St. Francis' Trial

For Carillon

by

Jo Coenen

In 1219, in the midst of the Fifth Crusade, a peaceful encounter took place between St. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan of Egypt, Al-Kamil. St. Francis was deeply impressed by this meeting and was also inspired by the *Adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer. Back in Italy, he promoted bell ringing as a Christian call to prayer. In 1220, he wrote to the Custodians:

> *"May you announce and preach His praise to all nations in such a way that praise and thanks may always be given to the all-powerful God by all people throughout the world at every hour and whenever bells are rung."*

A few decades later, the Franciscan friars started the tradition of the *Angelus*, a prayer to Mother Mary, by ringing bells in the morning, noon and evening.

On Friday 4 October 2019, St. Francis day, the Belgian Franciscan family launches *Franciscan Call 4 Peace* (www.franciscancall4peace.org). At the start of the Muslim Friday Prayer, at 14:00, we invite churches and monasteries worldwide to ring their bells for peace, and to organise interreligious meetings. In particular, we invite carillonneurs worldwide to play *St. Francis' Trial,* a piece for carillon composed by Jo Coenen for *Franciscan Call 4 Peace*. May this composition be played at intervals in the future as a musical example of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

The carillon composition *St. Francis' Trial* tells the story of the rapprochement between two gifted spiritual leaders, who both wanted to achieve peace in a socio-political context that did not permit that possibility. Not only did St. Francis manage to gain access to Sultan Al-Kamil in the heat of battle, but he also entered into diplomatic talks with him in the hope that a peaceful compromise could be reached that would stop the bloodshed of the Fifth Crusade. Two people of faith who could talk to each other, each rooted in his own tradition.

The composition starts with the *Adhan*, the traditional Muslim call to prayer. This *Adhan* is followed by the *Angelus*, a long forgotten Western hymn which, in turn, calls on Christians to pray. Even though they resemble each other more strongly than one might suspect, they both remain true to themselves and faithfully bear witness to the tradition they express. In course of the further development of the piece, a dialogue develops between the *Adhan* and the *Angelus*, while the clash of the Fifth Crusade continues unabated.

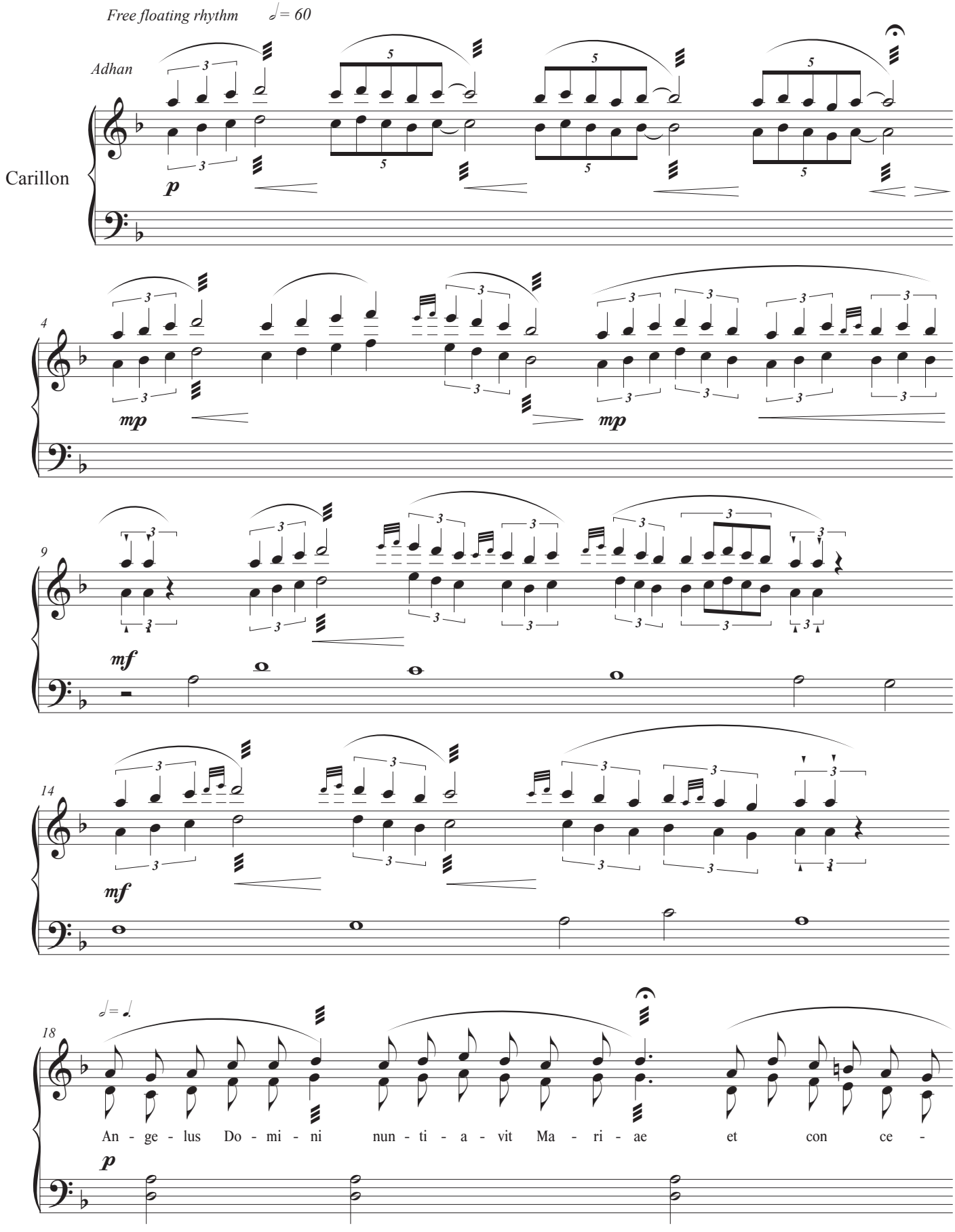
Suddenly in the music the focus of the spiritual struggle is shifted to our own time, where extremism is the order of the day on all sides. This musical passage expresses fear, which is the deeper psychological root of many prejudices and the inability to communicate. An elegy unites us all, witnessing the absurd bloodshed of our time.

The piece resumes the *Adhan* and ends with a '*lento mistico*': Of every religion, only the mystics speak the same language. Of all believers, they understand each other best and they seem to be speaking about the same reality, perhaps because there is only one God?

