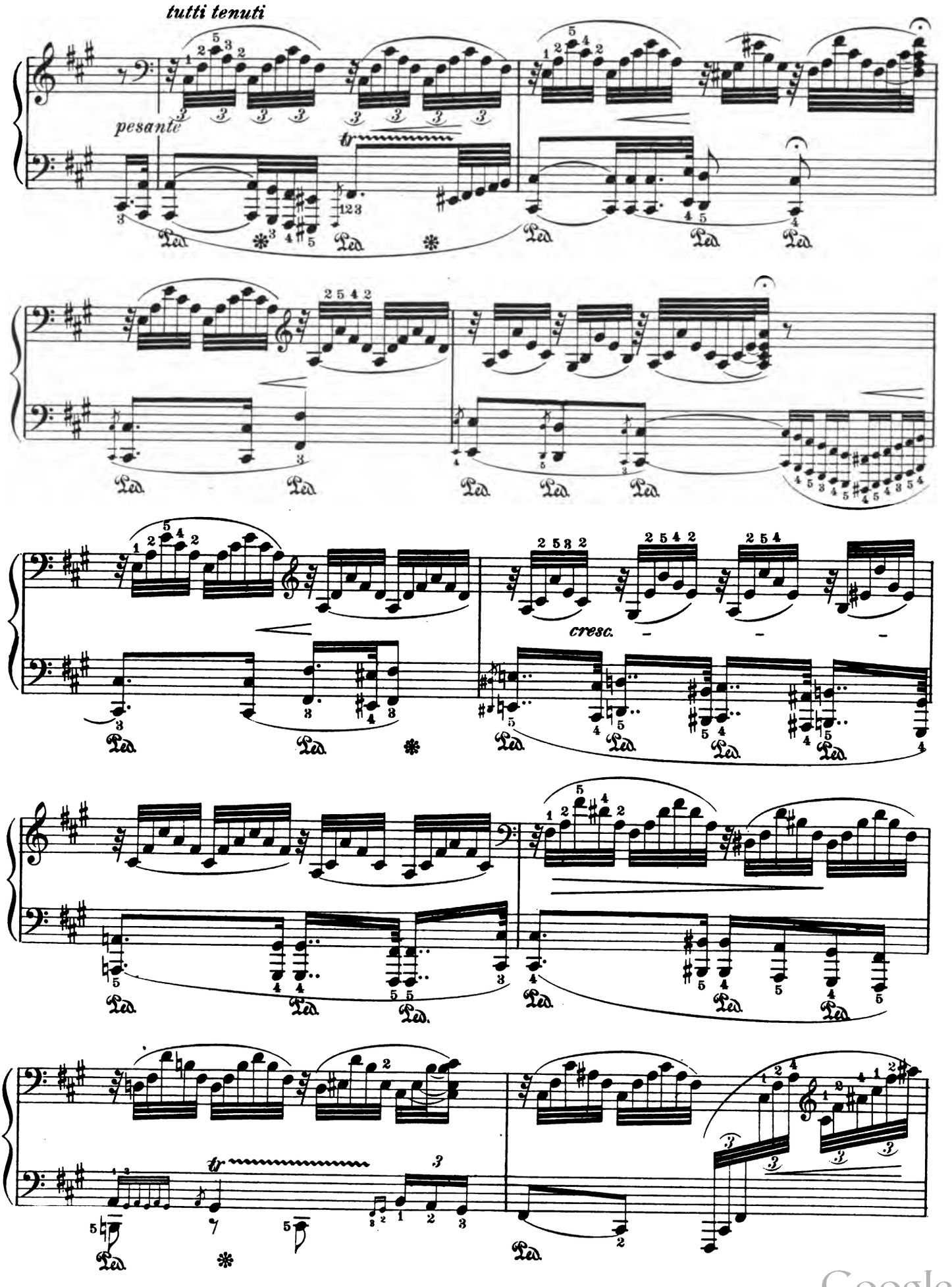

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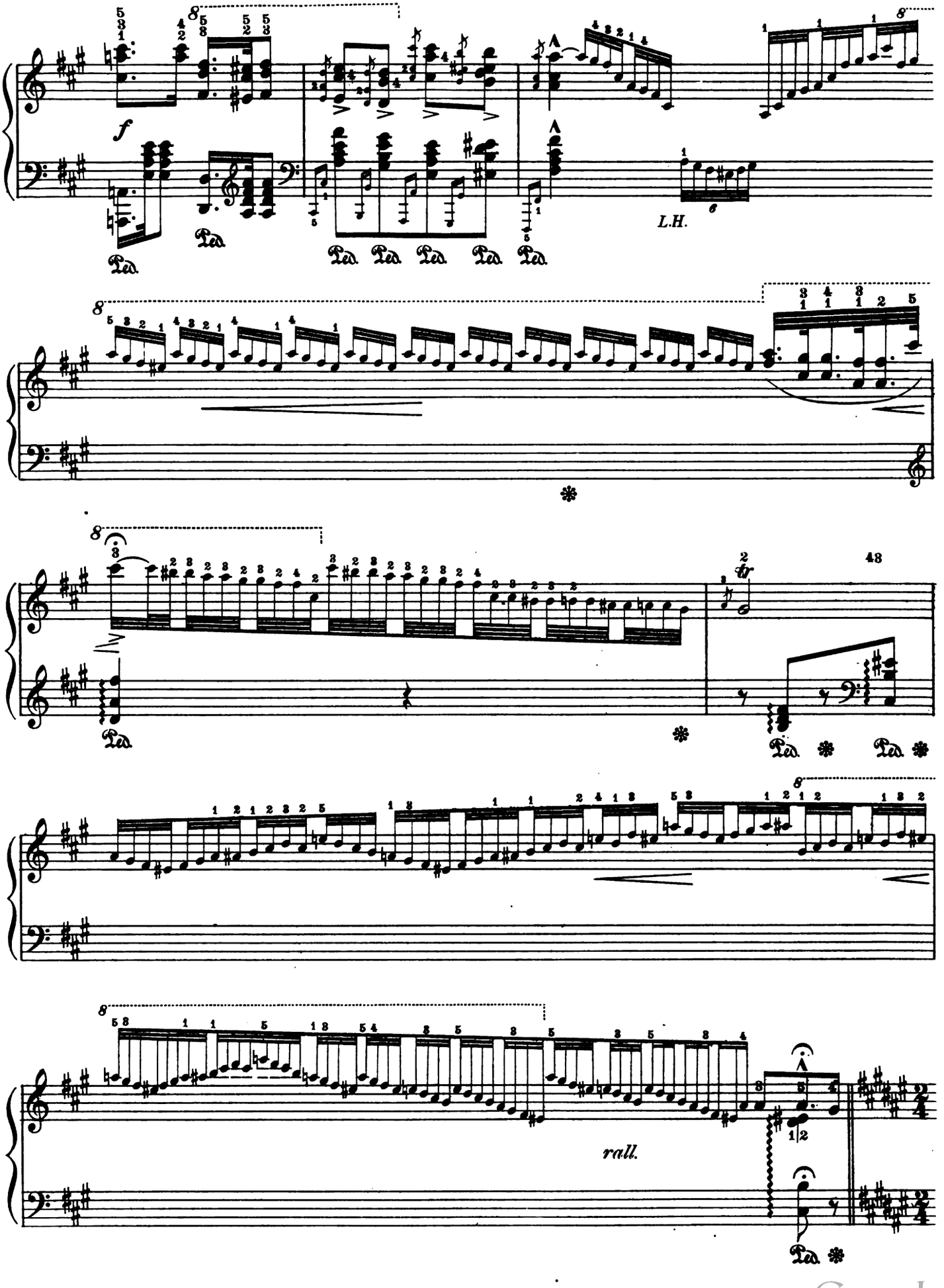

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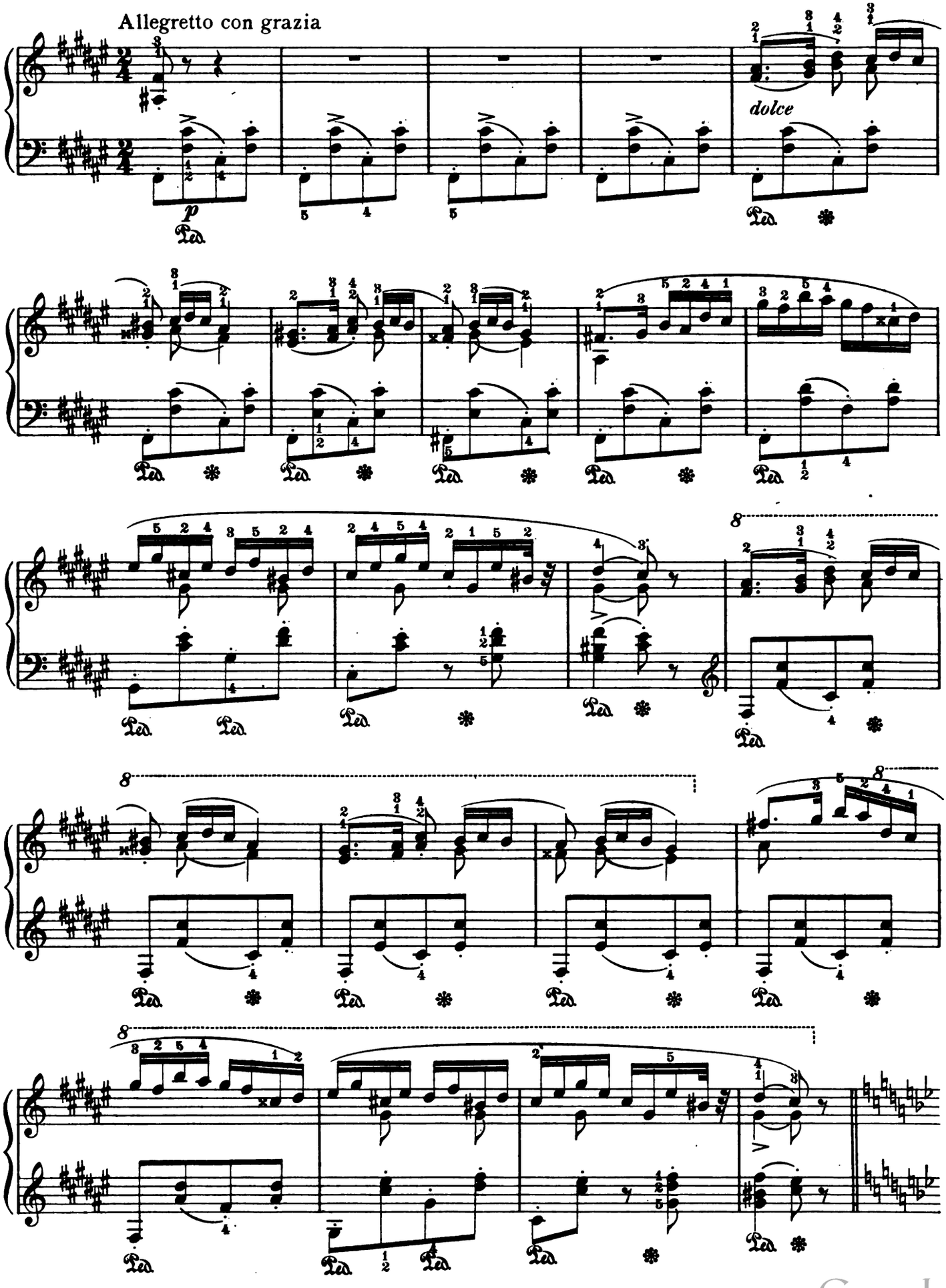

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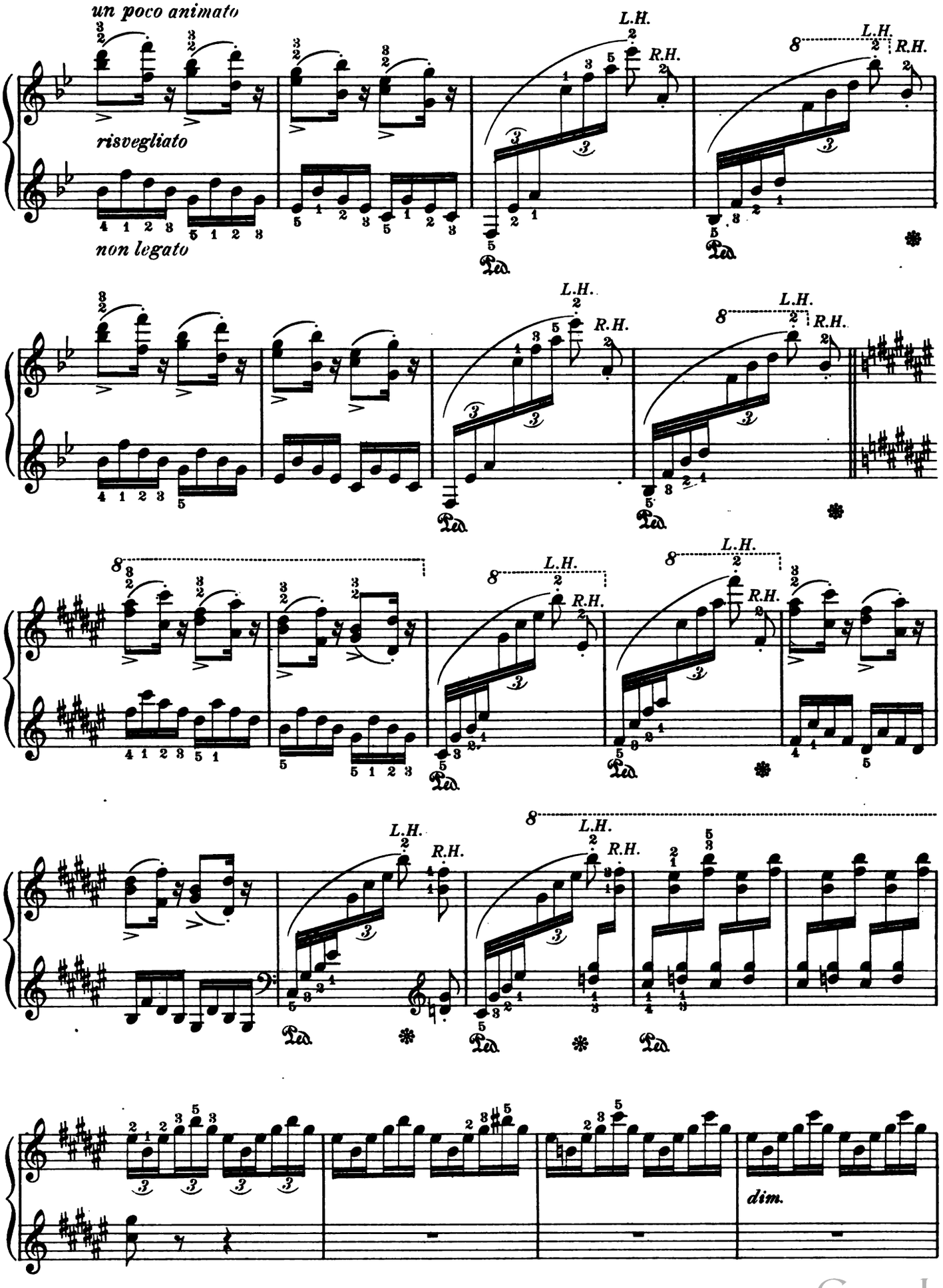

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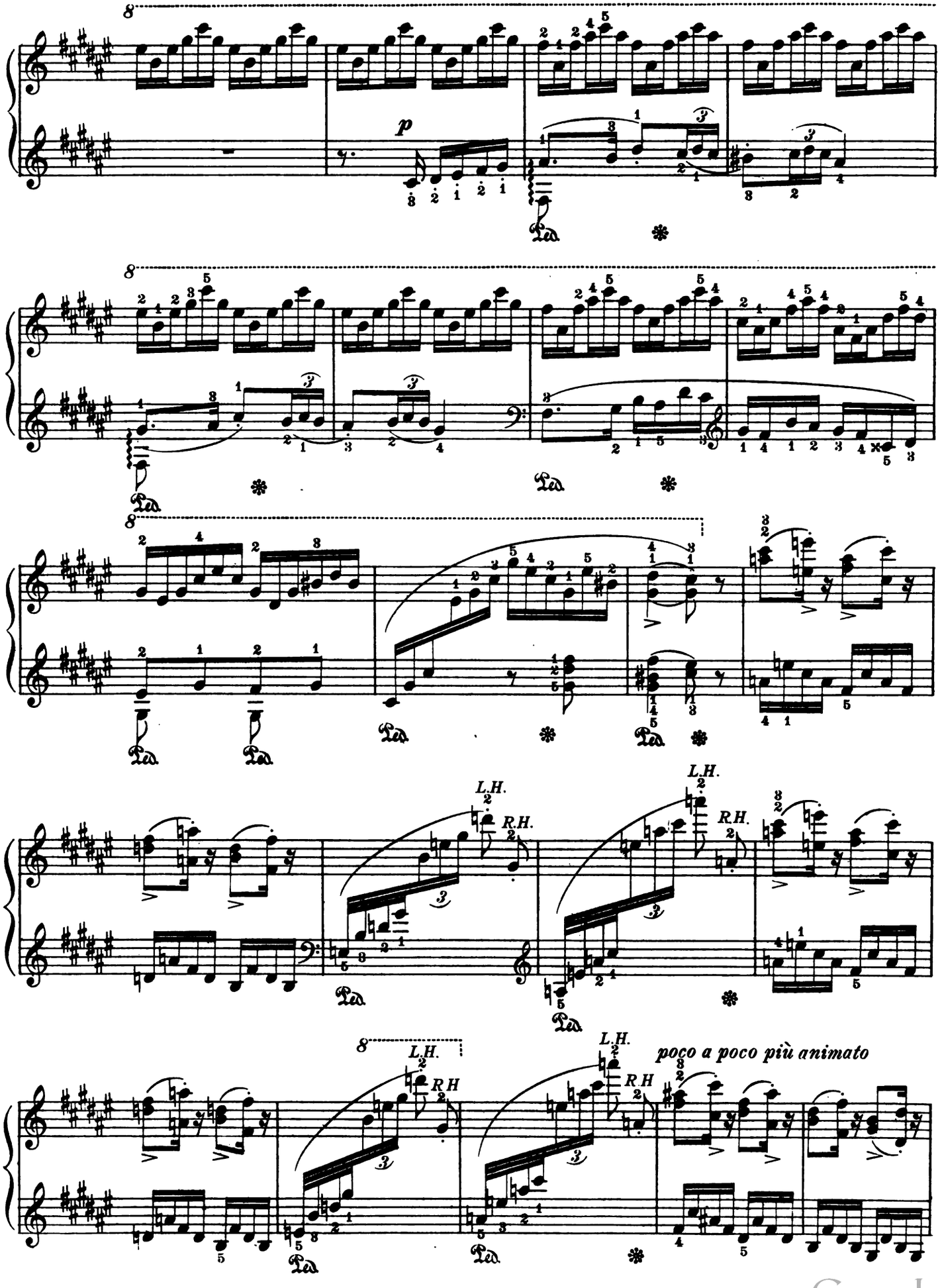

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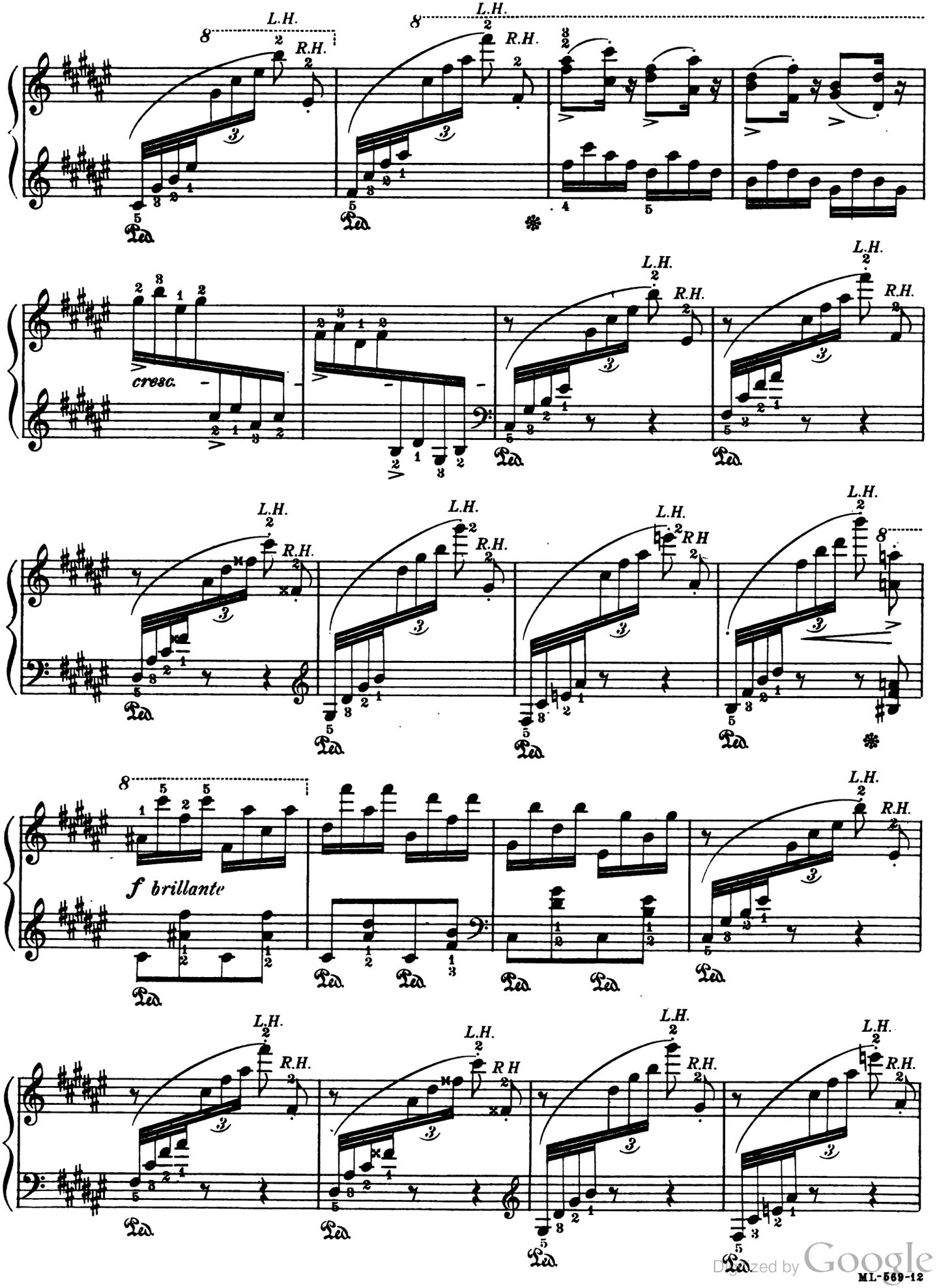

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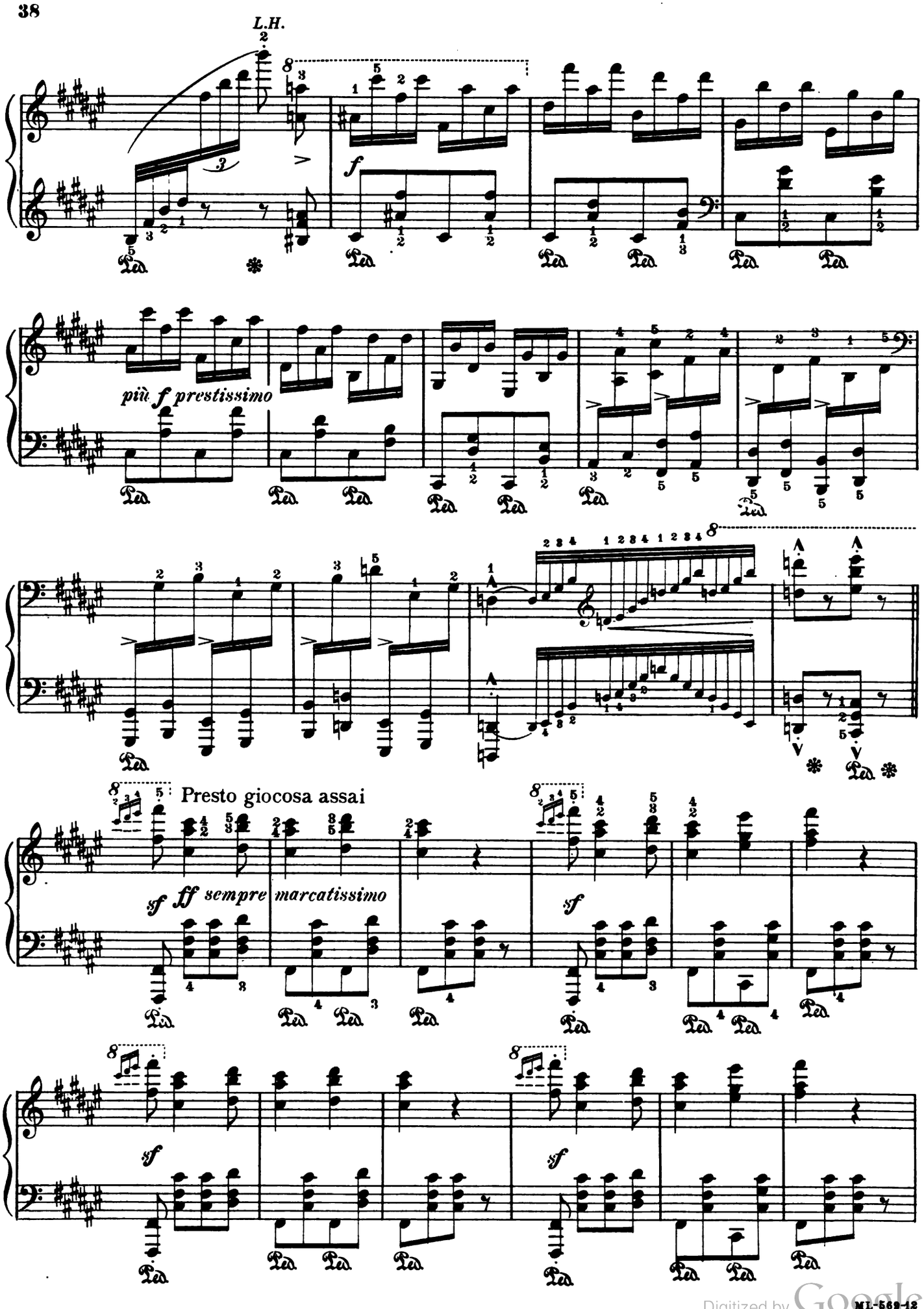

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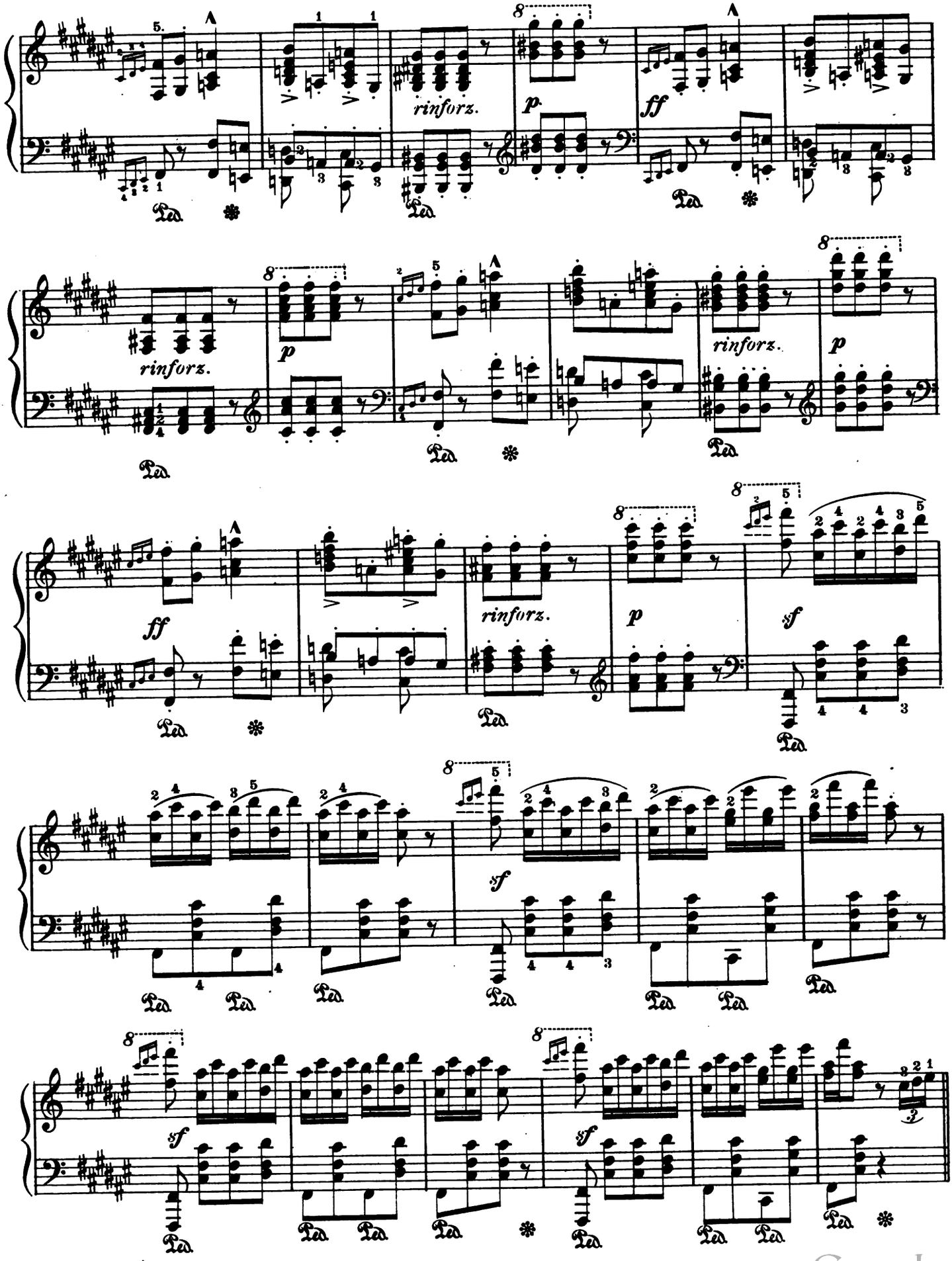

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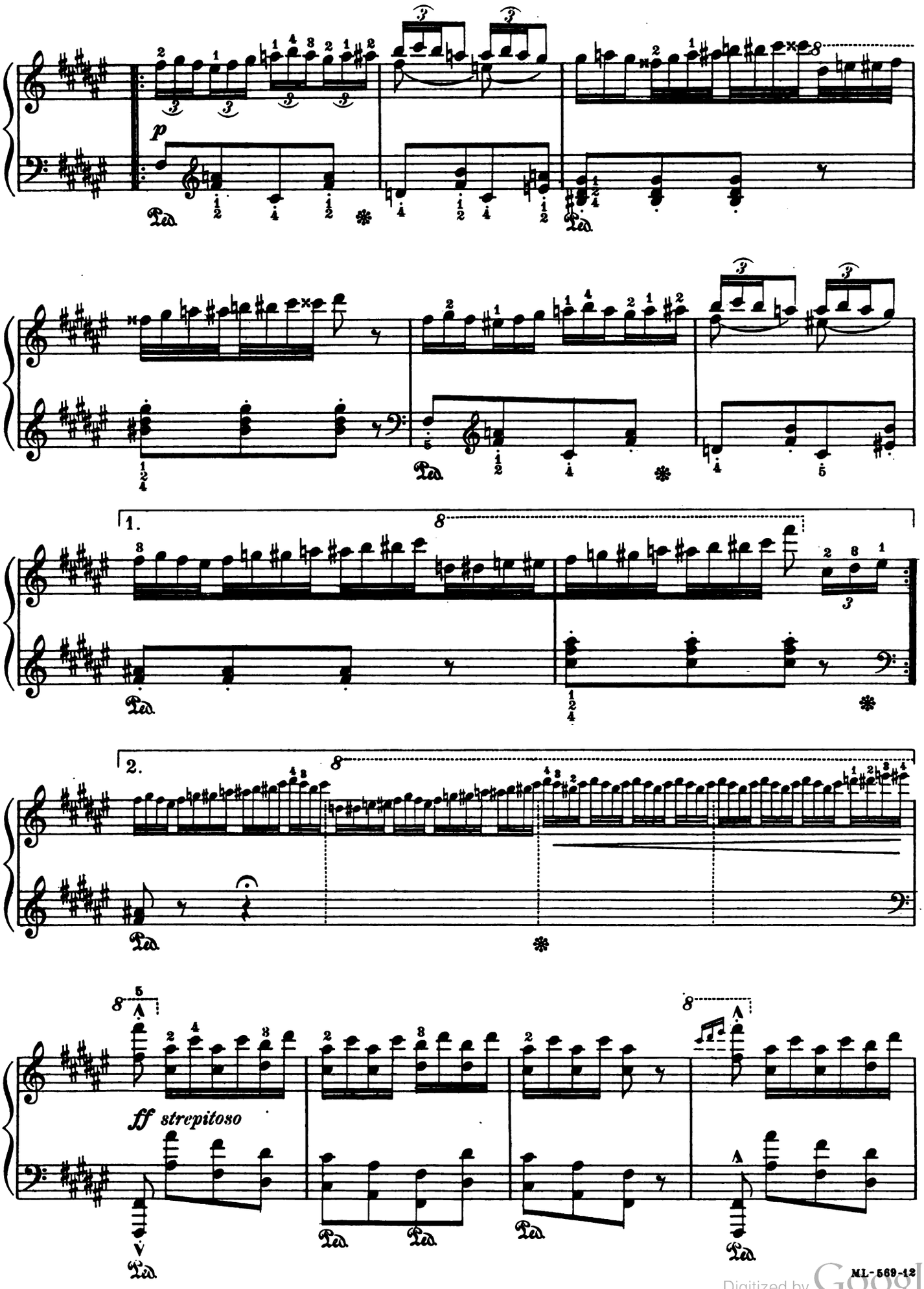

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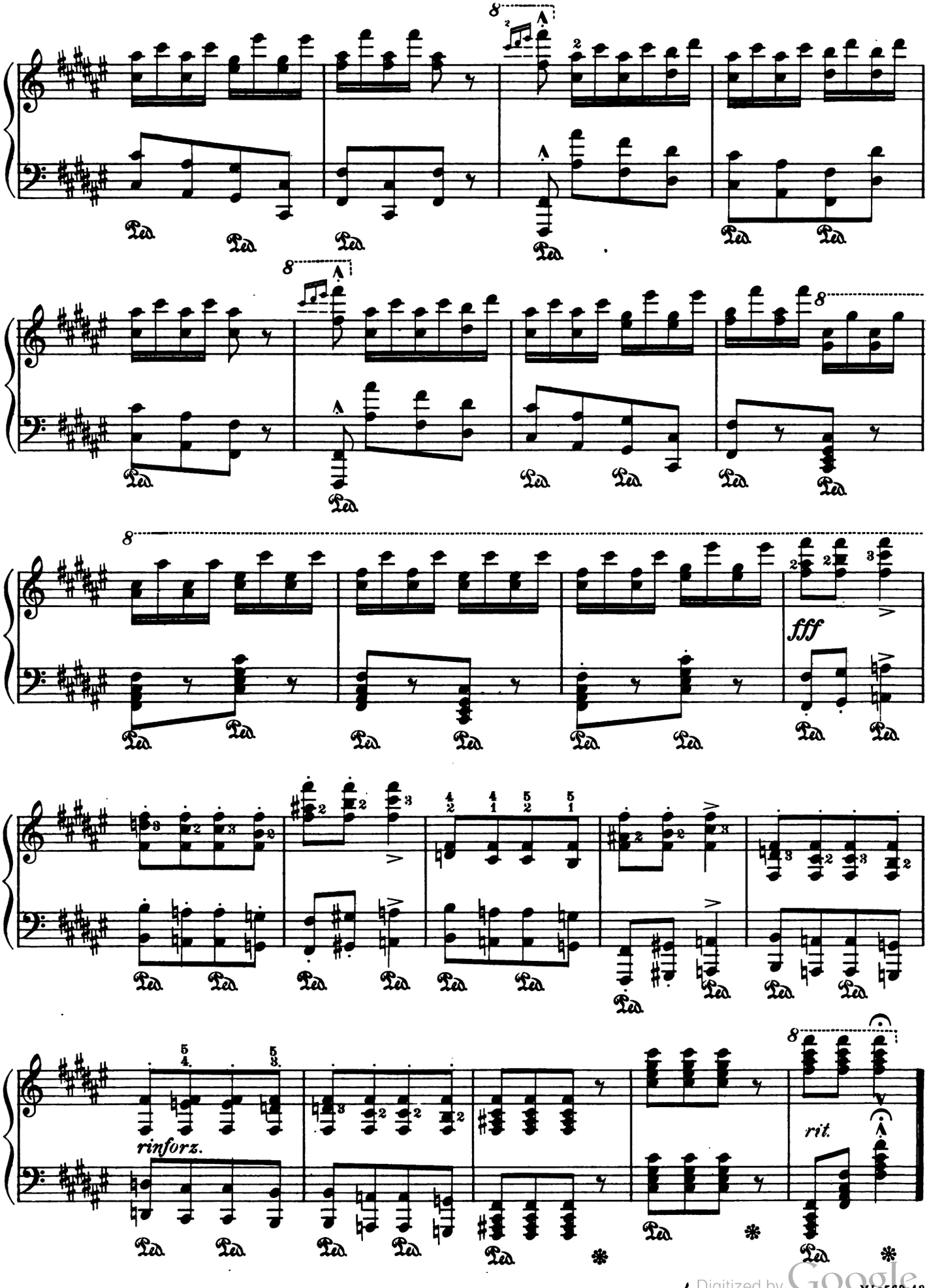

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To H.W. Ernst

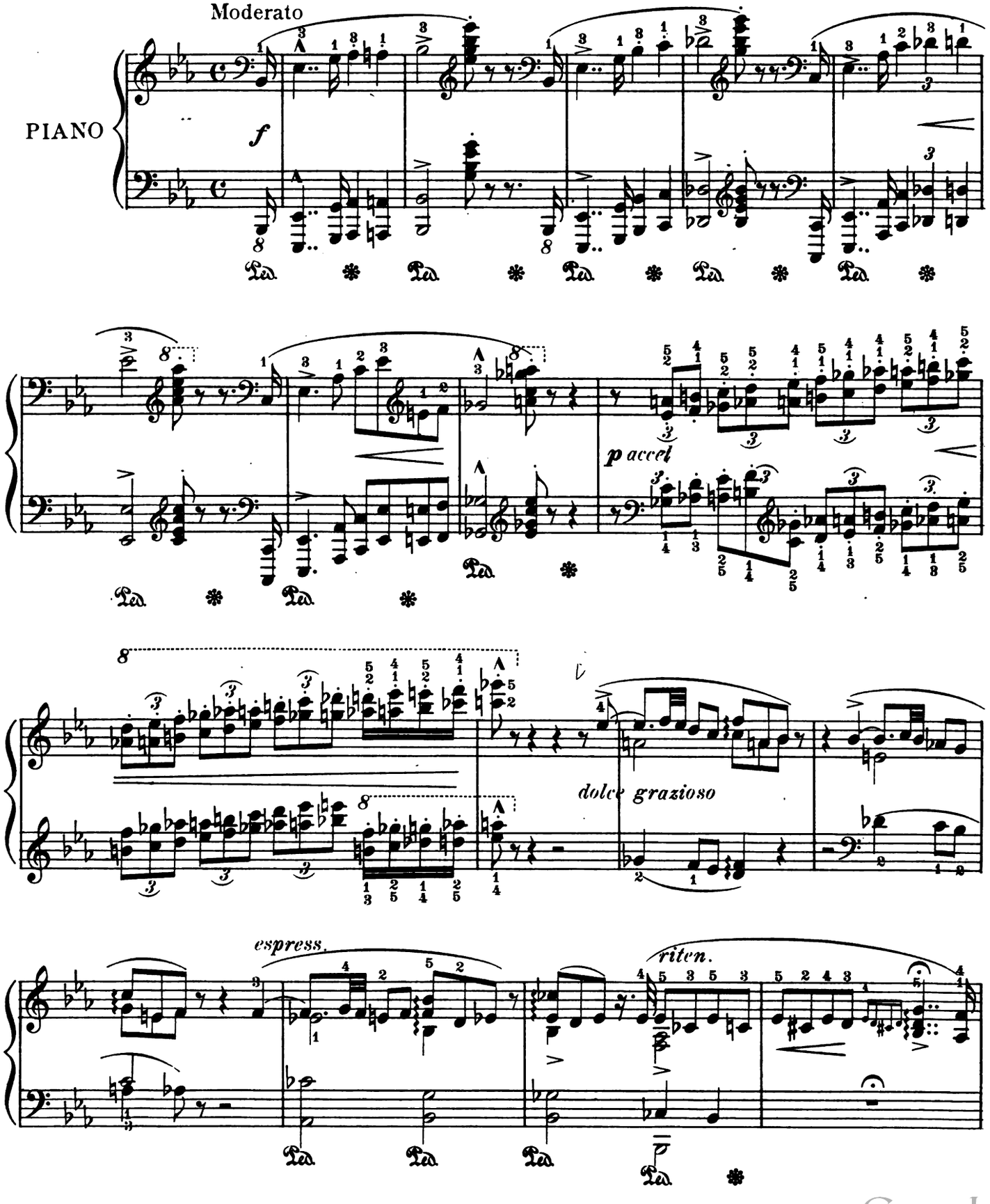
HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No9

(LE CARNAVAL DE PESTH)

Edited and fingered by
August Spanuth

(Published in 1853)

FRANZ LISZT



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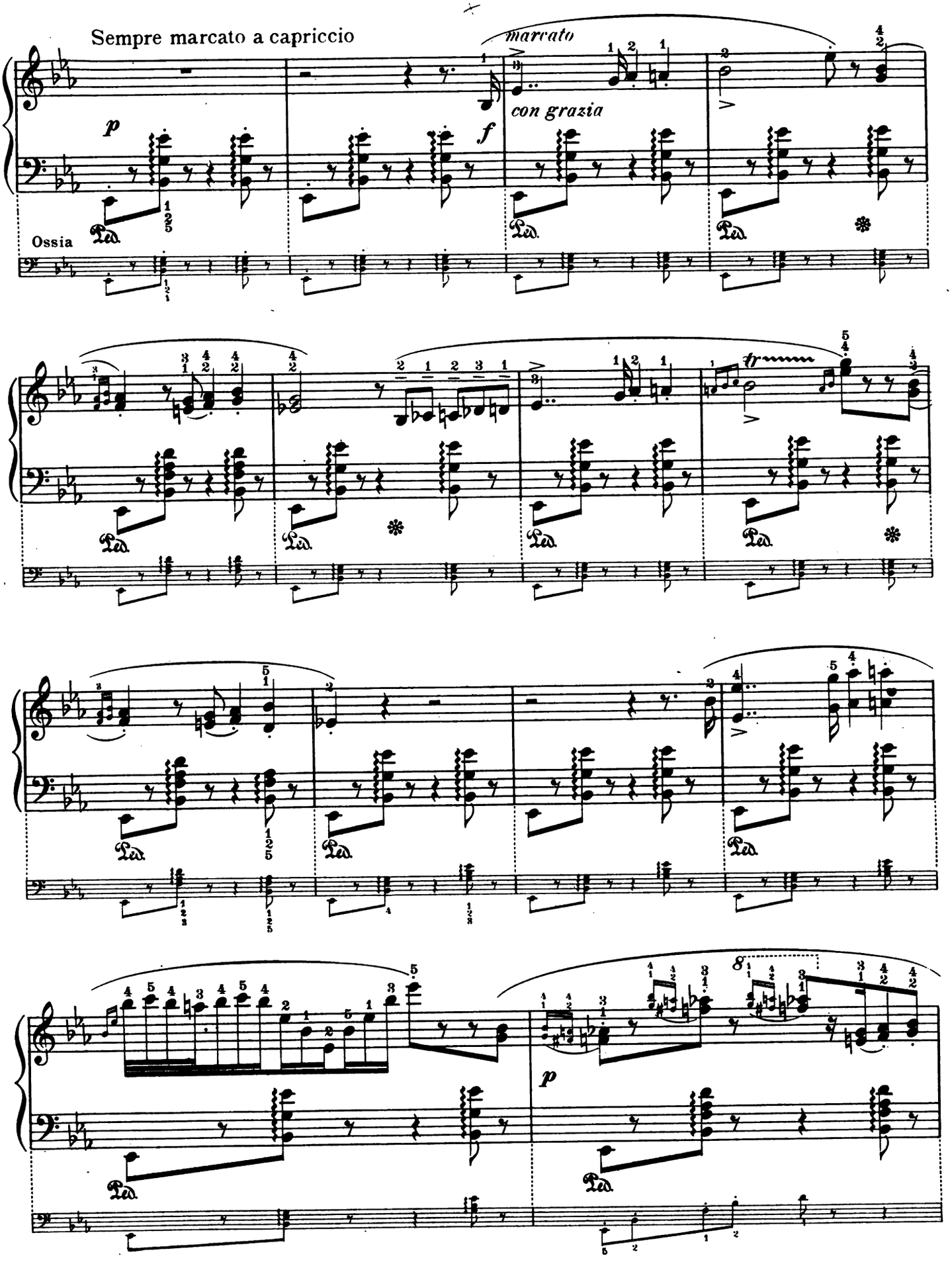

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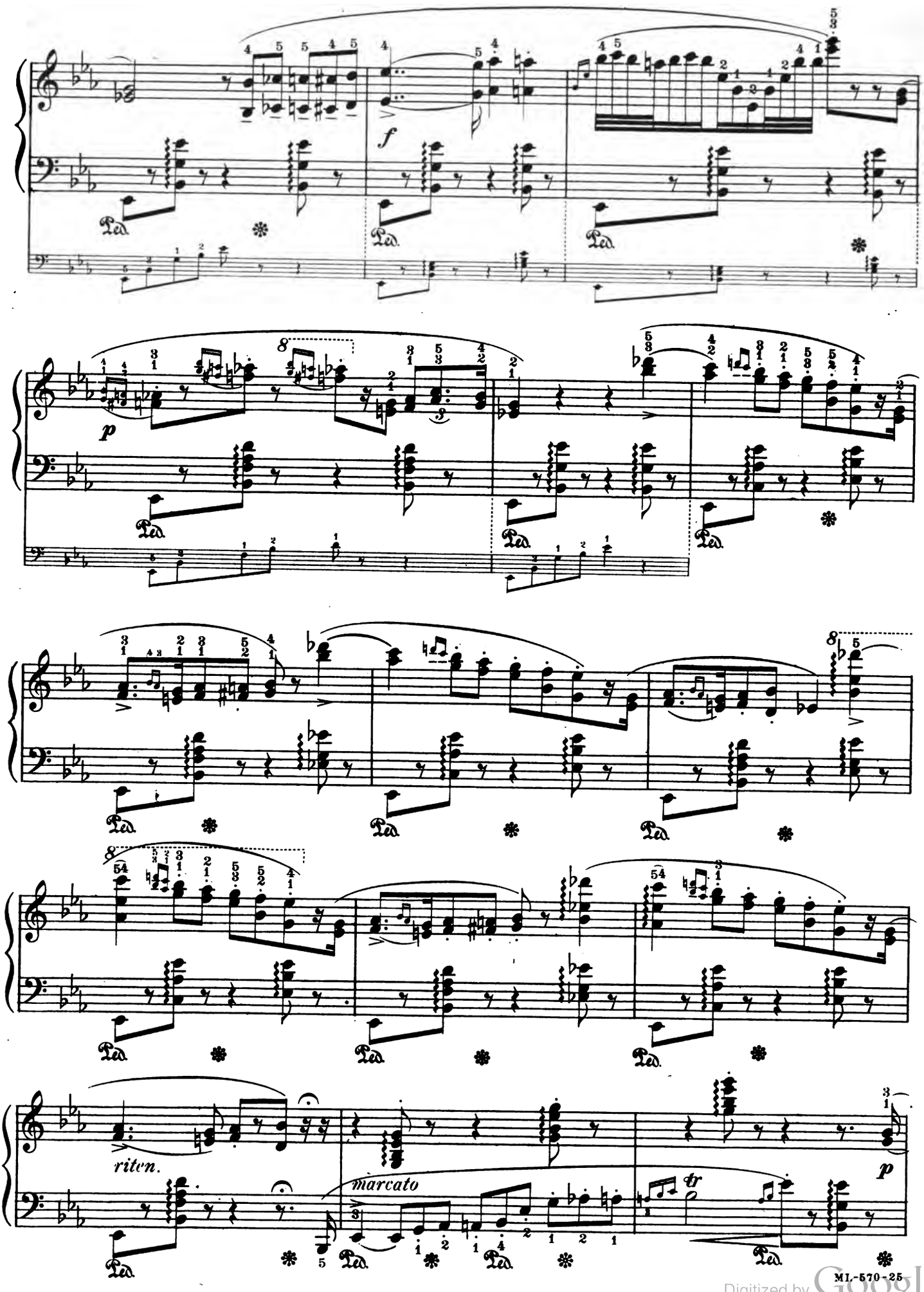

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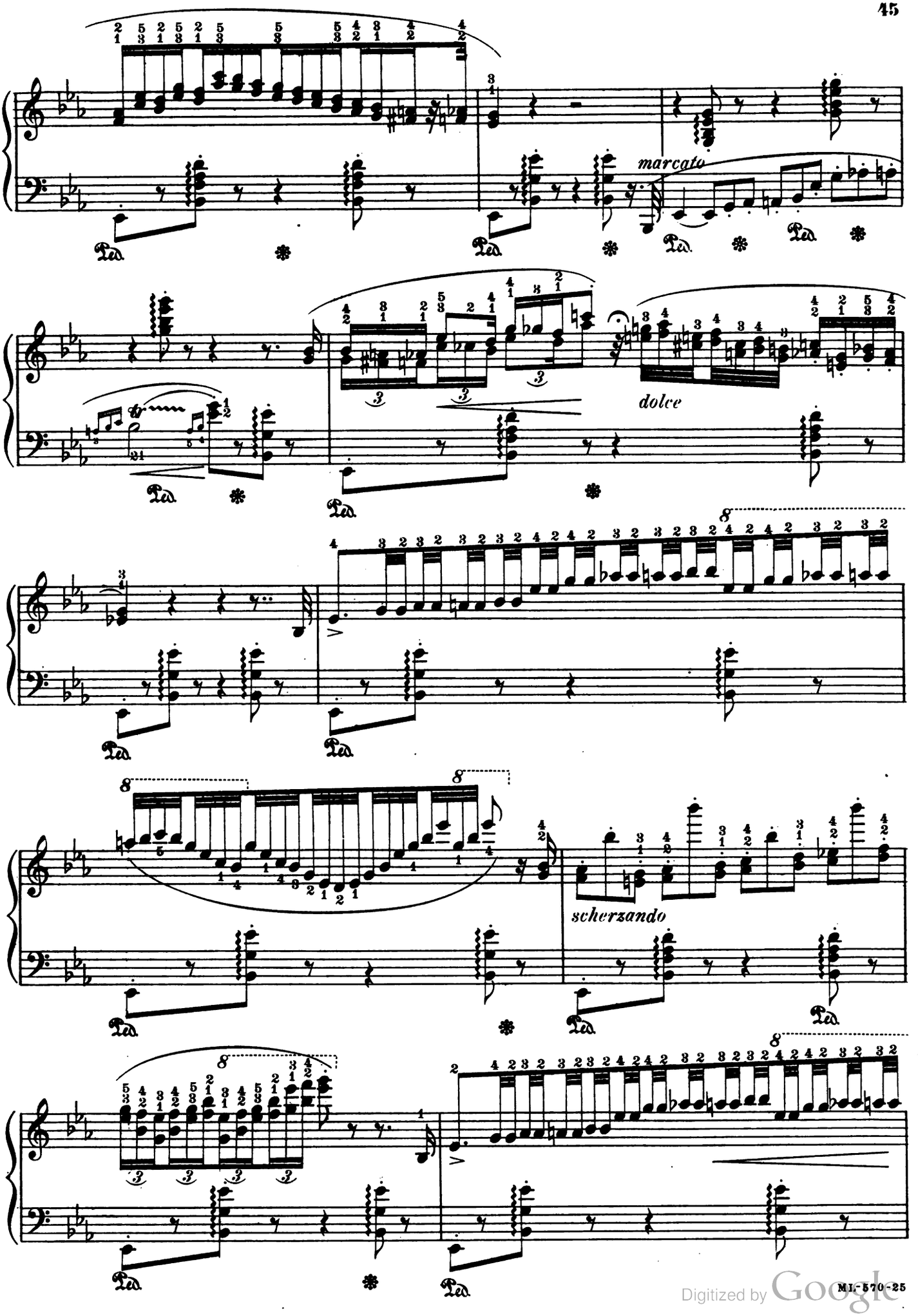

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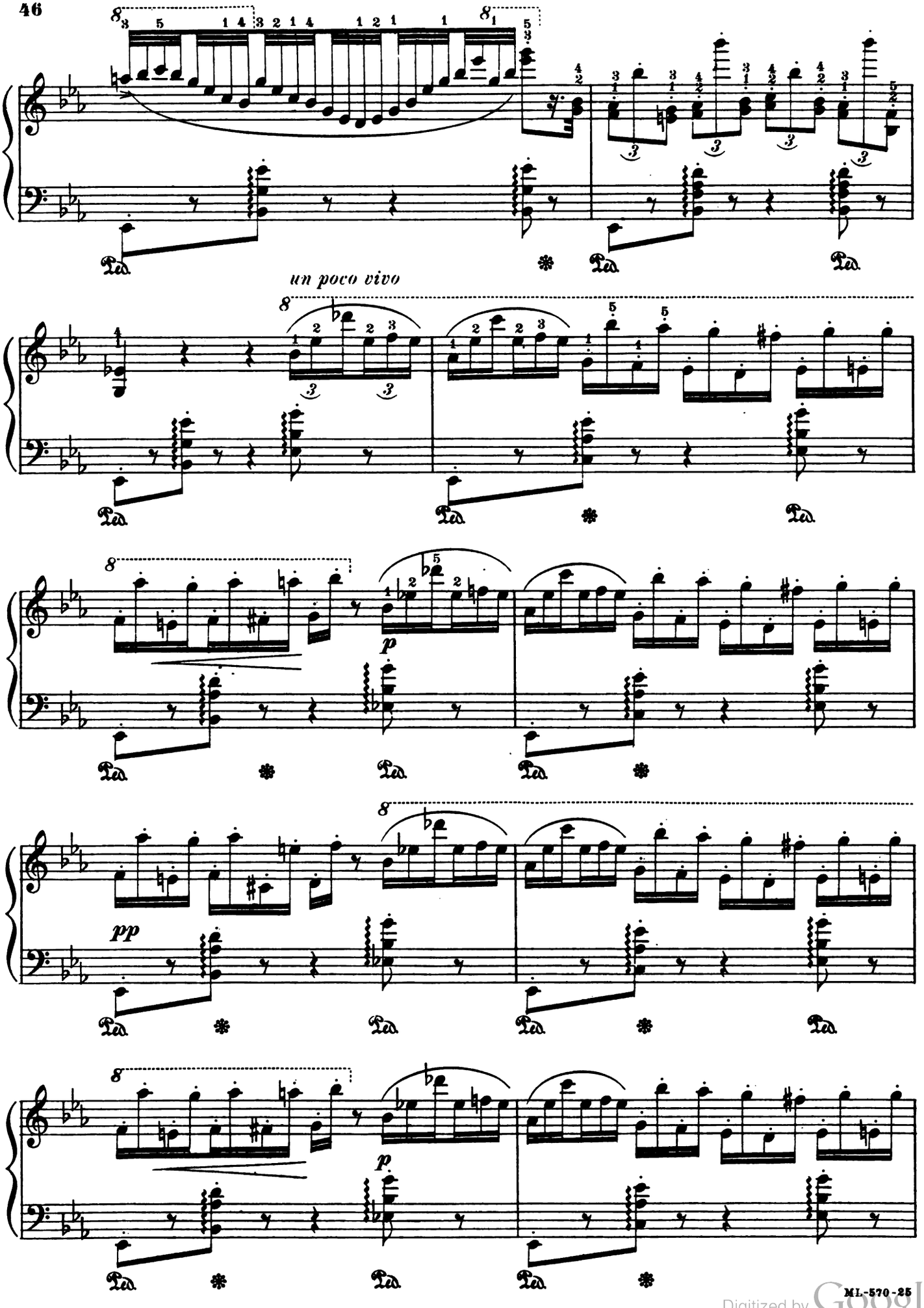

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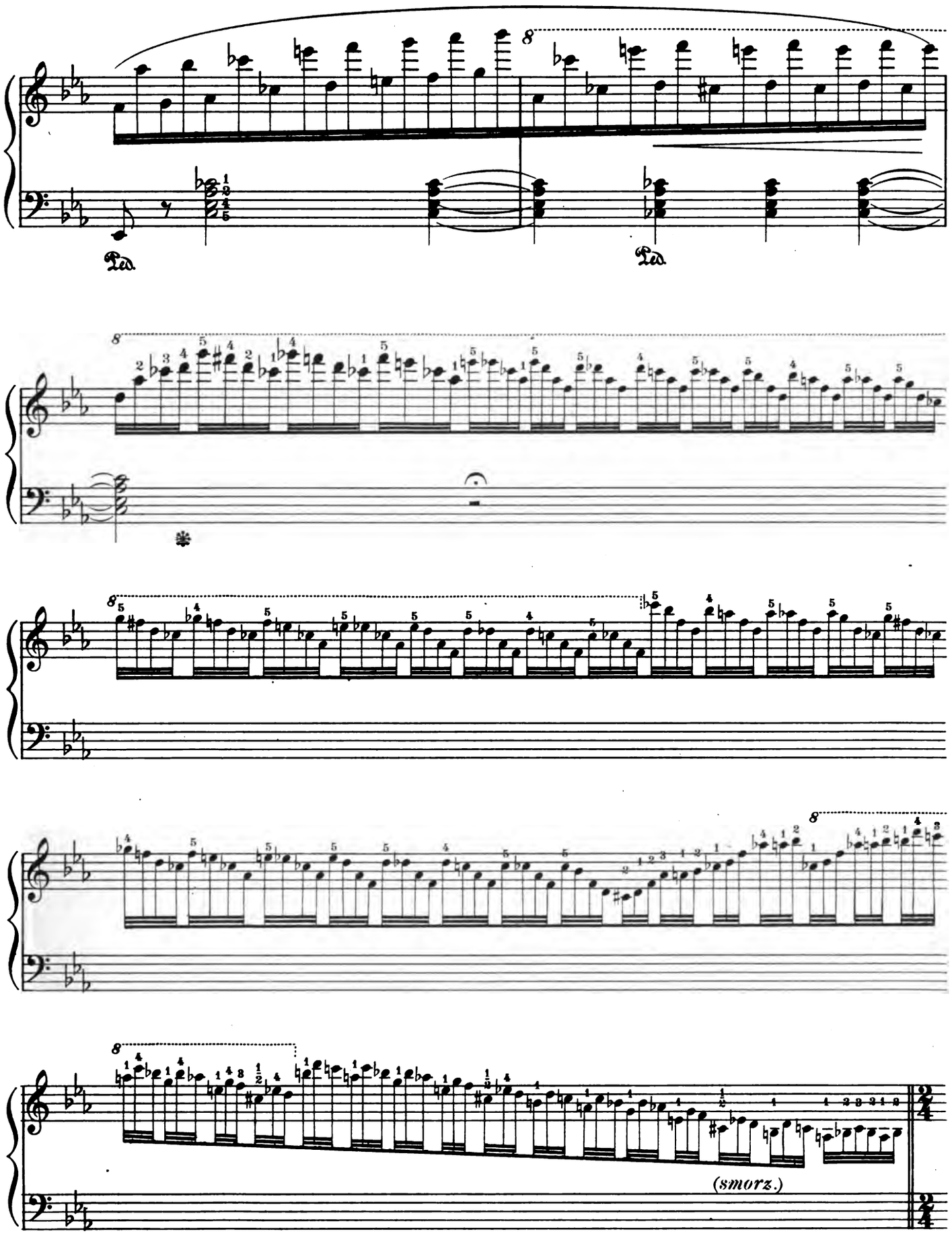

