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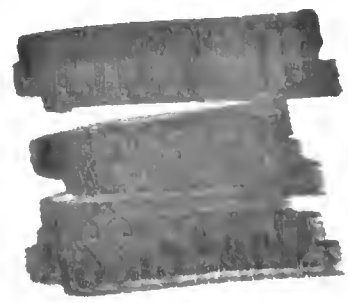

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THUNDERBIRD

PIANO SUITE

founded upon American Indian folk-songs and dances. Arranged from the incidental music for an Indian drama by Norman-Bel Geddes

By

CHARLES WAKEFIELD CADMAN

Op. 63

1. From the Village
2. Before the Sunrise
3. Nuwana's Love Song
4. Night Song
5. Wolf Song (War Dance)

With a short account of the music and reasons for idealizing the folk-tunes of the American Indians.

PRICE $1.25

WHITE-SMITH MUSIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO

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FOREWORD

With the exception of "From the Village" and "Before the Sunrise," the music in this set is based upon Blackfeet Indian (Montana) tunes obtained by the ethnologist Mr. Walter McClintock of Pittsburg, Penna. They are used with the permission of Mr. McClintock.

"Nuwana's Love Song" is founded upon the original "love song" given me by the ethnologist, and the same may be said for the "Night Song" which bore the same name before its harmonization. "The Dance" is a dance tune or Wolf Song. I have given the themes of these three pieces preceding their "idealization," so that the student or concert artist might see for himself just how much of the "idealizing" I have indulged in. "From the Village" is quite "built up" and somewhat independent, yet I trust it has the inherent characteristics of form and decided accent of aboriginal music. The little theme I use for it is culled from the collection of Alice Fletcher. "Before the Sunrise" is not founded at all upon an Indian song, yet I have used it in this collection simply because the music was a component part of my score for the play "Thunderbird". It occurs in the first act and accompanies an early dawn scene. The "Love Song" is heard in various ways throughout the drama, at first alone by the strings, then harmonized in another form and finally announced in the setting you find in this collection, — although in the original orchestral vestments. My "Night Song," "From the Village," and "Before the Sunrise," are exact transcriptions of the orchestral score and adapted for pianoforte just as the music for "Peer Gynt" was adapted for piano by its composer. Naturally the transfer from a larger to a smaller sphere reduces the color and effect, but if you find this collection pianistic enough for public performance, I shall be glad.

I would say that in the orchestral suite (soon to be published) entitled "Thunderbird" I have eliminated "From the Village," but the fifth number in the suite is obtained by adding a piece called "The Passing of Nuwana" which does not lend itself to any sort of transcription. Hence my not using *this* in the present piano cycle and my adding "From the Village." If one should examine the orchestral score of "Thunderbird" he may discover that about ten bars in the ending of "The Dance" fails to conform to that found in the piano arrangement. This is accounted for by the fact that I felt it necessary to arrange a more effective and pianistic ending,—a composer's privilege! Aside from this single instance the music of the piano suite and the orchestral version tally.

It may interest my readers to know that in the play "Thunderbird" I used the above Blackfeet Indian tunes in their *native state*, without altering a single note. The songs are sung with Indian "vocables" by the impersonated Indian characters, sometimes with only the drum beat on the stage-drum or again by the drums and tympani in the orchestra pit. I have also accentuated the drum beats on the lower notes of the contrabasses and 'cellos tuned with reiterated "open fifths," making no attempt at harmonizing the melodies. All my "idealizing" such as you find in this piano score was indulged in at the fall of the curtain or between the acts. In this way the audience hears the tunes in "native form" and later with the "white man's harmonies."

Charles Wakefield Cadman

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In Defense of Idealization

In my lecturing over the country and in my circularizing and writing, I am eternally meeting with the idea that it is not aesthetic or artistic to objectify Indian musical utterance. Some go so far as to say that the moment a composer touches a native melody just that moment does it lose its original character — and become "sophisticated." If this is true then you might as well put many of the successful works of the Russian composers who have employed barbaric Czek or Tartar themes into the same category. And all those French and Italian composers who have employed the wilder oriental and semi-barbaric tunes for which little or no accompaniment, harmonically speaking is used! Let me quote an article I wrote for the July, 1915, MUSICAL QUARTERLY:

"The chief objection of those who oppose the harmonizing and idealizing of Indian themes is based upon the assertion that the American Indian has no conception of harmony; that his tunes are homogeneous and accompanied only by the beat of a drum or the shaking of a rattle; since he has evolved no harmonic scheme in connection with this music it is therefore quite impossible for a member of an alien race with a definite harmonic concept to clothe the naked tunes in a manner that would intimately reflect the original content. 'When you do this, you violate every rule of esthetics,' they tell us. Many an art-movement has run the gauntlet of 'esthetics' and has reached the bright and hopeful road to success at the very moment when it looked doomed. With all due regard for esthetics and the esthetic principles involved, the matter is more elastic than many think.

"That Indian themes do *not* lose their native characteristics when harmonized and idealized intelligently is evidenced at least by one fact, brought out through the research work of several ethnologists. I shall mention a striking example, which may be taken for what it is worth.

"Say Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche in their book 'The Omaha Tribe' (27th report of the U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, pp. 374 and 375): '. . . and in every instance the harmony given [the ethnologist had played the Indian's melodies with a simple four-part harmony for him] has been tested among the Omaha and been preferred by them when the song was played on the piano or organ'; and again; 'That sounds natural!' was the comment on hearing their songs so played, even when it was explained to them that they did not sing their songs in concerted parts; yet they still persisted 'It sounds natural!' Now, if inclined to treat this incident seriously, we might endeavor to analyze it in two ways: That the Indian's embryonic harmonic sense is a racial remnant of a once (in antiquity) highly musical system, or, that it was a still undeveloped feeling, nebulous, in a state of nascence, when the white man found him. But this is mere theorizing and can lead us to no conclusion, however interesting.

"It is really true that no (primitive) race is more music-loving than the American Indian. If you talk with those at the head of any Indian school or those in authority on the many reservations scattered over the West and Southwest, you will find evidence for a firm conviction that Uncle Sam's little wards are in the main quite musical. I have

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seen Indian children who were slow in mastering the King's English exhibit surprising musical talent. The average Indian boy will show a preference for a musical instrument over any school study. This is no reflection on his unprogressiveness either, for it simply places him alongside of the average American child, and in a way is a convincing argument for a racial equality in musical feeling. The girl students show a singular aptness in the study of the piano and singing, and without a bit of urging on the part of their teachers.

"The matter of the Indian's 'thinking' an harmonic scheme to his simple melodies, subjective though the process may seem, is but a slight step forward, and the composer who idealizes his melodies follows the line of least resistance. We simply take up the process where the Indian dropped it, just as a European composer upon hearing a Scandinavian folk-song sung or whistled in the provinces and without other accompaniment would take down his folk-song and afterwards use it in an orchestral work, a chamber work, or a song."

What has been said by Miss Fletcher in her report of the Omahas is corroborated by other investigators. You may find an educated Indian in the United States here and there who may *not* be in sympathy with the movement to preserve his native tunes, or with the idea of idealizing and harmonizing them, but my experience in the work has convinced me that eighty per cent of "musical Indians" are pleased when the white man objectifies his songs and makes them understandable and perhaps more enjoyable to the white man's ears through the medium of the white man's musical "medicine." I suppose the question of "treatment" with regard to Poor Lo's vocal utterances and his love calls on the native flageolet will be fought and fought again during the next century. Let specialists and disgruntled musical critics argue pro and con, — the fact remains that our little band of primitive folktune idealizers is beginning to make a dent, and every year *more* American composers are blowing the dust from the many ethnological reports and collections of native songs and chants and are finding considerable wheat in the chaff. Every movement in art, science or literature while in the process of making, must be fired with an idea and an art-purpose mirrored for the moment or for all time in the history of mankind. This seems to hold good with reference to the various schools now in existence. As in older schools, so the beginnings of an "American school" (which is not yet) must tie to a *tangible something*. And the trail-blazers have utilized the means at hand for their first "infant" expression of a musical idiom, whether this is found or not in the utilization of Indian, Afro-American (Slave song or Negro spiritual) themes or in a more recent employment of idealized rag-time with its syncopation and elemental qualities somehow synchronistic with the restless energy of the American continent. Cavil at them if you must but respect their ideals I ask of you, — even though you may disagree with the legend upon their banner. So far as it lies within our power we should try to write *good* music whether it smacks of a European conservatory or of the broad free reaches of the Great West and the Out-of-Doors. And in the meantime let us be open-minded and sympathetic in the trail-blazing.

CHARLES WAKEFIELD CADMAN.

Los Angeles, 1917.

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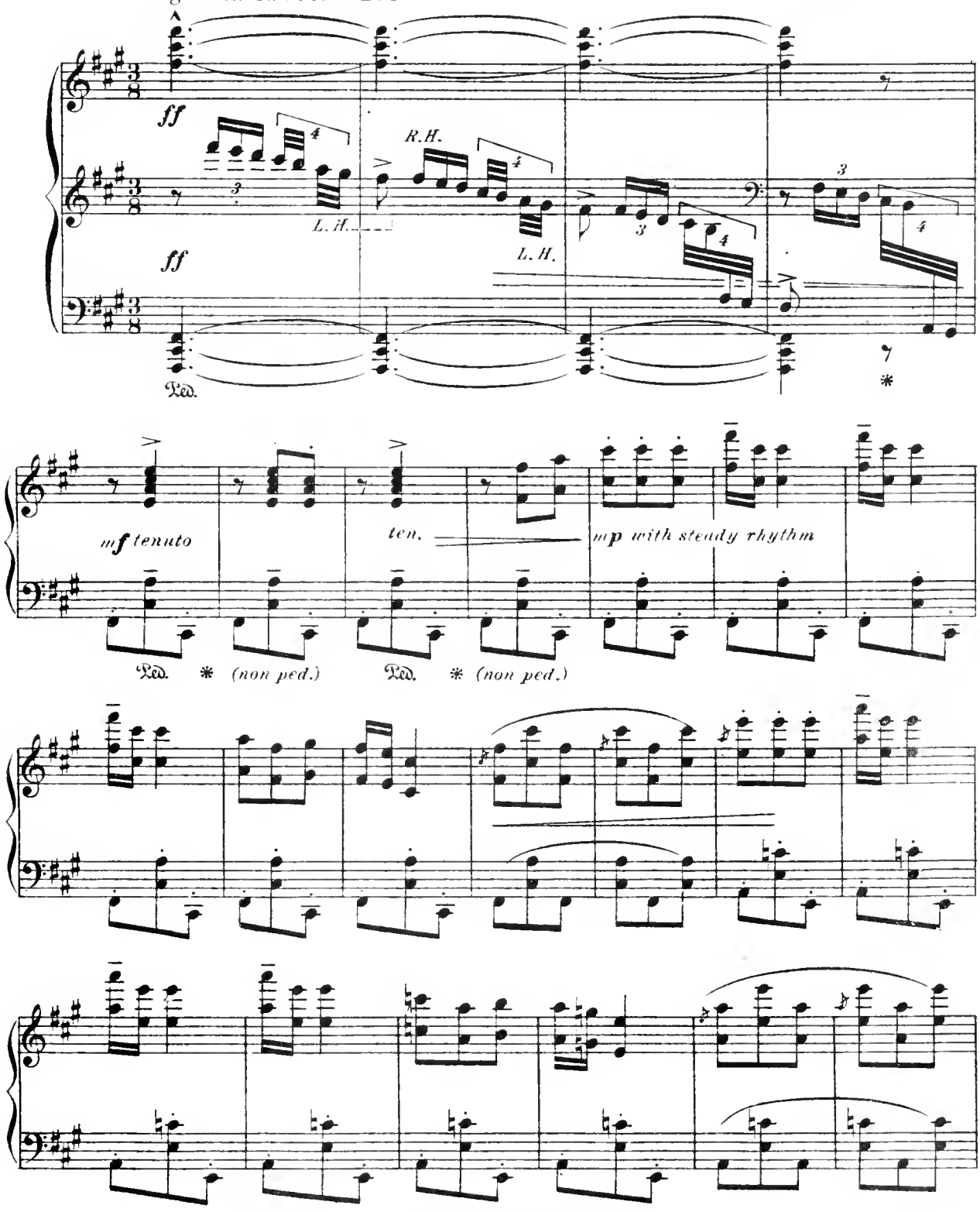
From the Village

NOTE: This piece is founded upon a fragment of an Omaha Indian melody obtained by Alice C. Fletcher, and is a free treatment of the theme. C. W. C.

