Franz Schubert

Martin Widmaier

Impromptu in G major

to 3 Impromptus D. 946

for piano

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Preliminary Note

On the one hand, I wished to add a conclusion to the presumably incomplete set of 3 'Impromptus' (pieces prompted by various situations) or 'Klavierstücke' (piano pieces) from Franz Schubert's artistic estate; on the other hand, to save the crossed-out second episode of its No. 1. But it took me twenty years to bring these matters together. On 24 April 2002, the critical mass was eventually reached, and this Impromptu saw the light of day: a low-key Andantino, based on a harmonic progression by Carl Czerny and a song line by Franz Schubert, in combination with the orphaned episode. In a piano recital in Herxheim on 3 May 2002, the Impromptus D. 946 still came in a set of 3; but on occasion of a fortepiano recital in Wuppertal on 21 July 2003, the programme already included an Impromptu No. 4 in G major.

According to Paul Badura-Skoda, Schubert 'crossed out the episode vigorously because he did not regard it as being on the same level of inspiration as the rest of the piece'. For my part, I would agree that there are many issues in this cycle – but lack of inspiration is not among them. So, let me construct a different story: Nos. 1 and 2 with their pairs of episodes took 12 and 14 minutes, respectively; No. 3 with its single episode, 4 1/2 minutes. To no surprise, Schubert considered Nos. 1 and 2 combined as too long. As he wasn't ready to sacrifice a single bar of No. 2, and as he regarded the coherence within No. 1 as comparatively weak, he crossed out its beautiful second episode – after a long struggle, hence the vigorous strokes …

In order to make the score a convincing reading, I have also experimented with notation, both timewise and pitchwise. Originally, the episode was written in 2/4 metre, with quaver triplets and dotted quavers followed by semiquavers – I have chosen a 6/8 metre instead. Likewise, the key signature of the complete episode used to be A♭ major – for an eight-bar paragraph, I have switched from flats to sharps. Furthermore, a few chord voicings were changed on the basis of parallel passages, and some articulation signs and dynamic markings either added or omitted. I am confident that these alignments are not arbitrary but well-grounded in the new context. While the original context was a breathless hunt based on a march rhythm, the new one is lyrical. Thus, the pianist is now allowed – and impelled – to highlight the clear-cut and eloquent side of the episode.

Martin Widmaier

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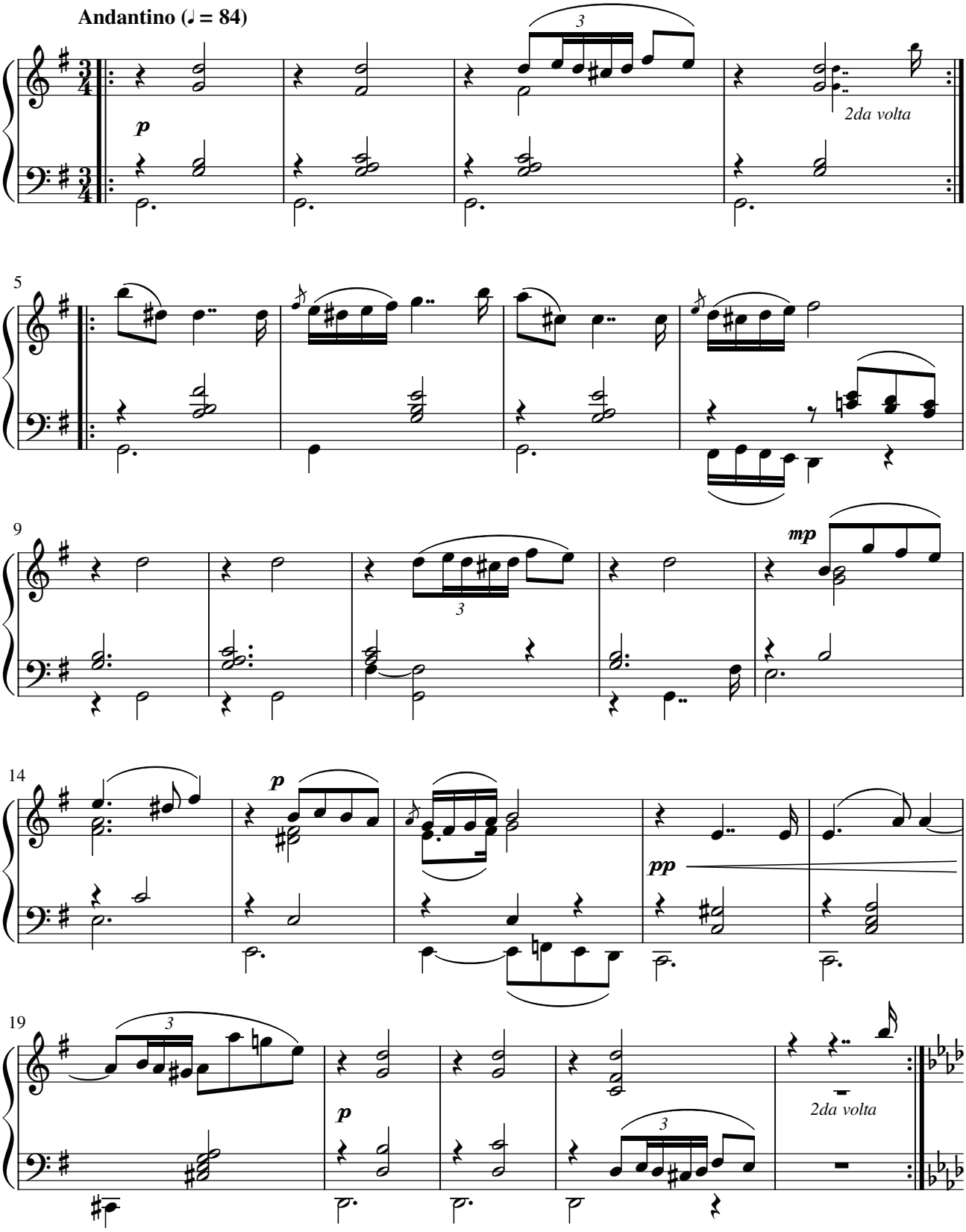
Addendum (No. 4) to 3 Impromptus D. 946 by Franz Schubert

