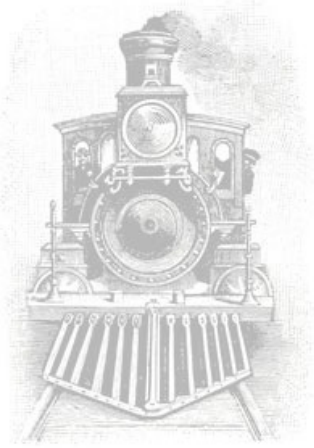
DESHEVOV

Рельсы (Rails)

op.16 (1926)

for piano



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Vladimir Mikhaylovich Deshevov

(b. St. Petersburg, 30 Jan/11 Feb 1889 - d. Leningrad, 27 Oct 1955) Russian composer. He studied the piano with Leonid Nikolayev and Alexander Winkler and composition with Vasily Pavlovich Kalafati, Anatoly Konstantinovich Lyadov, Maximilian Osseyevich Steinberg and Jāzeps Vītols at the St. Petersburg Conservatory (1908–14). After a period of active service during World War I, he became secretary of the "Musical Committee for National Education" in Yelizavetgrad (1917–19) and then headed the music section of the education department in Sevastopol (1920–21), where he founded a conservatory which he directed from1921 to 1922. He later taught in Leningrad music colleges (1923–33) before becoming one of the leading composers of music for the theatre, heading various music departments and conducting in several theatres in the city. This work continued throughout the blockade of Leningrad (1941–4) during which period this activity expanded to include radio work. His compositions range from linear, diatonic pieces in the manner of Honegger and Prokofiev to mechanistic chromatic constructions and machine-like music such as "Rails". Based on incidental music for a staging of Pierre Hamp's novel "Le Rail", "Rails" has remained one of the key works of the Russian avantgarde of the 1920s.

During the 1920s Dechevov was regarded as one of the most promising younger Soviet composers. Darius Milhaud, who made his acquaintance in 1926 during a visit to Leningrad, praised him in the French press as a 'genius' and 'extremely original'. However, subsequent attempts to make his compositions better known abroad were unsuccessful. In 1929 followed Dechevov's best-known composition: Ice and Steel. But such were the ideological tensions of this period that this avant-garde work soon disappeared from the public stage. Although Dechevov was one of the chief proponents of the left wing musical avant-garde in the 1920s and explicitly came out in favour of critical appropriation of elements from Western modernism, he was not subjected to direct ideological attacks during the Stalinist era. Neither, however, despite clearly moderating his compositional style, did he succeed in obtaining a prominent position in the conformist musical culture of socialist realism that held sway after 1932. It was only after the outbreak of the Second World War that he started once again to produce major works of his own: ballet music based on classical materials and patriotic tone poems. However, these did not prevent his name from increasingly being forgotten.

