Three Pieces for Violin and Piano

Violin Part

Bill Robinson

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early June—August 23, 2014
Duration: about 22 minutes

for Eric Pritchard

Over the last decade I have preferred to write pieces from about 15 to 25 minutes long; this is most suited to the kind of music that I write. In our fast-paced era of minute attention spans, what people want is music of much shorter duration. Almost all composition contests are for very short pieces. With extremely rare exceptions, my music is not being played on other people's concerts, where space is very tight; and longer works require more work to prepare, which is unrealistic for an unknown composer like me to ask of performers. Those who visit my website or YouTube channel usually stay for two or three minutes. Knowing this, I have frequently urged performers to consider playing single movements, but this happens infrequently. As a result I decided to write some short pieces for violin and piano that could be played together for the same effect as a single piece, but which would each stand alone.

All three pieces have orchestral versions.

The first piece in this collection was the last to be written. I like waltzes and have written several over the years.

The second piece was inspired by the radio. On July 6, 2014, WNYC broadcast "The World's Most-Used Musical Sequence", which was an hour-long compilation of musical excerpts demonstrating the use of the Diatonic Phrygian Tetrachord. NPR followed up with five minutes on *Weekend Edition* on July 20. Despite the forbidding academic name, this series of four notes, with many modifications, has been used for centuries by musicians all over the world.

The basic sequence is four descending notes with the pattern whole step, whole step, half step. On a piano keyboard, one example would be the four white notes going down starting from E. This composition uses the Diatonic Phrygian Tetrachord both unmodified and highly modified in pretty much every way I could think of, frequently with several modifications simultaneously, in a reasonably contemporary idiom. I will leave it to musicologists yet unborn to deal with the analytical details, as I have some pride in not having opened a music theory book since 1975, and I don't want to have to look things up.

The finale (the first to be written) is a modern take on the most dissonant music written by Mozart; the final half of the final movement of his 40th Symphony. This section starts with what is very nearly a twelve-tone row. What I have done here, as I have done several times in the past, is to see what I would do with the key ideas of this piece written in my own style and form. This is by no means an arrangement of the original, but instead is an entirely new work. (Never fear—as I have never written in the twelve-tone style, which I find obnoxious in the extreme, I have not done so here either.)

These three pieces were first performed at Duke University on January 11, 2015, by Eric Pritchard, violin, and Greg McCallum, piano.

Accidentals hold through the measure and not beyond, and do not refer to other octaves. Eric Pritchard edited the violin parts.

Bill Robinson

Publisher Parrish Press Raleigh NC First Edition January 2015
billrobinsonmusic.com

