work in four parts

for solo piano

by troy ramos

c. 12'45 minutes
written in august and september of 2009
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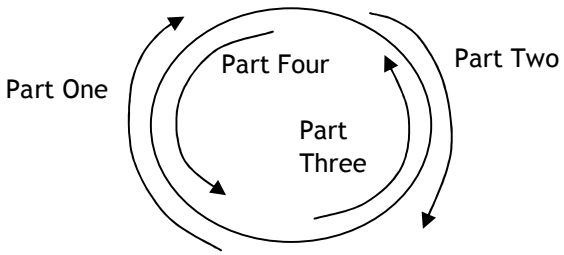
notes on *"work in four parts"*

This piece is essentially about two things: allowing sounds to breathe, and hearing them from a different perspective. The idea behind the 'breathing' of sounds is that the resonance of the notes and chords has at least as much importance as when the notes are first struck. The ringing of the sounds must become either as much of the story, so to speak, or become its own story, because it creates a different take on the sounds than when they first occurred. In essence, therefore, there are three key elements to these pieces: the notes when played, the ringing of those notes and, of course, silence.

The second major part of this work is the idea of perspective. This thought, which is based on a theme in "*Du côtè de chez Swann"* by Marcel Proust, and is the basis for the work as a whole, allows us to see the sounds from more than one perspective. In Proust's book, the hero, from his home in the little ville called *Combray*, encounters two walking paths: one to the right and one to the left; each leading to a destination quite different from the other. Eventually, the hero discovers that he could have actually reached both destinations from going in either direction. In other words, he discovers that each destination is part of the same path. So, the idea of walking to a destination using the same path, but from the opposite direction, opens up the experience of viewing sites already known, but from another point in time and space.

This work is a musical example of such an experience. If we imagine the shape of a path, circular, oval or whichever, and then imagine walking that path once in each direction, then that could be a good way to approach hearing the sounds in this piece.



Two of these parts were composed going one direction, while the other two were written for the opposite direction. In short, after two parts were composed, they were then retrograded to form the other two parts. And apart from a few minor changes, they are bonded together

through their nearly complete makeup of material and are essentially, as a whole, an example of a musical thought going forward and backward.

What this means for the listener, I cannot say. But, hopefully, the listener will develop a relationship with the piece that allows them to enjoy the sounds within it. Perhaps after that, they may also be able to connect with the concept behind it.

It was Proust's literary work that inspired the basis for this piece, and the 'breathing of sounds' approach came about within that context. Although the piece doesn't need to be heard as music moving forward and backward, it is, however, necessary that the sounds be allowed to ring as appropriate, especially in Parts Three and Four, in order to hear one of the work's vital aspects.

Special Performance Note:

