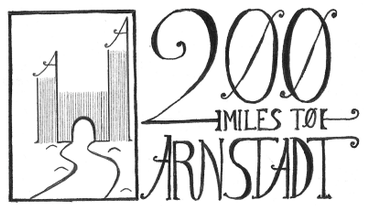
C O L O N N A D E S

Text and Music by

Douglas Buchanan

PREVIEW

PREVIEW



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***Colonnades,* for Piano Solo – Text and Music by Douglas Buchanan**

BOOK I

I. So what do the mountains have to gain…?

Rain falls facewards, meeting out the droplets that shape earth and sea, and see the gust blow the lines sideways against the mountainside, so rivers flood down to stream and gully where thickening scrub waits to burst the bonds of spring and winter and up and leave with spore and leaf to summer-autumns without end or begging for inceptions, and cleansing the face of old sins, no room for sour fruit when seasons are left to blow away in gusts and faceward rain.

So what do the mountains have to gain by
raising their peaks and valleys beyond reach?
Hulking sky- and westward bastions of Earth
and Time, finding their ancient manifolds
unlocked by questing shivers of hands, rebel
with the magnitude only lodestone can bring,
and still wait for the day their memory erodes
their lodes, until: dust lifting sky bequeaths the
hills their life, and, saving a gust,
blow from earth to sky and
Stars and then
beyond.

Backing to
reach beyond
the ancient
heights, young
hills bend
ceasingly,
impatient to
touch the sky
but unsure what
transcendence
will bring

The core
gives birth, but slow
revolution wind the tired
world; a clockwork? No desert
this watch, watch carefully
the winding decisions
spin out the world.

II. Angry, scraggle-tongued plants

Angry, scraggle-tongued plants invade
to force and grate against the bricks
these concrete jests
now laid for naught
as justice— bracken—
jutting bramble

renders futile
the footpaths
of
forgotten conquerors

III. Colonnades

Traveling east from the well-springs of darkness
along the ruined gallery of colonnades:
here, there a shattered visage of crystal and stone,
stoically erupted from tight-clung earth
still holding close its own facets of memory.
The stone-brick path curves through each cloistered history,
moving through hours to wayside disbelief,
driving its insinuate wa
toward the bright heart of the world.

IV. *Prime:* The Cathedral of Sacred Ruination

Praising its exalted emptiness,
the cathedral holds its ruination sacred,
withholding broken staff and sundered miter
as reliquaries of dilapidation:
hear the tattered banners in silent gusts
leading the shadowed masses which now populate the pews, singing:

"Wholly,
wholly,
wholly gone,
gone beyond."

V. Interlude

VI. Sign-Post Cities

a post: last sign of the straying cities
who, shocked by their own indifference,
fold up their brown'd alleyways,
moving off to pasture and fold,
searching for land unspoil'd by rigor
and reclaim their right to nature.

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(great placards of towers
rear their monolithic strands.
Vast-bricked plastics accompany the sky,
now gritty in the sun,
the dull metallic sheen frying,
slowly,
the eyes of the watchful.

VII. *Terce:* The Foot of the Cuckoo

Dump this at the foot of the cuckoo
this dump, this cuckold of fear
at the scaly bone-bird foot
where we sacrifice what we birth
and it dumps us out,
dumps us down
[down]
down at the foot,
down at the altar
for the sacrifice,
no altering this calamity:
—for Lo, there shall be unto you this day
a child,
But it will not be your own
rather an alien thing
to busy your thoughts
while
outside
the dump
[dump]
dumps on you,
dumps you down,
[down]
at the foot of the cuckoo

VIII. The Glass Head of State

The glass head of state is severed, and spiders clamber over,
beetle-winged scarabphim flit rightly about neck and body
moving in and out their scavenging.

A lone messenger waits on the hillside,
tremors up and down the crystal body, for:
broken governments make broken messages
and there is fear
[fear]
for what intelligence lies behind
the clicking, writhing mass
which now shuffles slowly up the hillside

IX. And Therefore Wolves

Therefore wolves descend,
grey shapes leaning towards town and pasture,
hungry jaws from northern wastes
where there was no one left to guard:
long-flown were the dogs
and gone were any keen-eyed sharp-eared watchers,
since blinded and turned out,
strangely saved from the ravaging claws of far-flung ancestors
which swept away presence and fold
from where pride had let in
stench and rot,
their lingered presence held at bay
by the vapid power
of
calm,
so that now the inhabitants could push back the land
to unhinge themselves,
but hindered their foes
and angered the wind
so made hungry the forest:

And therefore wolves

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X. *Sext: The Frightened Kyries*

the frightened Kyries amass themselves against the gates of Heaven
pushing for welcome,
frantic Fathers, prostrate Paters
all berobed, bejeweled with blessings,
(sent to Above for savings Below)
but no pounding, no staving upon those bright Doors of Morning
would welcoming egress bring:

and it was not known, among that crowd, whether
the bars were jammed
or the hosts busied
by some star-spanned War of the Holy,
or altogether, hopelessly absent;

though to them,
not more frightening to have no greeter,
to suspect behind the grimly shining doors
no wizened council waited,

no, indeed:

but that there was omnipotence beyond
and what could keep
such Light
from answer?

XI. Interlude

BOOK II

XII. *None:* Clouds

What is it, then, that the clouds know
to force them in forever-flight
a hundred times away from past and yearnings
or greater monsters still:
collapses, truths too hard for holding
in the still of the mind.

A vast hulking on the horizon,
dread, intent,
a visage just beyond sight
but there
nonetheless,
to tear through soft grey
(but too strained for tepid mists):
solely moist cloying white remains
and then—
only until release.

XIII. Epitaph

at a glance,

red blood on the marble,
the slick remains of a half-burial:
welcoming stone bejeweled with glistening droplets

in toto: rubies always send them home.

XIV. "as a Young Man"

in the hedge beside,
a shade,
(as of a young man)
leaning quietly against a pillar
knife-grin between the lips,
a ferrous thief
stealing lives
for its own beauty

now, bending over,
a rusted sieve in hand
sluicing,
kindfully,
the crimson juices.

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XV. Interlude

XVI. *Vespers: the Glowering Twilight*

At dusk,
between worlds,
the glowering twilight
unveils
as day
surrenders
sun to moon,
betraying the still watchfulness of night:

red broken clay laced with cloven green
lies flat upon the rillside
thoughtful ever,
as the dusky summer-ender
breezes slowly past the face of all things known
inviting either sleep,
or dreams,
or, perhaps on wakin
some arcane 'twixtn
hidden under sundered vales;

such unreckoned rifts drift back, then,
in this 'tween-time
this half-light,
so as to make all things greyly shadowed
and thus (imp)ossible
and therefore
possible

XVII. Lone-tree hill

lone-tree hill
sways,
whistling,
not-dead limbs
straggled-
up
unmoved by
still
breezes

Ha ing
ow
nD
stEA-
Dy

crackled branches
split
a
fissured horizon,
the
once-wholesome mantle
of sky
now
a furnace
of
red

PREVIEW

XVIII. Twin flints

twin flints spark in the dark of the wood
nestled between fitful trees,
though
only for a moment
for that is all they need:
now,
forever burned into the eyes of the mind
two searing holes
that delve the dank recesses,
find that shuddering
spot which
dare not linger
out once
day departs and
cuckoo sings
the fleeting
of clouds:

it has announced itself, this thing-in-the-woods
so that there is nothing left to do
but enter.

XIX. The Eye

a million green blades contract away from that living monolith
as from a deep wound in the tortured earth,
the skin splayed out across forgotten rock
and nailed down
with iron-rod and steel-spike:

staring wide straight out from the center peers
(nigh-unmoving)
the sole Watcher in the Night
well-deep pupil contracting in slow heartbeats,
waits for the unknown purpose to arrive;
reflecting nothing, save
the dark-down places
of the universe.

(the air about chants the unremembered runes,
forbidden, save here,
which lie blazing, wounded into skin and stone,
tongued by some charnel priesthood
still-rotting beneath
the bright–burn gaze)

save the doughty green warriors
and their gradual warfare of bramble,
all living has departed the clearing
fleeing for more-than-life,
more-than-fear,
as the buzzing air—
the multitude of chittering incantations—

swallow whole the fleeting starlight
in one
steep
and
faceless
moan

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XX. ***Compline: Ritual of Ash and Stone***

Hooded fiends shoulder the throne to raise, astride harsh steadfastness,
to hold, not the laurel-reathed, urn-oiled;
rather,
the shade of a saint:
its head lolls, drools drole sinilitude and an annihilate stare,
then rithes, to, fro—a nash of teeth—
thus shat forth so foul a dread,
a loud shout, as out a siren's throat

drones on,
and on,

an unearthli hush:

adroit hands tune a distant flute: infertile trills, austere;
The dried falsetto sounds lude and distasteful to our ea[illegible]

(this is rong,
all rong, and rusted:
let us out!
To release, and return,
not alone,
not
all-
one)

an irate no-one, (torn asunder from the folio of the infinite,)
tries to sound [her-his-our-out-there-here-hear]
rath of earthfulness,
foretell a future florid and lush,
flush red fertitiliti

releases a satin thread of dross-refrains to intone the roar of a sea of disrelief

(No graseful Sinai or Ararat here,
no tree-hull for sail or safe from rain-tossed fate,
or stained reefs in torrid seas forlorn,
salt-tears
to seethe,
soddin,
soddin,
soddin for release)

as the nations fire
their leaders' ire
the heart-assassins—on n[illegible]—nurse to foul-health the inland fools,
the futile strain
to rein in
those rushed hounds of erosion,
[illegible]-steel annihilation
to defase shadoes,
the lustful adulterers
of sound and sense.

(The fountains of need fill the strained flesh
[tho transient]
to seal, to find,
the torch
of a friend.)

See: the earthshatter
releases forth the infernos of land
a tirade of rusted root,
dirt and slate elided—anesthetised—in harsh tones of dust
stolen out, to atone the loss of one
and one
[and one,
and one]

the steel nife tore it forth
in ferrous fearlessness
'ere there authored trite sonnets to sae:

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“here is self: to thee I lend Truth, Feather, Star, and Sun,
to funnel into lute-notes,
to resite in fountains,
tho onli the deaf
do hear,
so irrational is art”

(the lunar shine fades soon,
and then the sane shall dote upon the Noontide?
O steadfast loneli,
should friendli disaster roar
to defer that leaden refusal of stolen nites
then, laud! for thou shalt hasten free!)

there:

interred
insofar
as a late denial
for errantri
sets the left-hand road
to sire the lost—
to defer the found—
to hasten heart’s ruination—

so, refer, too:

as the lone soldier entrusted to astound the air
in the final duel-duet of saturation and surrender,

strains,
artless,
to sound the horror
of
loss—
or
the
soul’s
arrest—
in this
last
Ritual
of
sh
and
Stor e

PREVIEW

XXI. on Frost’s *November*

unnumbered leaves litter the forest floor
strewn unkindly by some unseen and many-bloodied hand
(since fallen with triumphant madness to the earth)
to force, uncaring, from life
the economy of the individual
(while mother-father-branches sway their mourning,
dipping down in weeping
to reach once more
the vein’d pulse of childer fallen)
adrift in piles, raked to heaps,
those Excesses of Power
could ne’er hope to understand
this Fall that they
themselves
have
hastened

XXII. the Trial of Memory

the figure beats rapidly on the drowning window as mountains rise to either side,
afraid of no return, and sinking,
deep-gut terror that slowly seeps and drips past mirror'd illusion
as the choking water of entrapment, of no-will-be,
rivers coolly in, firmly, clogging the lungs of past and present

such changes of future as will become gone,
for now and evermore,
leaves the tiny one alone
viewing rapidly filling waves of brown, intent
to push out the remembrance-soaked air
and rush in, too real, too real for words, or pain, or waking, and then gone—

so, exempt from the Trial of Memory,
slinks off, welcomed to the sacred and smoldering oblivion

Book III

XXIII. prayer

Cellophane cross on a bedroom wall,
Scribbled writings in a bathroom stall,
Holy réfuse and withal,
The Lord Above has made them all.

XXIV. *Matins: Three Angels*

Three angels hold aloft a crown
strewn with amulets and stray annunciations
while below
lancelight pierces the thorny columns
Bidding the King's welcome…

XXV. Aubade: the hedge of the world

…but,
across the hedge of the world,
moss-bowled stone and ancient oak
hide deeper wonders still:
inchoate riches of dew and dusky twilight
forming slowly 'ere the sun's ascent
can brush away the intween magic
that lightens flower and spurs the fae-dance of leaves,
while the sky-bound twins
(yet unseen for now)
pull, in their blind arena,
at promised oceans of sound…

XXVI. a great gasp of waves

…a great gasp of waves yawn their brilliance to the moon,
pushing on through the barrier space of dreams
to yield their liquid yearning to the stars,
considering:
the heavens turned over,
the bowl of the sea catching the lamplight of these celestial giants
while winded waves wind their joyous way,
azure viridian,
across the blanketed night…

XXVII. glistening silence

…the glistening silence
alights softly atop gently falling waters:
glancing sheen upon the ripples,
a slow nimbus:
the aurora of sound
running bright through mind and body…

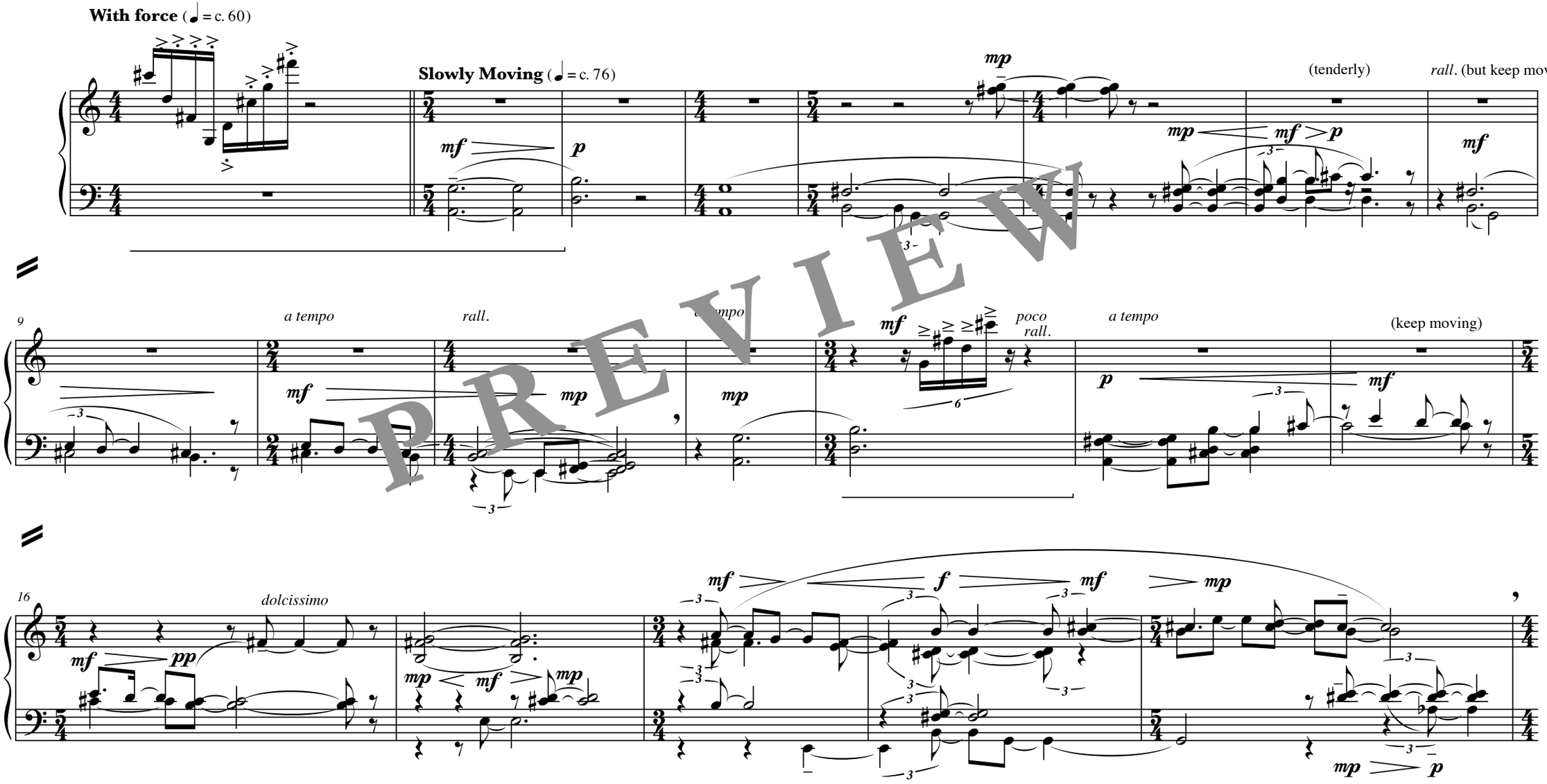
XXVIII. *Lauds: the Glories of Sunset*

…while the glories of sunset tower over all
as the road leaves off:
two hills rise to greet the traveler,
robed in paradisiac green,
where warm-spread rays open wide the beaming arms
to gather home the scattered.

PREVIEW

PREVIEW

I. So what do the mountains have to gain...?



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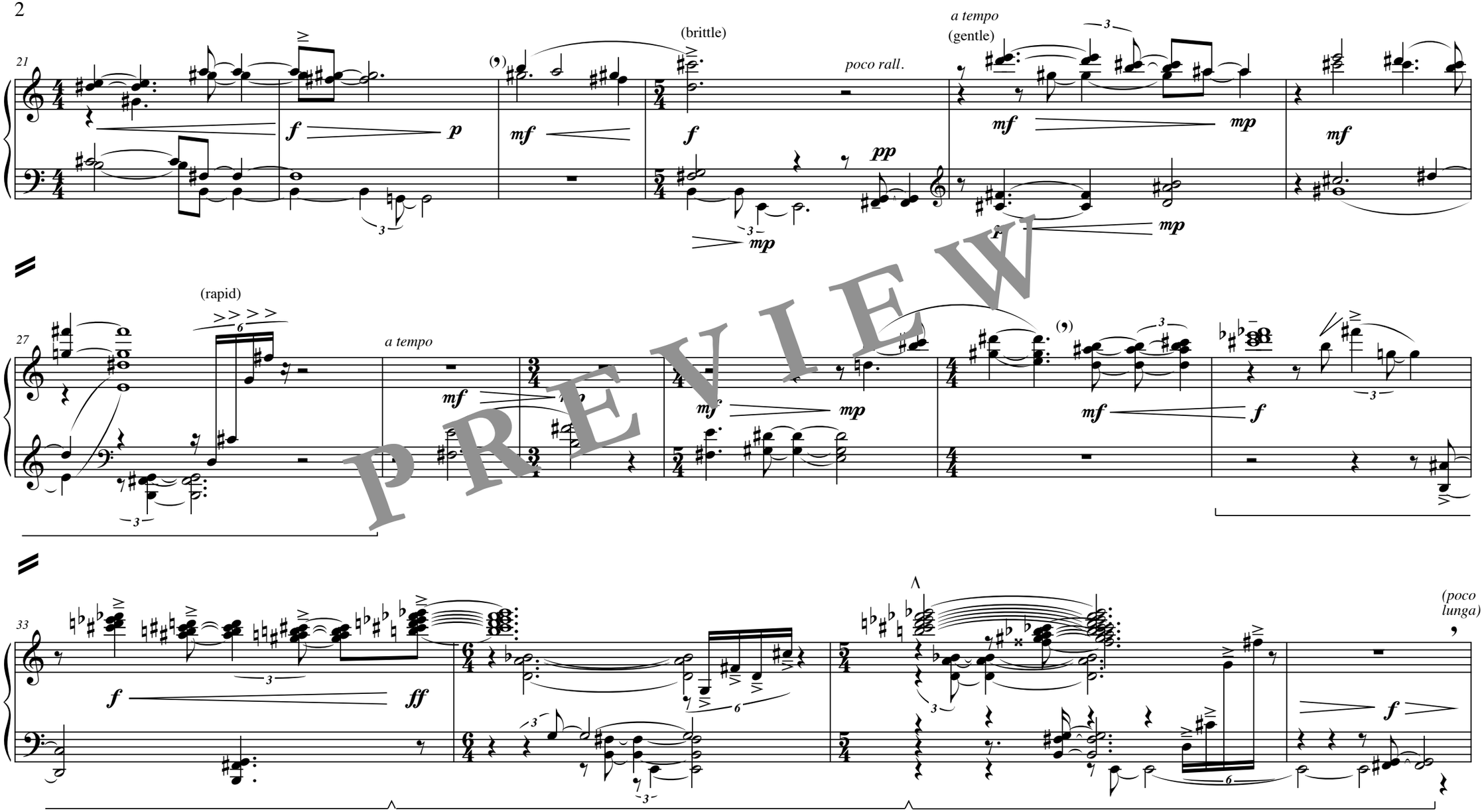
21
(brittle)
poco rall.
a tempo
(gentle)
27
(rapid)
a tempo
33
(poco lunga)

PREVIEW

37 *c - r - e - s - c - e - n - d - o p - o*

mp

c - o a p - o - c - o a p - o - c - o

42

a p - o - c - o a p - o - c - o a p - o - c - o

46

8va

(All pitches G-B and C#-E)

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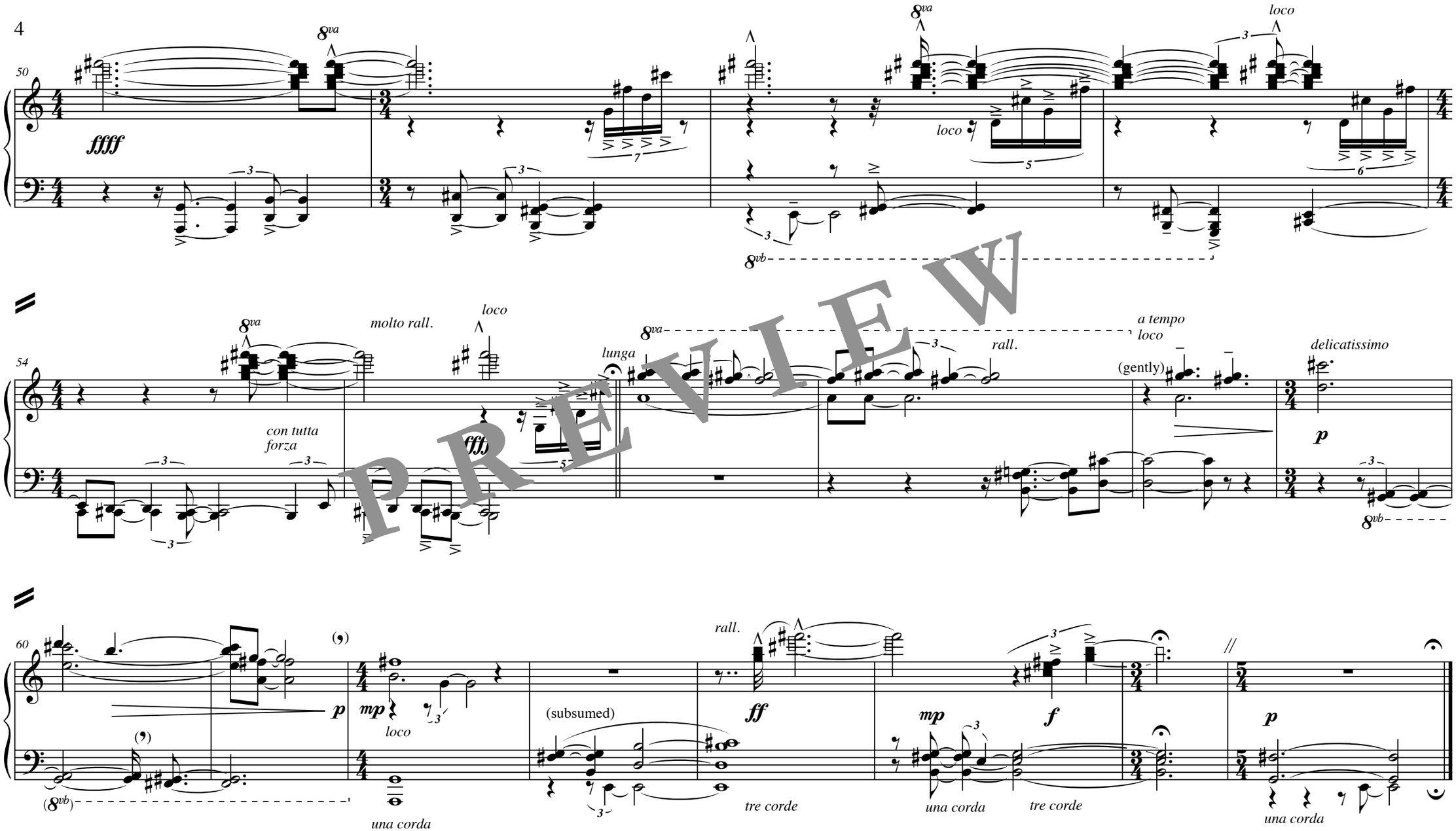
50
ffff
8va
loco
54
molto rall.
con tutta forza
fff
lunga
rall.
a tempo
loco
(gently)
delicatissimo
p
8vb
60
mp
loco
una corda
(subsumed)
ff
tre corde
mp
una corda
f
tre corde
p
una corda

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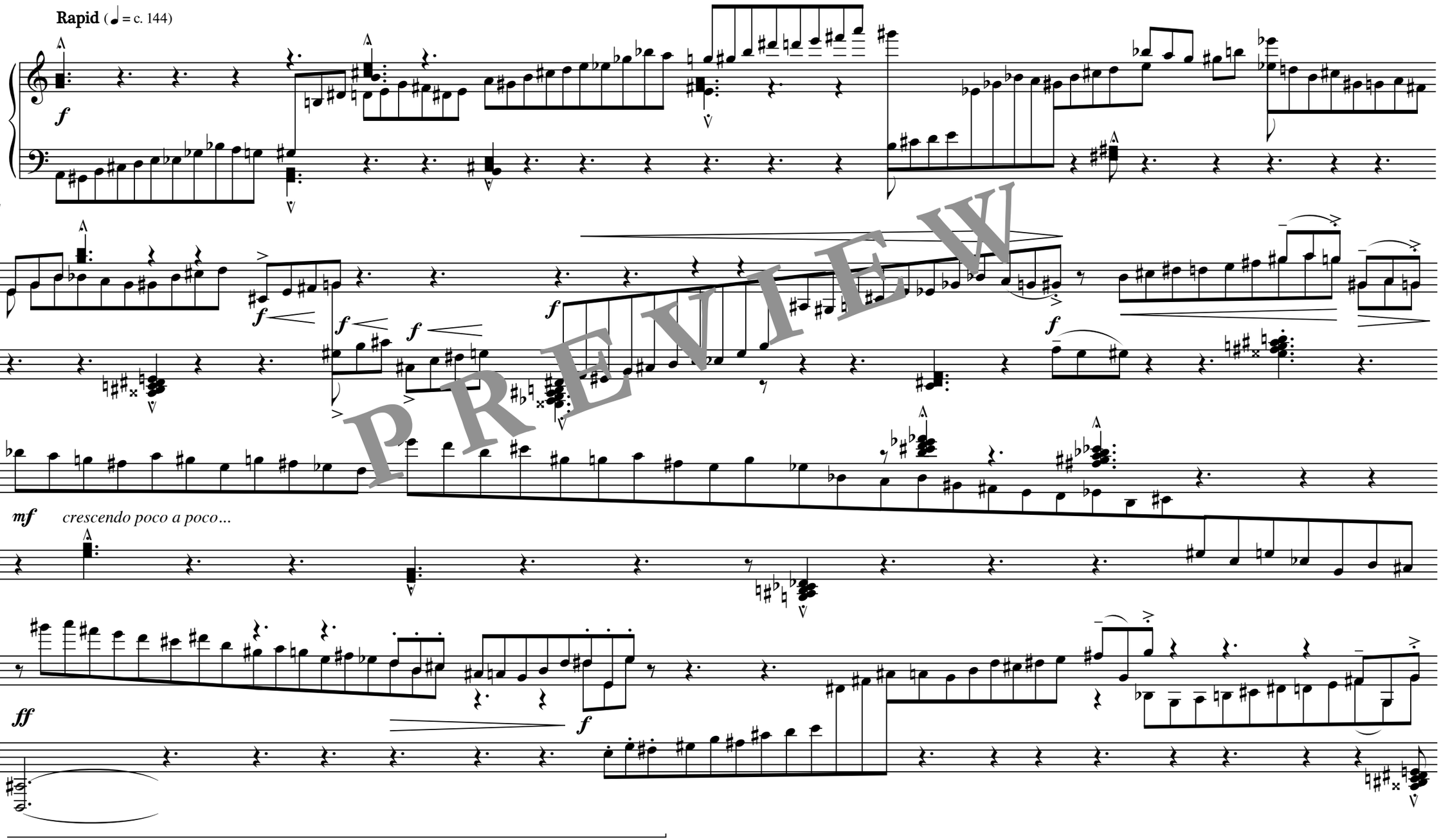
II. Angry, scraggle-tongued plants



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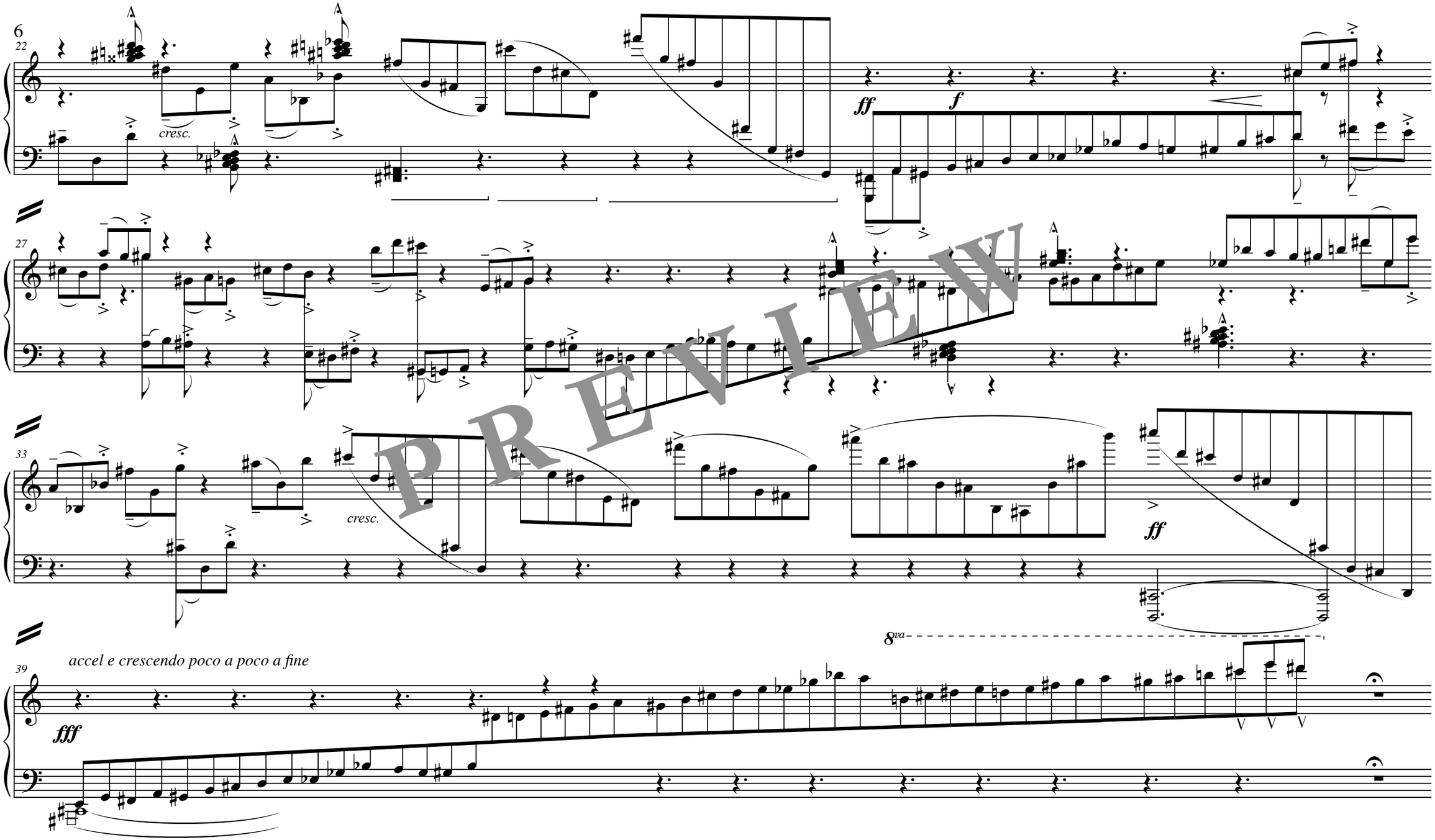
22
cresc.
ff
f
27
33
cresc.
ff
39
accel e crescendo poco a poco a fine
fff
8va

