INTRODUCTION

Harold Truscott

Havergal Brian was both organist and pianist, as well as, to some extent, violinist and cellist. But his activities as performer, except in private, ceased fairly early in his career, as he became more and more immersed in composition. Nonetheless, I can testify that even in his 70s he was capable of playing magnificently Busoni's transcription of Bach's C major organ toccata. Therefore, it is rather disappointing that he composed comparatively little solo piano music. The pieces published here comprise his complete extant work for the medium. To these must be added, as music for the piano, if not simply solo piano music, the piano parts of his considerable output of songs (about 70, including part-songs with piano), the last of which was written in 1926. These piano parts were often quite full (certainly more than accompaniments) and, as we shall see, in two instances were complete enough in themselves to be self-sufficient. Brian rated his songs as a very important part of his output and, at a time when his symphonies were unknown, was particularly distressed because his songs (or his "lieder", as he called them) were not known and performed. From his manner of speaking, this worried him quite as much as the non-performance of his symphonies. In fact, it is possible that it distressed him more for, although he had the desire to hear his symphonies, he had given up, for the time at any rate, any expectation of their performance; but he saw no reason, and nor did I, why his songs should not be performed.

The *Three Illuminations*, composed in 1916, are a curious sidelight on his personality. To a slightly lesser extent, so are the *Four Miniatures*, which were produced between 1918 and 1920, for they are, in a sense, a continuation, at a slightly lower temperature, of the style embodied in the *Illuminations*. That style is sarcastically, satirically or grotesquely humorous (perhaps even savagely so in the first and third of the three). Nor is it accident that the *Three Illuminations* were written just as he began serious work on the opera *The Tigers*, originally named *The Grotesques*, and subtitled 'A Burlesque Opera'; for the piano pieces clearly influenced the writing of the opera – a try-out on a small scale of much that was to be embodied in the opera, in style and outlook. Each of the three has a programme, written by Brian and prefacing each piece. In addition, added directions as to what is happening and where are printed over the music; and in this fact Brian reveals a connection, whether or not he was aware of it, although I suspect he was, with a form of music going back a long way. Programme music, of course, is centuries old, but the type to which I refer, in spite of sporadic forerunners such as Kuhnau's Biblical Sonatas, came to its heyday in the later 18th century, and gradually sank to rest during the 19th, with occasional dying wriggles even in the 20th. It manifested itself in programmatic pieces, usually celebrating some historical event, such as Beethoven's so-called *Battle* Symphony, for piano as a rule, with printed indications here and there as to what was happening in the music. Probably the most notorious, with some of the worst music, was called *The Battle of Prague*, by Franz Kotzwara, who hanged himself about 1791, whether for shame I know not. Now, it is into this company that Brian comes with his *Three Illuminations*, not because of poor quality music – on the contrary, the music is particularly good – but because of the way in which he has chosen to illustrate his three subjects.

The *Four Miniatures*, by contrast, have no programme, other than the connection of Nos. 2 and 4 with the songs from which the piano parts were extracted to form the piano pieces. The songs were settings of Blake's *The Land of Dreams* and *The Birds*. Much more important is the fact that they are, although less intense, of a piece with the *Illuminations* in style.

While Brian was writing the *Gothic* Symphony he worked on many contrapuntal studies in preparation for some of the counterpoint that inhabits that mighty work. In 1924 he selected some of these, reworked them and from them drew the two Preludes and Fugues in C minor and D minor and major, and the great E flat Double Fugue. Coming from the at times freakish gro-

tesquerie of the *Three Illuminations* and the *Four Miniatures*, at only a few years' remove, the writing in these contrapuntal works seems almost ordinary. It is illusion; the ordinary is a surface, beneath which lies the product of a mind just as extraordinary as that which produced the earlier pieces. But we must remember that Brian got something out of his system with those earlier pieces and, especially, with the opera to which they led, much as he may have claimed that Beecham bullied him into writing it, and that he had now passed into a mood no less characteristic, though no more traditional, than the earlier one, but which was serious in a way that that was not – overtly, at any rate. *The Gothic* is no joke, but it was, for Brian, a necessity. A serious cast of mind was therefore to be expected, and what better than the contrapuntal for that purpose? Counterpoint does, indeed, play a large part in that huge work, counterpoint of various kinds, each of which can be referred back to its counterpart in earlier music, but handled in a way that is peculiar to Brian. And he felt the need of discipline in this symphony. Hence the contrapuntal studies, and the eventual reclamation of some of these to produce apparently disarming music.

The C minor Prelude is, mainly, an arpeggio piece – as are indeed, some of Bach's – although with the gradual emergence of a theme which, to finish, receives four solid chordal statements; but this sounds no more like Bach than the symphonies sound like those of any other symphonist. It is good Brian but, taking these contrapuntal studies as a whole, it is the least interesting part of them. The Fugue is another matter. Each of the three fugues has a simple, short, four-square subject; each, taken alone, is suggestive of simple, four-square fugal writing to follow and, if one follows the music with one's eyes, that is to some extent what one gets. Nothing could be further, it seems, from the grotesque world we have just left. But, to quote the American poet Bret Harte: "Do I sleep? Do I dream? Do I wonder and doubt? Are things what they seem? Or is visions about?" The Brian fugal surface gives little idea of what lies beneath. One of the most notable characteristics of a good deal of early and middle period Brian is a propensity for giving a surface appearance of the normal which covers the unusual, if not the abnormal. The C minor Fugue is an example. It moves steadily, in keeping with its character, to its appointed climax through harmonies and episodes which actually effect a minor revolution as they progress; none of it could be deduced from appearance, or from the subject itself. Brian could make the normal itself look awry to our vision.

However, the best is to come. With the D minor Prelude, leading to its D major Fugue, and the Double Fugue we have two masterpieces. Convincing two-part counterpoint is not easy to write; it is easier to write two parts which will insist on coming together so that they suggest again and again that a necessary third part is missing. Haydn was a master in this line; an astonishing amount of his richest music is in two-part writing. And Tovey pointed out long ago that the bulk of that towering masterpiece, Elgar's *Falstaff*, moves in two parts. Brian is not faced here with a problem of that size, but it was no mean feat to keep such writing going with such richness of imagination for the four pages occupied by the D minor Prelude, especially since he has comparatively little recourse to arpeggio writing.

The D major Fugue is largely a triumphant piece, again producing the unusual from the normal; my only reservation about it is that it suggests the organ more than the piano – to me, that is. The Double Fugue is a resplendent achievement, its large scale, taken with its short, lively first subject, one of Brian's most notable justifications of his ability to extract the unexpected from a simple subject. This is done by compressing most of a normal double fugue into roughly one fifth of the total length, and then expanding on suggestions from tiny elements drawn from both subjects, exactly where one would not expect to find such expansion.

Brian closed his contribution to solo piano music in 1934 with a Prelude, *John Dowland's Fancy*, which owes much to his interest in music of the 16th and early 17th centuries; interest which had its effect on a good deal of his music, including, as he said himself, the *Gothic* Symphony. Brian produced the Prelude as the planned first movement of a four-movement suite inspired by Dowland, the idea being suggested by his great friend Sir Granville Bantock. After he had written down the first movement, however, Brian was called upon by the BBC to check the orchestral parts for an early broadcast of two symphonic dances from *The Tigers*; these proved to be so error-riddled that the task took a month, at the end of which time the mood and the music for the Dowland suite had entirely left his mind, never to return. The surviving Prelude, however, is a ravishing little piece, which manages to evoke the period without departing from an essentially Brianesque style.

PREFACE TO THE "THREE ILLUMINATIONS"*

Sir Granville Bantock

Havergal Brian is an English composer whose reputation has been made and confirmed by such works as his *English Suite*, *Cleopatra*, and *By the Waters of Babylon*. He is there seen to possess high attainments enriched by a fertile imagination and marked by an interesting originality of thought. A lighter vein is revealed in his *Festal Dance* and *Dr. Merryheart*, where the grotesque and fantastic find ample expression.

These *Three Illuminations* throw some light upon the present situation in musical art, and may be said to reflect a few eccentricities of the past, as well as to probe like a search-light, or X-rays, into the mysteries of the future.

Although the composer has faithfully adhered to the rules of three-dimensional music, it may be permissible, nay even illuminating, to suggest that an intelligent critic may find herein some food for thought and a clue to the Fourth Dimension.

We have perhaps been too apt to seek for inspiration in the past from the gods of mythology, the heroes of romance, the classic drama, or the tragedies of life.

Our composer here invokes the Comic Muse, and invites us to participate in her mystic rites. Let us not be chary of sweet incense or our applause – "Si neque tibias Euterpe cohibet nec Polyhymnia Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton".

BRIAN'S PROGRAMMES TO THE "THREE ILLUMINATIONS"*

The Boys and the Pastille

Two boys, having nothing to do one Sunday night, they couldn't play around the gas lamps, which were not lighted – because of Zepps – went into a church. During the service one of the boys, having a cold, coughed very badly and an old lady sitting behind him passed him a pastille. He bit it in two parts and gave one to the other boy. All the boys in the village got to hear of the story of the pastille, and having made sure of the church and which old lady had the "sucks", they flocked in a crowd on the following Sunday night. They crowded the seat before the old lady and, soon after arriving, all commenced to cough – but the old lady on this occasion had forgotten her pastilles.

The Butterfly's Waltz

A butterfly on wing is chased by a wasp. The butterfly flitters round a rose garden always followed by the wasp. The butterfly discovers two lovers hidden behind a rose tree in an arbour. She is about to scream to them like a parrot, "I'll tell your mother", when the wasp comes and drives her away. So she doesn't scream, but passes (disgusted) into a vegetable garden and perches upon a nice fat broccoli – thinks she, "Here I will lay my eggs". Just as she is about to put the thought into execution, a naughty boy passes and knocks her off with his cap.

Venus and a Bobby

In the black darkness of the city suburban streets, there gleams a mysterious red light. It is not still, but moves. As we approach the light we find underneath it the face of the representative and embodiment of the ponderous British law. It is a bobby! How queer is the law which needs a red light. Whilst we are in bed, he stands there, unseen, and often ignored, securing our safety. As the light leans at an angle, we may imagine that he is soliloquising upon his shoe laces or his socks.

On this night, so full of terrors, he has been warned that a "Zepp" is somewhere. He looks above him occasionally – as though looking for a moth.

Suddenly a light flashes from a bedroom window opposite. Thinks he – "Bedad a German spy". Says he – "But it cannot be, in the presence of the law". He gazes at the light, or where it comes from, and begins to lick his lips, for, instead of a spy he sees in the lighted room, the beautiful figure of a lady – placing her hat upon her head. He recognizes her as the Venus he had seen at the Opera. His truncheon falls to the ground. He is entranced. Like Tannhäuser, he loses himself. In a fit of enraged passion he exclaims – "How I would woo thee" and lies back propped up by the gas lamp. Suddenly the light from the window is switched off and as suddenly his senses return, in realising that the "Venus" may be descending to leave the house. Gathering himself together he rushes to the door – which suddenly opens and the sergeant calmly walks out. Bobby, disconsolate, looks at him and says – "Kiss me sergeant". The sergeant, laughing, replies – "As you like it".

*Sir Granville's Preface and Brian's programmes are reprinted from the original 1917 Chester edition of the *Illuminations*.

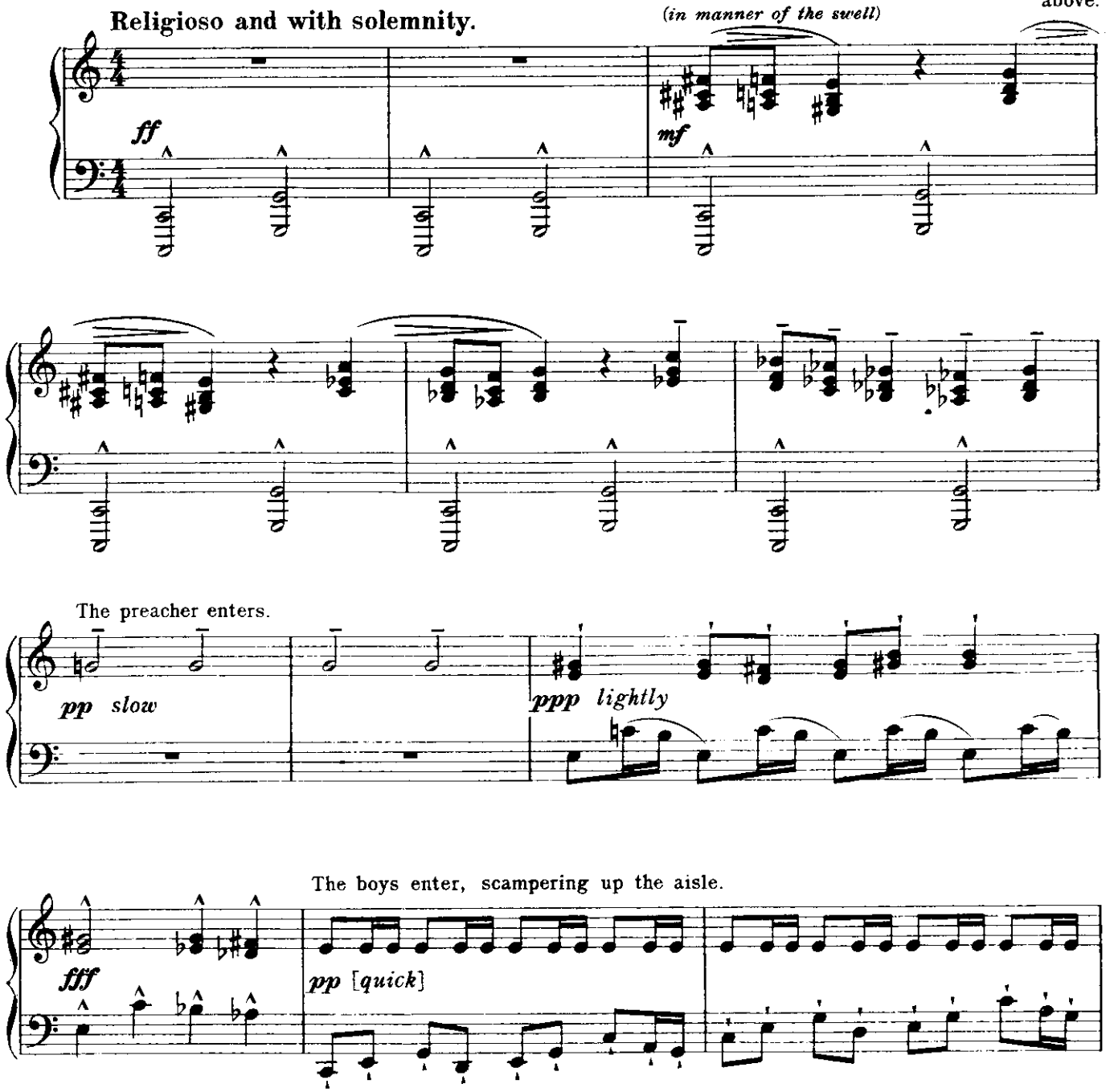
THREE ILLUMINATIONS.

HAVERGAL BRIAN.

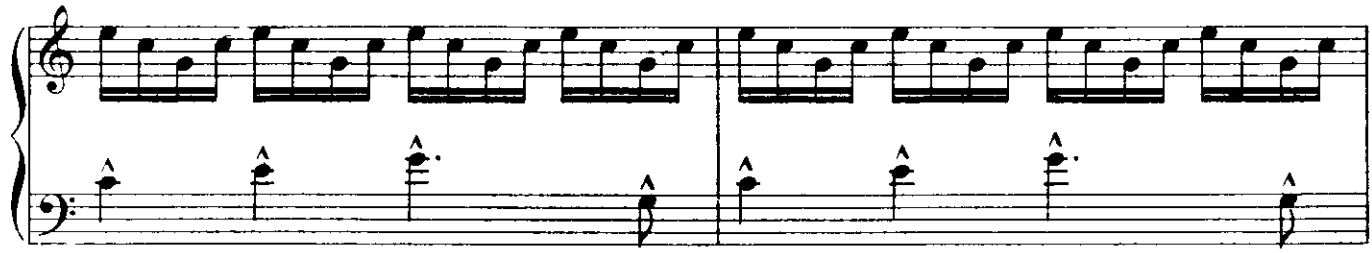
I.

THE BOYS AND THE PASTILLE.

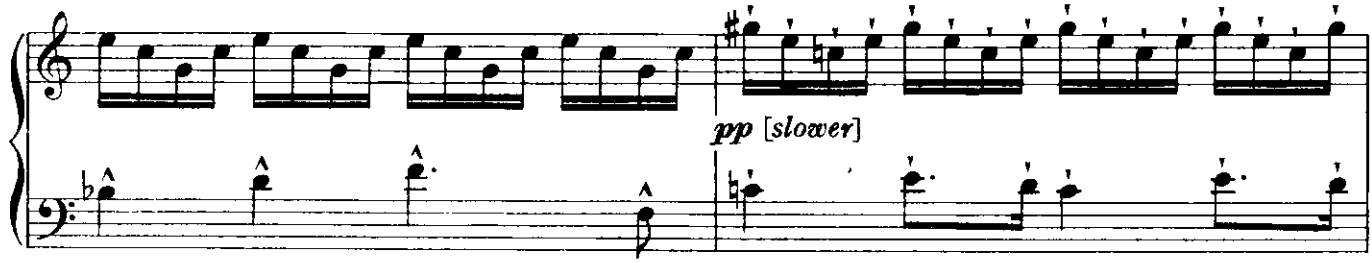
The organist had gone to the war and the 'deputy' was only sure of two pedals, the bottom one and a fifth above.



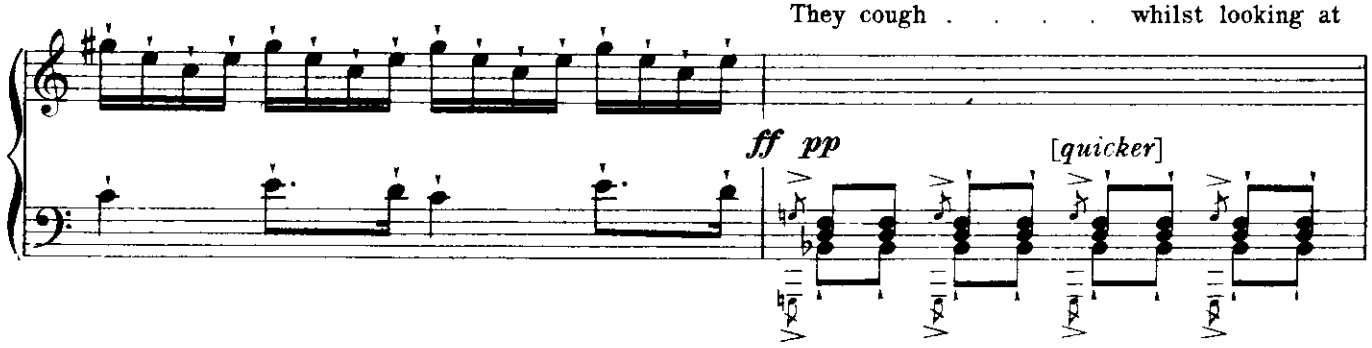
The verger says – "Be quiet, naughty boys."



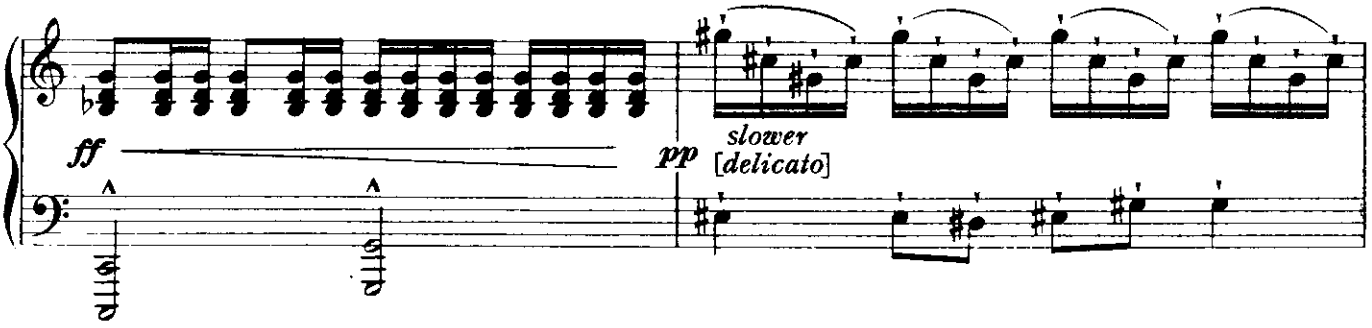
The boys turn round and 'find the lady.'

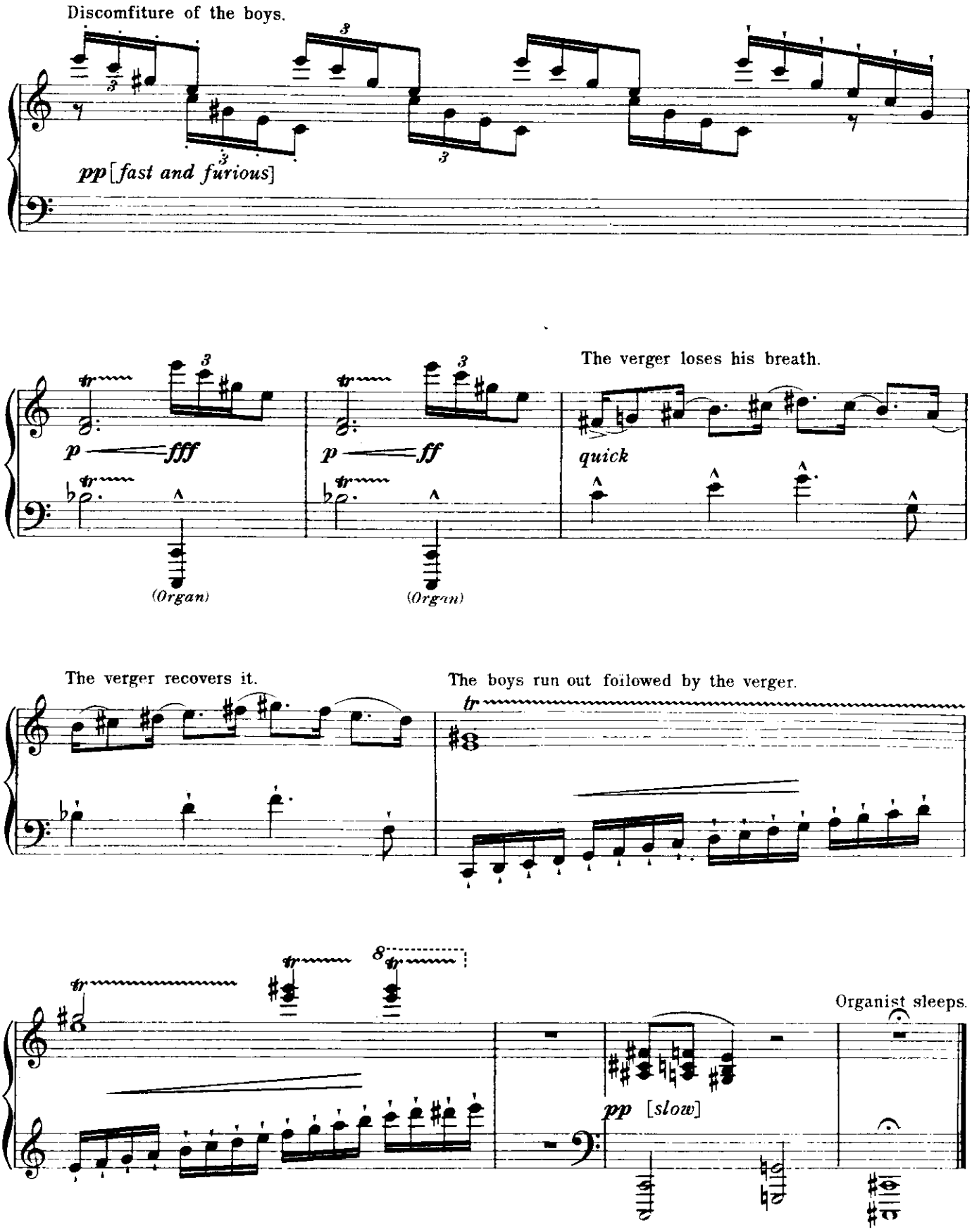


They cough . . . . whilst looking at

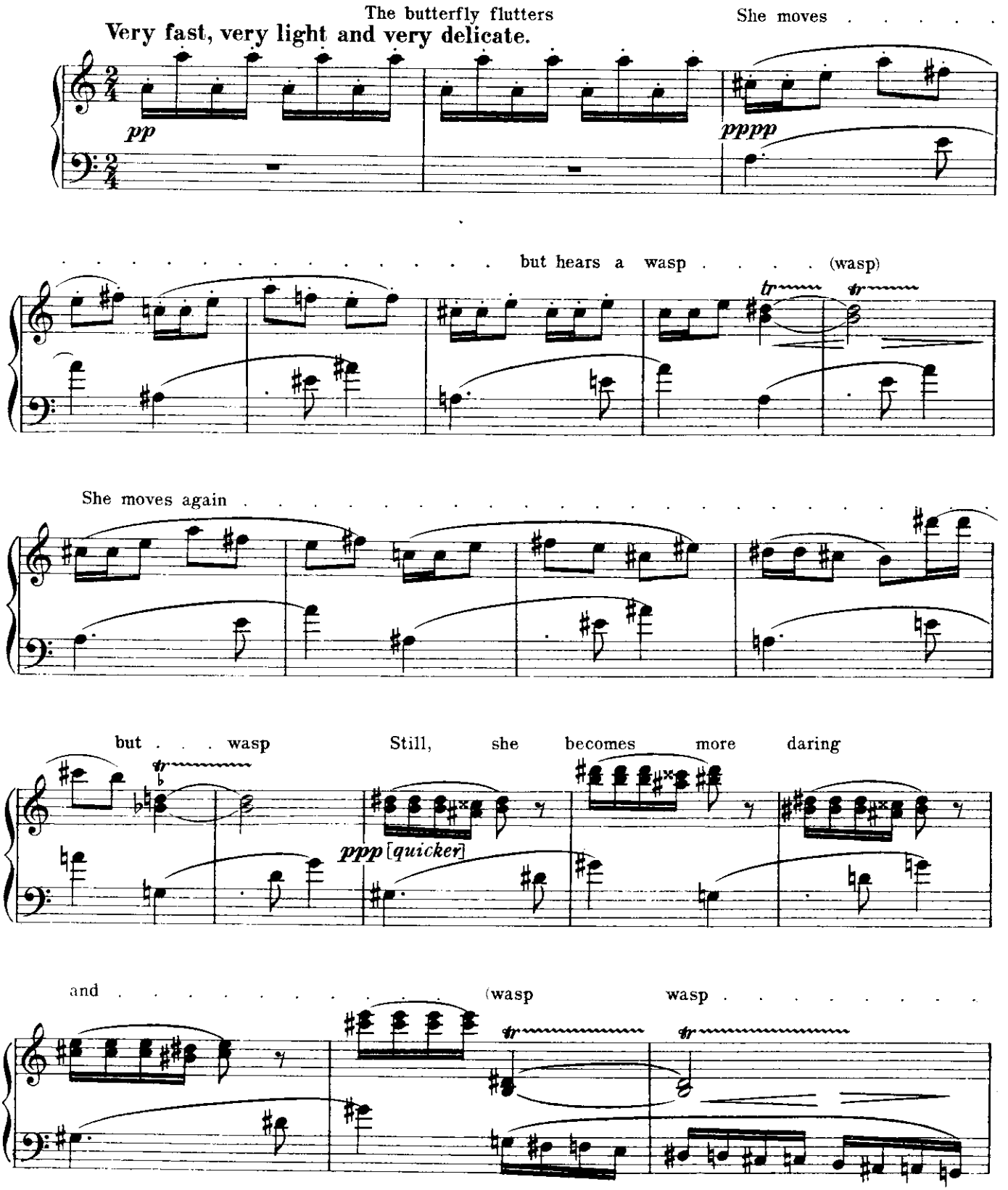


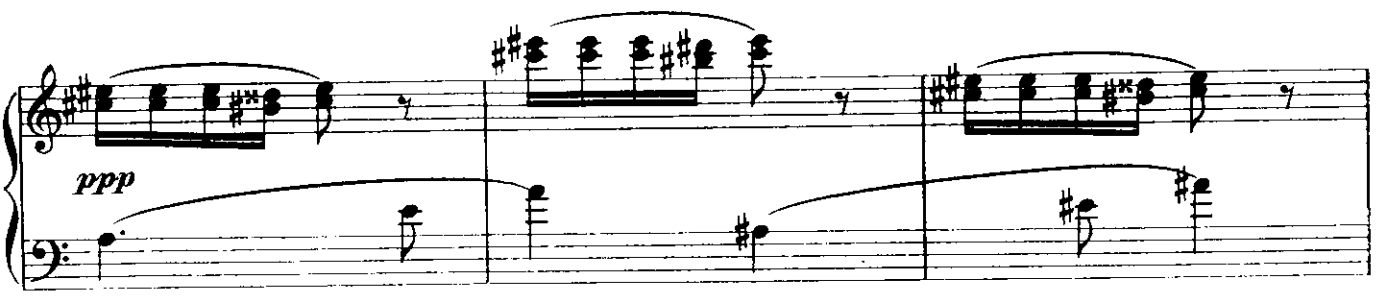
the lady . . . . . but the lady said "I've left them at home."

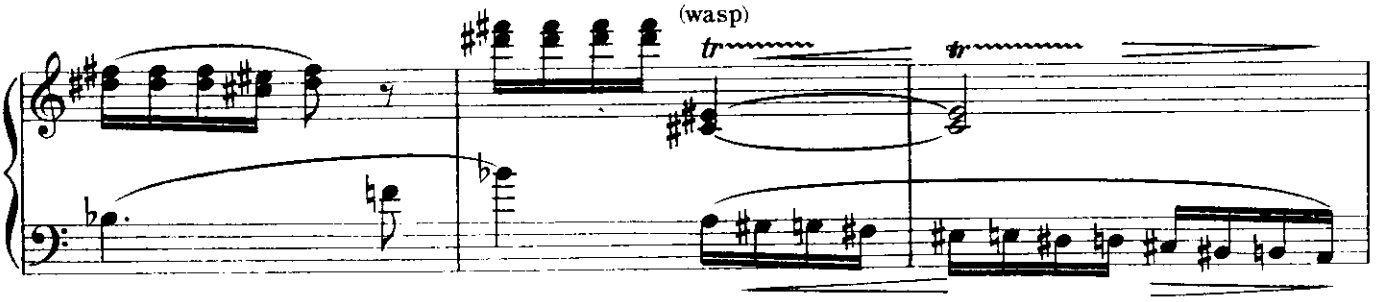



Discomfiture of the boys.
pp [fast and furious]
p fff
p ff
(Organ)
(Organ)
The verger loses his breath.
quick
The verger recovers it.
The boys run out followed by the verger.
tr
Organist sleeps.
pp [slow]

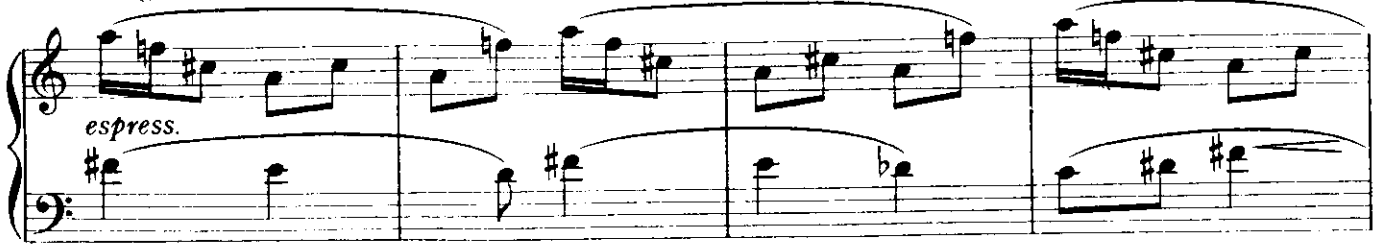
II.
THE BUTTERFLY'S WALTZ.



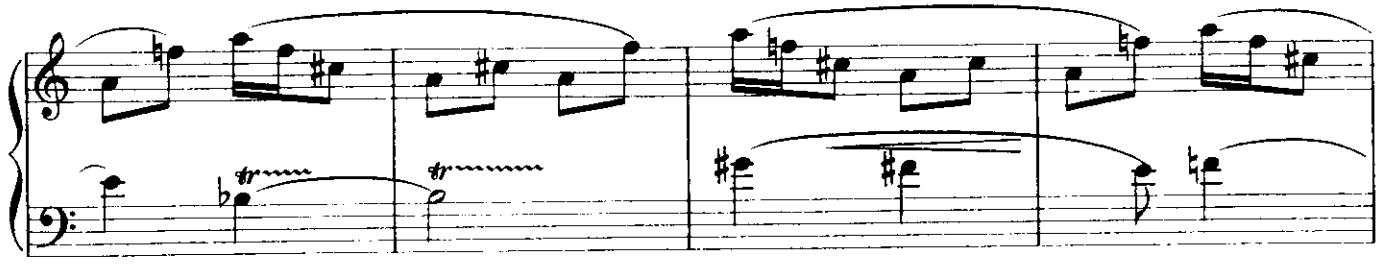




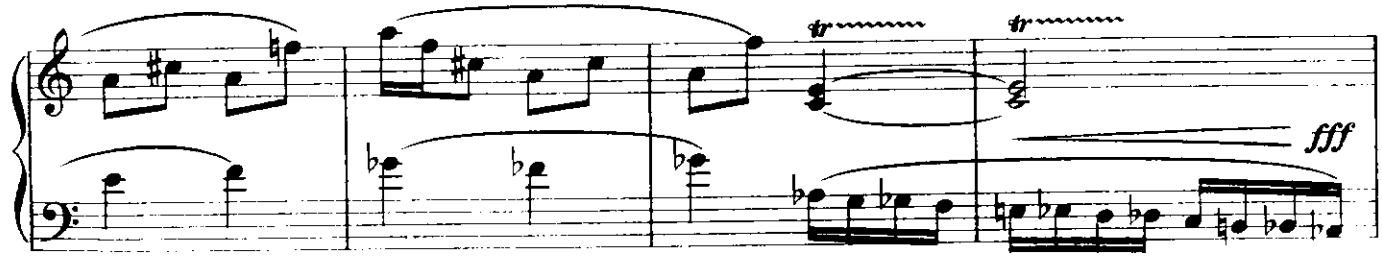
She grows more confident (right hand) She discovers two lovers behind a rose bush— she

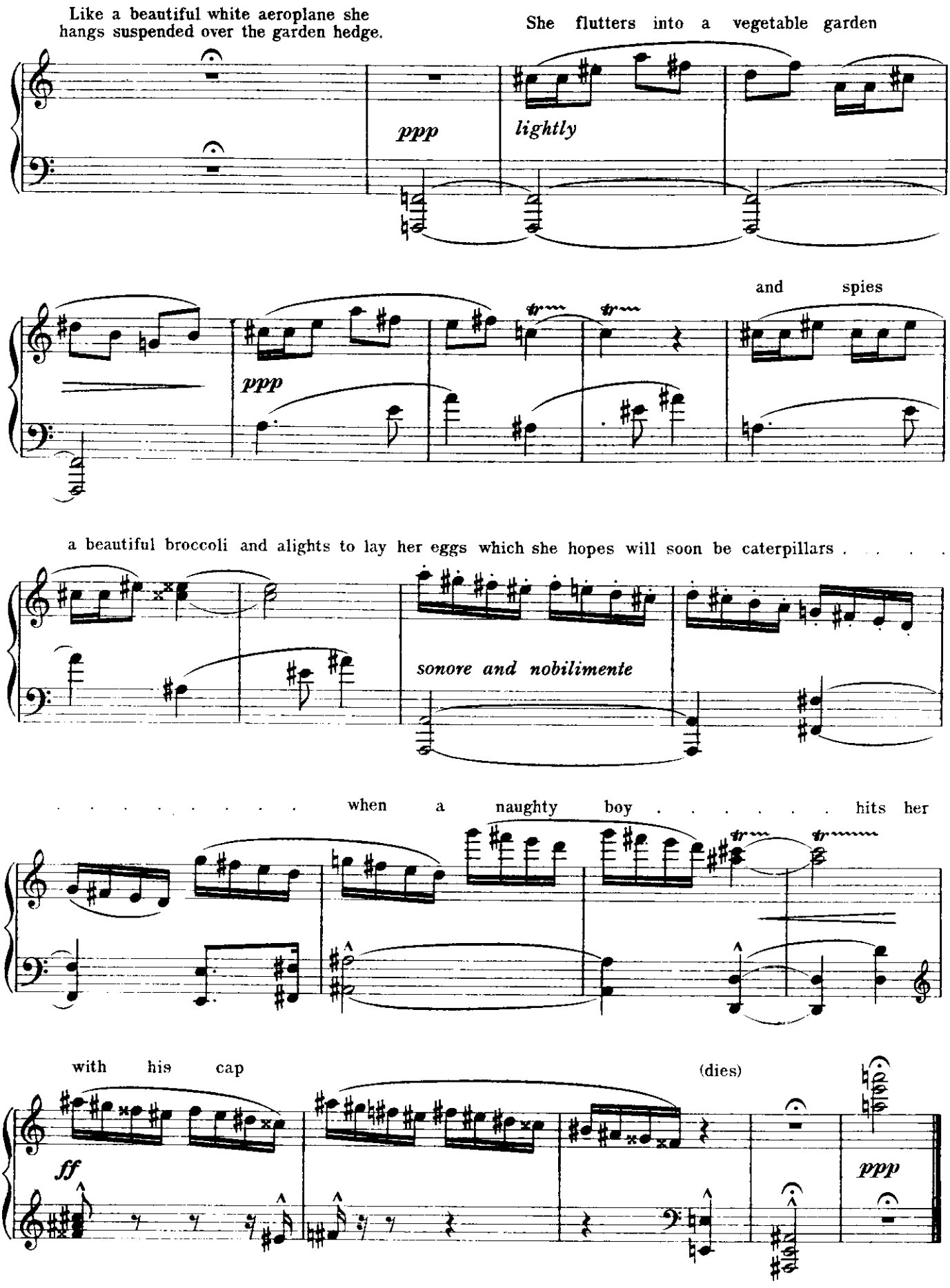


is about to exclaim— "I'll tell your

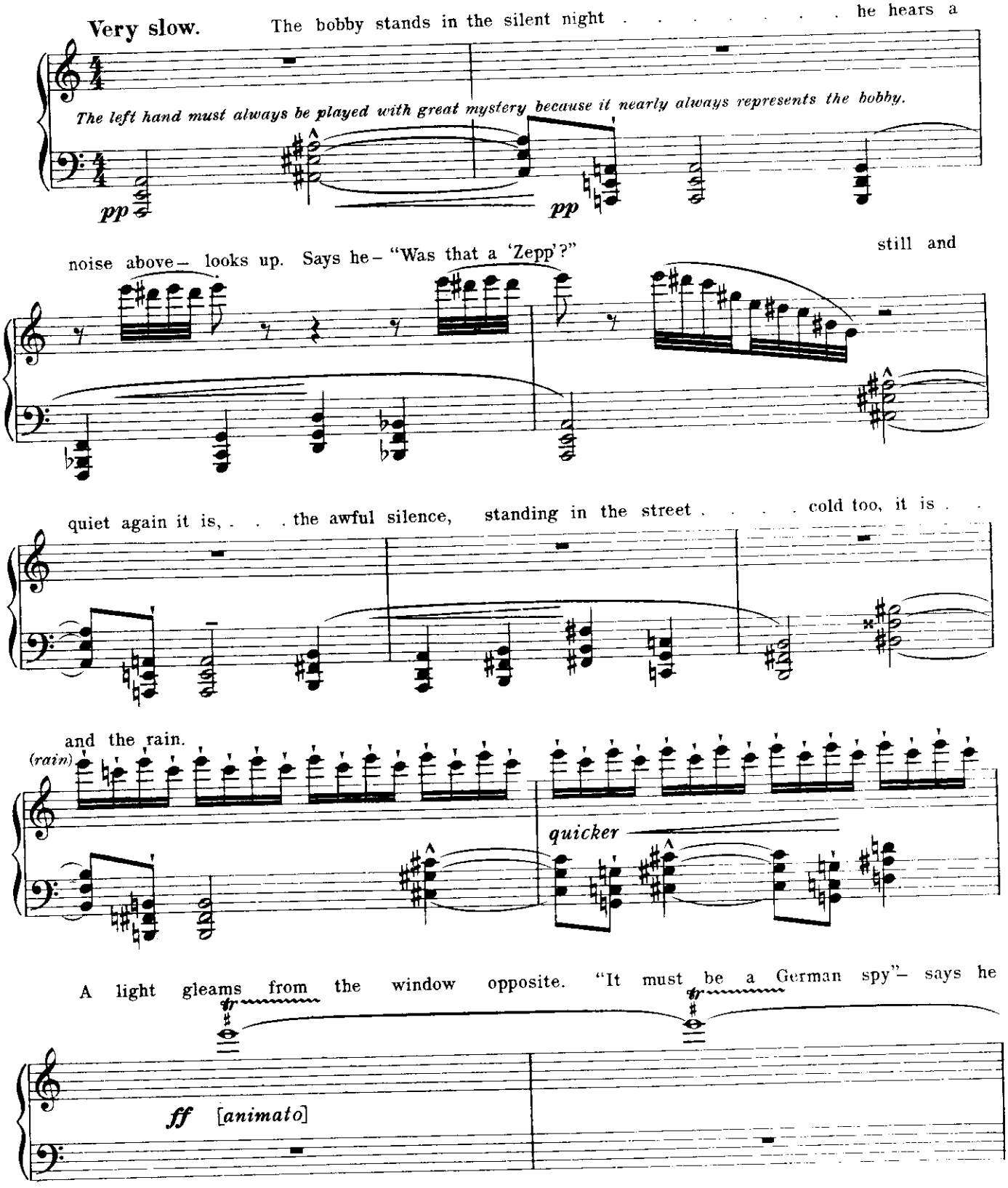


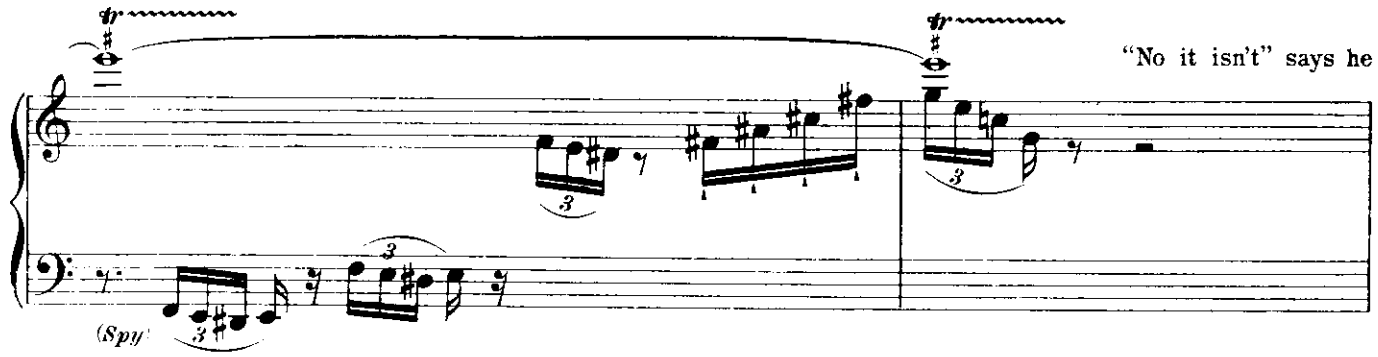
mother" . . . . . when the wasp . . . . . .

