Three Pieces for Violin and Piano

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

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billrobinsonmusic.com

Waltz For Our Time

[7:20]

Bill Robinson

Moderato (♩. =80)

Violin

Piano

mp *mf*

6

12

17

f *mf*

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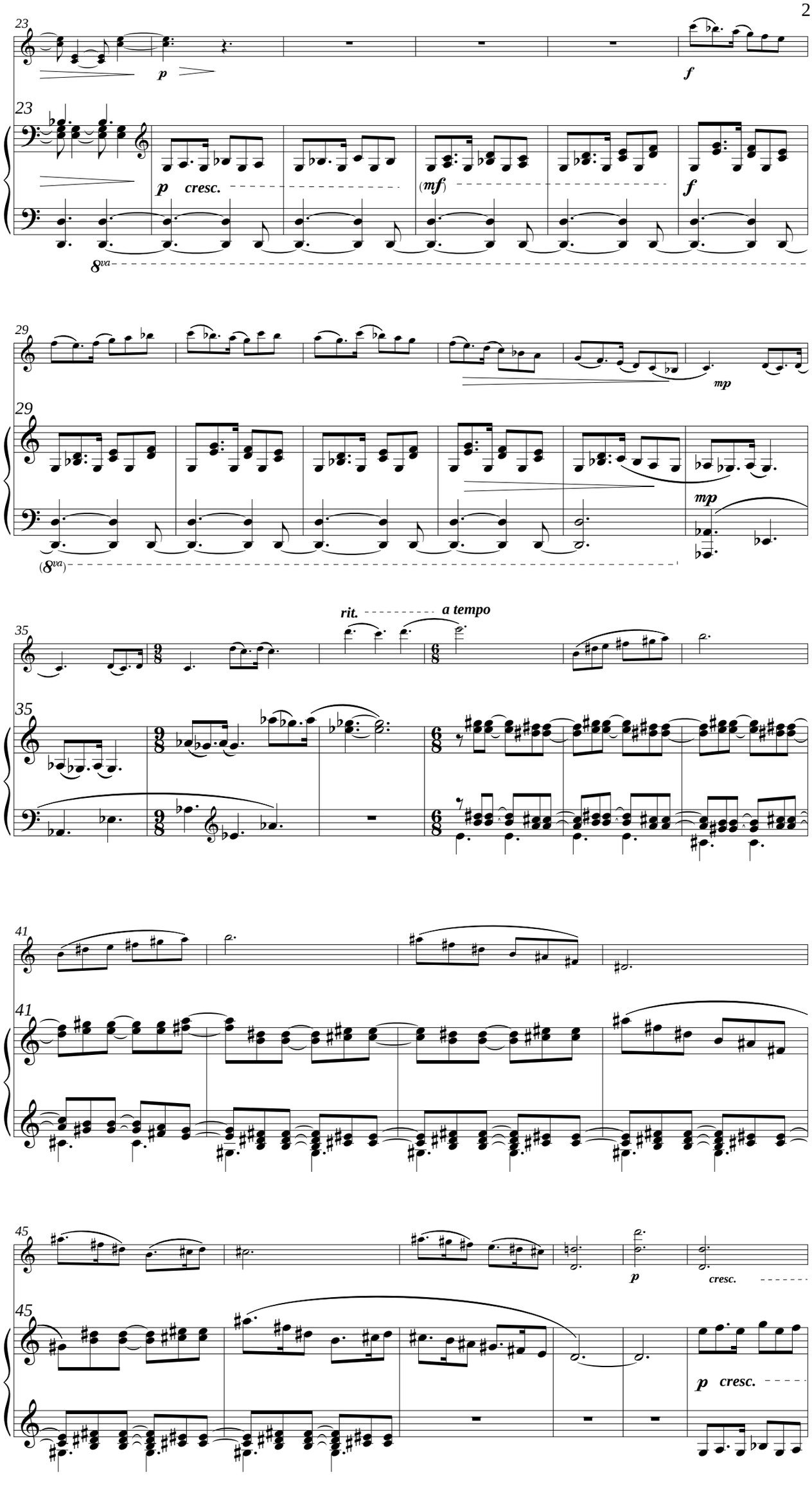
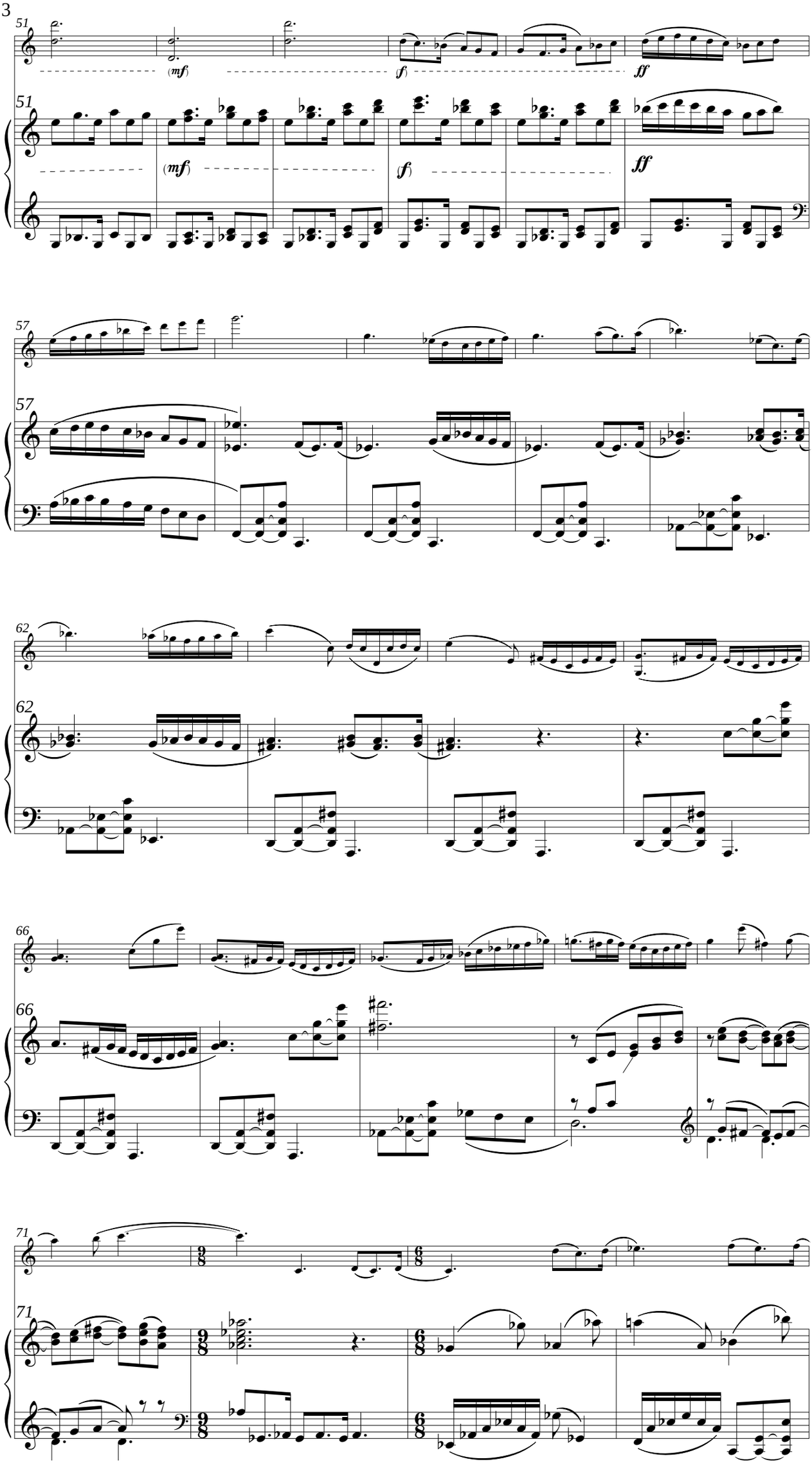
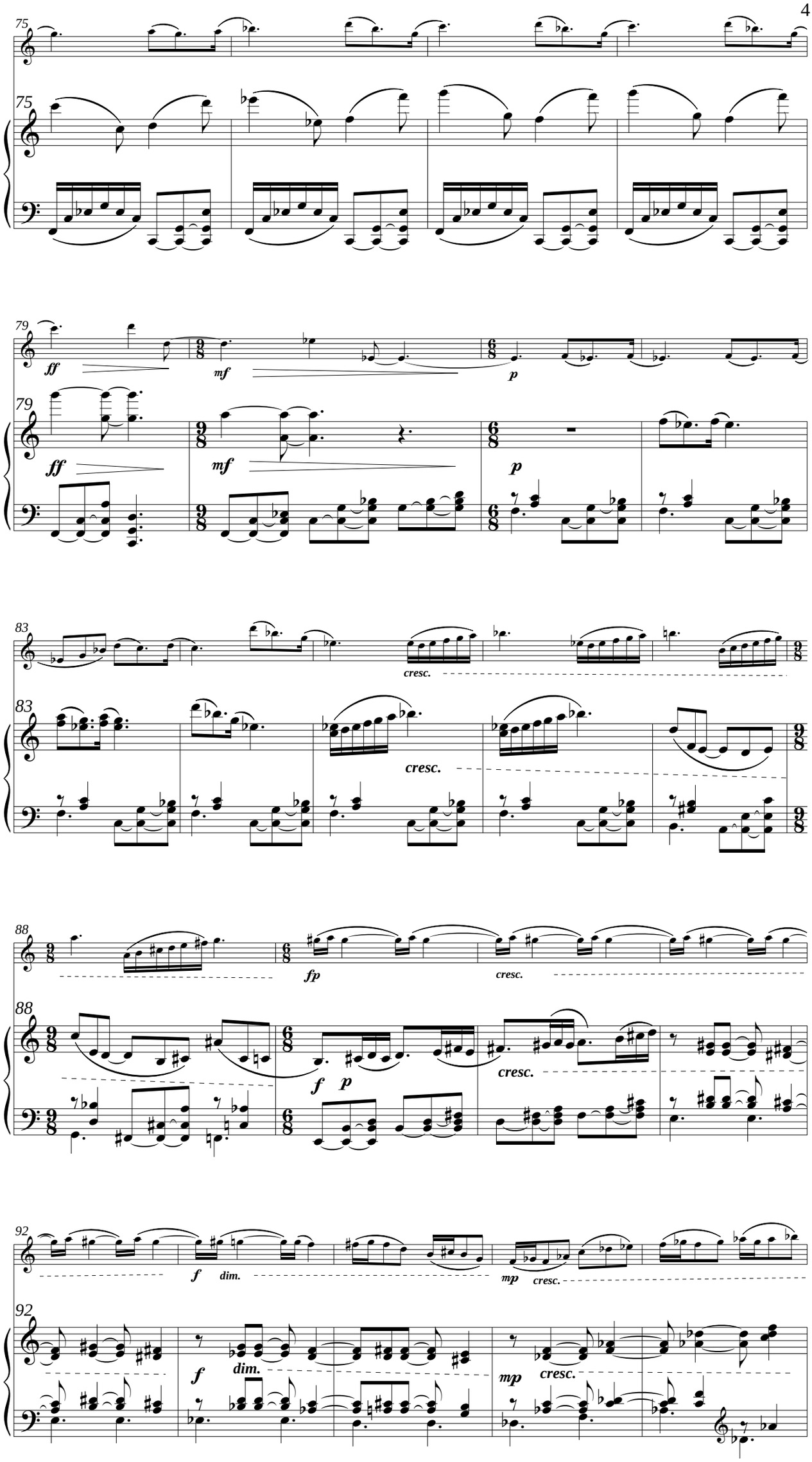
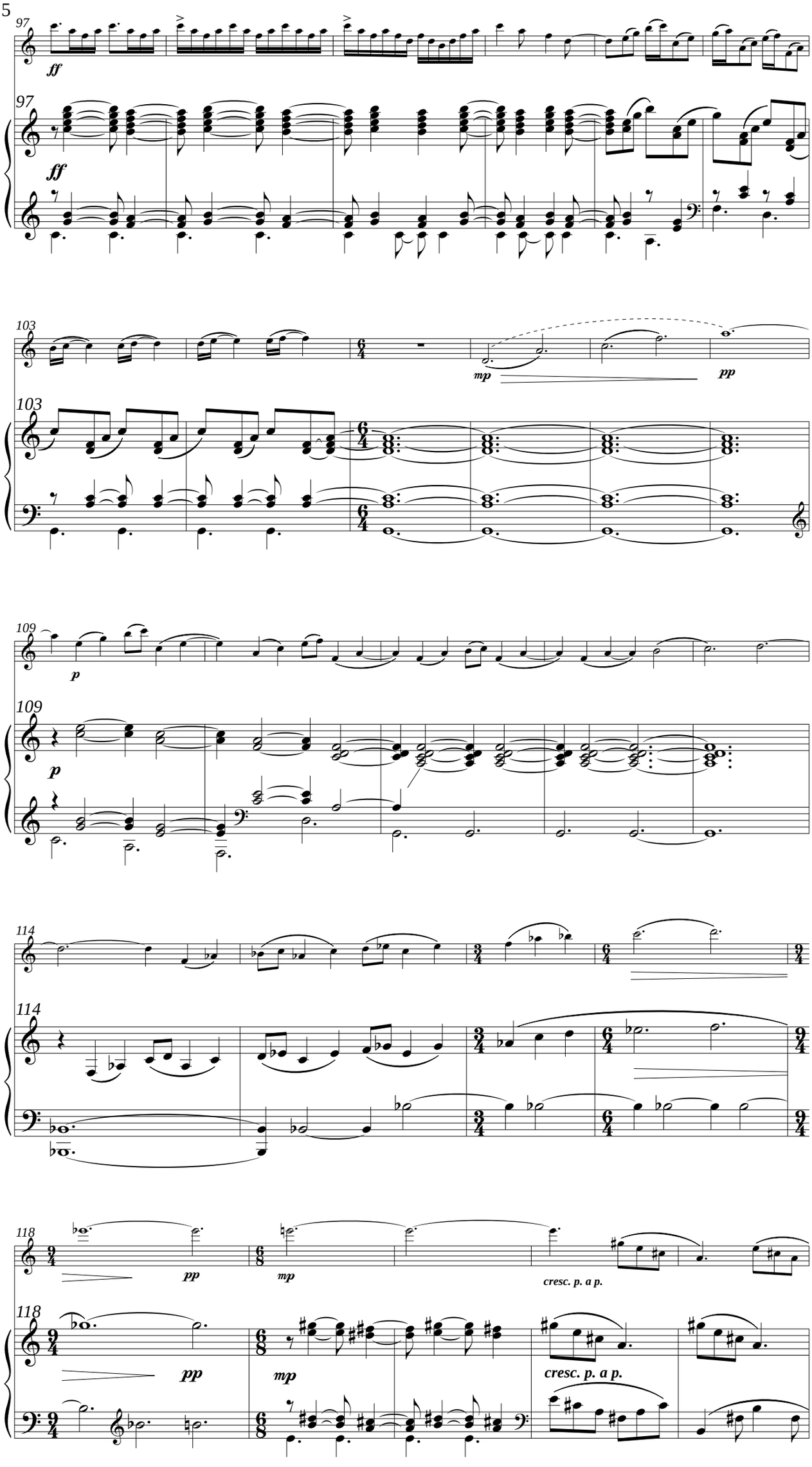
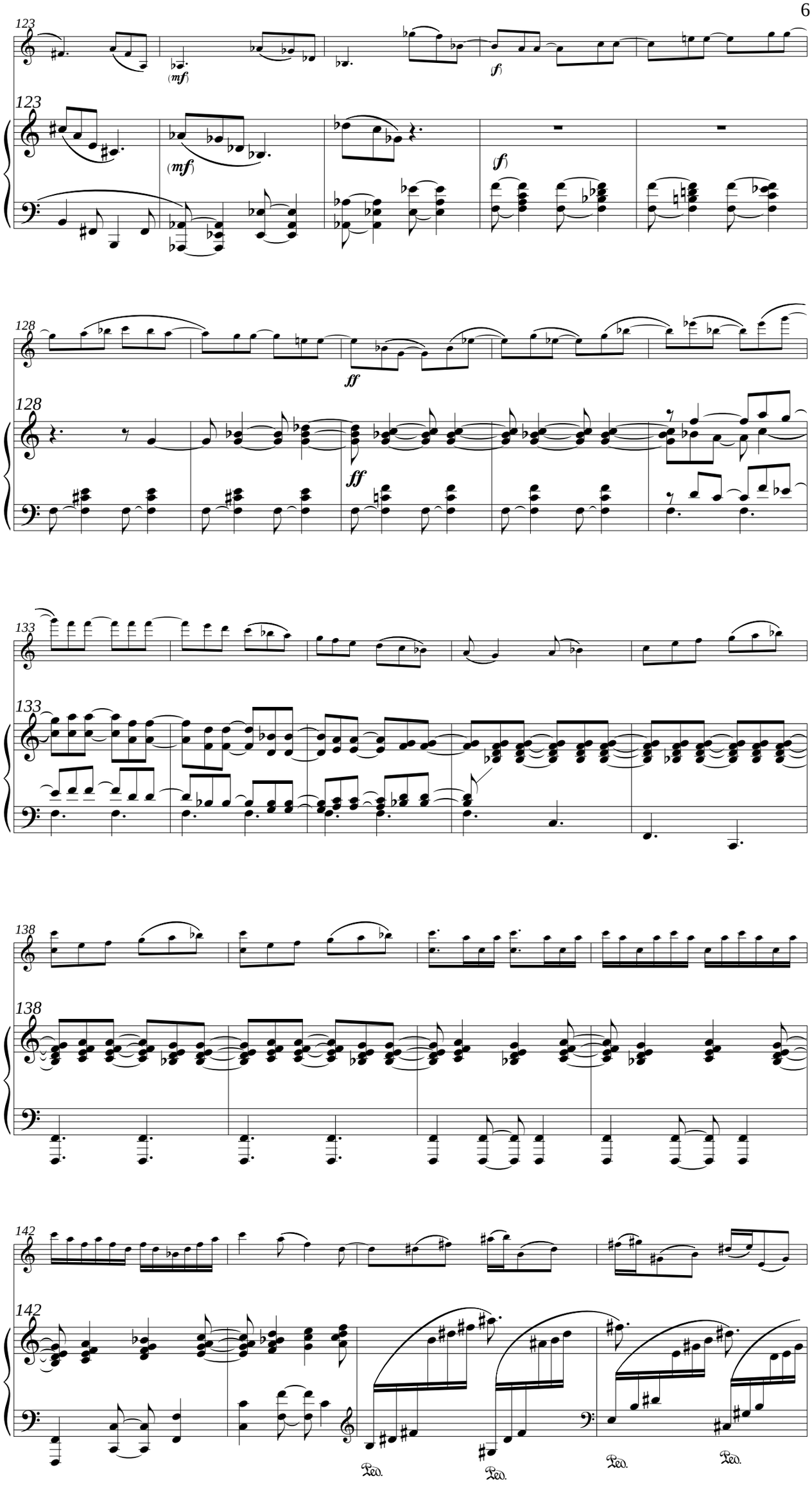
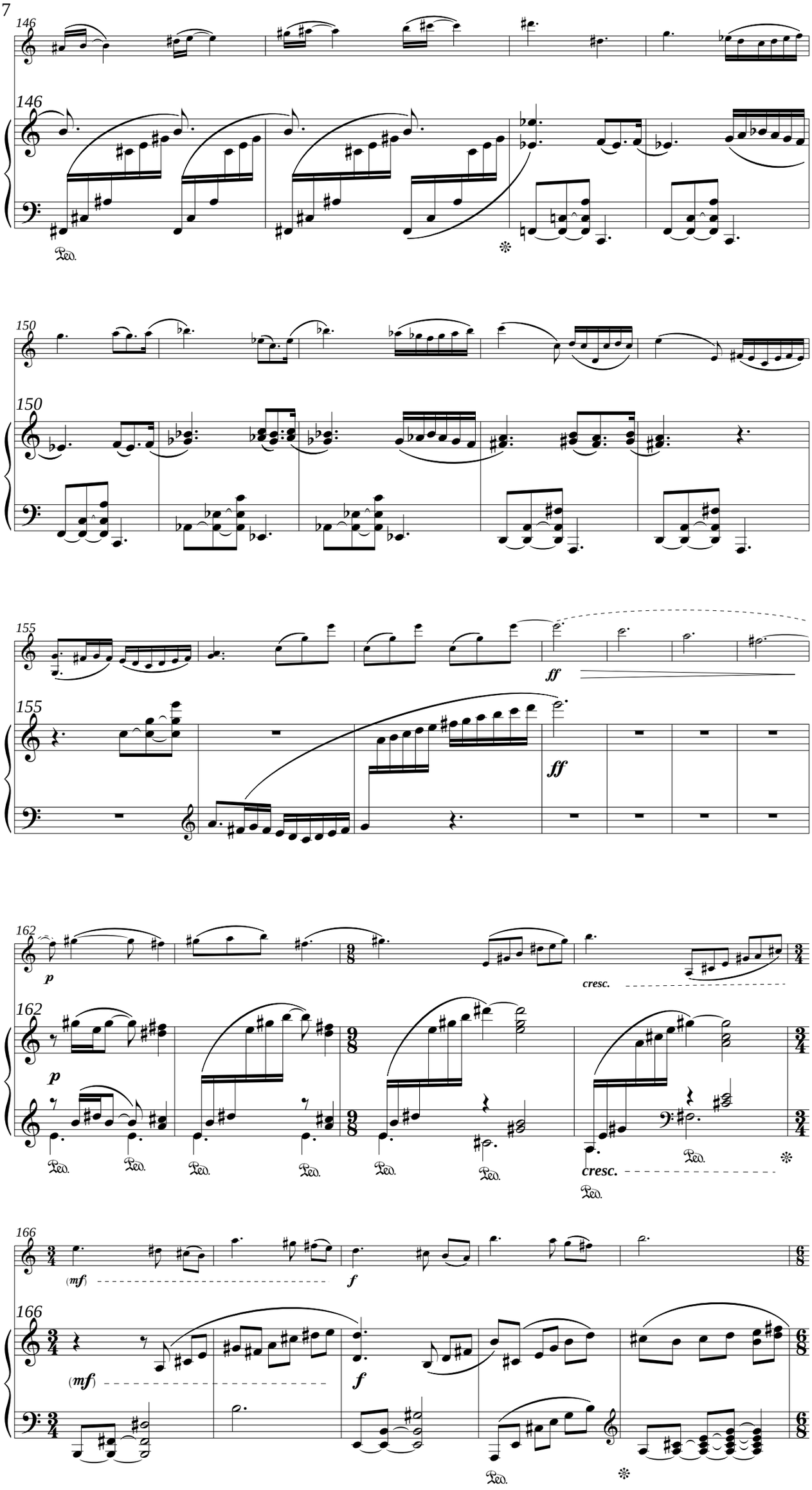

