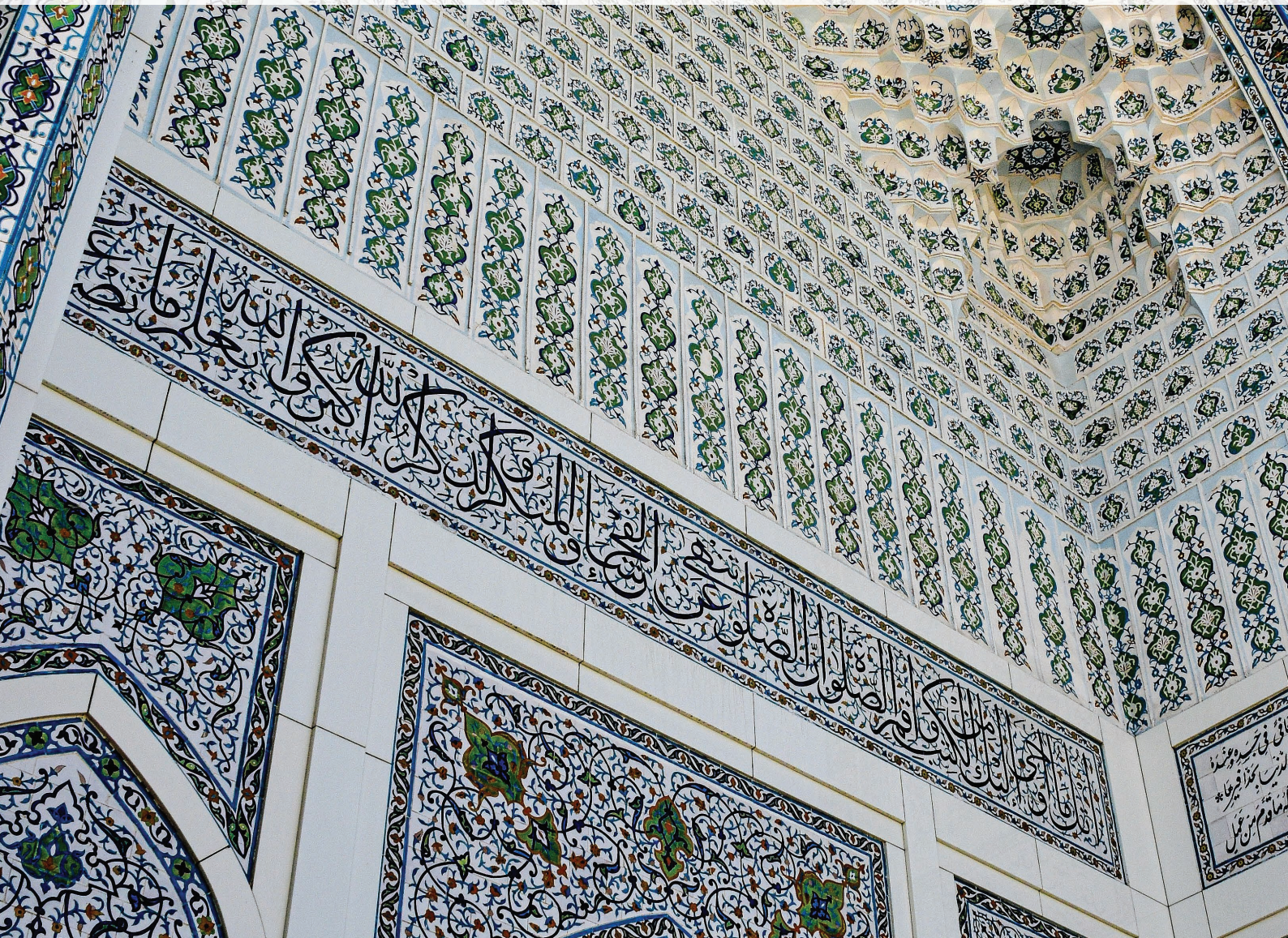
Georgi Mushel

(1909-1989)

Sonata for Cello and Piano

Edited by Renat Yusupov & Hila Yusupov



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Preface

Georgi Mushel was born on 29 July 1909, in Tambov, Russia. Playing music was enjoyed by the whole family: his father played balalaika, guitar, and mandolin, and his mother played piano and had a beautiful soprano voice. By the age of twelve, Mushel was taking regular piano lessons, and by the age of thirteen, he had composed his first piano pieces.

In 1930, Mushel was accepted into the Moscow Conservatorium where he studied composition with the Soviet composer Nikolai Myaskovsky (1881–1950), and later with Mikhail Gnessin (1883–1957). He also continued his piano lessons with Lev Oborin (1907–1974). During his years in the Moscow Conservatorium, the composer was attracted to the music of impressionist composers; he studied and performed the whole collection of works by Ravel and Debussy, which were available in the conservatorium library. Later, the composer's interest was drawn to the music of Honegger, Poulenc, Hindemith, and Prokofiev (particularly to his piano style).

In 1936, upon graduation from the Moscow Conservatorium, Mushel received an invitation to teach at the newly opened Tashkent State Conservatorium. Accepting this offer, he moved to Uzbekistan in the summer of 1936. Having fallen in love with Uzbek culture, the hospitality of Uzbek people, and their musical heritage, Mushel lived there for the rest of his life.

For more than fifty years, Mushel's life among the Uzbek people greatly influenced his musical style. In Uzbekistan, he created masterpieces that are associated with Uzbek folk music. In 1940, the Uzbek Institute of Arts requested Mushel to make an arrangement of fifty-five Uzbek folk songs for voice and piano. This work became his true creative 'laboratory', in which he experimented, discovered, and understood on a deeper level the nature of Uzbek folk music. His constant exploration of Uzbek national music, particularly its melodic and rhythmic nature, resulted in specific compositional techniques that became key features of his compositional style: parallel movement of 4th and 5th intervals, imitating the sounds of *dutar* music; various rhythmic ostinati associated with the patterns of Uzbek *usul* of *nagora* and *doira*; and the use of poly-modes. To obscure tonal clarity, the composer often employed seventh and ninth chords; and to reflect the descending structures of Uzbek melodies, he favoured the chords of the subdominant group in closing cadences (Kuznetsova, 1974, pp. 8–9).

Among his contributions to the development of Uzbek music are the first Uzbek symphony (1937), opera (1941), in collaboration with Victor Uspenskiy), ballet (1952), Toccata for organ (1947), and six concertos for piano and orchestra (Nikolenko, 2012). Mushel was one of the pioneer composers who introduced the European genre of chamber music to Uzbek musical art, creating a range of pieces for different combinations of instruments. His development of Uzbek classical music and his contribution to Uzbek musical art earned him the title of Uzbek Soviet composer—founder of Uzbek musical art.

Understanding of Performance practices in Uzbek traditional music

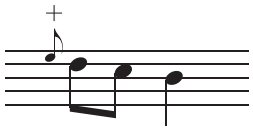
Traditional Uzbek music encompasses a variety of specific performance practices and nuances that performers need to acquire and understand in order to form stylistically appropriate interpretations. Some traditional performance aspects can be a real challenge for performers—primarily, the use of *rubato*, which allows improvisatory execution of metre and rhythm with particular freedom given to ornamentation, and the stylistically correct interpretation of *ornaments* (Gienko, 1984, p. 70).

Interpretation of Ornamentation and Vibrato

Ornaments are an important form of melodic embellishments in Uzbek musical art, and most of them are performed with much use of rubato, deliberately stretching the tempo to bring a sense of improvisation to the music (Gienko, 1984, p. 74). Glissando technique is also frequently applied to increase the flexibility and smoothness in performing various embellishments (melismas, ornaments and vibrato).

The **trills** in Uzbek music are short, sharp, and very rhythmical, without accelerating or slowing down. They are played on the beat starting with an accent on the principal note (Takhalov, 1985, p. 61).

Interpretation of **short grace notes** in fast tempos, particularly in dance-like melodies, is almost identical to European acciaccaturas, that is, typically crushed on the beat. Grace notes in lyrical and flowing melodies, however, should glide smoothly to the principal note and their performance, particularly in slow tempos, should convey the Uzbek national character: gliding from one note to another using *glissando*, causing the delay of the principal note and equalling the length of both (Gienko, 1984, pp. 73–74). The main traditional way of performing single grace notes, however, is to play them without an accent, in a more gliding manner, gently, as a subtle hint or suggestion (Takhalov, 1985, pp. 60–61). This is indicated by the plus (+) sign:



Two types of **vibration** commonly used in Uzbek music are *tolkinlatish* and *nolish*. *Tolkinlatish* is a type of vibration that causes a slight variation of pitch by raising or lowering; it is similar to vibrato on string instruments but on traditional Uzbek instruments it is performed at a much more

moderate pace. It does not just add warmth to the note but expresses the performer's emotional state (Takhalov, 1985, pp. 61–62). It is used widely in both instrumental and vocal music.

Nolish is a kind of slow vibration that causes a variation of pitch by raising it a semitone; it is known as wide, wavy vibrato because of its low frequency, and is used mainly on the *nay* (flute), *gijjak* (violin), t*anbur*, *sato* (long-necked lutes), and in singing (Takhalov, 1985, pp. 63–64). The main performance technique that differs *nolish* from *tolkinlatish* on string instruments is the gliding of the finger up and down, not shaking it.

Other features of Uzbek folk music reflected in Mushel's music include Uzbek *usul* (rhythmic ostinati) of *nagora* (kettle-drum) and *doira* (Uzbek tambourine), motivic structures of melodies, various syncopated patterns, and an Uzbek traditional structure, the *audj*—a section of music that leads to the climax. Each piece of music contains several *audj* sections, with each following *audj* becoming bigger and more powerful, exceeding the peak of the previous audj until it reaches the main climax (Yusupov, 2019).

Usul – rhythmic patterns (ostinati) performed on percussion instruments such as *nagora* (kettle-drum) and *doira* (Uzbek tambourine). The main function of the *usul* is to accentuate the strong beat of the bar and to provide a regular pulse. Every *usul* without exception, therefore, starts on the strong beat with an accent (Sultanova, 1998a, p. 14), and melodic emphasis always coincides with the accents of the *usul* on percussion (p. 15).

The Uzbek *usul* is performed in a consistent and precise manner, holding the piece together while melodies are performed with considerable *rubato* (Babaev et al., 1955, p. 43). Like the *ostinato*, the *usul* is repeated persistently through a long section (usually to the end of melody) or throughout the whole piece. *Usul* figures often become more complex building up to the climax; with changing dynamics, they provide an energetic drive and variety through numerous repetitions of the short tune (Karomatov, Djijiak, Levin, & Slobin, 1983, p. 27). Different *usul* structures are often performed simultaneously on several percussion instruments to create a rhythmic counterpoint; such complex polyrhythms are an important characteristic of traditional Uzbek music (Babaev et al., 1955, p. 43).

Interpretation of Syncopations in Melodies

Rhythms of Uzbek tunes are intricate and often contain a number of syncopated patterns that provide constant fluidity and smoothness to melodic lines (Vyzgo, 1970, p. 35). Boris Asafiev, sharing his thoughts about Uzbek folk music with Romanovskaya, the compiler of *Uzbekskie narodnye pesni* (Uzbek folk songs), noticed the remarkable fluidity and smoothness of melodic lines that were generated, in his opinion, by many different syncopated patterns and interesting performance techniques; for example, accents in melodic lines were sung, perhaps to match the word stress or to facilitate dance movements (p. 35).

Syncopated rhythms are interpreted differently in Uzbek music: rather than placing a disruptive stress on the weak part of the beat, the stress is placed on the shorter note on the beat, making it slightly longer and more prominent. Performers should not be concerned about the stretch of timing that causes a deviation from the tempo, as this is one of the characteristics of performance practice in traditional Uzbek music (Gienko, 1984, p. 74). This way of interpreting melodic syncopation will help first to achieve and maintain fluidity and smoothness in folk-influenced melodies, especially those that are mostly lyrical, and second will help to avoid metrical mismatches of accents between melodies and *usul* structures (Sultanova, 1998, p. 15).

For demonstration videos of all Usbek performance techniques mentioned above, please see the YouTube links: Yusupov, K. (2019). Interpreting and Performing the Chamber Music of Uzbek Soviet Composer Georgi Mushel: The Role of Folk Music. [PhD Thesis], The University of Queensland / Chapter 5.5 Specific Performance Practices, pp.35-41.

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Sonata for Cello and Piano (1951)

The Sonata for Cello and Piano was composed by Georgi Mushel in 1951. It was the first cello sonata written in the history of Uzbek Soviet music. This piece is another example of Mushel's compositional style that combines influences of both Western traditions—the use of classical forms—and Uzbek folk music—the thematic material. While the main sections of the sonata are obvious (I—sonata form, II—ternary form, III—sonata-rondo form), an extension of each section that contains several climaxes replicates the Uzbek *audj*.

One of the main characteristics of Uzbek tunes, the combination of dynamism and balance, is clearly presented in this sonata. In the first two movements, calm and narrative melodies in the introduction become emotionally intense and powerful at the climaxes. The transformation of the themes is achieved through the use of the Uzbek *audj*. There are several *audj* sections in each movement; each *audj* becomes bigger and more emotionally intense, exceeding a previous highpoint before reaching the main climax. Emotional and passionate explosions, however, do not disturb the wholeness of the form due to repeatedly returning motifs of the themes that link sections into a big canvas.

The music of the finale is associated with Uzbek national festivals and celebrations. It is based on two contrasting dance-like melodies: the first subject is energetic, dynamic, and masculine (associated with a male dance), and the second subject is lyrical, gracious, and feminine (associated with a female dance).

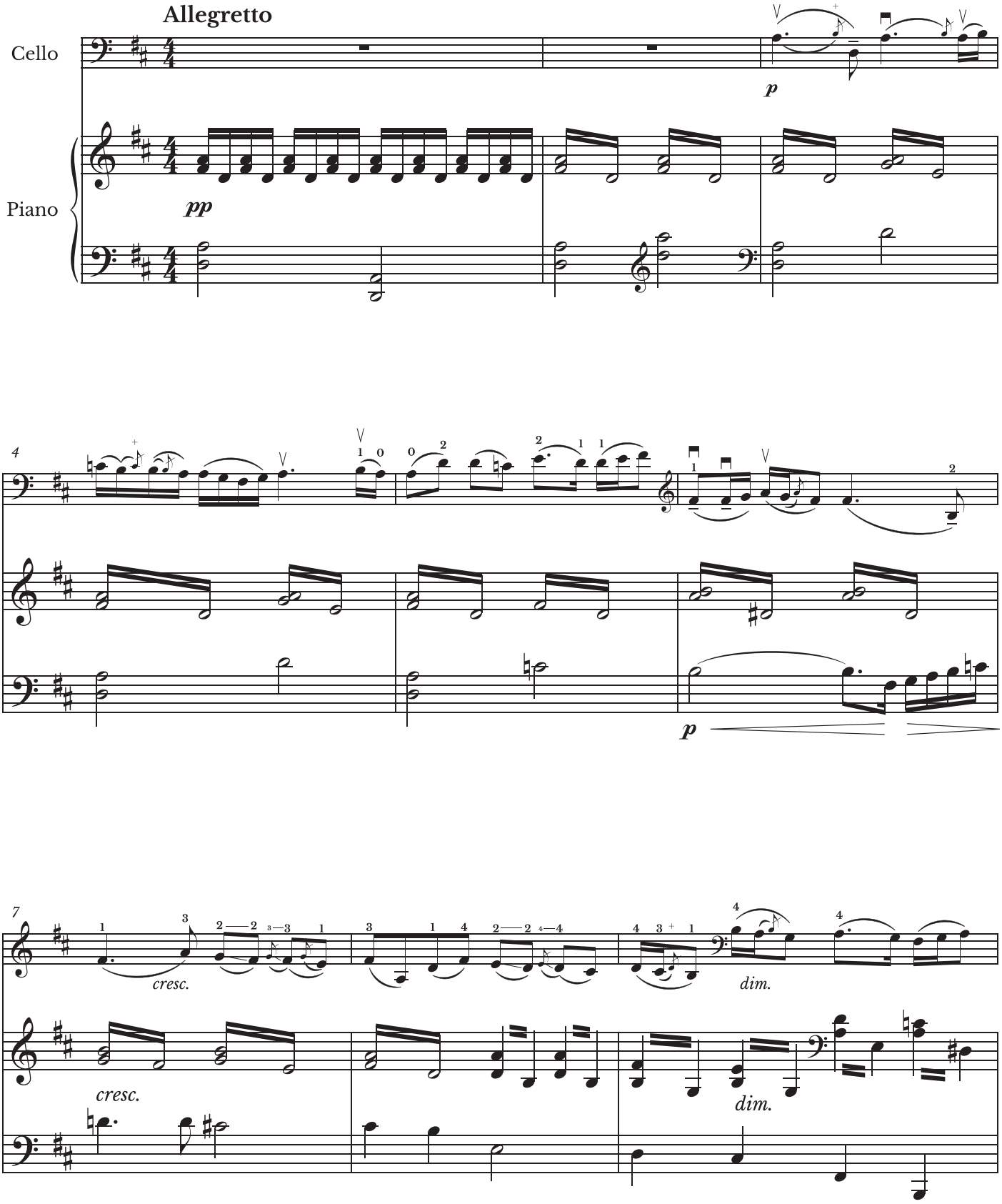
The common Uzbek traditional instruments that usually accompany Uzbek *raqs* (dance)—*doira, nagora, rubab, gijjak,* and *dutar*—are imitated throughout the movement between cello and piano. Marcato, legato, pizzicato, staccato, col legno, and the dynamic range from *pp* to *fff* are the compositional tools that Mushel used to achieve the closest sound representation of the picture of celebration and the sound of Uzbek instruments.

A full performance of this Sonata by Renat Yusupov (cello) and Hila Yusupov (piano) is available on iTunes and YouTube.

Sonata

Georgi MUSHEL
(1909-1989)

I



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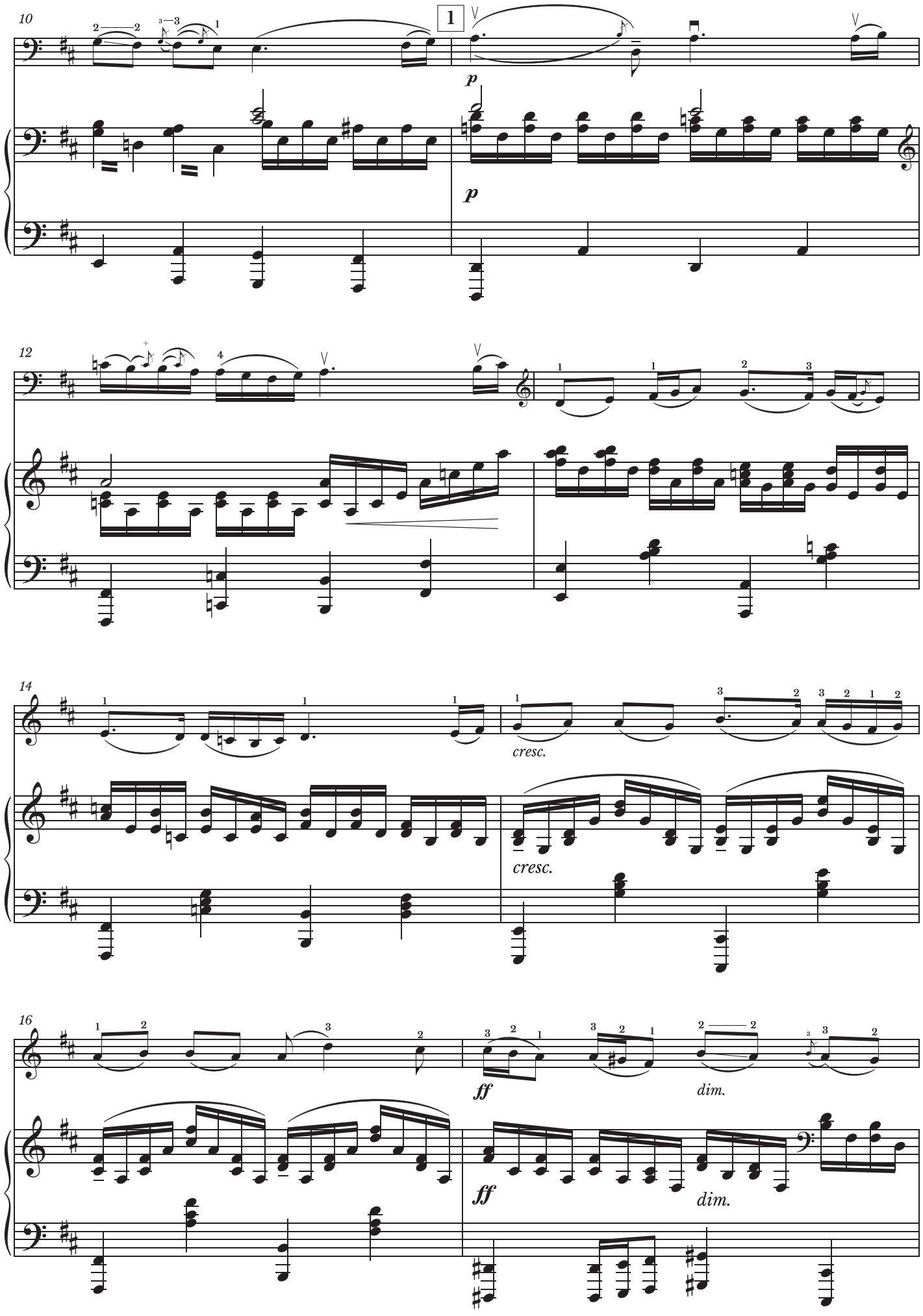
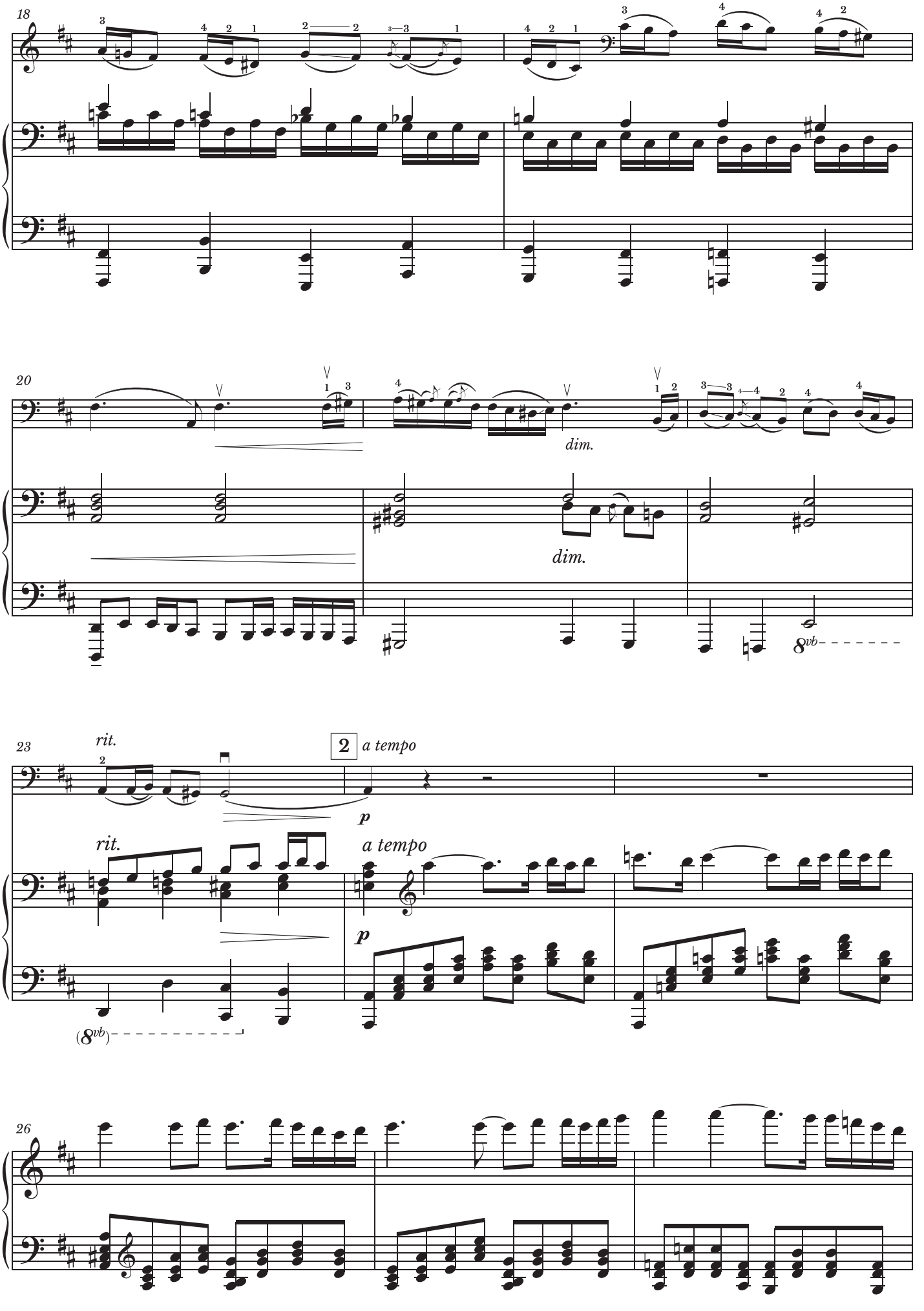
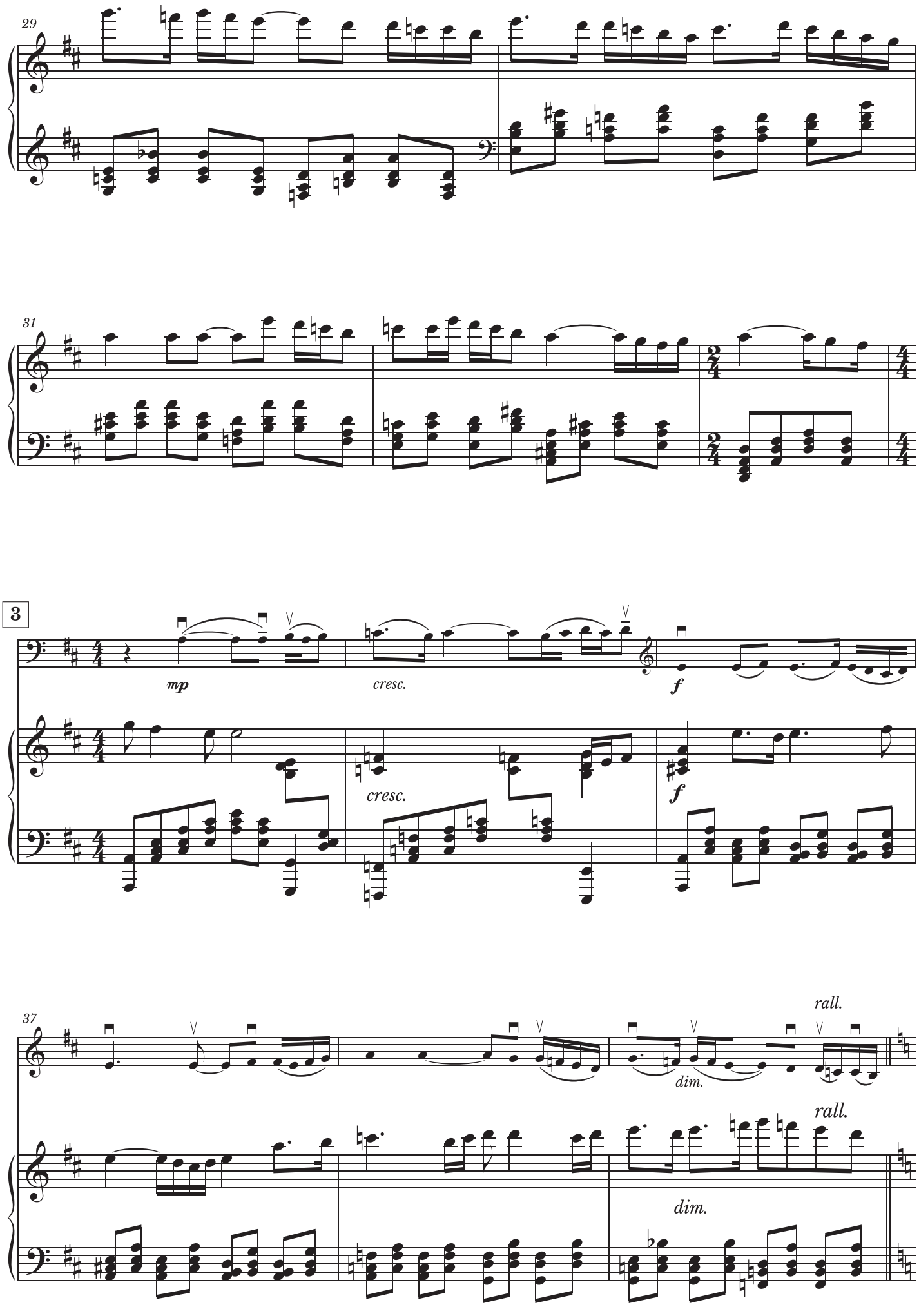
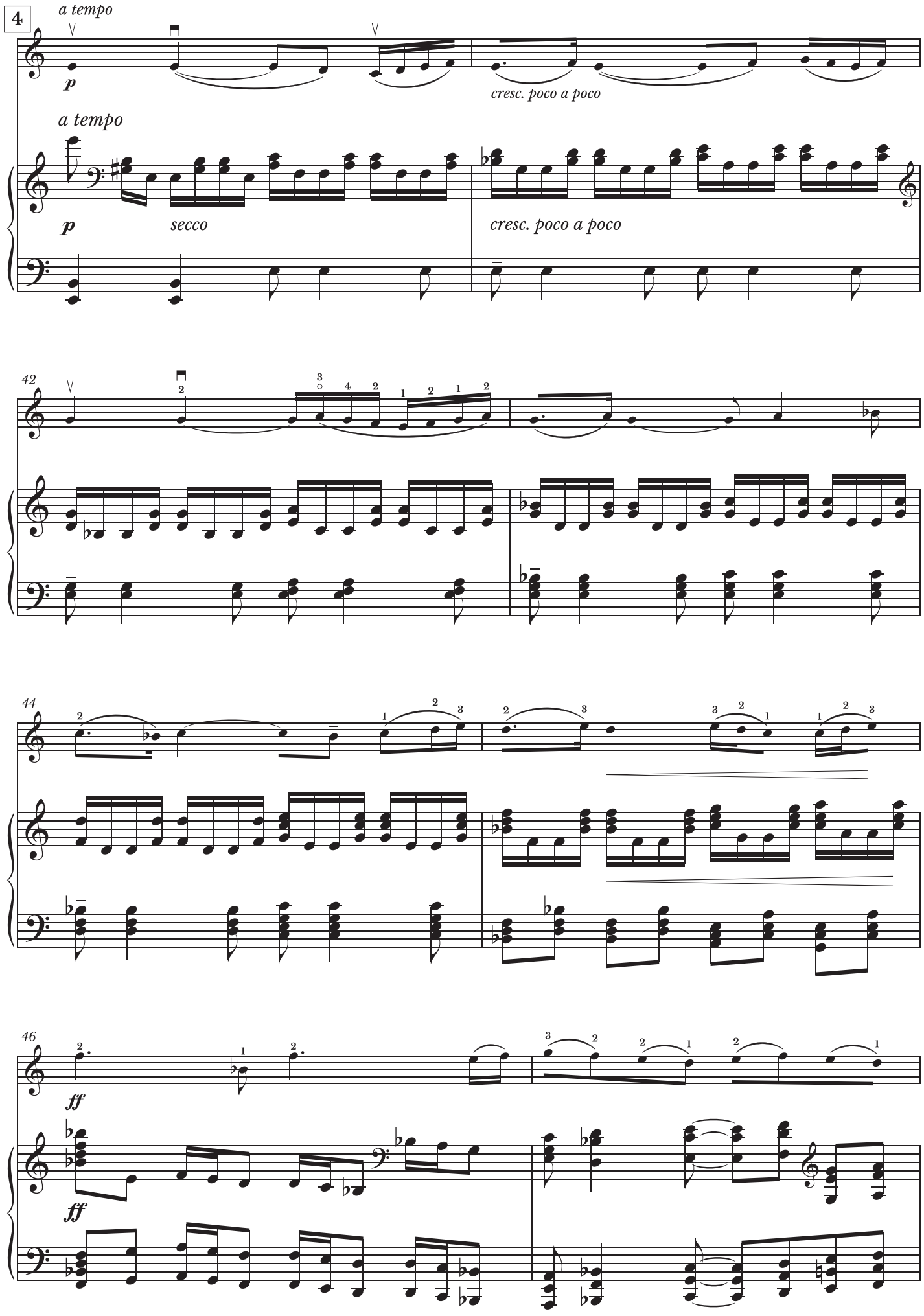
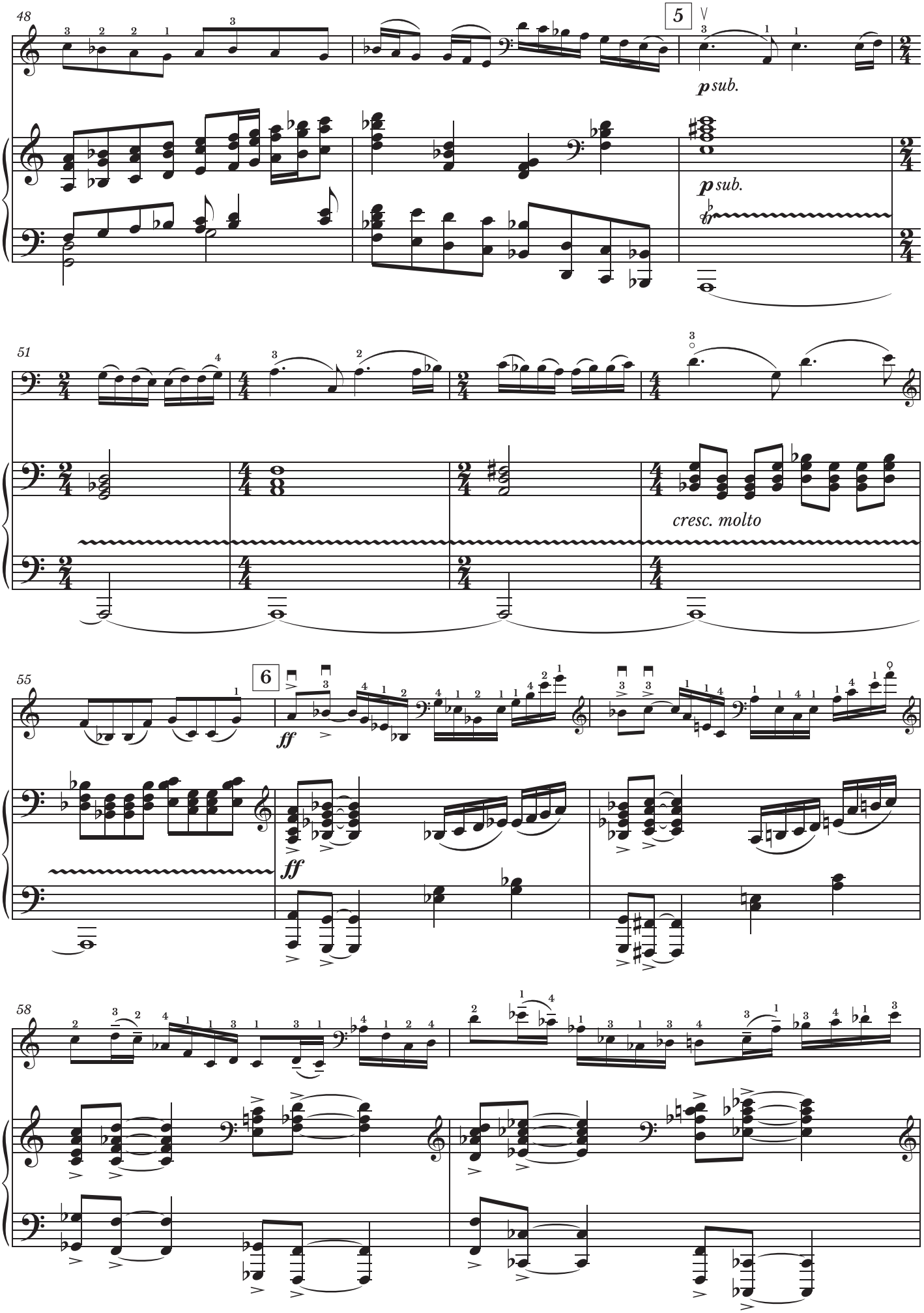
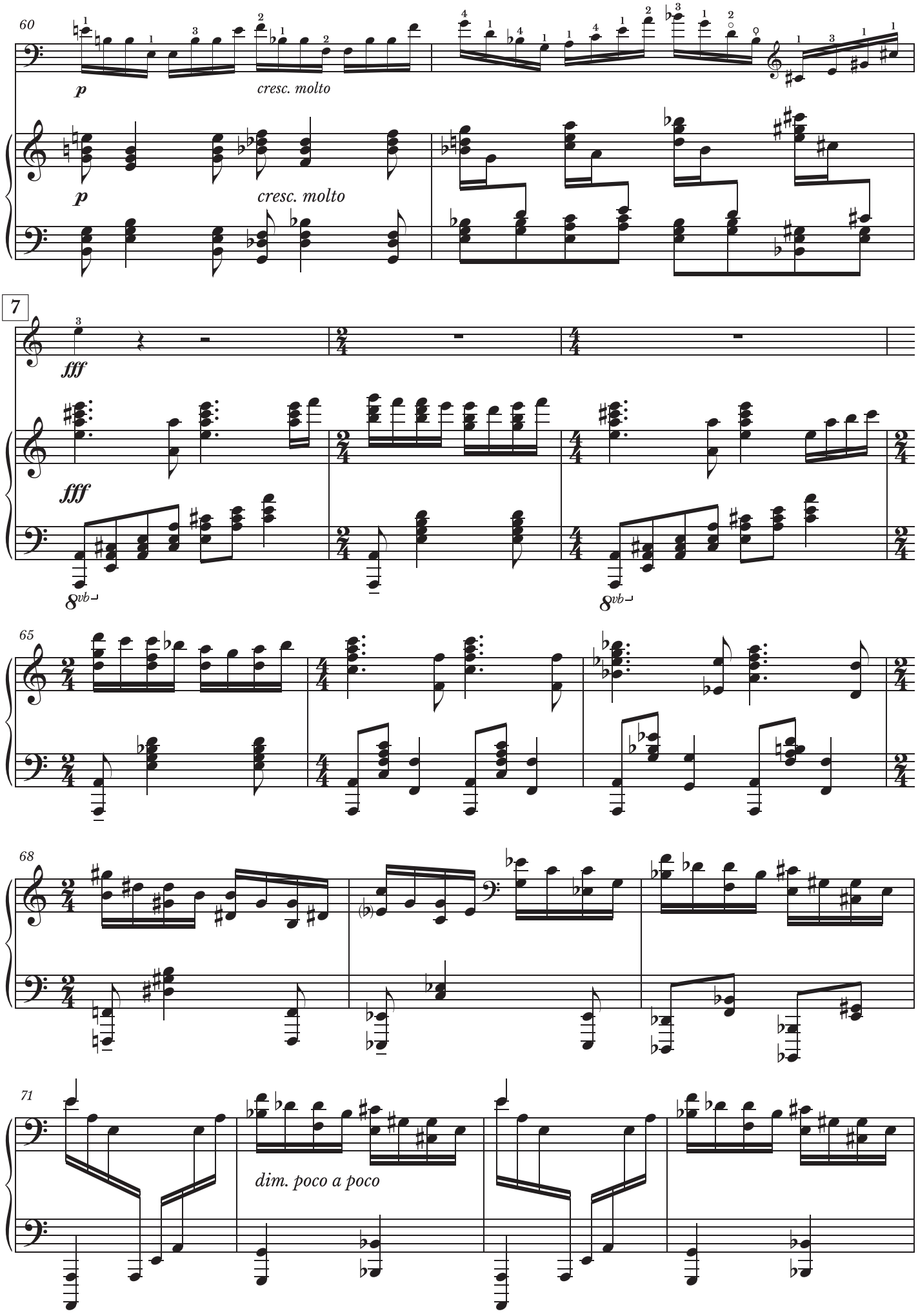

