Kevin Volans Piano Etudes

A Genealogical Analysis

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is a product of my own work and includes no outcome of work done in collaboration. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Music at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Michael Watt

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August 2014

In loving memory of Prof. Mary Rörich (1946-2010)

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW[1]

Perhaps the most striking quality of Kevin Volans's etudes is their clarity of thought. One is left with the impression that the material has been refined to its purest possible state, each note and each placement, exact. Consisting of ideas transcribed from his previous work, paradoxically, these etudes are in fact bursting with external references. How are Kevin Volans's etudes constructed internally? What historical conditions contributed to their formation? The etudes also raise a number of secondary questions and paradoxes incorporated within the primary questions. Does the external referentiality of the pieces compromise their internal autonomy? Why has a composer whose self-confessed goal is to 'do away with content' (Volans, 2011) created what he has dubbed a 'mini-museum' (Rörich, 2005: 155)? Most traditional analytical technique is either confined to identifying the musical structures within a piece or preoccupied with the context surrounding a work. Neither approach would satisfactorily reconcile the works' internal autonomy with their external referentiality. By analyzing the works intertextually, within the theoretical framework of a Foucauldian genealogy, the author hopes to gain insight into these issues, and in so doing, demonstrate a fresh and relevant method of music analysis.

There are a number of motivations for undertaking this research. Throughout his career, Kevin Volans has placed himself at the forefront of musical thinking. Despite this, as yet, not much has been written about him. Having grappled with modernity, the problem of the avant-garde, South African cultural identity, inter-cultural aesthetics and more recently tackling issues of style and content, his work has confronted many of the vital musical dilemmas of late modernity. In addition to this, Volans represents an extremely interesting position in relation to postmodernism. In an era when most composers have adopted a postmodern aesthetic, he has remained modernist in his sensibilities and approach to composition. His aim is to avoid the use of gesture or affectation and he is meticulous with regard to structure. As a pianist with formidable technique, familiar with the most virtuosic works of the repertoire, it is of particular interest how he applies his ideas when confronted with the piano. An etude is traditionally a technical work, but in addition to the usual dextrous material, the etudes include virtuosic extremes in dynamic, colour, rhythm and sonority. Each of these, usually secondary parameters, relates back to the overall structure and architecture. By making the realization of the architecture part of the technical argument, Volans expands our understanding of a technical challenge. What other technical issues do the etudes raise? How are they positioned in the musical landscape? By exploring these issues and addressing these questions, the author hopes to uncover perspectives that will improve interpretation and performance of the pieces as well as inform the performance of other ‘new’ music.

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[1] In the interests of clarity, this chapter contains a literature review which briefly outlines the references and resources which were used to structure the broader arguments of the thesis. Texts pertaining to particular issues are dealt with in the chapters.

The theoretical framing of music analysis through a Foucauldian genealogy and notions of intertextuality is not clearly formulated yet in current musicological thought. It is the intention of this study to add to this body of work within the discipline of musicology. Beyond any other form of analysis, the etudes provide an ideal opportunity to experiment with intertextual concepts and their musical applications. An intertextual analysis would seek to explore the multidimensional web of meaning, pursuing ‘grafts’ (Culler, 1982: 134-5) and relationships that are formed as a result of the pieces. The framework of the genealogy will accommodate a multiplicity of analytical methods, leading in a variety of directions. The goal is to trace the lineage of Volans’s musical ‘memes’ (Fearn, 2001: 165). Ultimately, the findings of the analysis will be plotted onto a genealogical diagram in order to highlight the interactions and power relationships both within and surrounding the etudes.

Michel Foucault’s archaeologies and genealogies provide the overarching model for this dissertation. Foucault’s books *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and *The Order of Things* (1966) are integral to the design of the archaeological analytical framework. Of Foucault’s writings, these provide the clearest illustration of the application of his archaeological methods. They also provide the structural and theoretical solutions for the design as well as the terminology used in the analysis. Foucault’s only two specifically genealogical studies are *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison* (1975) and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1976). As *The History of Sexuality* is incomplete as a genealogy because it was intended to be an introduction to a larger study, *Discipline and Punish* remains the only complete example of Foucault’s genealogical writing.

A great deal of literature is available for the application of Foucault to literary and other texts but there are very few examples of Foucauldian framed music analysis. In particular there is no prominent precedent for the application of Foucauldian genealogy to the analysis of musical scores. Many accepted modes of music analysis however, have broadly genealogical traits which the author has repositioned within a Foucauldian framework. Also, the notions of the genealogy are deeply rooted within those of Foucault’s archaeologies, of which there are many established models. The most prominent example of using the framework of the Foucauldian archaeology to date is Gary Tomlinson’s *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others* (1993). While Tomlinson’s archaeological survey is a useful reference for the conceptual and historical factors involved, it stops short at looking at the music itself. The solution to this problem the author has chosen is to engage applicable ideas from existing music analytical models and adapt them to the methods enabled by the genealogy. This necessitated using a broad base of literature in the field of poststructuralist linguistics in addition to writing related to music analysis.

Foucault's methods are steeped in poststructuralist literary theory. The author's initial point of contact with the theory was the book on pressing issues in musicology at the beginning of the 21st century edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everest entitled *Rethinking Music* (1999). Most notably from this book, the article 'Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue' (Korsyn in Cook, 1999: 55-72) by Kevin Korsyn and 'Analysis in Context' (Samson in Cook, 1999: 35-54) by Jim Samson argued strongly for the intertextual positioning of music analysis. These texts were firmly positioned within a musicological framework. In order to get closer to the concepts involved the author consulted Foucault's contemporary Roland Barthes in addition to translations of writings by Julia Kristeva. Both Barthes' and Kristeva's work is highly politically charged and in many cases quite relevant only to the particular issues with which they were dealing. In order to unpack and reinterpret Barthes and Kristeva's issues of the nature of texts, authorship and semiotic meaning, the author consulted Graham Allen's commentary *Intertextuality* (2000). Using Allen as an ancillary to the original texts aided in reigning in the vast terrain covered by these authors. The author also touched on Harold Bloom's theory of influence raised in *The Anxiety of Influence: a theory of poetry* (1973) as the author felt the issue of influence held some bearing on Volans's practice of reworking ideas. Although the author never pursued Bloom's bearing fully, this area may provide fertile ground to be covered by another study.

In parallel with the investigation into poststructuralist linguistic theory, the author conducted a survey of the musical analytical models which could be incorporated into the analysis. Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall's *Music analysis in Theory and Practice* (1988) used in conjunction with Nicholas Cook's *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (1987) provided overviews of the field. Dunsby and Whittall undertook the mammoth task of summarising a wide variety of analytical practises and, while incomplete, its survey and explanation of tonal, atonal and twelve-tone analysis was a useful introduction. Their focus is on the techniques of Heinrich Schenker as an early and influential figure in this area. While they maintain Schenker's hierarchical stance in relation to structure (which, based on the author's intertextual theoretical framework, the author chose to discard), their implementation of Schenker to post-tonal music was to prove useful in unpacking notions of stratification in the etudes.

The weakness in the analytical models implemented by Dunsby and Whittall is in their treatment of the analysis itself as a means to an end. In so doing, they failed to show how primary questions motivating the analysis should be interpreted. Cook's survey incorporated an awareness of the more recent semiotic, contextual and psychological developments within analysis, not covered by Dunsby and Whitall. Cook also included demonstrations of how to perform the analysis, including the subjectivity of the decisions made by the analyst as a factor in the practice. From Cook, the author drew further inspiration for using an eclectic selection of techniques simultaneously. Also, most usefully, locating the analysis within Schoenberg's notions of contrast and similarity as opposed to direction emerged from both of these readings.

Apart from countless newspaper reviews and interviews, the available musicological research on Volans's life and works emanating from a handful of writers. The most thorough South African investigations into Kevin Volans's music thus far have been undertaken by Christine Lucia. For this dissertation, Lucia's articles in *Musicus* to mark Volans's 60th birthday: 'Celebrating Composer Kevin Charles Volans, b.1949' (2009) provided useful background information. Her overview of Volans's string quartets 'The Landscape within: Kevin Volans and the string quartet' was the most detailed analysis of the musical material available at the time of this research. More broadly, Martin Scherzinger, Timothy Taylor, Christopher Fox and Mary Rörich are the other prominent writers who have entered into the debate over Volans's music. However, the nature of the debate generated by these writers is primarily contextual and not analytical. In two separate articles on Volans 'Art music in a Cross-Cultural Context: the case of Africa' (2004) and 'Of Sleeping White Men: Analytic Silence in the critical reception of Kevin Volans' (2004), Scherzinger argued against the misreadings of Volans's use of transcription and motivated in favour of serious analytical enquiry into the musical material itself, an argument in support of the premise of this dissertation. Christopher Fox, a close contemporary of Volans, provided first-hand knowledge of Volans's relationship with the other composers of the new Cologne school. His article: 'Where the river bends: the Cologne School in retrospect' (2007) was pivotal in formulating the important formative factors in Volans's time in Cologne.

The author's primary access point to Volans's piano etudes was Mary Rörich's review of 2005. In this paper, Rörich outlined certain key concepts involved in the etudes around which this dissertation centred. These issues include the importance of transcription in the etudes, Volans's identity as a modernist, his self proclaimed desire to 'do away with content' and role as a pianist in the composition of the pieces. This review also included a useful summary of the etudes on which to expand. Another central resource of information related to the etudes was the interview the author conducted with the composer at his farm at the foot of the Swartberg Mountains in December 2006. In this interview he outlined similar information to Rörich's review but clarified certain of the choices and stances he adopted in the etudes in detail. Also, Jill Richards, for whom the certain of the etudes are dedicated, provided a great deal of anecdotal information throughout the writing of this dissertation. The nature of her experience in working with Volans on the first seven etudes guided the analysis in the direction of the musical material itself. Volans's numerous articles on his own work also provided certain viewpoints from which to observe the etudes. From these, the most significant concept the author applied was taken from his description of the role of image in composition in 'Dancing in the Dark' (1986). Two other concepts central to the findings taken from Volans's writings include the divide between conceptualism and materialism, from his score notes for '100 Frames' (2002) and his internal conflict between his perceived European and African identity from his comments in 'A new note' (1986).

Exploring the genre of the etude, involved delving into the history of piano technique with which the genre is tightly bound. The literature available for keyboard technique extends back to Girolamo Diruta's 17th century treatise *Il Transilvano* (ca. 1600) with many famous teachers documenting their approach in the four hundred subsequent years. Viewed through the lens of Volans's etudes, the technical lineage of Liszt sprung into focus. The prominent summaries of this history include Gerig's *Famous Pianists and Their Piano Technique* (1974) and Kaestner Robertson's *Arm-Weight and Weight-Transference Technique* (1991). Another two influential teachers in this area were Abby Whiteside (1889-1956) and William Newman (1912-2000). Apart from small discrepancies in the details, there is a great deal of general agreement between these texts. They divide the history of piano technique into three eras. Beginning with the finger school of the late 18th century, a second period in the 19th century is outlined where arm weight became much more important necessitated by changes in the instrument. They all identify the most recent developments as the early 20th century techniques of relaxation. While George Kochetvitchy's *The Art of Piano Playing* (1964) also identifies these divisions in thinking, he makes a much clearer division between the finger and arm school. The author chose this position as the impacts of the change in thinking are clearly visible by the effects they had on the kinds of etudes that were being written, particularly those of Chopin and Liszt.

Delving into the genre of the etude in the 20th century generated three relevant areas of research. Increasingly, the genre implied pushing the boundaries of complexity while also enjoying a central role in the most forward-looking compositions of the Darmstadt school in the 1950s. More relevant to Volans's etudes was the inclusion of tone colour as a musical parameter. This research entered into the debate via comparing widely differing interpretations of complexity itself. For this, Richard Toop's article 'On Complexity' (Toop: 1993) helped create links between the arguments. The individual viewpoints taken by Brian Ferneyhough as described by Arnold Whittall in 'Connections and Constellations' (Whittall: 2003) and in his own words, with James Boros in 'Shattering the Vessels of Received Wisdom' (Whittal: 1990). Nancarrow, Ligeti and Kurtág were also contrasted to shed light on Volans's handling of the same issue. The author explored the genre's innovative compositional role in Messiaen's etudes and drew connections from these to Debussy's etudes' tone colour sensibility. Here, Allen Forte's article 'Olivier Messiaen as Serialist' (2002) and Richard S. Parks 'Tonal Analogues as Atonal Resources and their relation to Form in Debussy's Chromatic Etude' (Parks: 1985) assisted with connecting a thread between these works.

The analysis of the scores was approached from three viewpoints. The goal was to provide three coexisting analytical readings of the texts. These readings reflect the archaeological layers of meaning resulting from the Foucauldian framework. While the scores themselves form the backbone of the data gathering in these chapters, the author selected particular theoretical perspectives within which to position each reading. A loose and non-hierarchical interpretation of Schenker's model of organizing an analysis into background, middle ground and foreground was used in conjunction with Schoenberg's ideas of contrast and similarity of material in the chapter on stratification. In order to apply these techniques, the author referred once again to Cook and Dunsby and Whitall's practical demonstrations. The author then used Edward T. Cone's influential article, 'Stravinsky: the progress of a method' (1962) to interpret the data. Stratification has been written about extensively more recently, most notably by Wallace Berry in 'On structural levels in music' (1980) and Mark MacFarland's 'Debussy: The Origins of a Method' (2004). The author, however, chose Edward T. Cone's article as it links the method with Stravinsky and Picasso suggesting intertextual links between their approaches.

In his sleeve notes for the CD recording of his String Quartet *Dancers on a plane* (1994), Kevin Volans alluded to a number of connections between *Dancers on a Plane* and Jasper Johns' artwork. Taken together with Volans's statements about image in his article 'Dancing in the Dark', the author suspected the connection extended more deeply than Volans was suggesting and sought to investigate whether this is the case. The research path led to a strong link between Volans's conception of sound image and Johns's figurative visual use of metonymy. The author's deductions were largely based on Fred Orton's descriptions of

Johns's work in *Figuring Jasper Johns* (1994) supplemented with Jasper Johns' own comments in *Jasper Johns: writings, sketchbook notes and interviews* (1996). The topics of metonymy, metaphor and allegory were also investigated in detail to establish whether they operate in Volans's music.

The last lens through which the author views the etudes in this dissertation is that of organicism. Through examining Kevin Korsyn's articulation of the concepts in 'Schenker's organicism reexamined' (1993) and Ruth Solie's 'Organicism and Music Analysis' (1980), the author built a workable distinction between organic and mechanical composition methods. Superimposing Dan Warburton's definitions of minimalist techniques in his article 'A Working Terminology for Minimal Music' (1988) enabled me to identify certain important mechanical techniques used by Volans in the Etudes.

Designing the theoretical framework for a Foucauldian analysis

The primary role of the genealogical theoretical framework is to uncover the power relationships or web of influence of Volans's etudes. The web of influence acts on the etudes from within and without, dissolving the binary opposition between text and context, enabling answers to both the internal and external aspects of the research question. The structures provided by the Foucauldian genealogy, while being highly influential themselves, are deeply rooted in poststructuralism and are based on a number of poststructuralist principles. These principles provide the logic to tie complicated strands of thinking together. Due to the experimental nature of applying genealogy to music, the design of this framework is also methodological. The decisions as to how the theory will be applied to the analysis are handled at the same time as identifying the relevant theoretical principles.

Poststructuralism and Foucauldian theory

According to musicologist Jim Samson, historically, clear distinctions were made between the academic disciplines of performance/composition, theory/analysis and history/musicology (Samson in Cook, 1999: 43). Working within a modernist paradigm, those who specialized in analysis would treat musical works as autonomous objects, analyzing them independently of their historical context. More recently contextual and reception study has shown how a work's identity changes when confronted with different historical and ideological subjects (Samson in Cook, 1999: 44). This forces an analyst to acknowledge the historical context, not only of the work itself, but also of the questions they ask of it. Reception studies are still, however, limited by the construction of an opposition between text and context (Korsyn in Cook, 1999: 56). Volans's etudes are intricately woven texts which invite close scrutiny but they have numerous visible strands connecting them to a wider network of musical pieces, artworks and ideas. In order to truly explore and come to terms with the meaning within and surrounding the etudes as musical ‘texts’, they need to be viewed as relational events or networks rather than closed entities.

From a literary theory point of view, a text is any form of human code. Although much intertextual theory stems from a literary stance, its findings have been applied to many different kinds of text, including music. In this analysis, the goal is to fully exploit the analytical opportunities intertextuality provides for designing a Foucauldian genealogical analysis of music and specifically, Volans’s etudes. In order to do so, it is necessary to evaluate which concepts developed within the field of literary theory have already been applied to music analysis and articulate how these concepts will be useful for understanding Volans’s etudes. At each stage of the analysis, different intertextual ideas may jostle for importance. Also, whether or not Foucauldian genealogy with its intrinsic awareness of intertextuality offers useful tools for understanding Volans’s etudes will only be demonstrated by the extent and quality of the analytical findings it facilitates. Each of the concepts involved are so closely entwined as to be practically inseparable. It is for this reason that as groundwork the author has chosen to take a broad survey of the theoretical territory surrounding Foucauldian genealogy in order to isolate which concepts to illuminate the music within the analysis. While the nature of this analysis is primarily Foucauldian, Foucault’s premises are firmly rooted in poststructuralist literary theory. Any argument taking a Foucauldian stance would need to be positioned within the hypotheses laid out by poststructuralist literary theorists. For this reason some underpinning within literary theory is required.

The first theorist whose concepts are important for Foucault is the Bulgarian born, French-based literary theorist Julia Kristeva. It was Kristeva who first used the term ‘intertextuality’ in her two essays on Mikhail Bahktin: ‘The bounded text’ (1966-7) and ‘Word, dialogue and novel’ (1966). Many of Kriteva’s ideas can be traced to Bahktin. Bahktin lived in the Soviet Union where information was tightly controlled, enduring six years of internal exile imposed by Stalin. Consequently his work was not well-known outside the Soviet Union or in France where Kristeva was based in the 1960s. His study was concerned primarily with the ‘dialogic’ relationship between texts. Bahktin observed that dialogism, the notion that ‘utterances bear traces of other utterances’, was a ‘constitutive’ element of all language (Korsyn in Cook, 1999: 58). In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*[2] (1929), he highlighted the struggle between what he termed the monologic and dialogic forces within language, proceeding to show how the state and society exploit language in order to reinforce power structures. Bahktin illustrated how language serves as a battlefield on which clashes between opinions, ideologies, beliefs and interpretations take place. The dialogic forces within language celebrate a diversity of meaning – emphasising context over text. As such it is inseparable from its historical moment. In its diversity, a dialogic view of language poses a threat to any unitary, authoritarian or hierarchical conception of society (Allen, 2000: 30). For theorists such as Kristeva in Paris during the 1960s, Saussurean linguistics was just such a conception. Kristeva and Bahktin's findings, when directly translated into an analysis of music as text, present music as the battleground between ideologies. Viewing music this way would seek to destabilise any hierarchical structures which may be involved or associated with it. In order to streamline the analogy between post-structural linguistics and music, we need to clarify how the concepts appear in their very different vocabularies.

A fundamental tenet of the Saussurean linguistics to which Kristeva and Bahktin were reacting is that signifieds (concepts) refer to a langue (system) and not directly to the world. It is the synchronic system of language that provides determinate signifieds for arbitrary signifiers (words). From the Saussurean analytical point of view, 'the system' itself takes priority over the function of authorship – the author is treated merely as a mediator in 'the system'. What the approach did not acknowledge was that signifiers endlessly refer, not only to stable signifieds, but to other signifiers. In response to this, Kristeva's theory emerged as a celebration of that which resists the stabilization of the signifier/signified relation (Allen, 2000: 33). Mirroring the political turmoil in Paris, she 'destroyed the signified' (Barthes, 1977) and subverted the authority of monologic science (Allen, 2000: 35). If music operates as a linguistic system, it is more fluid and versatile than other kinds of texts. In this equation, musical reference behaves similarly to poetry – its meaning is entirely dependent on the texts it is positioned to invoke. Irrespective of how hazy those boundaries may be, music is required to operate within extended systems of meaning to be performable. Conversely, when viewed this way, music perfectly illustrates how textual systems operate. The system is generated by the historical context and the musical work together, dictating the codes and signifiers with no necessity for a corresponding independent network of signifieds. As stated, in the poststructuralist view of language, signifiers refer to other signifiers and not to signifieds. For example, there is no causal relationship or inherent property of the signified 'tree' that is denoted by the signifier 'tree'. The signifier creates a link in the synchronic system arbitrarily by sounding different from other signifiers. Taken further, the same arbitrary relationships can be seen to exist in music. Units of musical material act as signifiers by being different from other signifiers. Also, as intertextual objects in a relational field, pieces no longer exist as self contained units. They are relational events in a network. Most notably for this analysis, in the network, the systems created by these relationships would take priority over the role and intentions of the composer who becomes merely another mediator in the system. So, Volans's own views of his work need to be seen as one among many. In a web of meaning, analysis itself contributes to the network. The decisions affecting the nature of the analysis itself shape the meaning which it interprets. How would a flexible approach to the authorship of the composer affect the analysis? Which would matter more – the historical context surrounding the composer or the context surrounding the analysis? Later in this chapter the author shall explore Foucault's position on these issues in order to make a decision for this analysis. Before doing so, the political implications of Kristeva's findings are worth investigating.

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[2] The authorship of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* is in dispute. It was originally thought to have been written by Bahktin's friend V. N. Vološinov but Clark and Holquist in their 1984 biography of Bahktin credit him with writing the book. Korsyn also takes this view. It is agreed that even if he didn't write it himself, he influenced it significantly.

Before Kristeva, semiotics had sought to commodify texts: a text bearing a stable meaning is a quantifiable product (Kristeva, 1974: 36). In a capitalist system where value is seen largely in terms of monetary worth, viewing language as such gives knowledge and intellectual work an exchangeable value. By demonstrating how texts are in a constant state of production, Kristeva established a new mode of semiotics – a mode where the reader recognizes his/her role in creating the text. Author and reader collaborate 'in process/on trial' over the text (Kristeva, 1974: 36).

Kristeva's theory did more than grant the reader an authority previously devoted exclusively to the author – intertextuality does not merely replace one 'mythical figure' with another (Allen, 2000: 60). If the author is unable to 'control the meaning unleashed in the act of writing', then there is no way a reader could possibly 'hold together' every aspect of a text. How then, are these roles to be understood? By promoting notions of difference, the poststructuralist view, shifted away from believing in a single source of meaning and authority. Instead, it portrayed the reader as being 'lost among difference' (Allen, 2000: 90). By accepting 'difference', many contradictions in the nature of texts could be acknowledged (Allen, 2000: 93). This was partly reconciled by introducing new notions of influence into her theory. Building on Bahktin's hypothesis, in 'The Bounded Text' (1980) Kristeva demonstrated how texts are constructed out of already existing discourse. For Kristeva, this appropriation goes much further than mere influence. In this view, texts do not merely reuse previous textual units, the material itself is transformed, the meaning modified: ‘a text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts intersect and neutralize one another’ (Allen, 2000: 35). Interpreted with this awareness, music, and Volans’s etudes intersect a wide variety of texts and the analysis itself becomes a participant in the ongoing construction of meaning. As we know, Volans’s music consciously intersects and juxtaposes visual art, transcription, self borrowing, language and cultural identity. These translate into forces of opposition in his music.

It is important to note that the inventors of intertextuality, Bahktin and Kristeva, were both concerned – albeit in different ways – with notions of social liberation. Emerging from two very different historical situations, Kristeva and Bahktin’s theory of intertextuality, while providing a number of theoretical insights, gave no clear guidelines for its applications of power relations for systems such as music where pieces are treated as closed units. In this regard, Kristeva’s work leaves many questions. Most problematically, treating musical pieces as relational events undermines the basic analytical assumption of wholeness and unity in pieces (Korsyn, 1999). Unity is provisional and the separate notions of texts and context – or musical pieces and their historical surroundings – need to be continuous (Korsyn, 1999). For this reason, the metaphors of inside/outside in relation to pieces are no longer useful. For this analysis to be intertextual, it would need a theoretical framework that accommodates the absence of the binary oppositions of text/context and author/reader.

The poststructuralists highlighted the unresolved struggle between the forces of ‘truth and subversion’, ‘myth and its critique’, ‘monologic and dialogic’ – what Kristeva called ‘text and phenol-text’ (Allen, 2000: 90). It was these same forces the highly articulate writer, Roland Barthes, was later to call the ‘doxa and para-doxa’. Barthes’ texts not only explore but also embody the struggle between these forces (Allen, 2000: 94).

In ‘From work to text’ and ‘The Death of the Author’, Barthes demanded the ‘relativisation’ of the relations between ‘writer, reader and observer (critic)’ (Barthes, 1977: 156). To achieve this relativisation, Barthes needed to debunk many of the assumptions capitalist society had made regarding ‘the author’. By pervading the view that the author placed the meaning in a work, and so has dominance over it, consumption-based societies set up an artificial hierarchical structure (Allen, 2000: 89). Words associated with fathership, ownership and birth attached themselves to the author, author’s names fixed themselves to their work, and authors were assumed to hold the meaning of their texts (Allen, 2000: 71): ‘The explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the author "confiding" in us' (Barthes, 1977: 143). Heavily influenced by Kristeva, Barthes argued that authors, rather than being the sole source of their writing, assemble texts from the 'already-written'. 'The origin of a text is not a unified authorial consciousness but a plurality of voices, of other words, other utterances and other texts' (Barthes, 1977: 145). For Barthes, all texts are intertextual constructs and all codes are forms of texts. Therefore, for Barthes, since we act and think in codes, there can be no emotion, thought or deed before it is represented textually (Allen, 2000: 73). According to Barthes, the entire cultural code, comprised of all its discourses, is an 'intertext', 'a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture' (Barthes, 1977: 146). The fact that Barthes ascribed such agency to language has been criticized by writers such as Harold Bloom for being totally abstract but in order to understand his approach, it is crucial we take into account the tensions that exist within Barthes's work.

Barthes's writing is self-consciously intertextual (Allen, 2000: 94). Through writing, he explicitly sought to unleash the 'disruptive' forces of the text: 'the text is that uninhibited person who shows his behind to the political father' (Barthes, 1975: 53). Acutely aware of how culture is saturated with unconsciously accepted ideas, *doxa*, Barthes' texts set out to challenge these beliefs, *para-doxa*. Many of his later works such as *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973) are devoted to articulating the concept of *para-doxa*. Since *doxa* is not necessarily confined to a conservative point of view, even a liberal stance taken for granted becomes *doxa*, Barthes' own work faced the danger of also becoming an unchallenged position (Allen, 2000: 94). In order to eschew such a fate, Barthes, just like Kristeva, used language that defies any all-encompassing singular interpretation (Allen, 2000: 94). There is a sense that Barthes is presenting and exploring 'ways of looking' at texts rather than using them to promote fixed conclusions. Primarily, his task was to liberate language from the shackles of endlessly repeating 'that which has already been said'. In consequence, he consistently avoided elaborating on what he meant by the 'cultural code'.

The American writer, Harold Bloom also refused to use cultural codes and ideological formations as a way of informing literary meaning (Bloom, 1976: 512). Although Bloom deliberately restricted his study to 'the interplay of tropes' in literature, he nevertheless dedicated himself to intertextual theory and practice (Bloom, 1976: 511). After examining (mostly 19th century) poetry from a Freudian perspective, Bloom found that the motivating desire or *drive* behind the poems, was a kind of oedipal response, between the poet and his precursors. The poet has no choice but to imitate previous texts, whether willingly or unwillingly. In *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973), Bloom showed how 'willing imitators', misguidedly, believe there is determinate meaning within texts while those who rebel, also misguidedly, seek meaning in non-literary sources (Bloom, 1973). Either the poet rewrites his precursor's poems or he deliberately misreads them. The 'anxiety of influence' is the result of the knowledge of the unavoidability of the already-written. In consideration of this problem, Bloom developed a method of reading directed toward identifying the 'misreadings' of texts within texts. However, for Bloom, even reading is an act of 'misreading' (Bloom, 1975: 235). Having totally avoided addressing any real social setting, Blooms' writing resists responding to the question of historical situation and intertextuality.

Parallel to the monologic view of literature, was the view of history as a continuously evolving development. Based on the assumption that change occurs in front of a stable contextual backdrop, historians, including music historians, sought to explain significant historical changes in terms of a narrative. Historical knowledge, described in this way, could be (and was) used to promote a homogenous, distorted view of the past and thus reinforce *doxa*. In his detailed histories, it was the prominent (post-structuralist) Michel Foucault who incorporated the findings of all the theorists mentioned so far and used them to understand how knowledge is constructed and then dealt with the historical relationship between knowledge and power.

The premise for his investigations was the fact that, at any point in time in any context, thought is bound by implicit constraints – things that define the 'unthinkable' (Gutting, 2005: 32). When viewed from the outside, these constraints can appear arbitrary but when studied inside the framework of rules in which they existed, they make complete sense. Foucault's idea was that by uncovering these unconscious rules, we can reveal the conceptual environment that produced discoveries. The discussion then shifts from the roles and characters in the 'plot' of history to the stage itself. Rather than asking the meaning of historical texts, Foucault, in his 'archaeologies', investigated texts as clues to the general system in which they were conceived (Gutting, 2005: 36). Having first applied the archaeological method while writing *Madness and Civilization* (1964), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963) and *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault eventually gave a thorough explanation of it in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). The archaeological method operates by distinguishing between four main categories of analysis: objects, concepts, modes of authority and lines of strategic action. As detailed as they were, the archaeologies were still limited by the fact that they provided a synchronic account of history – they were primarily concerned with a language system at a particular point in time (Gutting, 2005: 43). In order to take into account the causal or diachronic aspect of history, Foucault engaged the 'genealogical' method. Similar in many ways to Darwin's theory of natural selection, a genealogy is an account of all the minor accidents that 'give birth' to lasting changes in ideas.

Nietzsche conceived the idea of the genealogy in 'On the Genealogy of Morals' (1887) as a challenge to the historical pursuit of 'origin'. 'Origin' is the pure, irreducible state when something embodies its own essence and identity. Those who search for origin assume there are meta-physical forms that 'precede the external world', a kind of 'primordial truth' at the source of things. A history that hankers after 'origin' is usually described in terms of a linear development. The 'origin' conveniently functions as the starting point of a narrative. In its desire to maintain a continuous narrative, this search omits the innumerable incidences, accidents, all 'the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals and the faulty calculations that give birth to those things which continue to exist and have value for us' (Foucault, 1971: 374). In contrast to 'origin', Nietzsche posited the notion of 'descent'. By tracing descent, the historian does more than describe continuous evolutionary development. Descent disrupts the smooth flow of history; it acknowledges the unstable, heterogeneous nature of events and reveals the treacherous forces behind them. Foucault, having found that the frameworks of ideas governing society were in a volatile state of flux, appropriated Nietzsche's methodology as a way of foregrounding this instability.

Although the idea for the genealogy was already present in minor ways in *Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic* and *The Order of Things*, Foucault's real genealogical projects were: *Discipline and Punish* (1975) (an account of the development of the prison system) and his incomplete *The History of Sexuality* (1976). *Discipline and Punish* unfolds similarly to archaeology although it diverges from the archaeological structure by highlighting notions of power and change. Foucault himself summarized the genealogical project as such:

> Three domains of genealogy are possible. First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents (Foucault, 1984: 262).

Both Foucault and Nietzsche applied genealogy entirely to the human body in relation to history (Gutting 2005: 50). Foucault explained this through a direct relationship between knowledge and power. The relationship is one where the social forces that control behaviour are the forces that cause changes in ideas. Is it possible or even appropriate to apply it to an abstract object such as music? If so – how? It is likely that not every musical object would benefit from such illumination; however, the fluid nature of Kevin Volans's etudes, as intertextual webs of his other works, would seem to suit such an analysis. Beneath the surface of the etudes is a volatile mesh of argument and contradiction. Although Christine Lucia in her article 'The landscape within' (Lucia, 2009) described the central driving force behind the music as the striving after the pure 'musical idea', from the Foucauldian standpoint we need to acknowledge that ideas themselves are restless and unstable. This raises a number of questions about how to treat restless and unstable musical material. Would a hypothetical ideal musical statement change in different musical or social contexts? What about all the paradoxes and contradictions unearthed by applying intertextual theory?

Part of the problem of understanding the music intertextually is how to accommodate the contradictions intertextual theory provokes. For example, related to the etudes, in his role as author, Volans considers himself a committed modernist with regard to having 'no received language' (Rörich, 2007). In contrast to this, his early views on the flexible relationship between the observer, the work and the role of the author as subject in his article on paraphrase (Volans 1976: 2) reflect a very different text/context viewpoint from a modernist mode of analysis which treats pieces as closed entities. It would be useful to take these contradictions into account when comparing viewpoints in the analysis of his music. The archaeological dimension of the genealogy would be required to investigate this dimension. The problematic diachronic areas of quotation, context, change, power, ideology, ethics and truth could be examined in terms of the genealogical notion of 'descent'. In order to create a distinction between the synchronic through archaeology and diachronic through descent, the author has chosen to pursue both approaches to the analysis. The most pressing criteria would be to pursue an analytical trajectory and reveal as much (or more) information about the internal structures of the works as any of the available existing modes of internal analysis without relying on the notion of internal coherence. To come to grips with this it may be necessary to derive as many useful schemes as possible from existing methods of analysis. The second criteria will be to incorporate Foucauldian theory as it has been applied in his archaeologies, out of which the author will bring appropriate themes and relate them to the particular musical material within the etudes. These two goals may overlap slightly, they may even knit together as findings become more closely related or else diverge as forces are found to be further apart.

A survey of musical analytical models

In the 20thcentury, musicology, as a necessary response to the seeming irreconcilability of diachronic and synchronic historical enquiry, branched into two distinct disciplines. By the late 1950s, music theory and 'historical' musicology were largely regarded as separate scholarly fields. These divisions were especially pronounced in the United States and less so in Europe. Musicologists surveyed music from an historical and contextual point of view, theorists or analysts were centrally concerned with the internal mechanics of individual works, focusing on aspects such as structure and composition technique. Analysts viewed works as durable, complete entities and sought to explain why a piece of music is 'coherent' (Cook, 1987: 335). Not all music is entirely rational and most pieces consist to some degree of material that evades an explanation (Cook, 1987: 2). Much of the art of analysis is 'asking the right questions' and there are a wide variety of methods of enquiry available (Cook, 1987: 2).

The branch of enquiry known as analysis can be traced back to Heinrich Schenker, indeed the very identity of the music theorist, as a specialized professional, primarily grew out of his analytical methods (Dunsby/Whittall, 1988: 11). The merits and demerits of Schenkerian theory have long been debated but as many of the available methods of analysis were derived from Schenker's, an understanding of the concepts of his theory are necessary for grasping most later analytical frameworks. At this point it is worth bearing in mind that Schenker's methods treat works as closed entities, paying no attention to how they might operate intertextually. A direct application of his methods would therefore be at odds with a Foucauldian position. Having taken note of this, some of Schenker's models could possibly be useful at points in data collection to supplement a Foucauldian analysis.

Schenkerian analysis emerged after 18th and 19thcentury theory had failed to produce any comprehensive analytical accounts for tonal composition practices. In retrospect, Schenker attributed the ineffectiveness and unpopularity of theory in the late 19thcentury to the persistent influence of Riemann's 'functional harmony' and Rameau's 'fundamental bass' (Dunsby/Whittall, 1988: 24). In the 19thcentury works by composers such as Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were largely analyzed in terms of Rameau's concept of music as a succession of 'vertical' harmonic states (Dunsby/Whitall, 1988: 25). At the time, there was no analytical model for the linear, contrapuntal strands that support non-harmonic or dissonant notes. It was only after 1900, that Schenker confronted the issue in his book: *Neue Theorien und Fantasie*. As a consequence of his belief that 19th century tonal music had developed from German baroque and classical models, Schenker gradually developed a theory of free composition, derived from both Fuxian contrapuntal theory and C.P.E. Bach's guides to accompaniment and improvisation (Dunsby/Whittall, 1988: 25). Schenker's primary contribution was a way of explaining horizontal structural functions in tonal music.

In his final years Schenker refined the techniques that have become the basis for analytical method. *Free Composition* written during the 1920s provides an explanation of tonal structure (Dunsby/Whittall, 1988: 29). By articulating the concept of 'fundamental structure', Schenker was able to explain how, in his view, tonal musical material operated. In addition to his structural archetypes, in his book *Five Graphic Music Analyses*, he designed a graphic technique that codified and presented his methods which has since been used extensively by analysts. In these graphs, Schenker arranged the musical material into three layers of foreground, middle ground and background. The lowest layer is the foreground of the piece where most of the notes appear. The middle ground, represented above it, is a partial reduction of the piece and the top layer shows only the barest harmonic structure of the piece which corresponds to an expanded three-chord cadential progression he termed the 'Ursatz' (Berry, 1980). These diagrams will later serve as models for one aspect of the analysis of Volans's etudes. Foreground, middle ground and background diagrams accommodate competing layers of structural depth within the etudes.

Schenkerian theory in its original form has numerous shortfalls. The most problematic for this particular analysis would be that it can only adequately describe tonal music. The hierarchical stance it takes toward concepts of consonance and dissonance and the values it ascribes tonalities, create problems when applied to pieces that fall outside the tonal language. Therefore Schenker's analysis, taken literally, has no applications in serial or atonal music. At the outset, the first ideas for analysing post-tonal music were suggested by Schoenberg. Schoenberg, once he had moved away from traditional tonality, proposed that whereas tonal music made sense through 'tonal coherence', post-tonal music was held together by 'musical logic' (Dunsby/Whittall, 1988: 75). For Schoenberg it was the laws of repetition, variation and contrast that constitute musical logic and govern the way musical ideas are connected. In *Structural Functions of Harmony* and *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, he argued for continuity in logical musical relationships (Dunsby/Whittall, 1988: 75). These relationships, between the manipulation of motifs, the basic shape, the musical figure and overall presentation, could be measured in terms of what Schoenberg called comprehensibility. As he never expanded on what he meant by many of the terms above, Schoenberg's ideas, while providing good general guidelines and a unique fusion between composition and analysis, aren't a systematic analytical method as such.

In 1952, Felix Salzer in *Structural Hearing*, proposed a post-Schenkerian analytical approach that could be extended to atonal music (Dunsby/Whittall, 1988: 53). Having studied with Schenker, Salzer reinterpreted and refined Schenker's principles. Although he dealt mostly with tonal structure, he presented a much clearer picture of harmonic function than Schenker did. He achieved this through expanding Schenker's structural classification. By including harmonic structure and contrapuntal structure with Schenker's contrapuntal harmonic structure, Salzer designed an analytic method that could be applied to dissonant music (Dunsby/Whittall, 1988: 54).

Later, Allen Forte and Steven Gilbert built on Salzer's designs and showed how Schenkerian concepts could be used in even more abstract ways in their *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis* (Cook, 1987: 28). Also approaching harmony linearly, they reversed the process by starting at the level of the note-for-note formations before going on to show how the larger structures are formed (Cook, 1987: 28). Allen Forte then set out to develop a method that could provide atonal music with the sorts of solutions Schenkerian analysis had given tonal music (Cook, 1987: 124). Set-theoretical analysis, as described by Forte in *The Structure of Atonal Music* (1973), was intended to establish 'a framework for the description, interpretation and explanation of any atonal composition' (Forte, 1973: 93). Set theory analysis is derived from the 19thcentury mathematical theories of Georg Cantor. Primarily concerned with the concept of 'membership', set theory organizes equal elements as members of a set. Sets may in turn have sub-sets whose members all equally belong to the set. At its most simple level, in music set theory creates a network of relations (based on atonal principles) by distinguishing surface features such as texture, rhythm and dynamics (Cook, 1987: 124). Forte's system of pitch class theory presents a simplified rendition of complicated atonal music by allocating each note a numerical value. Pitch class analysis ignores all differences in register so that all enharmonically equivalent pitches are represented equally in sets. The relationships between sets are then described in terms of equivalence (where the elements are the same), intersection (where part of the sets are the same), union (when sets fuse) and complementation (where sets do not share any similar elements) (Berry, 1980). In pitch class analysis, the exact way the sets are grouped in each piece is at the discretion of the analyst.

All of the methods briefly mentioned so far operate by reduction. They break pieces up into smaller independent segments and examine how these components relate to each other. In order to follow this through, the analyst classifies elements in closed groupings and then finds relationships between those groups. If the object or intent of analysis is to enable the analyst to understand the music, does examining a piece as a closed series of closed groupings tell us anything about its intertextual meaning? So far, the approaches to music analysis share a great deal in common with the linguistic structuralists' approach to language mentioned earlier. The structuralists came to the conclusion that the meanings of individual components of language (signifieds) are created by the system within which they operate. In other words, for structuralists, structure is meaning (Klein, 2005: 27). It is in this same sense that, for the analyst, the structure of music is its meaning. However, the structure of an individual piece can only make sense if it is related to a broader framework of meaning. Schenkerian analysis could be seen to be creating the meaning of musical building blocks by exploring how tonal meaning was unconsciously negotiated within the boundaries of the tonal landscape. Accordingly, the Schenkerian influenced diagrams to be used in the analysis of the etudes will serve to uncover their building blocks. Other methods of analysis will need to be used if their semiotic potential is to be uncovered. The selection of the tools to use for the intertextual aspects of the analysis have taken into consideration the principle that the etudes are musical languages with their own, albeit flexible, grammatical rules. According to Korsyn, pieces 'deny, compete, answer and transform the structures of other pieces' (Klein, 2005: 30). Since a 'musical structure is a relational event among texts' (Klein, 2005: 30), even the musical structure of the etudes can be considered to be intertextual. It is at this point the intertextual principles which are relevant to the analysis of the etudes can be explored.

In *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Klein, 2005), Michael Klein suggests initiatives by which an awareness of intertextuality could inform music theory and analysis. Klein insists that intertextual criticism, by entering the 'intertextual space', shows 'how language and meaning, syntax and semantics are redistributed and recontextualized from text to text' and, in so doing, transcends the familiar musicological path of 'merely proving connections between works' (Klein, 2005: 12-13). It is also true that Foucault, Barthes and Kristeva showed little interest in tracing influence as such but rather in uncovering the power struggles embedded in the texts. A study of the crossing of texts, whether linguistic or musical, would have to involve deciphering not only the 'codes that bind texts' but also the 'tropes that transform the codes' (Klein, 2005: 12-13). For Klein, a code is a convention. So, in order to uncover how a code was originally understood, the conventions surrounding its conception need to be reconstructed. In music, a topic is a code which 'associates a conventional label with a constellation of music signs' (Klein, 2005: 56). Topics are intertextual and as such can only be interpreted in relation to the convention system within which they were created. Since they refer to the space between texts, topics provide the opportunity for intertextual connections between musical pieces. These connections disrupt history as they can be made both backward and forward in time. In other words, a topic may refer to another topic, long before it's even written. Thus, in the constructing of a genealogy of the etudes, modes of authority need not be limited by their chronology in order to have an influence on them. In his approach to intertextual analysis, while Klein makes use of a variety of analytical methods in order to outline the ways in which music behaves intertextually, he offers very little in the way of a methodological model by which texts could be unlocked.

There are already cases where researchers have applied Foucauldian principles to music. These provide a precedent as to what works or does not work in the model. The most prominent such handling of Foucauldian archaeology and music is Gary Tomlinson's *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others* (1993). This book is concerned with the interactions of music and magic in the culture of late Renaissance Italy. Juggling dialogical hermeneutics and archaeology, Tomlinson outlines his project as an 'attempt to describe some of the uses to which music was put by magical practitioners and to understand the central place that music occupied in the thoughts of occult philosophers in the period' (Tomlinson, 1993: 13). Tomlinson's description is constructed by interrogating texts from the period by writers such as Ficino, Agrippa, della Porta, Campanella, Ramos de Parcia, Franchino Gafori and Tesauro. Beneath its descriptive appearance, Tomlinson's study has three explicit aims: to examine music in Renaissance magic, to compare music and the occult (in a general sense) and thirdly, to expand musicology's methods of enquiry through a Foucauldian approach to music history. The chapter 'Archaeology and Music: Apropos of Monteverdi's Musical Magic' briefly demonstrates an application of this approach. In this chapter, Tomlinson analyzes two famous Monteverdi madrigals: *Sfogava con le stele* (1603) and *the Lament of the Nymph* (1638). The analysis derives its archaeological structure largely from its intention to 'reveal a shift from the magical episteme to the analytic episteme' (Wilson, 1994: 932). Introducing the Foucauldian notion of the 'episteme' into the analysis of the madrigals enables the analysis to simultaneously span broad changes in musical practice between the 16th and 17thcenturies and deal with specific musical material. It also bridges Tomlinson's discussion with Foucault's view of the same period, which was marked by a fundamental shift in the understanding of language.

For Foucault, the concept of 'episteme' is a system of conditions and constraints defining the limits of possible knowledge. However, 'episteme' goes further than merely describing fixed cultural conditions at a point in time. When viewed through the lens of the 'episteme', a much more volatile image of the 16th and 17thcentury world emerges. In the 16thcentury 'episteme', a thing was not just a thing. Things were also signs pointing to other things. With each individual thing pointing and referring to other things, the 16th century historical context becomes a web of correspondences and resemblances. Language was seen as an integral part of this web, relating and corresponding to all the other things. The task of knowledge during this time was to trace these correspondences. By the middle of the 17thcentury, the notion of representation removed language from the web. Language, having become the medium of representation, could no longer be part of the world it represented. According to Foucault, in order for language to be used for comparing, identifying, measuring and ordering things, it had to function neutrally, independent of reality. Knowledge was transformed into the analysis of identity and difference between things, prohibiting signs from resembling the things they signified.

In her critical review of Tomlinson's study 'Contemplating Music Archaeology' (1995), Karol Berger argued that, despite its invocation of archaeology, Tomlinson's approach failed to provide any new methodological solutions to musicology. In her article she cites instances of musicologists who, long before Foucault's archaeologies, approached their analyses in ways that were, to all intents and purposes, archaeological. All of the cases Karol Berger lists share a common shift in focus away from the works themselves toward the historical context that produced them. Conversely, each precedent provides a number of possible solutions for the application of contextual concepts to music analysis. In a number of his essays Heinrich Besseler's handling of the transition between pre-modern and early modern performance is archaeological. His particular area of interest was the transition from 'umgangsmusik' (a performance practice in which listeners are actively part of the music making) to 'darbitungsmusik' (where performers and audience are separated). According to Berger, Besseler was primarily concerned, not with specific actions, but 'rather the premises of whole practices within the frameworks of which specific actions were performed' (Berger, 1995). By virtue of focusing on the cultural frameworks that produced the actions, Besseler's research was archaeological in nature. Carl Dahlhaus, as early as 1967, investigated the 'paradigm shifts' that gave birth to the culture of instrumental music in 19thcentury Germanic culture. By focusing on the historical context as opposed to individual works, Dahlhaus unearthed the cultural forces that produced the works. In anticipation of Tomlinson, Dahlhaus also made clear distinctions between hermeneutic and archaeological methodologies:

> No-one would maintain that human actions are conditioned exclusively by intentionality; they are equally dependent on conditions that have causal or functional explanations. The sole point of contention is whether, and if so to what extent, the structures that accommodate intentional actions should be merely touched upon in passing or placed stage centre and elevated as the fundamental objects of historical inquiry. It is not the dialectics of events and structures, institutions are compounded of actions that traditional and social historians are at odds about. Rather, the question is whether the emphasis should fall on the individual processes from which the system

> ultimately derives, or on the system that takes shape as a result of these processes. (Dahlhaus, 1983: 83)

Another two writers who had previously dealt with music this way long before Tomlinson, were Leo Treitler and Lydia Goehr. In a series of articles since 1974 Leo Treitler explained aspects of the Gregorian oral tradition of transmitting melodies by examining the cultural circumstances that supported the practice (Treitler, 2011: 3). Lydia Goehr's thesis on the emergence of the regulative concept of the musical work circa 1800 also drew attention away from works toward the presuppositions underlying the musical traditions of a particular time and place (Goehr, 1992: 24). When viewed against the backdrop of this previous research, how did Tomlinson's application of a specifically Foucauldian archaeology affect the outcomes of his analysis? Was he able to draw conclusions that would not have been possible without the introduction of Foucauldian methodology?

Tomlinson's archaeological analysis only deals with particular musical examples after an extensive analysis of the written texts. By the time he examines the music, he has already constructed a comprehensive model of the knowledge framework of the period in question. As a result, the conclusions he draws from examining the music itself serve mainly to reinforce the ideas extracted from the written texts rather than as units in the construction of the framework. This problem is aggravated by the selection of musical examples – both pieces were chosen as 'good examples' of the phenomena already outlined in the archaeology. By proceeding in this way, Tomlinson excluded the possibility of finding anything in the music that was not already examined in the written documents. In many ways, Tomlinson's analysis is an archaeology of the 'word' texts of the period, rather than the music. Analytically, it is not safe to assume anything, least of all that the findings of a musical analysis would naturally be consistent with the framework of knowledge that emerges from writing without investigating it independently. By working from 'word' to 'note', Tomlinson sidestepped a central problem in the application of a genealogical analysis. A genealogical analysis of music would be more viable and valuable if it could offer its own clues to the thought structures that produced it, rather than merely substantiating those found in written texts. Perhaps a useful middle ground in some circumstances could be the consideration of texts that are directly concerned with music in some way. However, as such, a central problem of genealogy in music is how thought frameworks can be reconstructed from musical material, in other words, how a system of ideas can be uncovered by analyzing the music it produced first.

The archaeology of written texts, as demonstrated by Foucault, is capable of unearthing a level of meaning inaccessible even to the makers of the document in question. The archaeologist reaches this level of meaning by examining language itself, by observing how meaning is facilitated by language. The definition of each word is far less important than how each word functions in the language as a flexible whole. A primary difference between language and music is that each component of language, each word, is endowed with an accepted function in relation to the greater whole in sets of conventions. The conventions are much less fixed in music, even less so in new music which seeks to push boundaries and expand existing musical languages. Most superficially, instrumental music is unable to record information about specific events, such as 'Nelson Mandela was the first black president of South Africa' without some kind of annotative content. However, we know that there are innumerable conventions governing musical performance and have seen in the above investigation how through the nature of its construction in time, the musical surface bears a number of properties very similar to those of the semiotic structures of language. The most conspicuous example of a linguistic property of music is the fact that it is a system that can be broken down into components. Finding whether Volans's etudes operate this way will be an important component of this analysis.

In summary, in order to uncover, understand and represent the etudes analytically by thoroughly integrating a Foucauldian framework, the following principles, distilled from the findings in this chapter, will be held as the primary tenets throughout the analysis. In terms of the theoretical criteria, the author shall presuppose that Kevin Volans's etudes are inseparable from their historical moment and consequently dispose of the opposing notions of text and context in evaluating findings. Also, the composer, analyst, listener and reader will all be regarded as equal, ongoing mediators collaborating over the work in a network of meaning with no single source of authority. The outcome of the analysis would be both to identify the unconscious rules governing the episteme of the etudes and to uncover the opposing forces on the battleground of ideologies in the music. According to the Foucauldian model, it might best achieve this by taking a heterogeneous view of events and searching for clues to the episteme rather than searching for specific meaning. As such a multiplicity of approaches will be followed, each chapter taking a different view of the etudes. The genealogy, in theory could be limitless. In order to focus on the most important issues, the analysis moves from broader general issues in the earlier chapters before pinpointing detail in the later ones.

In terms of the design of the music analysis, the author will take a different approach in each chapter. In dealing with the broad issues regarding Volans's life, the genre of the etude and tracing the transcription sources, the author will apply intertextual principles to ascertain how each field of enquiries impact on the etudes. The next three chapters will all derive from the scores themselves. The layered structures of the etudes will be exposed by following Schoenberg’s general guidelines of evaluating the continuity and logic driving the music in terms of repetition, variation and contrast. In the same investigation, in order to structure the analysis archaeologically, the author will apply the Schenkerian scheme of layering the material in foreground, middle ground and background, treating all textual content as contrapuntal strands in the text. In the next chapter, details in the units of musical material unearthed by the diagrams will be interpreted as signifiers. In this chapter, the Foucauldian framework, linked metonymically, will enable large interpretive leaps to expose the power relationships emerging from the images within the etudes. The last chapter will examine the etudes in terms of conventional minimalist composition technique to understand the organic structure of the etudes. Once the data has been gathered this way, the findings will be interpreted in terms of the Foucauldian genealogical model and plotted onto diagram to establish how they operate.

CHAPTER TWO

LOCATING KEVIN VOLANS'S MUSIC WITHIN ITS MUSICAL AND IDEALOGICAL TERRAIN

Volans arrived in Cologne in the 1970s during a period of transition. The gigantic reputations of iconic avant-garde composers attracted droves of younger composers, all seeking to build careers and fly close to the flame of modernism. The fame and success of Stockhausen, Kagel, Cage and Nono dispelled any possible myth of the tortured composer at the margins of society – indeed according to Volans 'Stockhausen was the most successful composer of all time' (Volans, 2011). This impression of Stockhausen most likely emerged after Stockhausen was invited to participate in the 1970 World Fair in Osaka, where his music was played for five and a half hours a day for 183 days to about a million listeners. Stockhausen's immense gravitational field triggered the events in Volans's life which were to become critically important to his compositional development. The collision of ideas of this time laid the epistemic conditions for Volans's music and is centrally important to understanding his music genealogically. Before examining the etudes in detail, for the analysis it would be useful to outline these collisions.

Viewed in hindsight, while Volans was in Cologne the tides were turning. While it would be speculative to try to outline his motives for moving to Cologne, he was undoubtedly attracted to what it represented. This attraction reflects Volans's artistic values at the time and was to affect almost every decision he would make thereafter, including those embedded within the etudes. Volans has consistently described himself as a modernist (Rörich, 2005: 155) and it would seem that the roots of this identity run deep. Volans claims to have attended concerts of Stockhausen's music as a student at the University of the Witwatersrand. He was sufficiently impressed by what he witnessed to analyse Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke* in an unpublished paper he titled *The Klavierstücke - Stockhausen's Microcosm,* for his fourth-year essay at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1971. He submitted this analysis as part of his application to study with Stockhausen and was accepted on the basis of its strength.

Through much of his writing and comment on his own work it would be safe to suggest that Volans's personal artistic values are strongly linked to his belief in the integrity of modernist artistic and philosophical frameworks. However, modernism is a highly diverse blanket term and resists simplification. A prominent feature of modernist music is the explosion of a wide variety of styles and musical languages without one language assuming dominance. As such, modernism has no set of defining stylistic characteristics. For Volans modernism is based on the tenet that there is ‘no received musical language’ (Volans in Rörich interview, 2008). Consequently for Volans, modernist composition involves the invention of new musical languages. The indirect, complex and contradictory effects of modernism on Volans’s etudes can be followed through Cologne and back to Darmstadt.

‘Knots in the web’, automatism and indeterminacy in modernist music

By the beginning of the 1970s a peculiar inversion had taken place within the art world. While a core goal of modernism was to challenge an audience with new works that demanded to be taken on their own terms, over time, once most accepted notions and norms surrounding music had been challenged, the stance of challenging an audience had taken on a distinctive meta-language in its own right. In many ways, the avant-garde had become the new establishment. How did this situation arise?

The reputations of the Cologne ‘greats’, Stockhausen, Cage and Kagel, can be traced directly to the Darmstadt of 1950 and 1951. While their work evolved considerably thereafter, the strength of their artistic beliefs and idealism at Darmstadt was to be highly influential in the world for at least the following 20 years. So, partly, the answer to this question relates to the source of its funding. Christopher Fox pointed out in his article ‘Darmstadt and the Institutionalisation of Modernism’ (Fox, 2007) that there is evidence that the modernist orthodoxy held the monopoly of institutional support for new music right through the 1950s and 1960s. Interestingly, Darmstadt was financed indirectly through the funding of the Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk (NWDR) – the regional radio station and other controlling bodies– by the United States. An important part of America’s strategy was to maintain a cultural hold at the front line of the cold war and radio was an ideal medium. The musical avant-garde in turn imbued the right combination of values to contrast with the artistic conservatism of the Soviet East and so was ideally positioned to benefit from the West’s cultural agenda. As a result, the reputation of the heirs of Darmstadt was enormous. For this investigation, this reputation is just as important as its reality – it was this aura that would have surrounded Volans’s perceptions of Cologne before his move to Germany.

Fox also claims that the basis of the orthodoxies of Darmstadt lie in assumptions embedded in its mythic representation. According to Paul Griffiths in *Modern music and after* (1995), on close inspection the trajectory toward total serialism and avant-garde dominance around 1950 was also propelled by certain assumptions which created the conditions in which the pieces could exist. By the time he was working in Cologne, many of these assumptions were being questioned by Volans and his generation. These assumptions were to determine the Foucauldian limits of possibility or the episteme preceding the 1970s and were formative in the development of Volans's individual style. Before identifying these assumptions it is necessary to identify the significant developments leading up to this point.

The history of Darmstadt has numerous links with total serialism. Interestingly, Griffiths traces the roots of total serialism back to Cage. He suggests Cage laid the foundation for total serialism with the ideas he put forward in his essay 'Forerunners of Modern Music' (Cage, 1968: 62-66). In this essay he identified the four characteristics of music as duration, amplitude, frequency and timbre. Isolating these parameters created the framework for an entirely systematic approach to composition. Twelve-tone principles, in conjunction with Cage's use of compositional algorithms provided a set of tools with which to implement a system. Boulez and Messaien were at Cage's own performances of his *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano (1946-8) in Paris in June 1949. Very shortly afterwards, Messaien published his first experiment with serialisation of pitch, duration, dynamics and attack: the *Mode de valeurs et d'intensites* (1949-50) for piano. In it, Messaien allocated twelve chromatic pitches and twelve 'chromatic durations'. Arranged in three-part counterpoint, each of the thirty-six pitches is paired with one of thirty-six durations. Every note is allocated one of seven dynamics and one of seven attack markings. However, the ordering and construction of the piece itself is not serial – the composer selected the notes according to his own taste and judgement. While *Mode de valeurs* may not be the earliest example of total serialism, it was the first experiment to take an extreme position of pre-compositional organization. In retrospect, pre-compositional planning was to become the most notable and enduring legacy of the composers of the Darmstadt school. In a way, this shifted the locus of the composer's attention from the pieces themselves to the design of organizational systems that govern them. The long legacy of this shift is evident in Lisa Dominick's article of thirty-five years later, 'Darmstadt 1984' (Dominick, 1985: 274-291) in which Dominick points out that the majority of the speakers at the 1984 Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik devoted their platforms to explaining their systems of composition rather than their pieces. In the majority of these systems, the works unfold automatically according to the pre-compositional plan.

Stockhausen heard *Mode de valeurs* when it was performed in Darmstadt in 1951. He was deeply impressed by what he heard (Griffiths, 1995: 31) and was awestruck at the sound material of the work; later calling it 'fantastic music of the stars'. It is worth noting that Stockhausen was attracted to the work's otherworldly qualities. For Stockhausen, the musical images *Mode de valeurs* offered were of divine unity – they existed in a perfect, modernist utopian realm with no human imperfection – totally liberated from the earthly physical reality.

> So serial thinking is something that's come into our consciousness and will be there forever: it's relativity and nothing else. It just says: Use all the components of any given number of elements, do not leave out individual elements, use them all with equal importance and try to find an equidistant scale so that certain steps are no larger than others. It's a spiritual and democratic attitude toward the world. The stars are organized in a serial way. Whenever you look at a certain star sign you find a limited number of elements with different intervals. If we more thoroughly studied the distances and proportions of the stars we'd probably find certain relationships of multiples based on some logarithmic scale or whatever the scale may be (Stockhausen quoted in Cott, 1973: 101).

In the same year, Stockhausen also reputedly heard Goeyvaerts' *Sonata for two pianos* (1950-51), a work which used a system of serialisation of duration values, attack and dynamics. The most striking innovation for Stockhausen was Goeyvaerts' serialisation of register. He introduced a system of raising a note up one octave each time the same note was repeated. The range of allowable registers is predetermined by a shape that spans the whole piece: beginning at five and a half octaves wide and reducing to two and a half in the middle of the work and then increasing to five and a half by the end of the work. Whenever a note falls outside the allowable range, it is reintroduced in the lowest register within the range. This system precluded very little composition at all. Except for the original material, the work would have unfolded automatically once the system was implemented. Soon after the Darmstadt of 1951, Stockhausen wrote *Kreuzspiel* for piano, percussion trio and two woodwinds. The influence of both the Goeyvaerts' *Sonata* and *Mode de valeurs* is quite evident. The 'cross-play' of the title comes from the system of moving single notes in a similar way to the sonata, but is extended to all of the serial forms, all of which go through a cross-over process, recurring in retrograde. The cross-plays and streamlined processes are not aurally perceivable – the system does not at any point reveal itself to the listener nor is there any reassuring, harmonic continuity in the manner of Schoenberg. If there is continuity, it is a continuity of unpredictability, irregularity and disjointedness.

Boulez and Stockhausen were to apply total serialism to their compositions for only two years – 1951 and 1952. While there are comparatively few pure examples of the approach, its rigour, clarity, intention and dazzling novelty captured the attention of the avant-garde. However, Stockhausen's *Kontra-Punkte* (1952-53) for orchestra, Boulez's *Structures* (1951), *Polyphonie* (1950-51) and *Etude sur sept sons* (1952) all share the paradox of meticulous organization contrasted with unpredictable and seemingly disordered effect. For Boulez, automatism provided a way of avoiding imitating melodic shapes and also helped the composer to move outside of his own learned patterns and tastes. The composer relinquishes control while the scheme shapes the piece. Boulez sought to invent a system which could be applied to different pieces and so develop a language with rules and grammar that could be refined. He described his process in *Structures* thus: 'The first Structure was quite consciously composed in an analogous way. I wanted to use the potential of a given material to find out how far automatism in musical relationships would go, with individual invention appearing only in some very simple forms of disposition – in the matter of densities, for example.' Boulez reserved the right to tweak the piece or take liberties against the systems. That Boulez withdrew *Poliphonies* and was suspicious of his achievement in *Structures* (Griffiths, 1995: 39) further indicates Boulez's discomfort with automatism. By contrast, Stockhausen was content to allow systems to unfold without any intervention (Griffiths, 1995: 40). 'We are all more or less treading on ice, and as long as this is the case, the organizational systems being put forward represent guidelines to as many systems as there are grains of sand, systems can be dreamed up and set in motion as easily as clockwork. Their number is probably infinite, but only a very few of them are acceptable systems, compatible with their means of expression, and applicable without self-contradiction to all the dimensions of music. Of these, still fewer are so perfectly prefigured that they yield beautiful and interesting music' (Stockhausen, 1963: 47).

As Volans's etudes are clearly not serial works, a detailed study of serialism does not seem entirely necessary for the etudes. However, the etudes are a product of a Volans' reaction to the consequences of serialism and these consequences are relevant to the analysis of his etudes. Stockhausen's milestone piano works are useful reference points in relation to Volans. In 1952 Stockhausen began the first group of *Klavierstücke (I-IV).* These piano pieces were written around the same time as *Kontra-Punkte* and *Studie 1*. These works straddle Stockhausen's transition from composing with a method of singular isolated notes he called point composition, to a system of using notes in molecule, like groupings known as group composition. The primary characteristic of point composition is 'music that consists of separately formed particles – however complexly these may be composed…as opposed to linear, or group-formed, or mass-formed music' (Stockhausen, 1998: 452). In the *Klavierstücke*, a 'group' was a collection of notes that formed an entity. The first four *Klavierstücke* were all composed systematically and written in the order III-II-IV-I. In all four pieces, the organizational strategies are not immediately obvious and there is still no consensus on the construction of number III. Aurally, the order is not perceivable – the result seems arbitrary and chaotic to the ear. The surprising outcome was that through a great degree of intention and highly ordered planning the composers had achieved results not unlike those they would have achieved if they had used completely chaotic and disorderly methods. As a result, for some, including both Boulez and Stockhausen, the experiment with total serialism had been exercised and it was not necessary to repeat it in the same way. The domain of compositional control and planning had been pushed to its extreme and could go no further, however issues of compositional control and intention were beckoning exploration.

Serialism began losing influence twenty years before Volans arrived in Germany. By the time of Boulez's move toward total serialism, Cage had embarked on a different course. Whereas Boulez had used number charts as a way to create a new grammar, Cage had seen them as a way of removing his own creative desire. In 1951, Cage's pupil, Christian Wolff (who together with Morton Feldman and Cage were to become known as the 'New York School'), gave him a copy of the *I Ching*, an ancient Chinese text which prescribes ways to arrive at random numbers. Cage had been a pupil of Henry Cowell who had helped develop aleatoric composition in the 1930s. Coming out of the American lineage of Ives and Cowell, for Cage, relinquishing some of the decision making to the performers was not at all new. In *Music of Changes* (1951) Cage used the *I Ching* to select duration, tempo and dynamics. By applying a chance system to serial method, Cage had found a new way of avoiding intention in the work. Cage had experimented with chance procedures in the *Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra* (1951). Concerning the *Concerto*, Cage said '…Until that time, my music had been based on the traditional idea that you had to say something. The charts gave me my first indication of the possibility of saying nothing' (Griffiths, 1995: 24). However, the *I Ching* was to provide a chance tool to totally subvert his preferences. The primary goal of eliminating personal desire developed through Cage's studies of Zen at Columbia University in 1951 and chance procedures were a way of achieving that goal. All of Cage's subsequent work was to pursue the goal of non-intention.

Music of changes was first performed in the same programme as Boulez's piano sonata in New York in 1952. Ironically, pursuing the goal of non-intention is in itself an expression of intent: in *Music of changes*, Cage was implementing chance with the same rigour and intensity as Boulez and Stockhausen were implementing serialism. By the end of 1952 Cage followed this goal through to its logical extreme and the result was *4'33"*.

Far from being a cul de sac, Cage continued creating and experimenting with different ways of eliminating the intention of himself as composer as well as that of the performers for the rest of the 1950s. He saw improvisation as a return to personal taste, so all of his pieces contain clear instructions to the performer. The performers need to follow the instructions with a great deal of devotion in order to fully realise the pieces. After *4'33"*, Cage explored different processes of indeterminacy through two main avenues: the *Music for Piano* series and *The ten thousand things* composed between 1953 and 1956. With these pieces, Cage was searching for more flexible systems to produce the most unpredictable results he could. In *Music for Piano*, the score is derived from marking imperfections in the paper and *The Ten Thousand Things* is a collection of pieces measured to precise chance determined durations. Cage used similar chance procedures in all of the pieces in this set, which were primarily a combination of the point-drawing method similar to the one used in *Music for Piano* and chart based methods. The paradoxical compositional intention of these pieces is for the chance operations to screen off the desires of both the composer and the performers.

Parallels to Cage's pursuit of indeterminacy appeared increasingly in Europe by the mid 1950s. The most conspicuous examples of this influence can be found in Boulez's *Third Piano Sonata* (1955-57) and Stockhausen's *Eleventh Klavierstücke* (1956). Both works are the results of the two composer's applications of open form and leave primary elements of the composition to chance. The score for Stockhausen's *Eleventh Klavierstücke* presents the performer with nineteen groups randomly dispersed across a single sheet of white paper. The performer is instructed to begin with whichever group he sees first and proceed in any order until any group is played three times. While Stockhausen wished to distinguish his piece as being statistical research into sound, its strong aleatoric elements belie its automatism. In Boulez's *Third Piano Sonata* (1955-57),[3] chance is absorbed into the musical structure and the performer is encouraged to plan a route through the options provided rather than take random glances.

From 1953 Stockhausen was based in Cologne at the electronic music studio of the Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk (NWDR) where he later became director. In 1957, Maurizio Kagel, György Ligeti and Cornelius Cardew all moved to Cologne, extending an intellectual circle which included the critic Heinz-Klaus Metzger and the poet Hans Helms. These artists had an undeniable effect on one another and a reciprocal influence is evident in all of their work. More importantly, their presence fostered a forum of debate and artistic stimulation reminiscent of Darmstadt earlier in the decade.

Throughout the 1960s, Stockhausen was to continue investigating the possibilities of process composition. In his process compositions he used symbols such as plus, minus and equal signs to indicate particular transformations of sounds. These transformations are set up to unfold unpredictably. Works such as *Plus-Minus* (1963), *Prozession* (1967), *Kurzwellen* (1968), and *Spiral* (1968) are constructed of sets of relations rather than specific sounds so that the sounds are not specified by the score. Stockhausen's process composition culminated in highly improvised intuitive music compositions such as the *Aus den sieben Tagen cycle* (1968) and *Für kommende Zeiten* (1968–71). In these, the performers are provided with a graphical or verbally described set of instructions on which they are expected to expand intuitively.

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[3] Of the five movements of Boulez *Third Sonata*, two (the 2nd and 3rd movements) are published and three remain unpublished.

Another composer with whom pure intuition and indeterminacy are very closely associated, is Morton Feldman. Feldman and Cage met in New York in 1950 and remained friends for the rest of their lives and pursued the goal of non-intention in different ways. They first encountered each other while walking out of a concert, appalled at the audience's disrespectful reaction to the performance of Webern's *Symphony Op.21* (1927-28). Throughout the 1960s, Feldman experimented with non-standard forms of notation, using graphs and grids and specifying details such as the number of notes to be played at a point rather than exact pitches. He also used note heads indicating pitch but not duration, resulting in individual instruments in ensemble pieces proceeding completely independently from one another. However, irrespective of the techniques employed, the music all conformed to Feldman's well established and characteristically very slow and very soft idiosyncratic style. By the end of the 1960s, Feldman had returned to notating rhythms but had not yet moved to the prominence he was to enjoy later as a composer. Unlike the more prominent composers of the 1950s and 1960s, he never subscribed to or generated any ideology, a trait which was to make him much more relevant to Volans's generation of composers than those of his immediate contemporaries. If Feldman did follow an ideology, it was an ideology of intuition – his works unfold spontaneously without following any pre-compositional plan. According to his interview with Alan Beckett from 1966, Feldman saw his task as a composer as being to liberate or discover music, not imposing any organizational strategy on its shape (Beckett, 1966). Before the 1970s, Feldman's pieces were mostly short works for solo instrument or small ensemble. Later however, the length and scope of his works would expand dramatically.

The above overview of the trends of the 1950s and 1960s outlines the significant musical developments preceding Volans. A clear description of the values and assumptions that have had a direct impact on Volans's work would be useful in informing the subsequent analysis of his work. Introducing the Foucauldian notion of the 'episteme' into the analysis of the rhetoric of the music of the 1950s and 1960s, enables the analysis to (simultaneously) span broad changes in musical practice in the middle of the 20th century and deal with specific musical material. It also bridges this discussion with Foucault's view, which focuses on fundamental shifts in the understanding of language.

For Foucault, the concept of 'episteme' is a system of conditions and constraints defining the limits of possible knowledge. However, 'episteme' goes further than merely describing fixed cultural conditions at a point in time. When viewed through the lens of the 'episteme', a much more volatile image of the mid 20th century world emerges. In an 'episteme', a thing is not just a thing, it is also a sign pointing to other things. With each individual thing pointing and referring to other things, any historical context becomes a web of correspondences and resemblances. For example, we can deduce through the relative importance of pre-compositional planning in the avant-garde music of the 1950s and 1960s that it is an important factor in the web of resemblances and domain of possibility of the time. This factor in particular creates a web of resemblances that encourages a domain of experimentation with its opposites – the complete absence of a pre-compositional plan explored by composers of the indeterminacy school. Both of these factors continue to be a preoccupation within Volans's descriptions of his own methodology: 'I studied, of course, with Stockhausen who is the master architect of music, everything is planned in advance. That's how I tried to learn how to compose. In fact I've devoted the last thirty years of my life to the opposite, to what you might call anti-conceptualist composition' (Volans, BBC radio interview, August 2011). In another sense, we might even say that in their effort to push the boundaries of possibility in music and by taking ideas to their logical extreme, the composers of the Darmstadt school defined the limits of possibility more strongly. It could also be said considering the tendencies of the years that followed, by the end of 1951, the boundaries of possibilities that would define the next 20 years had been more or less set.

If so, from the above data, it may be possible to articulate these boundaries. The most significant limits of possibility of the Darmstadt school were those inherited from the early modernist spirit. Most strikingly, the core belief of the avant-garde was in progress itself. The determined pursuit of progress propelled them to the extreme edge of cultural possibility. As a result they firmly held the belief that 'everything can always be seen in a new perspective' (Coenen, 1994: 206). At this point it is clear that this answers the assumptions made earlier. Firstly, the one implication of this belief is the misconception that any work of art that is not near the edge of what is possible, is merely replicating that which already exists. The second false assumption is that of treating a work of art in isolation and the existence of a sterile self contained musical experience, devoid of context. Implicit to these assumptions was the exaggerated importance granted to compositional intention and pre-compositional planning – which became almost more important than the works themselves. Underpinning all of these assumptions was the tendency to follow ideas or notions right through to their logical extremes.

Awareness of landscape and cultural identity

When Volans arrived in Cologne in 1973 to study with Stockhausen, he came into contact with three composers with whom he had a great deal in common: Clarens Barlow, Walter Zimmerman and later, Gerald Barry. All around the same age, all four of these composers were attracted to Cologne by its reputation in the 1970s as a major centre for new music and new ways of thinking about music. This reputation was due largely to the rigour of Stockhausen and Kagel's work at the time but it was also owed to the intensity of their composition courses at the Hochschule für Musik. In addition to this, the Westdeutscher Rundfunk organised and funded innovative concerts, broadcasts and commissioned new music prolifically. These composers shared the same intensity of artistic experience in Cologne and all eventually dealt with a similar set of problems thrown up by the conditions of the time. Volans, in describing Barry's music, articulated their position concisely: 'he rejected the dogmatism of serialism with its heavy diet of Germanic diligence and prepared surprises, but also mistrusted what he interpreted as the minimalist's bland pursuit of predictability (while noting the usefulness of its transparency and clarity of texture)'. Christopher Fox suggests in 'Where the river bends: the Cologne School in retrospect' (Fox, 2007: 27) that in Cologne in the mid-1970s Volans and his contemporaries were searching for a genuinely new music to define a completely new territory where none had seemed to exist.

Were the stylistic changes initiated by these composers motivated by a change in their compositional values or a result of a continuation of modernist beliefs? Fox's view implies partly the former and partly the latter. In the first instance, there can be no doubt that they continued the Darmstadt commitment to the 'new'. For these composers it was important to define a new territory where none had seemed to exist. In a letter to Walter Zimmerman in 1975, Volans laid out the ideals, values and assumptions to which he aspired at the time and in some ways provides a concise summary of modernism in general: 'New Music demanded listening without preconception. It challenged, as all important music has done throughout the history of western music, ideas of what is beautiful, what is acceptable as musical material or form, what constitutes a 'musical' event. The emancipation of all sound as legal musical tender, the abundance of forms, techniques and musical grammars demanded above all that the listener approach each work on its own terms and evaluate it within its own defined framework – in short that the listener be free from dogmatism' (Fox, 2007: 29).

Later Volans located his perceived redundancy of avant-garde music at the time in the institutionalisation of modernist practice: ‘Modernism is a philosophy in which nothing is given yet modernism had become a style to the extent that new music was becoming a parody of itself.’ For Volans and his contemporaries, the current strategies were not successful in constructing new ways of hearing. For the composers of the new Cologne School, listening to musical material in new ways would provide for the creation of an authentically new music.

Secondly, in addition to striving for the new, the new Cologne School inherited a preoccupation with the material itself. They prioritized the relationship between the musical material, large-scale formal structures and expressive intention. What does Fox mean by ‘a preoccupation with material’? The term ‘material’ highlights the physical properties of music – its directly observable characteristics. Volans coined the term ‘materialists’ in his outline for 100 Frames and explained it by way of a contrast with ‘conceptualists’: ‘The conceptualists begin with an idea. Their concern is primarily with the way in which music is put together. Materialists concentrate on the nature of material itself, and attempt to allow the material to determine the piece’ (Volans, 1991: 1).

The new Cologne School also deviated from their forebears in their awareness and the manner of inclusion of culture and quotation. Fox points out that all of their music uses some form of appropriation or transference of existing material into a new context – without any sense of irony that might have been present in quotations used by older composers (Fox, 2007: 37). The most obvious overlap and shared innovation between these composers is that they all returned to their respective countries of origin in search of ‘local’ music.

Localism was a revolutionary idea in the 1970s. It consciously broke with the internationalism in modernist music and directly engaged with issues of context, place and social condition. However in the case of the Cologne School, it could be argued localism and simplicity facilitated the construction of new musical languages and as such was a continuation of a previous modernist project.

Aesthetically, the music of the Cologne School is not unlike that of the New Simplicity with which it is sometimes associated. Three well-known composers of the New Simplicity are Walter Zimmerman, Aribert Reimann and Wolfgang Rihm. The music of the Cologne School and the New Simplicity is characterized by a return to aspects of tonality and striving for immediacy between the creative compositional impulse and the musical result. The paring down extends to the use of extremely simple textures and also conventional instrumentation. Zimmerman’s *Beginner’s mind* (1974) was one of the first works to explore this fresh aesthetic. Taking its title and structure from Shrunryu Suzuki's book on Zen Buddhism: *Zen mind, beginner's mind* (1970), its narrative is clear – 'leave the old' through simplification and clarity of material. Built from mostly white note modality, metrical rhythms and repeated notes it has the mood of a musical language being discovered afresh. Unlike most other minimalist music up to that point, there is no systematic process at work – the work unfolds intuitively. One of Zimmerman's narrative intentions for the 70 minute long work was for it to be understood as a sequence culminating in the 'Beginner's mind song'. A considerable compositional challenge of this work was shaping the end point so that it is the inevitable long-term result of all the preceding material while still surprising the listener with its freshness. Volans was extremely supportive of *Beginner's mind* and responded to Zimmerman with an enthusiastic seven page letter. Volans was particularly attracted to the way the musical language managed to be a-historical, local and personal. In his letter he also highlights the fact that the work challenges the accepted notions of what new music should be.

It is worth noting at this point how strongly Volans was motivated by the role of new music in challenging musical hegemony. For music to adopt a position in relation to existing languages is highly dependent on its context. It follows that what is new and challenging in one context could become mainstream given a different set of conditions. This relativism was typical of the general conditions in the art world in the 70s. By becoming so widespread, modernism had lost its vitality and for Volans's generation to continue the spirit of innovation, their music had to take a position in relation to what had become a modernist establishment. In many ways this positioning was political and corresponds with the *zeitgeist* of widespread disillusionment with capitalism at the end of the Vietnam War. The tone of Cornelius Cardew's polemical article on Cage and Stockhausen titled 'Stockhausen serves imperialism' (Cardew, 1974) expressed the suspicion with which any kind of orthodoxy associated with capitalism was held. In it he paints a bleak picture of the Darmstadt school as being a voice for the imperial west. In such a politically charged climate, the political alignment and positioning of any work of art would have been critical to whether it challenged its audience.

In response to their shared awareness of the political and social currents in music, the four composers of the new Cologne School each embarked on music research expeditions to their native countries. Barry went back to Ireland, Barlow to India, Zimmerman explored his Franconian heritage and Volans returned to rural Natal, Swaziland and Lesotho. The premise for their trips was to investigate folk musics in their 'natural sound environment' and regroup to compare the results (Lucia, 2009). The inclusion of the landscape in their field of enquiry was implicit from the outset. Funded by the Westdeutscher Rundfunk, each composer made field recordings of the music of local people. Volans made four trips between 1976 and 1979 and among the recordings he made were seminal recordings of Princess Magogo's Ugubhu or Bow Songs (December 1976, February and June 1977) and a recording of the marriage ceremony between King Zwelithini and the Swazi King's daughter on 25 June 1977. Volans was deeply affected personally and artistically by his encounters on these trips. His article 'Of White Africans and White Elephants' (Volans, 1986), describes how returning to South Africa after living in Europe, made him conscious of his own problematic, cultural identity. He found, through living in Europe, that he was not as European as he was brought up to believe. But, on returning to his roots, found he was no more African than he was European (Volans, 1986: 1). At the time South Africa, gripped by apartheid, was racially and culturally deeply divided. Volans 'became convinced that if we were finally to adapt to our environment, we would have to embark on a reconciliation of African and European aesthetics, of the western and African spirit' (Volans, 1986: 1). Reconciling these aesthetics became the primary concern of Volans's compositional output for the next decade – until he moved away from it after 1988.

Volans drew inspiration from a wide variety of African artistic sources, from basket weaving and textiles to mbira music and songs. He categorised the possible ways of including African folk material on a 'learning curve'. In his own words, the grading ranged from 'pure transcription (in the manner of Bach), through paraphrase (as in Liszt), quotation as objet trouve (Charles Ives), assimilation (in the tradition of Stravinsky and Bartók) to what was then called an "invented folklore" - what I thought of as a new music of southern Africa, or music for a new South Africa' (Volans, 1982: 1). He also selected and incorporated certain techniques which he felt underlined the reconciliatory values of his project. Central to this was the anti-hierarchic nature of traditional African music. In addition to this, he consciously used interlocking techniques, shifting downbeats and contrasting and irregular patterning. Structurally, he imitated African music's open forms and its non-developmental use of repetition. Tonally, he emulated the largely non-functional harmonic shapes (Volans, 1982: 2). He also deliberately restricted his frame of reference to rural music as he felt urban music had already been too influenced by western systems (Volans, 1986: 1). These values and techniques have continued to be important characteristics of Volans's signature style ever since. However, since moving to Ireland (1989) and the disbanding of apartheid (1994), concepts of multiculturalism have played a much less important role in his music.

In her written tribute to Volans, 'Celebrating composer Kevin Volans' (Lucia, 2009: 9) Christine Lucia felt that his minimalist two piano work: *Cicada* (1994) is, in a way, an important threshold in his entire output. In her view, the strongly identifiable techniques mentioned above are present in many of the works before *Cicada*. While the same techniques appear in the works after it, they are ‘in a much starker realm’ (Lucia, 2009: 9). This provides a useful reference point in Volans’s development as it was also the year of the first democratic elections in South Africa. Since *Cicada*, Volans music is, in his own view, much more influenced by the sparse use of material of Morton Feldman (Rörich, 2008). For the last two decades, Volans has largely been concerned with applying his personalised, unique version of minimalism. His recent works are characterised by an increasing frugality of resources where complex musical intentions are achieved through the most economical means. It is during this phase of his life that he wrote the piano etudes.

CHAPTER THREE
A GENEALOGY OF THE GENRE OF THE PIANO ETUDE

Volans remarked that his initial goal was to write a set of twelve piano etudes (Volans, 2006). The set of twelve echoes the seminal etudes of Liszt and Chopin, a point of historical contact, resemblance and influence with which he seems to have engaged intentionally. By locating his etudes within a genre this way, Volans opens a dialogue with it. His use of the term invokes a complex network of texts, each participating in the production of its meaning. In consequence, Volans's works carry the weight of meaning and association gathered and accumulated over more than 250 years. However, over this period, the interdependent aspects of the physicality of piano technique, the instrument's nature and the music's stylistic goals have changed and developed considerably. Also, the connotations associated with being an etude have been shaped, borrowed and transformed since the word was first used in relation to piano music in the early 19thcentury. Each use of the term has modulated the concept slightly to suit a new context while each etude has contributed and added richness to the term.

Volans, as an active pianist, was fully aware of the Chopin, Liszt and Debussy pianistic patterns programmed into his fingers (Rörich, 2005: 155). He chose to avoid using these patterns by collecting material he first conceived for other instruments (Rörich, 2005: 155). The by-product of this choice is while the material itself is given priority, it has an indirect relationship with the instrument. By default, this raises an implicit tension between the particular technical demands of playing the piano and the compositional difficulties involved with conceiving original material. A number of incidental questions arise: how useful would these pieces be in developing the technical aspects they address or would a pianist be better served elsewhere? Do they deal with technical issues in new or different ways or is their merit more purely musical than pedagogical? From these issues the author shall follow a genealogy of links to other etudes in the network to filter through the codes involved in the creation of the term's meaning.

What web of links does the notion of etude open today? By calling his works 'etudes', what connotations does Volans inspire and what expectations are evoked? Also, by locating the works in the territory of the etude, is Volans positioning his pieces within the realm of piano pedagogy? A survey of the term 'etude' is required to chart the fields of meaning it accesses. This involves exploring a wide selection of etudes across the development of piano technique. The factors which emerge from this survey become the modes of authority acting on Volans's etudes. This chapter's investigation is not directly about his etudes, but rather about discovering the forces which brought them into being. Nonetheless, mapping the field of meaning in other works reveals allusions and influences within etudes. The decisions and directions Volans adopts in relation to the field of meaning also yield information about Volans's own concepts of piano technique as well as his pianistic compositional priorities and values. Rather than tracing a linear ancestry of the genre of the etude, the author shall examine particular points of change in the use of the term. Firstly, the study documents the concept's inception in the earliest piano music of Clementi and Czerny. Next, the chapter observes the genre's association with the dramatic shifts in piano technique of Chopin and Liszt followed by the diversity of use of the title in the early 20th century. Lastly, the term's recent association with the outer limits of virtuosity will be examined. In each of these areas the author will use the following trajectories of tension raised by the notion of the 'etude': the role of the weight of history and expectations set up by genre and its relationship to the music itself; the tension between complexity and empty virtuosity with simplicity and clarity; the tension between programming the fingers with patterns and reinvention and the relationship between composer and performer that gives birth to the works. Bearing in mind the idea of 'study' is as equally a compositional study as a piano study.

18th and 19th century piano etudes

The genre of the etude developed in parallel with the instrument itself and its roots stretch back to the earliest piano music. The earliest keyboard instrument that used mechanical hammers was developed by the Italian Bartolomeo Cristofori in 1709, however the action and tone were too flawed to substitute or replace the keyboard instruments of the day. When Bach heard Gottfried Silbermann's piano in 1726, it was still unreliable and unsatisfactory to him. After twenty-five years of improving and refining, Bach was significantly impressed by the piano Silbermann presented to him in 1747. His son, C.P.E. Bach extolled its virtues of sturdiness and tone in his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* (1753). By the 1770s many of the previous problems were solved and the piano began to attract the attention of composers and performers. The forte-piano could produce a wider variety of tone colours and expression than earlier instruments and could also produce a sound large enough for concert halls. From the outset, the piano raised the threefold challenge of braiding together the capabilities of the player, the instrument and the expressive potential of the medium. Muzio Clementi's *Sonata no.2* of 1773 was the first published composition designed specifically for the forte-piano. In order to exploit qualities unique to the newly developed piano, Clementi experimented with technical and colouristic effects impossible on other keyboard instruments of the day (Kochevitsky, 1967). He sought to explore the piano's highly expressive dynamic range, tonal spectrum and its ability to produce a fluid legato. In figure 3.1 Clementi's use of a *forzato* in bar 6 and the sudden *piano* in bar 7 would not have been entirely possible on earlier instruments. Also, his slurring in bar 1,4 and 5 lends itself to the improved legato on the piano.

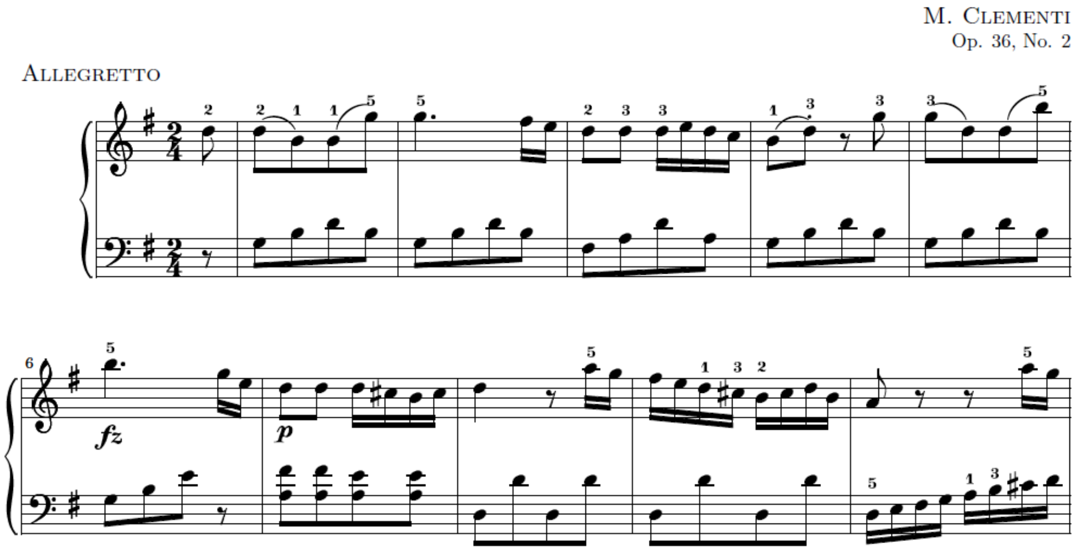
M. Clementi
Op. 36, No. 2
Allegretto
fz
p

Figure 3.1 Clementi: *Sonata No.2*, bars 1 to 10.

His 1801 treatise on technique, The *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Piano*, is the earliest methodology for learning the piano (Kochevitsky, 1967). It is also the first instance of the pedagogical etude as a means of acquiring technique. Clementi published the later, more famous and widely used, *Gradus ad Parnassum* in 1826. In figure 3.2 the single figure action required to play the repeated notes is still in line with the harpsichord technique.

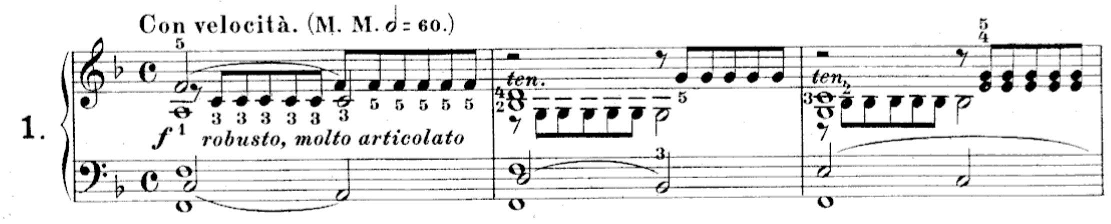
Con velocità. (M. M. 𝅗𝅥 = 60.)
1.
f
robusto, molto articolato
ten.
ten.

Figure 3.2 Clementi: *Gradus ad Parnassum, Exercise 1*, bars 1 to 3

.

In figure 3.3 the long phrases are tailored to the piano musically but the fingering is designed to minimise movement of the arm.

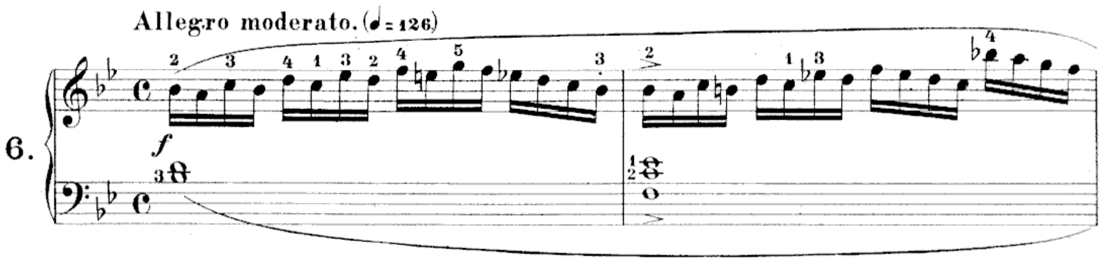
Allegro moderato. (♩ = 126)
6.
f

Figure 3.3 Clementi: *Gradus ad Parnassum, Exercise 6*, bars 1 and 2.

The above examples demonstrate how Clementi's technique was firmly rooted in the finger school where the upper arm is kept still and only the fingers are used. His primary area of attention was training all five fingers to reach equal strength. He required that the hand and wrist should be entirely motionless and the fingers should be raised high and strike the keys vertically. In particular, it was Clementi who pressed the need for pianists to practice for lengthy periods to develop the strength required for this kind of action.

Another founding father of piano technique to have a considerable impact was Czerny. Firmly entrenched in the finger school, Czerny's methods were highly instrumental in the development of some the most innovative pianists of the 19thcentury. Chopin, Dreyschock, Thalberg and Liszt all benefitted from his technical insight and as a result of his teaching, eventually revolutionised piano technique themselves. Despite his impact and apart from what we can glean indirectly from the hundreds of exercises he wrote, there is no direct record of the particulars of how he taught his own pupils. Through the methodologies of his many famous students we know that part of the success of his approach lay in his attention to setting up systems to build keyboard technique through speed and dexterity. Czerny's studies are a blend of Hummel's specifics about the training and positioning of the hand and Clementi's model of writing studies which resemble pieces. In the first few bars of exercise 1 from Czerny's *School of Legato and Staccato* depicted in figure 3.4, there are long pianistic phrases which exploit the scope and range of the piano but the fingering and hand positions required to fulfil the patterns, as with Clementi's compositions, require no arm involvement.

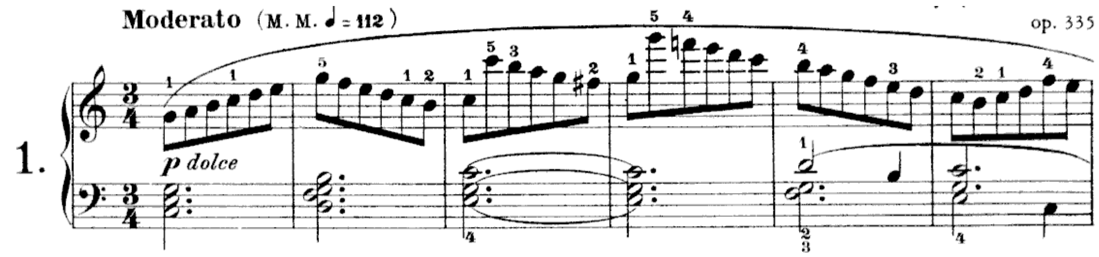

Figure 3.4 Czerny: *School of Legato and Staccato*, Exercise 1, bars 1 to 6.

While Czerny gave his students his own studies to practise, his success as a teacher bespeaks an approach of a great deal more intellectual engagement with piano technique than any teacher before him. One of his areas of focus was teaching his students how to practise. If we examined his studies in isolation, we would deduce that his technical approach relied heavily on repetition. His innumerable studies, through their repetition of scale and arpeggio patterns, are mostly oriented toward developing finger strength and endurance. While later teachers never disputed the obvious need for regular repetitive practise, they would discourage relying so heavily on repetition. They realised that in isolation, such repetition could at best result in rigid style and cramped movements but at its worst could cause injuries.

All of these early examples of the etude unashamedly operated at the interface between the instrument and the fingers, hand, arm and posture. Attention was drawn to the ways the shape of the composition directly exerts a force on the body, training the shapes and movements which were intended to become lifelong habits for the pianist. Through exact repetition of sequences of movements, the imprint of the etude will be left on the movements of the body – the more successful the etude, the more secure and reliable the movement. An important finding from the studies of Czerny and Clementi is the extent to which the composer's technical approach to the piano is plainly visible in the score. The impact of Volans's technical approach and the musical material is a line of influence which will be established through the genealogy later in the thesis.

The intention of etudes had, from the outset, been to strike a balance between their musical and didactic functions. Composers managed with varying success to achieve this balance but it was Chopin who first succeeded in striking the balance with a great degree of grace. Chopin's twenty-four etudes were the earliest in the genre bearing the title etude to secure a place in the standard concert repertoire. While stylistically very different, there are numerous traits that would indicate that J.S. Bach's *Well Tempered Klavier BWV 846-893* (1722) served as a model for Chopin's two sets of twelve *Etudes Op.10* and *Op.25*. Although Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues were not written as piano exercises, they straddle the same territory of compositional exercise, virtuosic display and a systematic addressing of the potential of the keyboard as Chopin's *Etudes*. Beginning with rising C major arpeggios, Chopin's *Op. 10 No.1* is a poignant rippling echo of Bach's C major *Prelude*.

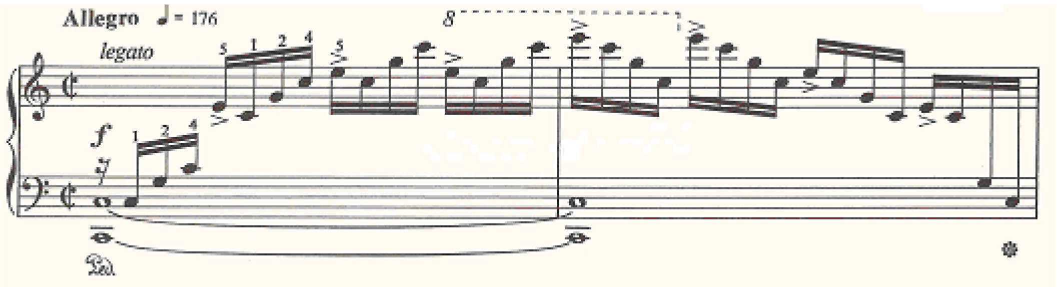

Figure 3.5 Chopin, *Etude Opus 10 no 1*, bars 1 and 2.

Chopin published the *Douze Grandes Etudes Op 10* in 1833 at the age of twenty-one, and only added *12 Neue Etuden op 25,* five years later in 1837. The first set of etudes was pivotal in Chopin's own oeuvre by being the first pieces showing all three qualities of his mature style. These etudes redefined the genre as a whole, particularly with their overlapping of piano technique, piano composition and the instrument itself. They show a sensitivity and intimacy with the resources of the keyboard, realising unprecedented potential in pianistic technique and manage to be equally useful as didactic and concert pieces. Chopin chose not to separate the duality of the technical, exercise properties of the music from the musical ideas – the musical ideas constitute the embodiment of the technical material. As a result, they stand at the apex of the transition between the less expressive early 19thcentury studies and the extroverted concert etudes of Liszt and Alkan.

By February 1836, when Chopin began writing his etudes, the repertoire of piano etudes was already very large. Schuman lists more than 350 significant individual pieces in his article 'Some piano pieces arranged according to their technical aims' in the *Neue Zeitschrift fur Musik*. Due to a combination of the large amount of material produced in the genre and its limited scope, a codifying of figuration had developed. The prevalence of this kind of figuration in the early 19thcentury resulted in a very predictable monotonous texture. Most early etudes were preoccupied with perpetual motion. Within this one dimensional rhythmic texture, harmony was the only way for the works to achieve shape and direction. Chopin's didactic figures were largely based on these traditional pianistic terms: arpeggios, broken chords, skips, extensions, 3rds, 6ths, octaves, chromatic runs. He also made use of melody and accompaniment in the same hand, triplet semiquavers, leggiero touch and bravura passage-work. These figures almost become clichéd in the etudes through Chopin's implementation of systems and frequent use but the way the figures participate in the larger harmonic structures prevents this from happening. He also avoided many other established virtuoso techniques such as hand-crossing, tremolos and broken octaves which would not have been at home in his pianistic sound world. Chopin's originality seems not so much to be in the invention of new figures so much as the construction of the novel broader schemes in which he used them. In figure 3.6 the oscillating seconds from Chopin's Etude Opus 25 no. 6 are conventional finger school patterns, which at the outset are unremarkable.

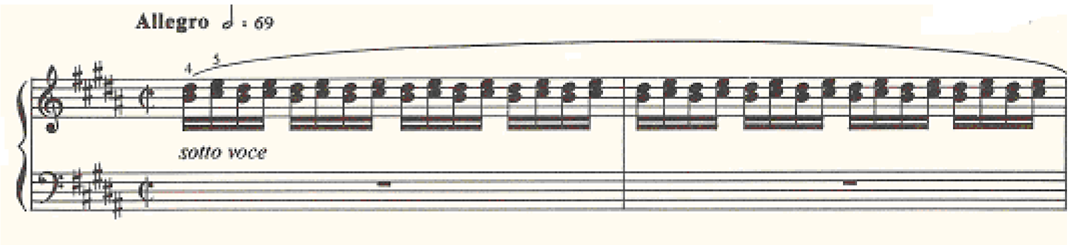

Figure 3.6 Chopin, *Etude Opus 25 no. 6*, bars 1 and 2.

While none of Chopin's etudes are particularly exceptional in their technical raw material, they are unique in the way that the motif structure flows through the figuration. Volans faced the same problem of figuration in his etudes and took steps to avoid clichés on both the level of the raw material and in the way it behaves structurally. As the raw material for most of Volans's etudes was conceived for other instruments (Rörich, 2005: 155), his task was a juggling act of adapting the material well for the piano while avoiding figuration and pushing the boundaries of technical possibility at the instrument. In this regard, Volans has either turned the argument of technique within the etude around or is side-stepping the issue entirely.

Technically, Chopin differed drastically from the mainstream of his time. Instead of using the key as his point of departure for the finger shape, his ideas began with the structure of the hand itself. Chopin's quite revolutionary hand position was derived from the almost symmetrical shape of the hand. With the shorter fingers, the thumb and fifth finger, on the outside and the three longer fingers in the centre – the hand's most natural point of rest on the keyboard is with the long fingers on the three black notes and the two short fingers on the white notes. In consequence, B major was the most logical scale to teach first. In addition to hand shape, he also emphasised the importance of the wrist, arm and forearm. This is clearly visible in his etudes which encourage lateral arm movements throughout. In the etudes, horizontal movements requiring flow between the arm and the supple wrist are needed for the wide scope of the patterns and for smooth shifts between the varied hand positions across the keyboard. Chopin's most pressing priorities were touch and legato. His ideas about legato were derived from bel canto singing and he taught various kinds of touch in order to shape melodic lines (Kochevitsky, 1967). In Chopin's *Etude Opus 10 No 5* the melody in the right hand is made up entirely of black notes. At a tempo of 116 beats per minute, the only way the notes can be played is through a rocking motion of the hand. Without the involvement of the hand the sudden change in dynamic from bar 1 to 2 would also not be possible.

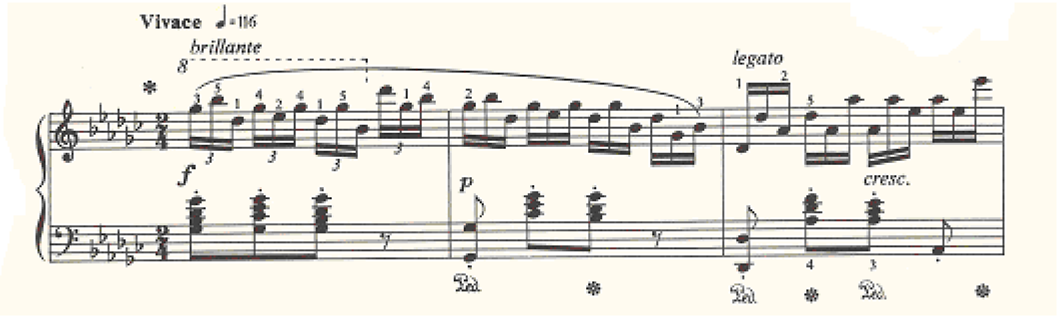

Figure 3.7 Chopin, *Etude Opus 10 No. 5,* bars 1 to 3.

Parallel to Chopin's innovations to piano playing were those of his contemporary and rival Franz Liszt. Volans claims that Liszt's piano music was critically important in his development as a pianist (Volans, BBC interview, 2011). However, he claims to have deliberately chosen to take certain measures in order to deliberately avoid the patterns programmed into his own fingers. From this it would seem as if there is a certain conflict between the creation of habit and duplication of the traditional study and the modernist impulse to create something totally new. Liszt typifies the persona of the pianist as virtuoso and his *Transcendental Etudes S.139* (1852) are a monument to virtuoso piano playing. Liszt's etudes are concert studies and are valued for their musical content and not usually viewed in the light of technical studies. By writing etudes, Volans engages with the same notion of virtuosity at the instrument – and their presentation is in line with the tradition of the concert study rather than the technical exercise. However, Volans's etudes are also allocated specific didactic functions, in the vein of the earlier strain of etudes. An important question at this point is to what extent Volans has moulded the music to perform the techniques in question. How does his concept of virtuosity compare with that of Liszt?

Despite a lingering reputation in some circles for vacuous adroitness, Liszt had a great deal of influence on 20thcentury music. Part of the reason for the early unfounded reputation was that his most experimental late works were not known until after 1927. While these works could not have influenced early 20thcentury innovators, they left a significant impression on many subsequent works. In Liszt's later works, his refining of chromaticism foreshadows the dissolution of tonality that was to be seen later (Hamilton, 2005: 76). Volans is highly aware and respectful of Liszt's piano music. He undertook to learn and record the *Transcendental Etudes* himself recently. There is no doubt that Volans is influenced by Liszt's spirit in pianistic technique, composition and the nature of the genre by Liszt. What imprints of Liszt's etudes are to be found in Volans's etudes? Are there direct relationships between them or is it more a case of carrying on the experimental torch?

Liszt's legacy was secured partly by the fact that he was the most published piano composer of the 19thcentury (Hamilton, 2005: 33) but mostly because he taught prolifically – at one count up to 400 students – ensuring that his innovations would be carried throughout the world. Liszt's students, due to their pedigree, were highly in demand as teachers themselves and in turn disseminated his technical views to their students. Liszt developed and transformed considerably as a pianist and composer over his lifetime and his approach to composition and piano technique transformed dramatically. This transformation can be seen by comparing his *Etude en Douze* (1826) with their later manifestation as the *Douze Grande Etudes* (1837) a decade later, and ultimately in the *Transcendental Etudes* (1851). In Liszt's etudes we have inherited three snapshots in his development of pianistic technique (Kotchevitsky, 1967). The choices Liszt made in revising the etudes, apart from the composer's self evident desire to refine and solve compositional problems, reveal key shifts in Liszt's view of pianistic technique and its development (Hamilton, 2005: 199). The early etudes are conspicuously early 19th century in their approach to the instrument. The patterns are largely based on earlier harpsichord techniques and strongly recollect Czerny studies where finger action was of primary concern. This is evident in comparing the rhythmically identical finger patterns shown between Czerny's exercise in figure 3.8 and Liszt's in 3.9.

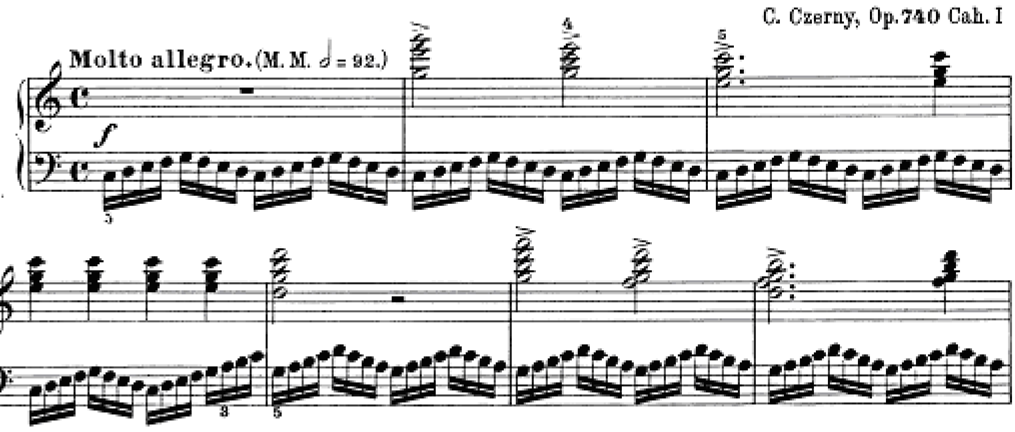

Figure 3.8 Czerny, *The Art of Finger Dexterity Op.740*, Exercise 1, bars 1 to 7.

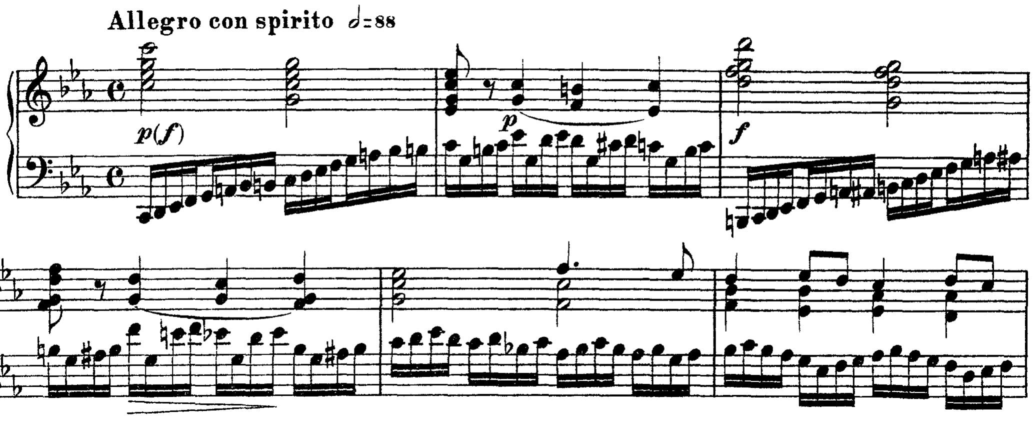

Figure 3.9 Lizst, *Douze Etudes No.8. C major,* bars 1 to 6.

By then, the doctrines of playing with a still wrist had continued to be rigorously implemented by teachers long after their practical utility. We know that by the third decade of the 19th century, a wide disparity had developed between the obsolete dogma of the mechanical drill school of pianism and performing players such as Liszt who needed a great deal of physical freedom to play the highly virtuosic compositions written for the instrument. Less than fifty years after the birth of the piano, none of the performing pianists played according to the instructions of their teachers. The main reason for the shift, apart from the huge proportion of physical injuries, was the highly expressive potential of the piano itself.

Liszt's revisions of his etudes in 1837 were undoubtedly inspired by those of Chopin but were also motivated by his own desire to reproduce orchestral texture and sonority on the piano. Liszt desired a freer technique that could tap into the physical and emotional potential of the piano. The *Douze Grande Etudes* include octave leaps and chords that would have been impossible to play using the older school of keyboard technique. Unfortunately, in the 1837 etudes, the densely textured virtuosity tended to cloud out the clarity of the musical intention. The final and most successful revision of the etudes were the *Transcendental Etudes* of 1851 (Hamilton, 2005: 200). The difference in clarity of intention is clearly evident in the examples shown in figure 3.10 and 3.11. In the *Grande Etude* the figuration of the phrase lacks direction and is unnecessarily complicated. By simplifying the left hand part into thirds in the *Transcendental Etude*, a melody emerges which anchors the phrase and gives it a discernable shape.

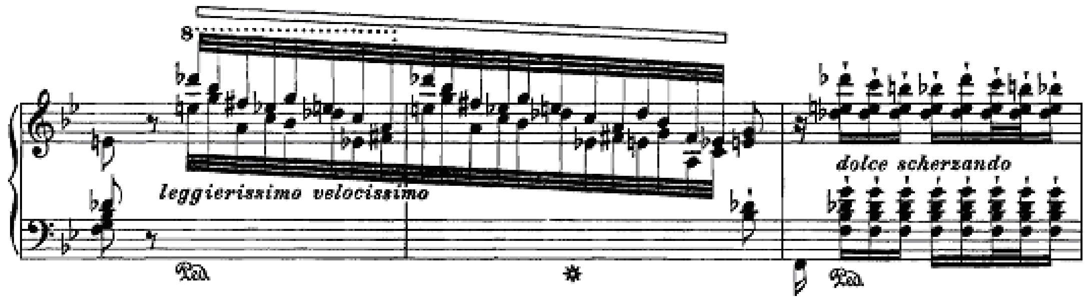

Figure 3.10 Liszt, *Grande Etude No 5 in B flat*, bars 7 to 9.