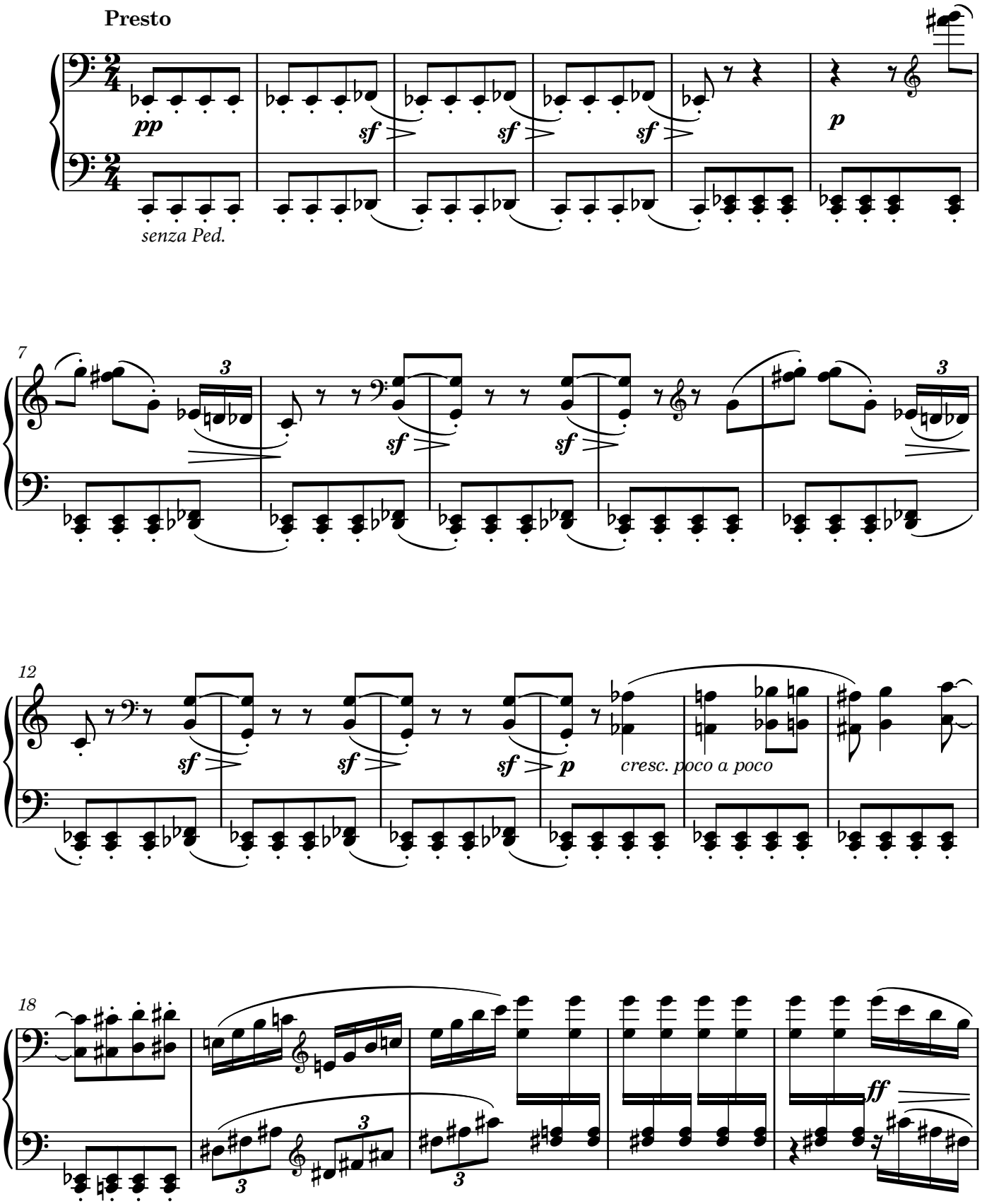
to Konstantin Tverskoy

Рельсы (Rails)

for piano, op.16 (1926)

Vladimir Mikhaylovich Deshevov
(1889-1855)