23
p
cresc.
(mf)
f
8va
29
mp
(8va)
rit.
a tempo
35
41
45
p
cresc.

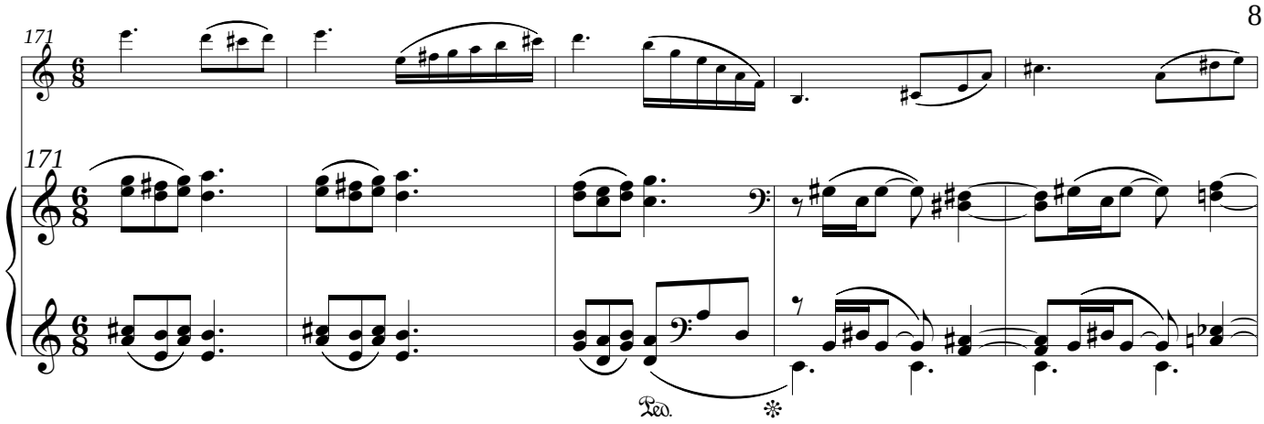

51
(mf)
(f)
ff
57
62
66
71

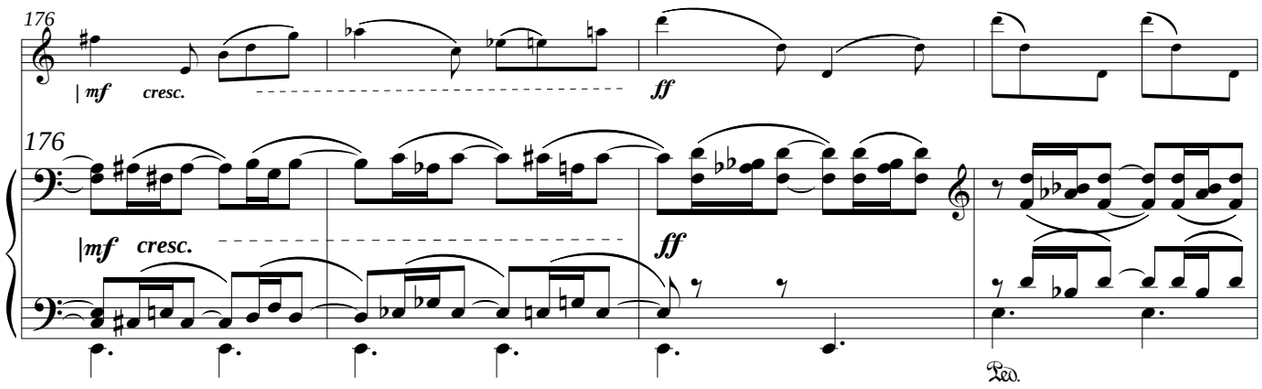

75
79
ff
mf
p
83
cresc.
88
fp
f
dim.
mp
92

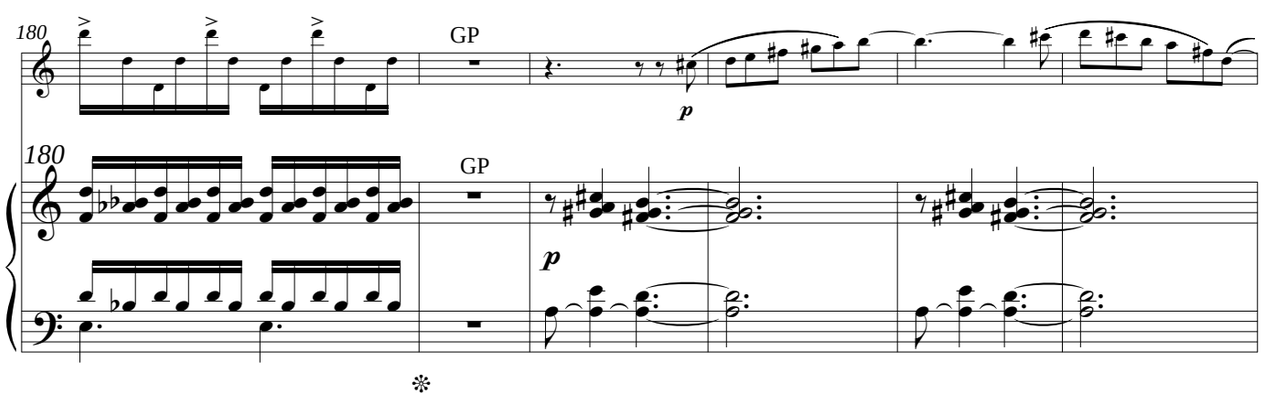

97
ff
97
ff
103
mp
pp
103
109
p
109
p
114
114
118
pp
mp
cresc. p. a p.
118
pp
mp
cresc. p. a p.

