FOUR FABLES

for flute, clarinet and piano

(2003)

Karim Al-Zand

From *Krilof: The Russian Fabulist & his Fables*. trans., W. R. S. Ralston, 1869

PROGRAM NOTE

These four short pieces draw their inspiration and their characterization from animal apologues by authors from near and far. *The Grasshopper and the Ant* is a classic fable traditionally ascribed to the Greek slave Aesop (ca. 620-560 BC). In keeping with the antics of the fable's protagonists, the piece is an acrobatic dance.

The Owl and the Echo, by eighteenth-century French fabulist Jean-Baptist Perrin, explains the nocturnal habits of the owl and its solitary call. Perrin's many fables were known in the US primarily through a French-language primer published in 1846. The second movement is a melancholy and atmospheric canon.

The Russian writer Ivan Kyrlov (1769-1844) was celebrated for the whimsical political satire in his fables, the most frequent target of which was the Russian imperial family. *The Lion, the Fox and the Fish* is said to parody a local governor's response to Alexander I, after the Emperor had expressed concern over the rioting populace. This movement is a dance, a sort of sizzling scherzo.

The fame of American author Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914) rested in large part on his withering wit, as manifest in his acerbic *Devil's Dictionary*. (He defines a fiddle as "an instrument to tickle human ears by friction of a horse's tail on the entrails of a cat.") *The Man and the Fish-Horn* is similarly sardonic, as it pokes fun at the fable genre and, in particular, at Aesop's many stories of fisherman. The last movement is a lively fanfare.

Dan Welcher. September 2003

Premiere performance: *Four Fables* was written for and premiered by the Wreckhouse Winds (Michelle Cheramy, flute; Sean Rice, cl.arinet; Maurenn Volk, piano.). It was first performed in Stephenville, Newfoundland, Canada on October 27, 2003.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

The appropriate fable may be read before each movement, either by a member (or members) of the ensemble or by a narrator. The pieces may be performed singly or as a group. If all four are performed, the order below should be used. The text is in the public domain and may be reproduced.

DURATION:

1. The Grasshopper and the Ant (Dance)	2' 30"
2. The Owl and the Echo (Canon)	2' 45"
3. The Lion, the Fox and the Fish (Scherzo)	1' 15"
4. The Man and the Fish-Horn (Fanfare)	3' 30"
TOTAL:	10' (plus reading time)

TEXT:

1. The Grasshopper and the Ant

In the winter, the Ants were sustained with food they had stored in the summer. The Grasshopper however, was hungry. He asked an Ant for help, promising to repay the favor when the weather was warmer. The Ant asked what he had done in the summer.
"In the summer I sang and entertained the walkers." replied the Grasshopper.
"You sang in summer?" said the Ant, surprised, "Well, then in winter you can dance!"

Aesop

2. The Owl and the Echo

An owl, puffed up with pride and vanity, sings his doleful song at midnight from the hollow of an old oak.
"For what is this silence which reigns in the forest, if not to favor my melody? Surely the groves are charmed by my voice; and when I sing, all nature listens."

An Echo immediately repeats: “All nature listens.”
“The Nightingale,” continued the Owl “has taken my right; his warbling is musical, it is true; but mine is much more sweet.”
The Echo replies again: “Is much more sweet.”
Encouraged by the phantom voice, the Owl, at the rising of the sun, mingled his doleful cries with the harmony of the other birds: but disgusted with his noise, they all chased him away. They continue to pursue the Owl wherever he appears, so that he avoids the daylight and only entertains himself under cover of darkness.

Jean Baptiste Perrin (translated by A. Bolmar)

3. The Lion, the Fox and the Fish

The Lion appointed the Fox governor of the water. While ruling on the shore, the Fox angled after fish, intent on eating his constituents. The poor fish were placed in a hot pan over a roaring fire. Seeing their end close at hand, the fish began to fling themselves about frantically in an attempt to escape. The Lion, hearing rumors of the Fox’s abuse of power, came to investigate.
“What is going on here?” he demanded, motioning toward the springing fish.
“These are carp, inhabitants of the waters.” answered the Fox, “We have all come together to congratulate you, our good king, on your arrival.” (All the time the fish were leaping about in the pan.)
“But tell me,” asked the Lion, “why do the carp fling themselves about so?”
“O wise Lion,” replied the Fox, “they are dancing for joy at seeing you!”

Ivan Krylov (translated by W. R. S. Ralston)

4. The Man and the Fish-Horn

A Truthful Man, finding a musical instrument in the road, asked the name of it and was told that it was a Fish-Horn. The next time he went fishing he set his nets and blew the fish-horn all day to charm the fish into them, but at nightfall there was not only no fish in the nets, but none along that part of the coast. Meeting a friend while on his way home he was asked what luck he had.
“Well,” said the Truthful Man, “the weather is not right for fishing, but it’s a red-letter day for music.”

Ambrose Bierce

for Michelle Cheramy and the Wreckhouse Winds

FOUR FABLES

Karim Al-Zand (2003)

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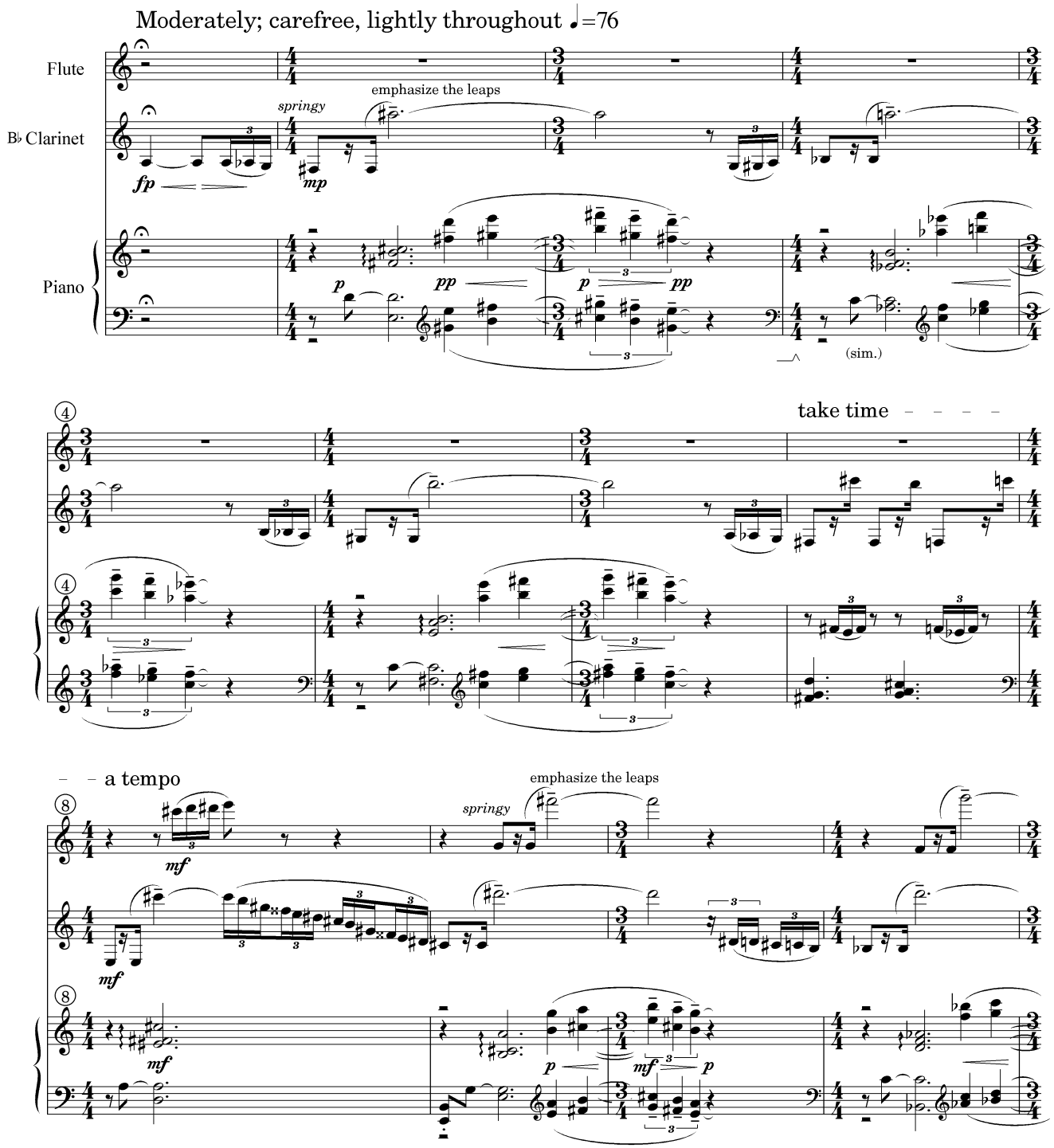
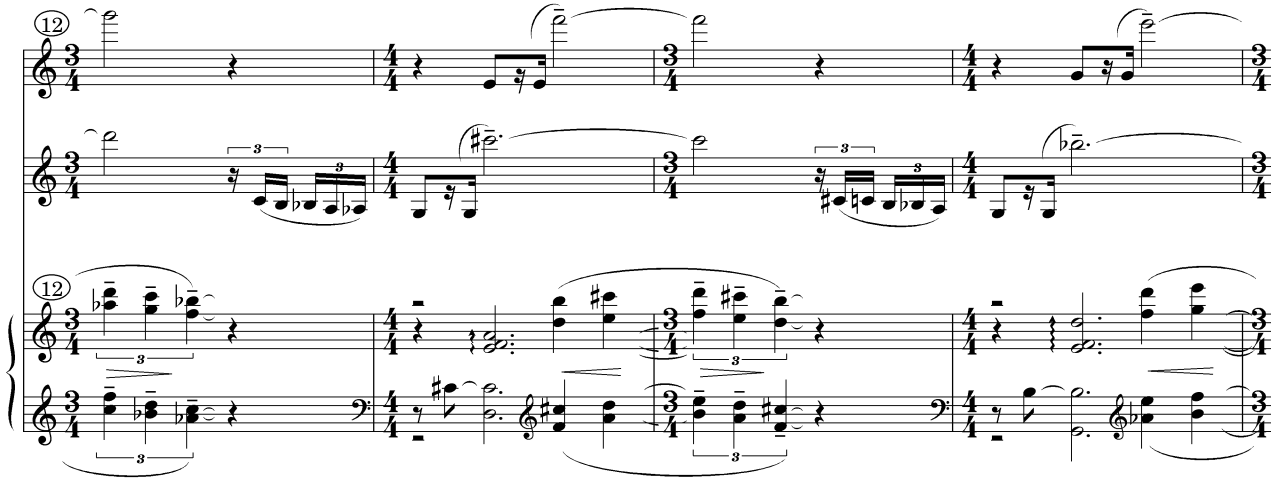
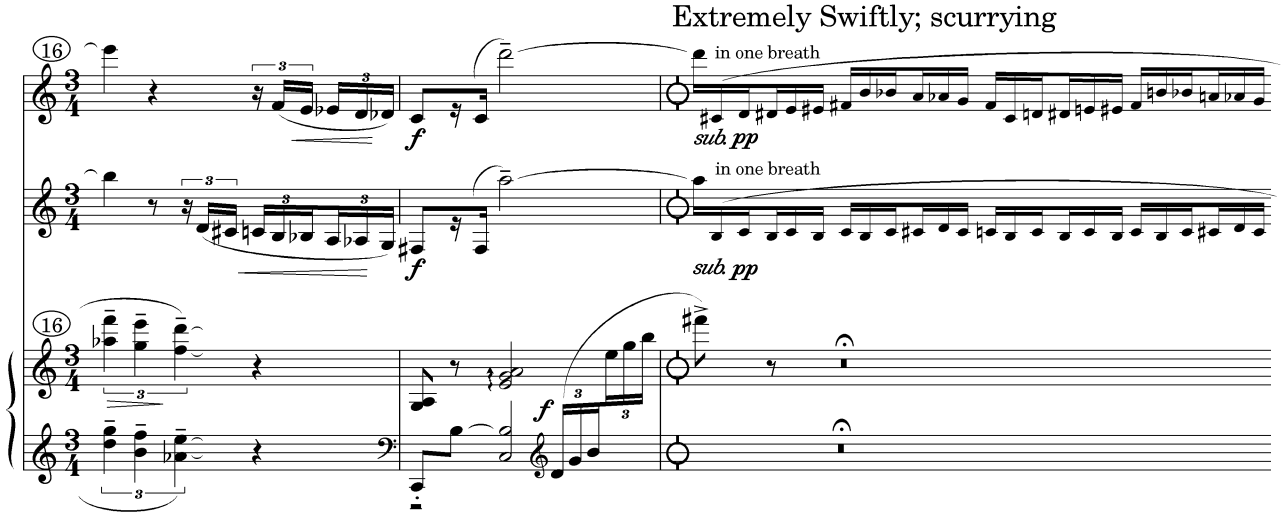
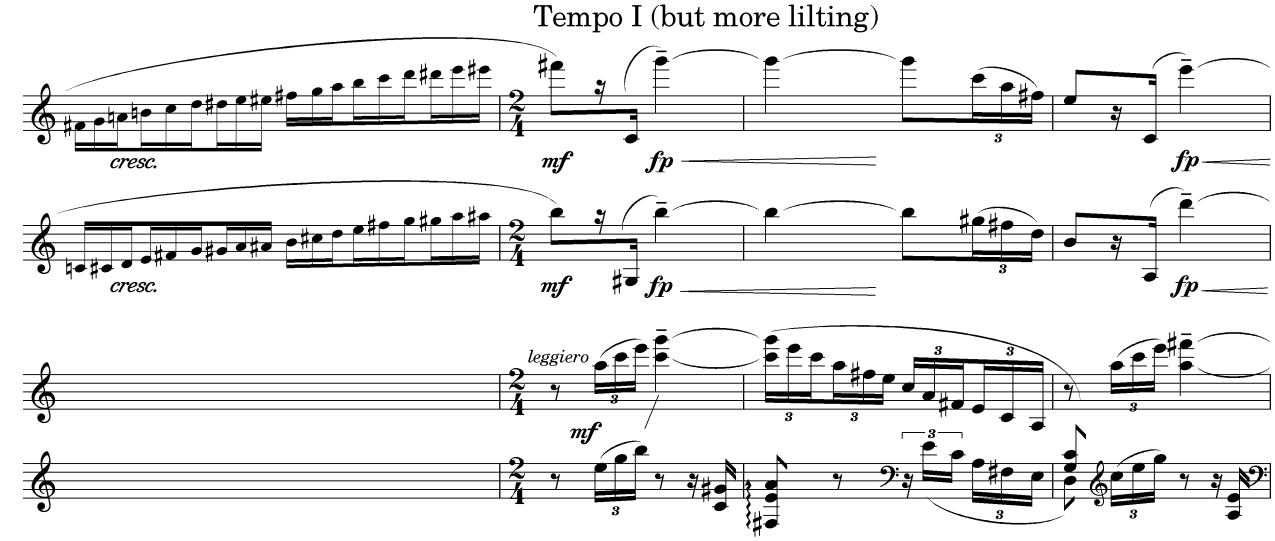
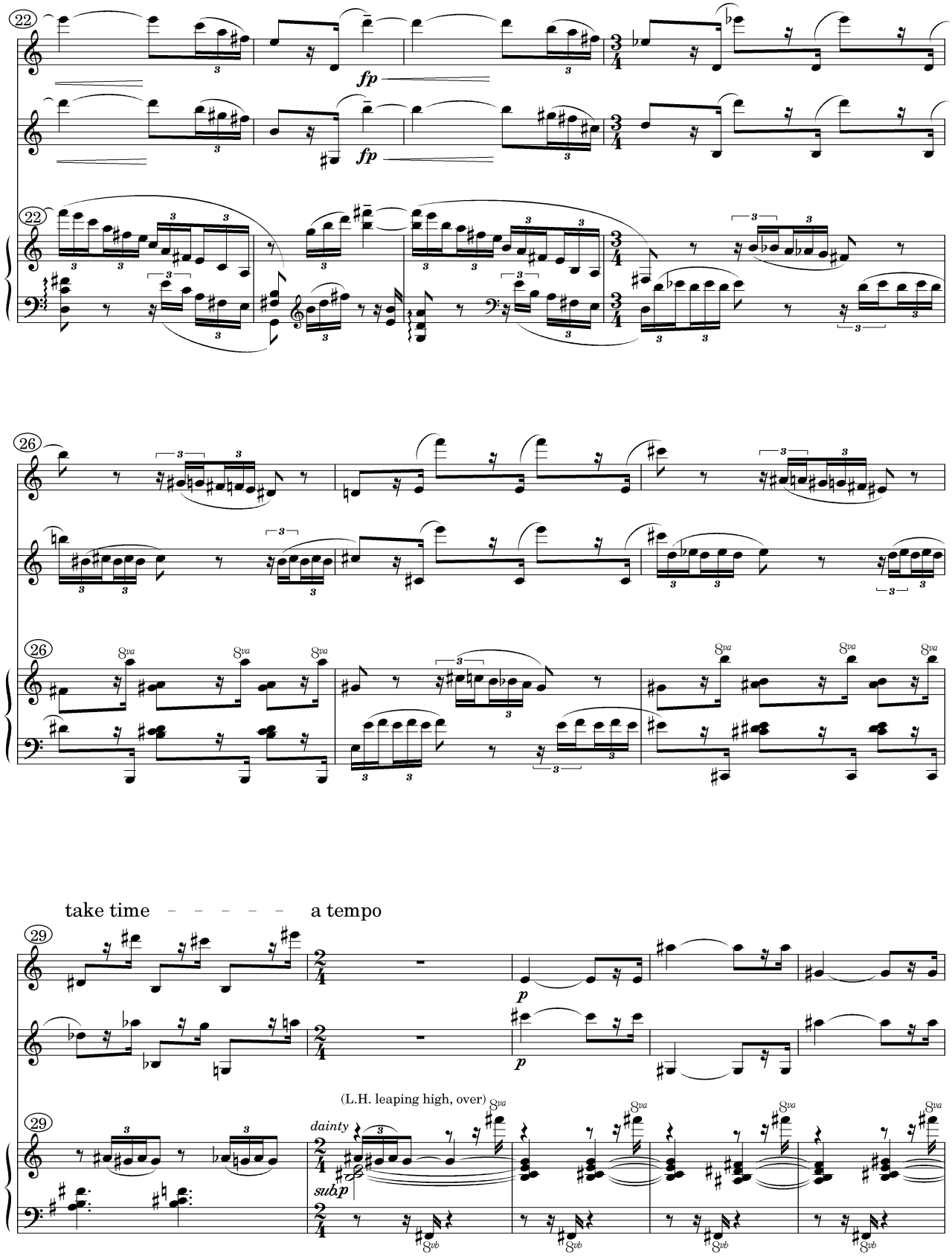
Aesop

