Martin Widmaier

Präludien und andere Spiele
Preludes and Other Games

für Tasteninstrumente
for keyboard instruments

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Preliminary Note

Most of these pieces are random off-the-track fruits from a pianist's life. However – at least to my ears – the 'links' for the Beethoven Piano Concertos could be major achievements … so I wish them well.

Martin Widmaier

First version of this publication: 2025

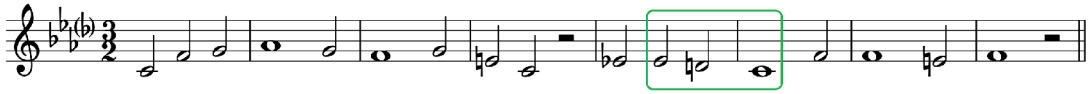
Contents

Organ Intonation to 'Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten' 6
Organ Intonation to 'Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier' 7
Main Theme to the Chaplin film 'The Champion' 8
Main Theme to the Chaplin film 'By the Sea' 10
Elaboration of Allemande in C minor by Bach from his French Suites 12
Elaboration of Sinfonia in E♭ major by Bach 16
Prelude to Variations in F minor / major by Haydn 20
Prelude to Piano Sonata in D major Op. 10 № 3 by Beethoven 21
Link for Piano Concerto № 3 in C minor by Beethoven 22
Link for Piano Concerto № 4 in G major by Beethoven 23
Prime Form and Inversion after 'An die Musik' by Schubert 24
Prime Form and Inversion after an Allegretto by Schubert 28
Extended Version of an orphaned episode by Schubert 30
Extended Version of 'Träumerei' by Schumann 34
Interlude to Mikrokosmos № 125 and 126 by Bartók 38
Interlude to Mikrokosmos № 142 and 143 by Bartók 39

Individual Notes

Organ Intonation to ‘Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten’
Organ Intonation to ‘Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier’

During my youth in Karlsruhe, I regularly experienced the musical legroom in the churches, playing the organ with a lot of fun but without much know-how and collecting preludes, but also ensemble and choral settings in folders. The organ intonation to ‘Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten’ uses three notes from an early version of this chorale for an album leaf.



The organ intonation to ‘Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier’ reveals some deeper interest in music theory.

Main Theme to the Chaplin film ‘The Champion’
Main Theme to the Chaplin film ‘By the Sea’

When I was a student in Salzburg, the communal cinema presented – step by step – the complete Charlie Chaplin silent films in correct speed and with my live accompaniment (cakewalk sections and slow waltzes, cat-and-mouse chases and simple tunes, to some extent prepared, to some extent offhand). On the whole, the surviving scripts are illegible – but now and again, a ‘theme’ was written down with more care … presumably *after* the performance.

Elaboration of Allemande in C minor by Bach from his French Suites
Elaboration of Sinfonia in E♭ major by Bach

Not being contemporaries of Johann Sebastian Bach, we need to find out much about his music. In the Allemande, as in many slower dance movements, the repetitions call for further embellishment which, of course, must make a difference to the audience – if not, it is of little use. The contrapuntal inversion of the supporting voices in bar 11 is a good option for smaller hands and can be ignored by larger hands. In the Sinfonia, as in baroque music in general, one sort of ornament is mandatory, written or not: the cadence trill; all other ornaments are voluntary – by consistency, they will underscore the basic structure, by variance, the developmental aspect. The many triplets might look strange but shouldn’t sound strange.

Prelude to Variations in F minor / major by Haydn
Prelude to Piano Sonata in D major Op. 10 № 3 by Beethoven

Like many classical musicians, I feel very much at home when dealing with the music of Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven, and sometimes, I even perceive myself as a musician of the late 18th, early 19th century with personal dreams and funny ideas. This could explain some ‘private’ facets of my performance practice, e. g., some hundred preludes which, more often than not, do not stop for good before the main pieces – either on the tonic or the dominant – but rather lead into them. Here are two examples.

Link for Piano Concerto № 3 in C minor by Beethoven
Link for Piano Concerto № 4 in G major by Beethoven

Beethoven was furious. A female pianist who was on a visit to Vienna and reportedly ‘played like a man’ had presented an all-Beethoven programme including chamber music, song cycles and solo sonatas, ending with two complete piano concertos. In both of them, she had linked movements I and II. When Archduke Rudolph recounted his positive impressions, the composer just sighed.

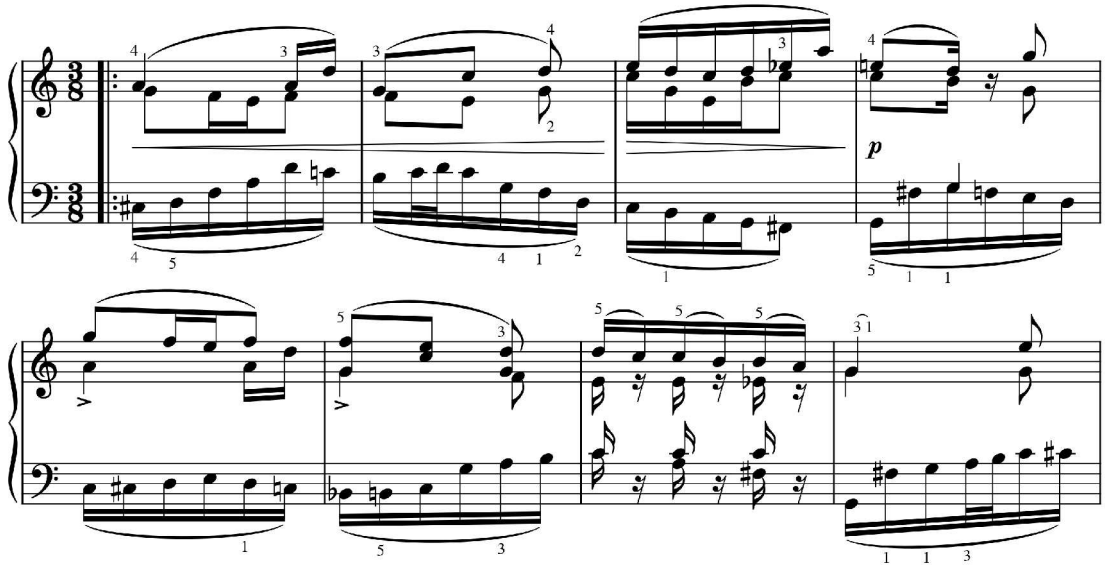
A pack of lies, of course … but not entirely silly. And the links are awesome.

Prime Form and Inversion after ‘An die Musik’ by Schubert
Prime Form and Inversion after an Allegretto by Schubert

There are different types of mistakes. Take *An Sylvia,* a beautiful lied by Schubert. In the 2nd stanza, a wrong translation proves to be annoying (see Robert Gernhardt: *Gedanken zum Gedicht*, Zürich 1990); ‘kindness’ = *Freundlichkeit* is – and always used to be – just a ‘false friend’ of *Kindheit* = ‘childhood’. My solution: two new lines.

Ist sie schön und gut dazu?
Denn Anmut wächst mit Güte;
ihrem Aug’ eilt Amor zu,
heilt Blindheit, schenkt ihm Blüte
und verweilt in süßer Ruh.

Or take the 2nd movement of Sonata op. 42 in A minor: here, four bars are clearly missing. My solution (in broad outlines): bars 41–44 from the original … together with an additional four-bar phrase.



However, the next two pieces are another matter as the ‘prime forms and inversions’ certainly constitute works in their own right.

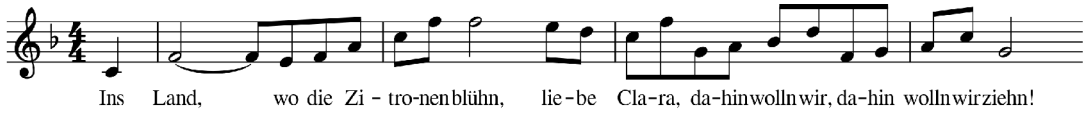
Extended Version of an orphaned episode by Schubert
Extended Version of 'Träumerei' by Schumann

With the first 'extended version', I wished to add a № 4 to the presumably incomplete set of 3 'Impromptus' (pieces prompted by various situations) or 'Klavierstücke' (piano pieces) from Franz Schubert's artistic estate and, at the same time, save the crossed-out second episode of its № 1 – but it took me twenty years to bring these matters together. On 24 April 2002, the critical mass was eventually reached, and the much longed-for 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 № 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 with this cycle – but lack of inspiration is not among them. So, let me construct a different story: №s 1 and 2 with their pairs of episodes took 12 and 14 minutes, respectively; № 3 with its single episode, 4 1/2 minutes. To no surprise, Schubert considered №s 1 and 2 combined as too long. As he wasn't ready to sacrifice a single bar of № 2, and as he regarded the coherence within № 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 experimented with notation, both timewise and pitchwise. Originally, the episode was written in a 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. All in all and if I am right, this Impromptu is a nice addition to the repertoire.