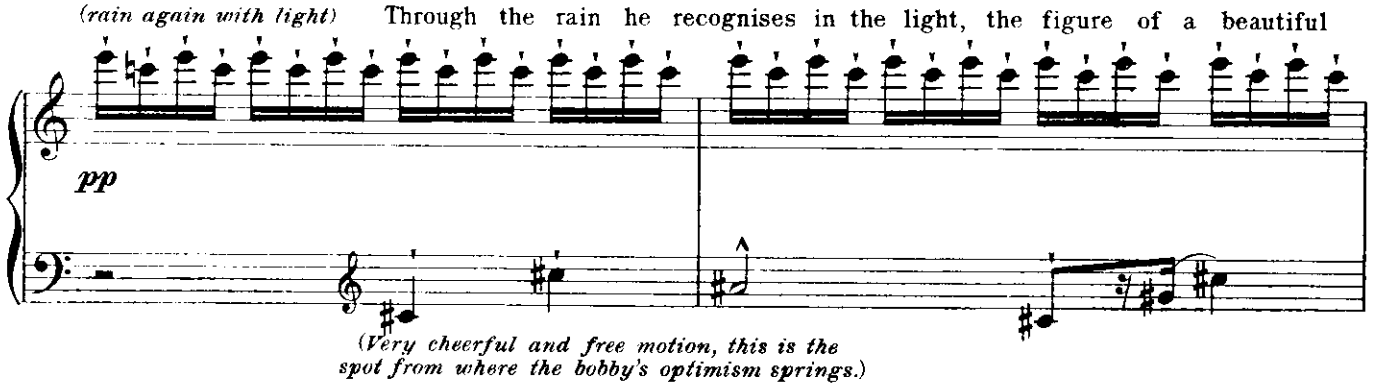


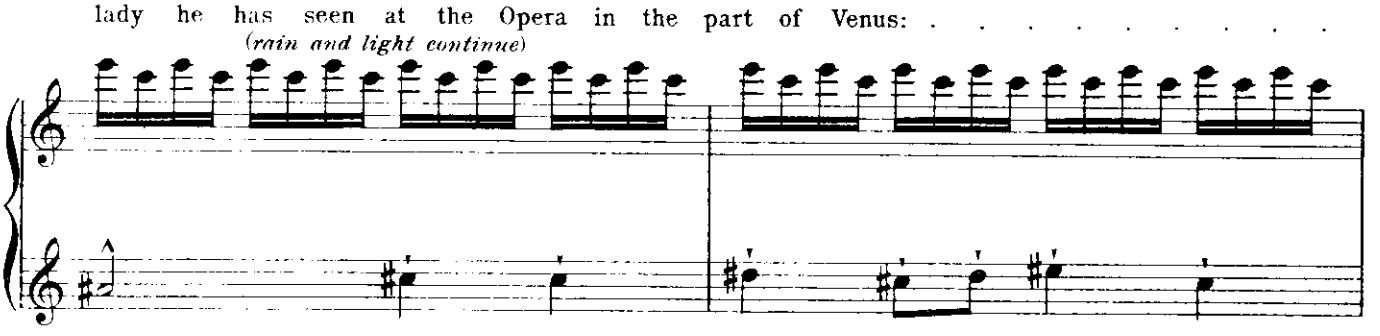

Like a beautiful white aeroplane she hangs suspended over the garden hedge.
She flutters into a vegetable garden
ppp
lightly
and spies
ppp
a beautiful broccoli and alights to lay her eggs which she hopes will soon be caterpillars . . . . .
sonore and nobilimente
. . . . . when a naughty boy . . . . . hits her
with his cap
(dies)
ff
ppp

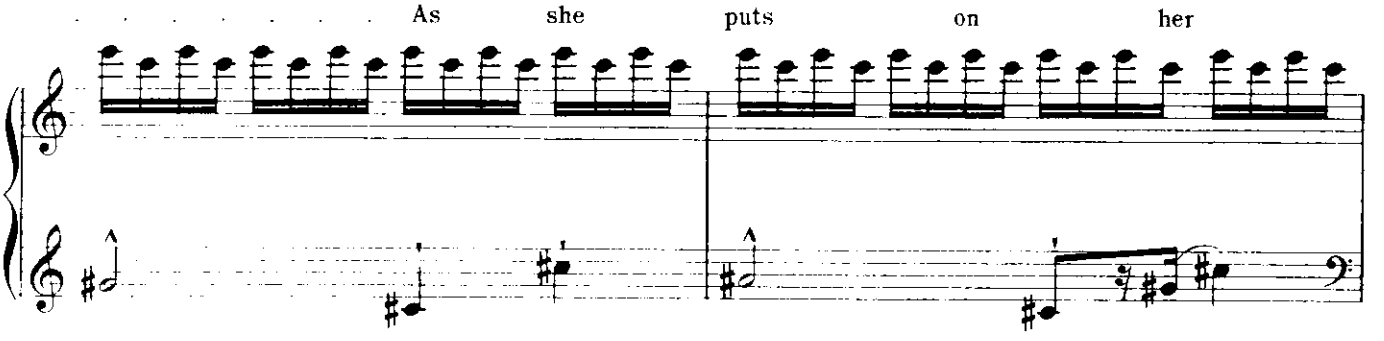
III.
VENUS AND A BOBBY.

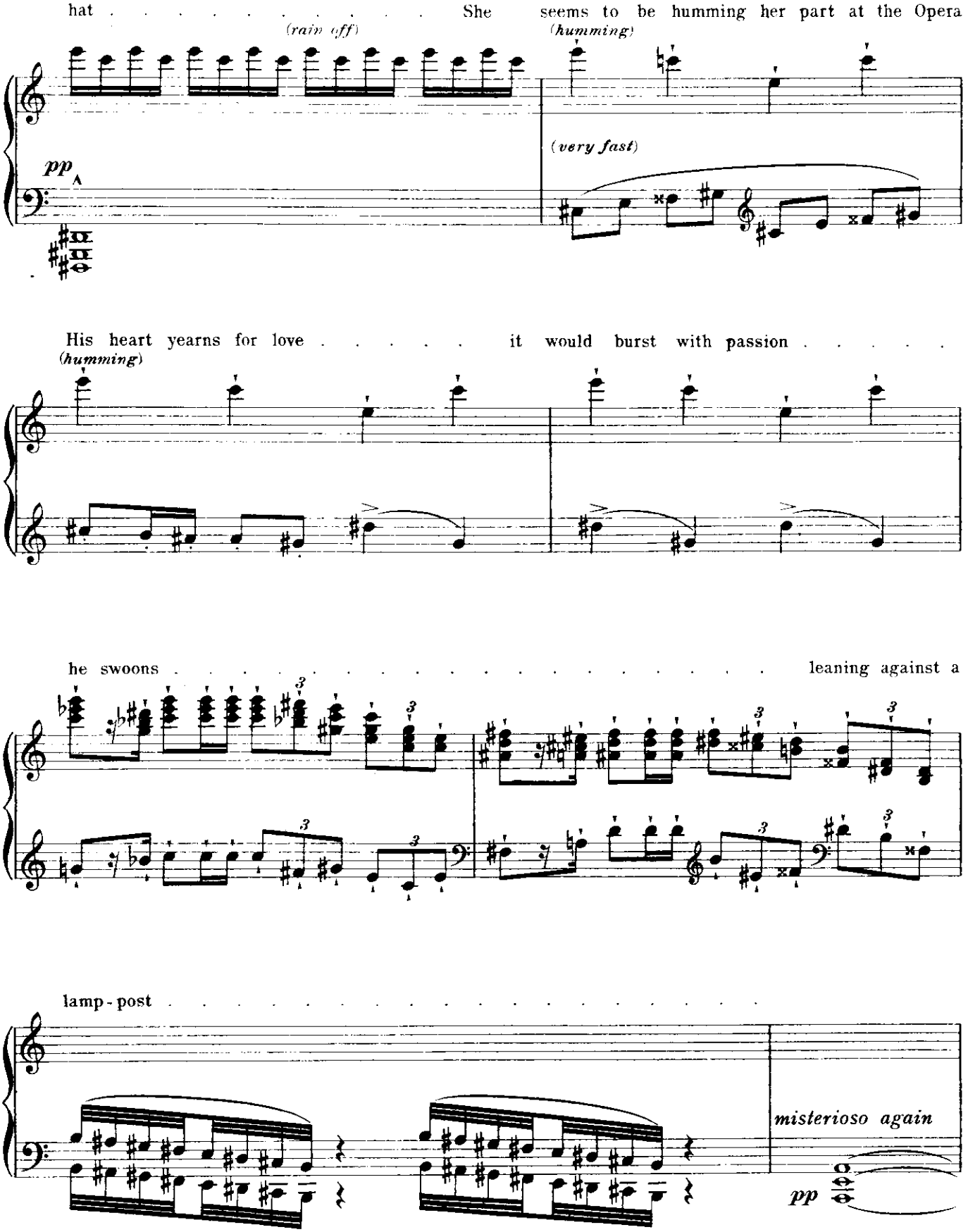


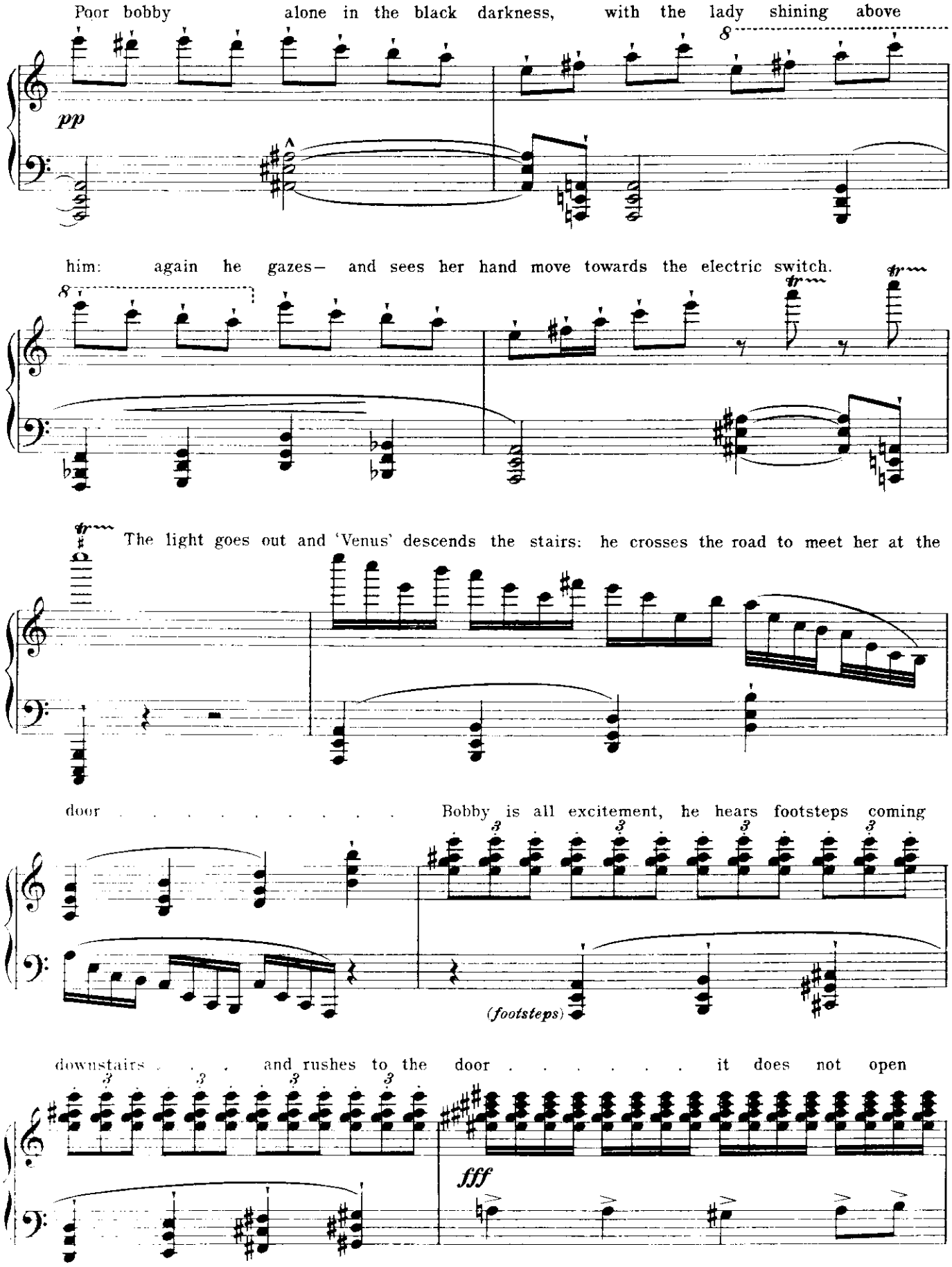

"No it isn't" says he
(Spy)


(rain again with light)
Through the rain he recognises in the light, the figure of a beautiful
pp
(Very cheerful and free motion, this is the spot from where the bobby's optimism springs.)

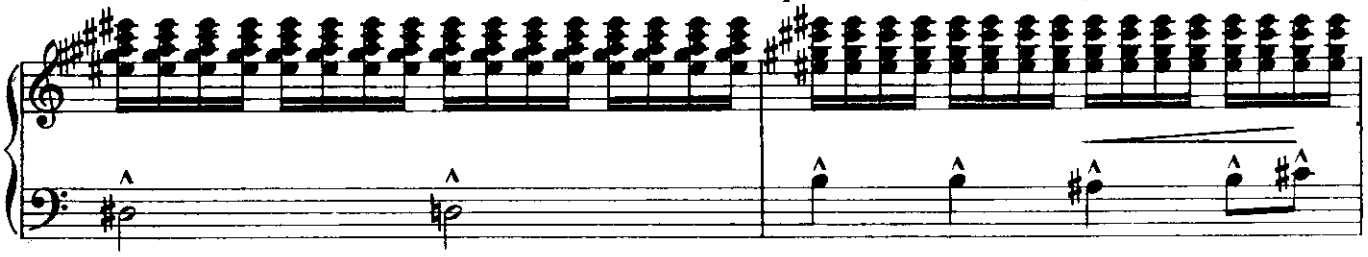

lady he has seen at the Opera in the part of Venus: . . . . . .
(rain and light continue)


. . . . . As she puts on her

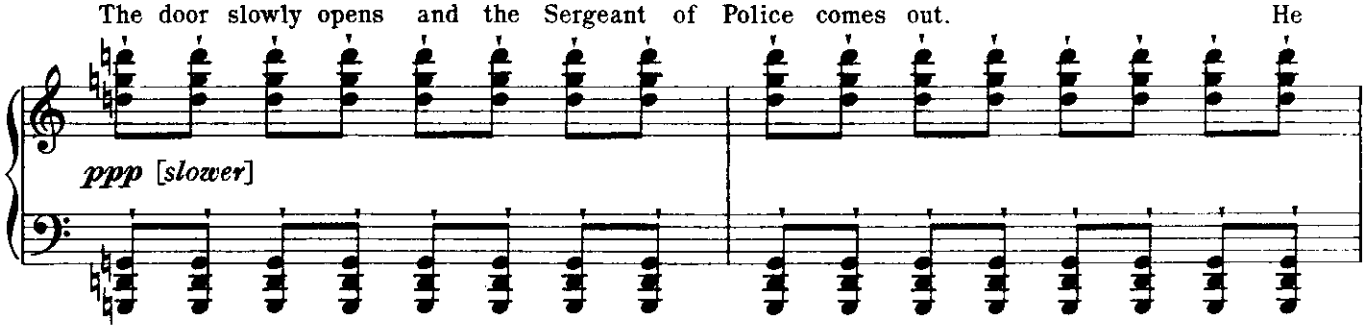

hat . . . . . She seems to be humming her part at the Opera
(rain off)
(humming)
pp
(very fast)
His heart yearns for love . . . . . it would burst with passion . . . . . .
(humming)
he swoons . . . . . leaning against a
lamp-post . . . . . .
misterioso again
pp


Poor bobby alone in the black darkness, with the lady shining above
pp
him: again he gazes– and sees her hand move towards the electric switch.
The light goes out and 'Venus' descends the stairs: he crosses the road to meet her at the
door . . . . . Bobby is all excitement, he hears footsteps coming
(footsteps)
downstairs . . . and rushes to the door . . . . . it does not open
fff

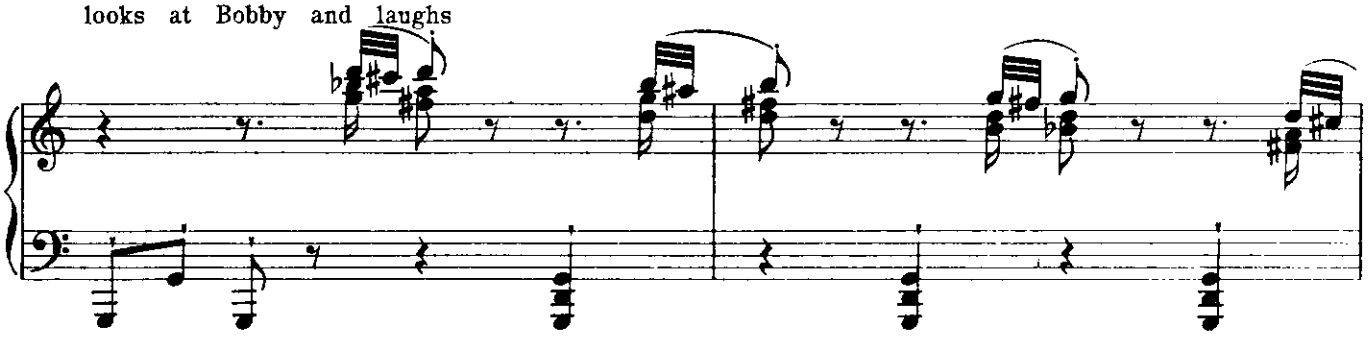
he hits it with his truncheon – he shouts "Open the door – Oh my love!"



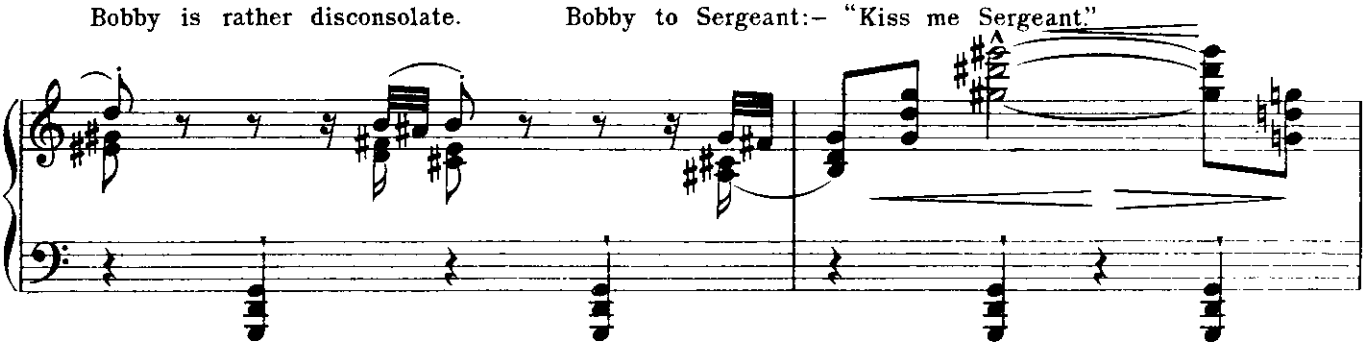
The door slowly opens and the Sergeant of Police comes out. He



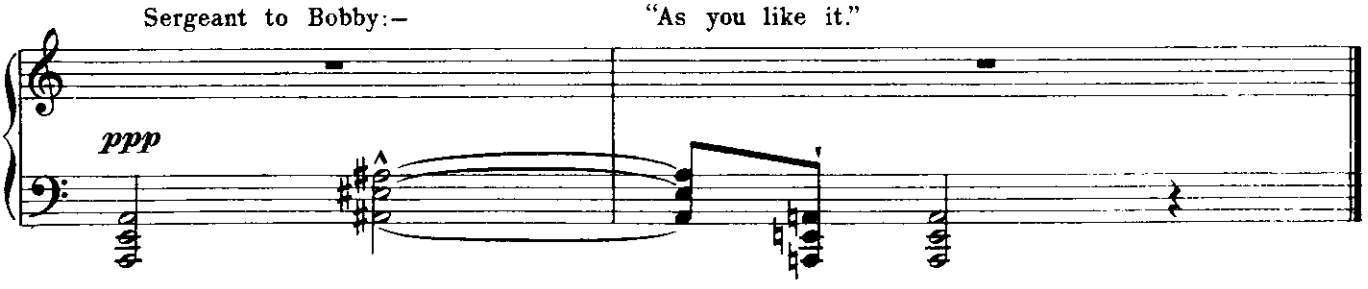
looks at Bobby and laughs



Bobby is rather disconsolate. Bobby to Sergeant:– "Kiss me Sergeant."

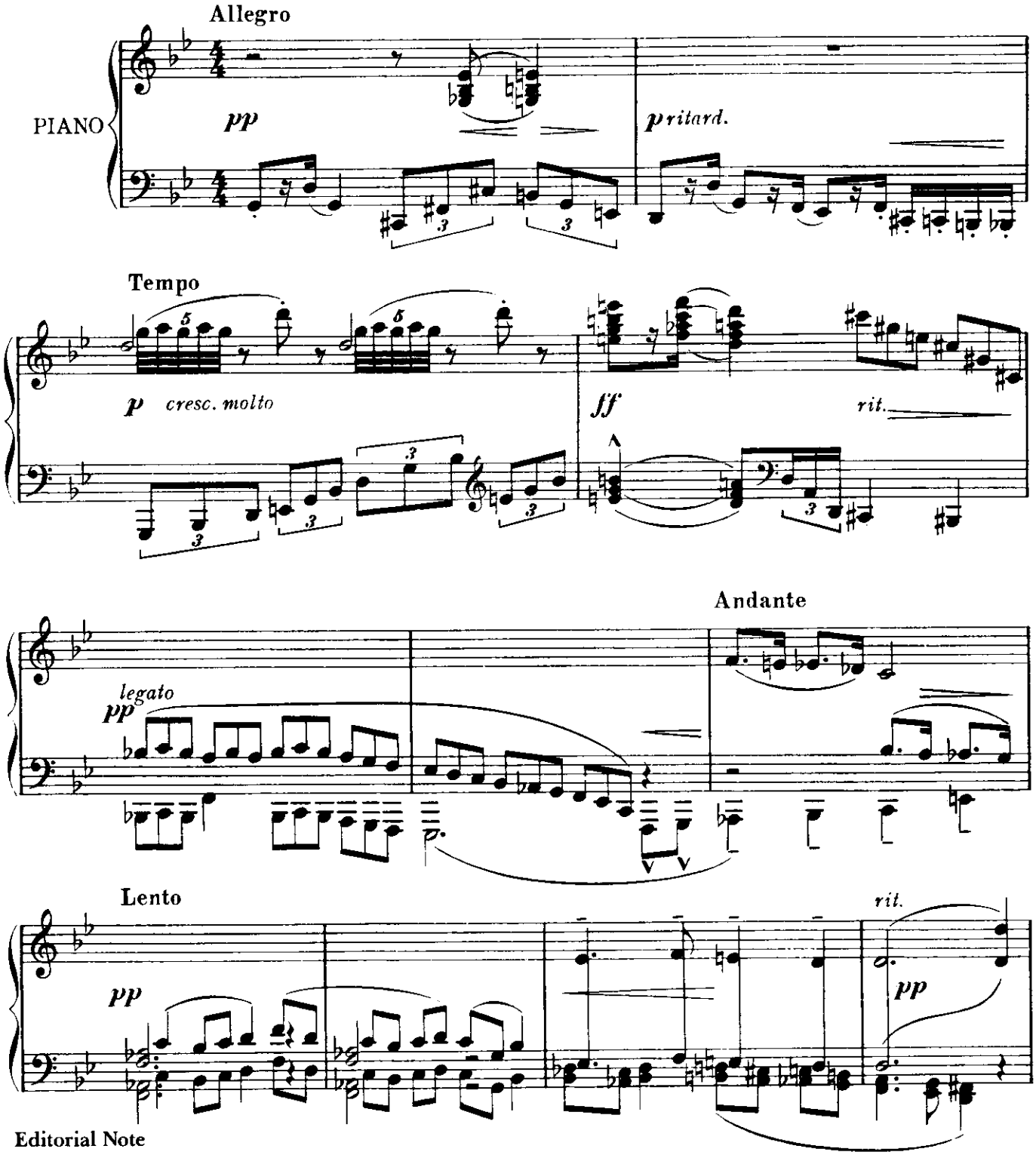


Sergeant to Bobby:– "As you like it."



FOUR MINIATURES

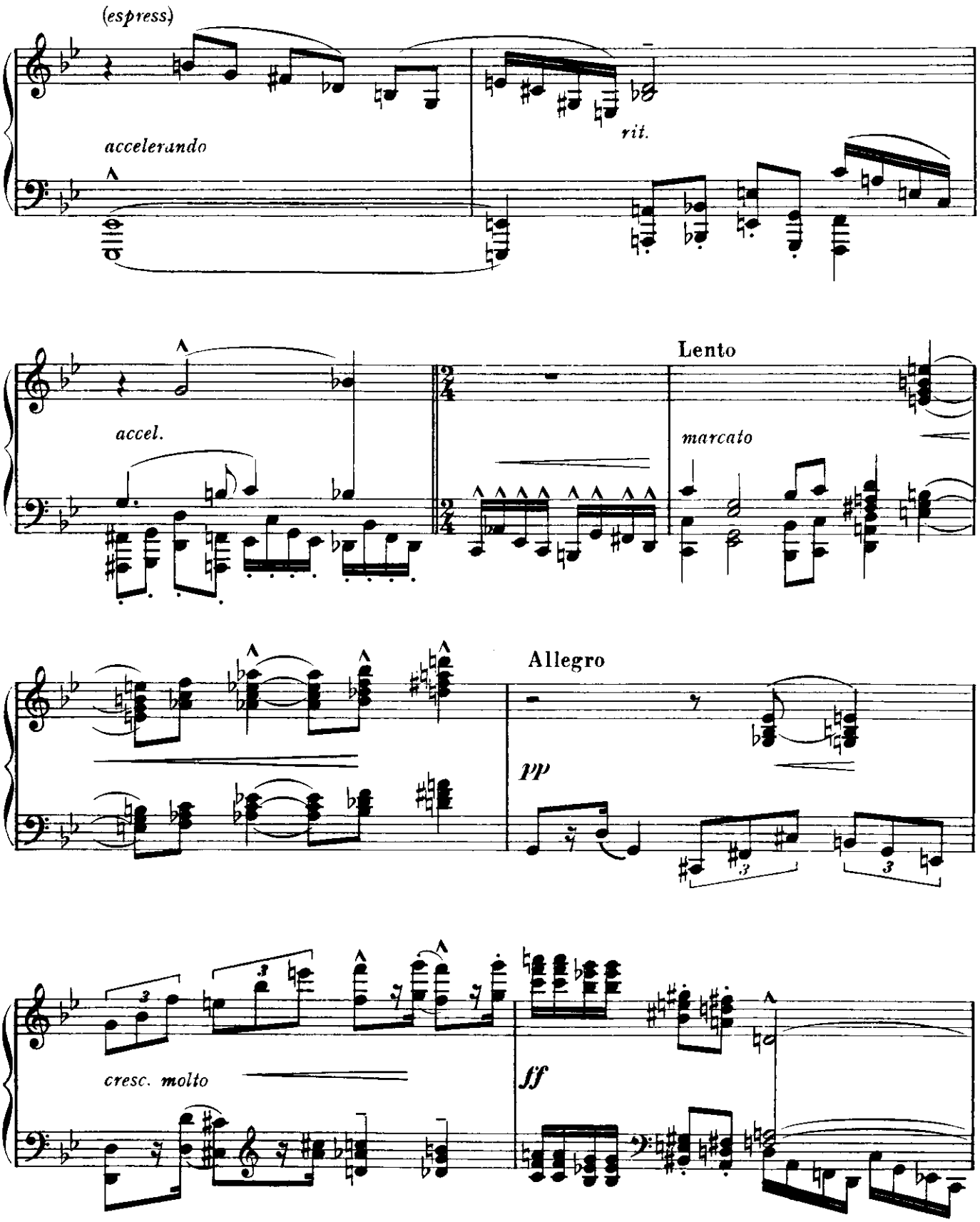
I

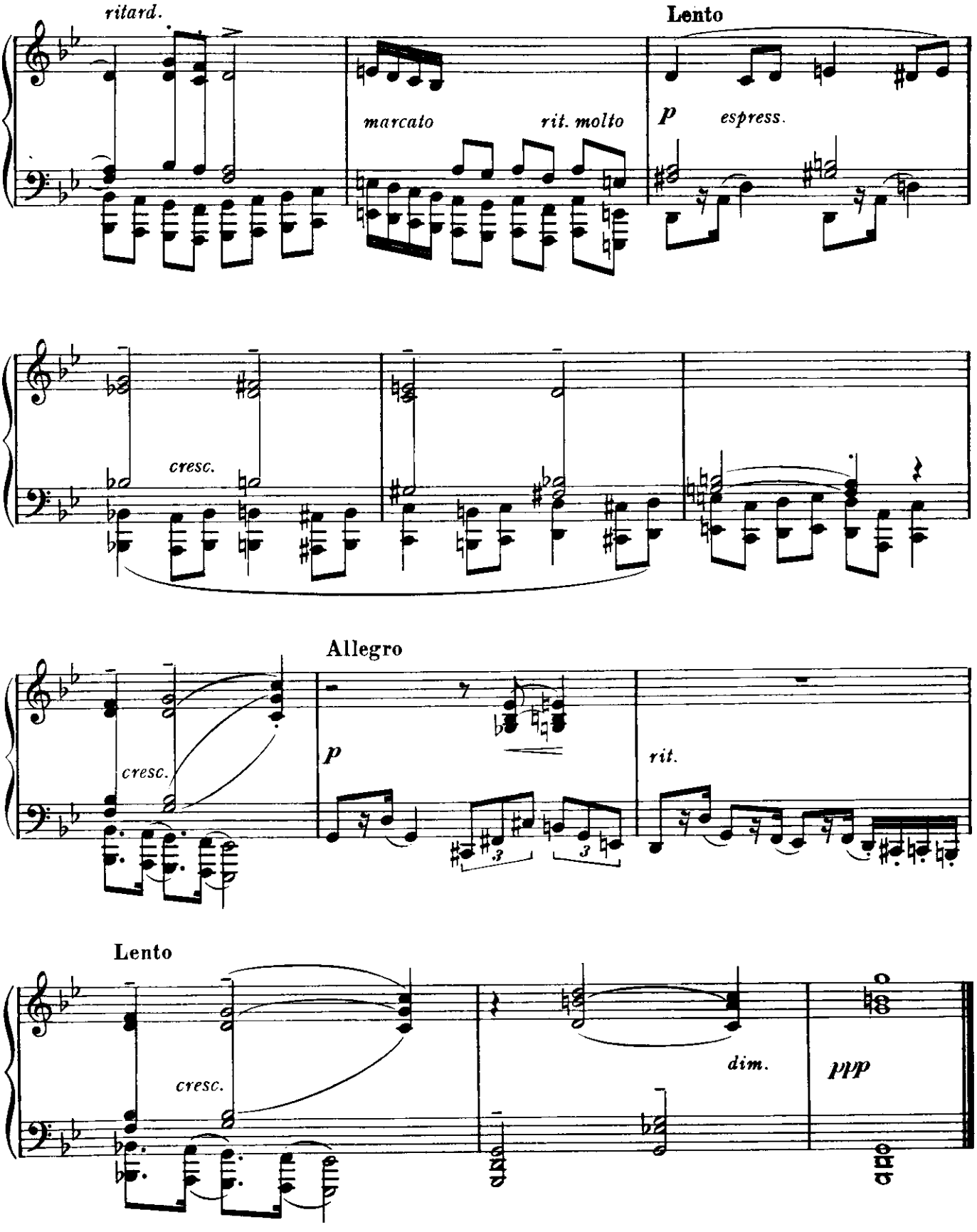


Editorial Note

The original edition of Brian's *Four Miniatures*, published in 1921, contains numerous errors and omissions, chiefly in regard to phrasing, accidentals and expression-marks. Brian voiced his disquiet about it in a letter to Granville Bantock, and expressed the wish that a corrected edition should be issued in due course. Only now, after the composer's death, has the opportunity arisen. The present edition is based on the 1921 printing, but has been revised in the light of the composer's corrections to his own manuscript fair copy (British Library Add. 54354); photocopies of a now-missing printed copy annotated by a performer at Brian's direction in 1966; and – in the cases of Movements II and IV – by comparison with the piano parts of the songs *The Land of Dreams* and *The Birds*, of which these movements are transcriptions.

