JOHN SYKES

Sonata for

Violoncello and Piano

in G minor

The JOHN SYKES PROJECT

MMXIII

John Austin Sykes (1909 – 1962)

John Sykes was born in India in 1909 - in India because his father was in the Indian civil service. Back in England he won a music scholarship to Clifton College, Bristol, and whilst still a schoolboy gained his A.R.C.O. and F.R.C.O. In 1928 he went up to Oxford as organ scholar at Balliol. In those days, undergraduates were not able to read Music as a first degree, so Sykes read Modern History, and followed it up with a B.Mus. One contemporary source considered him to have been the most distinguished musical undergraduate of his time. He was president of the famous Oxford University Opera Club and active in the Music Club and Union. He was sufficiently important to be given a full-page spread in the undergraduate newspaper 'Isis' – which referred to his ability to 'make a piano do anything but swim'. He was a friend of the left-wing poet Randall Swingler, and also a contemporary of W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender and C. Day Lewis, whom he knew, so it is perhaps not surprising that he was a fluent, though not distinguished, poet. After Oxford, he went to London, to the Royal College of Music, where he studied composition under Ralph Vaughan Williams, R. O. Morris and Gordon Jacob. In 1936 he was appointed to the staff of Kingswood School, and there he stayed, except for war service, until he died of cancer in the school Sanatorium in the summer term of 1962.

The John Sykes Project is an informal group of former pupils who are transcribing and publishing his music on the internet, and encouraging its performance.

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Sonata for Violoncello and Piano in G minor

I	Andante moderato - - -	1
II	Allegro vivo - - - -	4
III	Moderato - - - -	15

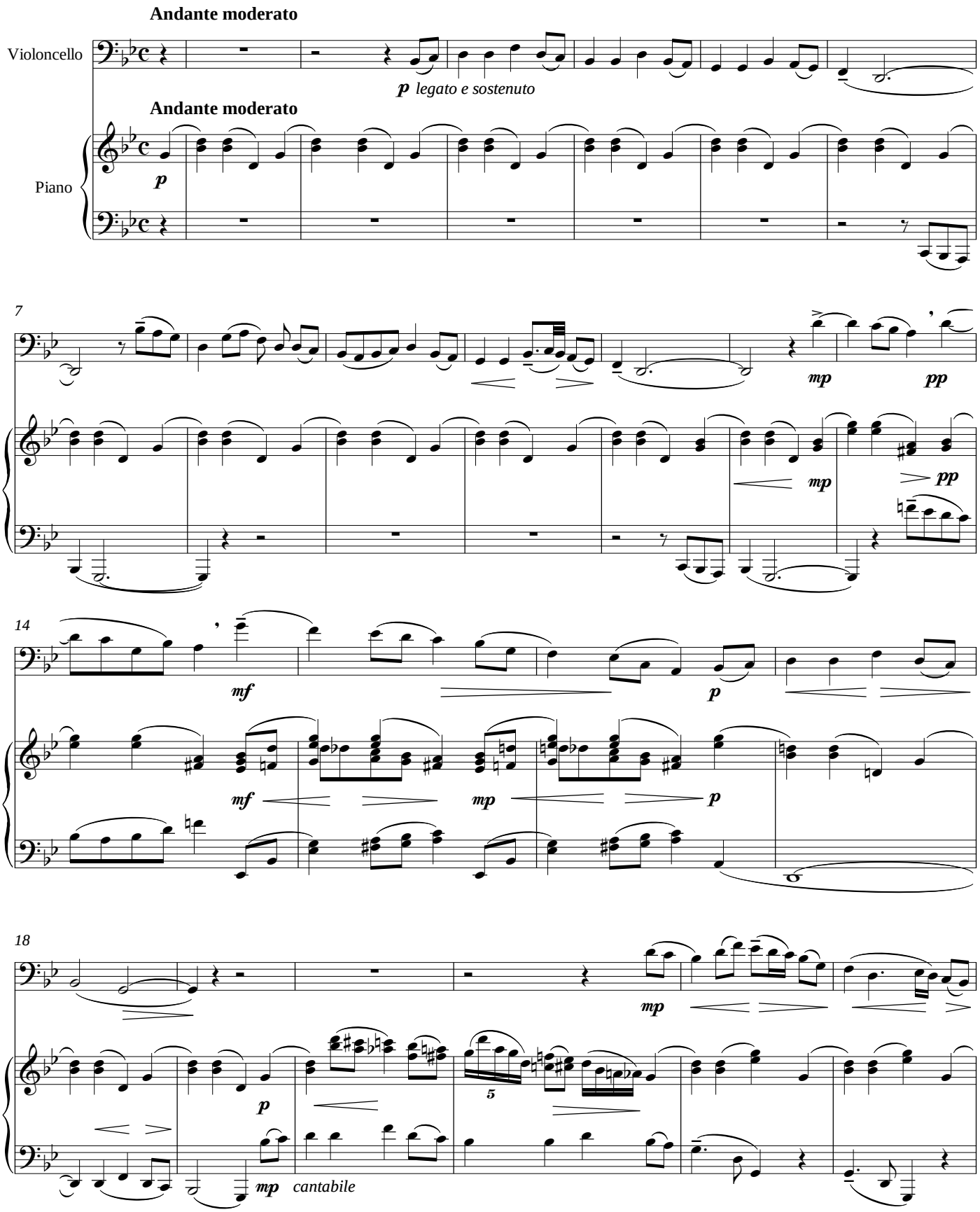
This sonata, which is John Sykes' second work for 'cello and piano, was composed over October and November 1942, while the composer was serving as a conscientious objector in the Pioneer Corps. (His first 'cello sonata was written in 1928 and is written in one continuous movement.) Writing this must have been a great relief from working on building sewers and such like.
It makes a good companion piece to his Violin Sonata with many similarities in style, and like that sonata makes good use of the instrument's capabilities.

