EIGHT BIBLE VIGNETTES
for the PIANO

BY

R. NATHANIEL DETT

1. Father Abraham
2. Desert Interlude
3. As His Own Soul
4. Barcarolle of Tears
5. I Am the True Vine
6. Martha Complained
7. Other Sheep
8. Madrigal Divine

50¢

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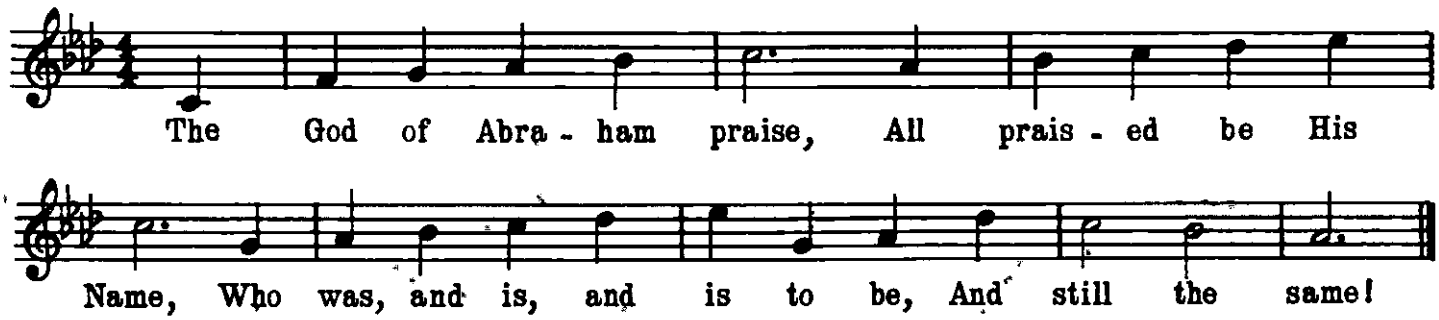
Music Publishers
1619 Broadway—New York, N.Y.

Father Abraham

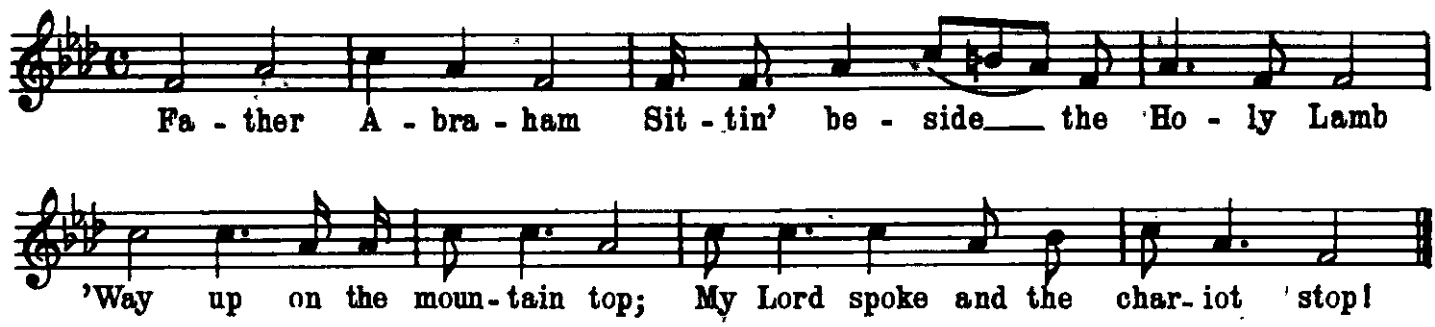
I

LEGEND:

14th CENTURY HEBREW



NEGRO SPIRITUAL



By myself have I
sworn, saith the Lord: .....

That in blessing I will bless thee,
and in multiplying I will multiply
thy seed as the stars of the heaven,
and as the sand which is upon the
seashore; and thy seed shall pos-
sess the gate of his enemies;

And in thy seed shall all the
nations of the earth be blessed;

—*Genesis xxiii*, 16-18

We will trabbel on together, Hallelujah,
Gwine to war agin de debbil, Hallelujah,
Gwine to pull down Satan's kingdom, Hallelujah,
Gwine to build up de walls o' Zion, Hallelujah.
Dere's a better day a-comin', Hallelujah!

—*Negro spiritual*

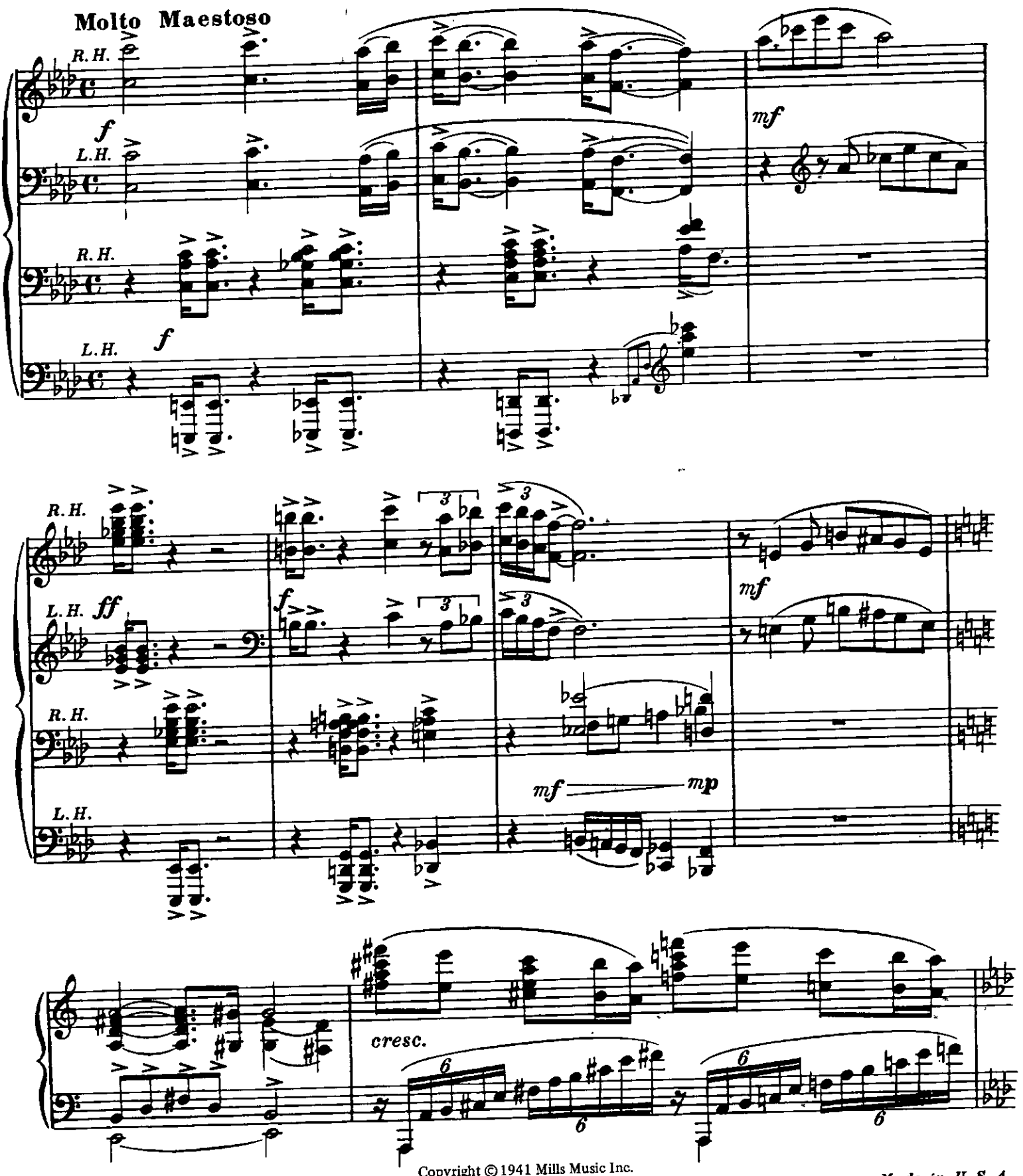
It is something more than a mere coincidence that Abraham, patriarch of Old Testament history, should also be apostrophized in the Negro spiritual; for the emotional and mystical keynote of the Negro, even as of the Jewish folksong, is emancipation and great happiness in some future state.

Moreover, from the standpoint of musicology, the interval of the augmented, or "barbaric" second (Byzantium mode) which occurs in the melody of the spiritual, identifies it as belonging more to the great family of oriental folksong than to any offshoot of Moody and Sankeyism, as has been sometimes alleged.

In this piece, appropriately the first of this set of BIBLE VIGNETTES, parts of both the Jewish and the Negro tunes are used and, because of their similarity of mood and melody, it is hoped that their association will appear to be logical and natural.

Father Abraham

I



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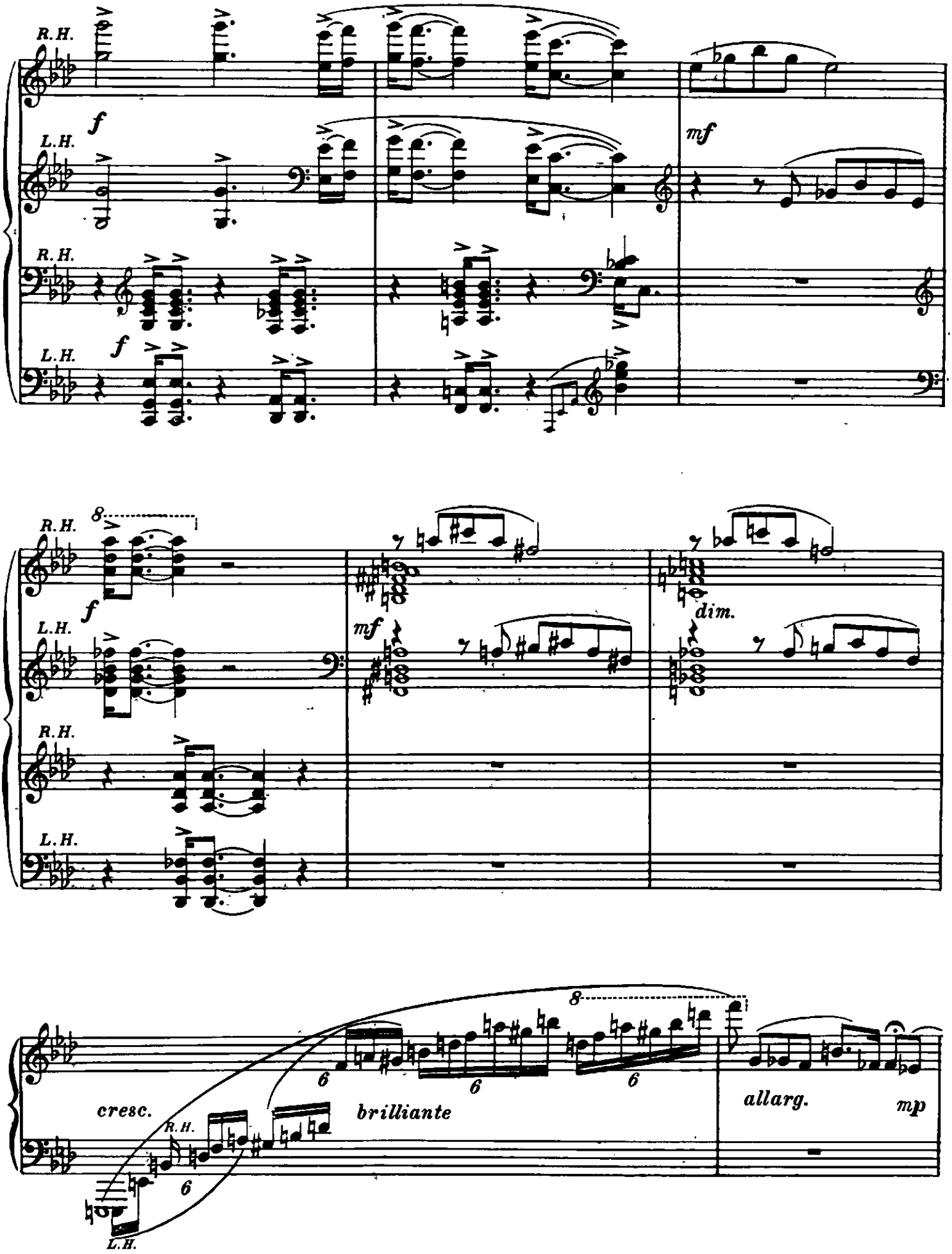
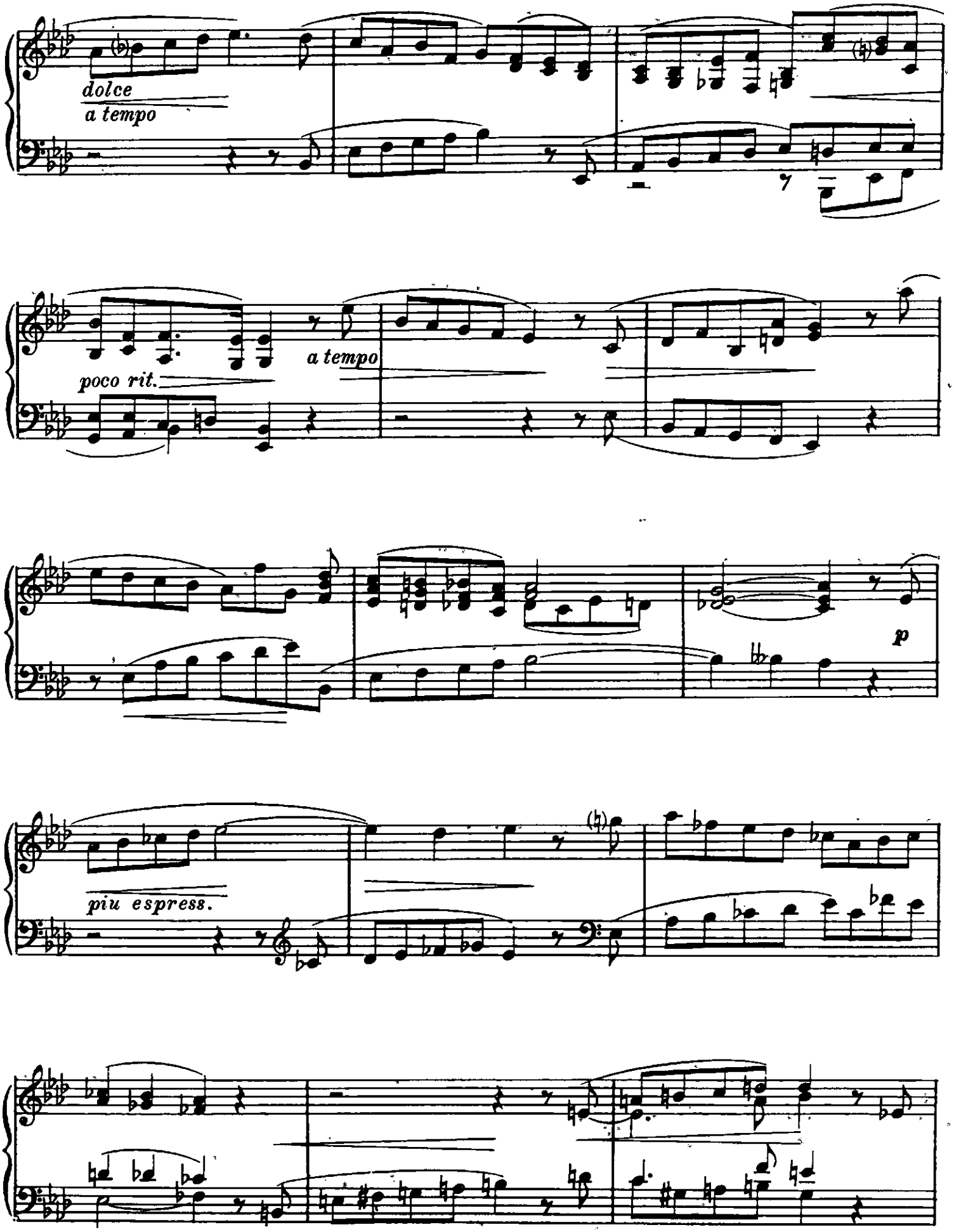
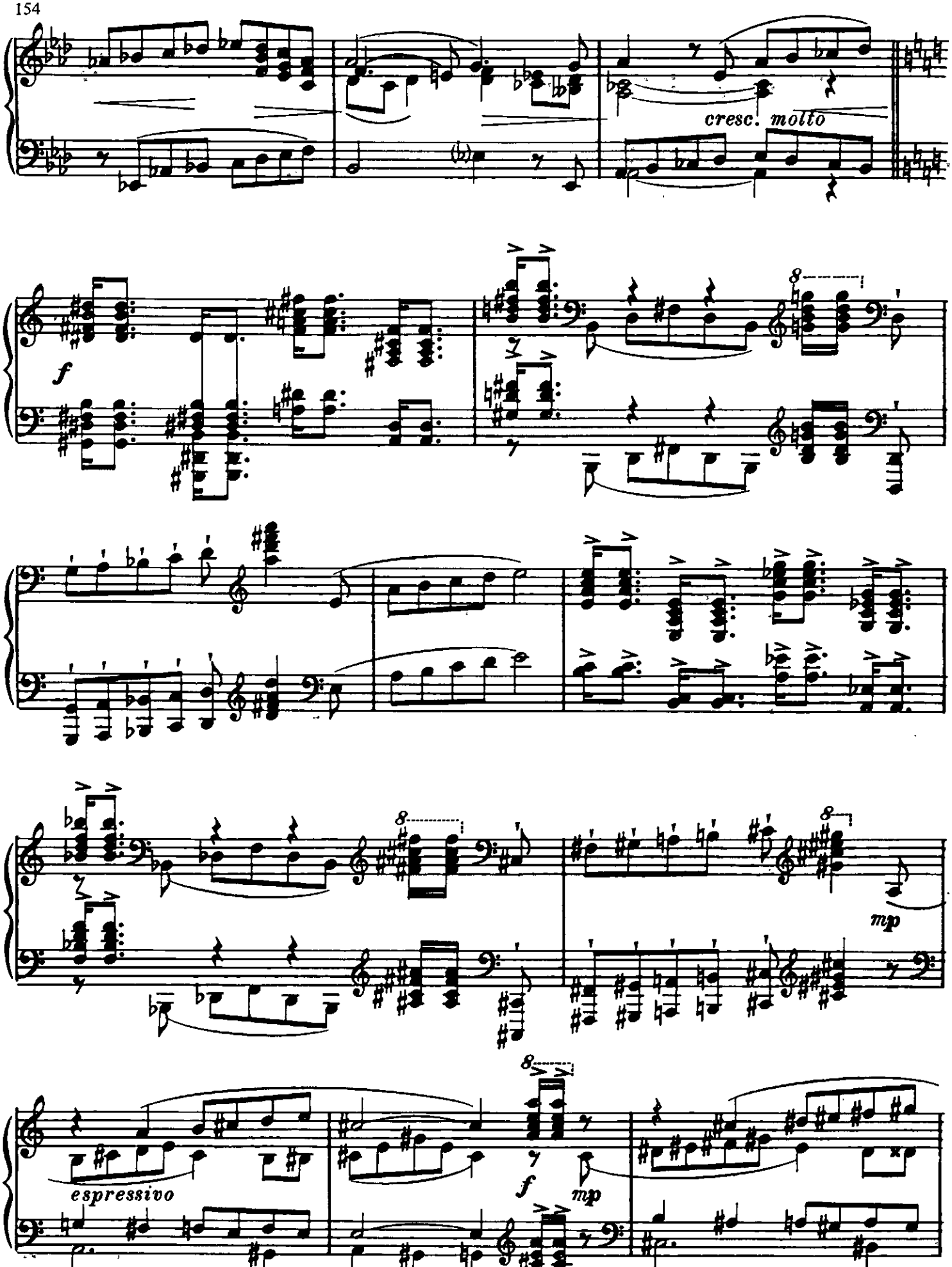
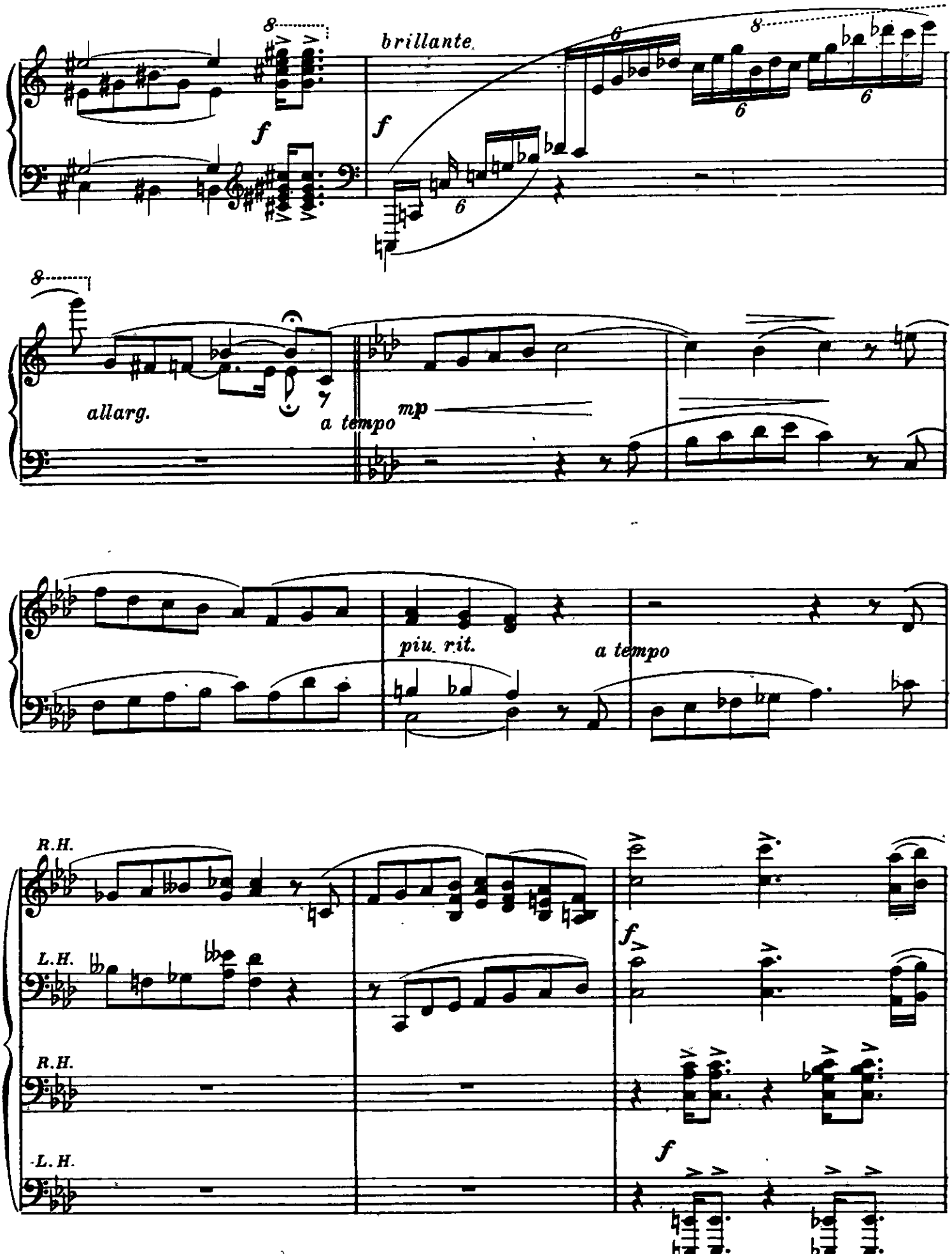
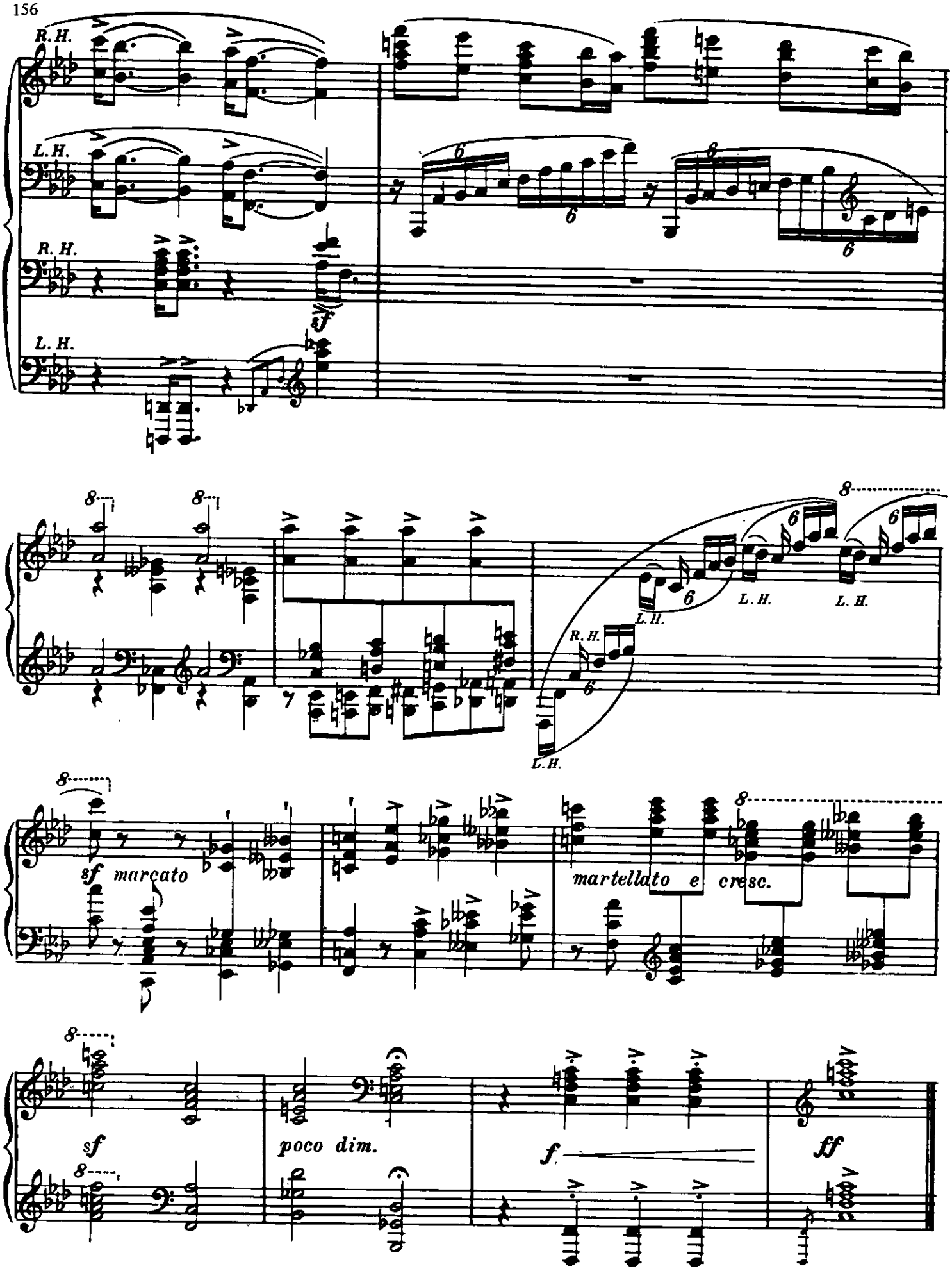

