Thirty for Grace

for speaking pianist

Ian Pace

For Grace Hom

Composed in 2019

Performance Instructions

The pianist is required to speak throughout, reading a series of numbers (from 0 to 29) in Cantonese. These should be delivered in an audible ‘stage whisper’, always clear.

The piece should be played in a generally hushed manner throughout, though with care taken in terms of the small dynamic variations and momentarily louder material, which may be imagined as akin to the sounds of sirens over the music, while in bars 15 and 25, the accented chords should be played in a ‘spikey’ manner, protruding from the texture.

First Performance: City, University of London, 13 May 2019.
Ian Pace, piano.

Programme Note

Thirty for Grace, which was written to celebrate Grace Hom's 30th birthday, is a direct response to Skempton's *One for Molly*, which I knew through William A.P.M. was one of Grace's favourite pieces, alongside *Campanella 3*, Finnissy's arrangement of 'Love is here to stay', and Pascal Dusapin's Sixth *Étude* for piano. Permutations, re-arrangements and mutations of the pitch material in the Skempton pieces are used to generate a basic 'thread' which runs through the piece, during which the pianist also counts from 0 to 30 in Cantonese, Grace's language and a homage to Walter Zimmermann's piano piece *When I'm Eighty-Four*, which employs a similar strategy in Japanese. Part of the piece also configures some of this material in the manner of the verse of the Finnissy (with 'inserts' derived from potent moments in the chorus), together with some rather urgent overlays alluding to Dusapin.

Happy Birthday Grace – I hope you enjoy this!

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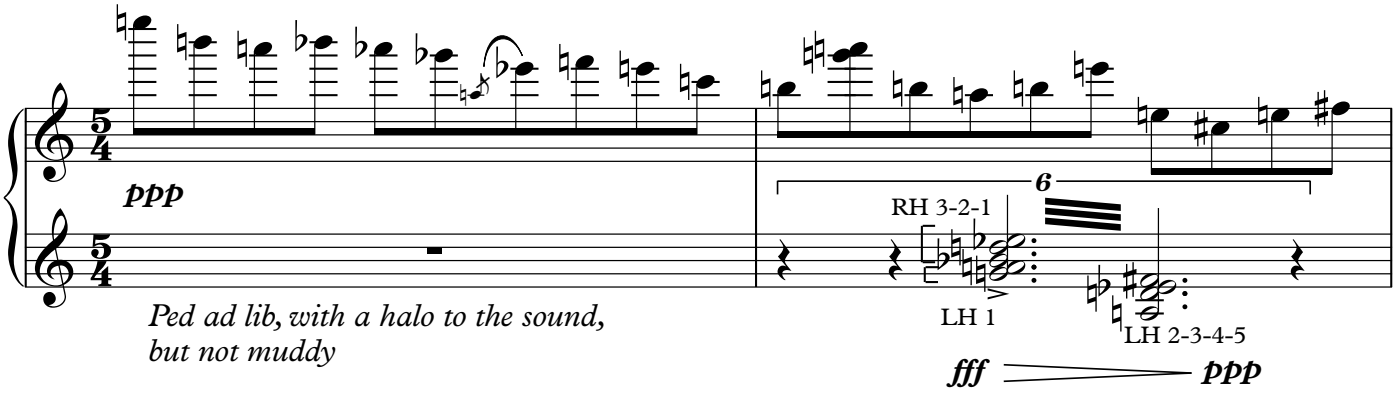
For Grace Hom