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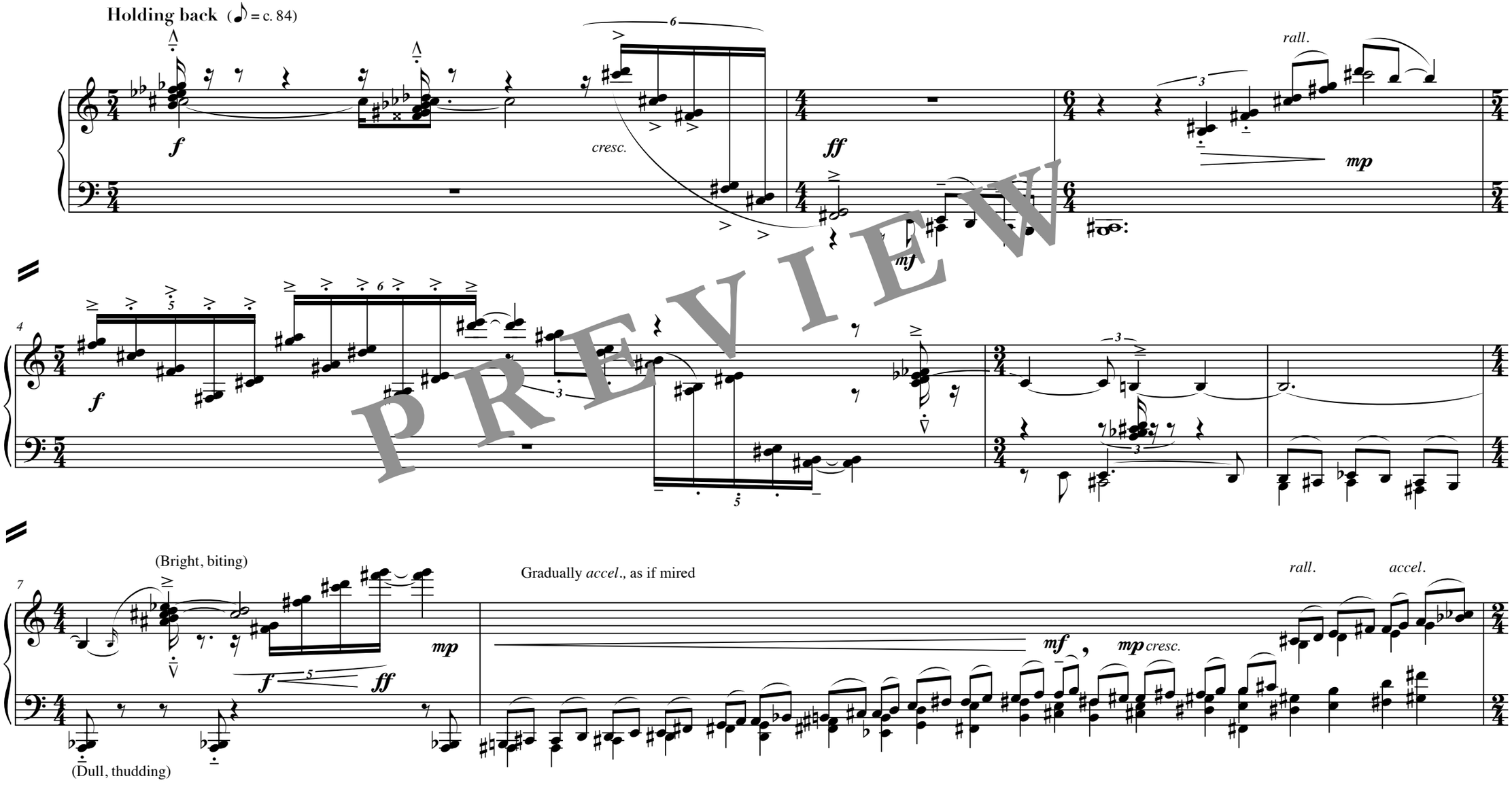
III. Colonnades



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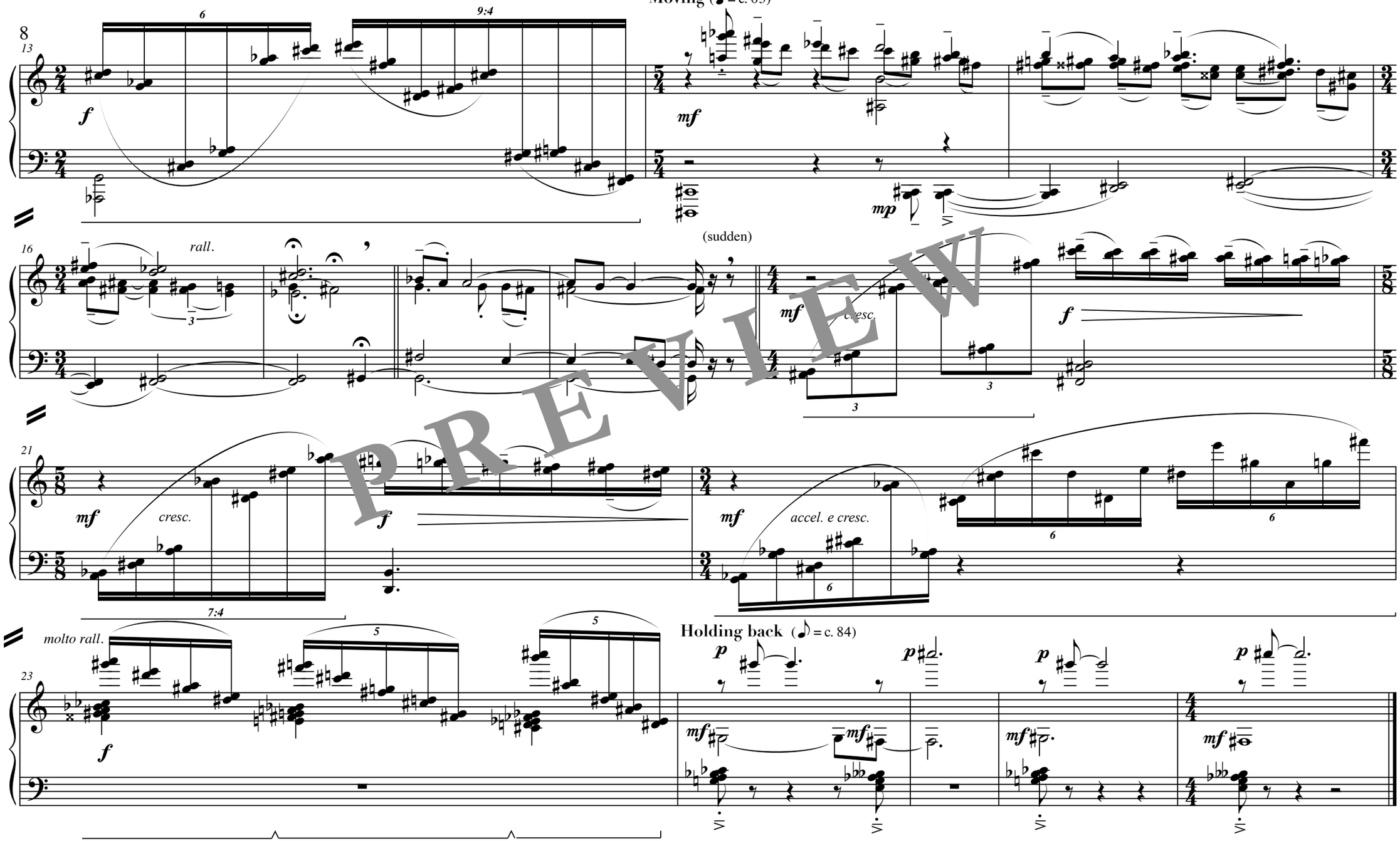
Moving (♩ = c. 63)
13
6
9:4
f
mf
mp
16
rall.
(sudden)
mf
cresc.
f
21
mf
cresc.
f
mf
accel. e cresc.
7:4
5
5
molto rall.
23
f
Holding back (♪ = c. 84)
p
p
p
p
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf

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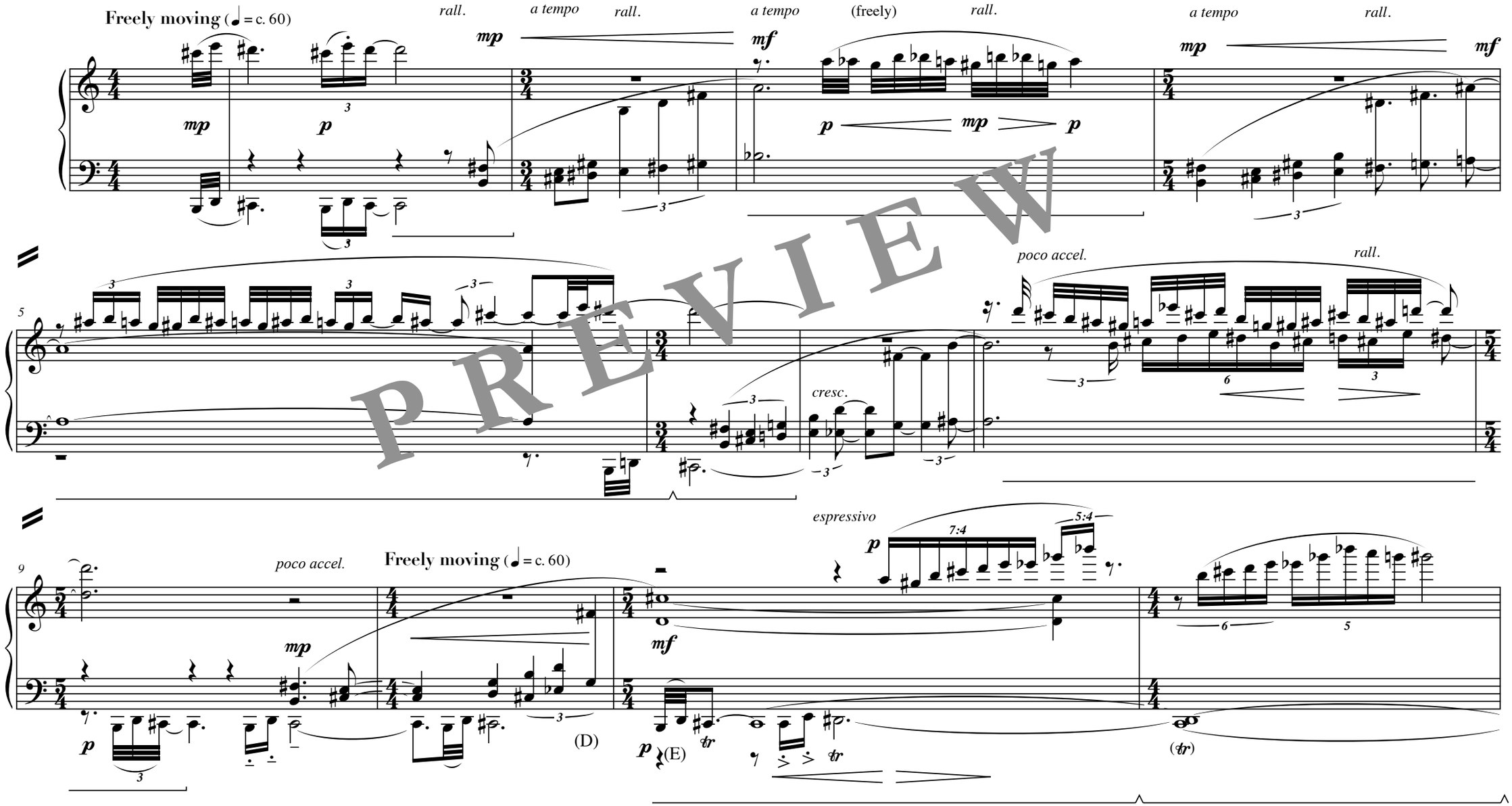
Prime
IV. The cathedral holds its ruination sacred



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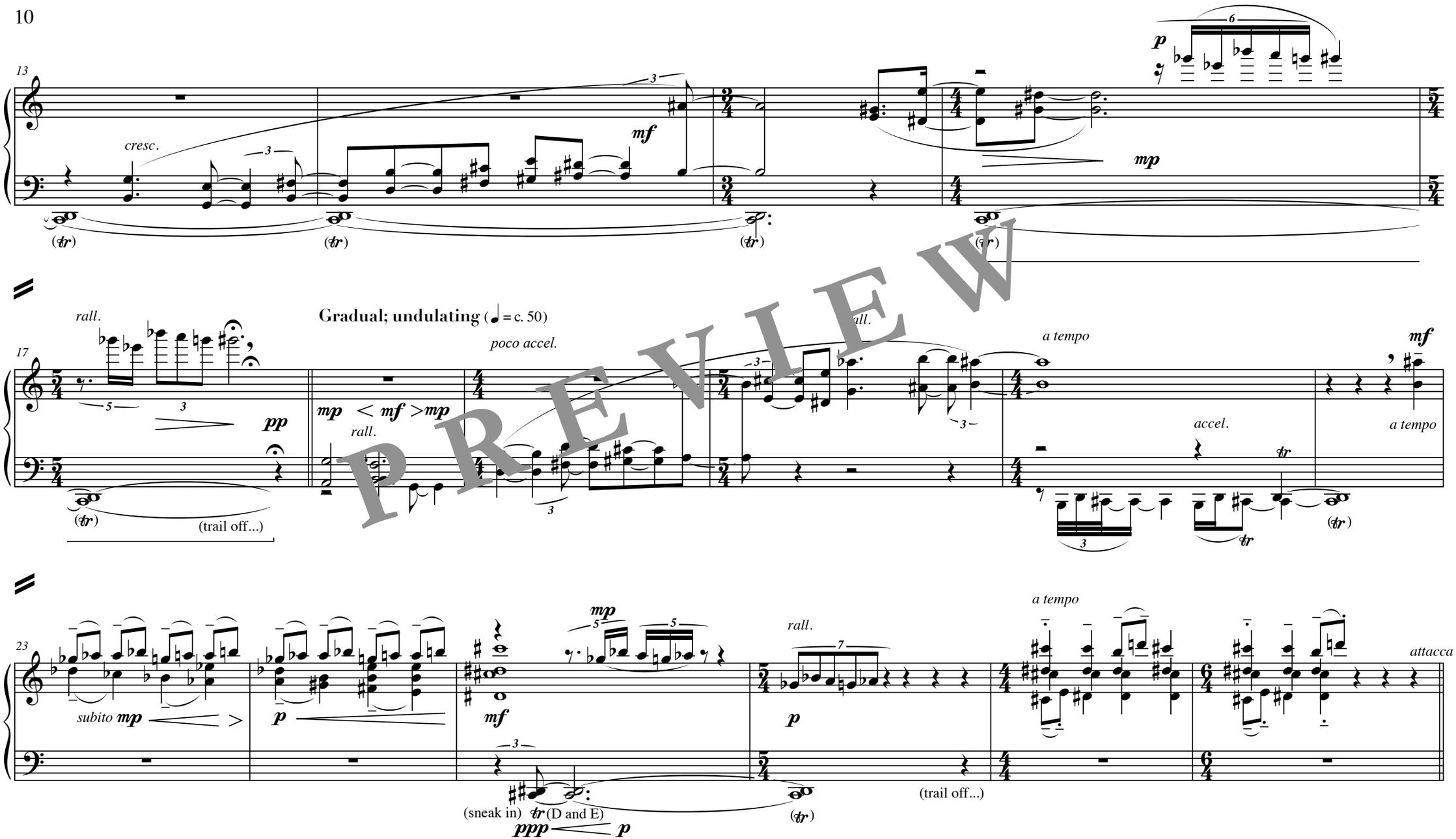
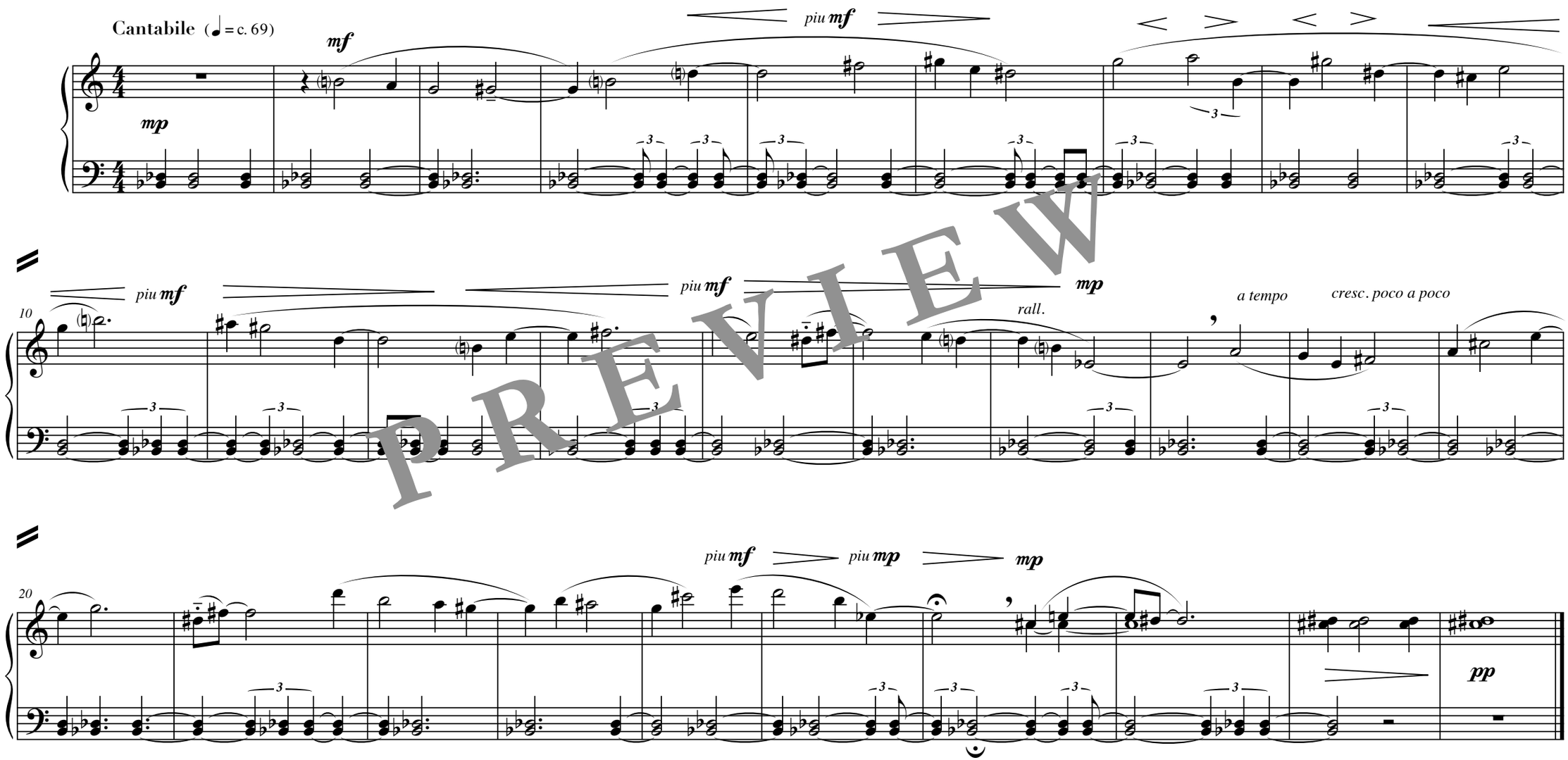

13
cresc.
mf
mp
(tr)
17
rall.
pp
(trail off...)
Gradual; undulating (♩ = c. 50)
poco accel.
mp < mf > mp
rall.
a tempo
accel.
mf
a tempo
23
subito mp
p
mf
mp
rall.
p
a tempo
attacca
(sneak in) tr (D and E)
ppp
p
(trail off...)

PREVIEW

V. Interlude



PREVIEW

PREVIEW

VI. Sign-post cities

Irrevocably drawn forward (♩ = c. 63)

poco rall.

Slower (♩ = c. 44)

poco accel.

Moving, again (♩ = c. 63)

poco a poco cresc.

poco a poco decresc.

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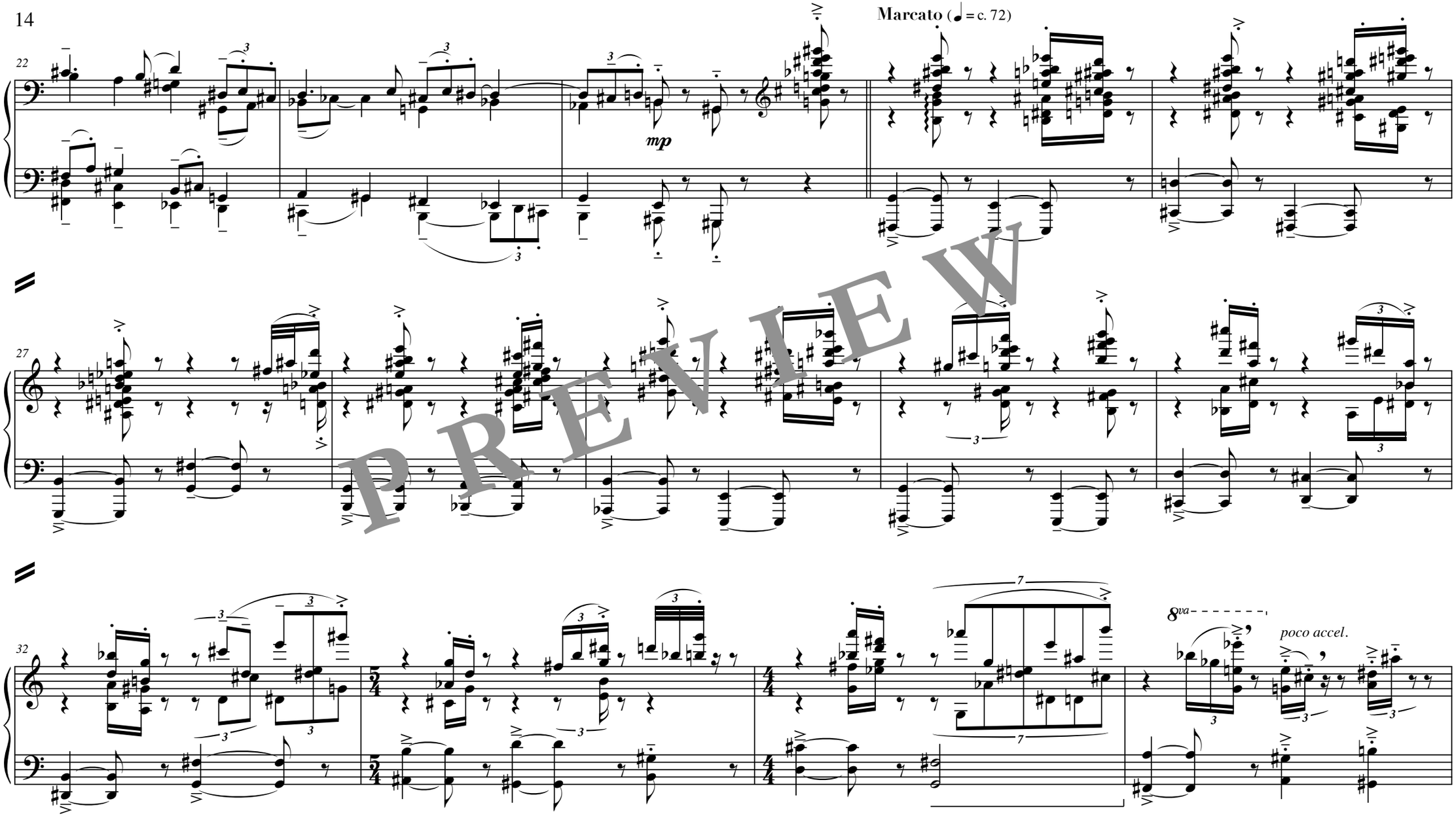

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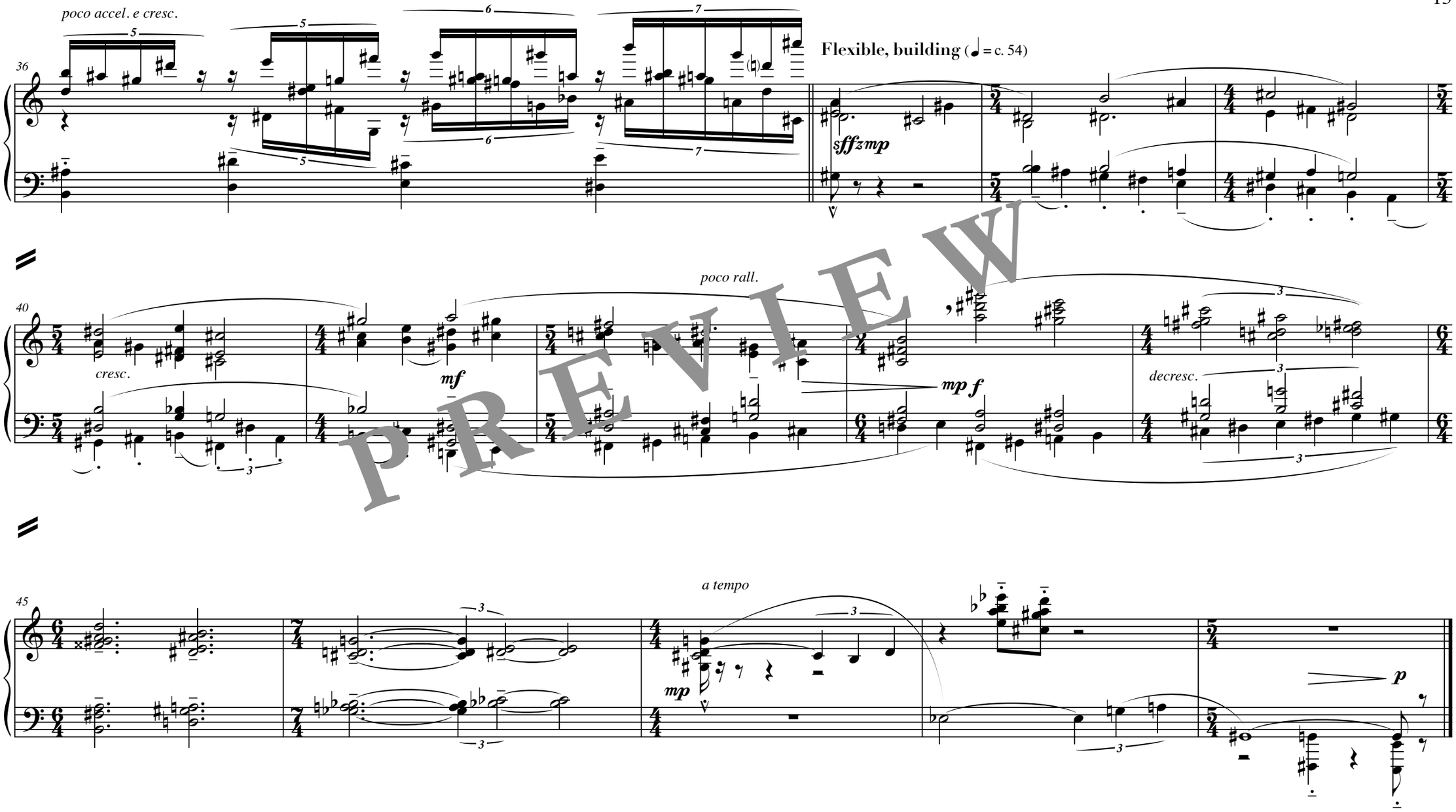
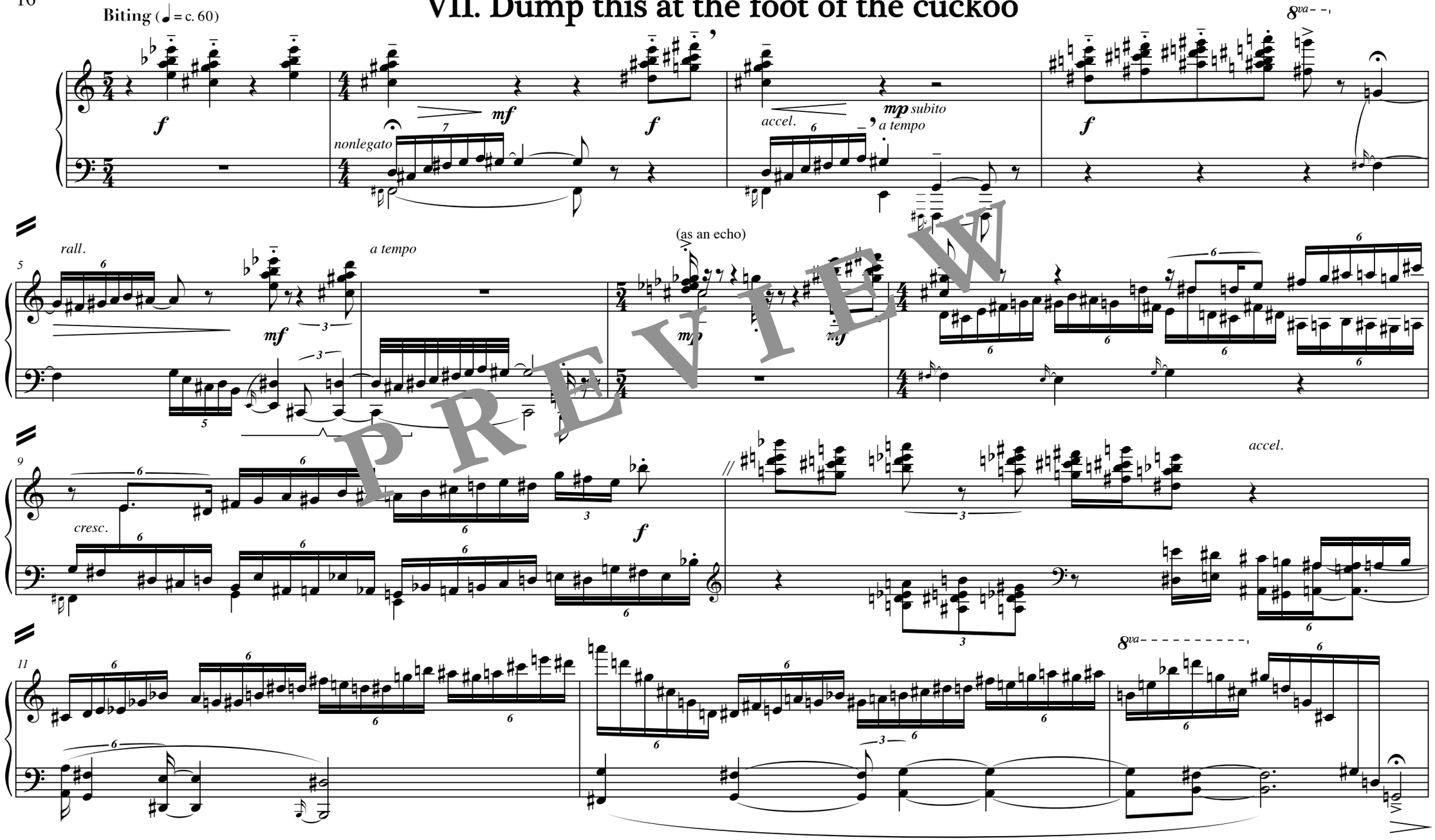

poco accel. e cresc.
36
Flexible, building (♩ = c. 54)
sffzmp
poco rall.
40
cresc.
mf
mp f
decresc.
45
a tempo
mp
p

PREVIEW

Terce

VII. Dump this at the foot of the cuckoo



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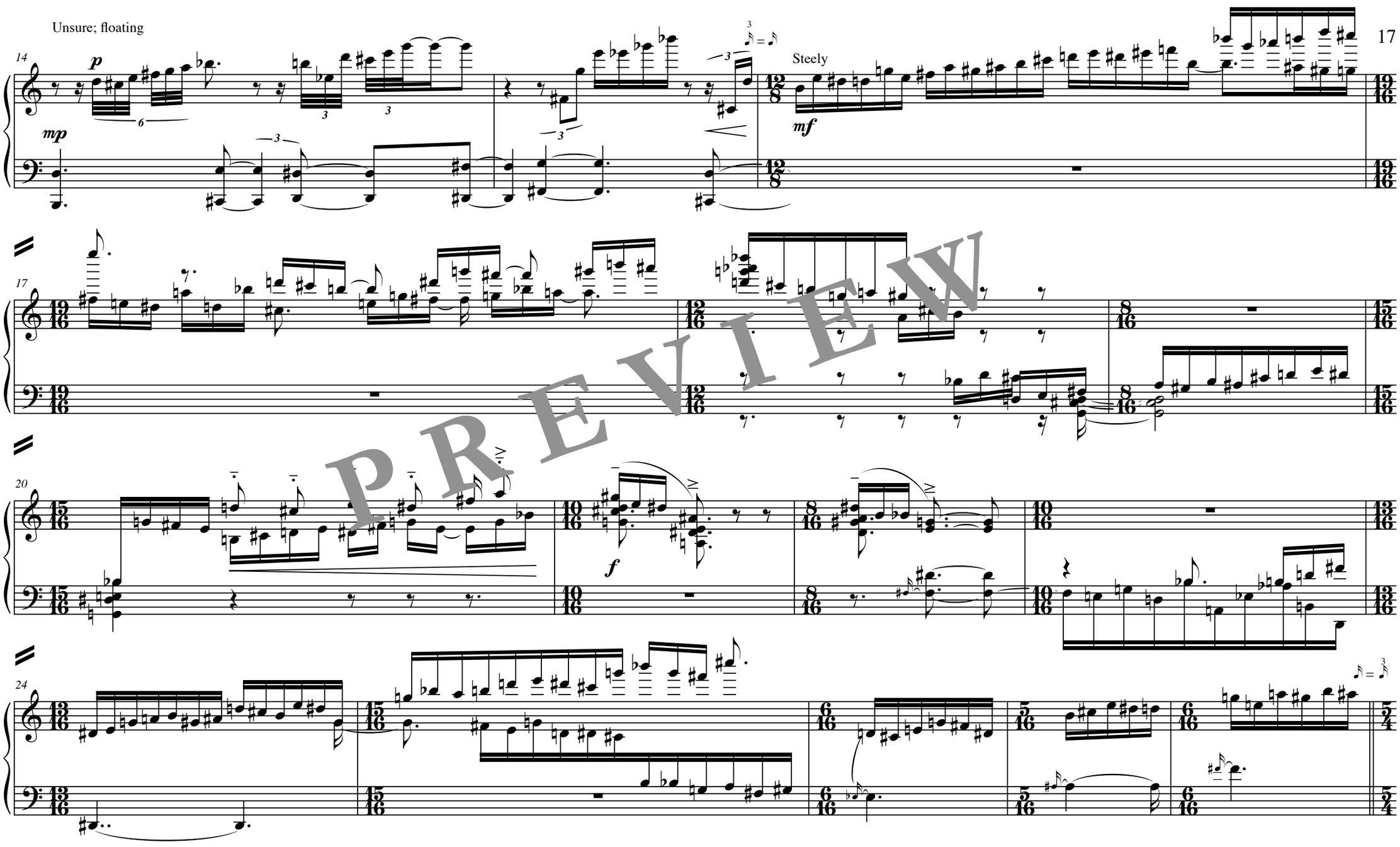

