Brittany J. Green

Portraits

for piano

BJG

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Portraits

for piano

I. La femme complexe

II. Le garçon qui passe

III. La mère dans le marché

IV. L'homme durci

V. La fille dans les nuages

Program Notes

Portraits is a five movement piano suite. Movements are based on a series of poems by Bessie Irene that depict people we all know. The first movement, "La femme complexe" explores feelings of longing, uneasiness, realization, and reassurance. Based on the poem *I am You,* "La femme complexe" is marked "slow and reflective," and conveys a meditative mood, full of subtle nuance.

Movement two, "Le garçon qui passe" is the shortest of the set. Based on the poem *Fleeting*, it conveys the swiftness of a fleeting moment. The rushing sixteenth notes and triplets create a sweeping mood reminiscent of trying to hold onto something that cannot last.

"La mère dans le marché," based on the poem *Mother in City Market*, is the third movement. It projects feelings of vulnerability, solemnity, heaviness, and exposure. This movement employs ninths chord voiced throughout several registers of the piano, and moves through a variety of keys, while exploring the timbre of the piano.

The fourth movement, "L'homme durci" portrays the confining walls of fury and frustration. Highlighting the lower register of the piano, this movement consists of only two notes- E and F. Unlike to previous movements, it focuses on rhythm and timbre over harmony and melody. This movement is based on the poem *Confinement*.

Lastly, the fifth movement, "La fille dans les nuages," portrays the complexity of struggling between who you are and who the world thinks you should be. Based on the poem *Beyond the Clouds*, the piece tells the story of a woman who hesitates to show the world who she is. The harmonic and melodic themes throughout various sections of the movement juxtapose the bleakness and beauty life can sometimes bring, creating a mood of melancholy and meditation.

I. La femme complexe

Performance Notes

Style
This movement should be played freely, slowly, and without a clear sense of time. The performer should pay special attention to the graphic distance between notes as an indication of the relative duration notes should be played. Additionally, the lengths of the blank measures are an indication of, relatively, how long notes should ring before moving on to the next measure. Notes with a smaller note head size are less important and should be played accordingly. Lastly, the performer may wish to draw from the poem below in determining how to interpret and convey the mood of the piece.

I am You
Little girl.
Longing for simpler times.
Heart hidden,
And nestled in the richness of melancholy.

The pitter patter of feet,
Crunching against the cold, country soil.
The cadence of breath.
The echo of fear.

Running for miles, is your soul not weary?

In your darkest hour,
You hum the song of your sorrow.
It resonates in the deepest parts of me,
Bubbling up to the top, as if your melody were my own.

I close my eyes and know you.

You are her.

She is me.

I am you.