10
1
p
p
12
14
cresc.
cresc.
16
ff
dim.
ff
dim.

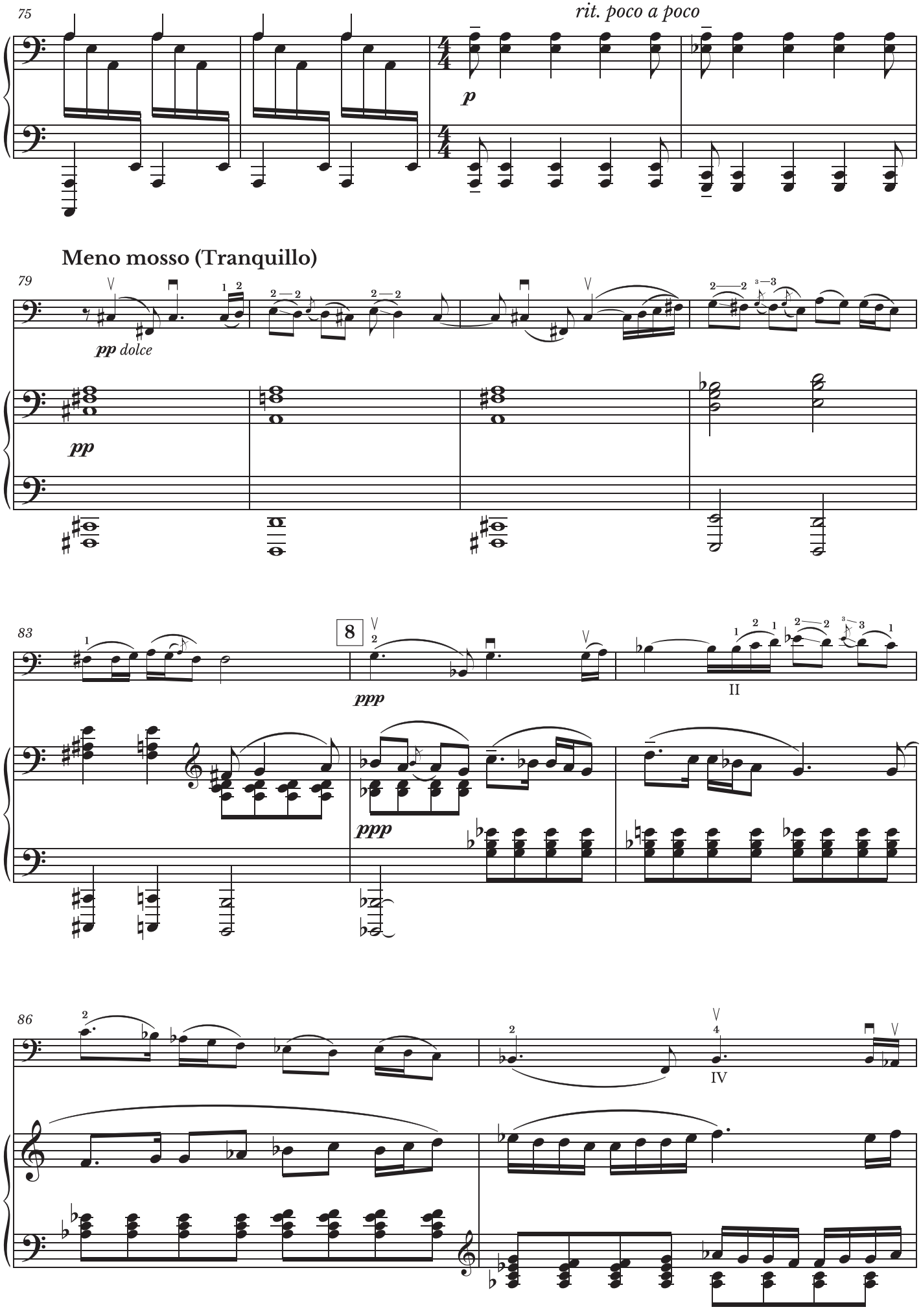

18
20
dim.
dim.
8vb
23
rit.
2
a tempo
p
rit.
a tempo
p
(8vb)
26

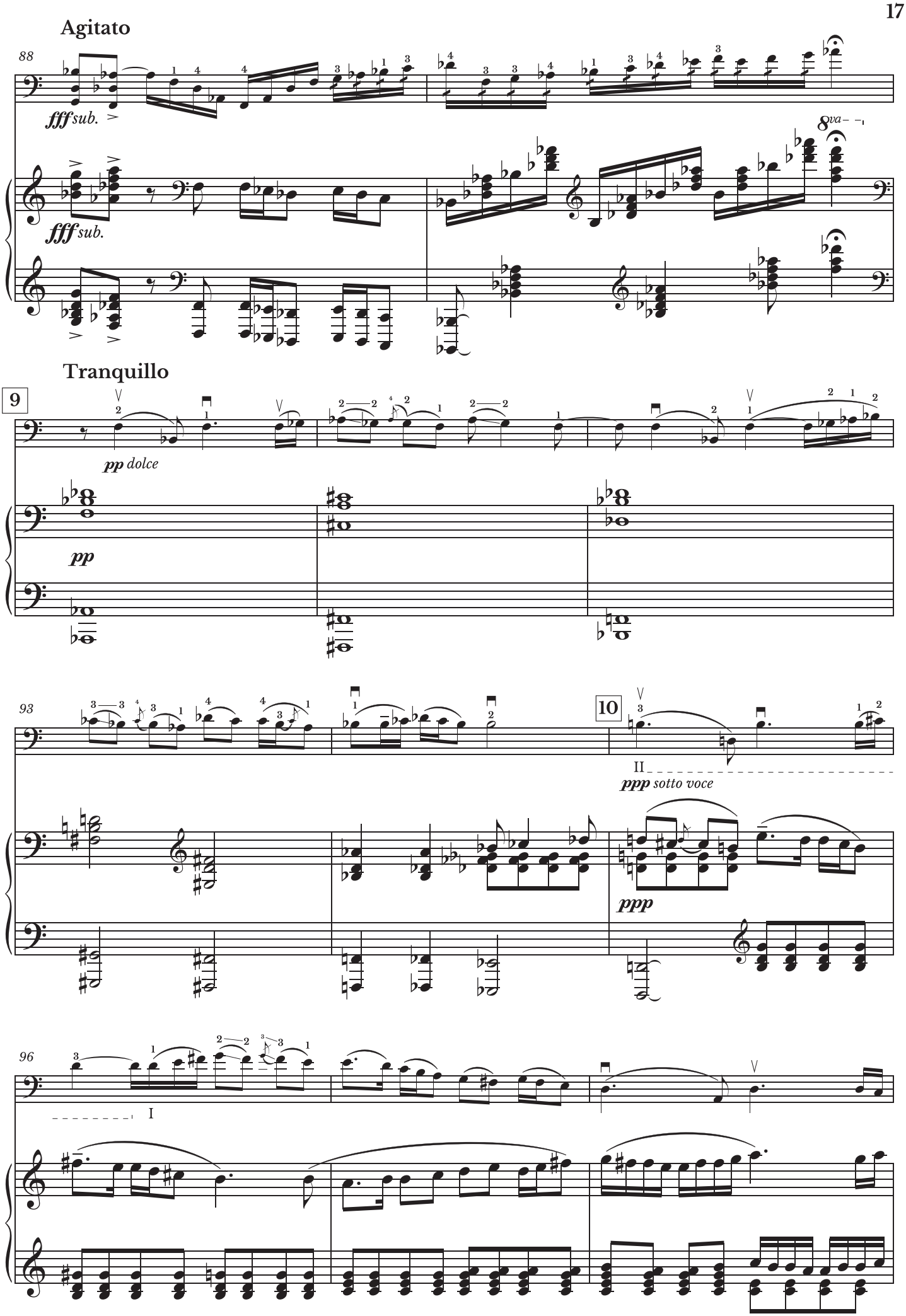

29
31
3
mp
cresc.
f
cresc.
f
37
rall.
dim.
rall.
dim.

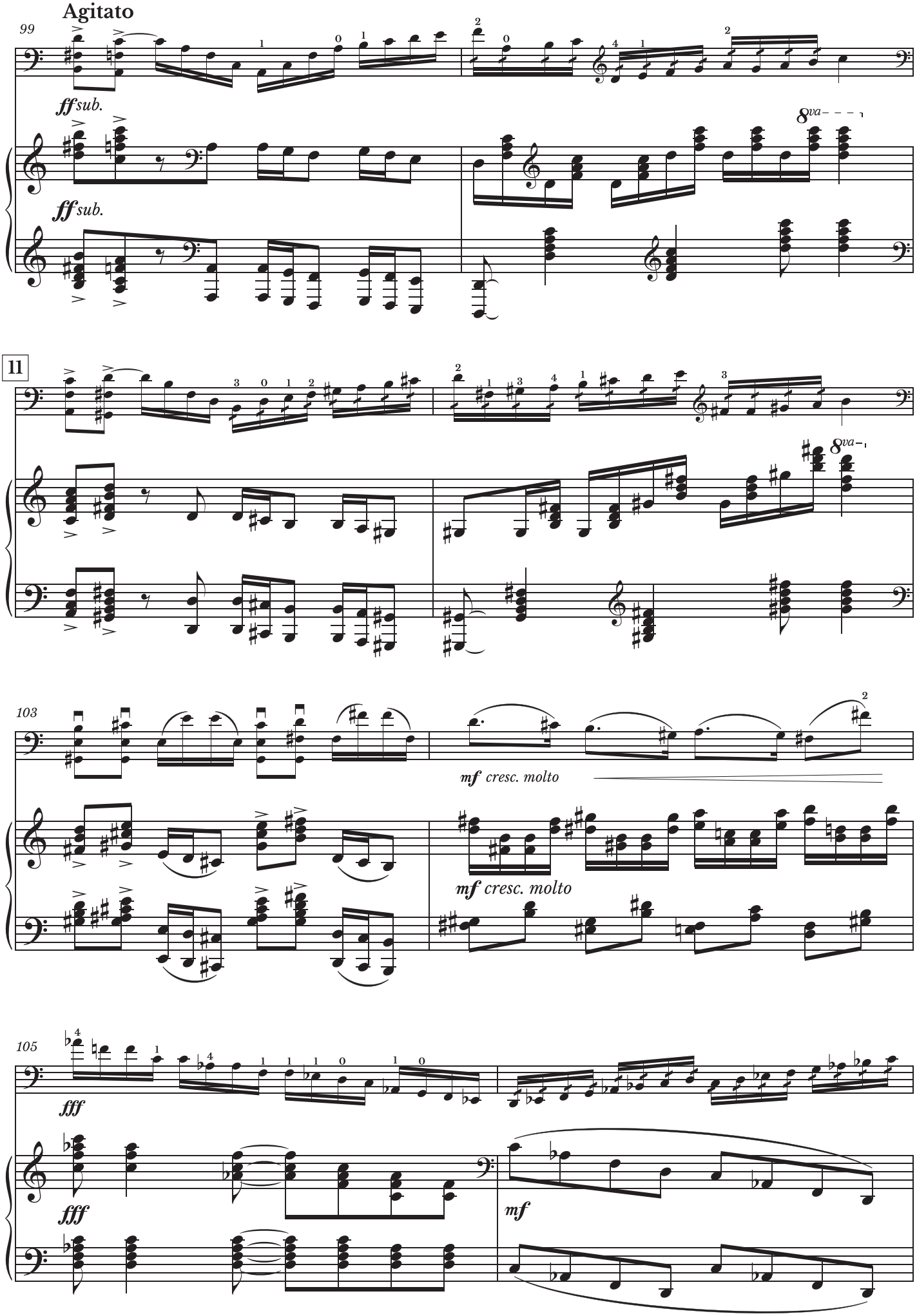

4
a tempo
p
cresc. poco a poco
a tempo
p
secco
cresc. poco a poco
42
44
46
ff
ff

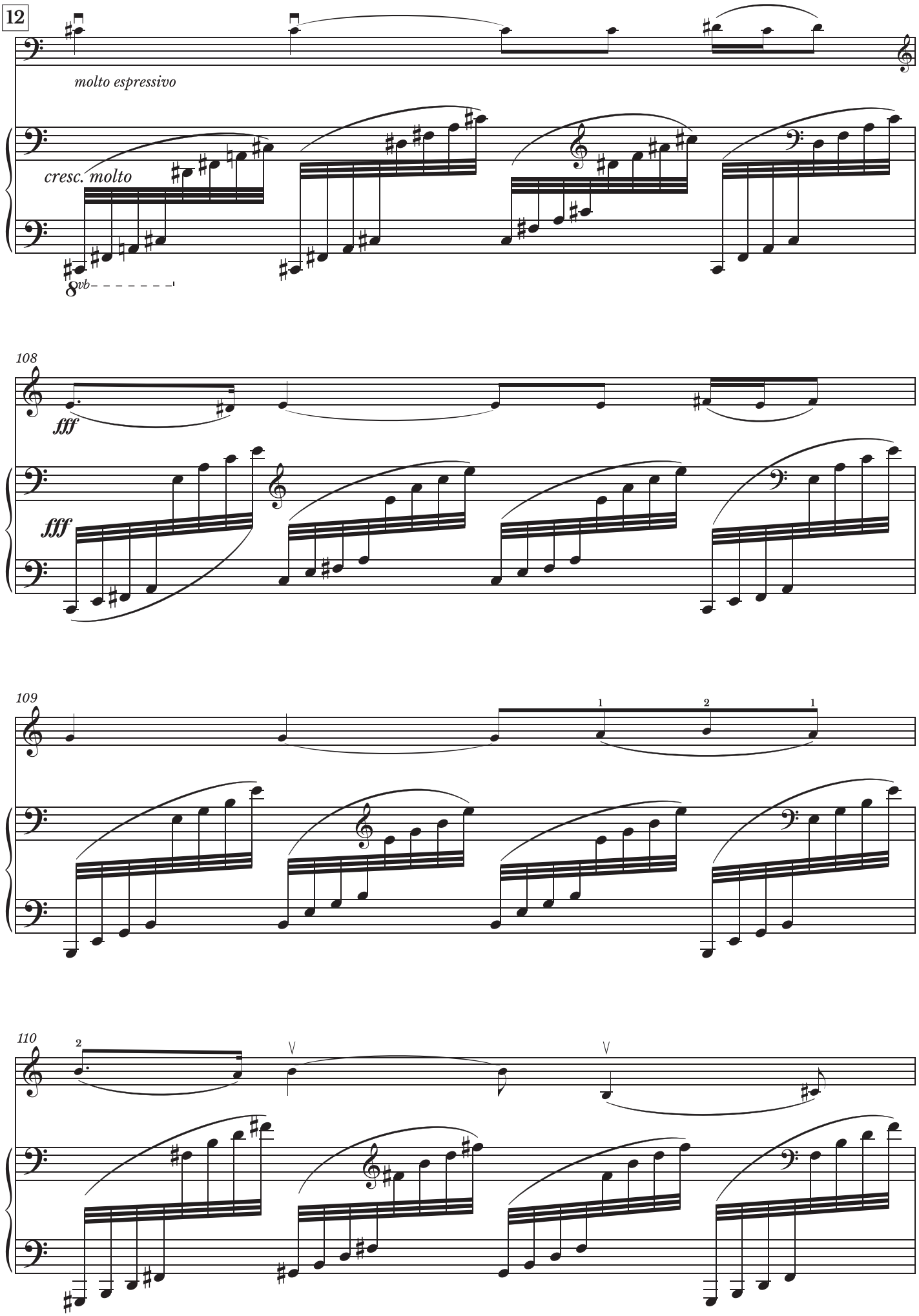

48
5
p sub.
p sub.
51
cresc. molto
55
6
ff
ff
58

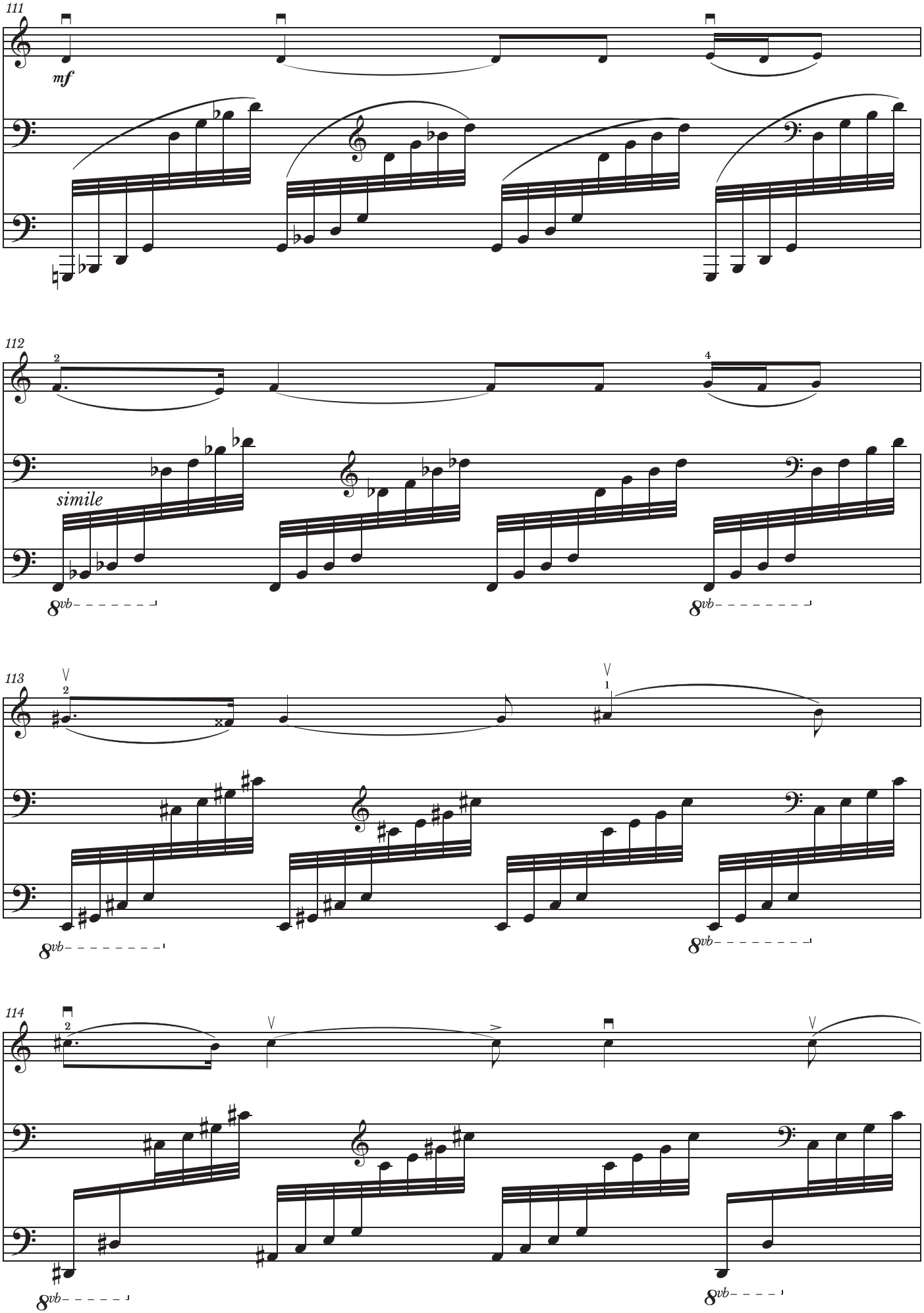

60
p
cresc. molto
p
cresc. molto
7
fff
fff
8vb
8vb
65
68
71
dim. poco a poco

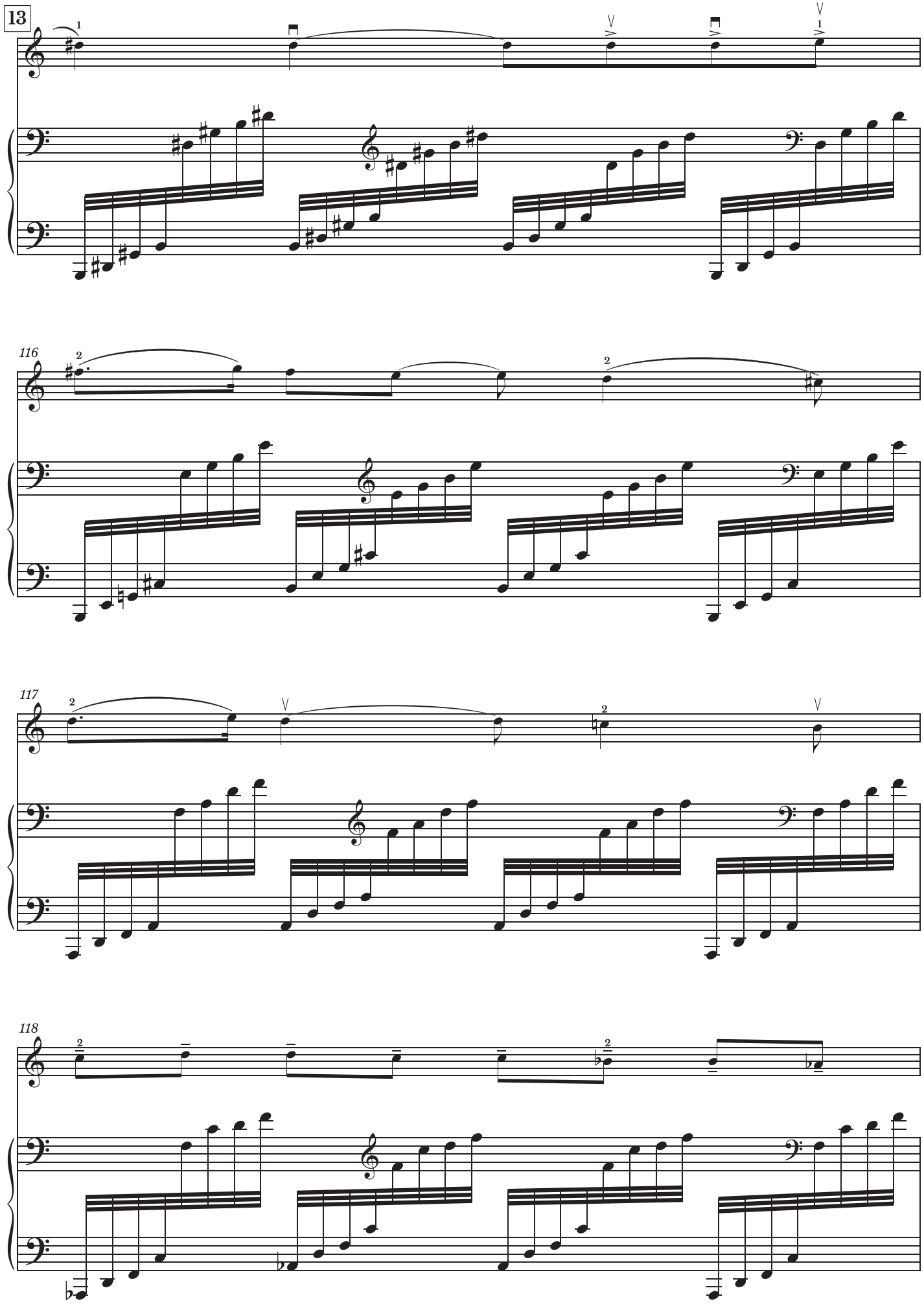

75
rit. poco a poco
p
Meno mosso (Tranquillo)
79
pp dolce
pp
83
8
ppp
ppp
II
86
IV


