P d e J 2 (austerer measures)

(2017)

from the heretical bagatelles, Book III *of the* Phase Portraits

for piano

for Peter de Jager

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Than what is it more austere?, is of course, the question.

This piece came to exist because Peter de Jager asked me to write him a piece of a purely contrapuntal nature. My quixotic impulse was to attempt an abstract work that combined Roland Barthes' notion of *atopos*—"of a ceaselessly unforeseeable originality"—with a sense of inevitability in its unfolding. More prosaically, the piece is a highly rigorous two-part invention, and ends with a pseudo-canon. It is technically a good deal simpler than many of my works: not everything has to be an exercise in ultravirtuosity.

Coincidentally, during the later stages of writing I obtained a copy of Robert Bates' recording of the *Complete Organ Works of Francisco Correa de Arauxo*, and realised that what I had been trying to achieve was a similar level of contrapuntal logic and formal rigour to that found in Correa's early seventeenth century tientos. I hope that I have managed to catch their flavour of dignified and chilly nobility. (See also my tiento de medio registro alto).

- Accidentals only apply to the notes they immediately precede except in the case of immediate repetitions or where score-space is lacking.
- The score is notated at approximately 3cm = 1 second, except during *accelerandi* and *rallentandi*. Tempi are somewhat abstract; players are encouraged to find a velocity that suits them. Gracenote notation is rigorous, all being notated as *in-time* graces.
- **Dynamic profile**: there are **seven** dynamic steps in this work:

  ppp—pp—p—mf—f—ff—fff

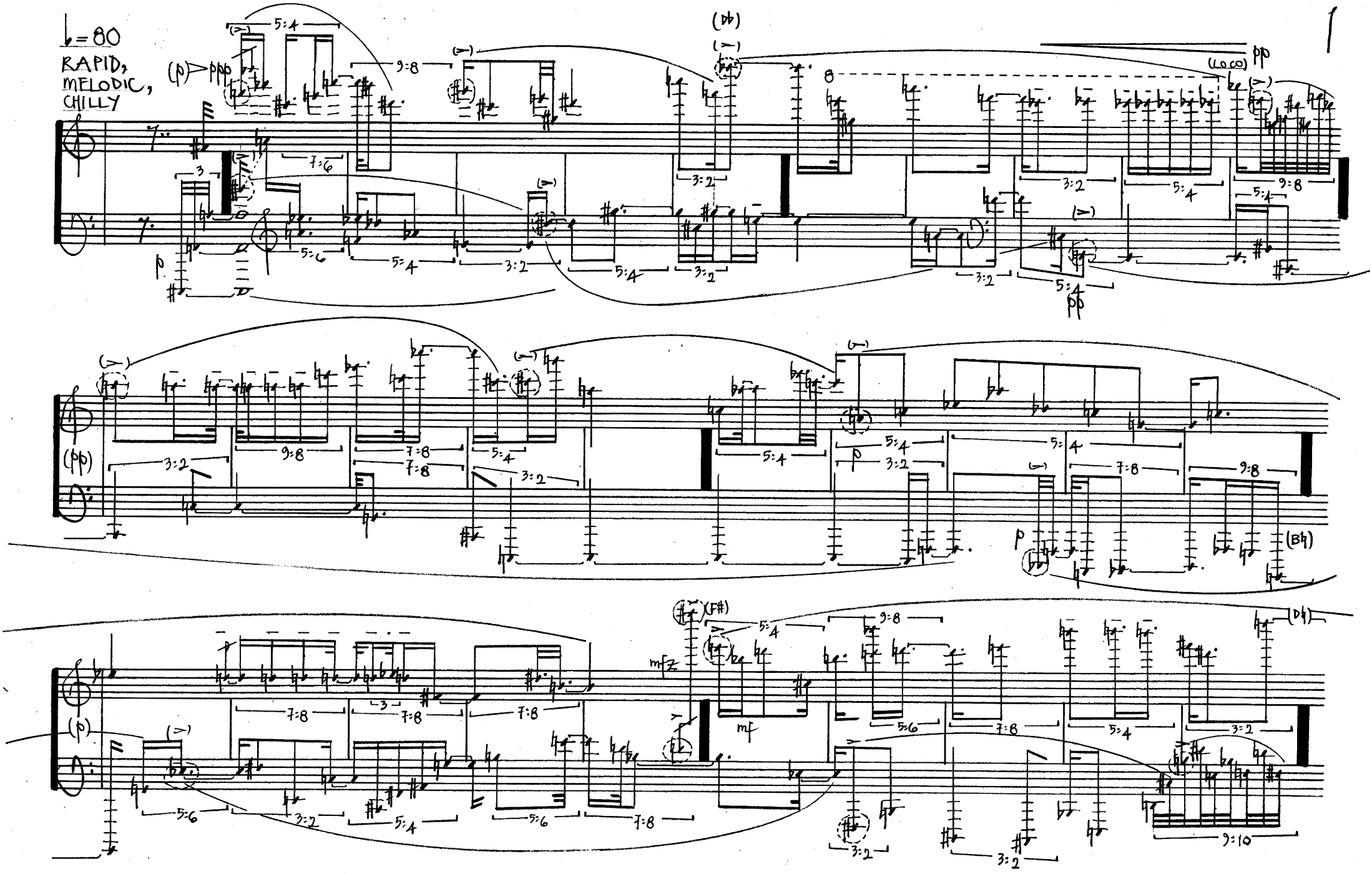
  There is no ***mp*** dynamic; ***mf*** is considered to be midway between ***p*** and ***f***. (*Poco*) written near a dynamic means to slightly understate it. A horizontal stroke (—) following a dynamic emphasises that it continues uniformly until contradicted; a slash (/) immediately between dynamics means an abrupt change.