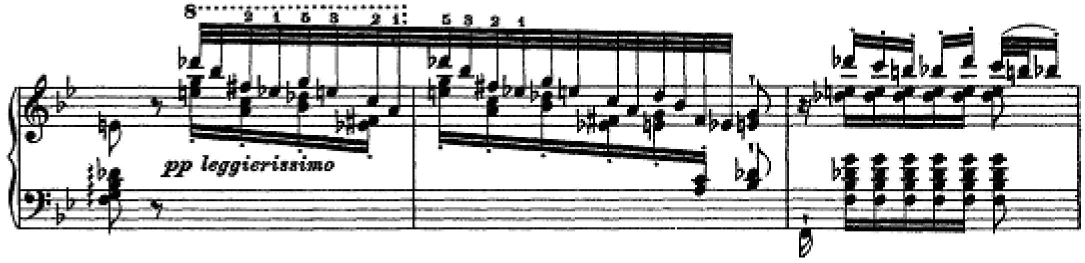

Figure 3.11 Liszt, *Transcendental Etude No 5 in B flat*, bars 7 to 9.

As a teacher, Liszt was not dogmatic about technique itself, never speaking or writing in detail about it. Rather there is a sense that he believed each pianist should find their own conception (Kotchevitsky, 1967). What we do know about his technique through his students, is that Liszt's chief priority was the grasping of the spirit of a composition. For Liszt, all body movements were to be entirely in service of the musical imagination. Technique itself is entirely generated by the tonal image (Kotchevitsky, 1967).

According to Kotchevitsky, Liszt distilled the difficulties in piano playing to a few principles. The first principle was the proportion of attention given to listening. For Liszt, only by listening is the musician able to bring his fingers in accord with the musical intention. Liszt's physical technique required the use of the arm, shoulder and torso, broadening the locus of attention from the fingers to the whole body. In the same manner as Chopin, for Liszt the movement of the fingers were part of a process of movements of the entire arm. He was also surprisingly opposed to purely mechanical practising. He required the mind to take the lead at all times, encouraging practising expression more than mechanical repetition. One of the ways he recommended his students engage directly with the musical content was for them to invent their own combinations of exercises and to practise improvisation and modulation (Gervers, 1970: 386). He also believed in the trial and error of experimentation and taught instinctively, relying on demonstration in order to explain technique (Gervers, 1970: 386).

Liszt's belief in fusion of music and poetry stood at the core of his teaching (Gervers, 1970: 385). Often he would read passages from a favourite author to illustrate a connection between the music and literature. His teaching focussed more on expressive nuance than on technique and in his maturity, did not consider showy virtuosity to be a virtue. He encouraged all of his students to read a great deal of music to broaden their experience (Gervers, 1970: 391). However, there was a wide discrepancy between his teaching principles as a young performer and those of his later Wiemar years where he pursued composition more seriously (Gervers, 1970: 390).

Liszt's prioritisation of the musical image is evidenced in its precedence in the *Transcendental Etudes*. Liszt's revisions in the *Transcendental Studies* consisted mostly of pruning of texturally overloaded figurations to achieve more musical clarity – revealing its musical value. The paring back and clearing out of empty virtuosity reveals clarity and musical intention not immediately obvious in the earlier etudes (Hamilton, 2005: 32). Sculpting the works from the less refined previous material revealed hidden layers of content within the works (Hamilton, 2005: 32). Through honing, the later etudes also became much more interesting structurally. Three of the *Etudes: no.8. The Wild Hunt* in C minor*, no.10. Allegro Agitato Molto* in F minor and *no.11. Evening Harmonies* in D flat Major are sonata designs. Liszt added the descriptive programmatic titles for the etudes about twenty-five years after the works' conception when they were published by Busoni in the final Wiemar version (Hamilton, 2005: 73). The titles give a vivid image which evokes the character of the music and, while they were possibly also a good marketing strategy, explore the area of poetic overlap crucial for playing them interpretively.

Liszt's harmonic style became more and more experimental as he developed as a composer. Chromatic voice-leading can be found in every work Liszt composed – in his resolution of unstable sonorities and in how he exploited multiple resolutions of augmented triads and chromatic harmony as can be seen in the first six bars of *Mazeppa* in figure 3.12. In this example, Liszt's displacement of resolution weakens the passage's sense of tonality, in some ways foreshadowing Schoenberg's early 20th century innovations.

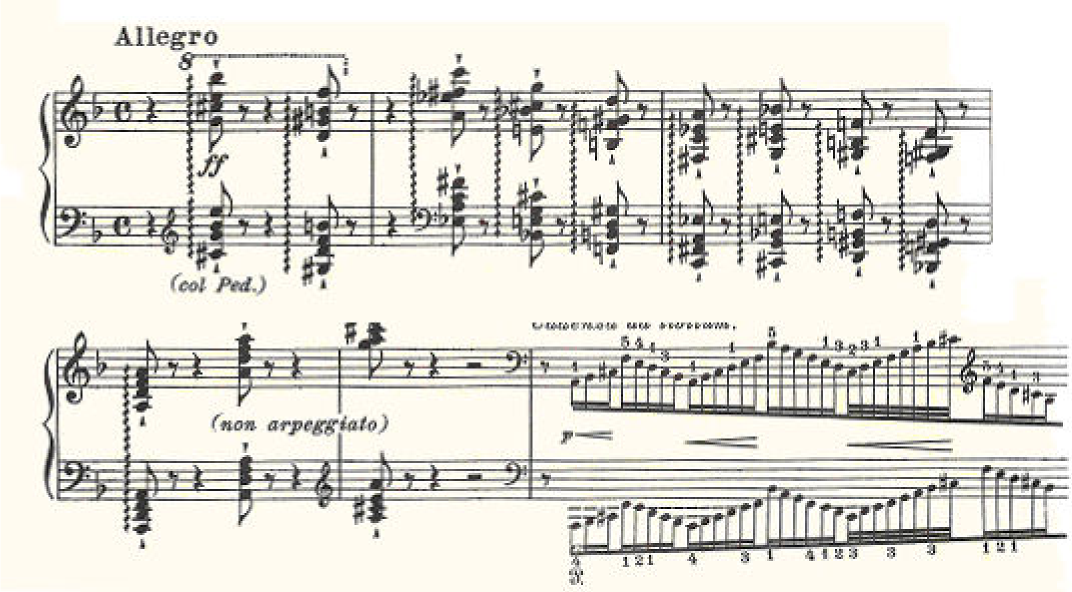

Figure 3.12 Liszt, *Etude d'Execution Transcendante No 4, Mazeppa*, bars 1 to 6.

So, before moving on to the diversity within the genre which emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, it is worth summarising what has been established about the term's accumulation of meaning before then. The rise in popularity of the piano at the beginning of the 19thcentury engendered three varieties of piano composition in which the etude has stood in the centre: exercises, etudes and concert studies. From the outset, the etude has precociously straddled all three spheres. It has its roots in the 18th century technical study but by the 19th century had transformed into a genre of dramatic concert works. While piano etudes may choose to deal with developing particular aspects of piano playing, they desire to be interesting and convincing pieces in their own right. Even if their only resemblance to technical exercises may be that they are highly technically demanding, their technicality foregrounds the physicality of playing the work – drawing attention not only to the sound material but also its 'means of production'. In so doing, etudes not only engaged with issues of compositional structure and style but also with the relationship between the human body and the instrument. All of these aspects were firmly established by the end of the 19th century. How did the 20th century affect the genre?

Etudes in the 20th Century

Throughout Volans's etudes, the issue of quality of sound is of supreme importance. There is a strong sense that each musical image requires a particular, exact sonority. While in many respects Volans's etudes resemble a 'Debussian' sensibility, it is in their preoccupation with sonority that they most vividly recall Debussy. Debussy's *Douze Piano Etudes* (1915) came into being during his late period. It was a period of his life characterized by a departure from goal-oriented tonality and dissociating sounds from their traditional function (Peterson, 2004: 2). They are organized into two books of six etudes. The technical and musical challenge of each etude is embodied in its opening gesture. The first book beginning with a five finger study, progressing through incrementally expanding intervallic relationships and ending with an eight finger study; and the second book exploring ornaments, sonorities, chords, arpeggios repeated notes and culminating in chromatic runs.

Written in the midst of the extreme uncertainty and upheaval of World War I, the emergence of modernism and neoclassicism, Debussy manifested the zeitgeist by seeking to establish a new tonal language based directly on colour and beauty of sound. While the etudes are not strictly neoclassical, Debussy strove to echo the clarity and proportional characteristics of the French clavecinistes as models of a French sensibility. Also, the abstract nature of the title 'etude' for the works recalls classicism. In correspondence with Stravinsky, Debussy described his later works as examples of 'pure music' with regard to their clarity and concern for proportion, both critical components of 'classicism'. For Debussy form was intricate at the level of detail. The focus of his attention was on the relationships between pitches, process and the unfolding of events in time. Figure 3.13 shows the opening of Debussy's *Etude no.10* with a long, ringing sustain of three G sharps in octaves interrupted three times by the octave As and a low G sharp. By avoiding resolution and allowing the notes to sustain, Debussy highlights the sonority and colour emerging from the intervals neutralising the tension brought about the dissonance.

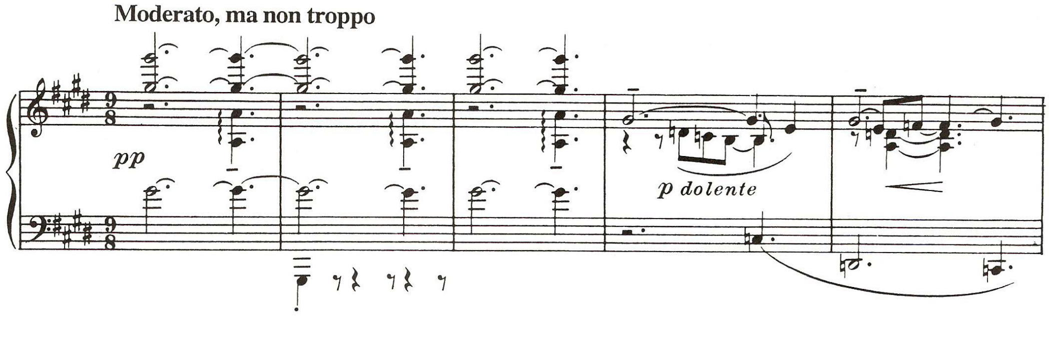

Figure 3.13 Debussy, *Etude no.10 for contrasted sonorities*, bars 1 to 5.

Debussy's self proclaimed aesthetic model for his transparent use of the pedal was Chopin, whom Debussy said used the pedal as a 'kind of breathing' (Roberts, 1996: 173). He also emulated the 19th century cantabile model of playing which idealised the piano as an 'instrument without hammers' (Peterson, 2004: 7). He also believed in flexibility of tempo. In a letter, in discussing his use of metronome markings, Debussy stated that 'they're all right for one measure, like those roses which only last for a morning'(Peterson, 2004: 8) – implying that tempo fluctuations should be expected and embraced.

All of Debussy's etudes emphasise sonority, he even called the whole set a 'special experiment in sonorities' (Peterson, 2004: 6). In order to achieve this, the etudes make use of the whole tone scale, the octotonic scale and pentatonic pitch collections which, by dispensing with tonic dominant hierarchies create opportunities for interesting harmonic substitutions (Peterson, 2004: 2). In each of these scales, the absence of a leading note subverts the forward drive of tonality yielding a form that emerges as a flexible rather than a fixed structure. The pentatonic scale also provided an exoticism, evoking other musical cultures in a way that was de rigueur at the turn of the century (Peterson, 2004: 2). Debussy deploys pitches as lines and sonorities, controlling events over a longer span.

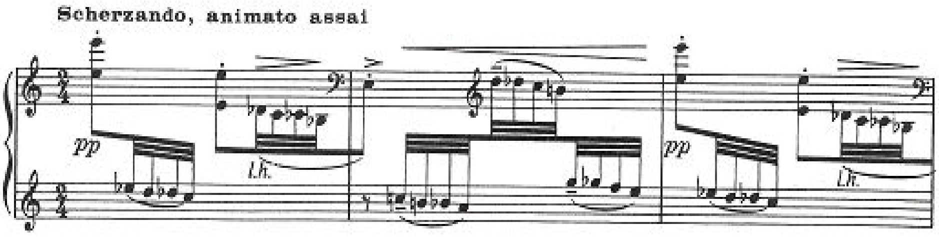

Figure 3.14 Debussy, *Etude no. 7 in chromatic half-steps,* bars 1 to 3.

The etude which departs furthest from the confines of tonality is the chromatic etude shown in figure 3.14 (Parks, 1985: 33). The chromatic etude does not conform to the norms of 18th and 19th century organization and shows Debussy's predilection for what Parks calls 'tonal analogues' (Parks, 1985: 33). While the piece contains both atonal and tonal contexts, for Parks it is open to interpretation whether the overarching tendency is toward atonality.

Harmonically, the pitches are derived from three tetrachords (Parks, 1985: 40). The tetrachords are separated into different registers, articulated in various guises, transposed, inverted and used to connect the musical surface in structural roles. For Parks, the way that Debussy allowed all of the features of the pitch material to generate form is very similar to the ways that atonal pieces operate (Parks, 1985: 53). For Parks, Debussy often places his pitch materials in contexts that use tonal material in ways that they are not normally used in tonal contexts. Debussy wrote phrases of parallel major thirds in whole tone scales which would never be possible in normal major or minor modes. He also allowed motifs to retain their exact shape when repeated at different scale degrees and hardly ever respected the constraints of tonal voice leading. By working in opposition to the key, Debussy emphasised the tonal colouring of the material.

Similarly, in areas held together with only the thinnest sliver of sound, Volans uses sound colour with great care in his etudes. In Volans's use of colour there is a direct link not only with Debussy but also with Messiaen. It was in Messiaen's piano etudes that he exercised his brief and only foray into total serialism. His *Quatre Etudes de Rythme* is a set of four piano works written in 1949 and 1950. The first and most influential of the works was the *Mode de valeurs et d'intensites*, written at Darmstadt in 1949 before the other three etudes were added and premiered the following year. *Mode de valeurs* is the most famous of the four works as it was the first work by a European composer to systematically organise pitch, duration, dynamics and articulation. As such it was a study in composition as much as a technical study. Together with Webern's twelve tone system it was decisively influential in the development of total serialism around 1950. Perhaps because of the *Mode de Valuers,* the genre of the etude is indelibly associated with modernism and ground breaking experimentation. It is worth noting that the *Quatre Etudes* and his organ piece *Livre d'orgue* are a special case in Messiaen's oeuvre (Delaere, 2002). They were Messiaen's only contribution to the development of total serialism nevertheless, the works were pivotally instrumental in attracting composers such as Stockhausen to Paris, who found it incomprehensible that Messiaen didn't take the experiment further (Delaere, 2002).

Messiaen taught at the Conservatoire National Superieur de Musique in Paris. From 1947 he initiated and taught the new 'Cours d'esthetique' and his teaching became attractive to an international audience of young, radical composers, all committed to the development of new music (Delaere, 2002). It was primarily Messiaen's progressive theoretical research into rhythm, harmony and analysis that were pivotal to the young composers' prioritising of rhythm and striving for its emancipation from other musical parameters. He discussed his techniques extensively in his treatise 'Technique of my musical language', giving us extensive access to his approach.

The *Quatre etudes de rythme* are perhaps the best known of Messiaen's works but they are quite unlike his previous work harmonically. In the rest of his oeuvre Messiaen employed a much more eclectic and organic collection of techniques in his works (Lee, 1983). In *Mode de valeurs* Messiaen treated the durations, intensities and attacks on the same plane as the pitches (Delaere, 2002). Figure 3.15 shows the opening of *Mode de valeurs* where every note is given a different dynamic marking. By comparing this excerpt with his note rows in figure 3.16 it is clear that serial tone row is not treated in the manner of Schoenberg where the 12 notes usually all sound before a tone is repeated.

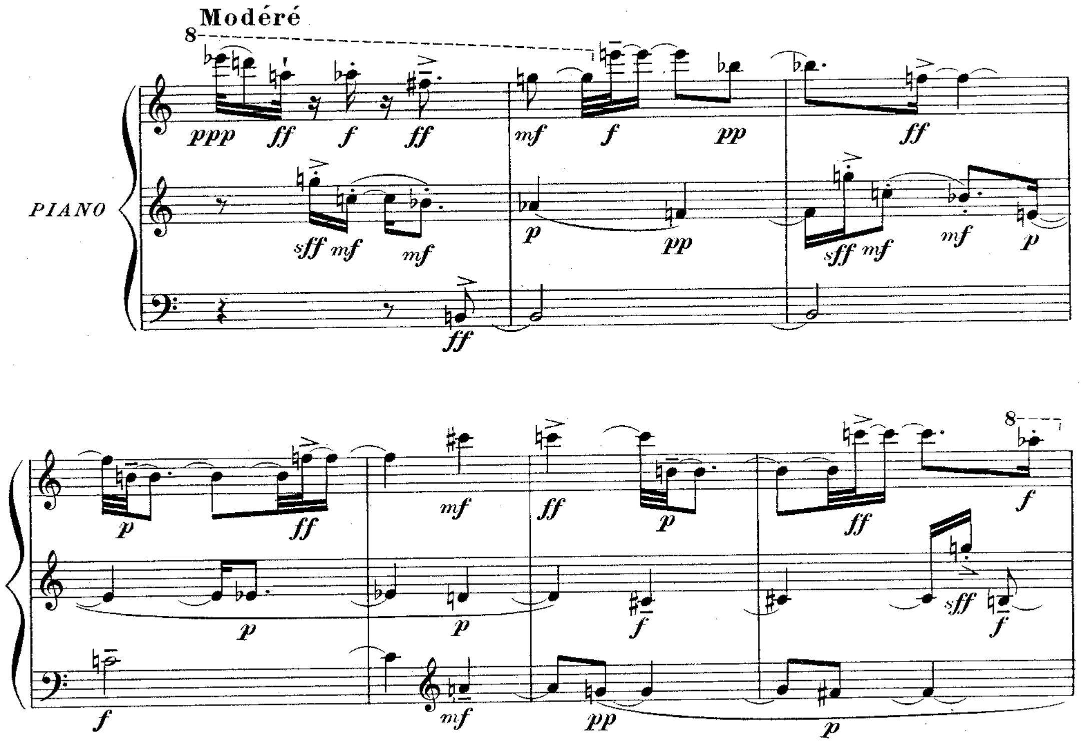
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Figure 3.15 Messiaen, *Mode de valeurs et d'intensites*, bars 1 to 7.

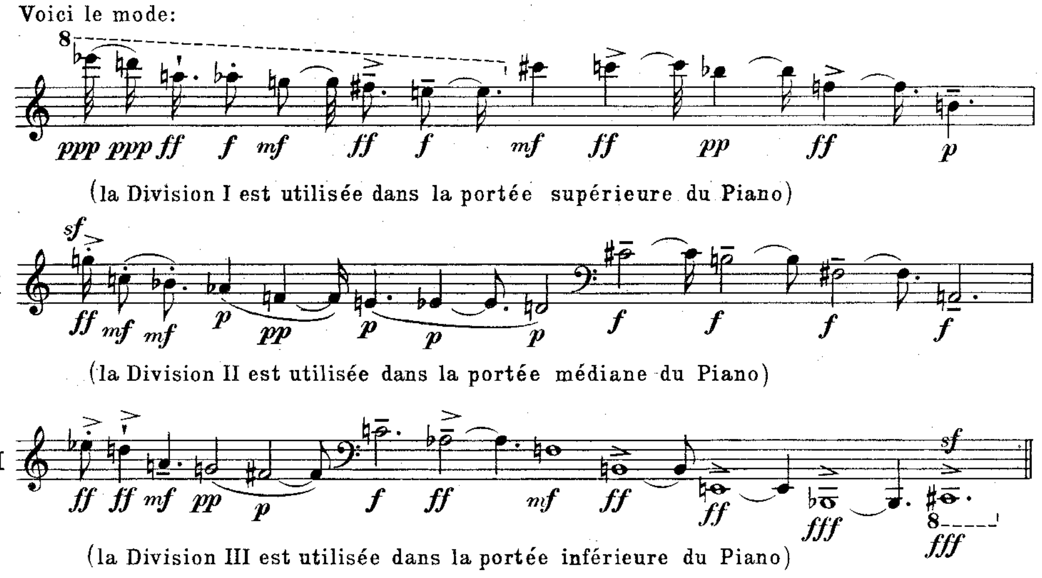

Voici le mode:
I
(la Division I est utilisée dans la portée supérieure du Piano)
II
(la Division II est utilisée dans la portée médiane du Piano)
III
(la Division III est utilisée dans la portée inférieure du Piano)

Figure 3.16 Note rows and dynamic organization outline for Messiaen's *Mode de valeurs et d'intensites*.

According to Forte, Messiaen deliberately avoided using the procedures of the Second Viennese School (Forte, 2002). In contrast to the permutations of classic twelve tone music, Messiaen's patterns are irregular and different from one another. Messiaen uses segments of a modal row (Lee, 1983) giving him more compositional leverage to sculpt the work. As a result a few motifs recur in the same or similar arrangements while only rhythm is altered as can be seen in figure 3.15. It is possibly for this reason that Messiaen called his approach dodecaphonic rather than the less precise serial. In any event, the ordering of pitches was not serial – it was the other parameters that were serialised (Forte, 2002). When Messiaen refers to 'serial organization' and series, he means the four order transformations of the Viennese School dodecaphony: prime, inversion, retrograde and retrograde inversion. Messiaen found the resulting serial music of the Viennese School 'lacking in harmony, too oriented toward individual pitches and in general lacking in colour' (Forte, 2002). Messiaen is also reported to have warned his students against thoughtless and rapid adoption of serialism (Forte, 2002). After developing a method recognised by others to have so much potential, why did Messiaen not pursue dodecaphony further and, as he did not, why did Messiaen enter the serial arena at all? Forte suggests that Messiaen wished to show how serial methods might produce music totally different from the Viennese School – possibly demonstrating an alternative for the younger generation who were so devoted to serialism.

Texturally, *Mode de valeurs* is monodic and pointillistic which gave the work an elegance and clarity which was imitated by Stockhausen in his *Klavierstücke* and by Boulez in his *Structures I*. However in the other etudes of the set, Messiaen also made extensive use of cluster harmonies. In a moment recollecting his schooling in impressionism, he applied a number of his own techniques using subtle colour palettes and gradations of lightness in addition to the dramatic contrasts. He also infused associations with Hindu and other symbolism through the dodeaophony. *Ile de feu I* and *II*, (openings shown in figure 3.17 and 3.18) employ Hindu melodies in extended two-voice passages. While very few of the harmonic structures are tertian, he also used extensive references to bird song, planed untraditional harmonies, superposed quartal and quintal harmonies as well as extended repetition of particular harmonies. He maintained a dramatic contrast of register and texture throughout all the etudes. In this way, Messiaen's etudes, despite huge variety, have a few common traits: the use of extreme ranges in close proximity, dramatic contrasts of texture, economy of material, readily perceivable forms, bird song and tertian and nontertian structures (Lee, 1983).

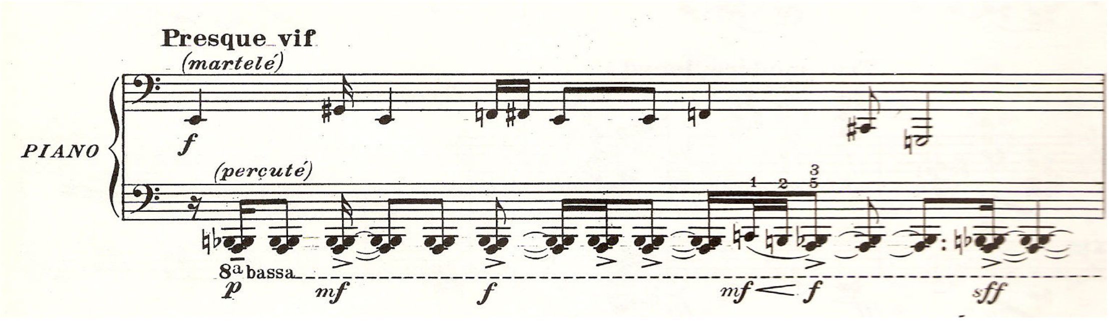


Figure 3.17 Messiaen, *Ile de Feu 1*, bar 1.

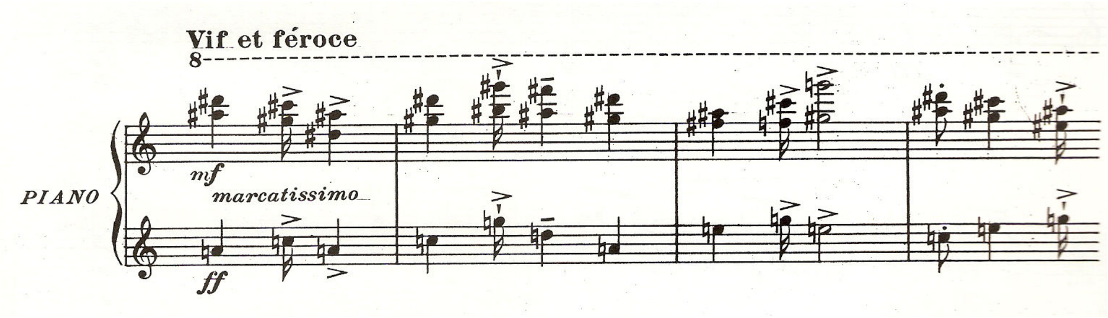


Figure 3.18 Messiaen, *Ile de Feu 2*, bars 1 to 4.

Perhaps the most important recent contribution to the genre of the piano etude was made by Ligeti. On the surface, there do not appear to be many overlaps between Volans's etudes and Ligeti's. Spanning similar time periods, when probed further, it emerges that Ligeti and Volans were grappling with similar artistic dilemmas and their artistic solutions are not as different as they at first appear to be. Both Volans and Ligeti positioned themselves as modernists resisting the post modern pressure to succumb to audience accessibility. However, both Ligeti's and Volans's music, mirroring the tendencies in the wider contemporary music world, did actually soften from uncompromising modernism to a much more approachable, eclectic language. Ligeti's and Volans's shared defensiveness on the issue bespeaks their position: 'My rejection of avant-garde music also lays me open to attacks and accusations of being a postmodernist composer. I don't give a damn' (Ligeti quoted in Searby, 1997: 9).

Despite this, in size, scope and impact, Ligeti's *Etudes* are the weightiest body of keyboard writing of the last fifty years (Holloway, 1989: 55). These monumental works were written across the last twenty years of his life and published in three books in 1985, 1994 and 2006 respectively. They vary widely in character from new extremes of machine-demonism in 'Desordre and Touches bloquees' to lightness and festivity in 'Fanfares' and veins of frank, delicate, sensuality in 'Cordes a vide' and 'Autumne a Varsovie' (Holloway, 1989: 63). Interestingly, the eclectic sound world of the etudes is as much tonal as it is serial. The etudes strike an interesting mixture of influences, being firmly rooted in a European tradition and borrowing liberally from Balkan, African, Brazilian and Caribbean music (Bouliane, 2006: 166) and are also infused with an array of extra-musical scientific, poetic, ethnographical and philosophical influences (Holloway, 1989: 63).

However, while Ligeti's style was perceived to be closely associated with the serial avant-garde during the 1960s, his musical language was much more phenomenological rather than purely theoretical right through this period (Bouliane, 2006: 163). It was during this time that Ligeti developed his highly original form of cultural reference using oblique rather than direct allusions.

His *Six Etudes for piano* of 1985 were composed around the same time as his other intrinsically classical *Trio for Violin, Horn and Piano* and the *Piano Concerto* and were composed with an awareness of the influence of Bartók. Ligeti idolised Bartók throughout his life and considered Bartók's influence returned in the eighties: 'Ever since the early 1980s I have experienced a kind of return to Bartók, especially as far as the Piano Concerto is concerned' (Searby, 1997: 9). Ligeti found the modernist tendency toward pure dissonance created an unnecessarily restricted harmonic palette; including major, minor and diminished chords provided a much more expressive language. In the string, brass and woodwind parts the potential for harmonic colour was enhanced by his use of microtonality or using intervals less than a semitone apart (Searby, 1997: 11). Another characteristic of Ligeti's shift was his return to melody (Searby, 1997: 11). Ligeti's rediscovery of traditional elements of harmony, rhythm, melody and tonal or modal implications was not part of a rediscovery of the past – but rather part of a search for new ways of treating universal elements of music (Searby, 1997: 11). The melody, texture and rhythm in the opening of Ligetti's *Etude 1: Désordre* in figure 3.19 are relatively regular.

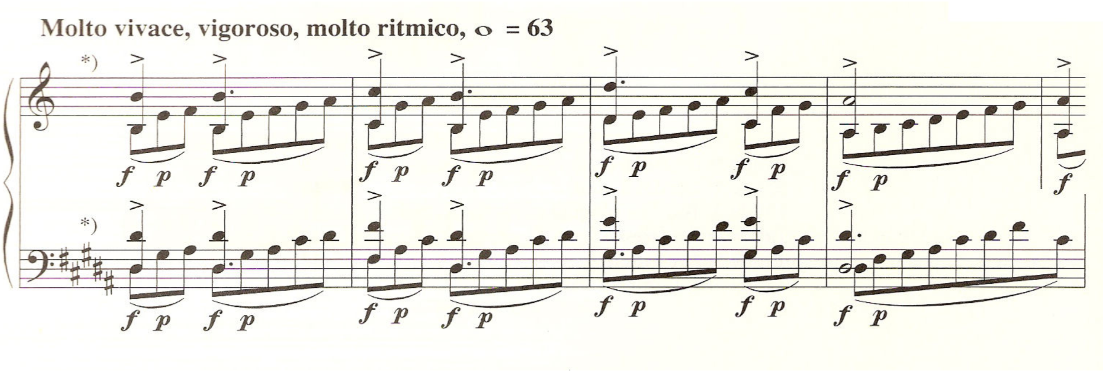


Figure 3.19 Ligeti, *Etude 1: Désordre*, bars 1 to 4.

By contrast, the left hand is playing in a different key signature and the repetition of the ascending scale patterns destabilises any sense of predictability and dispose of any tonal conventions which might otherwise emerge.

Ligeti called the processes of harmonic transformation he used in the etudes ‘constellations of pitches’ (Roig-Francoli, 1995: 242), many behaving symmetrically. Ligeti also worked with organizational processes that can be termed pitch reductions. Pitch reductions of the melodic-harmonic processes reveal the middle ground organization of net-structures (Roig-Francoli, 1995: 243). Ligeti’s net-structures are changed incrementally (Roig-Francoli, 1995: 243), by step-wise voice leading. These constellations of pitch content can be grouped into four distinct types of net-structures: 1) The harmonic process is produced by chromatic fluctuation of melodic microstructure – short melodic patterns moving within a range of six semitones; 2) Chromatic transformation of harmonic cells by means of intervallic expansion or contraction; 3) Chromatic transference of triadic units; 4) Creating net structures based on pitch-static textures which undergo processes of progressive change in dynamics, timbre or rhythm (Roig-Francoli, 1995: 246). This process is clear in the opening of *Etude 2: Cordes à vide* (figure 3.20) where the pitch patterns in the top stave are repeated with slight changes and the left-hand patterns act sequentially, rising a semitone with each repetition.

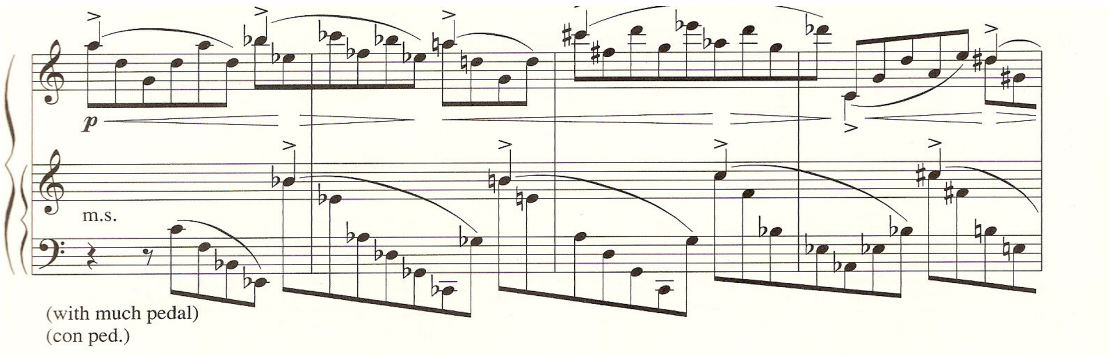


Figure 3.20 Ligeti, *Etude 2: Cordes à vide*, bars 1 to 4.

Ligeti’s etudes are relentlessly virtuosic and there is a sense that Ligeti composed the etudes in direct response to the physical limitations of playing with ten fingers on a keyboard (Bouliane, 2006: 176). Ligeti’s approach to virtuosity is notably different from that of Chopin which Volans seems to emulate – where the goal is for the virtuosity to appear effortless. However, both approaches straddle the limit of possibility of the human body at the instrument. In this regard, Nancarrow pushed beyond the boundary to explore beyond the limitations of the human body.

In the last twenty years, the relationship between the extreme pianist and the composer has resulted in an ever expanding array of piano repertoire. The performers seek the ultimate performance challenge and crave works that surpass the audacity of more established pieces. Audiences respond to, and identify with, the narrative of the virtuoso at the extreme edge of virtuosity. This narrative gives the audience an entry point into works that might otherwise be outside their frame of reference. A core repertoire of contemporary modernist virtuoso piano music has developed. The use of the title 'etude' most strongly evokes the idea of a piece at the edge of possibility – in sympathy with the modernist desire to be at the edge. As the works themselves are positioned right at the edge, the choices the composer makes in their composition reveals what their ideas of the edge of possibility are. This kind of pursuit has been most closely associated with composers of the 'new complexity'. At first glance, Volans' etudes are very different from Nancarrow, Ferneyhough or Ligeti in their sparseness and Volans' choices seem to be leading us in a different direction. The implicit argument in choosing to write etudes with such economical means implies that Volans feels the edge of difficulty at the piano lies elsewhere.

Conlon Nancarrow only became widely known in the 1980s and is best remembered for the pieces he wrote for the player piano. In his player piano pieces he treated musical instruments purely as mechanical machines, writing music for them to play that was far beyond the ability of human performance at the time he was writing. Even before turning to machines, Nancarrow's piano music was at the edge of what was technically possible at the piano. The extreme technical demands it made on players resulted in very rare satisfactory performances of the works. Added to this, Nancarrow lived in Mexico where there were very few musicians who could perform his works, so out of necessity he sought alternative ways of having his pieces performed. His solution, inspired by Cowell's 1939 book *New Musical Resources*, was the player piano. Nancarrow later claimed that if electronic resources had been available to him, he would have probably written music for them but they were not.

Nancarrow undertook to create music with superimposed tempi as is shown in figure 3.21 where the top two staves are given a different tempo marking from the lower two staves. Inspired by Cowell's suggestion that tempo might be graded in a scale in the same manner as pitch, Nancarrow's twenty-first player piano piece employed increasing, decreasing and sliding tempi within strata. Many of Nancarrow's studies are canons in augmentation or diminution in complicated ratios such as e:pi or with up to twelve melodic lines – each moving at a different tempo.

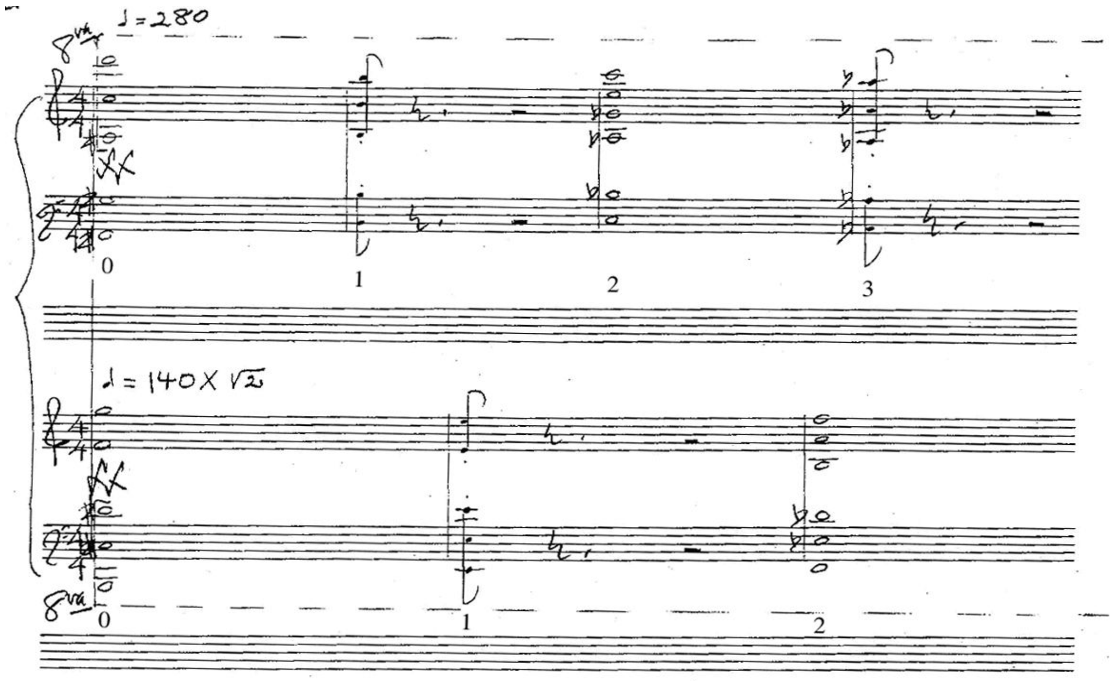


Figure 3.21 Nancarrow, *Piano Study No.33,* opening.

In Nancarrow's canons, pitch, dynamics and ordinary rhythmic techniques are of secondary importance (Jarvlepp, 1984: 218). Within the canons there are specified rates of acceleration and *ritardando* at fixed percentages such as 5%, 6% or 11% creating friction between the voices and temporal complexity (Jarvlepp, 1984: 220). Was Nancarrow's use of the player piano at the expense of a more immediate sense of human physical control or expression? In order to overcome this, Nancarrow altered the player pianos by covering the hammers with leather strips or metal to alter the tone and timbre (Drott, 2004: 534).

The genre of the etude is perhaps most enduringly associated with the notion of complexity. In 'On Complexity', Toop draws a distinction between complexity, difficulty and complication. For Toop, complicated merely reflects on the material substance of a work. A work can be described as complicated without reflecting on its legitimacy or value – the complexity is more of a reflection on the 'muchness' of a work. It may range from a density in the score to the difficulty of the performance, but apart from certain critical connotations, does not express any emotional response to the work. For Toop, the notion of complexity is more subjective and open to interpretation than the notion 'complicated'. Toop distinguished between three forms of difficulty in music: physical and intellectual difficulty in performance, difficulty in composition and in listening.

Sometimes superficially criticised for its excessive complexity, Brian Ferneyhough's hard line modernist music recalls the athletic physical virtuosity of Liszt. Just as the textural complexity of Ligeti's etudes creates layers of surface, middle ground and background, the densities in Ferneyhough's music create similar layers. Characterized by a return to notation and the score, his works include a number of extended playing techniques for the performer – making the pieces notoriously difficult to perform. In his earlier works, these playing techniques articulate the structural processes at the surface level so that the music becomes the 'sediment of these processes' (Toop, 1987: 624). Unlike Nancarrow or Ligeti, Ferneyhough's piano music, for all its gymnastic difficulty is written to sit well under trained fingers. He thinks of the instrument physically and gives primary consideration to the spatial relationships of the performer and his movements. In so doing, the degree of difficulty of the work is 'polyphonicized' together with its performative complexity. In this way, Ferneyhough works with what Boulez called the 'polyphony of polyphonies'. He achieves this through layering strands of activity, creating structures out of the 'intersection, collision, confluence and divergence' of these strands. Each line is entirely independent but not necessarily given equality in the overall texture. Strands and strata are brought in and out of focus through varying any of their parameters. The strata wind through, in and around each other, sometimes disappearing and reappearing. He also uses articulation to shape individual lines at specific points to prevent the overall result from becoming blurred or muddy. Richard Toop describes Ferneyhough's compositional process as more of a labyrinth as opposed to a predetermined path. The results are characteristic, unpredictable twisting and curling lines which form the backbone of his textures such as those at the beginning of *Lema-Icon-Epigram for piano* (figure 3.22).

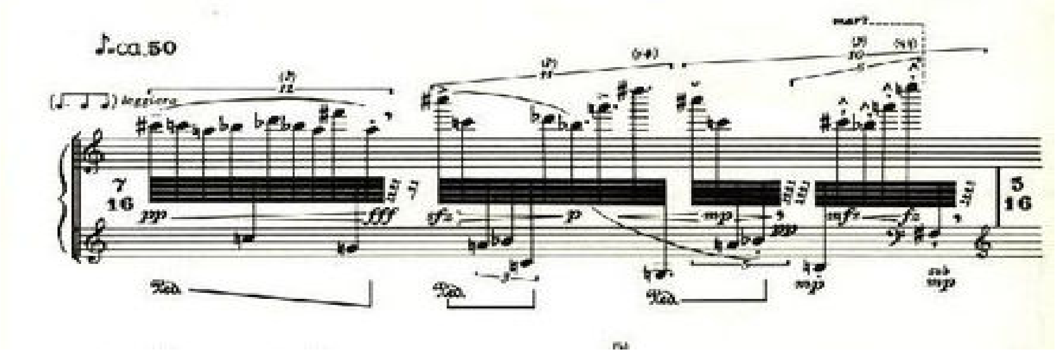


Figure 3.22 Ferneyhough, *Lema-Icon-Epigram for piano*, opening.

Pieces which are less technically difficult to play may be more complex musically and vice versa. For this reason, in discussing virtuosity it is necessary to distinguish between performative and musical difficulty. Often professional musicians who are expected to perform a wide variety of very difficult music on an ongoing basis develop a set of standardised skills to deal with a broad cross-section of music. Out of necessity, performers develop a set of manual patterns which they can use to deal with the majority of works.

However, as a result of the fragmentation of stylistic community in new music, there are very few performance practise techniques to guide the interpretation of new work. Very often performers are reduced to simply putting the right notes in the right place with little sense of a larger perspective of the work which would result in it making more sense. Performers who spend longer periods of intense involvement with particular works in order to penetrate their musical roots may get closer to the composer's mental development.

For Ferneyhough, learning the work is, in his words, an essential polyphonic strand in the final result. He has a general approach that once performers have grown into, if they have spent six months learning a piece, subsequent works fall into place much more easily. While Ferneyhough's scores appear visually highly complex, it is mostly because he has included as much information as possible in the notation to help performers get closer to the musical image. Ferneyhough claims that most of the textures in his pieces are very similar to those in other contexts implying that if a performer is familiar with and recognises the relationship, the music is accessed more quickly. He acknowledges that where his work is different is in the unusual rapidity of the succession of the elements and the high level of informational density. Also, the speed of informational presentation demands a high level of concentration from both the performer and the listener.

Ferneyhough suggests performers deal with the high level of complexity in their music by creating individual insights. He explains that this takes a long time to happen and can only do so when performers allow themselves to be immersed in the complex ambiguity of the piece as an art object. Part of the way this can also happen comes out of the technical problems themselves. Instead of starting with the musical material and letting the performing techniques take care of themselves, Ferneyhough builds the technique into the musical material. He believes in striving to create music so specifically for an instrument that it would be impossible to imagine any other instrument being played in the same way.

György Kurtág's eight volumes of Játékok (Games) for piano adopt a different approach to piano technique from any of the previous examples. Composed between 1973 and the present, they span roughly the same time period as Volans's etudes. They are acutely aphoristic – most are no more than a minute long. This smallness of time-scale heightens the musical and expressive intensity, maximising the impact of every note and every gesture. The title: 'games' deliberately evokes connotations of amusement and spontaneity. According to the composer's instructions, the games are designed to generate the uninhibited spontaneity of an untrained child's playing – a return to treating the piano as a toy. They are about the pleasure of piling up disconnected sounds, finding harmonies by chance and taking joy in freedom of movement (Kurtág, 1979). The opening of *Gyakorlatok, Palm Exercise* from *Játékok 1 for piano* (figure 3.23) consists of nothing but loud, widely dispersed cluster chords which require a great deal of freedom of arm movement so as to be achieved correctly.

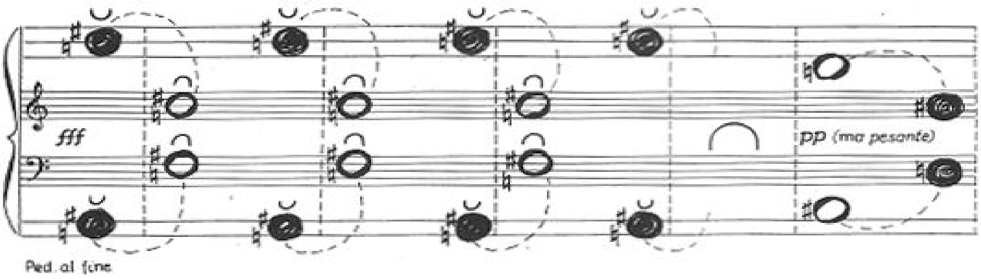


Figure 3.23 Kurtág, *Játékok 1 for piano, Gyakorlatok, Palm Exercise.*

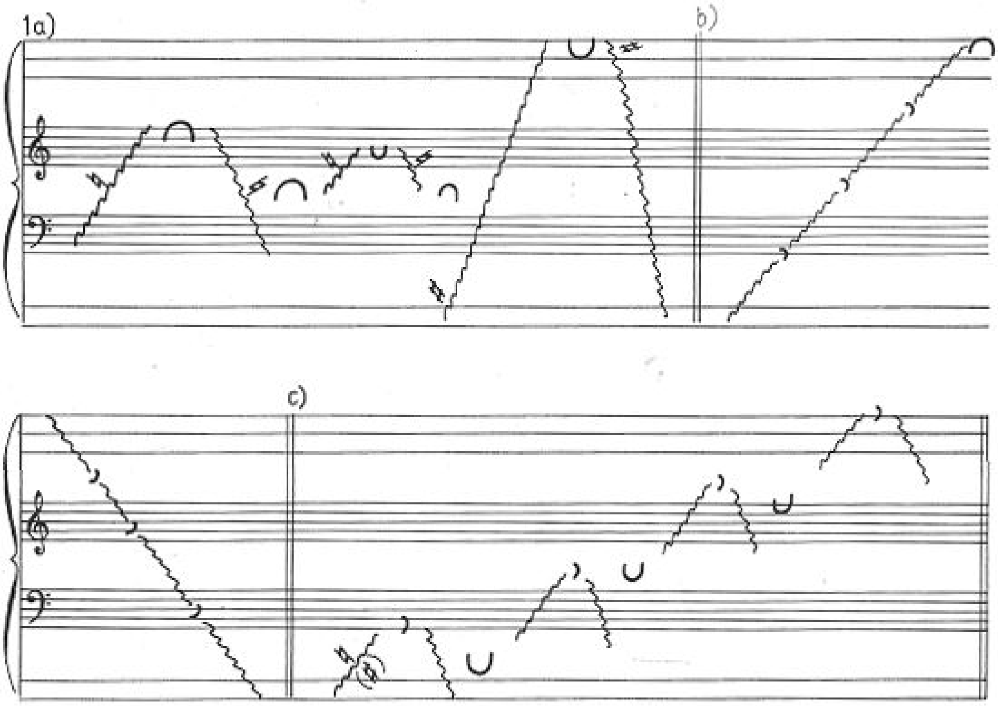


Figure 3.24 Kurtág, *Játékok 1 for piano, Gyakorlatok, Exercises a,b and c.*

In the editorial instructions for the games, Kurtág insists that the series is not intended as a piano tutor or a collection of pieces but rather to facilitate experimentation at the piano. Each piece sends the experimentation in a different direction, bringing slightly different musical, physical and technical issues to the fore. All the pieces are played on the keys themselves not using the inside or other parts of the piano. The scores are graphically notated with a range of symbols for each action. The range of movements required to realise the pieces, include using the palm, the side of the hand, various fist positions, whole arm and elbow movements and single finger percussive movements. This range of movements removes the pianist from the patterns programmed into their fingers and highlights aspects of playing that may ordinarily be overlooked. For example, the angle of the body and its weight are much more conspicuous when playing with the arm. Also, the speed of the key descent is much more prominent when using the palm. By abstracting movements this way, the pianist can heighten their awareness of individual mechanisms and action involved in playing the piano. For example: in *Gyakorlatok, Exercises a,b and c* (figure 3.24) the pianist's attention needs only be focussed on the speed and angle of the rotation of the arm to achieve the required glissandos.

In their concern with technique the *Játékok* share much in common with etudes. Their construal of virtuosity, however, is unlike any of the examples cited so far. In most cases, etudes set out to build a stock of technical armoury to tackle standard repertoire of the time. By contrast, the *Játékok* seek to avoid the weight of history of the instrument by forcing the pianist to step outside of the idiomatic way of playing. Kurtág's interpretation of virtuosity is about discovering new ways of moving the body at the instrument and not reinforcing or building on existing habits. Rather than deepening the pianist in technical 'ruts', they are designed to promote a flexible understanding of technique and actively encourage new and creative technical solutions.

The above data is a tiny sampling from the repertoire in the genre of the etude. The author's research criteria for selecting the particular examples cited above is largely subjectively based on those which the author is most aware of as a pianist, and those which the literature the author has used highlight as being important examples. The author's intention is in no way to depict the issues which were most pressing to Volans in his interpretation of the genre. In the context of a Foucauldian genealogy, the goal would not necessarily be to trace influence in Volans's etudes. Instead, for the analysis, the author would like to use the gathered range of factors related to etudes to construct a network of conventions for the genre.

In summary, in reviewing the above data sampling, the following significant conventions which exist in the genre can be deduced. From the outset the genre dealt with juggling, separating and bringing together the technical, musical and instrumental components. Over time these issues shifted and evolved resulting in the more diverse mix of interpretation possible in the 21st century. The problems raised by the genre are now quite different from those at the beginning of the 19th century. From the above data, the following current issues remain important within the genre. Firstly, the legacy of Liszt of exploring the relationship between the body and instrument is still critically relevant. The ultimate consummation of this relationship is the union of body and musical image. In Liszt's technique, this is where the hand and arm are taken both as departure points for the composition and where the tonal image generates the body movements of the player.

The next area of focus, as seen in Debussy and Messiaen, is that of exploring the technical, colouristic and sonorous effects unique to the instrument – to the extent that they may not be imaginable on any other instrument. Serialism also broadened the genre to incorporate the setting of technical figures in novel compositional schemes – even to the point of form being intricate at the level of detail in the relationship between pitches. More recently, Ligeti's etudes have shown how the genre accommodates the inclusion of scales and modes to evoke the music of non-western cultures – most subtly through oblique modal references. Subsequently, Ferneyhough sought to heighten the complexity by weaving unprecedented strands and strata of activity into the fabric of the music – to the point where learning the work becomes a strand in the polyphony of the work and 'playing' is a process of exploration and discovery. Most notably, in the work of Ligeti, Ferneyhough and Kurtág, we see the genre used as a way of reconciling modernist values within a postmodern context. In these cases the genre has offered an opportunity, through the highlighting of technique, of working as purely within the medium itself as is possible. By comparing Volans's etudes with these more extreme responses of the genre, the question emerges: what do Volans's etudes offer the genre? It may be safe to assume that the original function of the etude as serving to programme patterns into pianist's fingers through repetition, is not an objective since Volans sought to rid himself of clichéd figuration in writing them. Are they a set of etudes only by name and only in the sense of being very difficult to play or do they encourage dialogue and engage with the issues raised by other works in the genre?

CHAPTER FOUR
AN OVERVIEW OF KEVIN VOLANS PIANO ETUDES

Since childhood, Volans has been a pianist and has performed many pieces written for the piano. In writing the etudes, Volans consciously chose to avoid the patterns programmed into his fingers. One of the ways he sought to do this was to use material originally conceived for other instruments and ensembles (Rörich, 2005: 155). As a result, large tracts of the etudes are transcriptions of material from Volans's previous work. In his programme notes for the premiere of the first six, Volans describes the etudes as a mini-museum of his work spanning 25 years. The intention of this chapter is to broadly outline the sources of Volans's ideas for each etude. This involves examining the individual characteristics of each etude but also tracing where the material overlaps into other works. The hope is that examining the etudes with an awareness of the intertexual effects of Volans's use of transcription and paraphrase, would shed more light on the ongoing artistic vision that produced them.

While it might be argued that Volans' use of transcription in the etudes was to save time and effort in writing them, there are several reasons this should be dismissed. Firstly, Volans has used various forms of transcription of his own and other's work extensively throughout his career. His revisiting of material is not confined to his piano writing and occurs throughout his oeuvre in many different kinds of instrumentation. He has used transcription so widely and so distinctively that it could be argued as forming one of his central compositional procedures. Most controversially, the *African Paraphrases* from the early 1980s, such as *White Man Sleeps* (1986) contain transcriptions of and borrowings from African music. Secondly, Volans's careful and highly detailed handling of the material, suggests a level of compositional engagement that begs enquiry. Thirdly, the etudes are not 'arrangements' of other works. They are presented as works in their own right, and demand to be heard as such.

Christine Lucia showed the extent of interconnection and quotation within Volans's string quartets in her article 'The Landscape Within' (Lucia, 2009). In her essay, Lucia found that the interconnectedness of the string quartets made it possible to think of all ten quartets as one whole rather than a grouping of separate pieces. By treating the set as a whole, Lucia uncovered how ideas in earlier quartets were manipulated quite similarly to the ways they were controlled in later works. She found that these similarities did not, in her opinion, undermine the originality of the newer pieces – once the material has been reworked in different contexts the pieces are quite different. Lucia felt that Volans's obsessive refining of the same material revealed an underlying integrity of vision that he has pursued for the last thirty years – the paring down of content to its barest, clearest and most economical means. By framing the quartets as a whole, Lucia was able to equate the various borrowings, reworkings and quotations in the works as a manifestation of a larger theme in Volans's output – that of finding the ultimate realisation of the material. However, in addition to her conclusion, Lucia's findings on Volans's use of transcription raise a number of central ideological questions.

Has his reworking of old material contributed toward or hindered the creation of completely 'new' music? By deliberately engaging with transcription and paraphrase, Volans has consciously taken an intertextual position in relation to each work and more broadly to issues of authorship – how does this affect how the individual works can be analysed? How strictly should the etudes be treated as a set? Does he distinguish between borrowing from himself and borrowing from other music – particularly from other cultural contexts?

In some ways, Volans's use of transcription recalls his pianistic hero Liszt's copious transcriptions for piano – a practice which flourished in the 19th century. However, there were implicit conventions in the 19thcentury practise of transcription that underline Liszt's intention to realise or even summarise works in a pianistic idiom rather than create entirely new works. It would seem that Volans' intention is to reinvent the material in an entirely different setting. Lucia's article demonstrated the extent of the interdependence within Volans's string quartets and the etudes show the same potential. One wonders at this point whether it is possible for listeners and performers to gain a full experience of the music and its intent without being aware of the genesis of the material in other works.

The following table is a summary of the interconnectedness of the material in the etudes with other works in Volans's oeuvre. The middle column shows the sources from which the etudes were directly transcribed. The right hand column indicates other works which were written using the same or very similar material. While Etudes 7 and 9 found their first form as etudes, Volans used a transcription of Etude 7 as part of his Ninth String Quartet, a work which also bears many resemblances to Etude 9.

Piano Etude	**Primary source for material**	**Other pieces with related material**
Etude 1 (2003)	• *AmaHubo* (anthems) by Khabi Mngoma • *L'homme Aux*	• 2nd movement from *String Quartet no.2* (1988 rev. 1993)

	Semmelles (1988 - 1993)	• *String Quartet no.3* (1988) • Etude 3 • *This Is How It Is* (1996)
Etude 2 (2003)	• *Things I Don't Know* (1997-8)	• *Ninth String Quartet: Shiva Dances* (2008)
Etude 3 (2003)	• *Journal* (1984) • *Cello Concerto* (1997)	• *String Quartet 3* (1988)
Etude 4 (2004)	• *Guitar Quartet* (2004)	
Etude 5 (2004)	• *Monkey Music* (1976)	
Etude 6 (2004)	• *One Hundred Frames* (1991)	• *Correspondences* (dance piece) (1994) • *String Quartet no.4* • *Blue, Yellow* (dance film) (1995)
Etude 7 (rev.2003)		• *Ninth String Quartet: Shiva Dances* (2008)
Etude 8 (1988)	• *Movement for String Quartet* (1987)	
Etude 9 (2008)		• *Ninth String Quartet: Shiva Dances* (2008

(Sourced from Rörich 2005, Lucia 2009 and author's interview with the composer 2007)

The relationship between Etude 1 and *The Man with Footsoles of Wind*

The first etude is transcribed from sections of Volans's opera: *The Man with Footsoles of Wind* (1988-1993). It is the only etude of the set to have been conceived vocally, and as a result is the only one in which the pianistic texture is mostly melody and accompaniment, albeit somewhat fragmented. The transcription of the pianistic material is very similar to its source and as such recreates the character and mood of the opera very closely. Volans deliberately preserves the narrative drive of the opera in this etude and in so doing maintains the intertextual links with the opera.

The idea for an opera was first suggested by Volans's friend, the travel writer, Bruce Chatwin. His idea was to write an opera about the death of the 19thcentury French adventurer, Arthur Rimbaud. While there are many parallels between the lives of Volans, Chatwin and Rimbaud, the most noticeable resemblance is between Chatwin and Rimbaud, particularly since Chatwin forwarded the suggestion for the opera soon before his own death in 1989. It is described on the score as 'an imaginary conversation on an imaginary journey' (Chester, 1993: 1) and Roger Clarke's libretto drew heavily on Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell*, Rimbaud's own poetic premonition of his later wanderings in Ethiopia. The connections between the opera and the etude are very strong, largely due to Volans's direct quotations. The sense of journey so pronounced in the first etude strongly evokes a sense of the wandering nomad, reflecting back to Rimbaud.

The opening of the etude is transcribed from the middle of the opera's first scene. In the opera, the chords, spread across the brass, woodwind and strings, signal the entry of Arthur's mother. The dark ambiguity in the colouring of the chords, enhanced by trombones and bass clarinets in the lower registers depicts the conflict of emotions between the characters. The repetitive, angular chords heighten the tension of the scene, adding a sense of unease and danger.

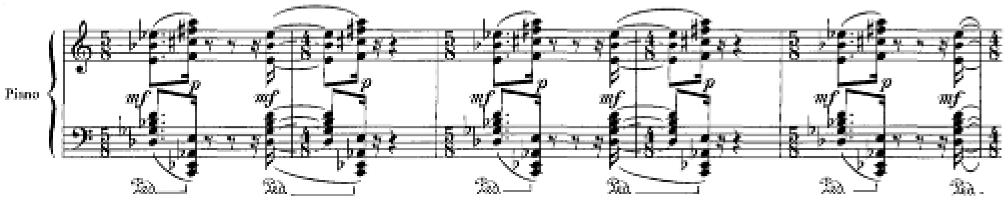


Figure 4.1 Etude 1, bars 1 to 5.

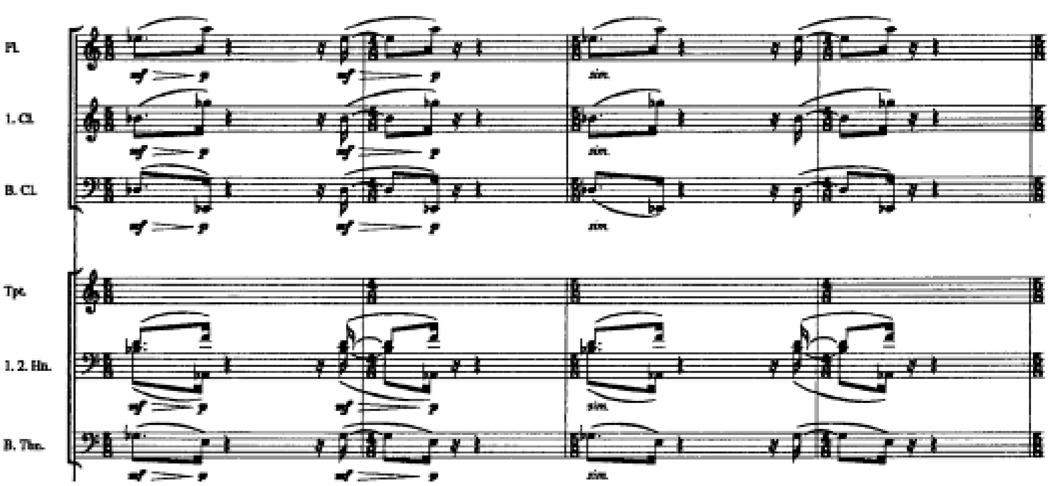


Figure 4.2 Brass and woodwind from bars 285 to 288 - Act 1 Scene 1 of *The Man with Footsoles of Wind* (1993).

This scene is set in July 1891 in Arthur's mother's farmhouse in Roche, France. Two months earlier, Arthur's right leg had been amputated in a hospital in Marseilles to prevent what his doctors thought was synovitis from spreading. Sadly, the misdiagnosis was only uncovered after the operation. It was probably cancer and it had already spread. In this scene Arthur is ill in bed and is being tended by his sister Isabella. Arthur sings alone for eight bars expressing his irrational fear that his mother has come to kill him. This melody appears in the piano etude in bar eight.

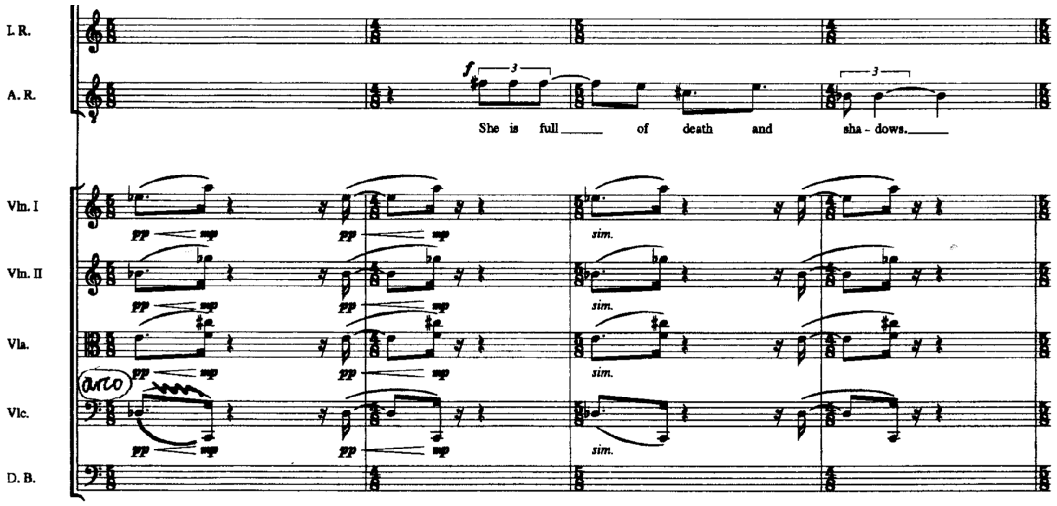


Figure 4.3 Arthur's entry from bars 285 to 288 - Act 1 Scene 1 of *The Man with Footsoles of Wind* (1993).

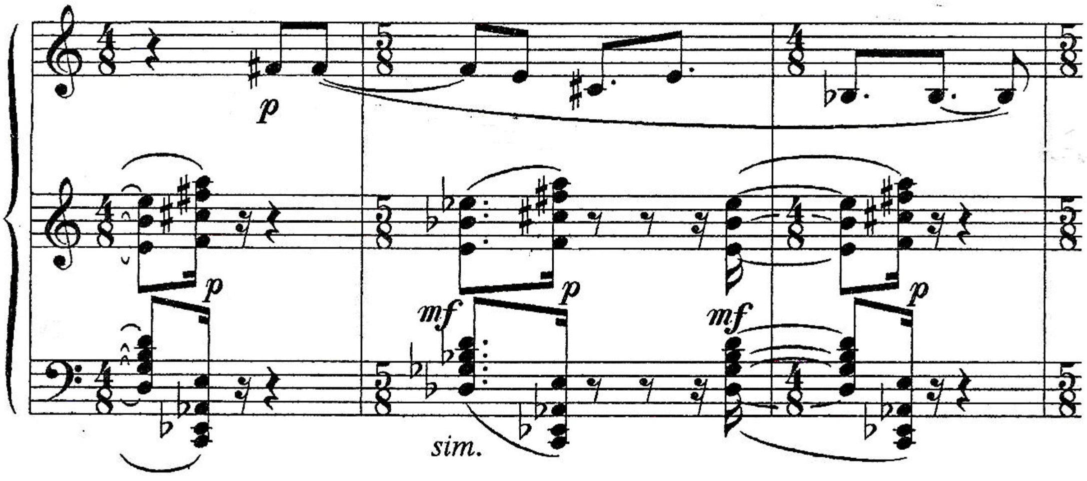


Figure 4.4 Corresponding melody from Etude 1, bars 8 to 10.

A trio between Arthur, his sister and mother ensues, contrasting the three characters' viewpoints contrapuntally. The three melody lines of the trio are reduced to a single line in the piano etude, although by comparing it with the three separate lines in the opera, the horizontal layering of its construction is made much more obvious as a compound melody.

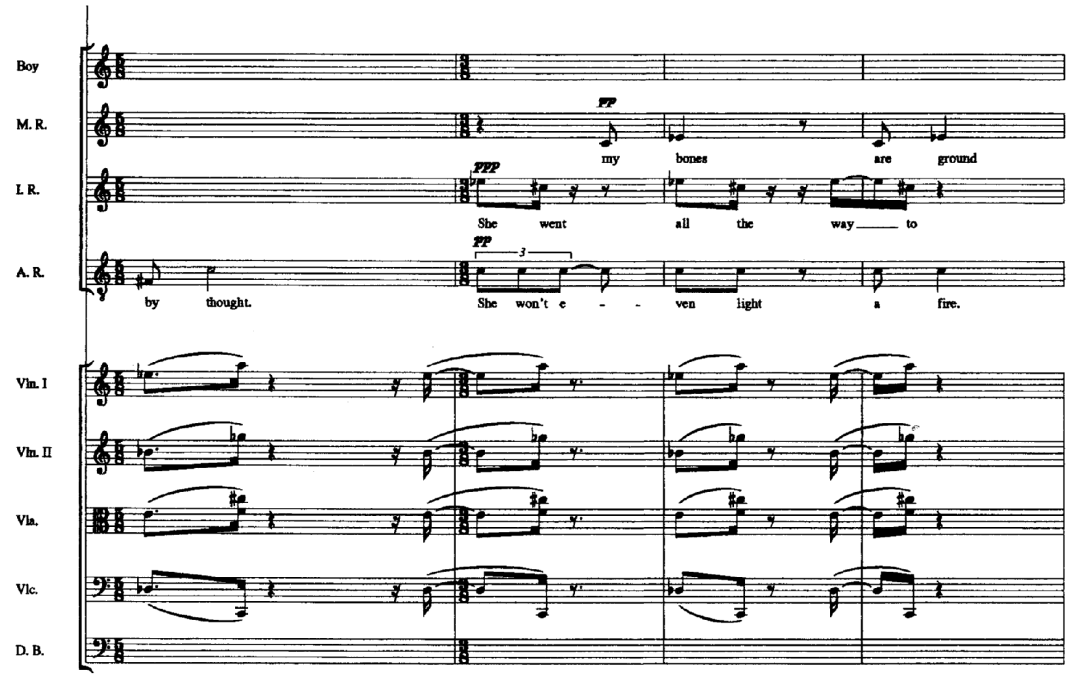

Boy
M. R.
I. R.
A. R.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vlc.
D. B.
pp
my bones are ground
ppp
She went all the way to
pp
3
by thought.
She won't e - - ven light a fire.

Figure 4.5 Trio from bar 293 to 296 from Act 1 Scene 1 of *The Man with Footsoles of Wind* (1993).

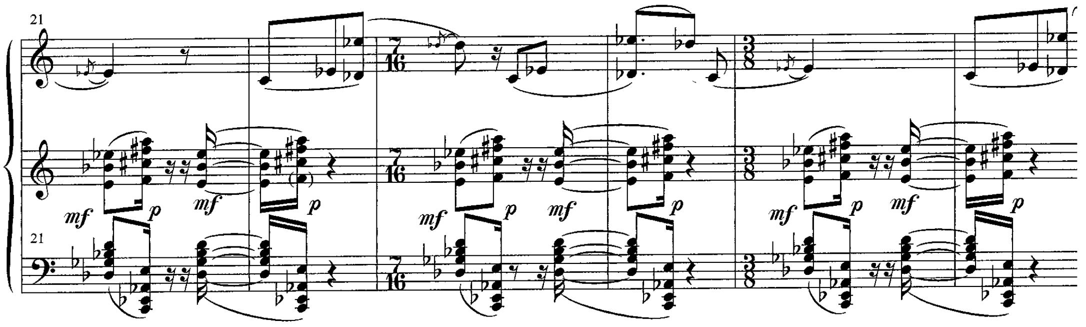

21
mf
p
mf
p
21

Figure 4.6 Trio transcribed for piano from bar 21 to 26 of Etude 1.

The opera assumes that the audience is familiar with the details of Rimbaud's life and some background information may be required to understand the conflict between the characters in this scene. The untamed Rimbaud is racked with frustration at being physically confined. During the 1880s Rimbaud had traded and travelled extensively through Ethiopia, Yemen and Egypt and was the first documented European to explore Ogaden in Somali Ethiopia. Mostly he walked ahead of his caravans, covering thousands of kilometres by foot. He had few possessions, never held a steady job nor lived anywhere for more than a short period. While he had turned his back on poetry when he was 21, he nevertheless spoke more than eight languages and had an intimate knowledge of the cultures he encountered on his travels. In his incapacitated state, he resents his mother's judgement: 'She is full of death and shadows. She is trying to kill me, by thought'.

Madame Rimbaud is a strictly religious and conservative woman who has long been offended by her son's provocative behaviour. Rimbaud, in life and poetry, rebelled against social and religious authority, restraints on sexual expression, materialism and all forms of tyranny (Peschel, 1973: 252). According to legend, he was the original 'born to be wild', room-trashing, drinking, 'drug taking rock star personality' (Merkin, 2003: 45). For Rimbaud, rebellion was the first step toward poetic expression. While he abandoned writing poetry early on, in retrospect, we can see how fervently he believed in free expression, imagination and inspiration his whole life. These beliefs found expression in his poetry and life, dramatically and sometimes violently (Peschel, 1973: 252) in comments such as 'morality is a weakness of the brain' (Merkin, 2003: 47). In this scene in Volans's opera, Madamme Rimbaud is totally disillusioned by the person her son has become: 'A mother of a monster still; is mother not by choice; my brood a nest of vipers; I rue the noon day when I first spawned a sad tomorrow'.

Isabella Rimbaud, in her attempts to mediate between her mother and brother, reveals a degree of naïvety about the flaws in their relationship but also her desire for reconciliation between them: 'Calm yourself Arthur. She went all the way to Charleville to buy you blankets, almonds'; 'Maman, let go your hopes, your unvoiced fears. See your son as he truly is. He loves you well, as you love him. How can you deny him?'

The melodic entry in bar 8 of the etude is taken directly from Arthur's vocal line. This single melody line continues until bar 19 when Isabella and Madame Rimbaud's melody lines are superimposed in the piano etude. In both the opera and the etude the melodies, while conveying severely contrasting and emotive text, are similar in shape and texture, and all very quiet in dynamic. The steady, regular melodic rhythm of all three lines resembles the rhythm and curve of speech but their quietness and smoothness does not seem to express the extreme emotions reflected in the text. The concurrent melody lines seem more to mask the characters' emotions than reveal them. In this regard, the agitated accompaniment betrays the strident emotion beneath the surface of the action. The unsettling accompaniment halts for ten bars in the opera leaving the vocal parts exposed, and surprisingly tender – the emotions totally removed from the action. The same happens in bar 43 of the etude although it is compressed to five bars. Thereafter, until bar 82, the etude consists of a more summarised version of the operatic material. Arthur dies at the end of the first act.

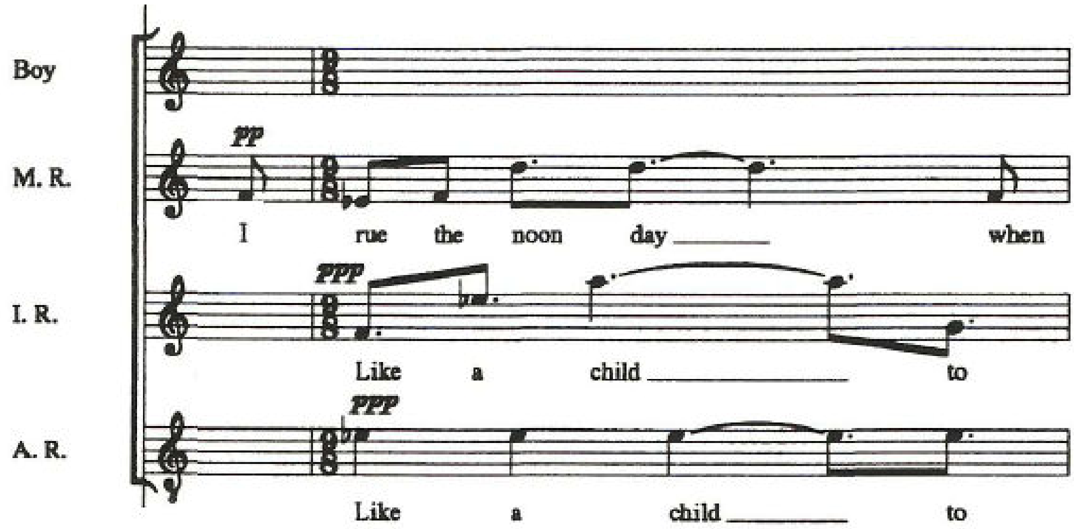

Boy
M. R.
I. R.
A. R.
pp
ppp
I rue the noon day when
Like a child to
Like a child to

Figure 4.7 Vocal trio from bars 312 -313 from Act 1 Scene 1 of *The Man with Footsoles of Wind* (1993).

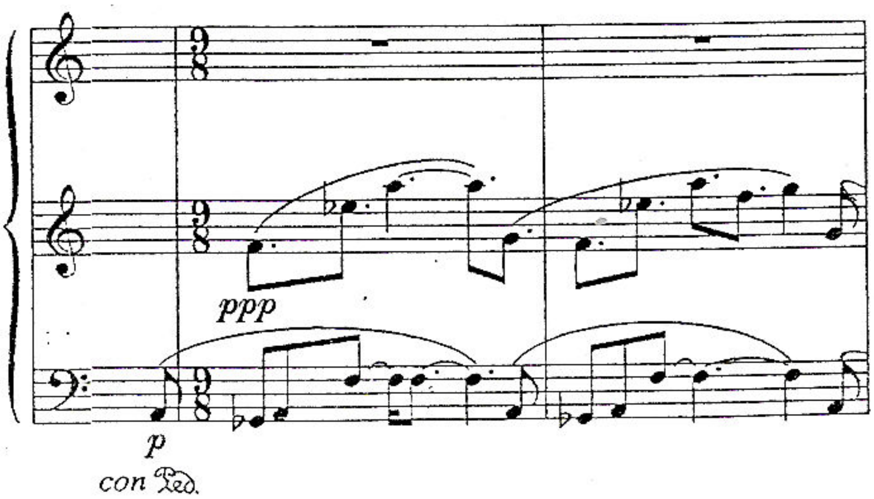

ppp
p
con Ped.

Figure 4.8 Piano setting of corresponding section in Etude 1, bars 42-44.

Bar 83 and onward, is taken from the second act of the opera. Arthur is in the Ethiopian desert with his servant Djami on a long journey. The nature of the action suggests it is taking place in Arthur's imagination – possibly a memory of a previous journey. In this scene, Arthur and Djami are trudging through the desert, wilting in the heat. The regular, repeated fifths suggests the monotony of their footsteps and the text evokes imagery from Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell*. Arthur and Djami sing very slow, plateau-like phrases over the pizzicato viola fifths.

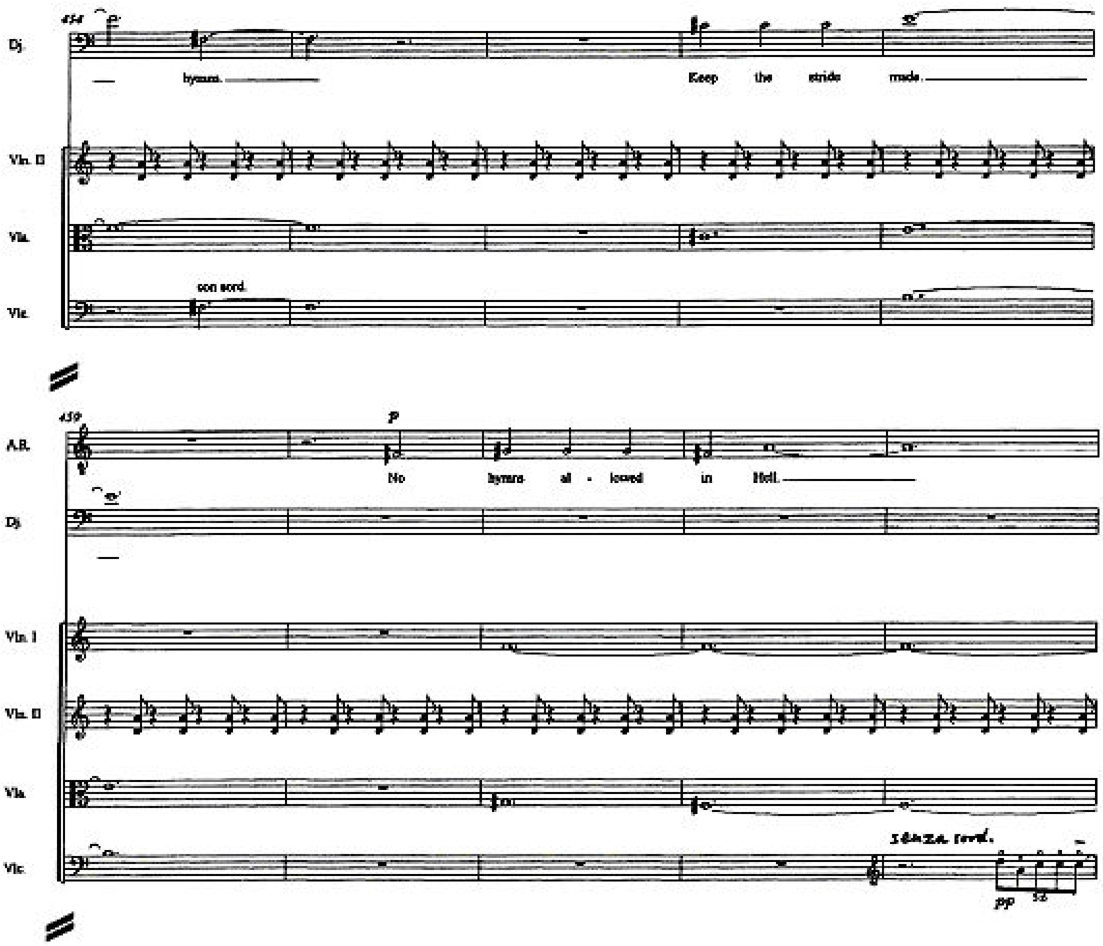

454
Dj.
hymns.
Keep the stride made.
Vln. II
Vla.
con sord.
Vlc.
459
A.R.
p
No hymns al - lowed in Hell.
Dj.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vlc.
senza sord.
pp

Figure 4.9 Arthur and Djami in the desert, bars 454 to 463 from Act 2 of *The Man with Footsoles of Wind* (1993).

There is far less singing in the second act with vast tracts of instrumental music between the vocal content. The material from bar 83 of the etude is transcribed from bar 452 to the end of Act 2 in bar 626. The etude is an exact piano reduction apart from the small omission of bar 474 to 488 of the opera. Arthur and Djami sing until bar 539 and are silent thereafter. Arthur's text at that point is 'I am leaving Europe' and it corresponds with the change in texture in bar 157 of the etude.

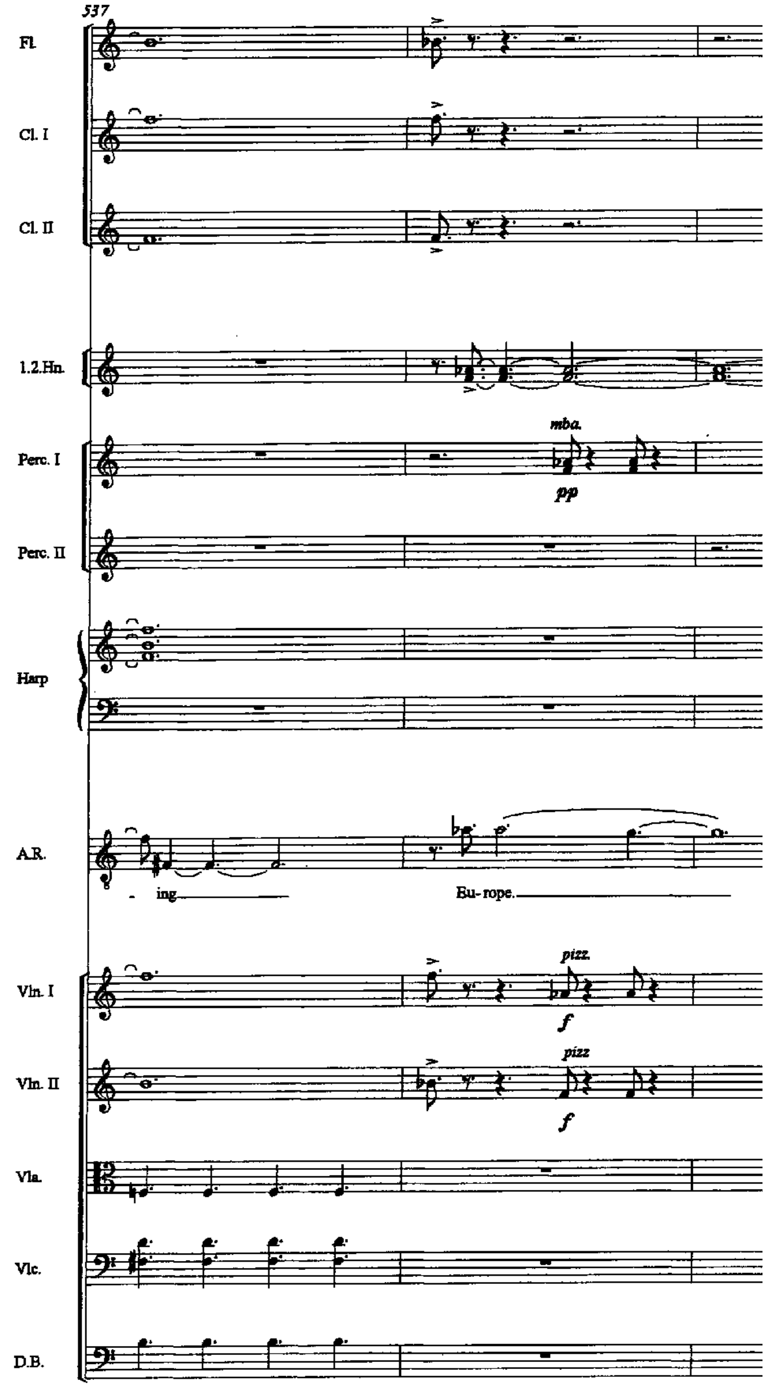

537
Fl.
Cl. I
Cl. II
1.2.Hn.
Perc. I
mba.
pp
Perc. II
Harp
A.R.
- ing
Eu-rope.
Vln. I
pizz.
f
Vln. II
pizz
f
Vla.
Vlc.
D.B.

Figure 4.10 End of Arthur's line bars 537 to 538 from Act 2 of *The Man with Footsoles of Wind* (1993) (written in C).

The orchestration plays a vital role in the textural organization of the opera, bringing clarity to thickly textured sections. Comparing the orchestration with the piano etude reveals the components of its construction. Between bars 110 and 114 of the etude a typically contrapuntal network of overlapping melodies switches from the top stave to the middle stave. In the opera, both bars are carried by two clarinets. The parts are continued without a break, lending the melodies a flow not immediately clear in the piano version.

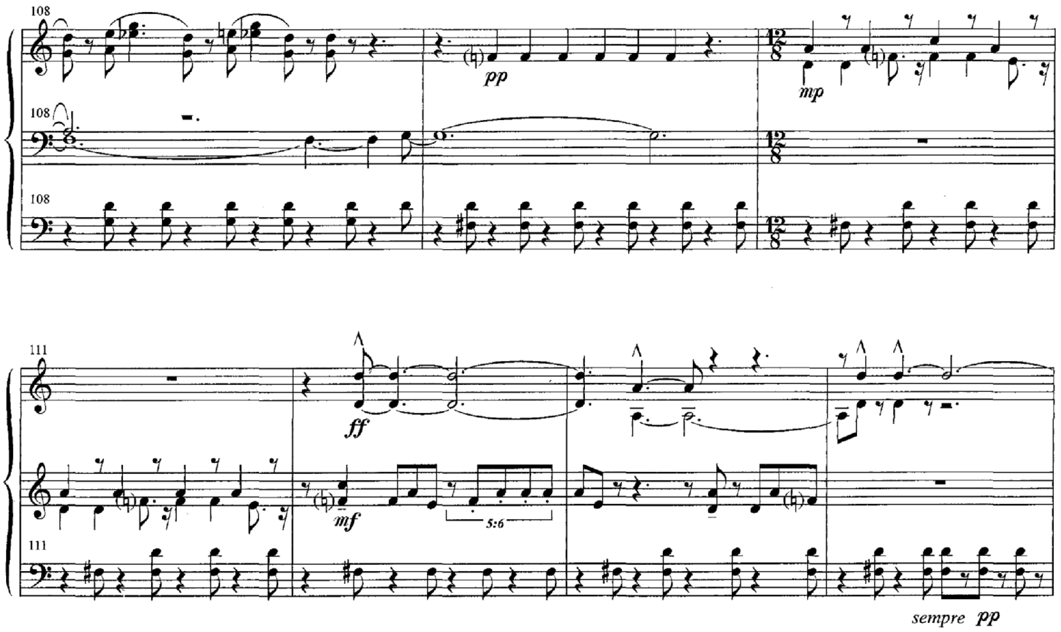

108
pp
mp
111
ff
mf
5:6
sempre pp

Figure 4.11 Overlapping parts in Etude 1, bars 108 to 114.

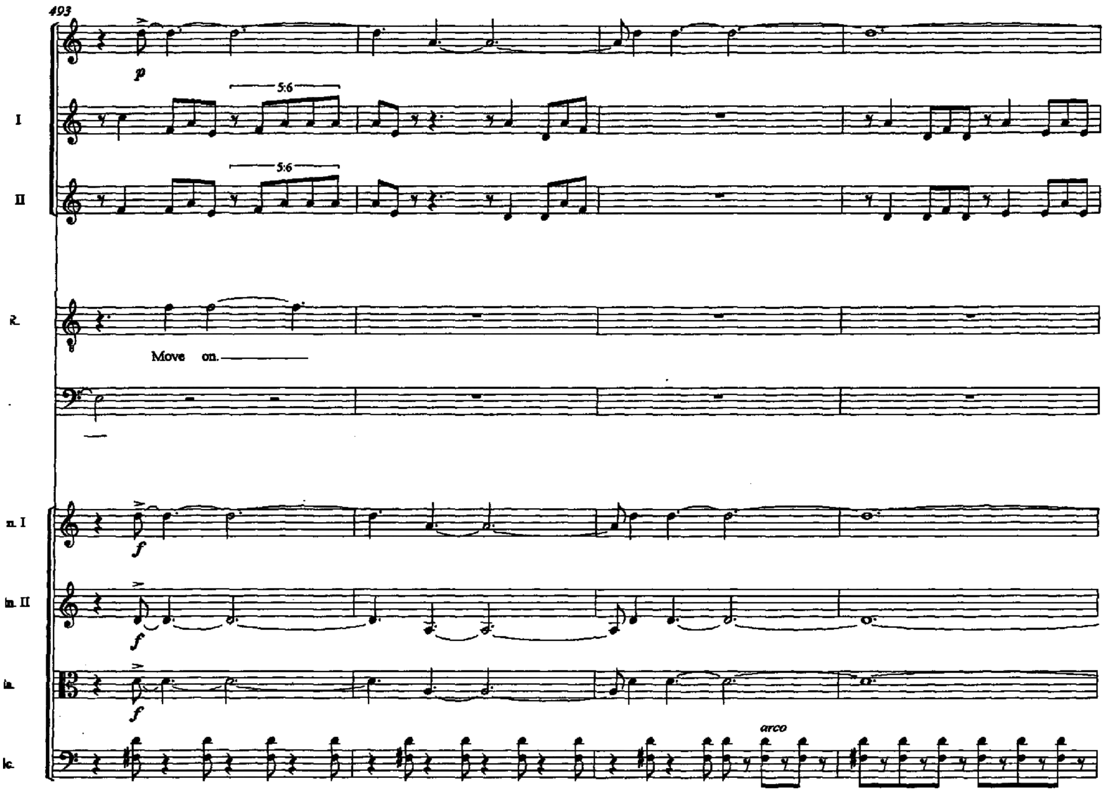

493
p
5:6
I
II
Move on.
f
arco

Figure 4.12 Corresponding overlapping parts in the opera, bars 489 to 496 (written in C).

Resonance and sparseness: Etude 2

The second piano etude is taken from the last 8 minutes of a computer piece Volans wrote in 1998 entitled *Things I Don't Know*. *Things I Don't Know* was commissioned by the avant-garde British choreographer Jonathan Burrows, whose style has both classical, folk and postmodern influences and is characterized both by its humour and being uncompromisingly sparing in its use of elements (Bremser, 1999: 47). Volans's piano etude adaption of the work is also uncompromisingly sparing in its use of material. Volans claims that the intention of the etude was for the pianist to balance very different dynamic layers and to achieve 'resonance' at every dynamic level (Volans, 2007). Written over three staves, the work consists of sustained intervals, mostly tenths and ninths, and requires the middle, sostenuto pedal to sustain the notes correctly. The etude begins with two bars of repeated single notes that do not appear anywhere else in the piece.

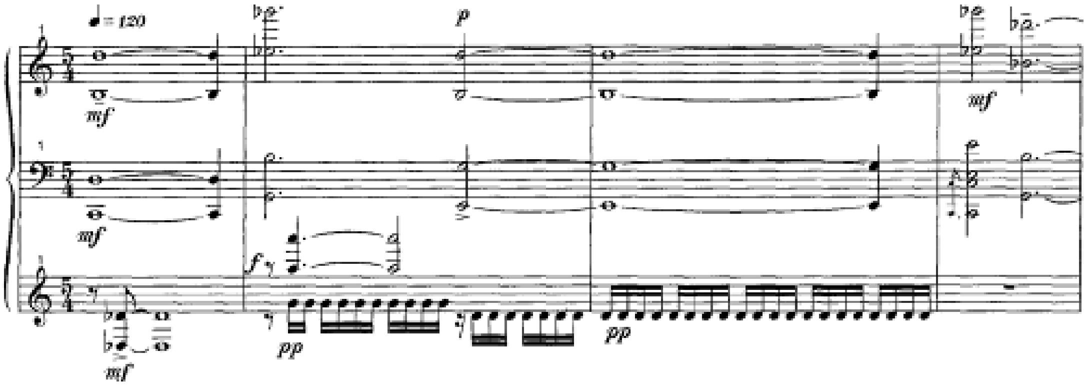


Figure 4.13 Repeated notes in the first bars of Etude 2.

There are small areas of melodic material in the bottom stave but they are diluted by the washes of resonance from the intervals. Volans claims the work was written intuitively (Volans, 2007) so there are no clear breaks or boundaries in the structure of this work – it unfolds along an uninterrupted continuum. There is also very little evidence of either development of material or any conspicuous sense of direction. That is not to say that the work has no shape. The structure of the piece emerges out of the shaping of the dynamic layers and the scope of the intervals across an aural plane. By eschewing large scale structure, the form of the work is localised – to the point of two and three interval groupings. The shape of the work emerges from a series of two and three note groupings intervals.

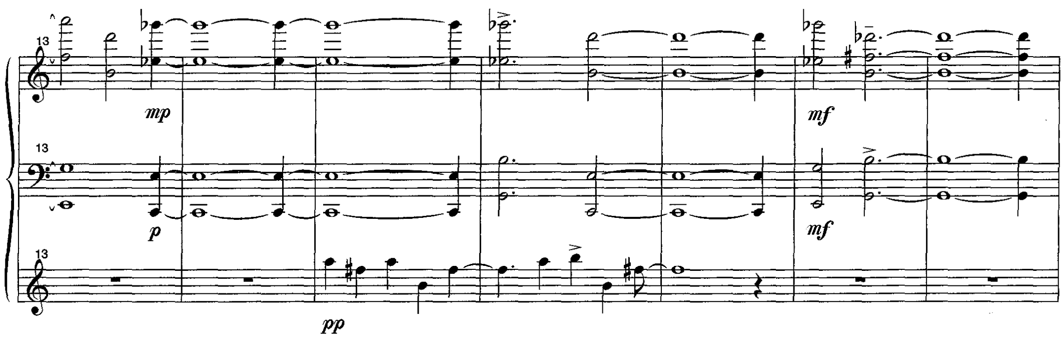


Figure 4.14 A three bar melody appears in the lowest stave from bar to 17 of Etude 2.

Etude 3: Pushing the limits of virtuosity

According to Volans (Interview, 2005) the third etude is the most difficult of the etudes to play. It requires a speed and agility in the traditional 19thcentury approach to the piano. The etude begins with enormous gymnastic leaps reminiscent of Liszt's *La Campanell*a (Rörich, 2005: 156), Volans's tongue-in-cheek representation of one of the genre's obvious connotations: 'My piece has humorous references to an etude having huge leaps' (Rörich, 2005: 156). However, the irony of this reference masks Volans's more complex goal of finding new ways of achieving resonance on the piano (Volans, 2007).

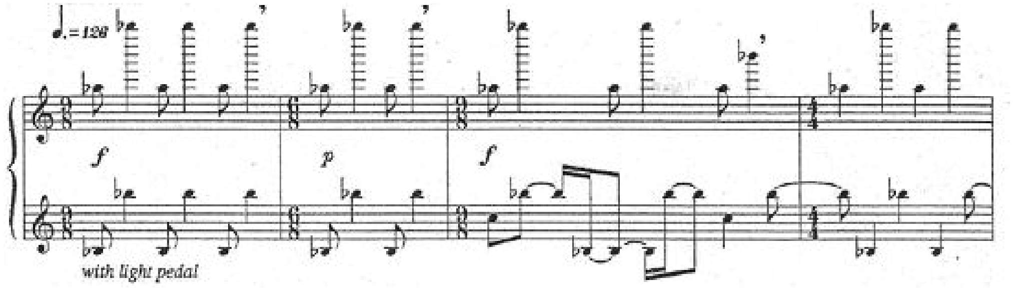


Figure 4.15 Wide leaps in the opening of Etude 3, bars 1 to 4.

The conventional manner by which composers increase resonance on the piano is through doubling or repeating notes at the octave. The task Volans set for himself in this part of the etude was to 'write patterns repeated at the octave which are not tonal' (Interview, 2006). In the second part of the etude the difficulty changes from the wide jumps to an uninterrupted stream of repeated semiquavers for the left hand.

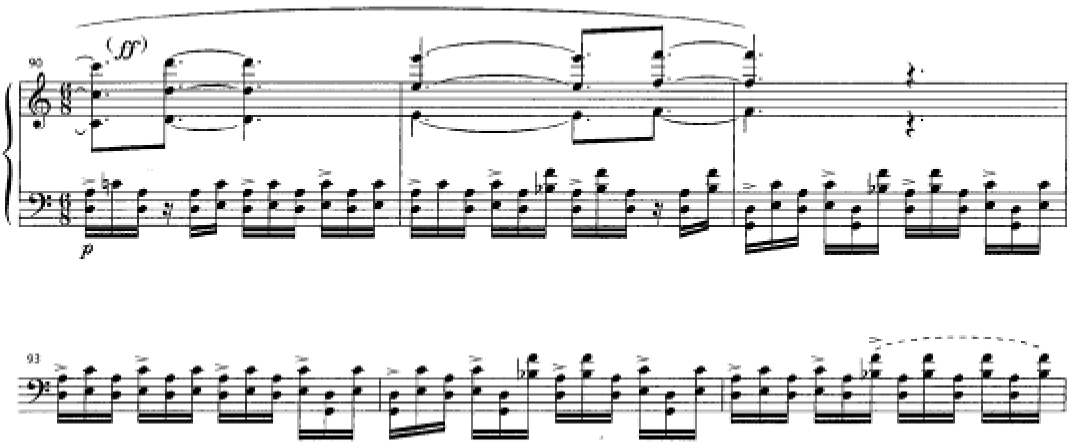


Figure 4.16 Semiquaver left-hand passages Etude 3, bars 90 to 95.

The difficulty of the perpetual repetition is multiplied through the use of unpredictable alternating intervals of a fourth, fifth and sixth in one hand. Further on, in addition to maintaining the flow of the semiquavers, the left hand regularly darts out to play a slow series of widely spaced loud chords, introducing another layer of melody in the lower registers. These wide chords suit big hands and massive amounts of weight to achieve the solid blocks of sound they require. For most of the rest of the etude, the pianist is balancing three or four melodic layers simultaneously.

The abovementioned, contrasting, exercises in virtuosity were conceived in very different settings. Volans transcribed the etude from two separate earlier works, written thirteen years apart. The first 76 bars of this piece were taken from *Journal*, a work for twelve players – two pianos and chamber ensemble. Volans wrote and first performed *Journal* in 1984 but has withdrawn it. The remainder of the etude, from bar 77 to the end, was taken from the 1997 *Cello Concerto*. Interestingly, after writing this etude, Volans revised the ending of the concerto in 2005.

The etude picks up from bar 220 of the second movement of the *Cello Concerto* and is a direct transcription until bar 119 of the etude and bar 263 of the concerto. The next six bars of the etude resemble bars 273 to 278 of the concerto but have been altered slightly for the piano version. The piano writing is a rhythmic distortion of the original and invites comparison. Volans treated the three bars of the *Cello Concerto* from 348 to 350 similarly, inserting an extra three bars in the piano etude (bars 195 to 198) that do not appear in the concerto. Bar 351 of the concerto is used for bar 199 of the etude and the block-like chordal accompaniment of bars 352 to 356 of the concerto is quoted directly in the ending of the etude. The concerto ends only three bars later.

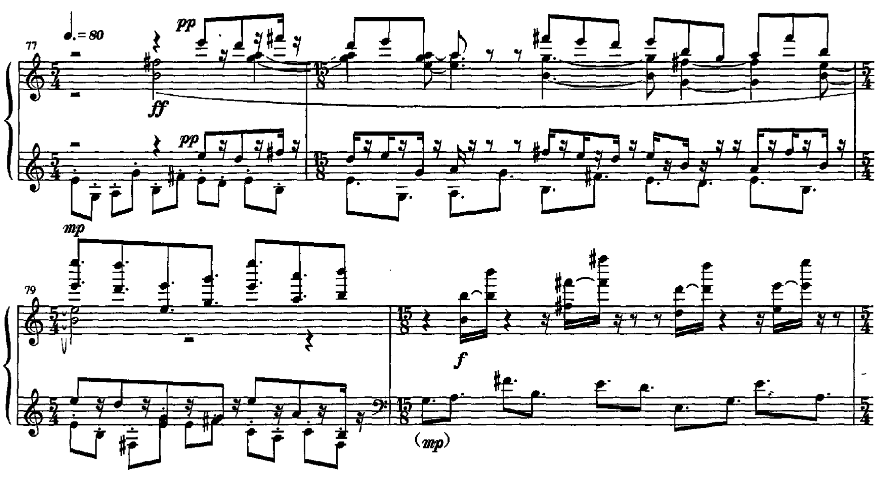

♩.= 80
77
pp
ff
pp
mp
79
f
(mp)

Figure 4.17 Etude 3, bars 77 to 80, the start of the piano transcription of the *Cello Concerto* (1997).

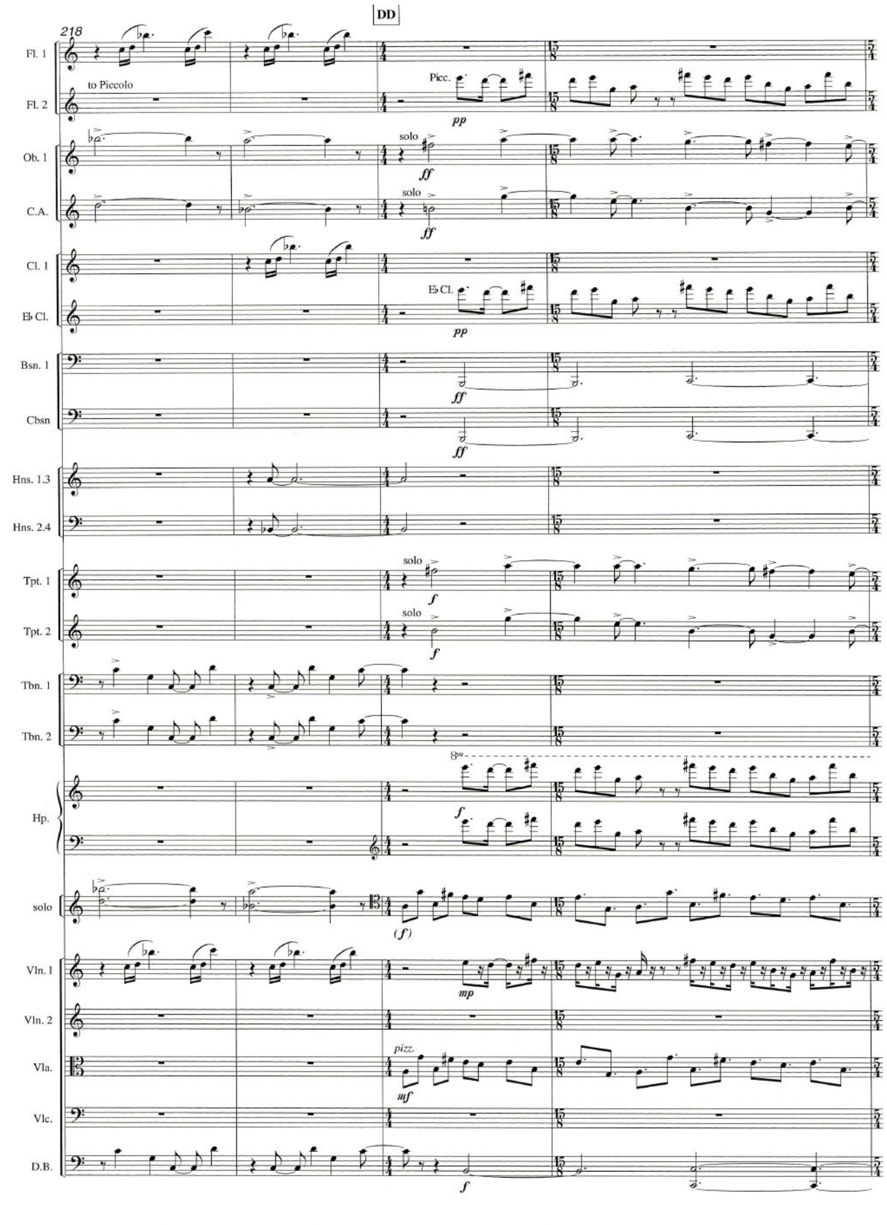

218
DD
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
to Piccolo
Picc.
pp
Ob. 1
solo
ff
C.A.
solo
ff
Cl. 1
E♭ Cl.
E♭ Cl.
pp
Bsn. 1
ff
Cbsn
ff
Hns. 1.3
Hns. 2.4
Tpt. 1
solo
f
Tpt. 2
solo
f
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Hp.
8va
f
solo
(f)
Vln. 1
mp
Vln. 2
Vla.
pizz.
mf
Vlc.
D.B.
f

Figure 4.18 Corresponding section, bars 218 to 221 of the *Cello Concerto* (1997) (In C).

The relationship between Etude 4 and *Four Guitars*

The fourth etude was taken from his guitar quartet of 2003 entitled *Four Guitars*. There are only two minor changes from the transcription of the quartet to the piano piece. Firstly, the fourteen-note quartet chords were slimmed down to nine or ten notes for ten fingers and secondly, the register of the single long notes was changed in order to make it possible to repeat them at the same pitch in the chords.

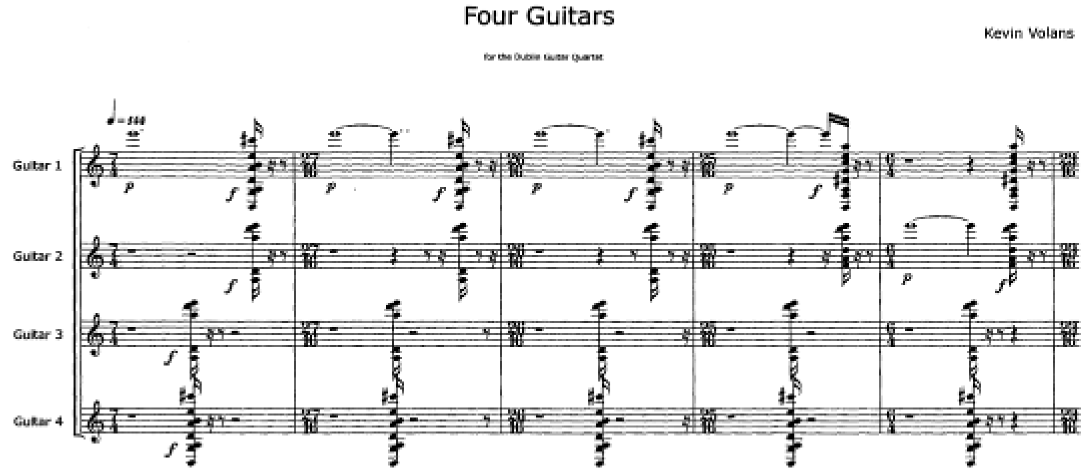


Figure 4.19 Opening of *Four Guitars*, bars 1 to 5.

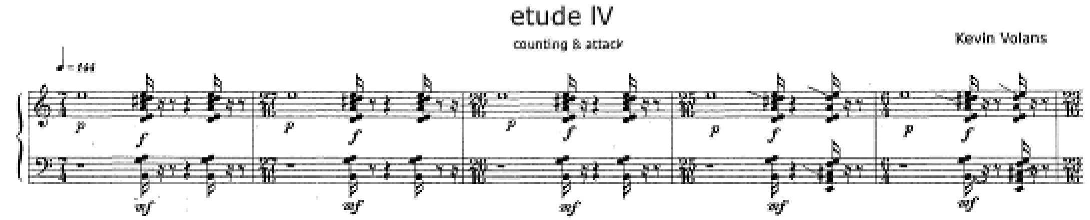


Figure 4.20 Opening of Etude 4, bars 1 to 5.

Despite the similarity of the material, the structural/rhythmical concept has a very different effect in the ensemble setting. The work consists of three clearly delineated, contrasting kinds of material. The idea for the main body of the etude is a single note followed by two abrupt chords in quick succession. The duration of the sustained notes is shifted by a semiquaver in each bar and in consequence every bar is a different length. In the quartet, guitars one and two share chords and guitars three and four share chords. The large chords bounce quickly between the guitar duos, their shifts in proximity augmented by the groupings. This sets up a visual and an aural game within the quartet which is not possible in the piano arrangement. Also, the verticality and spread of the chords is entirely suited to the shape and nature of producing a sound on the guitar.

Similar issues arise in the two stretches of cross rhythms between bars 109 and 116 and bars 142 and 149. Here, guitars one and four are together and guitars two and three play together. In both sections guitars one and four play four in the time of the three notes played by guitars two and three. The cross-rhythmical chord is repeated in the same way for seven bars. Once again, in the quartet, the concept is enhanced by the ensemble groupings.

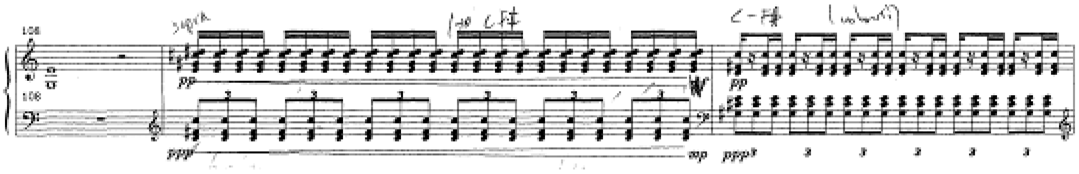


Figure 4.21 Cross rhythm chords in the Etude 4, bars 108 to 110.

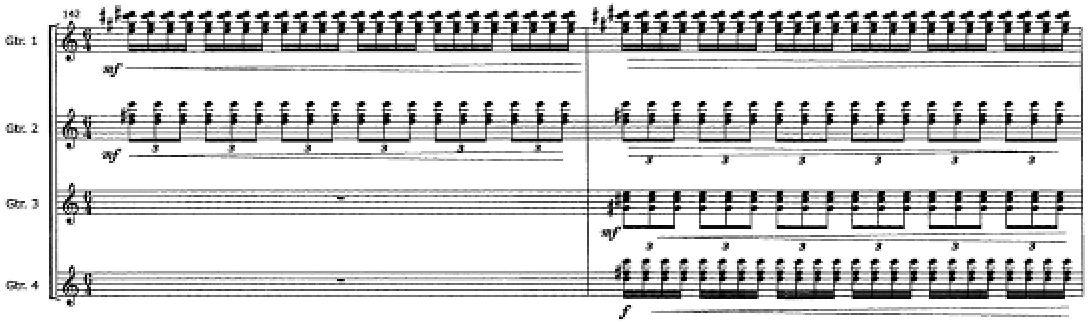


Figure 4.22 Corresponding cross rhythm chords in the *Guitar Quartet*, bars 142 and 143.

Optical illusion in Etude 5: *Monkey Music*

Etude 5 is the second revision of *Monkey Music* originally written in 1976 for solo piano and first revised in 1981. Volans wrote this piece for a performance at the opening of IRCAM at the Pompidou Centre in Paris. The etude is subtitled 'velocity and focus' but does not seek to develop these skills through perpetual motion as one might expect from a velocity study. The etude sets up a binary relationship between the elements of velocity and focus which swing from one to the other through sudden shifts between very fast playing and no movement at all. The work opens with a slow descending line of extremely short staccato notes, followed by very fast zigzagging chromatic legato lines and continues by alternating between such extremes for the rest of the work.

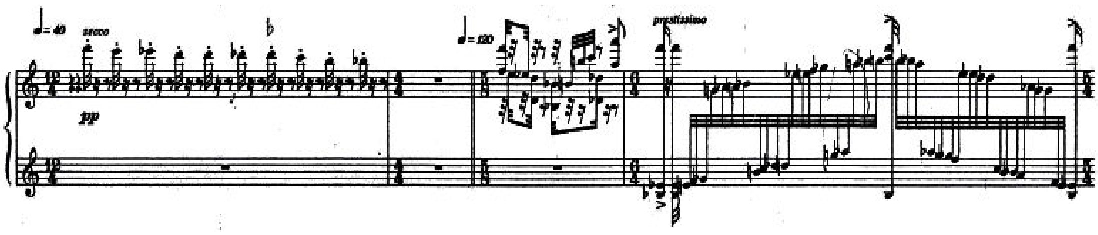


Figure 4.23 Opening of Etude 5, bars 1 to 4.

Volans attributes the playful oscillation between extremes in *Monkey Music* as drawing inspiration from the monkey in Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West*. *Journey to the West* is one of the 'Four Great Classic Chinese Novels' and dates back to the early 16th century (Elisonas, 2007). The first of four parts of the novel tells the story of the mischievous, ambitious monkey, Sun Wukong, who created havoc by rebelling against heaven and in so doing, met his downfall (Cho Bantly, 1989). The story draws from an eclectic selection of Chinese folklore, Chinese mythology and Taoist and Buddhist teachings. Cho Bantly hesitated interpreting the allegory literally as the cultural referents are diverse and changeable. In the etude, Volans sought to draw inspiration from the legendry skills and power Wukong developed through his energy and learning the art of the Tao and combat (Volans interview, 2006).