With the second 'extended version', the 'Träumerei' by Robert Schumann takes us into delightful scenery, both in the fine fluid tempo of the first edition and the meditative conventional tempo. Why choose when we can be part of both worlds? Please note: a fitting text (here after 'Mignon' by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe) is a proper way to clarify the rhythmic-metric structure of a melody:



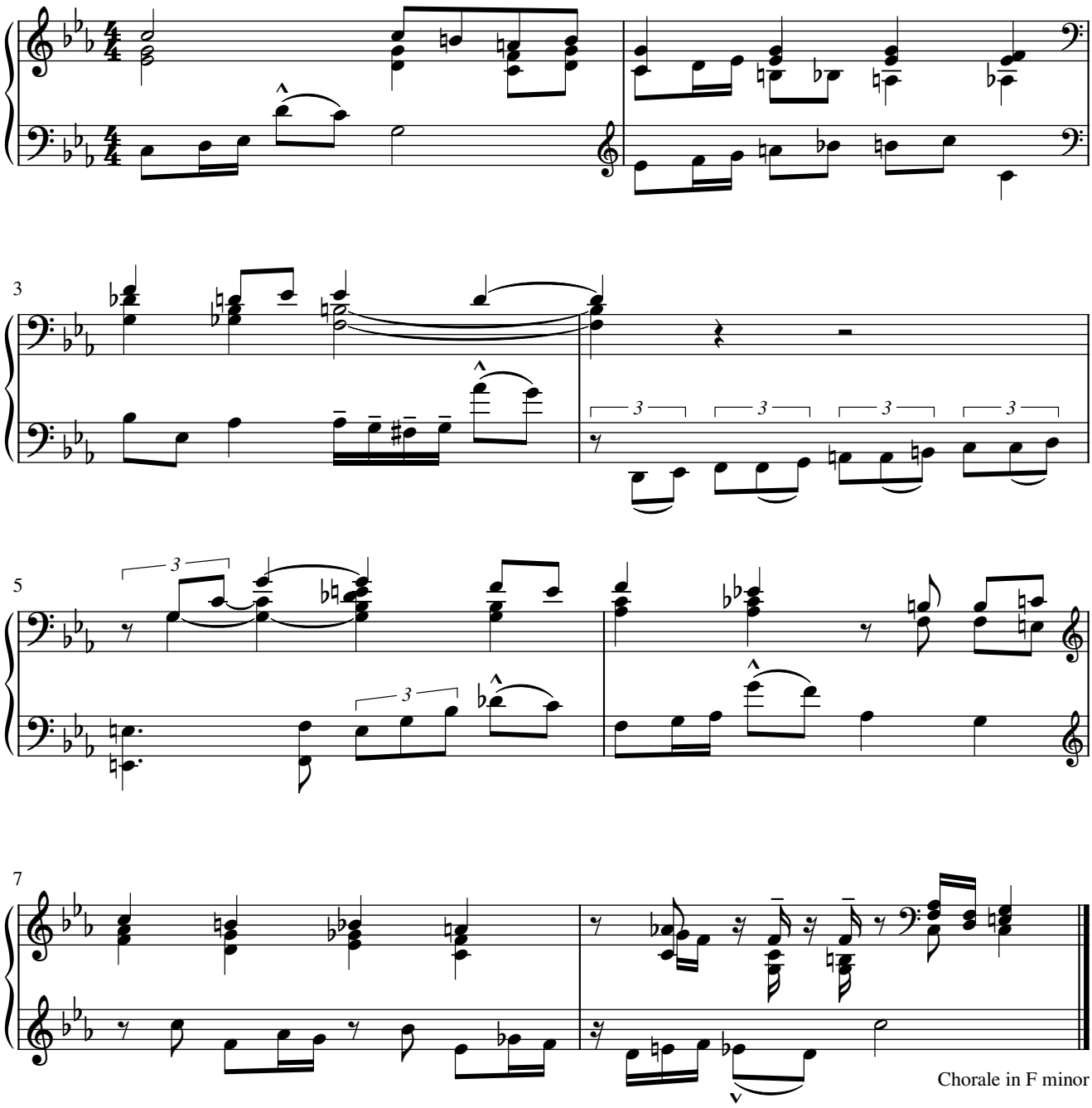
Intermezzo to Mikrokosmos № 312 and 313 by Bartók
Intermezzo to Mikrokosmos № 580 and 581 by Bartók

Here, each intermezzo couples two numbers of the Mikrokosmos, thus forming decent contributions to classroom recitals.

Organ Intonation

to ‘Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten’ by Georg Neumark

Molto tranquillo



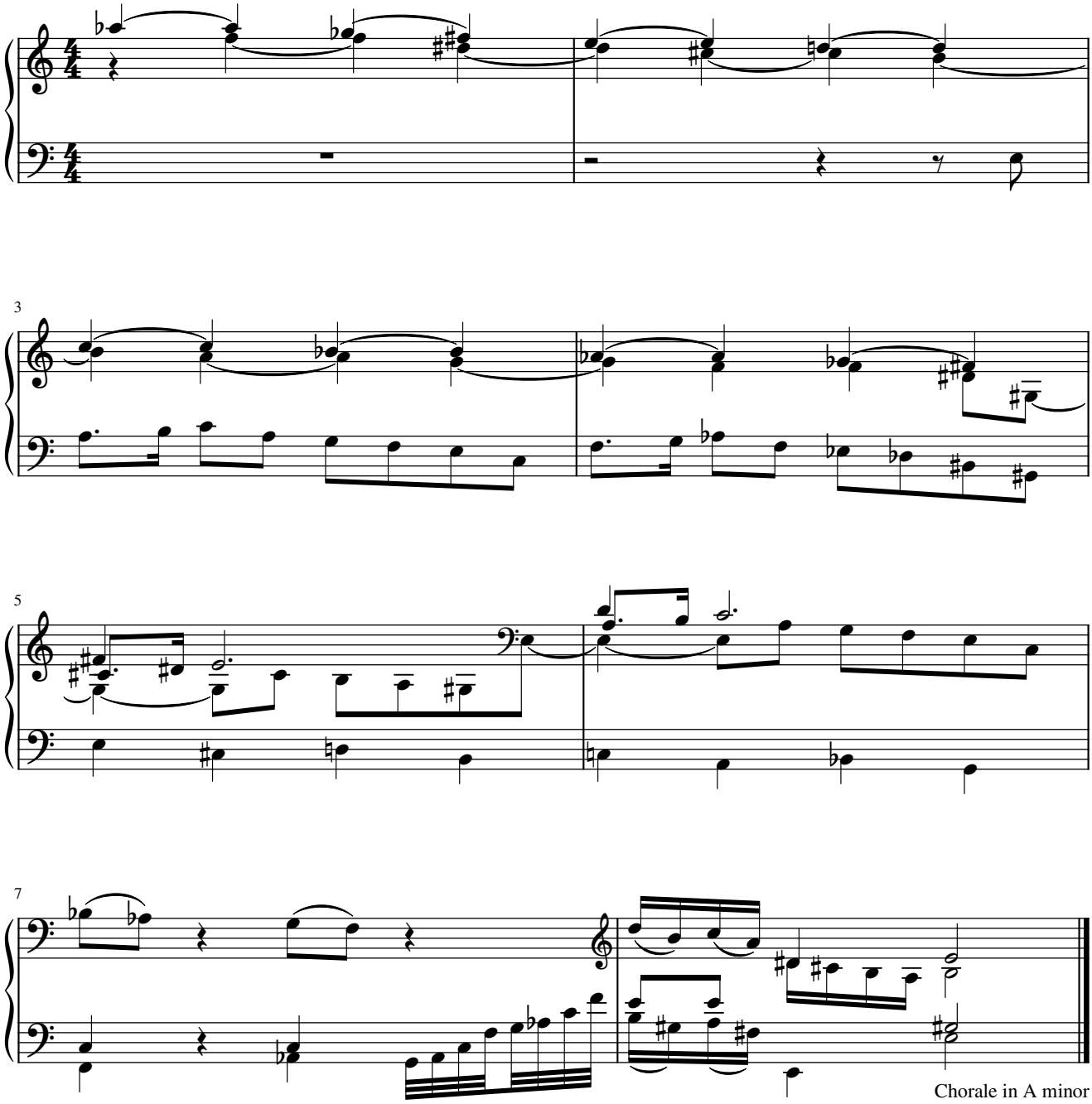
Chorale in F minor

Martin Widmaier, Karlsruhe 1975

Organ Intonation

to ‘Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier’ from Georg Christian Schemelli’s ‘Gesangbuch’