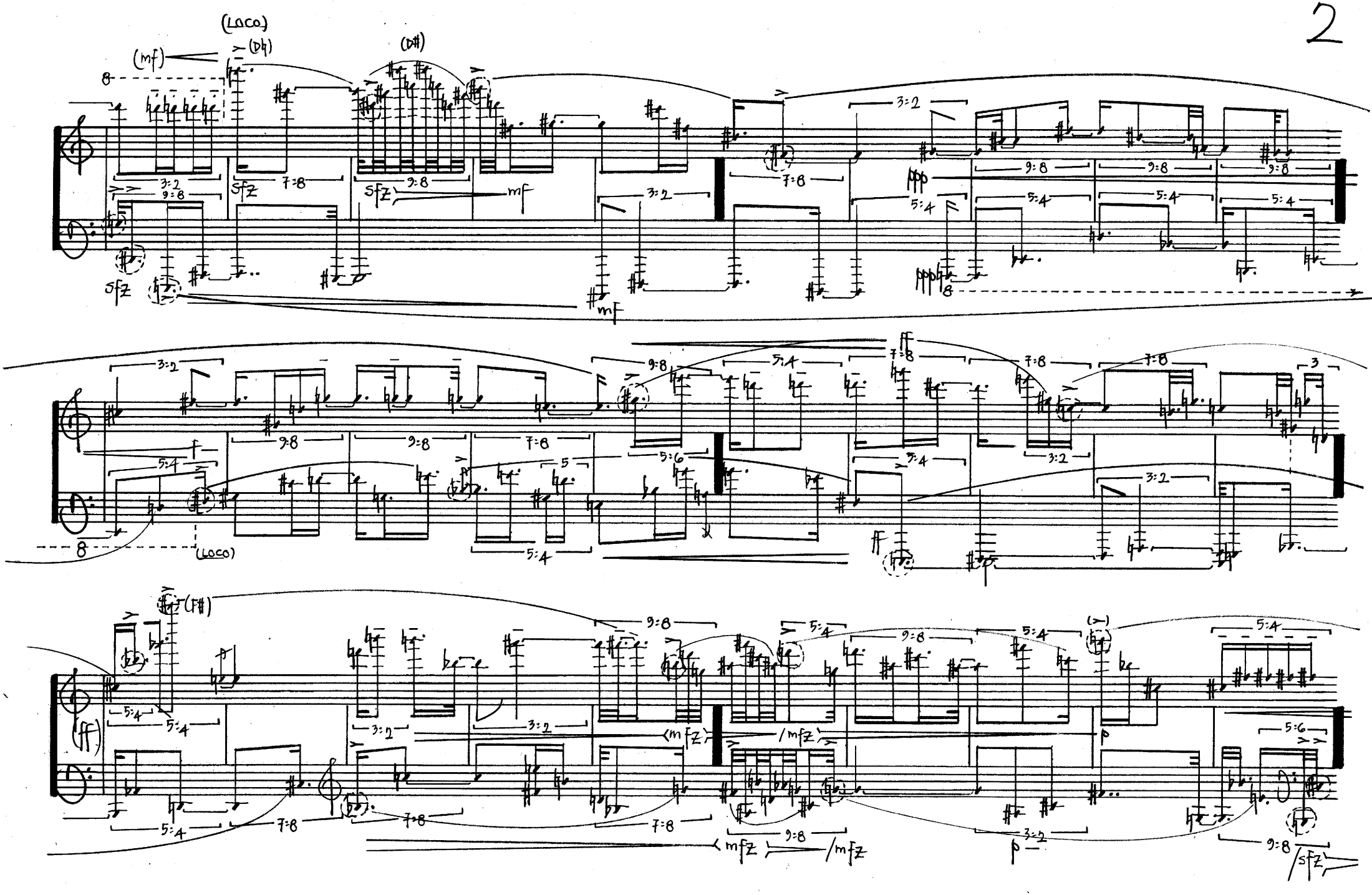
  Dynamics should be not be treated as a simple linear *soft→loud*: they function as variations in the *local* context.
- All gracenotes are *in-time*, that is, they do not interrupt the temporal flow of the music. They are not parenthetical. The one exception is at the end of the first line, page 4, and this is clearly indicated.

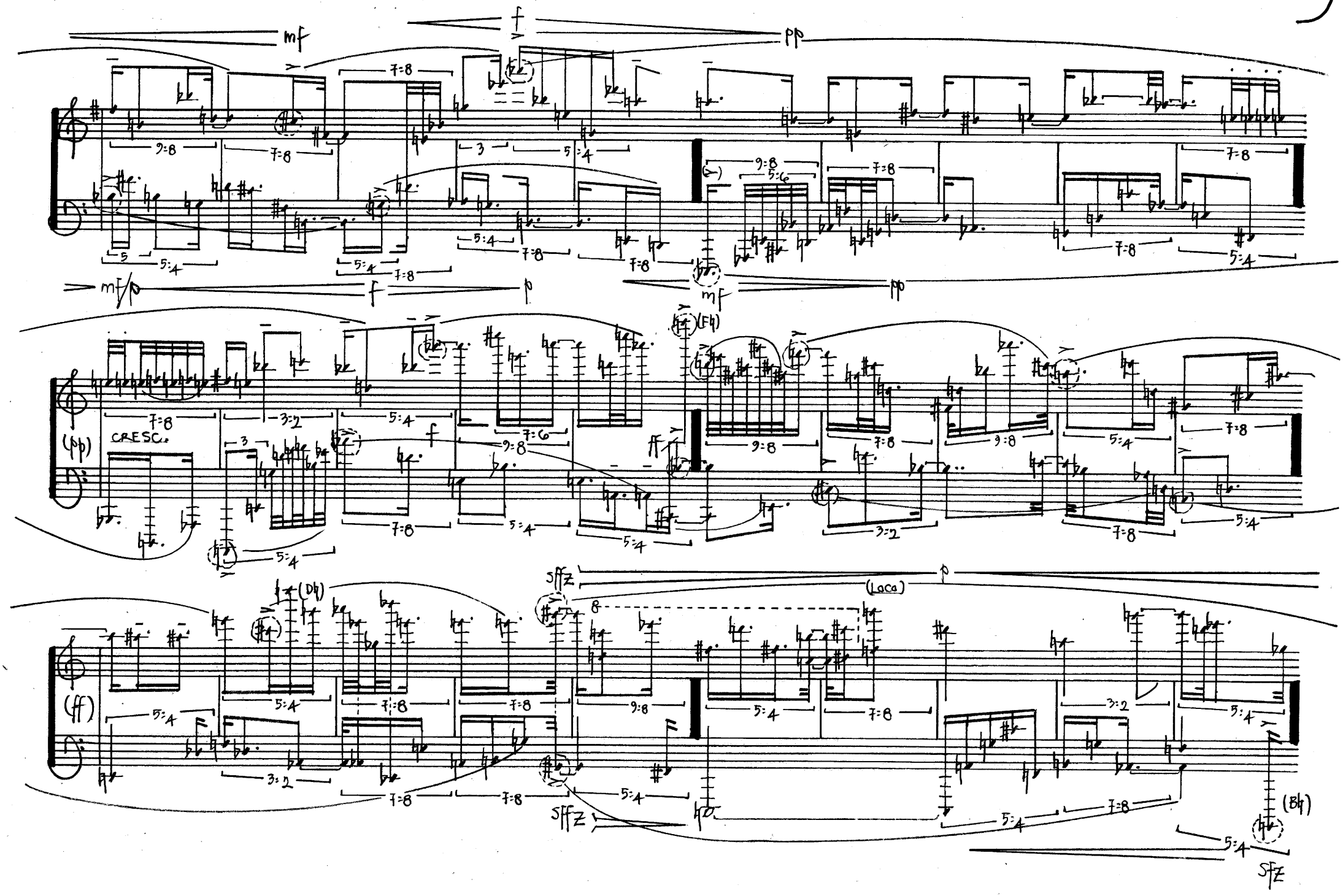
The melodic lines in the two hands should have a marked degree of gestural independence; they should sound as if their rhythmic synchronisation is tight but non-simple.

