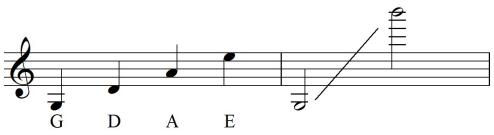
Writing for Violin

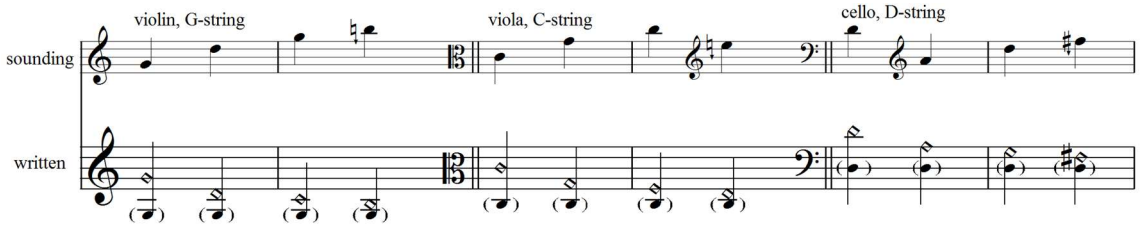


Bowing Techniques

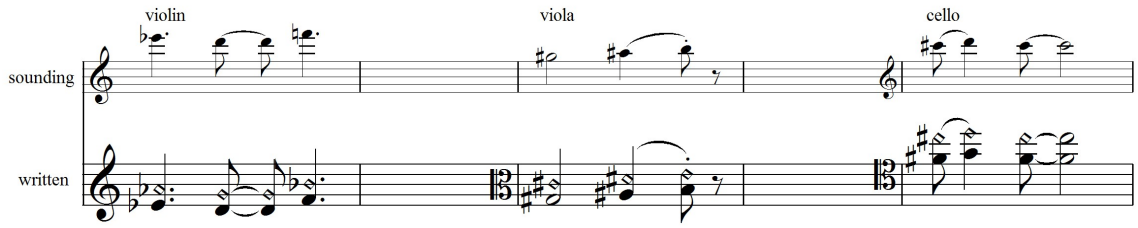
Term	Abbreviation in the score	What it means
Arco	arco	Play using the bow
Pizzicato	pizz	Pluck the strings
Slur	⁀ or ‿	Do not change bow
Col Legno	col leg. (c.l.)	With the wood of the bow
Sul ponticello	sul pont. (s.p.)	Near the bridge
Sul tasto	sul tasto (s.t.)	Near the fingerboard (normally understood as 'on' the fingerboard)
Tremolo	trem.	Fast unmeasured bow changes
Legato	legato	Smooth and without silence between notes
Spiccato	spicc.	Bow leaves the string to produce a light bouncing sound
Jeté/Ricochet	Jeté	Bow is 'thrown' at the string to produce a rapid series of notes, normally unspecified and unmeasured
Bartok/snap Pizzicato	a circle with a line	String is pulled away from the fingerboard, so that it snaps against in on release
Left hand pizz	L.H. pizz or +	String plucked with LH, best with open strings

Harmonics

Natural Harmonics



'False' Harmonics



a) Hierarchical Accompaniment Interaction

Early baroque chamber music featured a solo voice (e.g. flute, recorder, voice or violin) with basso continuo. There was an obvious hierarchy between the parts, and indeed the accompaniment part would have even been largely improvised– so the focus of the composer's 'expression' is in the solo part.

Igor Stravinsky – Tango arr. for violin & piano (1940)

Maurice Ravel – Violin Sonata No.2 (1927)

- 1st Movement
- 2nd Movement – 'Blues'

Arvo Pärt – Fratres (1977)

b) Melody and accompaniment

- Musical canvas provided by accompaniment part
- Often a feature of slower movements in the classical and romantic era
- Closely related to the textures in song/lied accompaniment

Lili Boulanger – Nocturne for violin & piano (1911)

Toru Takemitsu – Distance de Fée (1951)

Amy Beach – Romance for violin & piano

c) Non-hierarchical interaction (conversational)

Beethoven - Kreutzer sonata, No. 9 in A major (1803)

Bela Bartok – Violin Sonata No.2 (1922)

Kaija Saariaho – Tocar (2010)

John Cage – Six Melodies for violin & piano (1950)

Brahms violin Sonatas

Benjamin Britten – Suite for Violin & piano, No. II

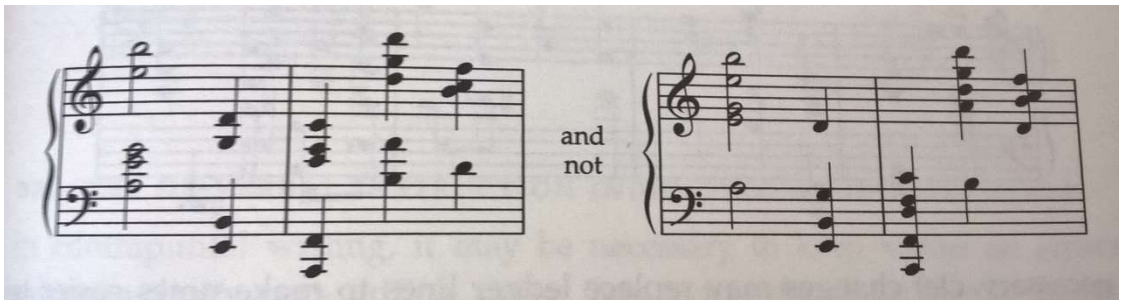
Alfred Schnittke – Violin sonata (1963)

Witold Lutoslawksi – Subito for violin & piano

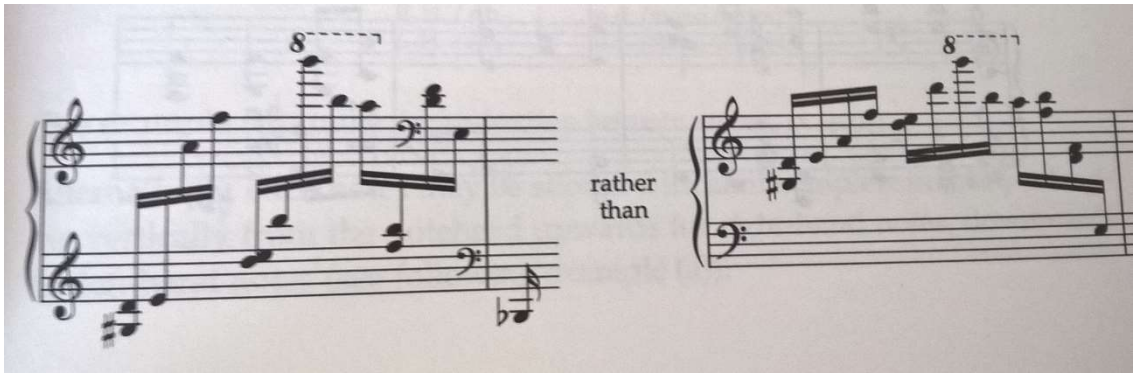
Some Basics of Piano Notation

Extracts taken from Elaine Gould's *Behind Bars*, published by Faber Music.

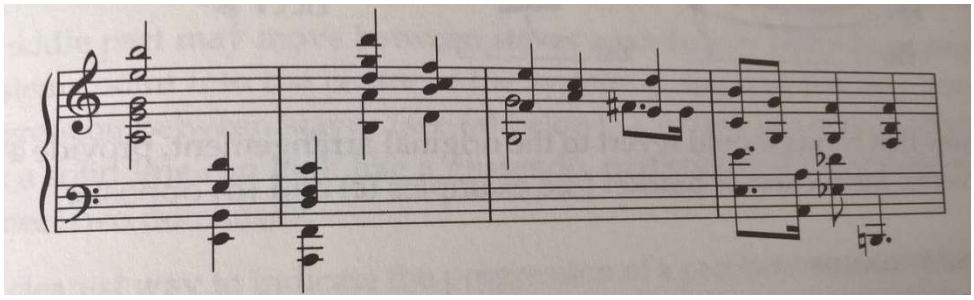
Distribution of notes on the two staves indicates which hand is to play them.



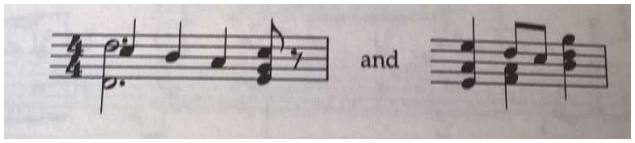
It is important to show how the hands of the play are to move. This also helps with making sure you compose something practical.



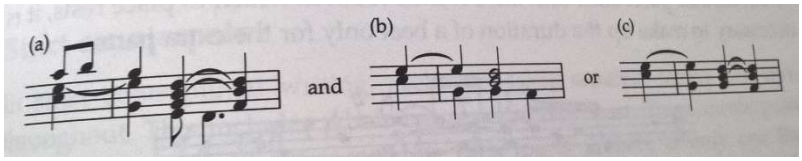
Stem direction can also be used to indicate hand distribution, whilst avoiding ledger lines and clef changes.



