YORGOS SICILIANOS

Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 45

Sicilianos.org

Preface

The Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 45 (1981) by Yorgos Sicilianos (1920 - 2005), is the first chamber work in which the composer draws his inspiration from extra-musical sources. Dedicated to the composer's son, Linos Sicilianos, who at that time was a violin student, the Sonata begins with a 57 bar section, titled Chaconne, that is inspired by J. S. Bach's Chaconne, the final movement of Partita No. 2 in D minor (BWV 1004). Apart from the chaconne rhythmic pattern that stresses the second beat of the bar, the composer evokes other sections of the Chaconne with the pedal section in bars 28-39 and the semiquaver triplet episode at bars 40-47, all occurring exactly 200 bars later in Bach's original composition. However, this section of the first movement is not an arrangement of Bach's work, but a fantasia-introduction inspired by it. As the performer will notice, the drastic changes in speed and dynamic, as well as the rubato indication, confer an improvisational character on this movement. The Scherzo is a reworking of an earlier composition by Sicilianos entitled Six Songs, Op. 37 (1975) for single voice and piano, inspired by a poem written of Giannis Ritsos (1909-1990), entitled "At the Edge of the Port" (1961).

Editor's translation of Ritsos' poem from the original Greek:

> The deaf-mute was waving his arms - he didn't hide his fear.
> He was pointing to somewhere high in the night sky. No one paid any attention.
> He had heard the wild birds scream, only he,
> over the coal-houses. When they took from the ship
> the five coffins, the mute lowered his arms, he took
> a little piece of string from his pocket and tied the bird's leg.
> In such dark shadows, he says, I yearn to escape the darkness.

The second movement, Pantoum, is inspired by the eponymous poem written by the Nobel Laureate Giorgos Seferis (1900 - 1971). The poem follows the traditional Javanese pantoum technique of poetry that repeats every other line of the poem in such a way that the repeated words gain new meaning each time because of the line of text that precedes and succeeds them. Sicilianos follows this structure and has assigned musical phrases to specific lines in the poem. It is imperative that the performers adhere precisely to the articulation, dynamics and other markings, as any alteration will affect the special concept of repetitions that the composer has transferred from the poetic style of the pantoum. The piano part in this movement emulates the percussive elements of a Gamelan orchestra, which traditionally accompanies recitations of Javanese and Malay poems. Below is the editor's translation of Seferis's poem from the original Greek. Note the introduction of numbers next to the lines of the poem for the easier identification of the repetitions:

1 The stars hold a world of their own
2 on the ocean ships draw flames
3 my soul liberate yourself from the bond of darkness
4 bitter, inflamed with grace.

2 On the ocean ships draw flames
5 the night shrivels and stands a stranger
4 bitter, inflamed with grace
6 my soul knows which law binds it.

5 The night shrivels and stands a stranger
7 in black silk the lights are extinguished
6 my soul knows which law binds it
8 and what will remain and what will leave.

7 In black silk the lights are extinguished
9 only the sound of time remains
8 and what will remain and what will leave
10 if the mute battlement strikes lightening.

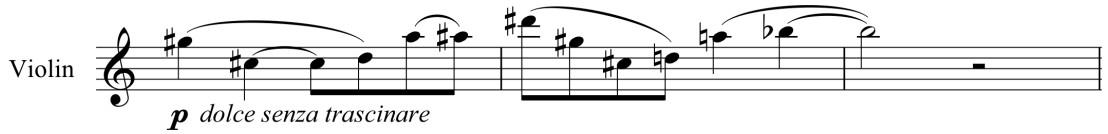
9 Only the sound of time remains
11 metallic post at the edge of pain
10 if the mute battlement strikes lightening
12 not even a dream will you find to shed a tear.

11 Metallic post at the edge of pain
13 the moment approaches like a hovering blade
12 not even a dream will you find to shed a tear
14 in the aerial crowd that constricts you like a snake.

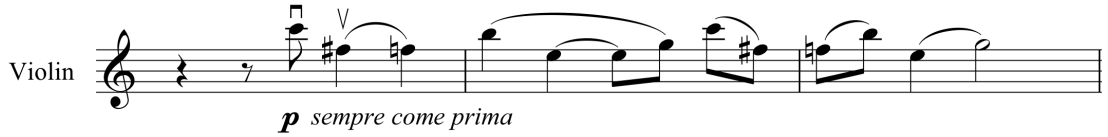
13 The moment approaches like a hovering blade
15 what are they awaiting for peace to prevail?
14 in the aerial crowd that constricts you like a snake
16 not the sky, nor an angel's indulgence.

15 what are they awaiting for peace to prevail?
17 on people shut in who measure their sorrow
16 not the sky nor an angel's indulgence
1 the stars hold a world of their own.

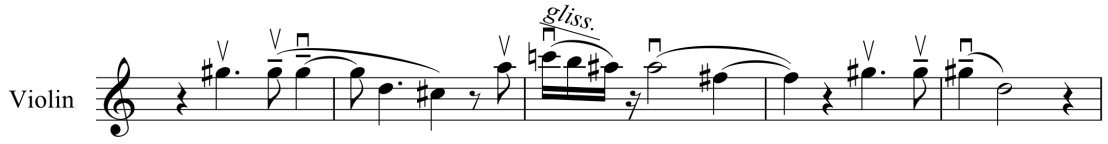
The violin part juxtaposed with the poem:



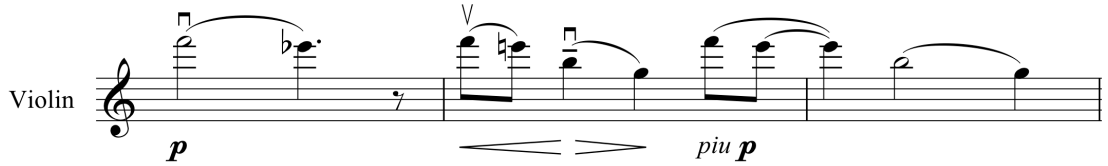
1 Τ' αστέρια κρατούν έναν κόσμο δικό τους
1 (Bar 4 - 6) The stars hold a world of their own



2 στο πέλαγο σέρνουν φωτιές τα καράβια
2 (Bar 7 - 9) on the ocean ships draw flames

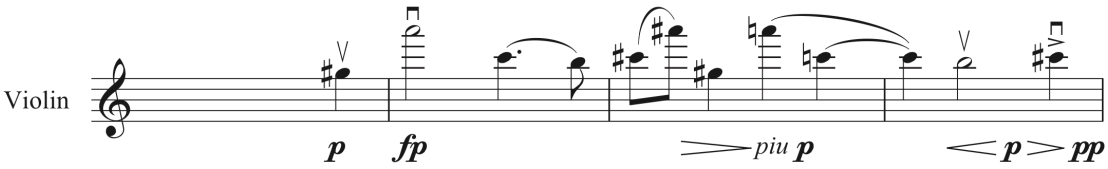


3 ψυχή μου λυτρώσου απ' τον κρίκο του σκότους
3 (Bar 10 - 14) my soul liberate yourself from the bond of darkness

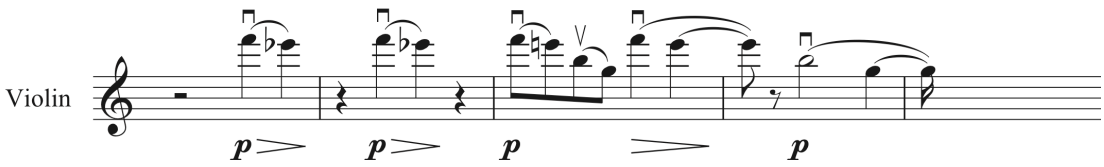


4 πικρή, φλογισμένη που δέεσαι με ευλάβεια.
4 (Bar 15 - 17) bitter, inflamed with grace.

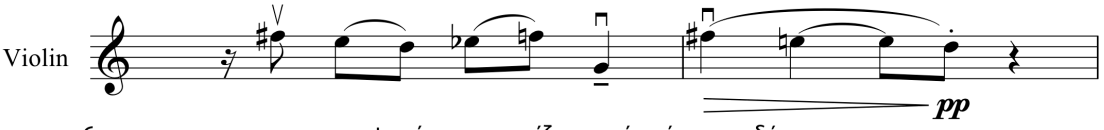
2 Στο πέλαγο σέρνουν φωτιές τα καράβια
2 (Bar 18 - 21) On the ocean ships draw flames



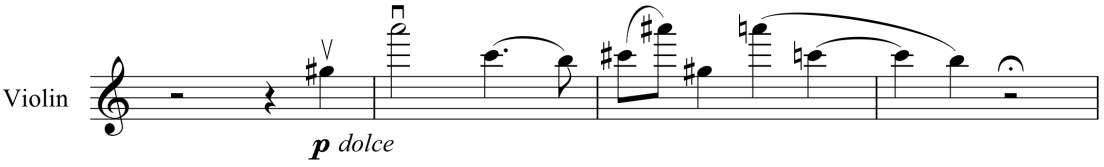
5 η νύχτα στενεύει και στέκει σαν ξένη
5 (Bar 21 - 24) the night shrivels and stands a stranger



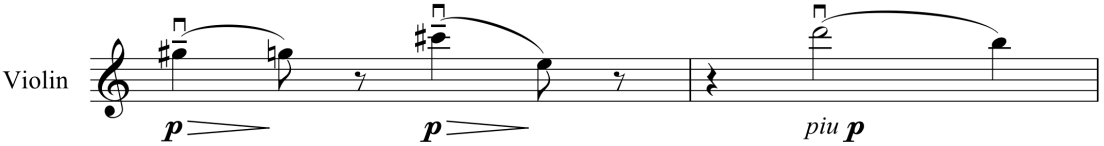
4 πικρή, φλογισμένη που δέεσαι με ευλάβεια
4 (Bar 25 - 29) bitter, inflamed with grace



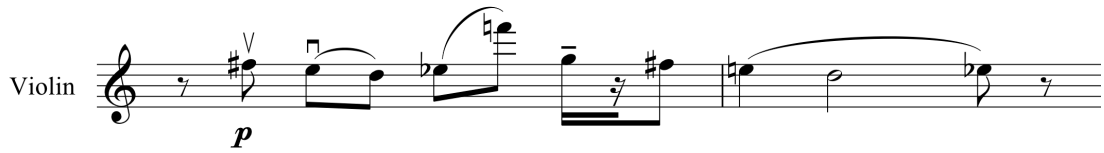
6 ψυχή μου γνωρίζεις ποιός νόμος σε δένει.
6 (Bar 29 - 30) my soul knows which law binds it.



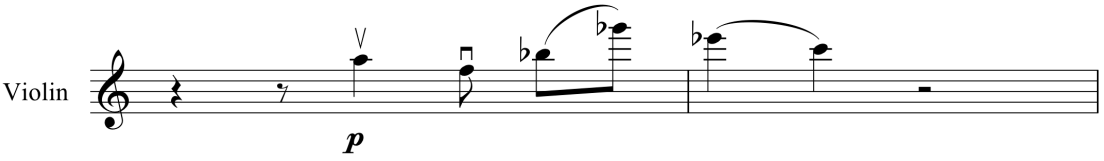
5 Η νύχτα στενεύει και στέκει σαν ξένη
5 (Bar 31- 34) The night shrivels and stands a stranger



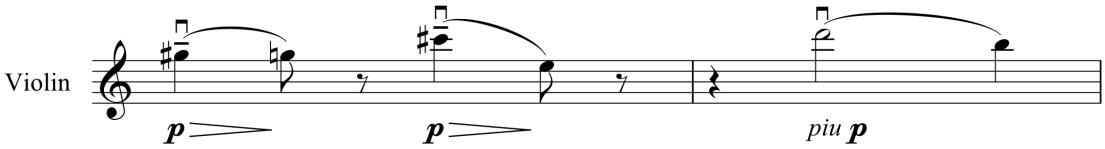
7 στο μαύρο μετάξι τα φώτα έχουν σβήσει
7 (Bar 35 - 36) in the black silk the lights extinguish



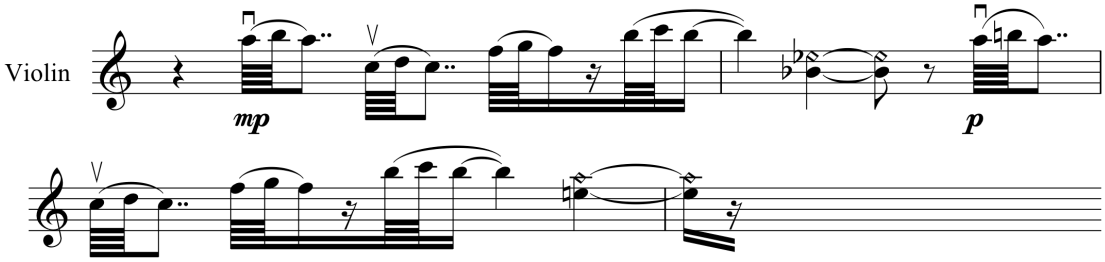
6 ψυχή μου γνωρίζεις ποιός νόμος σε δένει.
6 (Bar 37 - 38) my soul knows which law binds it



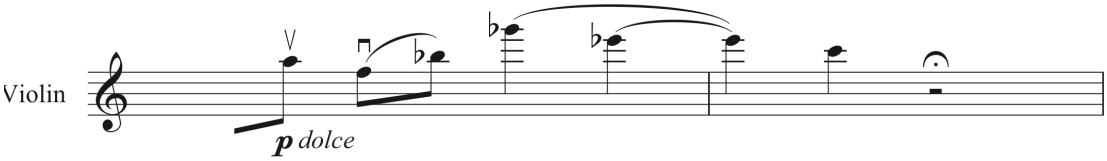
8 και τι θα σου μείνει και τι θα σ' αφήσει.
8 (Bar 39 - 40) and what will remain and what will leave.



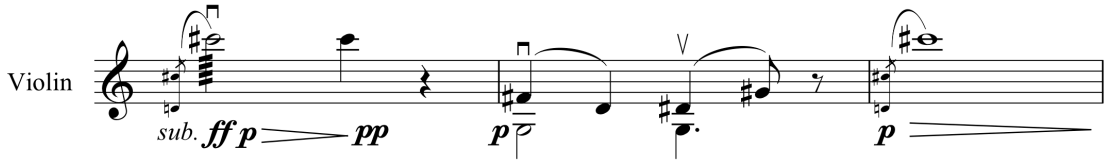
7 Στο μαύρο μετάξι τα φώτα έχουν σβήσει
7 (Bar 41 - 42) In the black silk the lights extinguish



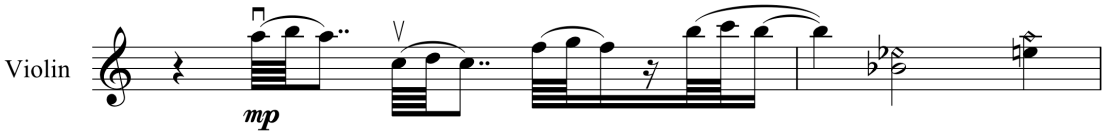
9 ακούγονται μόνο του χρόνου τα σείστρα
9 (Bar 43 - 46) only the sound of time remains



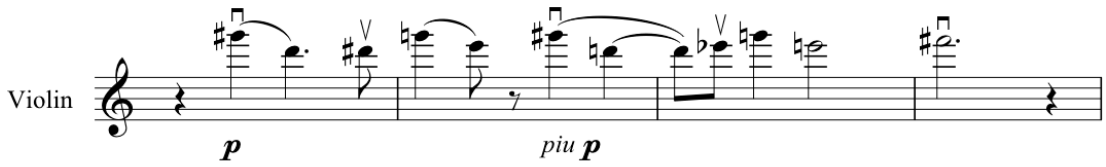
8 και τι θα σου μείνει και τι θα σ' αφήσει.
8 (Bar 46 - 47) and what will remain and what will leave



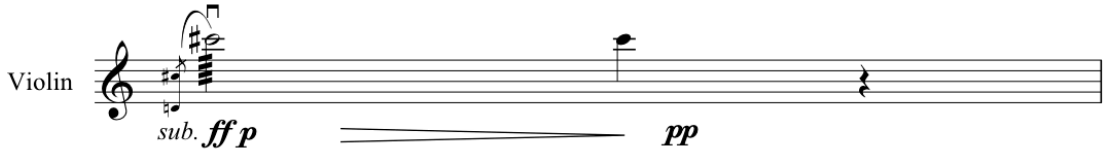
10 αν τύχει κι αστράψει βουβή πολεμίστρα.
10 (Bar 48 - 50) if the mute battlement strikes lightening.



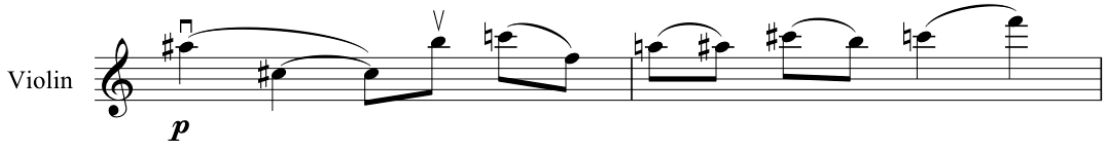
9 Ακούγονται μόνο του χρόνου τα σείστρα
9 (Bar 51 - 52) Only the sound of time remains



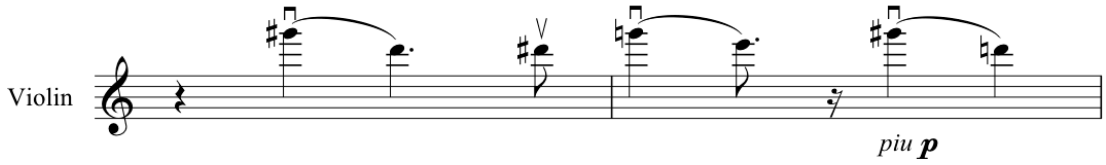
11 μετάλλινη στήλη στου πόνου την άκρη
11 (Bar 53 - 56) metallic post at the edge of pain



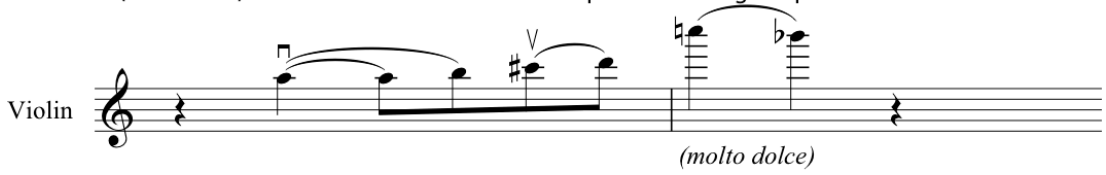
10 αν τύχει κι αστράψει βουβή πολεμίστρα
10 (Bar 57) if the mute battlement strikes lightening



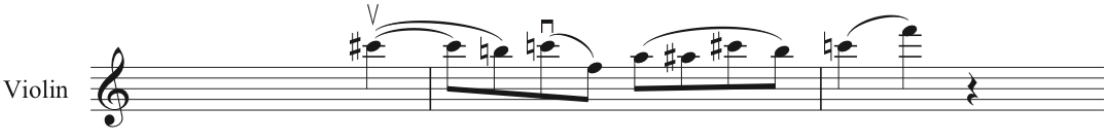
12 ούτε όνειρο θα 'βρεις να δώσει ένα δάκρυ.
12 (Bar 58 - 59) not even a dream will you find to shed a tear.