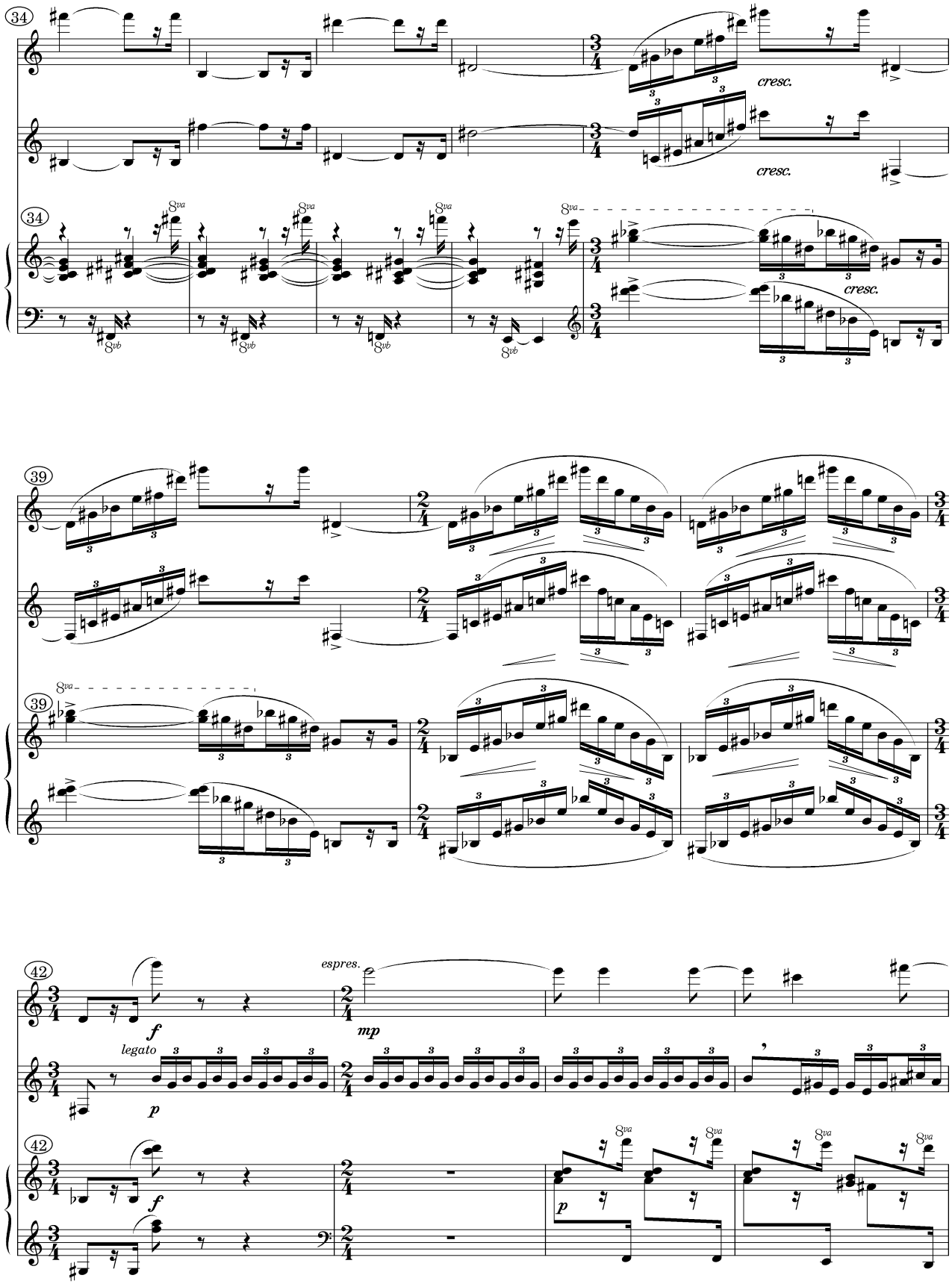


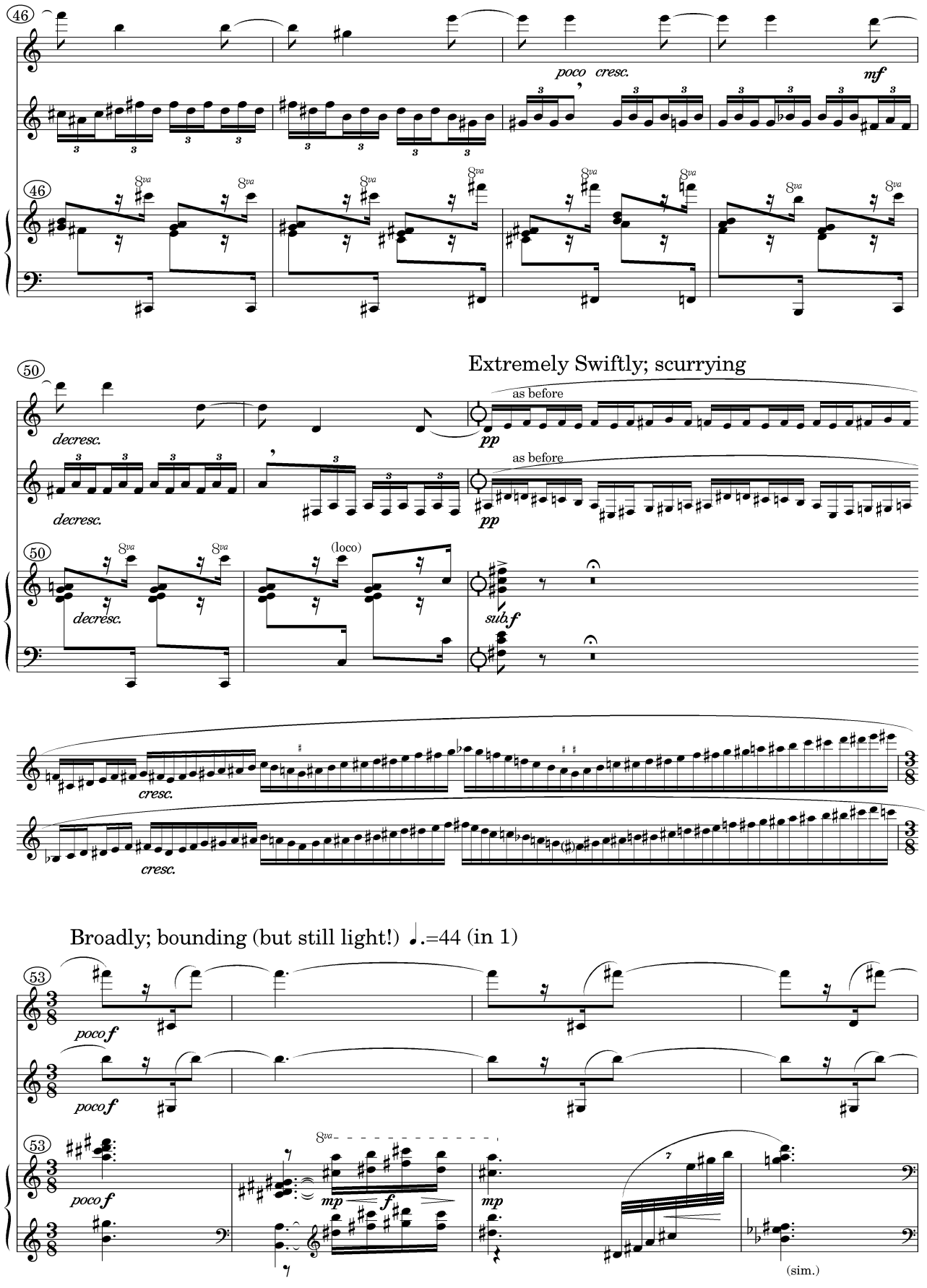

12
12

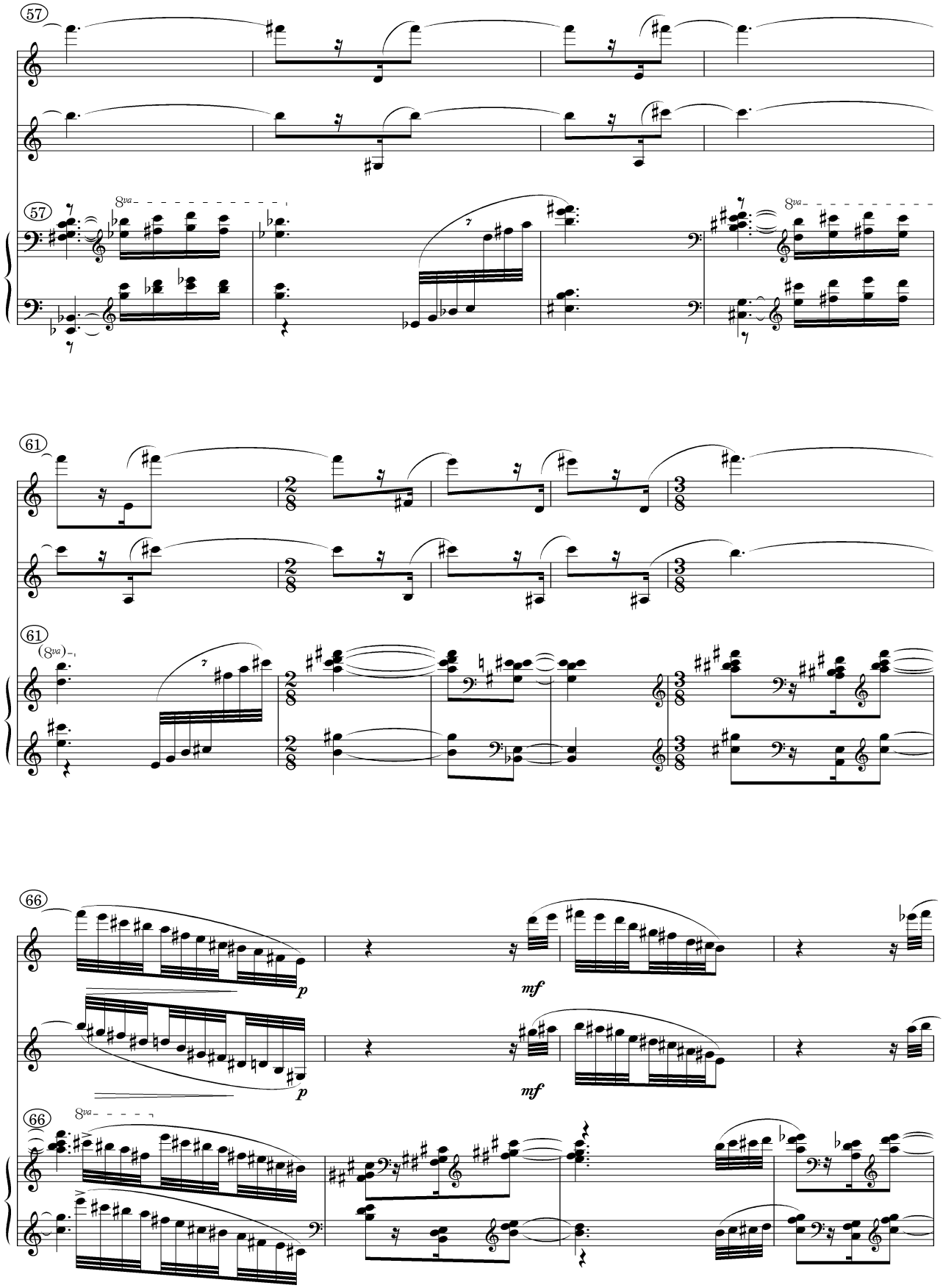

Extremely Swiftly; scurrying
16
in one breath
sub. pp
in one breath
sub. pp
16

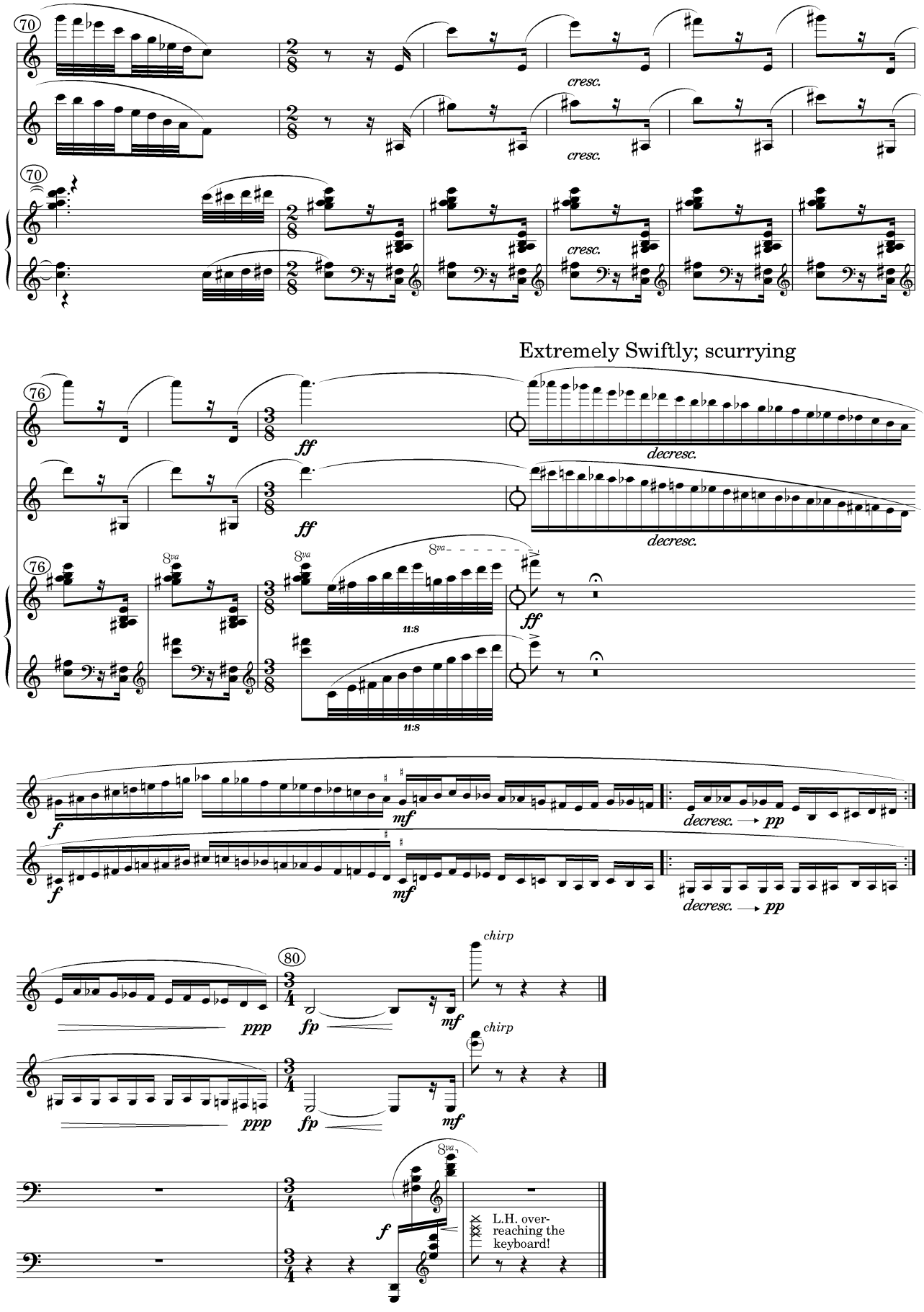

Tempo I (but more lilting)
cresc.
mf
fp
fp
cresc.
mf
fp
fp
leggiero
mf


22
fp
fp
22
3/4
26
8va
26
take time
a tempo
29
p
p
29
(L.H. leaping high, over)
dainty
subp
8va
8vb


34
cresc.
cresc.
8va
8vb
cresc.
39
8va
42
espres.
f
mp
legato
p
f
8va
p


46
poco cresc.
mf
8va
50
decresc.
pp
as before
(loco)
sub.f
cresc.
Extremely Swiftly; scurrying
Broadly; bounding (but still light!) ♩.=44 (in 1)
53
poco f
mp
f
(sim.)


57
57
8va
61
61
(8va)
66
66
8va
p
mf
p
mf


70
cresc.
