Max Charles Davies
&
Chris Nash

Manhattan Circus

FOR PIANO AND MANHATTAN SOFTWARE

Max Charles Davies (Composer)
&
Chris Nash (Coder)

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Duration: 5:30

Programme Note

Collaboration is an interesting endeavour! Particularly when it involves examining and subsequently articulating aspects of one's compositional process that can then be expressed as computer code and then realised by software.

This work is very much an experiment to explore the potential of a computer program and an instrumentalist playing together in ensemble. As with much of my recent work, including *Tiny Symphony* and *The Way of Things*, the pitch material is derived from the circumstances surrounding the piece. In this case, the central pitches are E – A – D – B, which is all the translatable pitch material from the word MANHATTAN. I then used several algorithms of my own making to proliferate both the pitch and rhythmic material according to specifically designed rules. The harmonic material is, again as with much of my recent work, based on triads with added sevenths. The structure is pre-chosen and fixed.

Once this 'road map' was in place – the chord sequence generated following specific rules related to the pitch and rhythmic material, and within a fixed structure of four contrasting sections – and translated into code within the Manhattan environment, it was then possible to manipulate and, where appropriate, randomise various musical parameters. This results in similar but never identical versions between performances.

The purpose of such an experiment, for me, was to explore the complementary differences in capability and execution between humans and technology, rather than mimicry.