St. Francis' Trial

To the Tau-movement, for St. Francis' day

Jo Coenen



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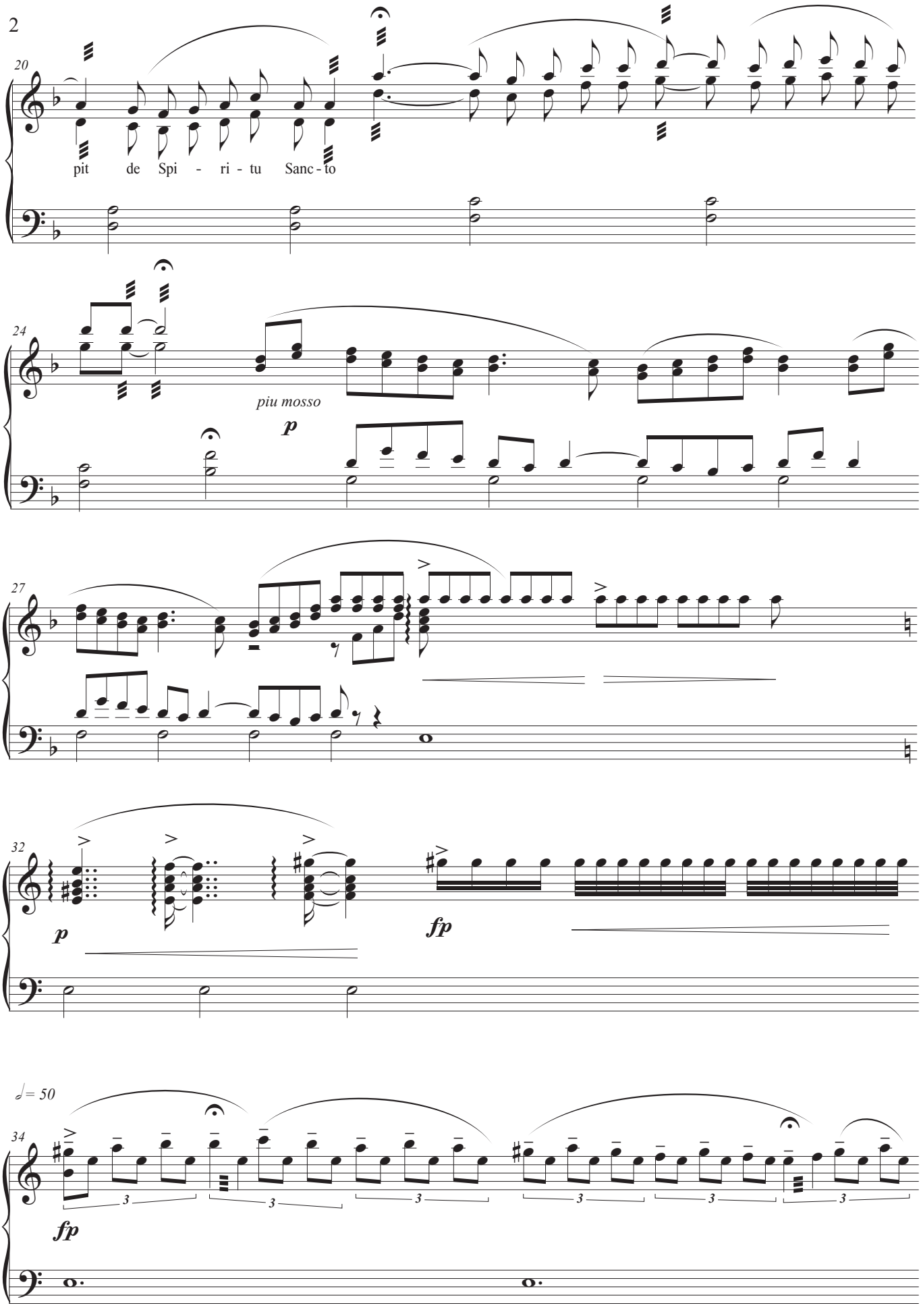