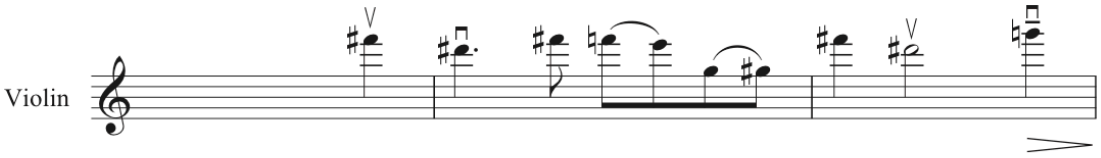
11 Μετάλλινη στήλη στου πόνου την άκρη
11 (Bar 60 - 61) Metallic post at the edge of pain



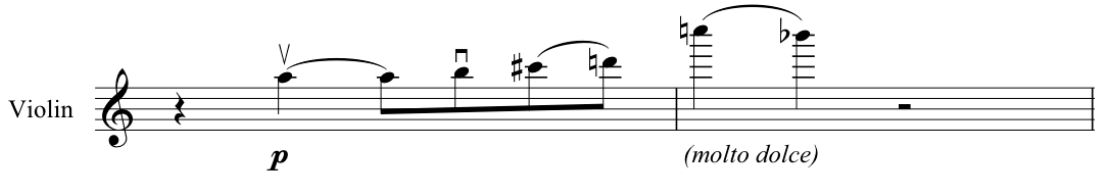
13 ψηλώνει η στιγμή σα μετέωρο λεπίδι
13 (Bar 62 - 63) the moment approaches like a hovering blade



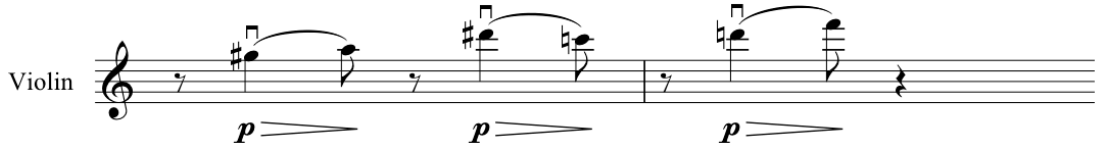
12 ούτε όνειρο θα 'βρεις να δώσει ένα δάκρυ.
12 (Bar 63 - 65) not even a dream will you find to shed a tear



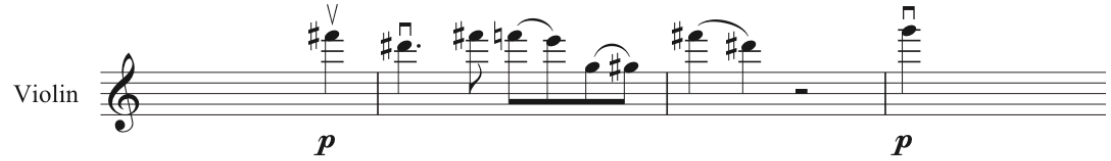
14 στο πλήθος σου το άυλο που σφίγγει σα φίδι.
14 (Bar 65 - 67) in the aerial crowd that constricts you like a snake.



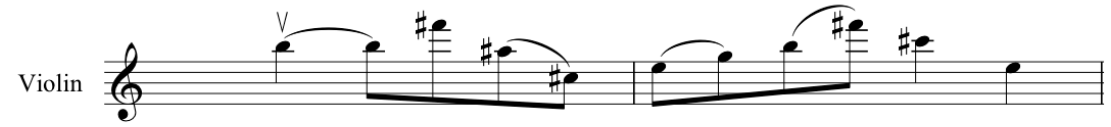
13 Ψηλώνει η στιγμή σα μετέωρο λεπίδι
13 (Bar 68 -69) The moment approaches like a hovering blade



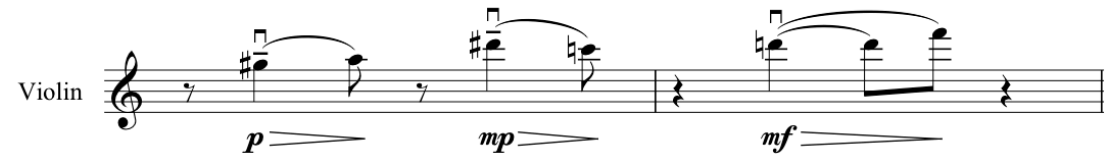
15 σαν τι να προσμένει να πέσει γαλήνη;
15 (Bar 70 - 71) what are they awaiting for peace to prevail?



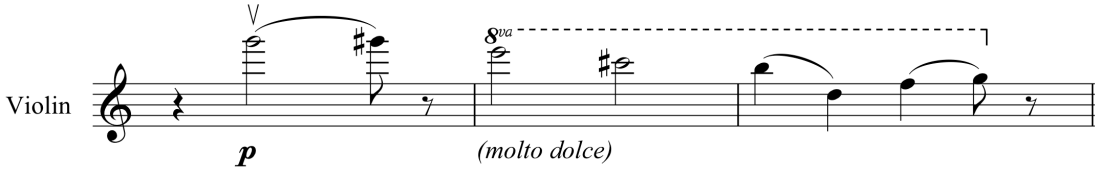
14 στο πλήθος σου το άυλο που σφίγγει σα φίδι.
14 (Bar 71 - 74) in the aerial crowd that constricts you like a snake



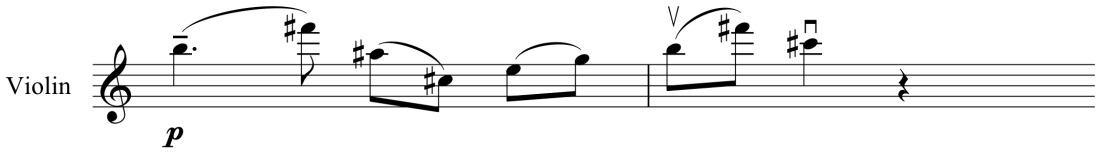
16 δεν είναι ο ουρανός μηδέ αγγέλου ευφροσύνη.
16 (Bar 74 - 75) not the sky, nor an angel's indulgence.



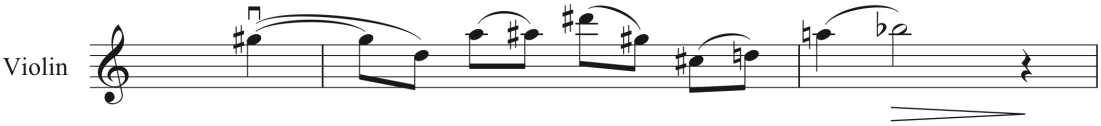
15 σαν τι να προσμένει να πέσει γαλήνη;
15 (Bar 76 - 77) what are they awaiting for peace to prevail?



17 Σ' ανθρώπους κλειστούς που μετρούν τον καημό τους
17 (Bar 78 - 80) on people shut in who measure their sorrow



16 δεν είναι ο ουρανός μηδέ αγγέλου ευφροσύνη
16 (Bar 81 - 82) not the sky nor an angel's indulgence



1 τ' αστέρια κρατούν έναν κόσμο δικό τους.
1 (Bar 82 - 84) the stars hold a world of their own.

The final movement of the Sonata, Nijinsky, is an example of programmatic music by Sicilianos. This movement like the previous one was inspired by the eponymous short story written by Giorgos Seferis. The story describes an imaginary encounter between an author (assumed to be Seferis) and the dancer Vaslav Nijinsky (1889-1950).

The editor's translation of “Nijinsky” by Giorgos Seferis from the original Greek:

> He appeared as I was staring at the lit coals that were burning in my fireplace. He had a large box of red matches in his hands. Like an illusionist pulls an egg from a person’s nose he presented it to me.
>
> He took a match and set the box on fire. It vanished in a puff of smoke, and he stood before me. I remember his magenta smile and his glass eyes. A small organ kept playing the same note out in the street. I couldn’t tell what he was wearing. Slowly his arms started to delineate a cross as they stretched out from his body. Where did all these birds come from? One could say that he had them hidden beneath his wings.
>
> They flew carelessly; oddly, with great momentum they slammed against the walls of the narrow room, against the glass windows and, injured, they strewed the floor. The soles of my feet felt a warm layer of feathers and pulses swell beneath them.
>
> I gazed at him with fervour that consumed my body. When he finished, he started to raise his hands, and when his palms met each other, he suddenly leapt. It was as if the spring had snapped in the clock opposite me. He hit the ceiling, which resounded like a cymbal ringing. He stretched his right arm and snapped the wire from which the lamp was hanging and moved a little, he then started to draw figures of eight with his body in the dark light.
>
> This spectacle stunned me and I covered my face with my two hands. I clasped the darkness over my eyelids, listening to the small organ that kept playing the same note, which then suddenly ceased. A sudden gust of cool air hit me. I felt my legs freeze. I heard the deep and velvety sound of a flute, and immediately after it a broad, even flapping sound. I opened my eyes. I saw him standing tiptoe, on top of a crystal sphere in the middle of the room. He had in his mouth a strange flute that was commanded by his fingers, as if he had seven thousand of them. The birds came to life and, with ridiculous order. They rose and formed thick flocks that one could embrace as they flew out into the night from the window that had somehow opened.
>
> When not even half a wing was left, though a muggy smell of game remained, I decided to look him in the eye. He had no face, at the top of his purple body. Headless, it seemed, he admired a golden mask, like one of those found at Mycenae. I attempted to stand up. No sooner had I made a move than a thunderous sound, like a stack of hubcaps crashing down at a funeral march, rooted me to the spot.

It was the mask. His face appeared once more in its original form, as I had seen it at first, his eyes, his smile, and something that I was only just starting to notice: the white skin stretched by two pitch black wisps that were embedded in front of the ears. He tried to jump, but he did not possess the same nimbleness as before. In fact, I think he
stumbled over a book forgotten on the floor and knelt on one knee. I could now look at him with greater ease. I could see the pores of his skin trickling tiny drops of sweat. I started to gasp. I was trying to understand why his eyes had seemed so strange to me. He shut them. He tried to stand, but it must have been immensely difficult, it seemed that he was trying to muster all his strength, but to no avail. He was down on both knees now.

The white skin seemed horribly pale, almost yellow-ivory, and the black hair seemed dead. Even though, I was witnessing his agony, I felt better as if I had scored a victory. Before I could breathe I saw him completely prostrated sinking into a jade pagoda that was printed on my carpet.

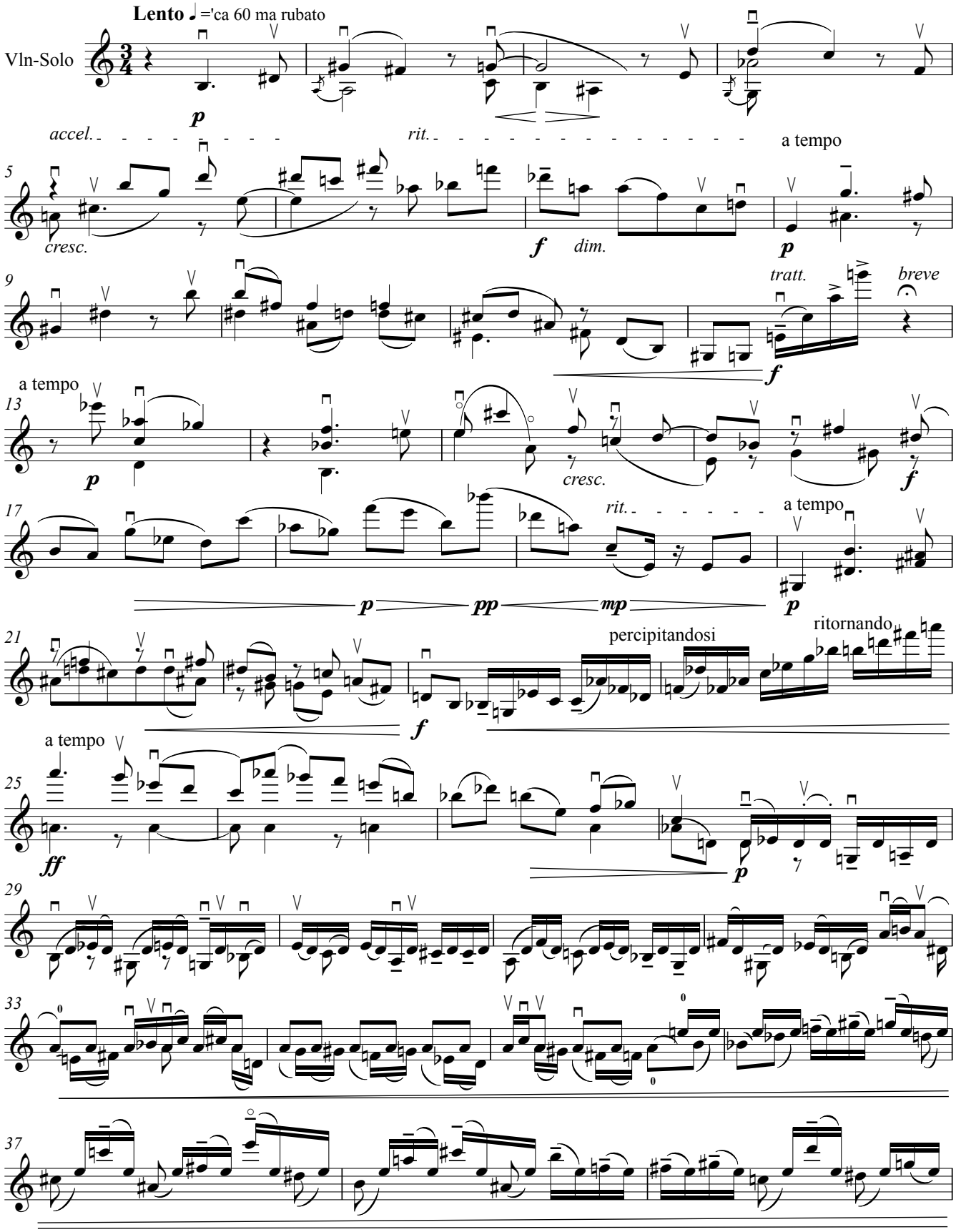
This edition used as its main source the composer's final manuscript, found in Sicilianos's digital archive housed at the Institute for Research on Music and Acoustics (IEMA) in Athens. Sicilianos was meticulous in the creation of "final" scores for his works, thereby safeguarding them from conjectural emendations. The file name for the source used in the creation of this edition is: iem.CMC.gsi.sme.160.1

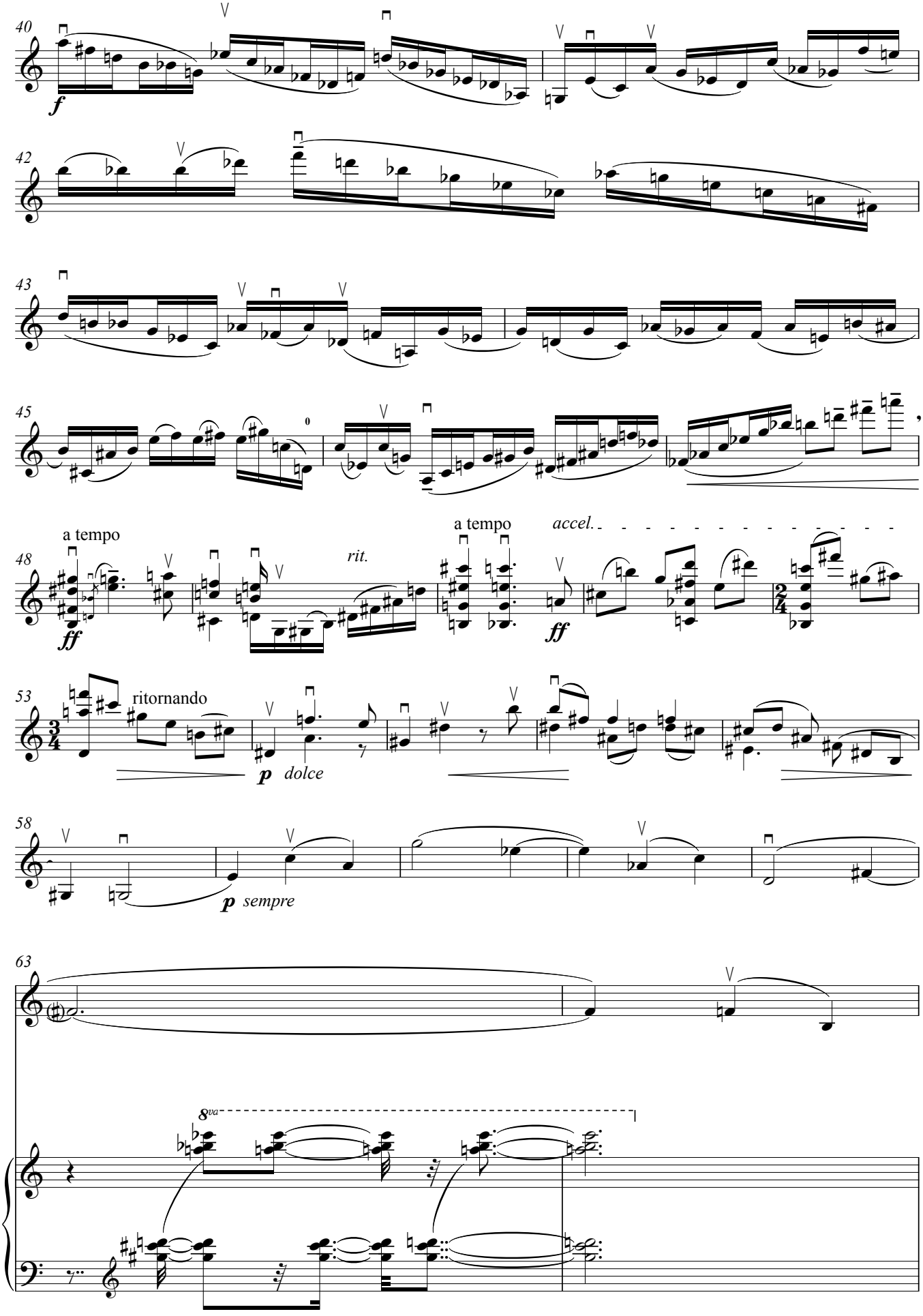
This preface and score were first published by the Benaki Museum of Athens in the following book: Mavroudis, Anastasios Rupert Arthur. *Sicilianos, The Greek Modernist: Performing Selected Chamber Works and Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 51*. Athens: Benaki Museum, 2020, 93-154, 323-357