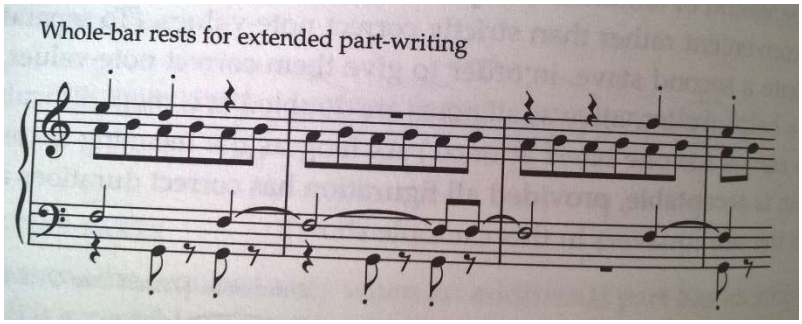
There can be multiple parts or voices in each hand, and these should be made clear by using different stem directions. It is possible to revert to single stemming at the earliest opportunity (even in the middle of bars), and rests can be hidden where unnecessary.



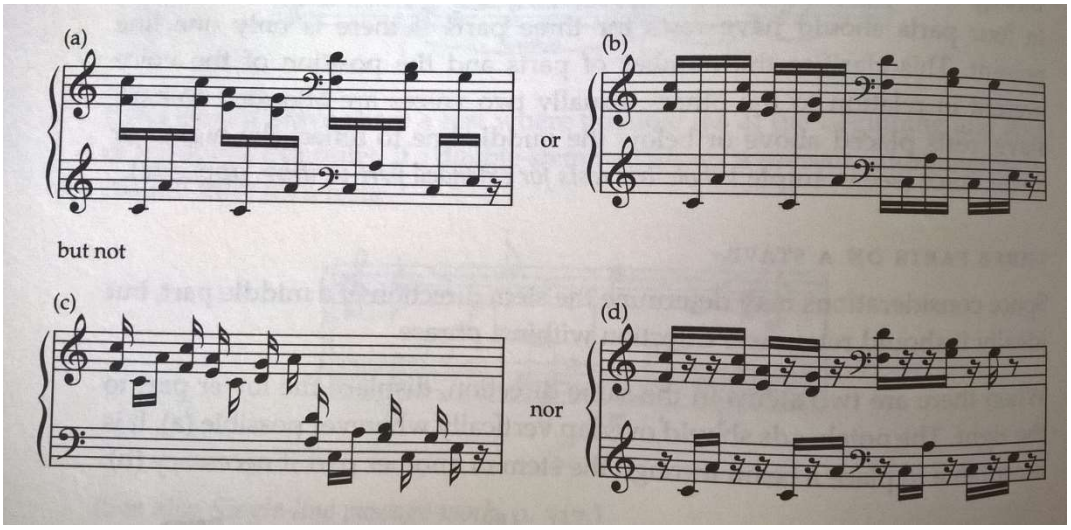
It is possible to have chords where only some notes are tied. Where possible use different stem directions , but if this is not possible then ties can be used to break up larger rhythms in order to show some internal part movement.



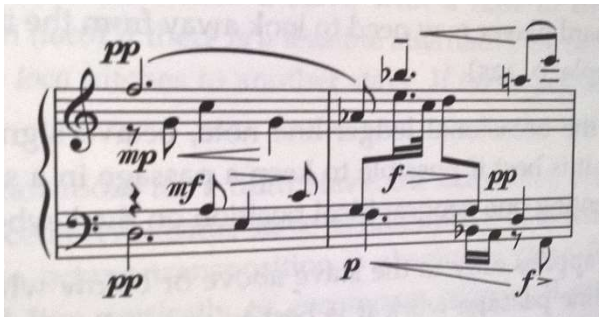
Here is another example of multiple parts on a staff. There is no need to include whole bar rests where parts stop, unless it has a purpose – as in this example.



Where rhythms are split between the hands and staves, it is possible to use a single beam across both staves lines. Be careful not to squash the beams in the middle!



Dynamics in general go in the middle of the staves, if they apply to both hands. Where they do not they can go below each stave, or even above if there is complex part writing.