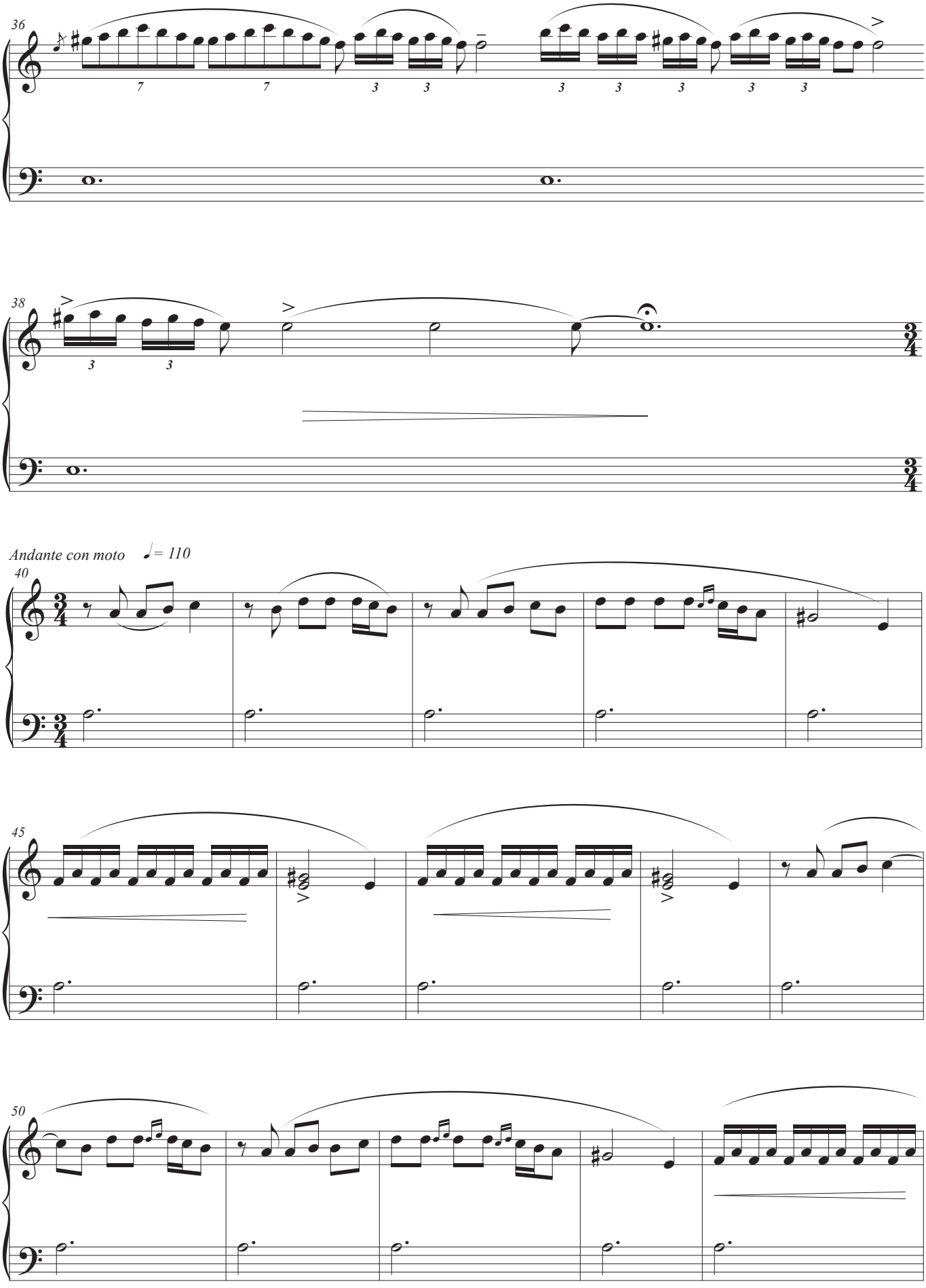
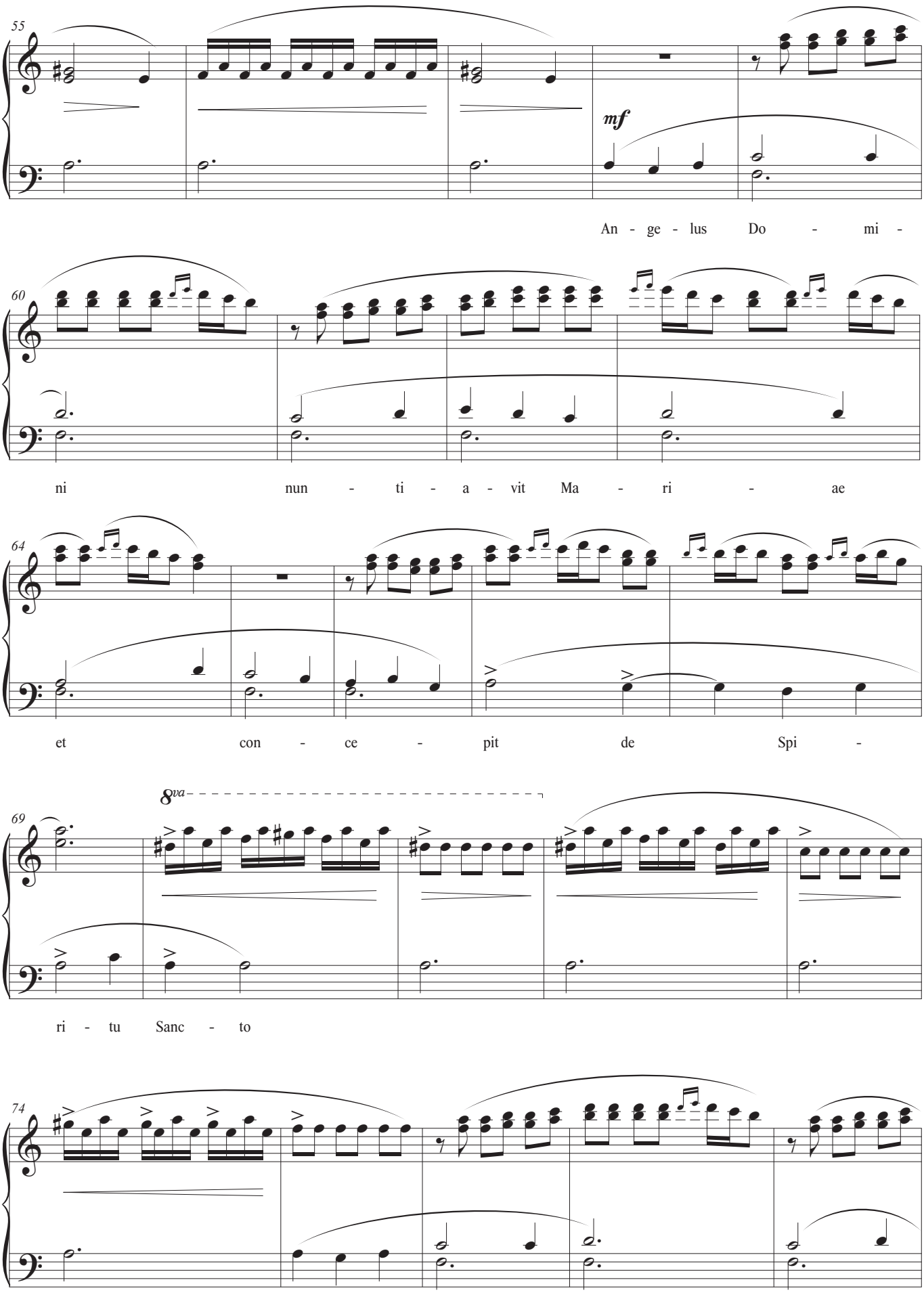
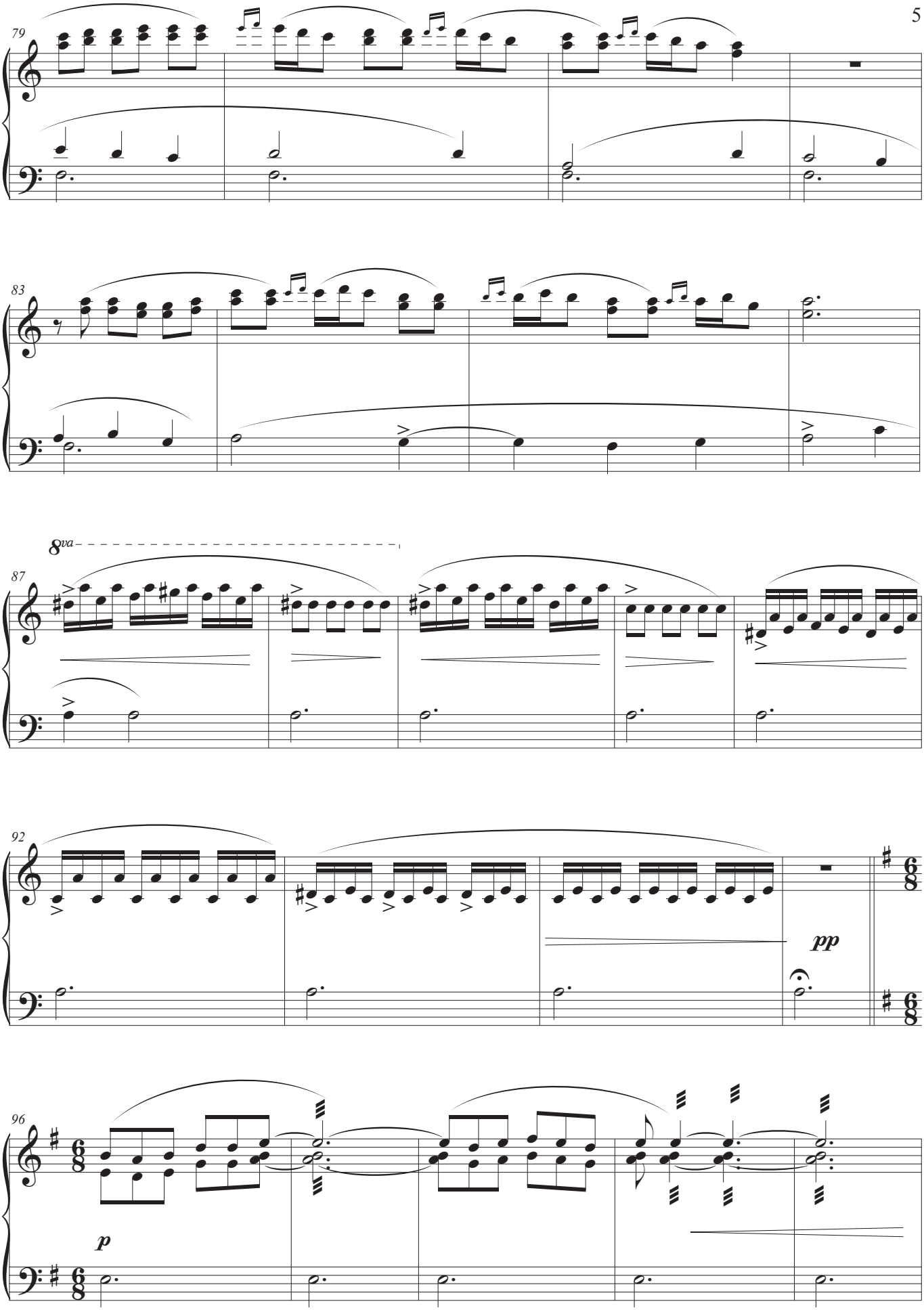