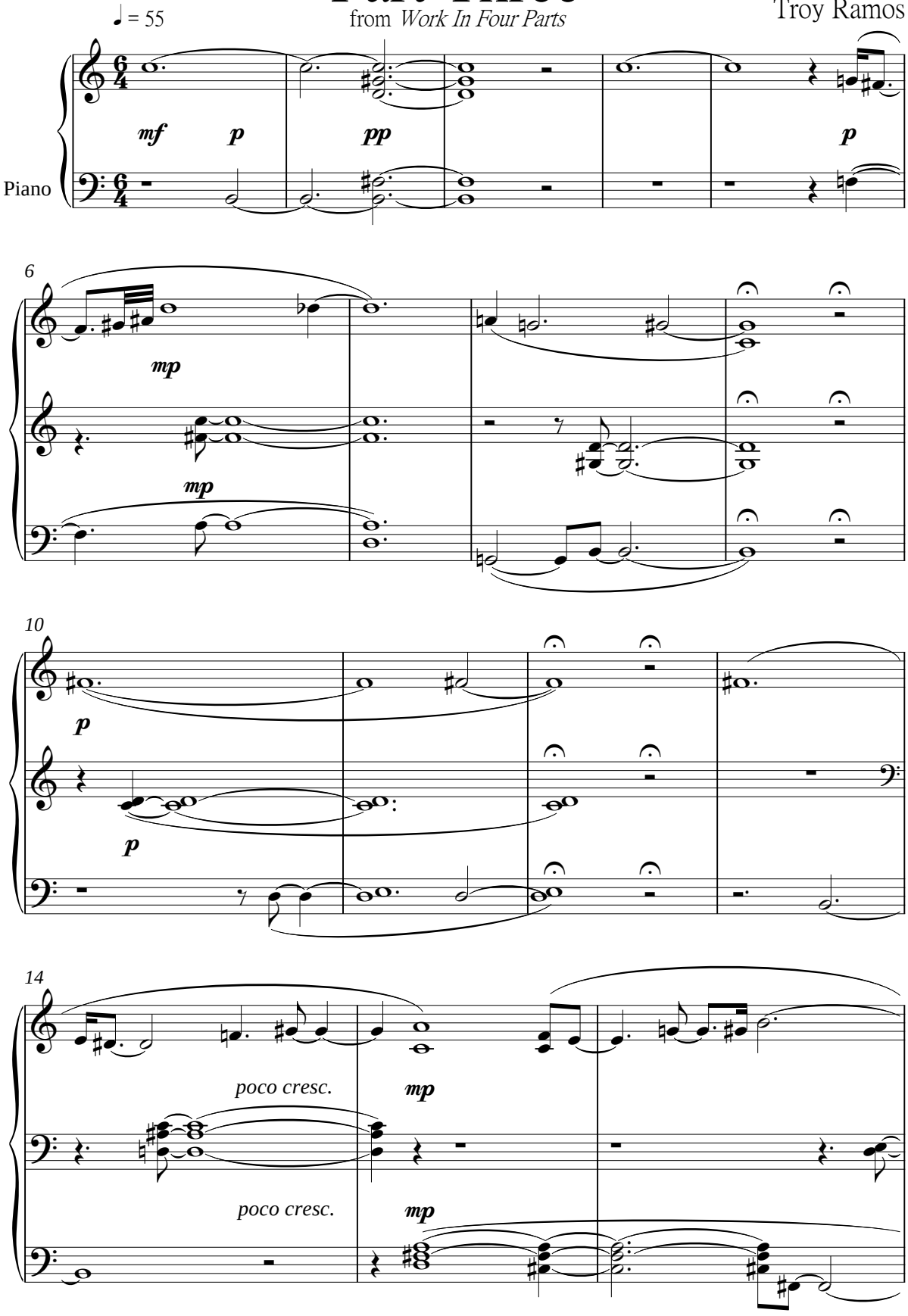
The pianist may, of course, roll any notes or chords, wherever necessary, to accommodate their reach. Also, whenever there is a dynamic marking that indicates a *cresc.* or a *dim.,* and it is placed in between played notes, it's simply an indication to the pianist that the next played note should be whatever amount softer or louder, accordingly. Also, in only a few instances the music moves to three staves, which is done only to relieve congestion that might arise from putting the music on two staves.

It should also be mentioned that, although the diagram above accurately depicts the order in which the Parts should be played, i.e. 1-2, and then going back is 3-4, it is also okay if the player wishes to begin the piece from the other direction. So, instead of playing Parts 1-2-3-4 in order, the pianist may also begin the work by starting in the other direction, i.e. 3-4-1-2.

Part Three

from *Work In Four Parts*

Troy Ramos



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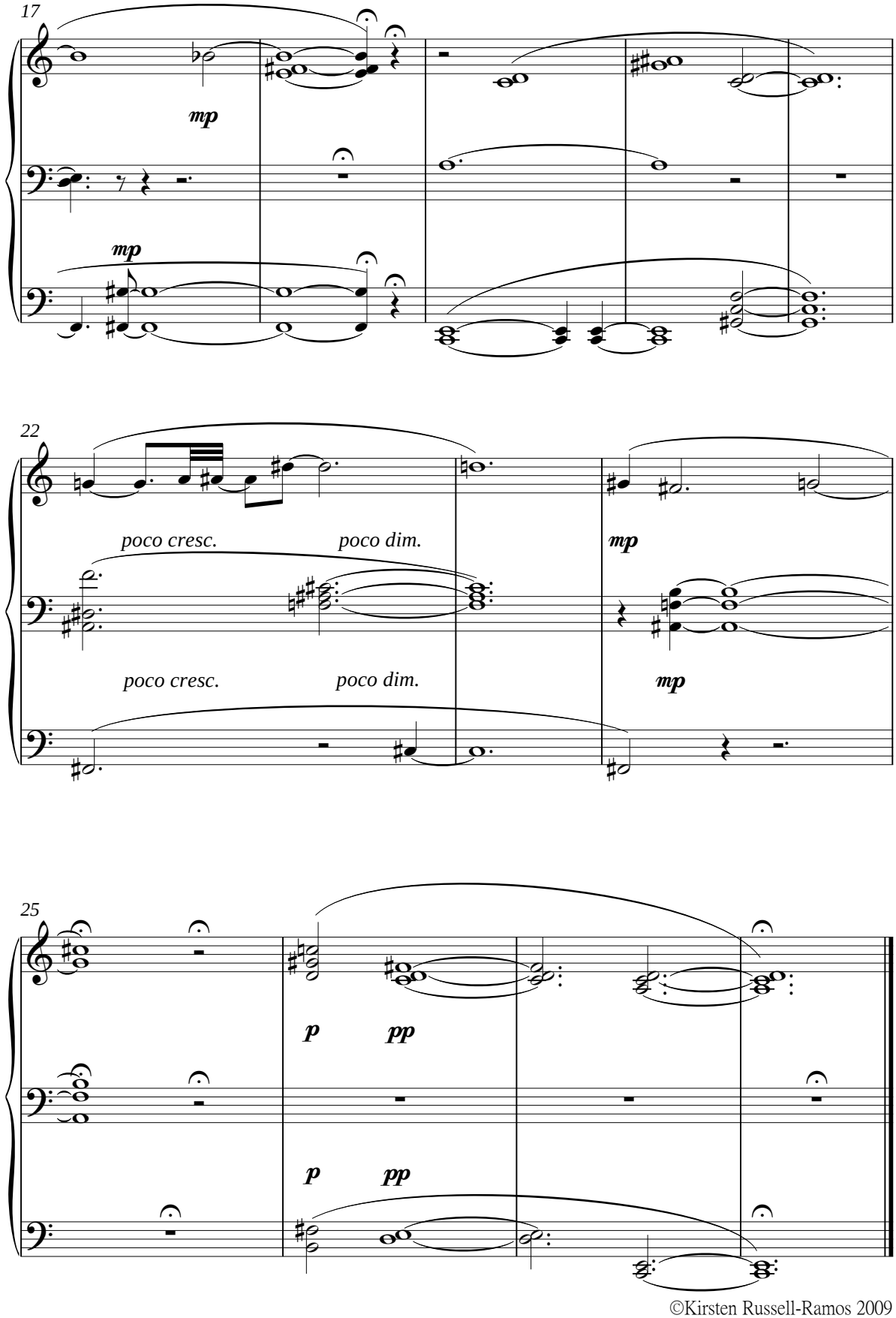