R.H.
f
L.H.
mf
R.H.
f
L.H.
8
R.H.
f
L.H.
mf
dim.
R.H.
L.H.
8
6
6
6
cresc.
brilliante
allarg.
mp
R.H.
6
L.H.


dolce
a tempo
poco rit.
a tempo
p
piu espress.


cresc. molto
f
mp
espressivo
f
mp


brillante
f
f
allarg.
a tempo
mp
piu. rit.
a tempo
R.H.
L.H.
R.H.
L.H.
f
f


R. H.
L. H.
R. H.
L. H.
sf
L. H.
L. H.
R. H.
L. H.
sf marcato
martellato e cresc.
sf
poco dim.
f
ff

DESERT INTERLUDE

II

Legend:

> And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took break and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.
>
> —Genesis xxi, -14

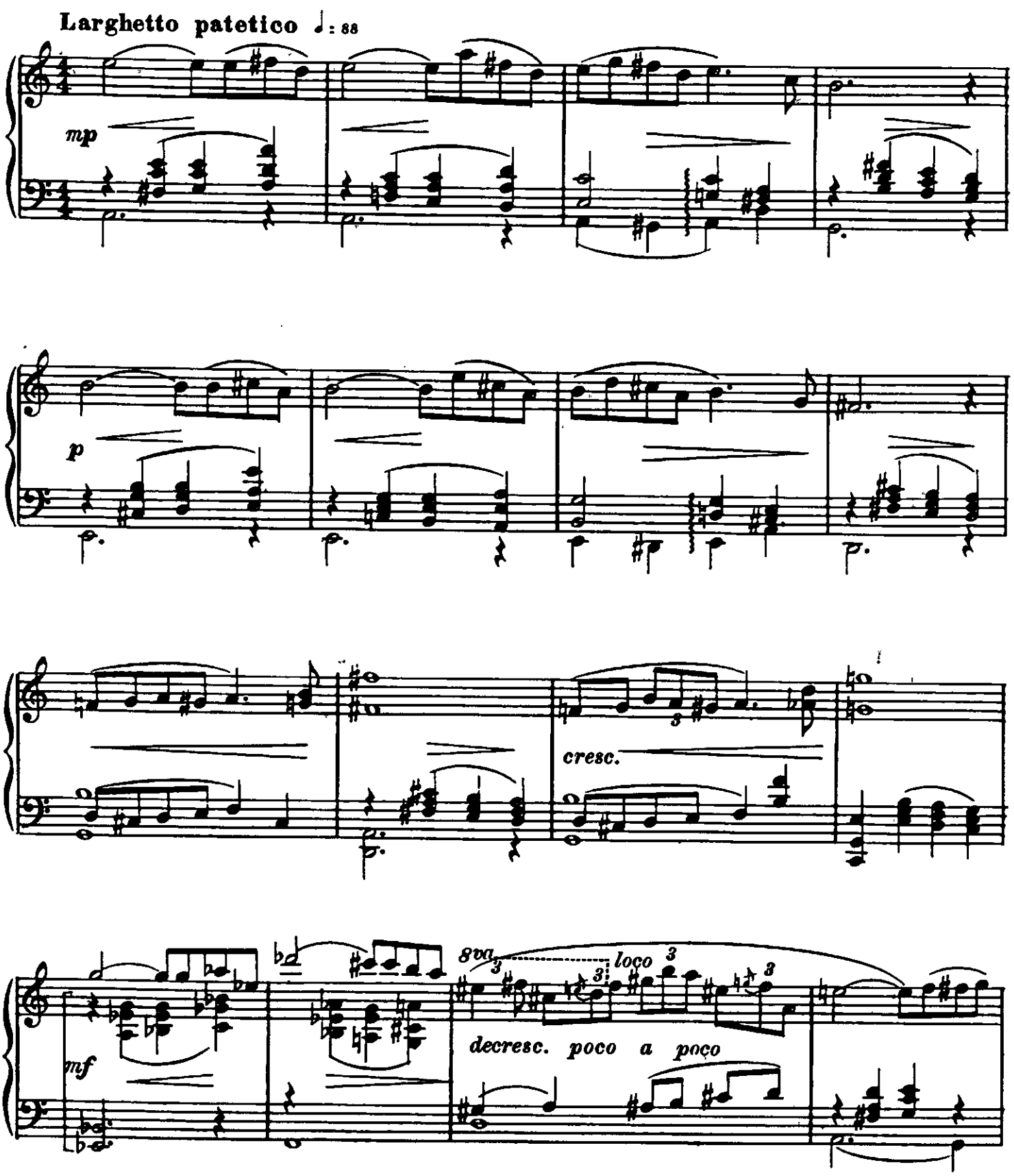
DESERT INTERLUDE, therefore, deals with that short period of time, wherein the banished Hagar, clasping the hand of Ishmael, her son, stood wonderingly, and despairingly in the desert, lost in dark contemplation.

The loaf of bread was almost gone, and the water "was spent in the bottle." The heat of the wilderness, each moment grew more oppressive.—What nostalgic thoughts of the home from which she lately had been thrust,—what fears for the immediate future,—what maternal dread for the fate of her child, filled her breast!

What should she do? Was there no hope? Had God, even as Abraham, forsaken her?

Desert Interlude

2



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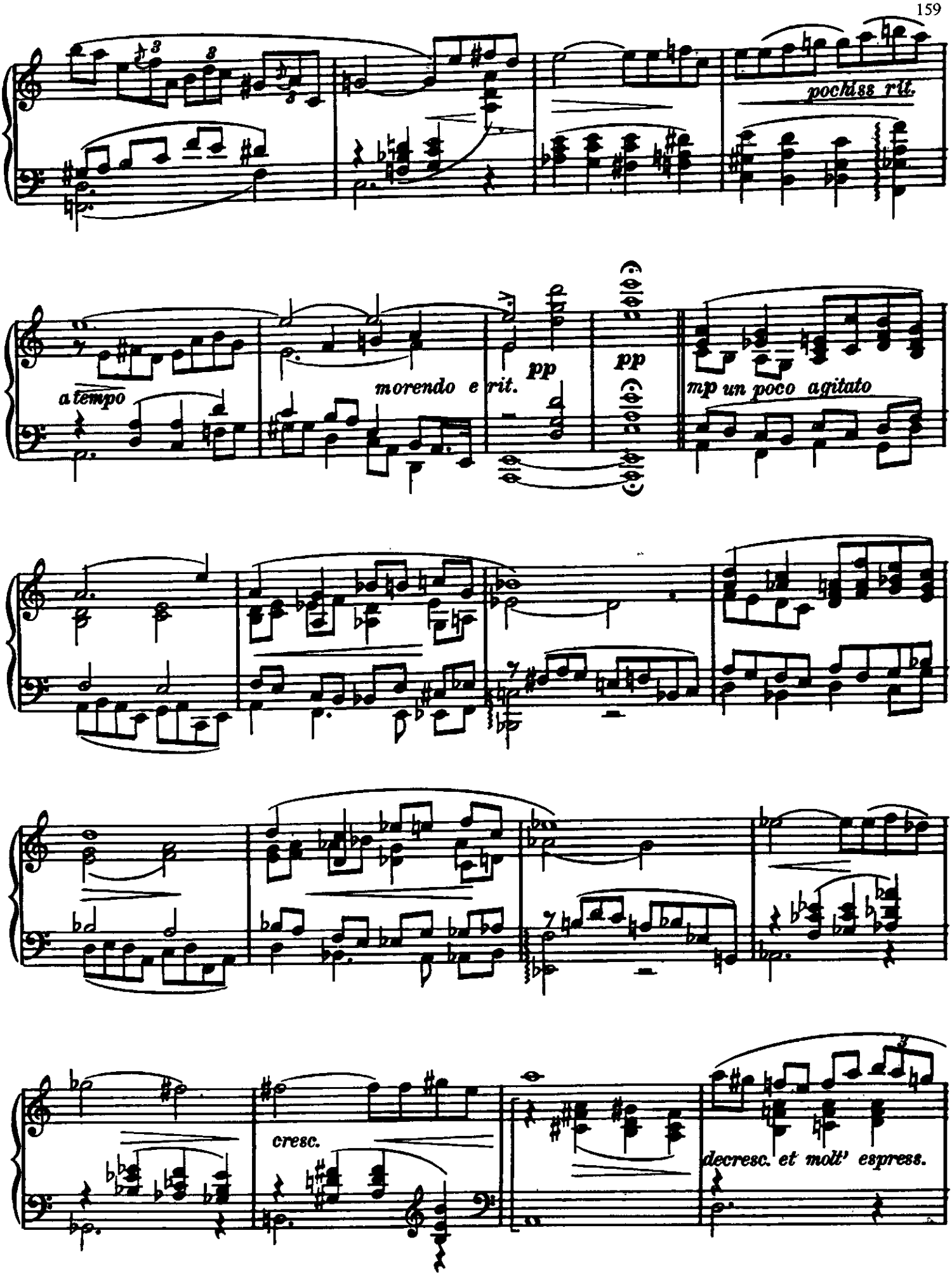
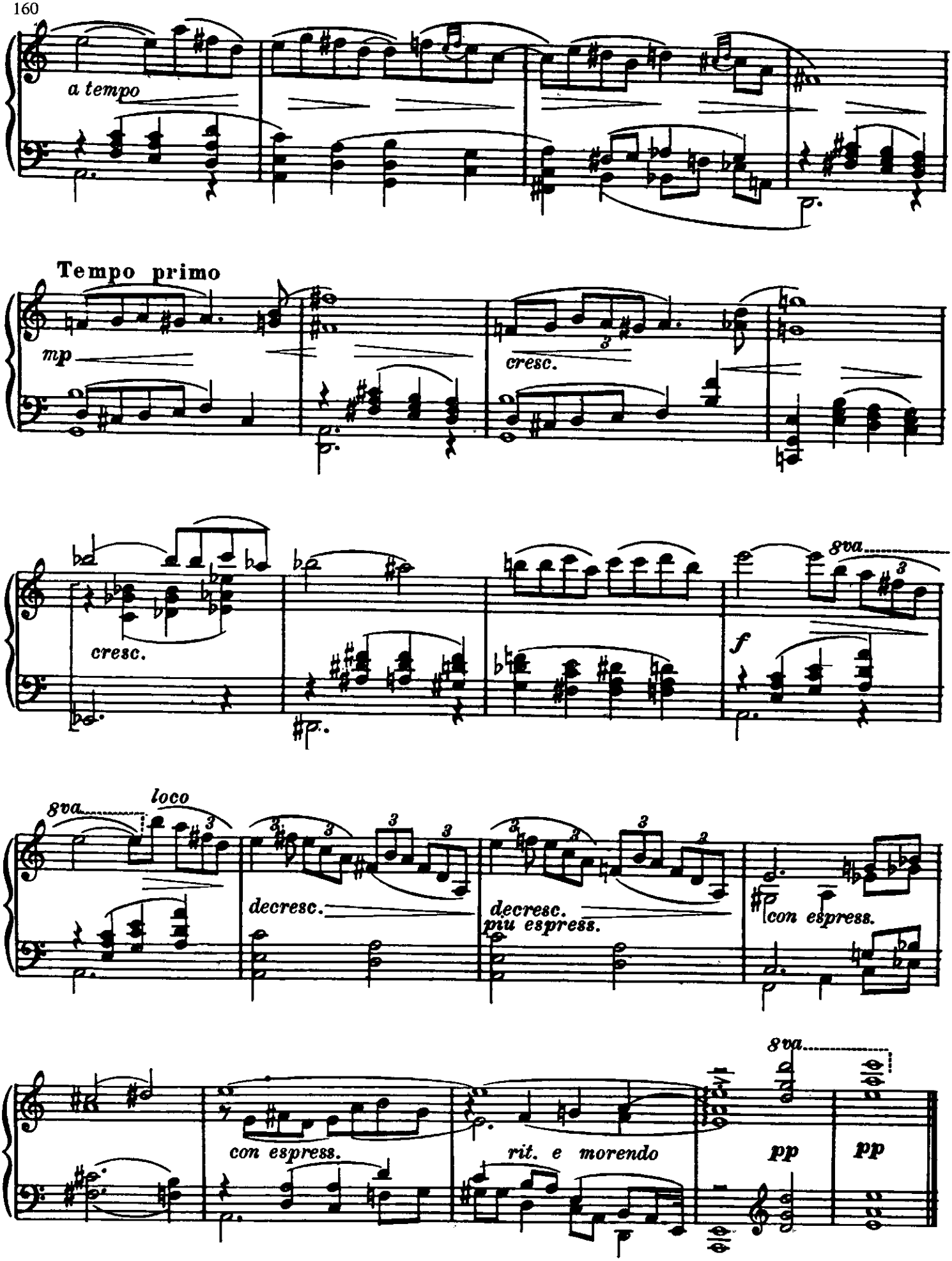

pochiss rit.
a tempo
morendo e rit.
pp
pp
mp un poco agitato
cresc.
decresc. et molt' espress.


a tempo
Tempo primo
mp
cresc.
cresc.
8va
f
8va
loco
decresc.
decresc.
più espress.
con espress.
con espress.
rit. e morendo
8va
pp
pp