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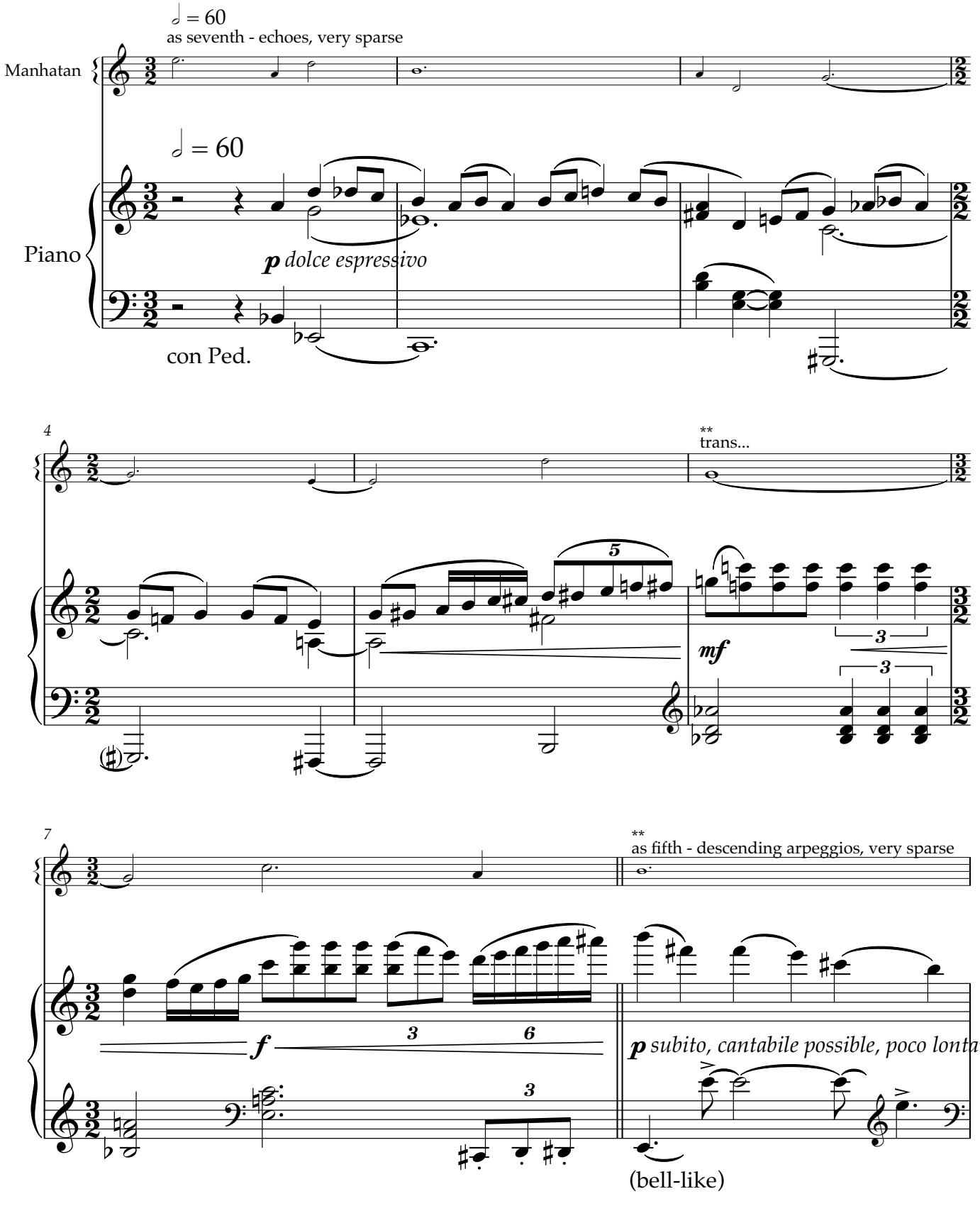
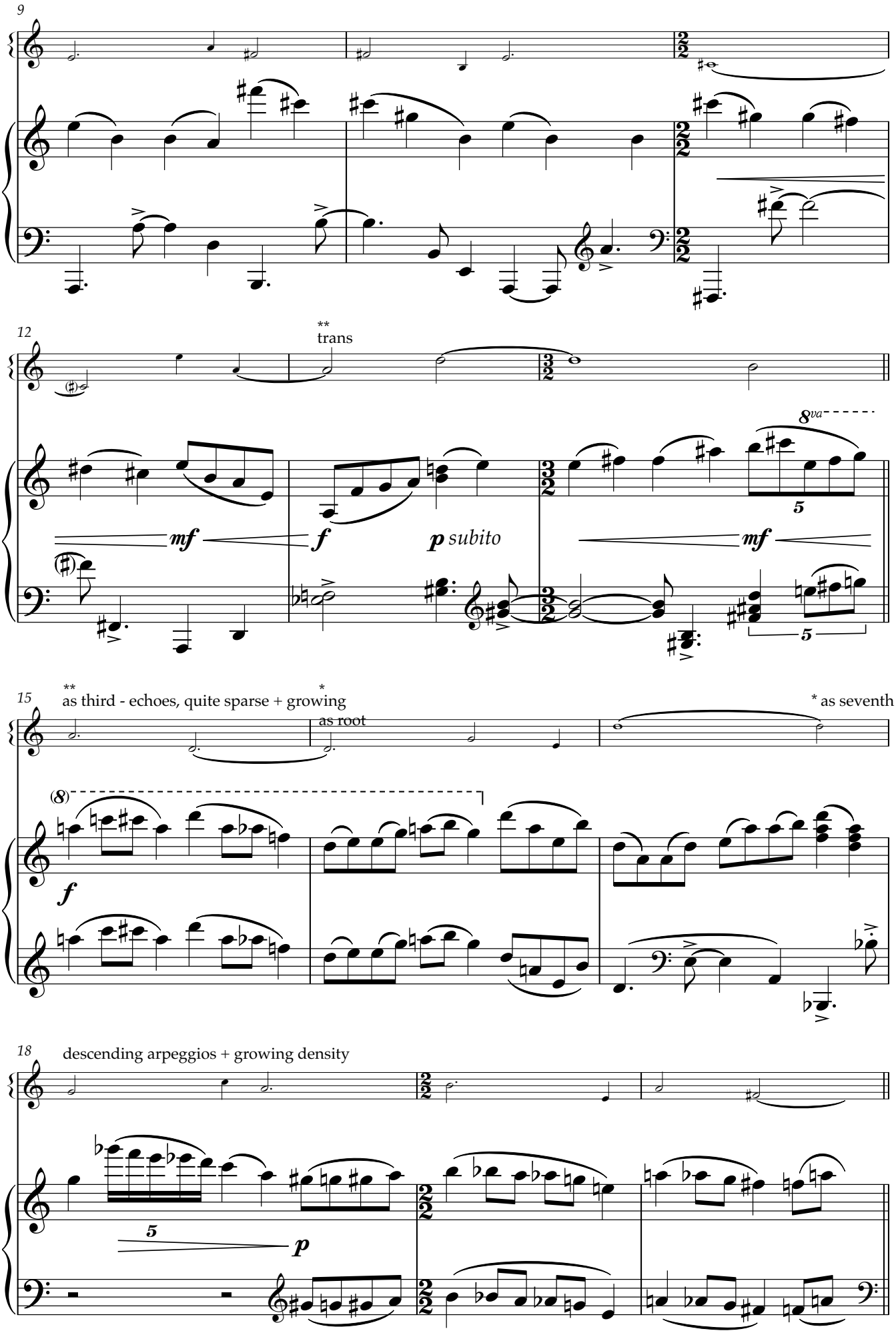
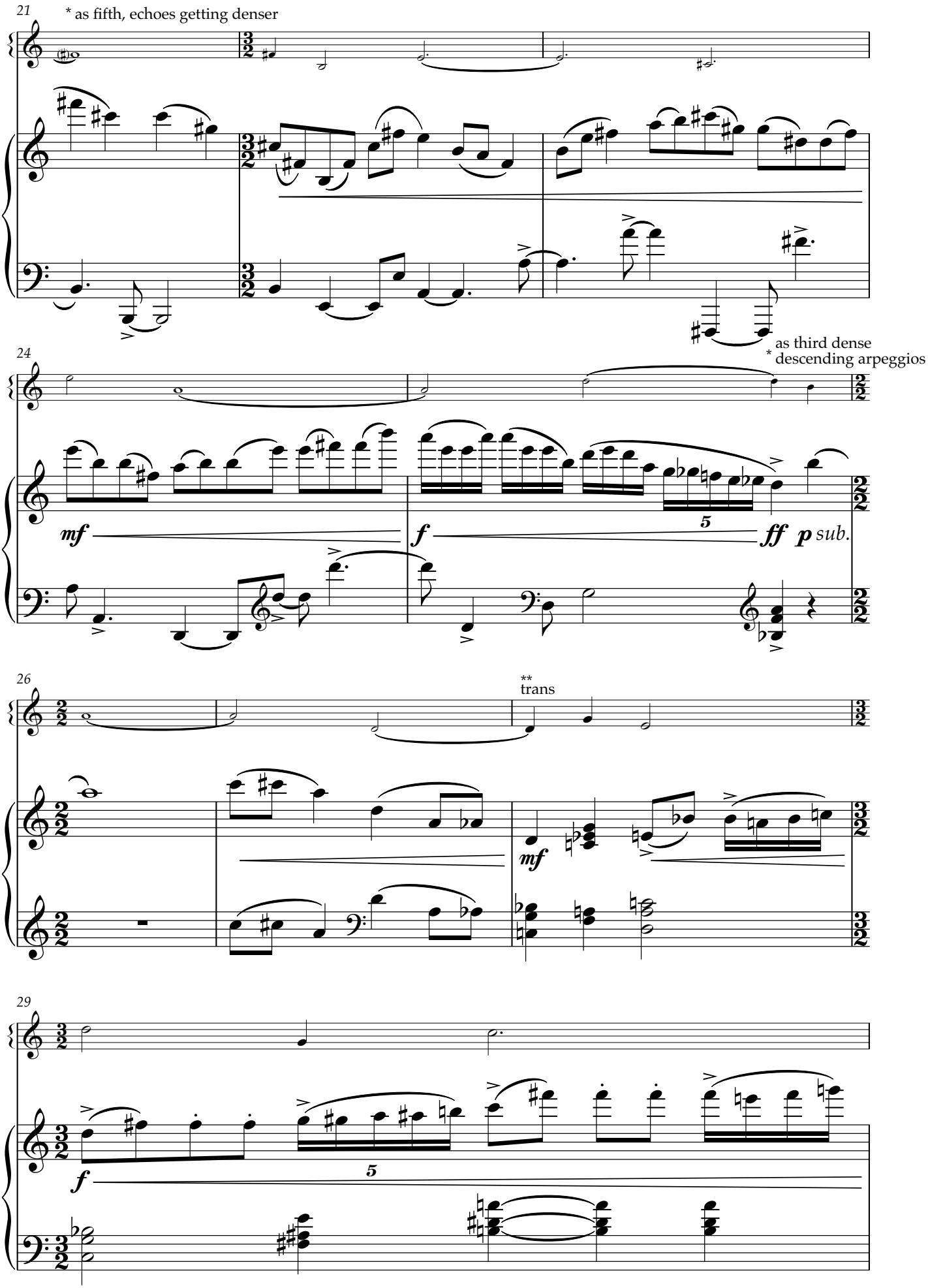
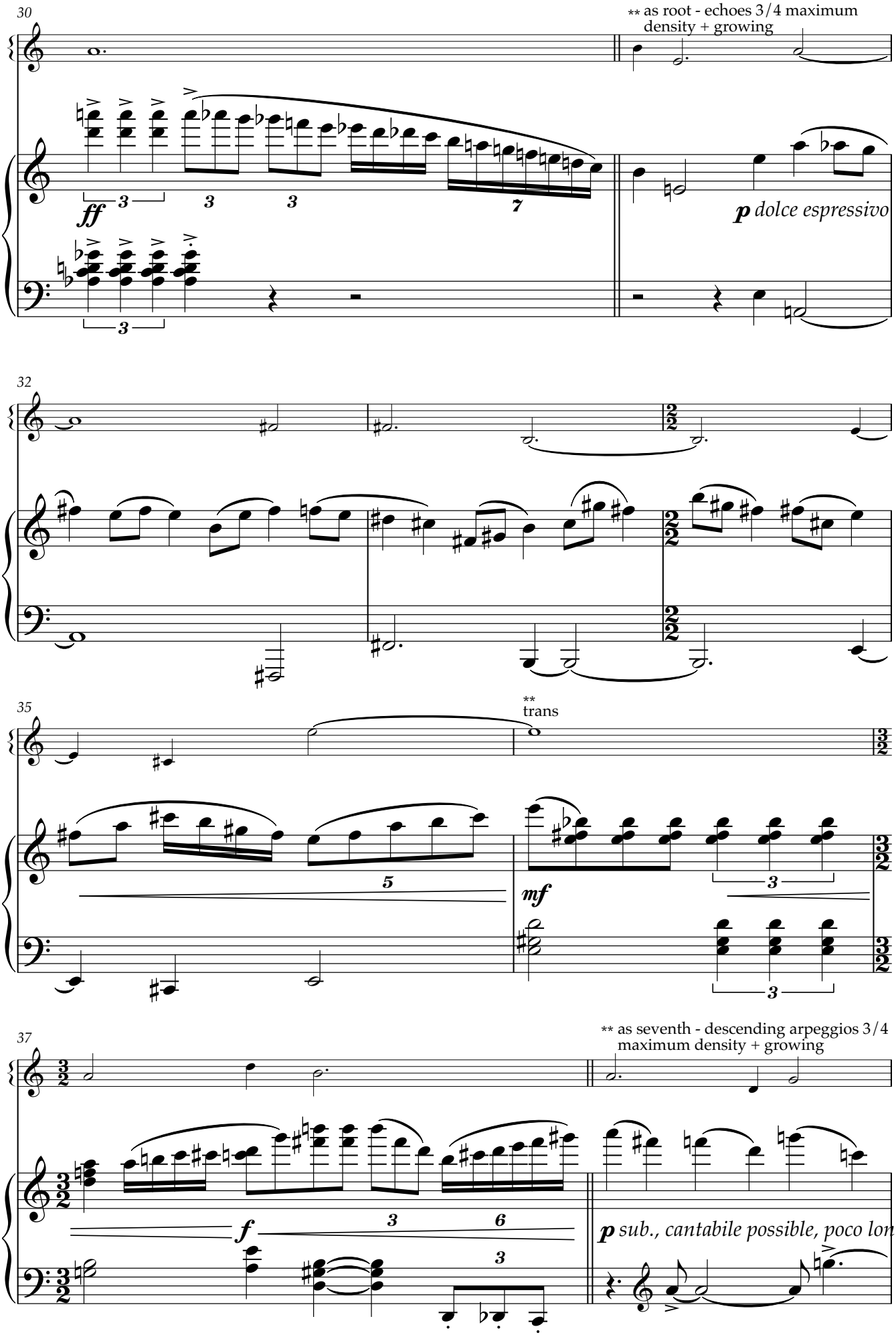
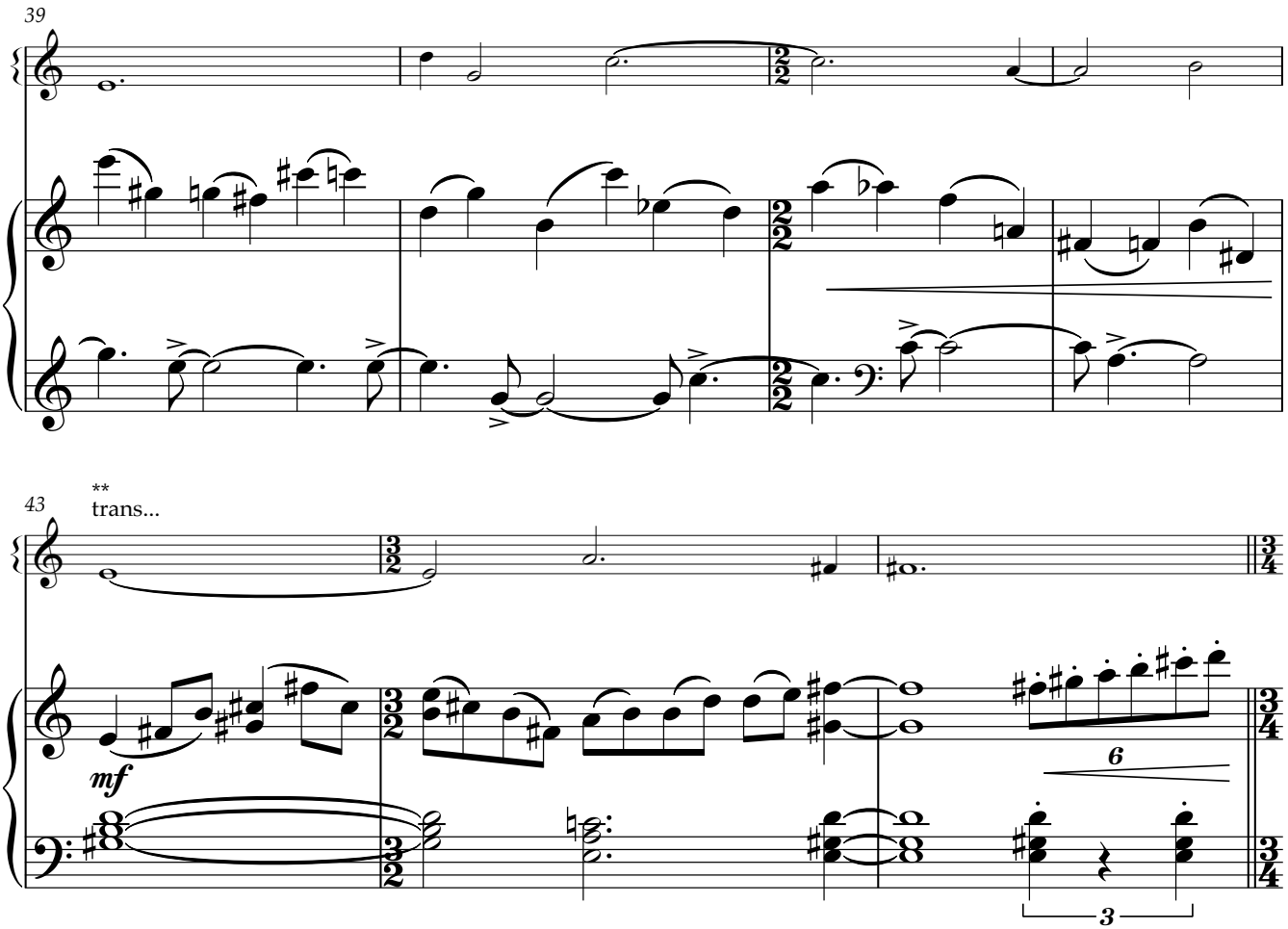
The Disklavier part is generated - following very strict parameters of the composer's design - by ReVisit Manhattan Software, designed by coder Chris Nash. Each time a disklavier part is generated it is different, but it will always work with the fixed piano part written in this score.