-Bessie Irene

Portraits

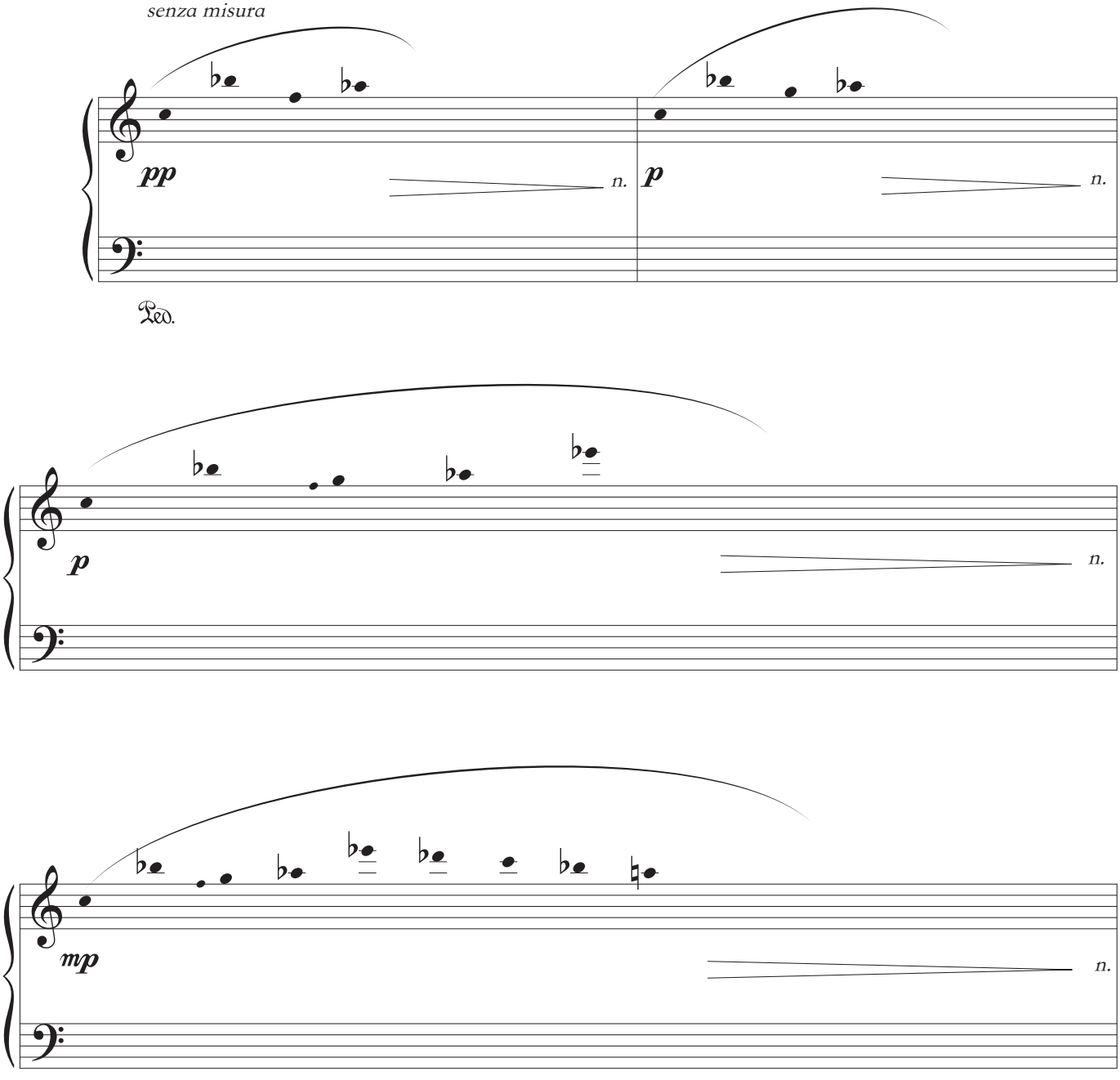
for piano

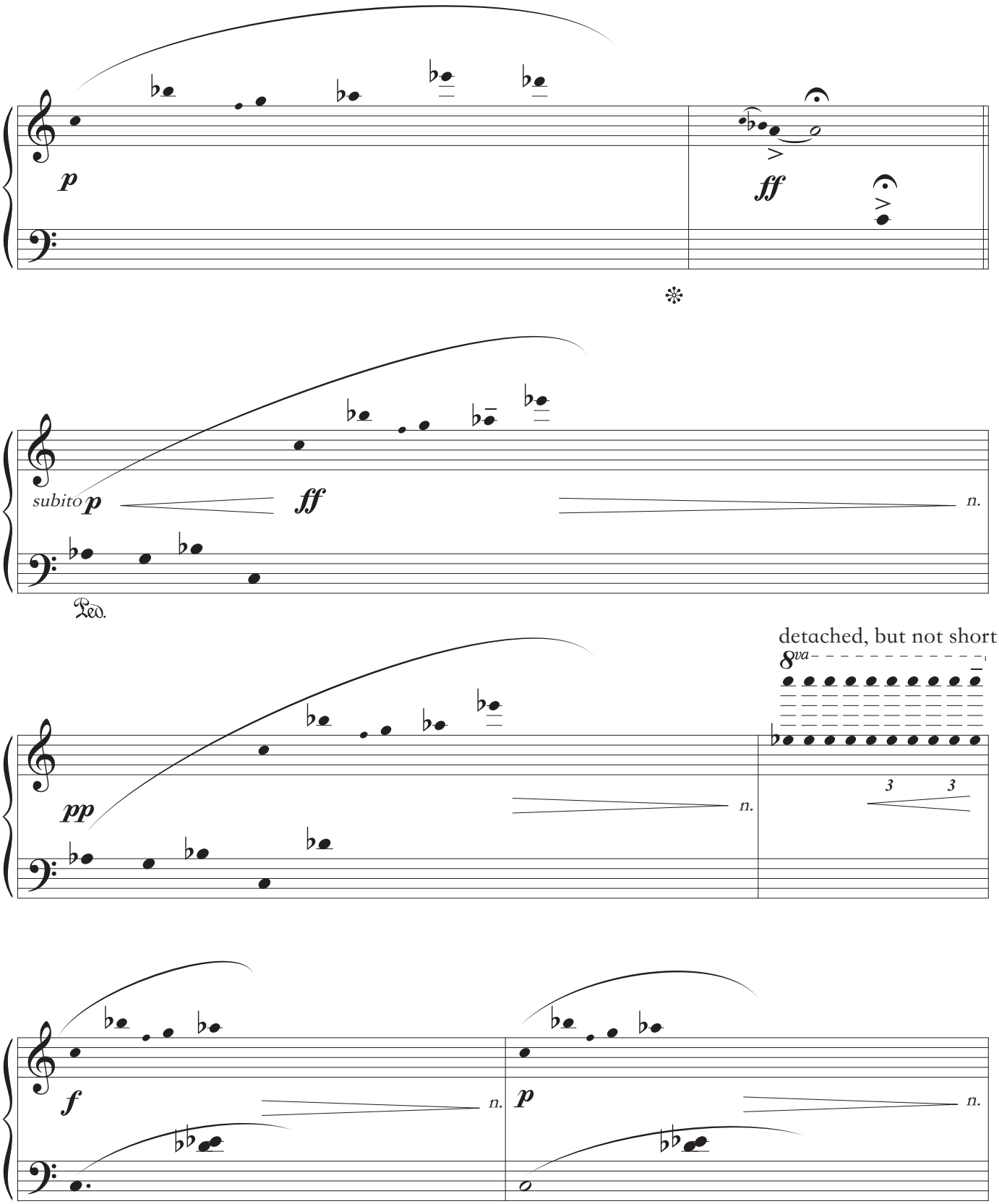
Brittany J. Greer

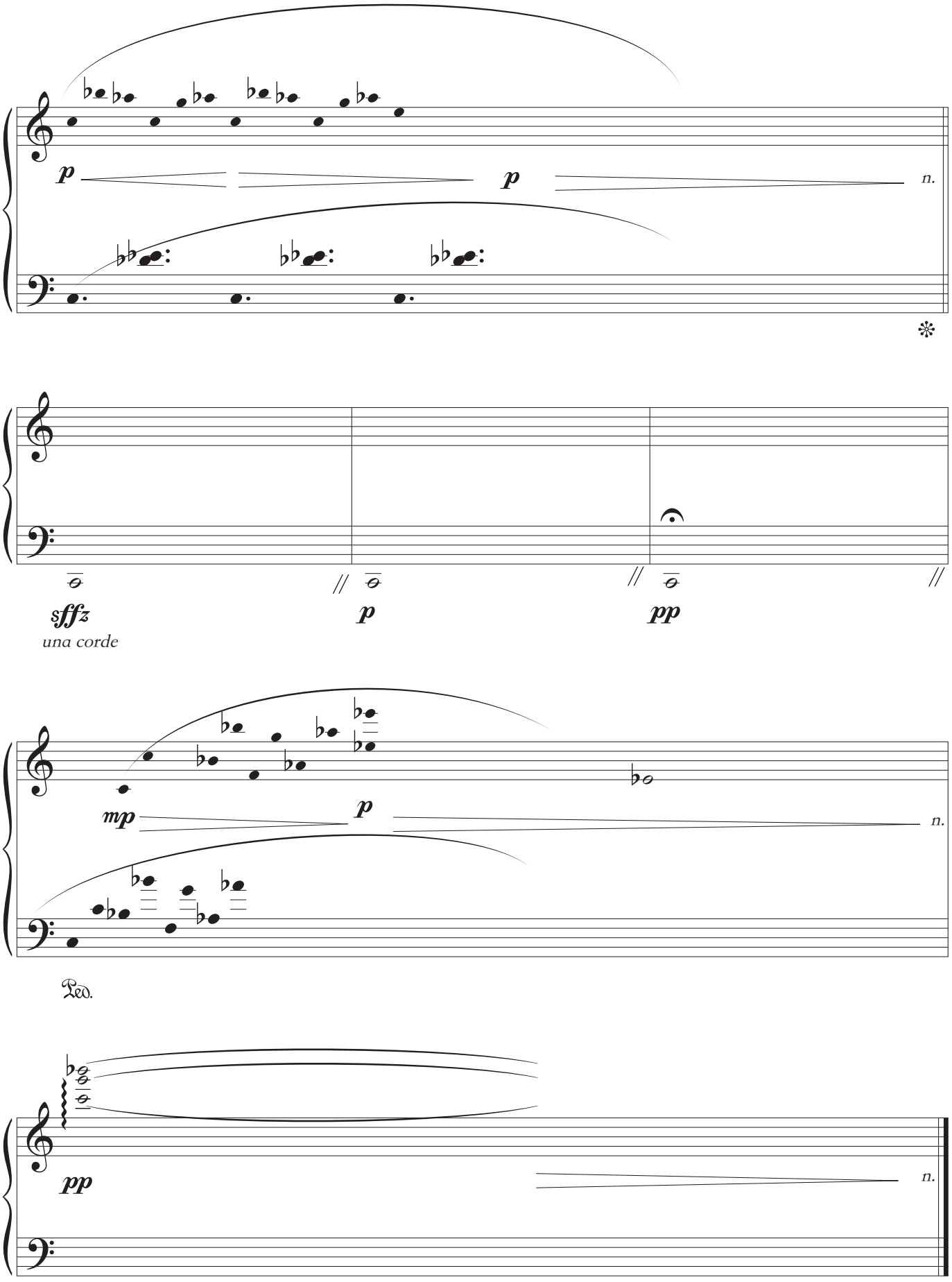
I. La femme complexe

Slow, Reflective

senza misura




p
ff
subito p
ff
n.
Ped.
detached, but not short
8va
pp
n.
3
3
f
n.
p
n.


p
p
n.
sffz
una corde
p
pp
mp
p
n.
Ped.
pp
n.

II. Le garçon qui passe

Performance Notes

Style
This movement should be played with the brevity of a passing moment in mind. The performer may wish to draw from the poem below in determining how to interpret and convey the mood of the piece.

Fleeting
Here,
and not here.

There,
and not there.

Everywhere.

No where.

Everything I have.
And did have.
And will have.
And can't have.

All consuming.

Non-consuming.

Etched in the stone of memories.

Contradiction?

Paradox?
Here.