Charles Wakefield Cadman
Opus 63, No. 1

Allegro scherzando ♩. = 84



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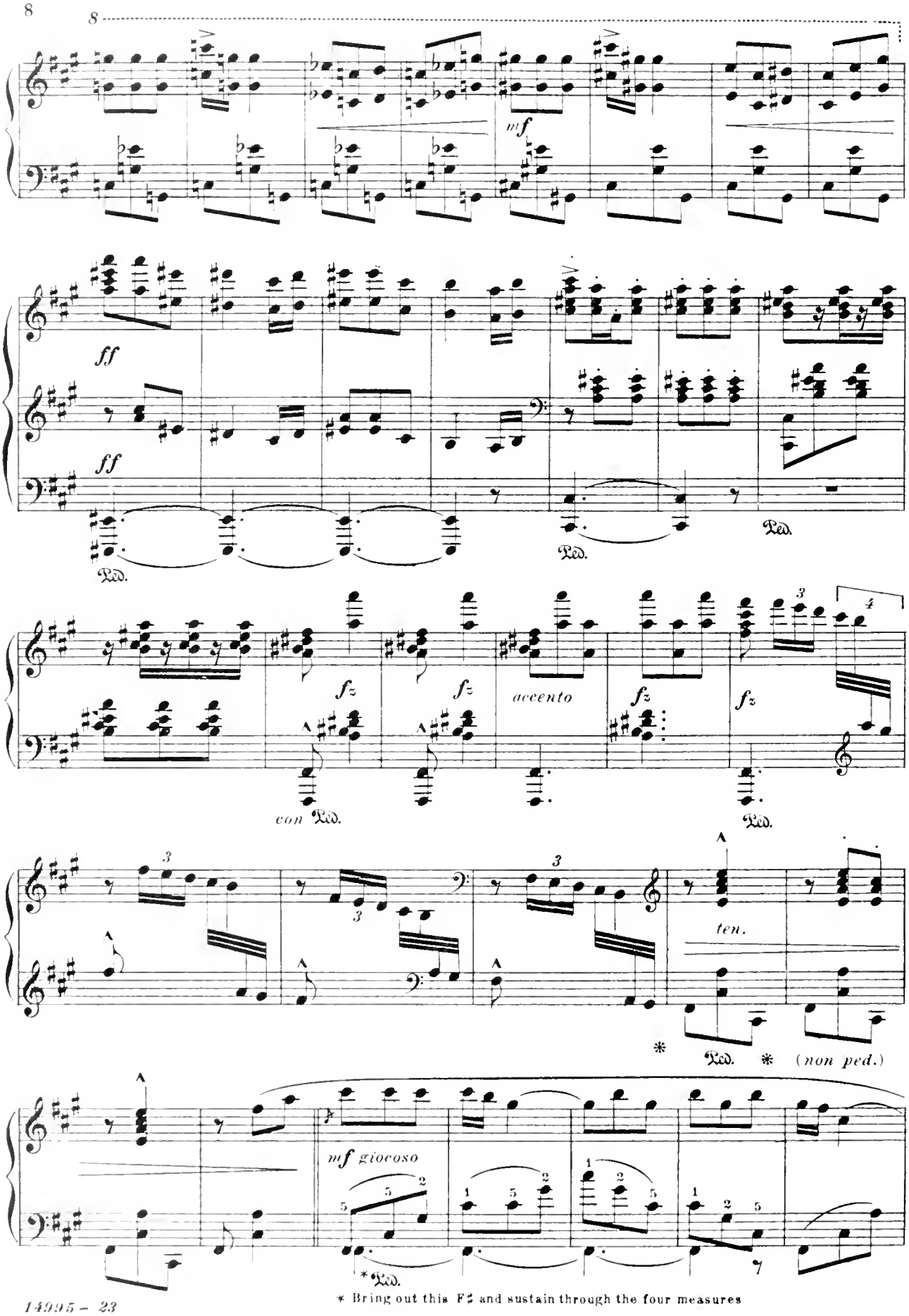

* Bring out this F♯ and sustain through the four measures

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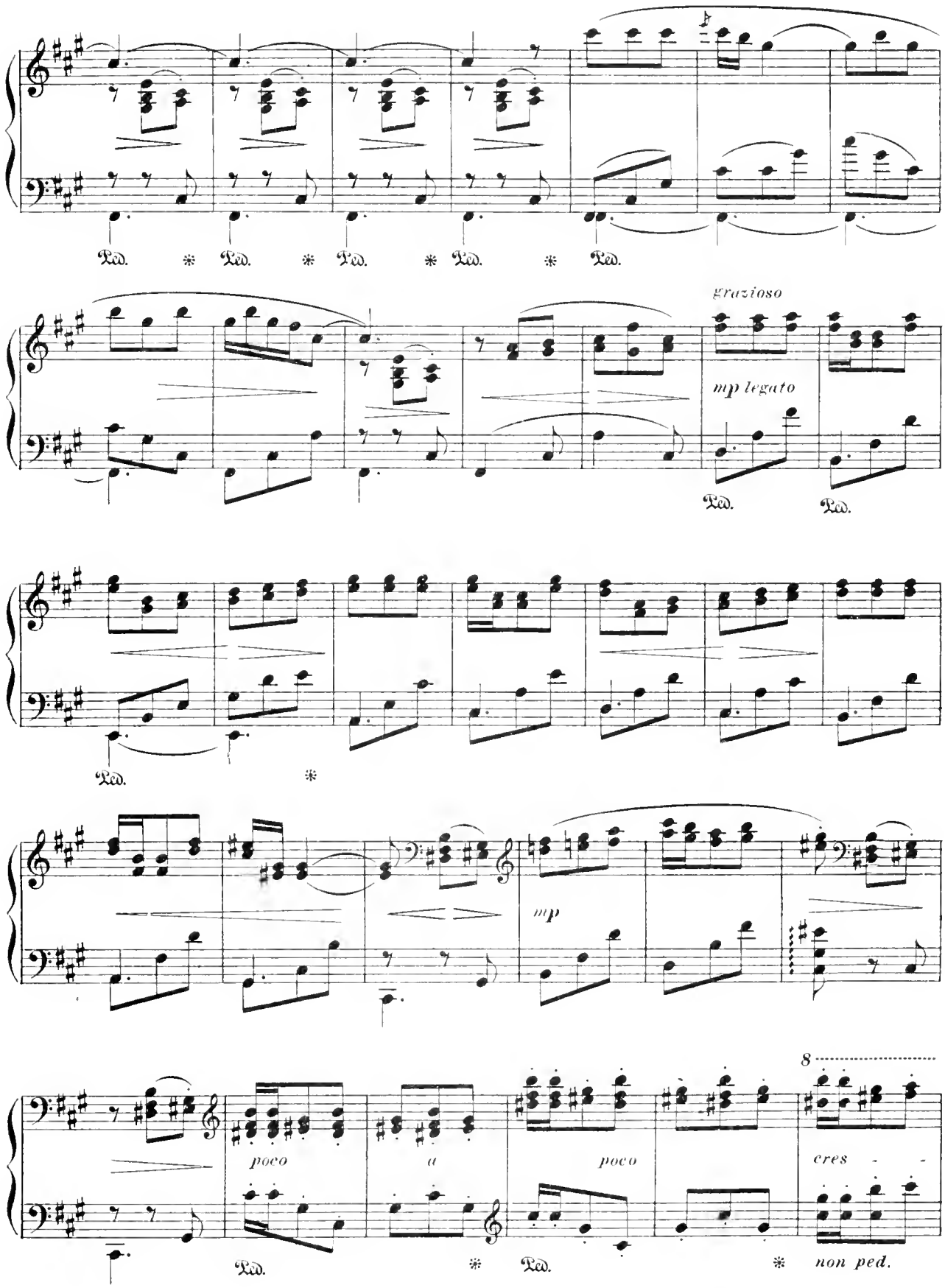

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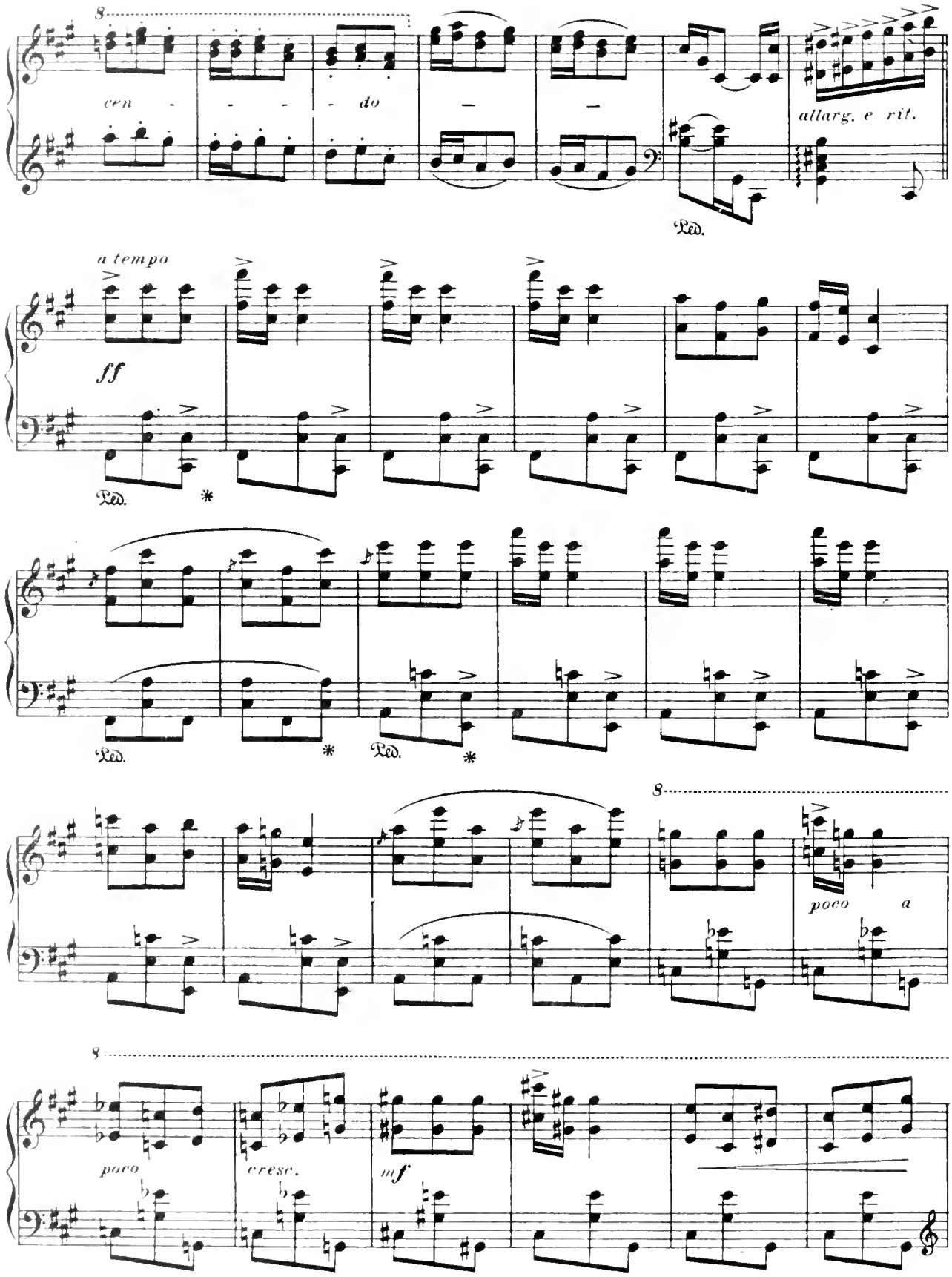