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Part Four

from *Work In Four Parts*

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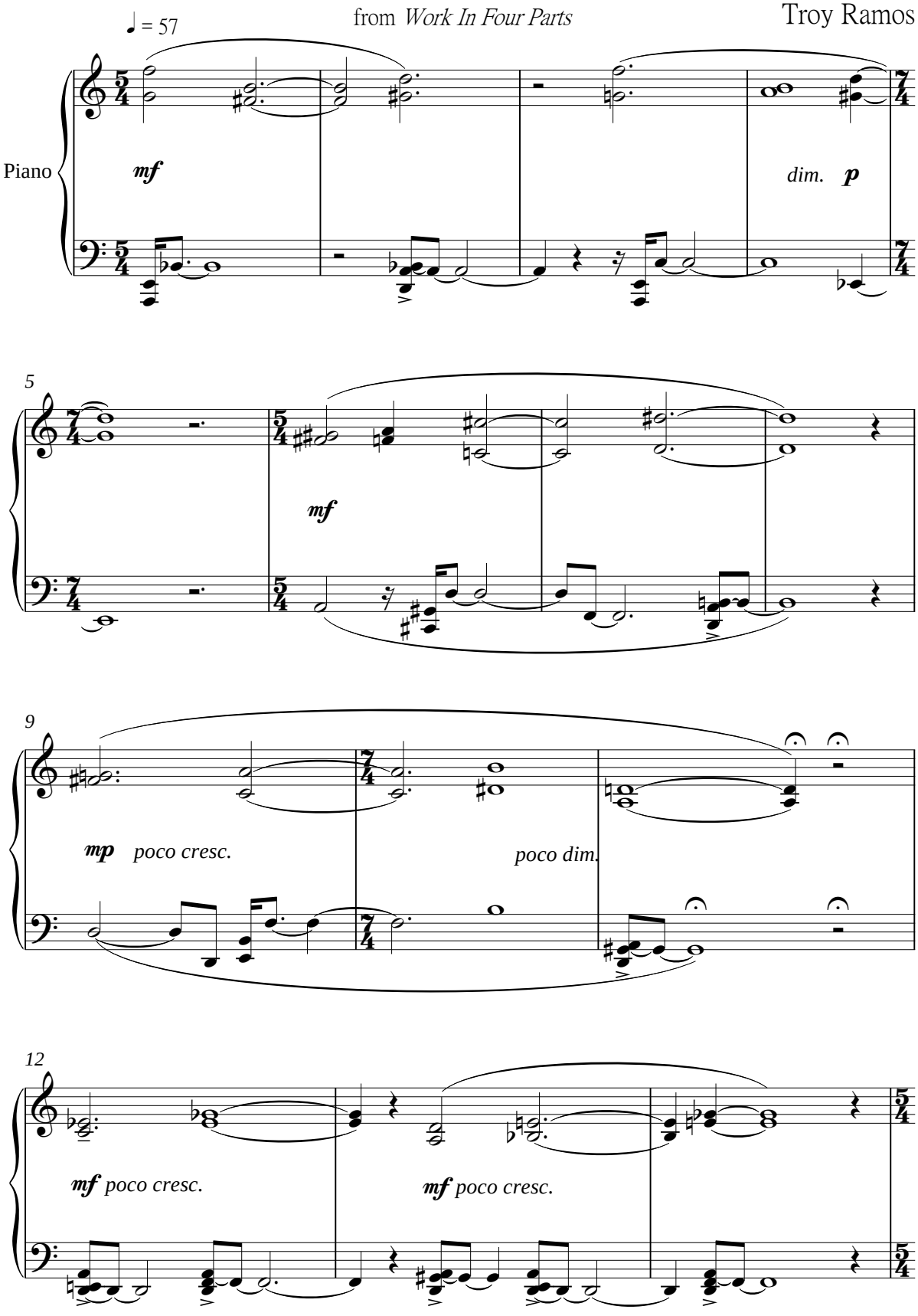