Malcolm MacDonald


(espress.)
accelerando
rit.
accel.
Lento
marcato
Allegro
pp
cresc. molto
ff

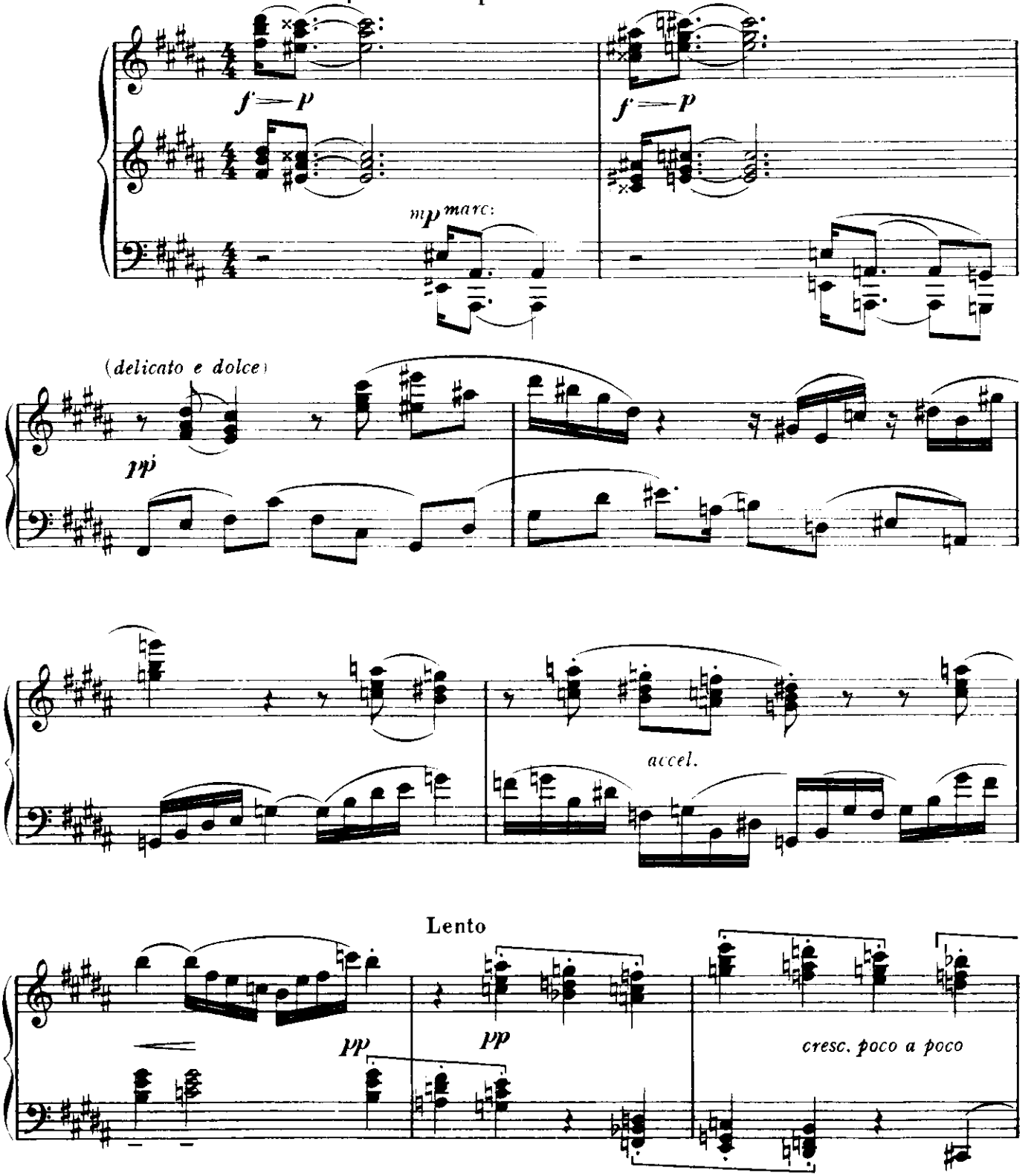

ritard.
Lento
marcato
rit. molto
p
espress.
cresc.
Allegro
cresc.
p
rit.
Lento
cresc.
dim.
ppp

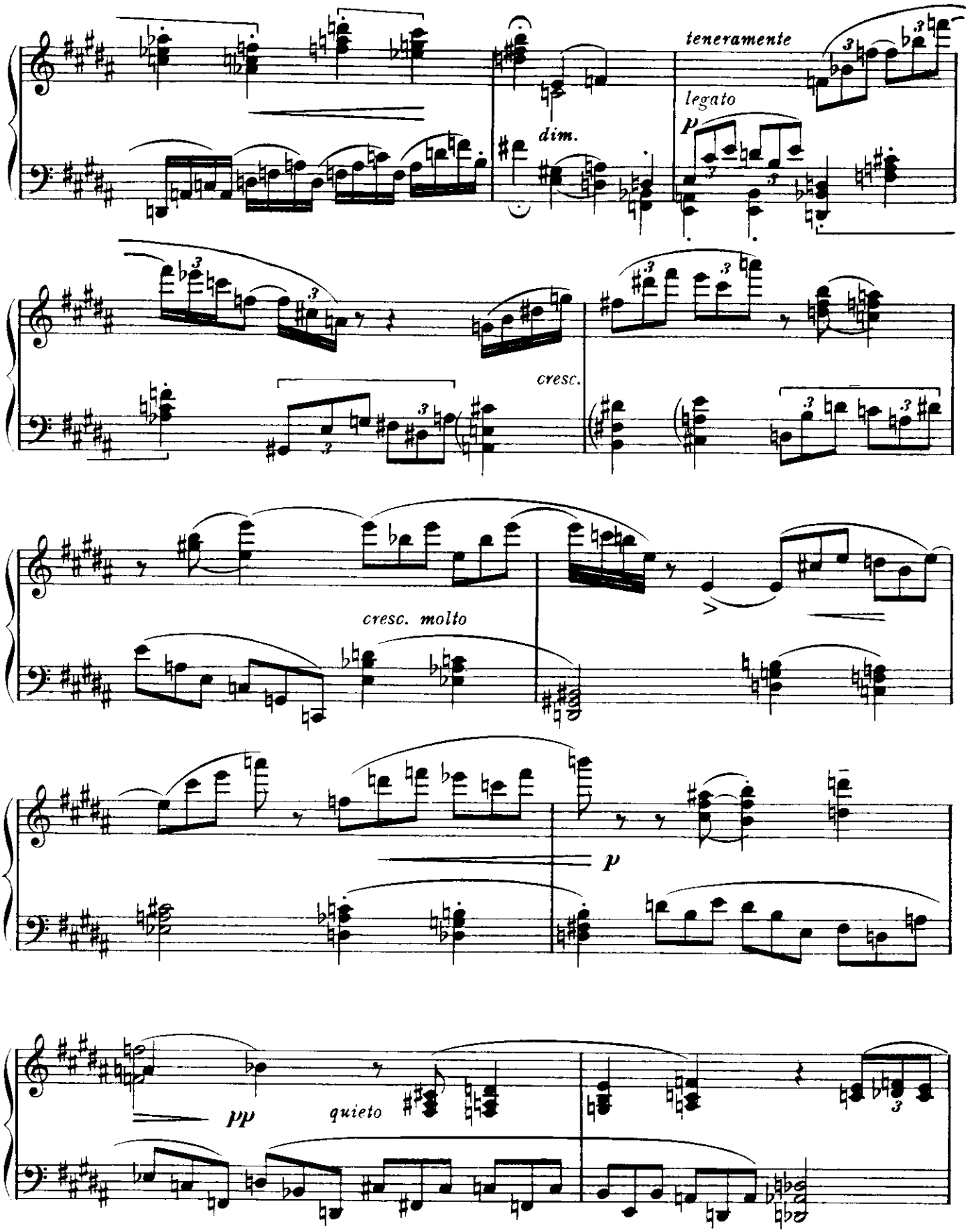
II

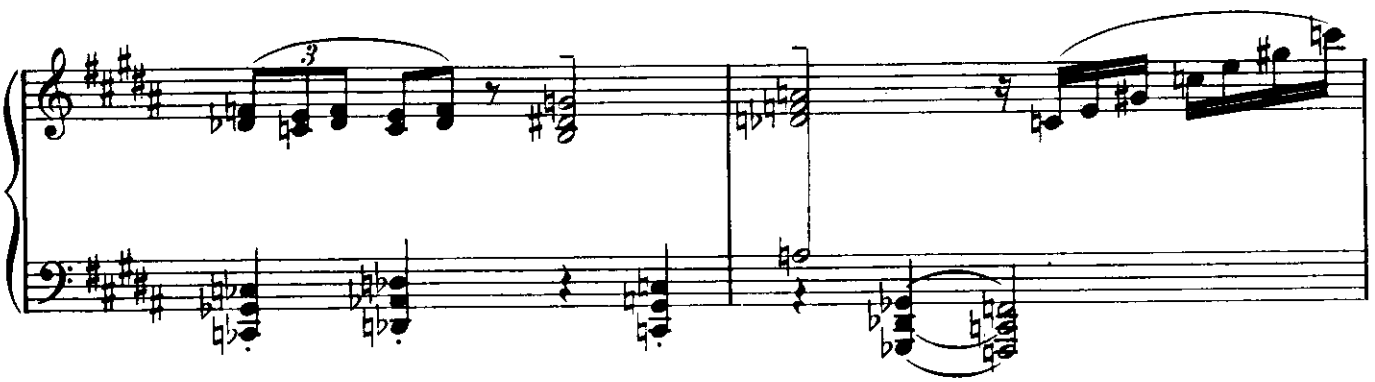
After William Blake's Poem
"The Land of Dreams."

Havergal Brian

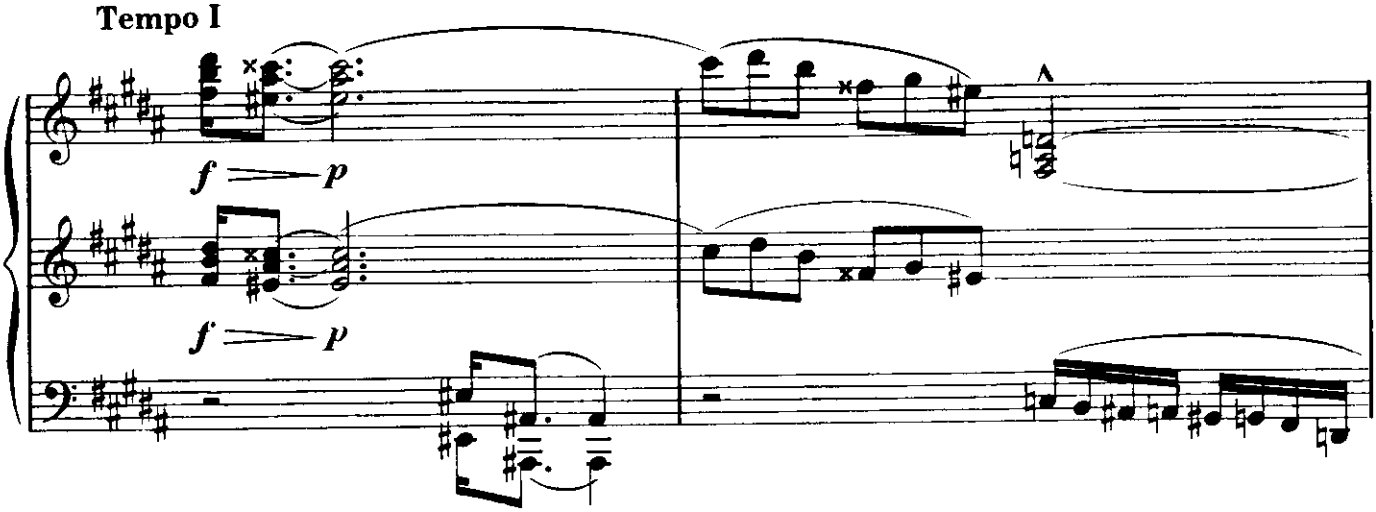
Lento tranquillo e sempre rubato

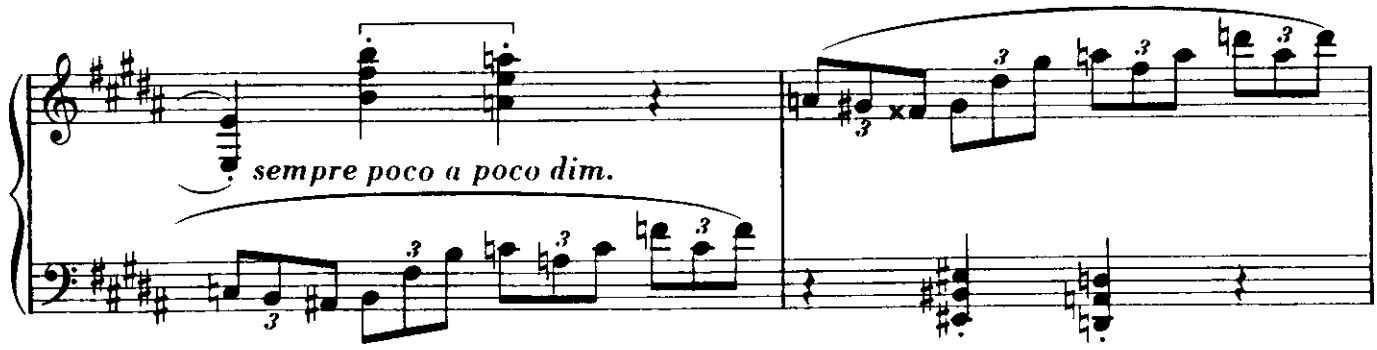



teneramente
legato
p
dim.
cresc.
cresc. molto
p
pp
quieto

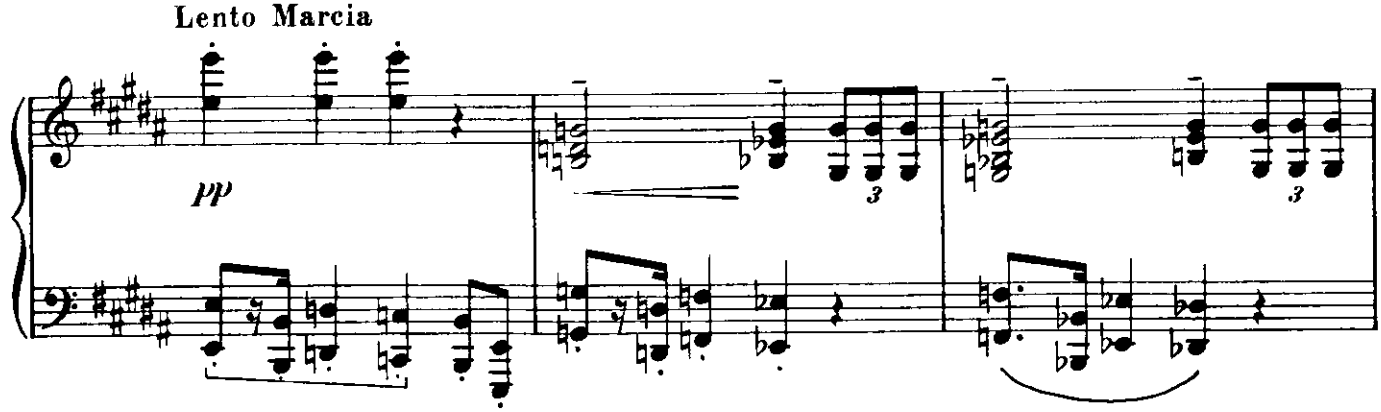


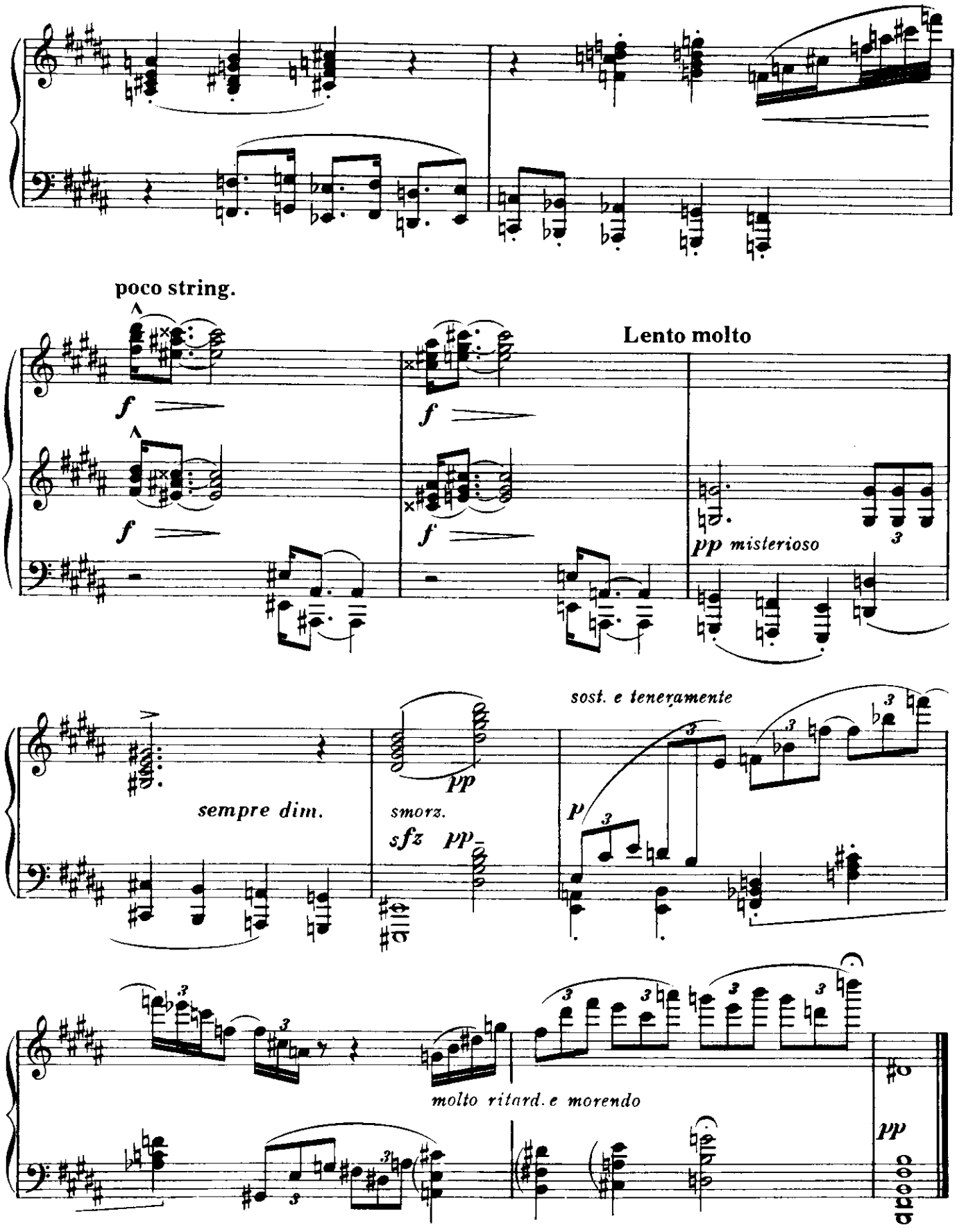
Tempo I



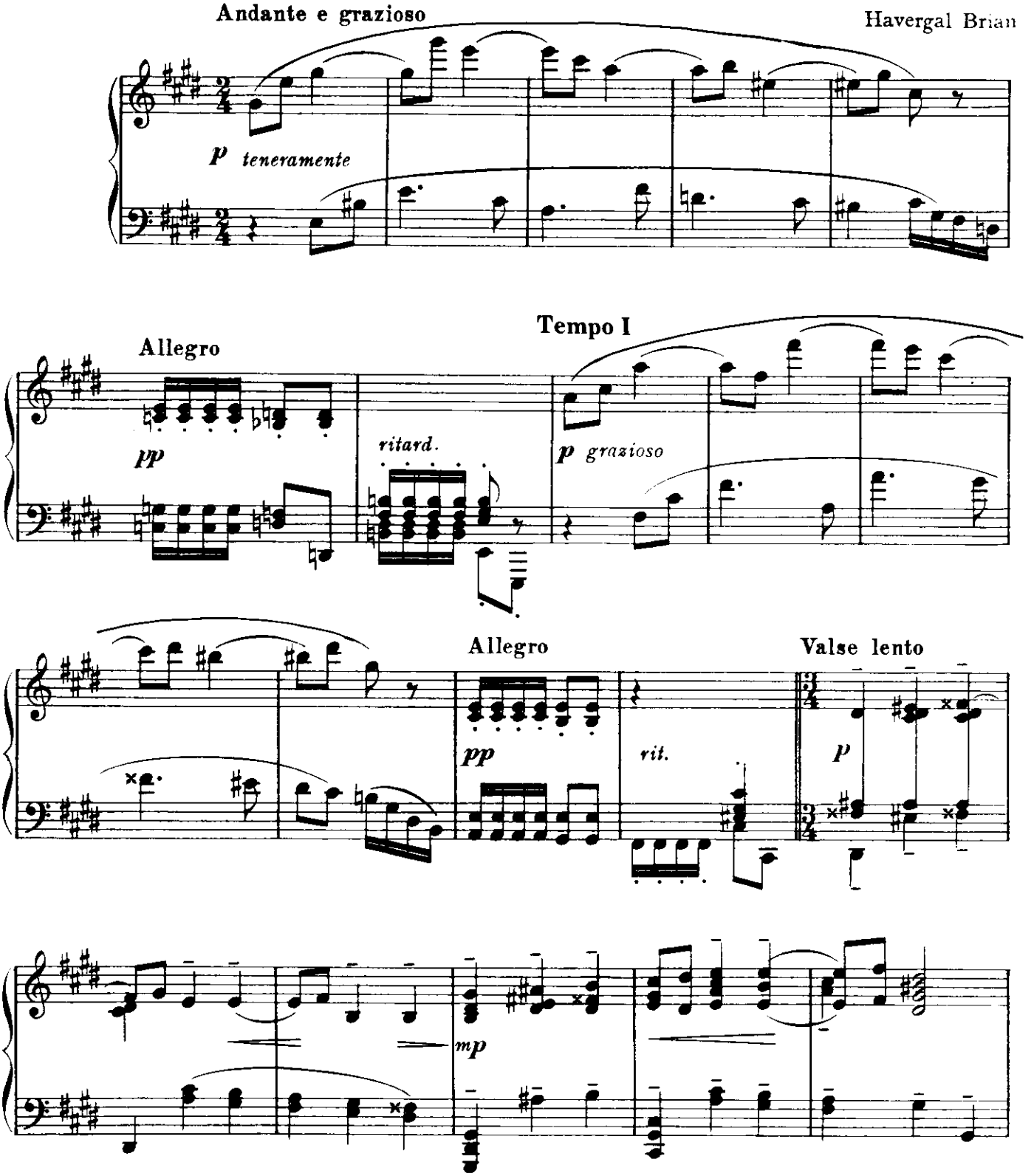


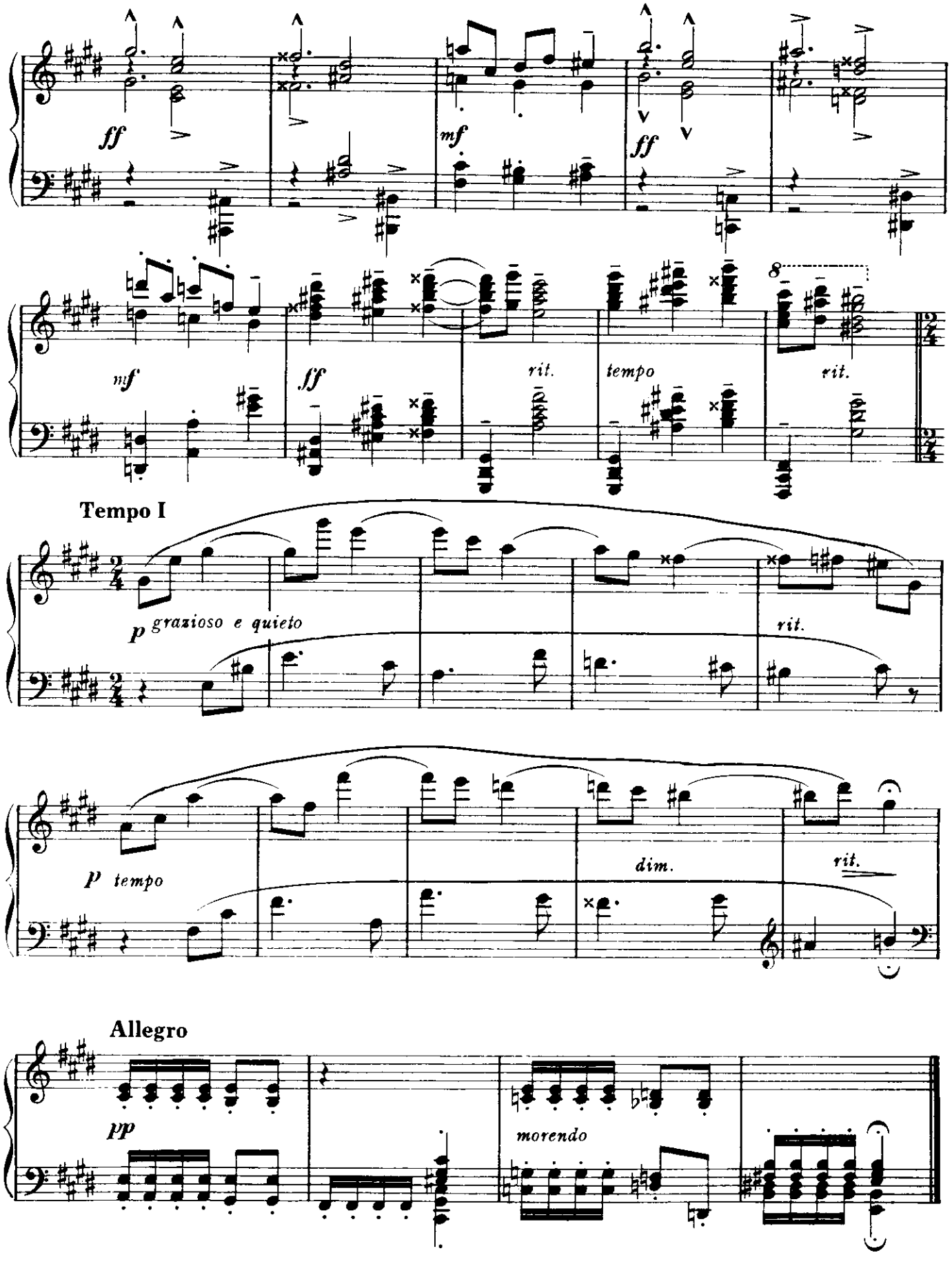
Lento Marcia




poco string.
Lento molto
f
pp misterioso
sempre dim.
smorz.
sfz pp
sost. e teneramente
p
molto ritard. e morendo
pp

III


Andante e grazioso
Havergal Brian
p teneramente
Allegro
pp
ritard.
Tempo I
p grazioso
Allegro
pp
rit.
Valse lento
p
mp

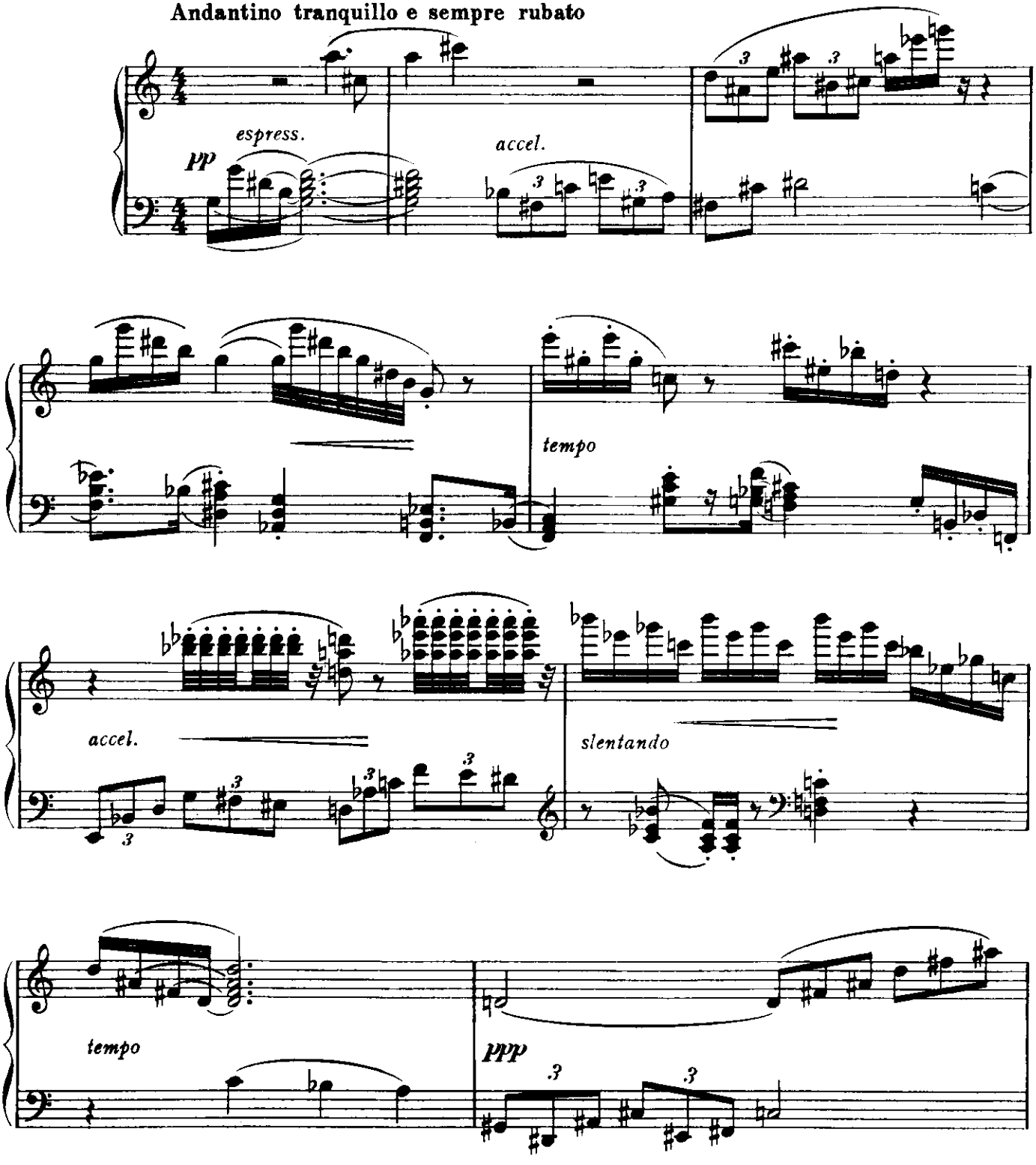

ff
mf
ff
mf
ff
rit.
tempo
rit.
8
Tempo I
p grazioso e quieto
rit.
p tempo
dim.
rit.
Allegro
pp
morendo

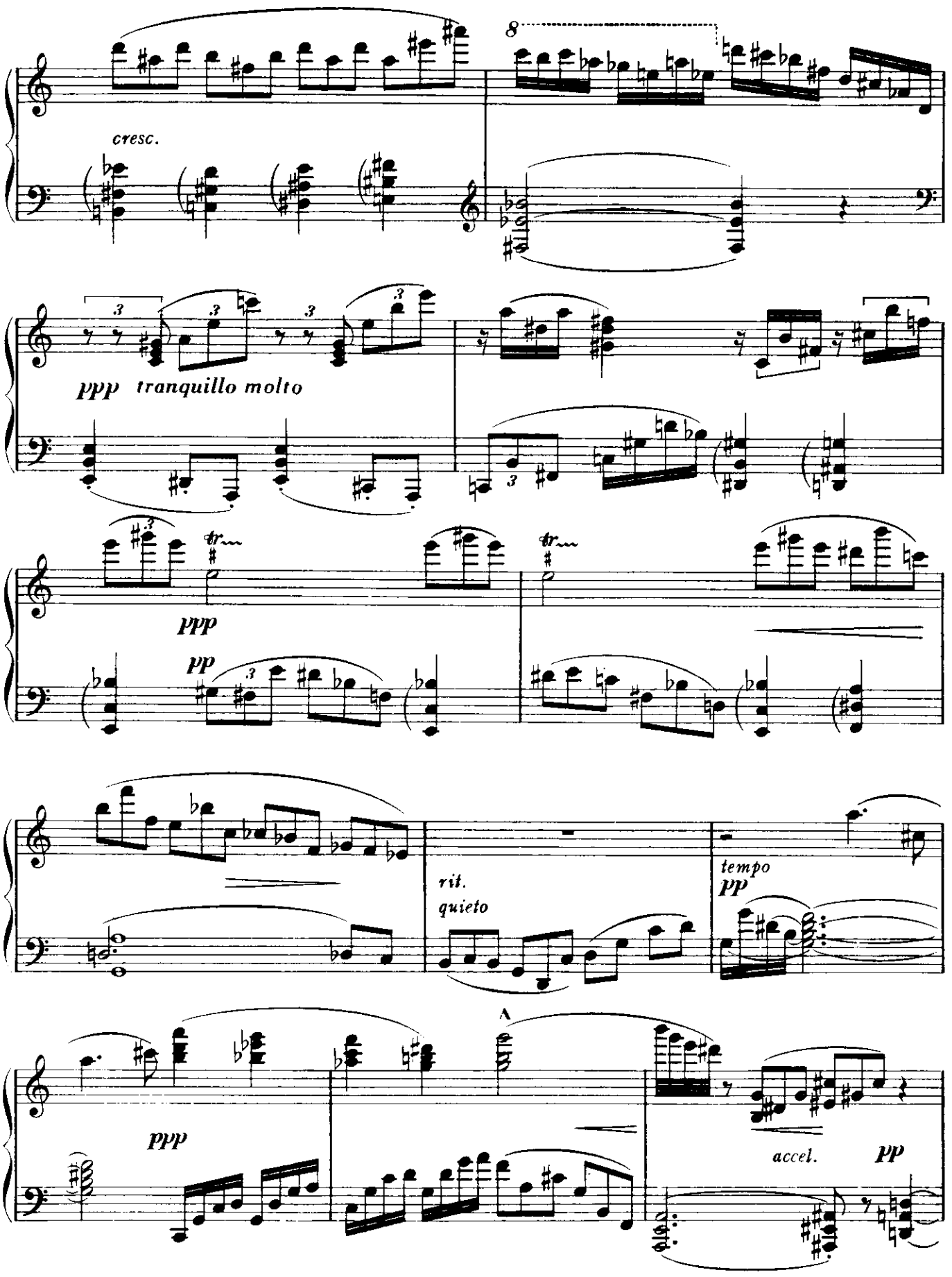
IV

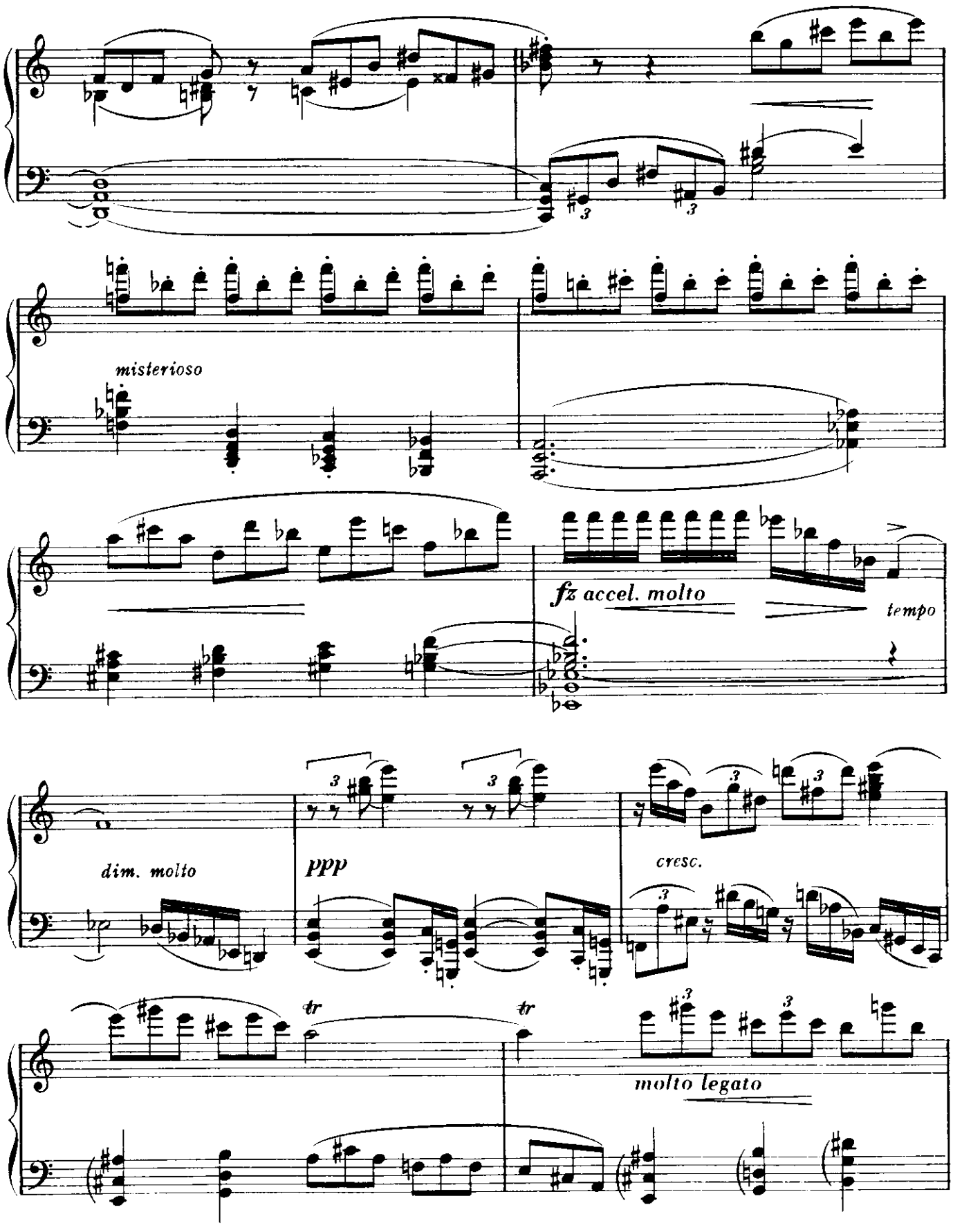
After William Blake's Poem
"The Birds."