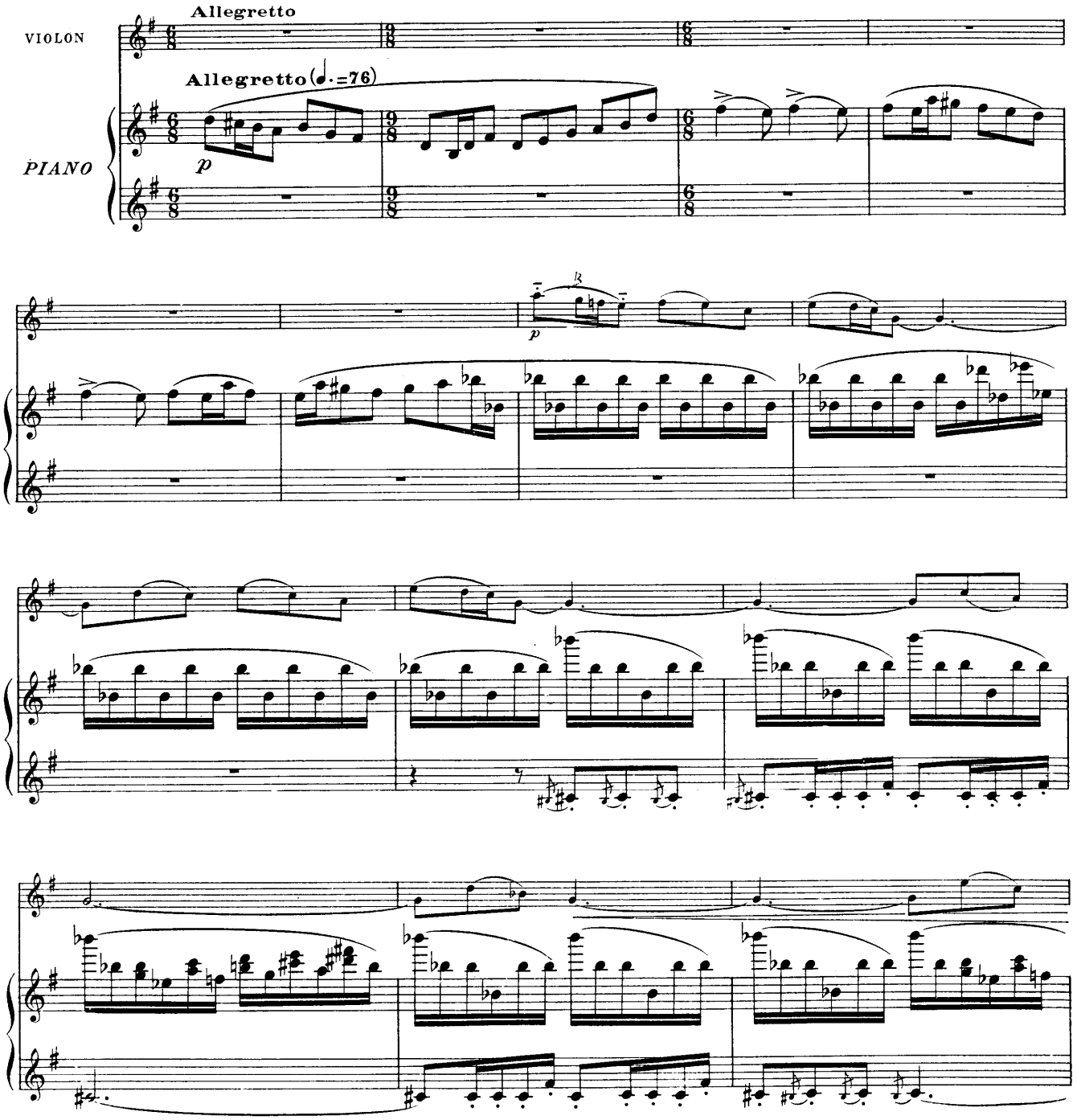
A Hélène Jourdan-Morhange

SONATE

Violon et Piano

MAURICE RAVEL

I



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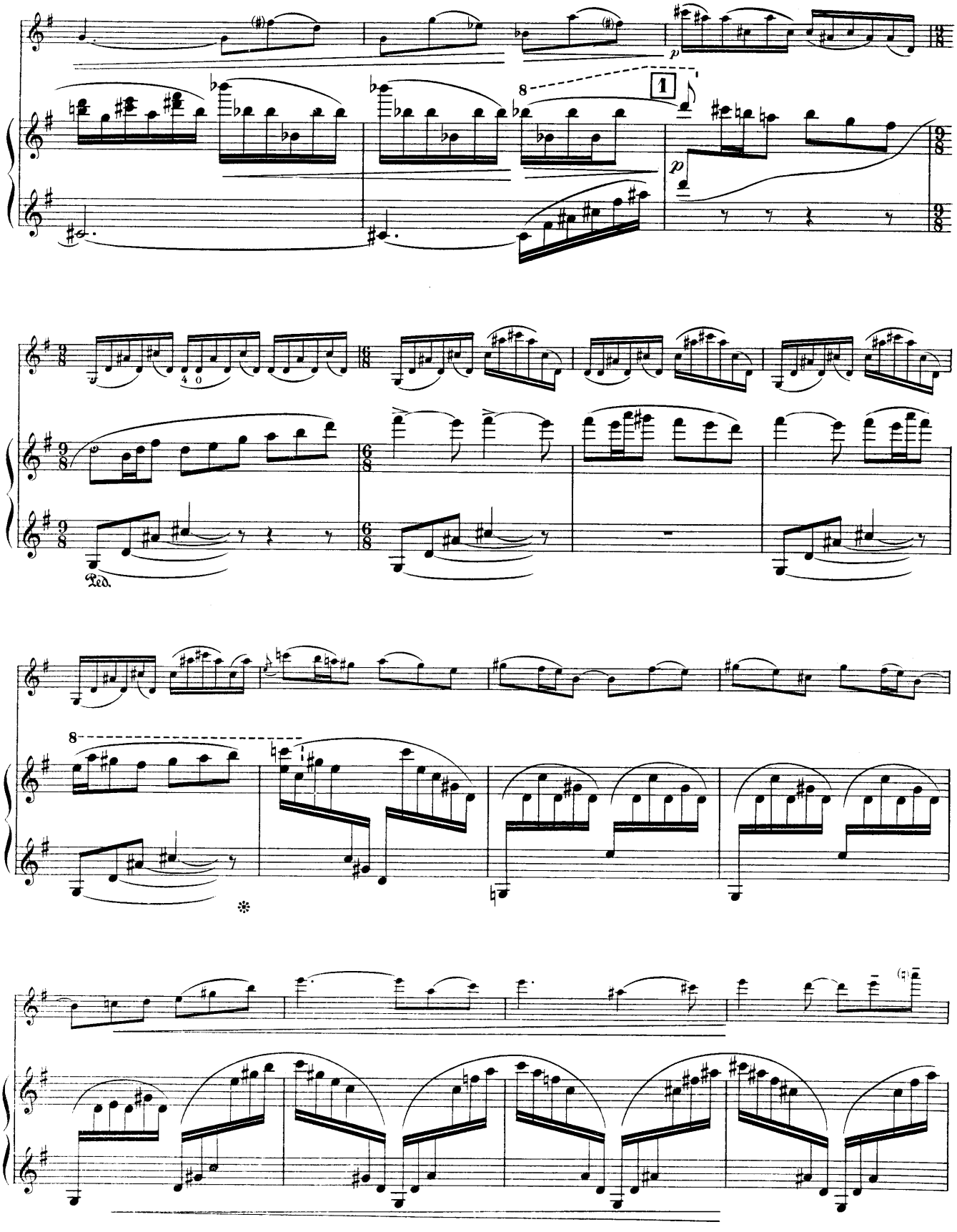
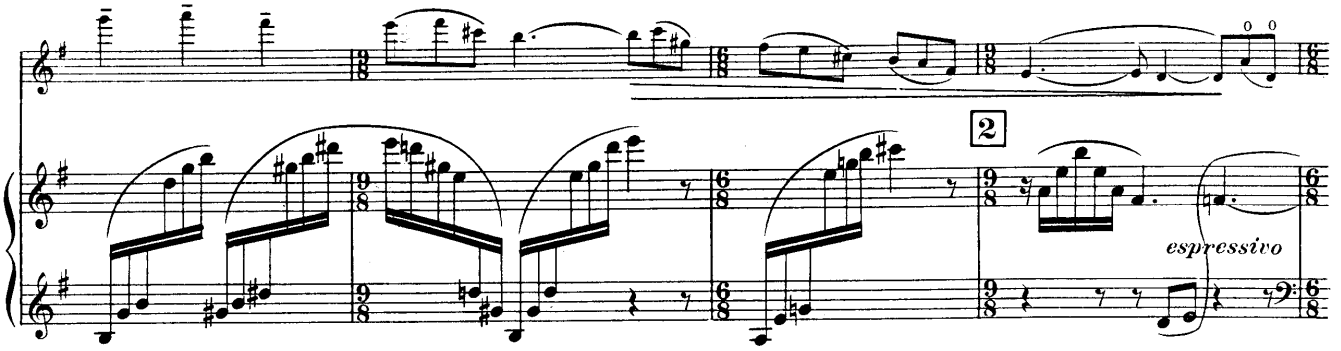
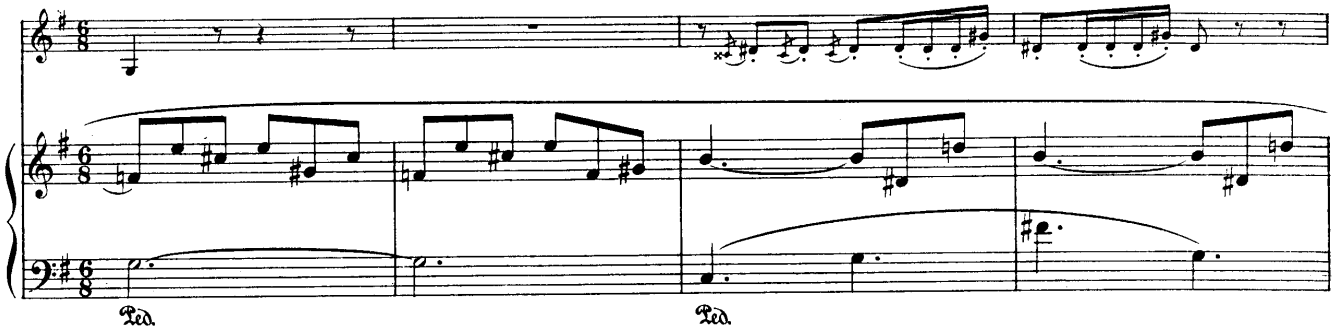
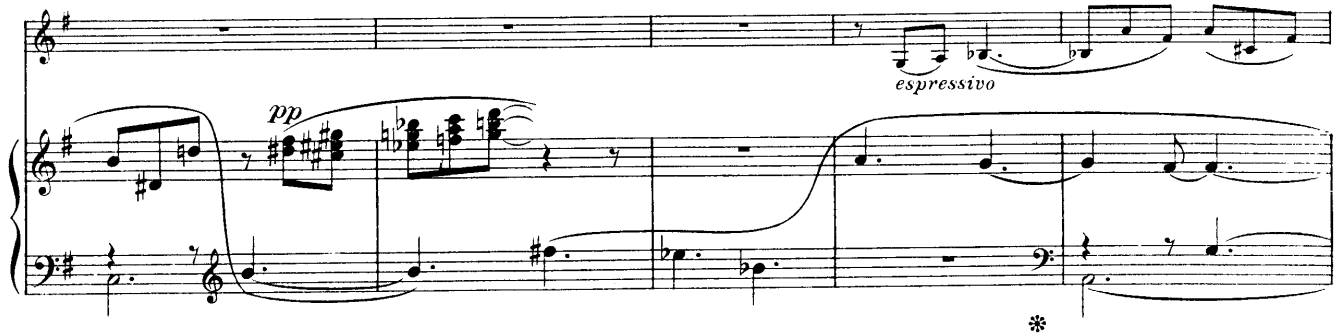
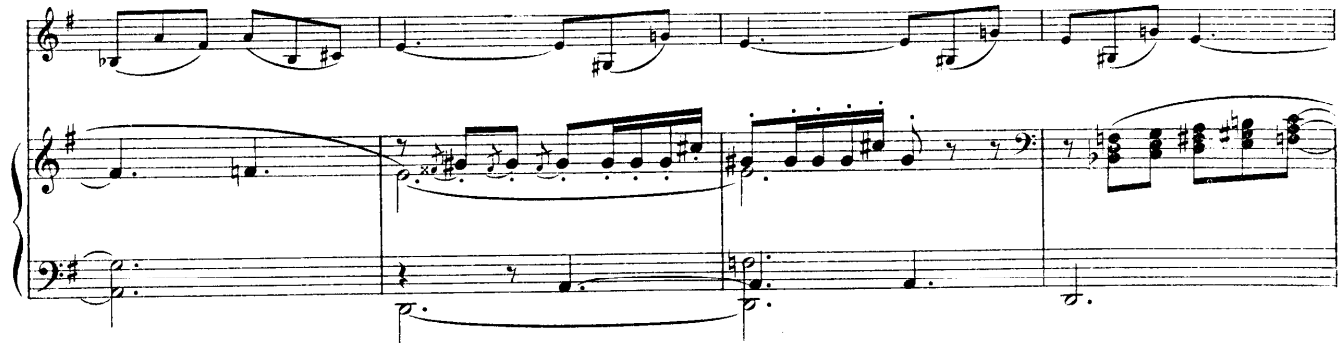

8
1
p
Ped.