edited by Eric Pritchard

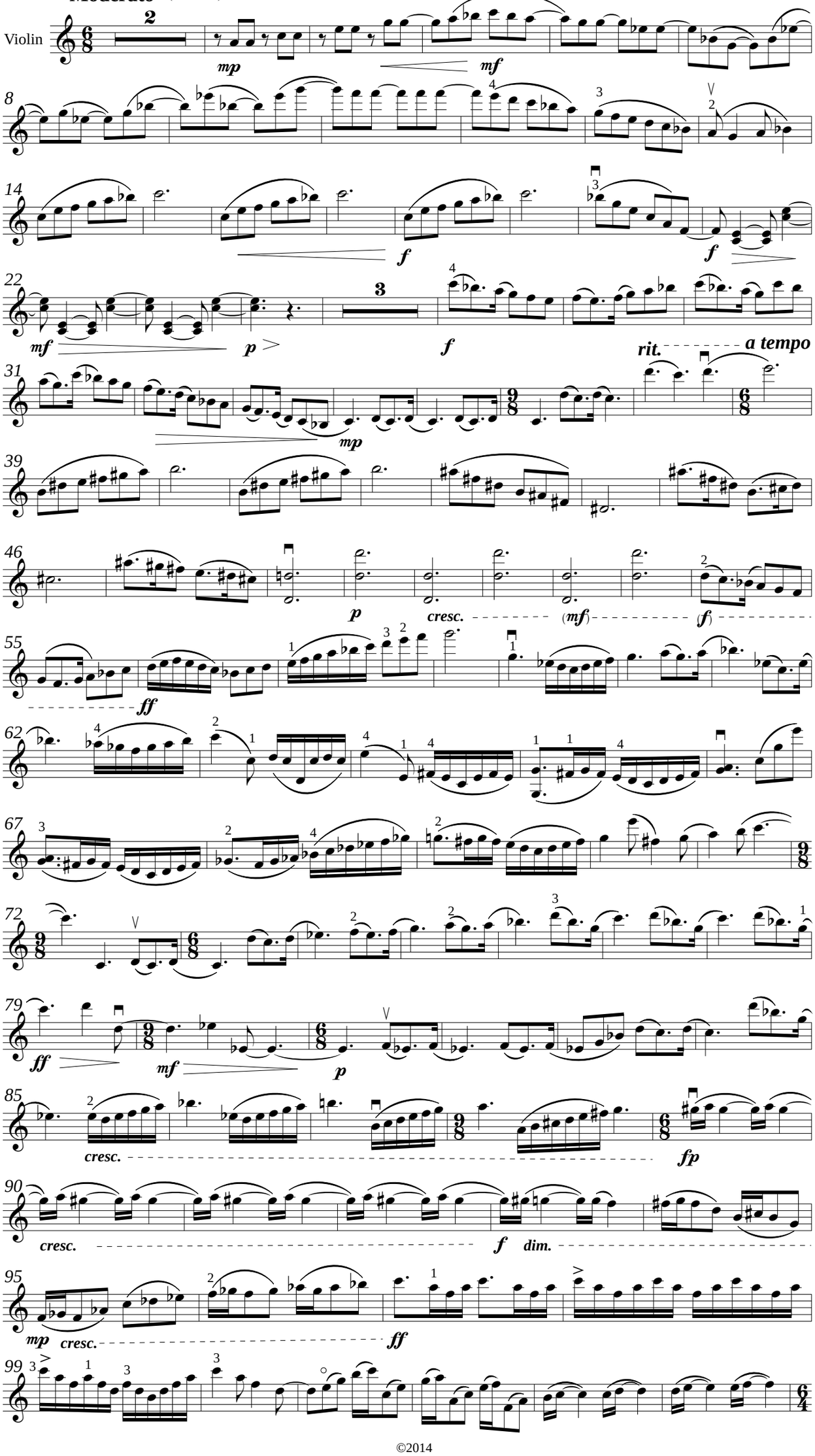
Waltz For Our Time

[7:20]

Bill Robinson

Moderato (♩. =76)