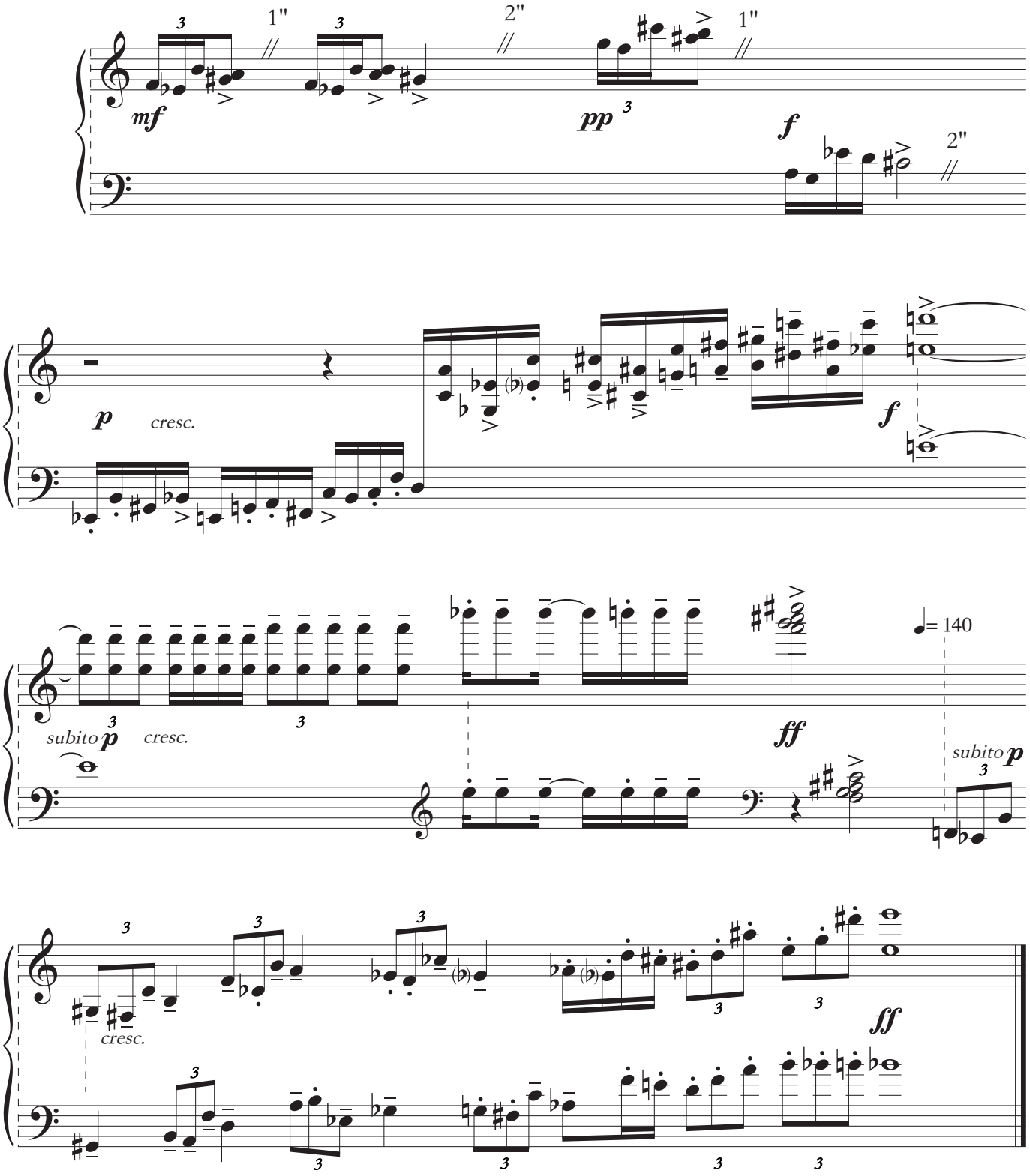
Fleeting.

Gone.

-Bessie Irene

II. Le garçon qui passe

with the brevity of a passing moment in time ♩= 120



III. La mère dans le marché

Performance Notes

Style
This movement should be performed with the feelings of vulnerability, insecurity, and heaviness in mind.

In regards to pedaling, the movement is *una corde* throughout and the sustain pedal should be used to group every two measures together. The sustain pedal should be released during passing quarter notes. In measure 34, the sustain pedal should not be used. Allow the chord to die out close to *niente* prior to proceeding with the quarter note pick ups into measure 35.

The performer may wish to draw from the poem below in determining how to interpret and convey the mood of the piece.

Mother in City Market
I sat watching.
On the rustic metal park bench.
The one adjacent to the colonial brick warehouse.

I sat watching.

Watching people pass like cars.
Each one colored with their own stories.
Each one tinted with their own regret.

One, a mother.
Her color, Prussian blue.
And her tint as algid and damp as the Raleigh sky that day.

With each footstep, I watched.

As the cobblestone absorbed the heaviness of her heart.

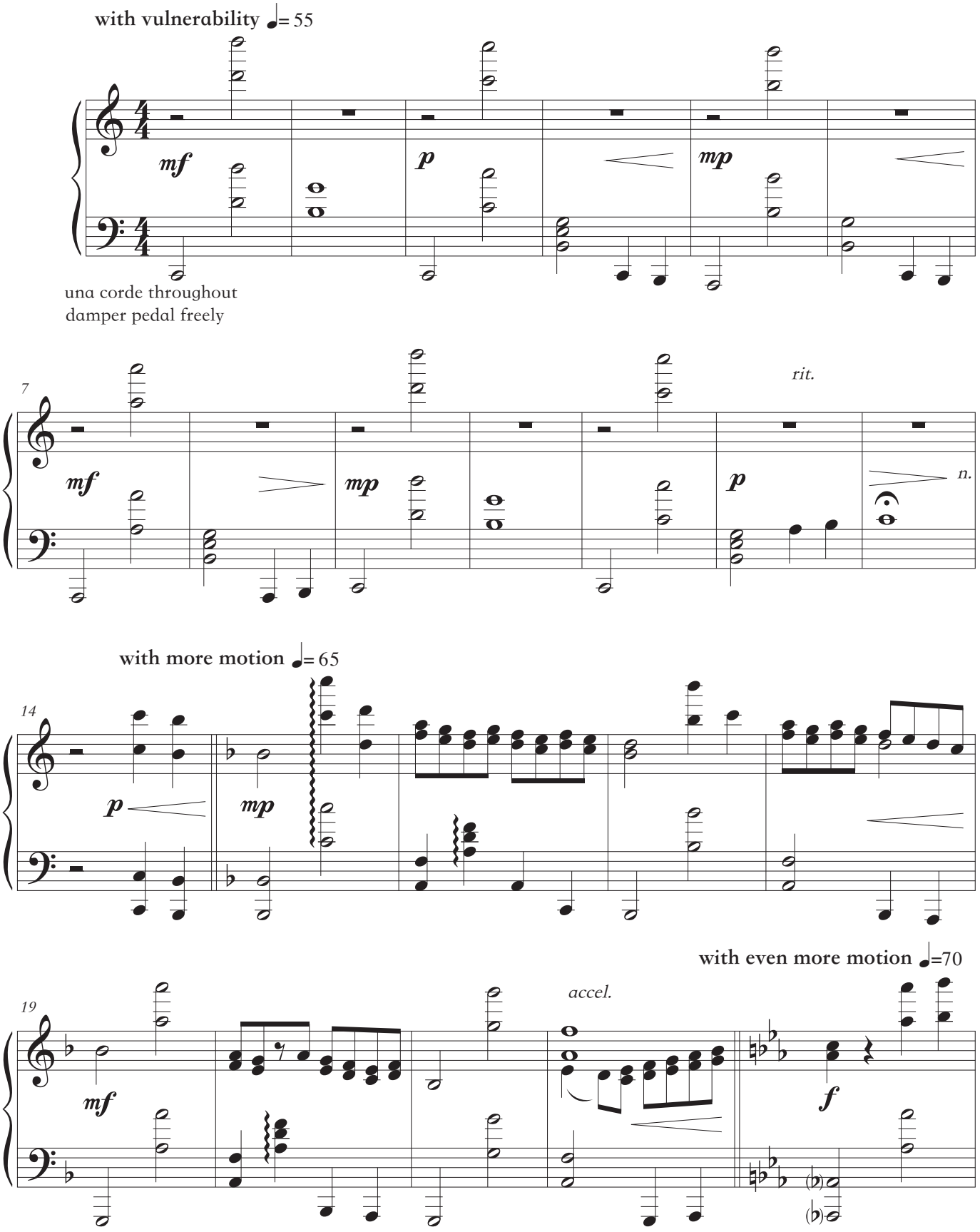
Clinging two small hands like rag dolls.
Her solemn,
Exposed through the stillness of her face.