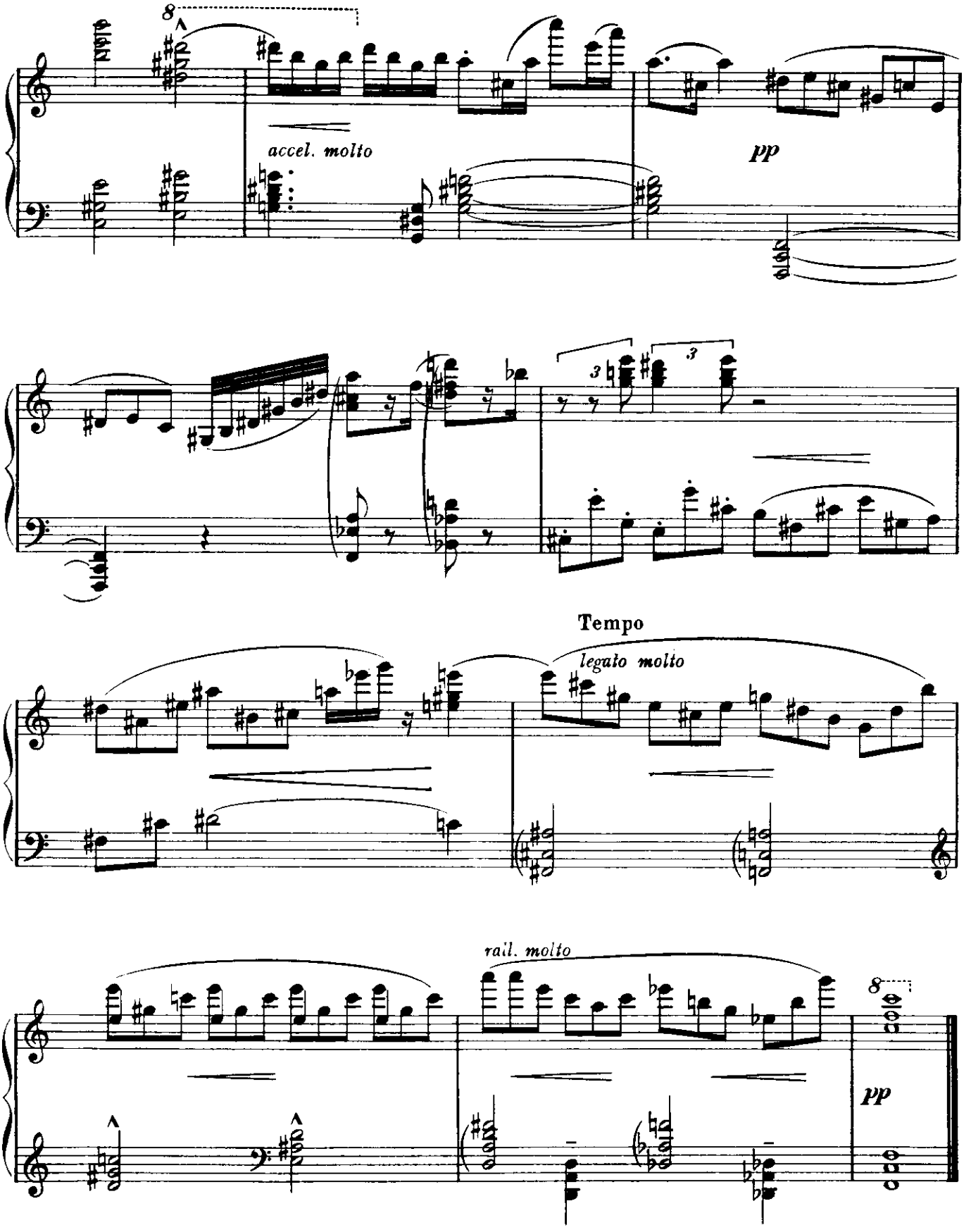
Havergal Brian

Andantino tranquillo e sempre rubato




8
cresc.
ppp tranquillo molto
ppp
pp
rit.
quieto
tempo
pp
A
ppp
accel.
pp


misterioso
fz accel. molto
tempo
dim. molto
ppp
cresc.
tr
tr
molto legato

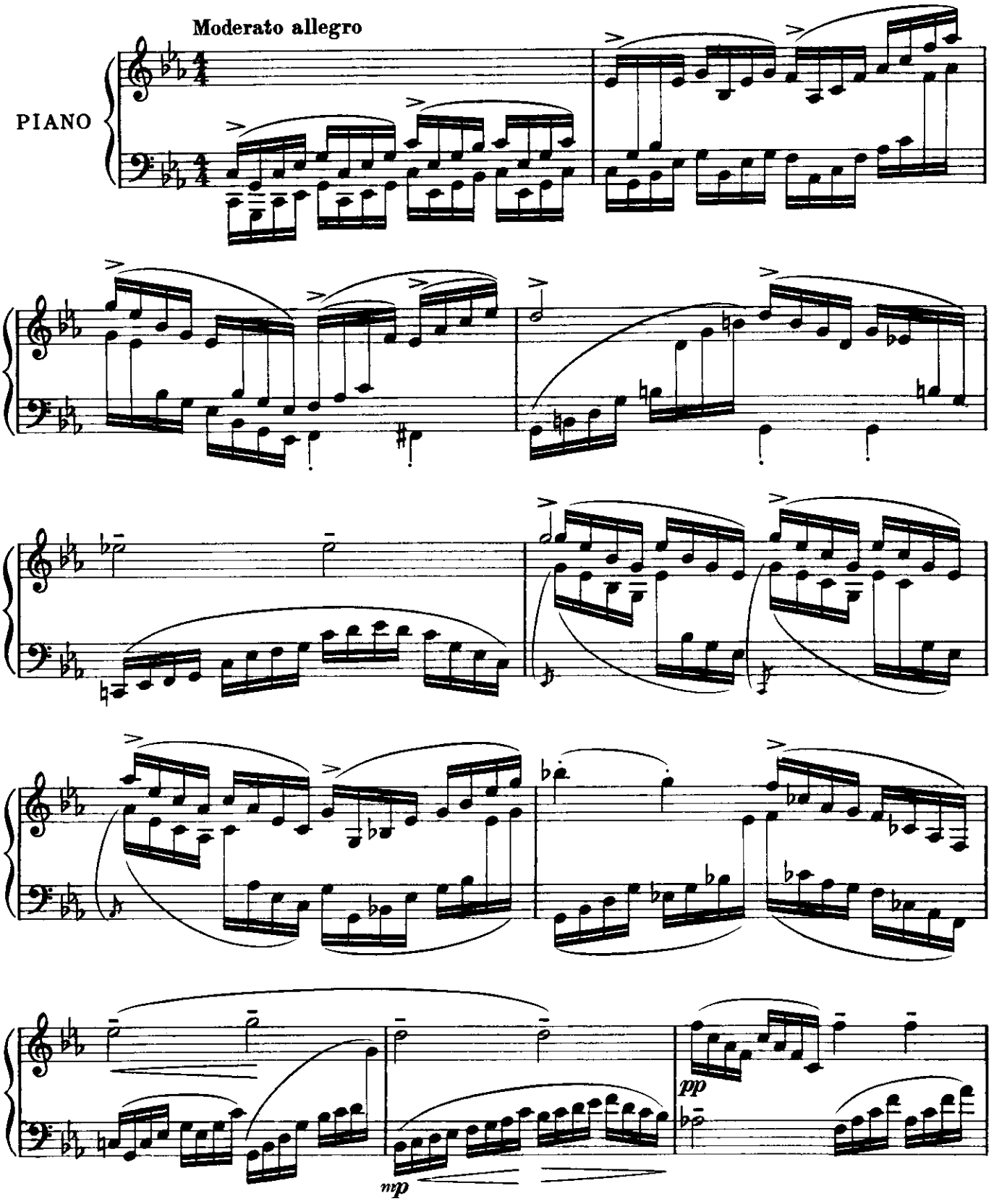

8
accel. molto
pp
3
3
Tempo
legato molto
rail. molto
8
pp

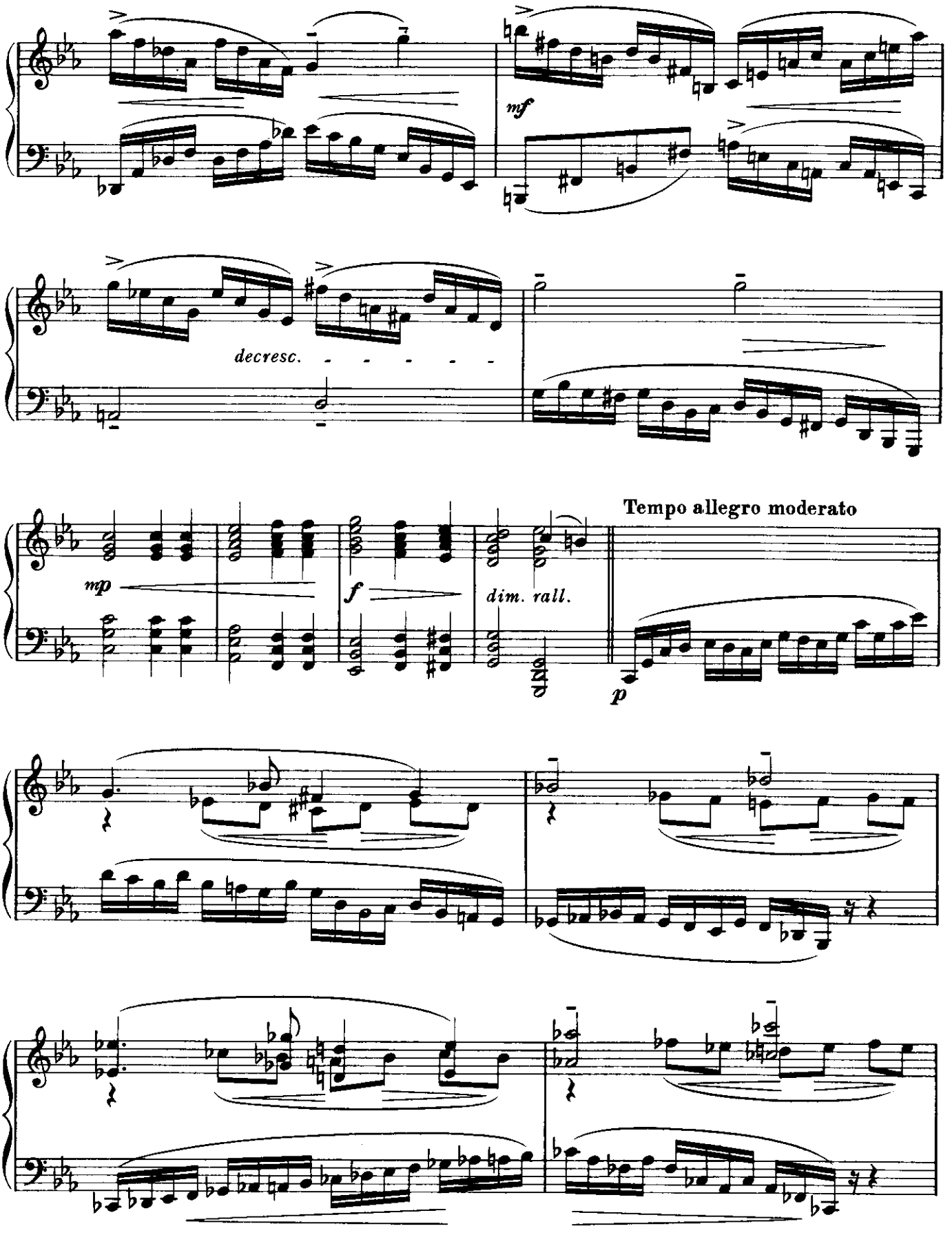
To Evelyn Turner-Inman

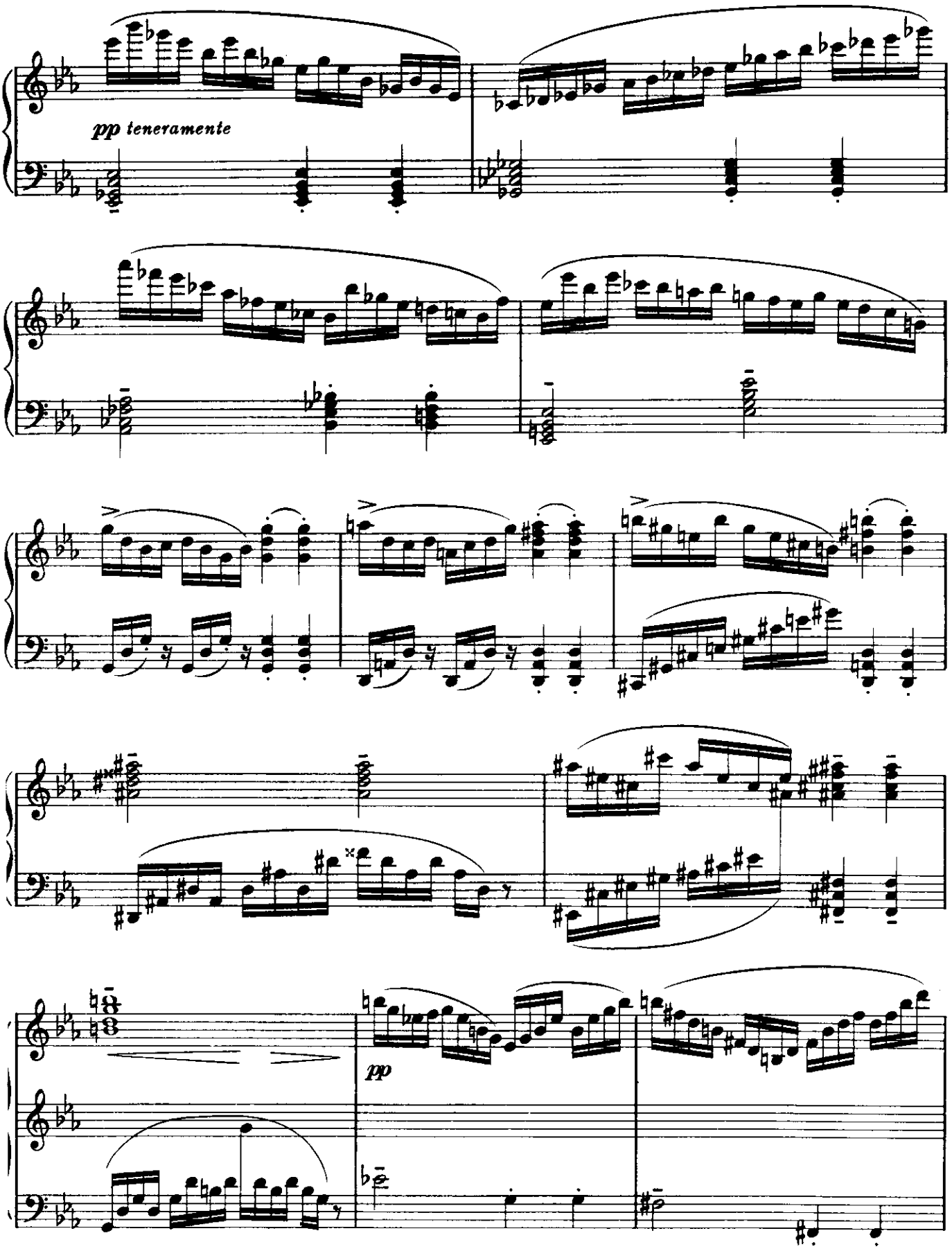
PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN C MINOR

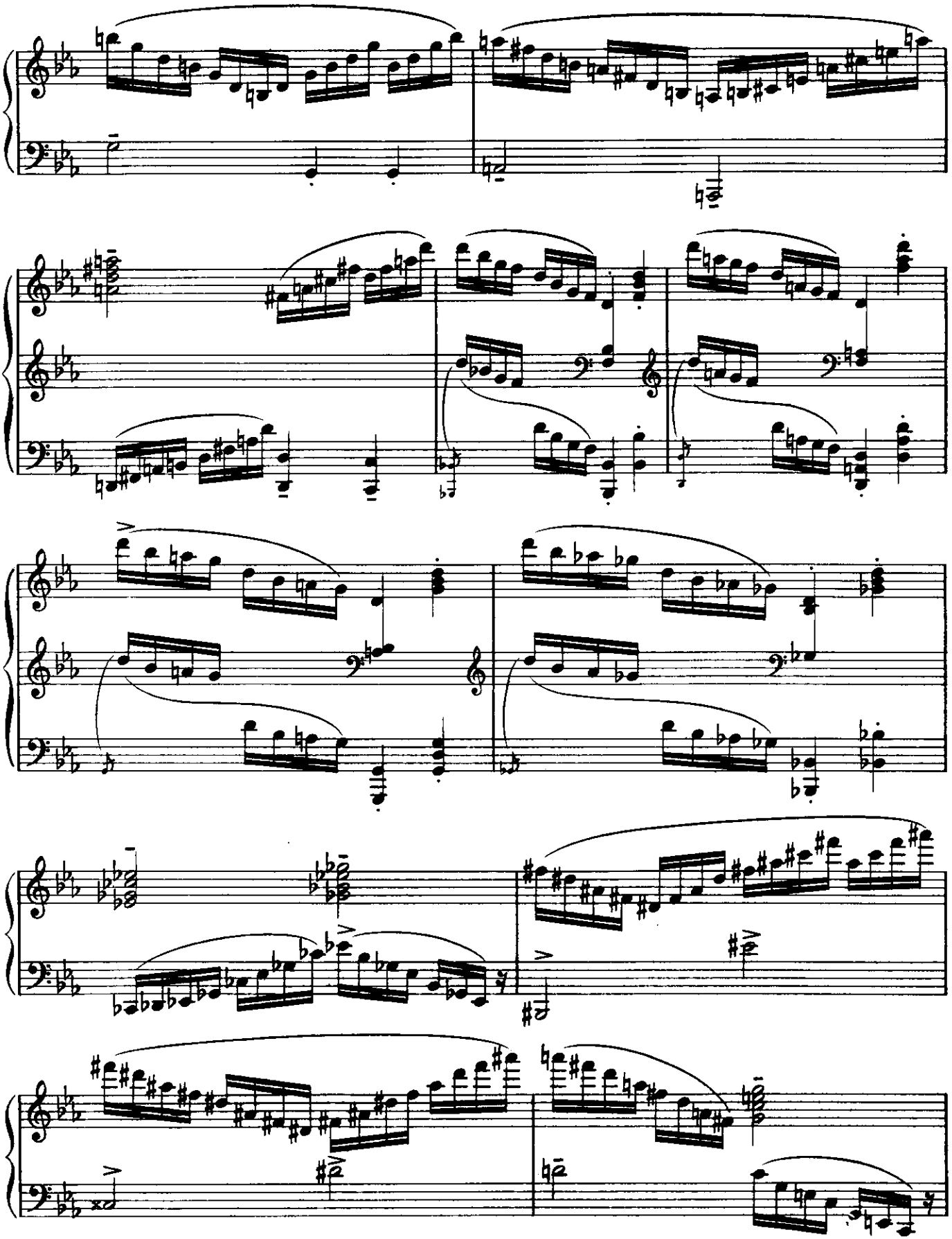
PRELUDE IN C MINOR

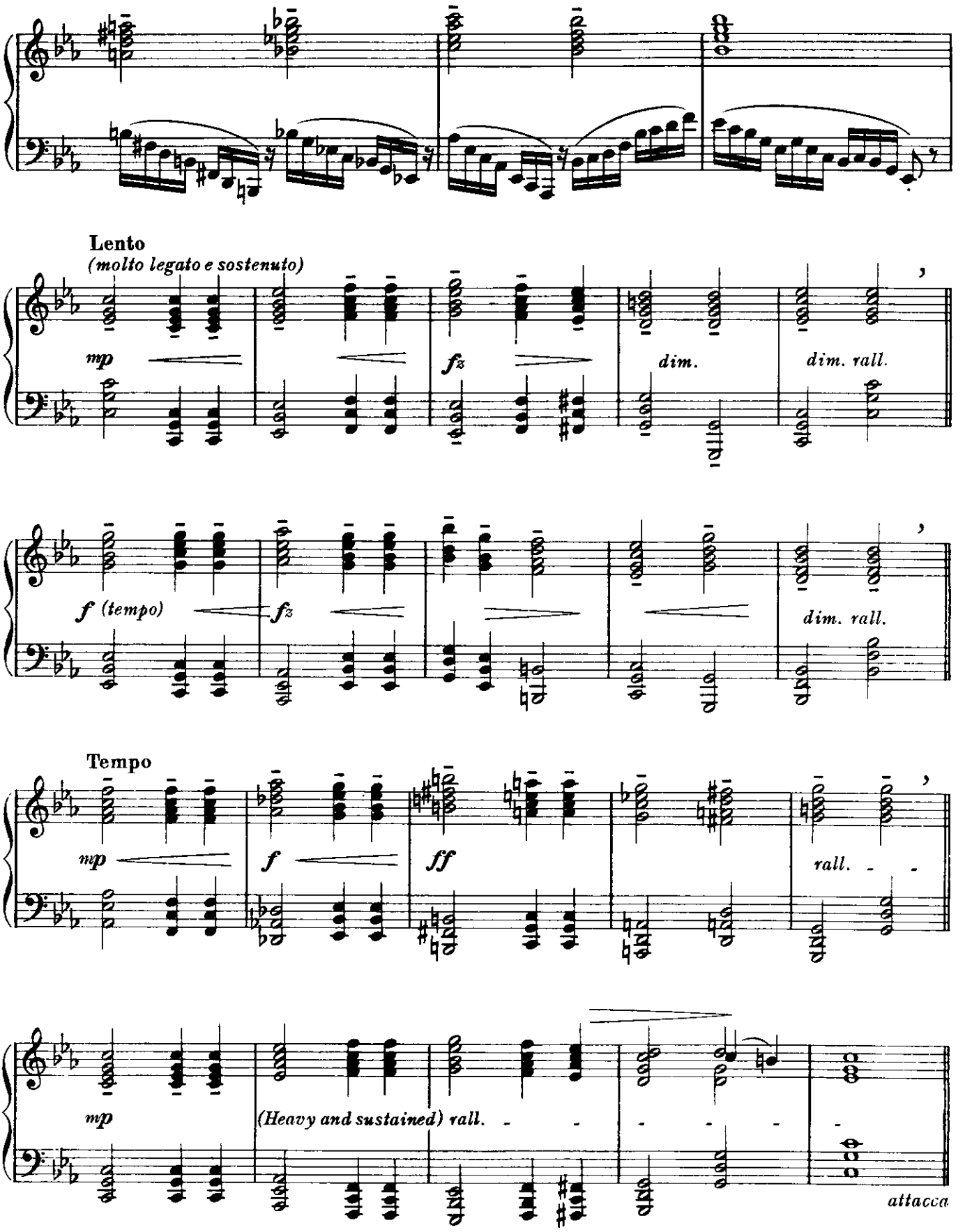
Havergal Brian



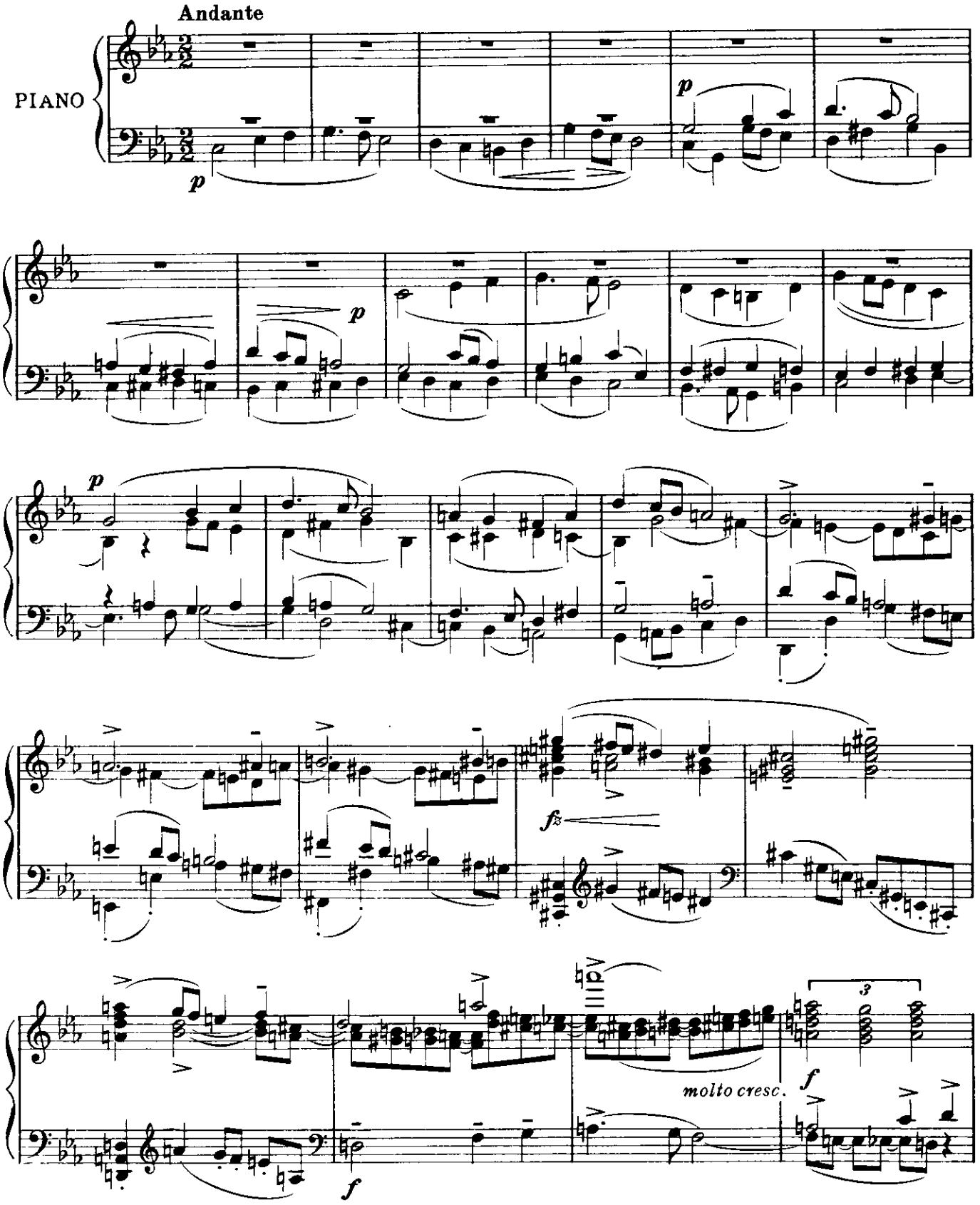

mf
decresc.
mp
f
dim. rall.
Tempo allegro moderato
p

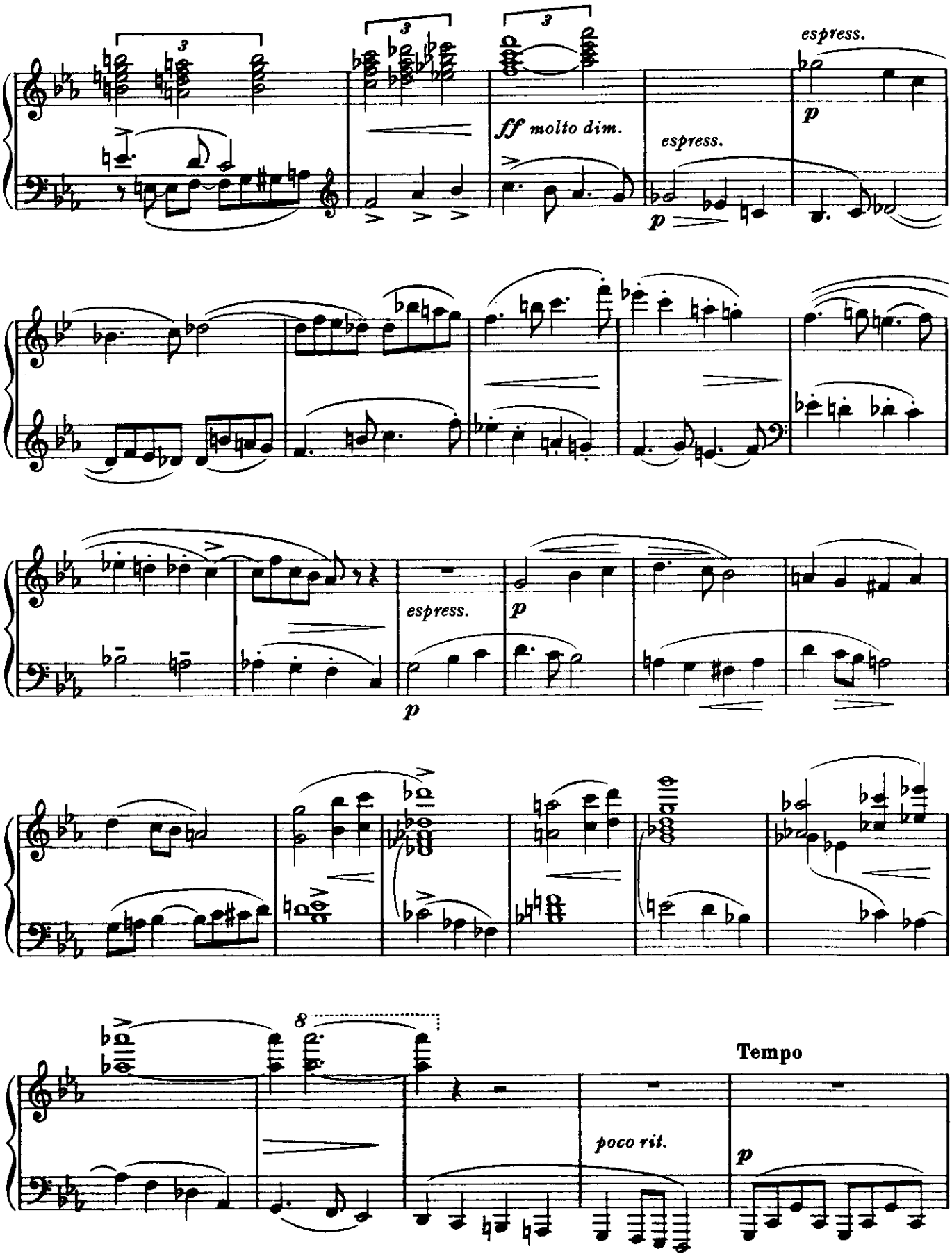

pp teneramente
pp

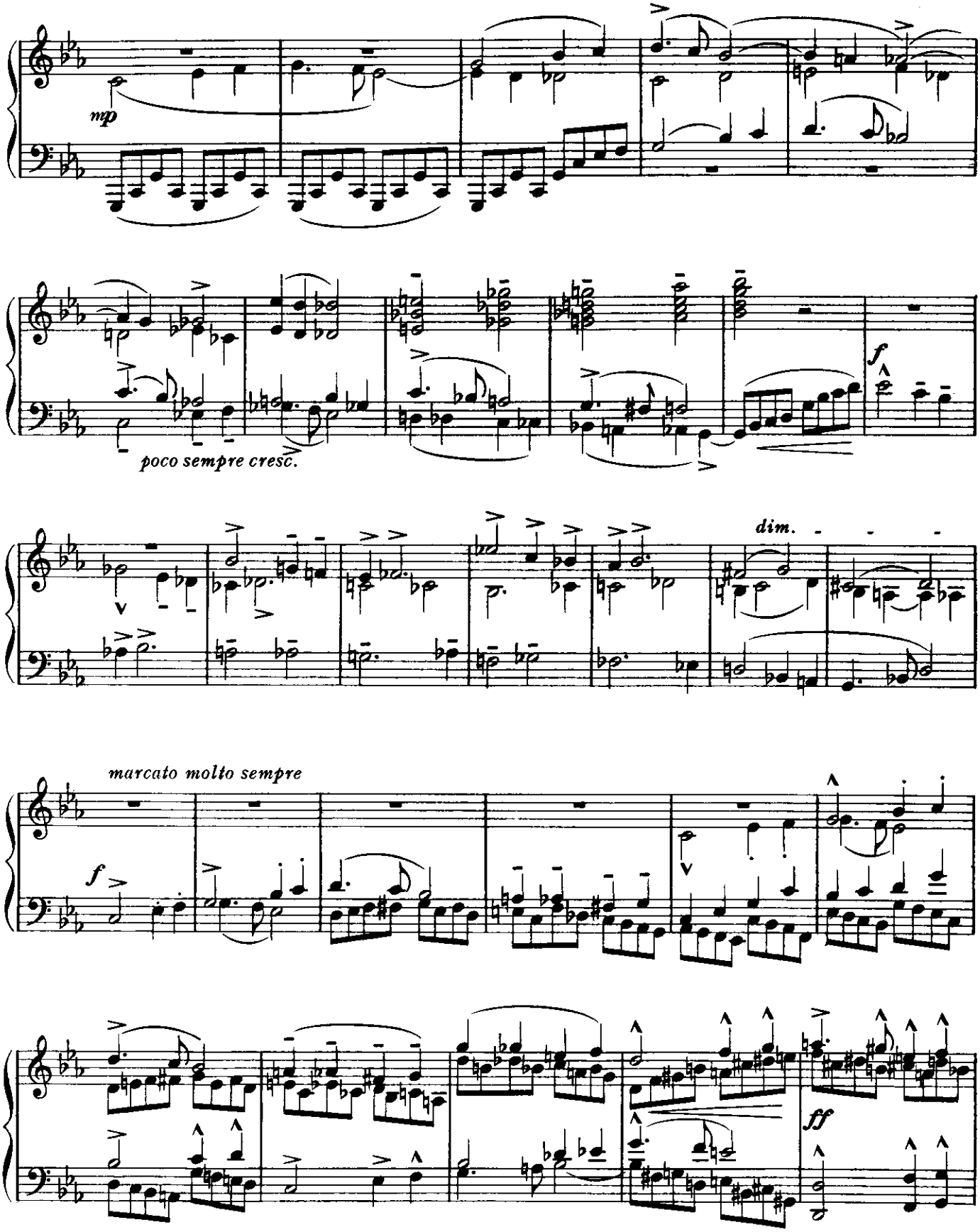


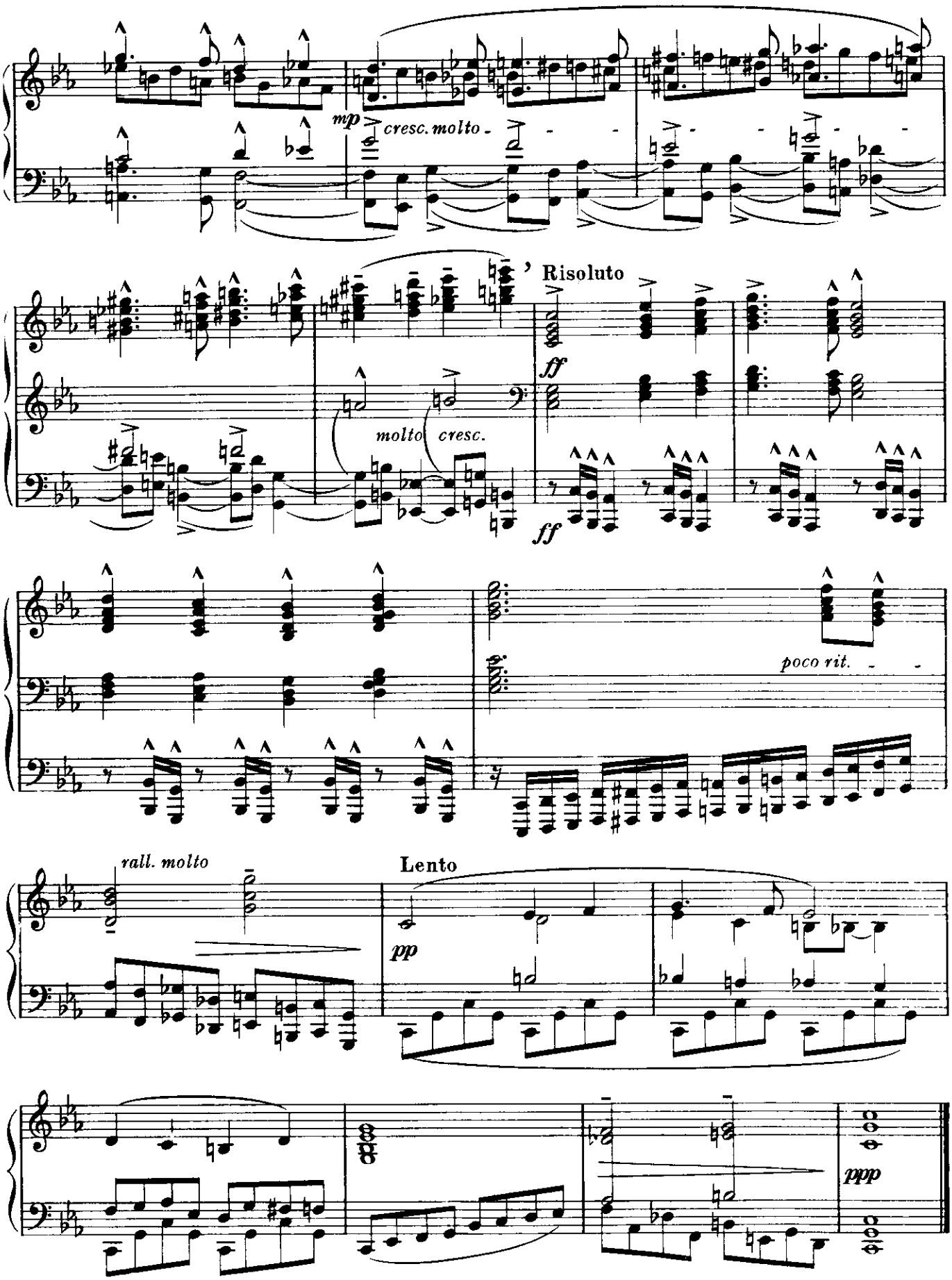

Lento
(molto legato e sostenuto)
mp
fz
dim.
dim. rall.
f (tempo)
fz
dim. rall.
Tempo
mp
f
ff
rall.
mp
(Heavy and sustained) rall.
attacca