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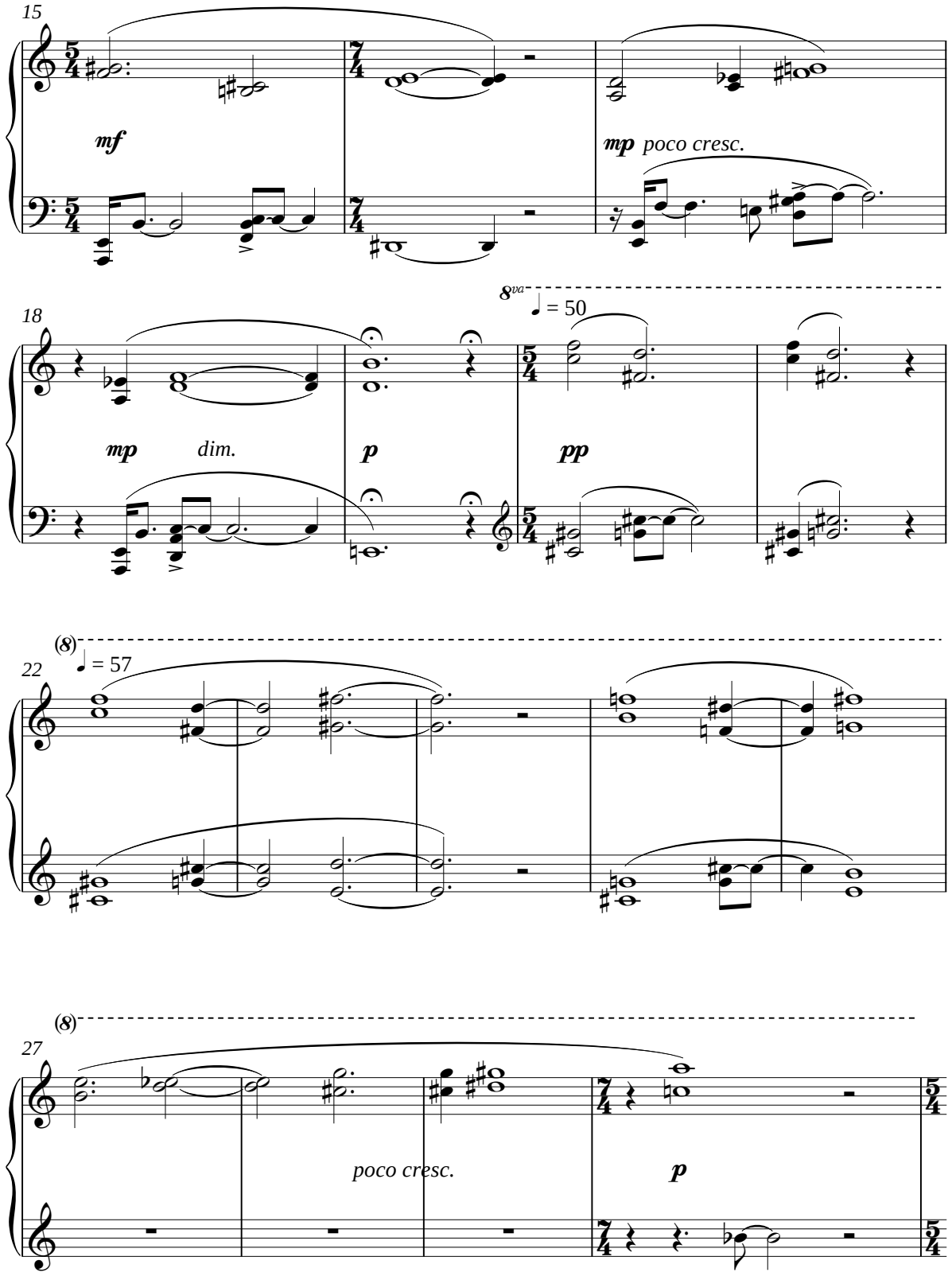

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