P.J.C. May 2013

Sonata in G minor for 'Cello and Piano

John Sykes

I



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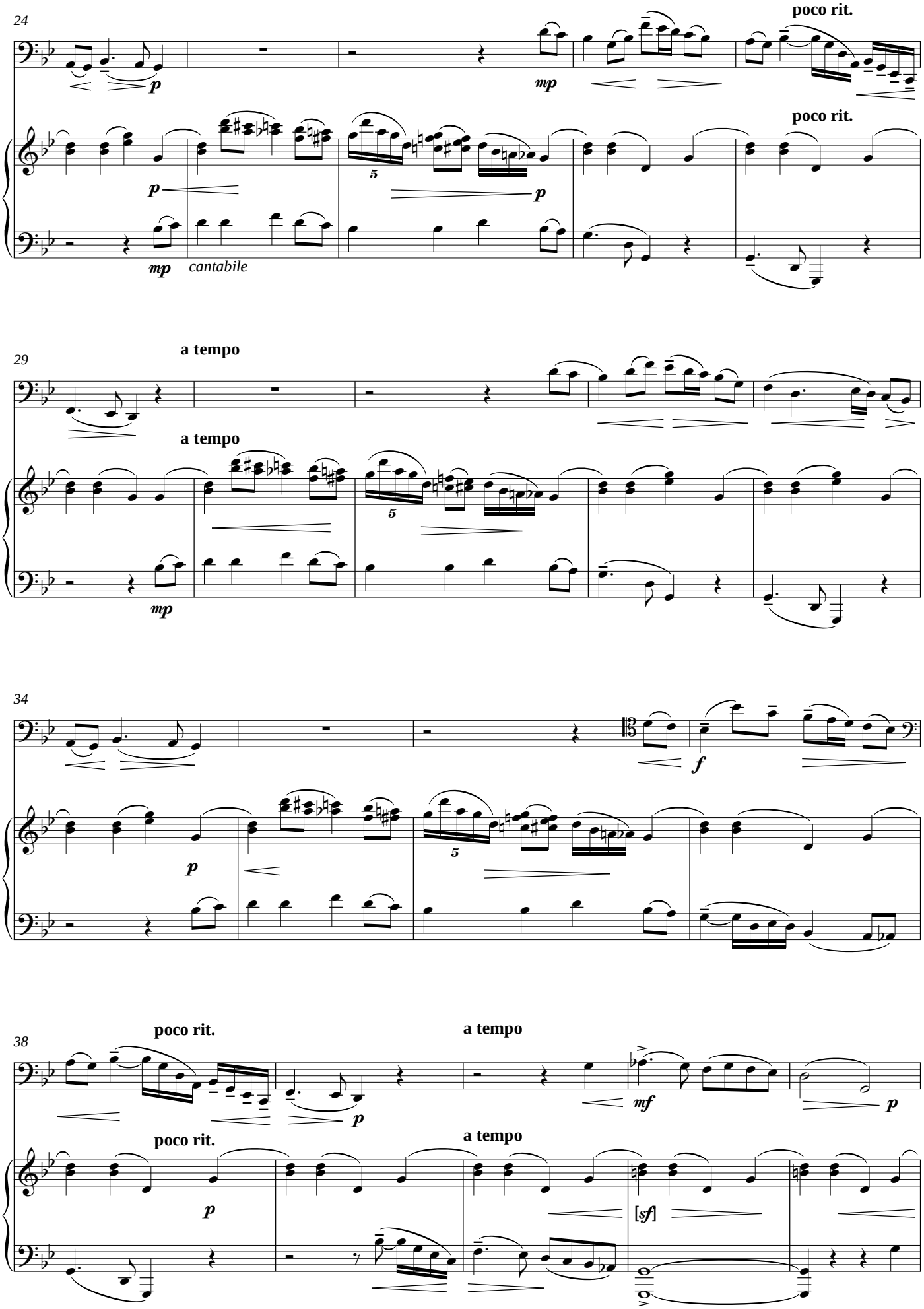
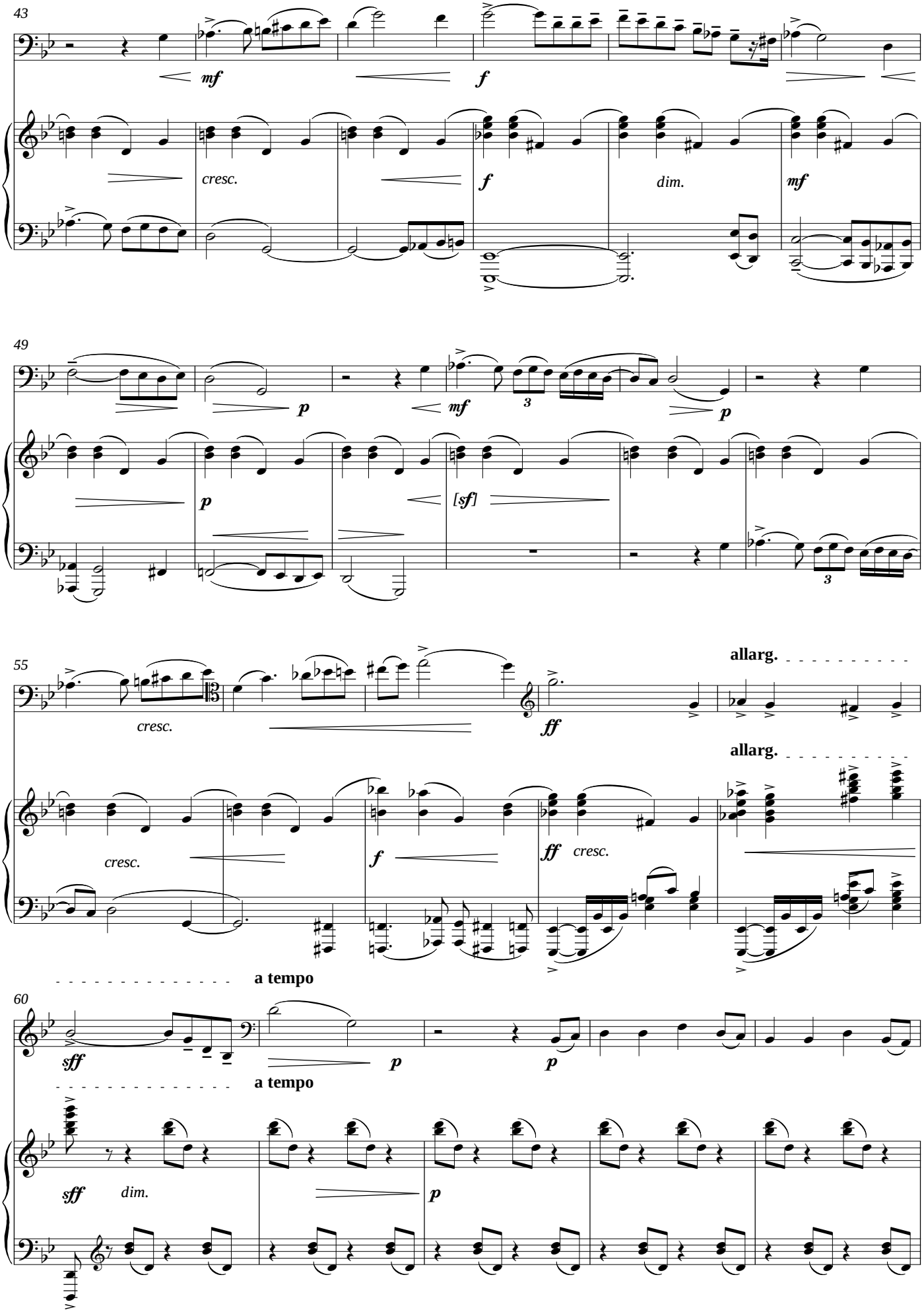
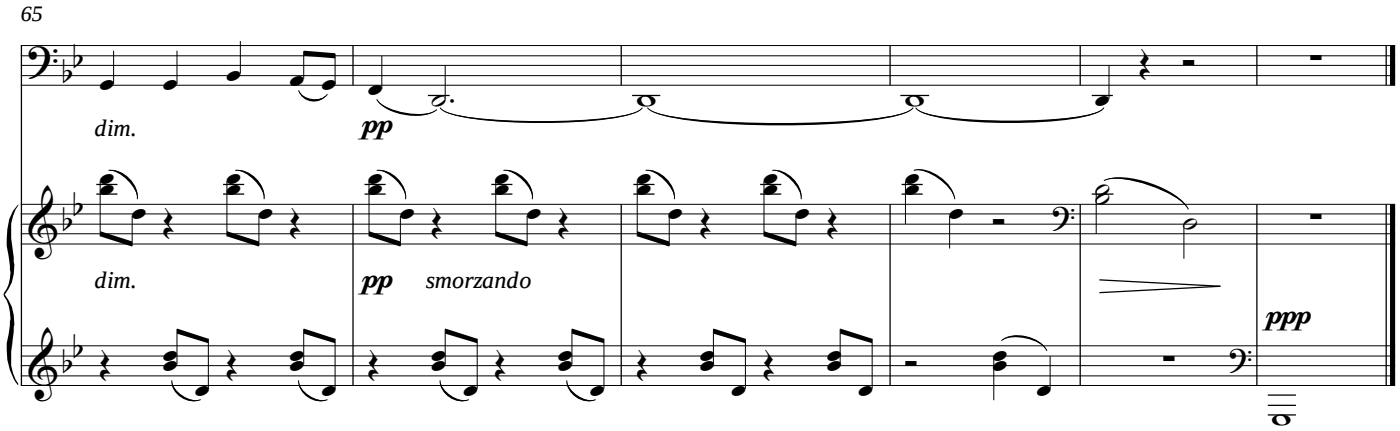
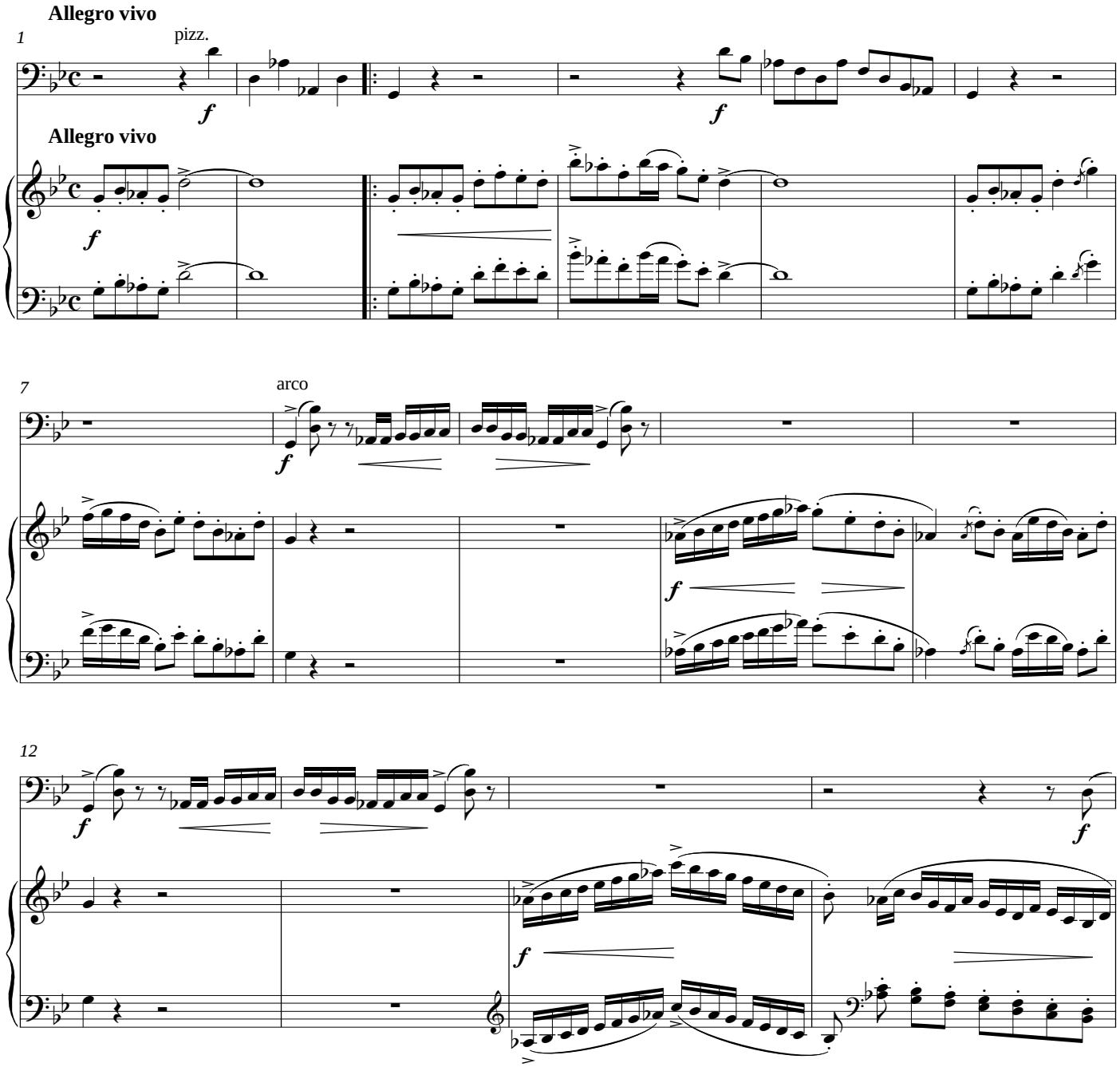
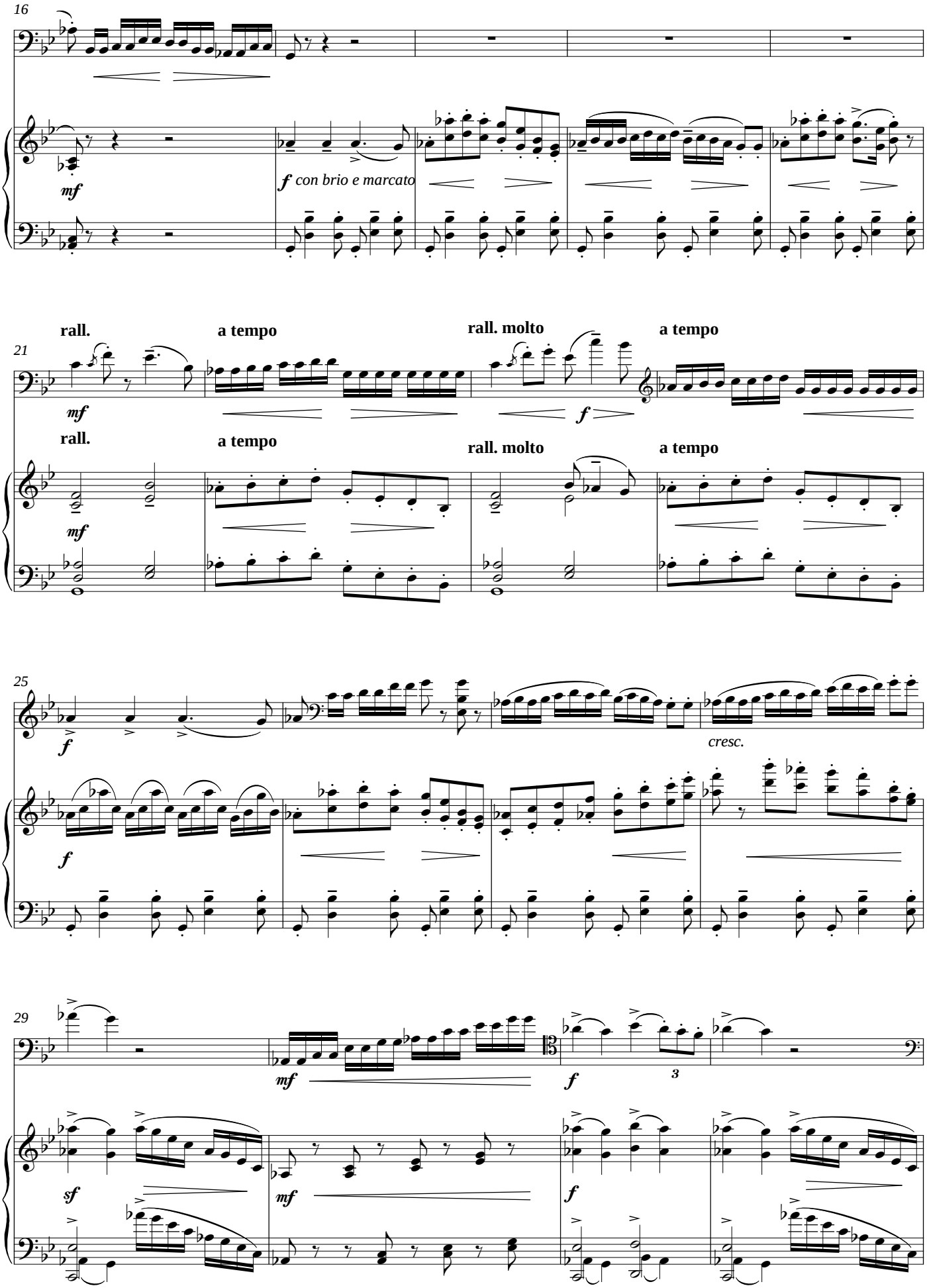