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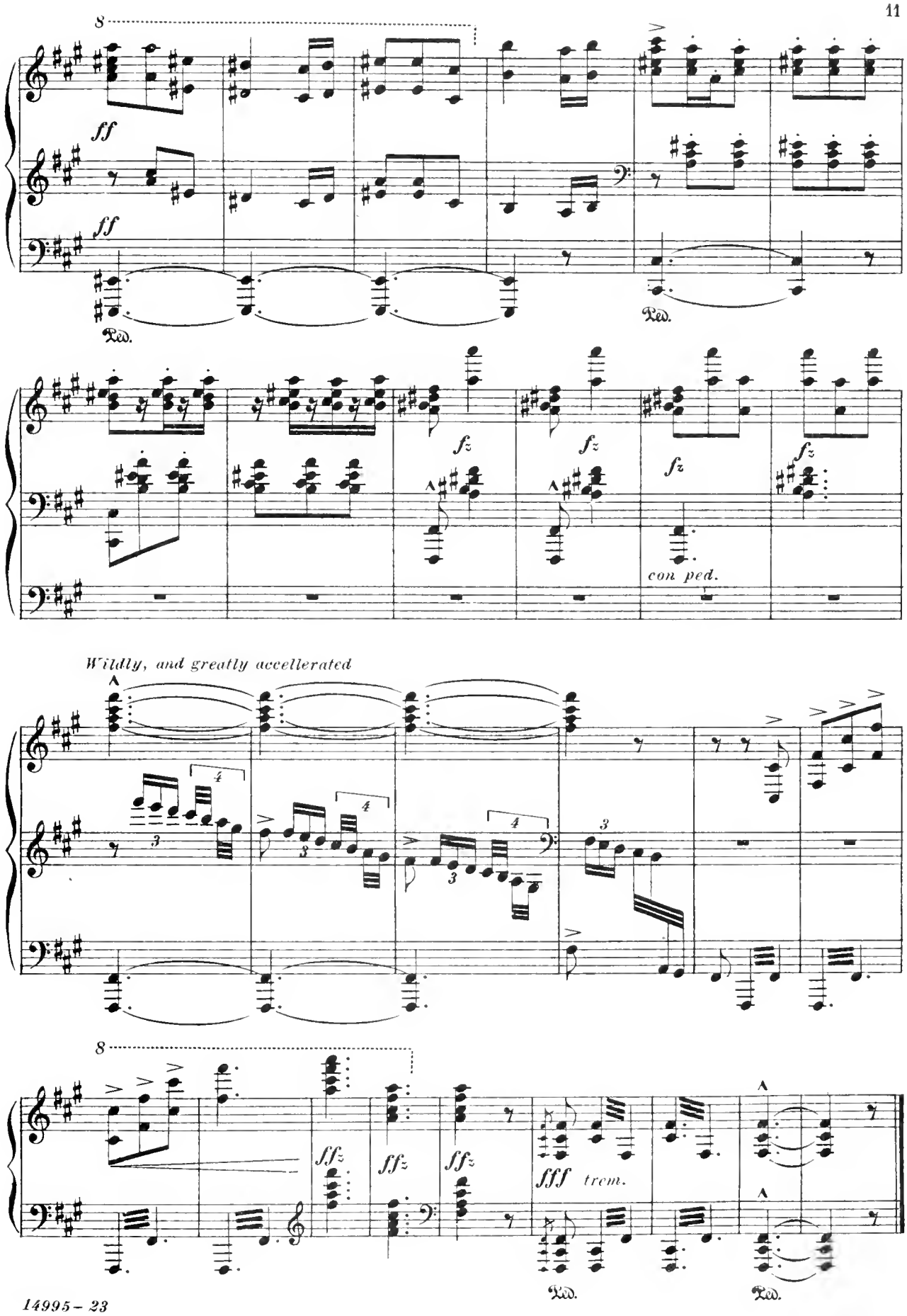

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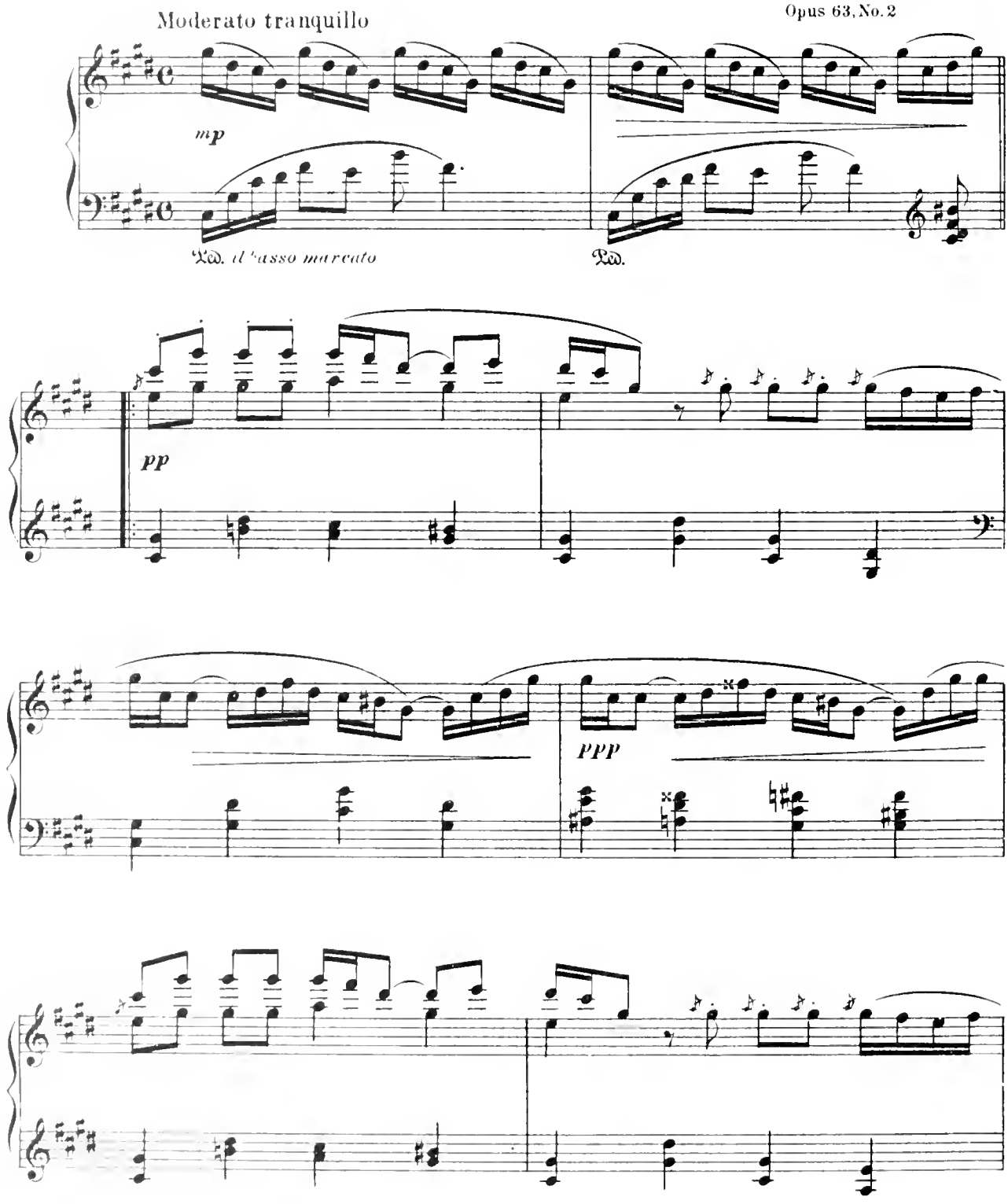
Before the Sunrise

NOTE. This piece is not based upon an Indian theme, but endeavors to reflect an Indian idiom and fit the episode and mood of that particular part of the play script for which it was written.
C. W. C.

Charles Wakefield Cadman
Opus 63, No. 2

Moderato tranquillo



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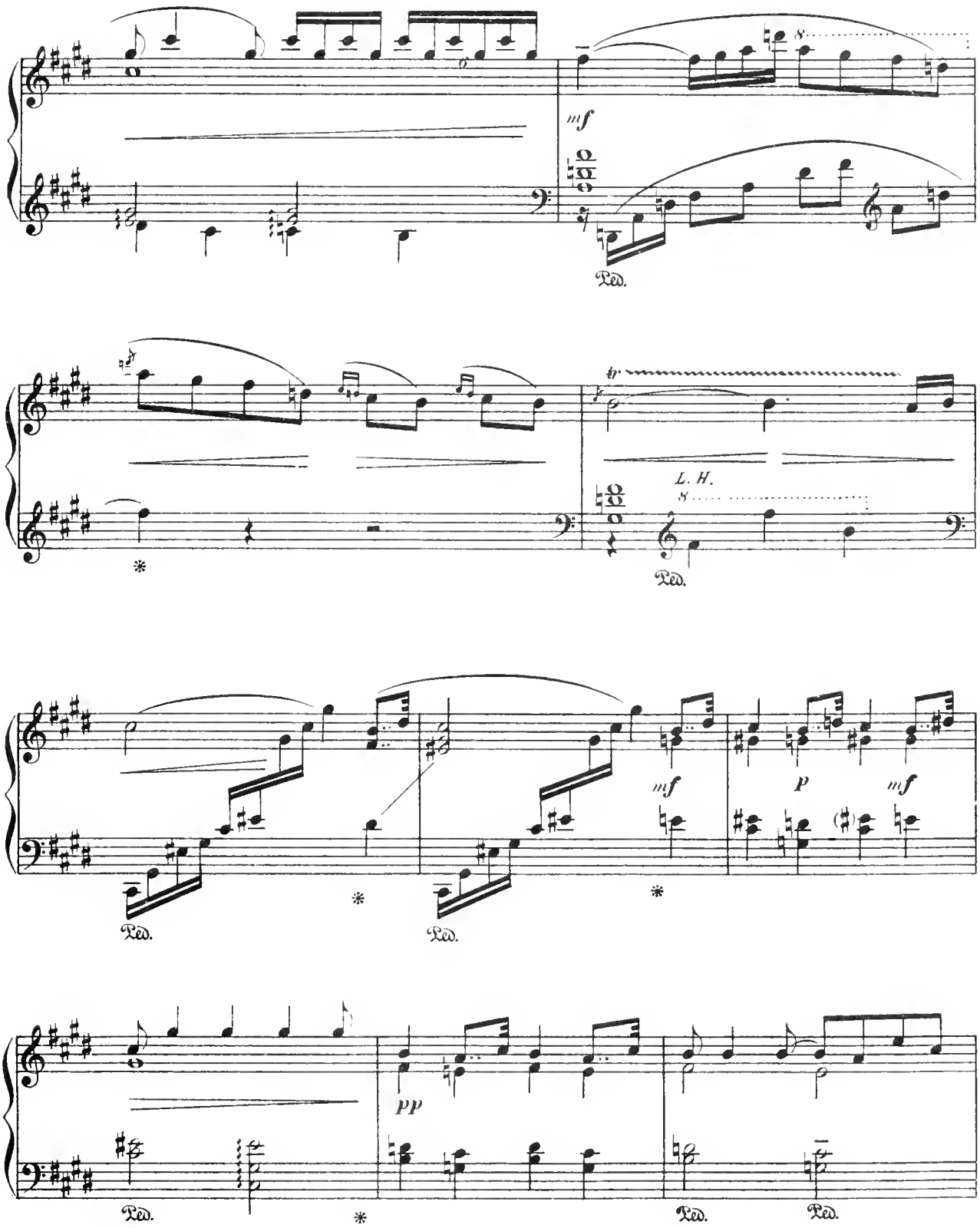
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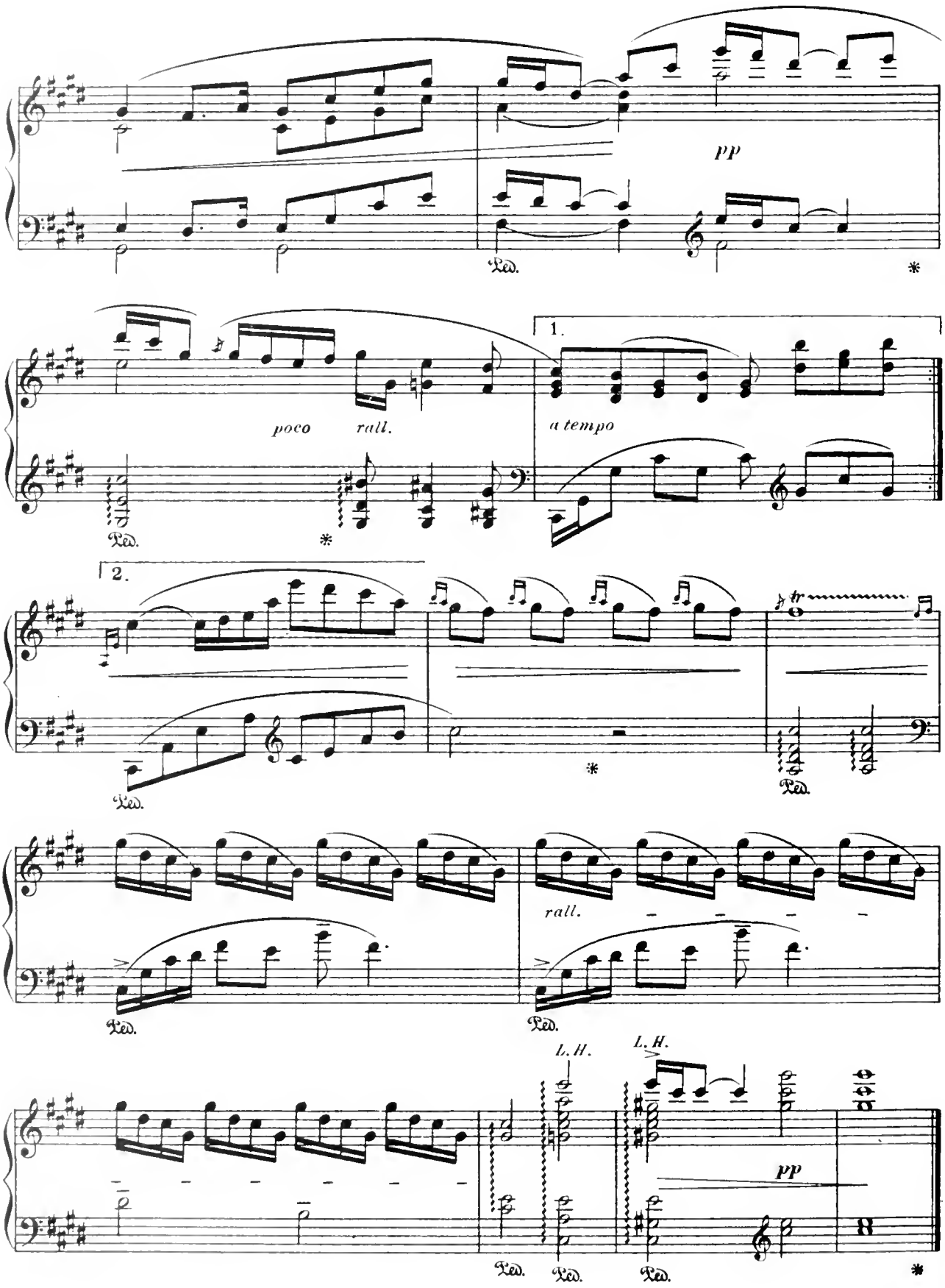