Outer sections by Martin Widmaier, based on models by Carl Czerny and Franz Schubert
Middle section by Franz Schubert (deleted second episode from No. 1 in E♭ minor)



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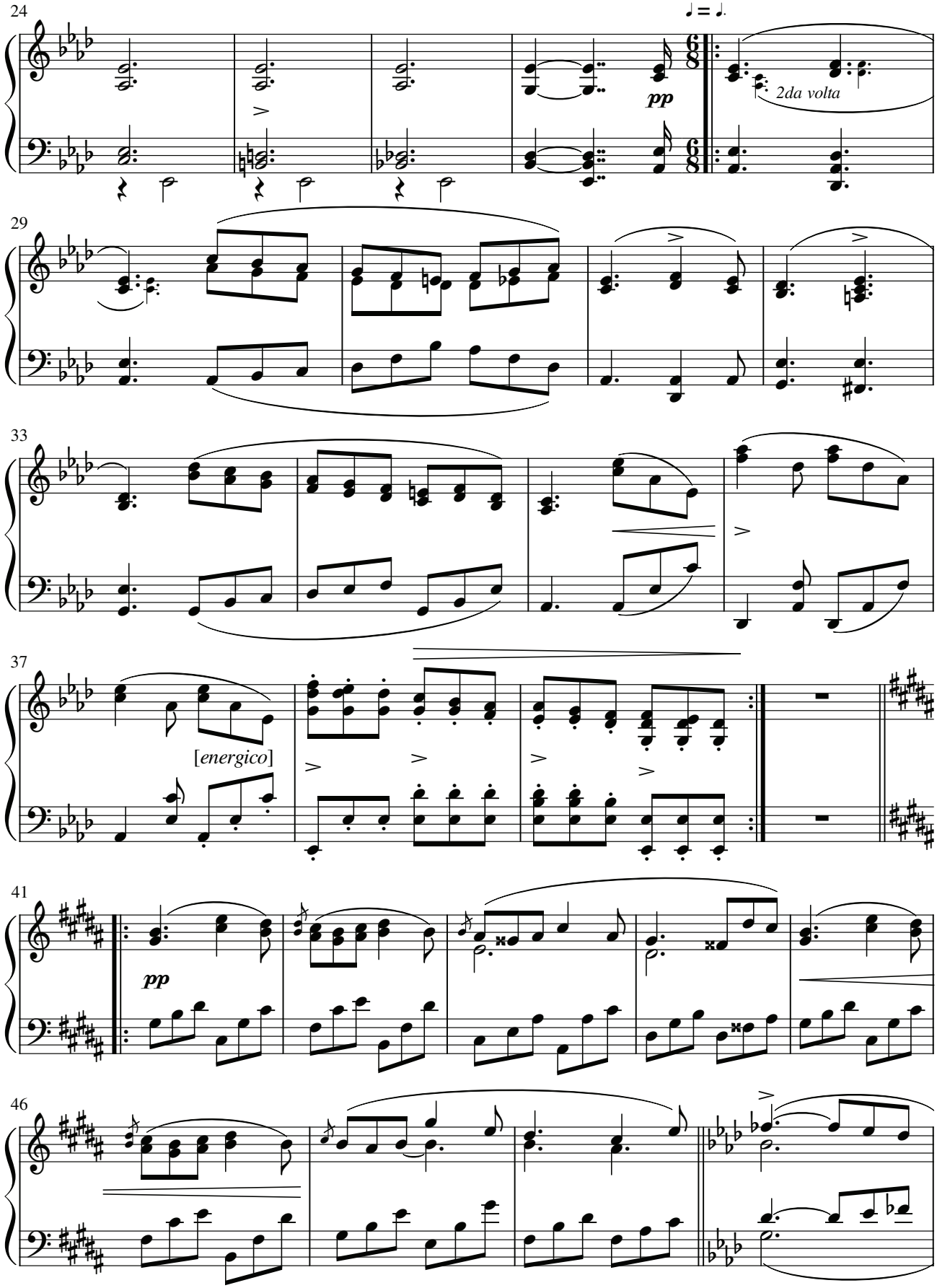
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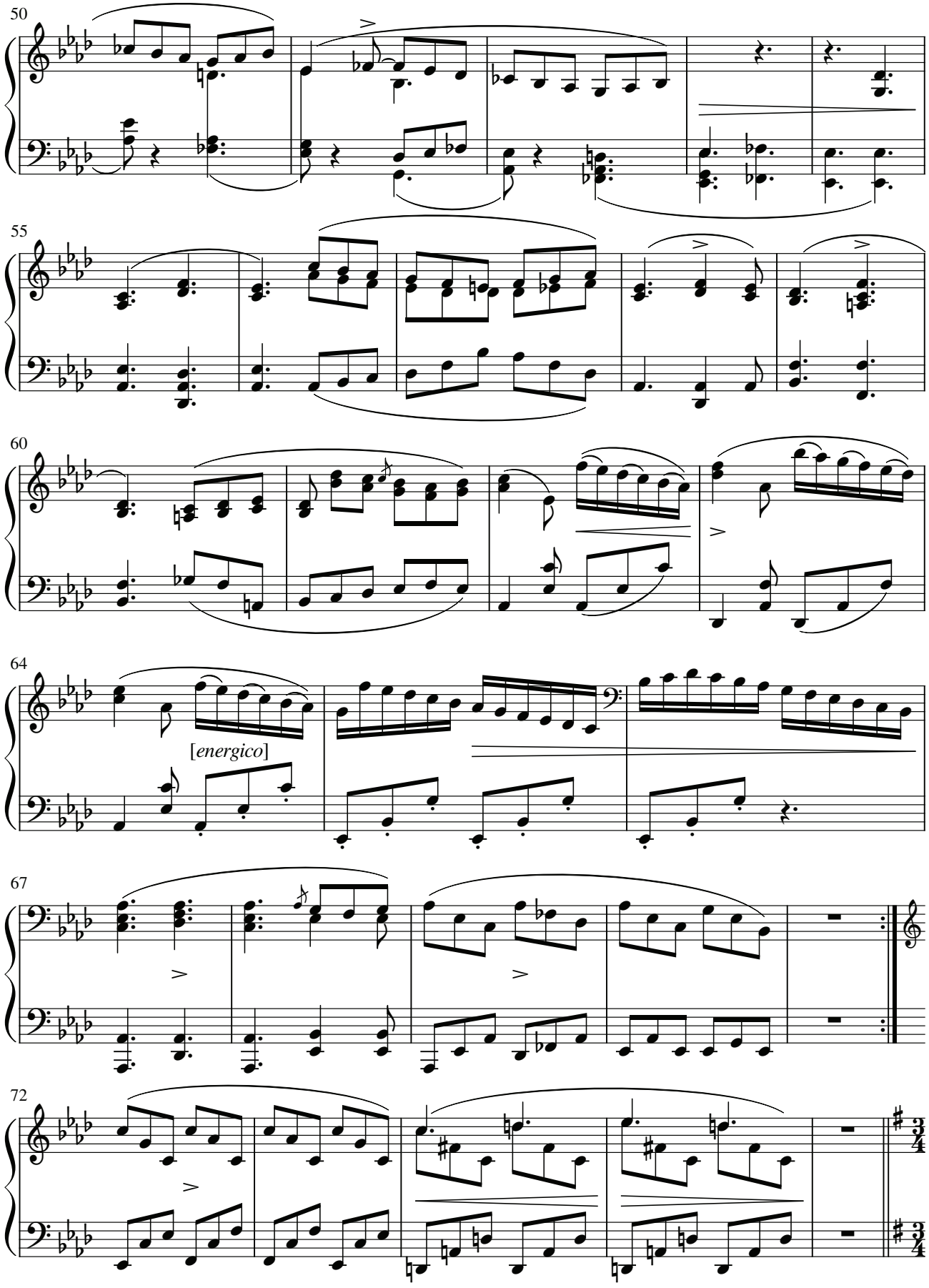
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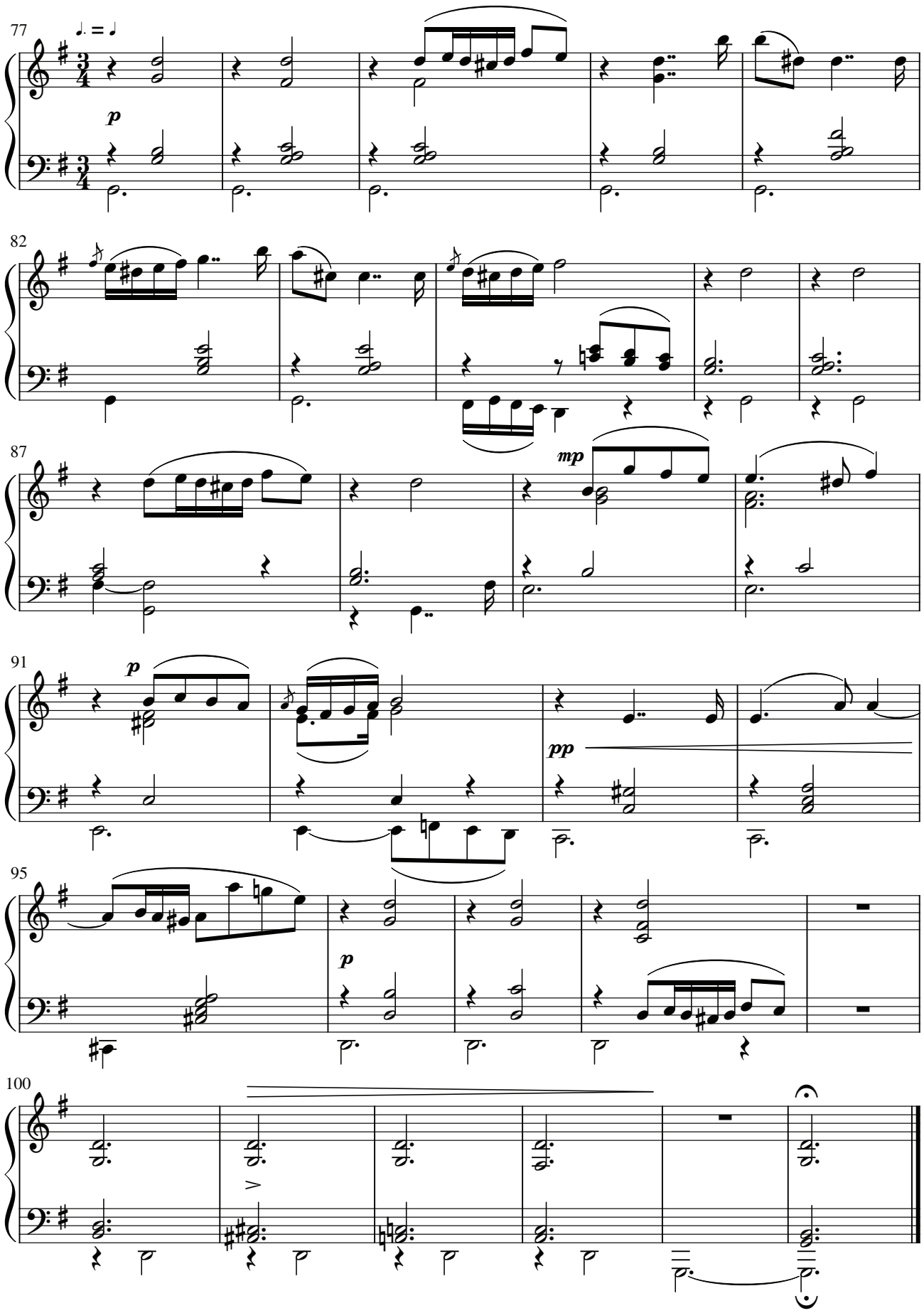

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Offline Publications

Orange Blue: *In Love with a Dream. Songbook*,
with piano arrangements by Burkhard Scheibe and Martin Widmaier, Peer, Hamburg 2001

Martin Widmaier: *Das kleine Land* (2 volumes), Peters, Frankfurt 2005/2006

Martin Widmaier: *24 Eight-Bar Studies after Frédéric Chopin*, Peters, Frankfurt 2012

Claude Debussy: *Préludes for Piano* (2 volumes), edited by Thomas Kabisch,
with fingerings by Martin Widmaier, Bärenreiter, Kassel 2014/2021

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Martin Widmaier: *Zur Systemdynamik des Übens*, Schott, Mainz 2016

August Halm: *Klavierübung* 1918/1919, edited by Thomas Kabisch, Linde Großmann
and Martin Widmaier, Ortus, Beeskow 2019

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