Agitato
88
fff sub.
fff sub.
8va
Tranquillo
9
pp dolce
pp
93
10
II
ppp sotto voce
ppp
96
I


Agitato
99
ff sub.
ff sub.
8va
11
103
mf cresc. molto
mf cresc. molto
105
fff
fff
mf
8va


12
molto espressivo
cresc. molto
8vb
108
fff
fff
109
1
2
1
110
2


111
mf
112
simile
8vb
113
114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117
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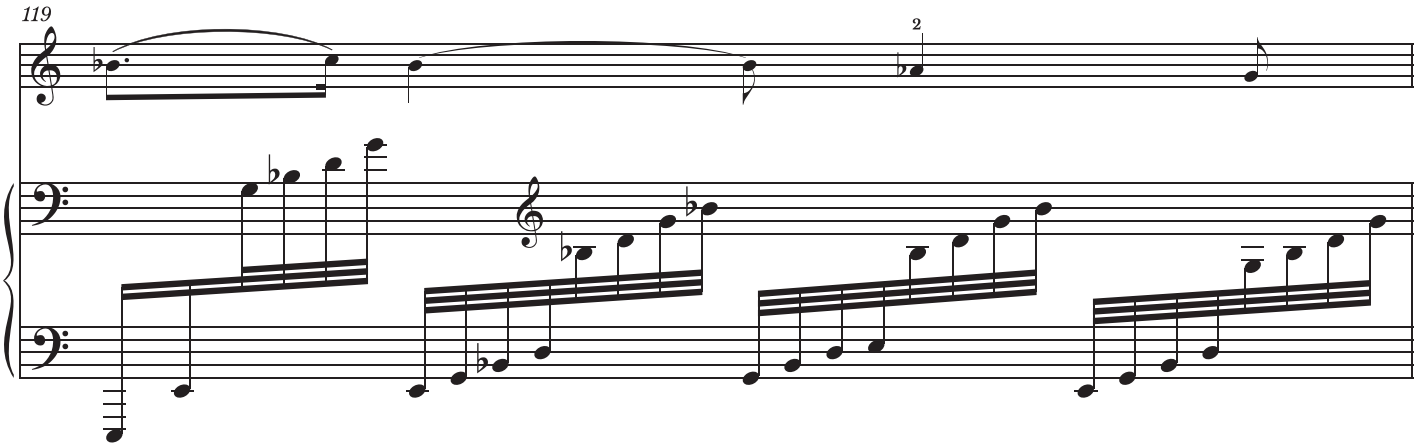
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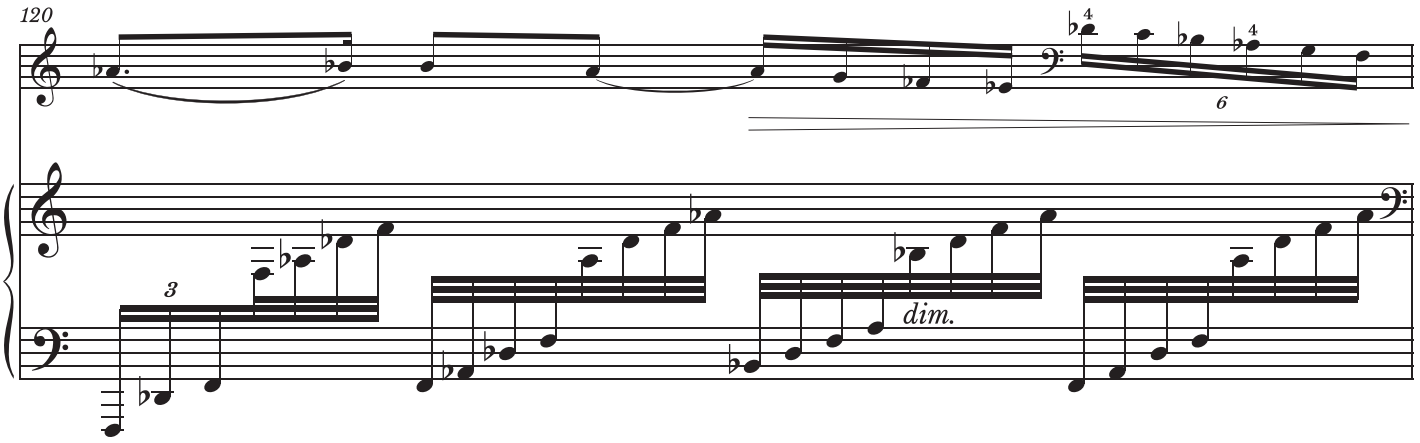
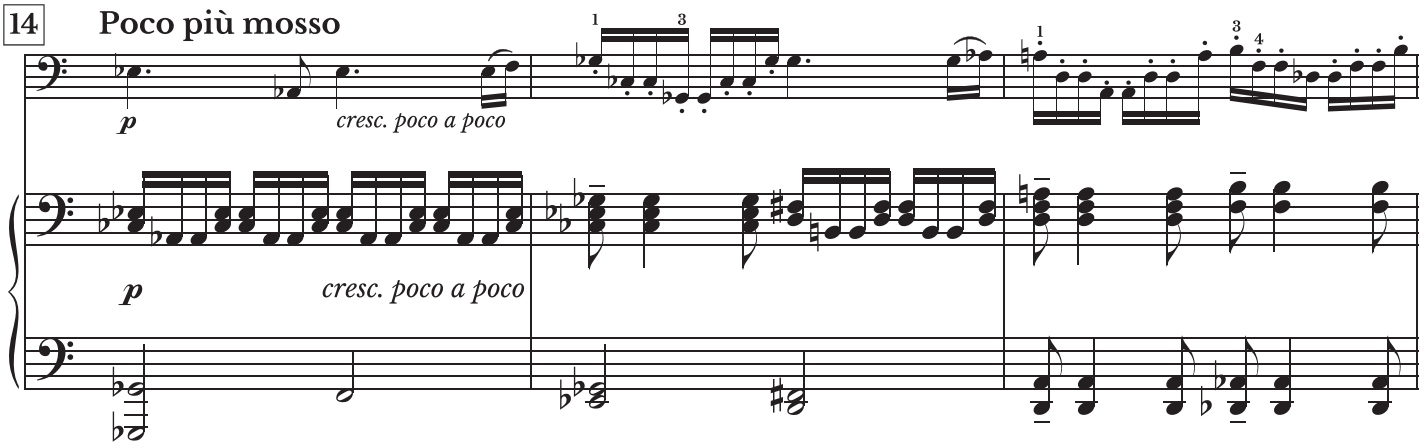
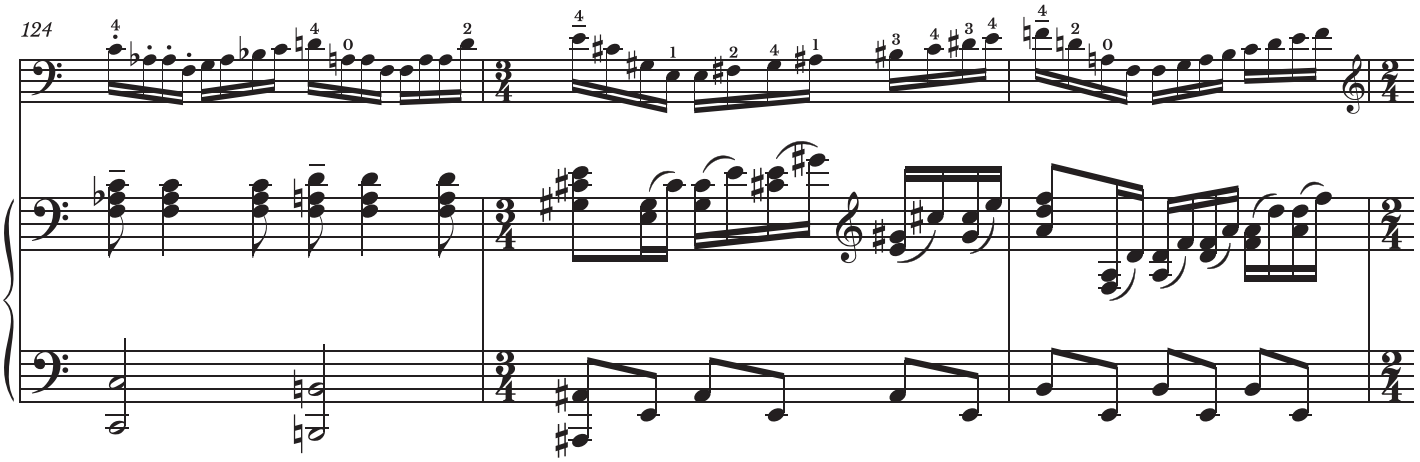

120
dim.


14
Poco più mosso
p
cresc. poco a poco
p
cresc. poco a poco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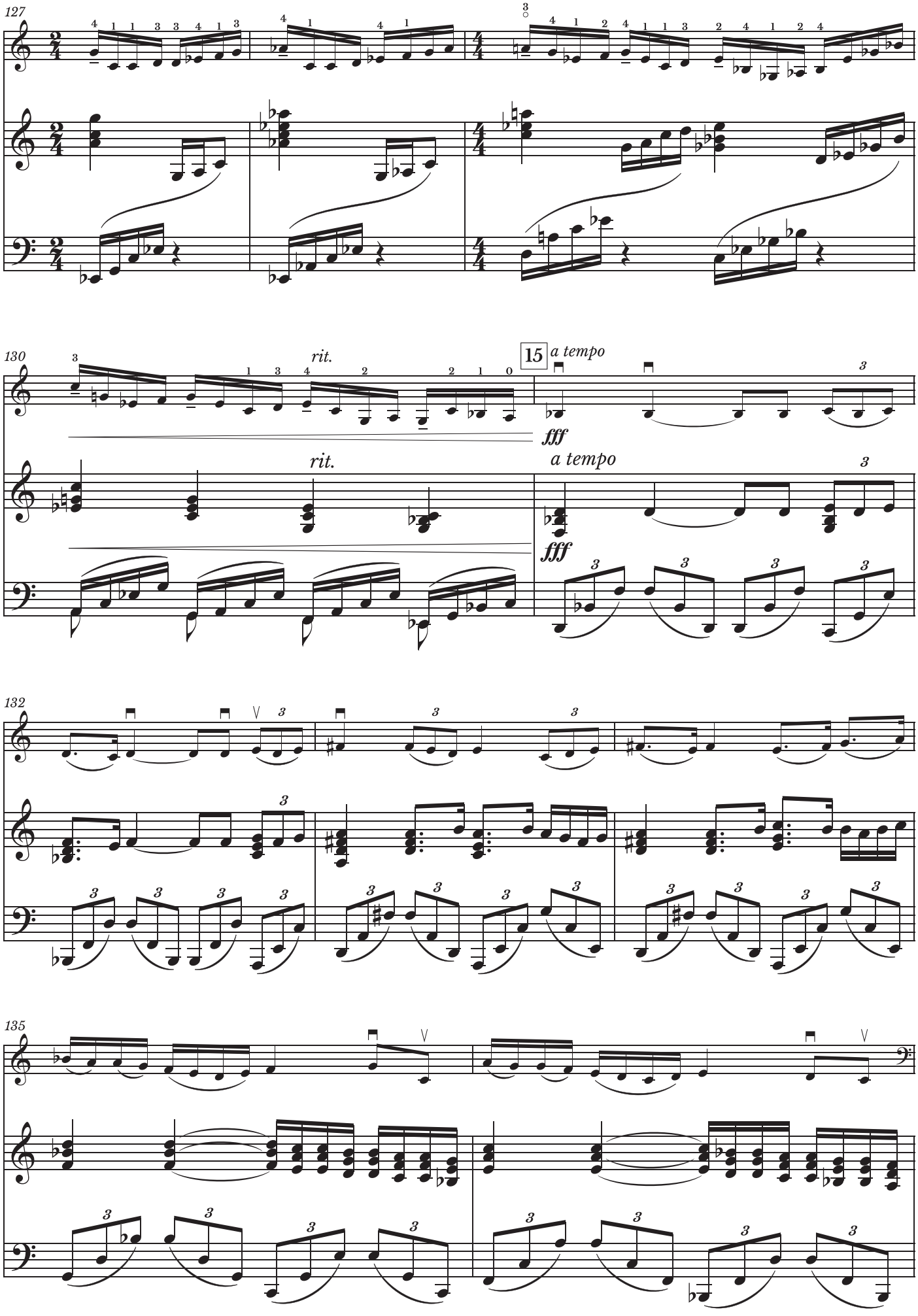
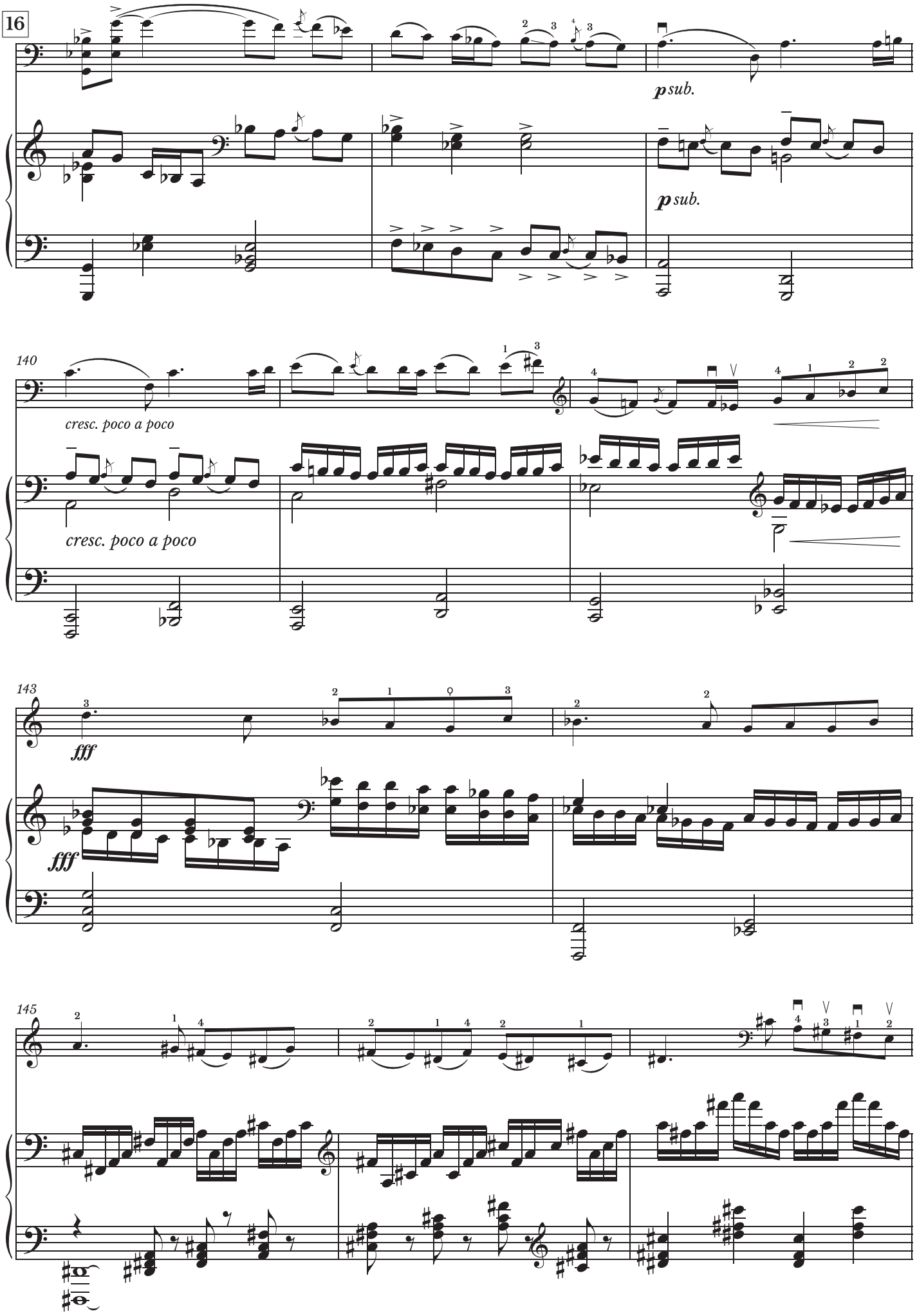
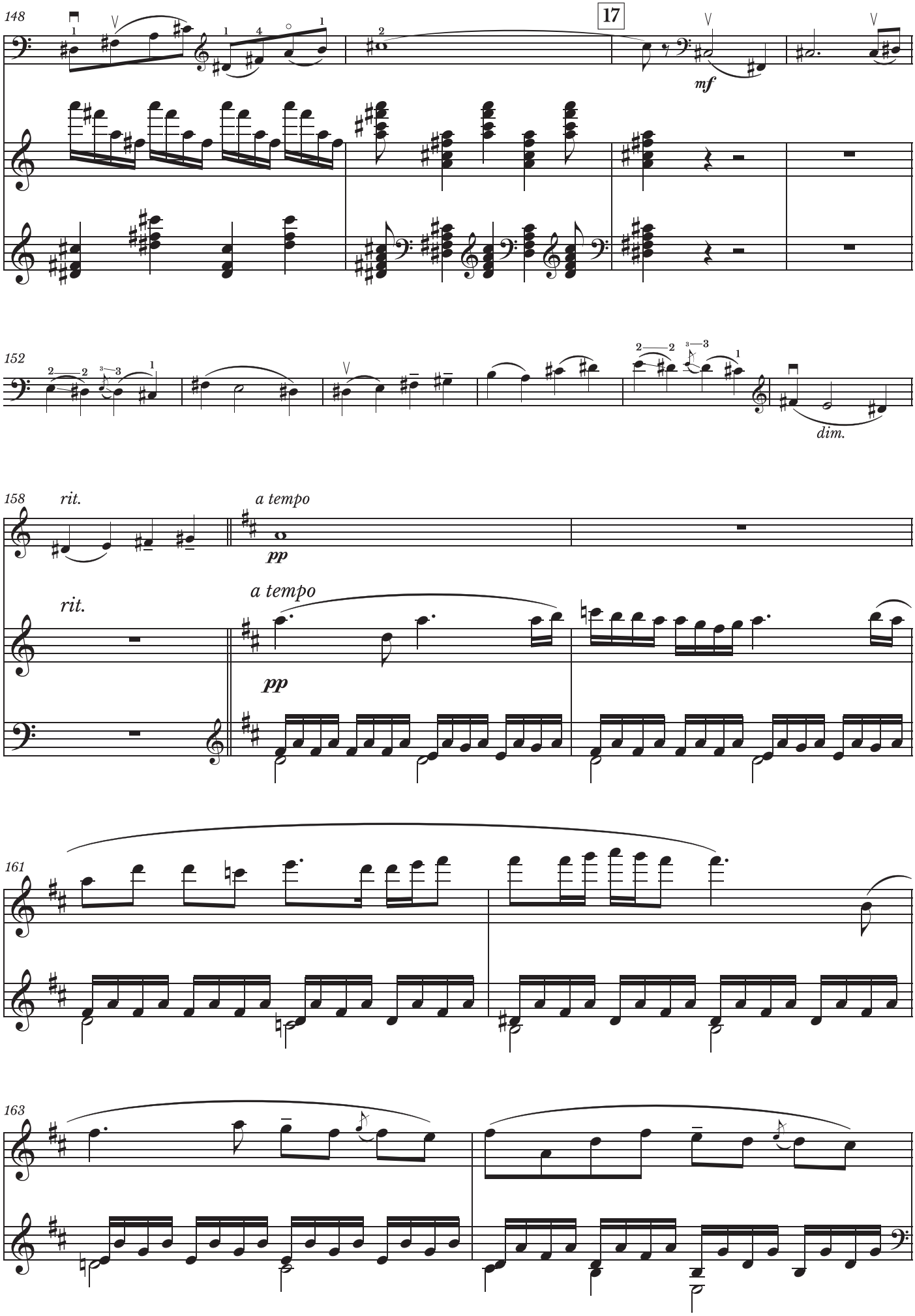
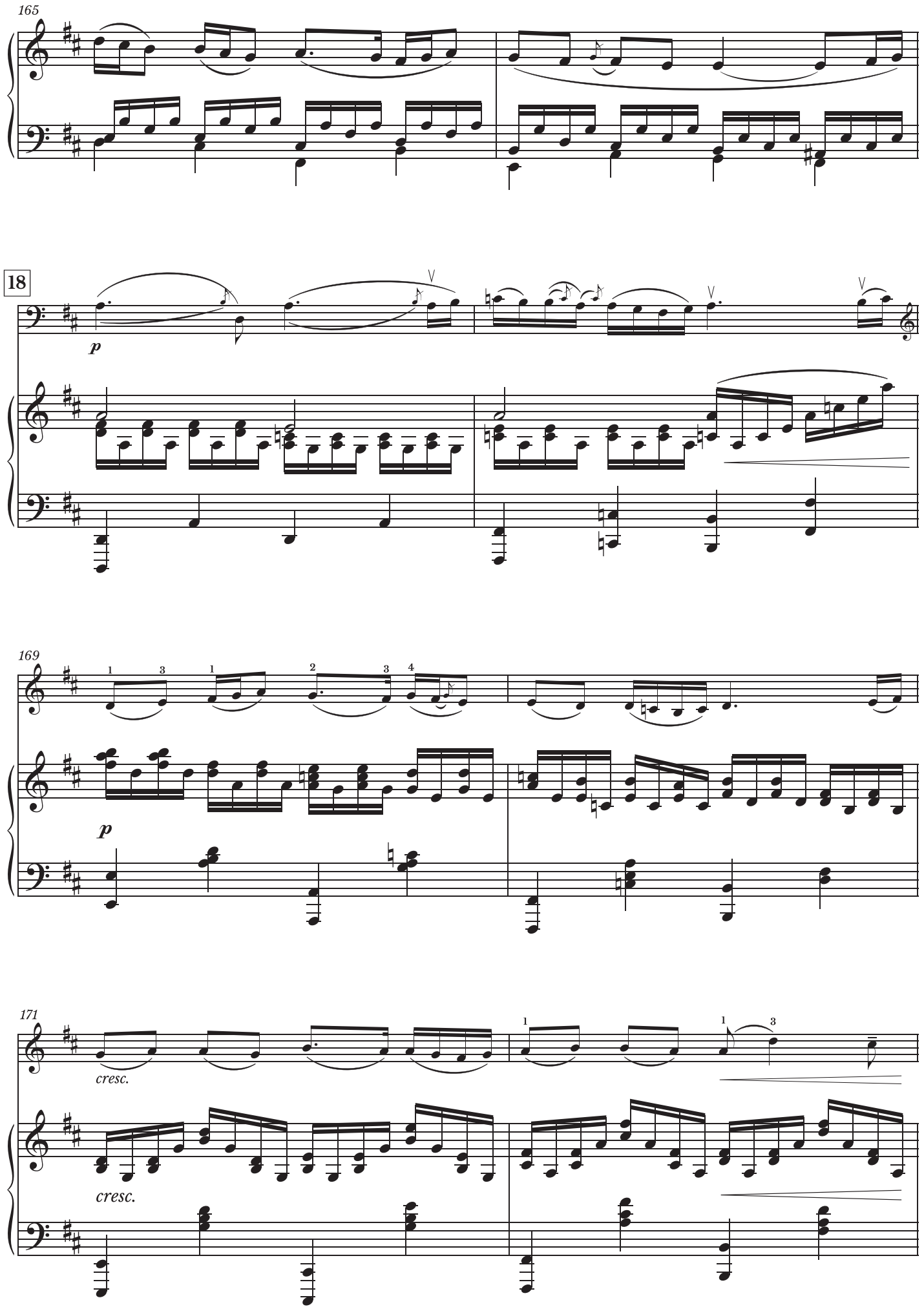
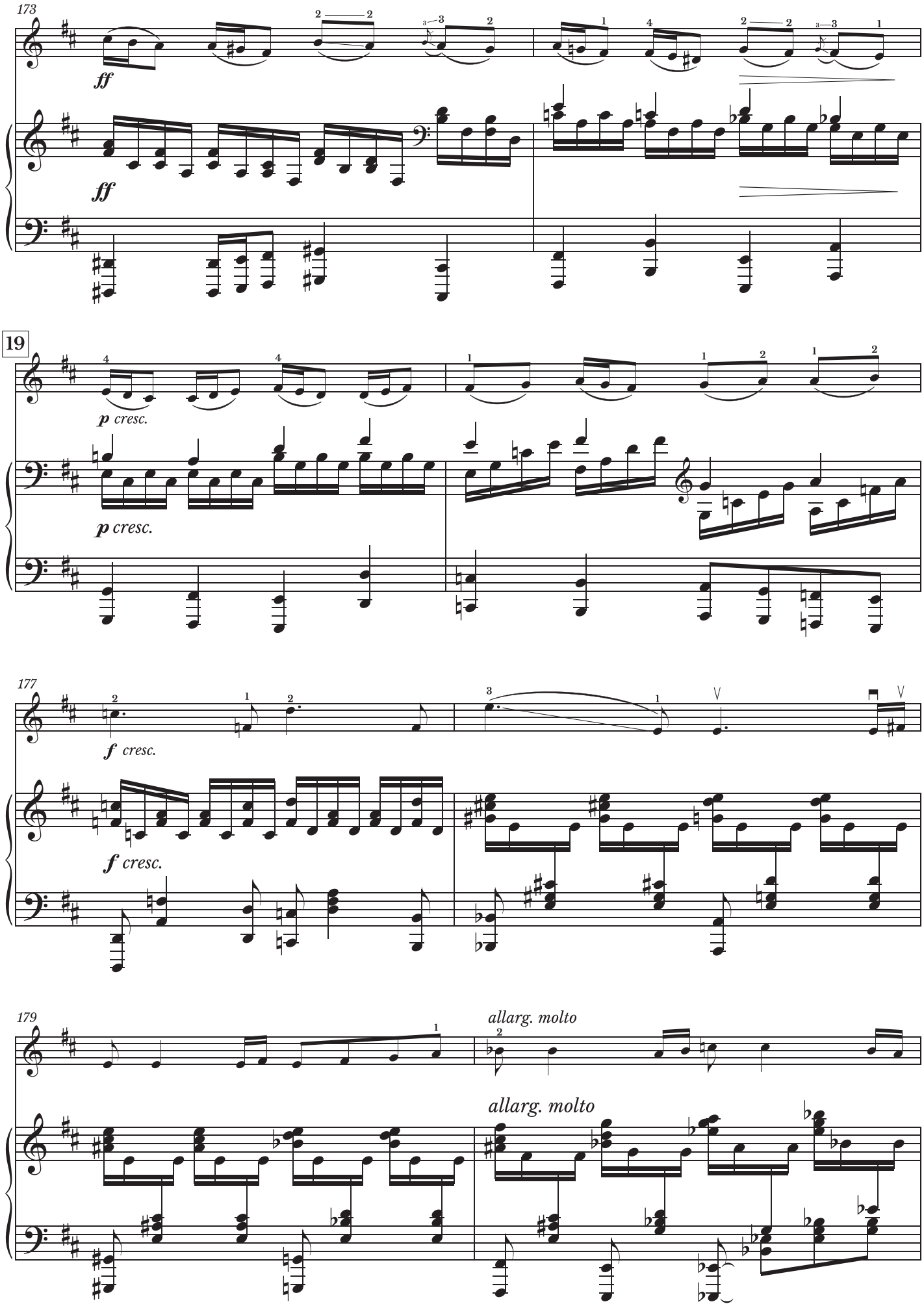
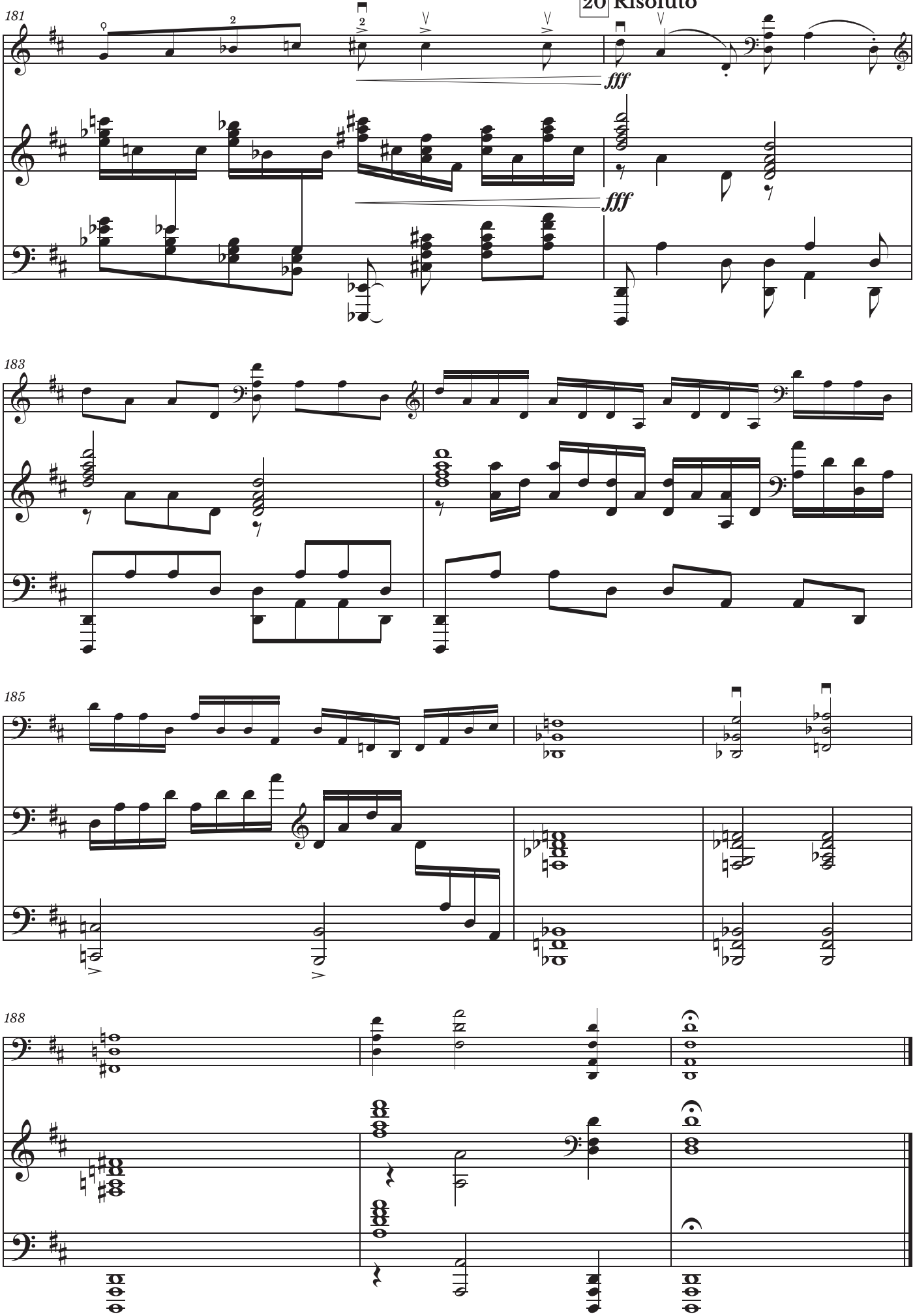

