I. Gamelan

Native music, played by the Javanese on their indigenous instruments, is called *Gamelan.* The Javanese ensemble is a kind of exotic orchestra, consisting mainly of diversely shaped and constructed percussive instruments of metal, wood and bamboo, comprising various kinds and sizes of bells, chimes, gongs, sounding boards, bowls, pans, drums (some barrel-like), tom-toms, native xylophones, sonorous *alang-alang* (zephyr-like, aeolian harp-like) and other unique music implements. The only stringed instrument I could discern was the ancient, guitar-shaped *rebab,* which is held by the leader in a position similar to that of the lute.

Both rulers of the two Sultanates of central Java: the Susuhunan of Solo and the Sultan of Djokja, and the two independent princes, Manku Negoro of Solo and Paku Alam of Djokja, have the best, largest and most complete native orchestras *(Gamelan).* They own old instruments of inestimable value, the enchanting sonority of which is attributable to the mellowing process of time.

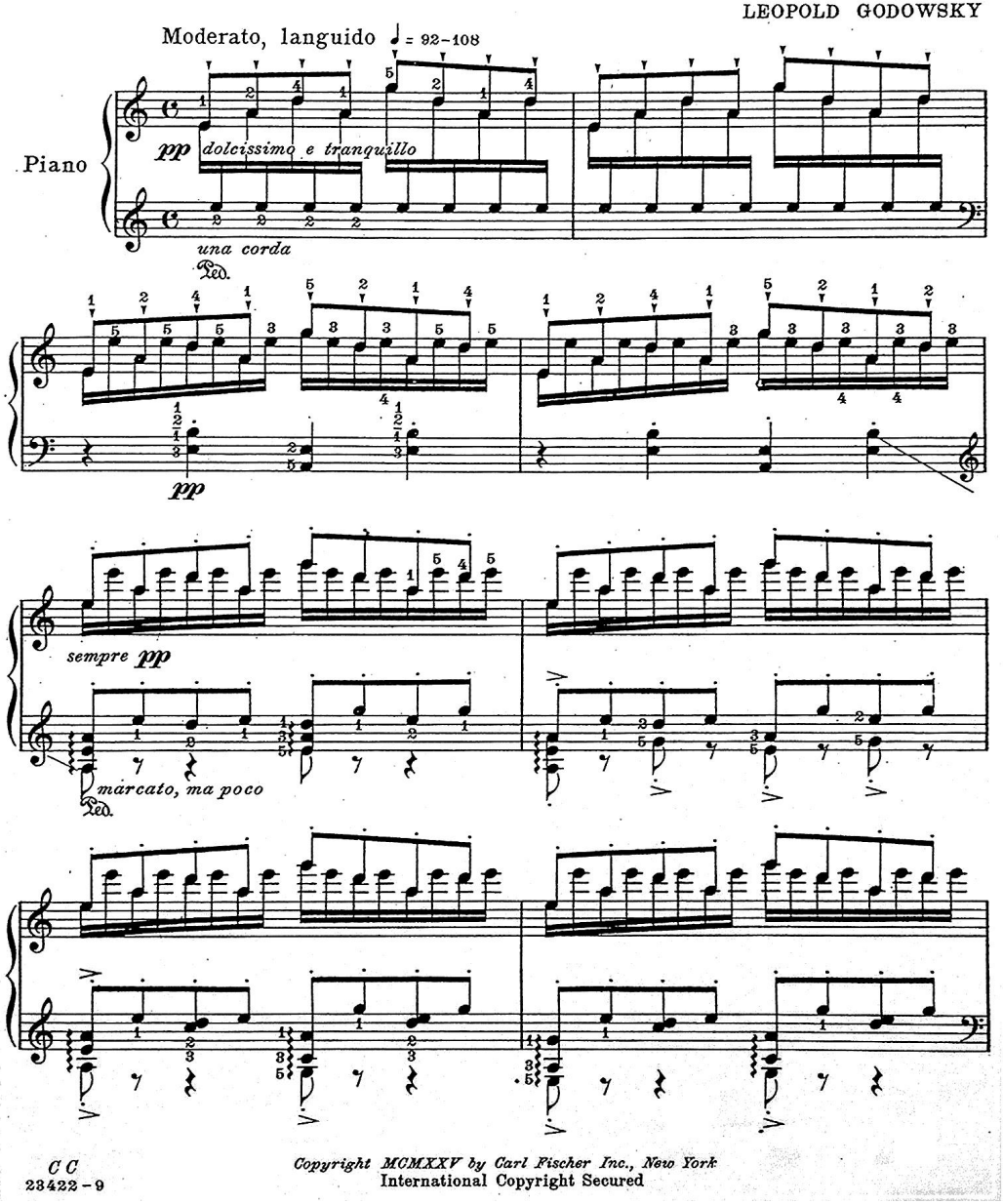
The sonority of the *Gamelan* is so weird, spectral, fantastic and bewitching, the native music so elusive, vague, shimmering and singular, that on listening to this new world of sound I lost my sense of reality, imagining myself in a realm of enchantment. Nothing seen or experienced in Java conveyed so strongly the mysterious and strange character of the island and its inhabitants.