2
espressivo

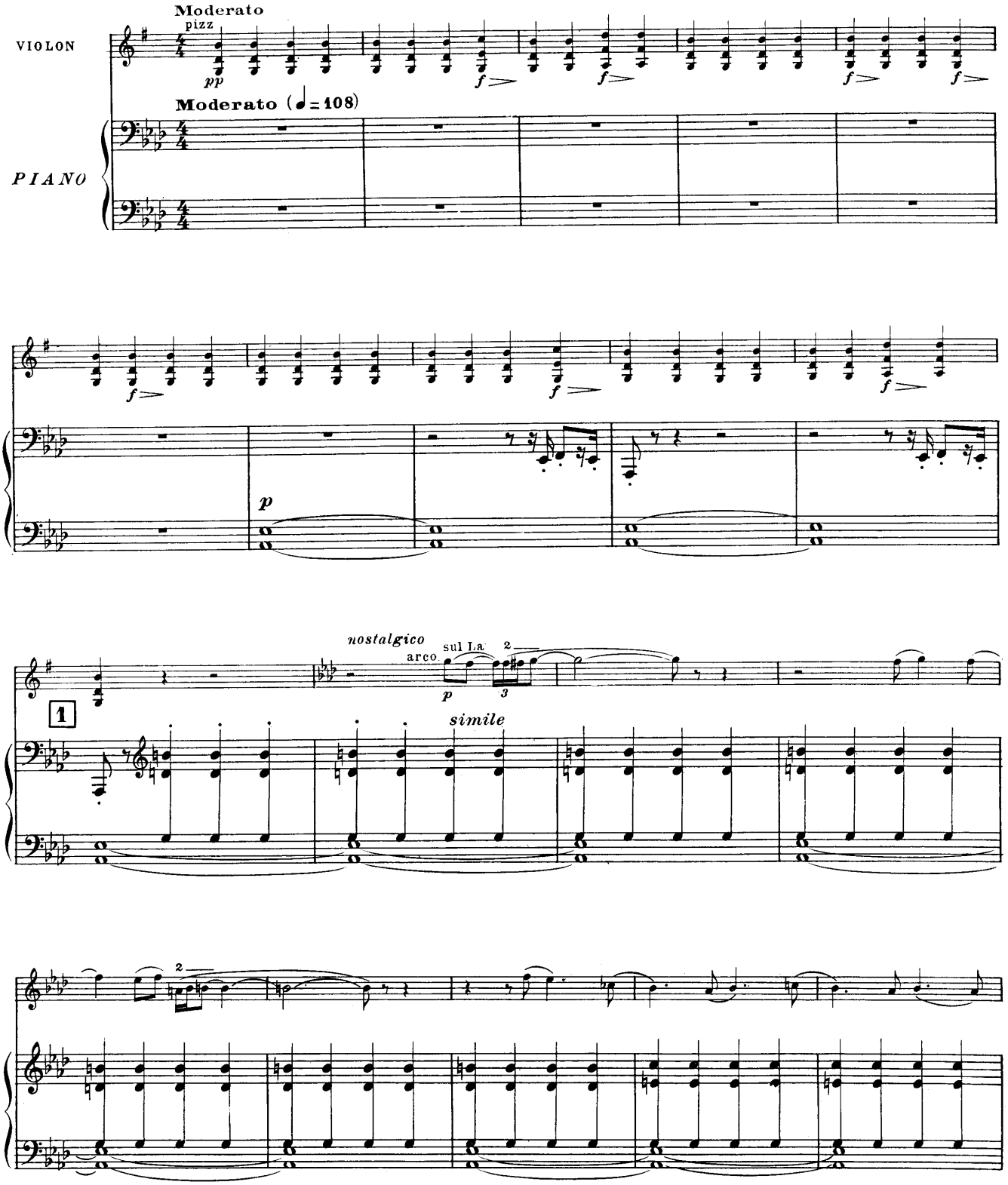

Ped.
Ped.