Violin



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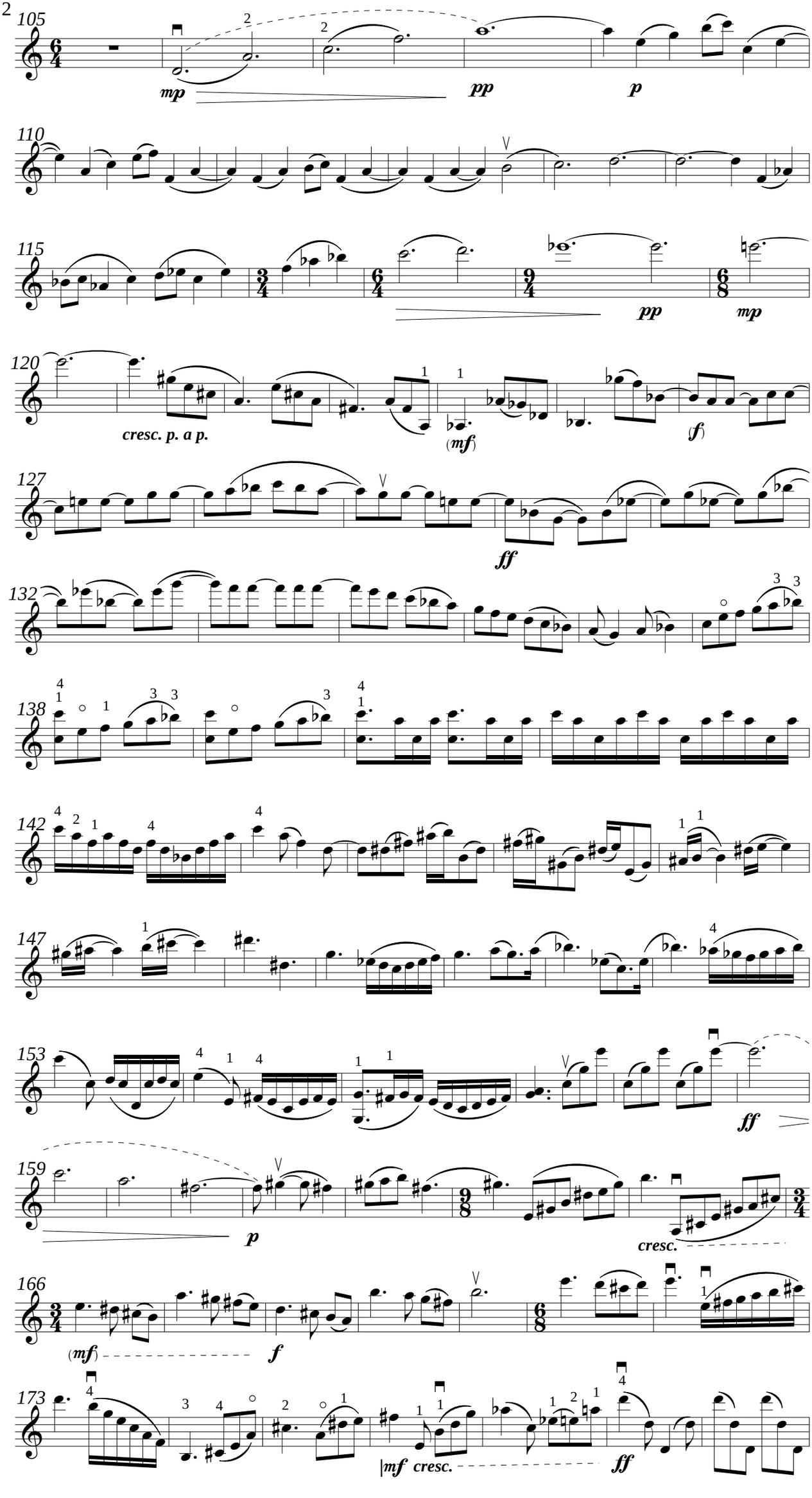
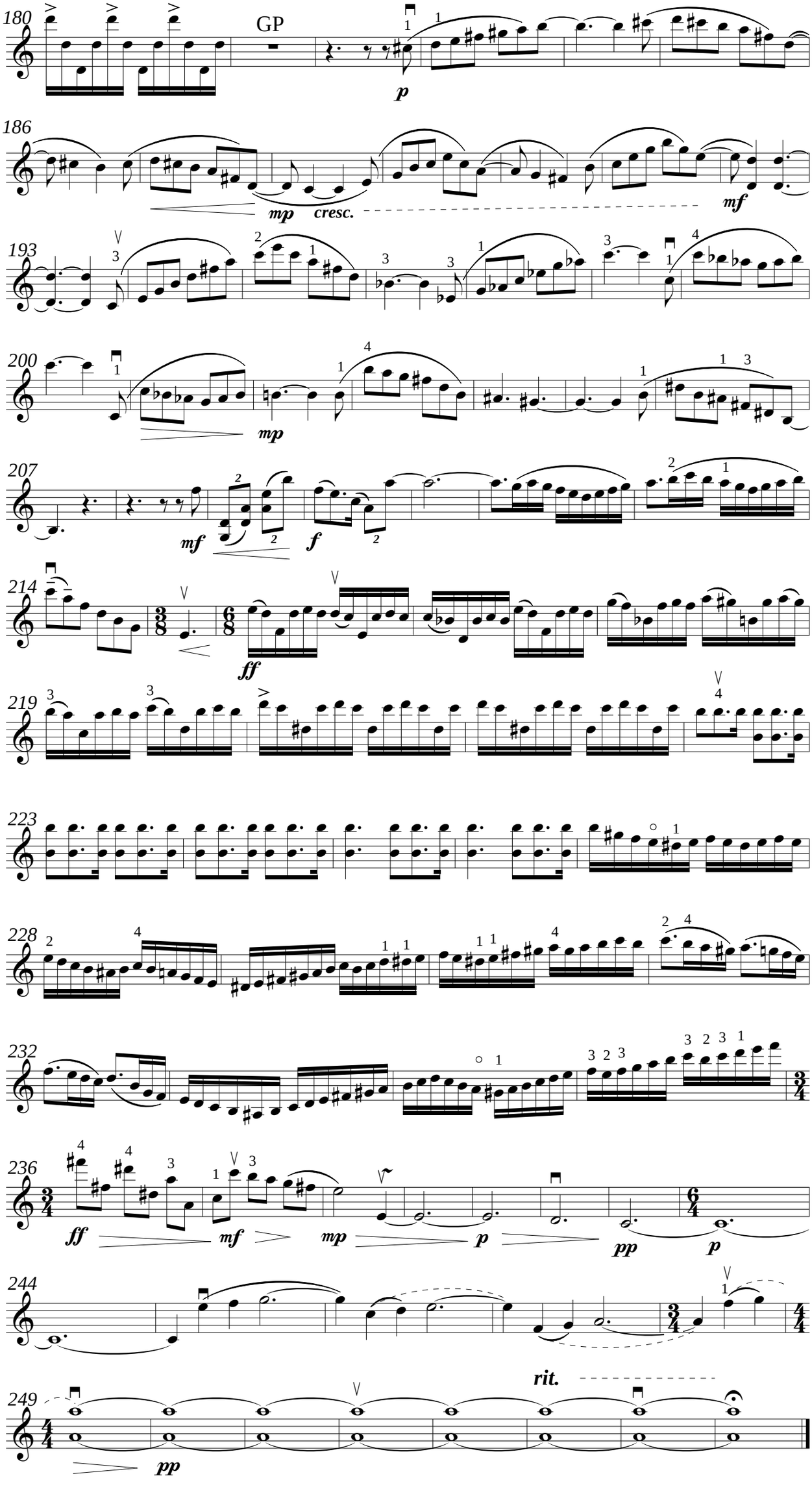

105
mp
pp
p
110
115
pp
mp
120
cresc. p. a p.
(mf)
(f)
127
ff
132
138
142
147
153
ff
159
p
cresc.
166
(mf)
f
173
|mf cresc.
ff