Presto



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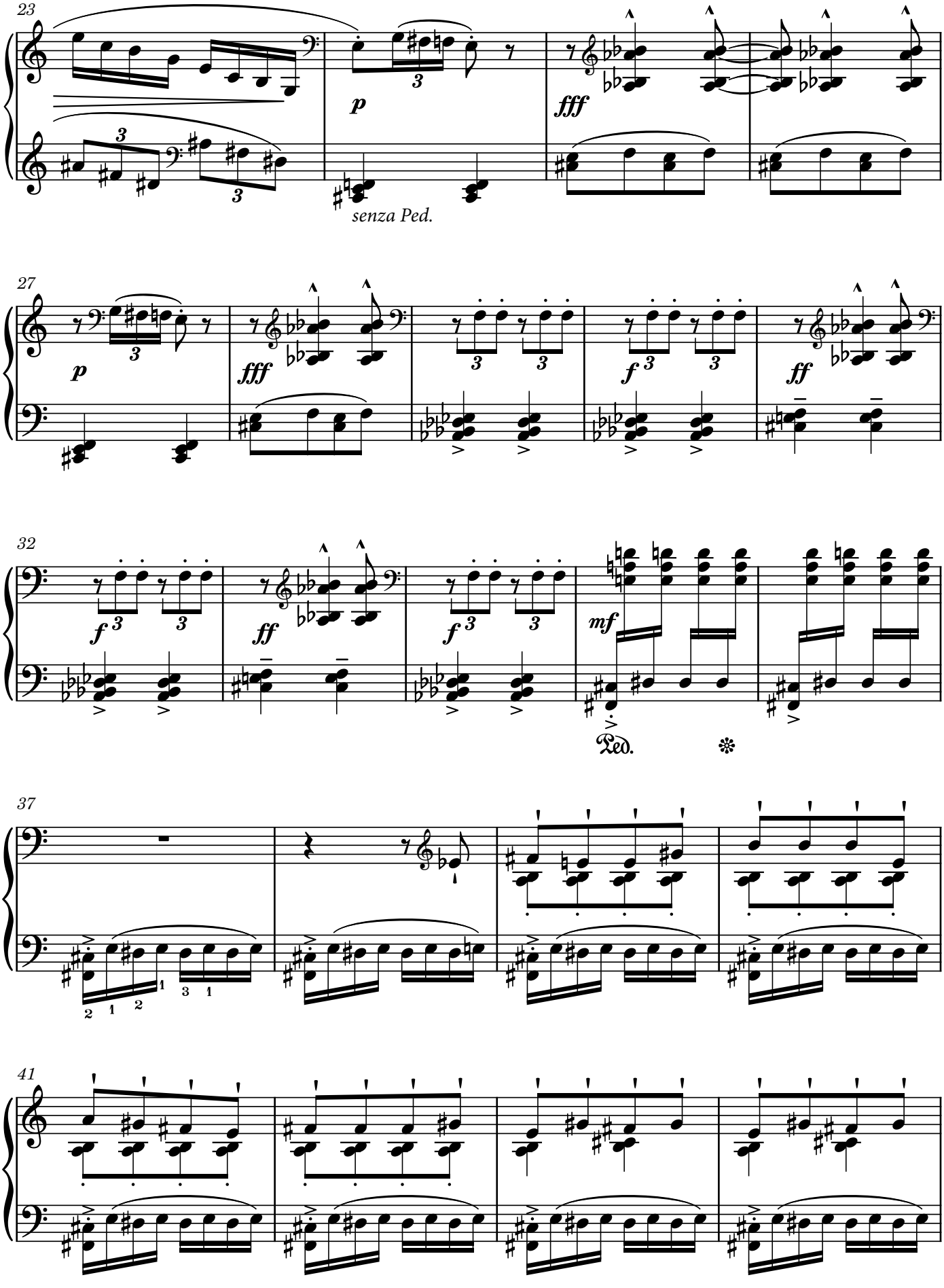
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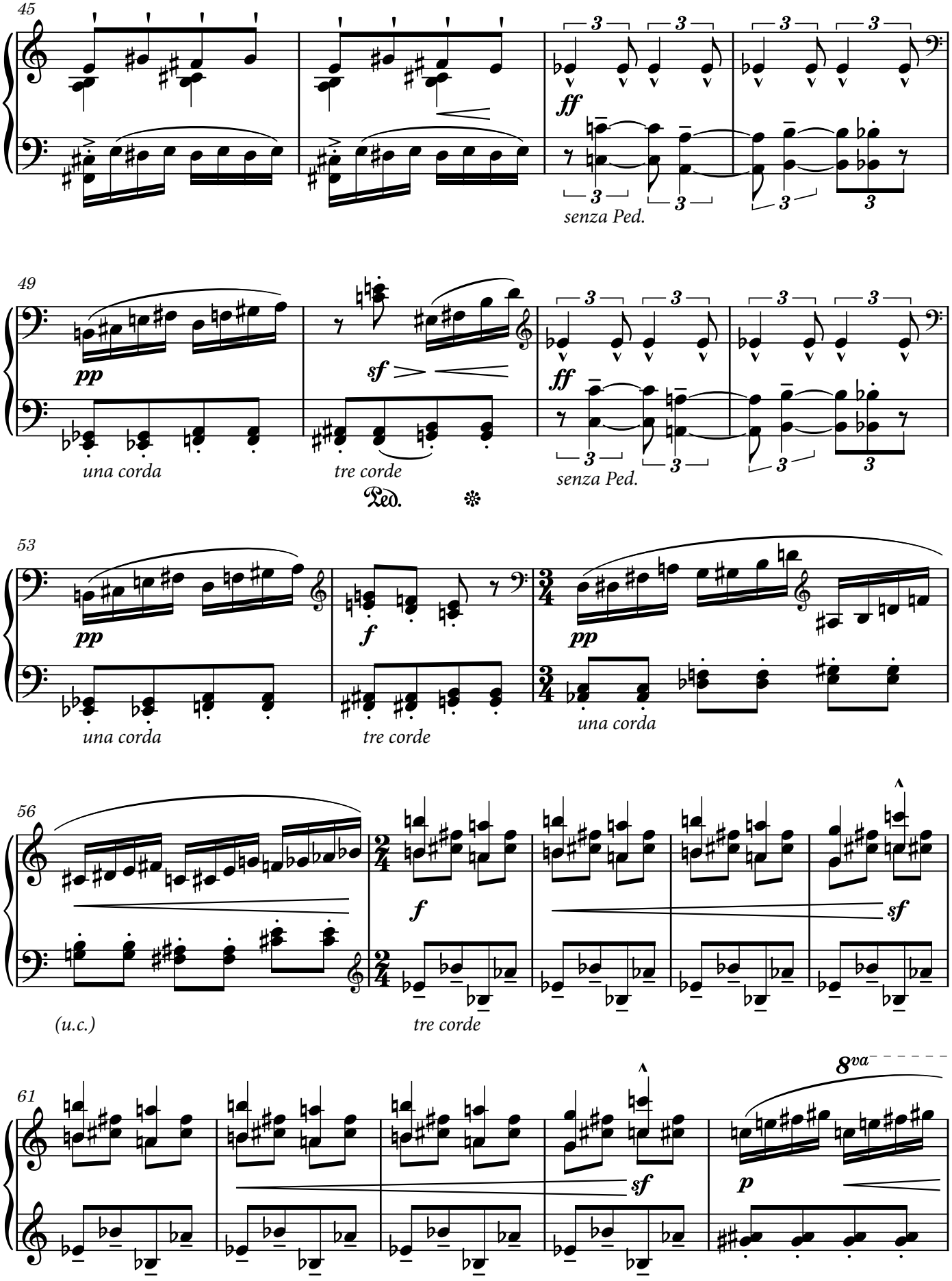