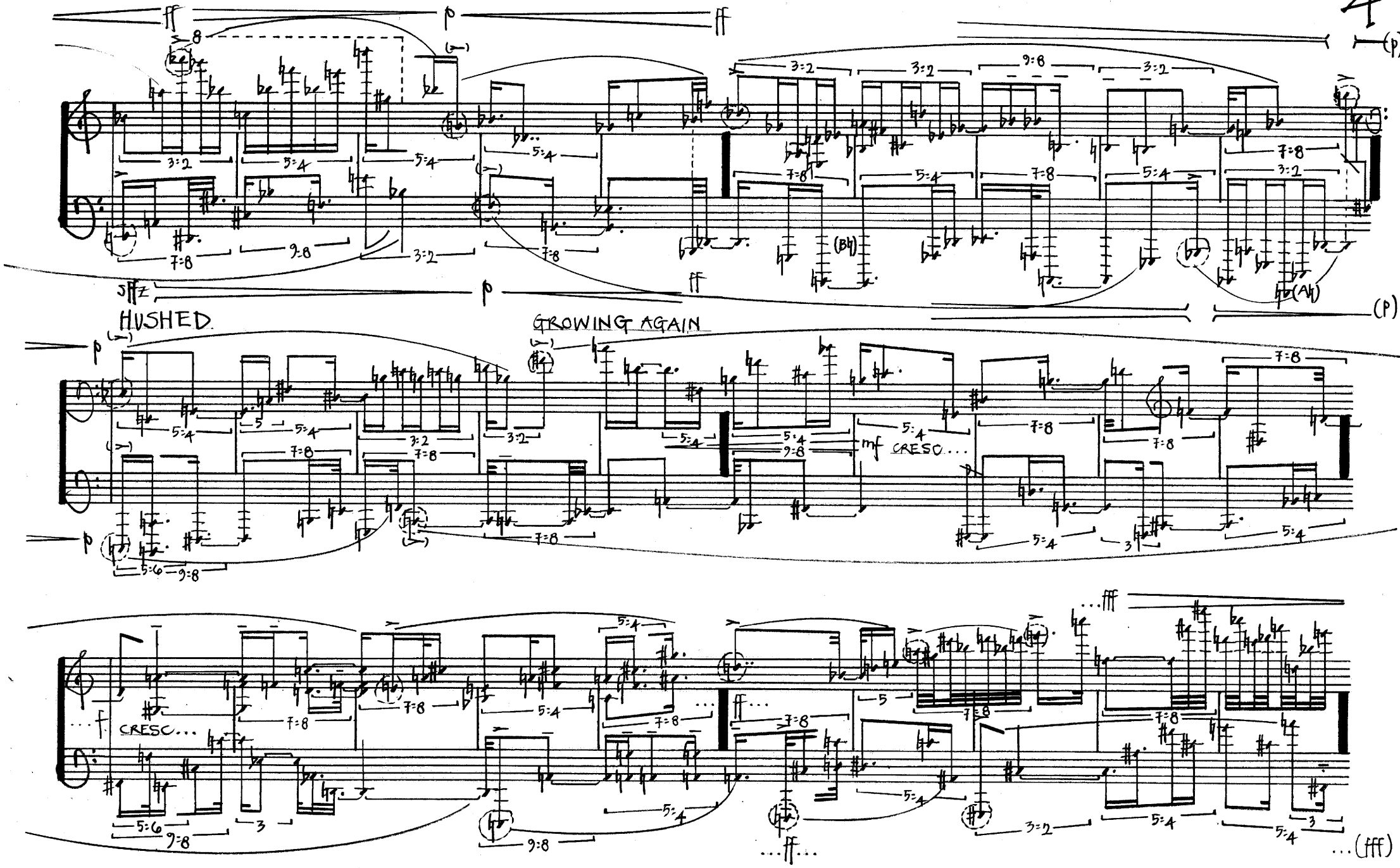
- Throughout the first part of this piece, in both hands and at all dynamics, certain note-heads are ringed; they also bear an emphasis mark (bracketed in quieter dynamics). These pitches need to stand out and ring through the texture as much as possible—they both articulate the gestural nodes of the musical layers, and constitute a slower textural layer in themselves. After page 8 the texture should become less differentiated.
- The small commas indicate that the sound should cease. This information is primarily provided by the notated durations; the commas merely reinforce the detail. They do NOT imply a hesitation.
- This piece may be performed as the central movement of the block of three **PdeJ** pieces. If performed in this way, the total three-movement form should be referred to as the **Sonata de Jager**.

