Rhetorical Devices: Definitions and Examples

"Starkle, starkle little twink
How I wonder what you think.
Up above the sky so high,
Shining like a lightbulb."
Don Powell

Isocolon - a figure of speech or sentence having a parallel structure formed by the use of two or more clauses of similar length

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust
"Finders, keepers; losers, weepers"
"Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country."

Hypophera – asking a question and immediately answering it

You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory. Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory, there is no survival. Winston Churchill

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. Martin Luther King, Jr

What did I tell you? No shoes in the house!

Tricolon - a group of three similar phrases, words, clauses, or sentences (sometimes with an extender or climax)

"Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn."
Benjamin Franklin

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Superman

Friends, Romans, Countrymen

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Truth, Justice and the American Way

Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou, Romeo

The good, the bad, and the ugly

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness

Theme and Variations – I don't think this needs to be defined!

"This is Just to Say" by William Carlos Williams:

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

Four Variations by Kenneth Koch

1

I chopped down the house that you had been saving to live in next summer.
I am sorry, but it was morning, and I had nothing to do
and its wooden beams were so inviting.

2

We laughed at the hollyhocks together
and then I sprayed them with lye.
Forgive me. I simply do not know what I am doing.

3

I gave away the money that you had been saving to live on for the next ten years.
The man who asked for it was shabby
and the firm March wind on the porch was so juicy and cold.

4

Last evening we went dancing and I broke your leg.
Forgive me. I was clumsy, and
I wanted you here in the wards, where I am the doctor!

Anaphora- repetition of a word or expression at the beginning of successive phrases (changes mood and tone, and/or emphasis)

Jack be nimble,
Jack be quick,
Jack jump over a candlestick

"It was the best of times, **it was** the worst of times, **it was** the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness**, it was** the epoch of belief, **it was** the epoch of incredulity**, it was** the season of Light, **it was** the season of Darkness, **it was** the spring of hope**, it was** the winter of despair." – Tale of Two Cities, Dickens

"**we cannot** dedicate—**we cannot** consecrate—**we cannot** hallow—this ground." Abraham Lincoln

Enjambment - the continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line, couplet, or stanza.

But, while he was shouting, he saw with surprise
That the moon of the evening was starting **to rise**
Up over his head in the darkening skies.
"What's THAT?" snorted Yertle. "Say, what **IS that thing**
That dares to be higher than Yertle the King?
I shall not allow it! I'll go higher still!
I'll build my throne higher! I can and I will!
I'll call some more turtles. I'll stack 'em to heaven!
I need 'bout five thousand, six hundred and seven!"
From "Yertle the Turtle" – Dr. Seuss

The Night was creeping on the ground!
She crept, and did not ***make a sound***
Until she *reached the tree:* ***And then***
She covered it*, and stole again.*
Along the grass beside the wall!
—I heard the rustling ***of her shawl***
As she threw *blackness everywhere*
Along the sky, the ground, the air...
"Check" - James Stephens

To be, or not to be—that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the **mind to suffer**
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
William Shakespeare, Hamlet

Antanaclasis - The repeated use of the same word or phrase, but with a different meaning each time

Syllepsis - a figure of speech in which a word is applied to two others in different senses or to two others of which it grammatically suits only one

Catachresis - The misuse or strained use of words, as in a mixed metaphor, occurring either in error or for rhetorical effect.

I hit a **bat** with a **bat**

Caught the train and a bad cold

Neither they nor it is working

She was very **upset** her team had been **upset** in the playoffs.

"The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep"
Stopping by Woods on Snowy Evening, Robert Frost

"Time **flies** like an arrow; fruit **flies** like a banana"

"If you aren't **fired with enthusiasm**, you will be **fired, with enthusiasm**."—
Vince Lombardi, American football coach

Last night I said these words to my girl
I know you never even try girl
Come on (come on) (repeat)
Please, please me, whoa, yeah, like I please you

You don't need me to show the way, love
Why do I always have to say, love
Come on (come on)
Please, please me, whoa, yeah, like I please you

I don't want to sound complaining
But you know there's always rain in my heart (in my heart)
I do all the pleasing with you
It's so hard to reason with you
Whoa, yeah, why do you make me blue?

Last night I said these words to my girl
I know you never even try, girl
Come on (come on)
Please, please me, whoa, yeah, like I please you
Whoa yeah, like I please you"
Please, please me" – Beatles

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest–
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men–
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

Julius Ceasar - Shakespeare

Musical Illustrations of Rhetorical Devices

Isocolon
Musette in G – Bach (mm 1-4/mm. 5-8)
Toccatina – Kabalevsky (mm 1-4/mm. 5-6)
Sonatina/i – Bartok (mm 9-10/mm. 11-12)
The Separation – Glinka (mm 9-12/mm 13-16)
Sonata in F minor, Op. 57/i – Beethoven (mm 1-2mm 3-4)

Hypophera
Mary had a little lamb (compare phrase 1 with phrase 2)
Ode to Joy – Beethoven (compare phrase 1 with phrase 2)
Gavotte in G Major, HWV 491 – Handel (mm 9-10/mm11-12)
In Evening Air – Copland (mm 24-26)
Starry Night – Liebermann (mm 1-4/mm 5-8)
Sonata in C minor, Op. 13/iii – Beethoven (mm 1-4/mm 5-8)
Ballade #4 – Chopin (mm 9-10/mm 11-12)

Tricolon
Schlummlerlied “Cradle Song” Op. 101, #6 – Gurlitt (mm 9 – 13)
In Evening Air – Copland (mm 19-26)
Four Anniversaries #1 “For Felicia Montealegre” – Leonard Bernstein (mm 6-12)
Sonata in C minor, Op. 13/ii – Beethoven (mm 37-44)
Prelude in B minor, Op. 32 #10 – Rachmaninoff (mm 1-4)
Etude-tableaux in C minor, Op. 33 #3 – Rachmaninoff (mm 1-4)

Anaphora
Drifting Clouds – Gillock (mm 1,5,9,17)
Sonata in C Major, Op. 36 #1/iii – Clementi (mm 1, 5, 9, 13 etc….)
Sonatina in F Major, op. 257 #2/iv – Lack (pick up to mm 1,2,3,5,6,7…)
Andaluza – Granados (mm 54-64)
Waltz in B minor, Op. 69 #2 – Chopin (pick up to mm 1,3,5,9,11,13 etc)

Enjambment
Drifting Clouds – William Gillock (mm 16-17)
Ballade – Burgmüller (mm 35-45)
To a Wild Rose – MacDowell (mm 9-16)
Starry Night – Liebermann (mm 18-21)
Arabesque #1 – Debussy (mm 38-39)

Antanaclasis/Syllepsis/Catachresis
Fairy Tale - Kabalevsky (mm 23-24)
Waltz in A minor, Op Posthumous – Chopin (mm 40-41)
Little Troll, Op. 79 #3 – Grieg (mm 21-36)
Nocturne in G minor, Op. 15 #3 - Chopin (mm 85-88)
Intermezzo, Op. 118 #2 – Brahms (mm 48-49)
Trio in E-flat, Op. 1 #1/iv – Beethoven (mm 337-342)

ISOCOLON

phrase 1

Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach
18th century

Moderato

mf

phrase 2

mp

mf

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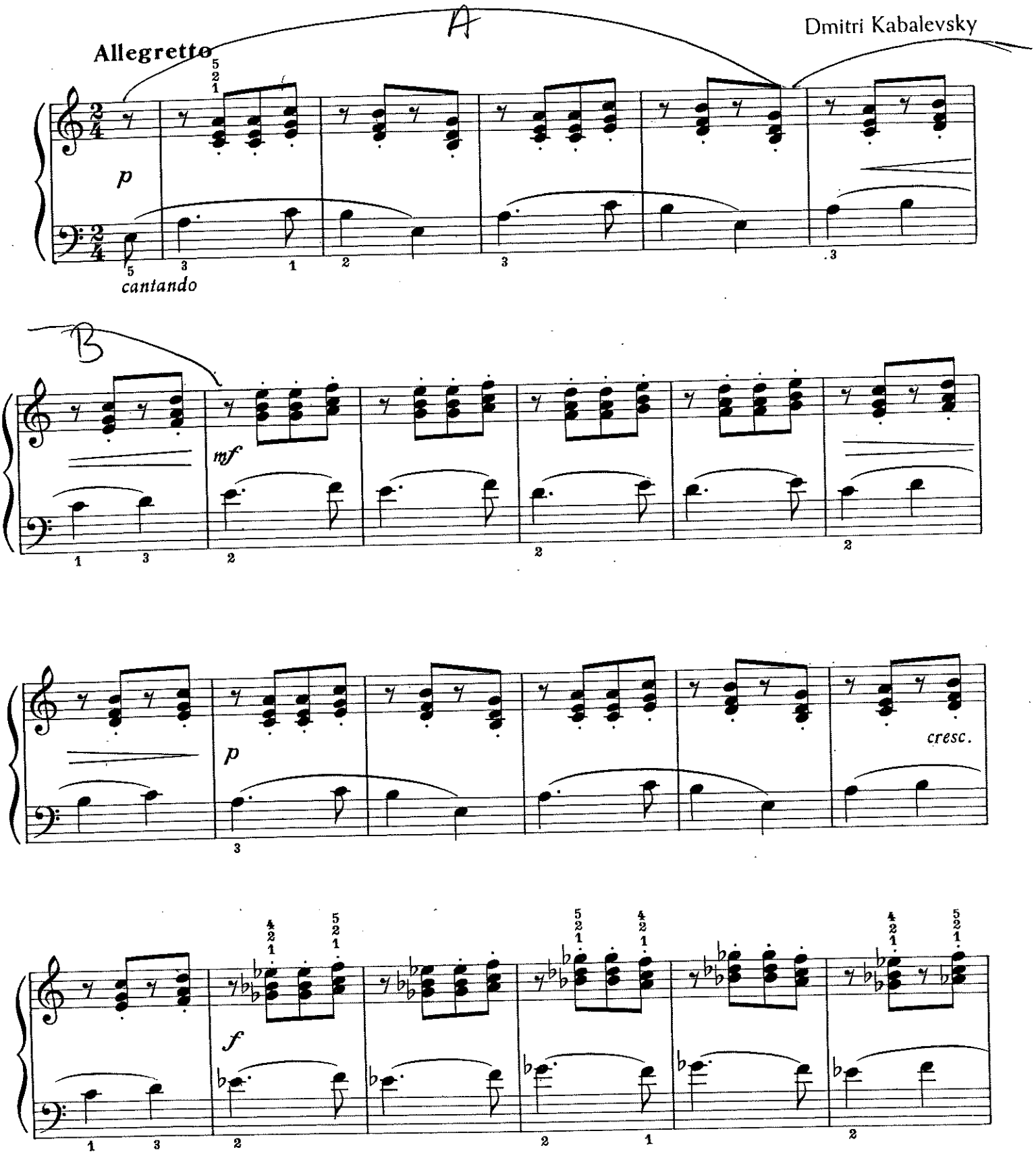
Toccatina

Dmitri Kabalevsky



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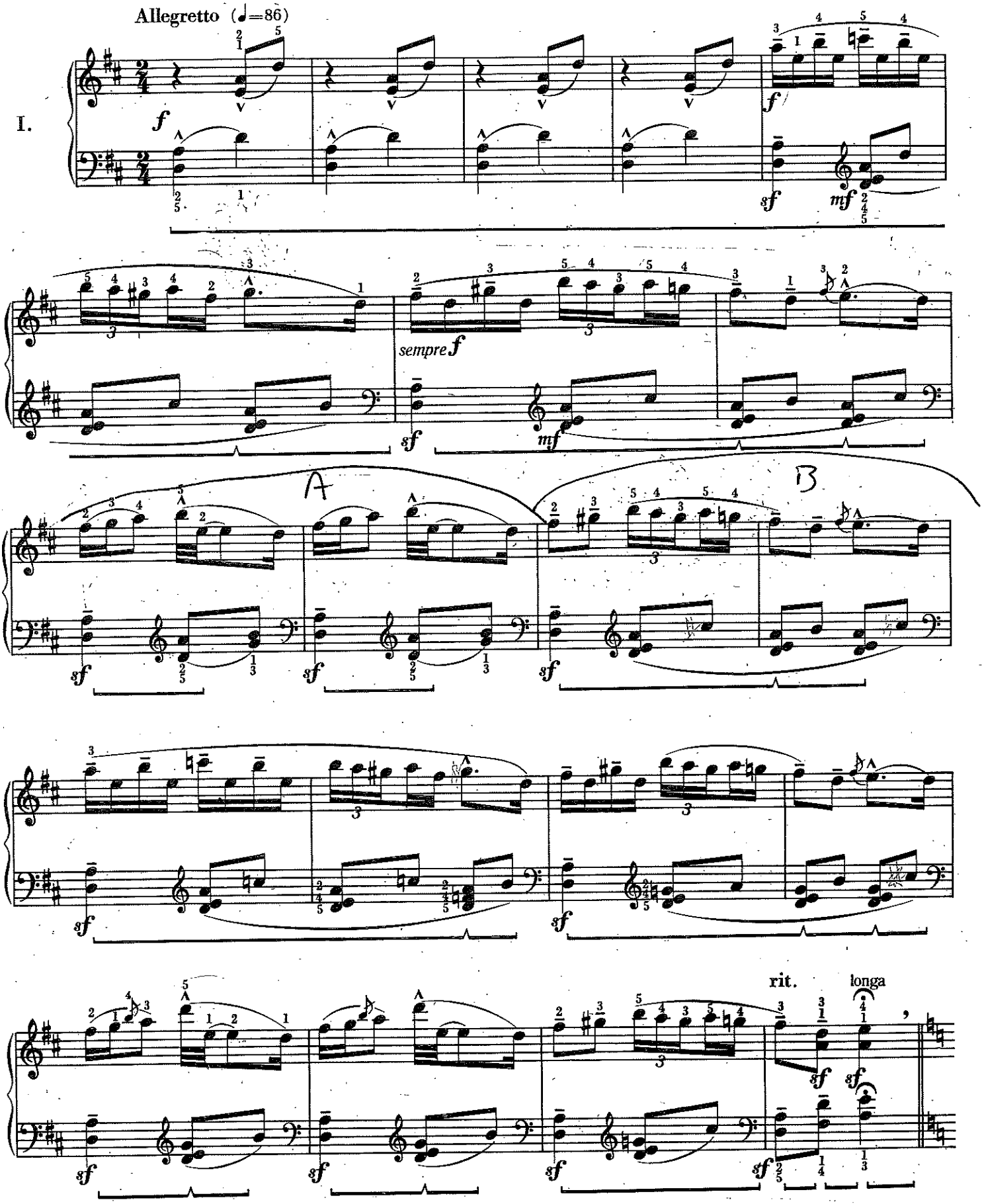
SONATINA

(BAGPIPERS DUDELSACKPFEIFER)