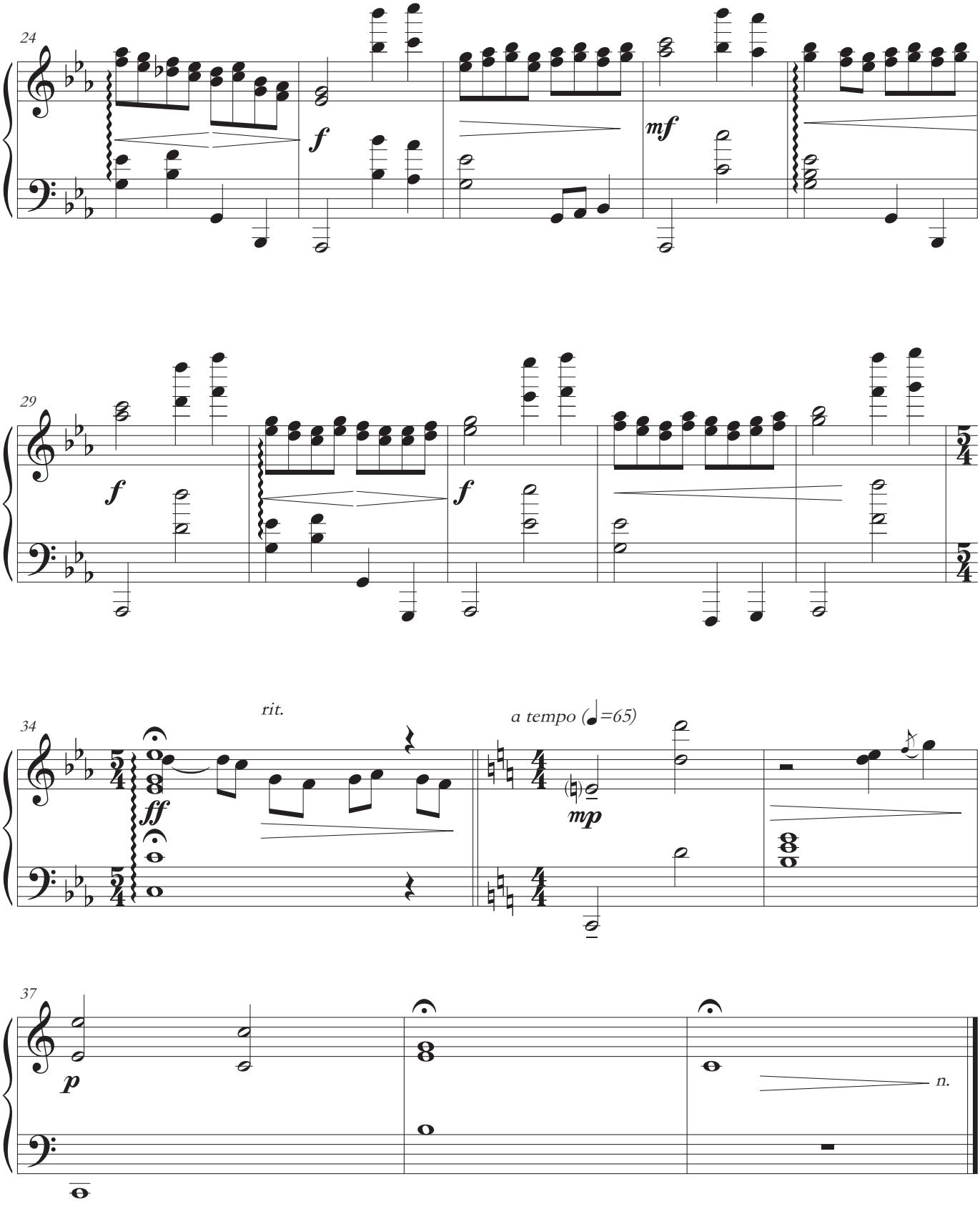
Vulnerable.