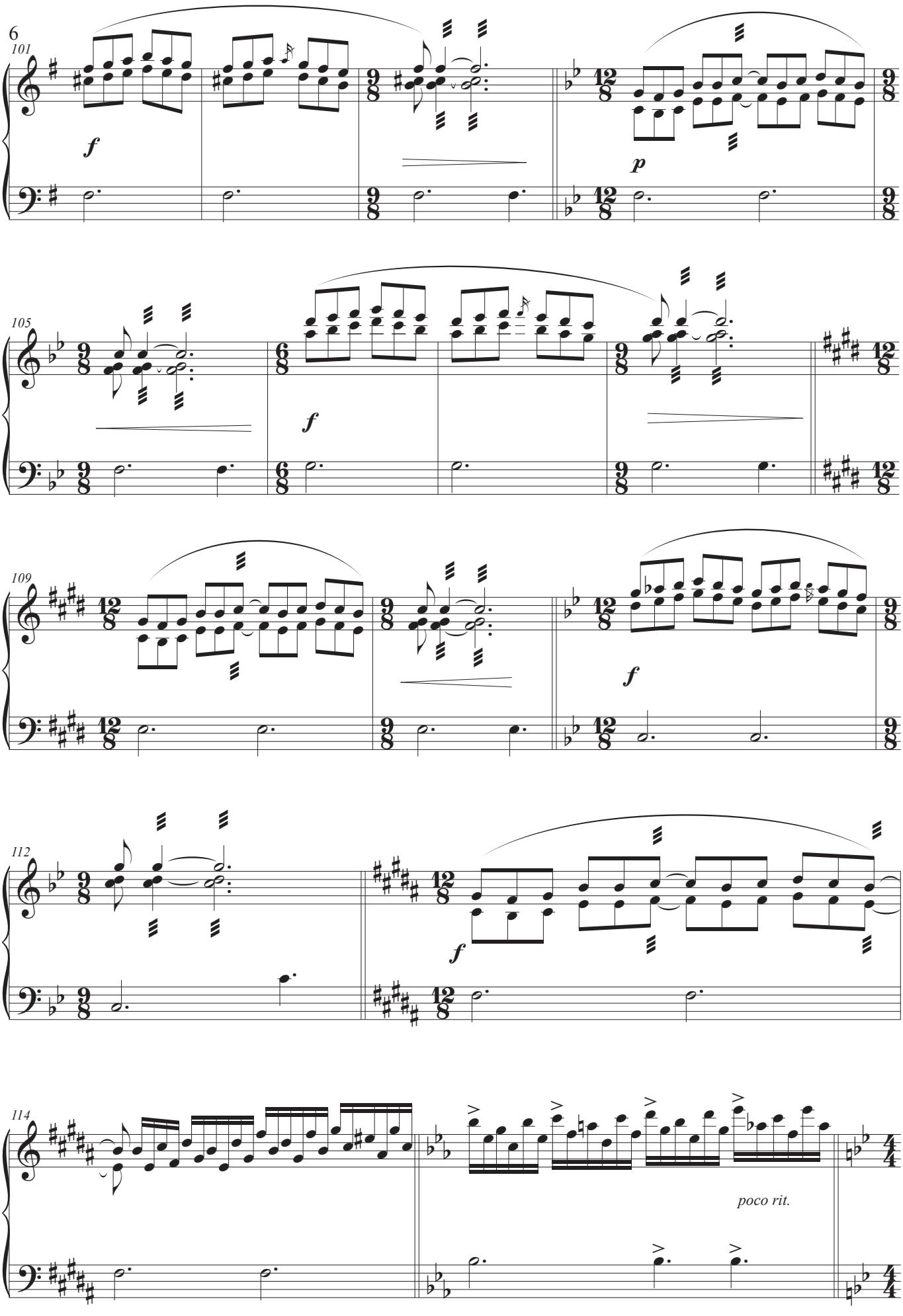
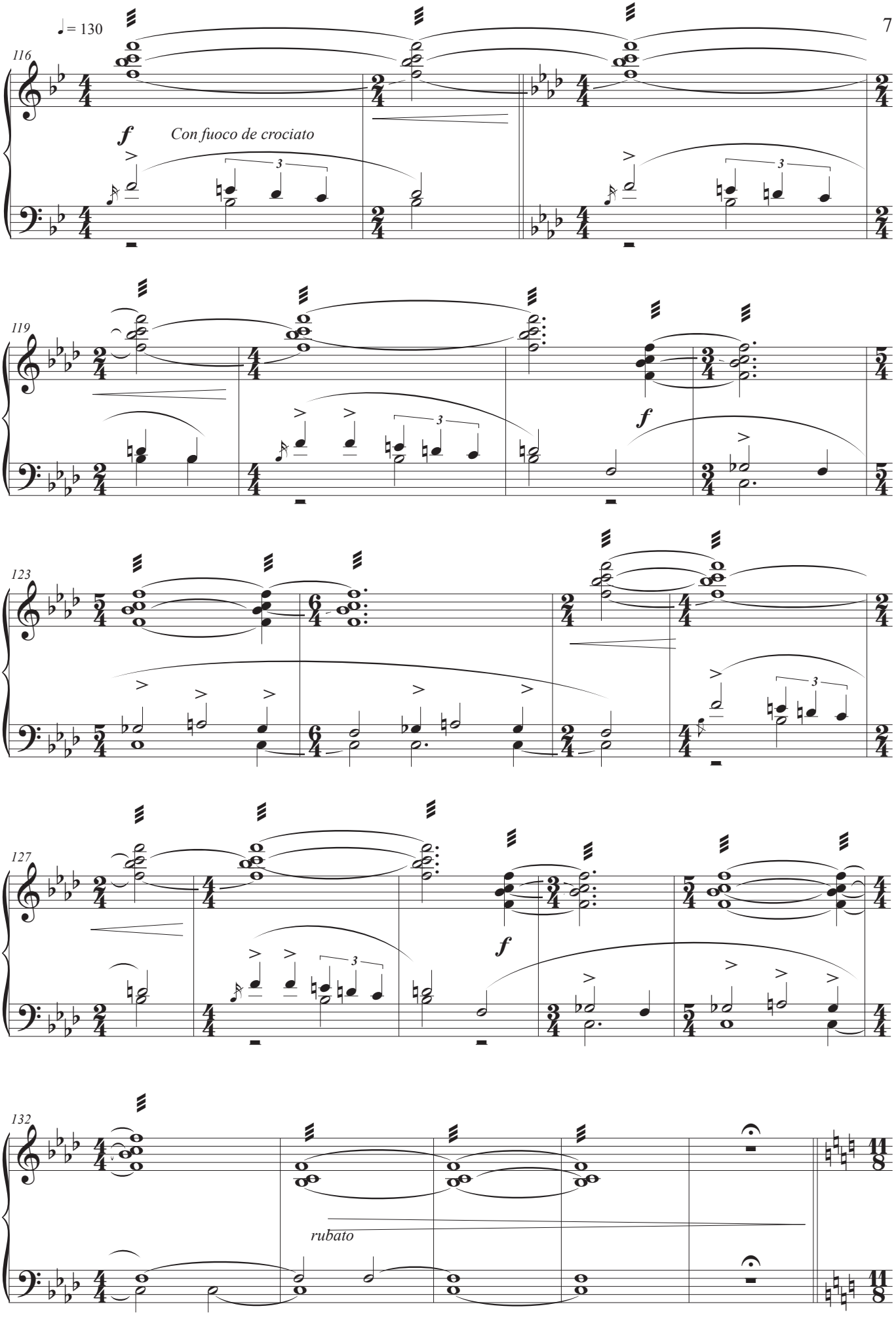