AS HIS OWN SOUL

III

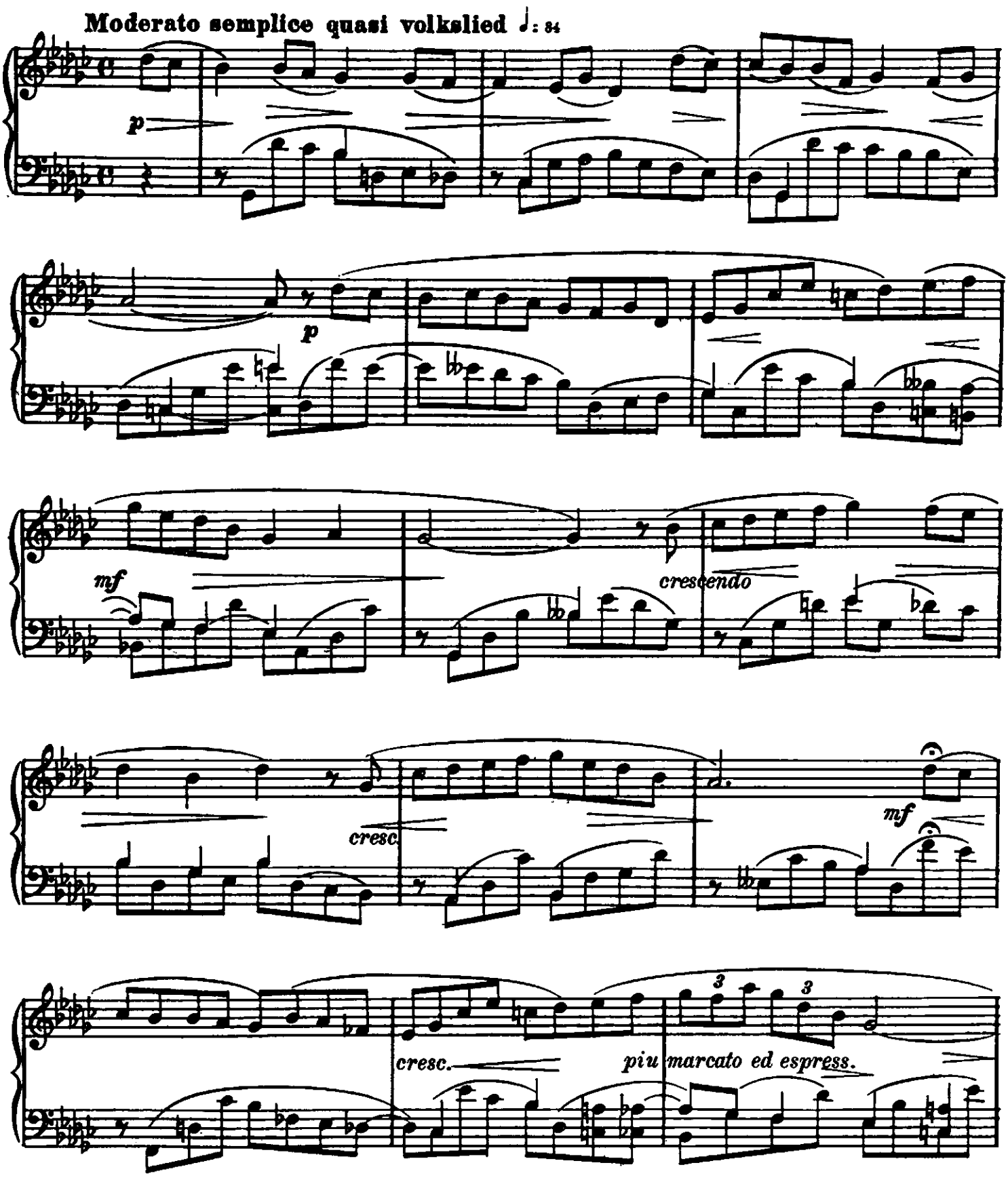
Legend:

> And it came to pass, ... that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.
>
> —Samuel xviii, -1

To the memory of Carl

As His Own Soul

3



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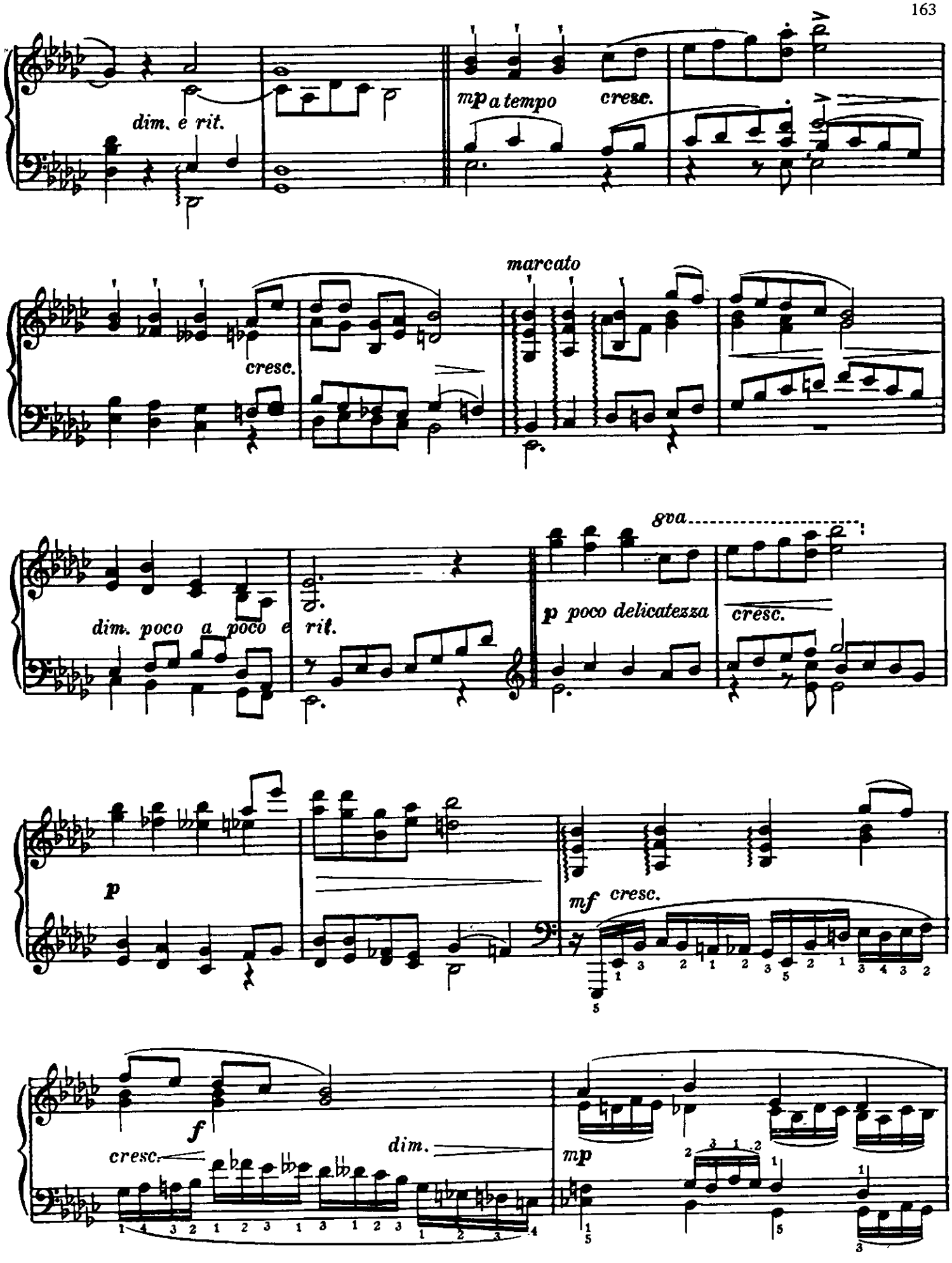
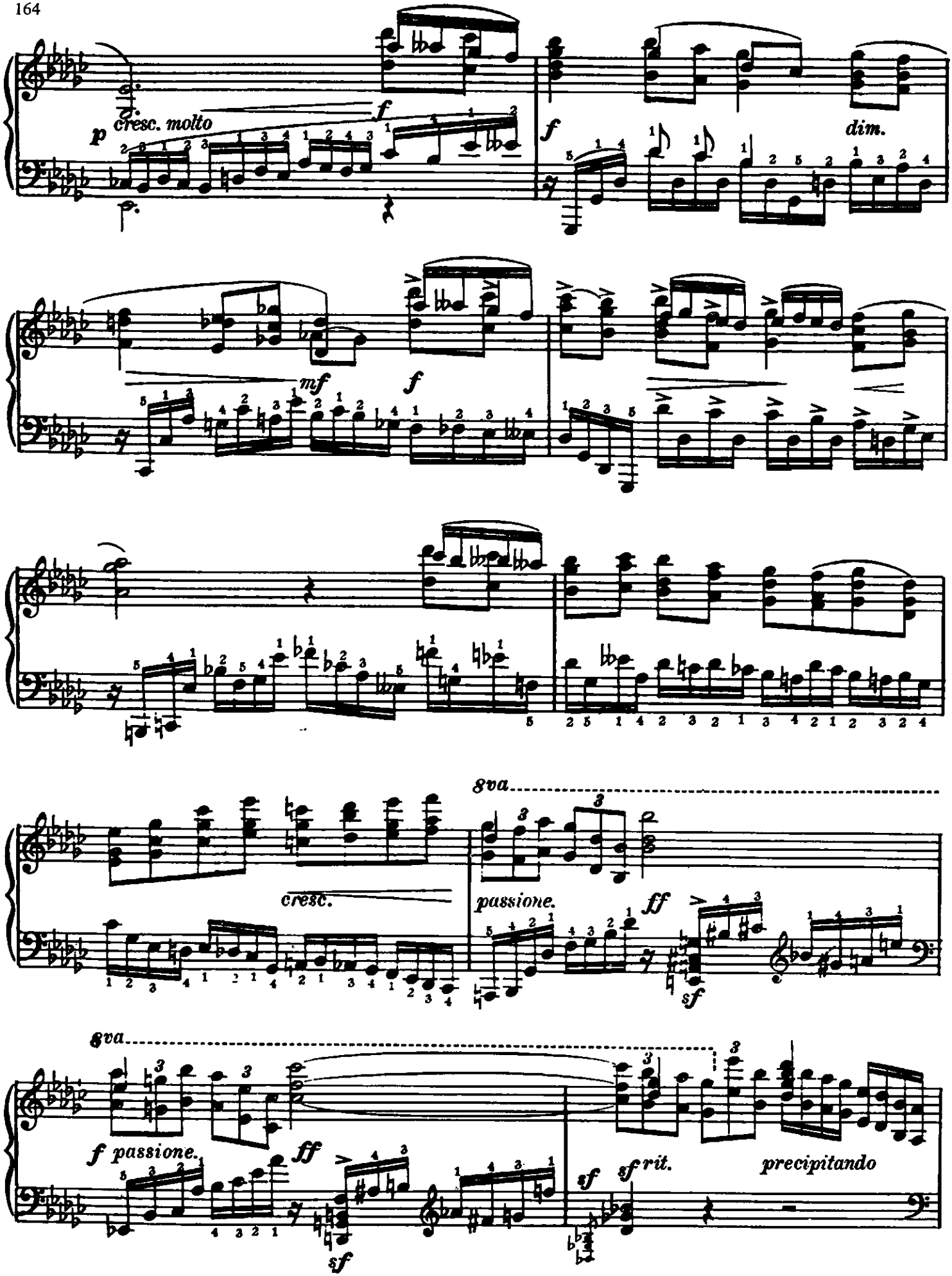
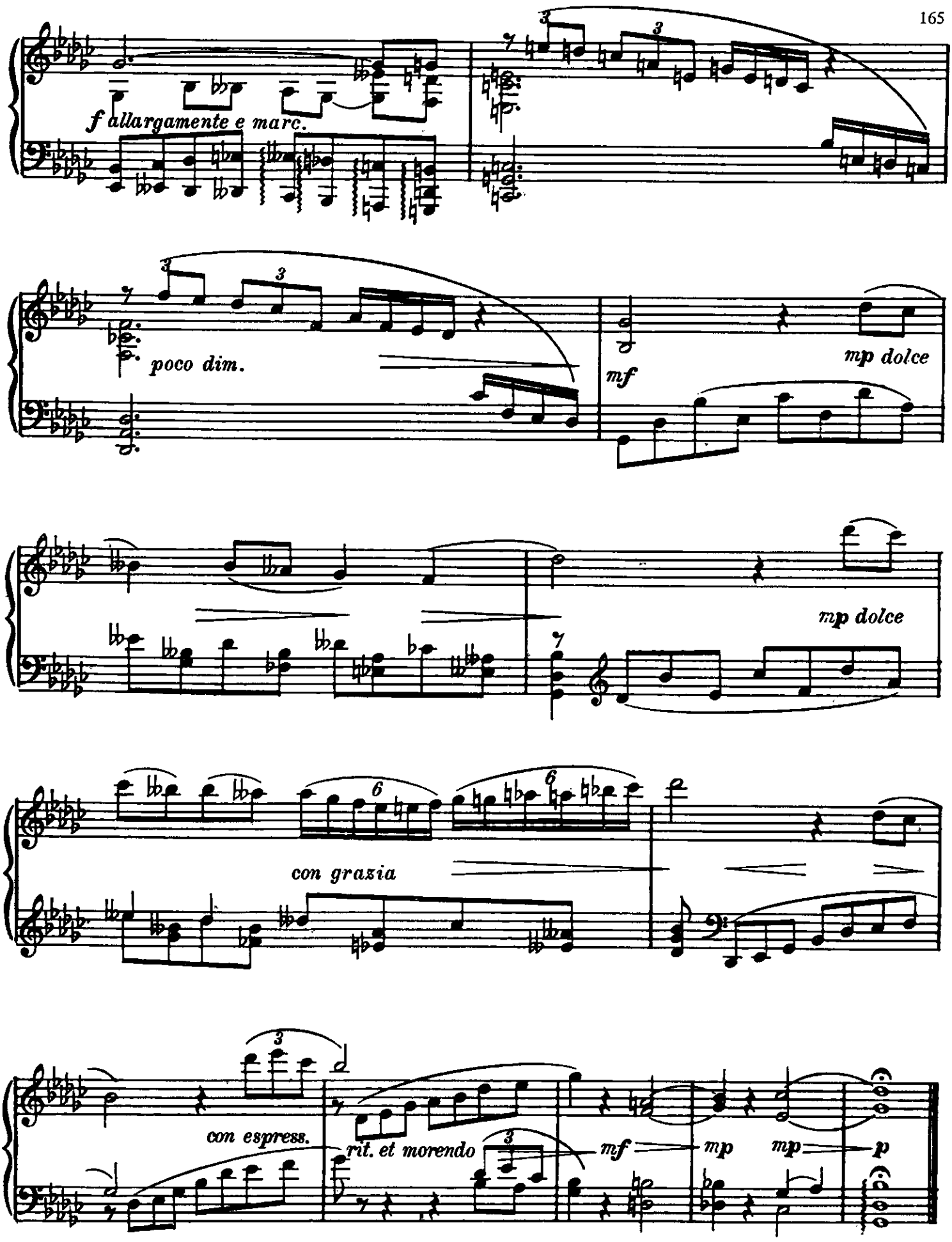
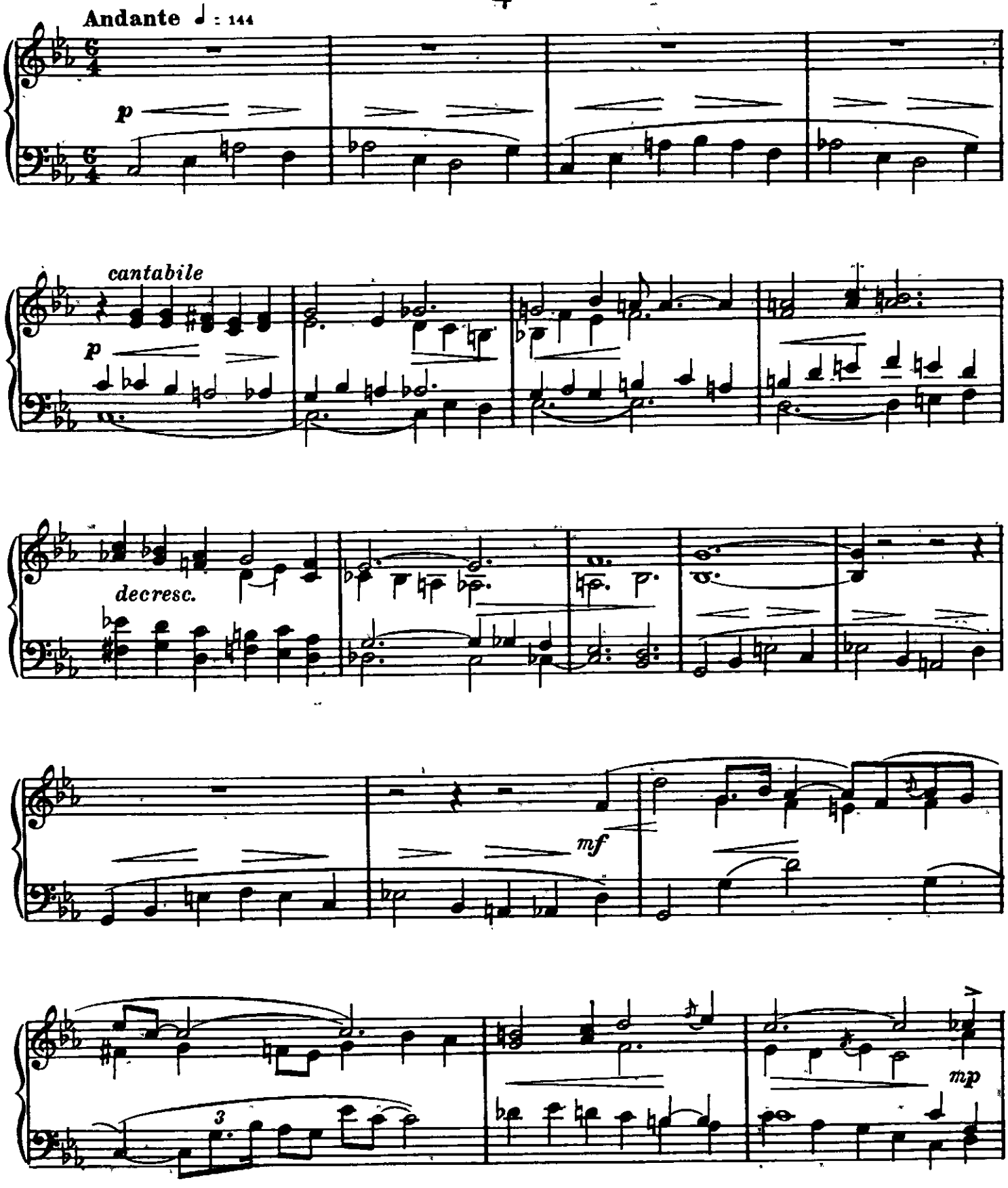

dim. e rit.
mp a tempo
cresc.
marcato
cresc.
8va
dim. poco a poco e rit.
p poco delicatezza
cresc.
p
mf cresc.
f
cresc.
dim.
mp


p
cresc. molto
f
f
dim.
mf
f
cresc.
8va
passione.
ff
sf
8va
f passione.
ff
sf
sf
sf rit.
precipitando


f allargamente e marc.
poco dim.
mf
mp dolce
mp dolce
con grazia
con espress.
rit. et morendo
mf
mp
mp
p