FUGUE IN C MINOR




espress.
ff molto dim.
espress.
p
espress.
p
p
8
Tempo
poco rit.
p


mp
poco sempre cresc.
f
dim.
marcato molto sempre
f
ff

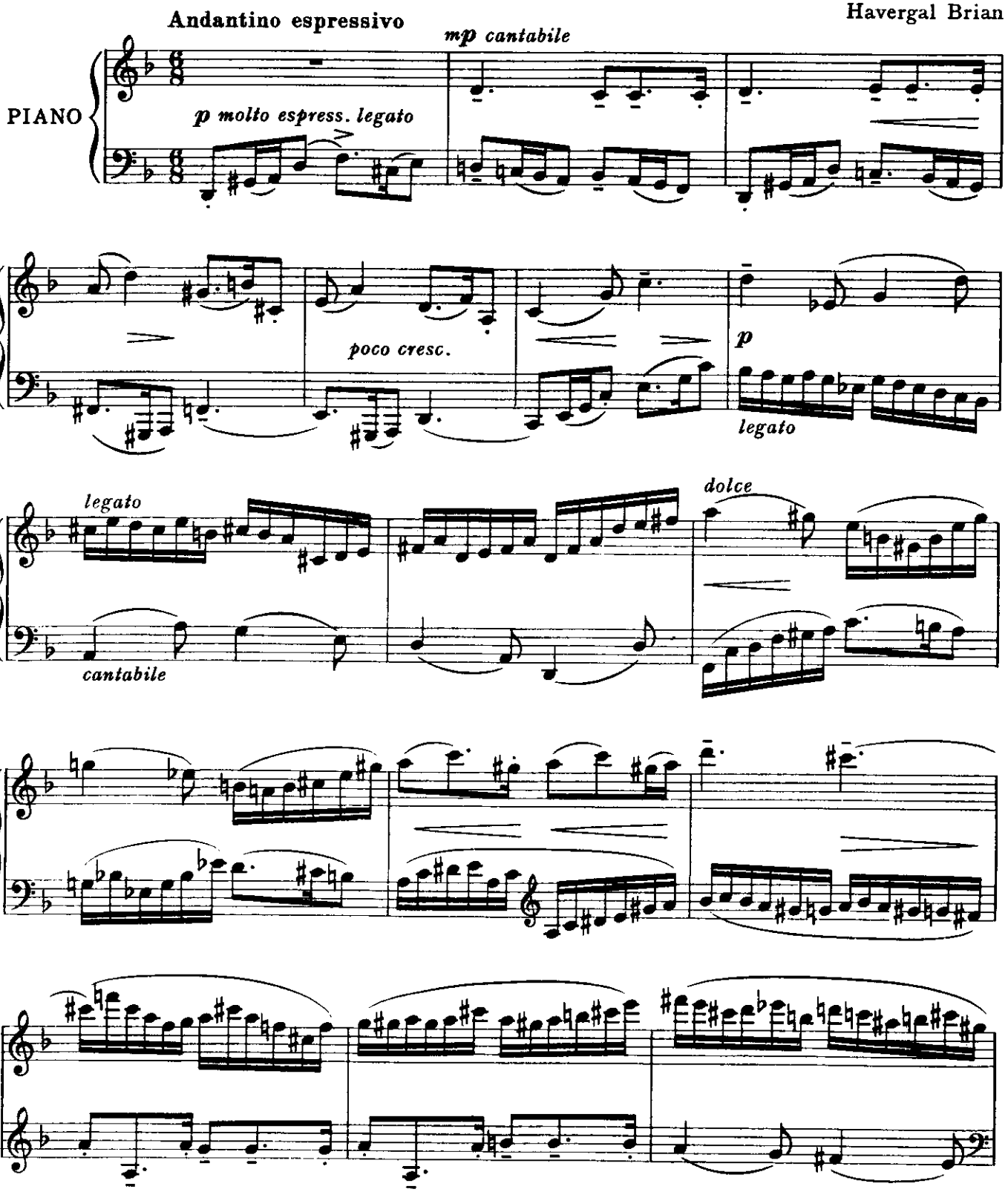

mp
cresc. molto
Risoluto
ff
molto cresc.
ff
poco rit.
rall. molto
Lento
pp
ppp

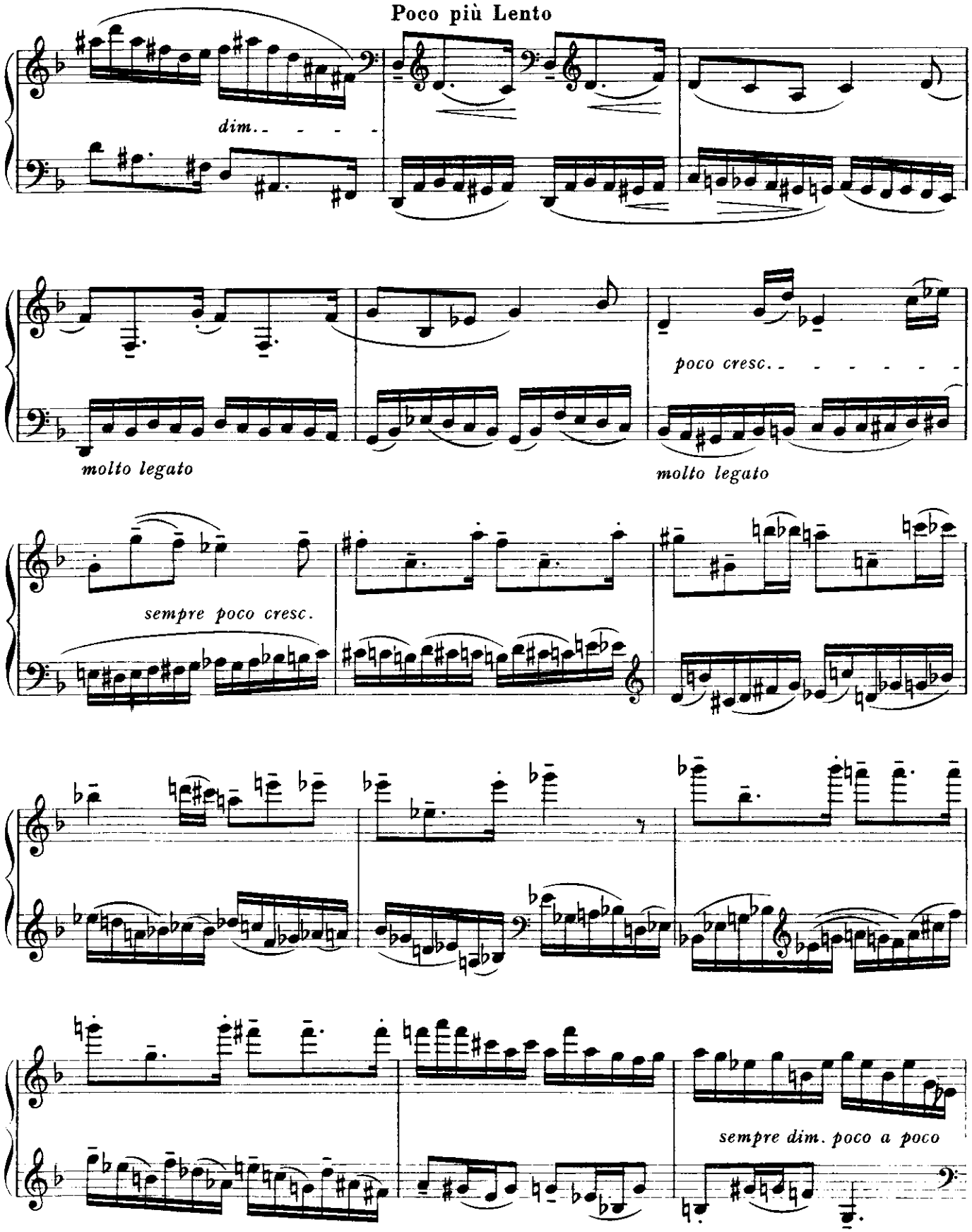
To Robert Keys

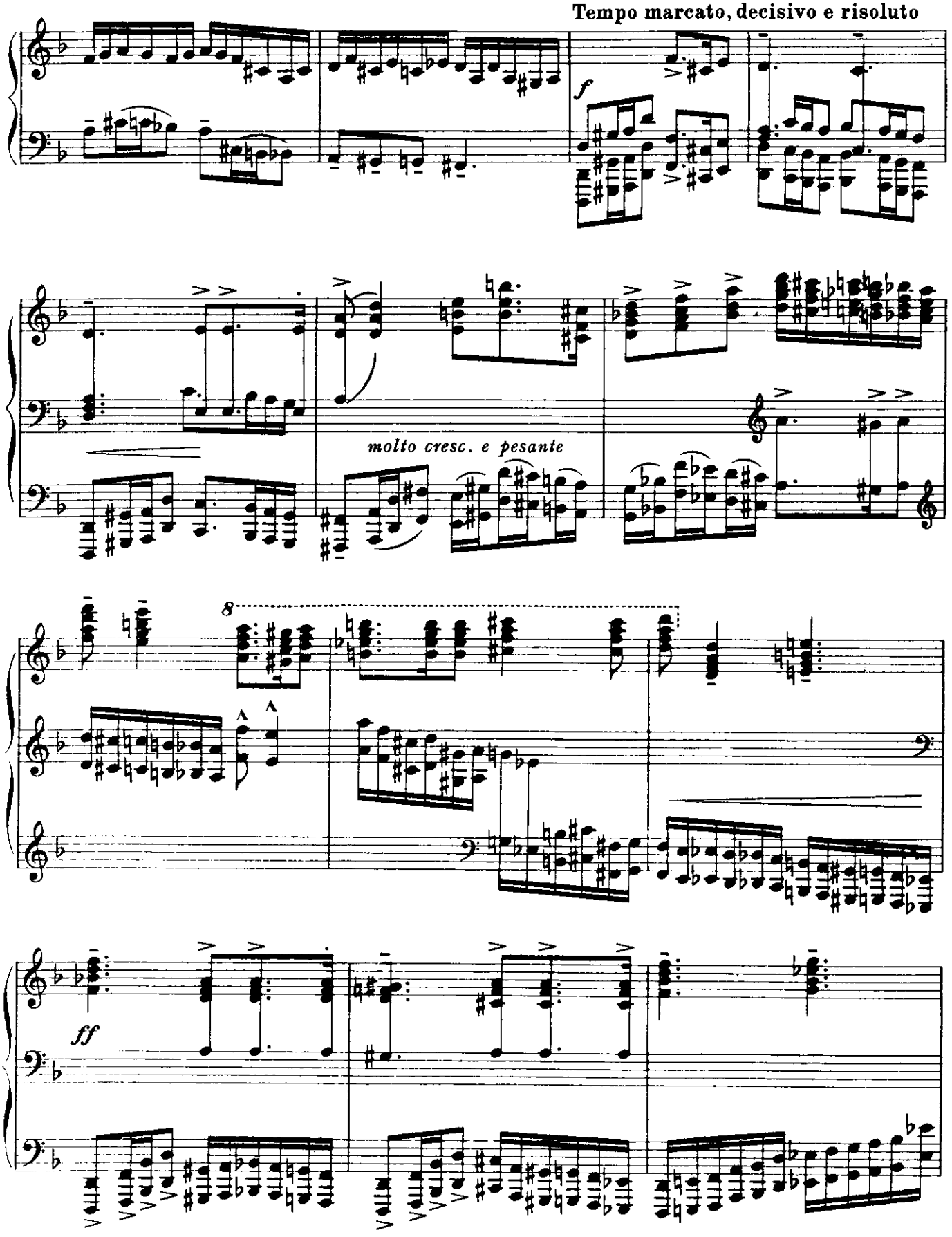
PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN D MINOR/MAJOR

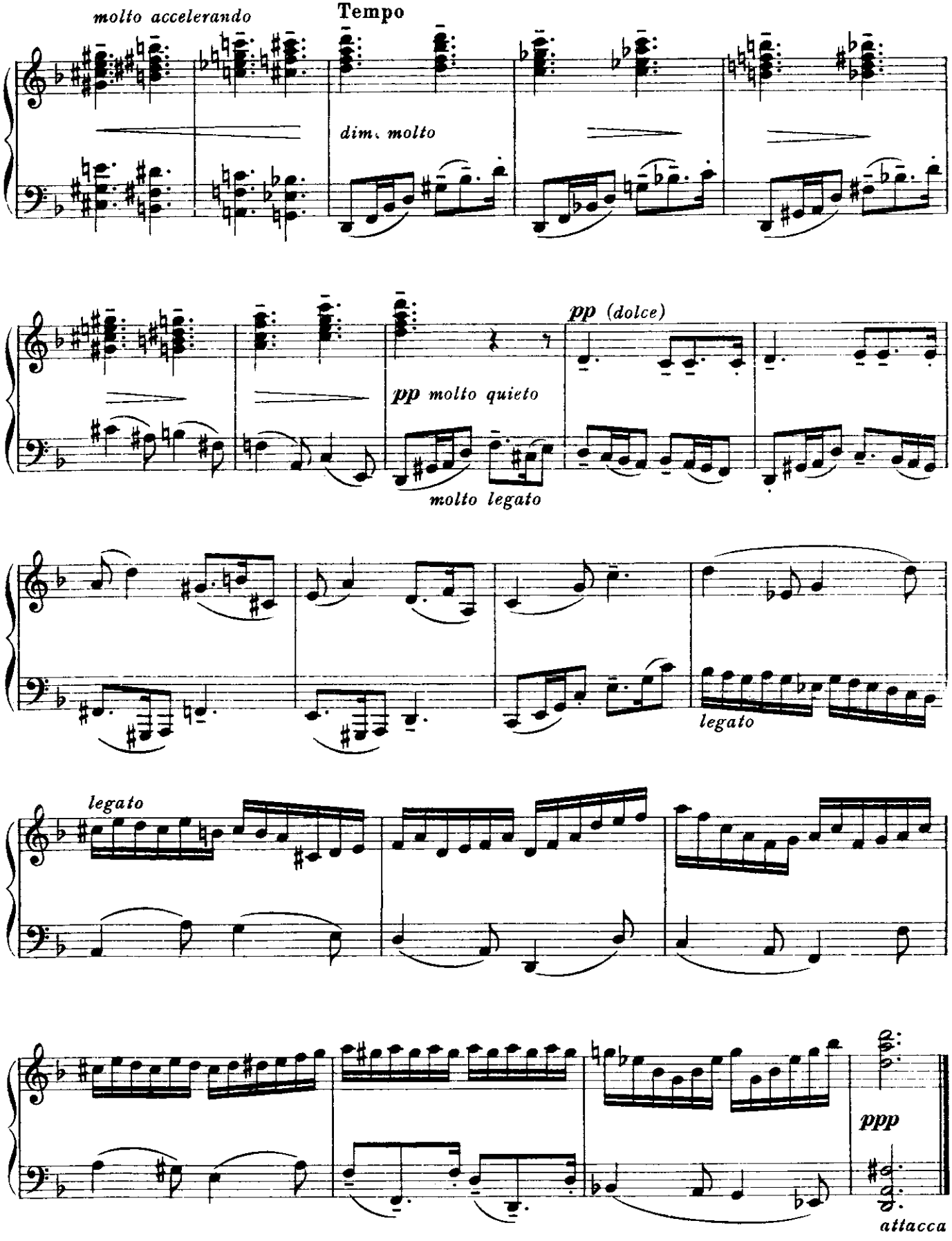
PRELUDE IN D MINOR

Havergal Brian



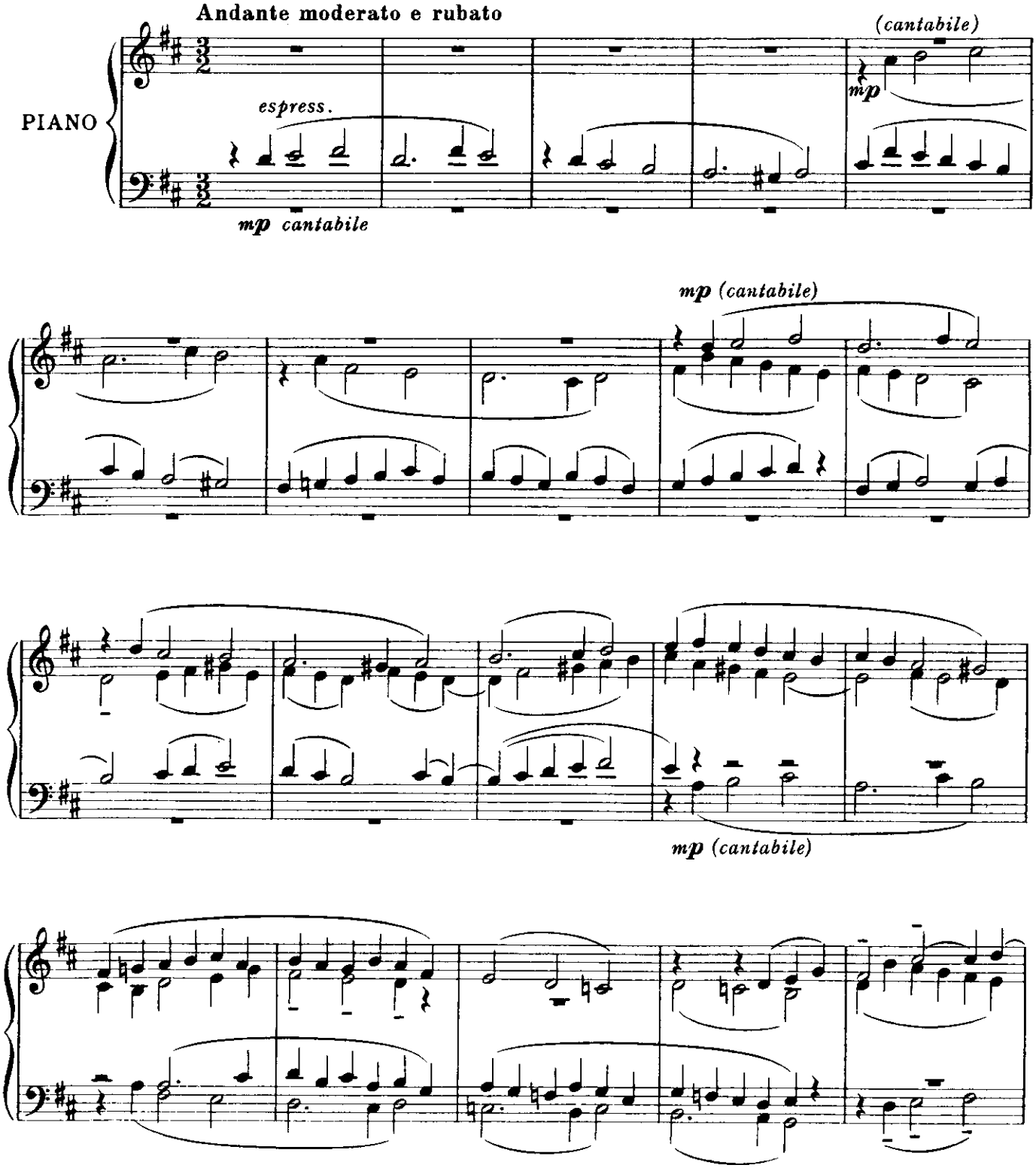

Poco più Lento
dim.
molto legato
poco cresc.
molto legato
sempre poco cresc.
sempre dim. poco a poco

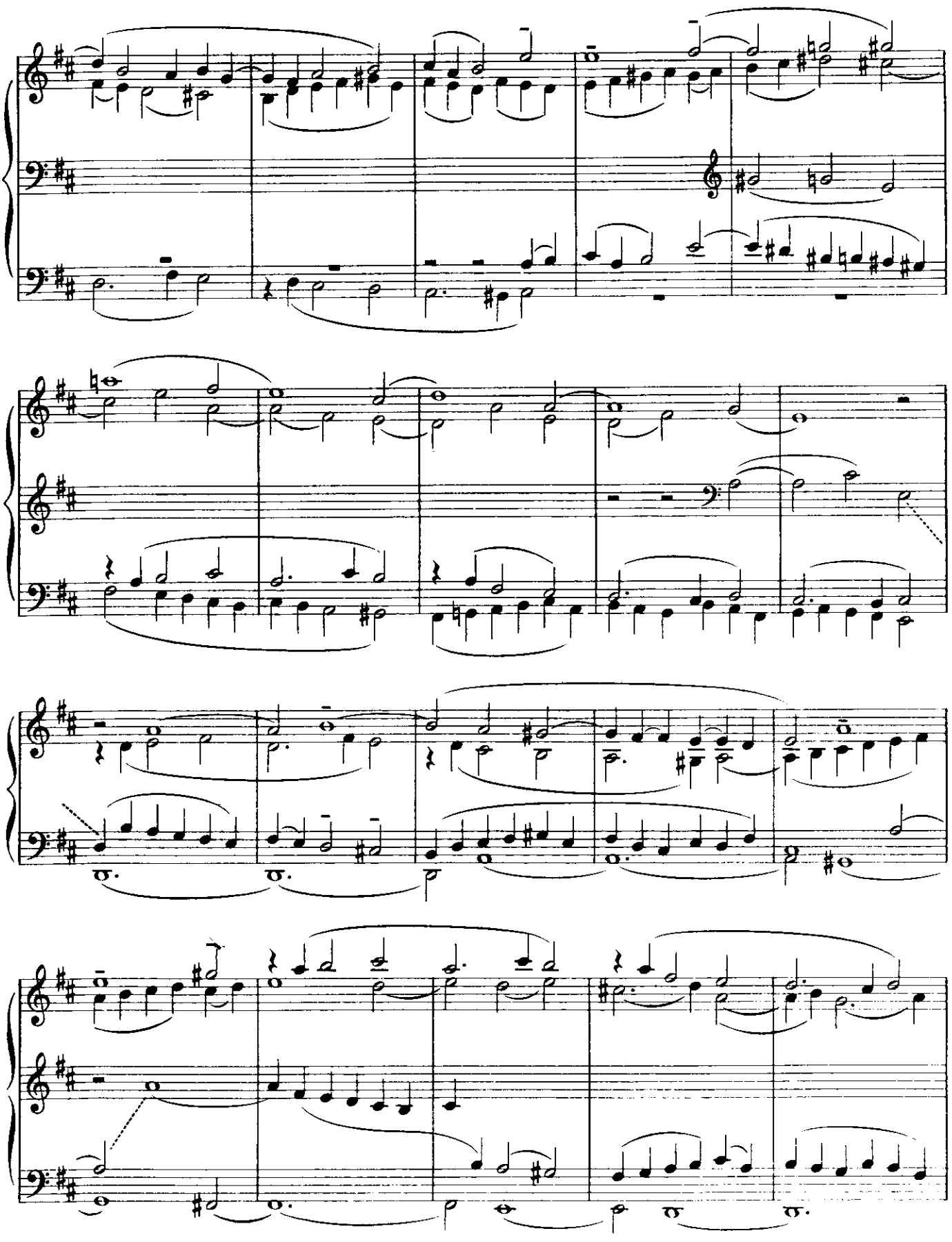

Tempo marcato, decisivo e risoluto
f
molto cresc. e pesante
8
ff

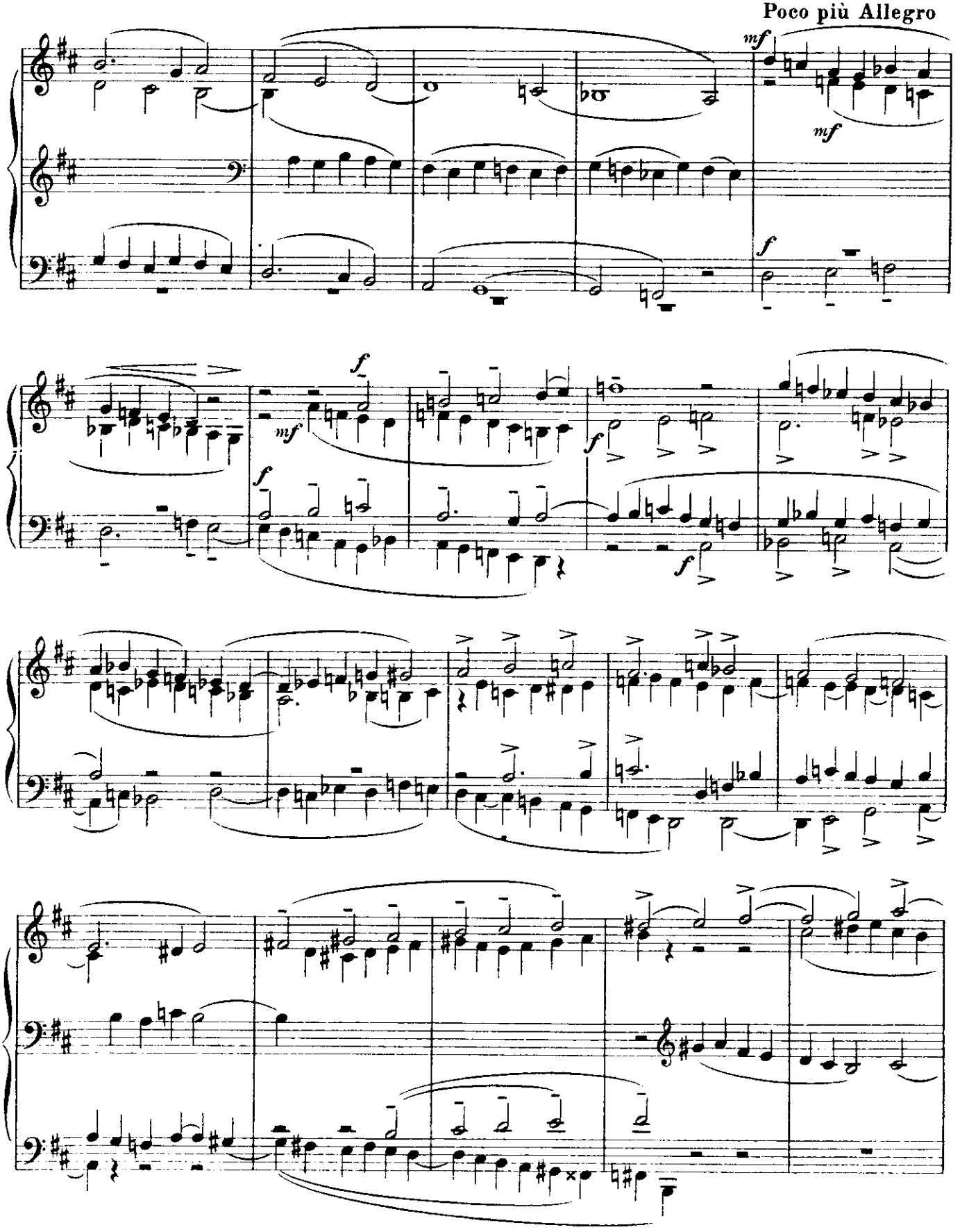

molto accelerando
Tempo
dim. molto
pp (dolce)
pp molto quieto
molto legato
legato
legato
ppp
attacca