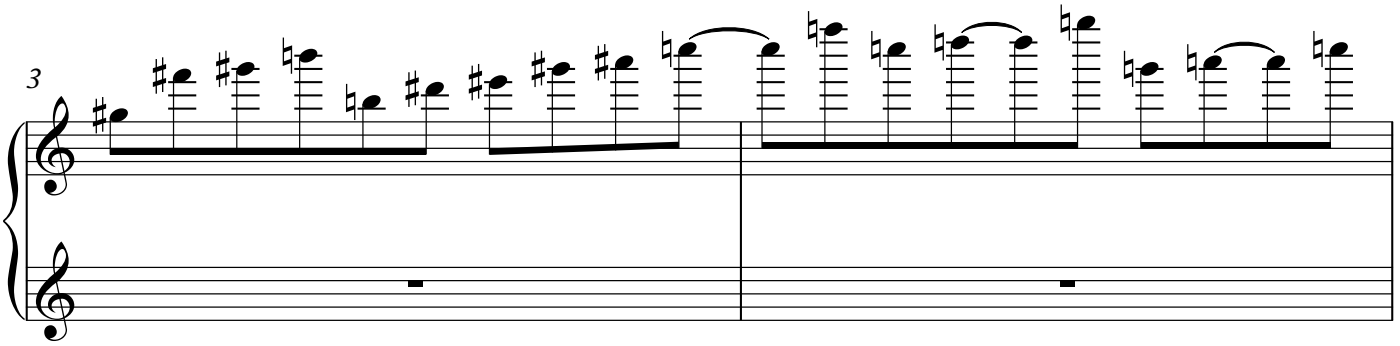
Thirty for Grace

Hushed but with some motion, ♩ = 60

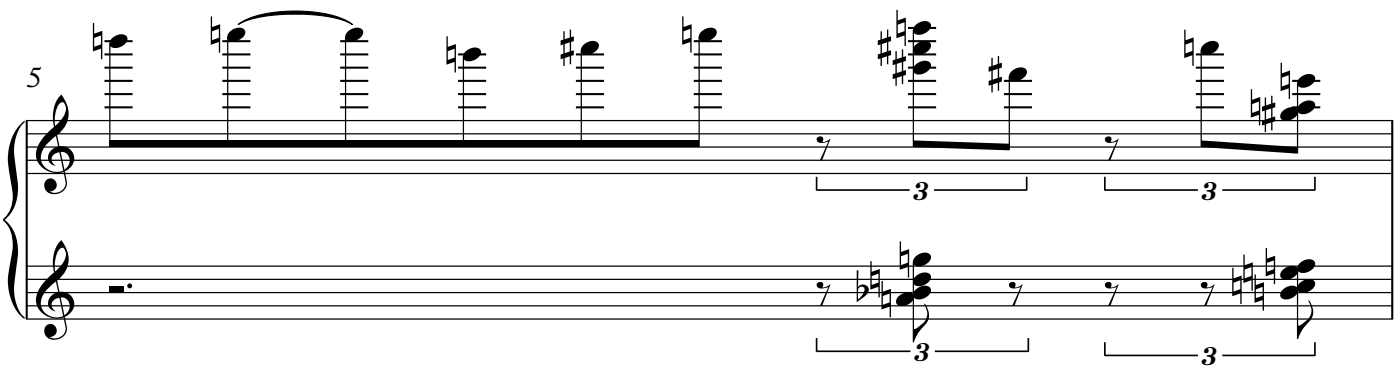