The *Gamelan* produces most ethereal pianissimos, particularly entrancing when heard from a distance. It is like a perfume of sound, like a musical breeze. Usually the music, beginning very softly and languidly, becomes faster and louder as the movement progresses, rising, at last, to a barbaric climax.

In this, the first of the descriptive scenes, I have endeavored to recreate a *Gamelan* sonority – a typically Javanese atmosphere. Except for the one chromatic variation (pages 9-10), which is intentionally Occidental, the movement is almost exclusively diatonic and decidedly Oriental (Far Eastern).

I. Gamelan

LEOPOLD GODOWSKY



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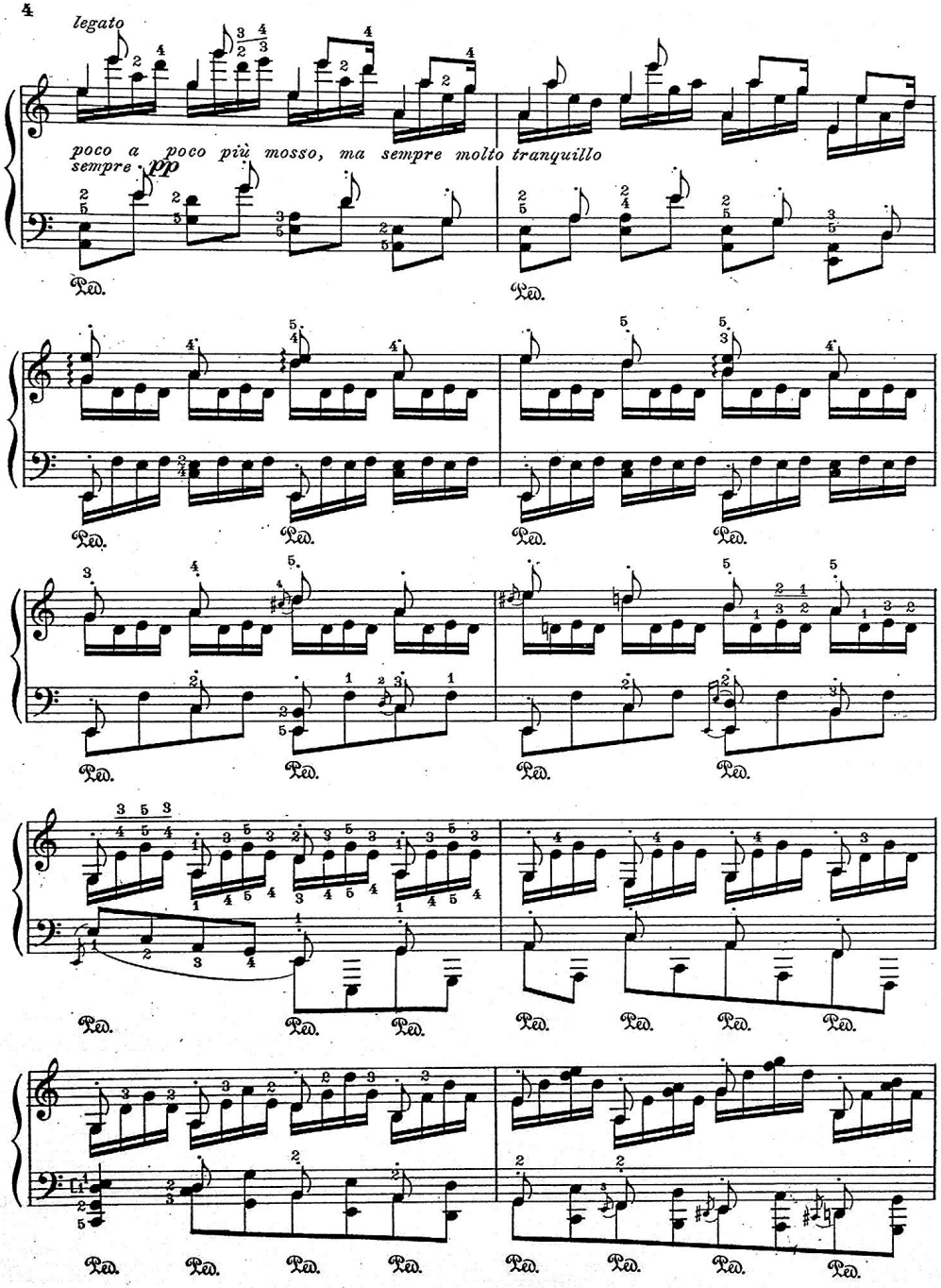