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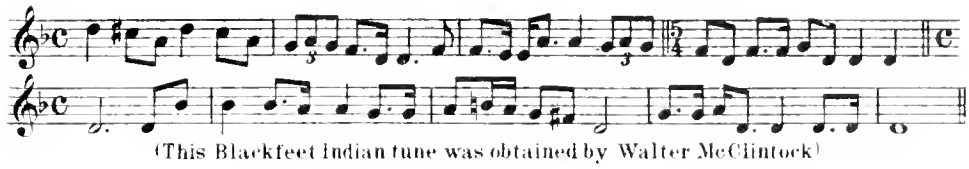
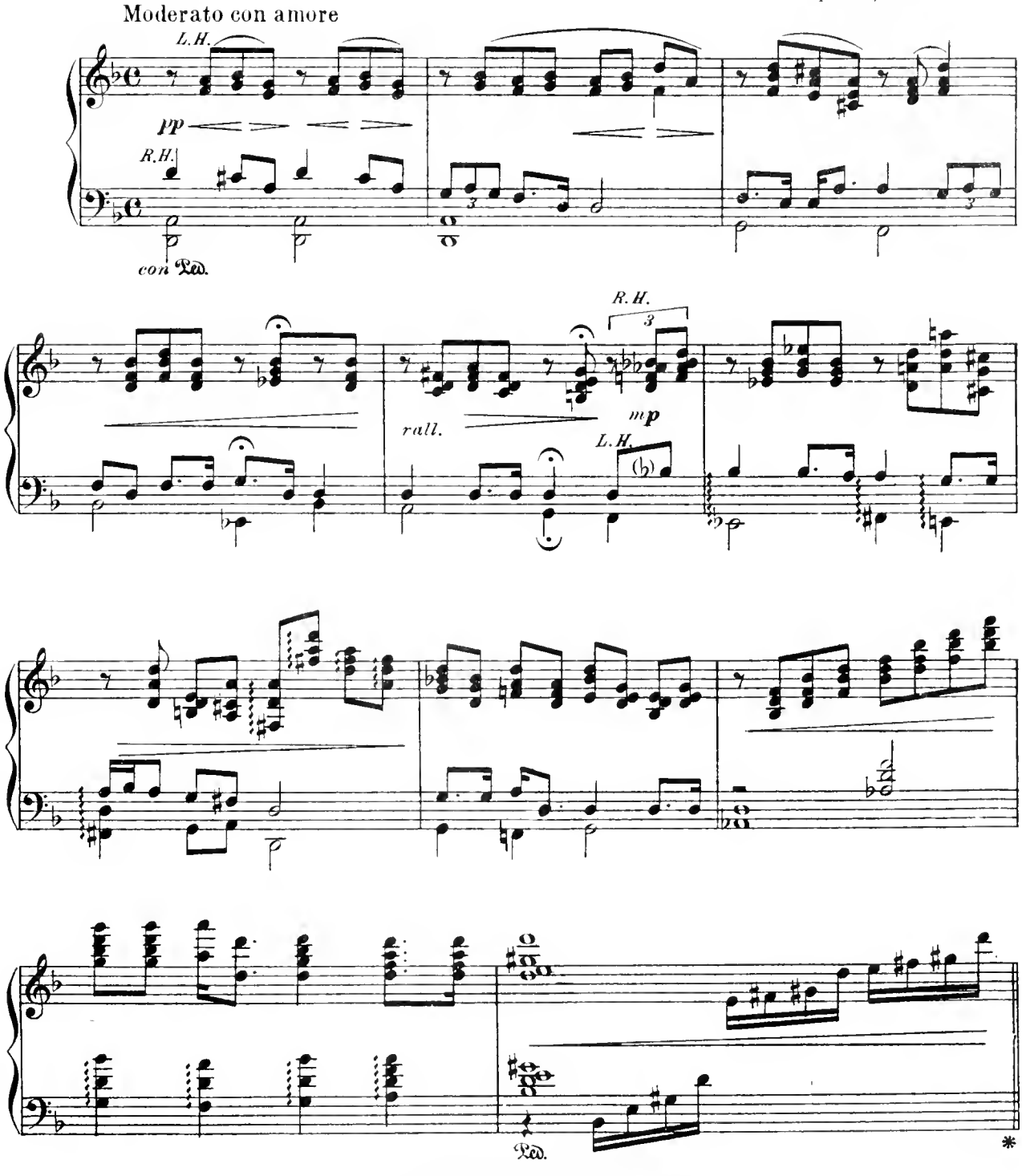
Nuwana's Love Song



(This Blackfeet Indian tune was obtained by Walter McClintock)

Charles Wakefield Cadman
Opus 63, No. 3

Moderato con amore



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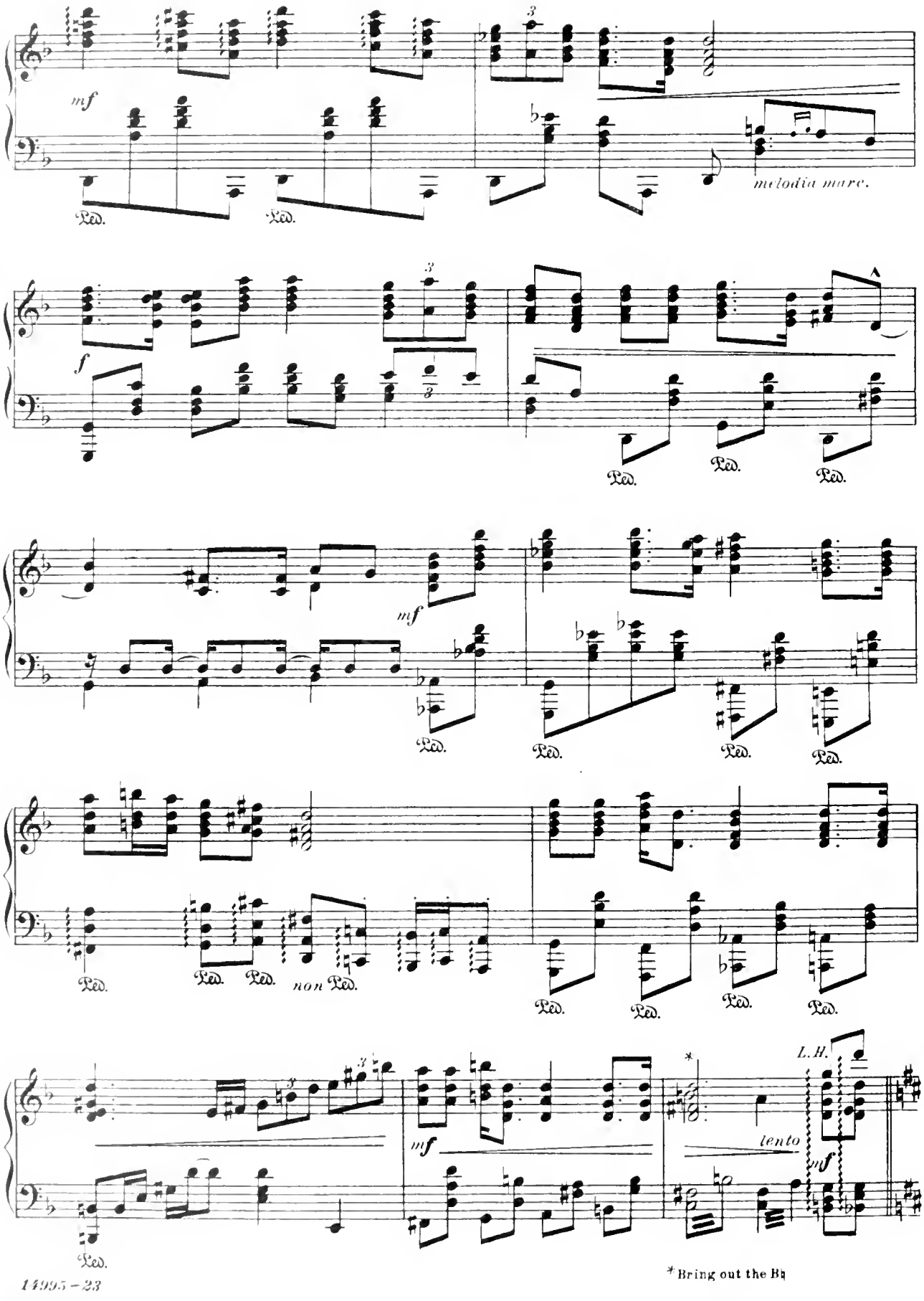