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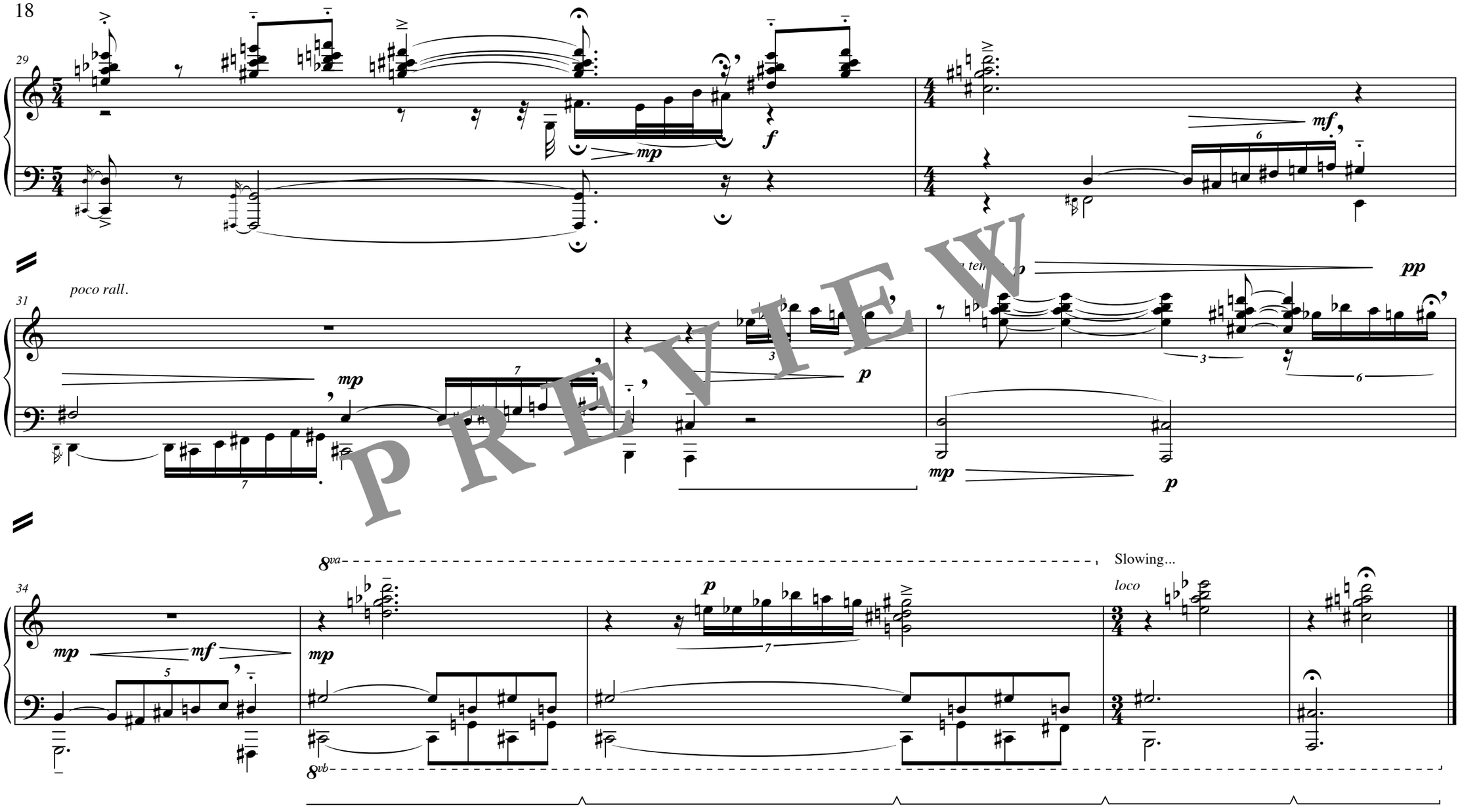

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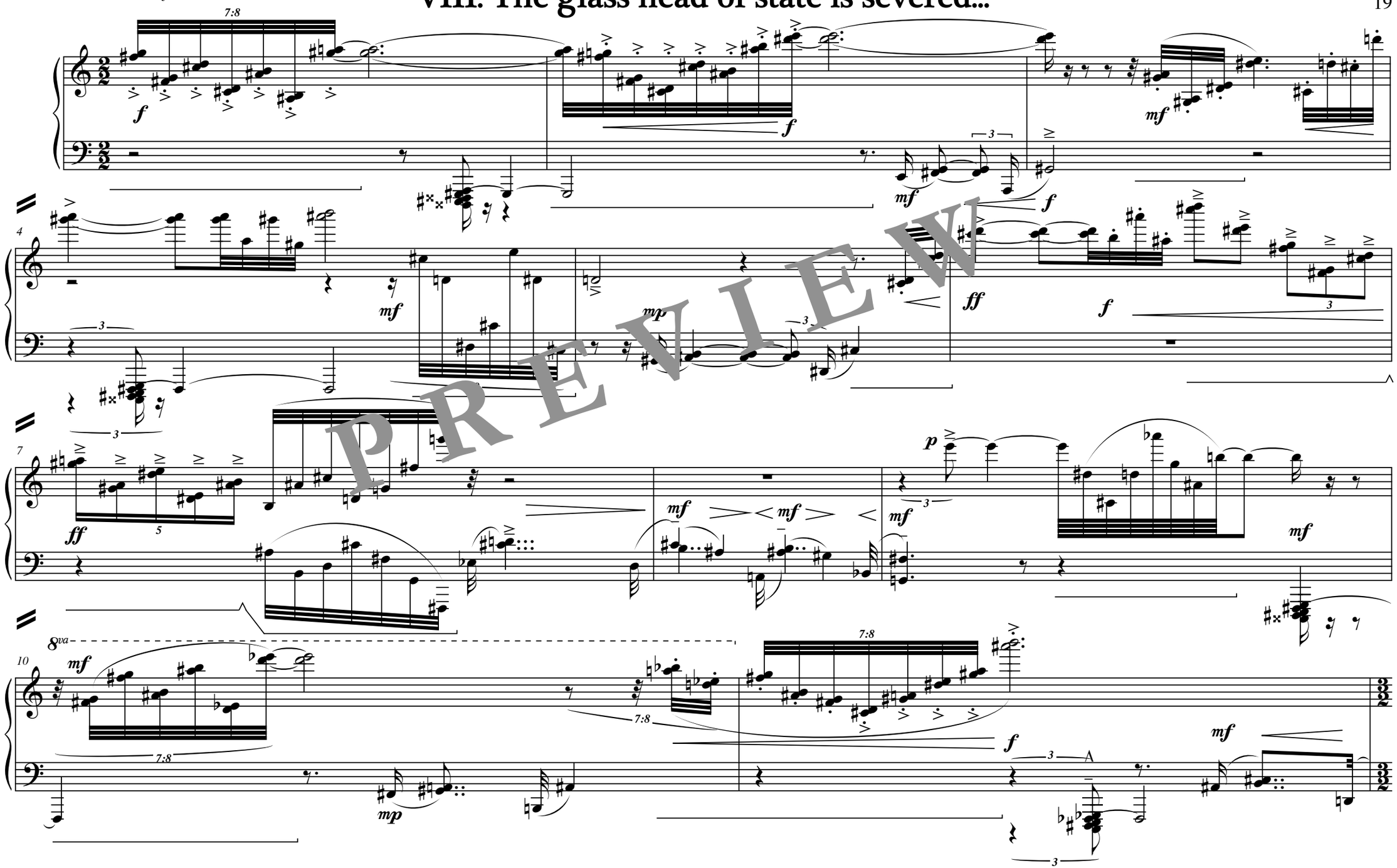
VIII. The glass head of state is severed...

Unsteady (♩ = c. 66-76)



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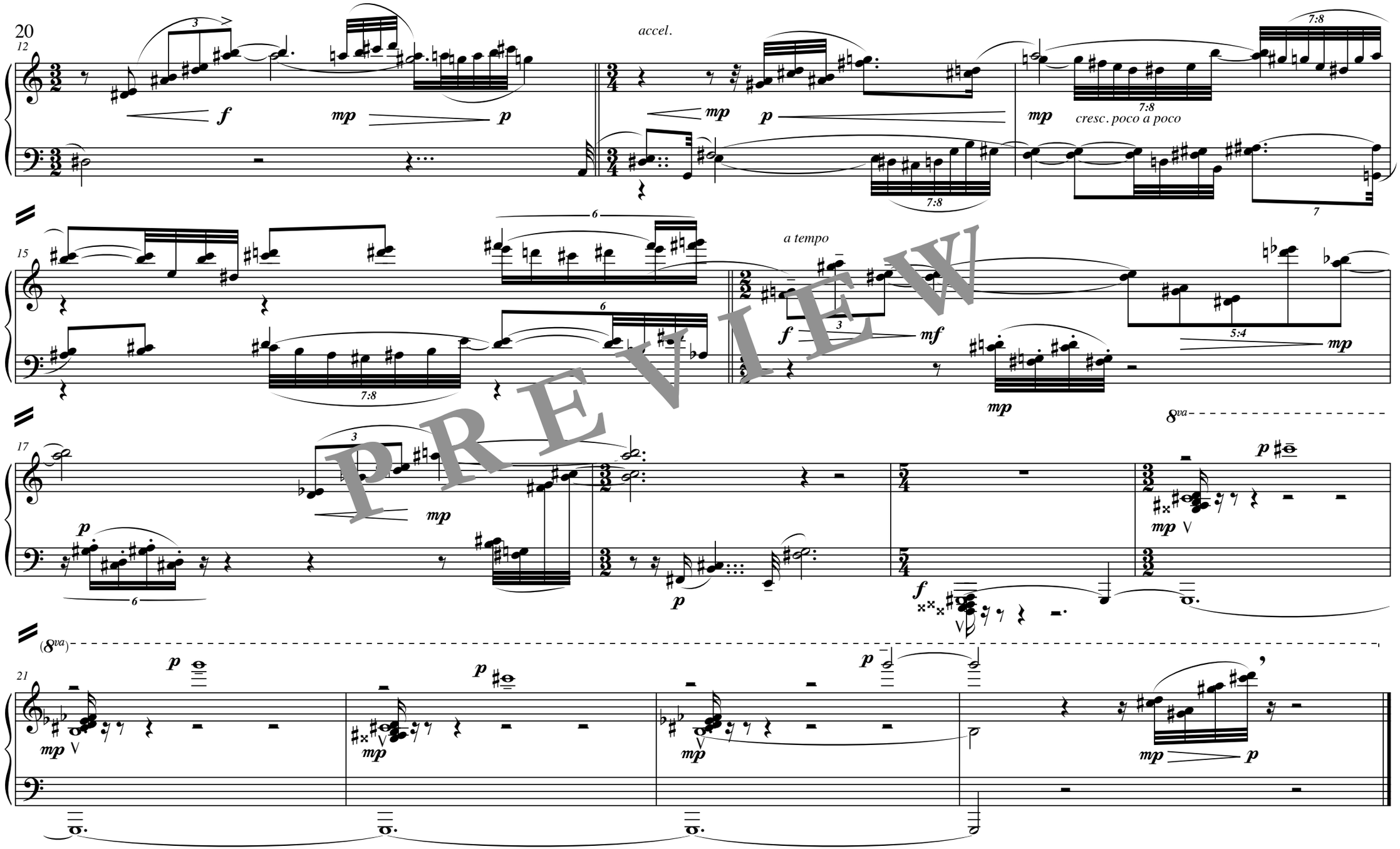

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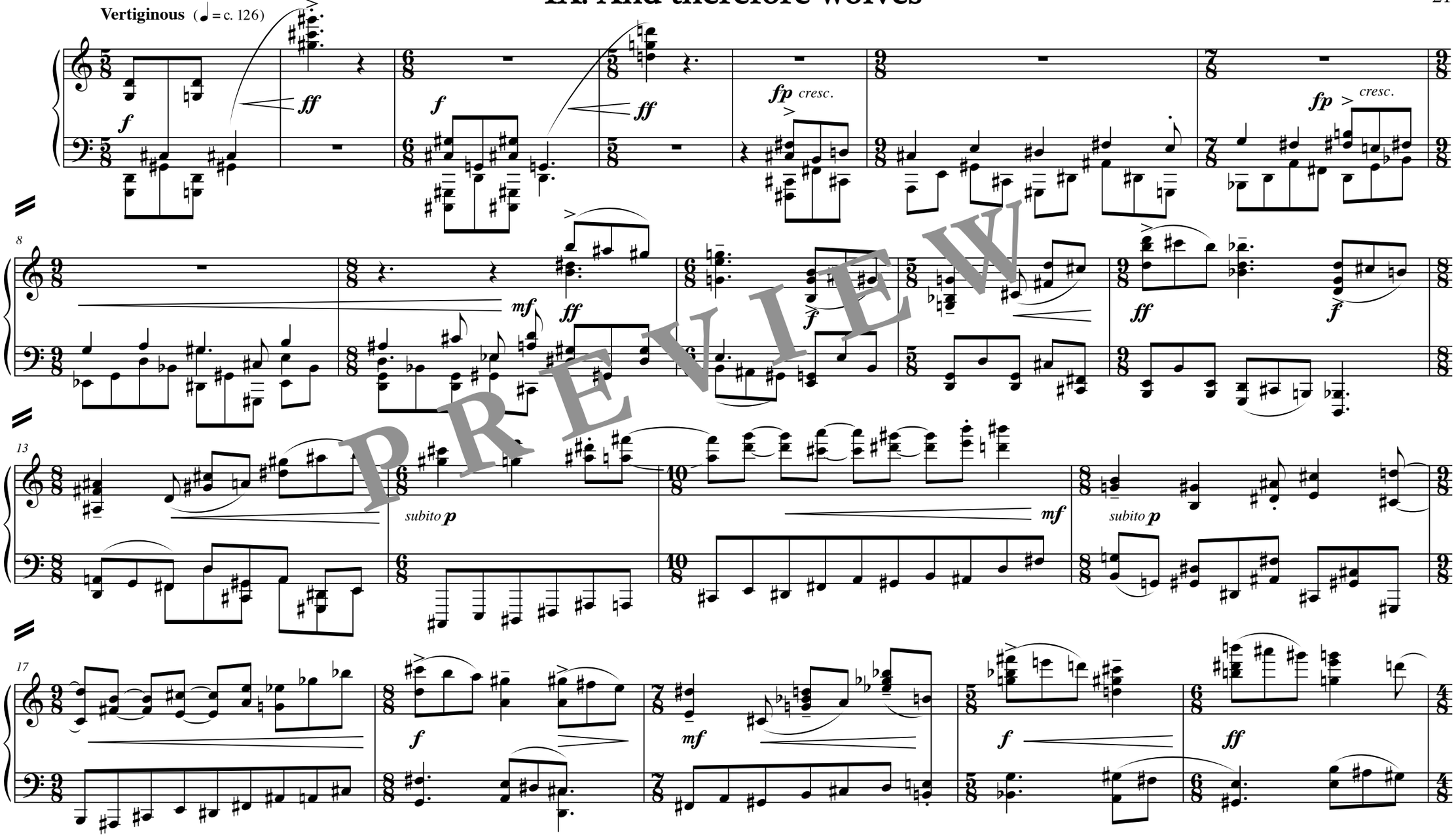
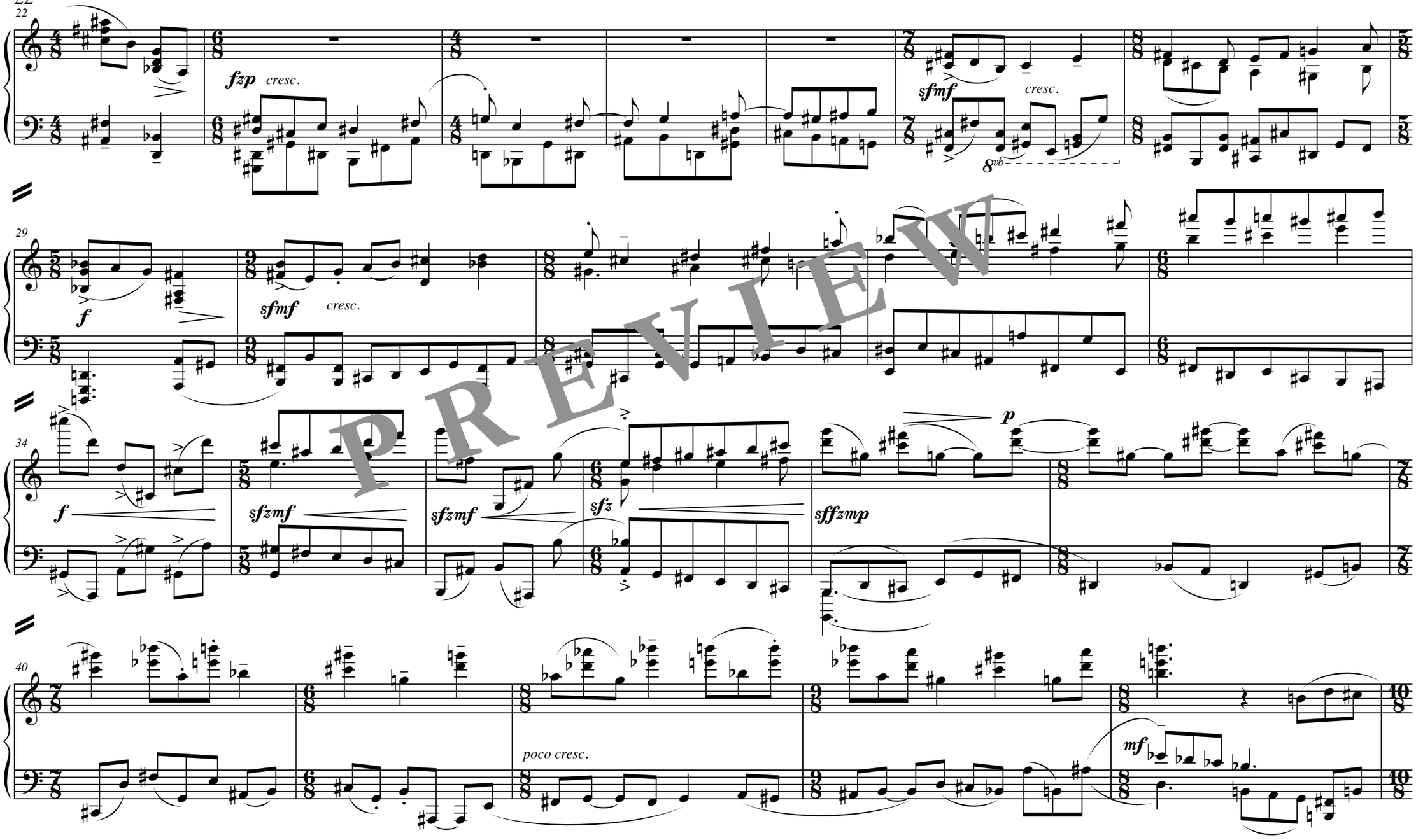
IX. And therefore wolves

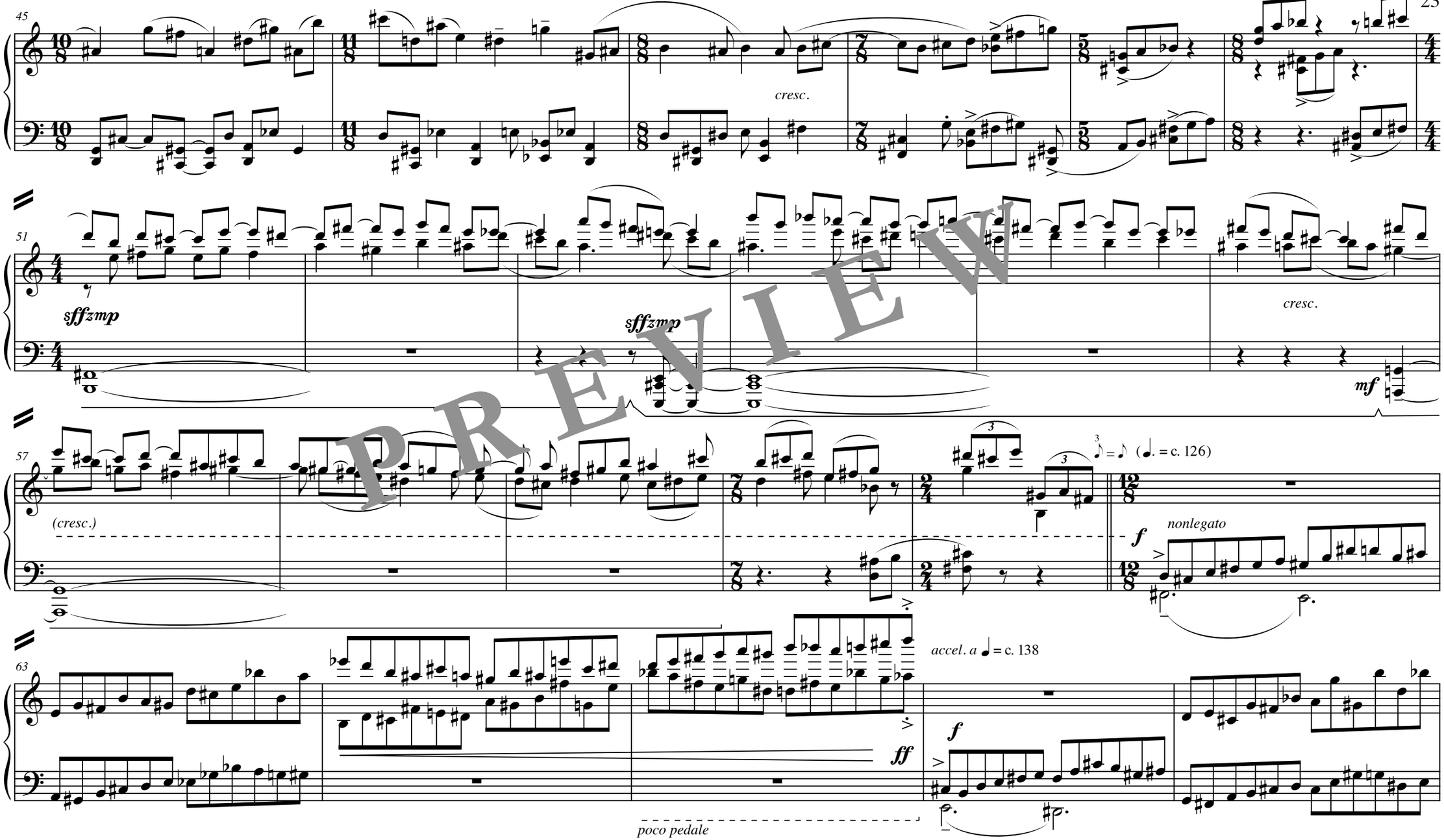
Vertiginous (♩ = c. 126)



PREVIEW


22
fzp cresc.
sfmf cresc.
8vb
29
f
sfmf cresc.
34
f
sfzmf
sfzmf
sfz
sffzmp
p
40
poco cresc.
mf

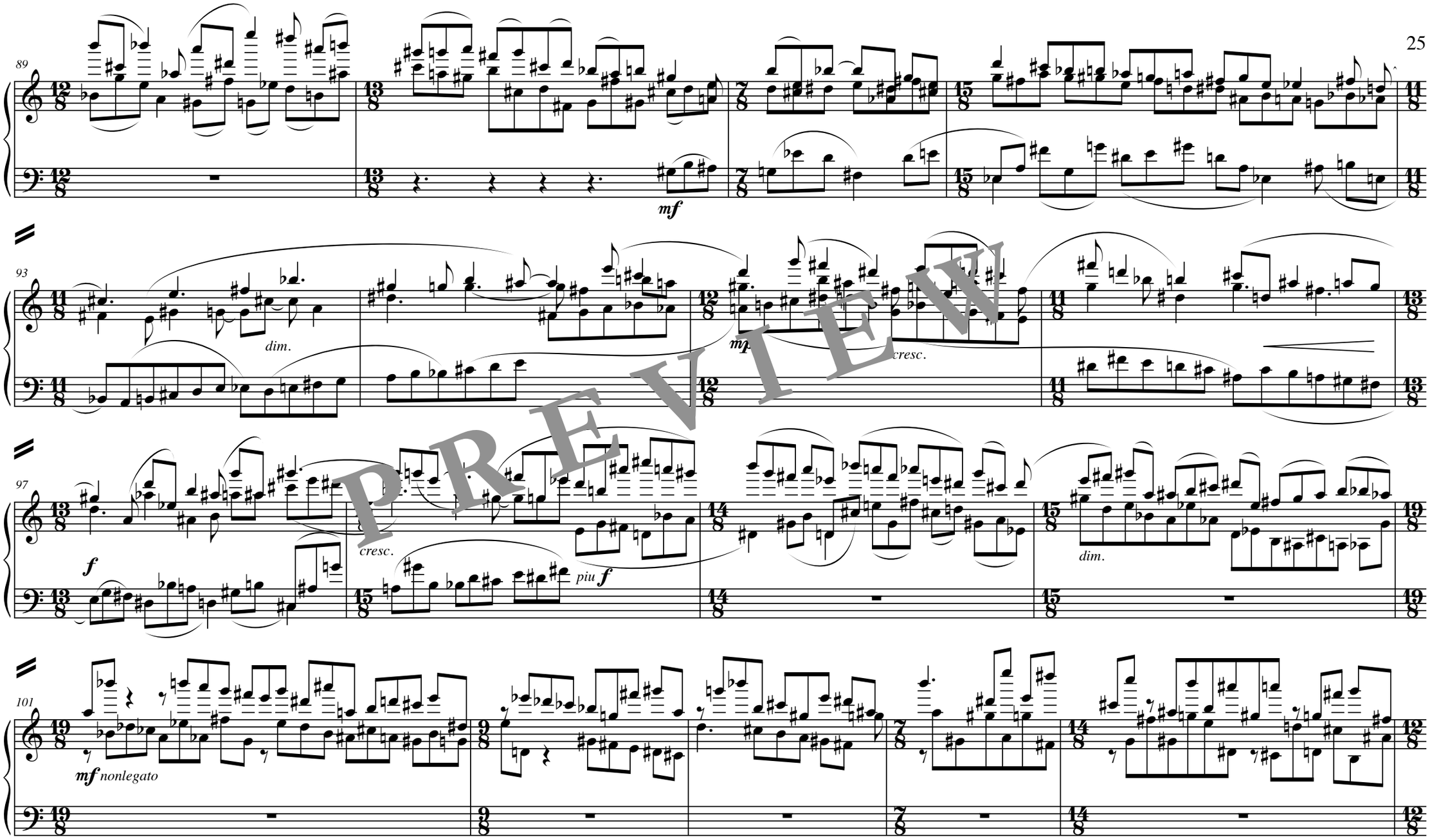
PREVIEW


45
cresc.
51
sffzmp
sffzmp
cresc.
mf
57
(cresc.)
3 = ♪ (♩. = c. 126)
f
nonlegato
63
accel. a ♩ = c. 138
f
ff
poco pedale

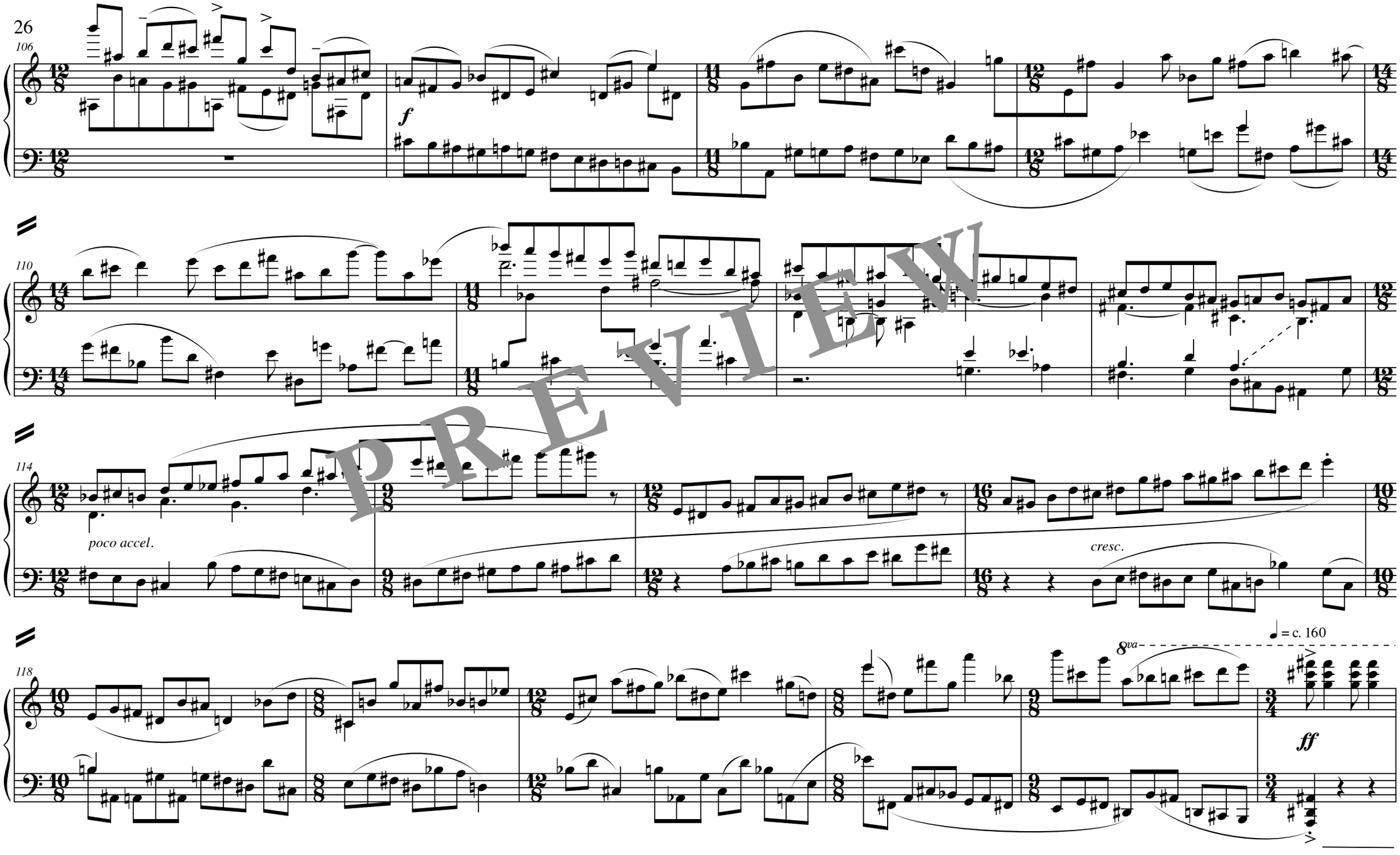
PREVIEW

8va
8:12
8:12
♪ = ♪³ (♩ = c. 138)
accel.
ff
68
(8va)
73
♩ = c. 152
sffzmf
78
f
84
cresc.
rall.
Holding back (♩ = c. 132)
mp
ff
poco a poco senza pedale