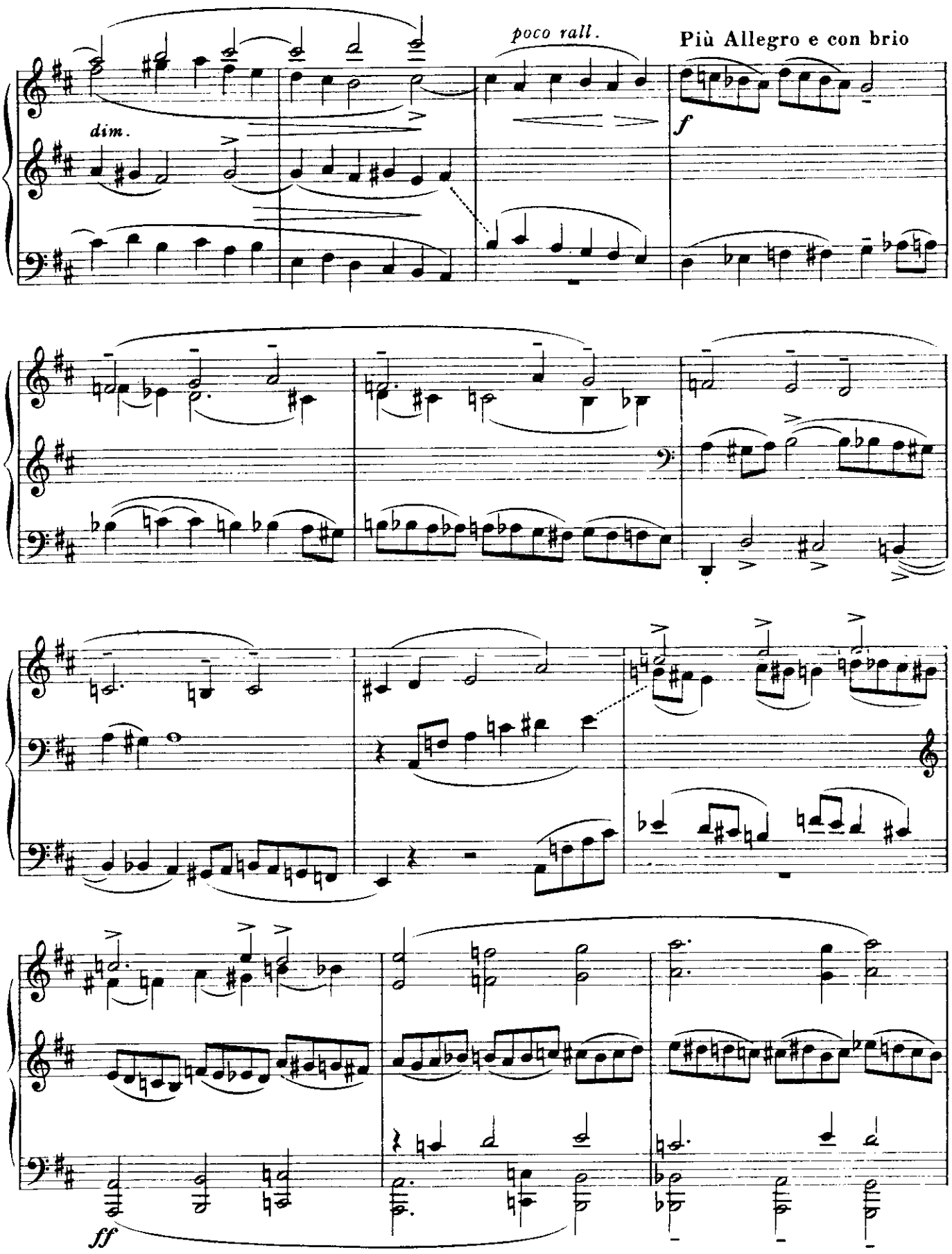
FUGUE IN D MAJOR

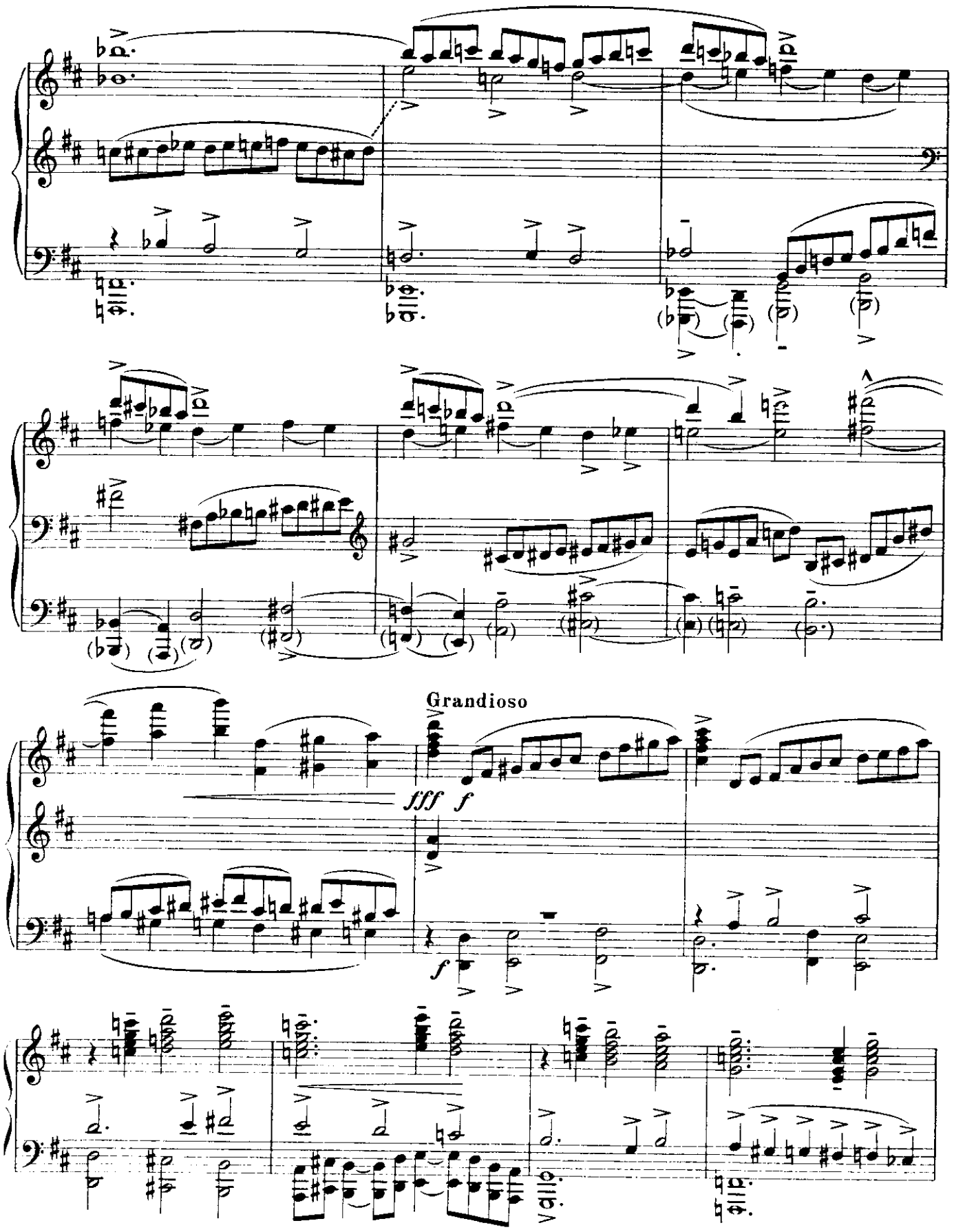
Havergal Brian

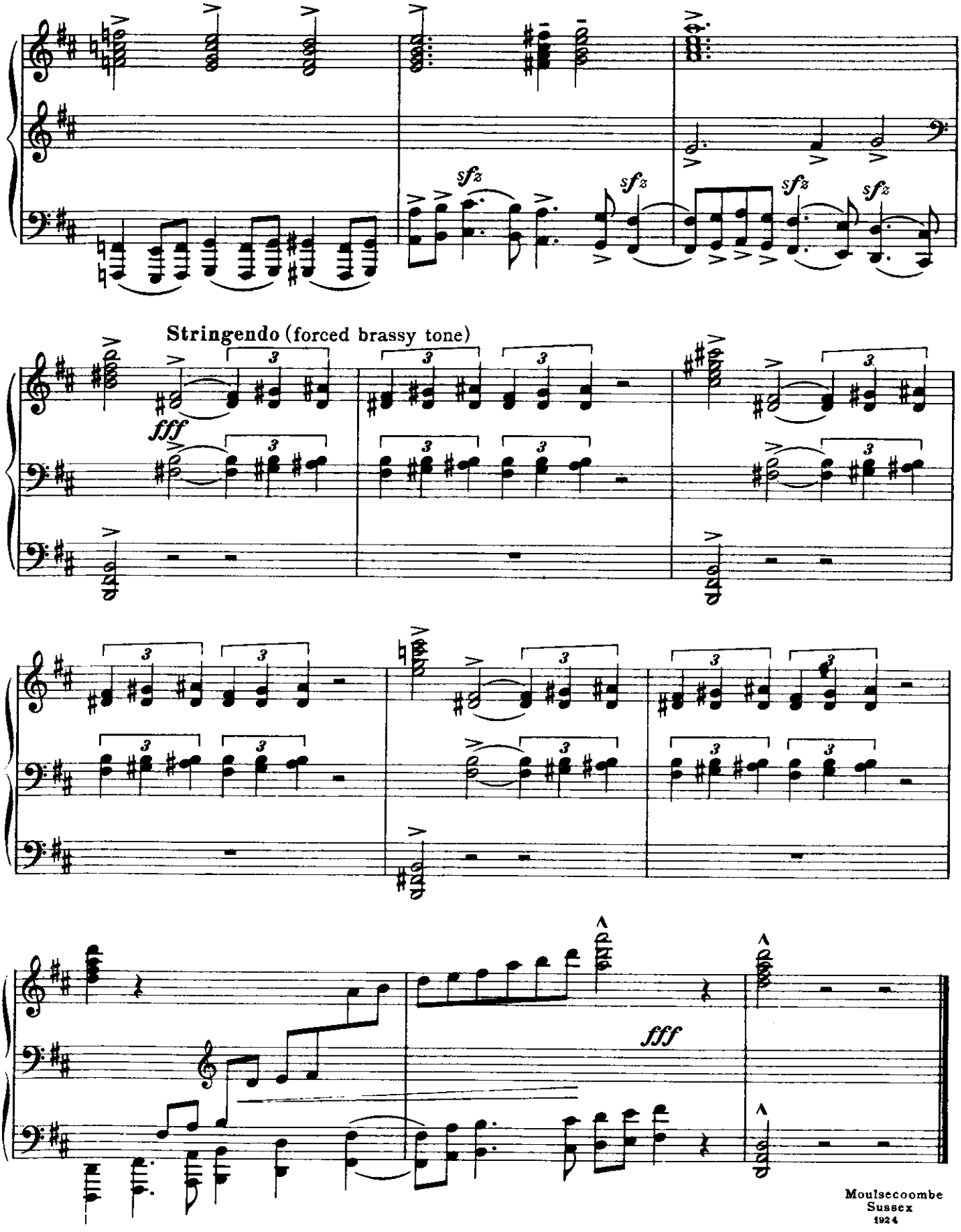





Poco più Allegro
mf
mf
f
mf
f
f
f
f
f


poco rall.
Più Allegro e con brio
dim.
f
ff


Grandioso
fff f
f

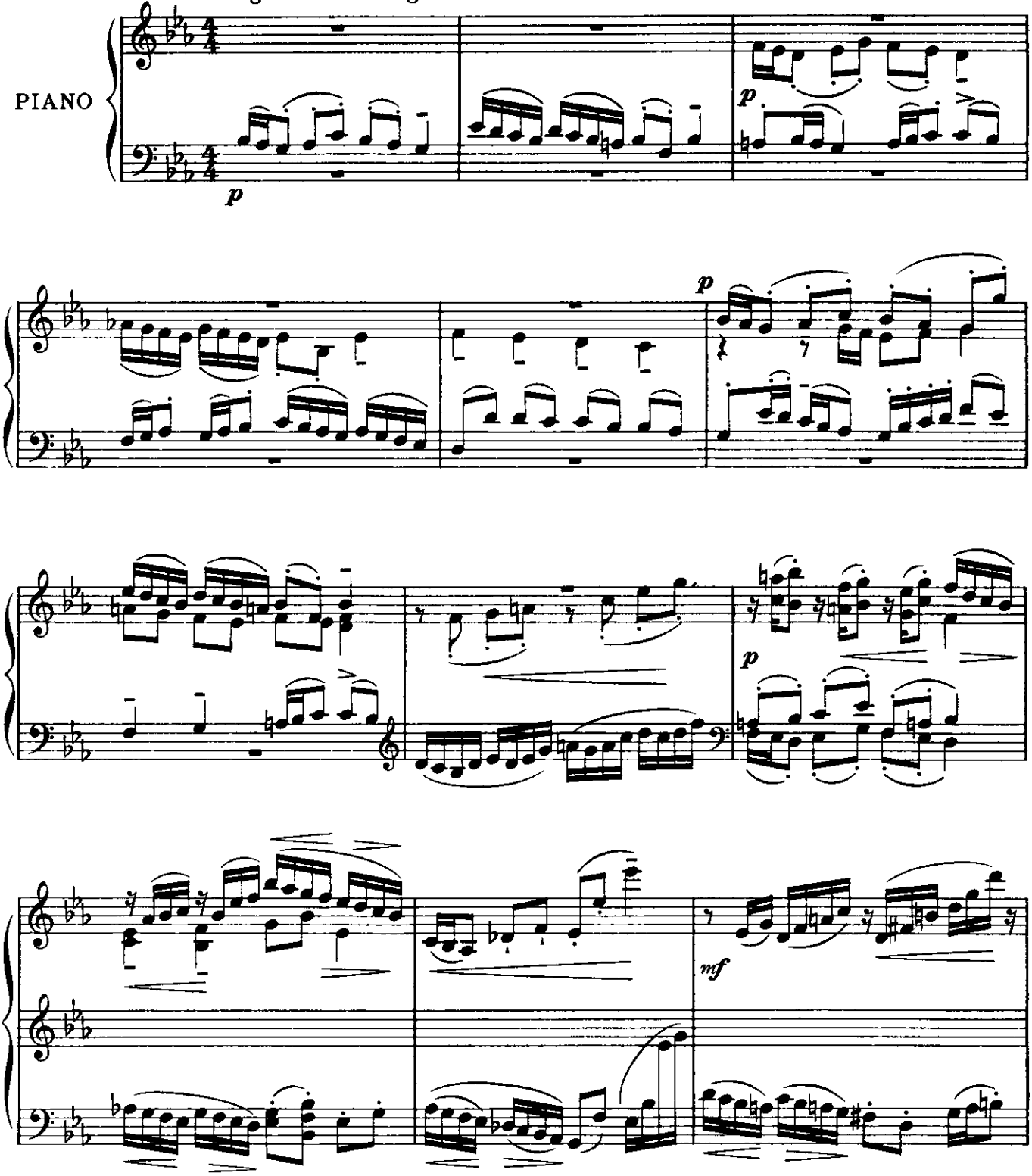

sfz
sfz
sfz
sfz
Stringendo (forced brassy tone)
fff
fff
Moulsecoombe
Sussex
1924

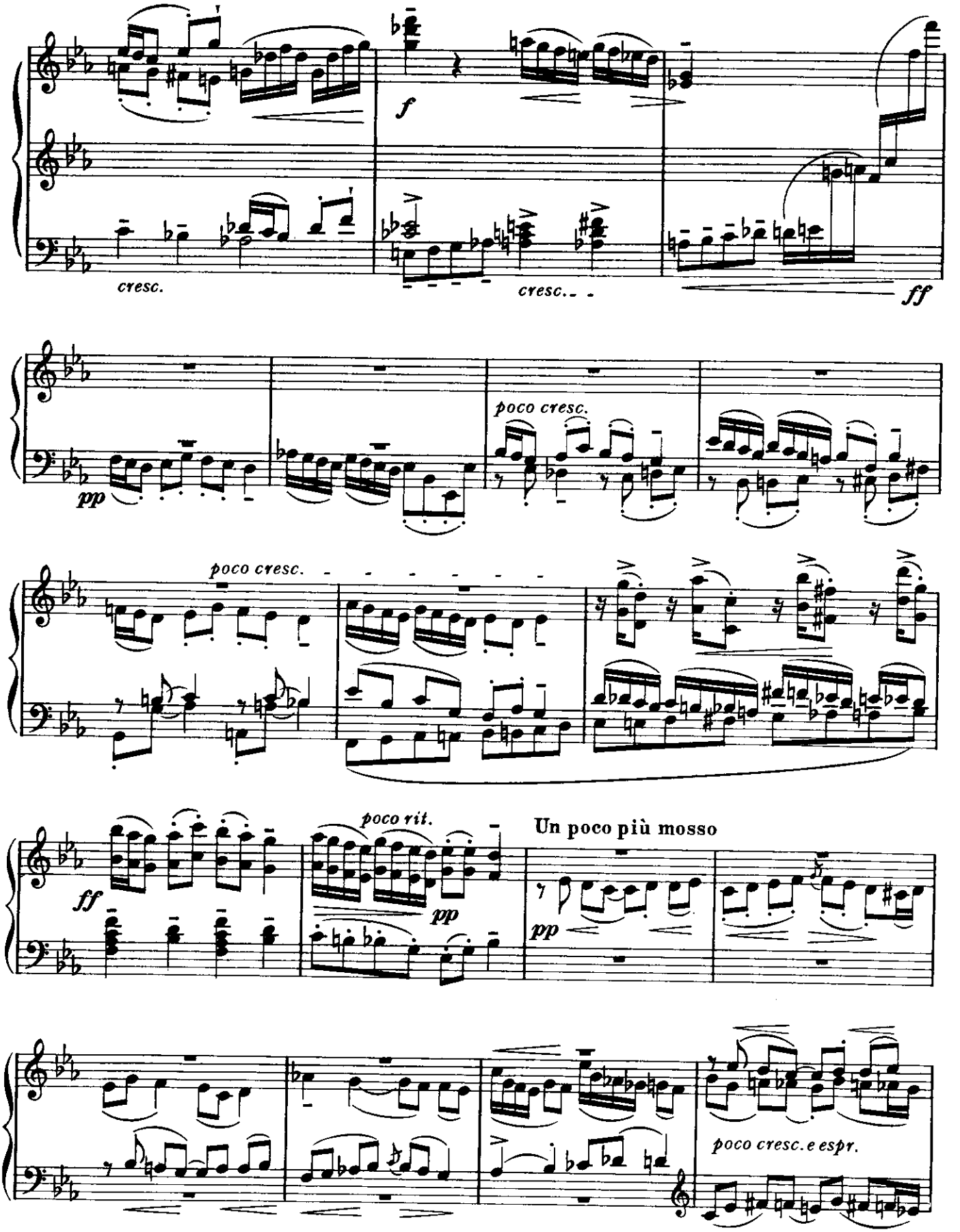
To Elfreda Brian

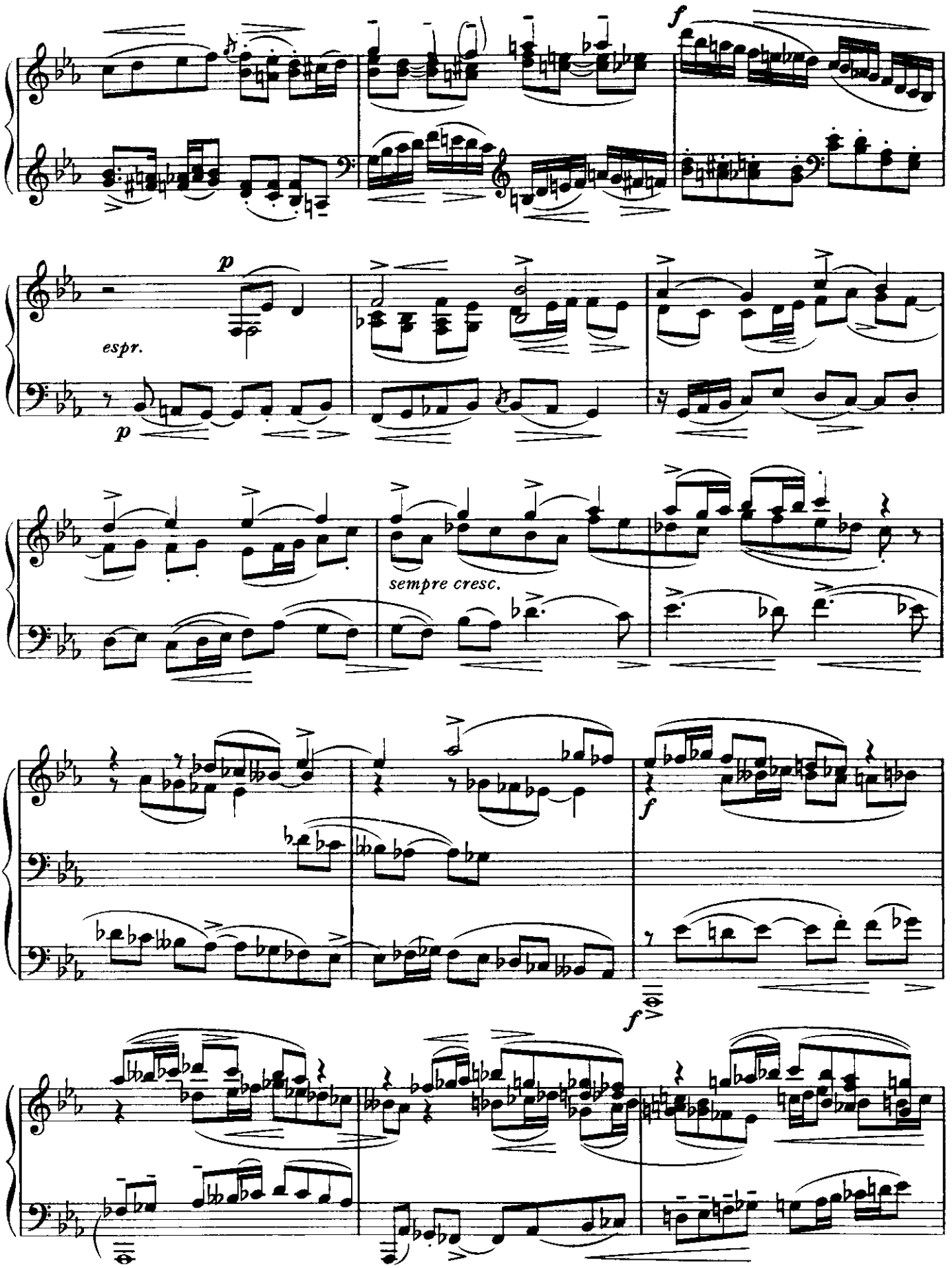
DOUBLE FUGUE IN E FLAT

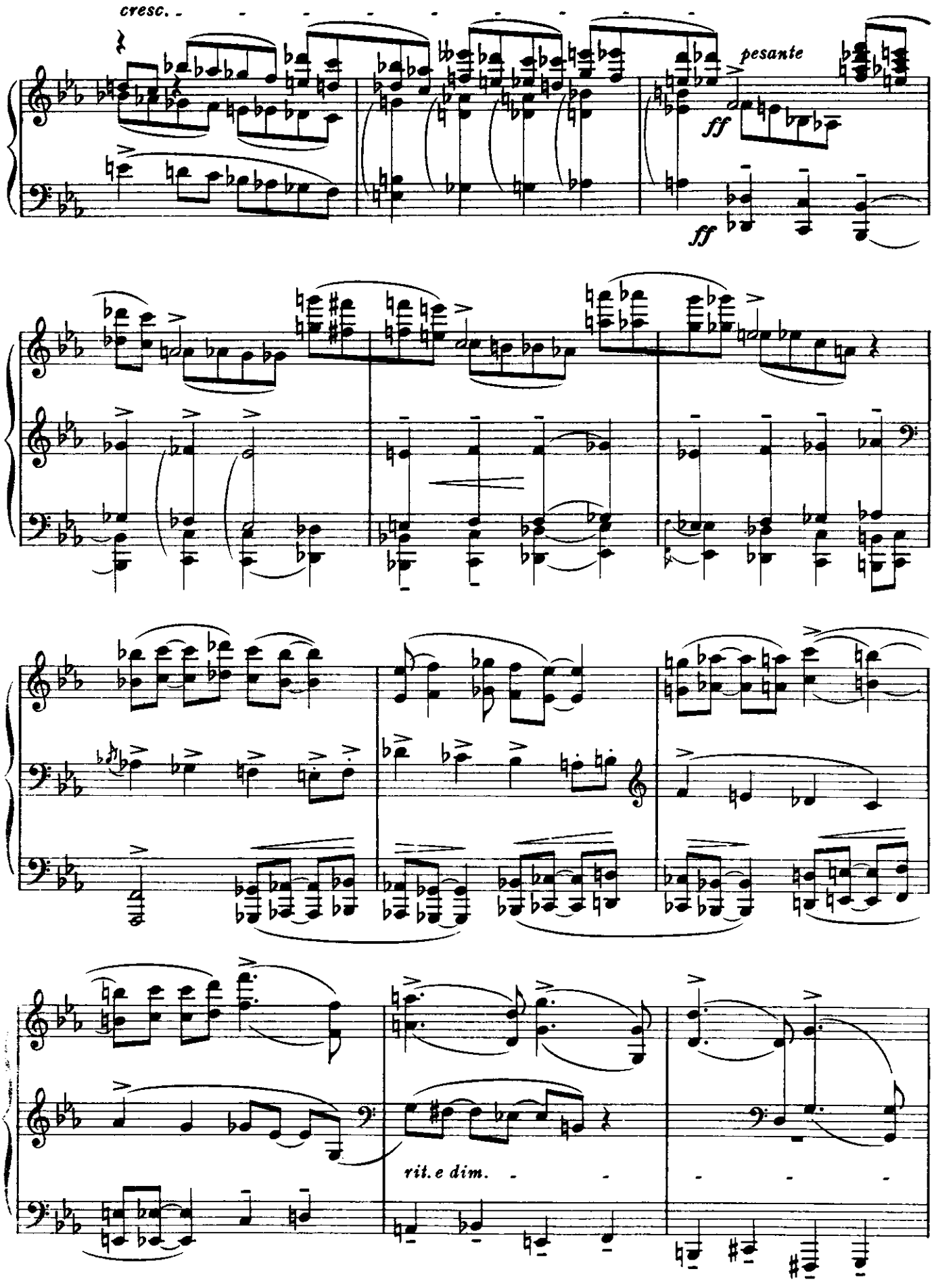
Havergal Brian

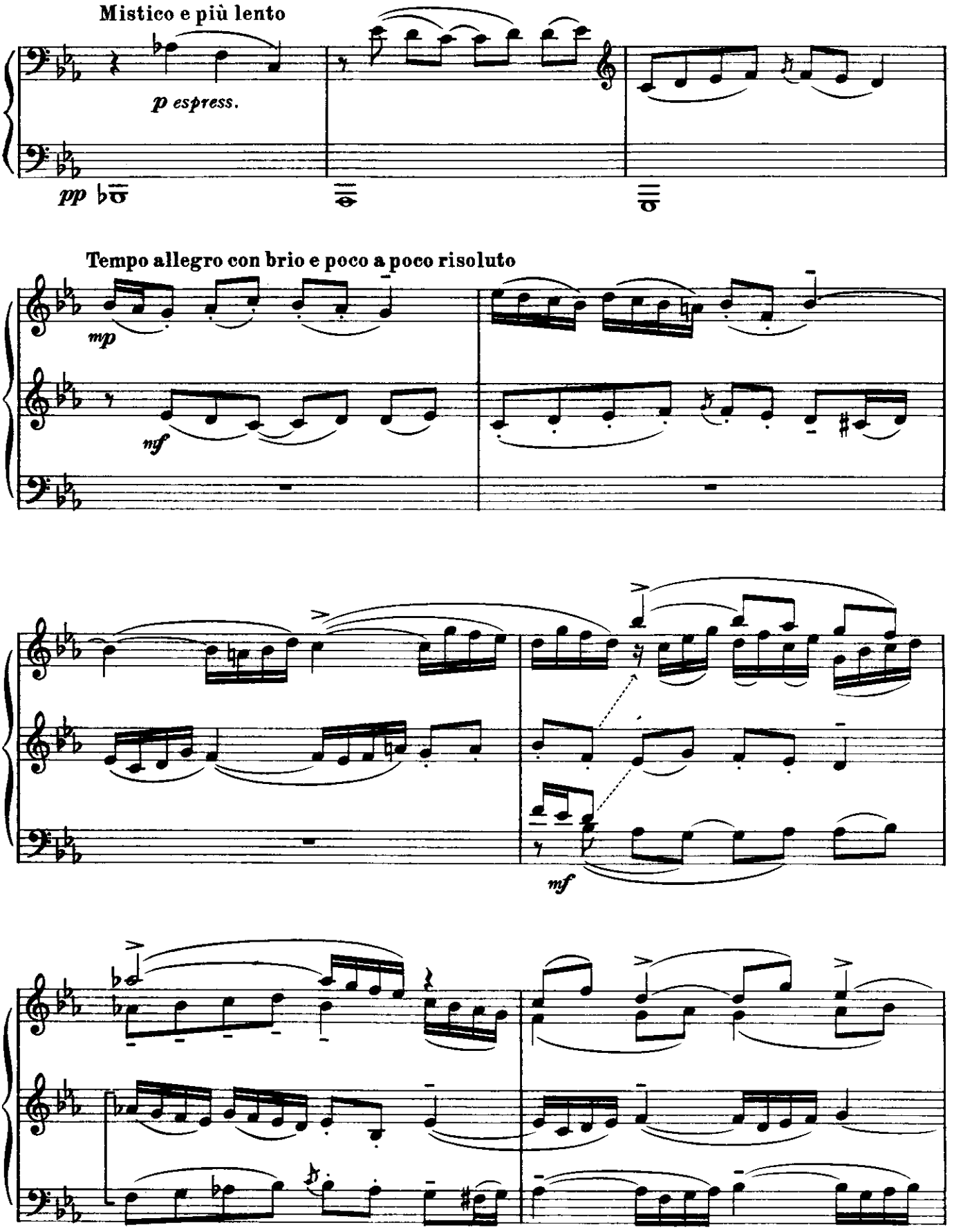
Allegro con brio e giocoso

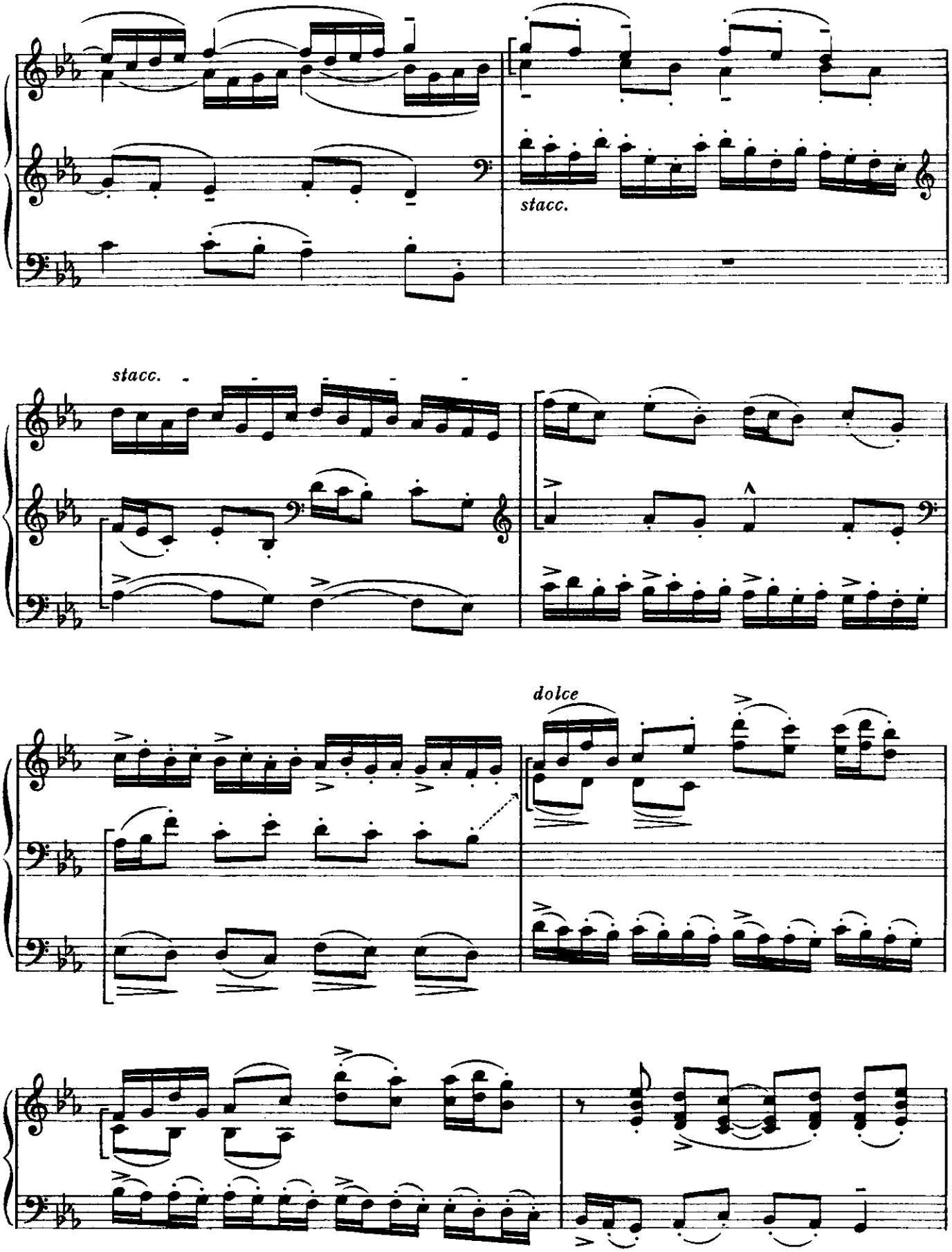


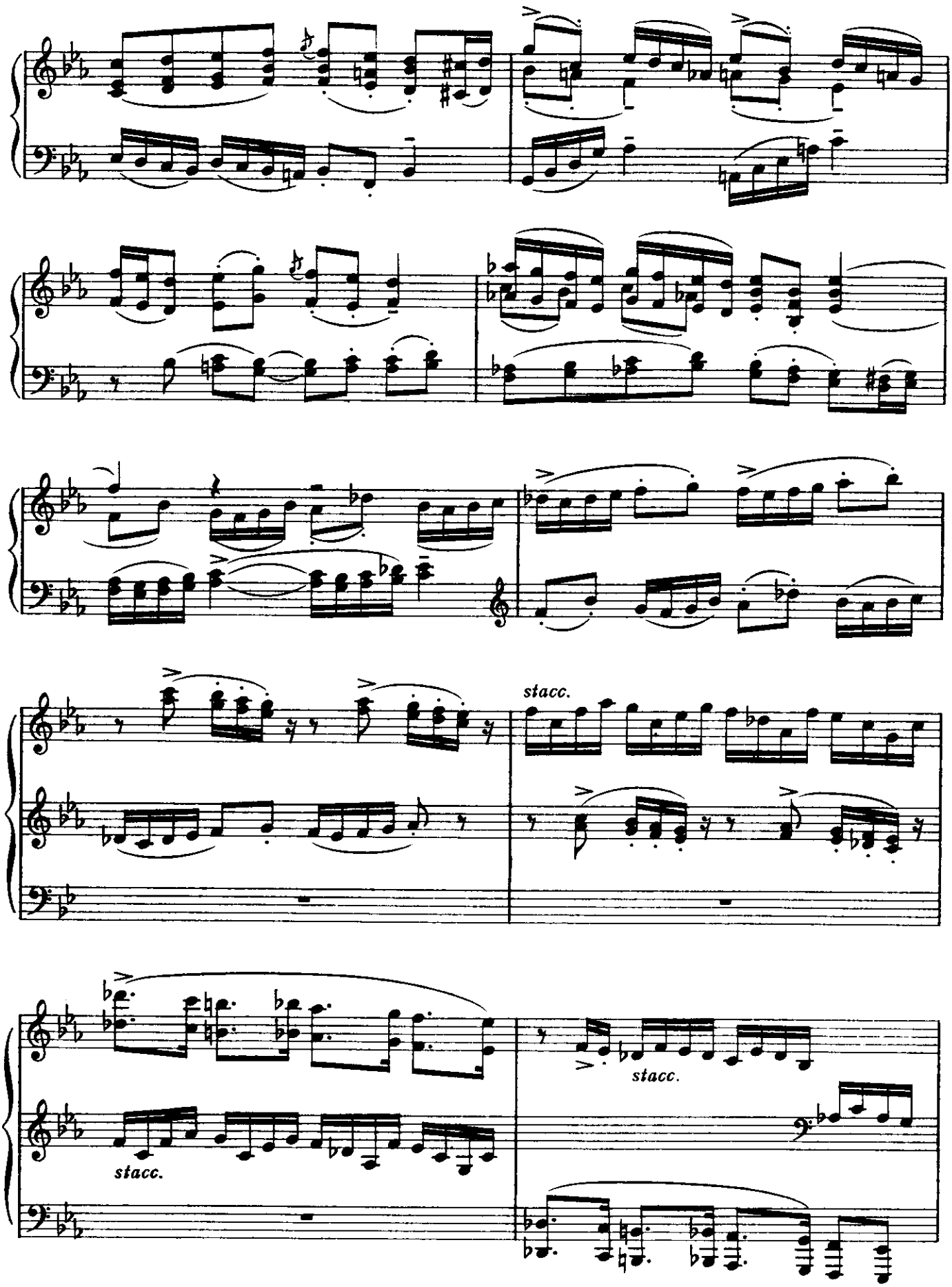

f
cresc.
cresc.
ff
poco cresc.
pp
poco cresc.
ff
poco rit.
pp
Un poco più mosso
pp
poco cresc. e espr.

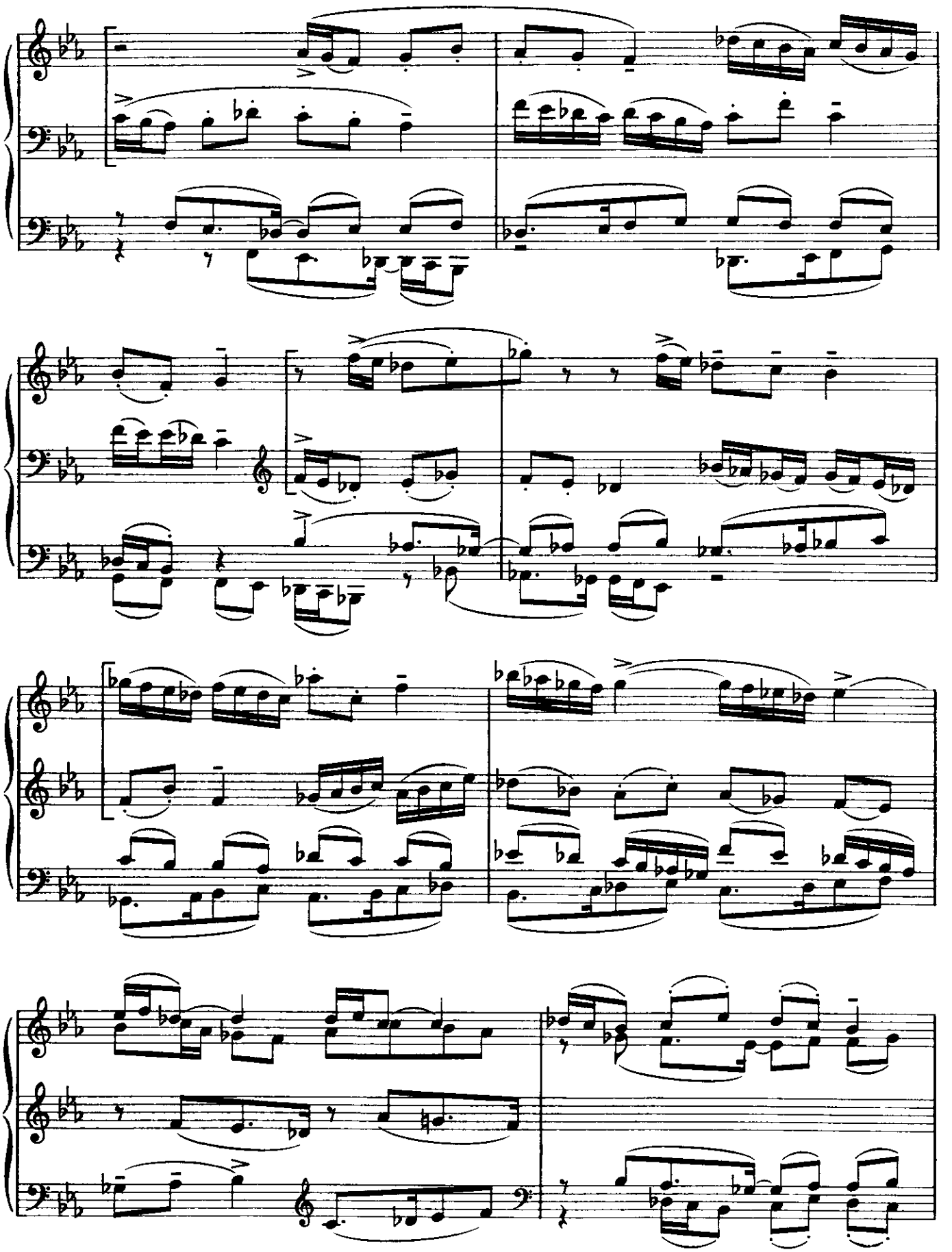

f
p
espr.
p
sempre cresc.
f
f

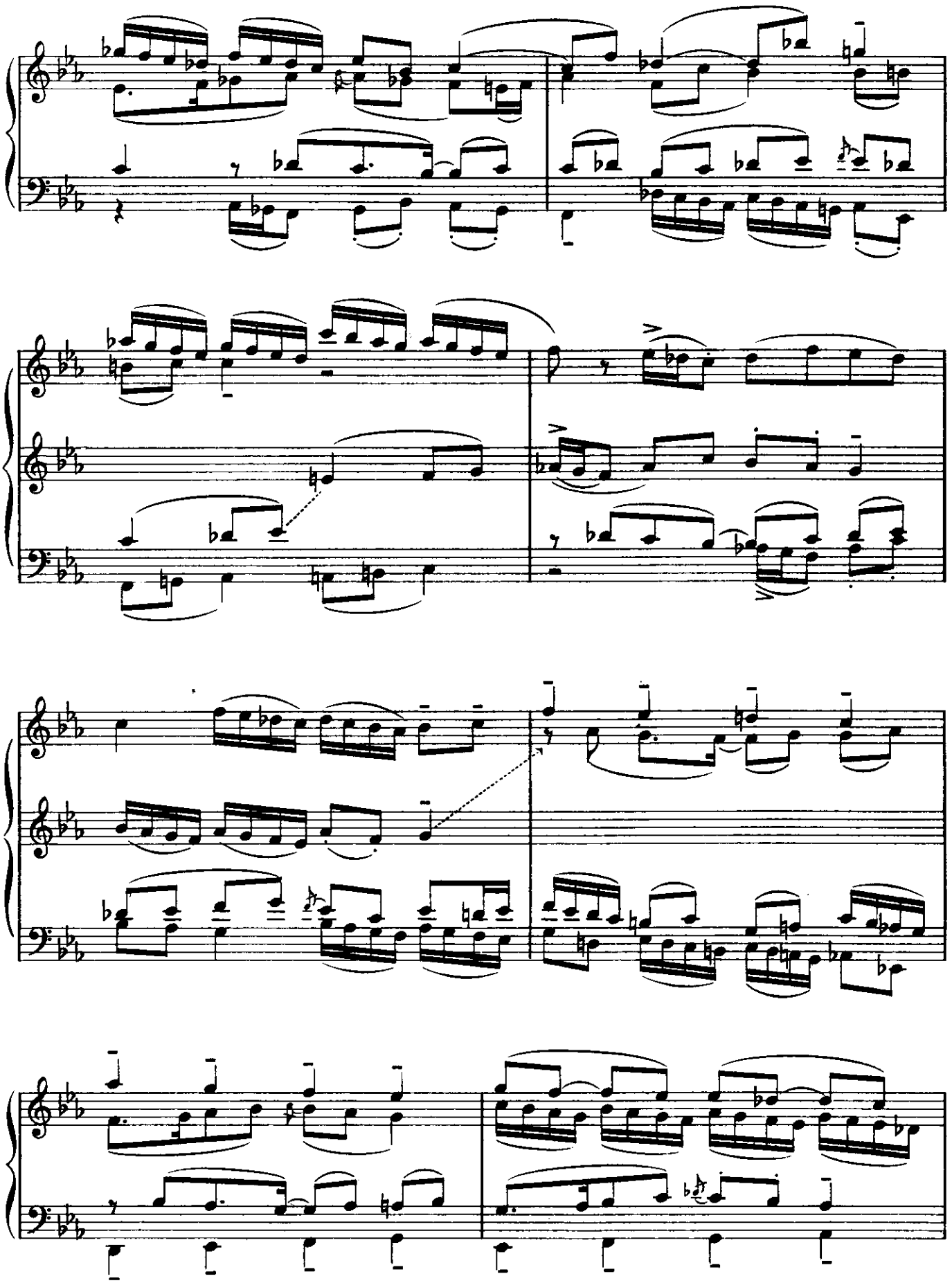

cresc.
pesante
ff
ff
rit. e dim.

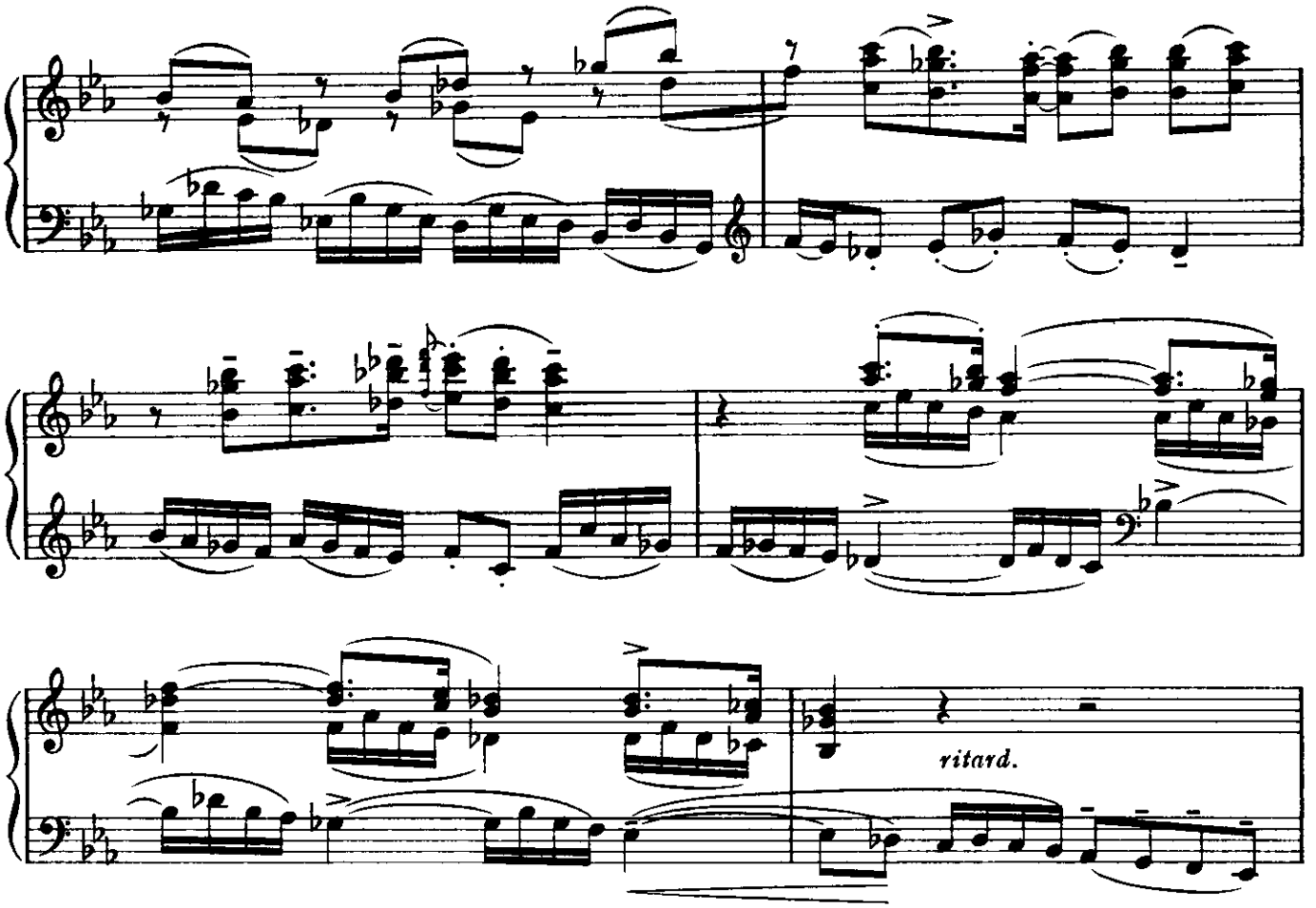

Mistico e più lento
p espress.
pp
Tempo allegro con brio e poco a poco risoluto
mp
mf
mf

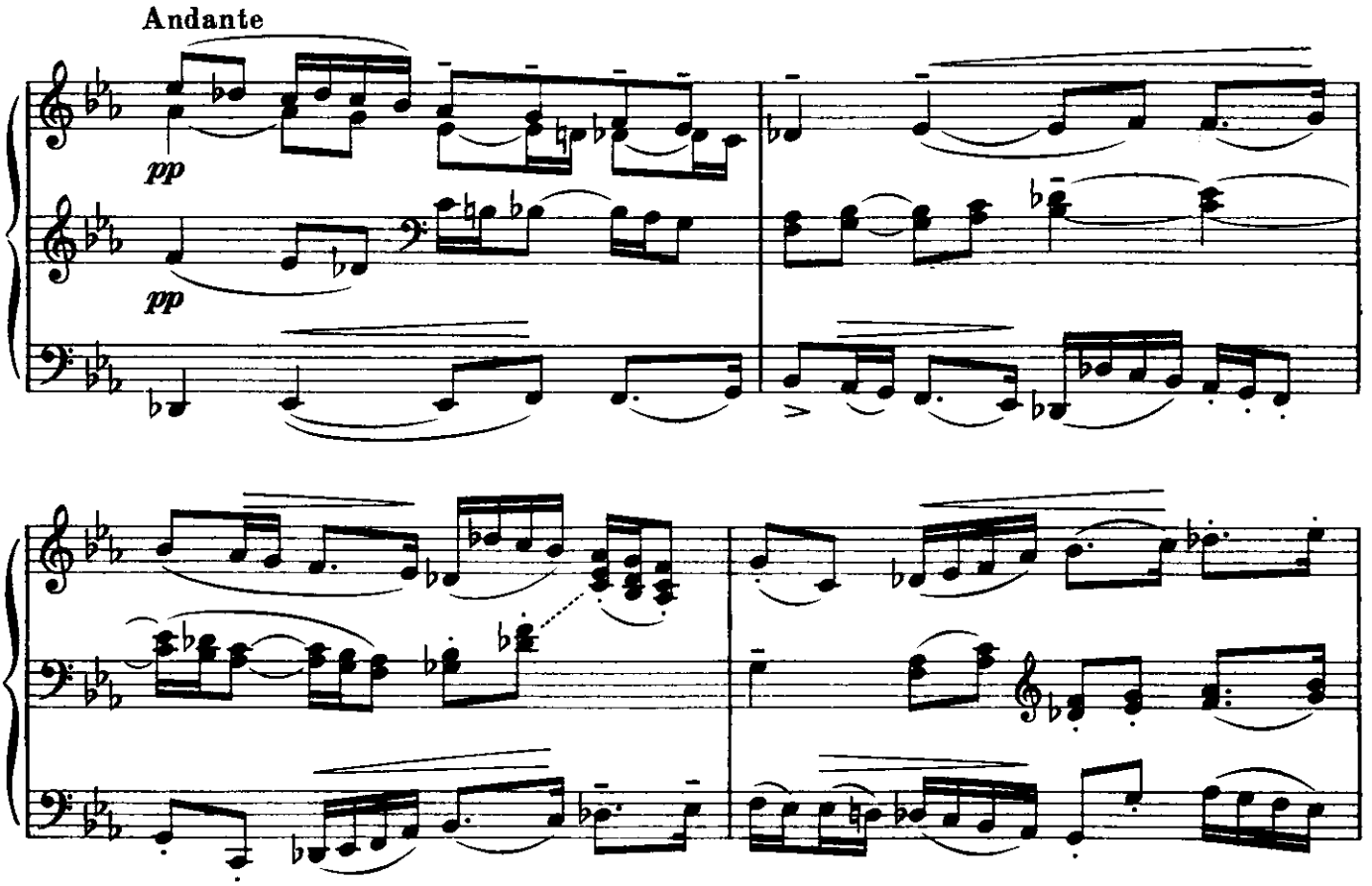

stacc.
stacc.
dolce

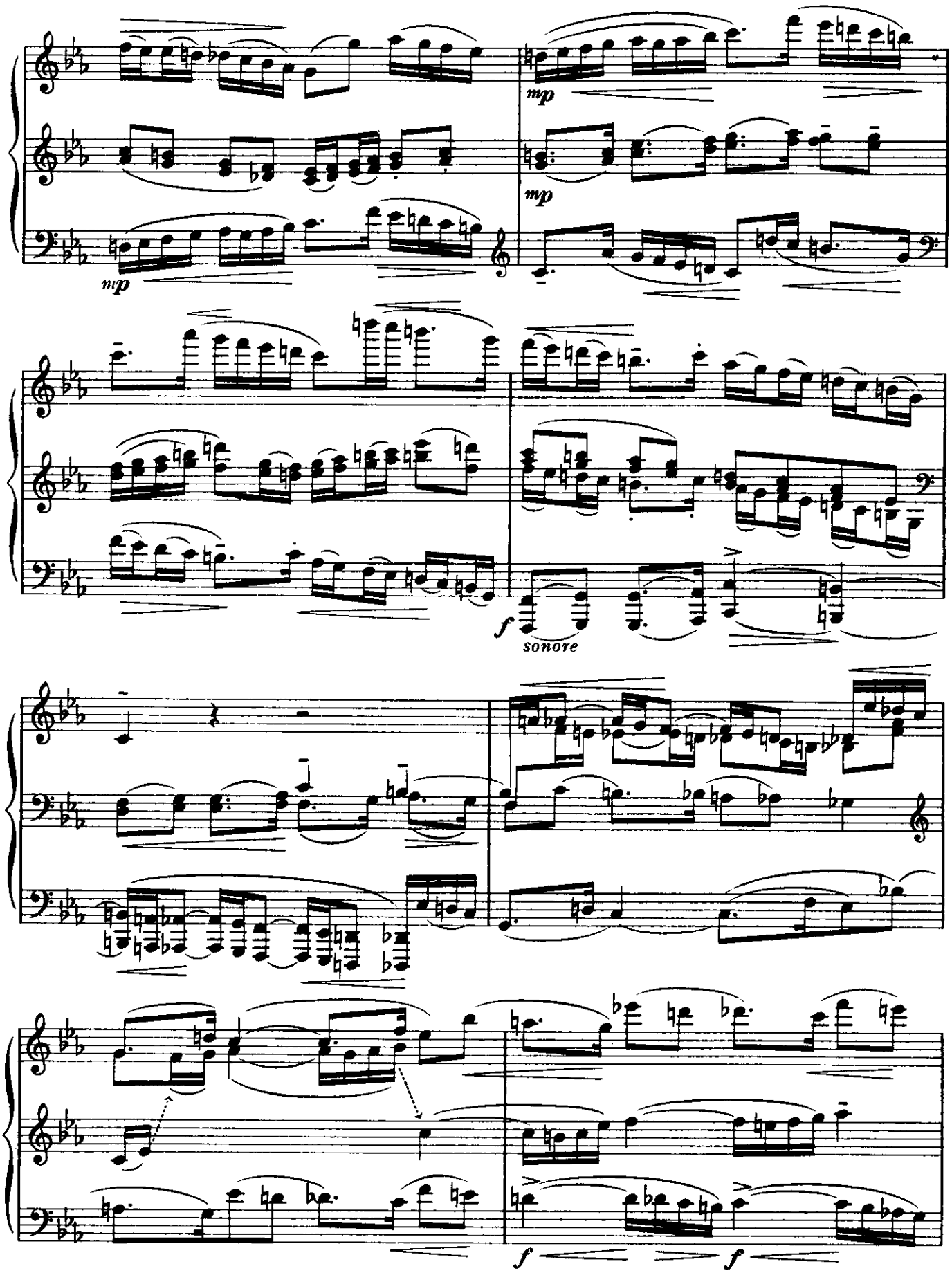

stacc.
stacc.
stacc.