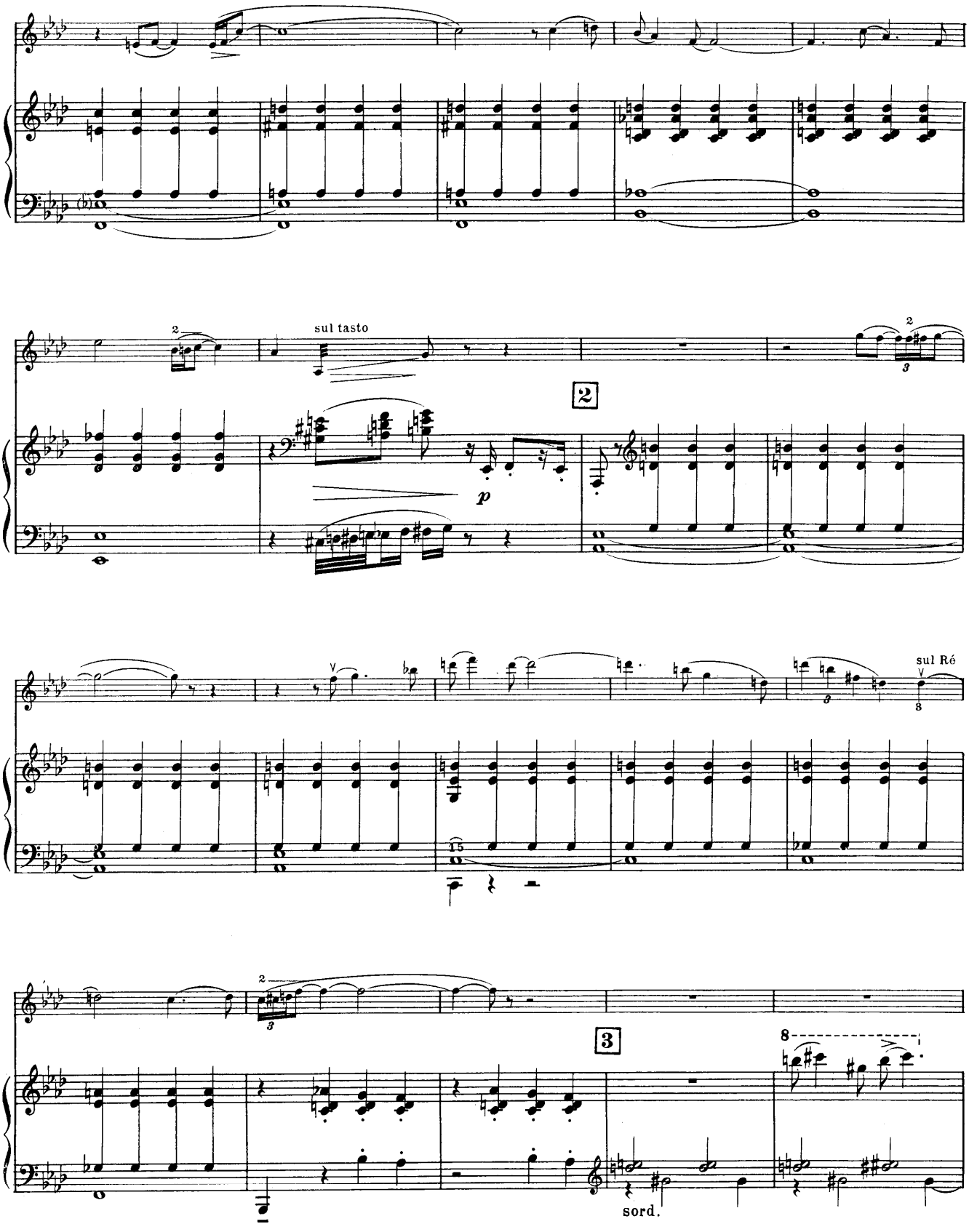

espressivo
pp



II

Blues

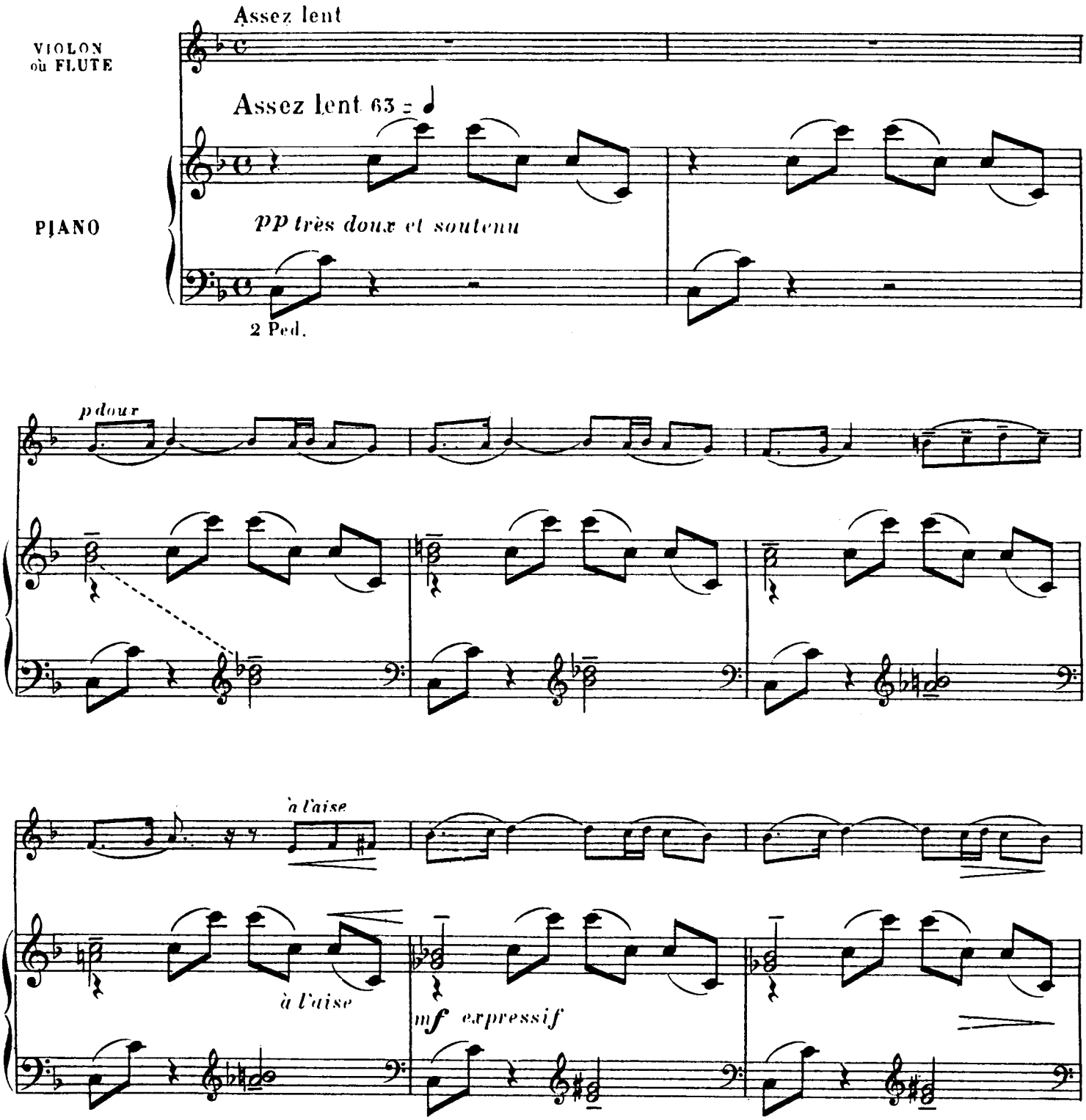

Moderato
pizz
VIOLON
PIANO
Moderato (♩= 108)
nostalgico
arco
sul La
simile

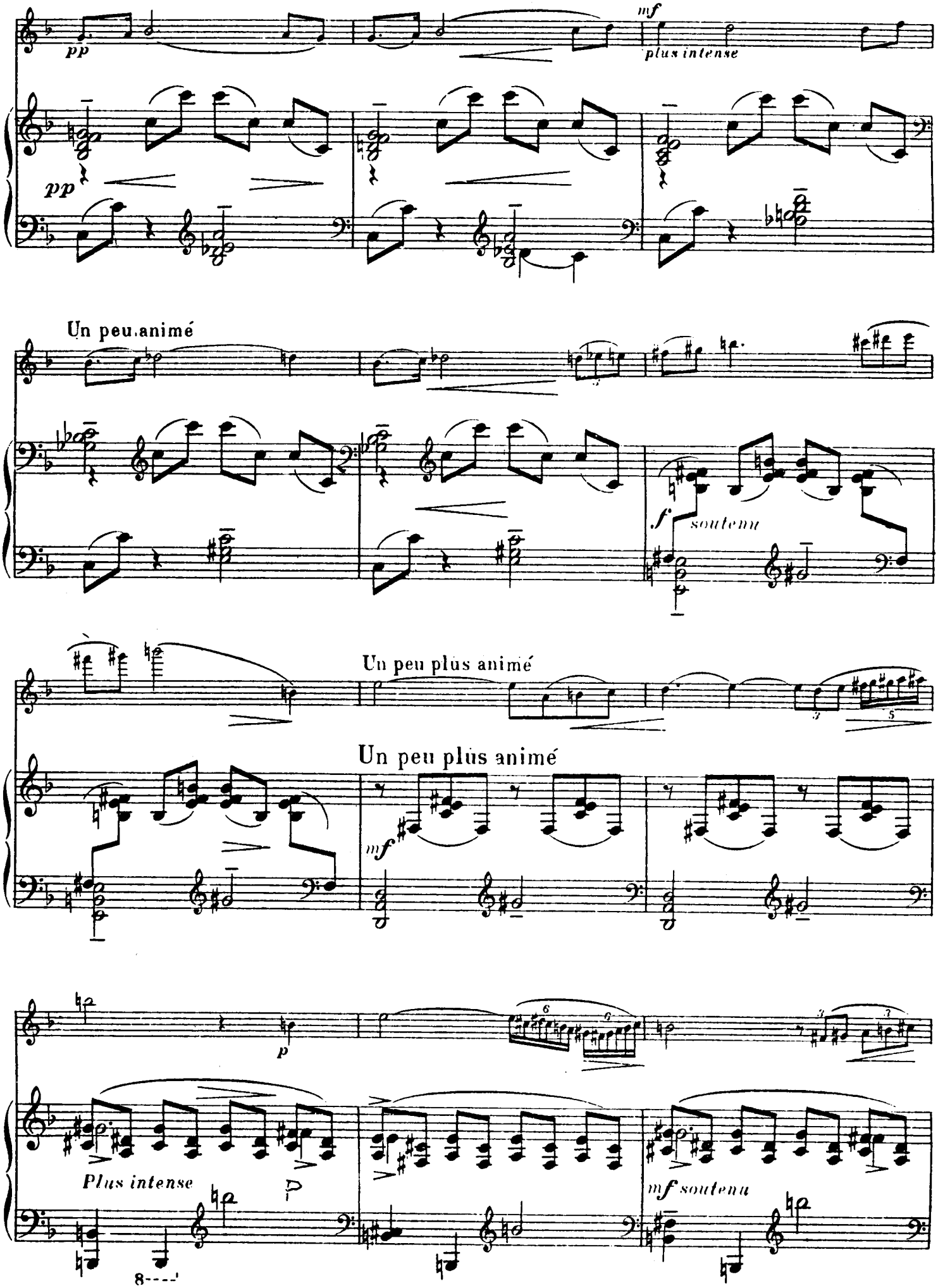

sul tasto
2
p
sul Ré
sord.