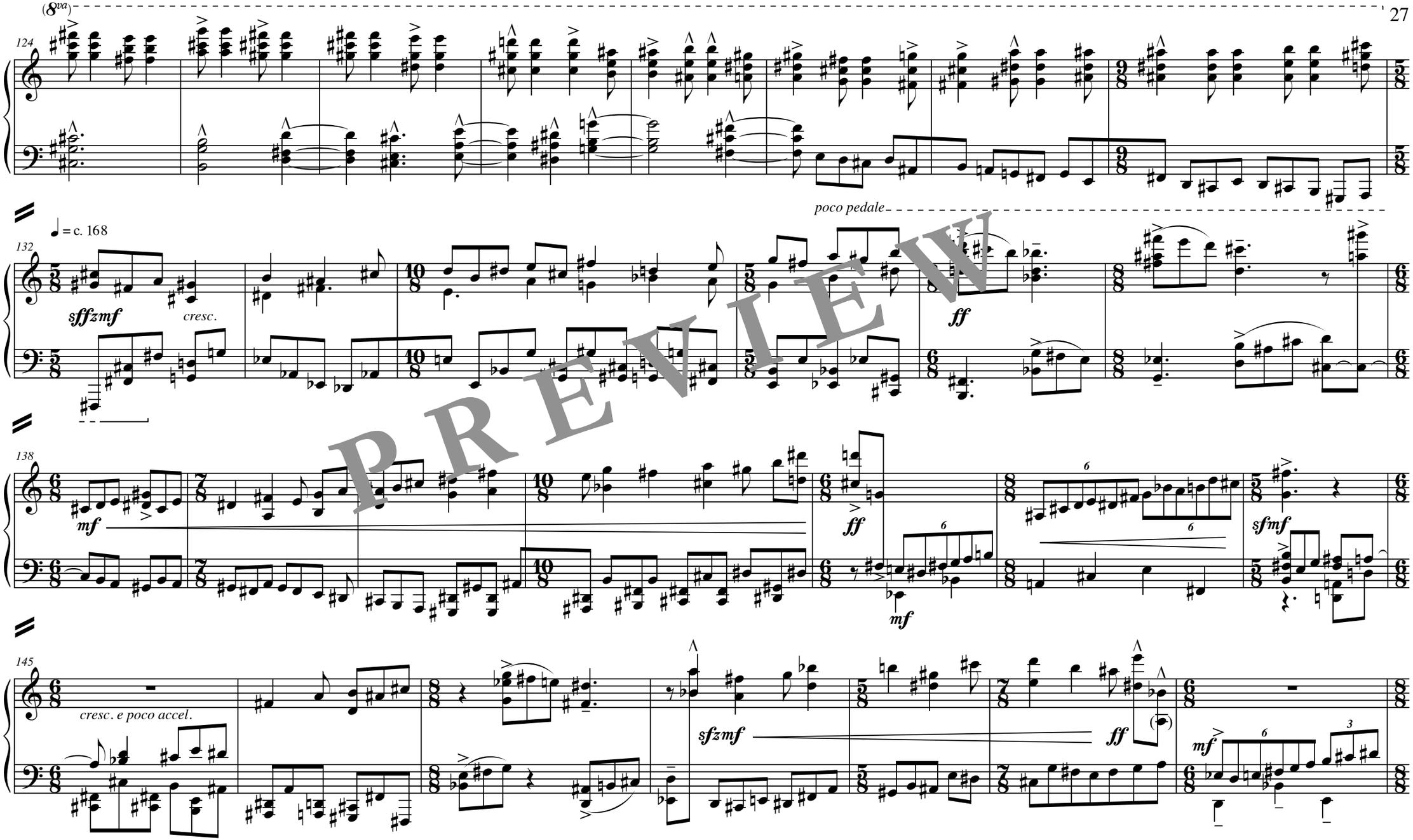
PREVIEW



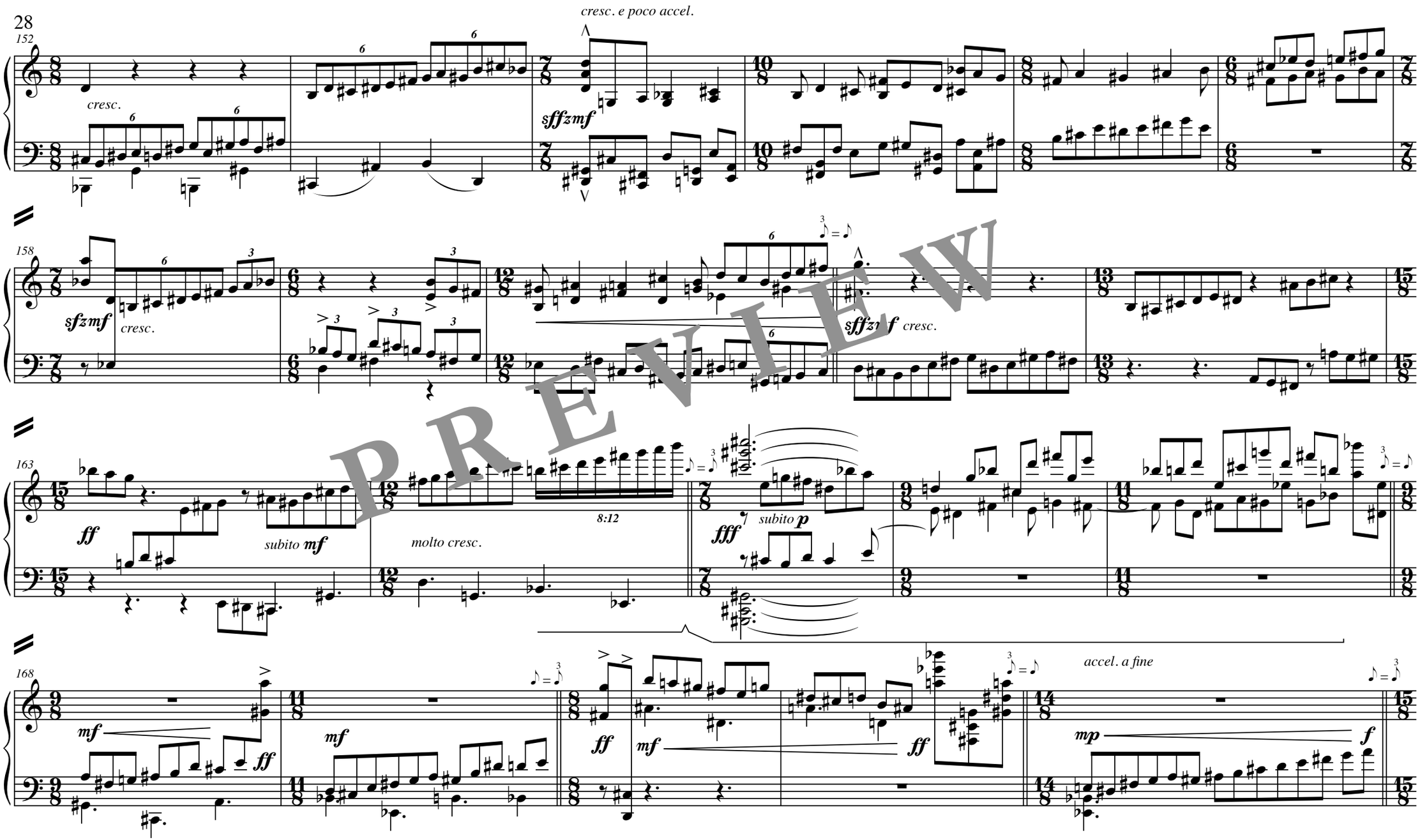
PREVIEW



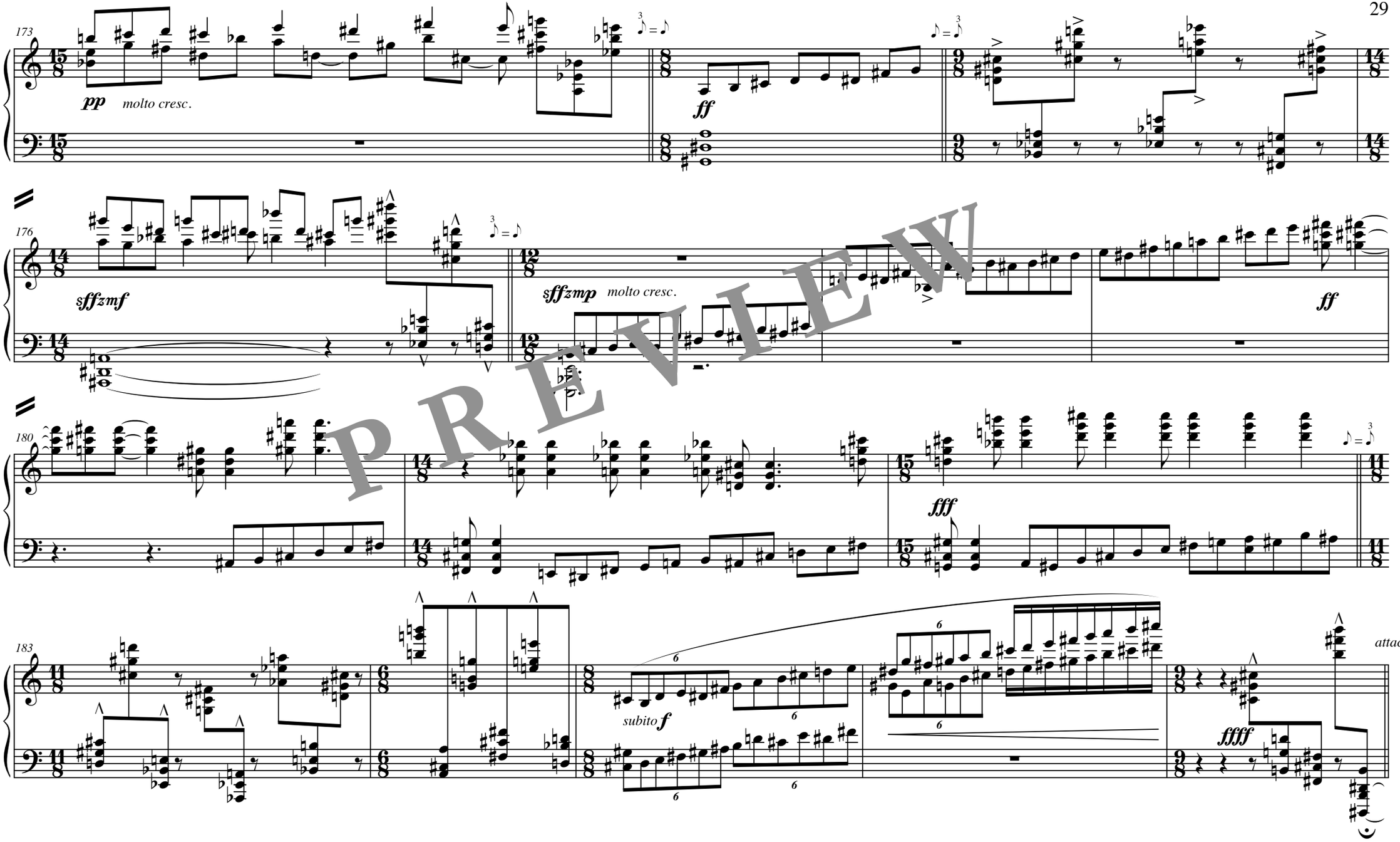
PREVIEW


(8va)
124
poco pedale
♩ = c. 168
132
sffzmf
cresc.
ff
138
mf
ff
mf
sfmf
145
cresc. e poco accel.
sfzmf
ff
mf

PREVIEW

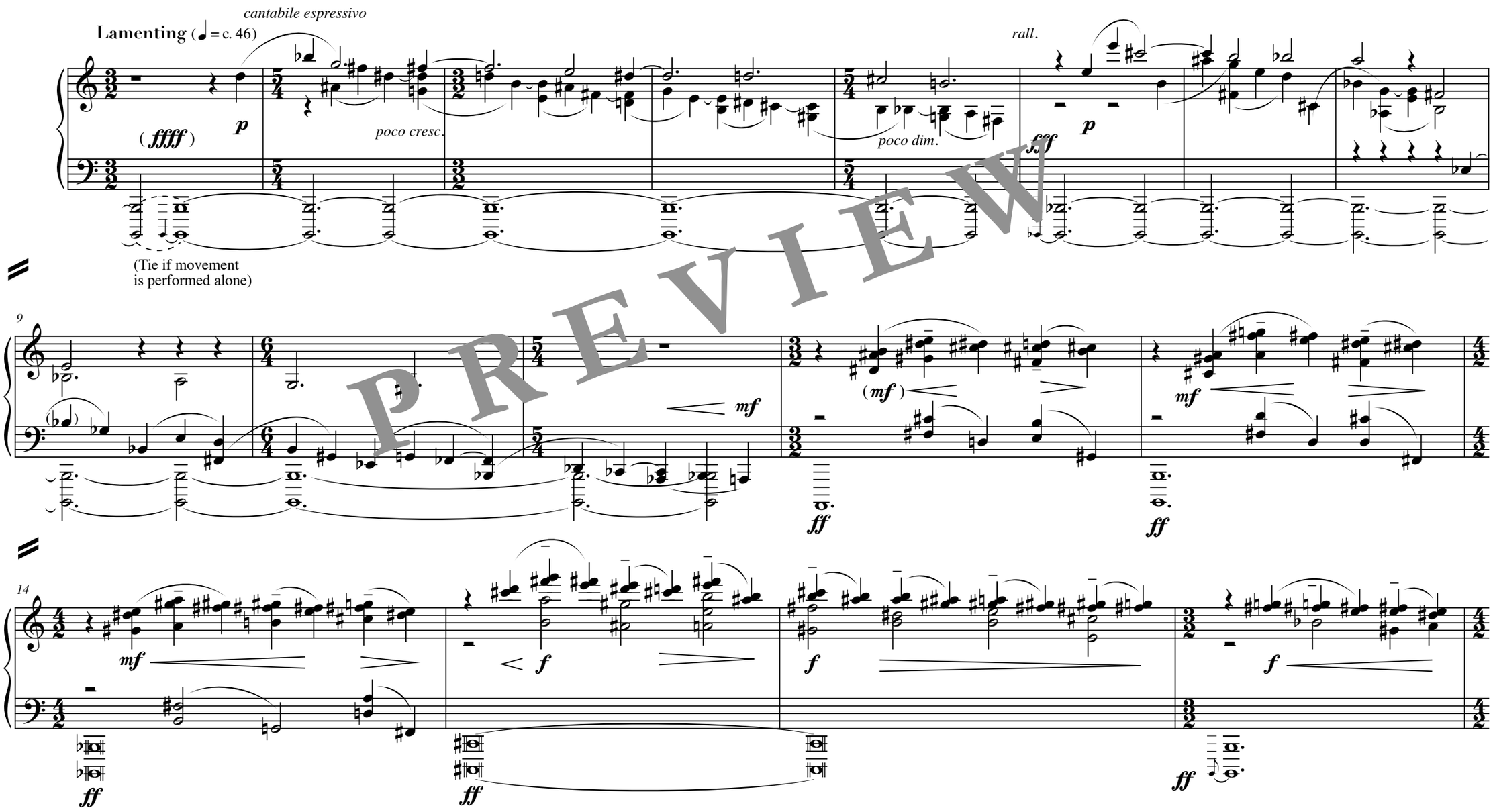

cresc. e poco accel.
152
cresc.
sffzmf
158
sfzmf
cresc.
sffzmf
cresc.
163
ff
subito mf
molto cresc.
8:12
fff
subito p
168
mf
ff
mf
ff
mf
ff
mp
accel. a fine
f

PREVIEW

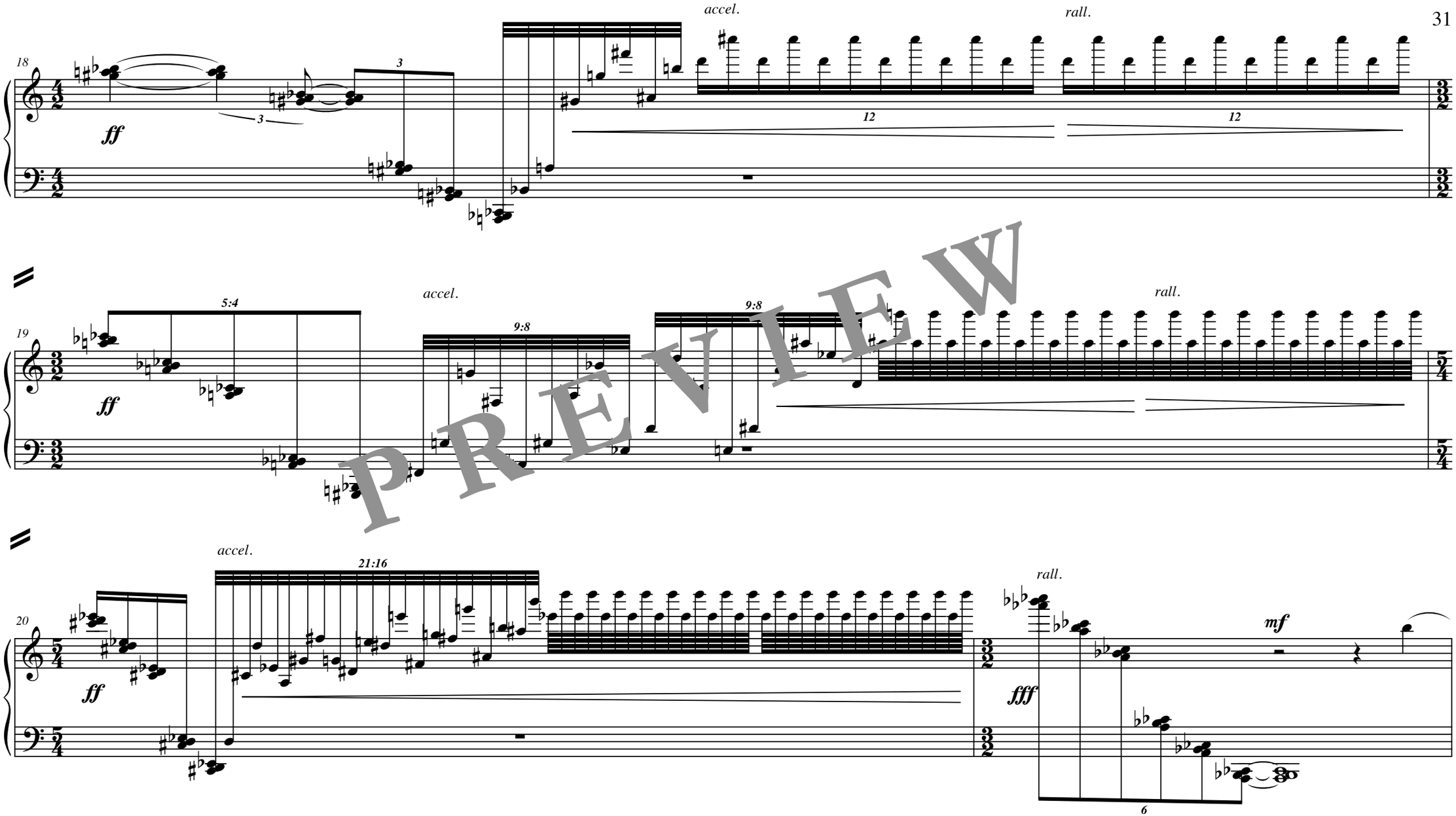

173
pp molto cresc.
ff
176
sffzmf
sffzmp molto cresc.
ff
180
fff
183
subito f
ffff
attacka

PREVIEW

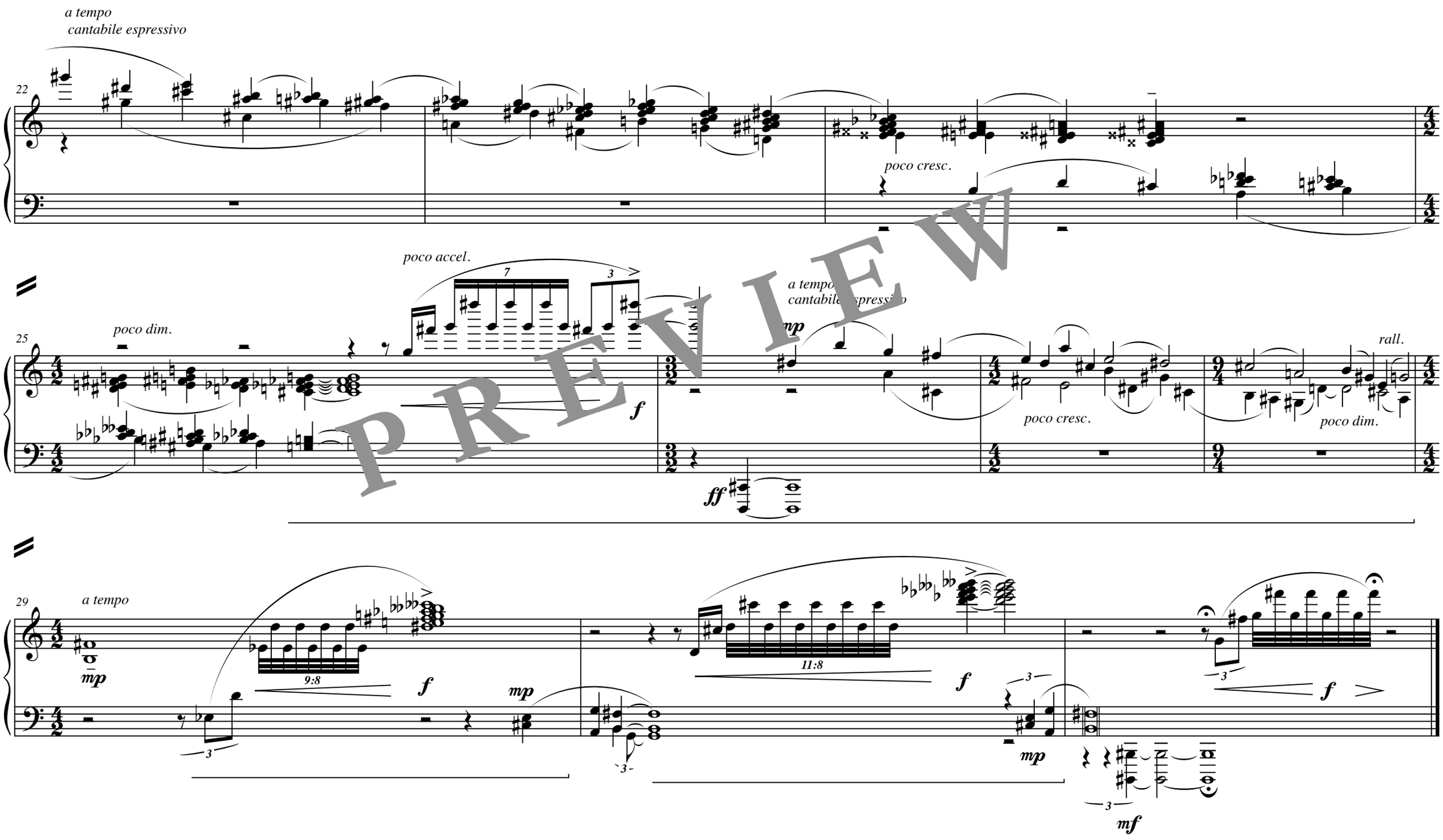
Sext
X. The frightened Kyries



PREVIEW

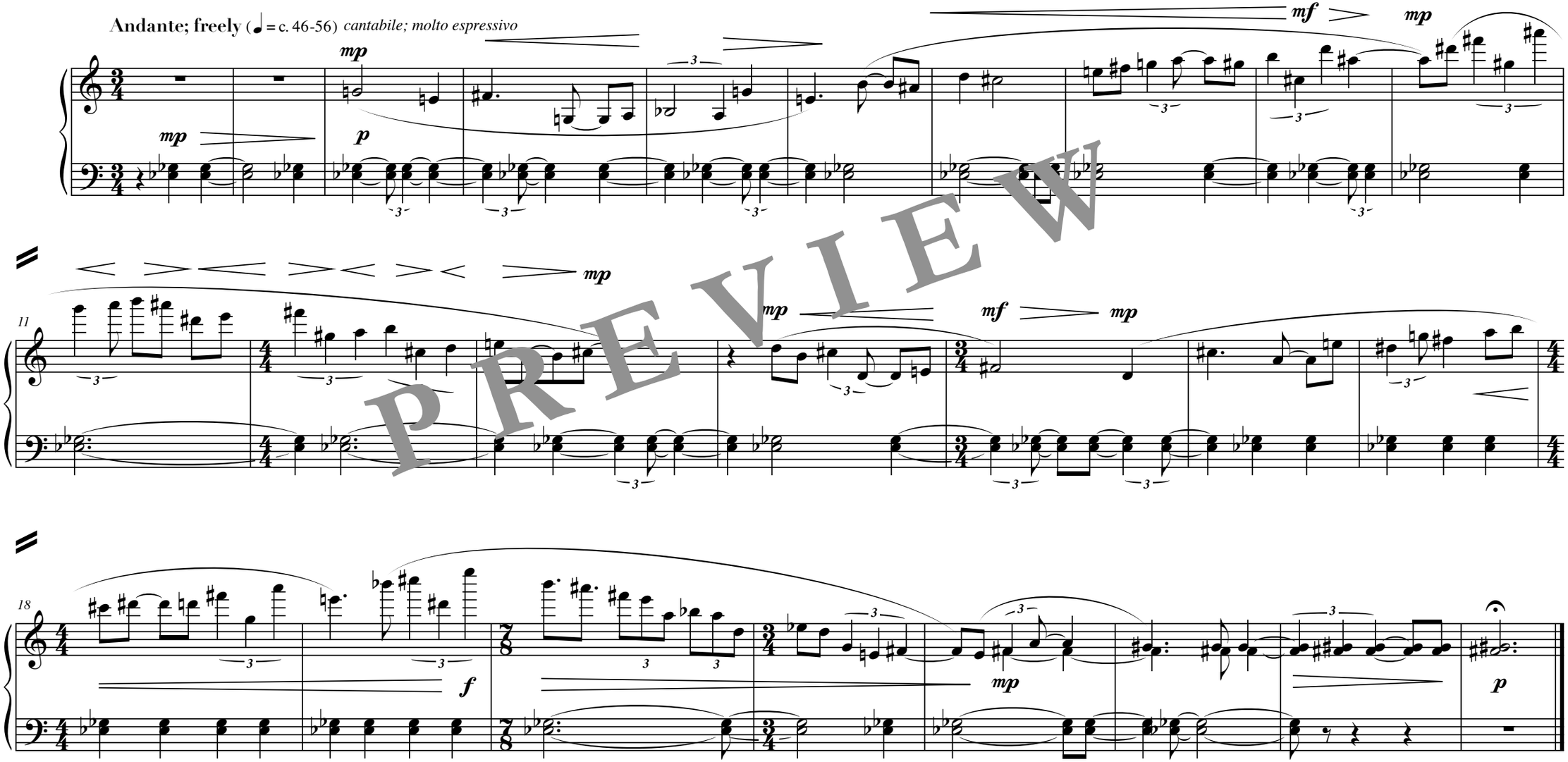

accel.
rall.
18
ff
3
12
12
accel.
rall.
19
ff
5:4
9:8
9:8
accel.
rall.
20
ff
21:16
fff
mf
6

PREVIEW


a tempo
cantabile espressivo
22
poco cresc.
poco accel.
7
3
poco dim.
25
f
a tempo
cantabile espressivo
mp
poco cresc.
rall.
poco dim.
ff
29
a tempo
mp
9:8
f
mp
11:8
f
3
mp
3
f
3
mf

PREVIEW

XV . Interlude



PREVIEW

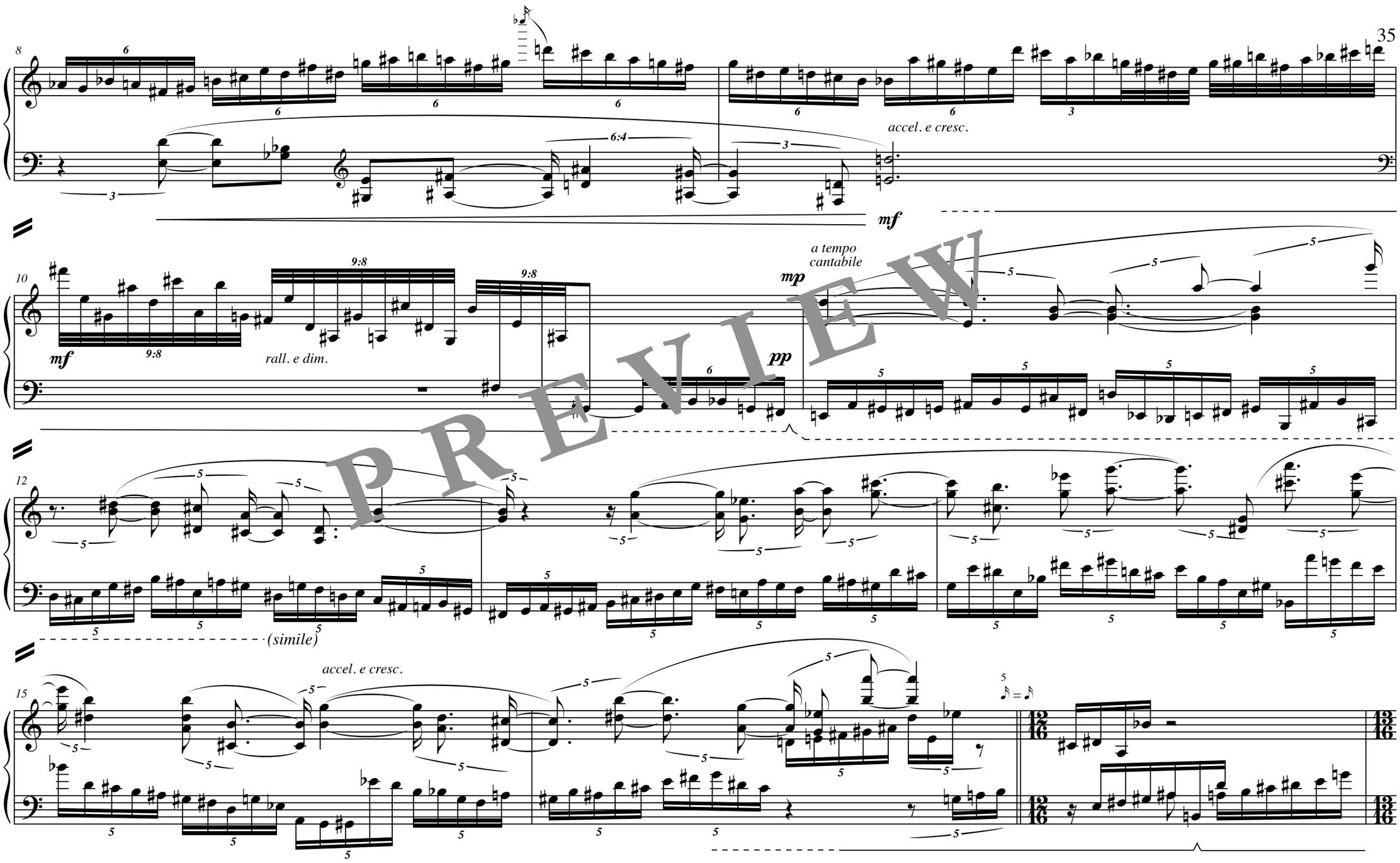
PREVIEW

Book II

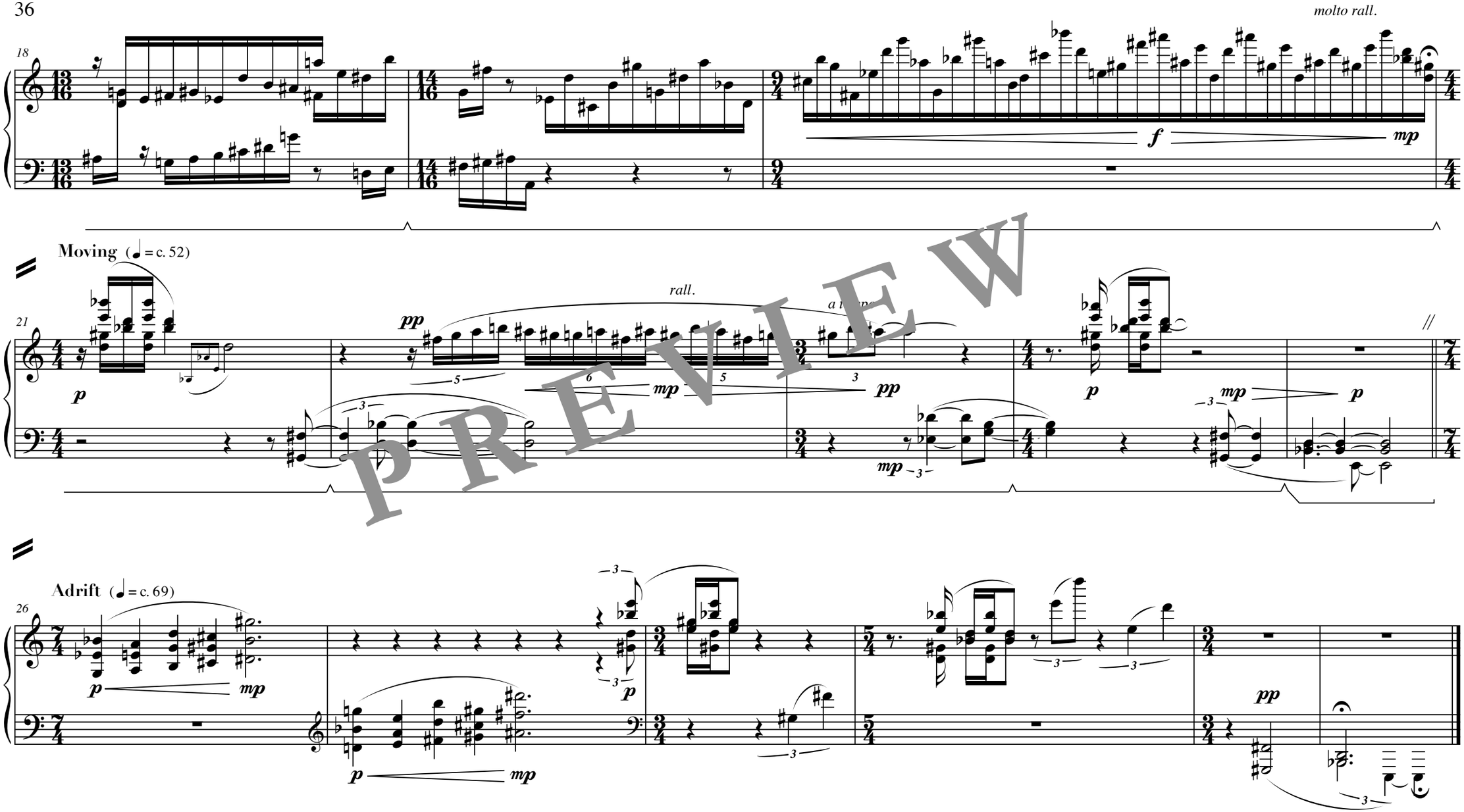
PREVIEW

None
XII. Clouds

PREVIEW

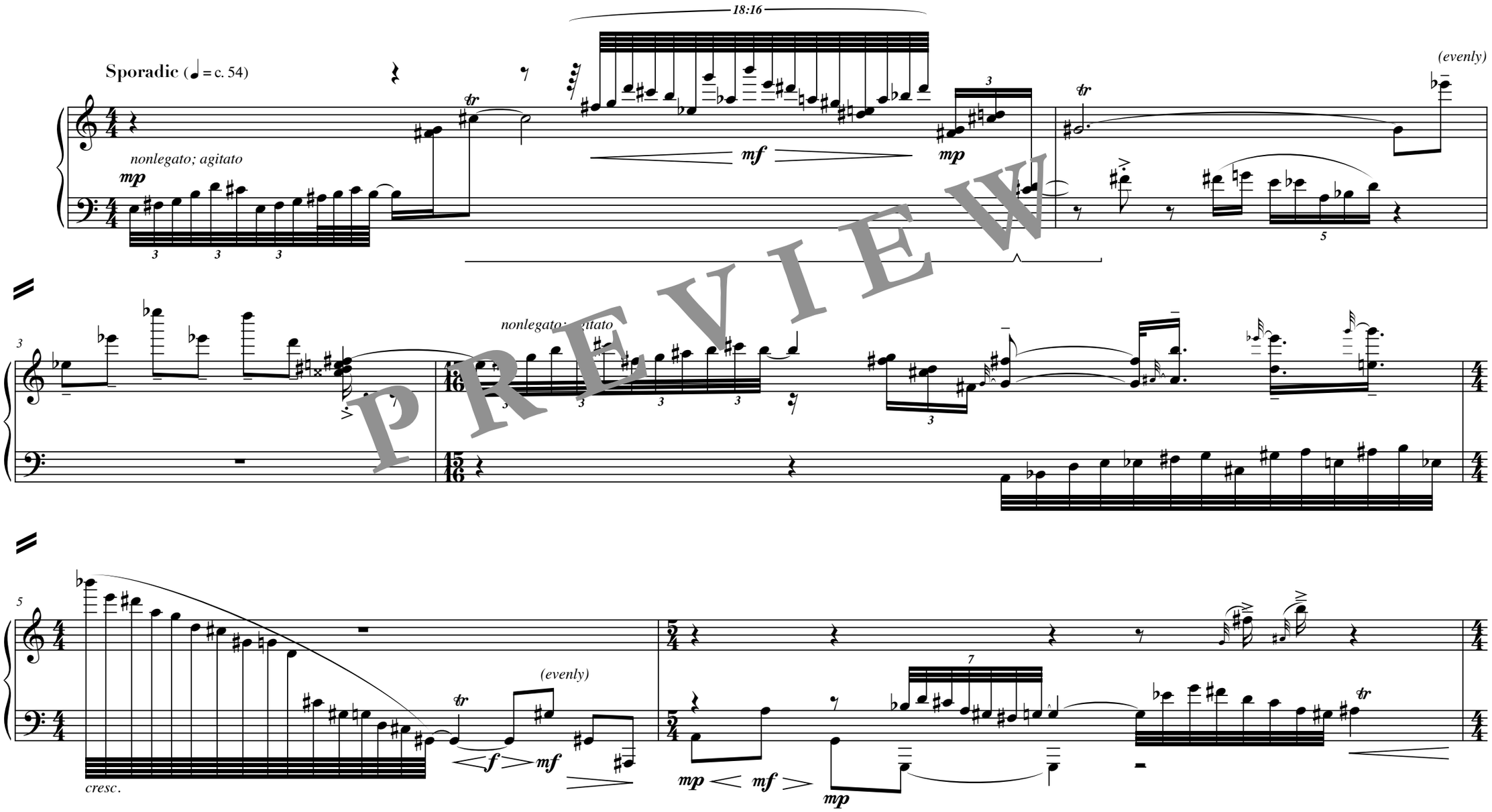

8
accel. e cresc.
mf
10
mf
rall. e dim.
a tempo
cantabile
mp
pp
12
(simile)
15
accel. e cresc.