Monkey music has a strong graphic design of points and straight lines. Also, many of the structures are vertically symmetrical. Volans was interested in how to render abstract notions such as straight lines and points as music (Volans, 2007). The result of this endeavour is the successions of zigzagging, spiralling, converging and diverging lines we now see in the etude. Volans also claims to have drawn inspiration for the graphic shapes from the sweeping lines in Japanese calligraphy. The brushstrokes involved are seen as an extension of the inner experience of the calligrapher (Gun, 2001). Calligraphers have only one chance to complete each page and any imperfections will remain in the drawing as representations of the drawer at that point. As a result, the movements are as fluid and as sweeping as possible (Gun, 2001). Volans recreates the sweeping ink lines with the vivid musical lines in the fifth etude.

Capturing the moment in Etude 6: *100 Frames*

Etude 6 is a shortened version of *100 Frames* for orchestra (1991). In his programme notes for the score of the orchestral work, Volans states that his approach to the work was neither materialist nor conceptualist. According to his definition, conceptualists begin with an idea while materialists focus on shaping the material at hand. He refers to Japanese artist's emphasis on capturing a moment as clearly as possible, rather than developing an argument. Also, according to the same explanation, in Japanese art, the material is given equal emphasis with the means of presentation (Volans, 1991).

Volans' title *100 Frames* refers to the 19th-century Japanese artist Hokusai's *100 Views of Mount Fuji*. The views are a series of large, colour woodblock depictions of Mount Fuji from different viewpoints in different weather conditions. 'The Wave', one from this set, was famously chosen by Debussy for the first edition of his score *La Mer*.

Volans chose the word frames over views to underline his emphasis on the form rather than the content. In this work he chose to make the medium the subject of the work, in this case the medium being the orchestra (Volans, 1991).

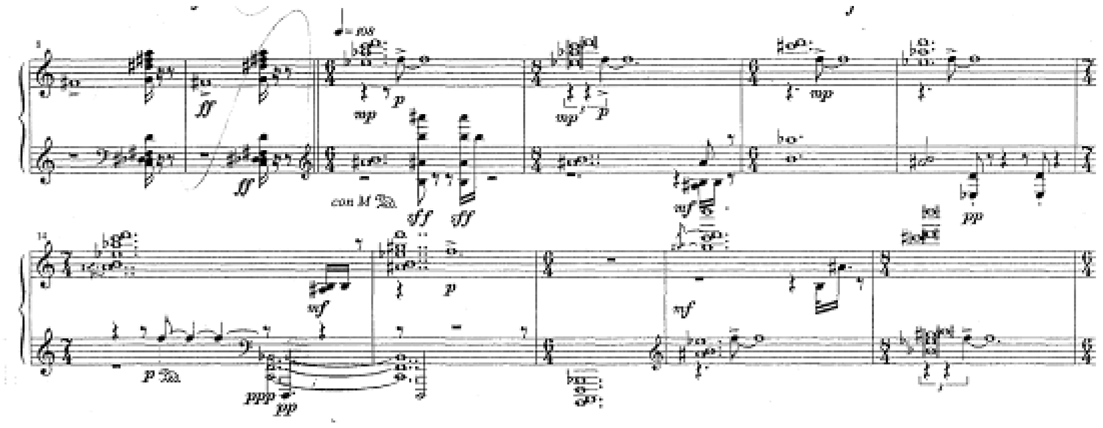


Figure 4.24 Opening of Etude 6.

In another nod to Hokusai, he overshot the goal of 100 and composed the piece on 102 sheets of manuscript paper instead. Each page served as a frame and the frames could be organized in any order. The bars in the resulting work in turn serve as frames in the same way. If the subject of the orchestral piece is the orchestra, it would follow that the subject of the sixth etude would be the piano itself.

Volans leaves the transcribed sections of the work largely untouched. The first 119 and last 12 bars of the piano piece are taken directly from the corresponding areas of the orchestra. Of the remaining bars, bar 120 is a repeat of bar 126 of the orchestral piece and 121 is from bar 131. The other 18 bars are very similar in nature but not exact replicas of anything to be found in the orchestral score.

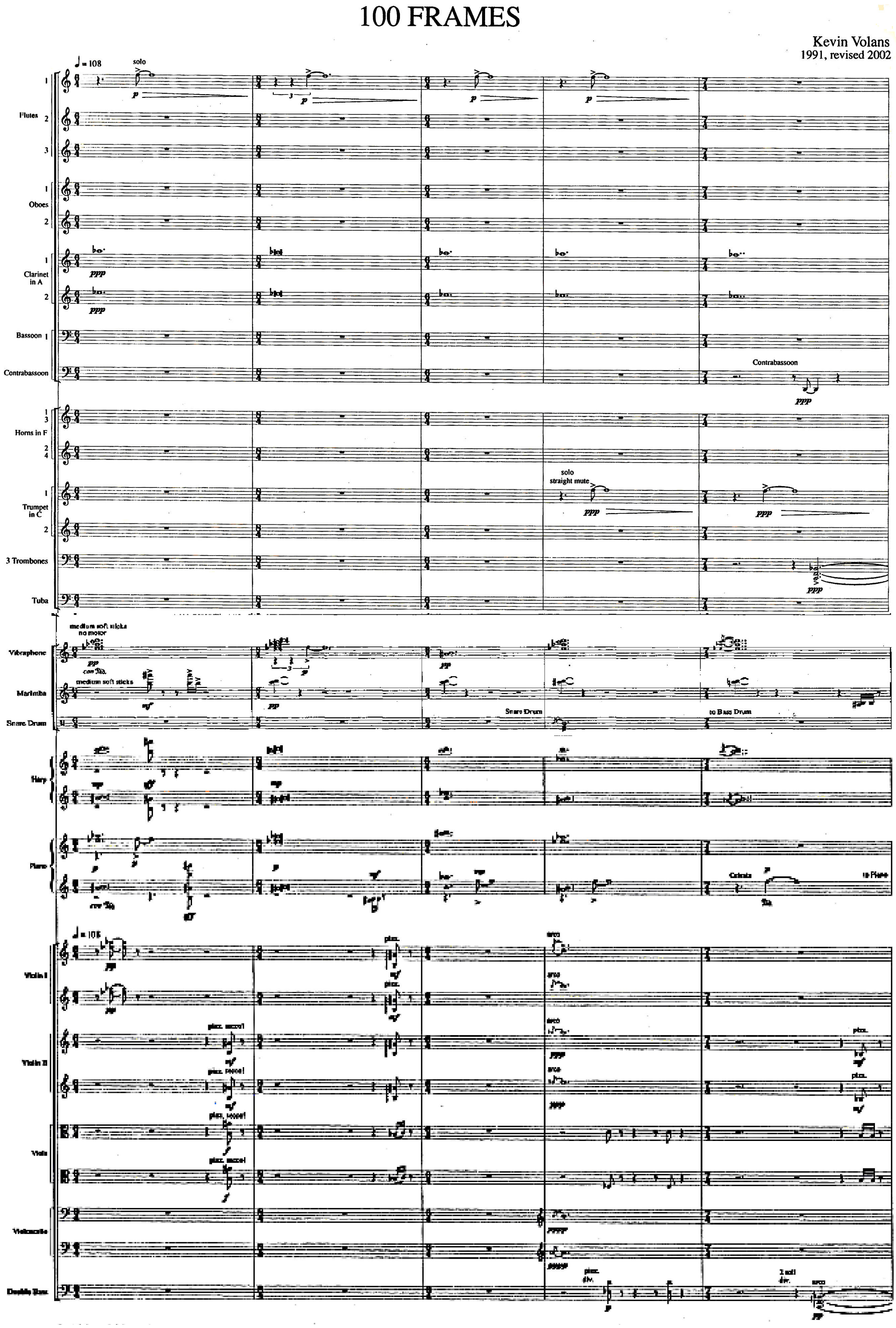
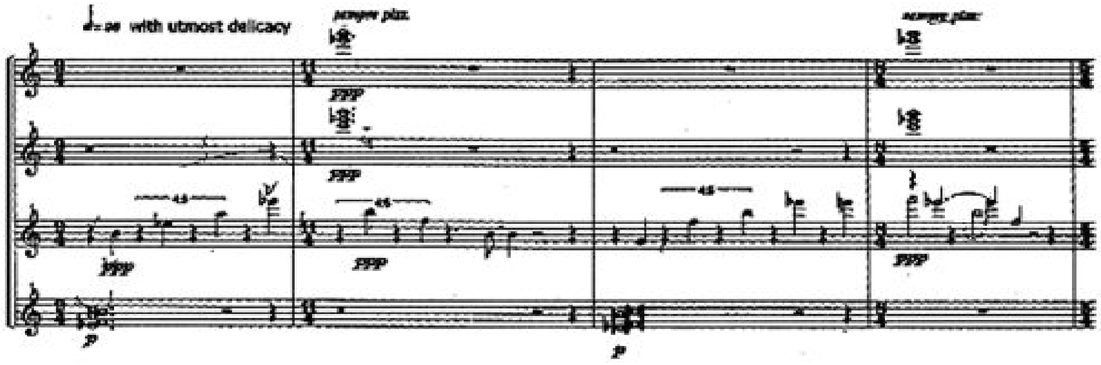

100 FRAMES
Kevin Volans
1991, revised 2002
♩= 108
solo
Flutes
Oboes
Clarinet in A
Bassoon
Contrabassoon
Contrabassoon
Horns in F
Trumpet in C
solo
straight mute
3 Trombones
Tuba
medium soft sticks
no motor
Vibraphone
medium soft sticks
Marimba
Snare Drum
Snare Drum
to Bass Drum
Harp
Piano
Celesta
to Piano
♩= 108
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
pizz.
pizz. secco!
arco
div.
1 soli
ppp
pp
p
mf

Figure 4.25 Opening of *100 Frames for Orchestra* (written in C).

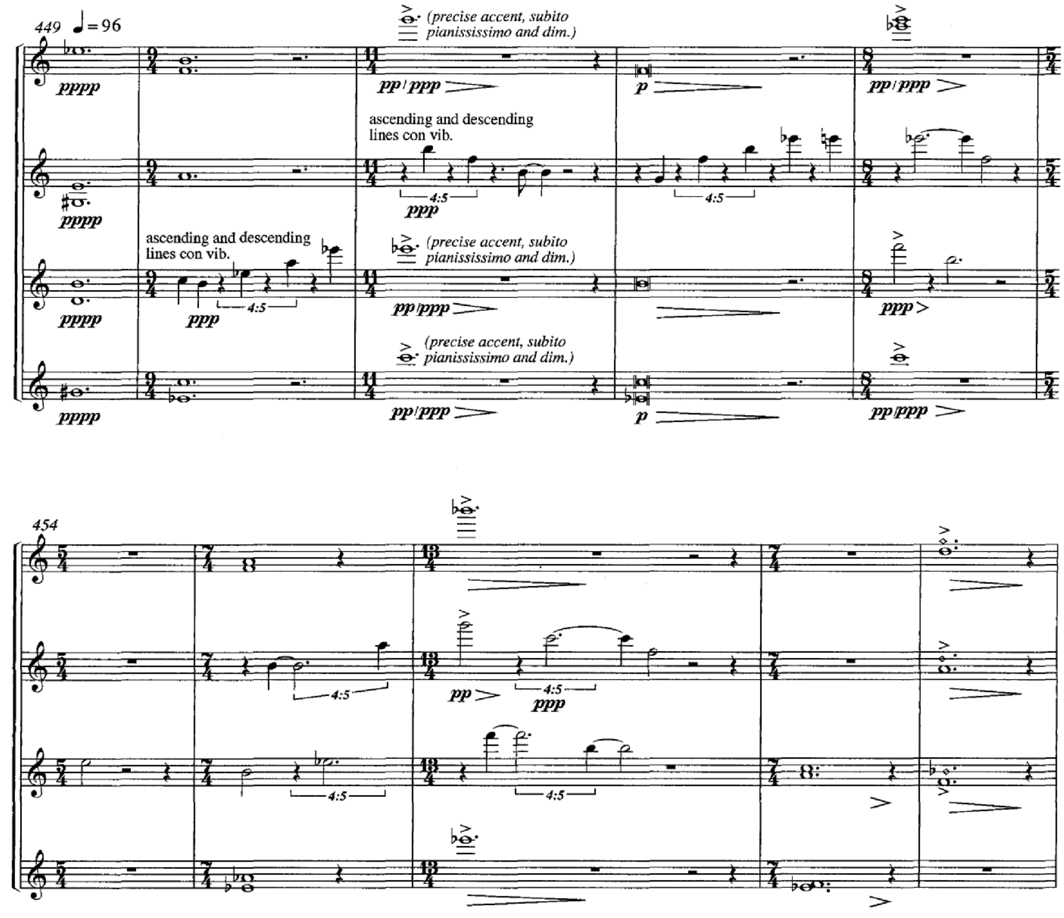
‘Doing away with content’: Etude 7

The seventh of Volans’s etudes, although used in the *Ninth String Quartet* in 2004, was originally intended for the piano (Rörich, 2005: 155). It is the shortest of the etudes and consists of the most sparing use of material.



with utmost delicacy
sempre pizz.
ppp
p

Figure 4.26 Opening of Etude 7, bars 1 to 4.



449
♩=96
(precise accent, subito pianississimo and dim.)
ascending and descending lines con vib.
4:5
pppp
ppp
pp/ppp
p
454
pp

Figure 4.27 Corresponding section in the *Ninth String Quartet* (2004), bars 454 to 458.

From bar 8 to the end in bar 64, the only note values used are semibreves, scattered with nine full bars of rests. Of the remaining bars, many are exactly the same – most ideas recur four or five times. The piano work is identical to the last 64 bars of the string quartet. In comparing the ending of the string quartet with the piano etude, the same material displays much more potential in the string quartet than the piano. While the long sustained notes on the piano simply decay, the strings engage techniques not possible on the piano. While both the string and piano score have very few dynamic indications, the strings are instructed to diminuendo at the end of every chord, some chords are tremolos and many use harmonics. The piano edition does not replace any of these ways of creating shape and interest.

Fragmentation in Etude 8

The eighth etude is a piano transcription of the whole of *Movement for Quartet* written in 1987. The texture of this etude makes it strikingly distinctive. Marked *scherzando* and *spiccato* throughout, it consists mostly of staccato, disconnected – almost stuttered, utterances. There are short fragmented melodies in the high register interrupted by repeated chords in the low register. The articulation, rests and texture work against any resonance that might be achieved – the effect is immediate and instantaneous rather than one of connecting and following through ideas.

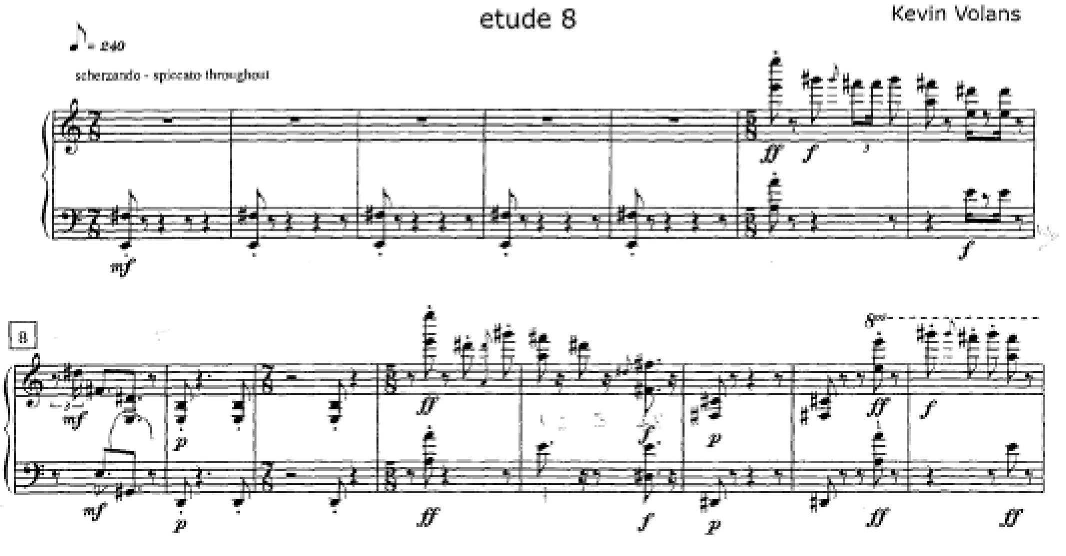


Figure 4.28 Opening of Etude 8, bars 1 to 15.

A repository of a lifetime of ideas: Etude 9

While the ninth etude is not a transcription of any earlier works, a number of the musical ideas Volans used in this etude have been used in the other etudes and compositions. If we include under the umbrella of transcription, material that has been reused in a slightly altered form and not only exact transcriptions, a high proportion of the music that makes up Volans's etudes would be included. To use Julia Kristeva's term, the etudes emerge as permutations of each other. In her article, Christine Lucia outlined the self-referencing within Volans' 10 String Quartets (Lucia, 2009). Lucia's article focussed on the interconnectedness of the String Quartets and found that the ideas generated in the earlier works were 'still essential in later ones' (Lucia, 2009). While, as we've seen, Etude 4 (2003) is a straightforward transcription of *Four Guitars* (2003) and Etude 6 is lifted from *100 Frames* for orchestra of 1991 (revised 2002), the material is still strikingly similar to etudes 2, 7 and 9. Indeed, two of the piano etudes are closely related to the *Ninth String Quartet: Shiva Dances* (2004): the seventh etude, originally conceived for piano, is rendered exactly in the last 66 bars of the string quartet and parts of the ninth etude.

Composed in 2008, this is the only etude of the set which Volans did not consciously take from other works, however there are many recognizable shadings of his *Ninth String Quartet*.[4] While the similarities between the works are useful for tracing the transcriptions, the composer's adaption of the material with each reworking is more interesting from a compositional viewpoint.

There are certain ideas which are used consistently throughout the etudes which could therefore be considered 'stock' material. Being a mini museum, these ideas are snapshots of the raw material for vast swathes of Volans's oeuvre. Is Volans possibly searching for the ideal musical realisation of these ideas by experimenting with them in various settings or does he return to them out of compositional expediency? If it was purely for expediency, would it affect how each idea should be viewed? It is worth noting here that these transcriptions of ideas are not exactly the same. They are different in each setting. While the composer has drawn from similar source material, he has adjusted it to various degrees, leaving a strong compositional imprint on the material. For the sake of this analysis, the author's intention and motivation are part of the broader search for meaning with numerous potential sources. Here, Volans's revisiting of the same material will be viewed as a kind of transcription – where ideas are not repeated exactly, but rather altered to suit their new setting. Viewed archaeologically, these would be the signifieds in the langue that each piece creates. While the langue is organic and changing, the fact that the vocabulary is so consistent across a wide spectrum of works assists with uncovering the rules that they follow. Comparing the small changes and reshaping of each idea in each context would, theoretically, assist in clarifying the nature of each signifier. The following are a few examples of ideas that occur frequently in various etudes which for this analysis will be regarded as Volans's signifiers.

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[4] Volans also subsequently used a transcription of the *Ninth Quartet* in 2006 in *Shiva Dances* for two pianos. (While the last third of the 797 bar *Shiva Dances* for two piano consists of other material, the first 548 bars are taken directly from the string quartet).

Repeated chords

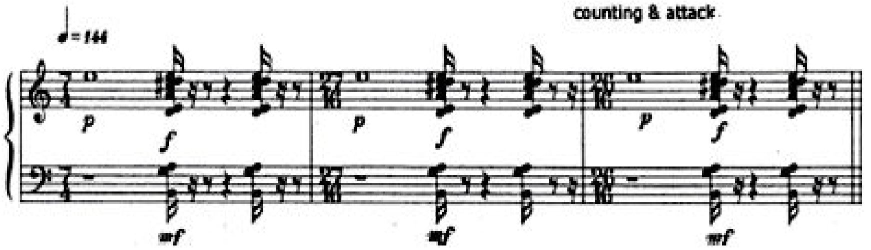
♩= 144
counting & attack
p
f
mf

Figure 4.29 Etude 4, bars 1 to 3.

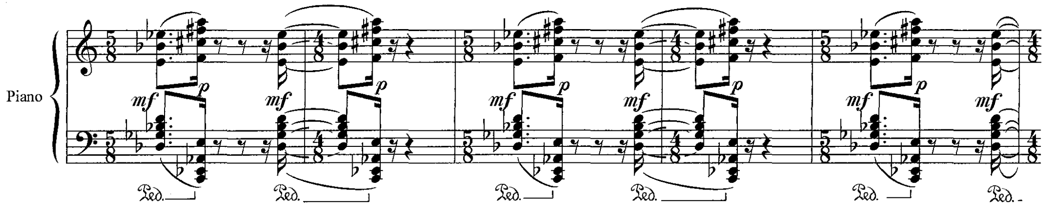

Figure 4.30 Etude 1, bars 1 to 5.

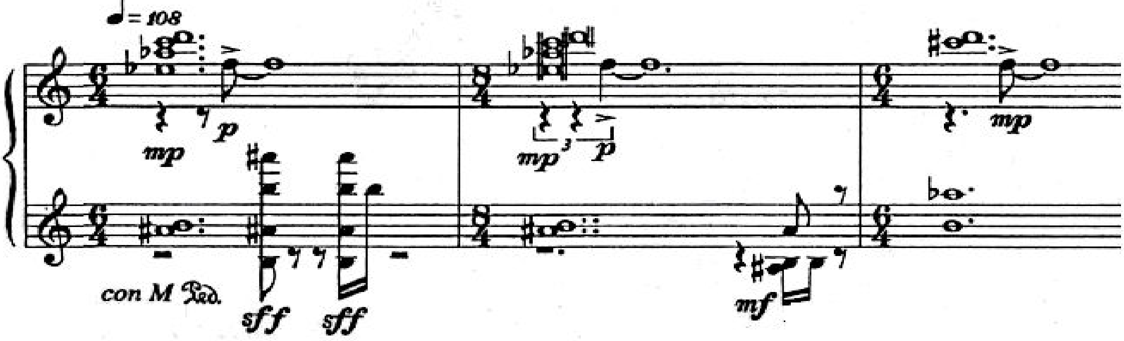
♩= 108
mp
p
sff
sff
con M Ped.
mf

Figure 4.31 Etude 6, bars 1 to 3.

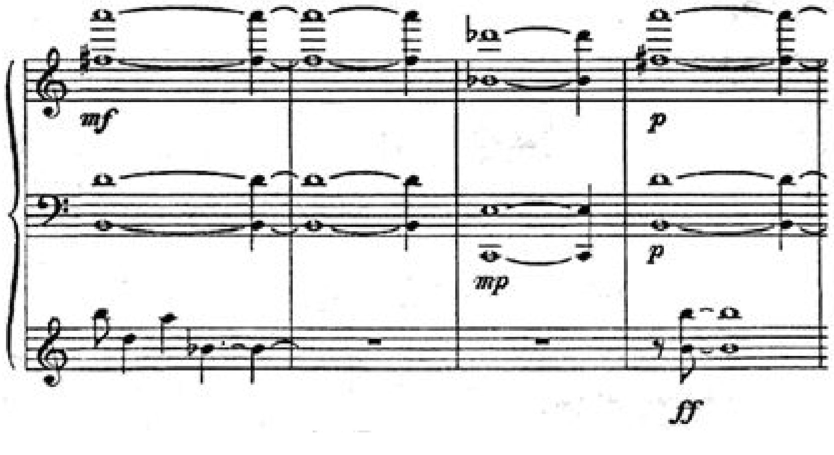

Figure 4.32 Etude 2, bars 21 to 24.

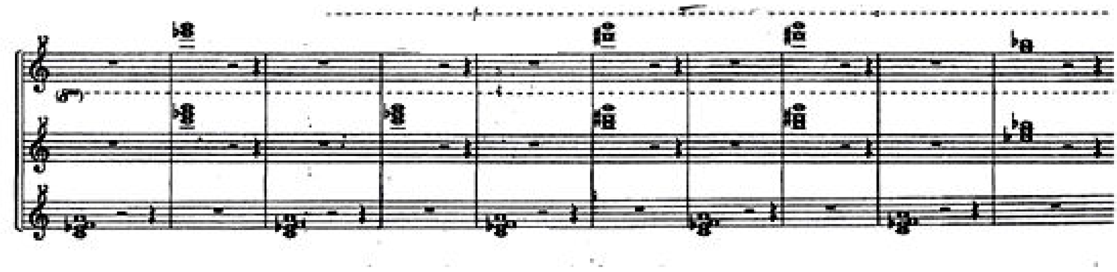

Figure 4.33 Etude 7, bars 12 to 21.

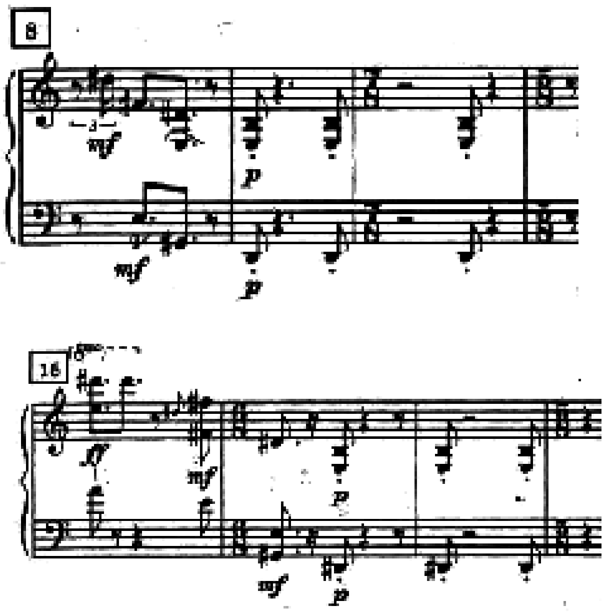

Figure 4.34 Etude 8, bars 9 to 10 and bars 17 to 18.

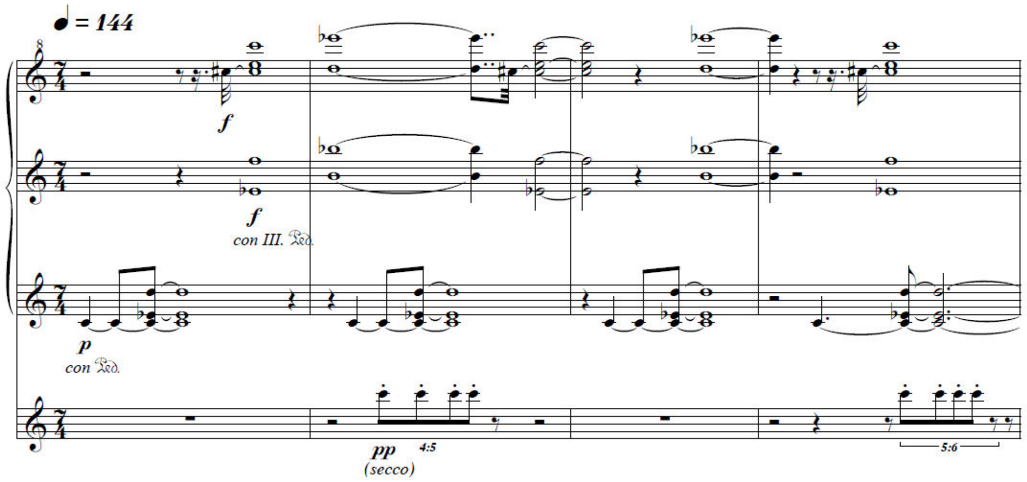
♩ = 144
f
f
con III. Ped.
p
con Ped.
pp
(secco)
4:5
5:6

Figure 4.35 Etude 9, bars 1 to 4.

The above examples of Volans's repeated chords demonstrate the variety of ways he has used them, treated them in different settings with different musical parameters. The articulation varies from widely spaced and detached (figure 4.29, 4.30, and 4.34) to joined (figure 4.31., 4.32. and 4.32 and 4.33) or overlapping (figure 4.35). They also appear at all dynamic levels, tempos and durations. Texturally, while all the chords are purely vertical entities, they range from widely spaced to compact. They also appear in every register. In each case, the chords are repeated, either once in immediate succession (figure 4.29 and 4.34) or as part of a two chord motif (figure 4.30 and 4.35) or as part of an extended phrase (figure 4.31 and 4.32). Harmonically, each chord has a measured quantity of consonance and dissonance arrived at through blending and balancing a variety of intervals. There is an even spread of every interval – they are not constructed in thirds, fourths or fifths and so bear no resemblance to triadic harmony. While the resulting intervallic construction of the chords is similar in general appearance, it is not immediately clear whether there is an organizational scheme at work or if the shapes are arrived at organically. The first factor that would account for the resemblance in their design is the relationship between the chords and the hand itself. While this is true to various degrees in any piece written for the instrument, there are a noticeable number of different spans and distributions included in these pieces – the shapes are quite idiosyncratic to the etudes themselves. Each chord exploits a different hand shape, some pushing the boundary of what is possible with the curve of the fingers. Of the examples cited above, one should bear in mind that only the 9th etude was intentionally written for the piano at the outset. Volans's intention was to deliberately avoid conventional shapes by using material conceived for other instruments. However, the ensuing chords are unconventional, sitting under the fingers in unusual ways, but very well designed for the hands and idiomatic for the piano. How are the shapes of the chords new and different? What makes them sit comfortably under the fingers? While overlapping in many ways, for this analysis, these two questions will be dealt with in two separate analytical fields of enquiry. The first issue is closely related to the musical result and the second is associated with the way the etudes operate technically.

Whole bar semibreve or dotted semibreve chords

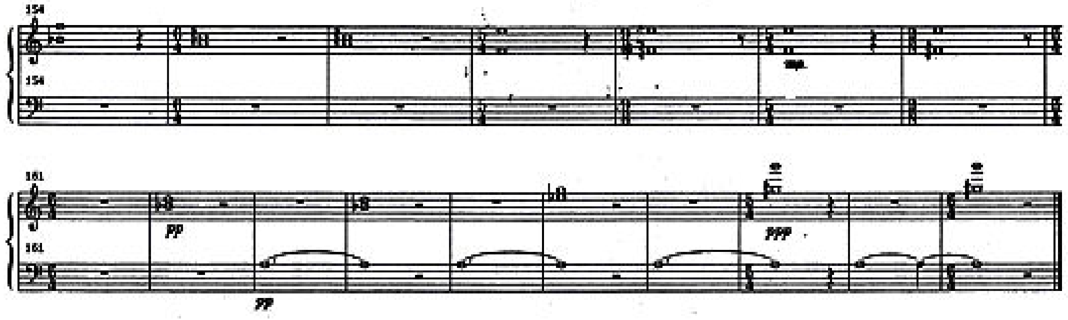

Figure 4.36 Etude 4, bars 150 to 170.

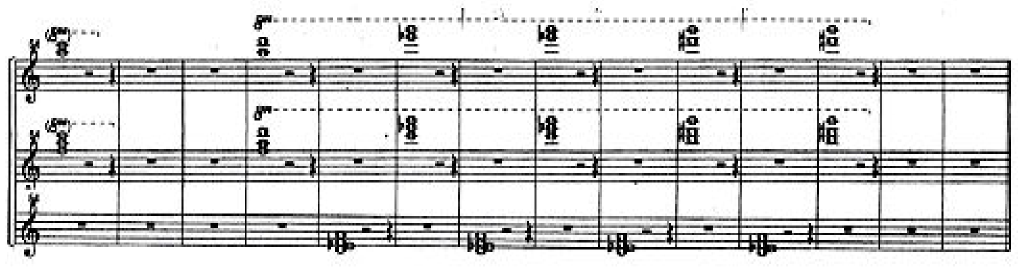

Figure 4.37 Etude 7, bars 54 to 67.

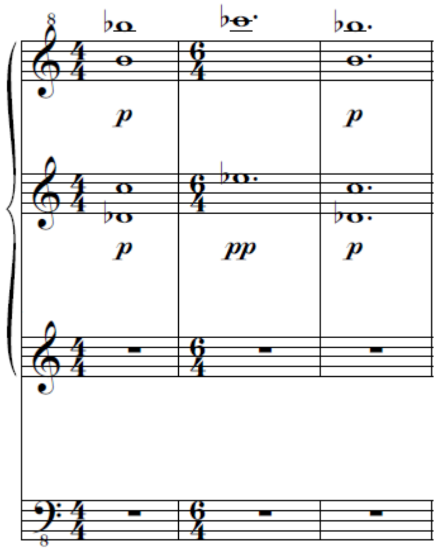

Figure 4.38 Etude 9, bars 365 to 367.

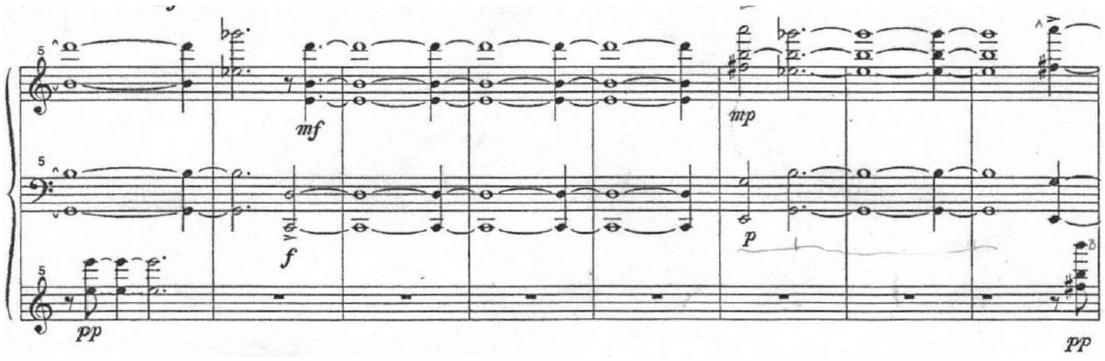
mf
f
mp
p
pp
pp

Figure 4.39 Etude 2, bars 5 to 12.

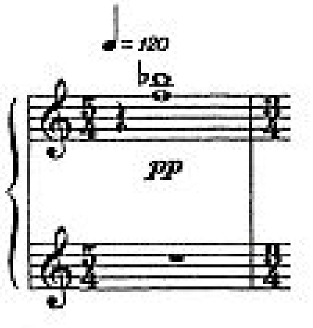

Figure 4.40 Etude 5, bar 70.

The examples cited above are of piano music stripped down to its minimum. The horizontal parameters of music have been reduced as far as possible, leaving only duration. Texture, rhythm, dynamic gradation, phrasing, articulation, direction and structure are all but eliminated. When the parameters which give music its shape and character have been trimmed down to this extent, there is very little left to constitute a quantifiable musical object. What is left is an instantaneous vertical static object of pitch, duration, harmony, timbre and dynamic. These examples display features suggestive of Volans's objective to do away with content. By default, this material hints at what he means when he uses the term 'content'. If by reducing content he means reducing the horizontal parameters, the properties that give music its shape, direction and definition, do the remaining vertical elements possess any definable musical shape?

The above examples would appear to be instances of already existing musical material that has been treated with reductive procedures. This assumes that there is an existing musical object before composition has taken place, which has already been established by the same material having been used elsewhere. In this case, composition has not been an act of invention but a trimming down of existing ideas. It suggests a very clear and measurable reductive artistic process. The assumption is that the music is refined by reducing the material as far as possible. The process is clearly evident in all of the above examples of Volans's work written after *Cicada* (1994). It is an aesthetic that favours the absence of decoration. It seems to be motivated by a rationale which dictates that the more streamlined an object is, the more efficient, economical and ultimately more desirable it will be. Any unnecessary, superfluous and redundant factors divert from the artist's primary intention.

Detached repeated notes

Although found less frequently than the previous two examples, detached repeated single notes appear in five of the etudes. In the first three examples from Etudes 6, 2 and 9, the repeated notes occur unexpectedly – without much in the preceding or subsequent texture to suggest their arrival or departure. By bearing little resemblance in shape to the immediately surrounding material, in each case the repeated notes loosen the tautness or homogeneity of the area. In Etude 6, they are used quietly but in a piercingly high register, unremitting in groups of five for ten bars from bar 158 until the end of the work.

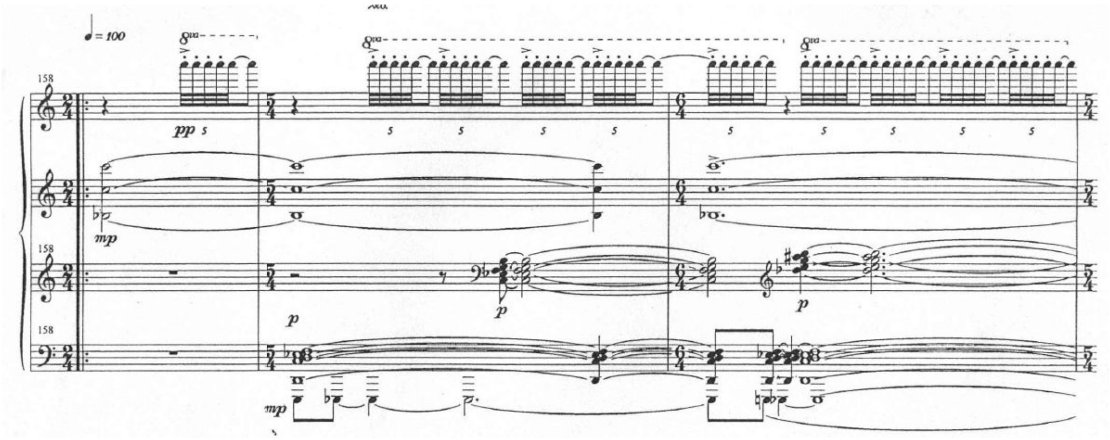

Figure 4.41 Etude 6, bars 158 to 160.

In Etude 2, they appear in the middle register but only in two bars at the beginning of the work. They enter as semiquavers in bar 2, beginning on the G above middle C and shifting down to middle D. They are *pianissimo* but are relatively exposed due to the very sparing use of widely spaced tenths which surround them.

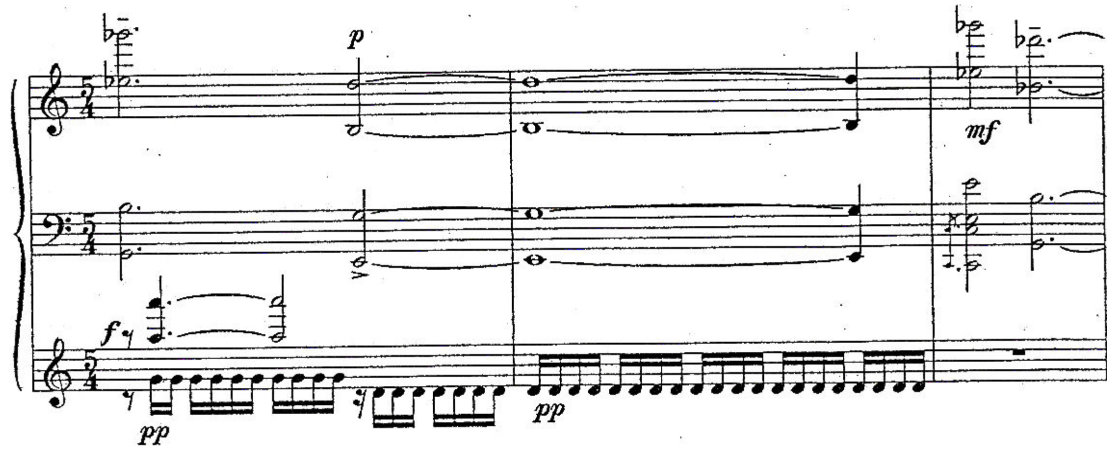

Figure 4.42 Etude 2, bars 2 to 4.

There are repeated single notes on two occasions in Etude 9. They appear at the beginning of the piece and in exactly the same layout between bars 196 and 201. They are constructed as three separated groups of four quavers and one group of three. The groups of four are in three different cross-rhythmic arrangements: 4:5, 5:6 (with a quaver rest) and 4:5 (starting with a quaver rest and one quaver after the cross rhythm). The last group of three are simply three repeated quavers.

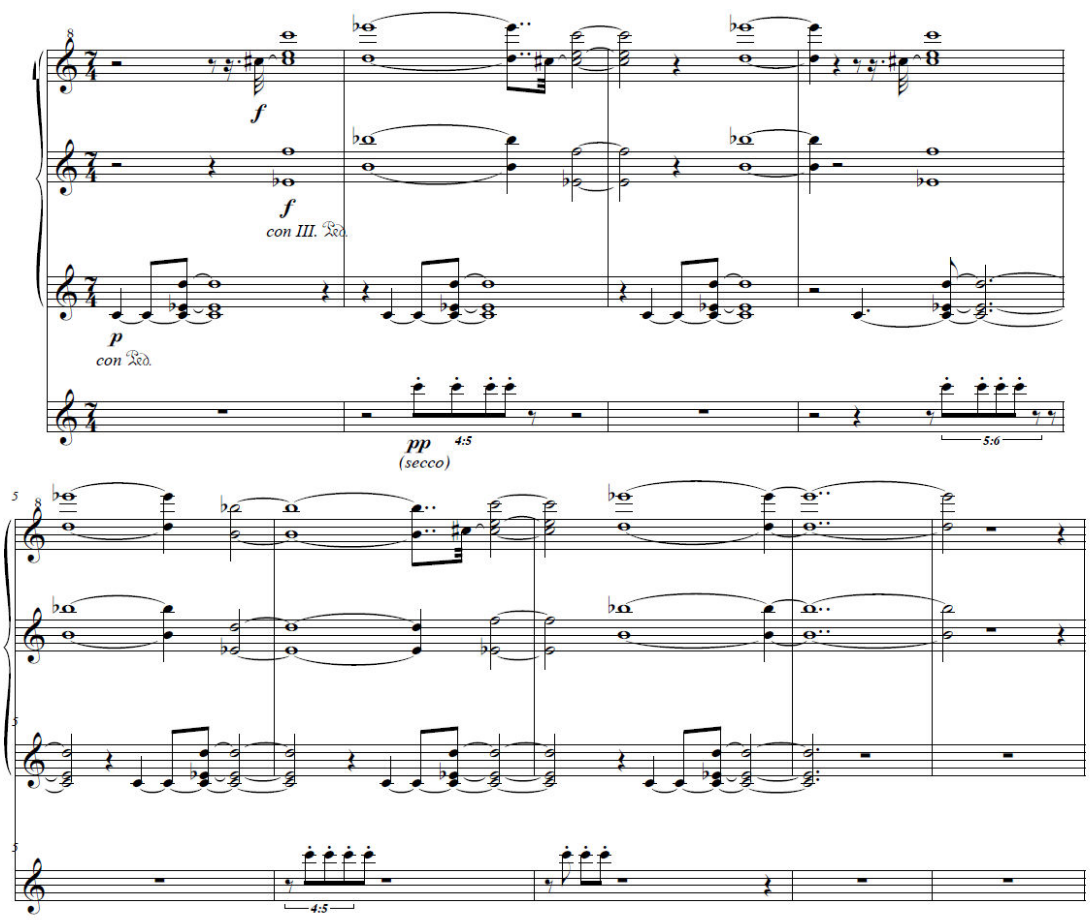

Figure 4.43 Etude 9, bars 1 to 9.

In Etudes 6, 2 and 9, the repeated notes, while being out on a limb, do not appear to be there to simply decorate or ornament the other, possibly more central ideas. In both these cases, the repeated notes have an unsettling effect, destabilising both the predictability and the calmness of the surrounding character.

In Etudes 5 and 1, the repeated notes form a much more integrated part of the melodic ideas. In Etude 5, the repeated notes are used in the brief static sections between the areas of velocity. Each episode of repeated notes is slightly different in this etude – they use different notes in different arrangements. In this etude the repetition of single notes is implemented in both regular and irregular rhythms, in widely and narrowly spaced intervals and chords at every dynamic level, ornamented and not ornamented as well as in various groupings. In the following example, the repetition of the octave As is concurrent with two held semibreves on either side. The vertically symmetrical arrangement frames the ideas which might otherwise appear to be independent from one another. When treated as a whole entity, the contrasting components can be seen to work together.

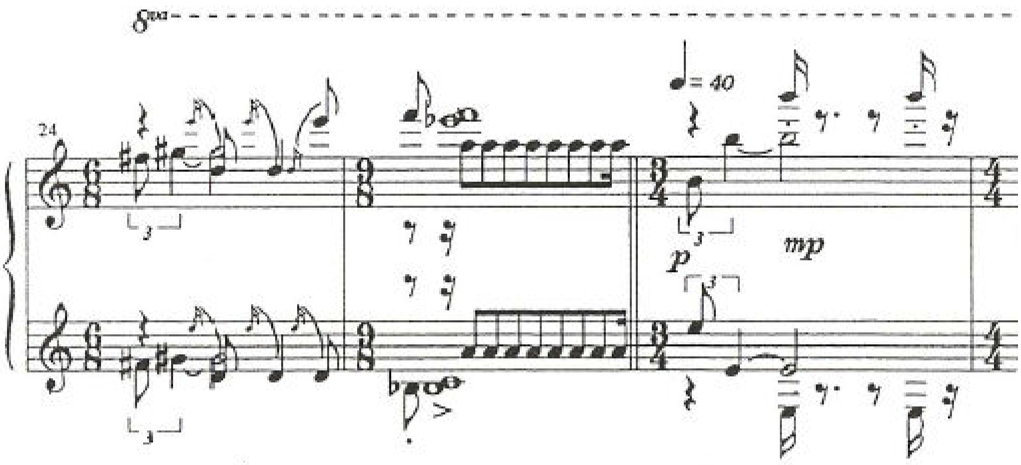

Figure 4.44 Etude 5, bars 24 to 26.

The repeated notes in Etude 1 were first conceived as harmonics for the cello in the *Man with Footsoles of Wind*. In the opera they have a more strident timbre than the gentle integrated mbira-like quality they adopt in the etude. They are more functionally melodic in this etude than the others as they are part of a broader melodic shape of oscillating thirds. Also, they are moulded and developed into other melodic material later in the work. They are initially grouped as three high Cs framed by single As a third lower. These groupings are augmented to groups of eight and seven notes across bars 104 and 105 and are echoed in later melodic ideas in lower registers in bars 112 and 113 and then in bars 119 to 121.

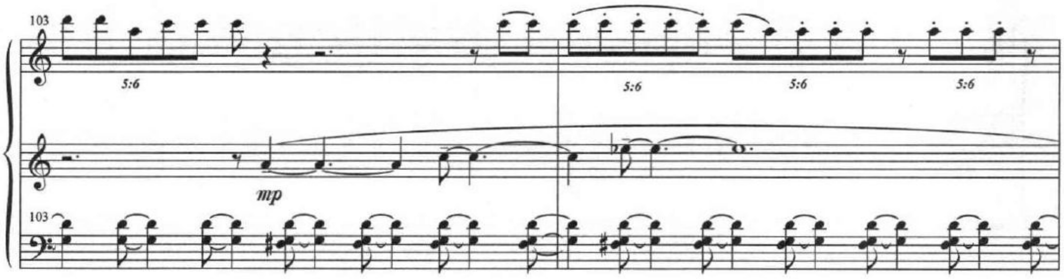

Figure 4.45 Etude 1, bar 103 to 104.

Broken chord, cross-rhythmical melodic patterns

This idea is slightly less definite than the previous three as it is used quite differently in each instance. The examples are all permutations of the same idea because they share the same curving ascending shape, are irregular or cross rhythmical in duration, are part of an extended harmonic belt and have the same delicate ethereal colouring. The intervallic construction is very similar to the chords mentioned previously and so the hand shape and harmonic shading works the same way. In appearance, they could be broken versions of the same chord structures.

They occur throughout Etude 6, their flowing and graceful silhouette conspicuously separating them from the other choppy vertical chords. Having recognized their resemblance and possible origin as broken versions of the same types of chords, it is striking how much contrast they offer this etude despite similar construction methods. This melodic pattern is used nine times in the etude, first widely spaced and then much closer together between bars 137 and 157. The patterns are built from different notes and rhythms and are different lengths; they extend in length as the etude progresses.

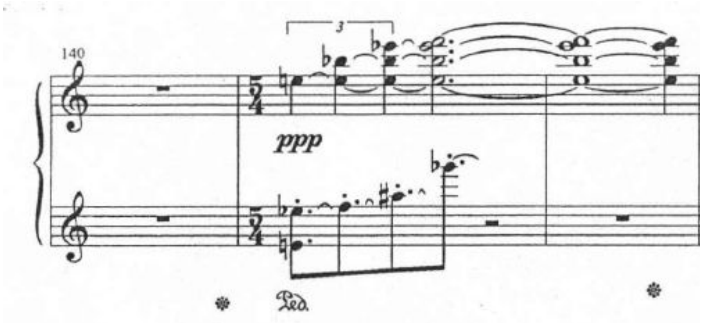

Figure 4.46 Etude 6, bars 140 to 142.

The same idea appears in ascending and descending form in the first seven bars of the seventh etude. The intervals are widely spaced and the notes are evenly separated with rests. These factors, together with the very slow tempo, reduce the flowing quality and sense of movement found in the same patterns in the sixth etude. However, the horizontal nature of these bars offers the only contrast in this etude which consists exclusively of whole bar semibreves from bar eight to the end. Despite this, the contrast is only partial, due to the same repeated chord being used underneath the gentle ascending cross rhythm and the rest of the work.

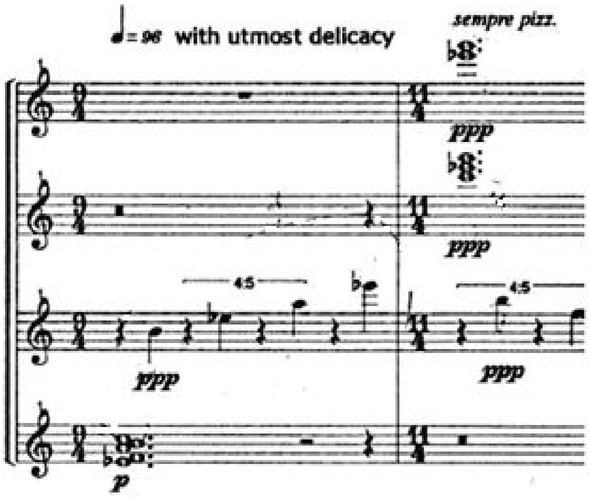

Figure 4.47 Etude 7, bars 1 to 2.

Ascending broken chords form the backbone of most of Etude 9. In this etude the links between the vertical chord structures and the ascending melodic patterns are much more obvious as there are incrementally different degrees of each one. The opening idea of the ninth etude is a partially broken chord that sustains in horizontal bands, repeated to cover vast stretches of the entire scope of this etude. From bar 240 the chords disintegrate further to become much more noticeable as melodic material from bar 251. Most of the rest of the etude is made up of derivations of this idea, in both ascending and descending form with each organic adaptation subtly moulding the idea until it is unrecognisable as such.

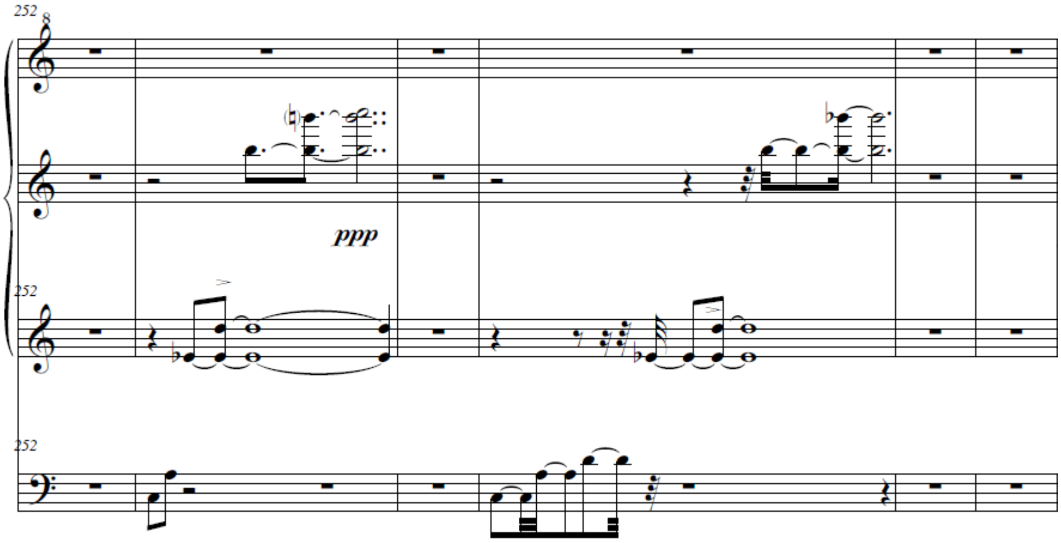

Figure 4.48 Etude 9, bars 252 to 257.

Oscillating seconds

If the most reduced form of melodic shape is a straight line of repeated notes, the next shallowest possible shape would be repeated stepwise motion of a semitone and third narrowest would be movements of one tone. Repeating the same interval neutralises any momentum or direction that might accumulate by such highly constricted pitch areas. Throughout the etudes, Volans's preferred choice of interval for this kind of motion is the tone, mostly spelled tonally as major second intervals. They occur in a wide variety of settings and perform very different functions, however are all underwritten by repetition and rhythmic regularity.

There are a number of instances of oscillating seconds in the first etude. The following example is the first overt statement of melodic phrases consisting only of oscillating seconds. In this texture the oscillating seconds are woven between abrupt chords and are doubled at the octave, increasing their weight. The section of the work from bars 50 to 54 consists of four phrases, two different phrases, each repeated once. The first two phrases oscillate upward in octaves from E to F# while the second two phrases oscillate downward from B to A. The rhythm of all the phrases is regular. The subsequent two phrases enlist appoggiaturas to permit the hands to play the chords at the same time.

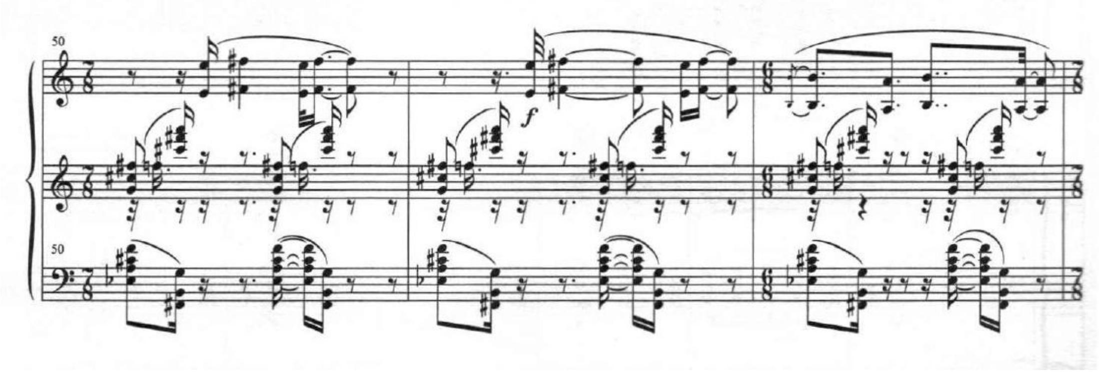

Figure 4.49 Etude 1, bars 50 to 52.

The huge leaps at the opening of the third etude disguise the oscillating second passed between the hands. As the outside notes are aurally far away, the ear connects the adjacent A flat and B flat and the effect is of a repeated melody of these two notes. This oscillation, while clearly deliberately planned, is more implied than explicitly stated and occurs as a by-product of the choice of intervals for the wide jump rather than a melodic shape in its own right. What is interesting about the choice of intervals is that at both points, there are extended major seconds in the form of ninths and seconds between the voices. This essentially harmonic choice suggests the oscillating seconds are significant not only for their horizontal melodic shape but also for their harmonic colour.

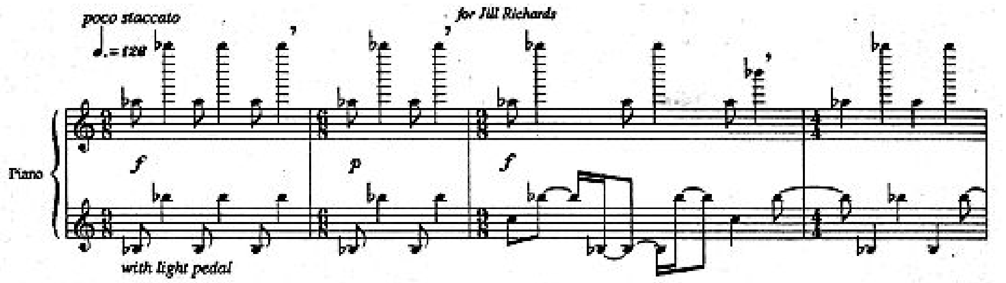

Figure 4.50 Etude 3, bars 1 to 4.

The fifth etude is much more eclectic than the other etudes in its use of stock ideas. Written in 1976, it predates the later etudes by 23 years. Even taking into account the transcription sources, this etude contains the earliest examples of Volans' material to be found in the set. As such, it is a snapshot of the early development of some of Volans' stock ideas. The following example shows layering of oscillating seconds that suggests the kernel of a stock idea that has been refined in later compositions. This is not to suggest that the composer was developing a compositional formula that he would use later, but rather a nodule of interest he was to revisit but that also provides us with intertextual links on a developing epistemic plane. From bars 76 to 78 two static inner voices are framed by outer voices moving in seconds. The treble in single notes from E to F# and the bass in two detached intervals expanding and contracting by semitones. The bass is expanding and contracting by semitones in line with the top voice, hinting at vertical symmetry without being exactly symmetrical. The vertical symmetry, layering of oscillating seconds and general organization in this example is strikingly similar to the example from the first etude. The differences are possibly more interesting as they provide vital clues as to the development of a langue using strongly identifiable signifiers such as these seconds. In the later examples from Etude 1 and 3, the seconds and indeed all the ideas, are much more obviously grouped, both rhythmically and spatially. This tendency is apparent in examples from other later etudes.

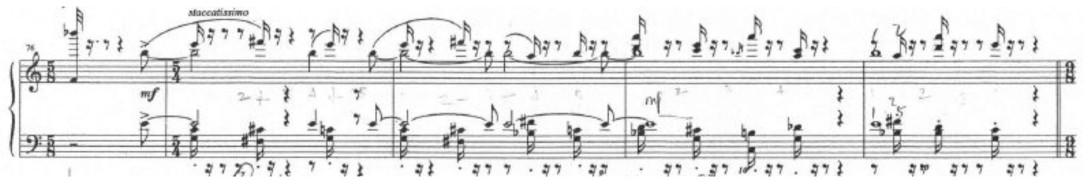

Figure 4.51 Etude 5, bars 76 to 80.

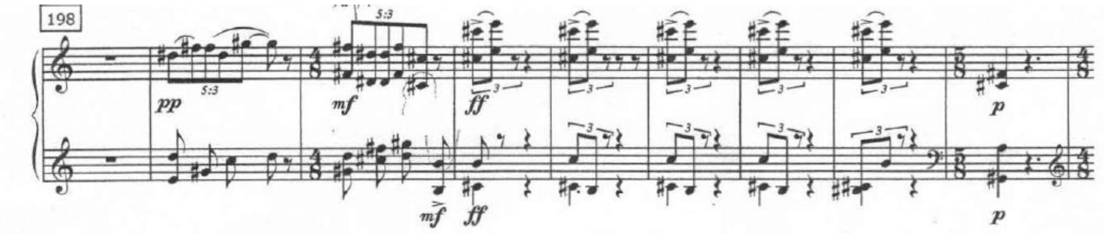

Figure 4.52 Etude 8, bars 198 to 206.

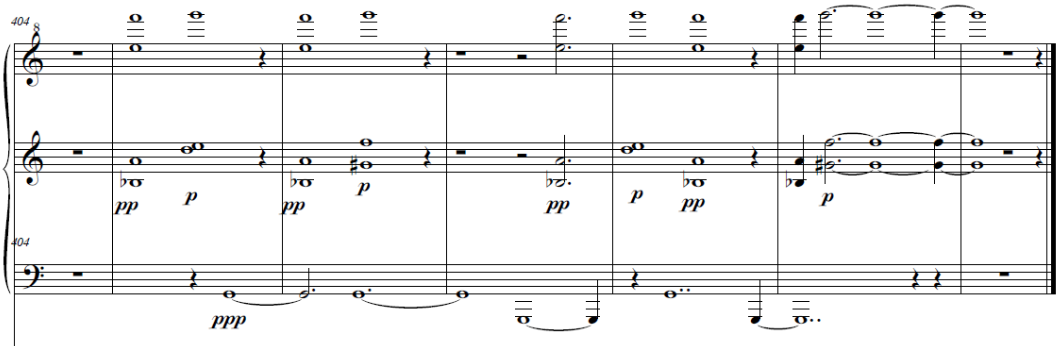

Figure 4.53 Etude 9, bars 404 to 410.

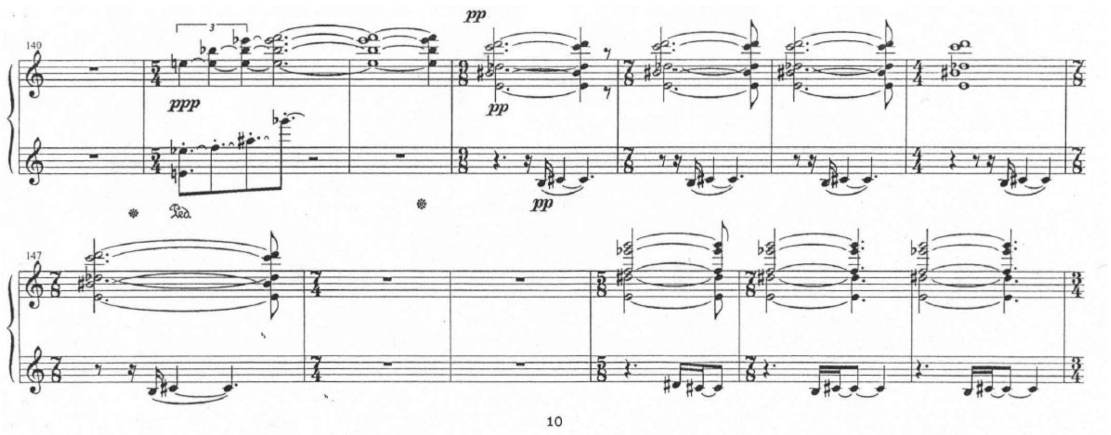

Figure 4.54 Etude 6, bars 140 to 152.

Distinctive use of two-part melodic counterpoint

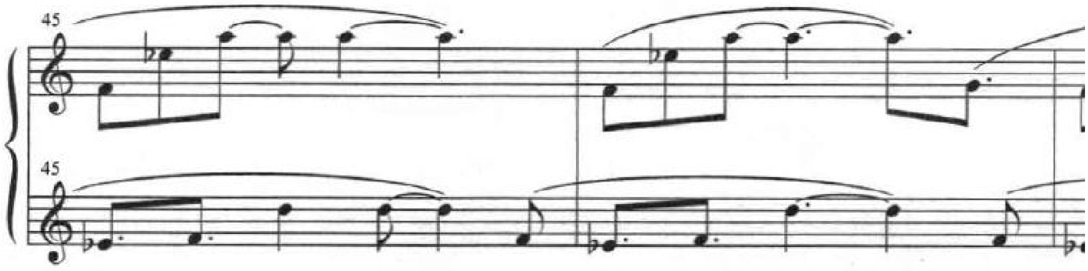

Figure 4.55 Etude 1, bars 45 and 46.

While counterpoint is arguably present in all music in varying degrees, the contrapuntal textures found in the etudes share a number of distinctive traits. There is a consistency of characteristics in the figures which suggests that they are the result of the same, particular approach. The examples here show carefully shaped cross-rhythms, consisting of three and four note patterns in layered voicing. The first example from Etude 1 is an ascending repeated pattern, each repeated utterance altered very slightly. Apart from the very first note of each phrase, it could also be seen as an ascending broken chord. In every utterance there are four notes in the lower part against three in the upper part. Both phrases begin the same way each time but end with tiny alterations – either a repeated note or adding one note. The cross-rhythm formed by the parts is a straightforward two-against-three, two in the lower part against three in the upper part. When viewed horizontally, it becomes clear that the voices sounded together result in the following pattern G - F - F - E flat -E flat *(8ve)* - F - A - D. If one disregards the octave, the middle five notes suggest an oscillating second resolving in an open perfect fifth.

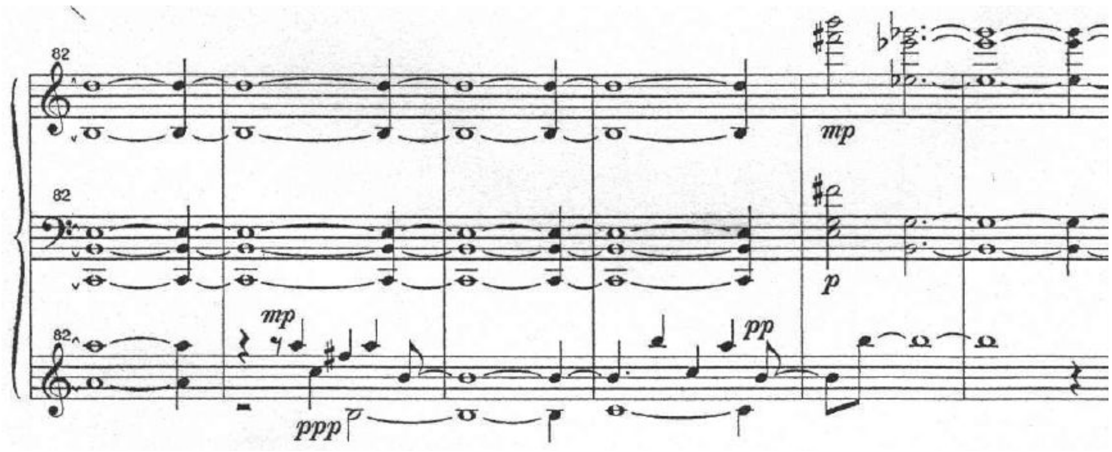

Figure 4.56 Etude 2, bars 82 to 87.

In Etude 2, the two-part counterpoint interlocks at the quaver in a way that suggests a cross rhythm but isn't strictly so. It also lacks obvious repetition. The lower part consists only of three notes and the top part of two fragments of four and five notes respectively. The top part hints at repetition as the two fragments are similar in shape and direction and are rhythmically the same with the second phrase – simply augmented by the one extra note repeated at the octave. When written out disregarding the octave, the top voice forms the following pattern: A - F# - A - B; B - C - A - B - B and the lower voice: C - B - C. The lower voice is an oscillating second. The repetition of the A-B compound second in the top voice forms a strong aural link between the two phrases in agreement with the major seventh (inverted second) B - C at the beginning of the second phrase. In total, disregarding the octave, of the total of ten intervals, there are three intervals of a minor second, two of a major second, three of a third and two unisons. This shows a very narrow and limited range of pitches – a very compact use of material for such an apparently dispersed section.

When comparing the stock ideas mentioned above, what is most striking is how many overlapping characteristics there are between them. Even within a limited vocabulary the differences between the musical ideas are comparatively restrained. Grouping these ideas identifies material that shares the same characteristic or compositional technique. It does not imply that the elements are extensions of the same source material nor does it suggest that they are related in any way other than their surface properties. What it does suggest is a consistency in Volans's musical language that operates beyond and outside of individual pieces. It also shows that there is a body of core figures which appear in all the pieces and that Volans is preoccupied with the shape of these figures. Lucia and Rörich have both implied that this consistency bespeaks a broader compositional search for the 'purest' form of the material. Their deduction over-emphasises the role of the composer and more problematically insinuates that each motif has a platonic 'ideal' form which he is striving, with each reworking, to create. Describing any compositional language in terms of linear development is strikingly at odds with an intertextual, heterogeneous view of history. In an intertextual, complex web of activity, what do the changes and adjustments the composer has made with each restatement of the same idea tell us about his compositional language? We have seen the capricious role form performs in poststructuralist textual analysis. The shape and form of the signifiers is largely arbitrary and has no impact on their function other than their contrast with other signifiers. This suggests that grouping musical material according to its formal properties is analogous to grouping words by sound and may not necessarily have a bearing on the grammar of the language. However, there are certain instances in language where the form plays a direct role in its function. An example of this is onomatopoeia where the sound of the word connects to its function through resemblance. In Volans's etudes, the core figures identified above operate as units and could be seen to function as signifiers. The priority in this Foucauldian analysis is to uncover the rules that govern the language of the etudes. However, in this chapter we have seen that the formal properties of the signifiers would appear to contribute to the construction of these rules. In this case, the form of the signifier would play a role in its function. The duality between form and function intersect in these stock figures and must be regarded together to uncover their modes of operation.

CHAPTER FIVE
STRATIFICATION PROCEDURES IN THE ETUDES

The previous chapter identified a handful of core musical ideas from which the etudes are built. Many of these ideas are layered structures. It would seem that layering is an important element in all of their construction. The notion of working in levels is also made obvious by the way Volans in many instances uses the staves to divide material into strata. The layering is visible from every viewpoint. Close up, at the level of the ideas identified in Chapter 4, notes are localized in idiosyncratic groupings. On the medium scale, these ideas are strung together horizontally to form ribbon-like structures. Broadly, the etudes form patchworks of layered material transcribed from other works. A bird's eye view of the etudes as a group shows that each piece is merely a layer in an ongoing process.

Using terms such as level, strata and layer to describe the clustering of pitch and rhythms in the stock ideas in the etudes, unlocks a number of useful analogous terms. The most notable of these is the notion of distance, which could 'operate in an imagined three dimensional field' of foreground, middle ground and background (Berry, 1980:20). These in turn imply depth and sharpness of focus. The concepts of layering in the etudes also seem to take place both horizontally and vertically in a similar way. As pointed out in Chapter 2, Schenkerian analysis also provides a model for organizing musical material into strata in terms of foreground, middle ground and background. We have also seen that a focal goal of Schenkerian analysis was to represent the music hierarchically. Conversely, Volans's music is intentionally non-hierarchical. It avoids achieving any sense of direction, replacing this rather with stasis and shifting. Layered diagrams, when organized in order of importance, have a number of inherent hierarchical properties. On the other hand, the etudes display layered structures which somehow operate non-hierarchically. If the layered diagram is treated purely as a representation of the scale and proportion of the layers of a piece and not their respective importance, it can sidestep comparing the value of each part. A diagram of foreground, middle ground and background structure does not need to refer to directionality nor hierarchical relationships in the music if used without the intention to do so.

Without tonal reference points, Volans's material would need to be identified and separated in terms of Schoenberg's notion of contrast. While Schoenberg never completed his long-term plan of writing a textbook of composition, his writings were comprehensive enough for his ideas to be quite clearly understood (Grove, 2001). In summary, Schoenberg sought a way of comprehending music in terms of its cohering quality rather than its subdivisions. The goal is to find the logic beyond identifying disconnected units. He did this in two main ways. The first was by the reduction of the motif into ‘elements’ in order to identify the compositional processes at play (Grove, 2001). This first process largely serves to uncover the elements. The second analytical technique he used was finding the principles by which these elements are modified. This is undertaken by observing the changes between restatements of each element. The intention is to find the cohesive logic between the elements.

In the analysis, the author wishes to blend the two styles of analysis to identify the individual elements in the etudes and the relationships between them. These relationships can then be plotted onto a scale drawing of each layer in question. It is also worth bearing in mind that any analysis, no matter how rigorous and objective its observations, ultimately reflects the subjective perception of the analyst.

Background structure

In the case of Volans’s etudes, the background structures are the largest groupings which make up each piece. In etudes transcribed from more than one piece, the quotation sections provide the broadest scaled sections. In those which are transcribed from one work, the overall organization of the transcription would form this level. In Etude 9, it would need to be the overall structural layout. As in Schenker’s three-chord progression, for simplicity, there should be at most three or four structural sections at this level of the analysis. These layers operate in two dimensions on the score. They can be either simultaneous or consecutive. Layers which coexist simultaneously are notated vertically, usually (but not necessarily) on different staves. Layers which occur consecutively could be on the same stave but would be identifiable by silence, juxtaposition or, less conspicuously, by linking material. Identifying where these layers are is the goal of this chapter. In this analysis, a layer or strata is any ribbon of cohesive material, whether vertically or horizontally arranged. Also, the arrangement of the layers is synonymous and can be used interchangeably with the structural sections of the works. In keeping with the findings in Chapter 4, beyond this level, the structural sections need not be treated in relation to individual pieces but in relation to the whole set of etudes, penetrating further into the rest of Volans’s oeuvre.

In the first etude, the fundamental structure consists of the two transcribed sections taken from different parts of the opera *The Man with Footsoles of Wind* (1993). Bars 1 to 82 form the first part and bars 83 to 246 form the second. These two sections are juxtaposed between bars 82 and 83; there is no blending or bridging material. The tempo, rhythm, texture, pitch patterns, meter and character change drastically at this point. In terms of this high level of contrast, the groupings within each of these sections display less dramatic discontinuity and so reflect intermediate structural joints. The two sections of this etude in many ways are independent horizontal elements and their juxtaposition raises questions as to why they should be positioned adjacently, what the effect of bringing them together is and whether the relationship between them is as arbitrary as it, at first, seems to be.

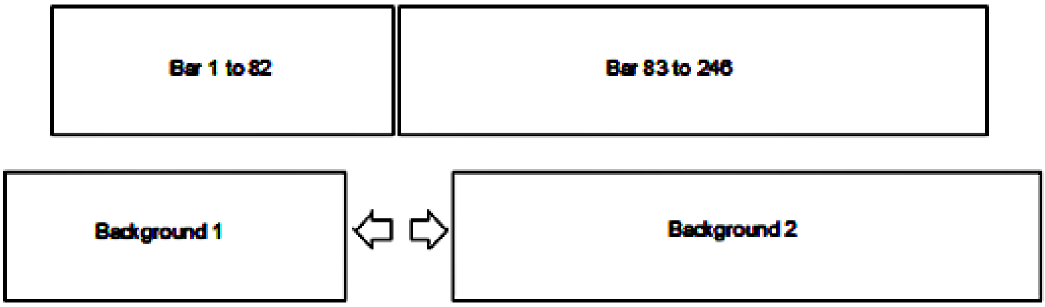

Figure 5.1 Background structure of Etude 1.

The second etude, apart from the semiquaver repeated notes at the beginning, is horizontally completely continuous. The nature of the material set in motion at the beginning continues in a similar fashion through to the end. The linear development is very restrained and there is no introduction of any new motifs nor any break in the lines. However, this etude is set out over three staves. The horizontal, note for note texture of the material in the lowest stave is unlike the sustained long chords in the upper two staves. It is also worth noting that the lowest stave is mostly sounded in the middle register and not the lowest one. While the top two staves continue unbroken for the whole piece, the lowest stave is removed between bars 50 and 73. This interruption separates the lowest stave into two parts. The continuous upper two staves form one section. The two, separated parts of the lowest stave form the two parts of the fundamental structure of the second etude.

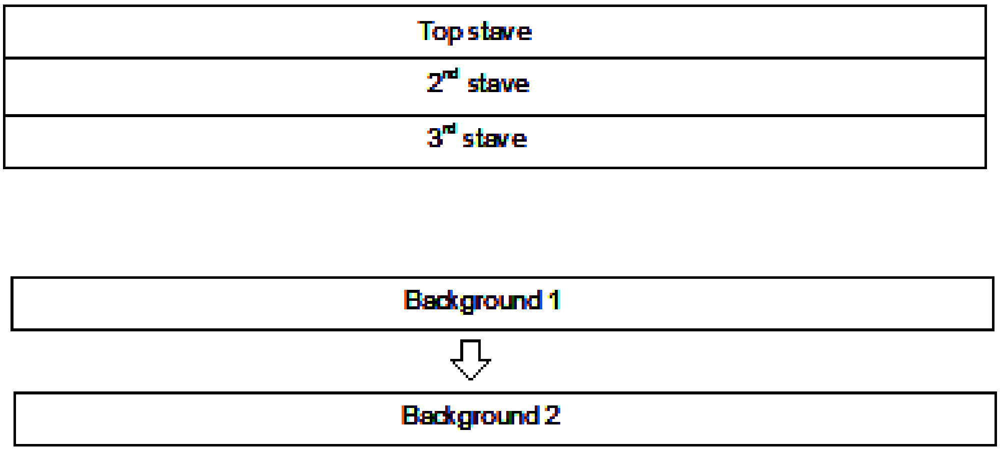

Figure 5.2 Background structure of Etude 2.

The fundamental structure of Etude 3 is similar to that of the first etude. This etude is also in two sections, but in this case it is transcribed from two pieces (*Journal* and *Cello Concerto*). The first 76 bars form the first section and bars 77 to 204 form the second. In this case, the tempo, texture, rhythm, character and layout also shift dramatically at this point. The first section is made up entirely of wide leaps and the second section constitutes interlocking rhythmic and contrapuntal material. There is no disguising of the disjunction at their meeting point – another similarity with Etude 1. The second section has a number of shifts and changes which, as subdivisions of the larger set, will constitute middle ground layers of structure.

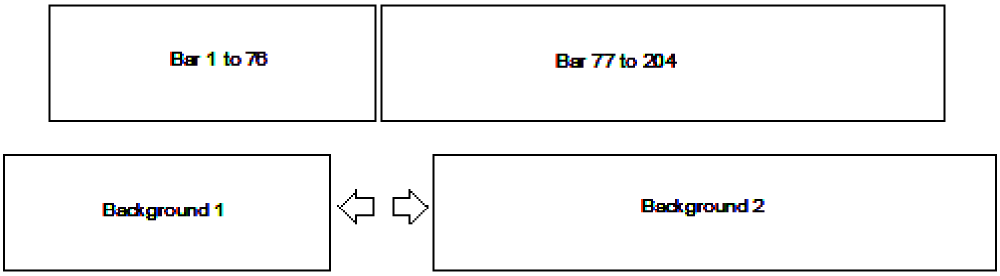

Figure 5.3 Background structure of Etude 3.

The fourth etude, transcribed from *Four Guitars*, consists primarily of two starkly contrasting kinds of material and short sections of whole bar semibreves (designated in figure 5.4 as C). The whole bar semibreves are two very brief sections which could be seen to act as subsets of the larger groupings. The sections of single notes and interrupting chords (designated in figure 5.4 as A) and the interlocking cross-rhythmical chords (designated in figure 5.4 as B) are much more prominent and are grouped in an AcBABc arrangement. At its simplest, this etude could be divided into two parts; namely AB/AB; this is because it could be argued that due to their brevity and simple construction, the two c sections do not play a structural role at the outermost level. For this reason it may be more effective to think of the background layer of this etude in two layers. While the two-part structure forms the basic outline of the etude's structure, the AcBABc arrangement can act as an intermediary background layer.

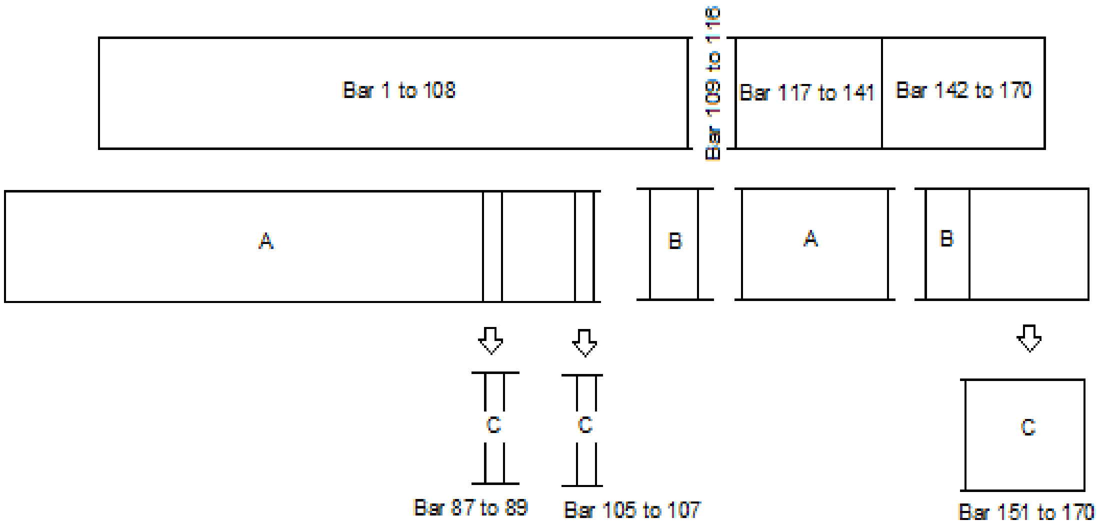
Bar 1 to 108
Bar 109 to 116
Bar 117 to 141
Bar 142 to 170
A
B
A
B
C
C
C
Bar 87 to 89
Bar 105 to 107
Bar 151 to 170

Figure 5.4 Background structure of Etude 4.

Etude 5 consists of many contrasting motifs, hiding the overall structure behind its complexity. The distinctive, descending staccato notes occur three times in the piece. The ideas which follow occur irregularly throughout this etude in different sequences. It would appear that the ordering of the various contrasting musical elements does not necessarily play a structural role at this level of the piece. Most tellingly, the composer used end barlines in bars 36 and 64, indicating two imposed breaks. Both of these breaks are preceded by a paused bar of silence. The silent bars in this piece provide hinges around which the other material is oriented. So, the overall layout of the primary layers of this piece, most pragmatically, lie in the three sections surrounding these breaks.

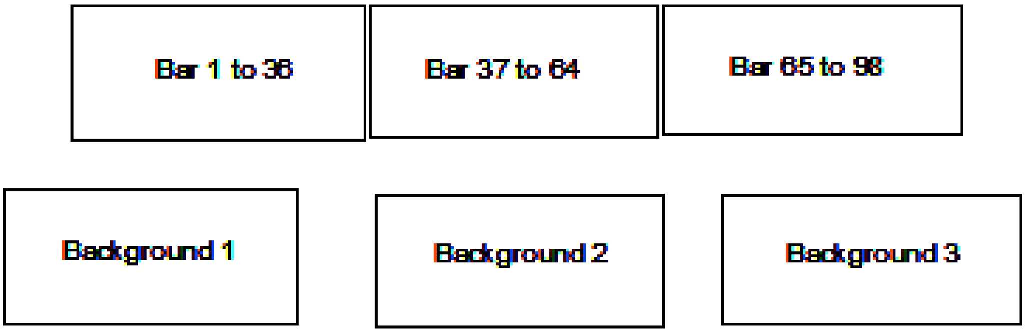
Bar 1 to 36
Bar 37 to 64
Bar 65 to 98
Background 1
Background 2
Background 3

Figure 5.5 Background structure of Etude 5.

The most conspicuous join in Etude 6 is between bars 139 and 140. The introduction of the high register repeated notes provides the highest degree of contrast in an otherwise much more homogenous piece. Also, as noted in Chapter 4, this section was drawn from a different area of *100 Frames* for orchestra. The first 119 bars of the etude were also noted to be an intact transcription. There are no other indications of background joins or separations. Taking these joins as background structural points, the first 119 bars form the first large section. The last 10 bars form a logical group at the end while the remaining 19 bars, made up of similar material to the first section, forms a third primary section. Apart from the double bar-line, there is no particularly obvious musical join before bar 120. We know that the section was added separately. For the intertextual aspect of the analysis it would be useful to include this transcription layout in the background.

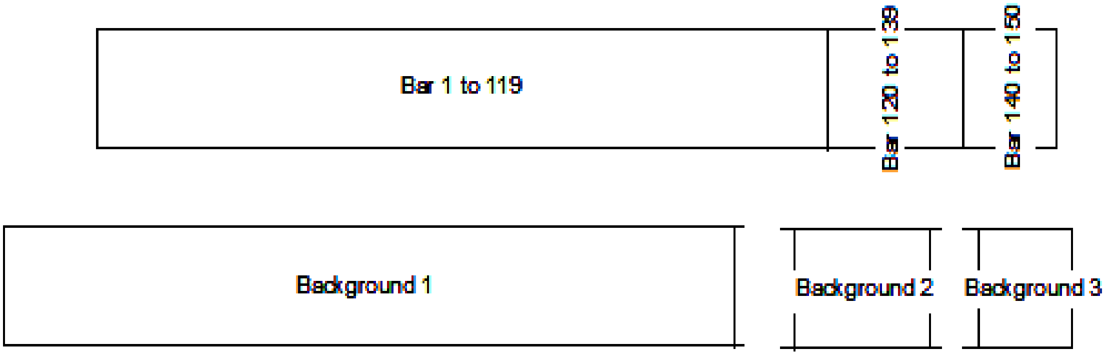

Figure 5.6 Background structure of Etude 6.

Similarly to Etude 2, the broadest structure of Etude 7 is layered vertically. Of the four staves, the chords on the top two staves consist of almost the same notes throughout, the only difference being the top chords omit the lowest of the three notes in each chord. Together these can be regarded as constituting the top layer. The chords on the lowest stave interlock in counterpoint to the top layer. While the chords in this stave are separated by register and construction, they are remarkably alike in every other respect. From the point of view of contrast, this may suggest that this layer be grouped together with the top two staves as part of the same strata. However, the shifts and changes that occur across the piece in both parts occur do not line up, making different structural layers in the middle ground levels. In order to plot these changes as sections most clearly, it would be better to treat the parts as the two primary layers in this etude. The middle layer, notated in the third lowest stave, consists of broken chords and only lasts for the first seven bars. Its brevity means that it plays a less important role structurally but provides interesting textural contrast in the otherwise entirely homogenous piece.

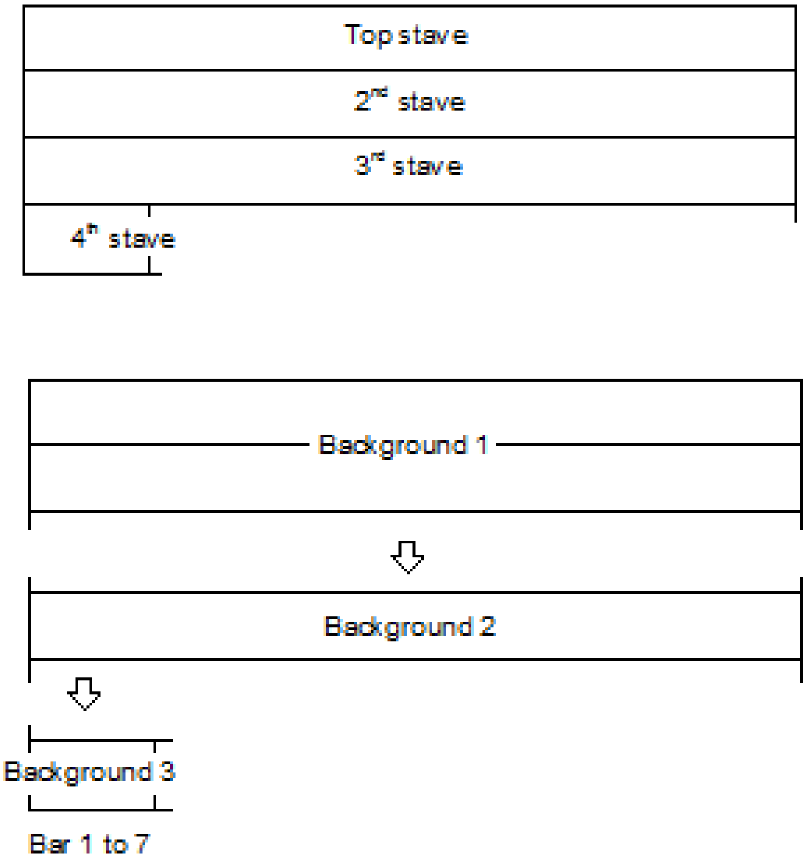

Figure 5.7 Background structure of Etude 7.

Etude 8, an unbroken transcription of *Movement for string quartet*, yields evidence of primary layers of construction less readily. There are no obvious fault lines in the form of musical breaks from which to trace the outlines of strata. There are four tempo changes alternating between 240 and 230 quavers per minute (in bars 49, 55, 60 and 195). The tempo changes are accompanied by double bar-lines but the material straddling these changes is relatively contiguous. In this case, we may enquire whether subdividing this work into layers would be at all useful to understanding it. Before disregarding the analytical strategy taken above, this etude provides an opportunity to experiment with the key factors involved with the applicability of the layered approach. The previous etudes acquiesced to being viewed in terms of layers so straightforwardly that there can be very little uncertainty of the effectiveness of the approach for them. If Etude 8 can be thought of in terms of strata, it is clear that it does not consist of layers in the same way as the other etudes. Either Etude 8 results from a different, much less conspicuous stratification or it does not have layers at all and other tactics need to be employed.

The most obvious factor is the one which initially generated doubt. How conspicuous do layers and strata need to be for the analysis to be fruitful? In this case we are faced with an etude which largely seems to unfold continuously and whose vertical relationships also appear to be relatively continuous. On closer inspection, it emerges that the structure consists of localized patterning. The four double octave A's, at the start of bar 6, reoccur regularly throughout the piece. There is no exact repetition, but enough similarity in shape and rhythm to create relatively clear reference points.

The restatements of the pattern are punctuated by lower register detached quaver intervals similar to the five in the first five bars of the piece. Most often there are three chords but there are enough exceptions for this not to be the rule.

If the structure of the work is related to patterning as it now seems, it will be necessary to outline the shape of the pattern. The immediate difficulty here is that the pattern's beginning and ending is unclear. Does the motif's pattern begin with the repeated notes in bar 1 or is that a statement of the end of a pattern similar to one which begins in bar 6? Is there a core idea which has been developed? Does the platonic ideal of the motif appear at all in the piece or are we only privy to derivations? In this etude these questions affect the structure both at the level of overall organization and inner detail. At this point it would seem that there is no one correct answer to all of these questions – the musical material could be interpreted in any number of ways and may not be relevant to the overall shape of the piece. The central question which still begs answering is whether there are layers of material embedded within the texture of the piece. In order to test other potential explanations, it may be necessary to assume there is no layering in the piece and temporarily suspend viewing it in these terms.

Viewing the etude simply as patterning on a broad scale reveals two prolonged areas of isolated intervals in the manner of the first five bars. The first occurs in the 22 bars between bars 103 and 125 and the second in the 33 bars between bars 161 and 194. The intervals are a mixture of repetition and slight variances but all constitute a quaver on the first beat of the bar followed by rests. Also, the last 21 bars of the pieces do not conform to the sequencing of the preceding 194 bars. In these bars, any sense of pattern is fragmented into irregular groupings and repetitions. These factors seem to group the patterning into three areas of activity. These areas are not separated by contrast in material or juxtaposition but rather by blending patterns together. It would seem that the patterns emerge from two distinct stock shapes: regular repeated intervals all at a quiet dynamic level and those of the louder descending curved shape such as the one beginning in bar 6. These two shapes are blended into each other so as to appear to be a continuation of one idea. They are blended both by the descending curve of the pitch shape and descending dynamic levels, appearing to lead directly from the curved line into the repeated intervals. However, throughout the etude, it must be noted that the difference between these two kinds of material is the primary means of generating contrast and punctuation. By separating the ideas in the pattern, the layered and fractured construction of the work springs into view. We now see that Etude 8 consists of two primary layers. These layers are not organized into sections as in the other etudes, but broken up into small alternately placed fragments. This organizational strategy disguised the stratification as it manifests so differently from the other etudes.

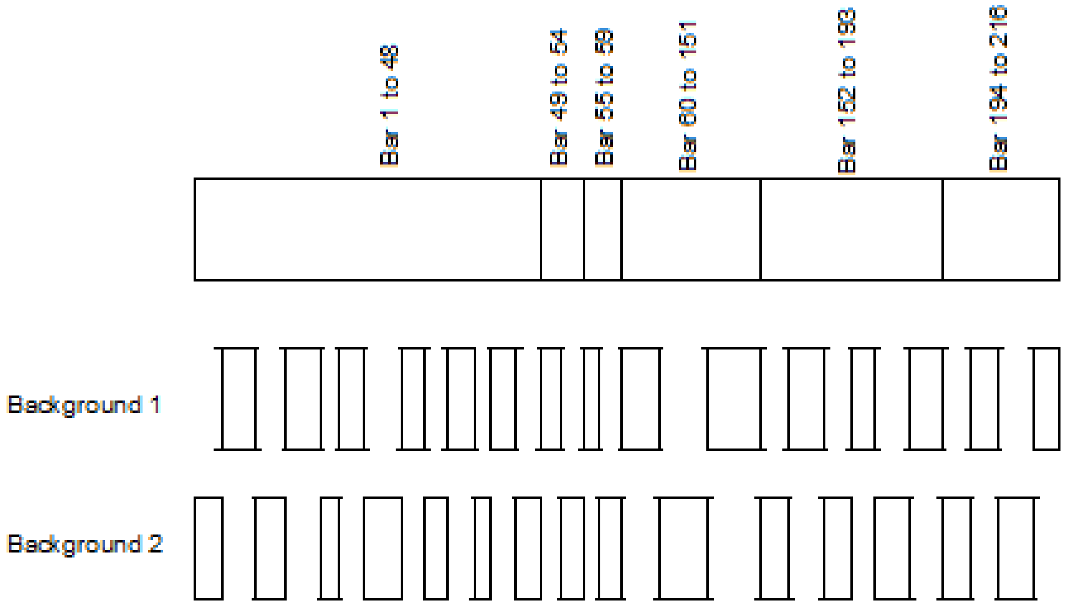

Figure 5.8 Background structure of Etude 8.

In reviewing the relevance of the layered approach to the etude, in this case a temporary suspension of the approach revealed enough about the work that the layers sprung into view. Here the approach was not imposed on the work but still provides a very clear retrospective understanding of its organization.

Similarly to Etude 8, Etude 9 also evades being broken into disparate and unrelated areas through transcription or obvious contrast. However, as there are four staves with four layers of differing material, evidence of vertical layering is not apparent. Moreover, there is enough variety in each of these layers and enough continuity between them to raise questions as to whether the layers are separate or contiguous entities.

The amount of subtlety, or perhaps the restraint in the degree of contrast in Etude 9, disguises the horizontal joints. Unlike Etude 8, there are four sections of material over the course of the etude marked by double bar-lines with different tempo markings. The first break section defined by a change in tempo is between bars 59 and 62, the next between bars 154 and 167, the third between bars 202 and 209 and the last one from bar 379 until the end. The first three of these break sections consists of ideas slightly unlike those found in the surrounding material. Although there are no obvious divisions in the texture before or after, the material is distinct enough to act as a divider between broader sections. The break section at the end of the etude includes compacted groupings of ideas from the main body of the piece making it even more similar to the preceding section. While maintaining largely similar textures, the rate of change of ideas and varying tempo, shifts the character slightly in this break section. Located at the end of the piece, this section does not divide the piece in the manner of the other three contrasting sections. It does however generate a sense of conclusion by recapping ideas, thinning out the material as it ends, almost in the manner of a traditional coda. These four break sections separate the piece into widely spanning horizontal strata and delineate the primary background structure of the etude.

In the other direction, vertically, the material is divided over the four staves in this etude. The independence of each of the staves also indicates a potentially important set of background layers. The top two staves, although different at points, largely work in parallel and together constitute a layer of material. The bottom two staves function much more independently and each make up their own independent layers. Each of the three vertically-stacked layers shifts and breaks through the course of the piece. Mostly, these shifts do not correlate with each other, resulting in overlapping of parts between the layers. However, these changes do line up at the double line points of the primary structure, supporting the structural function of those sections. For this reason, the lesser horizontal breaks in continuity perform intermediate structural roles.

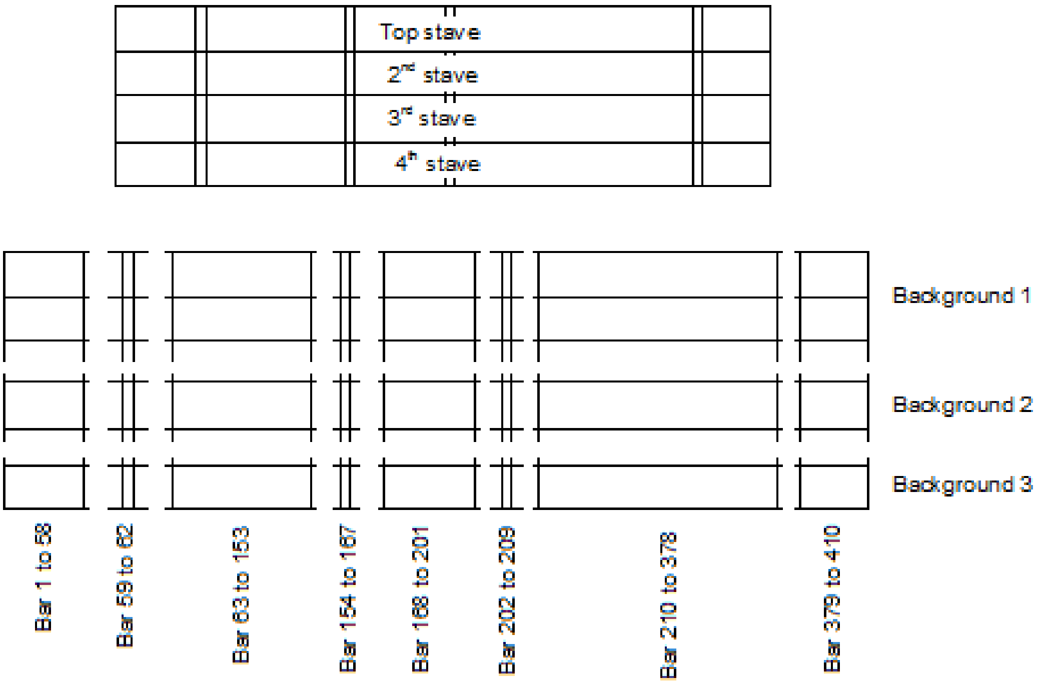
Top stave
2nd stave
3rd stave
4th stave
Background 1
Background 2
Background 3
Bar 1 to 58
Bar 59 to 62
Bar 63 to 153
Bar 154 to 167
Bar 168 to 201
Bar 202 to 209
Bar 210 to 378
Bar 379 to 410

Figure 5.9 Background structure of Etude 9.

Middle ground structure

The middle ground layers of this analysis are concerned with the subdivisions of the primary groupings. The goal at this stage is to find the intermediate components of the sections identified in the first stage. Contrast between the elements continues to play an important role in determining which material forms the layers. The points of maximum contrast in each section would be determined in proportion to the amount of contrast within the work – sections in some etudes, such as Etude 7, show minimal contrast while others, such as those in Etude 1, consist of diverse material. The etudes span various degrees of complexity and scope and so in many cases more than one middle ground layer may be necessary to reflect the activity in certain sections. There also may be horizontal and vertical layers at these levels.

Horizontally, the first section of Etude 1 very clearly consists of three longer sections characterized by symmetrical chords. These are punctuated at two points by shorter cross-rhythmical passages. There are three staves of material in the symmetrical chord sections; the lower two staves operate as one layer while the top stave carries a layer of melodic material.

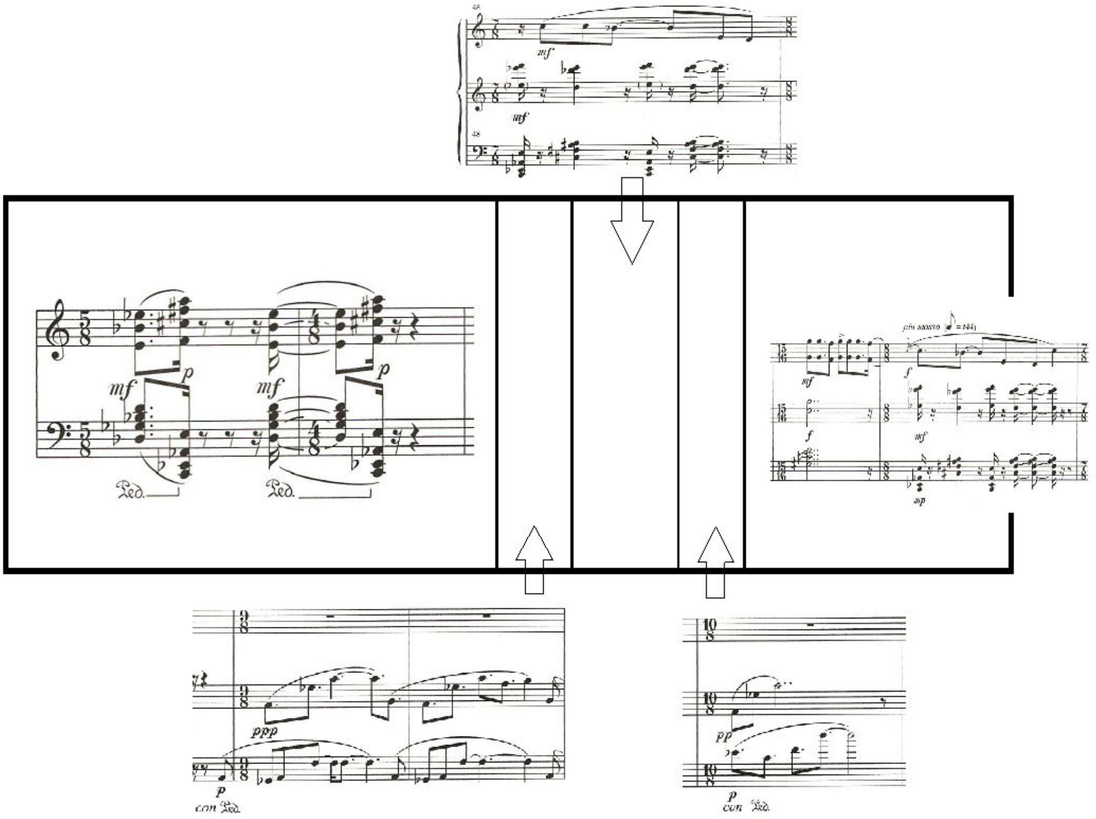

Figure 5.10 Middle ground structure of the first part of Etude 1.

The second half of this etude is less clearly delineated than the first. Individual sections are broader in this half of the etude and there is more development and moulding of material while the opening is more static. The main musical ideas in this half fall into three areas, each characterized by different but related musical ideas. The first of the three sections is the longest in the piece and is characterized by the repeated walking motif as identified in Chapter 4. This section consists of four vertical layers laid out on four staves, each showing an independent line of development. The compositional interventions here are incremental and cumulative, with small changes introduced into repetitions at irregular points in all four contrasting layers.

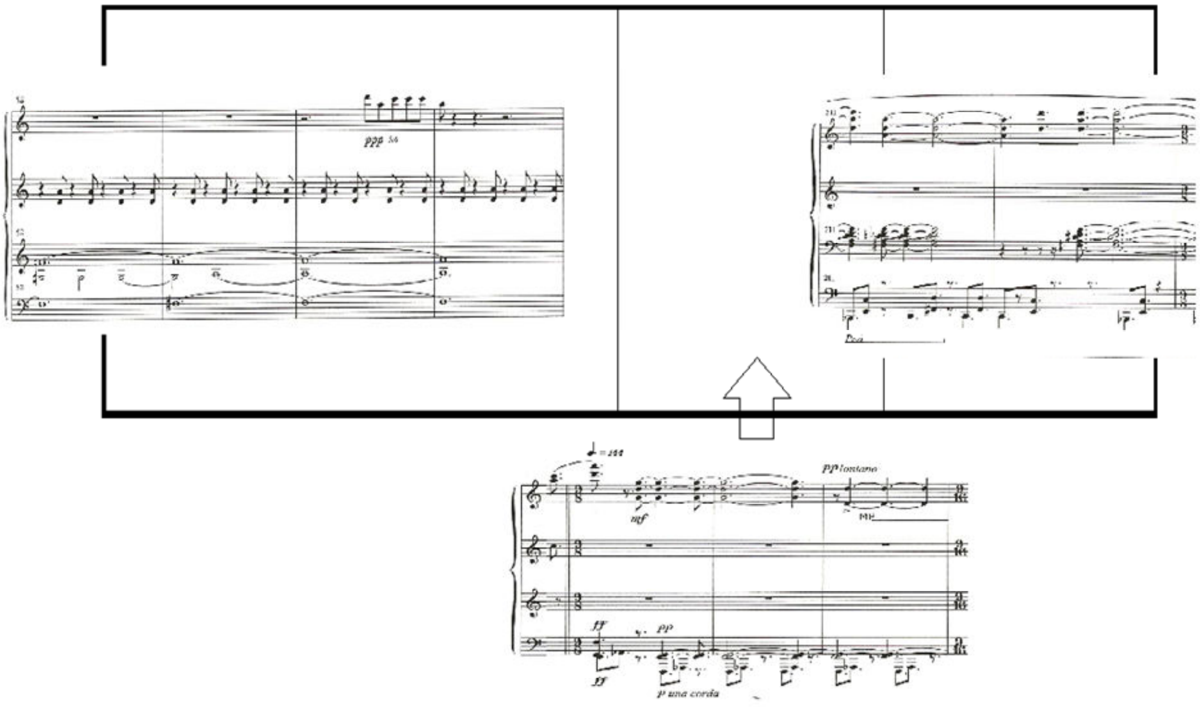

Figure 5.11 Middle ground structure of the second part of Etude 1.

The shift to the second of the three sections is abrupt and also characterized by repetition. Here the walking motif shifts into the low register and becomes a two-note pattern. This section is written over two staves and consists of two separate vertical layers. The last segment of the etude, while roughly continuing in a similar vein to the second of the three sections, bounces between material, recollecting ideas from previous sections in quick succession. There are three staves and three layers at first which are reduced to two staves from bar 228 to the end.

The two staves which form the upper layer of the primary structure of the second etude work together at the middle ground level, stretching the entire length of the piece. These two layers, made up of long held notes are both continuous for the whole piece, show no obvious breaks or joins. This makes further subdivision much more intricate. An organic layered structure emerges out of recurring elements in each part. In the top layer, the E flat to G flat interval at the beginning of bar two appears at the beginning of bars 4, 6, the middle of bar 10, the end of bar 13, bar 16, 19 and so on through the piece. In each case, it stands out due to its high register, creating a useful reference point in the top layer. Treating this interval as a reference point highlights groupings of two and three intervals – irregularly spaced from one another. In some groupings, this interval is first and in others, it falls at the middle or end of the group.

The groupings are separated by long sustained notes. These groupings constitute a second middle ground level for this layer.

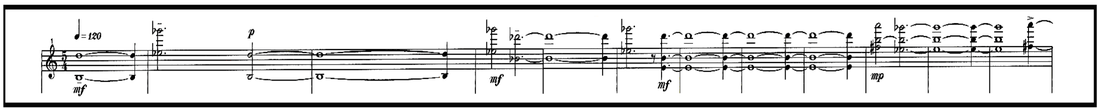

Figure 5.12 Middle ground structure of the upper part of Etude 2.

The layer formed by the second stave operates in the same way as the top layer. While intervals run parallel for the whole etude, the groupings and patterns operate slightly differently. In this layer, the interval from G to B on the first beat of bar 2 becomes the reference point. While echoing the structure of the upper layer, by bar 4 it is already clear that the groupings do not line up with the upper layer, running alongside but independently of the top layer.

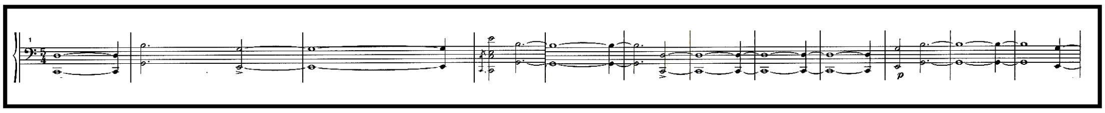

Figure 5.13 Middle ground structure of the middle part of Etude 2.

The two background layers of the lowest stave, while much more fragmented than the other layers, are made up of only three kinds of stock ideas. The middle ground structure of the lowest layer of Etude 2 can be traced from grouping these three types of material. These are the brief repeated notes at the beginning, the short melodic lines such as those in bars 15 to 17 and held octaves as in bar 24. The repeated notes, as previously noted, last for two bars and do not recur in the piece. They form a self contained structural unit in bars 2 and 3, separate from the two octaves, the last of which overlaps with the repeated notes. The overlapping of these two middle ground layers might suggest that they should be regarded together. However, they are marked with different dynamic levels in order to differentiate them. The melodic fragments initially occur as two bar single note series of notes but in bar 28 occur in counterpoint to a long held low notes. A similar construction appears once more in bars 83 to 85, in this case a series of three long notes in the lower register. In both cases the long held notes bear a different dynamic marking and are in disparate registers, also indicating a degree of independence between these parts. The third stock idea used in the lowest layer is sustained octaves. Mostly occurring as isolated utterances, they are separated by rests and distance.

Where these octaves occur in close proximity, they have different dynamic markings to emphasize each unit's independence.

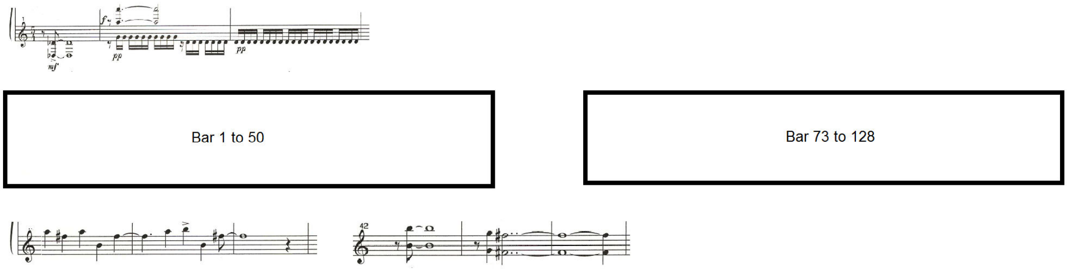

Figure 5.14 Middle ground structure of the lowest stave of Etude 2.

The middle ground of the first section in Etude 3 also shows evidence of both vertical and horizontal layering. Vertically, the two staves of interval leaps, are separated to form four interrelated voice layers. As each voice layer of repeated notes shifts, subtle melodic shapes are formed. The shifting occurs at different rates in each voice layer, resembling a fragmented four-part contrapuntal texture.

There are four breaks in this texture in Etude 3. The first takes the form of an abrupt, loud chord in bar 39, two bars of related but contrasting material in bars 45 and 46, an abrupt loud chord in bar 64 and one bar of related but contrasting material in bar 72. These four breaks separate the first half of the etude into five interval leap sections.

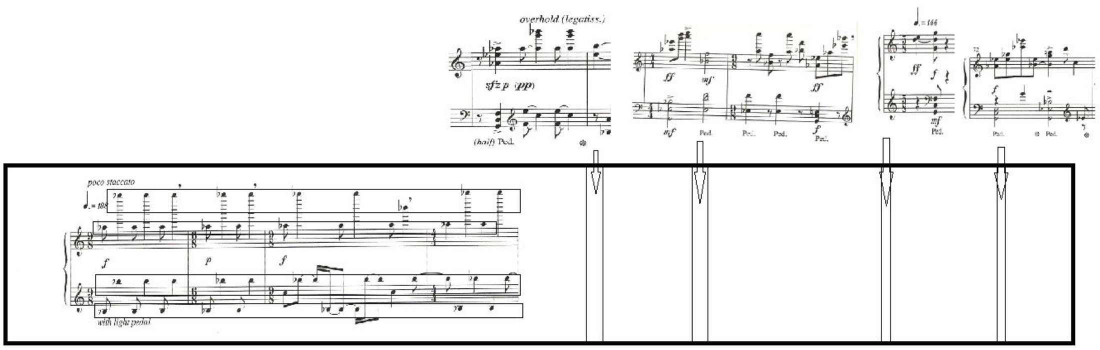

Figure 5.15 Middle ground structure of the first section of Etude 3.