Barcarolle Of Tears

4



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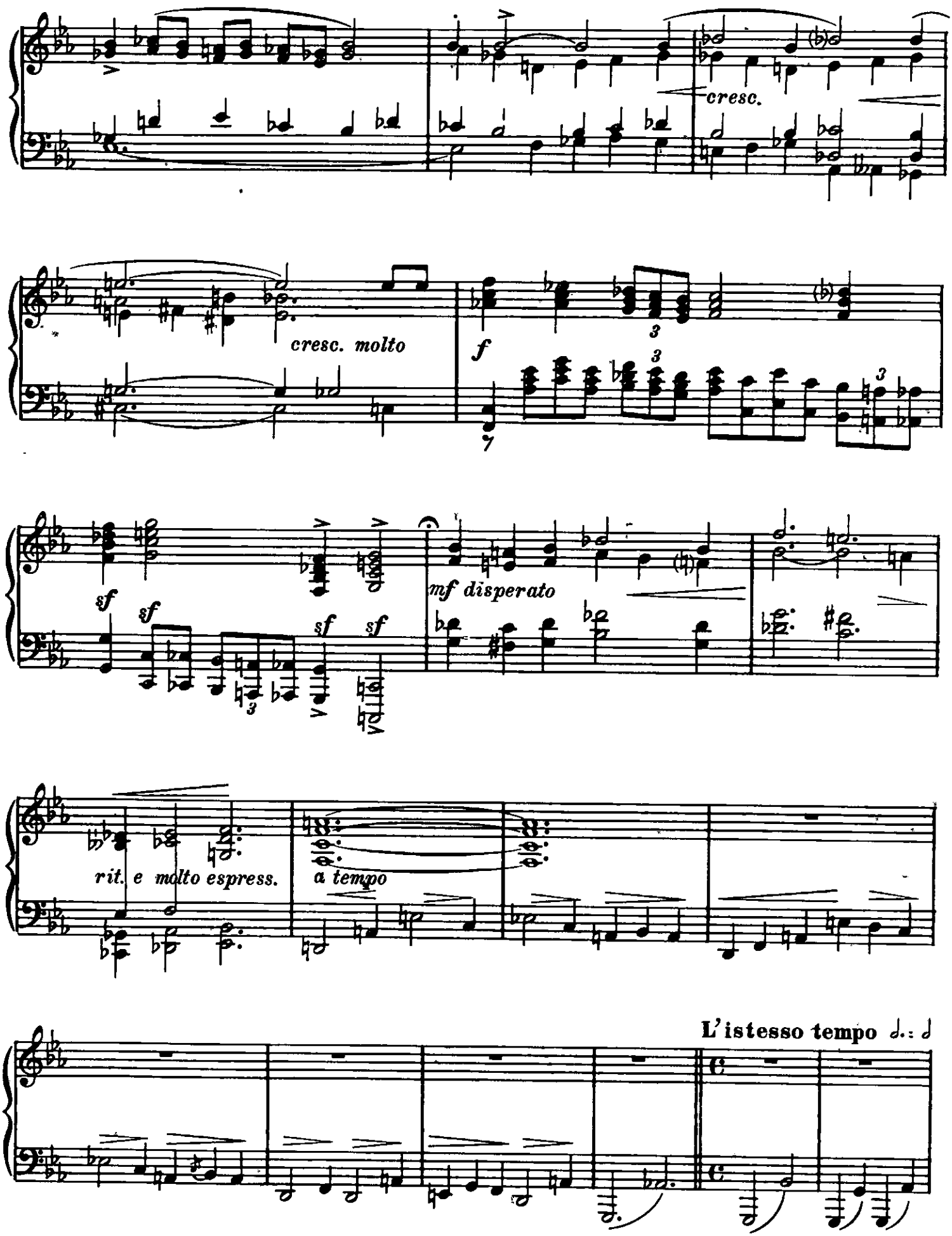
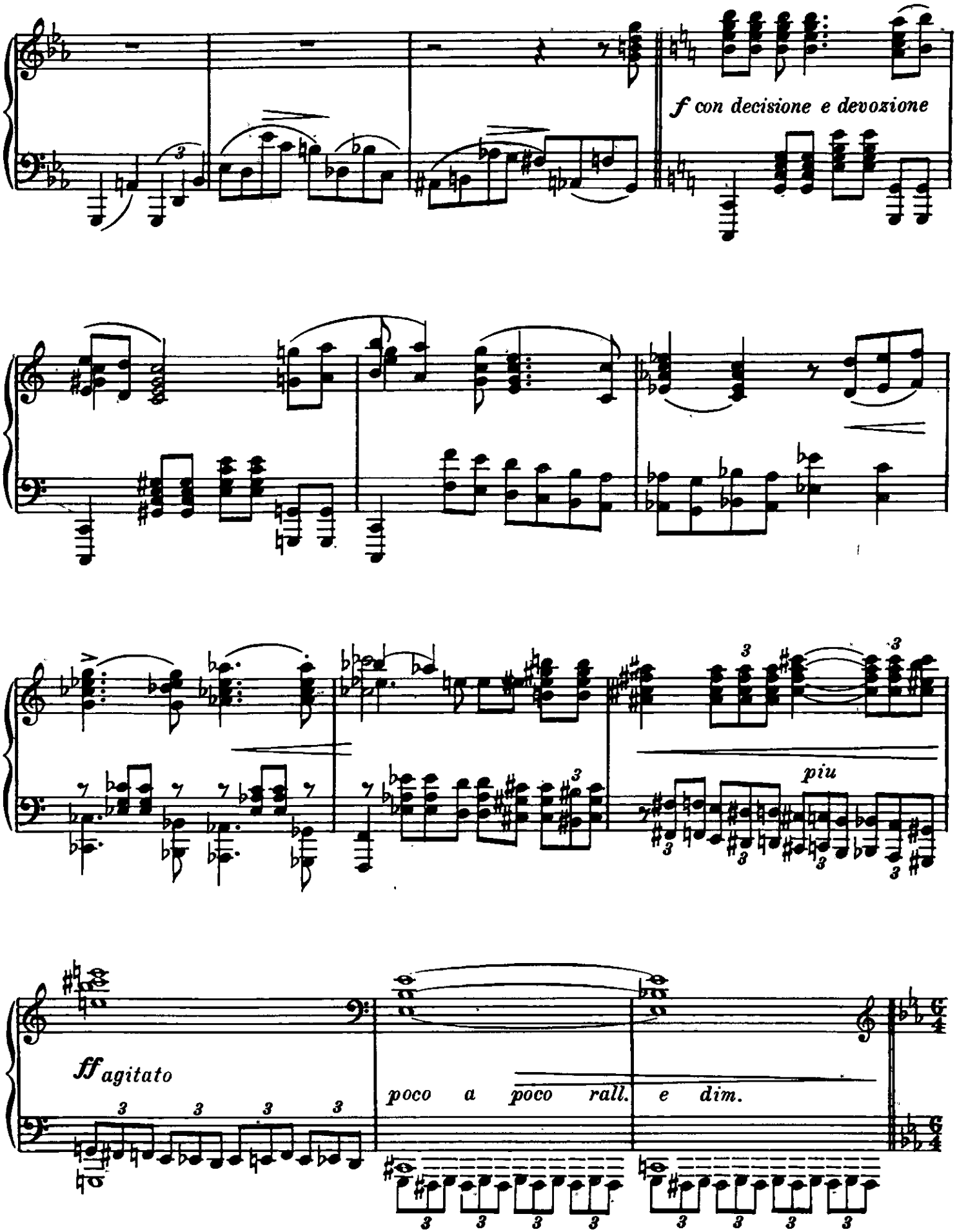
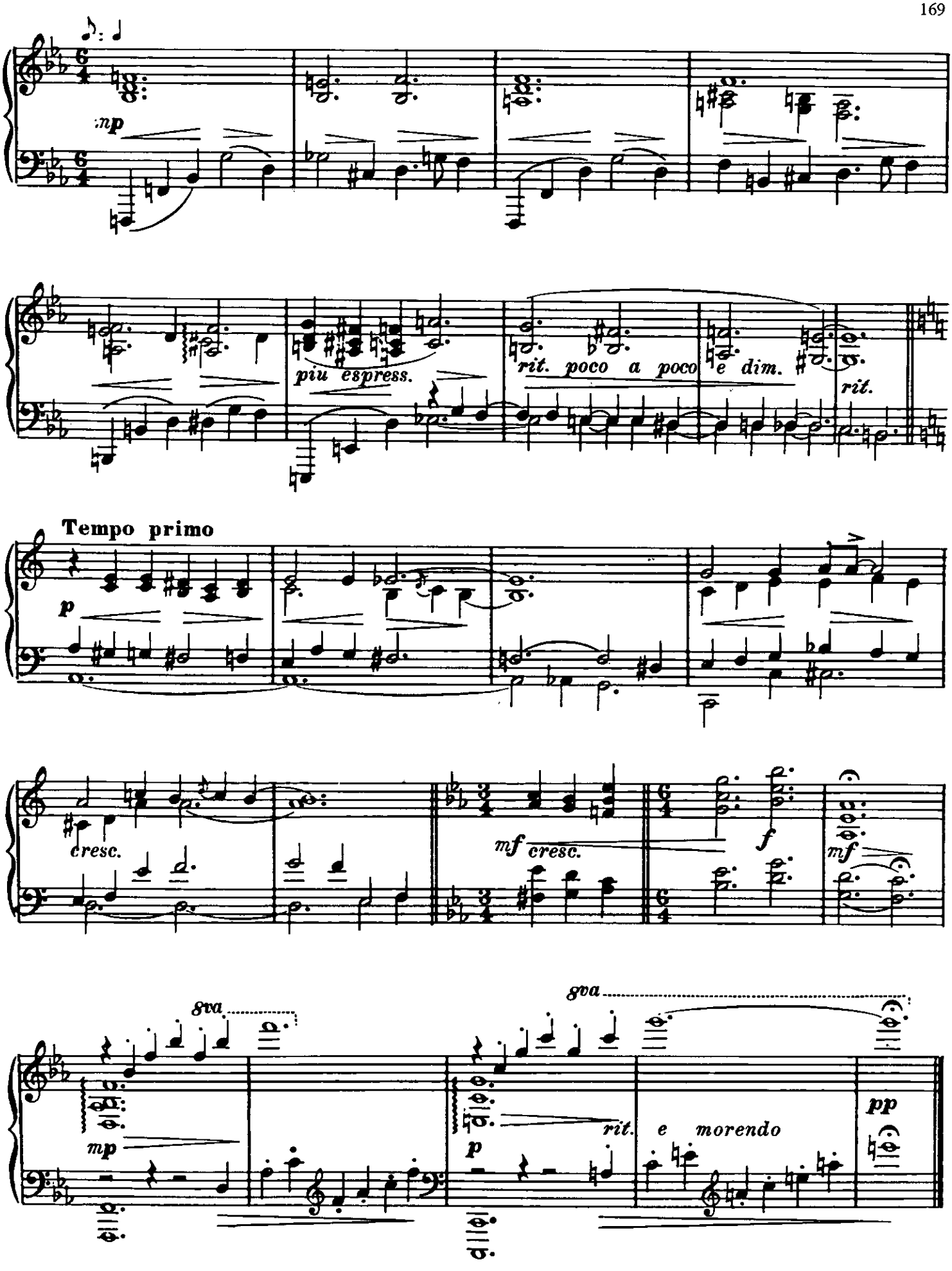

cresc.
cresc. molto
f
sf
sf
sf
sf
mf disperato
rit. e molto espress.
a tempo
L'istesso tempo


f con decisione e devozione
piu
ff agitato
poco a poco rall. e dim.


np
piu espress.
rit. poco a poco e dim.
rit.
Tempo primo
p
cresc.
mf cresc.
f
mf
8va
mp
8va
p
rit.
e morendo
pp

I Am The True Vine

5

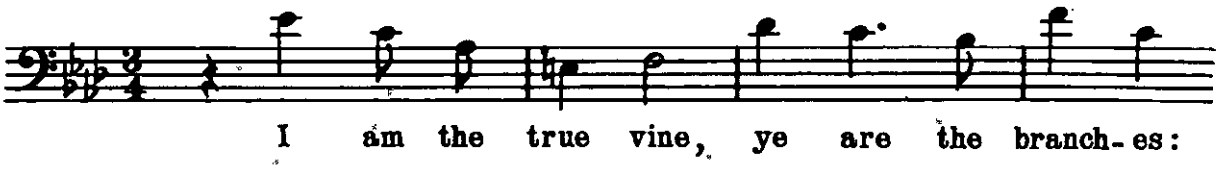
LEGEND:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

--- John xv - 1

I am the vine, ye are the branches:

--- John xv - 5

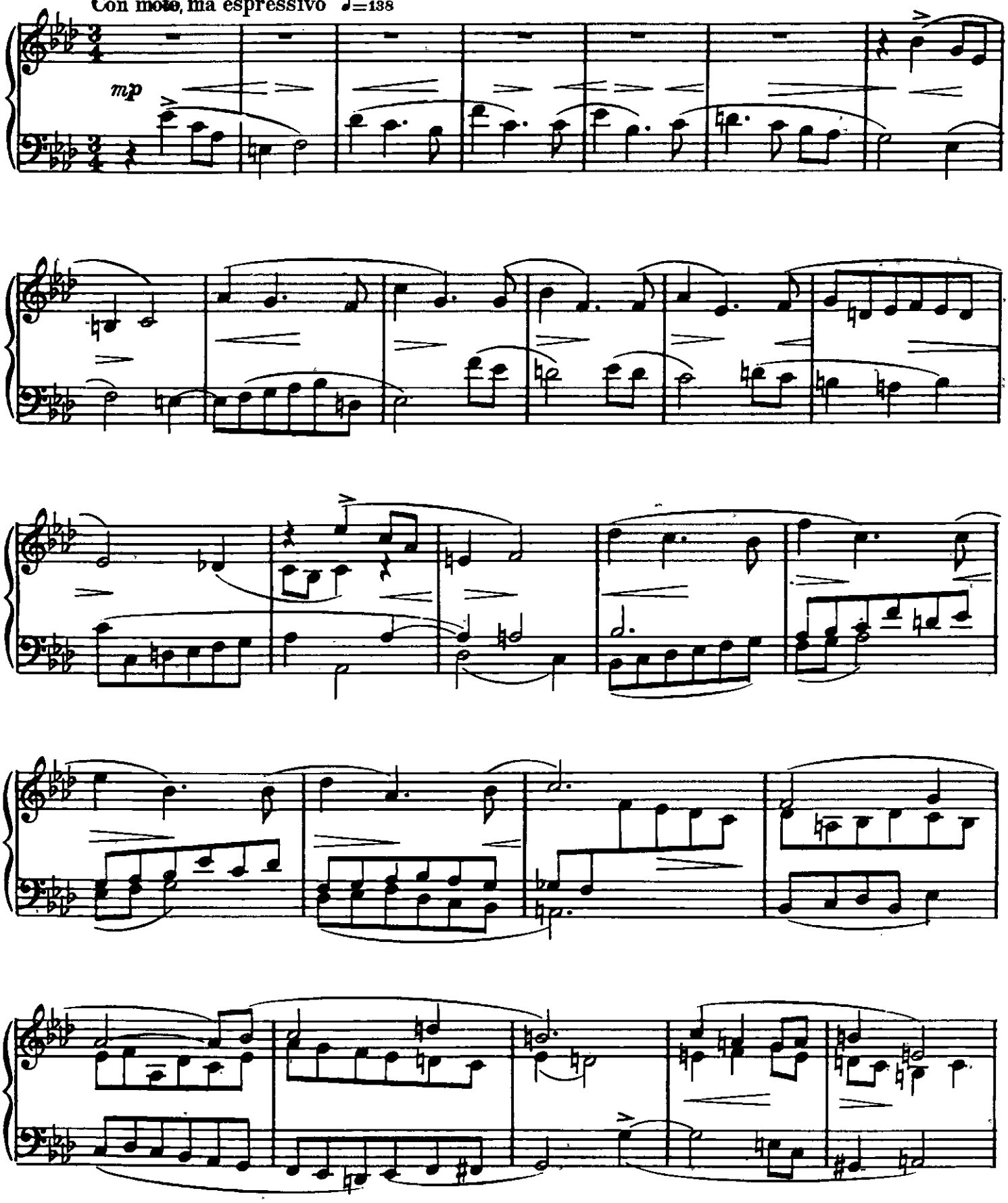


Because of the triune conception of the Divinity, this fugue is assigned to three voices; and as in the case of the other actual word quotations, the rhythm and flow of the text decided both the inspiration and the treatment of the theme.

I Am The True Vine

5

Con moto, ma espressivo ♩=138



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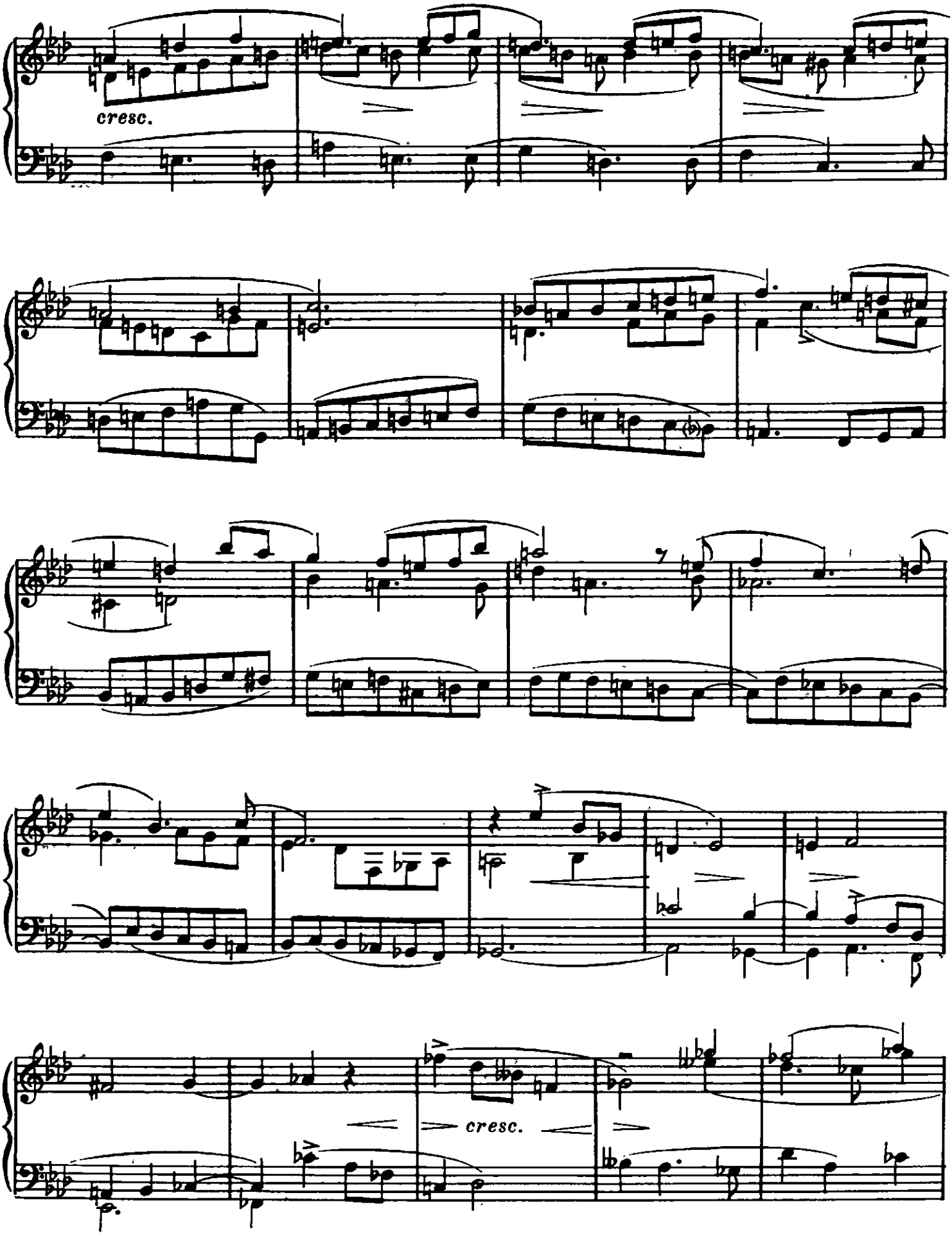
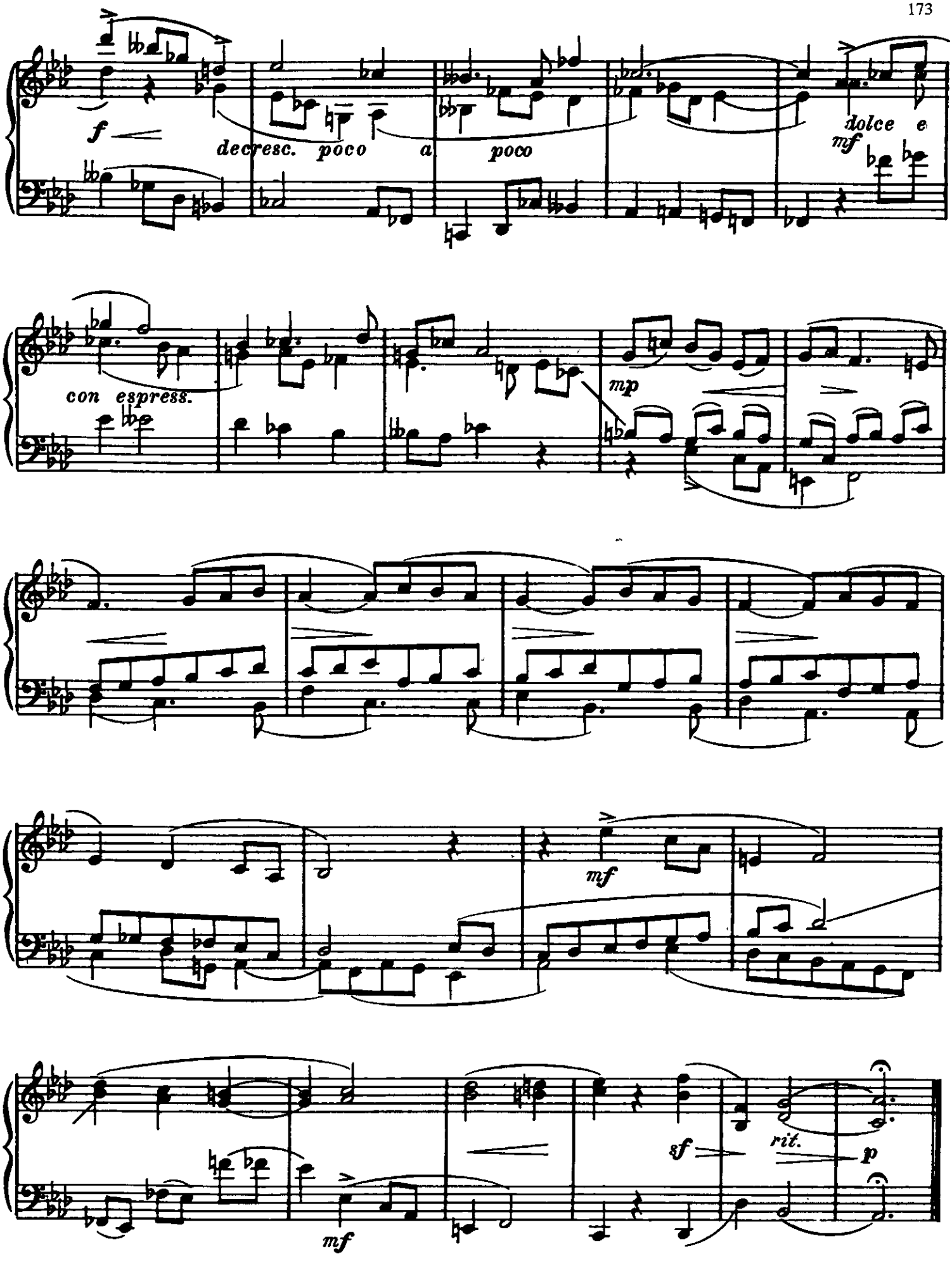

cresc.
cresc.