BÉLA BARTÓK



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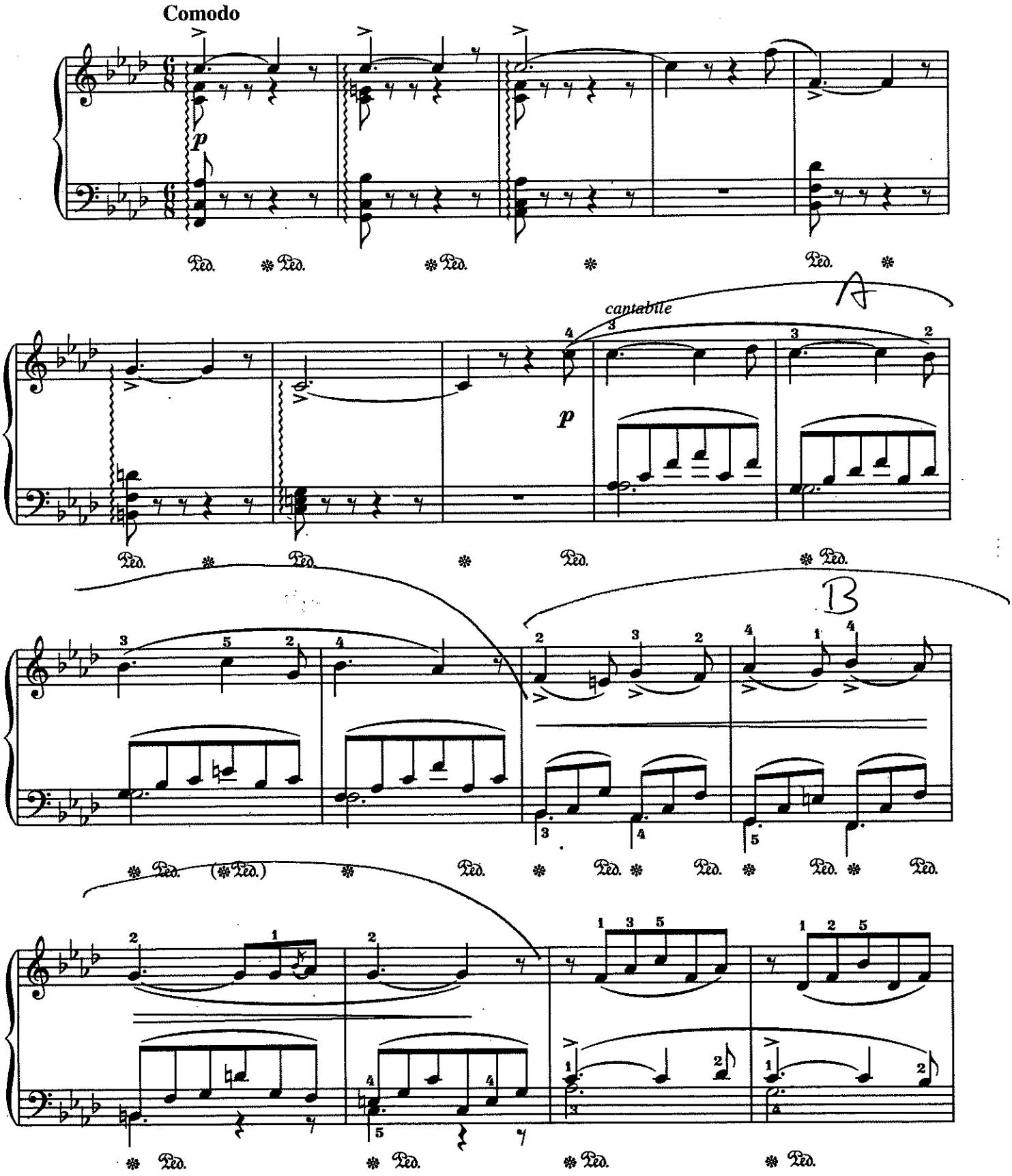
РАЗЛУКА
Ноктюрн

LA SÉPARATION (PARTING)
Nocturne

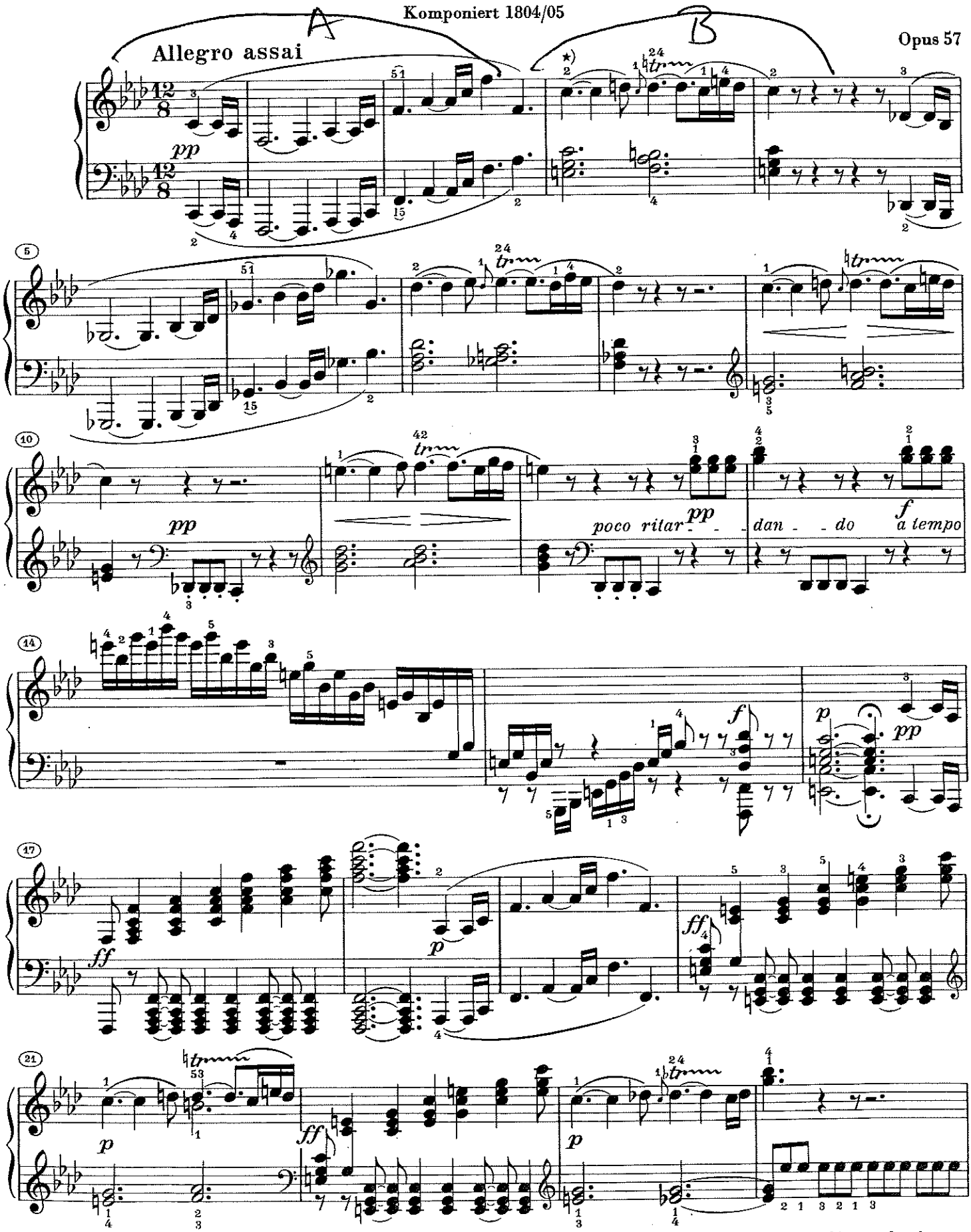


SONATE

Dem Grafen Franz von Brunsvik gewidmet

Komponiert 1804/05

Opus 57



*) Beim zweiten Teil des 1. Themas u. den folgenden, diesem entnommenen Stellen ist in Eigenschrift

*) In second part of 1st theme and the following passages based thereon, the slurs in autogr.

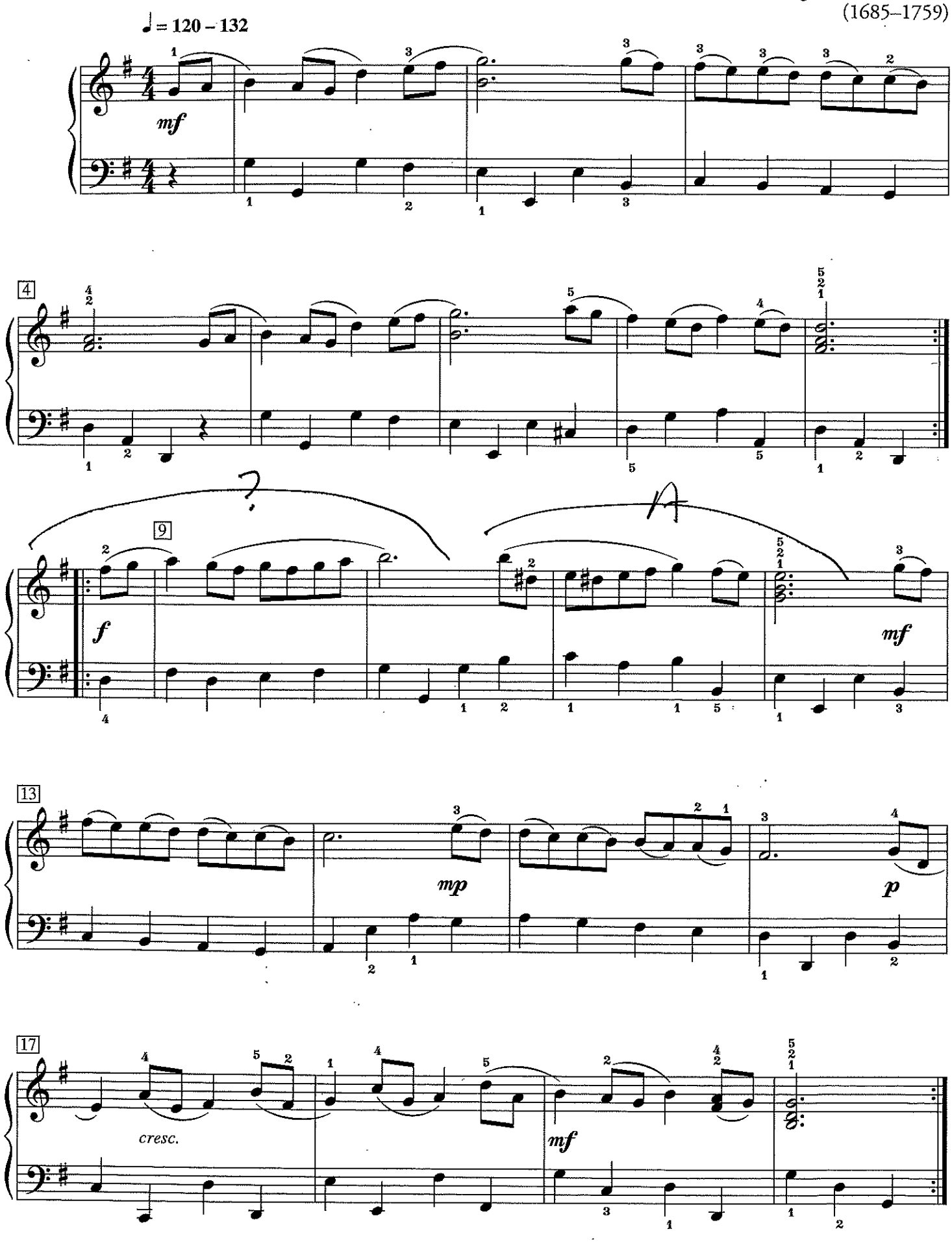
*) Dans la 2e partie du 1er thème et dans les parties en dérivant, les arcs sont marqués très inégale-