Spoken/
whispered: lihng yat Ian Pace



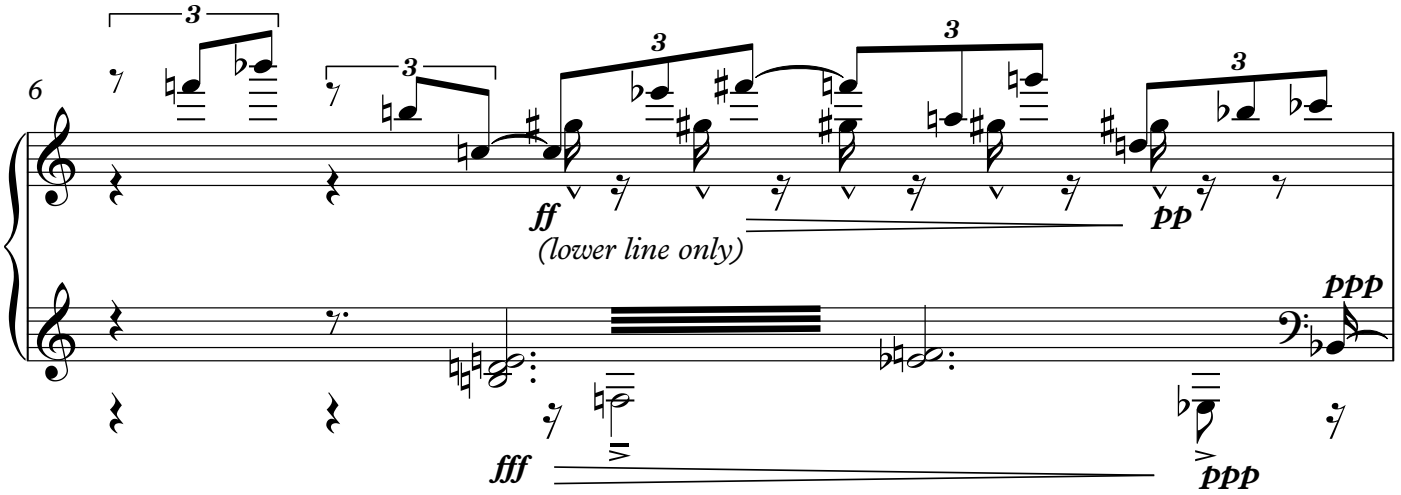
yih sàam



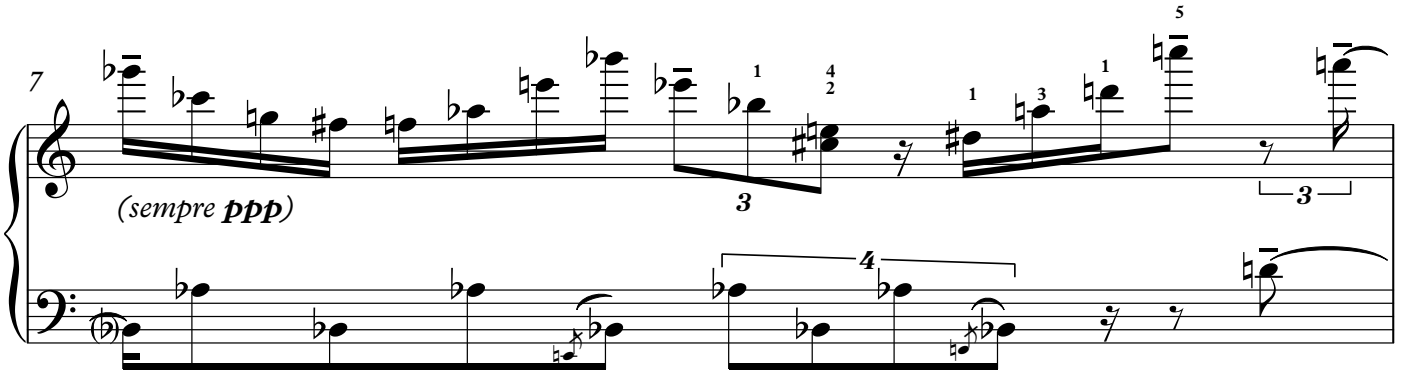
sei