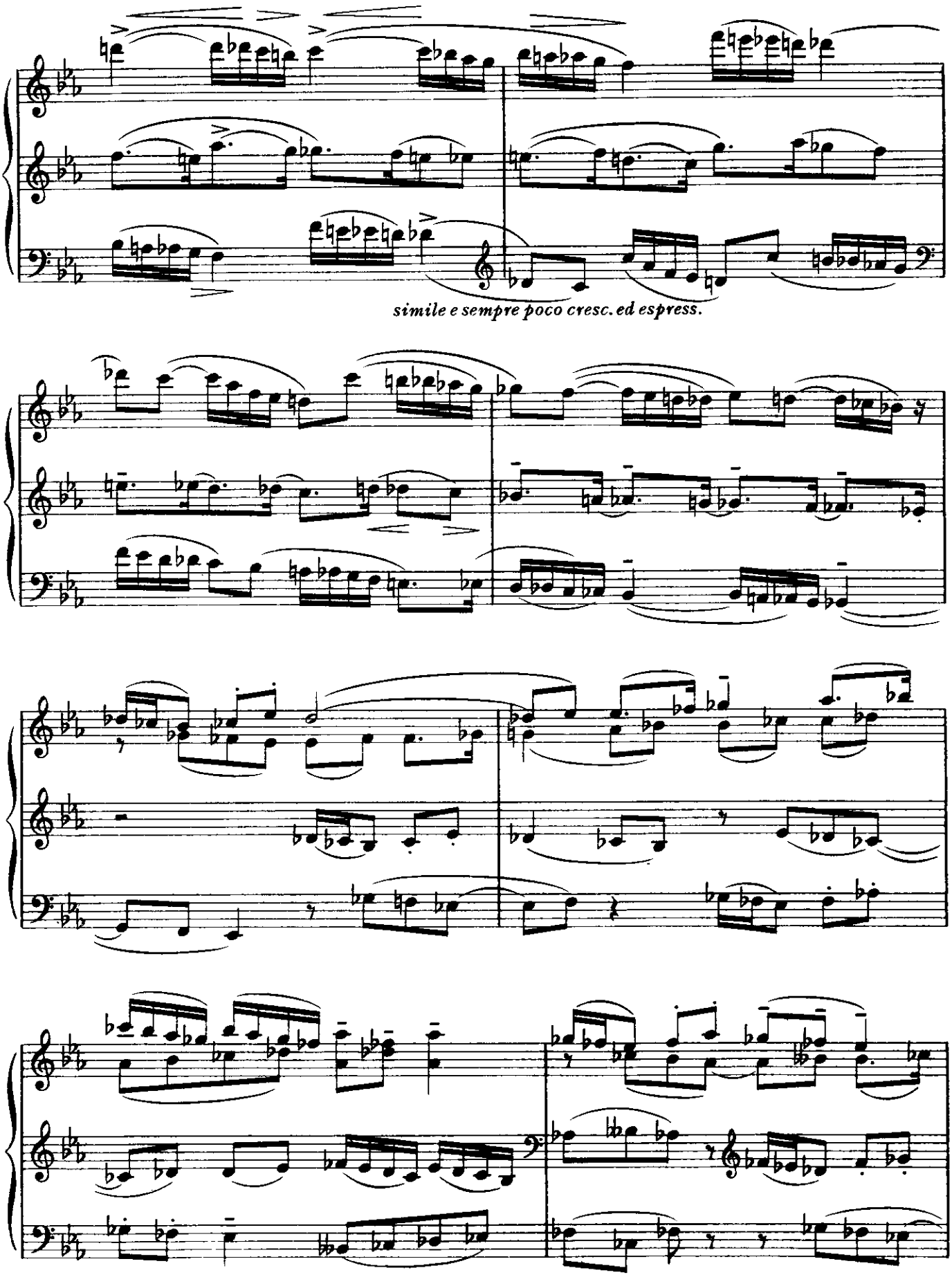


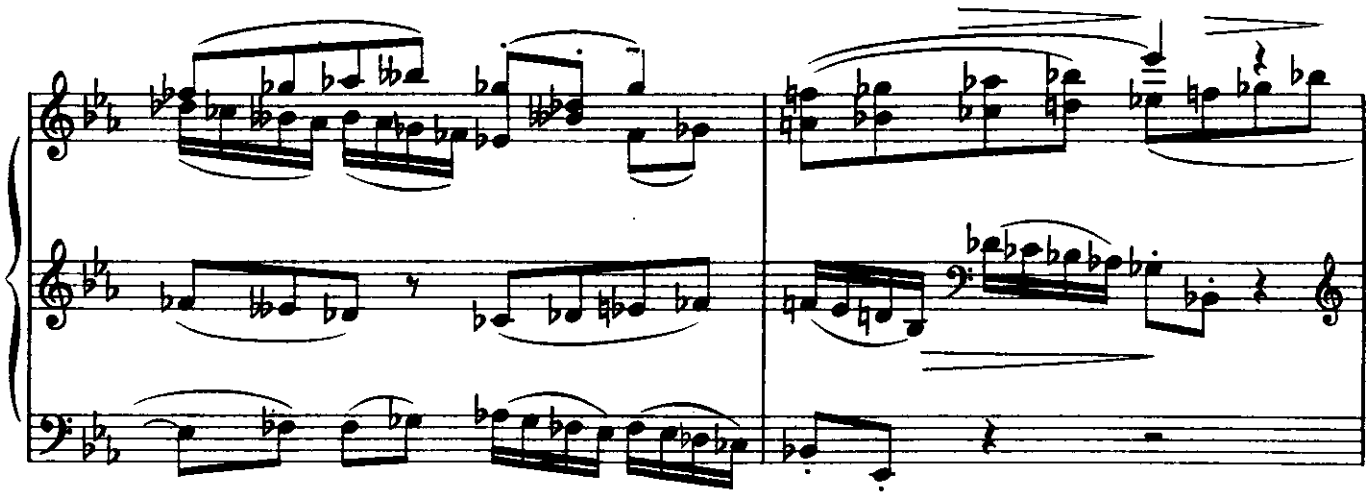


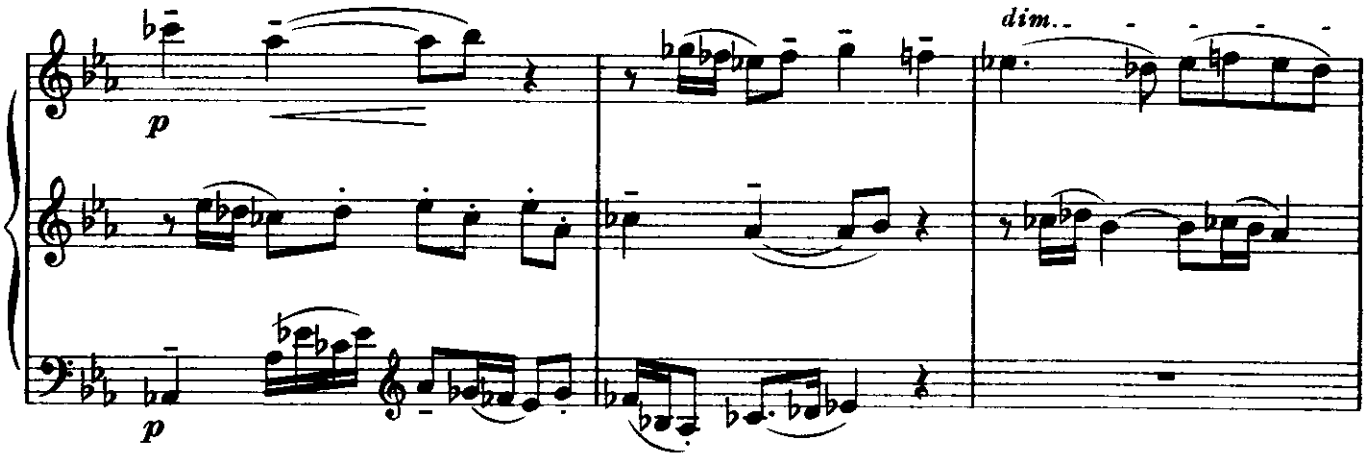

ritard.

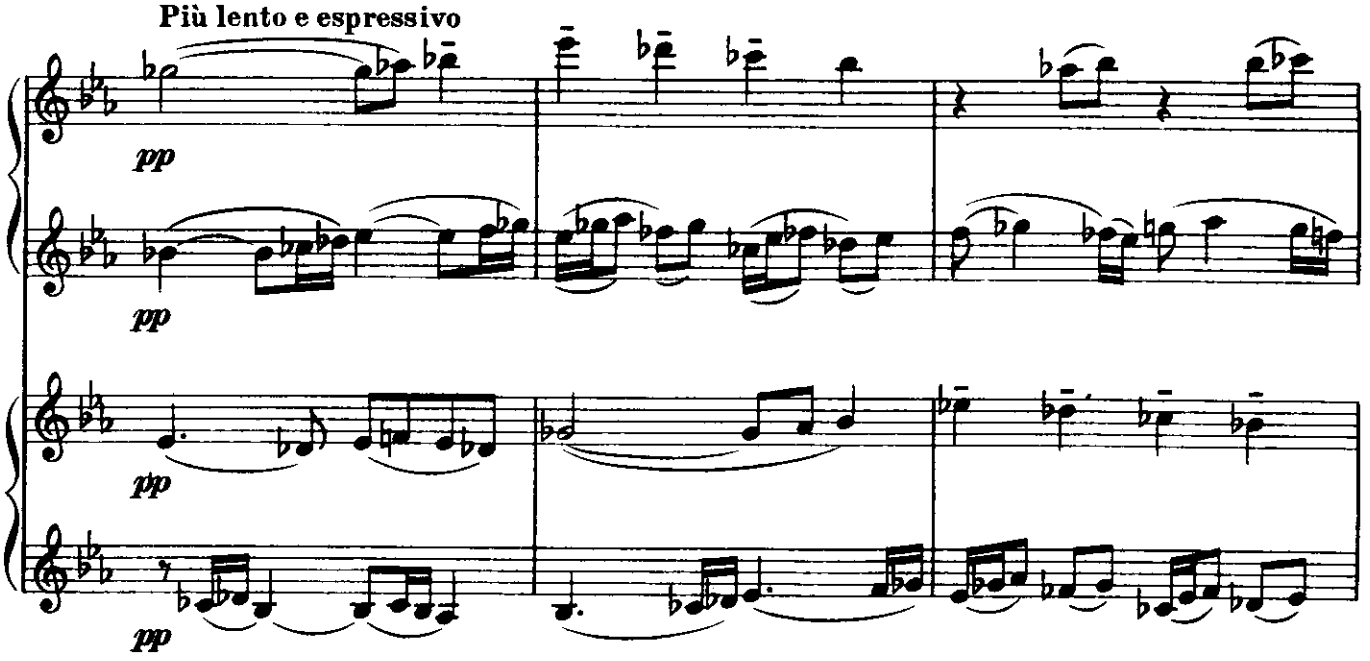

Andante
pp
pp

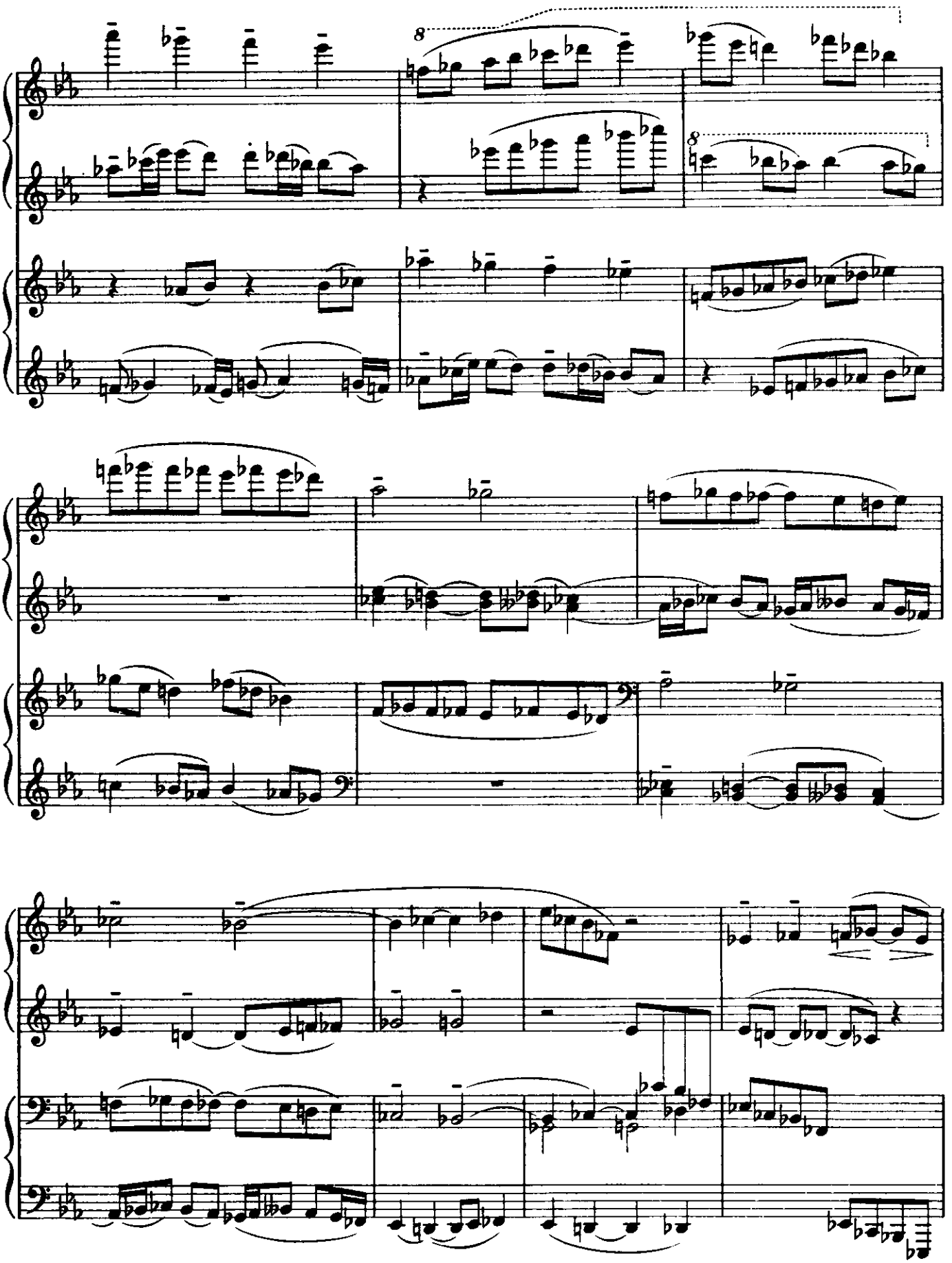

mp
mp
mp
f
sonore
f
f

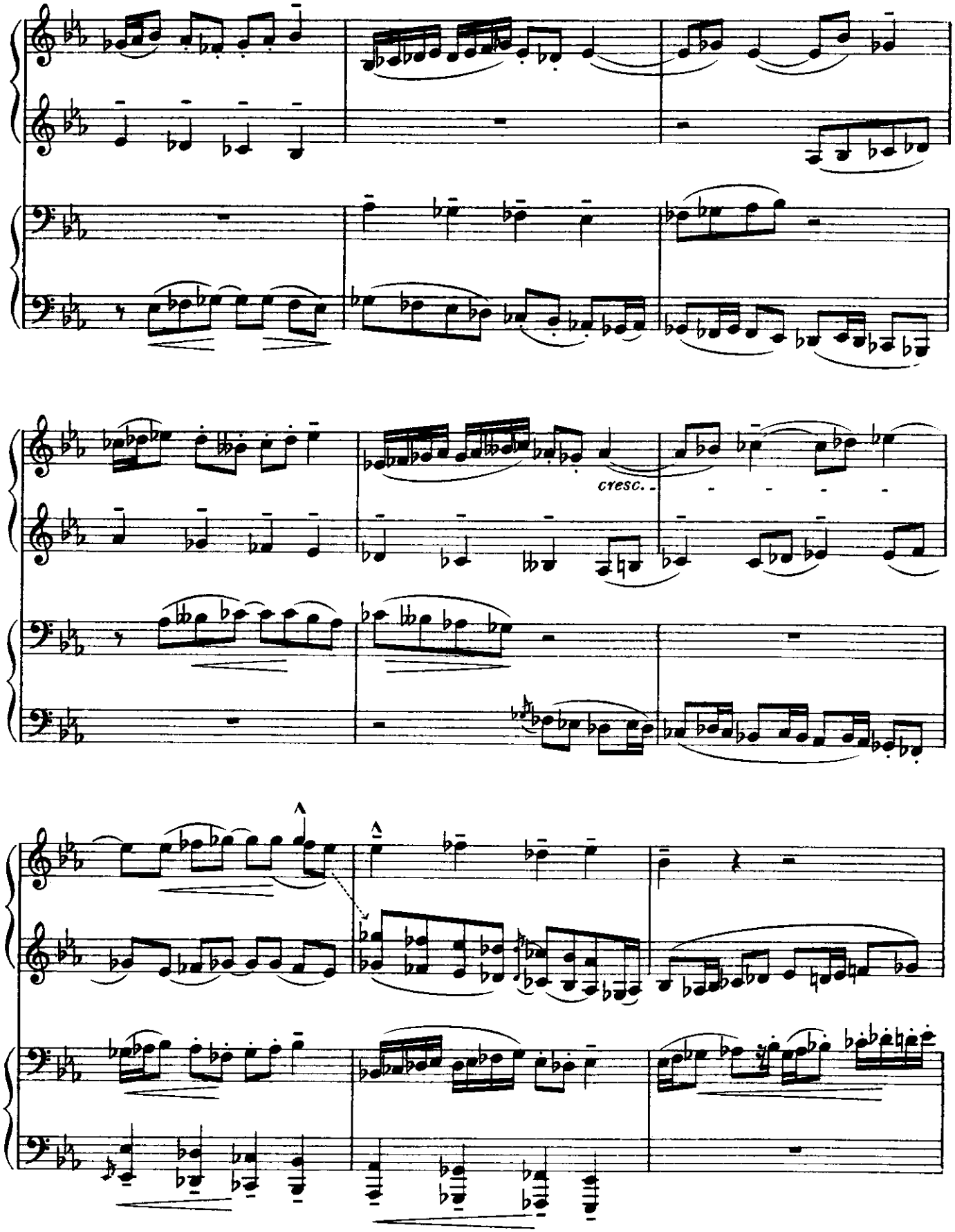

simile e sempre poco cresc. ed espress.

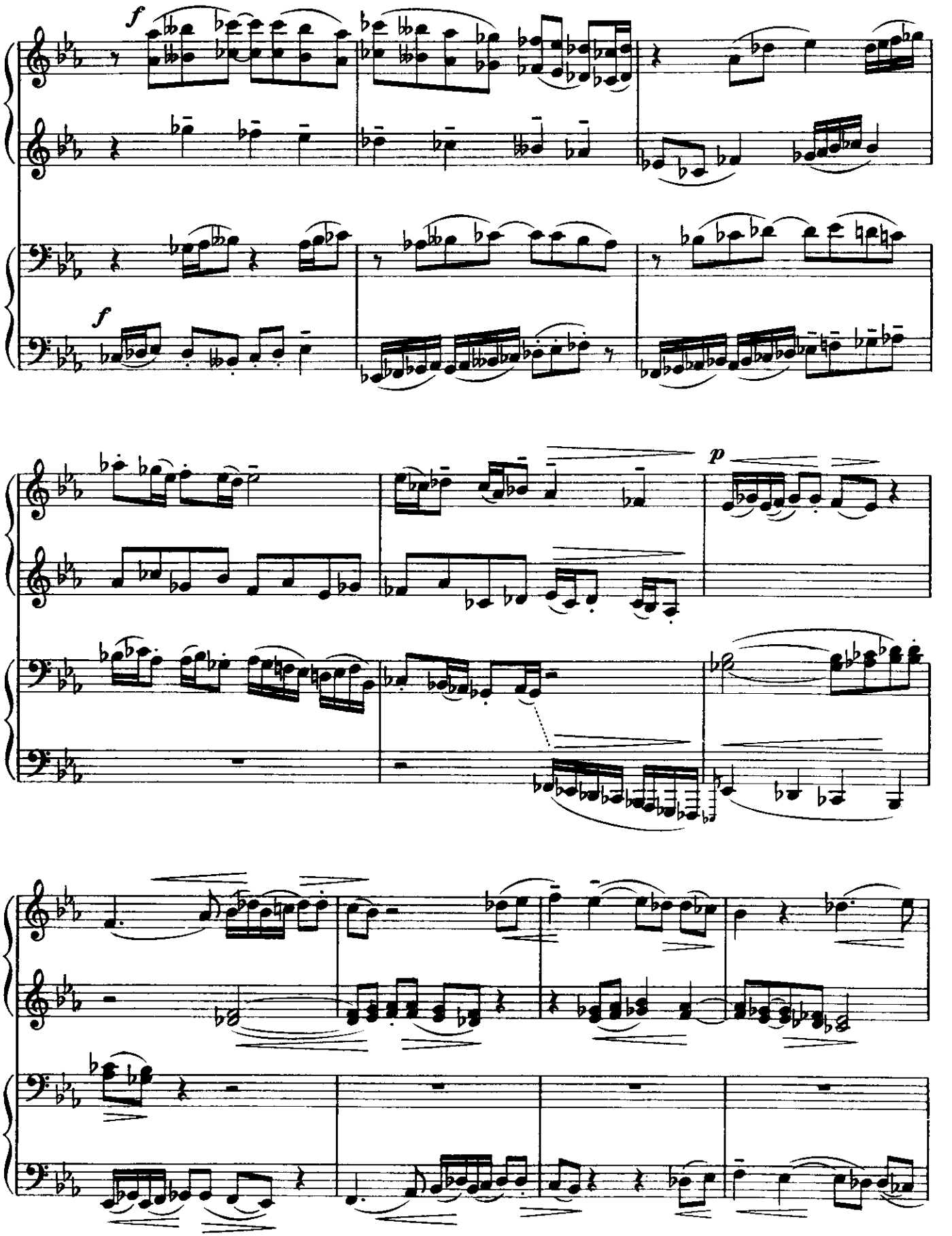


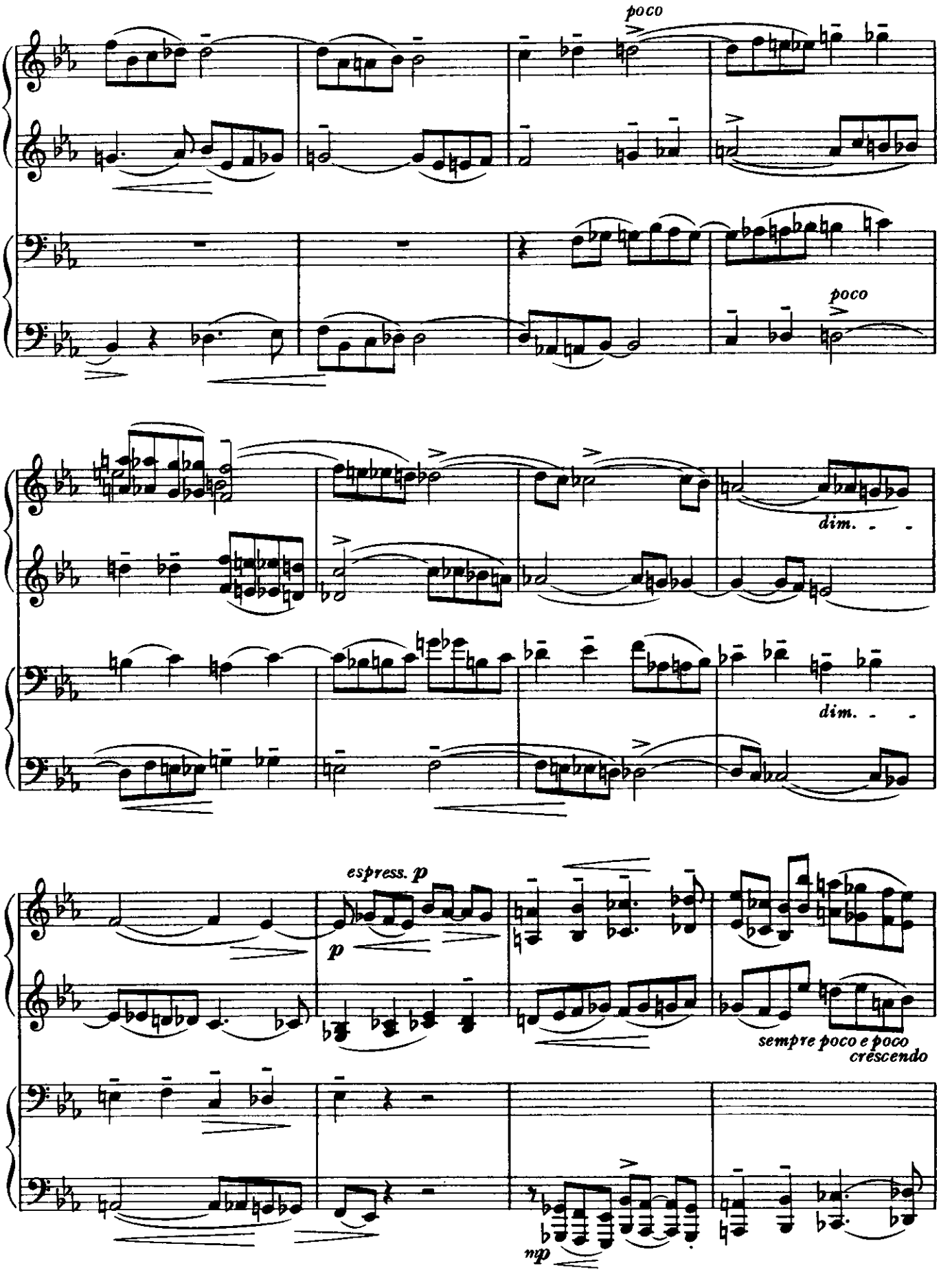

p
p
dim.

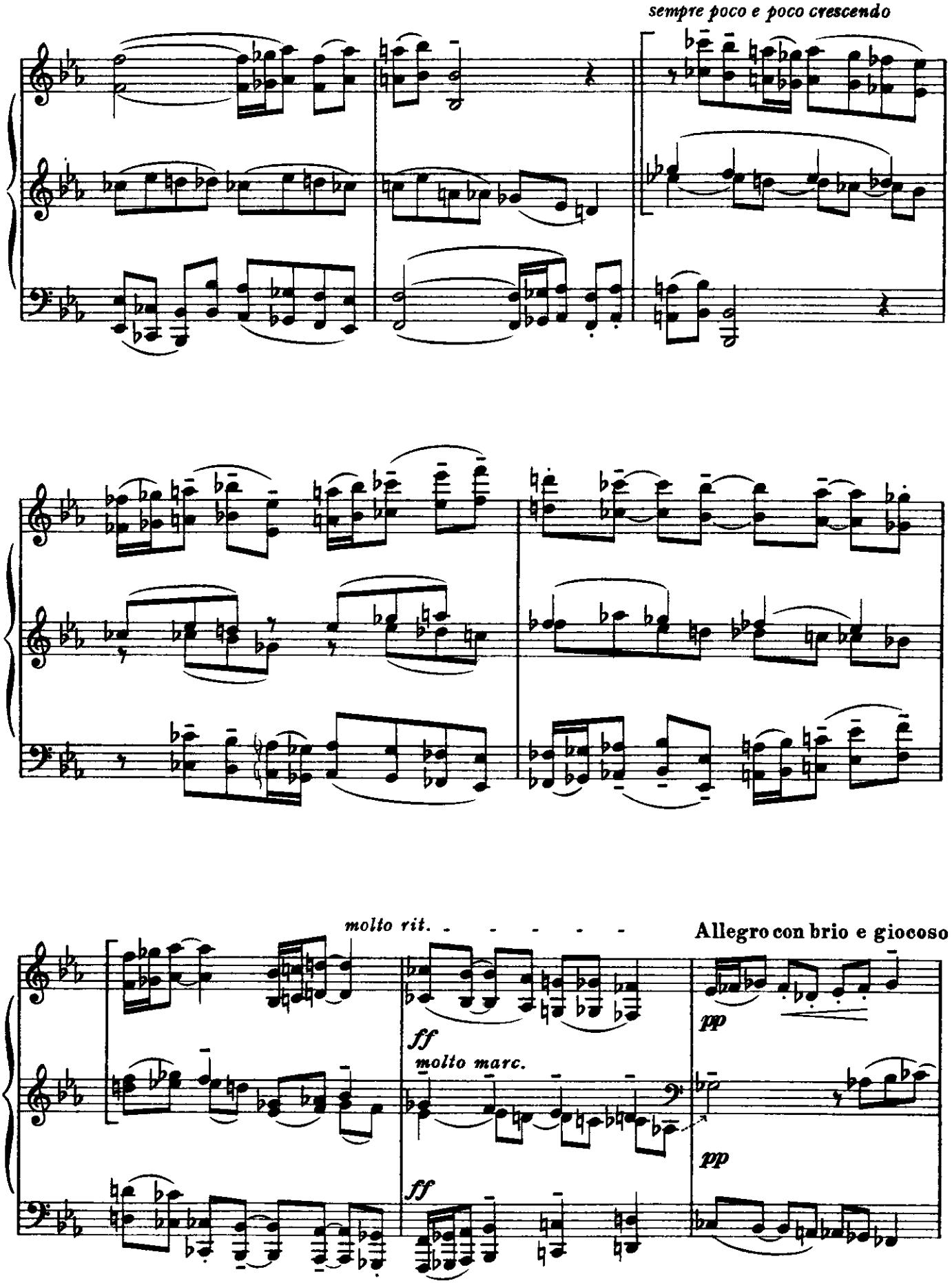

Più lento e espressivo
pp
pp
pp
pp

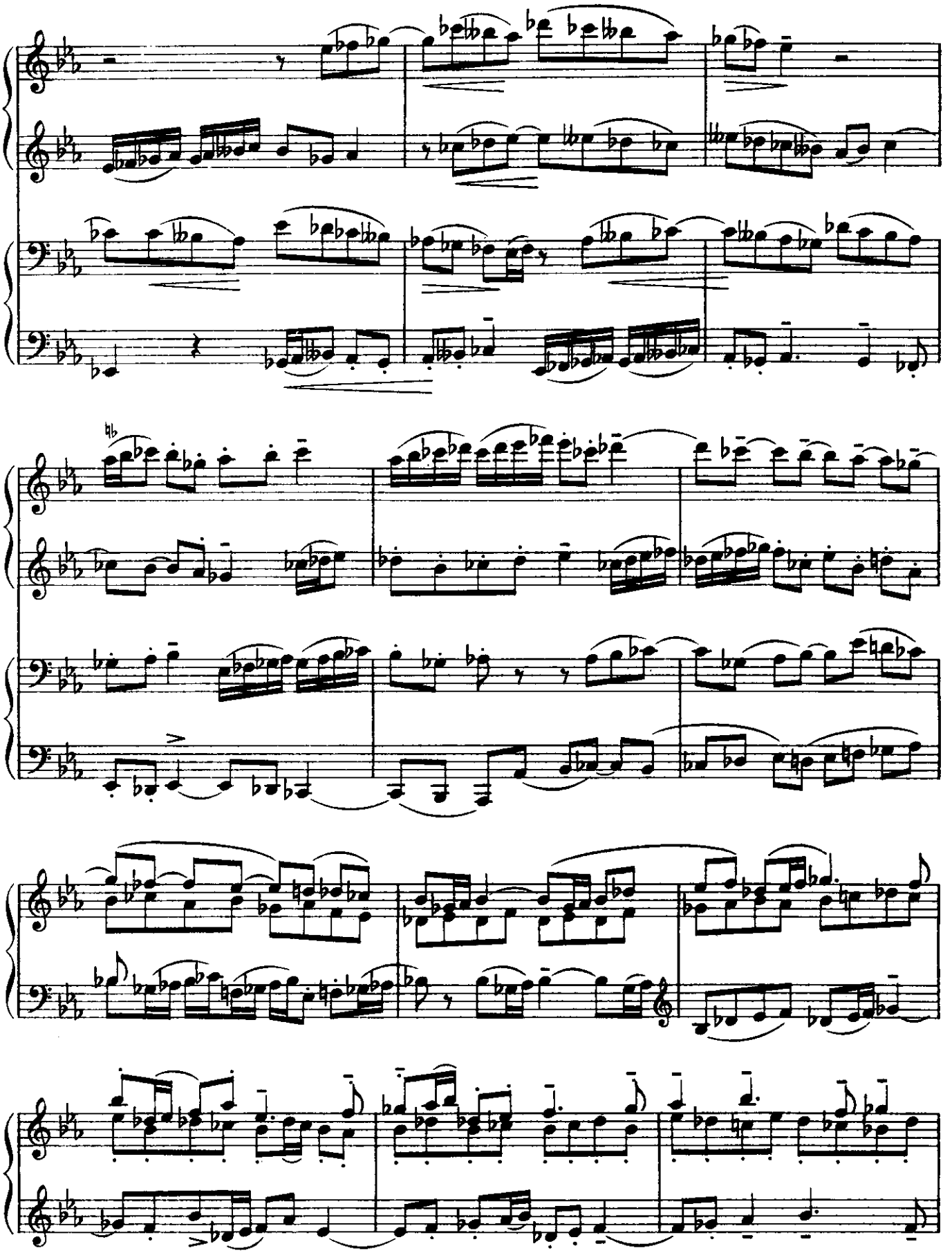


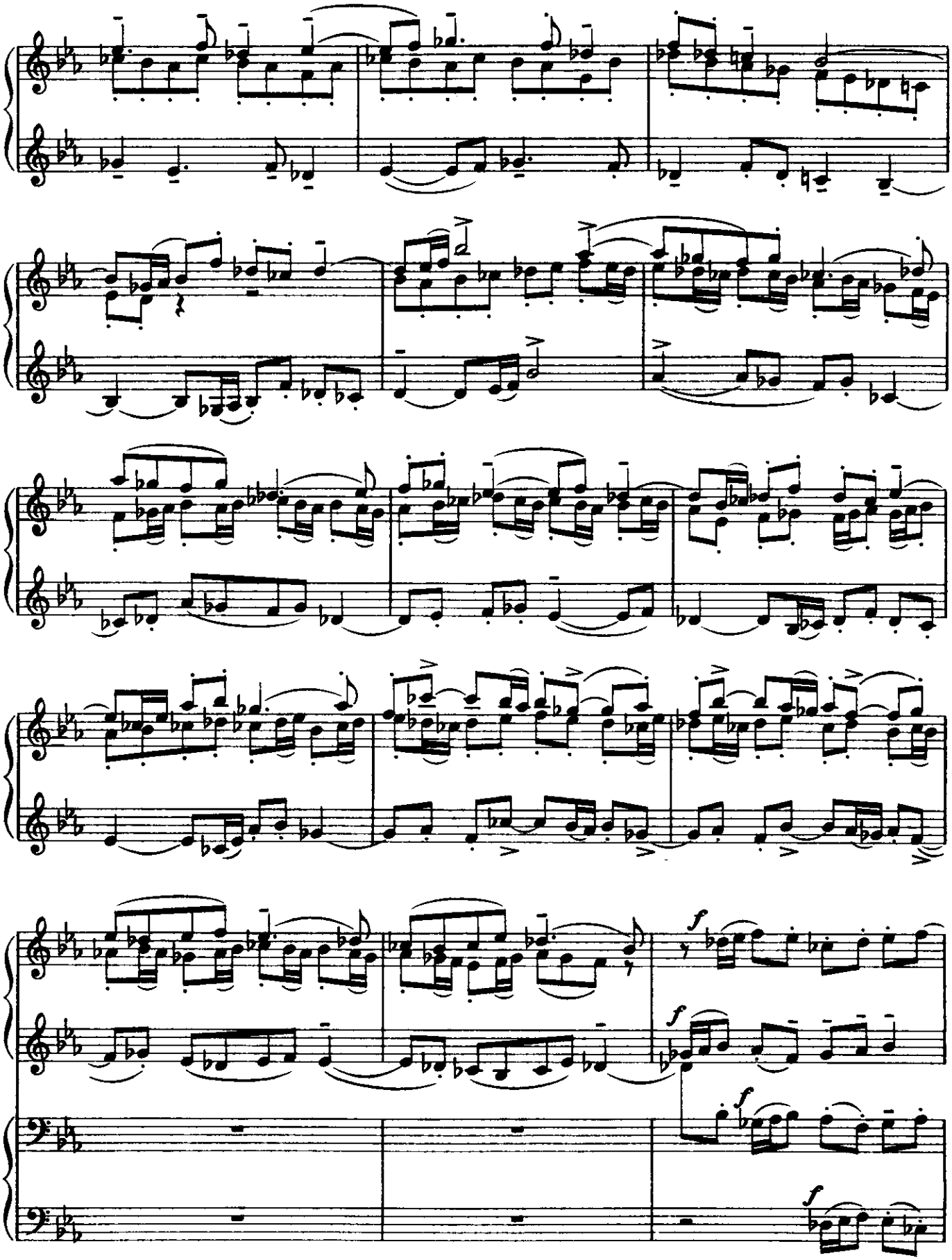

cresc.