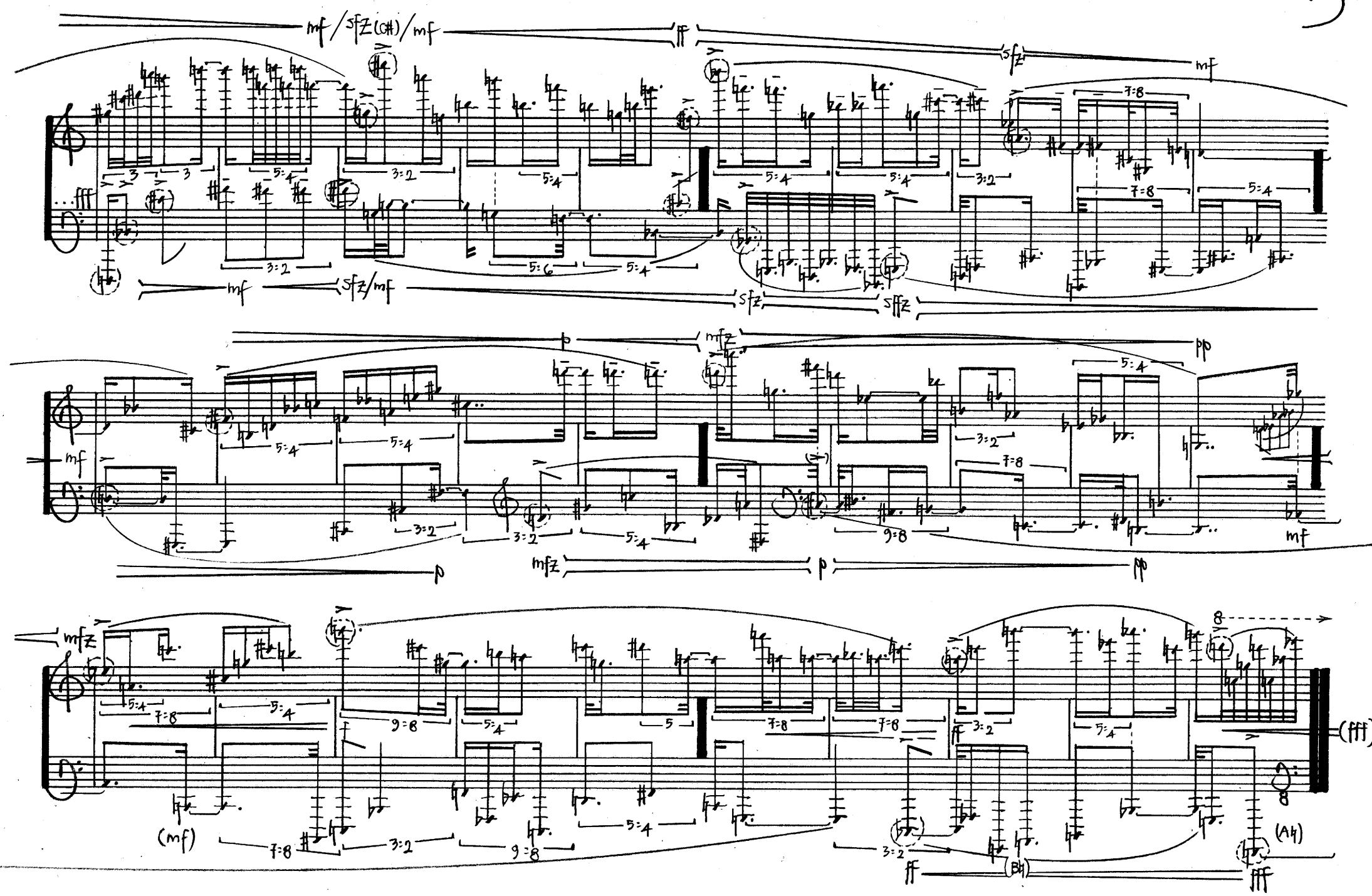
♩= 80
RAPID, MELODIC, CHILLY

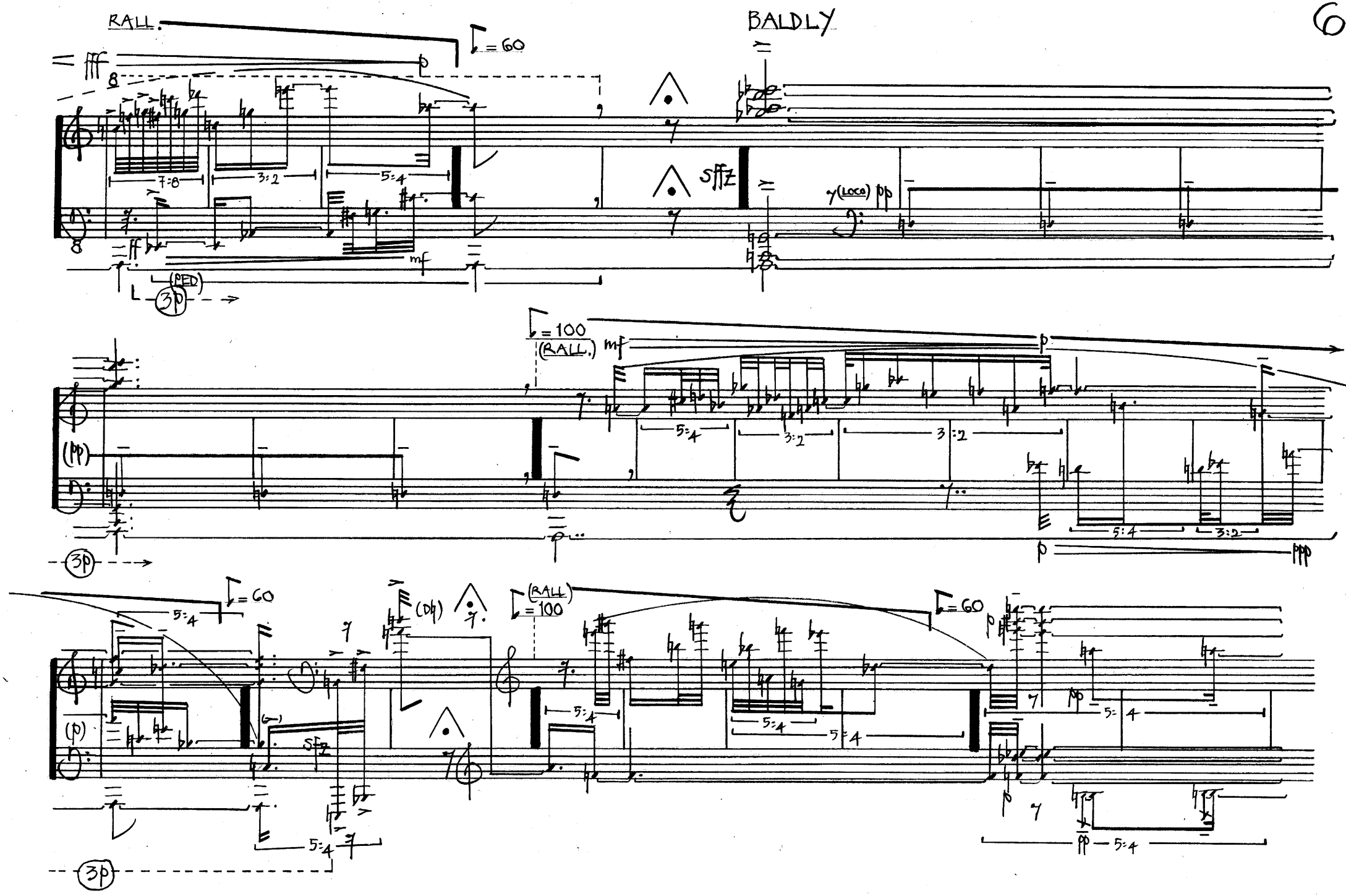


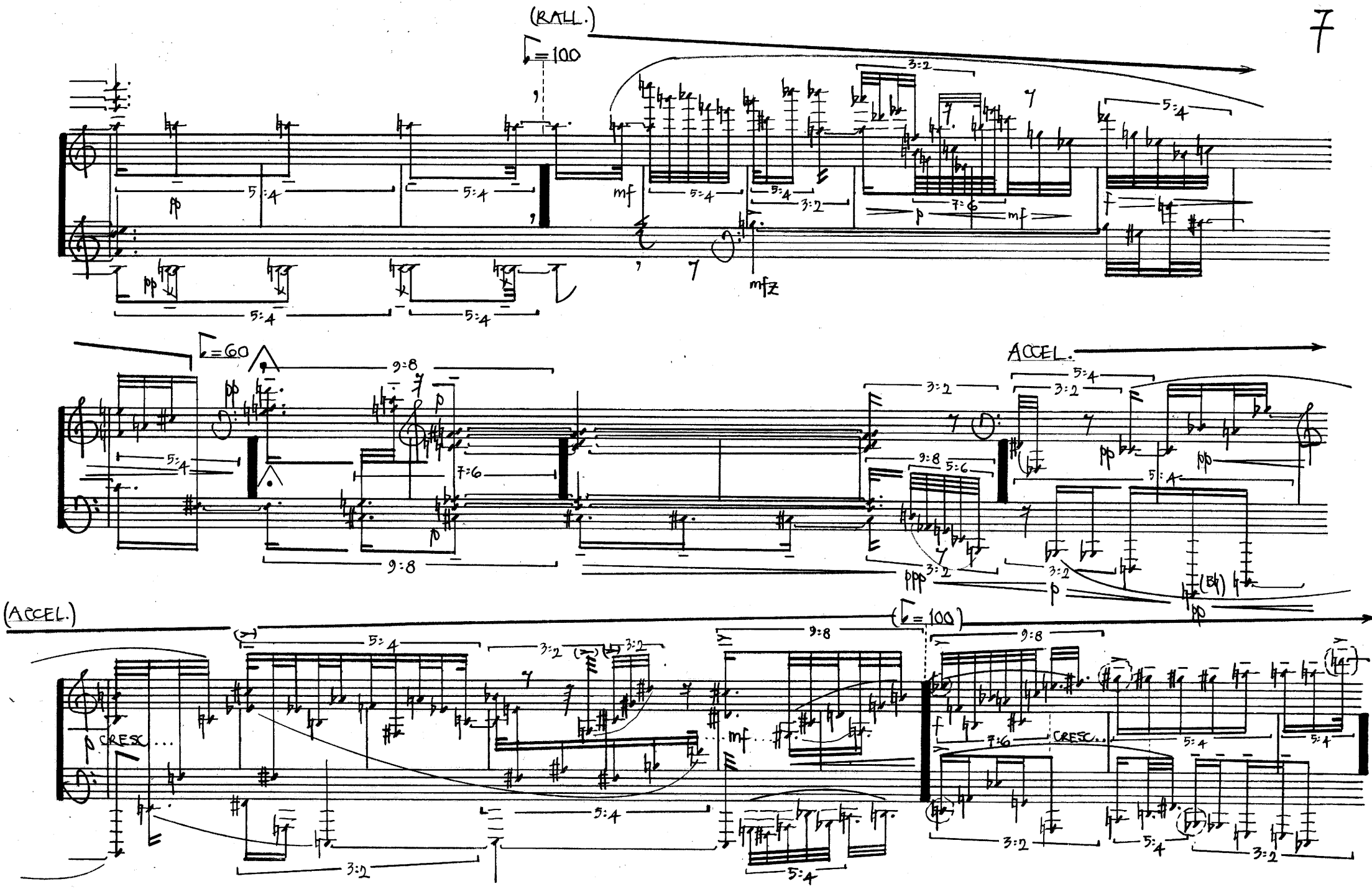

(loco)
(mf)
(D♭)
(D♯)
sfz
mf
(loco)
(F♯)
(ff)
mfz
p
sfz


mf
f
pp
mf/p
p
(pp)
CRESC.
(Fh)
(Dh)
(Loco)
(ff)
(Bh)
sffz
sfz