But unknowingly so.

-Bessie Irene

III. La mère dans le marché




24
f
mf
29
f
f
5/4
34
rit.
a tempo (♩=65)
ff
mp
37
p
n.

IV. L'homme durci

Performance Notes

Tempo
The performer should play as fast as he/she can while maintaining a consistent tempo. If notes blur together, this is okay. The rhythms do not need to be crisp.

Notation
- Blank measures serve as grand pauses for an unspecified amount of time. The length of these pauses are at the discretion of the performer.
- In measure three, the 25" hold should last exactly 25 seconds, whether the note is still heard or not.
- Glissandos should be performed using white keys only.

\+ Note should be performed by scrapping the string inside the piano with a coin.

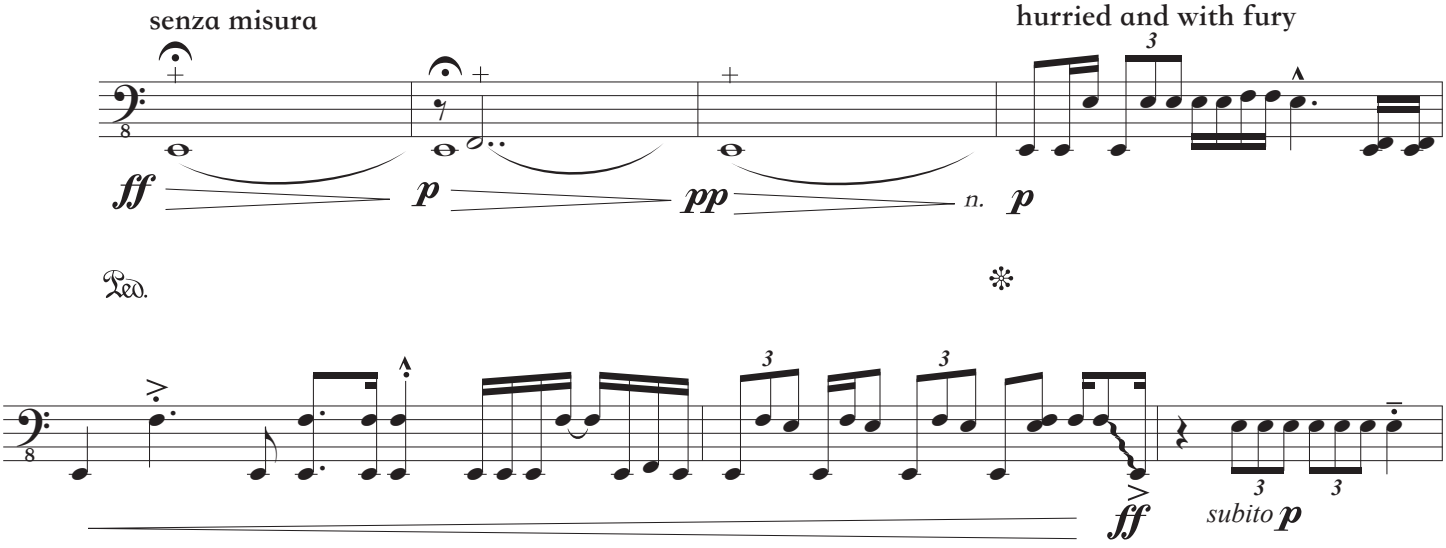
Style
The performer may wish to draw from the poem below in determining how to interpret and convey the mood of the piece.

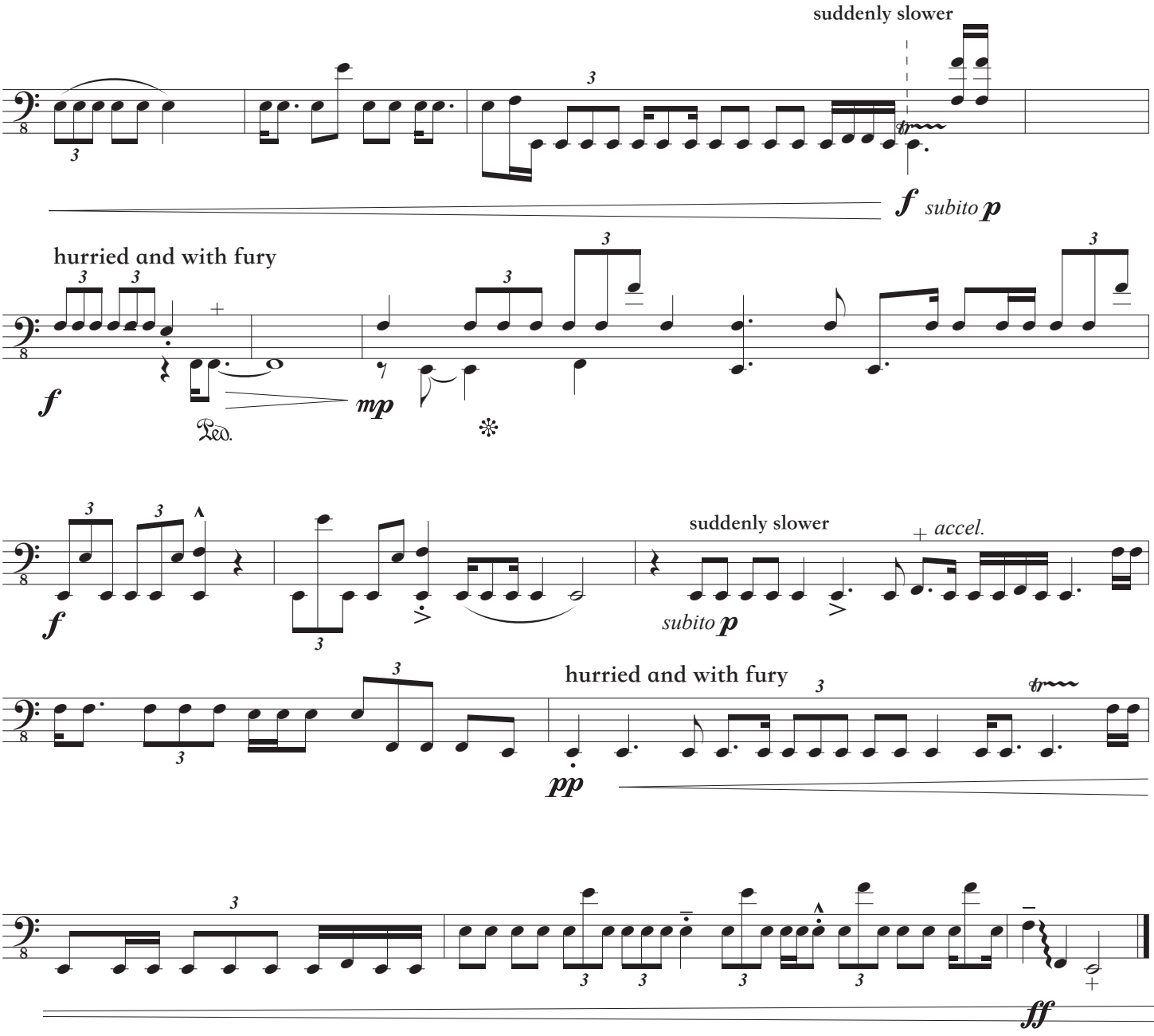
Confinement
Angst, and delusion.