180
GP
p
186
mp
cresc.
mf
193
200
mp
207
mf
f
214
ff
219
223
228
232
236
ff
mf
mp
p
pp
p
244
249
rit.
pp

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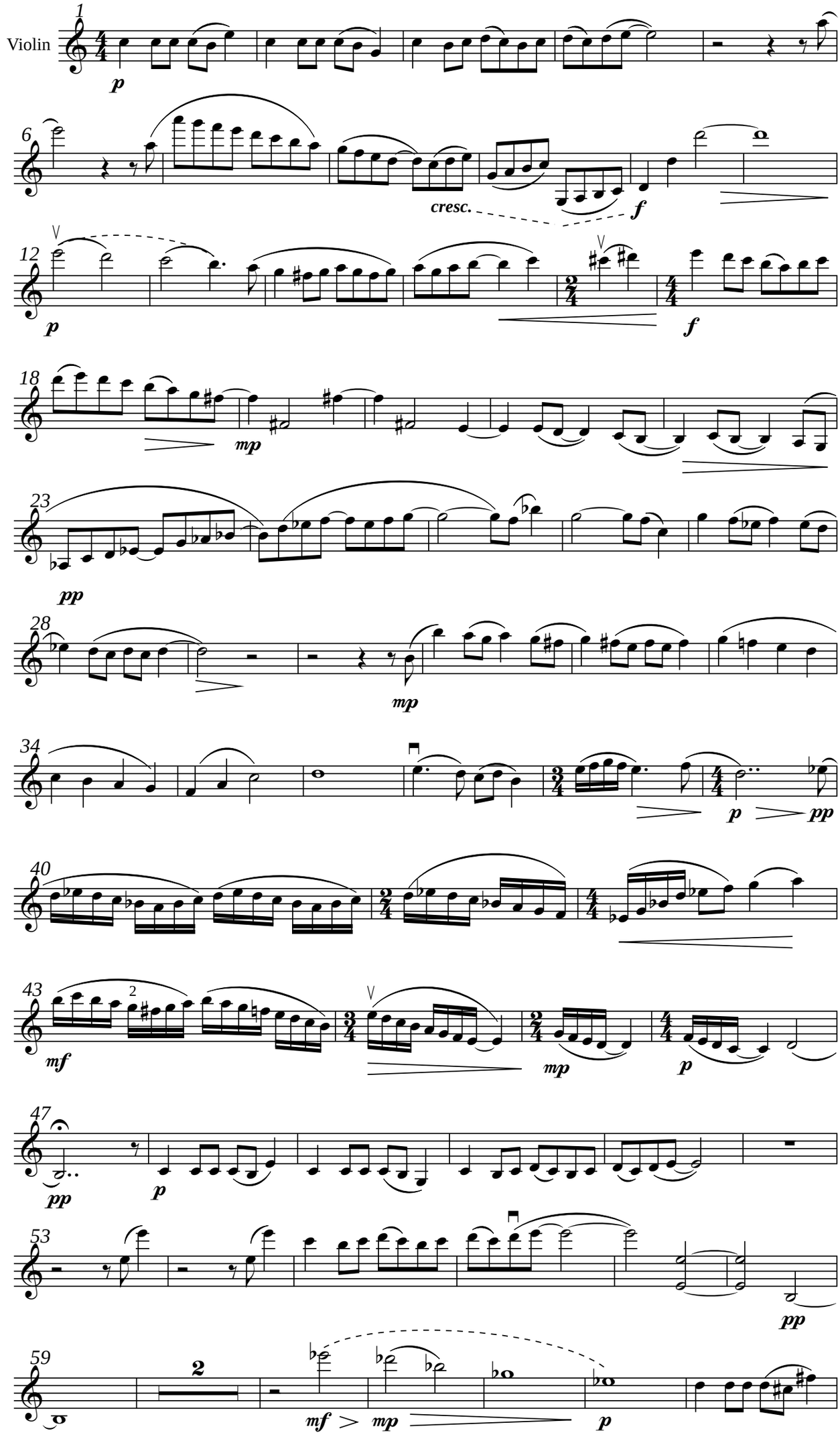
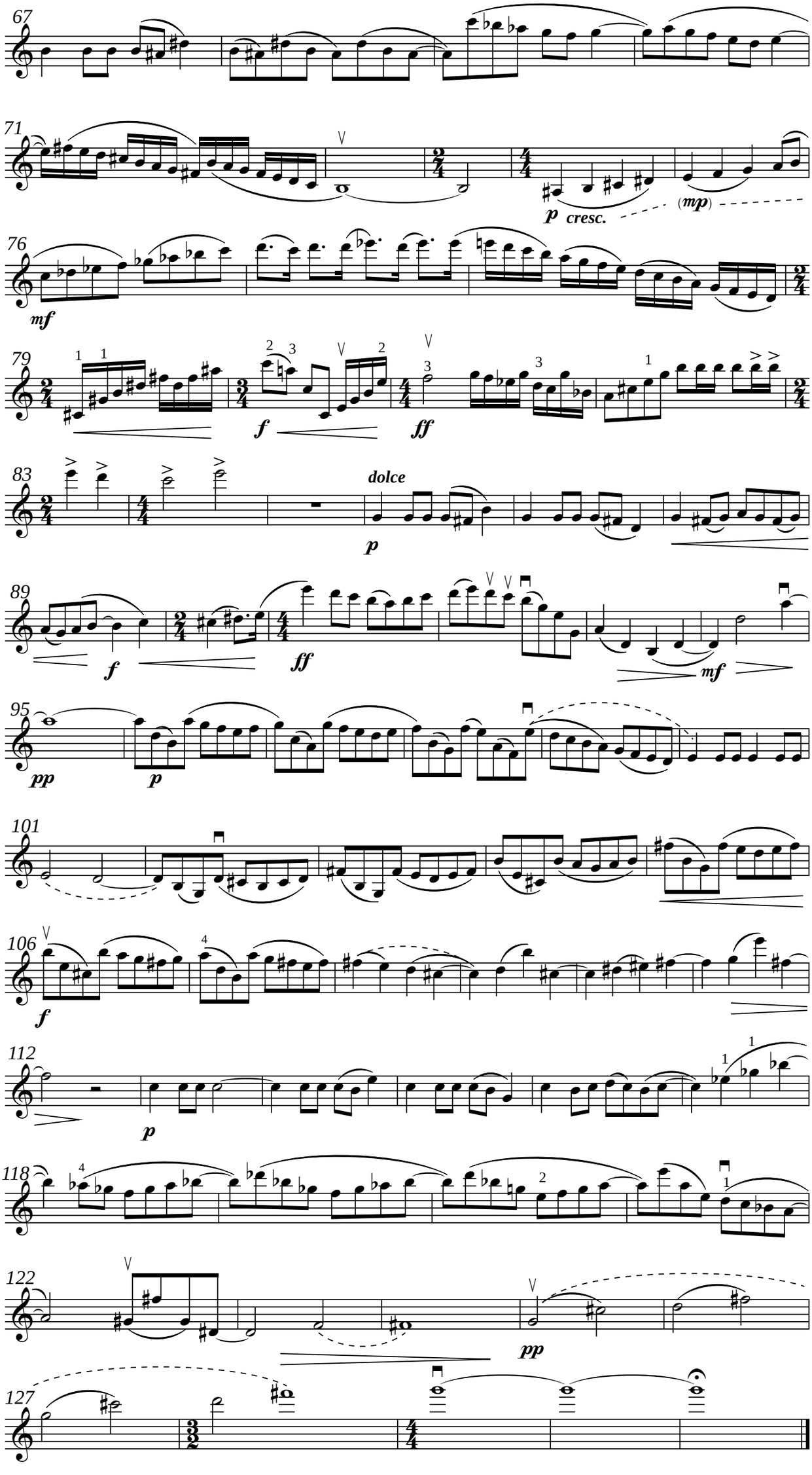
Diatonic Phrigian Tetrachord