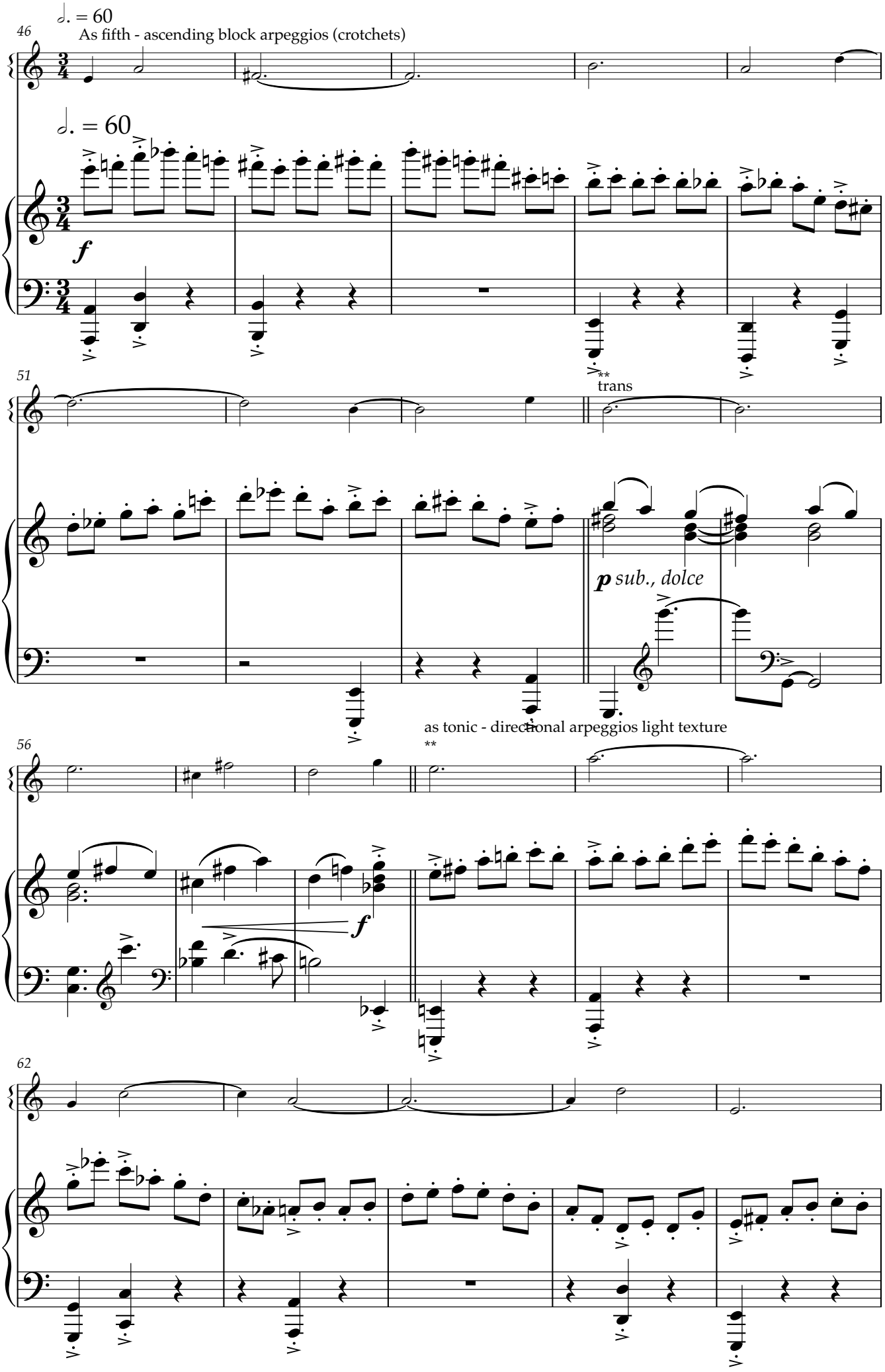


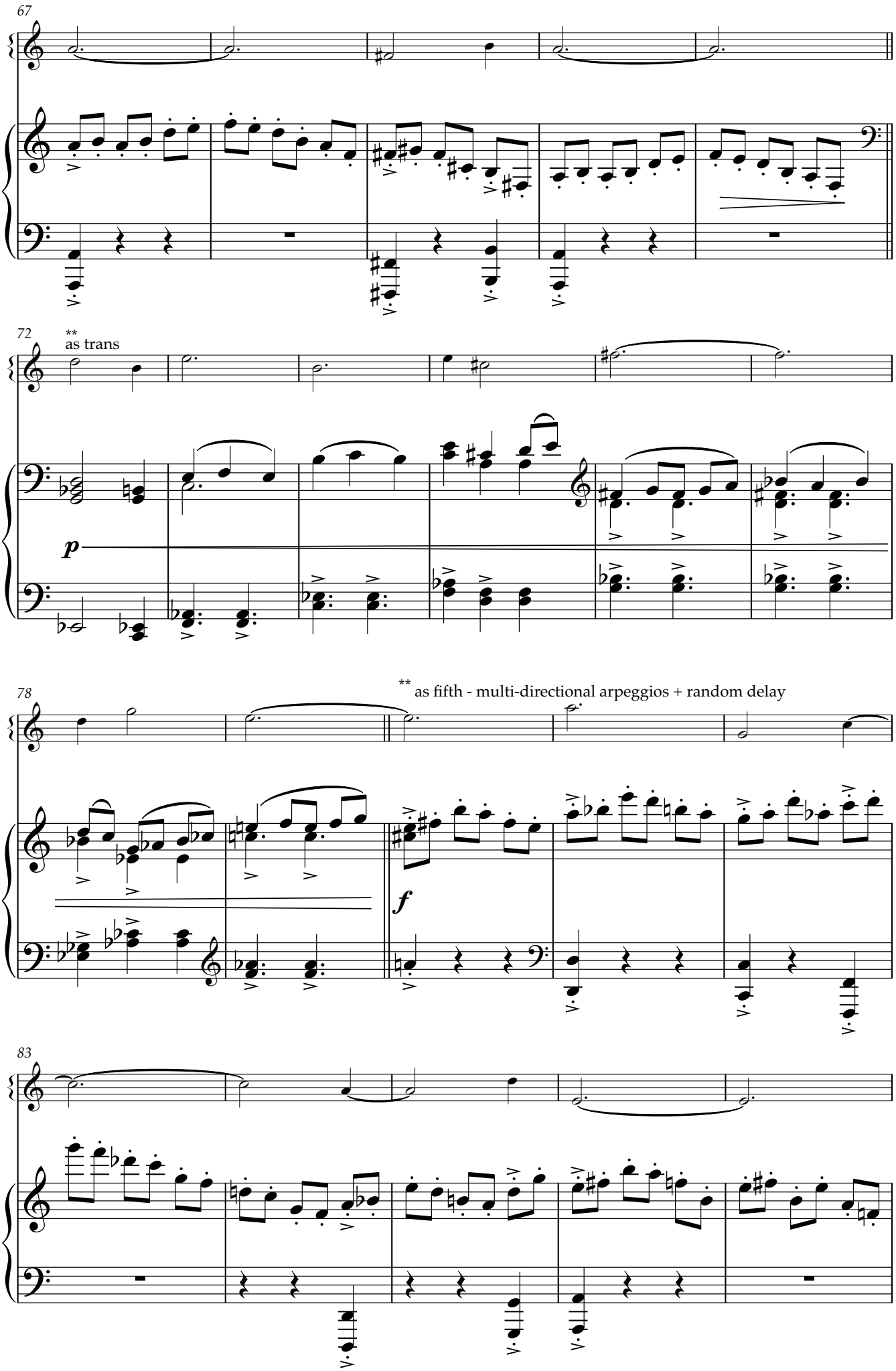

9
12
**
trans
8va
mf
f
p subito
mf
5
5
15
**
as third - echoes, quite sparse + growing
*
as root
* as seventh
(8)
f
18
descending arpeggios + growing density
5
p