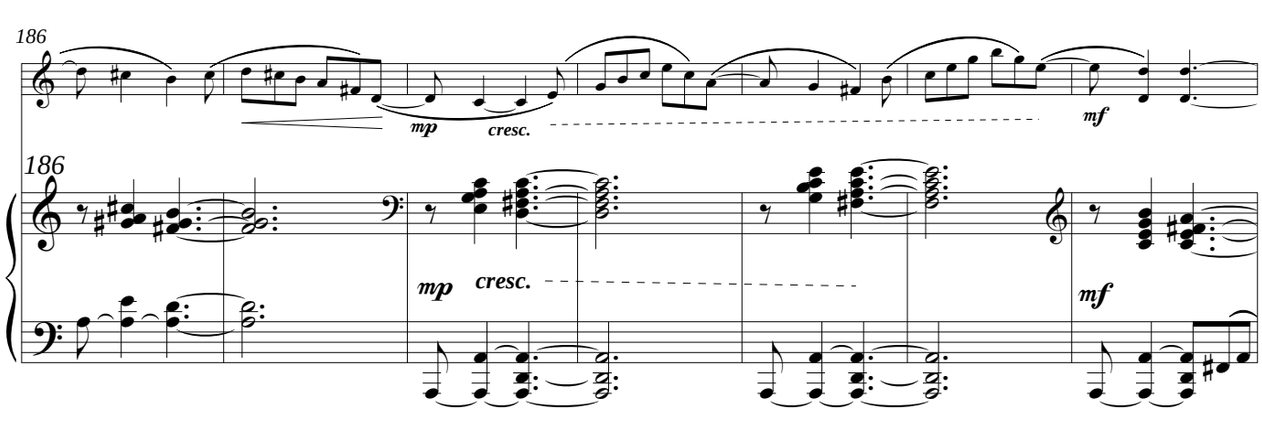

123
(mf)
(f)
128
ff
133
138
142
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

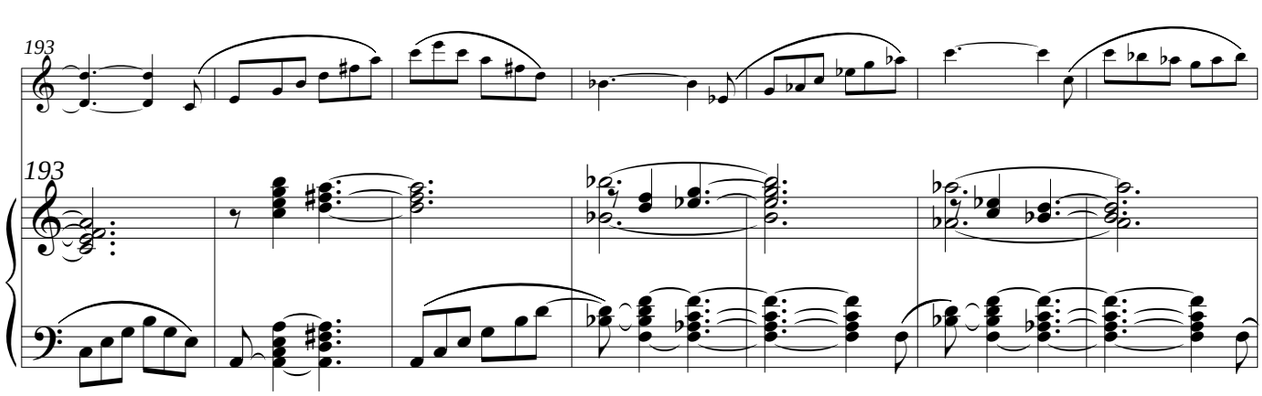

146
Ped.
150
155
ff
162
p
cresc.
166
(mf)
f

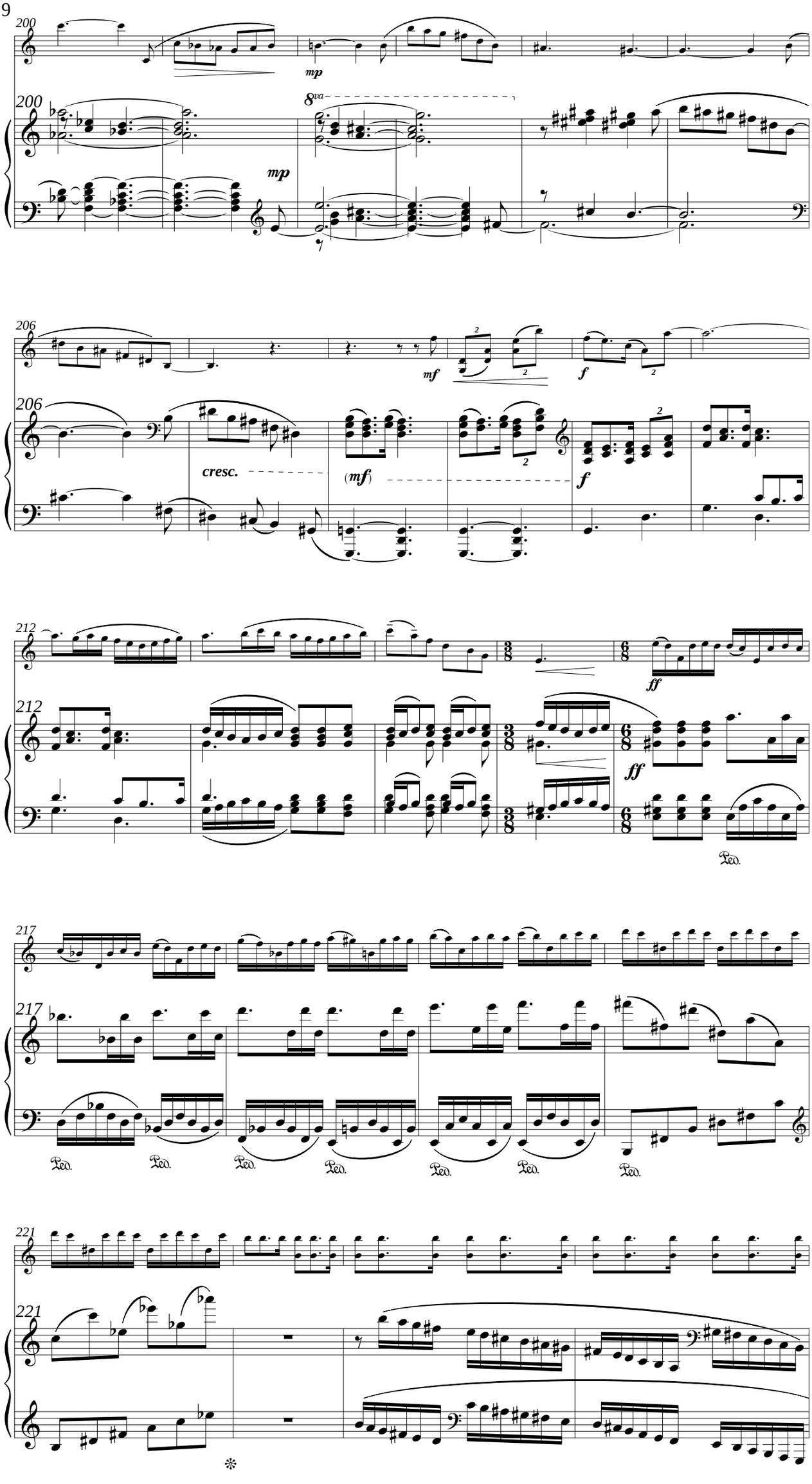

171
171
Ped.

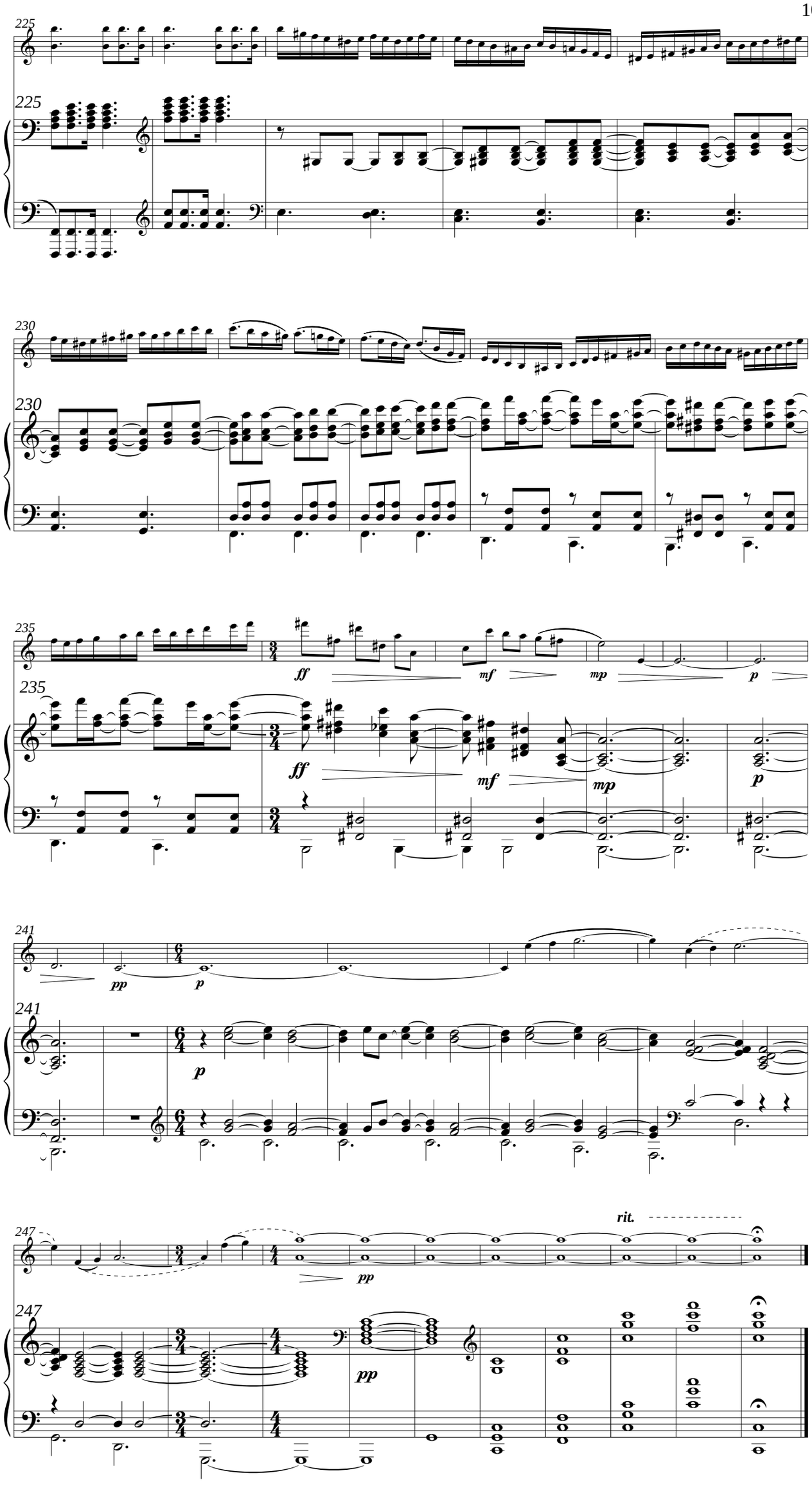

176
mf cresc.
ff
176
mf cresc.
ff
Ped.