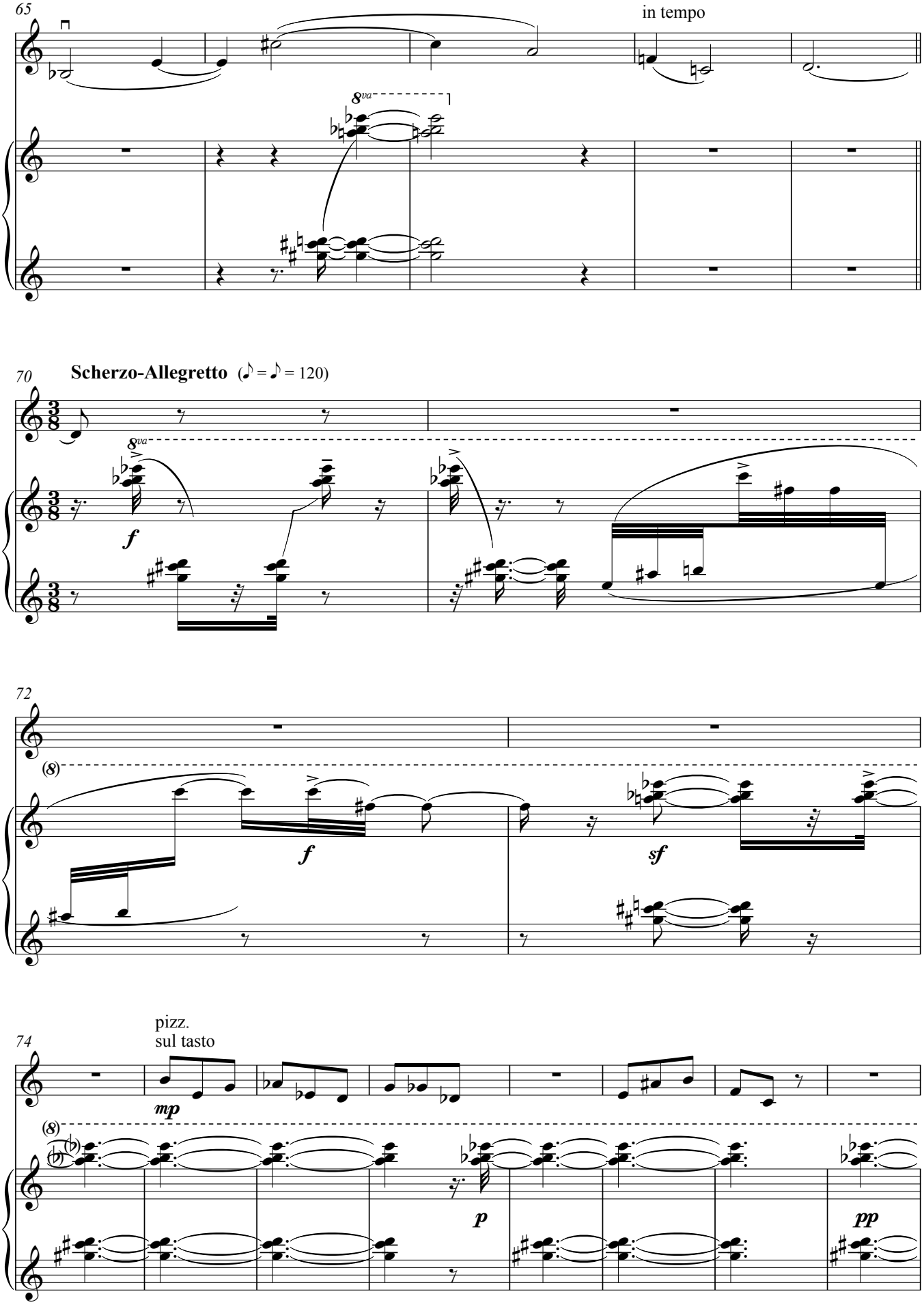
Sonata for violin and piano Op.45 (1981)

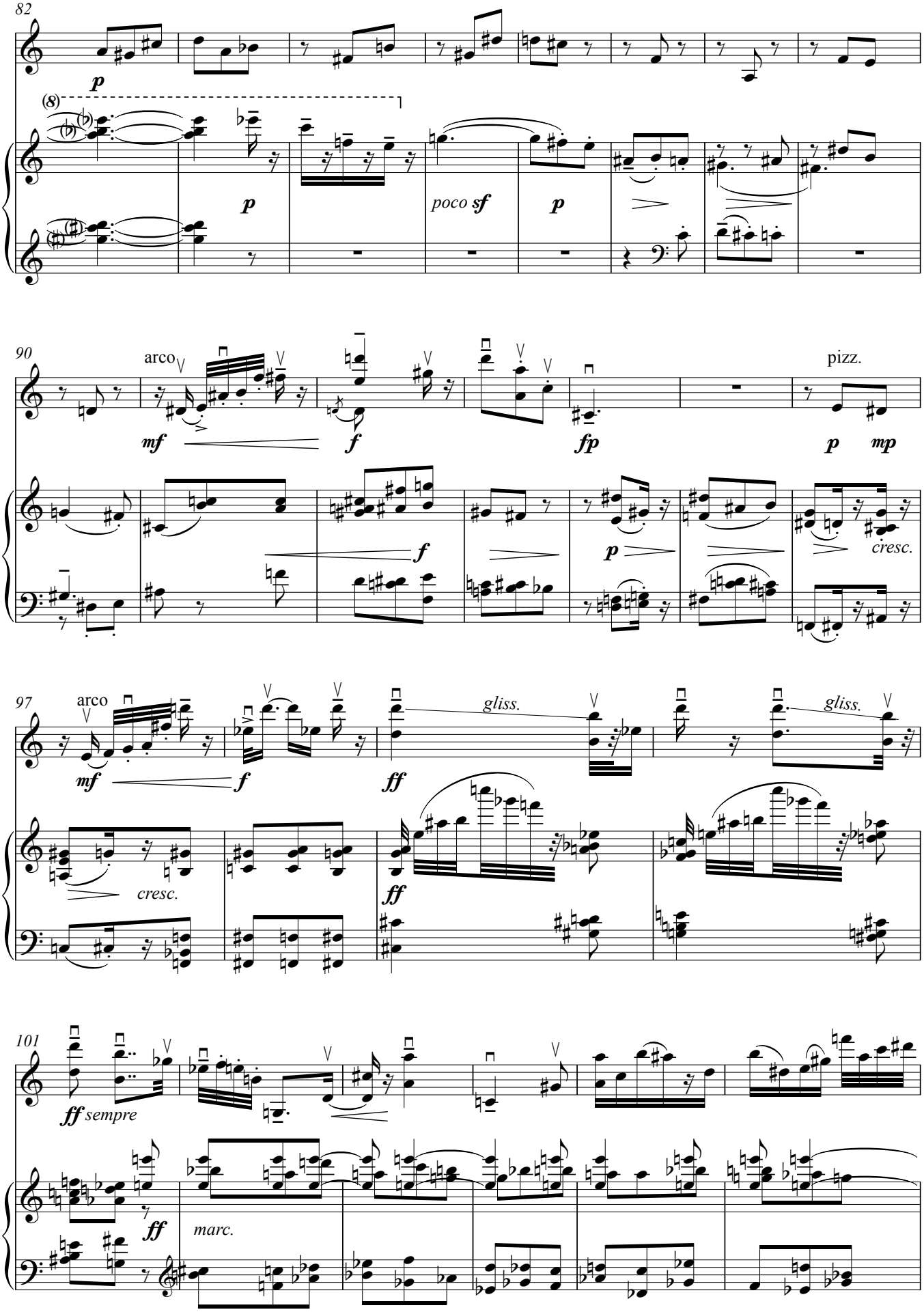
Chaconne and Scherzo

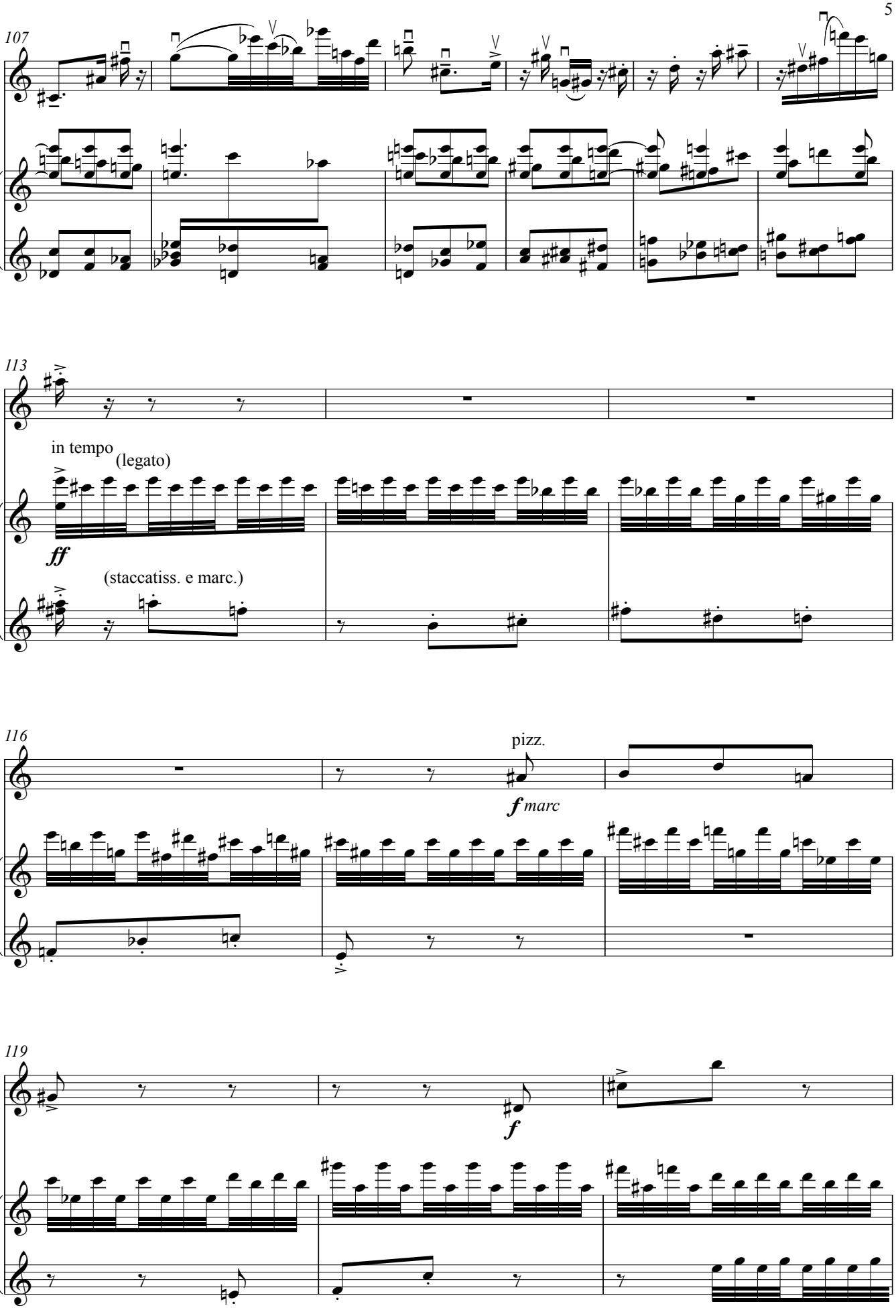
Yorgo Sicilianos (1920 - 2005)

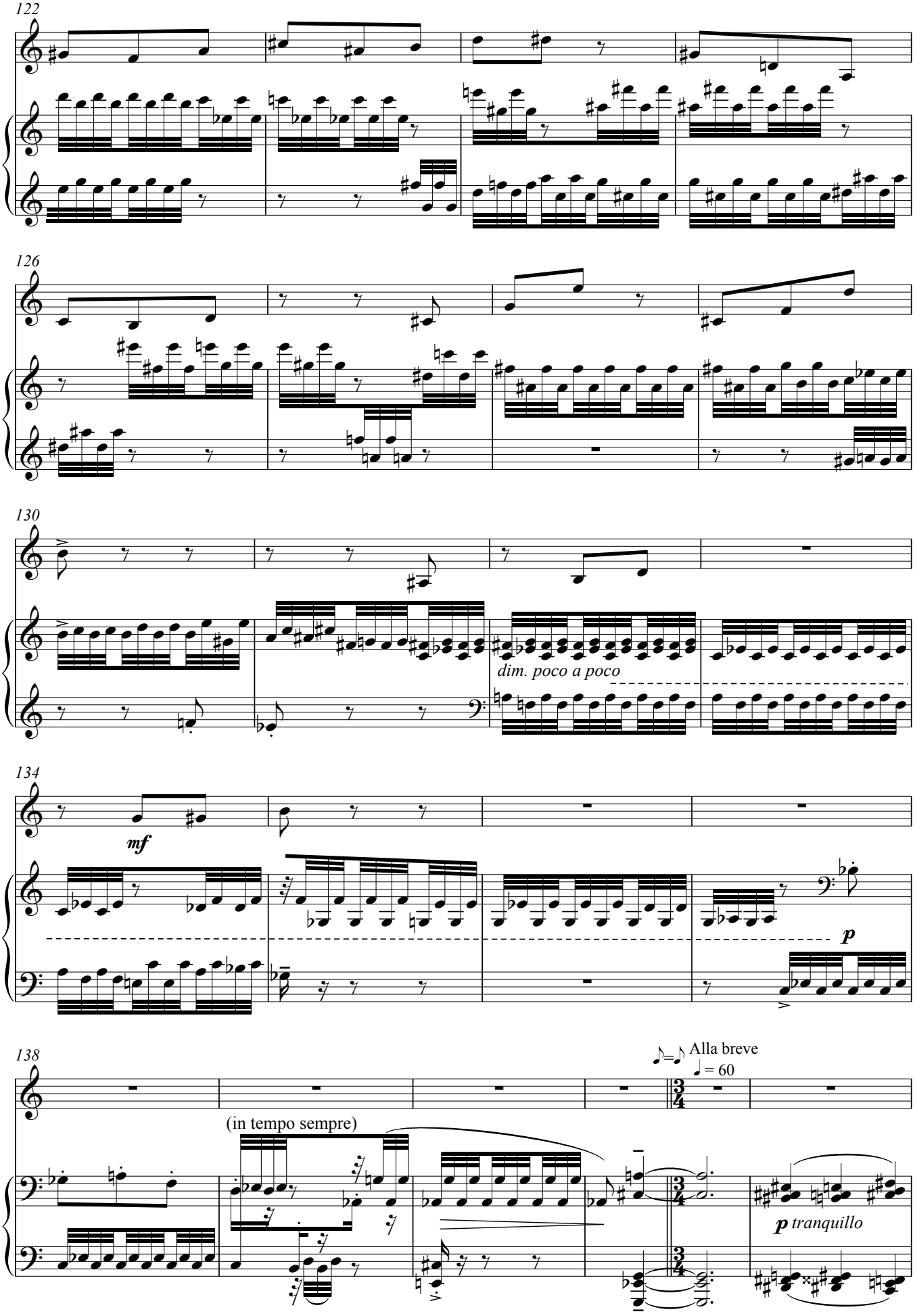


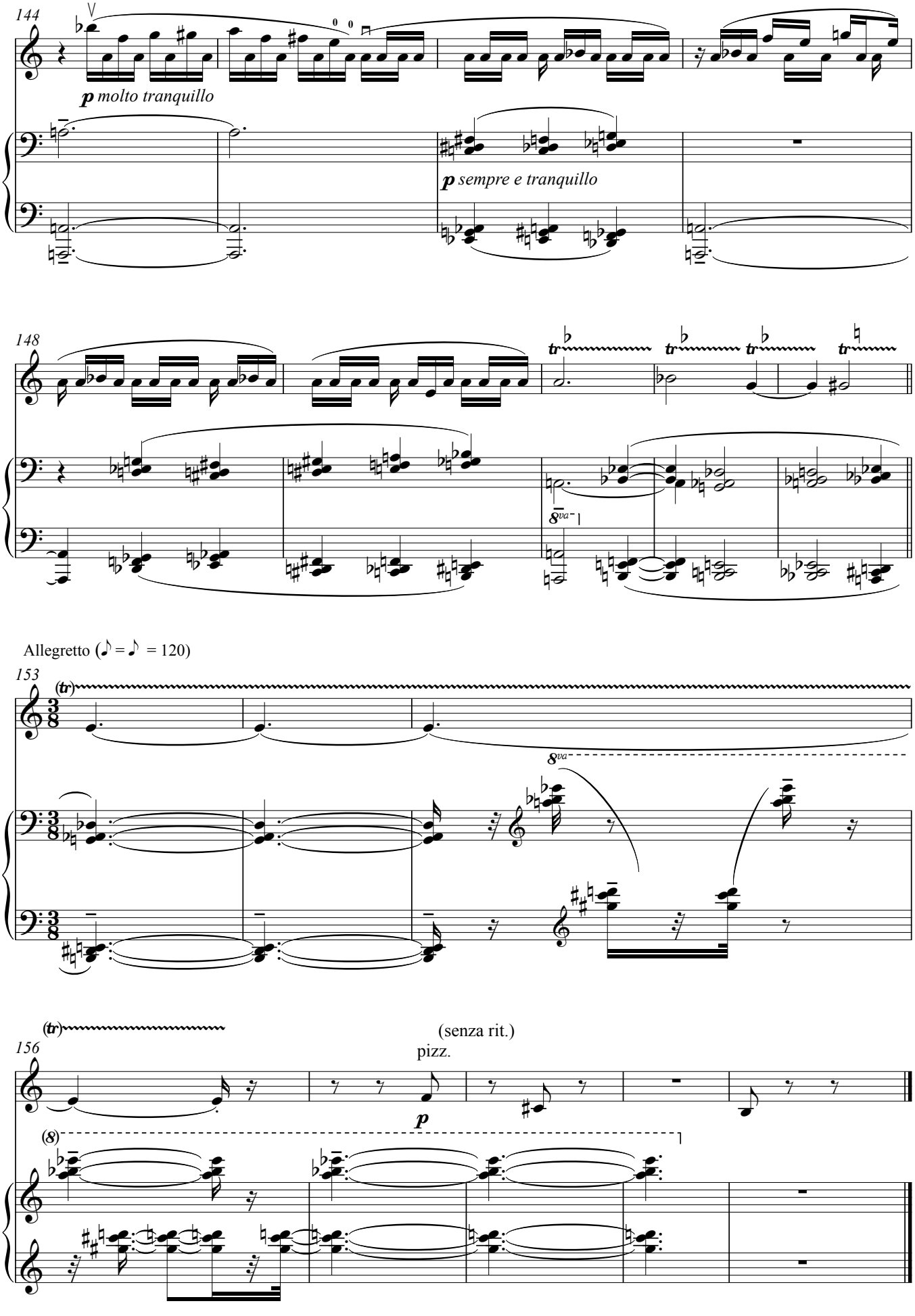

40
f
42
43
45
48
a tempo
ff
rit.
a tempo
accel.
ff
53
ritornando
p dolce
58
p sempre
63
8va


65
in tempo
8va
70
Scherzo-Allegretto (♪ = ♪ = 120)
8va
f
72
(8)
f
sf
74
pizz.
sul tasto
mp
(8)
p
pp


82
p
(8)
p
poco sf
p
90
arco
mf
f
fp
pizz.
p
mp
f
p
cresc.
97
arco
mf
f
ff
gliss.
gliss.
cresc.
ff
101
ff sempre
ff
marc.