127
130
rit.
15
a tempo
fff
rit.
a tempo
fff
132
135


16
p sub.
p sub.
140
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco
143
fff
fff
145


148
17
mf
152
dim.
158
rit.
a tempo
pp
rit.
a tempo
pp
161
163

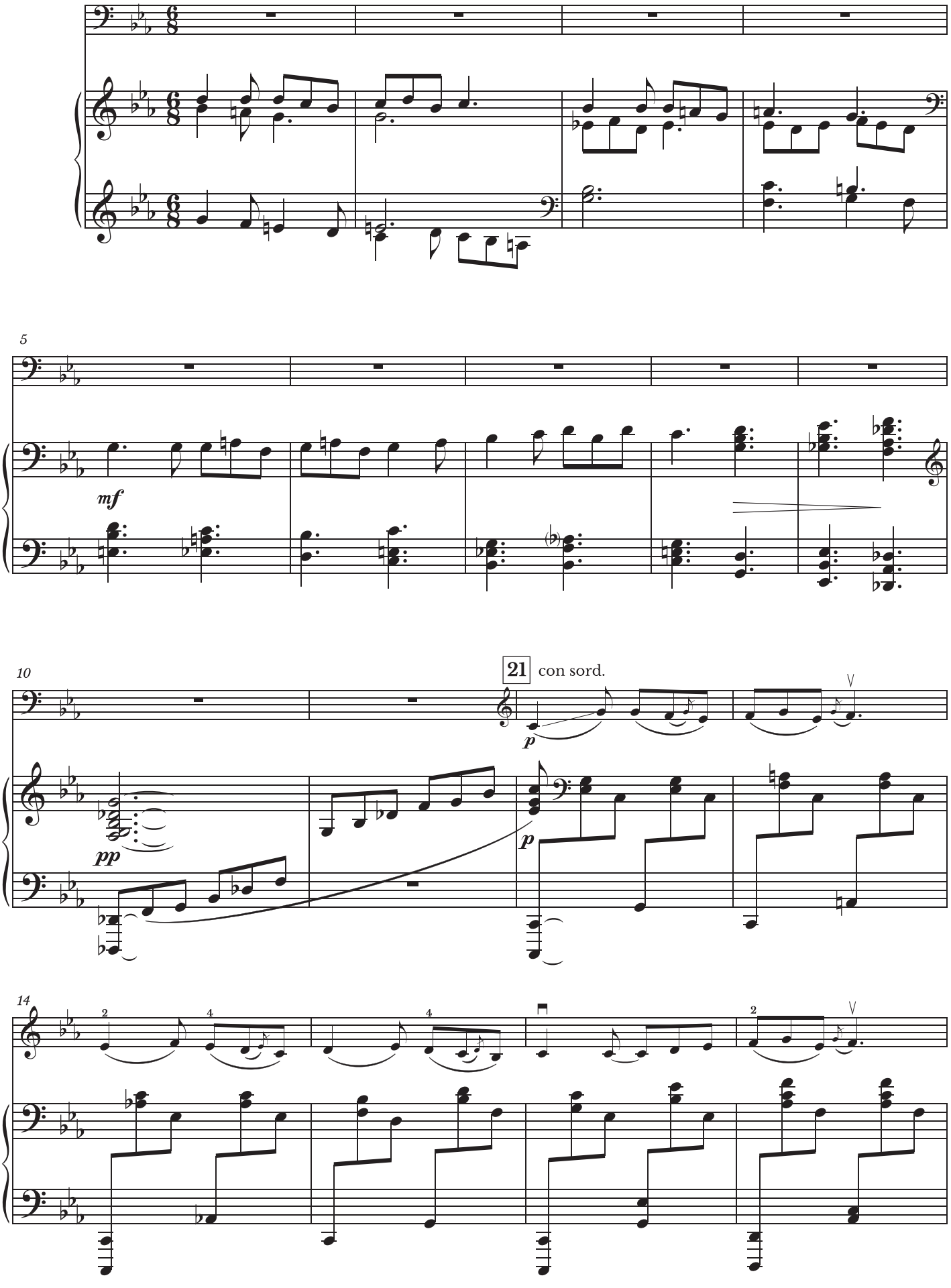

165
18
p
169
p
171
cresc.
cresc.

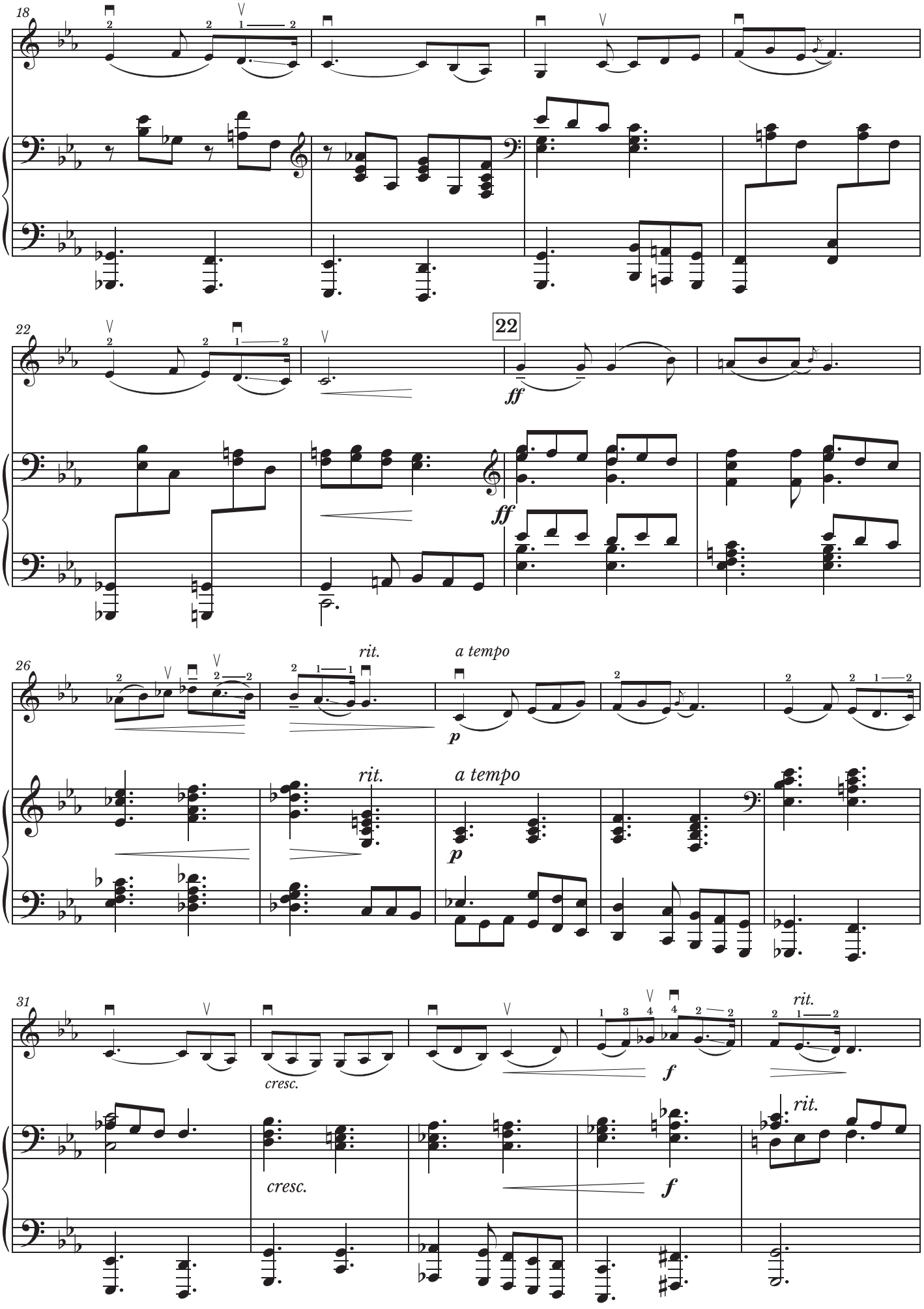

173
ff
ff
19
p cresc.
p cresc.
177
f cresc.
f cresc.
179
allarg. molto
allarg. molto

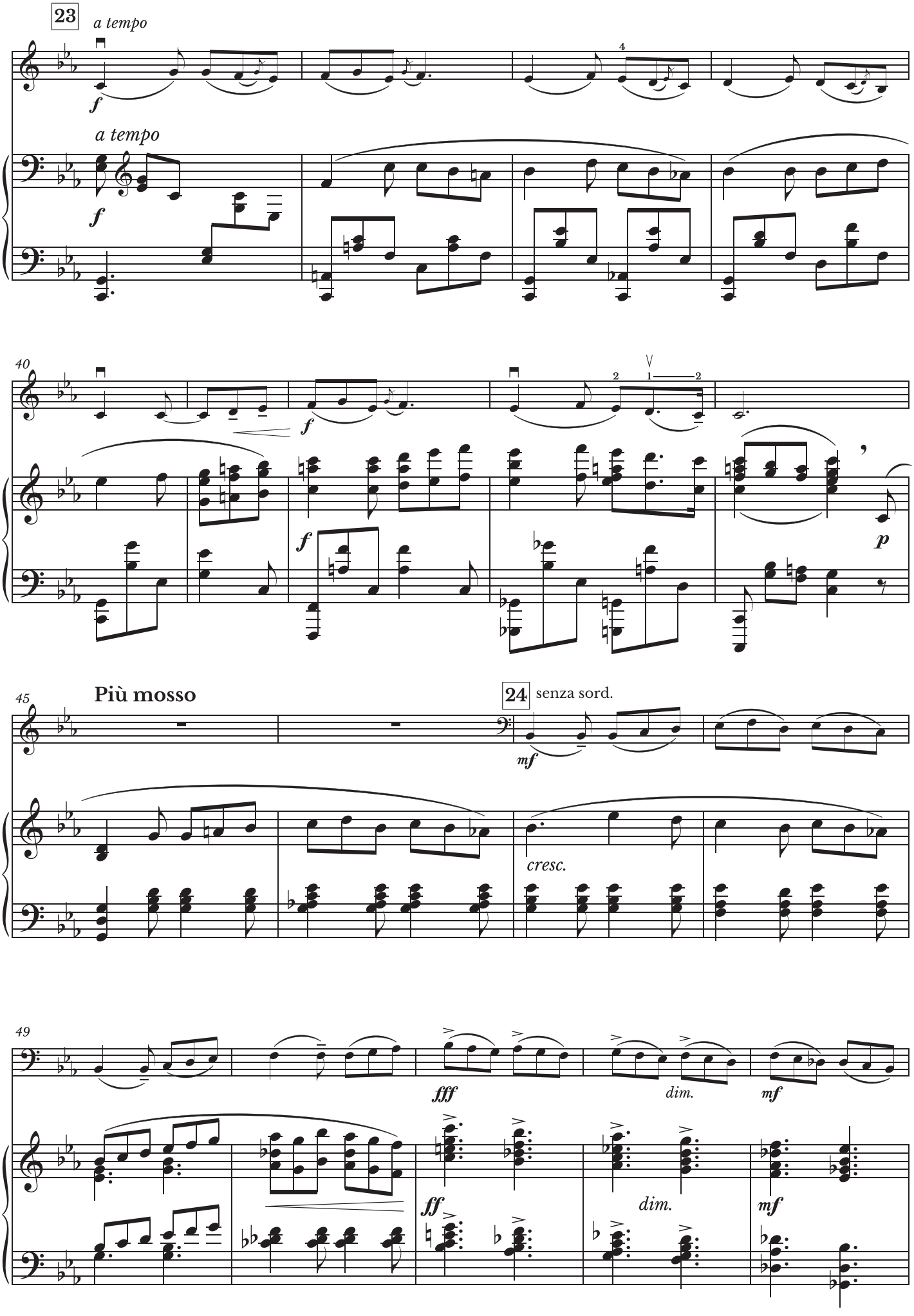

20 Risoluto
181
fff
fff
183
185
188

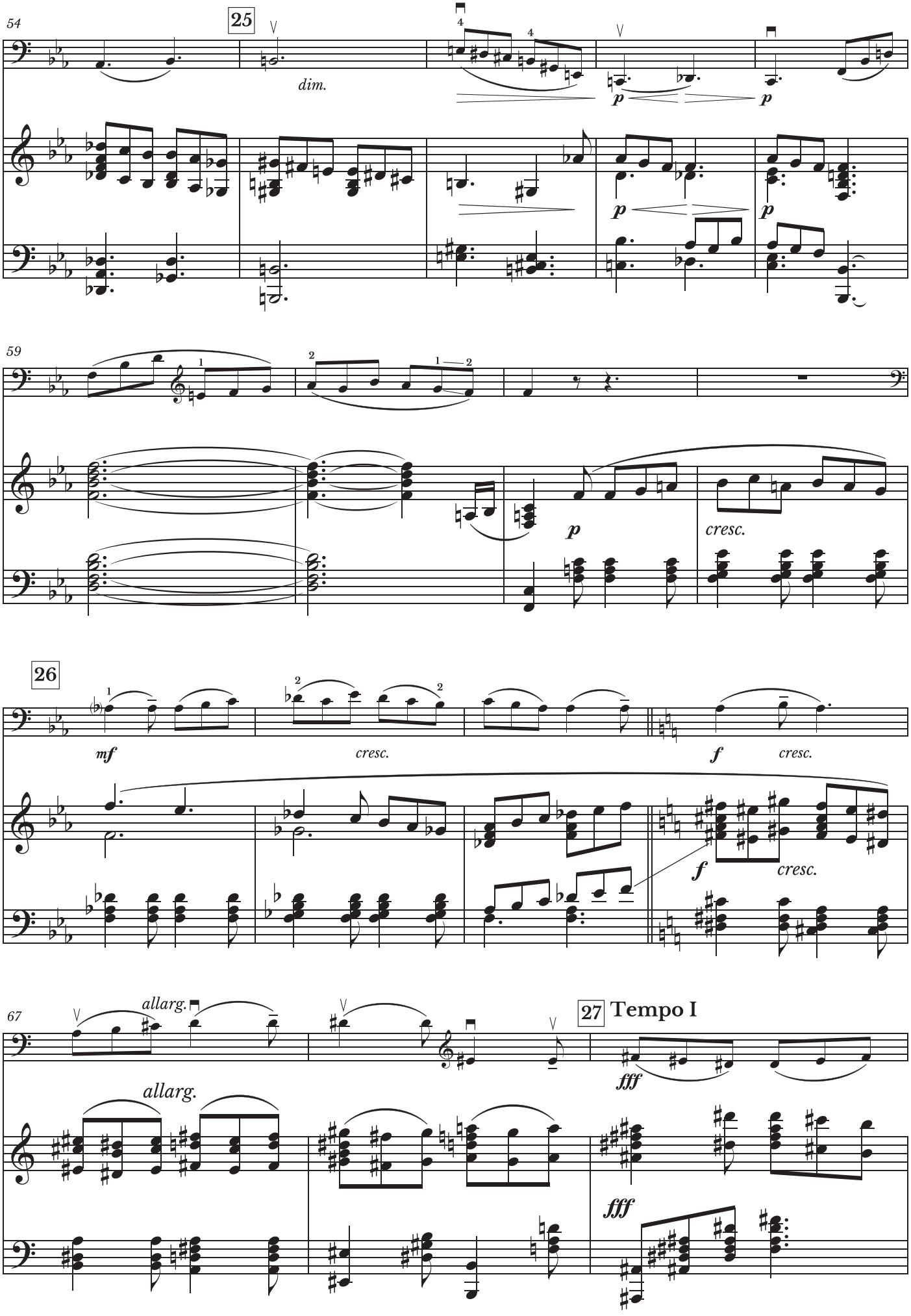
II

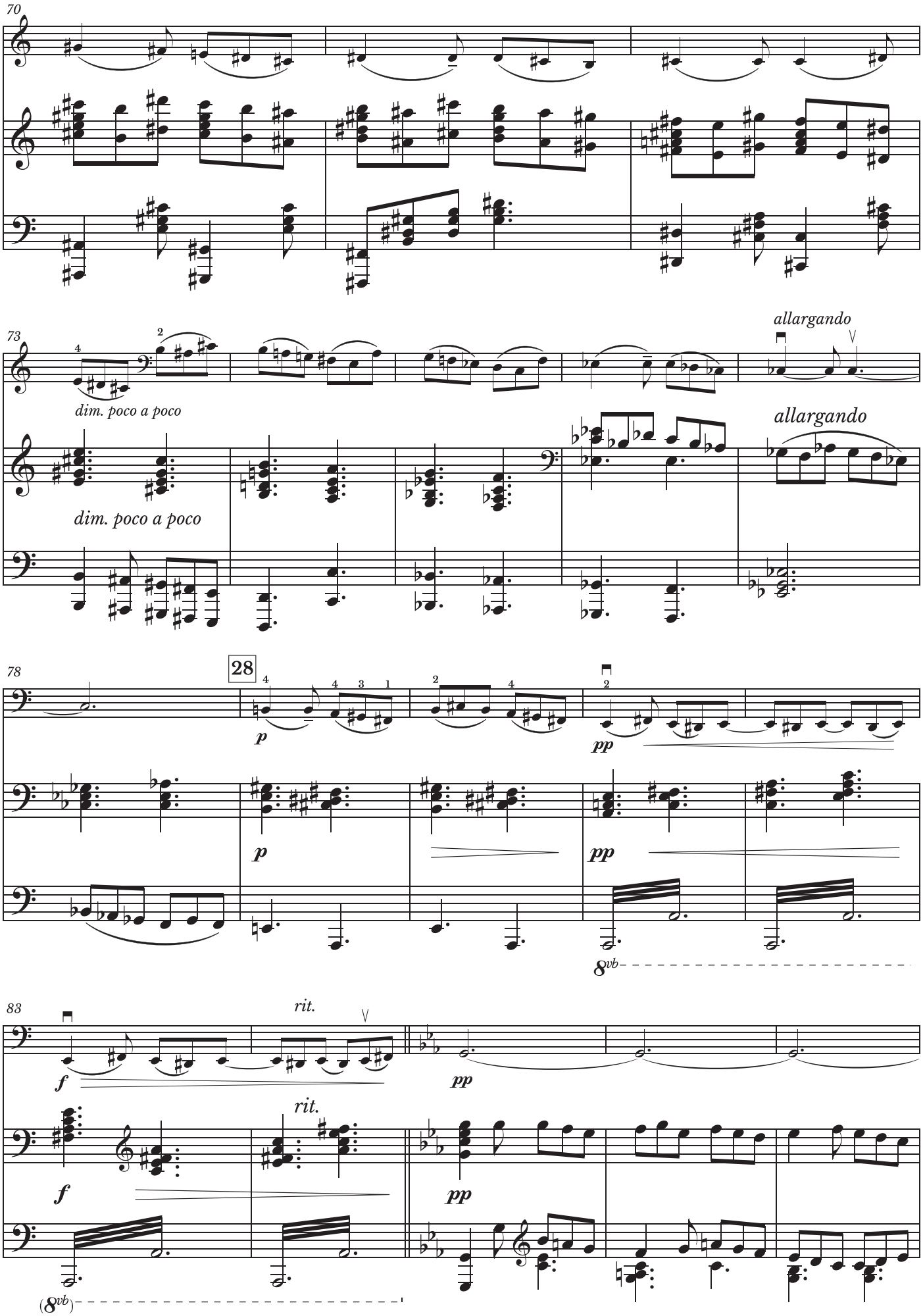
Andantino con moto

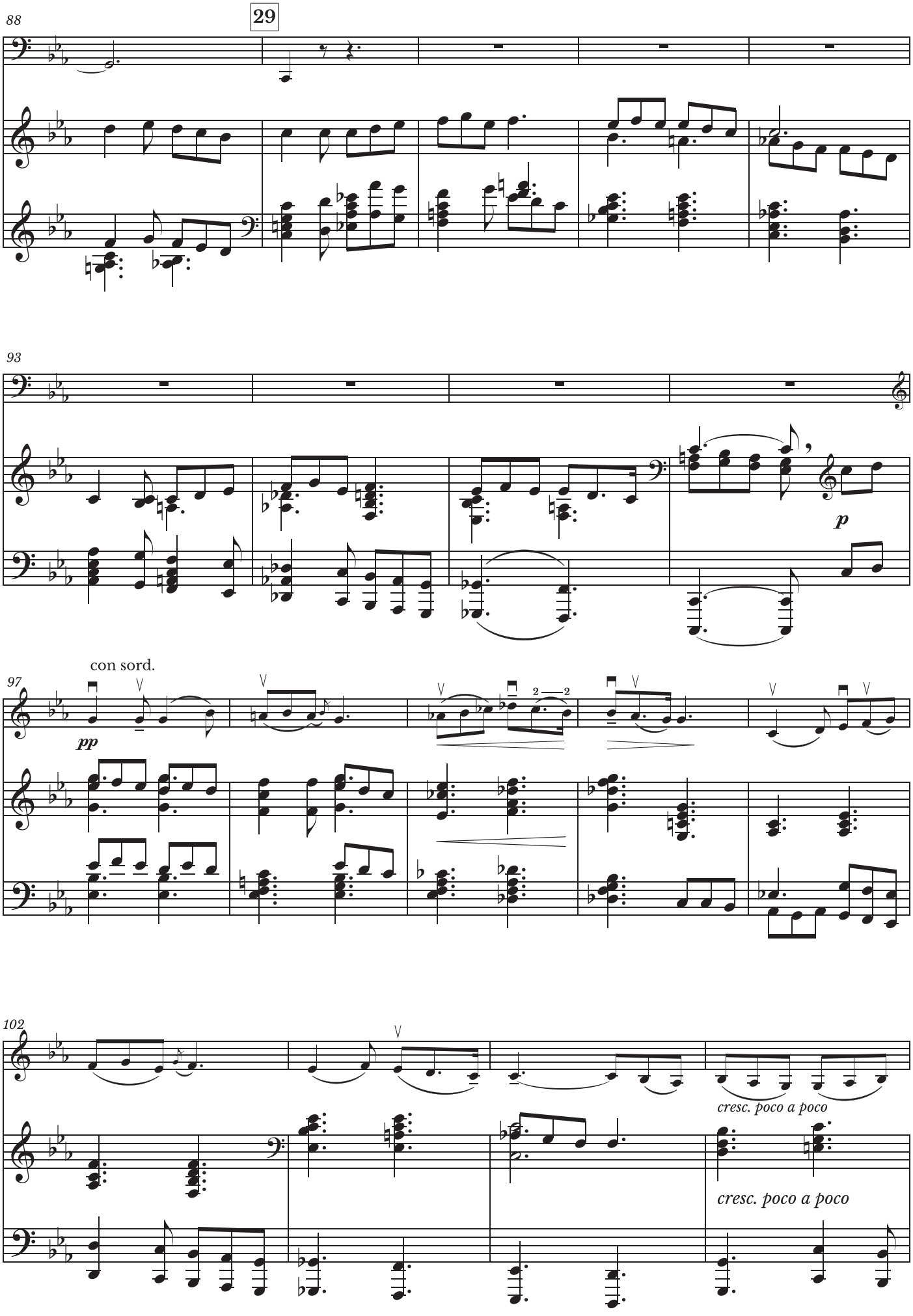


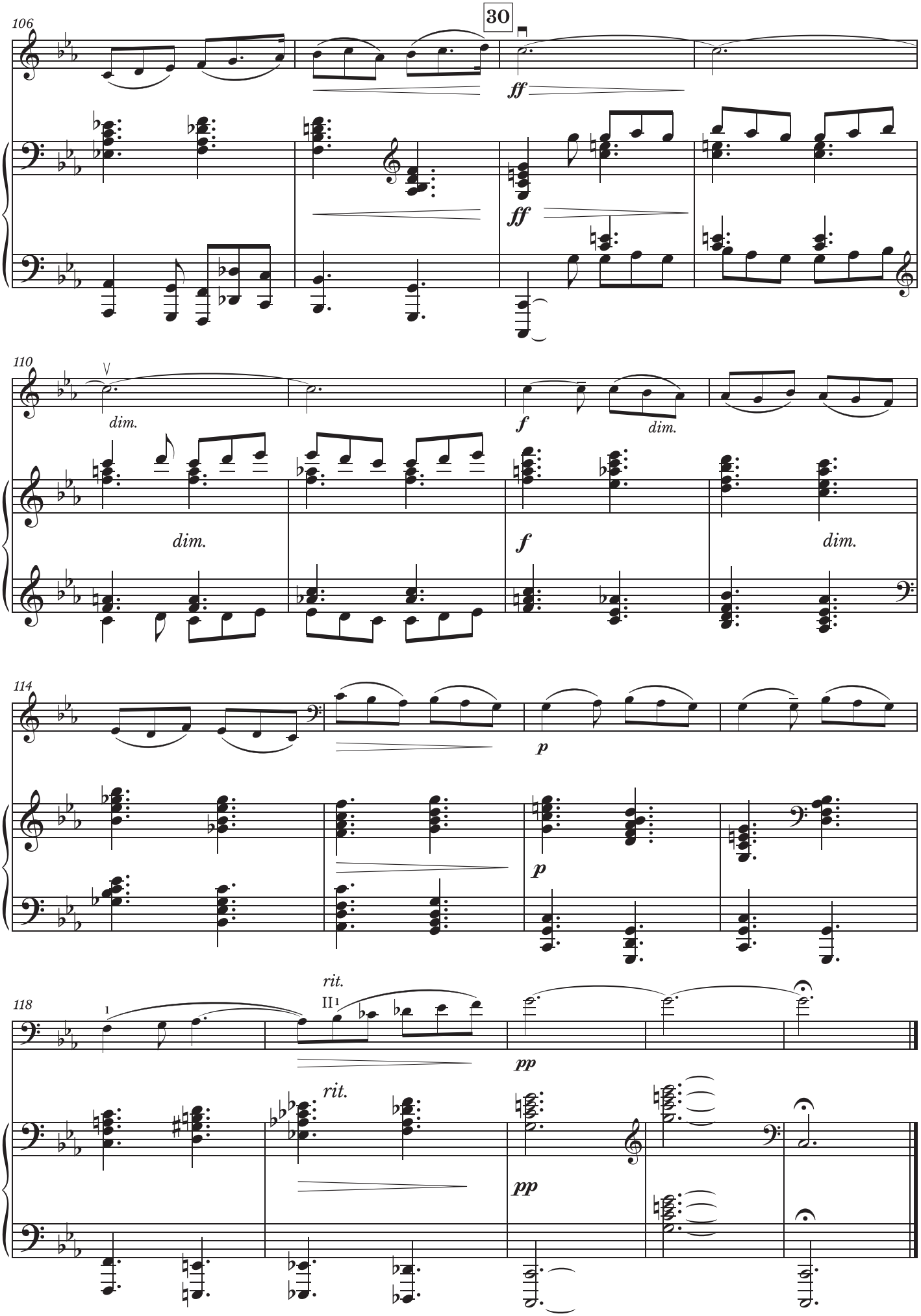

18
22
22
ff
ff
26
rit.
a tempo
p
rit.
a tempo
p
31
cresc.
f
rit.
cresc.
f
rit.