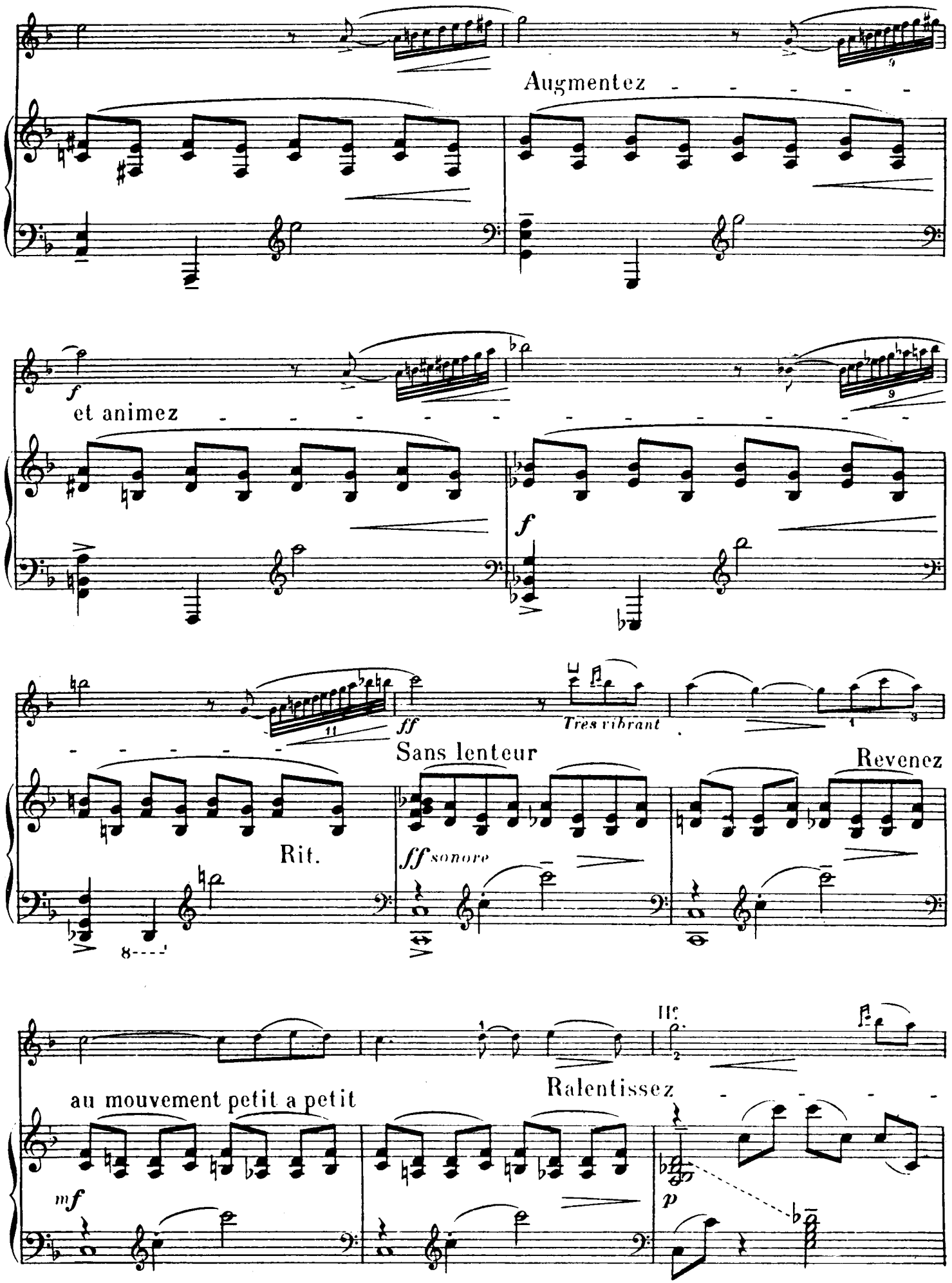
a ma chère MARIE-DANIELLE PARENTEAU

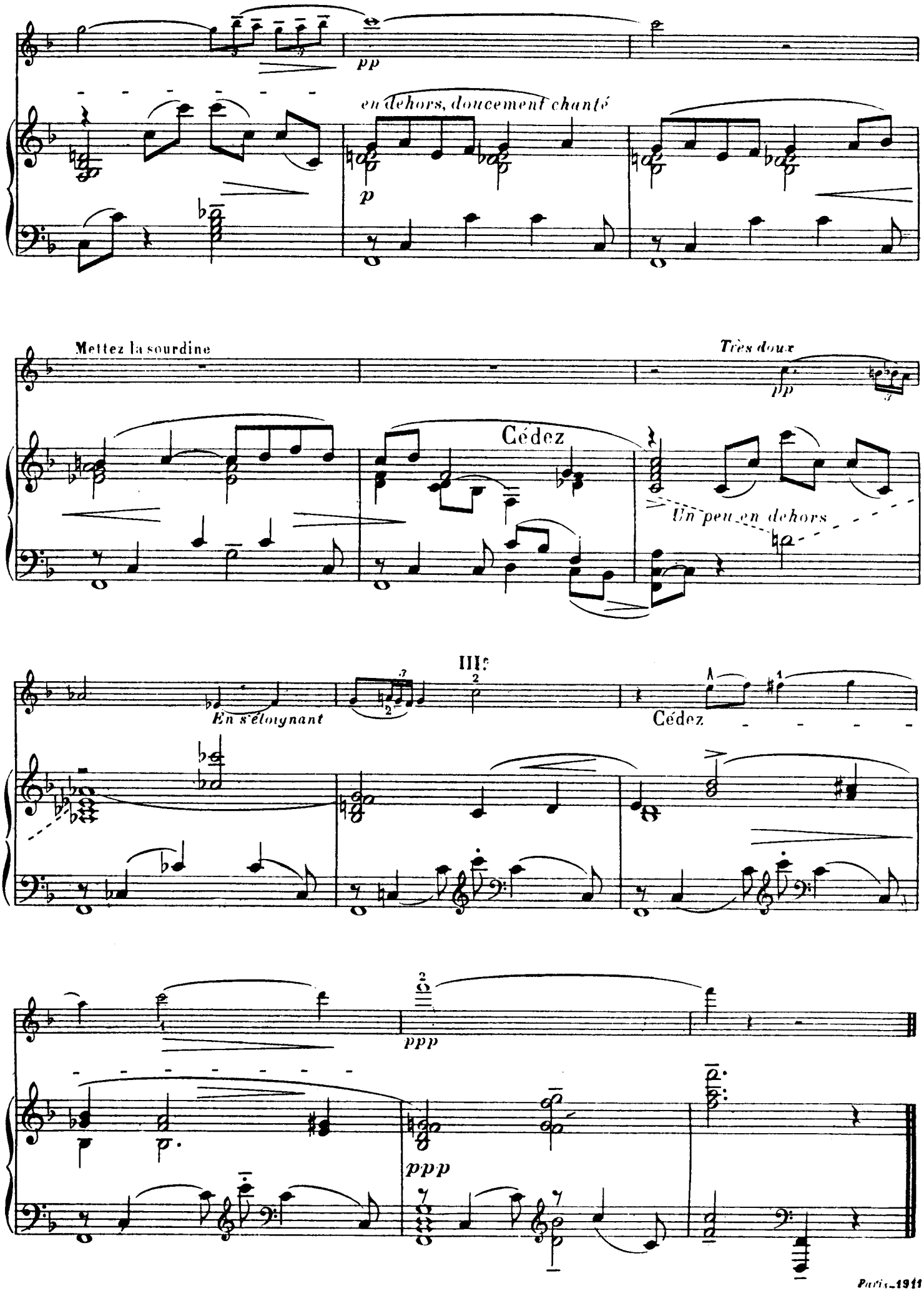
NOCTURNE

LILI BOULANGER
21 août 1893 - 15 mars 1918




pp
mf
plus intense
pp
Un peu animé
f
soutenu
Un peu plus animé
Un peu plus animé
mf
p
Plus intense
p
mf soutenu
8


Augmentez
et animez
f
ff
Très vibrant
Sans lenteur
Revenez
Rit.
ff sonore
au mouvement petit a petit
Ralentissez
mf
p


pp
en dehors, doucement chanté
p
Mettez la sourdine
Très doux
pp
Cédez
Un peu en dehors
En s'éloignant
Cédez
ppp
ppp

SONATE

für Pianoforte und Violine

von

L. VAN BEETHOVEN.

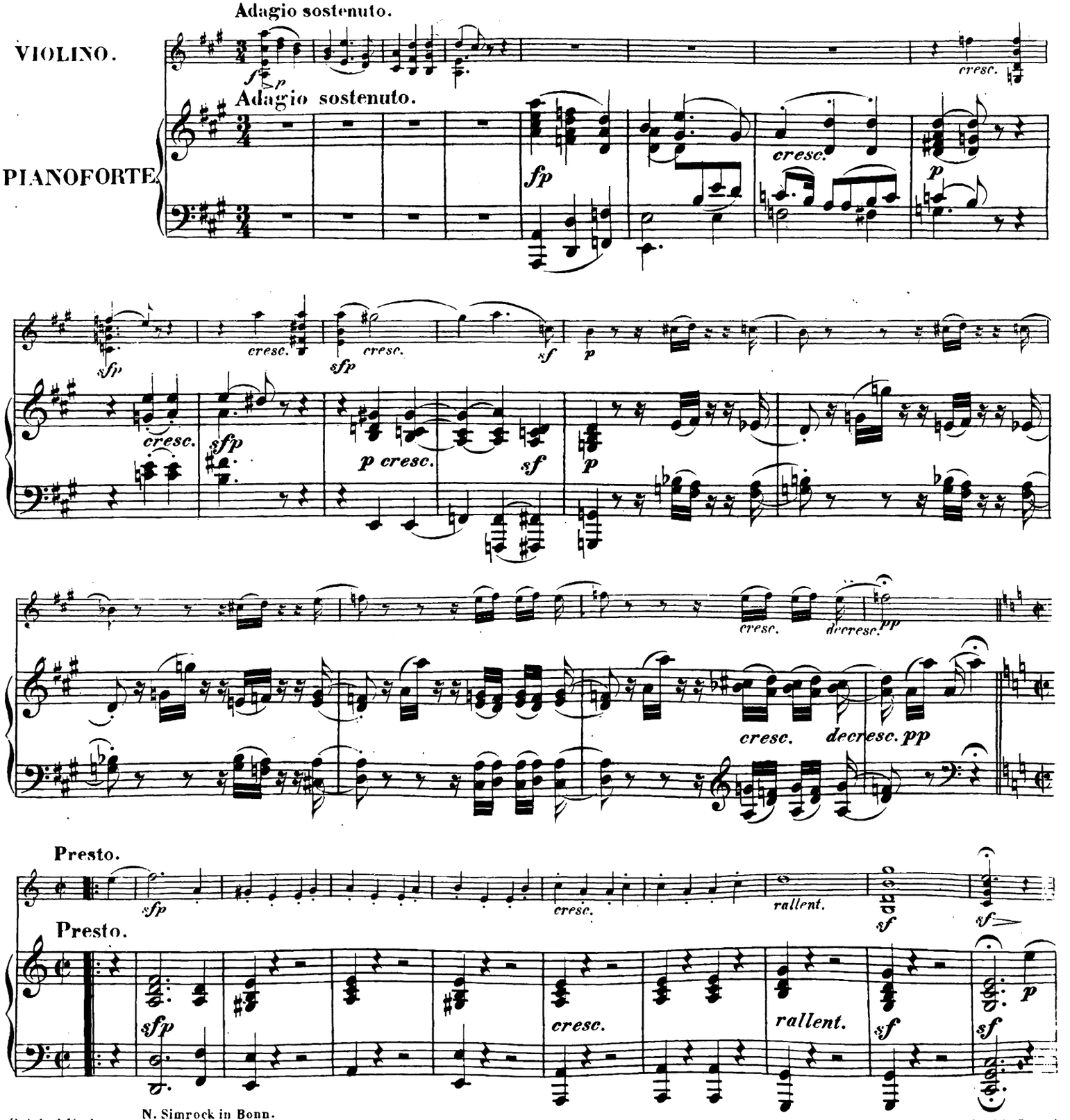
Beethovens Werke.