107
113
in tempo
(legato)
ff
(staccatiss. e marc.)
116
pizz.
f marc
119
f


122
126
130
dim. poco a poco
134
mf
p
138
(in tempo sempre)
Alla breve
= 60
p tranquillo


144
p molto tranquillo
p sempre e tranquillo
148
8va
Allegretto (♪ = ♪ = 120)
153
(tr)
8va
156
(tr)
(senza rit.)
pizz.
p
(8)

II
Pantoum

1 **Largo** ♩ = 48

Largo ♩ = 48

(senza pedale, come percussione)

pp ***pp*** ***pp***

p *secco*

sub. ***f***

3

p *dolce senza trascinare*

f ***pp*** ***mf*** ***pp***

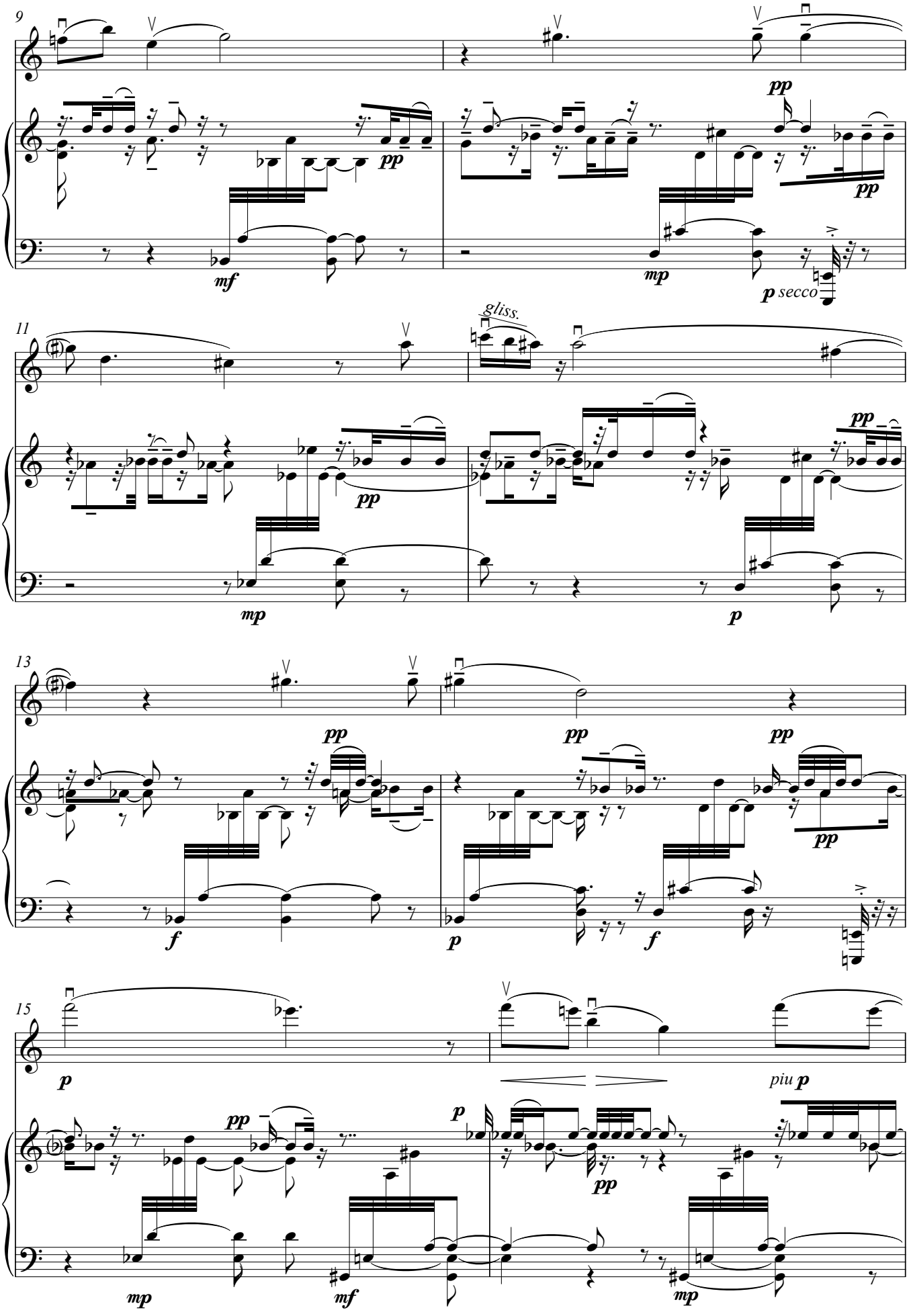
5

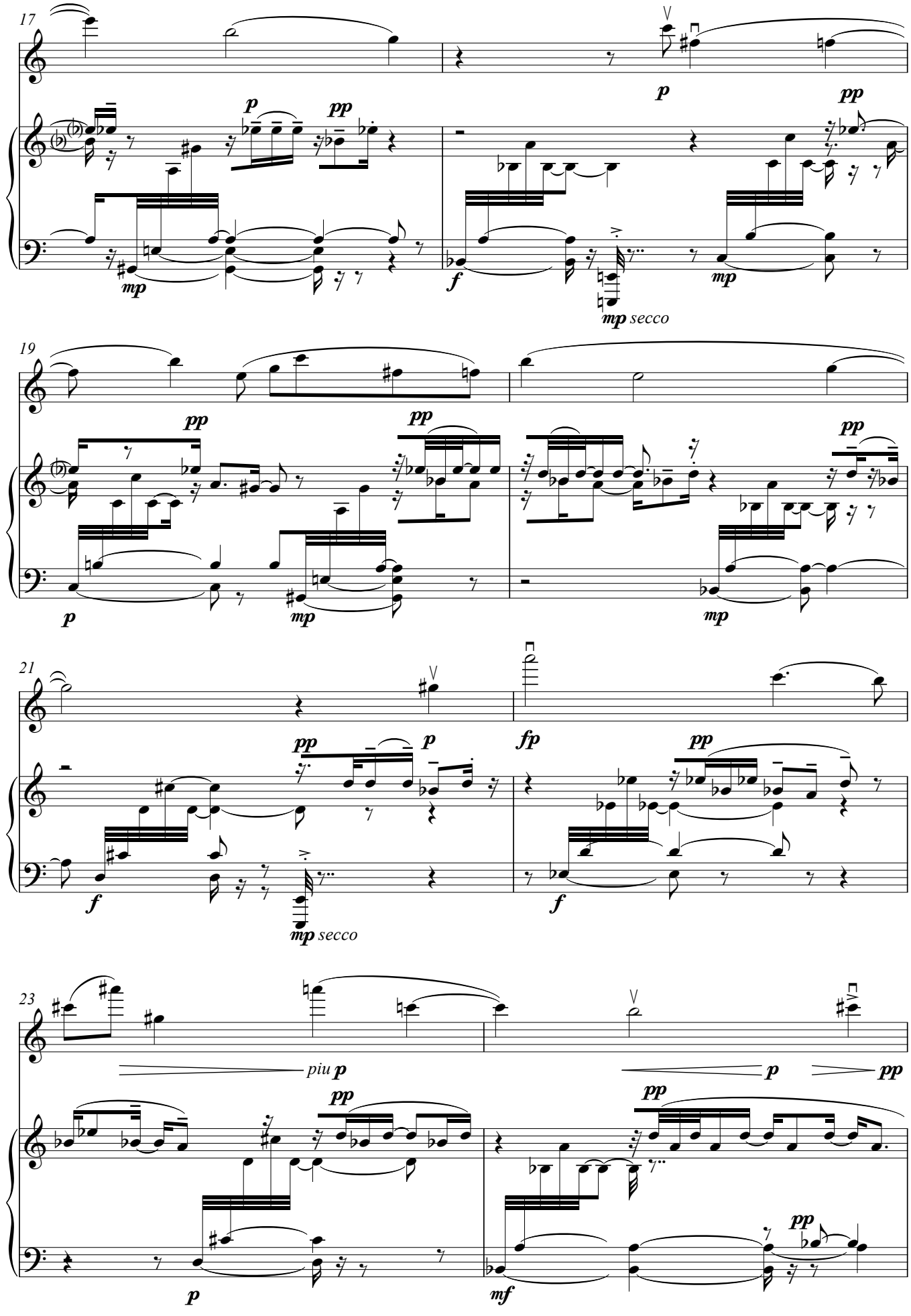
mf ***pp*** ***f*** ***pp***

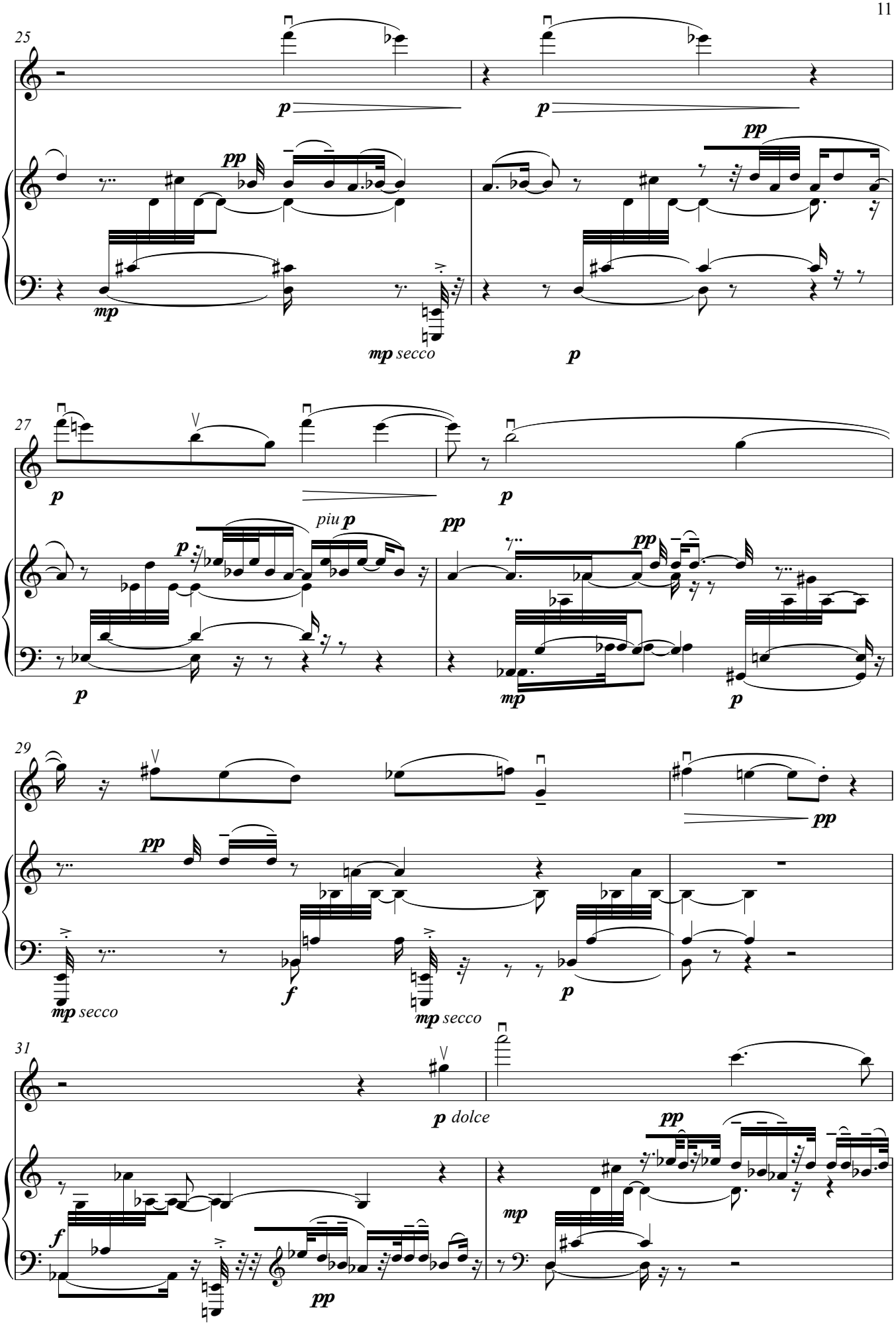
7