The second part of Etude 3 begins with an area defined by a continuous, regular leaping bass line. The leaping bass layer persists as either quavers or dotted quavers until bar 90 when it is suddenly replaced by the oscillating fifths and sixths. The domain above the leaping bass line is occupied by numerous, splintered and overlapping strata, all representing middle ground levels of activity. From bars 77 to 79, there are three layers above the bass layer. The second layer from the top is made up of regular, *fortissimo*, sustained minim-length intervals. They are slurred to form a phrase spanning the three bars. The top and third layers form two parallel *pianissimo* melody layers in octaves. In bar 79, the top part is doubled at the octave to augment the melody. Bar 80 introduces a shift to a new idea of a single upper layer in octave leaps. Bar 81 includes two upper layers of contrapuntal melodic material, the top part in octaves. In bar 82, a single upper layer of held minim intervals, reminiscent of those in bars 77 to 79, appears, lasting only two bars and overlapped by a layer of thinly-strewn octaves which last for two bars. Bars 85 and 86 have a two layer structure with three parallel octave voice layers making up the higher part. In bar 87, these fragment into a repeated octave interval leap. There are 3 layers in bars 88 and 89, including a middle layer of scattered octaves. The top layer of these bars is a phrase of octaves which continues into a second *legato* phrase in bars 89, 90 and 91. This loud melody cantilevers over the new material in the bass line after its shift to oscillating fifths and sixths in bar 90.

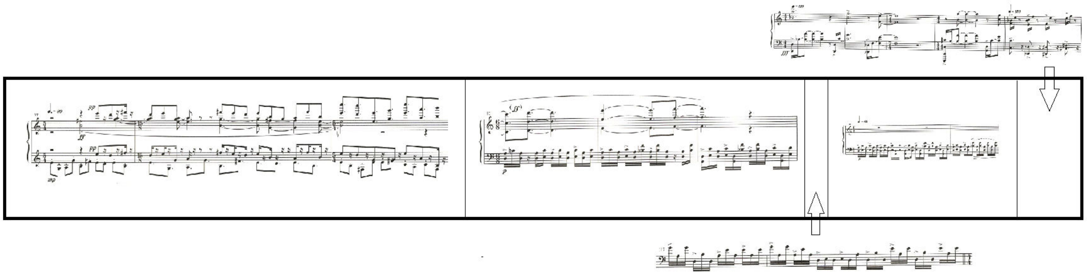

Figure 5.16 Middle ground structure of the second section of Etude 3.

The primary linking material in the rest of Etude 3 is the layer of oscillating fifths and sixths. In the middle ground section, the oscillating layer forms the middle layer punctuated at various points by sustained chords, which cause a break in the middle part as both hands are needed to play the outer parts. There are two places where this overall texture is disturbed, from bars 117 to 124 and from bar 188 to the end. These divide the second half of this section into two further main areas. The two disruptions are interesting as they are both instances of development of the material which disrupts the flow instead of maintaining it. The first junction, beginning in bar 117, is approached gently with the intervals breaking up into a single melody line outlining the interval patterns. Bar 120 moulds these jumps into slightly jarring chord constructions of the same pattern. The chord pattern is repeated in bars 123 to 125 as quiet, homorhythmic chords before returning to the bubbling oscillating intervals in bar 126. The next interjection, occurring from bar 188 to the end, also consists of loud, slightly abrasive, homorhythmic chord constructions in irregular phrases. These continue, with a single bar return to the oscillating intervals in bar 199, until the end.

The middle ground structure of Etude 4 can be seen in the joins created by changes in the shifting processes. The etude opens with a single E followed by a process of shifting the second of two chords one semiquaver closer to the first chord each bar. This process continues in bar 7 when the two chords meet and so become only one chord. From bar 8, the single note at the beginning of each bar is reduced by a semiquaver in each bar as the other chord is now shifting closer to the single note at the same rate. Having switched around, the first chord is also moving away from its counterpart at the rate of one semiquaver per bar. The process is concluded in bar 24 as a semiquaver single note and two semiquaver chords concluding the first middle ground structure of the work. The single note E shifts up to a G in bar 25 and follows the same process as the first section until bar 49, this forms a second intermediate section of the work. Bars 49 and 50 are simply two *pianissimo* semibreve C sharps in ascending registers. After bar 51 two new elements are introduced. The initial musical idea of the single note semibreve followed by two chords resumes the same process as before. The two new moving elements are a middle register minim interval and a duplicate of the first chord, both moving later in the bar at the rate of one semiquaver per bar. Bars 58 to 60 break the flow before the same processes continue from bar 61 to bar 66. The single note shifts up to an F in bar 67 before following the initial process until bar 78, dropping the additional two ideas introduced in the previous section. After two bars of semibreves, non-linear processes are introduced. Between bars 81 and 85, two processes affecting two blocks of material are interlocked in alternating single bar and double bar groups. After four bars of semibreves and rests, a similar interlocking, complex overlapping of processes occurs until the end of the first primary section of the work in bar 103.

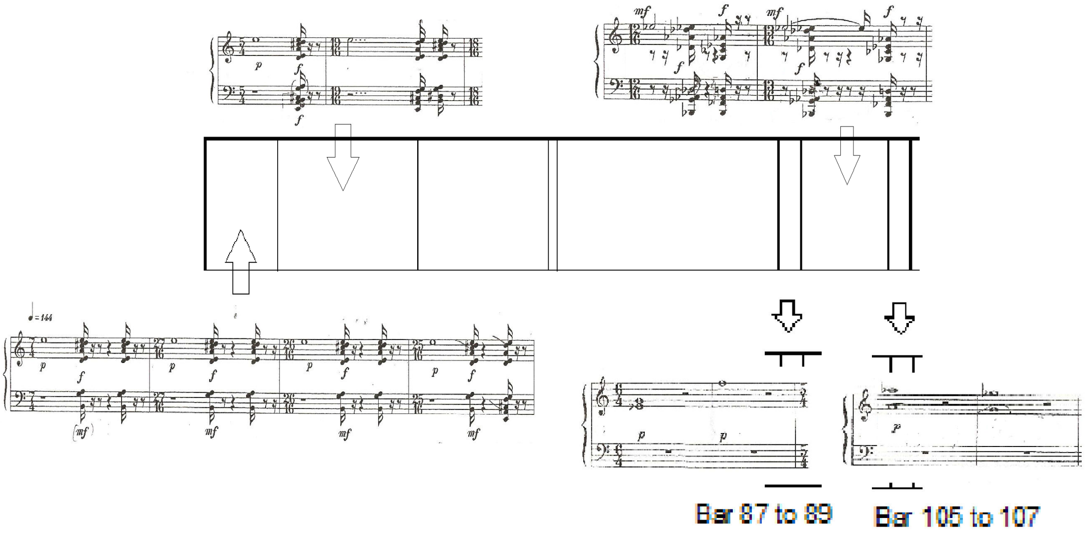

Figure 5.17 Middle ground structure of the first section of Etude 4.

The middle ground structure of the cross-rhythmical chord passage is more straightforward. The section has only two units of ideas, each one bar in length. The first, in bar 109, is a cross rhythm of four repeated right-hand chords against three repeated left-hand chords. The second idea sees the chords changed, shifted downward and, while also four against three, the second chord of each right-hand group is replaced with a semiquaver rest. These two bars alternate three times followed by two statements of the first bar to make a total of eight bars in the section. The next passage sees a return to the same, process-driven, content of the portion of the etude. Totalling 23 bars, the middle ground segments of this section are fragmented recollections of the initial shifting processes. There are eight fragments, seven short portions followed by an area ten bars long. After a bar's rest, an eight bar replica of the cross-rhythm passage flows from bar 142 to 149. The final section of this etude is made up of semibreve dyads.

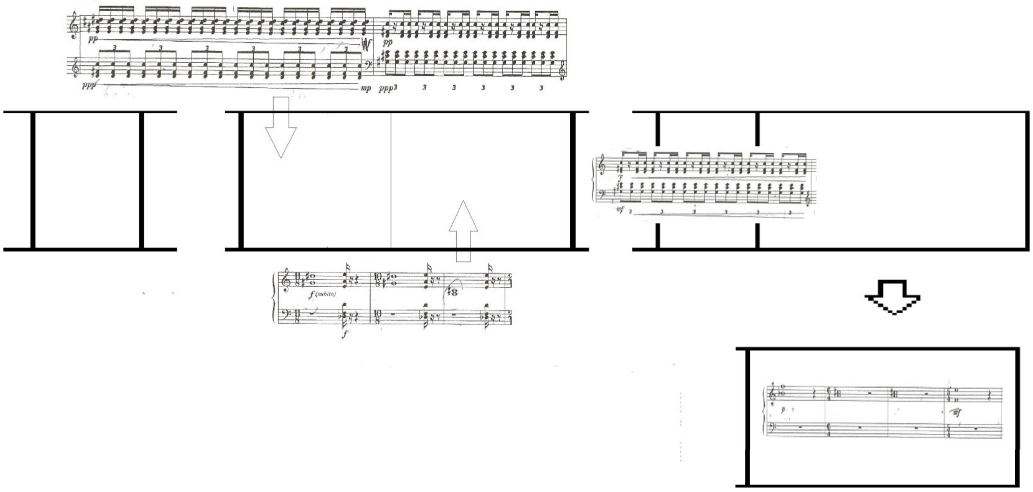

Figure 5.18 Middle ground structure of the last section of Etude 4.

The fifth is the most discontinuous of the etudes. While the three primary areas of the etude are analogous to each other, the middle ground level of this etude is an amalgam of numerous stock ideas. Each stock idea lasts one bar – the barlines outlining each idea. Several ideas in the first 18 bars are separated by rest bars. These rest bars, while not bearing any immediate direct relationship with the material, group certain material together while introducing the main ideas of the piece. The only whole bar rests in the remainder of the piece divide the important structural sections.

Vertically, many of the ideas are contrapuntal with two voices moving in contrary motion to create symmetry. The two staves represent two separate layers in the middle structural levels. In the bars where the converging and diverging lines are placed on the same stave, the lower part is grouped with the lower layer of activity. While both of these layers extend for the whole etude, they line up with each other all the way and so can be organized together on the horizontal plane.

The first large horizontal section stretches from bars 1 to 36 and consists of eleven individual ideas and slight variances thereof. In the first 18 bars, the first layer of middle ground structure is indicated by the rest bars. The second layer is outlined by each individual bar. From bar 19 onwards, the ideas are placed adjacent to one another, however the bars continue to outline each unit. The more general middle ground groupings are indicated by the double barlines.

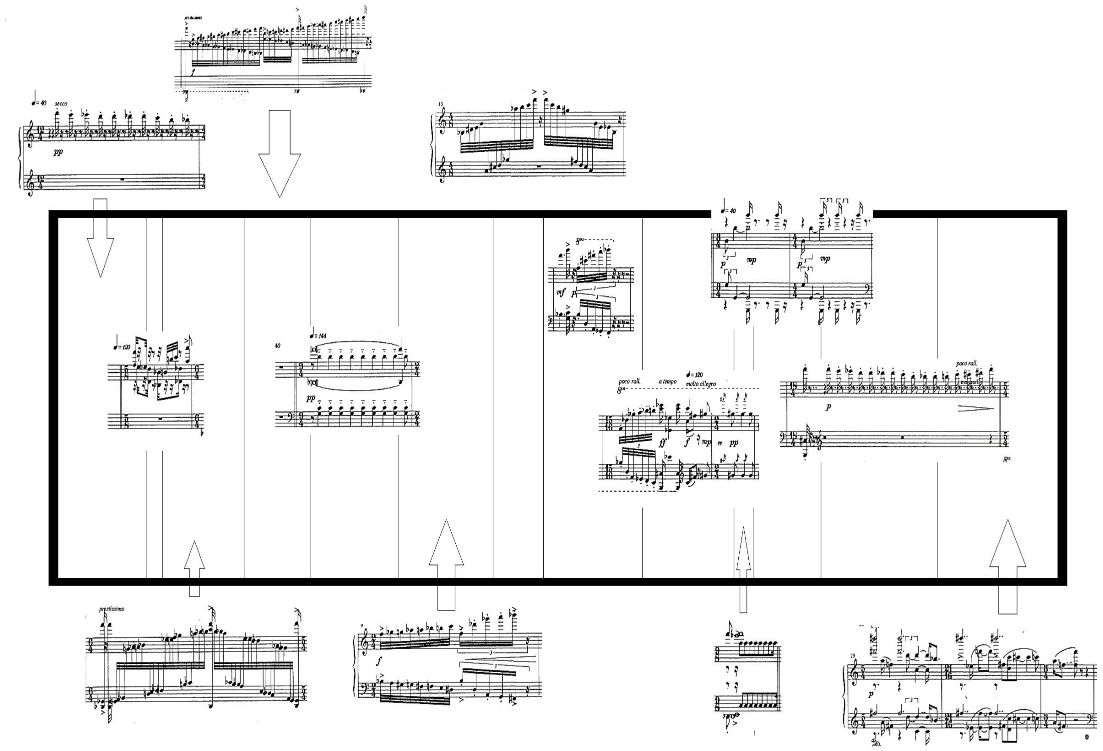

Figure 5.19 Middle ground structure of Etude 5.

Throughout this etude, differing material is visibly contrasted with the surrounding ideas. Groupings can be clearly identified by their shapes. The eight bars from bars 18 to 25 hold eight different ideas. Here they operate as a middle ground grouping of contrasting material. Bar 27 is a slight variation of the unit in bar 26 and so it forms the next group. Bar 28 echoes the descending chromatic line from the first bar. The rhythmic and textural similarities between the next six bars from bar 29 (together with the double barlines grouping them together) suggest that they form a layer. The ideas in the first three bars all work inside the bars while the overlapping tied notes between bars 32 and 33 and bars 33 and 34 bleed the musical ideas across the barlines. The next three bars form a middle ground section of flowing demisemiquavers which are also outlined by their respective bars. The next bar of a semibreve interval buffers the following six bars of repeated demisemiquavers. The musical ideas in the next short section of four bars are outlined by the slurs and do not fit into the bars.

The leaping *legato* demisemiquavers in the bars that follow provide a sense of unity as a section. The jumping and detached contrary motion octaves in bar 35 also act as an independent entity.

No new material is introduced to the other two large sections and only small alterations to the ideas introduced in the first section take place. The middle ground layers can be grouped according to the same criteria as the first section.

In Etude 6, each bar acts as a frame for the ideas it contains. So, as in the fifth etude, the barlines serve as important foreground structural reference points for the etude and are not only an organizational tool. In Chapter 4 it was noted that the composer intended the frames to be free enough to unfold in any sequence. If there is no particular compositional intention behind the relationships between each bar, how important is the layout of the middle ground structure of the piece? According to the principles of this analysis, the composer's intention is one role player among many in understanding the piece. Whichever organizational procedure a composer applies, the work now exists in a certain shape and sequence. At this point, it will be useful to draw a diagram that represents the proportions of the layers that form the shape. So, in order to find reference points, it will still be useful, at least practically, to outline the contour of the middle ground layers of this piece.

Interestingly, there are a number of areas where similar material can be grouped together in the first 119-bar section of the piece. The first groupings hinge around the held single Fs struck immediately after the chords on the first beat. There is no discernable system governing chords' changes, but the regularity of these F's position is an important reference point in the entire first section of the etude. The F is positioned similarly in the first six bars but does not appear in bar 7. The F then continues in the three bars until bar 12 where it is absent. It then appears in each bar from bars 13 to 18 after which in bar 19 there is an ascending broken chord. This broken chord has the effect of creating a transition and so a temporary break in the texture. These two factors become the defining features of the two middle ground layers in the first part of Etude 6. The appearance of the ascending broken chords indicates the outline of the larger middle ground strata while a sense of cadence emerging out of the regular single note utterances suggests organic, more intimate intermediate layers. The regular single notes shift pitch intermittently throughout the piece resulting in a third layer of middle ground material. Tracing out these three markers reveals the following three layers of middle ground structure.

The first part of Etude 6 can be divided into four sections. Here, the ascending broken chords can be read as structural markers. The four sections are as follows: bars 1 to 19, bars 20 to 43, bars 45 to 82 and bars 84 to 120. Each of these can in turn be broken up into smaller groupings which are defined mainly by the behaviour of the regular single notes. Bars 1 to 7, 8 to 11, bars 12 to 13 and bars 15 to 18 all form groupings ending in held chords. The ascending broken chord in bar 19 signals the close of the first section.

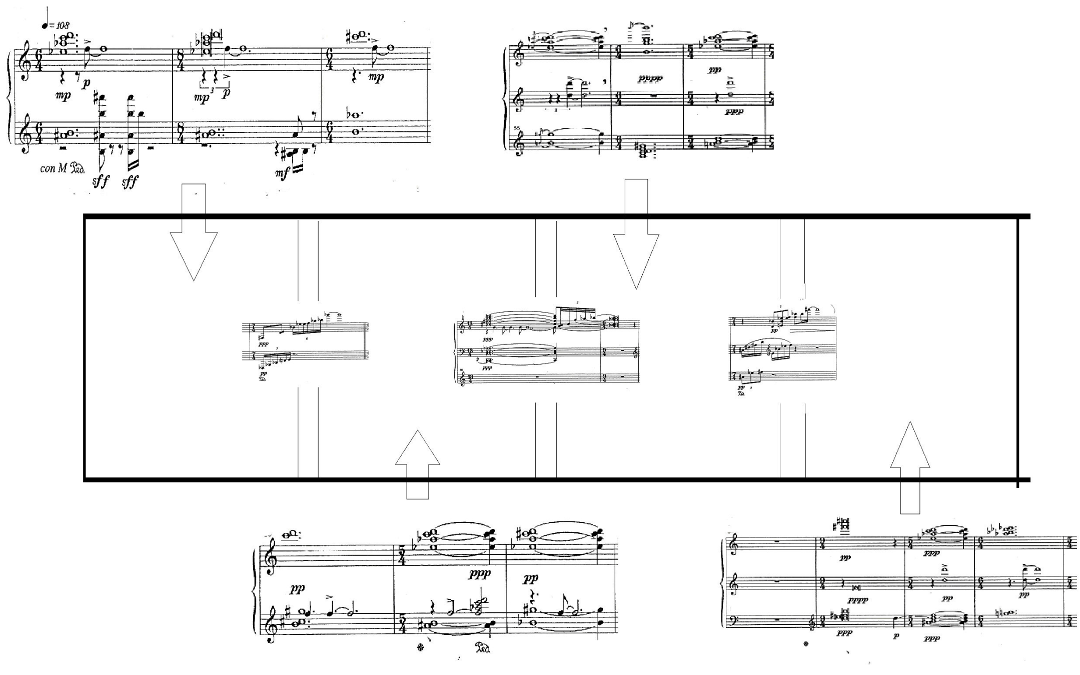

Figure 5.20 Middle ground structure of the first section of Etude 6.

From bars 20 to 25 the single F continues in a similar way but in bar 26 it shifts suddenly to F sharp. Also, instead of occurring on the fourth quaver of the bar, the single notes appear right at the beginning of the bar. From here the general rate of change also increases with the held chords also shifting more than in the opening. Without any break in texture after bar 30, the single note shifts from F sharp to A in bar 31 before returning to an F in its original position on the fourth quaver of the bar from bars 32 to 34. After a small ascending broken chord in bar 35 which is held in bar 36, there are two frames in the manner of the second section in bars 37 and 38. The four bars from bars 40 to 43 contain three utterances. The first is a chord in bar 40 followed by a blend of a held chord and an ascending broken chord in bars 41 and 42 before another chord in bar 43. Bar 44 is silent and heralds a clear break, indicating the end of this section. The single notes build intensity by stepping upward in small increments[5].

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[5] The small upward steps occur in bars 46 to 48; bars 49 to 51; 52 and 53. There is a shift of single note to F sharp stated at the beginning of the bar from bar 55 to 59 before a shift of single note from F sharp to A in bar 60. Then the rate of change increases resulting in sections being able to support greater variety. There is a return to F sharp for bars 61 and 62 before one bar A in bar 63 until section ends in bar 74. Bars 75 to 82 are then linked by a D octave repeated note.

Even though the tempo and bar length remain the same, the pitch rate of change increases from bar 84, thus accommodating more variety in each section. From bar 87 many more of the chords are sustained rather than simply repeating the pattern. Held chords such as those in bars 89, 91 and 93 which, in previous sections, would have performed cadence-like functions, now have a less divisive effect. Much longer sustained notes are needed to punctuate the texture and this occurs across bars 95 and 96. A prolonged section beginning in bar 97 unfolds. Here, the single notes are again placed at the beginning of the bar. This, more emphatic sequencing continues until the end of bar 119. The single notes shift between an A, F sharp, G and E but from bar 106, they increasingly centre on the F sharp, adding to the intensity and momentum of the passage without any rise in dynamic. The double barline before bar 120 indicates a primary structural point.

The material between bars 120 and 139 was not directly transcribed from the orchestral piece but instead four, loosely organized, middle ground phrase-like sections can be seen. Bars 120, 121 and 123 are ascending broken chords separated by a bar rest in bar 122. Whereas in previous sections these indicated breaks and shifts, in this section they become primary rather than dividing material. From bar 125, new variations on the original material begins. These comprise a chord followed by a two-note, slurred, interval of a B moving to a C sharp. This is repeated five times until two bars of rest occur in bar 130 and 131. Four frames further, a two-note slur from D sharp to C sharp is introduces in bars 132 and 135. The ascending broken chord in bar 138 is then held in bar 139 and this closes the first part of Etude 6.

The final section of the etude, from bar 140 to the end, is characterized by the A tremolo in the upper part and is stratified into four horizontal layers shown by the four staves. These layers unfold independently each showing their own middle ground levels of activity. The tremolo stave only consists of repeated demisemiquaver As grouped as quintuplets tied to a quaver. The last demisemiquaver is tied to the quaver which results in five sounding notes in each group. These groupings form units of activity which in turn are arranged together in broader clusters which are separated by single crotchet rests. There are seven of these clusters, each consisting of a different and irregular number of units. The sequence of the number of units in each cluster is 1, 5, 9, 16, 5, 9, 5. While it would seem that there is a preference for odd number groupings, particularly of 5 and 9, the sequence is irregular and unpredictable with no particular pattern or system in operation.

The sparsely populated second stave is made up of repeated long, widely spaced, three-note chords. They are irregular in length and are separated at two points by a low chord in the bass in bars 144 and 149 – an echo of the notes in the chord on the third stave. The break caused by the low chord divides this stave into two simple phrase-like structures. The first phrase contains two statements of the widely spaced three-note chord followed by a single low five-note chord and the second phrase contains three statements of the three-note chord followed by a single, low five-note chord.

The third stave is characterized by three different five-note chords constructed in tight shapes of intervals of a second and third. There is very little connection between these chords and they occur entirely irregularly across this section, making each individual chord a middle ground unit at this level. The first is the five-note bass clef chord in bar 159. It is identical to the chord mentioned previously in bar 144 of the second stave but as the utterances are disconnected, there is no other way of linking the layers on the score. Listeners, without the help of the score, would have more reason to think the second stave chord is part of the third stave rather than the second. For this analysis, the shape of the sound material is the priority at this point. The similarity between the layers is an instance of unity or even overlap between layers. This observation suggests adaptability and variability in the structure of the piece – these layers show a great deal fluidity which must be acknowledged by the analysis. The other two chords in this section occur only in this layer and all three occur irregularly in this stave for the rest of the piece.

The incredibly subtle shadings of material in Etude 7 fog the gentle middle ground layers of the etude. The third stave is the simplest structurally and consists of three two-bar arches of disconnected notes, rising and falling three times until bar 7 when the part retreats completely. There are three arches of rising and falling notes. Each phrase-like arch operates as three distinct groups of notes. These groupings form three logical middle ground layers.

The outer two layers of the etude extend for the length of the etude and while independent in organization and proximity, relate very strongly to each other in their texture, organization and character. Incidentally, in the opening seven bars, these layers are unaffected by the entrance and exit of the brief third part. At the widest middle ground level, these layers interlock vertically and share prolonged silences at the same time. These silences divide the parts up horizontally across the piece. The longest such break occurs in the bars of rests in bars 28, 29 and 30. The next longest silence occurs for two bars in bars 55 and 56. There are also five single bars of silence in these parts in bars 5, 37, 41, 46 and 52. In total these silences divide the piece into seven short phrase-like passages. Within each phrase, these layers change and shift pitch independently and irregularly, forming smaller subdivisions in each part.

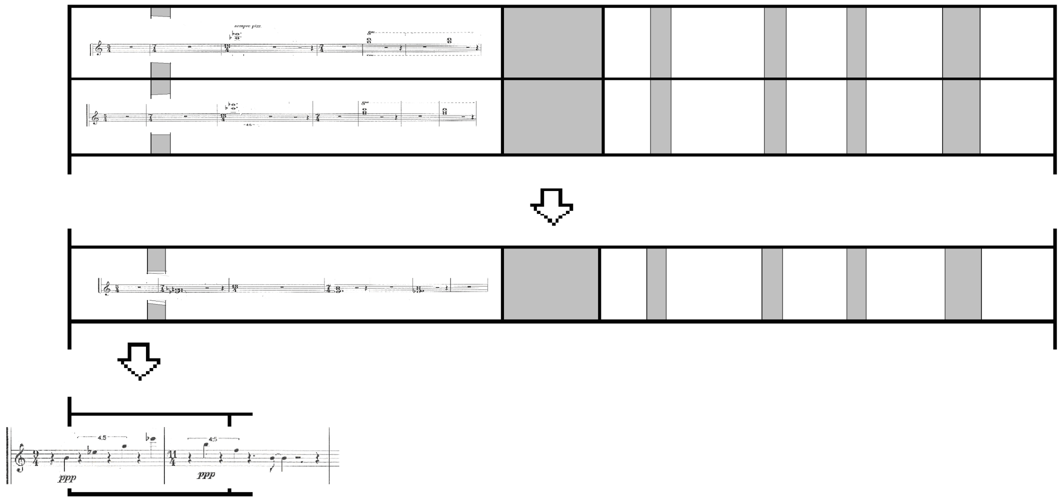

Figure 5.21 Middle ground structure of Etude 7.

The complex and fragmented nature of the background structure of Etude 8 makes the middle and foreground layers of this piece much more obvious and simple to define. The two fragmented primary layers alternate with one another and extend to the whole piece. The two areas of extended detached notes mean that there are two larger stretches of activity but within those sections, the layers largely appear in two- and three-bar stretches. For example, the descending line beginning on the high A in bar 6 is defused by the two bars of repeated chords in bars 9 and 10. The middle ground structure of the work consists of the short units of these alternating layers: the first layer is conspicuous through its repetition and the second by the descending and more melodic shape. Following this means of identification, the layers emerge very straightforwardly. As the structure is fluid and variable rather than fixed, there are areas in the work where the two layers are blended with one another. This happens between bars 49 and 54 where the melodic part has seven repetitions of the G sharp and does not immediately revert to the repeated chords but rather to another bar of melodic statement. In these cases, tiny differences are nevertheless still apparent between each fragment. While the repetition may suggest an alternate layer, the horizontal shape of the melody is more closely related to the melodic layer. Following this criterion through the piece reveals the following middle ground structure:

The final stretch of Etude 8 between bars195 and 216 appears to be quite different to the rest of the piece. However, on closer scrutiny it emerges that it consists of an expansion of the same kind of material. Here too is an alternating between melodic, horizontal construction and repeated vertical material. Bars 195 to 200 feature three short melodic fragments. Here there are two vertically-aligned voices in the upper part, underpinned with less important accompanying intervals below. From bar 201 are three areas of repetition, although in this case it is the repetition of a two-note slur rather than isolated chords.

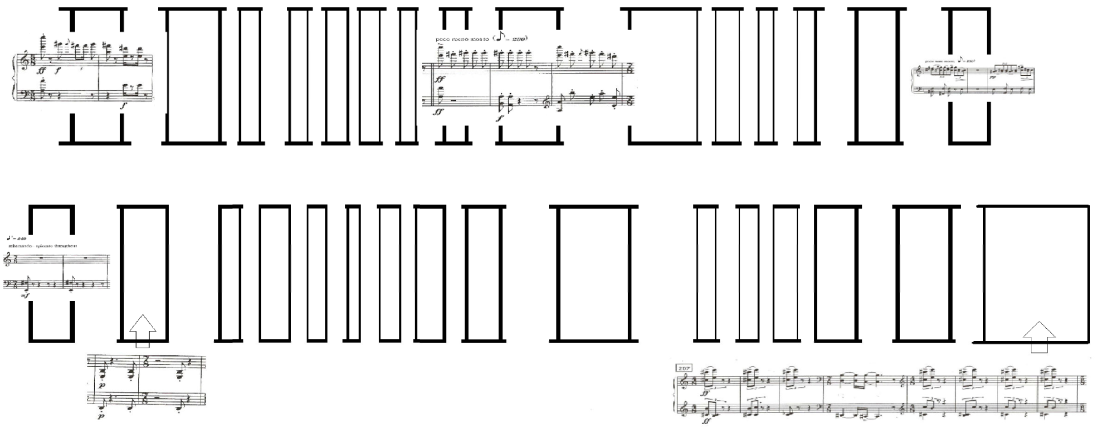

Figure 5.22 Middle ground structure of Etude 8.

The top two of the four horizontal layers or staves of Etude 9 operate, structurally, in parallel for the whole of the etude. The layers and joins mostly line up with one another and so, at the middle ground level, can be handled together. In the first of the primary sections of this etude (from the beginning until bar 60) there are only two different musical ideas which are repeated. The first 15 bars consist of the repetition of widely spaced held notes. From there until bar 60, the ideas in the top two layers are interspaced by long rests. The second, leaping staccato idea occurs between bars 17 and 43, seven times in total, lasting for only one bar each time. A variant of the first idea appears for three bars from bar 56 until the first double barline in bar 60. The break section is characterized by a frivolous melody at the top with chords in the second layer. After the break, the top two layers have widely-spaced held semibreves until bar 70 when a two-note slurred melody begins in the top part with an accompanying major second in the layer below. This gradually blends with the widely-spaced held notes which, in bar 91, return to the initial idea from the first section until the second double barline break in bar 201. The break in these two layers consists of leaping diverging staccato patterns. From bar 209, there is a return to the first idea until bar 218. After 12 bars of repeated held chords, the second layer begins with a variant of the first idea which is deconstructed into its component parts. From bar 248, all four layers of the piece begin operating together with arches of broken chord patterning passing through all the layers. Aurally the effect is of a single rising and descending pattern without discernable layers. On the score, the strict vertical division is maintained. The blending of the layers and gradual merging of material is conspicuous through these sections. Widely differing ideas are changed incrementally, gradually changing shape and becoming one another. The development is in no way narrative in the sense that it has direction or cause and effect but rather it is transient and reversible. This observation is a critical stylistic feature of Volans's music.

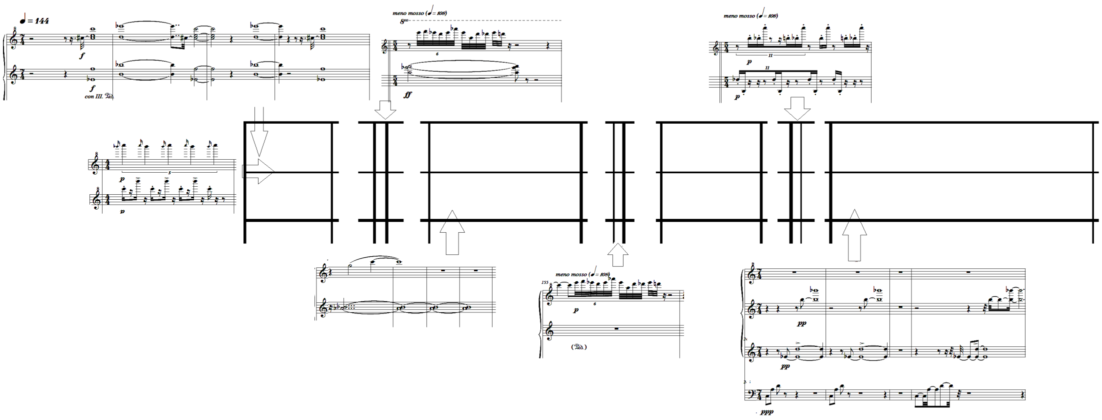

Figure 5.23 Middle ground structure of top two layers of Etude 9.

The ninth etude is much longer than the other eight etudes and a written description of all of the incremental evolutions of Etude 9 would be too lengthy at this point in the analysis. By continuing in the same analytical fashion to the end of the etude, the following middle ground structure of the top two layers emerges. It is a middle ground characterized by gradual evolution rather than development of material. The layers on the third and fourth staves of Etude 9 behave largely like ostinatos beneath the top two layers.

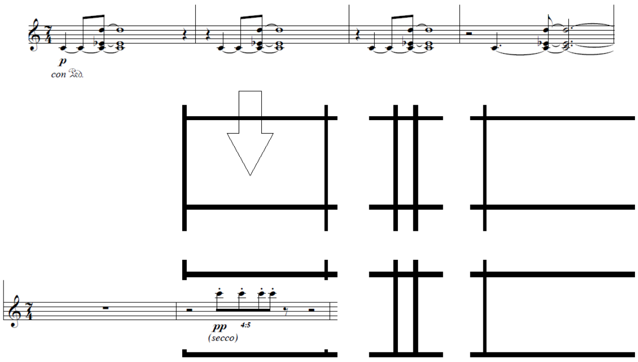

Figure 5.24 Middle ground structure of the lower layer of Etude 9.

Foreground structure

The foreground structure of the etudes, as in a Schenkerian diagram, is the surface of the piece as it appears in the score. In Volans's etudes, the foreground is an accumulation of units of notes which are the cell-like entities observable in the score. Many of these resemble the stock ideas such as those identified in Chapter 4. The stratification is evident at this level in the way that the units are stacked vertically and horizontally. The specifics of these structural units will be explored in the following chapter.

An intertextual reading of stratification

Just as we've seen in the layering of Volans's etudes, the act of piecing ideas together has implicit structural attributes. Whenever two or more musical layers are placed beside one another, whether they are positioned vertically or horizontally, they can only meet in one of two ways. Either the ideas can gradually evolve and merge, possibly with additional bridging material, or they can simply be juxtaposed against one another and left to contrast. The amount of contrast is in direct proportion to the amount of difference between the components. This process of joining elements is not unique to music. It is found in any act of design or artistic creation where the choice is either to blend or contrast disparate entities. Kevin Volans's etudes are musical composites of pre-existing components. At every level, each of their sections is fractured by other smaller joints and interruptions and by making the layers, visually and aurally clear, the joins are exposed to the listener. In Chapter 4 we found how clearly each core idea in the etudes is articulated, a clarity that possibly would have been blurred if the ideas were blended more. By leaving the joints exposed, the composer leaves strong clues about the works' construction. As the author wishes to treat the pieces 'as they are', whether or not this construction method[6] is a by-product of compositional expediency, should not affect the intertextual implications of this analysis. Besides, the independence of elements takes place at every level – far beyond the scope of cut and paste which would be clearly revealed by much more simple block structure. From the archaeological point of view, their exposed construction, preoccupation with the material itself and the juxtaposition of their component parts aligns the etudes with a broader modernist aesthetic approach of values and priorities.

By briefly linking and juxtaposing this musical work with two unrelated, but similarly constructed other works, the author hopes to illustrate a modernist organizational strategy central to understanding how the etudes operate. The first work, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* (1923), is musical and the second one, Picasso's *Mandolin and Clarinet*(1914), is sculptural. In order to link them to the broader modernist strategy in question, these are superimposed with Edward T. Cone's theoretical solutions as outlined in 'Stravinsky, the progress of a method' (Cone, 1962). While Cone's concepts are long standing, they are well established and provide the clearest examples of this conceptual framework. More recent applications of stratification include Maury Yeston's book *The Stratification of Musical Rhythm* (1976) and Philip Rupprecht's article 'Tonal Stratification and Uncertainty in Britten's Music' (1996), but neither provides the same level of clarity of intention as Cone's original article. In order to locate the stratification as a modernist strategy, it will be useful to compare similarities between the work of Stravinsky, Picasso and Volans.

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[6] Modes of transcription could be dismissed on a similar basis – see Chapter 4.

Cone's concept of stratification incorporates both of the issues raised above. Stratification deals with both the notion of treating the music in strata and offers a model for understanding the joins and junctions between the strata. The analysis proceeds through three phases: Stratification, Interlock and Synthesis – ultimately seeking to find some form of agreement or common goal between the unrelated areas (Cone, 1962: 19). If the goal of the analysis is to find how the elements are synthesized, what are the underlying structures and assumptions that support synthesis where there is so much contrast?

Unlike Volans, in their time both Stravinsky and Picasso were criticized for artistic inconsistency. Subsequently, it has been largely accepted that both artists' stylistic development was in fact remarkably consistent. The reasons for this judgment, however, may not always be immediately clear (Cone, 1962: 18). The roughly-hewn wailing of a bride heralds the opening passage of Stravinsky's 'La tresse' from the ballet *Les Noces*, conjuring up a primeval musical landscape. Driven forward by pulsating rhythms, the texture is characterized by sudden breaks affecting every musical parameter. The sense of disjunction left by these shifts and fractures is particularly striking, an effect further intensified by other peculiarities in Stravinsky's style. An abrupt change of harmony after periods of relatively static tonality and big melodic jumps within an otherwise conjunct line or a temporal passage between areas of persistent rhythm, leave distinct points of interruption throughout the piece. On examination, interruption emerges as an important compositional technique used in the conception of the work. In the case of *Les Noces*, it could be argued that the interruptions in the music support the action on the stage, but Stravinsky used the same device in many purely abstract instrumental works such as the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, *Serenade in A* and *Symphony of Psalms*. Edward T. Cone (1962) singled out the technique of interruption as crucial to understanding Stravinsky's artistic development, a thread of consistency through the widely diverse range of his work. In reaction to this realization, Cone laid out an analytical framework with a view to understanding the disjunctions.

Both directly and indirectly, Picasso addressed this issue in many of his works but perhaps none more so than in his assemblages. Constructed from off-cuts of wood and metal, Picasso's assemblage of *Mandolin and Clarinet* (1914) is one of a number of works born out of the artist's investigation into the three-dimensional implications of cubist painted space (Arnason, 1975: 136). It is a delicately balanced collage wherein each component has largely been left as it was found. An uneven timber slat provides a slanted vertical axis while at the same time strongly suggesting the fingerboard of a stringed instrument, possibly a violin. The arched outline of the body of the violin is traced by the curving silhouette of a smooth, painted board. A more literally rendered clarinet is fixed perpendicularly across the vertical axis, partly masked by the belly of the 'violin'. The pieces have been joined without any attempt to blend their starkly-contrasting properties. As a result the overall image is littered with fractures and disjunctions. In this ambiguous composition, solid and void are interchangeable. Almost impossibly, the material is simultaneously both integral and unrelated to the subject. The culmination of three years devoted to analyzing, breaking down and destroying the traditional subjects of the painter, namely portrait, figure, still life and landscape, Picasso's cubism, in the form of the collages, provided an entirely new concept of visual and symbolic reality (Arnason, 1975: 137). By leaving each component in a 'raw' state and by leaving the joints exposed, Picasso redirects the argument from one of subject likeness and representation to an experiment in spatial dynamics and perception. If traces of the strategy of interruption are clues to a shift in artistic argument, how does the strategy appear in Volans's etudes?

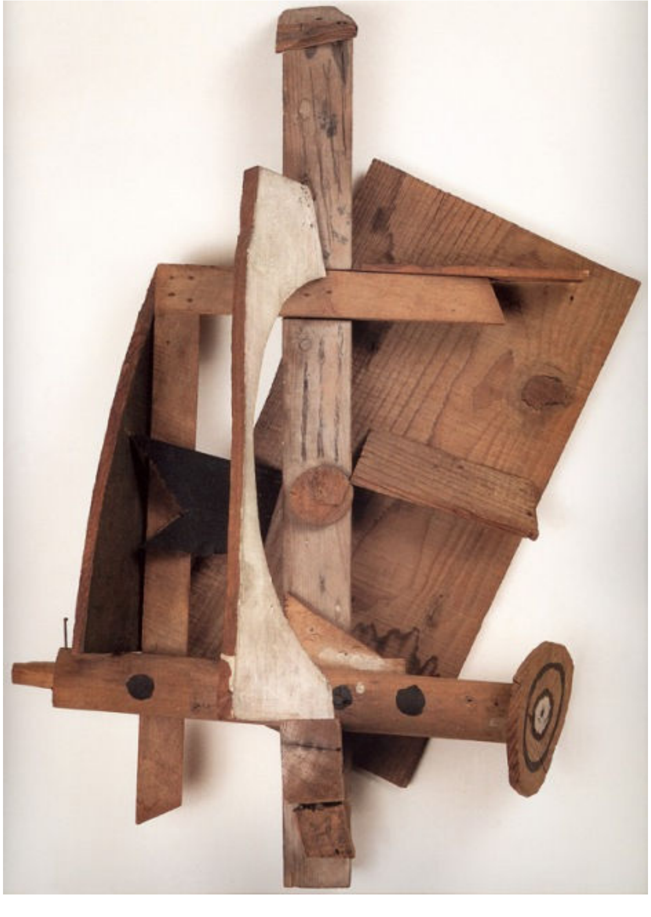

Figure 5.25 Pablo Picasso, *Mandolin and Clarinet.* 1914. Painted Wood. Musée Picasso, Paris (Heuman, 2009).

Just as Picasso's assemblage hints at the notion of subject through line and proportion, the stratification layers in the etudes similarly evoke and hint at a form of broken, undeveloped narrative very different from any 19thcentury precedent. In the etudes the layers and strata are simply juxtaposed as they are. If these junctions occurred as isolated incidences, any analyst would be content to accept that the etude is simply a fusion of two different pieces. However, as demonstrated, interruptions of this sort occur regularly enough for them to constitute a compositional technique. How does engaging such a technique affect or benefit a work? Interestingly, both Volans's etudes and Stravinsky's *Les Noces* are constructed from individual units strongly suggestive of a form of narrative. It could be that by deliberately breaking the narrative, leaving points of interruption throughout the work and by contrasting unrelated material and highlighting the proportion, the composer redirects the argument away from the 19thcentury subject, towards the materiality of the work, foregrounding how the music functions through time while experimenting with music spatially and questioning how it is perceived.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ROLE OF IMAGE, METAPHOR AND METONYMY IN THE ETUDES

Harmonically, Volans's music as well as that of his contemporaries in the new Cologne school occupies an ambiguous area between tonality, modality and total serialization of pitch. The harmony resembles tonality in the sense that the repetitions of pitches create very distinct reference points which create contrast when the reference points shift. Once these reference points have been established, a hierarchy of pitch naturally comes into play. This hierarchy happens primarily as a result of the appearance of pattern and so only emerges in sections of the music where there are identifiable patterns. The kind of tonality that emerges from these patterns is very different from tonality in any traditional sense. There is no trace of dominant/tonic duality or dissonance/consonance tension. While traditional tonality has always possessed a determinable goal and direction, contemporary composers use harmonic tension in completely different ways. In instances where the harmonic approach neutralizes any sense of direction, it is always possible to utilise parameters other than pitch, such as texture, timbre and total organization of material to achieve shape.

Patterning, tension and shape all function horizontally. Harmony, however, has a strong inherent vertical component. Whenever more than one pitch is sounded simultaneously, relationships are set up between the pitches and they become intervals and chords. Together, the repetition, the neutralizing of any harmonic direction, the ambiguous vertical construction of the chords and the irregular implied harmonies of horizontal lines, position Volans music in a realm that has identifiable reference points but is in no way tonal. Even when compared to his contemporaries, his distinctive sound has been regarded by many as having its own harmonic language with its own distinctive grammar. So far we have found that it is a modernist language built up in layers of semiotic units, analogous to words, with a vocabulary of stock units and a stratified and layered grammar. The author's goal in this chapter is to attempt to investigate these units in order to delve deeper into relationships between the building blocks of the language.

The majority of the terms required to describe aural concepts within any musical discussion are completely dependent on related visual concepts: line, vertical, horizontal, colour, texture, material and even counterpoint. The visual and aural concepts have completely different physical natures but the terms themselves make sense as a result of shared properties at a conceptual level. These shared properties link the concepts and as a result it can make perfect sense to speak of differences between the frequencies of notes as higher or lower when in reality there is no spatial relationship between them. When dealing with music at the level of ‘material’, its physical properties are a primary area of concern. At this level, music displays the same conceptual properties as those found in related arts, especially the visual arts. The way a composer or artist deals with these properties in so many ways marks the aesthetic territory that their work occupies. These choices translate into the grammar and language of the works and shape how they are communicated. In order to explore how Volans’s harmonic language operates, the author shall approach it indirectly, at the conceptual level, through painting. This choice is partly motivated by the fact that Volans – in many of his writings – uses visual analogies to describe musical concepts. In his sleeve notes for the Duke Quartet’s recording of *Dancers on a Plane* (1994), Kevin Volans drew an analogy between his fifth string quartet and the paintings of Jasper Johns, particularly Johns’s juxtaposition of figurative references against abstract patterning. He describes it as such:

> The work of Jasper Johns embodies both these elements [of treating the work of art as an object in the world rather than a window into another world and the use of quotation or reference to other works as a structural device]. His 1950s paintings of the United States flag are both paintings and flags, but not paintings *about* flags. His later work contains reference to Picasso and da Vinci among others and in his painting *Dancers on a Plane* he has inserted figurative references to tantric art in the midst of abstract patterning (Volans, 1995).

In this statement, Volans carefully positioned the analogy to Johns’s work within the avant-garde’s technique of using ‘quotation and reference to other works’ as a structural device. However, while Volans was writing specifically about *Dancers on a plane*, the author would like to suggest the ‘juxtaposition of figurative references against abstract patterning’ is an important device used throughout his work and in particular in the piano etudes. Viewed in relation to the artistic developments in the late 20th century, Johns’s application of figurative techniques is symptomatic of a shift in artistic priorities and more importantly, could provide clues as to how tropes generate meaning in contemporary discursive practice. There are many parallels and overlaps between the earlier reaction against abstract expressionism in painting associated with Jasper Johns and the revolutionary changes in avant-garde music associated with Kevin Volans, of the late 20th century. In this chapter the author proposes that these specific reactions, in music, were symptomatic of fundamental changes in the construction of meaning in works of art.

Metaphor in language

Although metaphors are often used to explain artistic works, little attention is given to the mechanism of metaphor itself. Generally speaking, metaphor simply implies that the work in question contains more than one meaning. By juxtaposing two (or more) things, metaphors draw attention to particular similarities or analogies between otherwise unrelated fields of meaning. In this way, texts take on extended meanings while the distance between distinctive meanings is preserved. In consequence, the literal meaning of the work is enriched by the qualities it shares with the substituted meaning. The similarities between distant and unrelated concepts, pulled into juxtaposition by the metaphor, provide the links that support it. For the links to make sense, metaphors generally rely on associations that already exist in a semiotic system. However, they do so in a variety of different ways. There are subtle discrepancies in the figuration of different kinds of metaphors. In order to articulate exactly how metaphors operate, we need to clearly articulate the different kinds of metaphorical configuration. In order to unpack whether or not Volans's harmonic language in the etudes is metaphorical in nature, it is necessary to investigate how the tropes translate musically.

In language, metonymy is the kind of metaphor that operates by referencing links between a literal object and its replacement. In other words, it substitutes one name for another. The metonymic process can be reductive, expansive or associative, linked by contiguities and relations of experience. The contiguity between the entities, the way they entwine each other, distinguishes metonymy from other kinds of metaphor where much more distance is possible. Traditionally, metonymy is defined as the 'figure of speech whereby the name of one entity *e1* is used to refer to another entity *e2* which is contiguous to *e1*' (Taylor, 1995: 122). The contiguity between the entities allows the name of the container to refer to its contents: 'a boiling kettle'. A similar relationship enables the name of a producer to replace the name of its products: 'he played Beethoven'. In the same vain, synecdoche is the instance of metonymy where the name of a whole is replaced by the name of one of its parts: 'It would be nice to see some new faces'. Another kind of metonymy allows a token to refer to a type: 'This is our best selling handbag'. Sometimes, two different metonymies can even operate simultaneously: 'negotiations between Washington and Tehran' (Taylor, 1995: 123).

In order to investigate whether metonymy operates within Volans's etudes, it would be extremely useful if there was some unifying characteristic, present in all instances of linguistic metonymy that could help clearly identify instances of it. Unfortunately, the scope of metonymy is wide and there is no immediately obvious way to gather all instances of metonymy into a cohesive group.

In his journal article: ‘Metonymy’ (1984) Hugh Bredlin examined the conceptually chaotic usage of metonymy as a linguistic category. His primary goal was to find whether there is some principle of unity between all metonymical tropes. Before Bredlin’s article most theorists had focussed, without much success, on finding linguistic relations between the words used within all metonymical expressions. Aristotle, Hume and Kant’s typologies of relations provide models but can’t be applied across every kind of metonymy. Albert Henry’s fields of psychological intention possess no features that clearly distinguish between all metonymical and non-metonymical expressions. In his article, Bredlin pointed out that the contiguities exist – not between the words in the metonymical expressions – but rather between the things the words refer to. Bredlin’s proposition can be summed up by the statement that metonymical relations are a particular kind of relations between things and not words. By exploring a number of different kinds of relations, we see clear and convincing differences between metonymy, synecdoche and metaphor. The first difference in relations is between synecdoche and both metonymy and metaphor. Synecdoche refers to a relationship between an object and a structural part of the same object while both metonymy and metaphor are relations between completely separate entities. In metaphor, the separate objects are related by a property possessed by both entities. For the metaphor to make sense there has to be some similarity or likeness between the object and its substitution. On the other hand, the objects within metonymy are usually completely different from one another. The relationship between cause and effect or inventor and invented does not depend on any shared property. In language, metonymy is a transfer of names between separate things that share close proximity in time, space or origin. Metonymical relations lack the explicit conceptual connections found in metaphor and the structural relations presupposed by synecdoche. As a result, metonymical expressions rely on relations or contiguities between objects that are already conventionally known and accepted.

In order to make sense, all metonymic expressions operate within sets of conventions (Taylor, 1995). The conventions which support metonymy can only operate within the framework of an appropriate body of knowledge. For example, the convention of using the name of a producer to replace the name of its products means it can make perfect sense to speak of ‘collecting Picassos’, when referring to Picasso paintings. However, under the same convention, ‘Jeremy was delicious’ could never be used to refer to a meal Jeremy prepared. Our cultural belief that the value of a work of art is the result of the unique genius of its creator together with the permanent nature of the work supports the link between the artist and his work. There is no such cultural belief in relation to food to support a similar analogy between a chef and his work. As a result, metonymic relationships can only make sense within the broader conceptual structures of a culture. According to Taylor, understood in this way, metonymy is ‘no longer restricted to the act of reference’. Also, the entities themselves no longer need to be spatially contiguous for the reference to operate effectively. In Taylor’s view, metonymy is a fundamental process of meaning extension – possibly even more basic than metaphor. Taylor goes on to demonstrate how the meanings of many words, supported by metonymy, modulate according to their context. A common example of this is the word ‘close’ as in ‘close your mouth’ or ‘close the door’. In both cases, there is ambiguity with whether the mouth and the door are acting as the container or the ‘lid’ that prevents access to it. However, through metonymic extension supported by a broader number of cultural conceptual structures, the meanings modulate causing the sentences to make perfect sense.

Metaphor in music

For her article ‘Two types of Metaphoric Transfer’ (1991), Marion Guck conducted an informal experiment in which she examined how metaphorical description contributed to musical discourse. She played three groups of musicians a recording of Chopin’s *Prelude in B minor Opus 28, No.6* and asked them to discuss the piece, first without consulting the score and then after looking at the score. In their discussions, the participants predictably and naturally resorted to metaphor and their comments were recorded. Once faced with the score, one of the musicians proposed the metaphor of an arch to describe the melodic curve over the whole piece. The group’s subsequent comments suggested a detailed analysis in terms of the metaphor/image of the arch. The arch proved to be an extremely useful way of describing and understanding the piece as it represented the directly observable features of the music very accurately. Since arches are structures that curve, ascending toward a focus and then curving again to descend, the two bar melody beginning in the left hand could be described in exactly the same way – the music being taken in a single continuous event. As both the music and the arch image share literal ascent and descent, the two bar phrases can be precisely and objectively described as arches. The second way in which the arch metaphor was relevant to the *Prelude* was through arching movement. In the gesture of an arching movement of the arm, the rise and fall convert to the increase and decrease of tension transferring to the musical arch’s rising and falling dynamics. The same tension and relaxation could be extended to the character of the work – transferring to the emotional tension in the work. Lastly, the developmental curve of the whole work could be thought of as a narrative arch – with introduction, development and conclusion. In each of the above applications of the metaphor of the arch, the musical features underwent a metaphorical transfer, but ‘each was directly perceivable in both domains’ (Guck, 1991: 7).

In the same experiment, a second useful metaphor arose inadvertently by another of the musicians in the following claim: '…that same harmony through the whole measure, and yet *urgency* and the speeding up…is really striking to the ear' (Guck, 1991). Metaphorically, the musical features demonstrate an increase in movement that share the qualities of movement associated with the human experience of urgency – directly relating to the behaviour of a person exhibiting the qualities of urgency. The success and accuracy of the metaphor urgency are much more dependent on context than that of the arch and as such are more specific about musical properties at particular points.

To summarise, Guck identified a significant difference between the metaphorical use of the *arch* and the use of the *urgency*. The arch works by direct comparison and implies its extension directly to the musical material under observation. Urgency is less clearly limited and more interactive – it requires more of an imaginative leap. Guck articulated the difference in transference by defining the first kind of metaphor as comparative and the second as ascriptive. These contribute to a tangible practical model to use for general analysis.

In Marion Guck's application of metaphor to Chopin's music, the use of the metaphors was largely subjectively applied to the music and is then weighed by the analyst as to their usefulness. The metaphors are useful for description but there is no indication or way of knowing whether the metaphors are in line with Chopin's own view of the work. Also, distinctions are not subtle enough to differentiate between metonymy, synecdoche and metaphor.

Kevin Korsyn in *Decentering Music* (2003) created subtler distinctions between the figurative tropes. To examine metonymy in music, he refers to Rose Subotnik's analysis of Chopin's *A minor Prelude* in her article 'Classical Music as Post-Kantian Critique' (1981). Subotnik viewed Chopin's 'Preludes' as nomads, turning them into 'part-objects, parts without a whole or belonging to a whole that remains to be specified' (Korsyn, 2003: 114). Similarly to Marion Guck, Subotnik also treats the piece as a quasi-spatial inventory. However, she views the *A minor Prelude* as a collection of 'highly individualized aspects' (Korsyn, 2003: 114). Viewing this as a metonymic catalogue of parts, the layers cohere to the piece through metaphorical resemblances rather than only through the key. Her analysis disregards any preconceptions of internal logic and as a result, the harmonic disjunctions between the initial E minor harmony and the last A minor cadence are treated as contiguous but independent sections. The importance of the metonymic interpretation is that it is dispersive, the parts refer outside of the piece itself. Treating the *Prelude* this way allows for relationships with the other preludes and even other Chopin pieces allowing broader cultural forces to bring their meaning to the work. This way, works that are made up of disparate parts can be understood as entities in ways that conventional searches for overall coherence and unity do not allow.

Synecdoche, on the other hand, relates the part to the whole. It occurs when the parts and whole share a strong metaphorical resemblance. As such, the part can take the place of the whole. Musically, the concept of the whole is flexible and extendable. One of the etudes might be seen as part of the whole set or the etudes might be considered part of the whole of Volans's oeuvre or part of one etude might refer only to the whole piece. The benefit of synecdoche of flexibly tracing metaphorical resemblance through larger and larger wholes provides a structure within which it is possible to trace an unlimited number of contiguities.

The strategy common to all three of the above analytical approaches is the identification of the musical image operating as metaphor. In his article, 'Dancing in the Dark' (1989), Kevin Volans insists that it impossible to understand music outside of metaphor and images:

> Musical content can be understood, but it cannot be described in terms of an obsolete reality [i.e. in terms of craft]. Only through metaphor or images can we approach the topic. It is clear that the image is inseparable from the materials and the method, but it is over and above both of them. No amount of discussion of materials and method will give us a clue to understanding the image, except from the point of view of reconstructing it. Technique is "the right method at the right time", but what guides us in making the choice of appropriate method cannot be adequately explained except in terms of the resultant image. In other words, unless one is a conceptualist a discussion of technique is meaningless without a discussion of imagery. It is that indescribable relationship between the method and the image that interests me. It is in this nebulous area that composition lies (Volans, 1989: 1).

So, by equating the concept of metaphor with that of the musical image, a crystal clear approach to figurative analysis is uncovered. While we have yet to establish whether Kevin Volans's etudes display a greater inclination toward figurative tropes than other music, we can be certain that by treating the images as metaphors it will be possible to find the part-whole and part-part relationships within the material and ultimately understand it better.

In the following analysis of images in three of the etudes, the author shall apply a twofold analytical approach to test whether metaphor and metonymy are useful to understanding Volans's music. The first shall be based on Marion Gucks' notion of space being embedded in the musical discourse. The author shall attempt to create comparative and ascriptive images from the directly observable features of prominent components of the pieces. Next, the author shall examine each of these according to Subotnik's notions of metonymy and synecdoche – viewing the piece as a self generating structure with each part related by contiguity and extending beyond the piece itself to other works. Once a comprehensive image has been established it may be useful to map out whether there is any logic governing Volans's use of metaphor. If a figurative interpretation sheds light on Volans's work, it could then yield clues as to the limits of possibility in the use of tropes in his music.

Images in Etude 1

As identified in Chapter 5, macroscopically, one is struck by the fact that this piece consists of two distinct, very different and quite independent areas. The areas are so different that if they were separated, if regarded in terms of the images they generate, would be two quite complete pieces in their own rights. However, before dealing with the broader questions of the work, the author would like to develop a strong image of each half on its own terms.

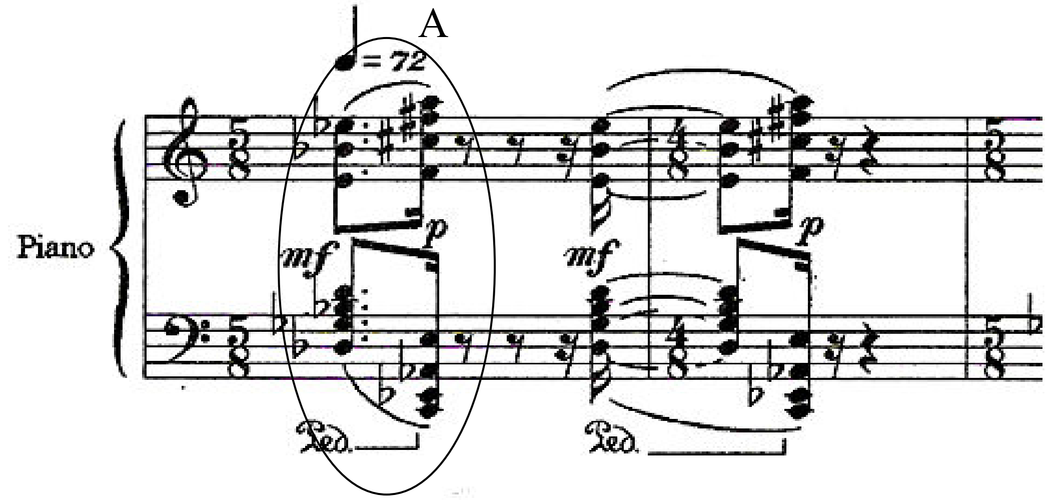

Figure 6.1. Etude 1, bars 1 to 2.

The first part of the etude begins with the single juxtaposition of two chords which form the backbone of the first half of the work (A). The chords are each shared between the hands and are linked by a two-note slur forming a clearly defined phrase-like entity. This short phrase is then repeated identically until bar 27 when the notes of the chords shift but otherwise continue similarly until bar 42. This idea occurs frequently in slightly altered forms throughout the rest of the section. Each statement of the chords is separated equidistantly by two-and–a-half quaver's rest which also contributes to the component and fragmented quality of the two chord phrase. The first, *mezzo-forte,* chord is sustained for a dotted quaver and the *piano* second chord is an abruptly ending semiquaver. The combined effect of the short duration of the second chord, its articulation and dynamic is brusque and abrupt. Also, the pitches that make up chords seem to be chosen not as individual notes but as subtle elements of colour that mix and blend into the colour of the chord. This blending of notes as colour begs closer examination.

The chords distantly recall tonal chord constructions, but cannot be explained or summarised by any of the labels of tonality. The left hand of the first chord could be thought of as a second inversion, augmented G flat major chord, but sounded it with the three notes carried by the right hand, they do not suggest or relate to G flat tonality. However, the first chord does inevitably set up a reference point from which the subsequent chord is measured against. The second chord includes what could be thought of as a first inversion A flat major chord at the bottom and an F sharp minor chord at the top, however there is an E and an F false relation in the centre of the chords that prohibits direct association with any conventional chords. The first chord overlaps the hands in the middle register of the piano, while the second chord positions the right slightly higher and the left hand almost and octave lower. The change in both dynamic and register (between the medium loud, middle register chords and the soft and slightly dispersed outer chords) reinforces the distinctive shape of the image and creates a characteristic outward jump for the hands.

Consonant, dissonant, major and minor intervals mix and intermingle to form a hybrid modality that is neither consonant nor dissonant and possesses both major and minor qualities. Although the chords are built with strikingly different notes they have the same balance of major, minor, consonance and dissonance. The colours of the chords are subtle, opaque and unusual.

The following quite varied images could emerge: The directly observable features of the first chord form could be interpreted as a wide block of colour. There are no individual lines or strands, only a wide band of difficult to isolate hues. The second chord could be thought of as stamping a narrow vertical line of contrasting colour which terminates the first chord. Thinking of the chords as bands of colour is useful in that it precludes any necessity to describe the material in terms of melody and accompaniment. The bands of colour operate as such and possess qualities of both melody and harmony that have been synthesised into one entity. Next, the arch-like jumping movement between the chords creates a pouncing image – with a soft landing on the second chord. This image emerges from an abstraction of the shape of the gesture of the hand and arms in order to play the chords. The jumping movement is enhanced by the shape of the slur above which relates equally to the arm movement as well as the articulation for which it was intended. Lastly, the suddenness of the second chord leaves the impression it is interrupting the rather insistent, emphatic first chord – albeit gently.

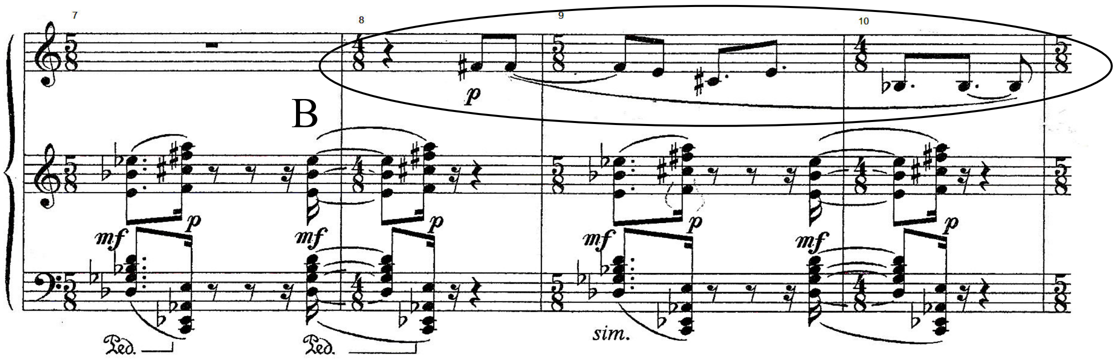

Figure 6.2 Etude 1, bars 7 to 10.

Beginning halfway through bar 8 until bar 10, a short line of 7 melody notes threads itself through the bands of colour (B). The image of the line directly corresponds to the succession of single legato pitches. This melody or fragment of a melody is marked *piano*, the notes falling during the rests and between the striking of the chords in order to be audible. The line also weaves through the same range that the chords occupy. The insertion of this melody sets up a game between the melody line and the bands of colour formed by the chords. Since the melody line has a totally different character to the bands of colour: it is soft, legato and regular, it is very difficult for the pianist's two hands to control the three simultaneous layers now unfolding. The notes of the melody line are swapped between the hands in order continue playing the chords at the same time. Aurally it is very hard to imagine how it is possible, but by using the pedal to sustain the chord the pianist can play a distant melody note, then return to the note silently and release the pedal. As a result, the chords are articulated cleanly, separated by silences and the melody can be a smooth legato line.

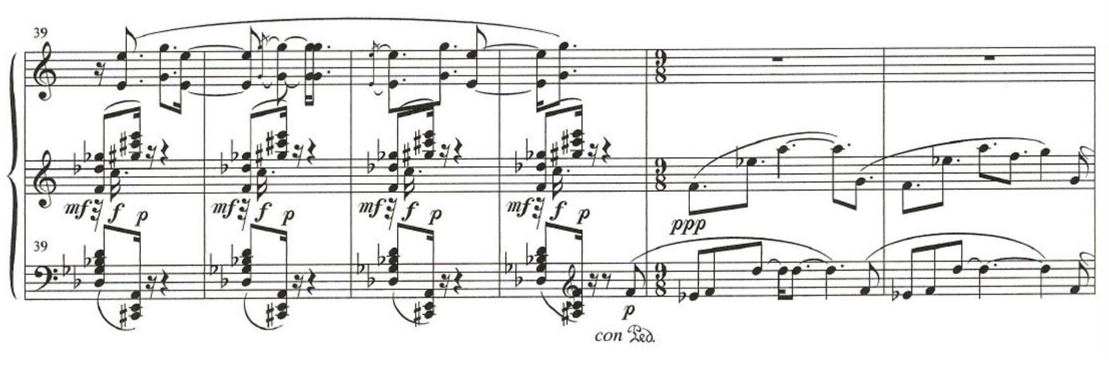

Figure 6.3 Etude 1, bars 39 to 44.

There is a complete change in character between bar 42 and 43.

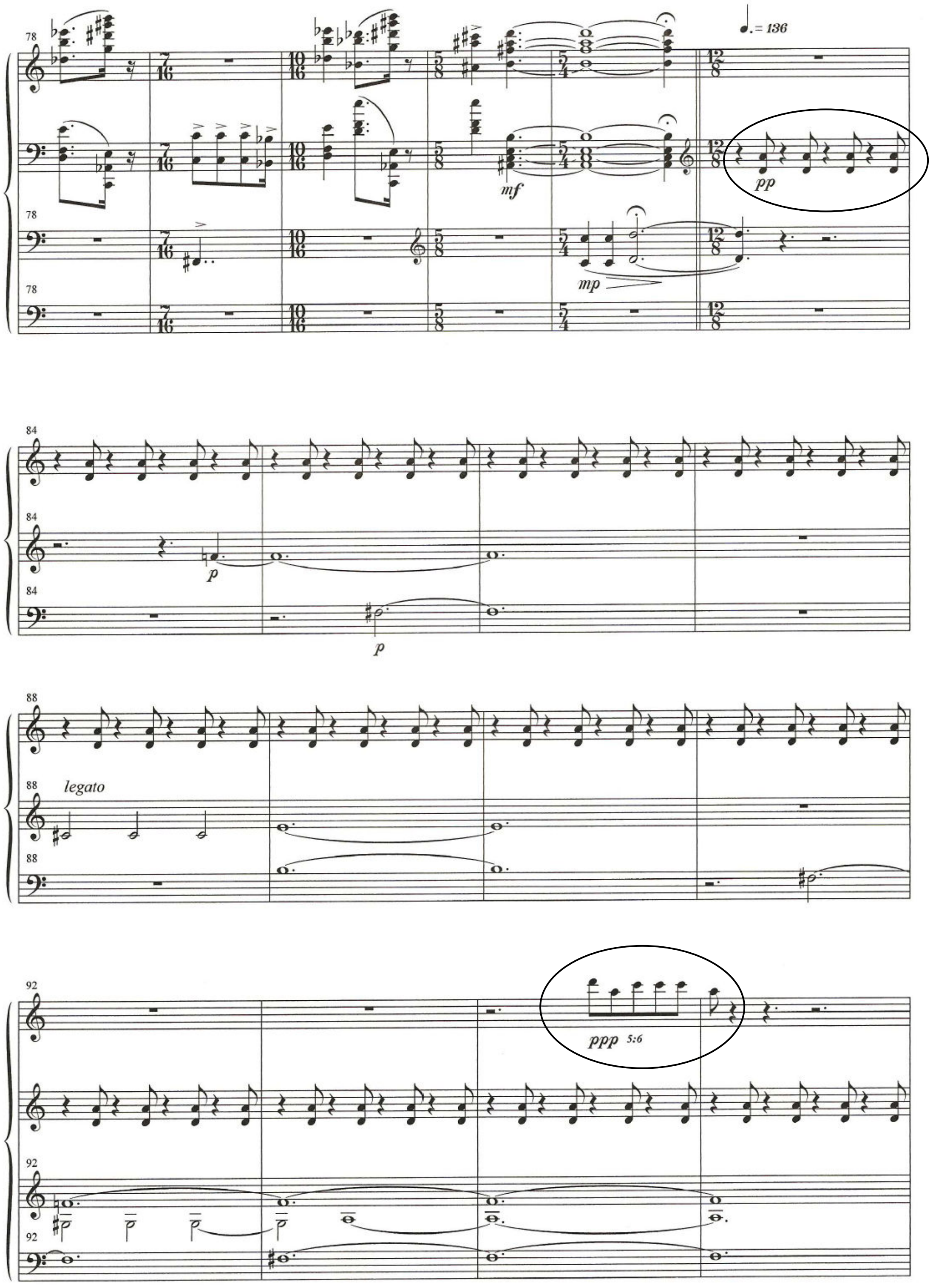
78
♩. = 136
mf
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Figure 6.4 Etude 1, bars 78 to 95.

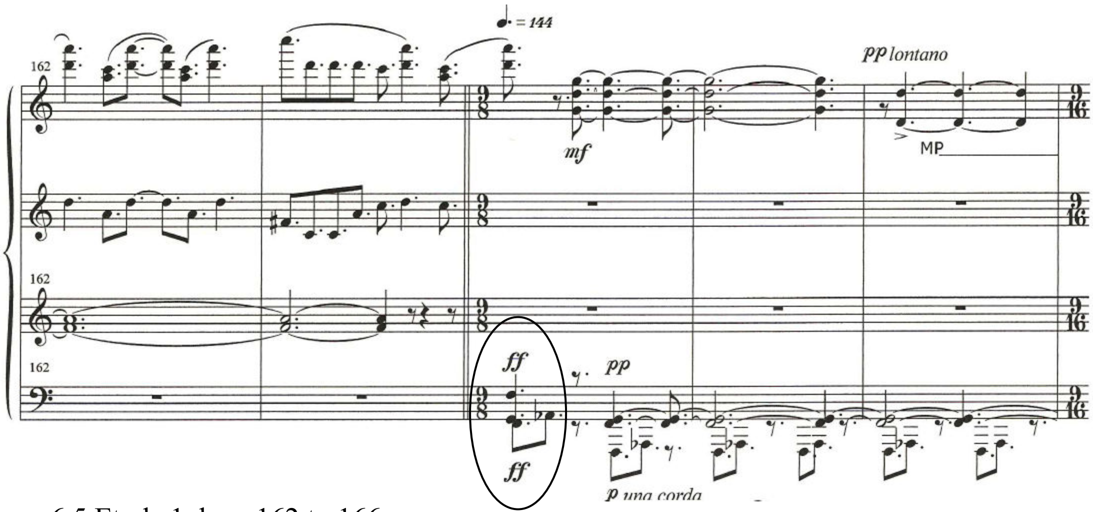

Figure 6.5 Etude 1, bars 162 to 166.

Images in Etude 6

At fist glance, the images in the sixth etude operate slightly differently from the first etude. They overlap visually and their repetitions are not exactly the same. Also, structurally, the work unfolds organically – with no evidence of a predetermined compositional shape. There is a sense of cadence at a number of points and the alterations in the material are subtle. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the sixth etude is a shortened version of Volans's *One Hundred Frames* (Chester, 1991) for orchestra, a work in which he consciously engaged visual metaphors. Each of the 100 prints is a stylised depiction of the volcanic form of Mount Fuji from a different vantage point. While the composition of each view is different, the volcano is almost identical from every angle. In his article 'One Hundred Frames', Volans describes the work in terms of conceptualism and materialism. He explains his intention with the work was for it to be completely abstract. He claims to have titled it *One Hundred 'Frames'* instead of *'Views'* to highlight the notion of surface rather than content. The subject of the work was the materials of the orchestra itself – there is no narrative or drama. The composer's explicit intention to create one hundred different but similar abstract surfaces is immediately apparent. The frame consists of one chord but with additional material that changes from frame to frame. The order the frames are arranged in seems less important than the slight changes in material. So, for the purposes of this analysis, it might be useful to look at not only the metonymical nature of the musical images in terms of the similarities and differences between the frames, but also metaphorical function of the frame itself.

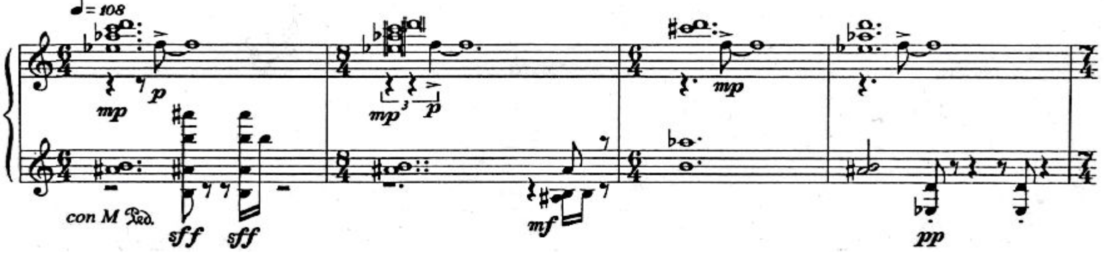

Figure 6.6 Etude 6, bars 1 to 4.

On the score, the image of the bar as a frame is immediately obvious. There is a great deal of visual contiguity between the lines around bars on the score and a frame around a painting. Bars on scores are rectangular, two dimensional and form a clearly demarcated outline around material, organised in beats. In music in general, the number of beats in each bar is more or less constant and so bar lines become useful groupings of beats and accents and create useful practical reference points in works. In the sixth etude, the function of the bar enclosing groups of beat is undermined by the fact that the time signature changes for every bar. In this work, the bar's function is linked to the organization of the images rather than the organization of the beats, and the length of each image is slightly different.

Whether structuring the material in frames prevents any development of narrative or drama is questionable. The way they are positioned in series, the frames could resemble and be read in the same way as a cartoon strip or frames along a film reel. The changes in material between frames become changes in time and could be heard in a sense as a narrative. Also, as the frame itself is only visible on the score and does not translate through to anything aurally, its usefulness in creating a sense of surface is only present conceptually and on the score itself. Whether the material contained within the frame is to be heard as 'surface' depends entirely on the material itself.

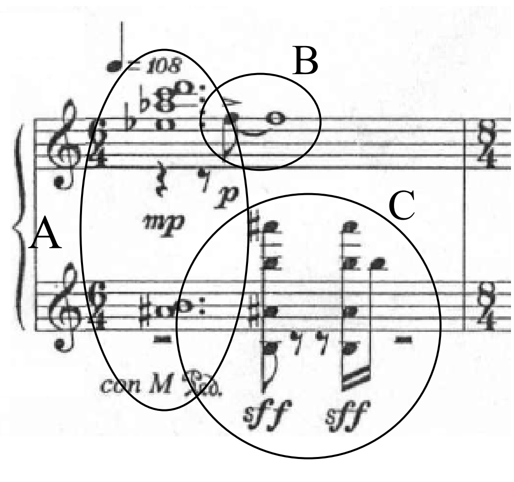

Figure 6.7 Etude 6, bar 1.

Each frame begins with a chord. The chord is followed by a single F and both are sustained for the rest of the frame. Each bar then contains some other brief material that is different in every bar. As such, the image within each frame can be divided into three component images: the chord (A), the single F (B) and the other fragmented material (C). There are also some occasional bars that contain contrasting material (D). For analytical purposes, the author would like to separate the components, analyse how they occur in the very first frame and then examine how they alter as the work progresses.

The image created by the chord is very similar to the ones created by the chords in the first etude. The image could be read as a horizontal band of colour. (A) consists of six dotted semibreves and is notated on two staves. The two lowest notes on the lower stave indicating that they should be played with the left hand. The notes are spread evenly with no interval wider than a fourth so the chord is heard as a single entity – there are no audible gaps. The bottom note is an A sharp, the second note is the B a minor second higher. The remaining four notes are played by the right hand a diminished fourth higher – there is an E flat, an A flat, a C and a D. The intervals formed between the notes are a minor second, diminished fourth, a perfect fourth, major third and major second. No notes are doubled and the intervals are all different but, as three of the right hand notes form an A flat minor chord in first inversion, the chord suggests A flat minor tonality. However, this sense of key is not sustained by the other material in the frame. (A) is marked mezzo piano and is gentle and suggestive rather than insistent. It is only very mildly dissonant and so has a reassuring presence and is tender in nature.

The next image to form part of the frame is a single sustained F that falls after one and a half crotchets (B). The image that emerges is of a horizontal line. B shifts slightly but is repeated in a similar way in almost every subsequent frame and as such, creates a continuous drone that becomes an important aural reference point for the rest of the piece. *Pianissimo*, (B) could possibly be seen to resemble a horizon line behind the image – unobtrusive and in the background, but the level against which all the other material can be measured. Images A and B always occur beside each other throughout the etude and together form the primary subject material of the etude. The images occur regularly and predictably – always either soft or very soft – and provide the surface of the work with a peaceful continuity and an unthreatening ambience, the gentle ambiguity of the harmonies concealing a hint of mystery. Compositionally, these two images evolve considerably as the work progresses without ever breaking the sense of continuity. As the images are subtly but noticeably transformed – how has change and continuity been managed in this work?

As there is some degree of change in the (A) and (B) in every frame, each individual similarity and difference is less important than the kinds of changes that are made and whether or not there is any observable compositional process governing changes. Between the first two frames there is one difference of rhythm – B appears a sixth of a beat earlier and so the images are fractionally closer together. The third frame is rhythmically like the first but two notes are removed from (A) and the (C) is raised to a C sharp. The fourth Frame is even more similar to the first – the only difference being the C is omitted from the chord but the rhythm is identical. The fifth frame is also almost identical to the first – the left-hand chord notes of A are appoggiaturas. There is one note change and one omission from the chord in the sixth frame and (B) falls on the second beat of the bar. The seventh frame breaks to a single chord – its stasis giving a sense of cadence and phrase to the first five frames. Thus far the following observations can be made regarding change and continuity in the first five frames: the changes are not cumulative – the first frame serves the basis for every frame so far; the rhythmic changes are minute; the order of the notes remains the same; at least half the notes in the chord have remained the same throughout; there has been no change in dynamics but most significantly the images are clearly identifiable.

The piece continues similarly until bar 28 with the first strikingly different image (D1). The rate of change then increases slightly for six bars before (B) changes to an F sharp and their order is reversed. By now the only strategy for similarity is maintaining the clarity of the images, which now appear to be primarily textural in nature. It should be noted that by this stage there have been 14 statements of (A) and (B), their imprint has been established securely enough to allow more intervention without distorting the image significantly for the listener. (B) is also now louder than (A) and the notes of (A) change much more between frames. In bar 40, (B) shifts up to an A, the images switch back to their original order and (B) returns to an F before another bar of very different material (D2) in bar 44. While the notes, durations, dynamics, order and colour in bar 38 are strikingly different from the first frame, both images (A) and (B) are instantly recognisable due to their strong resemblance in texture.

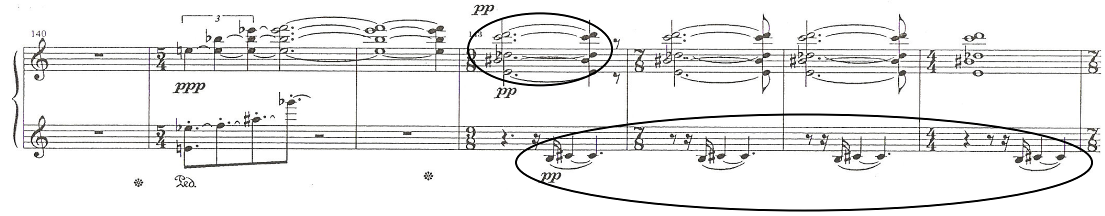

Figure 6.8 Etude 6, bars 143 to 149.

Similar strategies of change continue to be used for the rest of the piece until bar 143 where (B) is transformed to the extent that it is almost unrecognizable. The order and texture of the images is the same as the original but (B) is no longer forming a horizontal axis in the middle ranges of (A). (A) appears at the beginning of bar 143 in a different note configuration and largely the same but (B) now consists of a two-note pattern – a semiquaver B moving up to a sustained C sharp. This movement affects the absolutely level, static, horizontal position of the image and it becomes an oscillating major second with more movement and a sense of anticipation. The textural contrast and rhythmical proximity of the initial image are present to the extent that they still resemble the images in frame 1 enough to relate them. Bar 150 to 153 proceed similarly to 143 to 147 with (B) changing direction and moving a tone higher in bar 150 and 153. Image (D) emerges for two bars in Bar 155 and 156.

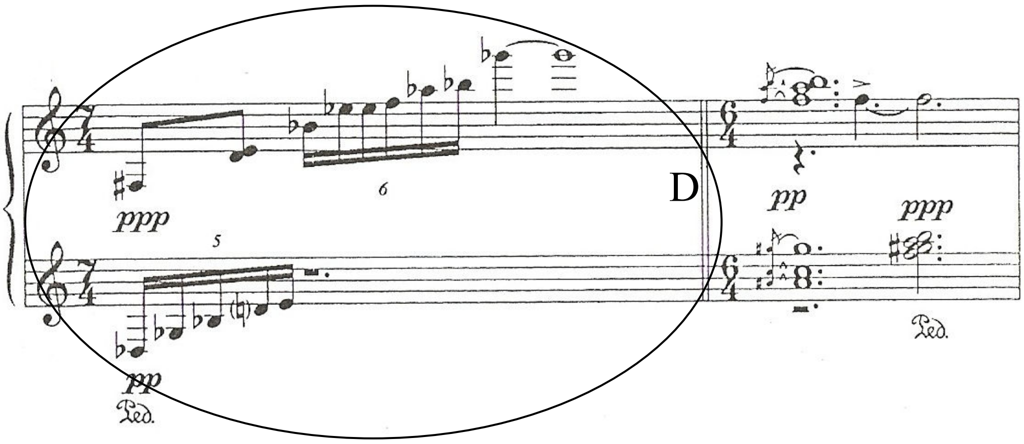

Figure 6.9 Etude 6, bars 155 to 156.

Image (D) is used in recognisable form consistently through the piece to denote endings or episodes. The first time it is used is for one bar in bar 28 before the first change in rate of change. It is primarily a very soft upward, even, flowing series of notes, terminating on a long high note. The image that emerges out of these characteristics is a very light upward movement. Its extreme delicacy and lightness give it an ethereal quality. The upward momentum, speed and energy of the string of little notes resemble particles bubbling upward. The same image appears again in bar 100. While the notes are quite similar, the rhythm is different and the texture a little thicker although the effervescent image is immediately recognisable. (D) occurs again in a lengthened form between bar 138 and 140 and for the last time in bar 155 and 156.

Images in Etude 9

The first section of Etude 9 is from the beginning until bar 15. Three distinct repeated metonymical fragments define this section. As there is no thematic development of these ideas in this section, the terms motif or theme could be misleading. For now the author would like to think of these simply as metonymical fragments. The fragments are notated on four separate staves – the top two staves display one repeated fragment with the other two occupying the bottom two staves. The first two fragments are remarkably similar. Both are constructed vertically and would appear to serve a primarily harmonic function. The third fragment is simply a linear, repeated staccato high C. So, for the purpose of this analysis the fragments will hereafter be referred to as 9A, 9B and 9C.

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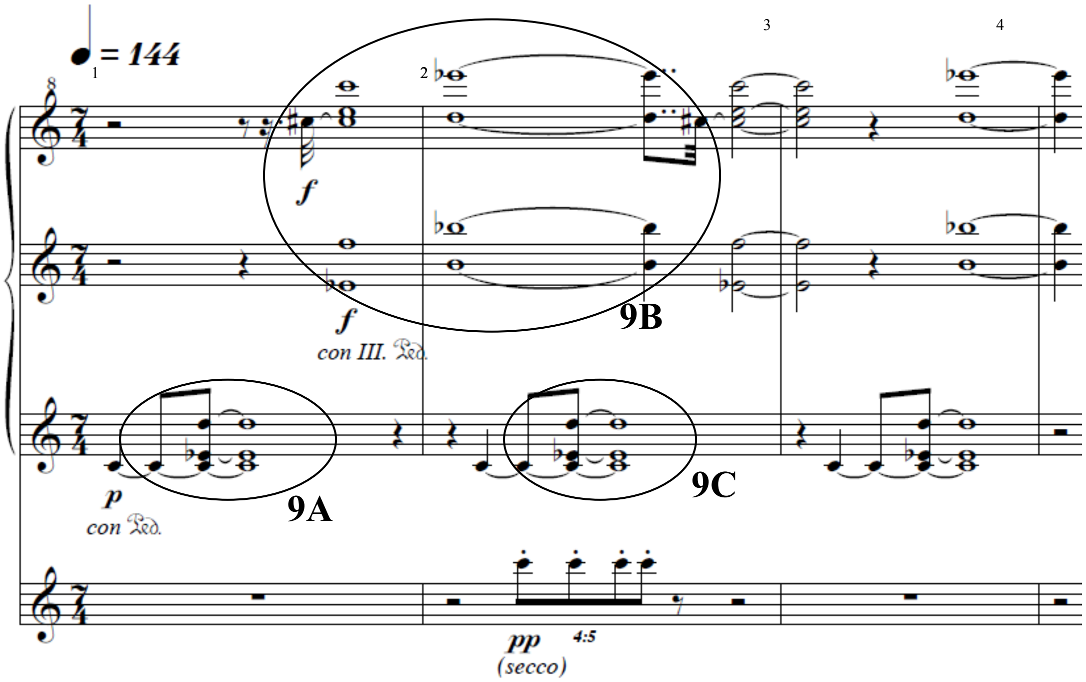


Figure 6.10 Etude 9, bars 1 to 4.

9A is extremely compact. A middle C extends for one beat before a major seventh interval (E flat and D) sounds above it. The notes are then sustained together and decay as a chord for four more beats. By sounding first, in isolation, and by virtue of being the lowest note of the whole section, the middle C is conspicuous, aurally. Through being sounded and sustained at regular durations, it operates as a kind of pedal point. Its horizontality and linearity lend it two dimensional qualities and the image that it evokes is that of a horizon which could be extrapolated as a perfectly level plane or platform. It could even be thought of as the stage that the action is to take place above. However, due to harmonic interaction with the interval above, the middle C also functions as part of a chord. The three notes could equally be seen as a chord but pulling the C forward deconstructs the harmony for the listener and destabilises it slightly also contributing to the linear shape. However, the dissonance is mild and there is a sense of agreement between the notes due to the consonant minor third, the mildly dissonant major ninth and the strongly dissonant major seventh intervals that make up the harmony. Rhythmically, 9A is regular – always occurring on the beat – it is not jarring or unpredictable. The repetitions are exactly the same except in bar 4 and bar 13 where the C is slightly longer to make it possible to play the chord for 9B. The steadiness together with its quietness and extremely mild dissonance, lend 9A amiability, there is nothing unsettling or disturbing about it. Ascriptively, metaphors relating to stability and regularity would be appropriate for 9A.

9A sets up a reference for the subsequent ideas. 9B contrasts with 9A in a number of ways. It is louder that 9A and the duration between the anticipatory C sharp and the rest of the chord is much shorter and more sudden. The first chord is two notes denser (five notes) and the intervals a little more strident due to the diminished octave between the C sharp and the C and the augmented fourth between the C and the F sharp. Most notably, the fragment consists of a second chord, positioned an augmented fifth higher. 9B repeats similarly to 9A, although the durations of the notes are different and the length of the gaps between each utterance varies. The doubling of the E flat between 9A and 9B asserts its importance. The lowest note, middle C is reinforced by the high C in 9B and the C in 9C enhancing the sense of C tonality. Also, the third statement includes an extra chord – the bass note returning to the E flat by jumping and augmented fourth downward and the higher notes jumping a minor sixth, major third and perfect fourth respectively.

The image that emerges from the directly observable features of 9B is similar to 9A in as much as the C sharp deconstructs the harmony with the C sharp in the centre of the chord rather than the bottom. It is also worth noting that the interval formed is a minor third (C sharp to E Flat), the same interval that occurs in 9A, implying a sequence. The effect is not of a horizontal platform but rather more like a raised beam. The horizontality of the C sharp and its sonorous repetition also lend it a two dimensional quality – it could be thought of as the platform, second tier or second floor of activity. As shown the harmony is more dissonant than 9A and the intervals formed by superimposing 9A and 9B are mostly dissonant (due to the semitone sequence), apart from the doubling of the C and E flat which further asserts the importance of these two notes. The last chord of 9B consists of four notes – all of which are higher than a corresponding note in the previous chord. This correspondence creates a type of voice leading and the block-like homophonic texture of the chords has chorale-like tendencies. The direction of each successive event in both 9A and 9B is upward, each successive chord reaching slightly higher than the one before. The metaphor that could be ascribed to this directionality is one of reaching upward or yearning.

Due to the different lengths of 9A and 9B, and the varying distances between the restatements of 9B, the fragments are aligned differently with each repetition. The shifts in positioning set up a counterpoint between 9A and B while also clarifying the parameters of each image aurally. If the voices were to be repeated in exactly the same position with each repetition, aurally there would be no real distinction between the layers as they are very closely related and entwined.

The third fragment of the ninth etude is a repeated *secco*, staccato pianissimo high C. While in articulation it is contrasting with all the other material, the fact that it is an additional C, in the same register as 9B, echoes the Cs in 9A and 9B, adding more weight to C as a reference point. Through its horizontality, it would seem to be asserting a third tier or floor above the other two planes. It does however provide a contrast in articulation, register and dynamic with the other material. Metonymically, its erratic appearance and approximate repetition strongly evokes the call of a bird or an insect – perhaps even the chirping of a cricket.

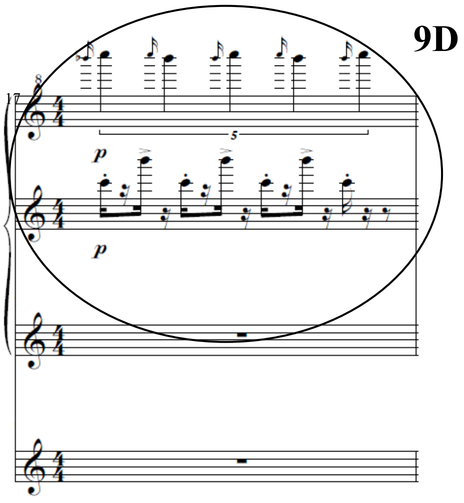


Figure 6.11 Etude 9, bar 17.

The next section of the etude begins in bar 17, after one-and-a-half bars of silence and a change in meter to 4/4. The material in this section is also in three main groupings, but metonymically, it consists of four independent fragments. They occur in registers outside of those established in the first section, entrenching a noticeable break in continuity. The top two fragments are superimposed but, due to the cross-rhythm, have been notated separately and so will be heard as separate ideas. The lower two layers are very similar in texture and are in a similar register. For this section it would be useful to relate the top two fragments together as 9D due to their proximity, and the lower two 9E1 and 9E2 due to their general resemblance.

9D is an oscillating major second between a high B flat and a high C with an appoggiatura before each note. The five individual utterances occur as five against the four of 9D. The ascending and descending stepwise motion and the linearity formed by the legato, forms a short wavy line. 9D is a repeated staccato major seventh jump between the high C and the B above it. The Cs all fall on the crotchet beat and the accented Bs on the alternating quaver. Once again, C becomes a tonal reference point. Metonymically, the high register, the regularity of the rhythm and the disparateness of the pitches could be interpreted to form an image of something very small and agile, possibly an insect, jumping four times in a row. Both parts are marked *piano* and individually are unremarkable although aurally when superimposed create an altogether different effect. The B in the lower part falls in the same register between the B flat and C in the top part to create a highly irregular chromatic line. As the C's are an octave lower, aurally, they are separated from the higher notes. The C then appears to be functioning as an ostinato beneath the higher material – further ingraining the C tonal reference point. Metonymically, the combination of the elements of 9D creates a slightly different image from the individual fragments. The ostinato formed by the Cs provides a platform in the same way as it did in the first section of the etude. The rhythmic complexity of the higher material could be thought of as an image of erratic activity – busy but light.

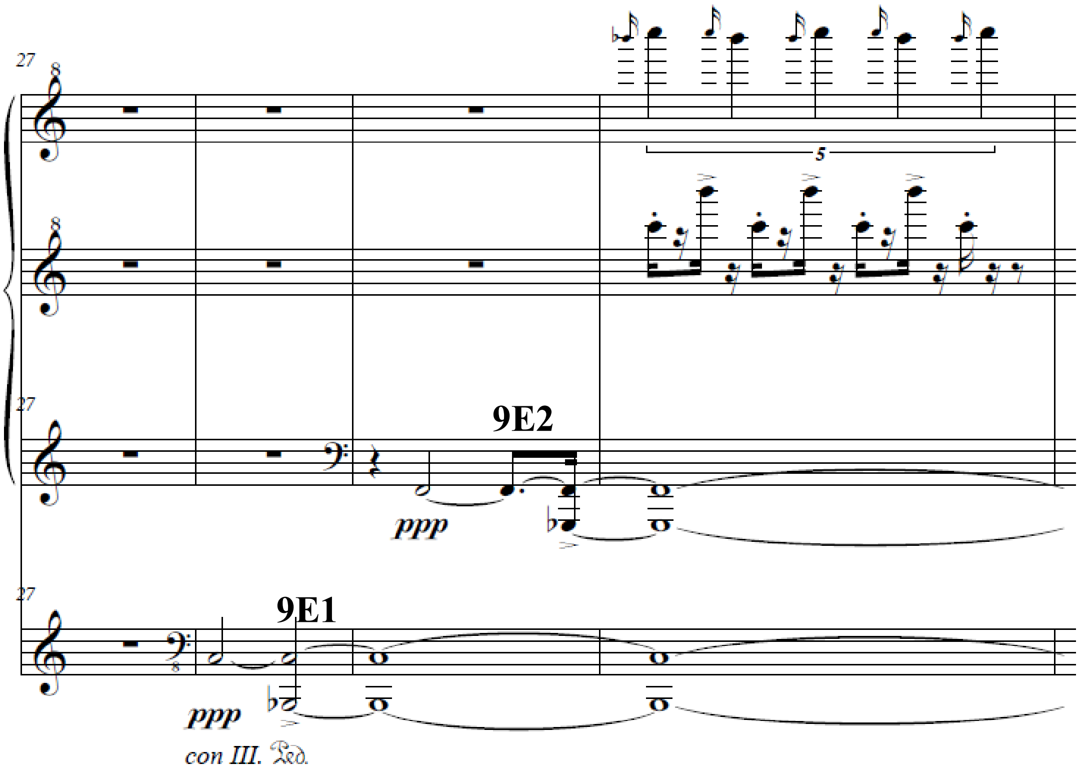


Figure 6.12 Etude 9, bars 27 to 30.

9D1 and 2 are repeated three times before six full bars of rests. 9E1 and two then follow in bar 28 and 29 respectively. The first note of 9D1 is a *pianississimo* low C. The C is sounded for two beats before a B flat one octave lower. The image is of two independent, fading parallel lines of indefinite length. These lines also seem to be functioning as planes in the same way as the other ostinatos. Their rhythm and register are low and slow and in combination with their quietness, infer depth and darkness – if the middle C at the beginning of the work was ground level, 9E1 and 2 are below ground. 9E2 is very similar to 9E1 except the notes fall on a low F and G flat. The metonymical effect is similar but placed consecutively they appear more as dialogue – the second a response in agreement with the first. The way that 9E2 occurs lower than 9E1 has the effect of a response that affirms the statement. They are then sustained beneath two restatements of 9D1 and 2 and are repeated in slightly different forms a further four times, the final two statements without any other material. 9D1 and 2 repeat unchanged at varying distances until bar 43. From bar 55 to 59, the material from section one returns briefly.

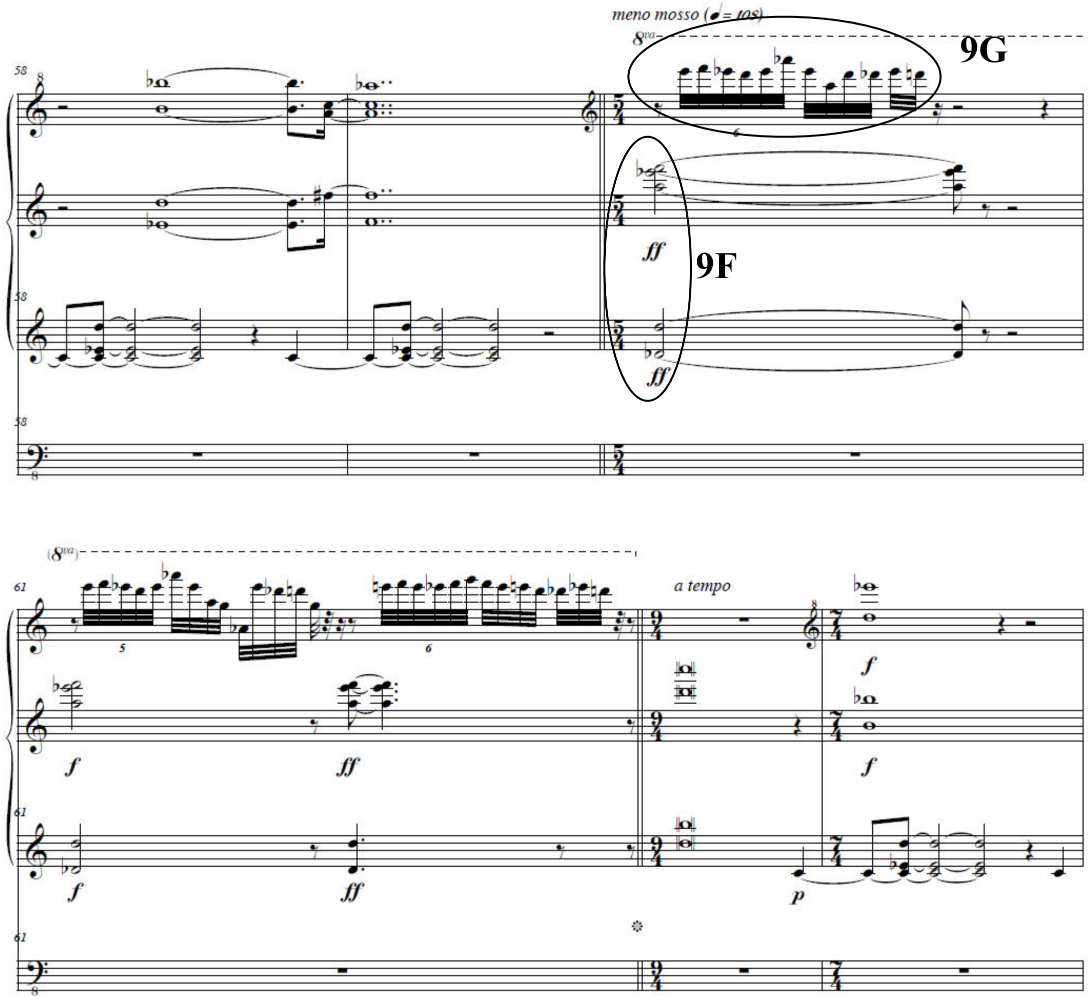


Figure 6.13 Etude 9, bars 58 to 63.

From bar 60 to 63 two new metonymical images are introduced. The first (9F) is chordal and distantly resembles previous sections although all the notes are struck at the same time – no notes are pulled forward. The five-note-chord is spread across both hands and is sustained for four-and-a-half beats. As all of the notes in the chord are treated equally, the notes on the top and bottom gain significance in that they define the outline of what metonymically operates as a band of colour. The top two notes of the chord are an E flat and an F. The middle two notes between the hands are a major fifth D to A while the lowest note is the D flat above middle C. The same chord is repeated three times before moving upward in bar 62 to a four note chord forming three intervals – a major sixth, minor third and a minor seventh. The note at the top of this last chord is a C.

The second fragment (9G) is melodic and consists of a very fast twisting line in the highest registers of the piano. A similar image repeats three times with slight note alterations each time. All three repetitions begin on an E to F thus reinforcing the importance of these two pitches. These two notes are followed by a turn around an E flat, then a jump up and down – all circling the E and E flat. The metonymical image that emerges is a twisting and spiralling line – an arabesque. The chromatic movement of the line enhances its serpentine qualities. As it is in a very high register, it is eerie and its speed and unpredictability gives it volatility.

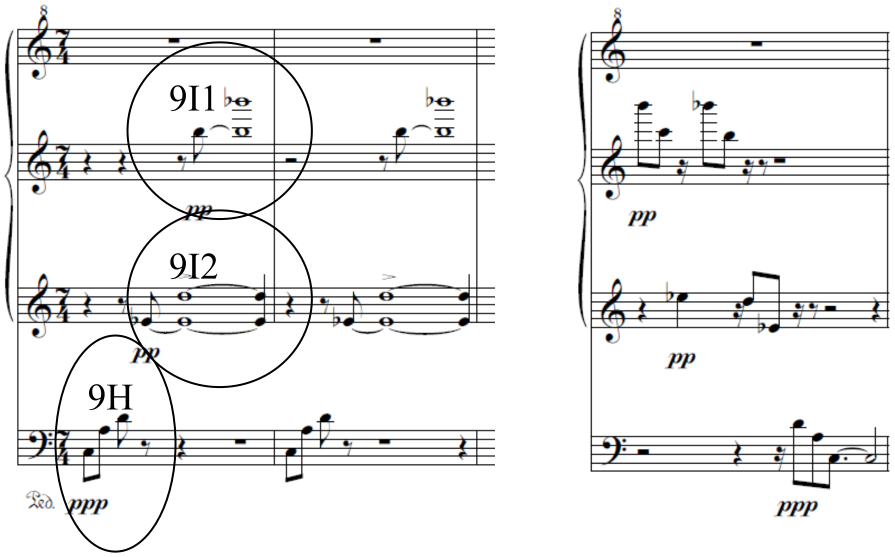


Figure 6.14 Etude 9, bars 248 to 249 and bar 258.

From 63, the etude returns to images from the first sections. They then follow a process of changes and adjustments before there is a break in continuity in bar 202. At first glance the ideas appear new but on closer inspection they prove to be a development of 9D1 and 2. No new images are introduced until bar 248 where the chords are broken into a series of rising notes and from bar 258 the direction changes and the chords unfold from the top downwards. The harmonies originate in previous material but the strong directionality of the pitches translates into new metonymical images. Once again, there are three levels of activity in this area. The lowest stave holds the first of these fragments – 9H. It is simply three consecutive quavers, a low C followed by an A and a D above it. As the C is sounded first, it becomes the reference point for the section. This pattern is repeated at the start of every bar that is not a whole bar of rest until bar 258 where the direction changes. The next ideas fall, one after the other, immediately after 9H. They are both intervals of two notes and are sustained – 9I1 and 9I2. While the notes are struck individually, they decay together and so sound as a chord. 9I1 is an E flat followed a major seventh higher by a D and 9I2 is a B followed a minor ninth higher by an E flat. Metonymically, the overwhelming image these fragments project is of upward motion. As the intervals are quite widely spaced, the rhythm absolutely steady and the dynamic quiet, the effect is of lightness – the upward motion is even, unhindered and effortless. The other factor involved in the image is the notion of horizontal planes that form levels.

Interpreting image, metaphor and metonymy in the etudes.

By identifying and describing the directly observable characteristics of each unit as an image in the three etudes we have seen how Volans deals with images in the following ways. The important aspects to have emerged show us that juxtaposition creates internal opposition. Also, Volans's denial of symbolism and his emphasis on the material and its production emphasises the mechanisms of the surface and object. The stratification in the works creates parts within parts which can be reduced to units which, through repetition, transcription and reworking, are sound images with strong metonymical potential. The question now is: does Volans, like Jasper Johns, have a set of figured relations between the parts (individual images) and whole through metonymy and/or synecdoche?

The first clue which suggests that this is possible is how easy it is to observe how Volans's shaping of each figure is directed to enhance and articulate the inherent metaphorical properties of the images musically. There now can be no doubt that the composer's intention was to express the works as imagery, as clearly as possible. How is it that despite the above analysis the images would still seem to be positioned arbitrarily? While Volans directs the listener's attention to the surface, the works can certainly be heard purely structurally and technically – the structural and technical aspects of the works in themselves are captivating. However, an audience conscious of the use of images could experience the pieces on another level and could interpret the works metaphorically. How do the images operate together? Are they arbitrary or is there a deliberate logic in the composer's sustained use of metonymy and synecdoche? While the numerous contiguities within and between works create associations that would not otherwise be possible, there is no obvious deliberate connection, logic or relationship between the images within the pieces. Has the composer merely constructed an imagistic game or does the whole determine the sense of the part and while the parts are governed by the intention of the whole?

According to Fletcher in *Allegory: the theory of a symbolic mode* (1982), allegory is the sustained use of two tropes of metaphor: metonymy and synecdoche. For Fletcher, metonymy and synecdoche, despite being antagonistic in many ways 'contain the full range of allegorical part-whole relationships' (Fletcher, 1982: 87).

In ancient Greece, allegoria enabled a public speaker to communicate at least two meanings simultaneously. The more obvious meaning would have been understandable to anyone, while the second could convey private information intended only for a selective audience. In allegoria, this private meaning is concealed by a cloak of deceptive rhetoric (Orton, 1994: 157). Two separate sets of interpretive conventions arose to decode the meanings. If the speaker emphasized the rhetorical aspect i.e. saying something other than what seems to be said, the meaning would have been hidden in the grammatical construction of the message and would have been unlocked through rhetorical procedures, protocols and compositional practices. If the speaker emphasized or drew attention to another text, the allegory was a philosophical issue, involving an exegetical interpretation of another, pre-existing, text (Orton, 1994: 158). Over time, as allegoria evolved, the two traditions merged resulting in the practice known as allegory.

While allegory can be understood most simply in terms of its dual meaning, the location of meaning in another text opens up a number of possibilities. The meaning could be a visual image, a quality, sense or even a form or process used in the other text (Fletcher, 1982: 71). The signifiers embedded in any medium or material are capable of this kind of meaning. The interplay between the material signifiers within the texts articulates the allegory. In this sense, the allegory can only be understood through properties of the material itself – any other interpretation the reader may wish to bring to the text will be of little use for its allegorical interpretation. While the majority of readers/listeners/beholders only engage the literal meaning of the work, those who are informed of the allegorists' use of language are able to access the 'private' information (Orton, 1994: 44).

Allegory has consistently been applied in many kinds of written, aural and visual representation since the middle ages (Orton, 1994: 158). Irrespective of its medium of representation, all applications of allegory share the same self conscious use of language and the same relationship to a preceding text. The complex relationship between the allegory and its antecedent text is very different from the ordinary connection between a work and its sources (Fletcher, 1982: 106). It goes further than mere allusion. The prior text possesses an authority (possibly religious, philosophical, historical or even aesthetic) over the allegory, which guides its interpretation and limitations. This existing text is generally chosen for its richness of meaning. By penetrating the depth of meaning of the pretext, an allegory can stand as a completely independent, new work (Orton, 1994: 162). Imagery, vocabulary, syntax or even semantics could all be exploited for their ability to operate as signifiers. Historically, the Bible was most often the source for allegory (Fletcher, 1982: 21). More recently, a much wider variety of cultural sources have been re-examined this way. Almost anything could serve as a source if it can provide a well established direction for the new work as well as hold the clues for the reader/listener/beholder to understand it.

The primary task of the allegorist involves creating linguistic connections. Using figures of speech, the allegorist links unrelated notions and concepts through a chain of associations, thus connecting the texts. In so doing, the surface of the new text need not resemble the one it refers to in order for the meaning to be confirmed. Each link in the chain, manifested in the work as a substitution, transforms the surface of the text. In linguistics, the collection of figures of speech that operate by substitution can be broadly grouped under the concept of metaphor i.e. the replacement of a subject with a similar or analogous substitute.

When presented with any kind of allegory, each member of the audience has to contend with their own uncertainty as to what is signified. Whether the allegorist is manipulating words or images, he consciously provokes an attention to the emotional and intellectual experience of understanding the work. As the process of interpretation is open-ended, possibly infinite, it requires a great deal of engagement from the listener. The images that emerge from Volans's music are not, in and of themselves, unique or profound in any way. Though the manner in which they are presented is interesting, what ends do they serve?

It may be argued that through allegory, Volans is consciously questioning the language appropriated to his project. We have found that he consciously uses modernist procedures to create accentuated surfaces. However, the medium of allegory acknowledges the subjectivity of experience and disrupts the continuity and predictability of the experience of the surface. Coleridge described it as follows:

> Now an allegory is but a translation of abstract notions into a picture language, which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses; the principle being more worthless even than its phantom proxy, both alike unsubstantial and the former

> shapeless to boot. On the other hand a symbol is characterized by a translucence of the special in the individual or of the general in the special or of the universal in the general; above all by the translucence of the eternal through an in the temporal. It always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that unity, of which it is the representative. The others are but empty echoes which the fancy arbitrarily associates with apparitions of matter, less beautiful but not less shadowy than the sloping orchard or hill-side pasture-field seen in the transparent lake below (Coleridge, 1816: 30).

In *The Statesman's Manual* (1816) Coleridge goes on to compare symbols in art to the Christian Eucharist – where the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. Similarly, in a secular, contemporary context, where the prevailing sentiment is that art lies beyond the reach of mere craft or technique, the work of art becomes the feeling and state of mind of its creator for the listener. In a similar vein, Clement Greenberg in his discussions on the avant-garde identified two of its main priorities. The first was the emphasis on surface matter as opposed to subject matter (Greenberg, 1940: 28). As a result, painters addressed the flatness of the canvass and the medium of paint while composers emphasised the material properties of sound. The second priority was the exploration of the mediums for their expressive effects – the immediacy of sensation (Greenberg, 1940: 31). Out of this stems the distinction between subject-matter and content – subject-matter being the artist's own intentions and content being the effect the work has on its audience. The primary goal was to confront the audience with immediate sensations (Greenberg, 1940: 31). As such, content is the effect, quality or feeling a work provokes. Abstract Expressionism was the style in painting that developed the pursuit of immediacy of effect. So, when making an abstract expressionist painting, the artist uses marks and colours as vehicles of feelings or 'inner necessity' (Kandinsky, 1994: 175). However it could be said, in music, particularly after Stravinsky and Cage, that many composers have prioritised an idea or concept outside of themselves – they haven't sought to express or communicate their own feelings. Volans's music definitely resists being understood as being the communication of feelings and his explicit resolution to 'do away with content' supports this. As such, the works' intended engagement with the audience must reside elsewhere – in some other effect or quality. Through an allegory of images, Volans is able to simultaneously highlight both the signifiers of identity and its absence – the meaning does not need to coincide with the intent. In a post-structural framework in which meanings and things disengage – Volans as allegorist directs the listener's attention to the arbitrary character of the form – disavowing the symbolic.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MECHANICAL AND ORGANIC PROCESSES OF CONTINUITY IN THE ETUDES

Mary Rörich, in her review of the etudes, described the goal of Volans as a modernist as 'striving for absolute organic coherence and concentration of thought' (Rörich, 2005: 155). In the previous three chapters we have seen how each of Kevin Volans's nine completed piano etudes each have very different shapes but with strong cohesive internal and external links. So far there has been no evidence of any pre-existing compositional plan or even a systematic approach to how the material is organized. There is an overarching sense that the composer has let the material dictate its own desires, each image taken on its own terms. Paradoxically, we have seen how there is also evidence of a remarkable degree of control over detail. All along, the balancing act of accommodating spontaneity and unpredictable outcomes while maintaining a high degree of cohesion and unity has emerged to be an important factor in Volans's approach to the etudes. There is no doubt that every note is critically important to the whole.