20
pit de Spi - ri - tu Sanc - to
24
piu mosso
p
27
32
p
fp
♩= 50
34
fp
3
3
3
3
3
3

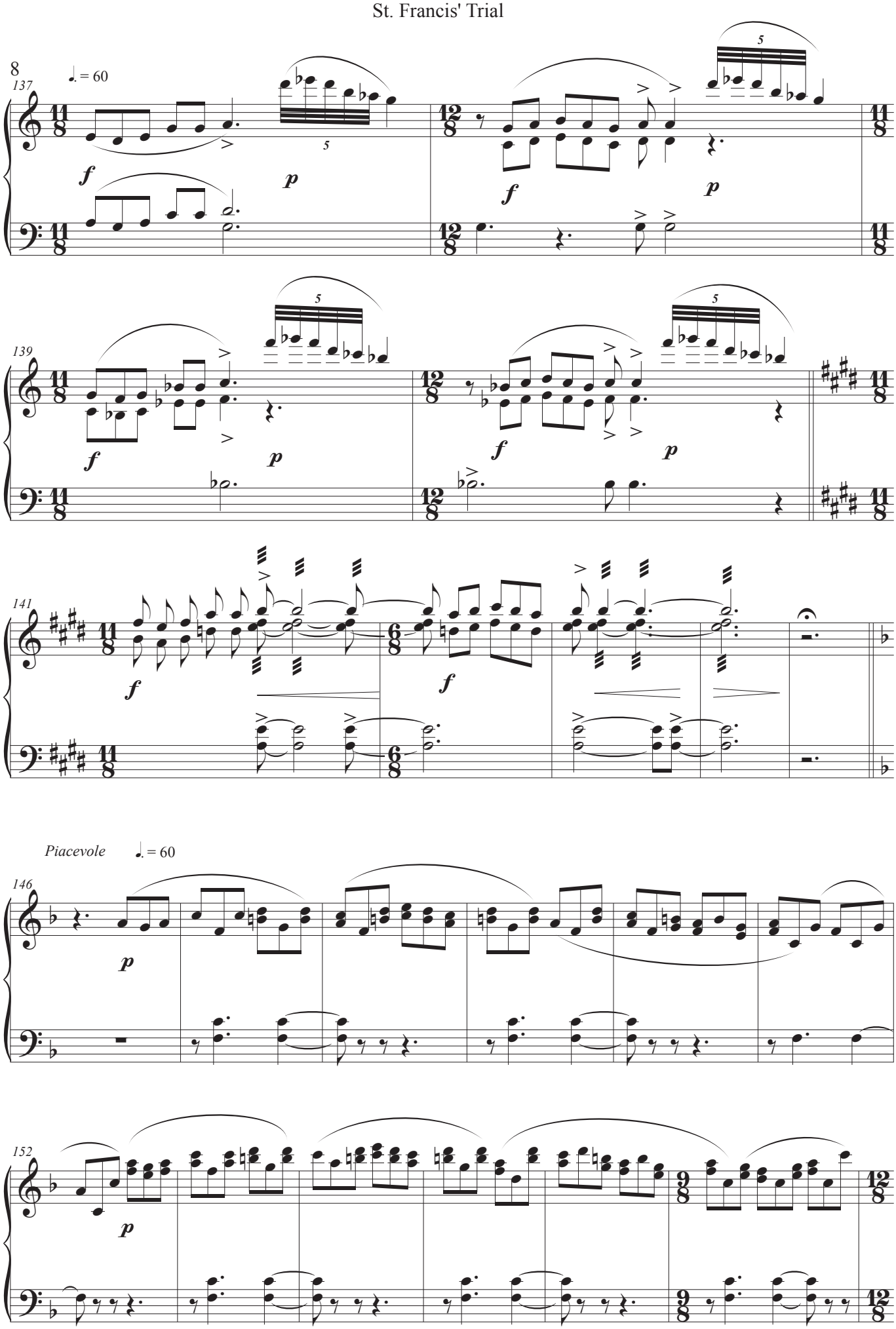

36
38
Andante con moto
♩= 110
40
45
50

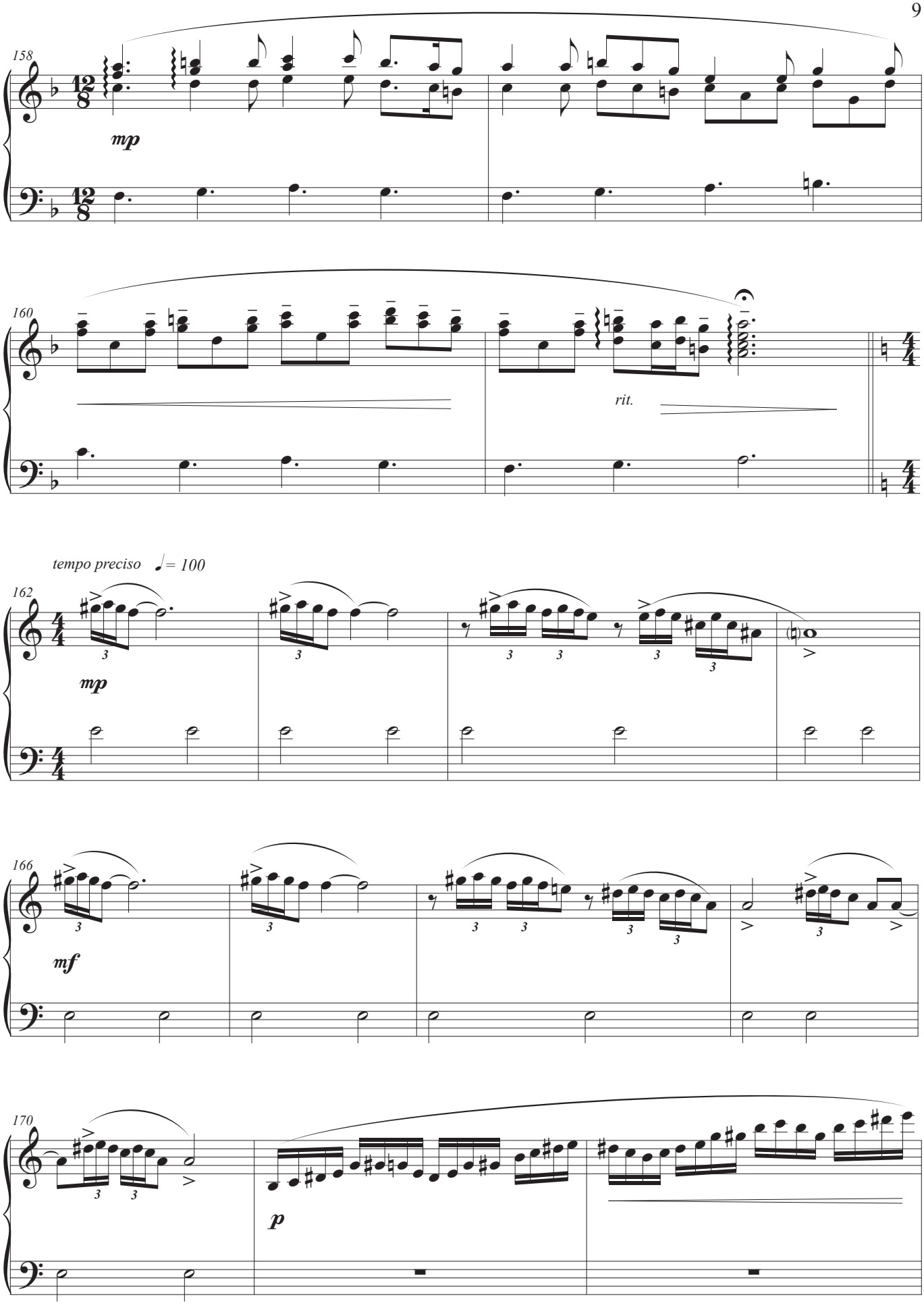

55
mf
An - ge - lus Do - mi -
60
ni nun - ti - a - vit Ma - ri - ae
64
et con - ce - pit de Spi -
69
8va
ri - tu Sanc - to
74