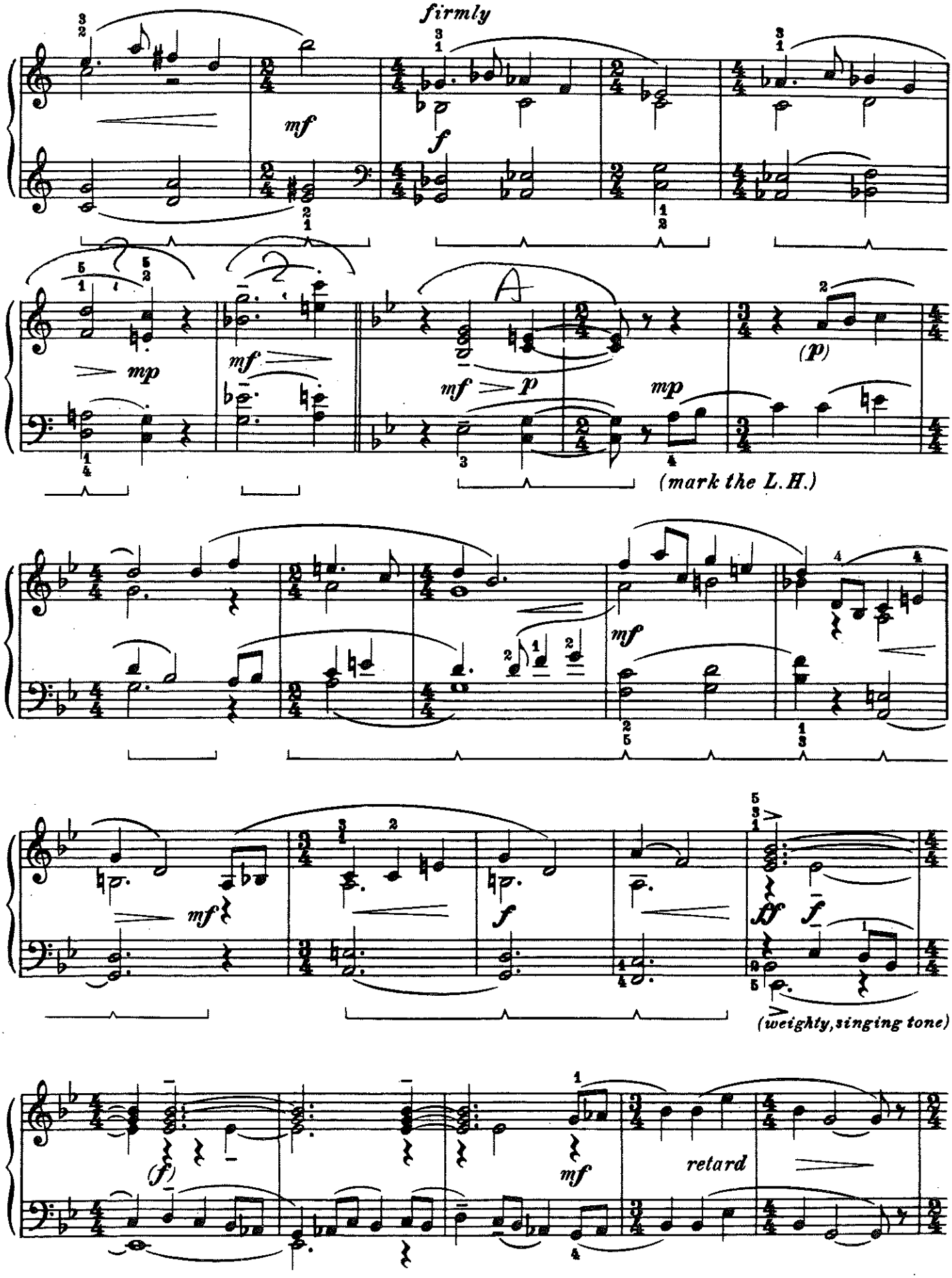
HYPOPHERA

Gavotte in G Major

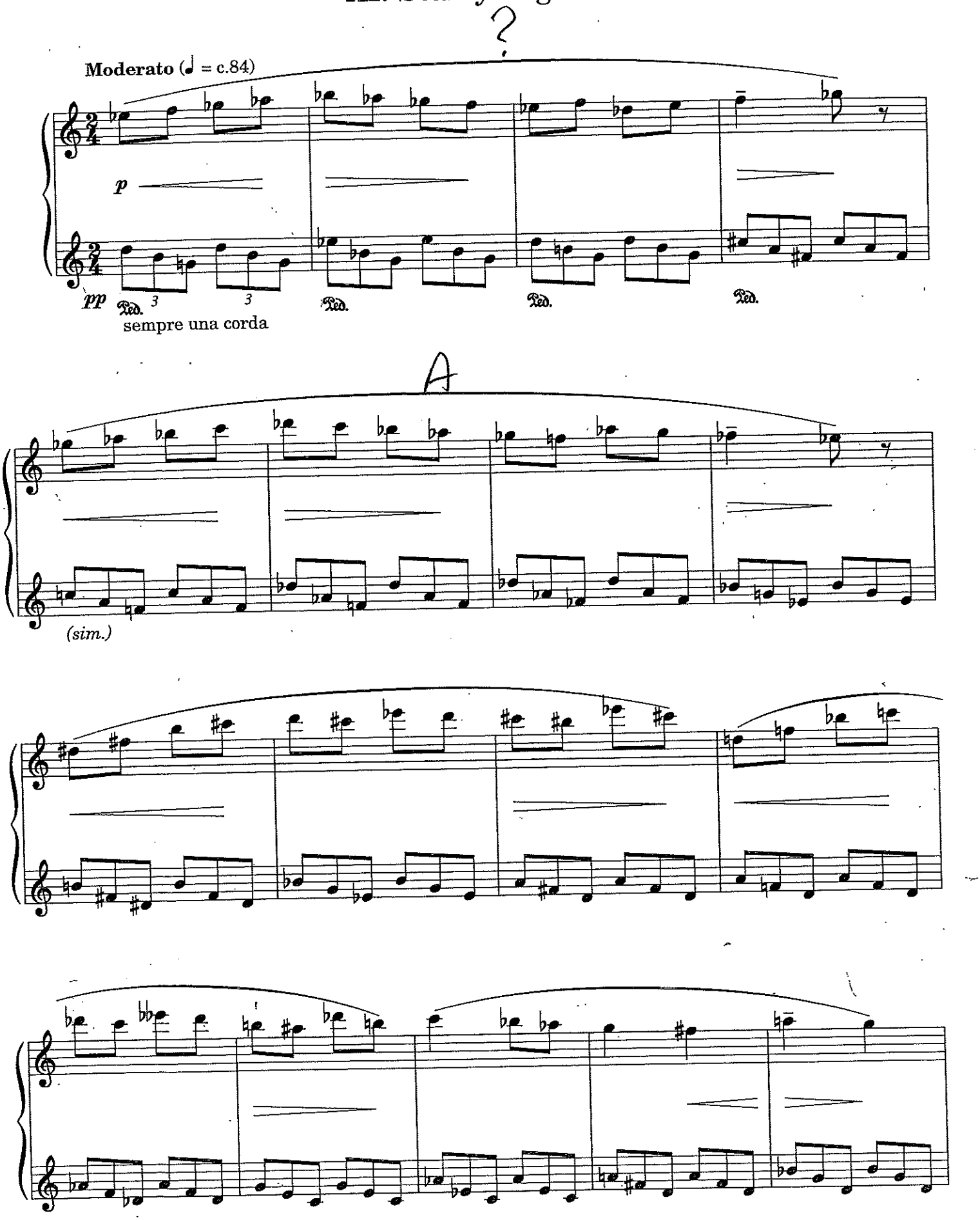
HWV 491

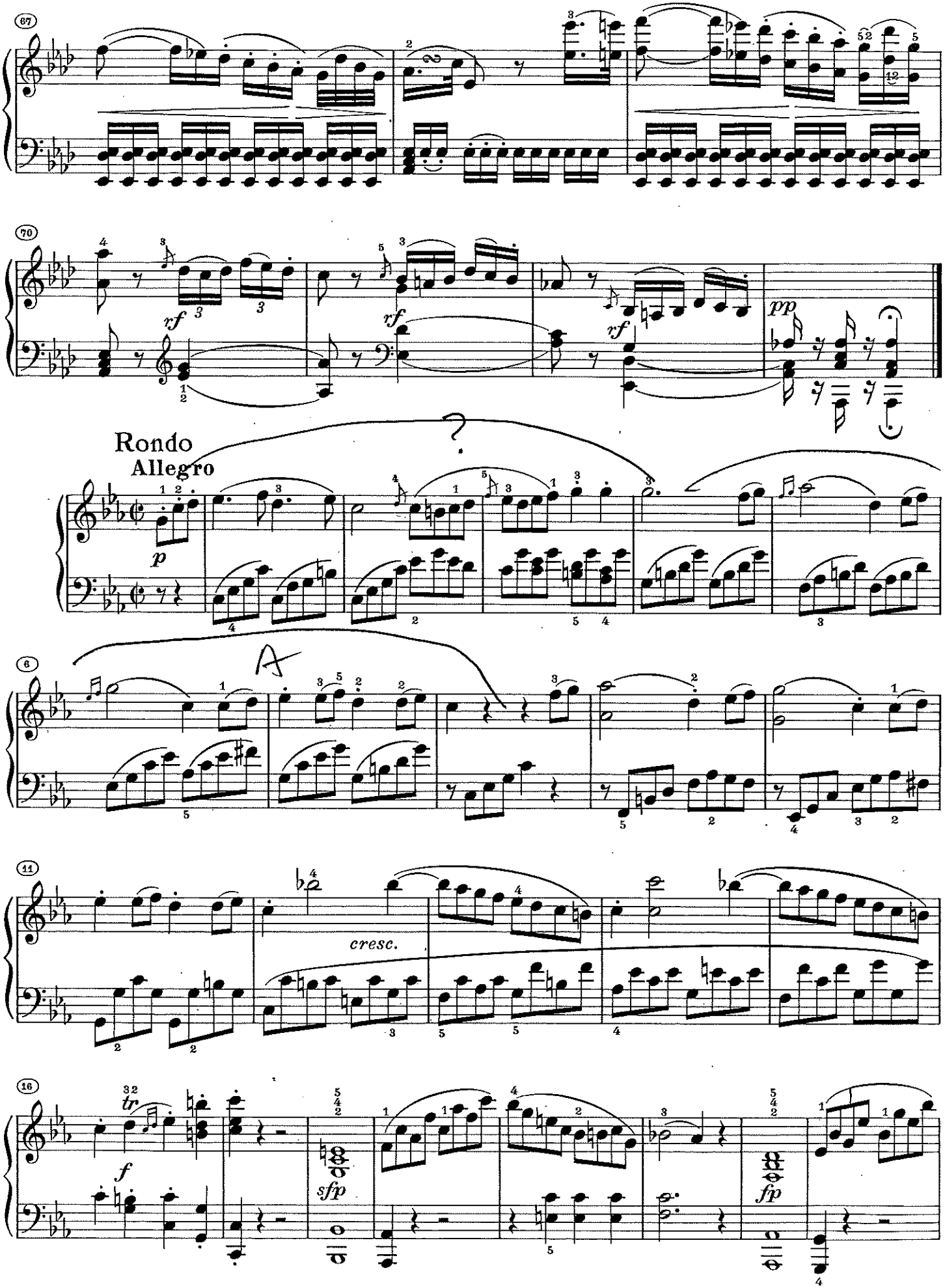
George Frideric Handel
(1685–1759)




firmly
mf
f
mp
mf
A
mf
p
mp
(p)
(mark the L.H.)
mf
mf
f
ff
f
(weighty, singing tone)
(f)
mf
retard

XI. Starry Night




67
70
rf
rf
rf
pp
Rondo
Allegro
p
6
A
11
cresc.
16
tr
f
sfp
fp

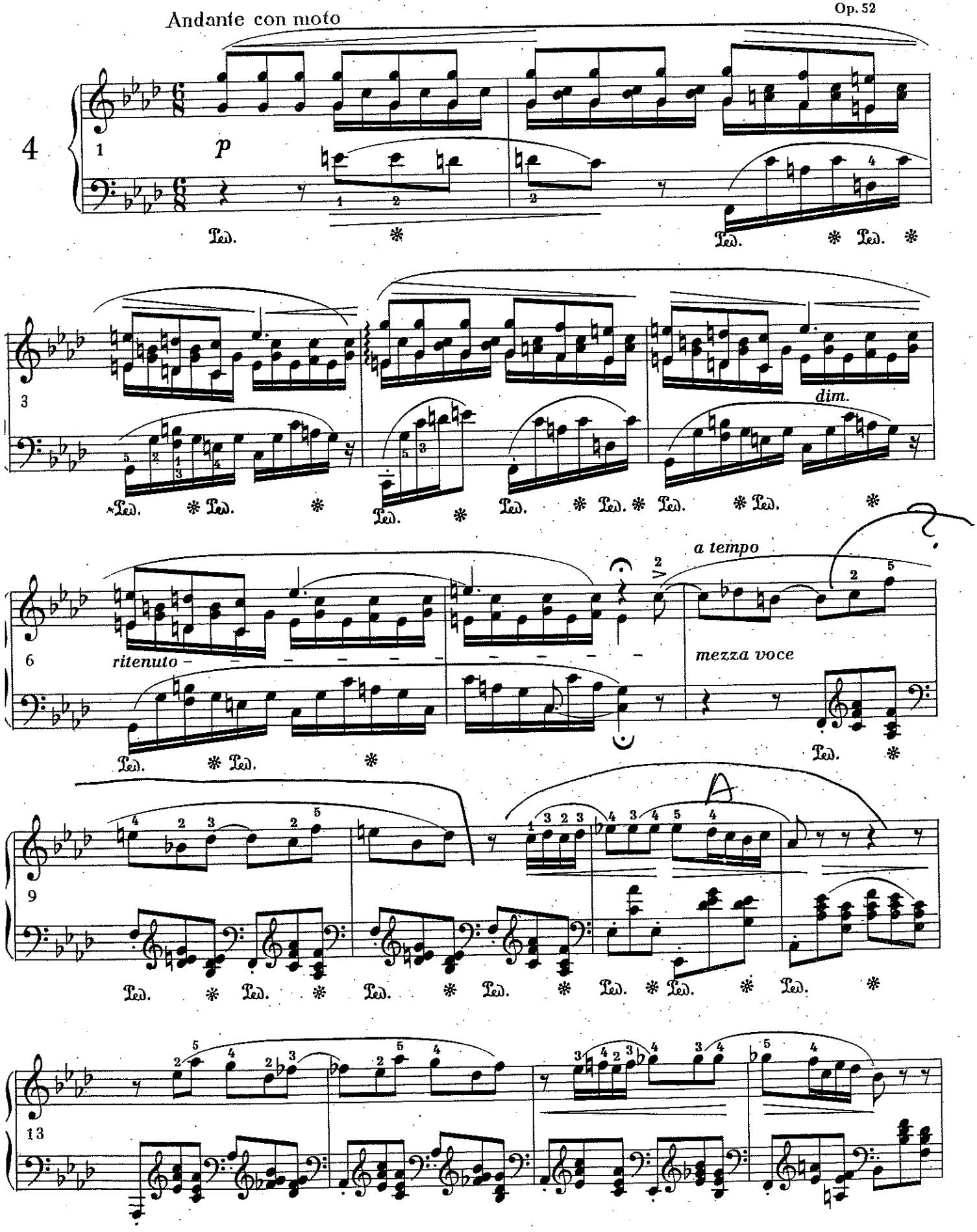
A Madame Nathaniel de Rothschild

BALLADE

FR. CHOPIN

Op. 52

Andante con moto



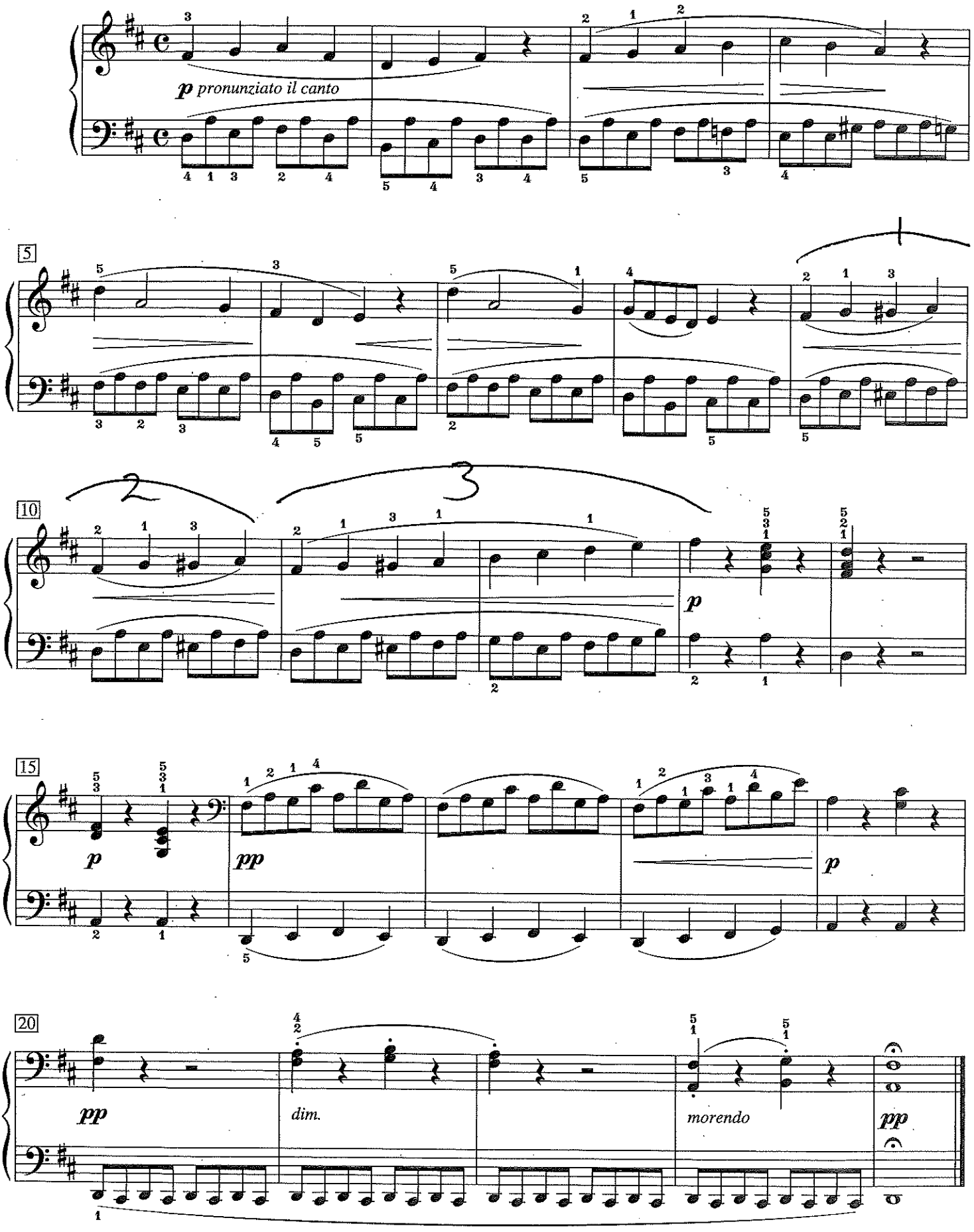
TRICOLON

Cradle Song

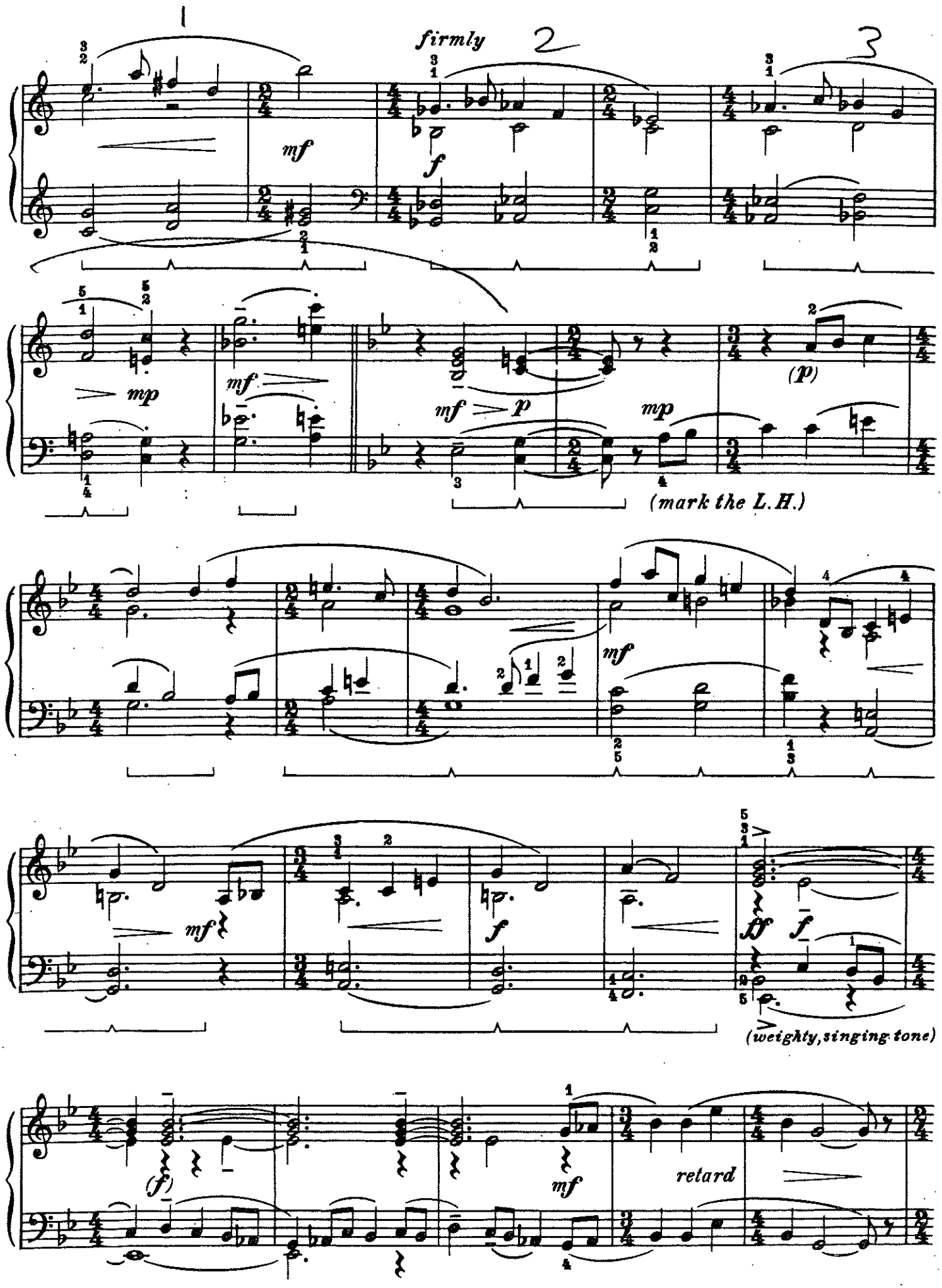
op. 101, no. 6

Cornelius Gurlitt
(1820–1901)