cresc.
70
cresc.
Extremely Swiftly; scurrying
76
ff
decresc.
ff
decresc.
76
8va
8va
8va
11:8
ff
11:8
f
mf
decresc.
pp
f
mf
decresc.
pp
80
chirp
ppp
fp
mf
chirp
ppp
fp
mf
8va
f
L.H. over-reaching the keyboard!

2. The Owl and the Echo

An owl, puffed up with pride and vanity, sings his doleful song at midnight from the hollow of an old oak.
"For what is this silence which reigns in the forest, if not to favor my melody? Surely the groves are charmed by my voice; and when I sing, all nature listens."
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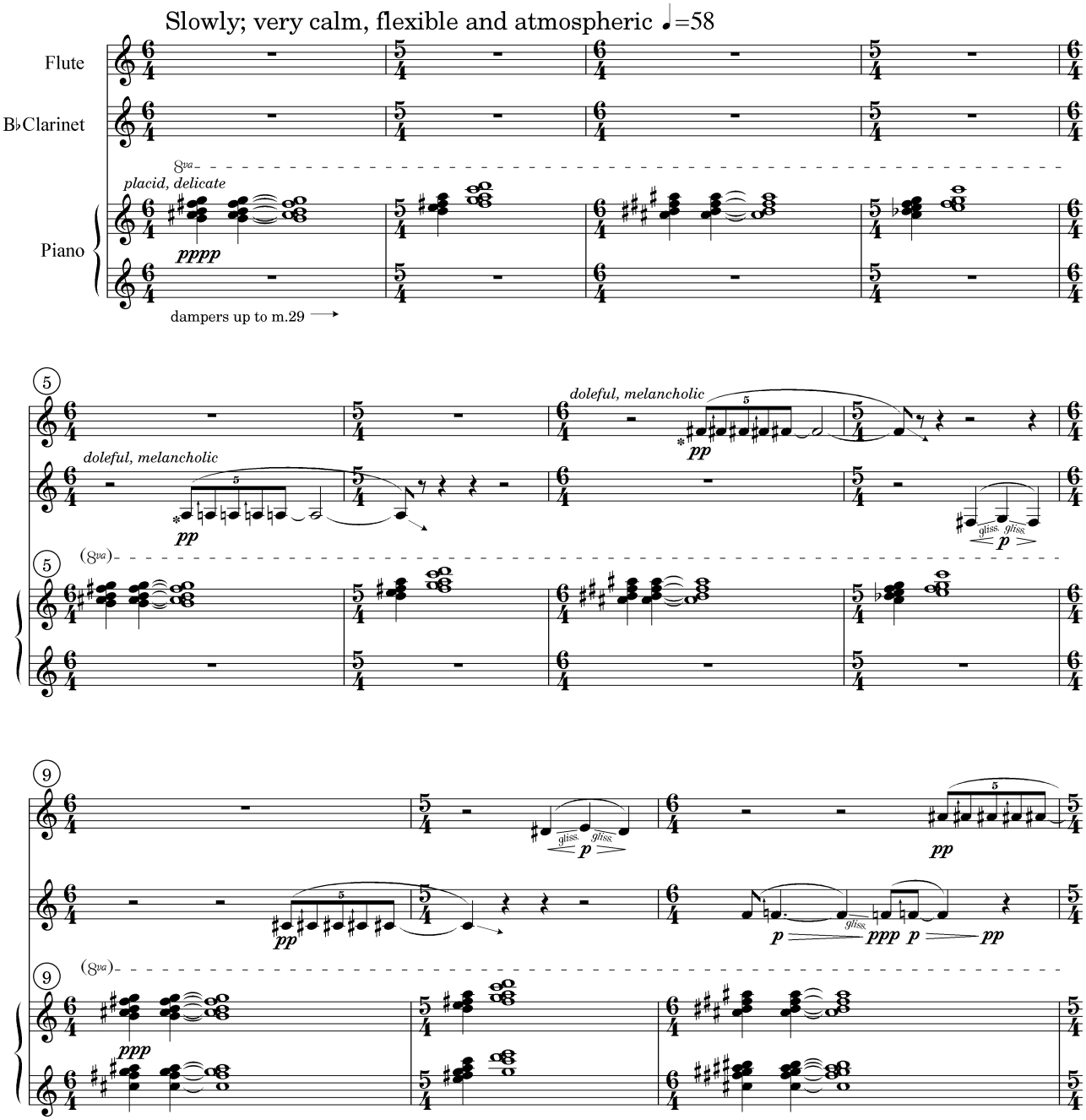
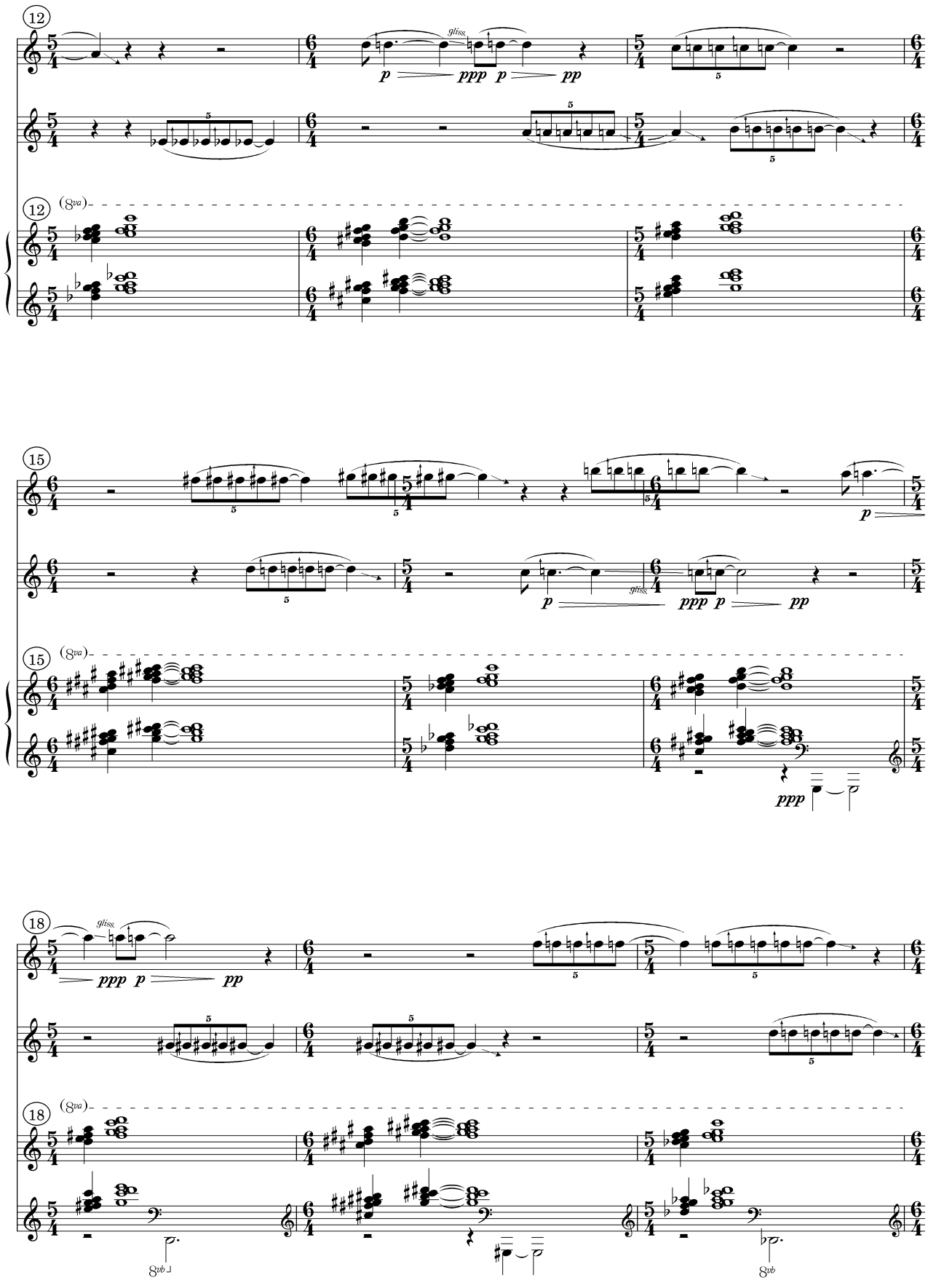
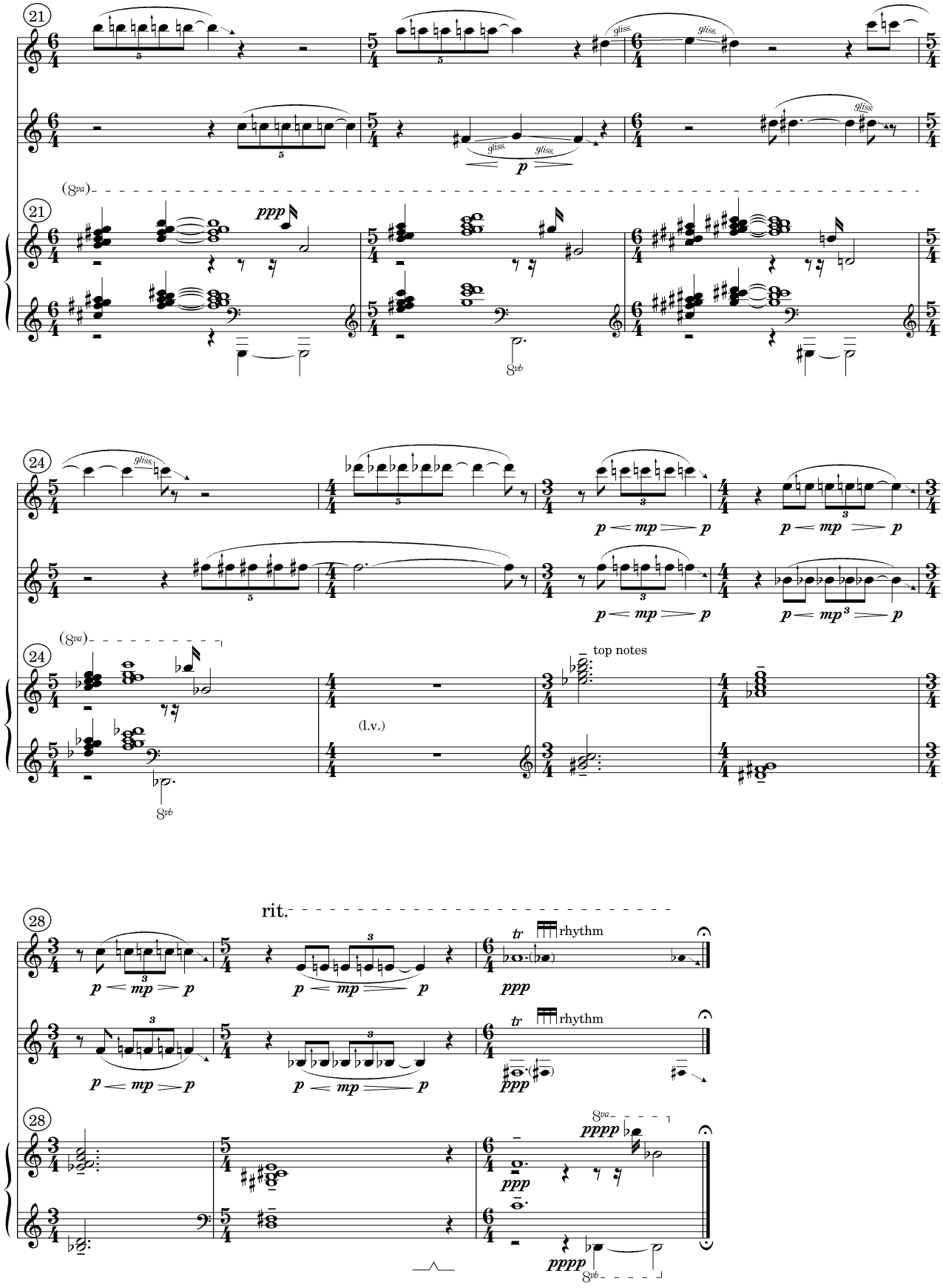
Jean Baptiste Perrin (trans. A. Bolmar)