180
GP
p
180
GP
p


186
mp cresc.
mf
186
mp cresc.
mf


193
193


200
mp
8va
mp
206
mf
f
cresc.
(mf)
f
212
ff
ff
Ped.
217
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
221

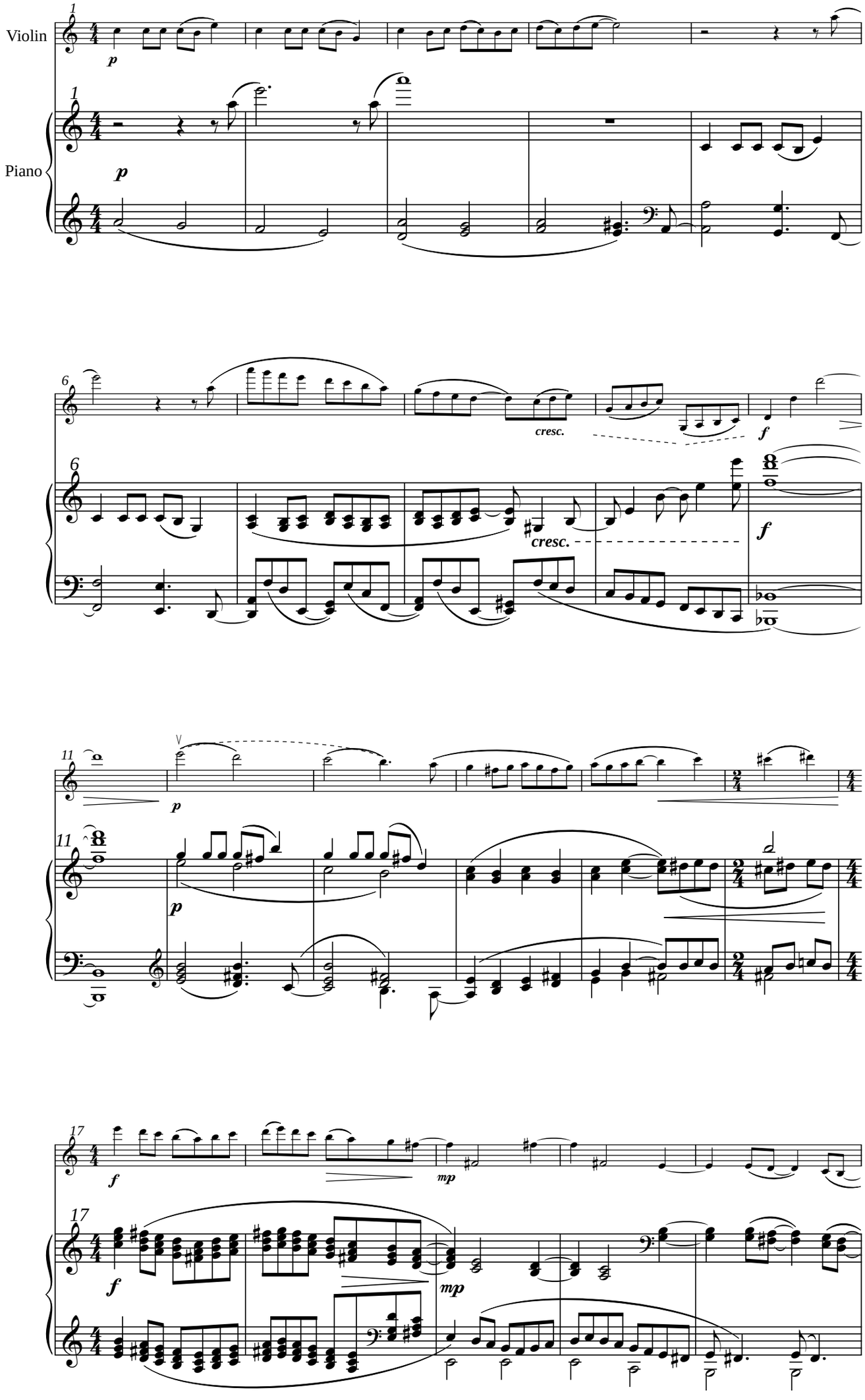

225
225
230
230
235
235
ff
mf
mp
p
241
241
pp
p
247
247
rit.
pp

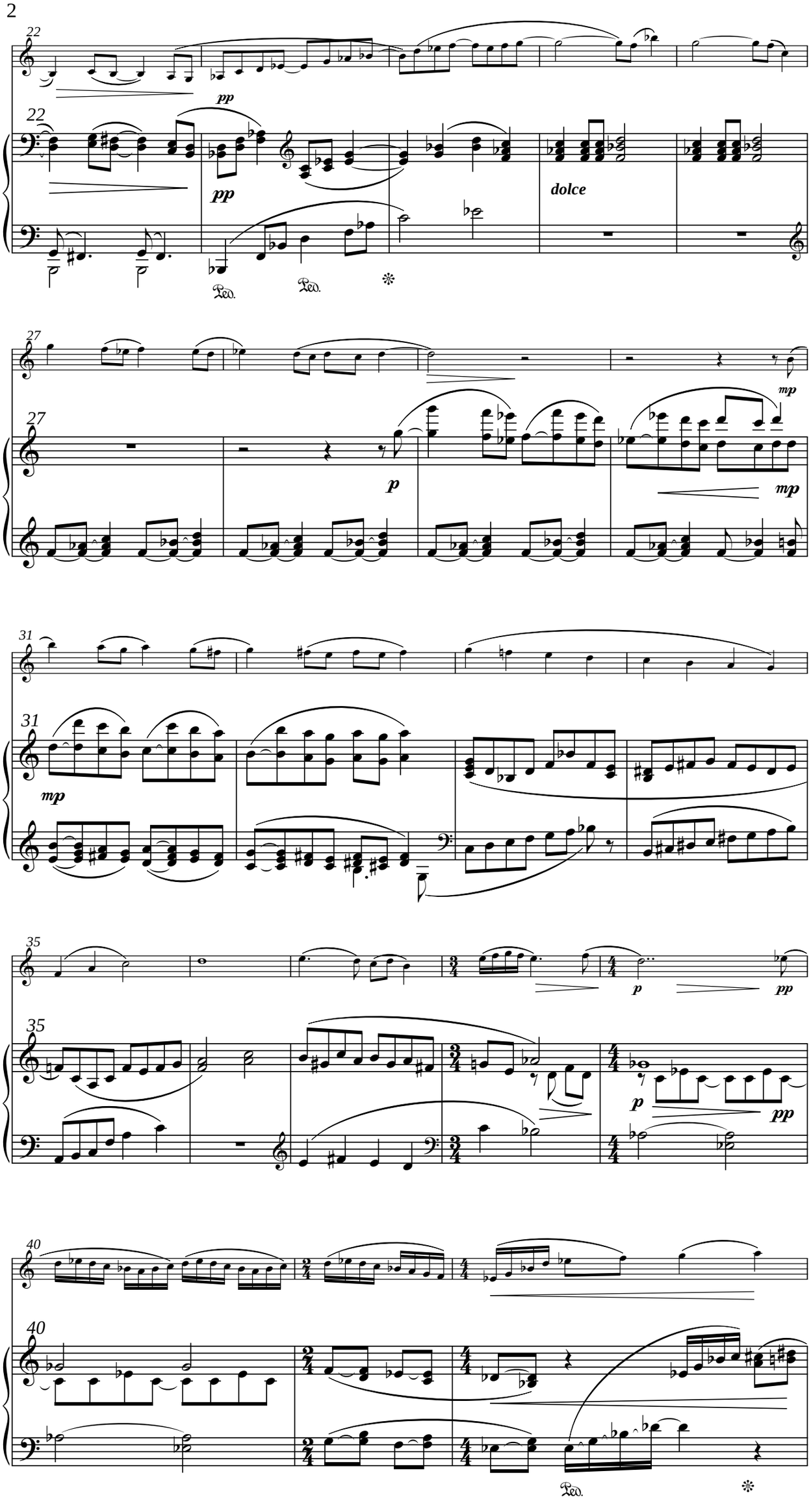
Diatonic Phrigian Tetrachord

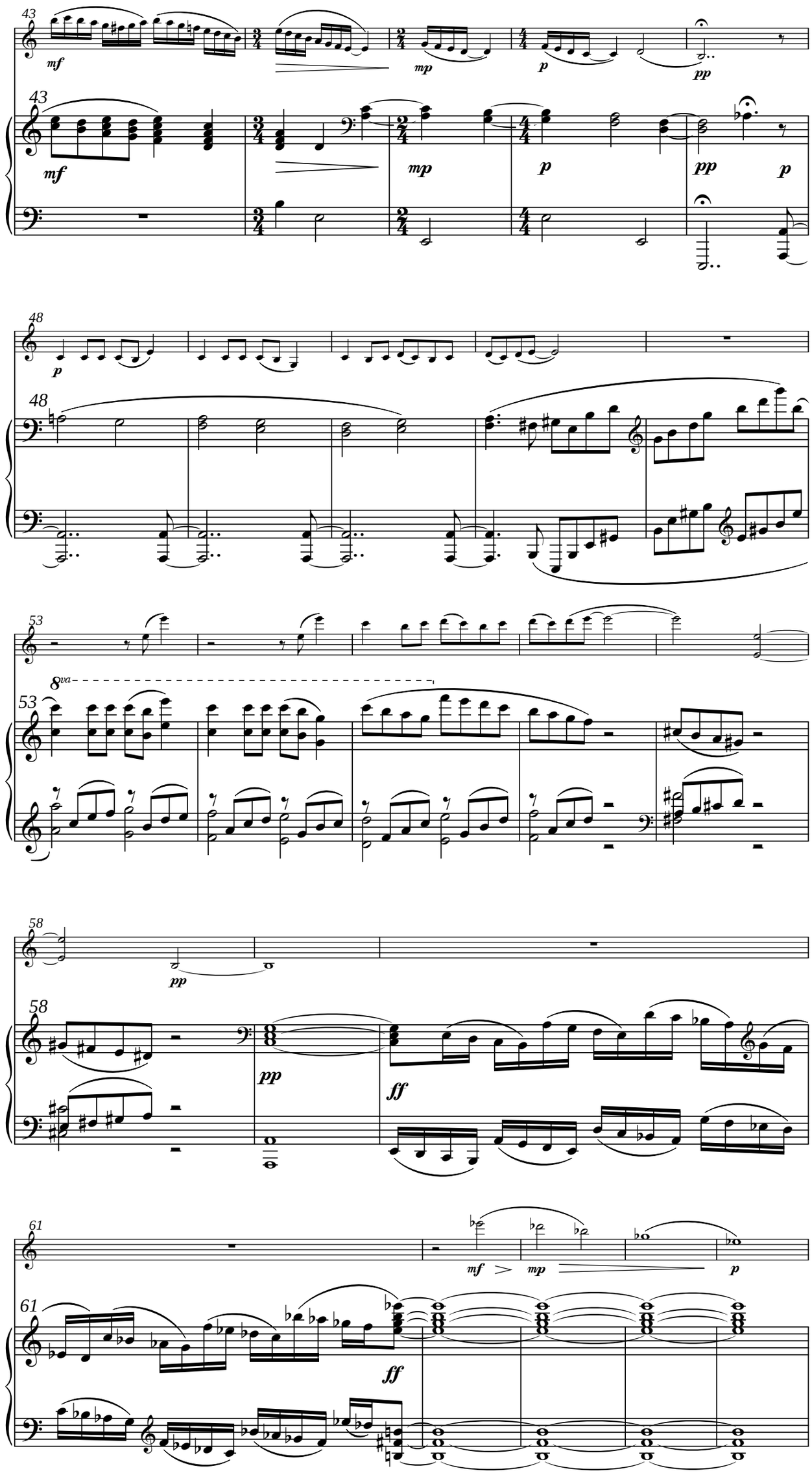
[7:50]