Deep sharp eyes that pierce through the soul.

Confined by his own fury.

-Bessie Irene




suddenly slower
f subito p
hurried and with fury
f
mp
Ped.
f
suddenly slower
accel.
subito p
hurried and with fury
pp
ff

V. La fille dans les nuages

Performance Notes

Style
This movement should be performed with a sense of melancholy and thoughtfulness. The performer should take the liberty to use the sustain pedal throughout according to his/her own interpretations of the music. The performer may wish to draw from the poem below in determining how to interpret and convey the mood of the piece.

Beyond the Clouds
She stretches, yawns, and rests her feet on the cool mahogany.
As she stands, she sighs and puts on the smile her mother passed down to her.
She covers herself in the womanhood expected of her, and enters the world.

Her world,
A twisted fantasy.
Manufactured, and pieced together of lines and niceties,
Primed and painted into the places she carved out for them.

Beyond the clouds,
Past the formalities,
At the edge of her universe,
There lies, nestled in the depth of her consciousness, a post.

Tucked behind the heartbreak of broken promises,
Next to the sting of unspoken words,

Guarding the remnants of who she once was,
And who she desires to be.
Concealing the feelings she can't feel,
And the thoughts she can't think.

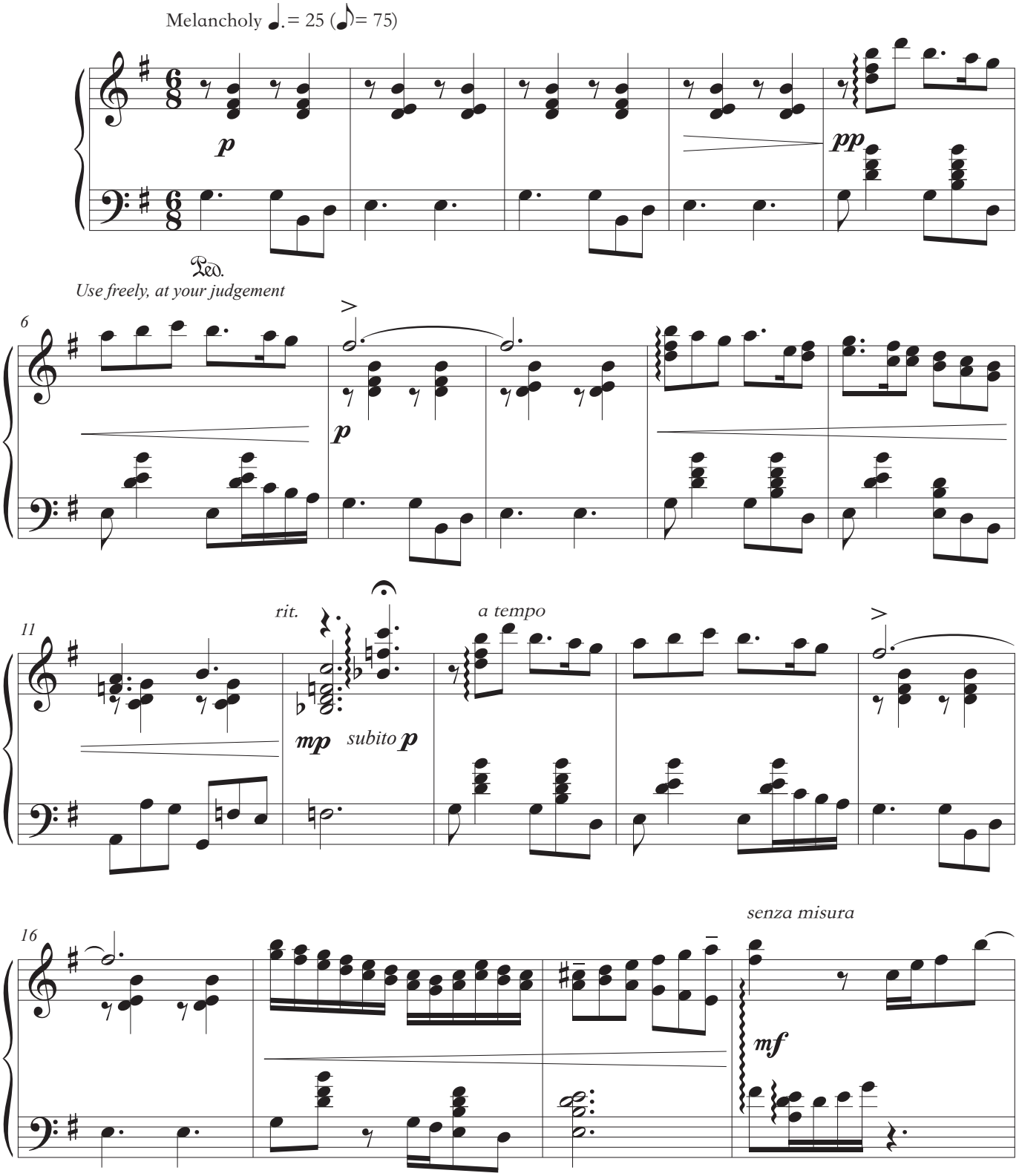
And beneath it all, a brilliance, as piercing and pure as a blue beryl crystal.