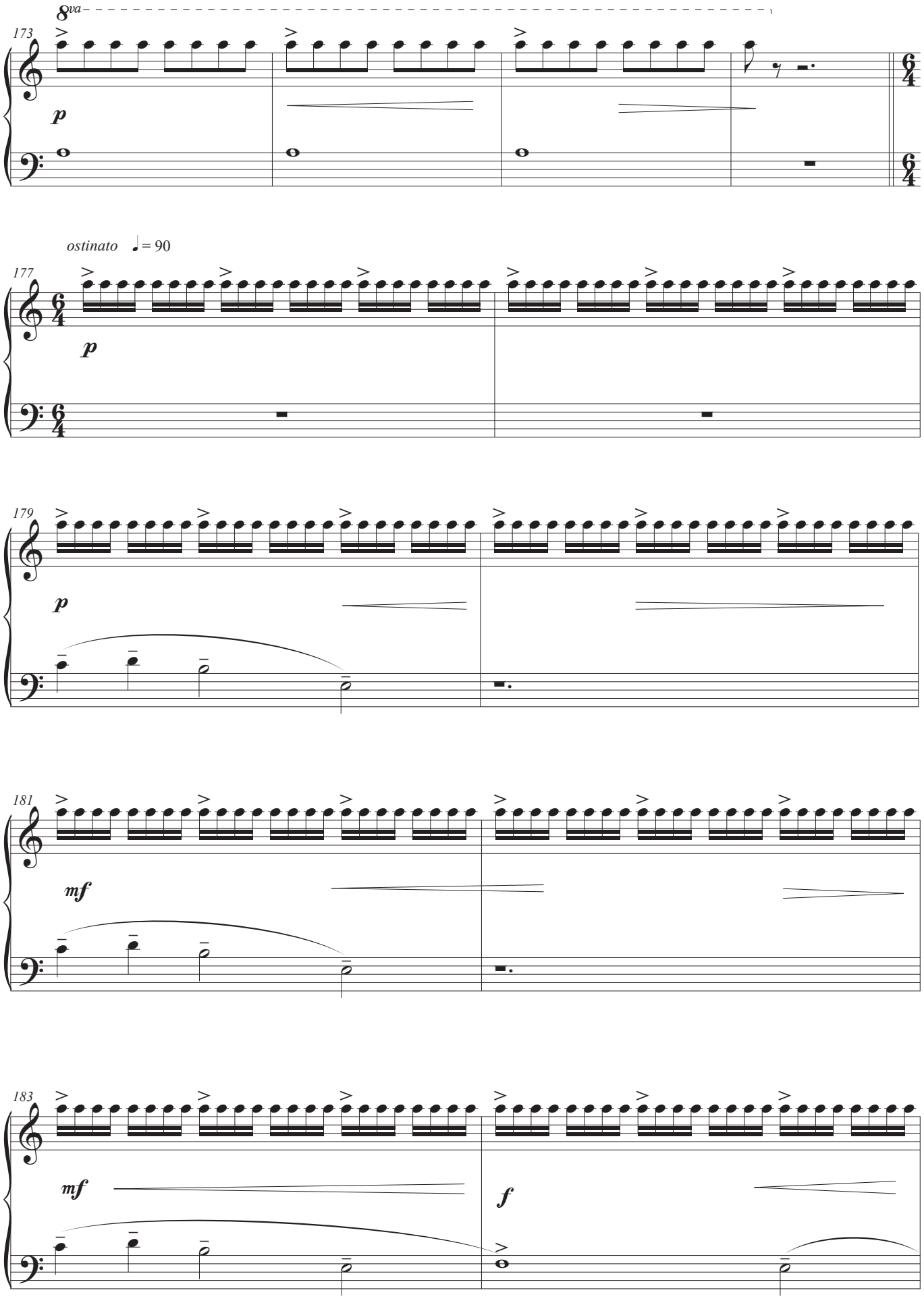

79
83
8va
87
92
pp
96
p

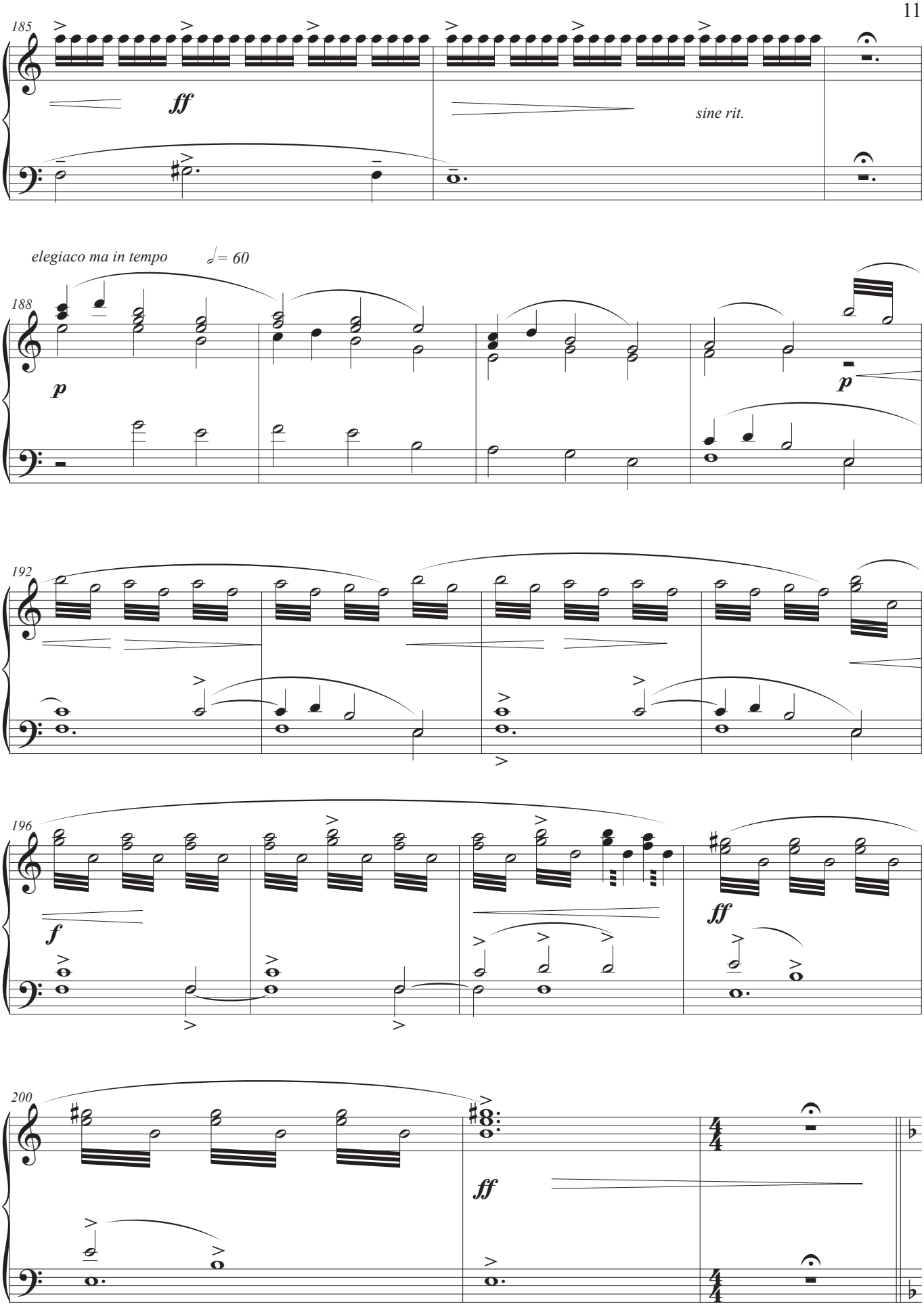

101
f
p
105
f
109
f
112
f
114
poco rit.