PREVIEW

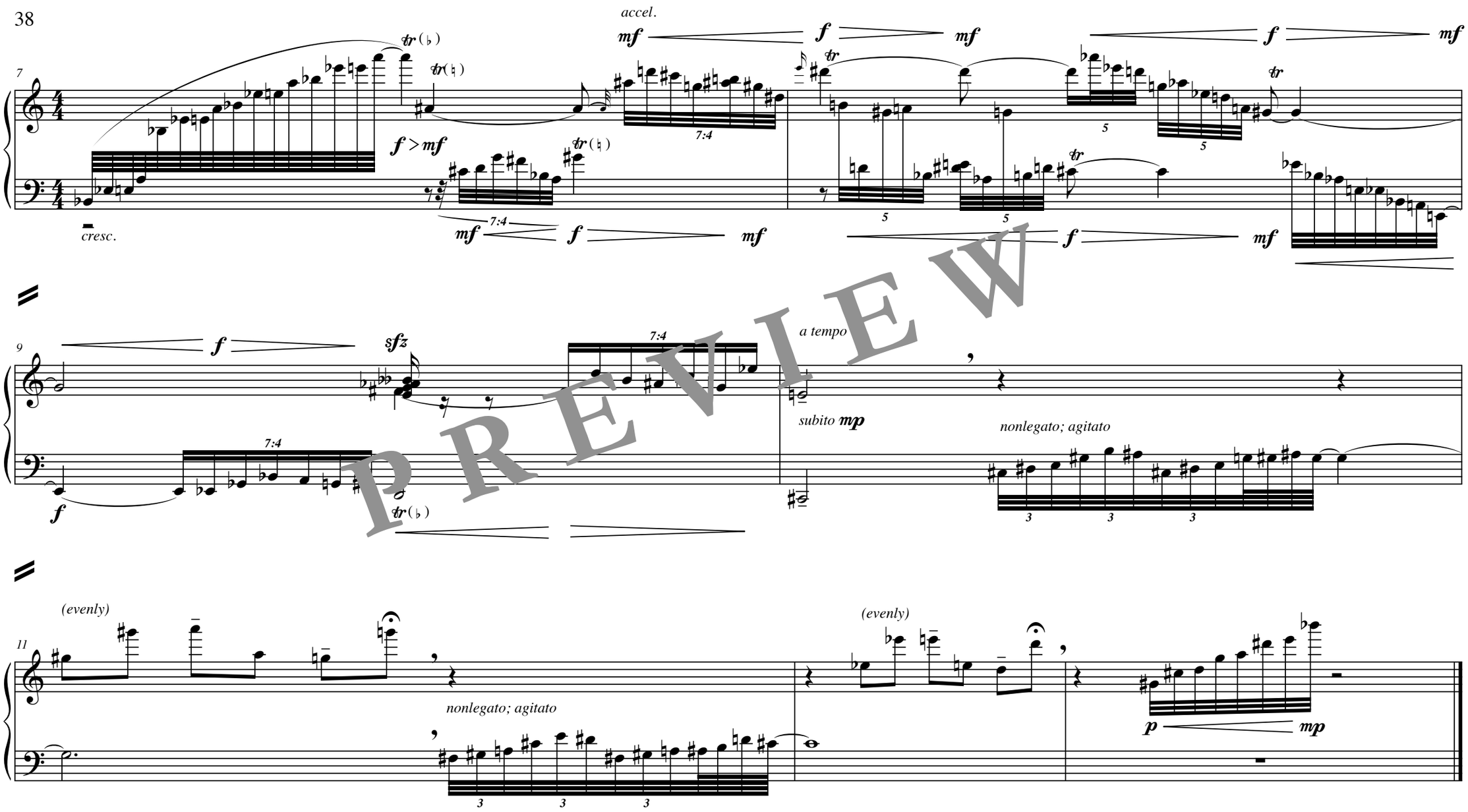

molto rall.
18
f
mp
Moving (♩ = c. 52)
21
p
rall.
pp
mp
a tempo
Adrift (♩ = c. 69)
26
p
mp
pp

PREVIEW

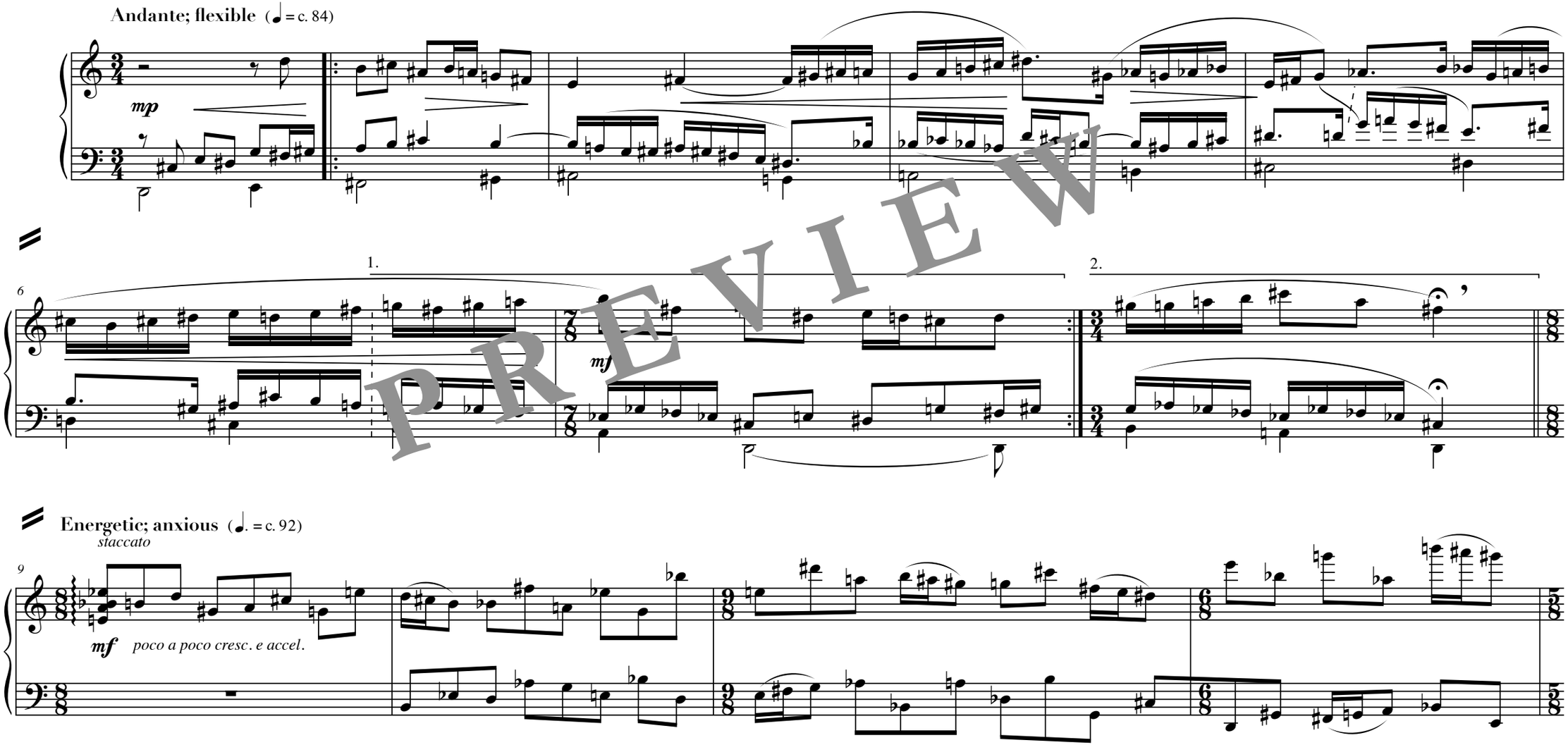
XIII. Epitaph



PREVIEW


accel.
cresc.
a tempo
subito mp
nonlegato; agitato
(evenly)
PREVIEW

XIV. As a Young Man



PREVIEW

13

17

f *poco a poco cresc. e accel.*

22

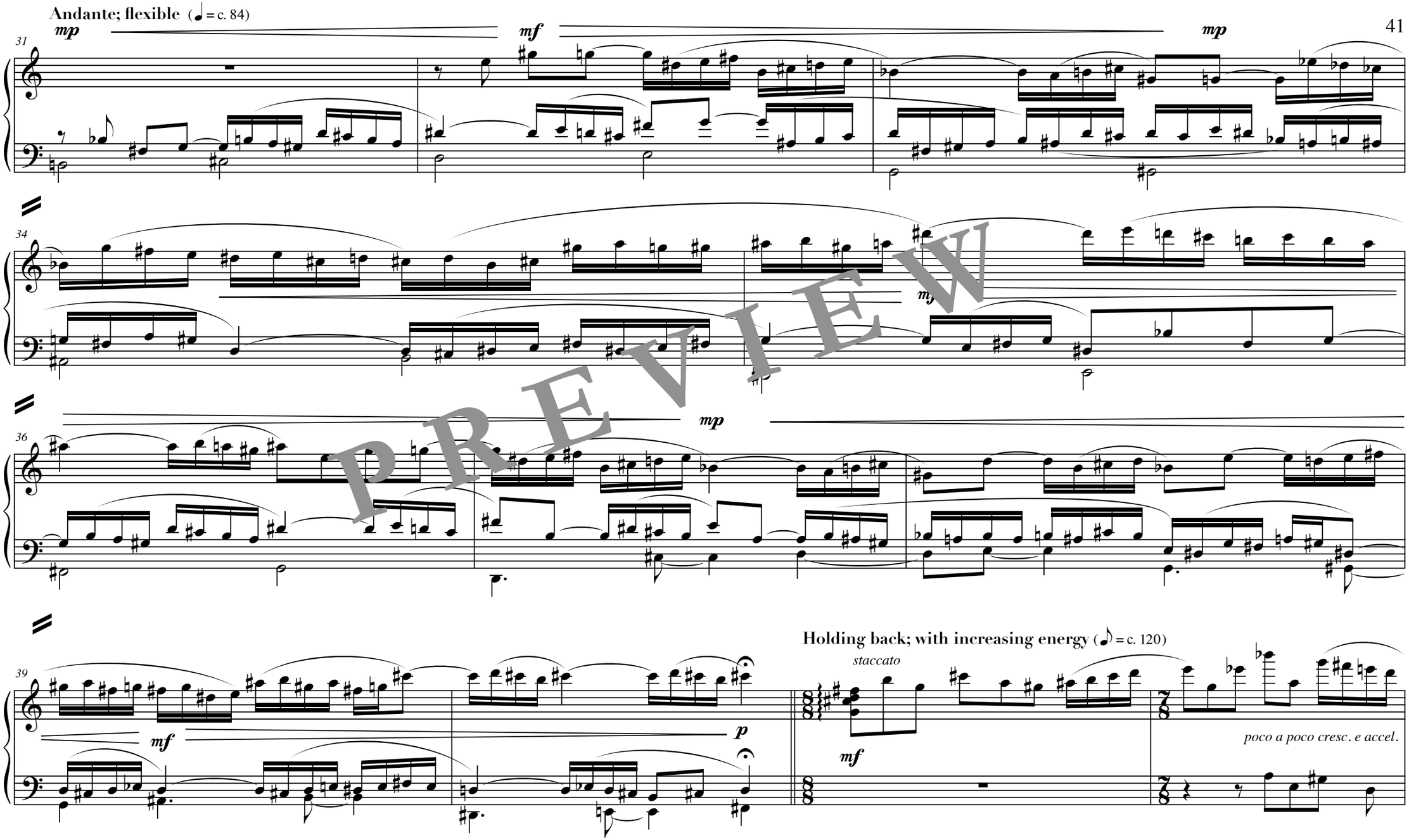
8va

27

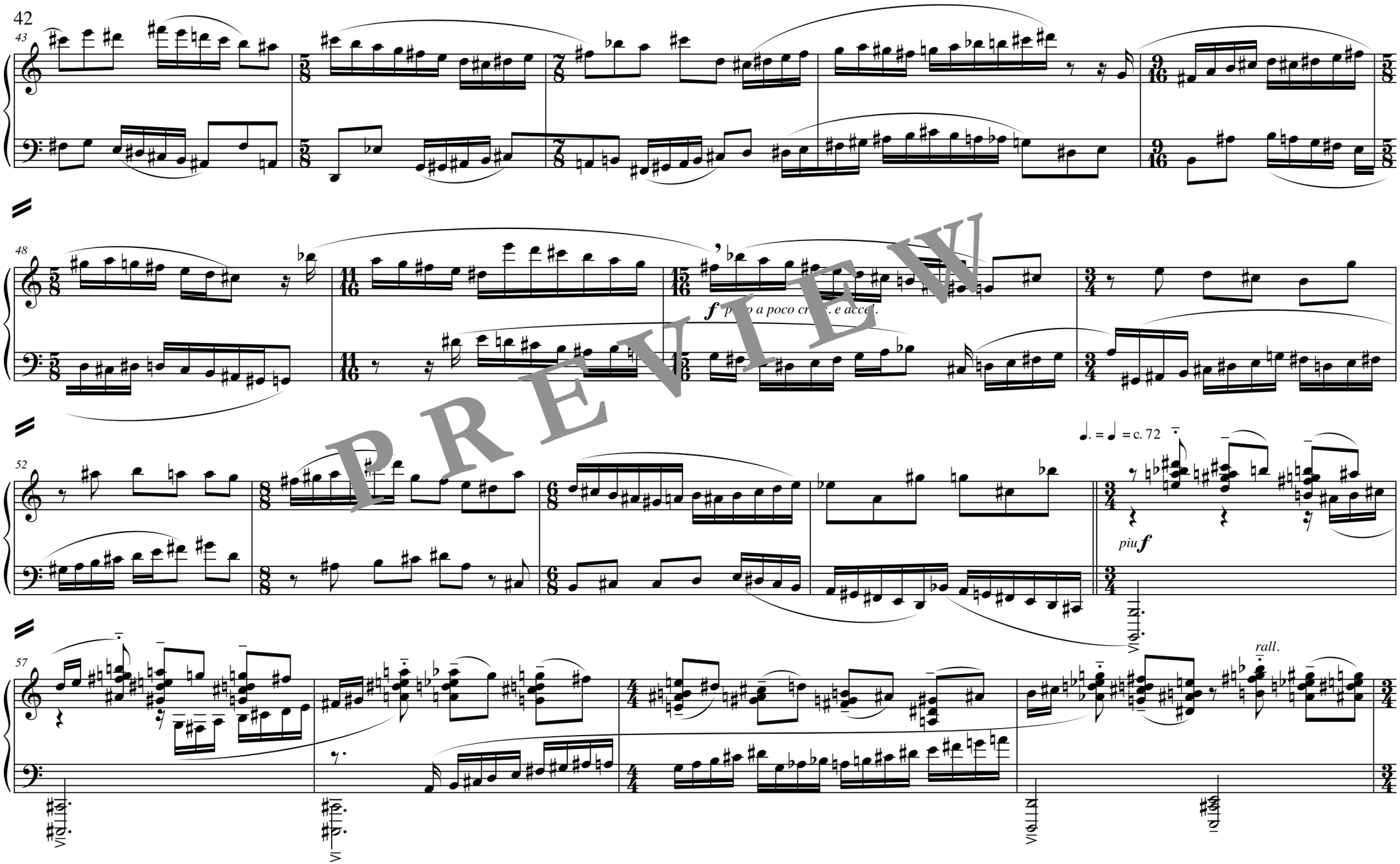
piu ***f***

rall.

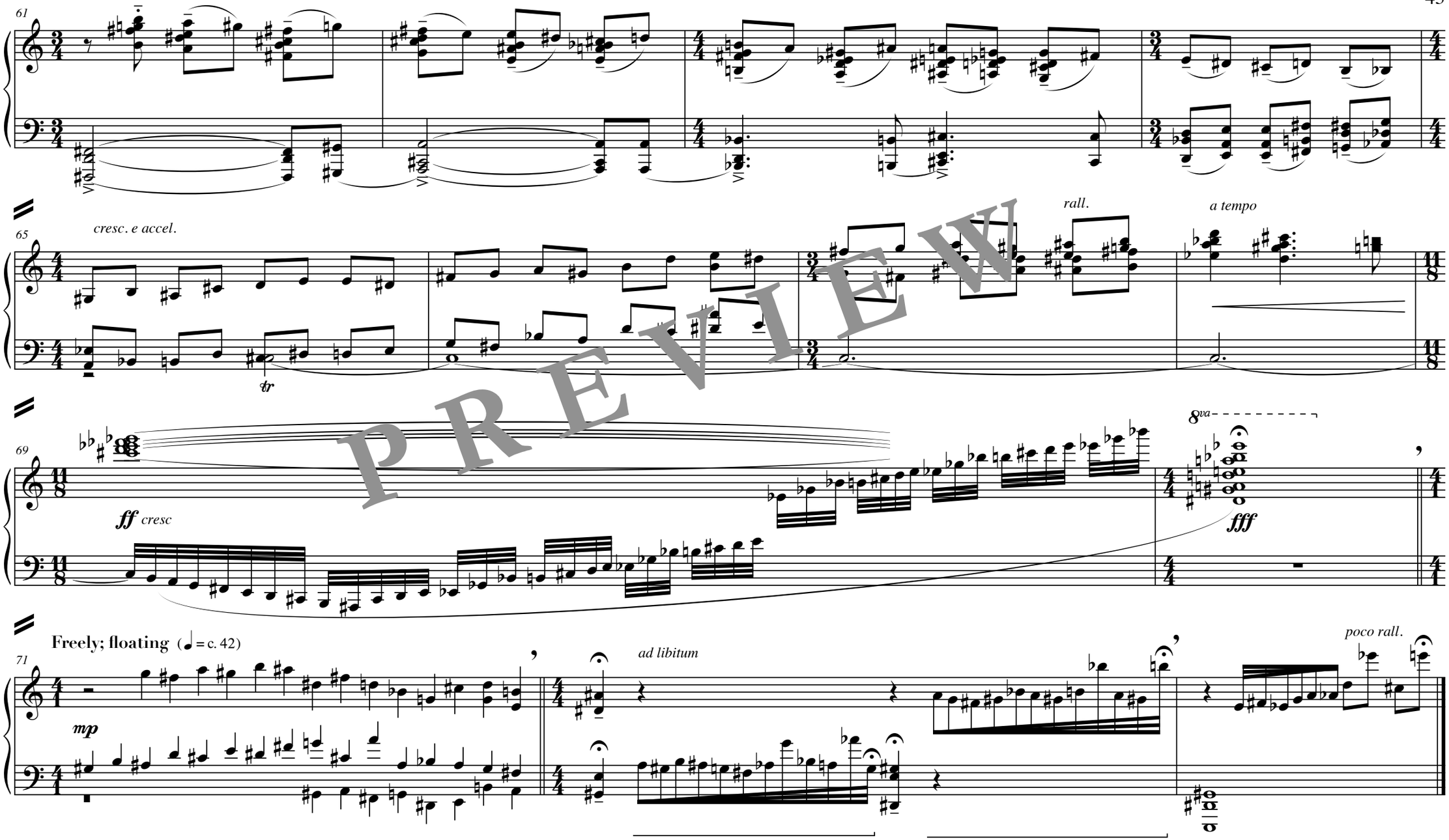
PREVIEW


Andante; flexible (♩ = c. 84)
mp
mf
mp
31
34
mf
36
mp
39
mf
p
Holding back; with increasing energy (♪ = c. 120)
staccato
mf
poco a poco cresc. e accel.

PREVIEW

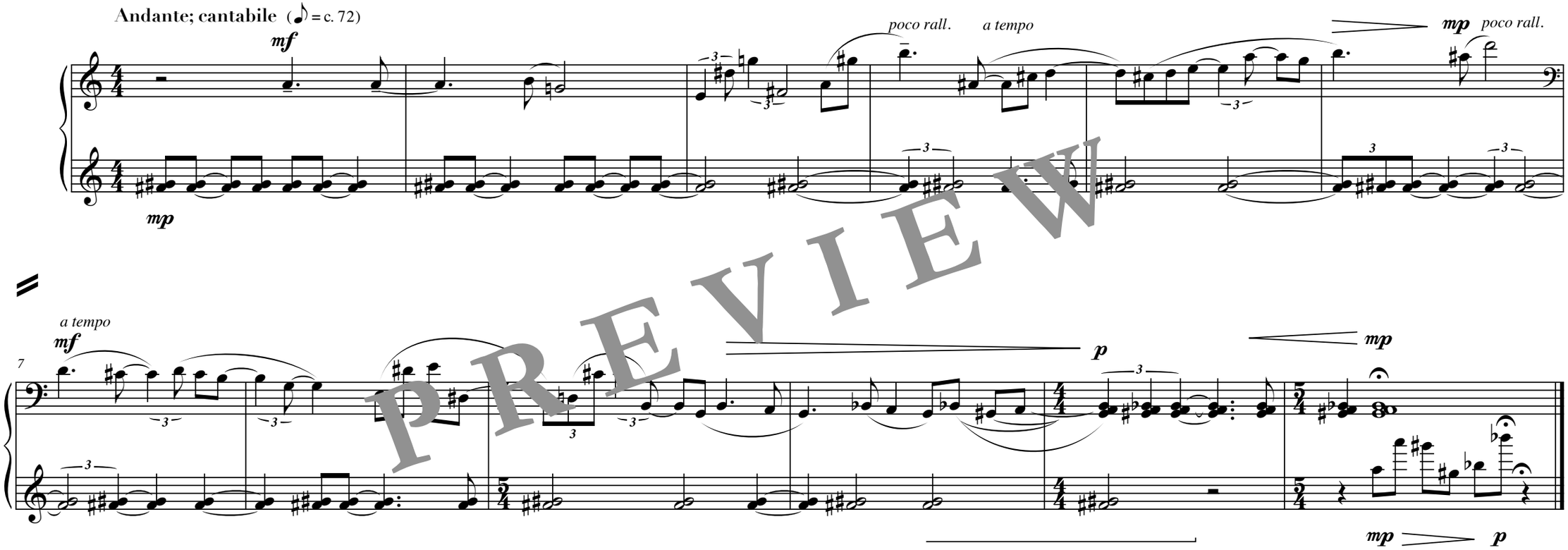


PREVIEW

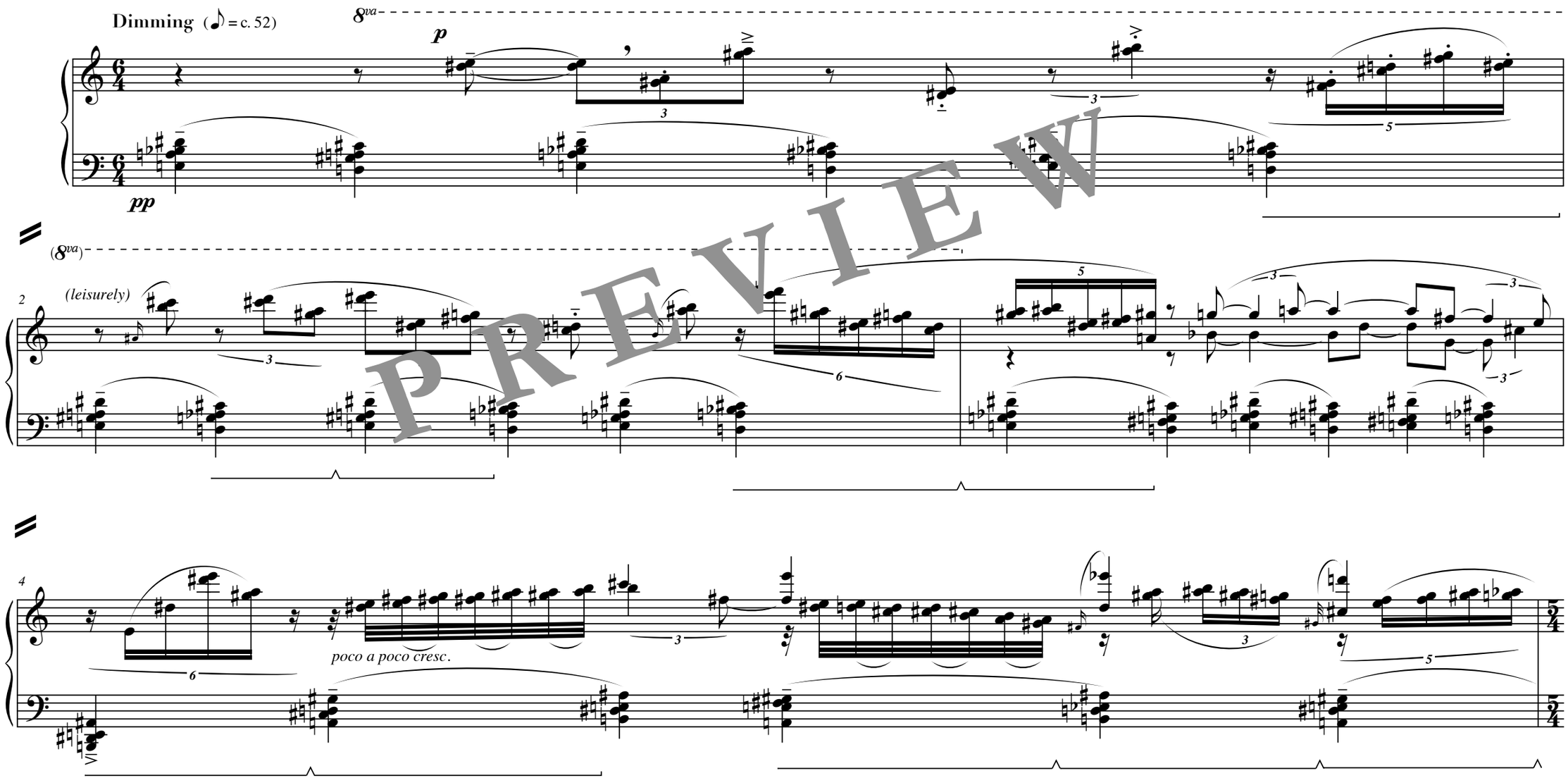

61
65
cresc. e accel.
rall.
a tempo
69
ff cresc
8va
fff
71
Freely; floating (♩ = c. 42)
mp
ad libitum
poco rall.

PREVIEW

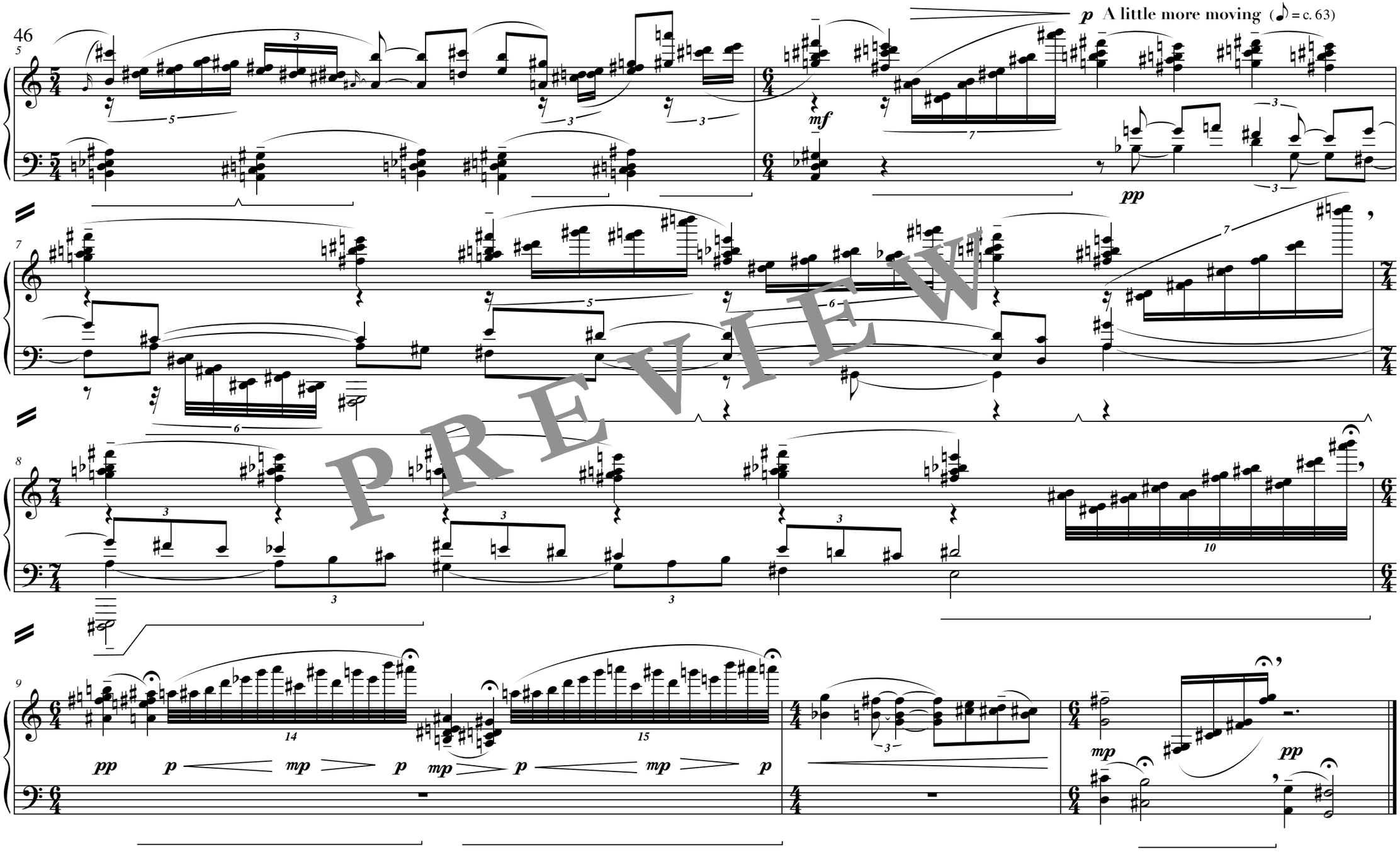
XV. Interlude



PREVIEW



PREVIEW



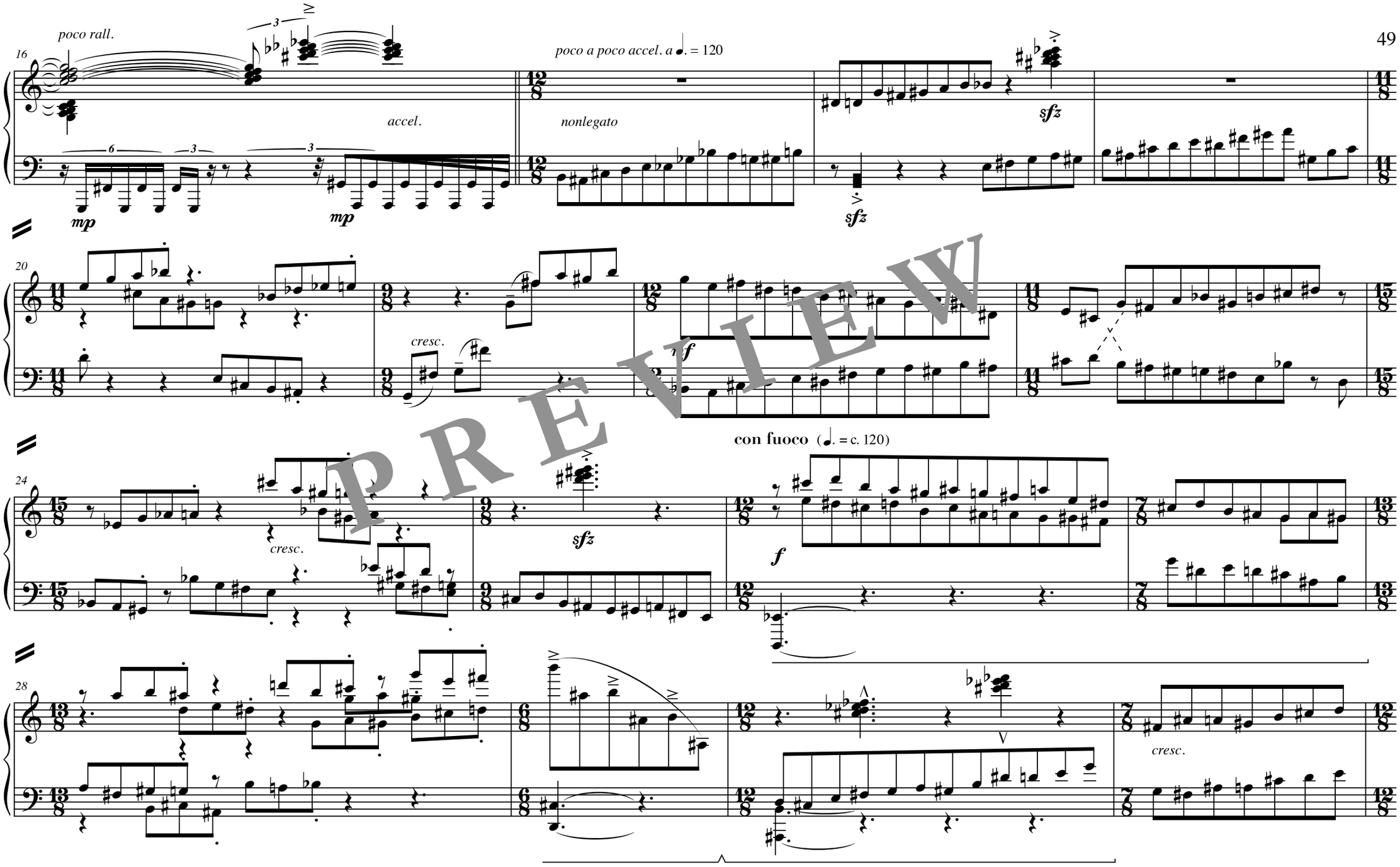
PREVIEW

XVII. Lone-tree hill

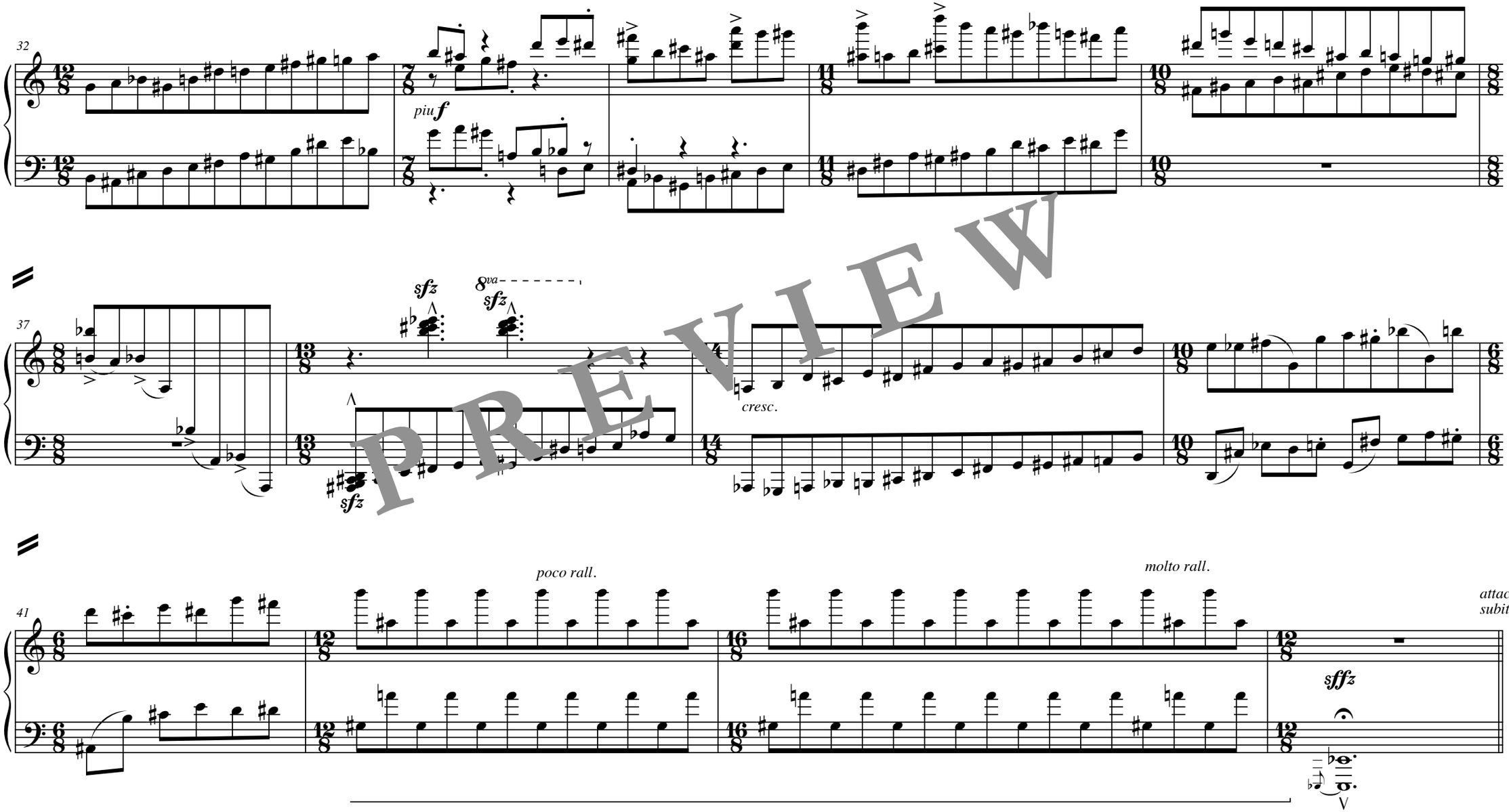
PREVIEW

(Gb, "G," "Ab,"
"A," "B")
accel.
a tempo
accel.
a tempo
(B, C#, D,
Eb, Fb)
sfz
mf
cresc.
ff
f
mf
sfz
accel.
mf
sfz
mf
cresc.
mf
f
mf
Swaying (♩= c. 72)
mp
p

