Ari Ben-Shabetai

THREE ROMANCES FOR PIANO

The title "Romances", chosen by Ari Ben-Shabetai for these three piano pieces, refers to the Romances of Robert Schumann, a composer who redefined the basic concept of this particular genre. Previously, the Romance was generally known as a relatively short, slow, lyrical song, often containing a refrain, or alternatively, an instrumental "song without words" (indeed the French title for Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* is "***Romances*** *sans Parole* "). Schumann's Romances revolutionize the term, in that they draw on the literary model of this genre, which is one of the most important sources of the Romantic movement in the 19th century, well known for it's fantastic adventure sagas such as Swift's "Gulliver", Servantes' "Don Quixote", Carol's "Alice in Wonderland" and many more literary creations which deal with the unreal, fantastic, exotic and remote worlds, often "spiced - up" with a strong element of nostalgia for the distant past.
These characterizations of the literary Romance, are musically apparent both in Schumann's Romances (for example Op. 28) and, following his model, in Ben - Shabetai's Romances, by the echoing of distant sounds, extended — almost "exaggerated" — chromaticism, syncopated rhythms and strongly contrasting sections which make up each complete Romance. More specifically, here, in his Three Romances for piano, Ari Ben - Shabetai evokes memories of "exotic" musical styles from the past, while placing them side by side in clashing contrast. There is a constant "stylistic pendulum" within these pieces, swinging back and fourth from any specific type of 20th century "modernism" (atonality, politonality, polymetric asymmetry, octatonicism etc.) to any particular form of extended chromatic "tonality" as one would find in the music of Wagner, Liszt, late Richard Strauss, Mahler, Scriabin & Ravel.

The work was written for the composer's wife, Israeli pianist Liora Ziv-Li, who gave it's first performance in a recital at Wigmore Hall, London in June 1986.

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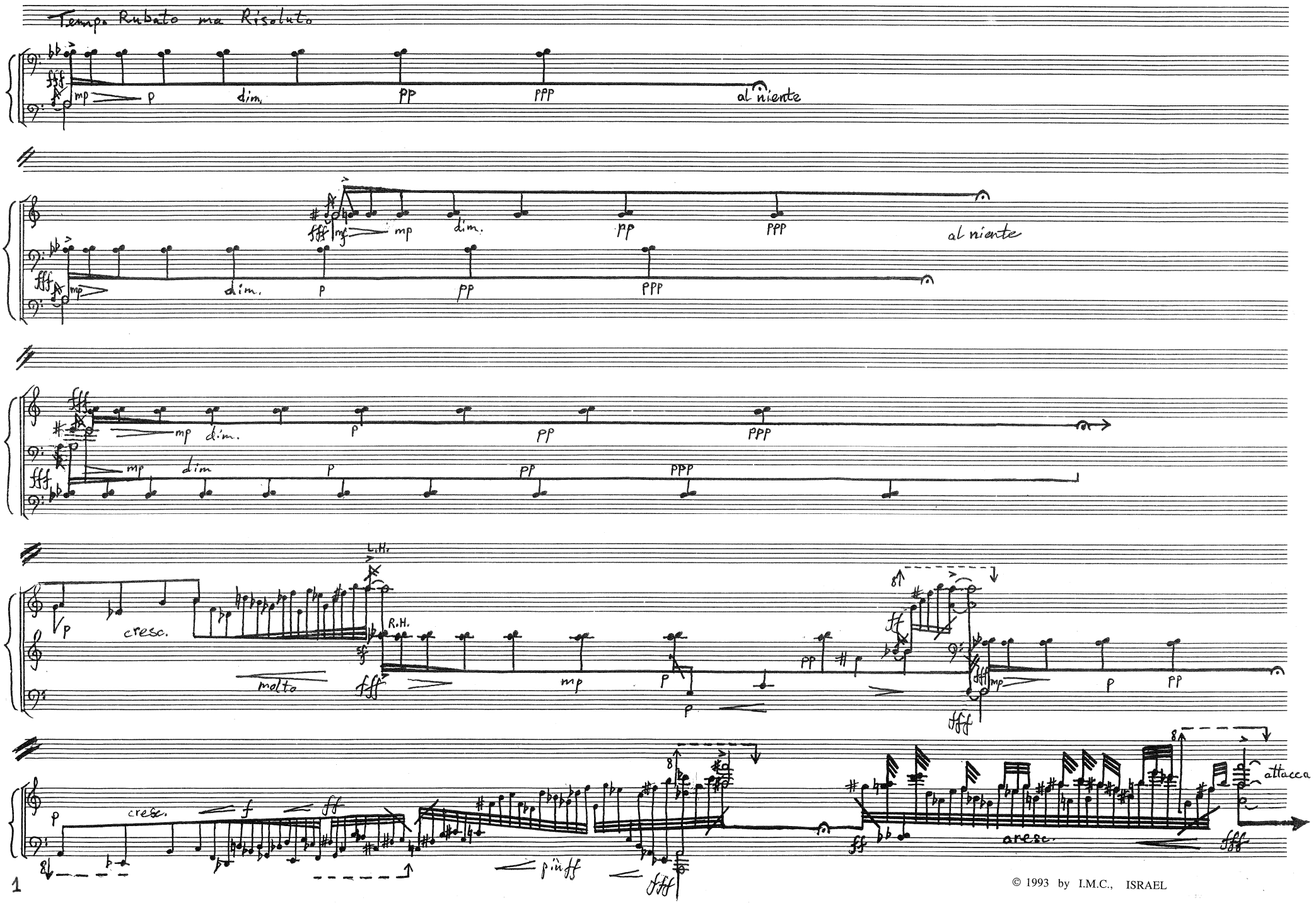
3 ROMANCES