We have also seen a widespread use of repetition throughout the etudes. However, even when repetitive processes are set in motion, the rules can change at any point. Each etude unfolds uniquely. As one listens to them, there is no real way of knowing what to expect next. In an interview for the BBC in August 2011 Volans hinted at this attribute of his work. He spoke of his methods as being anti-conceptualist, implying that he composes without an initial idea of where the music will take him. Volans studied with Stockhausen, the 'master-planner', but when he explains his music, there is a tangible tension between the mechanical procedures of his education and his desire to allow works to unfold organically. In his early article 'Of White Africans and White Elephants/A New Note' (1986) Volans described the difference between his perception of the creation of 'African' music and 'western' music. In this article he outlines certain differences between these musical cultures, citing aesthetic solutions for problems in western art music to be found in African music. Primarily the solutions he suggests lie in what he found to be the African conception of time, space and African art's additive, immediate modes of production. 'From our privileged position in this country we can and must learn something of the spirit of traditional African culture – the exuberance, extravagance and unexpectedness; the sense of order and pattern – the need to make every part essential to the whole; the assurance, humility and lack of guilt that comes of a knowledge of one's place and value in society' (Volans, 1986: 5). These views reflect not only Volans's political position but also an organic stance in relation to time and process in his work.

Defining organicism

Mechanical methods imply a reliance on implementing formulae. Mechanical composition is concerned with applying techniques while an organic structure is instinctual and intuitive (Korsyn, 1993: 102). While organicism could be associated with biological growth, where the larger form of the work emerges out of an accumulation of smaller cellular units, it is strongly associated with the less tangible attributes of living things. The concept of organicism is flexible and, over time, has come to mean different things to different writers. While it is sometimes used interchangeably with concepts of 'unity', its philosophical meaning is much more precise.

For 19thcentury philosophers, the term 'organic' was used to elevate an object beyond the physical realm, much more than a description of its physical attributes. The strong links between philosophical idealism and organicism in art are well expressed by the term '*Geist'* (Korsyn, 1993: 82) – a spiritual element or quality possessed by all living beings. Describing a work of art as organic ascribes it with spiritual significance. As such, the word organic is closely associated with concepts such as genius, originality, imagination, symbol, the transcendental and 'the sublime' (Korsyn, 1993: 90). Perhaps the most prominent exponent of the dualism between organic unity and the mechanical in music to date has been Heinrich Schenker. For Schenker, the organic work is more than an object to be observed, it is a subject in its own right who 'returns our gaze' (Korsyn, 1993: 91).

While most Romantic organicist discourse cultivated the binary opposition as a reaction to 19thcentury sciences' reduction of natural organisms to mechanisms, in 'Schenker's Organicism Re-examined' (1993), Kevin Korsyn proposed that the two concepts overlap much more than previously thought. Korsyn argues in favour of fluidity between the opposites. He also recounts how Schopenhauer, the highly regarded and influential late 19th century voice of the cult of genius in art, demanded that the exercise of 'genius is nothing but the most complete objectivity' (Schopenhauer, 1924). For Schopenhauer, genius was the ability to silence the subjective 'Will'. He purported that works of genius result when the artist is a pure subject of knowing and so achieves an entirely objective perception.

Superficially, a purely objective perception might be thought of as a scientific, rather mechanical viewpoint. Paradoxically, according to Schopenhauer's thinking, a purely objective perception provides the ideal convergence between the mind and nature, language and *Geist*. By being independent of the conscious mind and will, a significant by-product of Schopenhauer's view is the increased importance of unconscious, spiritual, instinctive inspiration or *Geist*. In contrast, in music the term 'technique' is usually used to describe the objective, mechanical and technical aspects of works. If we incorporate Schopenhauer's reading of organicism as ultimate objectivity, the paradoxical title of Schenker's famous 1895 series of essays, *The Spirit of Musical Technique* (Translated in Cook: 2007), is not nearly as self-contradictory as it could be.

Schenker's reading provides a useful analytical model of the application of organic and mechanical concepts to music. For Schenker, organic composition involves processes that are 'uncontaminated by the composer's consciousness' while techniques, such as counterpoint exercises, can be learned, practised and refined. This correlates with Volans's assertions on craft and composition in his article 'Dancing in the Dark', although Volans takes the concepts further by making two equations. For Volans, craft (mechanical) is any form, system or process that the composer uses consciously: 'Craftsmanship involves knowledge of a body of precise skills which enable one to make the same thing over and over again' (Volans, 1989: 2). In contrast, composition (organic) is instinctive and unconscious: 'real composition begins when you do not actually understand why you are doing something, because you are attempting to reach beyond the limits of your own knowledge' (Volans, 1989: 3).

In order to identify and examine the organic processes in the etudes, it is necessary to construct a clear musical definition of each approach, embracing their directly observable musical characteristics. For this analysis, any procedure that has the capacity to be repeated in a different context, has been executed systematically and has been used more than once will be regarded as a mechanical technique. Areas in pieces where there is no obvious evidence of musical causality, could only have been shaped by the composer's preference at that point and are not unfolding according a predetermined formula but still display a strong sense of cohesion and compositional unity will be regarded as organic. While it would be impossible to catalogue every technique the composer has implemented, it will be useful to identify those which are used most often in the etudes. It is also important to bear in mind that at any particular point there is likely to be more than one mechanical or organic process in operation. The first step will be mapping the mechanical processes in order to expose, by default, where organic processes are at play.

Minimalist composition techniques

Dan Warburton addressed the issue of standard minimalist practices in his article 'A working terminology for minimal music' (1988). Written around the time of a resurgence of interest in minimal music, his aim was to present a precise terminology for academic analytical requirements. While Warburton sought to address the kind of minimalist music which is driven by process or multiple process, which Volans music isn't, the techniques he defines and names are widespread enough to be regarded as standard techniques.

Repetition

The most conspicuous mechanical technique used throughout the etudes is repetition. Repetition is possibly the single most important device of so-called minimalist composers and Volans's etudes display a variety of applications of it. Repetition is a ubiquitous characteristic of minimalism. Steve Reich used repetition as a structural principle and claimed to derive his version of repetition from studying non-western music (Schwartz, 1981: 380). In early Reich in particular, all the processes in his pieces are set out before the piece is composed and although he allows a certain degree of flexibility, generally do not deviate from the pre-compositional plan (Schwartz, 198: 378). In a sense Reich takes a mechanical approach to repetition. Volans, whose works are not at all driven by fixed processes, takes a different view of repetition. In both 'Dancing in the Dark' and 'Of White Africans and White Elephants', Volans explained the way he saw the notion of additive repetition in African music. In Volans's research, 'none of the African musicians showed any anxiety about change in their music, for them repetition was so self evident that they did not perceive it as such. They perceived their music as a continuous flow without an identifiable beginning or ending. As such, for them, the music can't be subdivided' (Volans, 1986: 3). These views reflect the perception of Volans African music's organic mode of repetition, a mode he contrasts with the western mode. We have seen in Chapter 5 how his etudes are built from individual image units which are strung into layers and strata with repetition being a central compositional technique to achieve this. The image units also indicated that repetition within the etudes can be subdivided. How does repetition appear to have been used as a technique in the etudes? To what extent does Volans application of the technique reflect a mechanical or an organic process? While each occurrence of repetition is adapted slightly to its particular context, there are certain tendencies that appear in many instances throughout the etudes.

The simplest and most obvious form of repetition is exact repetition. Exact repetition is a mechanical process in the sense that there is no compositional intervention once it's implemented or element of uncertainty in the outcome. Inexact repetition or repetitions with tiny alterations would be mechanical if the changes were introduced systematically. The only window for organic growth using repetition is inexact repetition where the changes are not part of any process. Since repetition is used throughout all the etudes, at first glance exact repetition might seem to be the most important factor in their construction.

Between bars 17 and 21 of Etude 9 and in bars 1 to 4 of Etude 8, we find examples of exact repetition where the composer has not introduced any element of change and can be regarded as the product of a simple mechanical process.

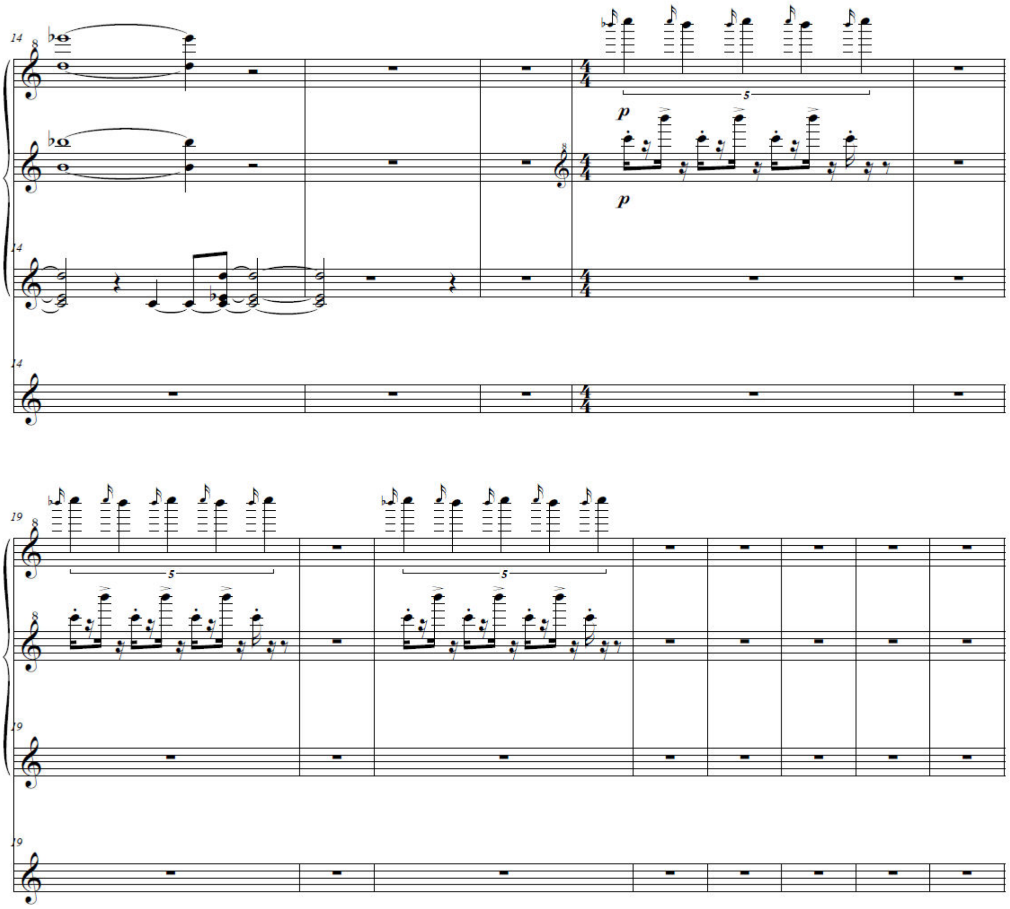


Figure 7.1 Etude 9, bars 17 to 21.

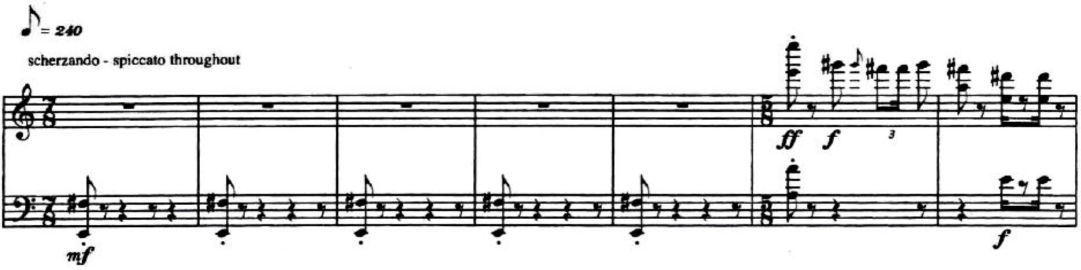


Figure 7.2 Etude 8, bars 1 to 7.

Many of the repetitions in the etudes are single repetitions of a figure. In these cases, in the majority of instances, small changes have been made so that the repetition is not exact. This example from the upper line of Etude 1 shows the inclusion of an appoggiatura before the second statement of the slur. Also, the C on the second note of the slur is lengthened the second time to a minim from a crotchet.

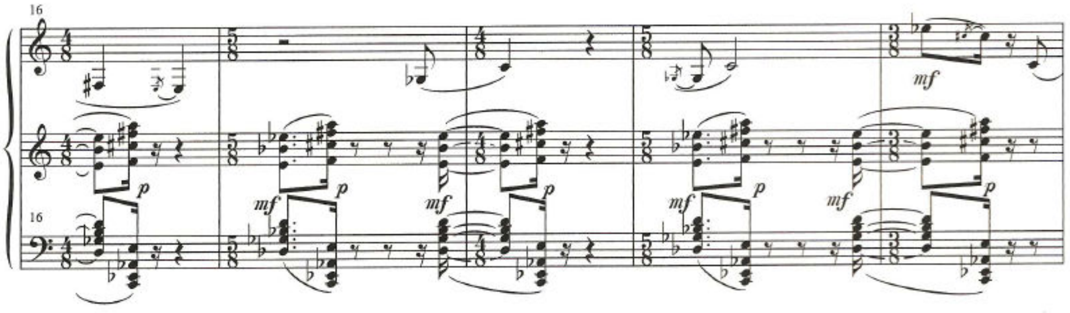


Figure 7.3 Etude 1, bars 16 to 20.

In searching for examples of thoroughly exact repetition it was difficult to find many which where truly exact on a broader scale, that is to say, more than a few bars of the same content. In Etude 1 we see what seems to be exact repetition at play right at the outset.

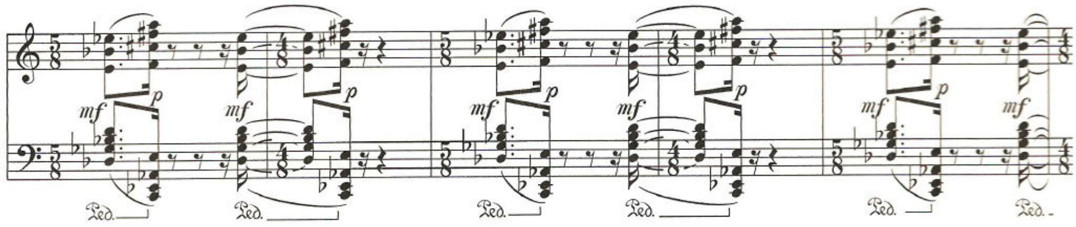


Figure 7.4 Etude 1, bars 1 to 5.

The first 27 bar long section of Etude 1 consists of 13 exact repetitions and one partial repeat of the two bar symmetrical image. The two bar phrase is itself a single repeat of exactly the same figure but with a semiquaver shift forward in relation to the meter. Taking that into account, the opening image of the first etude is stated 27 times before shifting upward in bar 28. However, after the melodic layer is introduced in bar eight, the repeated material takes a secondary role and in relation to its shifts against the melody, is not exactly the same each repeat.

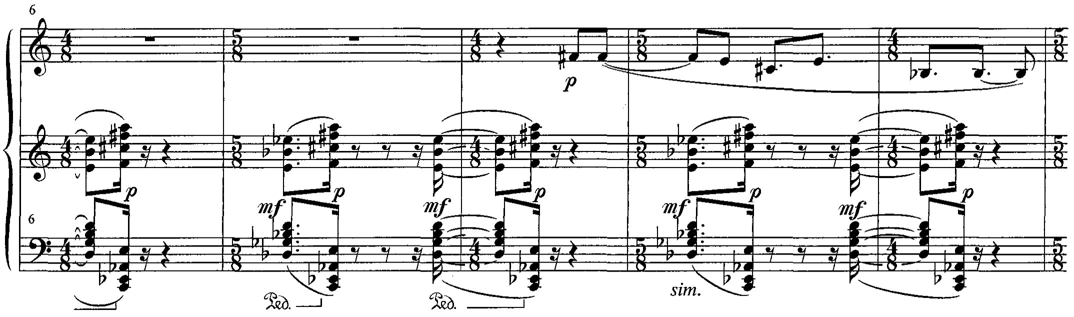


Figure 7.5 Etude 1, bars 6 to 10.

The repeated perfect fifth in the second half of the etude is also affected by the changes in its context.

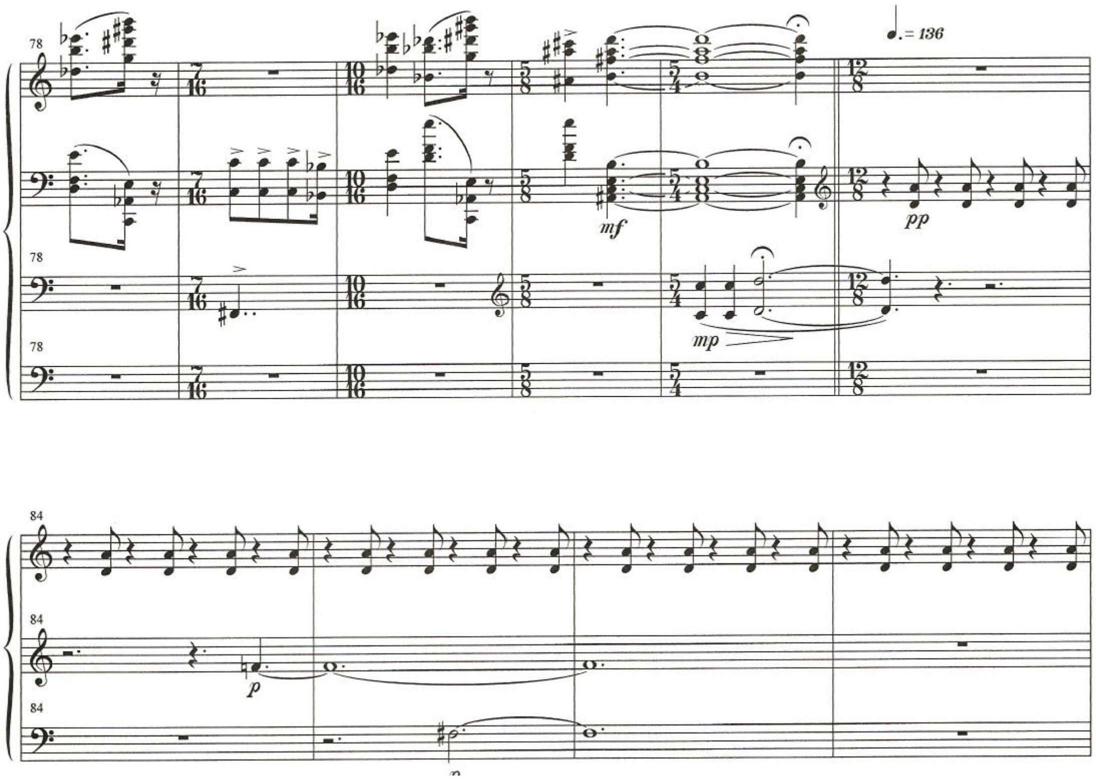


Figure 7.6 Etude 1, bars 78 to 87.

In both of these examples the material taken out of context is exactly repeated but within the piece, its relationship to the surrounding material therefore changes. Also the way the material is affected in both cases is unsystematic and as such is organic rather than mechanical in its development.

The four layers of the ninth etude shift in relation to one another by very small increments. Each layer is subject to slight changes with each repeat so that the repeat is not strictly exact. On observation, it emerges that the composer has implemented certain techniques to avoid using mechanical repetition. Apart from making tiny rhythmic or alignment adjustments, exact repetition is also avoided by inserting fragments of other material between repeats of an idea. This creates groupings which defy patterning such as this insertion in Etude 1. The melody in bar 76 frames two groupings of quaver jumps. As the notes of the first dotted quaver in bar 74 are different from those in bar 77, the groups, despite using the same figure three times, are different.

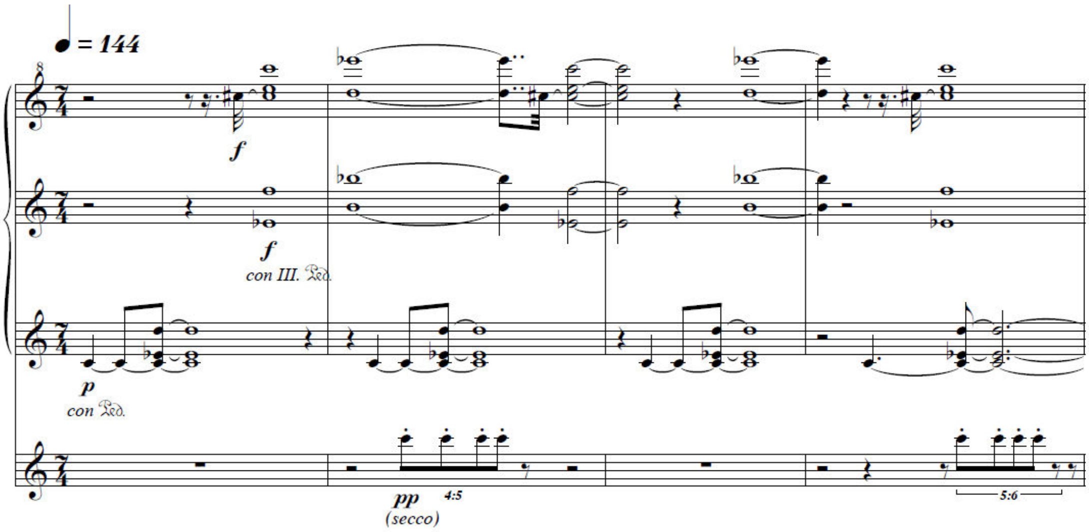


Figure 7.7 Etude 9, bars 1 to 4.

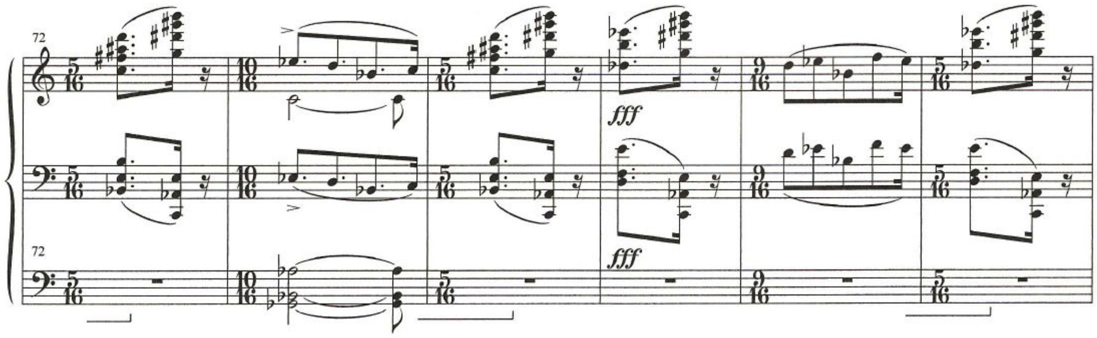


Figure 7.8 Etude 1, bars 72 to 77.

A technique not cited by Warburton, probably as it is not strictly a minimalist process but which is a technique which Volans uses, is the repetition of a single note. Whenever he has done this in the etudes, the groupings of the repeated notes are entirely irregular. In the opening of Etude 2 the 10 repetitions of a G followed by 23 repetitions of a D in the lowest part have no immediate or logical link to anything else in the work. Also, the repeated note tremolo at the end of Etude 6 is gathered in quintuplet figures which occur irregularly throughout the rest of the piece.

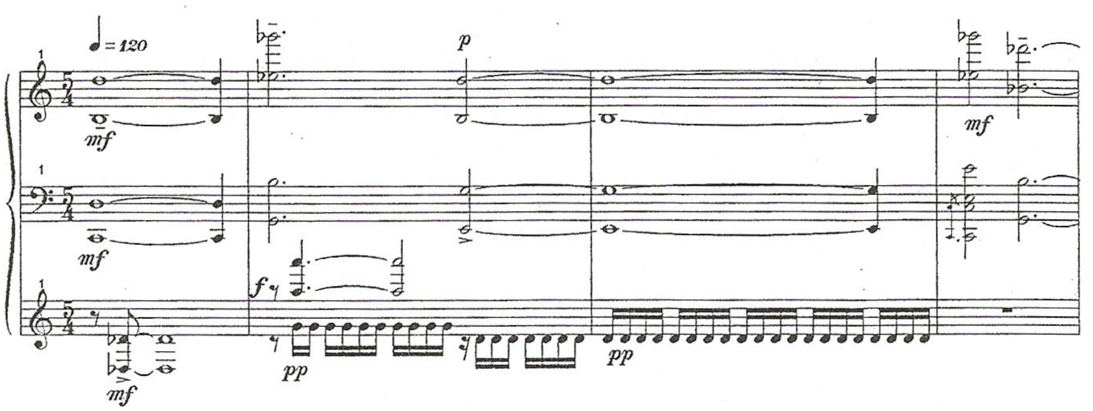


Figure 7.9 Etude 2, bars 1 to 4.

In the following instance of the repetition of a phrase from Etude 1 the composer has repeated the same melodic figure three times in a row. In an analytical mode of ‘spot the difference’, we see that they are in fact not exactly the same. Apart from being positioned differently in the bar, the third quaver is lengthened to a dotted quaver in the second phrase. The third phrase shows the tiniest difference. Unlike the first phrase, the whole of bar 27 in the third phrase is slurred, including the C and E flat in the phrase whereas in bar 22 and 23, the last two notes are part of the next phrase. Also, the composer has inserted an additional two-note fragment across bar 24 and 25 which creates asymmetrical phrase groupings on either side of it.

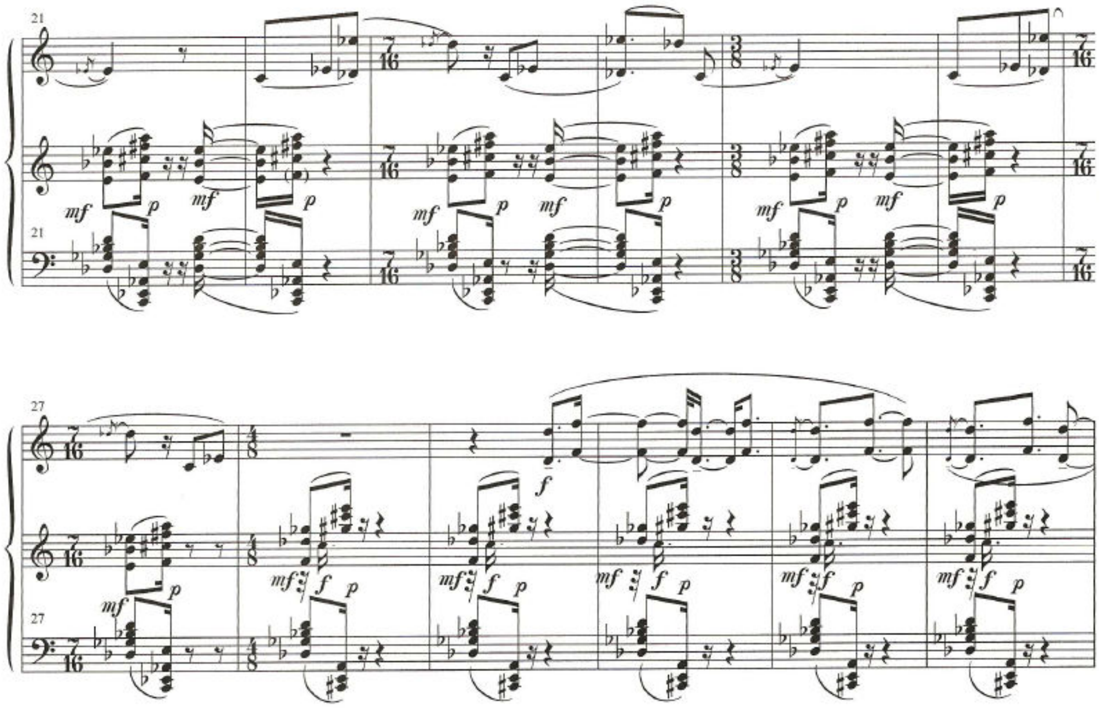


Figure 7.10 Etude 1, bars 21 to 32.

Ostinatos are found frequently in the etudes either as single note repetitions or, as in the example from Etude 1 below, repeated groupings of more than one note. Such layers of repetition perform a subordinate role in relation to the broader texture performing a mechanical process within a broader organic scheme. The effect of repeating individual notes this way results in a note or figure becoming a tonal reference point. Generally, minimalist composers allow the tonal reference point to linger and, as in the case of Steve Reich, steer clear of functional tonality by neutralizing of any tonic/dominant tension (Schwarz, 1981: 377). In this example, the melodic material has no direct tonal relationship with the fundamental harmony generated by the ostinato. If it were in a tonal setting, the ostinato would suggest an F minor harmony which is contradicted by the false relation with the A natural octaves in the top layer. Also, after skating on the edge of tonality, Volans diffuses the tonal reference point in bar 180 by abruptly shifting all material in register.

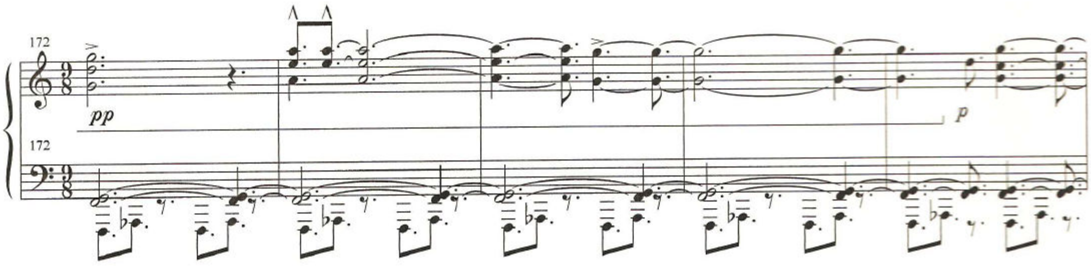


Figure 7.11 Etude 1, bars 172 to 177.

Linear additive and subtractive processes

In dealing with repetition, it is clear in these examples that Volans avoids purely mechanical writing by altering the repeated figures. These alterations are not at all developmental in the sense of elaboration but rather organic shaping of material. However, many of Volans's interventions in dealing with repetition observed above are standard techniques used by other minimalists. So far the primary difference between mechanical minimalist and his application of the techniques is Volans's juggling his use of techniques. The first techniques of changing figures during repetition we encountered above are known as additive and subtractive processes. While only strictly speaking a process if it takes place systematically, since we are looking for Volans's undermining of systematic composition, it is necessary to bend this rule. Linear addition or subtraction occurs horizontally in conjunction with repetition when single or multiple notes are added or subtracted from a melody (Warburton, 1988: 146). Generally, minimalist process-oriented pieces use this technique cumulatively over extended sections but Volans applies it irregularly and hence organically. In bar 5 of Etude 3 the phrase is extended by simply adding the B flat at the end of the phrase. Equally, notes could be inserted at the beginning, middle or end of any fragment or phrase. Notes can also be subtracted. In the following example from bar 65 and 67 of Etude 1, the final C in bar 65 is removed in its repetition in bar 67.

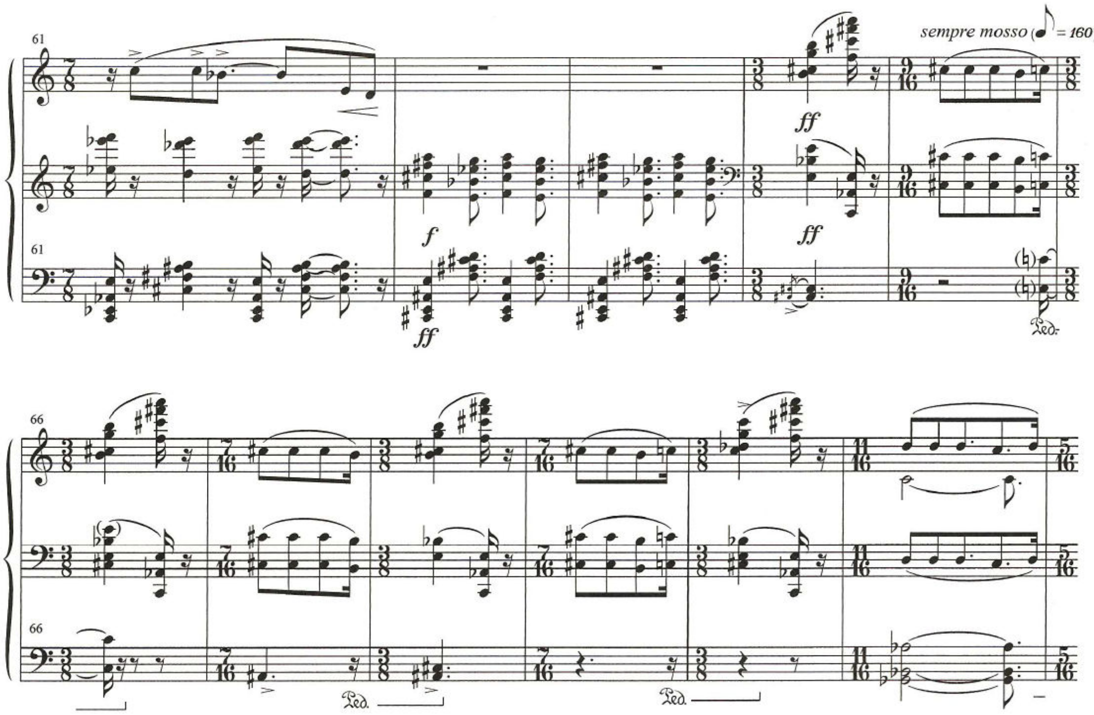


Figure 7.12 Etude 1, bars 61 to 71.

Volans's preferred way of applying this technique of addition and subtraction is vertically, by adding or subtracting one or more notes from repeated chords. He most often uses this technique cumulatively in sections of extended repetition as in bar 103 of Etude 1. Once again, Volans applies the technique irregularly and in unpredictable groupings to avoid predictability. In this section of Etude 1 changes occur completely unpredictably. The first addition of the F sharp occurs after five repetitions of the fifth. A subtraction happens after sixteen repetitions. We then have five repetitions before a single subtraction and then an addition with eleven repetitions.

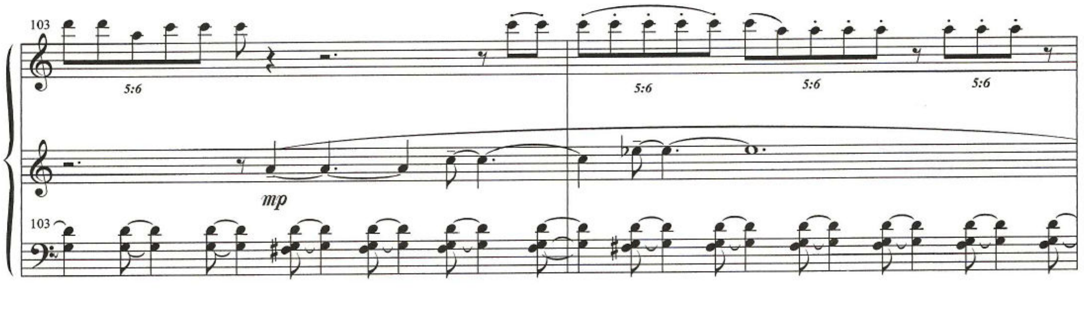


Figure 7.13 Etude 1, bars 103 to 104.

In this example from Etude 5, the second chord is simply a repetition of the first minus the A.

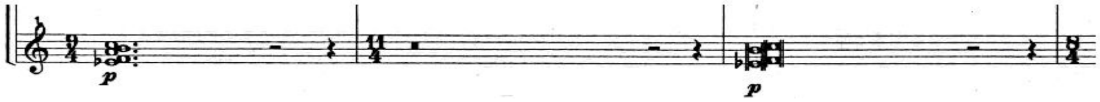


Figure 7.14 Etude 5, bars 1 to 3.

The same technique can be applied by inserting or subtracting horizontal or vertical fragments instead of single notes. These additions are less conspicuous than single note changes and so have a much subtler contiguity and are harder to trace. In the lowest layer of bar 15 to 17 of Etude 2 we see a melodic shape that hints at repetition but with clear differences. The held F across the bar hints at the fused two-fragment structure of the phrase. The first fragment consists of five notes. The second fragment is an inexact repetition of the last three notes of the first (the A-B-F) with the addition of a B (highlighted by the accent) between the A and B. By fusing an incomplete repetition with a single note addition, a highly coherent but organically shaped phrase emerges.

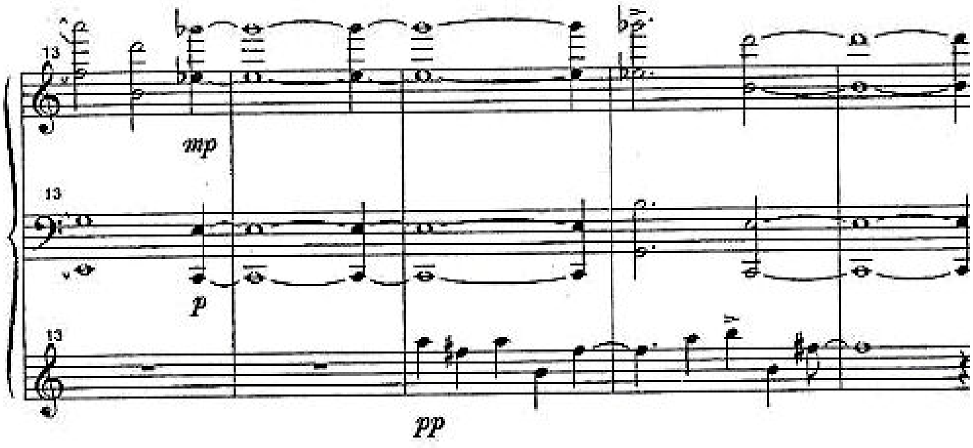


Figure 7.15 Etude 2, bars 13 to 17.

Overlapping patterning

The above instances of repetition in the etudes can be measured on a scale ranging from ‘exact’ repetition of a figure on one side, to repetitions with minute or larger changes on the other. It is self evident that when groupings of two or more notes are repeated and stacked above or below one another, patterns begin to materialize. In relation to minimalist, process-driven techniques, patterns can be arrived at through extending the linear additive process to include blocks of notes instead of single notes. Rigidly adding blocks of notes results in a very rhythmically regular process but can be expanded or contracted in more expansive linear processes. Warburton calls this fluctuating process ‘overlapping pattern work’ (Warburton

1988: 152). Overlapping patterning is a widely used non-western minimalist technique which Volans uses extensively. In the example below from the third etude a whole bar is used for one unit of the pattern which is exactly repeated (apart from the last three notes in the top voice) once. The sequence of twelve pitches in the top three layers are tripled across three octaves. The lowest voice is built from ten notes in duplets against the triplets above and is a continuation of an unbroken pattern set up in bar 77. Here, the overlapping is largely mechanical and is predicable once the process is set up.

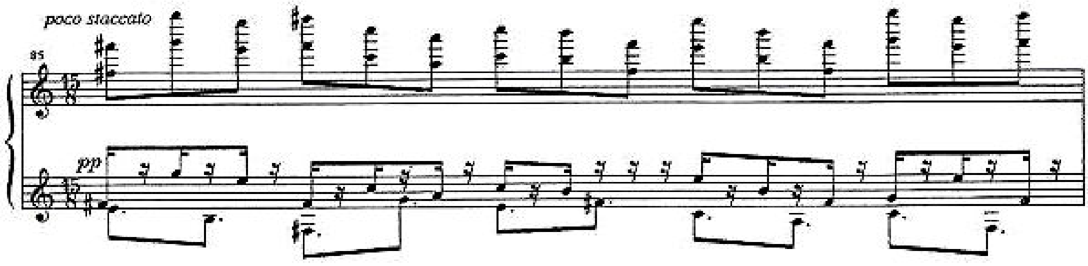


Figure 7.16 Etude 3, bar 85.

The next example is of another overlapping cross-rhythmic pattern in Etude 1 but in this case the repeated figures are shorter with three notes in the top layer over four in the lower one. The first repeat of the pattern is a mechanical reproduction but the second repetition is rhythmically altered and extended leading into the chord in bar 58.

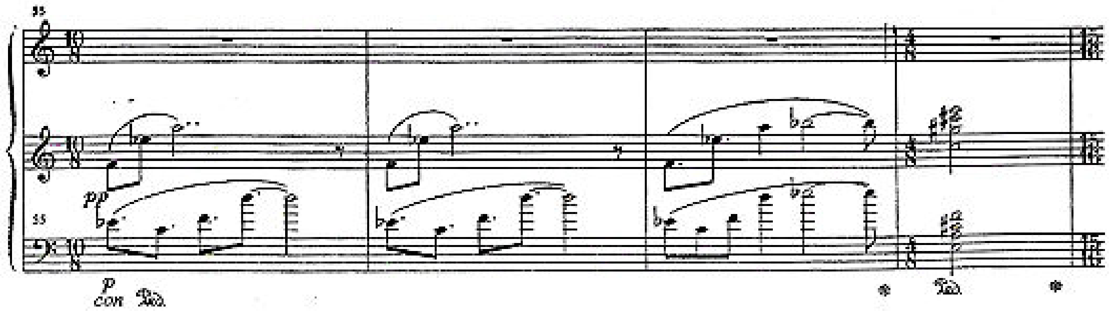


Figure 7.17 Etude 1, bars 55 to 58.

Strongly resembling standard phase shifting as popularised by Reich, in both of the above examples the patterns are the same length and line up vertically. Another standard patterning technique Volans uses is units of different lengths which not only interlock but also shift in relation to one another. This occurs for two bars slightly earlier in bar 77 of Etude 3 where an altered pattern in the top layer (doubled in the third layer) is much shorter than the phrase in the middle and lower layers resulting in the parts ending at different points.

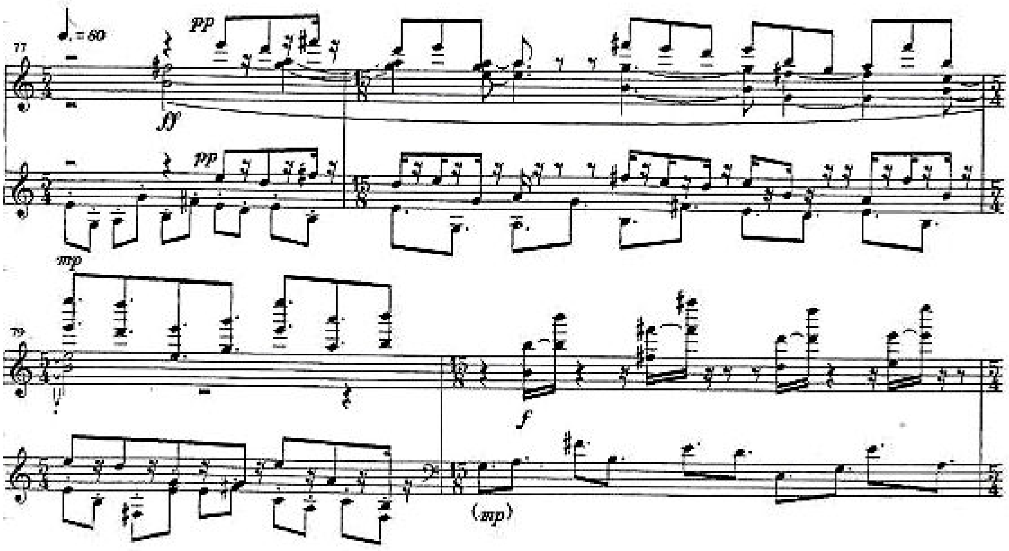


Figure 7.18 Etude 3, bars 77 to 80.

Standard minimalist patterning varies in contrast between the layers. It is possible for layers to be built from a range of either similar, somewhat different or completely contrasting ideas. In all three examples of patterning so far there has been some contrast between the parts. Also, the linear material has been purely melodic. In the cross-rhythmical textured section of Etude 4, there is less contrast and the repetition more static. Both parts only consist of unchanging vertically aligned groups of chords in each bar. As there is no melodic movement, the primary overlapping is the textural and rhythmical interlocking created by the cross rhythm, forming an overall polyrhythmic texture.

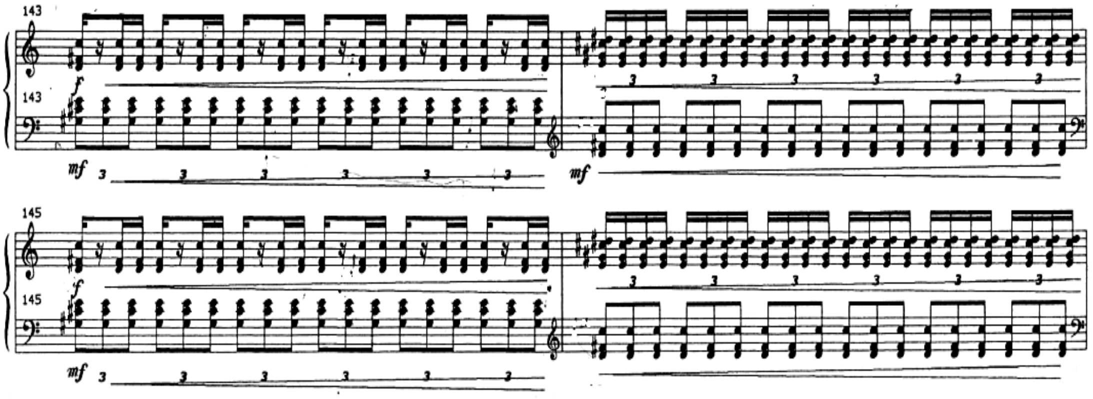


Figure 7.19 Etude 4, bars 143 to 146.

In the next example from bar 55 to 61 of Etude 3, two parallel patterns are completely out of alignment. Between bar 55 and 58, the patterns are of different lengths and are both interlocking but also shifting past each other. In bar 59 they are brought, through incremental change into alignment for one bar in bar 60 only to move out of sync in the very next bar.

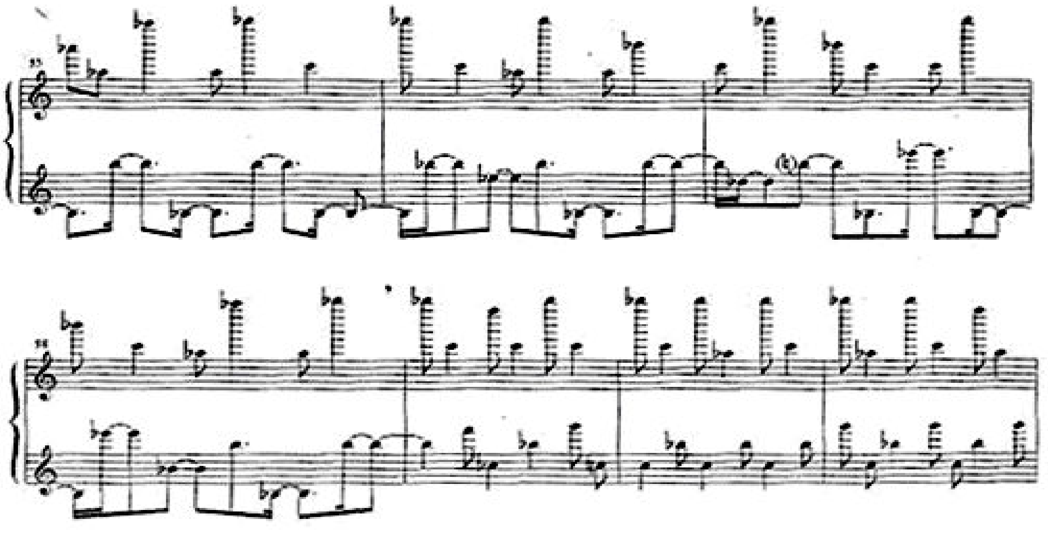


Figure 7.20 Etude 3, bars 55 to 61.

Another way Volans avoids exact repetition is symmetry. As we have seen, symmetry aids with creating strong images but it also builds strong cohesion between essentially different ideas. Symmetry has different manifestations in the etudes ranging from vertically symmetrical chords (opening of Etude 1), vertically symmetrical melodic contours (divergent chromatic lines in Etude 5: bar 6) to horizontally symmetrical material achieved by restating it in retrograde (accompaniment figure in Etude 1: bars 227 to 231 and Etude 5: bars 4 and 11).

When observed closely, we see that Volans has slightly disrupted the symmetry in all of these cases. The vertical symmetry in the opening of Etude 1 is in fact not exact. In the first chord the left hand has four notes and the right hand three. The chords would be exactly symmetrical if the B flat in the left hand were omitted. While the second chords in the slur are exactly symmetrical, the left has a much bigger interval jump than the right hand making the movement asymmetrical.

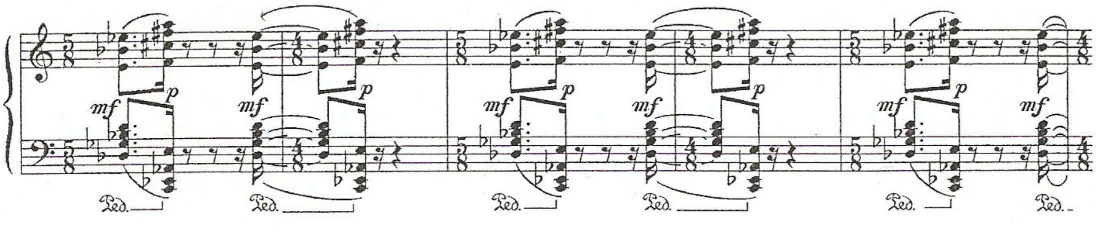


Figure 7.21 Etude 1, bars 1 to 5.

The diverging horizontal lines in Etude 5 are also not quite exactly symmetrical. When the upper part jumps down a fifth from F to B, the lower voice, instead of jumping up the corresponding augmented fourth to E, moves up to the E an octave higher. The pattern then continues exactly symmetrically.

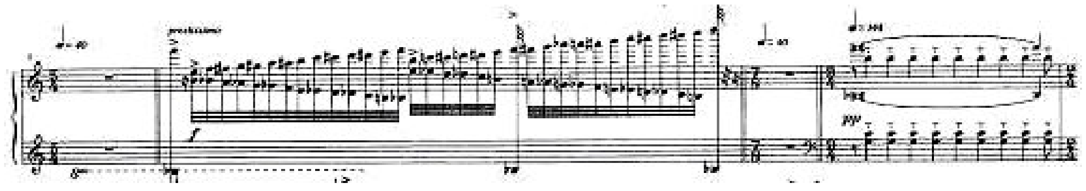


Figure 7.22 Etude 5, bars 5 to 8.

A small alteration has also been made in the seemingly horizontally symmetrical pattern in the lowest layer from bar 227 of Etude 1. In the former statement the C is held for a dotted crotchet but in retrograde the E flat and D are held.

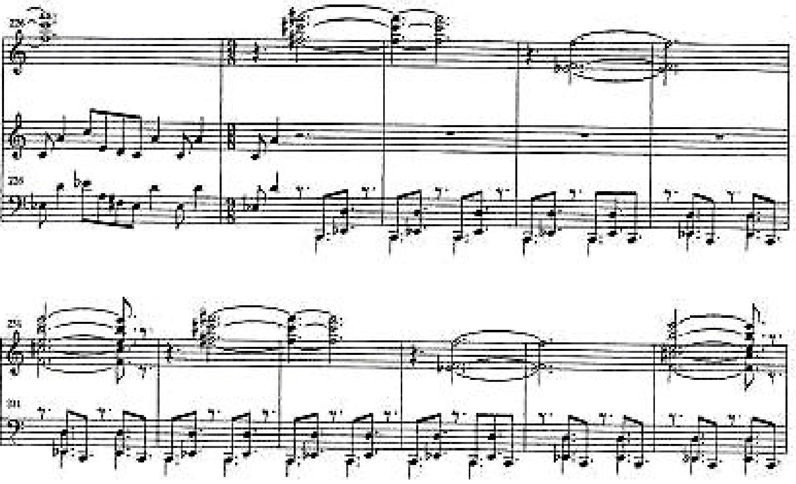


Figure 7.23 Etude 1, bars 226 to 235.

Uncharacteristically, the retrograde is exactly symmetrical in the fourth bar of Etude 5.

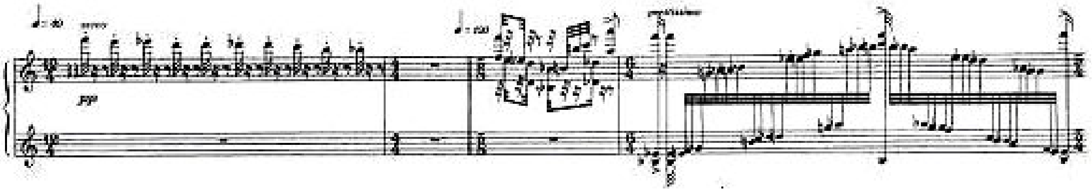


Figure 7.24 Etude 5, bars 1 to 4.

Phasing

Another minimalist technique, linked to repetition, Warburton mentions is phasing. Phasing is found where two patterns move at fractionally different rates, shifting incrementally in relation to one another as though they were at different tempi (Warburton 1988). An iconic example of phasing happens in Reich's *Its Gonna Rain* (1965) where two rhythmic patterns of different lengths start together but continue at different tempi, shifting against each other until they eventually meet up. Although straightforward examples of phasing would use matching patterns and run for full cycles, Volans's more organic application of the idea juxtaposes different patterns with incomplete or indeterminate cycles. He has used the technique explicitly more recently in *Violin: Piano* (2009) where the instruments are given different tempi. In the piano etudes a variant of this technique results in the shifting frames of Etude 4 where it is the primary organizational strategy in the work.

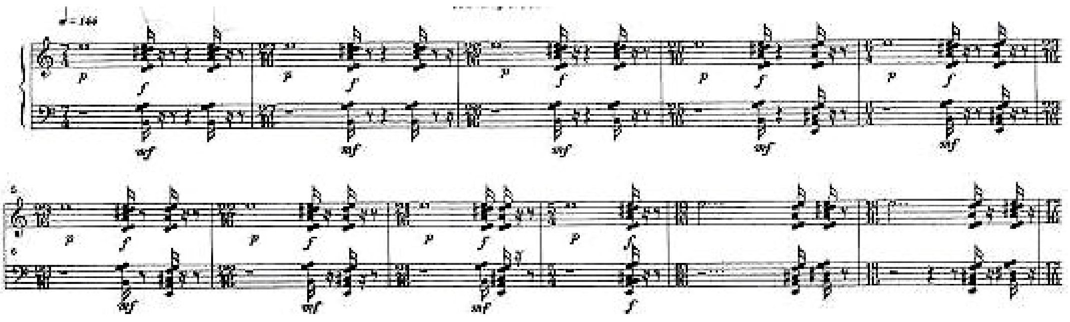


Figure 7.25 Etude 4, bars 1 to 11.

Another variable involved in the phasing method is the amount of difference between the tempos of each layer. The larger the difference in tempo the quicker the phasing takes place. Also tempi need not remain constant, one part may or may not change tempo in the middle of a phase. In the etudes, this occurs as different meters at the same tempo. As seen in the previous chapter, in Etude 4, there are three separate elements in phase: the held notes and the two struck chords. Initially the held notes are in phase with the first chord moving at a steady tempo, while the shifting second chord will be heard recurring at a faster tempo than the first chord (one semiquaver per bar faster than the first chord). At bar 10, when the chords overlap, the tempo of the held notes unexpectedly speeds up by one semiquaver per bar putting it in phase with both the chords. The phasing then continues to happen irregularly for the rest of the piece. Later in the piece, from bar 81 onwards, the phases are broken up and separated into one and two-bar fragments and juxtaposed at different points in each phase, breaking any linearity which may accrue.

Splicing

In Etude 4, Volans is essentially interrupting the flow by switching between processes. This is quite different from early minimalism where composers such as Reich felt that processes should be seen through. The term Warburton uses for this is splicing. The end result appears as though two unrelated figures have been cut up and spliced together. Instead of undermining the unity and cohesion of works as one might at first assume, through contrast, this technique has the effect of drawing attention to particular qualities and characteristics of the material. This occurs on various scales ranging from inserting single bars to joining together large sections of pieces. Volans did this in Etude 6 where the joining of ascending broken chords such as in bar 28, were inserted creating layers of sections and processes. His application of this technique in this instance is also incomplete – in this case the splicing indicates a change in process. Elsewhere in the work the processes continue after the splice.

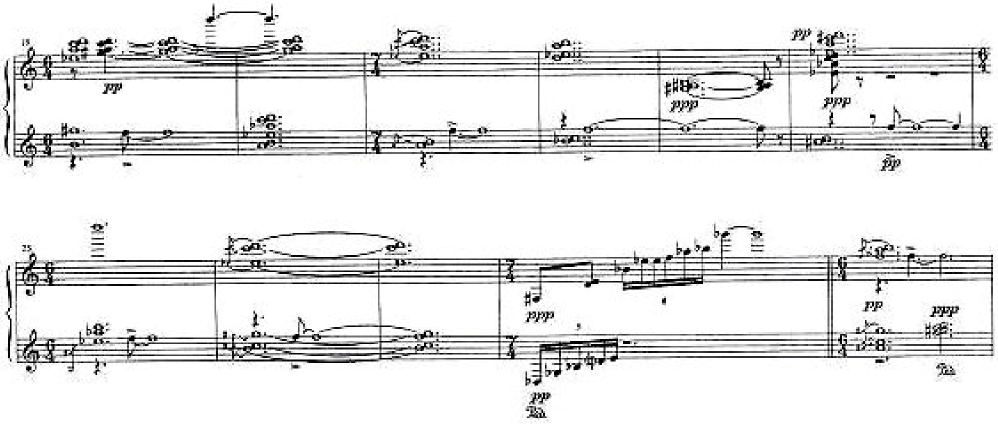


Figure 7.26 Etude 6, bars 19 to 29.

Later in Etude 6, bars 115 and 116 are splicing on a larger scale – in this case two bars.

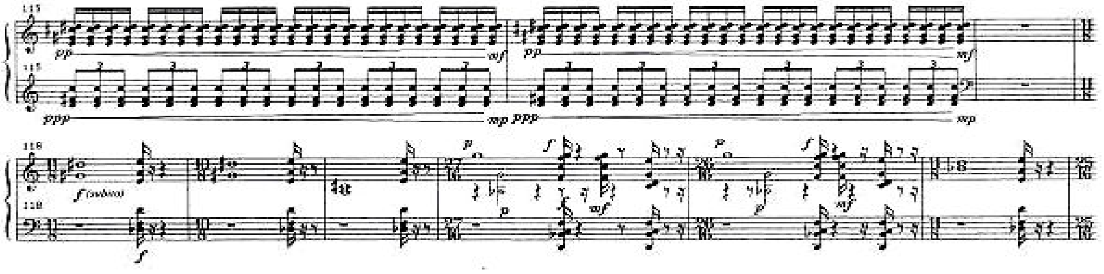
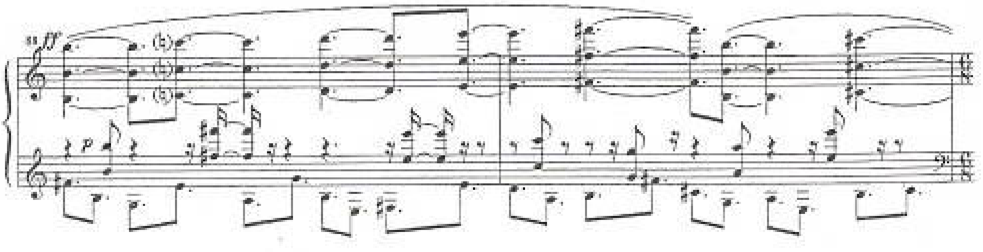


Figure 7.27 Etude 6, bars 115 to 123.

Fragmentation

In a certain sense, the fragmentation of the two primary layers in Etude 8 is a sustained form of splicing across the whole piece. In these examples the changes are abrupt, however, in certain instances the transitions are smoothed over by dovetailing the end of one process over the beginning of the next. According to Warburton, this occurs frequently in minimalist music where lower voices are dropped out of the texture and returned in an upper part with new material beneath them. Volans has put a variant of this technique in place in bars 89 and 90 of Etude 3. In this case, the melody in the top layer continues while a new process is spliced in the lower part. The melody in the upper part ends in bar 92 while the new process in the lower part continues. Later, in bar 98, the melody returns in a fragmented form.



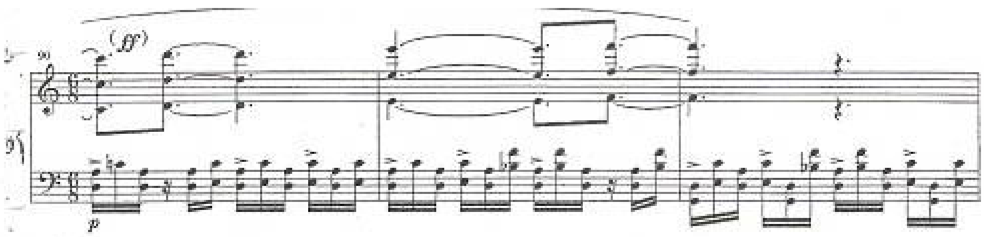


Figure 7.28 Etude 3, bars 88 to 92.

In Volans's etudes a similar form of fragmentation occurs within layers themselves where vertical intervals and chords are fragmented into linear patterns. Notably, this technique was used extensively in serial composition. In Volans's etudes it appears as the fragmentation of a repeated figure as in Etude 1 bar 116. One quaver before the last beat of bar 116, the F sharp to D interval breaks into exactly repeated patterns of the same notes.

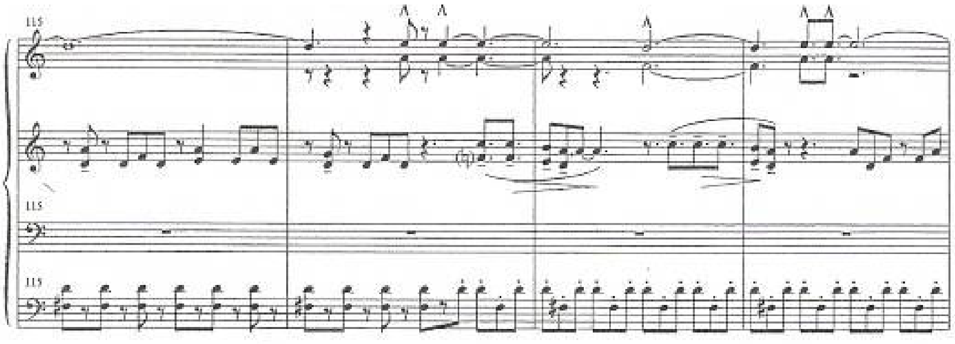


Figure 7.29 Etude 1, bars 115 to 118.

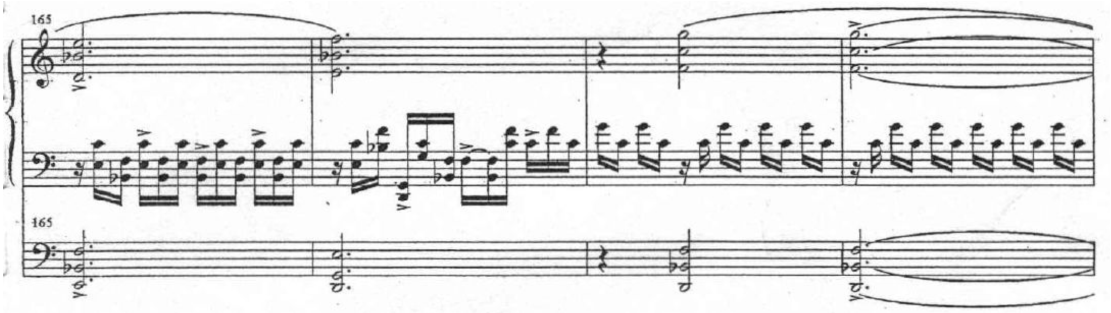


Figure 7.30 Etude 3, bars 165 to 168.

A similar breaking up occurs in bar 166 of Etude 3. In this case the oscillating intervals in bar 165 unravel in the first three beats of bar 166. In the quaver before the last beat of bar 166, an interval of a fourth is struck before breaking into detached C and F. The F immediately shifts up to a G in the very next bar before continuing with exact repetitions in irregular groupings. In both of these examples the fragmentation has occurred to an interval but the same process could equally be undertaken on whole linear patterns or parts of a pattern.

An inclination which has emerged from the units identified in previous chapters is Volans's preference for short melodic fragments. The majority of the melodies in the etudes have consisted of a restricted palette of notes. This has been widespread enough to be considered a central design feature of the majority of images, units and figures. Also, this compositional preference is characteristic enough to be regarded as one of Volans's methods or techniques. While it is a reductive tendency, it is not a process and so not strictly minimalist or even widespread minimalist practice. Volans's use is distinctive. As seen previously, the notes often alternate with one another resulting in oscillations or they otherwise form patterns through repetition of individual note sequences. They vary in duration and interval and they are sometimes used vertically in contrapuntal relationships.

In figure 7.31 from Etude 1, the melody in octaves in the upper layer oscillates across a minor third between a D and an F. These notes are grouped in two melodic phrases, the first phrase with three repetitions of the interval and the second with two repetitions and ending back on the D. The pattern shifts up a major second to E and G in bar 35 and continues similarly for four repetitions. What is notable about these oscillating patterns is that they are performing the melodic function in this area and not an accompanying one.

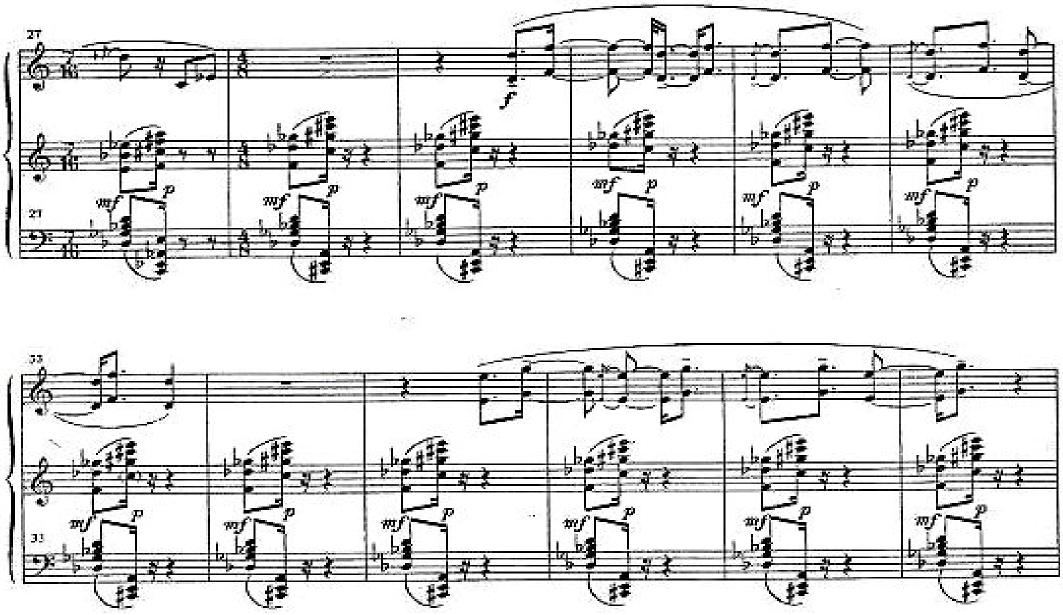


Figure 7.31 Etude 1, bars 27 to 38.

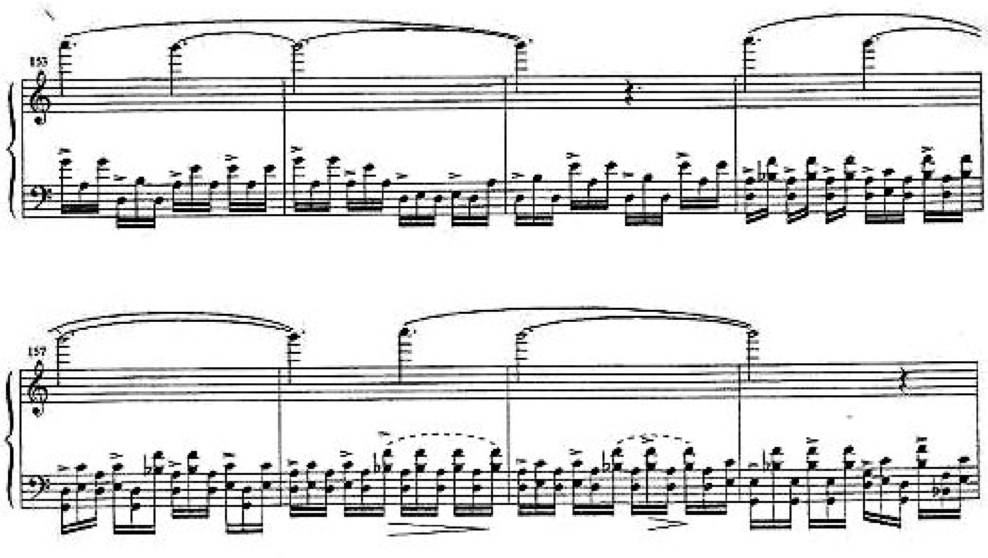


Figure 7.32 Etude 3, bars 153 to 160.

It goes without saying that using such a limited number of notes in each unit restricts the number of potential melodic shapes severely. A fragment of only two notes can potentially result in a maximum of 24 different images and their compound versions: 12 different intervals in two directions. A three note fragment increases the number of possibilities dramatically to 576 but is still much fewer than chains of more notes. These limitations possibly explain why each of Volans's images has a very strong fingerprint. It also goes some way to explaining transcription from all over his oeuvre can coexist with a great degree of cohesion – they share the same narrow band of intervallic construction. This could be argued for any of the methods discussed so far. It is Volans's unique arsenal of techniques which also supports the strong individual imprint. However, all of the analytical paths so far have led to the point at which the individual unit or image is created. It follows that if the selection is limited at this point, every other aspect of the music would be affected. Once again, if this is a mechanical method then, how it is applied affects the extent of its predictability.

On following musical instinct

While almost every part of the etudes can be explained in terms of mechanical processes, there are certain compositional decisions which do not show any trace of systematic design. These aspects endow the etudes with their amorphous forms. While they can't be simplified into explicit predictable processes they are still governed, unconsciously, by a logic which creates the many complex internal relationships. These internal relationships occur organically and if any patterns do exist, they are too subtle, complex and irregular to be predictable. After some observation, it emerges that the unpredictability is contained. On close inspection, we see that the composer's methods allow for a high degree of variability with specific design choices. In his desire for spontaneity, he has deliberately left room for unconscious involvement, but with relatively obvious and quantifiable boundaries. These are the areas where the composer's creativity and personal preference are given their voice.

The abovementioned techniques are probably only a small sample from the broad artillery of techniques which Volans uses. Also, it is likely that many of these techniques, through education and experience, are so ingrained as to be quite unconscious for him. Volans sees that simply applying techniques results in 'manipulating cliché' (Volans, 1989: 2). There is no doubt we can attribute the strong cohesive and solid logical grounding of the etudes to the rigour of his technique. At another level, his choice of methods remains within an aesthetic framework which supports his artistic intentions. However, strict adherence to method would stifle organic growth. From the analytical examples above, it has emerged that Volans preserves the organicism in his work consciously, through certain deliberate measures. These measures are in place to ensure that his works do not become mechanical.

In summary, the above has shown that Volans applies his techniques irregularly – his approach is totally unsystematic as to when and how each technique is applied. His maxim of 'the right technique at the right time' (Volans, 1989: 2) is apt in this regard. In a sense he makes rules for pieces while fully intending to break them.

The first area governed by organic processes involves the creation of the initial musical material or idea. The exact nature of each image is allowed to arise spontaneously. The next area of choice is the selection of which mechanical process to implement and how exactly to use it at each point in the work. While relating very closely to the material itself, these choices reflect the composer's own interpretation of the material at the time of writing rather than following any discernable formula. Also, throughout the pieces the mechanical processes show evidence of being refined to suit their particular contexts, these refinements are also made instinctively rather than systematically. In addition to this, each piece has a wide and unpredictable variety of mechanical processes in operation at any point. In certain cases, once a pattern has been established, it is deliberately disrupted with the insertion of an unrelated element. Sometimes, as in Etude 3, there is a sustained deliberate avoidance of patterning and a high degree of variability in notes and rhythms.

Lastly, in certain instances, there is a circumventing of the composer's conscious will. Volans claims to have used chance procedures in Etude 6, his transcription of *One Hundred Frames* for orchestra. The work was organized by writing each bar on its own sheet of paper and spreading the pages out on the floor. As a result there is absolutely no conscious causality between the bars and any internal relationships that do exist across bars are completely spontaneous in the original version.

While the balancing of spontaneity and design affects all composers to some degree, Volans actively engages with where the balance lies. While he was mildly antagonistic about craft in his ‘Dancing in the Dark’, on close inspection, we have seen that the etudes rely surprisingly heavily on the same tried and tested mechanical techniques as those used by many other composers. While his mastery over these techniques is plainly evident, there is nothing exceptional about using the techniques themselves. The organic way in which he applies these techniques, however, is interesting, new and unique. Volans’s originality, his greatest strength, lies where he relinquishes control and allows organic processes to unfold.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSION

In reviewing the scope of this dissertation, many questions asked at the beginning were easily answered but certain others proved to be unanswerable: some questions required a rephrasing of the question itself while others await further research. In some instances the answer was obvious, such as whether or not Volans's etudes' internal autonomy is compromised by their external referentiality. This issue was explained by intertextual theory's redefinition of what constitutes the boundaries of an individual text. In other cases, where the questions were more open, it was difficult to ascertain exactly what the question was, such as Volans's project of 'doing away with content'. Exploring the issue of 'doing away with content' failed to yield clear analytical data and continues to evade any clear definition beyond pitch material limitation. To evaluate the findings of this research, it is necessary to recap the central strategies, data and findings.

The intention was to place the research within a Foucauldian theoretical framework. In order to follow this through thoroughly, it was imperative to come to grips with the roots of Foucauldian theory in poststructuralist thought. It emerged that Foucauldian historical enquiry required rigorous investigations into every aspect involved with the text itself. Intertextual theory provided a number of principles by which to conduct the research. Most significantly, these included the dissolving of the boundaries between the work and its context. The notions of authorship were repositioned in relation to the work and the issues surrounding the authorship of the work were questioned. The primary goal of the research became plotting the system of meaning within which the pieces operate.

The chapters of the thesis explored a heterogeneous range of issues relating to Volans's etudes. Each chapter revealed quite different findings. Together they paint a variety of portraits rather than a single picture of the etudes. In a sense, each chapter dealt with its own archaeological or epistemic layer of meaning present within the etudes. While these layers represent only a part of the potentially infinite scope of influence involved, the power relationships between these findings are of key interest for this genealogical analysis.

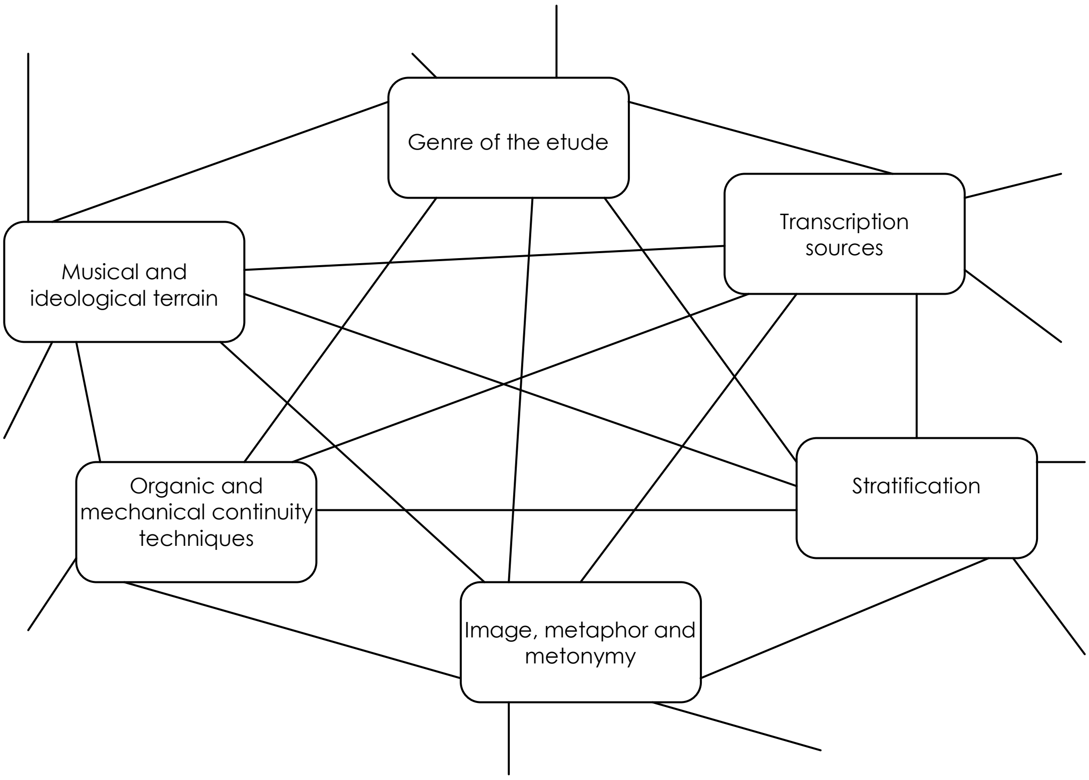

Genre of the etude
Transcription sources
Musical and ideological terrain
Stratification
Organic and mechanical continuity techniques
Image, metaphor and metonymy

Figure 8.1 Outline of a genealogical diagram for Volans's etudes.

In figure 8.1 each chapter's findings represent a Foucauldian mode of authority. The lines joining the modes of authority represent lines of strategic action – the paths through which power is exercised. A total of thirty lines of action are possible between the above six modes of authority if the modes all act on one another. There is no single point of origin within the network and descent can be traced through any number of lines of action. The goal of using this structure is to juxtapose the findings of the chapters in order to interpret each line of action.

The chapters can be loosely grouped into two groups. In dealing with the musical and ideological terrain, the genre of the etude and by tracing the transcription sources, the first group of three chapters followed a diachronic field of enquiry. The score-based activity of the second group of chapters covered synchronic issues of organic and mechanical continuity techniques, image, metaphor and metonymy and the stratification techniques used by Volans in the etudes. Lines can be drawn between all the chapters, tracing the influence each set of findings exerts on the other factors. Hypothetical lines of influence extend beyond figure 8.1 to other nodes of enquiry not undertaken by this thesis. Every line also represents a power relation impacting the surface of the score of the etudes – representing genealogical modes of authority. Every action the pianist is to make is encoded in the score. The score, in miniscule detail, directs the body movements of the pianist.

In figure 8.1, the lines of power relations run in both directions. So for example, the line drawn between ‘Stratification’ and ‘Transcription sources’ represents both the role Volans’s use of transcription plays in the stratified structure of the works and stratification as a modernist strategy in the use of transcription as a compositional method. The lines of interaction between the contextual/diachronic and the synchronic/internal analyses will be of particular interest, as this is where answers to certain key questions of this thesis are most likely to be found. A summary of the findings of each chapter will help clarify the factors involved before extrapolating the details of each power relation.

Summary of findings

In the second chapter, the author explored Volans’s stylistic background and sought to position his music within the landscape of his times. The first issue that emerged was that the early seventies were an important shift in the priorities in composition. The avant-garde had become more preoccupied with the organizational systems governing works than the musical material itself. This had been developed to the extreme of Cage’s implementation of chance procedures to organise musical works to make them less predictable. The author found that the epistemic conditions preceding Volans were primarily built out of issues concerning pre-compositional planning and indeterminacy. On reviewing the later findings, Morton Feldman’s music would prove to be a key influence on Volans in this regard who was not initially obvious. Feldman’s intuitive process was ideally positioned to offer a way forward out of the cul-de-sac. This issue emerged in the chapter on technique and organic construction as Volans’s primary concern in organizing material.

Volans became part of what was to become known as the Cologne school – a group of composers whose work continued in the spirit of modernism, but without implementing controlling systems. The Cologne school was preoccupied with the material of the music itself and not the conceptual aspects. It also became interested in the relationship between music and its cultural context. This prompted Volans’s experimentation with finding a middle ground between African music and western art musical cultures. His focus was on the ideological differences and finding inter-cultural solutions. Viewed through the lens of the transcription sources of the etudes, Volans’s works in the eighties were packed with direct transcriptions and paraphrases of African music. These took place on the surface as well as on the level of compositional technique. Melodic shapes such as those in the middle section of Etude 1 and mbira-like patterns found in Etude 3 retain the strong African flavour of this earlier engagement. However, there are distinct differences between the way he used African sources thirty years ago and how they appear in the etudes. The African elements in the etudes have no direct link to the original source material. Over time and through the reworking of the ideas, the African surface features of his earlier works have been absorbed into Volans's compositional language. This reworking mediates the ideas' African ancestry. Also, many of the widely used minimalist techniques Volans uses are inspired by African and other non-western music blurring the lines between western and African influence in his style.

The next shift in Volans's style happened after the end of apartheid where his project became one of adopting an increasingly austere personalized version of minimalism. In summary, from the survey of Volans's life, the epistemic field of enquiry to be considered, emerged as Volans's organic/intuitive composition method, the inclusion of landscape into the composition at a conceptual level and the reduction of material to only the most crucial constituents. Interpreting these factors in terms of the power relations that create the episteme did not seem clear at the conclusion of Chapter 1 – Chapter 1 lead us to this conclusion but my later findings reveal that Volans's intense focus of attention on the material indicated that conclusions were more likely to be drawn from the music directly.

In parallel with the contextual issues surrounding Volans's life is the fact that Volans entitled the pieces etudes. Part of gaining an understanding of the etudes as piano music involves understanding the expectations of the genre of the etude. The historical terrain covered by the genre sets up inescapable expectations of the pieces. This investigation was largely a survey of etudes from the earliest Clementi exercises to a few prominent recent works. Mostly, the examples were typical of the stylistic parameters of their times. From this it emerged that the genre, in particular Chopin and Liszt's etudes, was part of an important shift in thinking in the first half on the 19thcentury. The genre facilitated the change in piano technique from the early, inhibited finger school to the late 19thcentury virtuoso technique using the arm, shoulder and showing awareness of the whole body. It could be deduced from the broad scope of Volans's etudes that these works inhabit the latter approach to piano playing rather than the former.

Chapter 3 then moved on to trace the most significant developments in the genre in the 20thcentury. While some recollections of Debussy's etudes' handling of sonority do appear in Volans's etudes, the most important finding of the survey of etudes revealed that the etude became part of the compositional experiment of total serialism in the 1950s. This served to associate the genre, not only with extreme complexity of execution, but also with strict of organization of material. The composer's concepts of what it means to be at the extreme edge of pianistic and compositional virtuosity become much more defining of the pieces thereafter. Chapter 3 then followed four influential recent contributions to the field: Ligeti, Nancarrow, Ferneyhough and Kurtág offered very different interpretations of complexity. Nancarrow pushed toward exceeding what was physically possible for the human body at the piano during his time; Ferneyhough sought to increase the contrapuntal complexity by including the process of learning the work as a thread in the counterpoint; Ligeti increased the complexity of cultural referencing; and Kurtág operated at the level of discovery and rediscovery of the experience of playing the piano. The differences between these approaches are symptomatic of a wide diversity of potential solutions to the questions of virtuosity and complexity in the genre of the etude. Volans's etudes then raised a number of problems : the first three etudes are titled *3 Rhythmic Etudes* and there are no notable rhythmical pedagogical features in these etudes. Superficially, there is no way that these etudes are more rhythmically focussed than any of Volans's other repertoire. The same holds for the three structural etudes. So, either we have to deduce that his engagement with these aspects is non-existent or it is indirect and has a more complicated relationship with them. Volans's lack of arbitrarity in other respects begs us to momentarily consider the latter of the two options. And, taking into account the Foucauldian premise of this dissertation, the author would propose the following explanation as highly probable.

According to Foucault, systems are governed by sets of unconscious but restless and unstable rules. As stated earlier, Foucault's idea was that by uncovering these unconscious rules, we can reveal the conceptual environment that produced discoveries. Through observing the material itself we have uncovered certain of Volans assumptions and techniques. At this point it is worth overlaying these findings. If we combine the knowledge of Liszt's enduring approach of fusing of technique with the musical image we can draw a direct link with the finding of Volans's use of musical images as the building blocks of the pieces. If technique and image are linked and image and structure are linked, there is an indirect link between technique and structure. However, if we can say that all music is built from metonymical images, would this not be relevant to all music and therefore be redundant? We have seen that Volans handles the notion of image in his etudes in a particularly layered and organic way. The etudes are the result of this particular process and so are distinguished by an intrinsic awareness of their own internal interactions. So, taken this way, the etudes stand out as a particular and direct handling of composition where technique, image and structure are fused entities. This way, rhythm operates in the images as proximity – the closer units are on the score, the closer they are in time. This proximity in space translates to the physicality of the technique required to execute the image and ultimately the larger structure. So, the pieces function within the genre as etudes where, in the spirit of Liszt's etudes, their technical properties are inherent.

The next chapter broadly outlined each of the etudes in terms of their transcription sources and other general information. After comparing the material in the transcribed etudes with the same ideas in the source material, it was noted how straightforward the transcriptions were. Again, at this point, it seemed that there was one of two possible explanations. Either, the works were simply copied and pasted for the composer to save time and effort or the mechanisms of transcription are part of Volans's approach to composition. It was noted that Volans has used transcription of his own and others' material throughout his career. He has also written in detail about the aspects involved with transcription, paraphrase and variation and so takes the mechanisms involved very seriously. He also distances each work from their original sources and in so doing invites comparison between them. These factors led me to take Volans's implementation of paraphrase and transcription seriously. At this point the author incorporated Lucia's findings which suggest that Volans uses transcription as part of a broader search for the right setting for material (Lucia, 2009: 42). This notion implies an overarching, linear compositional development which minimizes the crosscurrents between the transcriptions themselves. The author sought to explore these interplays by applying the intertextual and Foucauldian principle of dissolving the boundaries between works. This revealed the reworking of a set of core, recurring ideas in the etudes. One could come to the conclusion that Volans's use and reuse of these same ideas as units within systems was analogous to the semiotic structure of language. It was suggested that these ideas operated as a set of signifiers in a semiotic system which had its own governing principles. If so, the way these signifiers are organized would reveal the mechanics and ultimately the way meaning is constructed within the system.

The subsequent three chapters with a more analytical focus, sought to clarify the issues raised in the previous chapters by gaining an intimacy with the scores. This necessitated looking at the music very closely to see what the music itself dictates. The first avenue to explore was the subdivided and layered structures which had emerged out of the transcription method. Loosely applying Schenker's notions of foreground, middle ground and background to broadly describe issues of macro and micro structure in the etudes clearly revealed their layered, stratified construction. The Schenkerian theory enabled the analysis to show a structural integrity that would not have otherwise been obvious. As a result, diagrams could be drawn of their structure, mapping the geography reasonably clearly. However, while this analysis was useful in shedding light on the construction of the works, it fell short of uncovering any obvious semiotic rules by which they are constructed. It appeared the layers in the pieces were carefully assembled but in a totally unsystematic way. By introducing Foucauldian framework, through Cone's notions of stratification (Cone, 1962: 18), parallel procedures could be found in both Stravinsky and Picasso – two eclectic but highly influential, modernist icons. It was suggested that while Volans is by no means as stylistically eclectic, his work is constructed with similar intentions. In particular, Picasso's assemblages were a three-dimensional cubist experiment which he translated into his paintings. Through assemblage, the spatial relationships between the elements could be explored. The stratification and three dimensional layering in Volans's etudes suggest a similar process, also hinted at by Volans in his article 'Dancing in the Dark'. Taking into account the data generated in subsequent chapters, we might deduce that the two-dimensional musical images on Volans's scores, have intentional three-dimensional shapes and spatial relationships to each other. In the final chapter it was found that the relationships within the continuous layers themselves are achieved through organic repetitive processes. The stratified assembling of these layers is where the spatial experimentation occurs. However, understanding the structure this way still provided few clues as to the way meaning operates in the works at the foreground, at the level of each unit.

The next chapter set out to deal with the individual units identified in the previous chapters which make up the foreground of the pieces. The striking and distinctive shape of each of these elements was identified as a potentially important aspect in their design. Volans's reference of Jasper Johns's painting 'Dancers on a Plane' in his sleeve notes to *String Quartet no.5* (1994) drew attention to Johns's use of quotation as a structural device. The chapter found that aside from the issues of quotation and self-borrowing, Volans's layering of semiotic units is analogous to the assembling of figurative units in Johns's works. It appeared that these overlaps apply, not only where Volans has explicitly intended, but also to the etudes. By applying the notion of the Foucauldian episteme, the chapter then explored issues of metonymy, metaphor and allegory as they have been interpreted in Johns's works in an attempt to potentially gain access to Volans in the same way. Through Volans's writings, in previous chapters it was safely established that he treats musical material as images. The metonymical points of resemblance between the musical material and the visual associations in language provide strong links between the two different mediums. However, once the material was analysed it was clear that Volans was not dealing in literal meaning at all. Rather it emerged he was using the semiotic units in a system which reflect back on the system itself. It was concluded that, in parallel with Johns, rather than in exactly the same way, Volans is taking the listener on an allegorical journey. The allegory relies on the listener's awareness of what Volans is doing with the material. With increasing understanding of the materiality of the composition, Volans thus invites the listener to follow his composition journey. The allegorical by-product of doing so excludes those who are unable to grasp the dynamics at play. As a result, we see that the interaction is a game of the mechanics of the medium of music itself rather than the creation of symbolic references. The interaction, through allegorical insider compositional knowledge, rewards a more informed listener, a listener who is more prepared to step into the semiotic world of the music with the understanding of how the music is organized. While the same could be said to a certain extent of any artist who is immersed in their work, the conclusion is relevant to Volans in particular ways. Volans's project in the etudes sets out to achieve this through, as was found above, a methodical and careful awareness of the implications of his choices. The allegory is constructed through the meticulous construction of musical images, imbued with strong visual metonymical links to inhabit a system built to accommodate such connections.

Lastly, the task was to separate the issues of technique from organic composition to articulate how the structures are such an interesting mixture of highly cogent ideas with no formula or rigidity. Warburton's terminology for certain minimalist composition techniques as well as other key minimalist traits shed light on many of the processes of continuity in the etudes. It emerged that Volans relied heavily on mostly standard techniques throughout the etudes. On closer inspection it emerged that his application of the techniques was unsystematic. Wherever an identifiable standard technique appeared, it had been disrupted before it became predictable. In so doing, Volans uses a meta-technique of disruption to destabilize the mechanical effects of implementing technique. It was found that it was this interference which gives the etudes their organic, irregular forms. It also emerged that the interferences were far from arbitrary but rather careful interventions which show a clear awareness of their effect on the clarity of each image.

The musical and ideological terrain asserts a significant number of constraints on the other modes. As seen in the chapter of the genre of the etude, the modernist spirit in its resistance to representation fits well with the genre's physicality and flexibility. However, Volans's etudes inclusion of landscape into the genre of the etude broadens the expectations of the genre considerably. Also, framing the pianistic complexity expected from the genre of the etude within the aesthetic constraints of the new simplicity forces the creation of new physical challenges. As a result, the technical difficulties of his piano etudes are completely unlike the virtuosic challenges set by other contemporary piano etudes such as those of the new complexity school. Acting against the notion of transcription, the ideological context narrows the parameters for expression. Postmodern composition's dilemma of inescapable quotation and self-conscious self-reference is at odds with the modernist quest to say something entirely new. These factors squeeze Volans's etudes into a very narrow domain where transcription is used, not as quotation but as a structuring device. Instead of amplifying the distance between works as is the case with empty quotation, in his etudes, the transcription of material dissolves the boundaries between works and in so doing, revealing the individual signifiers of Volans's compositional language. As outlined in the Foucauldian reading of stratification in Chapter 4, the ideological context impacts heavily on the creation of the layered structures of the etudes. Assembling musical works this way within modernist epistemic conditions, transforms them from sequential events in time into spatial experiments with three dimensional properties.

This reading would not be possible without taking into account a broader modernist strategy. The greatest Foucauldian interpretive leaps were made in the chapter linking musical image, metonymy and metaphor. In this area, it could be argued that the compulsion to develop a new musical language propelled the individual, image, signifiers of Volans's etudes into a web of metonymical transfer – the metaphorical links relying heavily on musical resemblances. Volans's organic manipulation of standard compositional techniques is entirely motivated by his emphasis of musical material over pre-compositional planning.

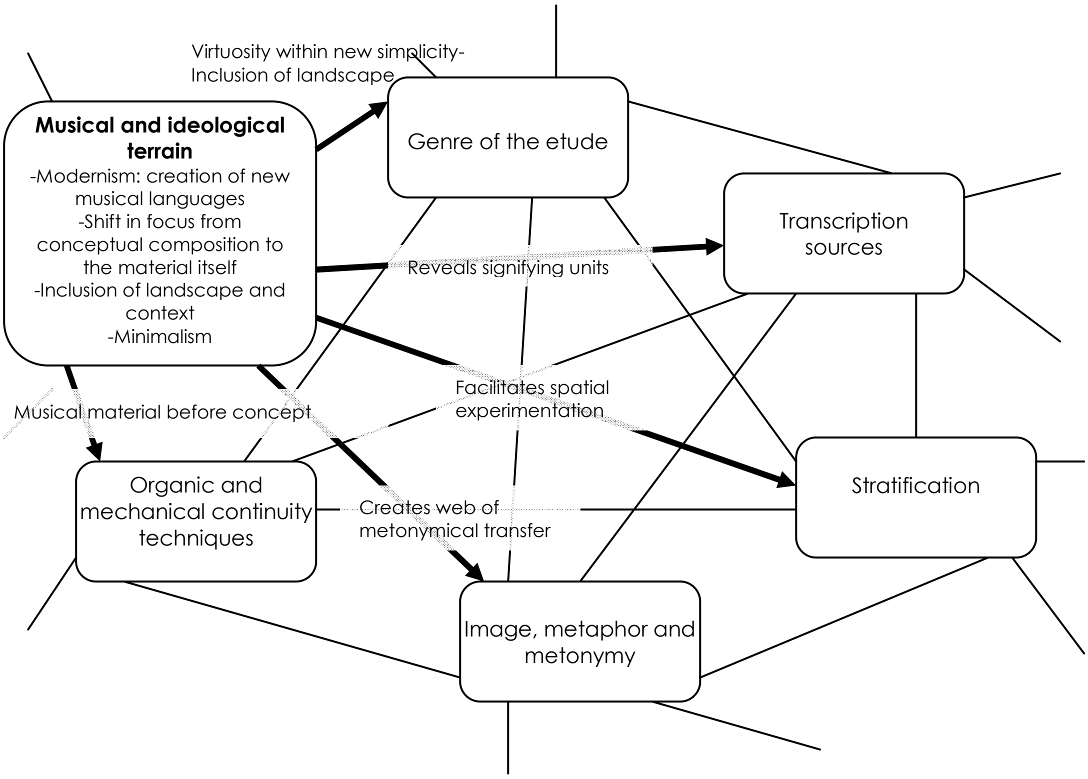

Virtuosity within new simplicity-
Inclusion of landscape
Musical and ideological terrain
-Modernism: creation of new musical languages
-Shift in focus from conceptual composition to the material itself
-Inclusion of landscape and context
-Minimalism
Genre of the etude
Transcription sources
Reveals signifying units
Facilitates spatial experimentation
Musical material before concept
Organic and mechanical continuity techniques
Stratification
Creates web of metonymical transfer
Image, metaphor and metonymy

Figure 8.2 The lines of influence exerted by the musical and ideological terrain.

Next, the power relationships between the genre and the musical terrain must be mapped. Dealing with the effects and implications of genre are more narrowly focused than the broader musical and intellectual terrain. Genre exercises its influence more flexibly, accommodating a greater variety of interpretation. However, the expectations created by the etude, while subtle, have an identifiable imprint on the other modes of authority. In dealing with its effect on the broader musical and ideological terrain, the use of the title etude positions Volans's etudes within a tradition of piano playing. Historically, etudes have always sought to advance the boundaries of possibility at the instrument. This impulse for progress is in agreement with Volans's modernist outlook, but whilst the groundbreaking compositional techniques of the Cologne school broke away from serialism to move forward, we have seen how the genre was defined by its antecedents.

Genre impacted on transcription in Volans's etudes at the outset. In most of the evaluated historical case studies, the piano was taken as the departure point for generating the material. In his etudes, the issue of pre-programming due to his own training triggered his use of transcription. Paradoxically, etudes would normally be used in order to programme the fingers. So Volans's view of technique must surely move away from programming the fingers. In this way he reinterprets the genre to further an adaptable, experimental view of piano technique. The survey of the genre showed that advanced etudes need to deal issues of counterpoint, where two or more layers of activity take place simultaneously. In addition to this, the fact that pianists play with two hands lends itself to stratifying the music into at least two layers of activity. Volans's etudes generate contrapuntal complexity through stratification. They expand contrapuntal layering by exploring unpredictable stratified structures.

In the realm of image, the genre offers Liszt's etudes' approach to piano technique through musical image. Without the knowledge of Liszt's approach to technique, it would be impossible to make the leap between piano technique and image. The next impact of genre is through repetition. Repetition occurs throughout the genre but the repetition in the etudes is more stylistic than technical. The impact of repetition on the etudes can be understood through Volans's use of repetition through his organic and mechanical continuity techniques. Unlike other examples in the genre, repetition is a built in composition technique, not for drilling technical patterns into the fingers. However, the repetition in Volans's etudes will still impact on the habits of the pianist, manifesting in their subsequent playing.

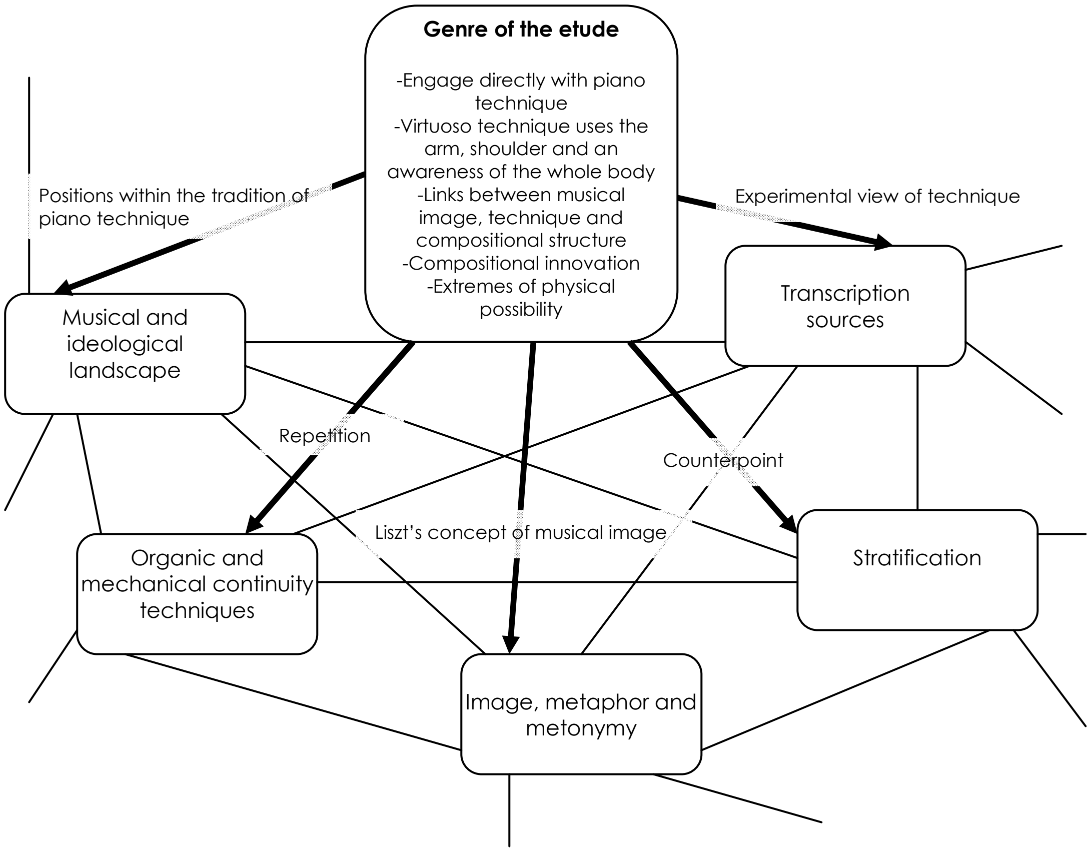

Genre of the etude
-Engage directly with piano technique
-Virtuoso technique uses the arm, shoulder and an awareness of the whole body
-Links between musical image, technique and compositional structure
-Compositional innovation
-Extremes of physical possibility
Positions within the tradition of piano technique
Experimental view of technique
Musical and ideological landscape
Transcription sources
Repetition
Counterpoint
Liszt's concept of musical image
Organic and mechanical continuity techniques
Stratification
Image, metaphor and metonymy

Figure 8.3 The lines of influence exerted by the genre of the etude.

Like the issues of genre, transcription also has a strong retrospective influence on the other modes of authority. By transcribing old material, the act of composition revisits old ideas, seeking to reinvent them in new the context of the piano. The idea of what constitutes a new musical language is modulated by this act. It's the creation of new language through recycling and reinvention of the old rather than starting from scratch. Next, transcription affects the way Volans applies his organic and mechanical composition techniques. It presents large units of material to break up rather than build up. The act of organically growing ideas is changed to one of cutting up existing ideas and realigning them. The resulting fragments become constituents of a compositional collage – sculpted together in three dimensions. This results in the layered three dimensional structures visible in the etudes. Fragmenting pieces this way also augments their visual properties, crucial for the notion of music composition as the manipulation of images.

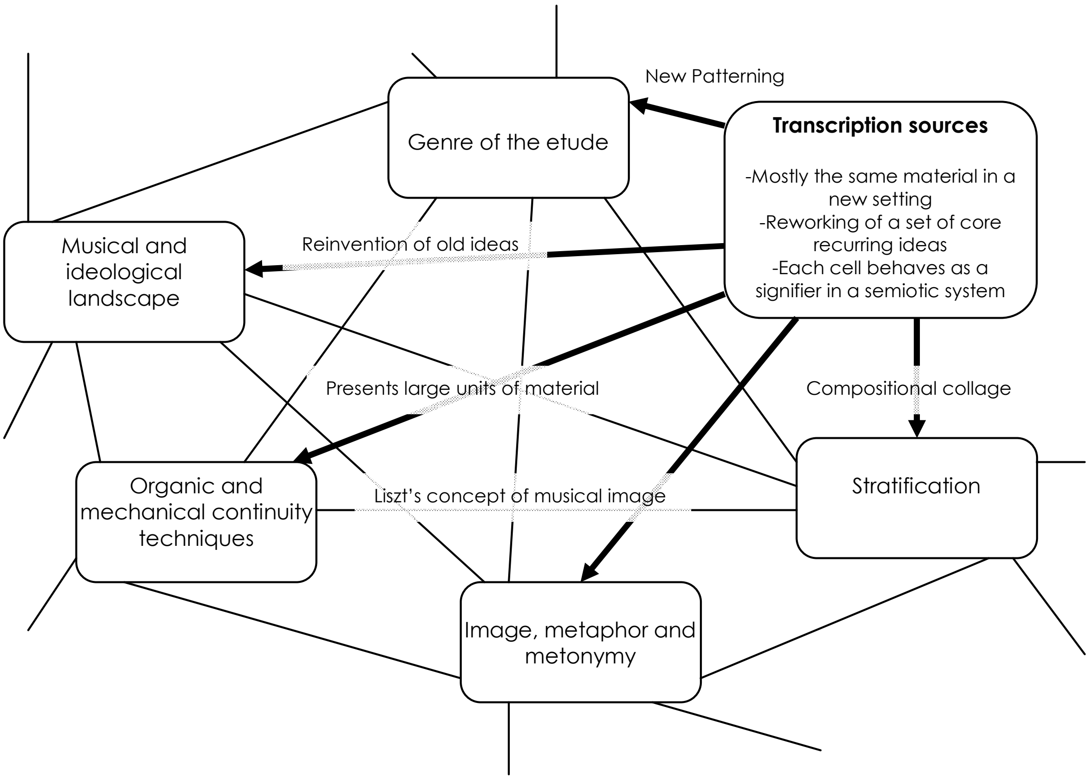

New Patterning
Genre of the etude
Transcription sources
-Mostly the same material in a new setting
-Reworking of a set of core recurring ideas
-Each cell behaves as a signifier in a semiotic system
Musical and ideological landscape
Reinvention of old ideas
Presents large units of material
Compositional collage
Organic and mechanical continuity techniques
Liszt's concept of musical image
Stratification
Image, metaphor and metonymy

Figure 8.4 The lines of influence exerted by Volans's use of transcription.

Volans's allegorical manipulation of music as images in turn offers a grammar and syntax to the tangible semiotic units produced by stratification. In another sense, it enables his use of transcription. The images viewed as semiotic units, take on a new meaning in the new context. Transcription becomes more than the repetition of the same ideas in a new setting. The musical images are transformed by the new context. As piano music, they take on new functions and meanings. Image also unites the independent technical aspects of pieces with a precision that character does not achieve. Playing the pieces communicates and recreates clear objective images to the listener, rather than the more elusive and subjective idea of character. The notion of image also gives clues to understanding Volans's inclusion of African techniques in a western musical setting. According to Volans, the African approach to repetition in composition is analogous to the use of repetition in the craft of basket weaving (Volans, 1989: 12). In basket weaving, the individual units of a pattern are plainly obvious. The accumulation of these units results in a totally new image or object, which is much more than the sum of the individual units. It is at this, structural, level which Volans most effectively and innovatively engages with African music. An accumulation of these, semiotic, image units is then forged together through organic and mechanical composition methods.

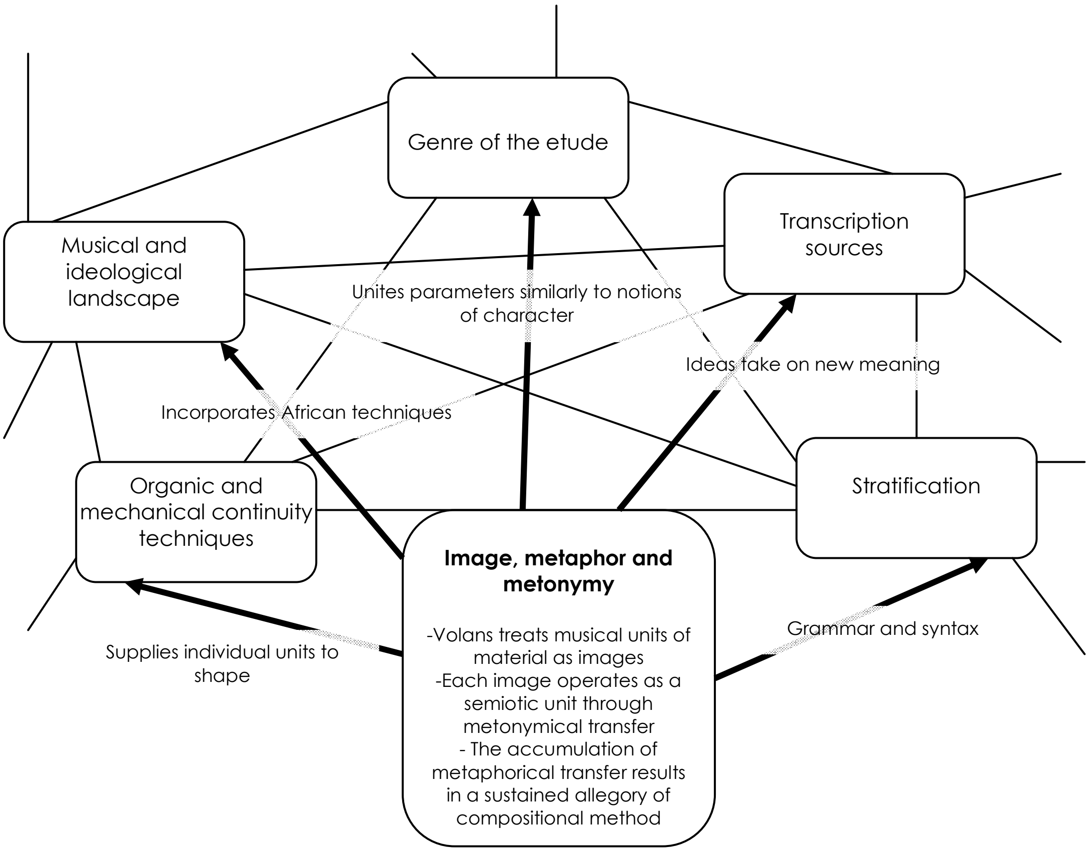

Genre of the etude
Transcription sources
Musical and ideological landscape
Unites parameters similarly to notions of character
Ideas take on new meaning
Incorporates African techniques
Organic and mechanical continuity techniques
Stratification
Image, metaphor and metonymy
-Volans treats musical units of material as images
-Each image operates as a semiotic unit through metonymical transfer
- The accumulation of metaphorical transfer results in a sustained allegory of compositional method
Grammar and syntax
Supplies individual units to shape

Figure 8.5 The lines of influence exerted by image, metaphor and metonymy.

In reaction to the diachronic aspects of context, the organic and mechanical methods provide a self sufficient internal organizational strategy. Volans's organic form of development is quite unlike the systematic implementation of technique present in the broader genre. In this sense, the technical content of Volans's etudes is unsystematically applied. In contrast to this, his application of transcription is quite straightforward – mechanical in the way that the material is not reworked heavily in the transcribed setting. However, there does not seem to be any system governing the choice and scope of the transcribed material. The works are cut up and segmented organically. Within these sections, sudden changes in compositional method cause fissures in the piece which can also manifest as stratification. The horizontal repetition methods which create unity within the layers help transmit the metonymy and metaphor that support the grammar of the images.

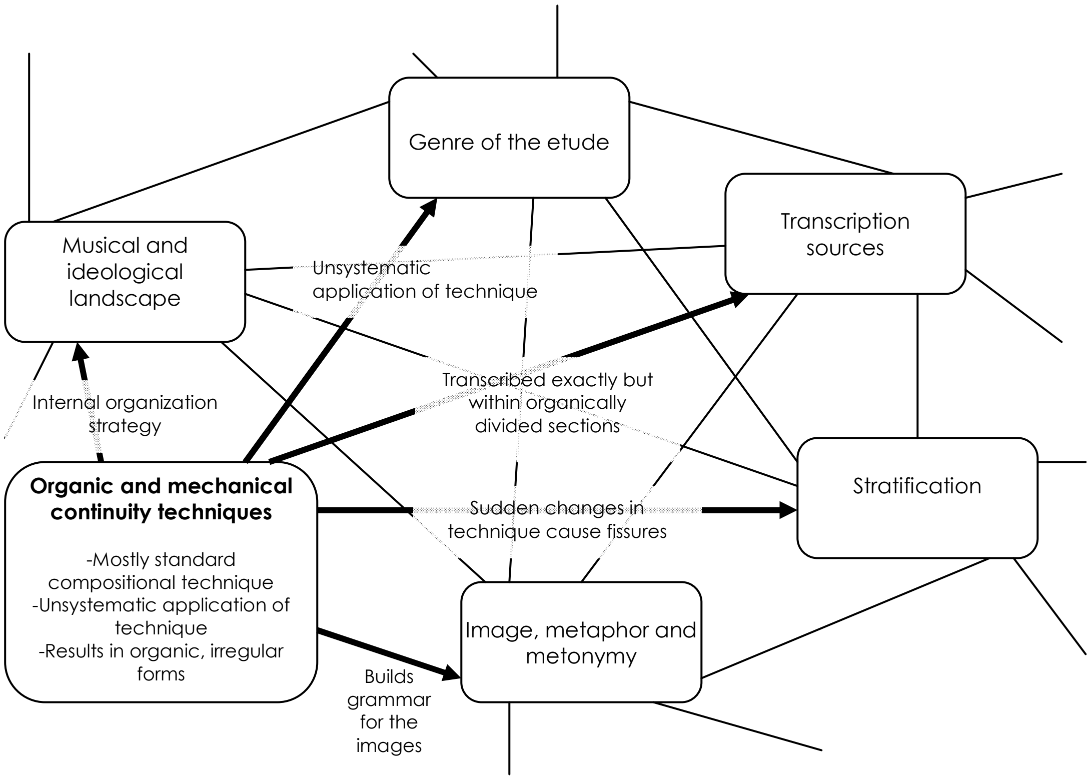

Genre of the etude
Transcription sources
Musical and ideological landscape
Unsystematic application of technique
Transcribed exactly but within organically divided sections
Internal organization strategy
Organic and mechanical continuity techniques
-Mostly standard compositional technique
-Unsystematic application of technique
-Results in organic, irregular forms
Sudden changes in technique cause fissures
Stratification
Image, metaphor and metonymy
Builds grammar for the images

Figure 8.6 The lines of influence exerted by Volans's organic and mechanical continuity techniques.