24
poco rit.
poco rit.
cantabile
29
a tempo
a tempo
34
38
poco rit.
a tempo
poco rit.
a tempo

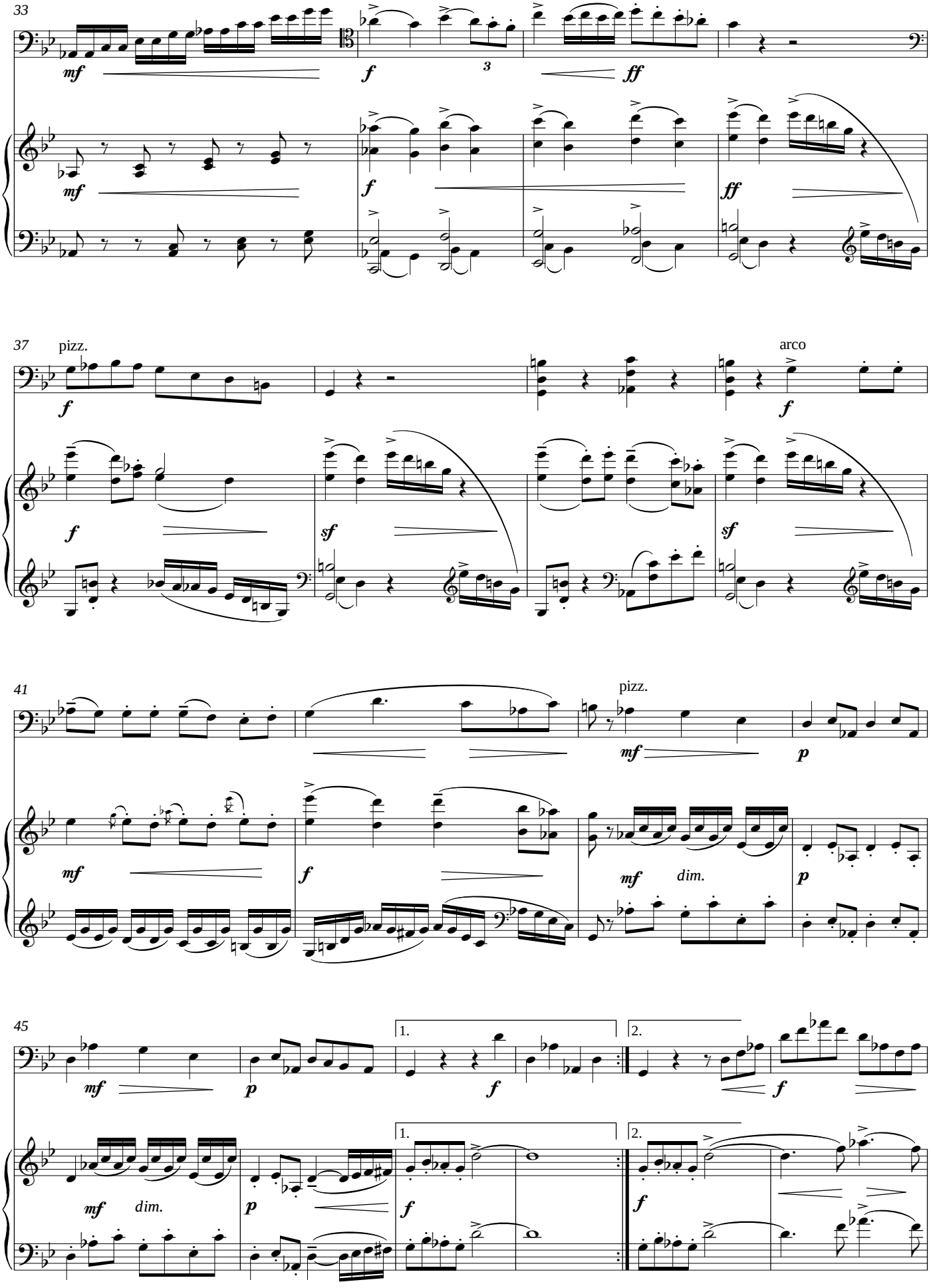

43
mf
f
cresc.
f
dim.
mf
49
p
mf
3
p
p
[sf]
3
55
allarg.
cresc.
ff
allarg.
cresc.
f
ff
cresc.
a tempo
60
sff
p
p
a tempo
sff
dim.
p