* Bring out the B♮

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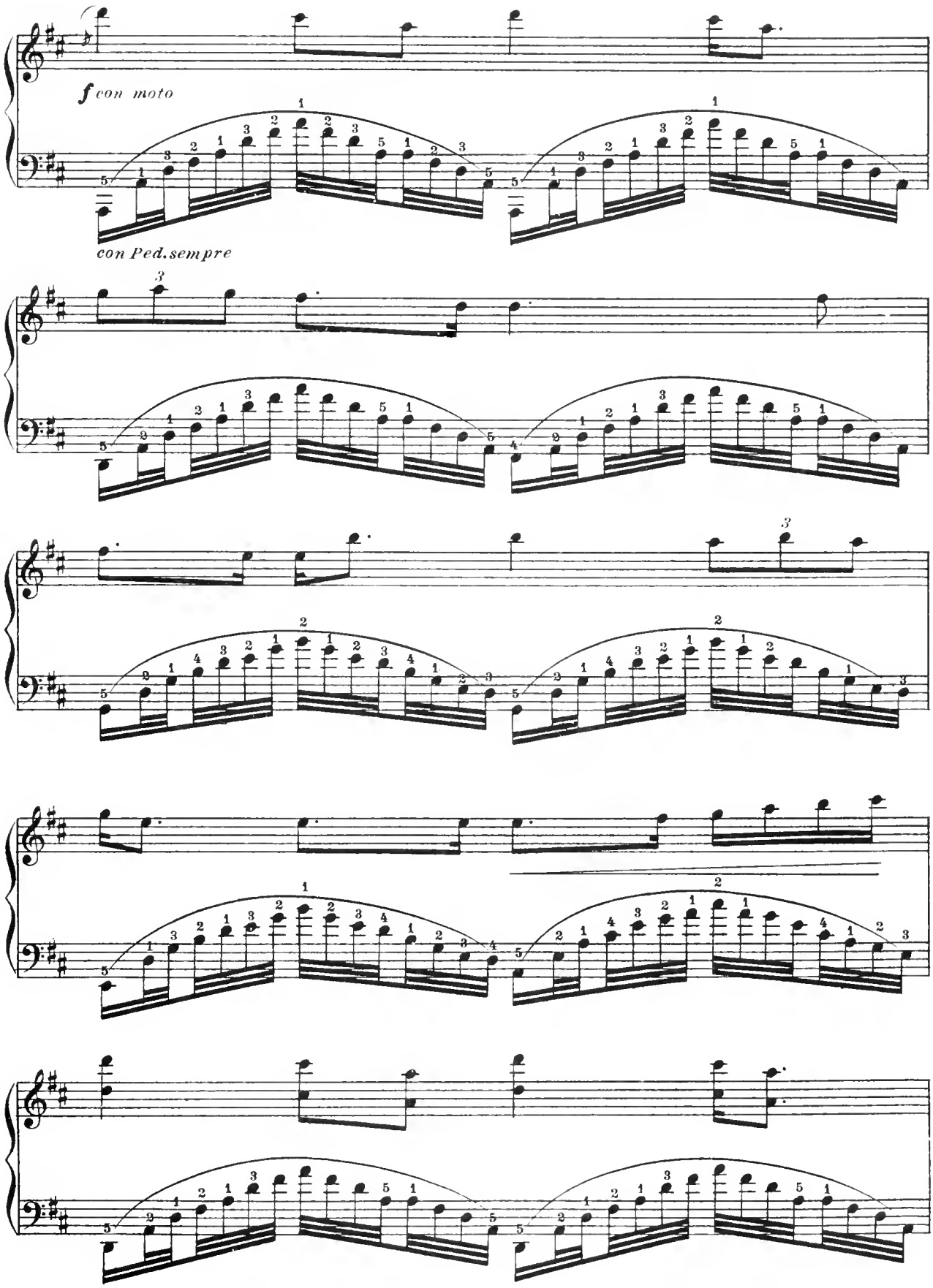

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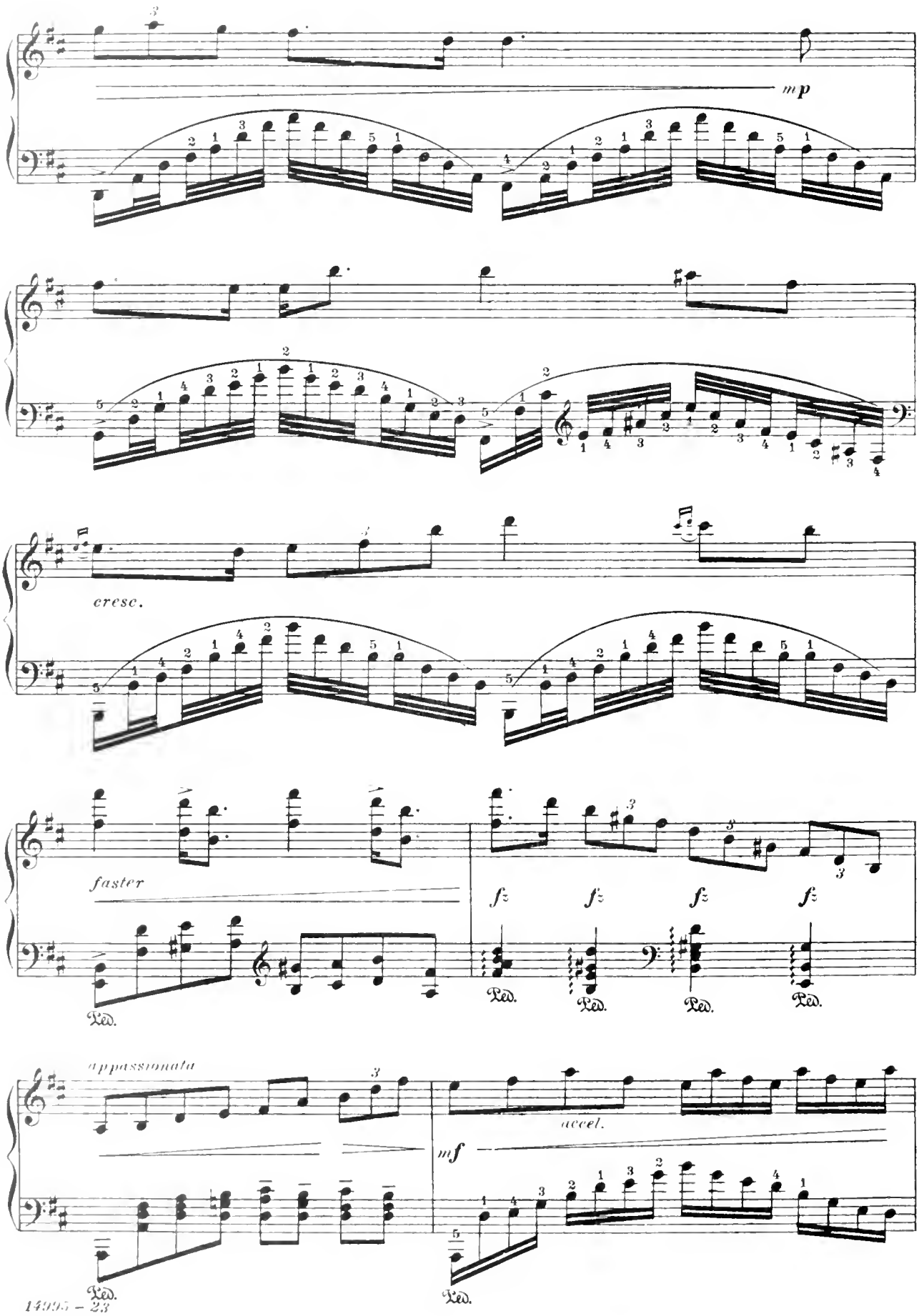

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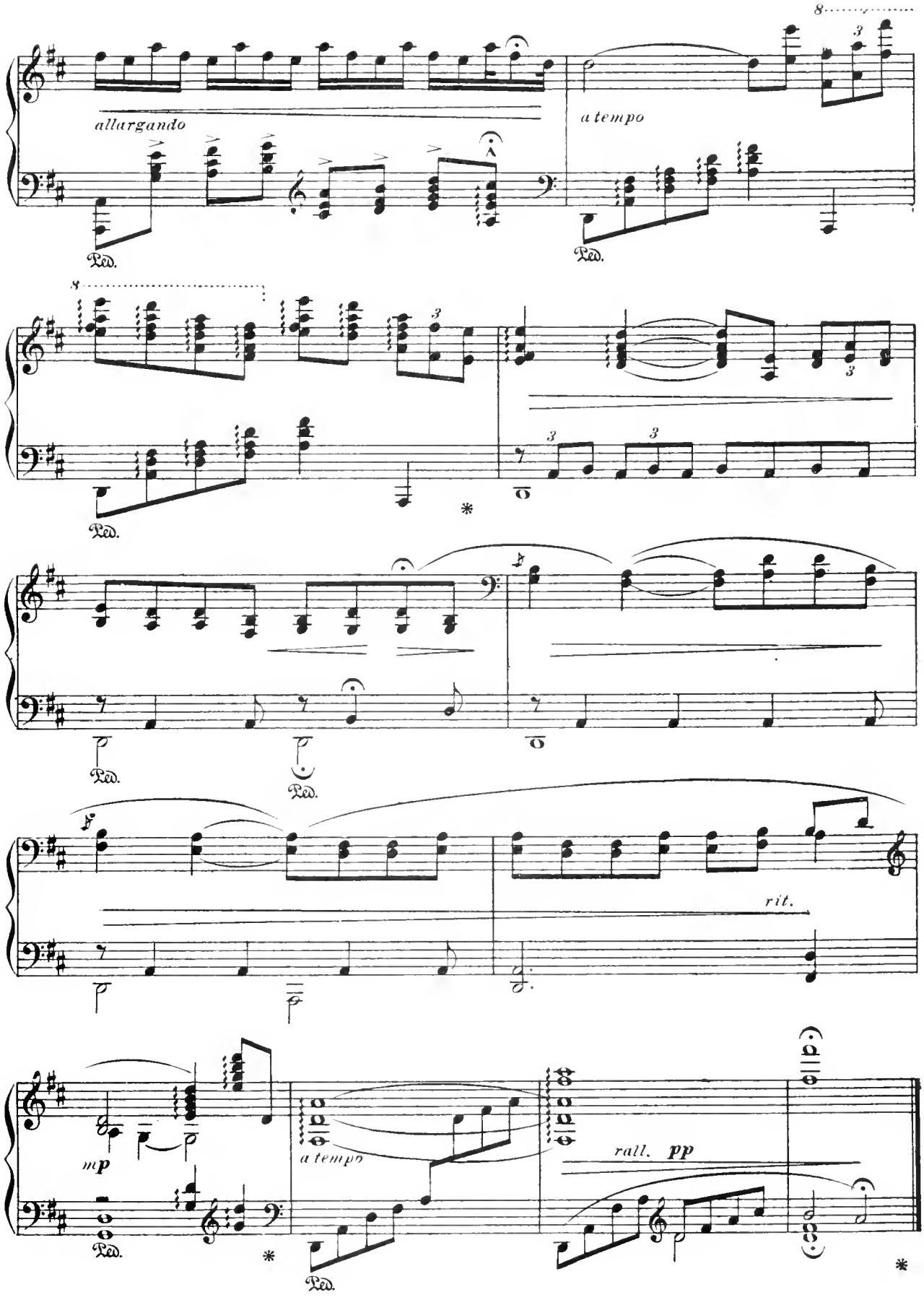

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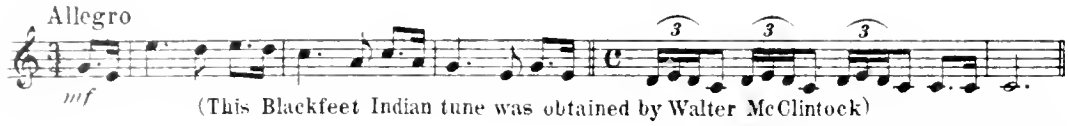
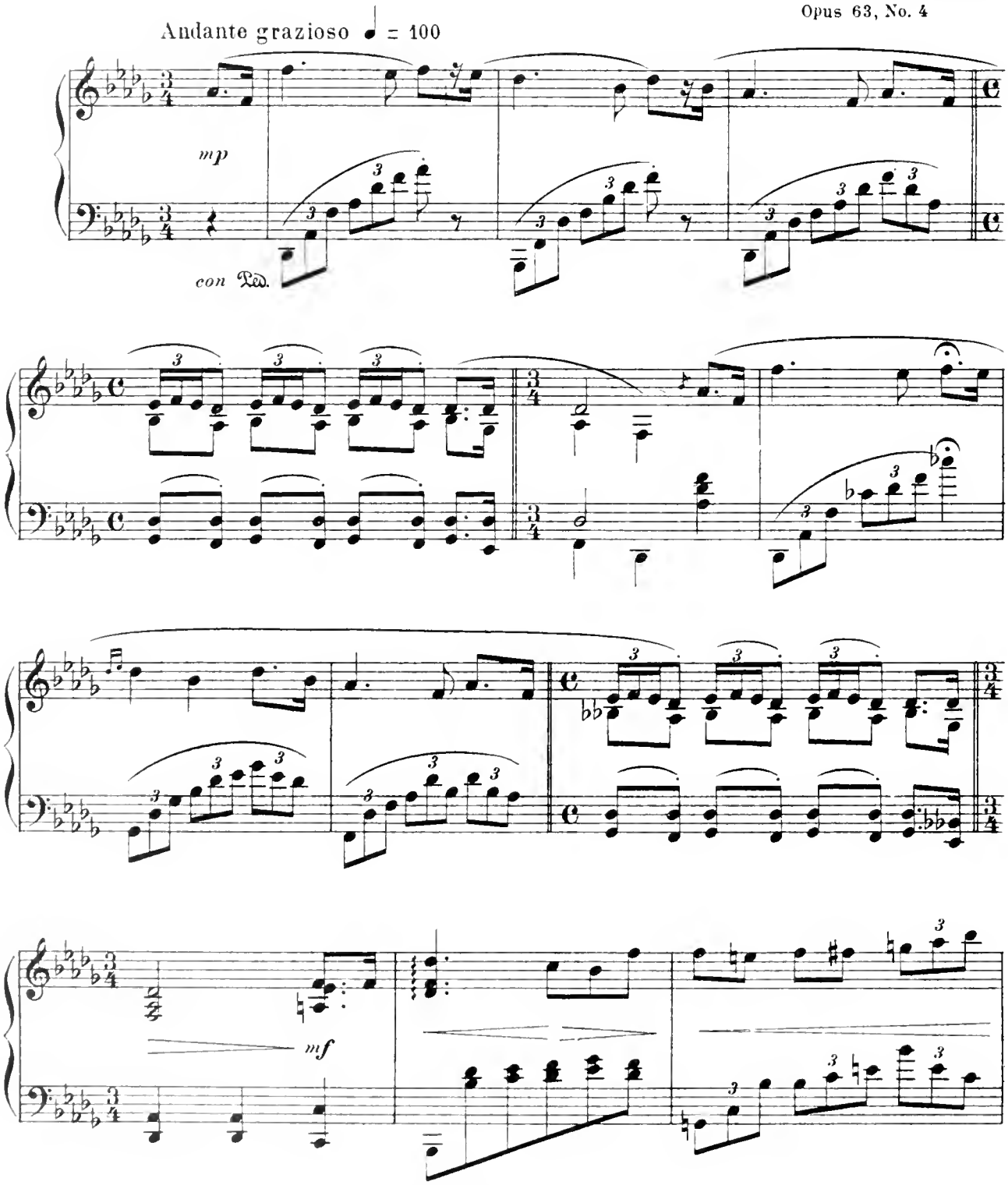
Night Song