* The microtonal symbol indicates a pitch at least a quarter-tone higher (but less than a semitone). The ↘ symbol signals a downward, inexact 'fall off' in pitch, using a combination of embouchure and fingering. For the flute, the effects may be best achieved by playing the semi-tone above the written note and 'lipping' down.


12
(8va)
p
ppp
p
pp
15
(8va)
p
ppp
p
pp
ppp
18
(8va)
ppp
p
pp
8vb
8vb


21
gliss.
p
(8va)
ppp
8vb
24
p < mp > p
p < mp > p
p < mp > p
p < mp³ > p
top notes
(l.v.)
28
rit.
p < mp > p
p < mp > p
tr
rhythm
ppp
pppp

3. The Lion, the Fox and the Fish

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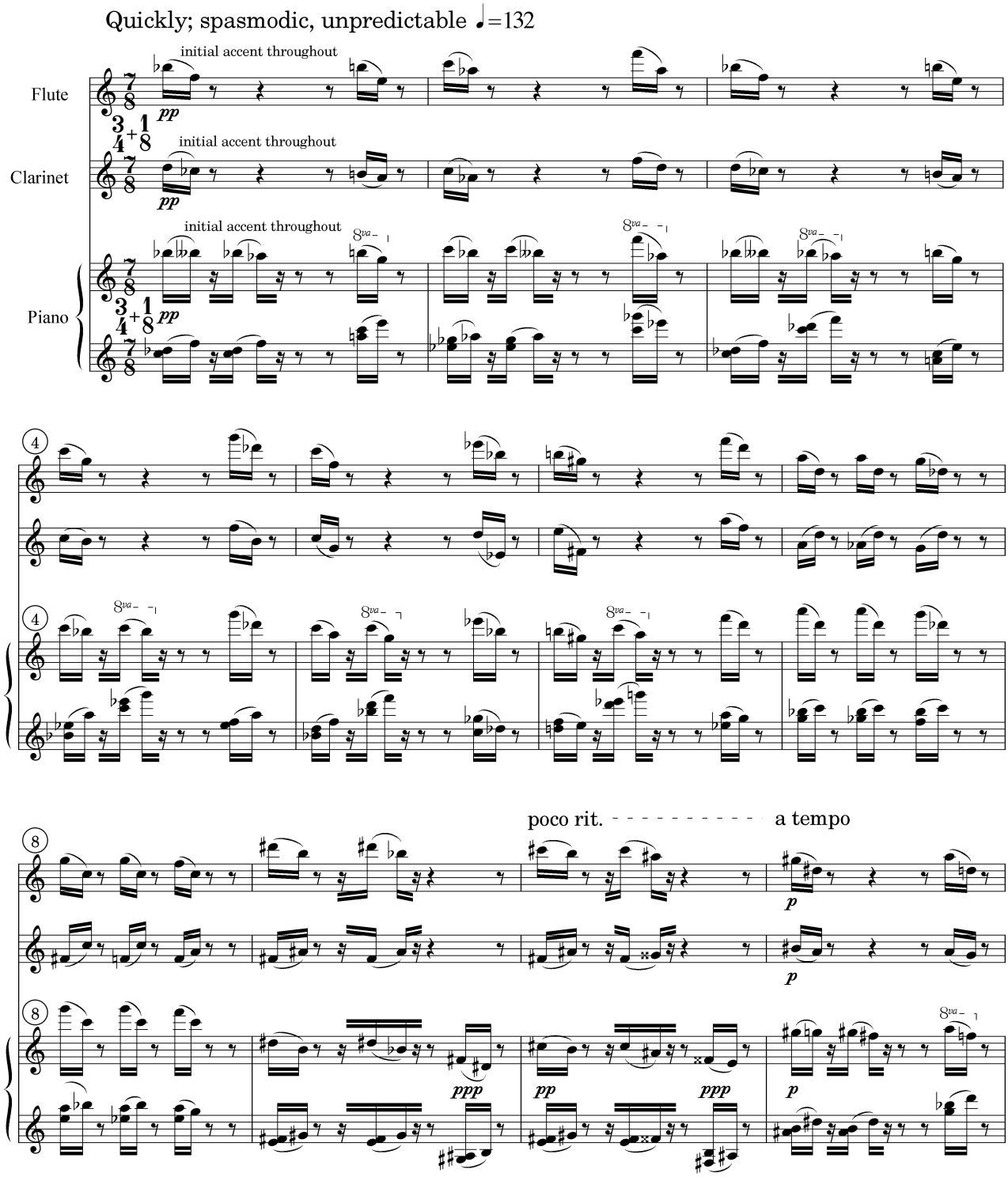
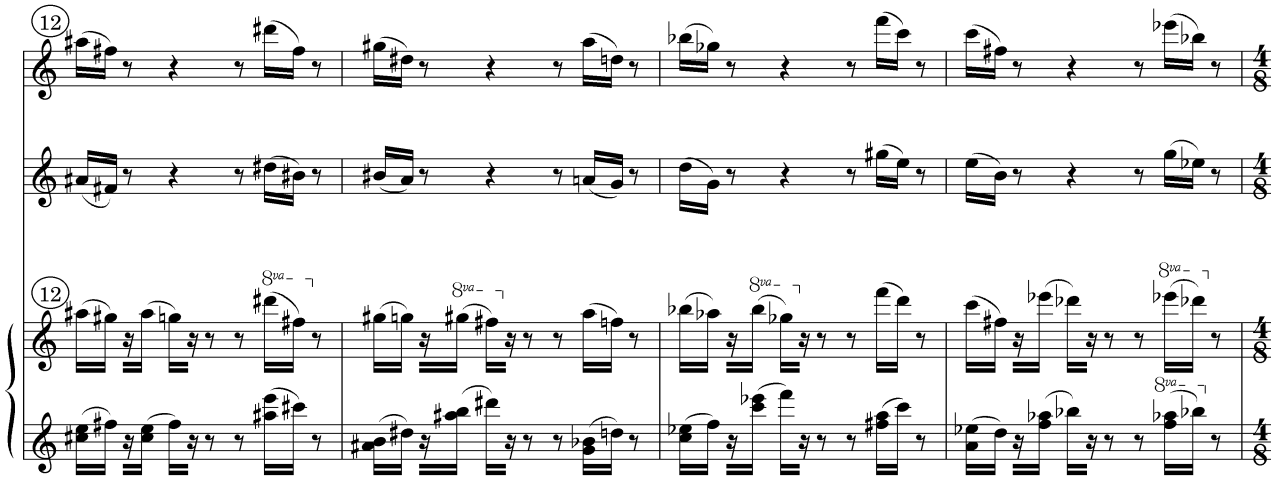
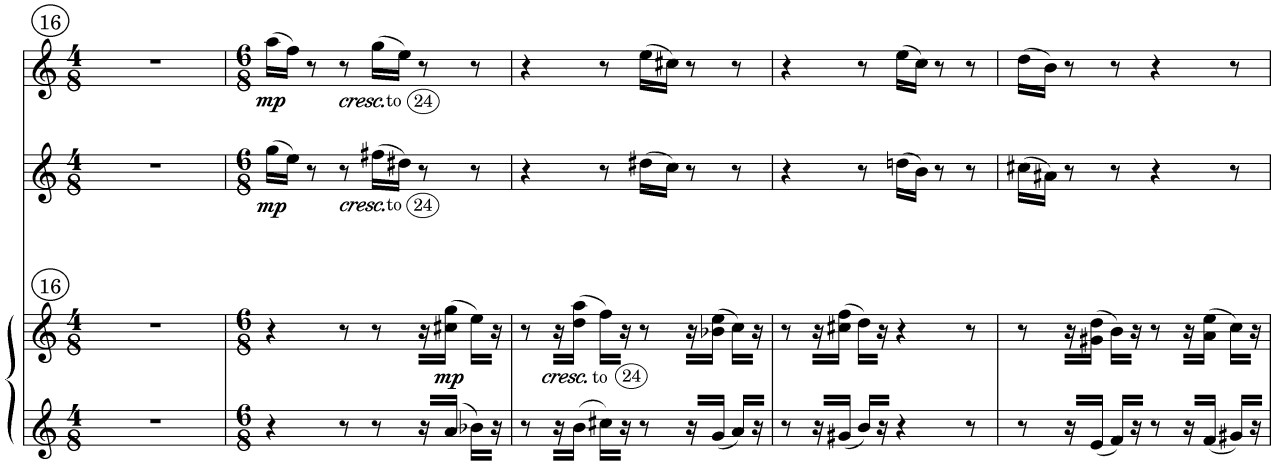
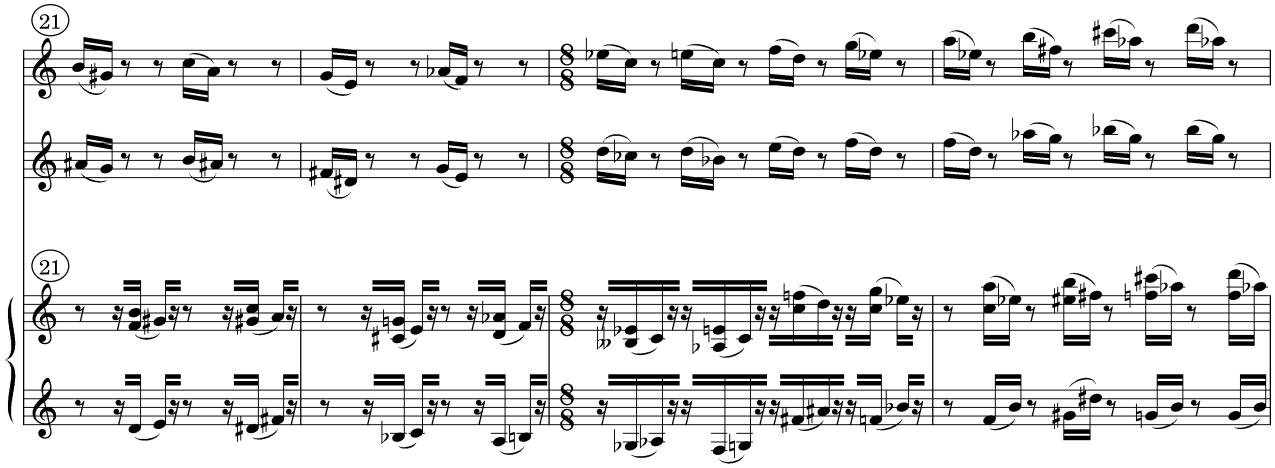
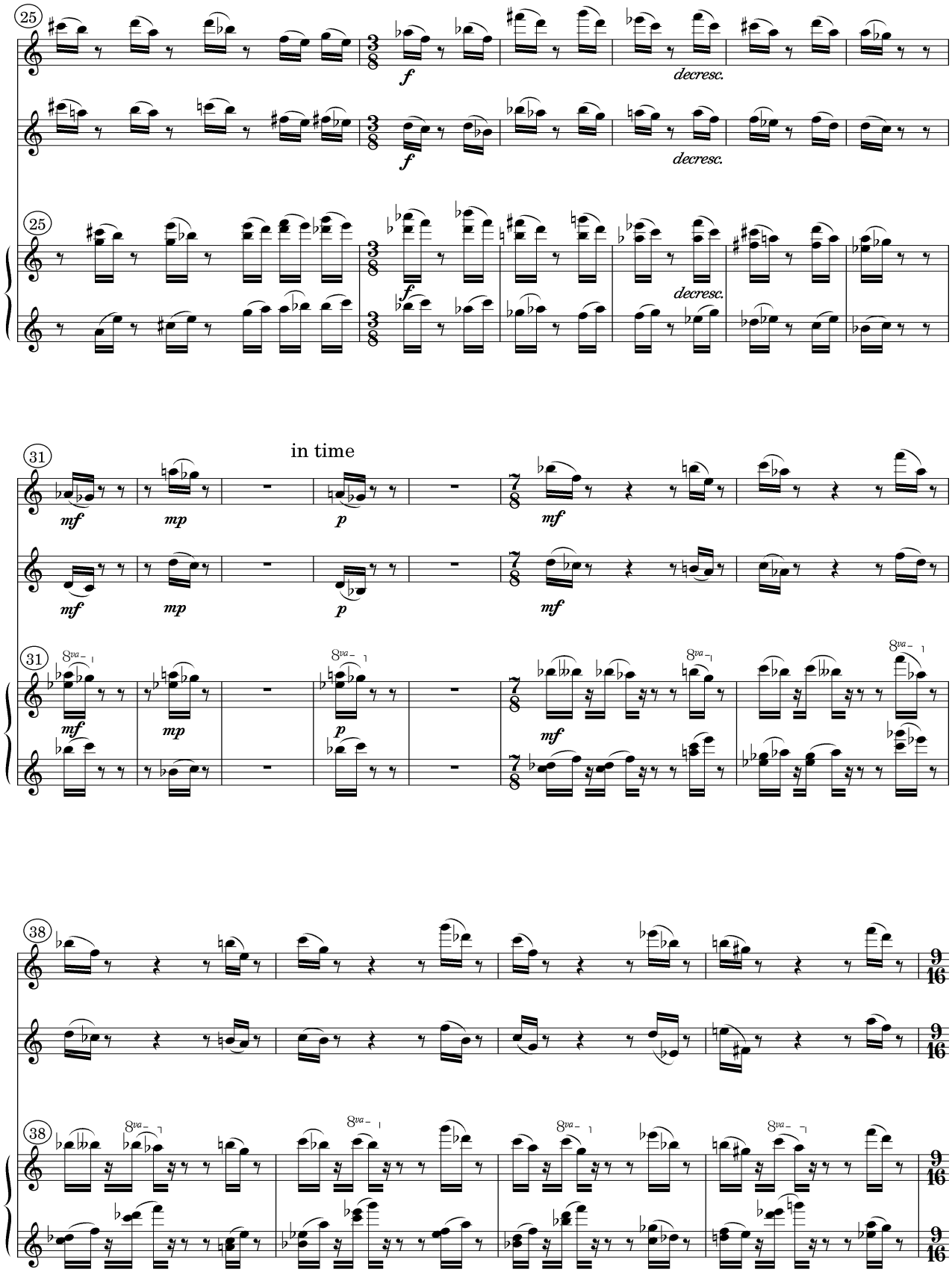
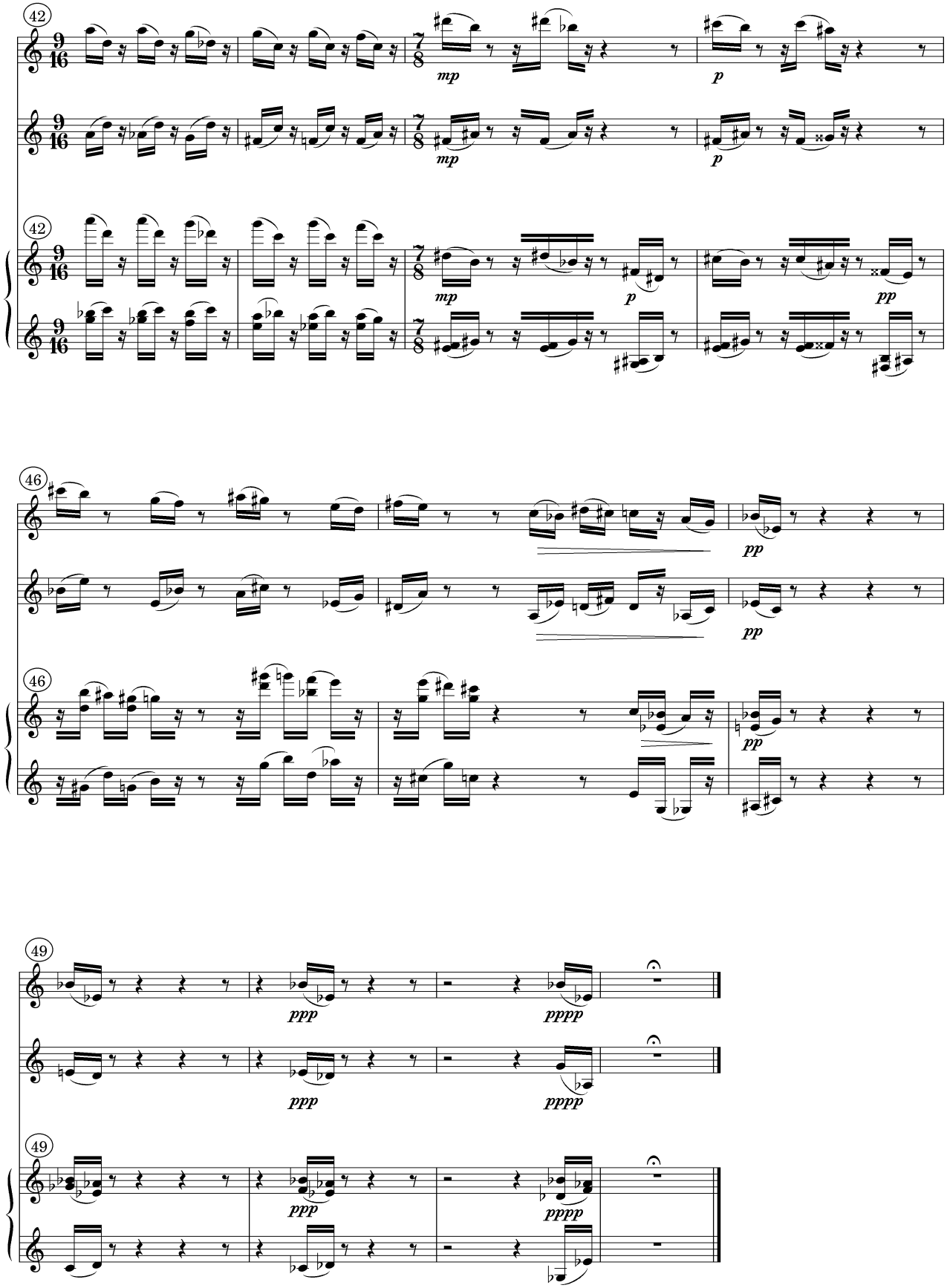