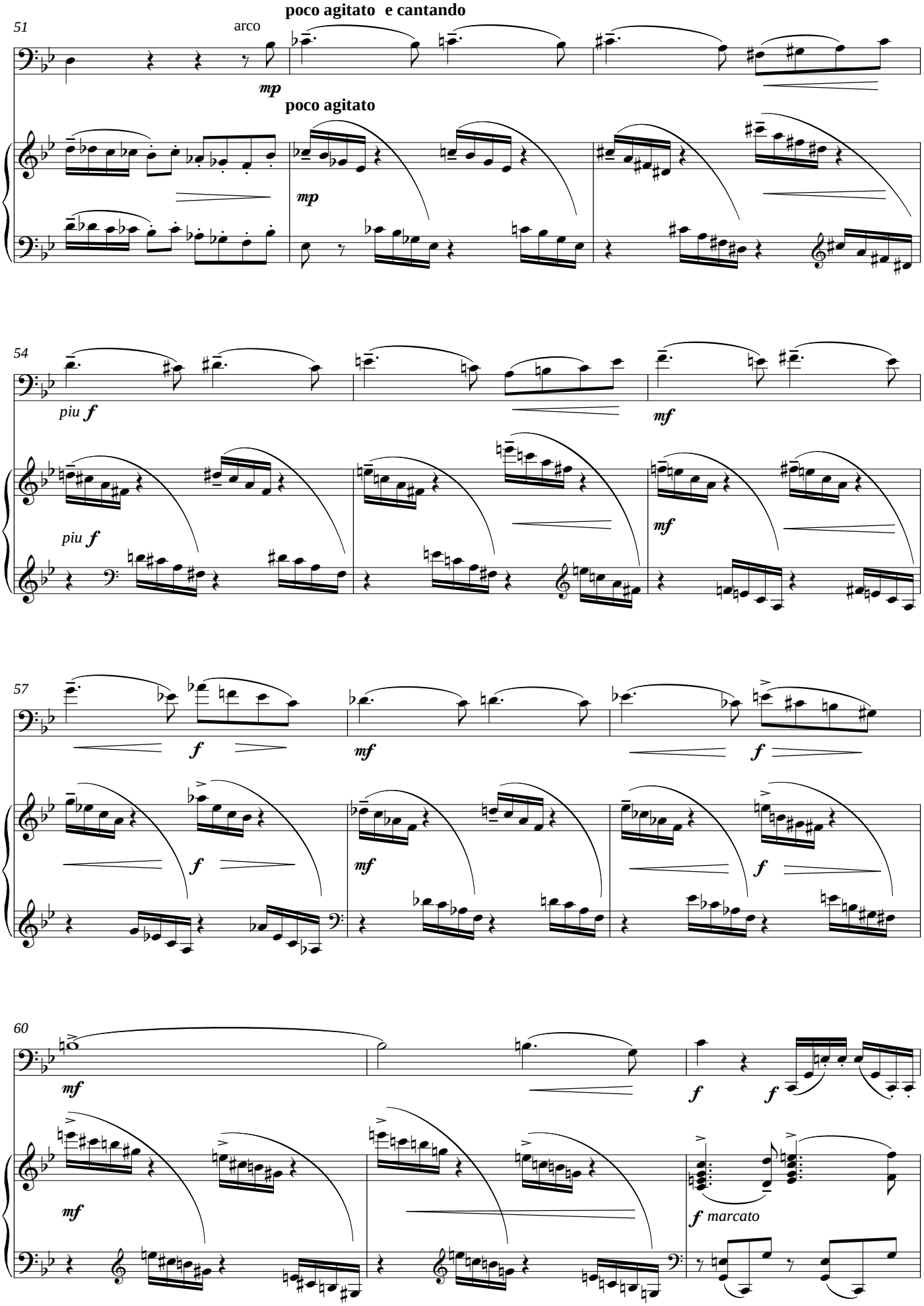

65
dim.
pp
dim.
pp
smorzando
ppp

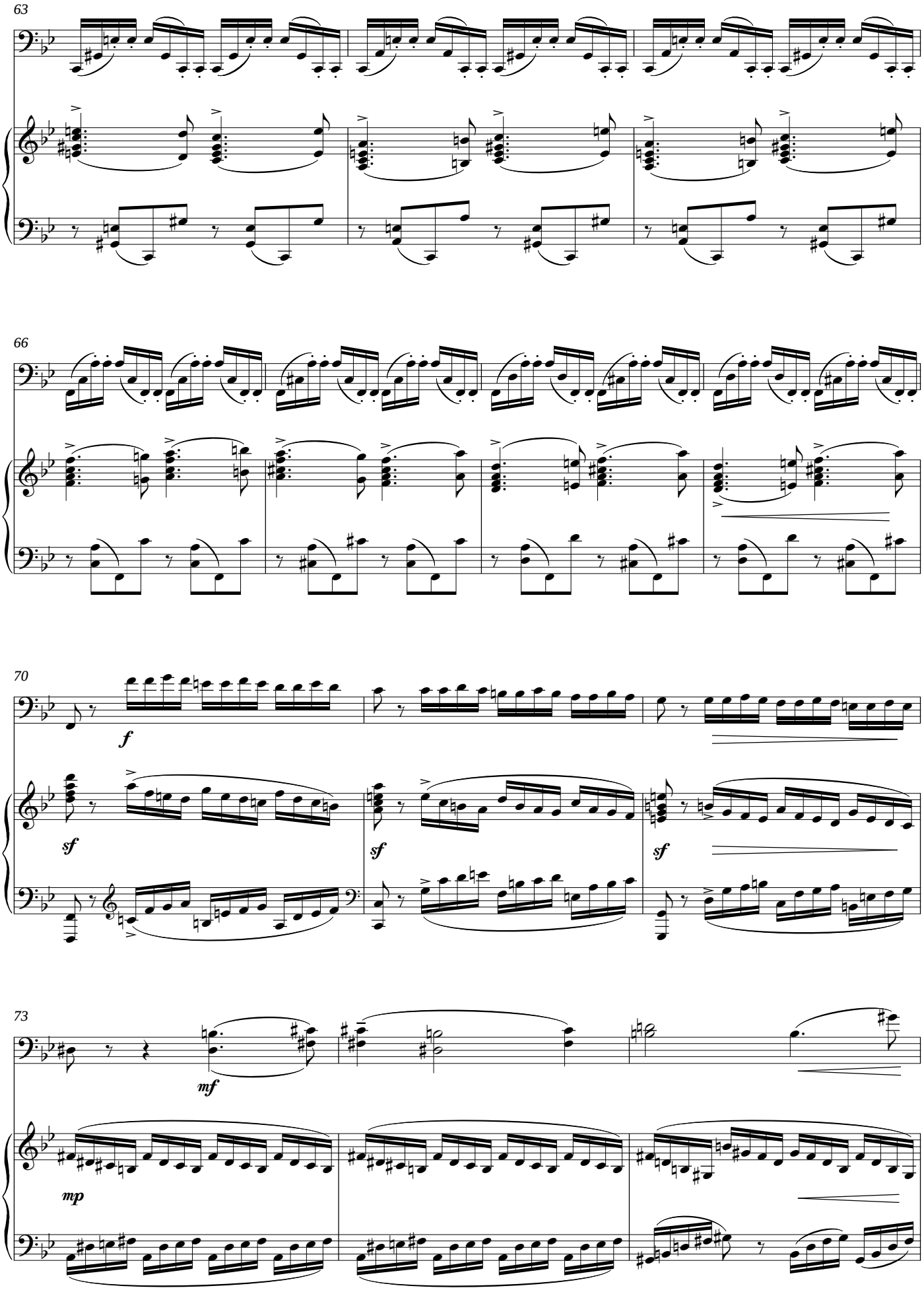
II

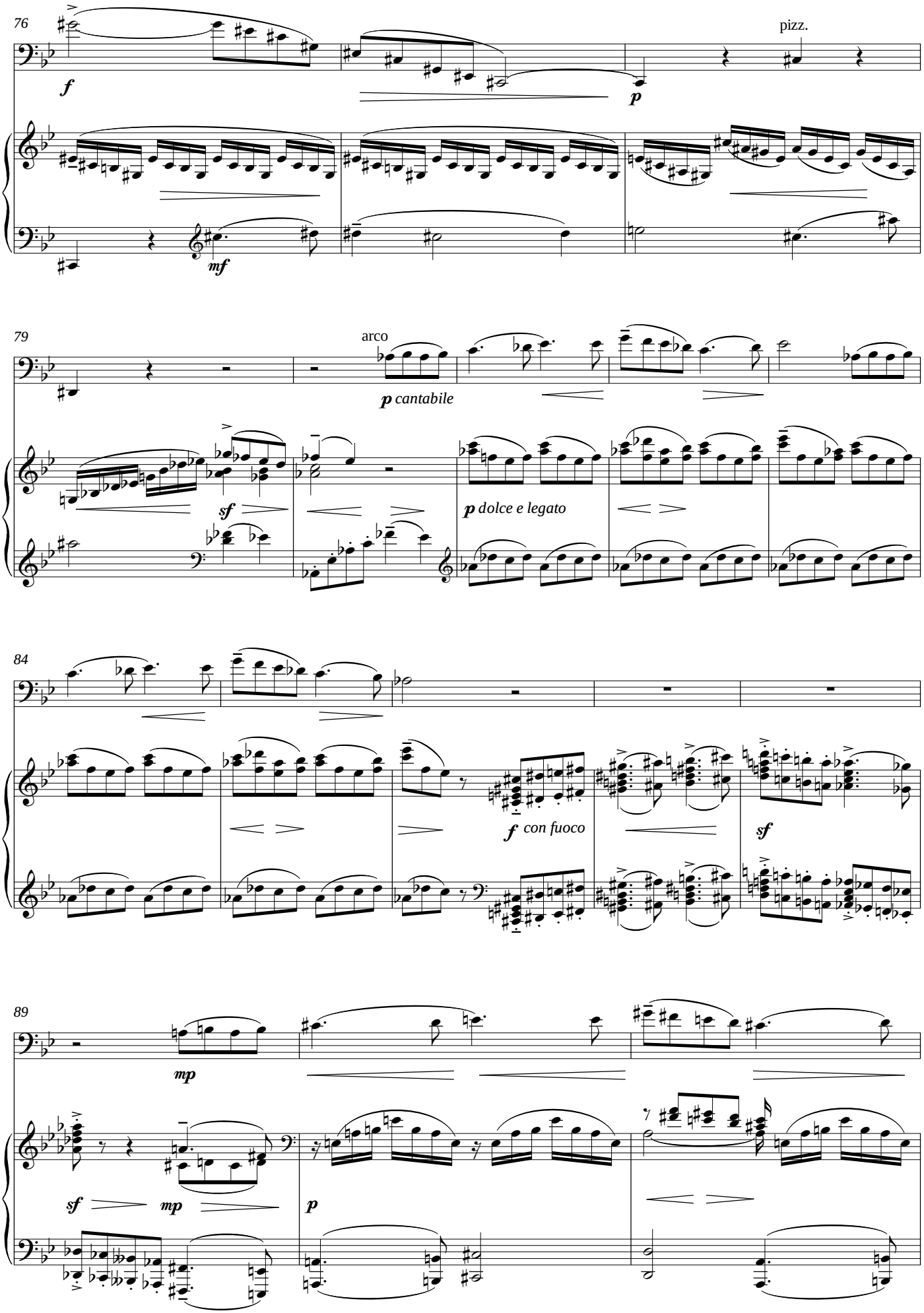

Allegro vivo
1
pizz.
f
f
Allegro vivo
f
7
arco
f
f
12
f
f
f

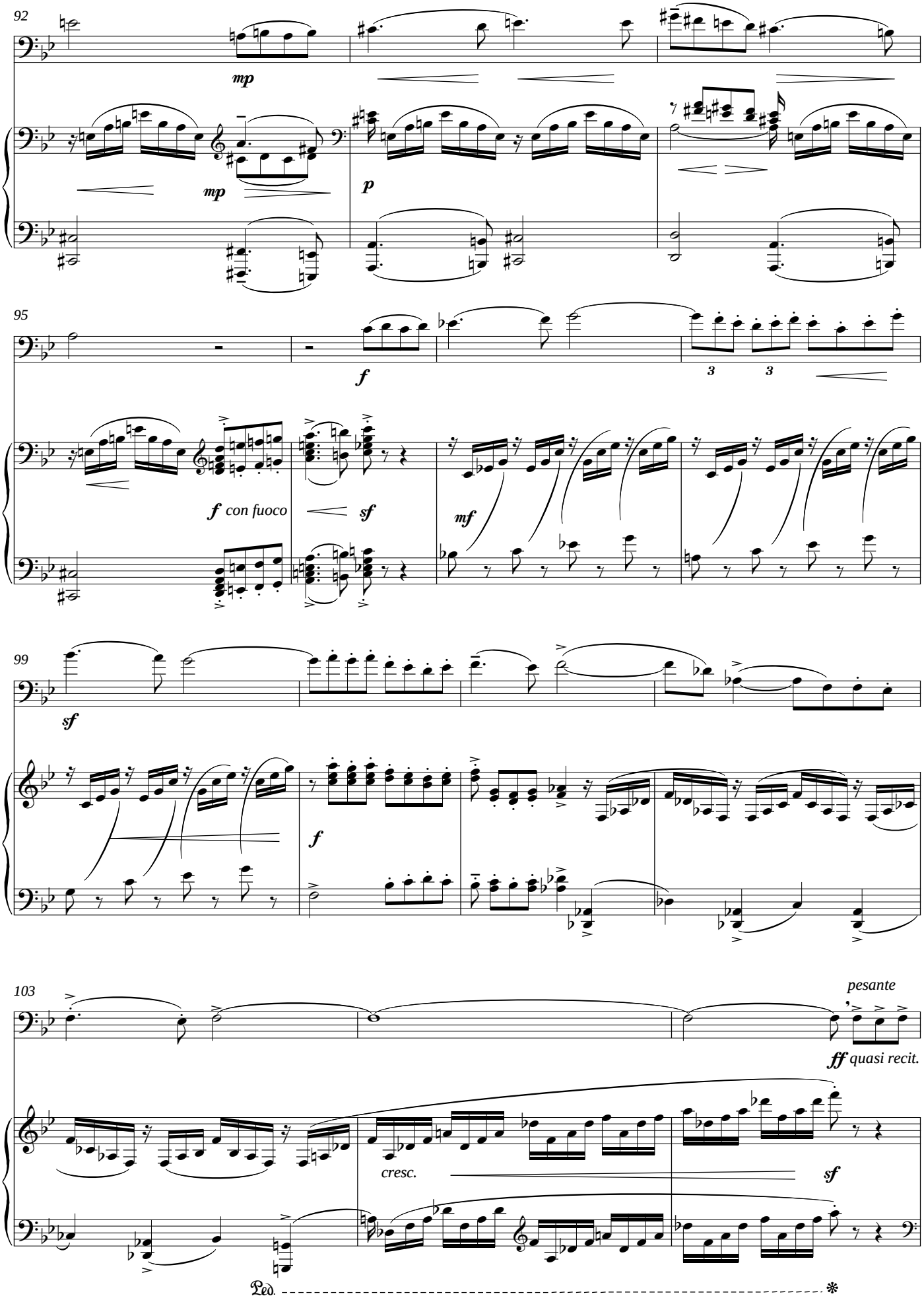

16
mf
f con brio e marcato
21
rall.
a tempo
rall. molto
a tempo
mf
f
25
f
cresc.
29
mf
f
3
sf

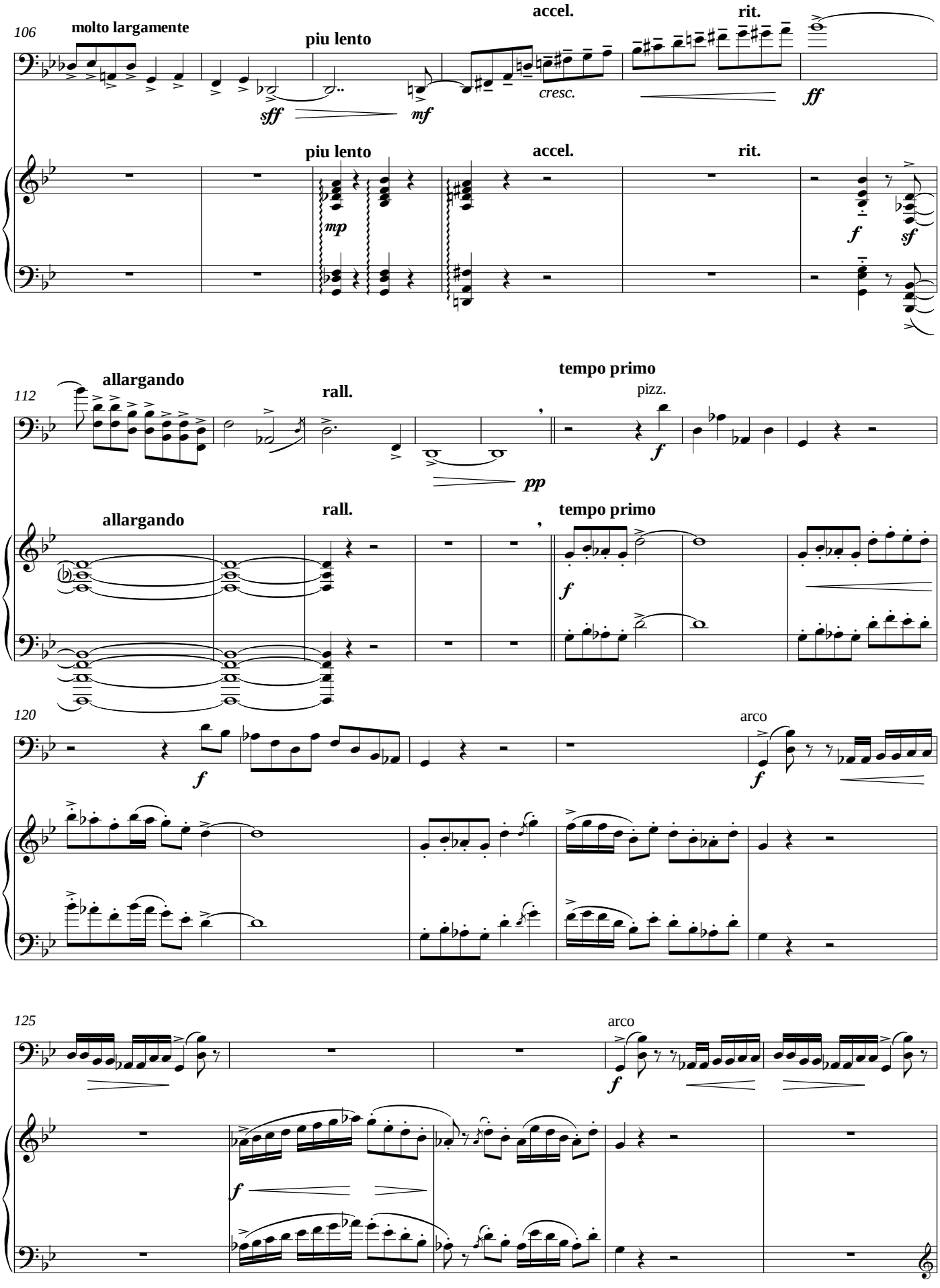

33
mf
f
3
ff
37
pizz.
f
arco
f
sf
41
pizz.
mf
p
dim.
45
1.
2.
dim.