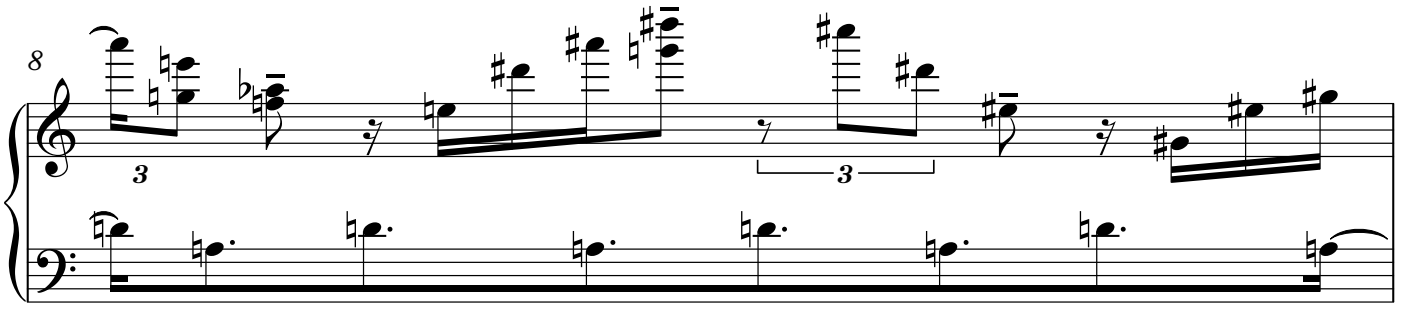
ngh



luhk

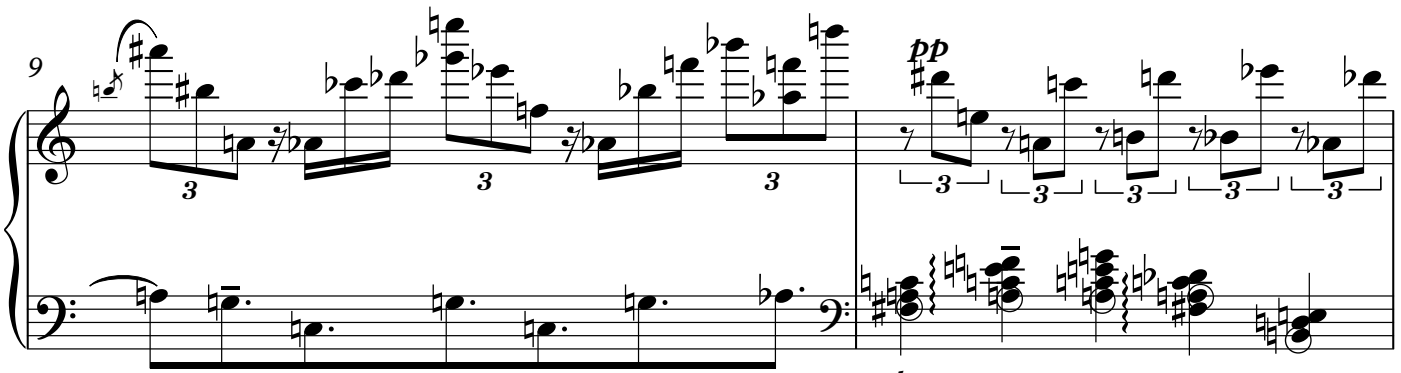


chat

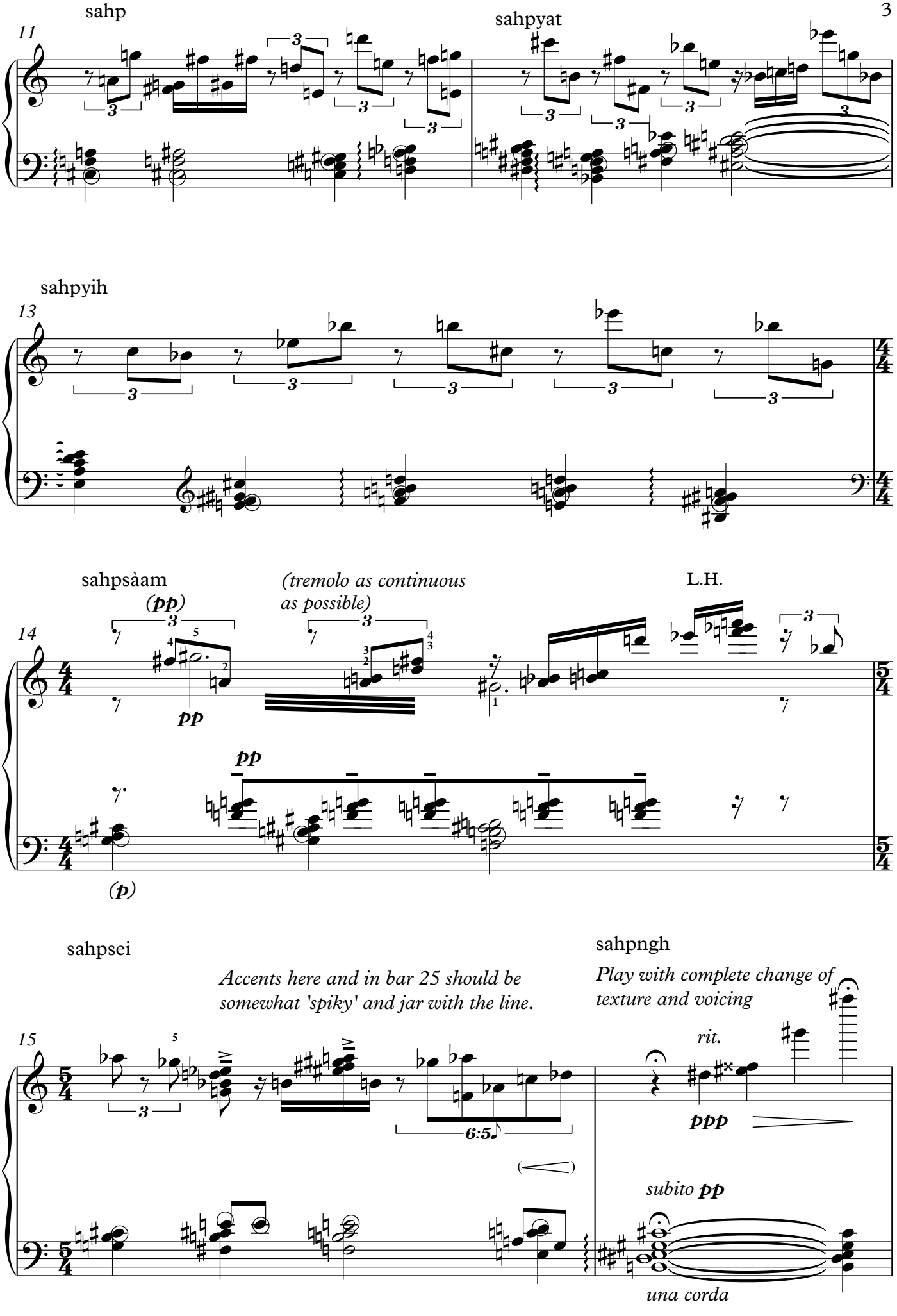