Molto tranquillo

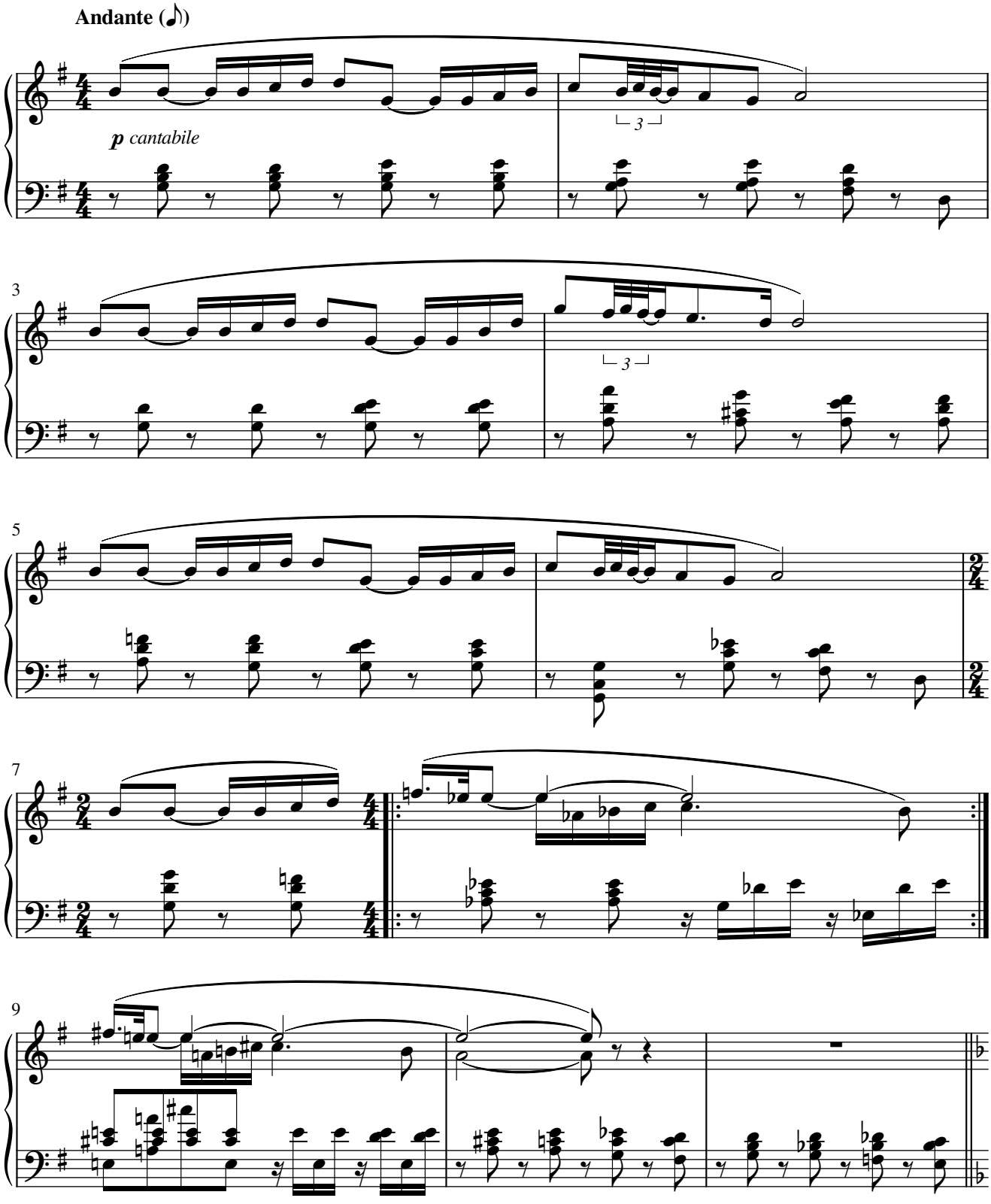


Chorale in A minor

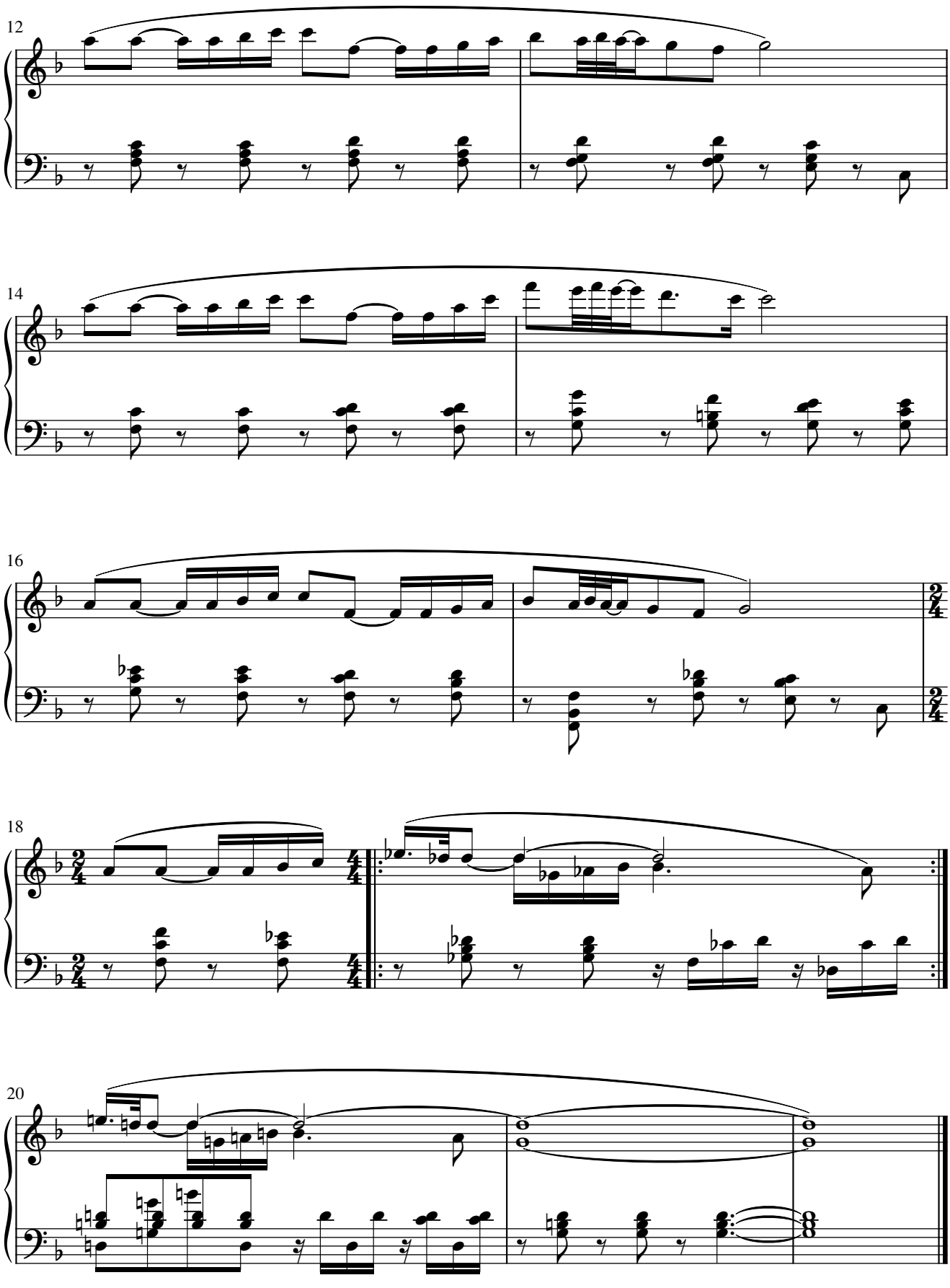
Martin Widmaier, Karlsruhe 1975

Main Theme

to the Charlie Chaplin film 'The Champion' from 1915
To Burkhard Scheibe in friendship



Martin Widmaier, Salzburg 1981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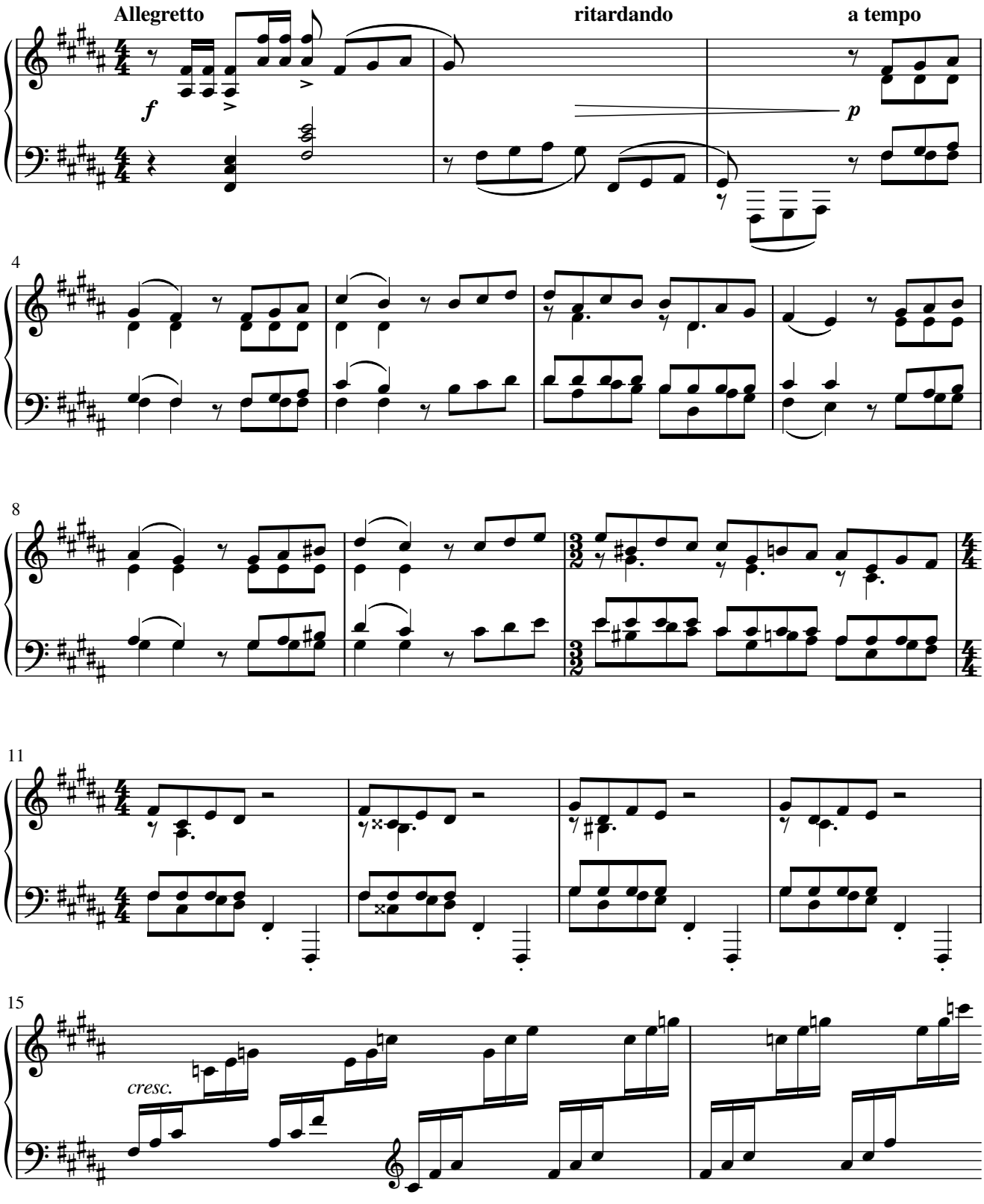
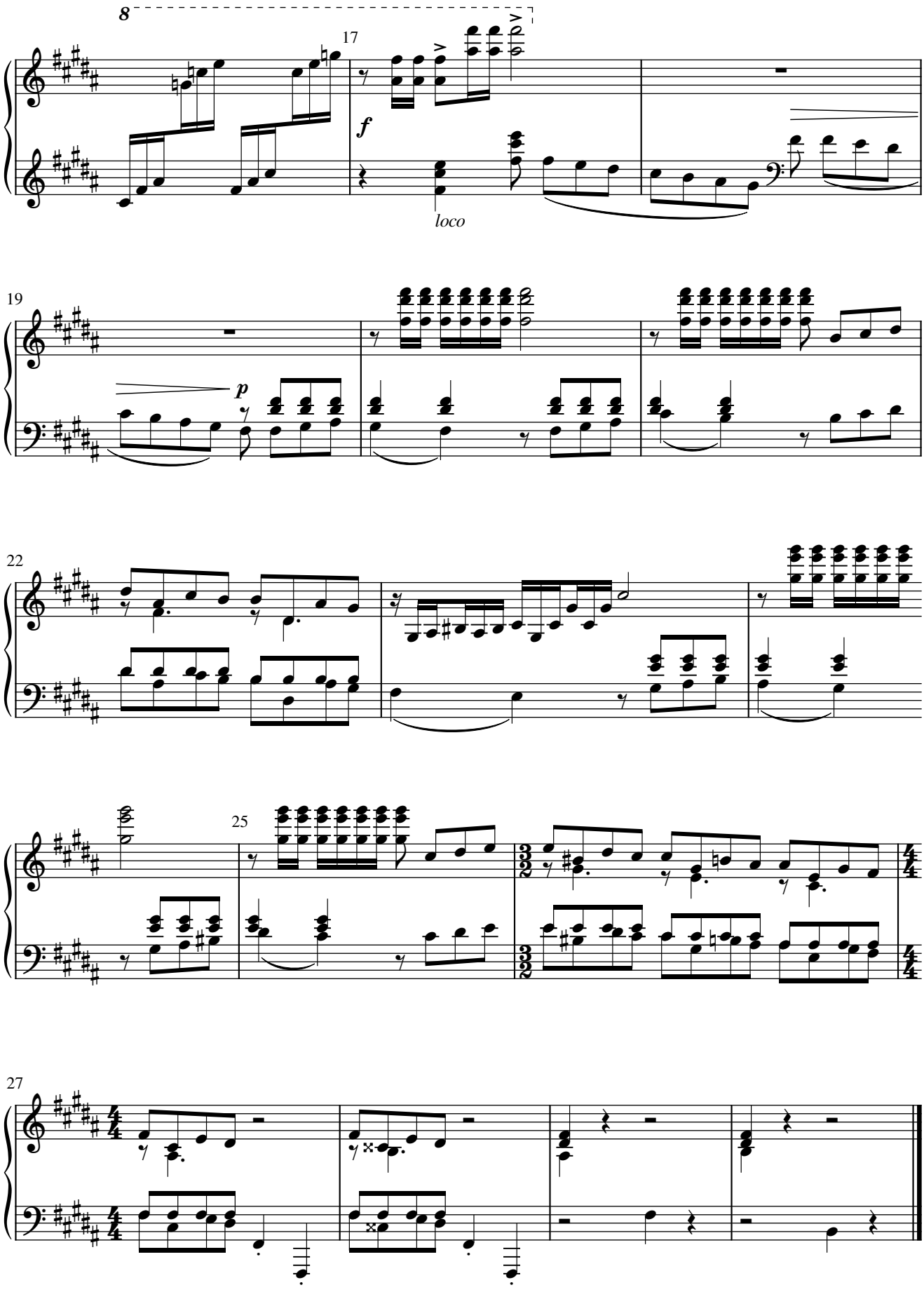
Main Theme