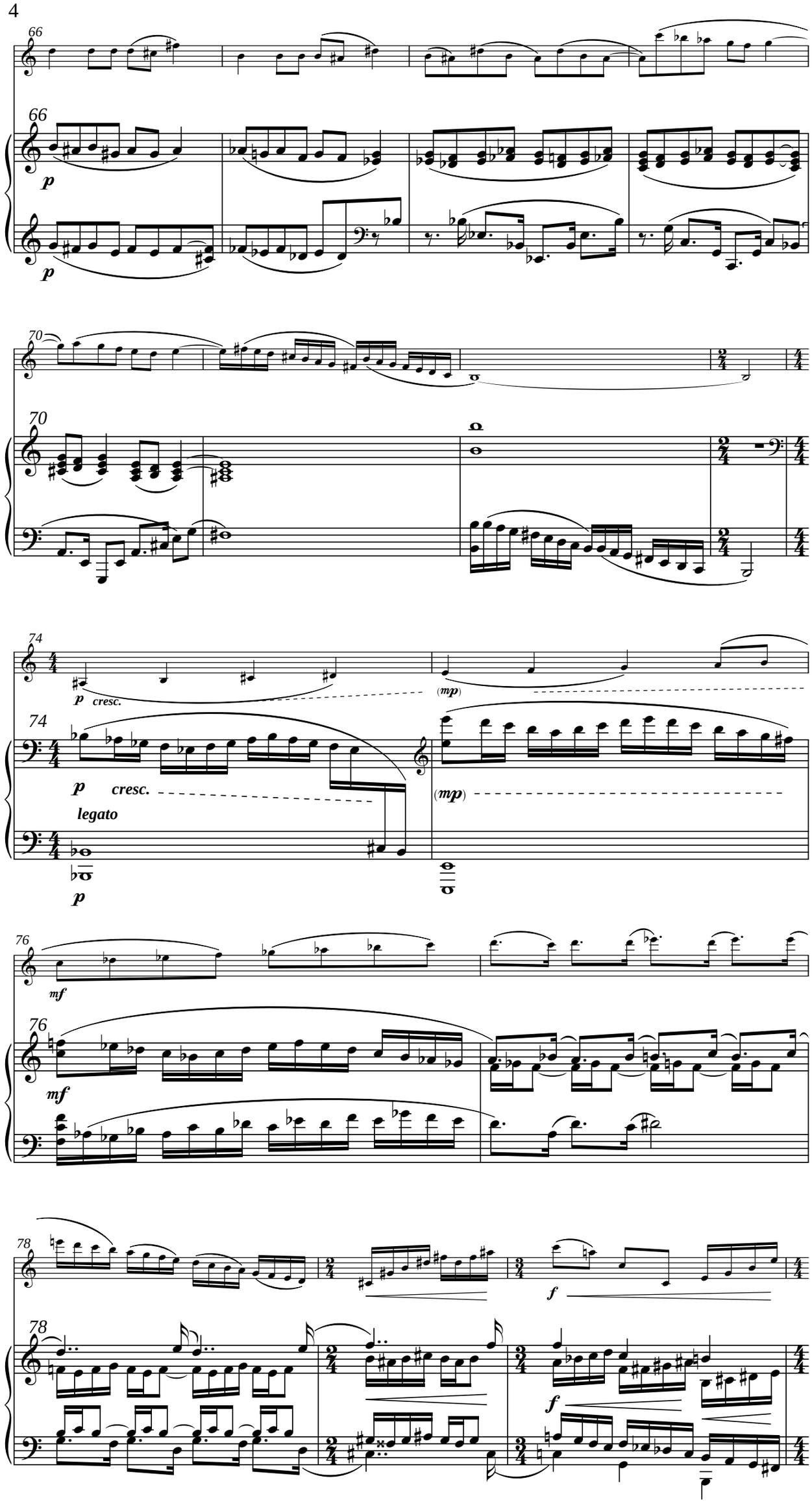
Bill Robinson

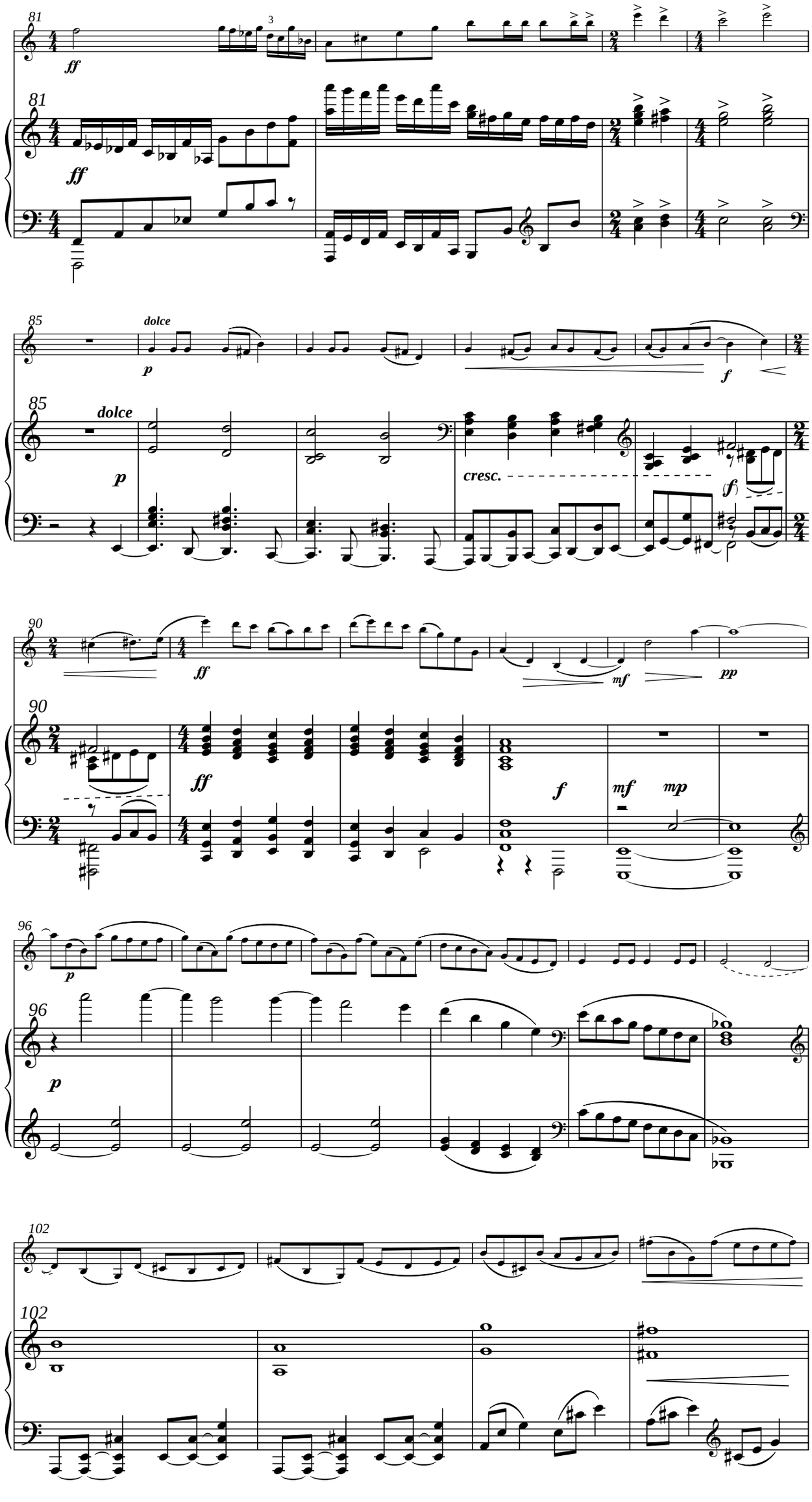
Adagio andalusia (♩ = 74)

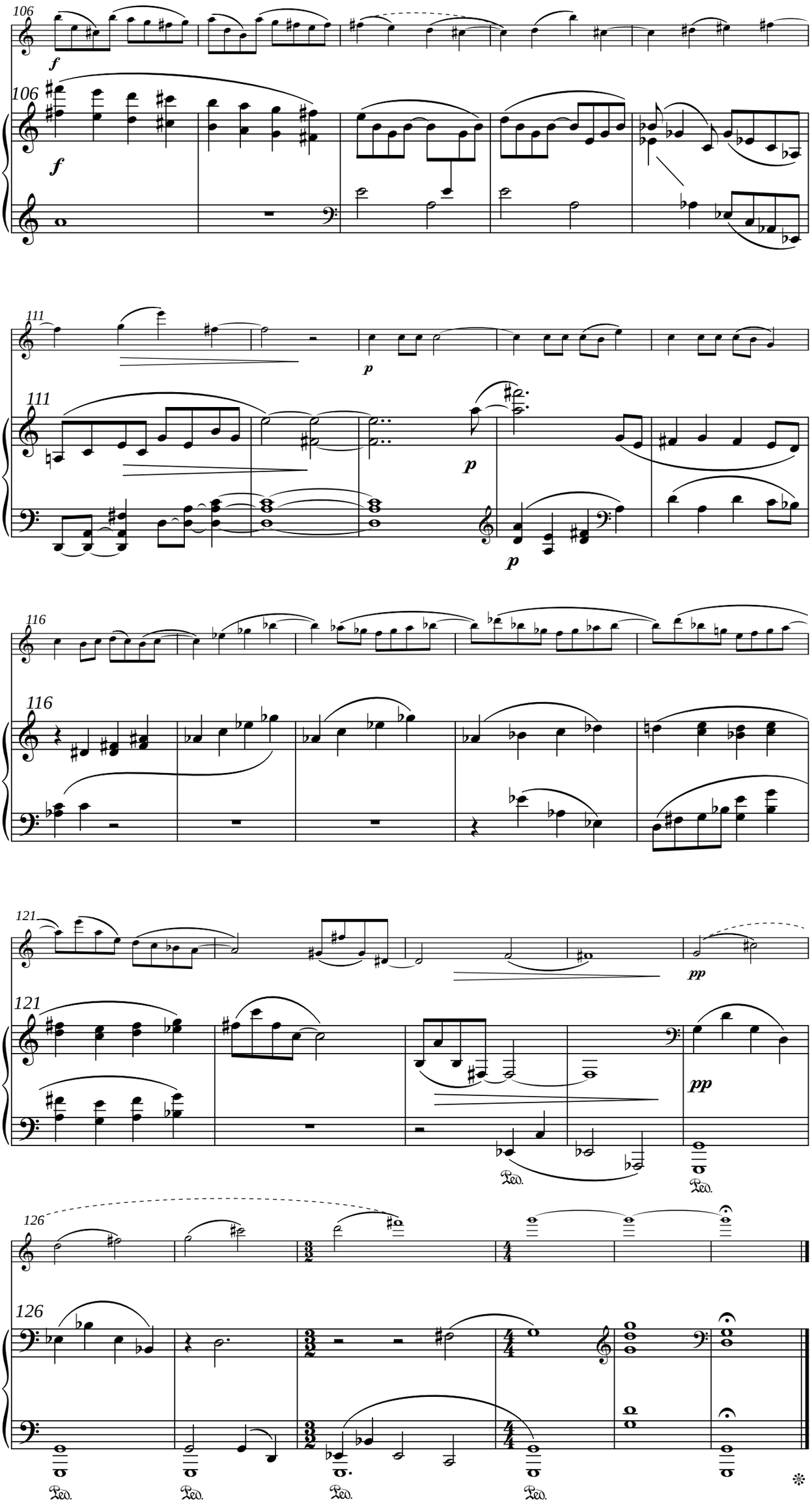



22
pp
22
pp
dolce
Ped.
Ped.
27
27
p
mp
mp
31
31
mp
35
35
p
pp
p
pp
40
40
Ped.


43
mf
mp
p
pp
48
53
8va
58
61


66
p
70
74
p cresc.
(mp)
p cresc.
legato
(mp)
p
76
mf
mf
78
f
f


81
ff
81
ff
85
dolce
p
85
dolce
p
cresc.
f
90
ff
90
ff
f
mf
mp
96
p
96
p
102
102

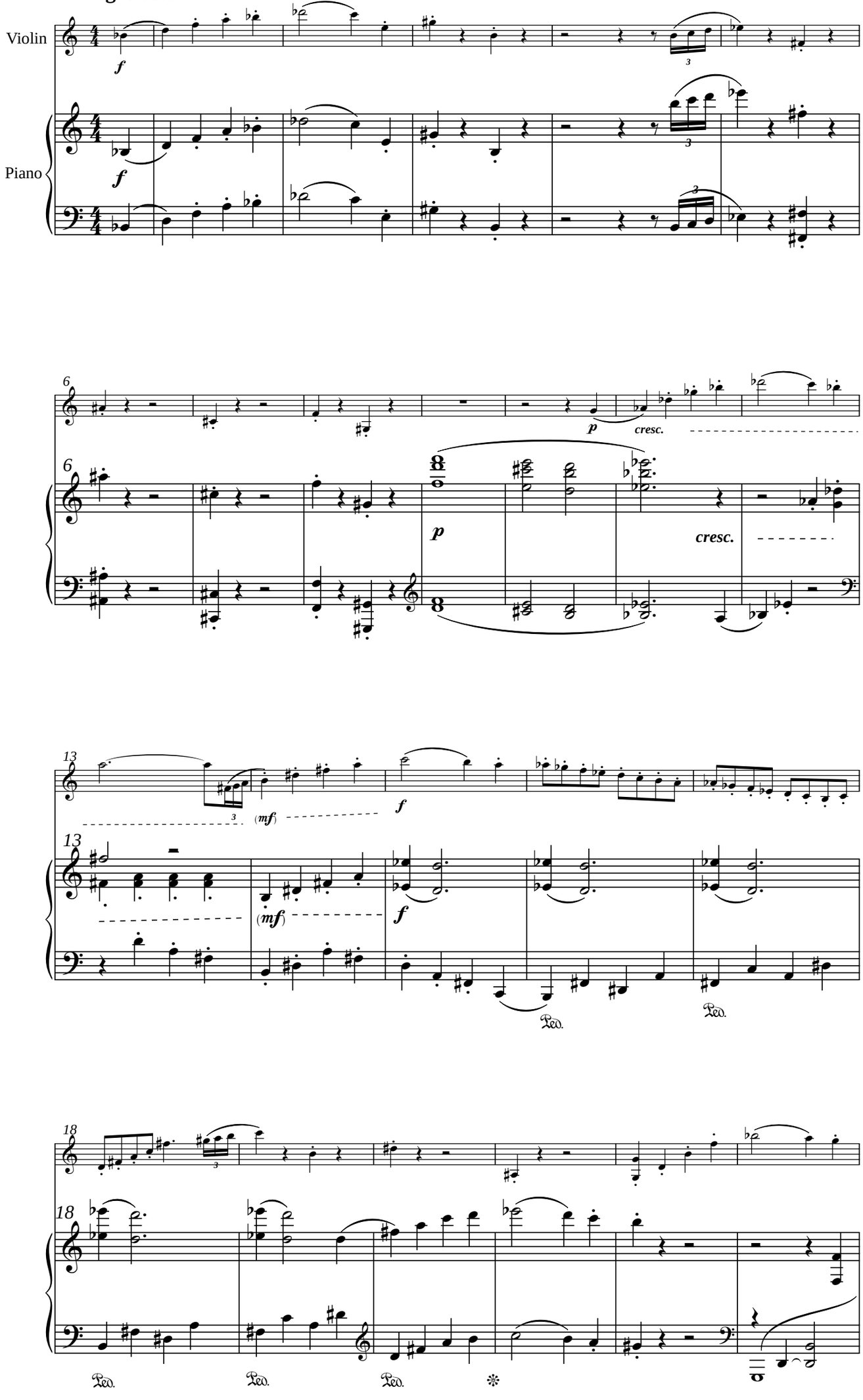

106
f
106
f
111
p
111
p
p
116
116
121
pp
121
pp
Ped.
Ped.
126
126
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