baat

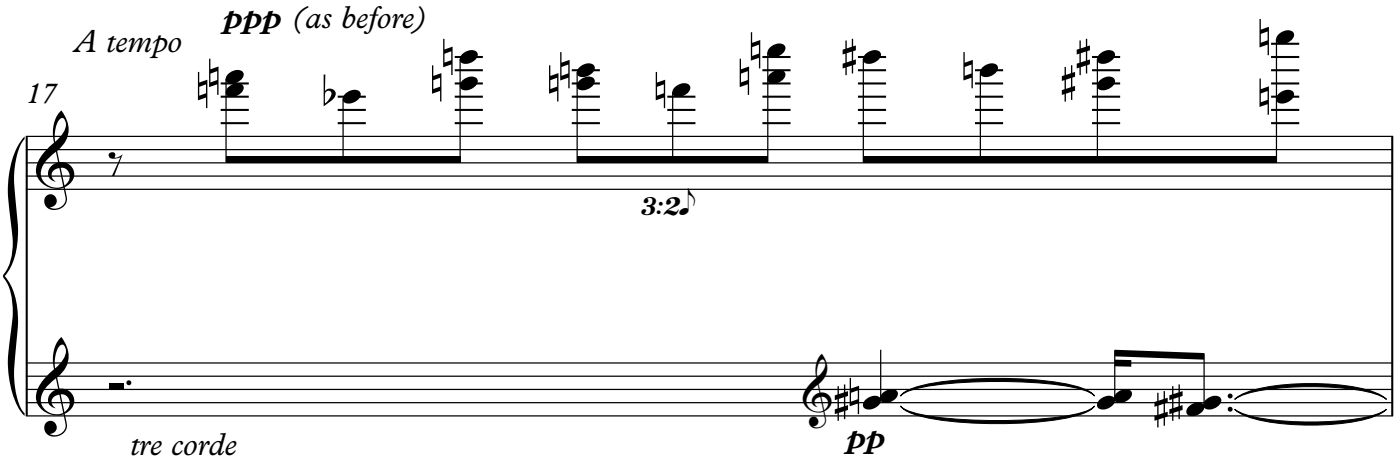
gáu



p marc.
(*very slight emphasis on circled notes, not like a Hauptstimme*)