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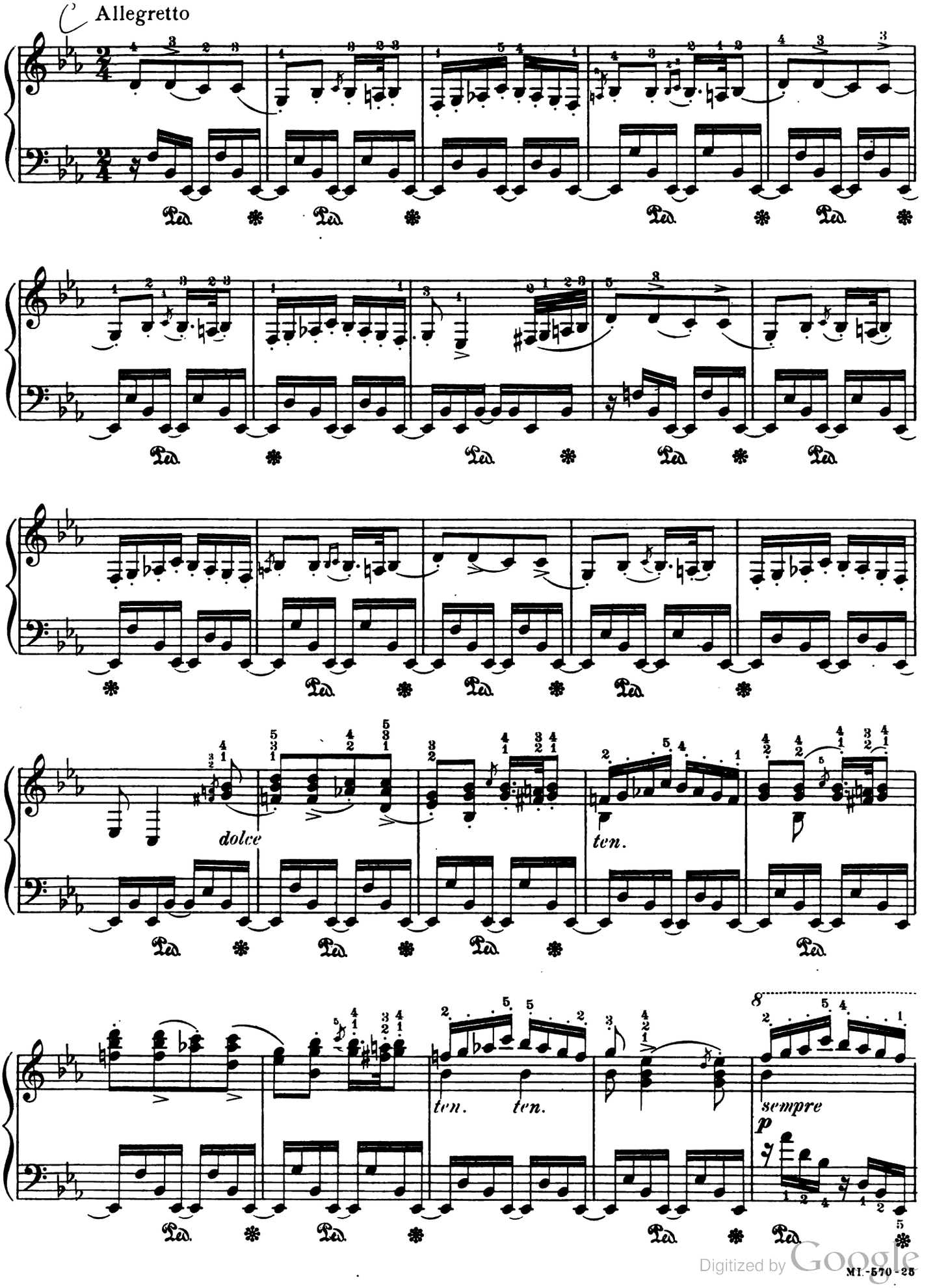

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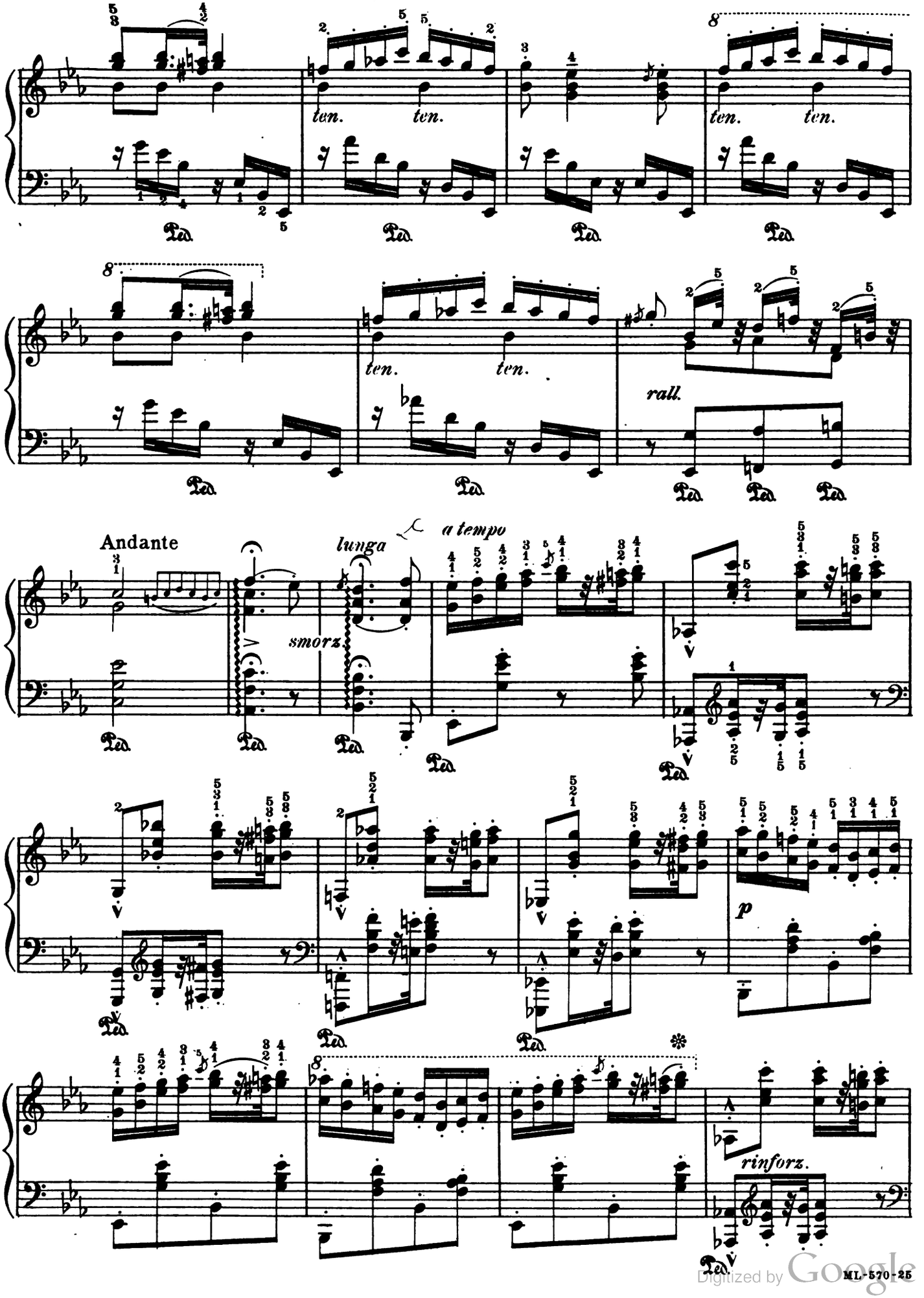

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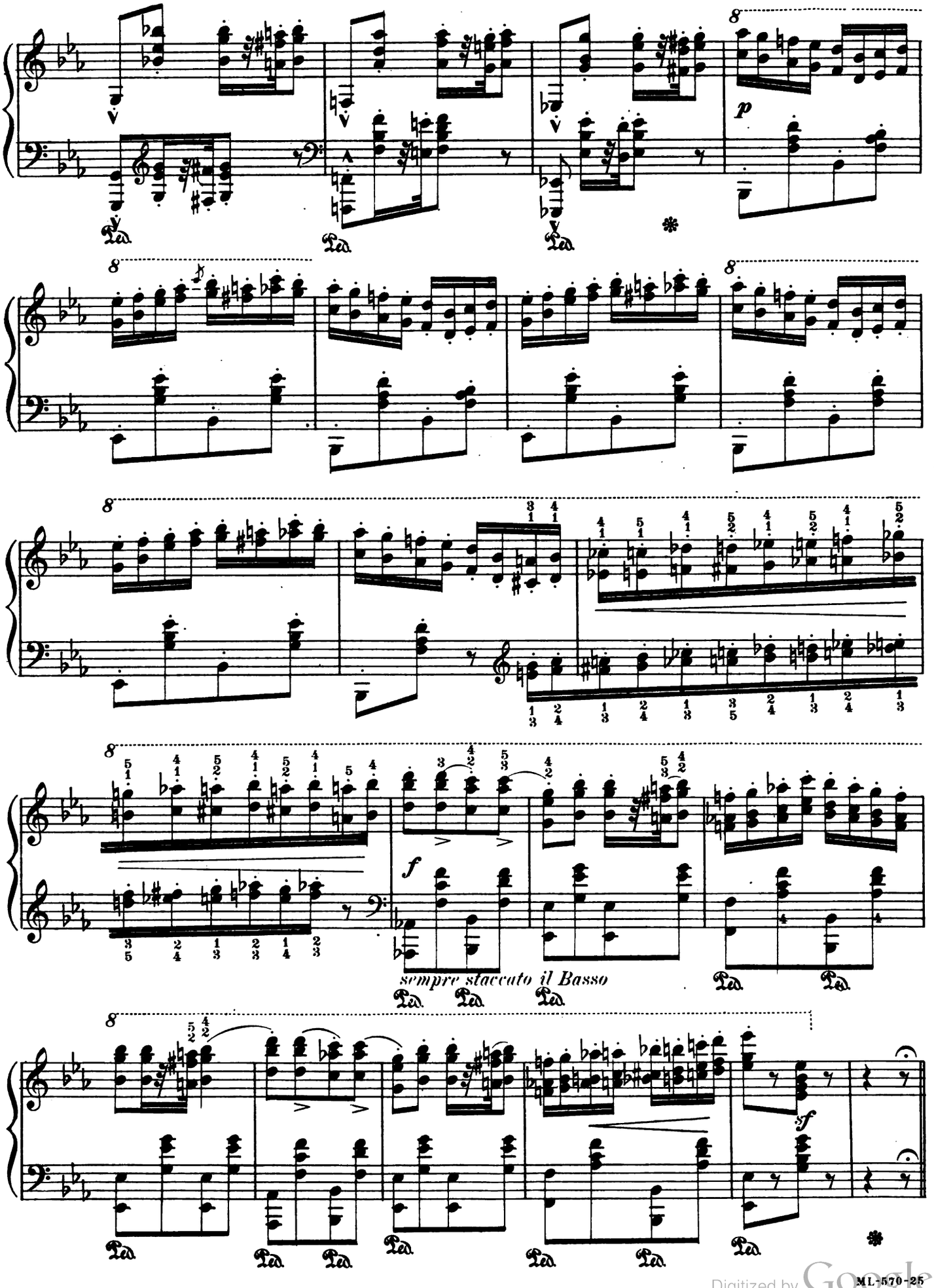

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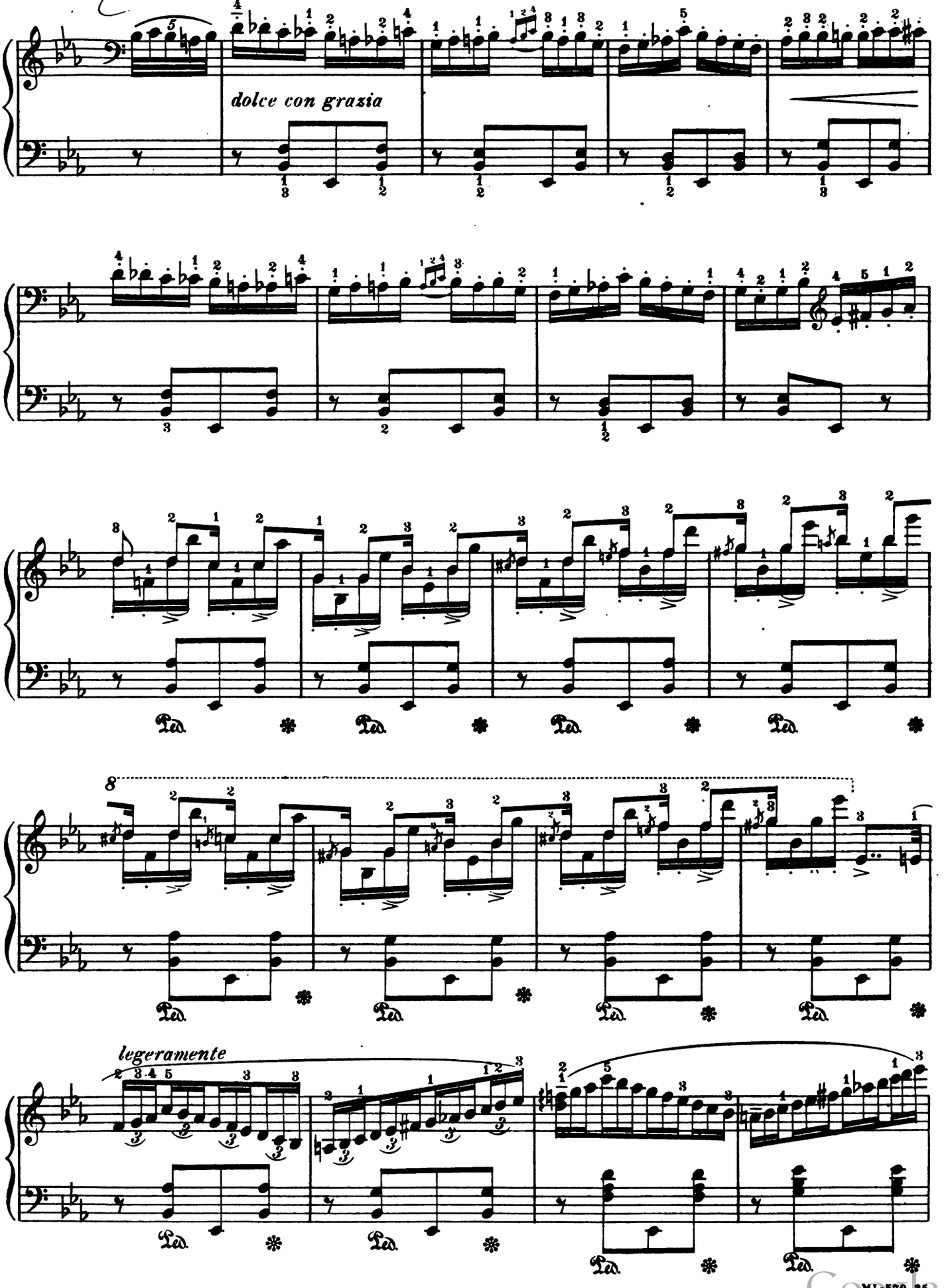

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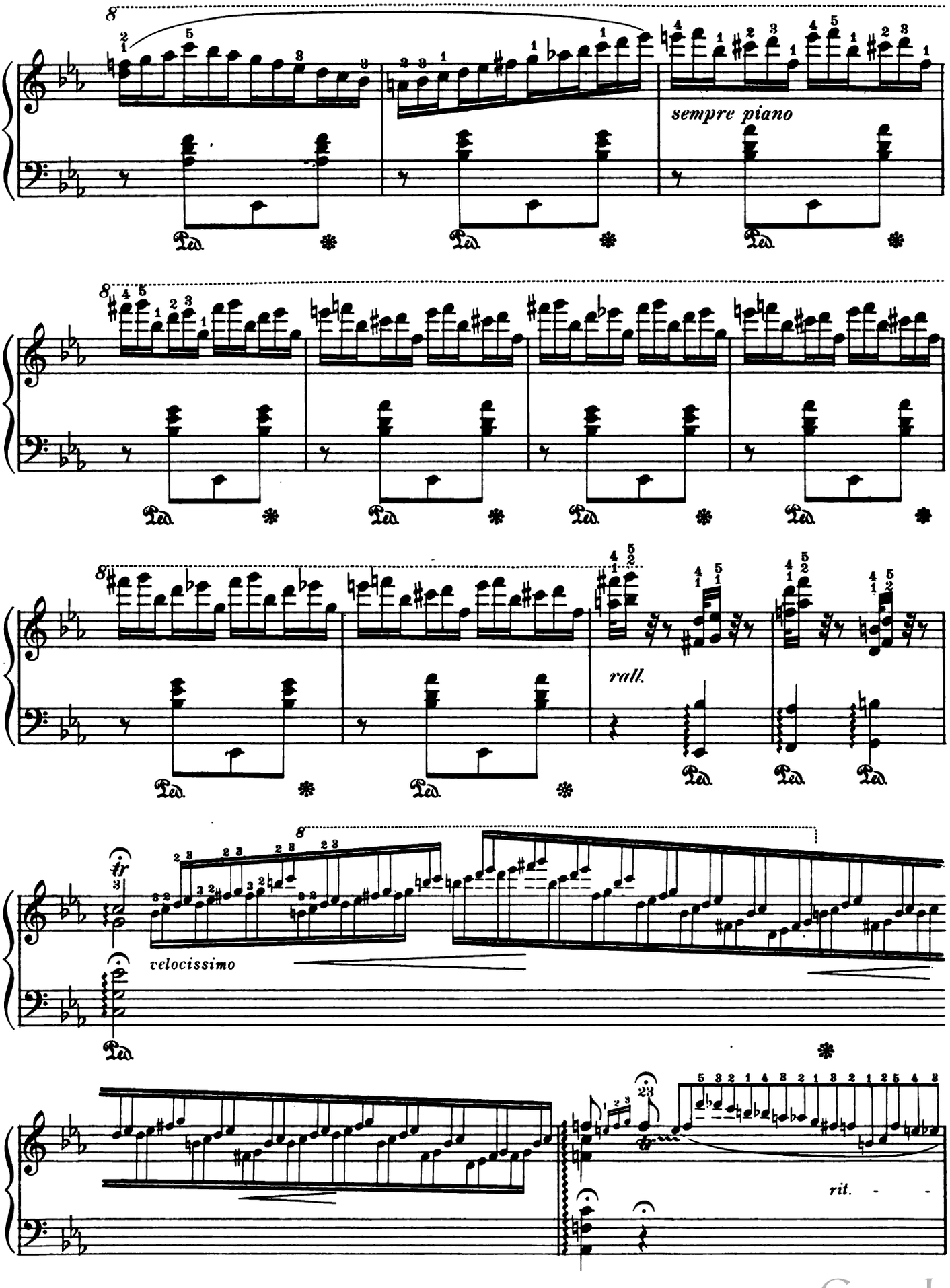

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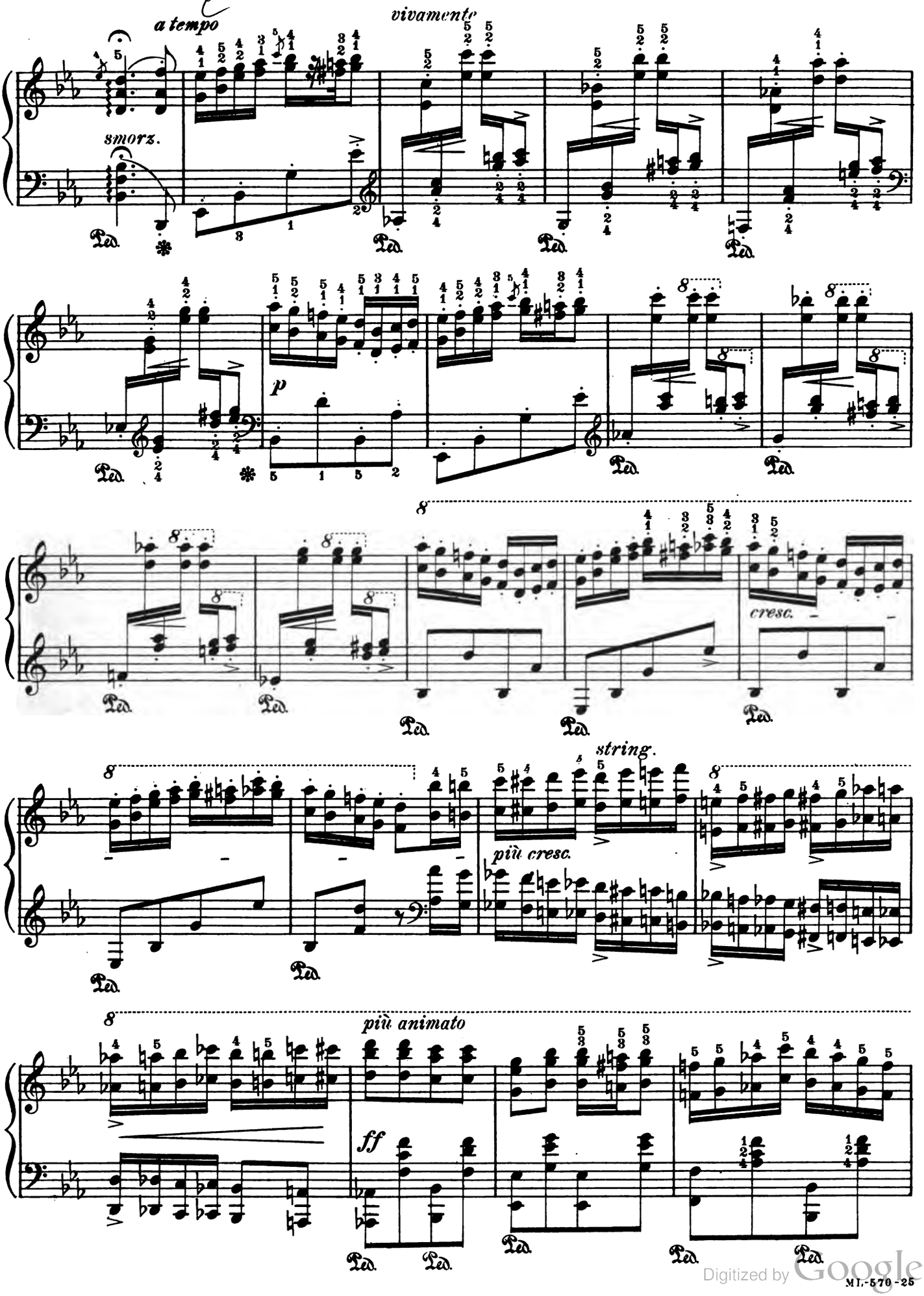

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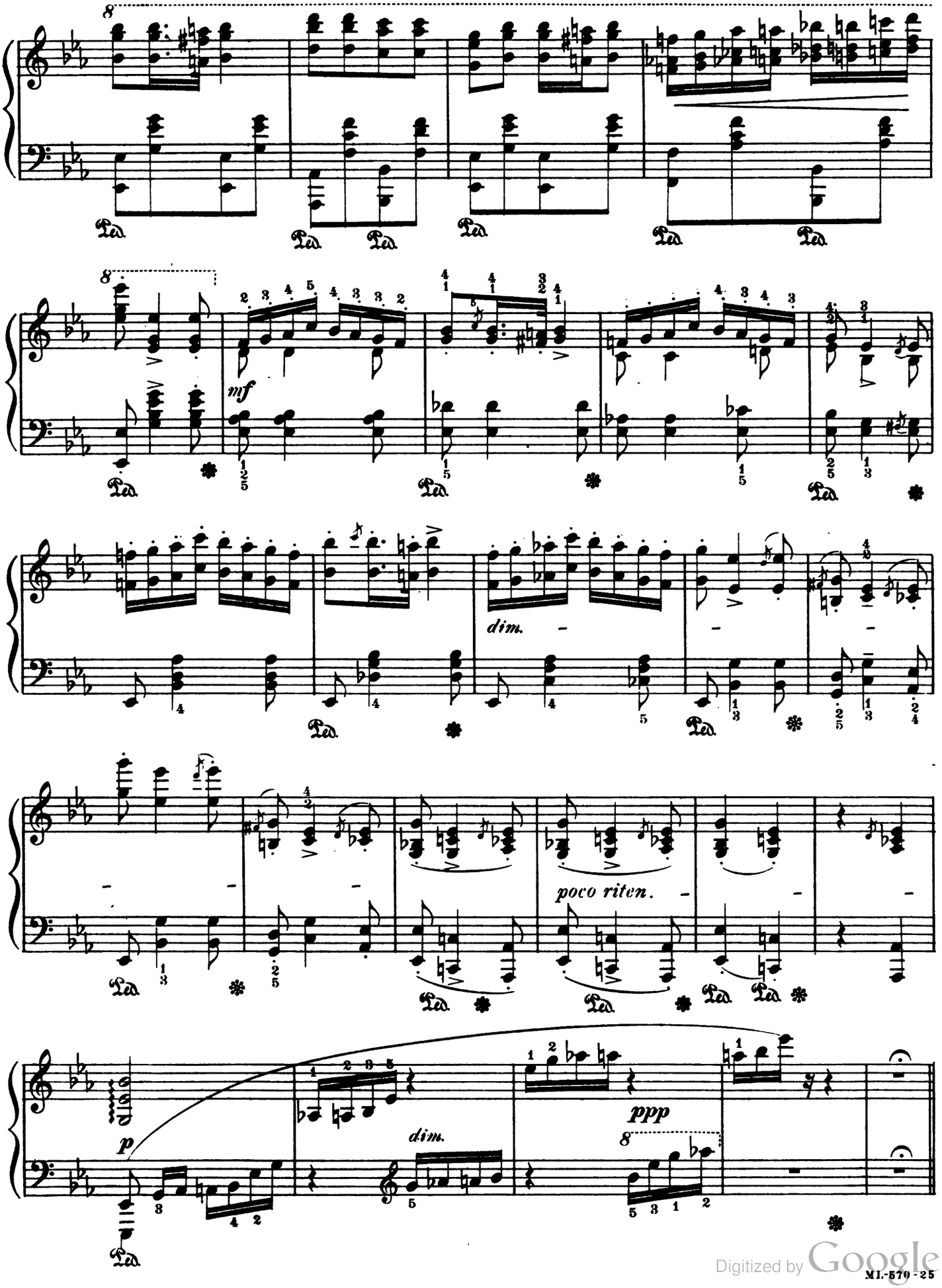

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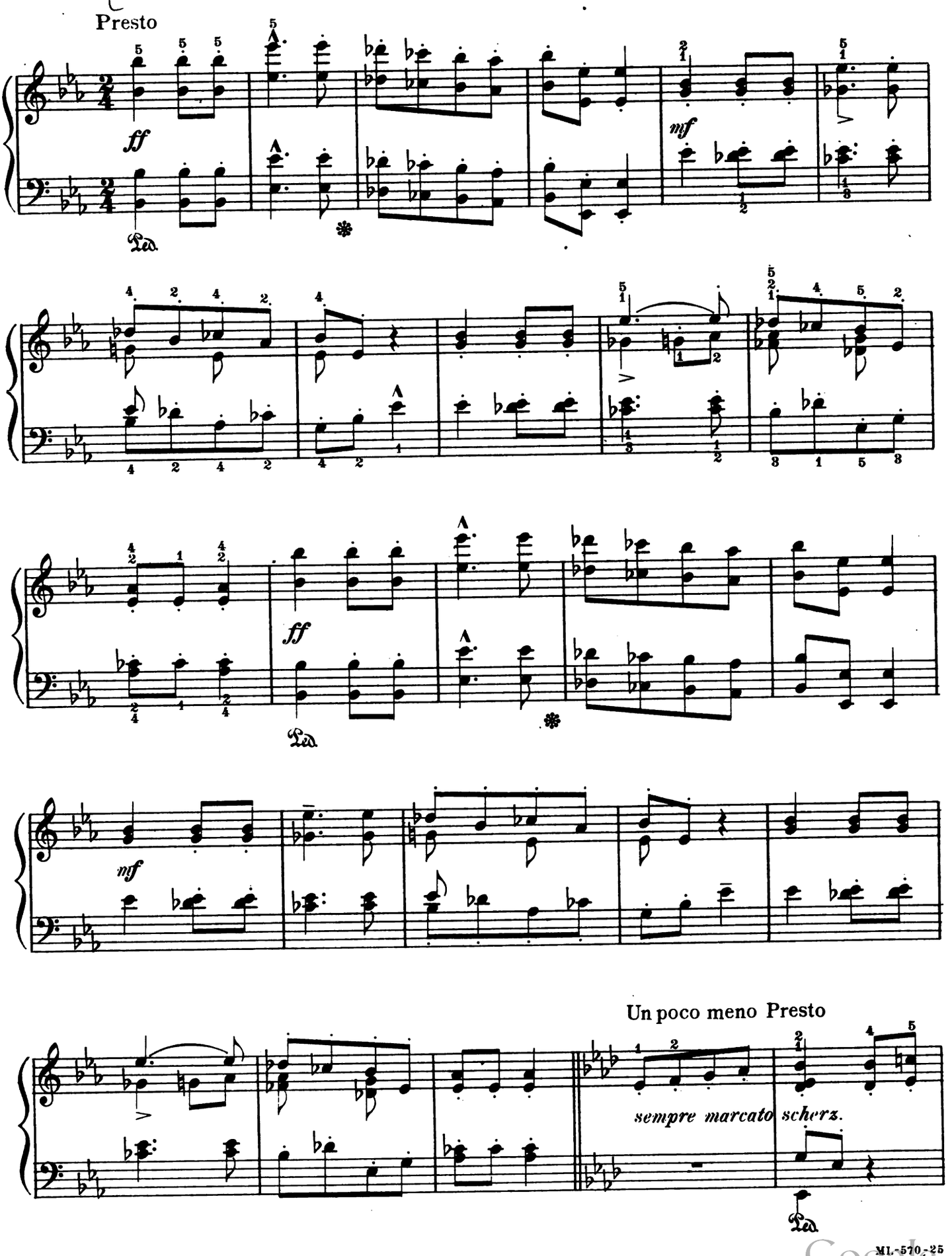

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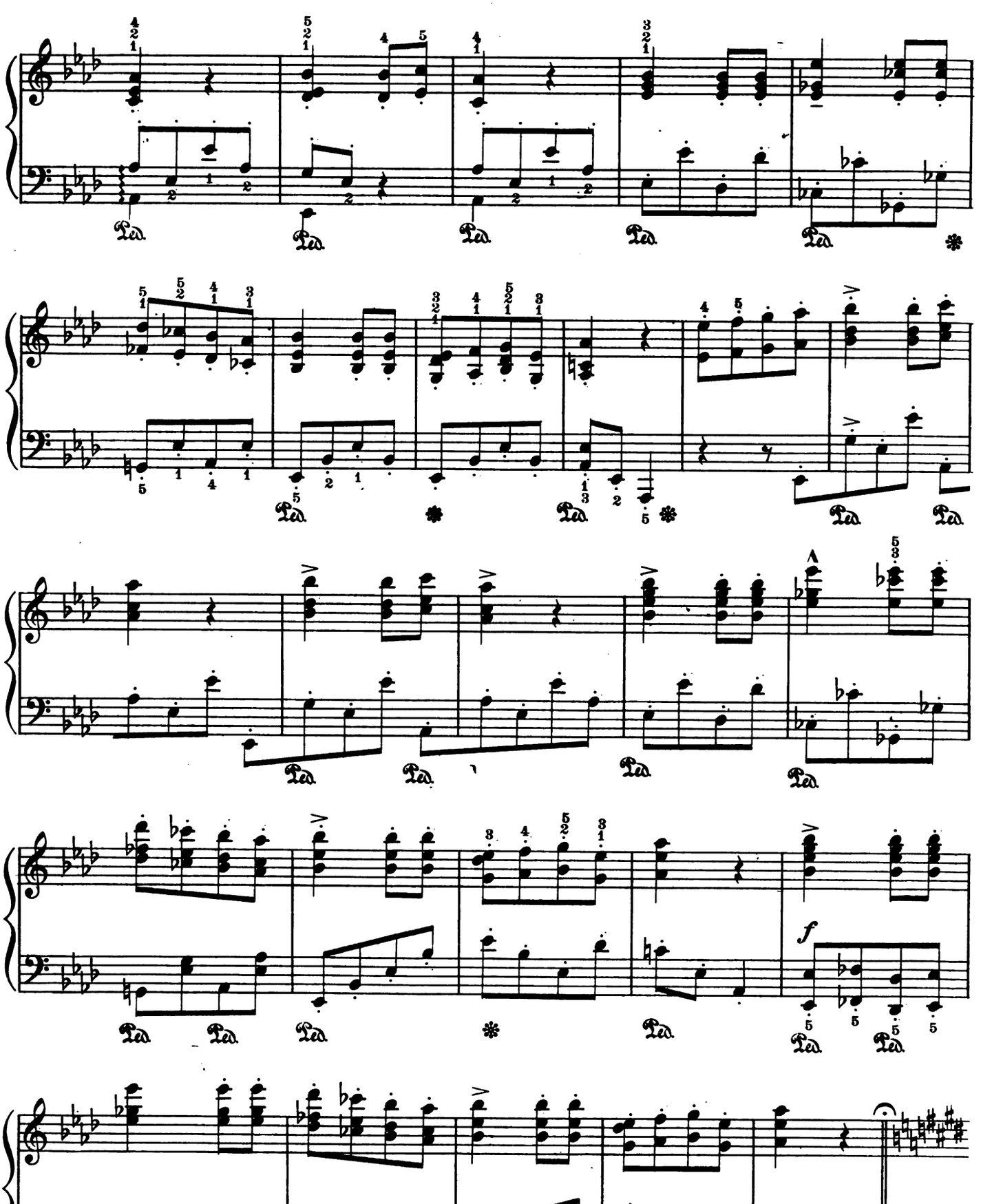

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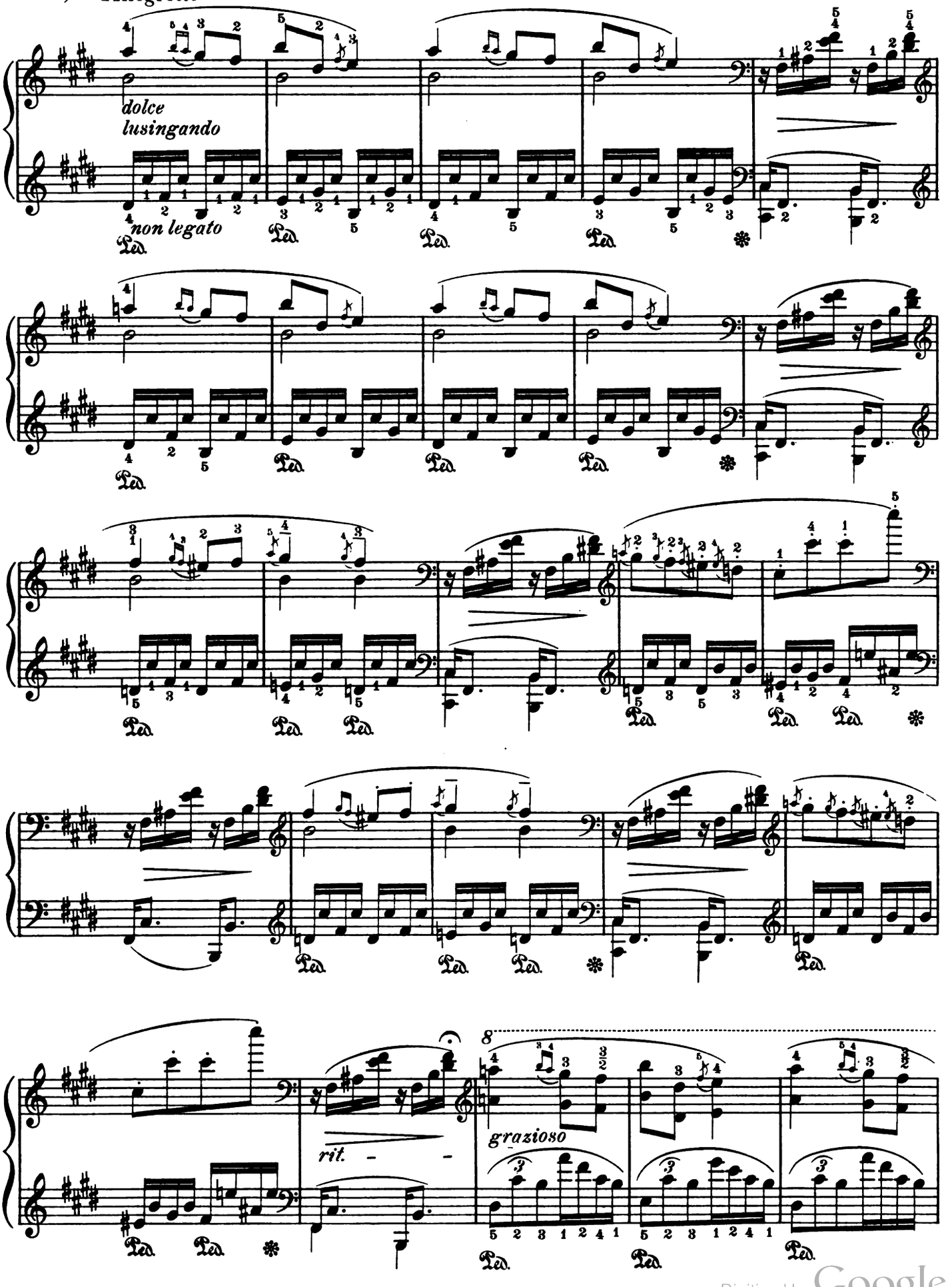
13 Allegretto



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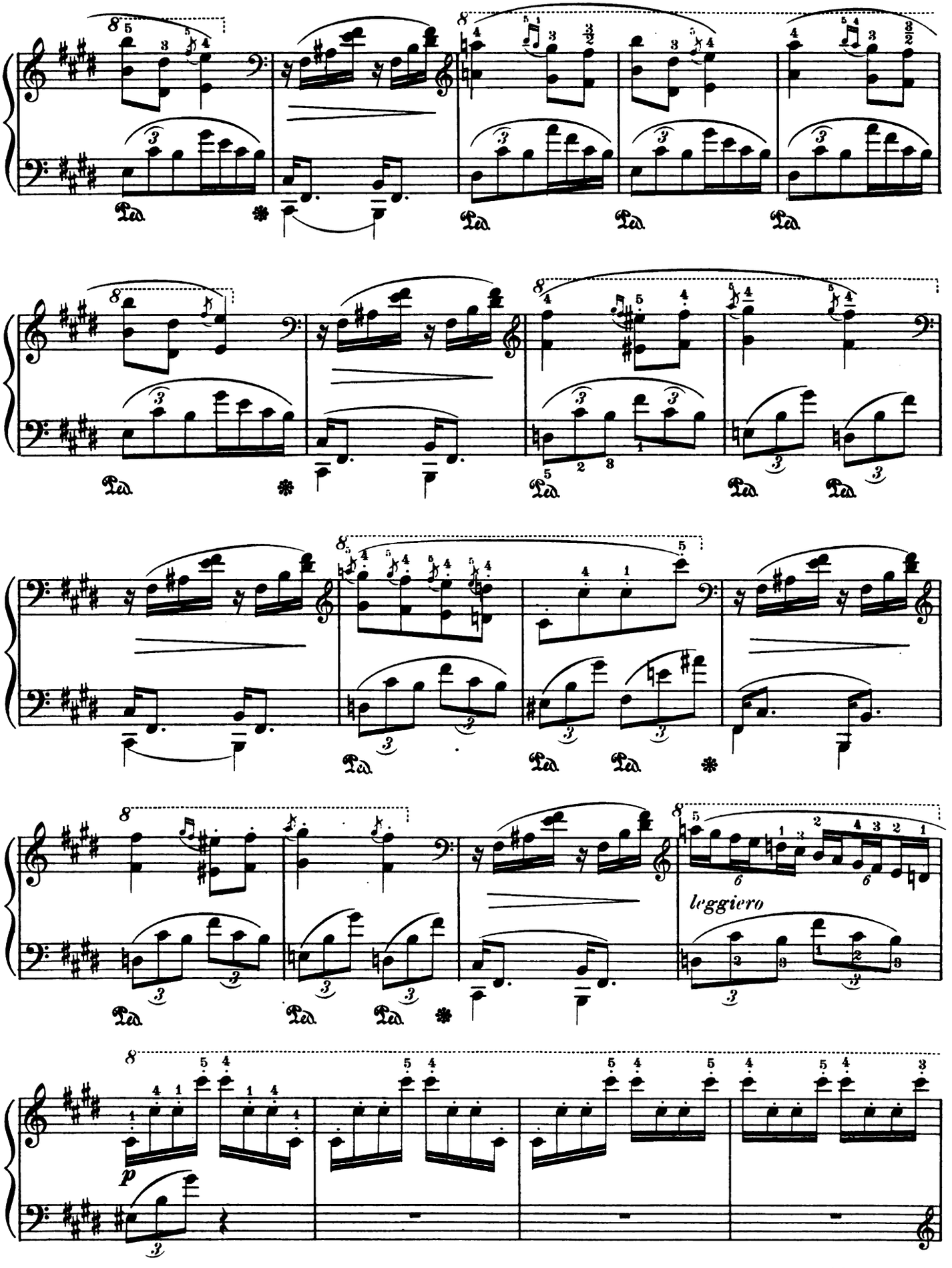

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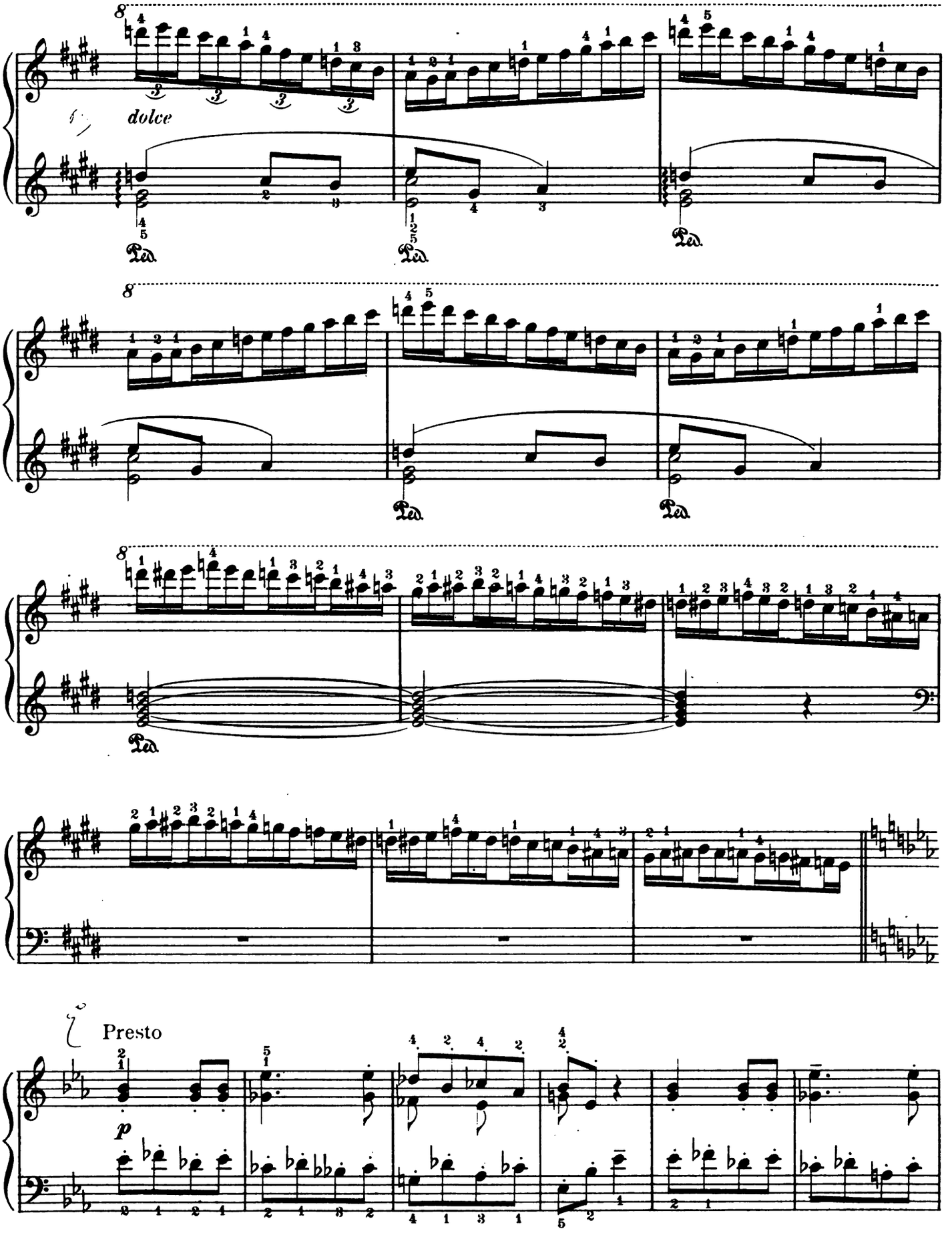

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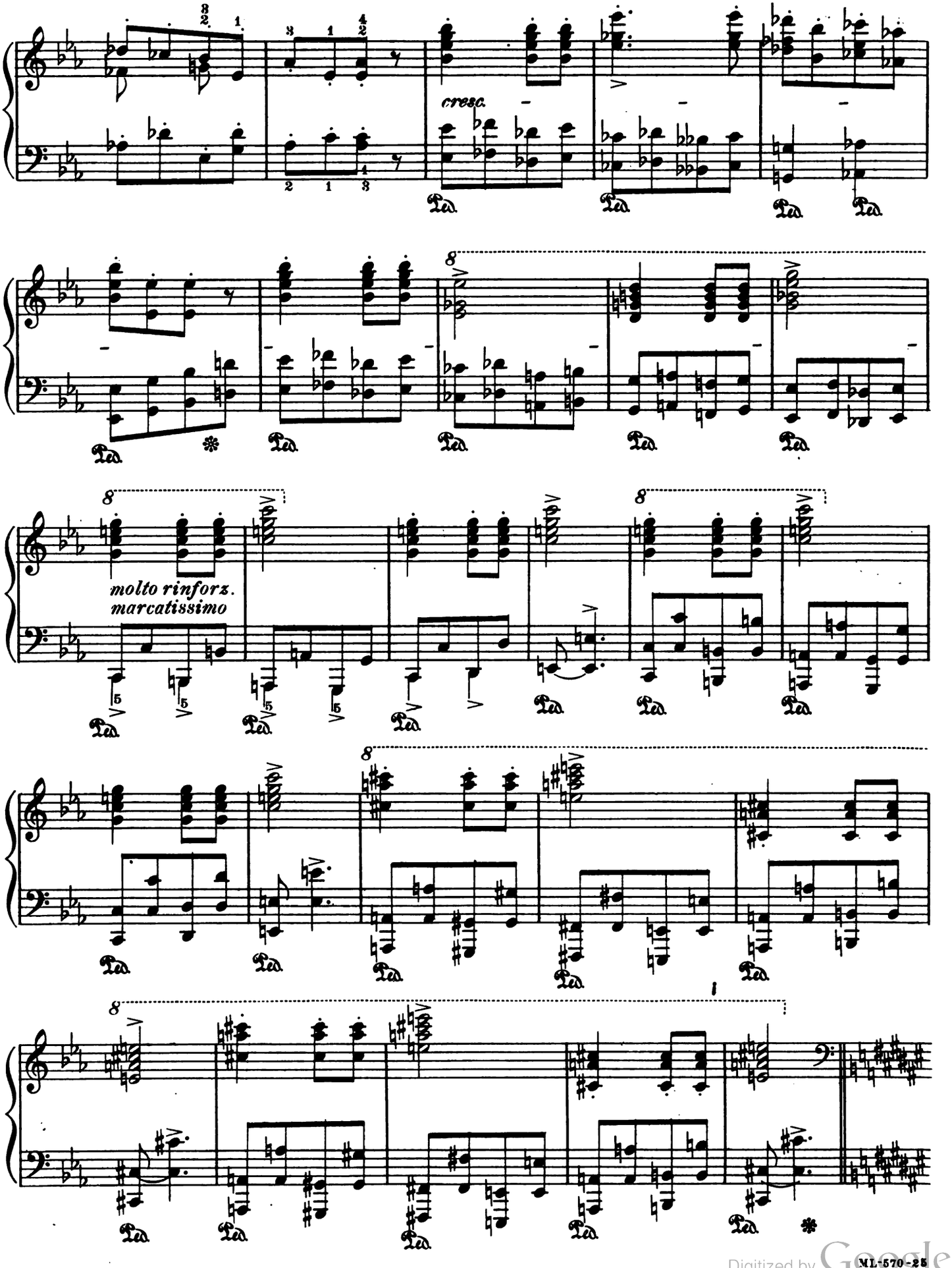

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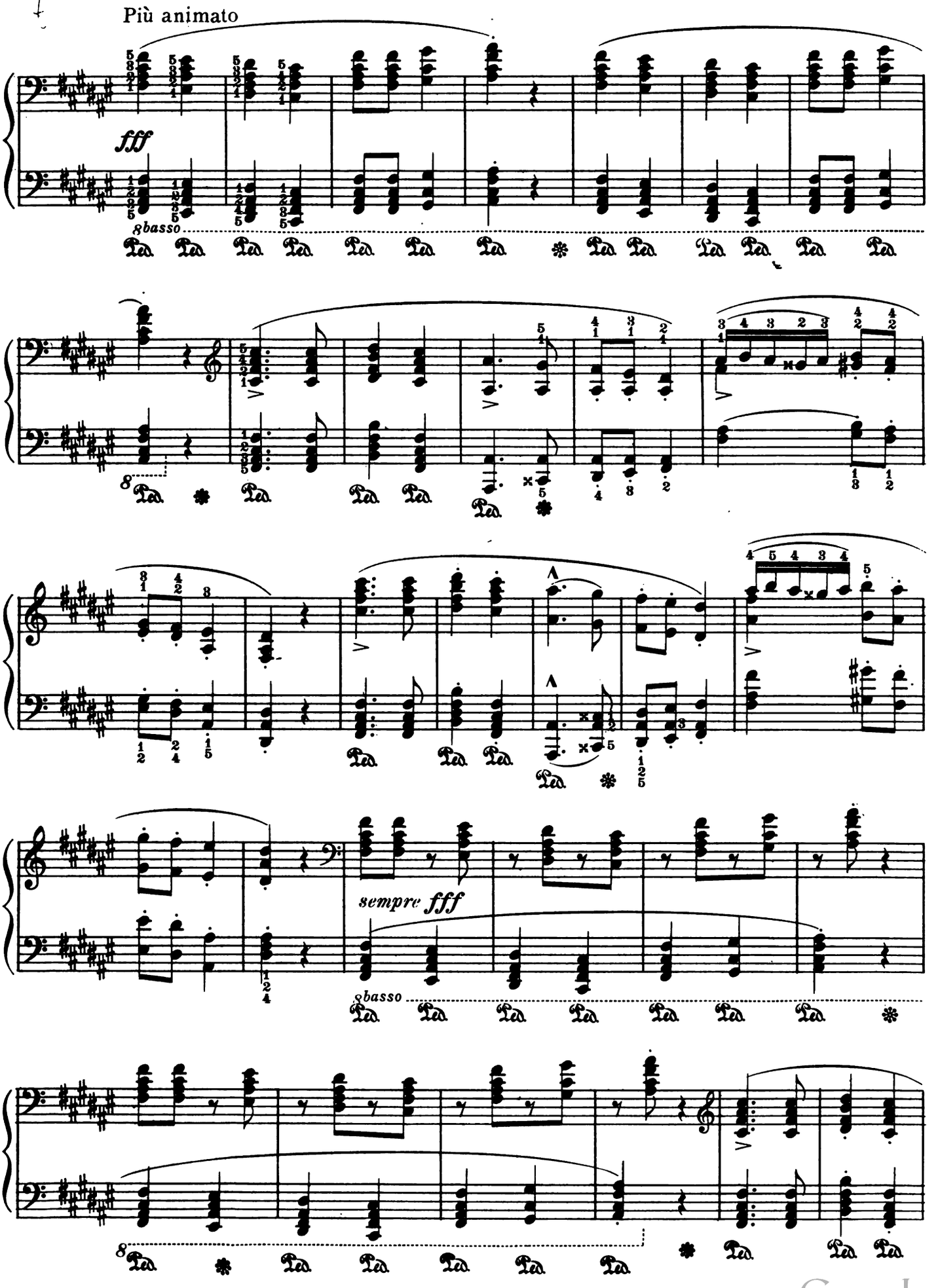

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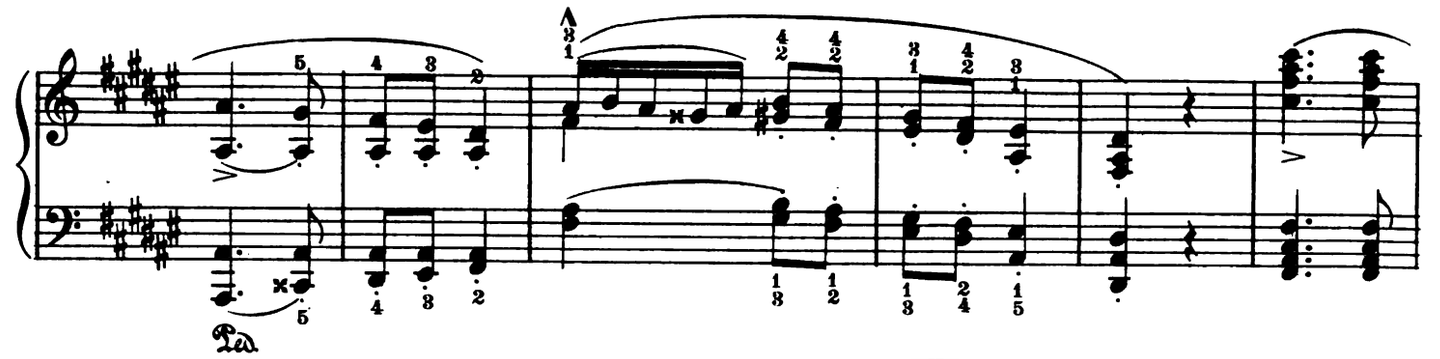

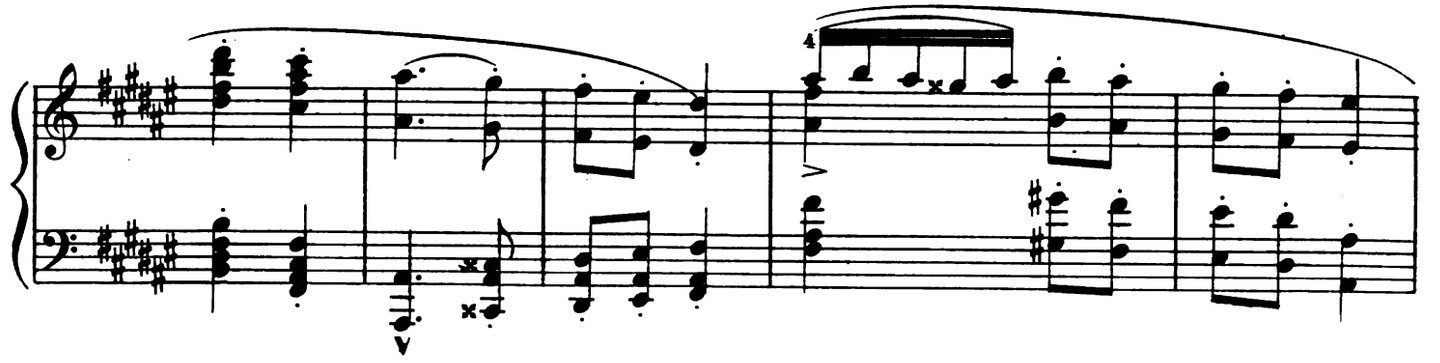

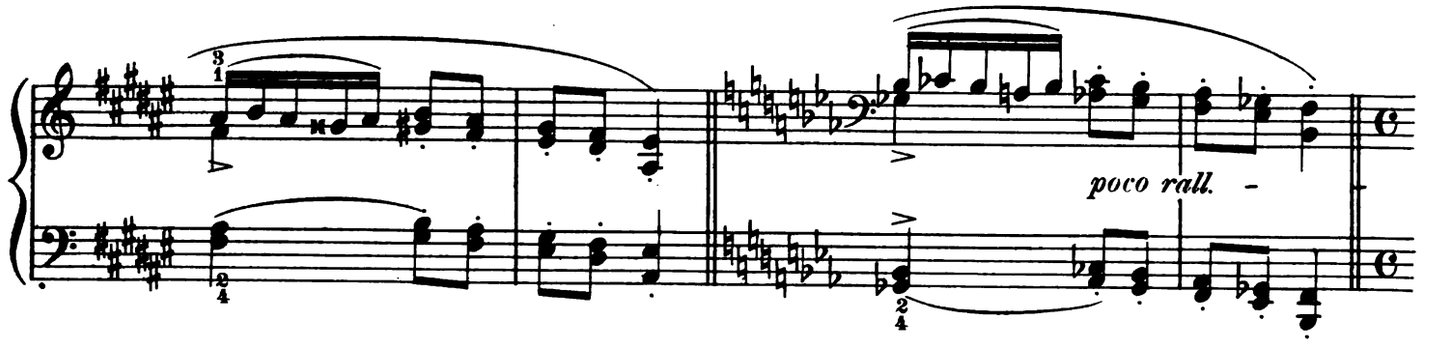

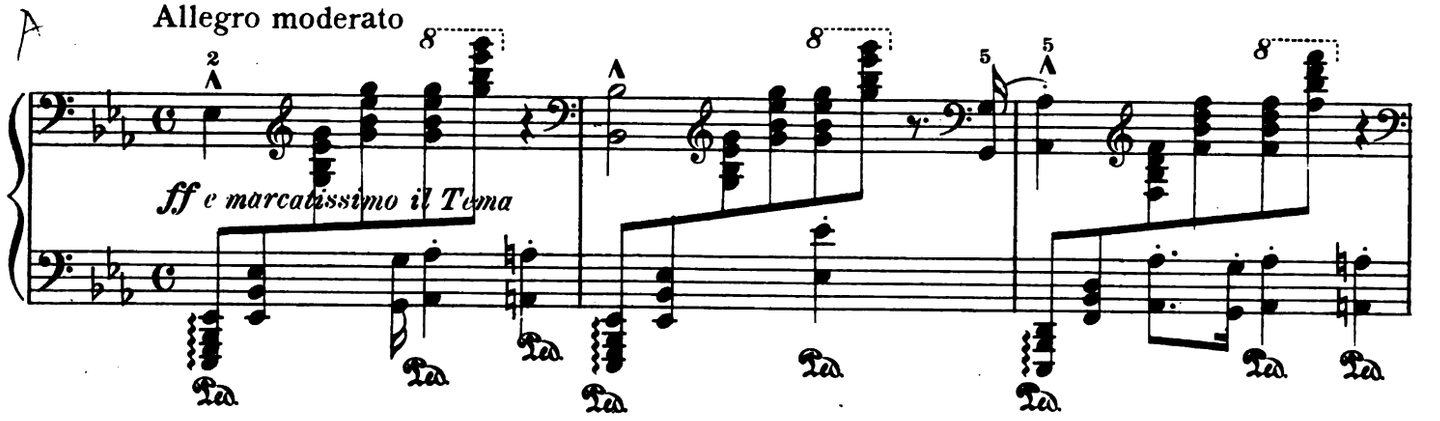

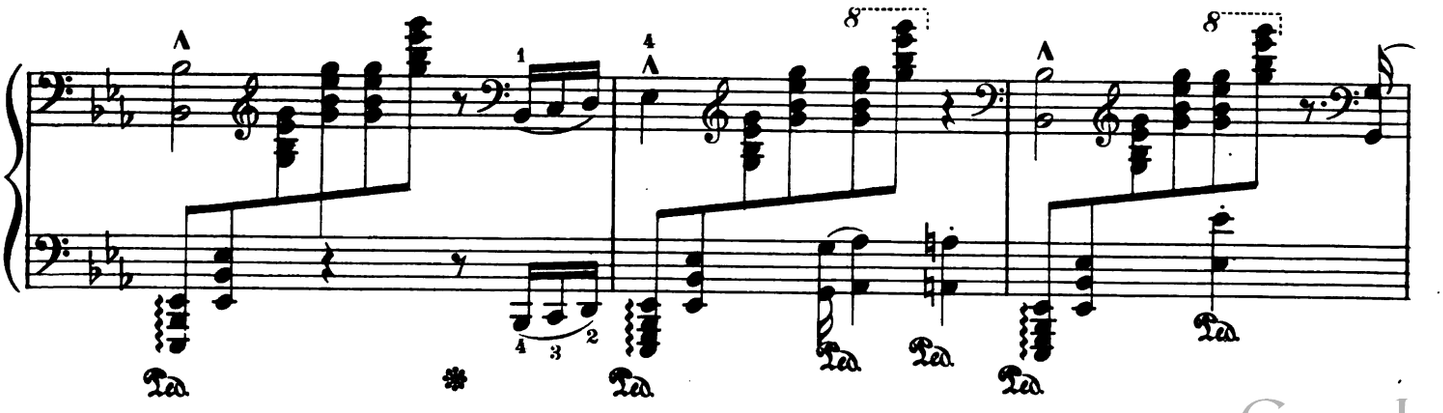

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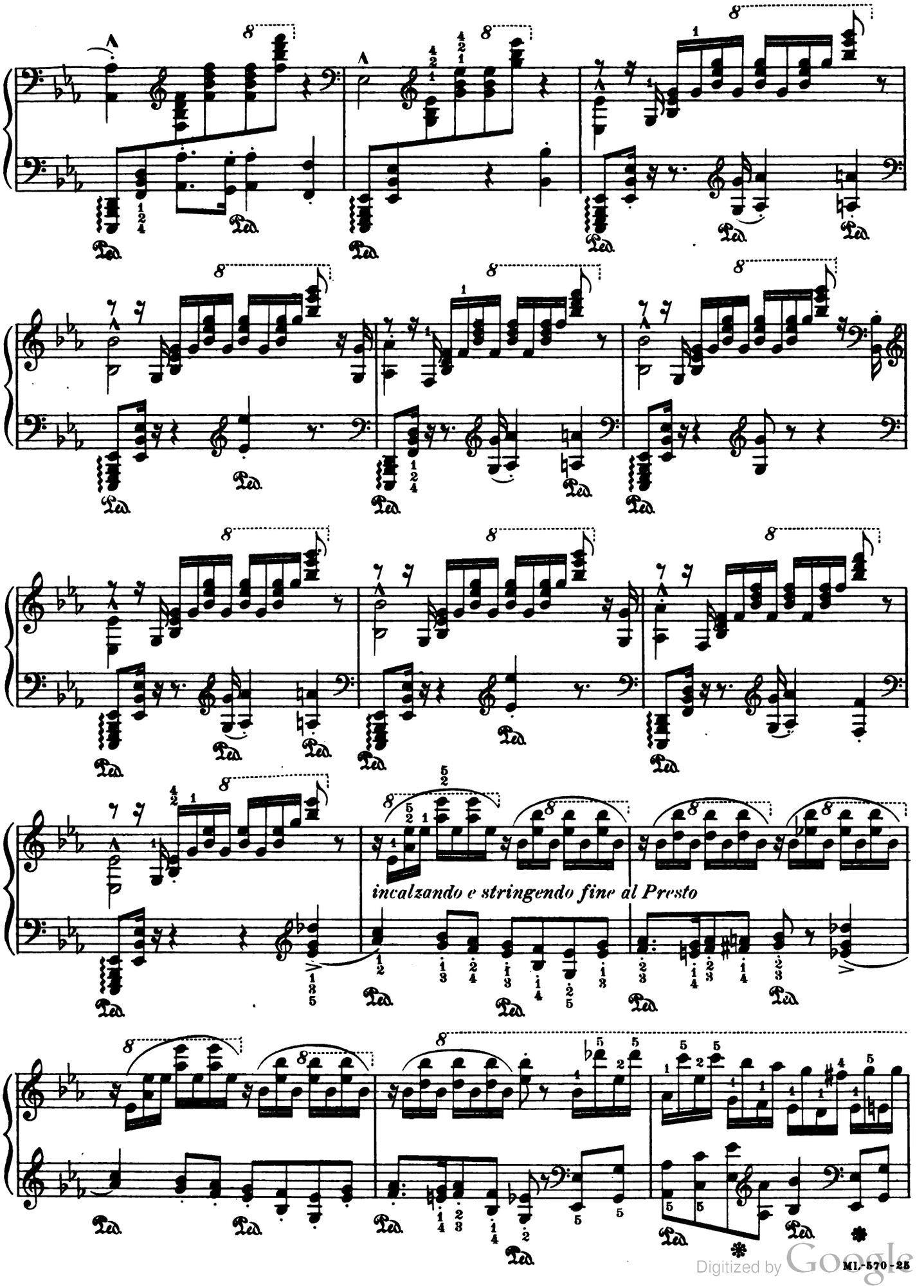