12
8va
12
8va


16
mp
cresc. to 24
mp
cresc. to 24
16
mp
cresc. to 24

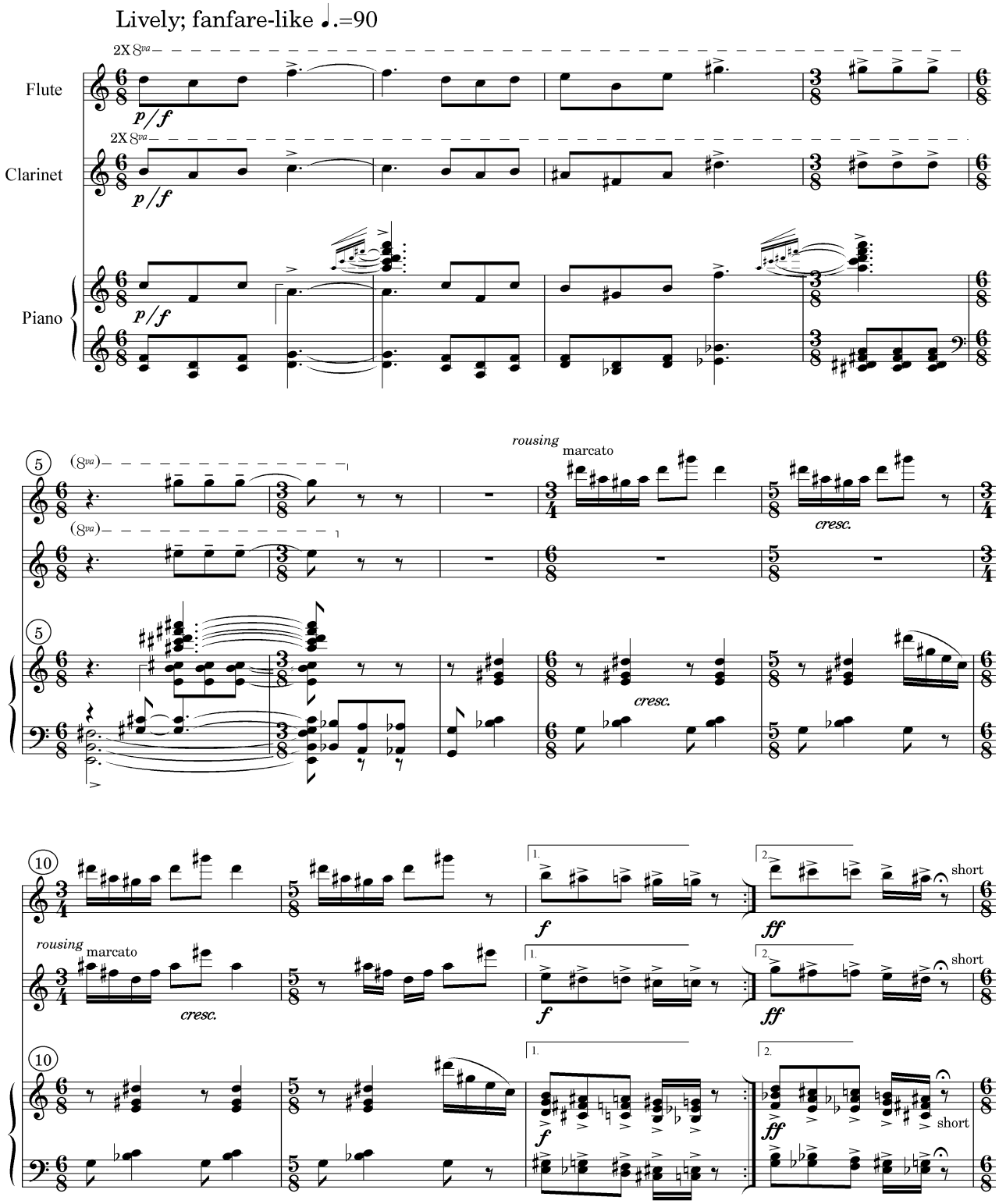

21
21

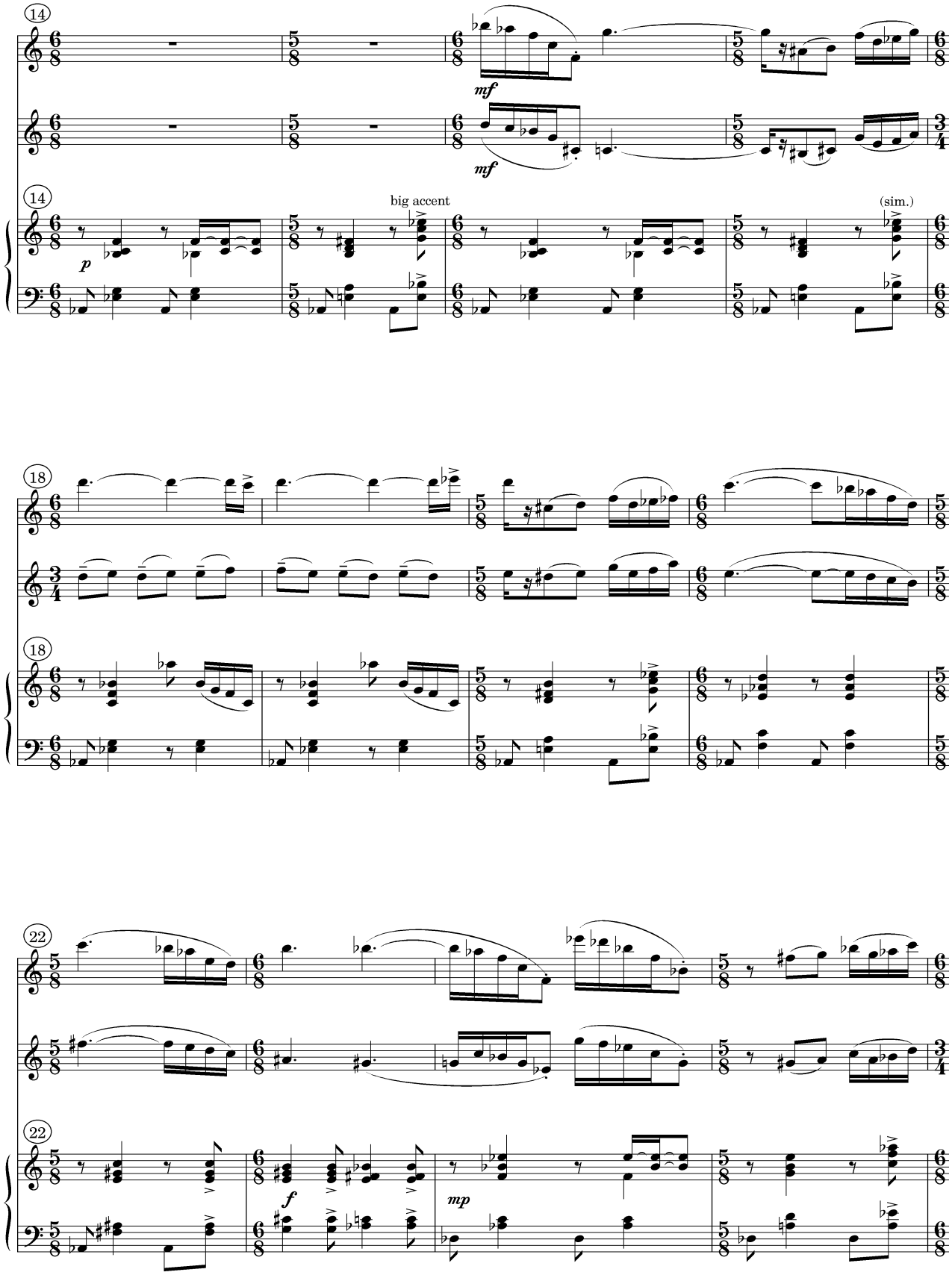

25
f
decresc.
25
f
decresc.
31
in time
mf
mp
p
mf
31
8va
38
9/16

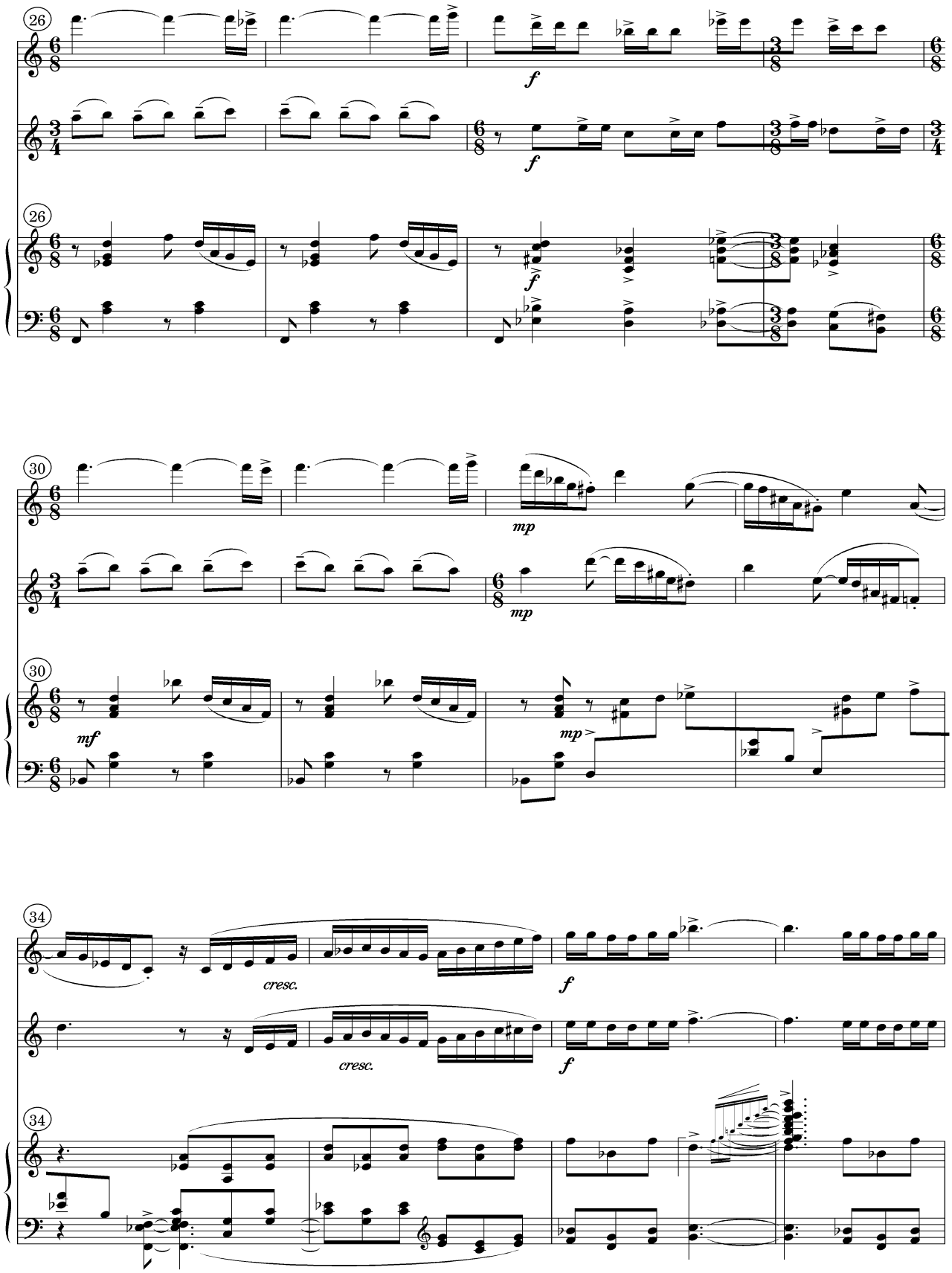

42
9/16
7/8
mp
p
42
mp
p
pp
46
pp
pp
46
pp
49
ppp
pppp
ppp
pppp
49
ppp
pppp

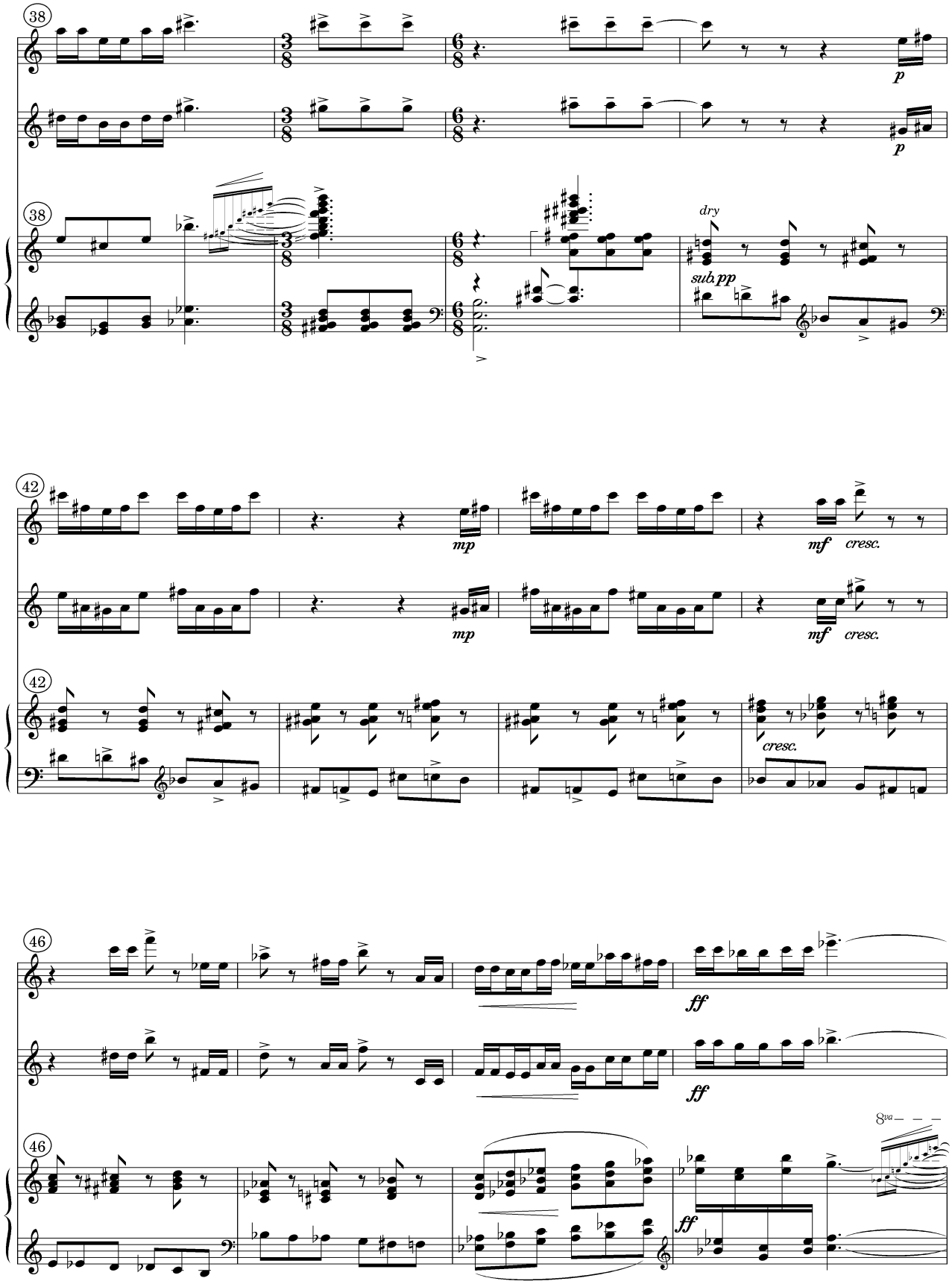
4. The Man and the Fish-Horn

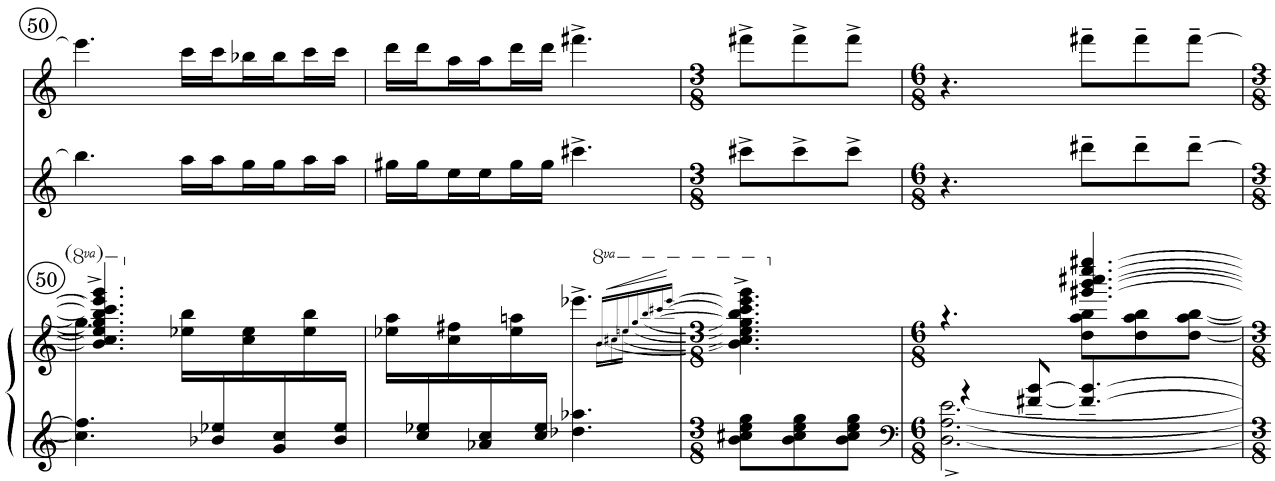
A Truthful Man, finding a musical instrument in the road, asked the name of it and was told that it was a Fish-Horn. The next time he went fishing he set his nets and blew the fish-horn all day to charm the fish into them, but at nightfall there was not only no fish in the nets, but none along that part of the coast. Meeting a friend while on his way home he was asked what luck he had. "Well," said the Truthful Man, "the weather is not right for fishing, but it's a red-letter day for music." Ambrose Bierce