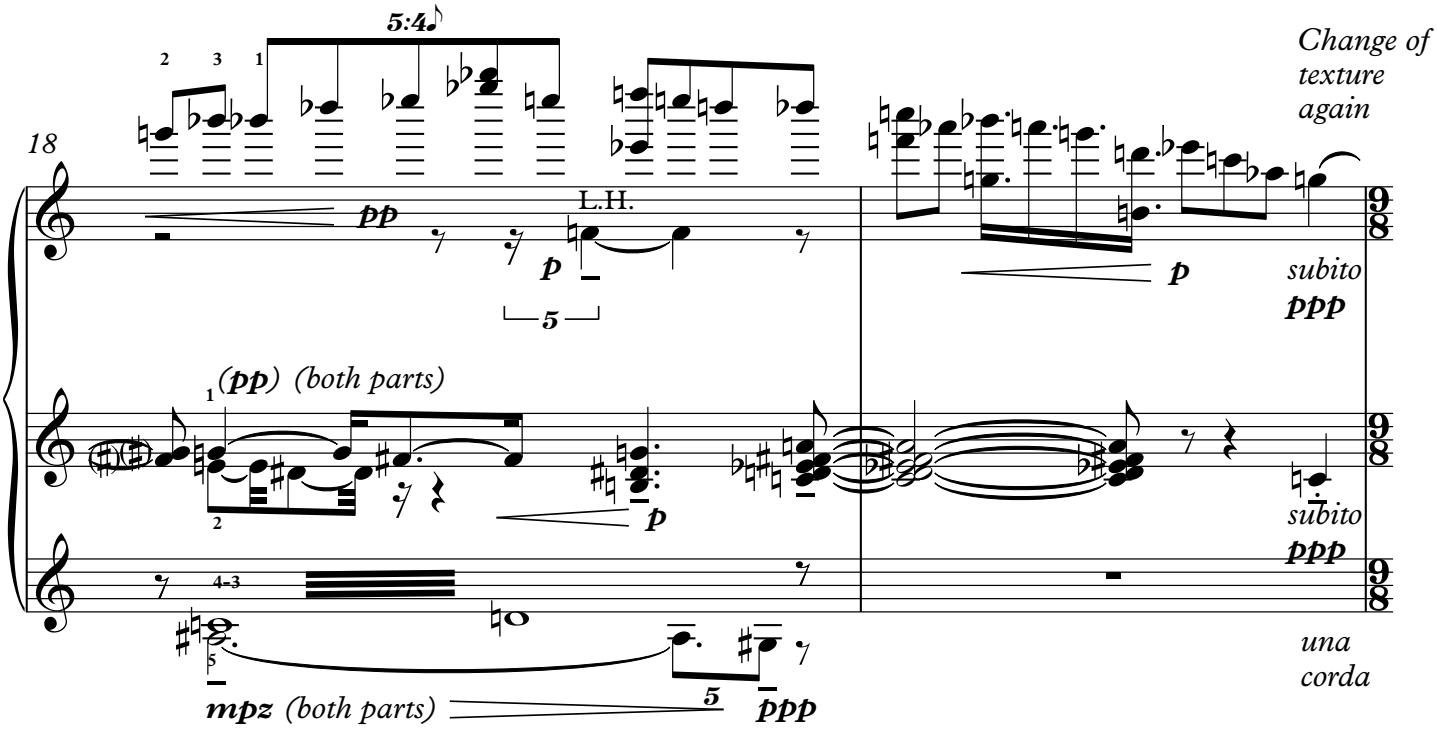

sahp
sahpyat
11
sahpyih
13
sahpsàam
(pp)
(tremolo as continuous as possible)
L.H.
14
pp
pp
(p)
sahpsei
Accents here and in bar 25 should be somewhat 'spiky' and jar with the line.
sahpngh
Play with complete change of texture and voicing
15
6:5
rit.
ppp
subito pp
una corda