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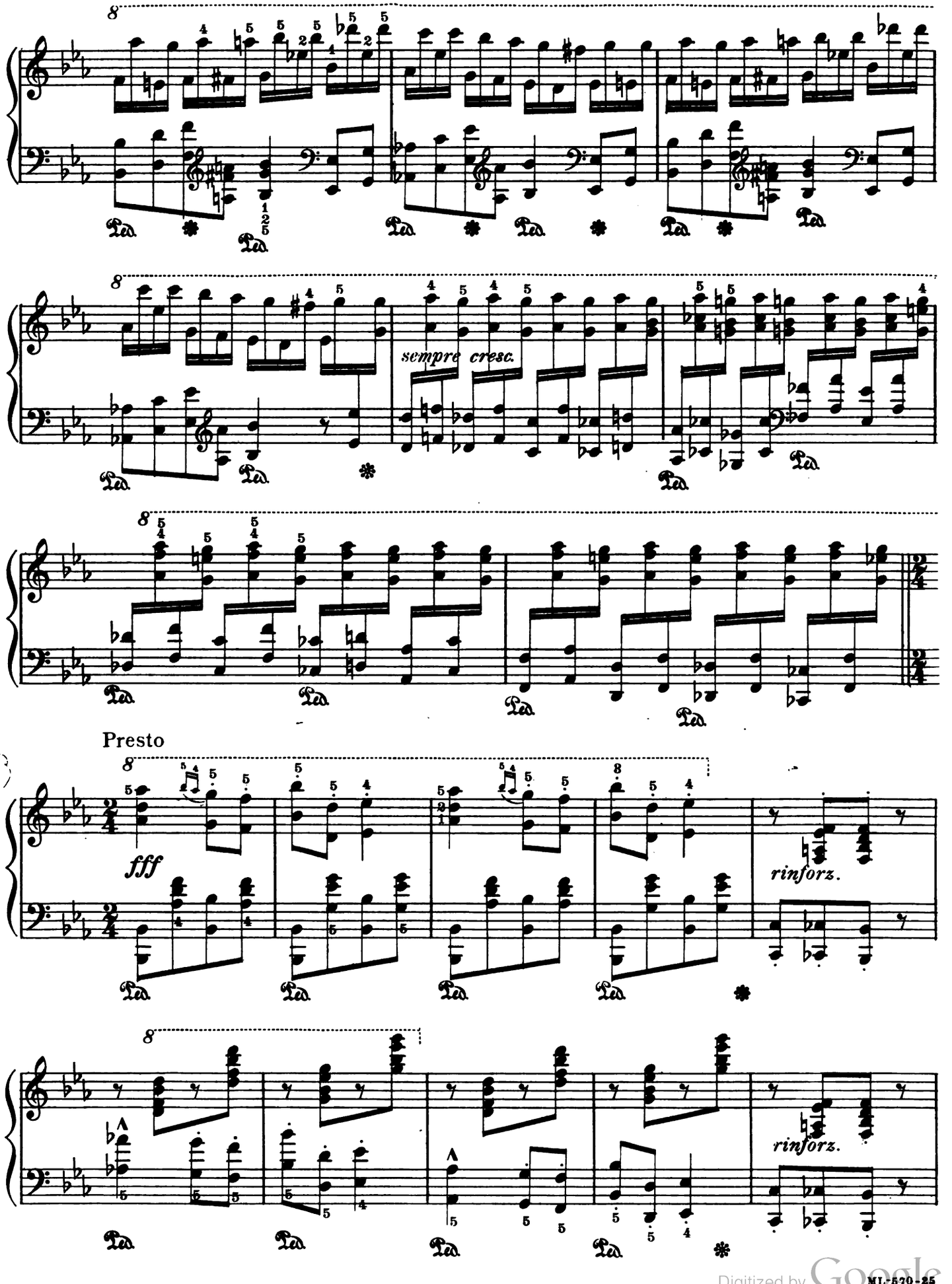

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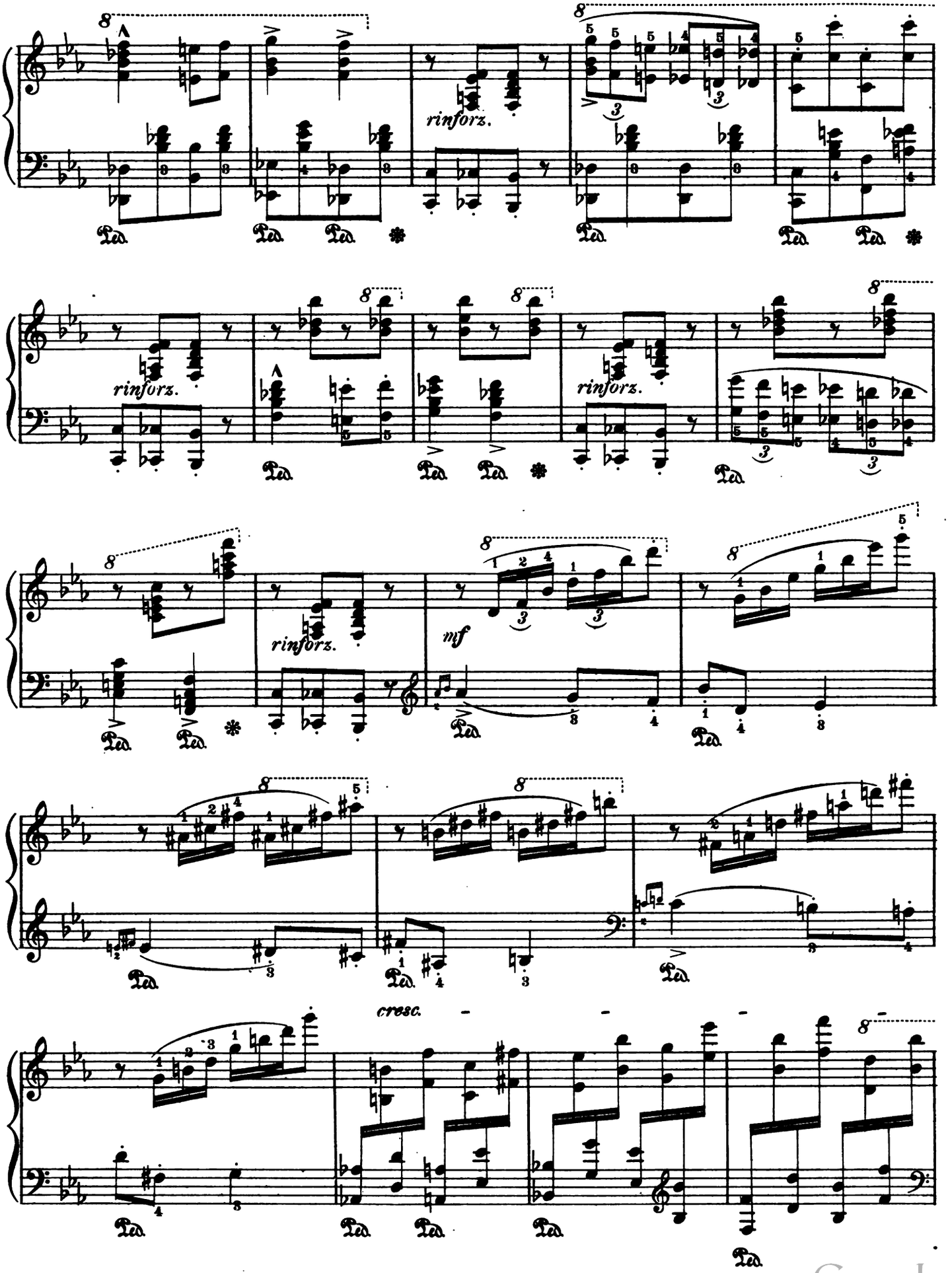

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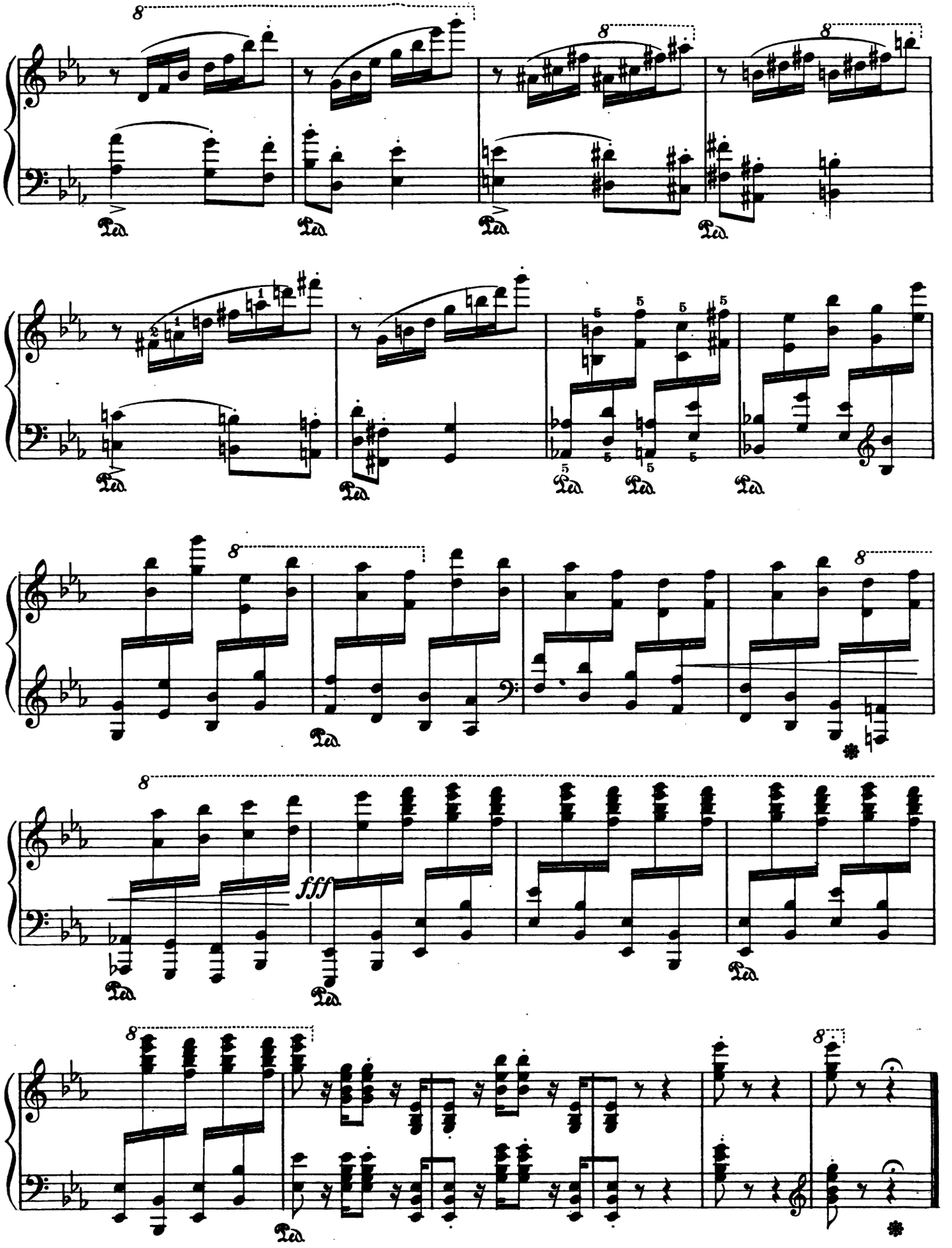

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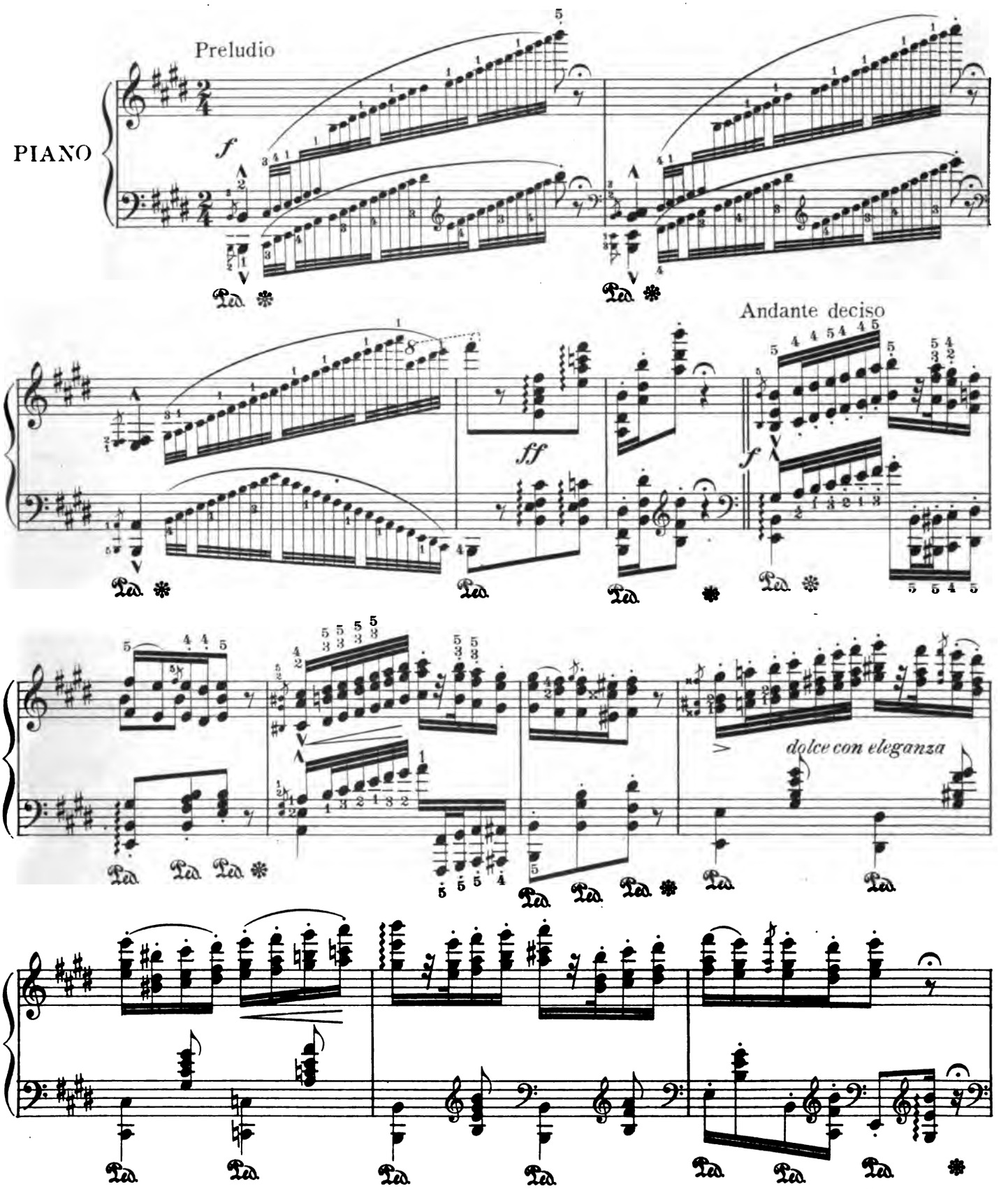
To Egressy Bény

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY № 10
(PRELUDIO)

(Published in 1853)

Edited and fingered by
August Spanuth

FRANZ LIŞZT



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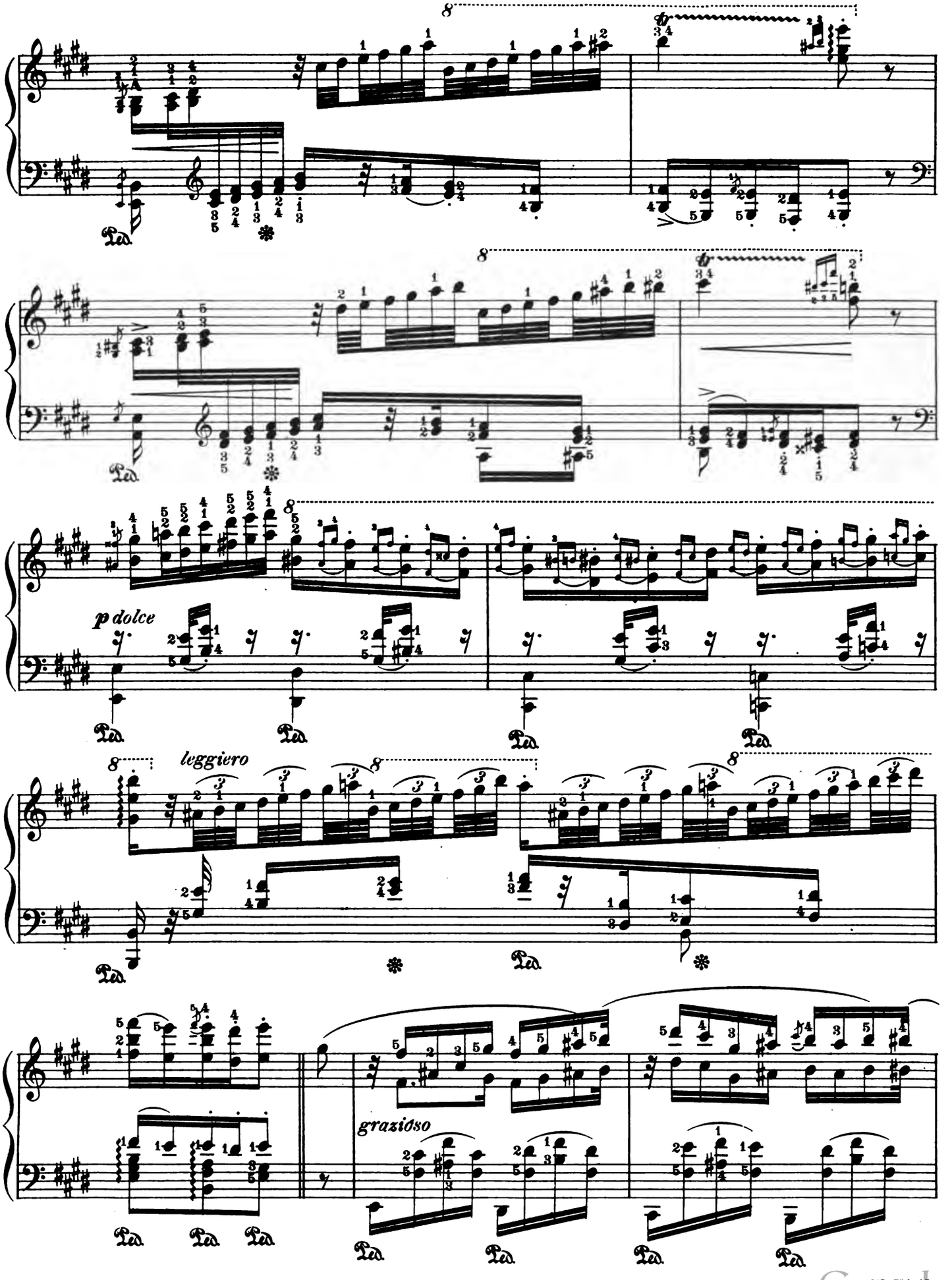

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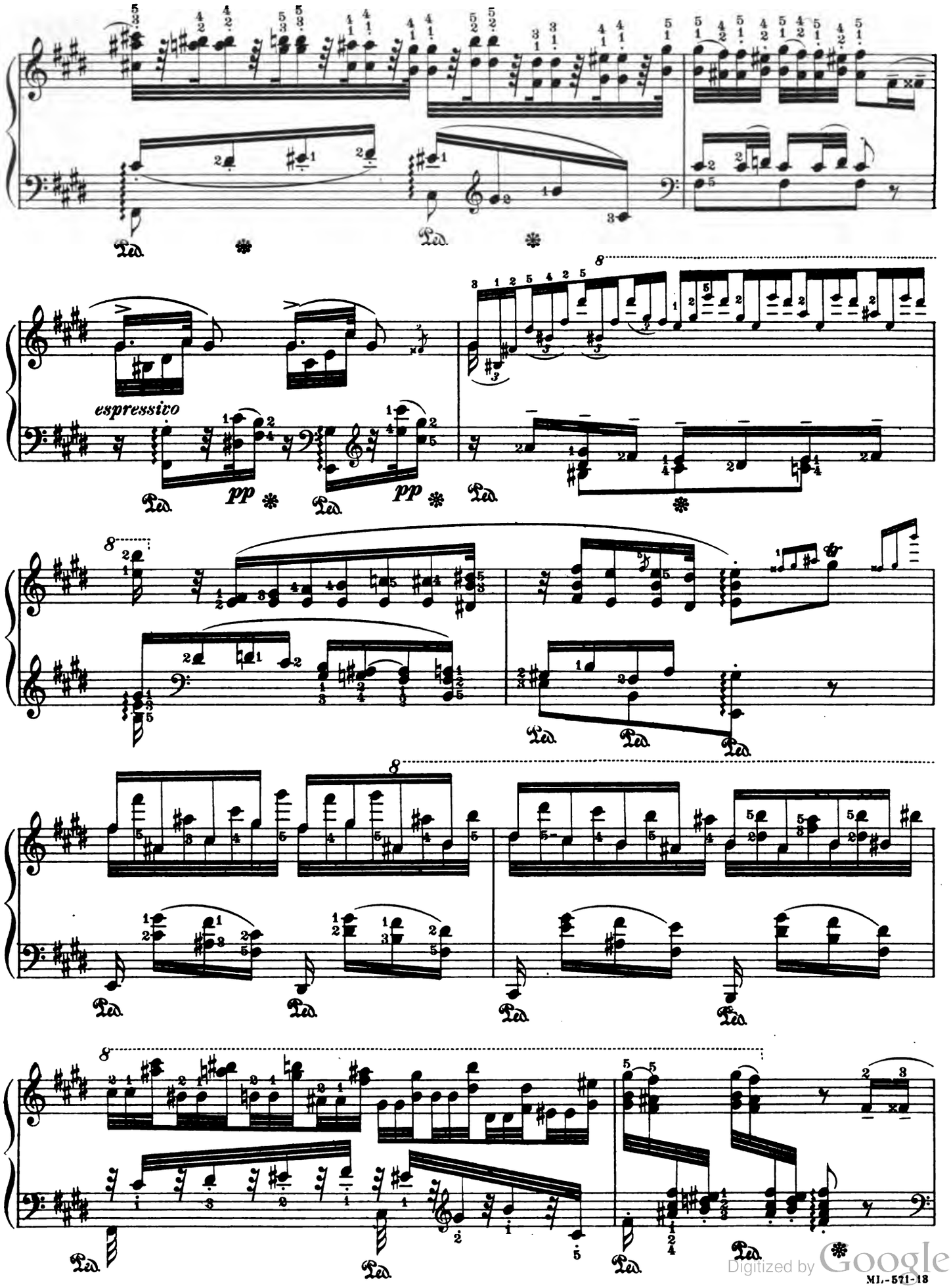

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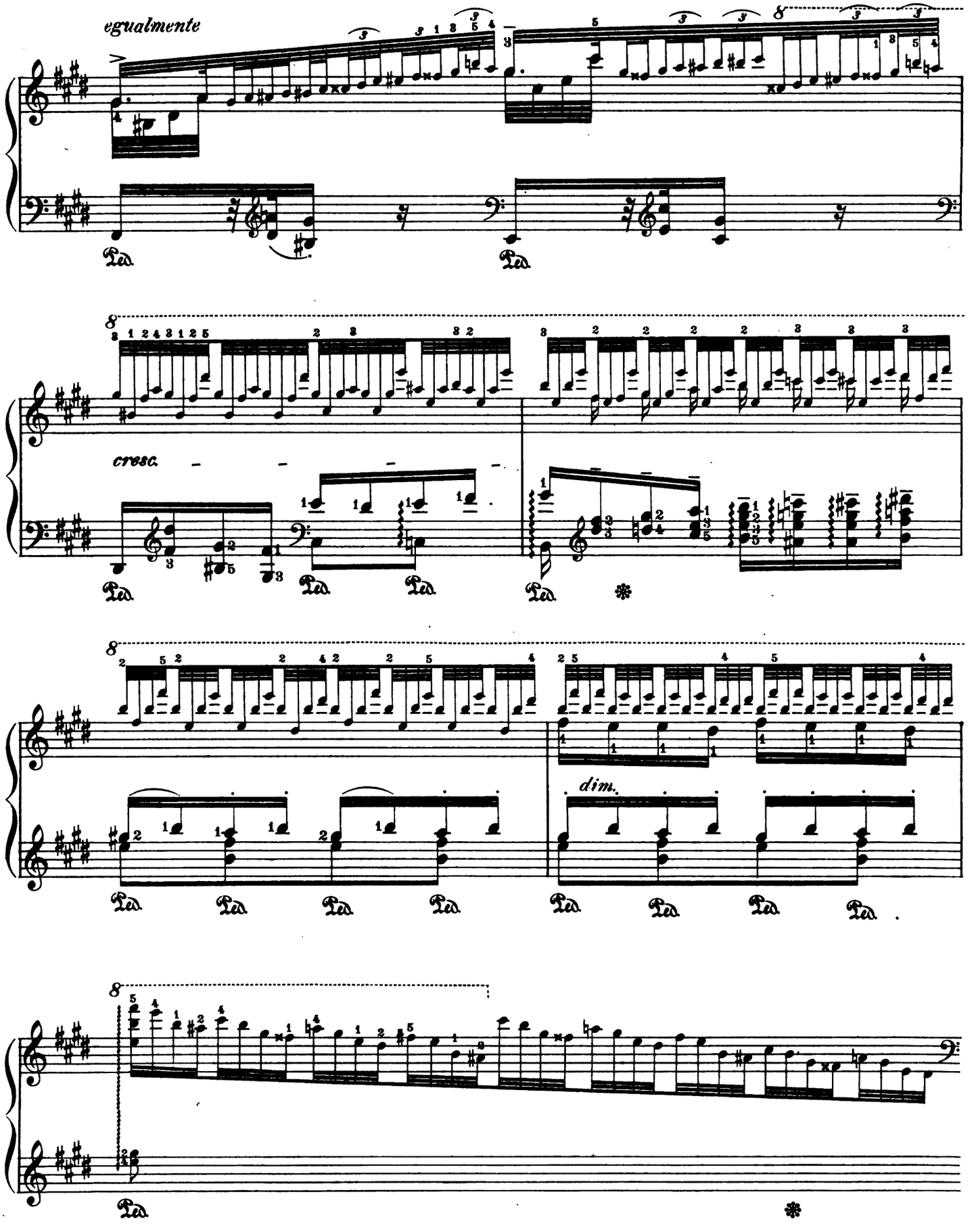

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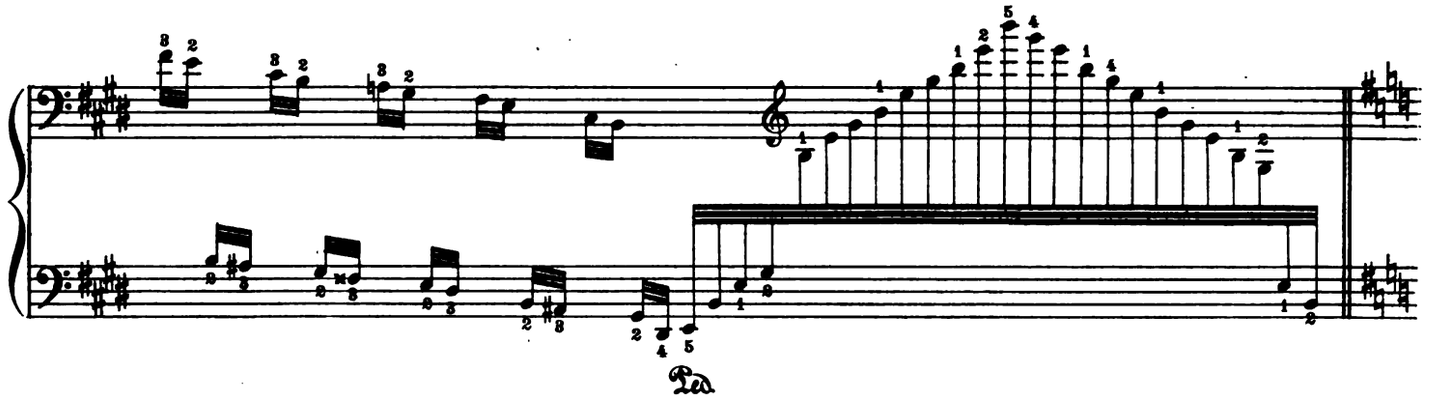
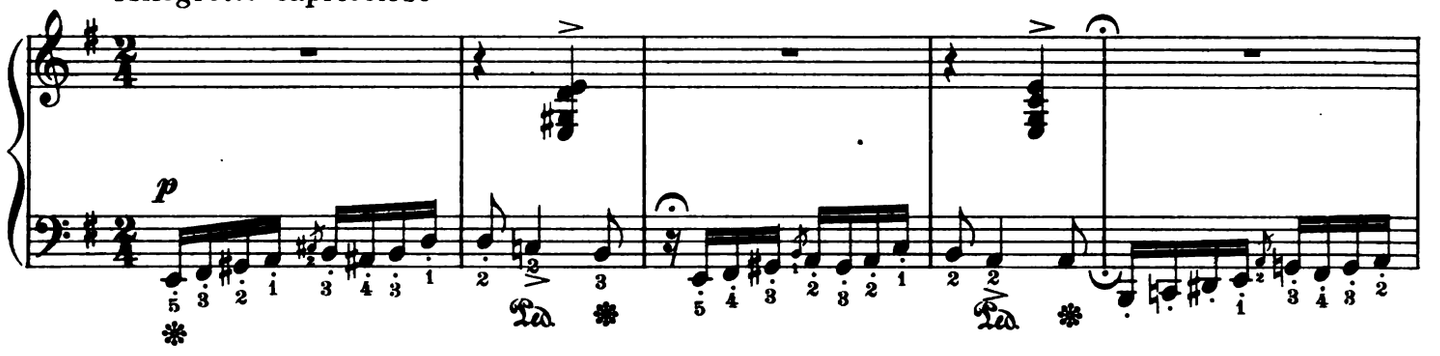
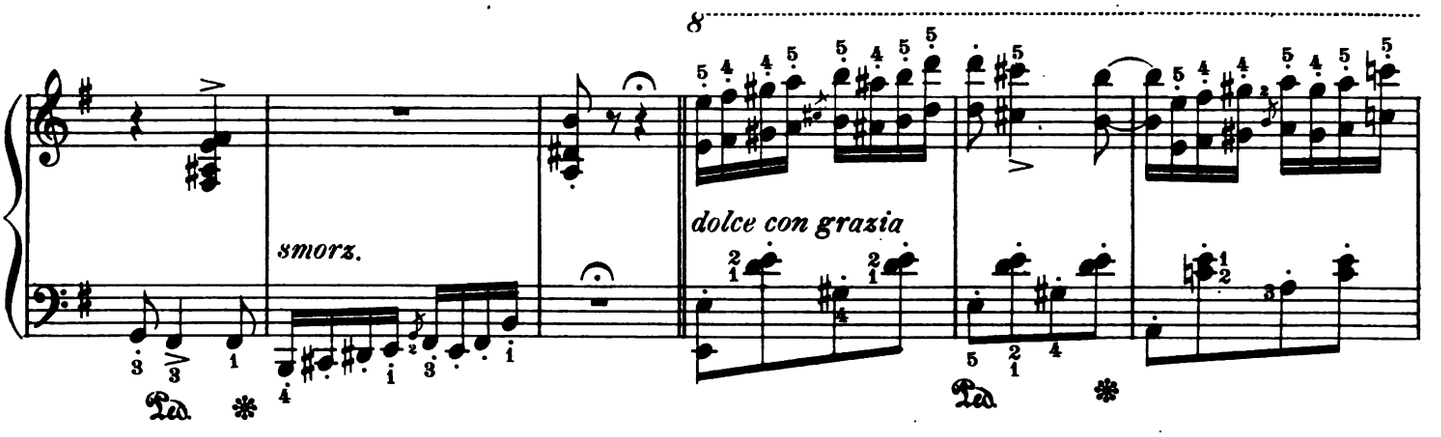
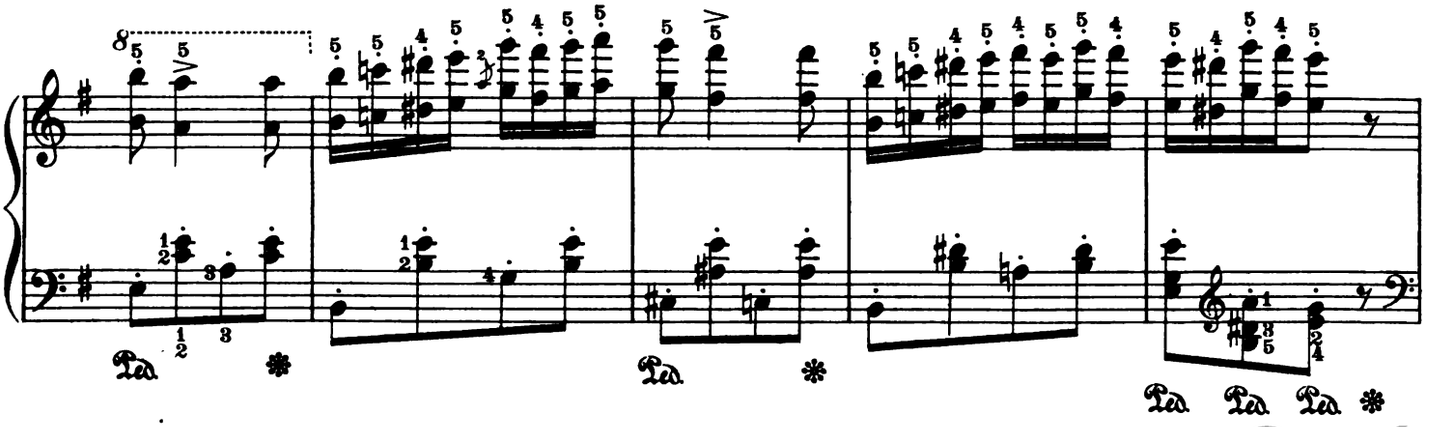


Allegretto capriccioso







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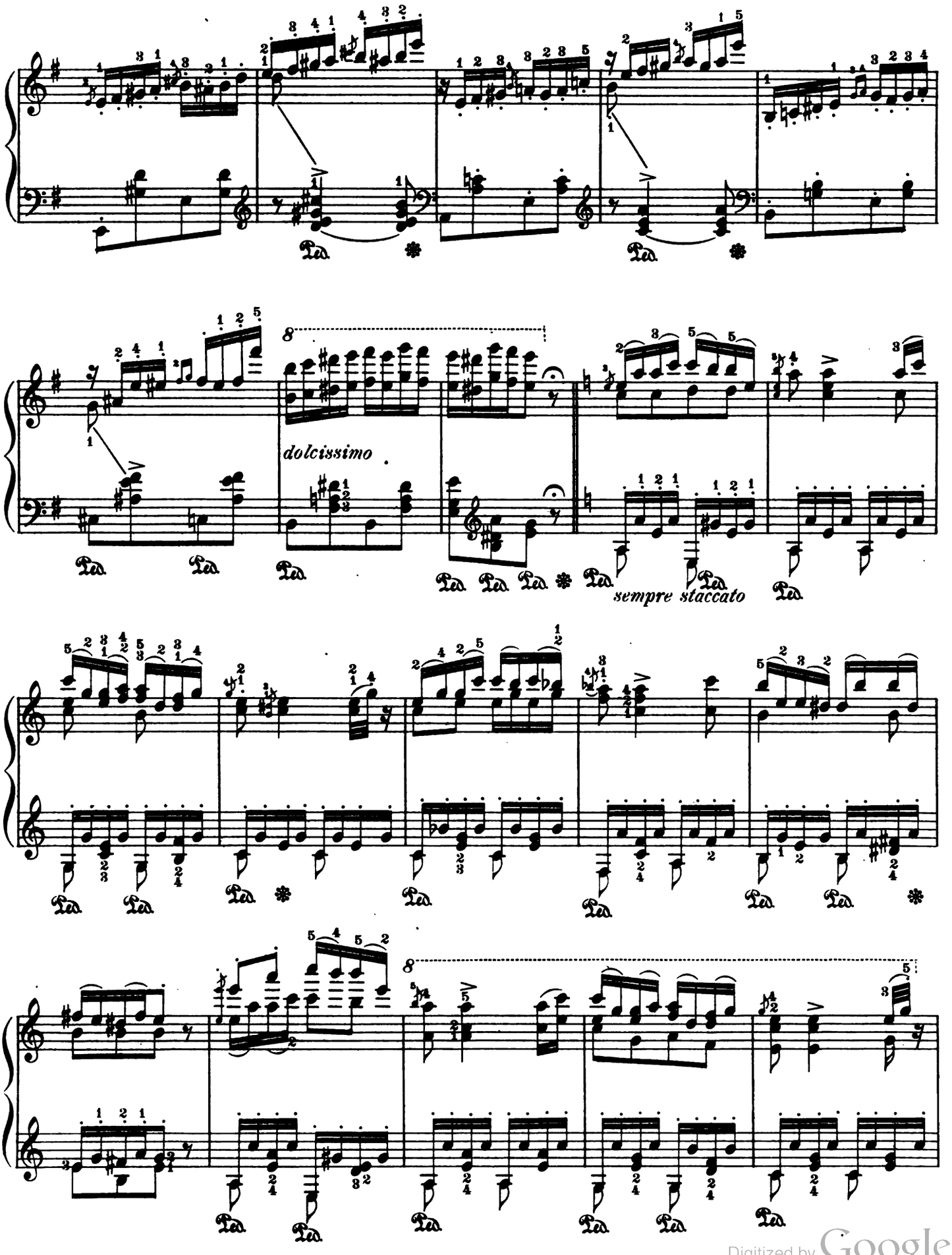

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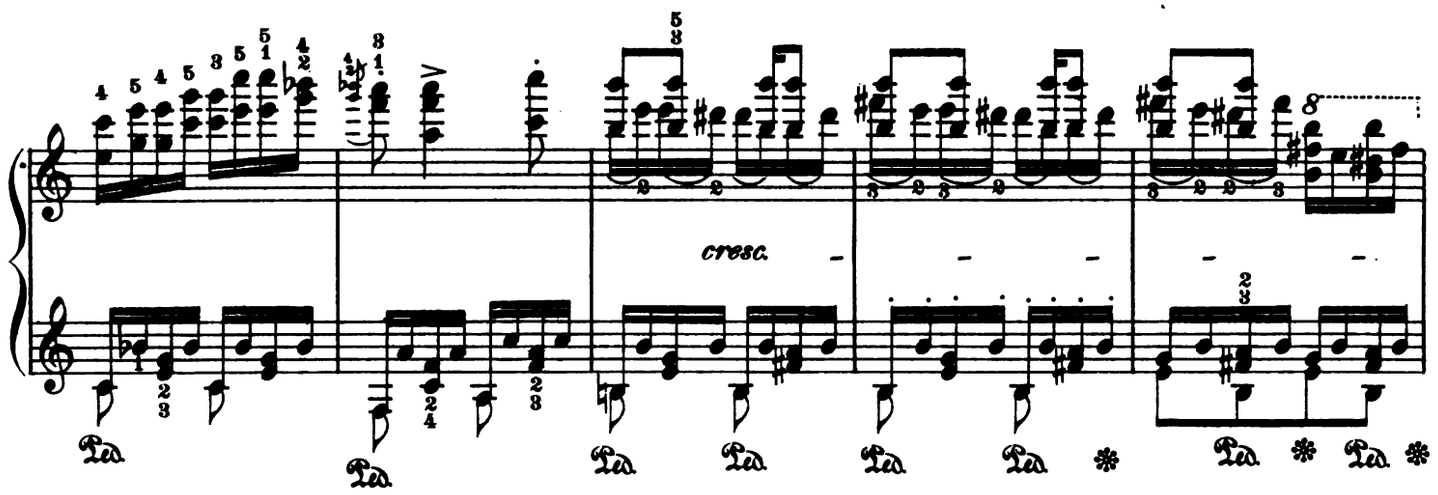

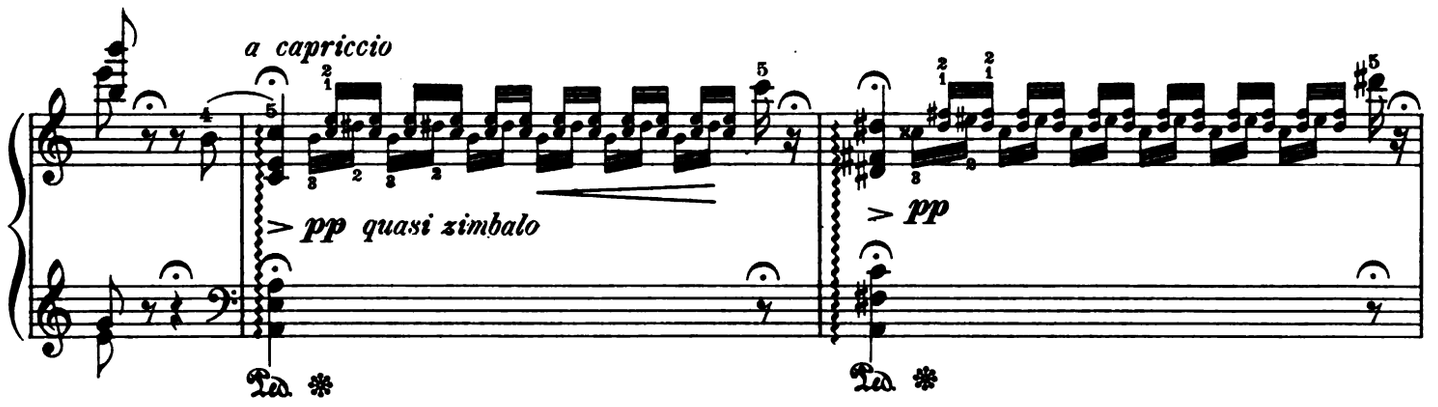

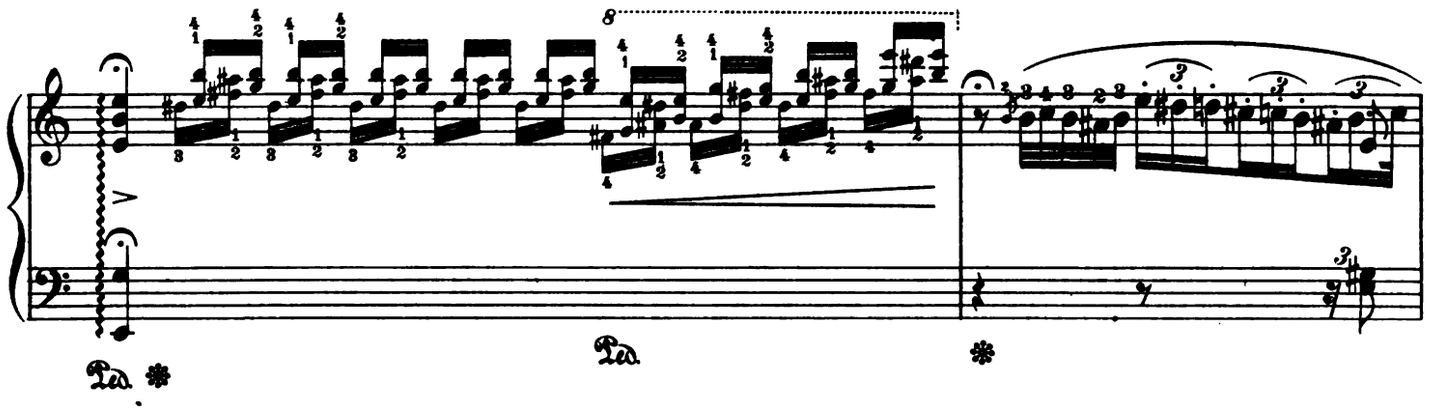

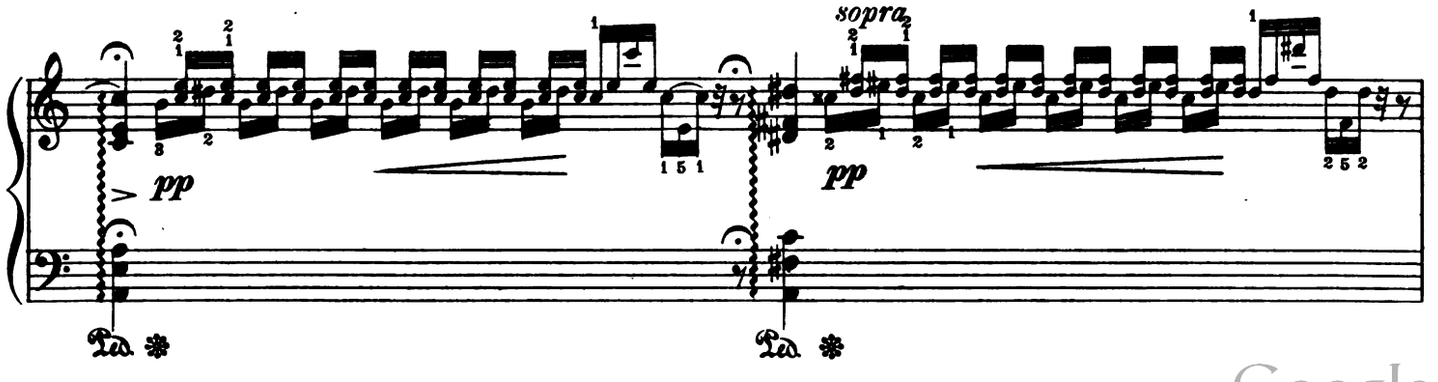

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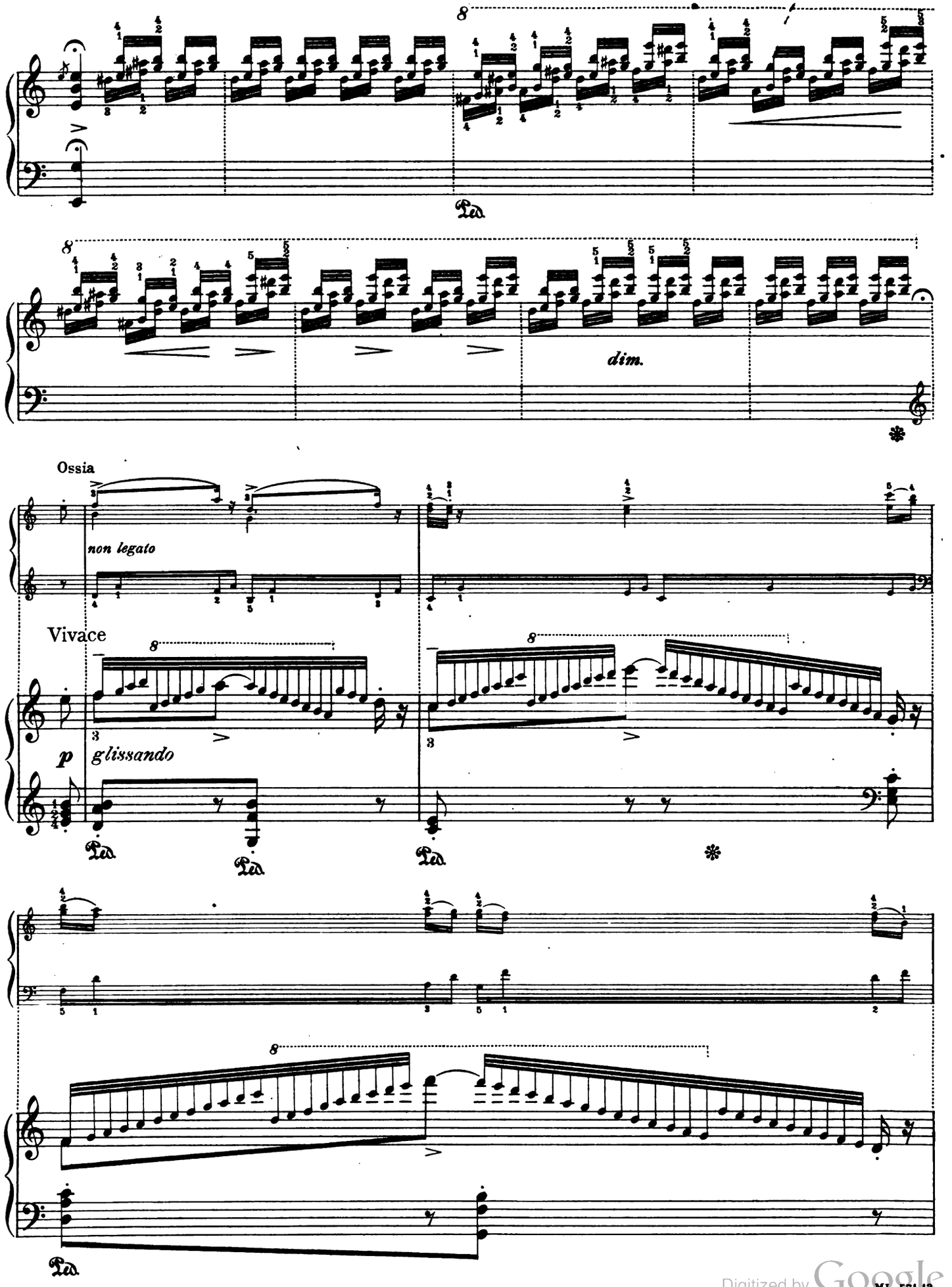
ML-571-18



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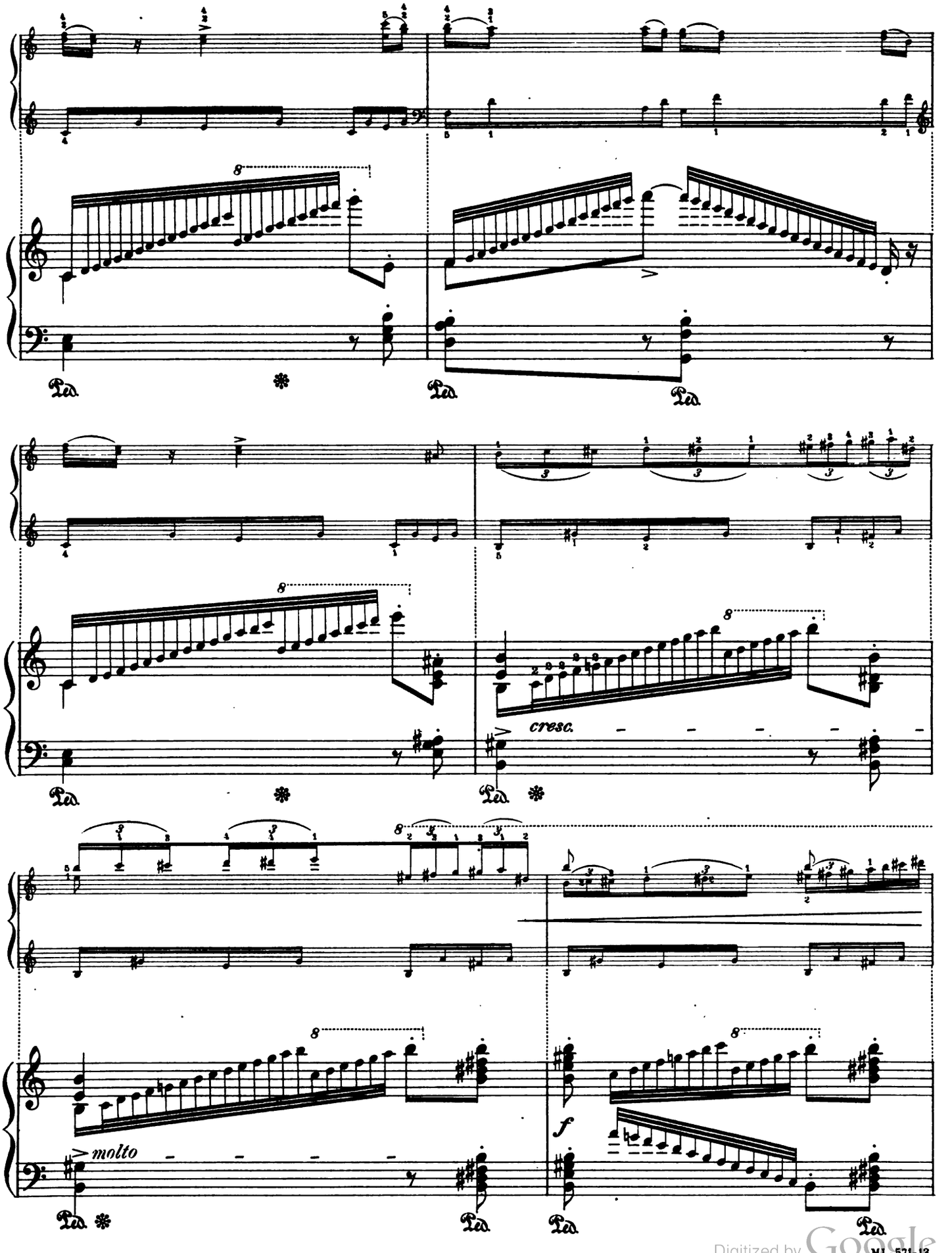

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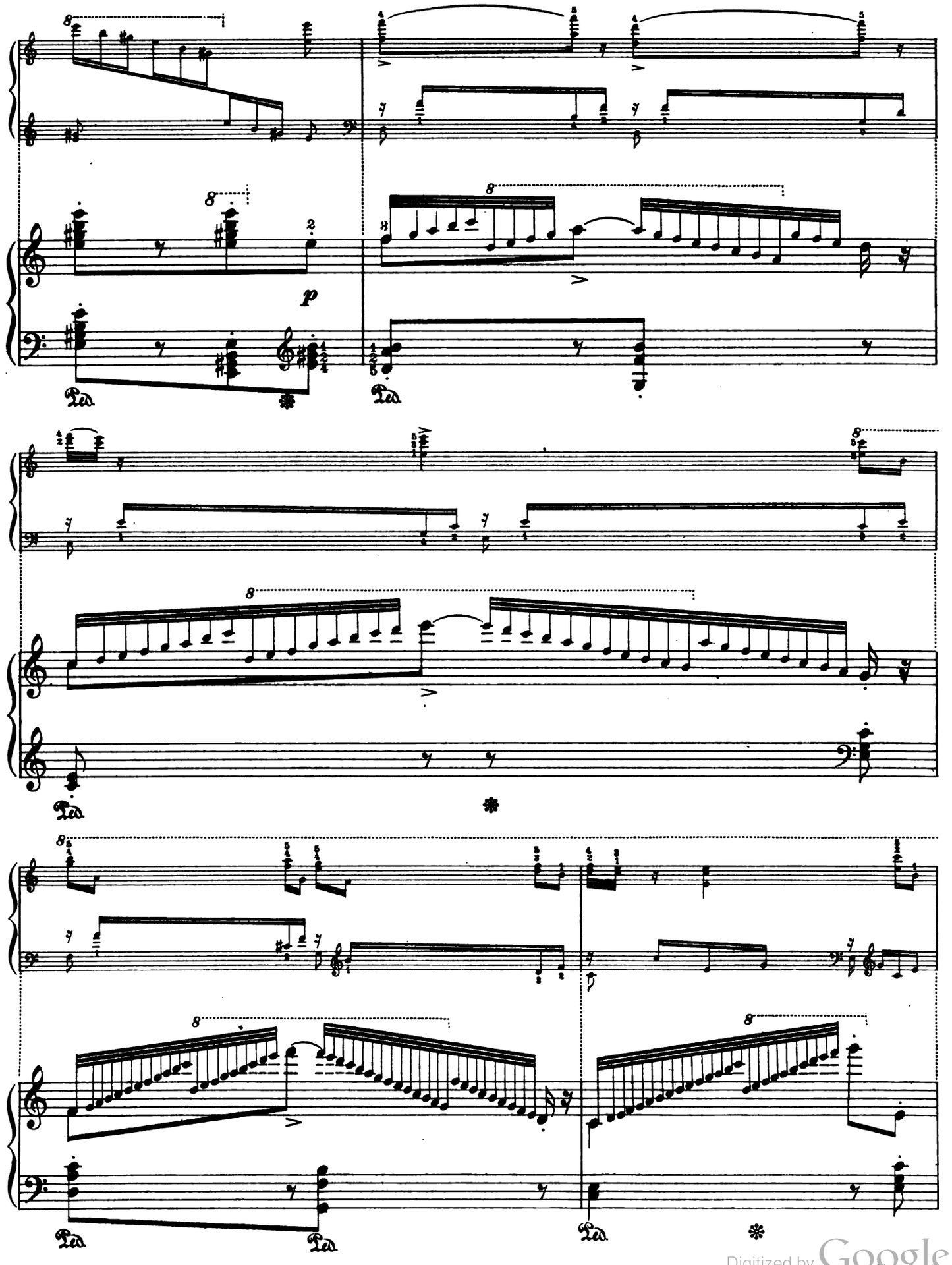

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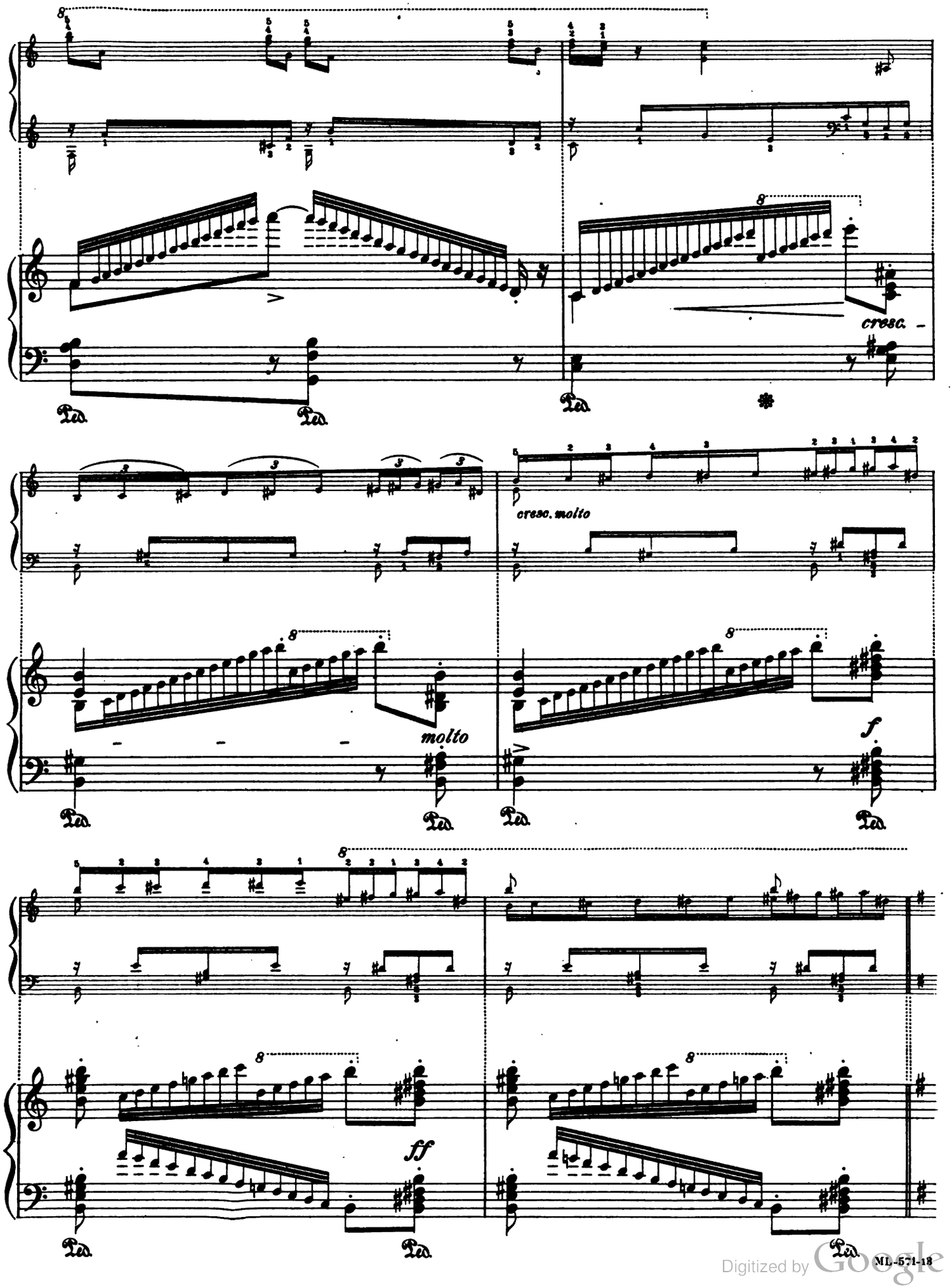

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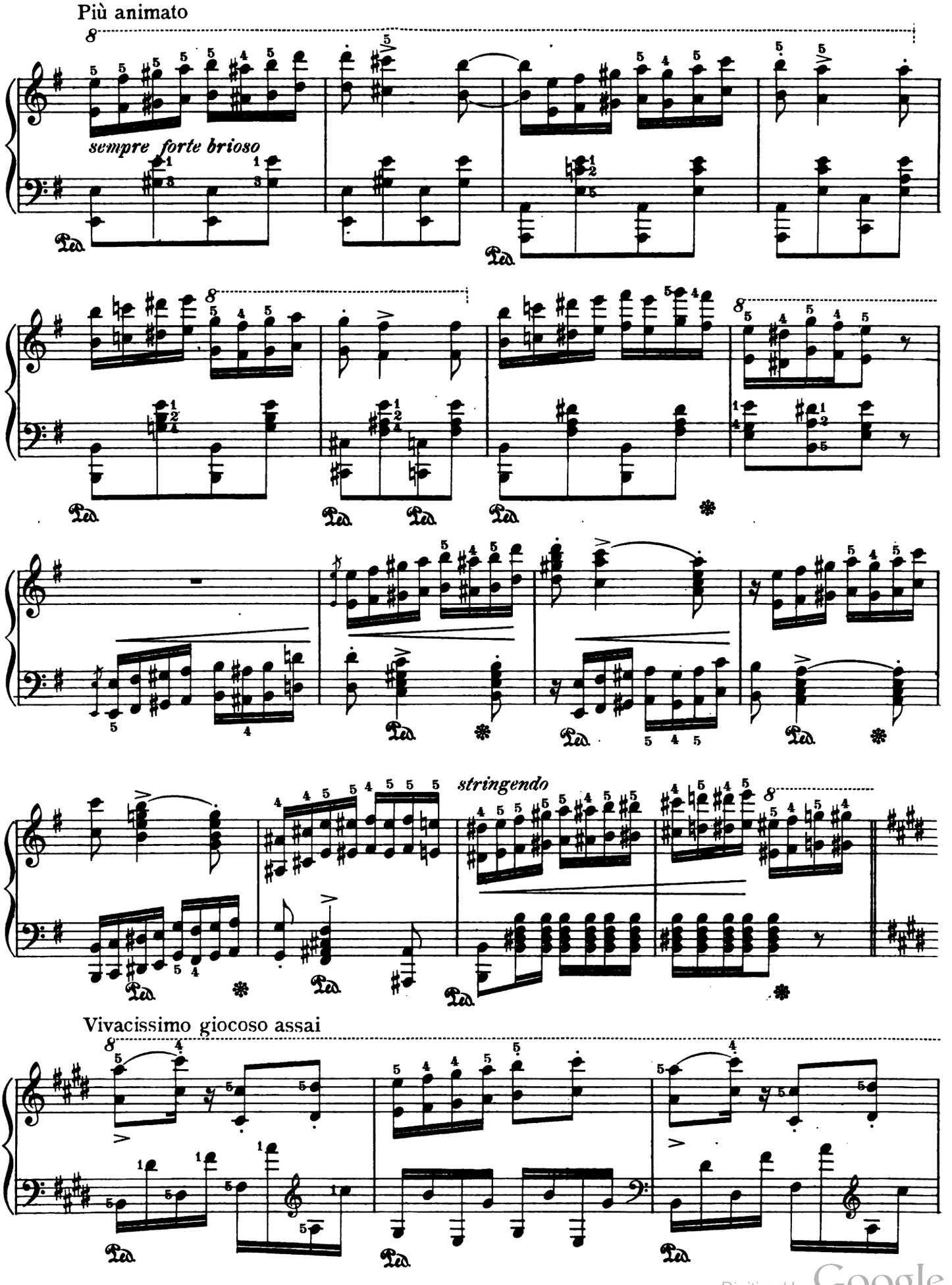

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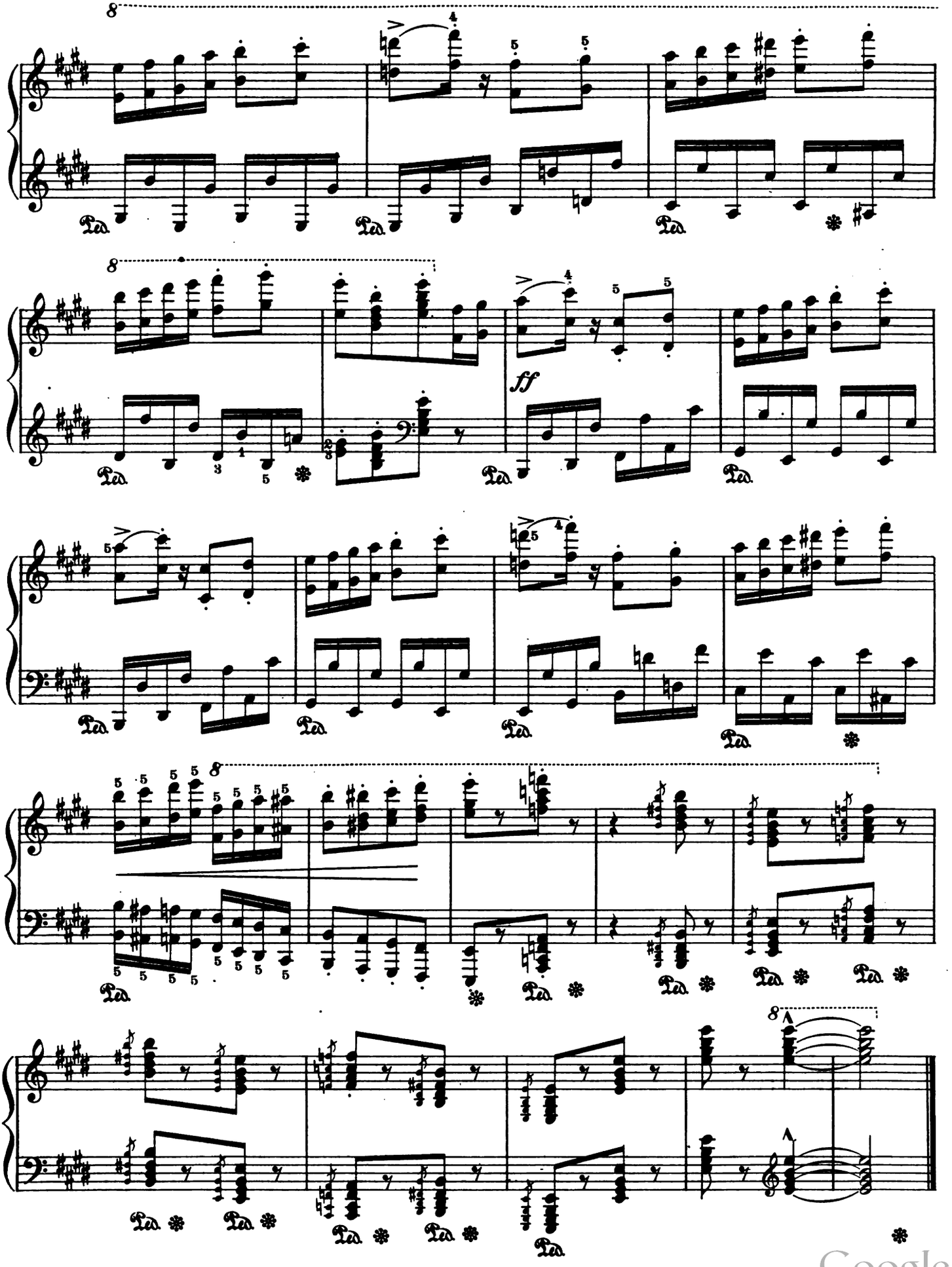

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To Baron Fery Orczy

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 11

(Published in 1854)

Edited and fingered by
August Spanuth

FRANZ LISZT

Lento a capriccio

PIANO

p quasi zimbalo
una corda

sopra.

smorz.
pp

espress.

dolciss.