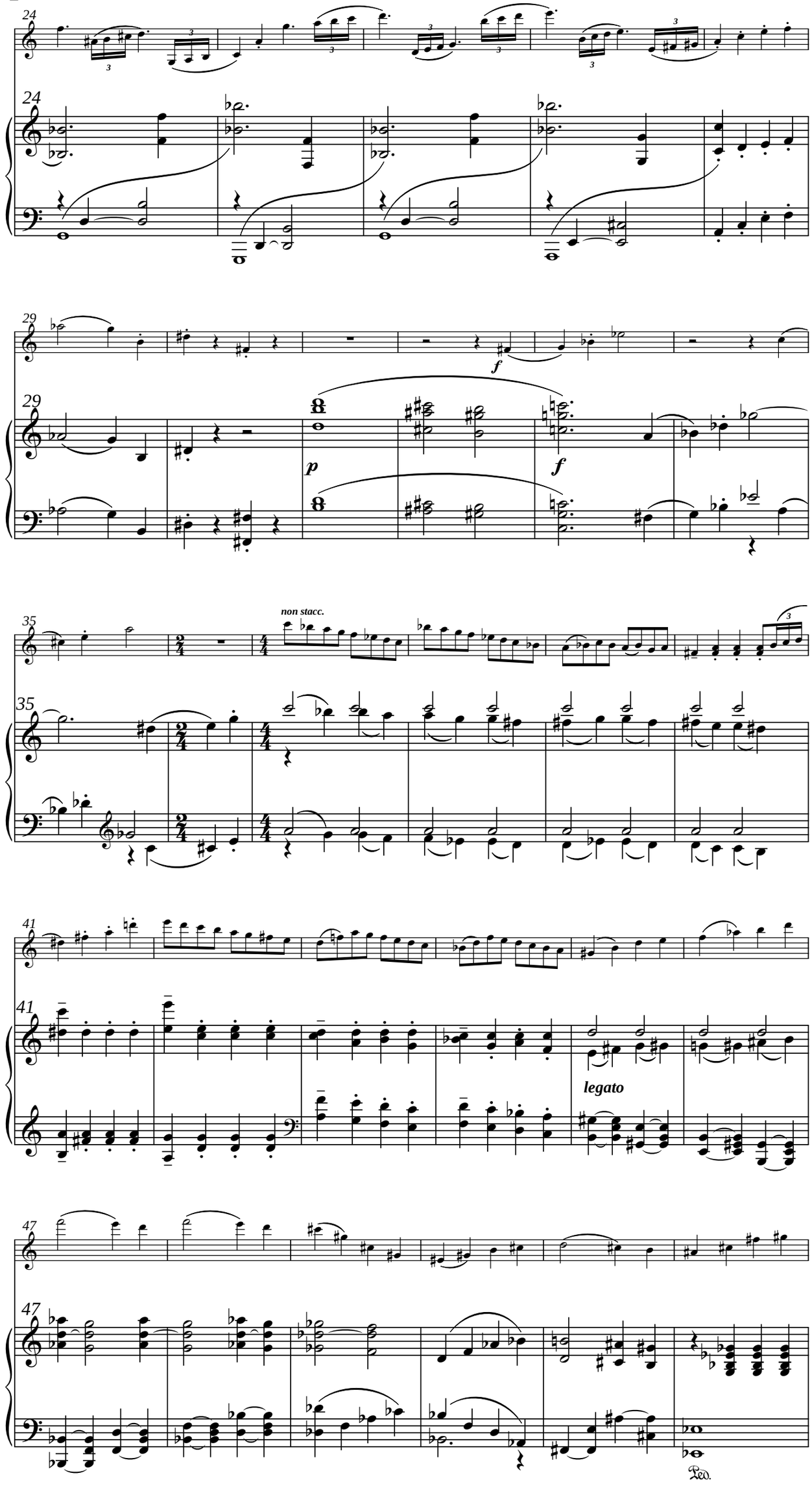
Mozart's Twelve-Tone Row

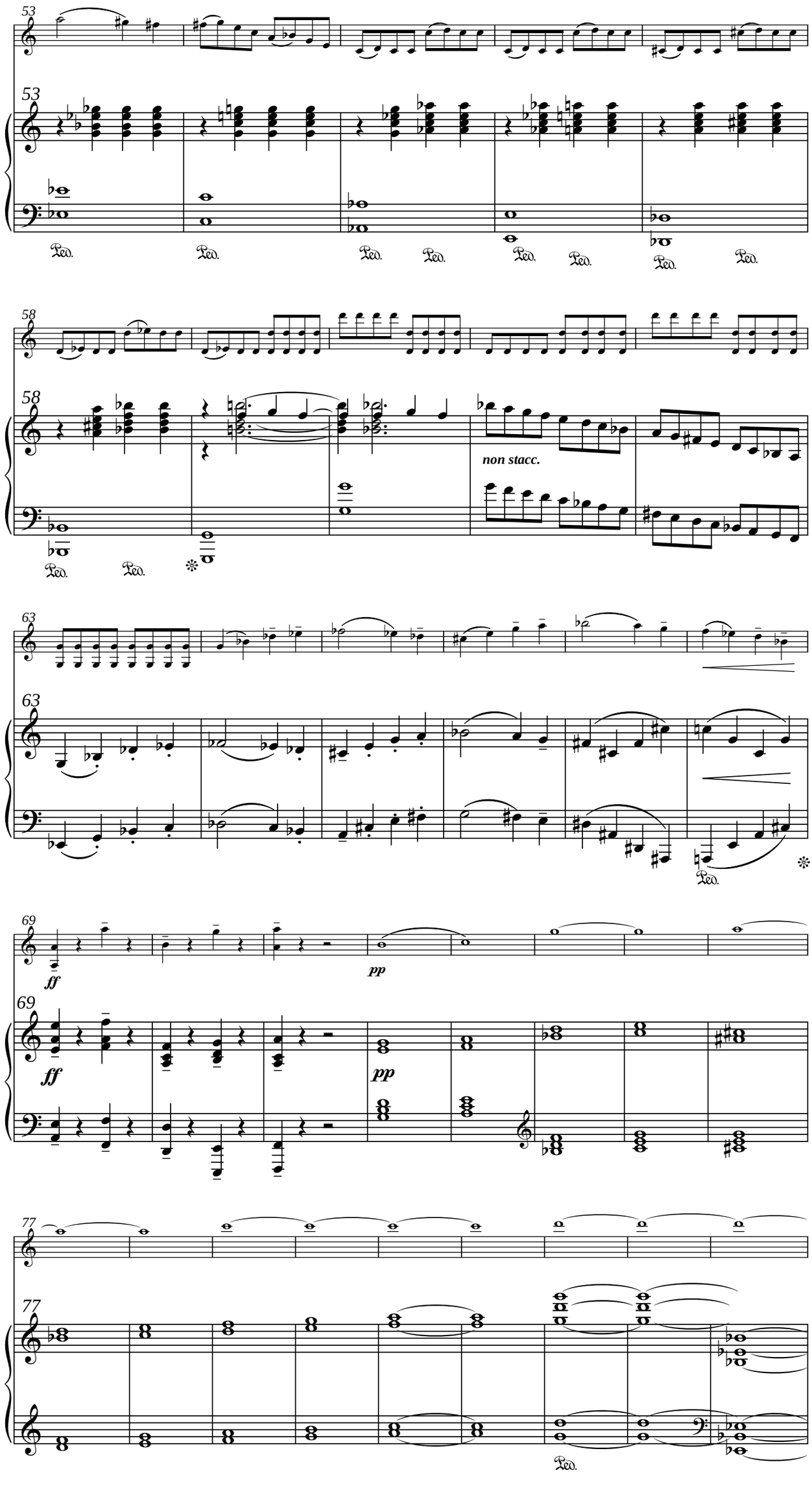
[6:14]

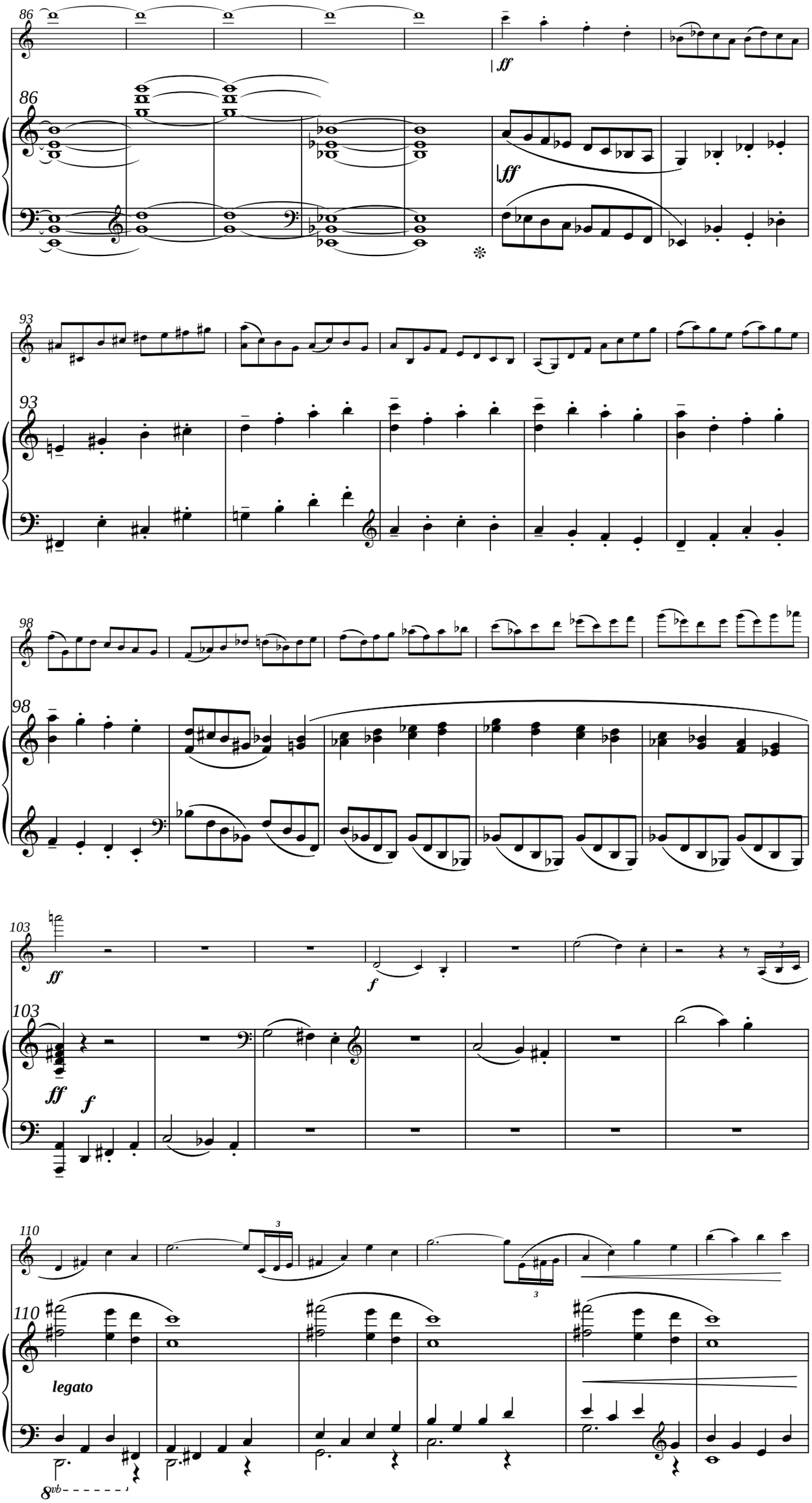
Allegro assai (𝅗𝅥 = 116)