to the Charlie Chaplin film 'By the Sea' from 1915
To Burkhard Scheibe in friendship



Martin Widmaier, Salzburg 1981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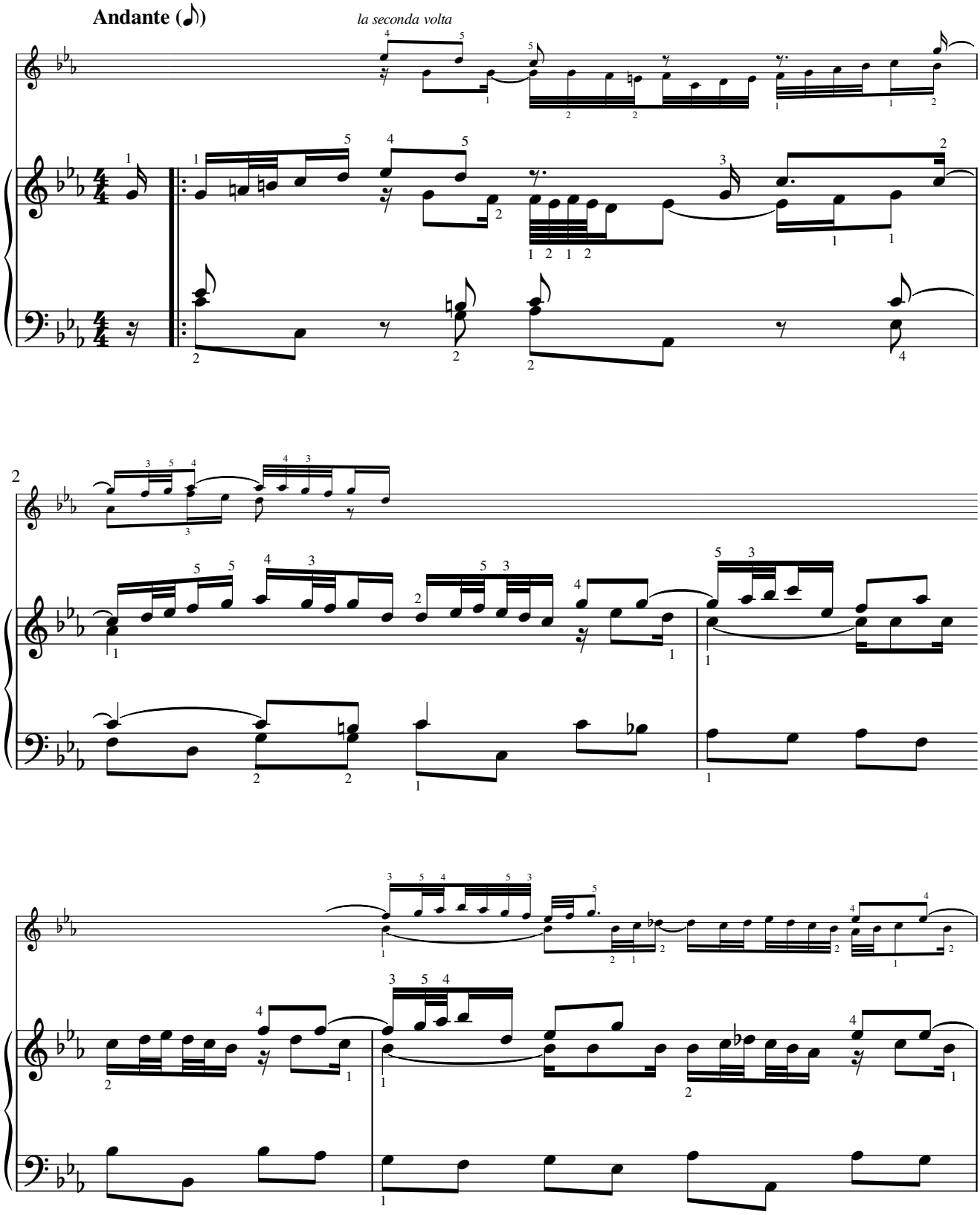
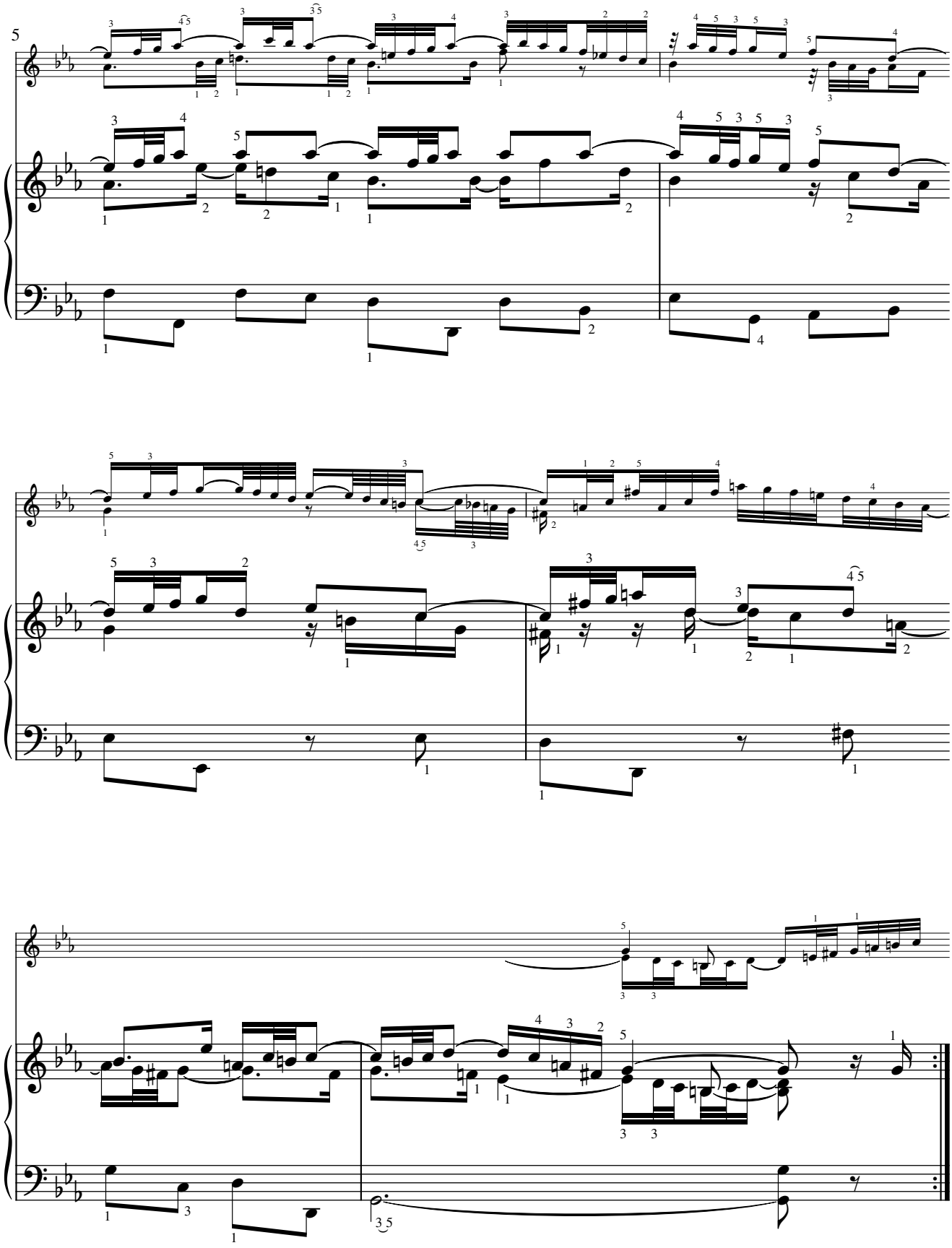
Elaboration