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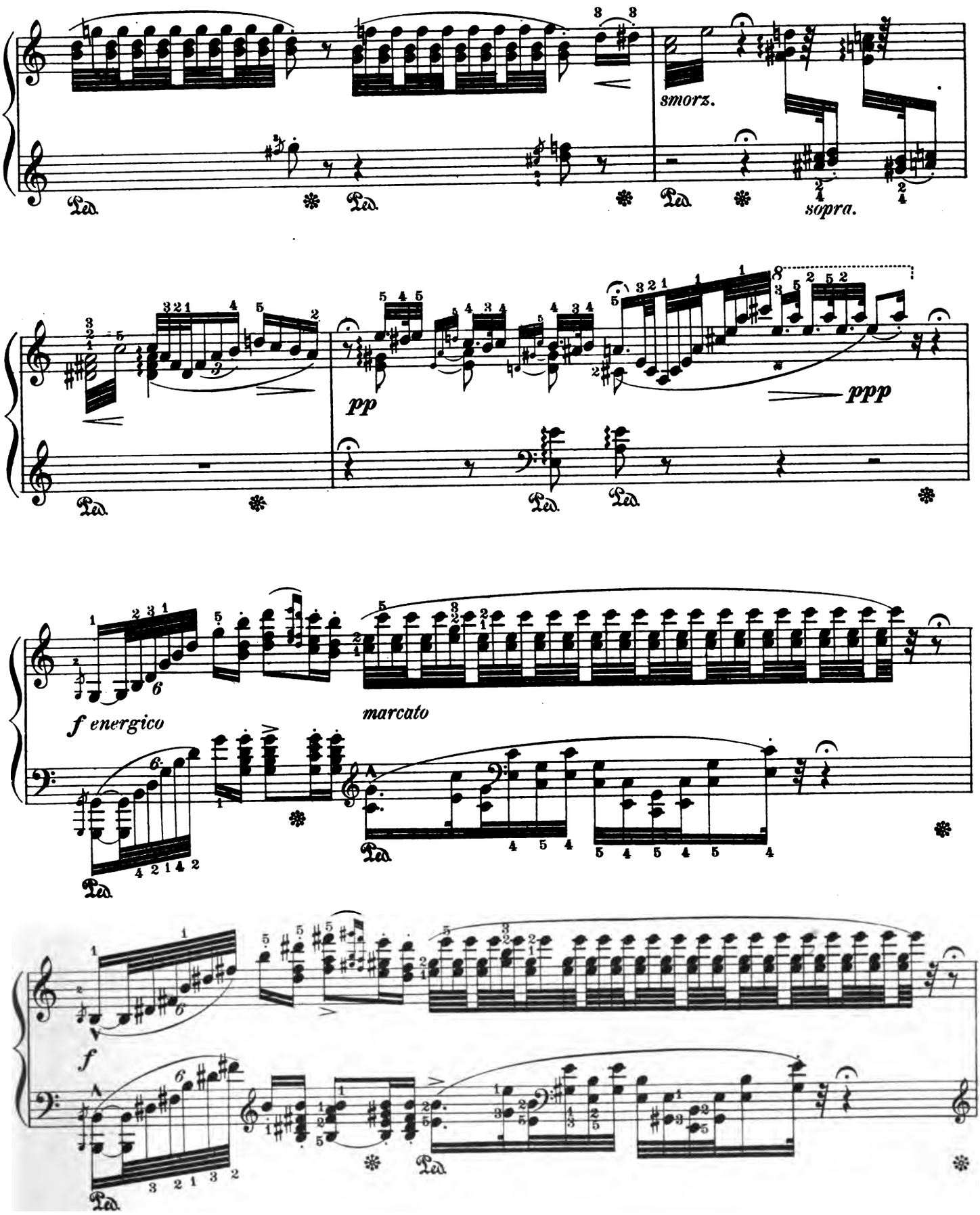

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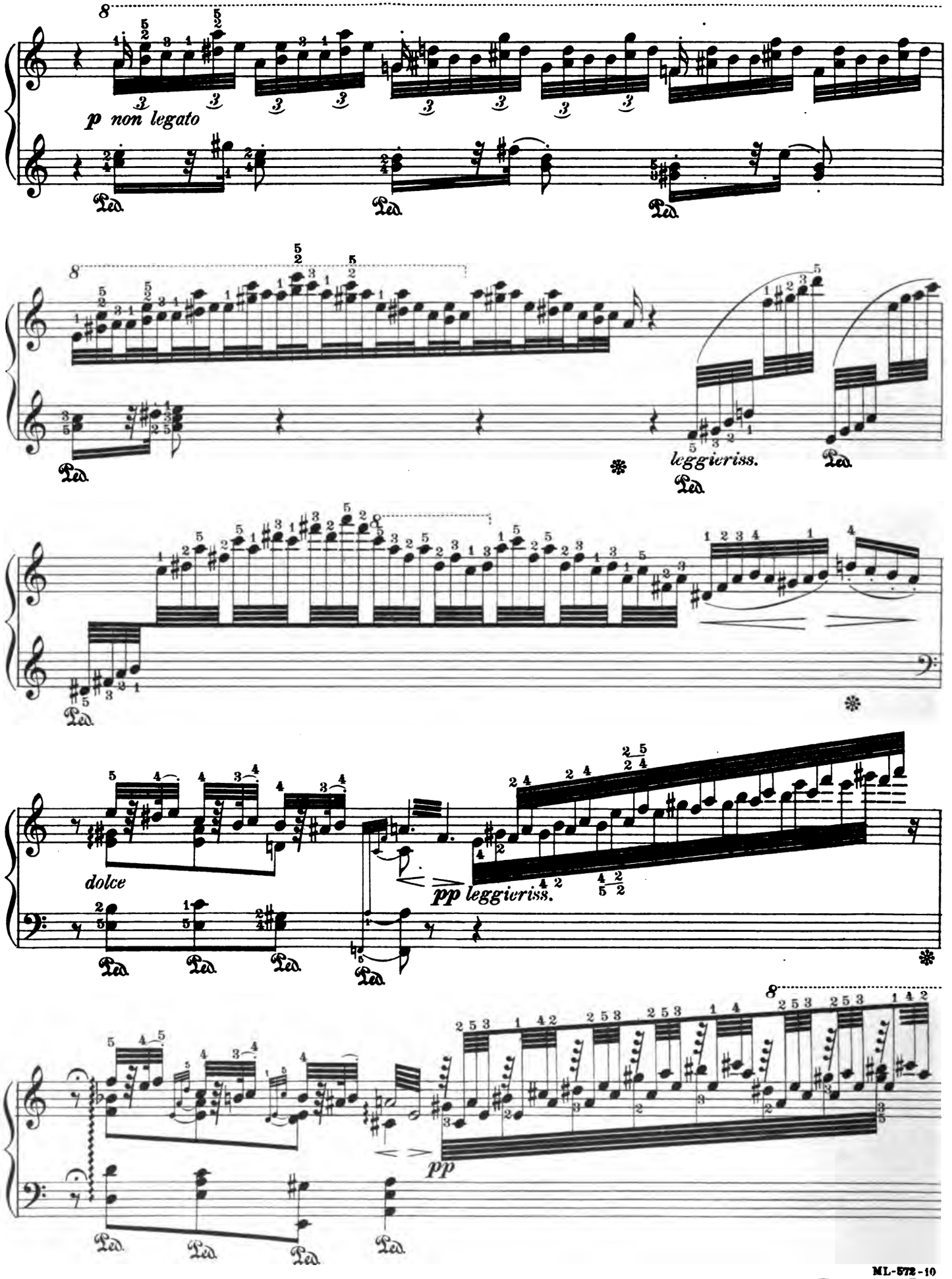

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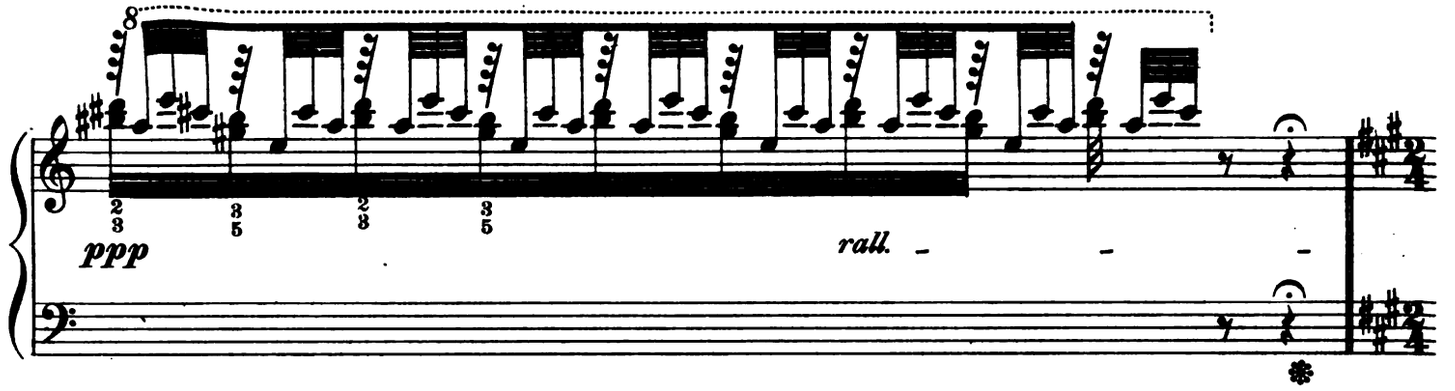

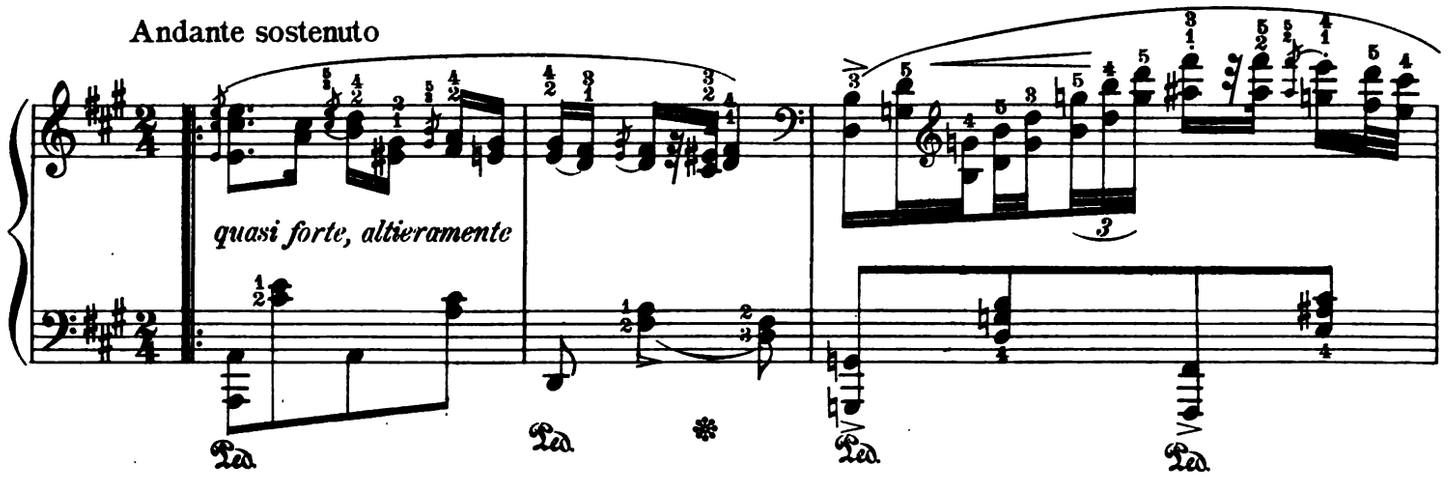

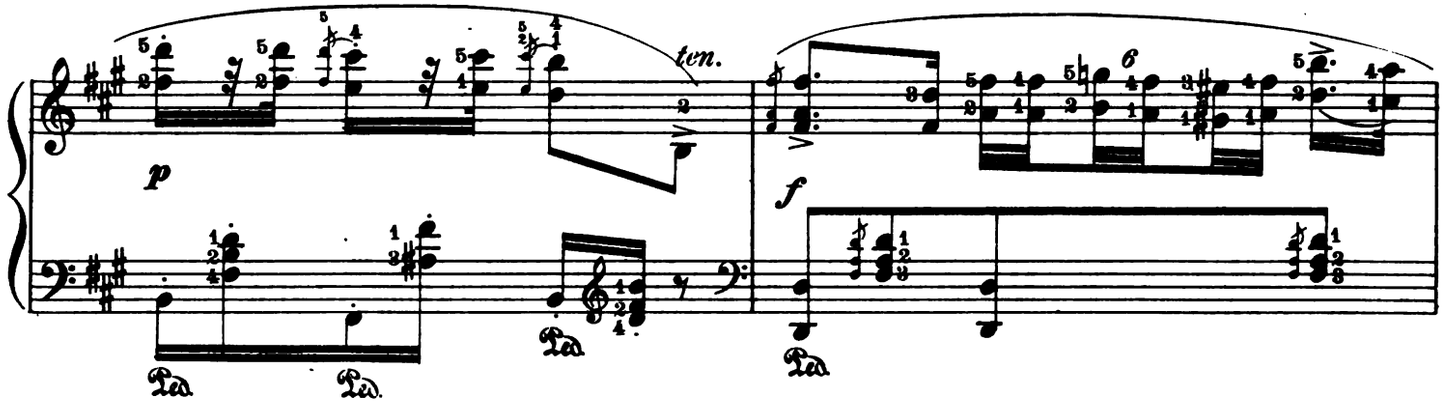

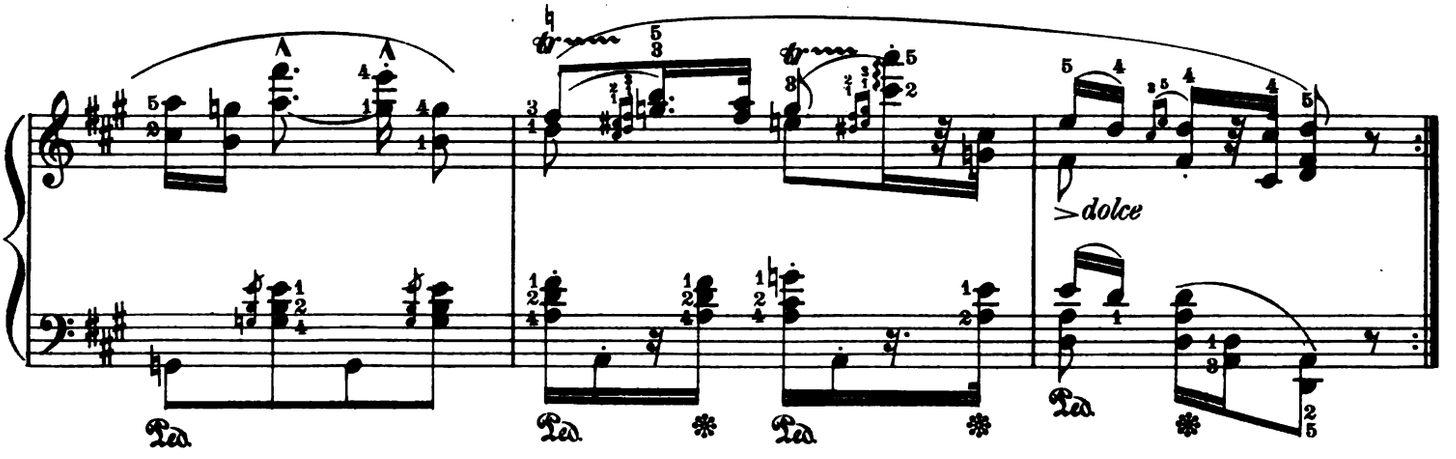

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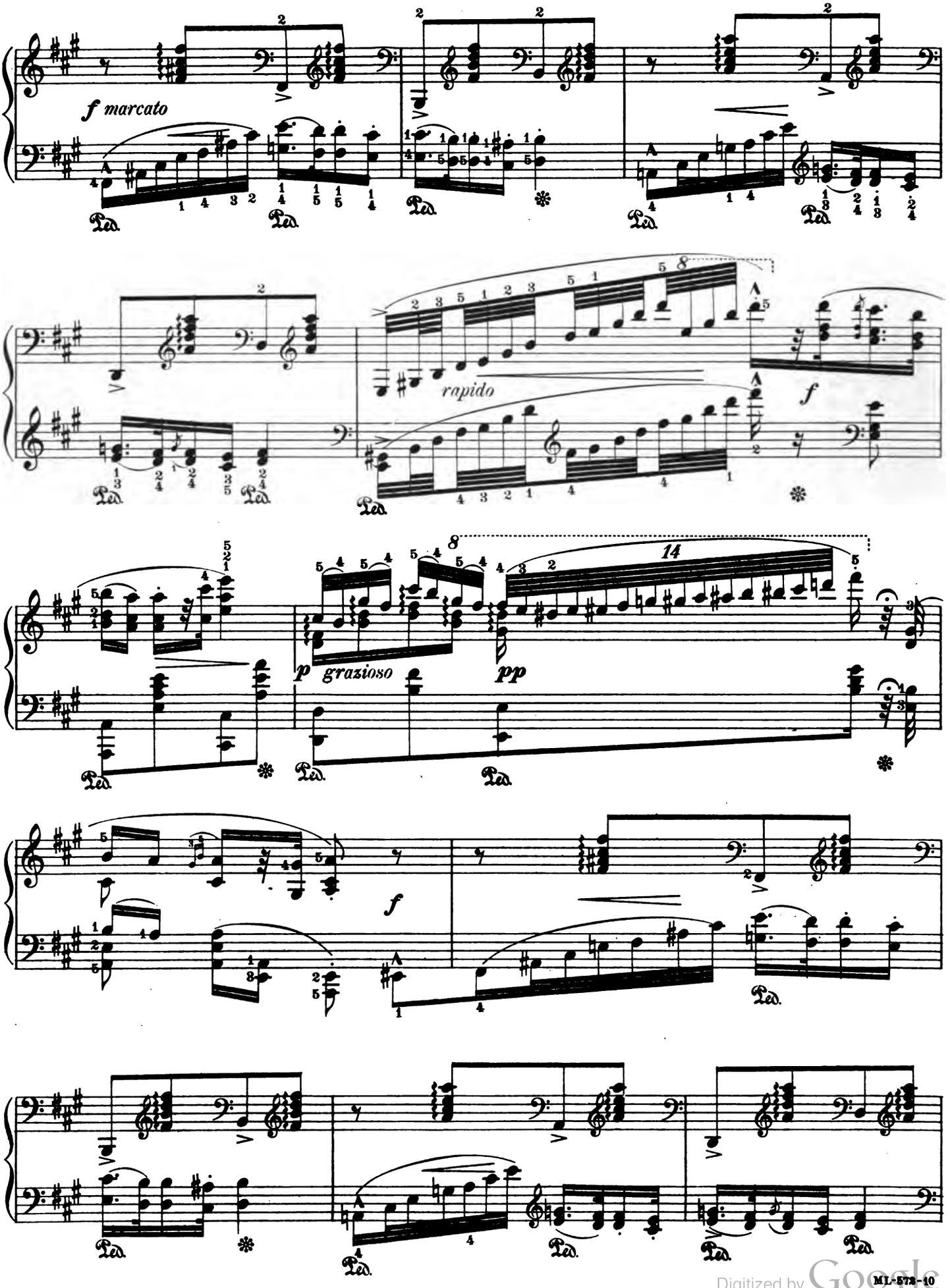

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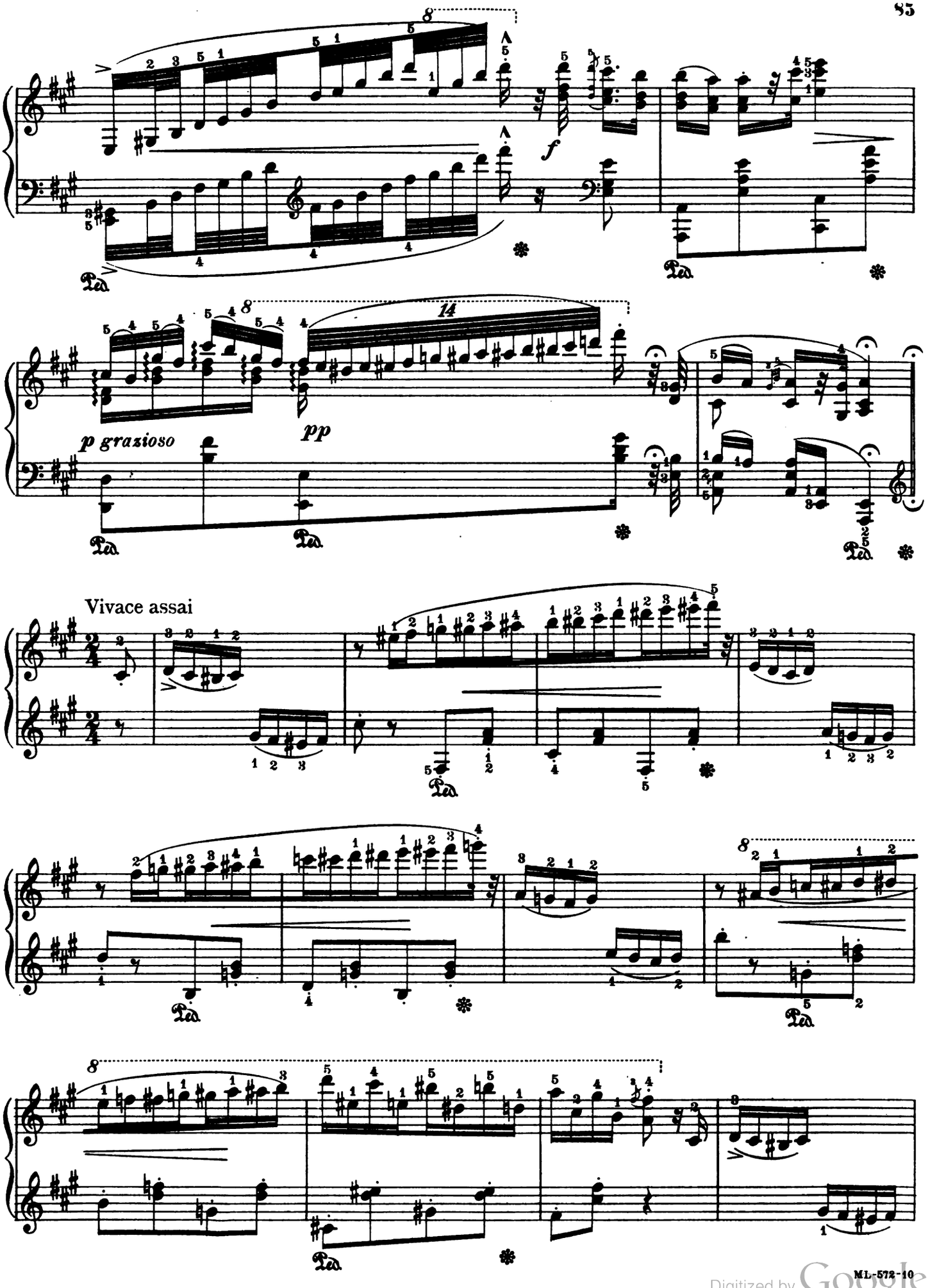

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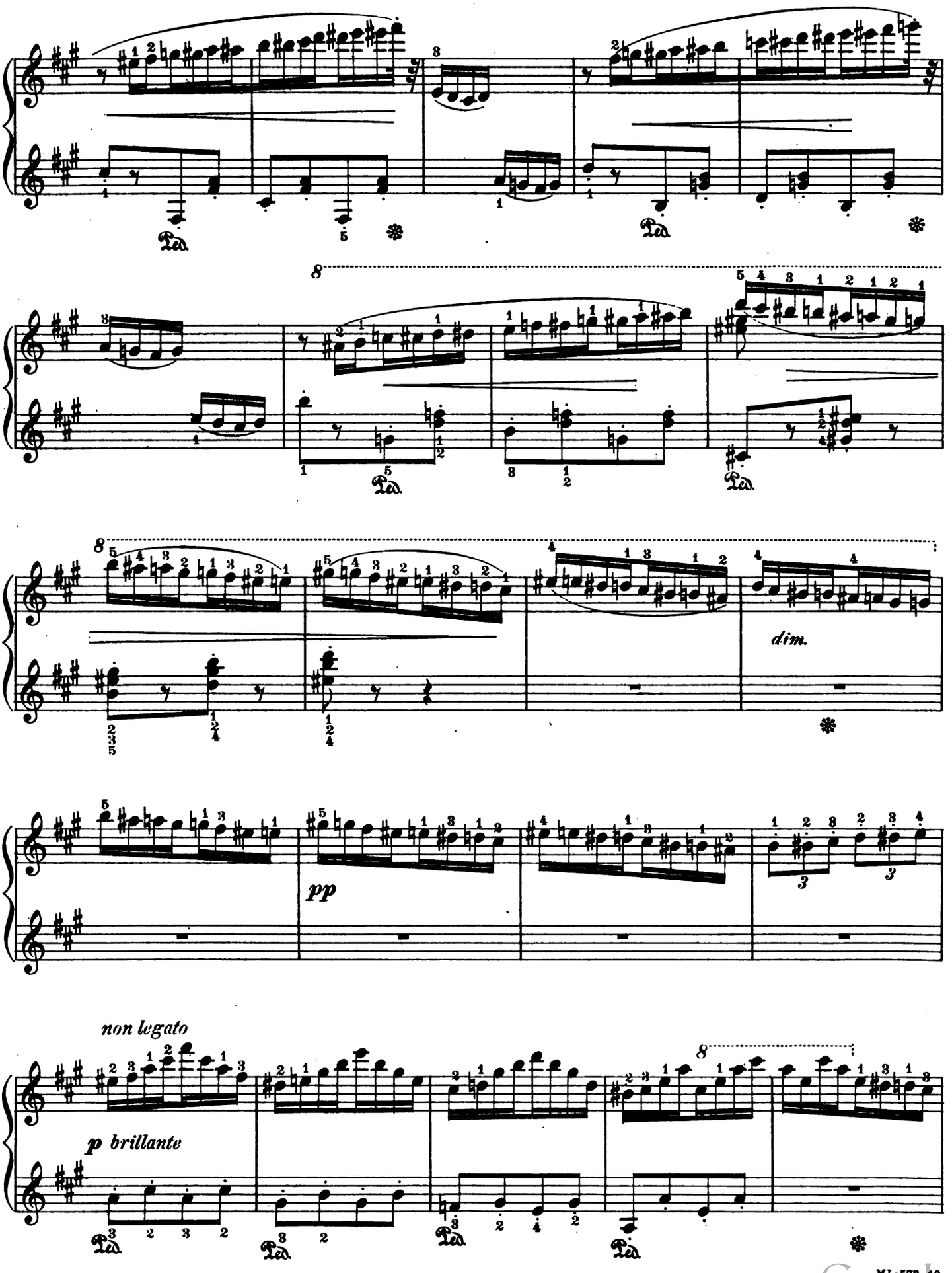

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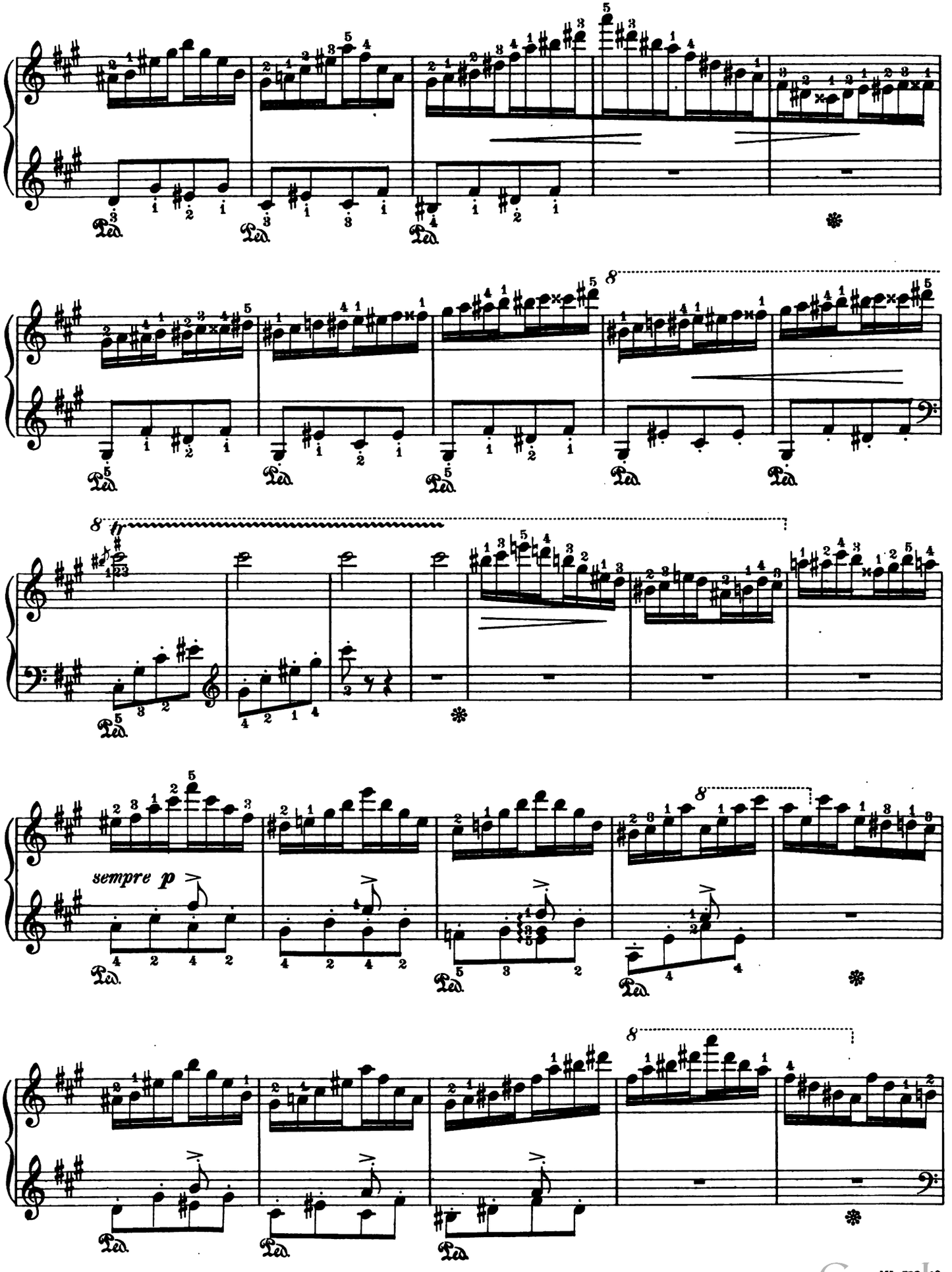

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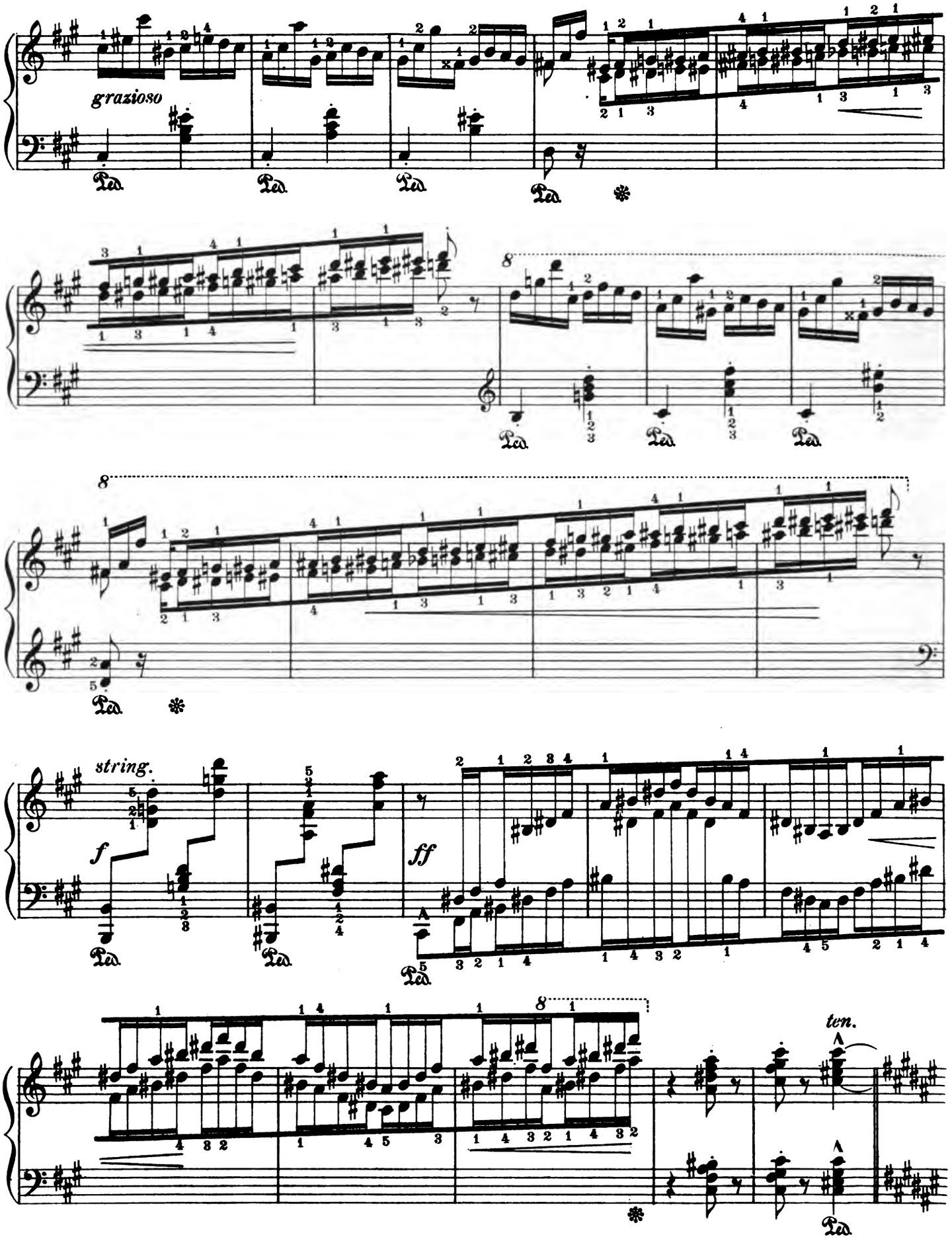

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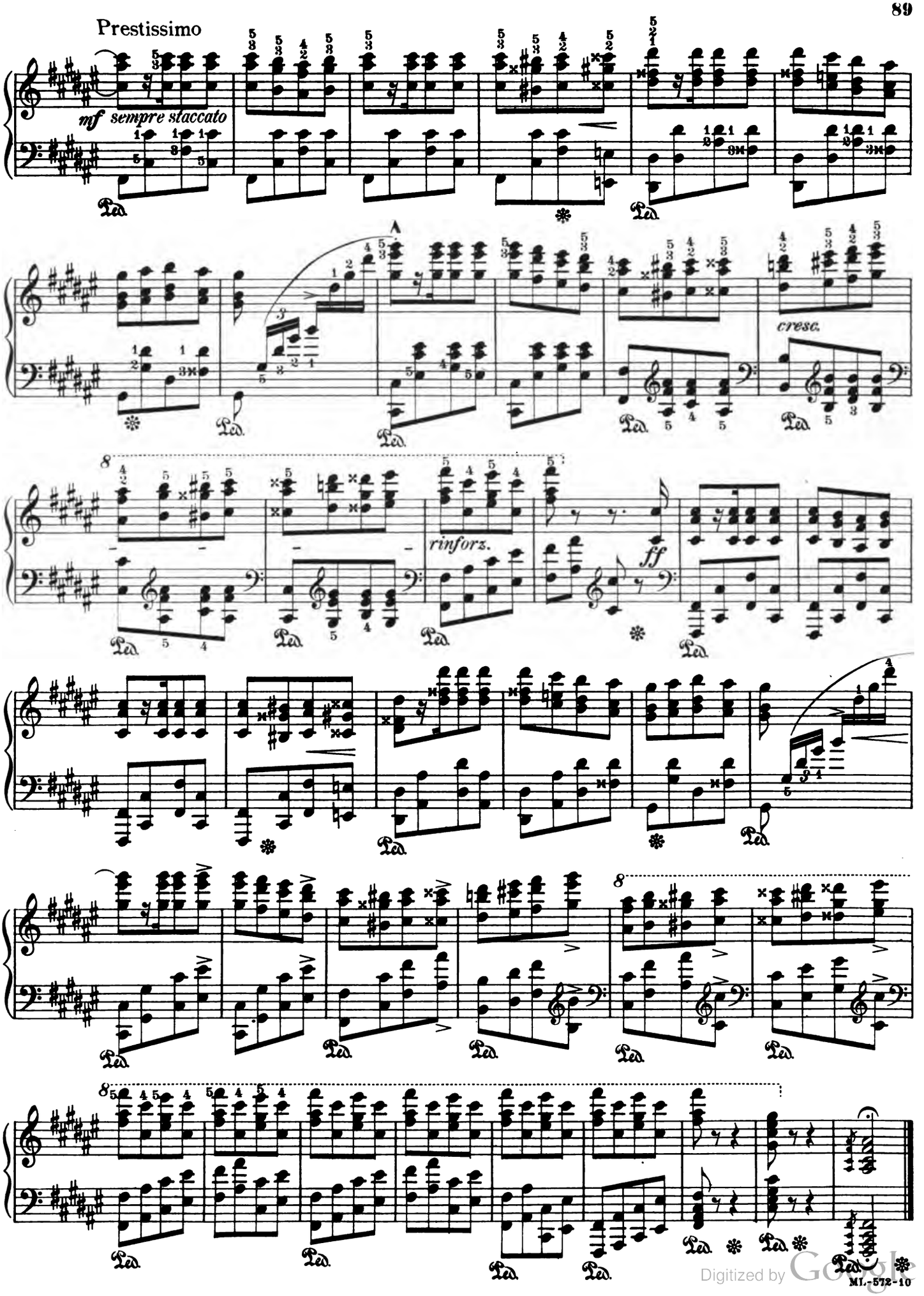

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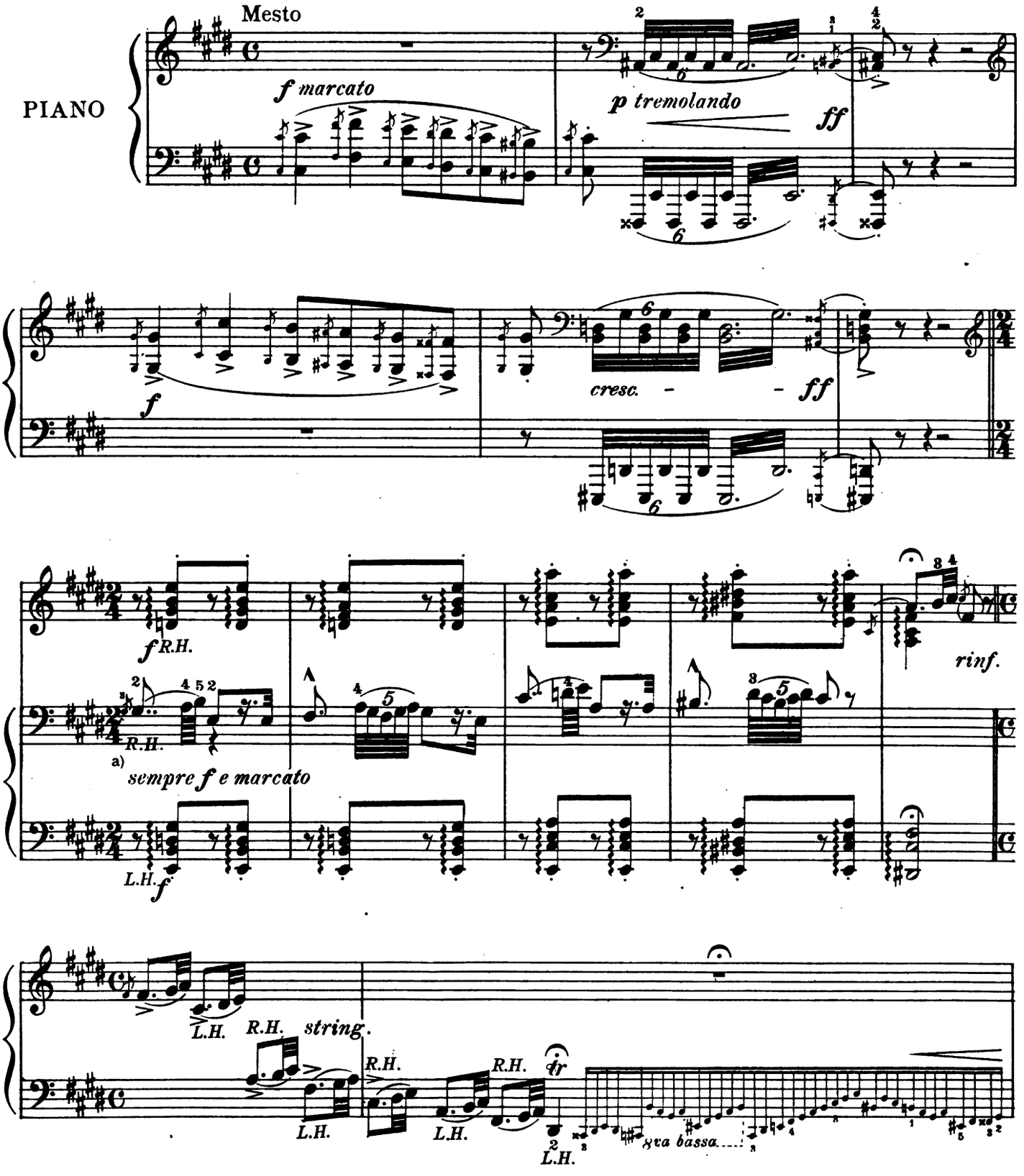
To *Josef Joachim*

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No 12

(Published in 1854)

Edited and fingered by
John Orth

FRANZ LISZT



a) In the original, the notes with the upward stems were intended for the right hand, those with the downward stems for the left hand.

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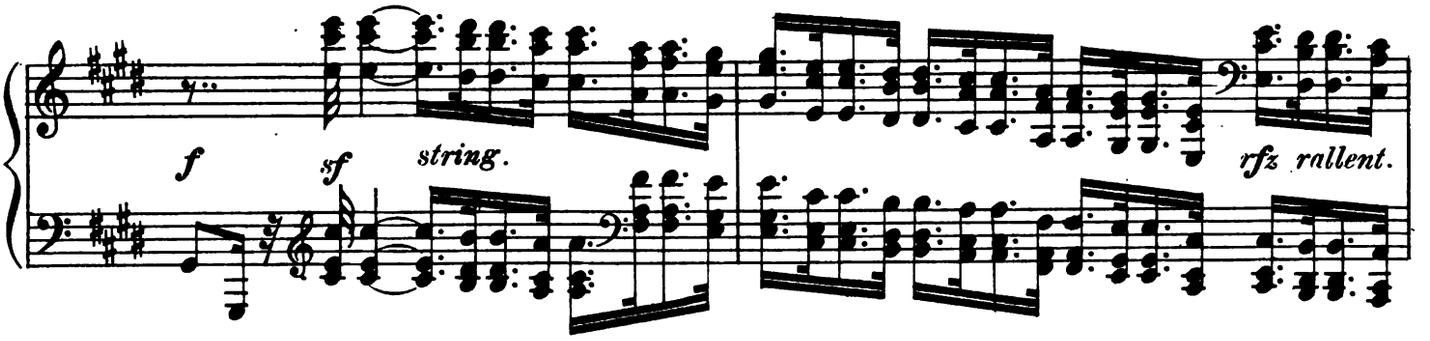

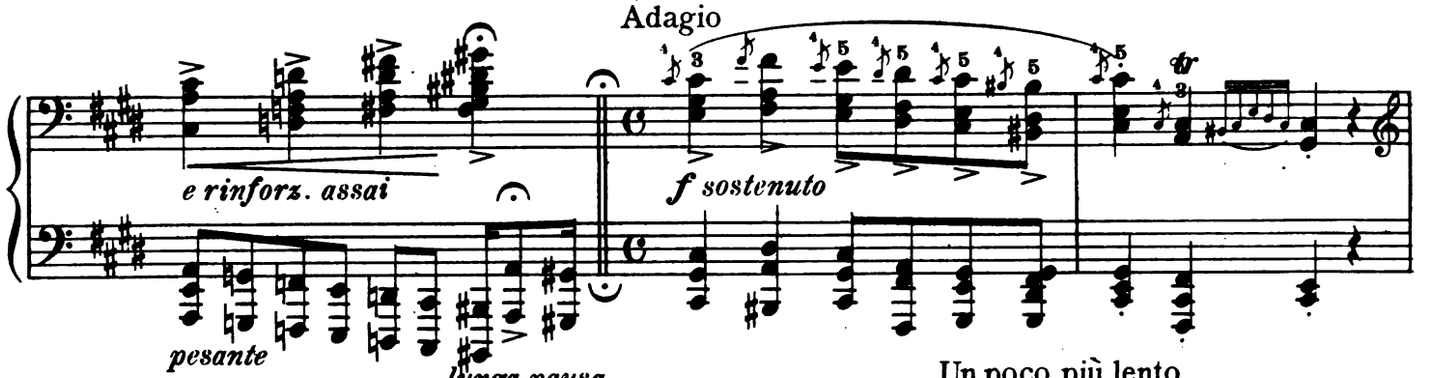

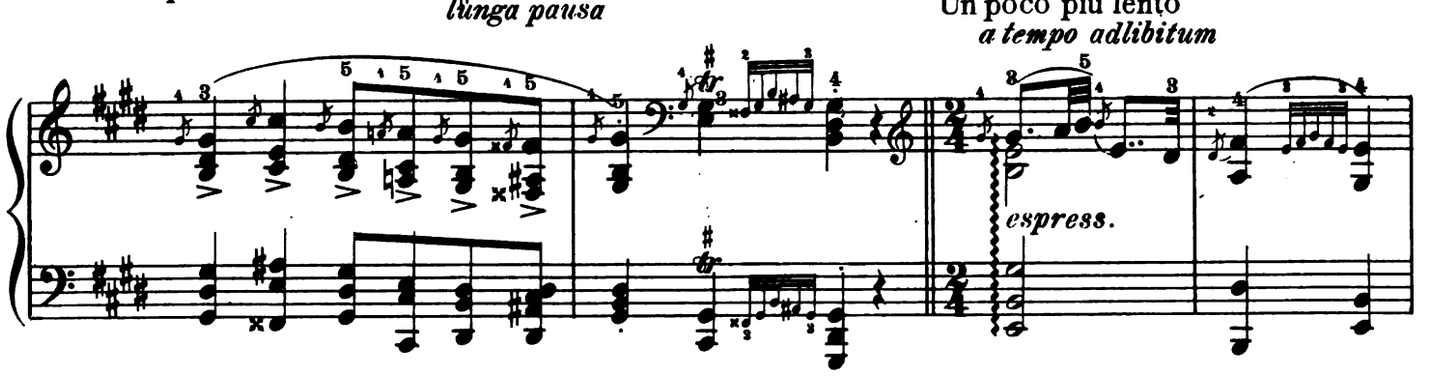

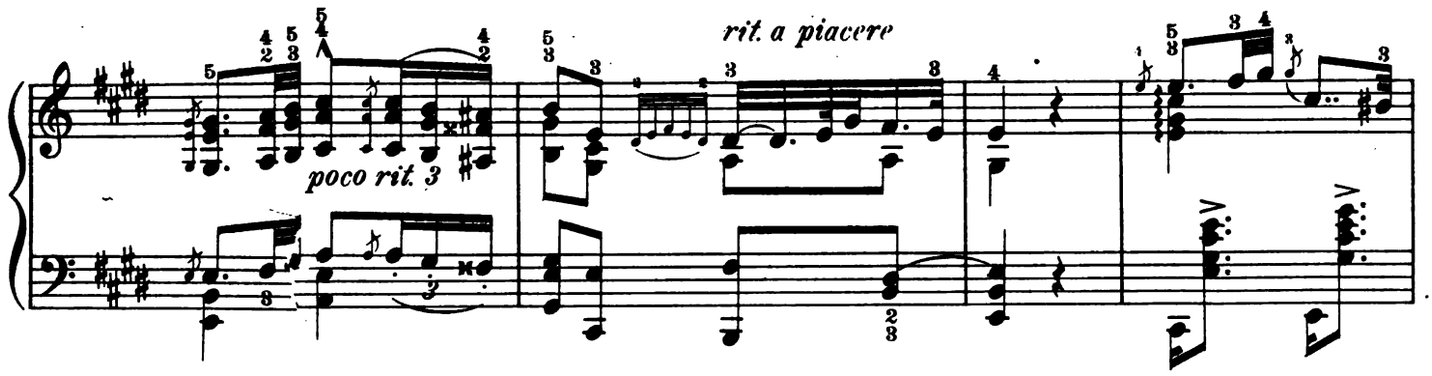

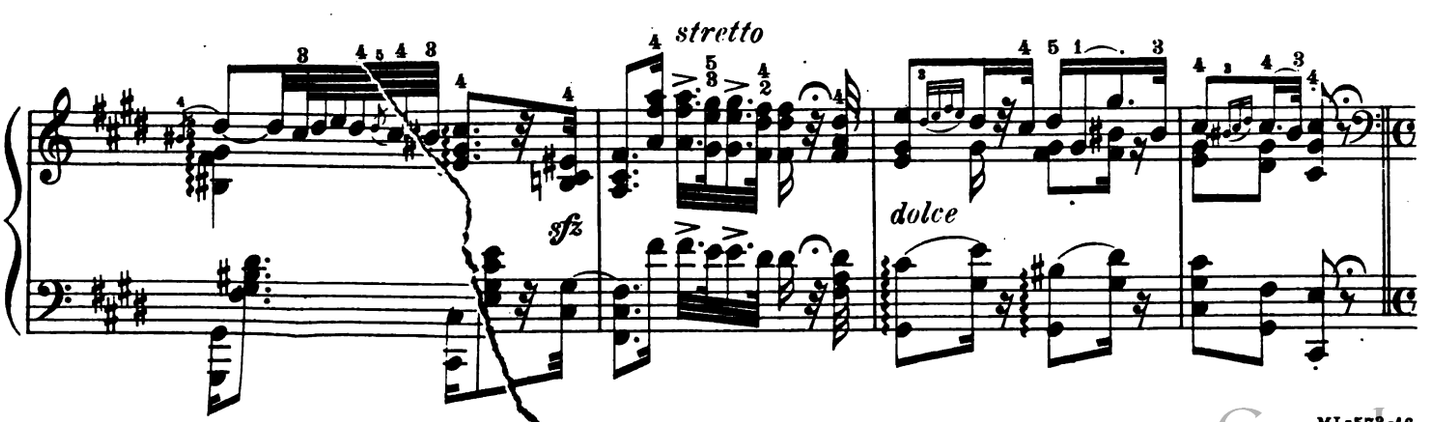

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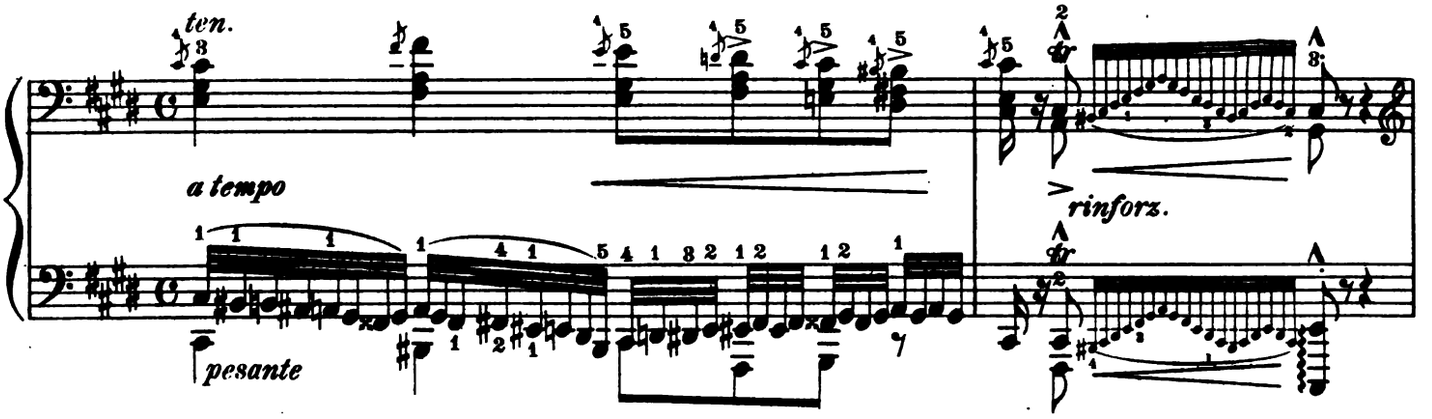