23
a tempo
f
a tempo
f
40
f
f
p
45
Più mosso
24
senza sord.
mf
cresc.
49
fff
dim.
mf
ff
dim.
mf

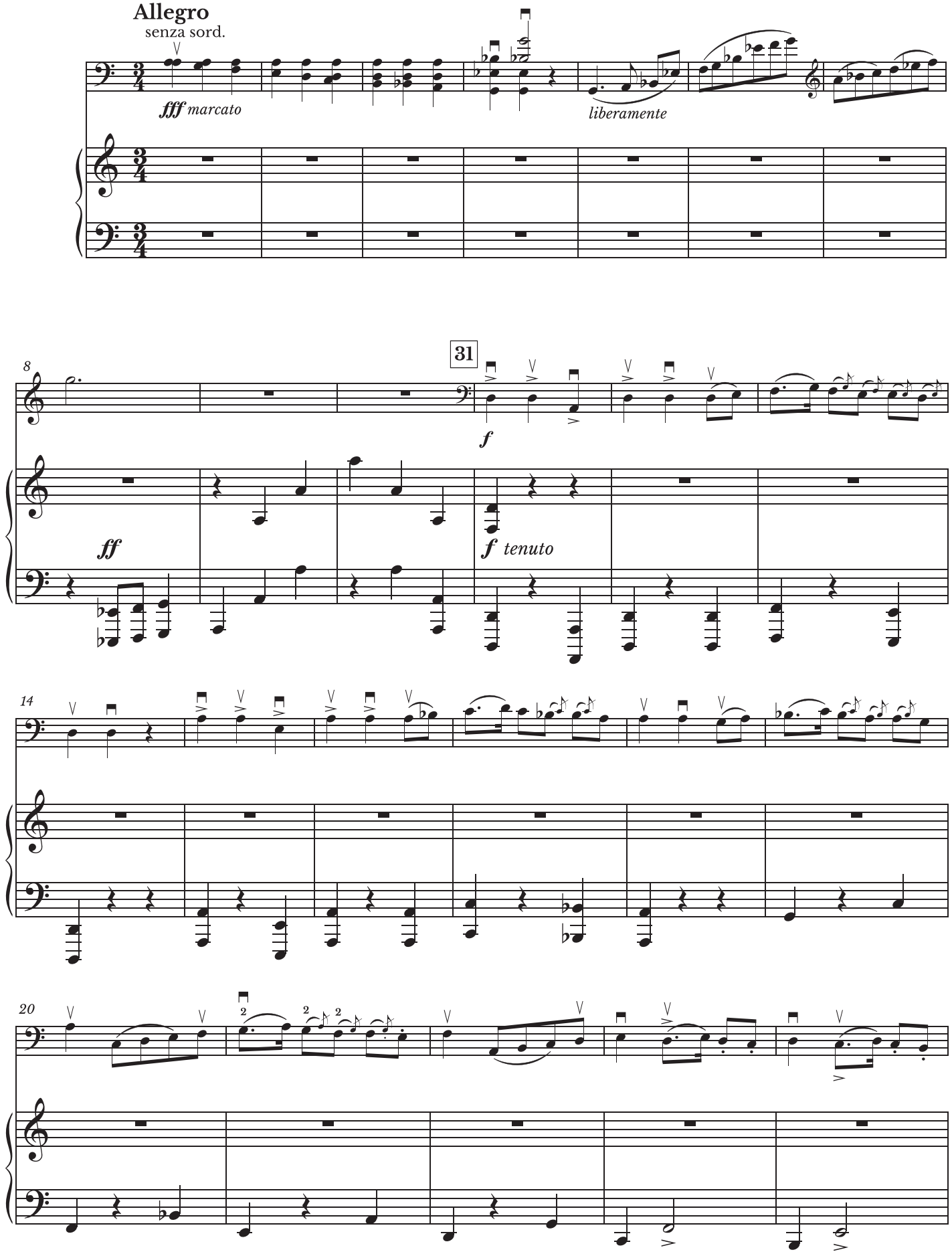

54
25
dim.
p
p
p
p
59
1
2
1 2
p
cresc.
26
mf
cresc.
f
cresc.
f
cresc.
67
allarg.
allarg.
27 Tempo I
fff
fff

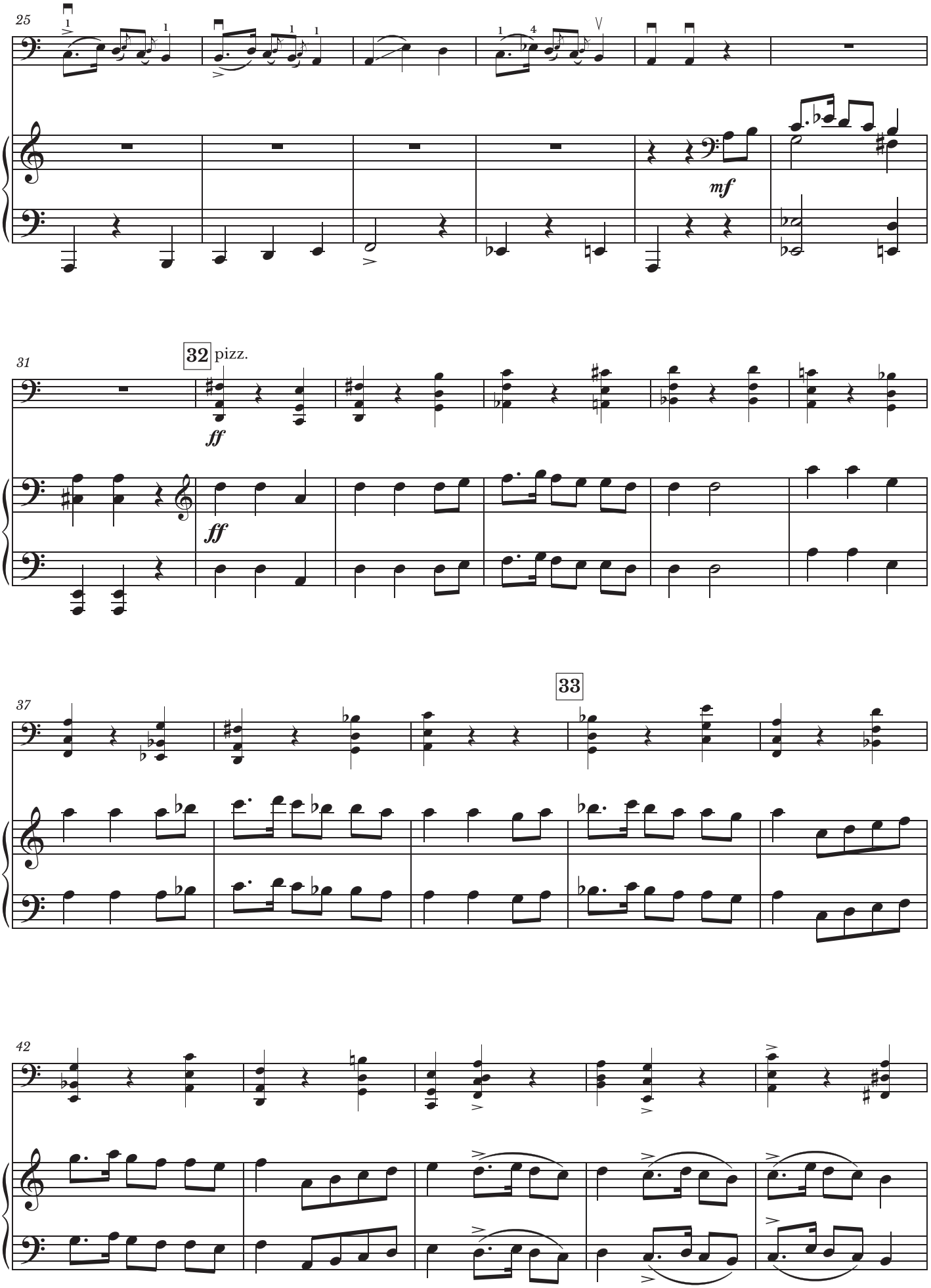

70
73
dim. poco a poco
allargando
78
28
p
pp
8vb
83
rit.
f
(8vb)

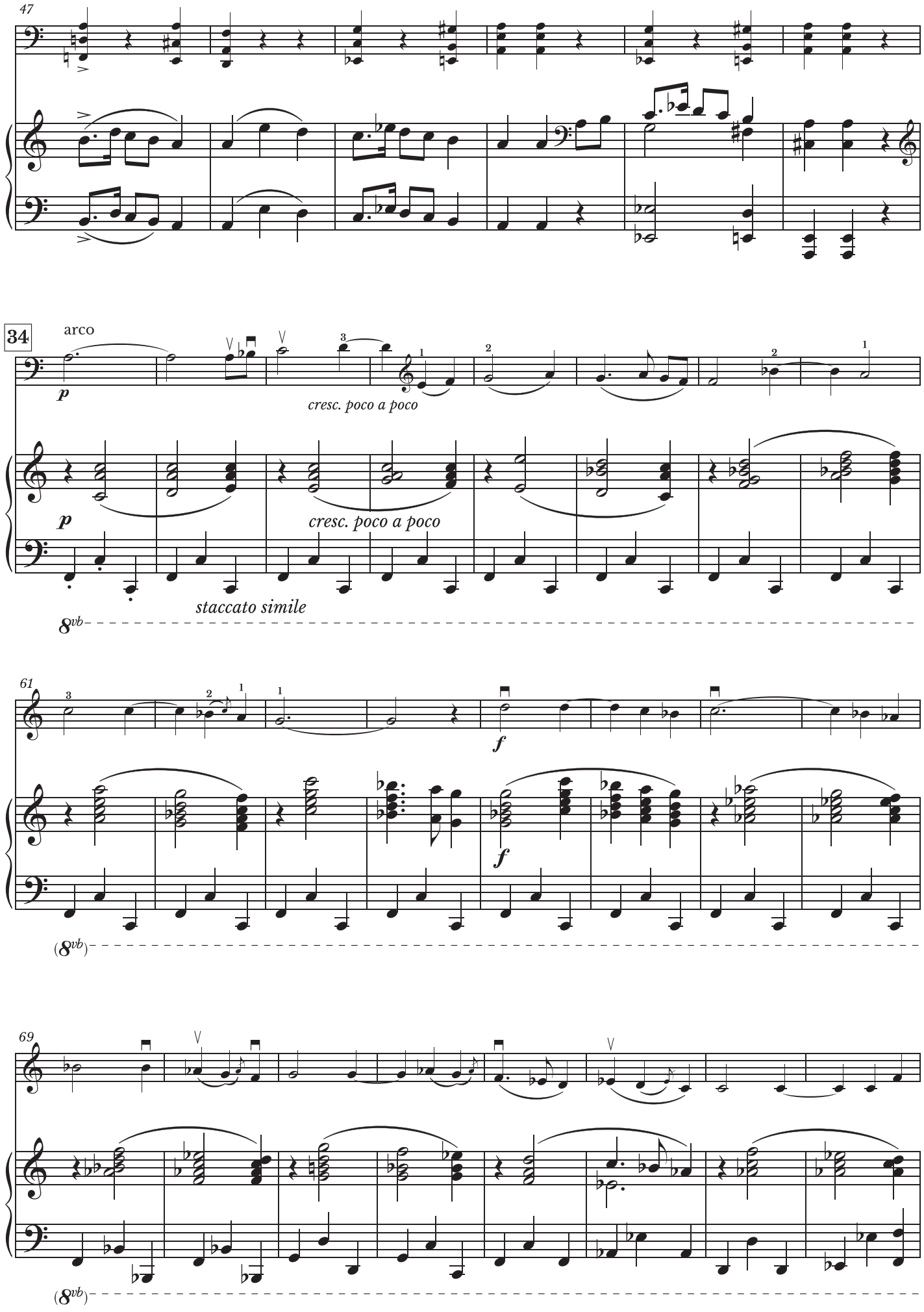

88
29
93
p
con sord.
97
pp
2
2
102
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco

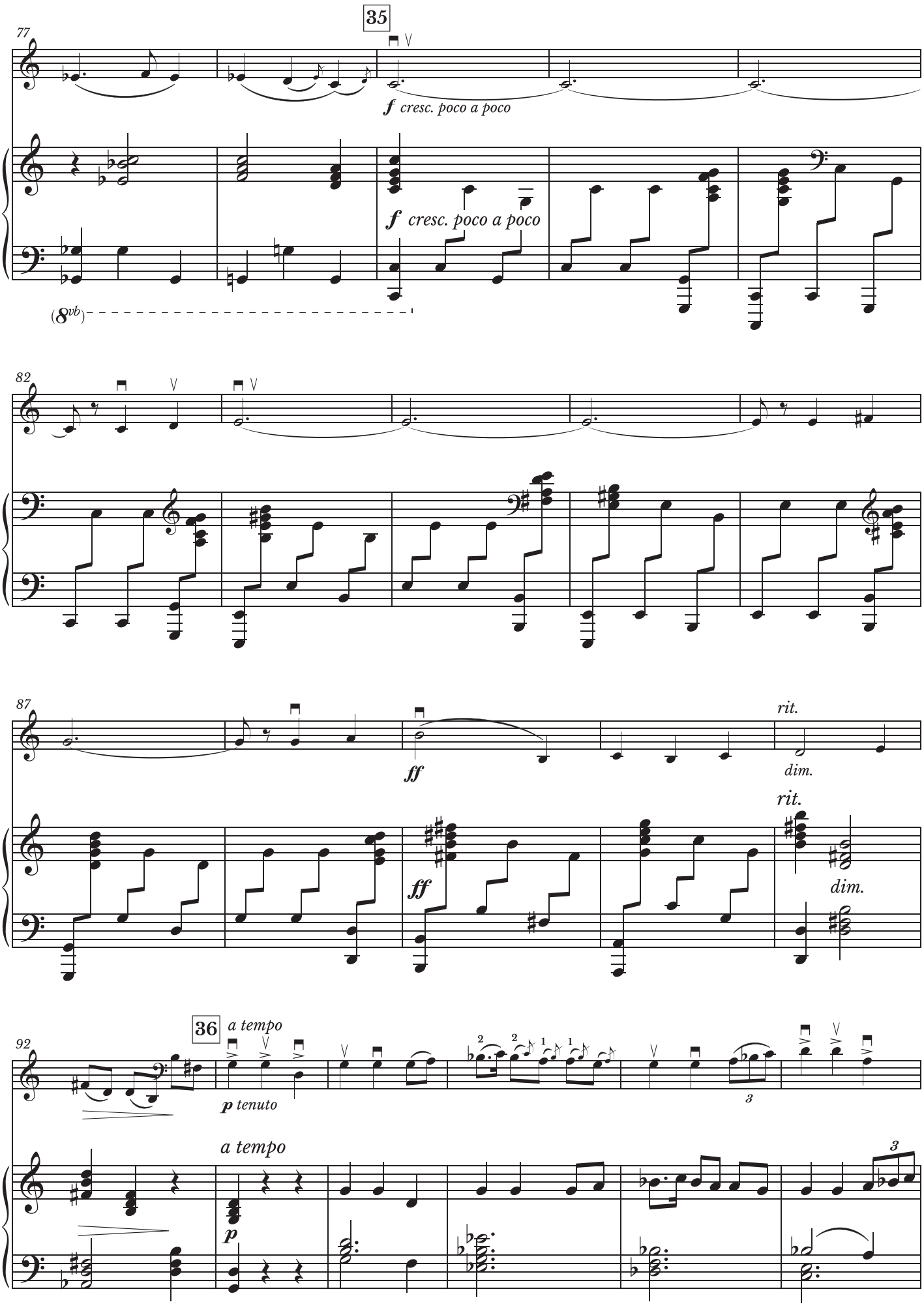

106
30
ff
ff
110
dim.
f
dim.
dim.
f
dim.
114
p
p
118
rit.
II
pp
rit.
pp

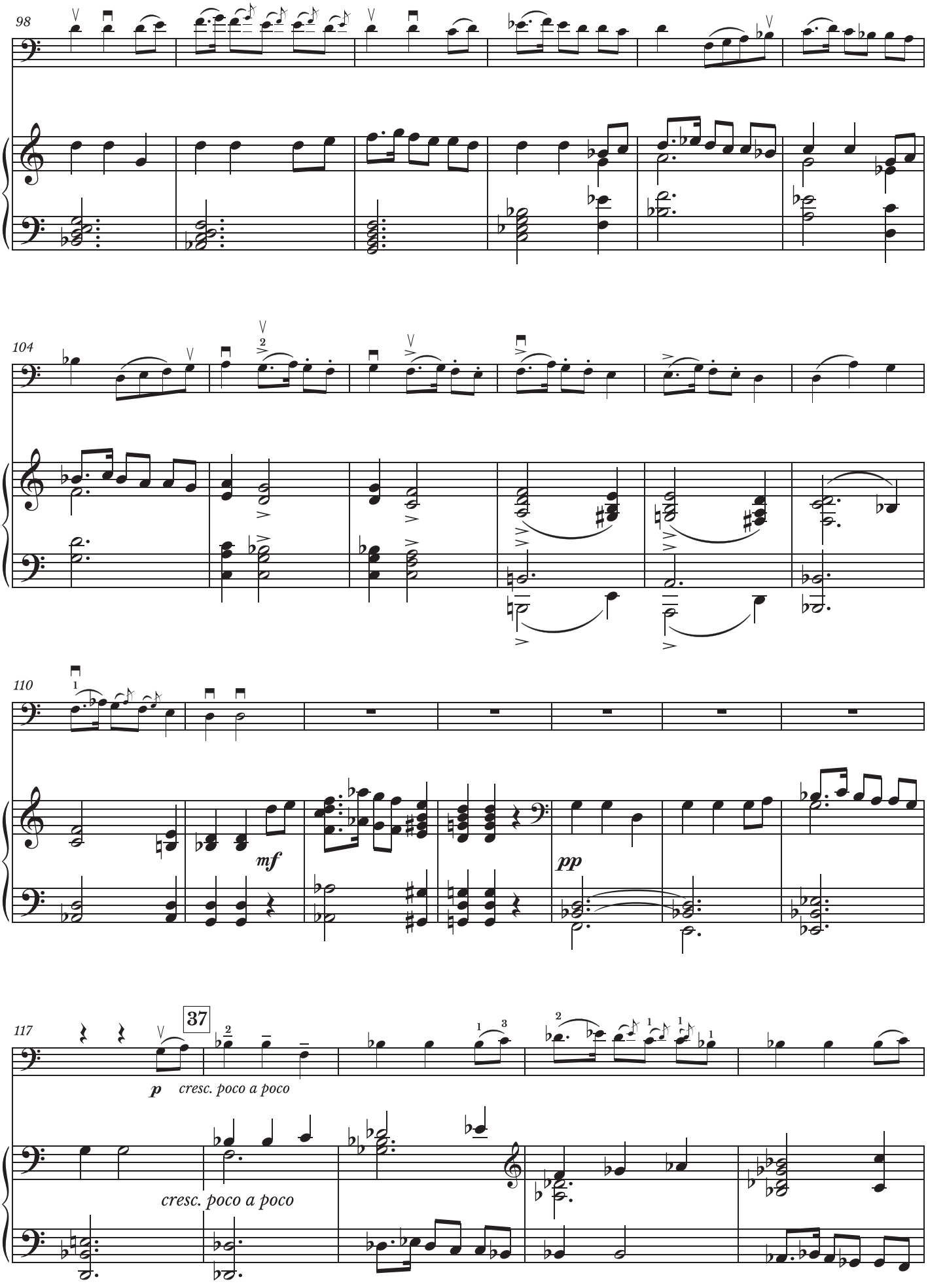
III

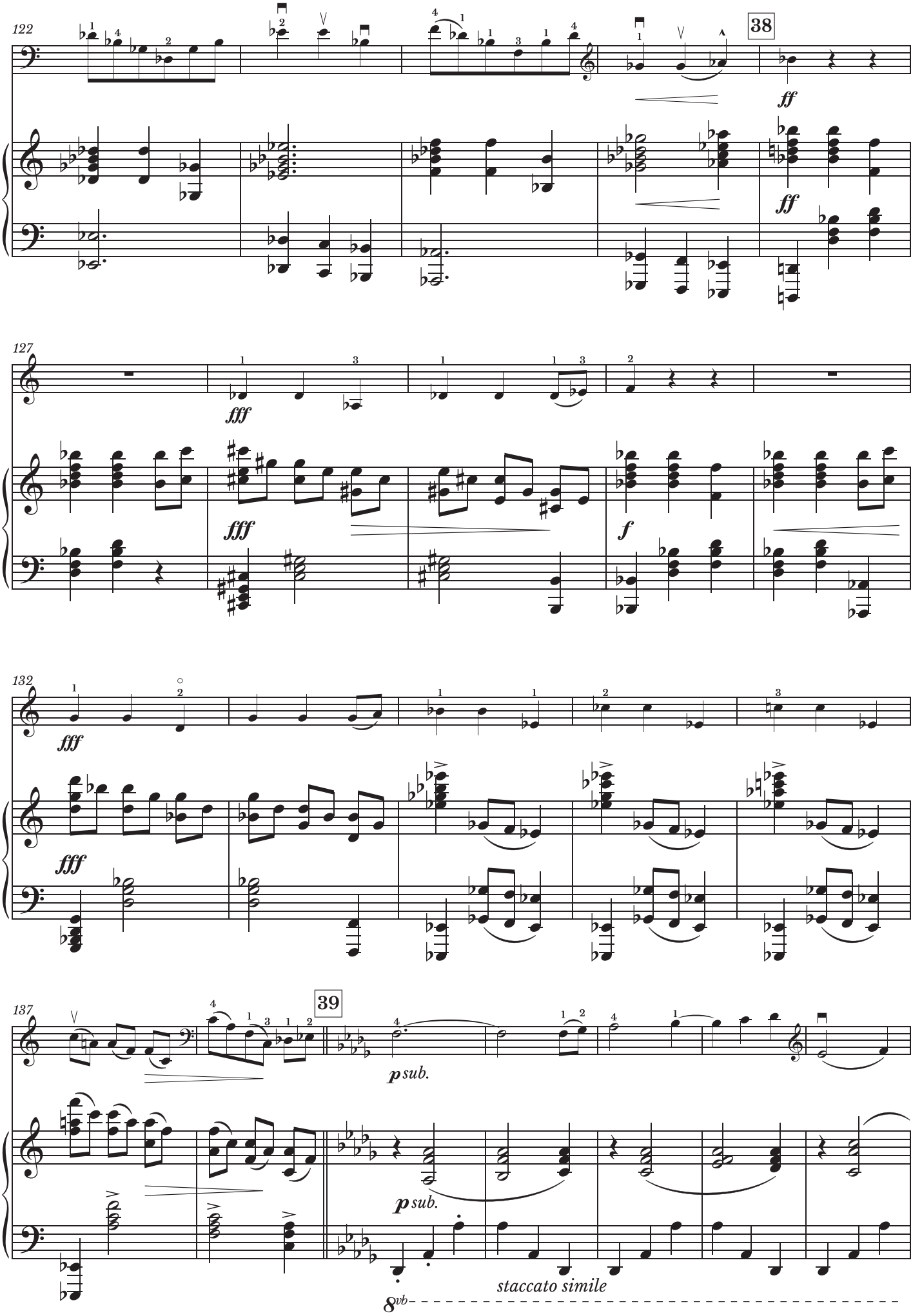

Allegro
senza sord.
fff marcato
liberamente
8
31
f
ff
f tenuto
14
20

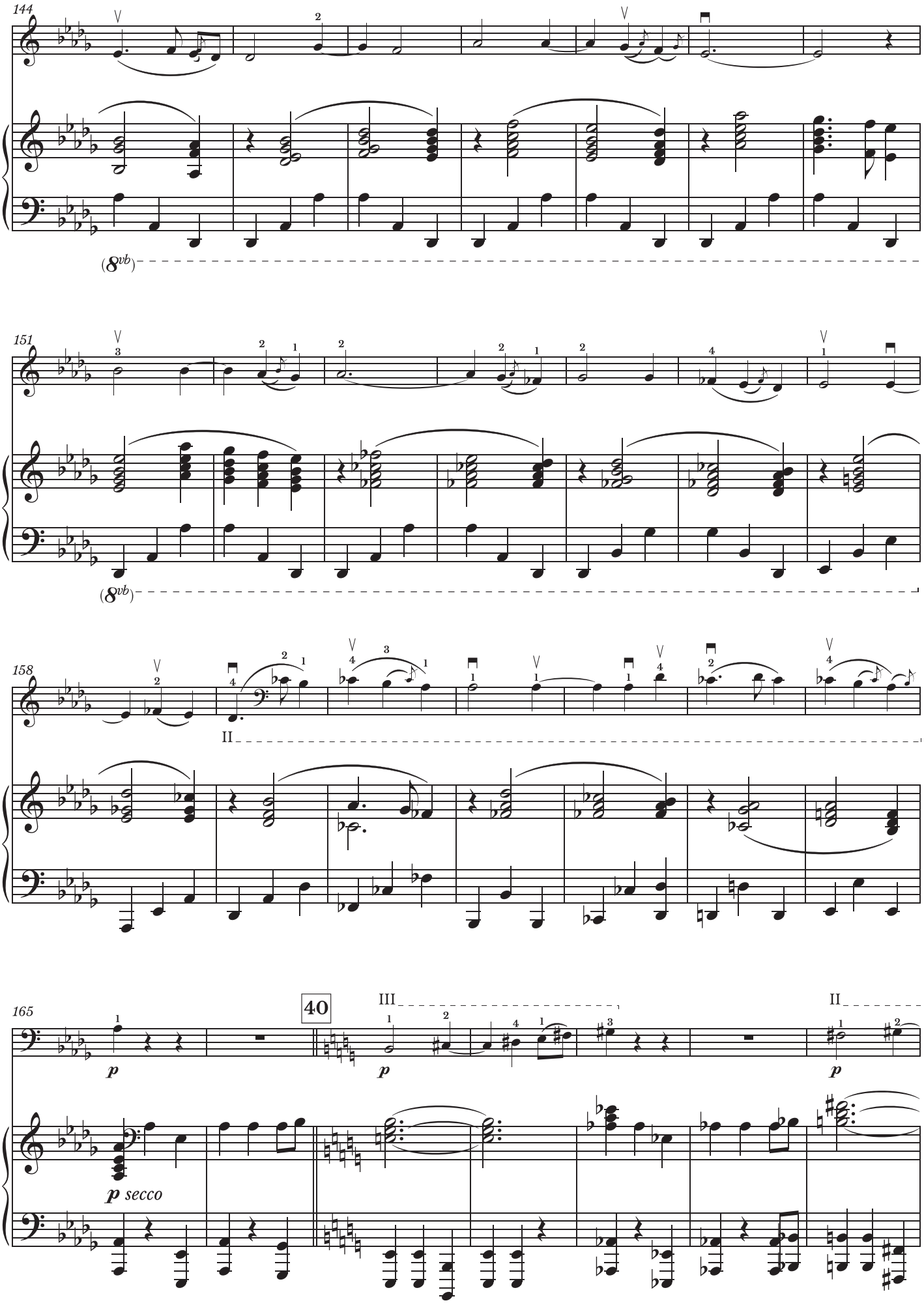

25
mf
31
32 pizz.
ff
ff
37
33
42

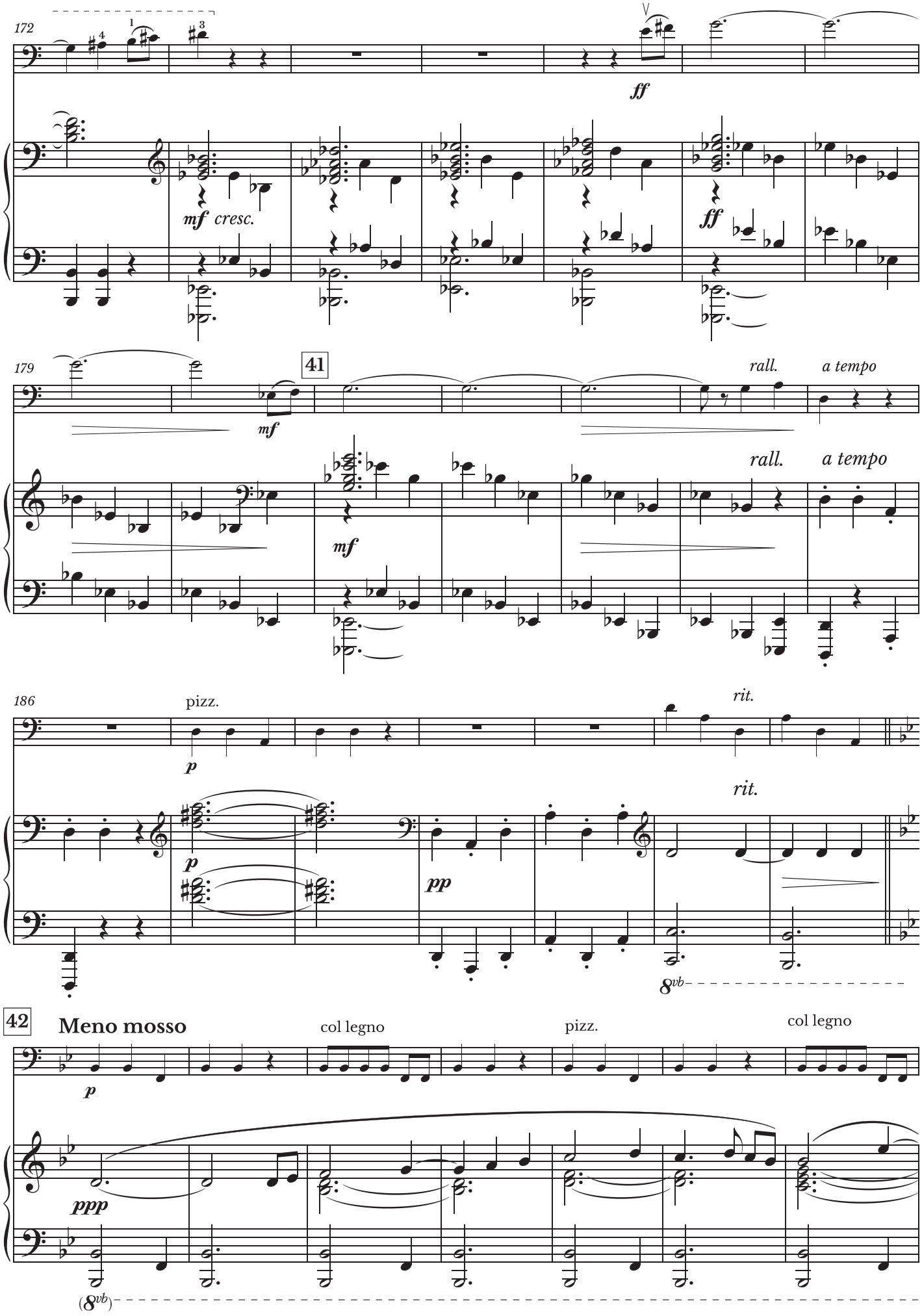

47
34
arco
p
cresc. poco a poco
staccato simile
8vb
61
f
(8vb)
69
(8vb)