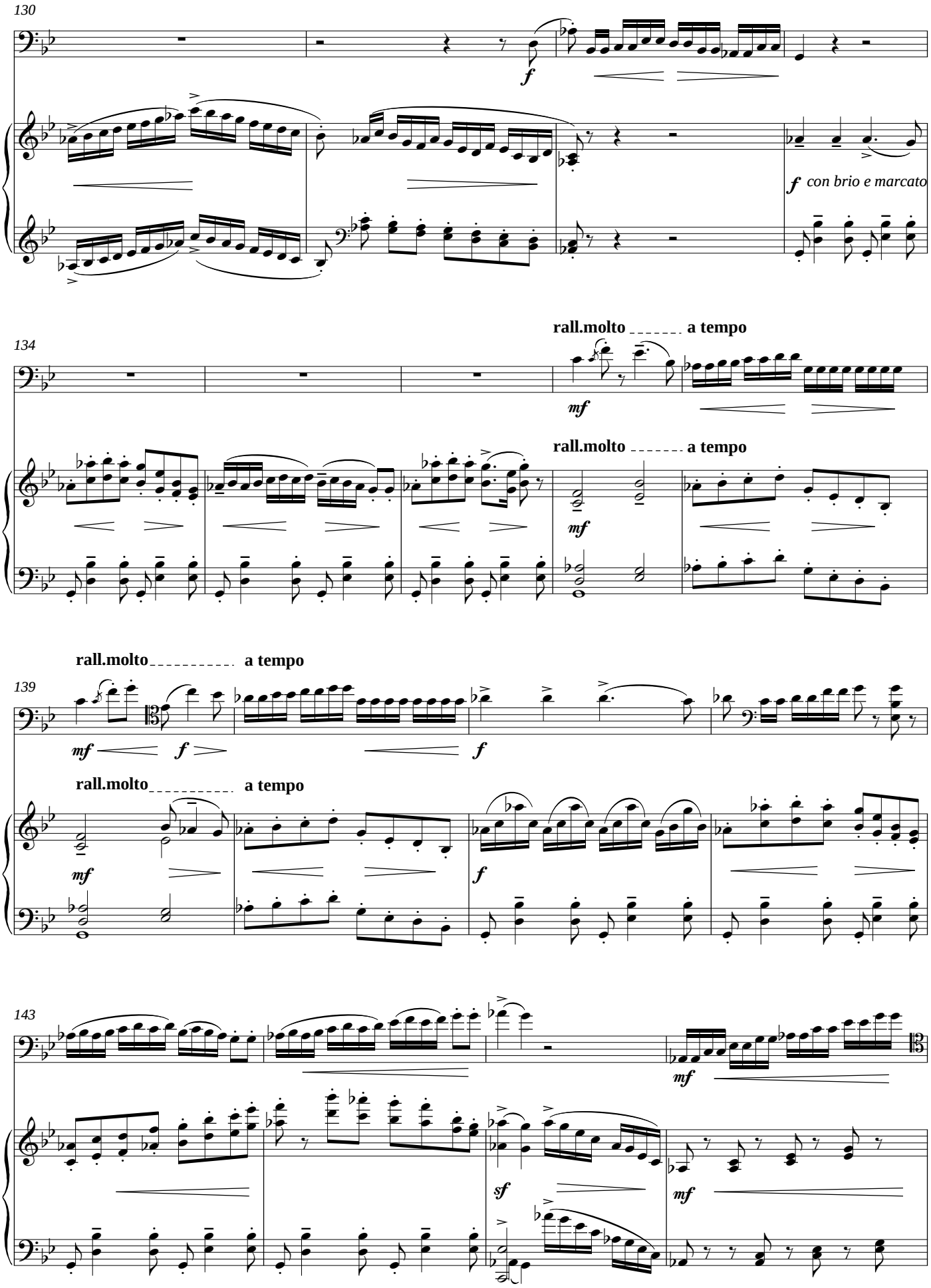

poco agitato e cantando
51
arco
mp
poco agitato
mp
54
piu f
mf
piu f
mf
57
f
mf
f
f
mf
f
60
mf
f
f
mf
f marcato