(This Blackfeet Indian tune was obtained by Walter McClintock)

Charles Wakefield Cadman

Opus 63, No. 4



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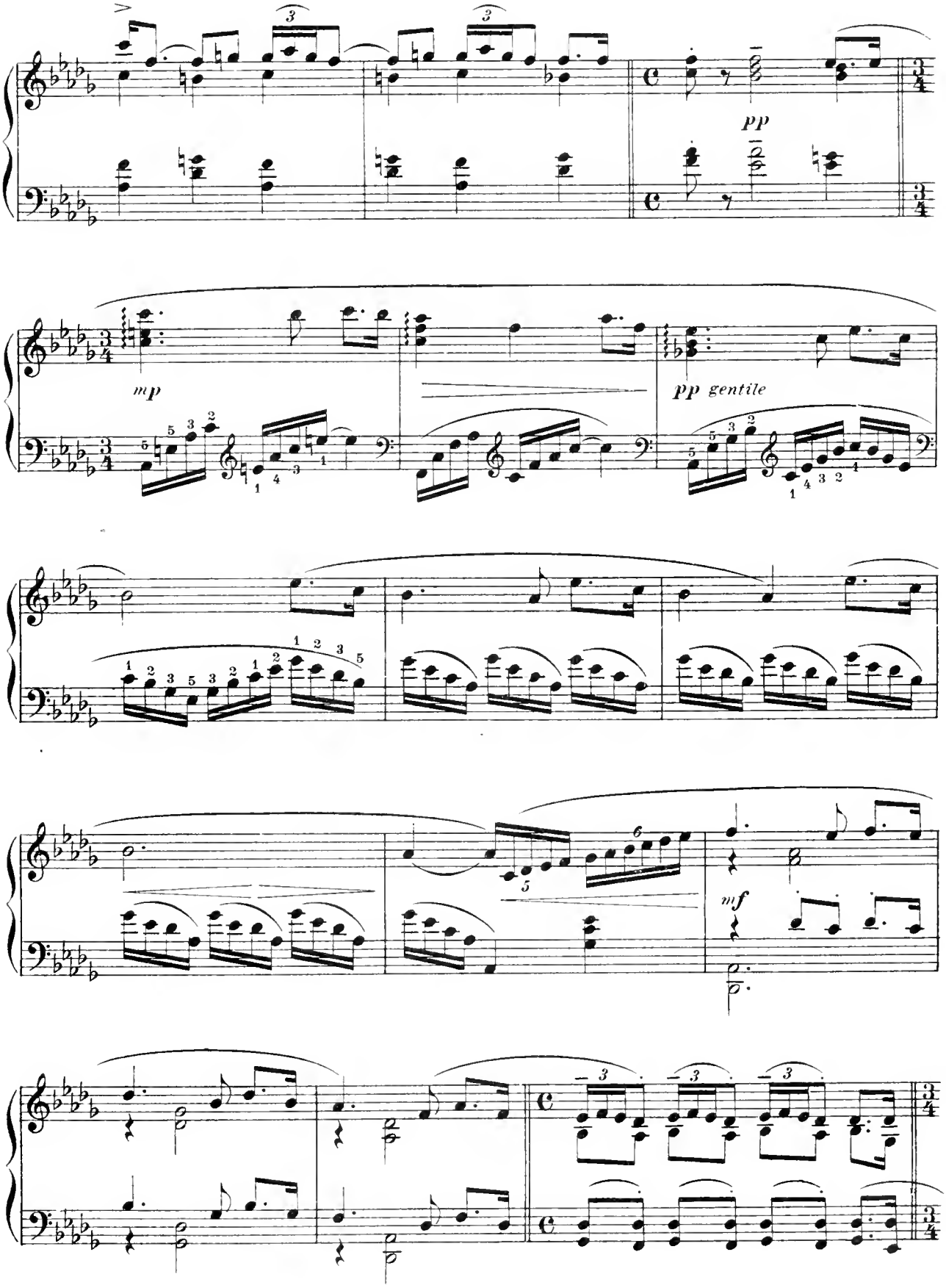

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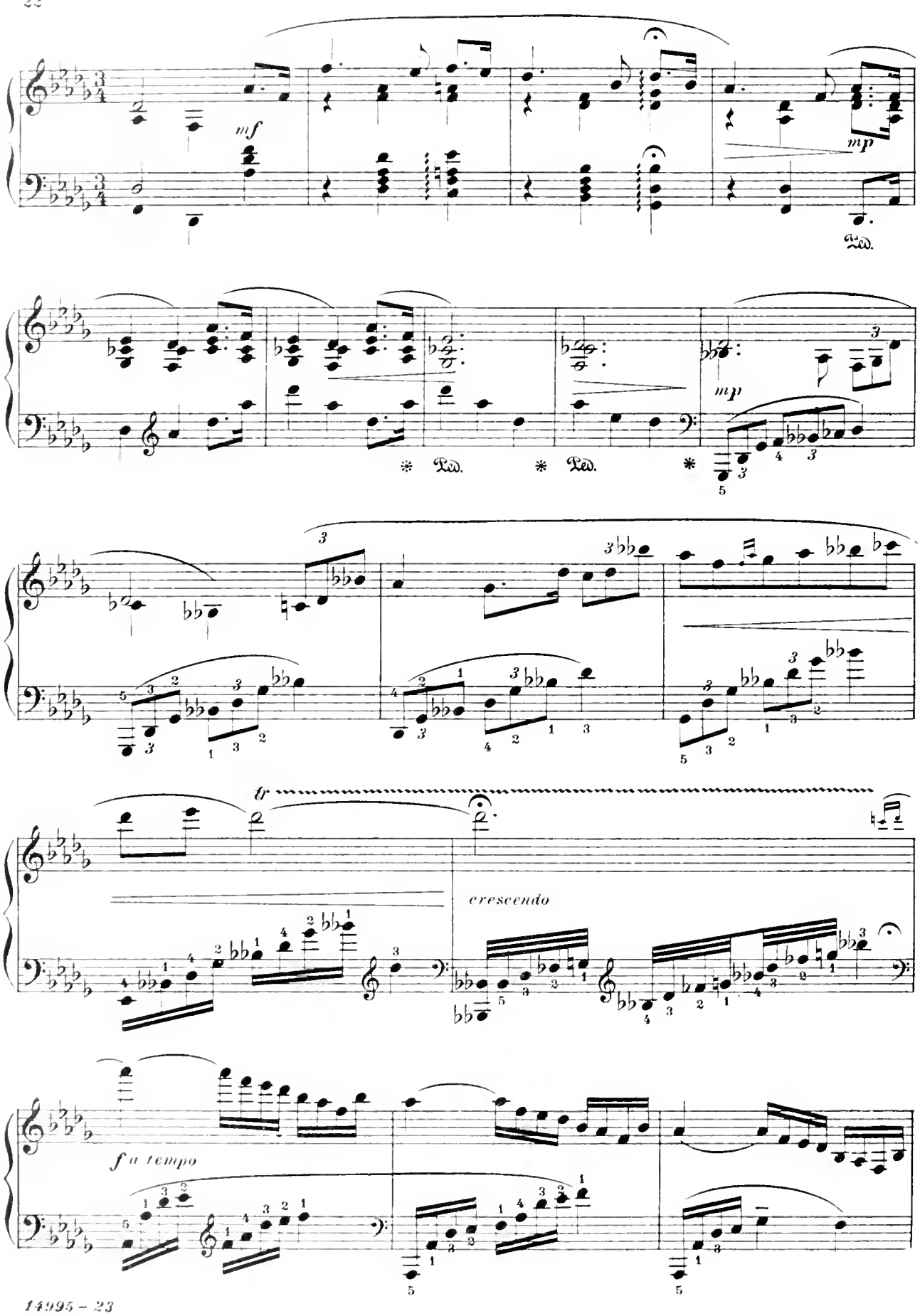