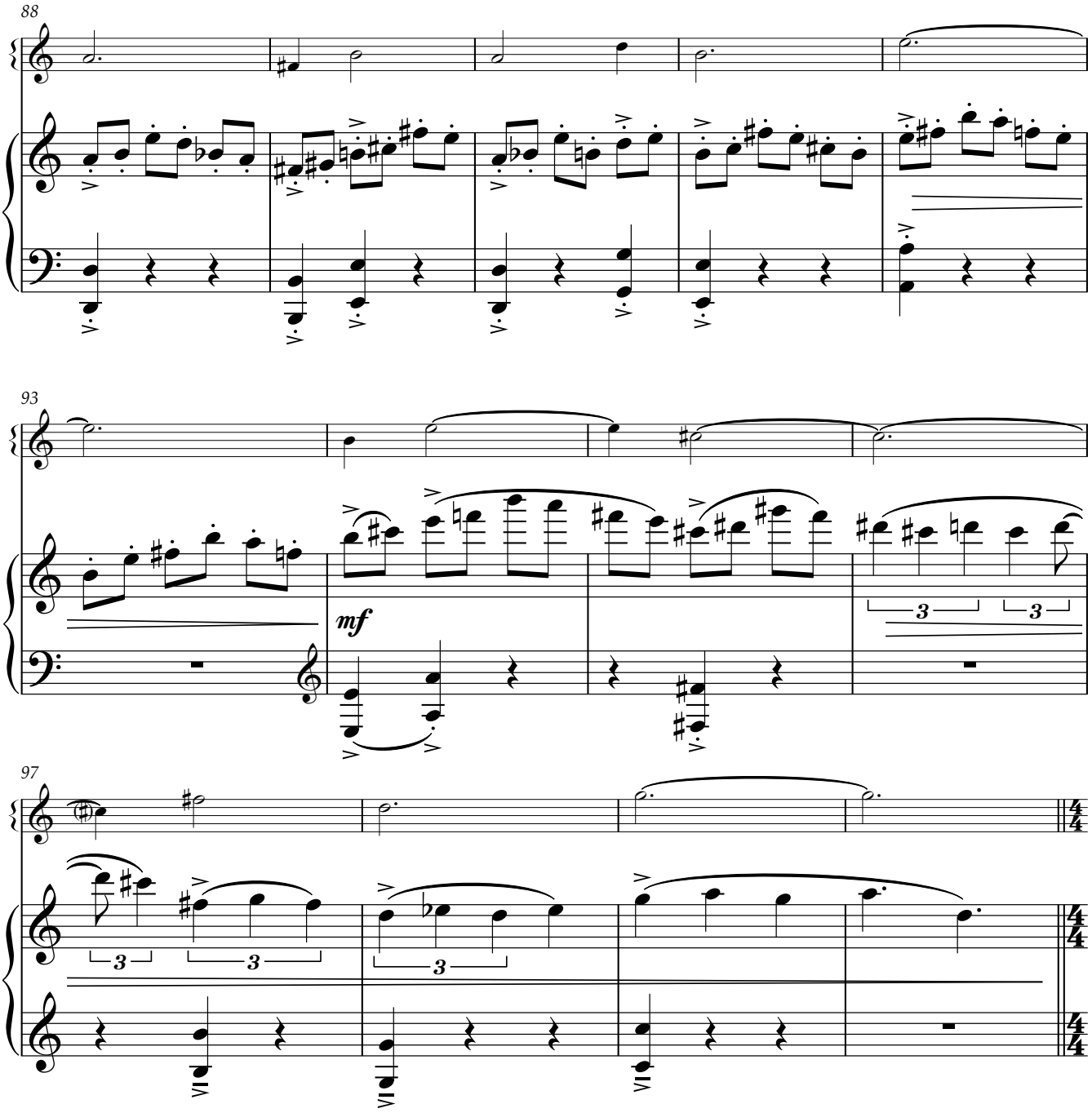

21
* as fifth, echoes getting denser
24
* as third dense descending arpeggios
mf
f
5
ff
p sub.
26
** trans
mf
29
f
5

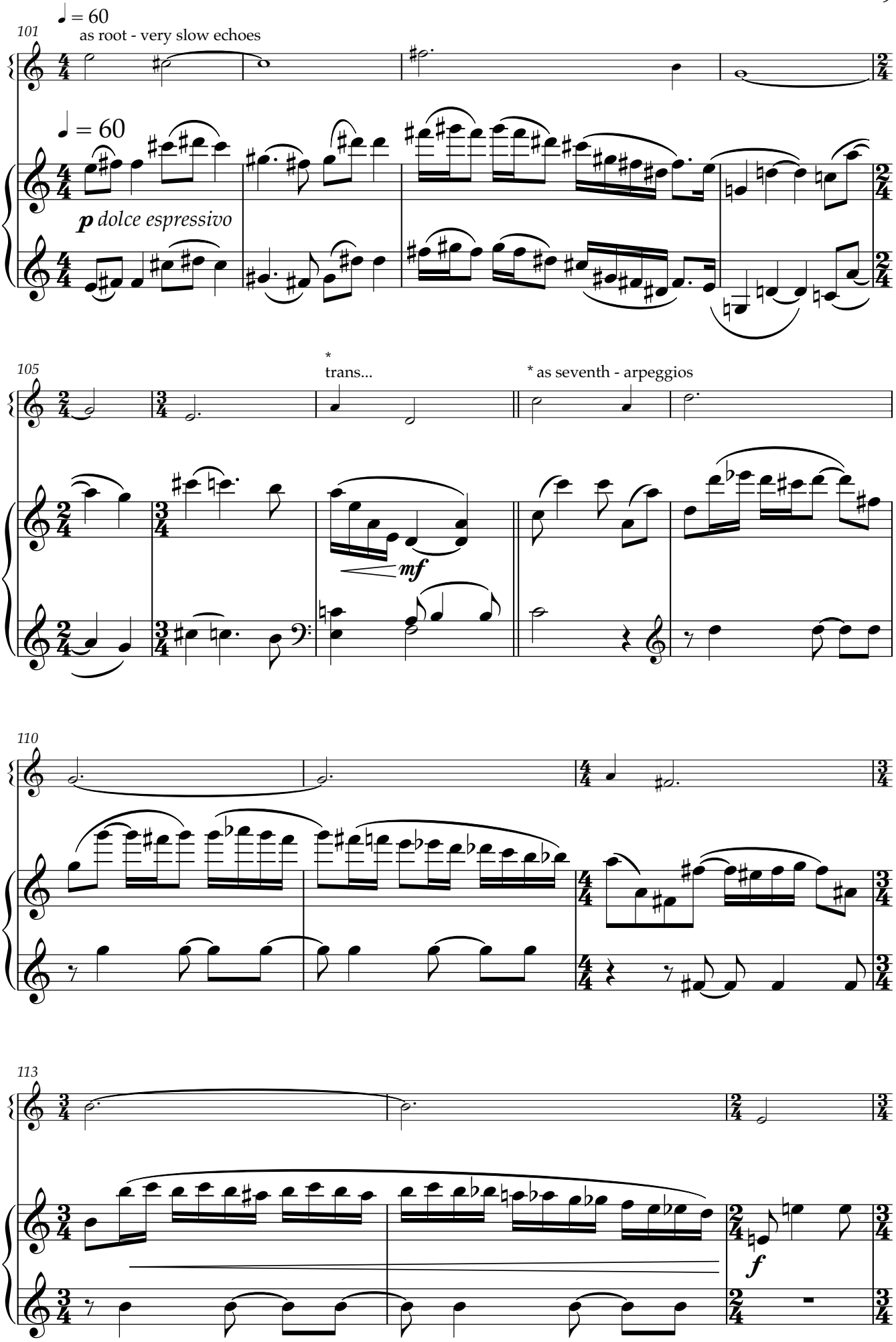

30
** as root - echoes 3/4 maximum density + growing
ff
p dolce espressivo
32
35
**
trans
mf
37
** as seventh - descending arpeggios 3/4 maximum density + growing
f
p sub., cantabile possible, poco lontano