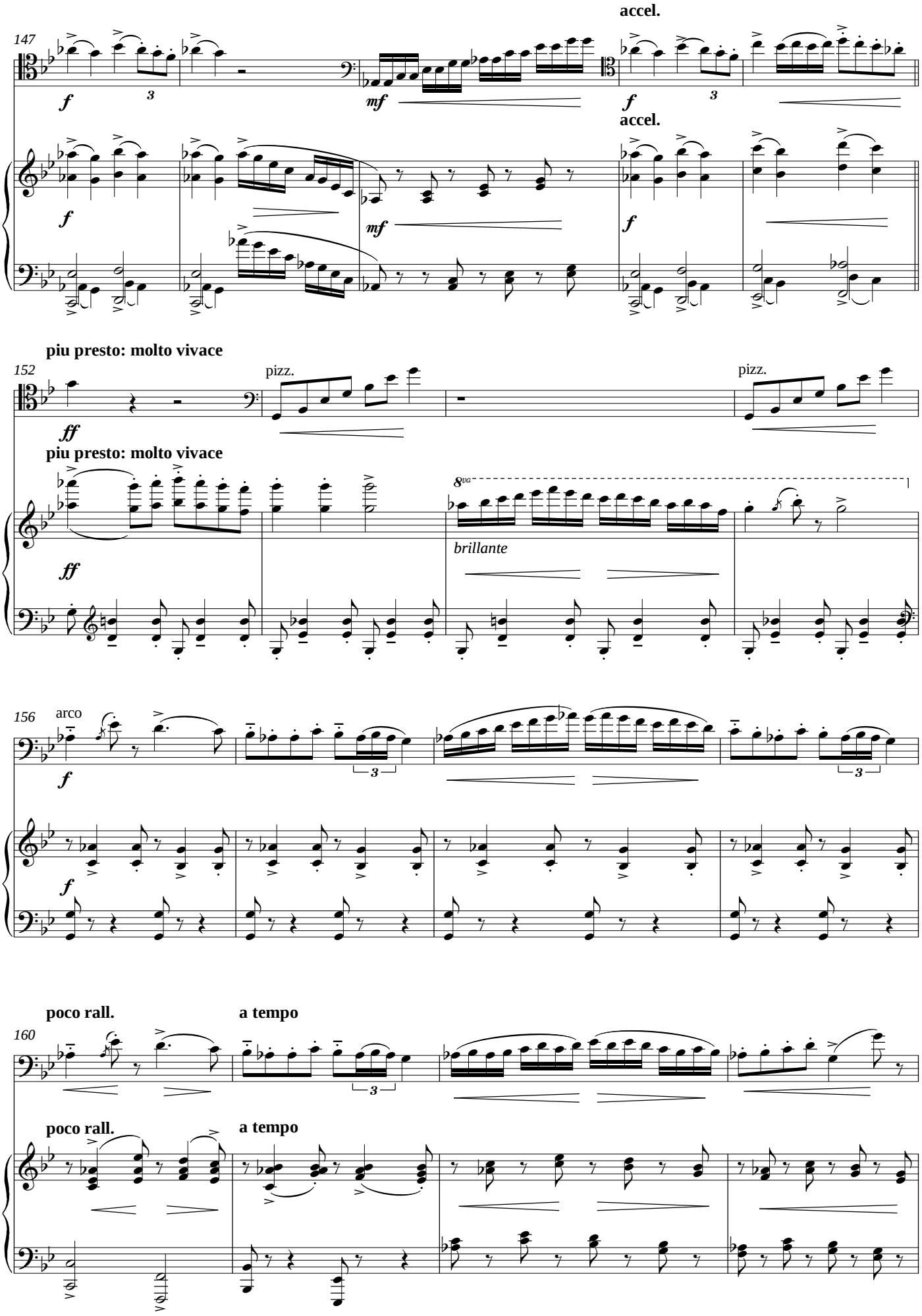

63
66
70
f
sf
sf
sf
73
mf
mp

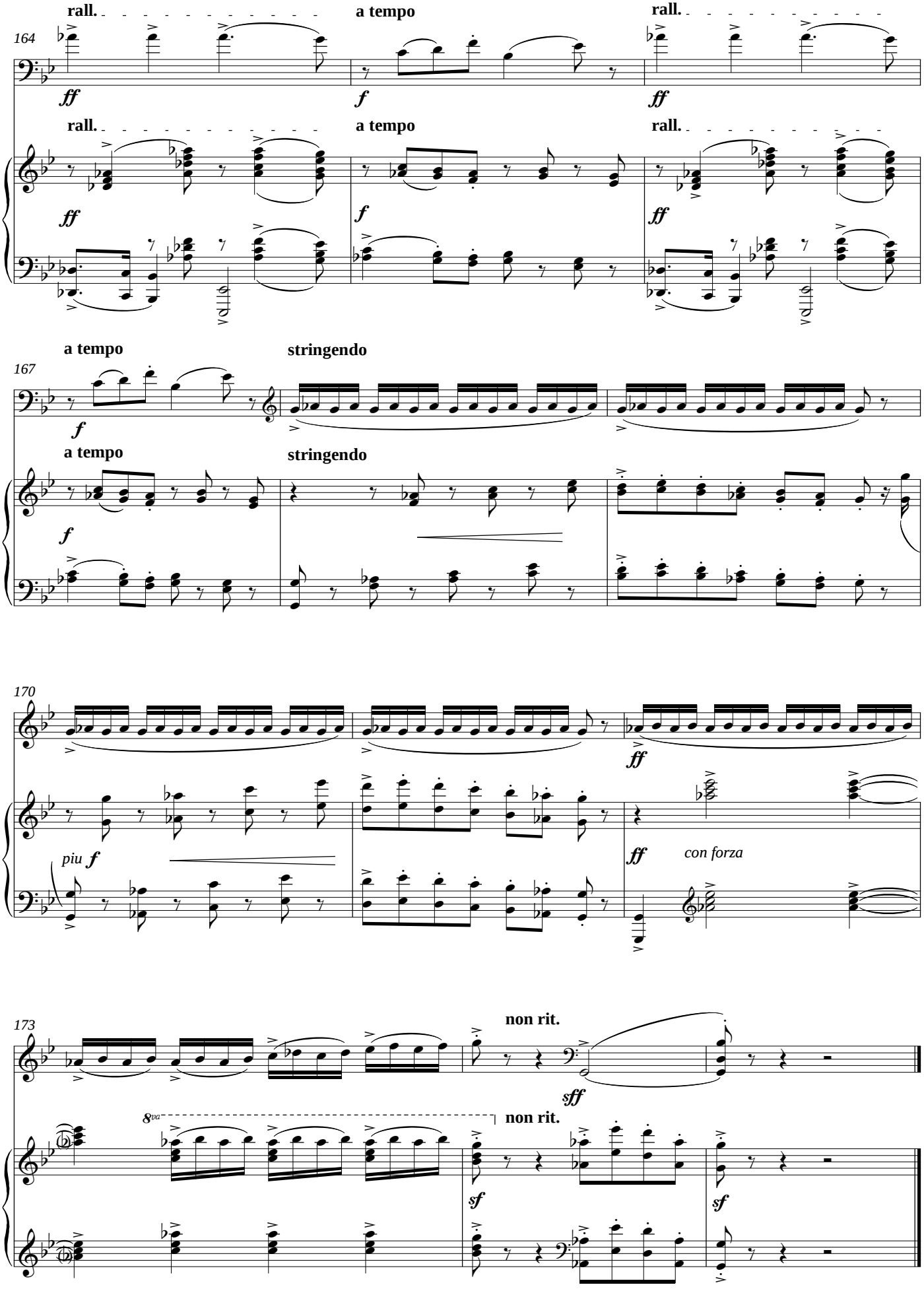

76
pizz.
79
arco
84
89


92
mp
mp
p
95
f
3
3
f con fuoco
sf
mf
99
sf
f
103
pesante
ff quasi recit.
cresc.
sf
Ped.
*

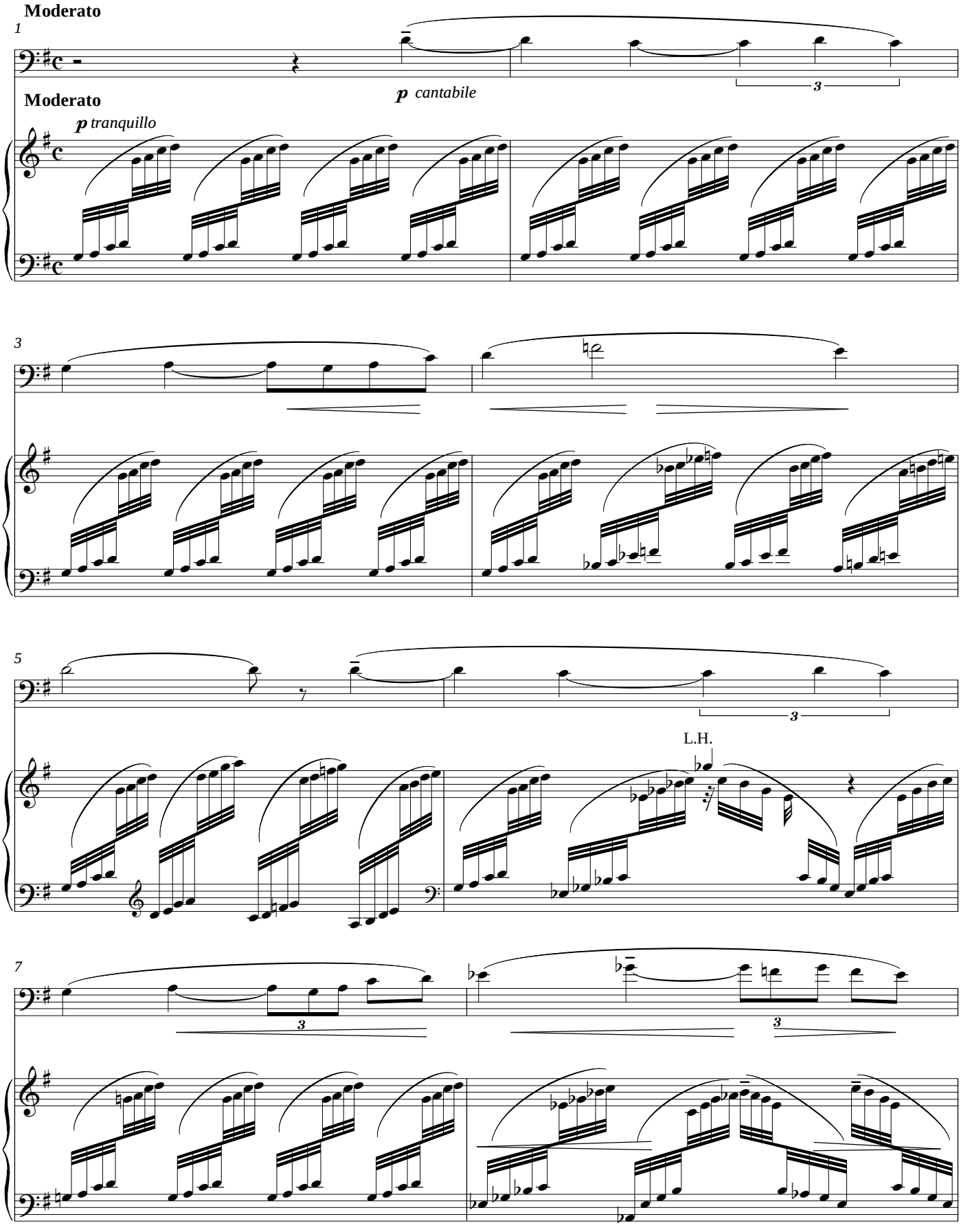

106
molto largamente
piu lento
accel.
rit.
cresc.
sff
mf
ff
mp
f
sf
112
allargando
rall.
tempo primo
pizz.
pp
120
arco
125

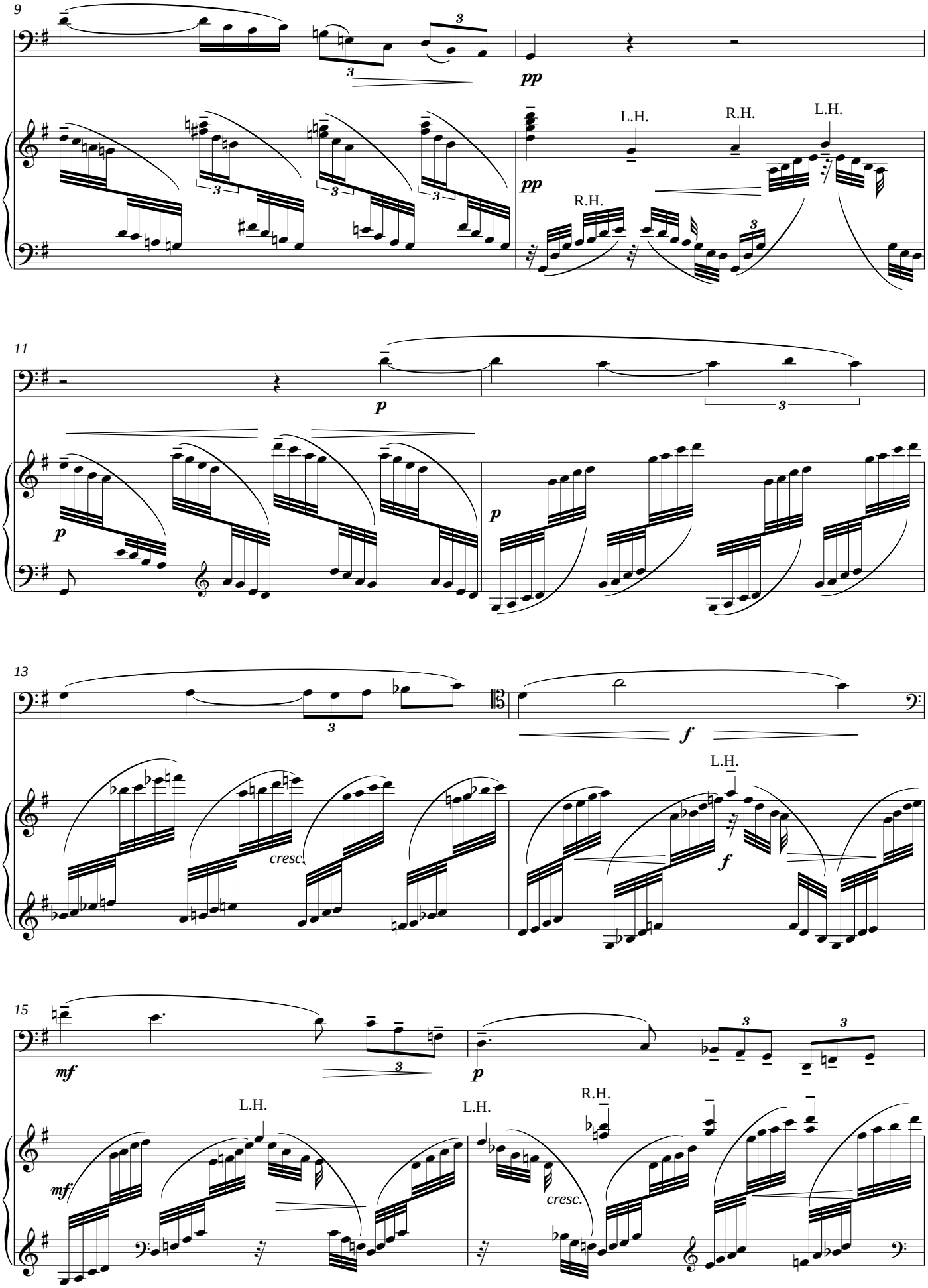

130
f
f con brio e marcato
134
rall.molto a tempo
mf
rall.molto a tempo
mf
139
rall.molto a tempo
mf
f
f
rall.molto a tempo
mf
f
143
mf
sf
mf