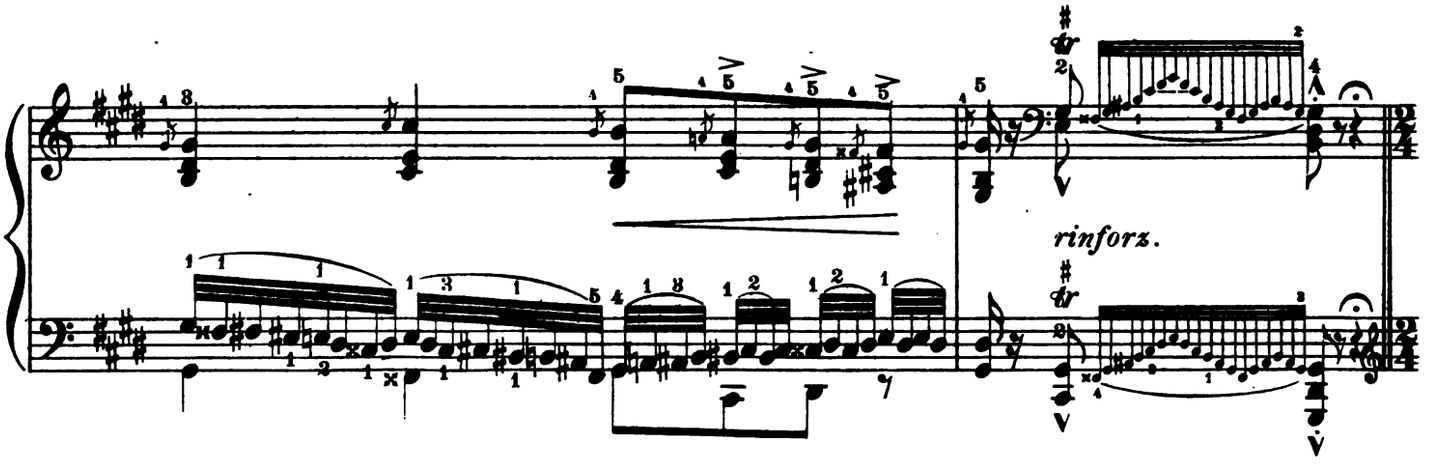

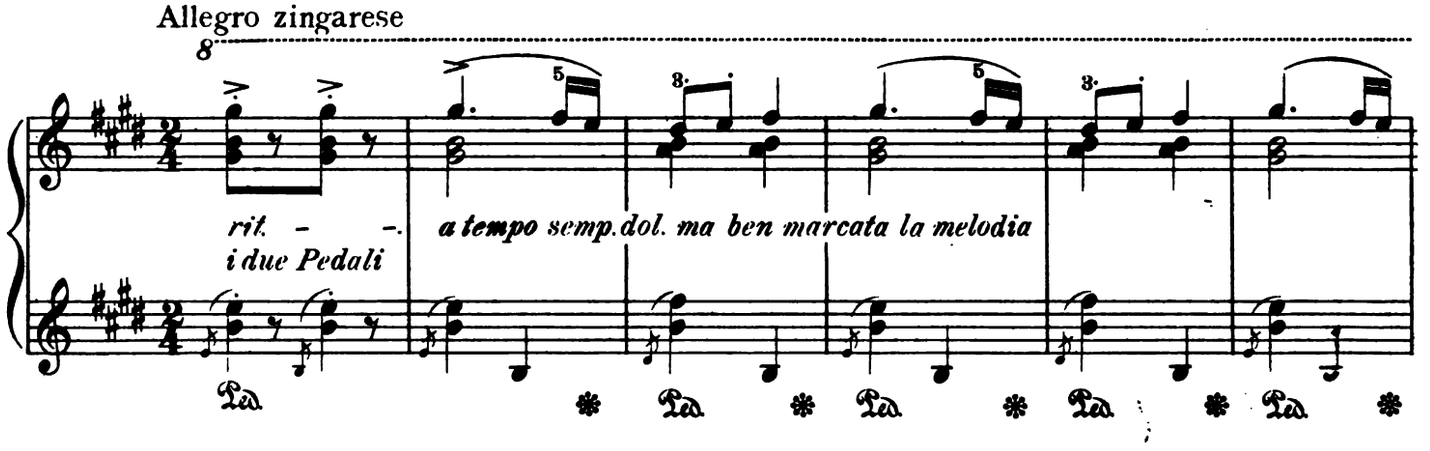

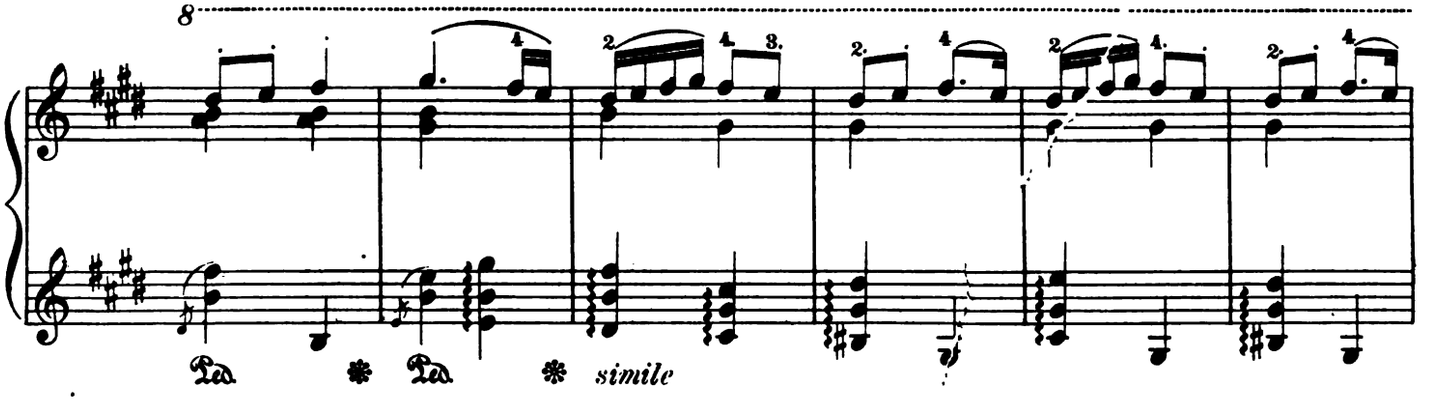

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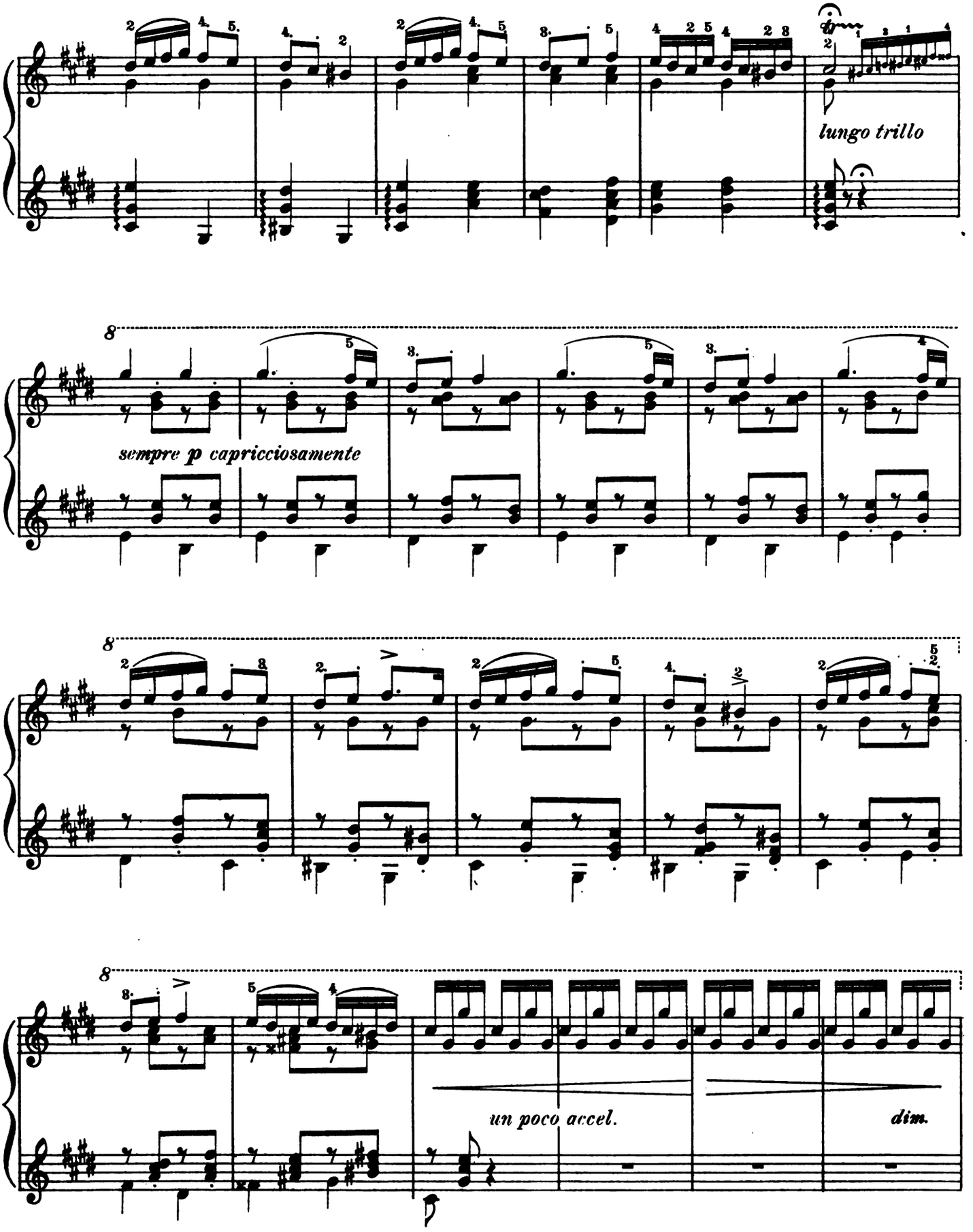

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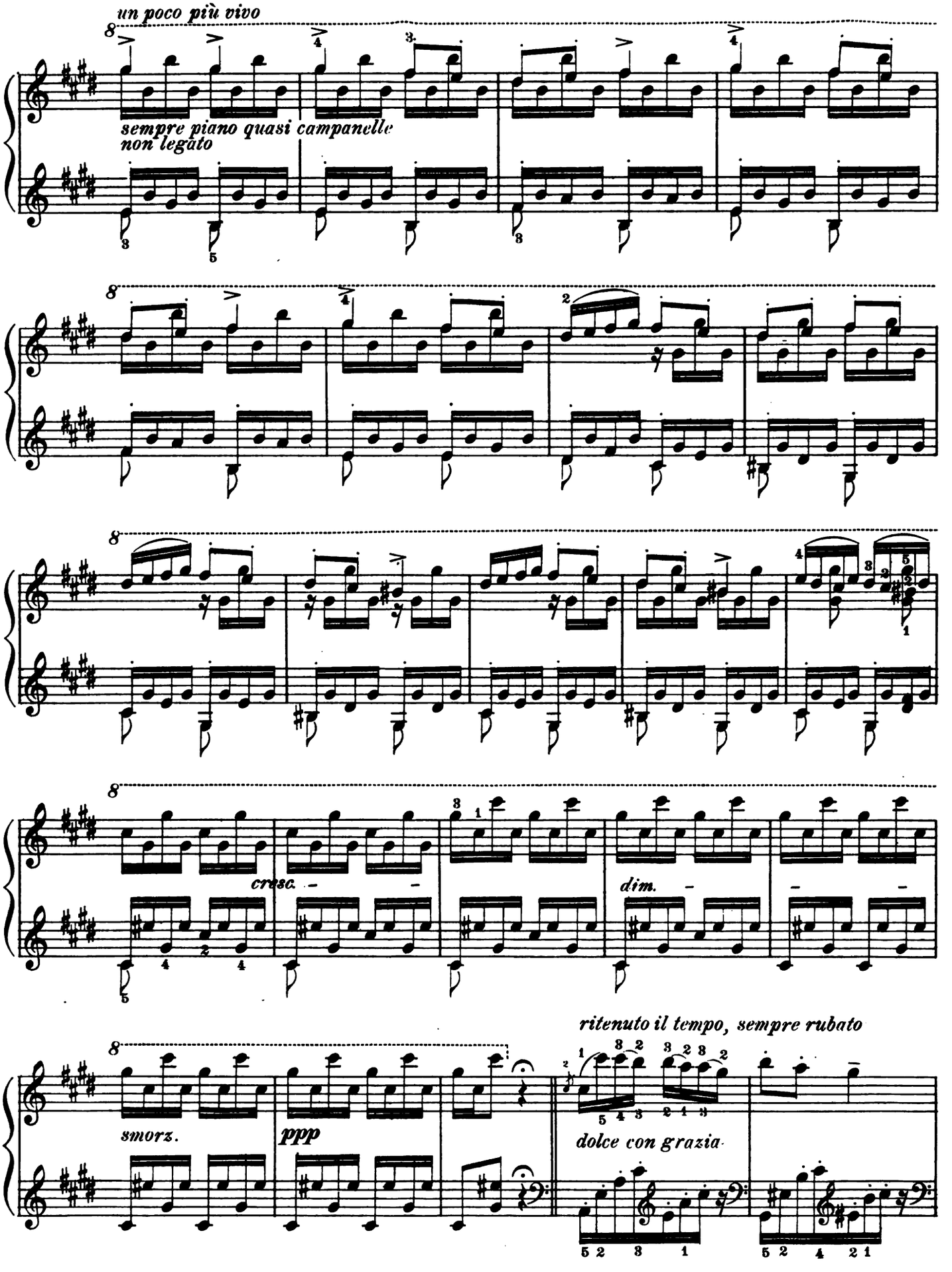

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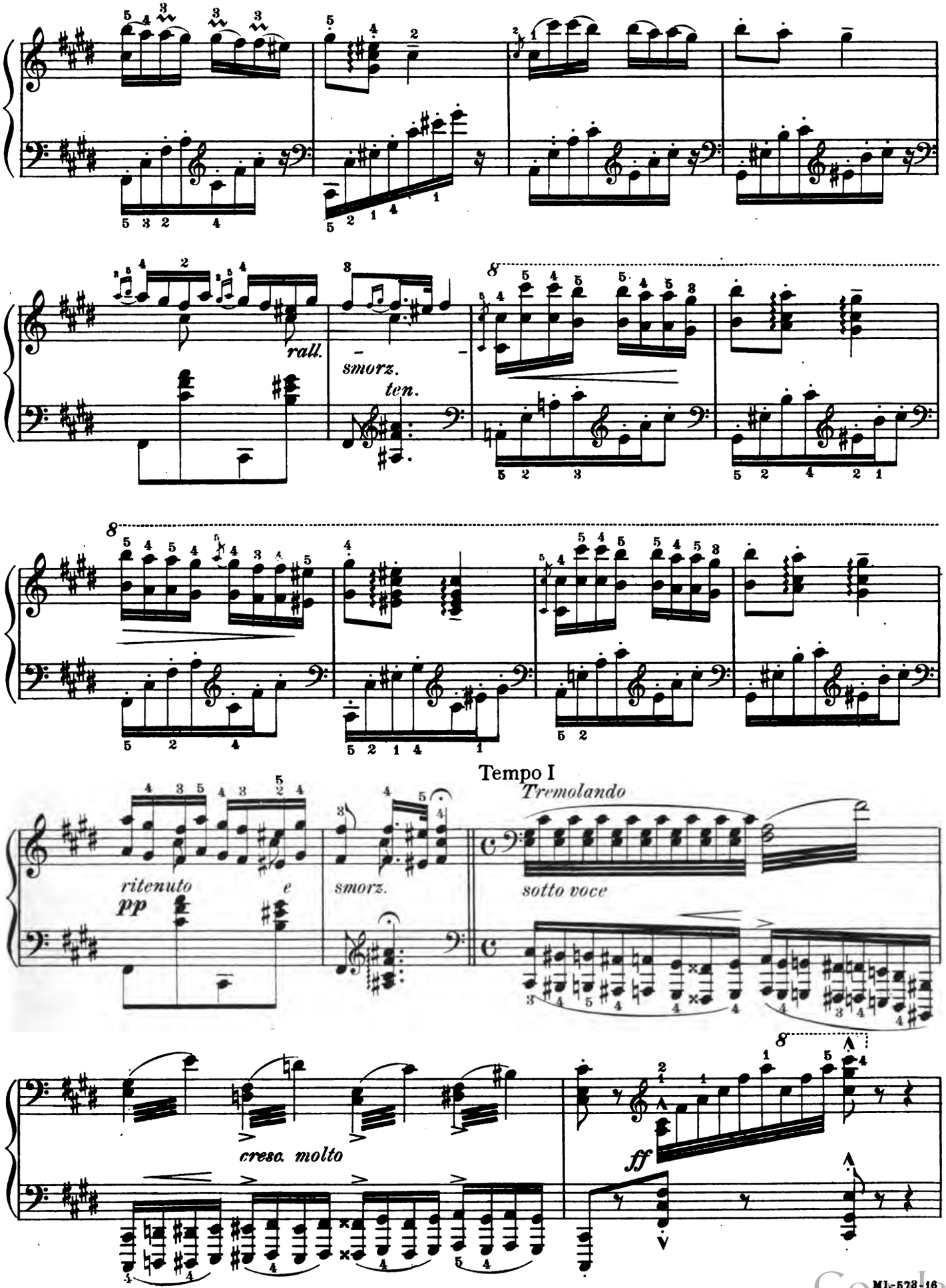

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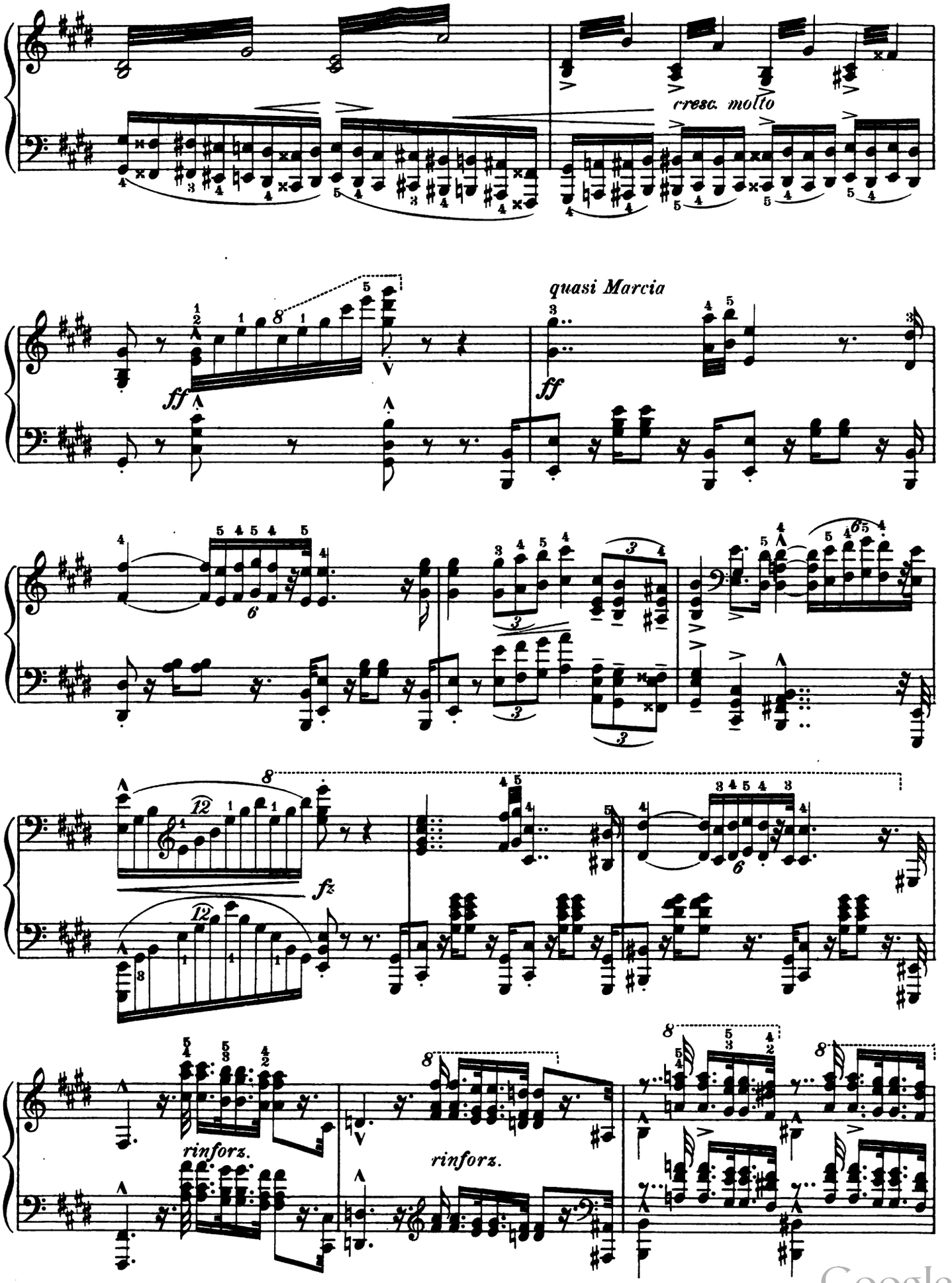

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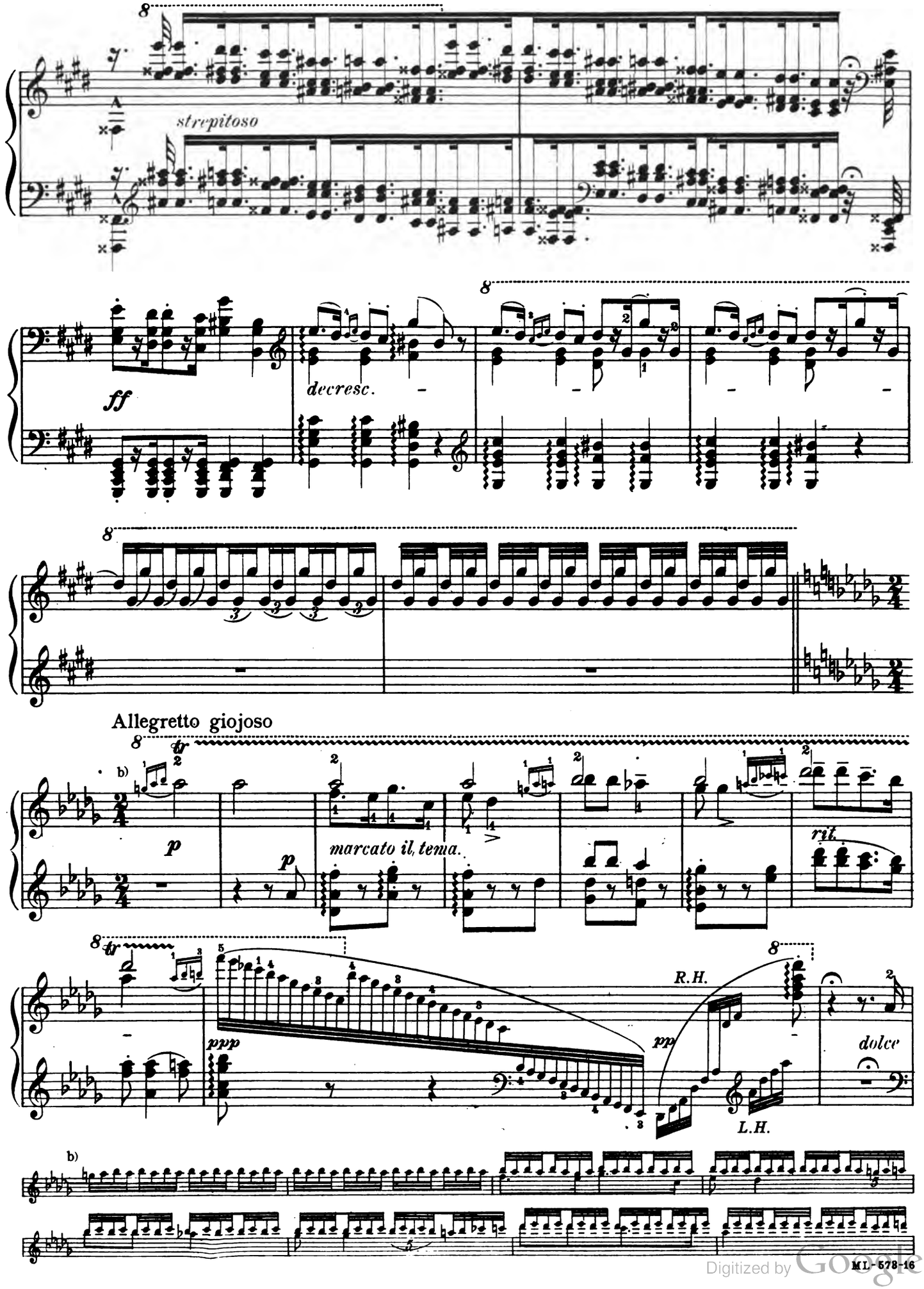

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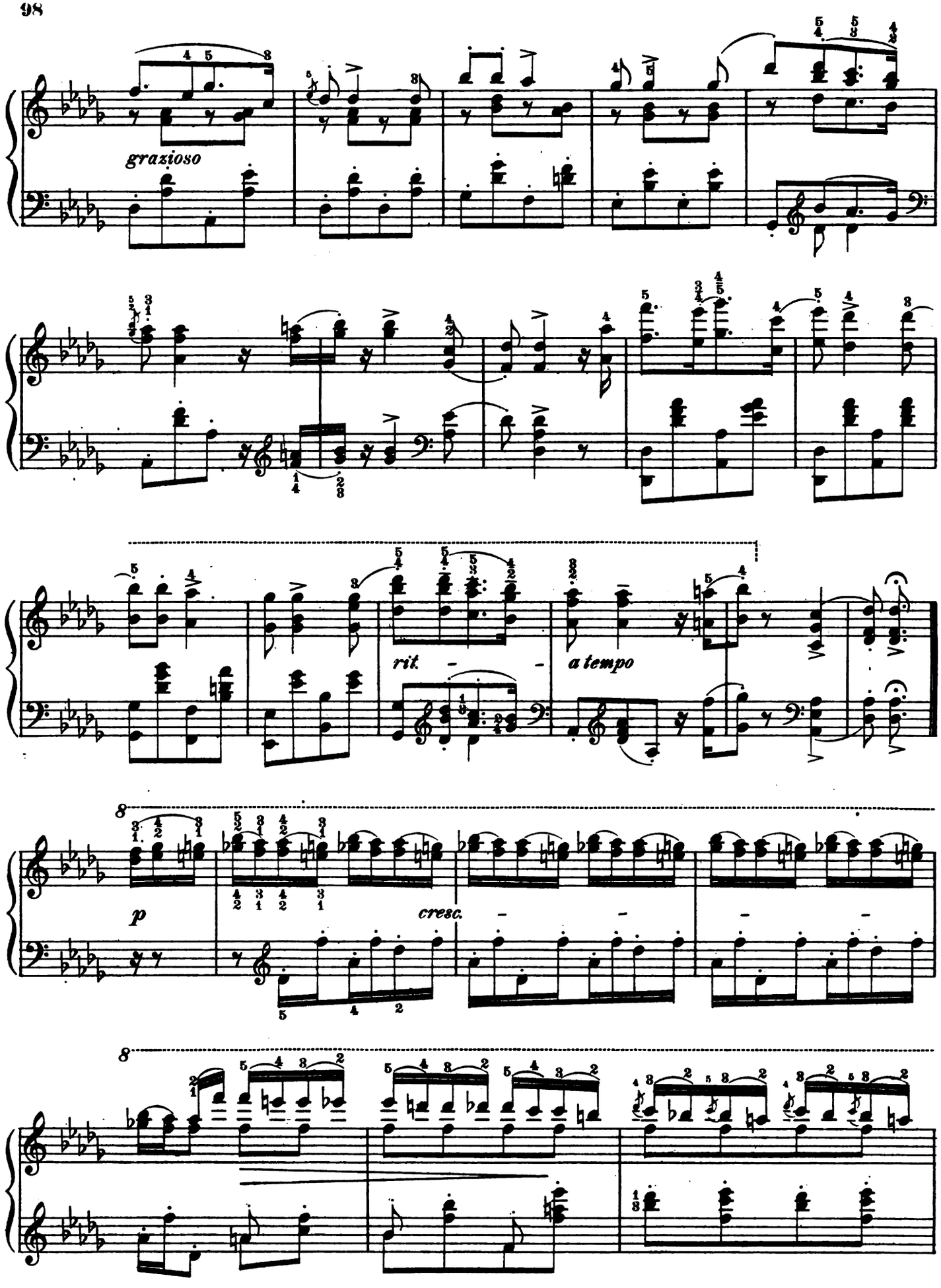

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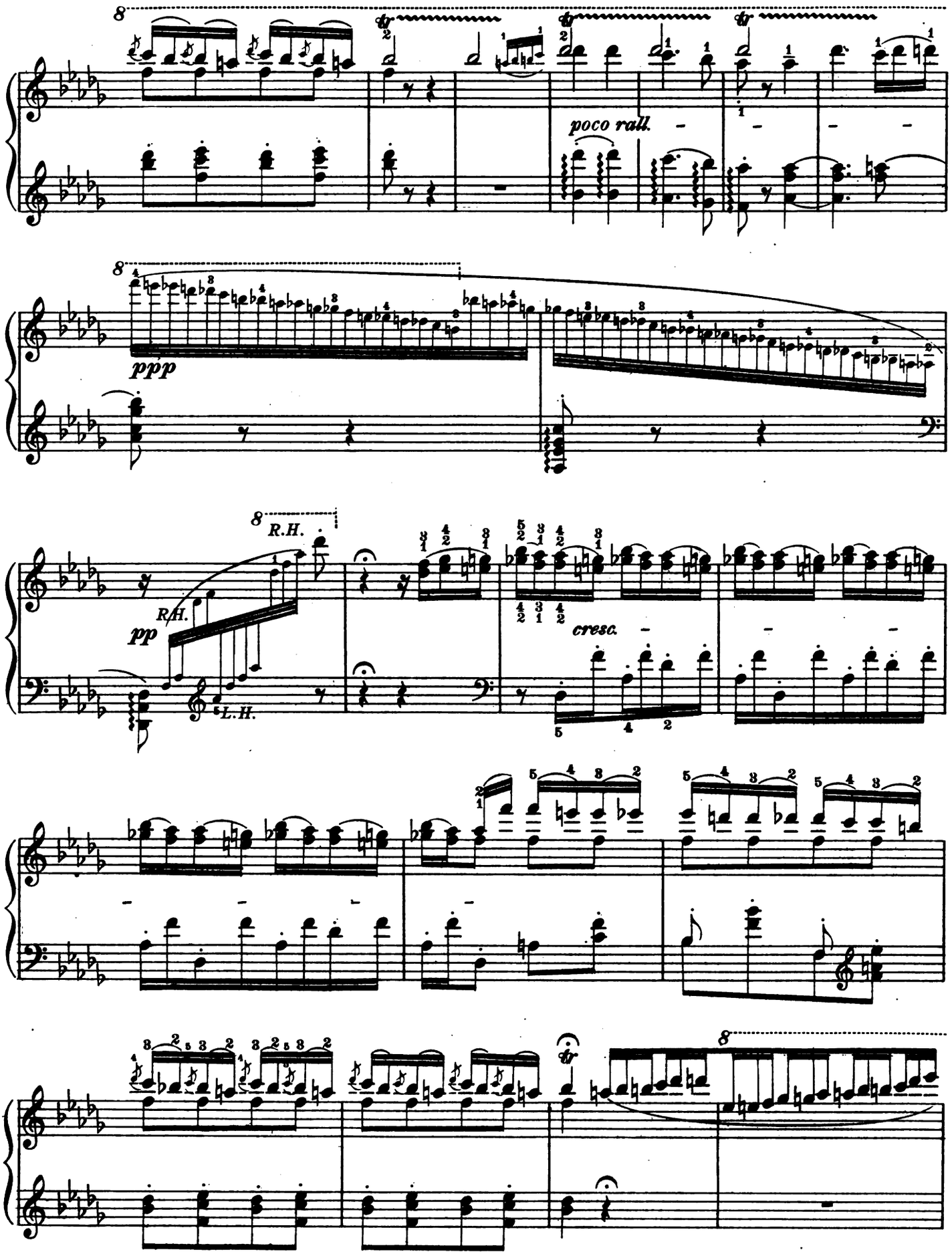

c) See b page 9

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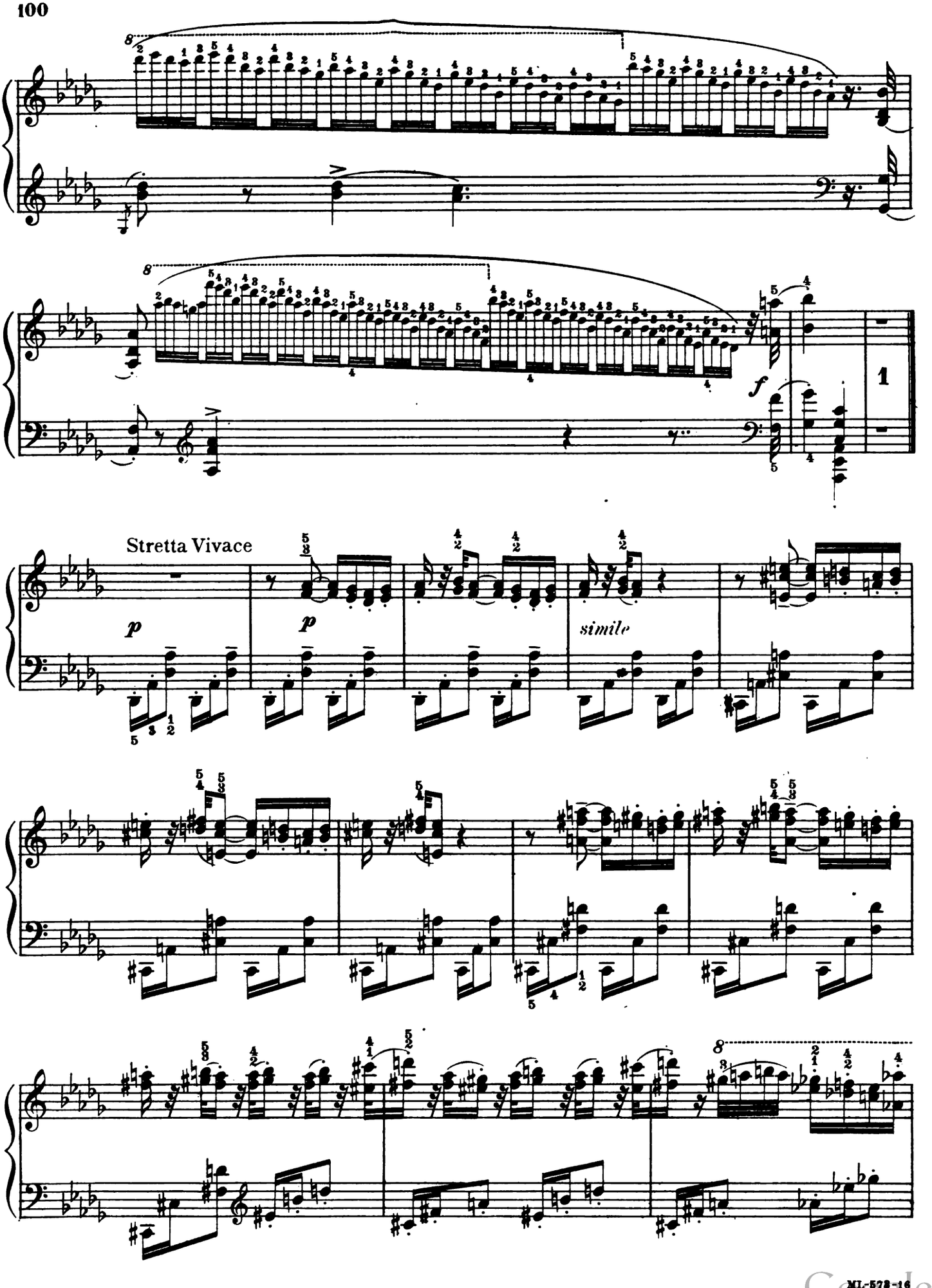

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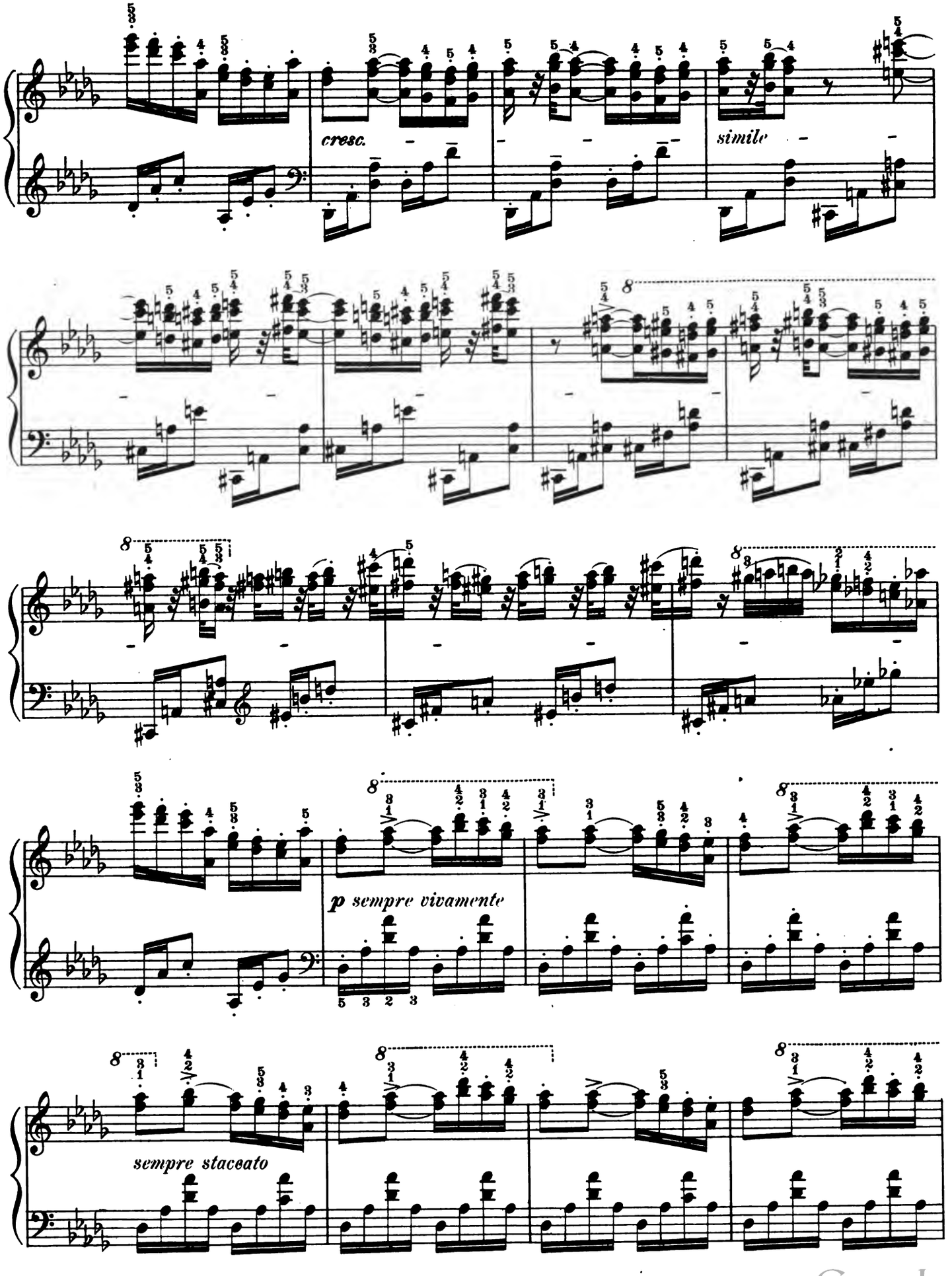

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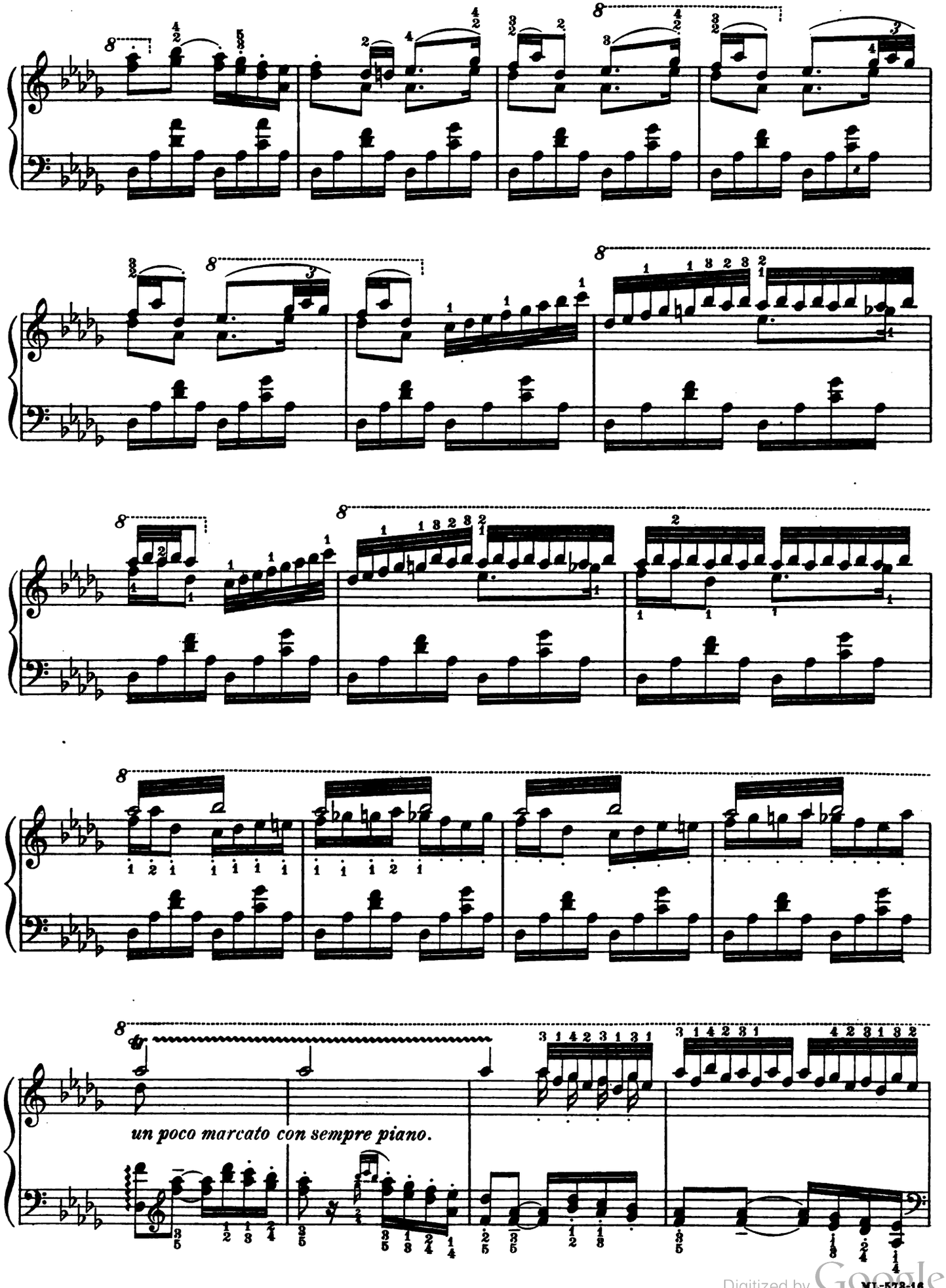

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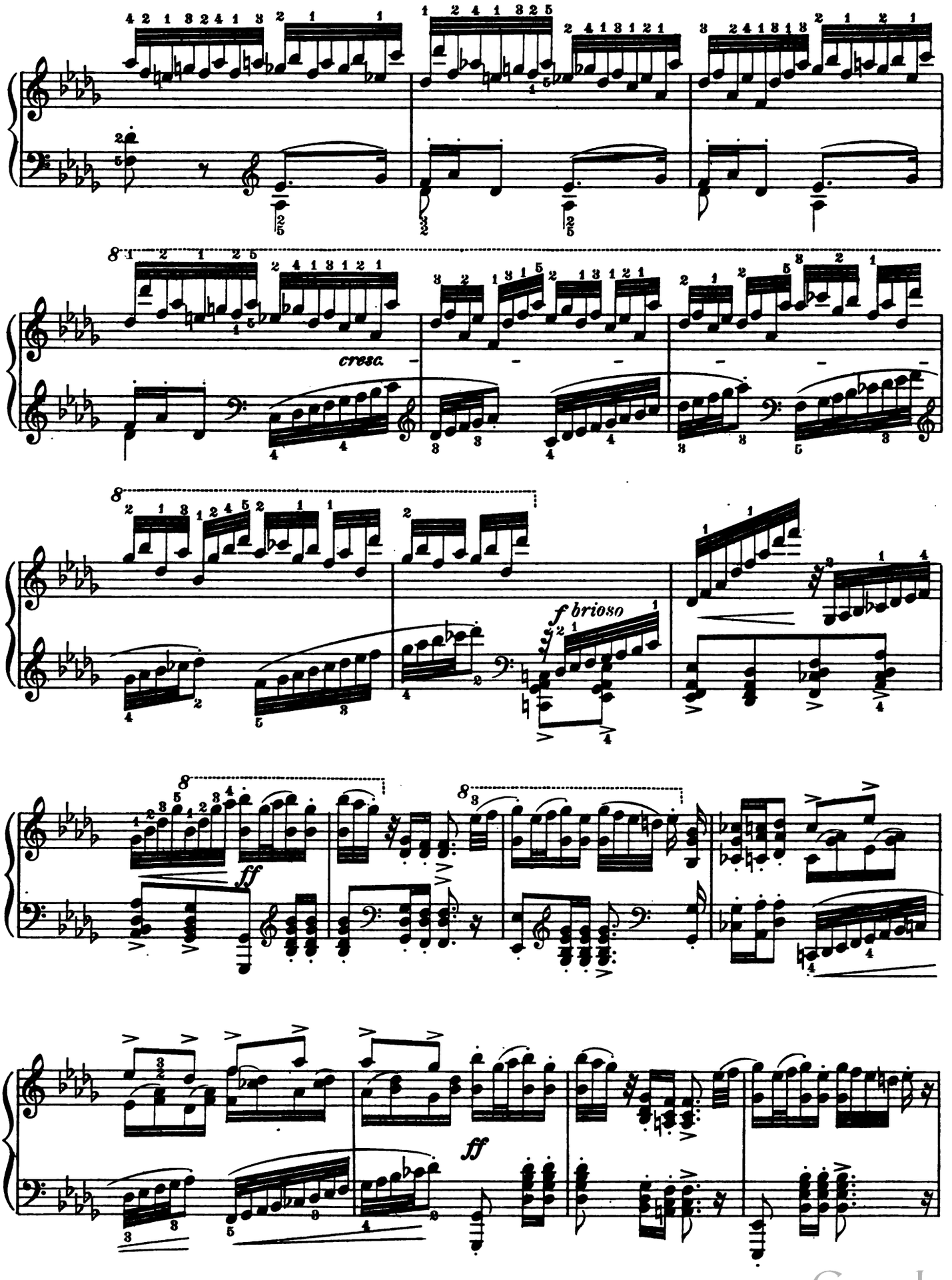

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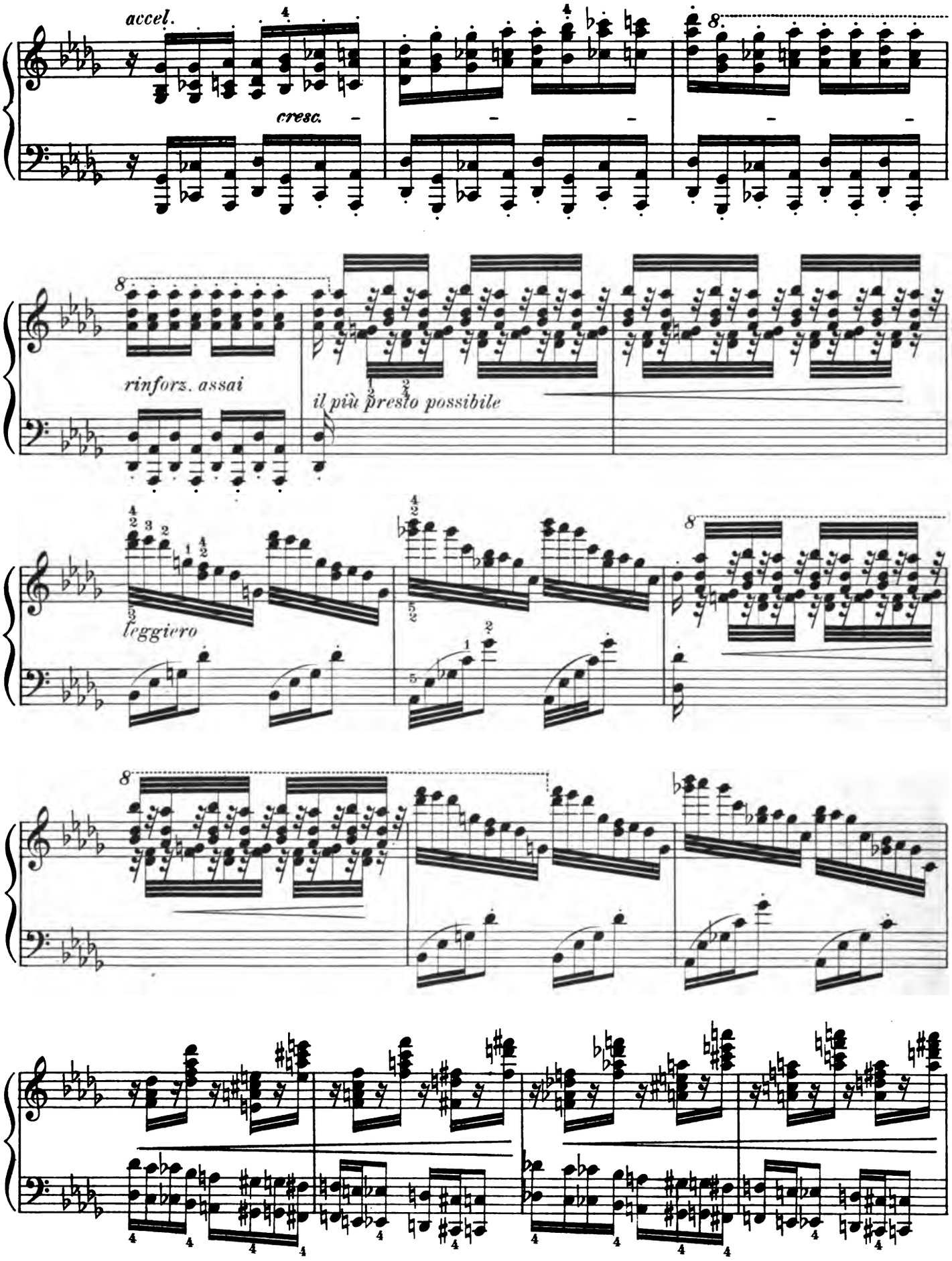

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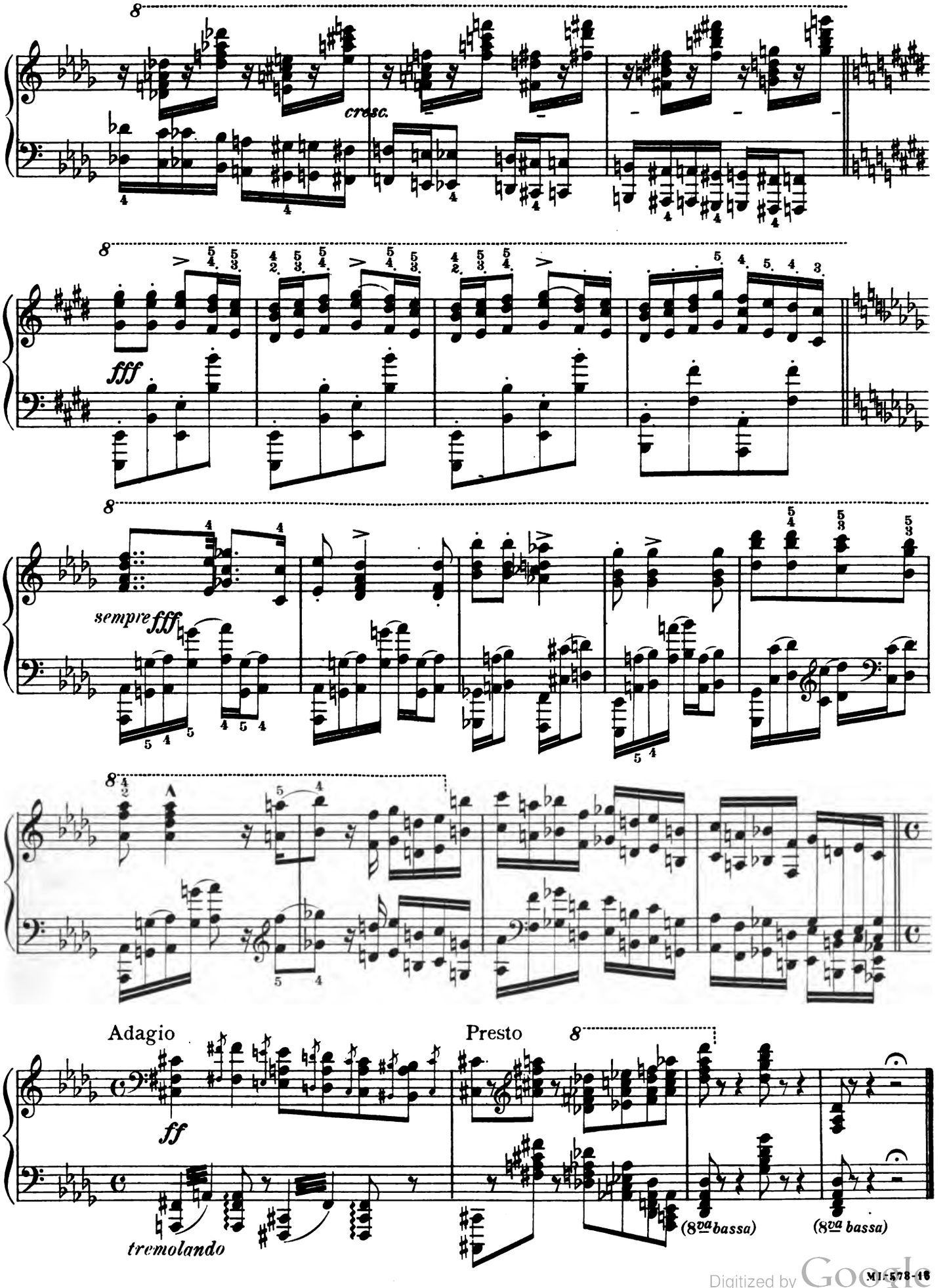

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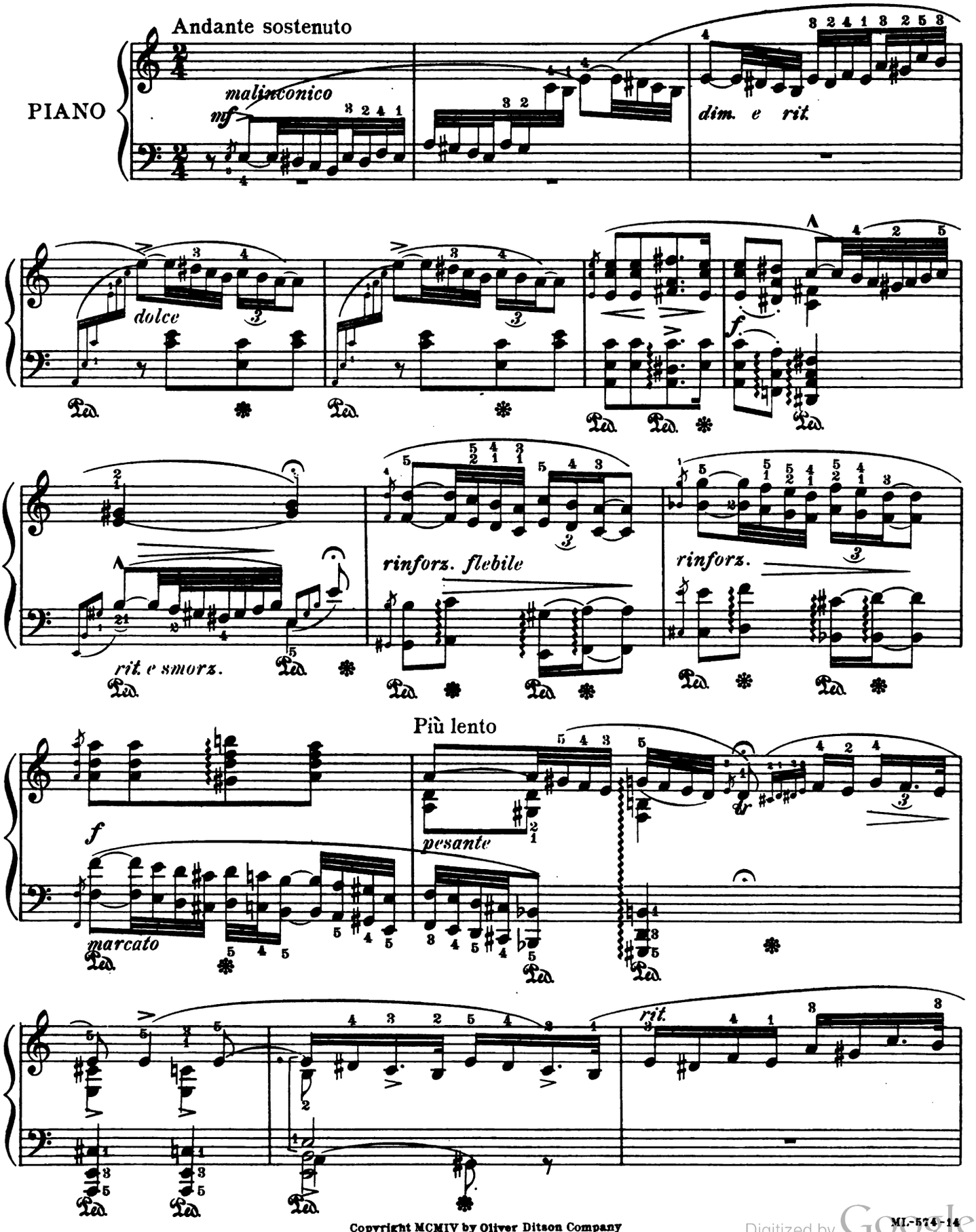
To Count Léo Festetics

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 13

(Published in 1854)

Edited and fingered by
August Spanuth

FRANZ LISZT



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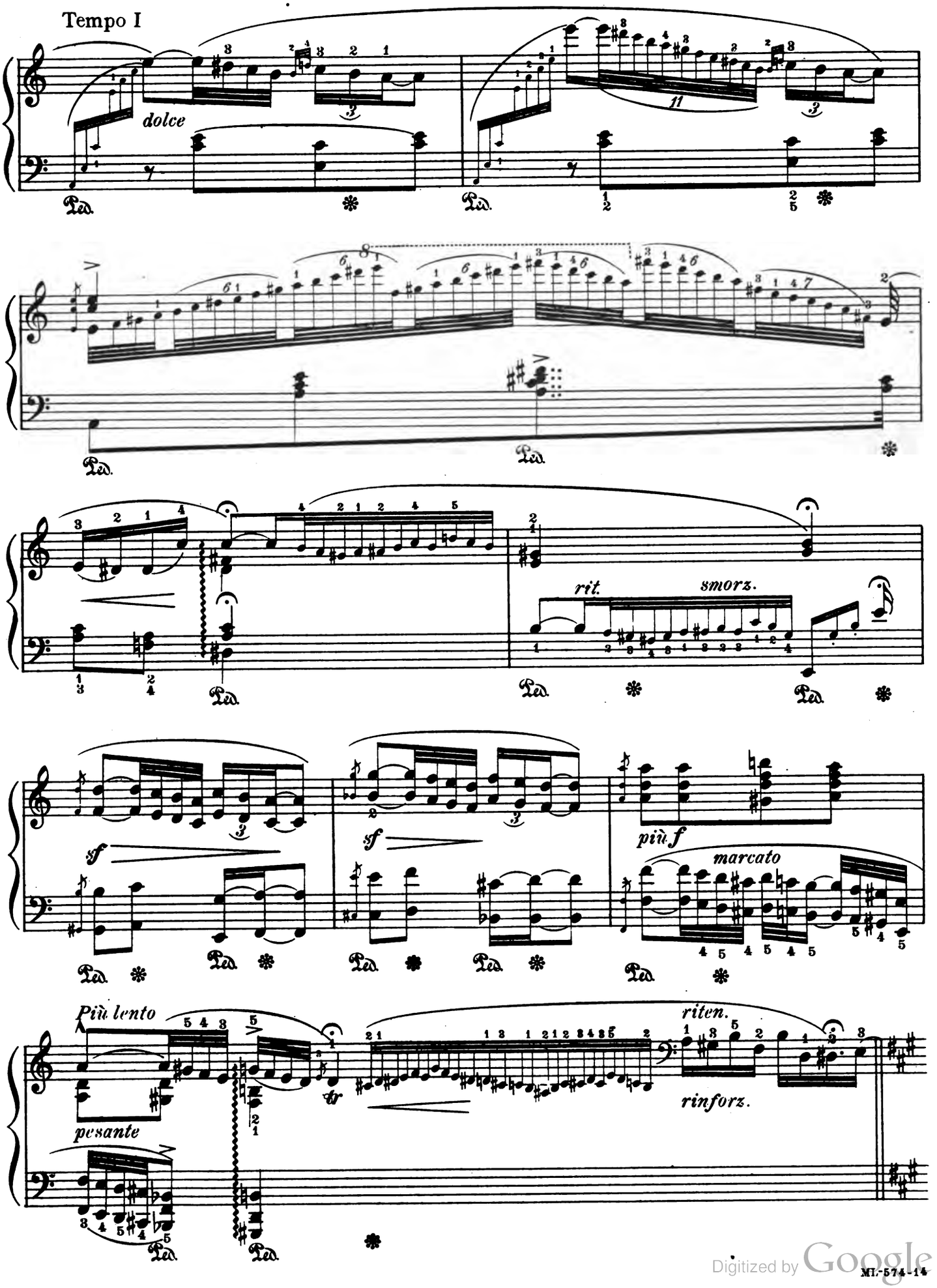