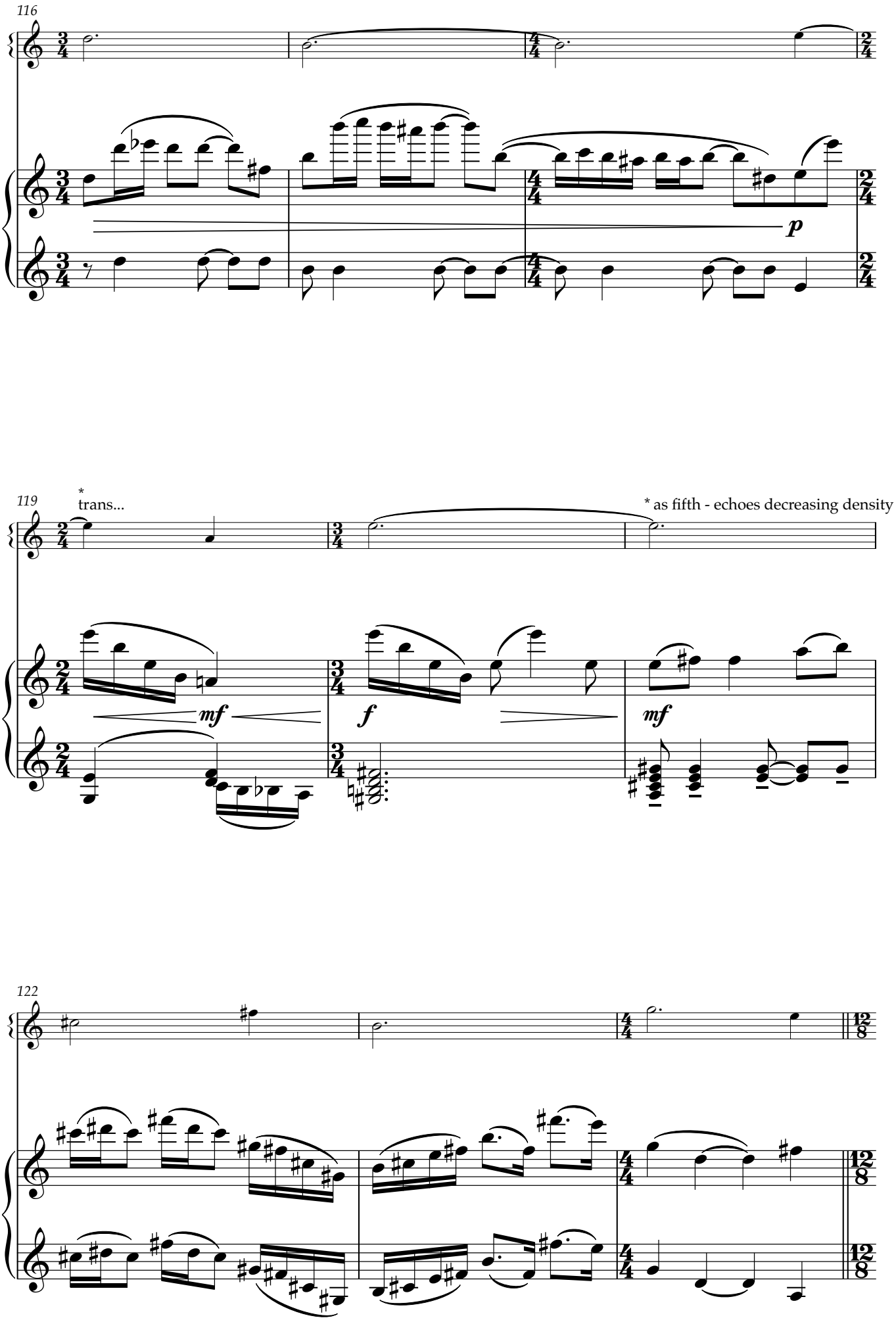

39
43
**
trans...
mf
6
3

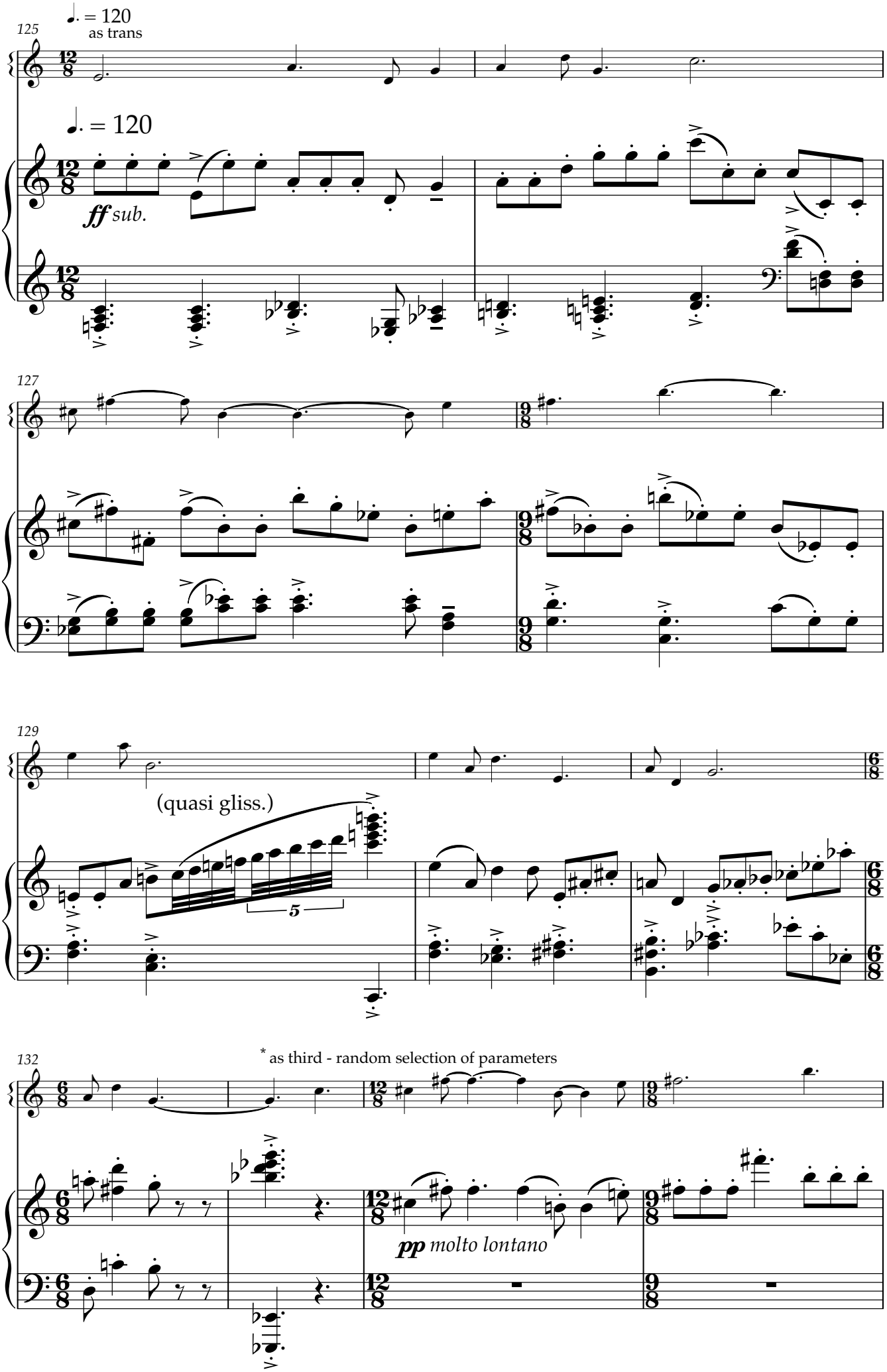

♩. = 60
As fifth - ascending block arpeggios (crotchets)
46
♩. = 60
f
51
**
trans
p sub., dolce
56
as tonic - directional arpeggios light texture
**
f
62