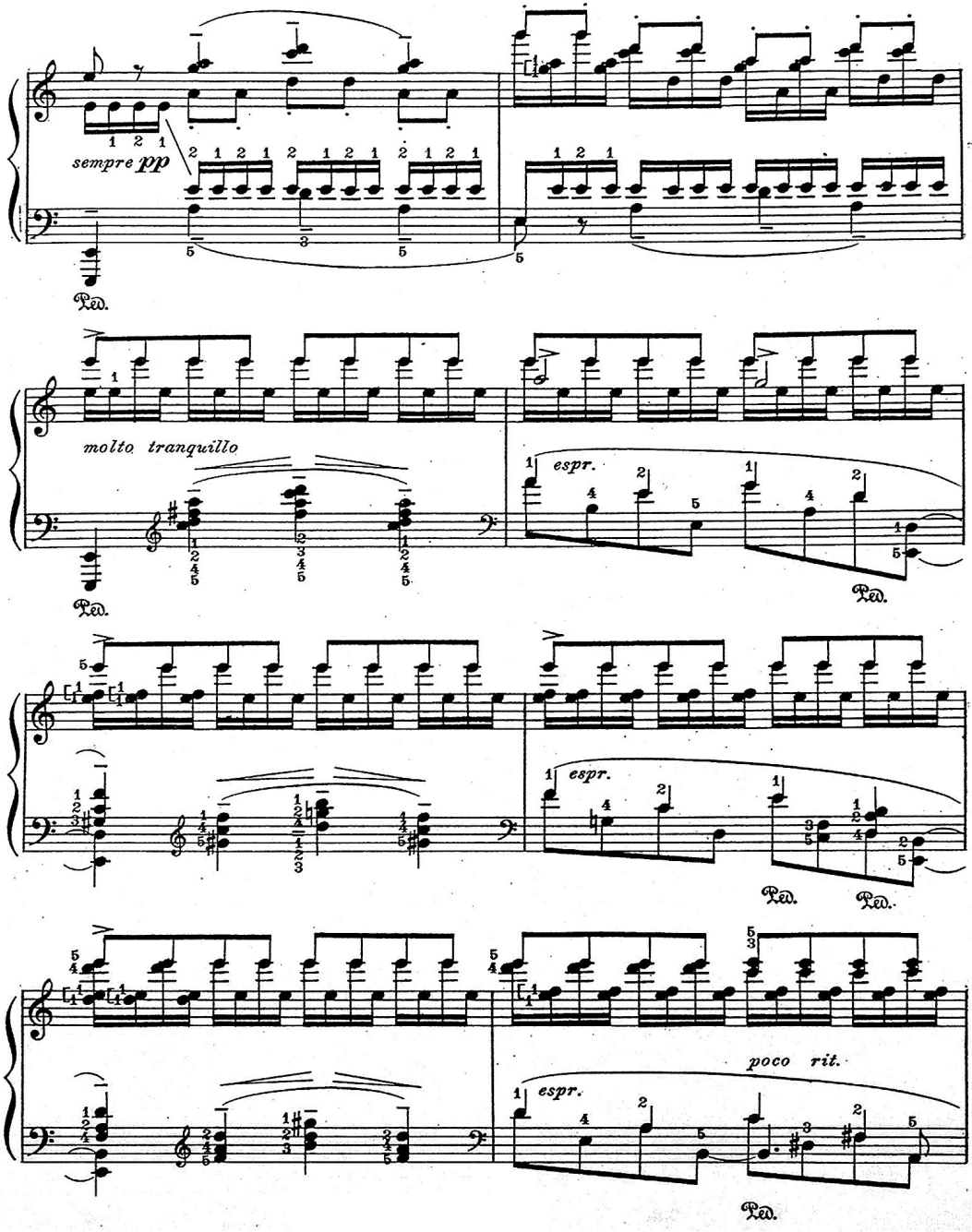
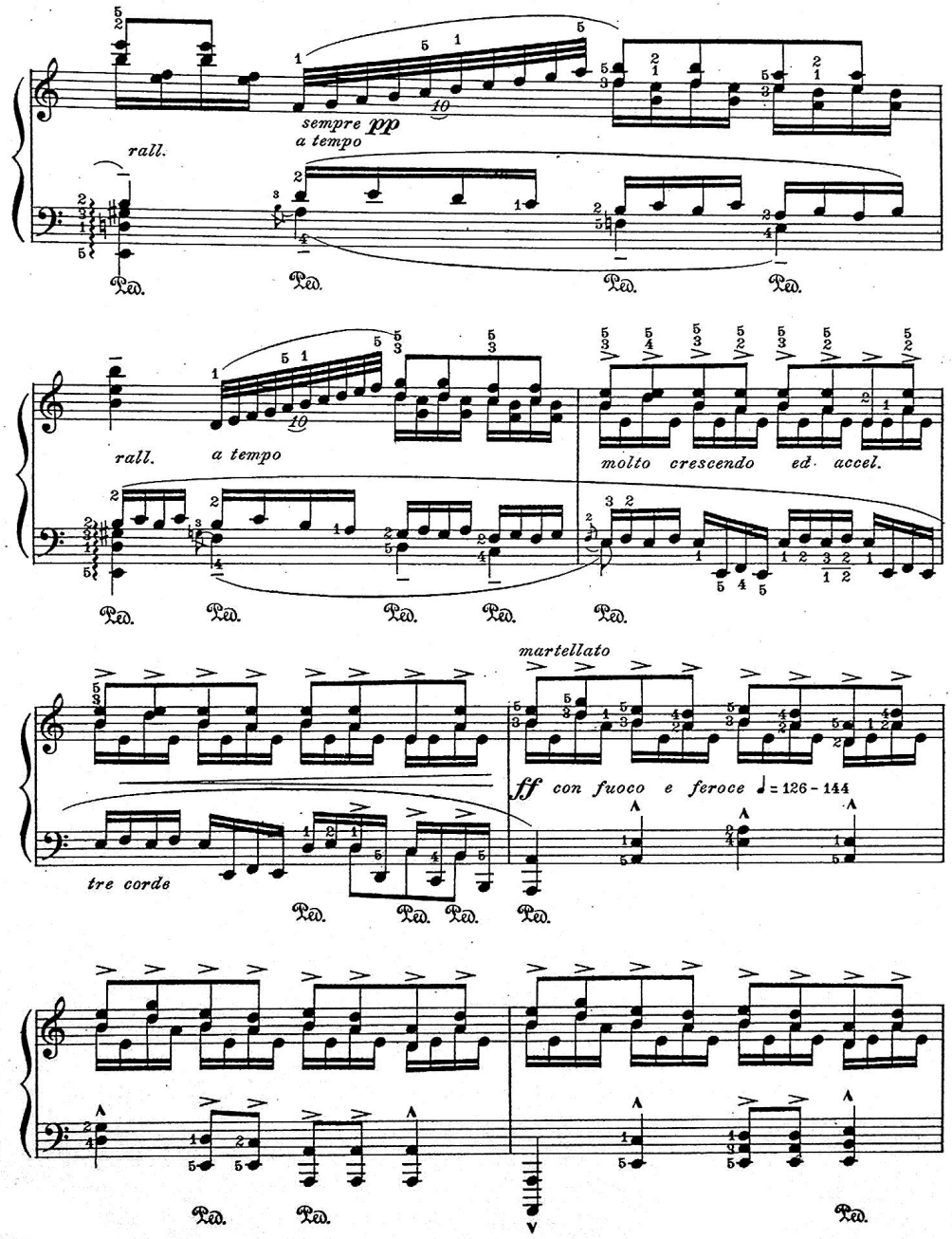
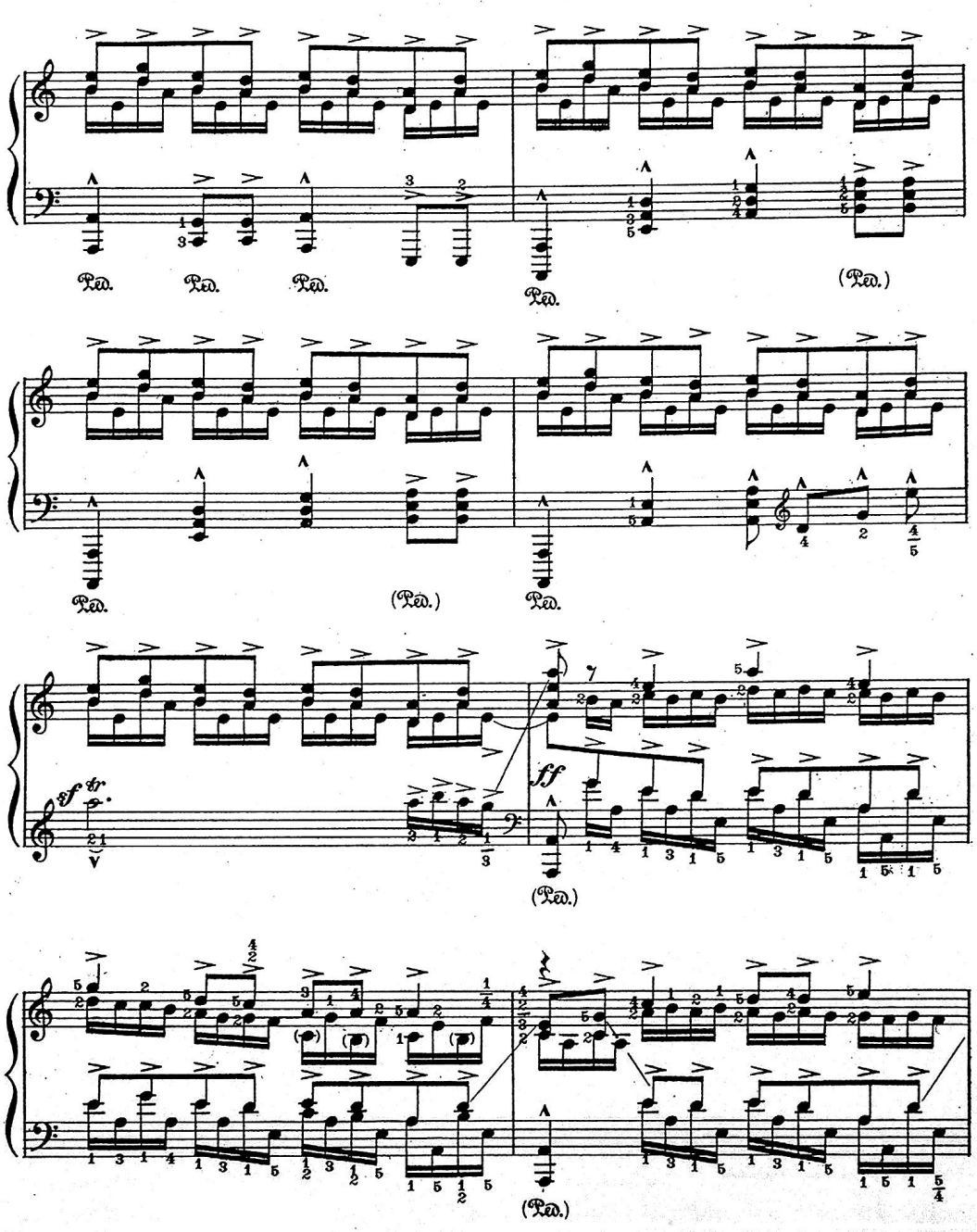
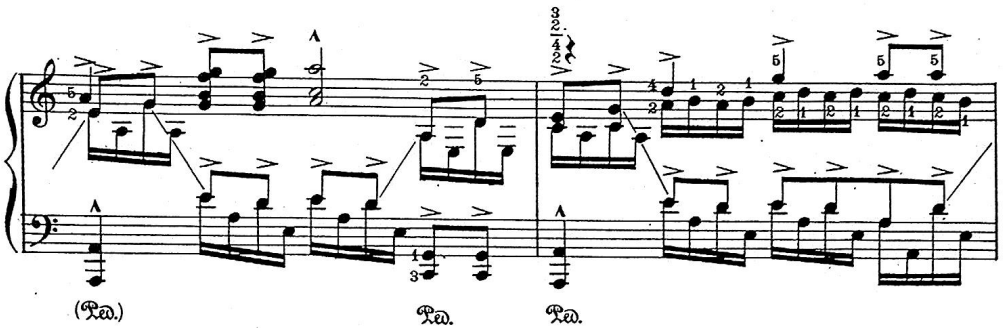
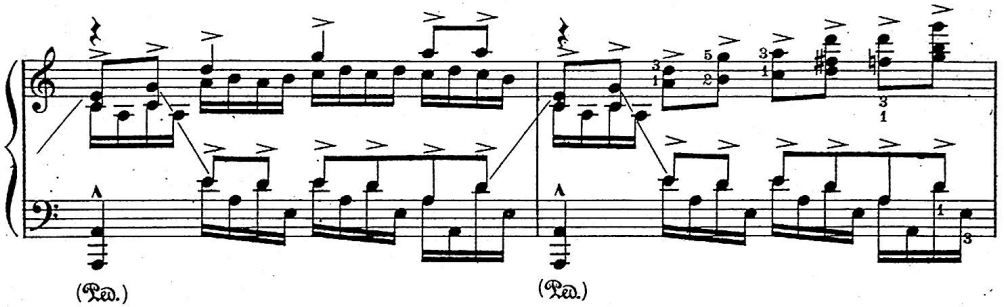