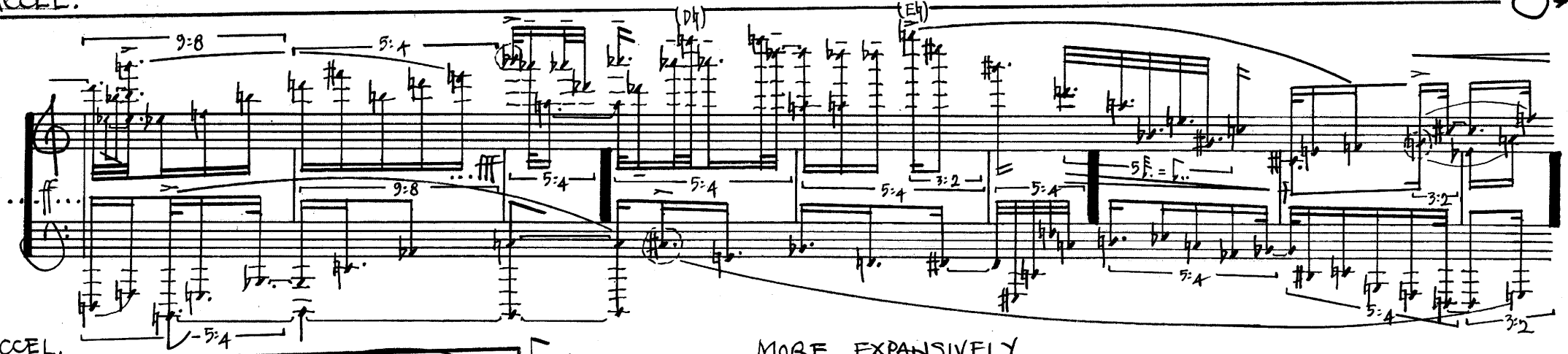

HUSHED
GROWING AGAIN
mf CRESC...
f CRESC...
...fff
...(fff)


mf/sfz(C#)/mf
ff
sfz
mf
fff
sfz/mf
sfz
sffz
p
mfz
pp
mf
mfz
p
pp
mfz
(mf)
ff
(B♮)
(A♮)
(fff)
fff


RALL.
= 60
BALDLY
7:8
3:2
5:4
sffz
(LOCO)
pp
(PED)
3p
= 100
(RALL.)
mf
(pp)
ppp
(p)
(D♮)
(RALL)
= 100
sfz