Serie 12. No 100.

R. Kreutzer gewidmet.

Op. 47.

Sonate No. 9.



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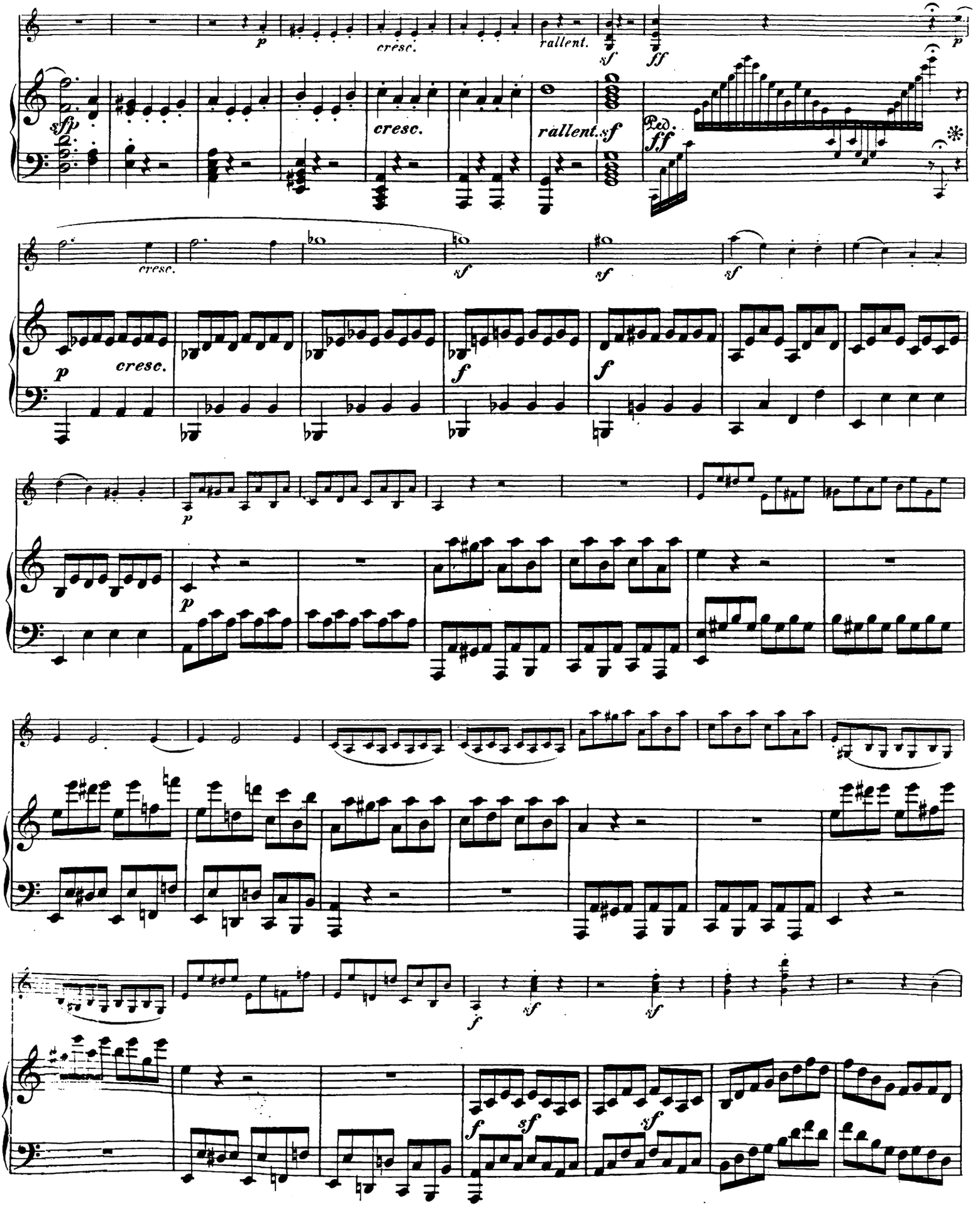
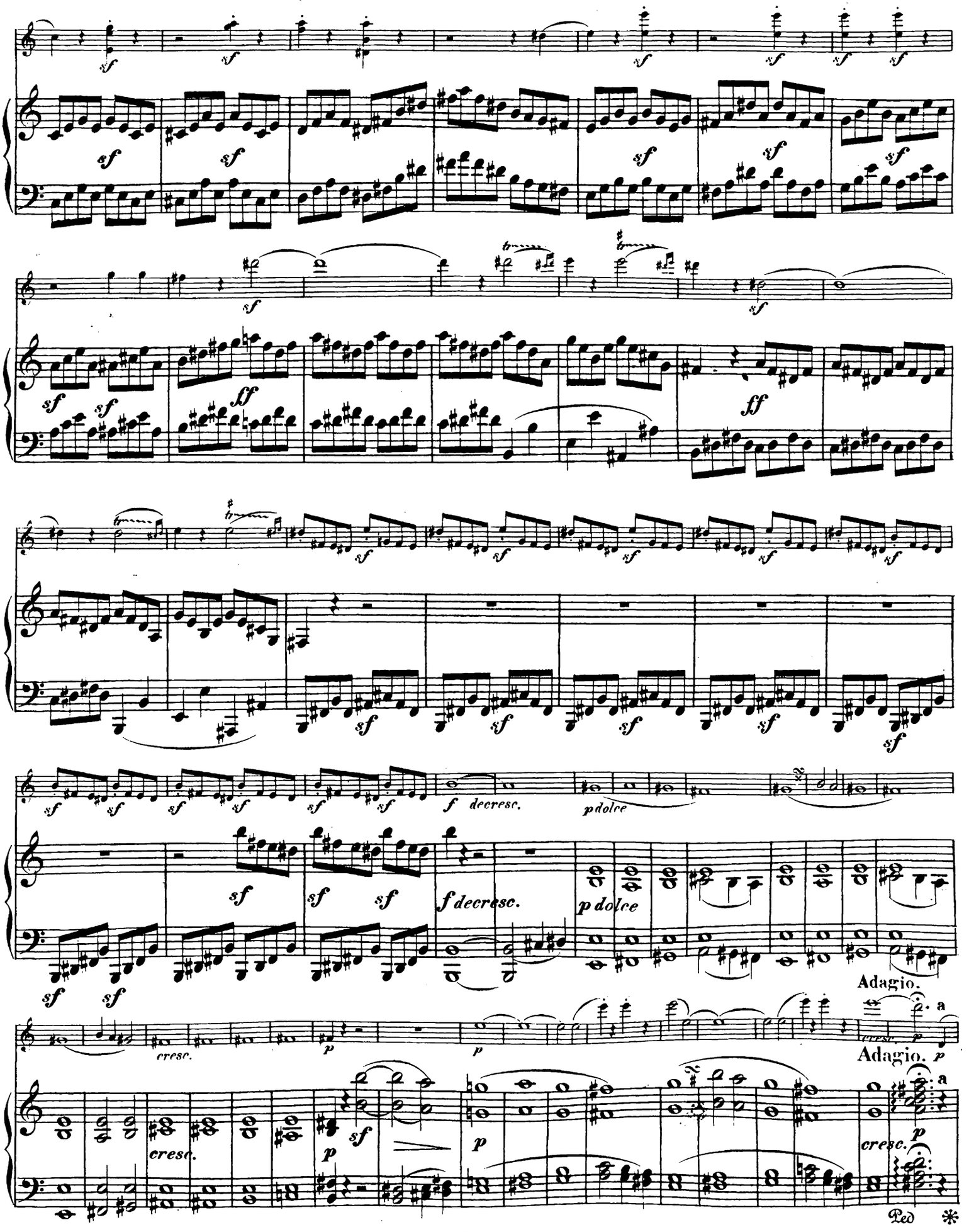

p
cresc.
rallent.
sf
ff
sfp
cresc.
rallent.sf
Ped.
ff
cresc.
sf
sf
sf
p
cresc.
f
f
p
p
f
sf
sf
f
sf
sf