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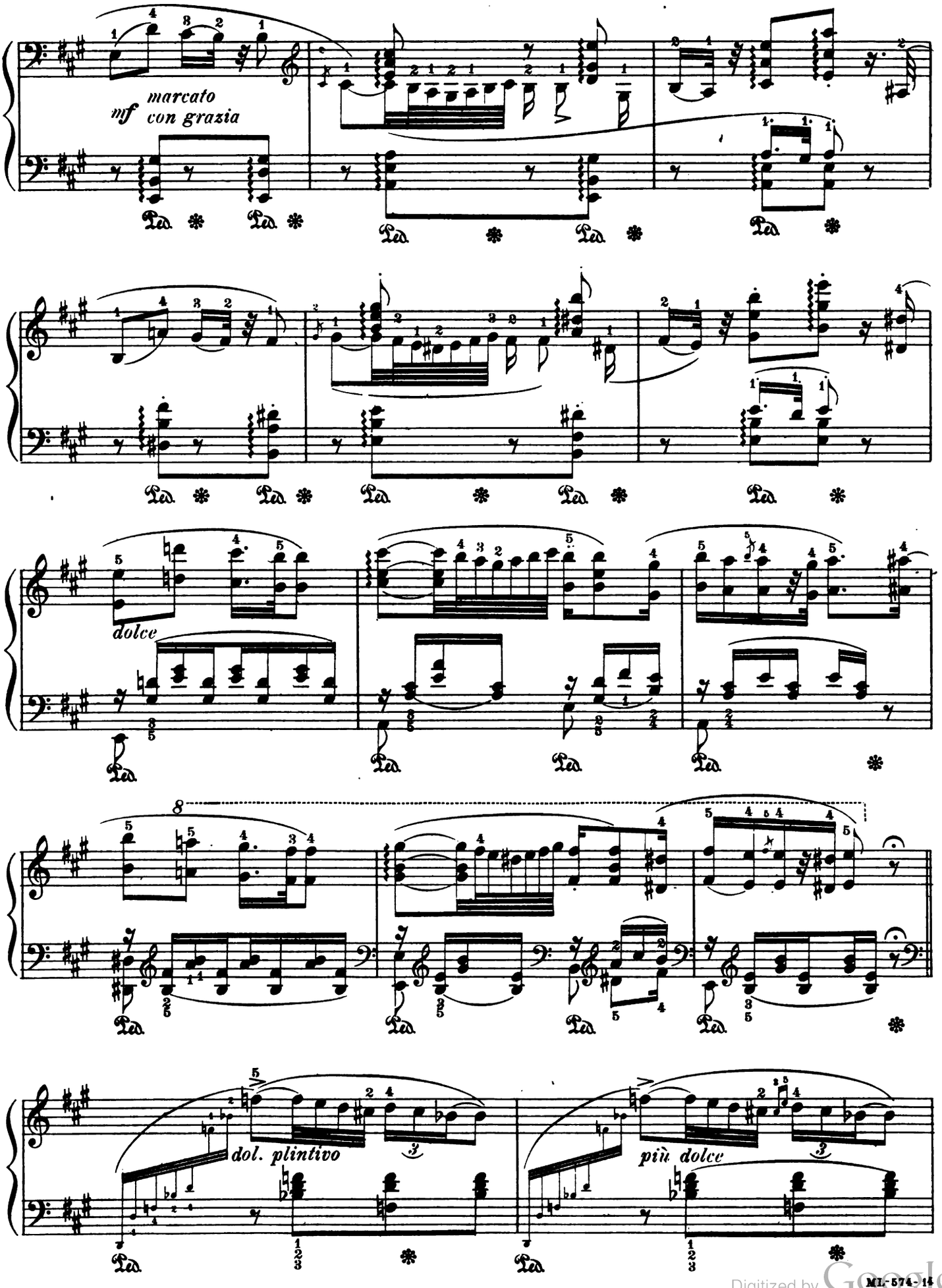

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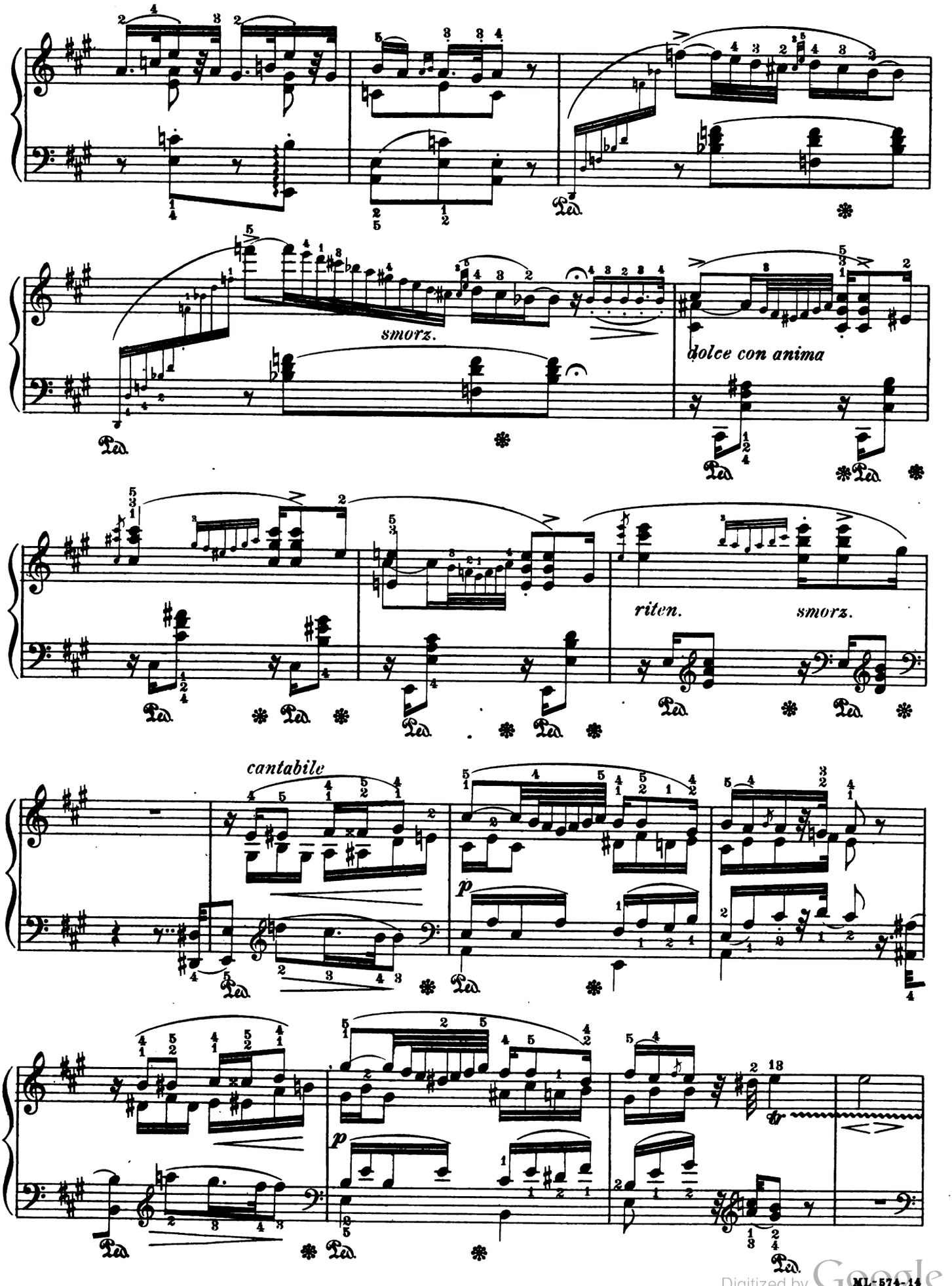

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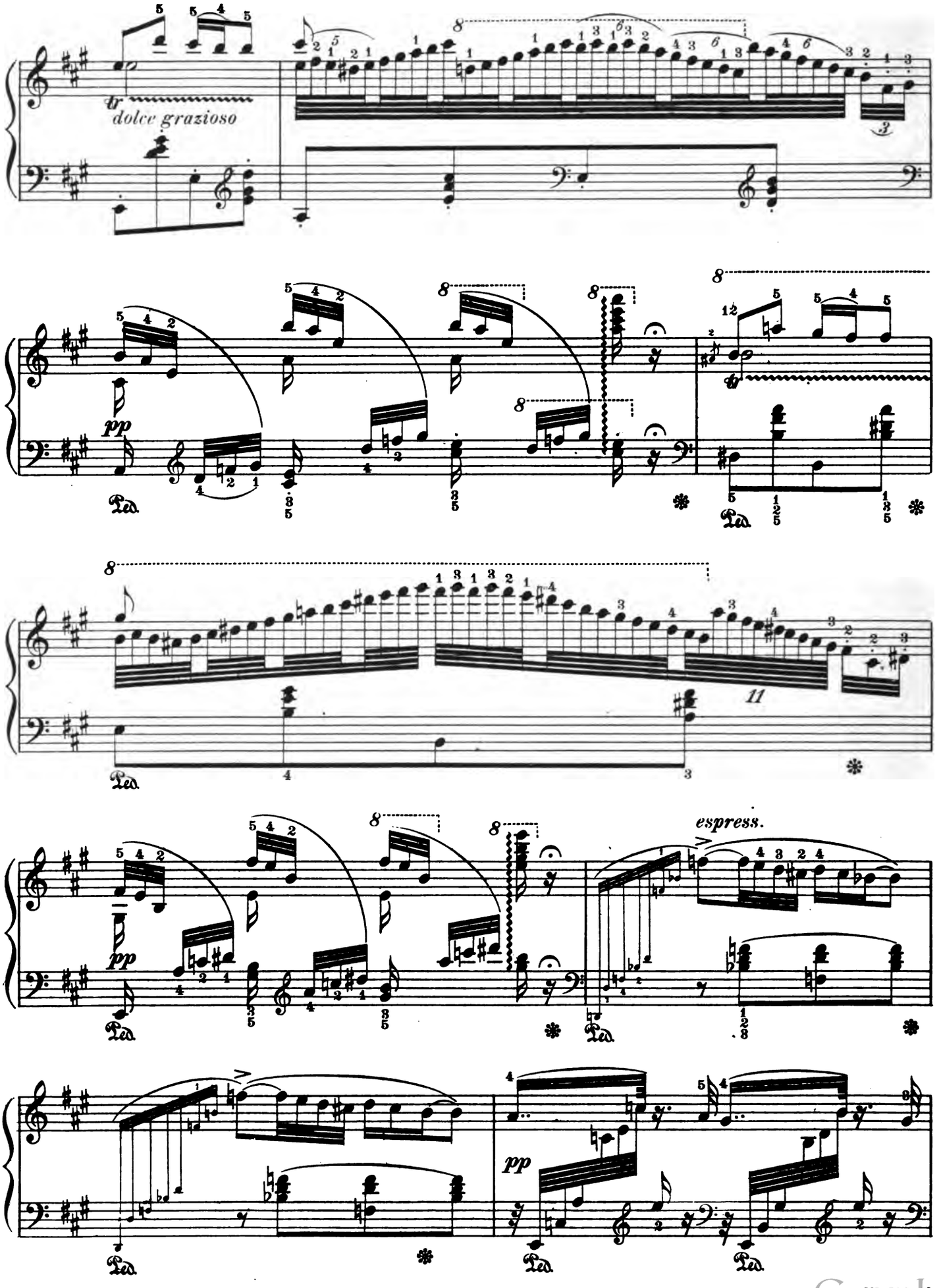

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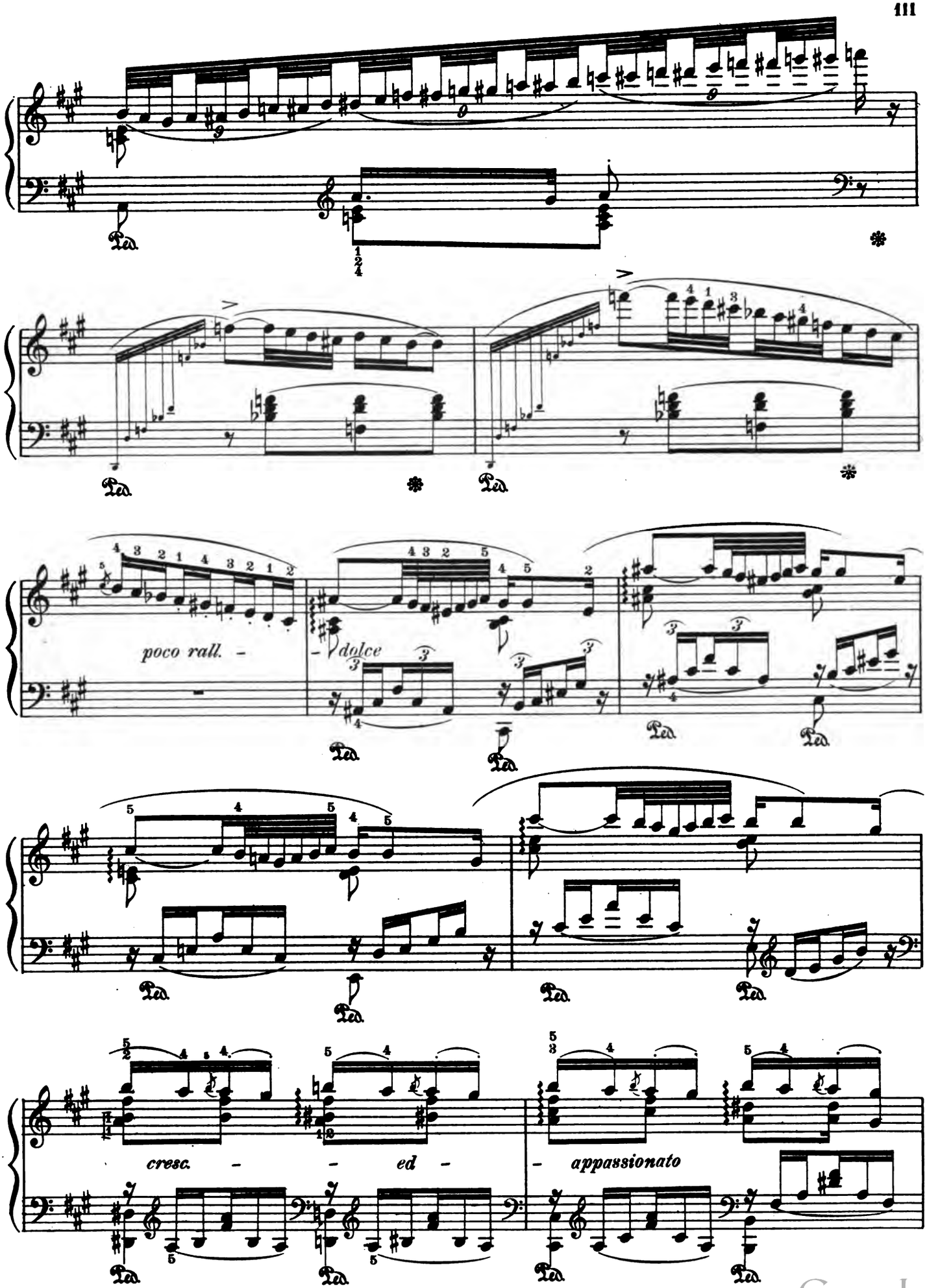

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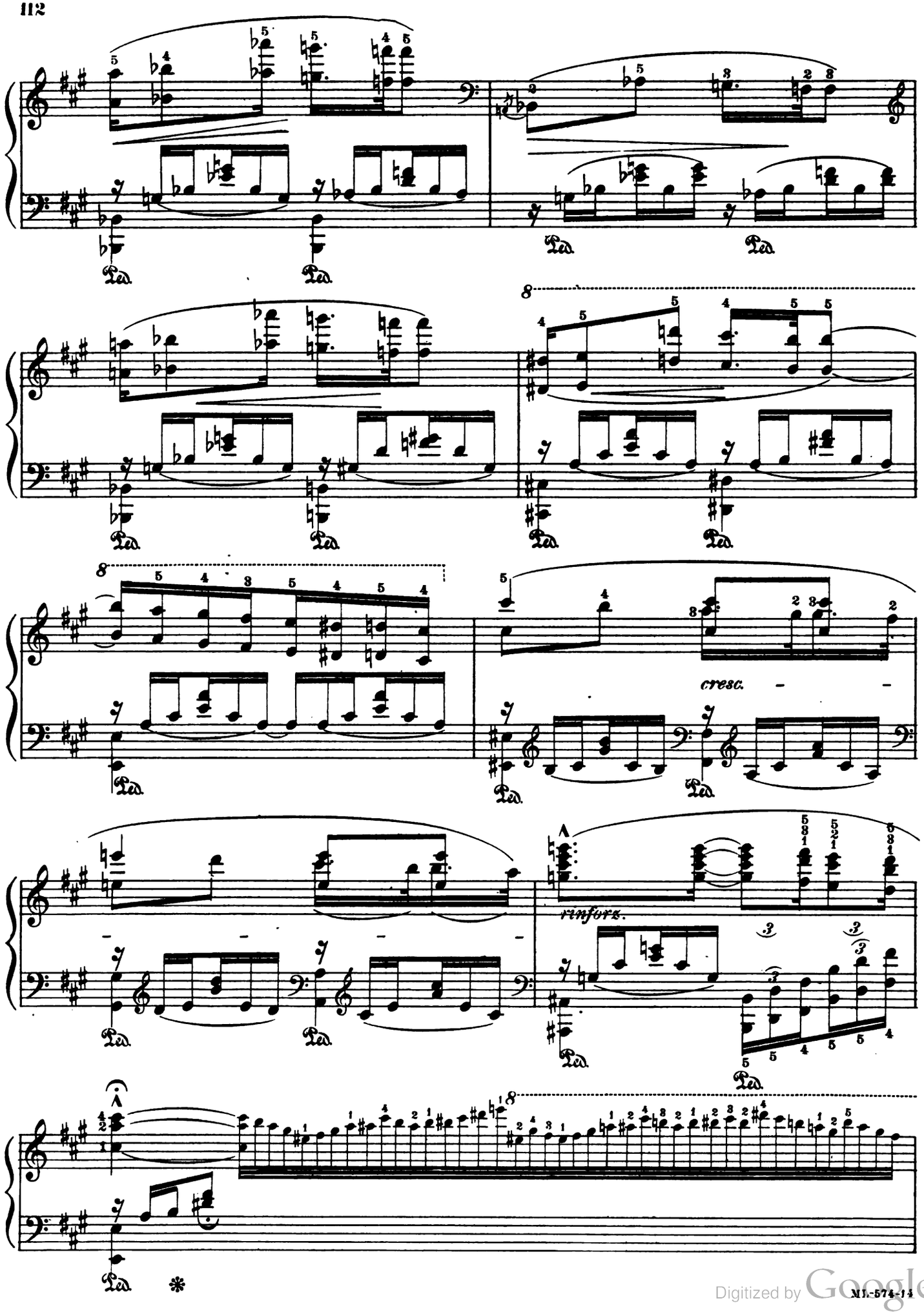

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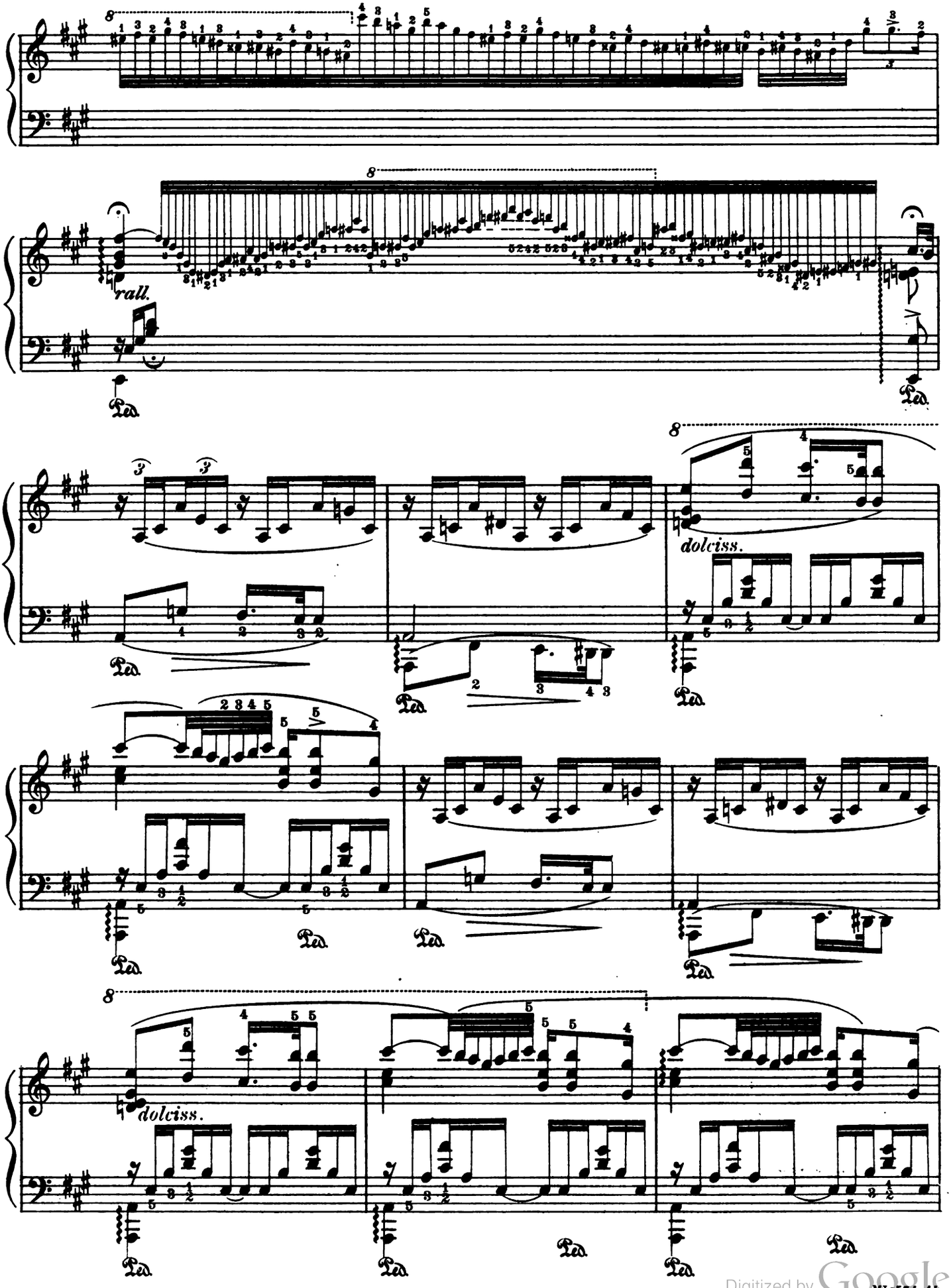

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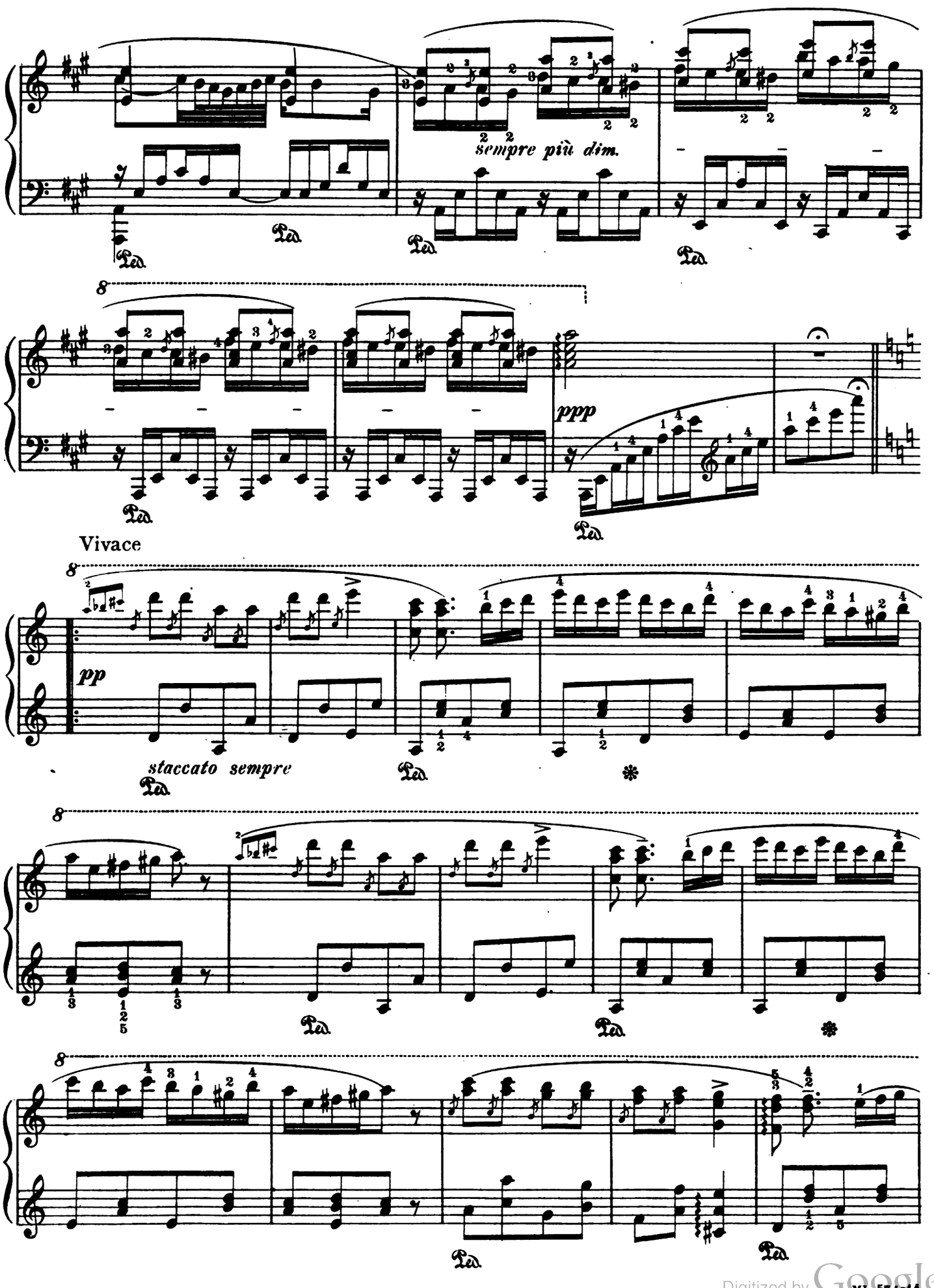

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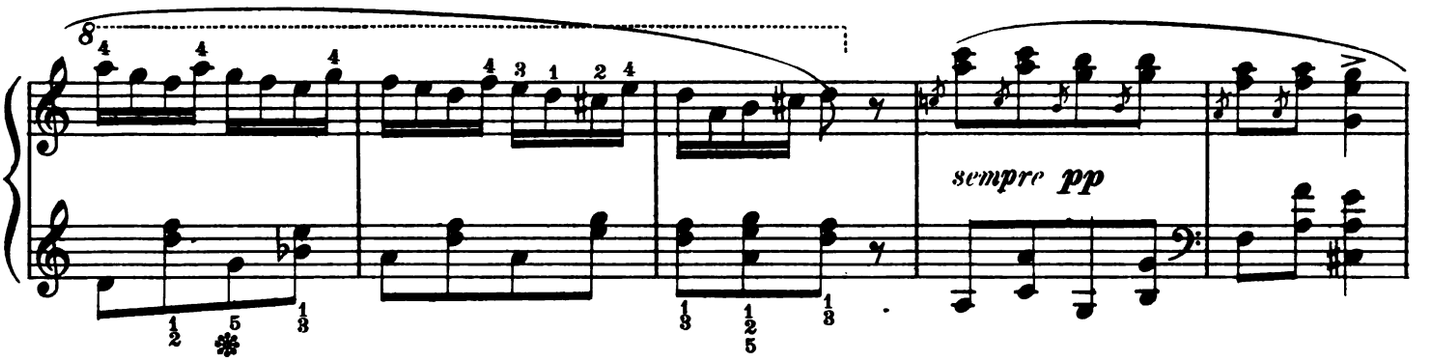
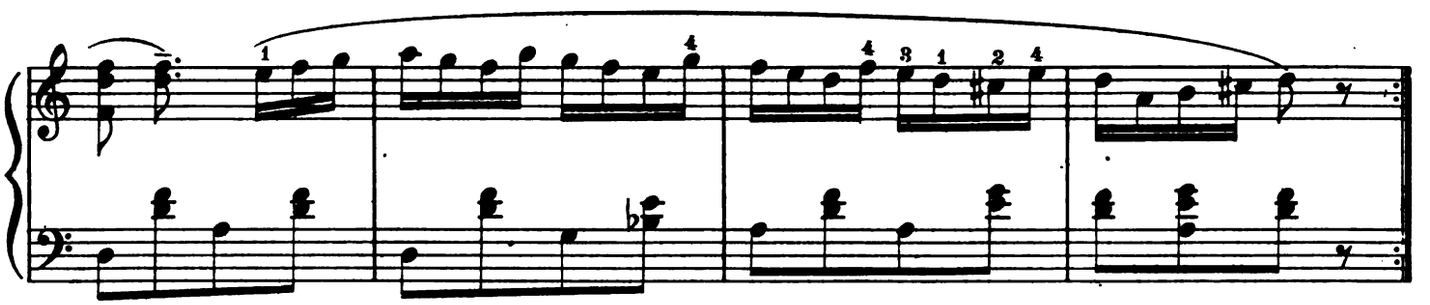
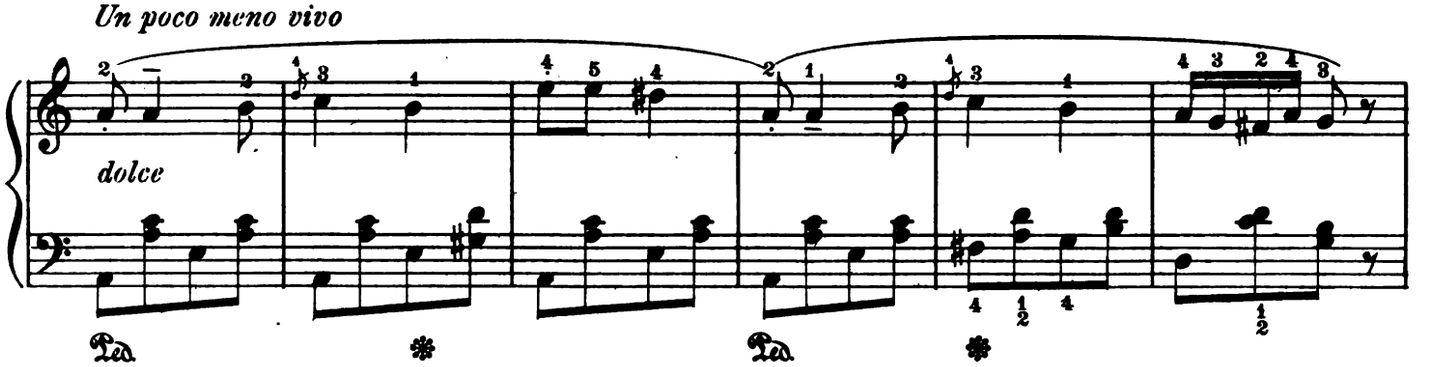
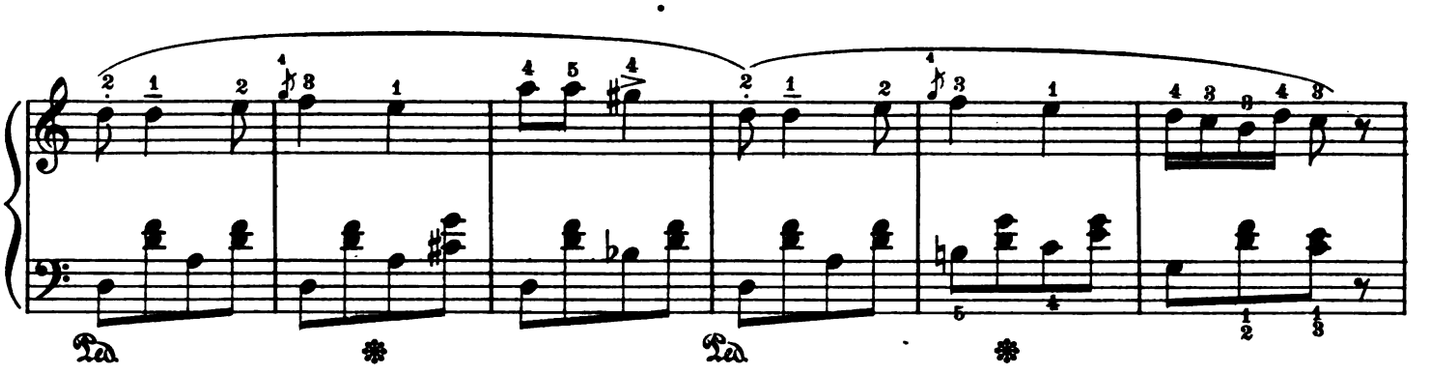
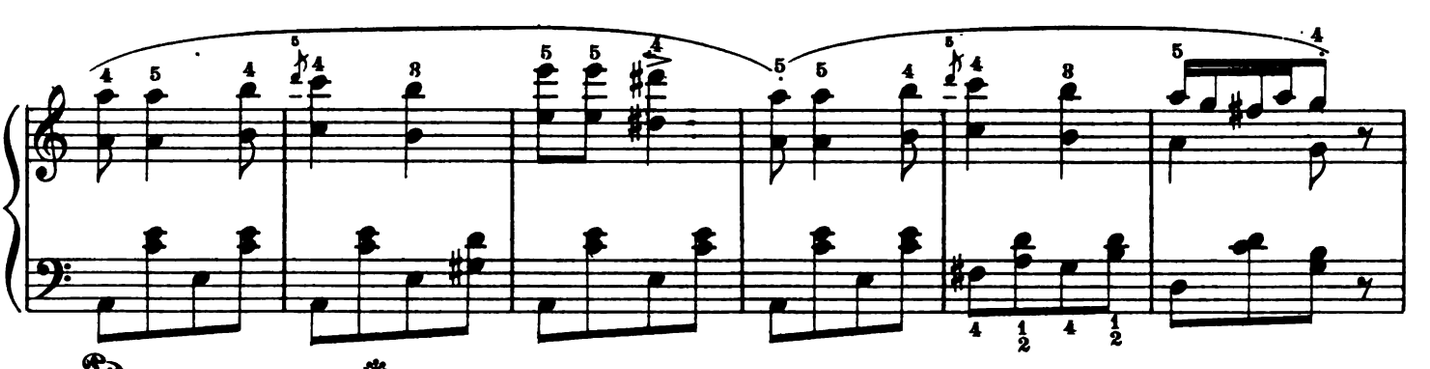




Un poco meno vivo







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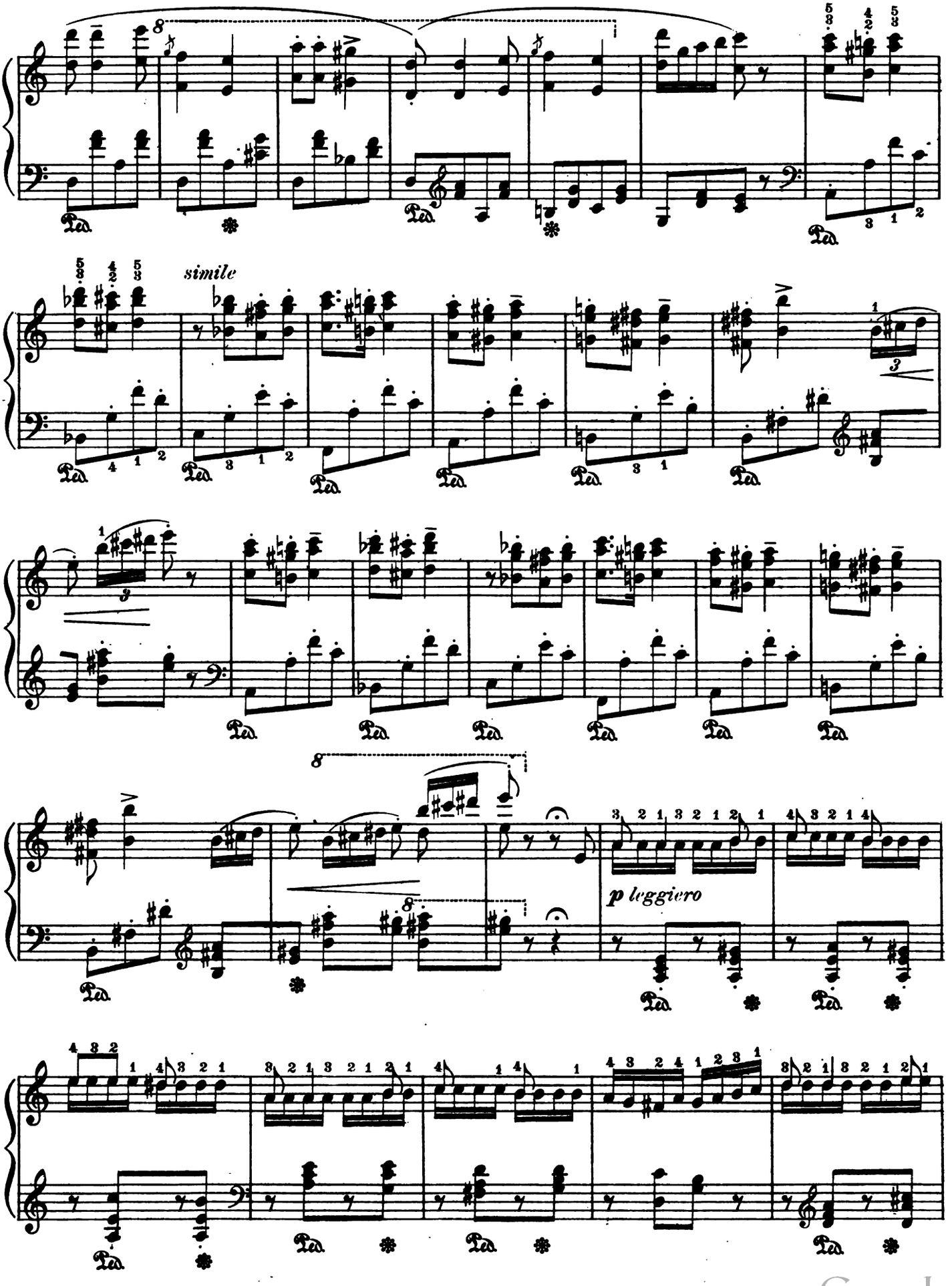

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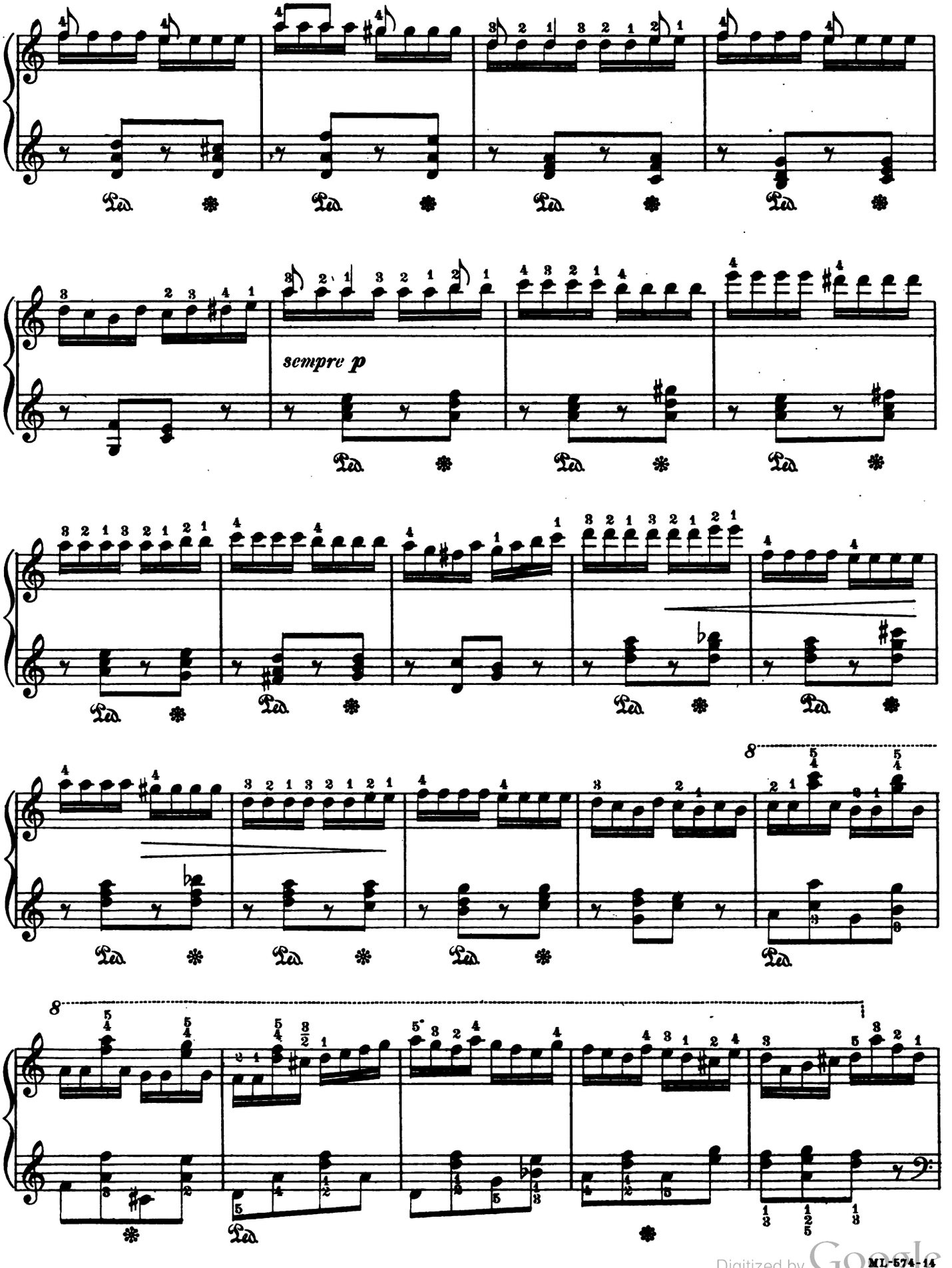

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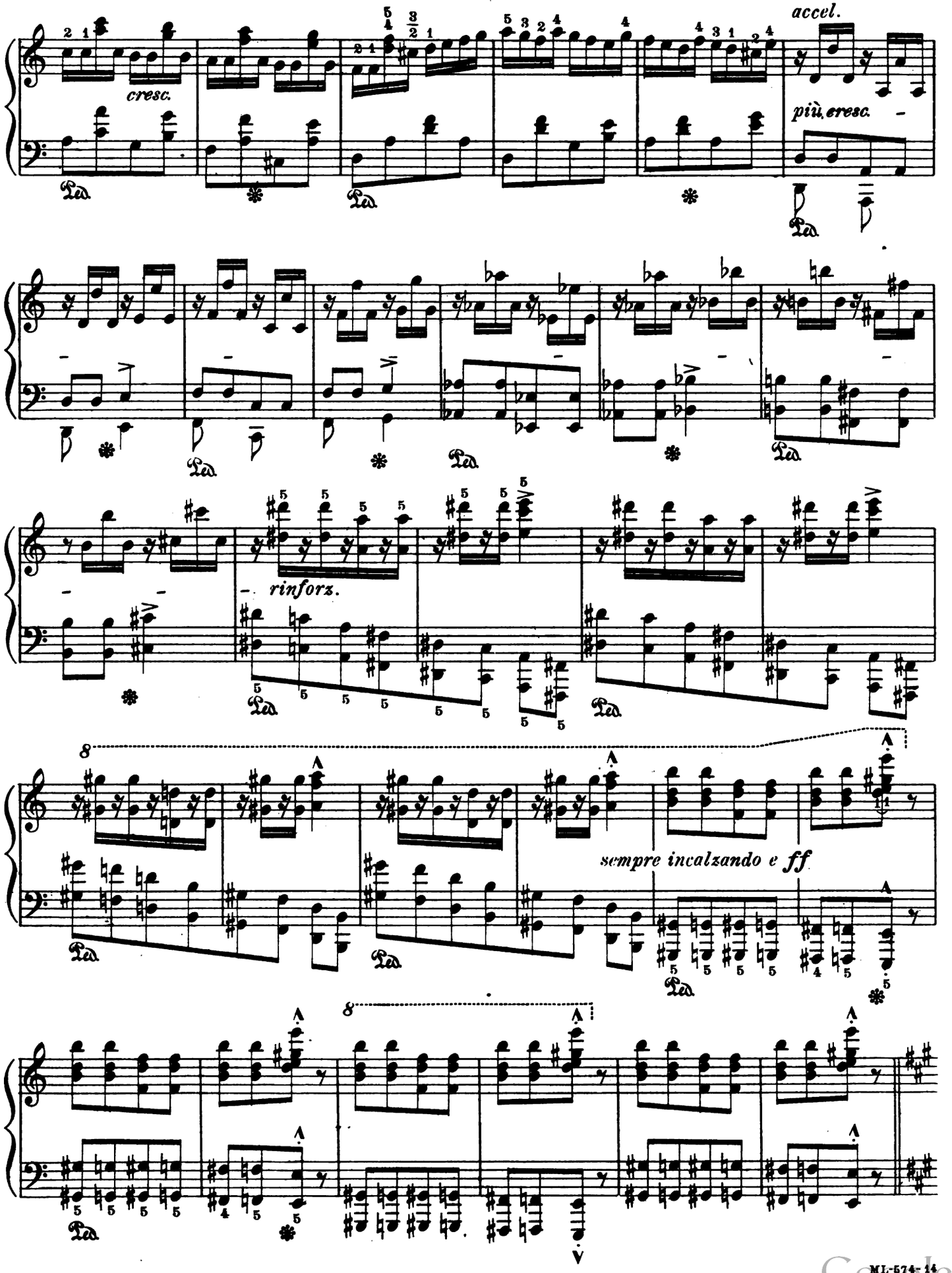

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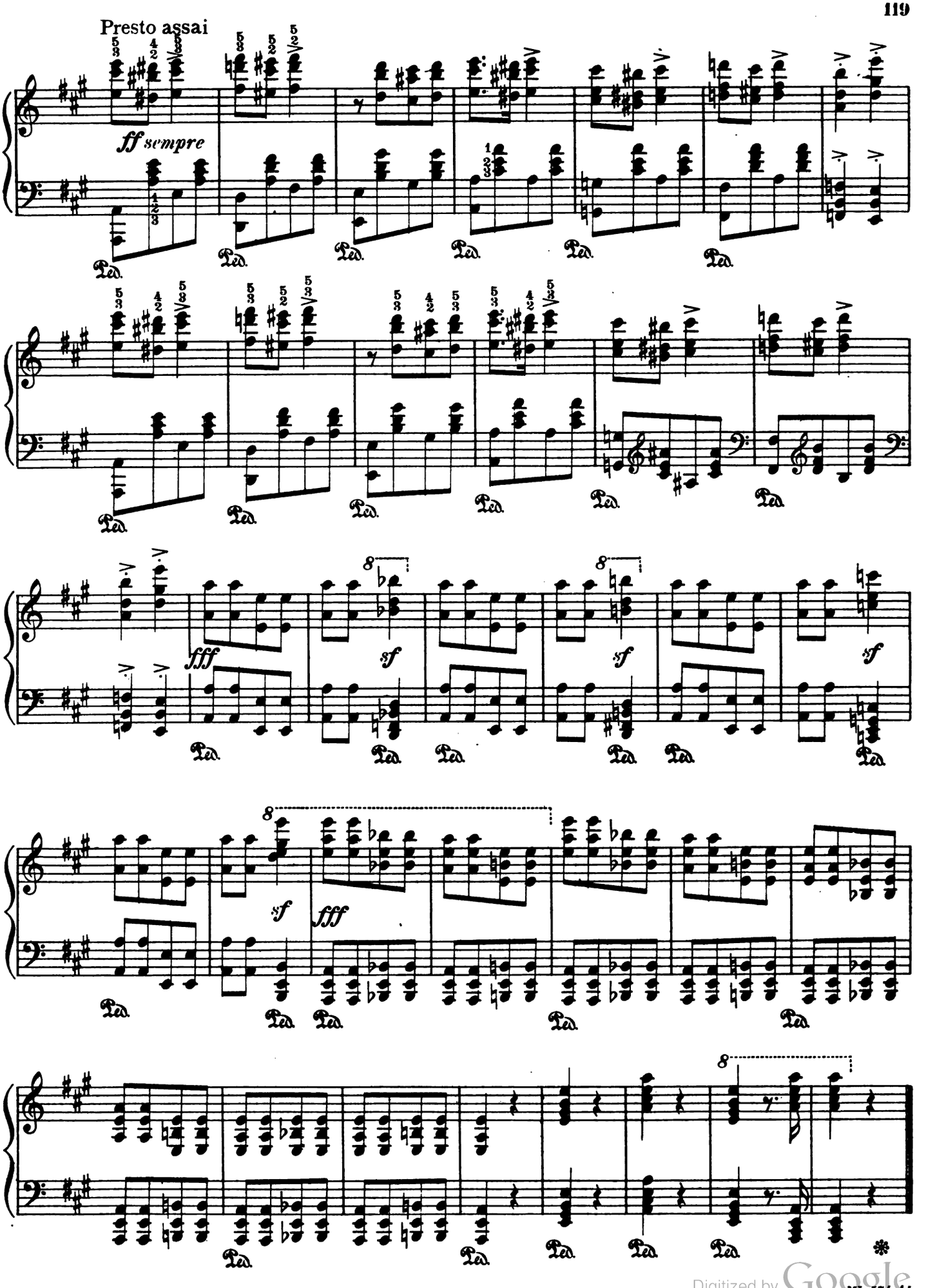

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To Hans von Bülow

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 14

(Published in 1854)

Edited and fingered by
John Orth

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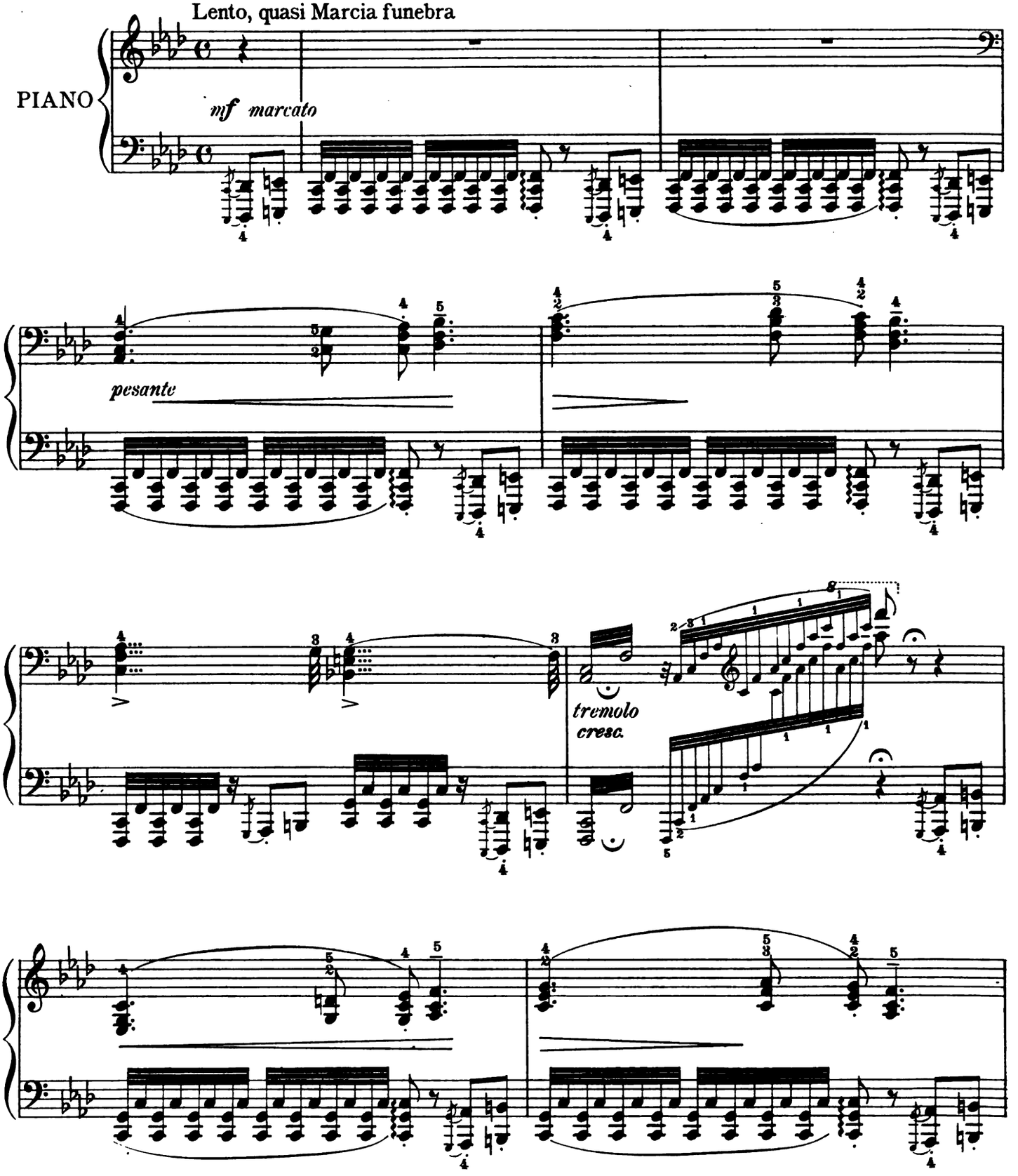

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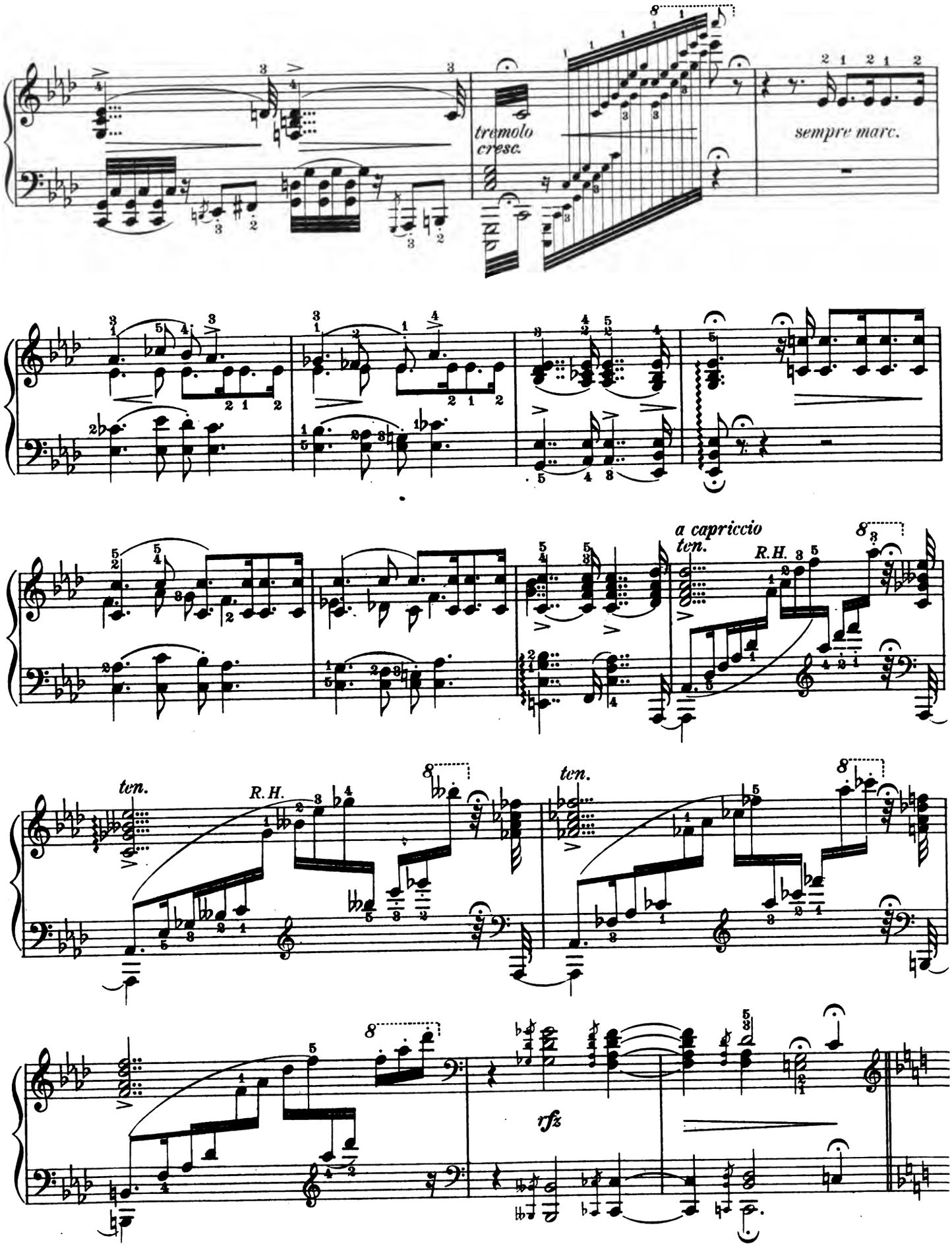

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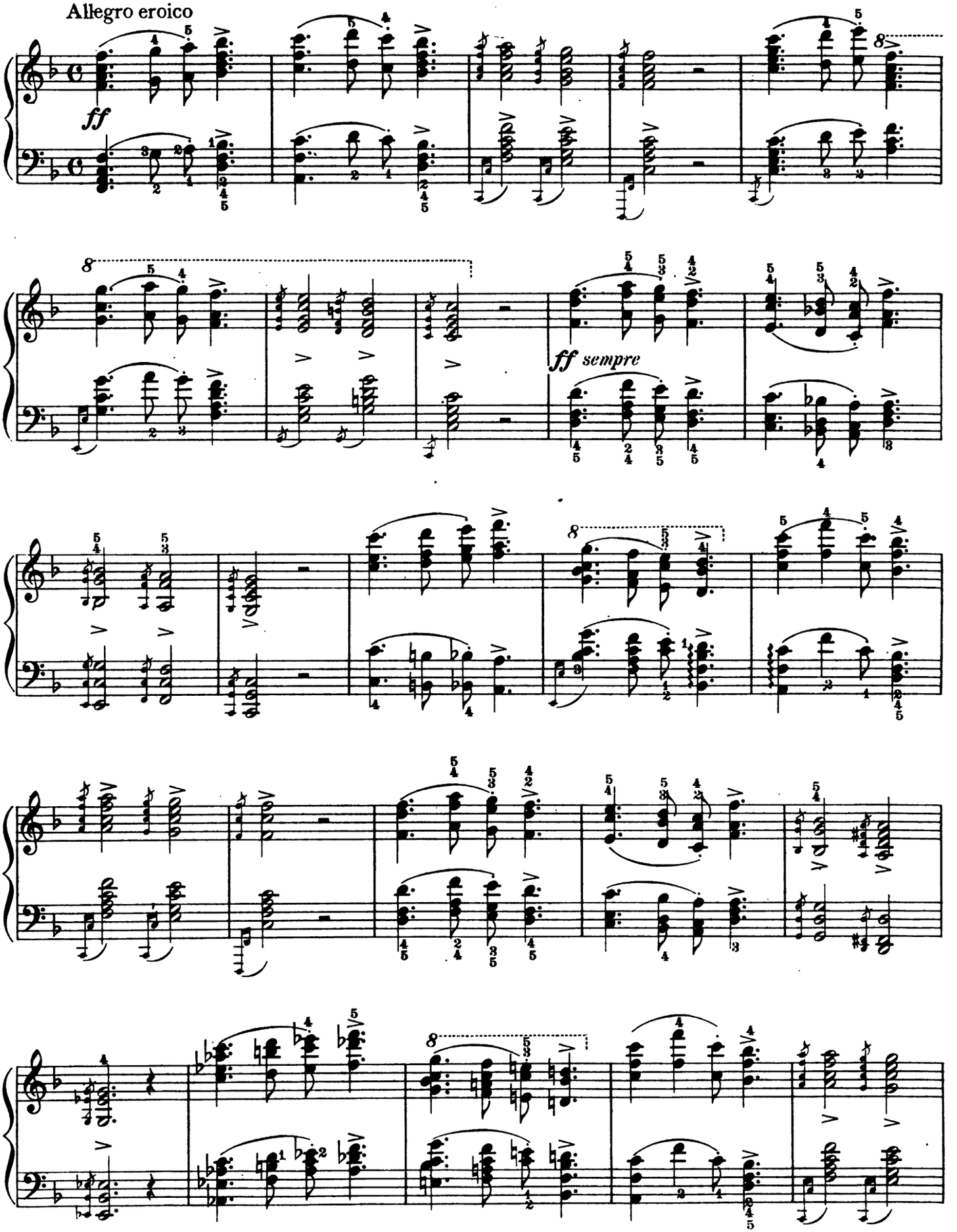