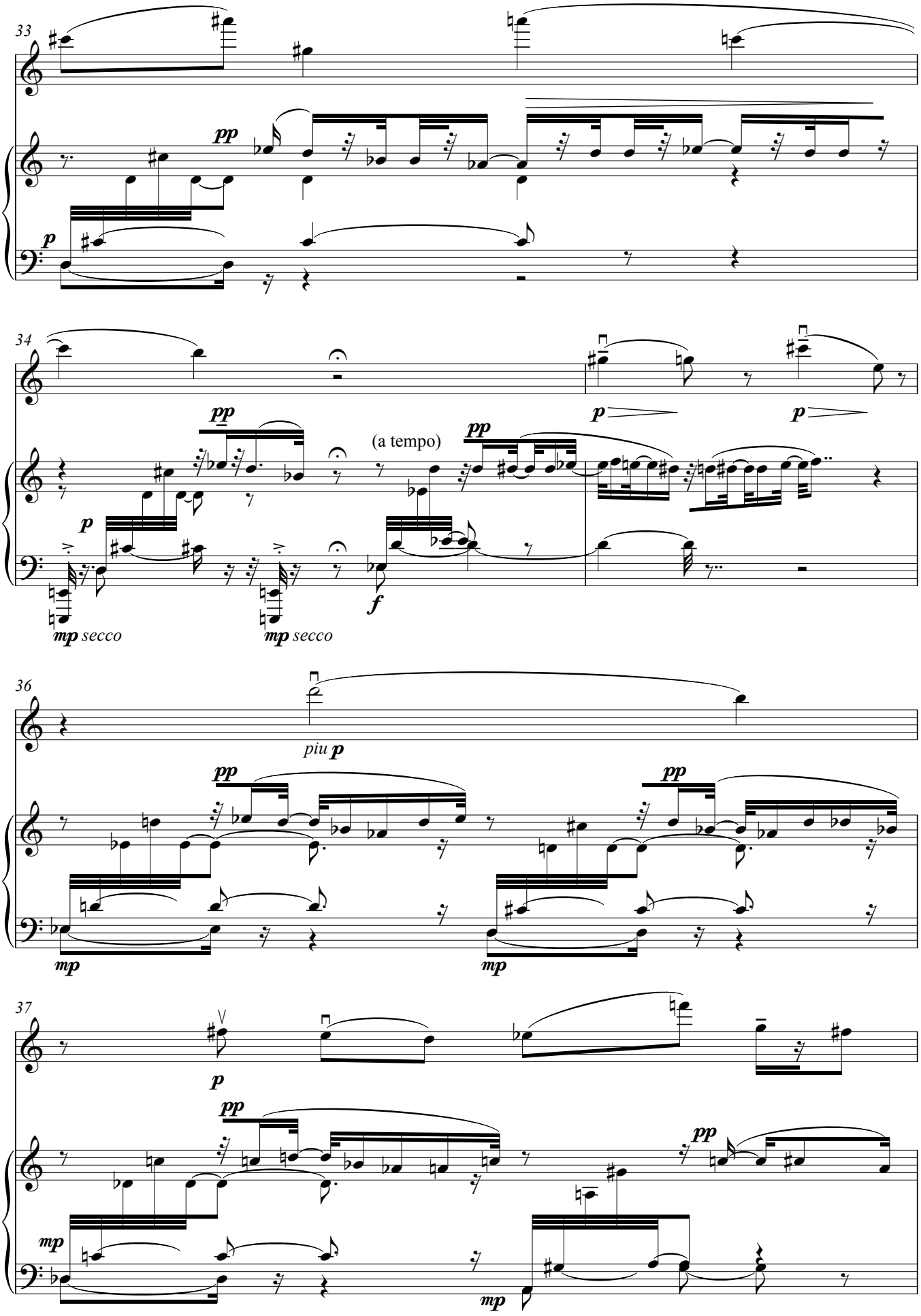
p *sempre come prima*

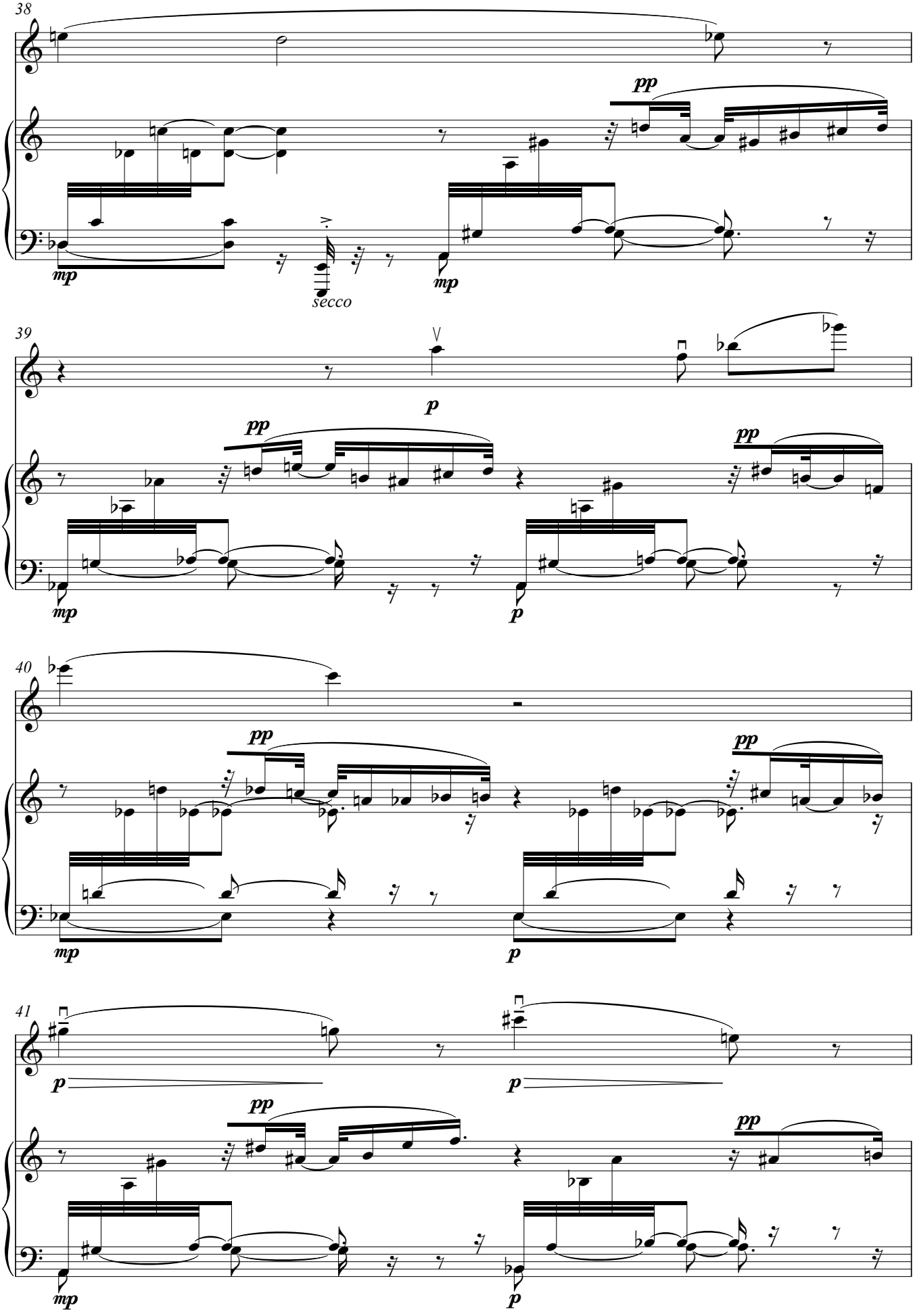
mf ***pp*** ***mp*** ***pp***

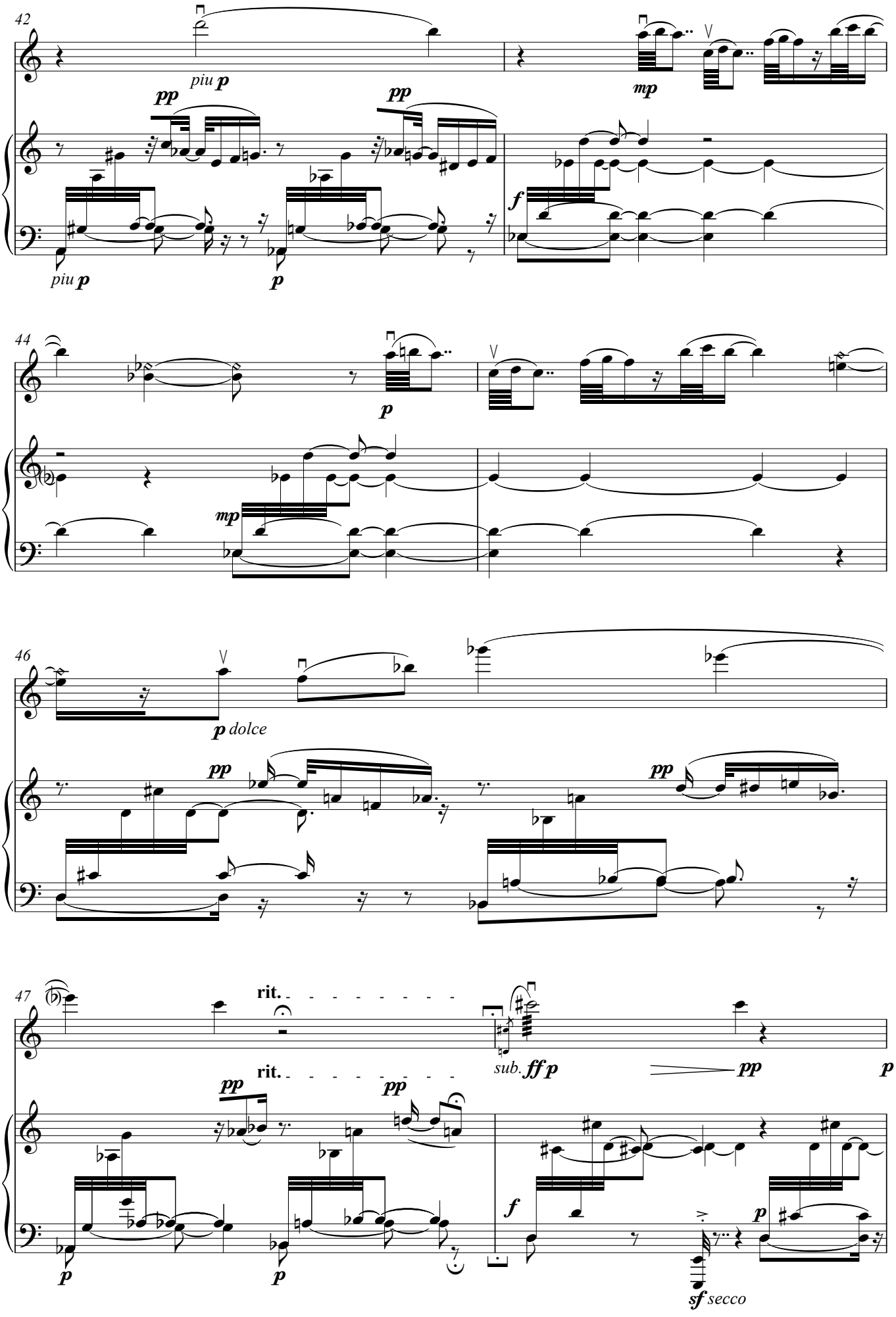

9
mf
pp
mp
p secco
11
gliss.
mp
pp
p
13
f
pp
15
p
piu p
mf

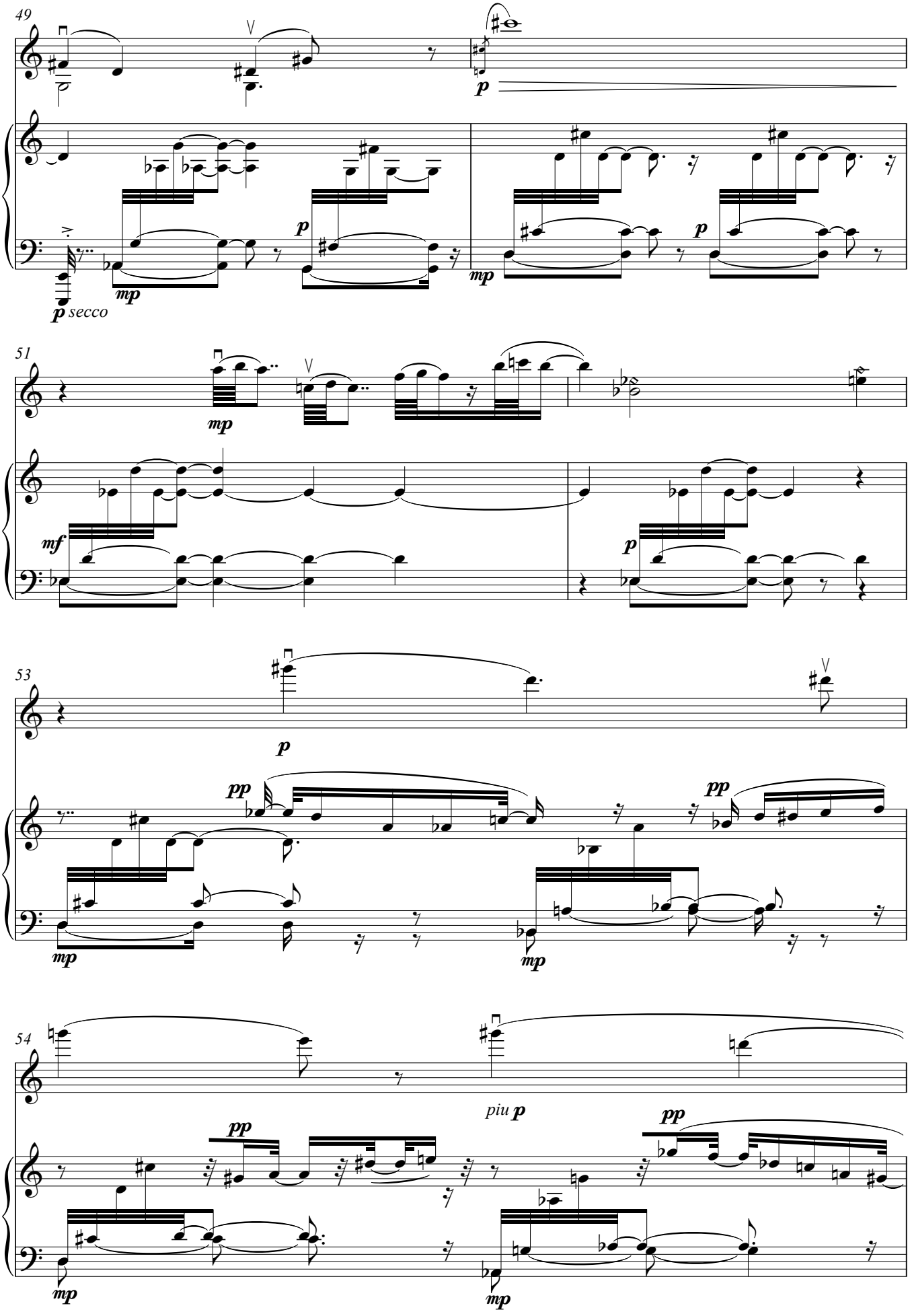

17
p
pp
mp
f
mp
mp secco
19
pp
pp
pp
p
mp
mp
21
fp
pp
p
pp
f
f
mp secco
23
piu p
p
pp
pp
p
mf
pp

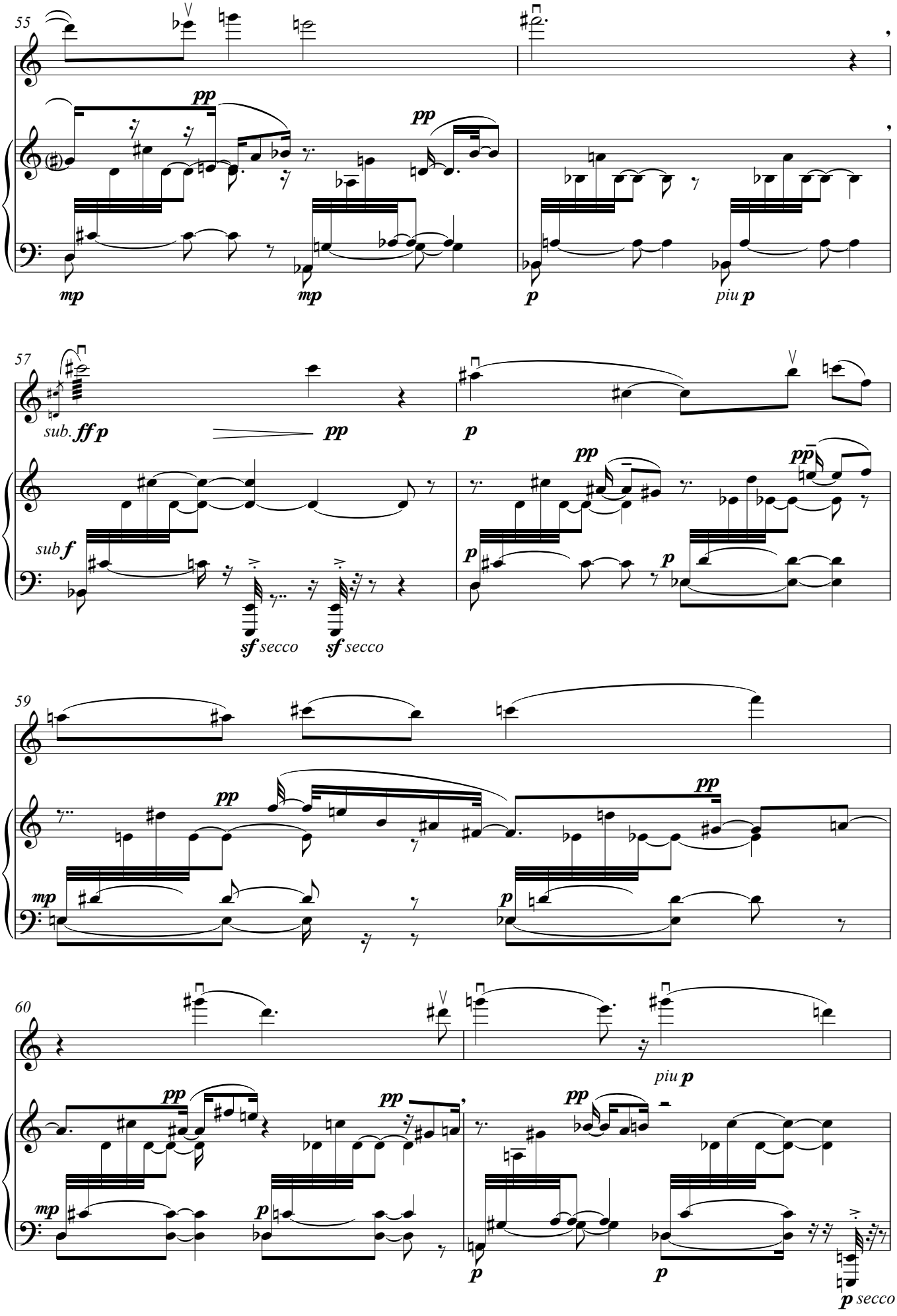

25
p
p
pp
mp
mp secco
p
pp
27
p
p
piu p
p
pp
pp
mp
p
29
pp
pp
mp secco
f
mp secco
p
pp
31
p dolce
pp
f
pp
mp

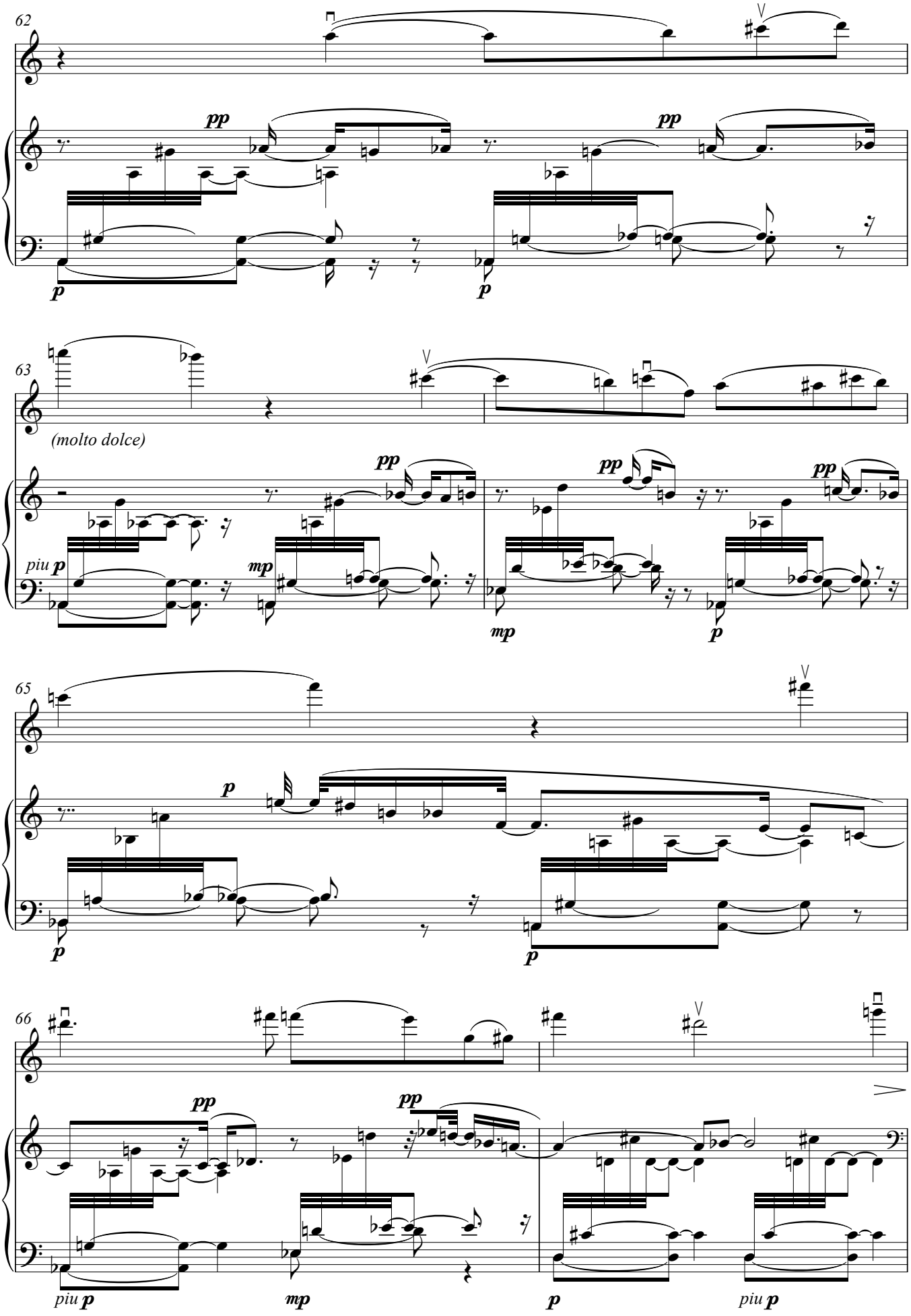

33
pp
p
34
pp
(a tempo)
pp
p
p
p
mp secco
mp secco
f
36
piu p
pp
pp
mp
mp
37
p
pp
pp
mp
mp