PREVIEW

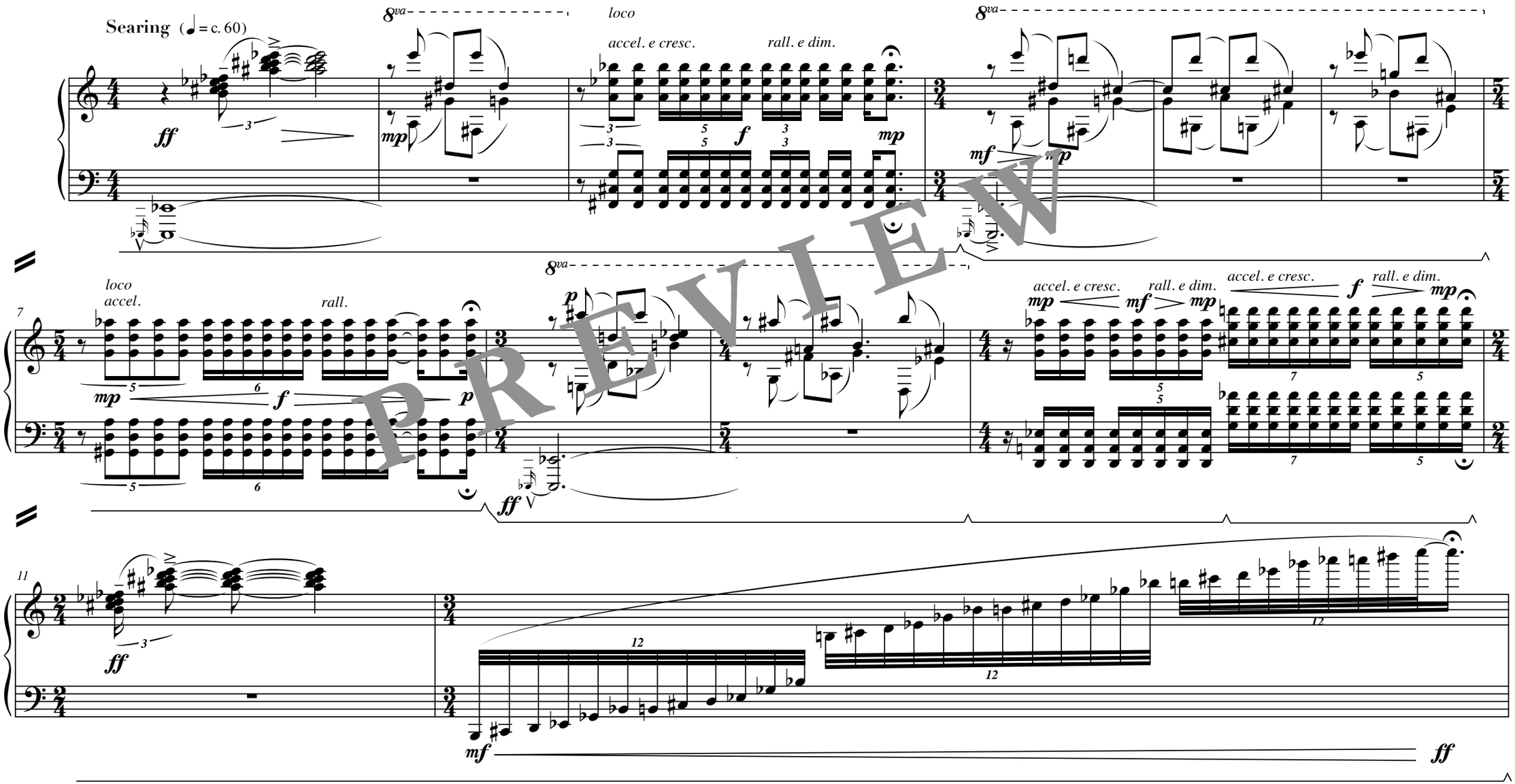

poco rall.
accel.
poco a poco accel. a ♩. = 120
nonlegato
mp
mp
sfz
sfz
cresc.
mf
cresc.
sfz
con fuoco (♩. = c. 120)
f
cresc.

PREVIEW

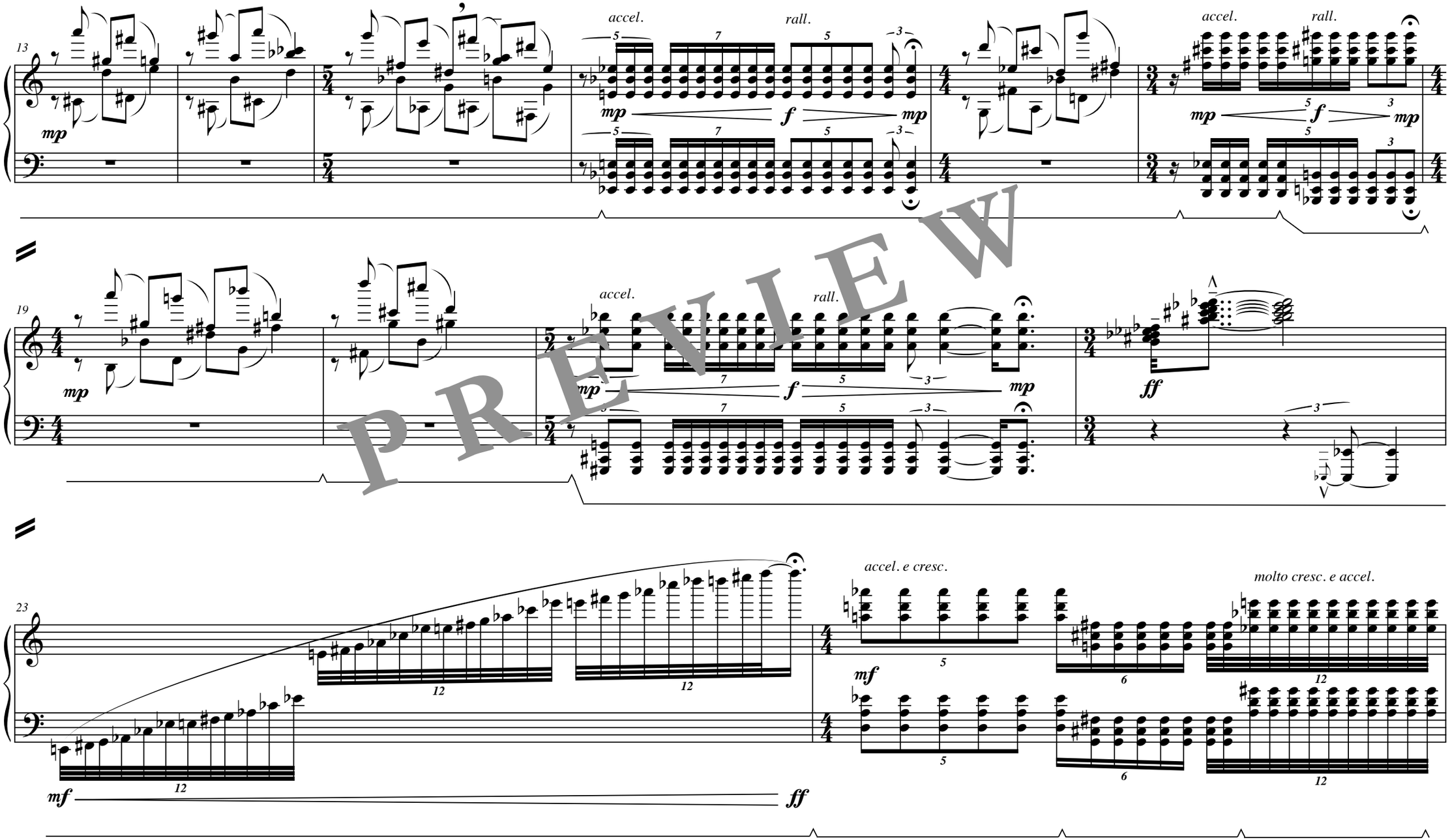

32
piu f
37
sfz
8va
sfz
sfz
cresc.
41
poco rall.
molto rall.
attacca subito
sfffz

PREVIEW

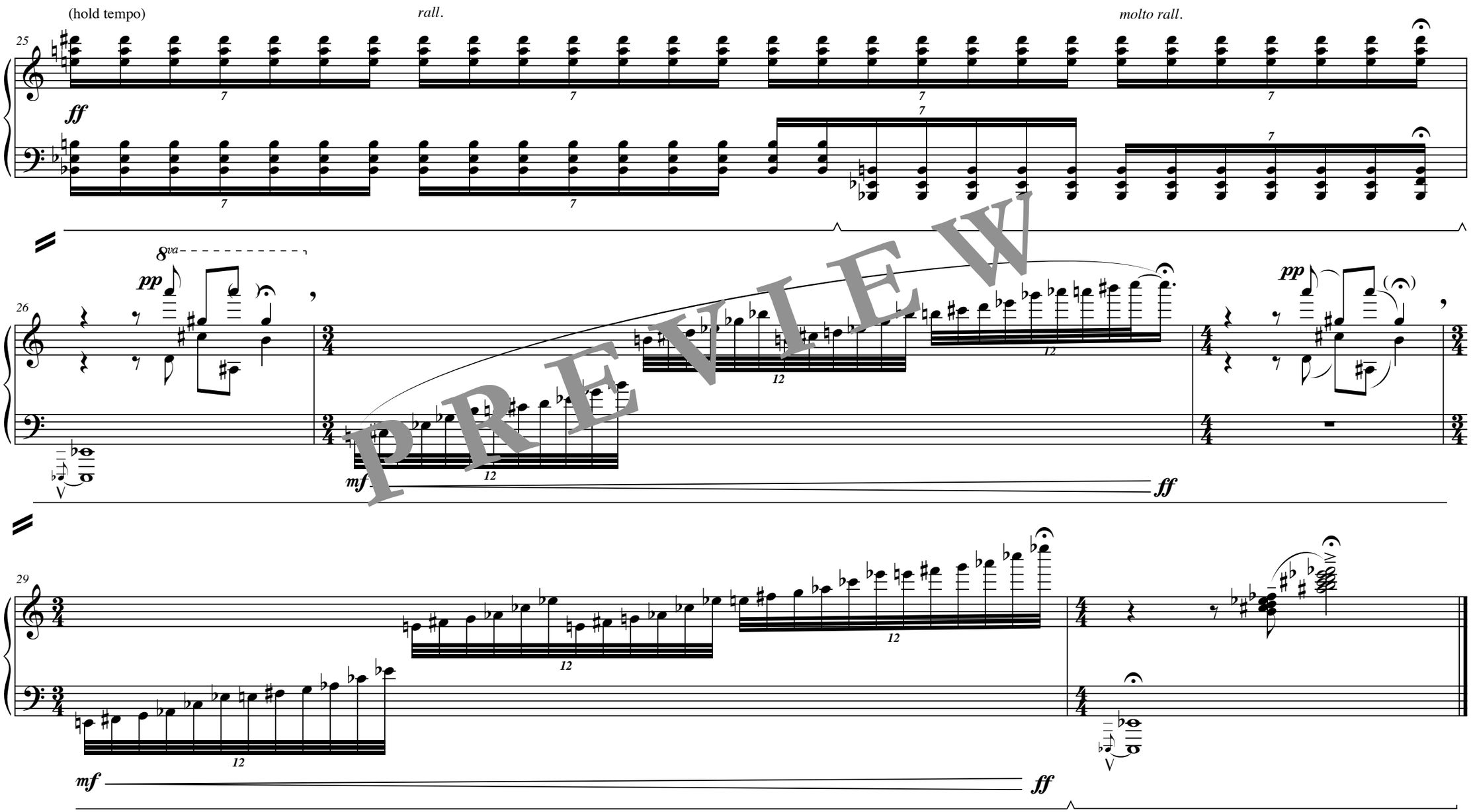
XVIII. Twin flints spark in the dark of the wood



PREVIEW

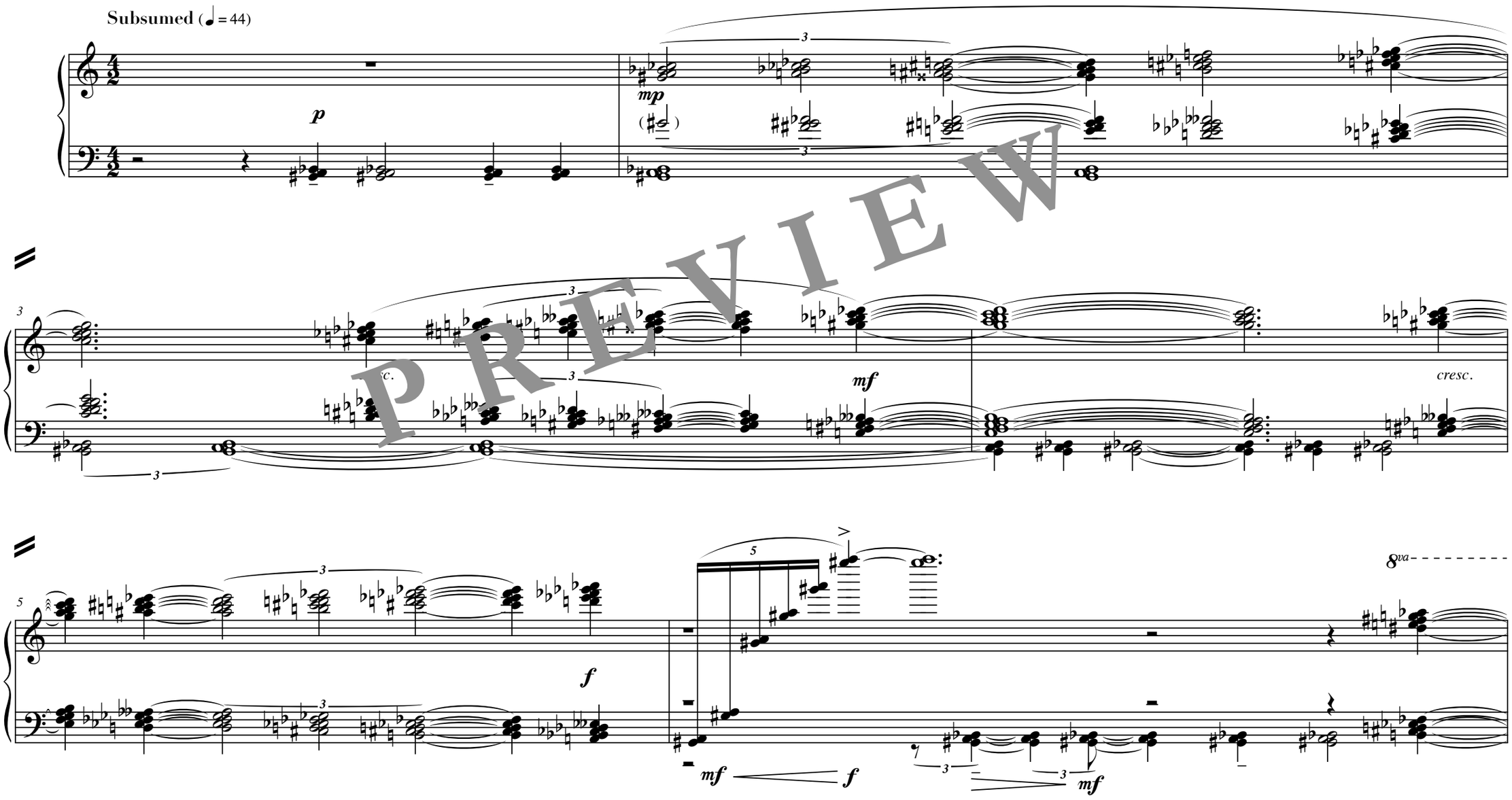

13
accel.
rall.
mp
f
mp
accel.
rall.
mp
f
mp
19
mp
accel.
rall.
mp
f
mp
ff
23
accel. e cresc.
molto cresc. e accel.
mf
ff

PREVIEW

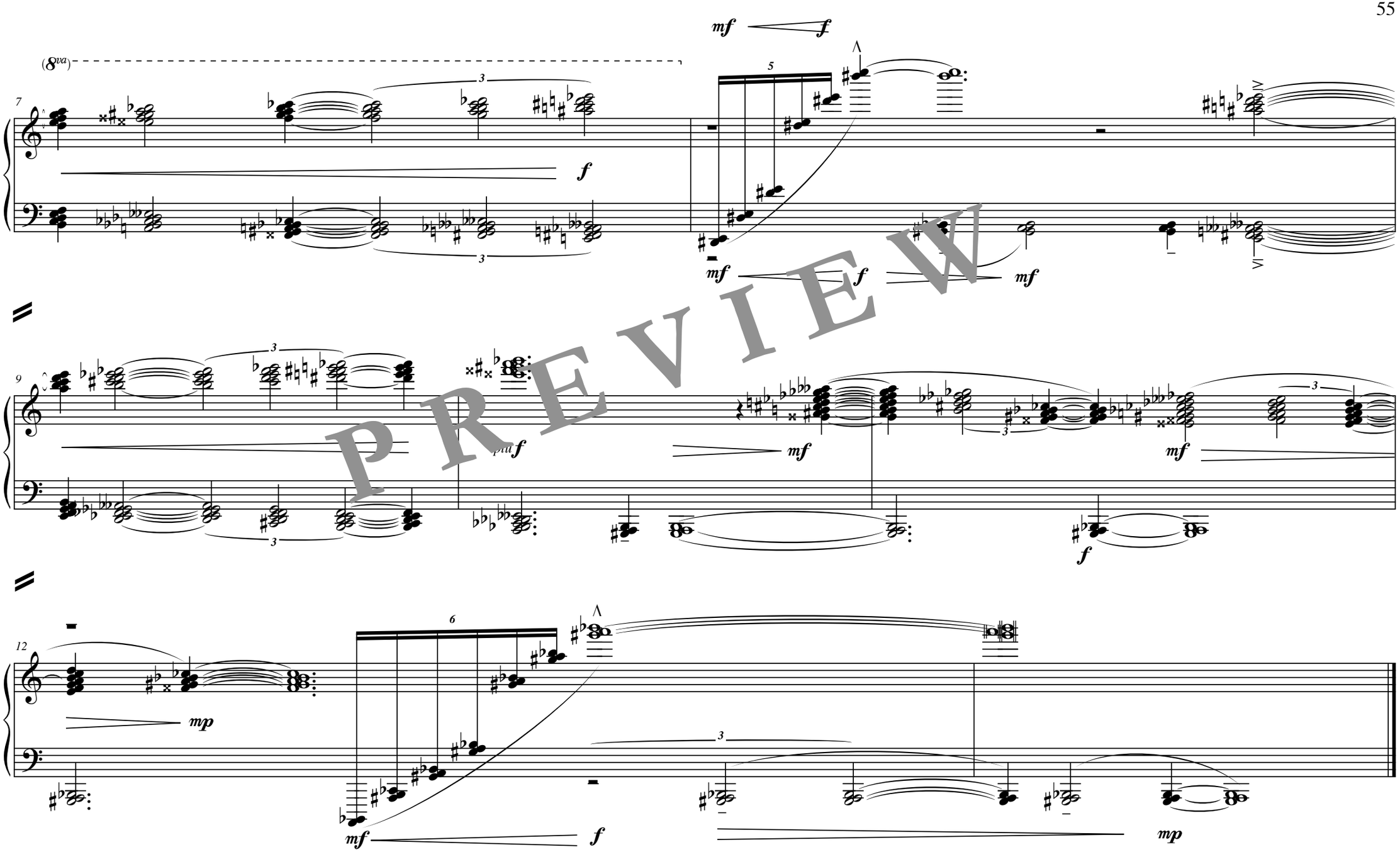


PREVIEW

XIX. The Eye

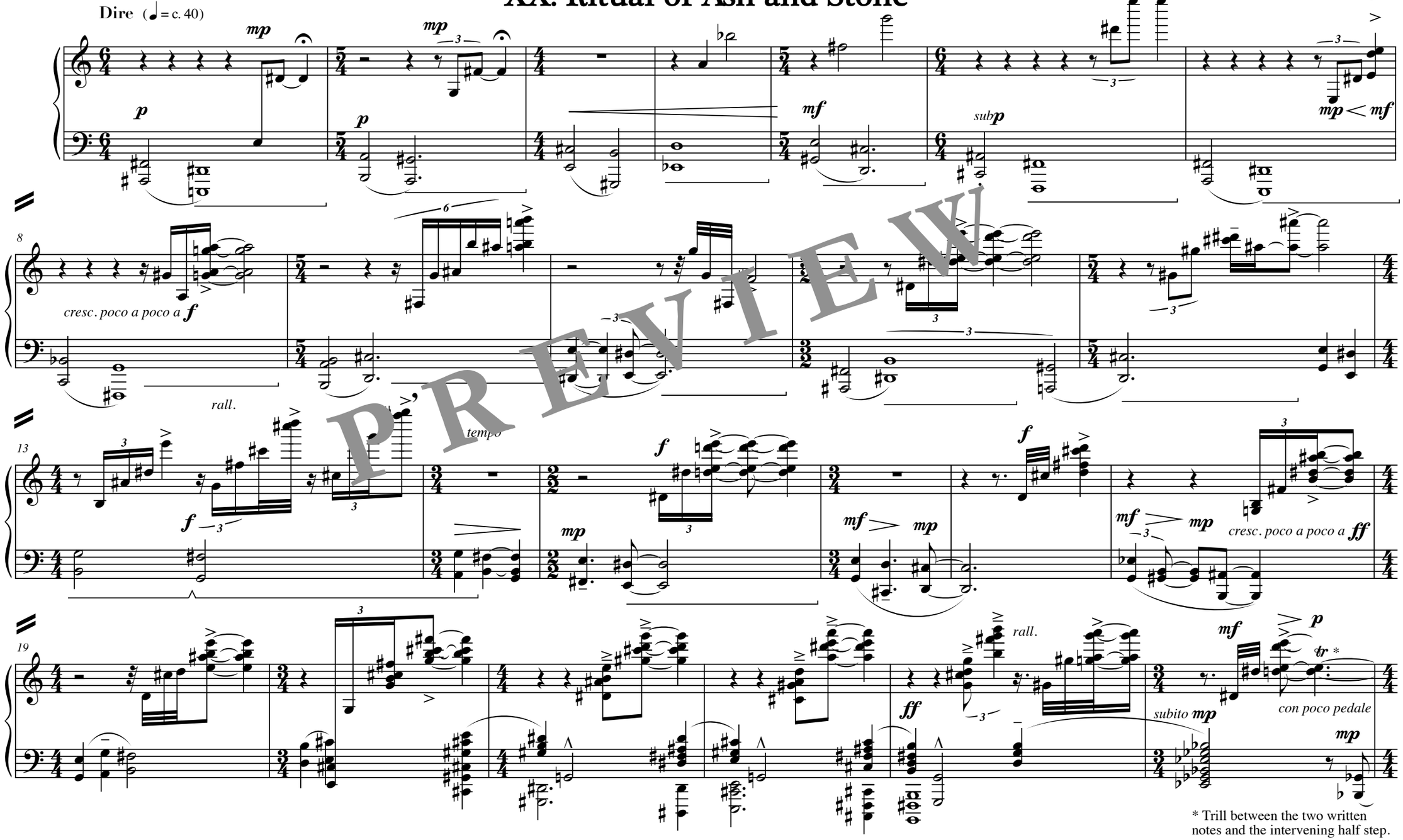


PREVIEW



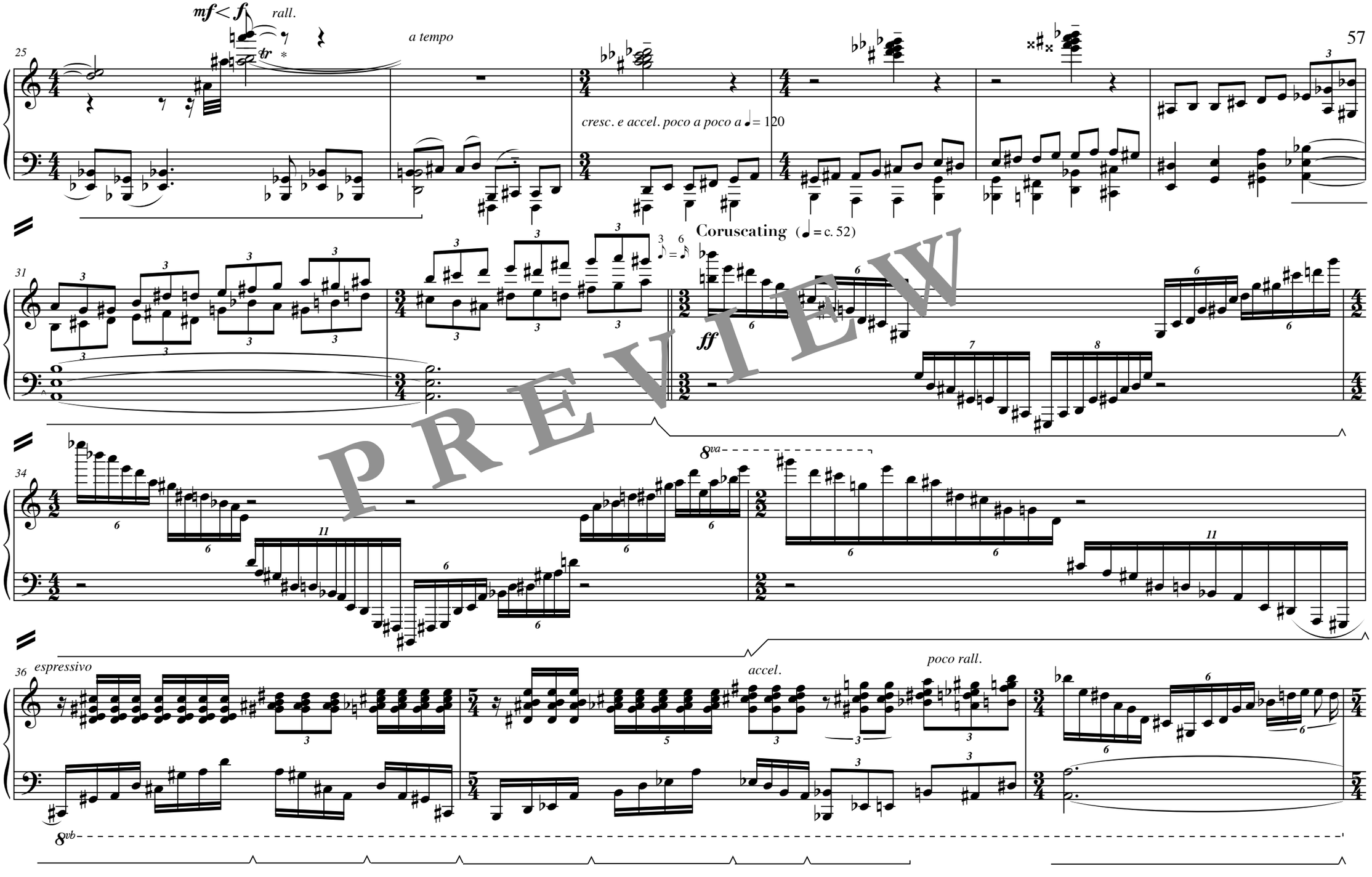
PREVIEW

Compline
XX. Ritual of Ash and Stone

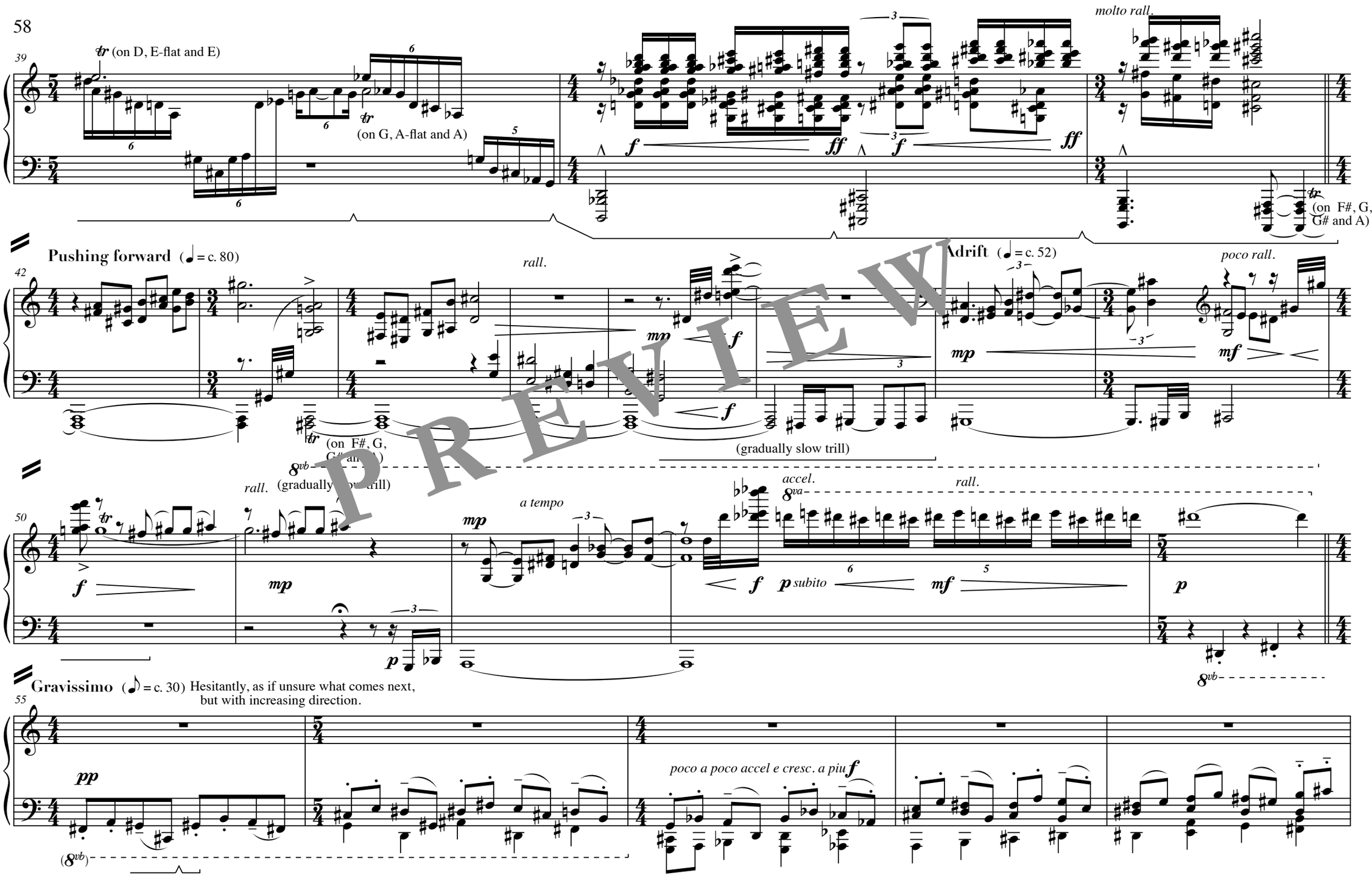


PREVIEW

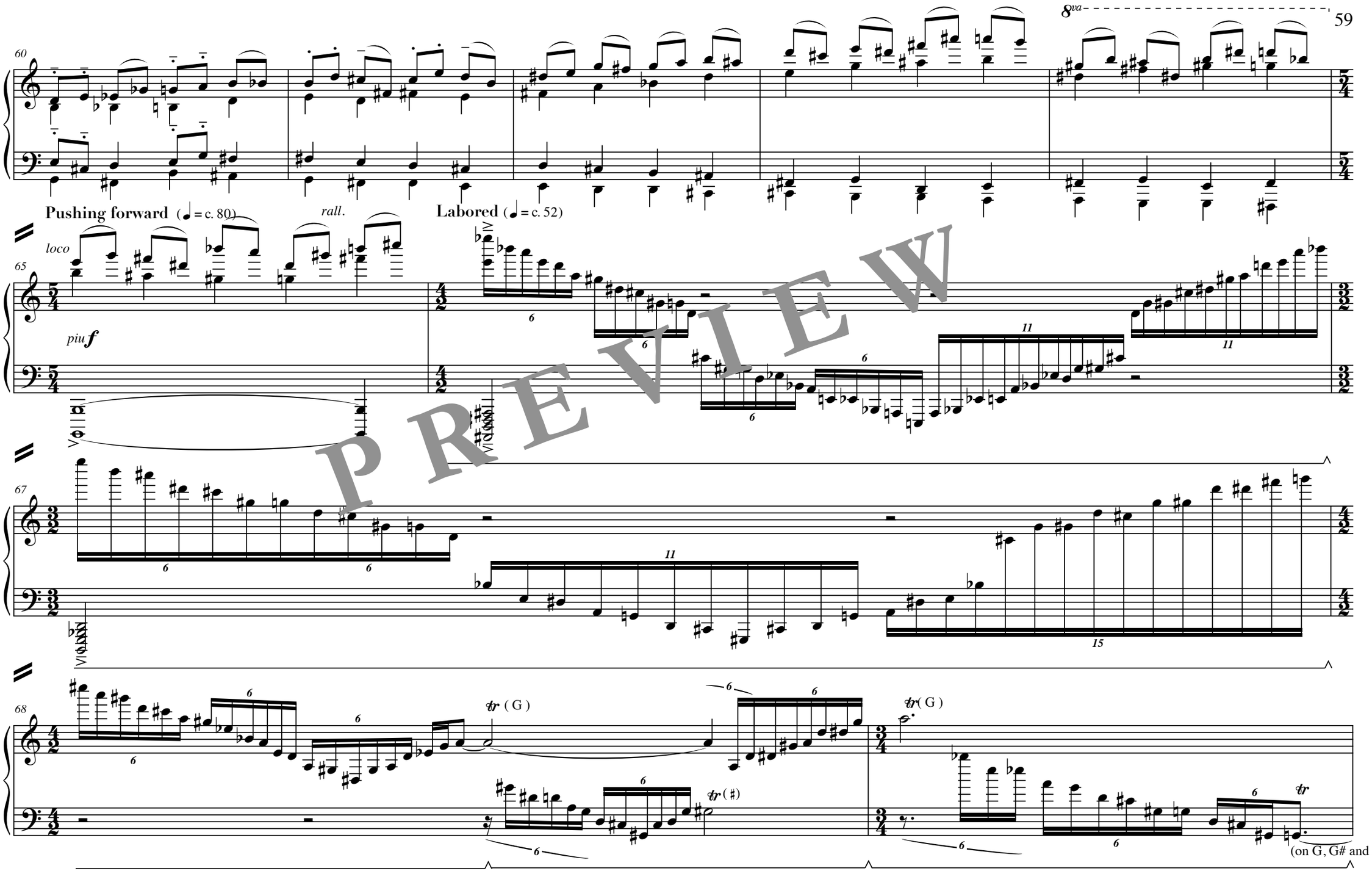
* Trill between the two written notes and the intervening half step.