Moderato ♩ = 92 – 100



Original title: *Schlummerlied*
Source: *Albumblätter für die Jugend*, op. 101

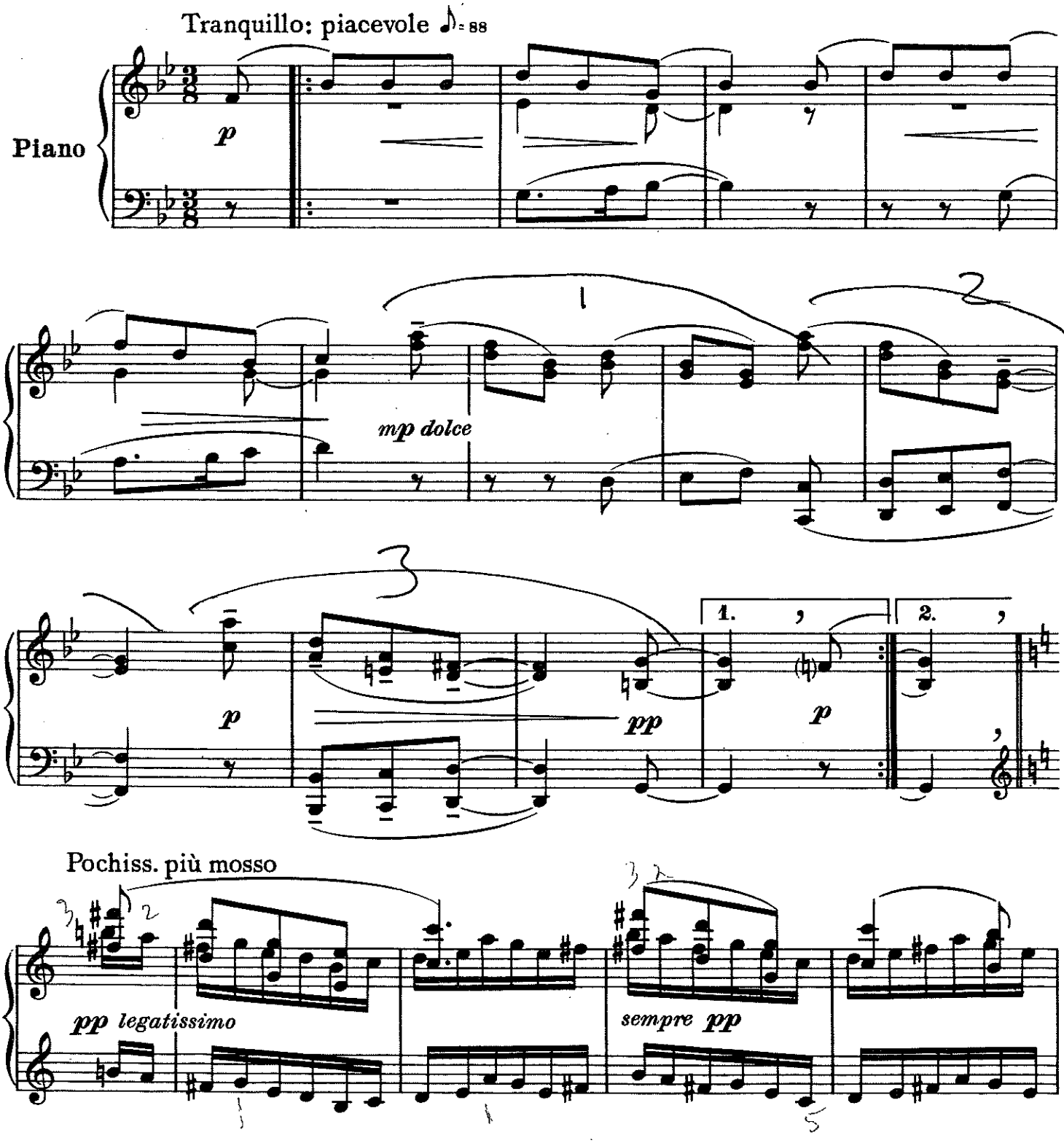

1
firmly
2
3
mf
f
mp
mf
mf > p
mp
(p)
(mark the L.H.)
mf
mf
f
ff
f
(weighty, singing tone)
(f)
mf
retard

FOUR ANNIVERSARIES

LEONARD BERNSTEIN
(1948)

I. For Felicia Montealegre

(Feb. 6, 1922)



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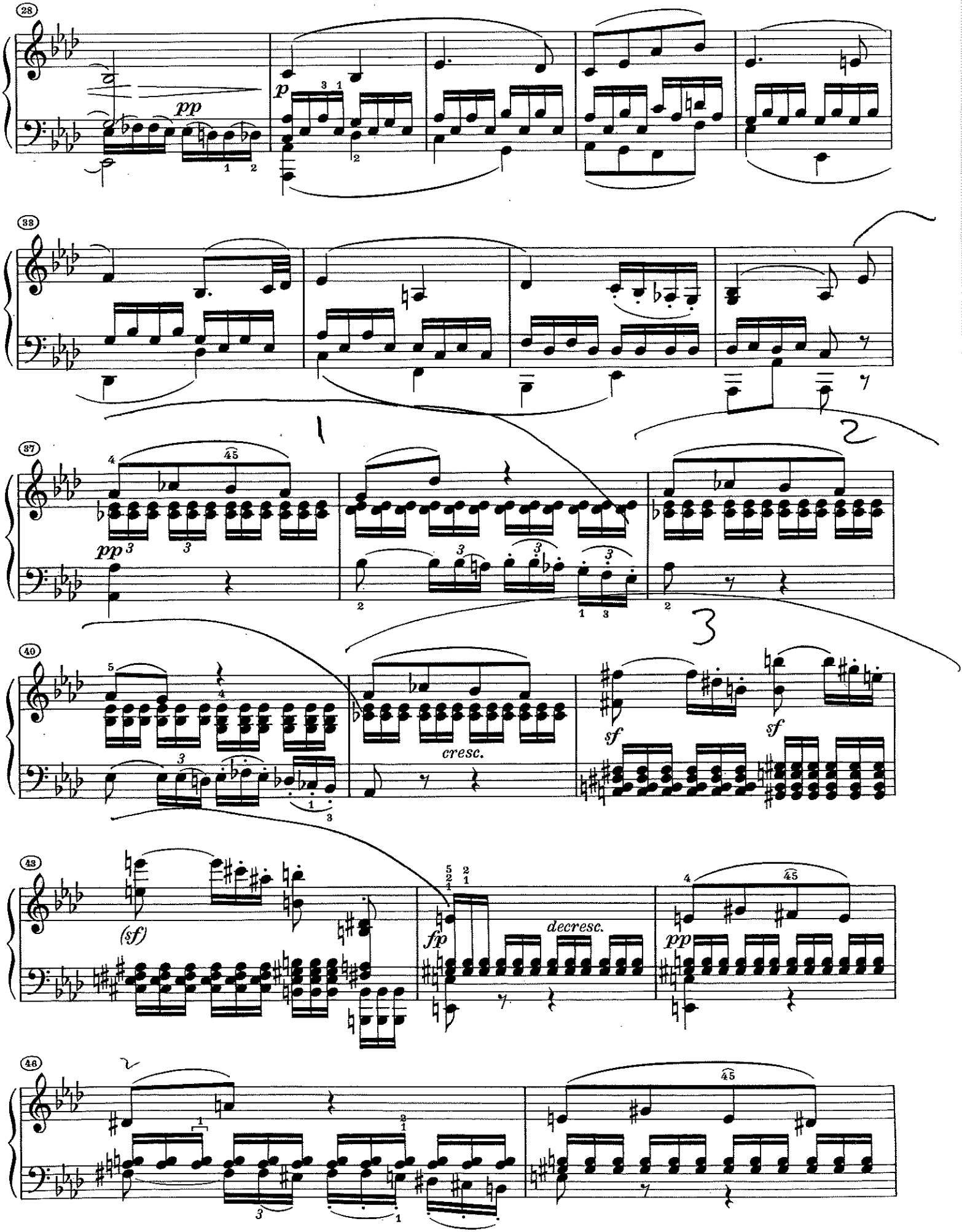
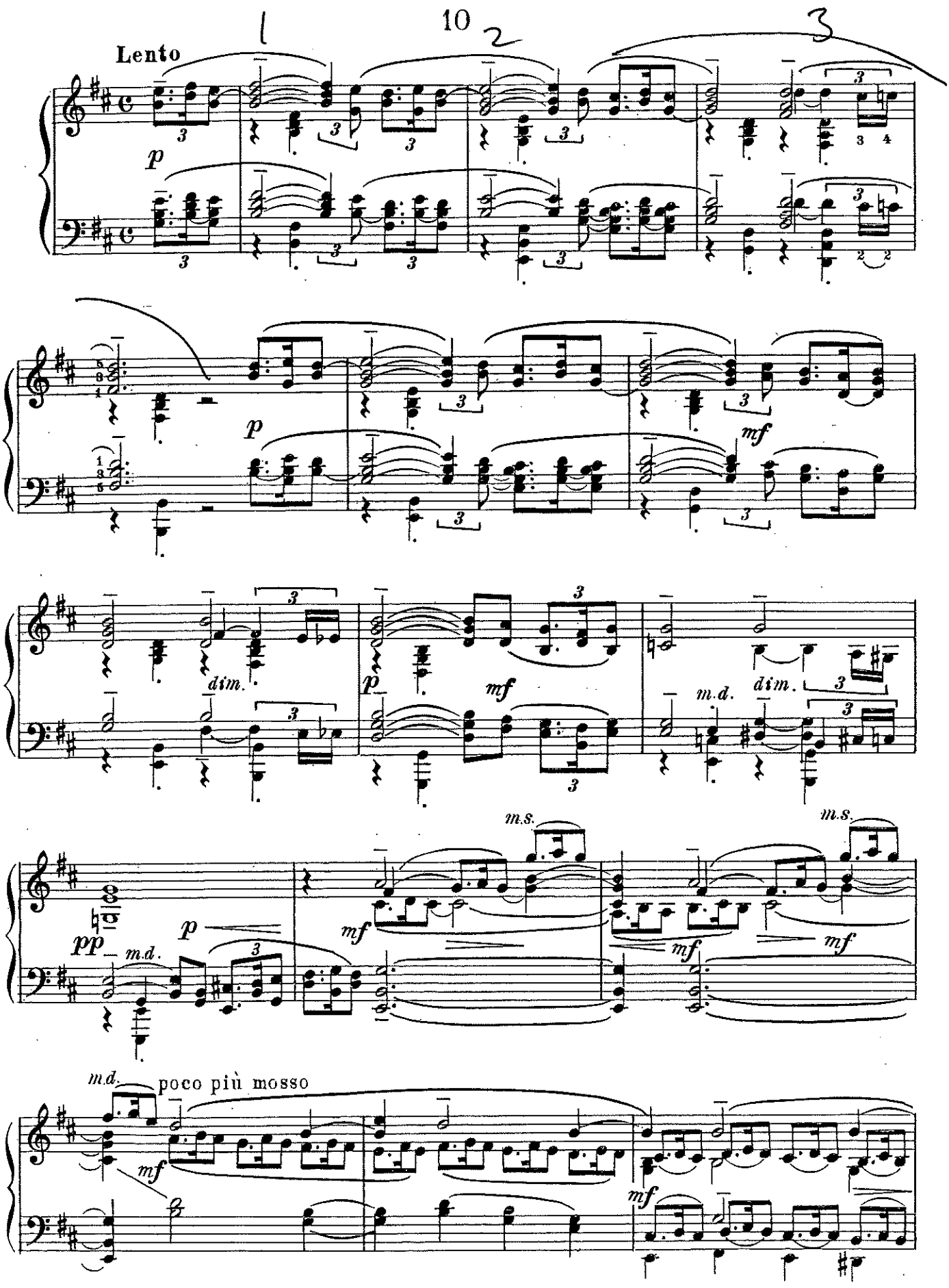
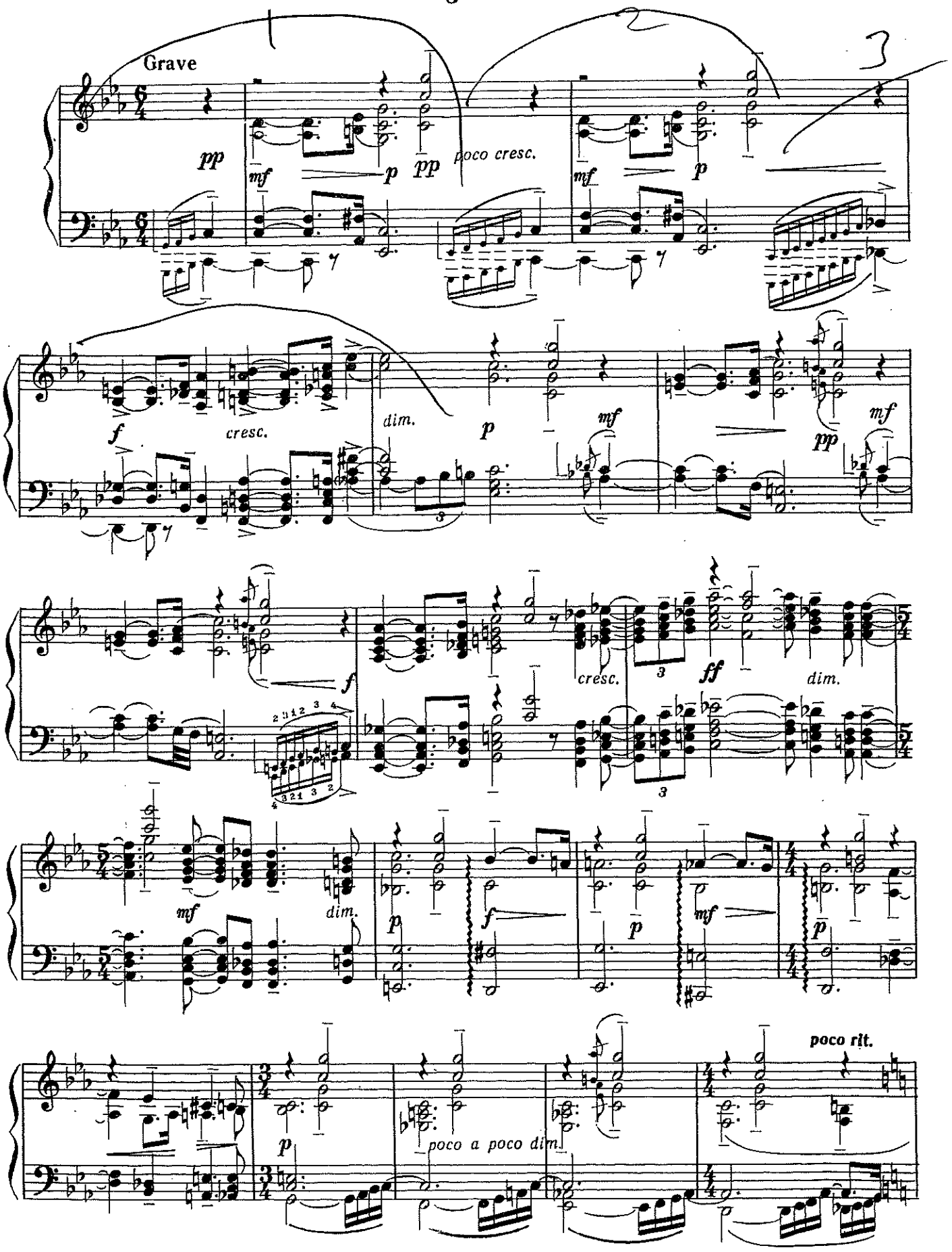