The individual images or metonymical units are linked on the planes of activity laid out by stratification. These planes provide for the inclusion of landscape into the imagery. Much of the technical difficulty of playing the etudes is in juggling the multiple layers of activity that unfold on these planes. In some cases, the stratified layers disrupt and break the continuity set up by the conventional composition methods. We have also seen how Volans's etudes can be thought of as a spatial experiment analogous to assemblage. Musically, the act of assemblage lends itself naturally to transcription.

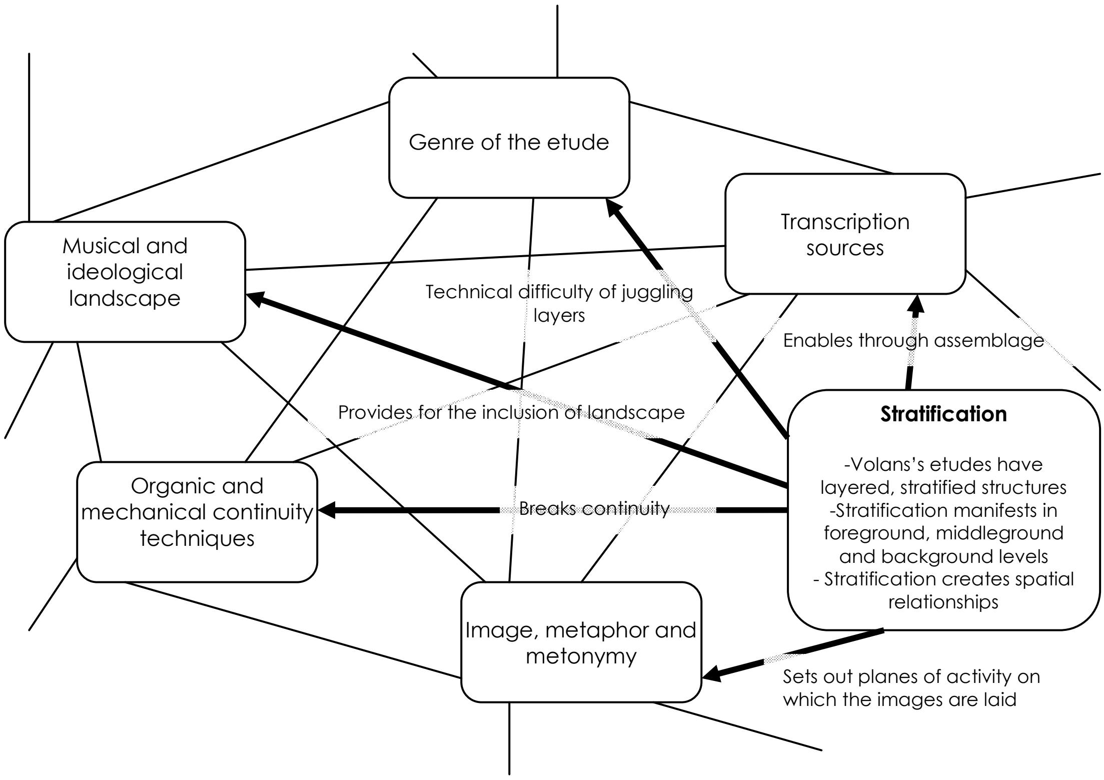

Genre of the etude
Transcription sources
Musical and ideological landscape
Technical difficulty of juggling layers
Enables through assemblage
Provides for the inclusion of landscape
Stratification
-Volans's etudes have layered, stratified structures
-Stratification manifests in foreground, middleground and background levels
- Stratification creates spatial relationships
Organic and mechanical continuity techniques
Breaks continuity
Image, metaphor and metonymy
Sets out planes of activity on which the images are laid

Figure 8.7 The lines of influence exerted by stratification.

On reflection, the above findings and conclusions demonstrate the ways in which the Foucauldian genealogy worked well in this research. It provided clear principles and parameters within which to operate and by accommodating a number of concurrent research paths, increased the likelihood and complexity of the outcomes. Many of the facets of the theory were found to be entirely congruent with Volans's approach. This aided in drawing conclusions about the etudes. As a result the author can confidently say that this theory is fertile for dealing with music of a similar outlook. It would be interesting to see how the theory reacts if the same framework were to be applied in a musical context where there was more conceptual disagreement between the theory and the music. The Foucauldian theory proved to be malleable. This made it highly adaptable to any of the various issues which begged exploration. In this research, the broad based semiotic principles underpinning the framework were appropriate and proved useful wherever I applied them. The genealogy enabled casting a wide net without fear of undermining the cohesion between the findings.

Another problematic area was the degree of involvement of the author in determining the meaning of the work. The role of the Foucauldian position is rather passive in that it leaves the text, author and reader to 'fight it out'. In practice, the author's intentions became quite critical in interpreting the work in this research. In particular, the degree of care Volans takes with each compositional choice became critical in winning the author's trust as an analyst at a number of points. At critical points it seemed equally likely that Volans might be calling the listener's bluff or working in a highly complex manner. The most conspicuous example of this is his affinity for transcription: is it merely expedient or is it more complex in its rationale? This situation occurred at numerous times during the research. The care the composer has clearly taken with so many of his decisions swung the research toward deeper exploration and was rewarded with fruitful findings. In these cases, the intensity of intention the composer took in creating the work was critical to following certain analytical paths. The same interaction would be present for any sceptical listener of the music. As a result, the composer's care and intention became more important for justifying the research than the theoretical framework initially allowed. In any subsequent Foucauldian research project, the instability and volatility in the area of author's involvement could be included much more in order to facilitate findings.

In conclusion, as with any analysis, the author's subjective motivation for undertaking this analysis influenced its direction. In retrospect, it was driven by an unacknowledged curiosity as to whether or not Volans's piano etudes should be regarded as important works in his output and if so why? At the time of writing, the etudes are a work in progress. The first three etudes have been available for more than a decade but have only been performed a handful of times. Etudes 3 to 6 are held by Chester but are unavailable, presumably due to changes the composer still wishes to make. Etudes 7 to 9 have not been published and it seems Volans is likely to write another three to complete the set of 12. Possibly once the set is complete and scores are published and available they will be performed more regularly. Once the etudes are in circulation it might be possible to establish their subsequent impact on the genre of the etude and the musical terrain. With more performances, their expressive potential and reception could also be assessed. Notwithstanding, the genealogical analysis of Volans piano etudes has unveiled the surprisingly intimate relationships by which they were conceived. The forces that brought them into being were gentle. The interdependency between all the factors and the fragility of the conditions is almost unnerving. But perhaps most strikingly, their physicality, again and again, has emphasised the tender relationship between the body and the piano, a characteristic which is innately human.

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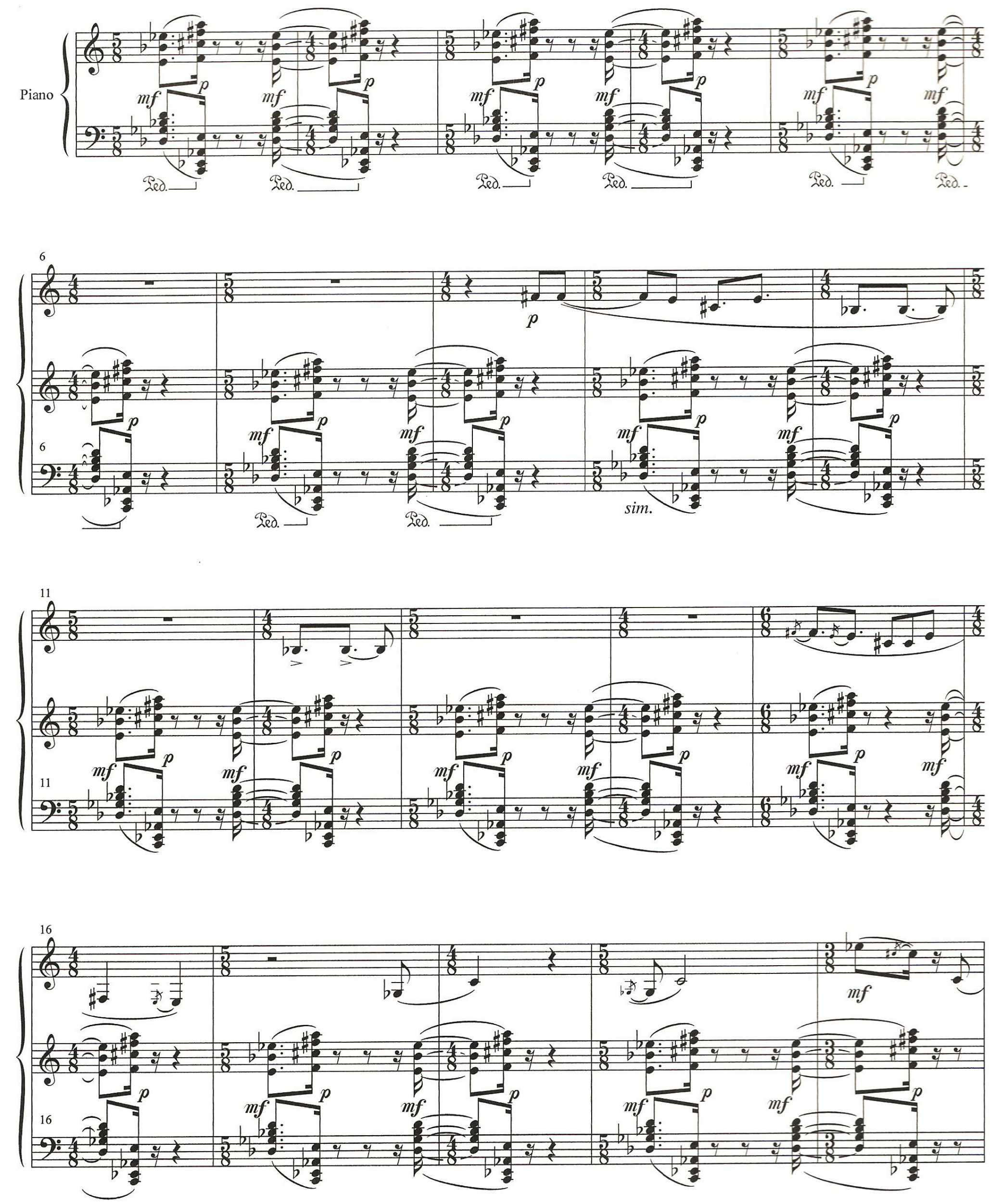
APPENDIX: MUSICAL SCORES

Etude 1

in memory of Khabi NGoma

Kevin Volans


Piano
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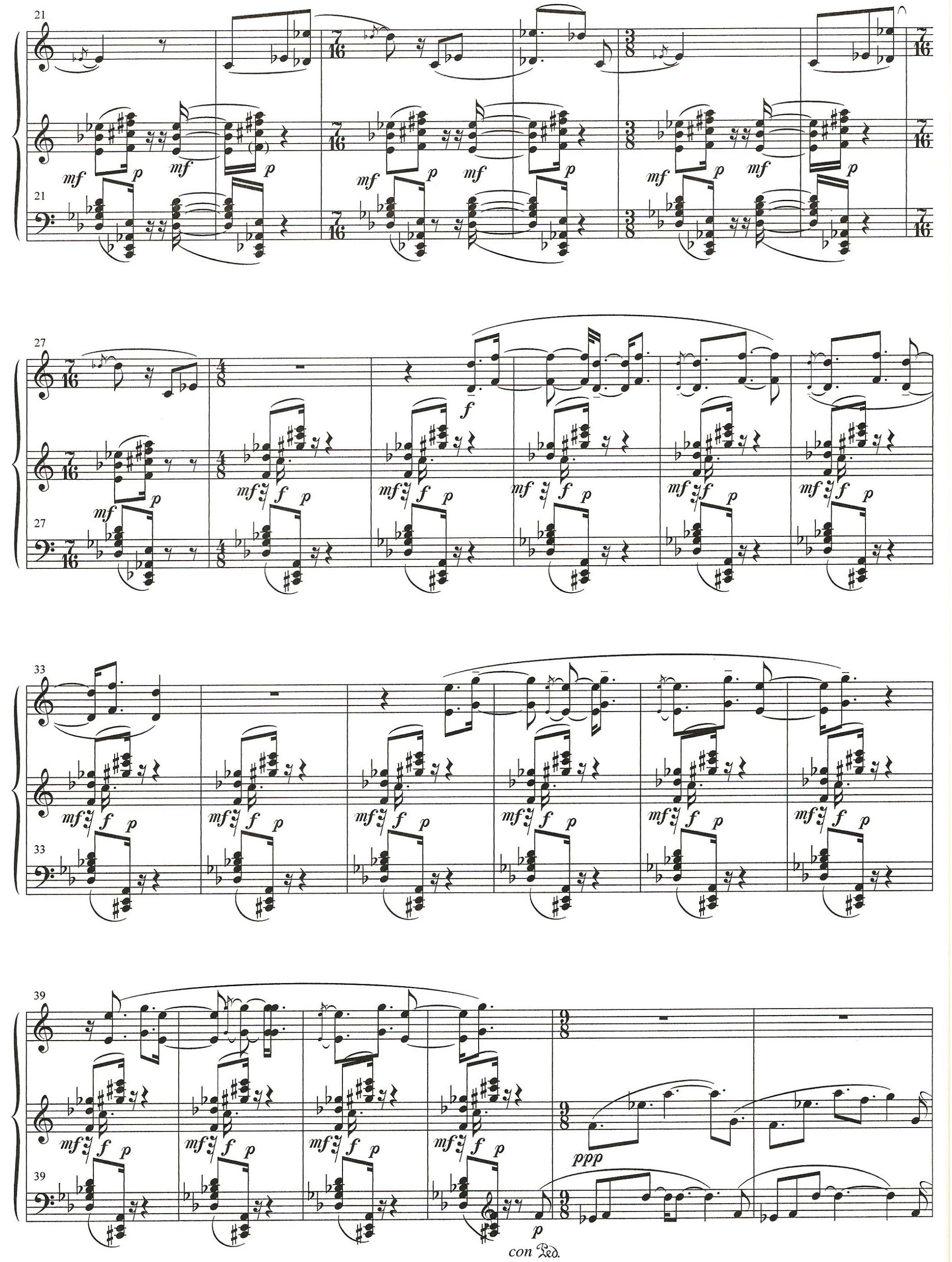
© 2002 Chester Music Ltd.


21
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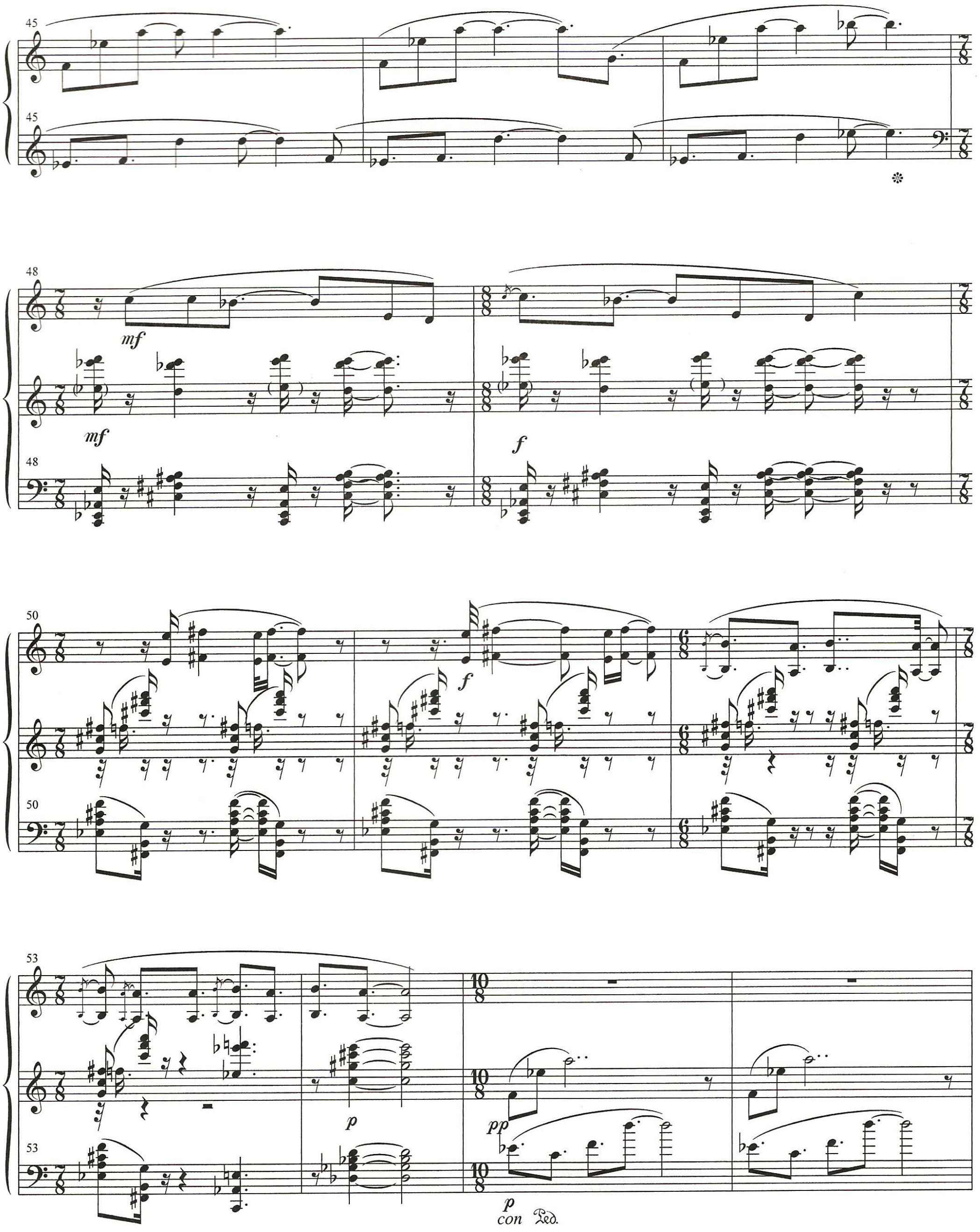
45
45
48
mf
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f
50
50
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53
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53
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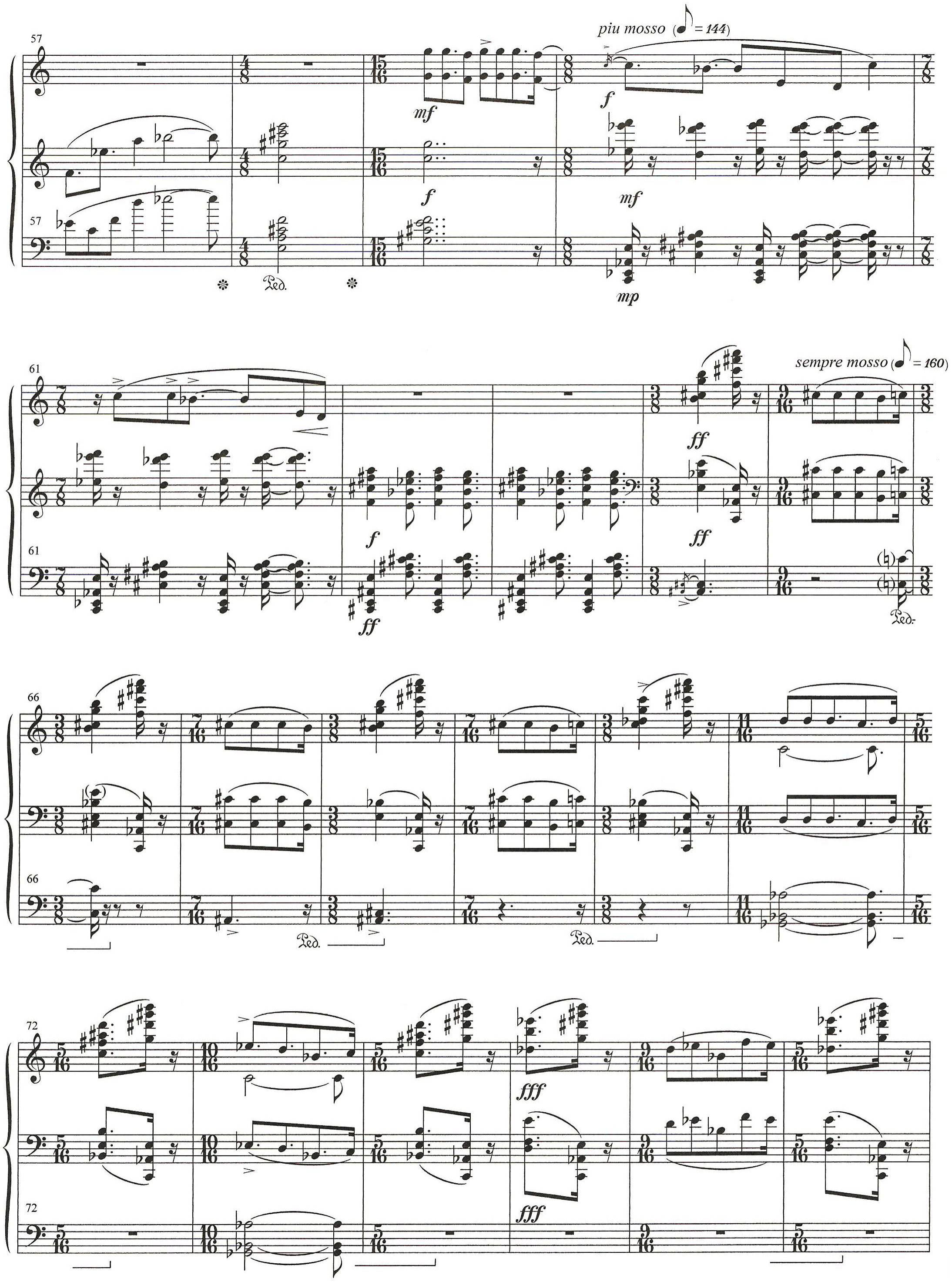
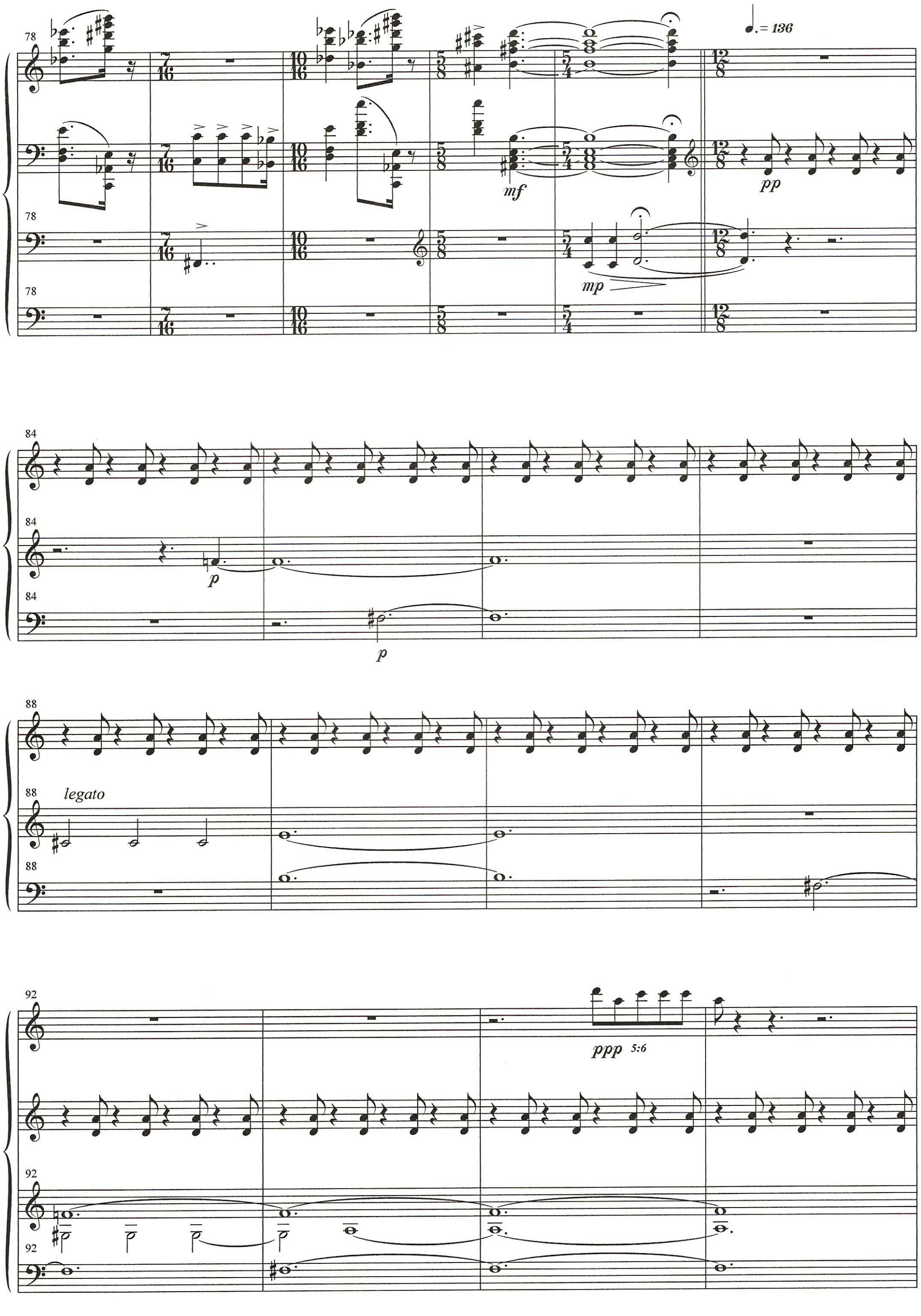
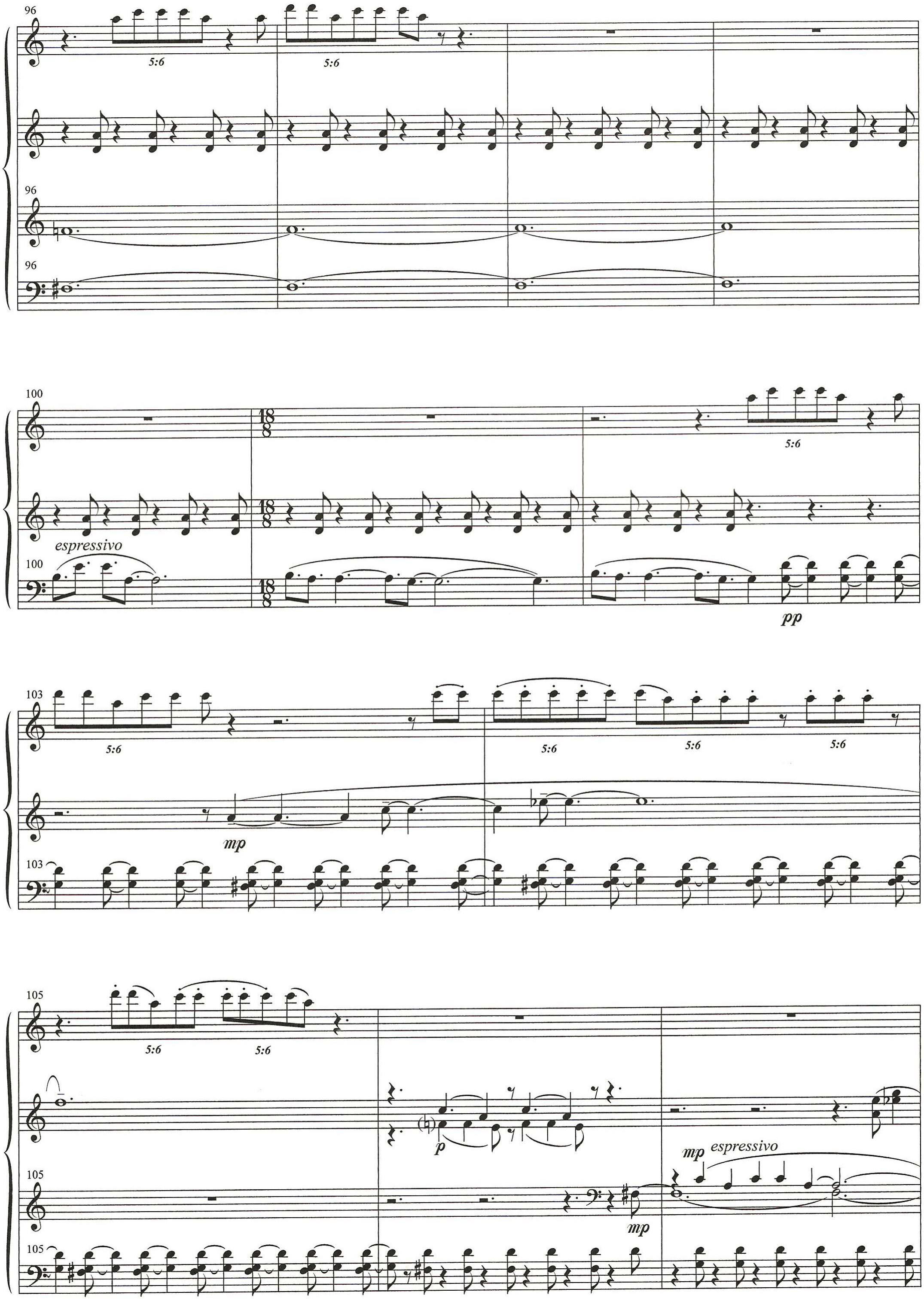
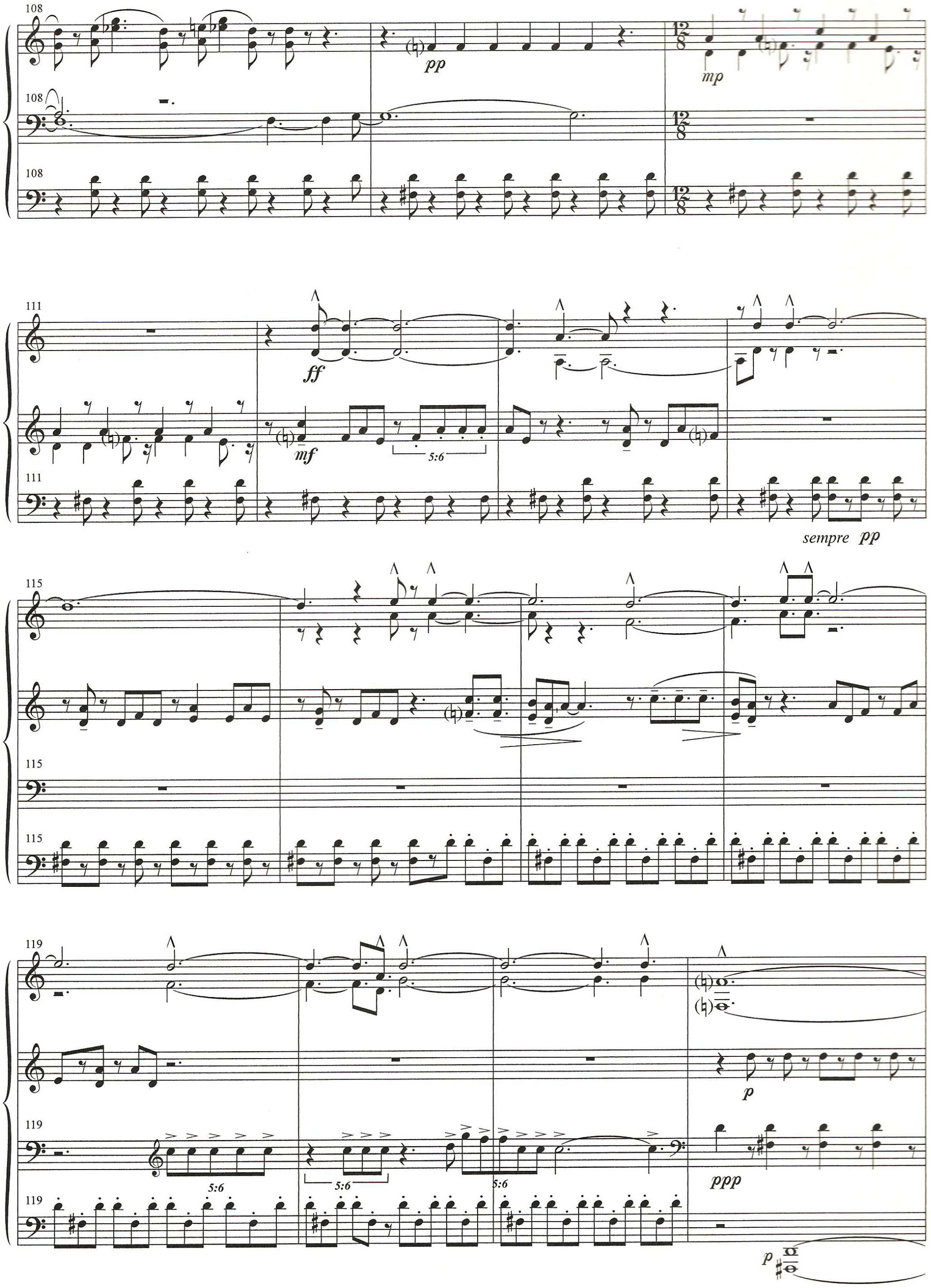
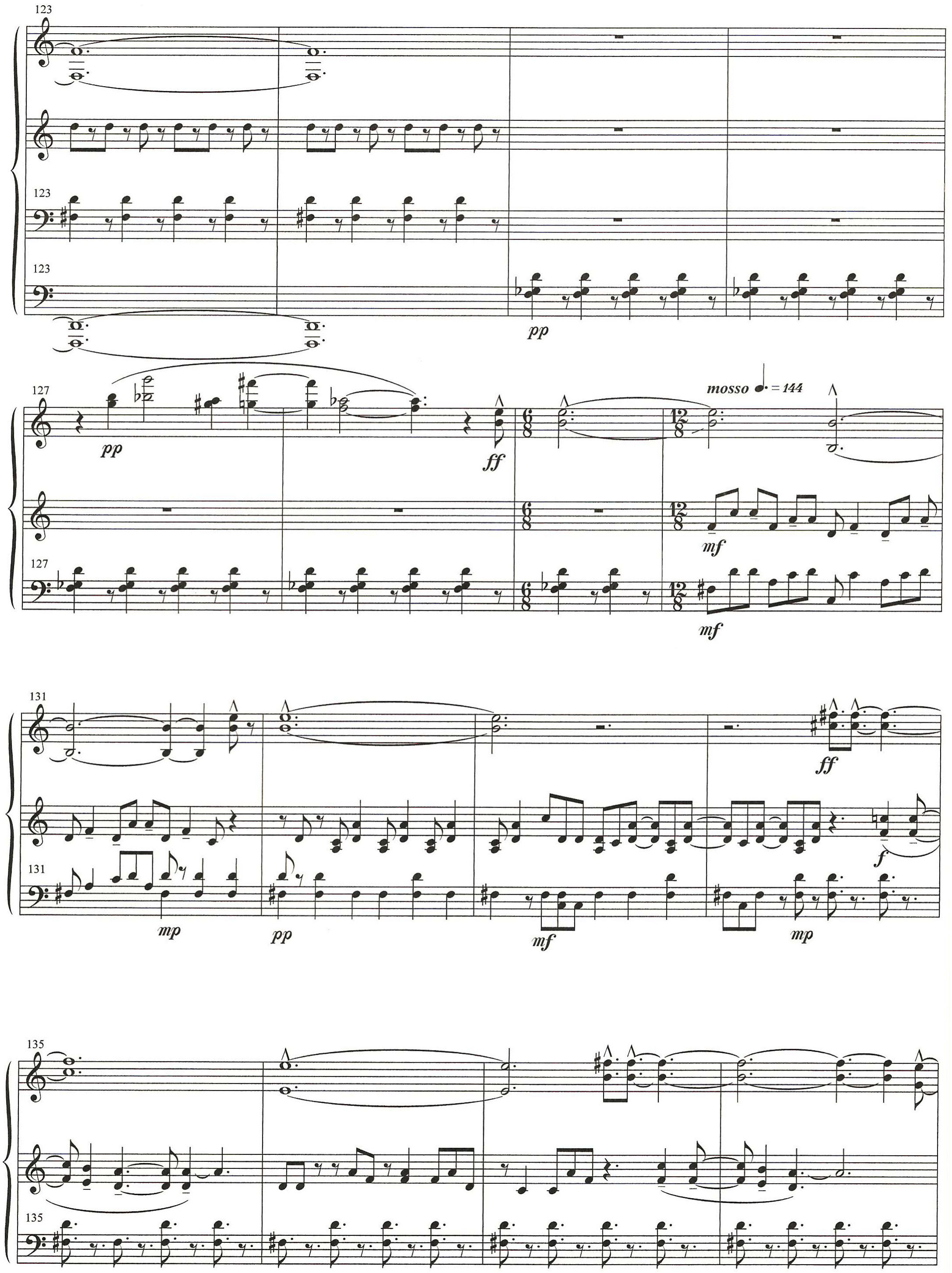
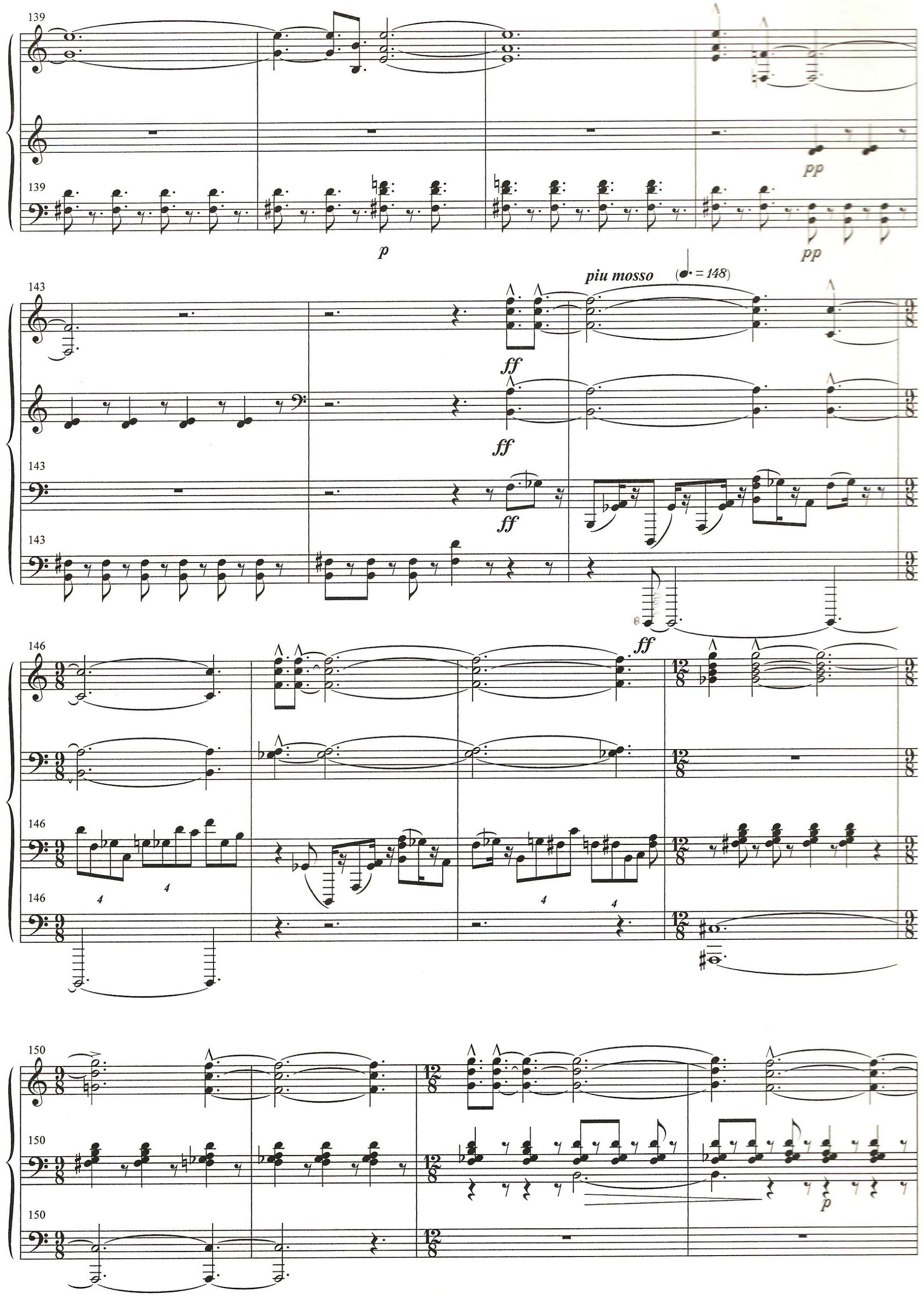

57
piu mosso (♪ = 144)
mf
f
mf
mp
Ped.
61
sempre mosso (♪ = 160)
ff
f
ff
Ped.
66
Ped.
Ped.
72
fff
fff

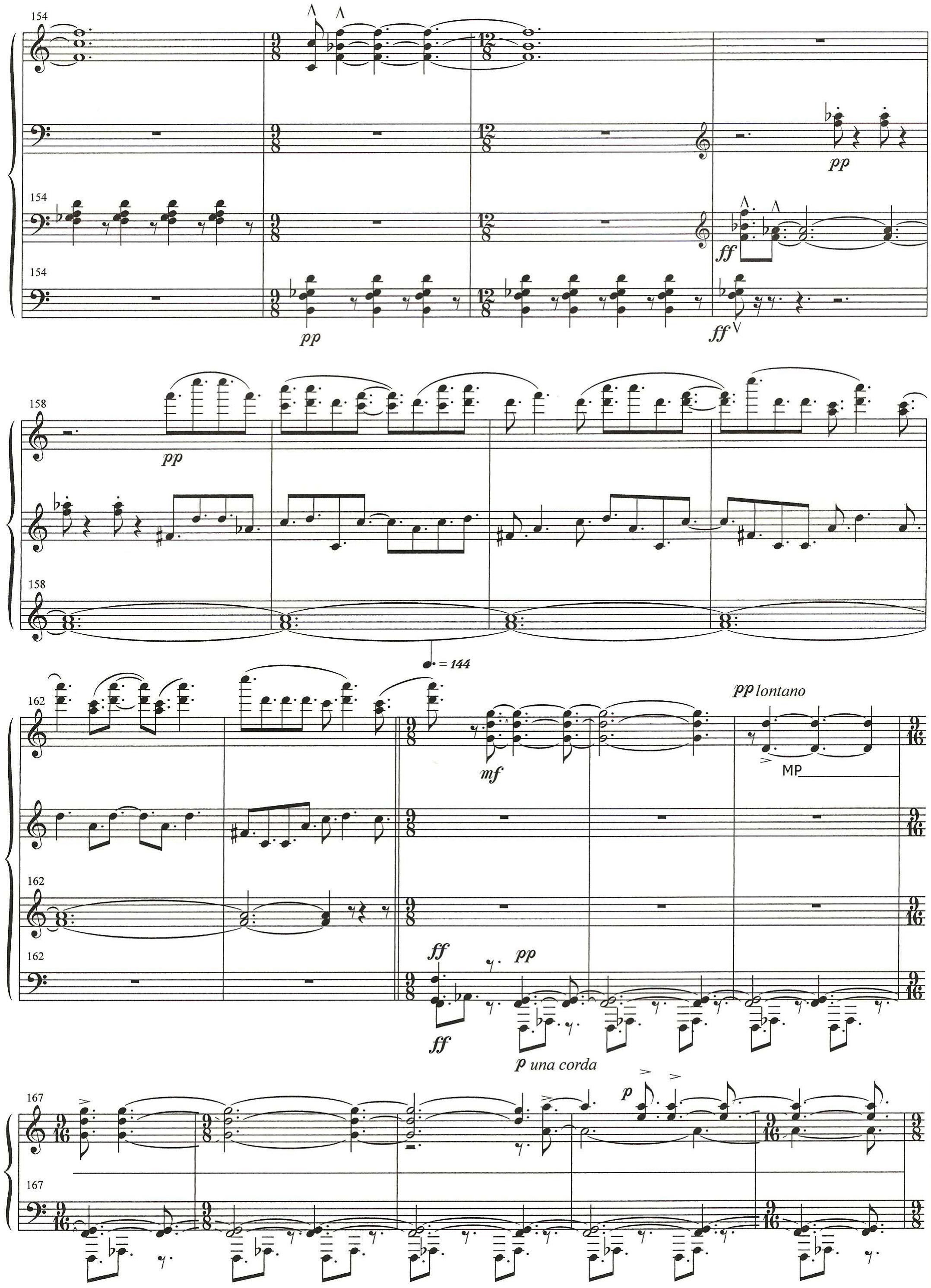

78
78
78
♩. = 136
mf
pp
mp
84
84
84
p
p
88
legato
88
88
92
ppp
5:6
92
92

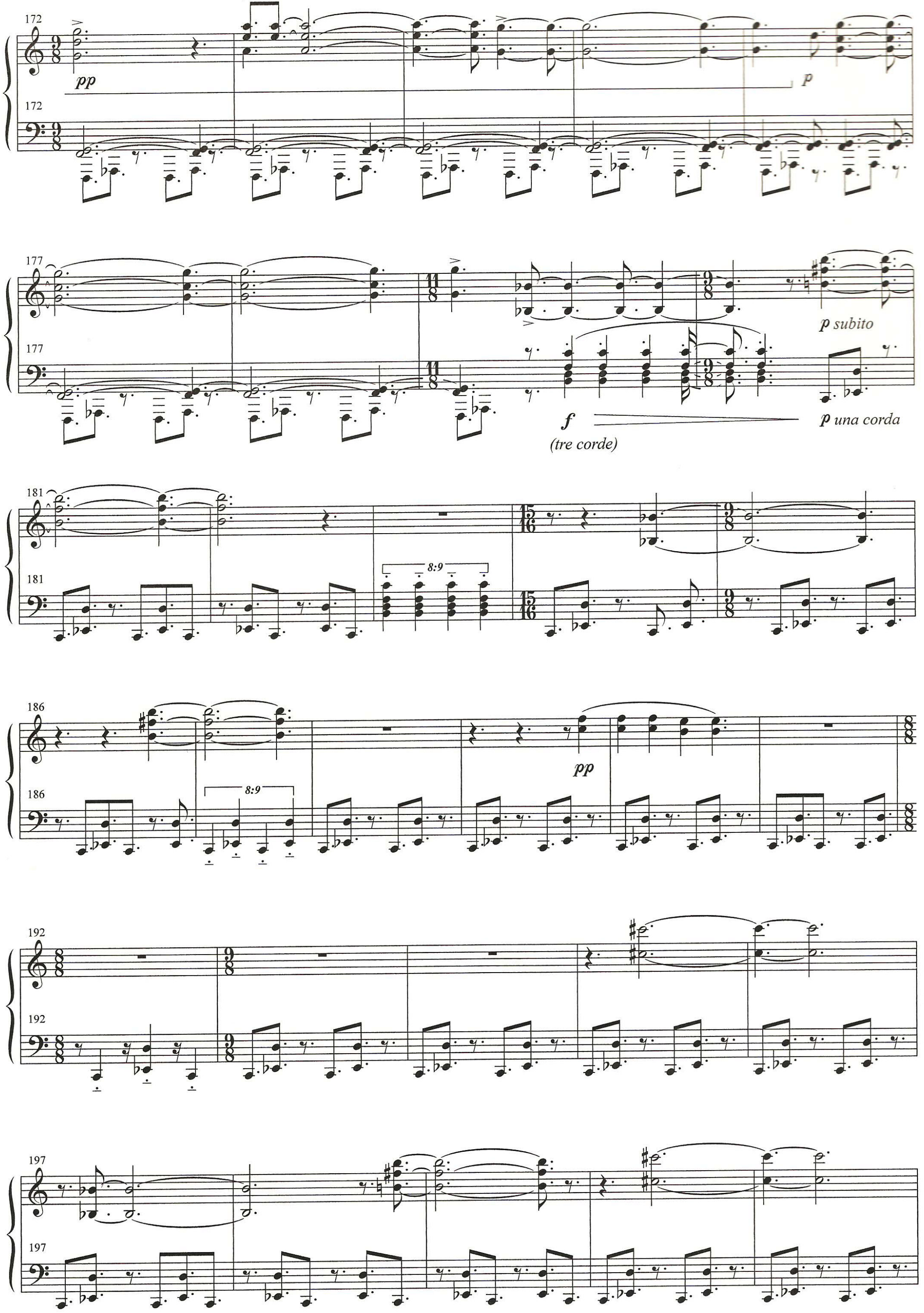

96
5:6
5:6
96
96
100
18/8
5:6
espressivo
100
pp
103
5:6
5:6
5:6
mp
103
105
5:6
5:6
p
105
mp
espressivo
mp
105

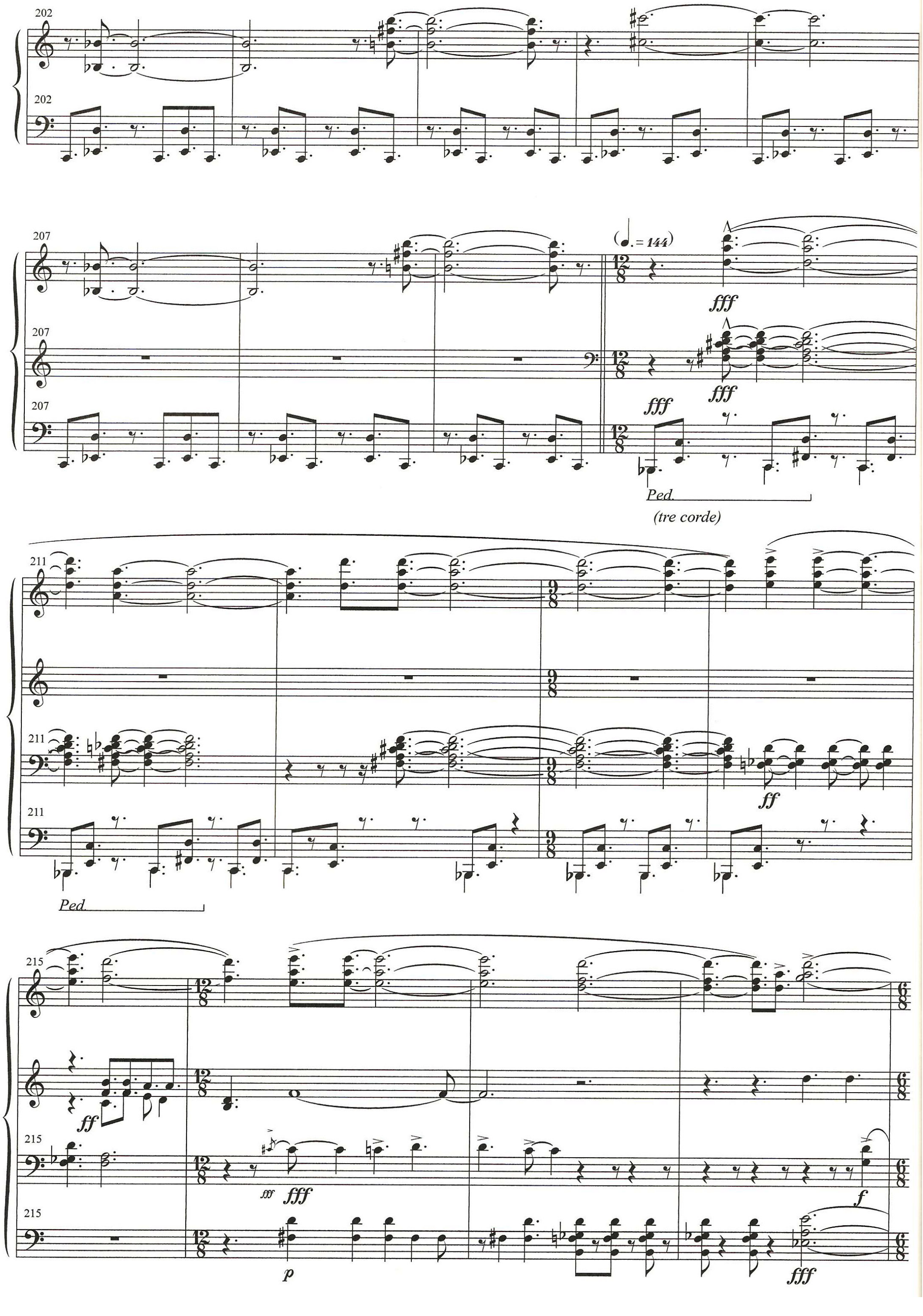

108
pp
12/8
mp
111
ff
mf
5:6
sempre pp
115
119
5:6
p
ppp

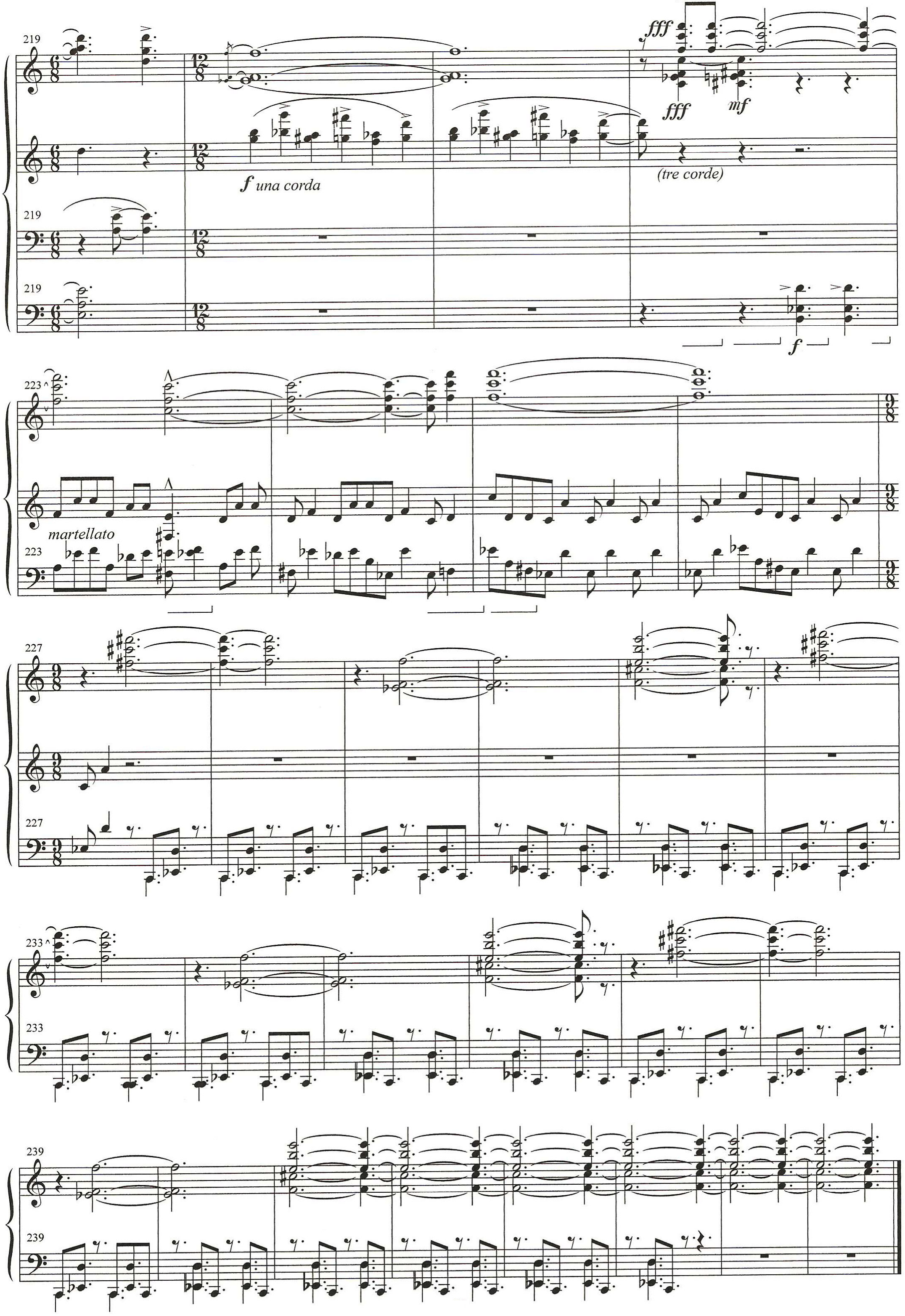

123
pp
127
pp
ff
mosso ♩. = 144
mf
mf
131
mp
pp
mf
ff
f
mp
135


p
pp
pp
piu mosso
(♩. = 148)
ff
ff
ff
ff
p

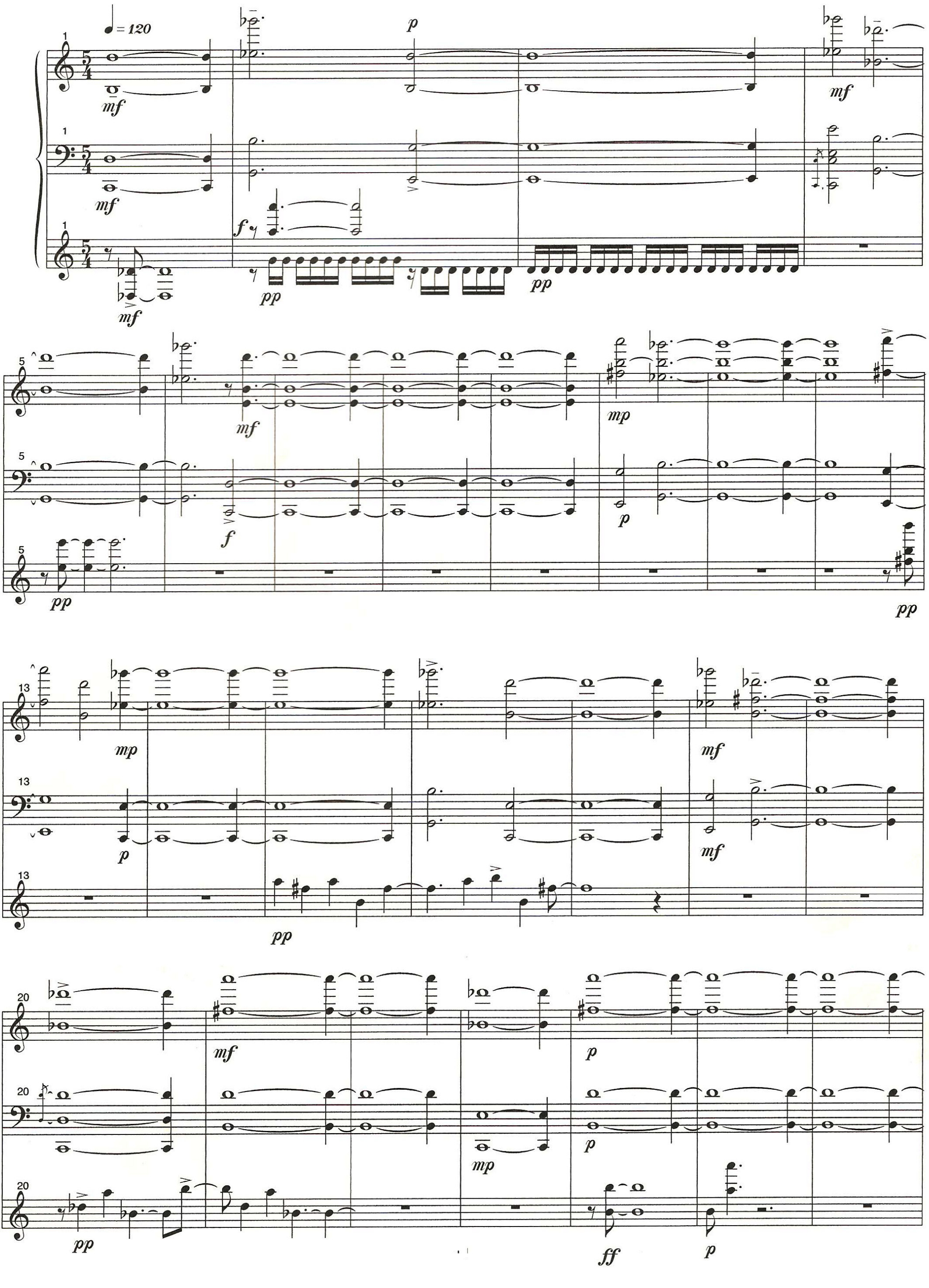

154
pp
ff
158
pp
162
♩. = 144
mf
pp lontano
MP
ff
pp
p una corda
167
p

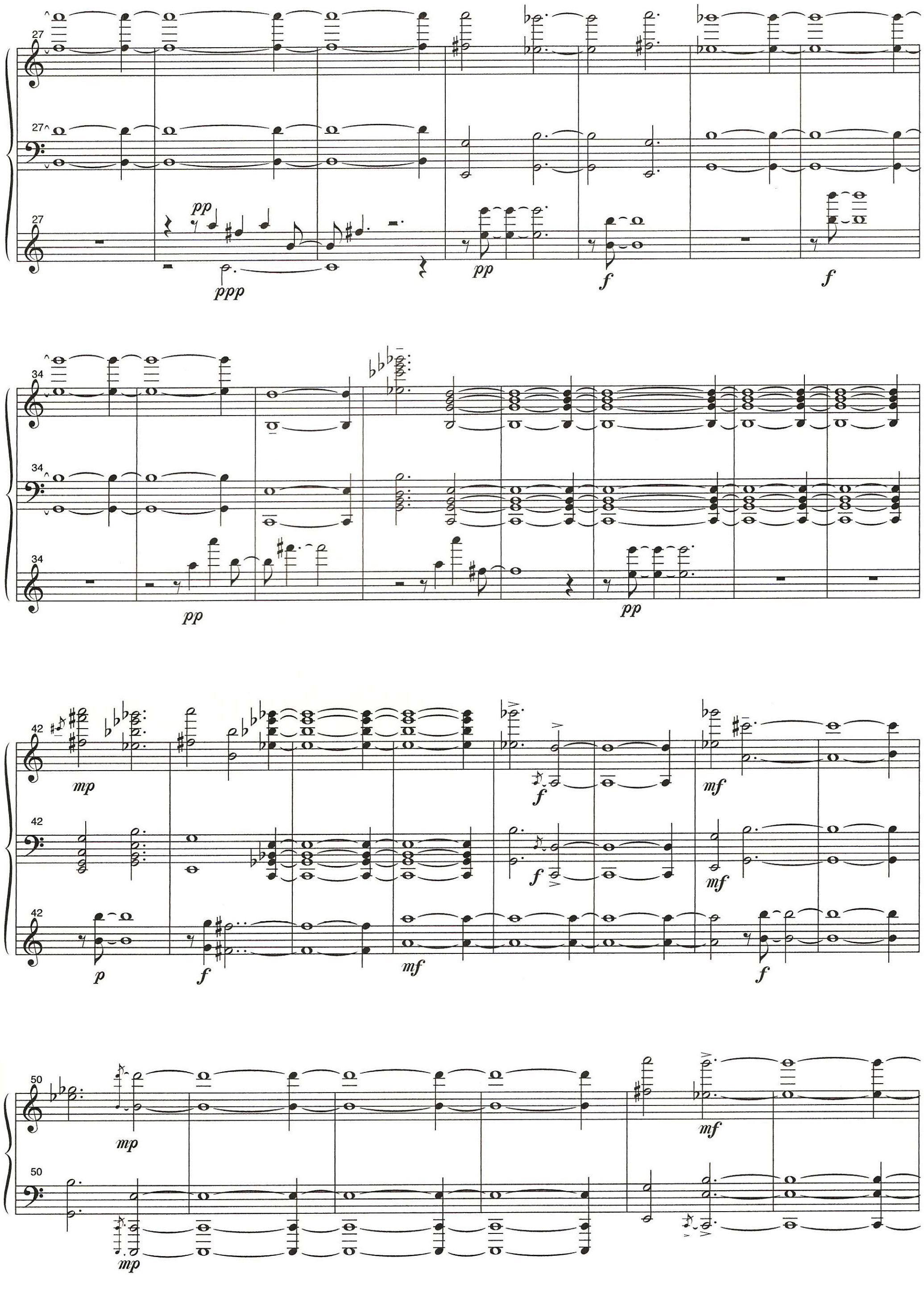

172
pp
p
177
p subito
f
(tre corde)
p una corda
181
8:9
186
pp
192
197

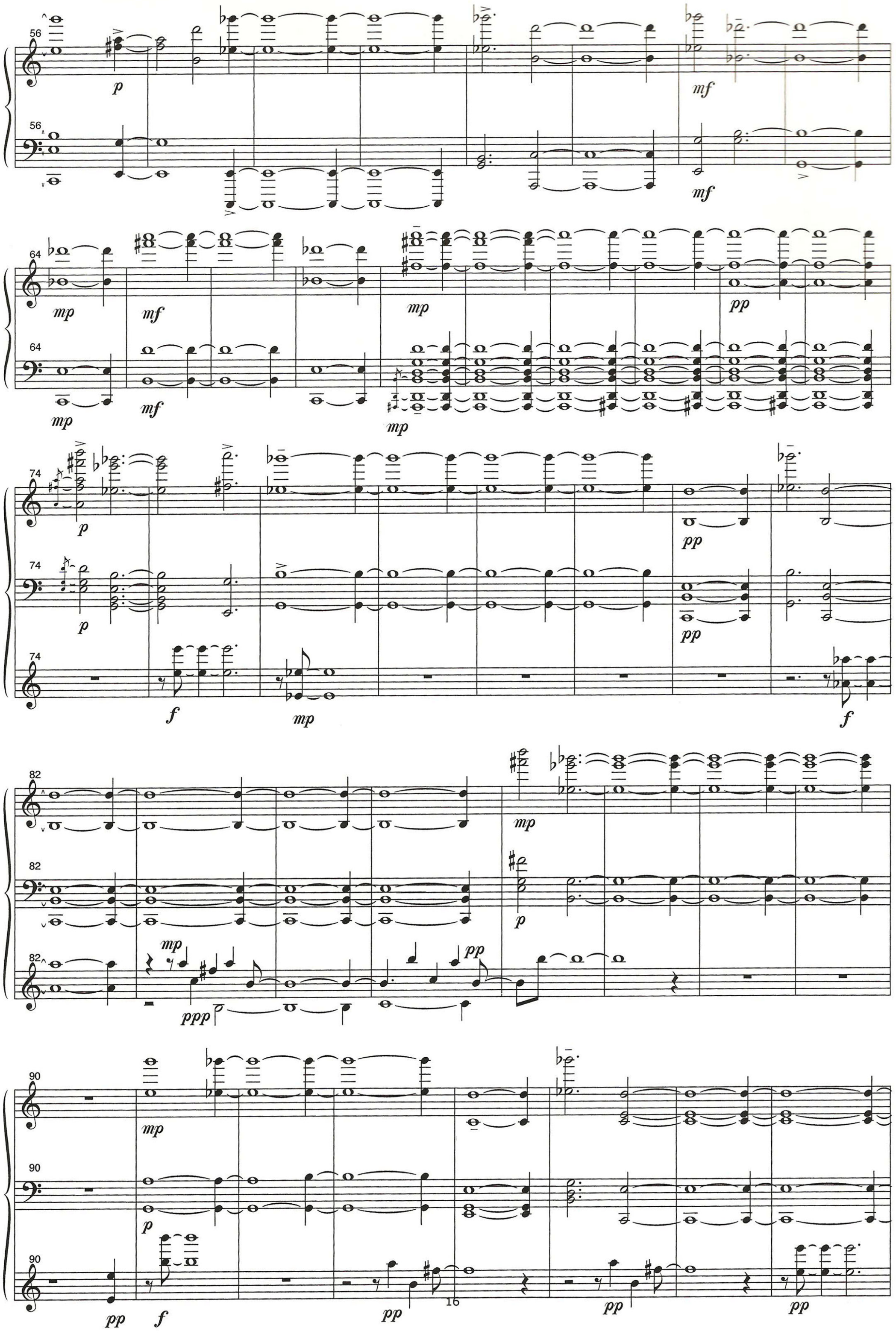

202
202
207
207
207
(♩. = 144)
fff
fff
fff
Ped.
(tre corde)
211
211
211
Ped.
ff
215
ff
215
fff
fff
215
p
f
fff

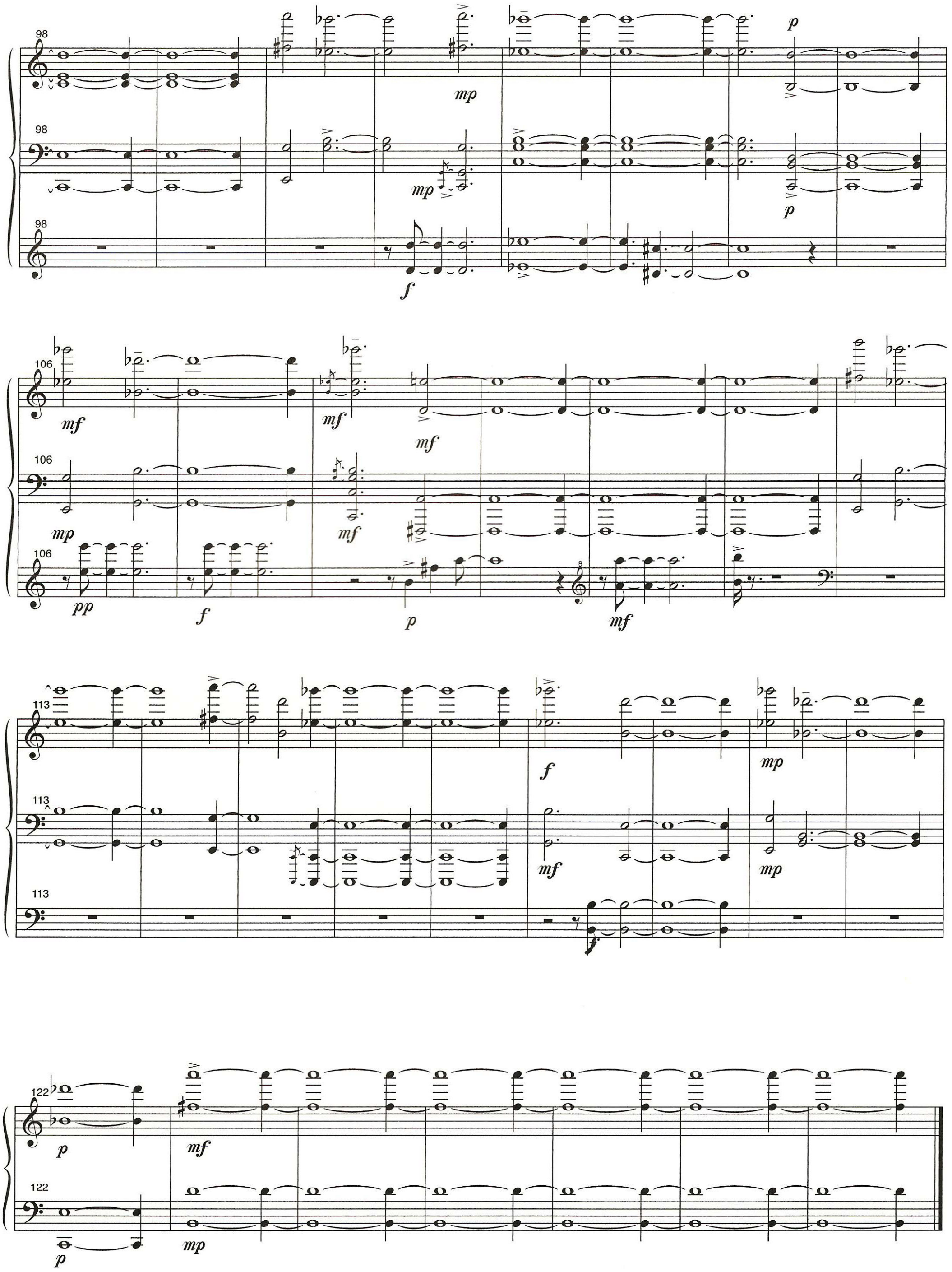

219
fff
fff
mf
f una corda
(tre corde)
f
223
martellato
227
233
239

Etude 2


♩ = 120
mf
p
f
pp
mp
ff
1
5
13
20

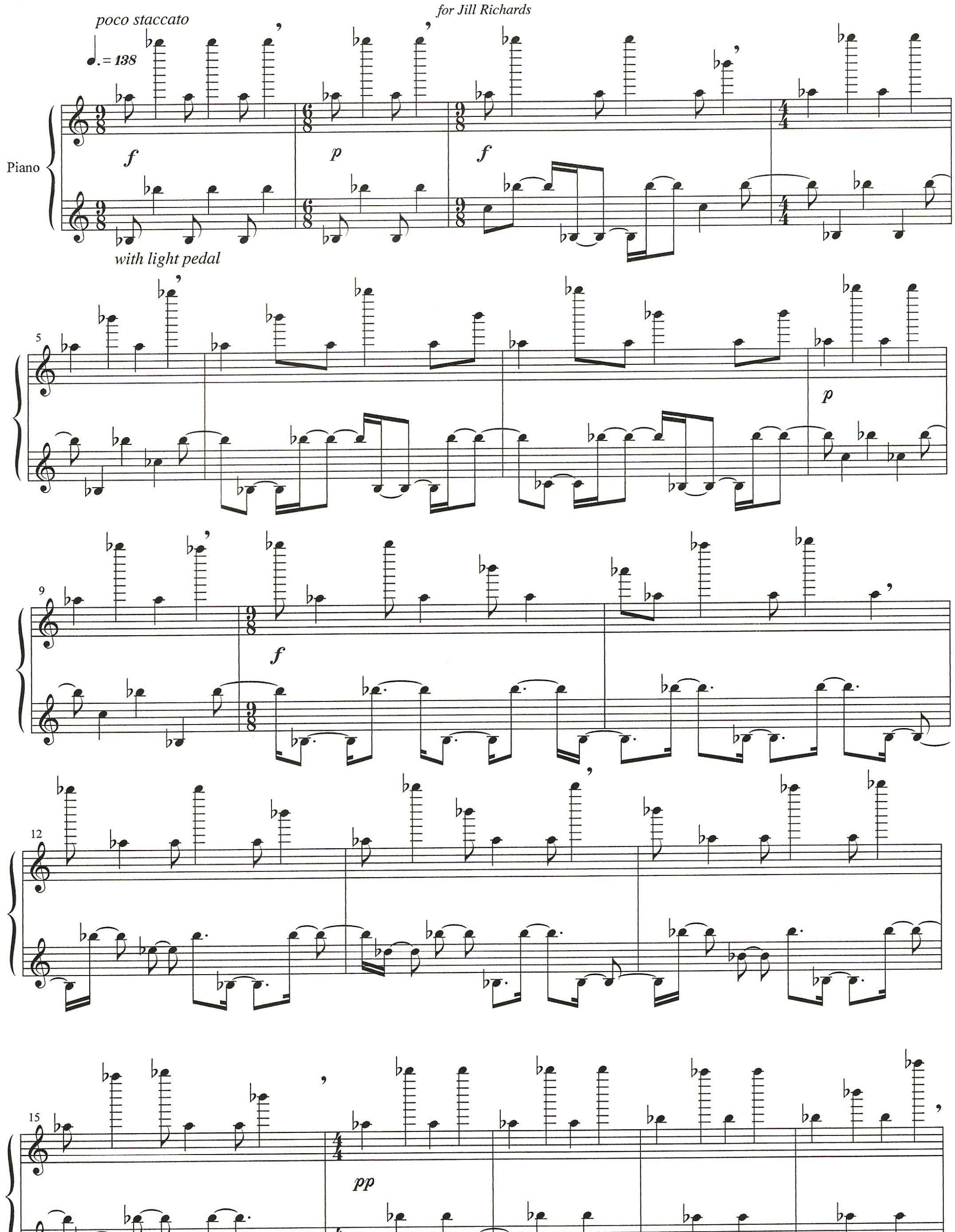

27
pp
ppp
pp
f
f
34
pp
pp
42
mp
p
f
mf
f
f
mf
mf
f
50
mp
mp
mf


56
p
mf
64
mp
mf
pp
74
f
mp
82
ppp
90


98
p
mp
mp
p
f
106
mf
mf
mf
mp
mf
pp
f
p
mf
8
113
f
mf
mp
mp
122
p
mf
p
mp

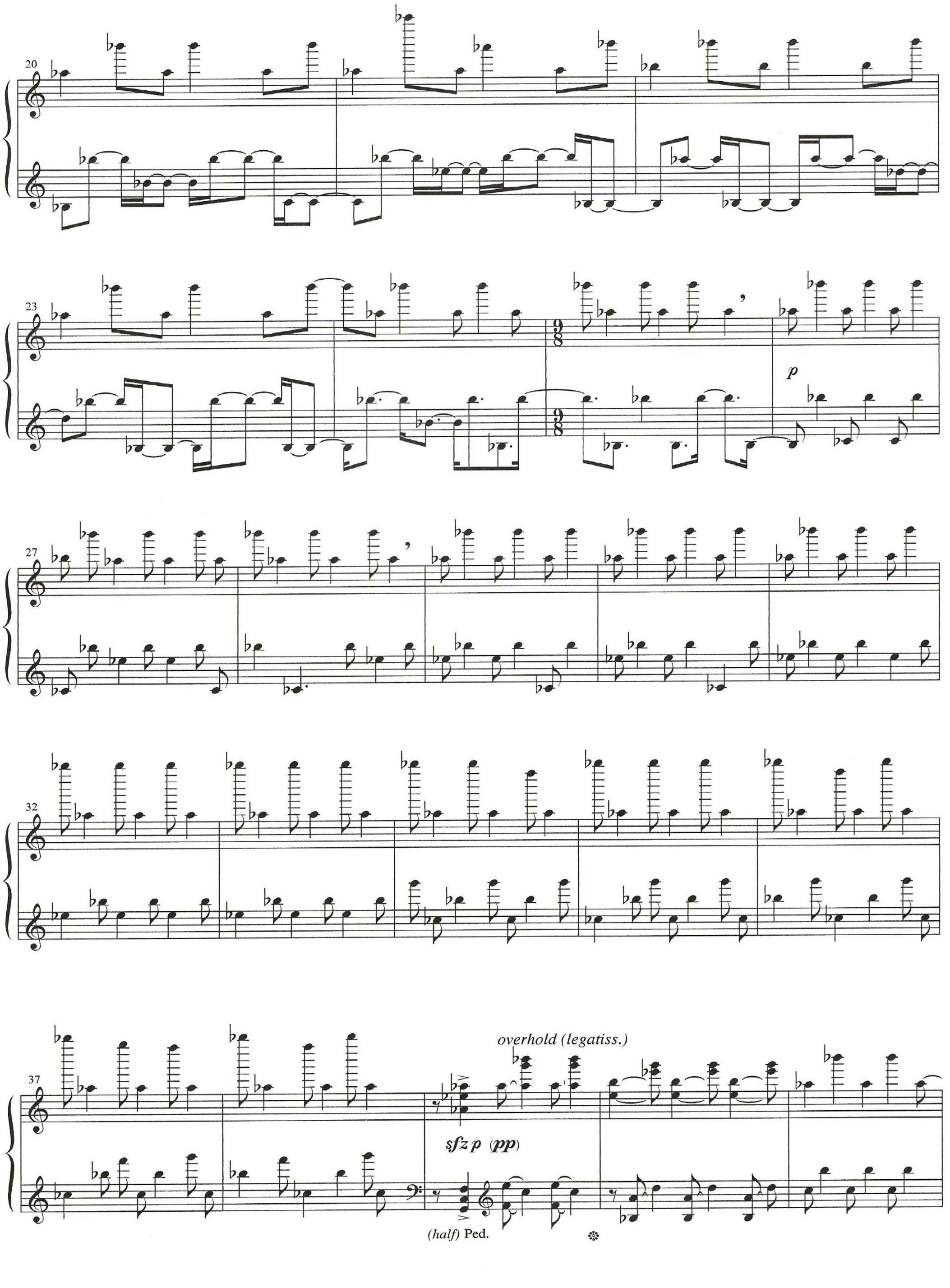
Etude 3

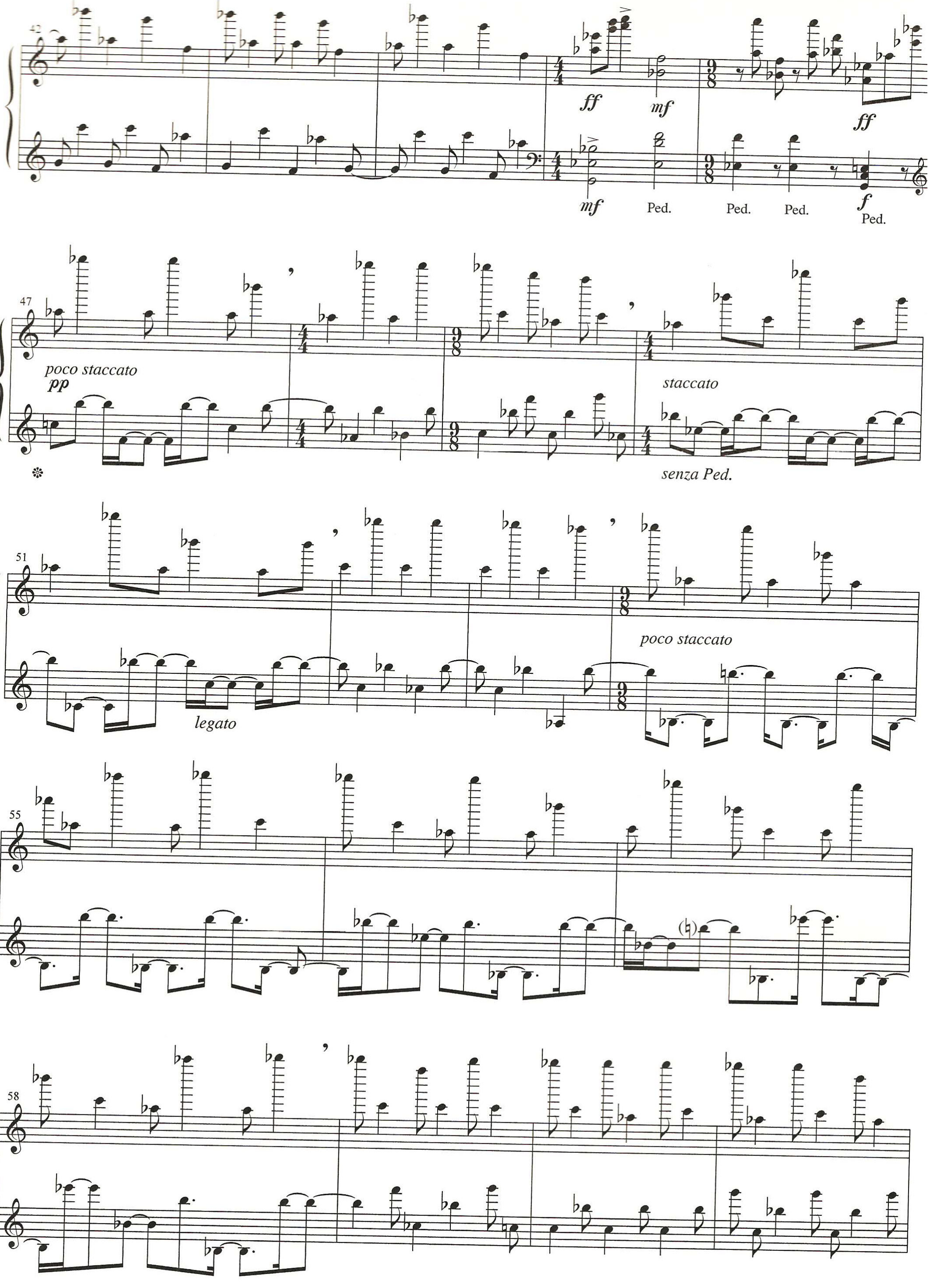
for Jill Richards

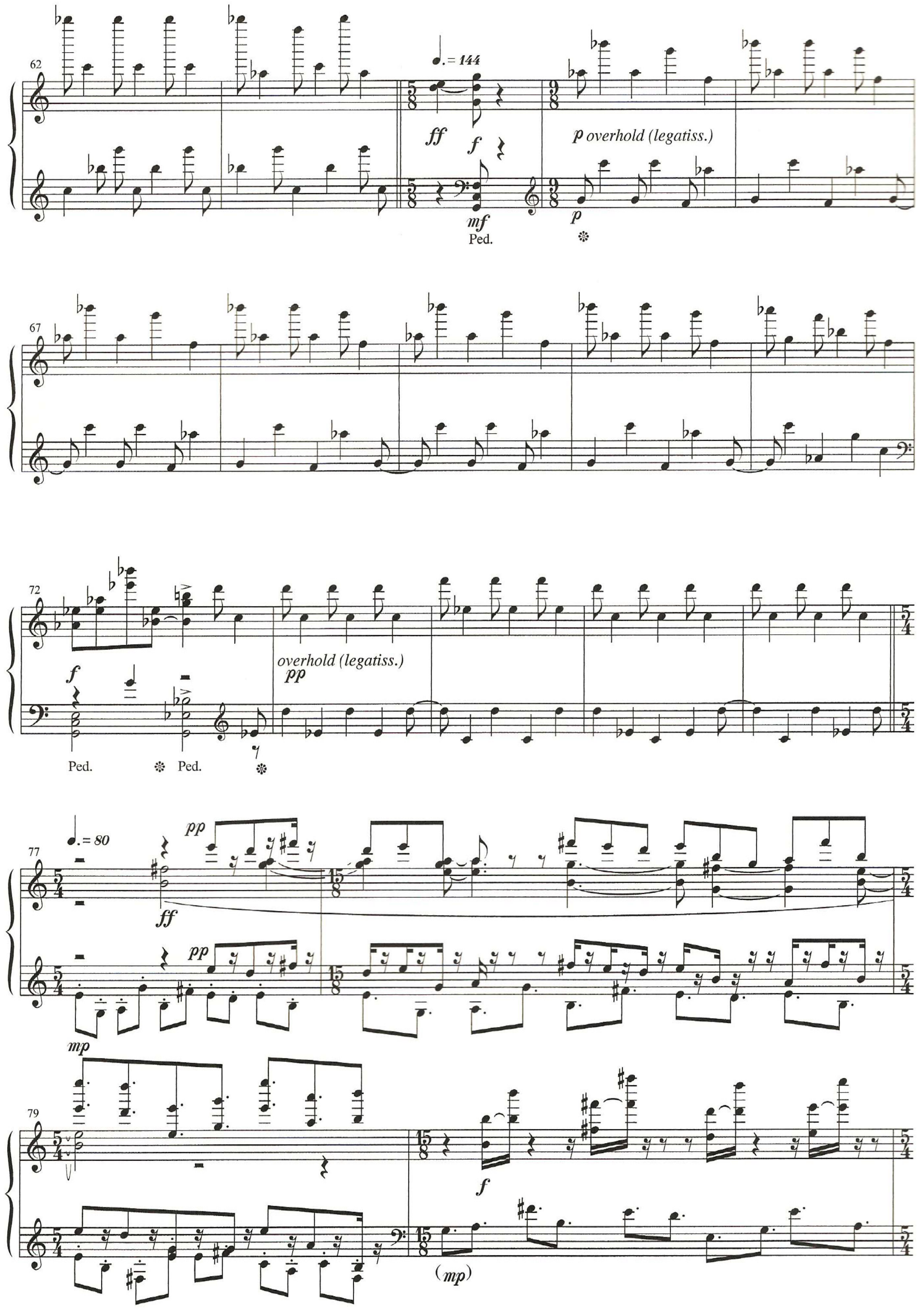


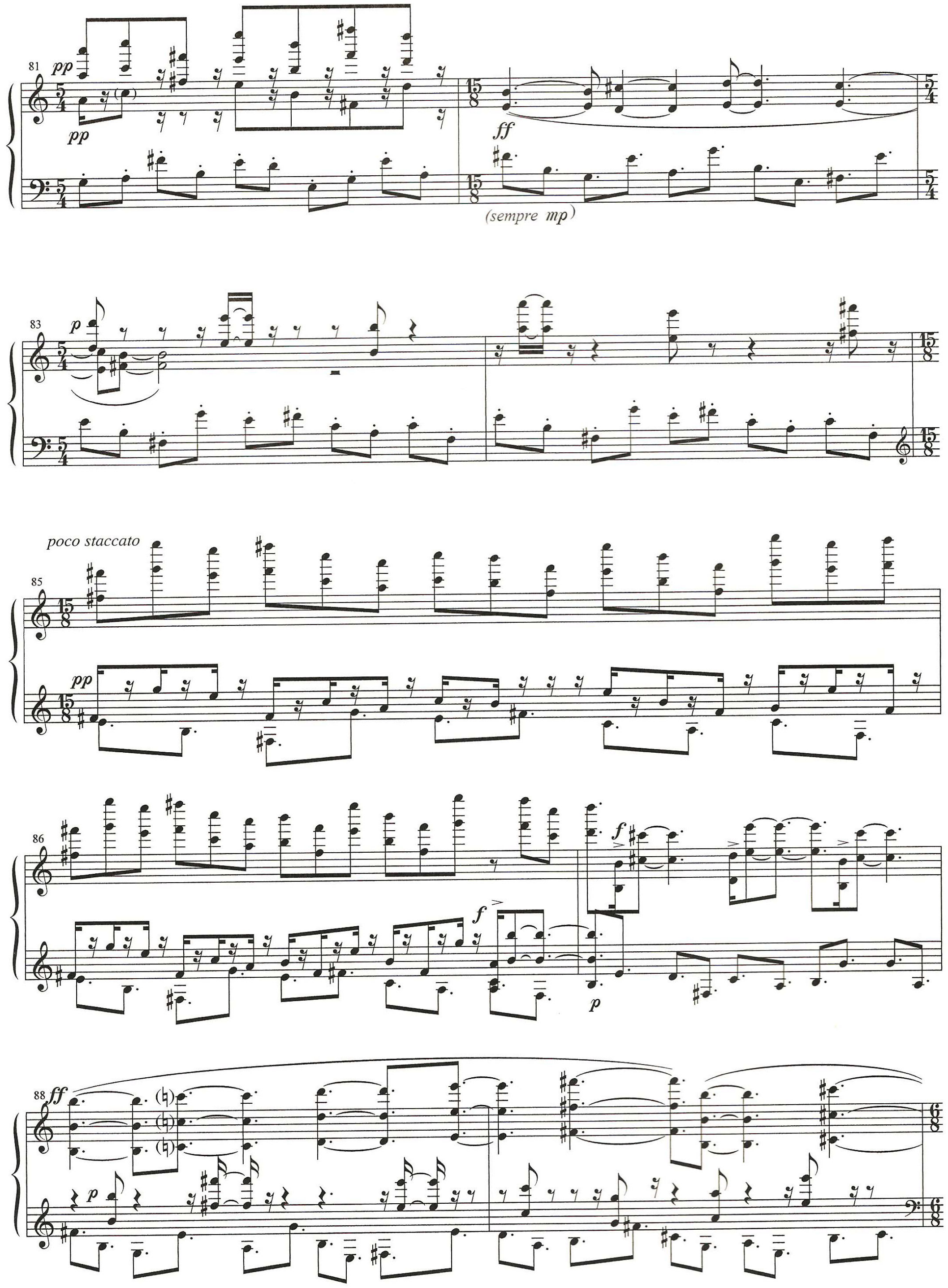
poco staccato
♩. = 138
Piano
f
p
f
with light pedal
5
p
9
f
12
15
pp

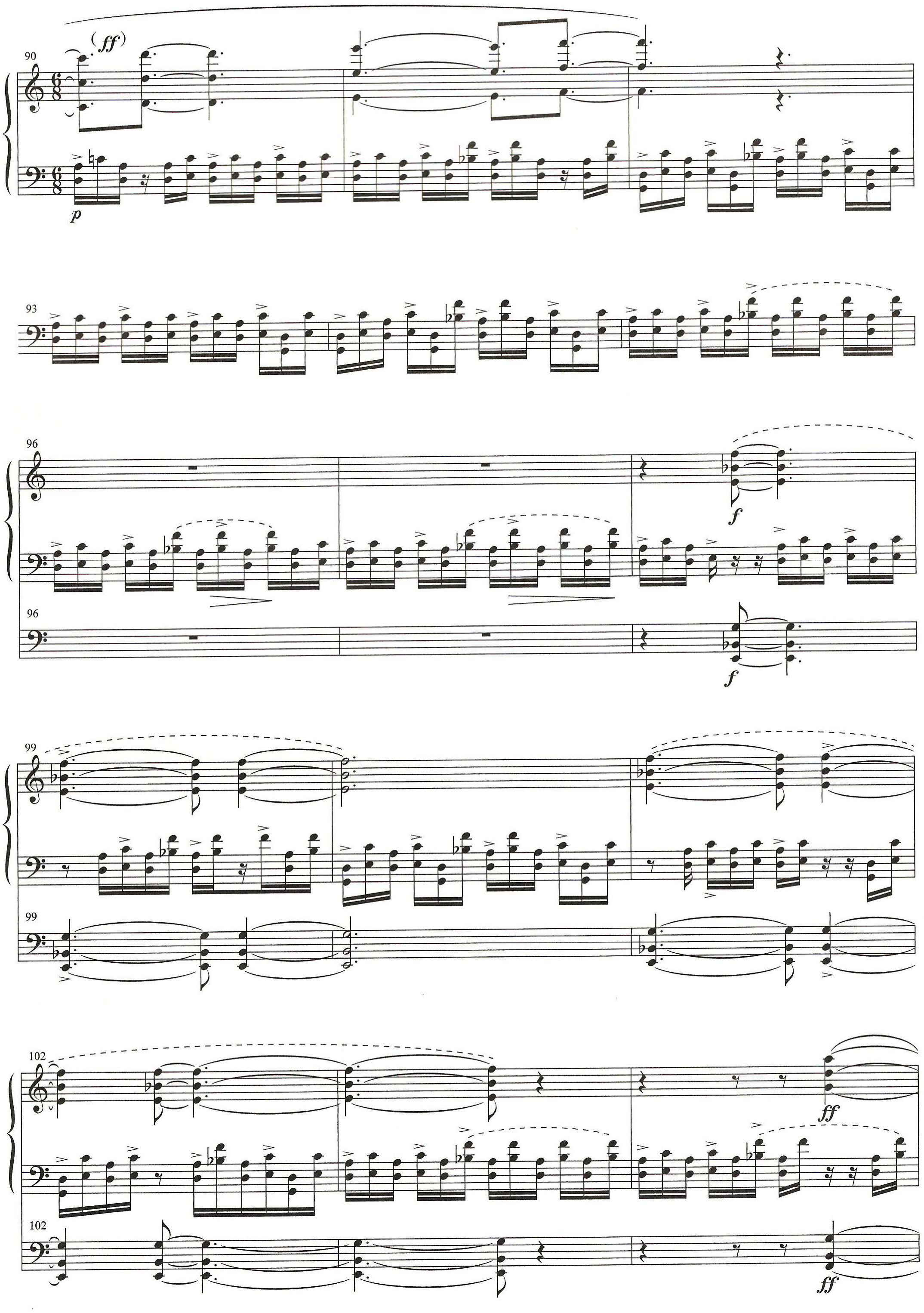
* commas indicate an extremely short hesitation before the barline

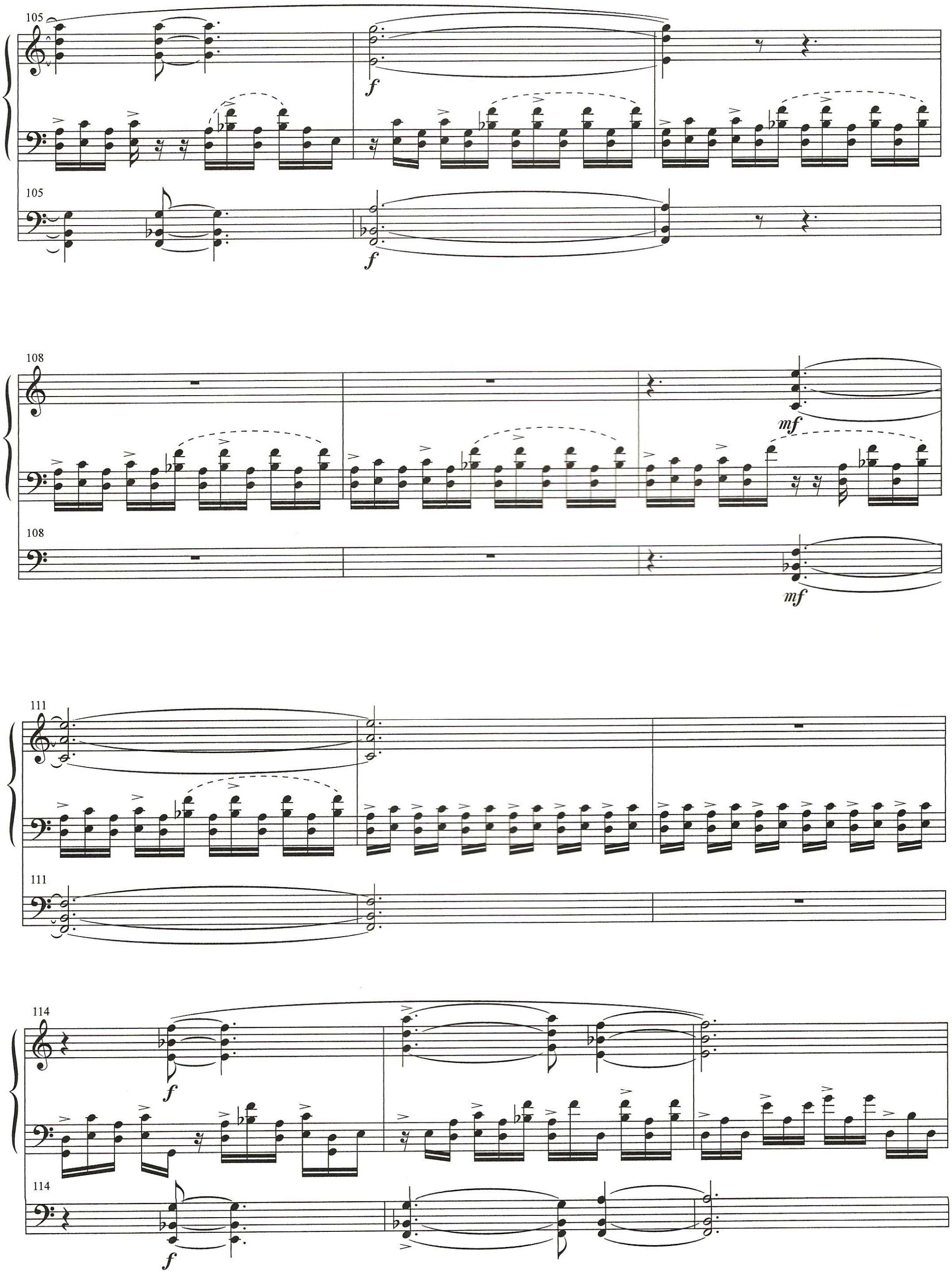

20
23
p
27
32
37
overhold (legatiss.)
sfz p (pp)
(half) Ped.