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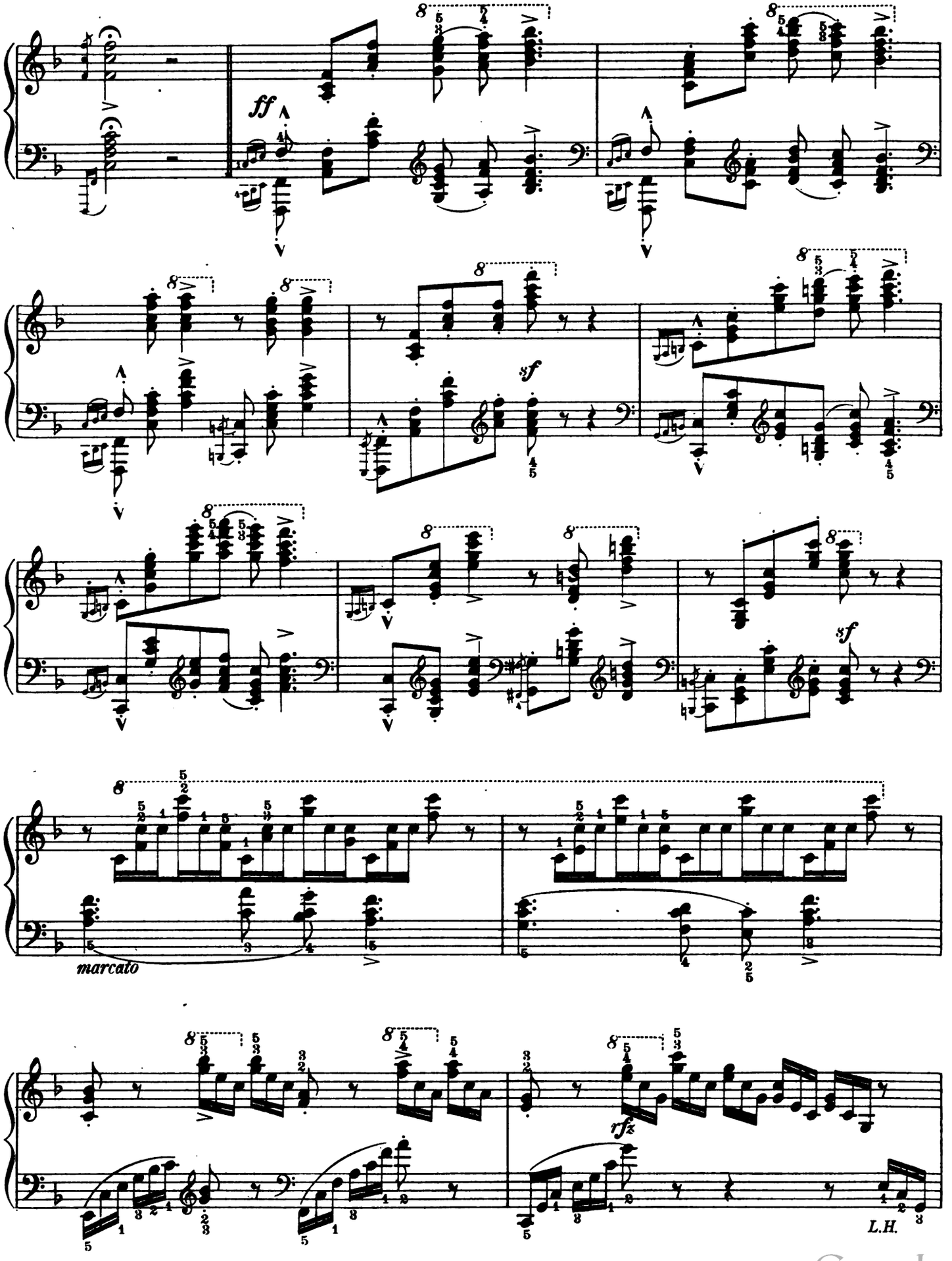

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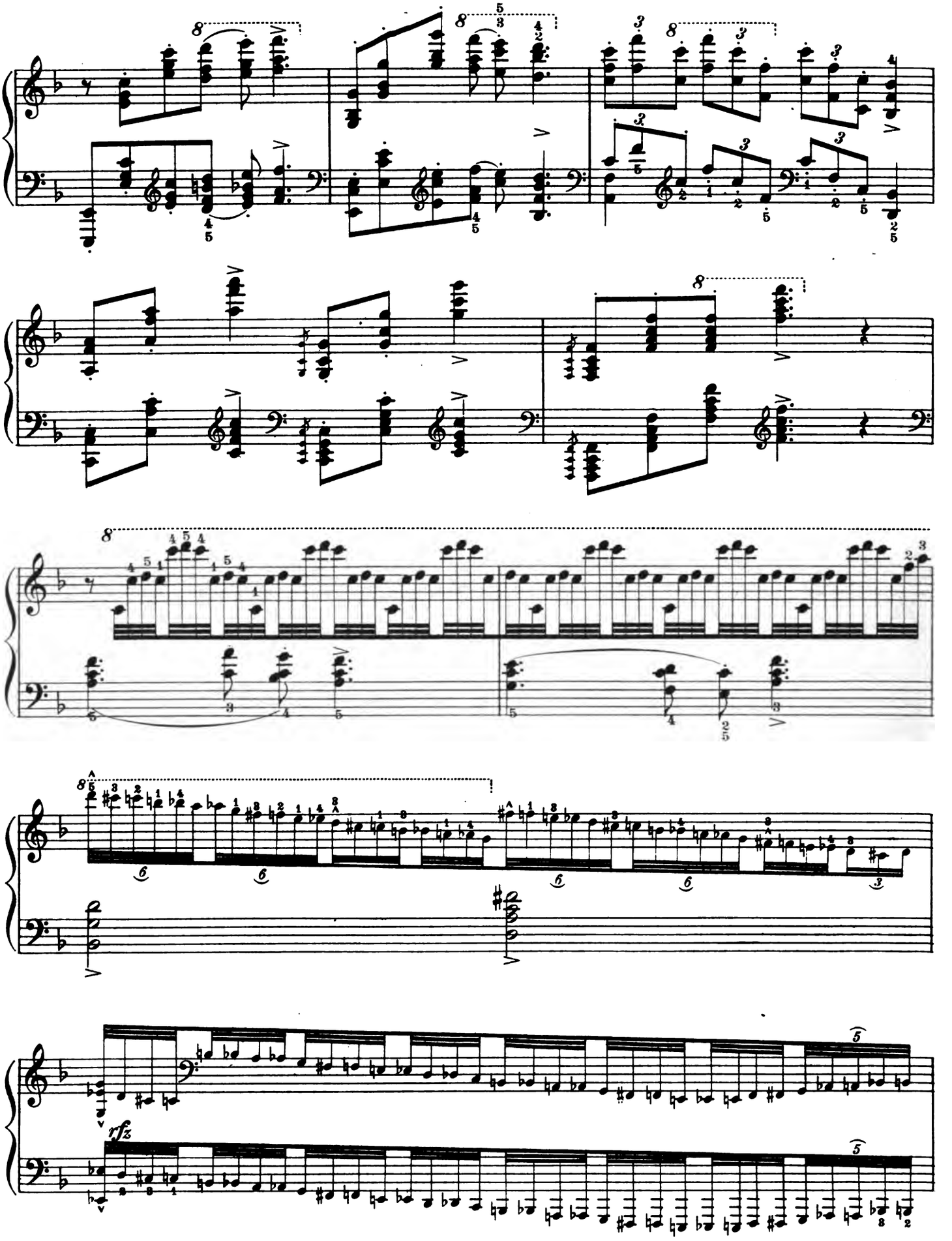

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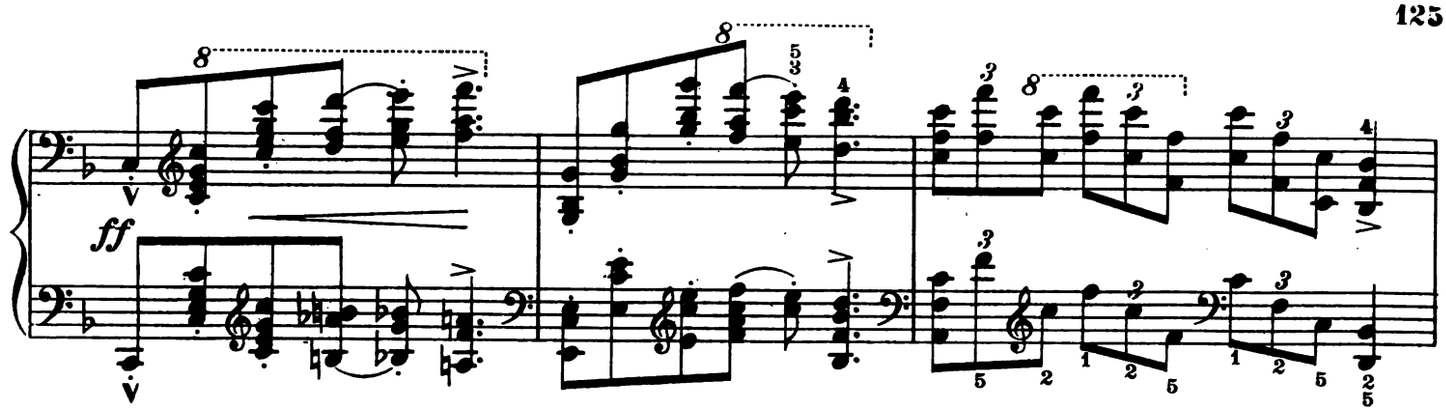

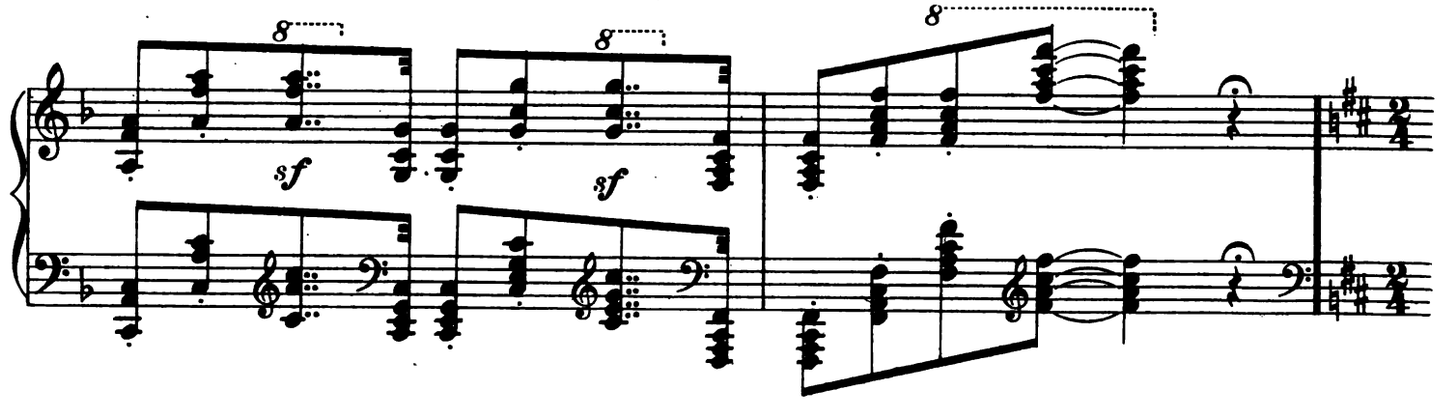

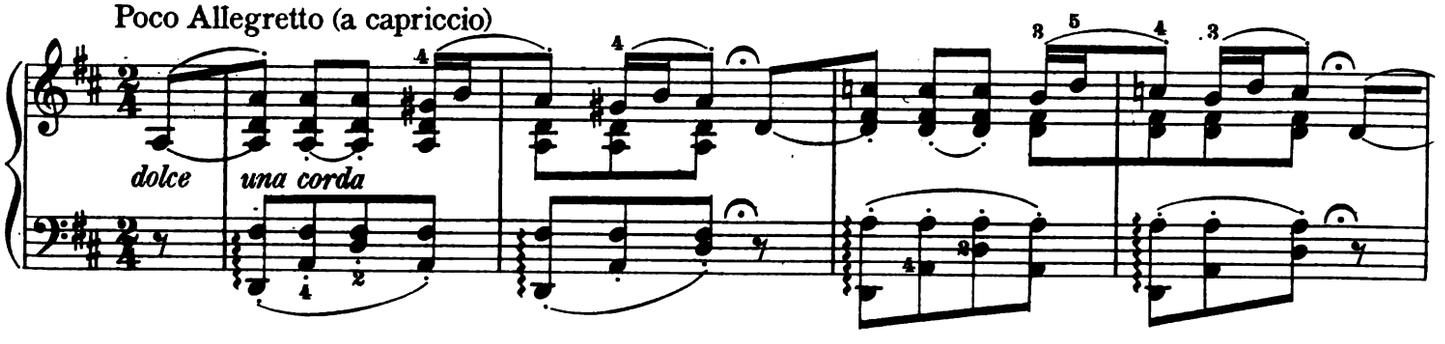

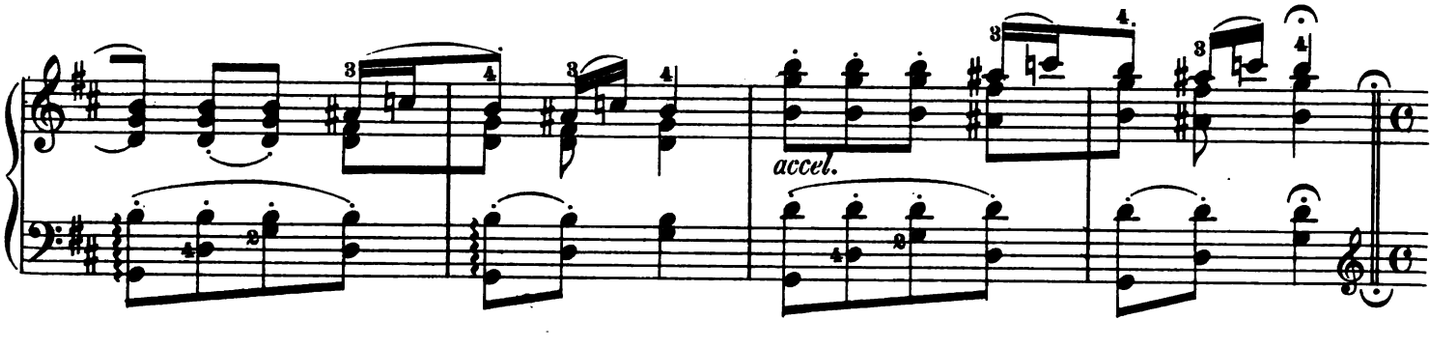

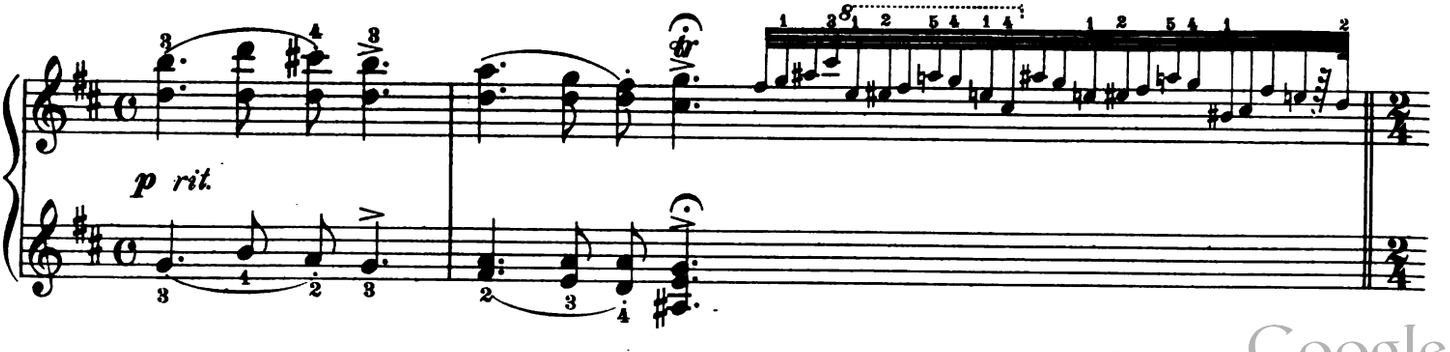

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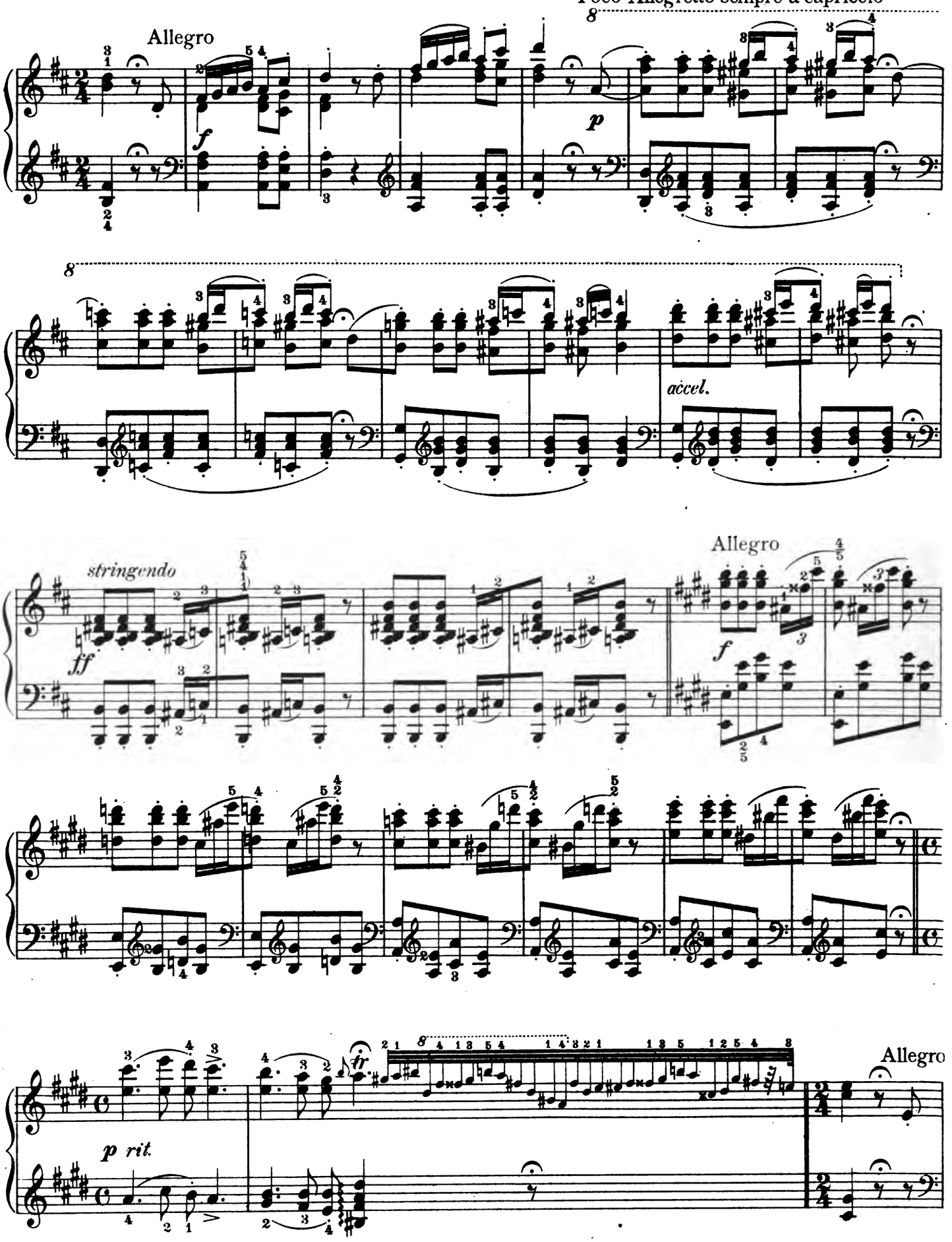

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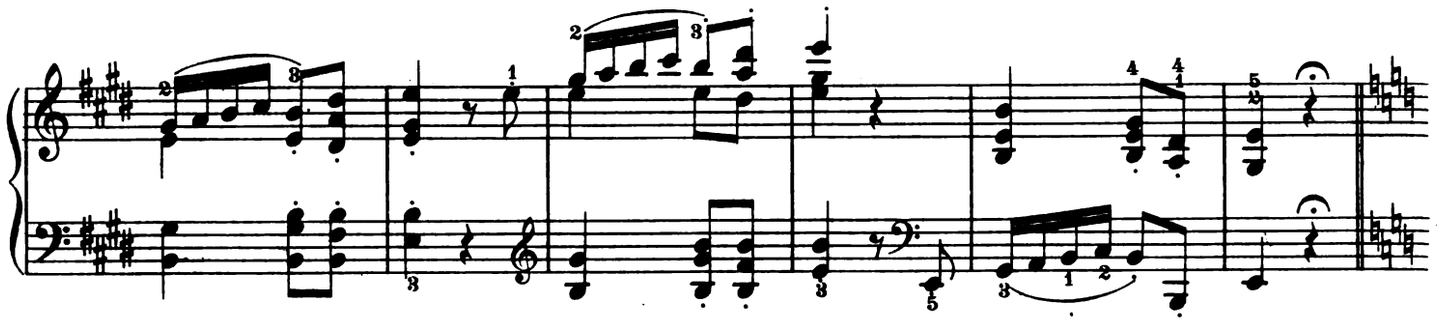
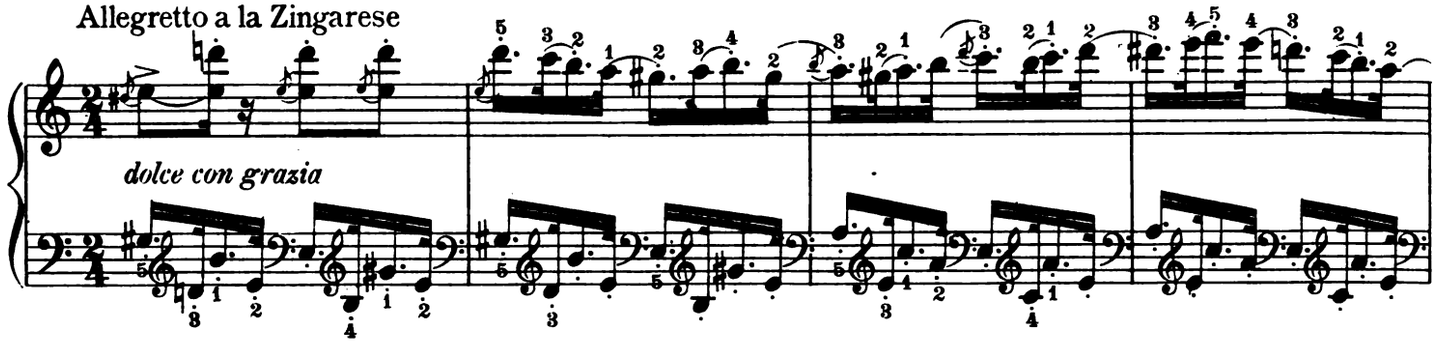
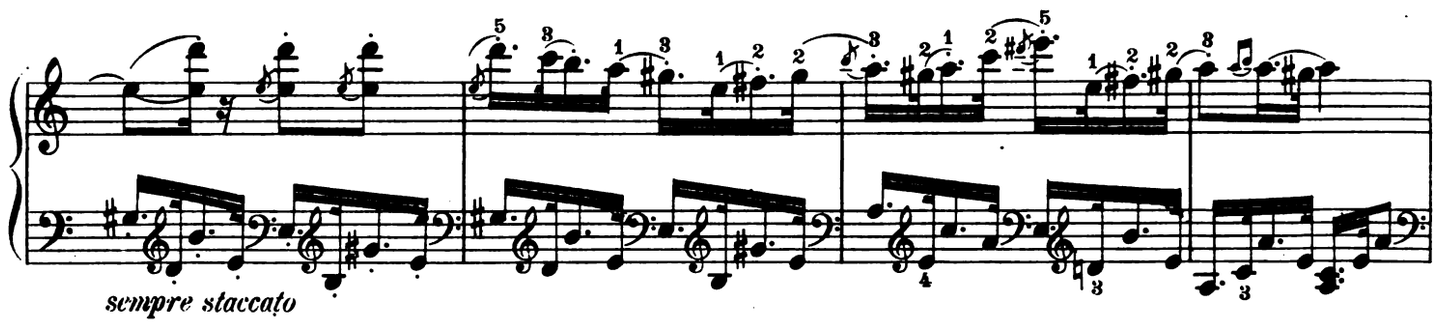


Allegretto a la Zingarese

dolce con grazia





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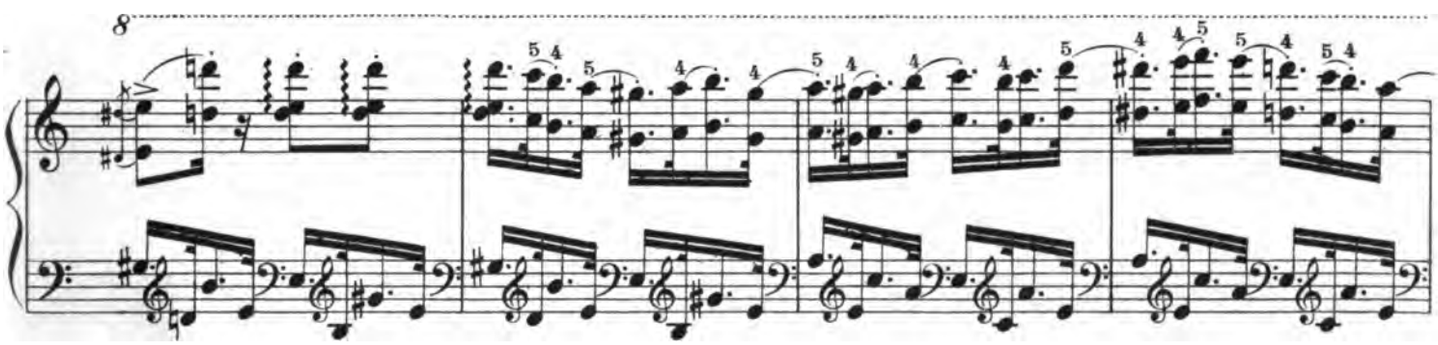

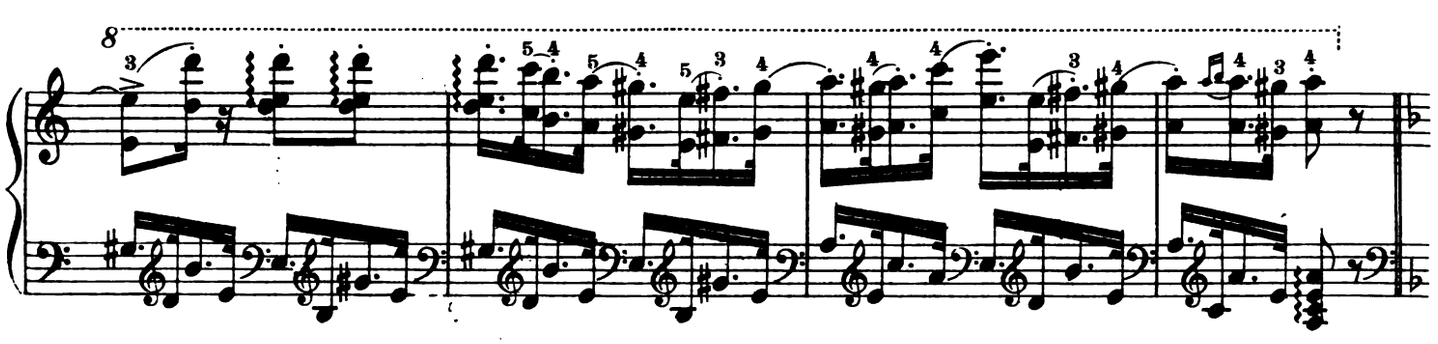

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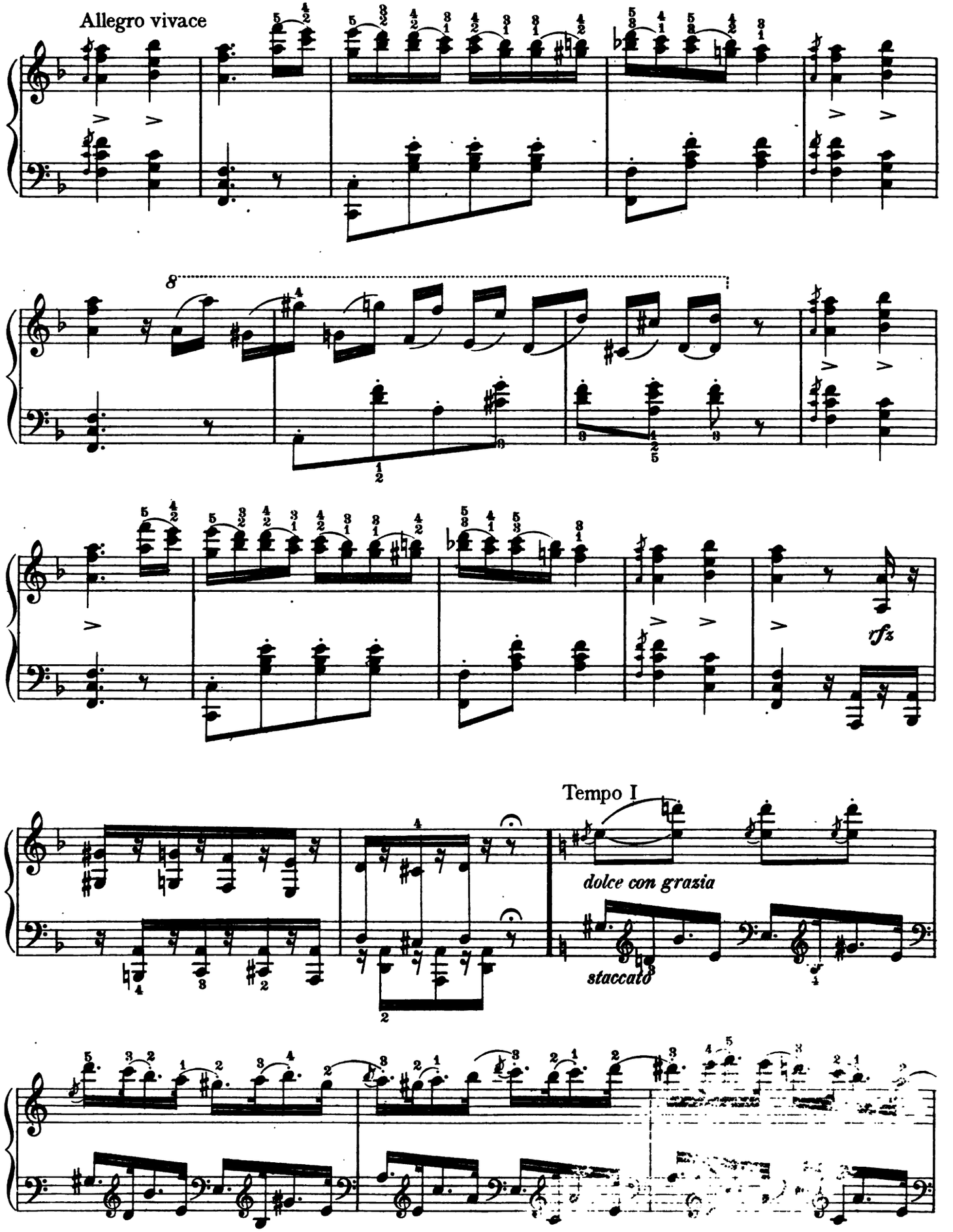

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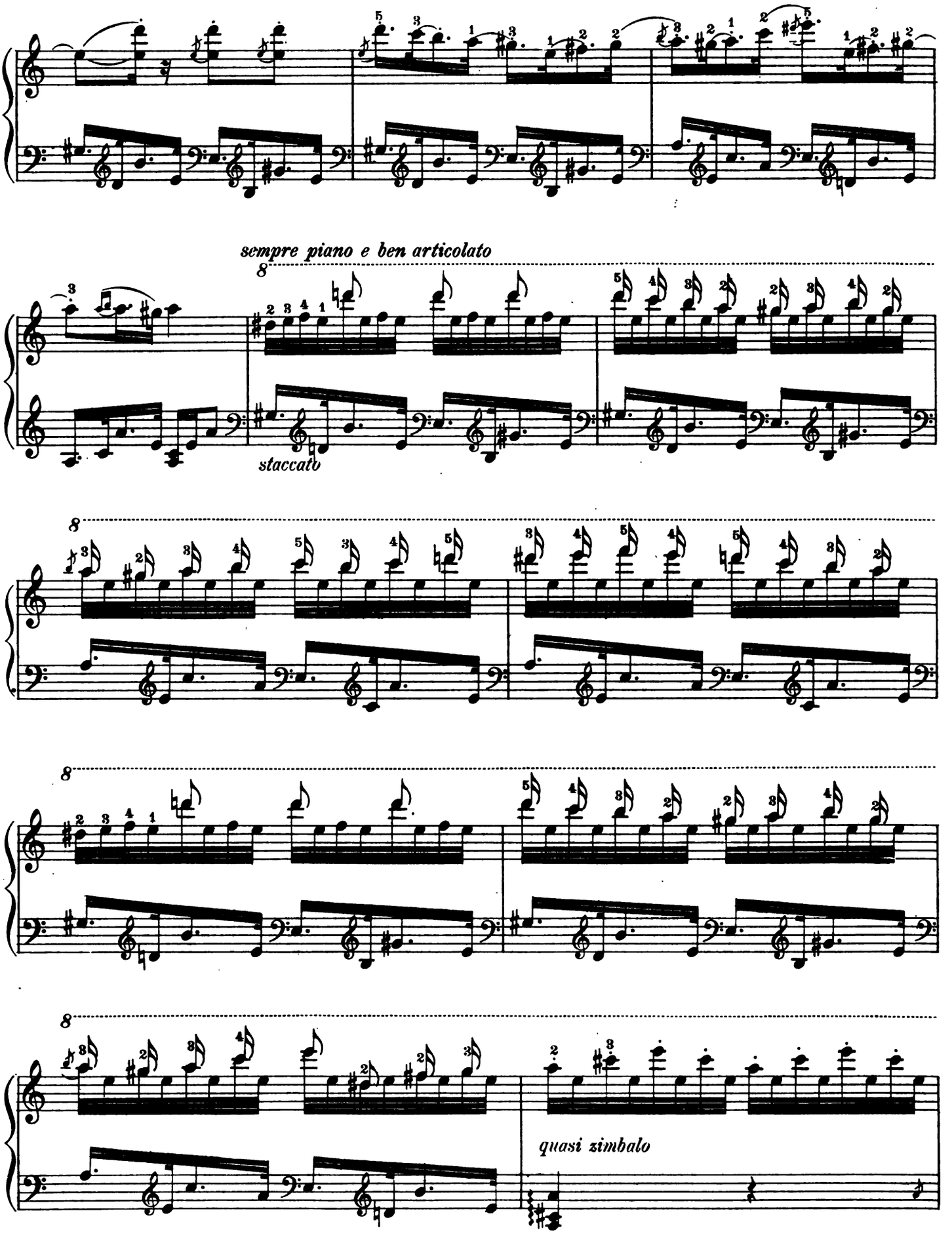

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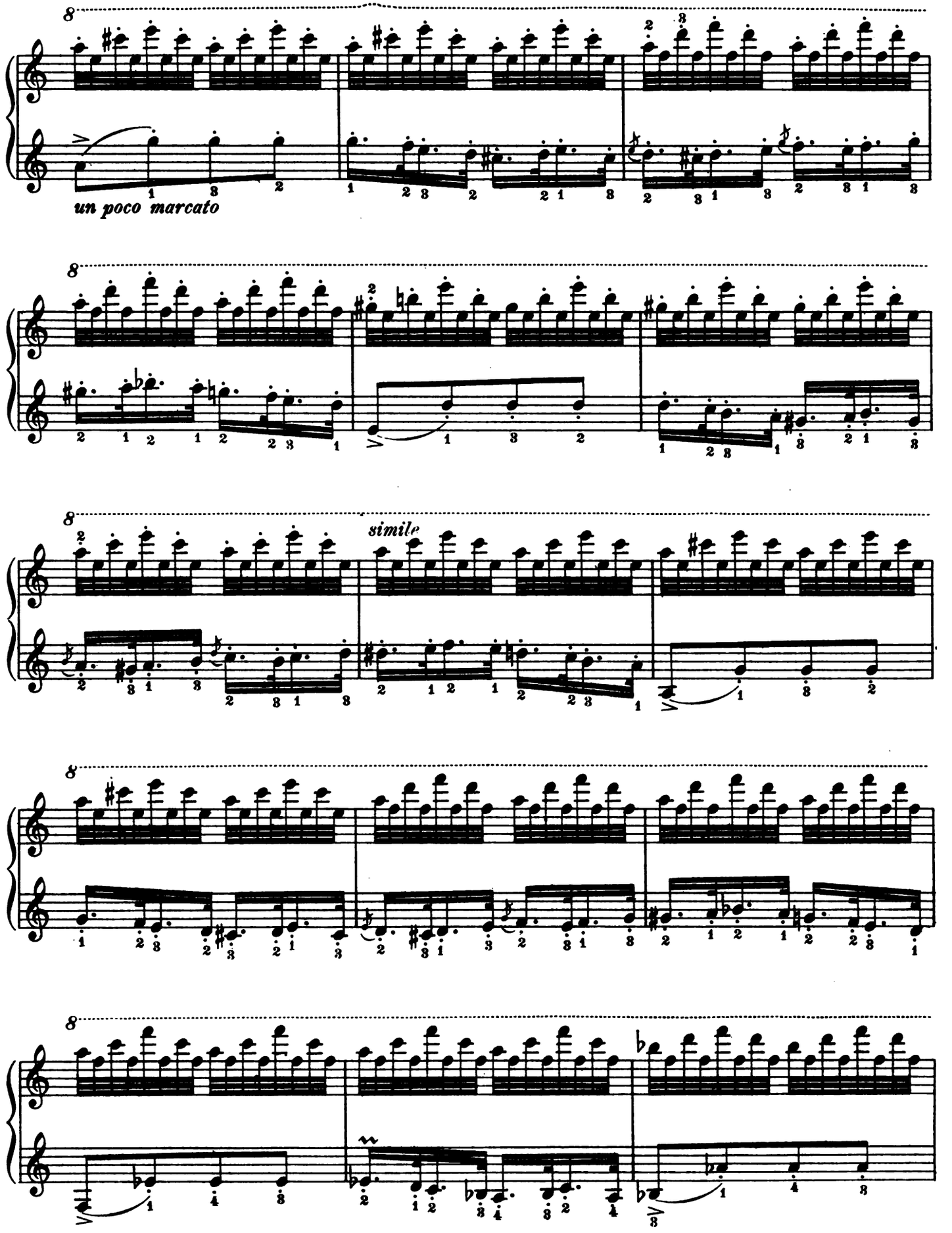

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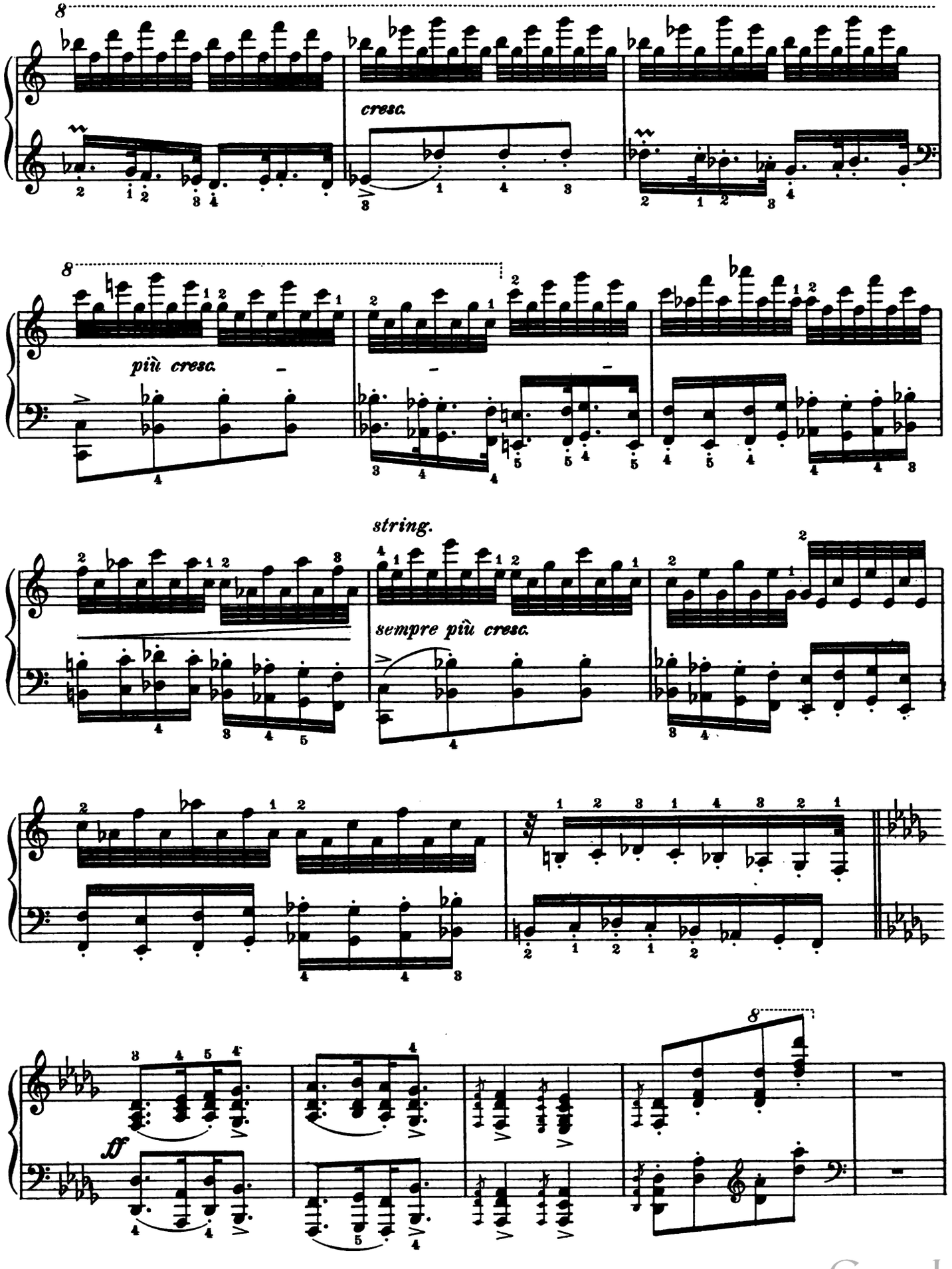

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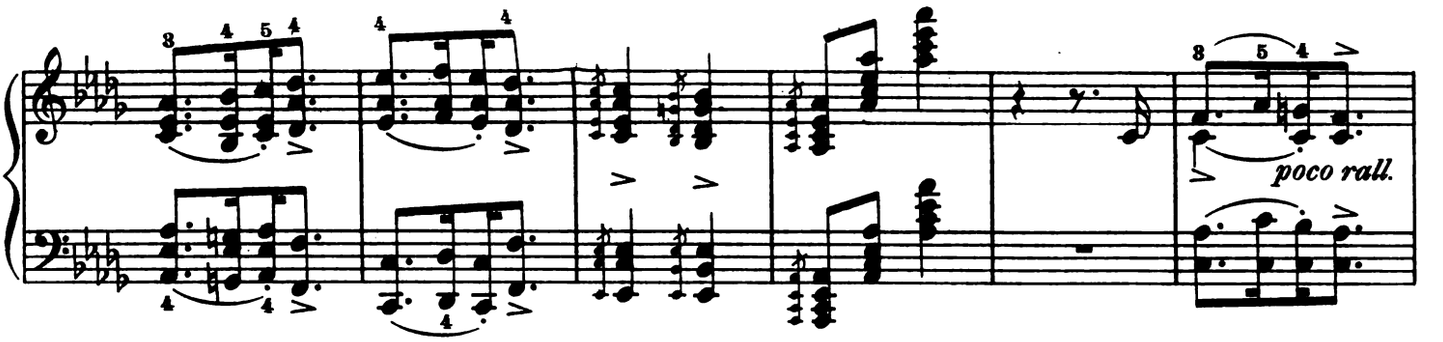
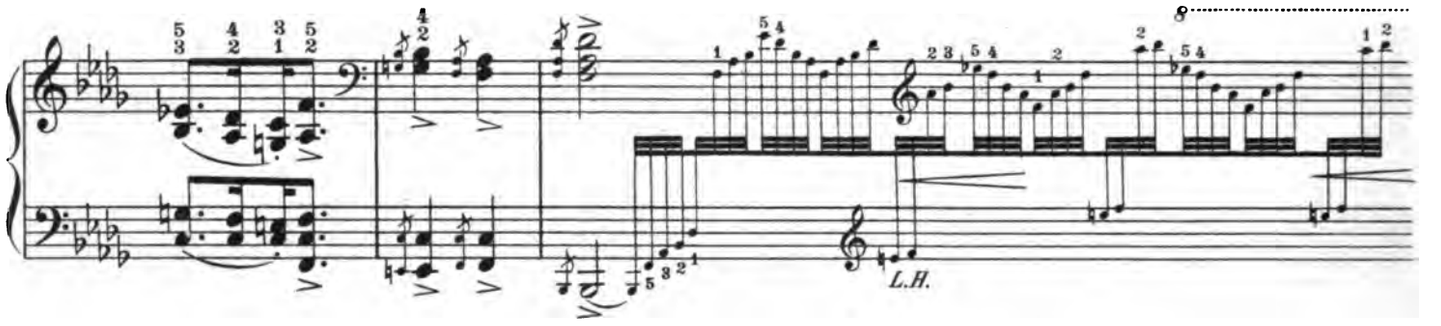
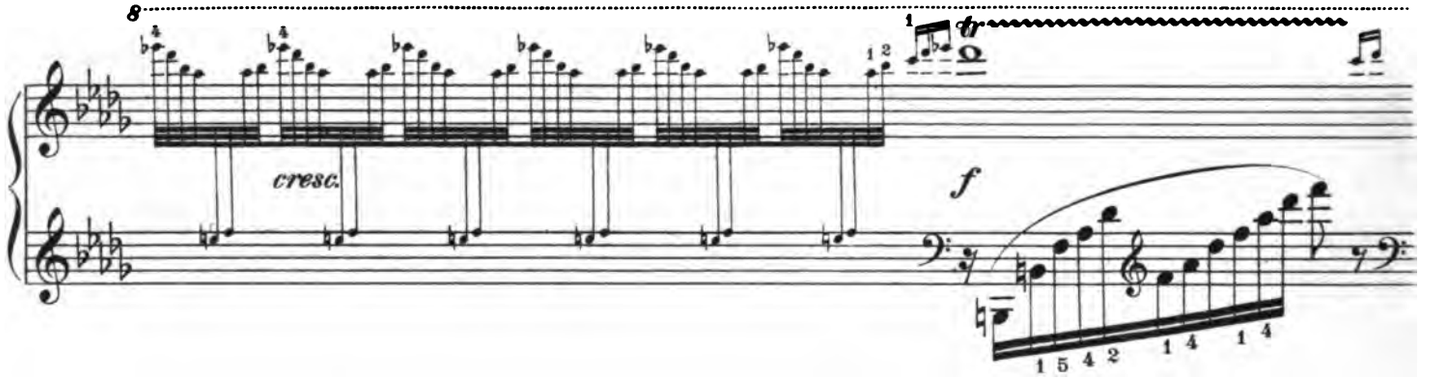
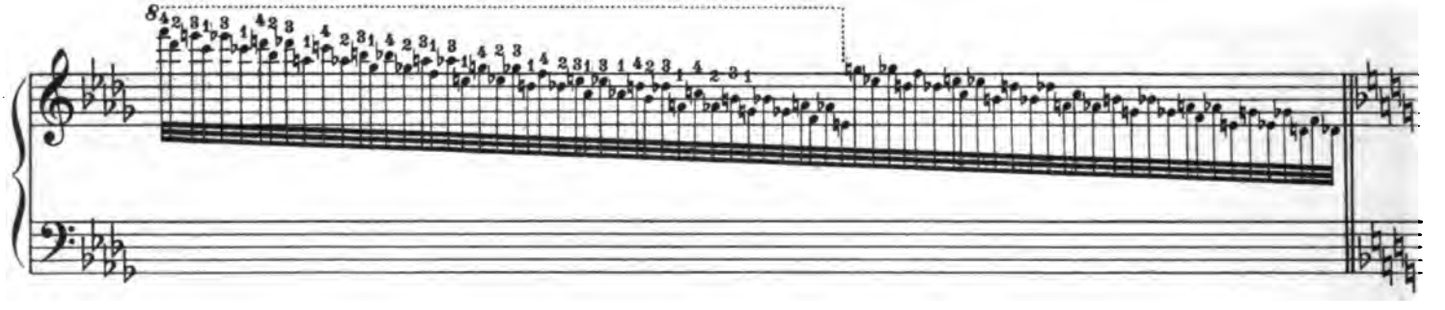
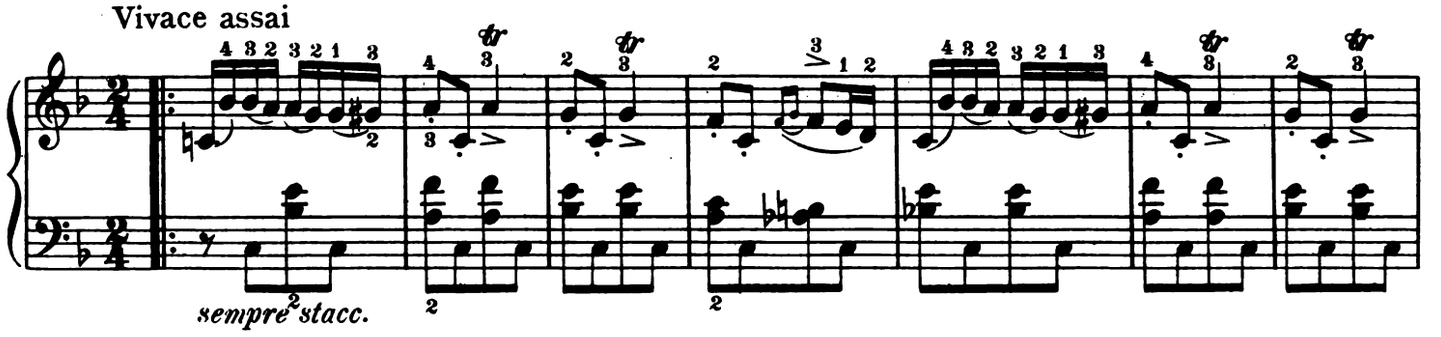








Vivace assai



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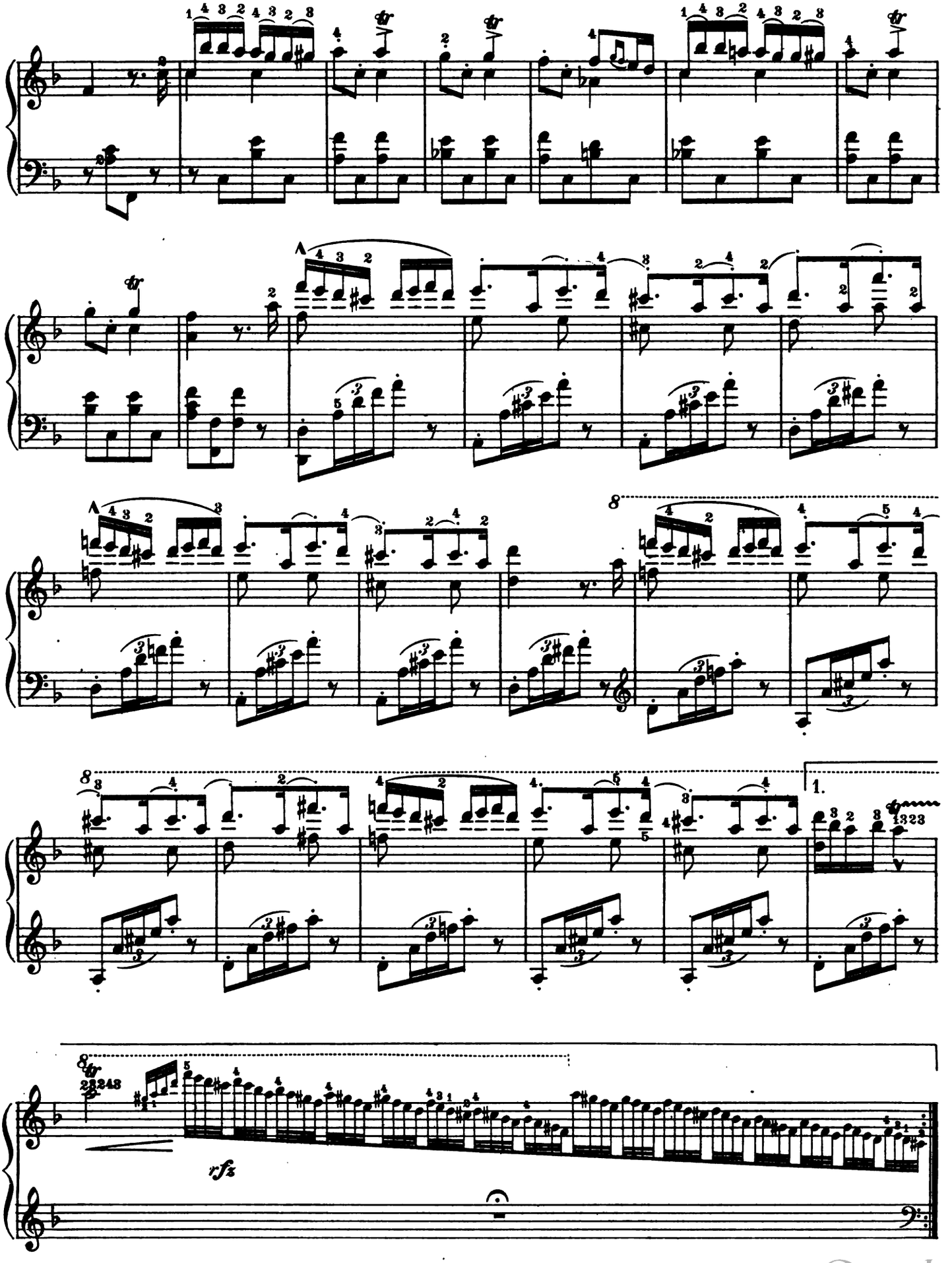

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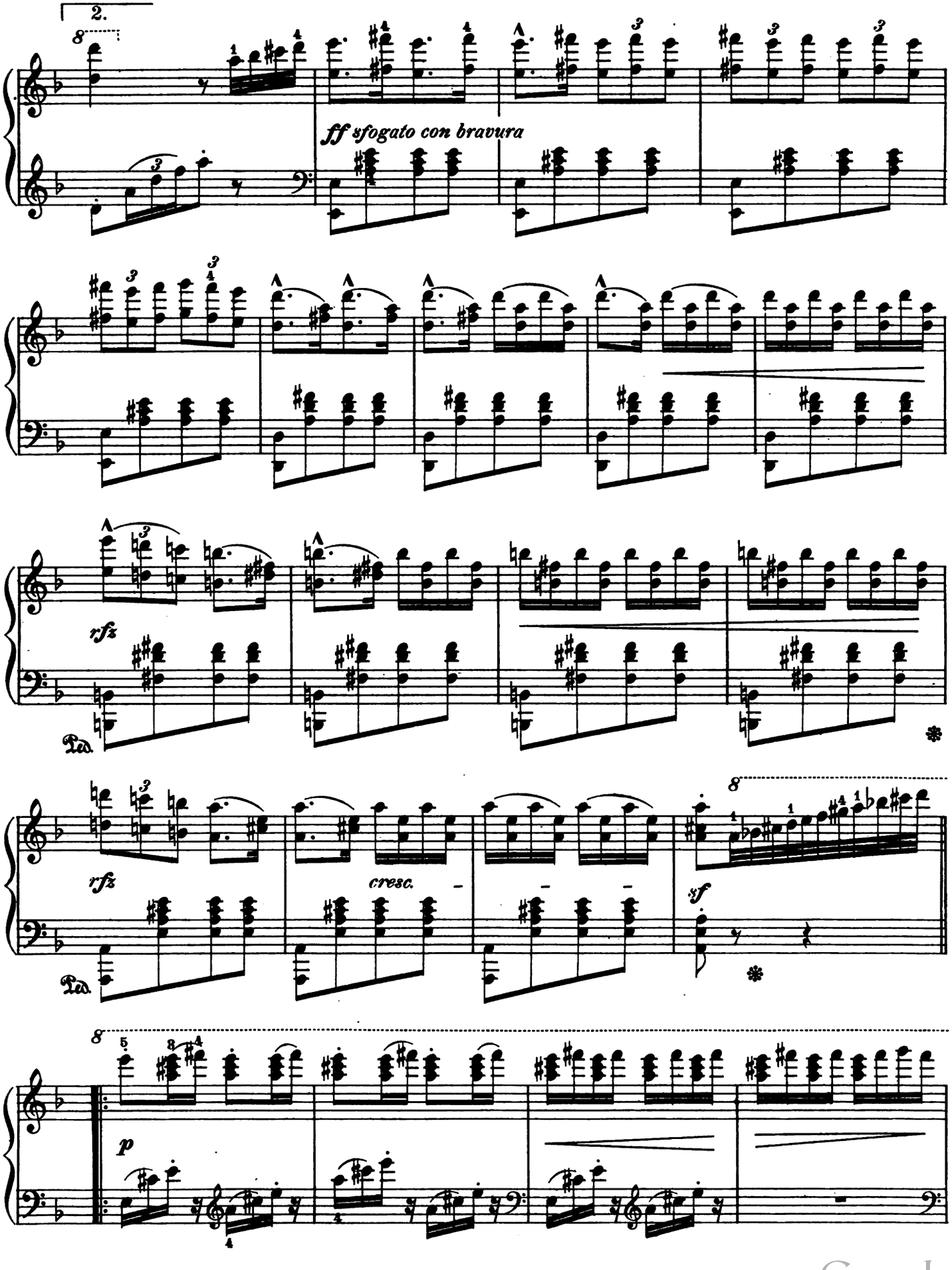

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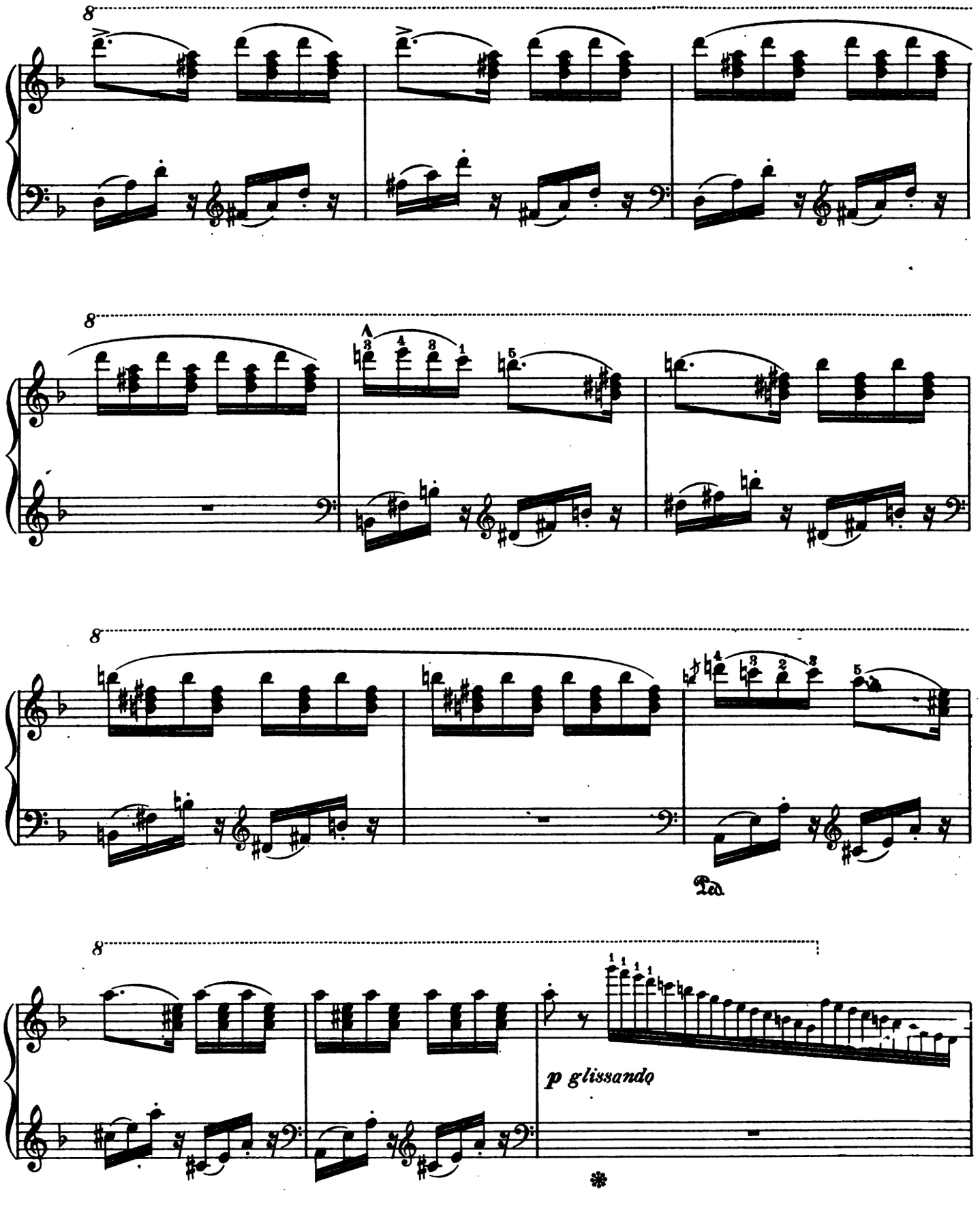