28
pp
p
33
37
pp
cresc.
sf
sf
40
43
(sf)
fp
decresc.
pp
46


Lento
p
dim.
mf
m.d.
m.s.
pp
poco più mosso

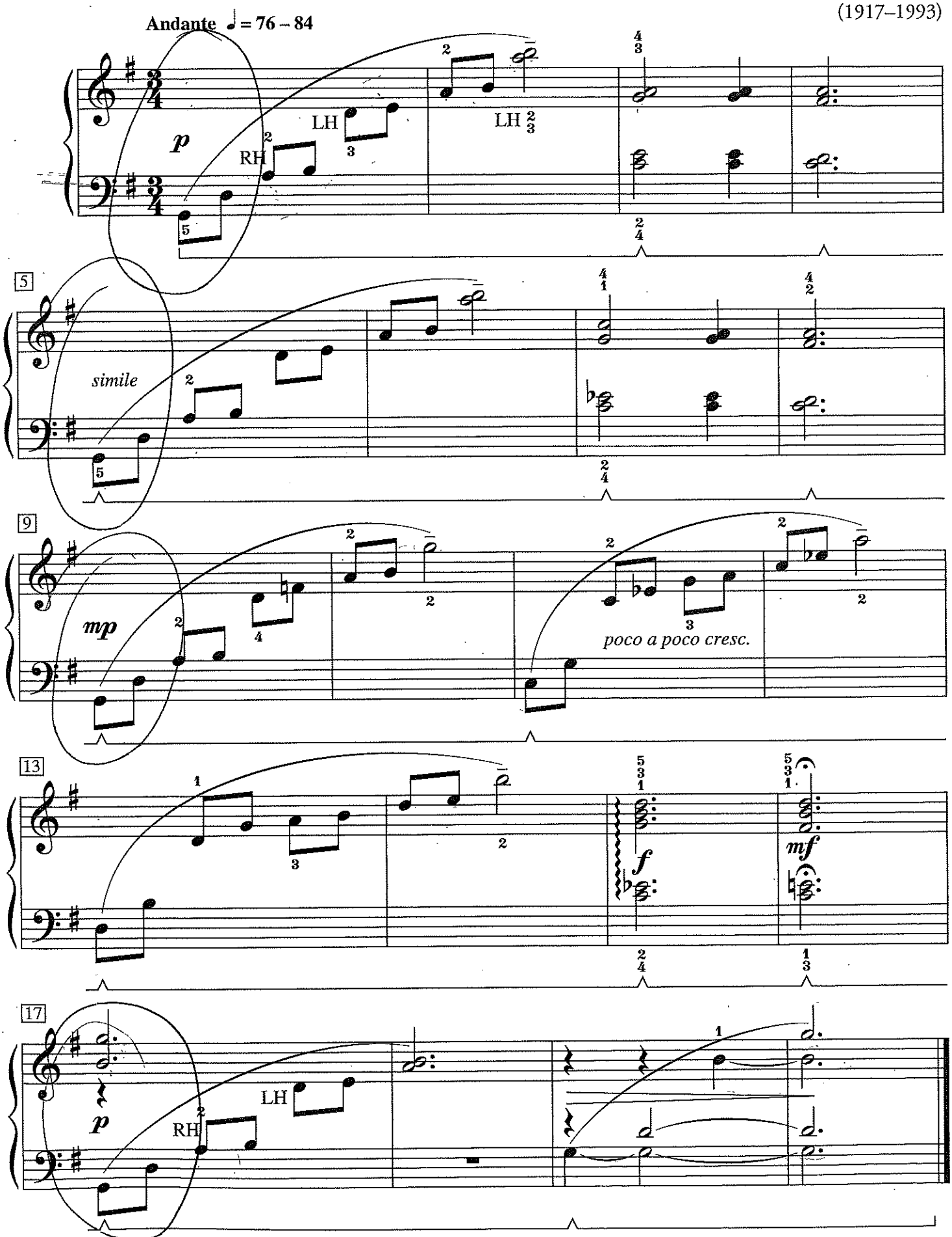

Grave
pp
mf
p
pp
poco cresc.
mf
p
f
cresc.
dim.
p
mf
mf
pp
f
cresc.
ff
dim.
mf
dim.
p
f
p
mf
p
p
poco a poco dim.
poco rit.

ANAPHORA

Etude no. 8

Drifting Clouds

William Gillock
(1917–1993)



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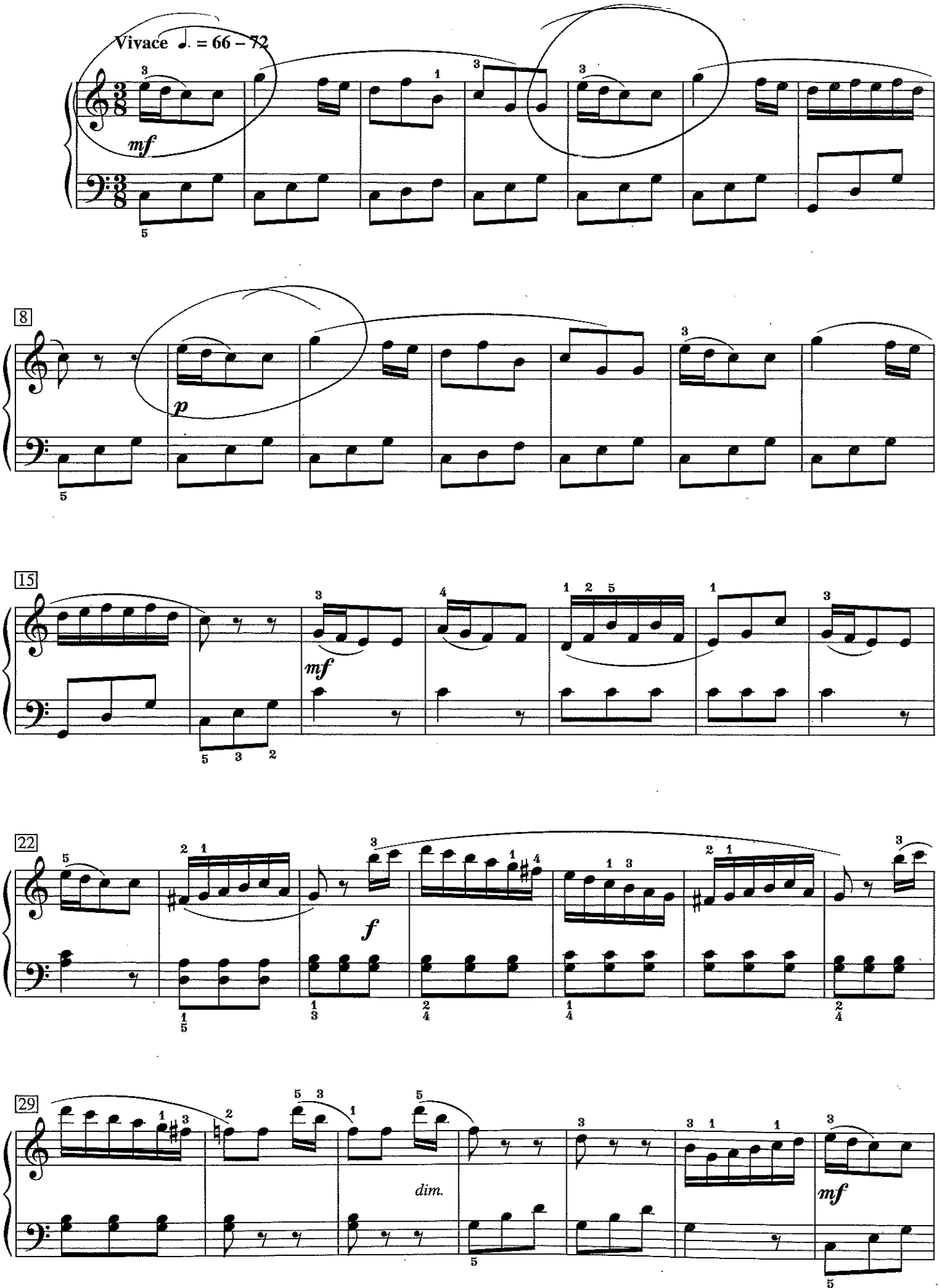
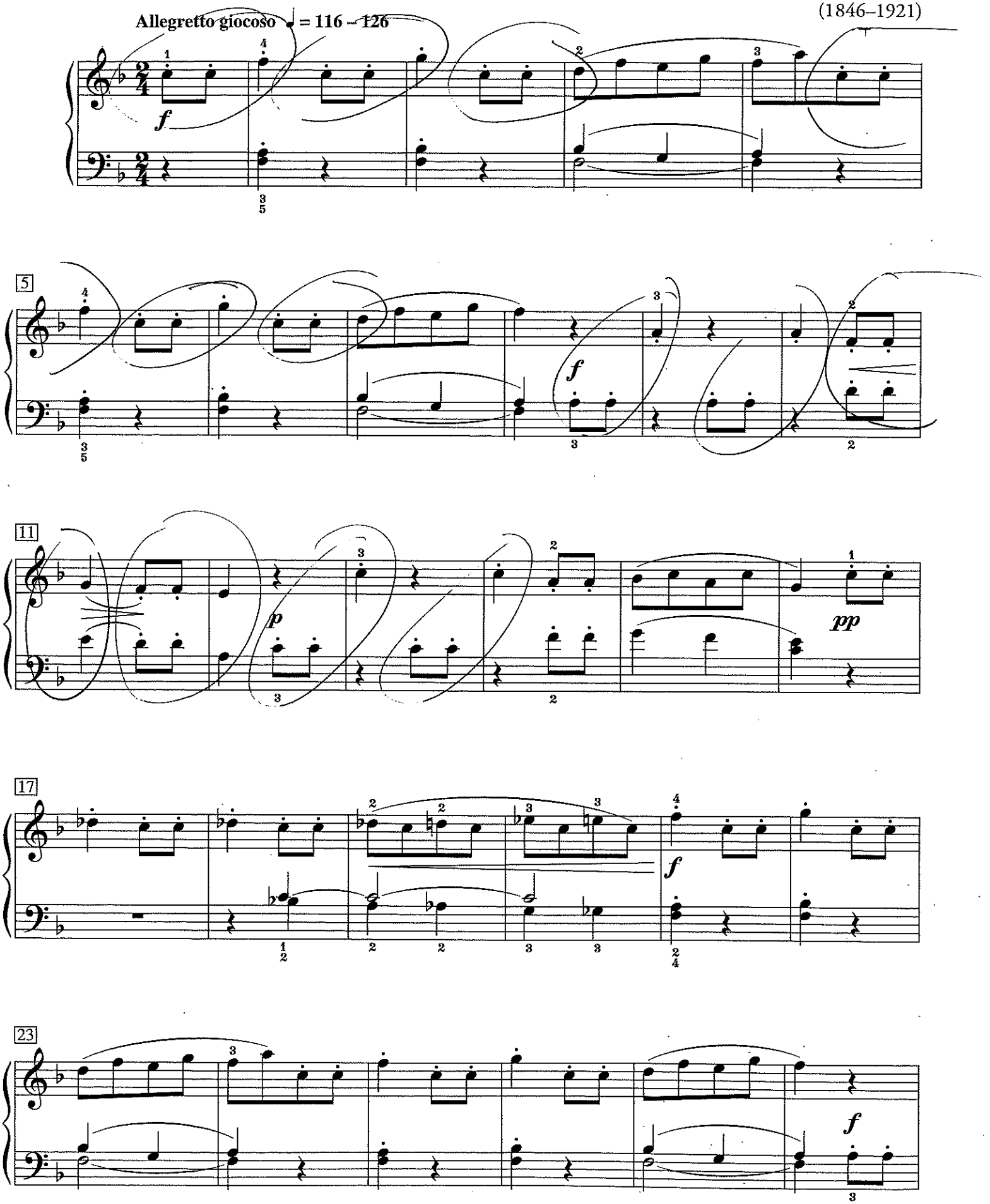