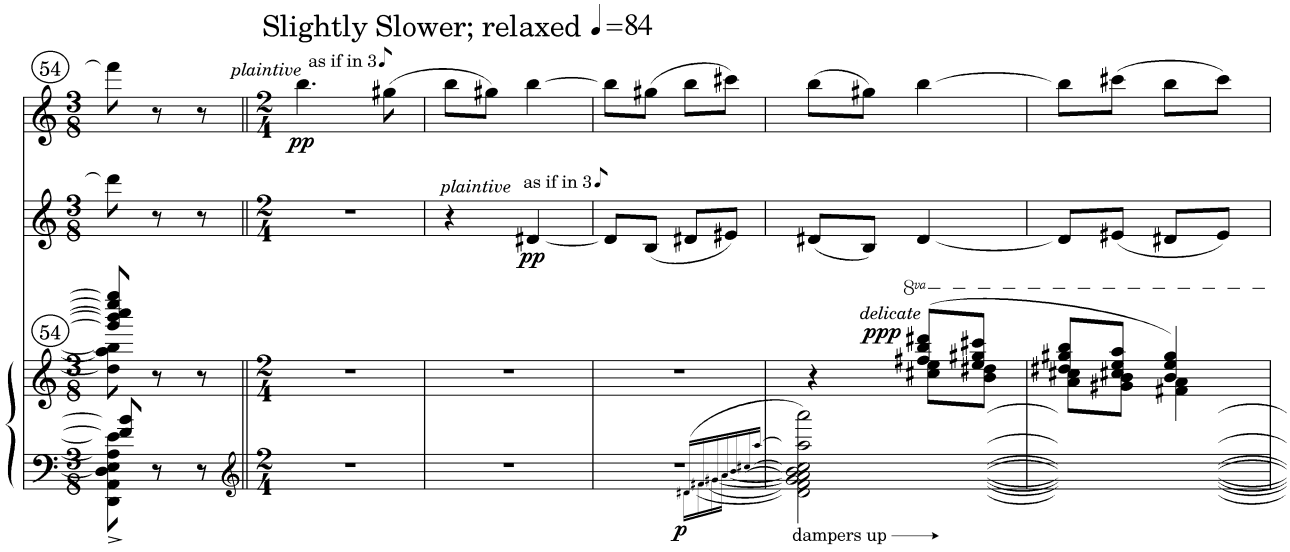


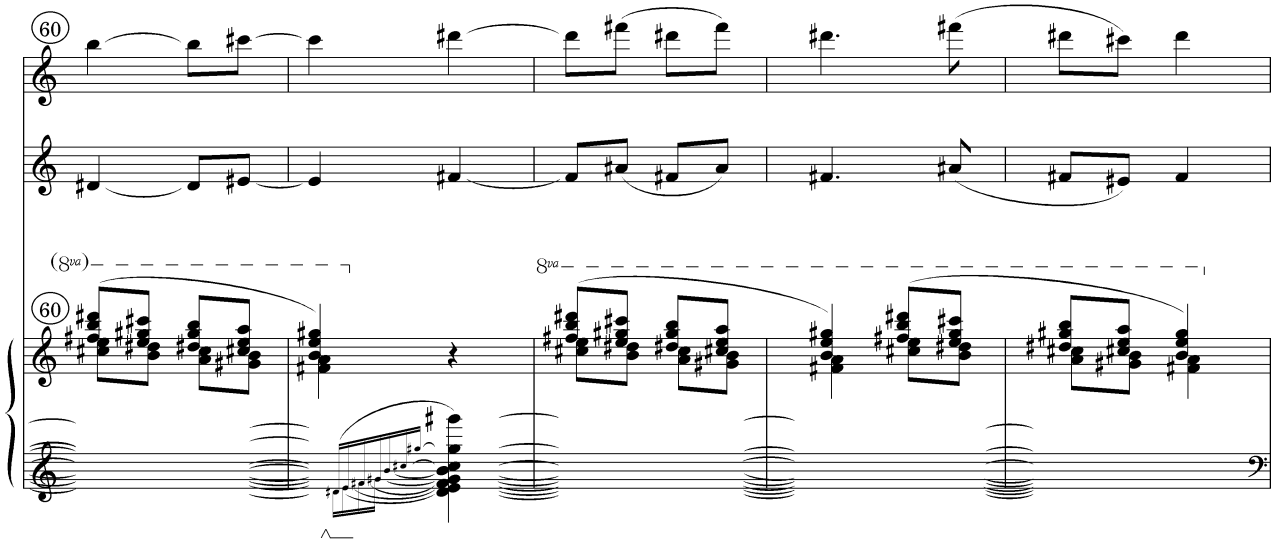

14
mf
mf
14
big accent
(sim.)
p
18
18
22
22
f
mp

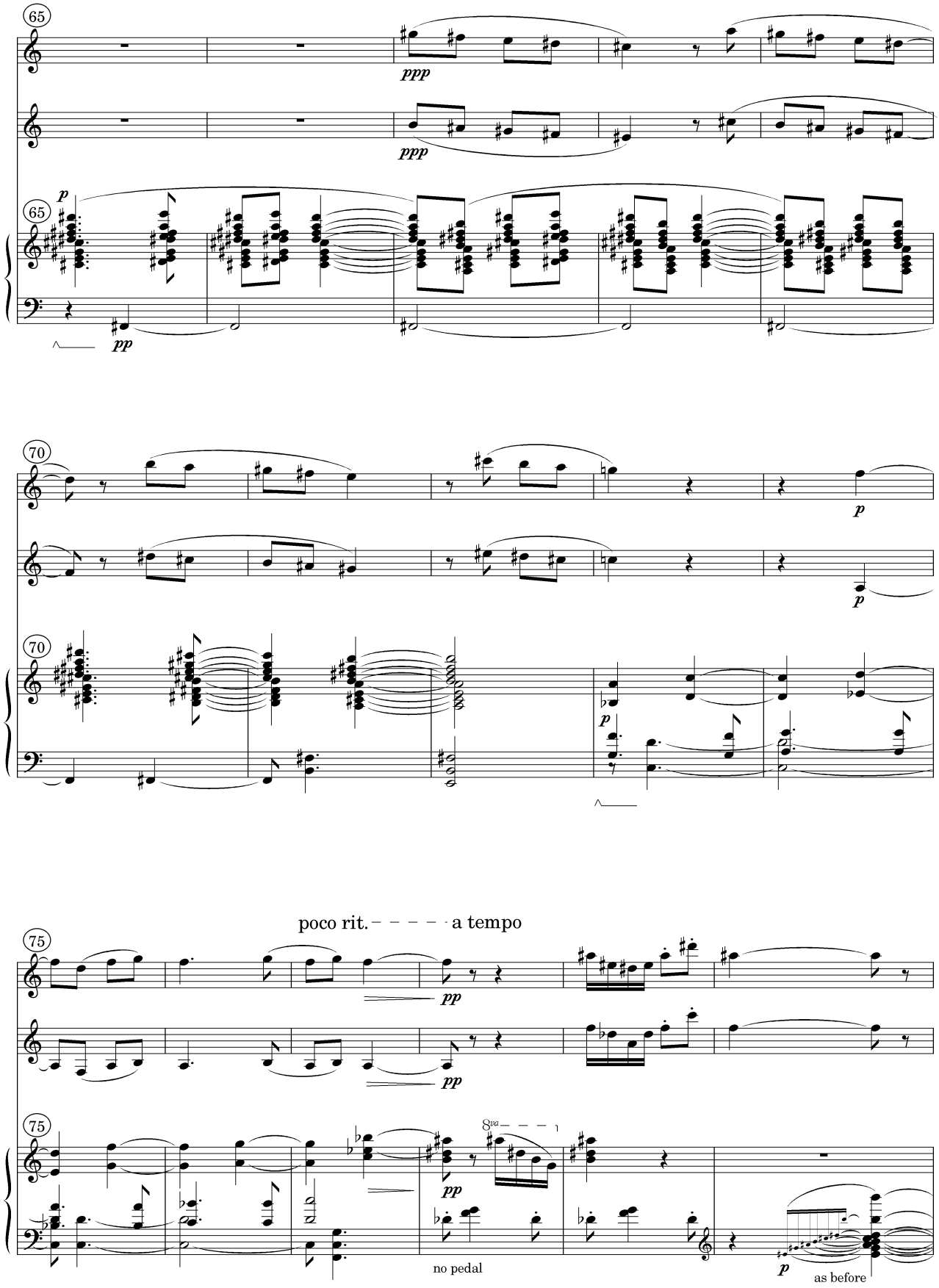

26
f
f
26
f
30
mp
mp
30
mf
mp
34
cresc.
f
cresc.
f
34

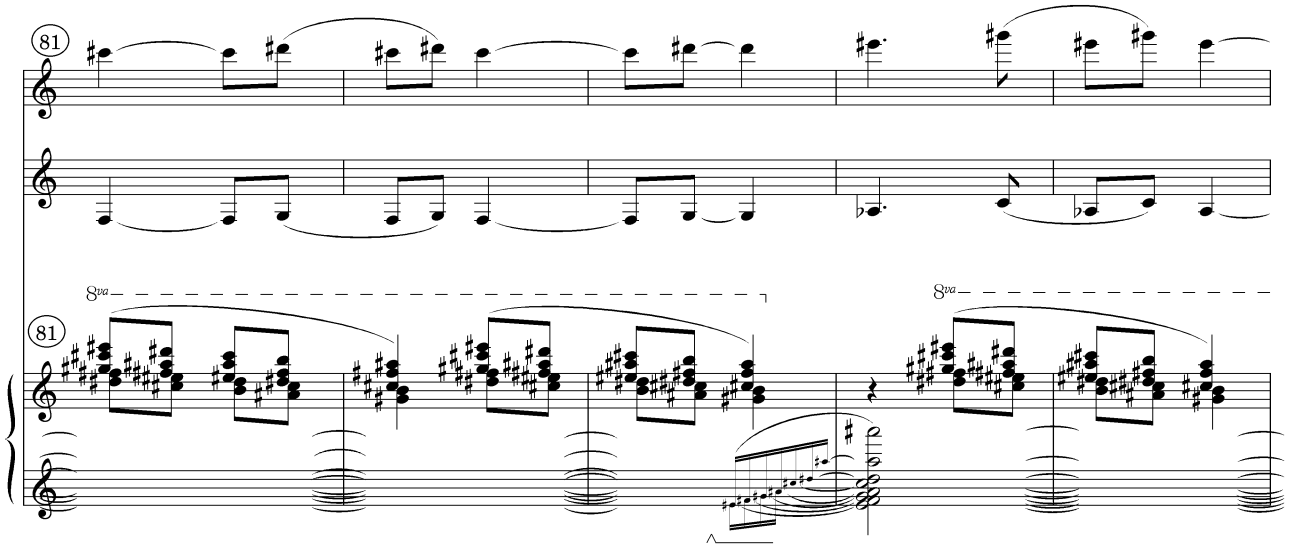

38
38
p
p
dry
sub.pp
42
42
mp
mp
mf
cresc.
mf
cresc.
cresc.
46
46
ff
ff
8va
ff