[7:50]

Bill Robinson

Adagio andalusia (♩ = 74)




67
71
p cresc.
(mp)
76
mf
79
f
ff
83
dolce
p
89
f
ff
mf
95
pp
p
101
106
f
112
p
118
122
pp
127

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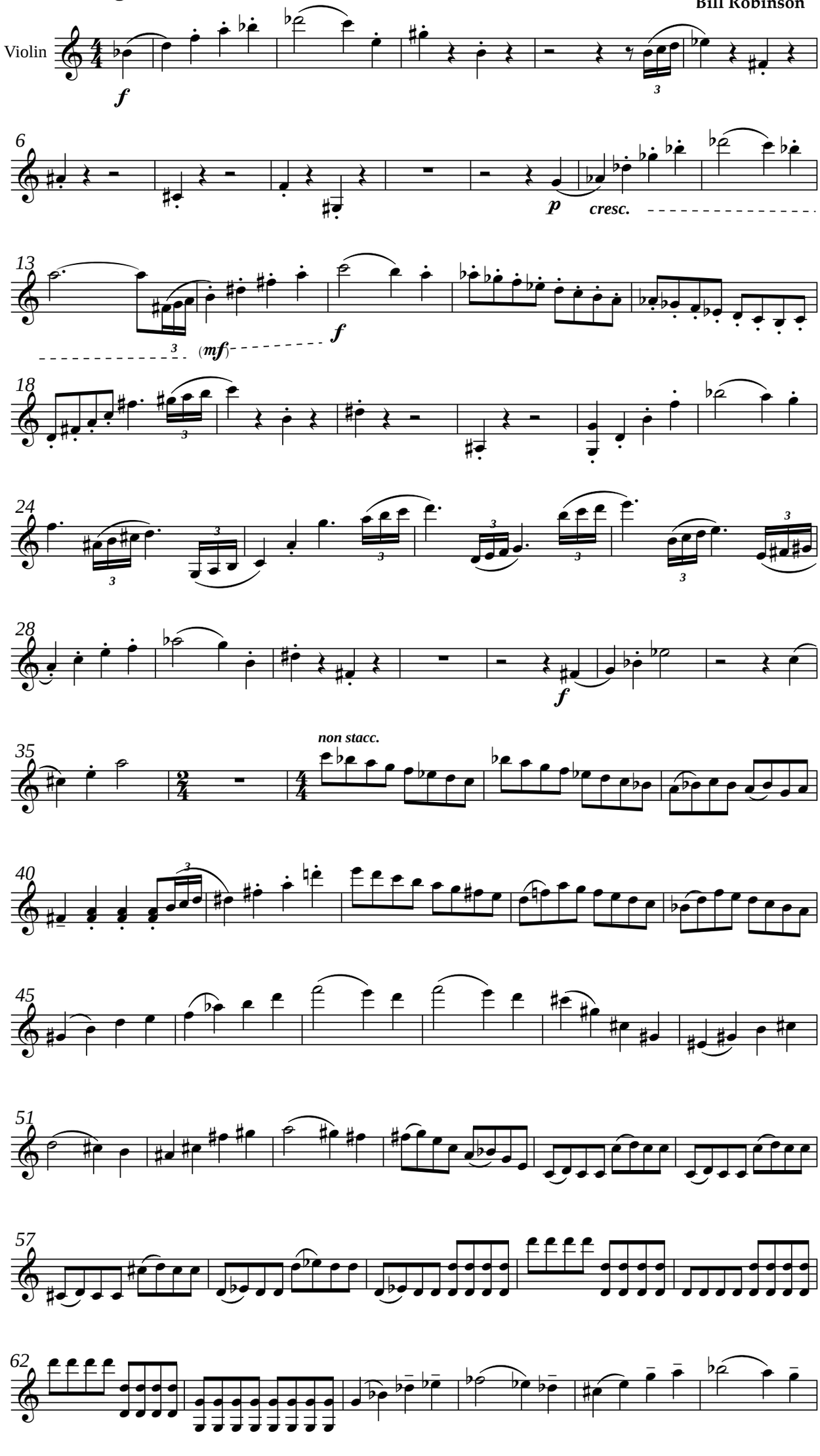
Mozart's Twelve-Tone Row

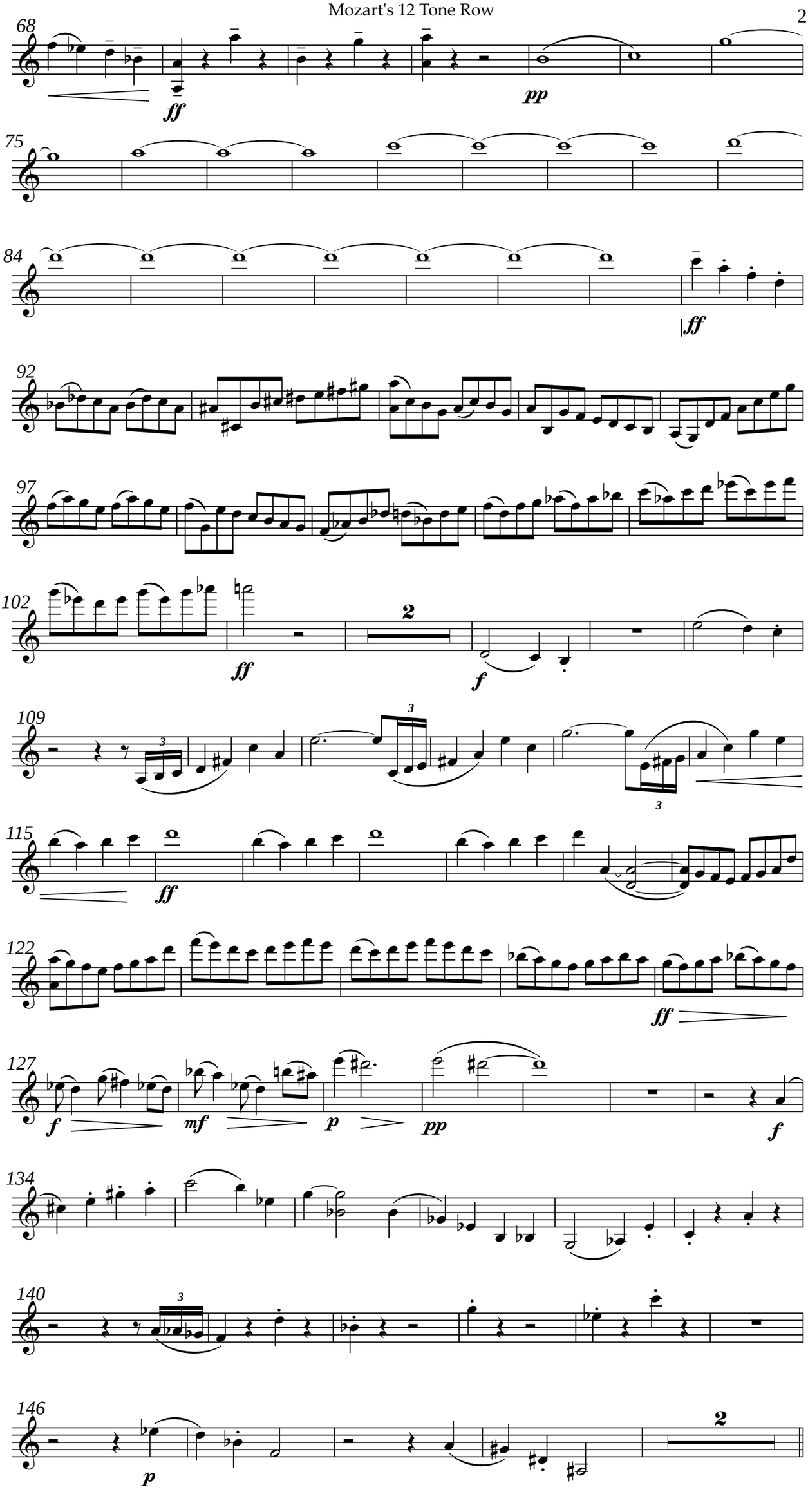
[6:14]