Vivace ♩. = 66 – 72
mf
8
p
15
mf
22
f
29
dim.
mf

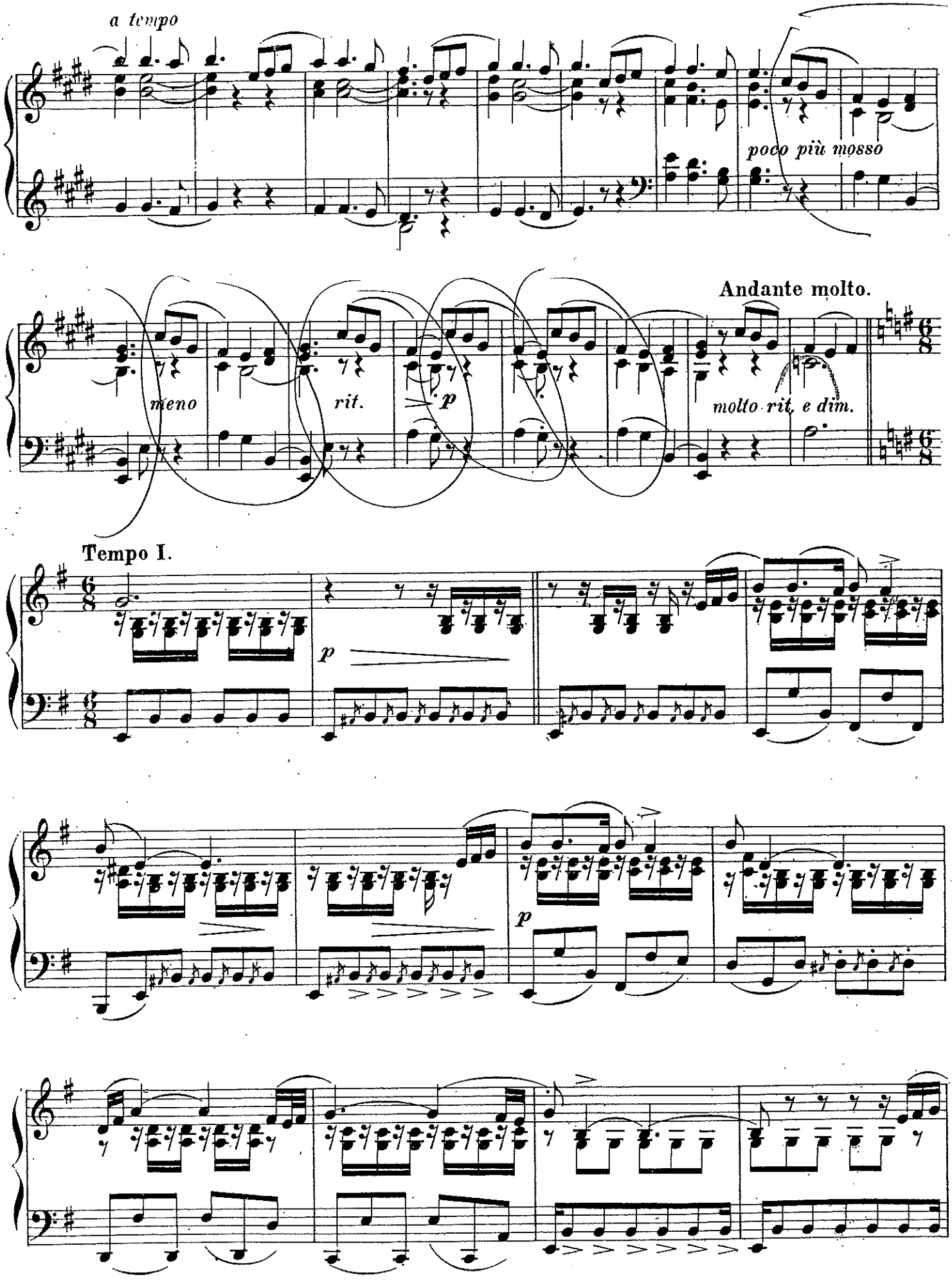
Sonatina in F Major

op. 257, no. 2

IV: Finale

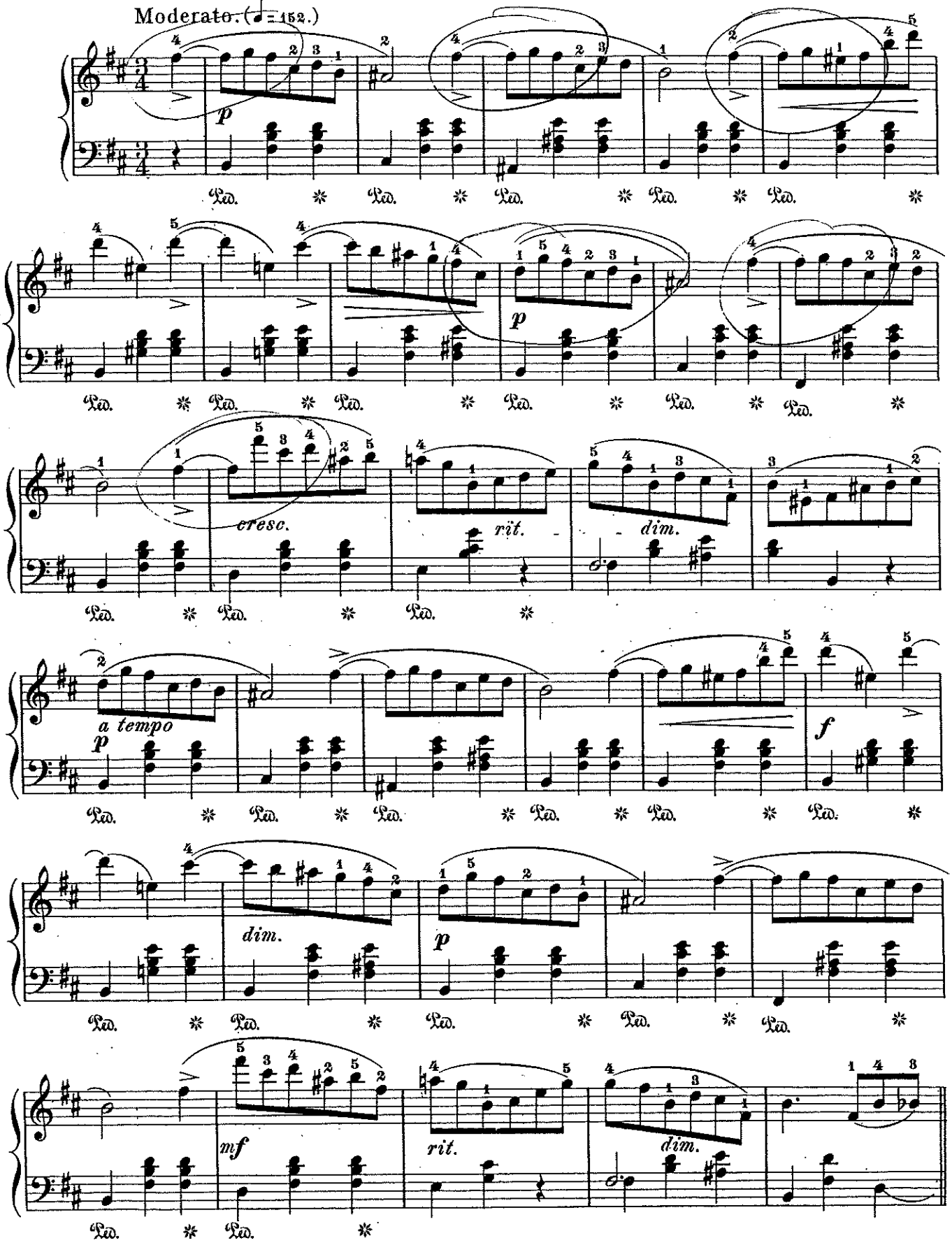
Théodore Lack
(1846–1921)




a tempo
poco più mosso
Andante molto.
meno
rit.
p
molto rit. e dim.
Tempo I.
p
p

Waltz in B Minor

Op. 69, No. 2 (1829)

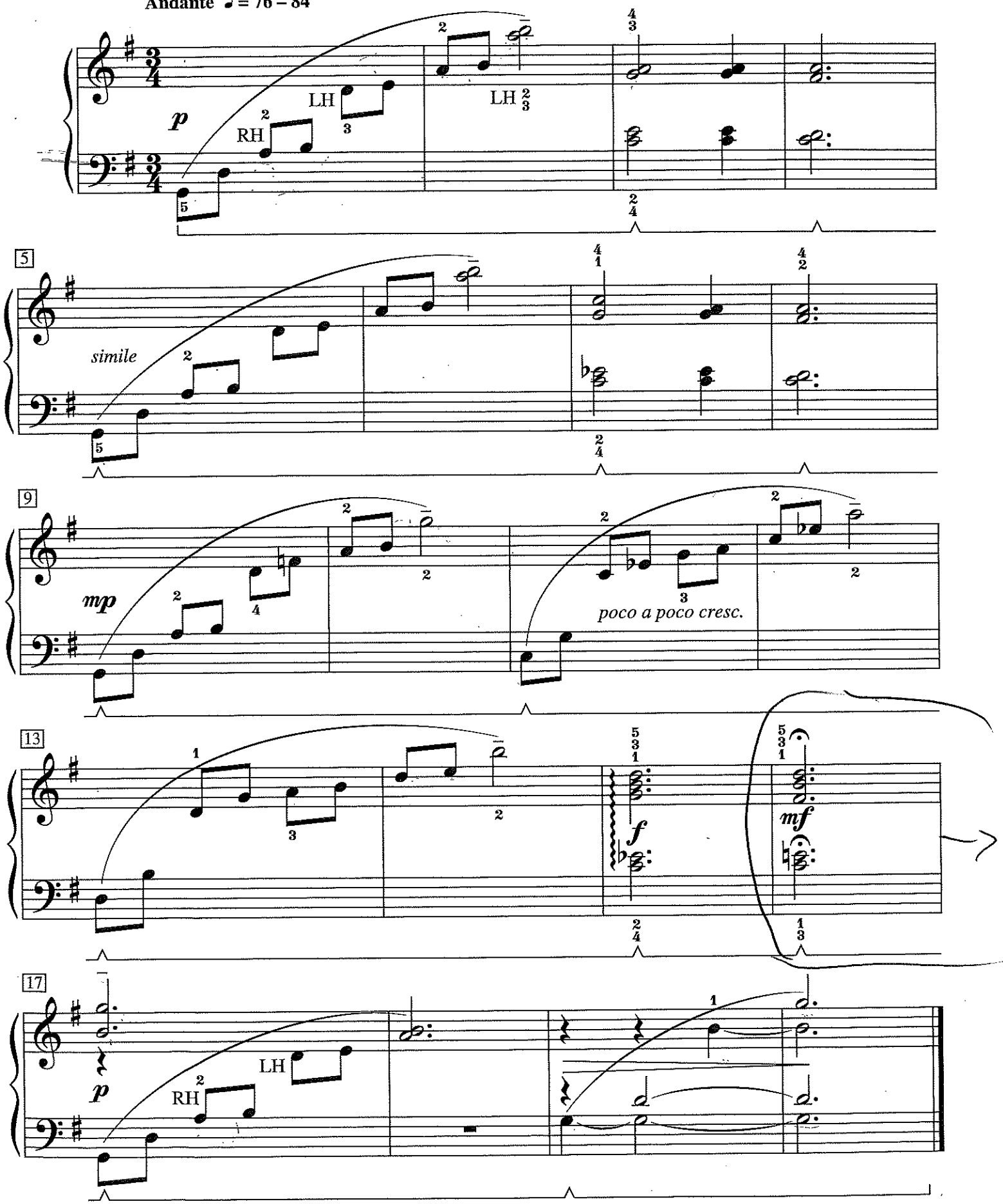


ENJAMBMENT

Etude no. 8

Drifting Clouds

William Gillock
(1917–1993)



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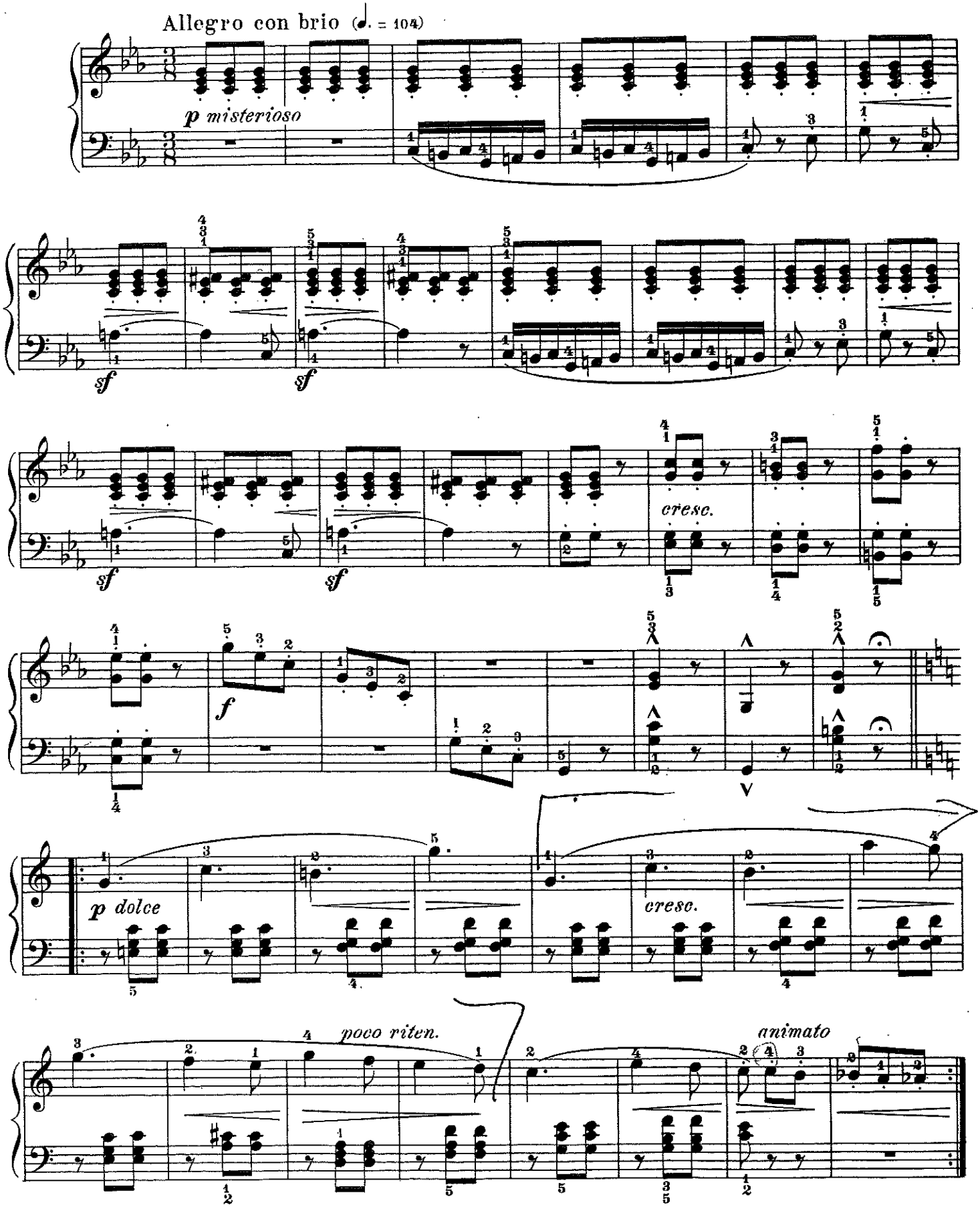
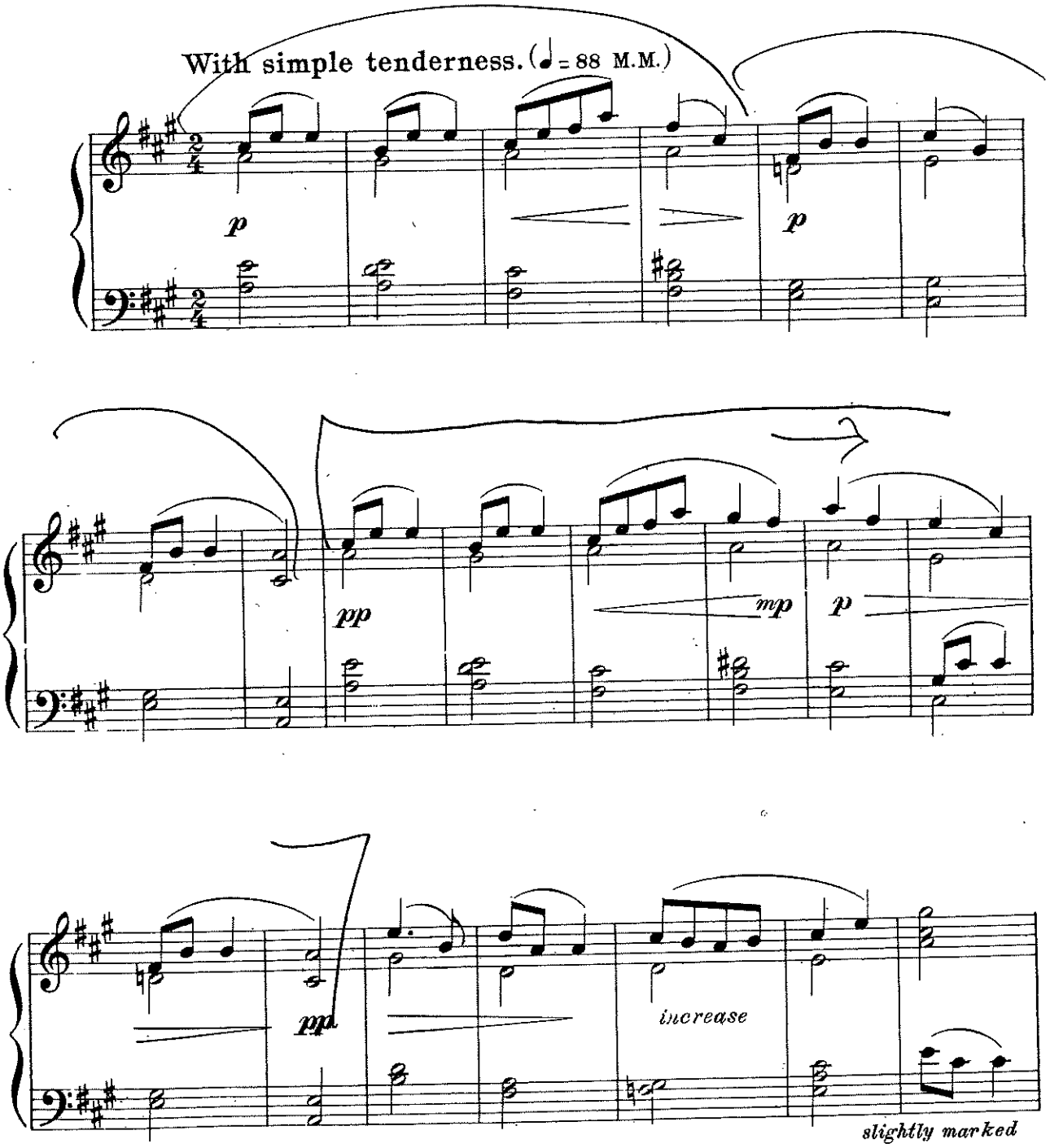
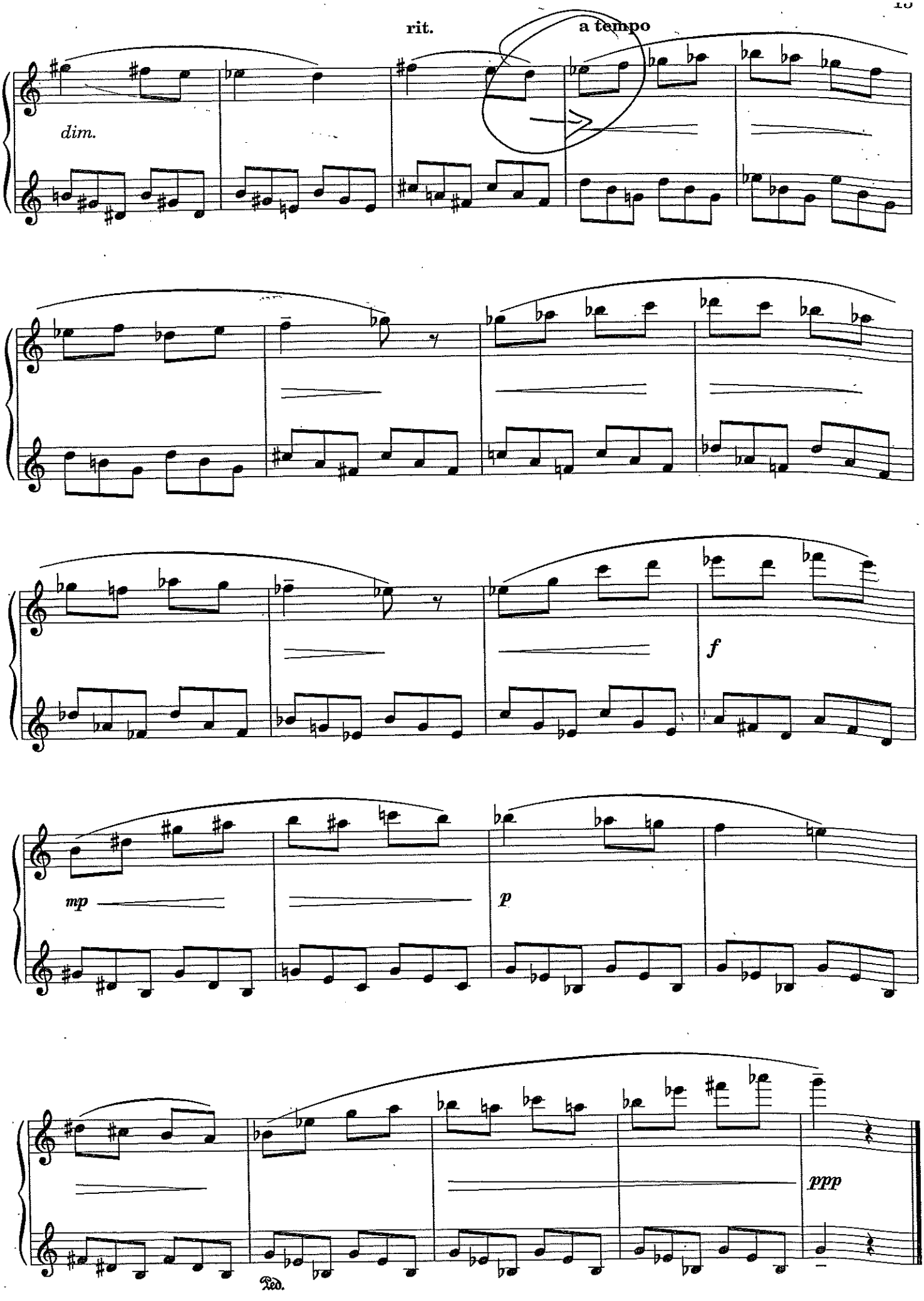