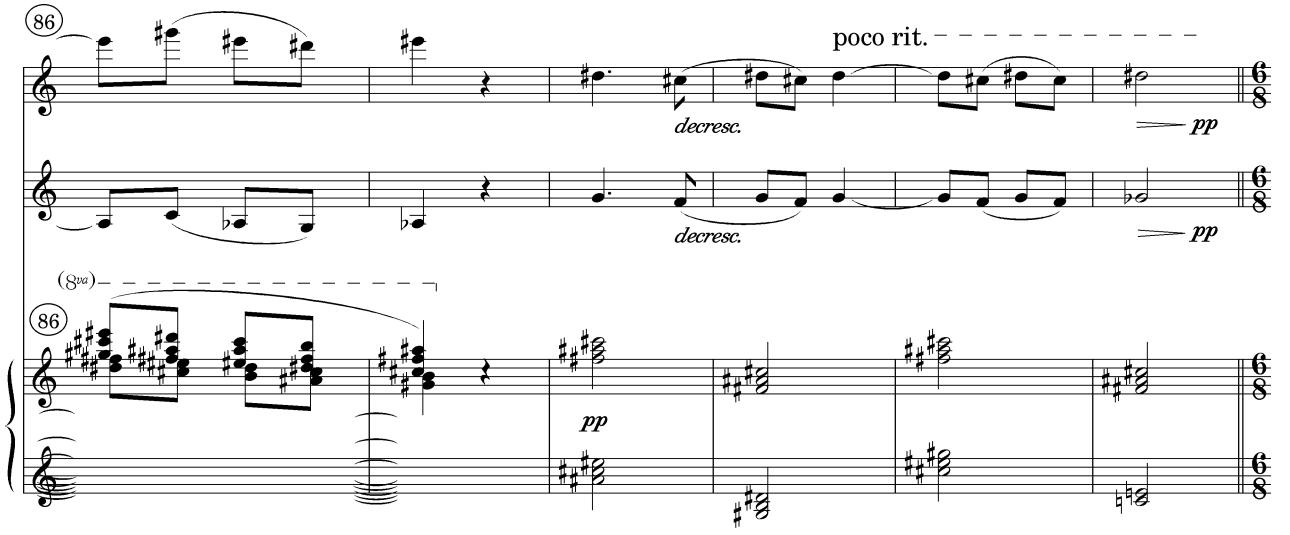

50
(8va)
50
8va


Slightly Slower; relaxed ♩=84
54
plaintive as if in 3
pp
plaintive as if in 3
pp
54
8va
delicate
ppp
p
dampers up

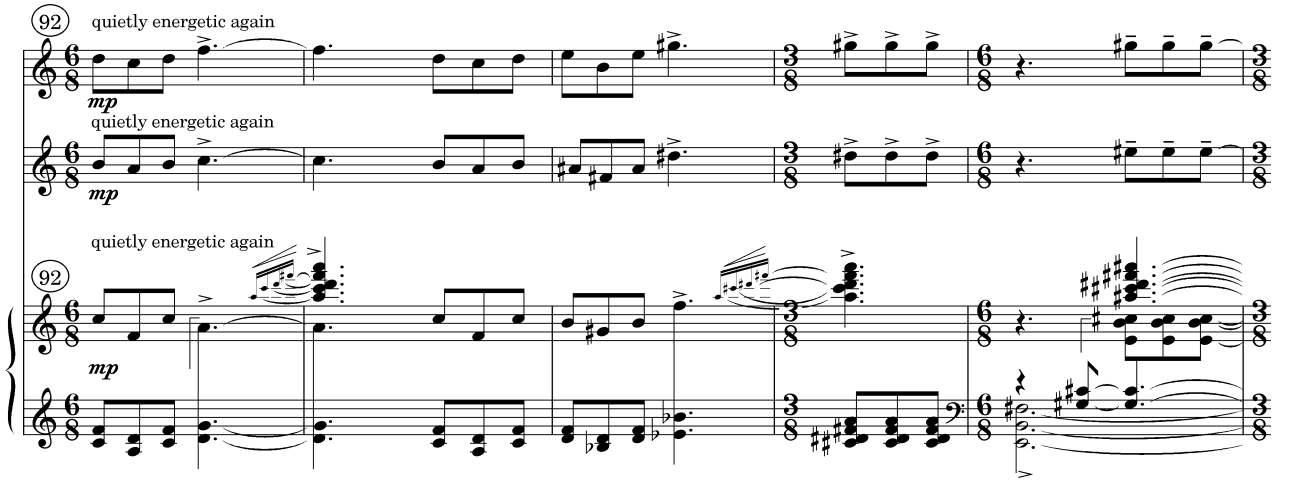

60
(8va)
60
8va

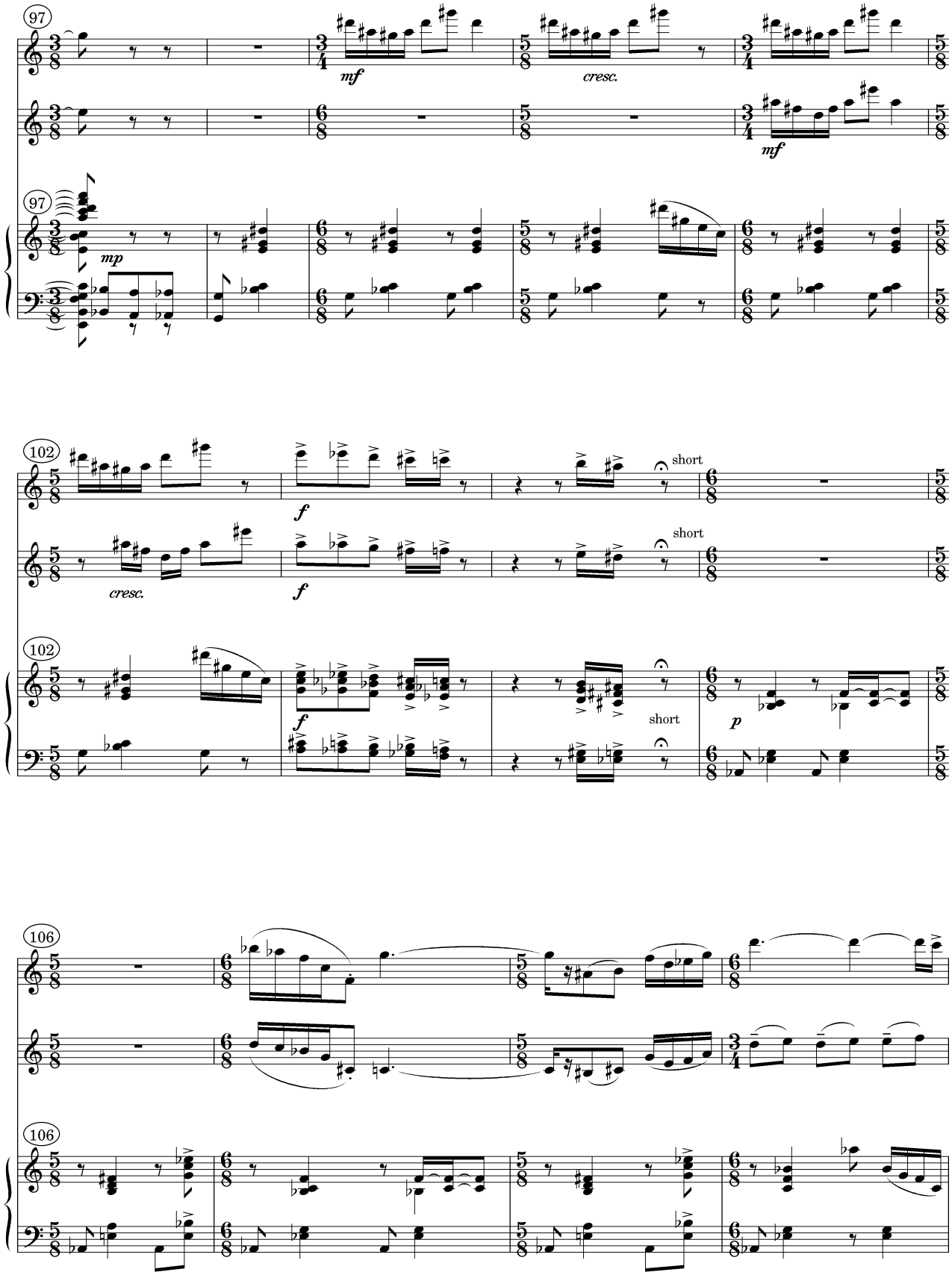

65
ppp
ppp
65
p
pp
70
p
p
70
p
75
poco rit. - - - - - a tempo
pp
pp
75
8va
pp
no pedal
p
as before