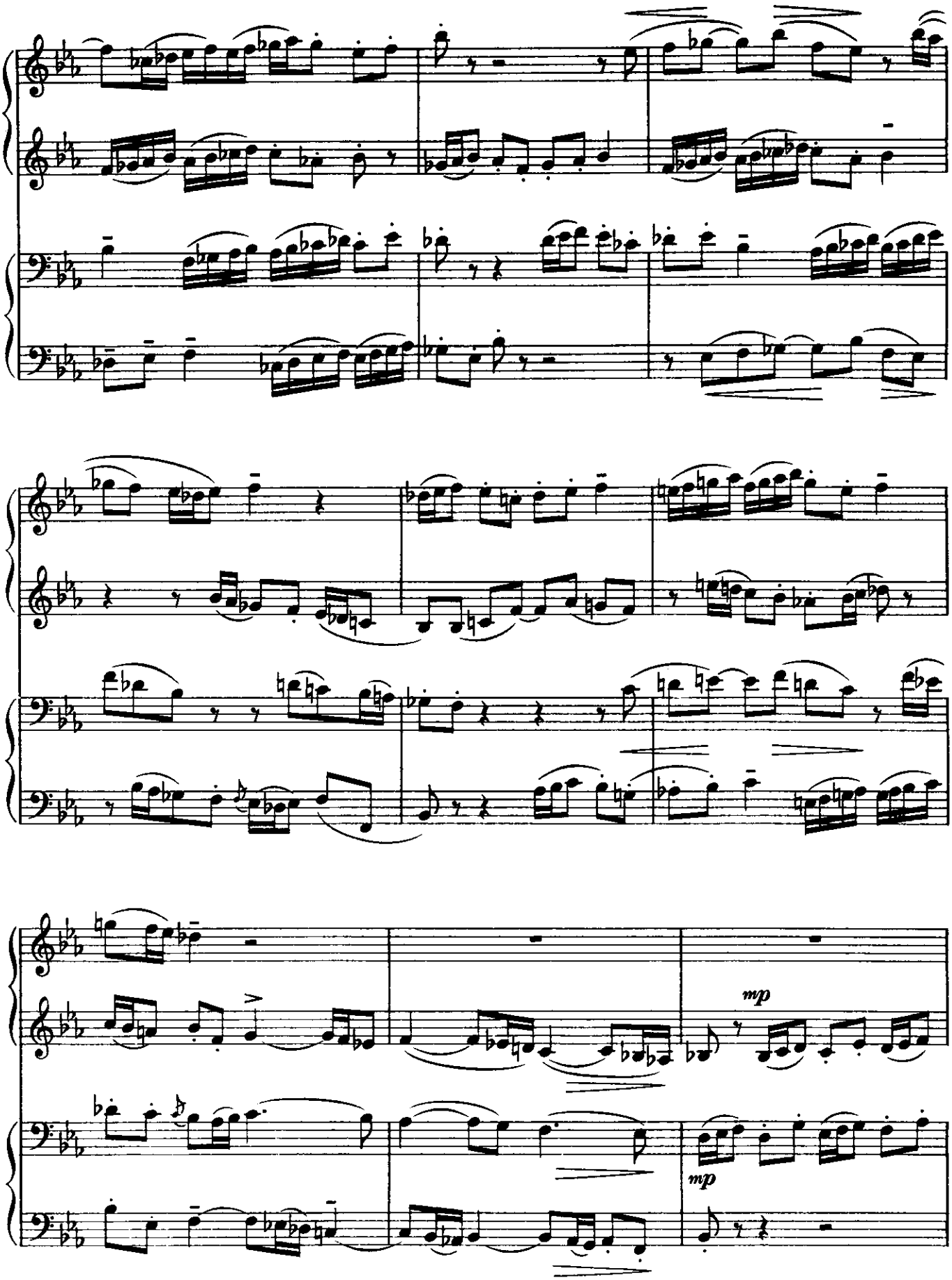

f
f
p

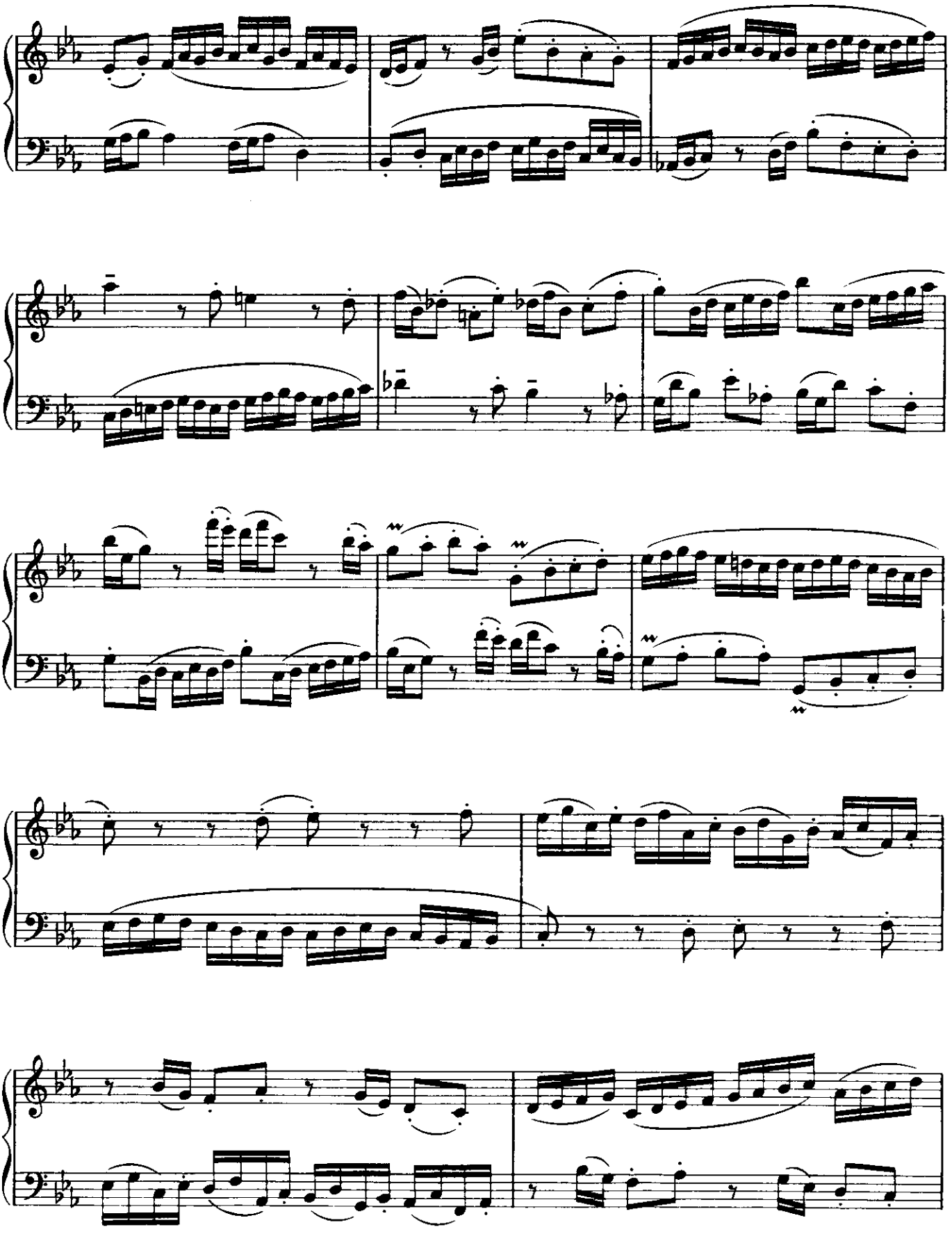

poco
poco
dim.
dim.
espress. p
p
sempre poco e poco
crescendo
mp

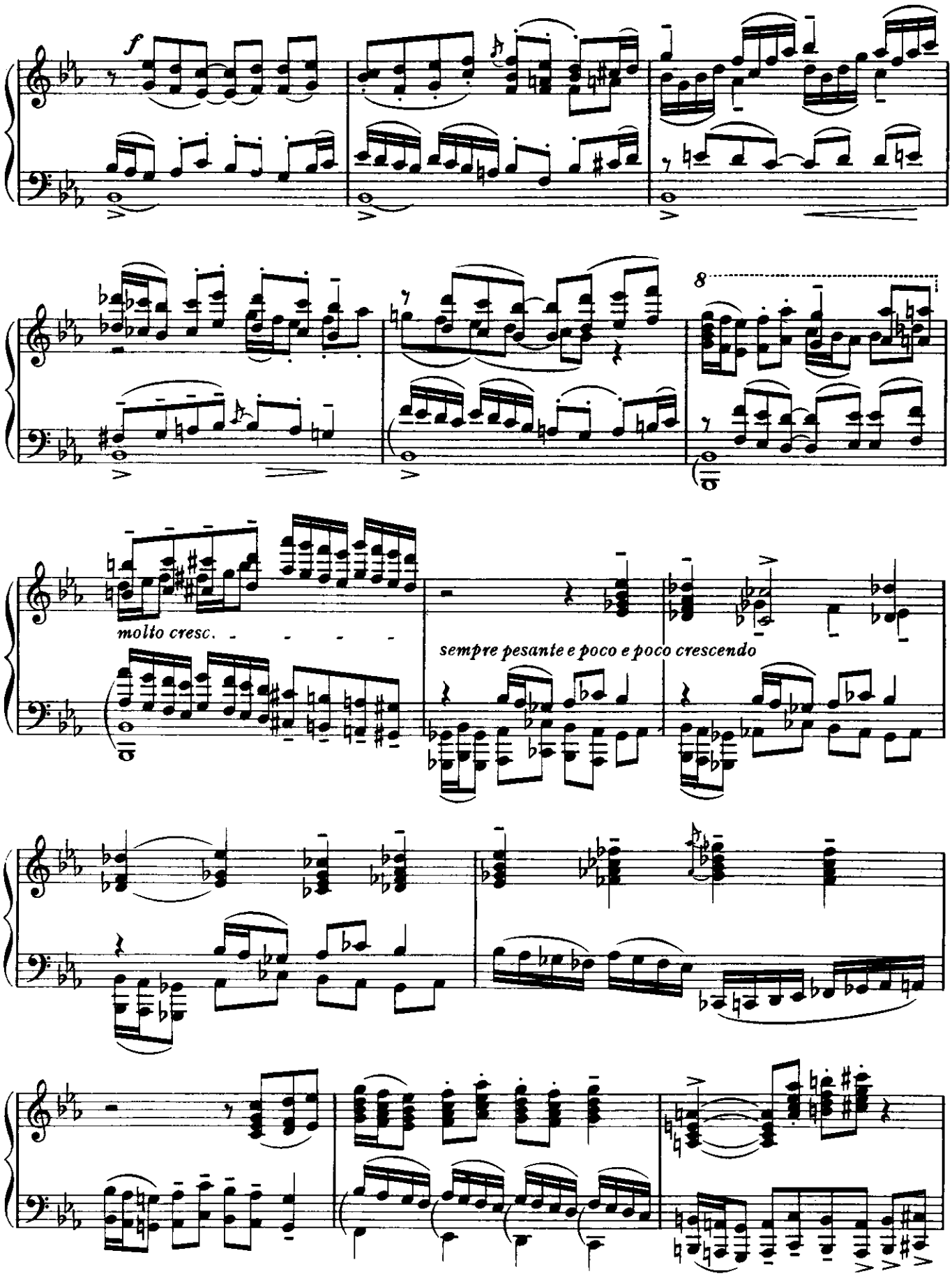

sempre poco e poco crescendo
molto rit.
Allegro con brio e giocoso
ff
molto marc.
pp
pp
ff

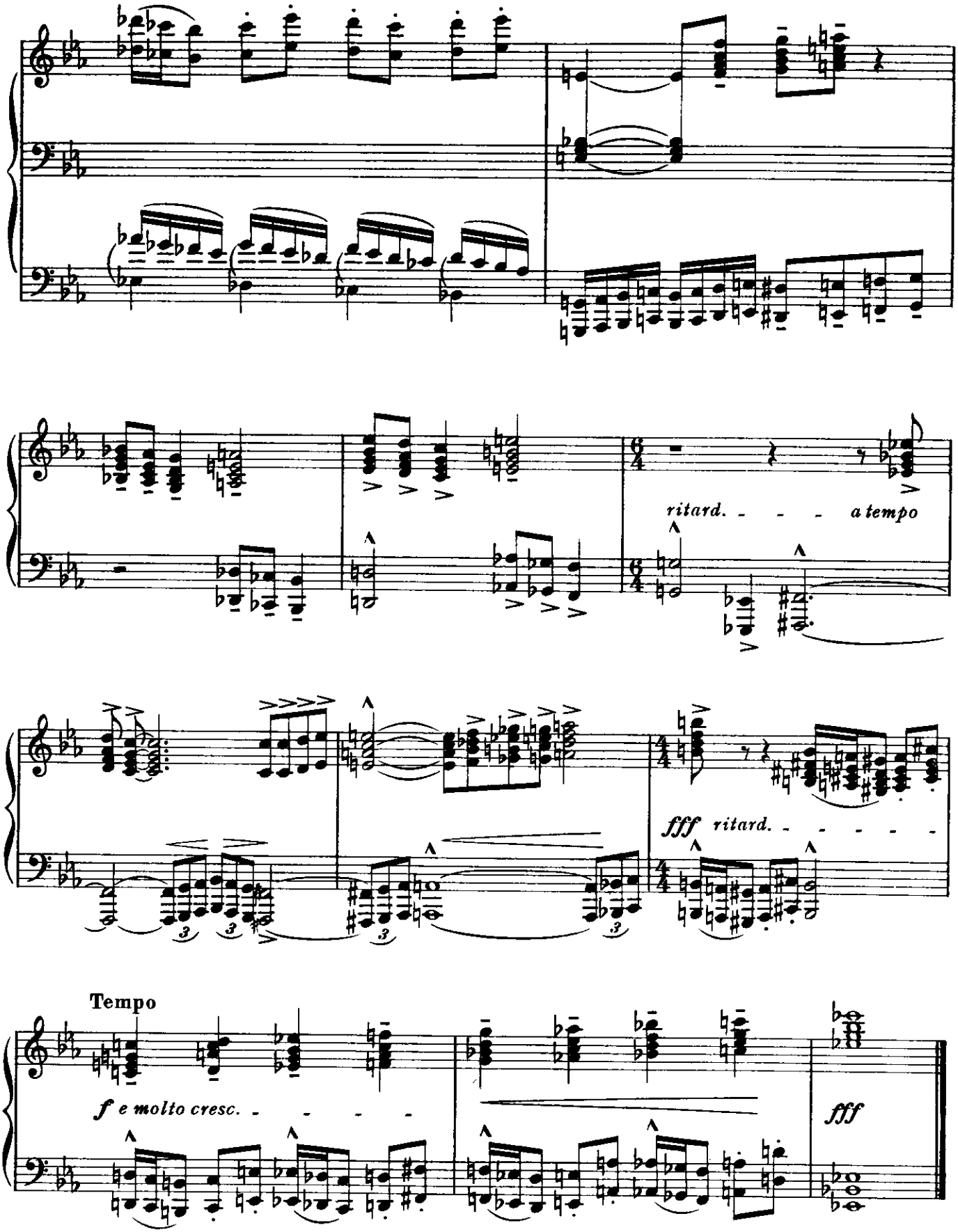



f
f
f
f


mp
mp




f
8
molto cresc.
sempre pesante e poco e poco crescendo


ritard. - - - a tempo
fff ritard. - - - - -
Tempo
f e molto cresc. - - - -
fff

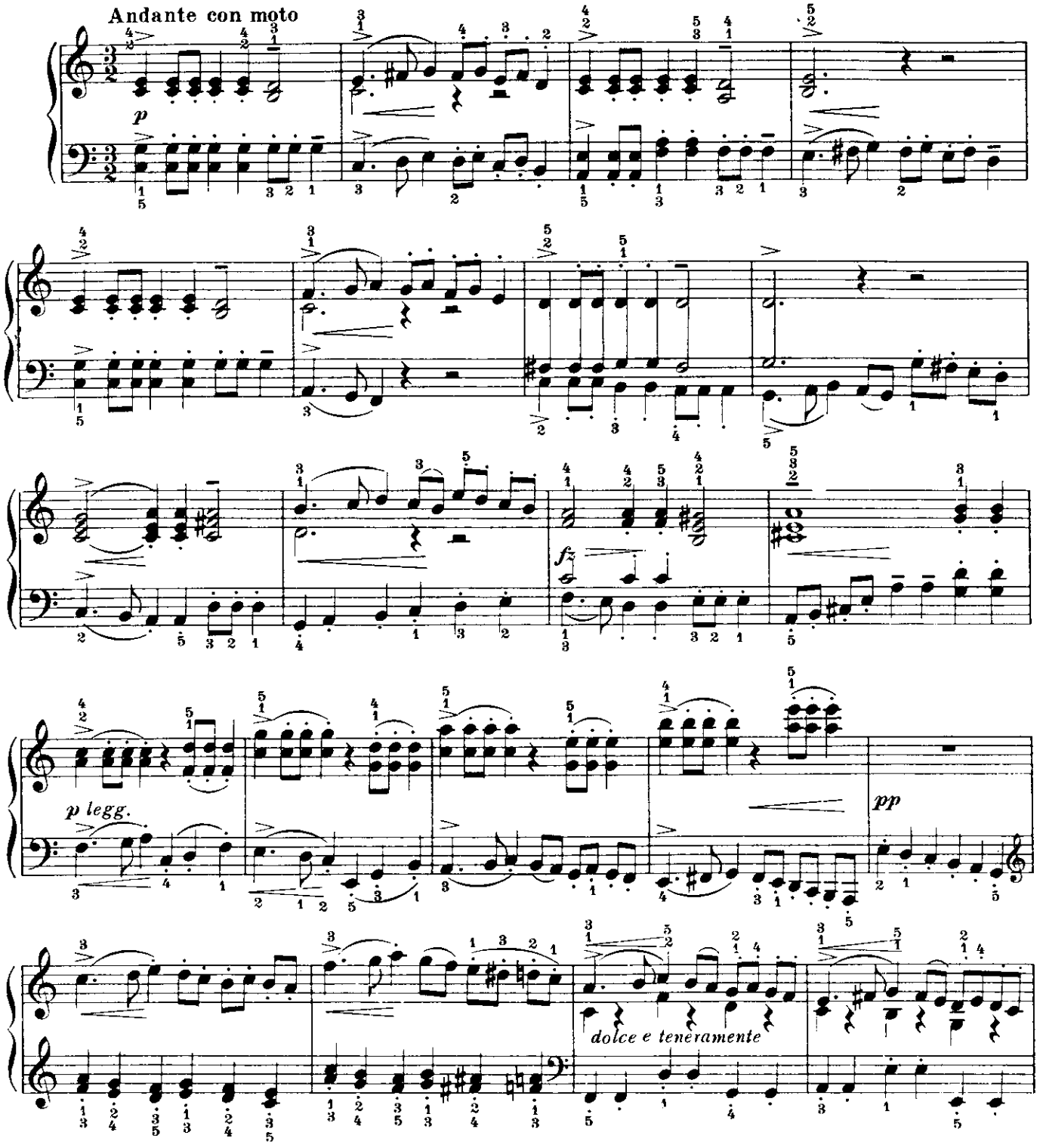
To my daughter Jean

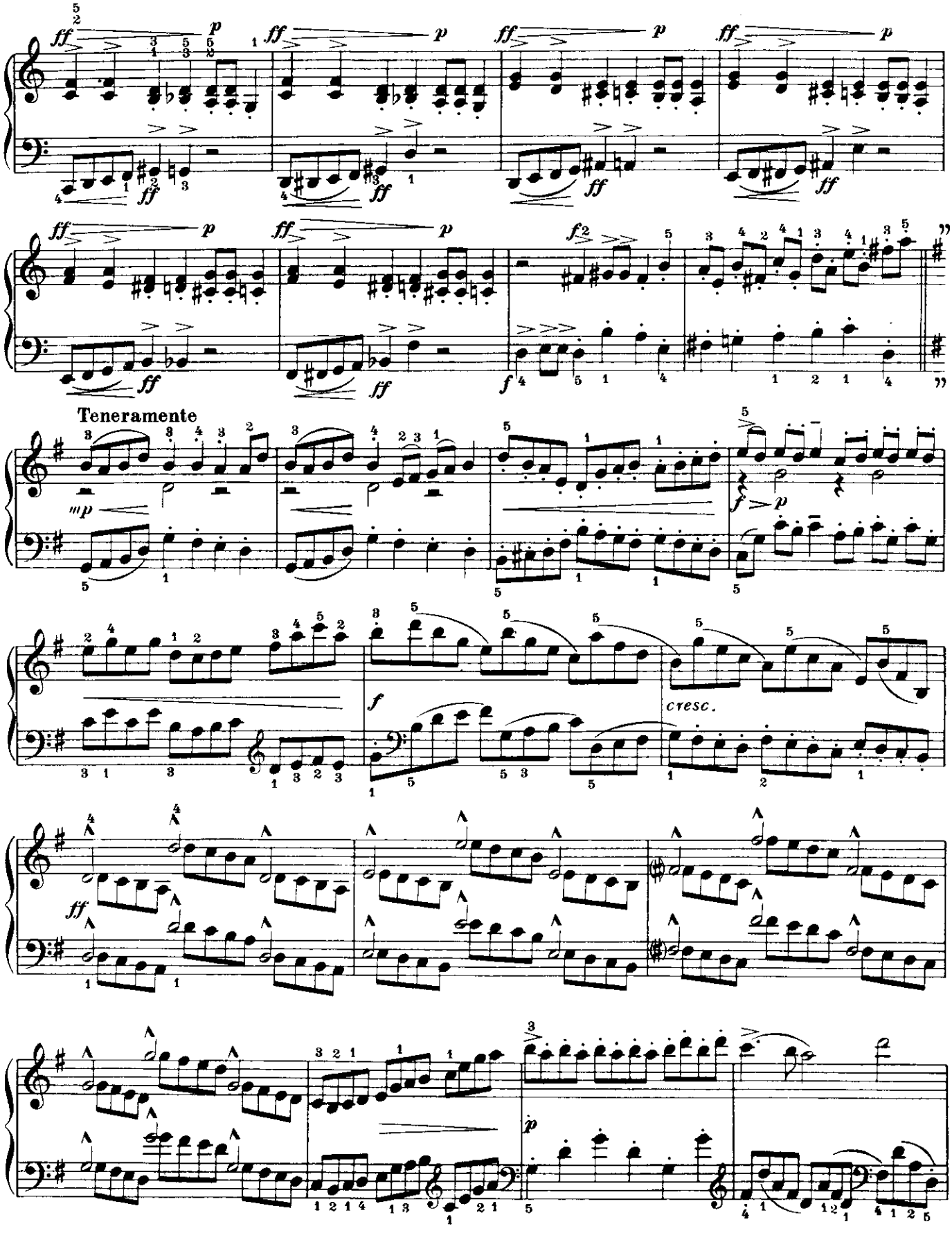
Prelude

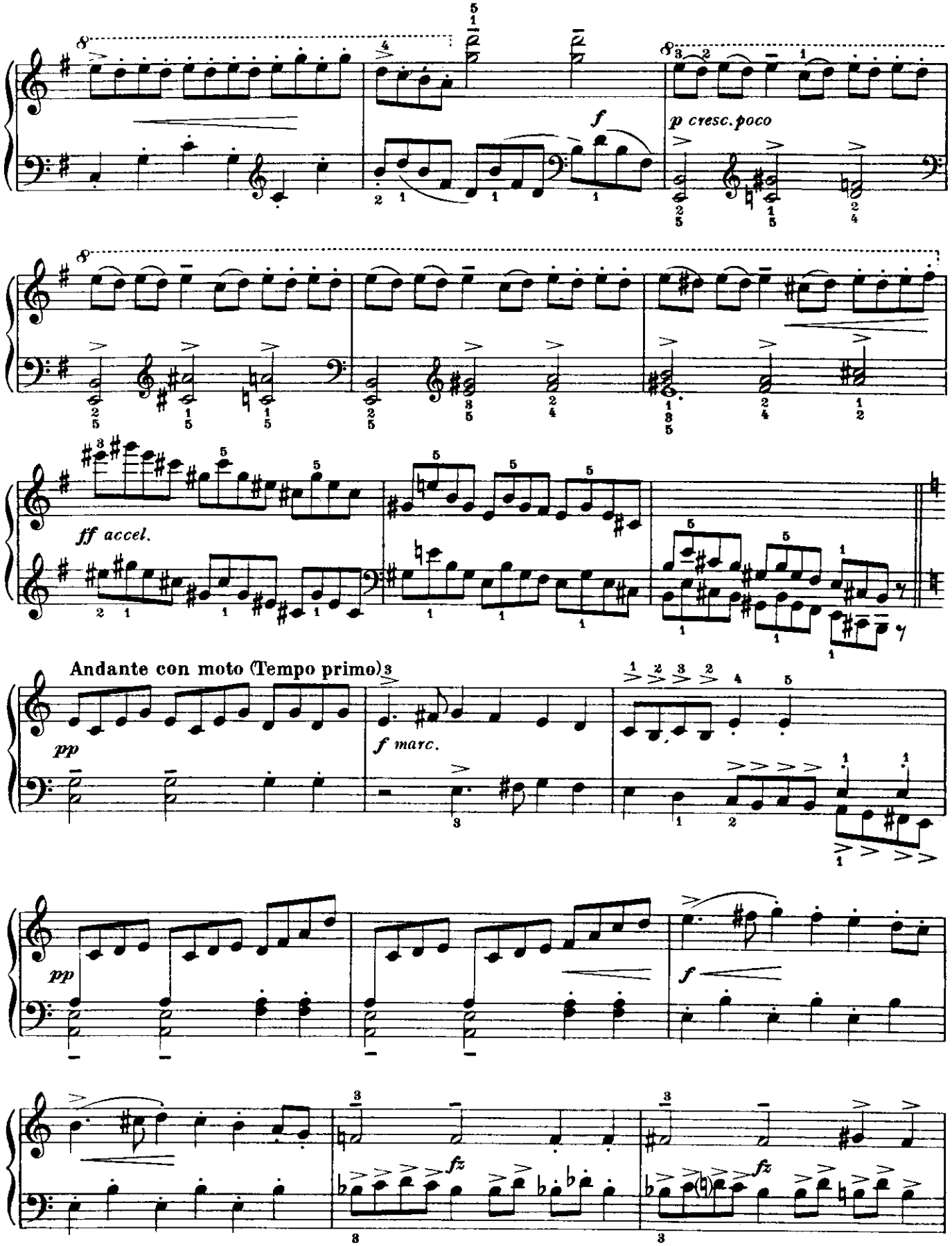
John Dowland's Fancy

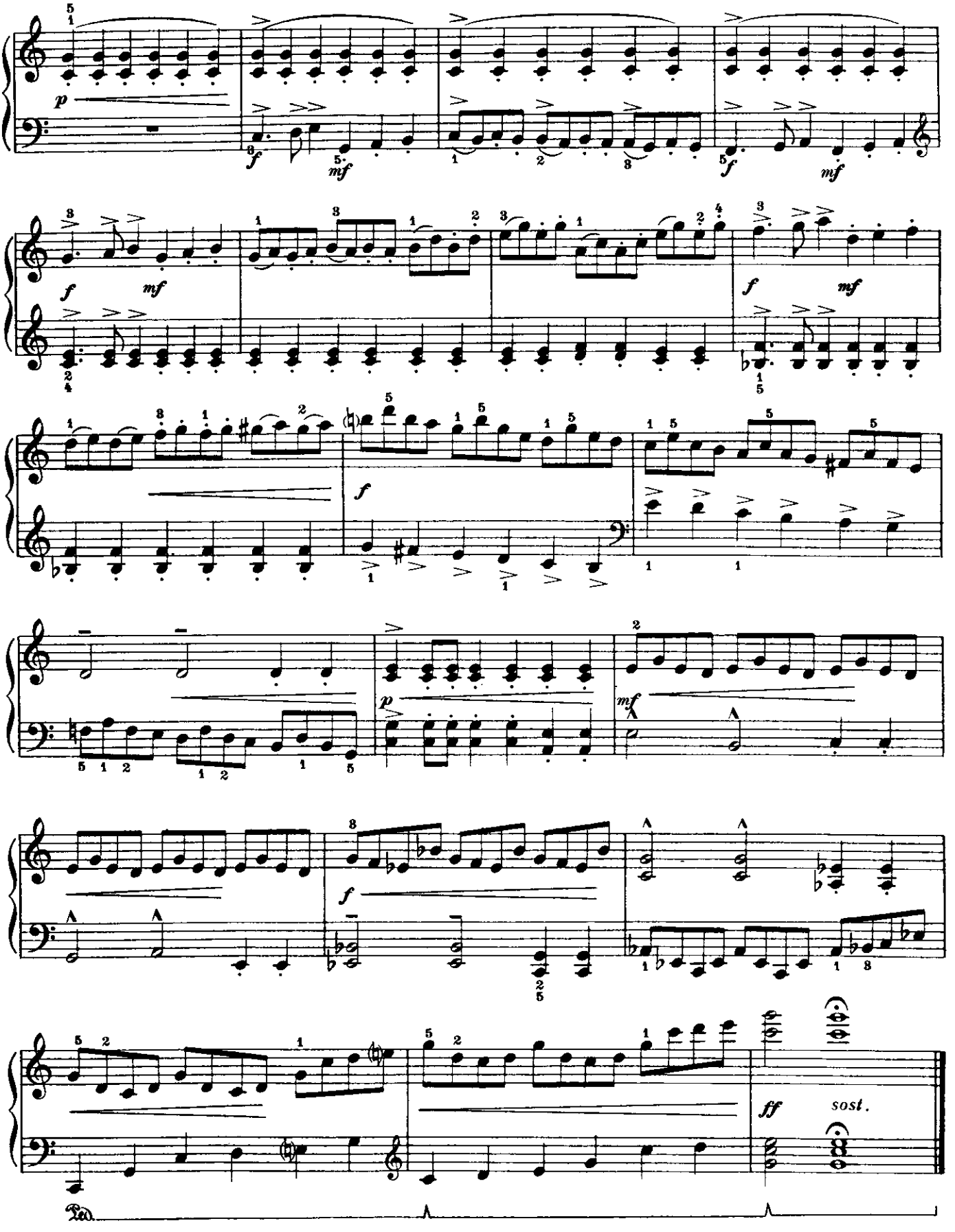
Continental Fingering

HAVERGAL BRIAN




Teneramente
cresc.


f
p cresc. poco
ff accel.
Andante con moto (Tempo primo)
pp
f marc.
pp
f
fz
fz


p
f
mf
f
mf
f
mf
f
mf
p
mf
f
ff
sost.
Ped.

HISTORICAL APPENDIX

Malcolm MacDonald

The *Three Illuminations* were composed in the first week of December 1916 – in a letter of 7 December, Brian reported to his friend Granville Bantock that all three were sketched and the first two already in fair copy. A letter of 28 December seems to indicate that Brian went on to make an orchestral version over the Christmas period, but nothing more is known of this arrangement. In January 1917 the piano version was acquired by J. & W. Chester, who published it later in that year.

In January 1919 Brian composed three settings of poems by William Blake, two of which he subsequently sold to Augener Ltd. At Augener's suggestion, he arranged the piano parts of these songs as self-sufficient instrumental pieces, and added two further movements to create a set of *Four Miniatures*. This occurred in 1919 or 1920; Augener published the work in 1921, and in 1922 the fourth *Miniature* was reprinted in a smaller format as a musical supplement to the November issue of *The Monthly Musical Record*. The original songs were not published until 1932.

John Dowland's Fancy was composed early in 1934 at the suggestion of Sir Granville Bantock, as a teaching piece for use at Trinity College of Music, where Bantock was then Principal. It was published the same year by Joseph Williams for the Associated Board, and its educative function is reflected in the fact that it was issued in two versions – musically identical, but one employing English and the other Continental fingering. It is the latter which is reproduced in this volume. It is not known if the fingerings are Brian's own.

Performance details for these works are hard to come by, but it would seem that *John Dowland's Fancy* and the *Four Miniatures* were given their public premieres together at the Wigmore Hall, London, on 18 December 1934, as part of a debut recital by a young pianist named Meyer Rosenstein. The earliest known public performance of the *Illuminations* (it was not announced as the premiere) was given at the Aeolian Hall, London, on 12 April 1935, by John Tobin. On that occasion Tobin prefaced the pieces with a reading of Brian's programmes (see p.6) and performed them as pure piano music; but performances have sometimes subsequently been given with a speaker (reading Brian's commentary printed above the music).

The three fugal works were probably written in 1924, although there is no contemporary evidence for this. The date at the end of the D major Fugue (see p.49) is not found on the manuscript; it must have been added at proof-stage, and Brian's memory for dates has been observed to be fallible in similar circumstances. They remained in obscurity until 1946, when an enquiry from the pianist Robert Keys prompted Brian to look at them again and offer them to him for performance. Keys premiered the two Preludes and Fugues on 9 May 1946 at a concert of Leamington Music Club devoted to the music of Havergal Brian and William Baines. Partly as a result of his interest all three works were published by Augener in 1948. Keys does not seem ever to have performed the Double Fugue; and the earliest performance of this piece known to me was its first broadcast, by John Lill, for BBC Radio 3, as part of a 'Composer's Portrait' programme broadcast on 22 February 1967. The same programme included the first broadcast of *John Dowland's Fancy*, and later that year the D minor/major Prelude and Fugue and the *Four Miniatures* both received first broadcasts, by John Lill and Ronald Stevenson respectively.

Brian's fair-copy manuscripts of the four works published by Augener are preserved in the British Library; they are catalogued together as Add.54354. The whereabouts of the manuscripts of the other two pieces are unknown. For completeness' sake we should also mention one missing piano composition, whose substance is preserved in Brian's *English Suite No. 3*. We know this as an orchestral work, but Brian's correspondence of the years 1919-21 reveals that the first three movements were originally written as a suite for solo piano. Brian later orchestrated them, adding a fourth and fifth movement; and he duly arranged these new movements for piano as well, to form an independent piano version of the entire suite. This piano suite is last mentioned in a letter of 24 November 1921, and does not appear to have been heard of since.

The works contained in this volume have been reprinted from their original editions. The opportunity has been taken to make some minor corrections in the first *Illumination* and the D minor Prelude, and several more important ones in the *Four Miniatures* (see note on p.18). All these works have been recorded by Peter Hill on Cameo Classics GOCLP 9016(D).