Allegro con brio (♩. = 104)
p misterioso
sf
sf
sf
sf
cresc.
f
p dolce
cresc.
poco riten.
animato

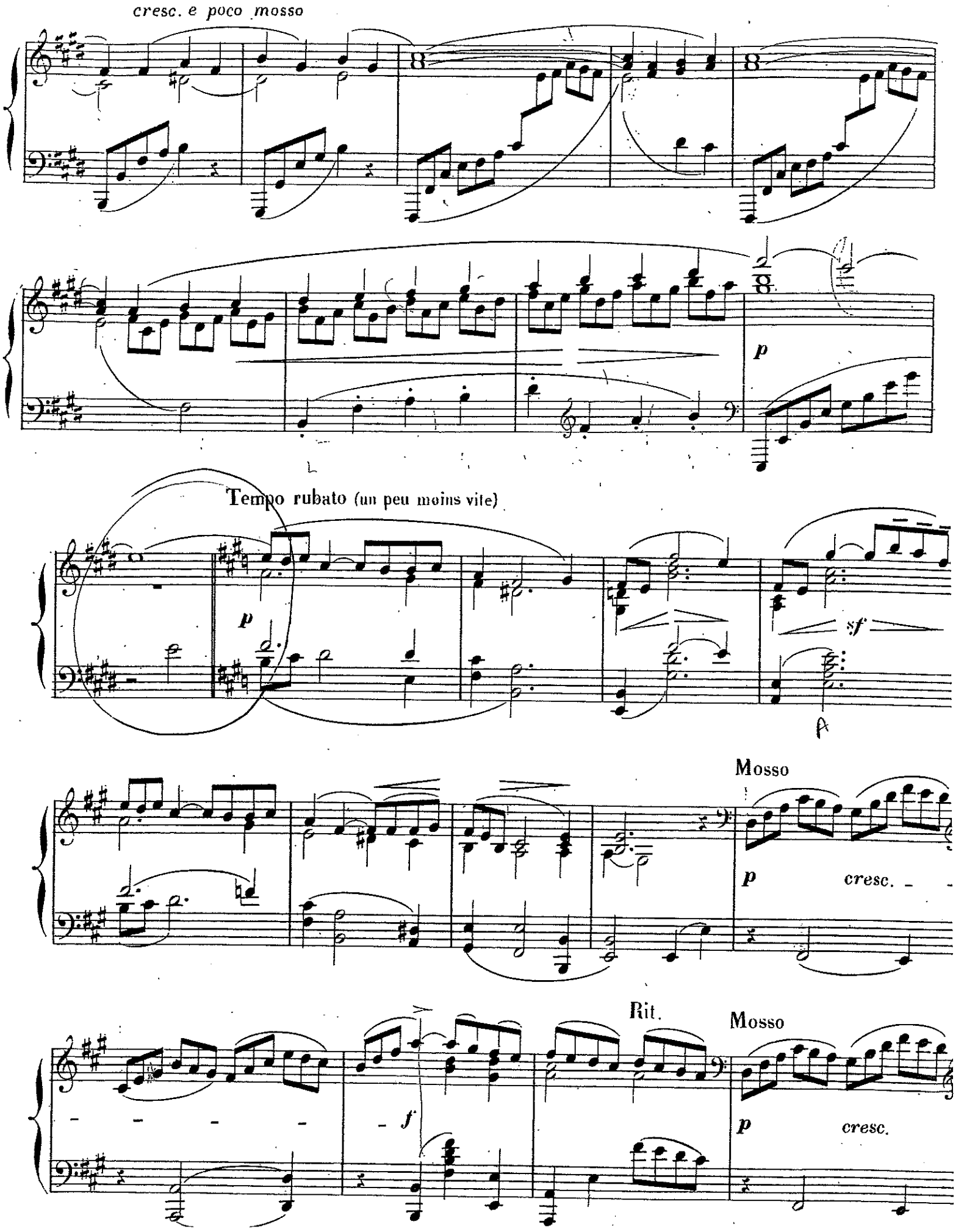
Woodland Sketches, Op. 51

I.

To a Wild Rose.




rit.
a tempo
dim.
f
mp
p
ppp
Ped.


cresc. e poco mosso
p
Tempo rubato (un peu moins vite)
p
sf
A
Mosso
p
cresc.
Rit.
Mosso
f
p
cresc.