of Allemande in C minor by Johann Sebastian Bach
from his French Suites



Martin Widmaier, Salzburg 1981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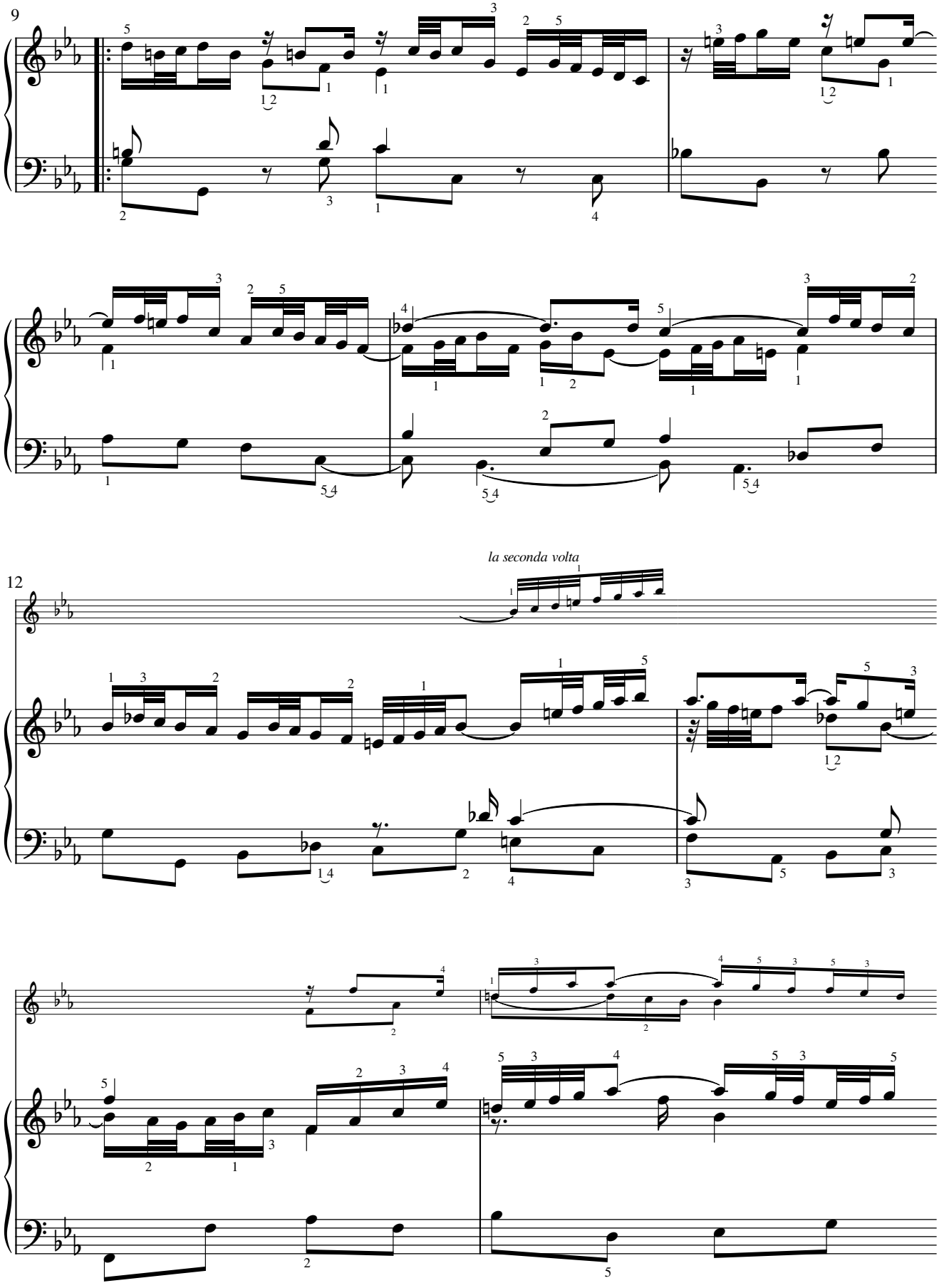
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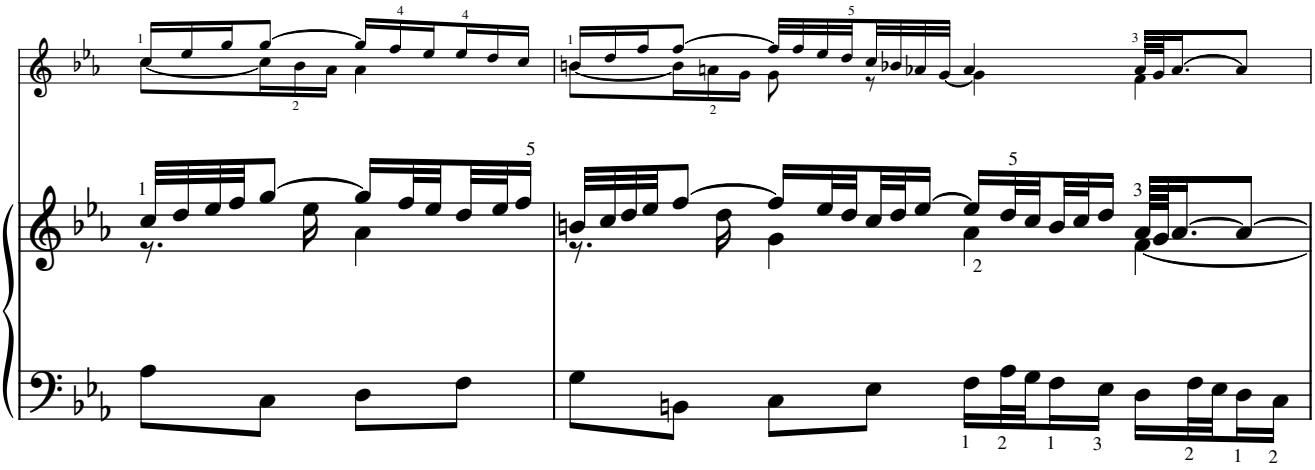
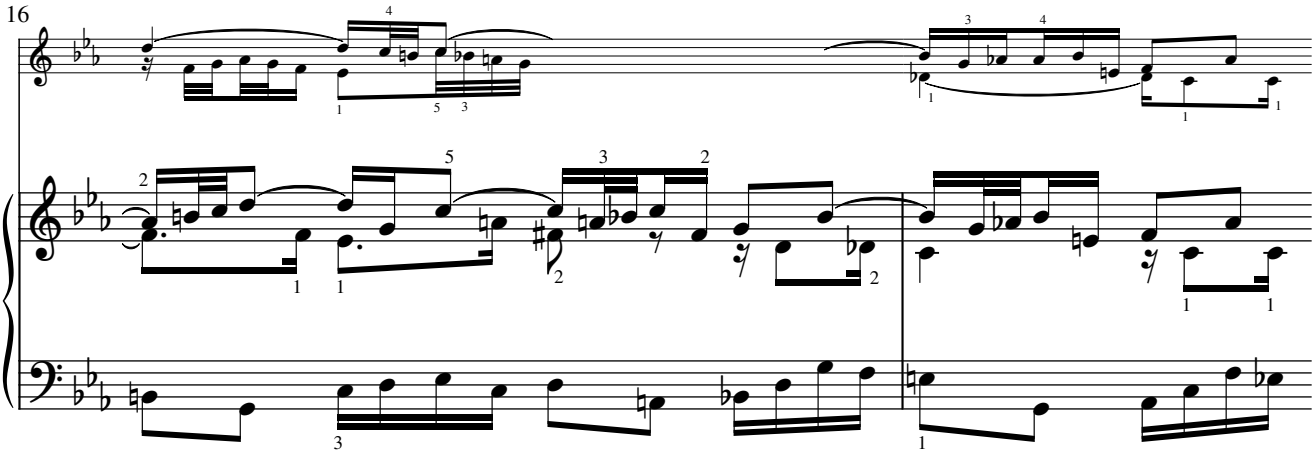
la seconda volta