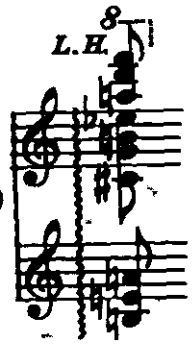

f
decresc. poco a poco
dolce e
mf
con espress.
mp
mf
sf
rit.
p
mf

Martha Complained

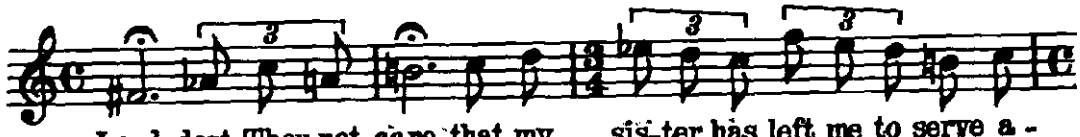
6

LEGEND:

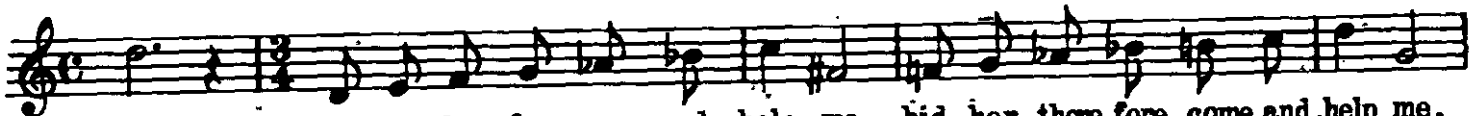
In MARTHA COMPLAINED, the ground bass represents the monotonous drudgery of work and the high-pitched melody, Martha's dissatisfaction with it. Her feelings become more and more tense until finally, in her impatience, she breaks a dish (an imaginative incident represented by the arpeggiated dissonant chord:-)



and this proves to be the last straw. She goes straight to the Master:

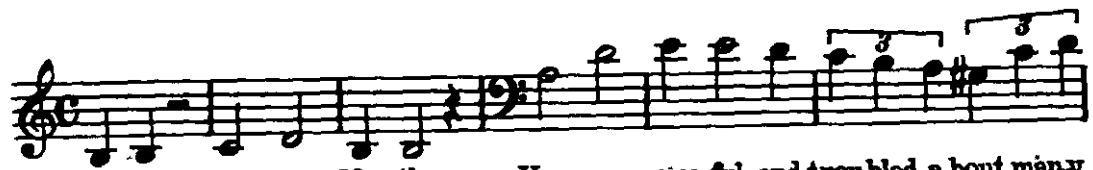


Lord, dost Thou not care that my sis-ter has left me to serve a-lone?

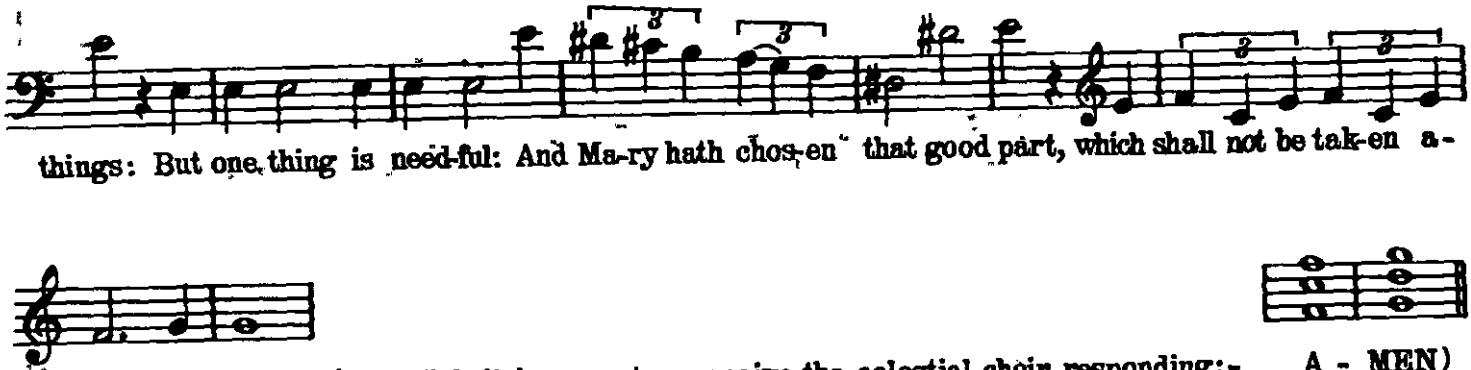


Bid her there-fore come and help me,- bid her there-fore come and help me.

But Jesus reproves her:-



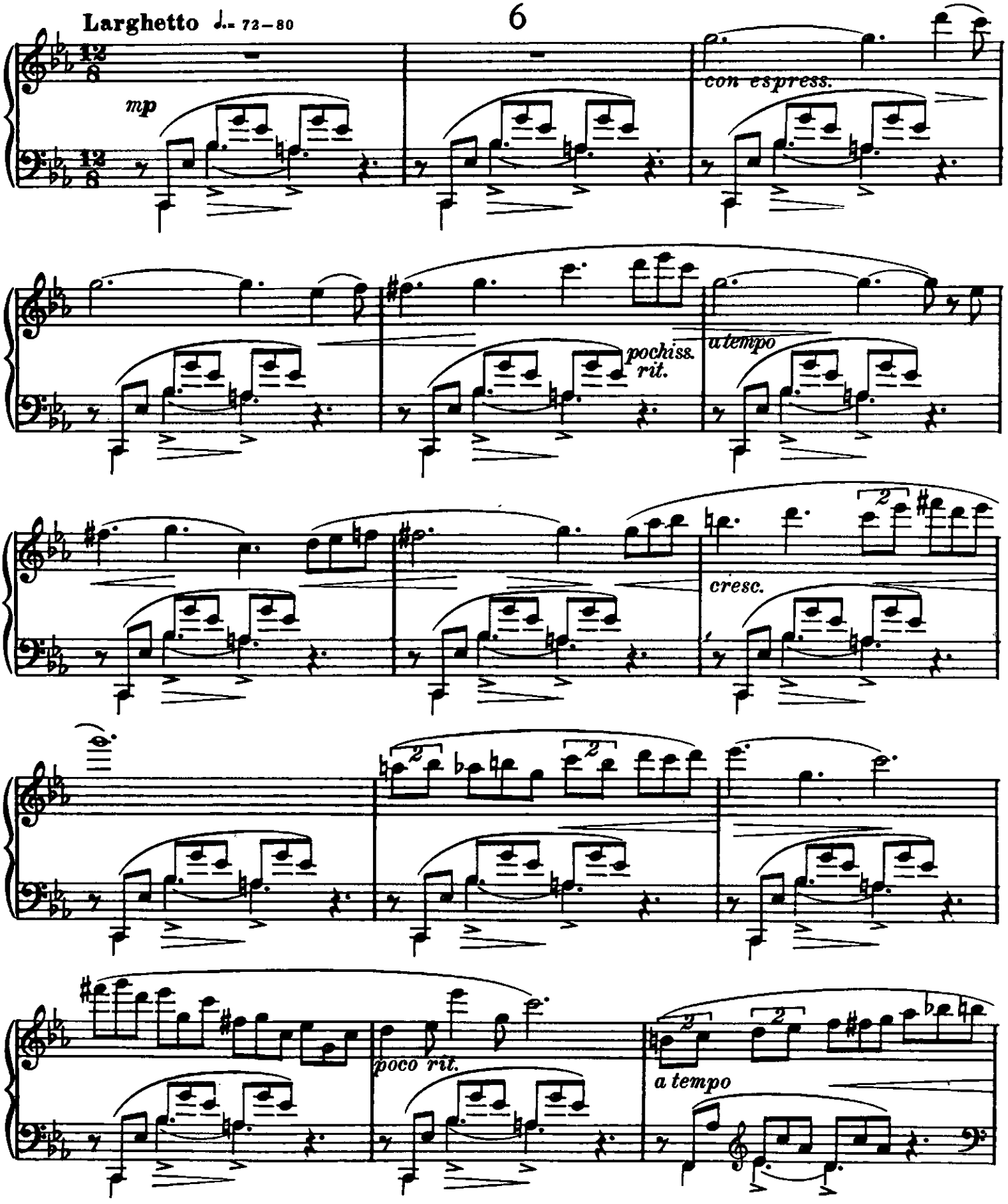
Mar-tha, Mar-tha, Mar-tha, You are care-ful and trou-bled a-bout man-y things: But one thing is need-ful: And Ma-ry hath chos-en that good part, which shall not be tak-en a-way from her.



(To which it is easy to conceive the celestial choir responding:- A - MEN)

Martha returns to her duties and upon reflection (it is the composer's thought) a change takes place in her feelings; the music changes from minor to major, indicating that something of light has passed into her soul.

Martha Complained



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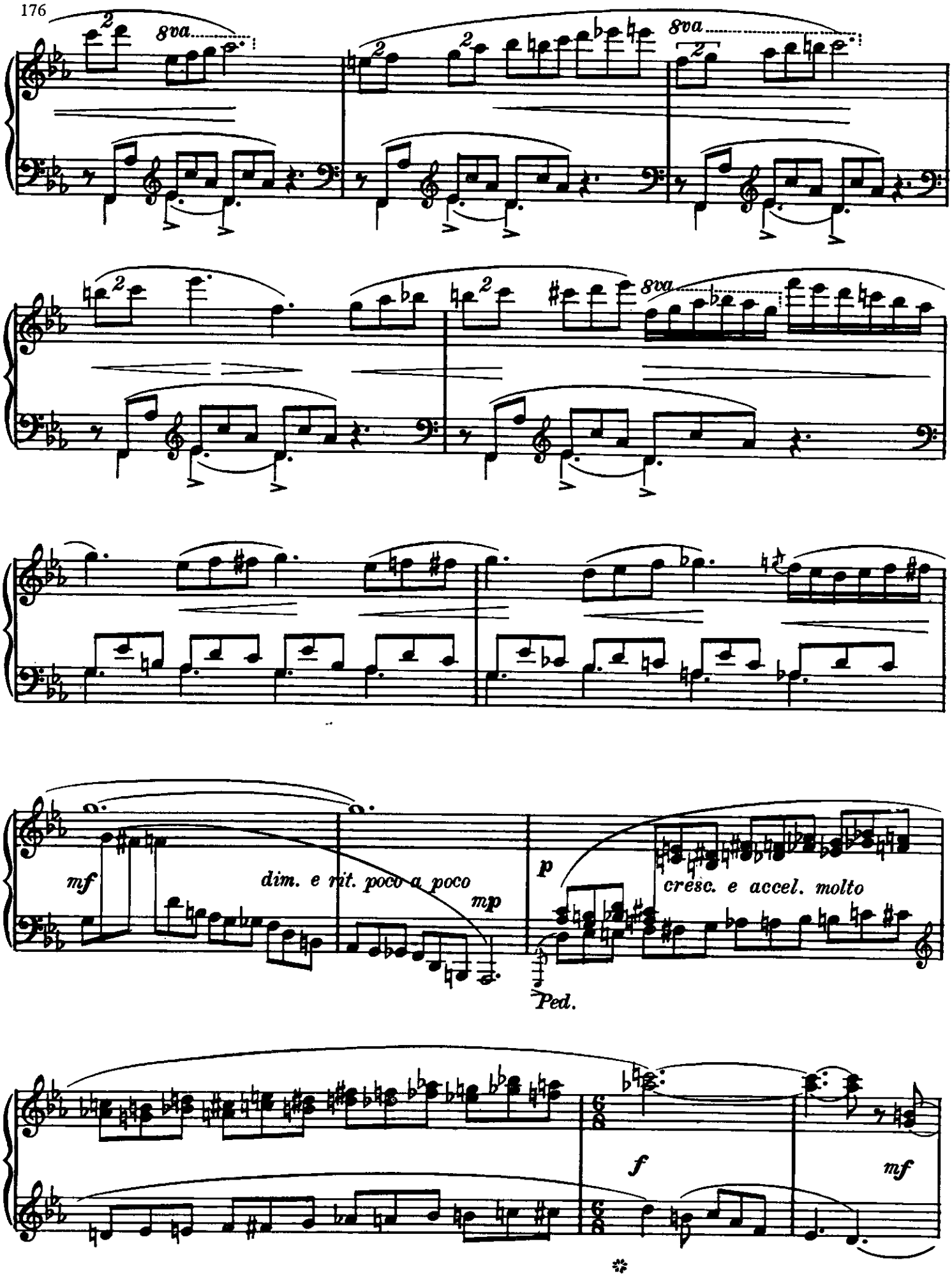
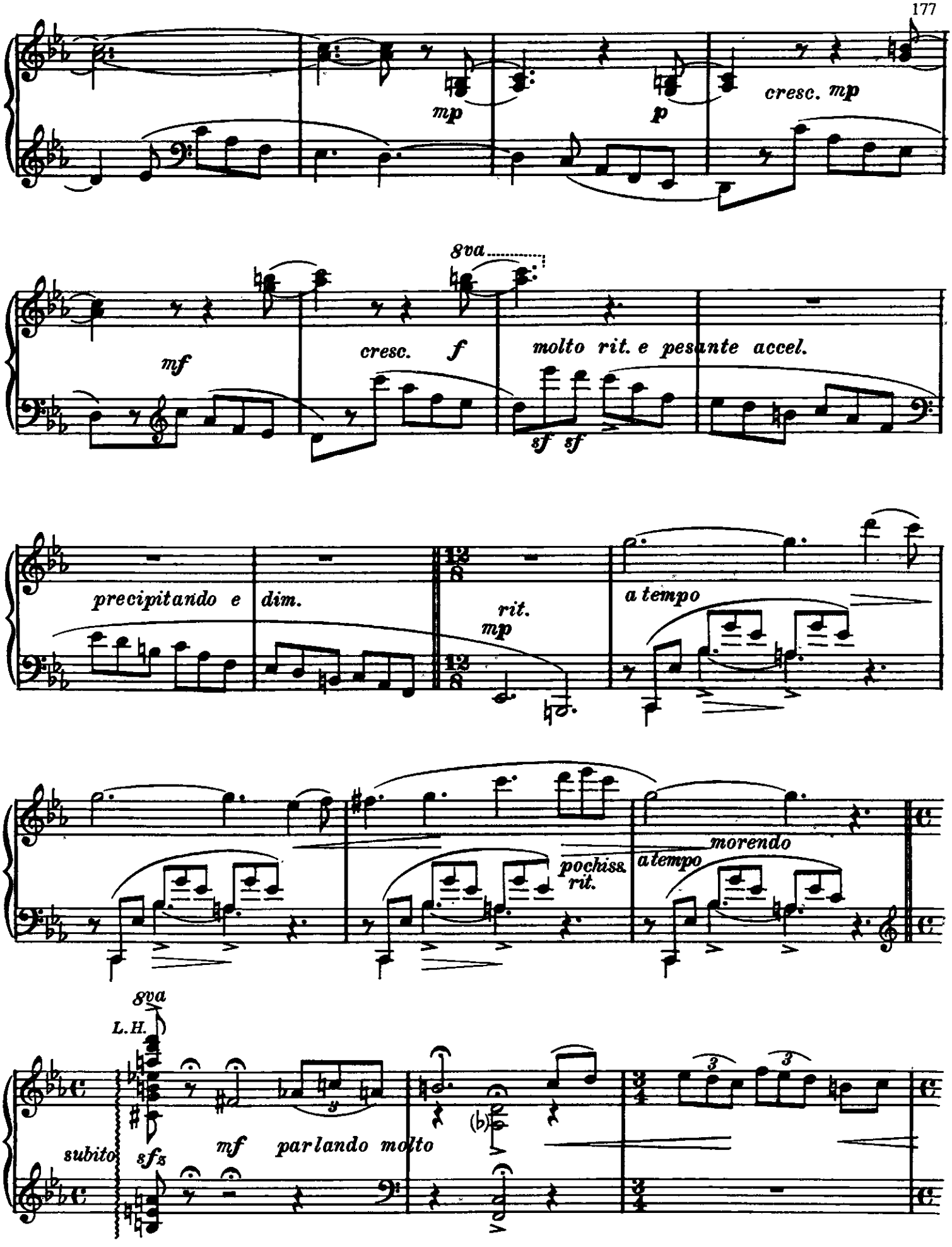
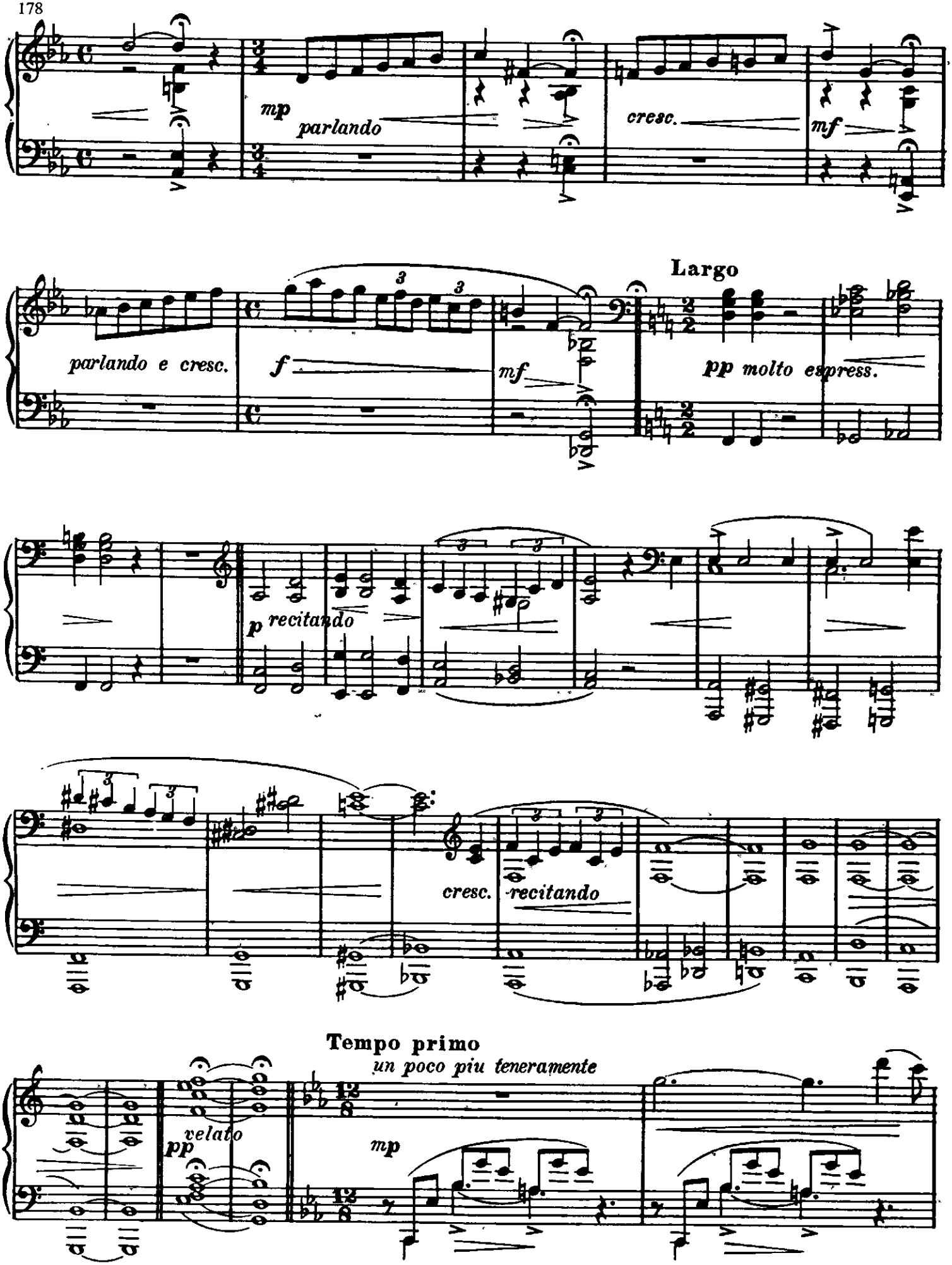
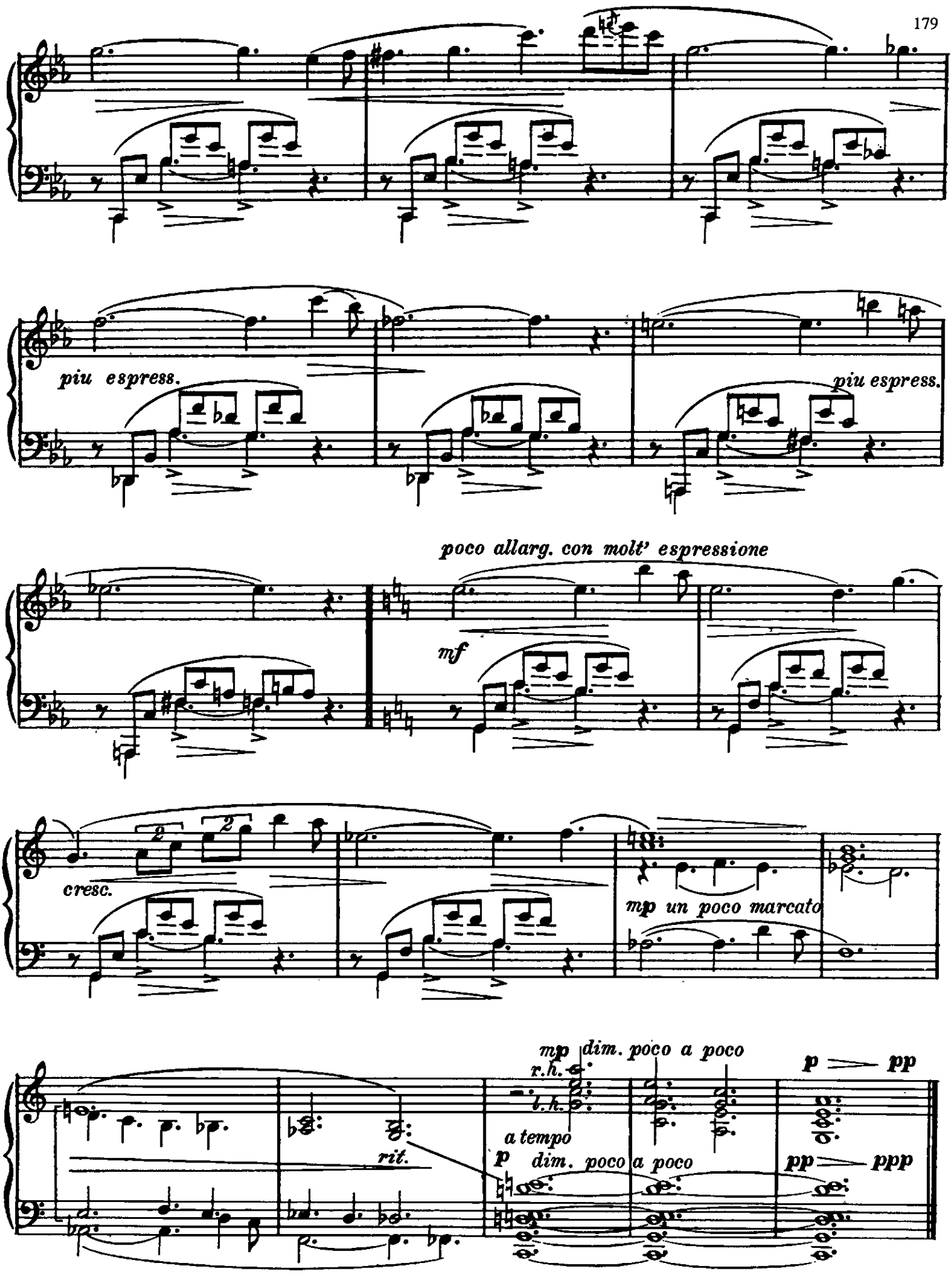