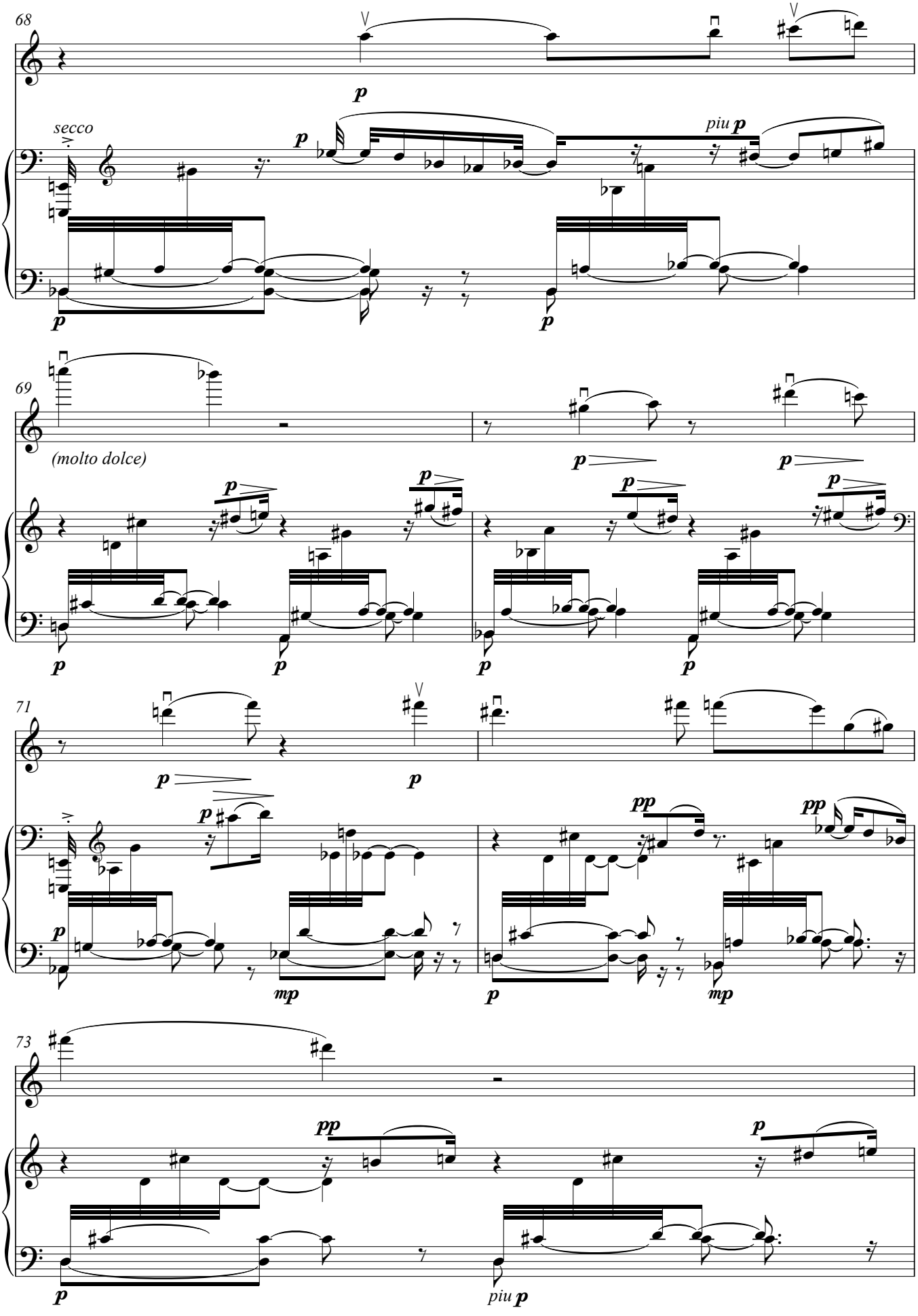

38
pp
mp
secco
mp
39
p
pp
pp
mp
p
40
pp
pp
mp
p
41
p
p
pp
pp
mp
p

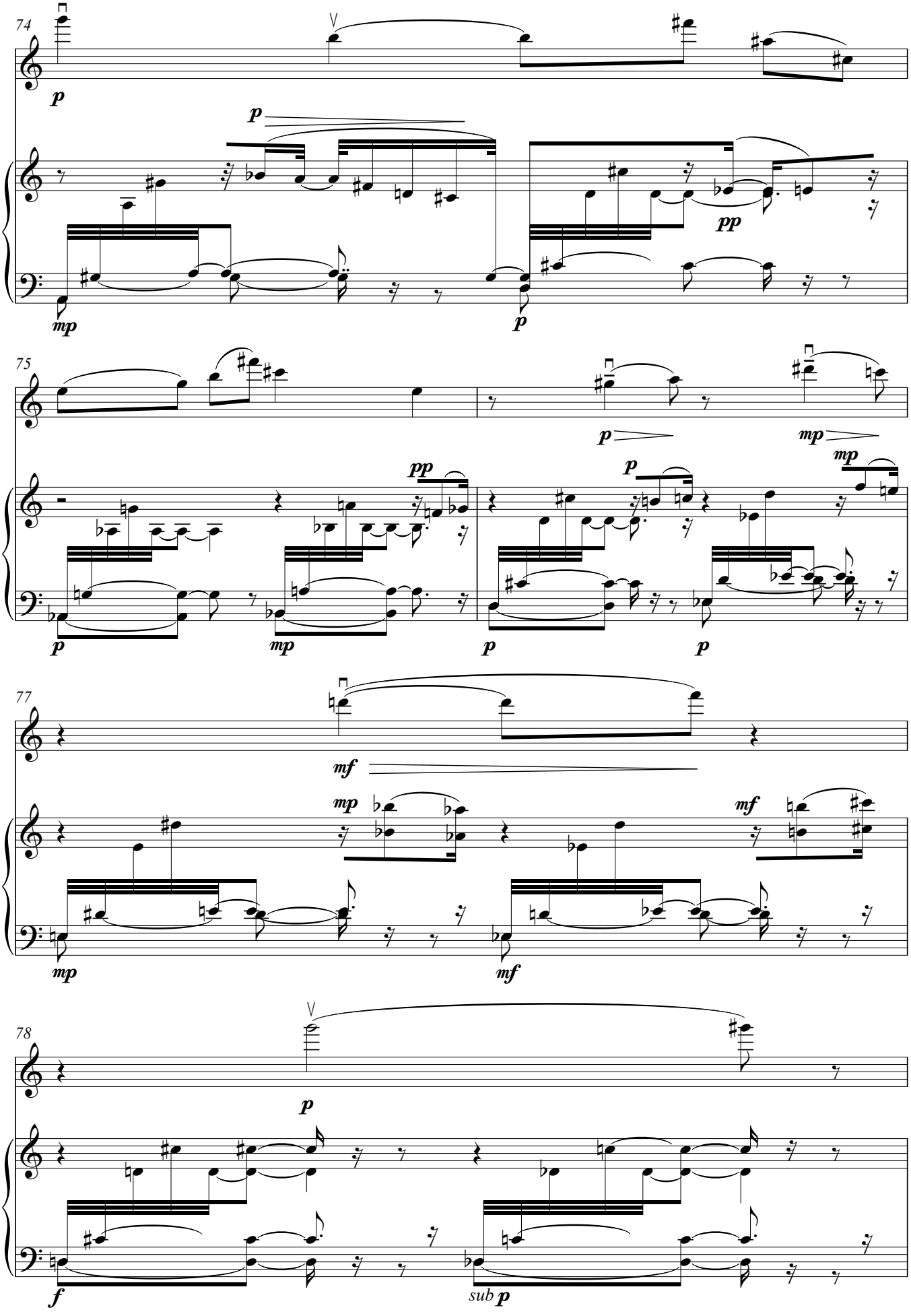

42
piu p
pp
pp
mp
f
piu p
p
44
p
mp
46
p dolce
pp
pp
47
rit.
rit.
sub. ff p
pp
p
pp
pp
f
p
p
p
sf secco

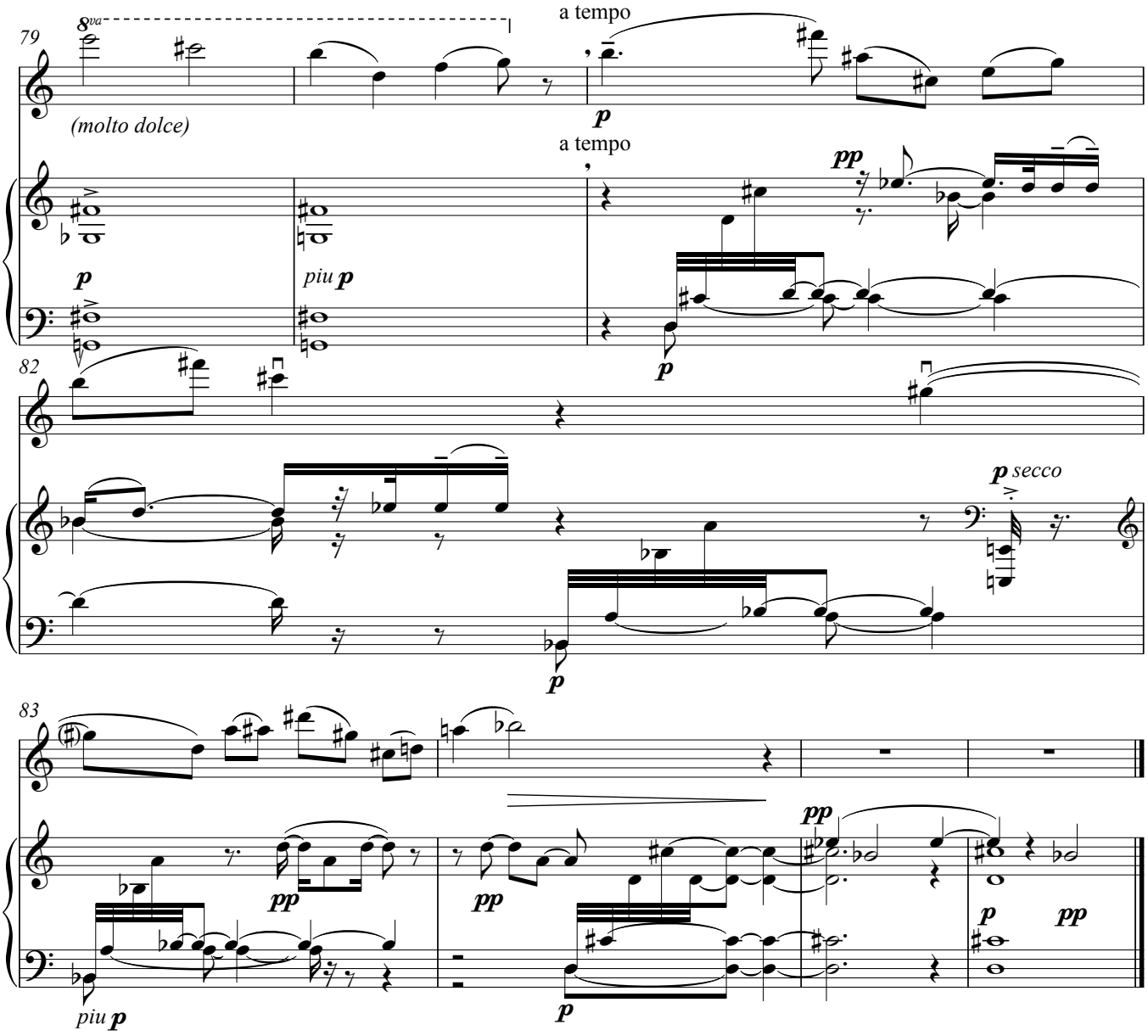

49
p secco
mp
p
mp
p
mp
51
mp
mf
p
53
p
pp
mp
pp
mp
54
piu p
pp
mp
pp
mp


55
pp
pp
mp
mp
p
piu p
57
sub. ff p
pp
p
sub f
pp
pp
p
p
sf secco
sf secco
59
pp
pp
mp
p
60
piu p
pp
pp
pp
mp
p
p
p
p secco

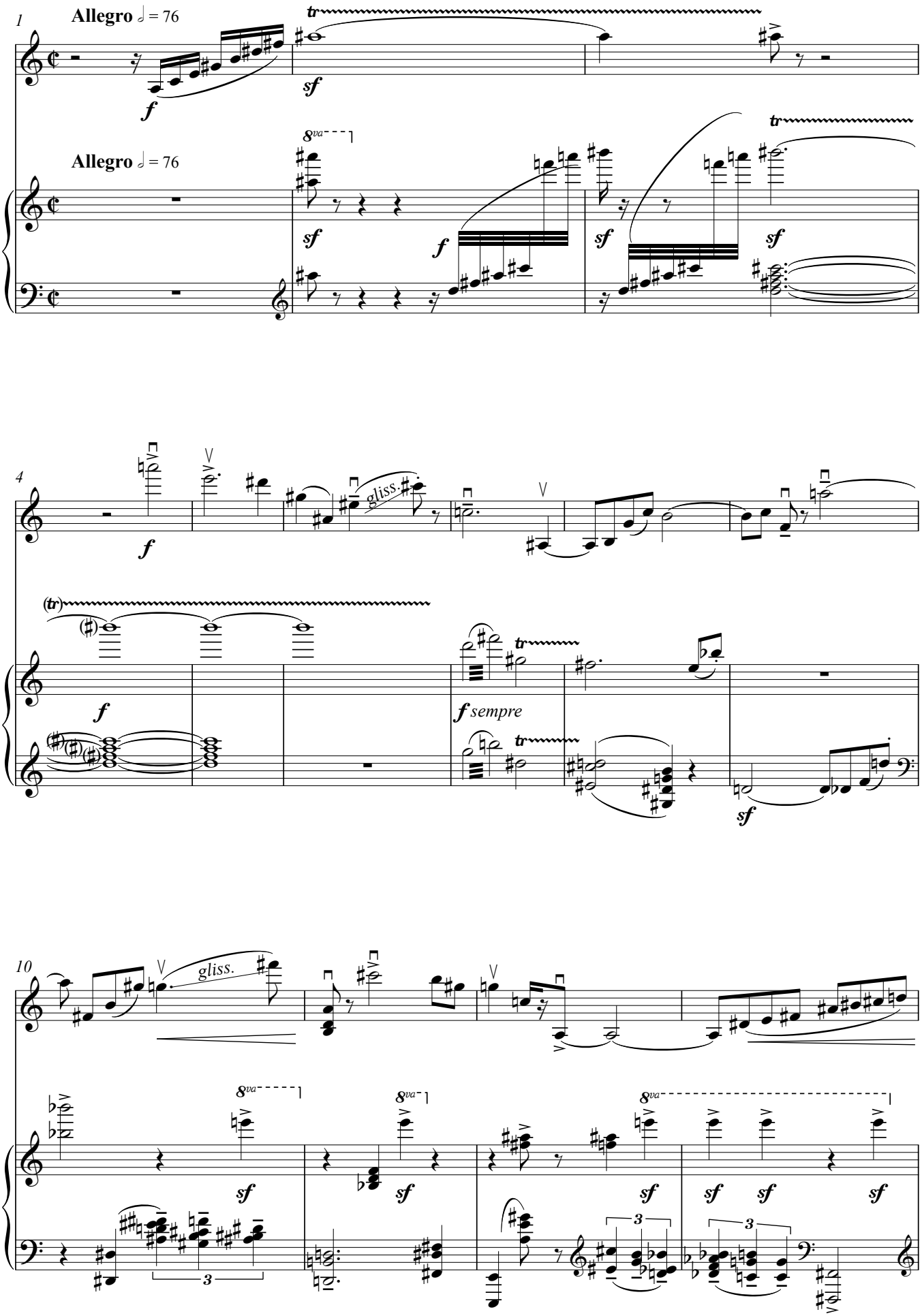

62
pp
pp
p
p
63
(molto dolce)
pp
pp
pp
piu p
mp
mp
p
65
p
p
p
66
pp
pp
piu p
mp
p
piu p