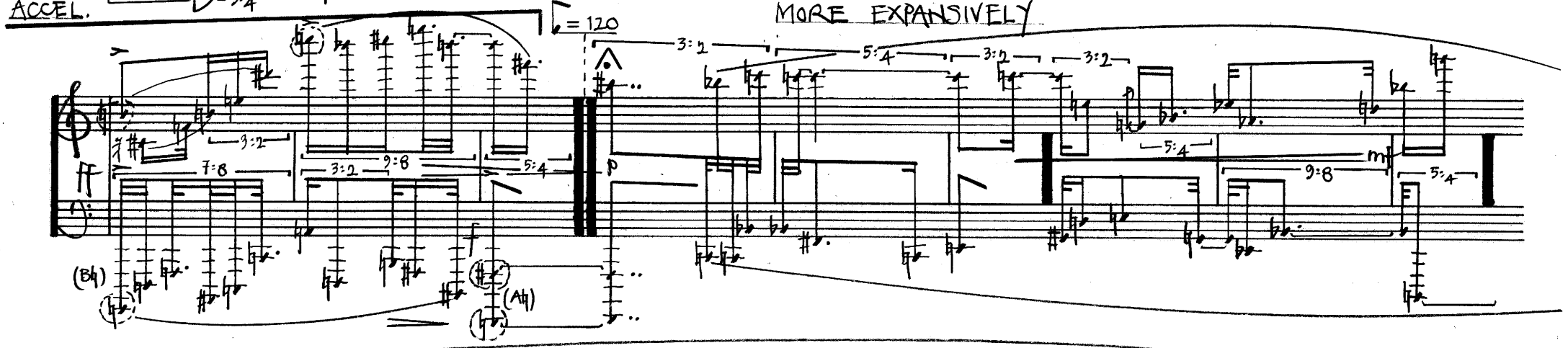

(RALL.)
♪=100
3:2
5:4
pp
mf
mfz
p
7:6
♪=60
9:8
ACCEL.
5:6
ppp
(B♮)
(ACCEL.)
(♪=100)
CRESC...

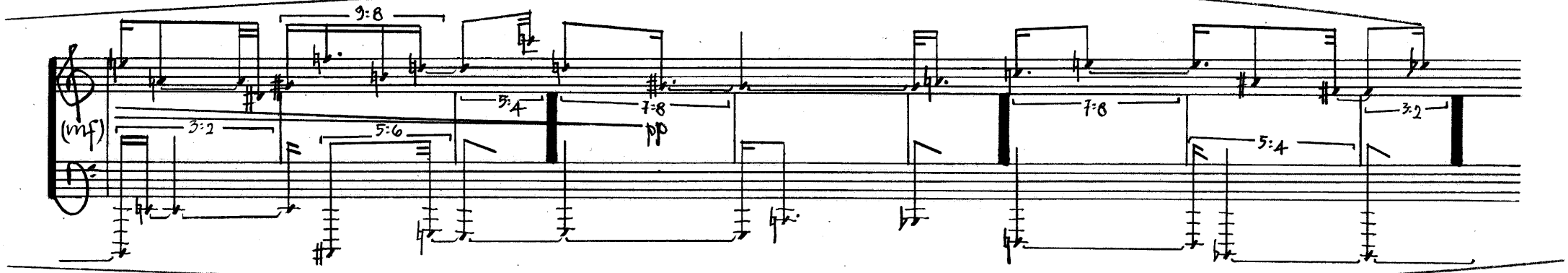
ACCEL.