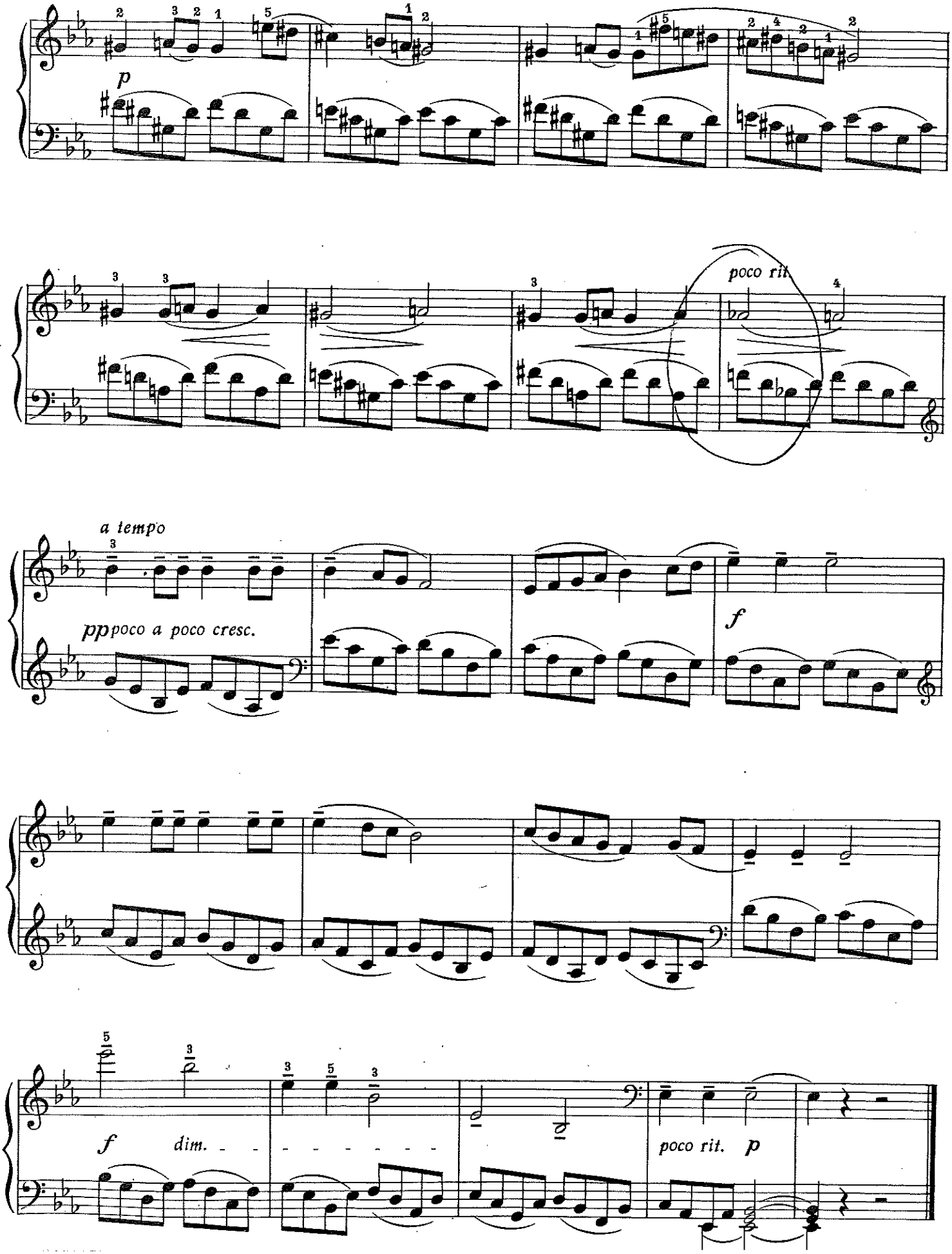
ANTANACLASIS

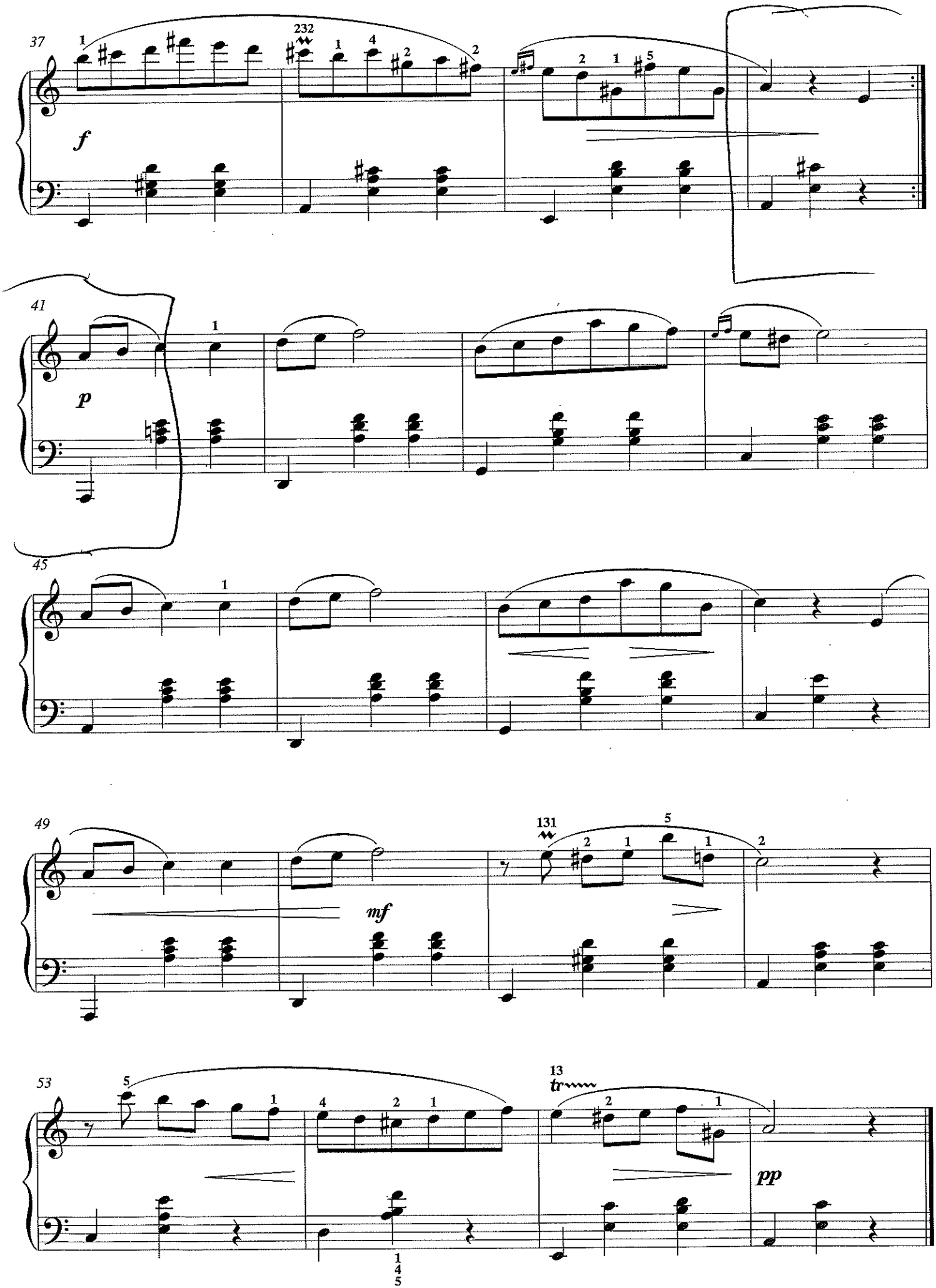
or

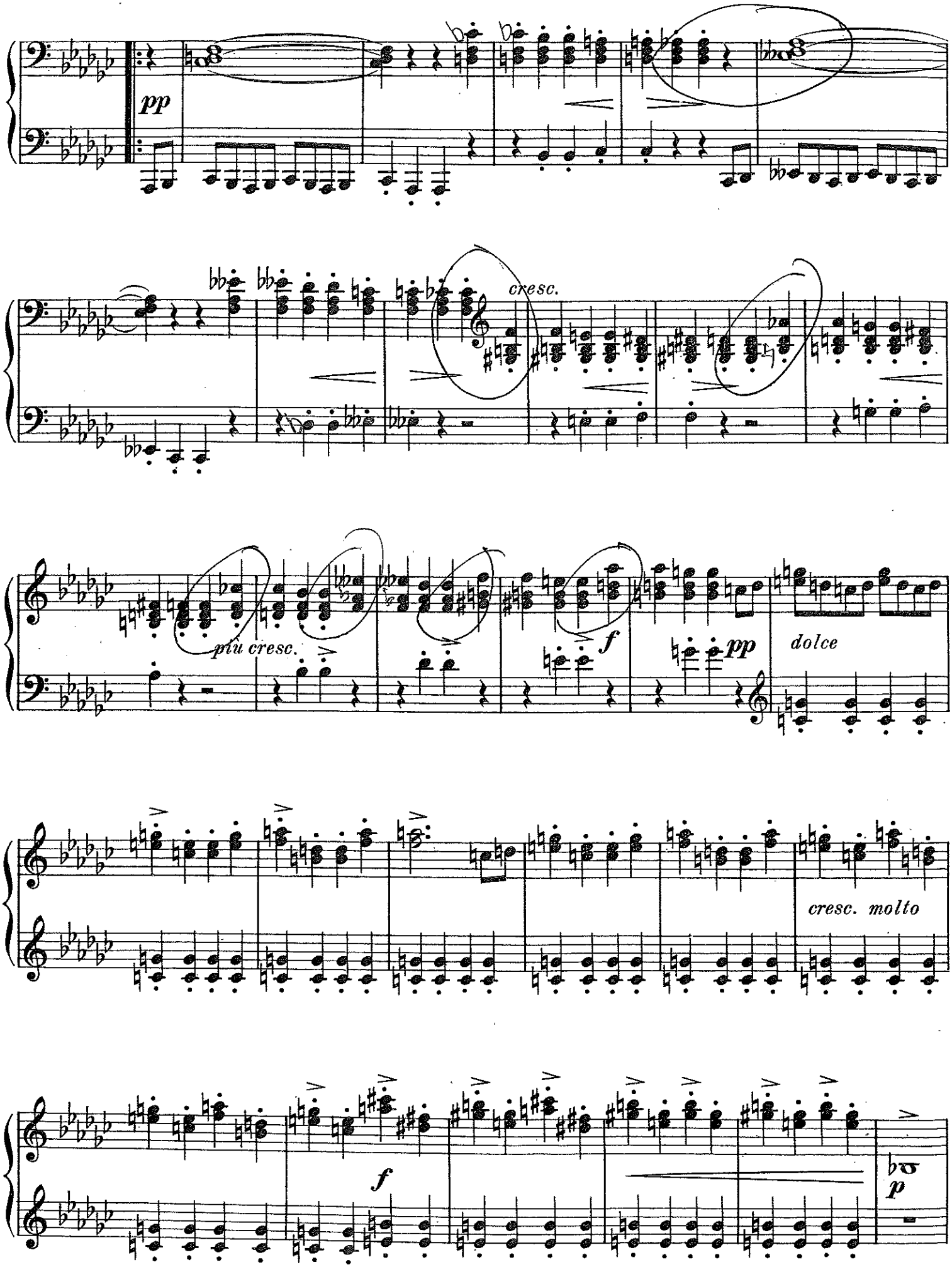
SYLLEPSIS

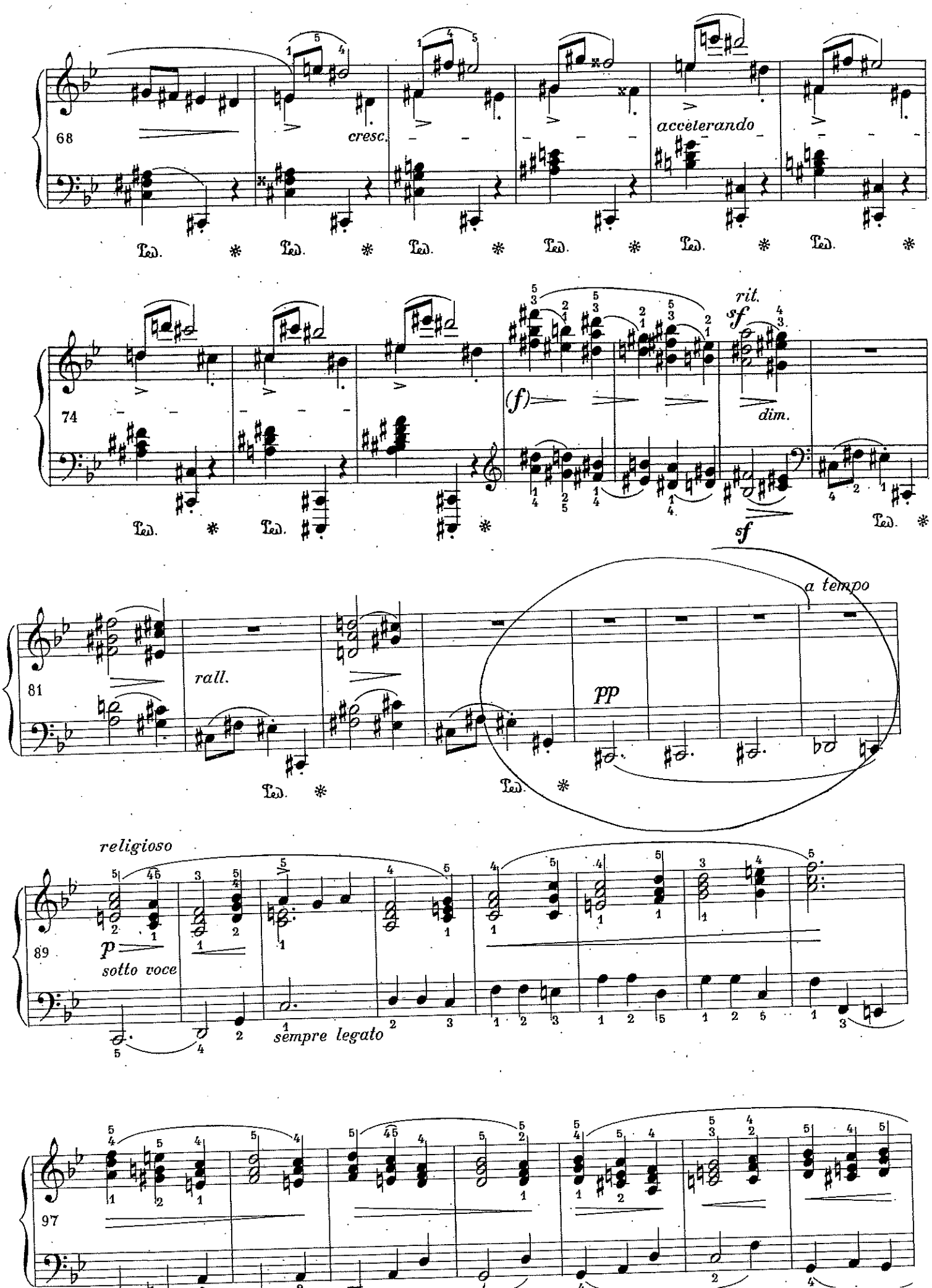
or

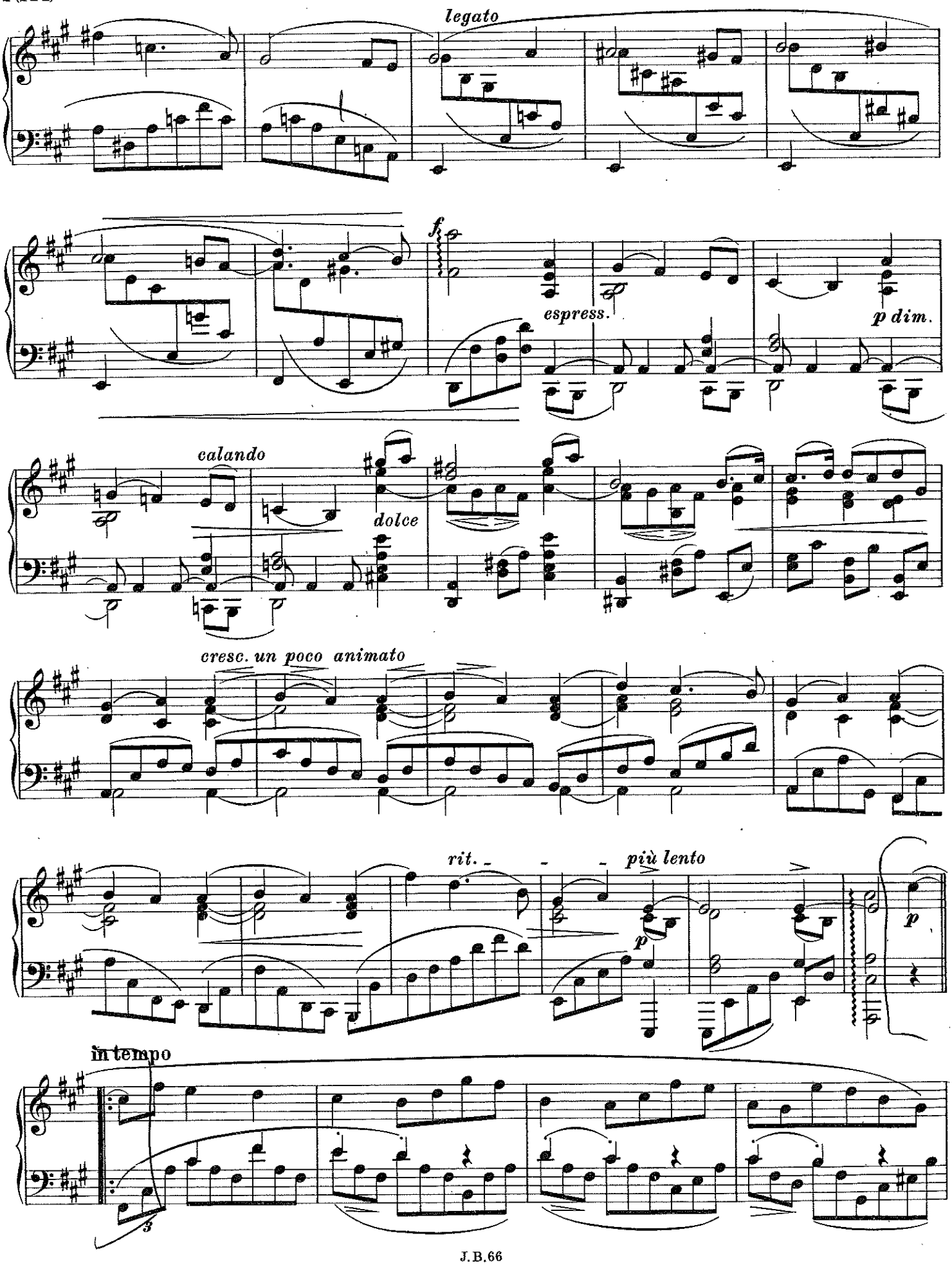
CATACHRESIS

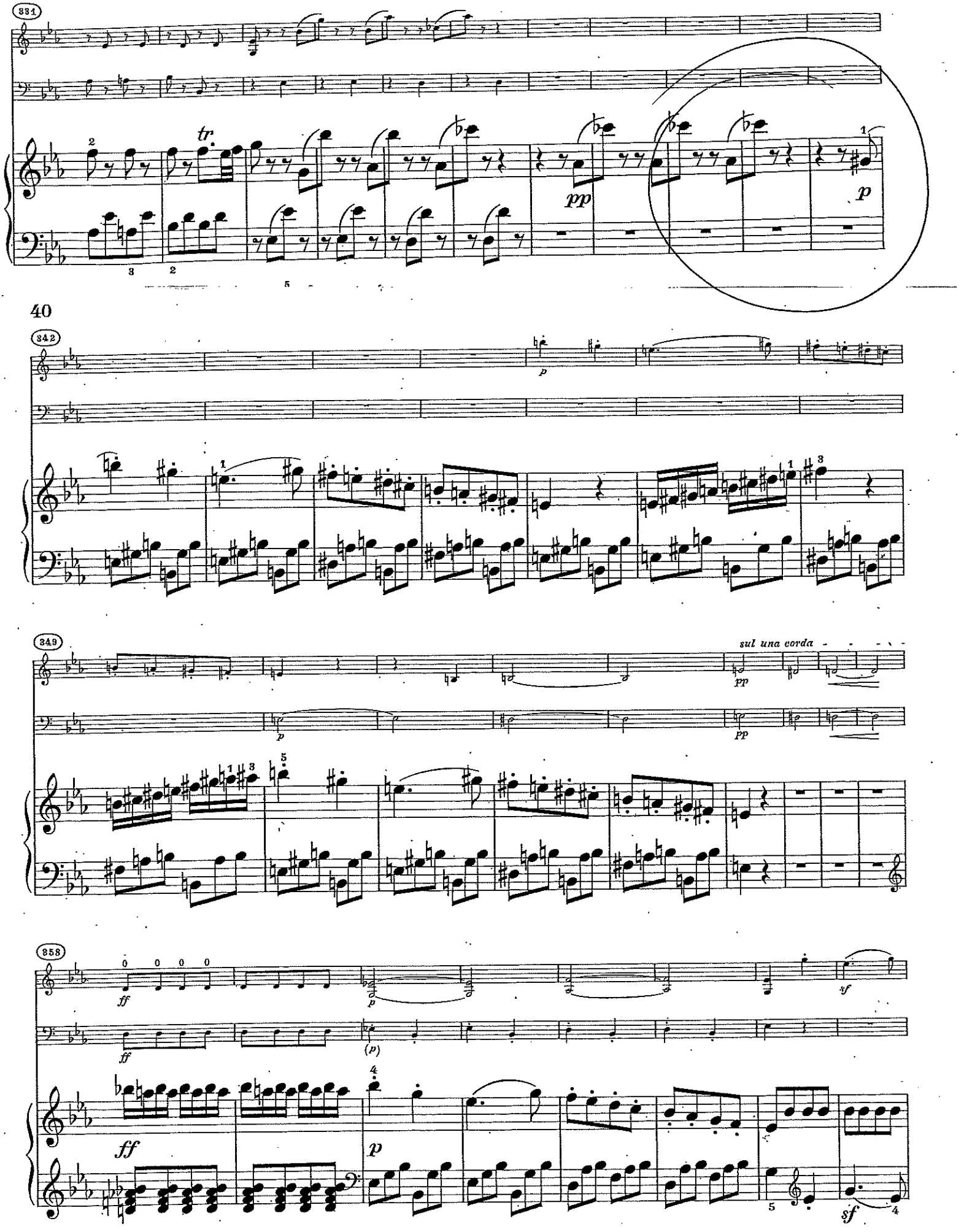

p
poco rit.
a tempo
pp poco a poco cresc.
f
f
dim.
poco rit.
p


37
f
41
p
45
49
mf
131
53
13
tr
pp


pp
cresc.
più cresc.
f
pp
dolce
cresc. molto
f
p


68
cresc.
accelerando
Ped.
74
rit.
sf
(f)
dim.
81
rall.
pp
a tempo
religioso
89
p
sotto voce
sempre legato
97


legato
f
espress.
p dim.
calando
dolce
cresc. un poco animato
rit.
più lento
p
p
in tempo
3


331
tr
pp
p
40
342
p
349
sul una corda
pp
p
pp
358
ff
p
sf
ff
(p)
ff
p
sf