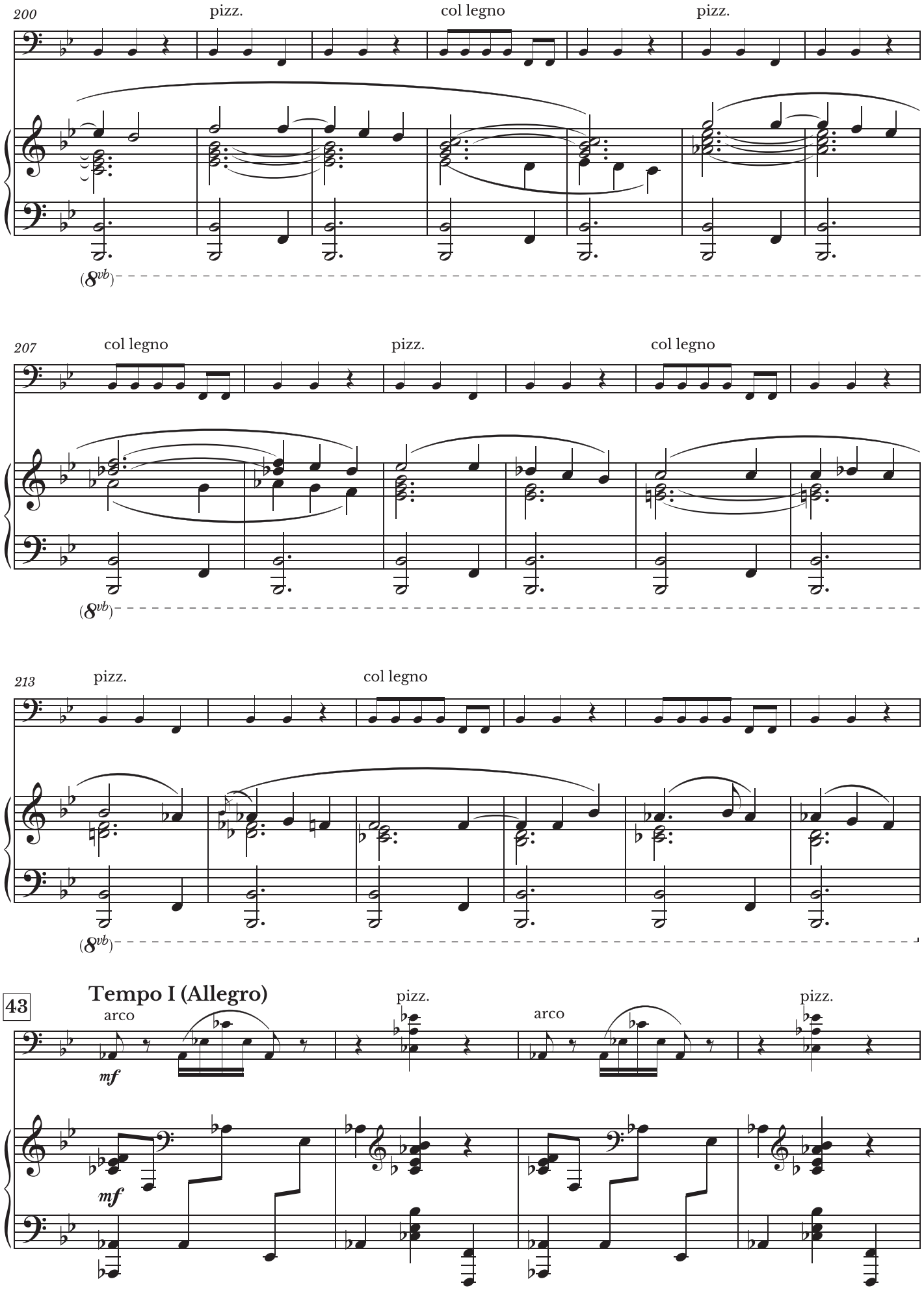

35
77
f cresc. poco a poco
f cresc. poco a poco
(8vb)
82
87
ff
rit.
dim.
rit.
ff
dim.
36
a tempo
92
p tenuto
a tempo
p

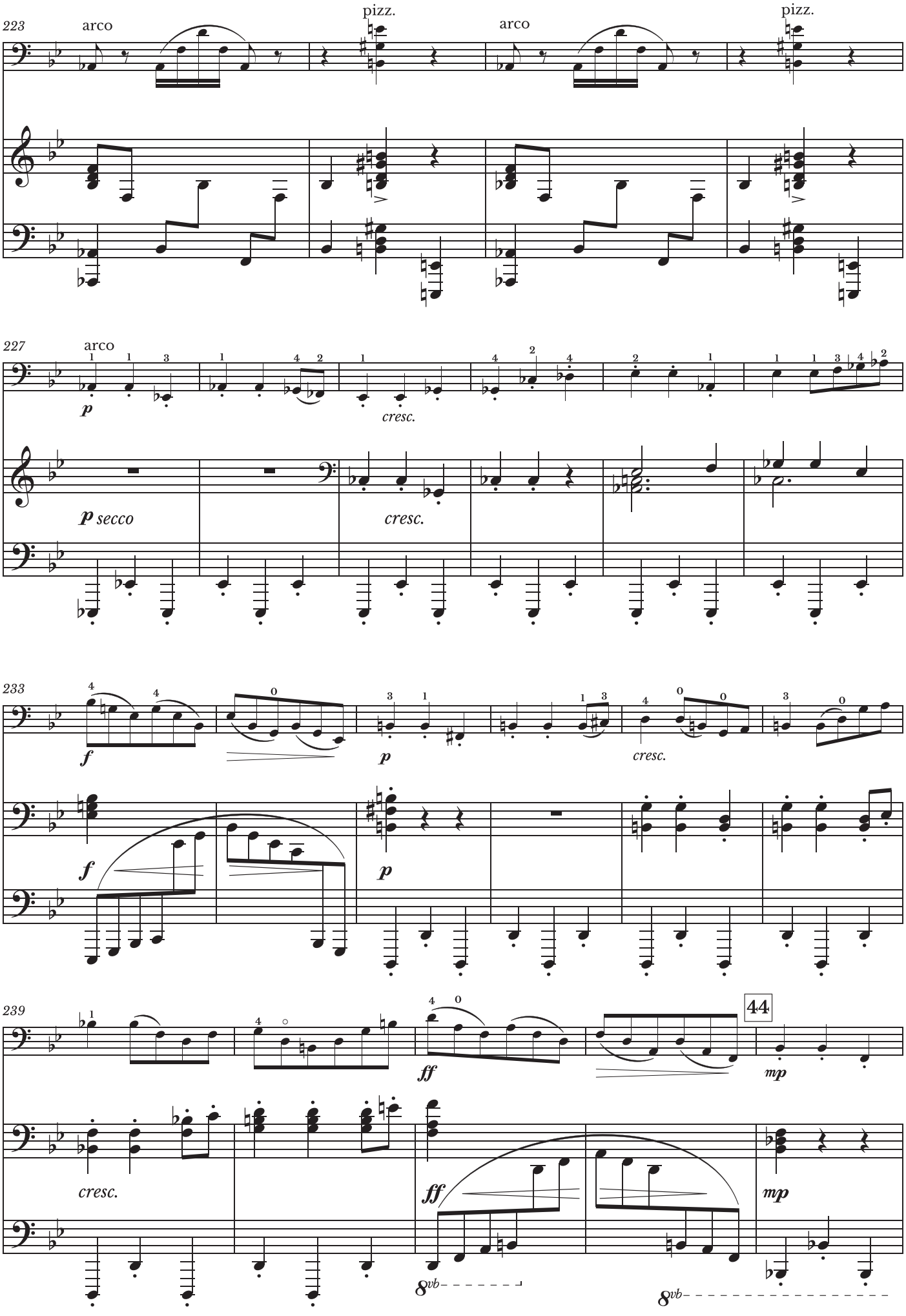

98
104
110
mf
pp
117
37
p
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco

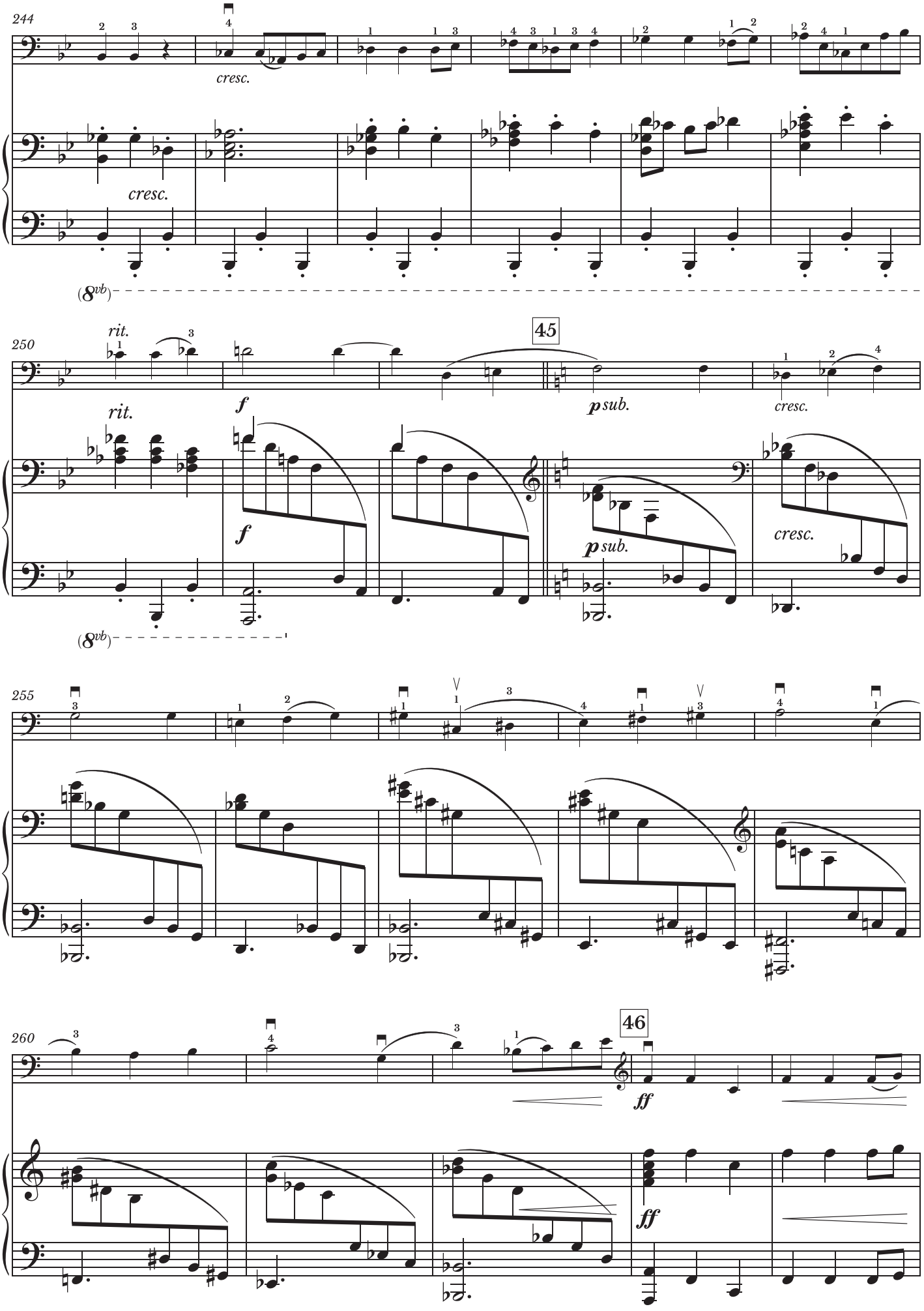

122
38
ff
ff
127
fff
fff
f
132
fff
fff
137
39
p sub.
p sub.
staccato simile
8vb

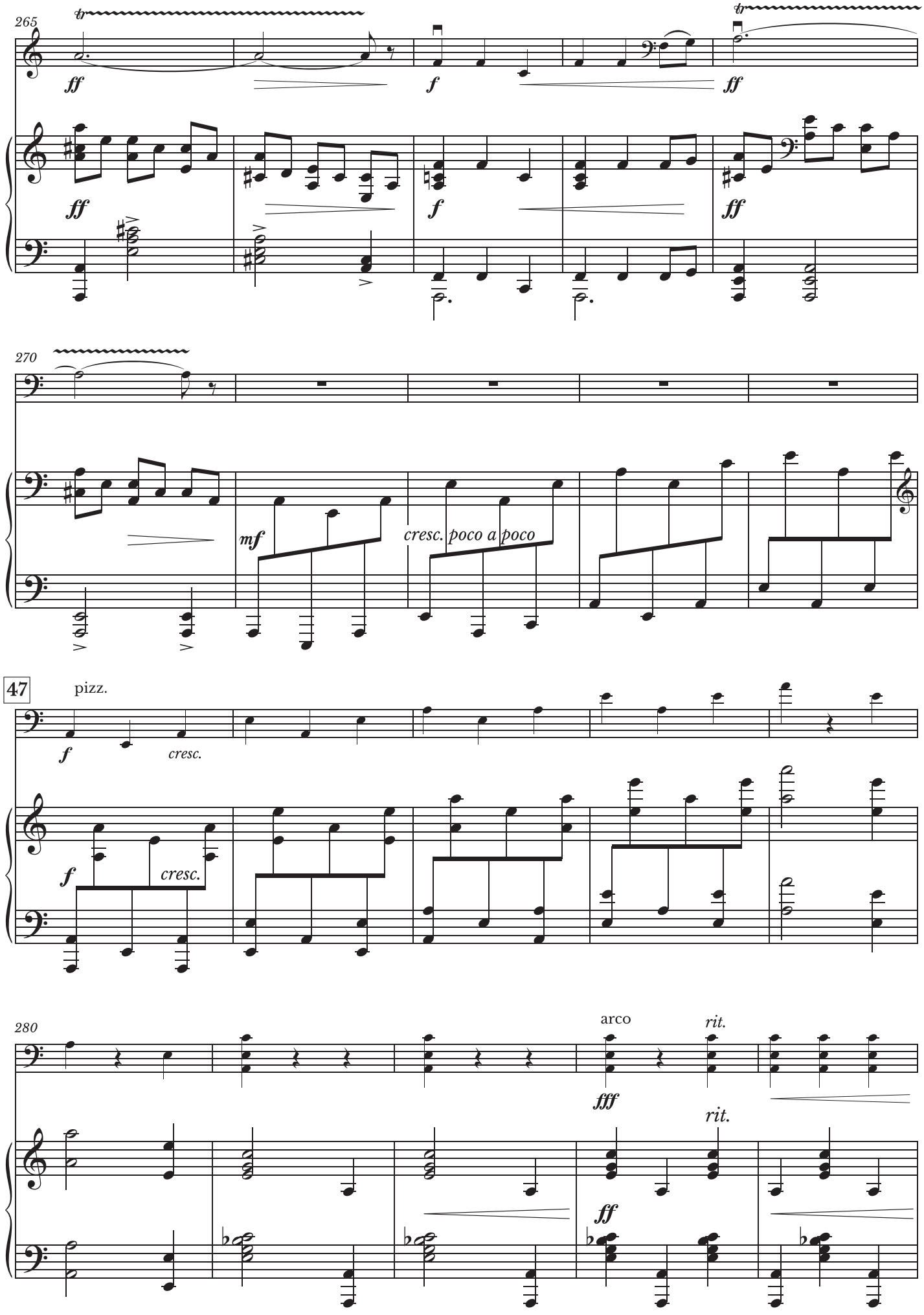

144
(8vb)
151
(8vb)
158
II
165
40
III
II
p
p
p
p secco


172
ff
mf cresc.
ff
179
41
mf
rall.
a tempo
rall.
a tempo
mf
186
pizz.
p
rit.
rit.
p
pp
8vb
42
Meno mosso
col legno
pizz.
col legno
p
ppp
(8vb)

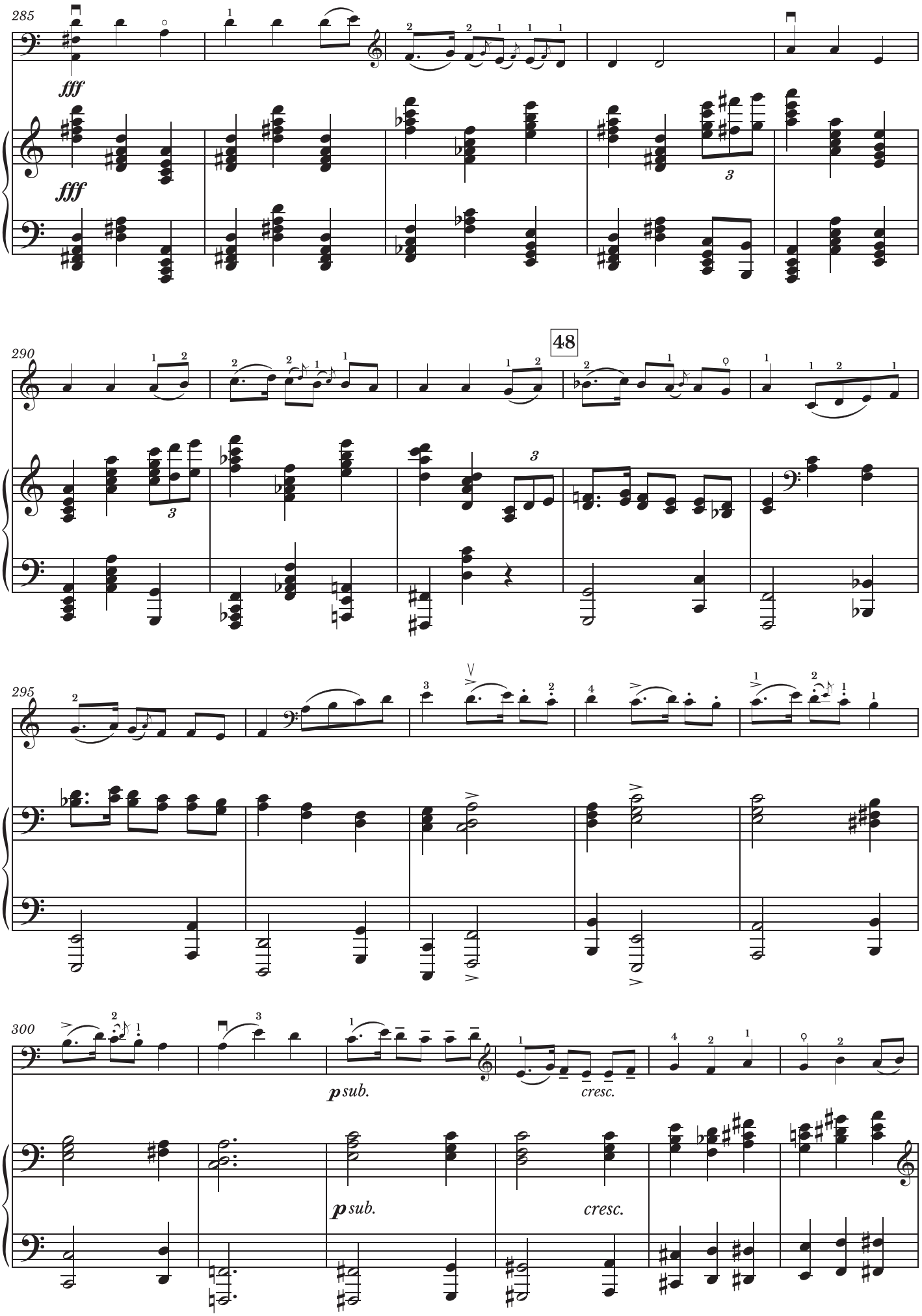

200
pizz.
col legno
pizz.
(8vb)
207
col legno
pizz.
col legno
(8vb)
213
pizz.
col legno
(8vb)
43
Tempo I (Allegro)
arco
mf
pizz.
arco
pizz.
mf

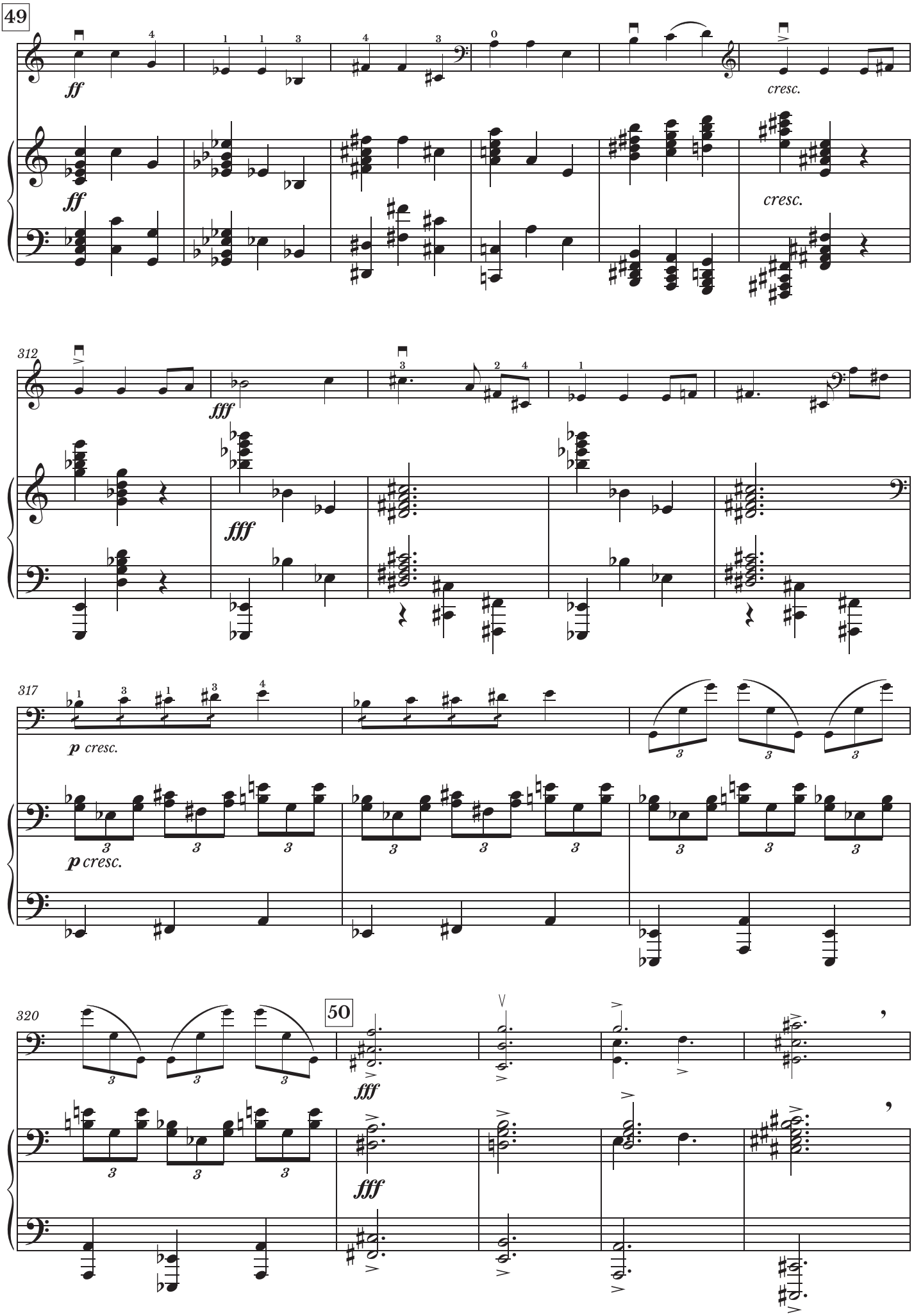

223
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
227
arco
p
cresc.
p secco
cresc.
233
f
p
cresc.
f
p
239
cresc.
ff
44
mp
ff
mp
8vb
8vb


244
cresc.
cresc.
(8vb)
250
rit.
rit.
45
f
f
psub.
psub.
cresc.
cresc.
(8vb)
255
260
46
ff
ff


265
tr
ff
f
ff
tr
ff
f
ff
270
mf
cresc. poco a poco
47
pizz.
f
cresc.
f
cresc.
280
arco
rit.
fff
rit.
ff

Moderato maestoso




49
ff
cresc.
ff
cresc.
312
fff
fff
317
p cresc.
p cresc.
320
50
fff
fff

325 **Presto**

mf *cresc. poco a poco*

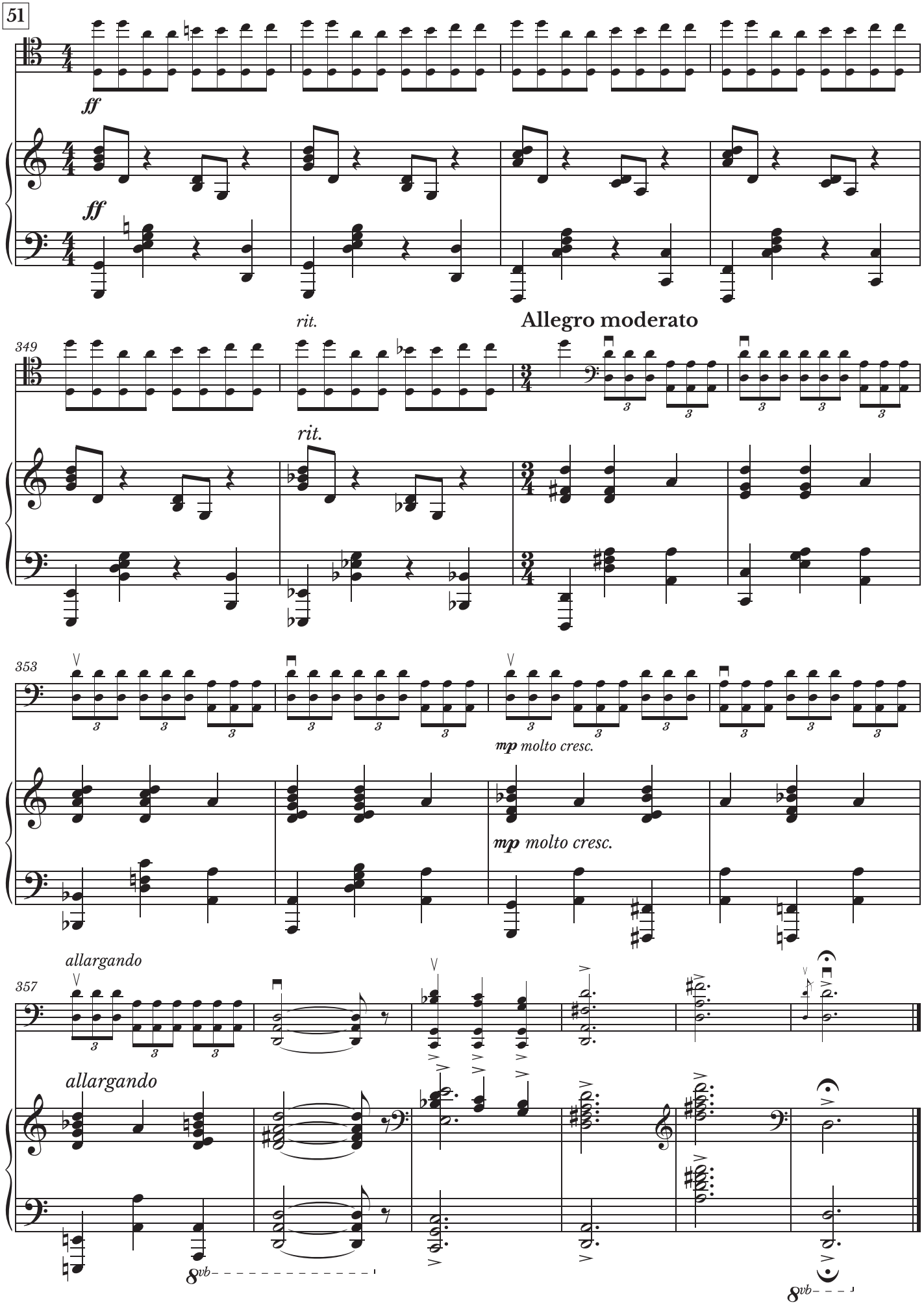
mf *cresc. poco a poco*

330

335

340

4/4



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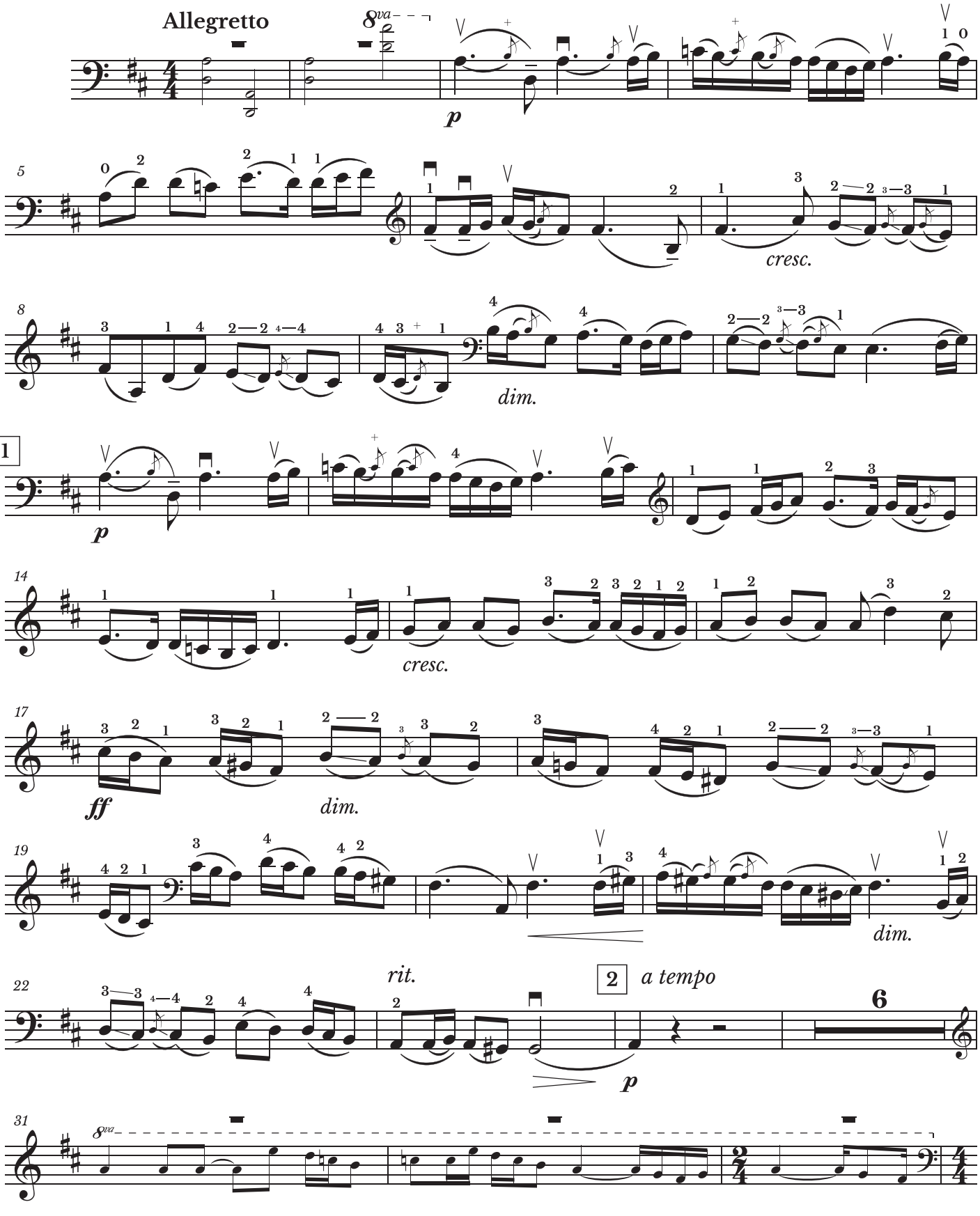
Sonata