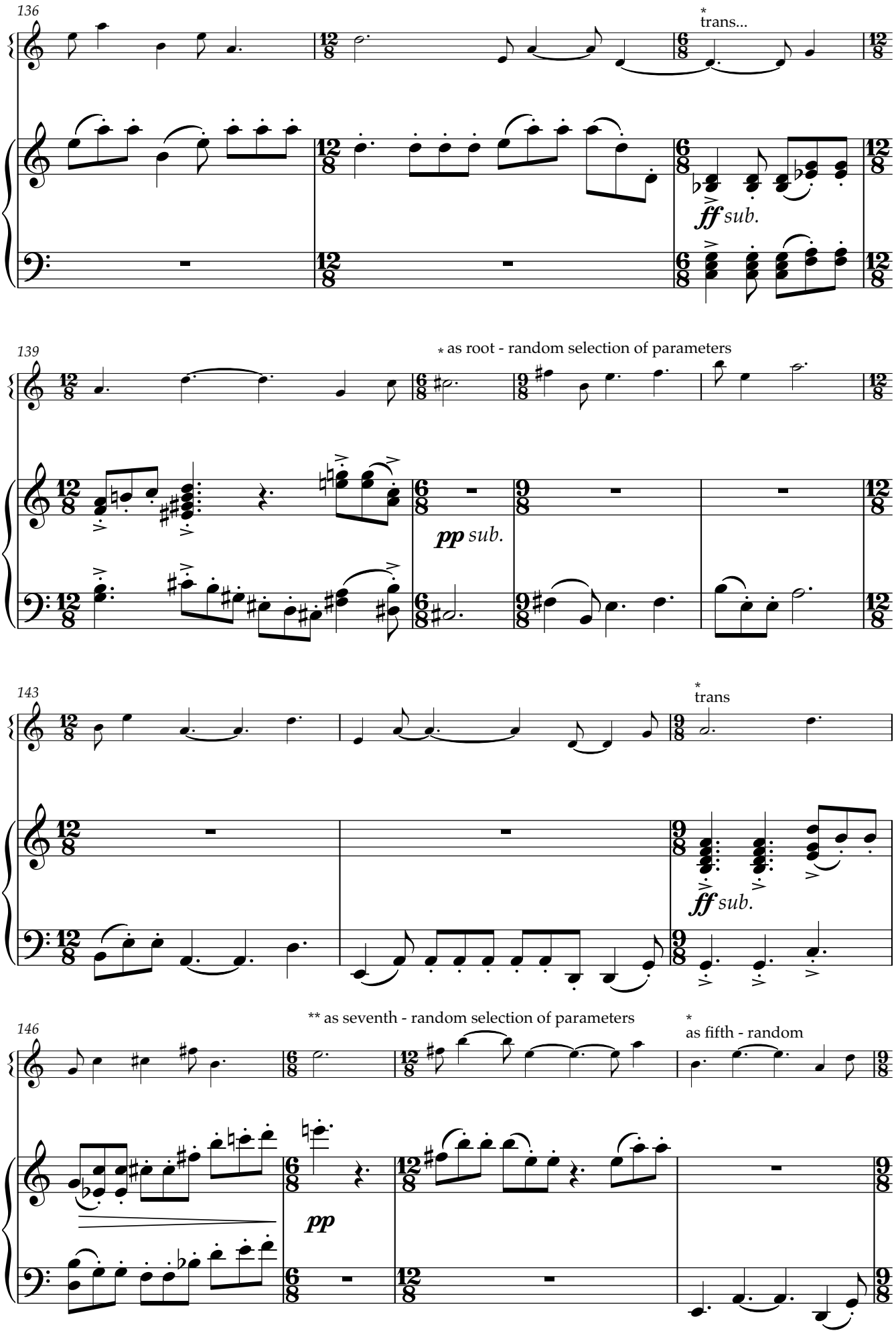

67
72
** as trans
p
78
** as fifth - multi-directional arpeggios + random delay
f
83