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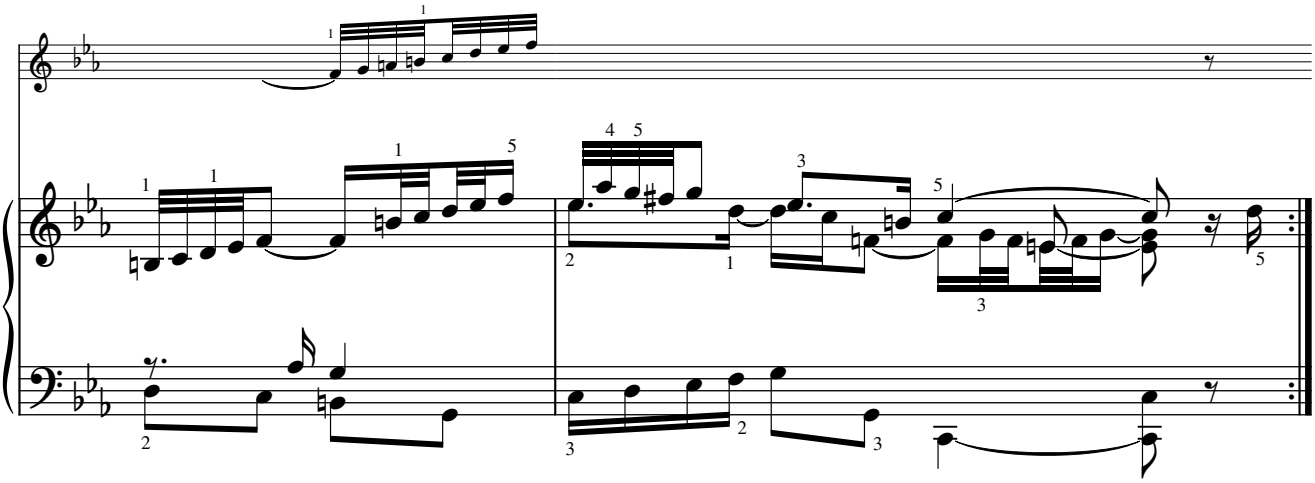
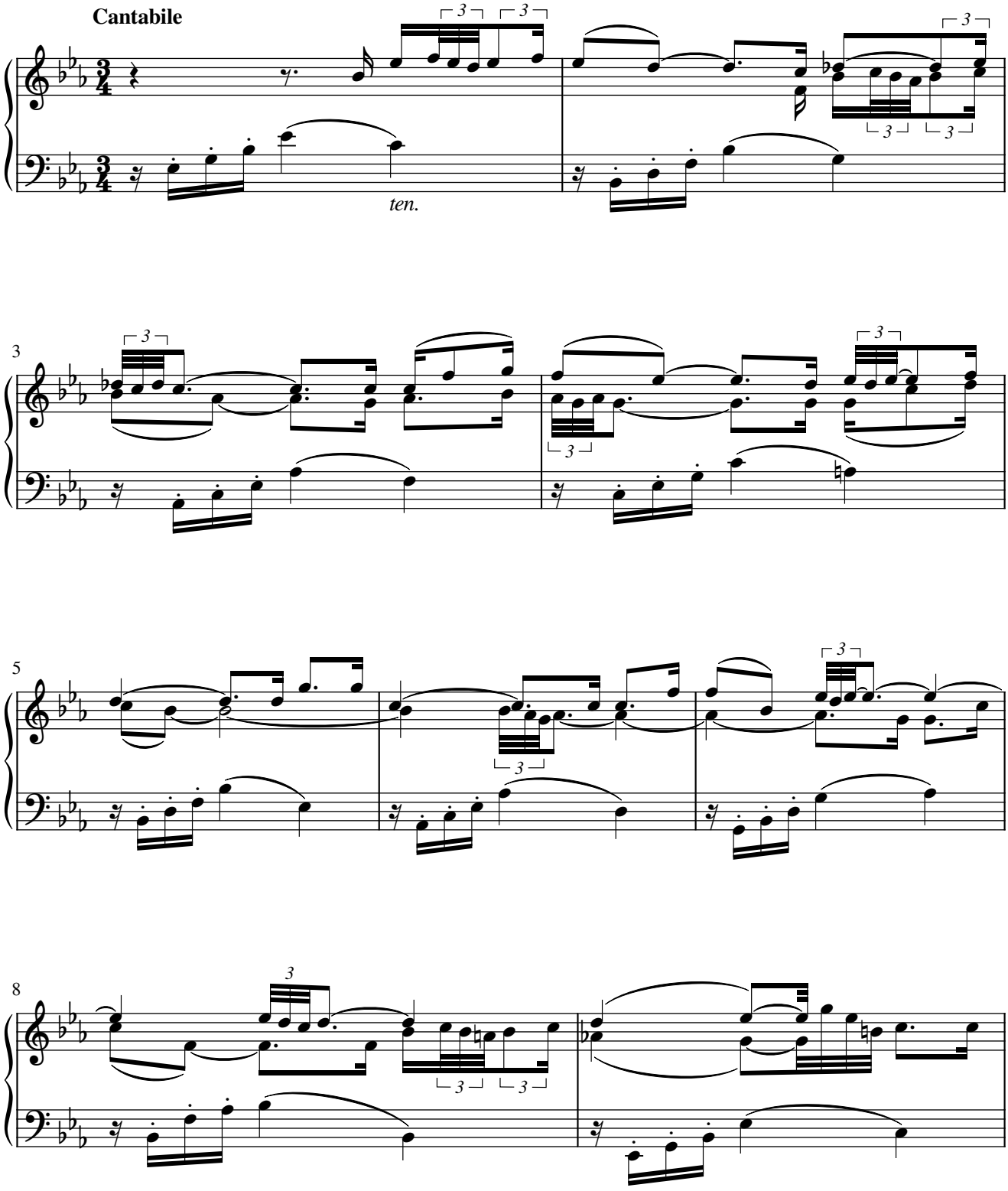
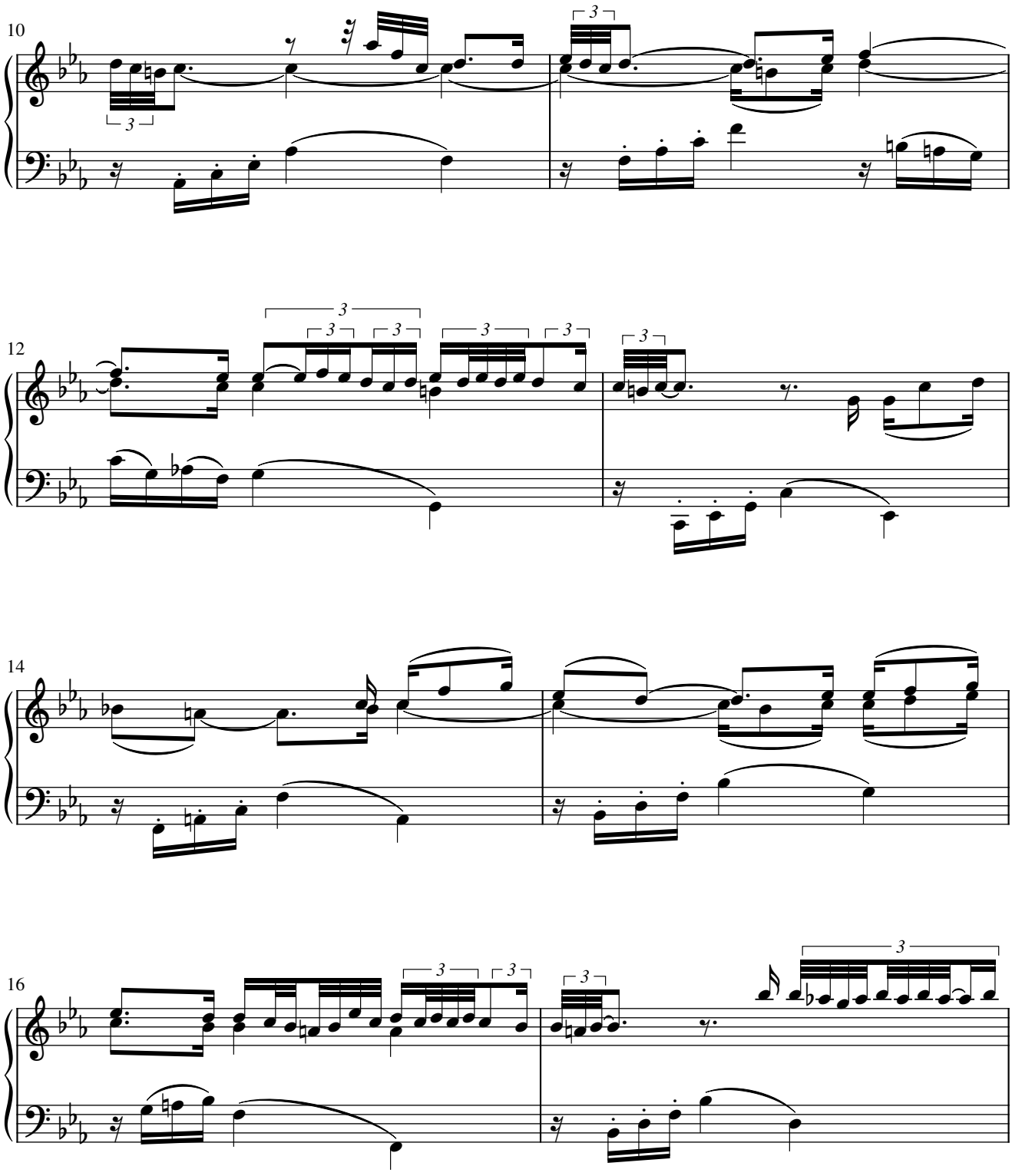


Elaboration

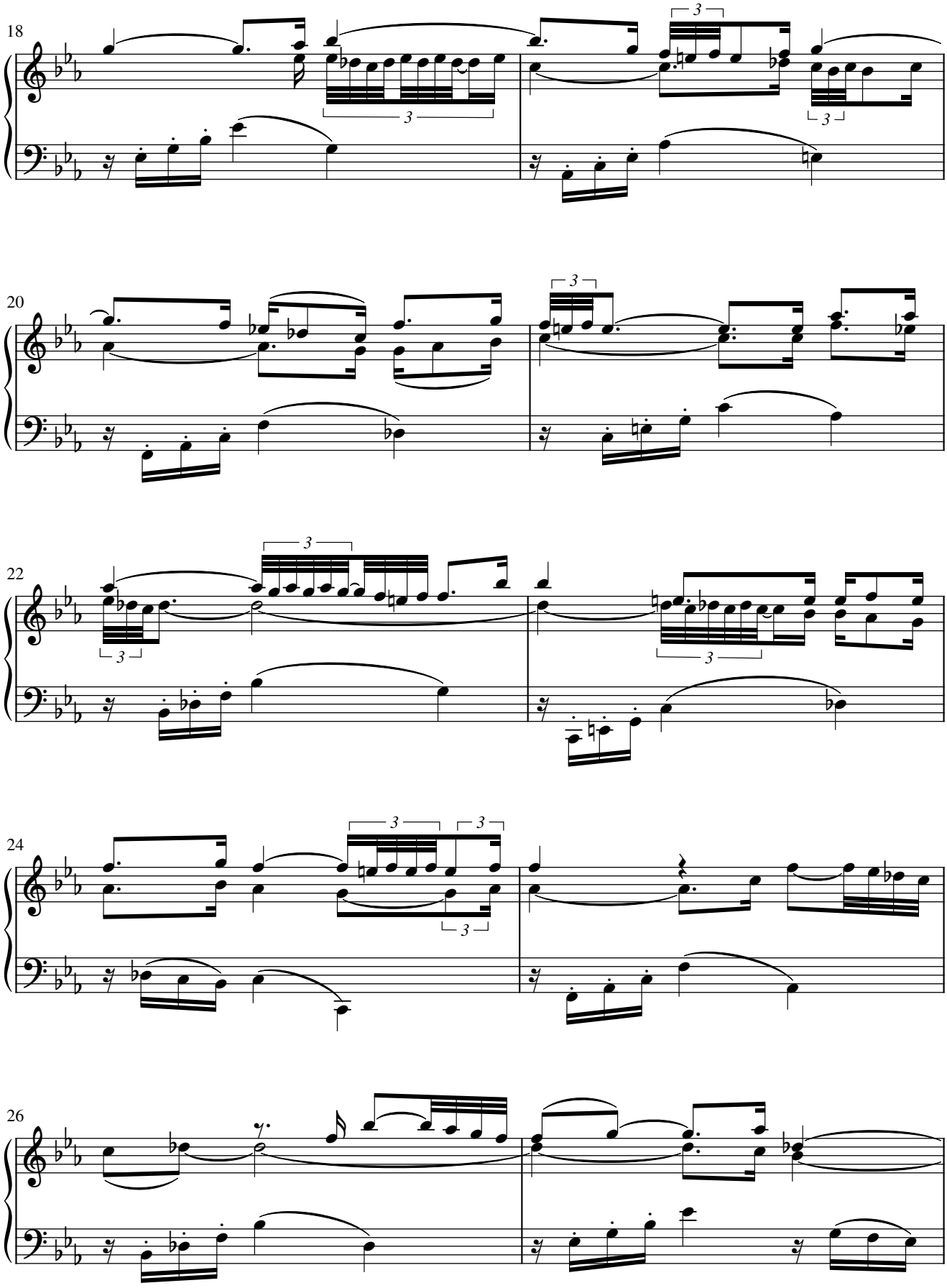
of Sinfonia № 5 in E♭ major by Johann Sebastian Bach
from his Three-Part Inventions