Georgi MUSHEL
(1909-1989)

I



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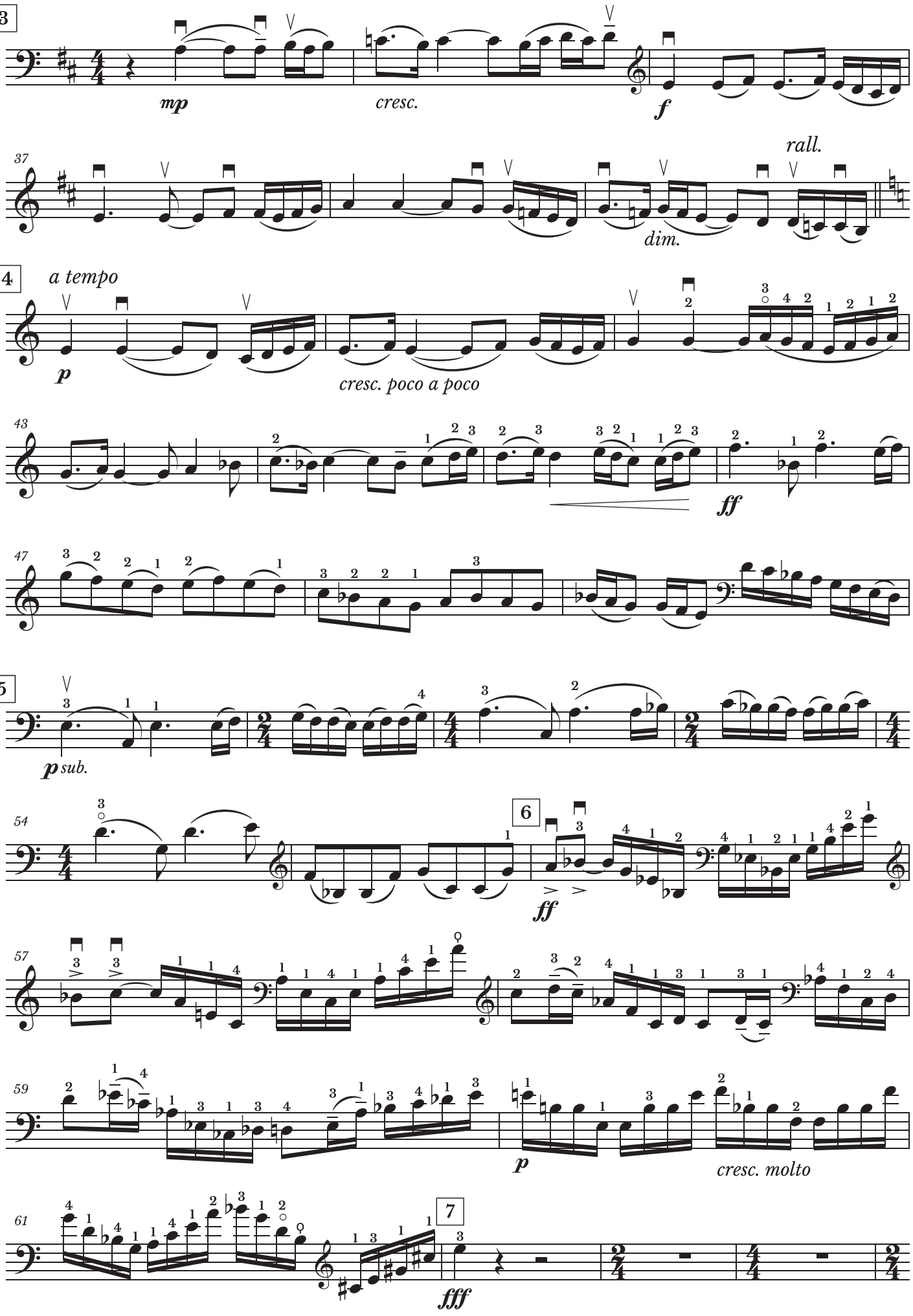
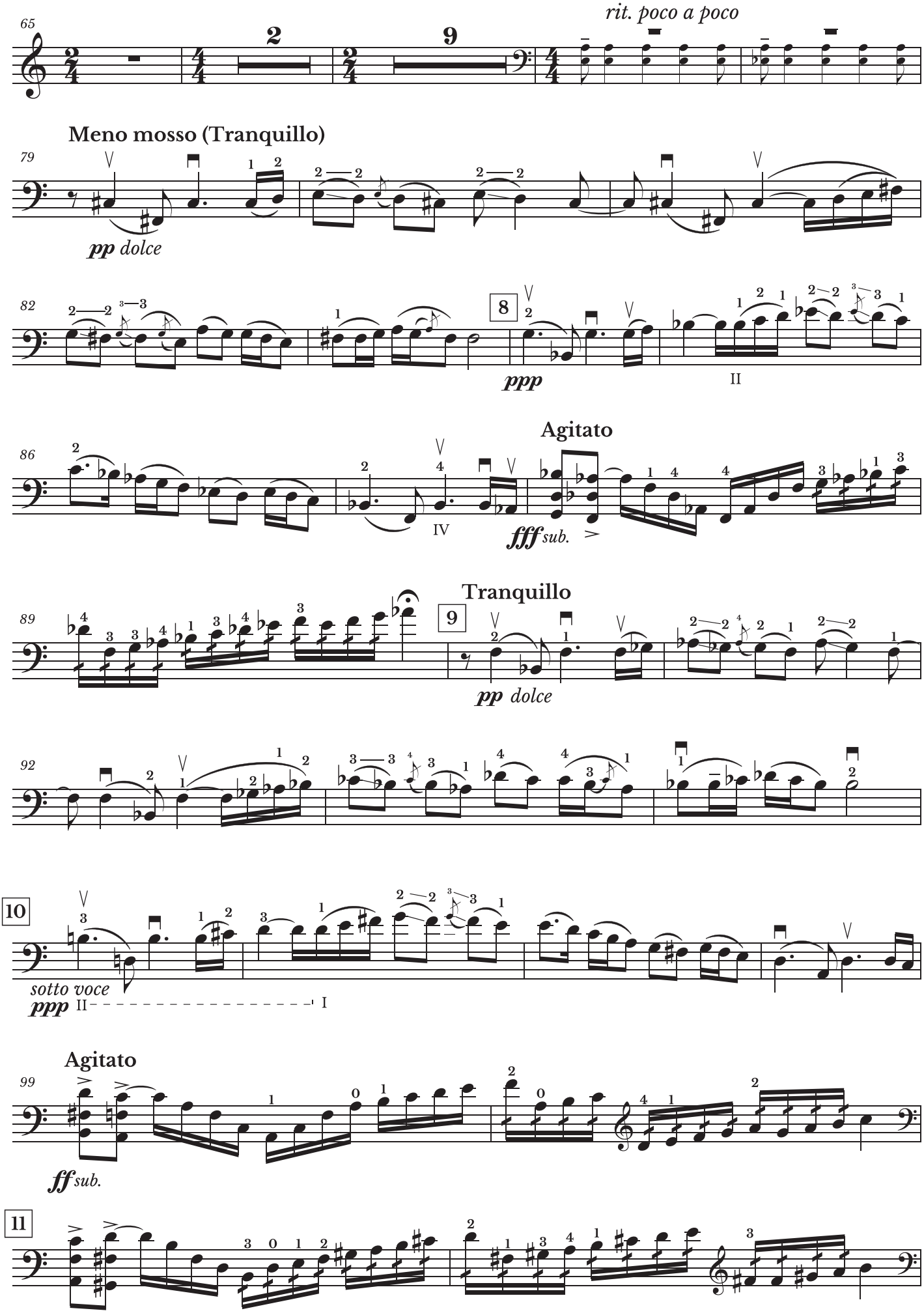
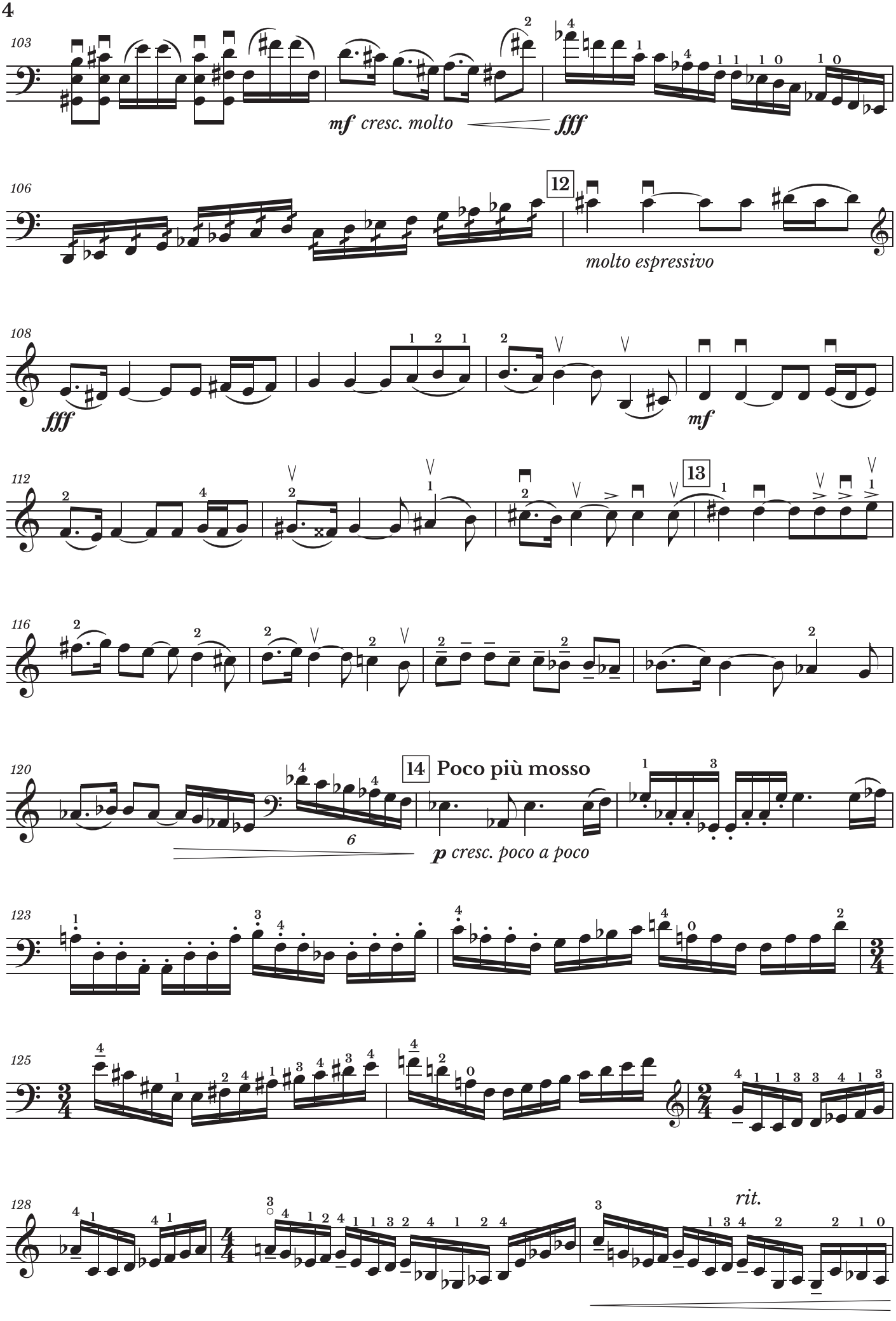
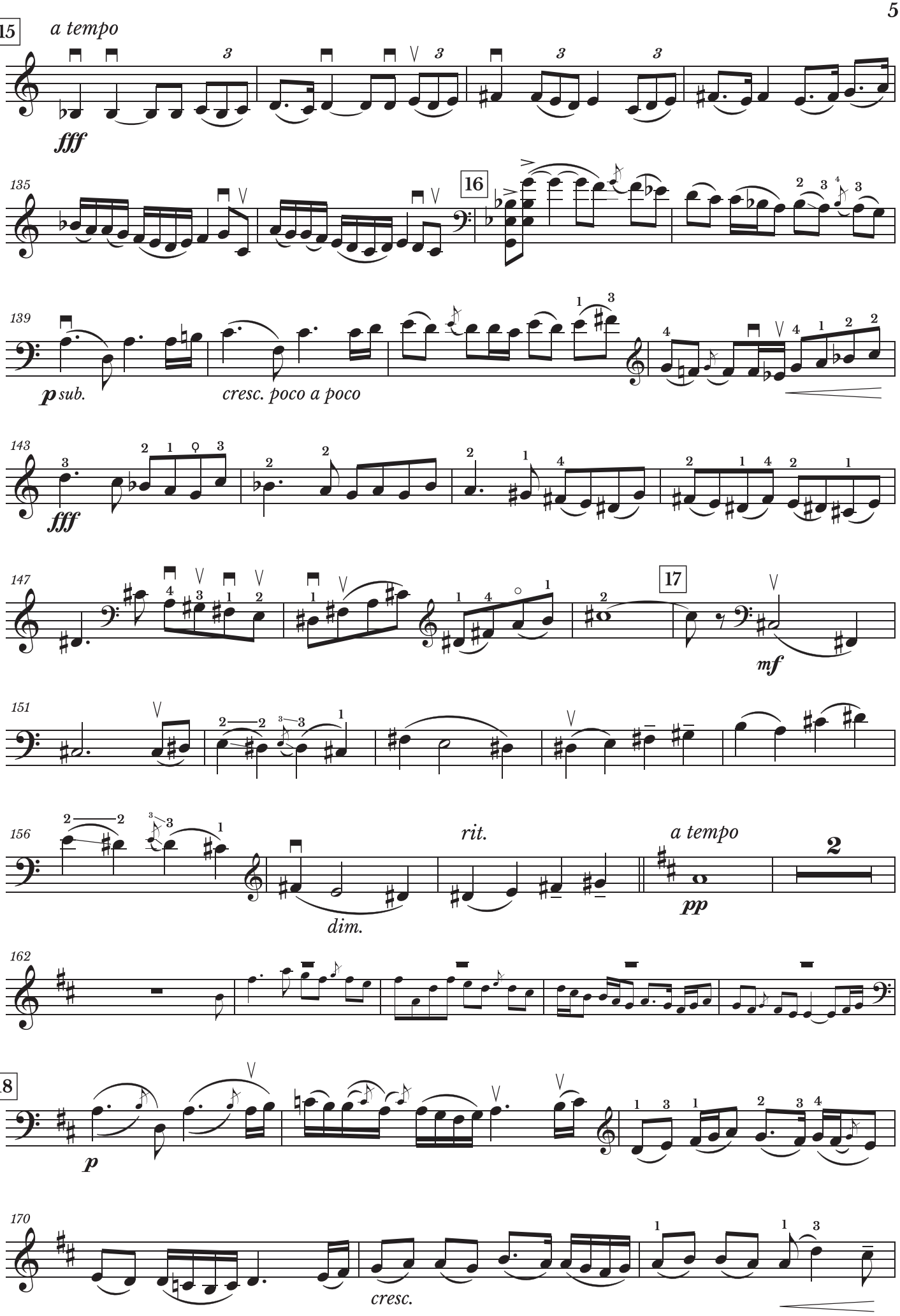
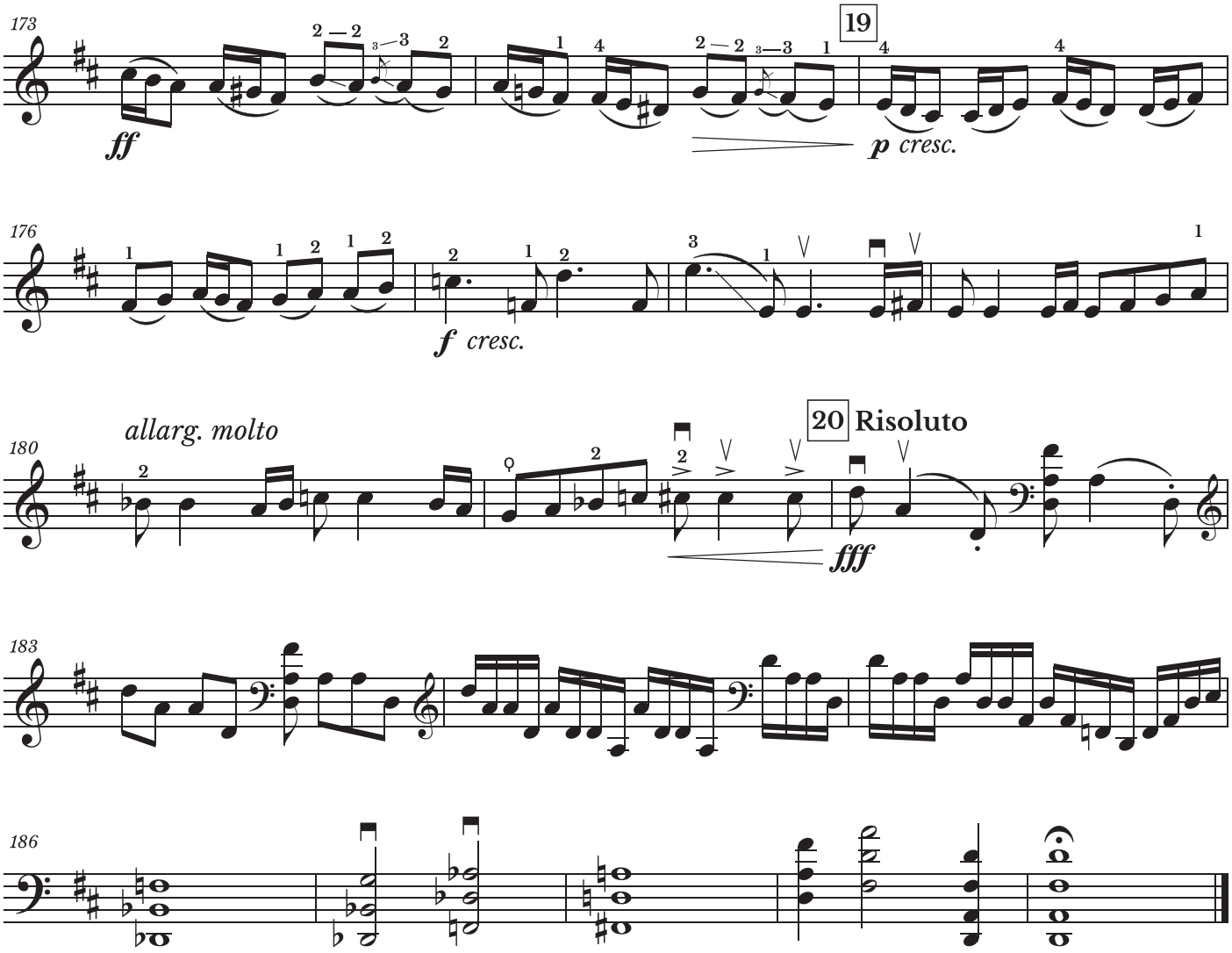

3
mp
cresc.
f
37
rall.
dim.
4
a tempo
p
cresc. poco a poco
43
ff
47
5
p sub.
54
6
ff
57
59
p
cresc. molto
61
7
fff

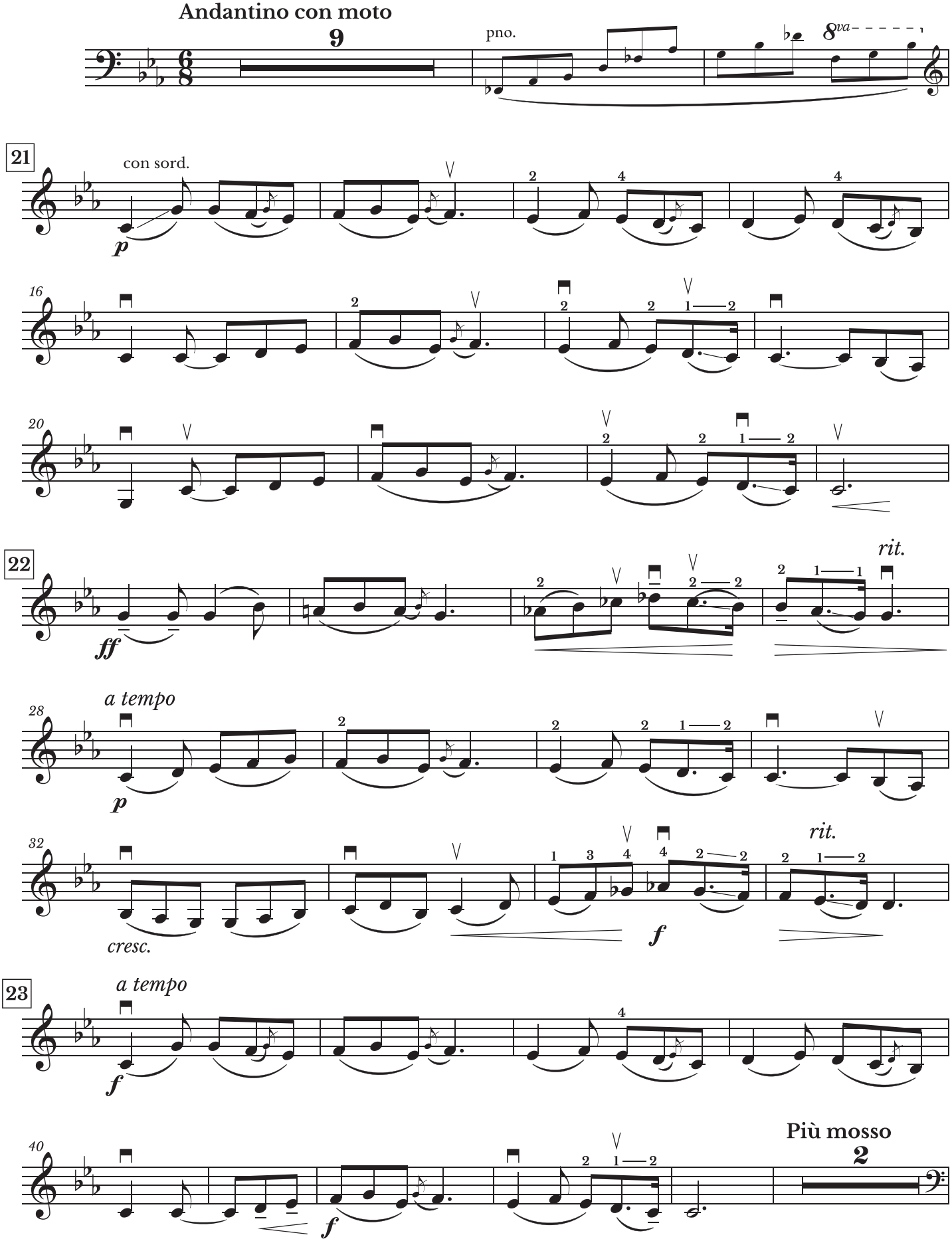

65
2
9
rit. poco a poco
Meno mosso (Tranquillo)
79
pp dolce
82
8
ppp
II
Agitato
86
IV
fff sub.
Tranquillo
89
9
pp dolce
92
10
sotto voce
ppp
II
I
Agitato
99
ff sub.
11

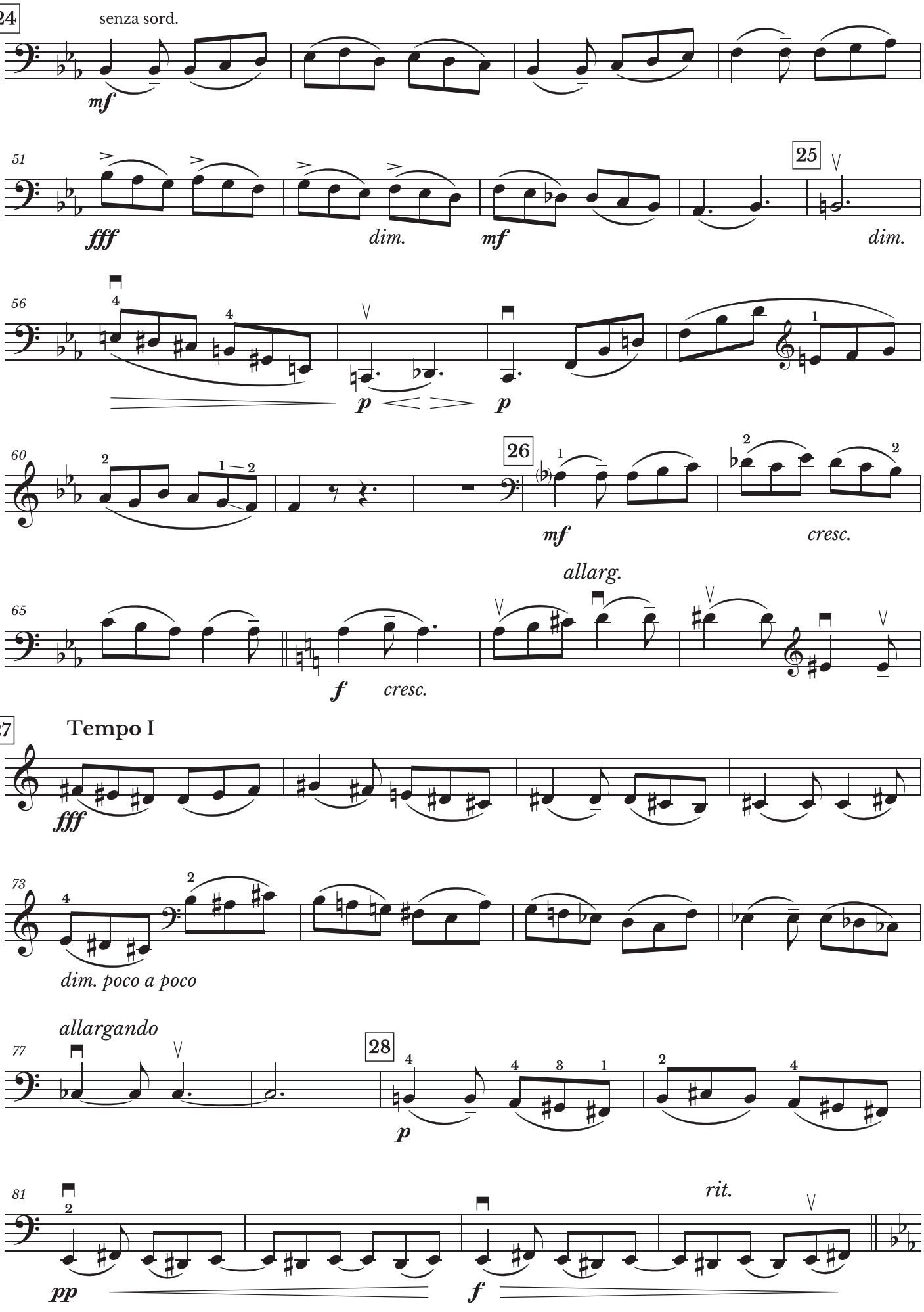

103
mf cresc. molto
fff
106
12
molto espressivo
108
fff
mf
112
13
116
120
14 Poco più mosso
6
p cresc. poco a poco
123
125
128
rit.

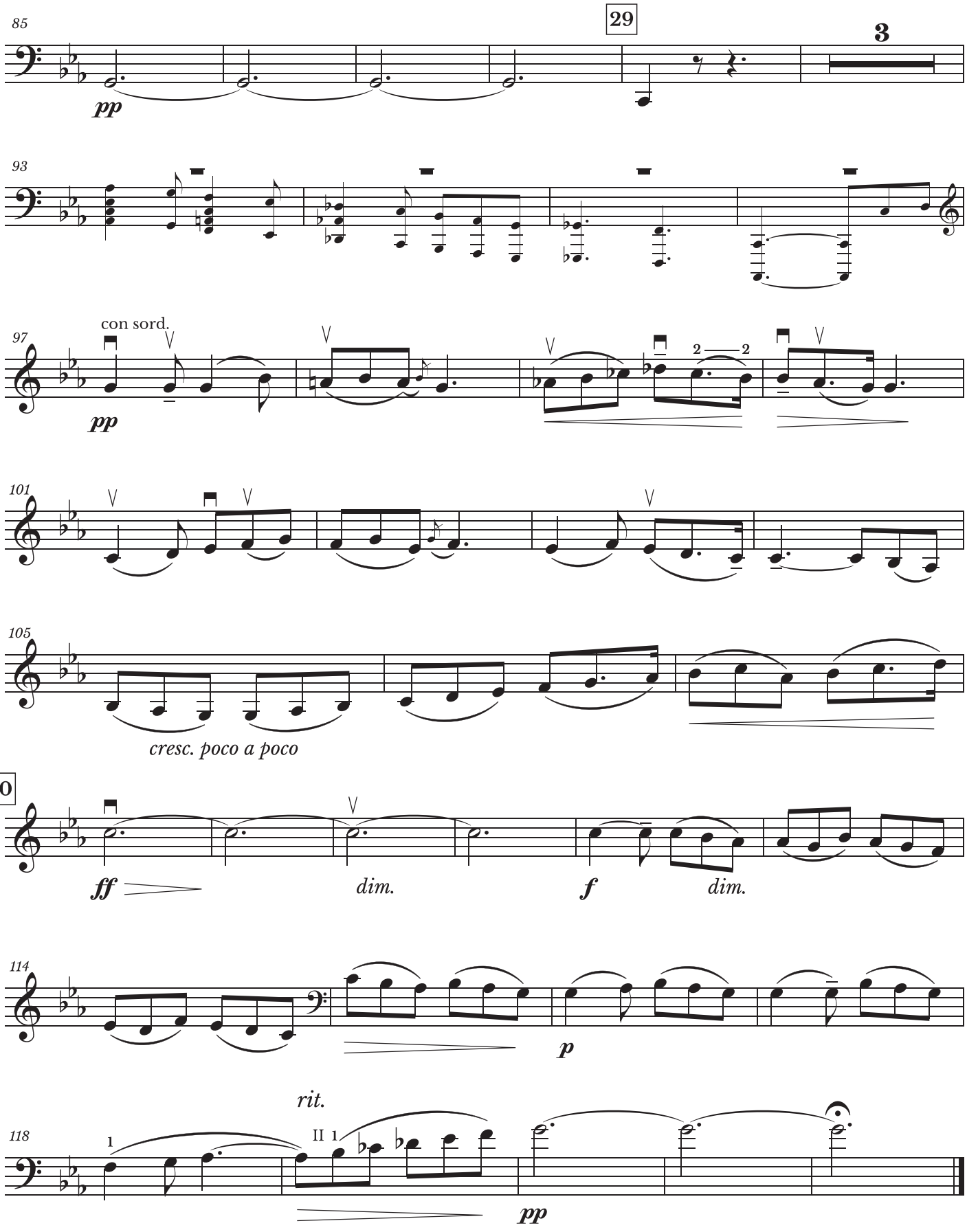

15
a tempo
fff
135
16
139
p sub.
cresc. poco a poco
143
fff
147
17
mf
151
156
rit.
a tempo
2
pp
dim.
162
18
p
170
cresc.