sahpluhk



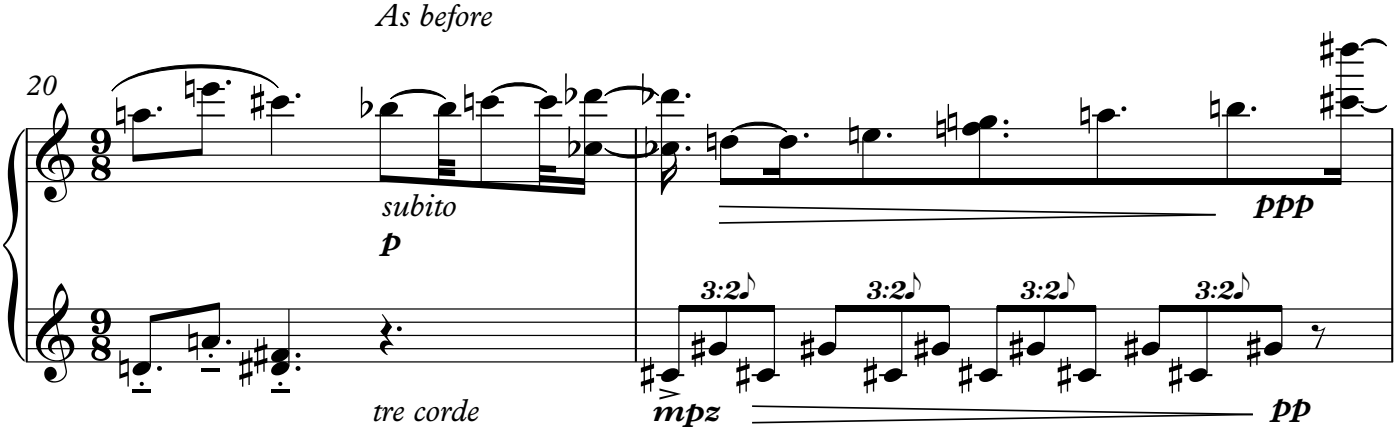
sahpchat

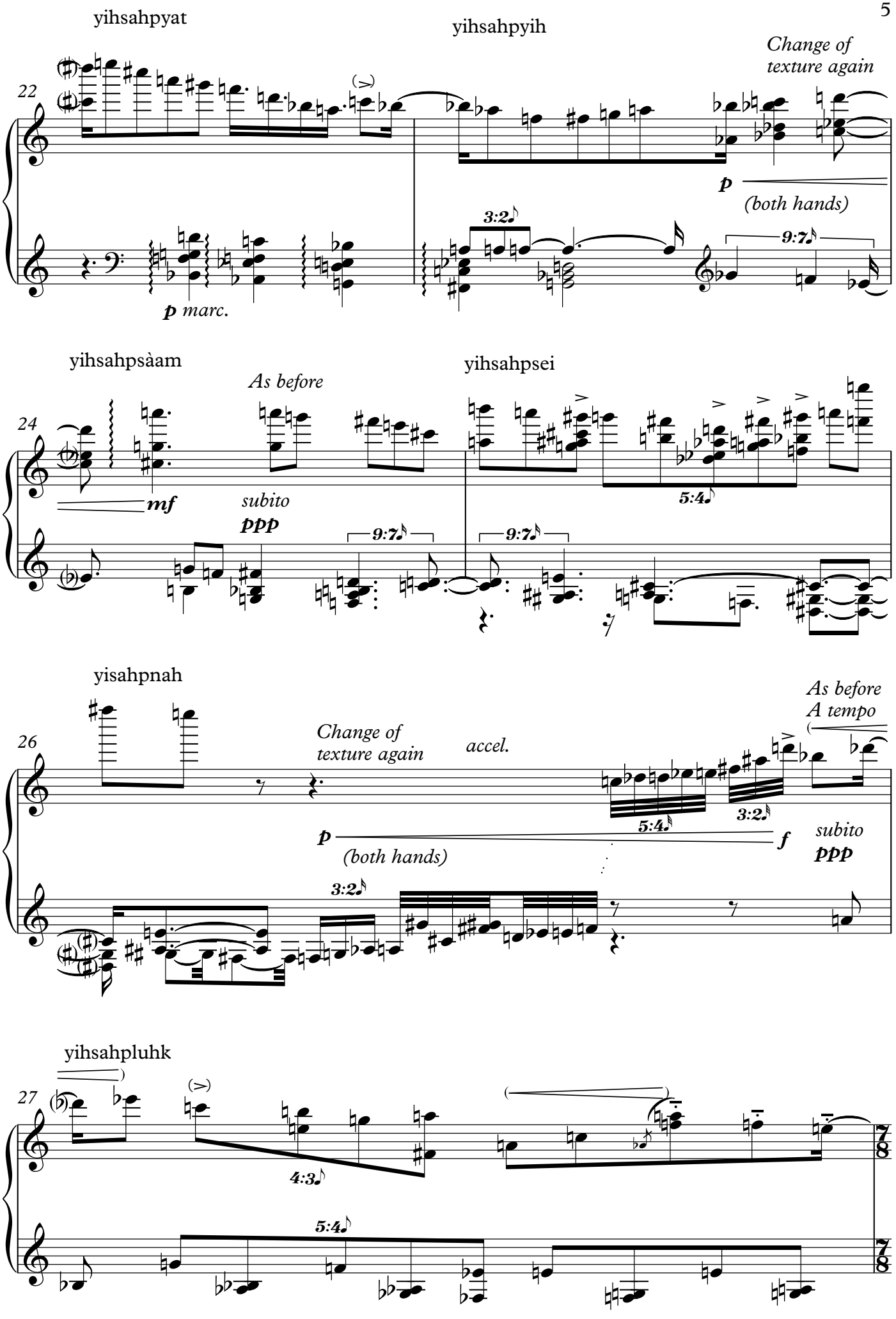
sahpbaat



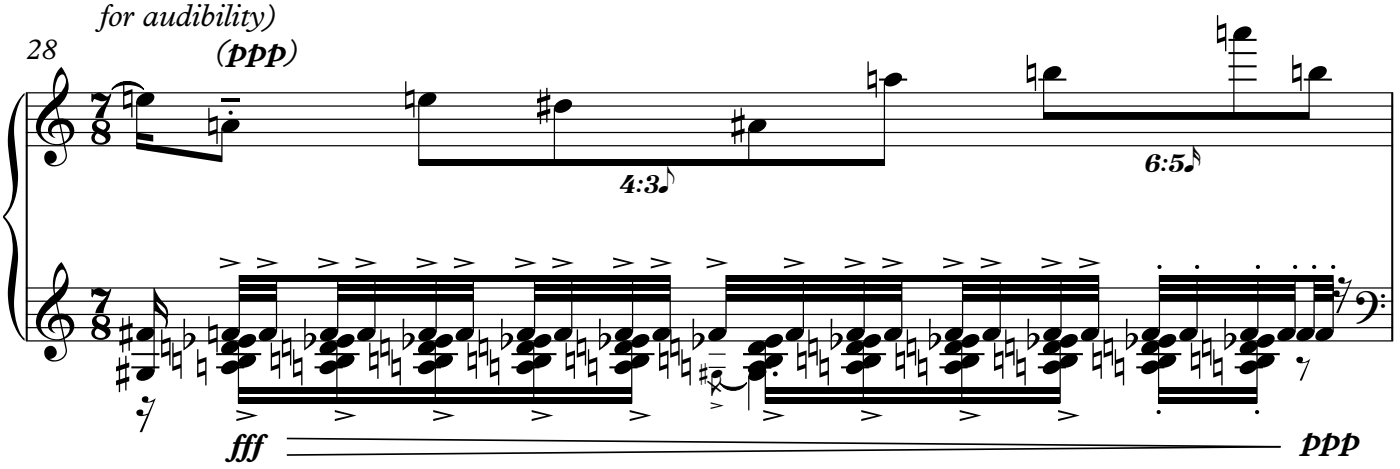
sahpgáu

yihsahp



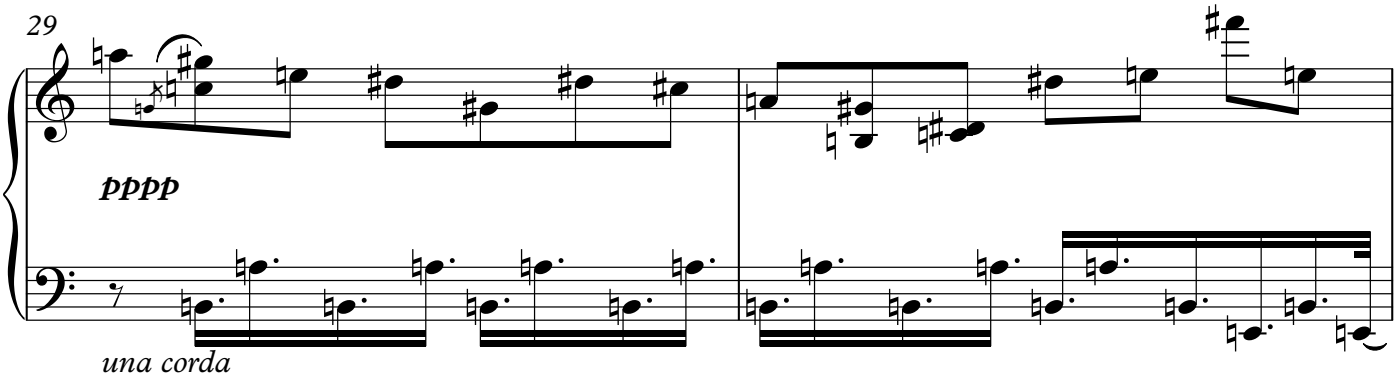
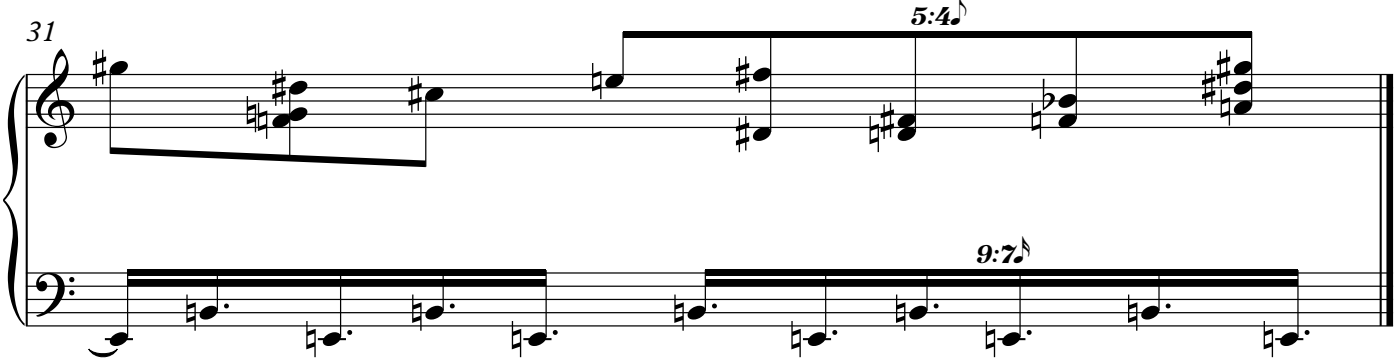

yihsahpyat
yihsahpyih
Change of texture again
22
p
(both hands)
p marc.
3:2
9:7
yihsahpsàam
yihsahpsei
As before
24
mf
subito
ppp
5:4
9:7
yisahpnah
As before
A tempo
26
Change of texture again
accel.
p
(both hands)
f
subito
ppp
3:2
5:4
yihsahpluhk
27
4:3
5:4
7/8
7/8

yihsahpchat
(can be spoken slightly earlier for audibility)



yihsahpbaat

yihsahpgáu



sàamsahp