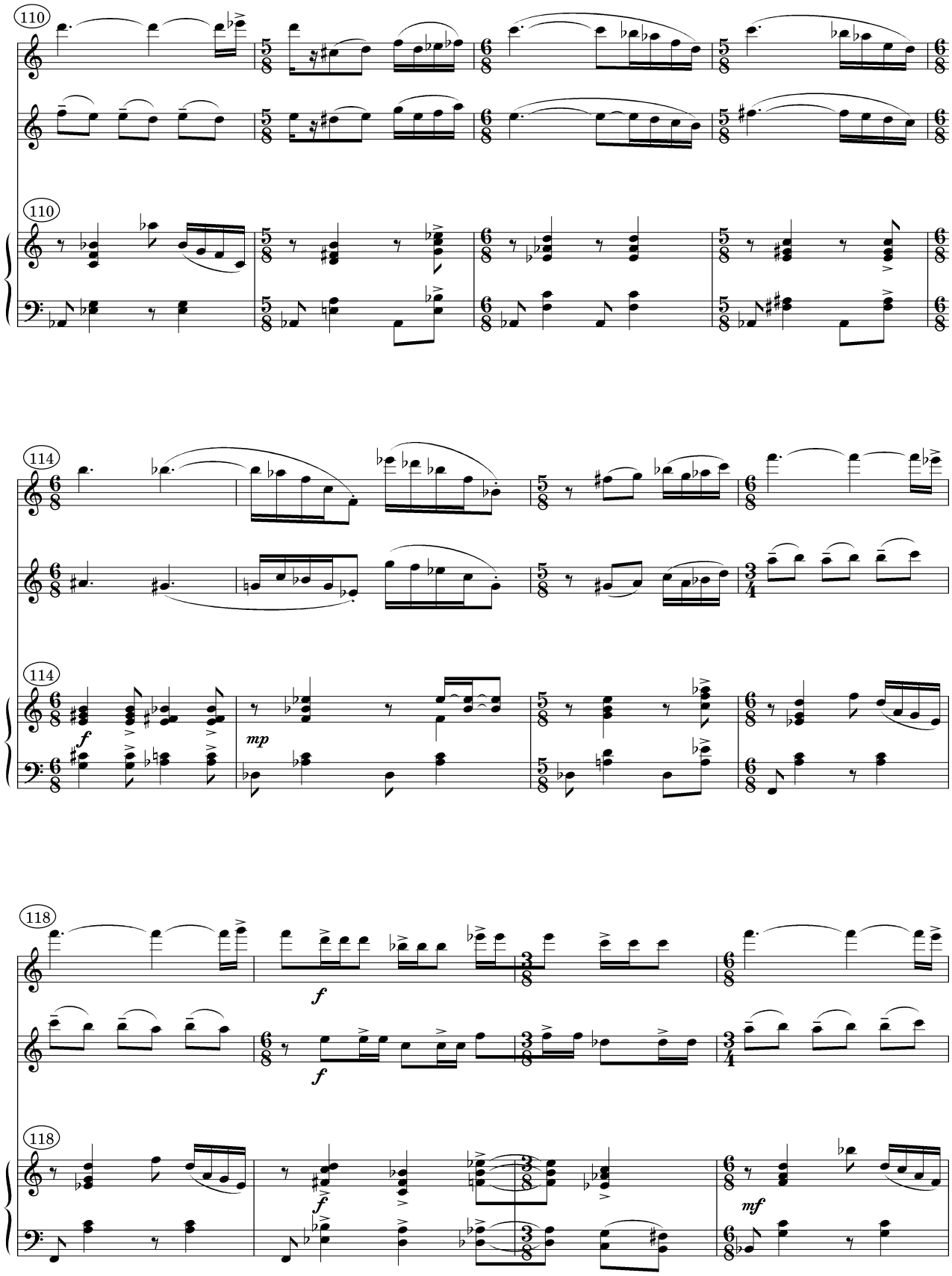

81
8va
81

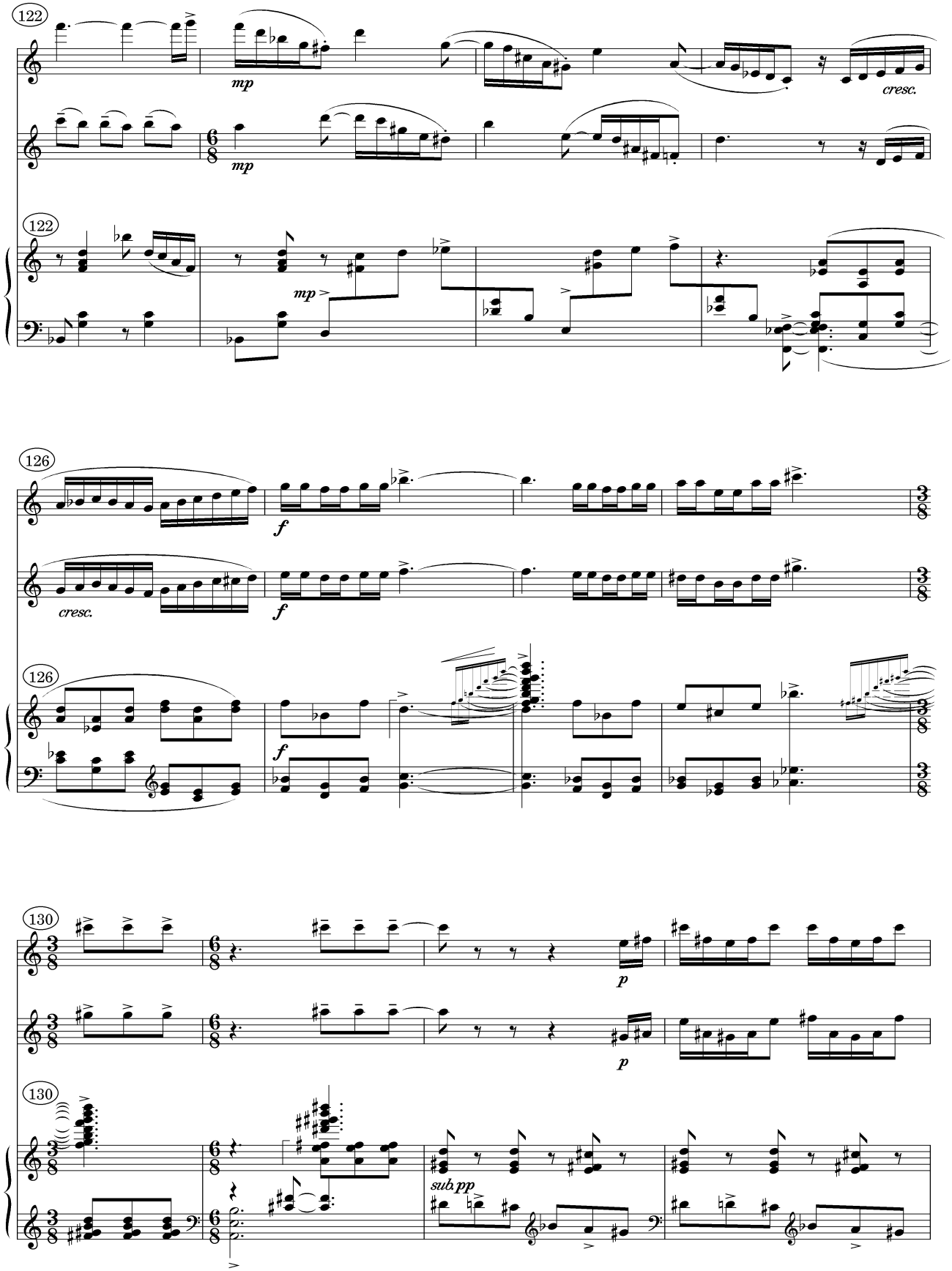

86
poco rit.
decresc.
pp
decresc.
pp
(8va)
86
pp

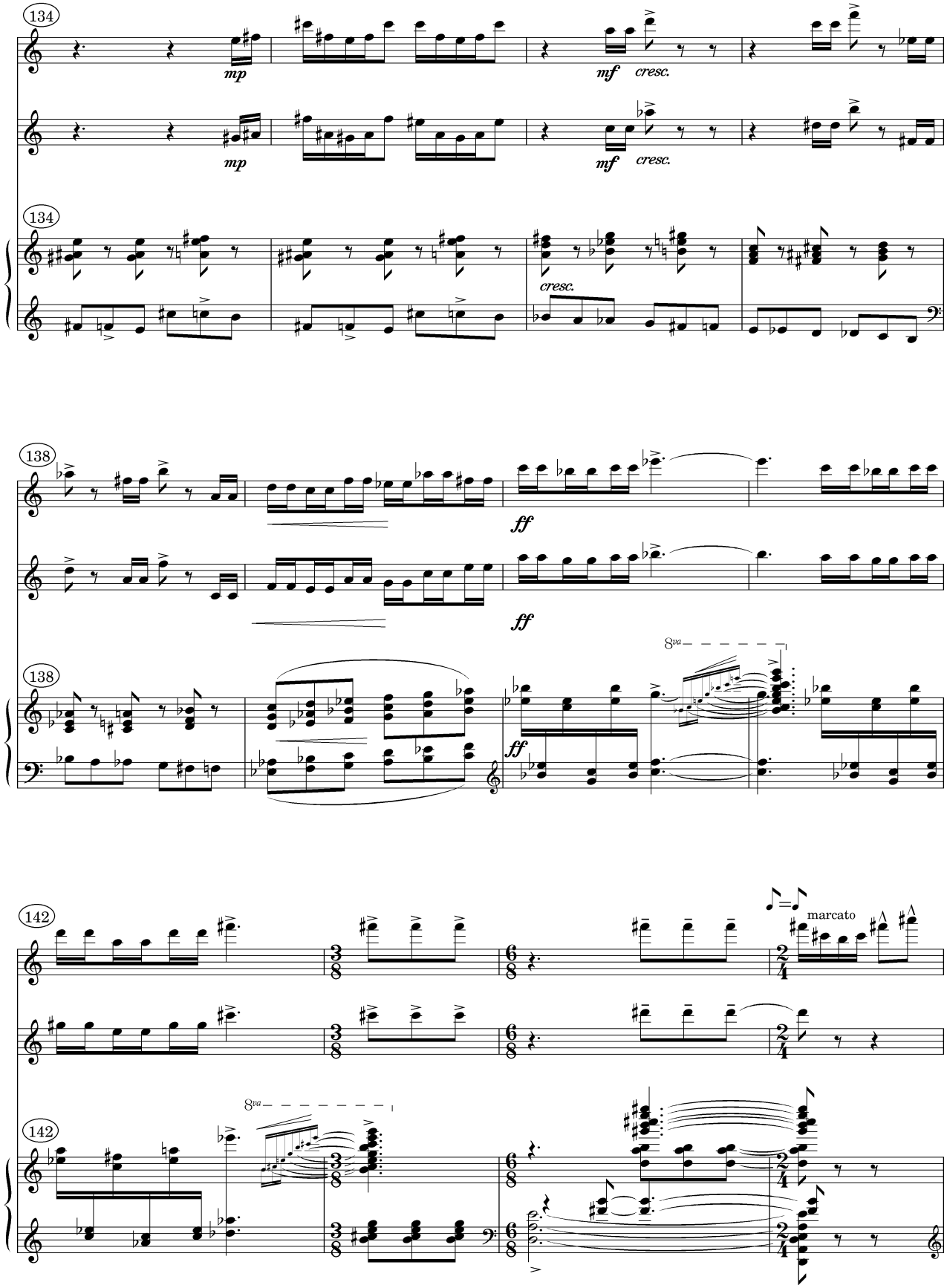
Tempo I

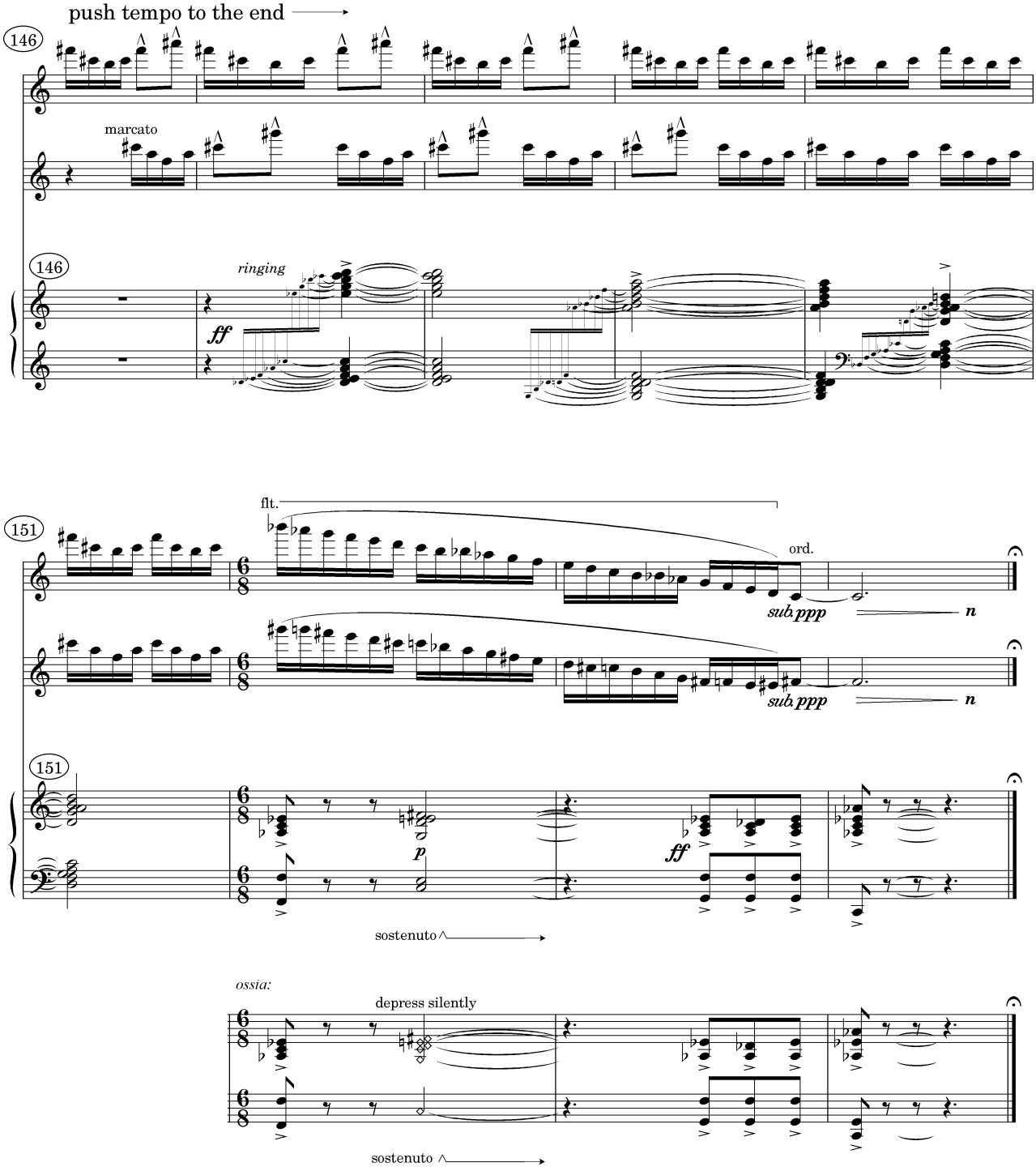

92
quietly energetic again
mp
quietly energetic again
mp
quietly energetic again
92
mp


97
mf
cresc.
mf
97
mp
102
cresc.
f
short
f
short
102
f
short
p
106
106


110
114
118
f
mp
mf


122
mp
mp
cresc.
122
mp
126
cresc.
f
f
126
f
130
p
p
130
sub.pp


134
mp
mf
cresc.
134
cresc.
138
ff
ff
138
8va
142
marcato
142
8va


push tempo to the end
146
marcato
146
ringing
ff
151
flt.
ord.
sub. ppp
n
sub. ppp
n
151
p
ff
sostenuto
ossia:
depress silently
sostenuto

From an early Spanish edition of *Aesop's Fables*, Madrid, 1489.