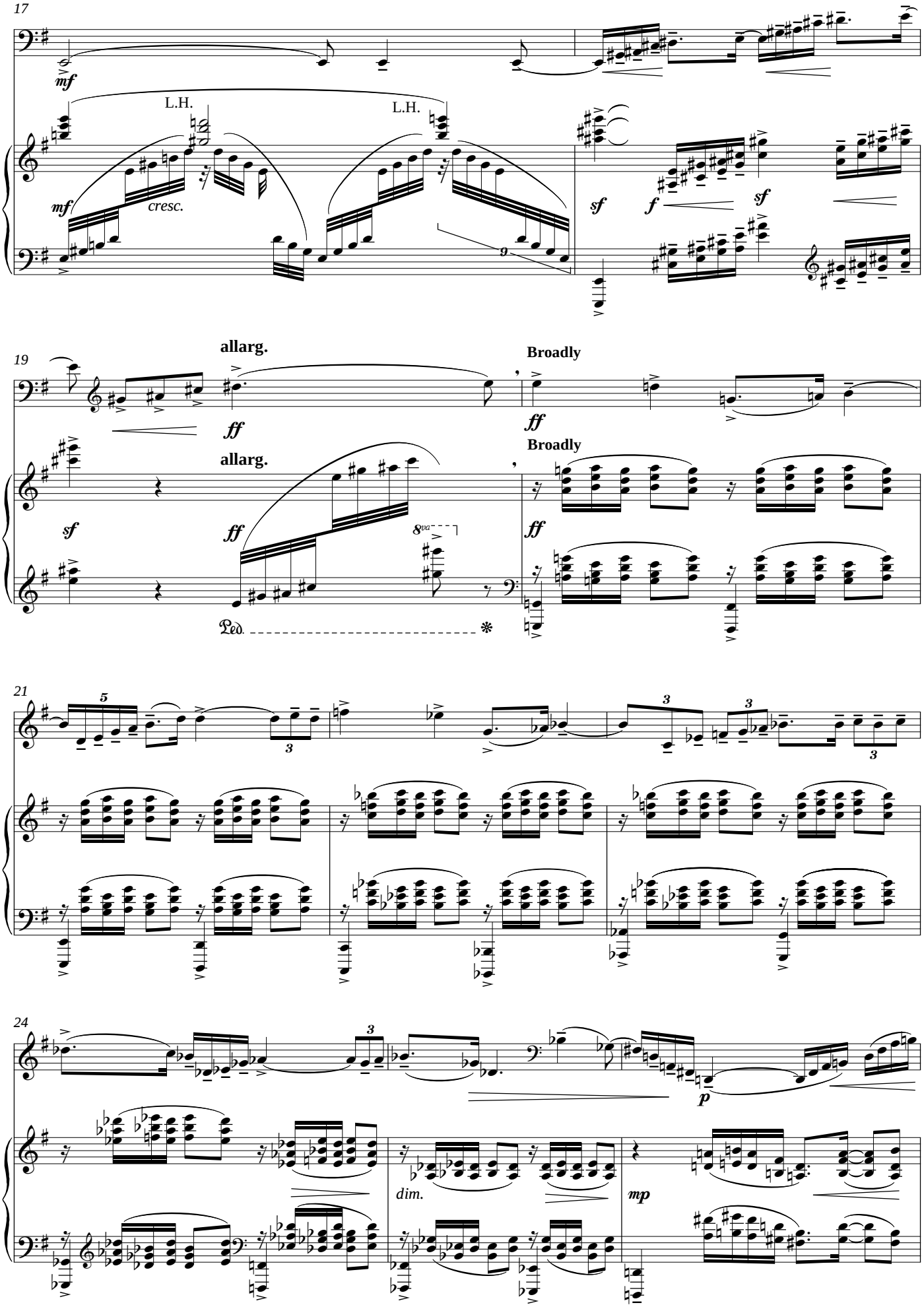

147
accel.
f
mf
f
accel.
piu presto: molto vivace
152
pizz.
pizz.
ff
piu presto: molto vivace
8va
brillante
156
arco
poco rall.
a tempo
160
poco rall.
a tempo

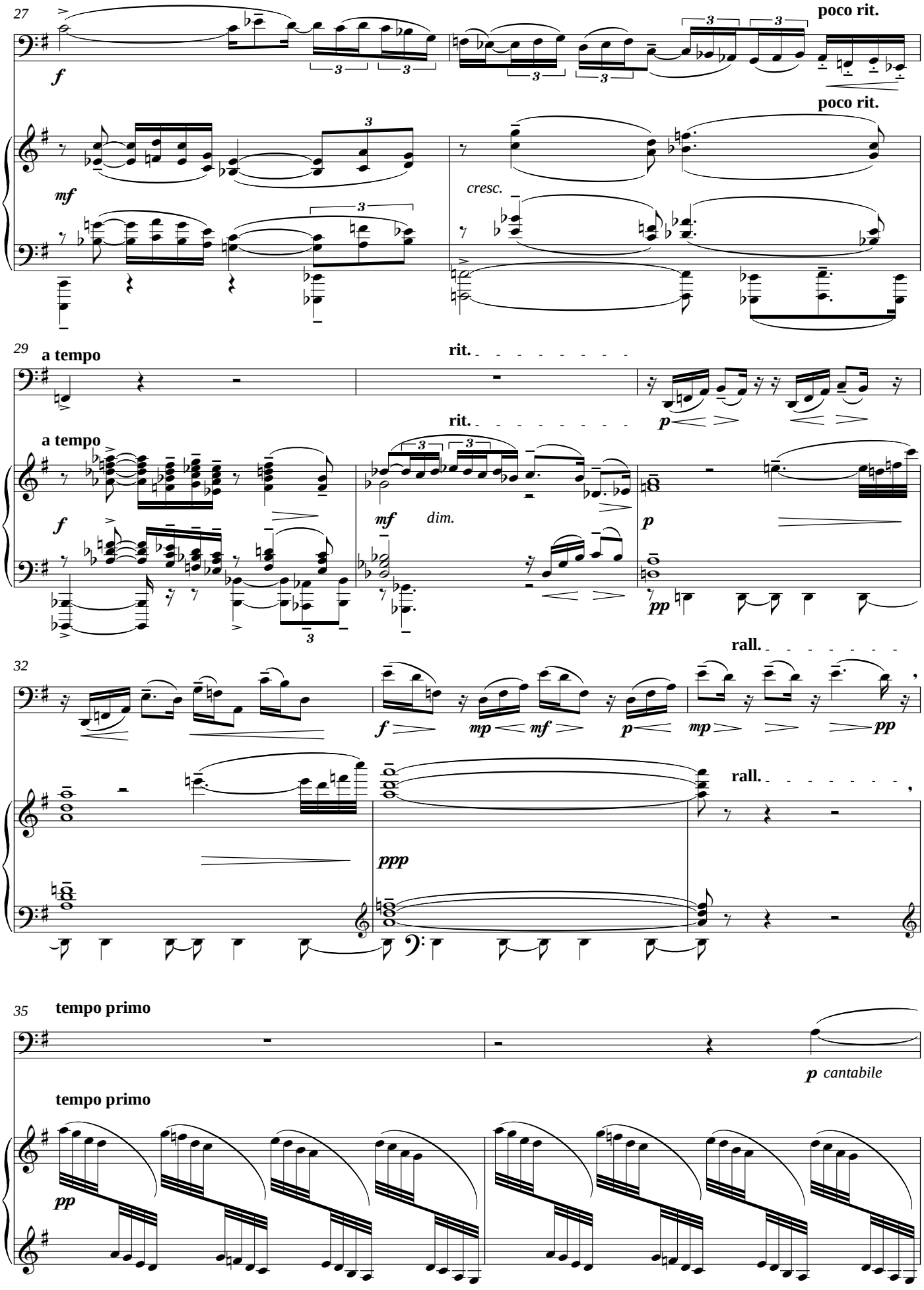

rall.
a tempo
rall.
164
ff
f
ff
rall.
a tempo
rall.
ff
f
ff
a tempo
stringendo
167
f
a tempo
stringendo
f
170
piu f
ff
ff
con forza
173
non rit.
sff
8va
non rit.
sf
sf