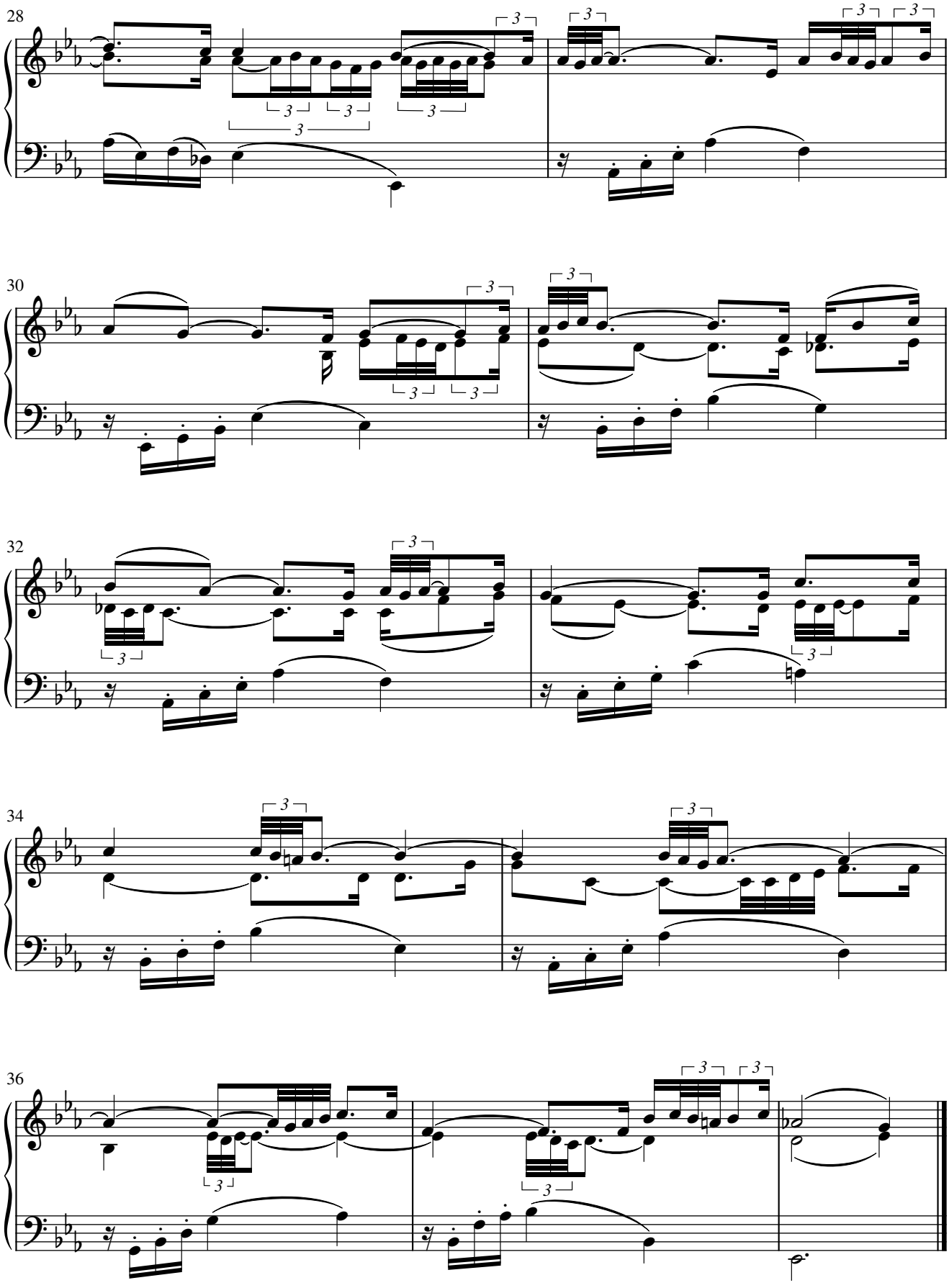
Martin Widmaier, Karlsruhe 1994



Martin Widmaier, Karlsruhe 1994



Martin Widmaier, Karlsruhe 1994


28
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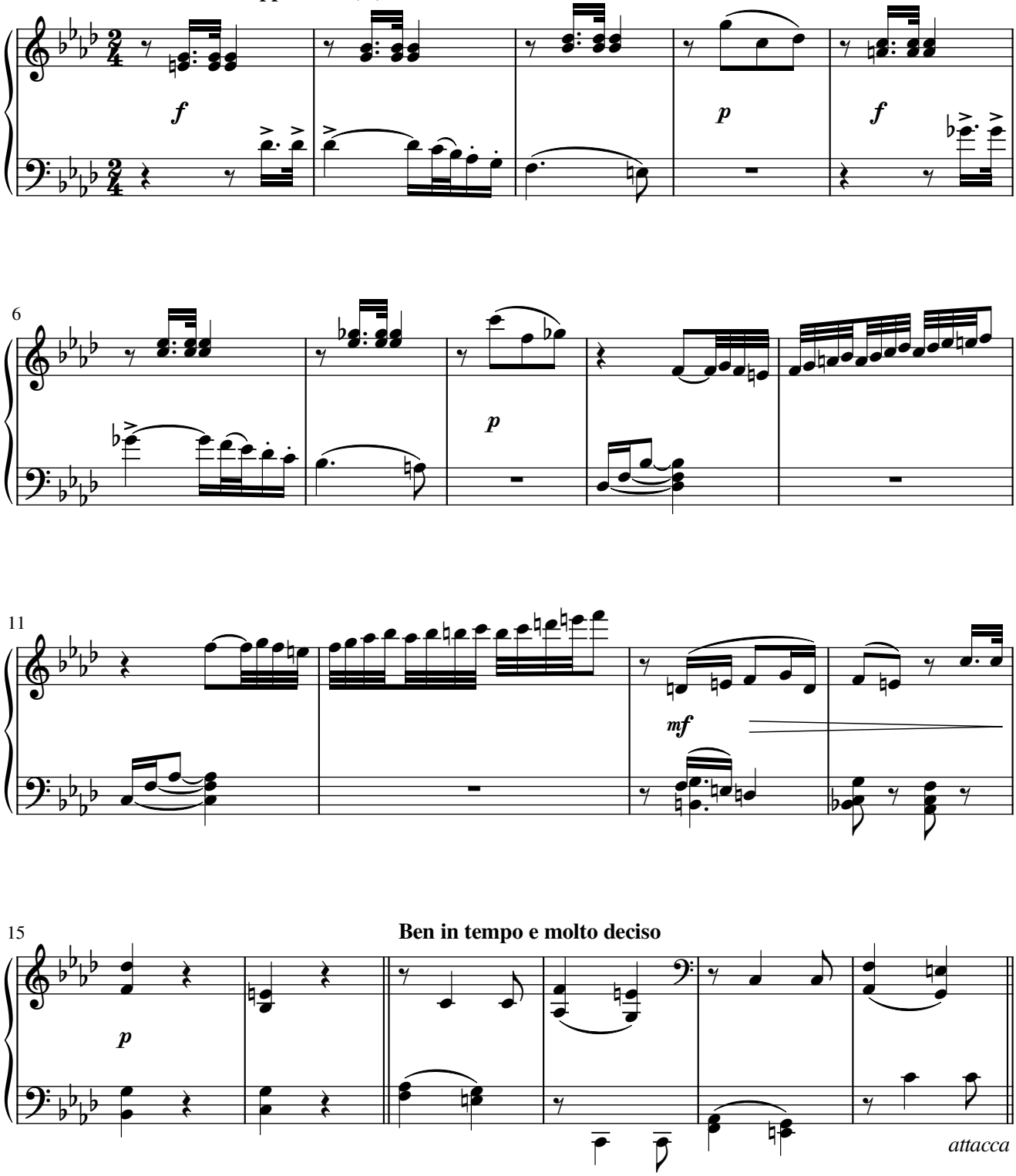
Prelude