8va
8va
8va
mf
dim. e rit. poco a poco
mp
p
cresc. e accel. molto
Ped.
f
mf


mp
p
cresc. mp
8va
mf
cresc.
f
molto rit. e pesante accel.
sf sf
precipitando e
dim.
rit.
mp
a tempo
pochiss.
rit.
a tempo
morendo
8va
L.H.
subito
sfz
mf
parlando molto


mp
parlando
cresc.
mf
parlando e cresc.
f
mf
Largo
pp molto espress.
p
recitando
cresc.
recitando
Tempo primo
un poco piu teneramente
pp
velato
mp


piu espress.
piu espress.
poco allarg. con molt' espressione
mf
cresc.
mp un poco marcato
mp dim. poco a poco
r.h.
l.h.
p pp
a tempo
rit.
p dim. poco a poco
pp ppp

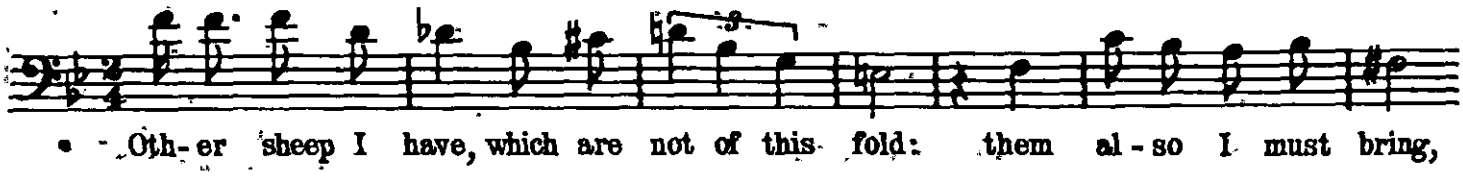
Other Sheep

7

LEGEND:

And other sheep I have, which
are not of this fold: them also
I must bring, ...

---- John x, 16



That there were other groups besides the "chosen people" to whom the Messianic message should be brought, is evidenced by this pronouncement of the Master. Who these might be, we do not know, but it is reasonable to suppose that they were outside the pale of the Twelve Tribes.

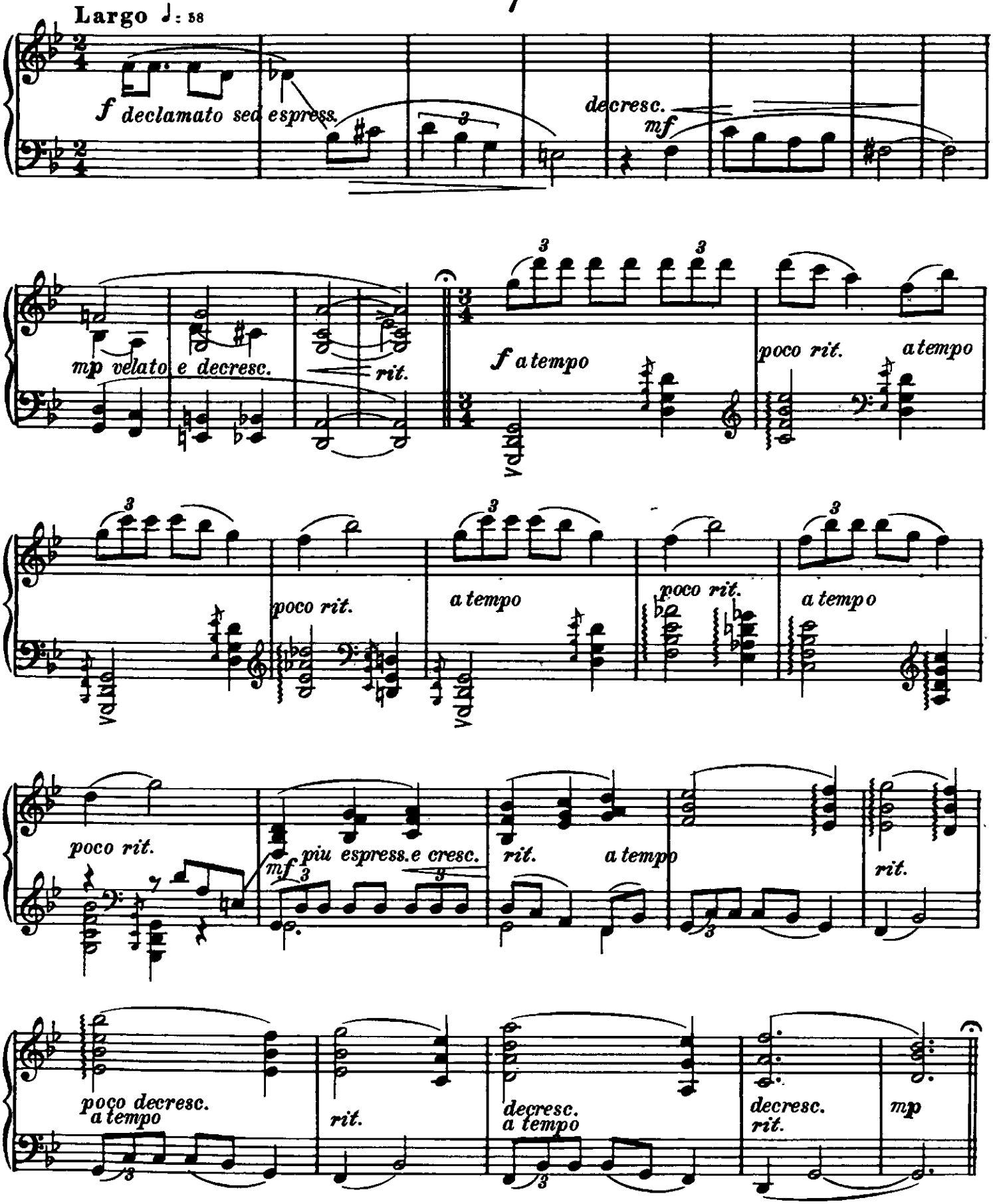
The melody used for representation is one of many given the writer several years ago by a former pupil, Mr. Dahklama Simango, a native African; and was chosen because it seemed to possess a certain yearning quality suitable for the portrayal of the feelings of those who "longed for light."

The whole piece is a large two-part form, of which the first section is a set of variations, and the second section, (Poco Allegro), a sonata-allegro with coda.

It is obvious that the opening phrase is an unaccompanied setting of the biblical quotation and, as in "Martha Complained", the divine words are followed by an imaginary "Amen" by the celestial choir.

Other Sheep

7



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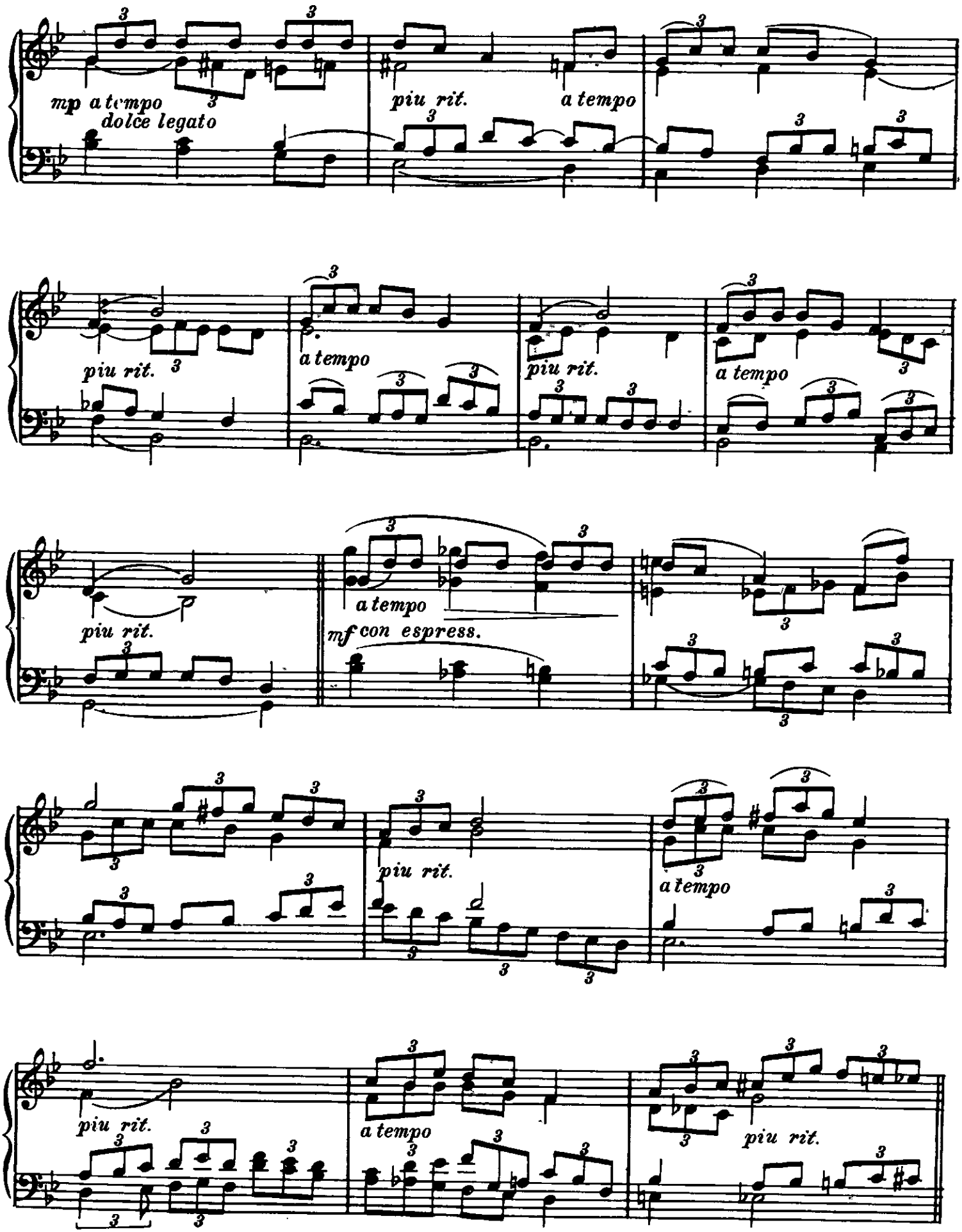
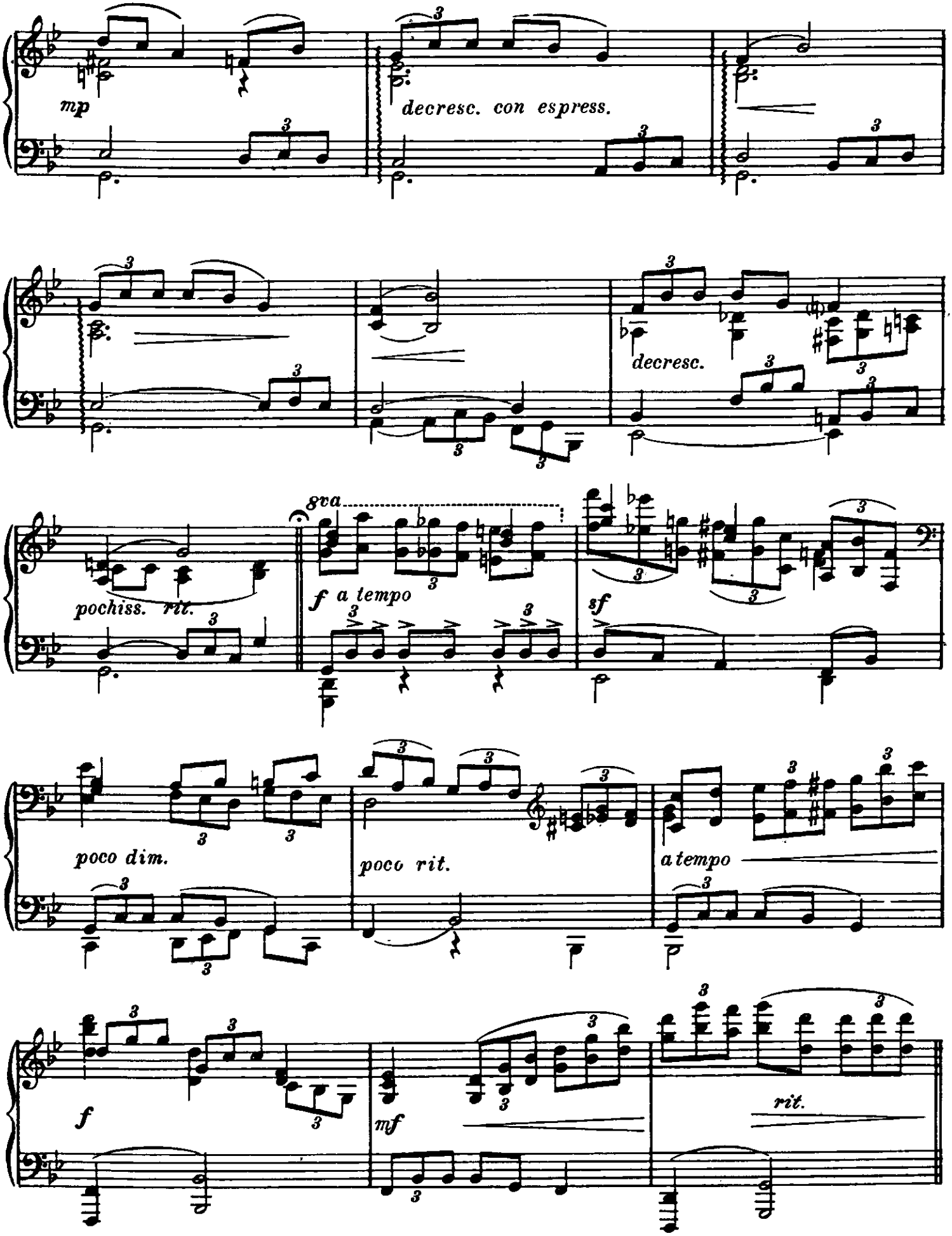
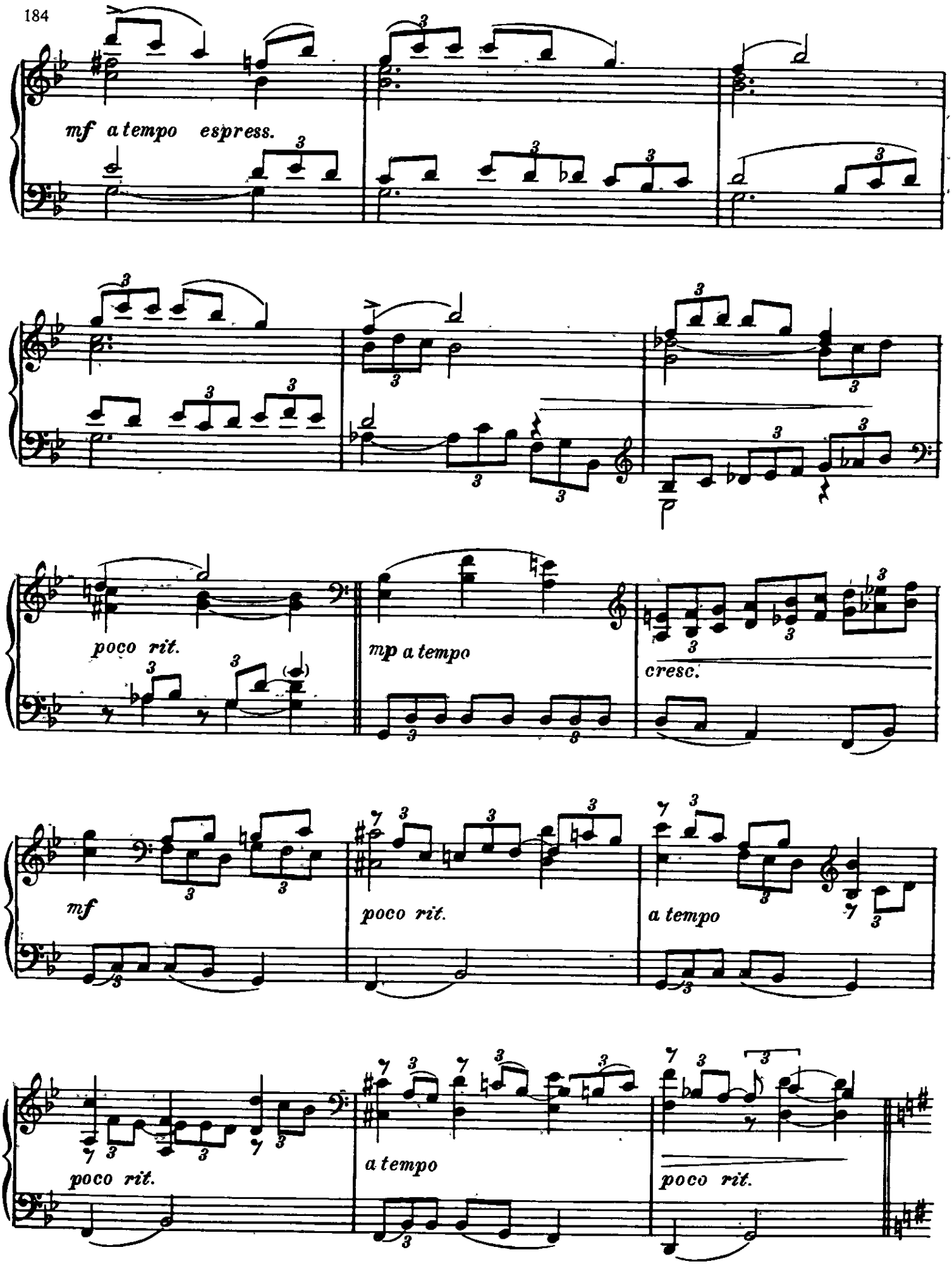
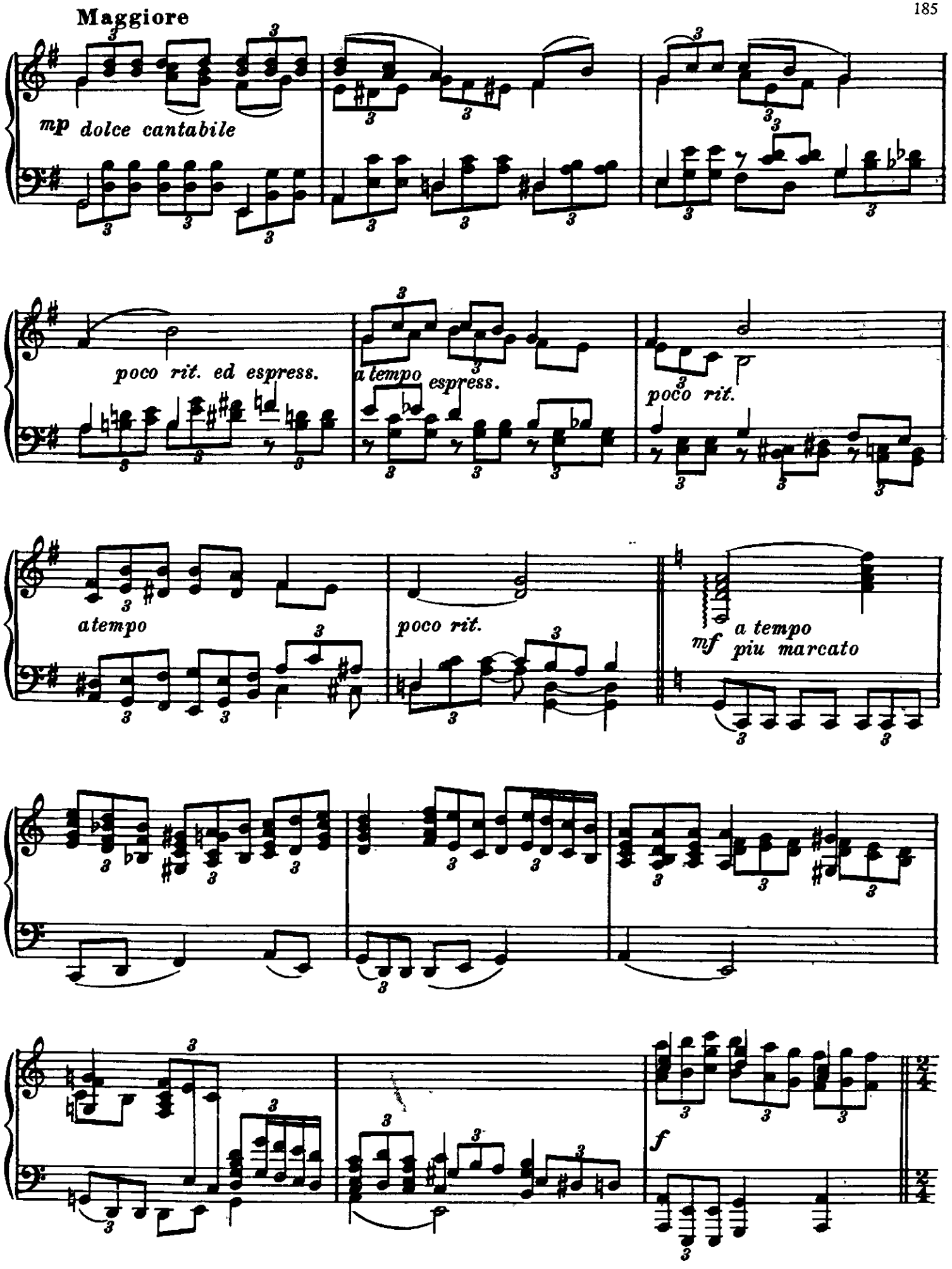
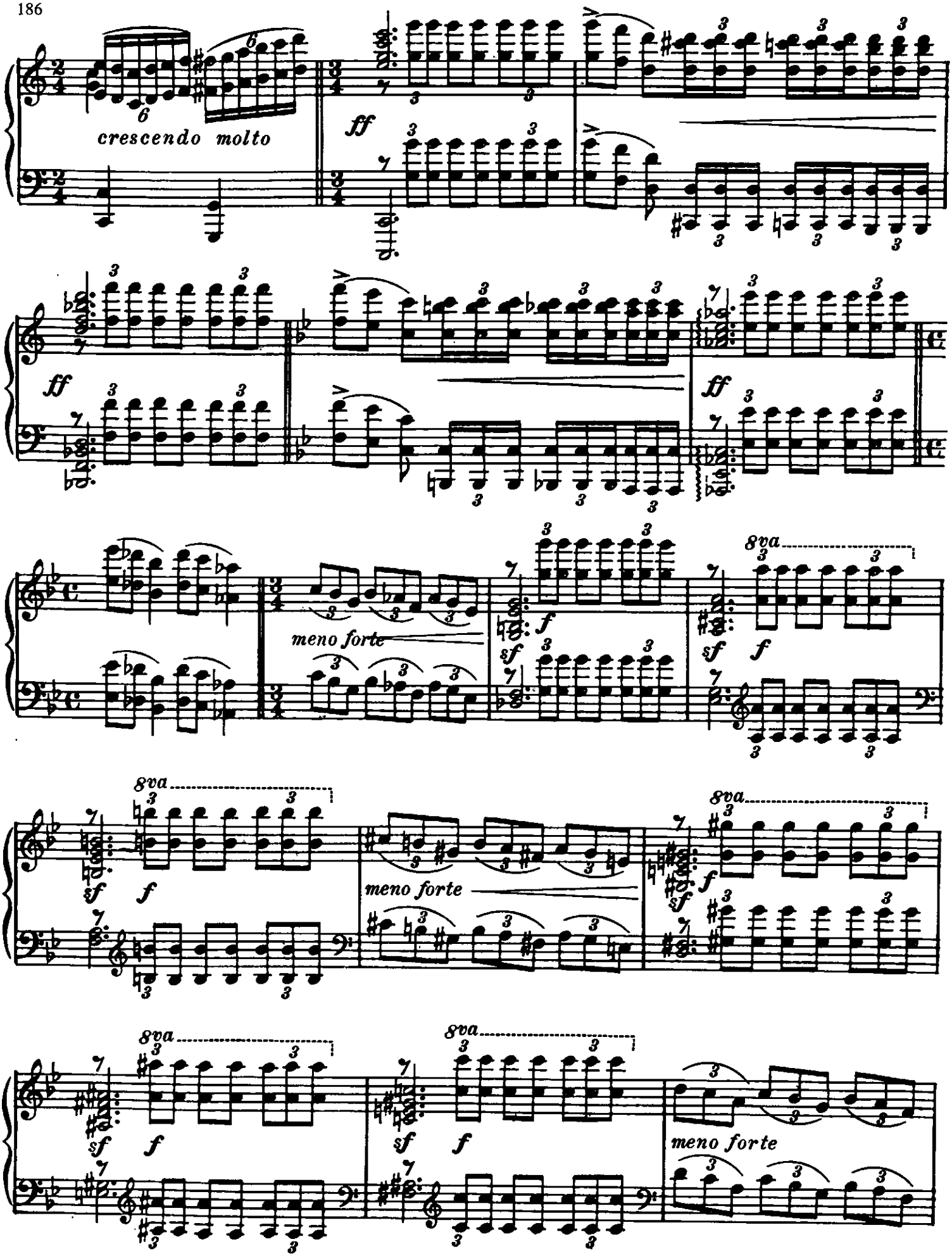
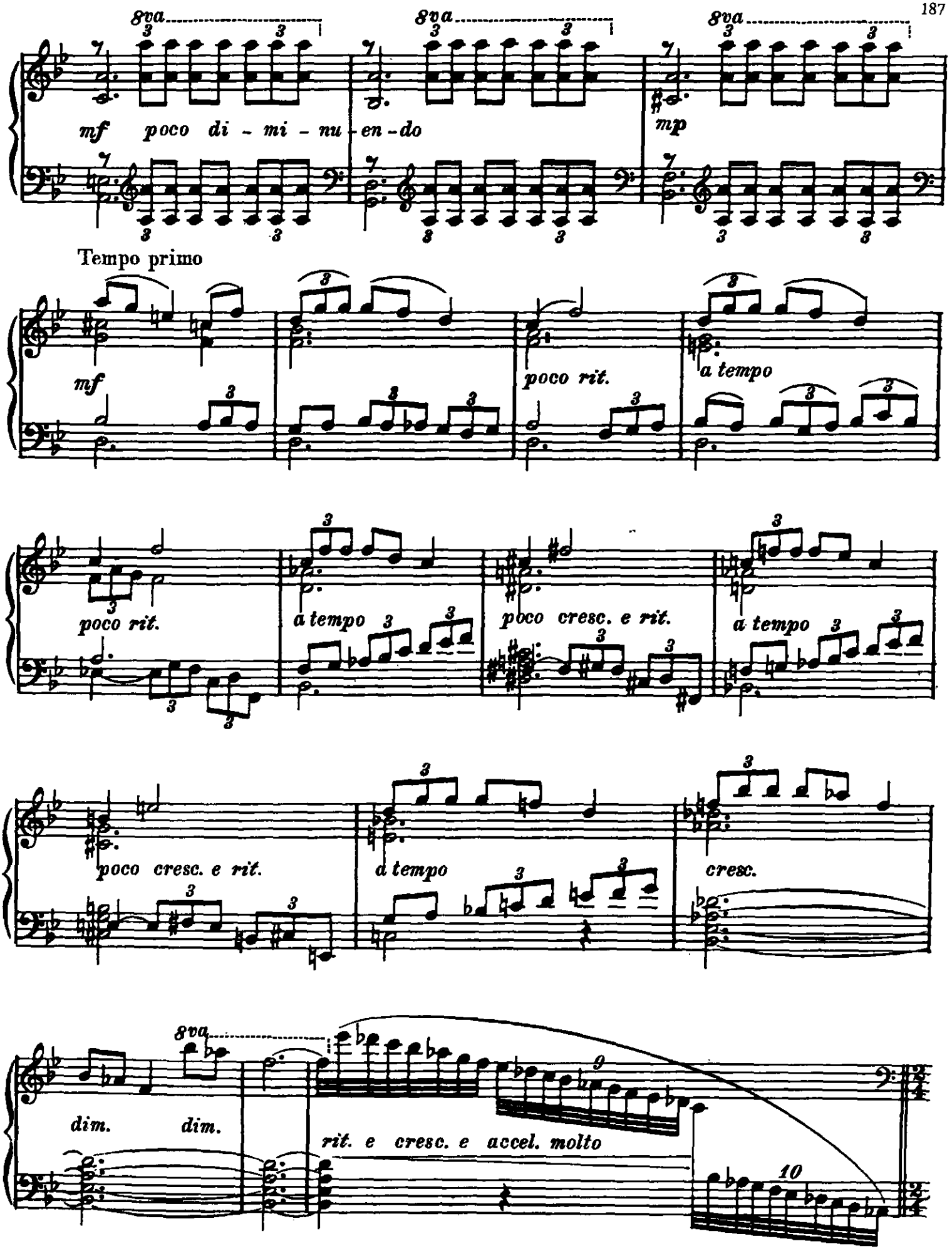