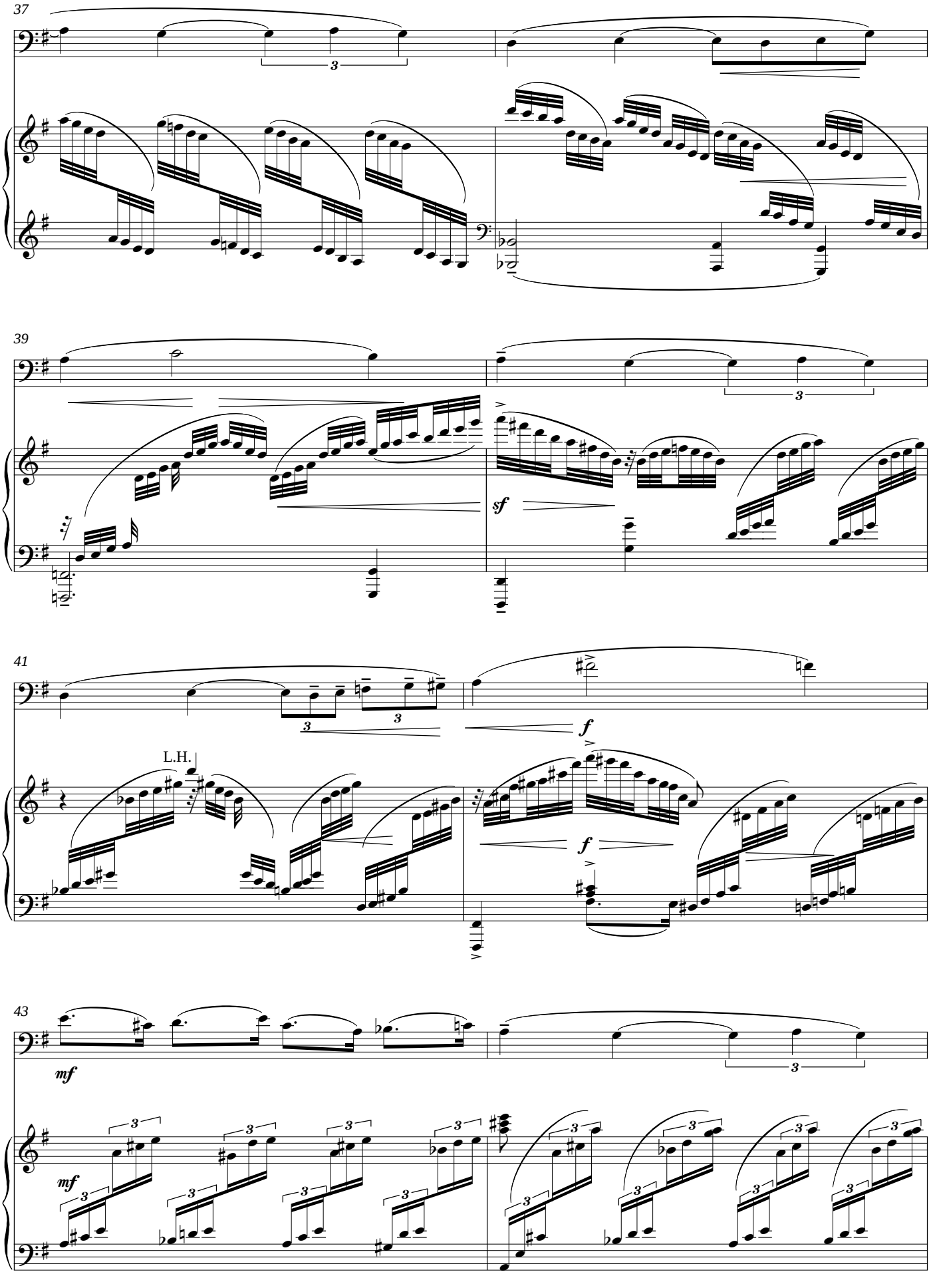
III

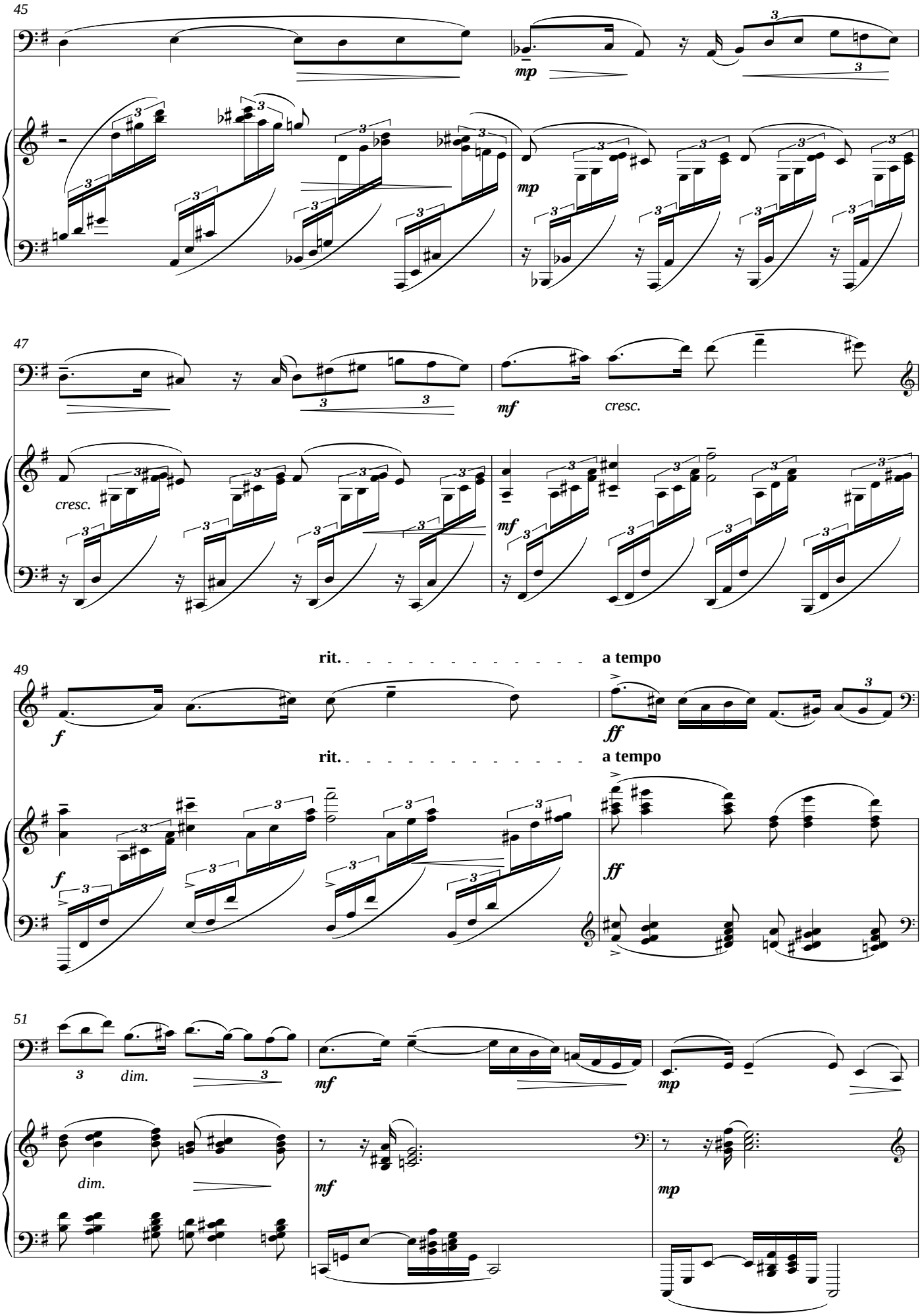


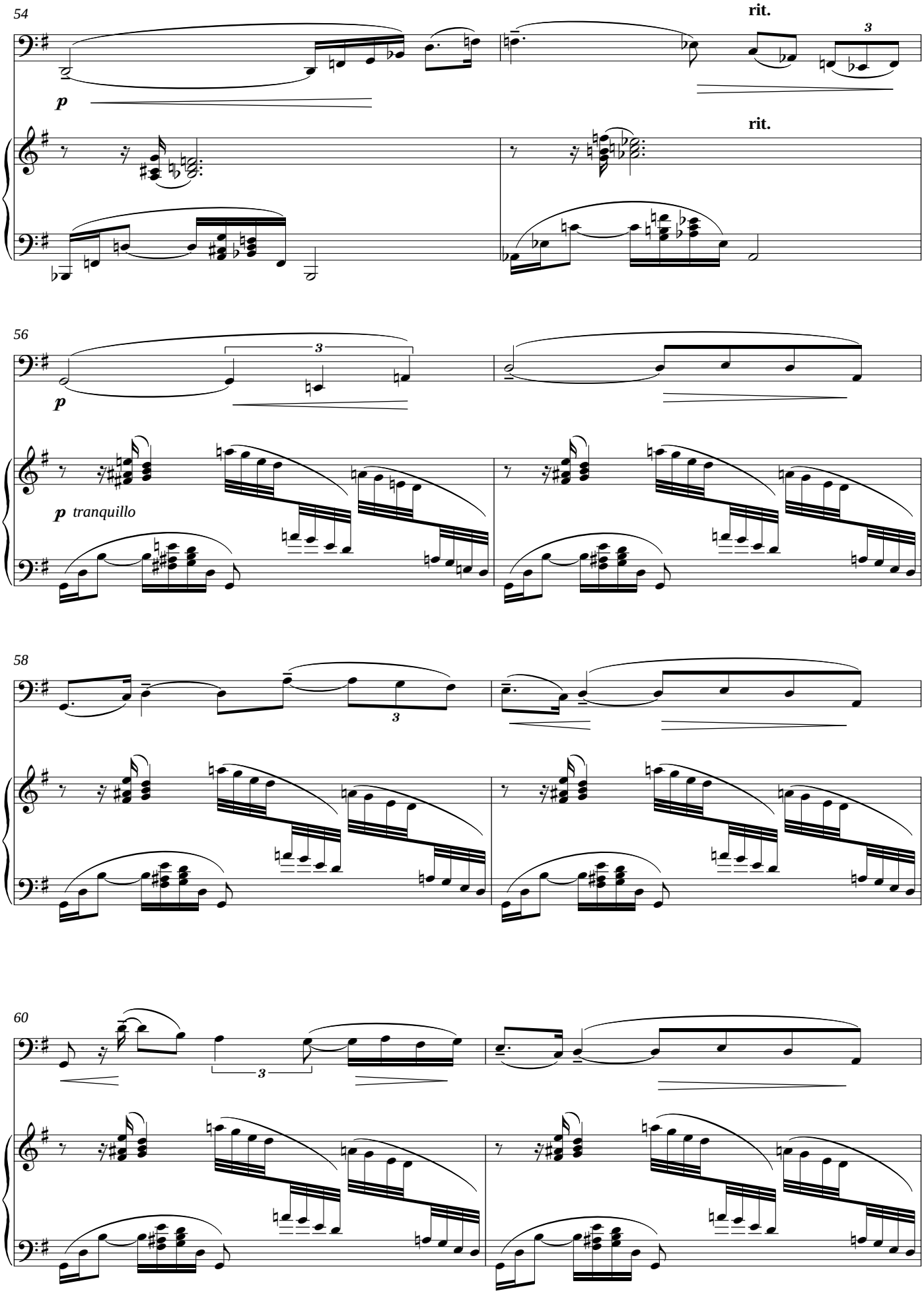

9
pp
L.H.
R.H.
L.H.
pp
R.H.
11
p
3
p
p
13
3
f
cresc.
L.H.
f
15
mf
3
p
3
3
L.H.
mf
L.H.
R.H.
cresc.

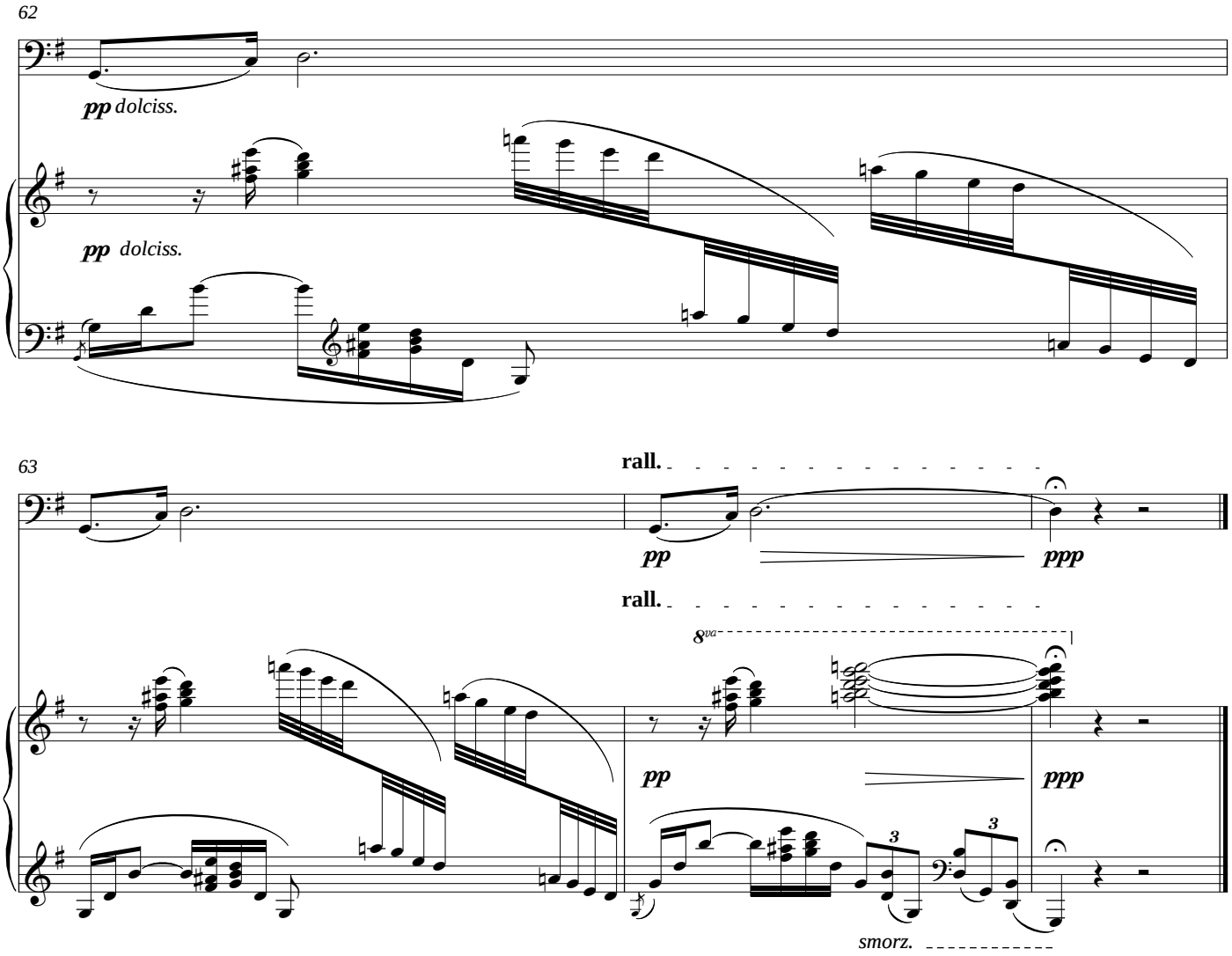

17
mf
L.H.
L.H.
mf
cresc.
sf
f
sf
19
allarg.
Broadly
ff
ff
allarg.
Broadly
sf
ff
ff
8va
Ped.
21
24
p
dim.
mp


27
poco rit.
poco rit.
cresc.
29
a tempo
rit.
rit.
a tempo
dim.
32
rall.
rall.
35
tempo primo
p cantabile
tempo primo


37
39
sf
41
L.H.
f
f
43
mf
mf


45
mp
mp
47
mf
cresc.
cresc.
mf
49
rit.
a tempo
f
ff
rit.
a tempo
f
ff
51
dim.
mf
mp
dim.
mf
mp


54
rit.
3
p
rit.
56
3
p
p tranquillo
58
3
60
3


62
pp dolciss.
pp dolciss.
63
rall.
pp
ppp
rall.
8va
pp
ppp
3
3
smorz.

Oct. - Nov. 1942