173
ff
19
p cresc.
176
f cresc.
180
allarg. molto
20 Risoluto
fff
183
186

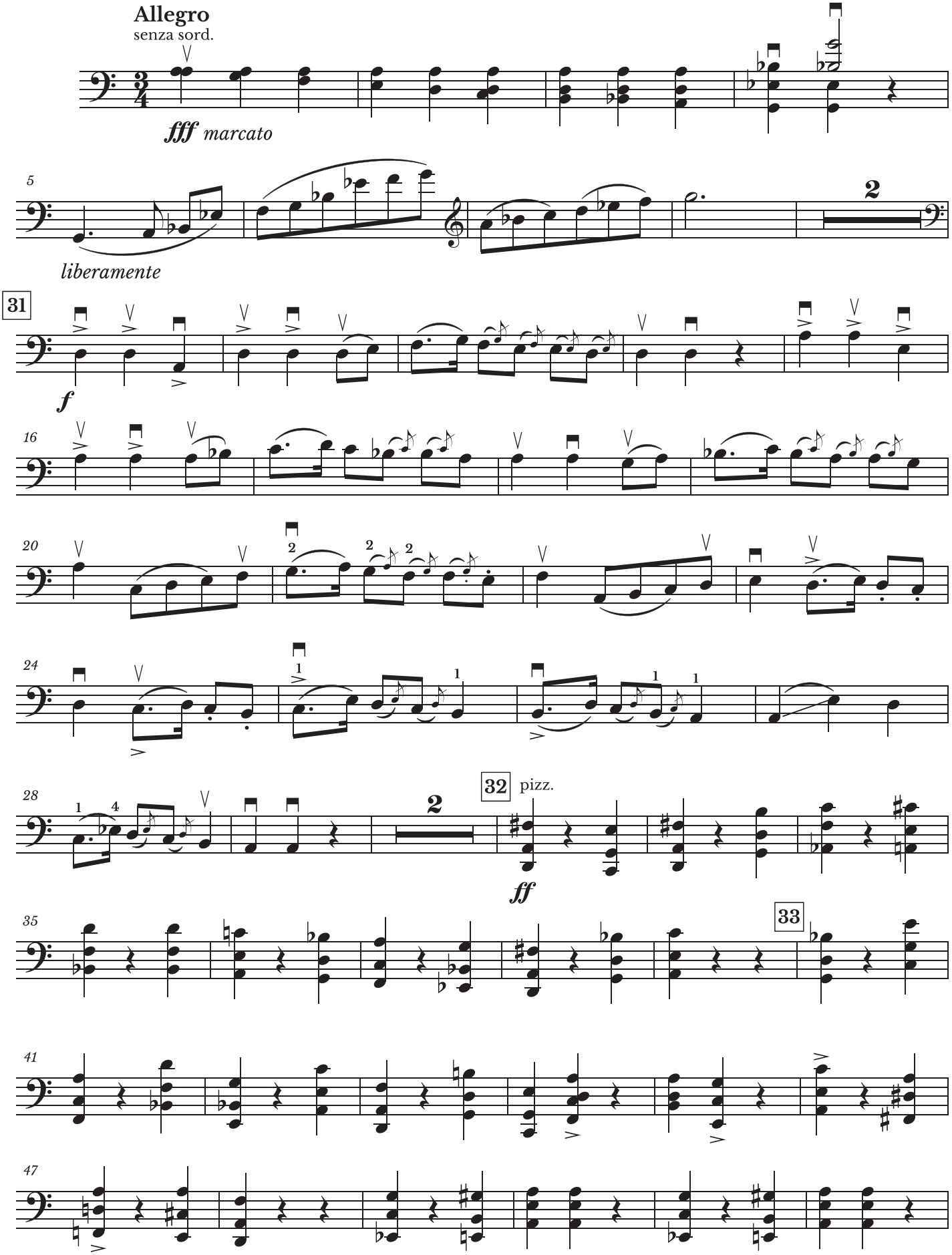
II

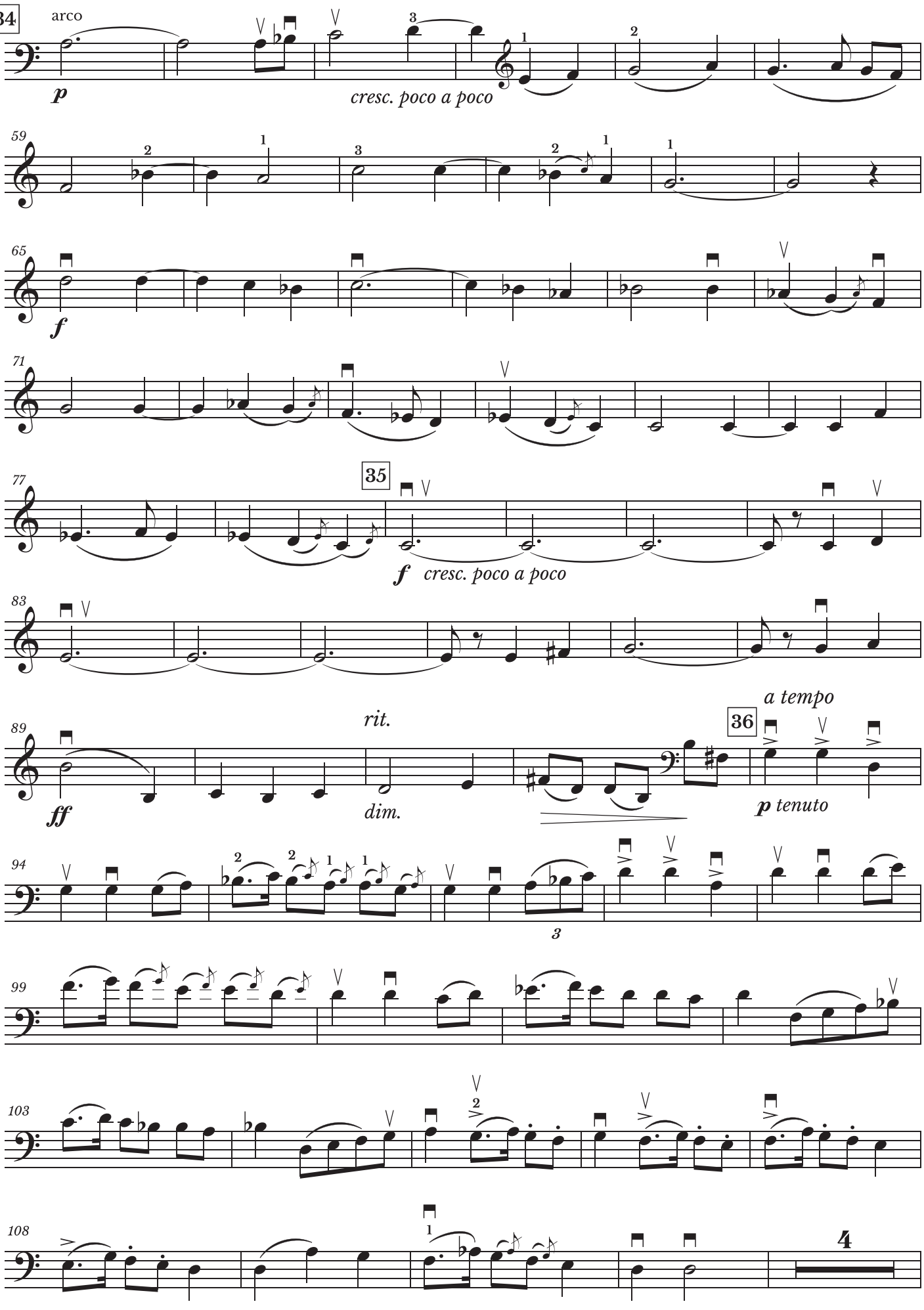

Andantino con moto
9
pno.
8va
21
con sord.
p
16
20
22
ff
rit.
a tempo
28
p
32
cresc.
f
rit.
23
a tempo
f
40
f
Più mosso
2

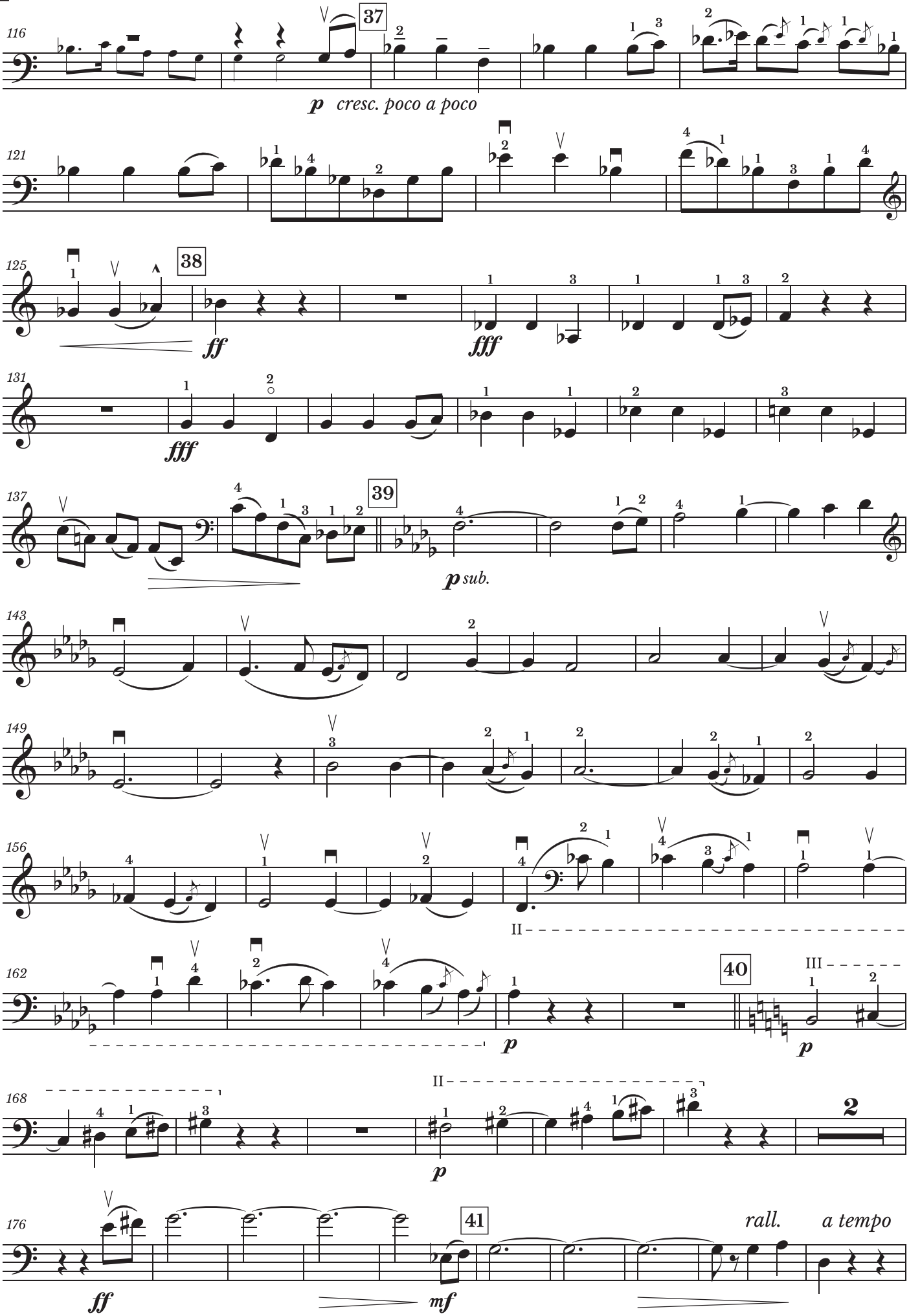

24
senza sord.
mf
51
fff
dim.
mf
25
dim.
56
p
p
60
26
mf
cresc.
allarg.
65
f
cresc.
27
Tempo I
fff
73
dim. poco a poco
allargando
77
28
p
81
rit.
pp
f

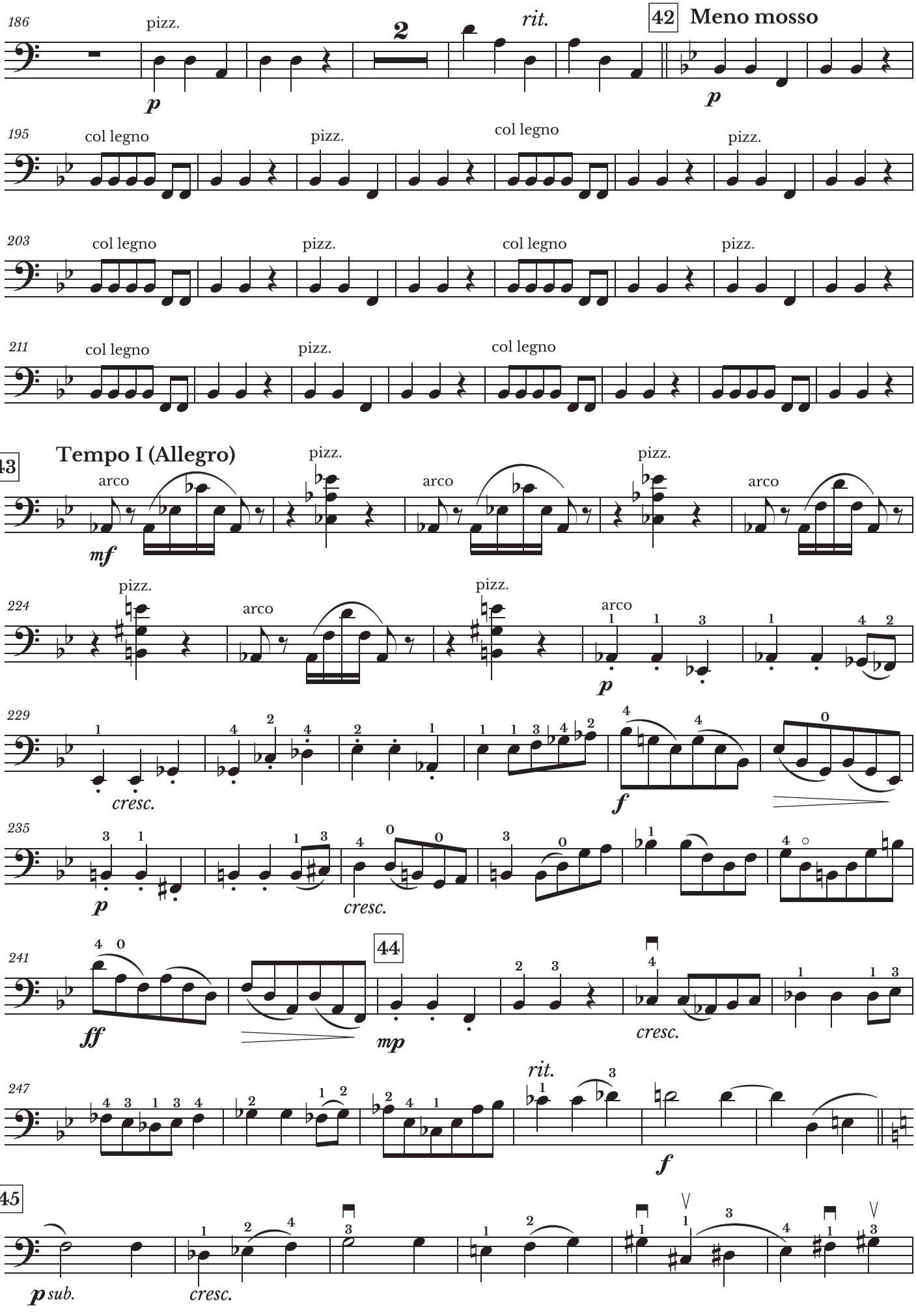

85
29
3
pp
93
97
con sord.
pp
2 2
101
105
cresc. poco a poco
30
ff
dim.
f
dim.
114
p
rit.
118
1
II 1
pp

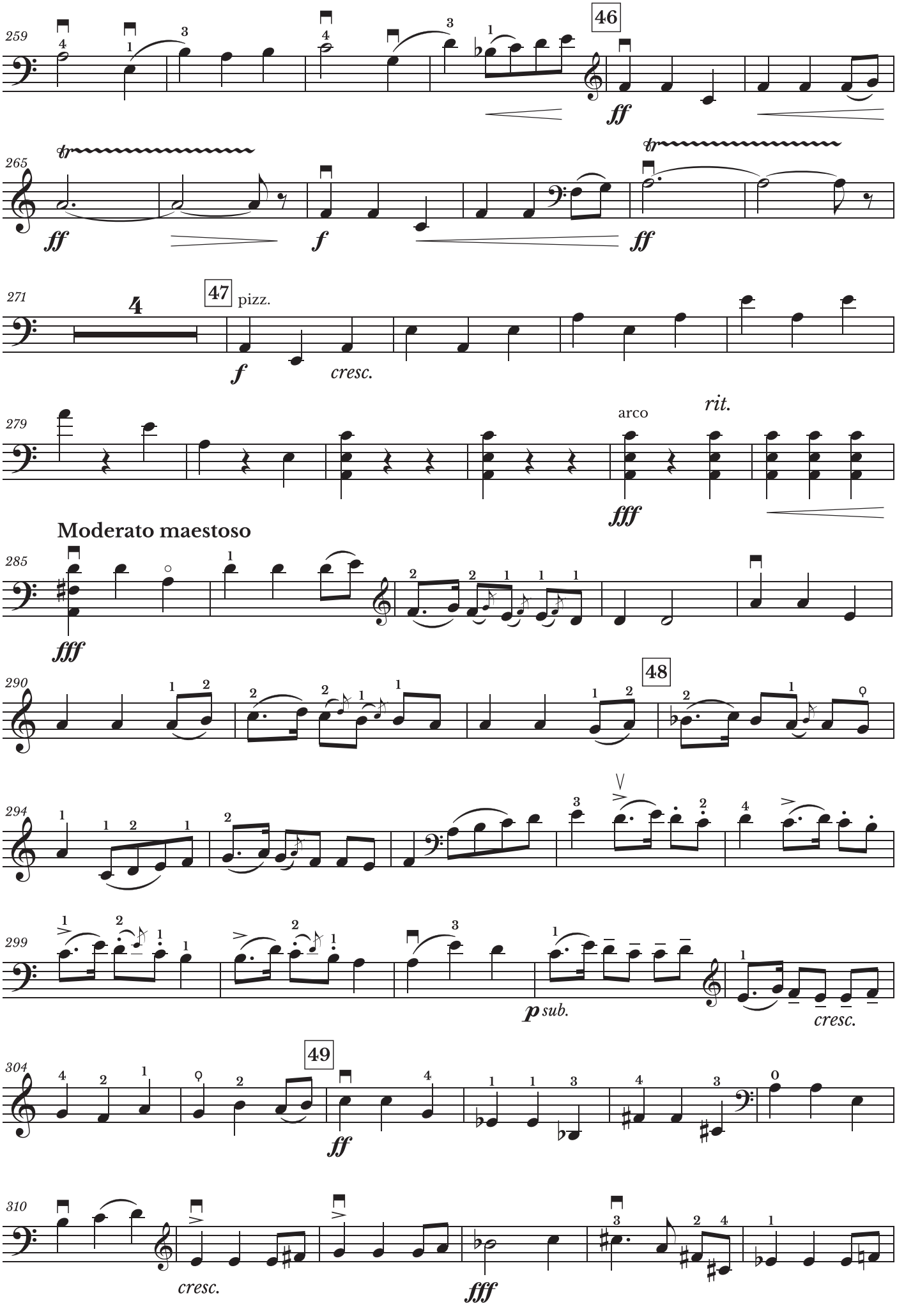
III

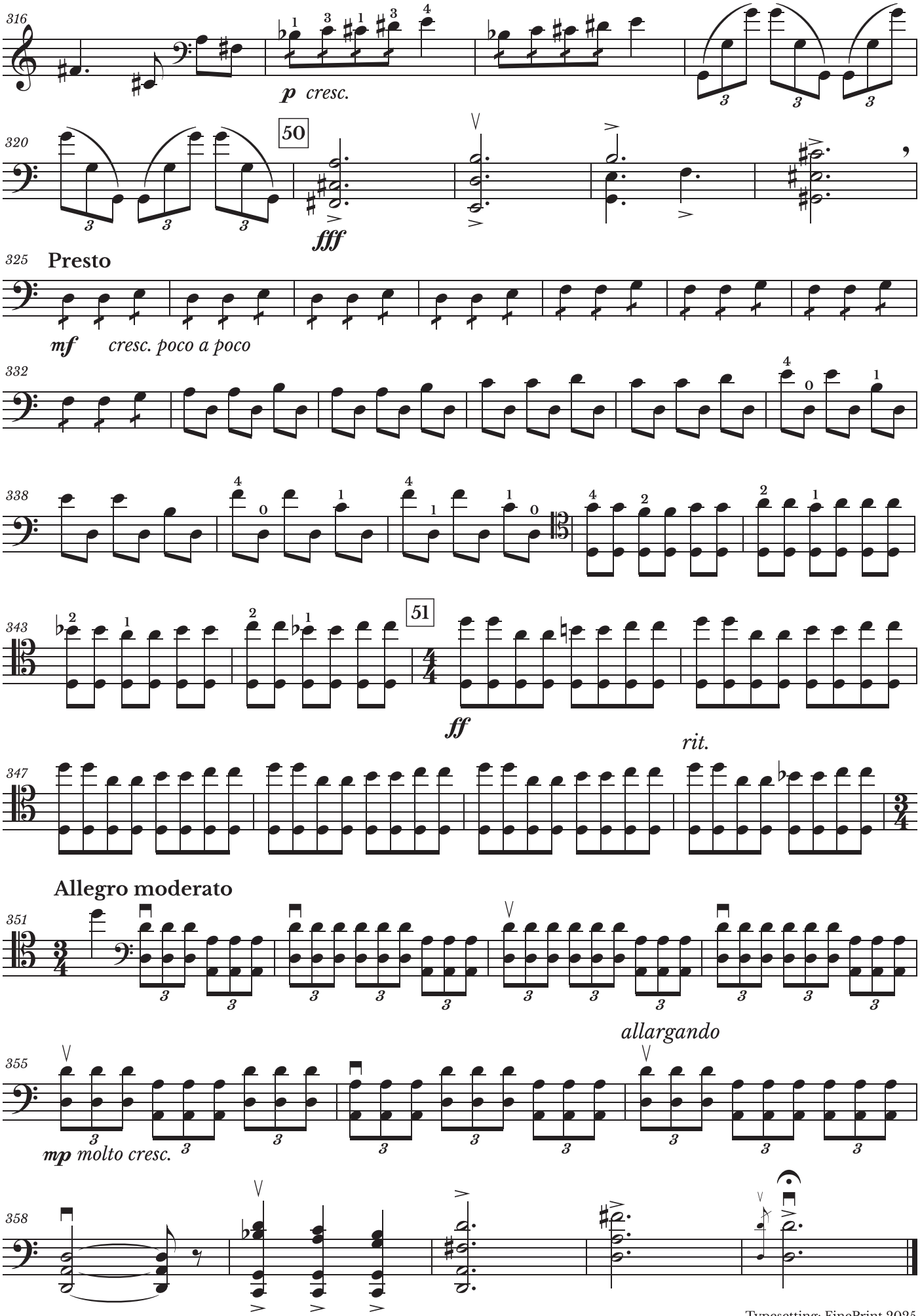

Allegro
senza sord.
fff marcato
5
liberamente
2
31
f
16
20
24
28
1 4
2
32 pizz.
ff
35
33
41
47


34
arco
p
cresc. poco a poco
59
65
f
71
77
35
f cresc. poco a poco
83
89
rit.
a tempo
36
ff
dim.
p tenuto
94
3
99
103
108
4


116
37
p cresc. poco a poco
121
125
38
ff
fff
131
fff
137
39
p sub.
143
149
156
162
II
40
III
p
168
II
p
2
176
ff
mf
41
rall.
a tempo


186
pizz.
p
2
rit.
42 Meno mosso
p
195
col legno
pizz.
col legno
pizz.
203
col legno
pizz.
col legno
pizz.
211
col legno
pizz.
col legno
43 Tempo I (Allegro)
arco
mf
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
224
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
p
229
cresc.
f
235
p
cresc.
241
ff
44
mp
cresc.
247
rit.
f
45
p sub.
cresc.


259
46
ff
265
tr
ff
f
ff
271
47 pizz.
f
cresc.
279
arco
rit.
fff
Moderato maestoso
285
fff
290
48
294
299
p sub.
cresc.
304
49
ff
310
cresc.
fff



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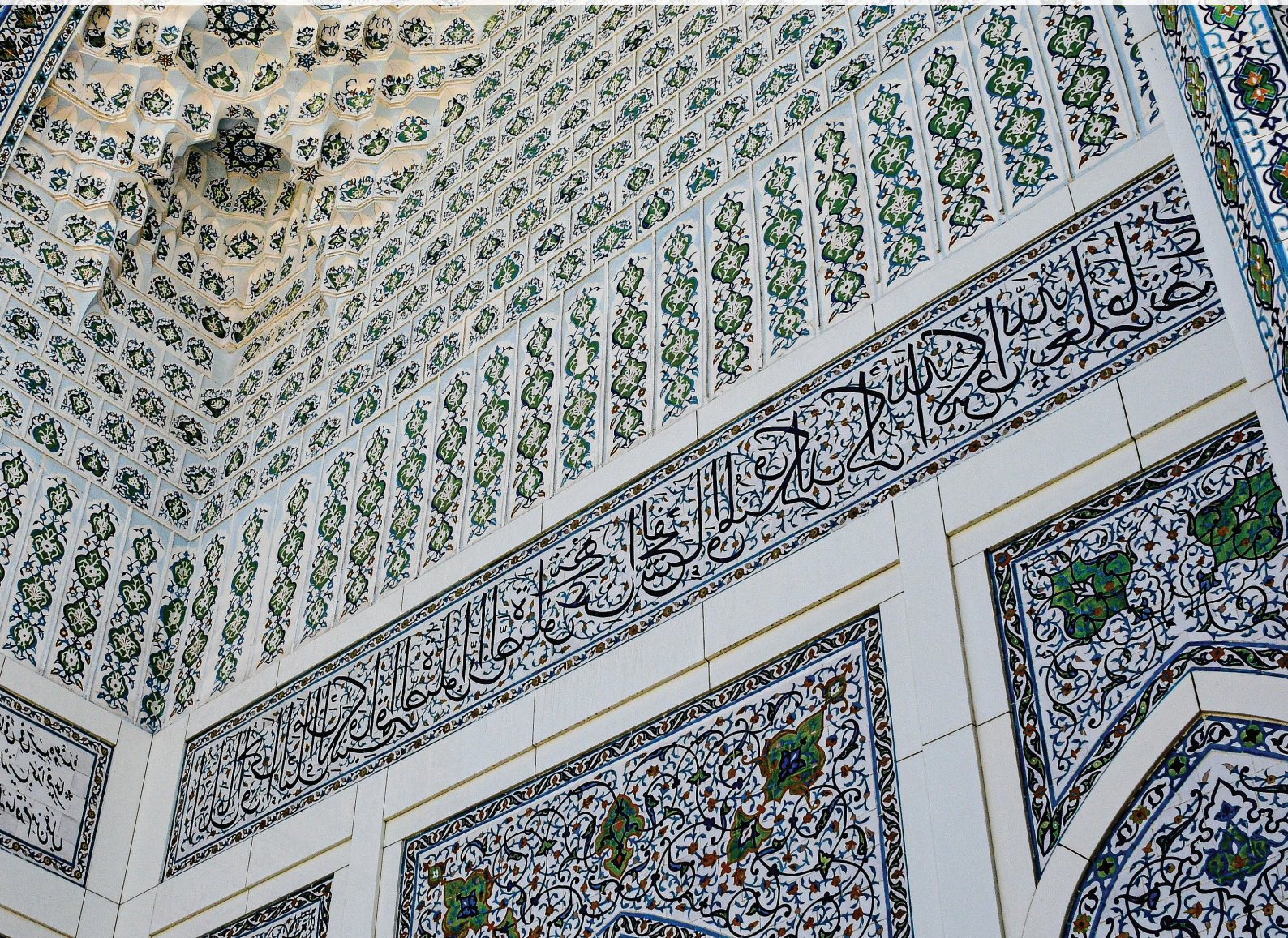
Mushel's **Sonata for Cello and Piano** (1951) was first published in 1955 by Muzgiz, Moscow. It was the first cello sonata written in the history of Uzbek Soviet music, and was regarded as one of the most significant works in the genre of chamber music by many Soviet scholars, and was one of the most performed pieces of Mushel's chamber repertoire. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused political and cultural disruption, and as a result, many works of Soviet-era composers, including Mushel's **Sonata for Cello and Piano**, were at risk of being forgotten and lost.

This re-engraved edition is the result of a research project that investigated the influences of traditional Uzbek elements in Mushel's music. It presents performance and interpretation guidelines that is informed by the editors' experiences with Uzbek music, knowledge of its culture, and exploration of specific performance practices that are beyond the score. The purpose of this publication was to revive the **Sonata for Cello and Piano**, to enrich the chamber music repertoire of Western musicians, and to raise awareness of the music of Uzbek Soviet Composer Georgi Mushel.