mp a tempo
dolce legato
piu rit.
a tempo
piu rit.
a tempo
piu rit.
a tempo
piu rit.
a tempo
mf con espress.
piu rit.
a tempo
piu rit.
a tempo

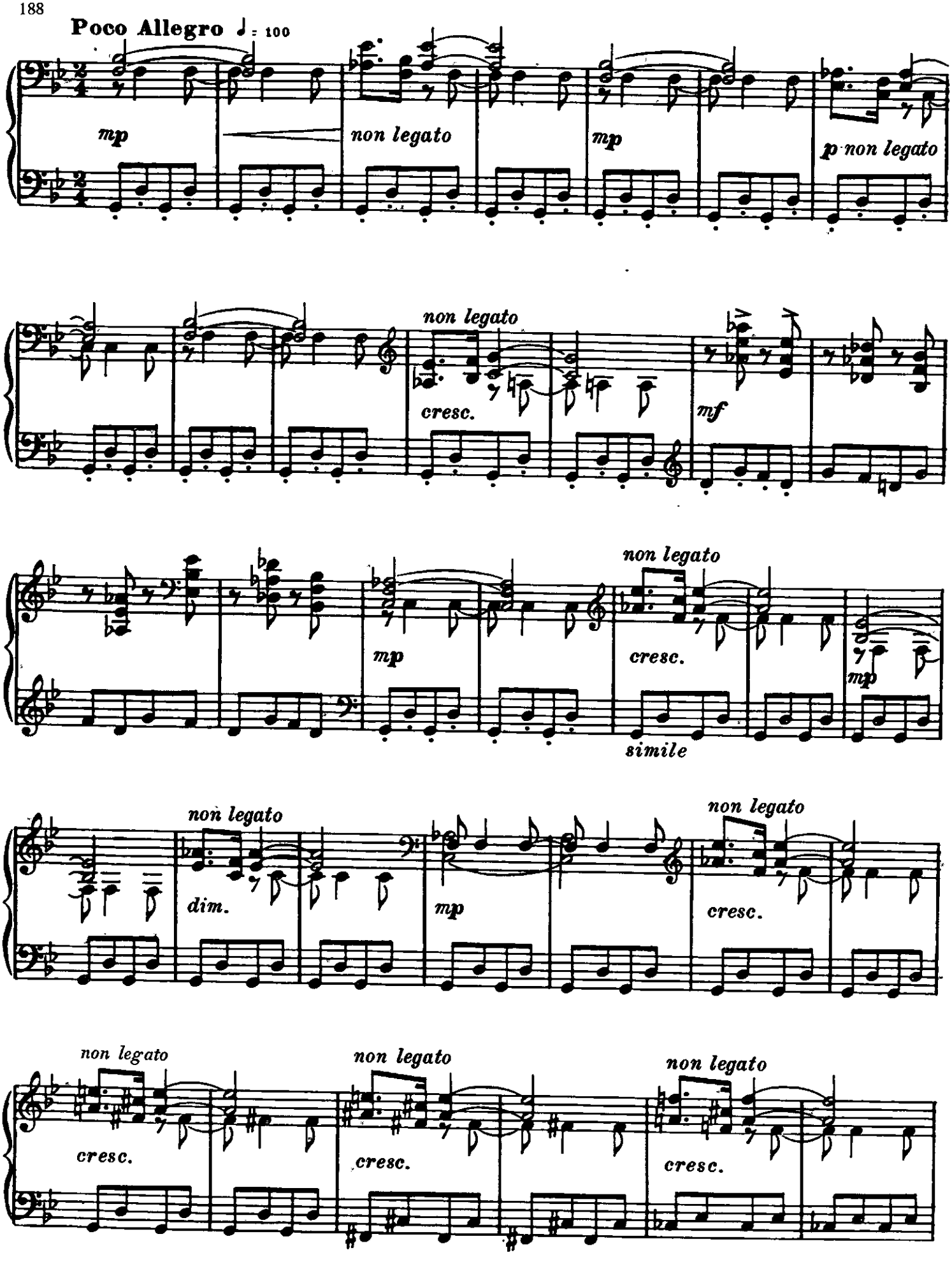

mp
decresc. con espress.
decresc.
8va
pochiss. rit.
f a tempo
sf
poco dim.
poco rit.
a tempo
f
mf
rit.

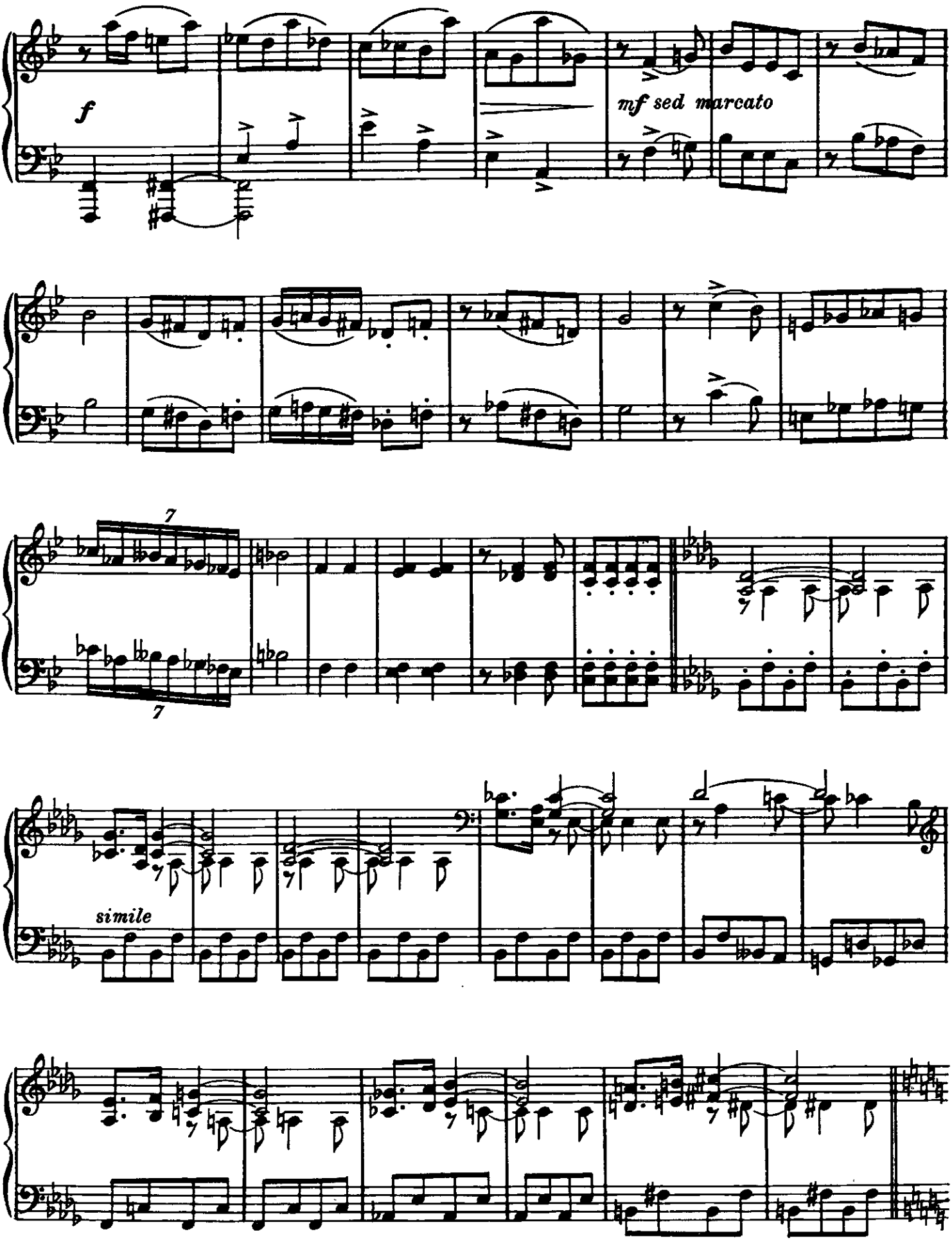

mf a tempo espress.
poco rit.
mp a tempo
cresc.
mf
poco rit.
a tempo
poco rit.
a tempo
poco rit.