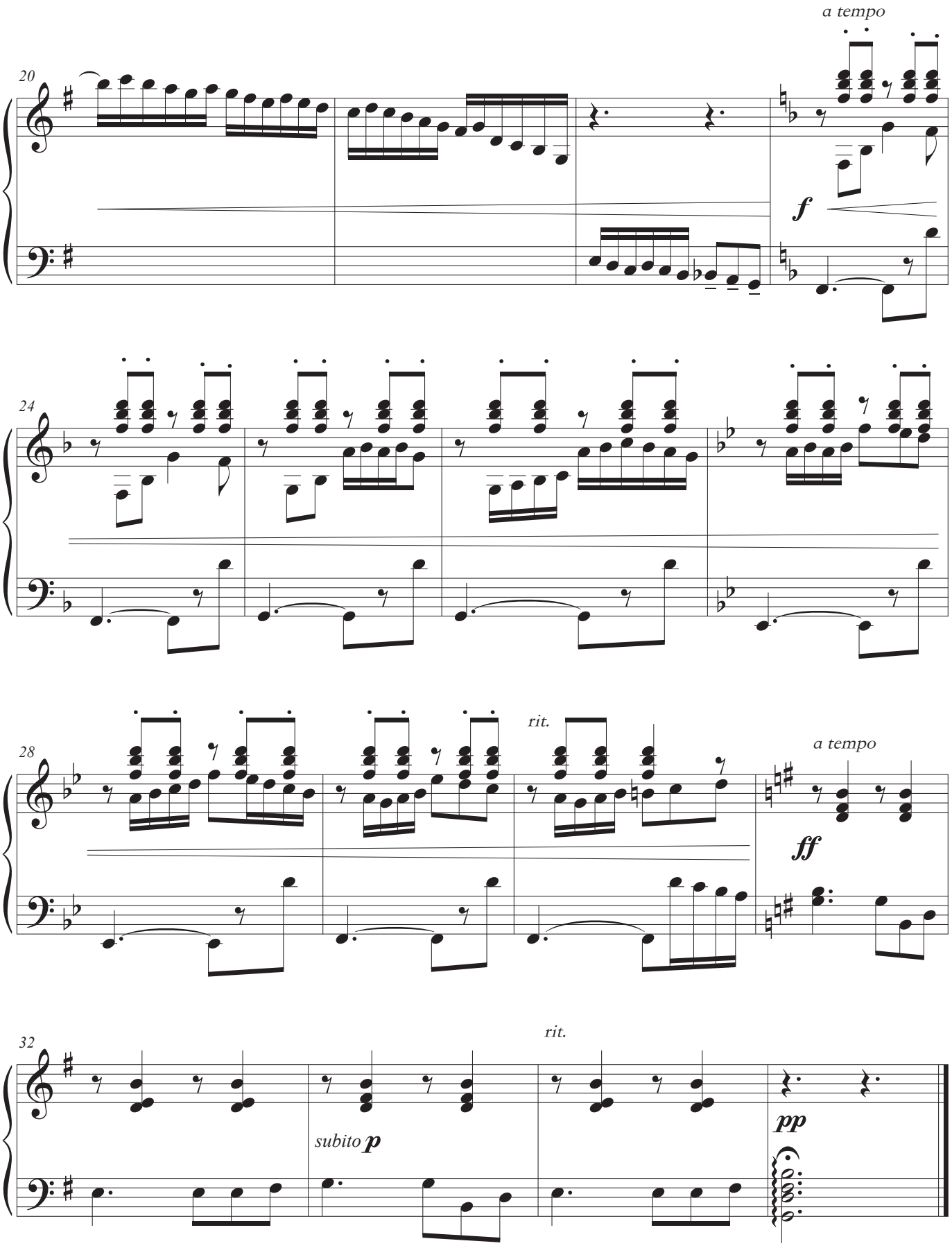
If only she knew the light she hides.
Bright enough to illuminate the whole world!

But in her eyes this isn't so,
And so it wasn't.

-Bessie Irene

V. La fille dans les nuages




a tempo
20
f
24
28
rit.
a tempo
ff
32
rit.
subito p
pp