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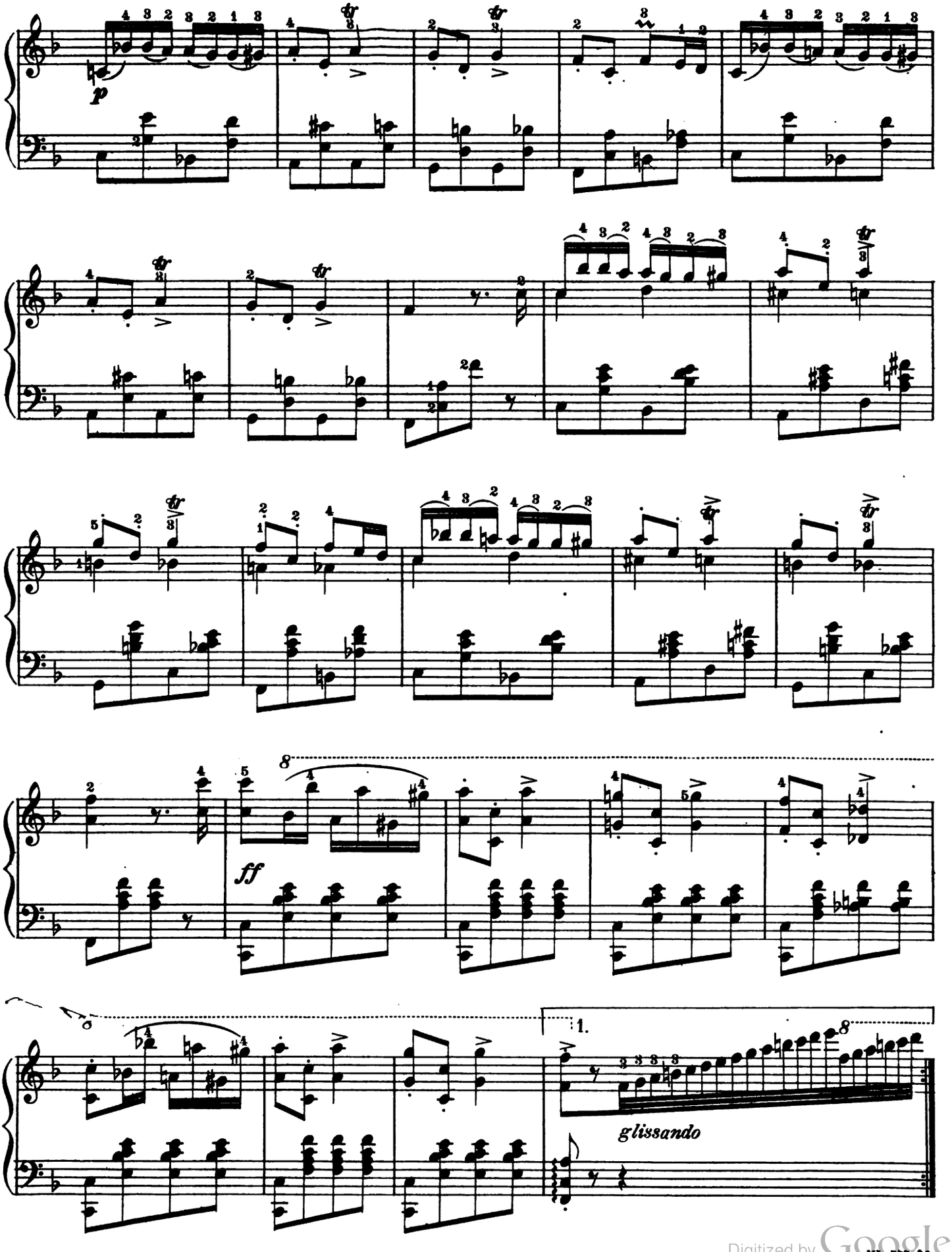

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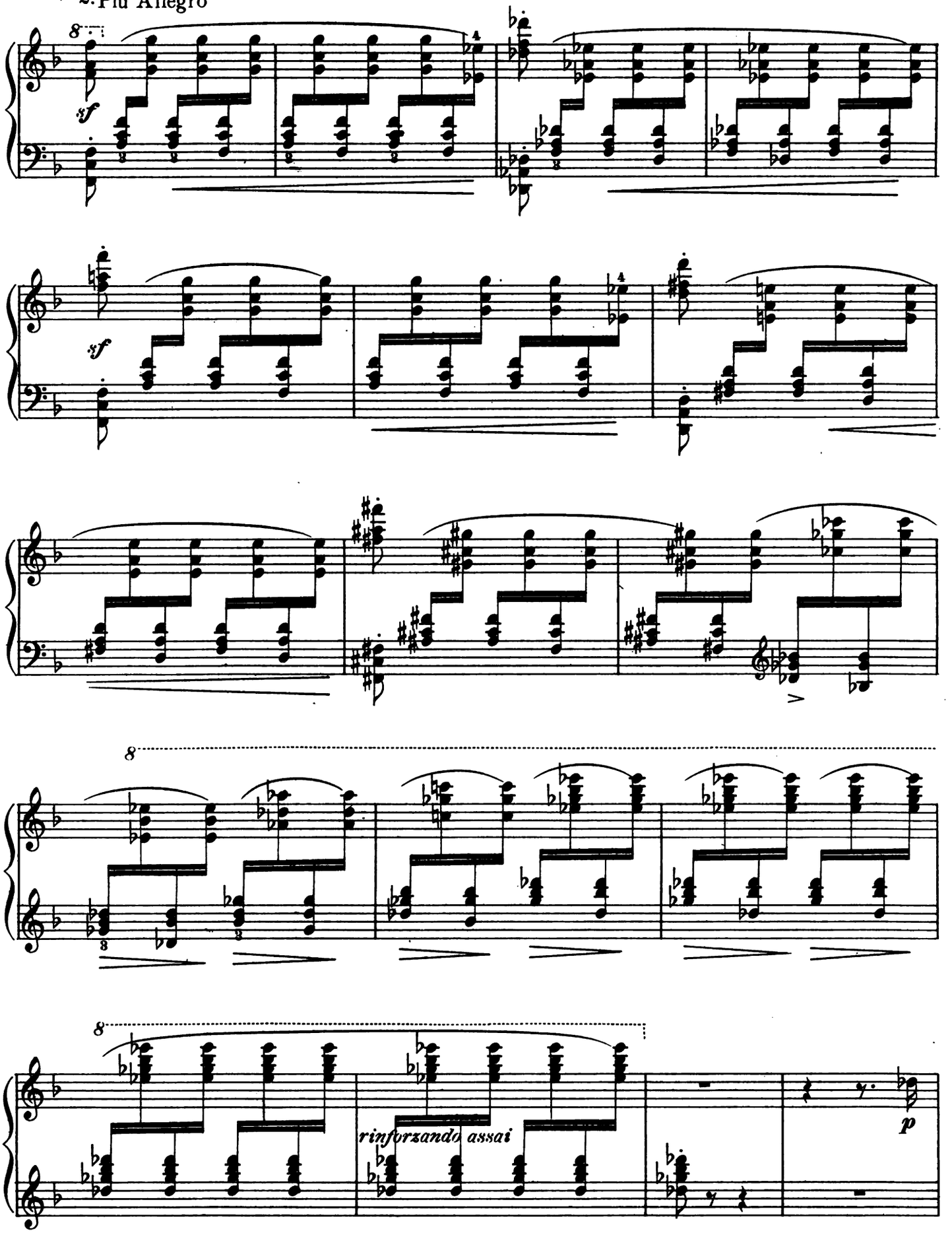

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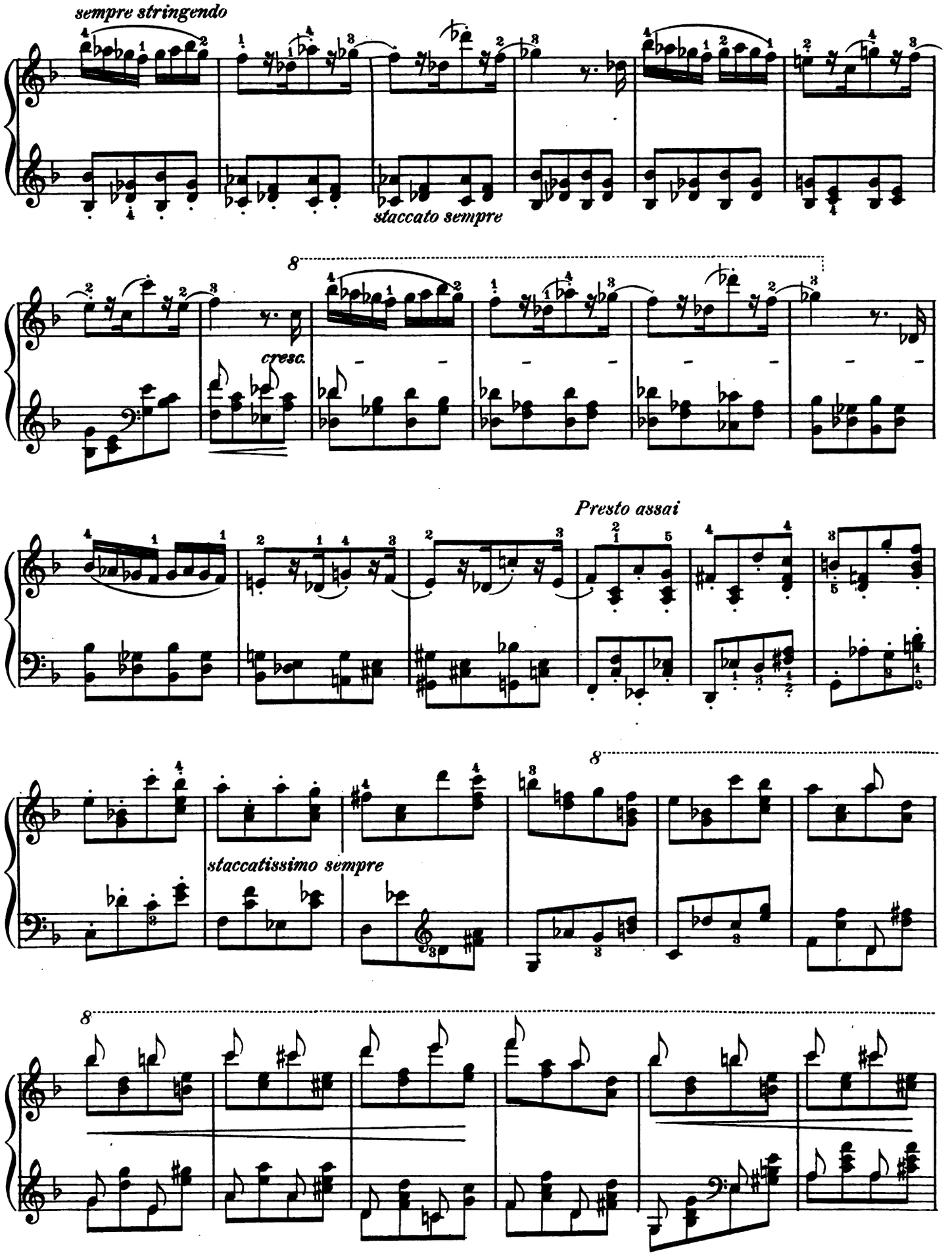

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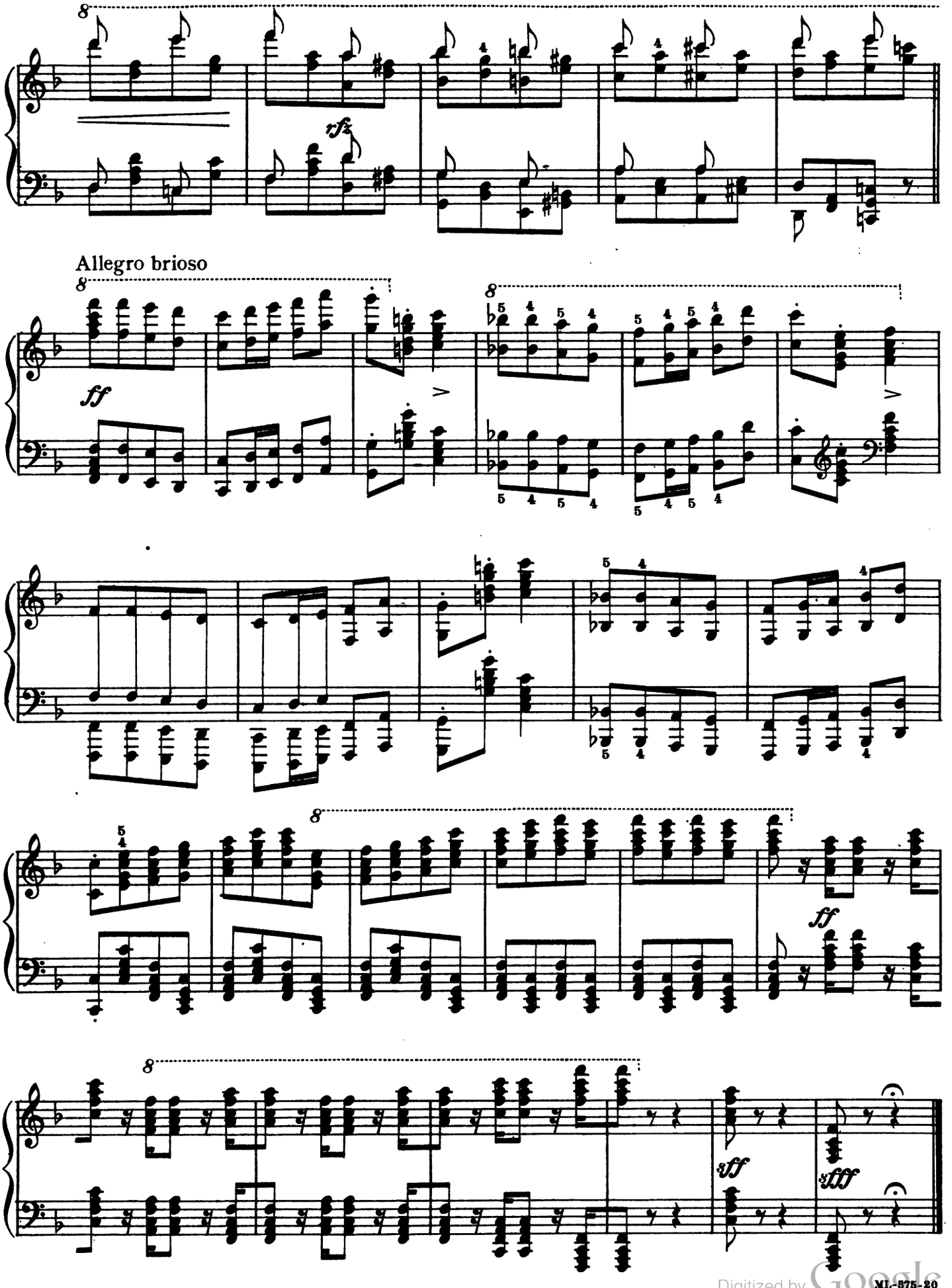

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(RAKOCZY MARCH)

Edited and fingered by
August Spanuth

(Published in 1854)

FRANZ LISZT

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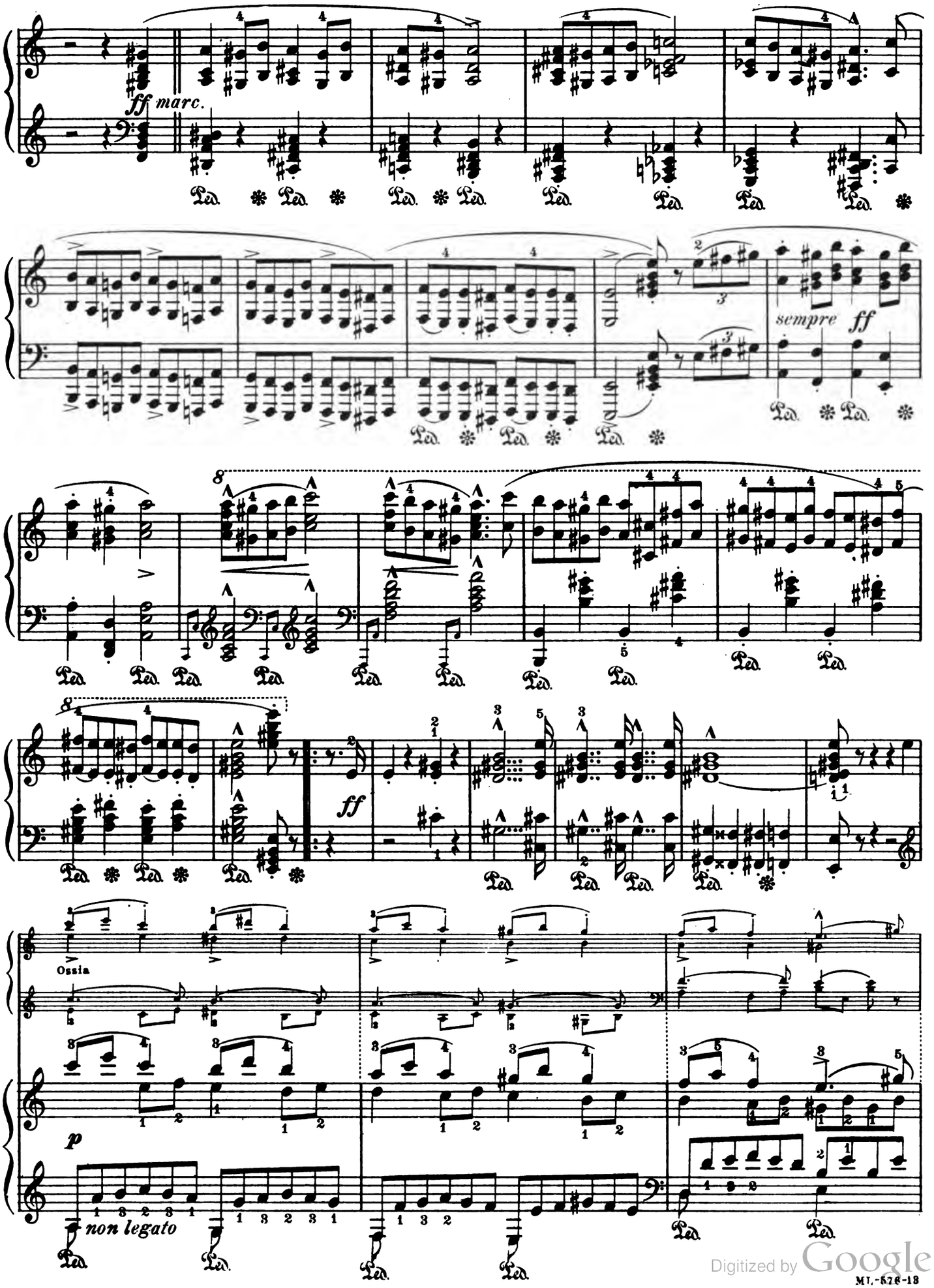

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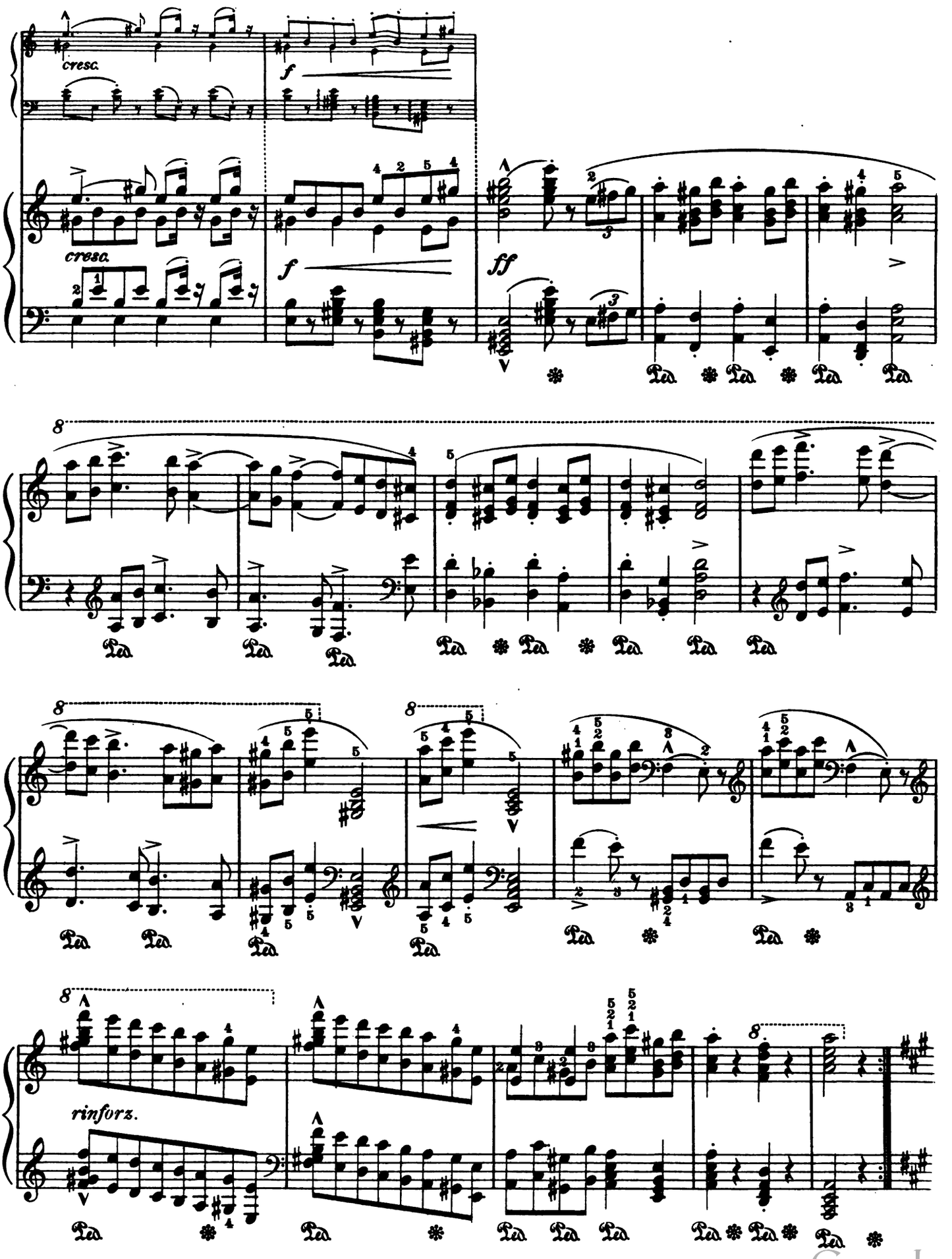

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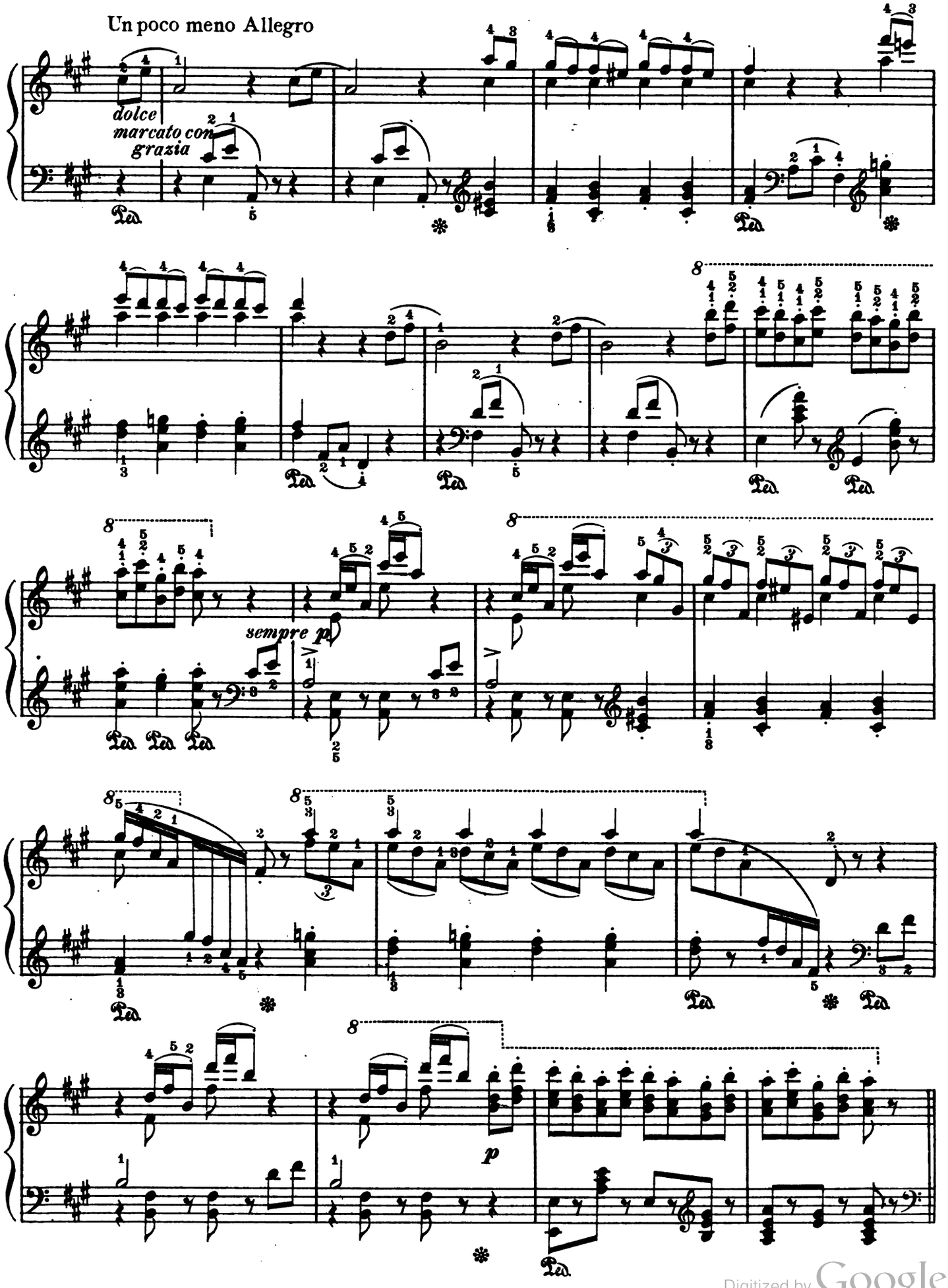

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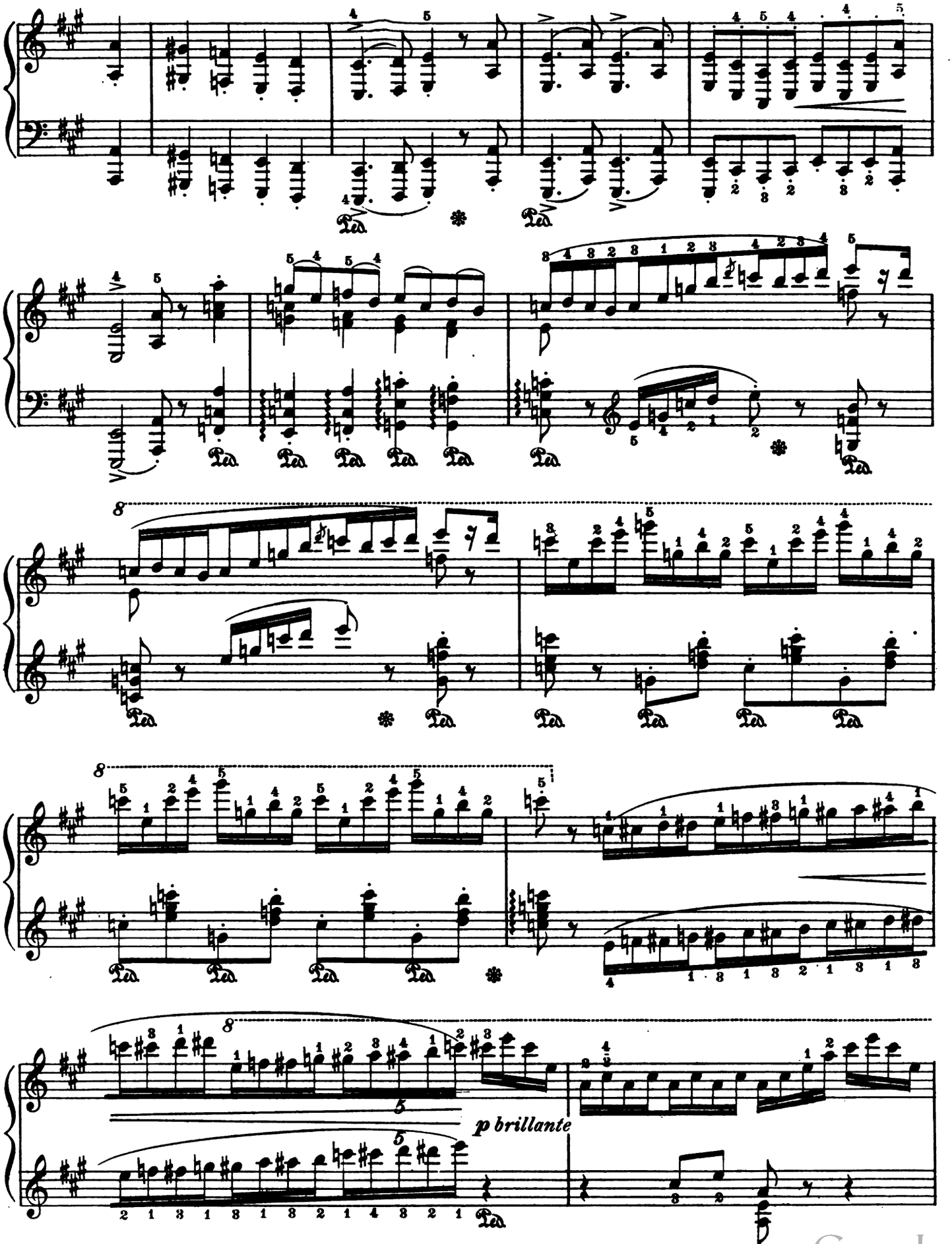

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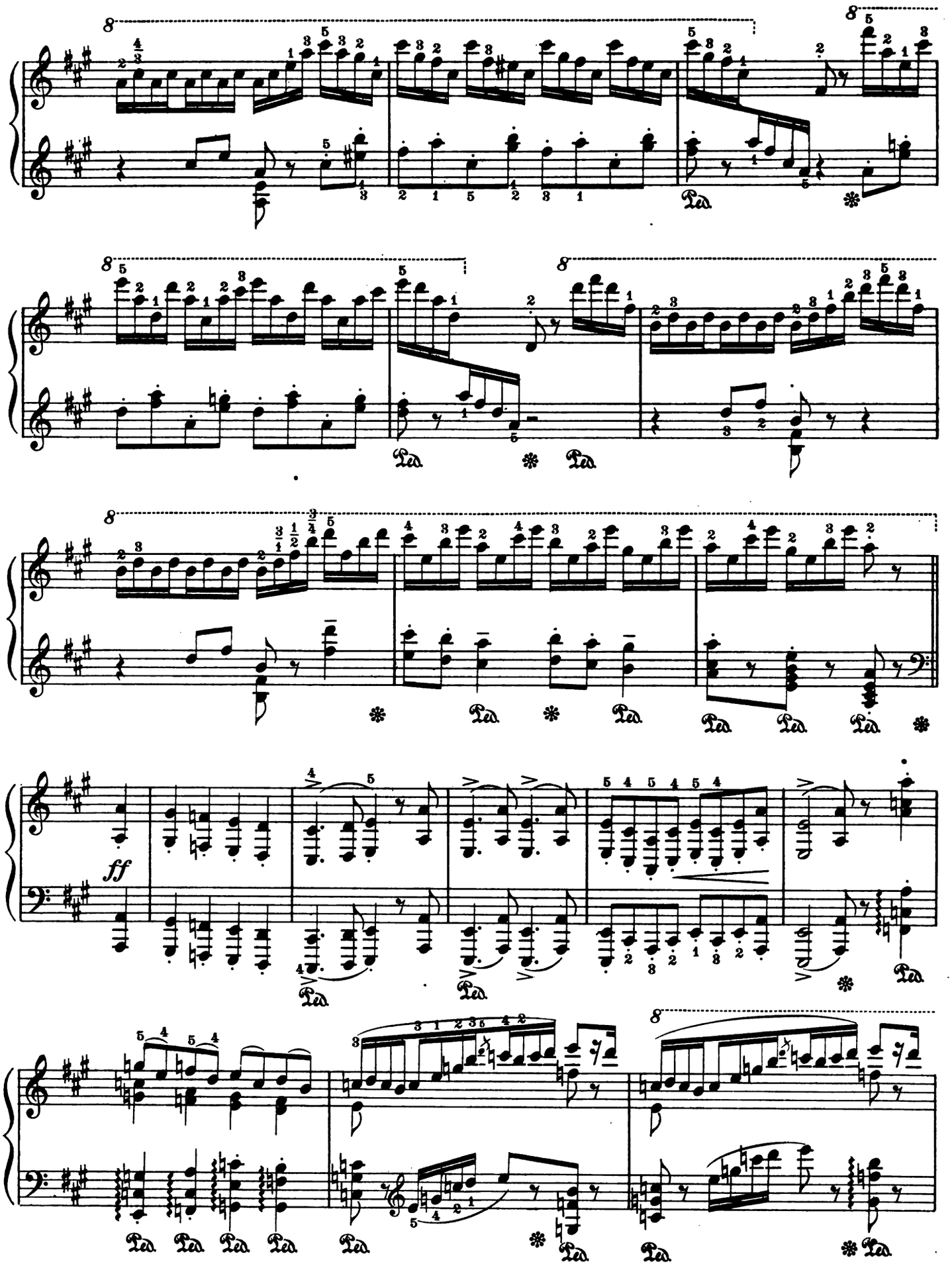

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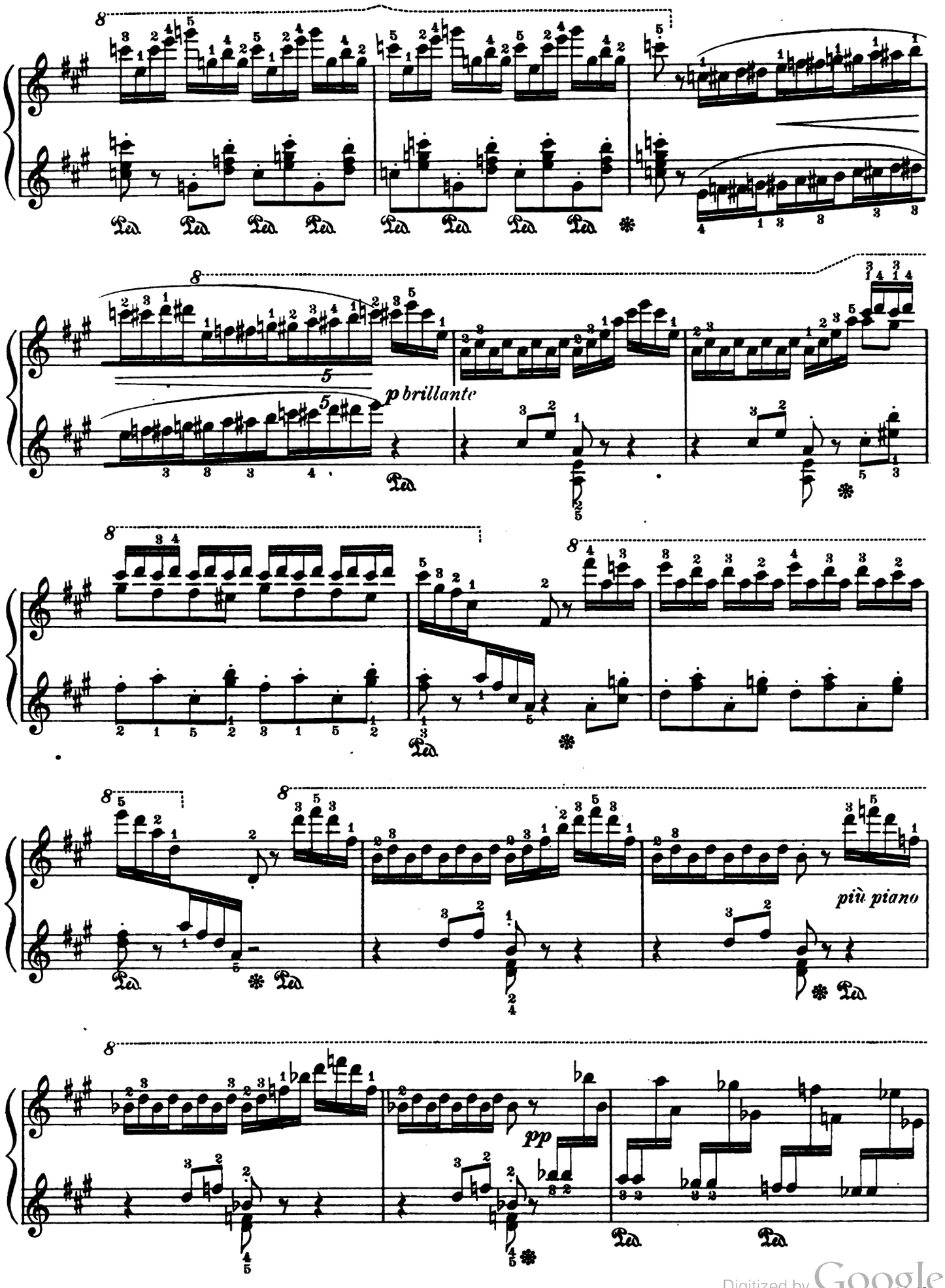

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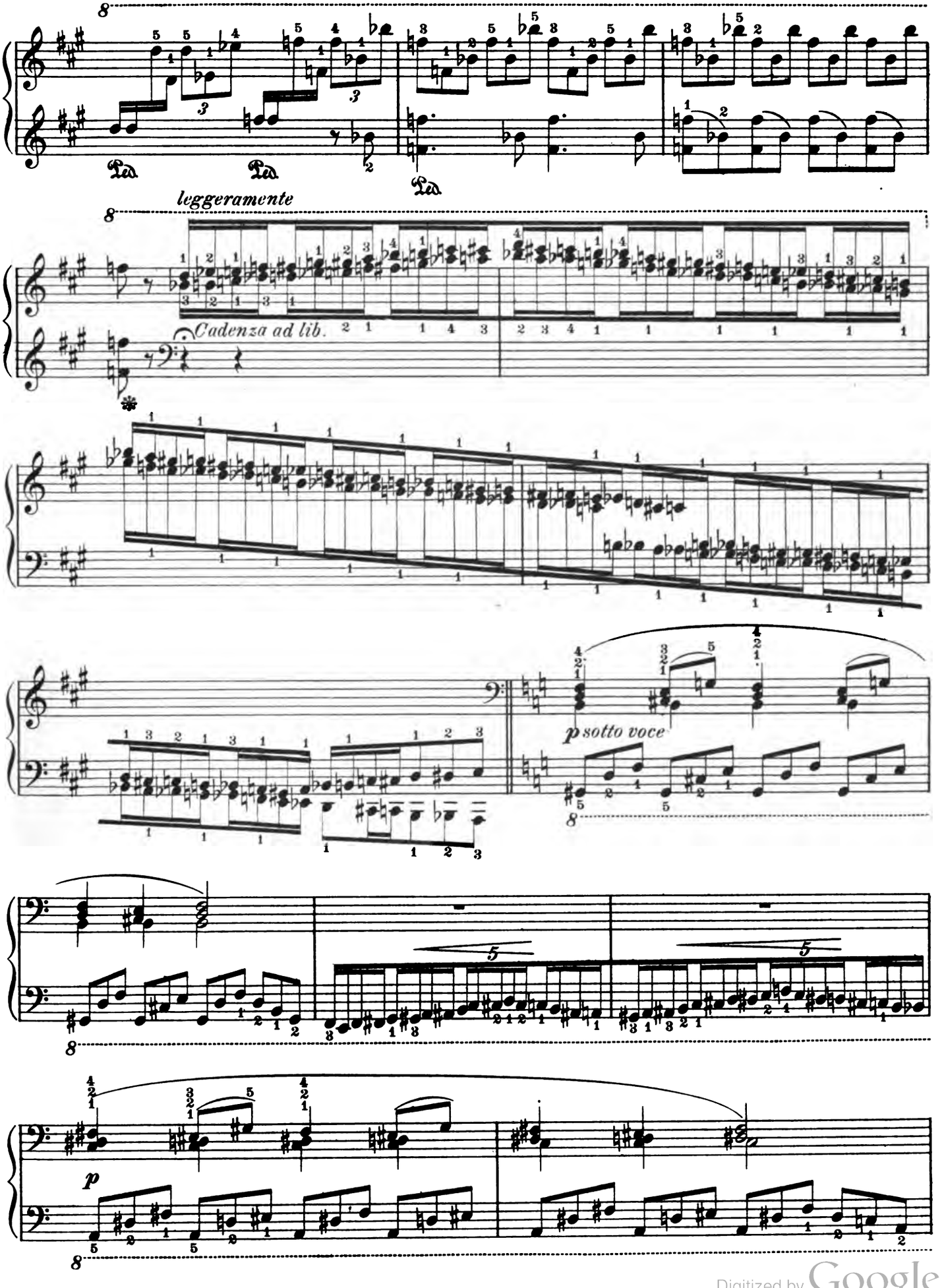

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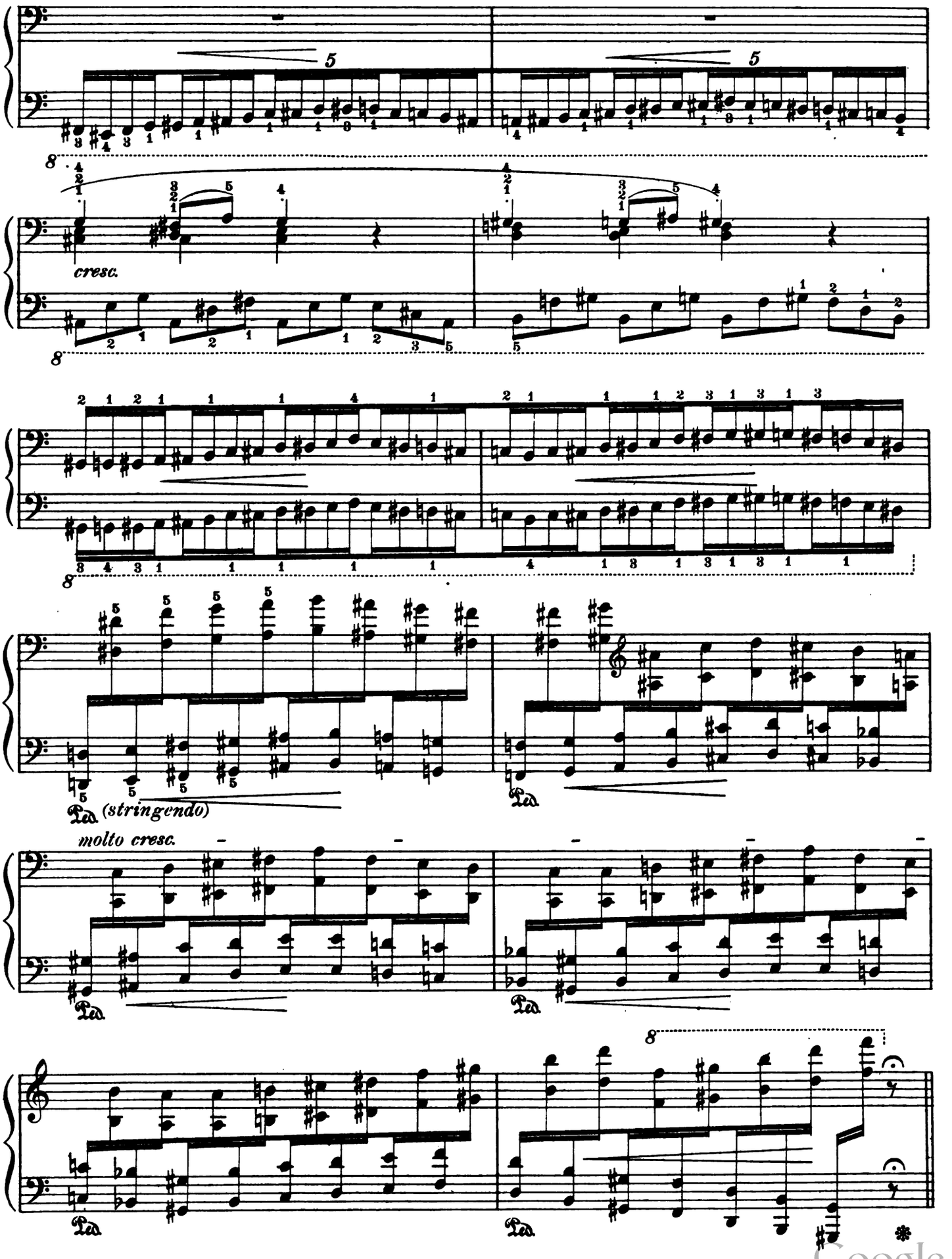

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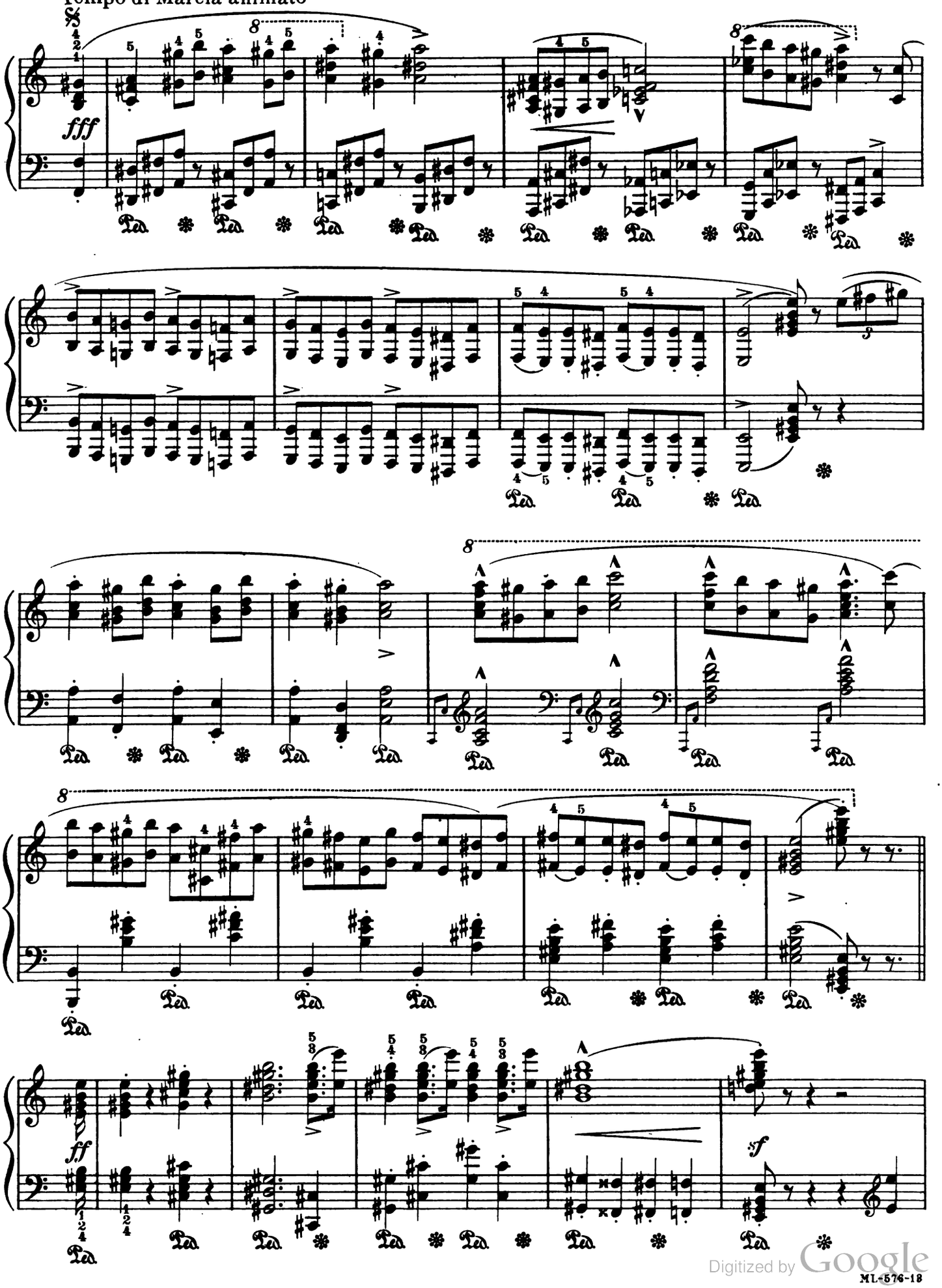

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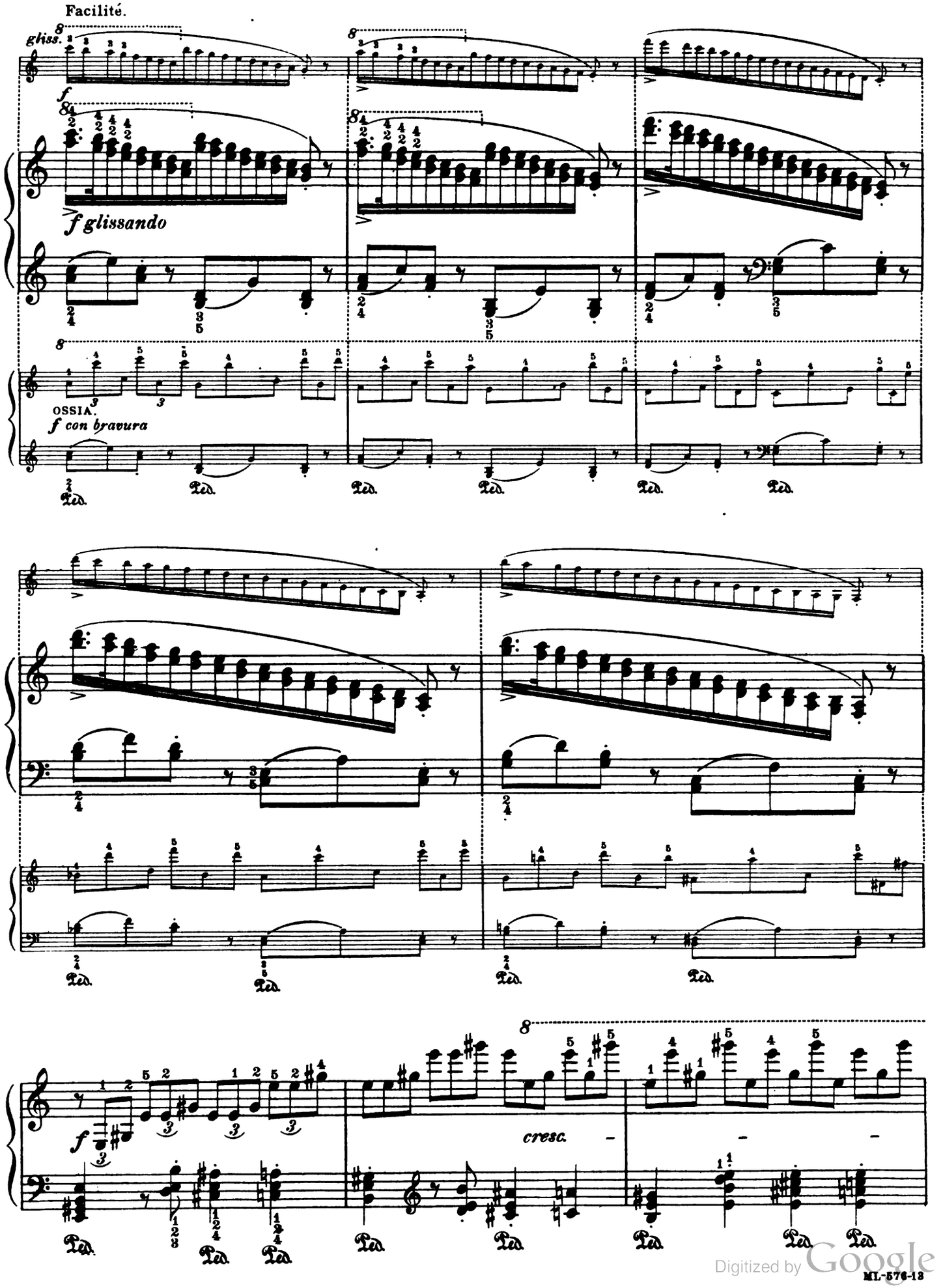

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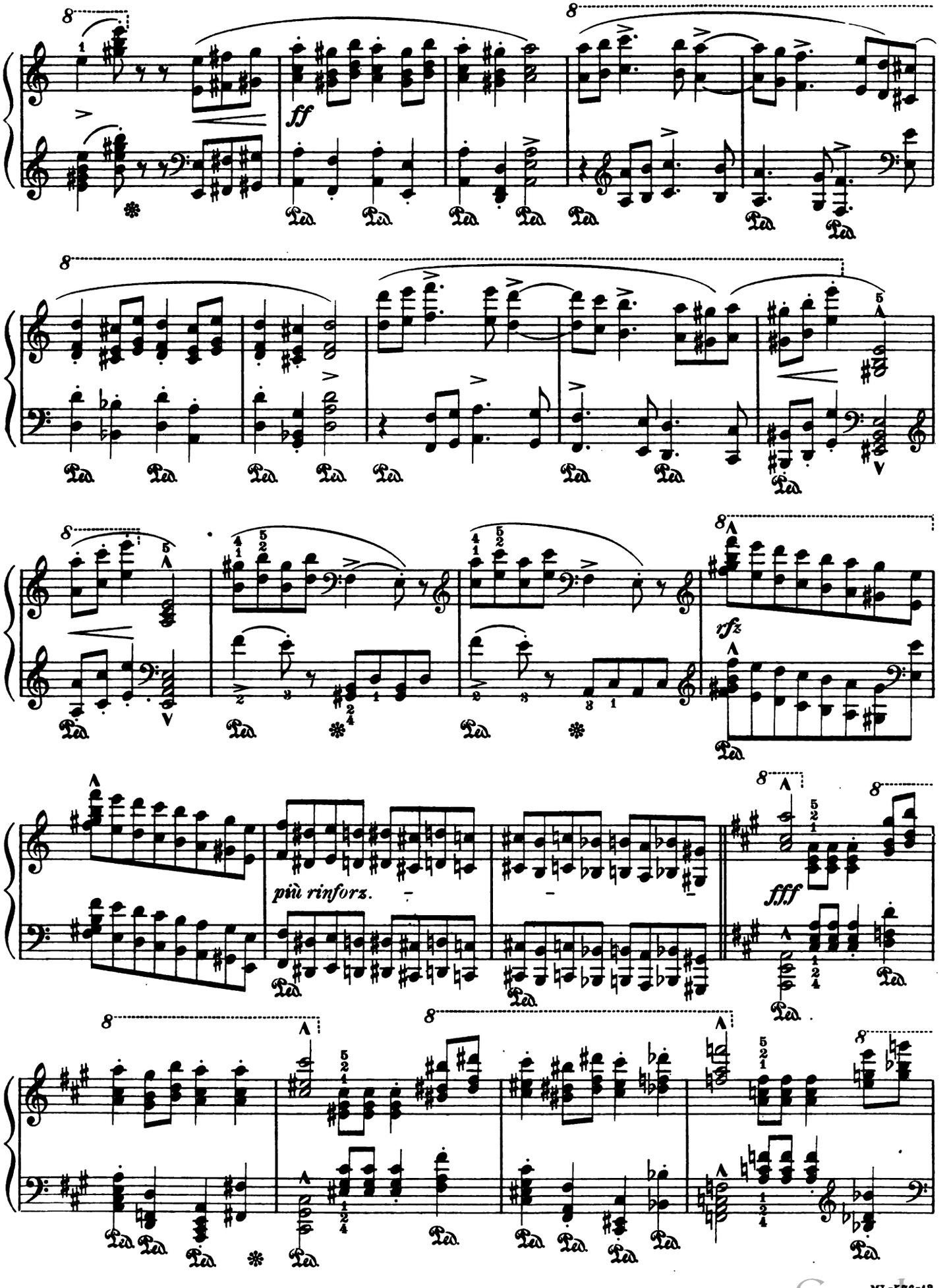

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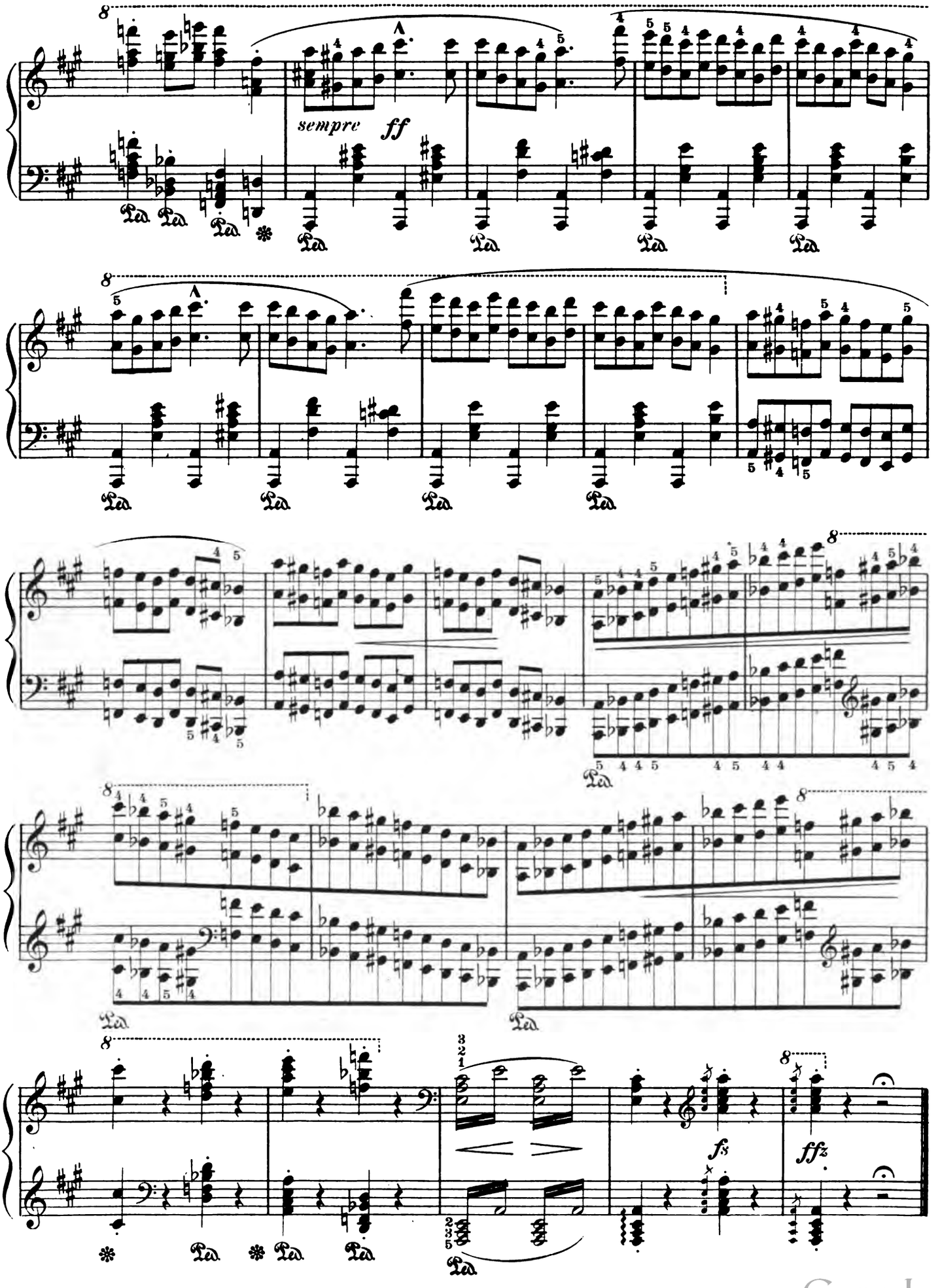

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