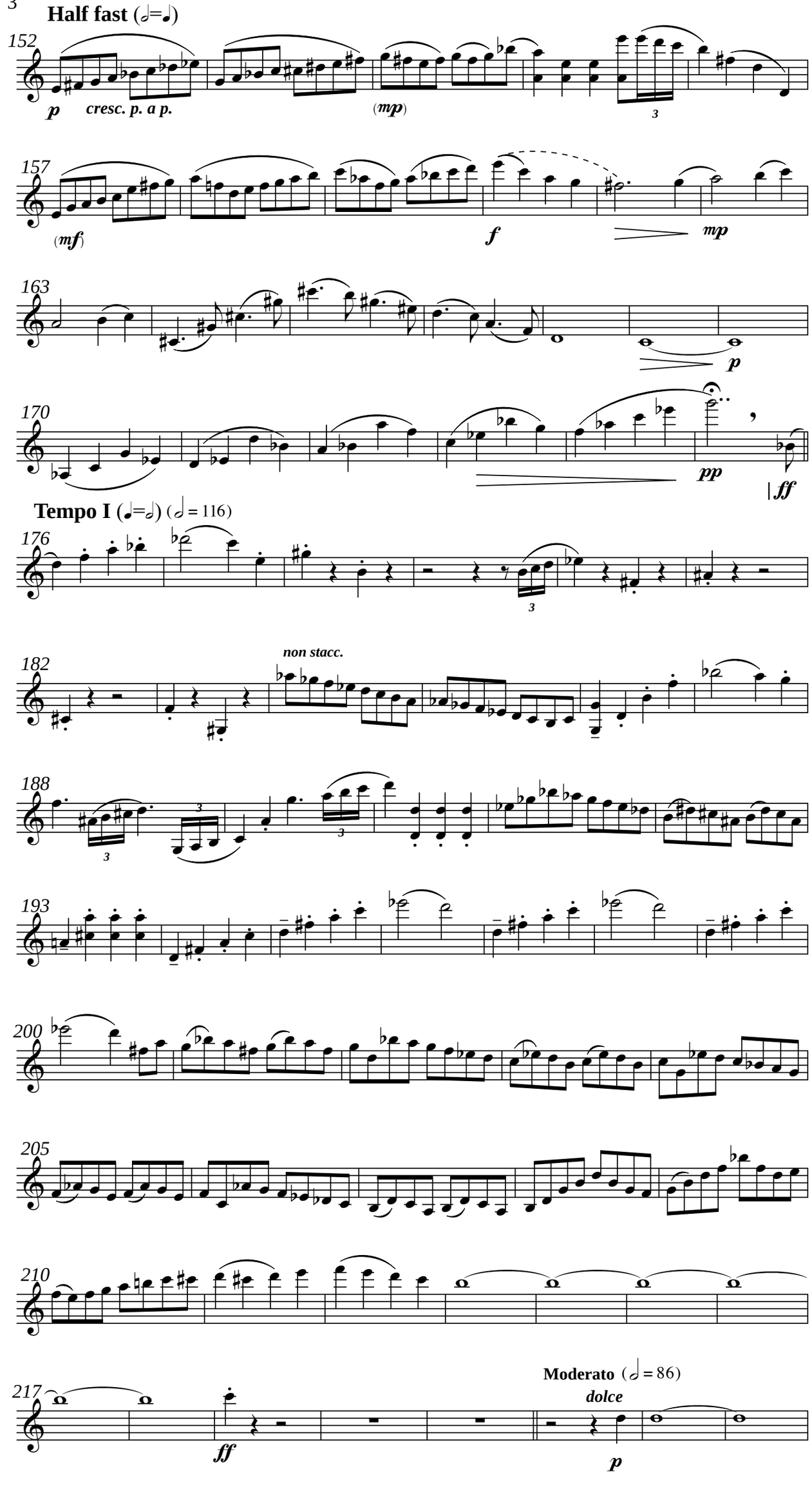
Allegro assai (𝅗𝅥 = 116)