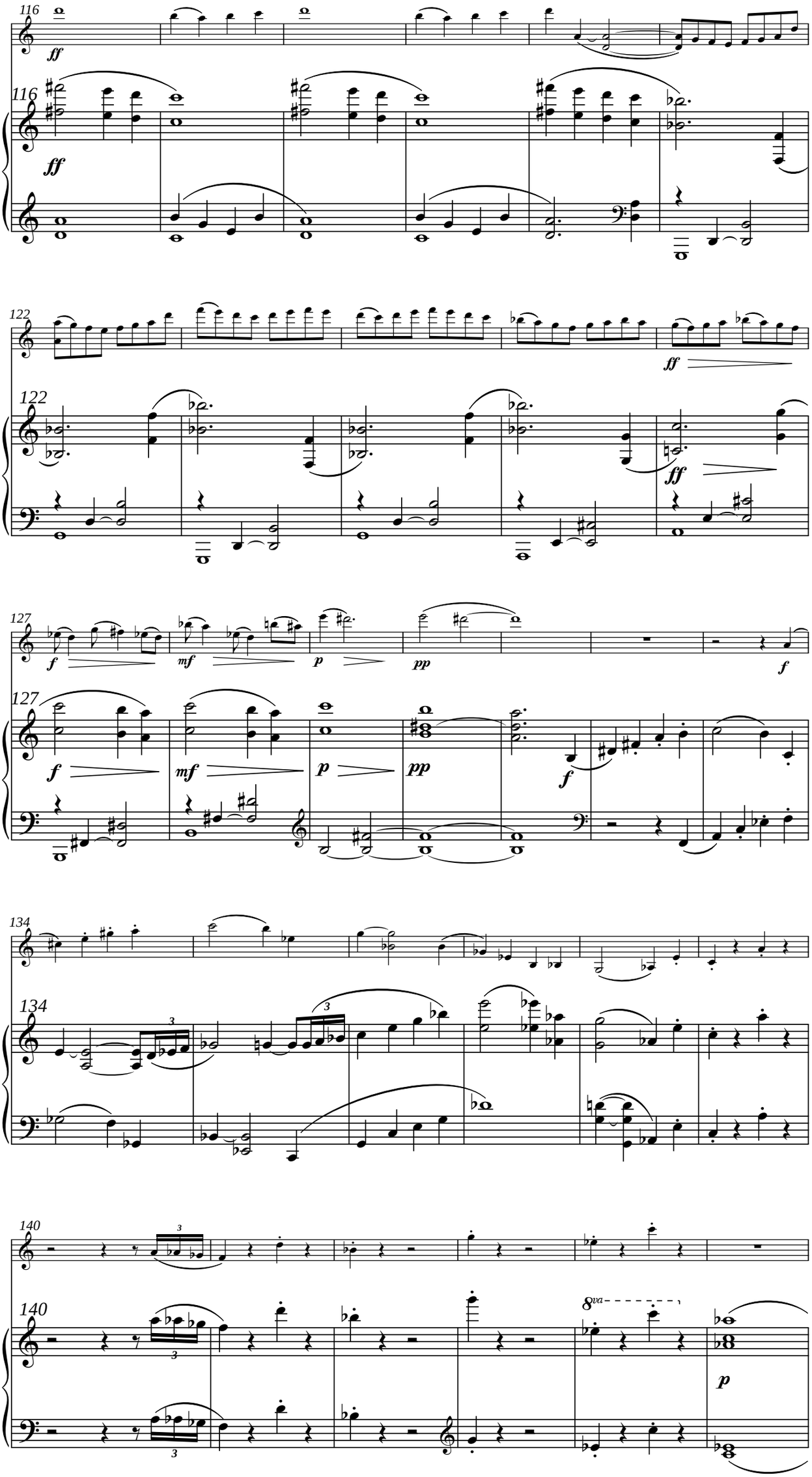
Bill Robinson

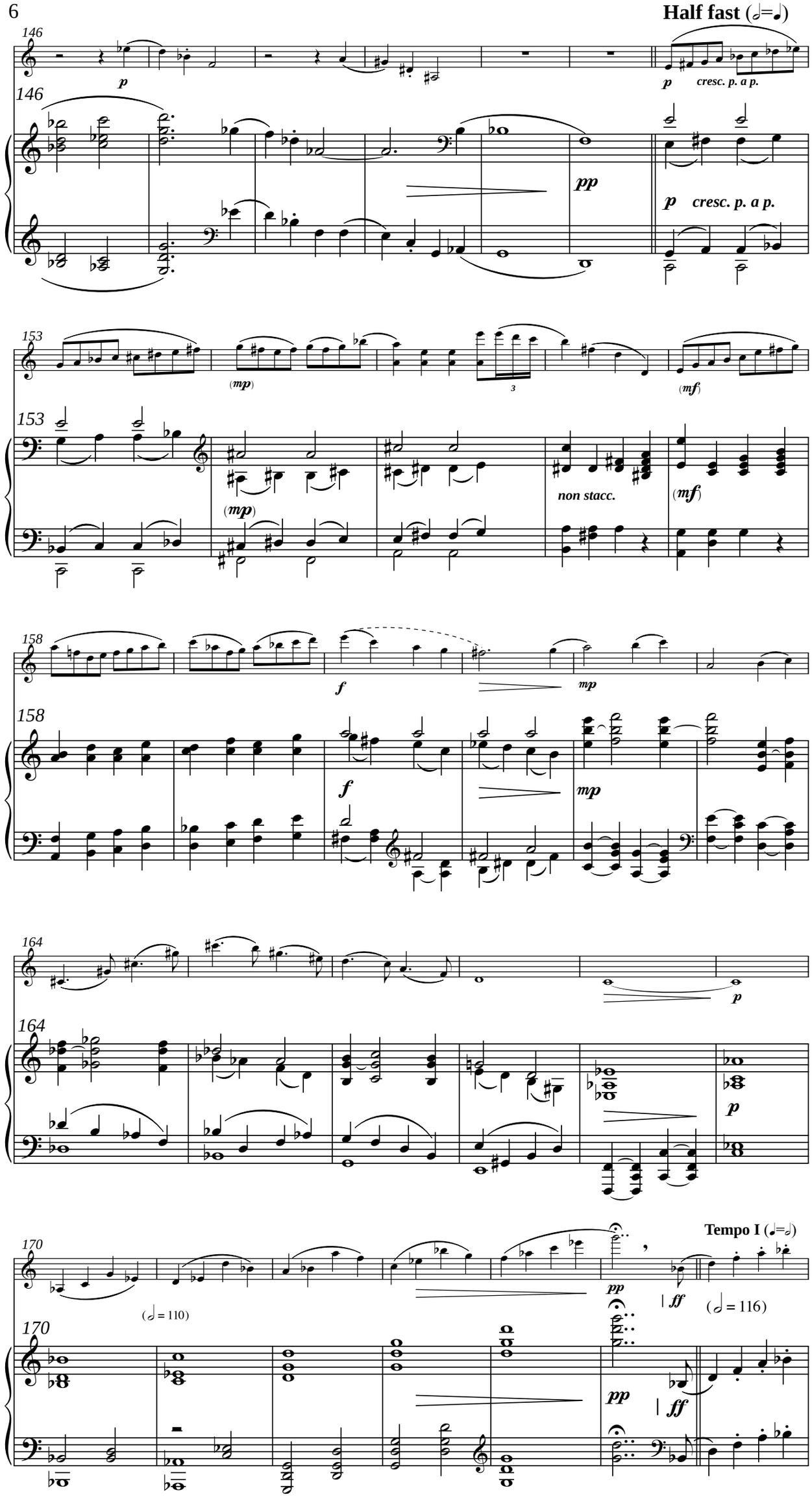


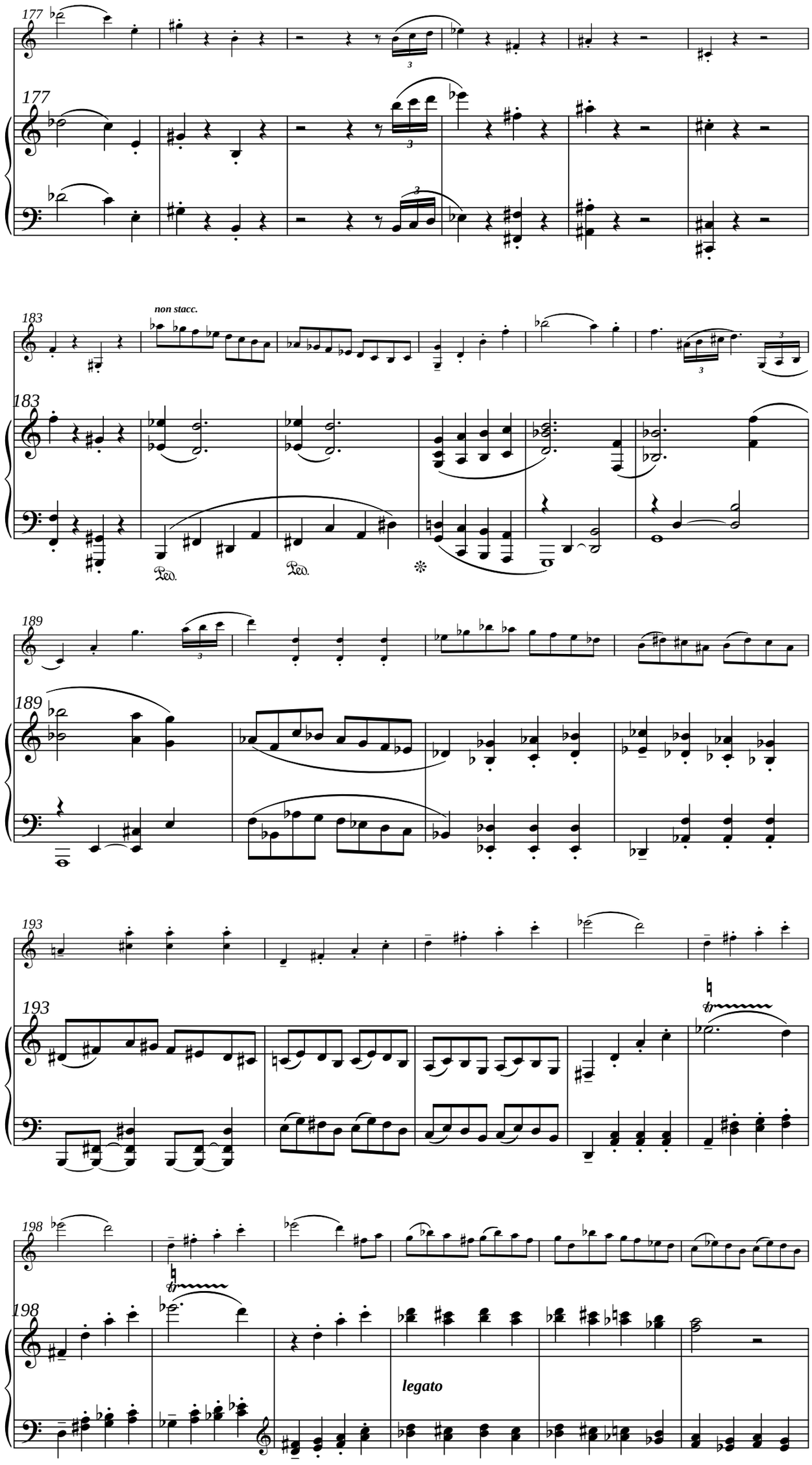

24
29
f
p
f
35
non stacc.
41
legato
47
Ped.

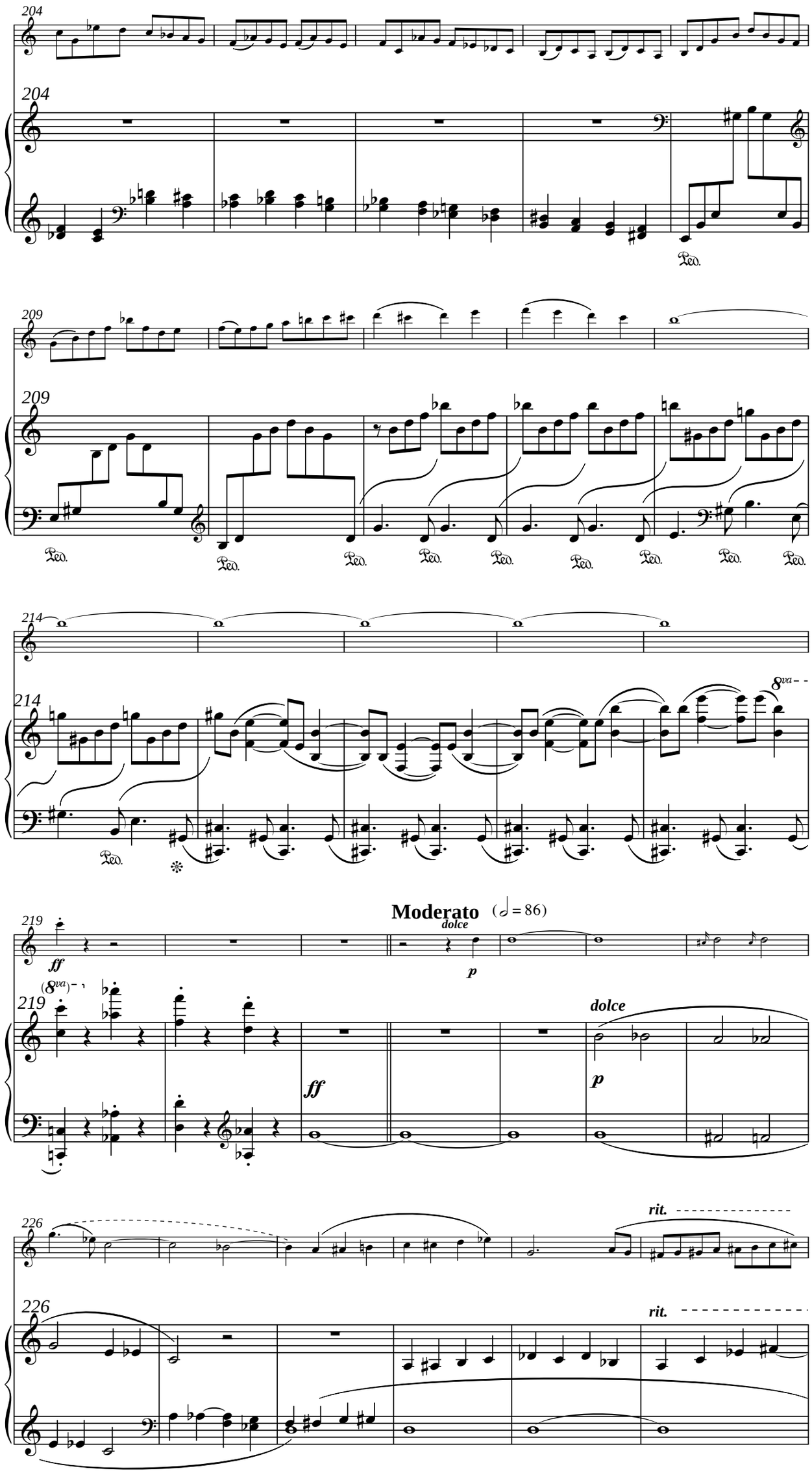

53
53
Ped.
58
58
non stacc.
Ped.
63
63
Ped.
69
69
ff
pp
77
77
Ped.