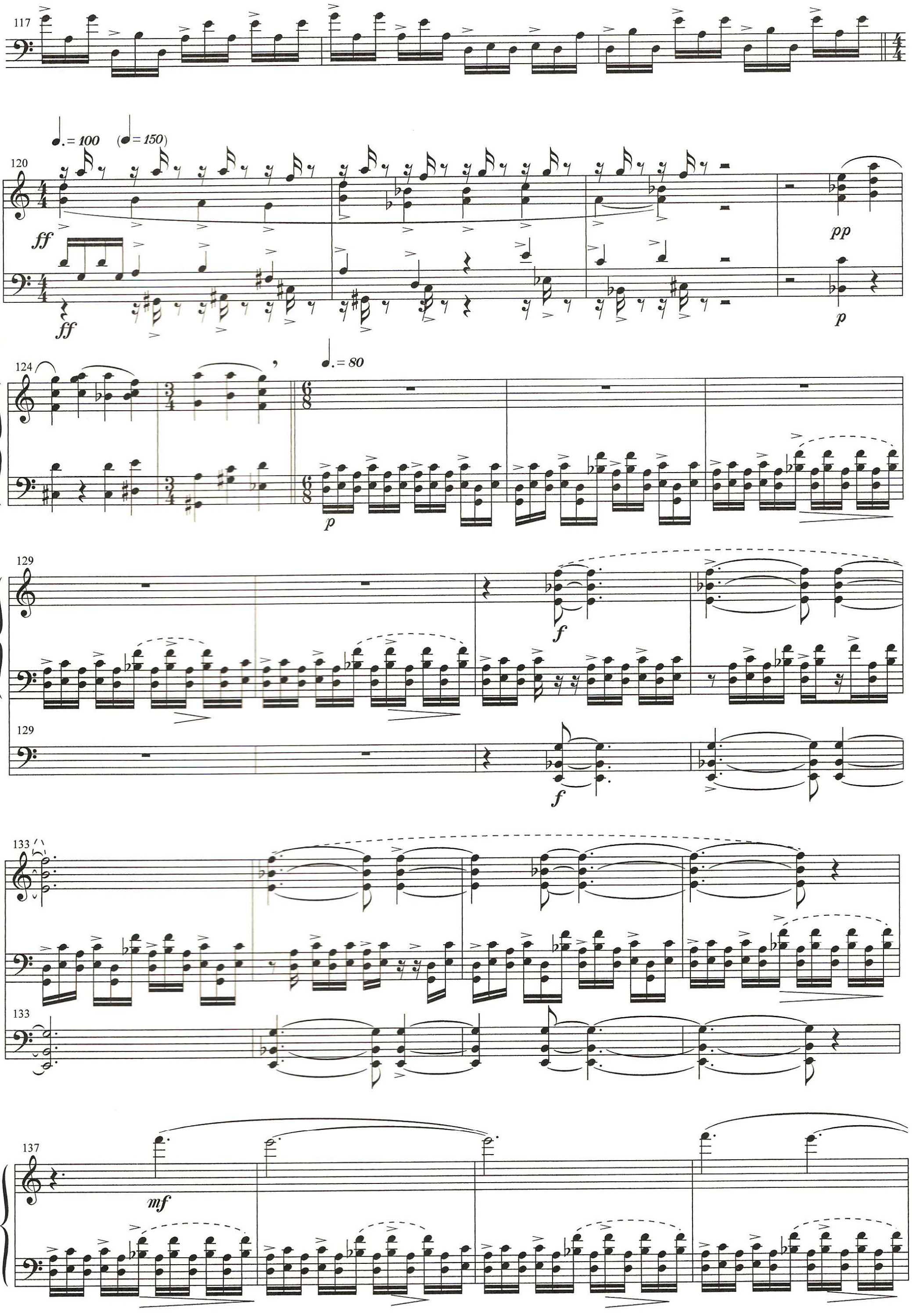

42
ff
mf
mf
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
ff
f
Ped.
47
poco staccato
pp
staccato
senza Ped.
51
legato
poco staccato
55
58

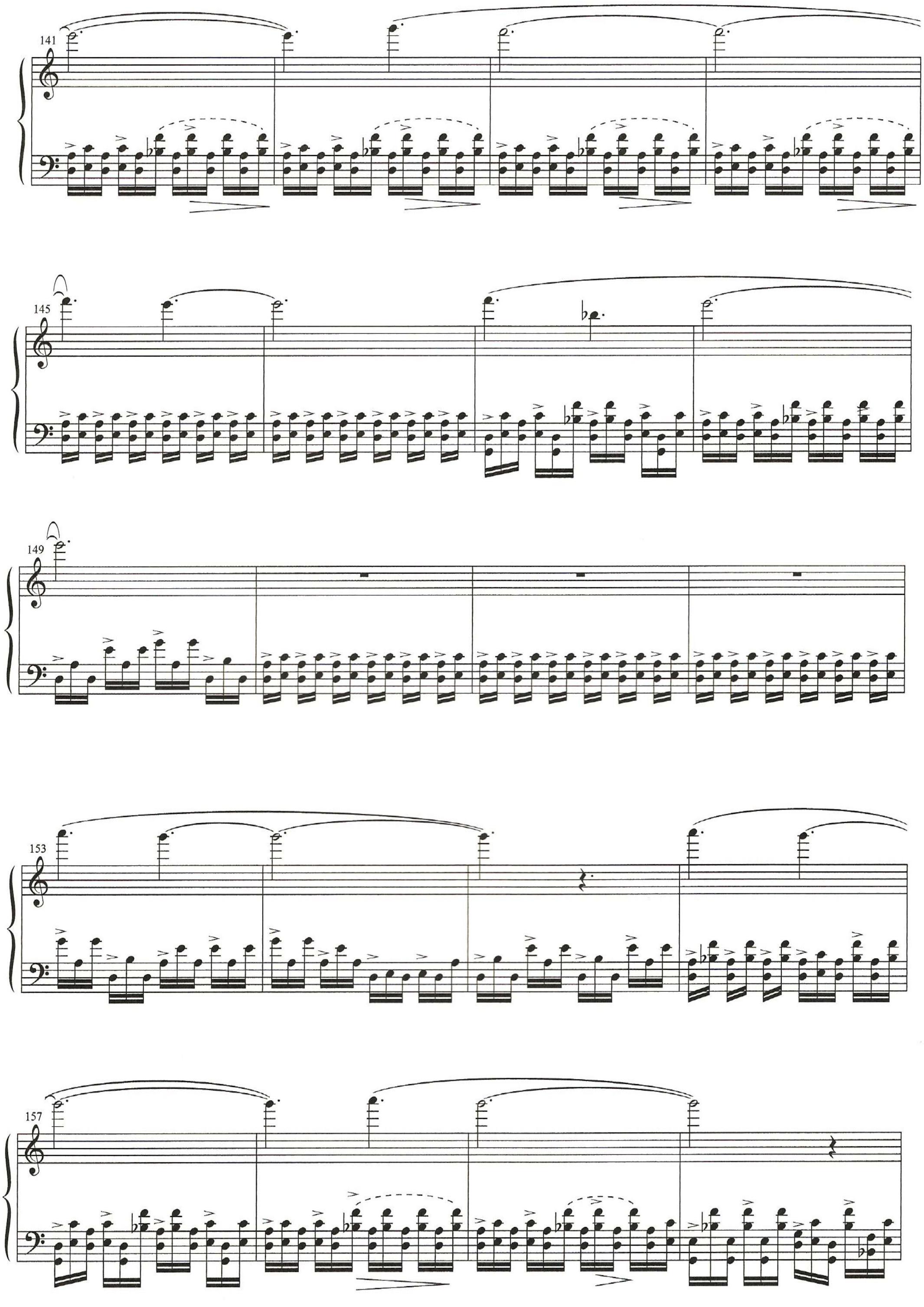

62
♩. = 144
ff
f
mf
Ped.
p overhold (legatiss.)
p
67
72
f
Ped.
Ped.
overhold (legatiss.)
pp
77
♩. = 80
pp
ff
pp
mp
79
f
(mp)

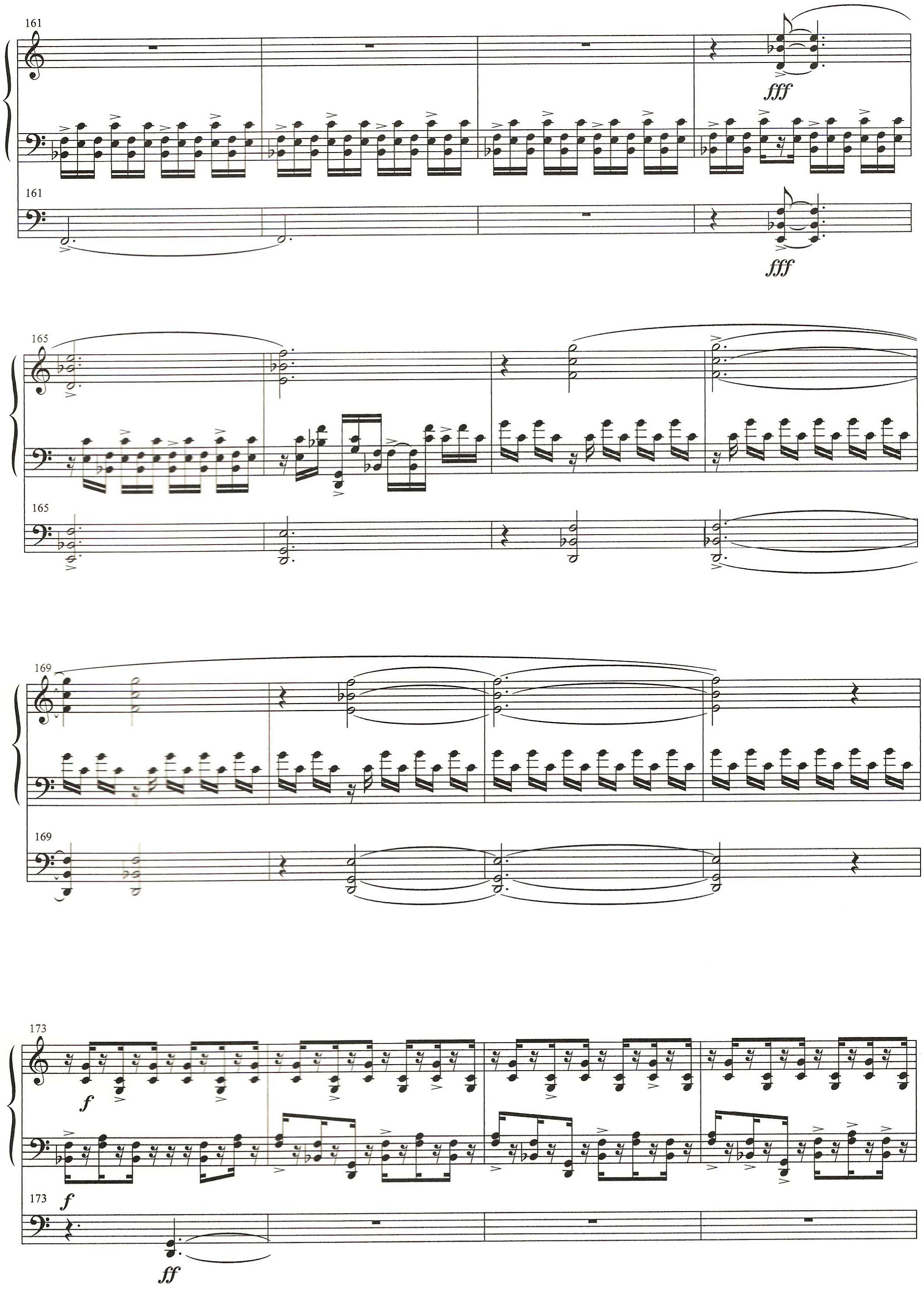

81
pp
pp
(sempre mp)
ff
83
p
poco staccato
85
pp
86
f
p
88
ff
(♮)

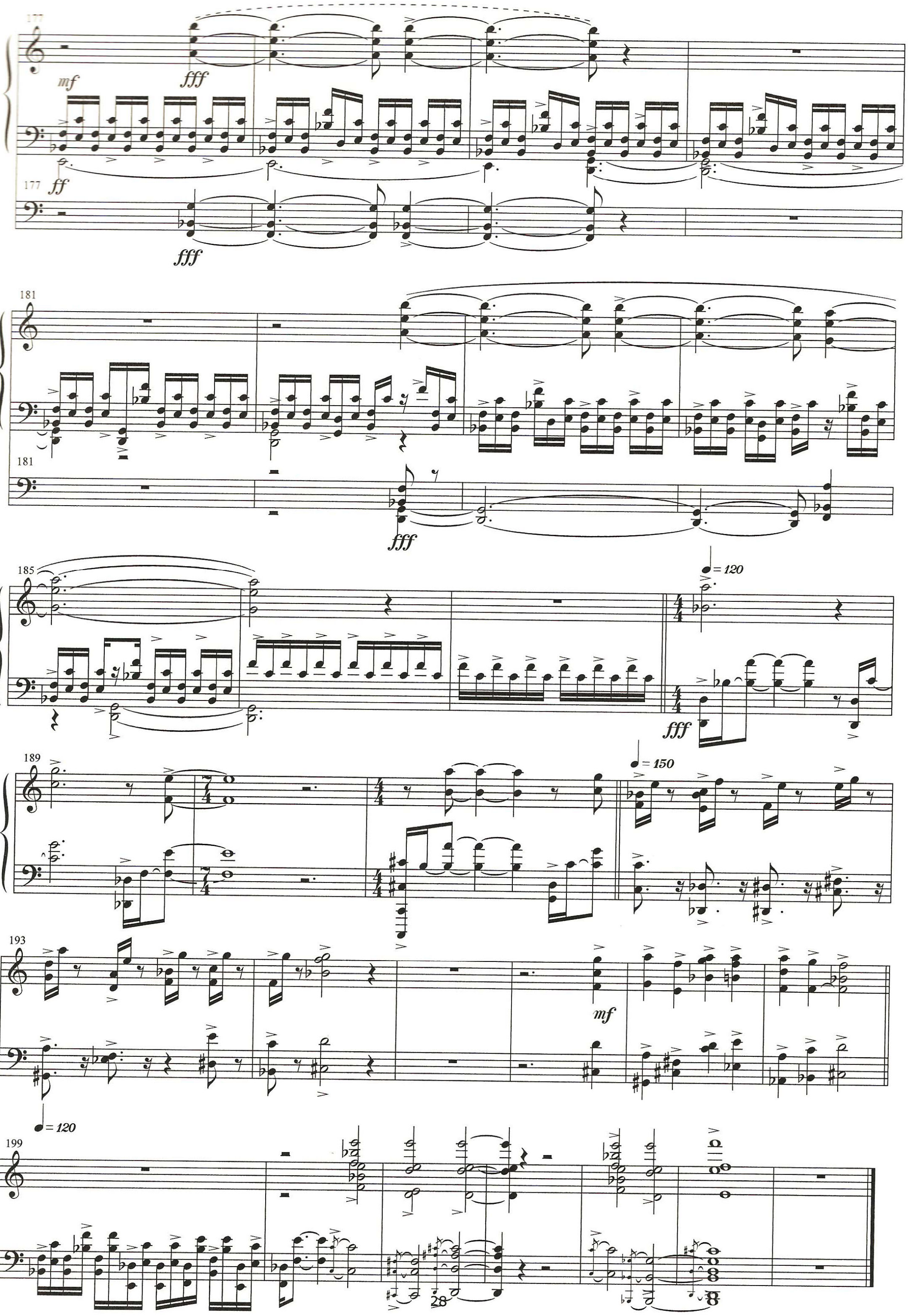

90
(ff)
p
93
96
96
f
f
99
99
102
ff
102
ff


105
105
f
f
108
108
mf
mf
111
111
114
114
f
f


117
120
♩. = 100 (♩ = 150)
ff
ff
pp
p
124
♩. = 80
p
129
129
f
f
133
133
137
mf



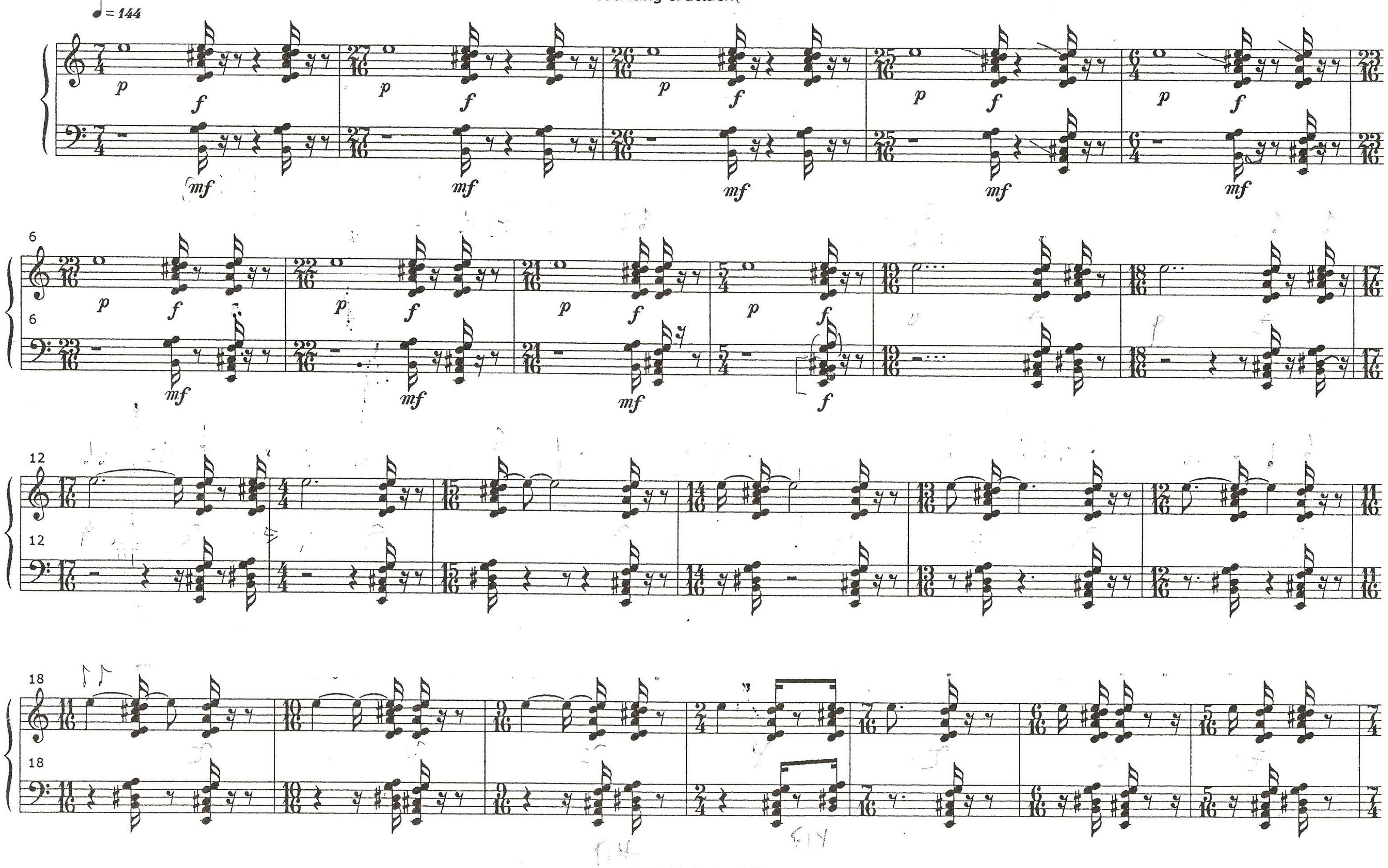

fff
fff
f
f
ff


177
mf
fff
ff
177
fff
181
181
fff
185
♩ = 120
fff
189
♩ = 150
193
mf
♩ = 120
199
28

etude IV

counting & attack

Kevin Volans


♩= 144
p
f
mf
6
12
18

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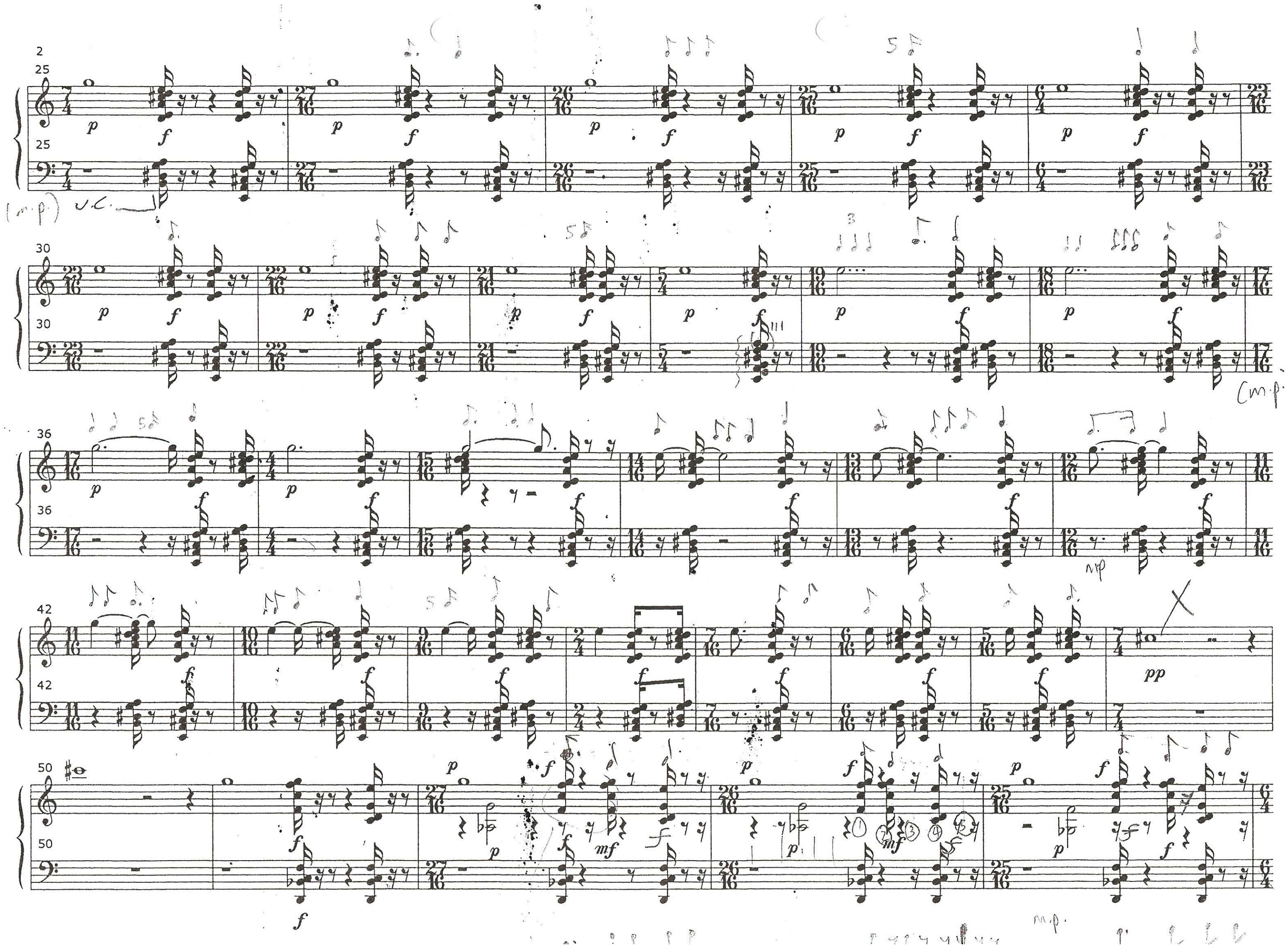
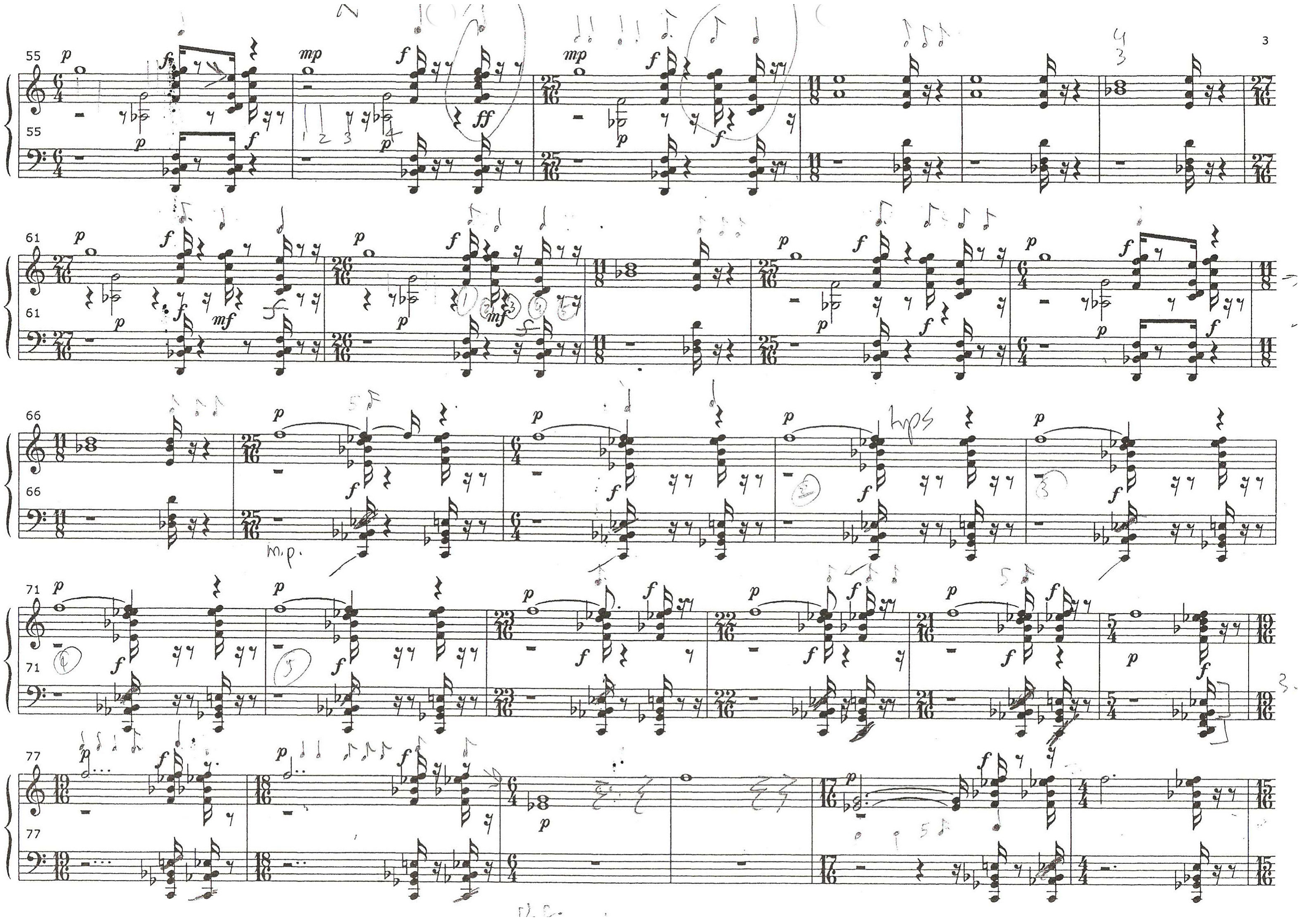
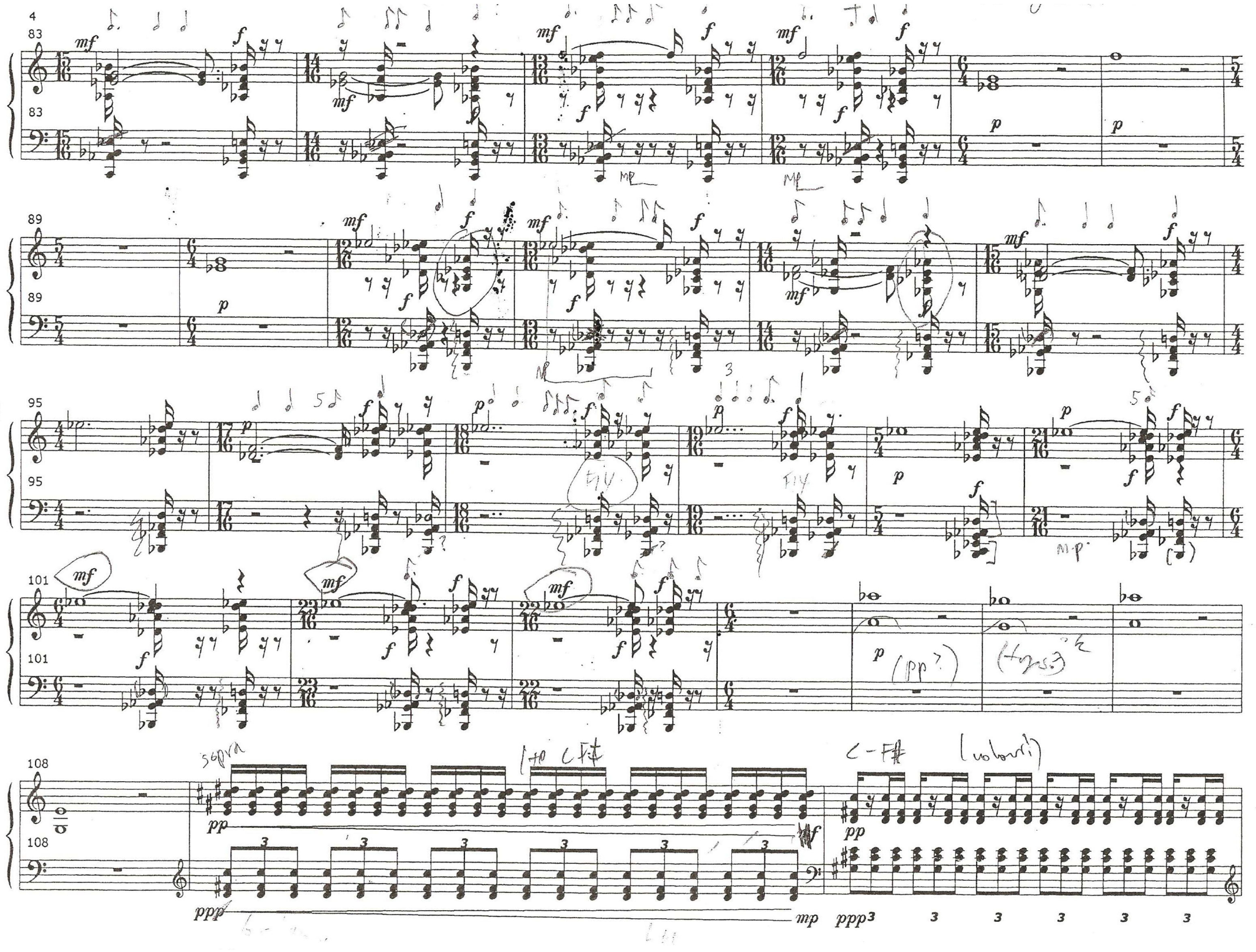
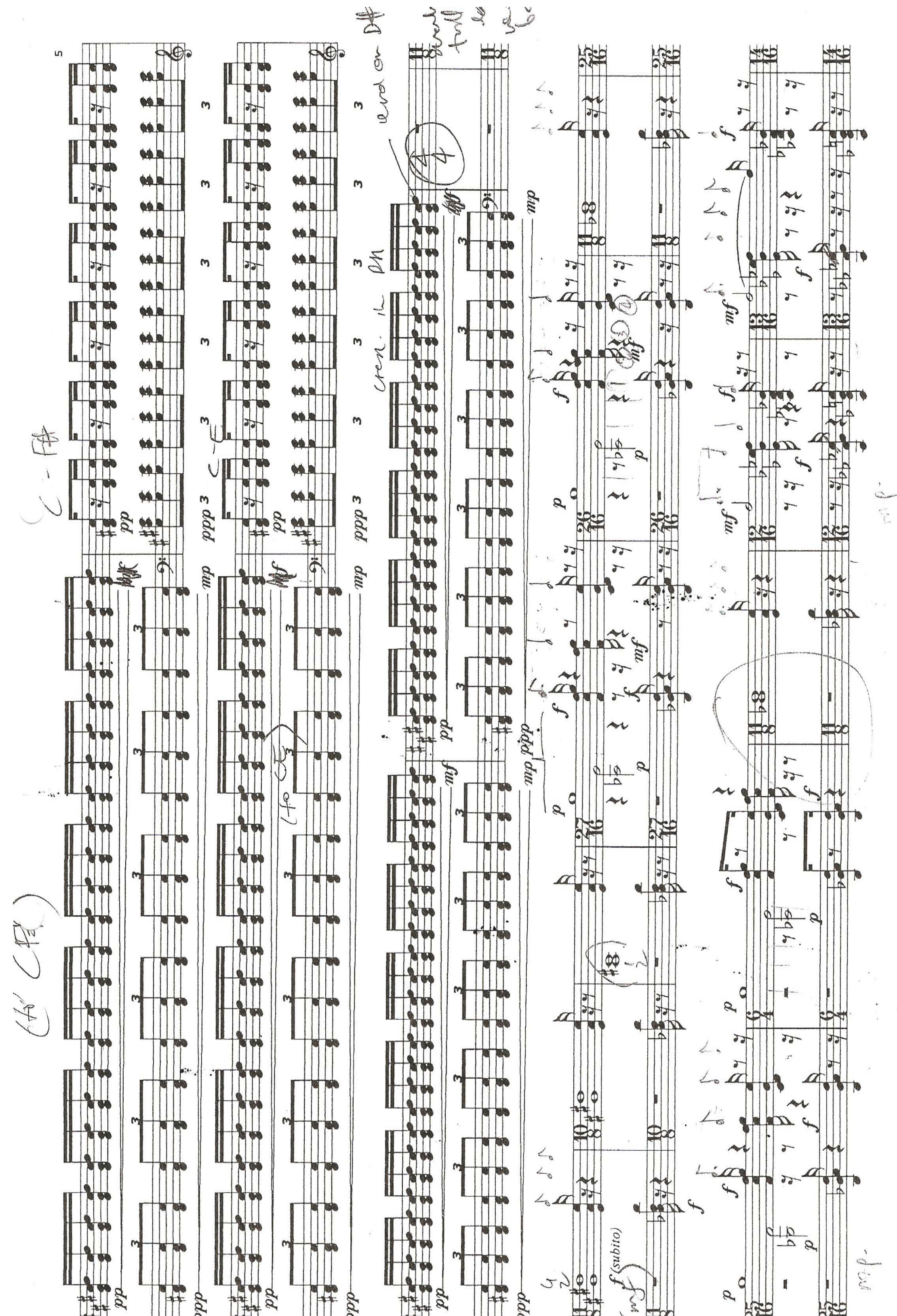
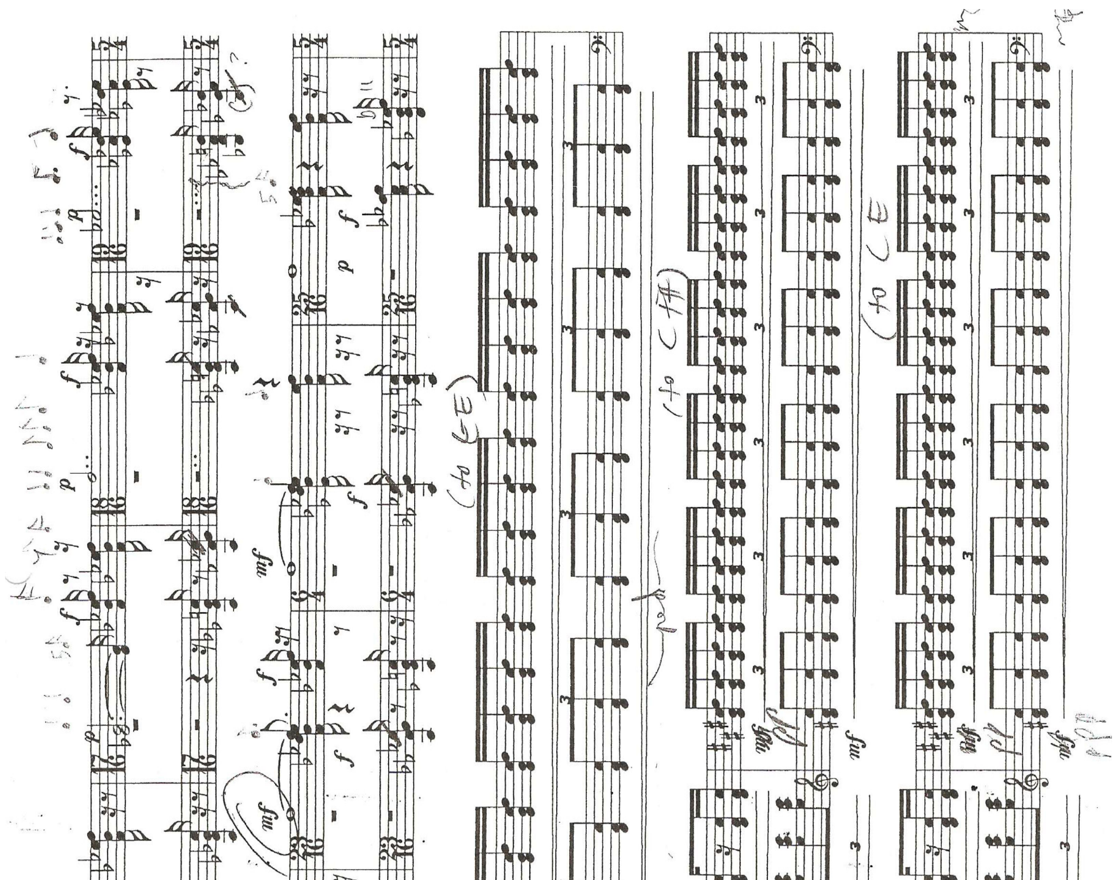
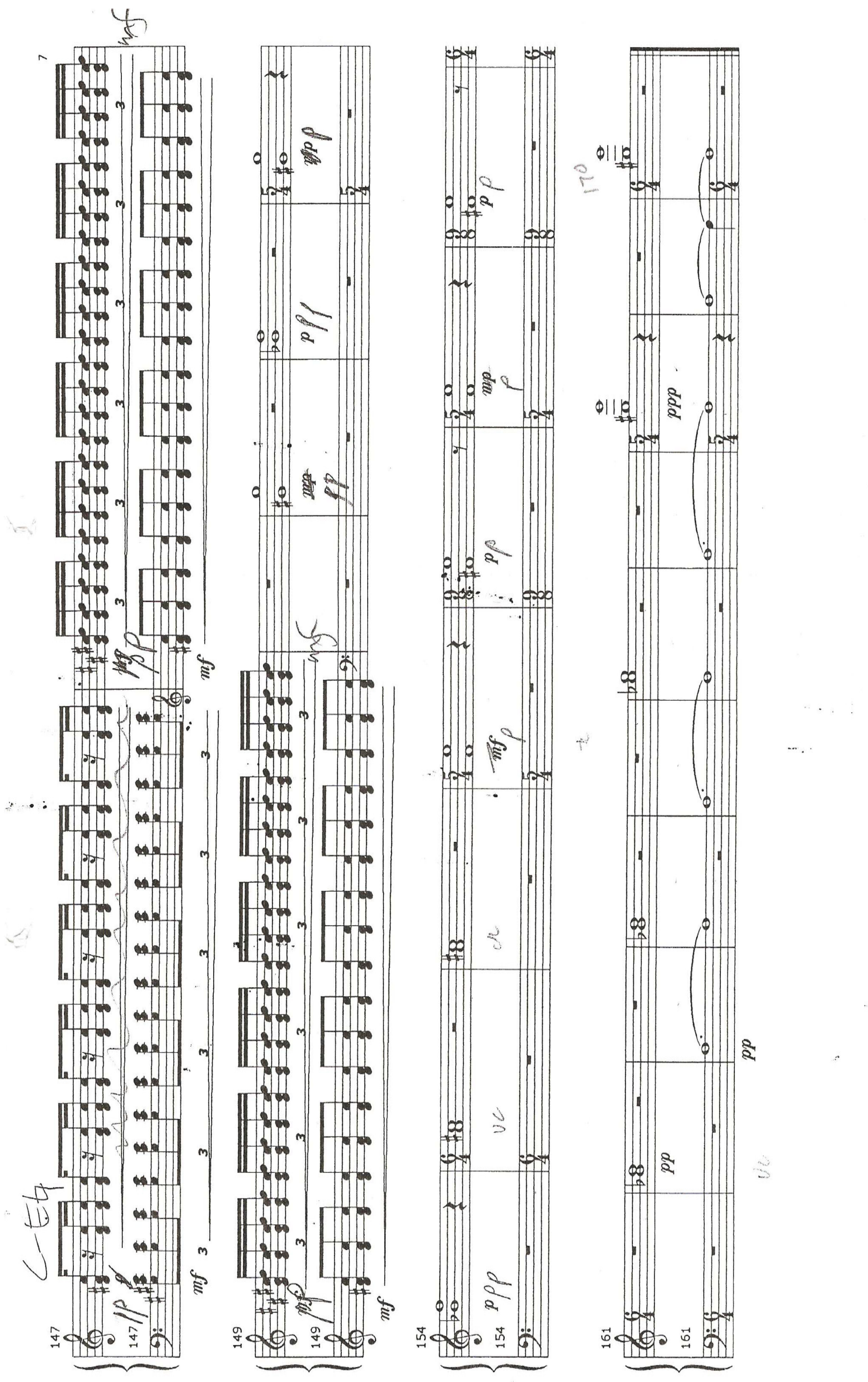

2
25
30
36
42
50
p
f
mf
pp
(mp)
mp


3
55
61
66
71
77
p
mp
f
ff
mf
m.p.


4
83
89
95
101
108
mf
f
p
pp
ppp
mp
sopra
1+0 C-F#
C-F#
(volvadi)
(pp?)


5
111
113
115
118
124
pp
ppp
mp
mf
f (subito)
p
f
cresc. .. DH
C - F#
ped on D#

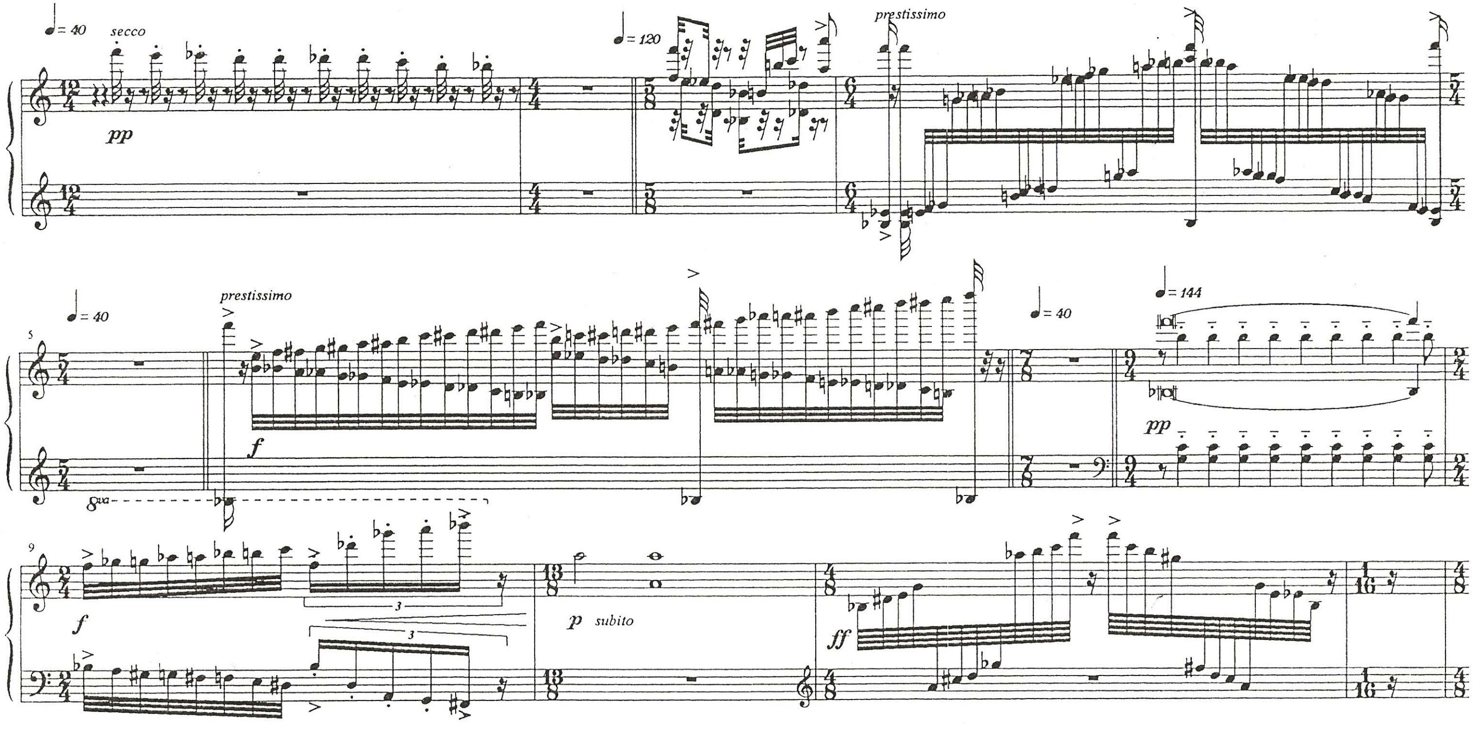

6
129
135
141
143
145
(to C E)
(to C F#)
C-E
C-F#
ped
no ped


147
149
154
161
7
mf
ff
pp
ppp

etude V (1976, 1981, 2003)

(velocity & focus)

Kevin Volans


♩= 40
secco
pp
♩= 120
prestissimo
5
♩= 40
prestissimo
f
8va
♩= 40
♩= 144
pp
9
f
3
3
p subito
ff

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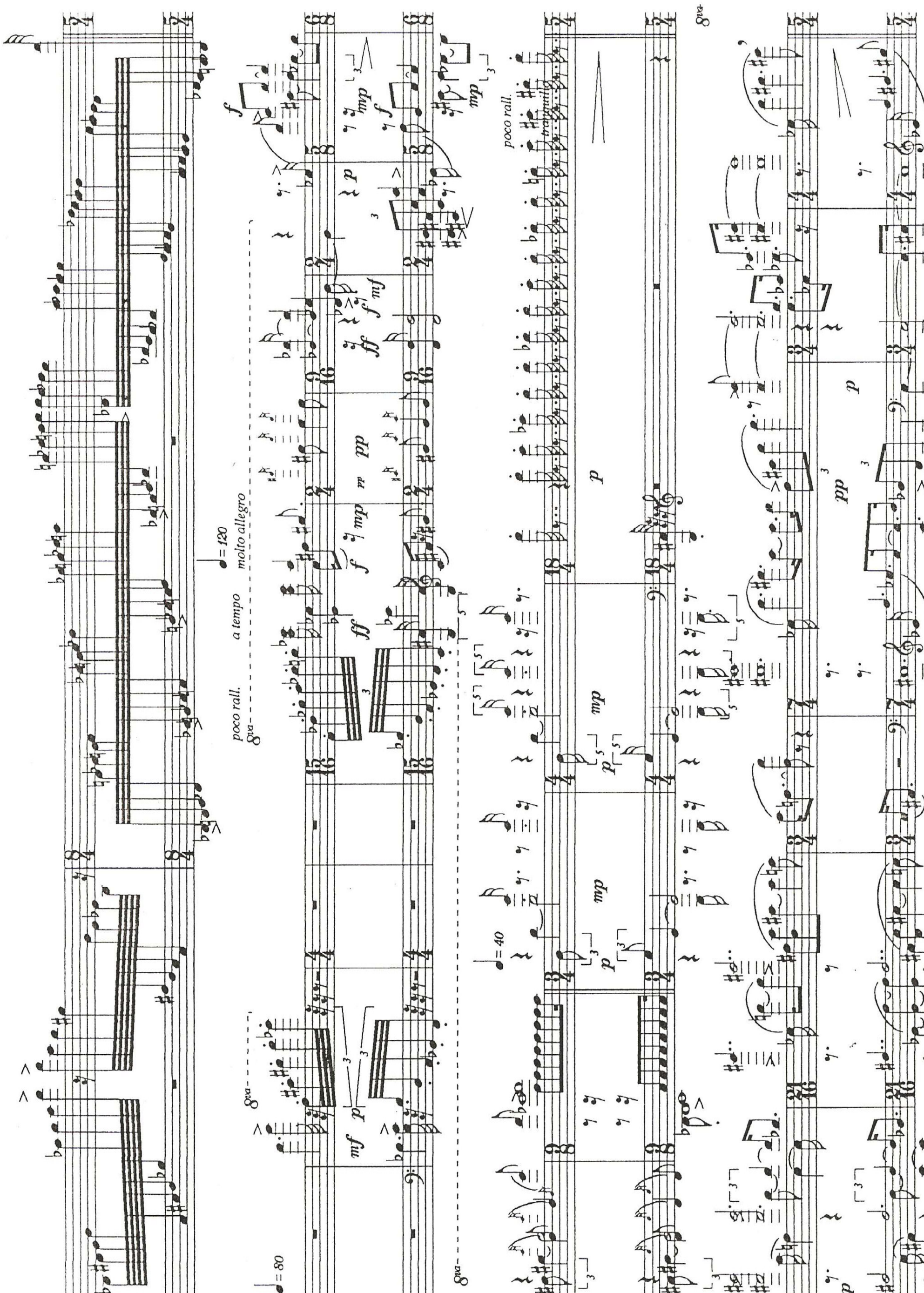
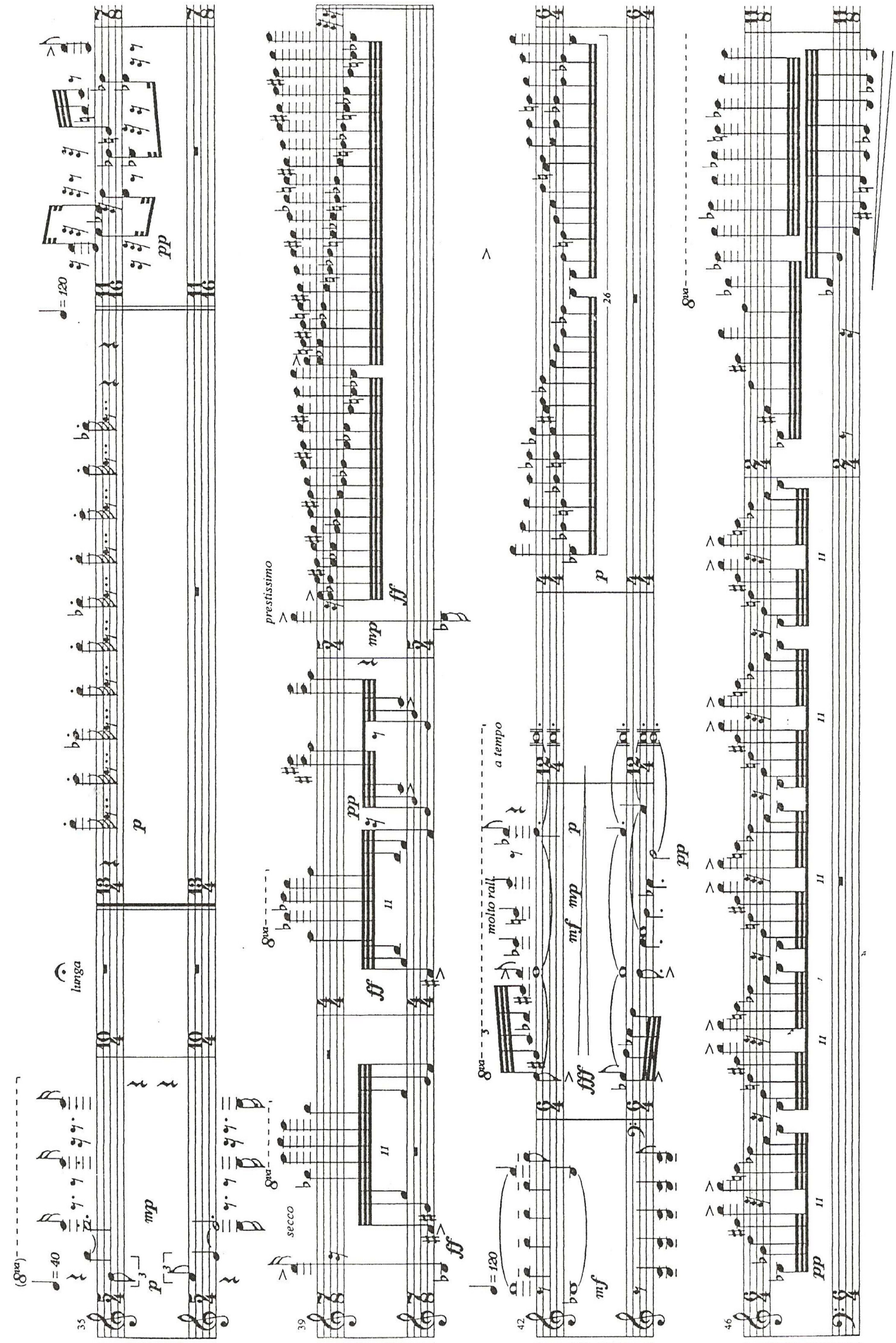
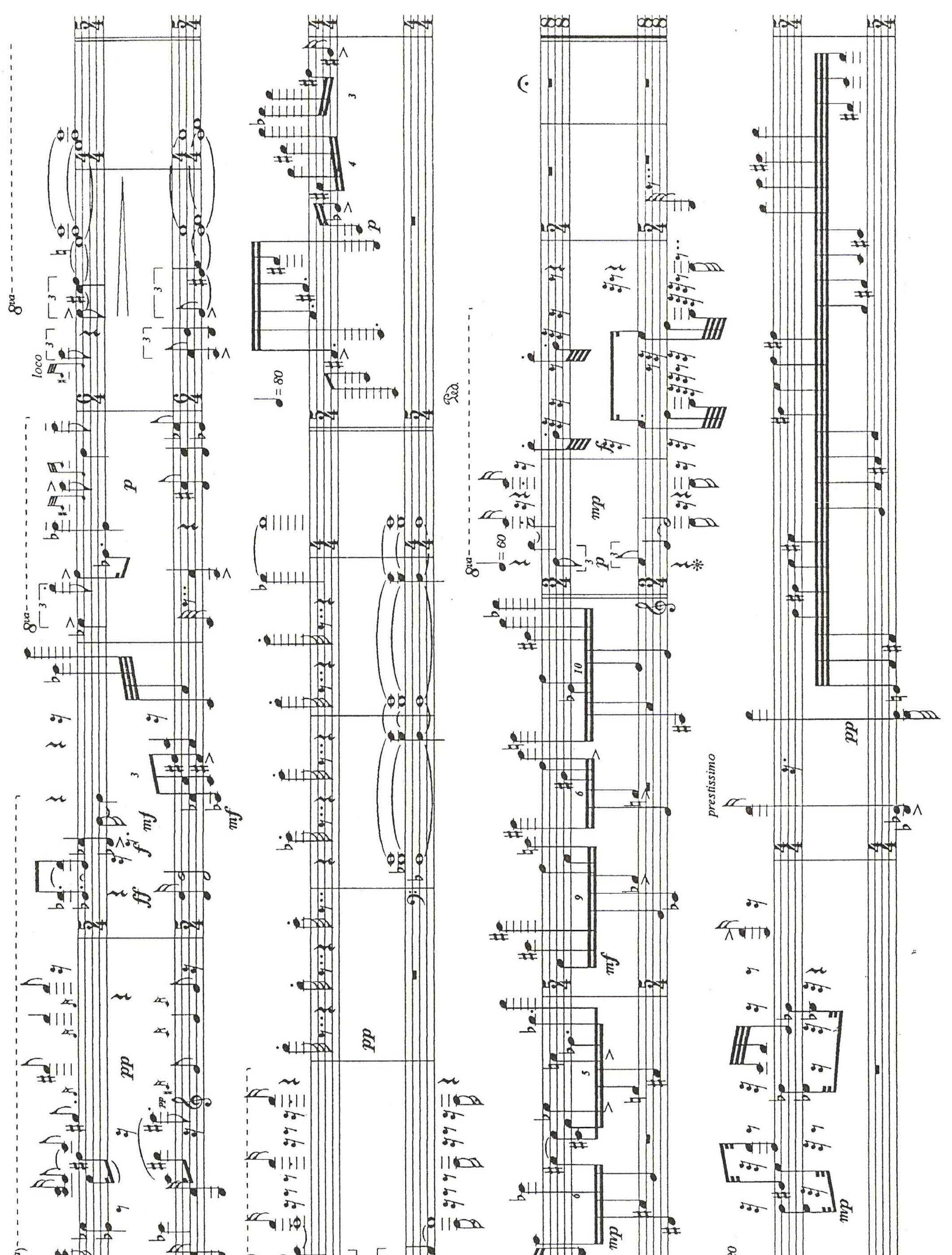
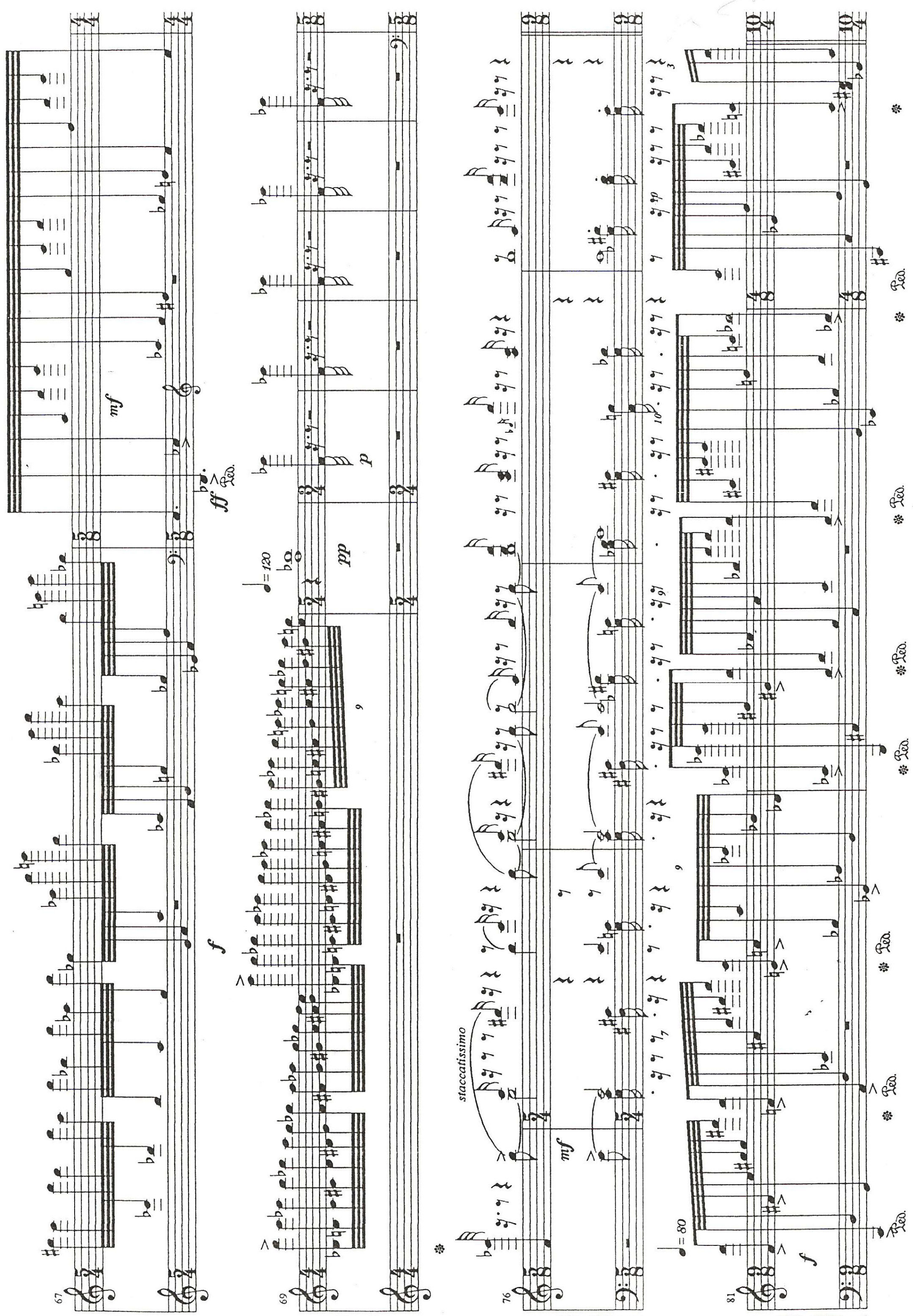
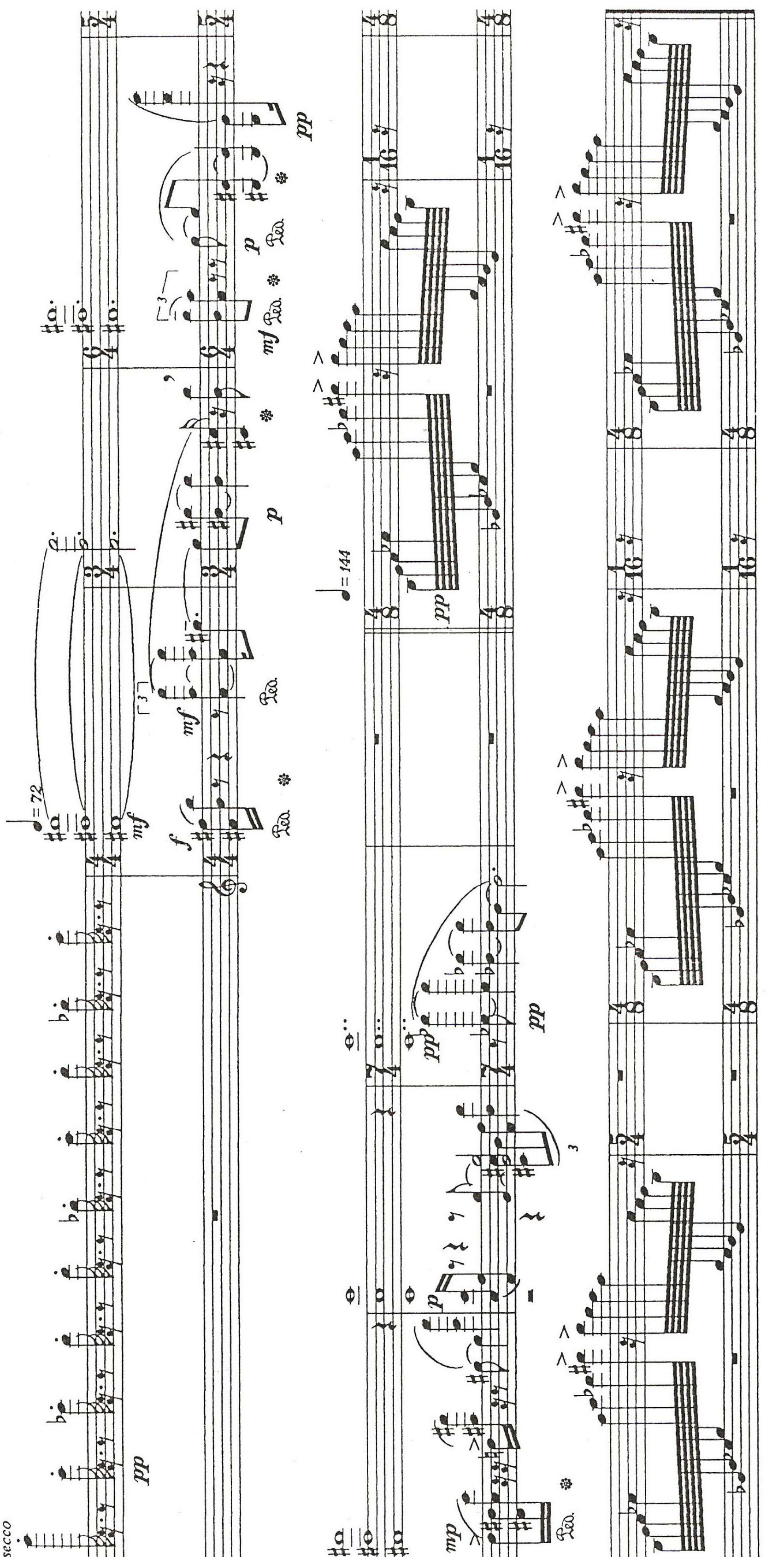

13
15
♩ = 80
8va
poco rall.
a tempo
♩ = 120
molto allegro
mf
p
ff
mp
pp
f
24
♩ = 40
♩ = 80
poco rall.
tranquillo
29
Ped.


35
(8va)
♩= 40
p
mp
lunga
p
♩= 120
pp
39
secco
8va
ff
pp
mp
prestissimo
ff
42
♩= 120
mf
8va
fff
molto rall.
mf
mp
p
a tempo
pp
p
26
46
pp
8va


48
(8va)
8va
loco
ff
pp
f
mf
p
53
♩= 60
♩= 80
59
mp
Ped.
65
♩= 120
prestissimo

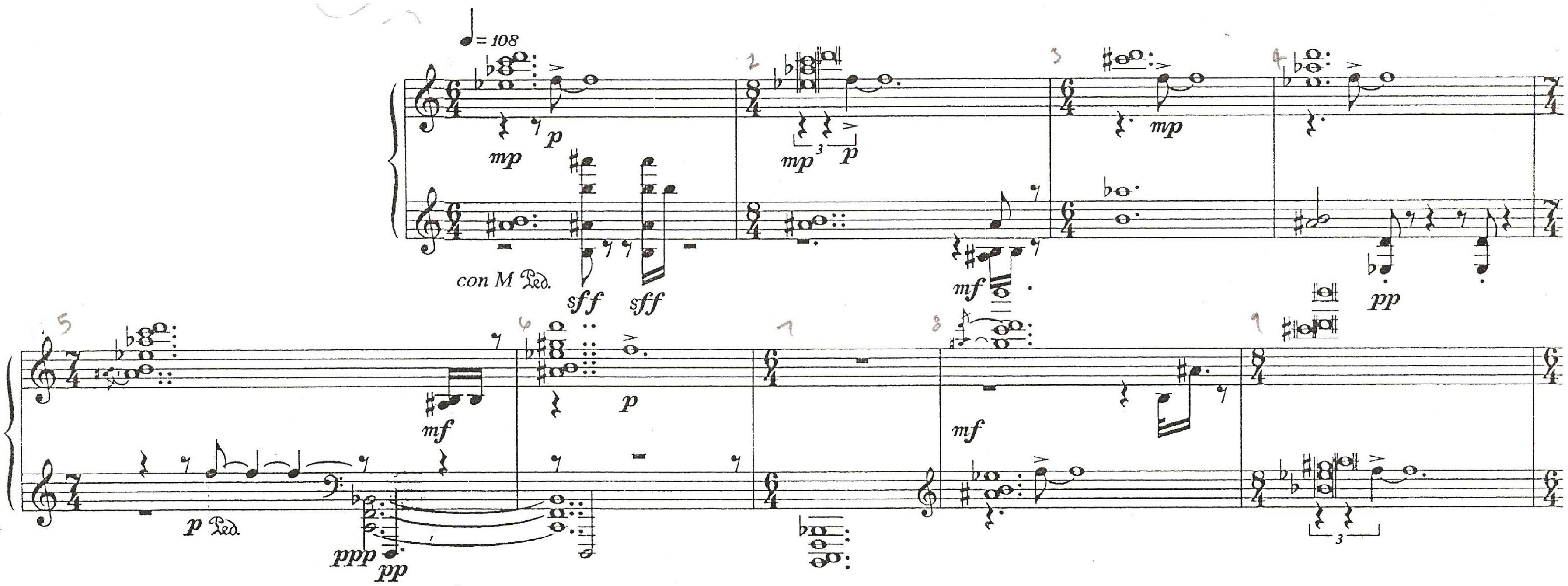

67
f
mf
ff
Ped.
69
♩ = 120
pp
p
9
76
staccatissimo
mf
10
3
♩ = 80
81
f
Ped.


84
♩ = 40
secco
pp
♩. = 72
mf
f
Ped.
mf
p
mf
p
pp
88
mp
Ped.
pp
♩ = 144
pp
94

etude VI

(voicing & touch)

Kevin Volans


♩= 108
con M Ped.
mp
p
sff
sff
mf
pp
ppp
p Ped.
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

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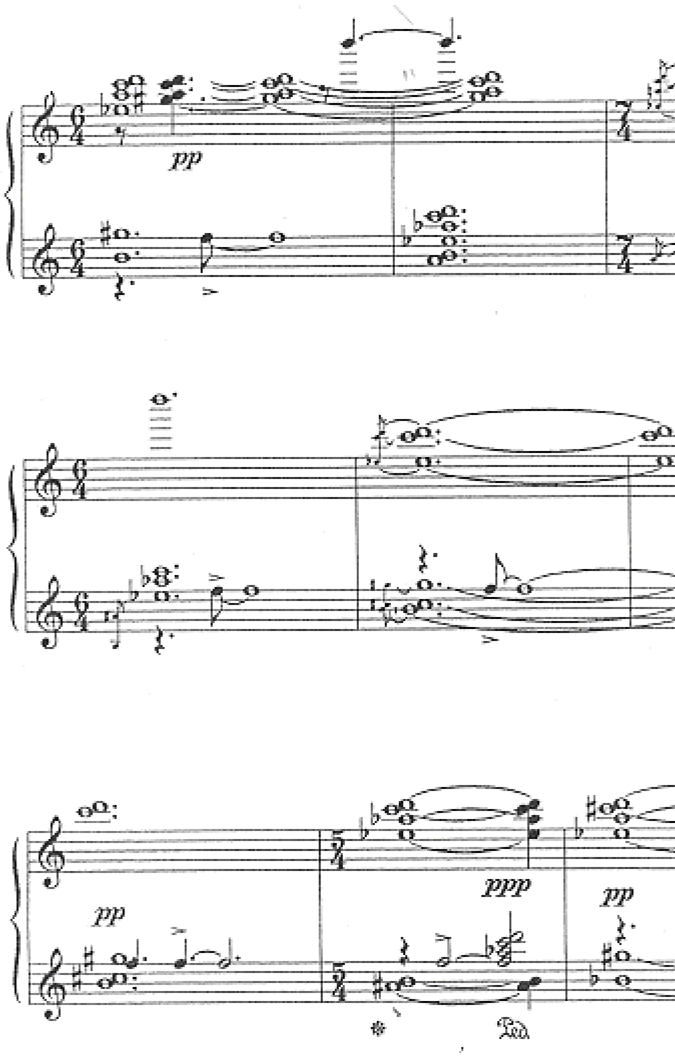
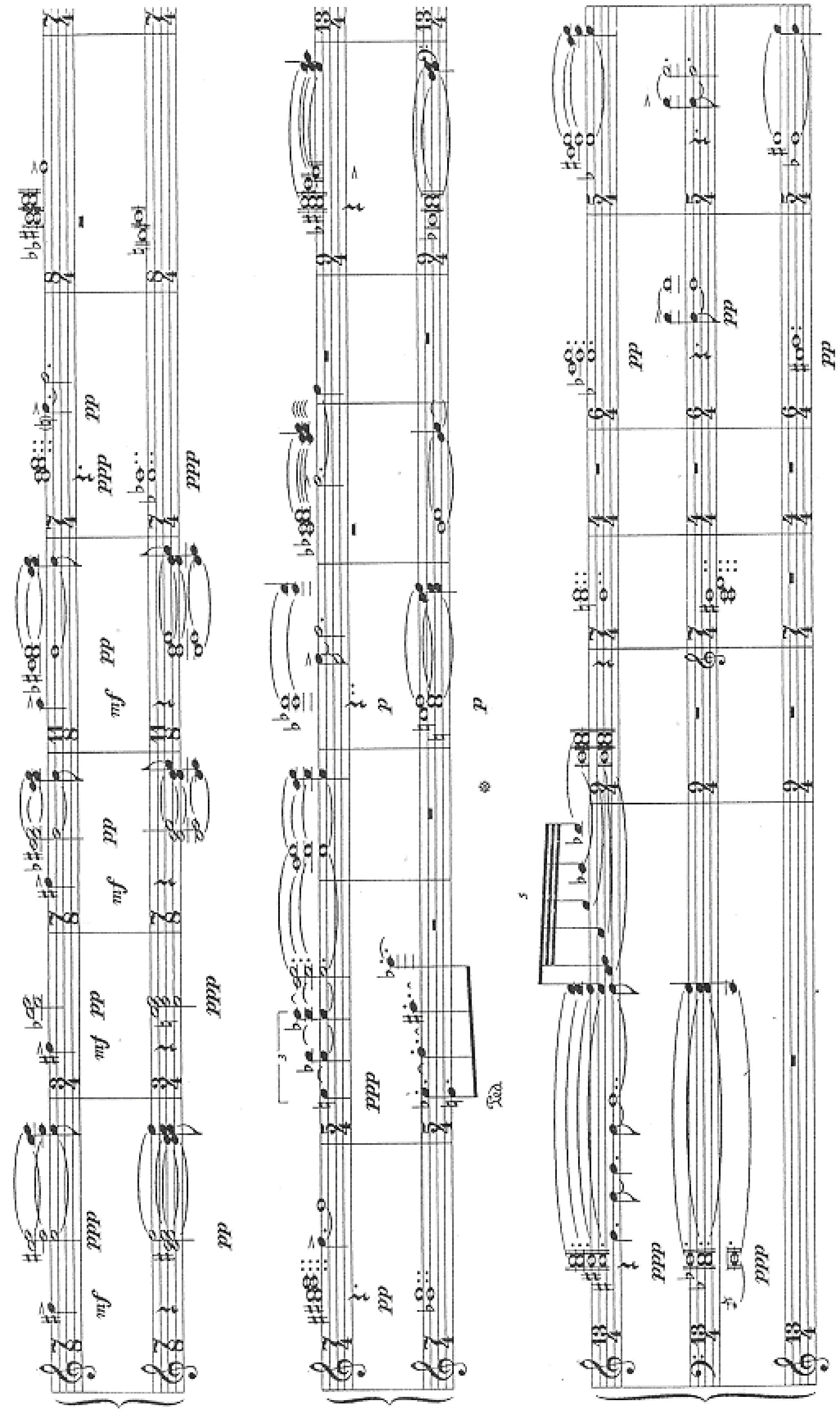
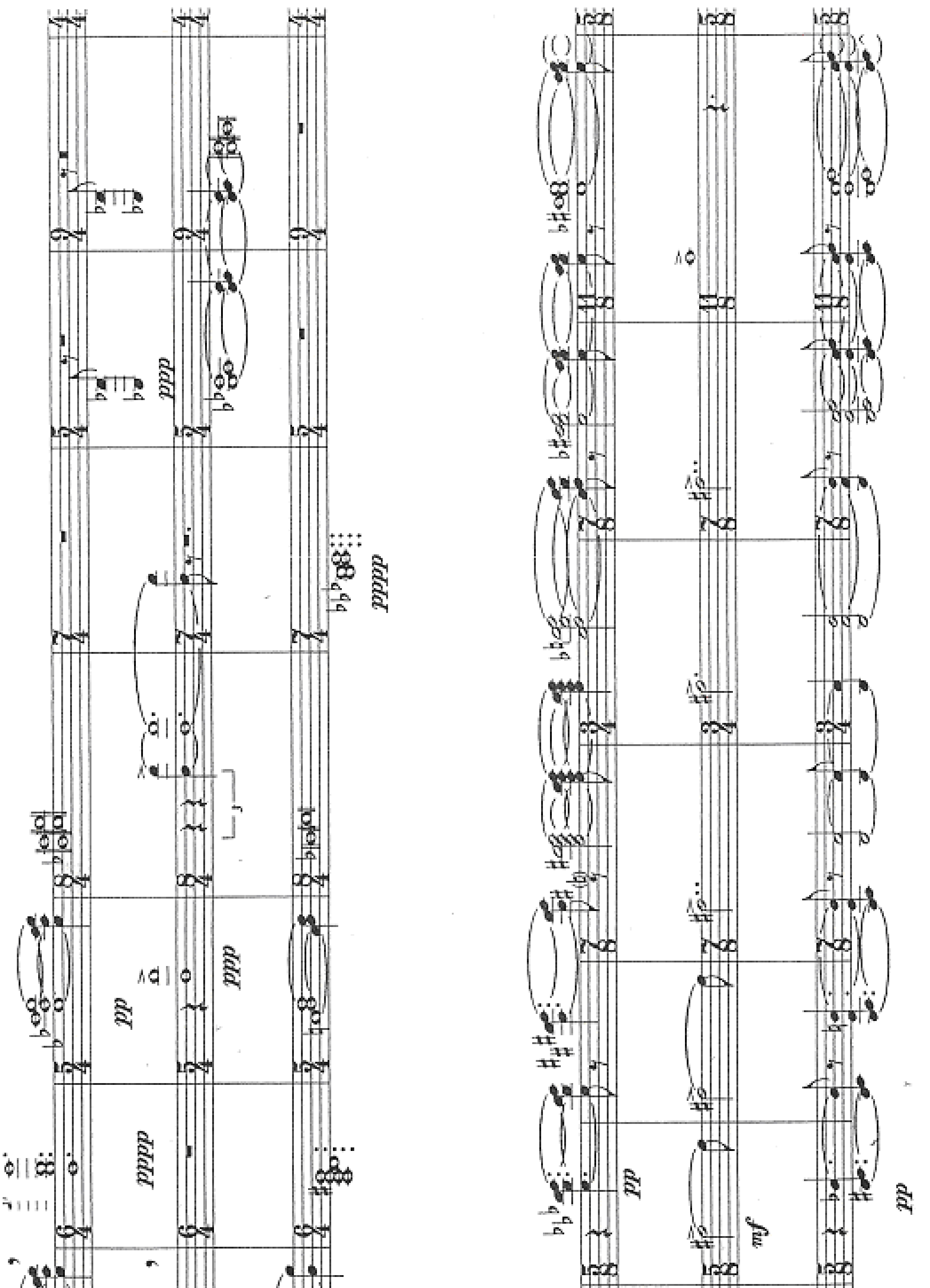
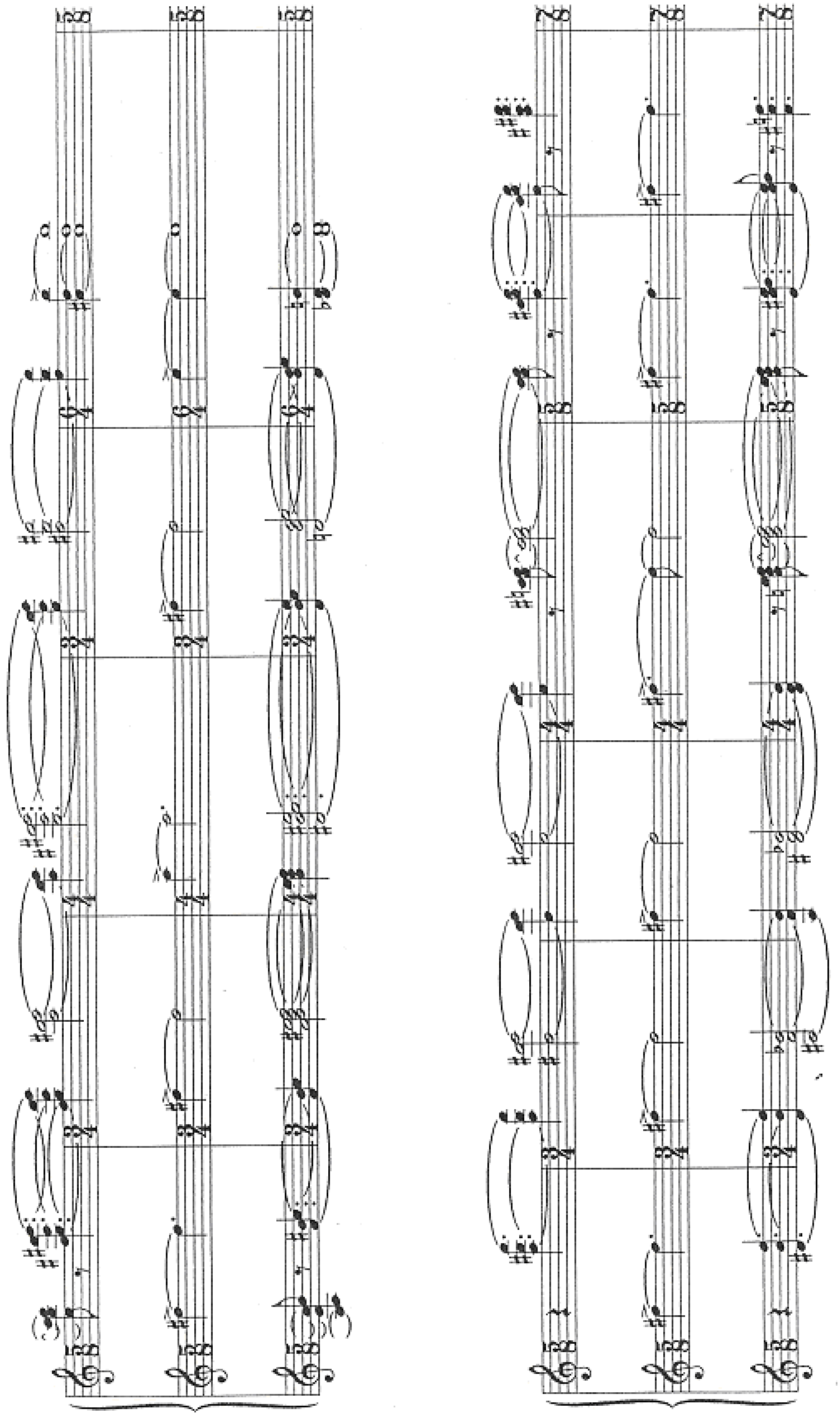
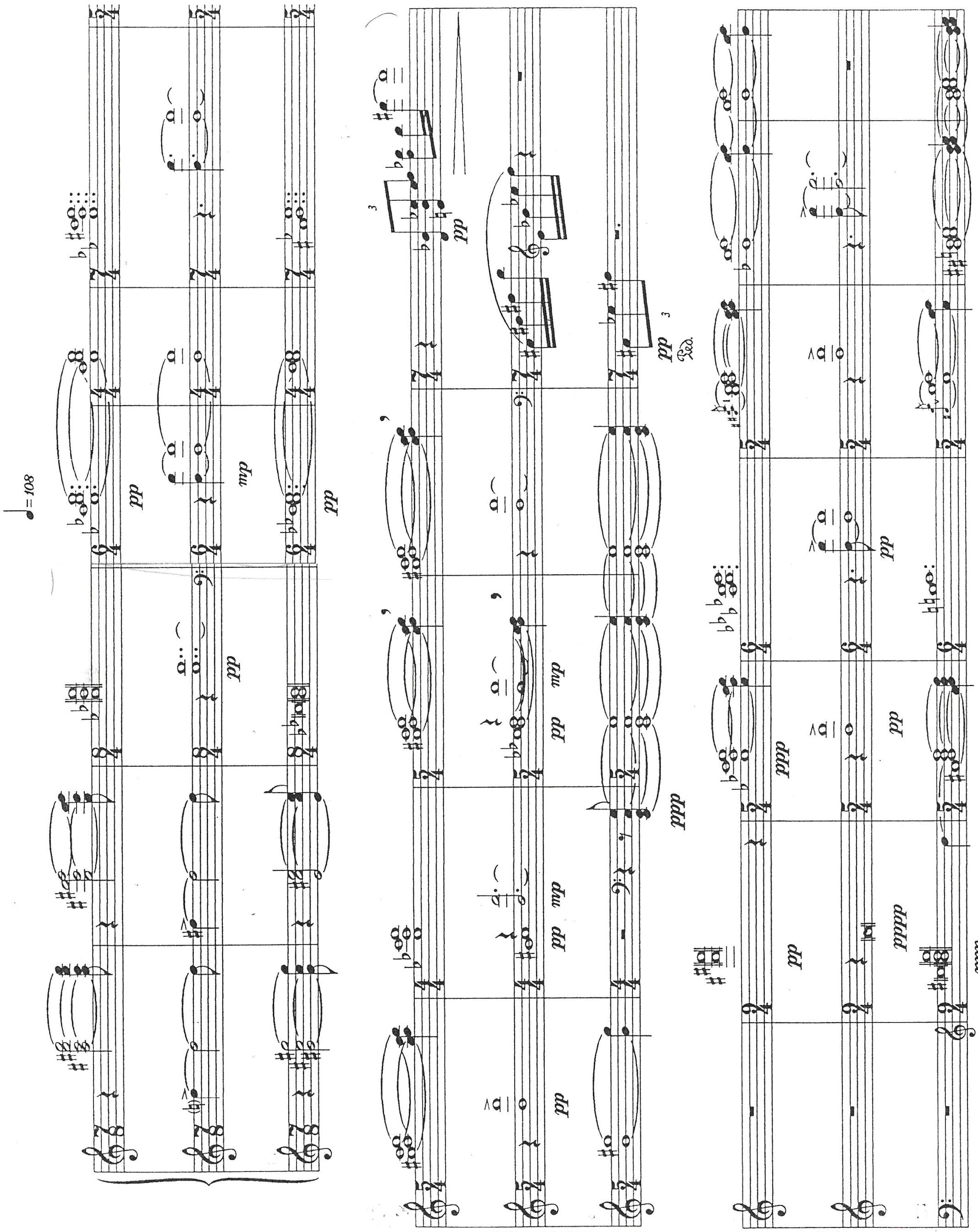
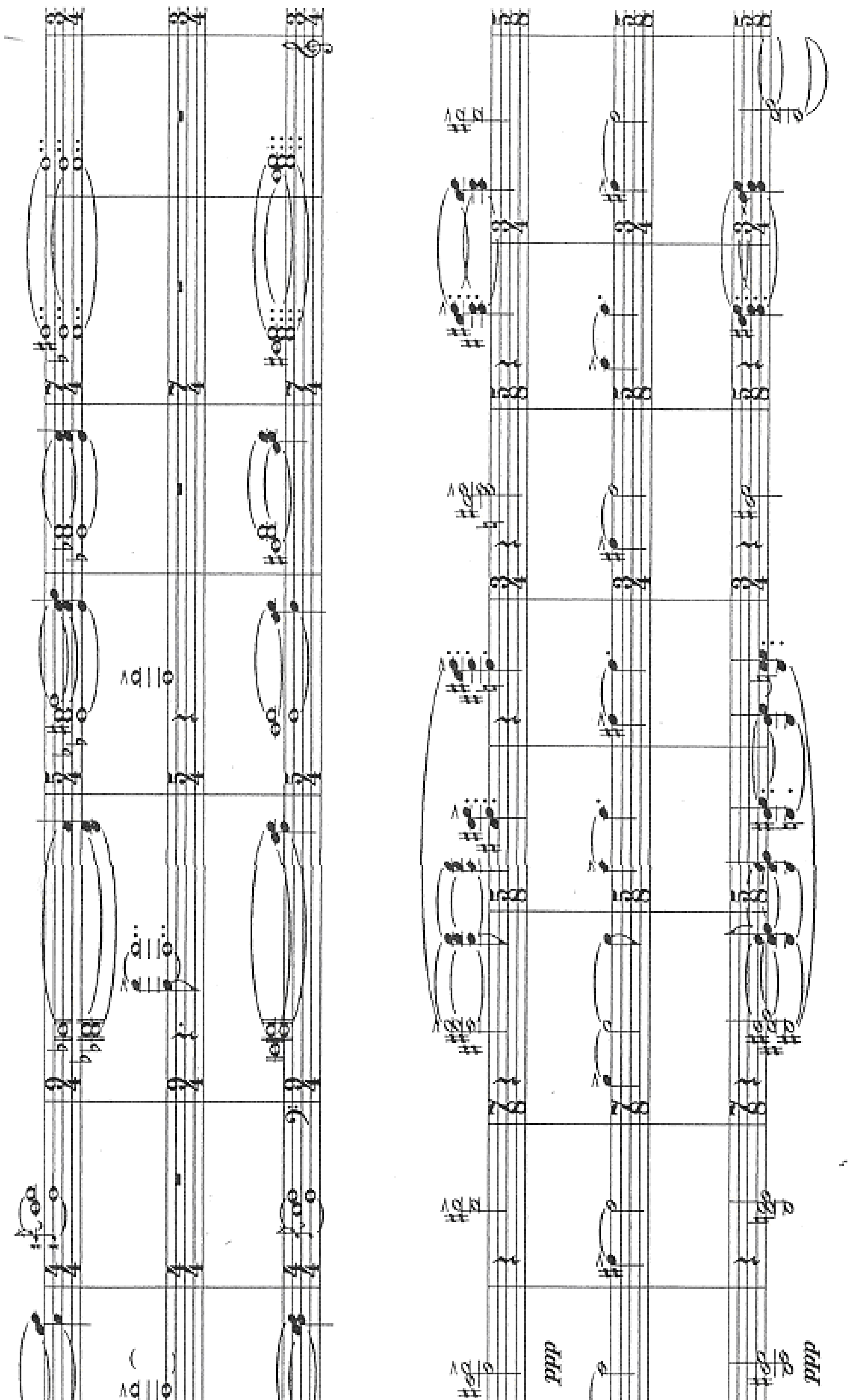

pp
pp
ppp
ppp
pp
ppp
pp
pp
ppp
pp
Ped.
Ped.
pp
ppp
pp
Ped.
mf
ppp
pp
mf
pp
ppp

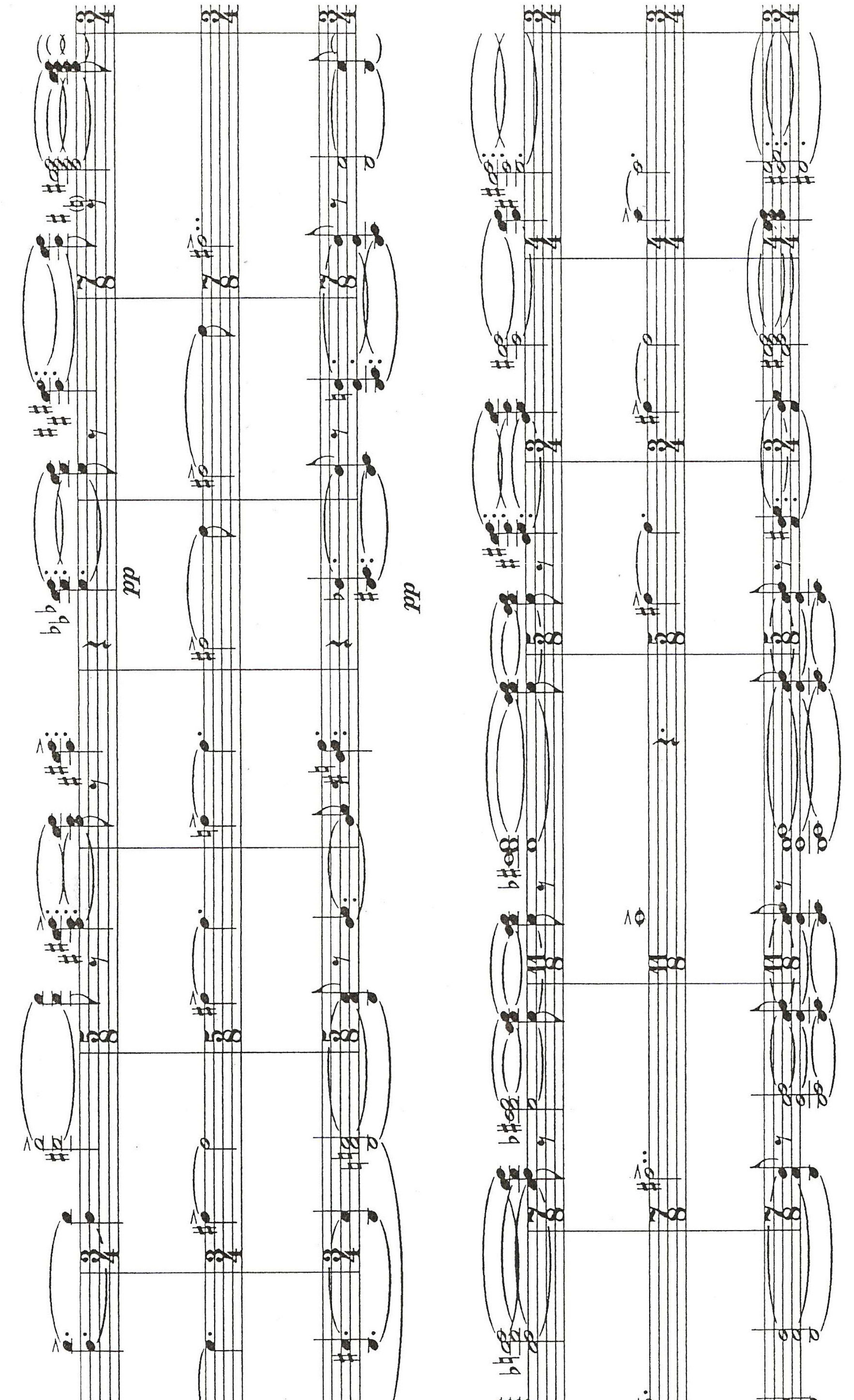

mf
ppp
pp
p
pppp
3
5
Ped.

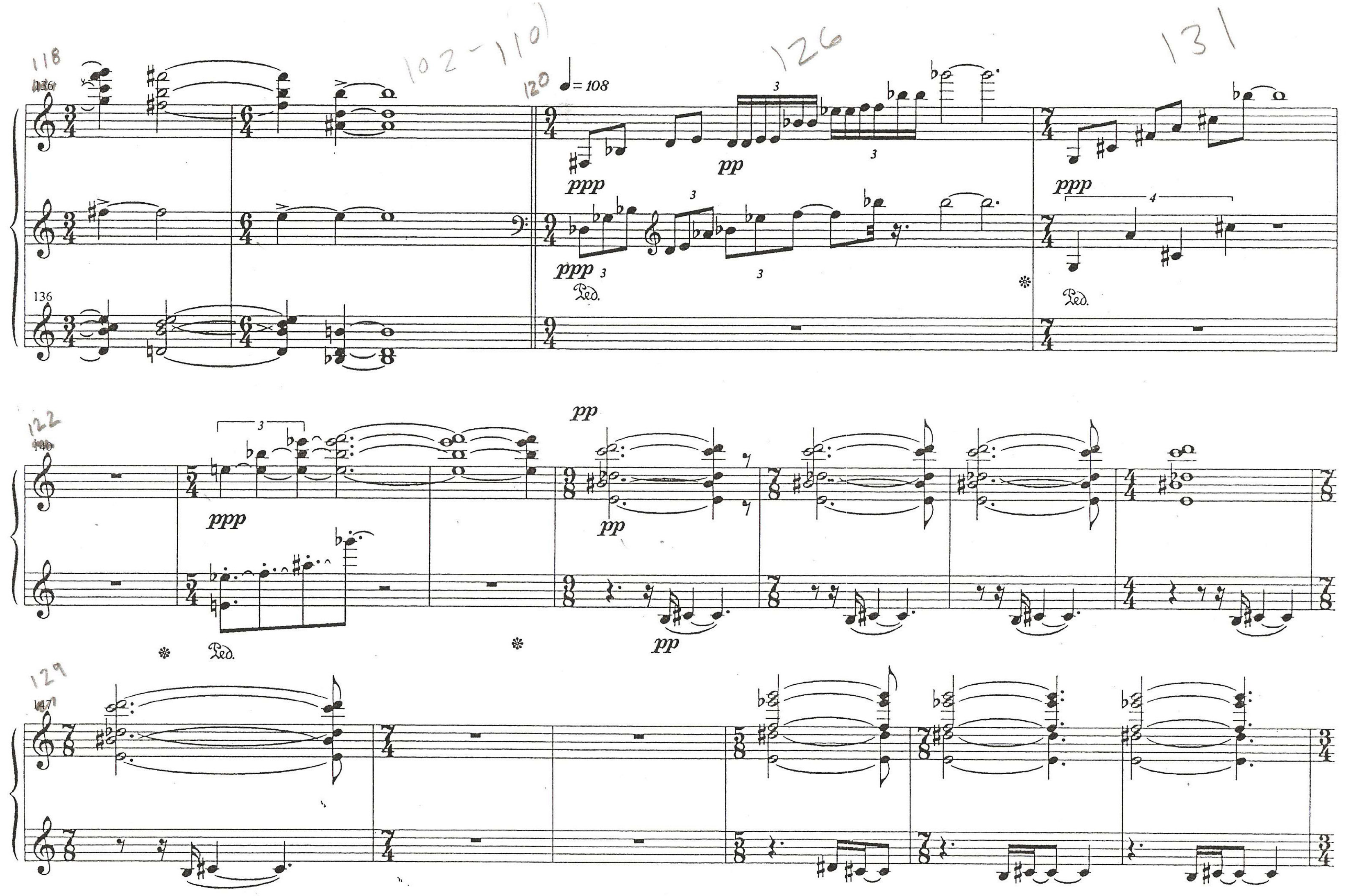

pppp
pp
ppp
f
pppp
ppp
pppp
mf
pp
pp

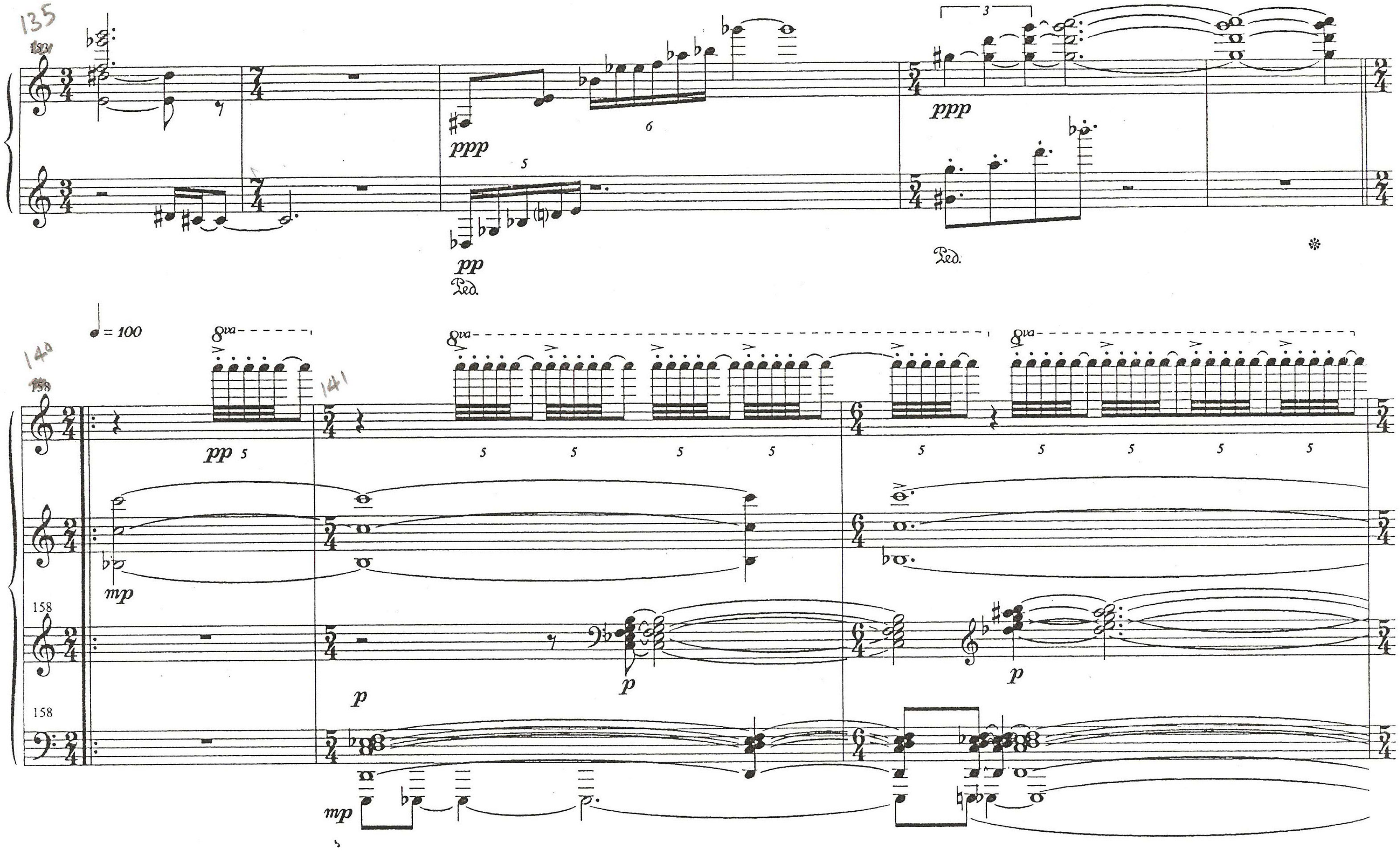


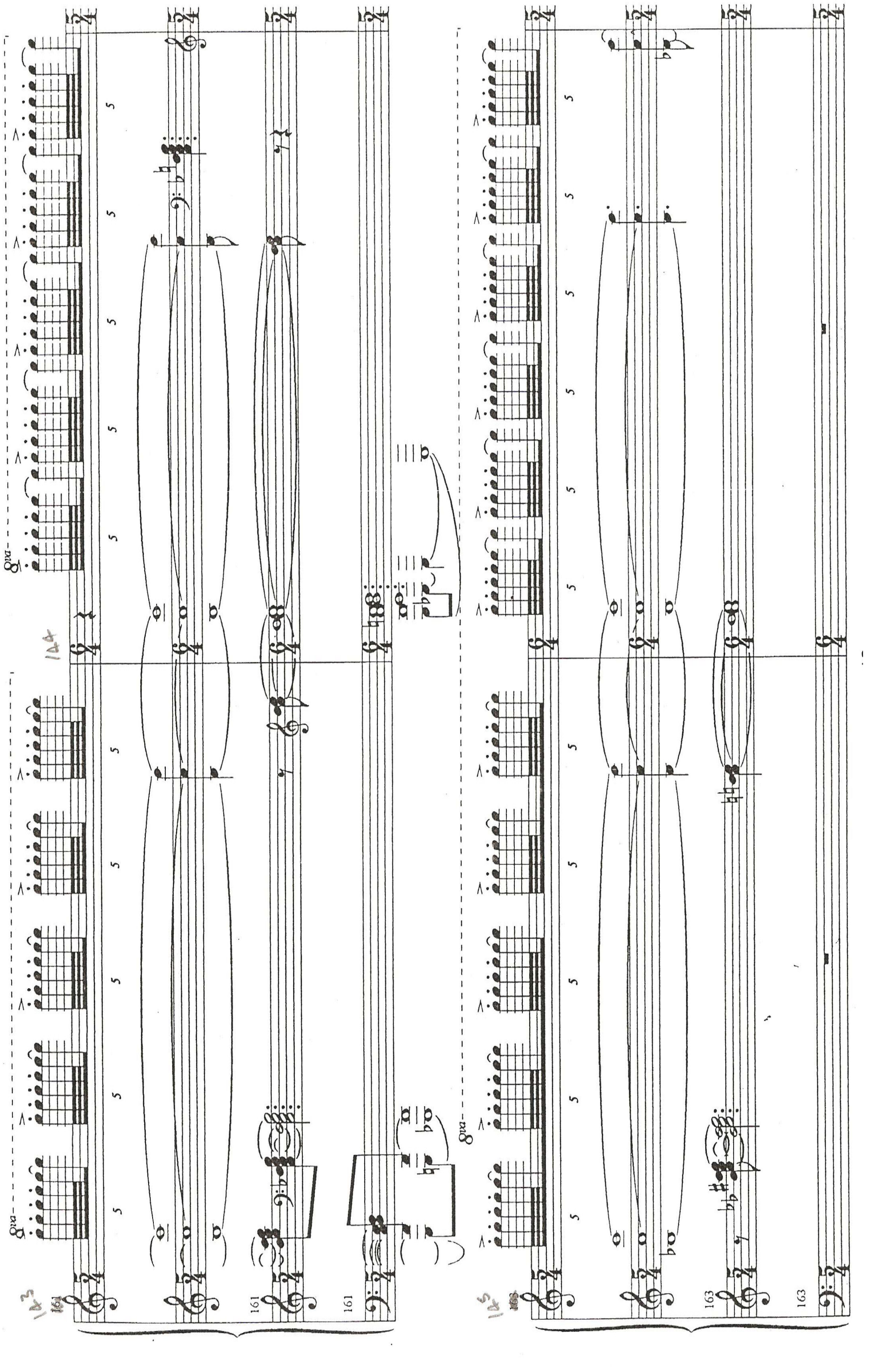

♩ = 108
pp
mp
ppp
pppp
p
3


ppp
mf
ppp

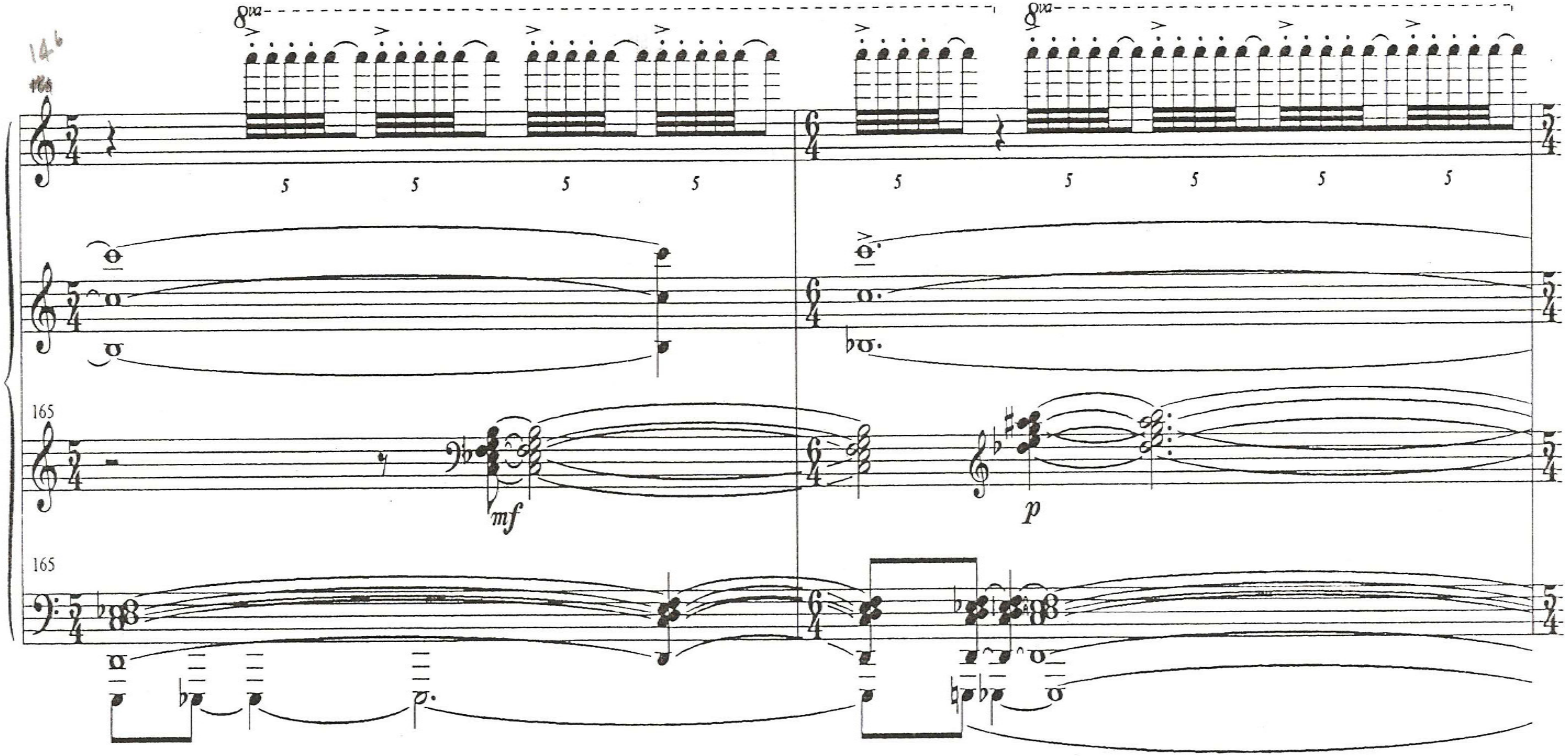

pp
pp

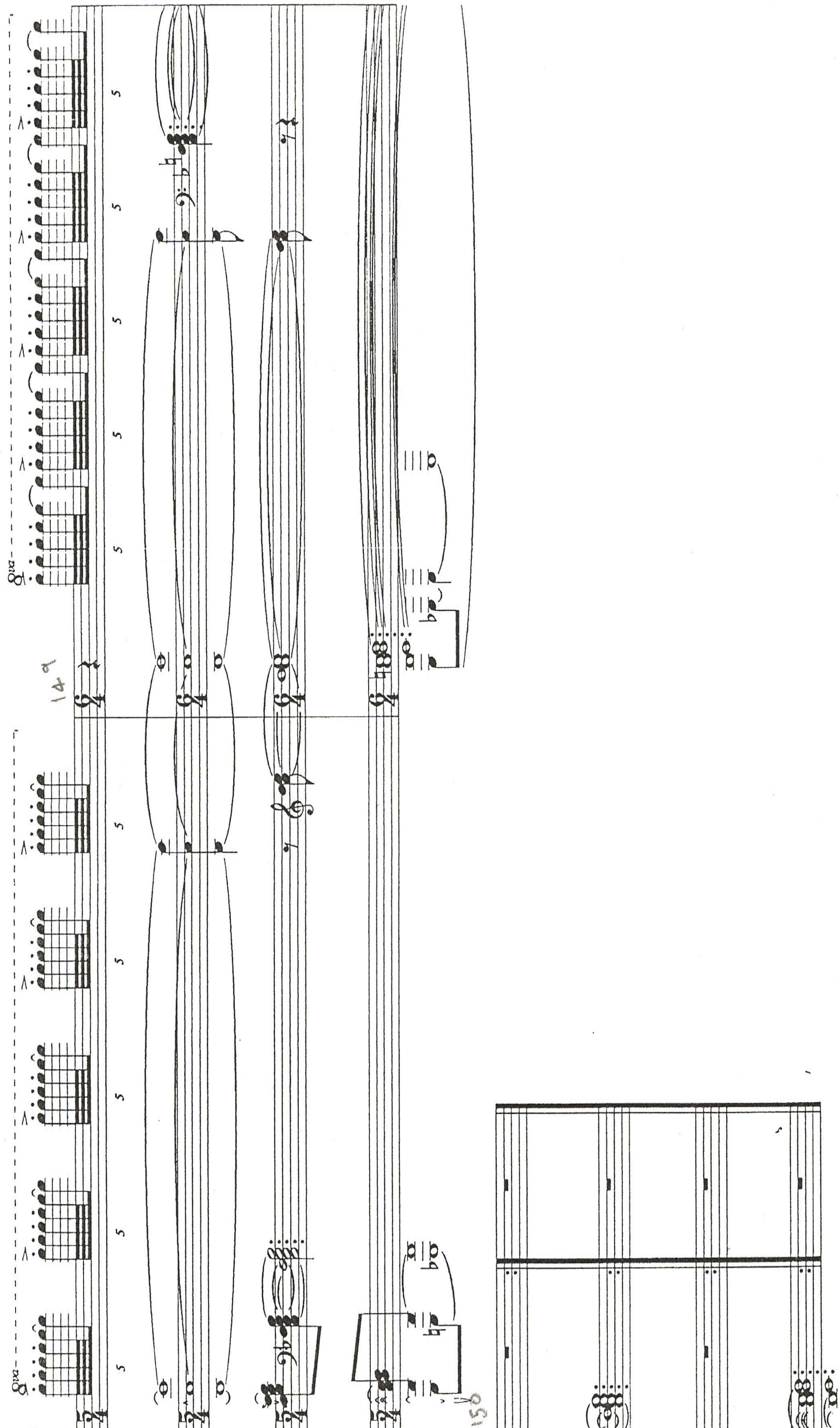

102-110
♩= 108
ppp
pp
Ped.