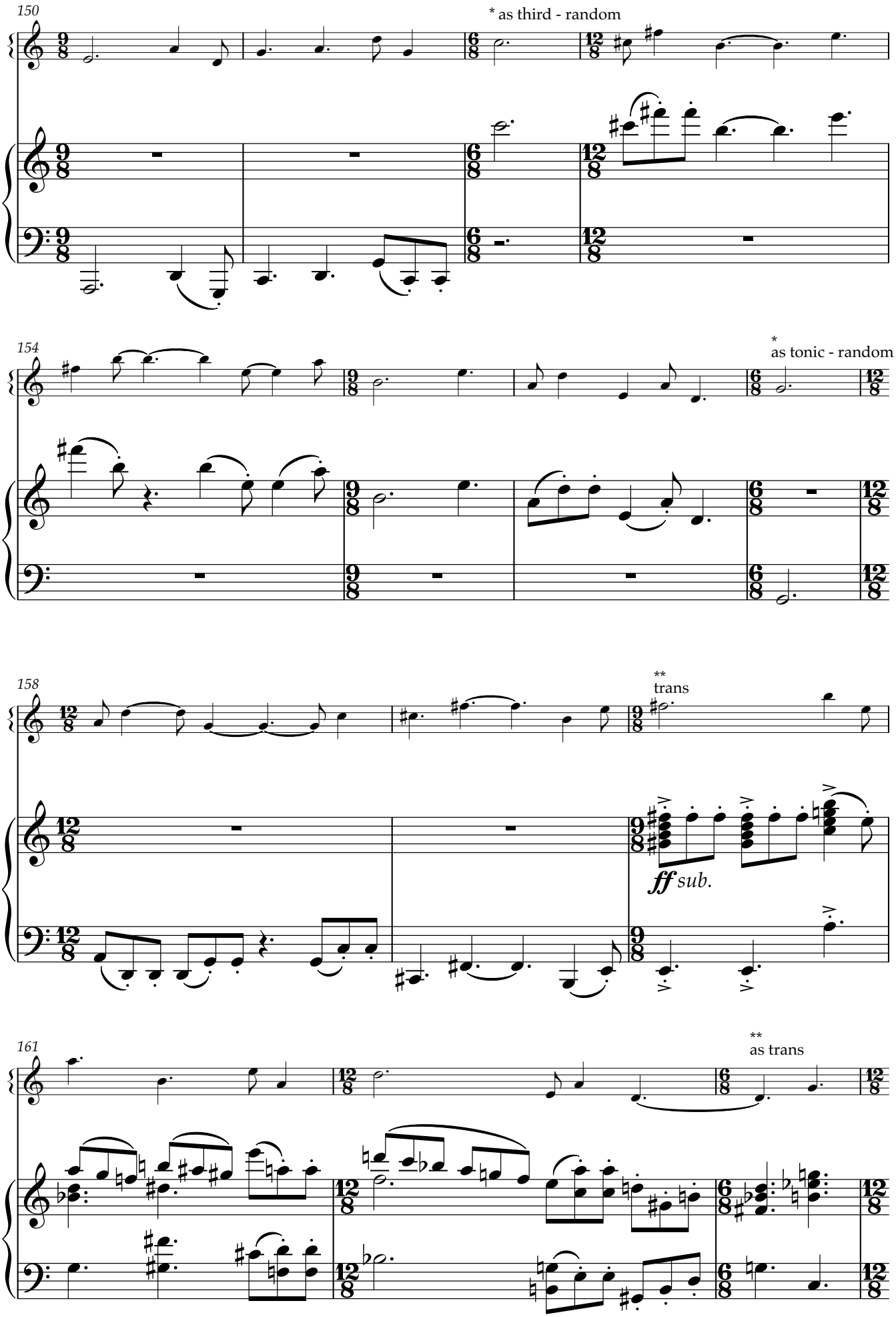

88
93
mf
97

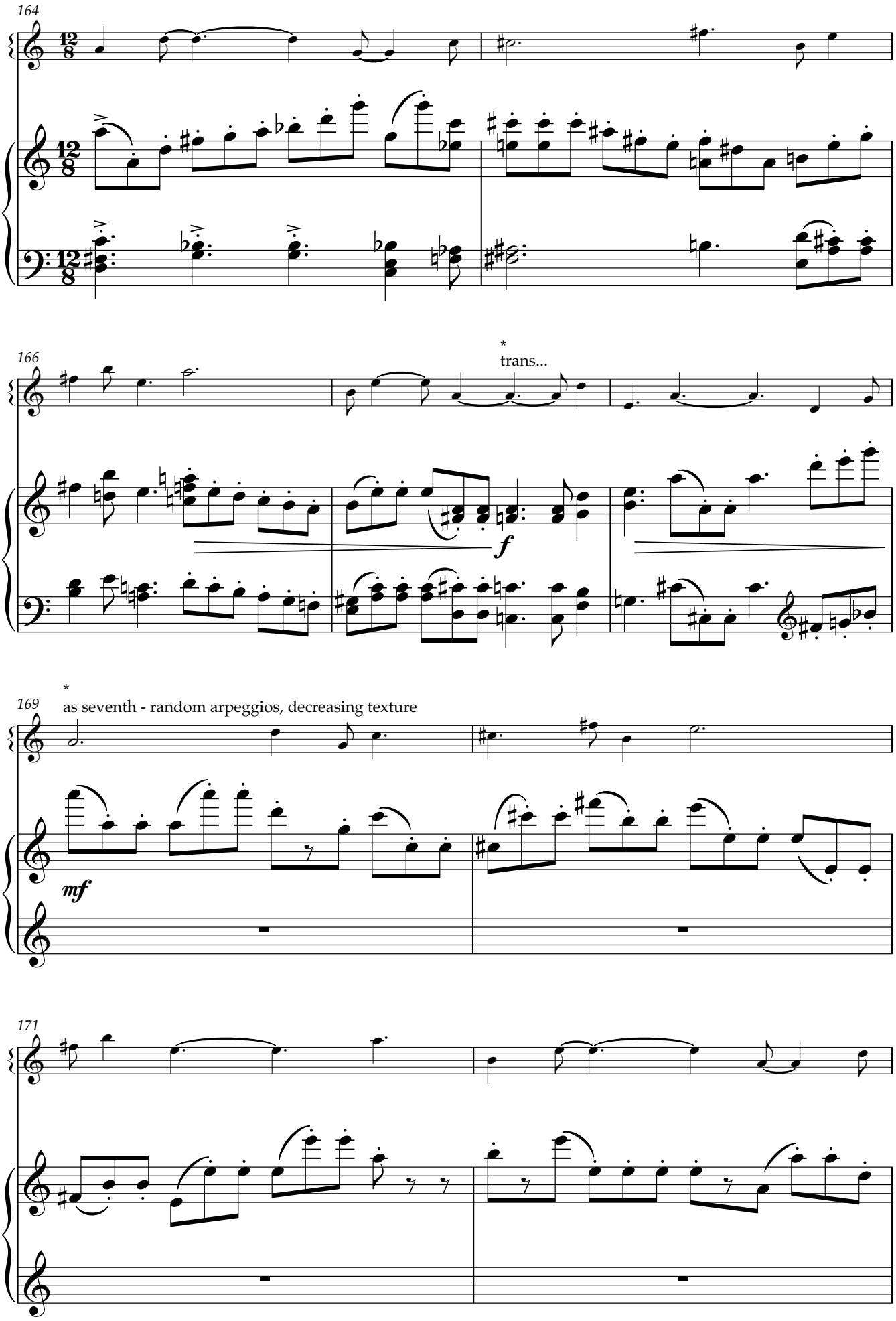

101
♩ = 60
as root - very slow echoes
♩ = 60
p dolce espressivo
105
*
trans...
* as seventh - arpeggios
mf
110
113
f

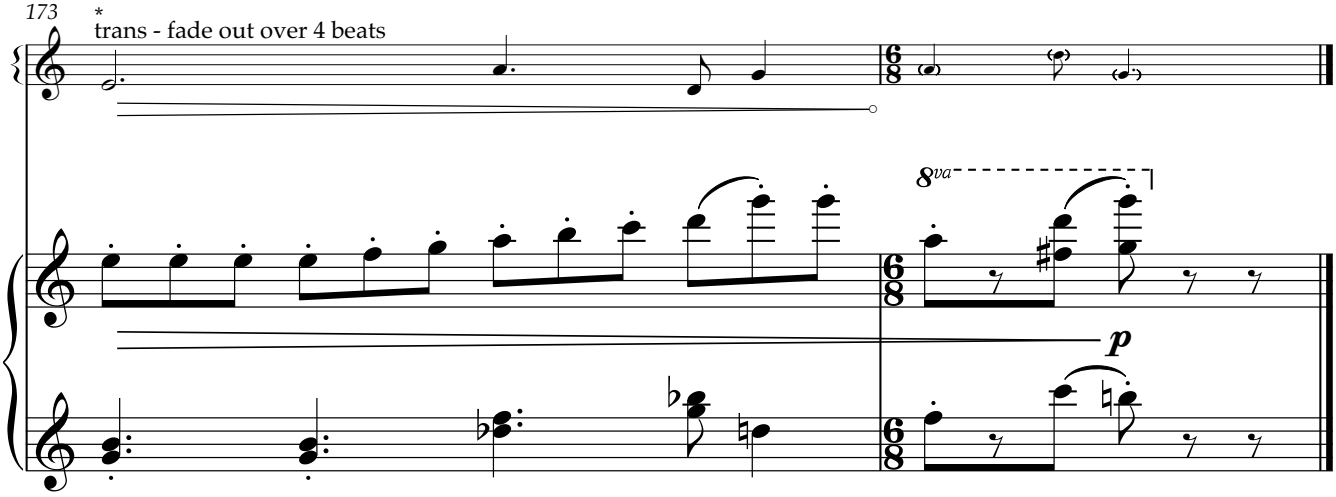

116
119
trans...
* as fifth - echoes decreasing density
122
p
mf
f
mf


125
♩. = 120
as trans
♩. = 120
ff sub.
127
129
(quasi gliss.)
5
132
* as third - random selection of parameters
pp molto lontano


136
* trans...
ff sub.
139
* as root - random selection of parameters
pp sub.
143
* trans
ff sub.
146
** as seventh - random selection of parameters
* as fifth - random
pp


150
* as third - random
154
*
as tonic - random
158
**
trans
ff sub.
161
**
as trans


164
166
*
trans...
f
169
*
as seventh - random arpeggios, decreasing texture
mf
171


173
*
trans - fade out over 4 beats
8va
p