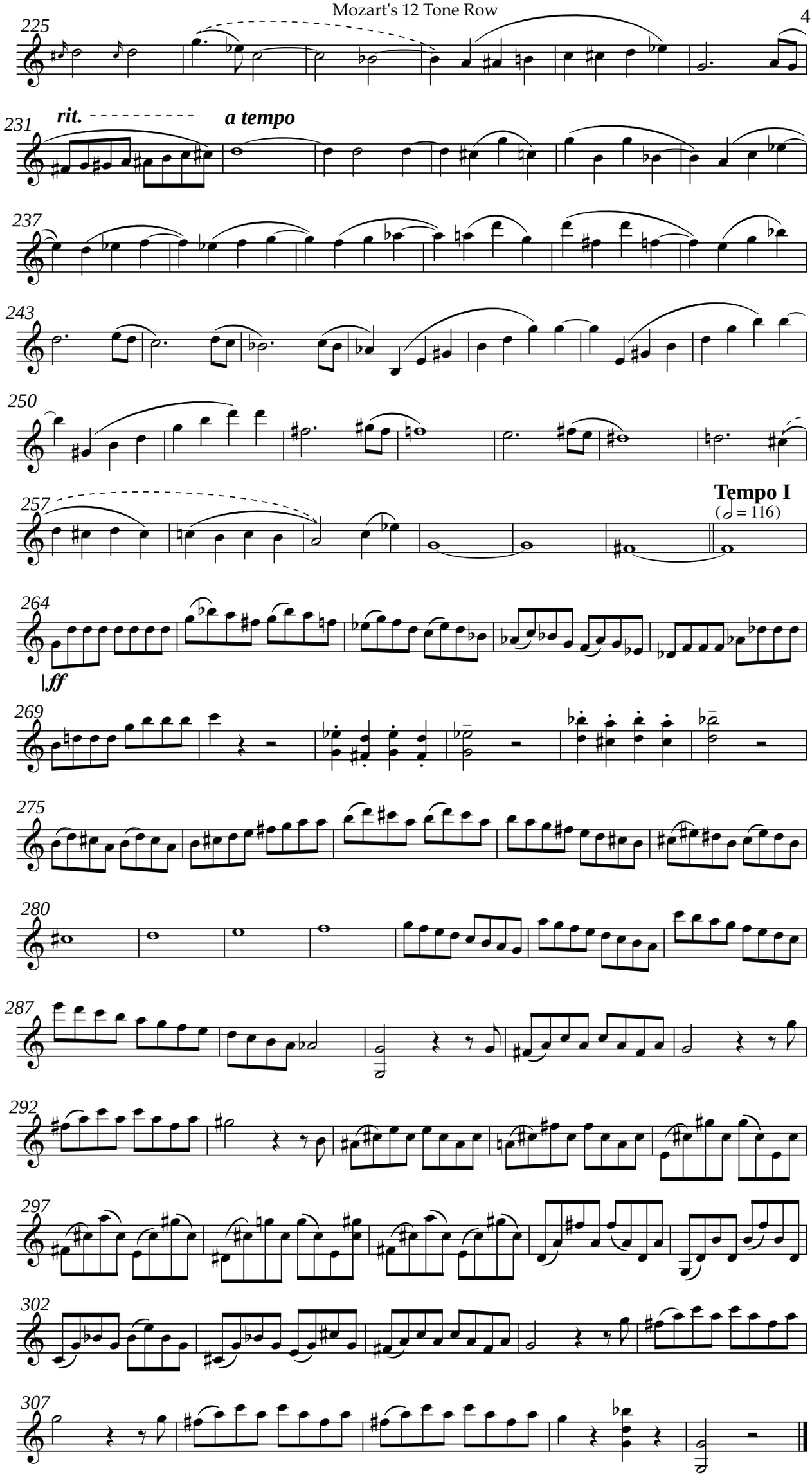
Bill Robinson

Violin




68
ff
pp
75
84
ff
92
97
102
ff
2
f
109
3
115
ff
122
ff
127
f
mf
p
pp
f
134
140
3
146
p
2


Half fast (𝅗𝅥=𝅘𝅥)
152
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
157
(mf)
f
mp
163
p
170
pp
ff
Tempo I (𝅘𝅥=𝅗𝅥) (𝅗𝅥 = 116)
176
non stacc.
182
188
193
200
205
210
217
ff
Moderato (𝅗𝅥 = 86)
dolce
p


225
231
rit.
a tempo
237
243
250
257
Tempo I
(𝅗𝅥 = 116)
264
ff
269
275
280
287
292
297
302
307