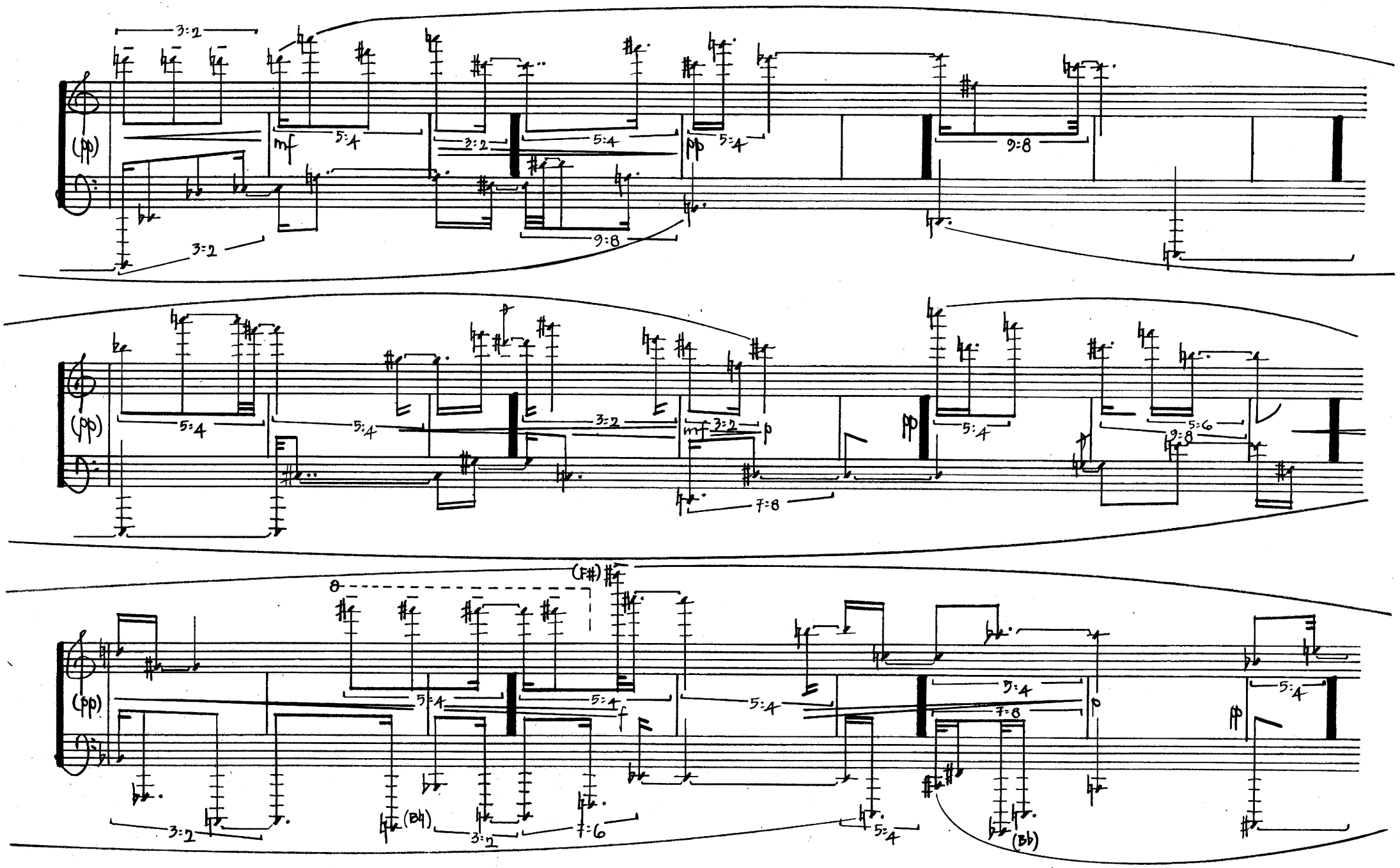


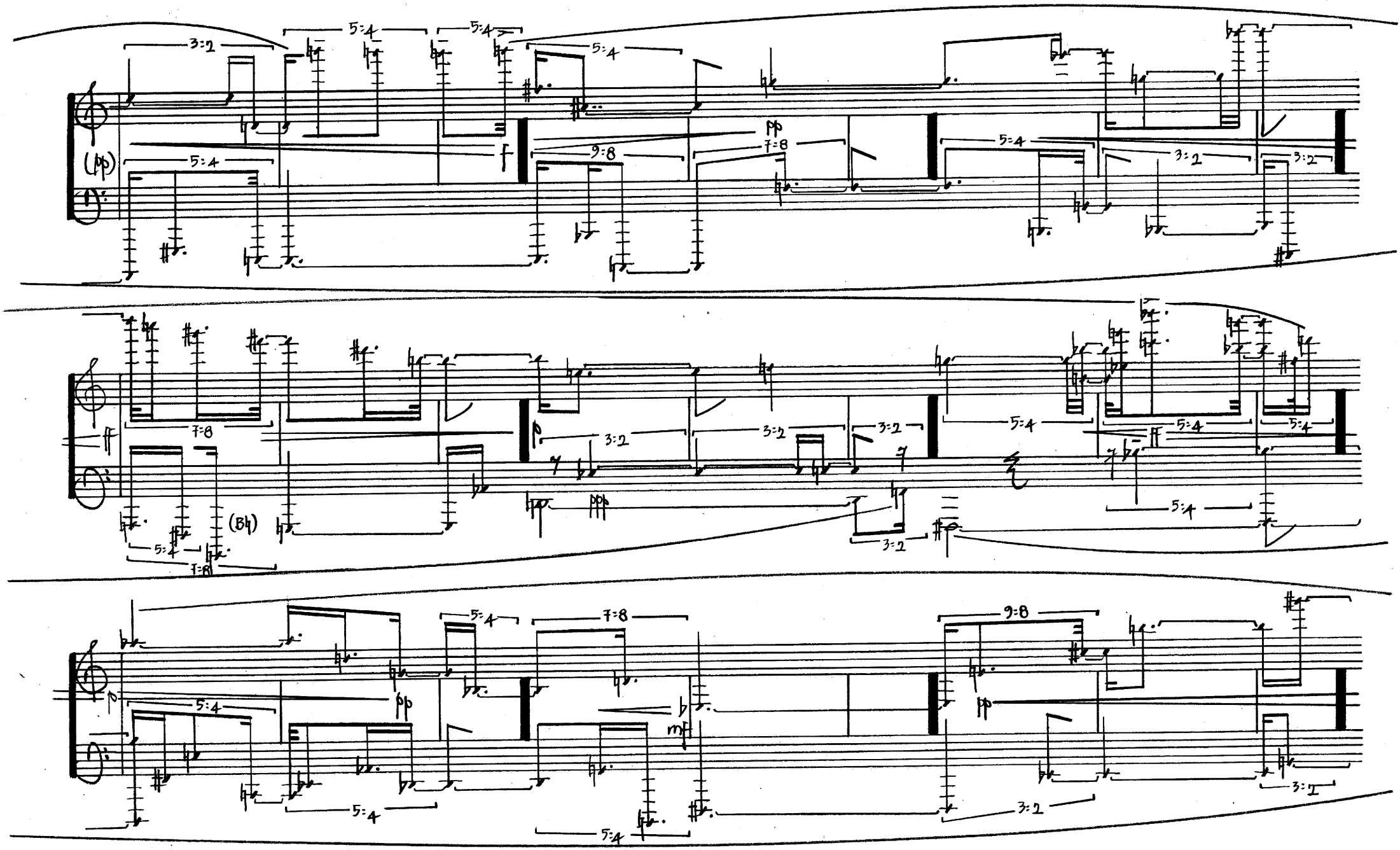
ACCEL.