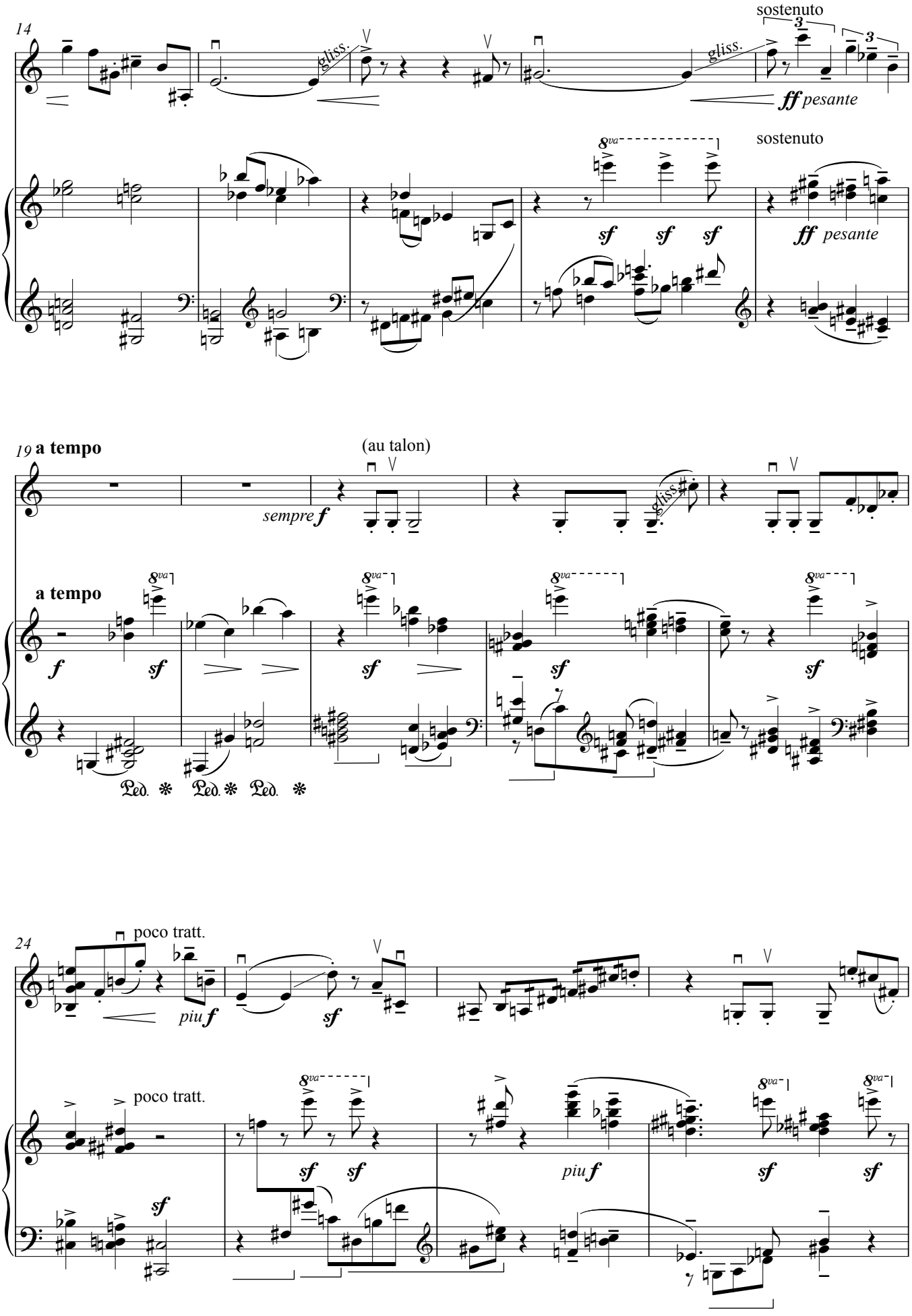

68
secco
piu p
69
(molto dolce)
71
73
piu p

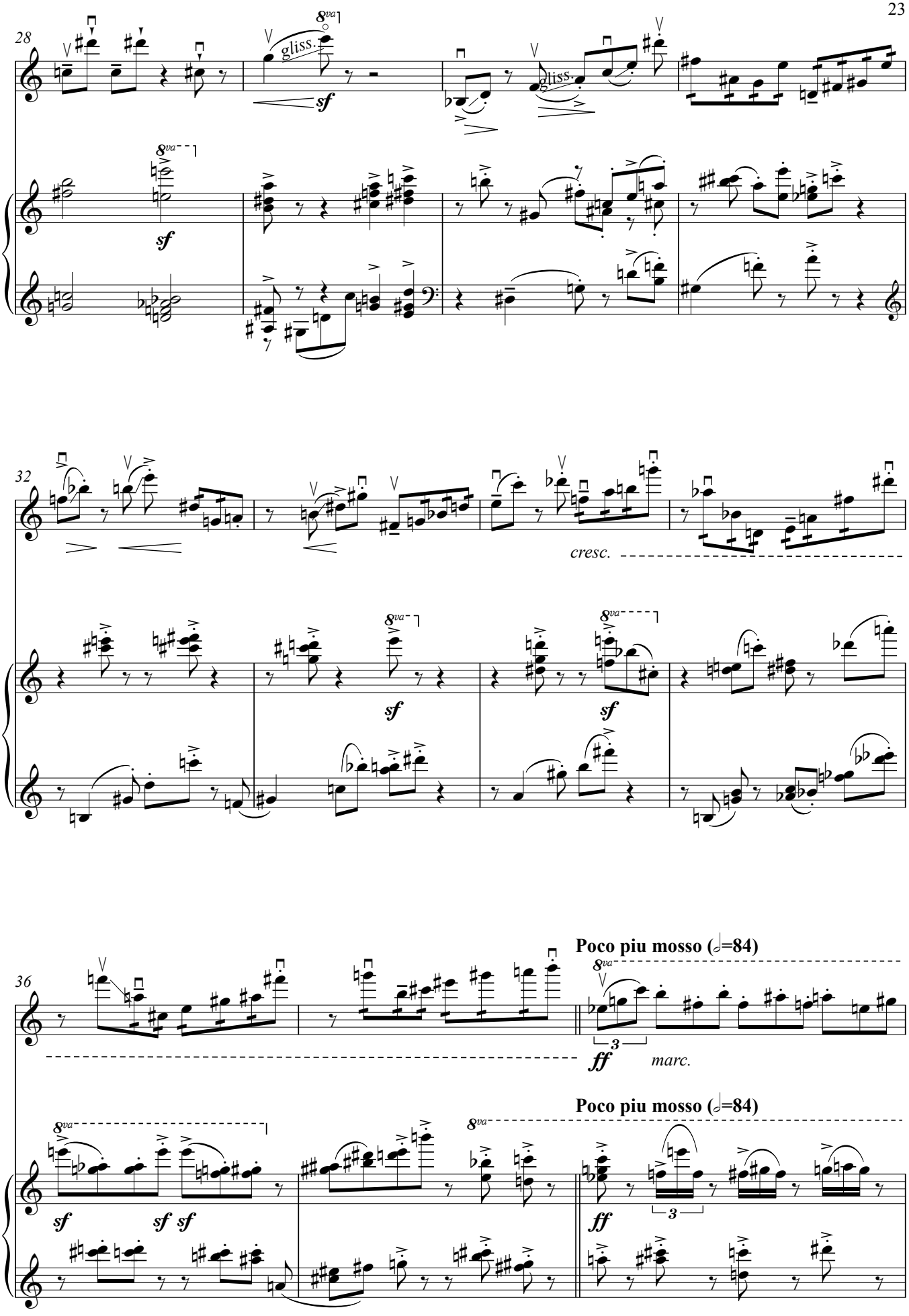

74
p
p
mp
pp
p
75
p
mp
pp
mp
p
p
mp
p
77
mf
mp
mf
mp
mf
78
p
f
sub p

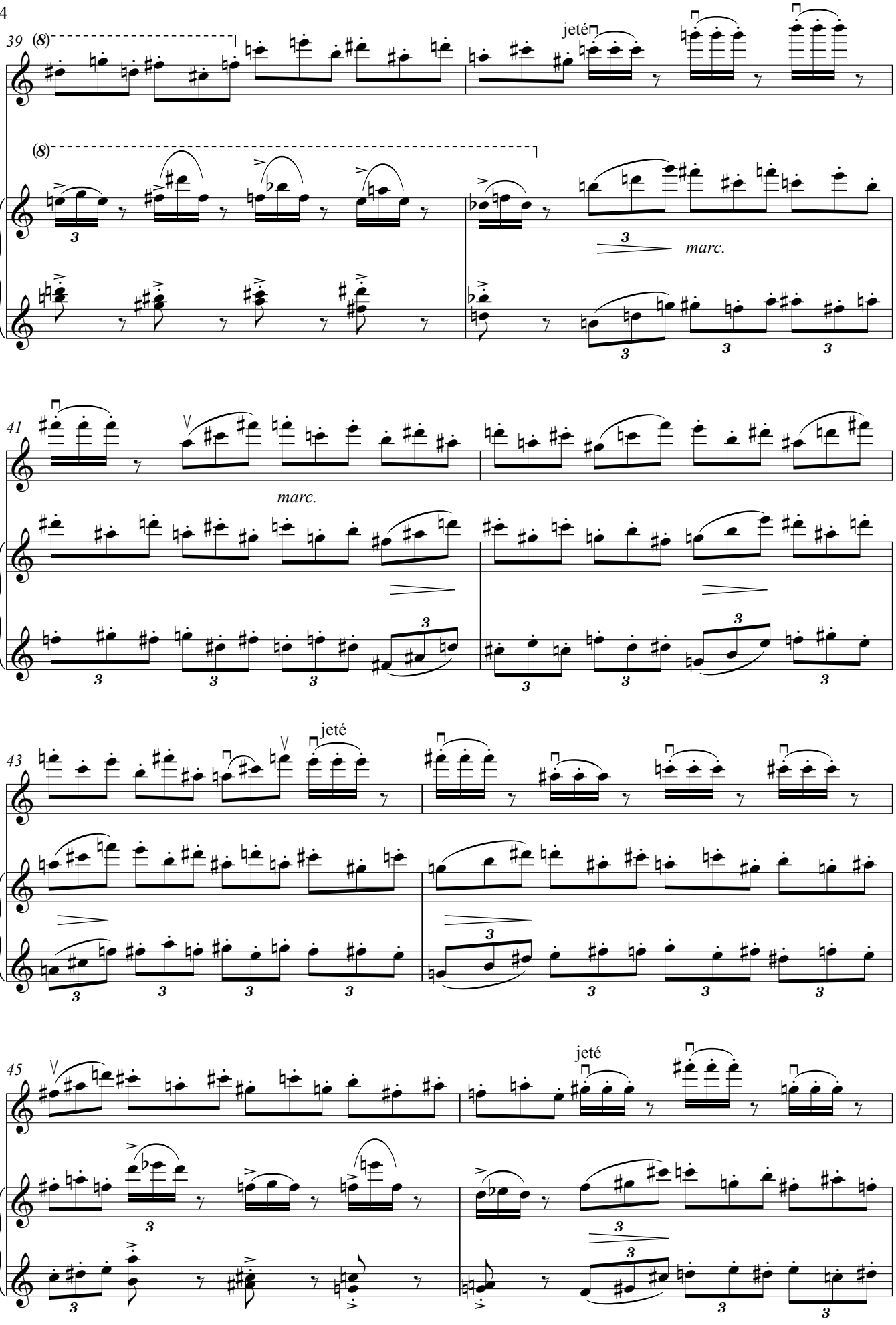

79
8va
(molto dolce)
a tempo
p
a tempo
pp
p
piu p
82
p secco
p
83
pp
pp
pp
p
pp
piu p
p

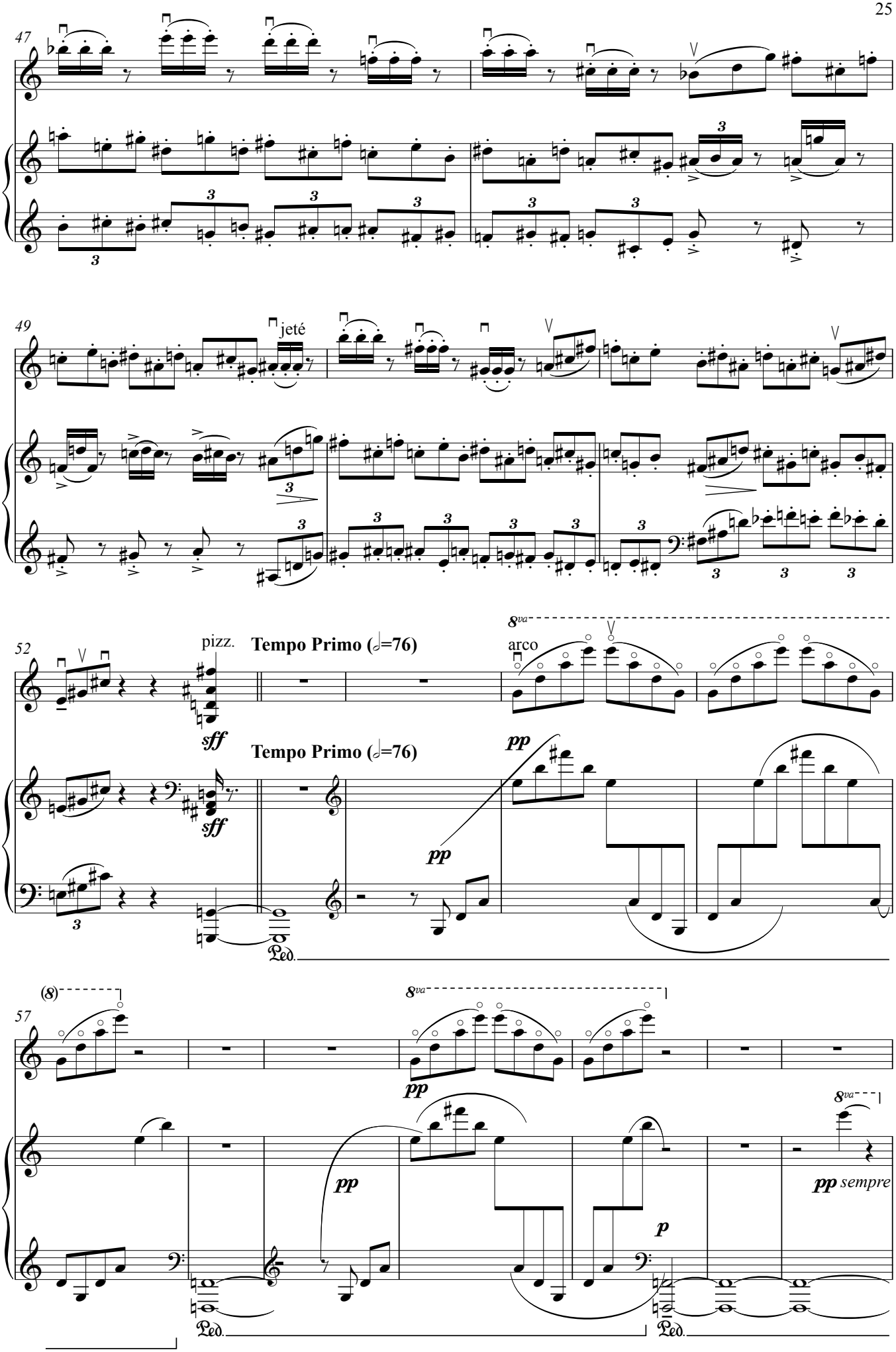
III
Nijinsky

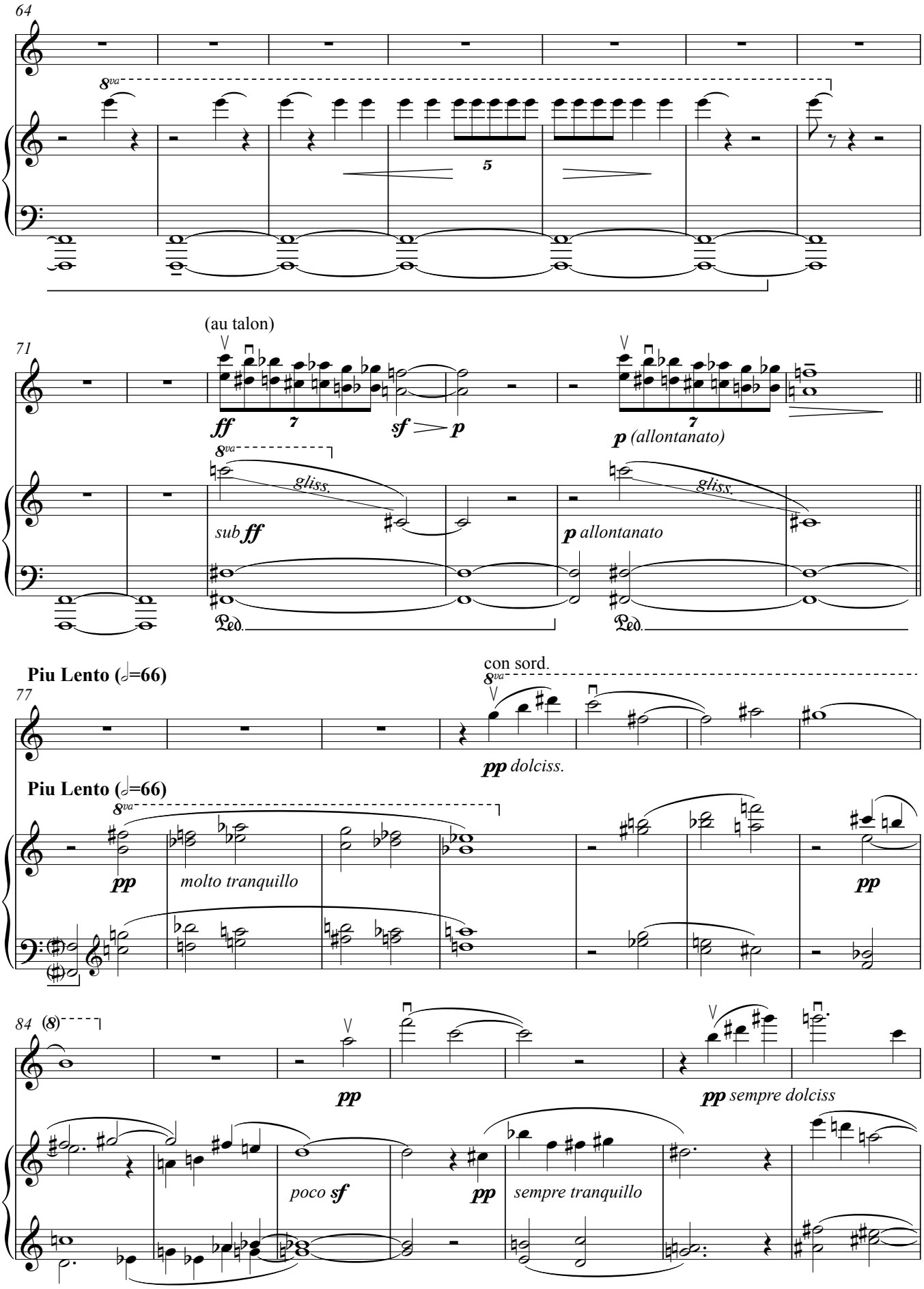



14
sostenuto
gliss.
gliss.
ff pesante
sostenuto
8va
sf sf sf
ff pesante
19 a tempo
(au talon)
sempre f
gliss.
a tempo
f
sf
sf
sf
sf
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *
24
poco tratt.
piu f
sf
poco tratt.
sf sf
piu f
sf sf
sf


28
8va
gliss.
sf
gliss.
8va
sf
32
cresc.
8va
sf
8va
sf
36
Poco piu mosso (𝅗𝅥=84)
8va
3
ff
marc.
Poco piu mosso (𝅗𝅥=84)
8va
sf
sf sf
8va
3
ff


39
(8)
jeté
(8)
marc.
41
marc.
43
jeté
45
jeté


47
49
jeté
52
pizz.
sff
Tempo Primo (𝅗𝅥=76)
8va
arco
pp
Ped.
57
(8)
pp sempre
p


64
8va
5
(au talon)
71
ff
7
sf > p
p (allontanato)
8va
gliss.
sub ff
p allontanato
Ped.
Piu Lento (𝅗𝅥=66)
77
con sord.
8va
pp dolciss.
Piu Lento (𝅗𝅥=66)
8va
pp
molto tranquillo
pp
84 (8)
pp
pp sempre dolciss
poco sf
pp
sempre tranquillo

91

poco rit.

8va

a tempo

pp dolciss.

poco rit.

a tempo

98

(8)

(pp senza trascinare)

103

(senza dim.)

(senza rit.)

Tempo primo (𝅗𝅥=76)

109

pizz.