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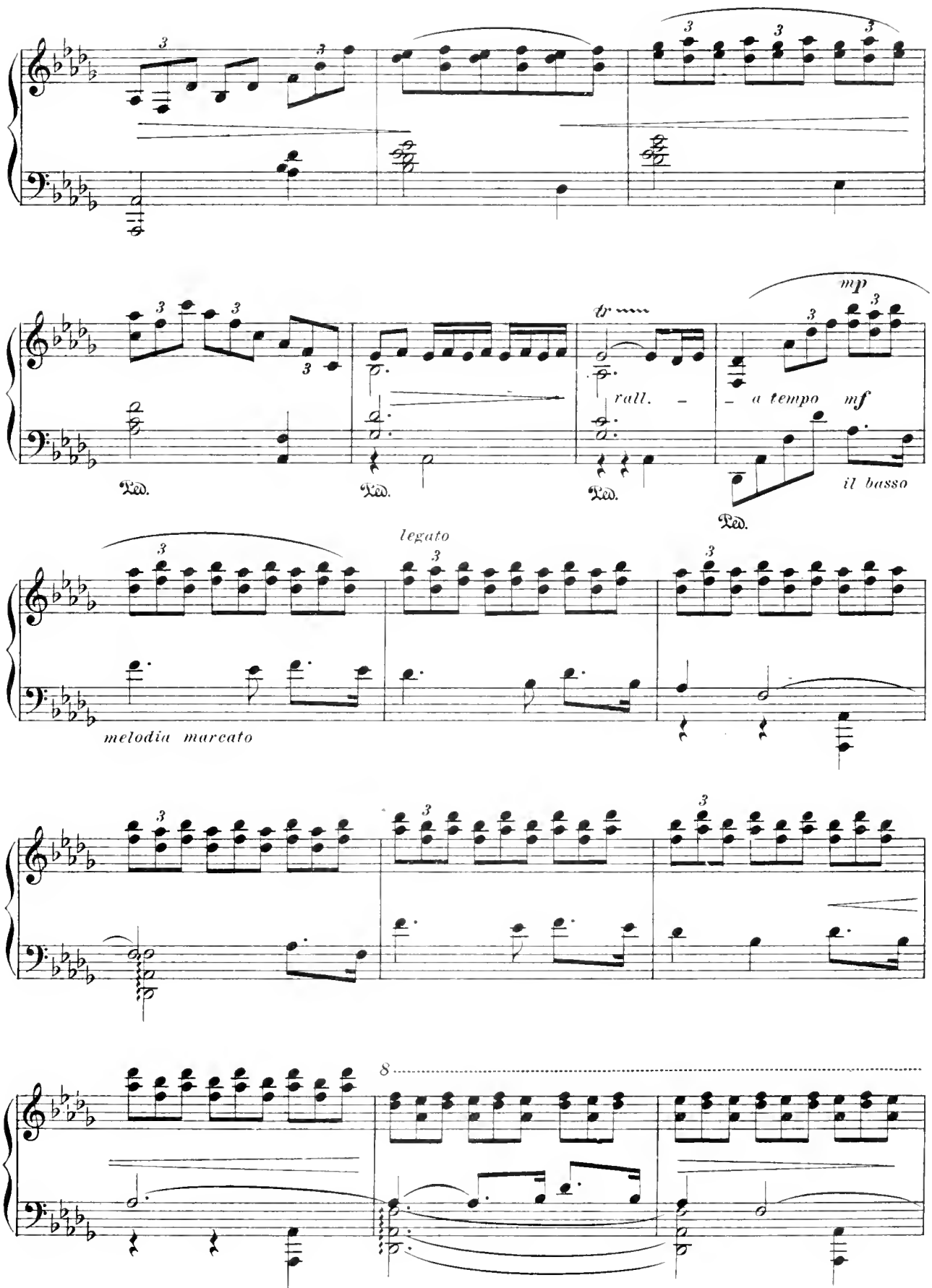
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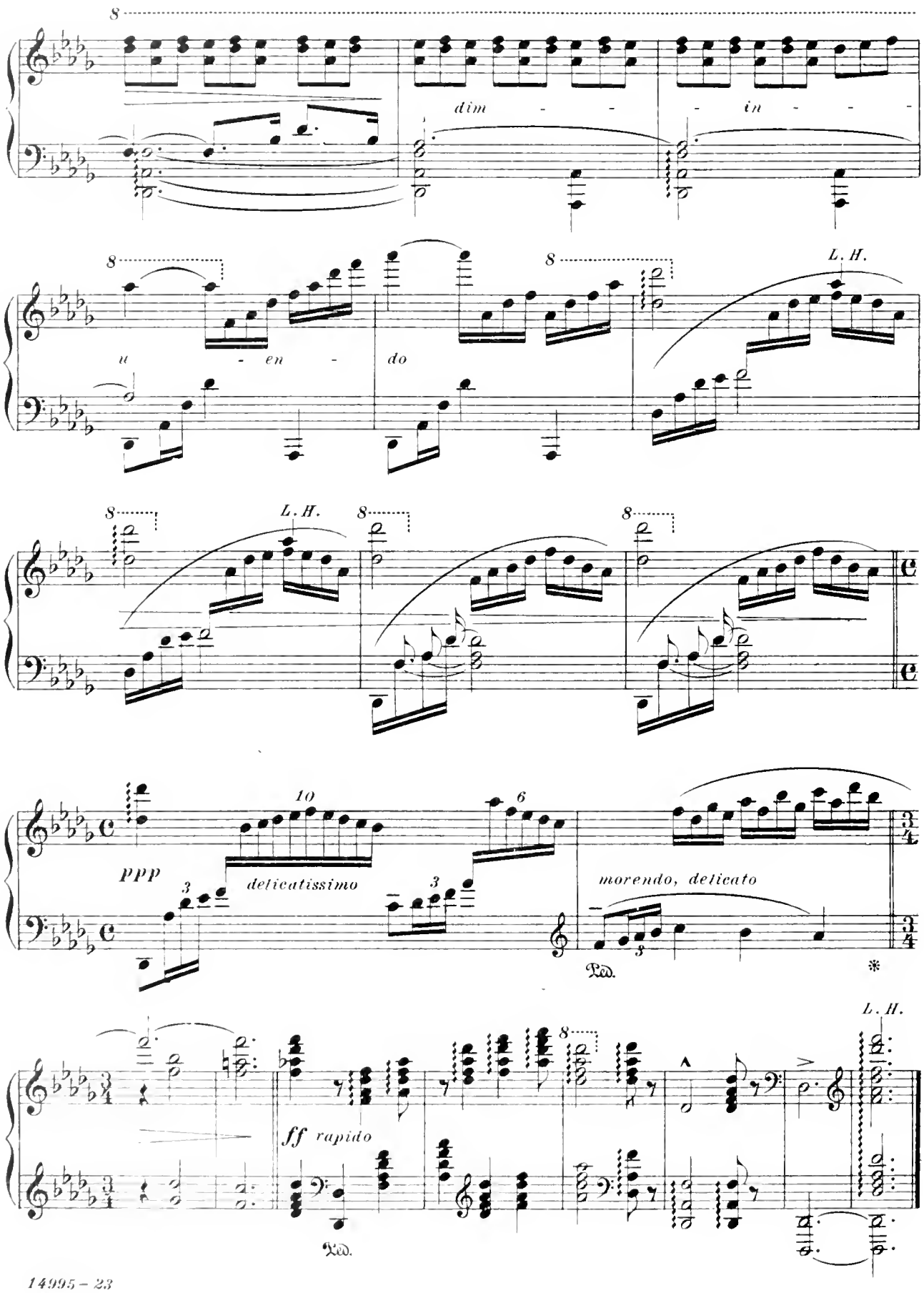

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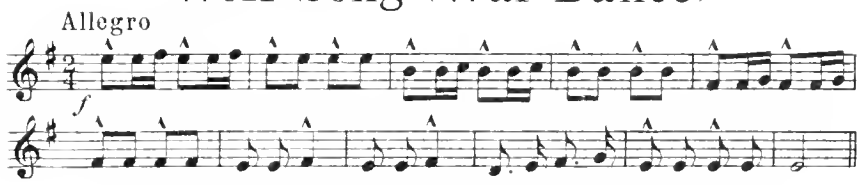
Wolf Song (War Dance)



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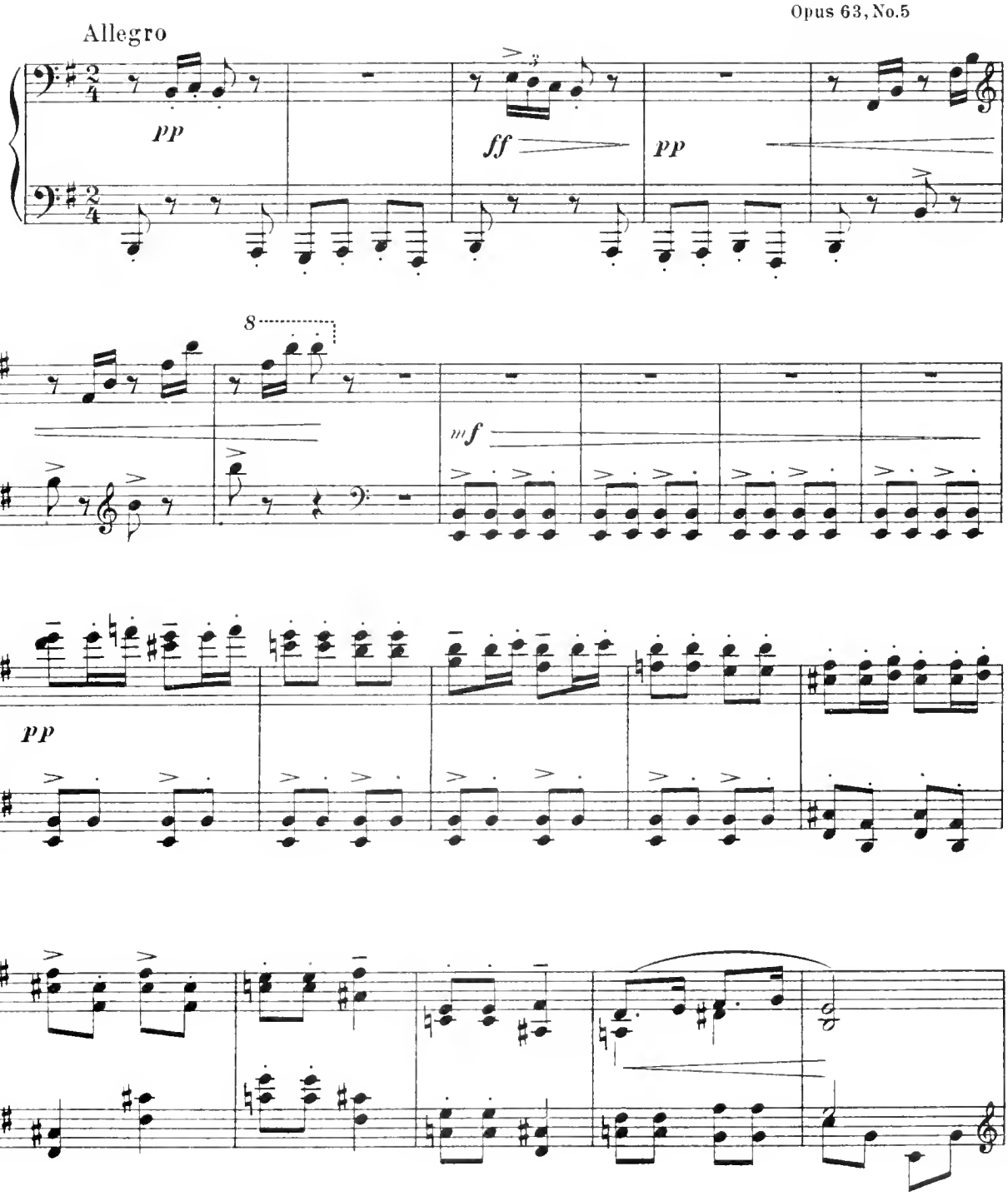
Charles Wakefield Cadman
Opus 63, No.5



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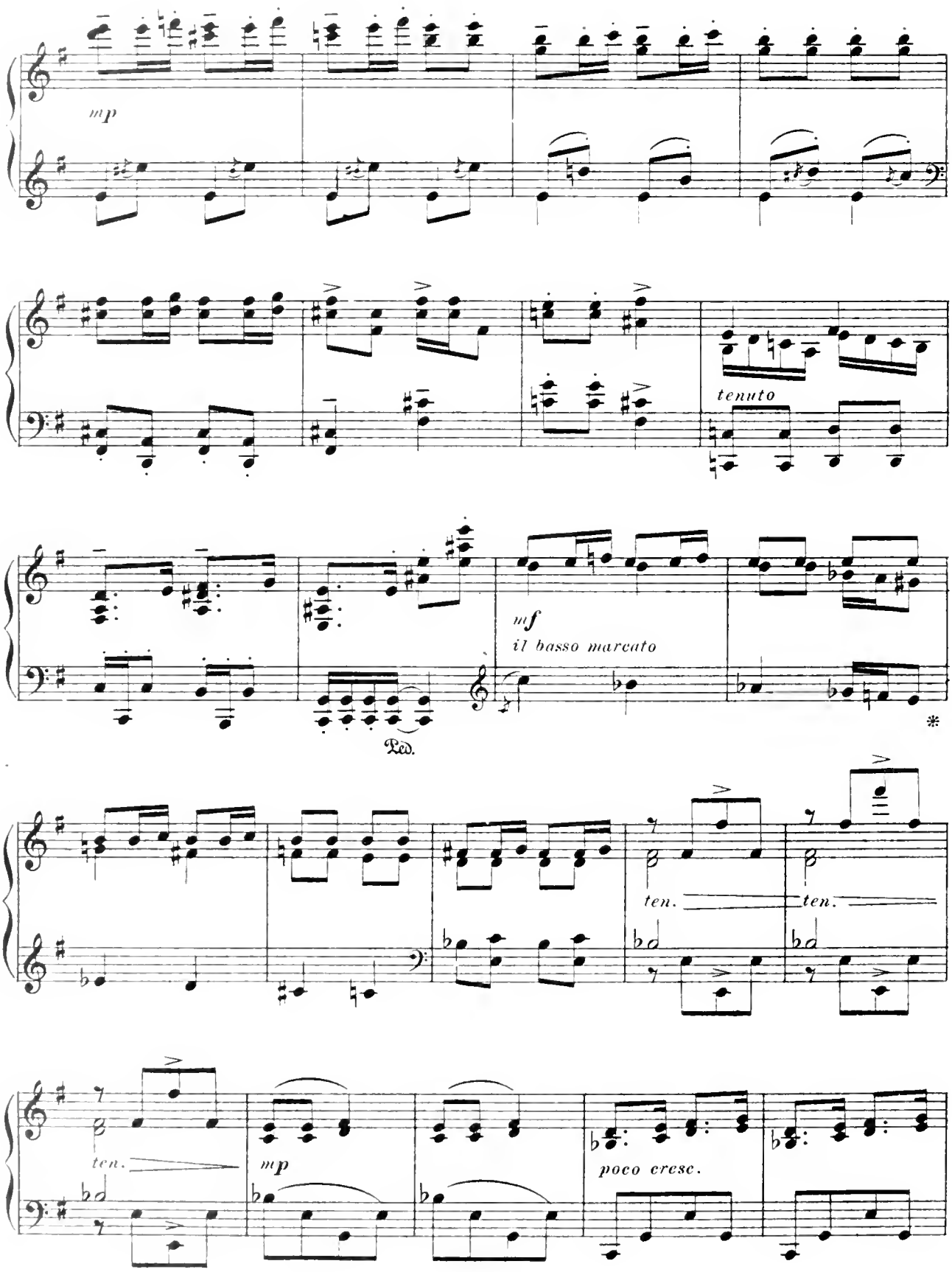