MORE EXPANSIVELY





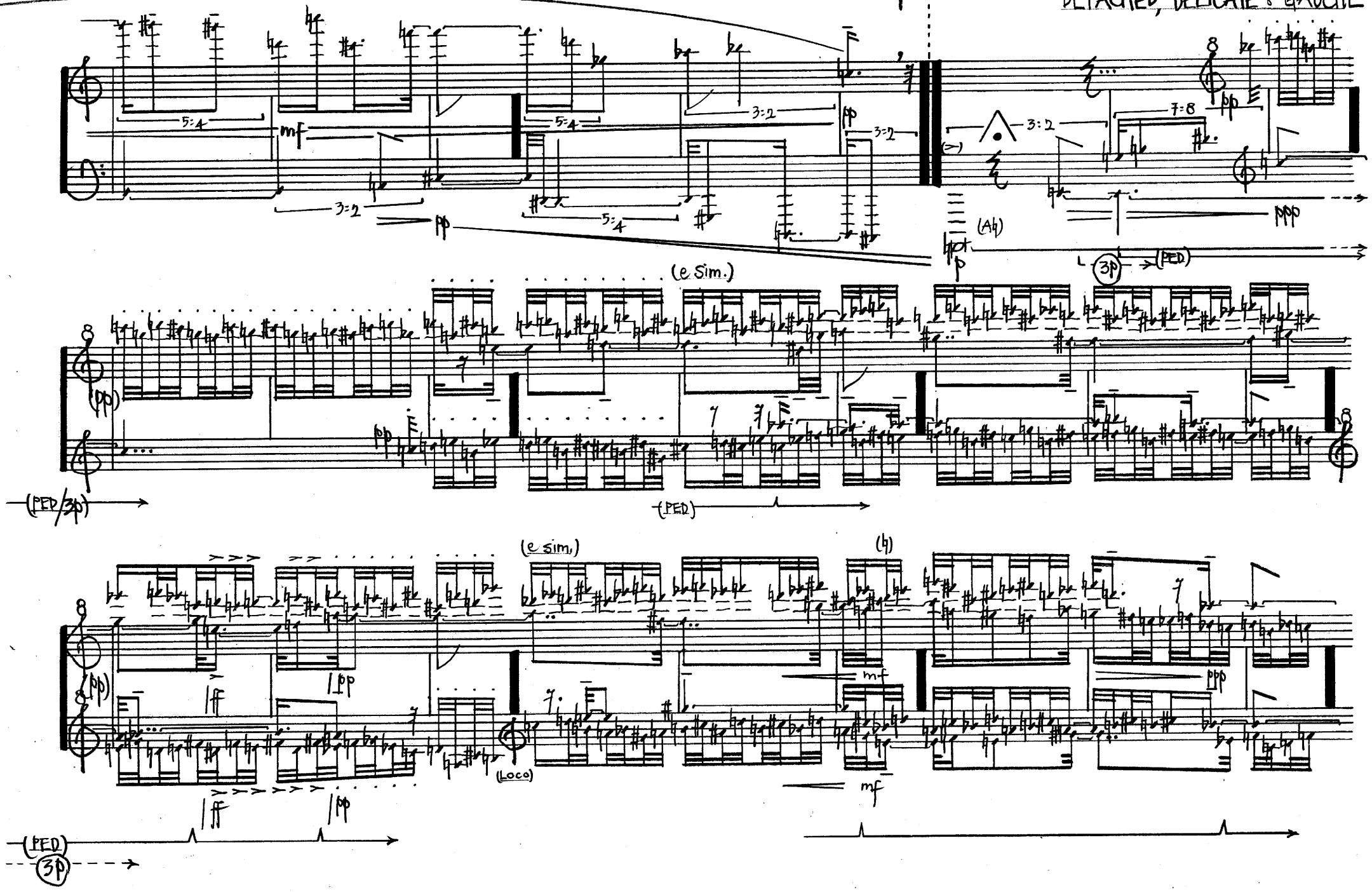

3:2
(pp)
mf
5:4
3:2
5:4
pp
5:4
9:8
3:2
9:8
(pp)
5:4
5:4
3:2
mf
3:2
p
pp
5:4
5:6
9:8
7:8
(pp)
8
(F#)
5:4
5:4
f
5:4
5:4
7:8
p
pp
5:4
3:2
(B♮)
3:2
7:6
5:4
(B♭)

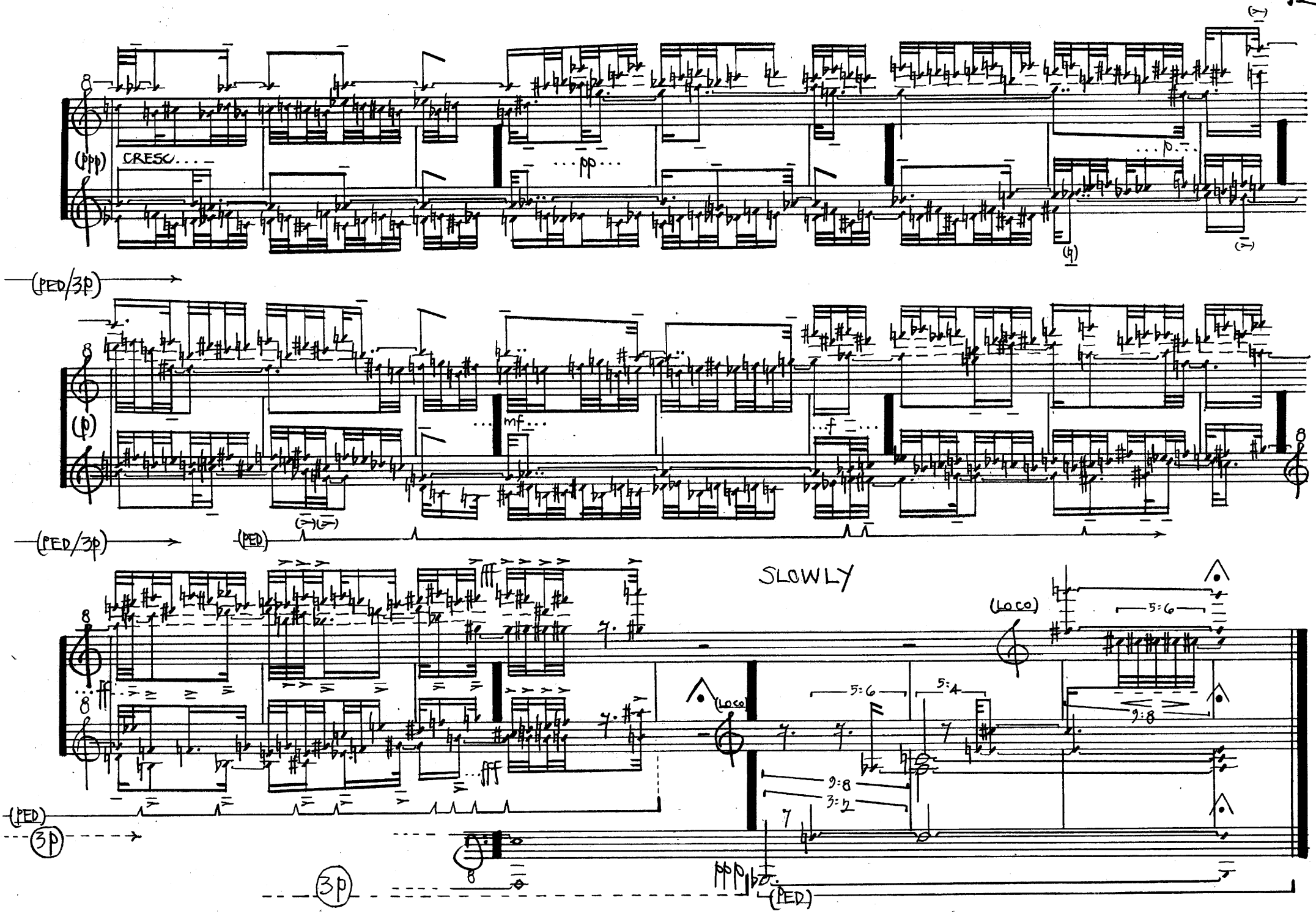

3:2
5:4
5:4
5:4
(pp)
5:4
pp
9:8
7:8
5:4
3:2
3:2
7:8
p
3:2
3:2
3:2
5:4
5:4
5:4
ppp
(B♮)
5:4
7:8
3:2
5:4
5:4
7:8
9:8
p
5:4
pp
mf
pp
5:4
5:4
3:2
3:2

MOLTO RALL.

♩=112

DETACHED, DELICATE & GAUCHE




(ppp)
CRESC.
pp
p
(PED/3p)
(p)
mf
f
(PED)
SLOWLY
(loco)
5:6
5:4
9:8
3:2
fff
ppp
3p