legato
poco a poco più mosso, ma sempre molto tranquillo
sempre pp
Ped.


sempre pp
molto tranquillo
espr.
poco rit.
Ped.


rall.
sempre pp
a tempo
rall.
a tempo
molto crescendo ed accel.
martellato
ff con fuoco e feroce ♩= 126 - 144
tre corde
Ped.


Ped.
(Ped.)
sf
ff


(Ped.)
Ped.
Ped.


(Ped.)
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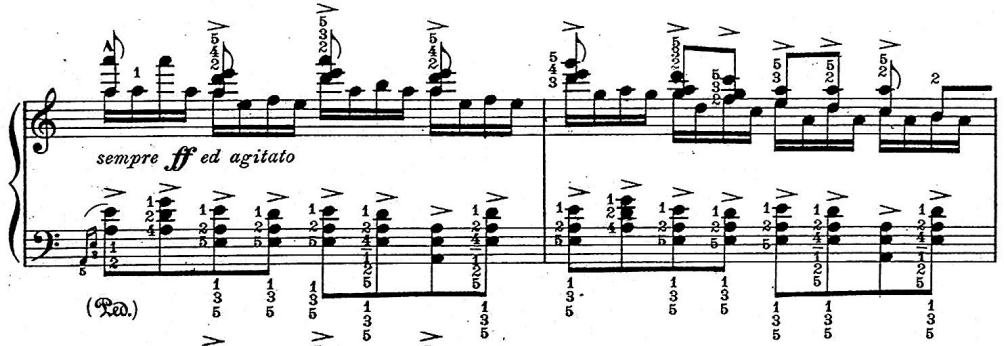
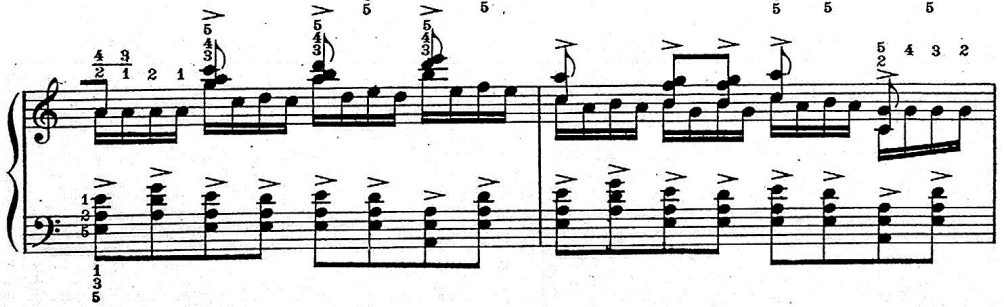
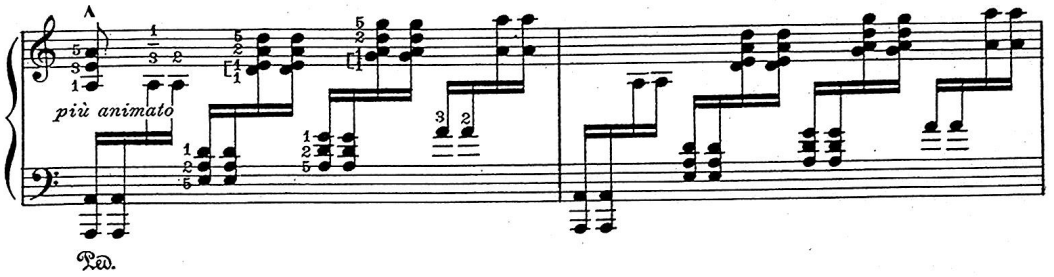
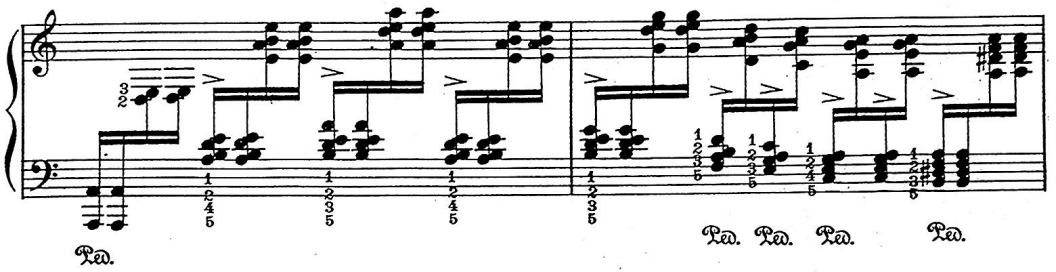
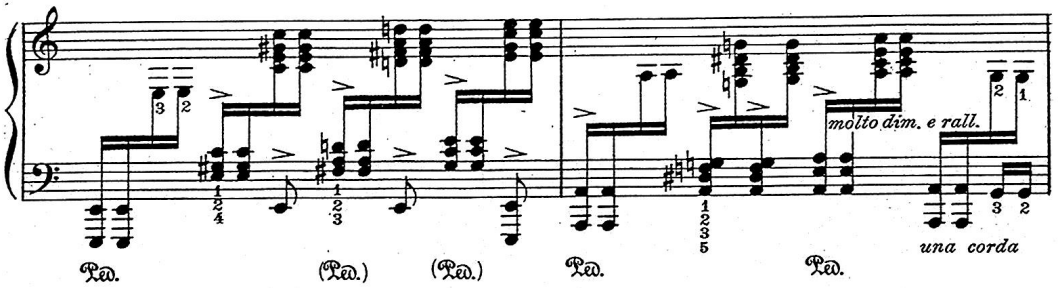
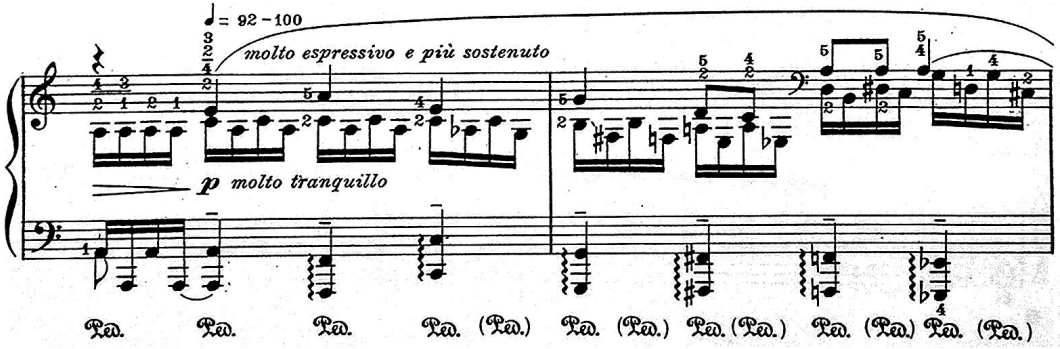