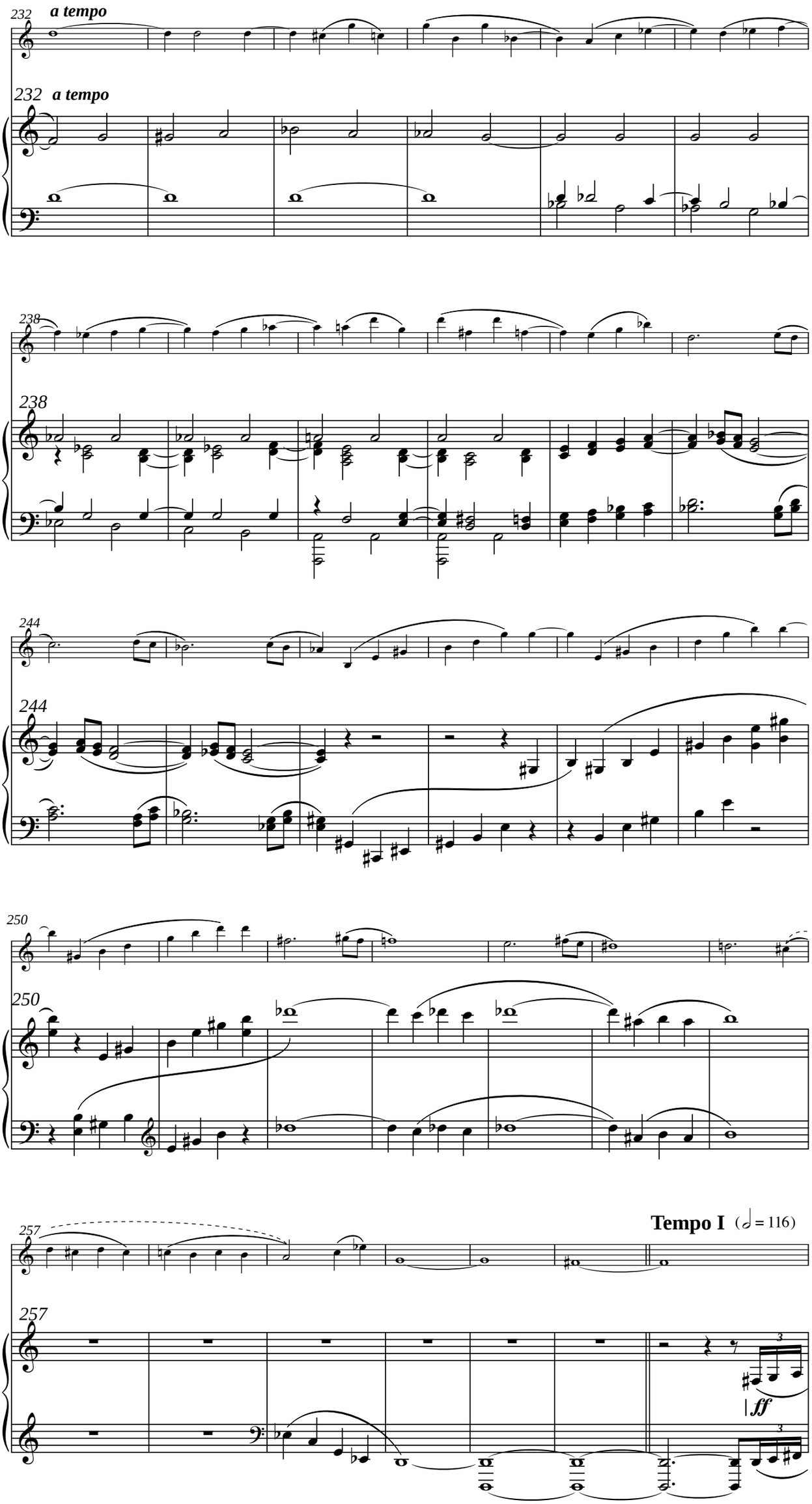

86
ff
86
ff
93
93
98
98
103
ff
f
103
ff
f
110
110
legato
8vb

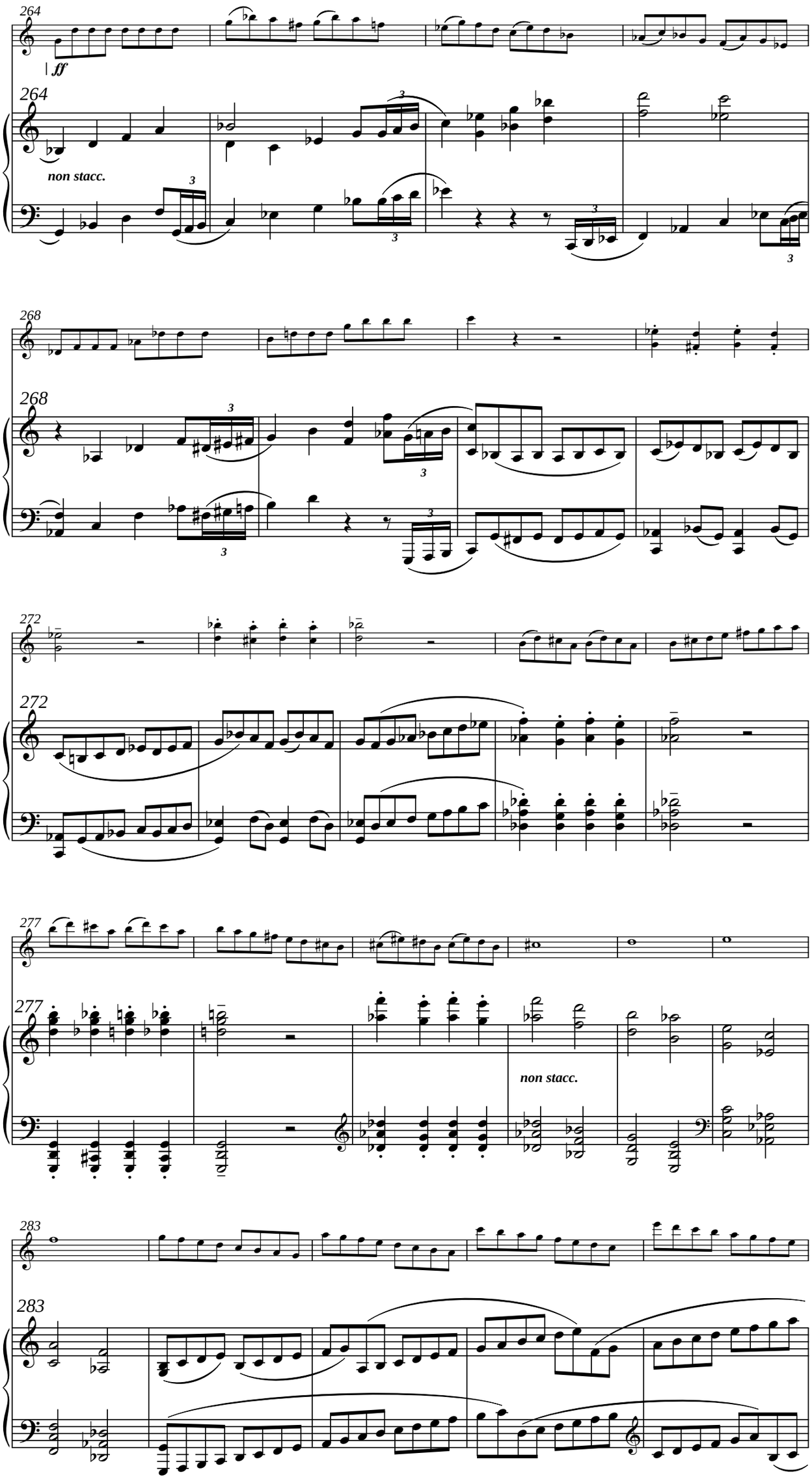

116
ff
116
ff
122
ff
122
ff
127
f
mf
p
pp
f
127
f
mf
p
pp
f
134
134
140
140
8va
p

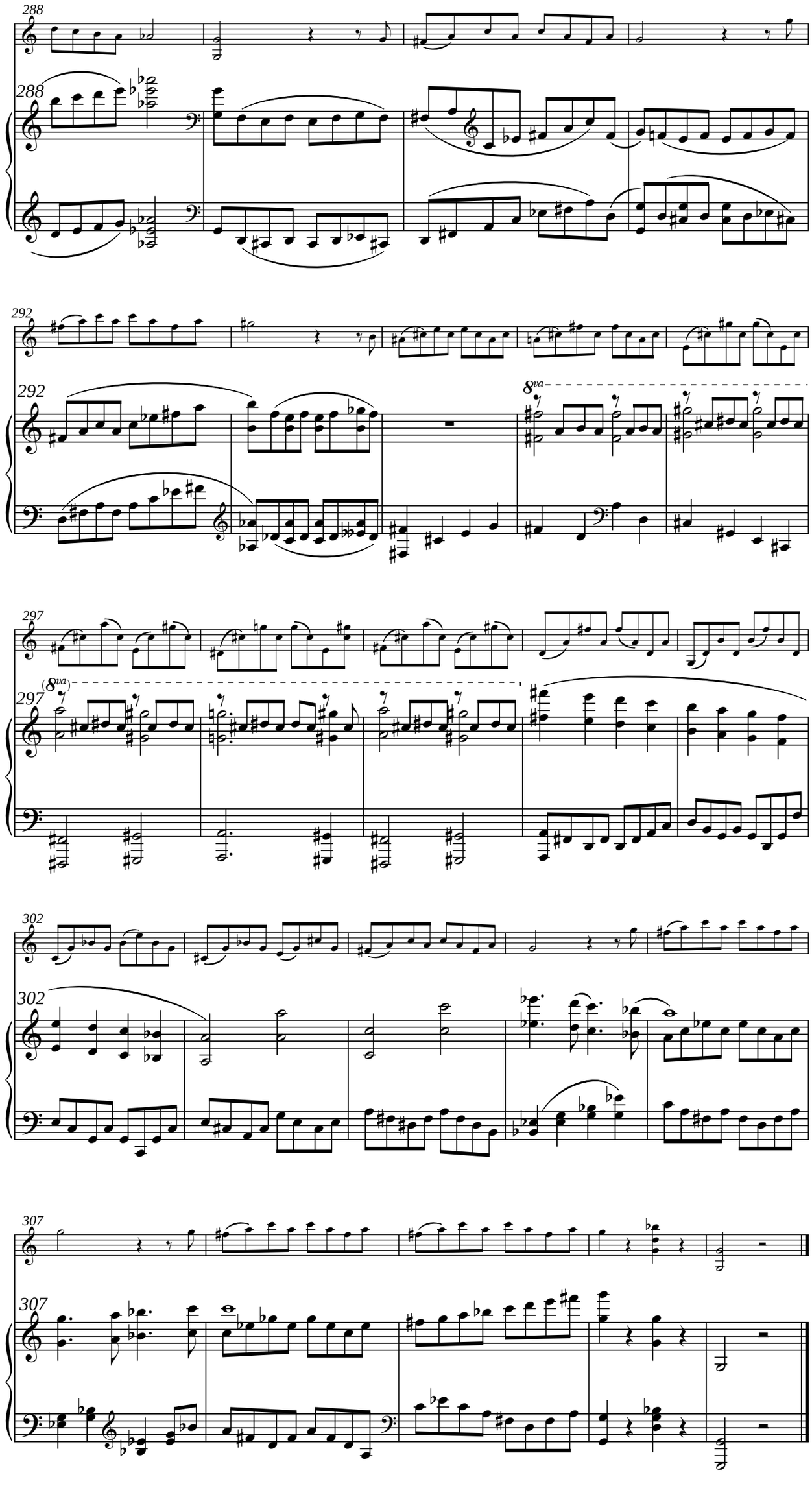

Half fast (𝅗𝅥=♩)
146
p
cresc. p. a p.
pp
153
(mp)
(mf)
non stacc.
158
f
mp
164
p
170
(𝅗𝅥 = 110)
pp
ff
Tempo I (♩=𝅗𝅥)
(𝅗𝅥 = 116)


177
177
183
non stacc.
183
Ped.
Ped.
189
189
193
193
198
198
legato


204
209
214
219
226
Moderato
(𝅗𝅥 = 86)
dolce
ff
p
rit.
8va
(8va)


232 a tempo
232 a tempo
238
238
244
244
250
250
257
Tempo I (𝅗𝅥 = 116)
257
ff


264
ff
264
non stacc.
268
268
272
272
277
277
non stacc.
283
283


288
288
292
292
8va
297
297
8va
302
302
307
307