135
153
ppp
6
pp
5
Ped.
3
ppp
Ped.
♩ = 100
140
158
8va
pp 5
141
mp
158
p
p
p
158
mp


8va
8va
8va

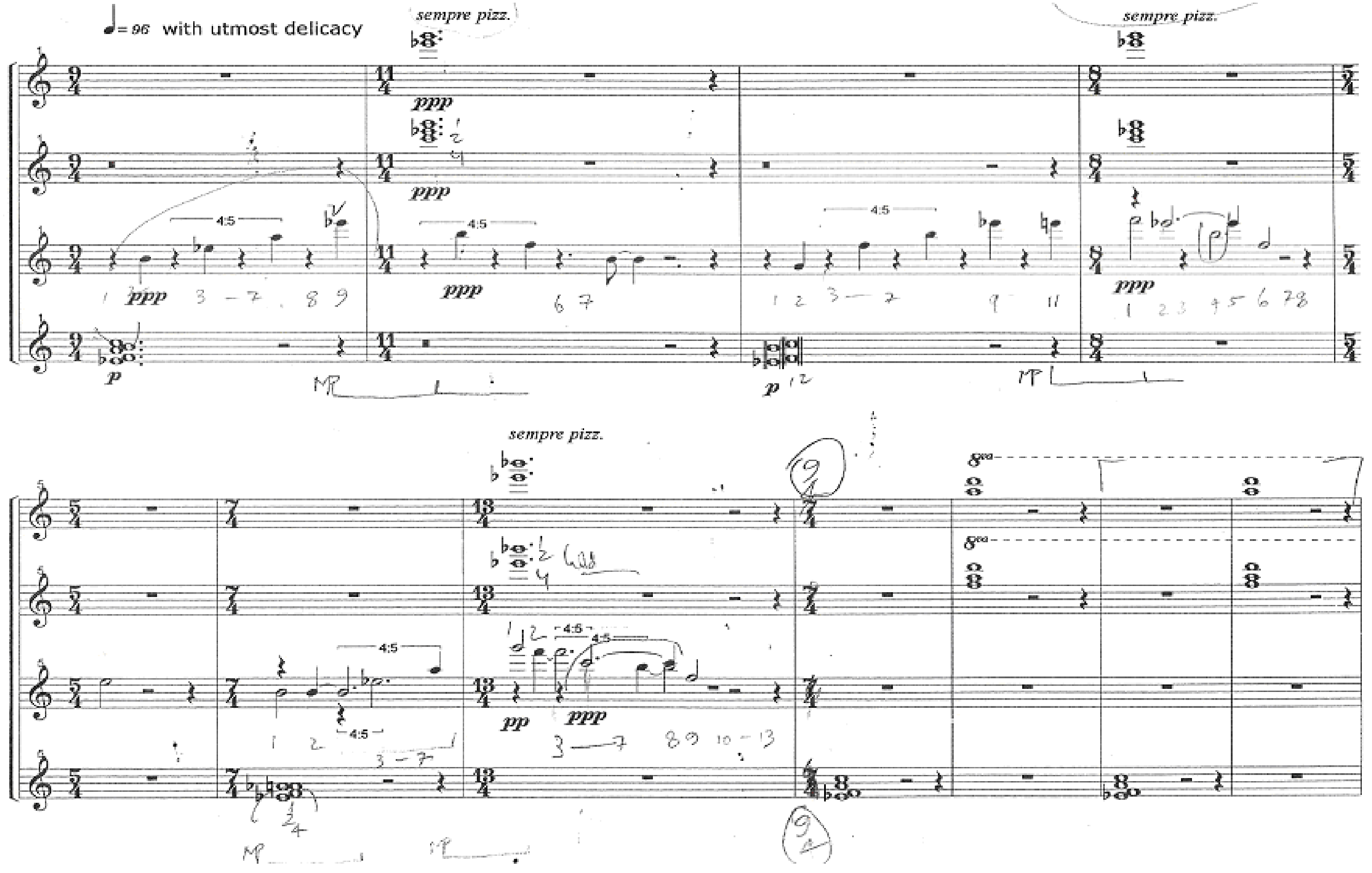
146

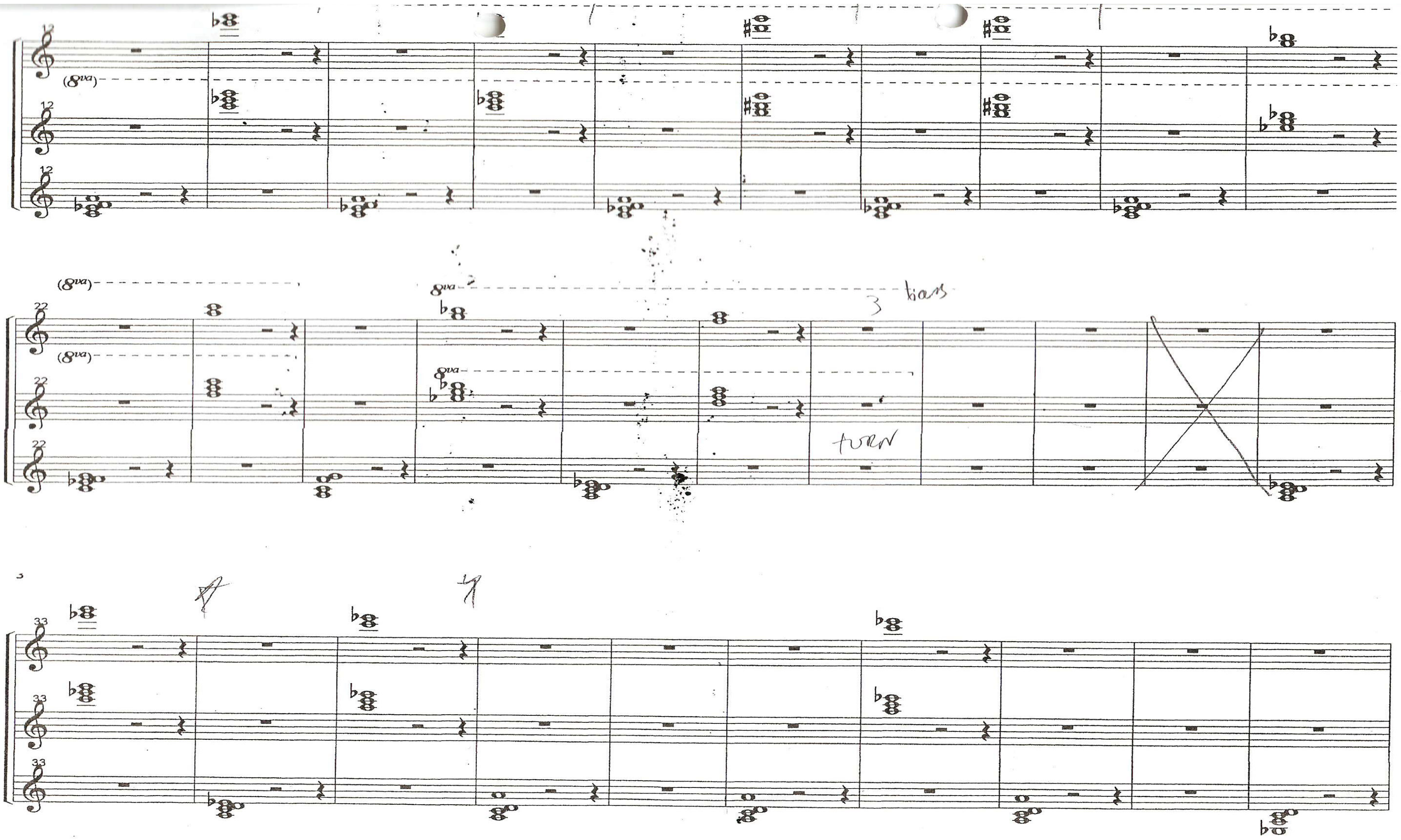

8va
5
165
mf
p

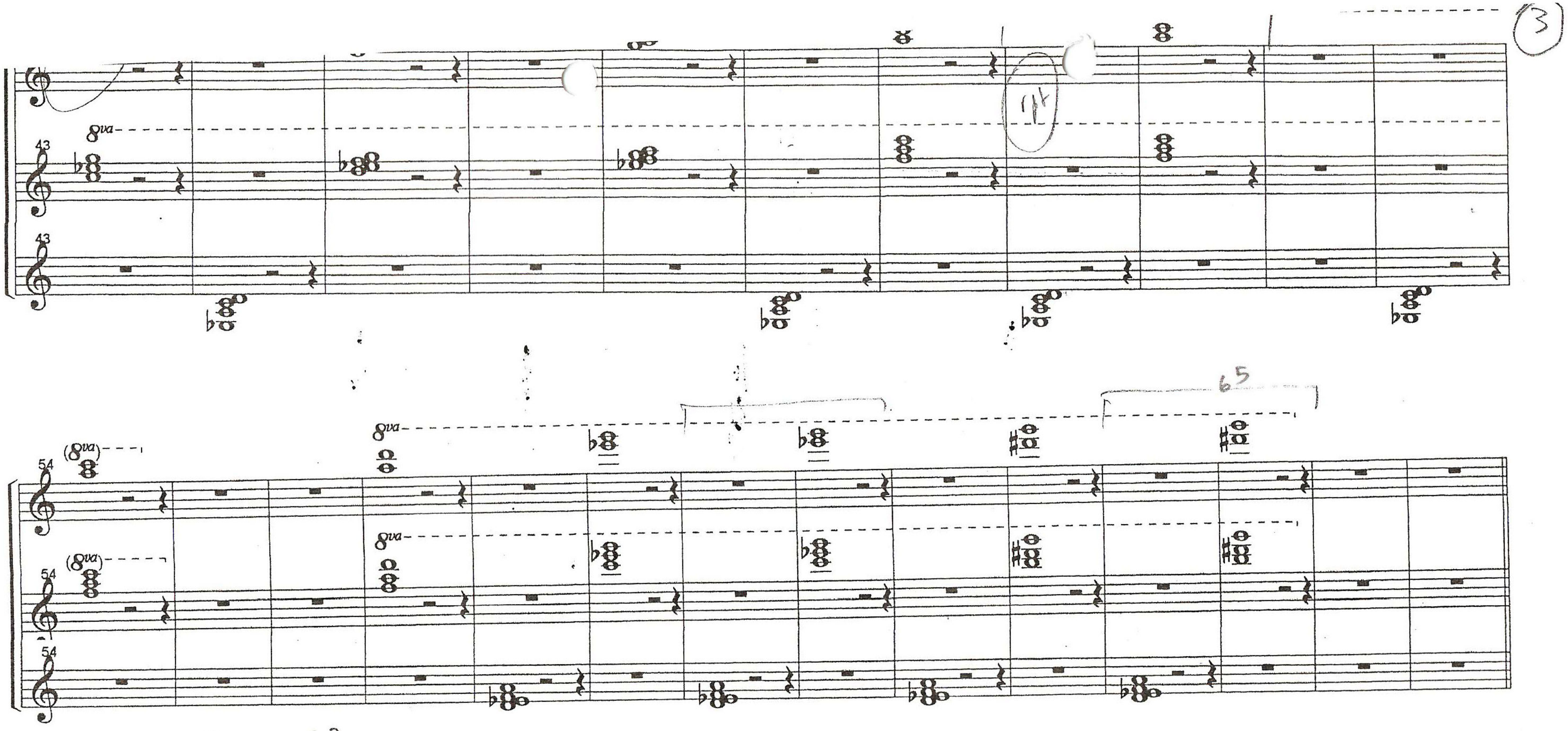

8va

etude vii

KEVIN VOLANS


♩= 96 with utmost delicacy
sempre pizz.
ppp
pp
p
4:5
MP
mp
8va


12
(8va)
12
12
(8va)
22
(8va)
22
22
8va
8va
3 bars
turn
33
33
33



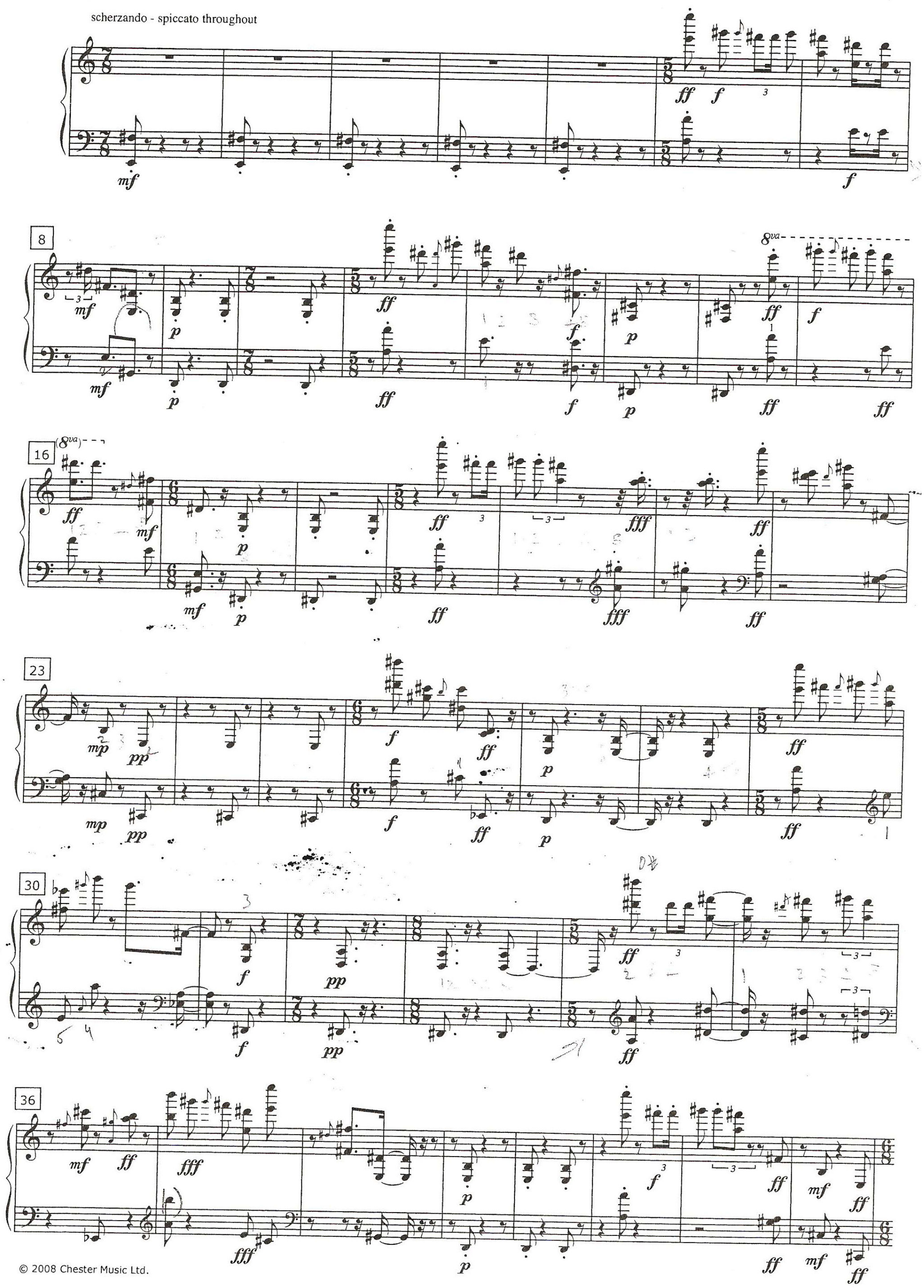
③
11
43
43
8va
65
54
54
54
(8va)
(8va)
8va
8va

2x9?

etude 8

Kevin Volans

♪ = 240


scherzando - spiccato throughout
8
16
23
30
36
8va
mf
ff
f
fff
p
pp
mp

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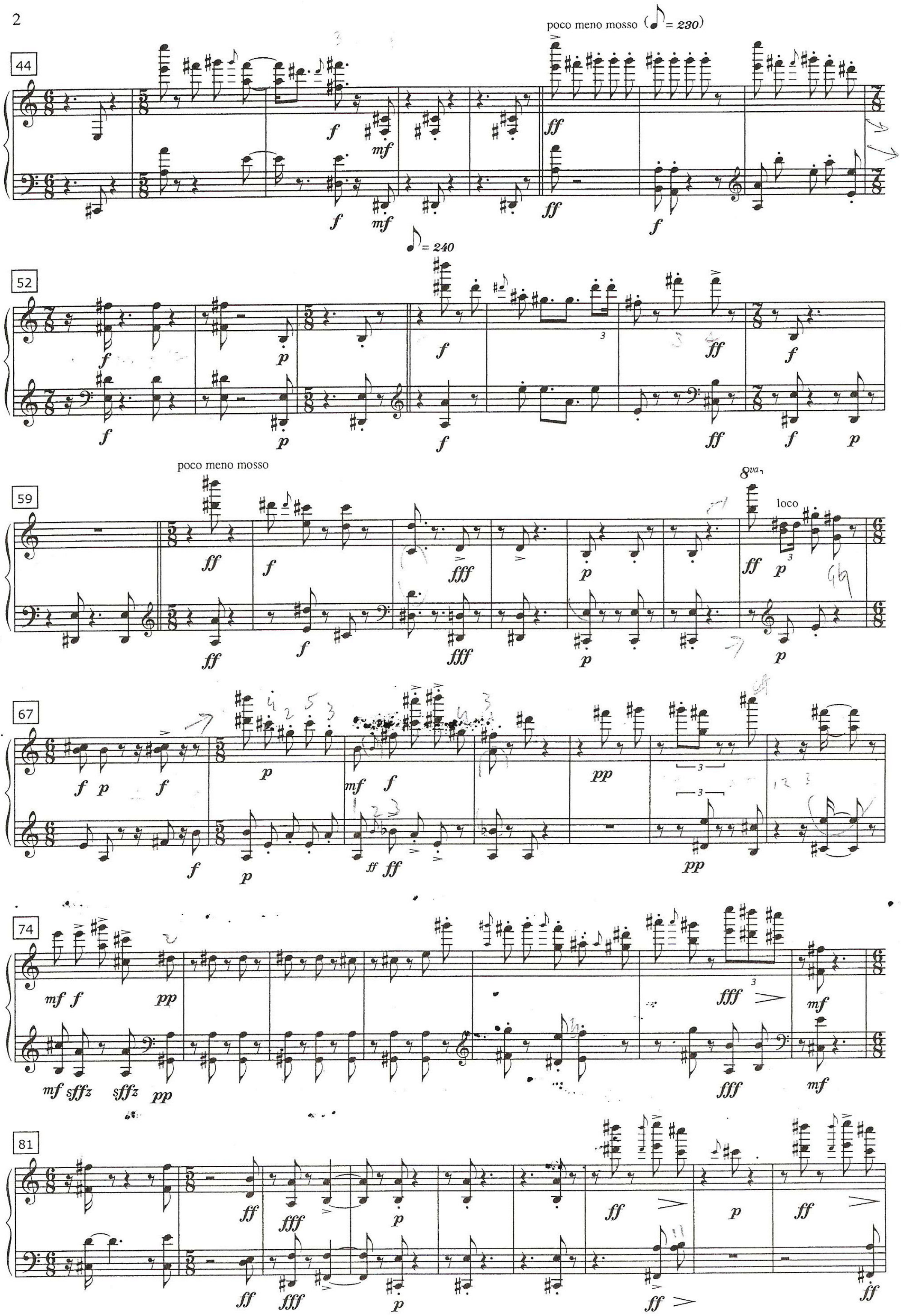
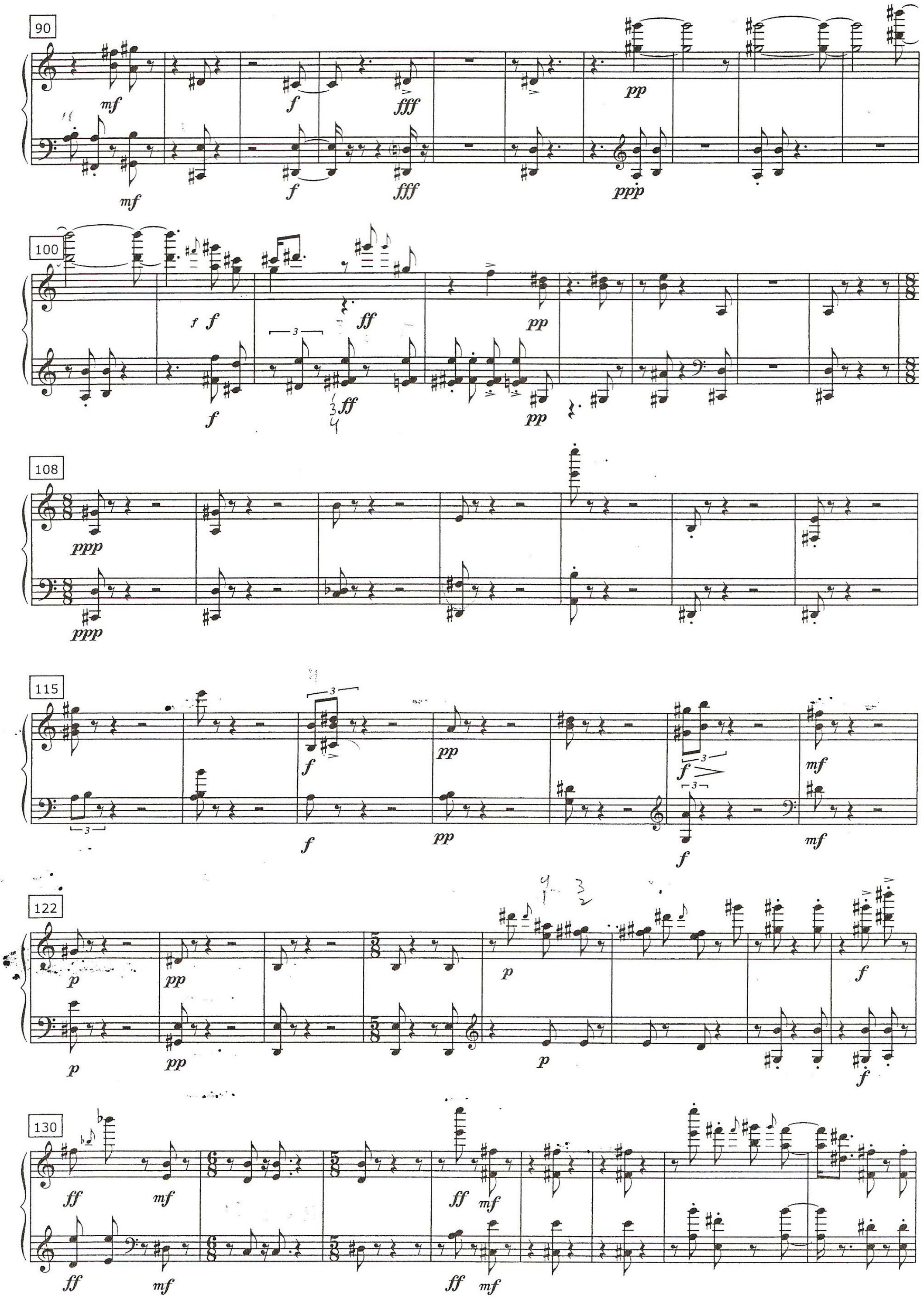
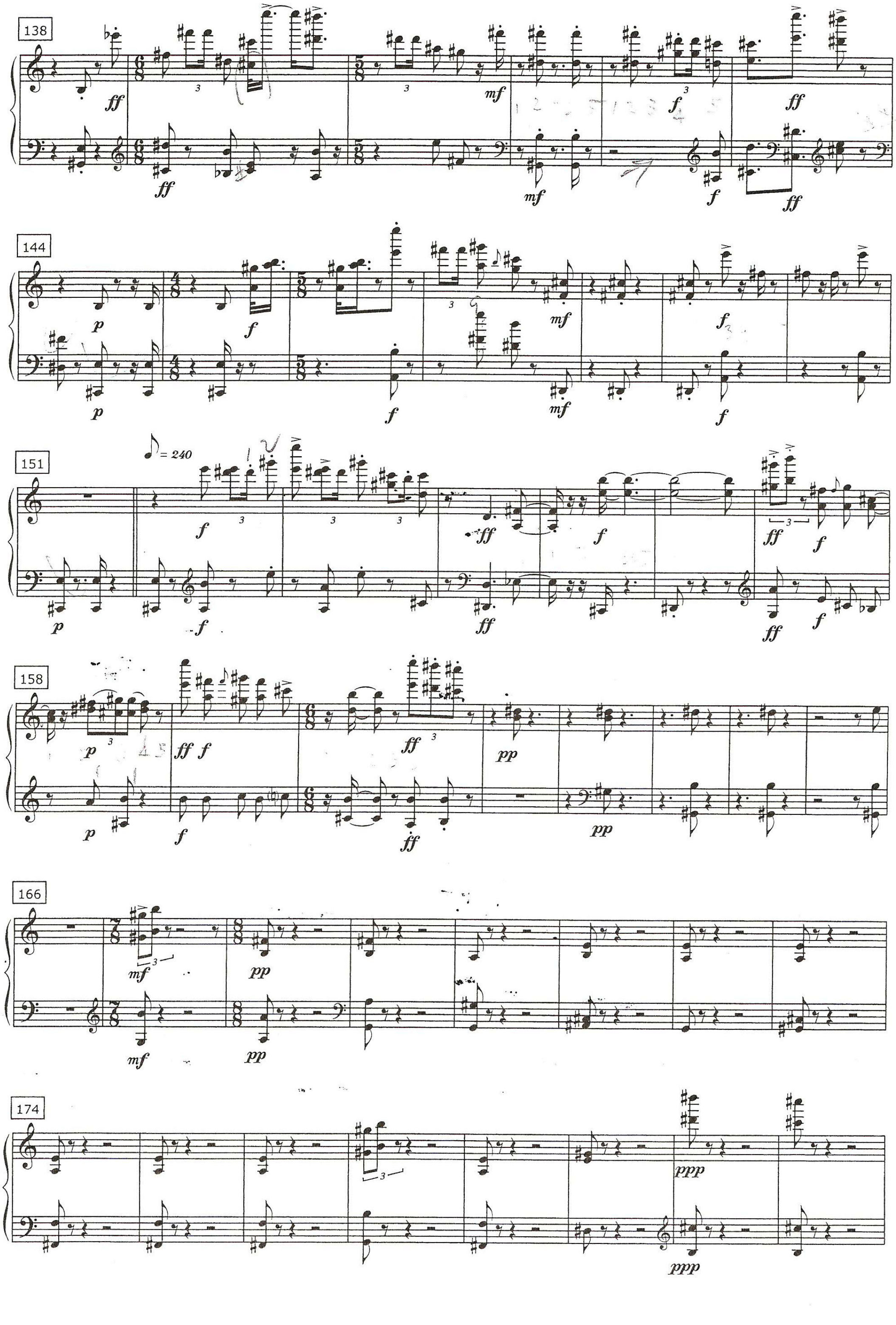
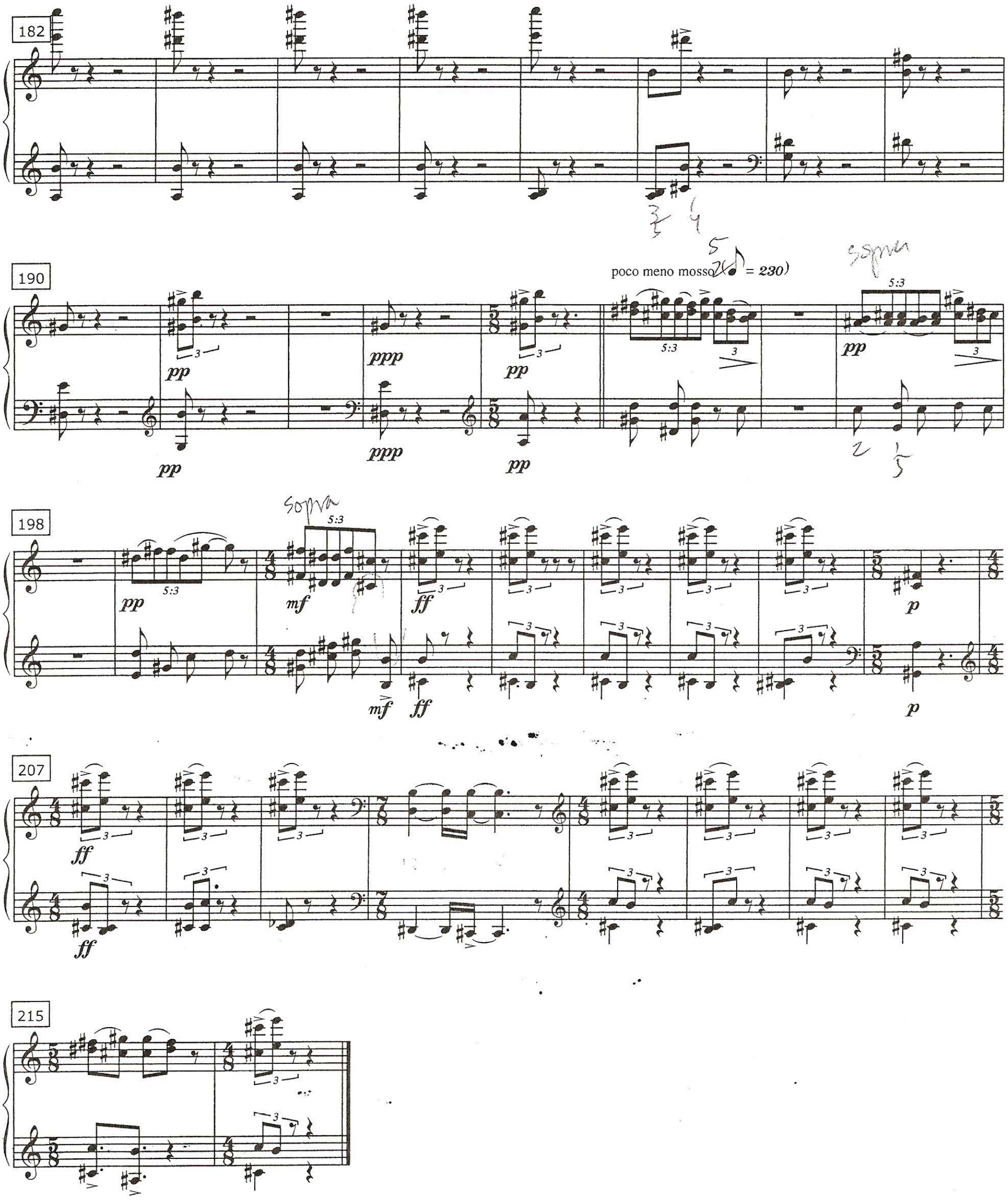

poco meno mosso (♪ = 230)
44
♪ = 240
52
poco meno mosso
59
8va
loco
67
74
81
f
mf
ff
p
fff
pp
sffz


90
mf
mf
f
fff
f
fff
pp
ppp
100
f f
ff
f
ff
pp
pp
108
ppp
ppp
115
f
pp
f
pp
f
mf
f
mf
122
p
pp
p
pp
p
f
f
130
ff
mf
ff
mf
ff
mf
ff
mf

E


138
144
151
♪ = 240
158
166
174
ff
mf
f
p
pp
ppp

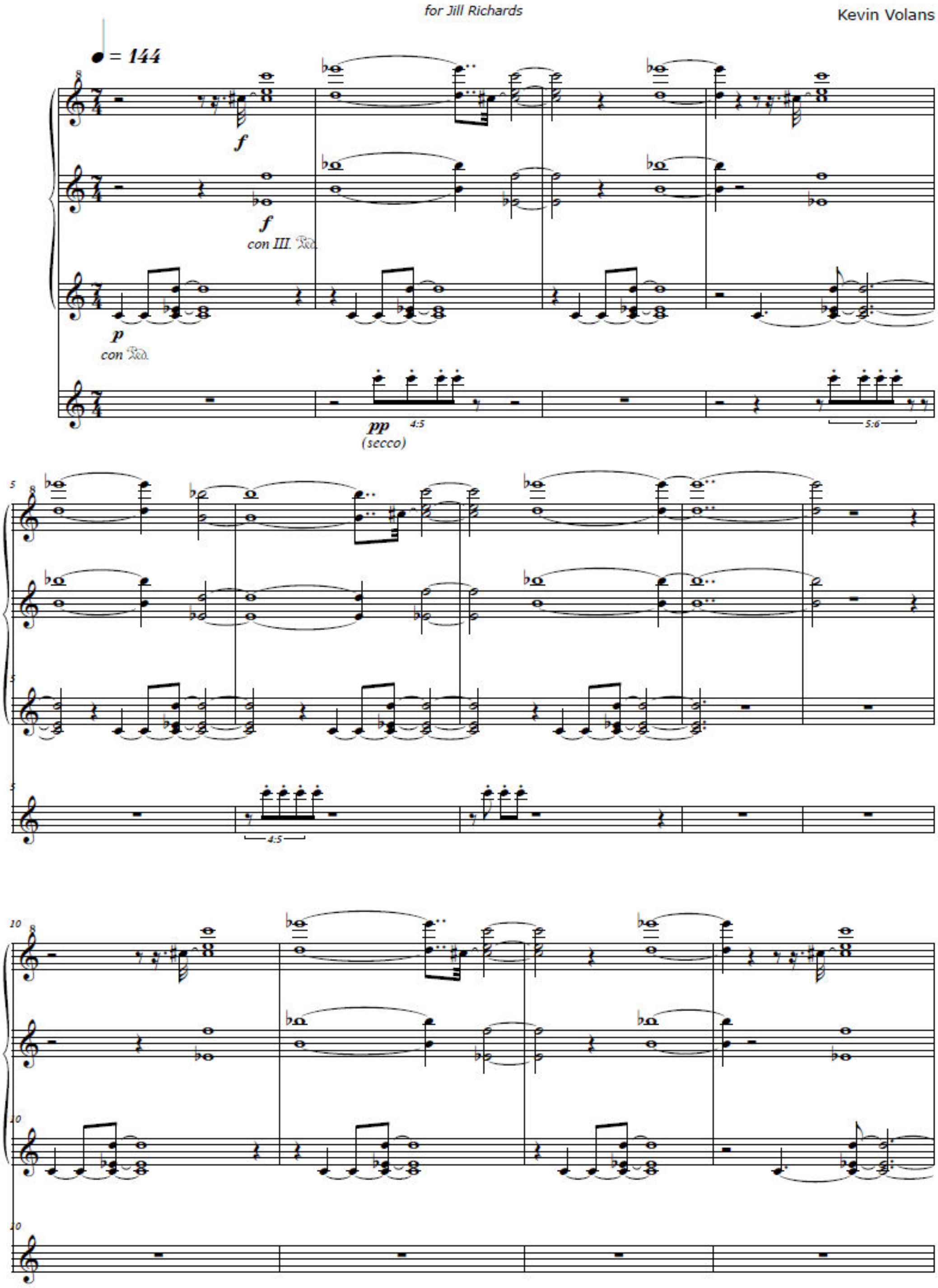

182
190
poco meno mosso (♪ = 230)
sopra
pp
ppp
pp
5:3
3
198
sopra
mf
ff
p
207
ff
215

Belfast March 1987, revised 2008

Etude 9

for Jill Richards

Kevin Volans


♩ = 144
8
f
f
con III. Ped.
p
con Ped.
pp
(secco)
4:5
5:6
5
4:5
10

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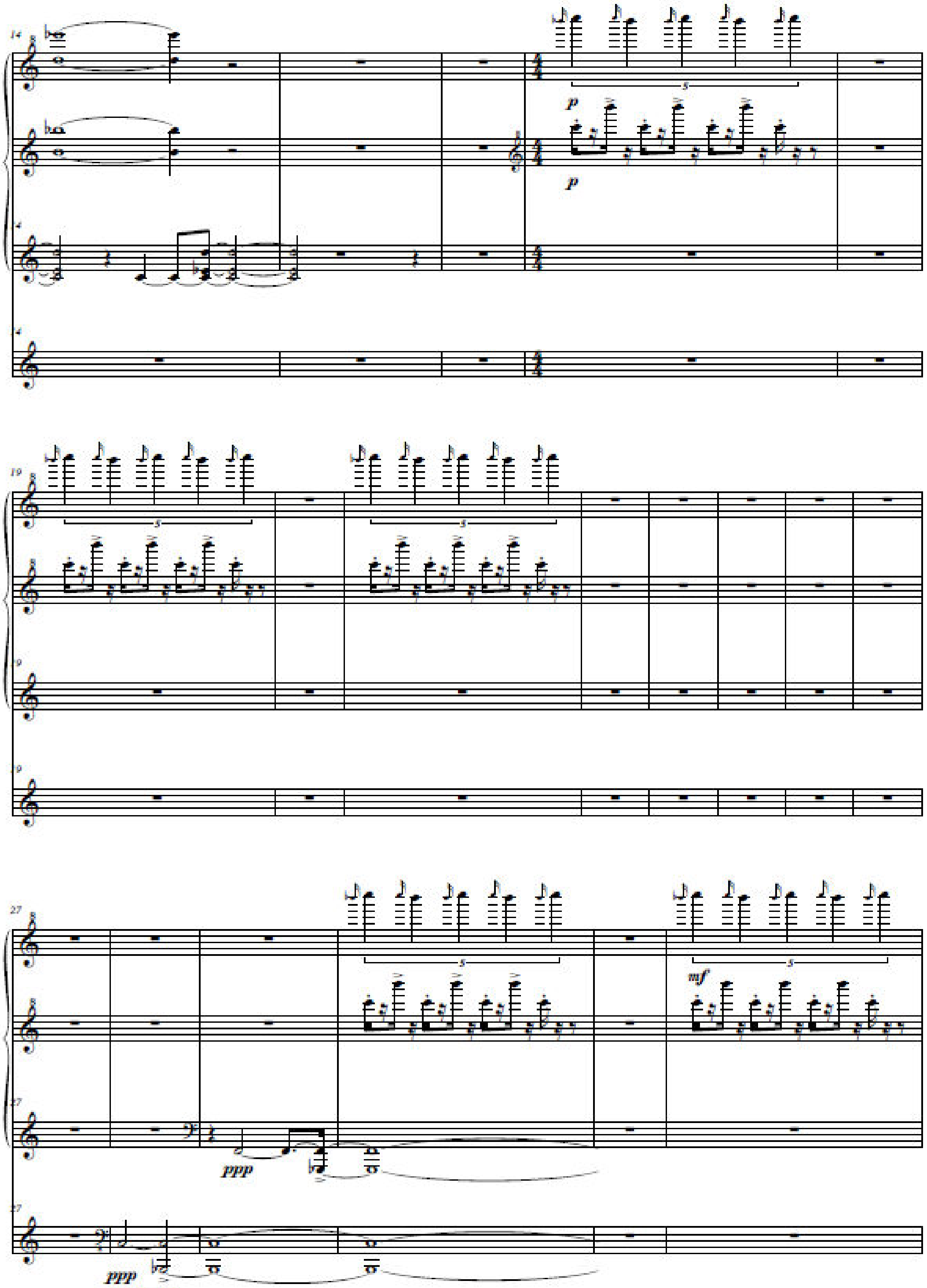
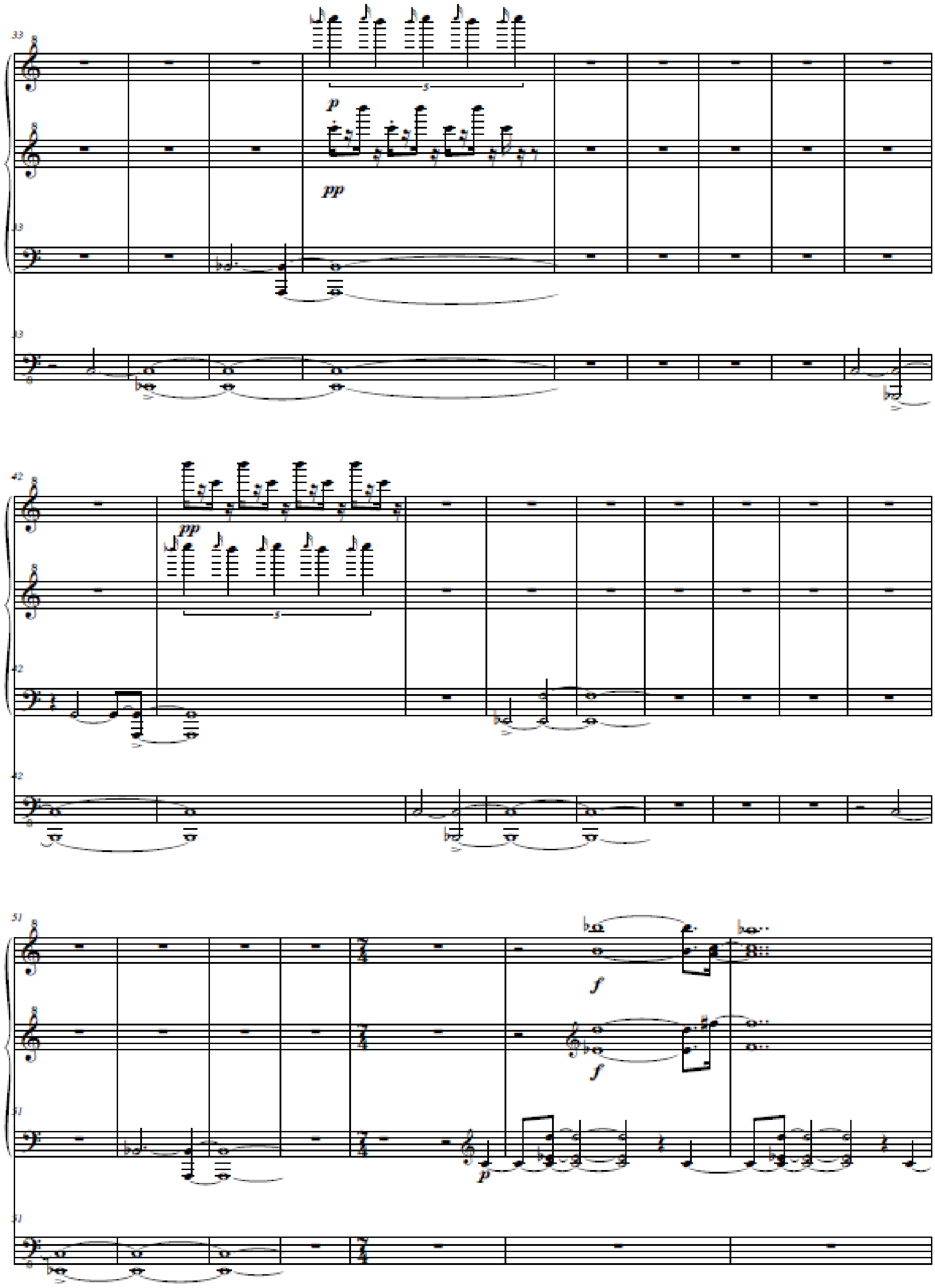
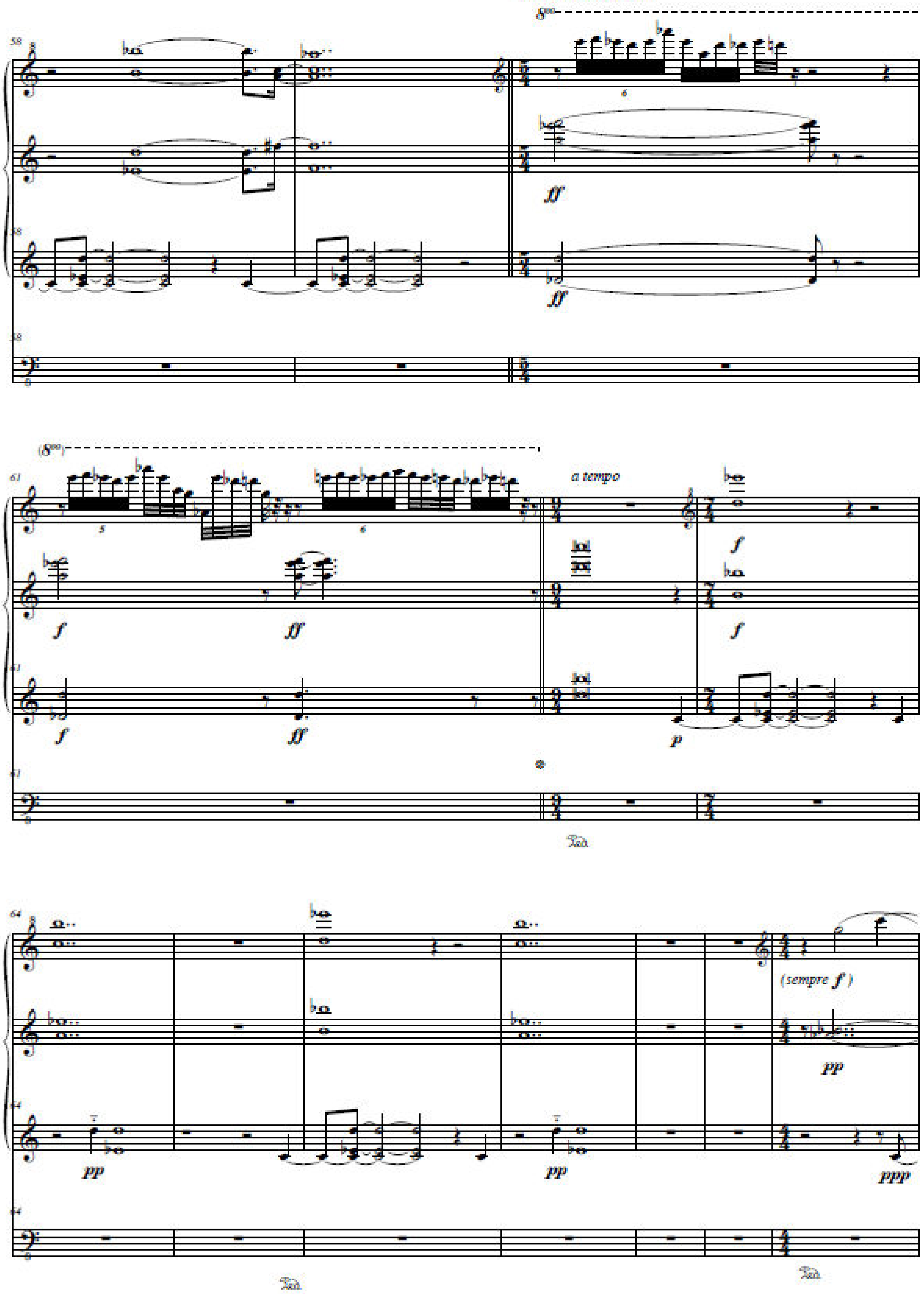
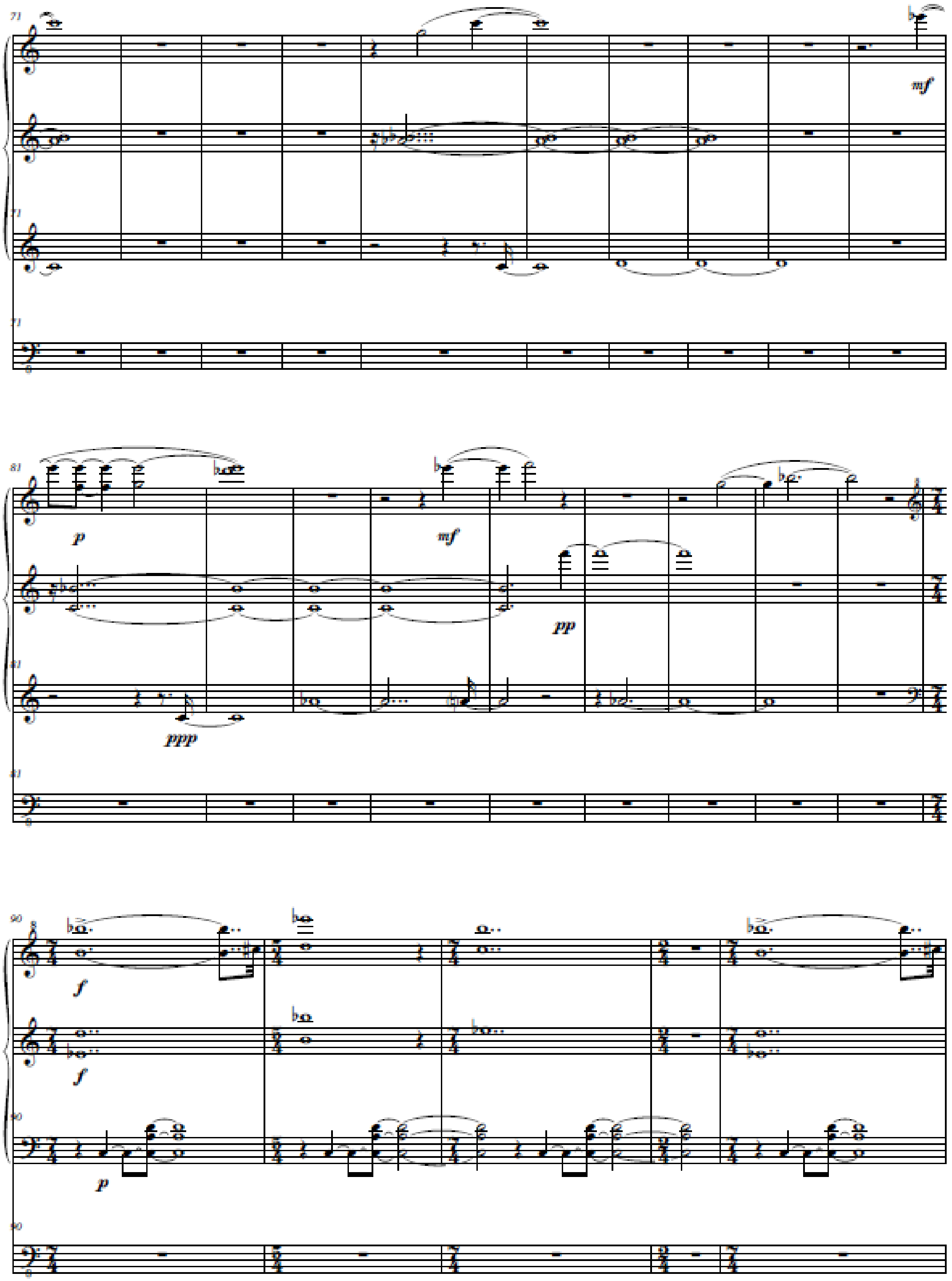
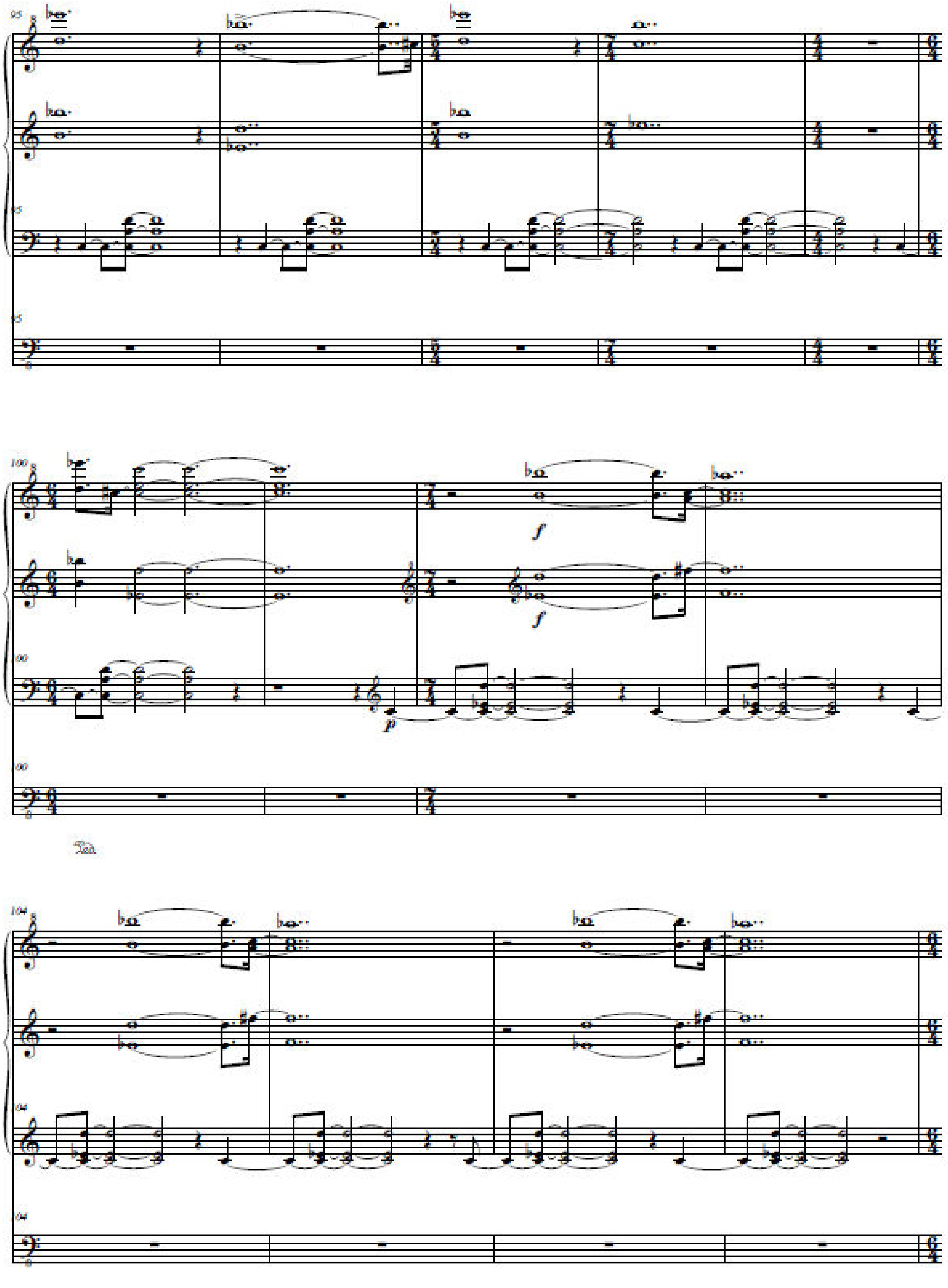
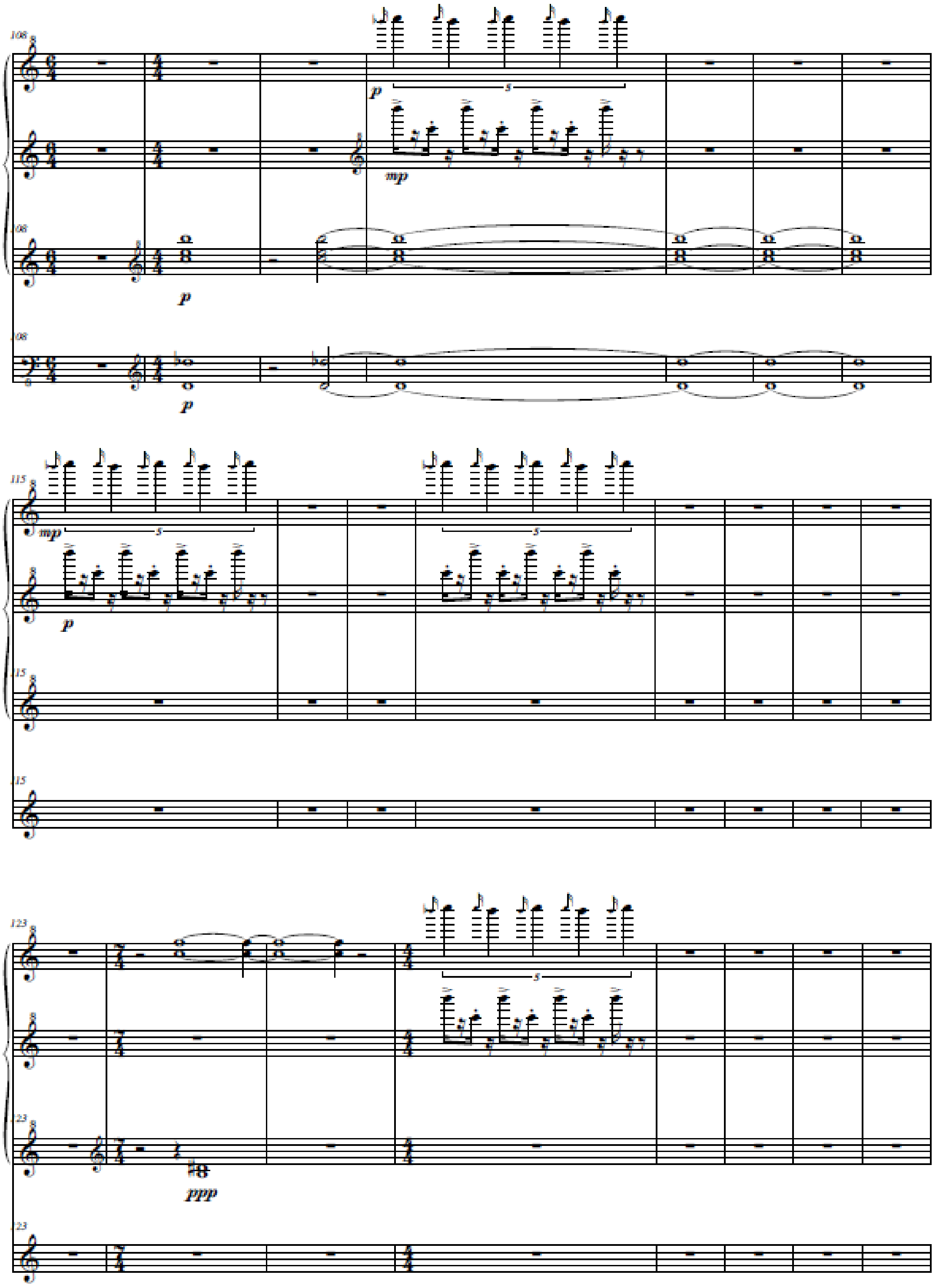

14
p
p
5
19
5
5
27
5
5
mf
ppp
ppp
con III. 𝒫𝑒𝒹.

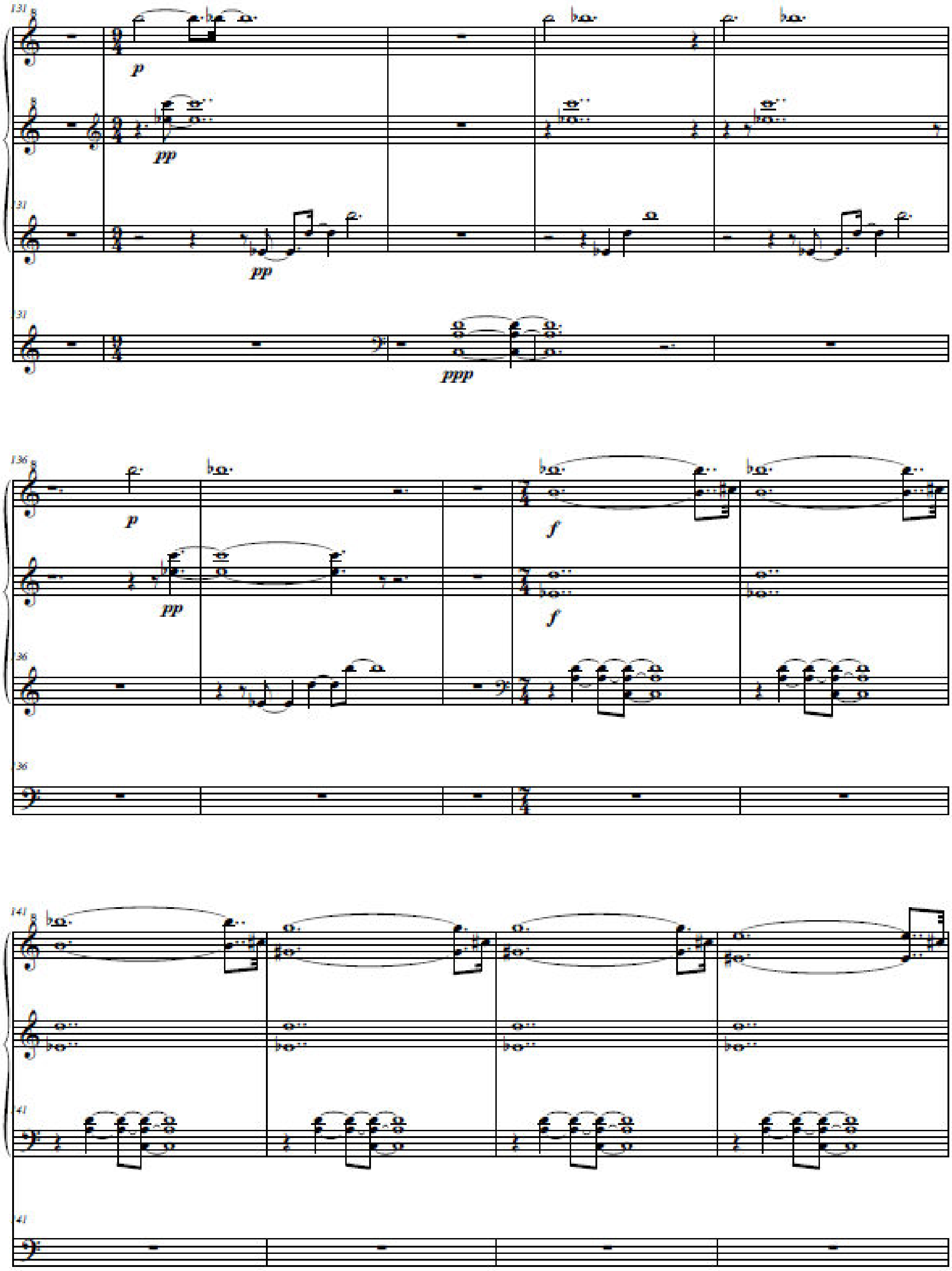

p
pp
pp
f
f
p

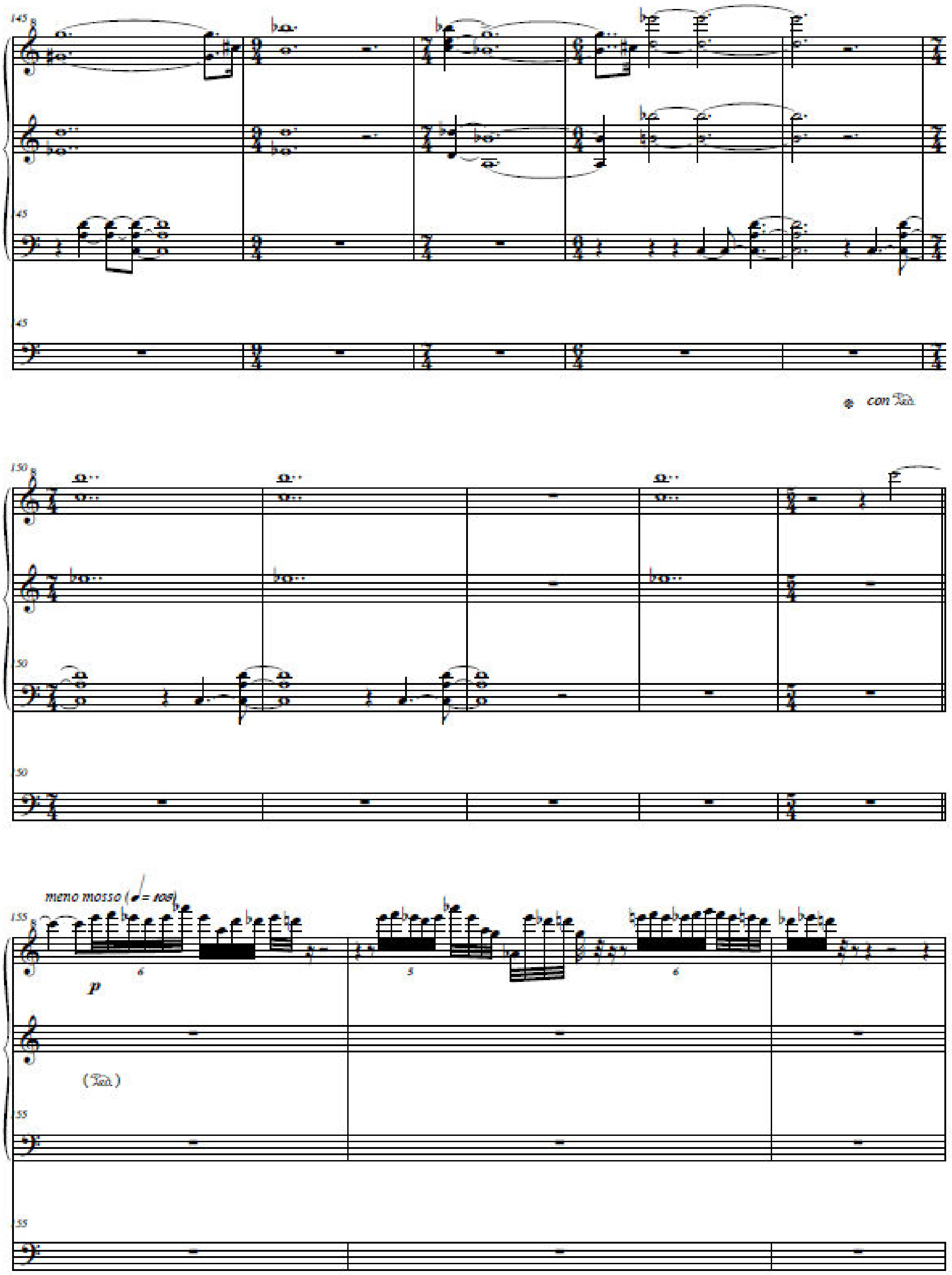

meno mosso (♩= 108)
8va
58
6
ff
ff
(8va)
61
5
6
f
ff
f
ff
a tempo
f
f
p
64
pp
pp
(sempre f)
pp
ppp

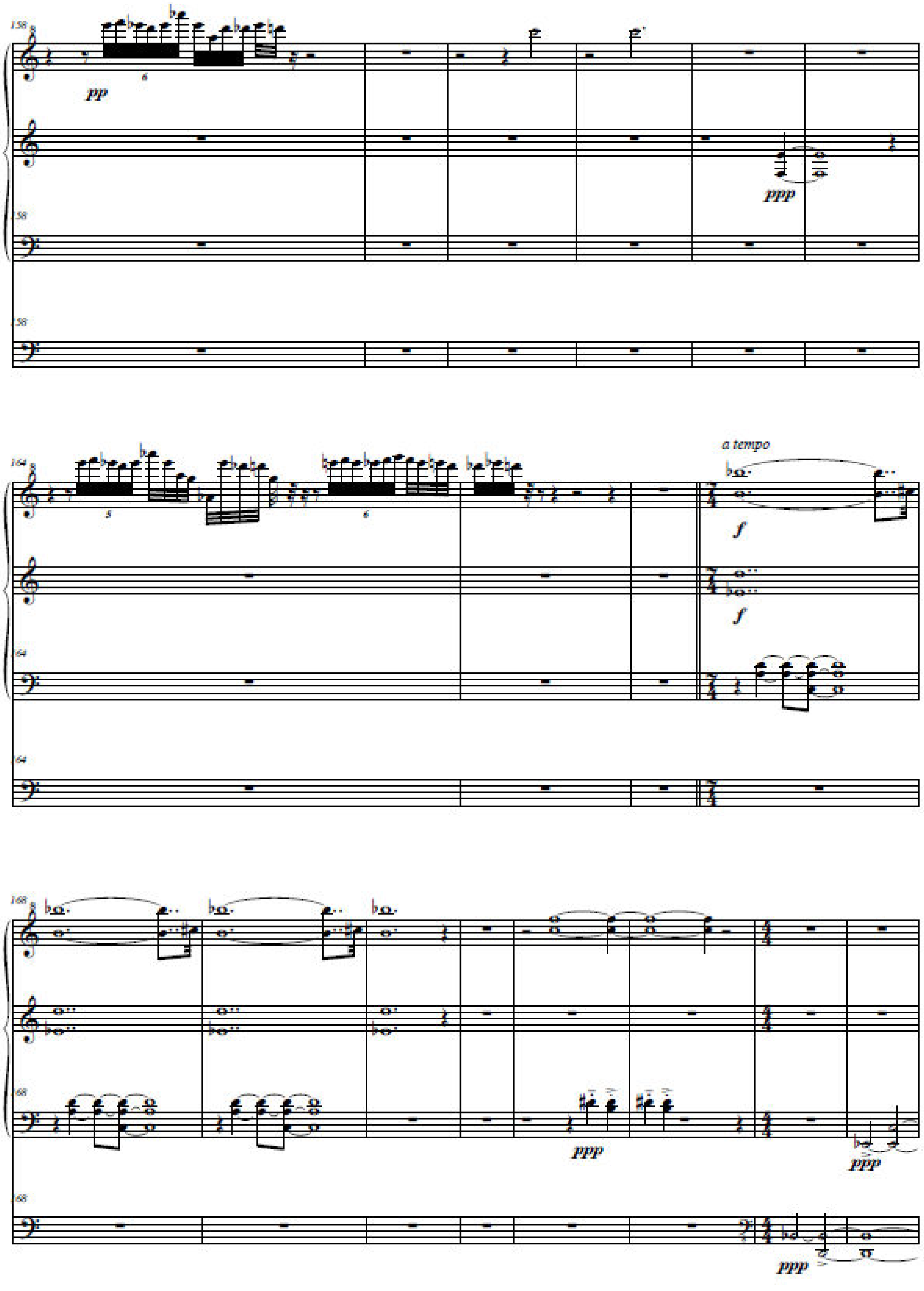

71
mf
81
p
mf
pp
ppp
90
8
f
f
p

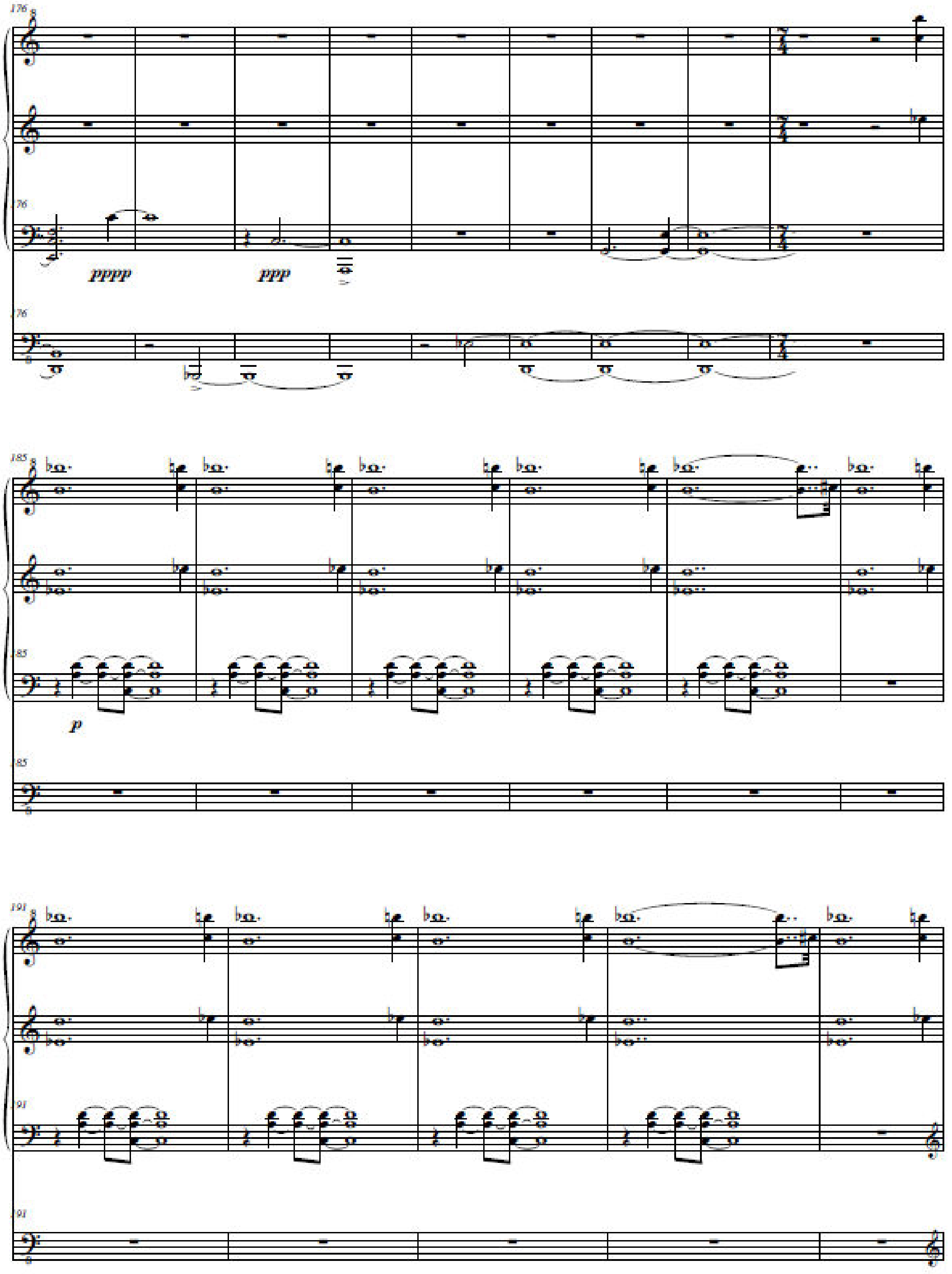

95
100
104
f
p
Ped.

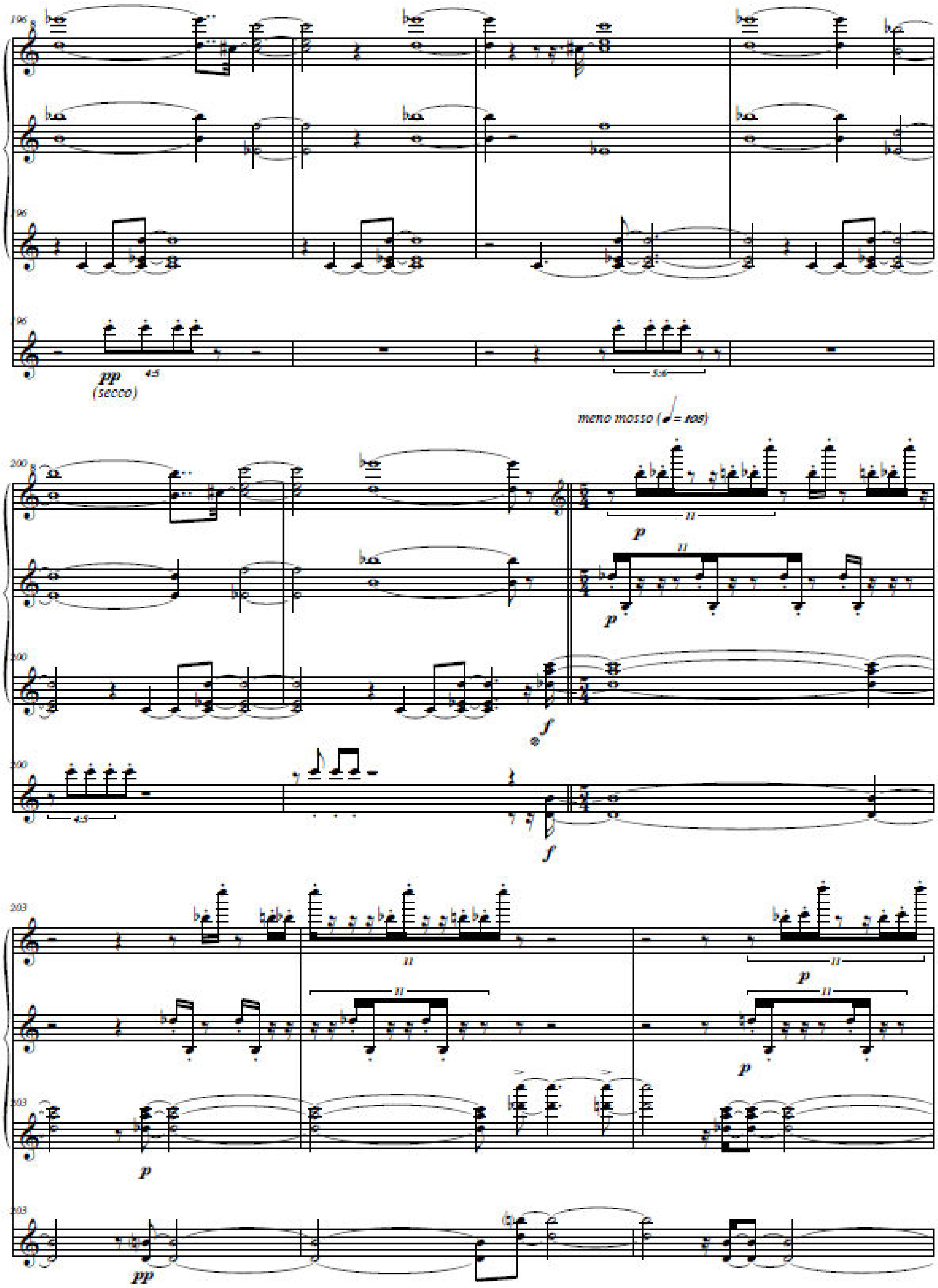

108
p
5
mp
p
p
115
mp
5
p
5
123
5
ppp

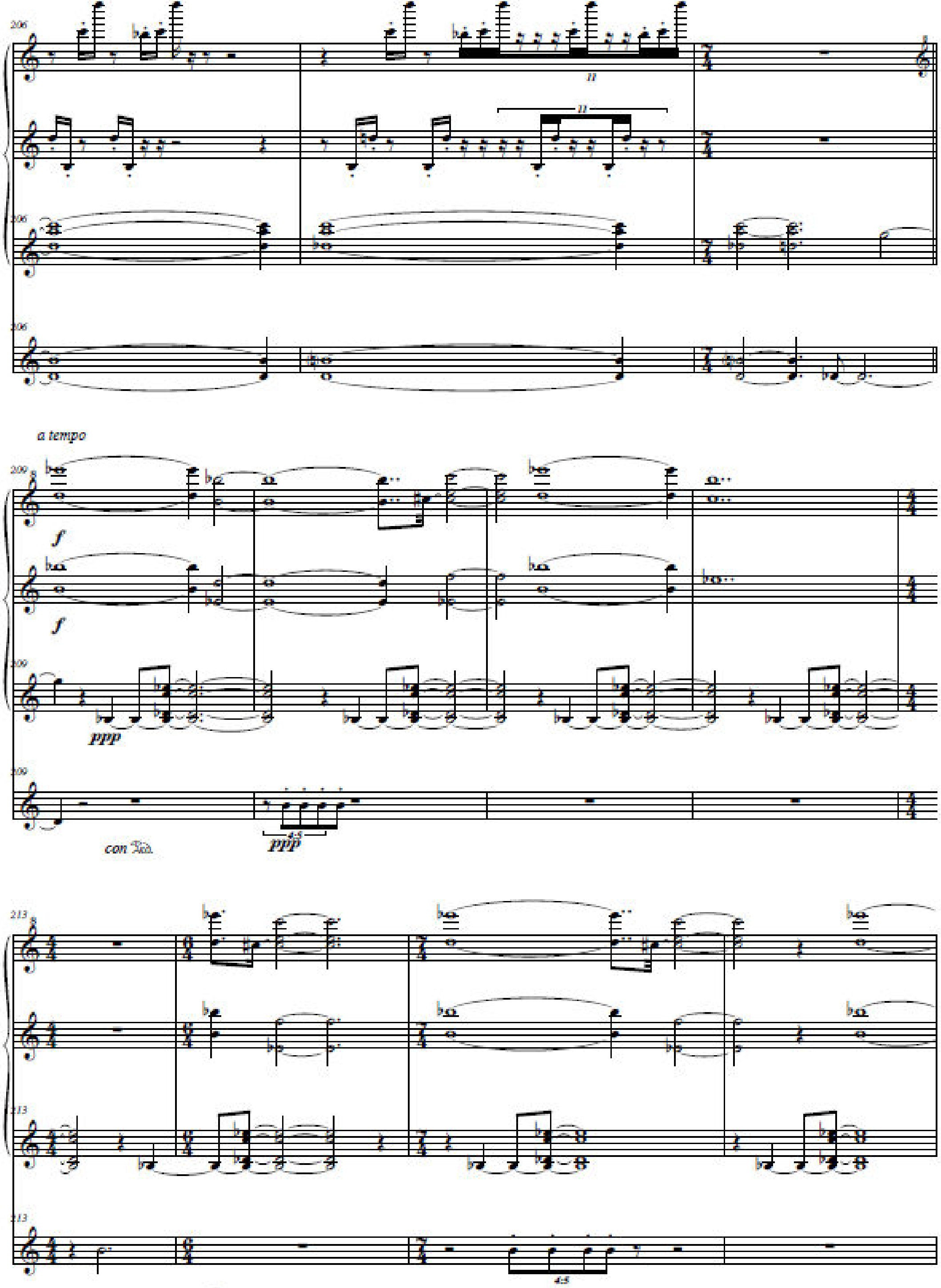

131
p
pp
pp
131
131
ppp
136
p
pp
f
f
136
136
141
141
141

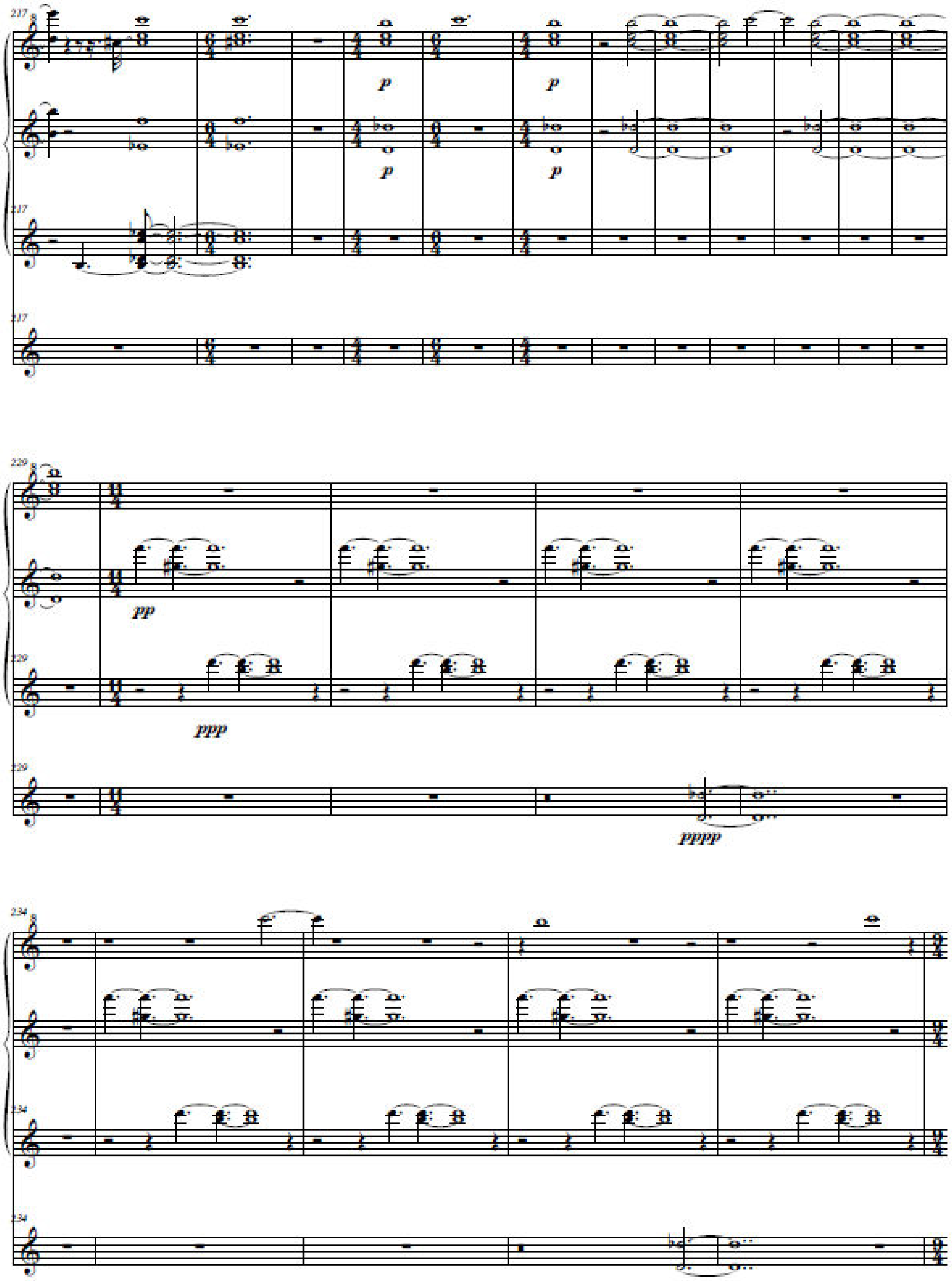

con Ped.
meno mosso (♩= 108)
p
(Ped.)

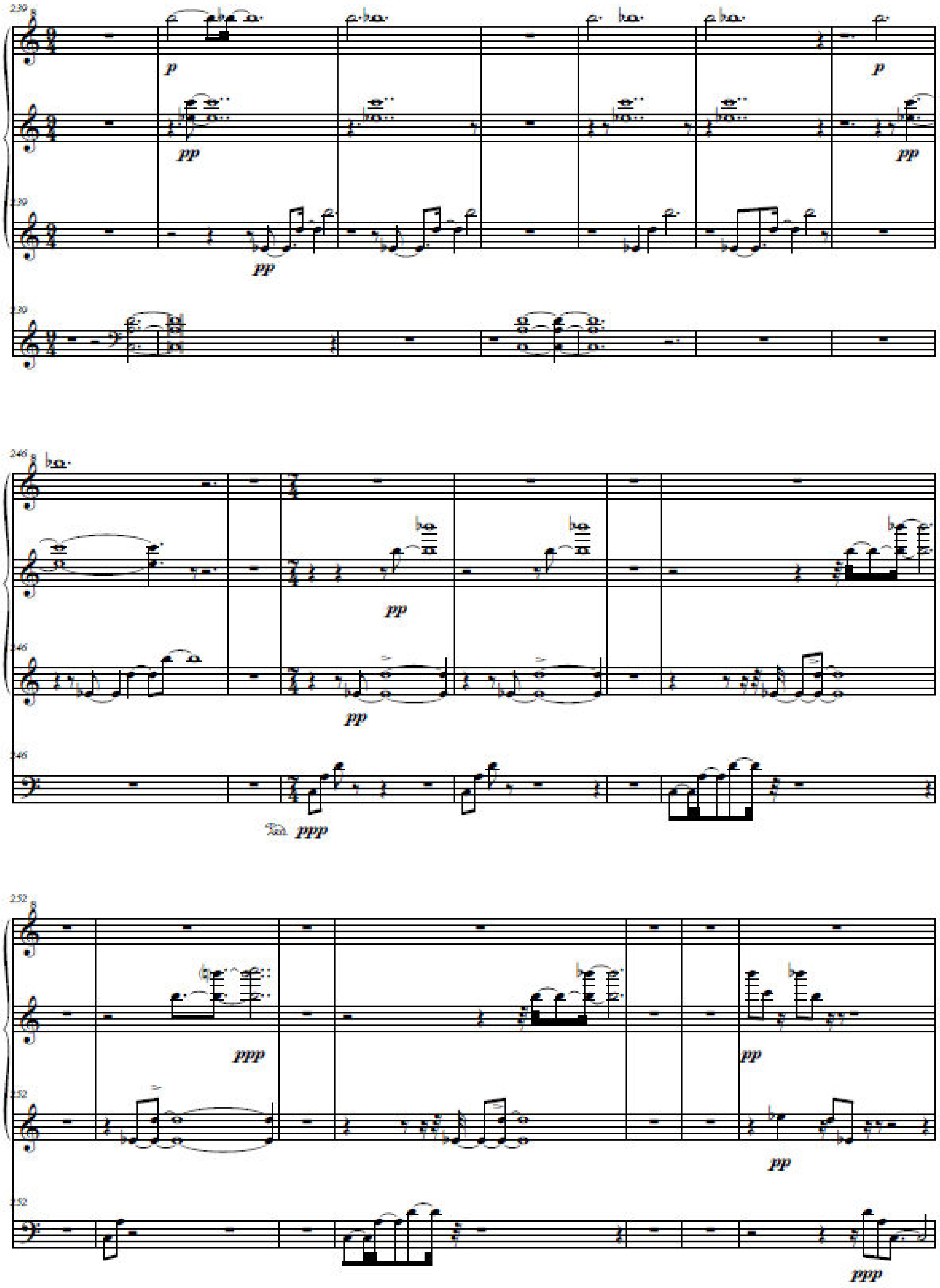

158
pp
6
ppp
164
5
6
a tempo
f
f
168
ppp
ppp
ppp

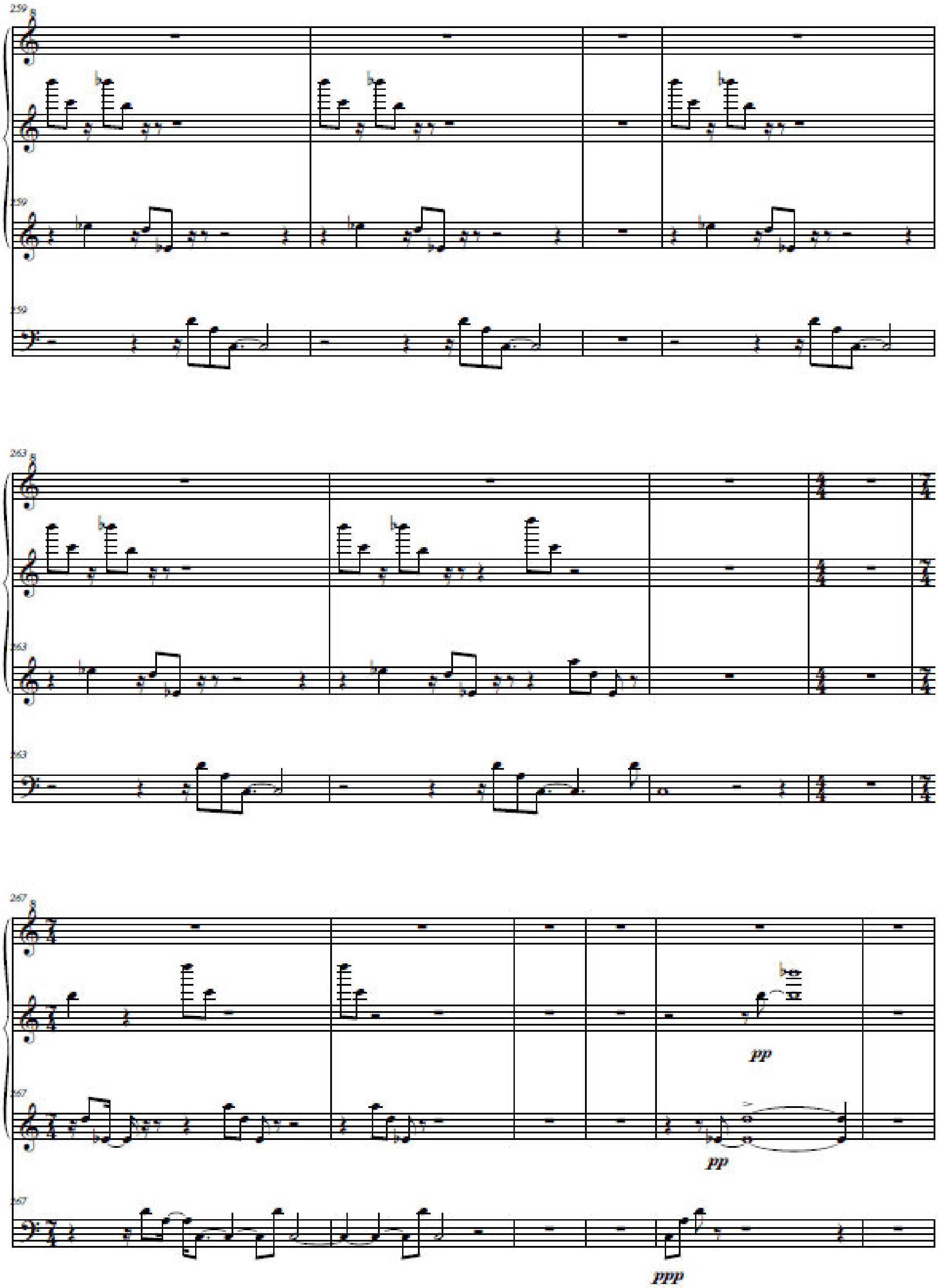

176
pppp
ppp
185
p
191

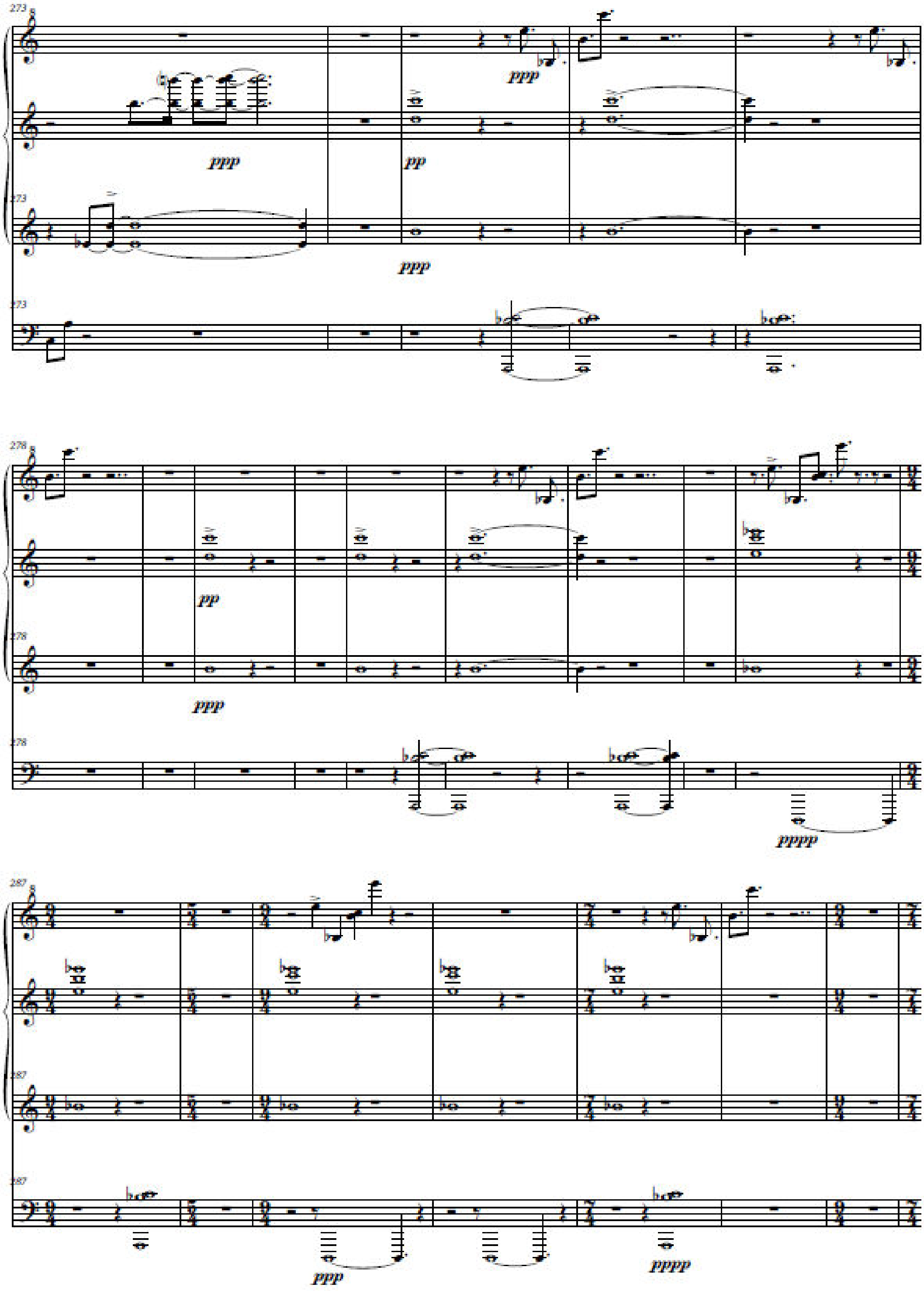

196
pp
(secco)
4:5
5:6
meno mosso (♩ = 108)
200
11
p
f
4:5
203
pp

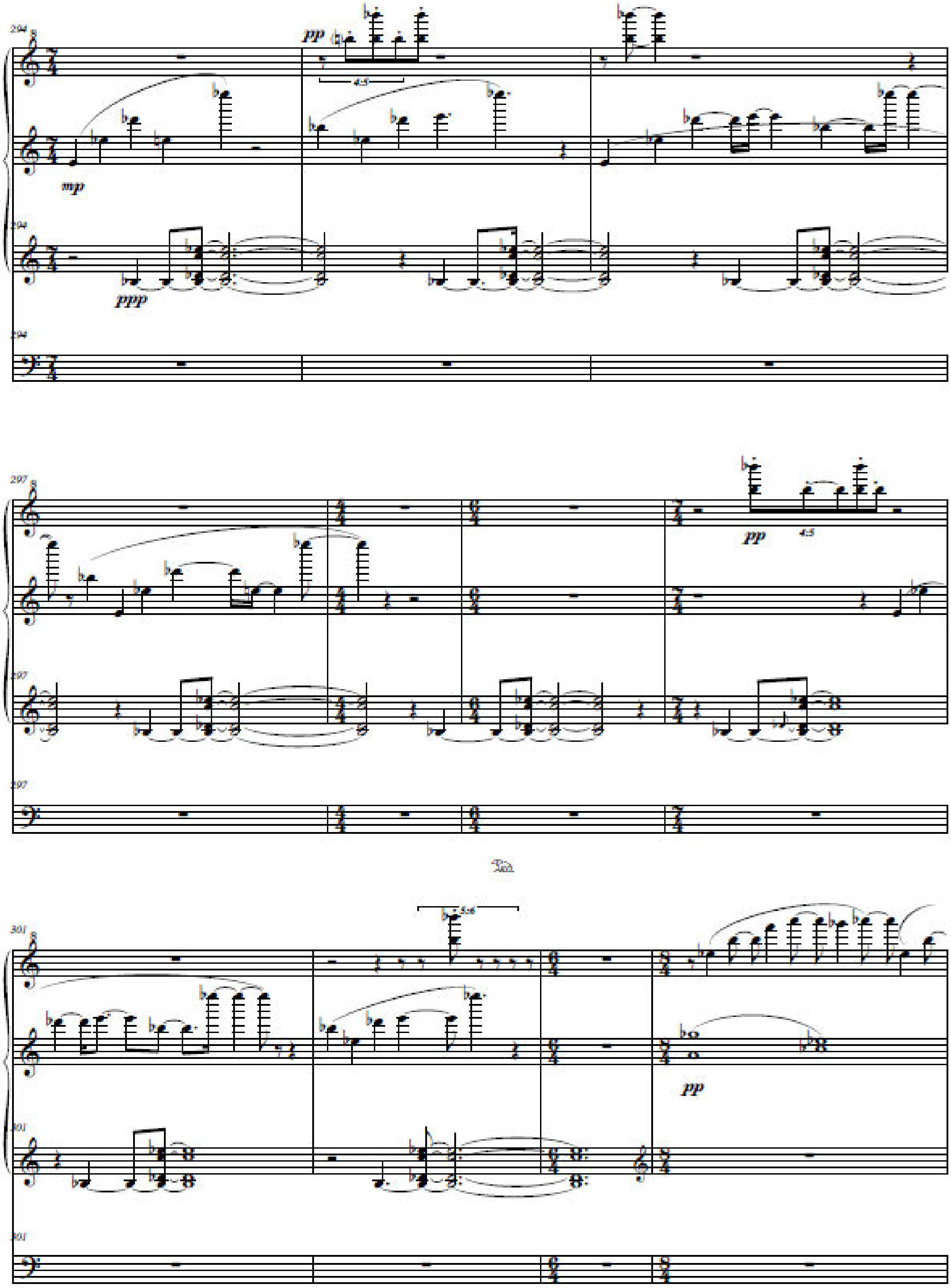

206
11
11
a tempo
209
f
f
ppp
con Ped.
ppp
4:5
213
Ped.
4:5

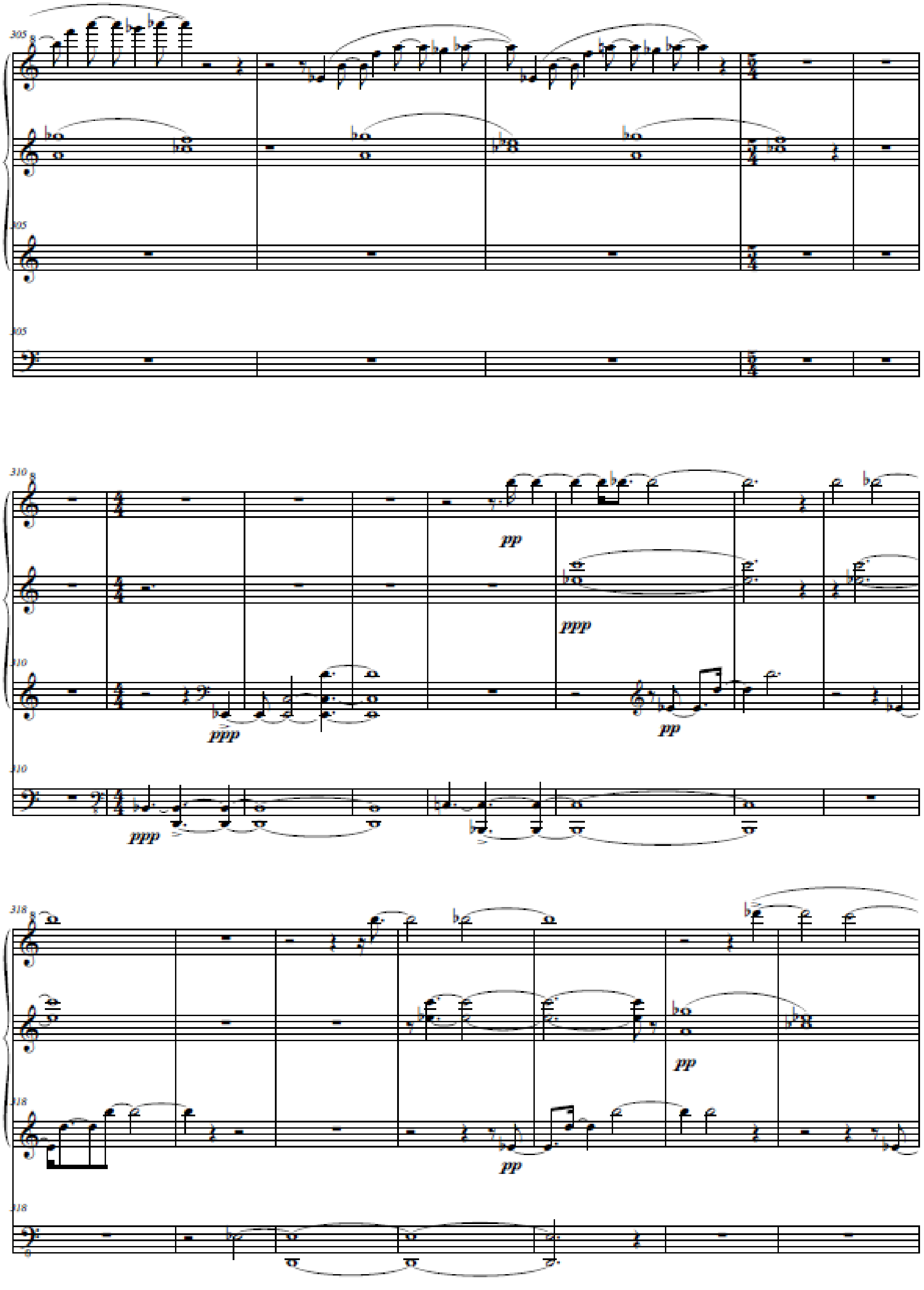

217
p
p
p
p
229
pp
ppp
pppp
234

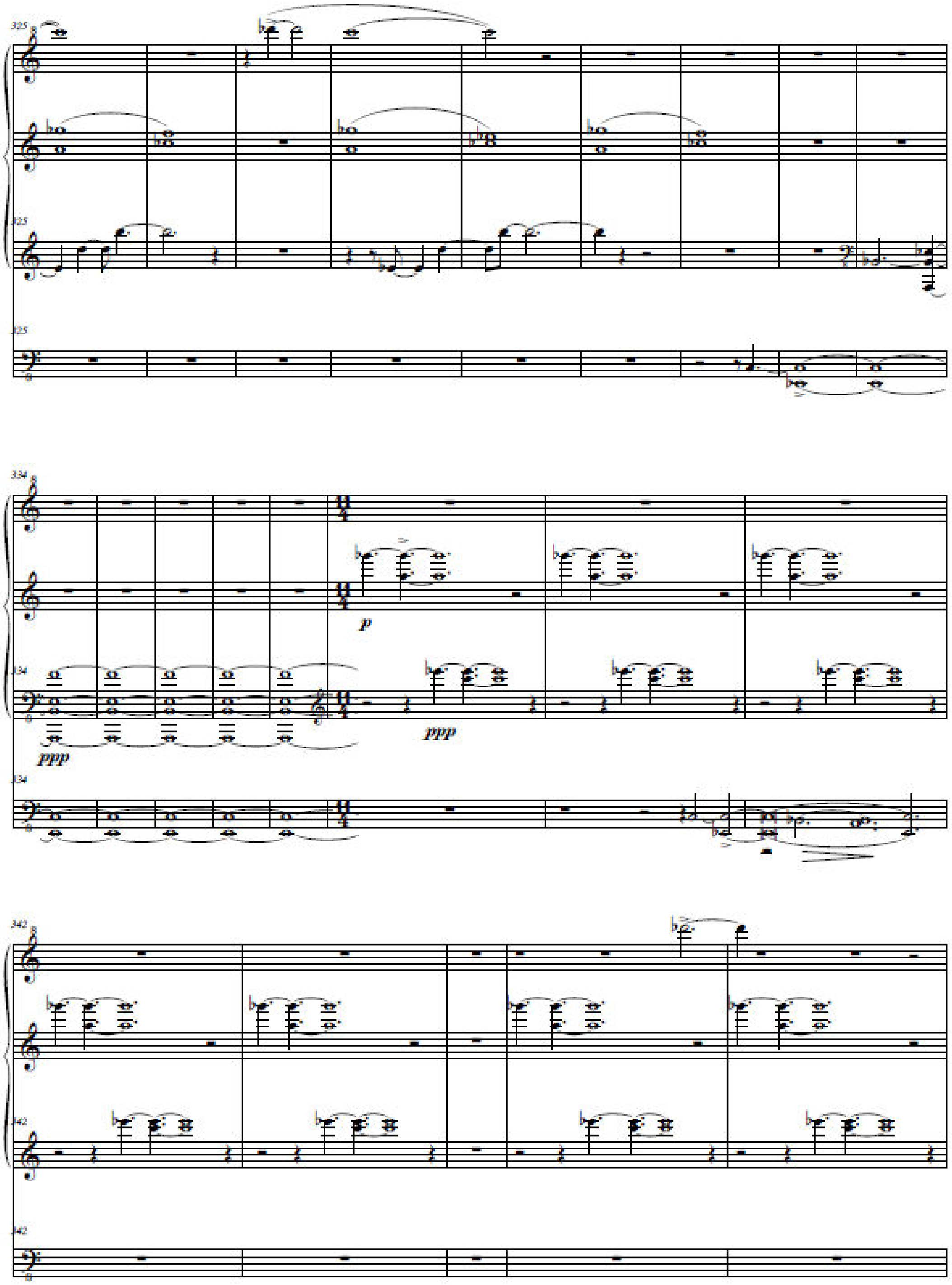

239
p
pp
pp
p
pp
246
pp
pp
Ped.
ppp
252
ppp
pp
pp
ppp

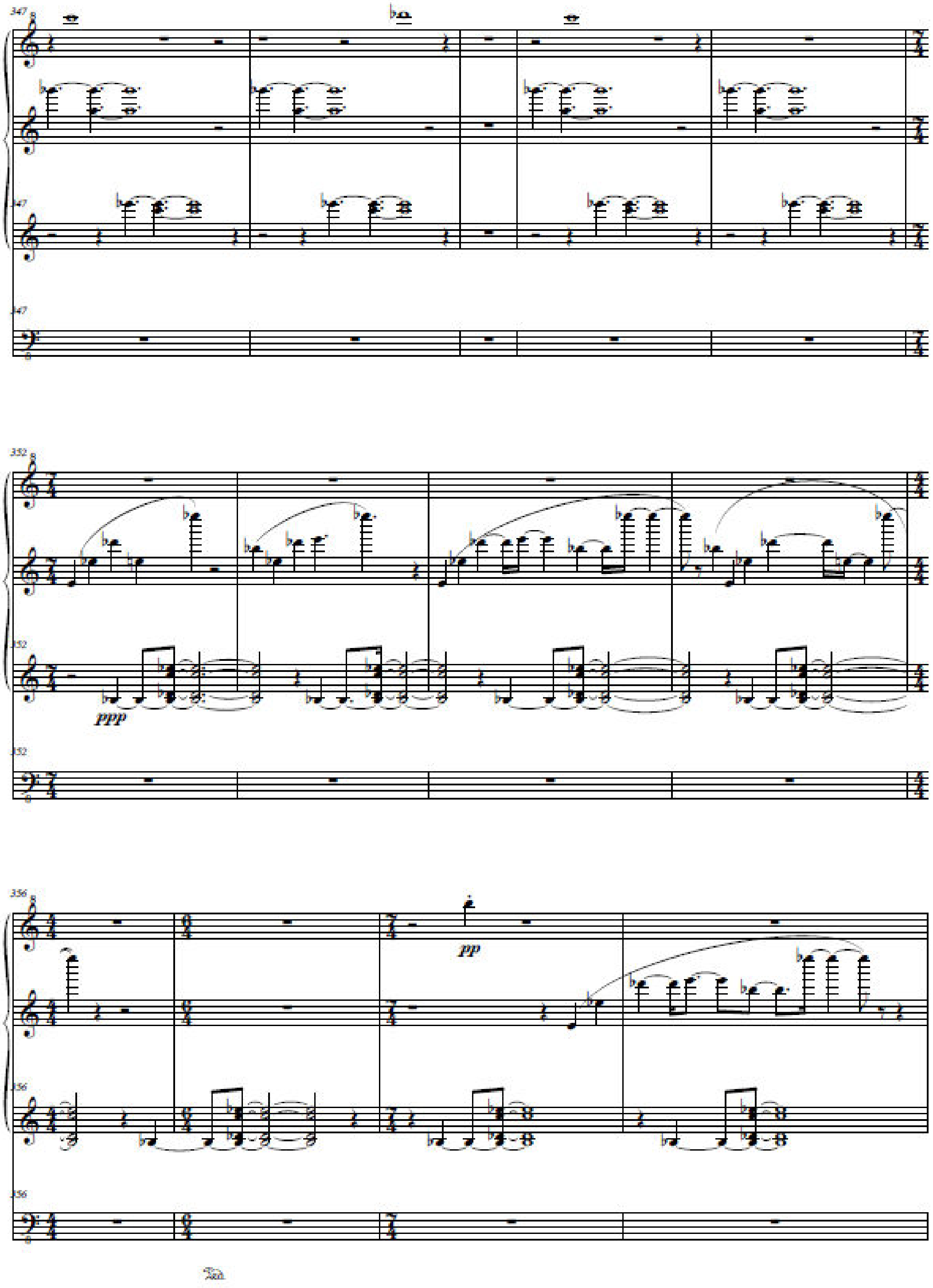

259
263
267
pp
pp
ppp

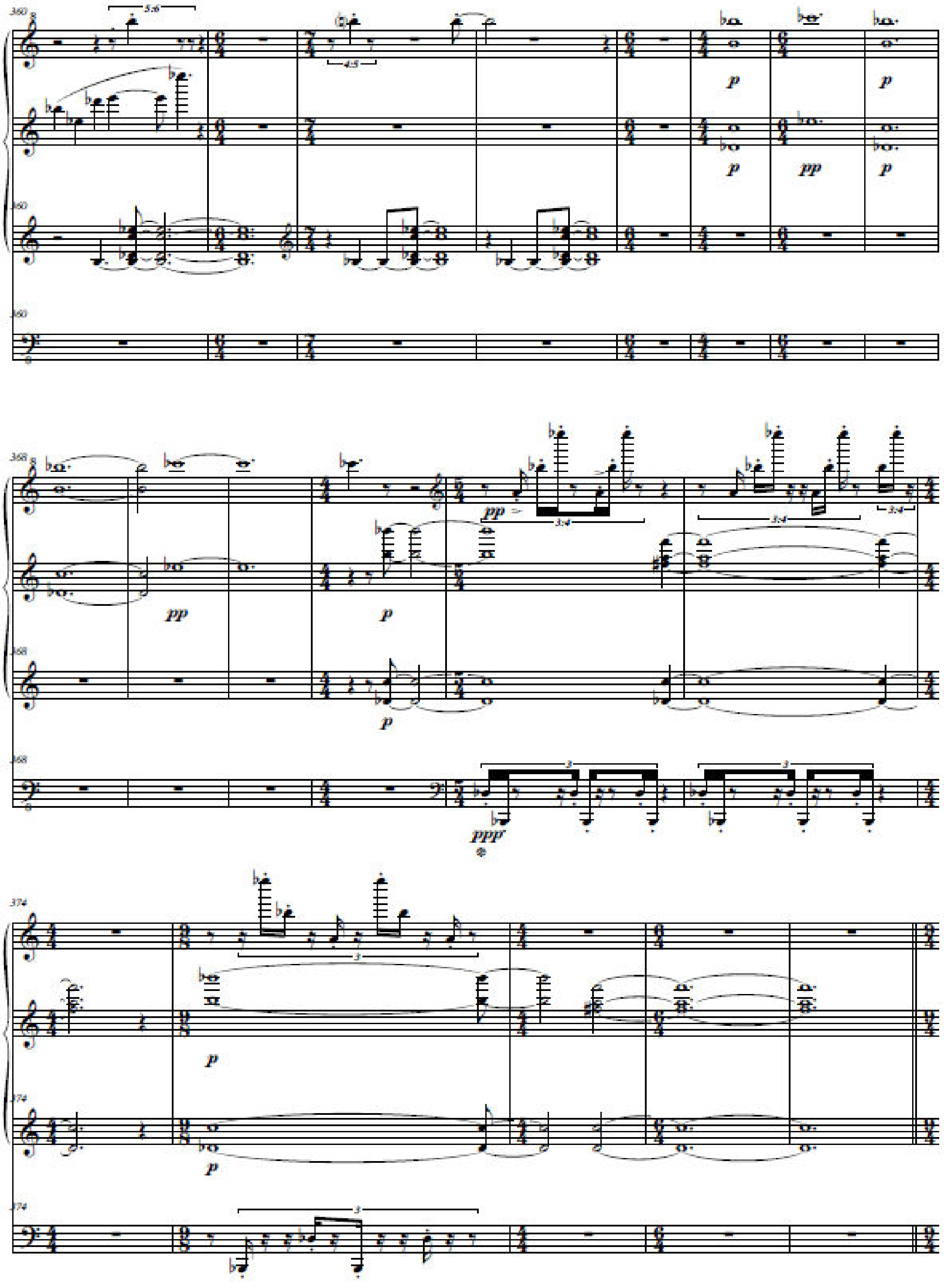

273
8
ppp
pp
ppp
278
pp
ppp
pppp
287
ppp
pppp

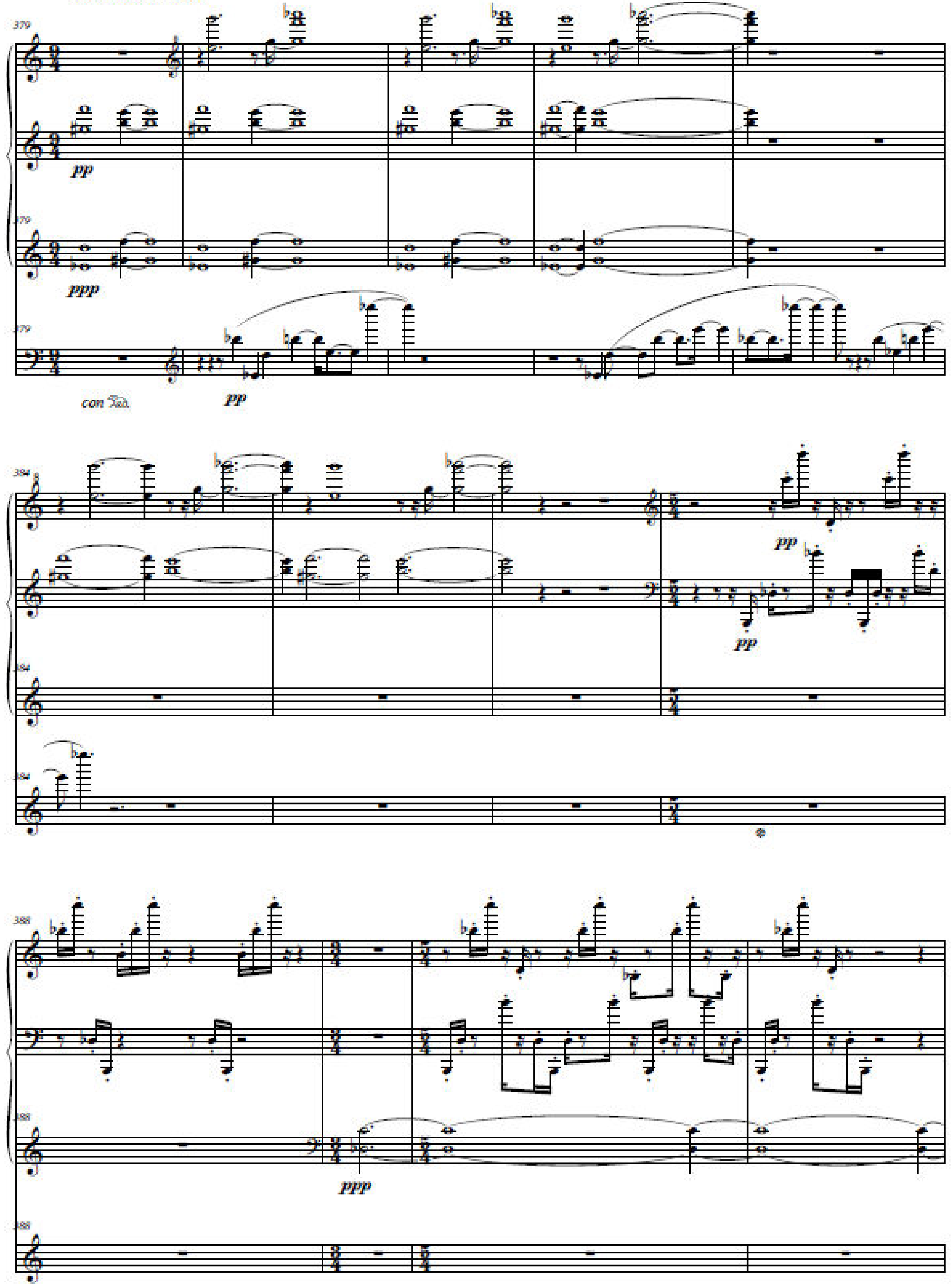

294
pp
4:5
mp
ppp
297
pp
4:5
Ped.
301
5:6
pp

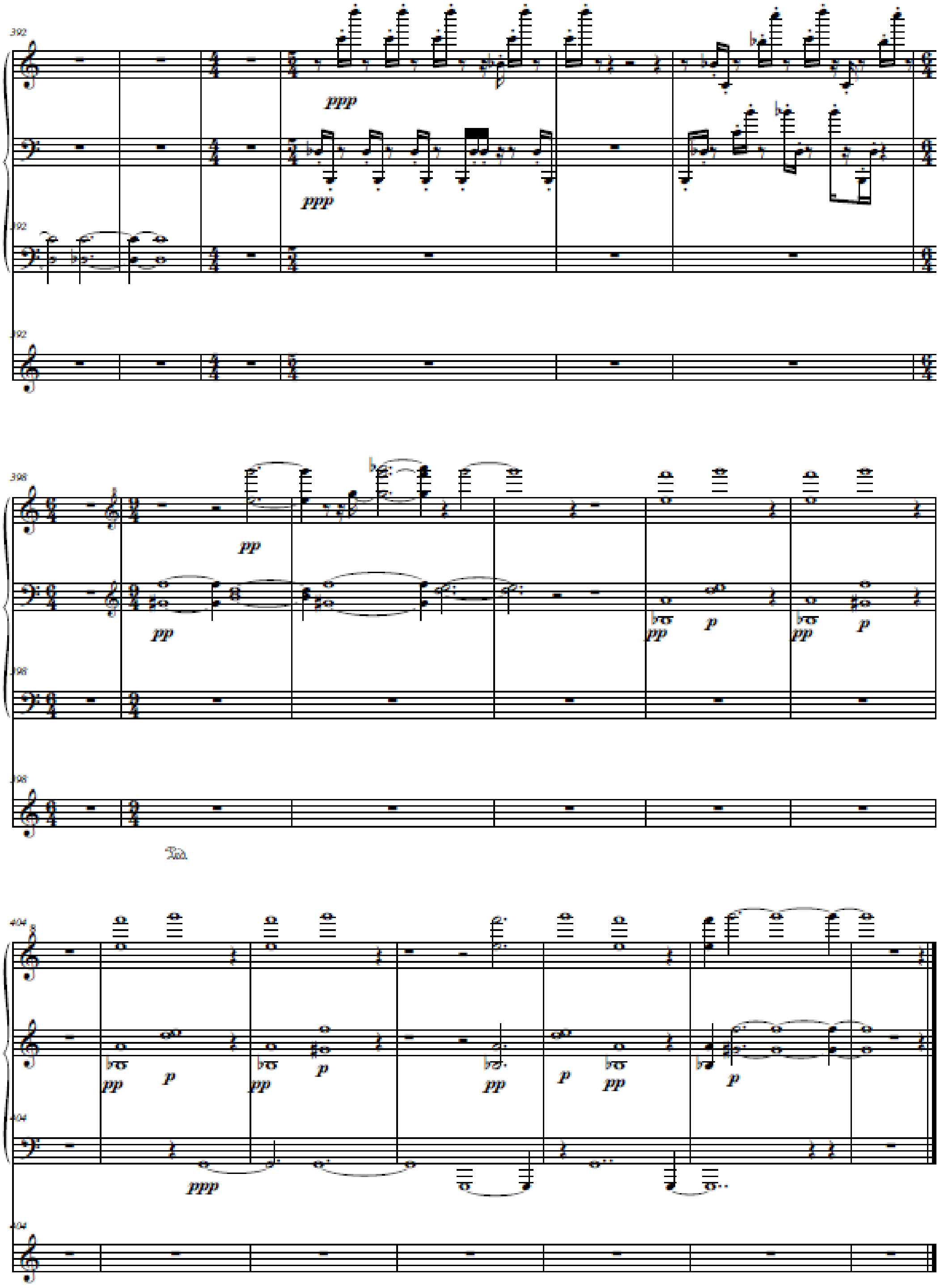

305
8
310
pp
ppp
pp
ppp
318
pp
pp


p
ppp
ppp


347
352
ppp
356
pp
Ped.


360
5:6
4:5
p
pp
368
3:4
ppp
374
3


meno mosso (♩ = 105)
379
pp
ppp
con Ped.
pp
384
pp
pp
388
ppp


392
ppp
ppp
398
pp
pp
pp
p
pp
p
404
pp
p
pp
p
ppp
pp
p
pp
p