sf
ff
f decresc.
p dolce
cresc.
Adagio.
Ped

IIème SONATE

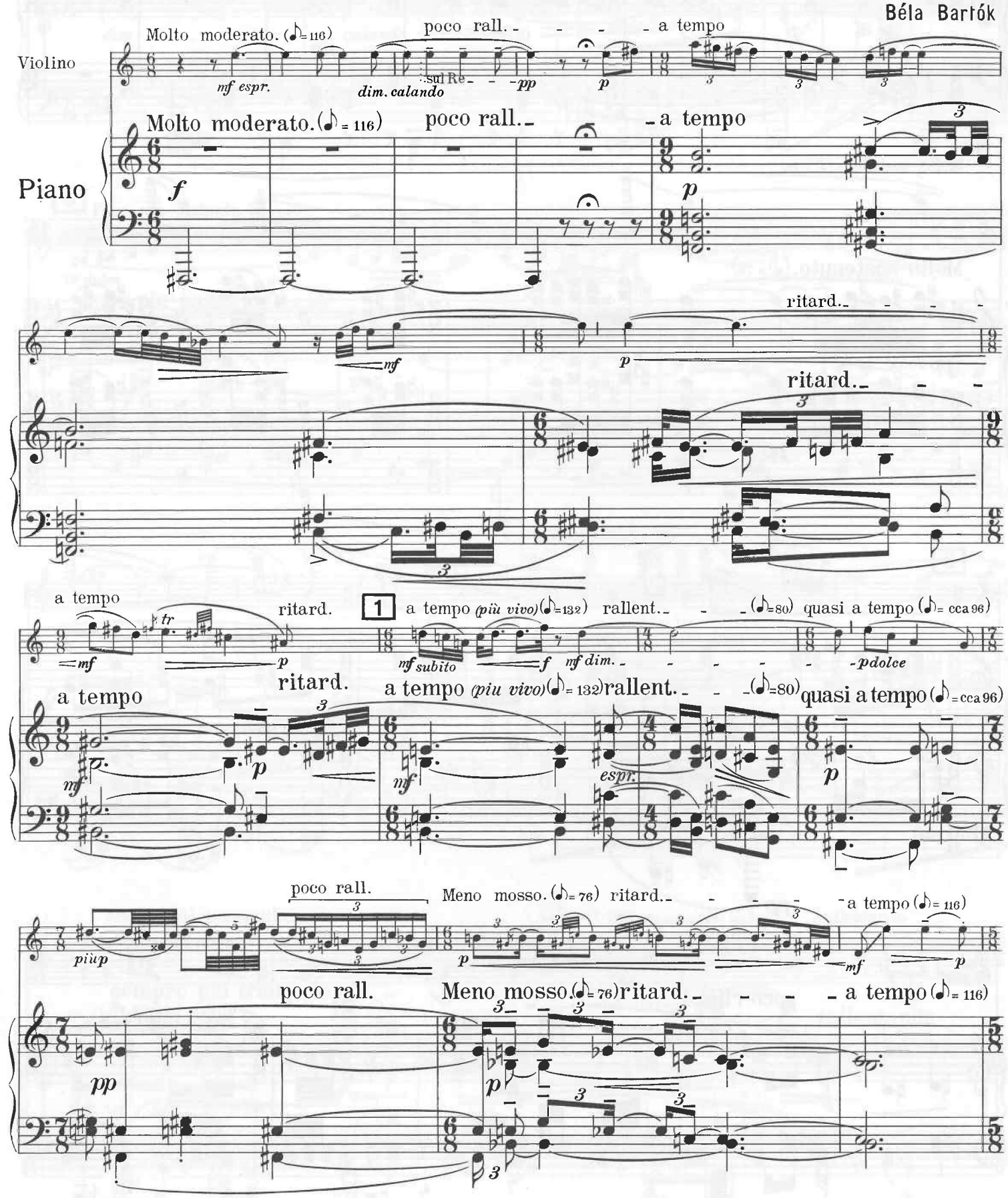
pour Violon et Piano

S 4 - 29

Aufführungsrecht vorbehalten
Droits d'exécution réservés

I.

Béla Bartók



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2

poco stringendo - - - - - rallent. - - - al (♪= 98)

ritard. - - al

con sord.

nf f p pp ppp

poco stringendo - - - rallent. - - - al (♪= 98)

ritard. - al

nf p f pp p secco

Molto sostenuto. (♪= 76)

Molto sostenuto. (♪= 76)

pp dolce

pp

Ped.

3

p molto espr.

pp

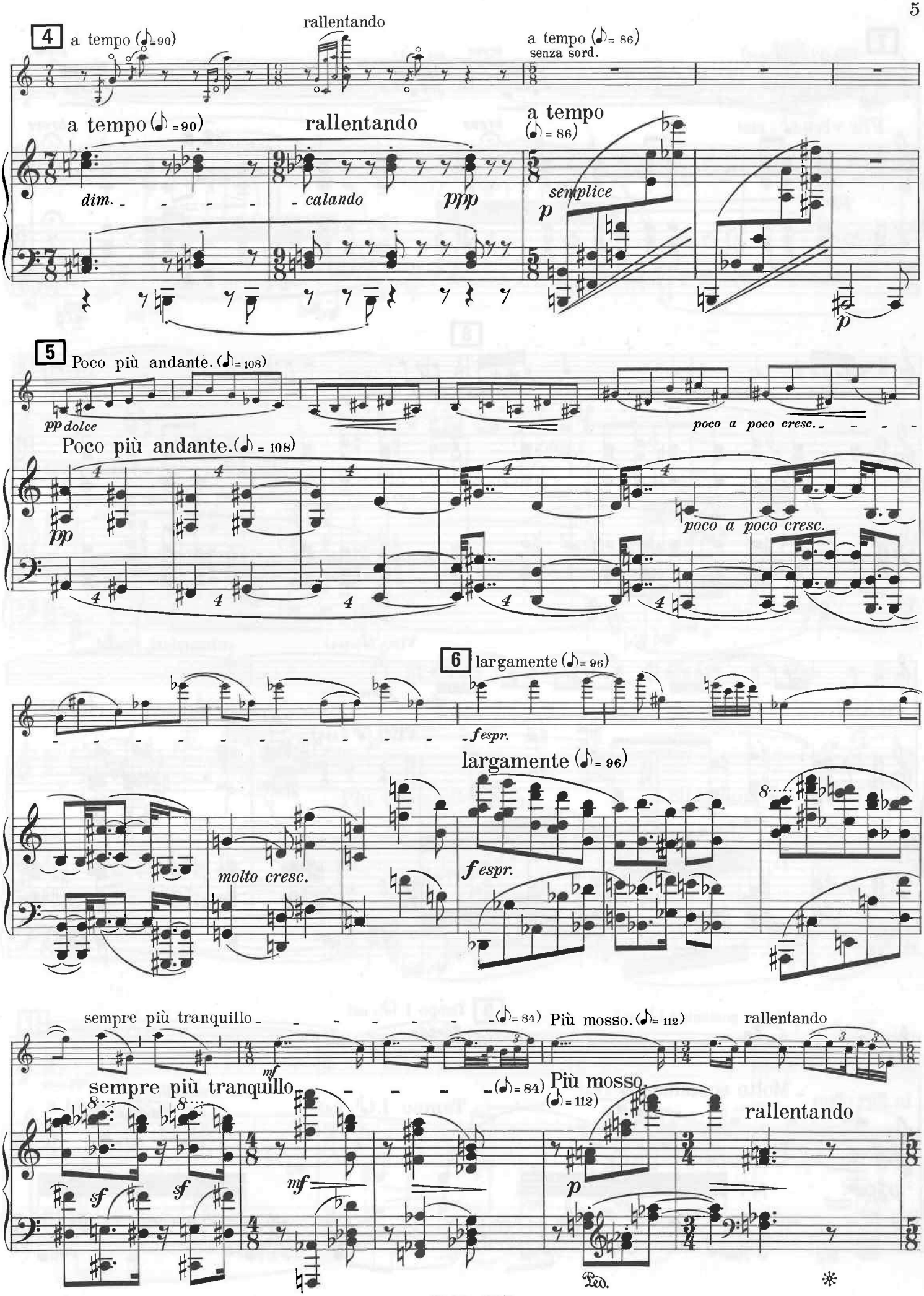
poco ritard. - - - - a tempo

poco ritard. - - -

poco ritard. - - - a tempo

poco ritard. - -

p mp


4
a tempo (♪=90)
rallentando
a tempo (♪= 86)
senza sord.
a tempo (♪ = 90)
rallentando
a tempo
(♪ = 86)
dim.
calando
ppp
semplice
p
p
5
Poco più andante. (♪= 108)
pp dolce
poco a poco cresc.
Poco più andante. (♪ = 108)
pp
poco a poco cresc.
6
largamente (♪= 96)
f espr.
largamente (♪= 96)
molto cresc.
f espr.
sempre più tranquillo
(♪= 84)
Più mosso. (♪= 112)
rallentando
mf
sempre più tranquillo
(♪= 84)
Più mosso.
(♪= 112)
rallentando
sf
sf
mf
p
Ped.
*