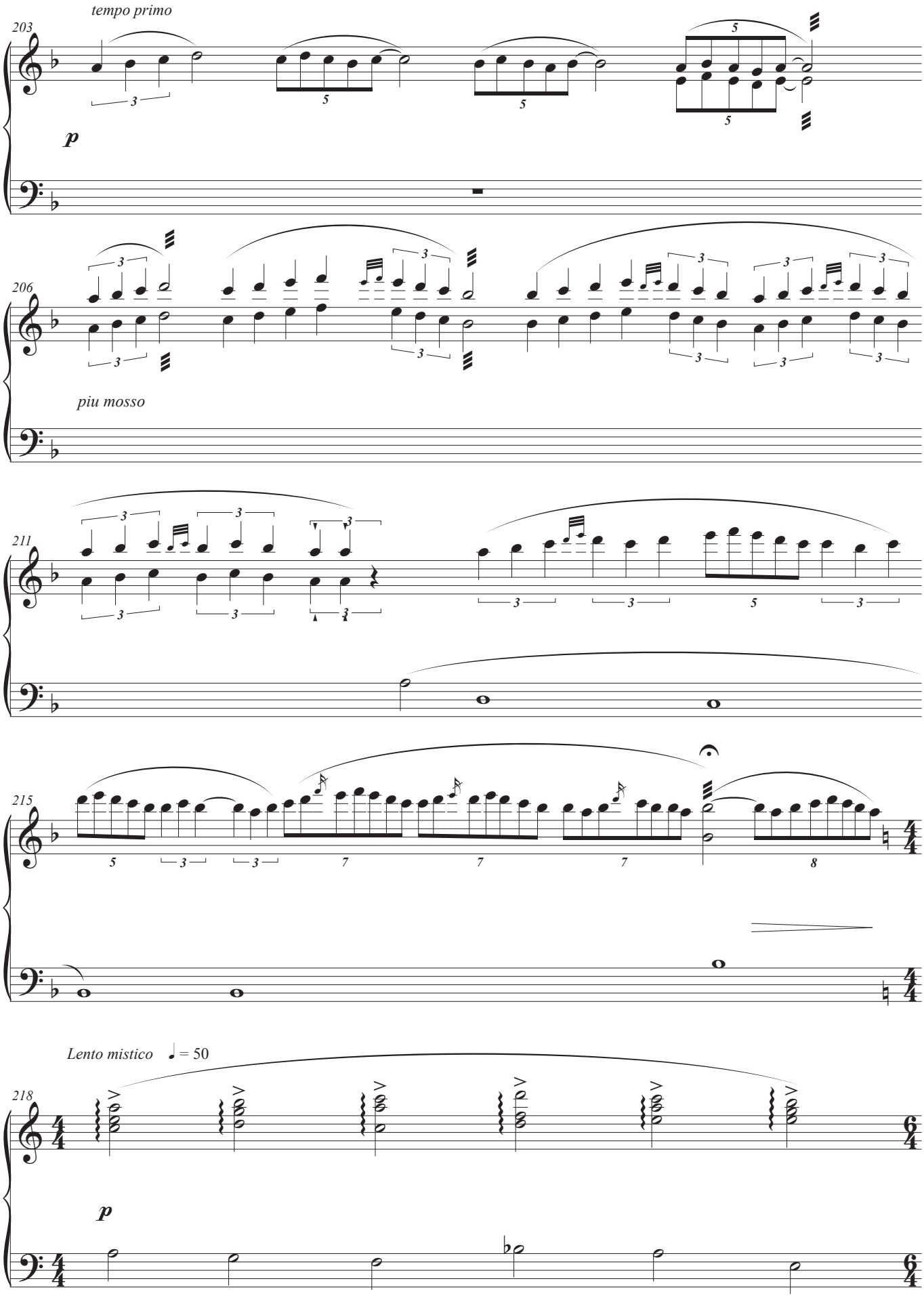

♩= 130
116
f
Con fuoco de crociato
119
f
123
127
f
132
rubato

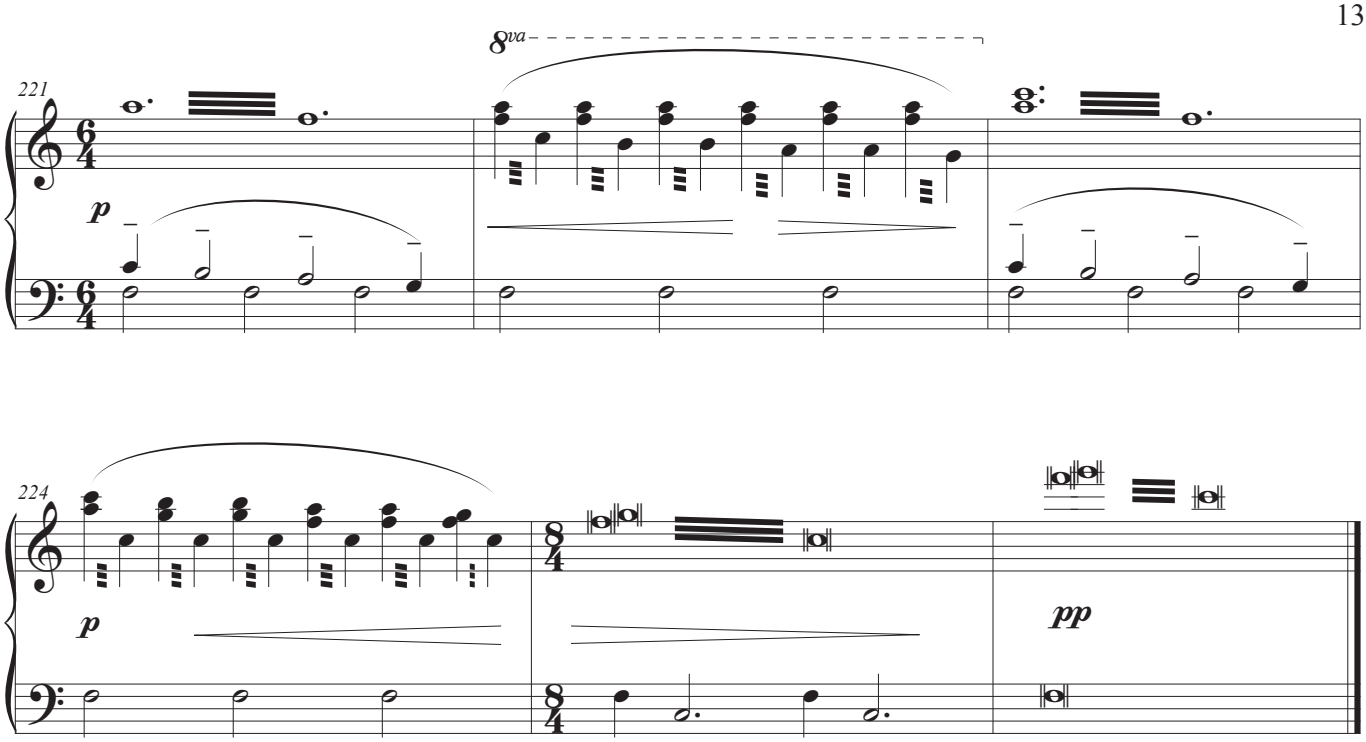

8
137
♩. = 60
f
p
5
139
141
Piacevole
♩. = 60
146
152


158
mp
160
rit.
tempo preciso ♩= 100
162
mp
166
mf
170
p


8va
173
p
6/4
ostinato
♩= 90
177
p
179
p
181
mf
183
mf
f


185
ff
sine rit.
elegiaco ma in tempo
♩= 60
188
p
p
192
196
f
ff
200
ff


tempo primo
203
p
206
piu mosso
211
215
Lento mistico ♩= 50
218
p



Heverlee, 05/08/2019

Lof en eer zij Christus