mf < f
rall.
a tempo
cresc. e accel. poco a poco a ♩= 120
Coruscating (♩= c. 52)
ff
8va
espressivo
accel.
poco rall.
8vb

PREVIEW


39
tr (on D, E-flat and E)
tr (on G, A-flat and A)
molto rall.
tr (on F#, G, G# and A)
Pushing forward (♩ = c. 80)
42
rall.
Adrift (♩ = c. 52)
poco rall.
tr (on F#, G,
8vb
(gradually slow trill)
50
rall.
(gradually slow trill)
a tempo
accel.
8va
rall.
subito
8vb
Gravissimo (𝅗𝅥 = c. 30) Hesitantly, as if unsure what comes next,
but with increasing direction.
55
poco a poco accel e cresc. a piu
(8vb)

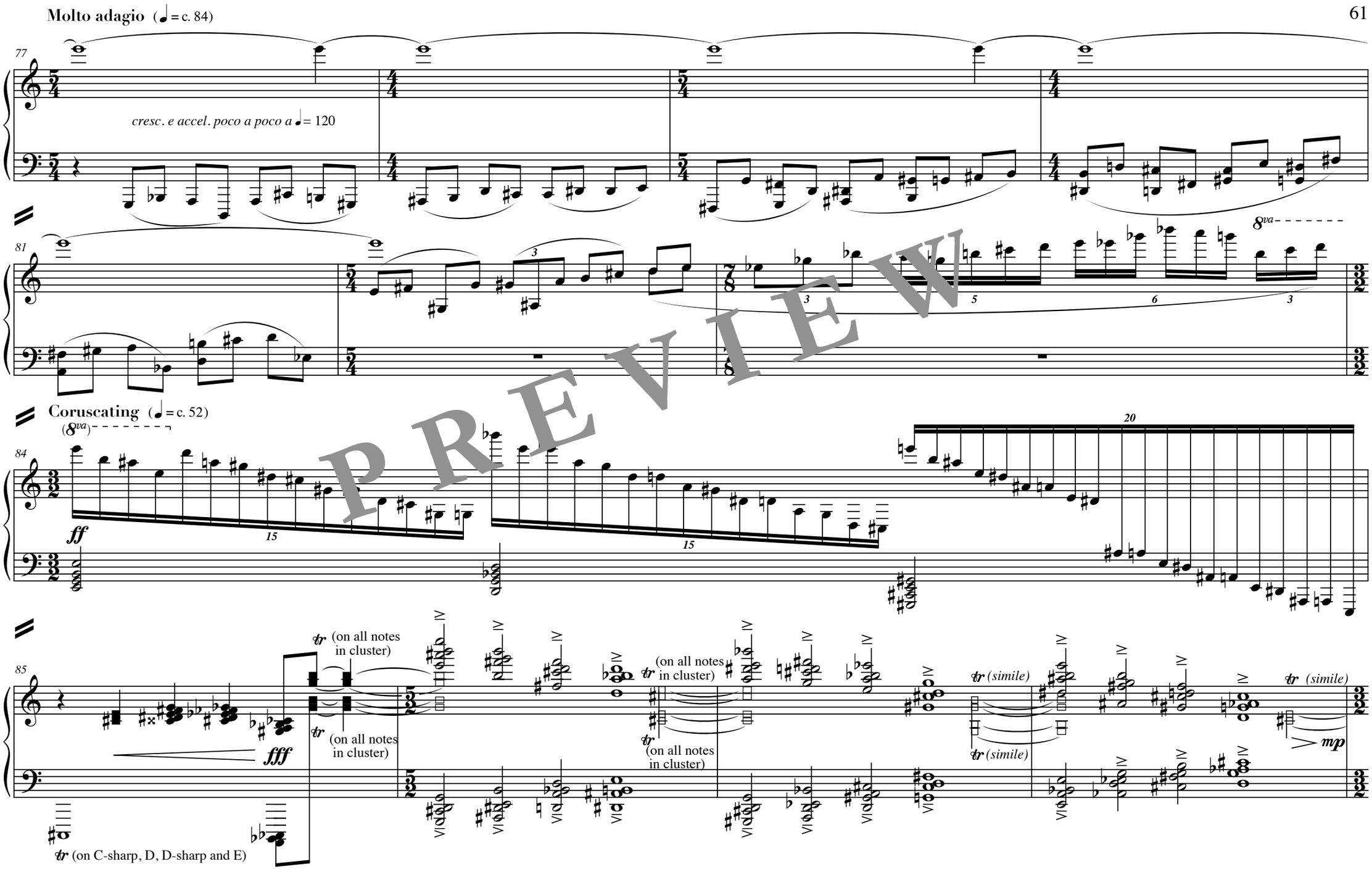
PREVIEW


8va
60
Pushing forward (♩ = c. 80)
rall.
Labored (♩ = c. 52)
65
loco
piu f
67
68
tr (G)
tr (♯)
tr (G)
tr
(on G, G# and A)

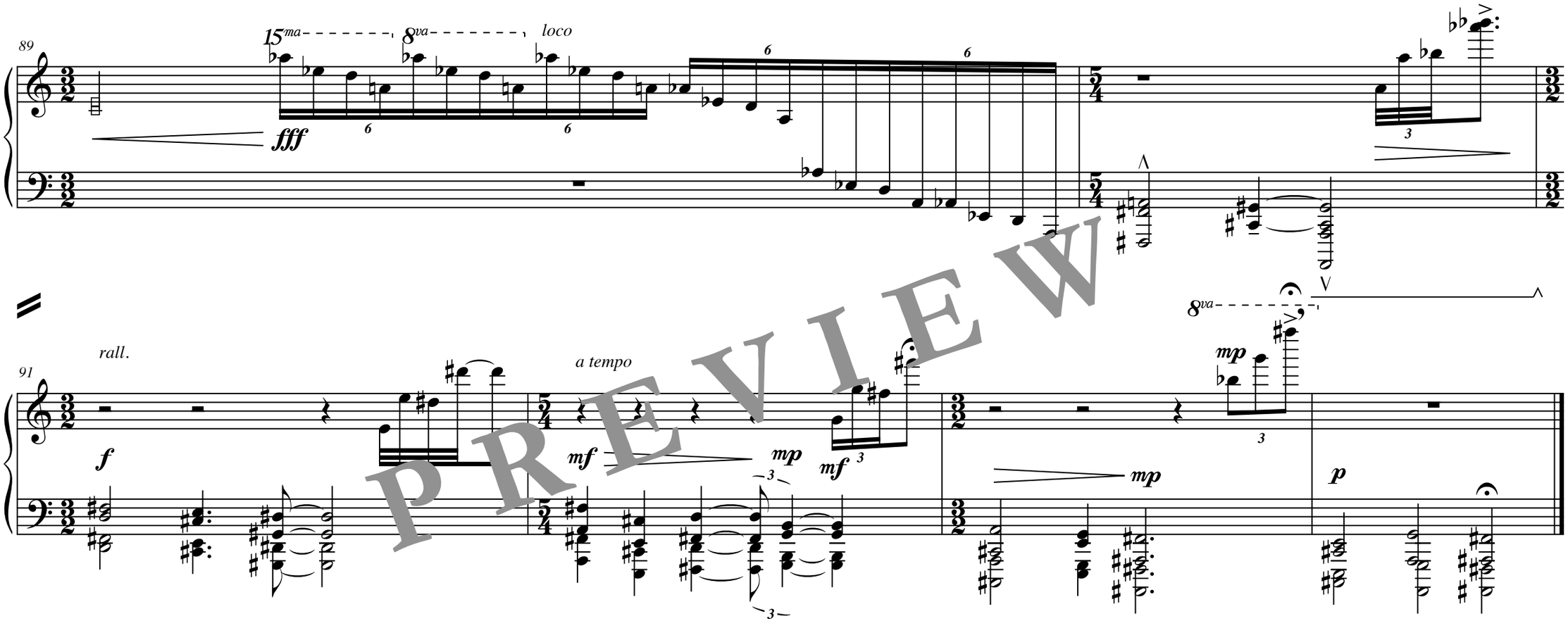
PREVIEW

70
tr (on D, D# and E)
8va
73
rall.
tr (on G-sharp, A and B-flat)
accel.
75
a tempo
(on D, E-flat and E) tr
tr (on C-sharp, D and E-flat)

PREVIEW

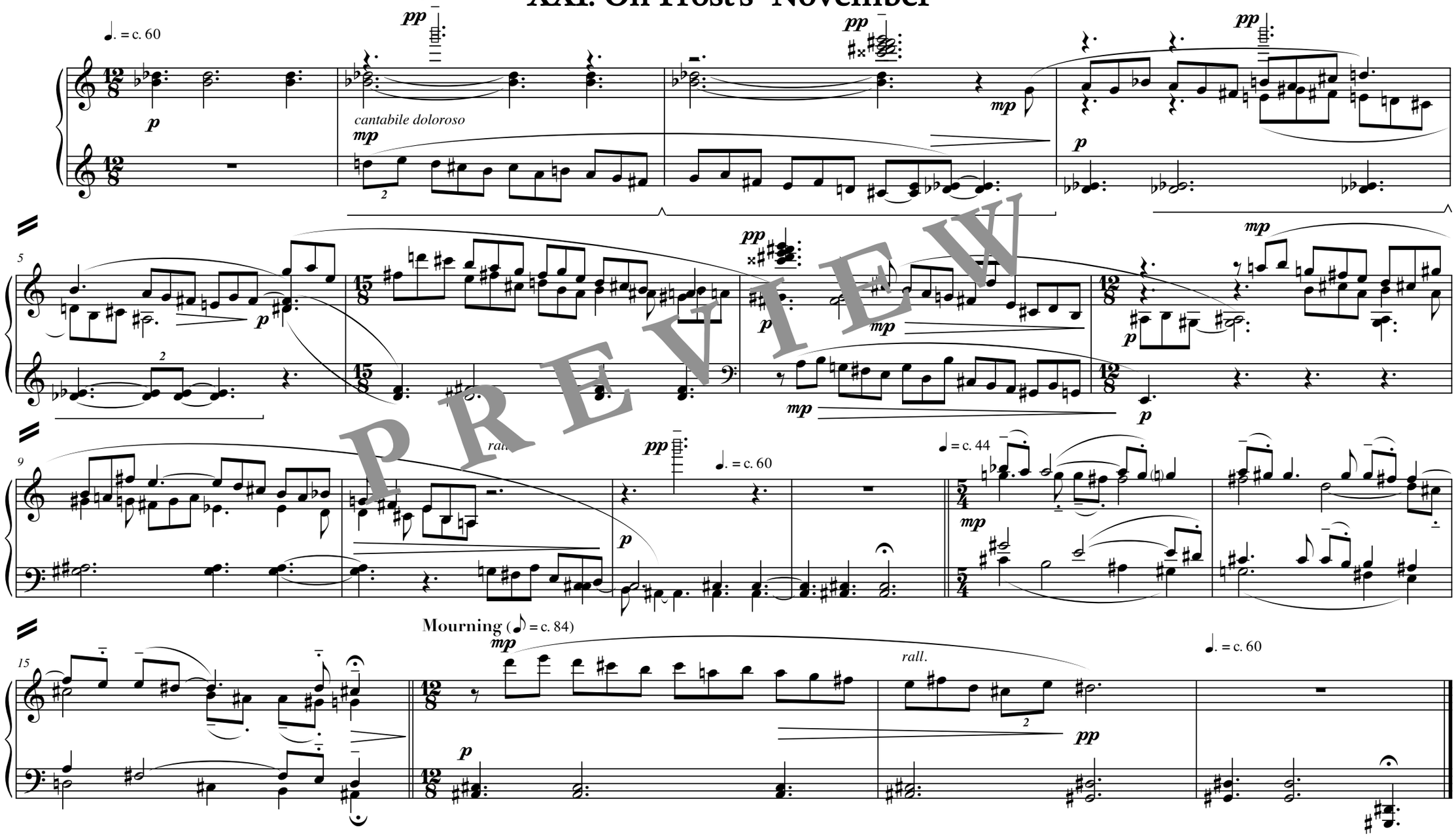

Molto adagio (♩= c. 84)
77
cresc. e accel. poco a poco a ♩= 120
81
8va
Coruscating (♩= c. 52)
(8va)
84
ff
15
15
20
85
fff
tr (on all notes in cluster)
tr (on all notes in cluster)
tr (on all notes in cluster)
tr (on all notes in cluster)
tr (simile)
tr (simile)
tr (simile)
mp
tr (on C-sharp, D, D-sharp and E)