sempre ff ed agitato
(Ped.)

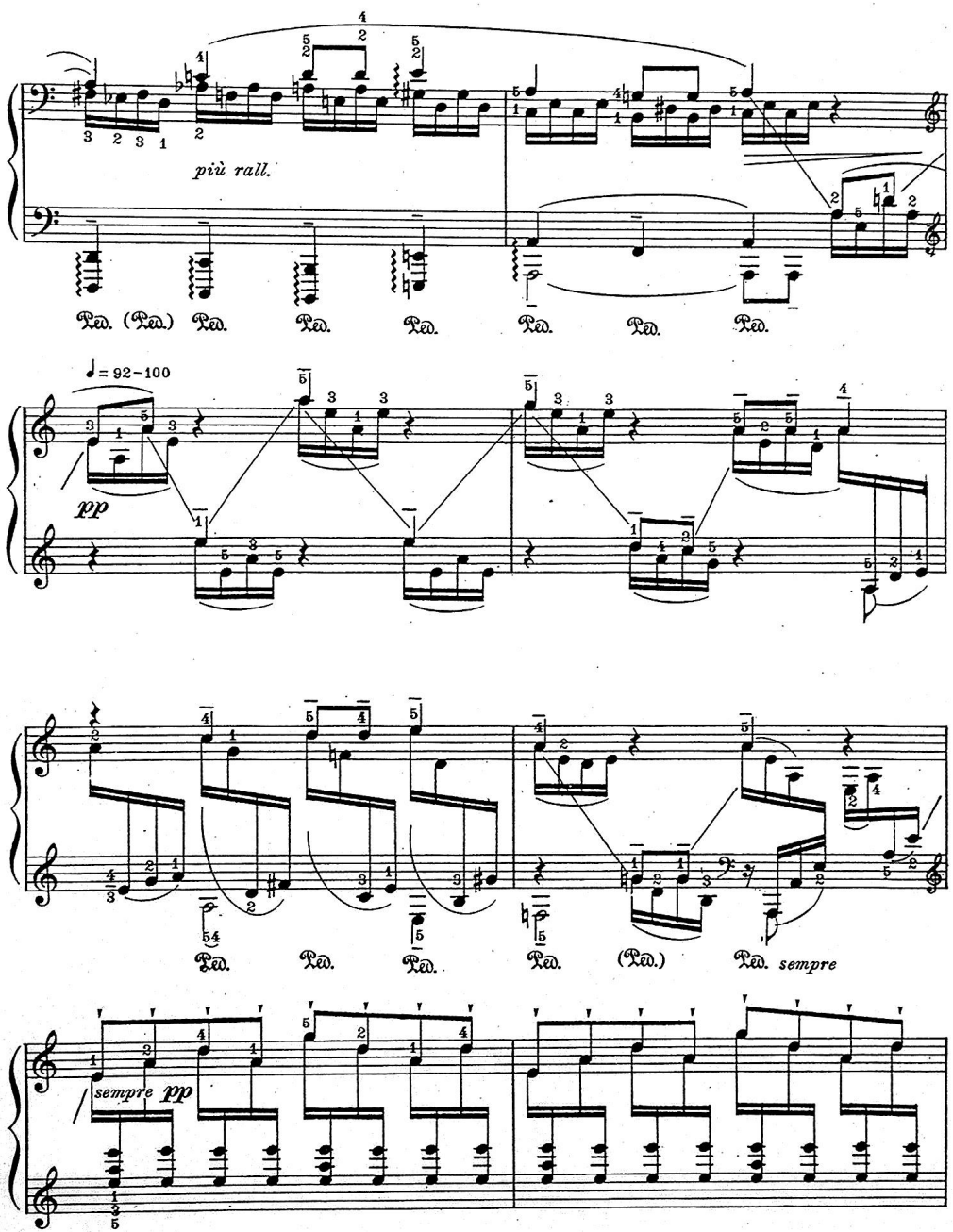


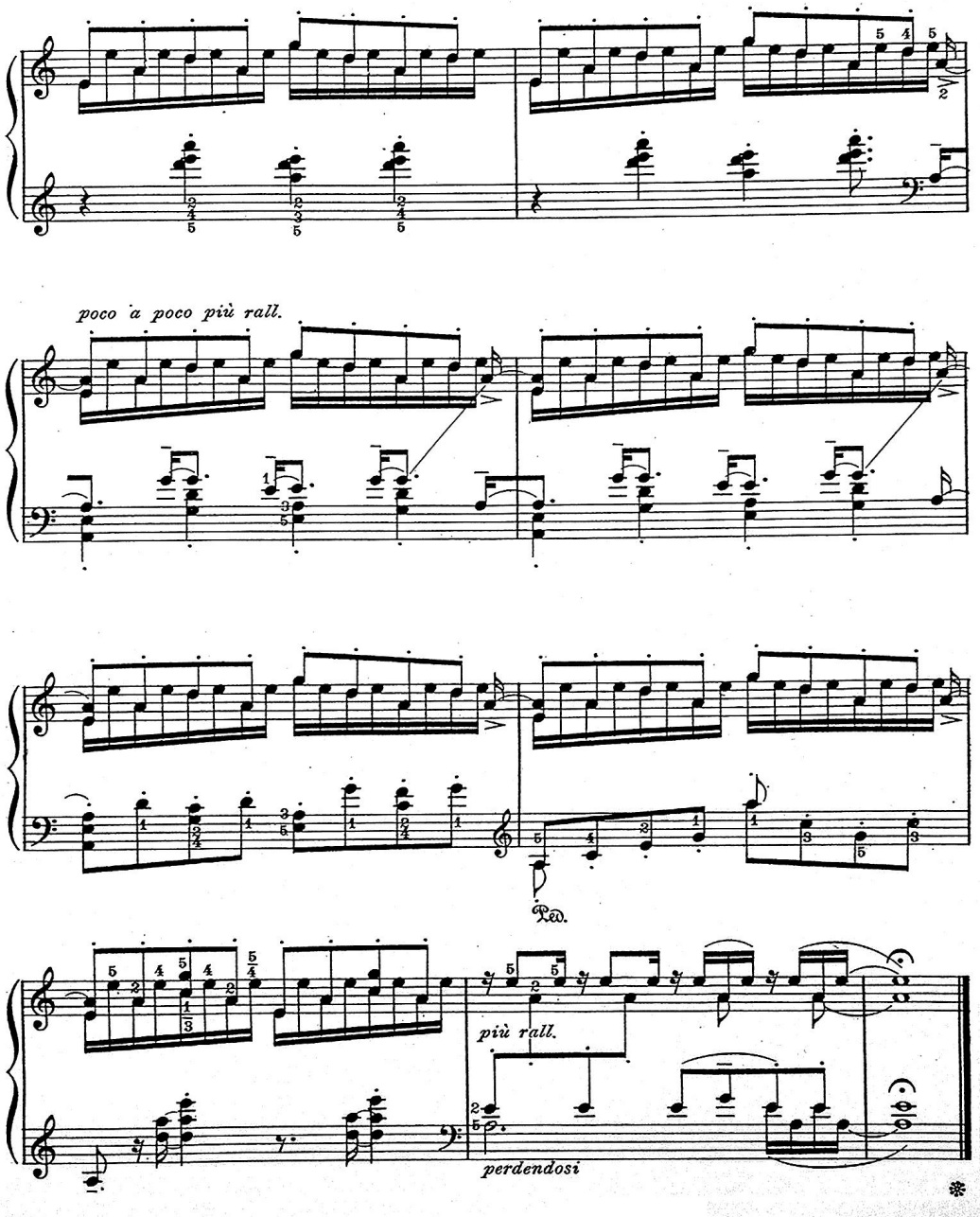

più animato
Ped.


Ped.
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.


molto dim. e rall.
una corda
Ped.
(Ped.)
(Ped.)
Ped.
Ped.


♩ = 92 – 100
molto espressivo e più sostenuto
p molto tranquillo
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. (Ped.) Ped. (Ped.) Ped. (Ped.) Ped. (Ped.) Ped. (Ped.)





Berlin, Sept. 24, 1924.