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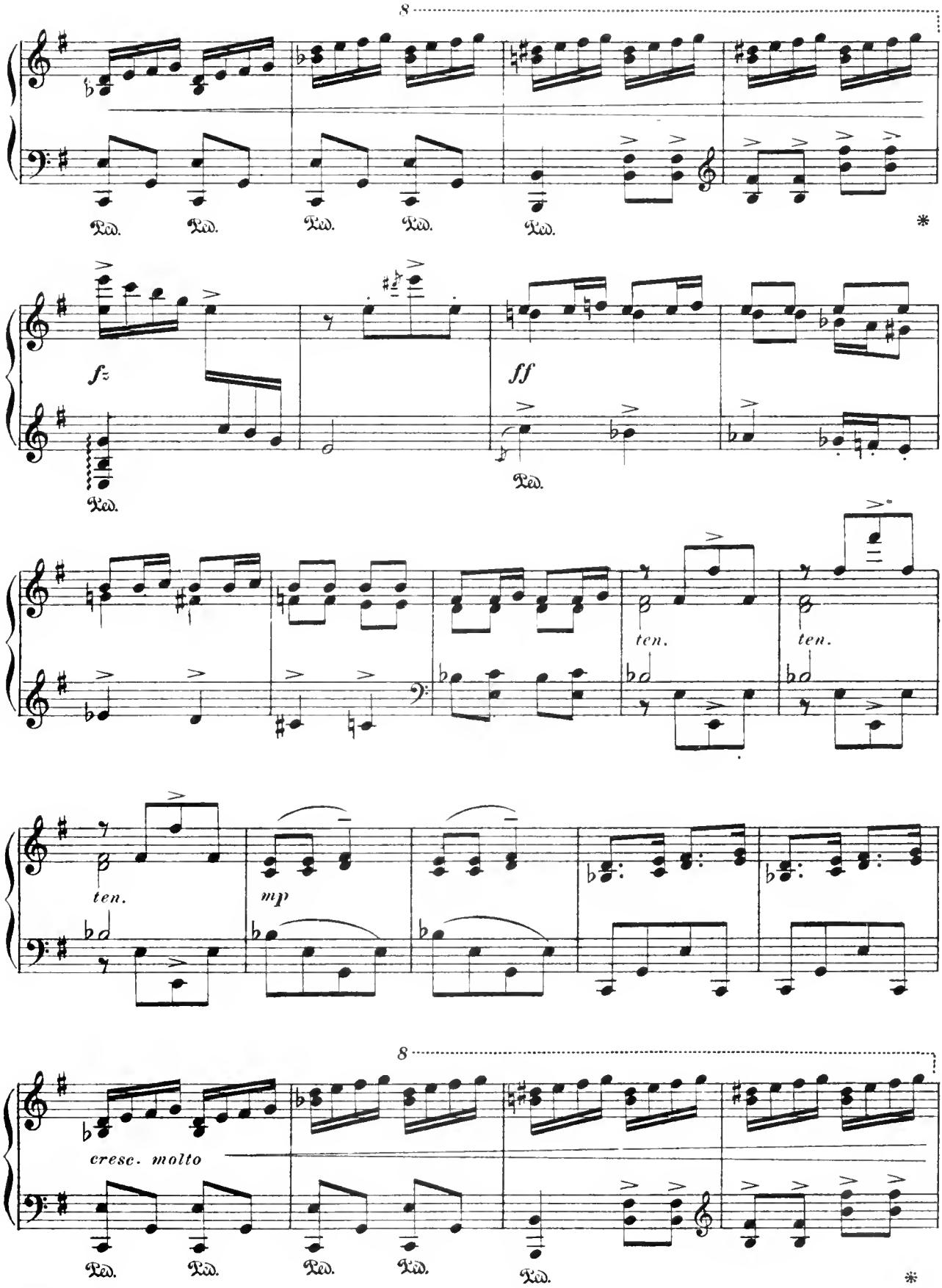

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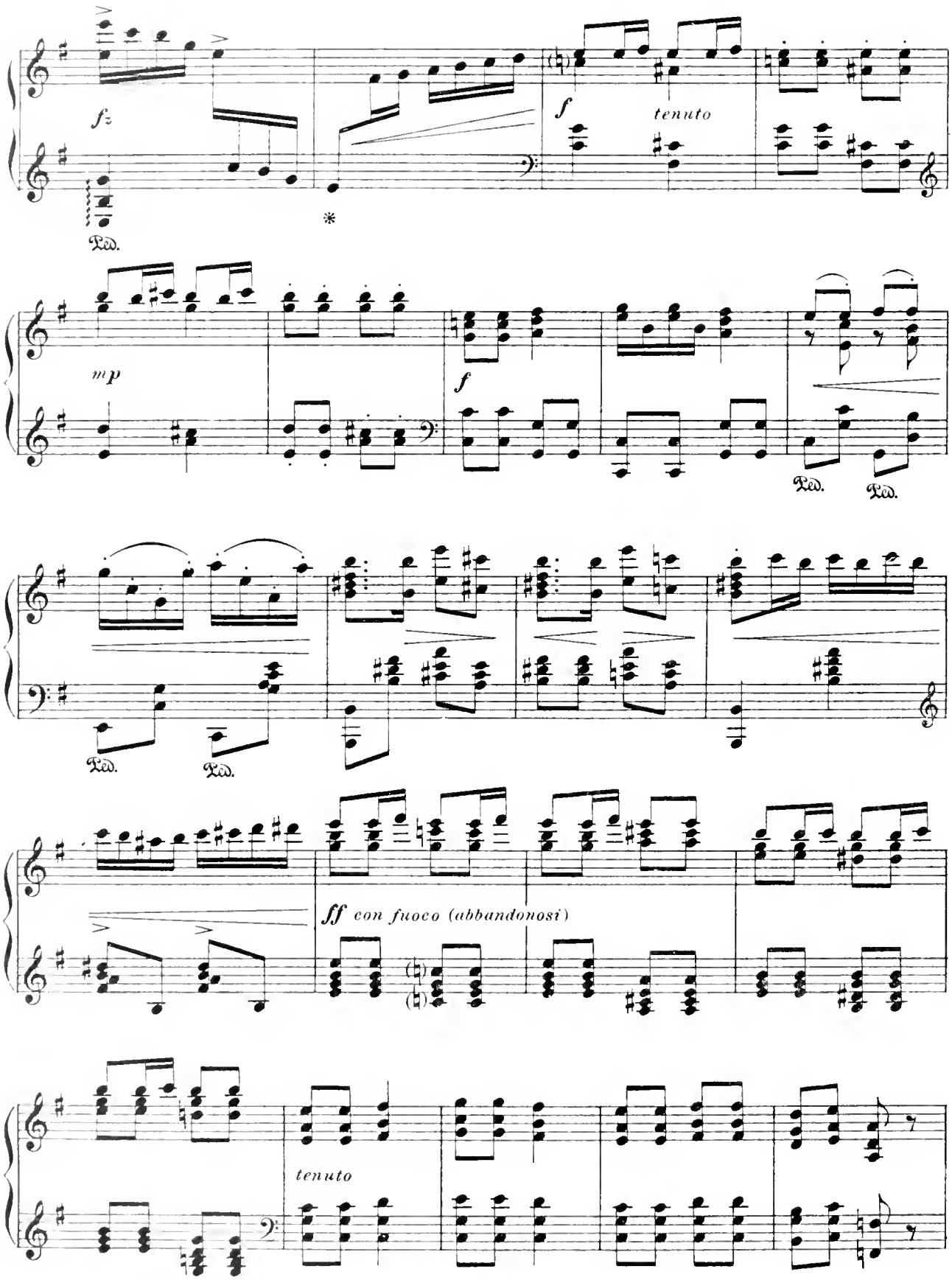

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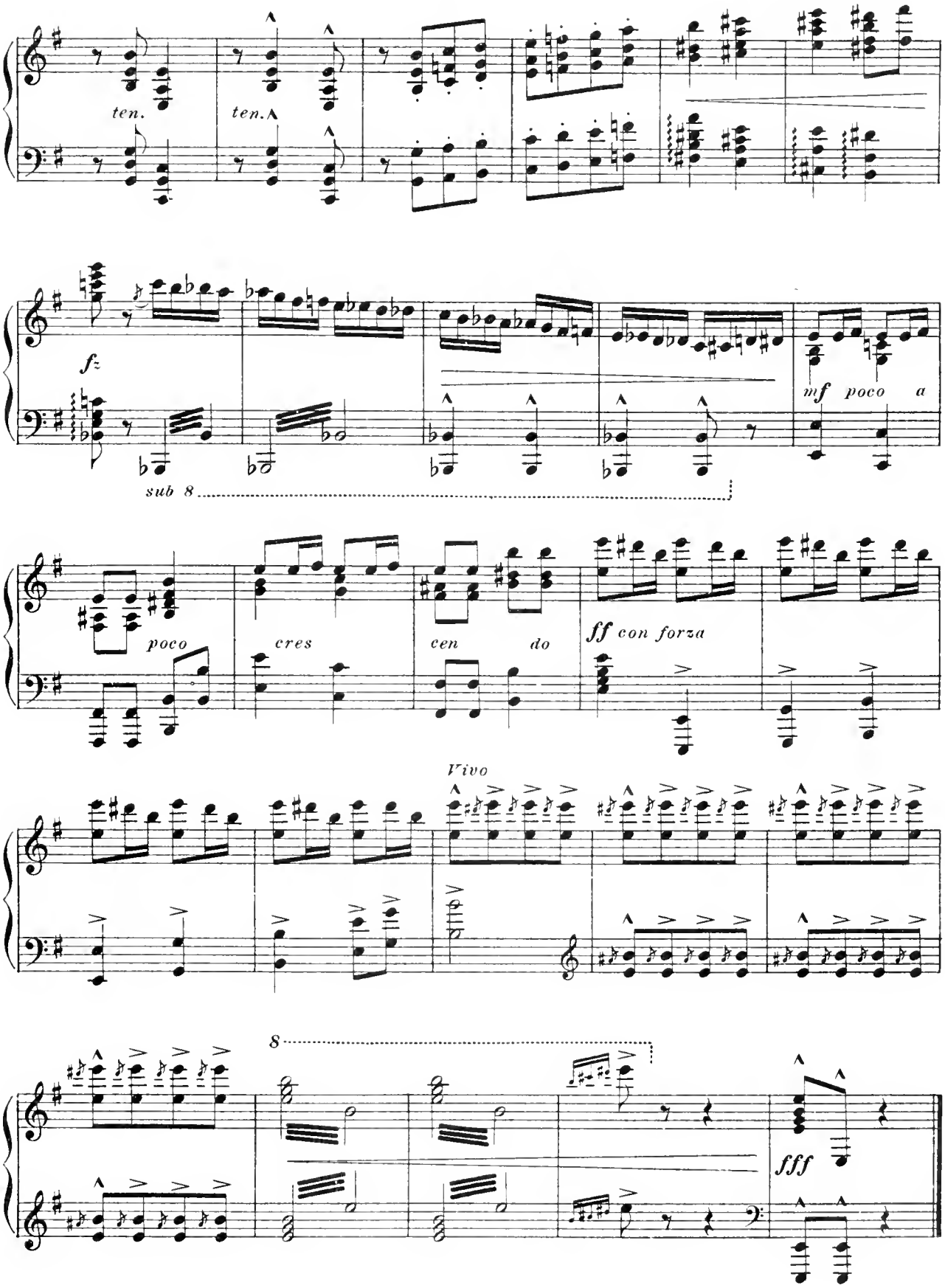

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