PREVIEW



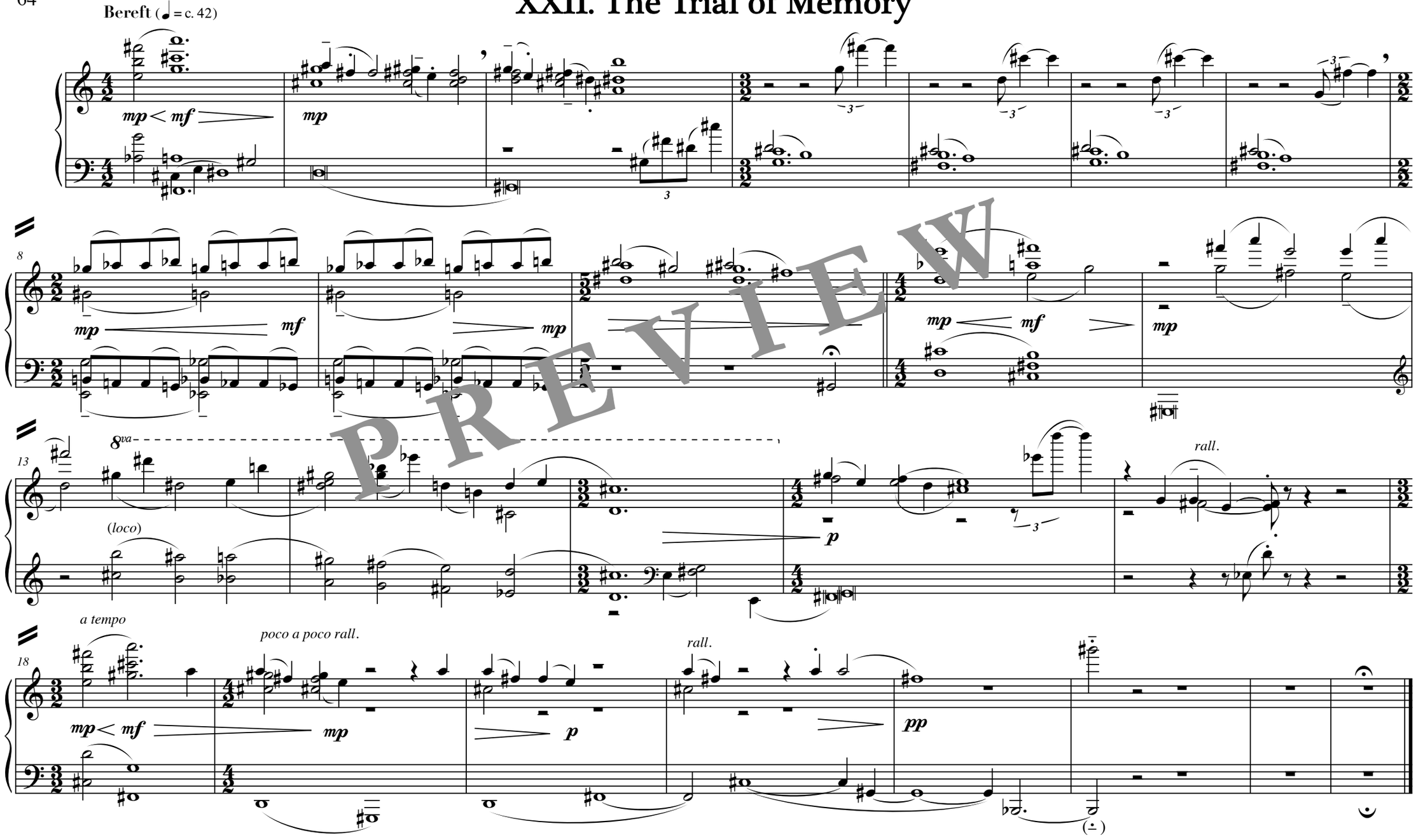
PREVIEW

XXI. On Frost's "November"



PREVIEW

XXII. The Trial of Memory



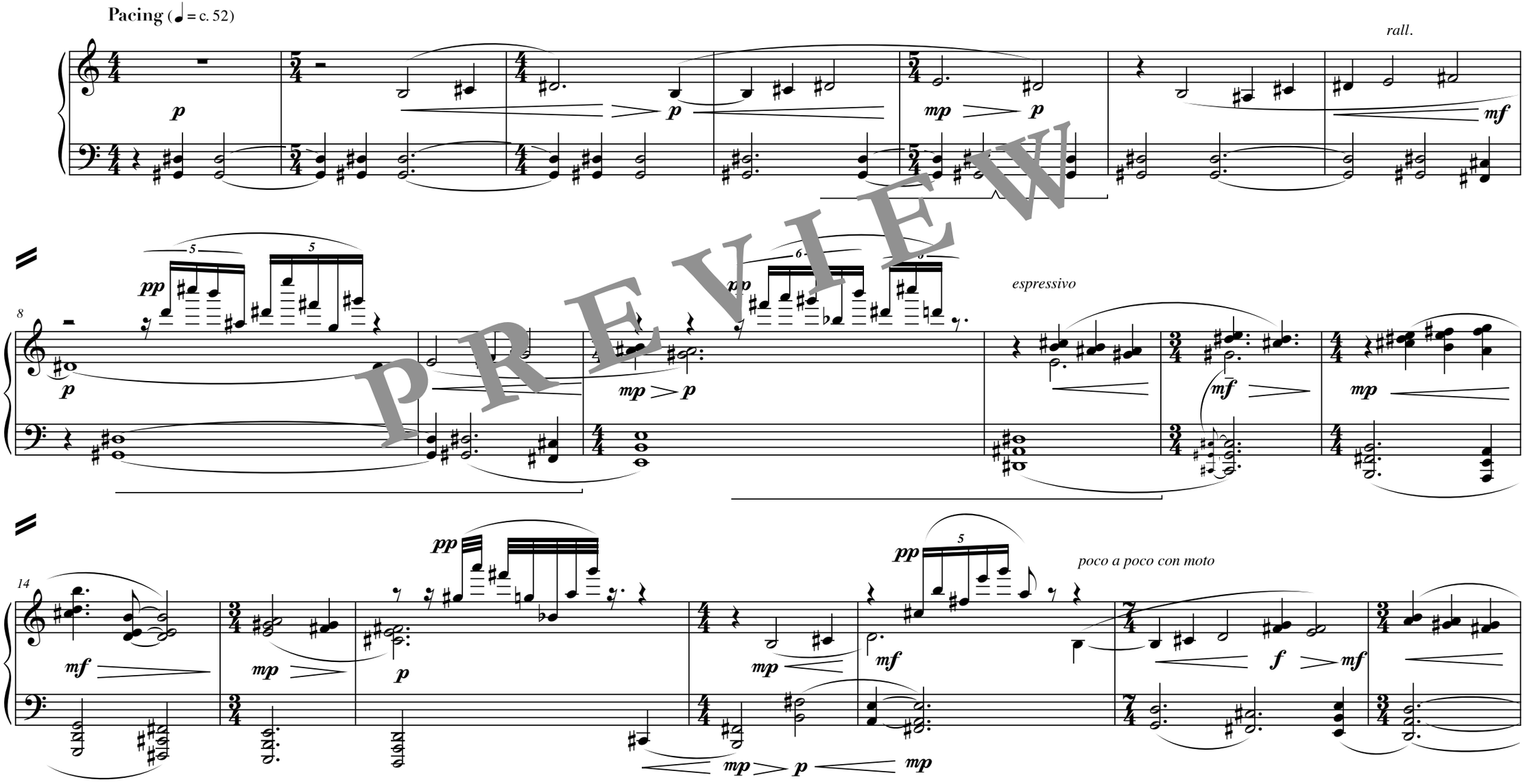
PREVIEW

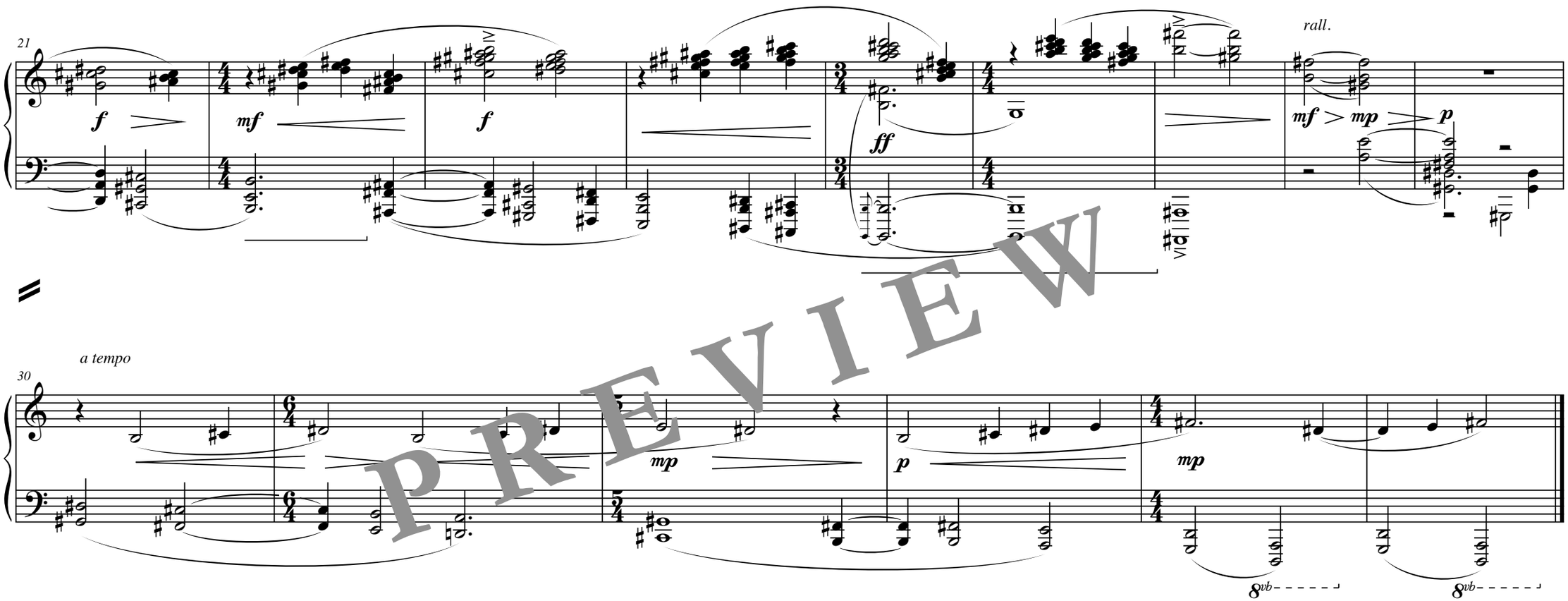
PREVIEW

Book III

PREVIEW

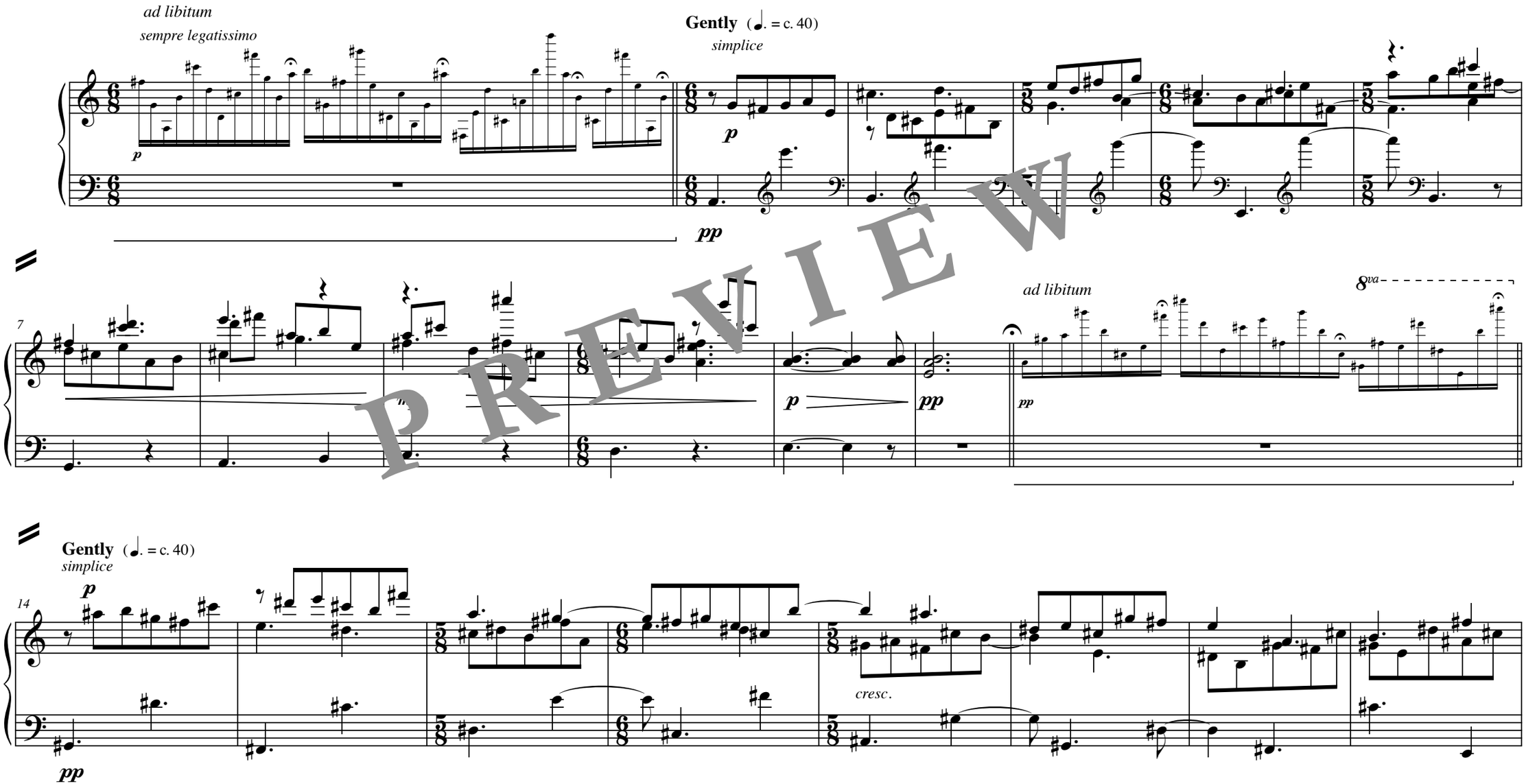
XXIII. Prayer



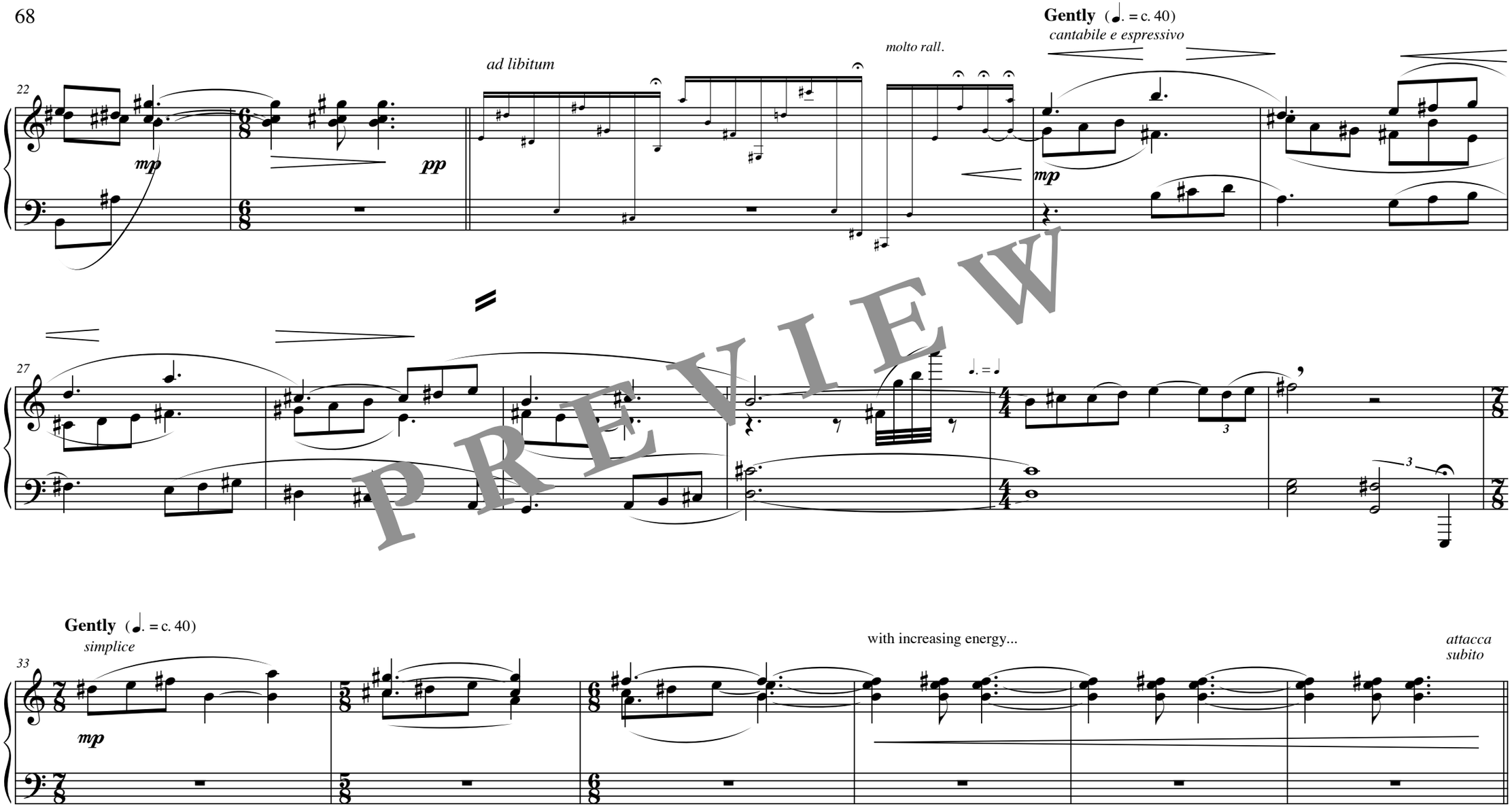


PREVIEW

XXIV. Three Angels

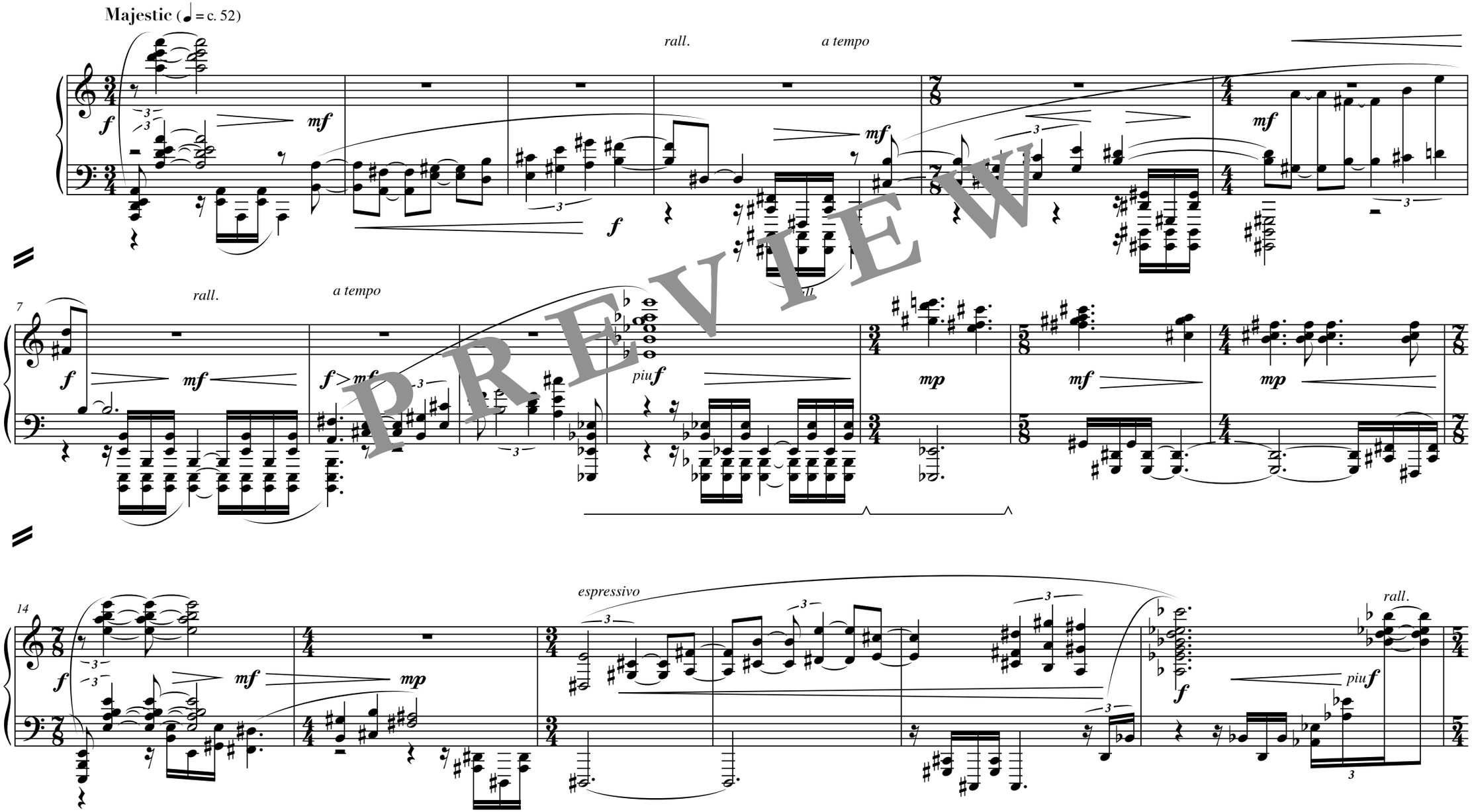


PREVIEW

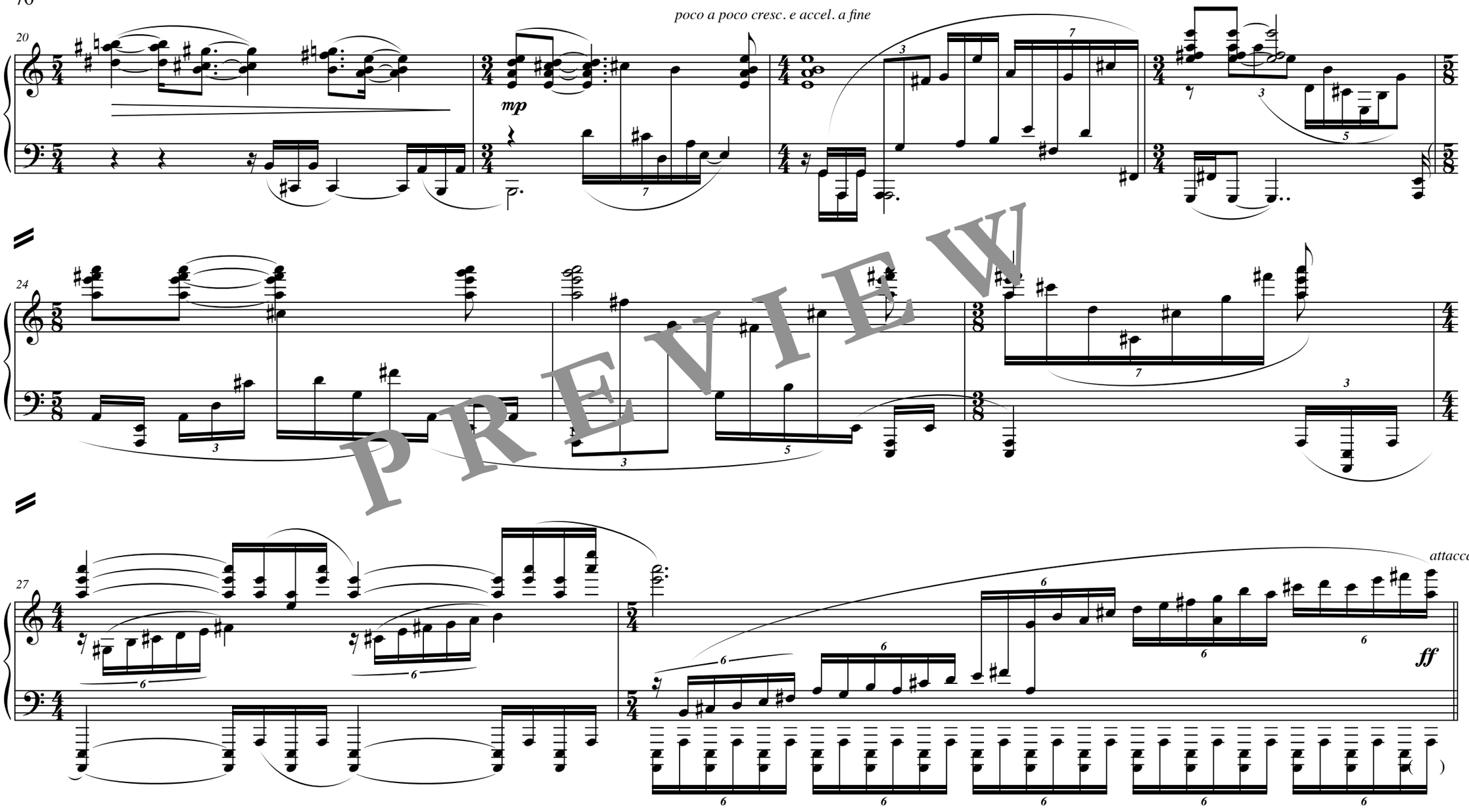

Gently (♩. = c. 40)
cantabile e espressivo
ad libitum
molto rall.
22
mp
pp
mp
27
♩. = ♩
3
3
Gently (♩. = c. 40)
simplice
33
mp
with increasing energy...
attacca
subito

PREVIEW

Matins
XXV. Aubade

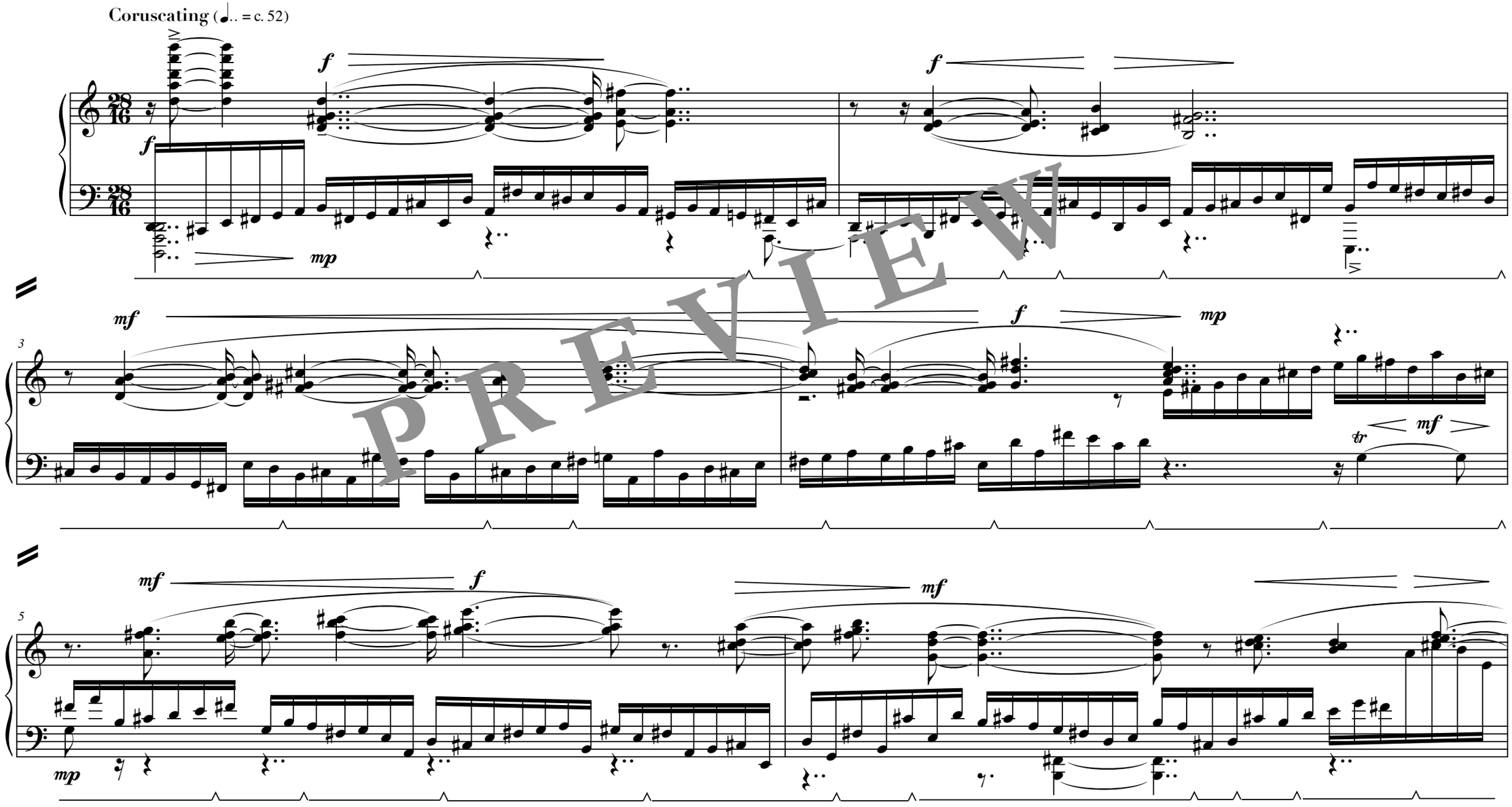


PREVIEW

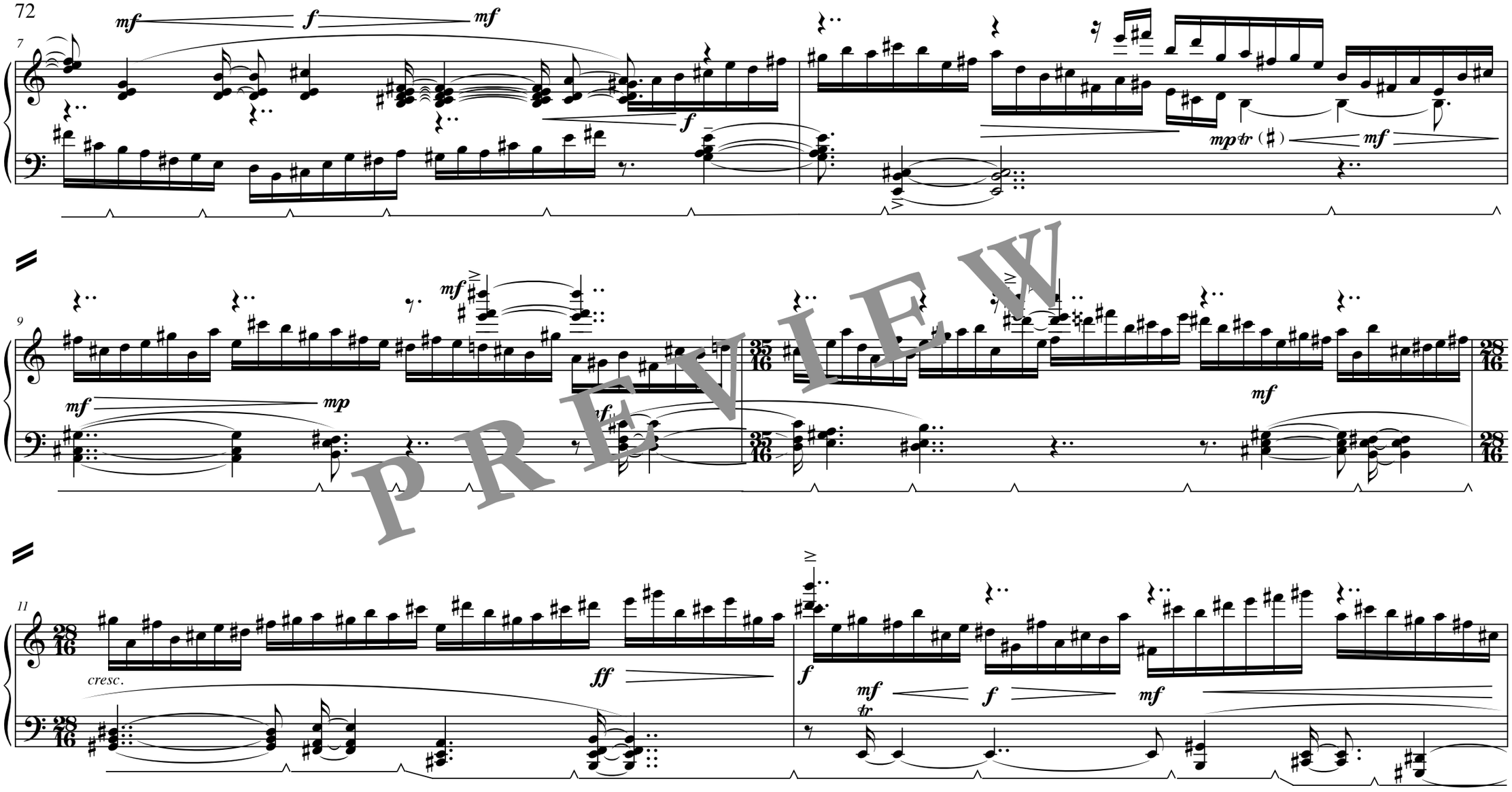


PREVIEW

XXVI. A great gasp of waves

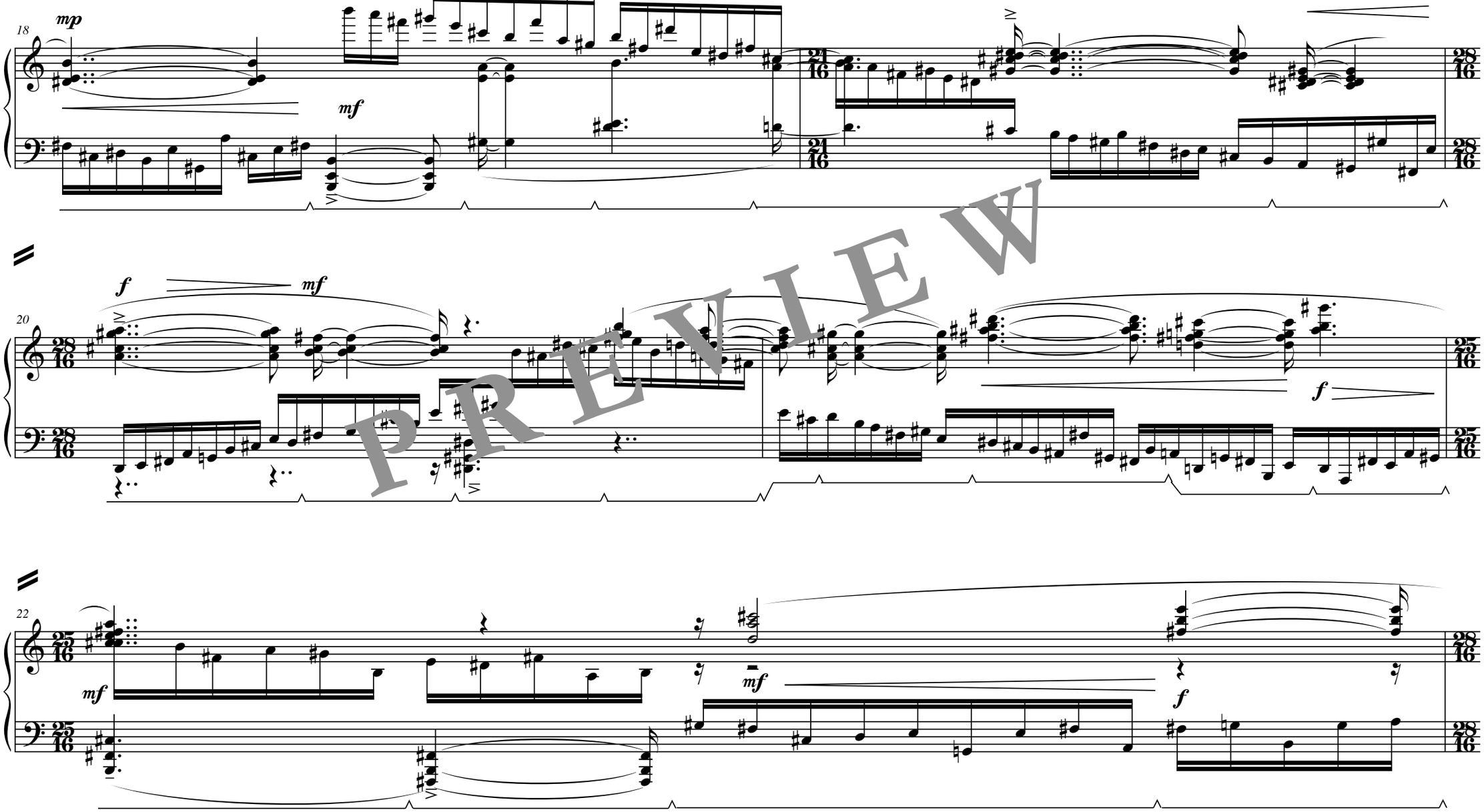


PREVIEW

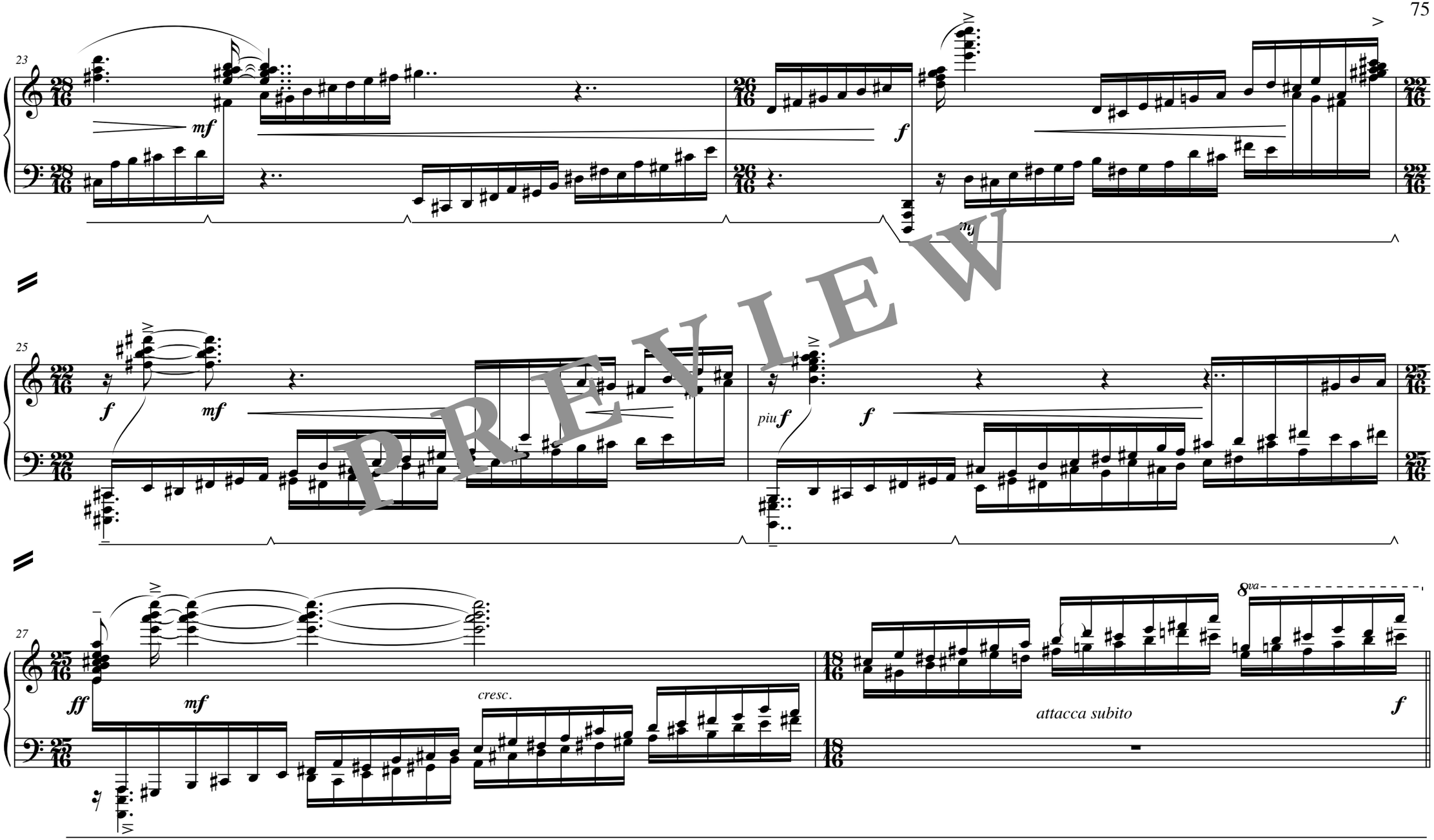


PREVIEW

PREVIEW



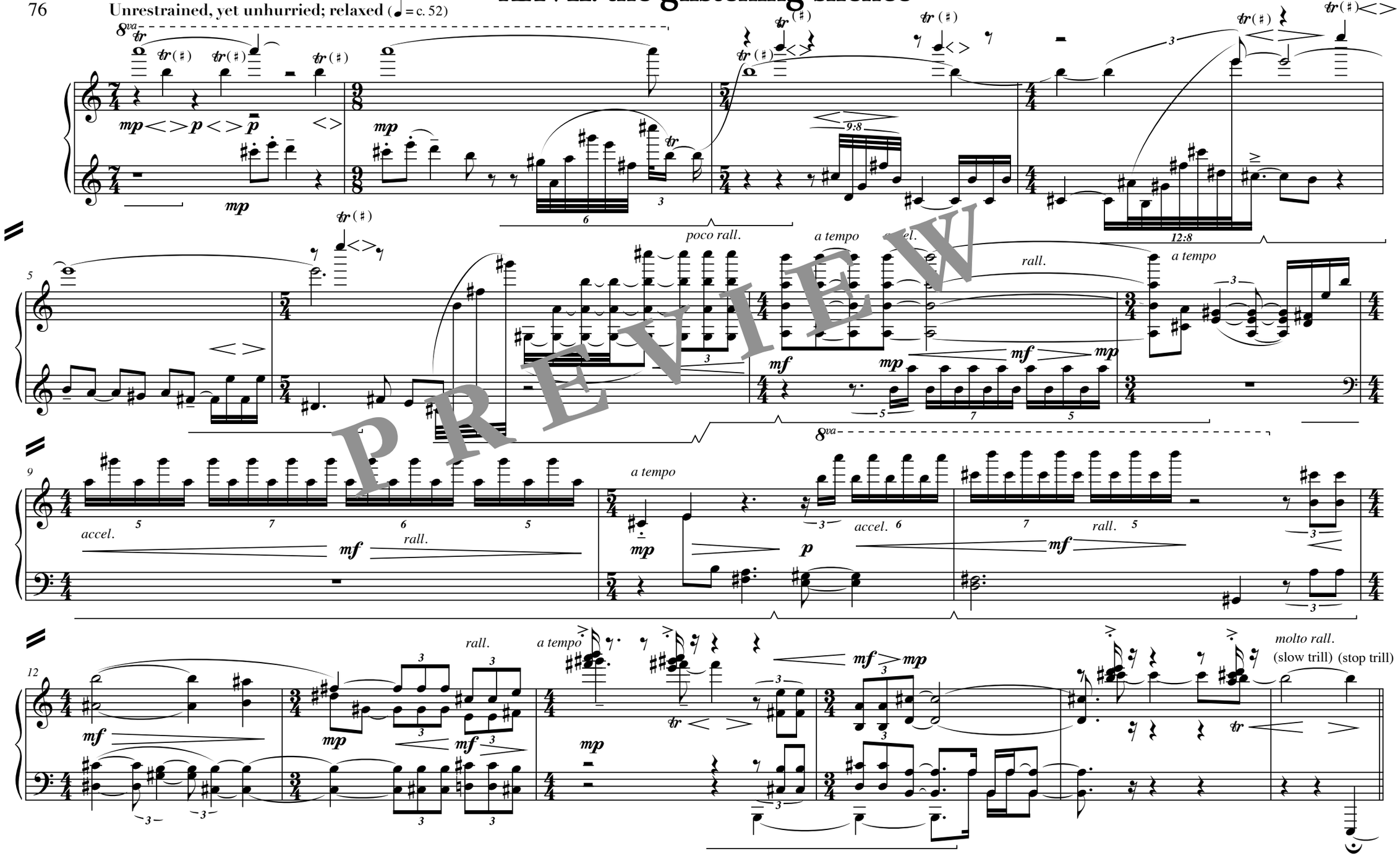
PREVIEW



PREVIEW

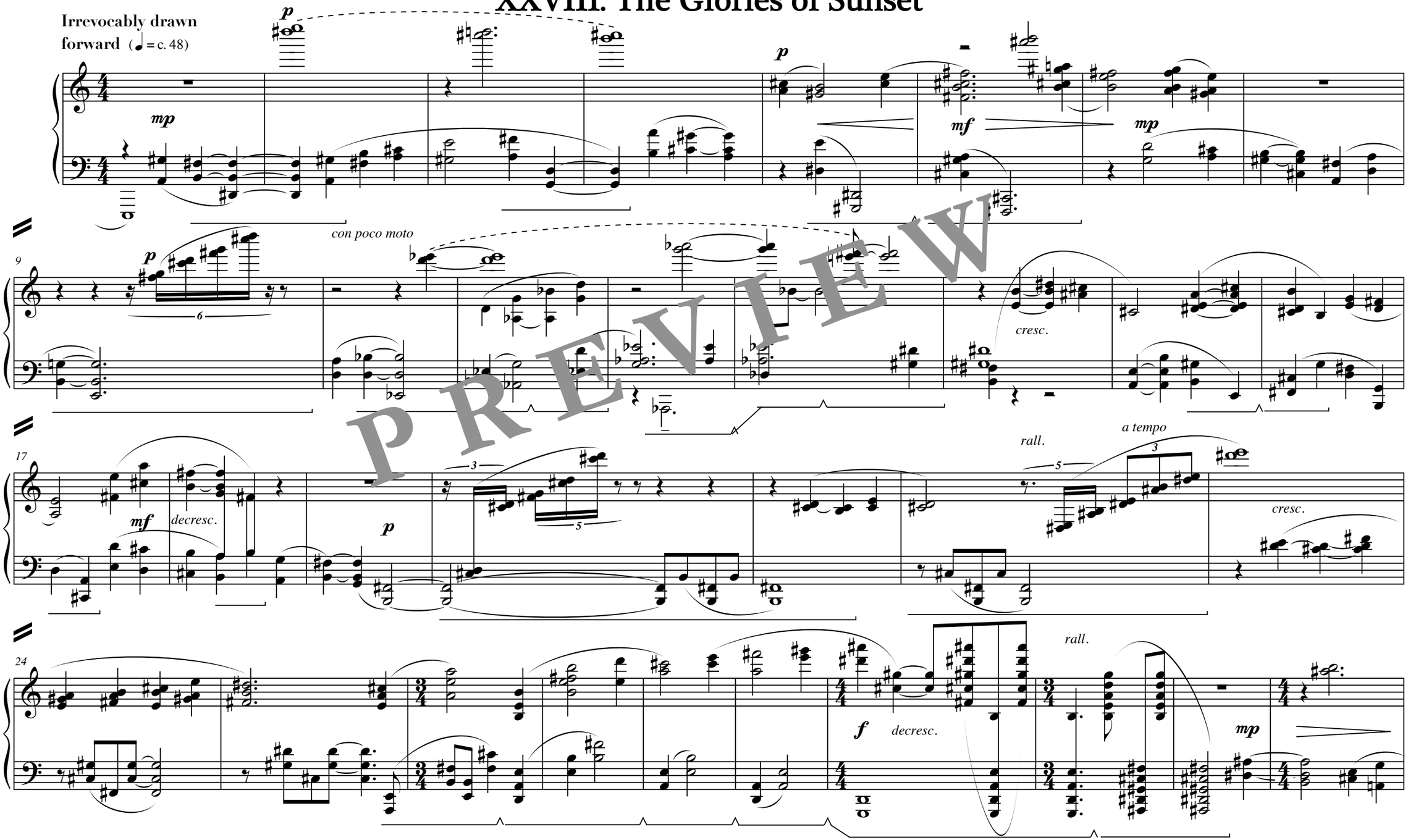
XXVII. the glistening silence

Unrestrained, yet unhurried; relaxed (♩ = c. 52)

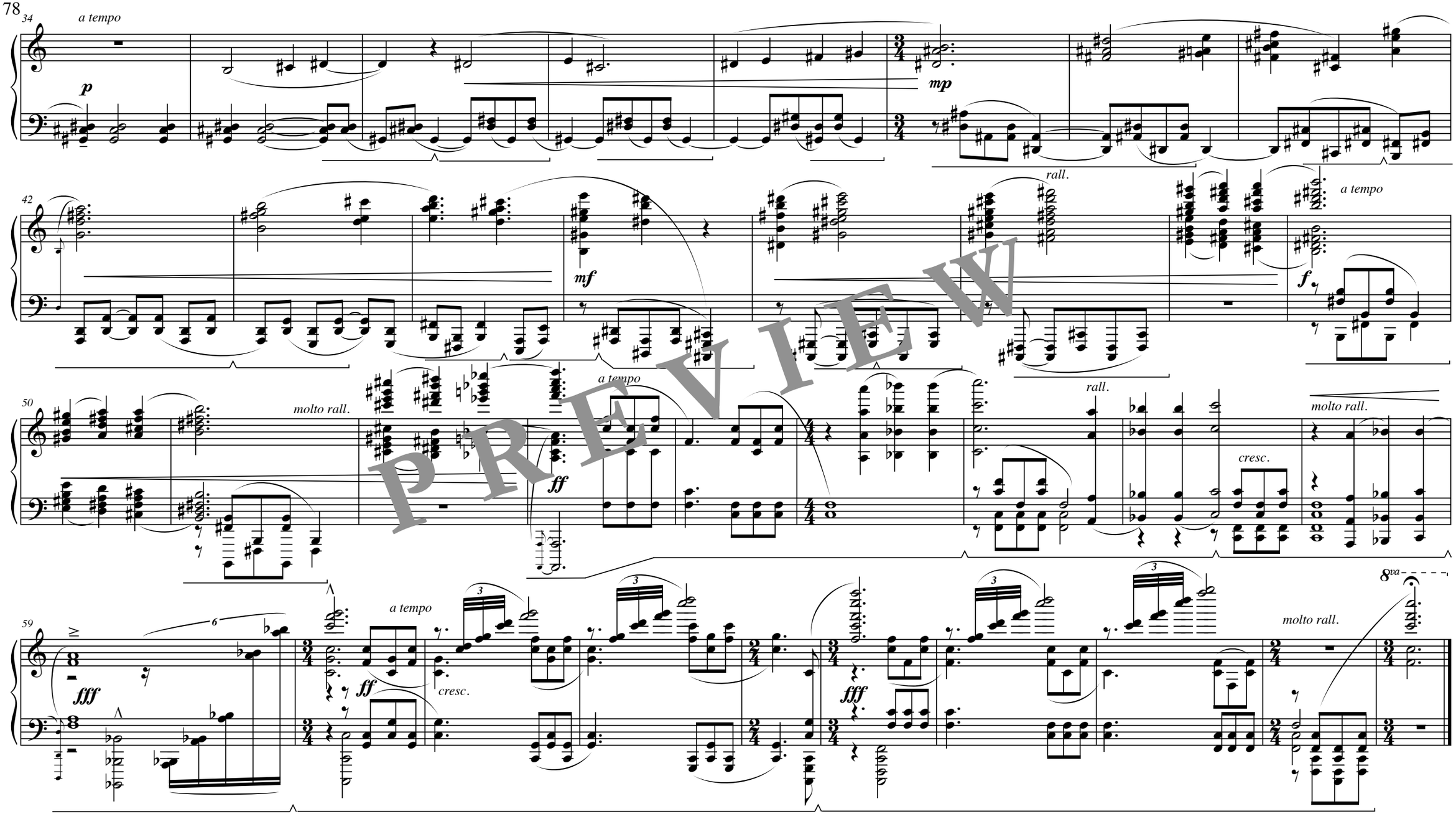


PREVIEW

Lauds
XXVIII. The Glories of Sunset



PREVIEW


34
a tempo
p
mp
42
mf
rall.
a tempo
f
50
molto rall.
a tempo
ff
rall.
molto rall.
cresc.
59
fff
ff
a tempo
cresc.
fff
molto rall.
8va

PREVIEW