for my dear wife - Liora Ziv-Li

Ari Ben-Shabetai



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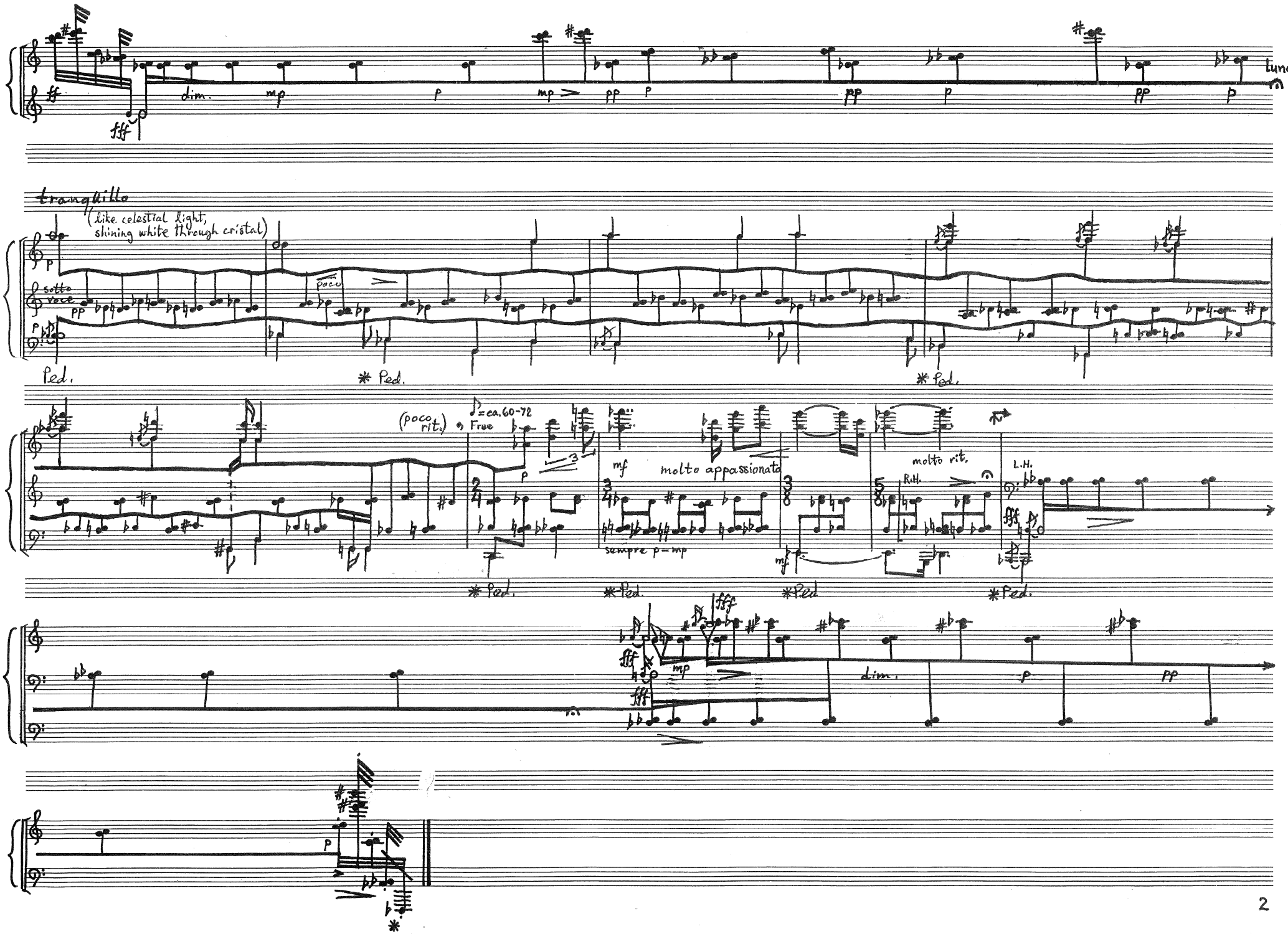
dim.
mp
p
mp
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
lunga
tranquillo
(like celestial light, shining white through cristal)
sotto voce
poco
Ped.
* Ped.
* Ped.
(poco rit.)
♪=ca.60-72
Free
mf
molto appassionata
sempre p-mp
molto rit.
R.H.
L.H.
* Ped.
* Ped.
* Ped.
* Ped.
mp
dim.
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