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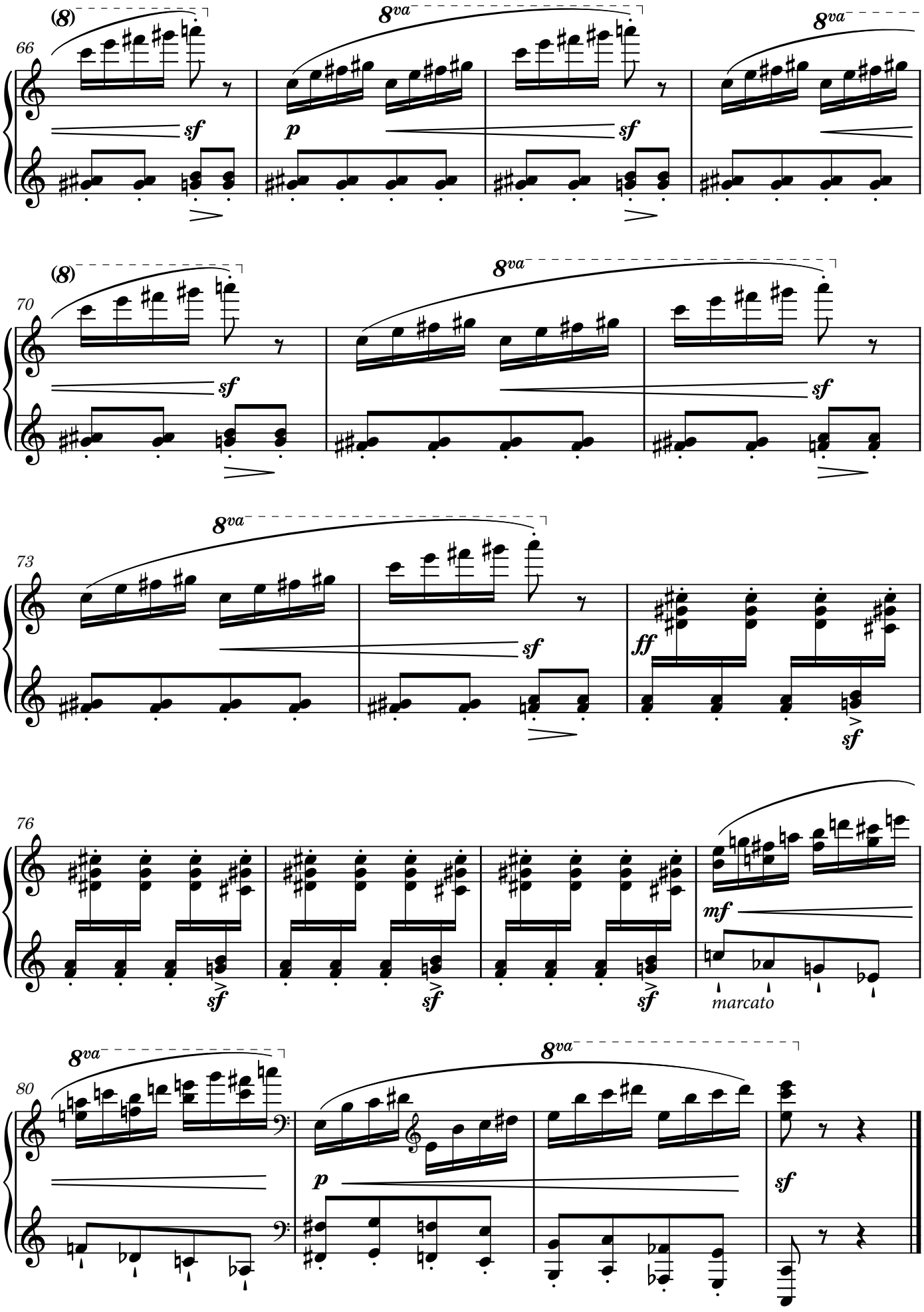
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