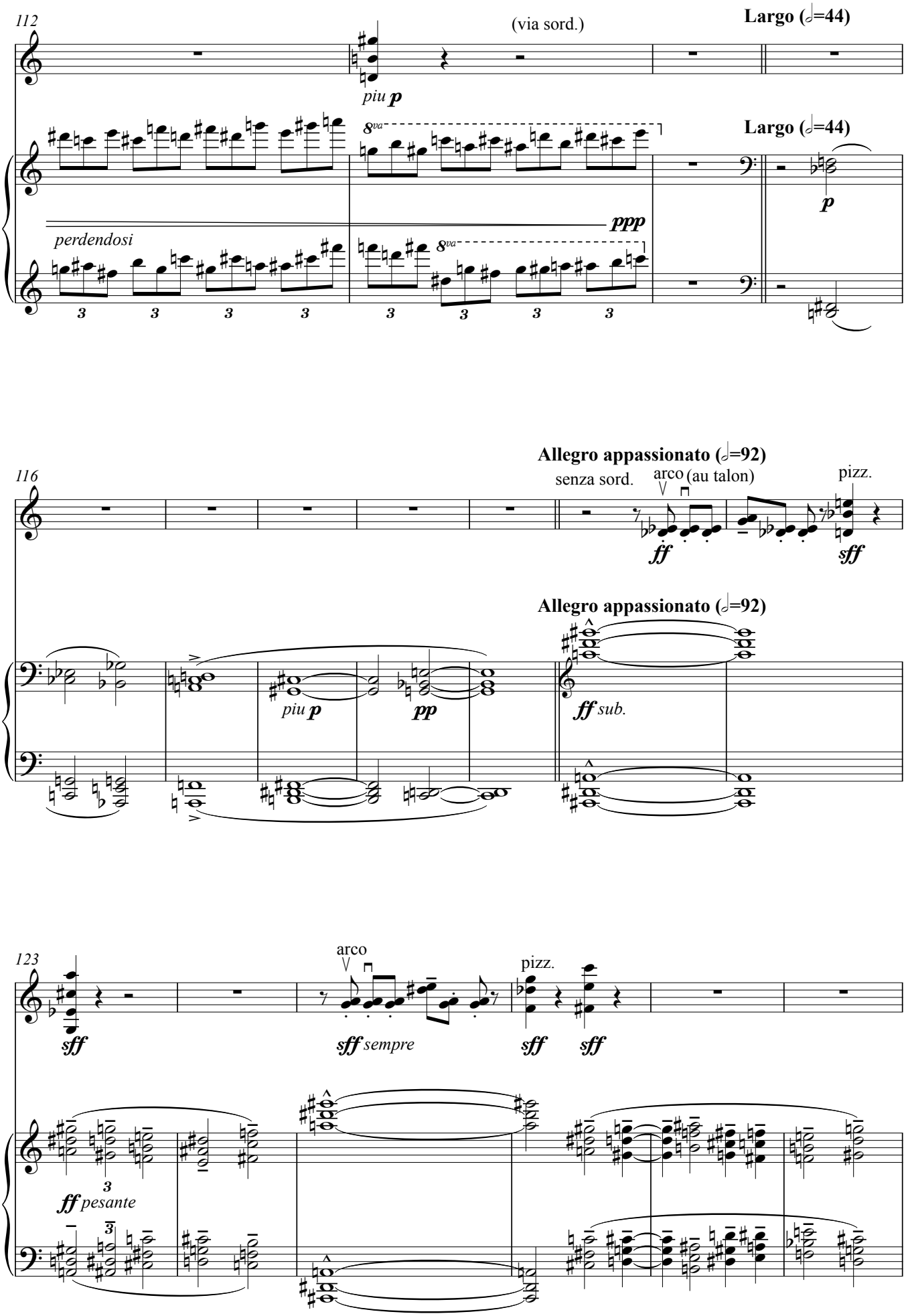
p

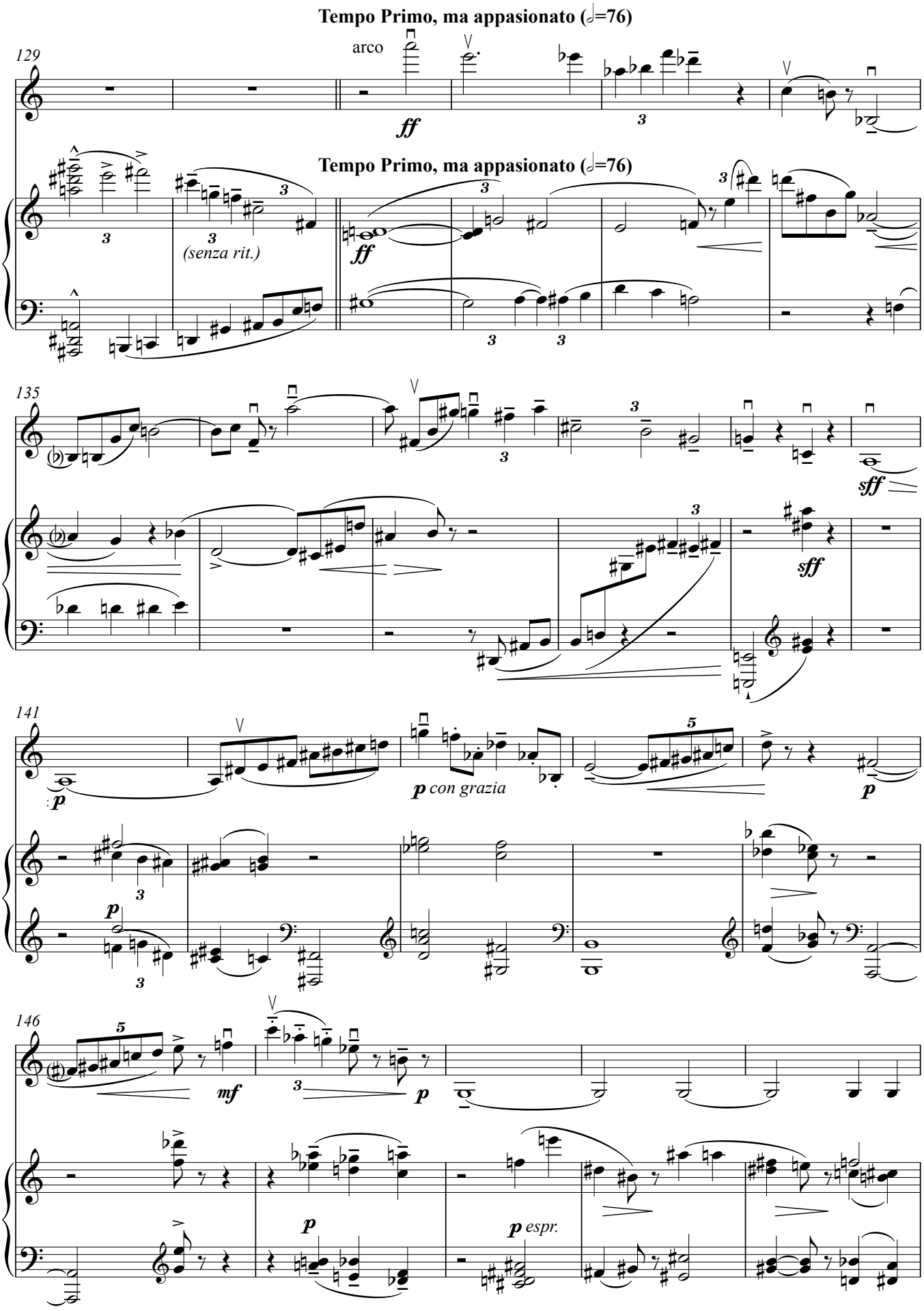
Tempo primo (𝅗𝅥=76)

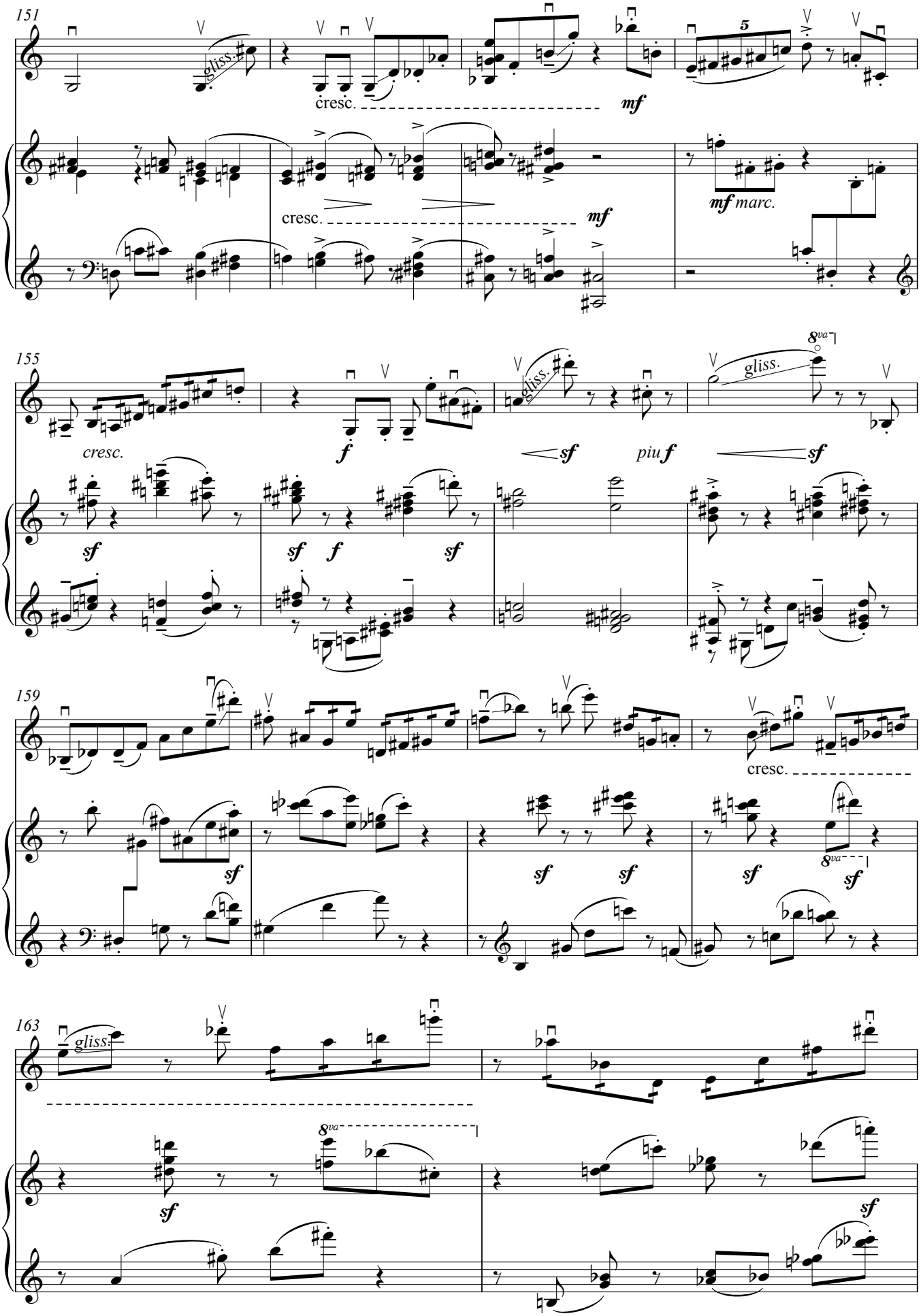
legato

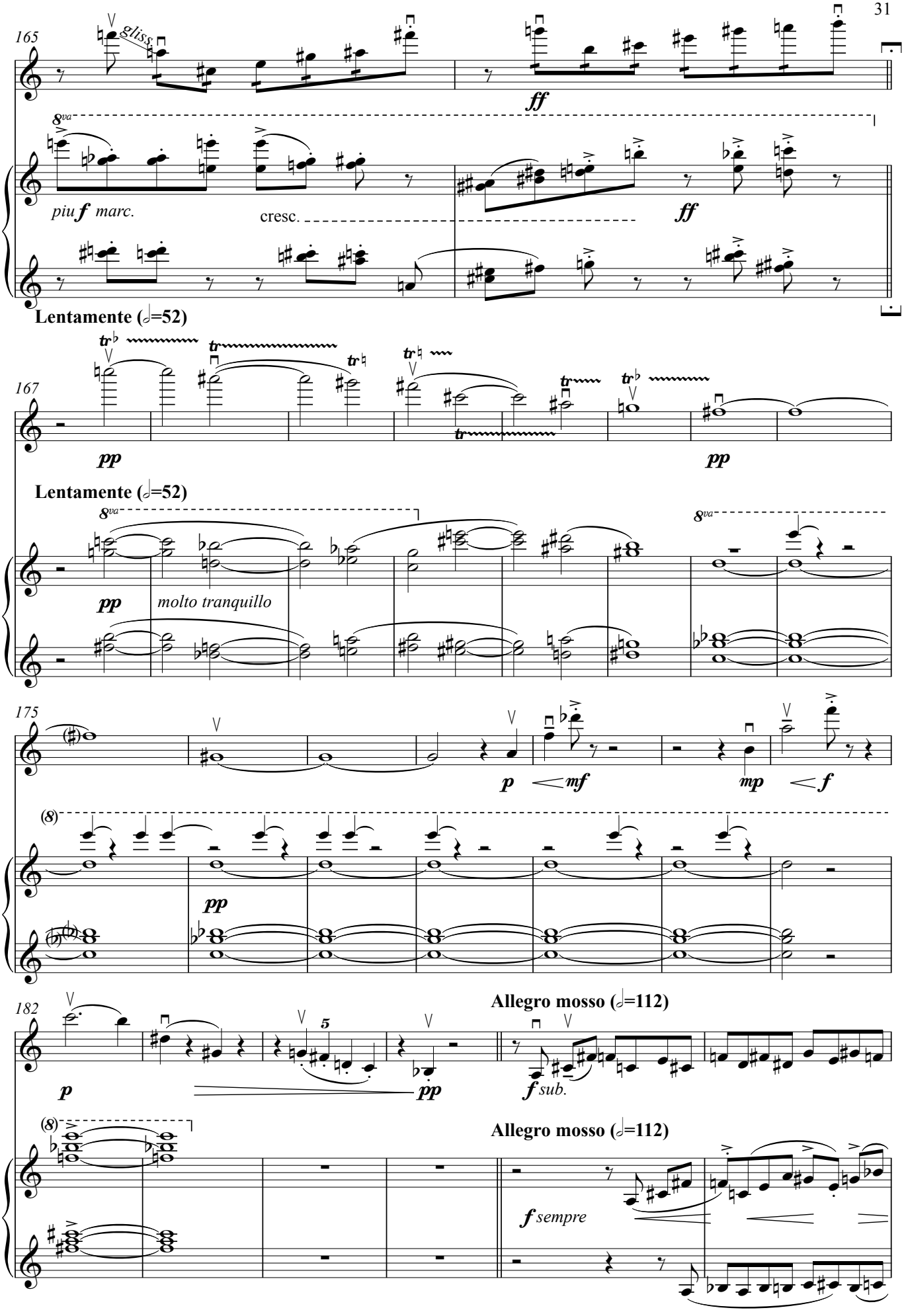
pp leggero

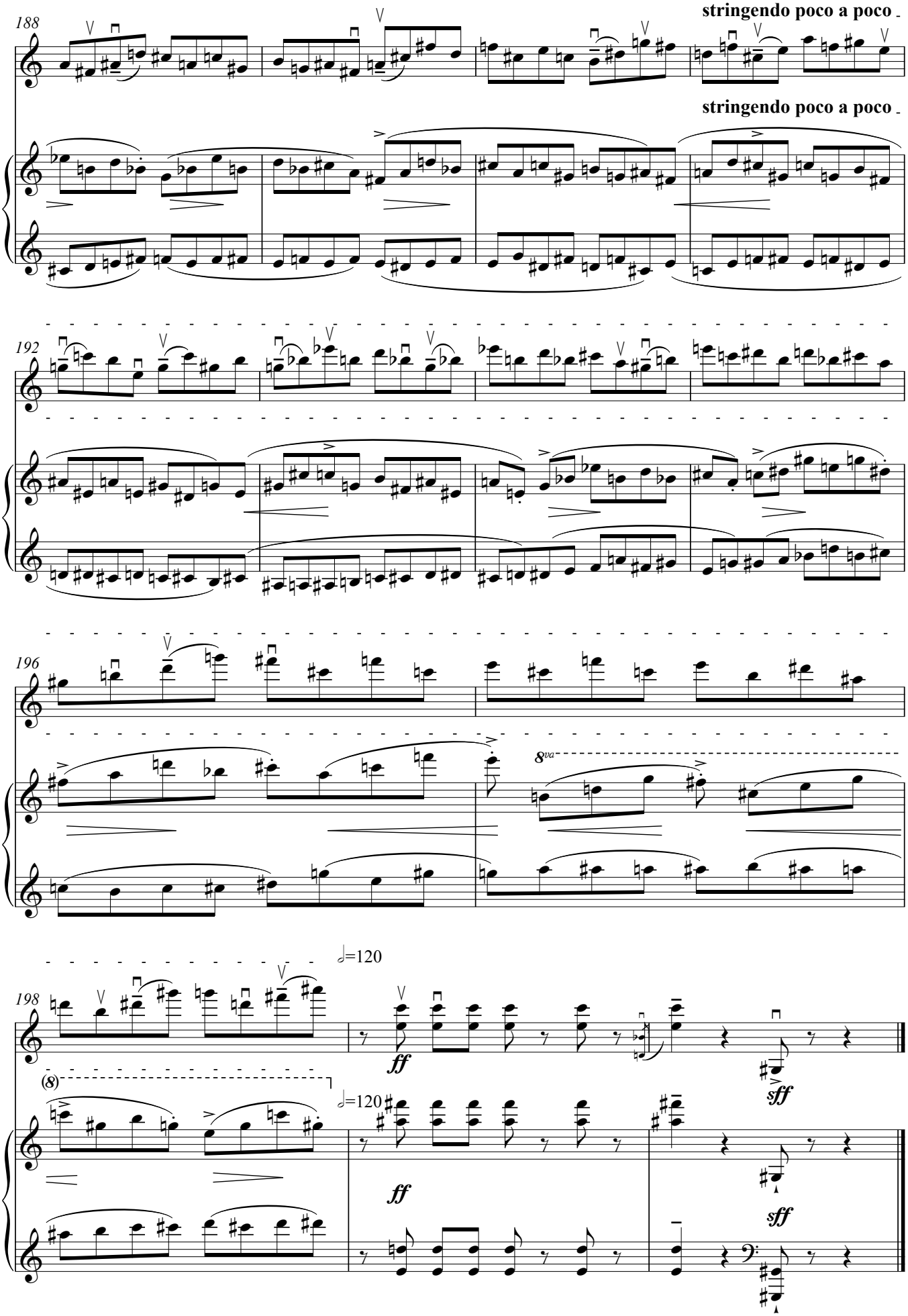
mp


112
(via sord.)
Largo (𝅗𝅥=44)
piu p
8va
Largo (𝅗𝅥=44)
p
ppp
perdendosi
8va
116
Allegro appassionato (𝅗𝅥=92)
senza sord.
arco (au talon)
pizz.
ff
sff
Allegro appassionato (𝅗𝅥=92)
piu p
pp
ff sub.
123
arco
pizz.
sff
sff sempre
sff
sff
ff pesante


Tempo Primo, ma appasionato (𝅗𝅥=76)
129
arco
ff
Tempo Primo, ma appasionato (𝅗𝅥=76)
(senza rit.)
ff
135
sff
sff
141
p
p con grazia
p
p
146
mf
p
p
p espr.


151
gliss.
cresc.
mf
5
cresc.
mf
mf marc.
155
cresc.
f
sf
piu f
sf
8va
gliss.
sf
sf
f
sf
159
cresc.
sf
sf
sf
8va
sf
163
gliss.
8va
sf
sf


165
gliss.
ff
8va
piu f marc.
cresc.
ff
Lentamente (𝅗𝅥=52)
167
pp
pp
Lentamente (𝅗𝅥=52)
8va
pp
molto tranquillo
8va
175
p
mf
mp
f
(8)
pp
182
Allegro mosso (𝅗𝅥=112)
p
pp
f sub.
(8)
Allegro mosso (𝅗𝅥=112)
f sempre


188
stringendo poco a poco
stringendo poco a poco
192
196
8va
198
♩=120
ff
sff
(8)
♩=120
ff
sff