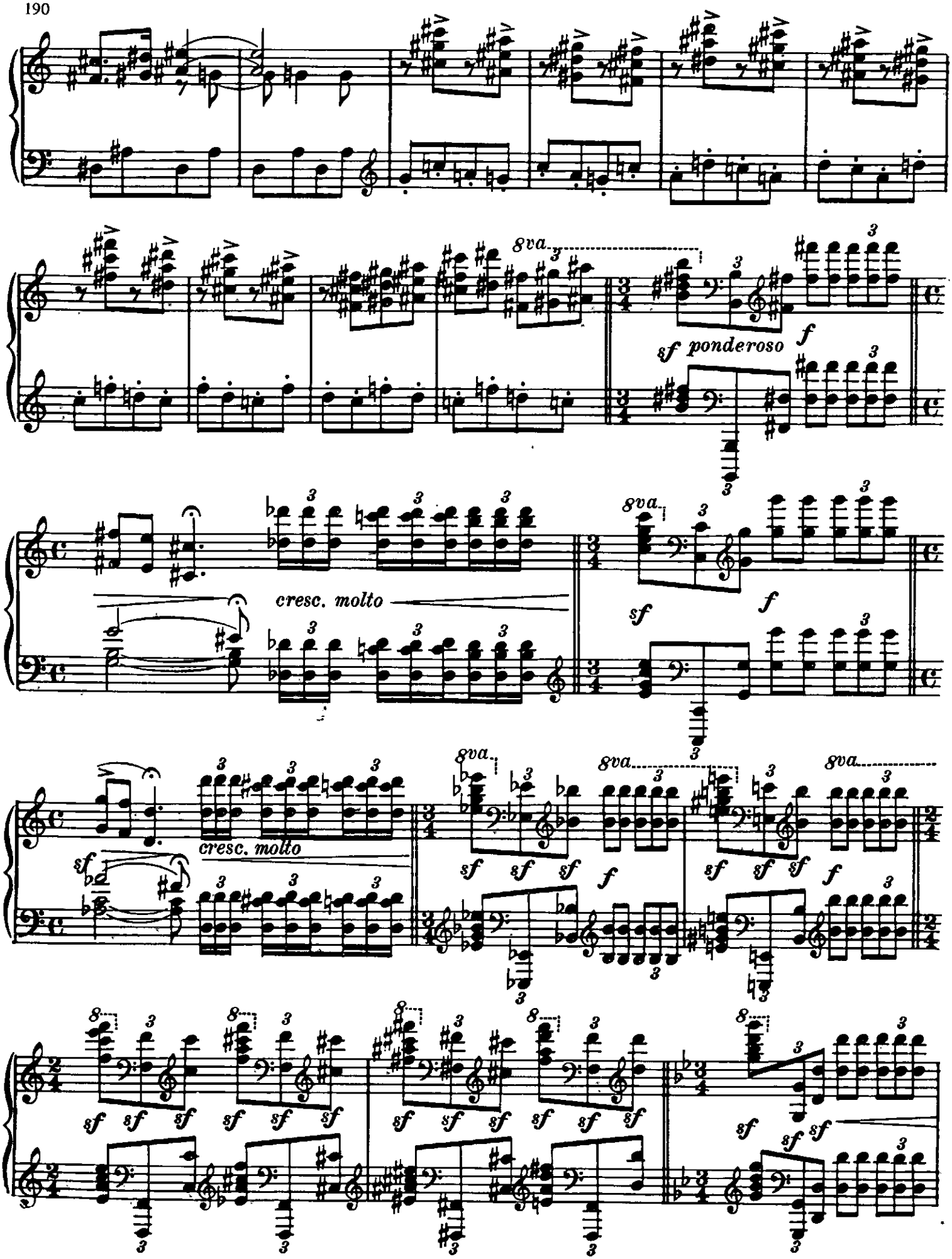

Maggiore
mp dolce cantabile
poco rit. ed espress.
a tempo espress.
poco rit.
atempo
poco rit.
a tempo
mf piu marcato
f

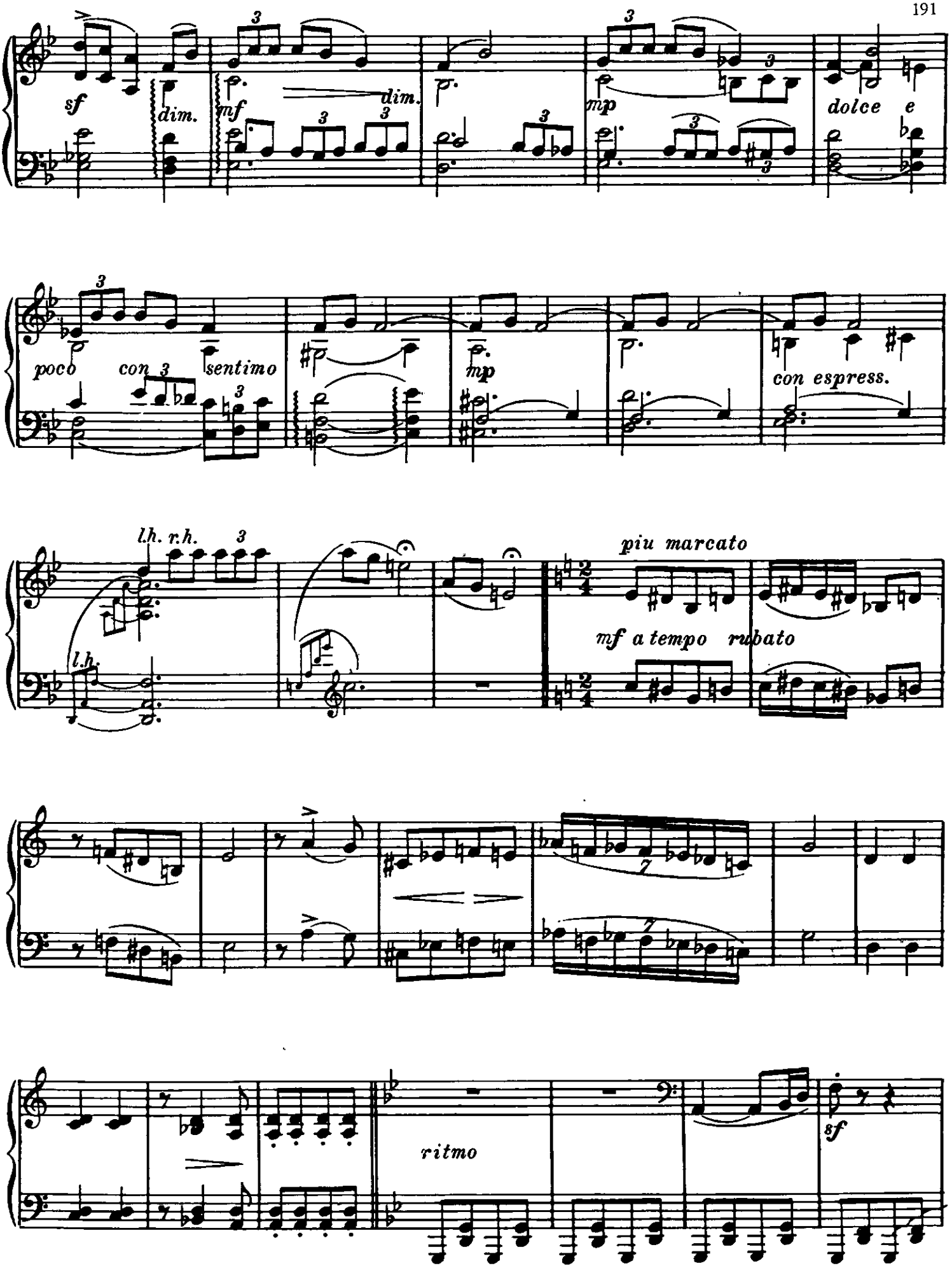

crescendo molto
ff
ff
ff
meno forte
8va
f
sf
meno forte
8va
meno forte

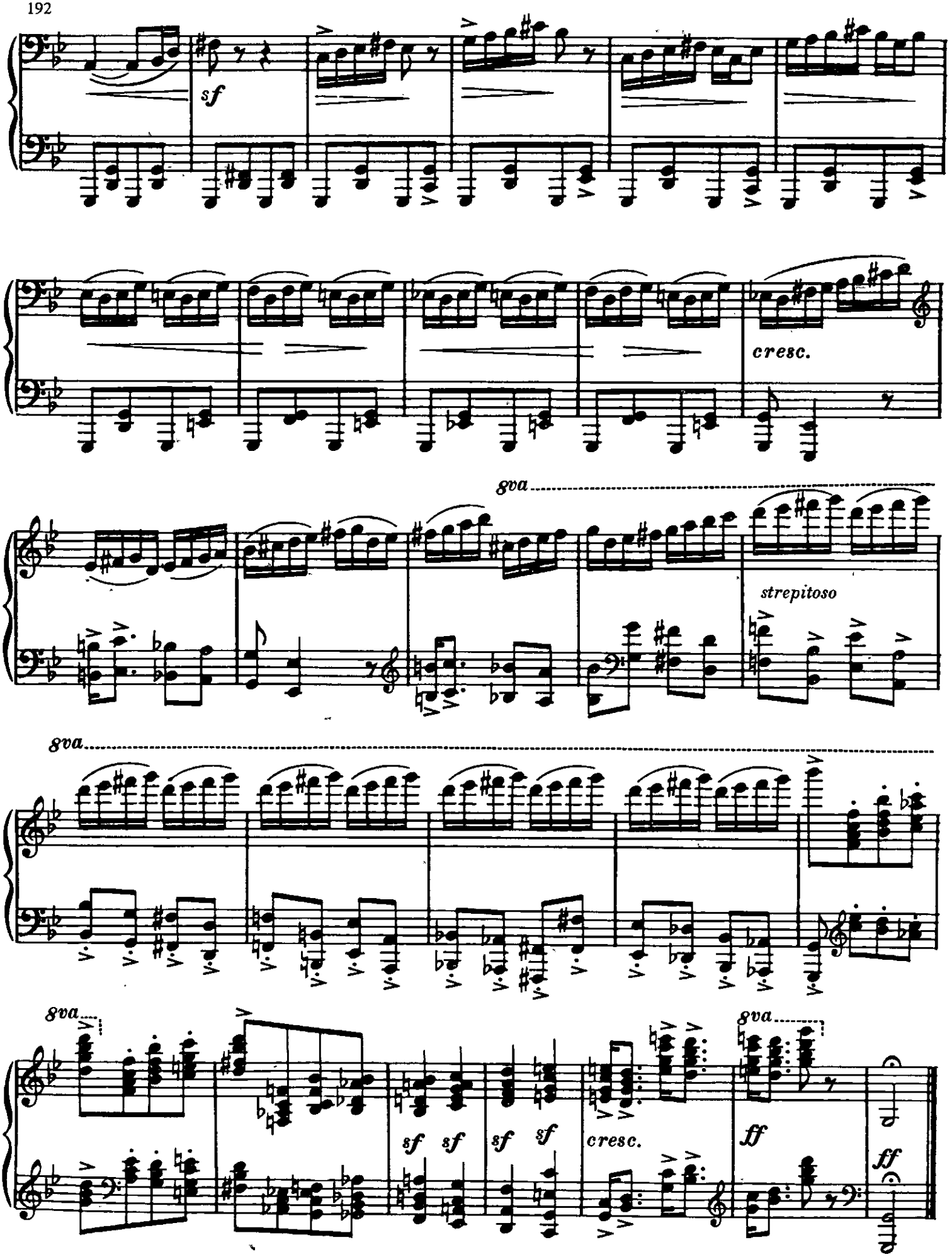

8va
mf poco di - mi - nu - en - do
mp
Tempo primo
mf
poco rit.
a tempo
poco rit.
a tempo
poco cresc. e rit.
a tempo
poco cresc. e rit.
a tempo
cresc.
8va
dim.
dim.
rit. e cresc. e accel. molto


Poco Allegro ♩ = 100
mp
non legato
mp
p non legato
non legato
cresc.
mf
non legato
mp
cresc.
mp
simile
non legato
dim.
mp
non legato
cresc.
non legato
cresc.
non legato
cresc.
non legato
cresc.


f
mf sed marcato
7
7
simile


8va
sf ponderoso
f
cresc. molto
sf
f
cresc. molto
sf
sf
f
sf
sf
f
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf

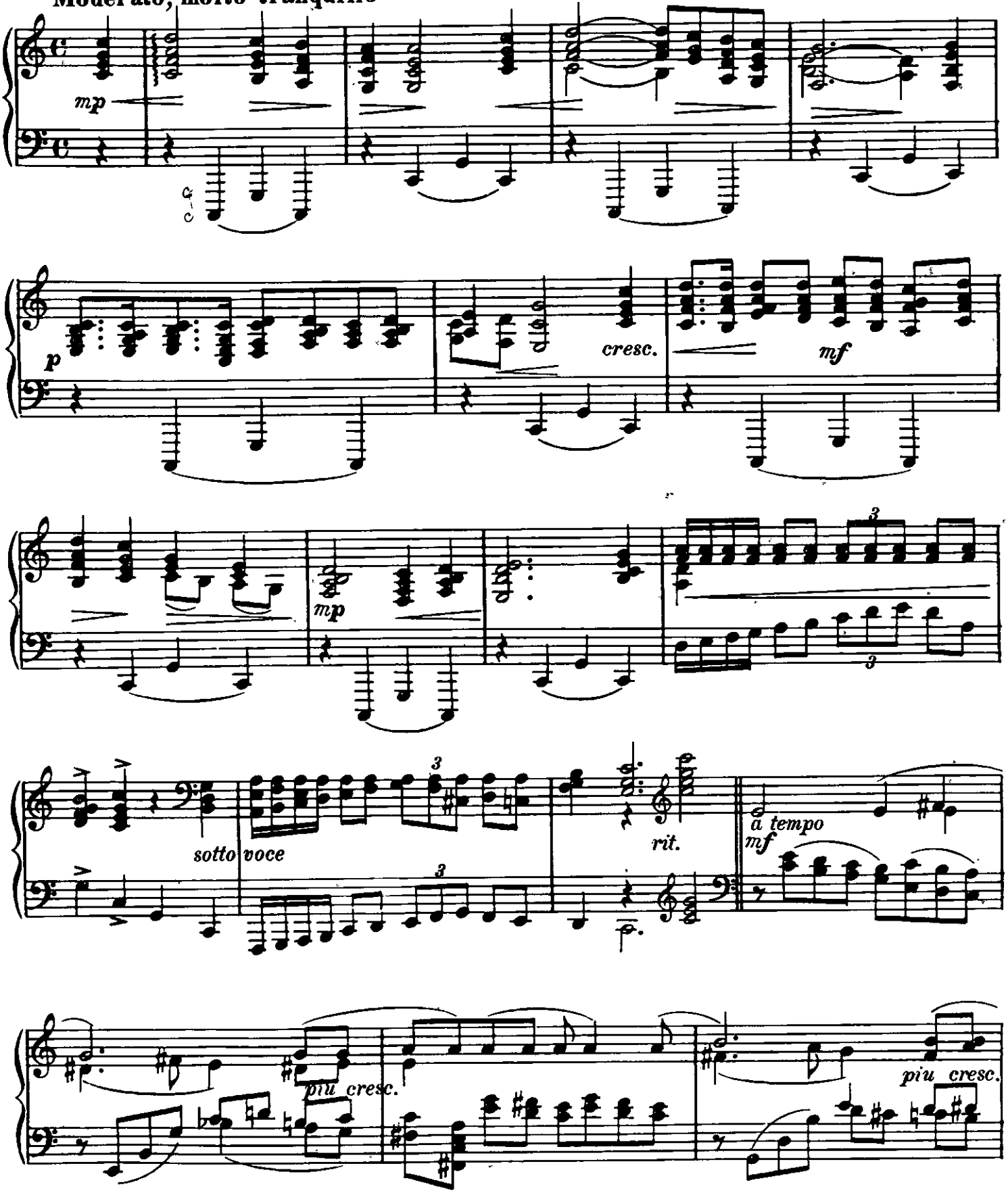

sf
dim.
mf
dim.
mp
dolce e
poco
con 3
sentimo
mp
con espress.
l.h. r.h.
l.h.
piu marcato
mf a tempo rubato
ritmo
sf


sf
cresc.
8va
strepitoso
8va
8va
sf sf sf sf
cresc.
8va
ff
ff

Madrigal Divine

8

Moderato, molto tranquillo



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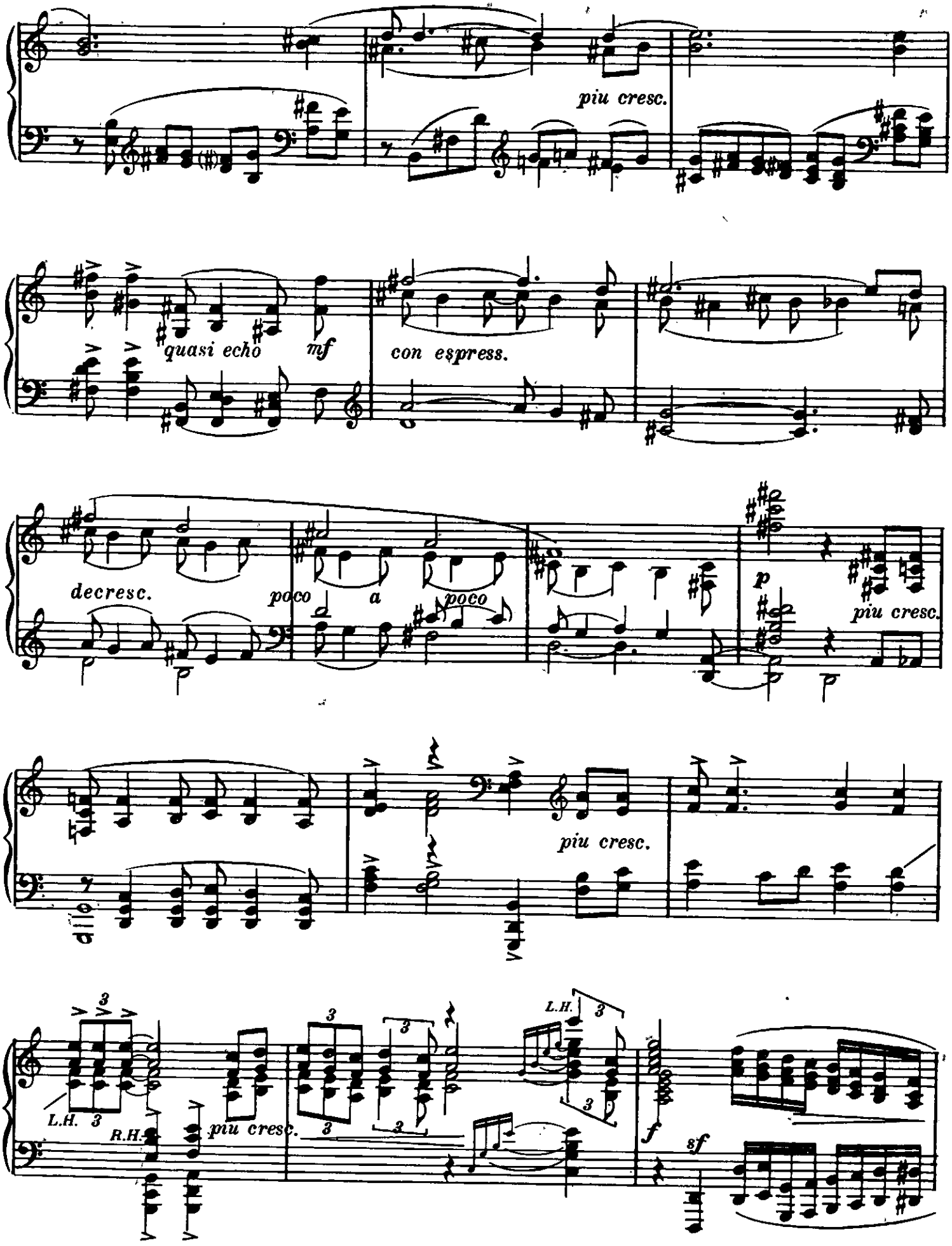
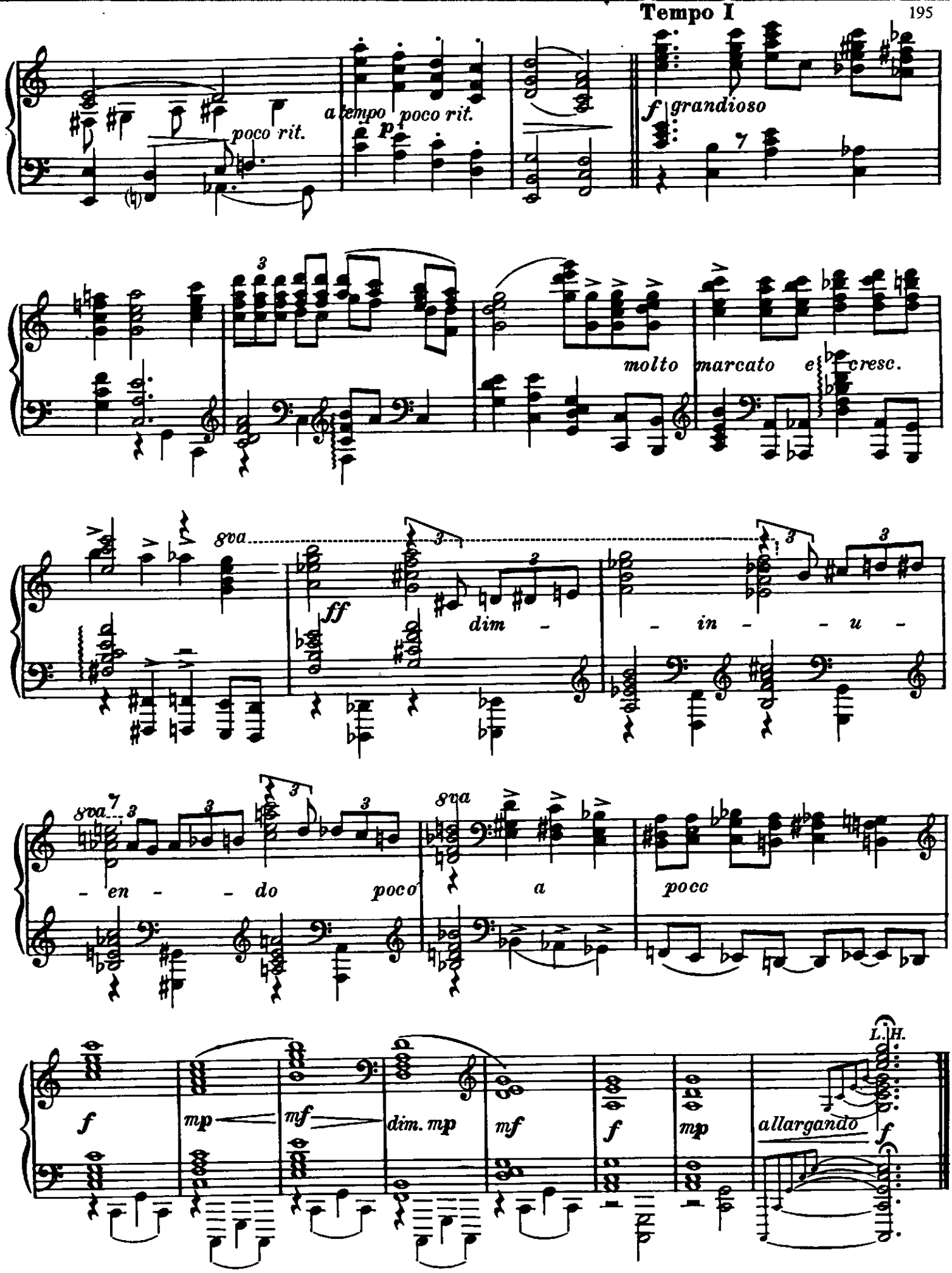

piu cresc.
quasi echo
mf
con espress.
decresc.
poco a poco
p
piu cresc.
piu cresc.
L.H.
R.H.
piu cresc.
L.H.
f
sf


Tempo I
poco rit.
a tempo
p
poco rit.
f
grandioso
molto marcato e cresc.
8va
ff
dim - in - u -
8va
- en - do poco
8va
a
poco
f
mp
mf
dim. mp
mf
f
mp
allargando
f
L. H.