to Variations Hob. XVII:6 in F minor / major by Joseph Haydn

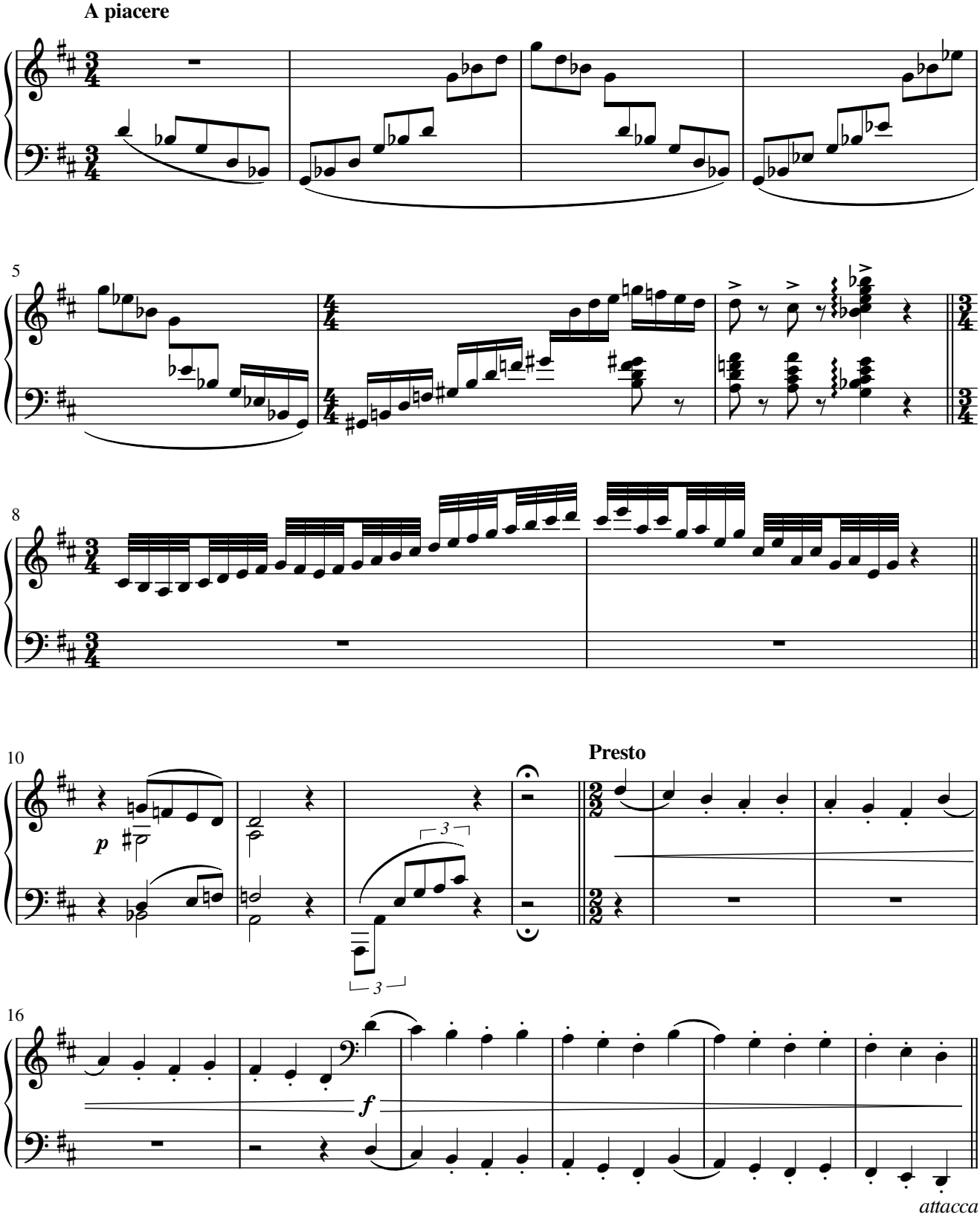
Andante non troppo lento (♪) con alcuna licenza



Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2005

Prelude

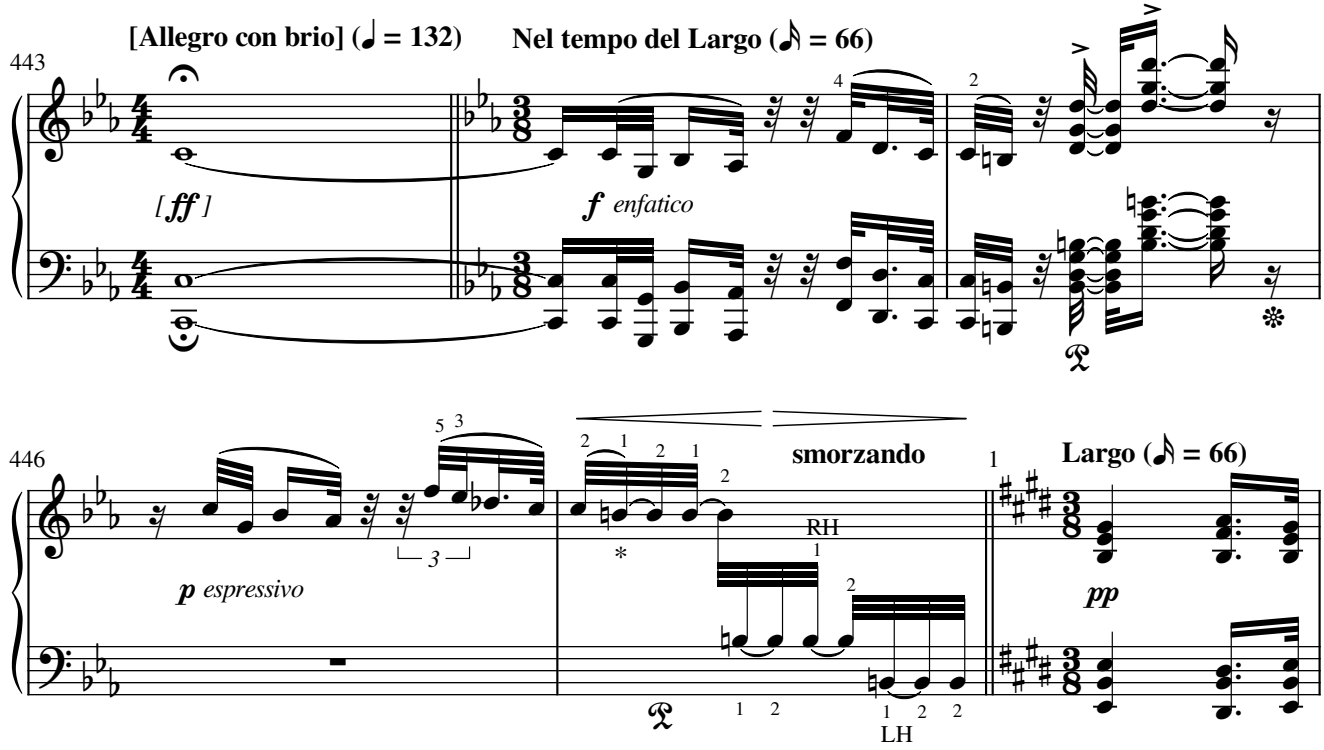
to Sonata Op. 10 № 3 in D major by Ludwig van Beethoven



Martin Widmaier, Karlsruhe 1997

Link

for Piano Concerto № 3 in C minor by Ludwig van Beethoven
between movements I and II
Dedicated to Paula Dickmann

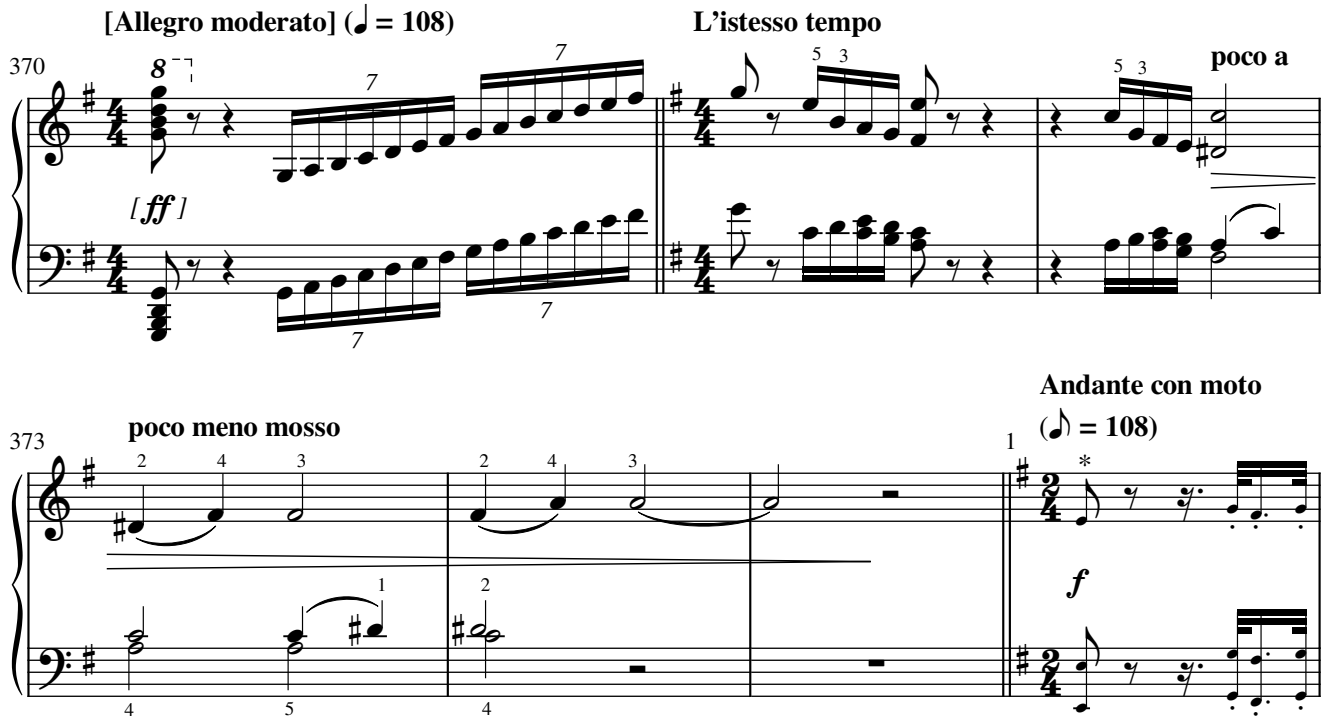


*) silent finger substitutions (1_2) for reasons of expression

Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2020

Link

for Piano Concerto № 4 in G major by Ludwig van Beethoven
between movements I and II
Dedicated to Paula Dickmann



*) strings

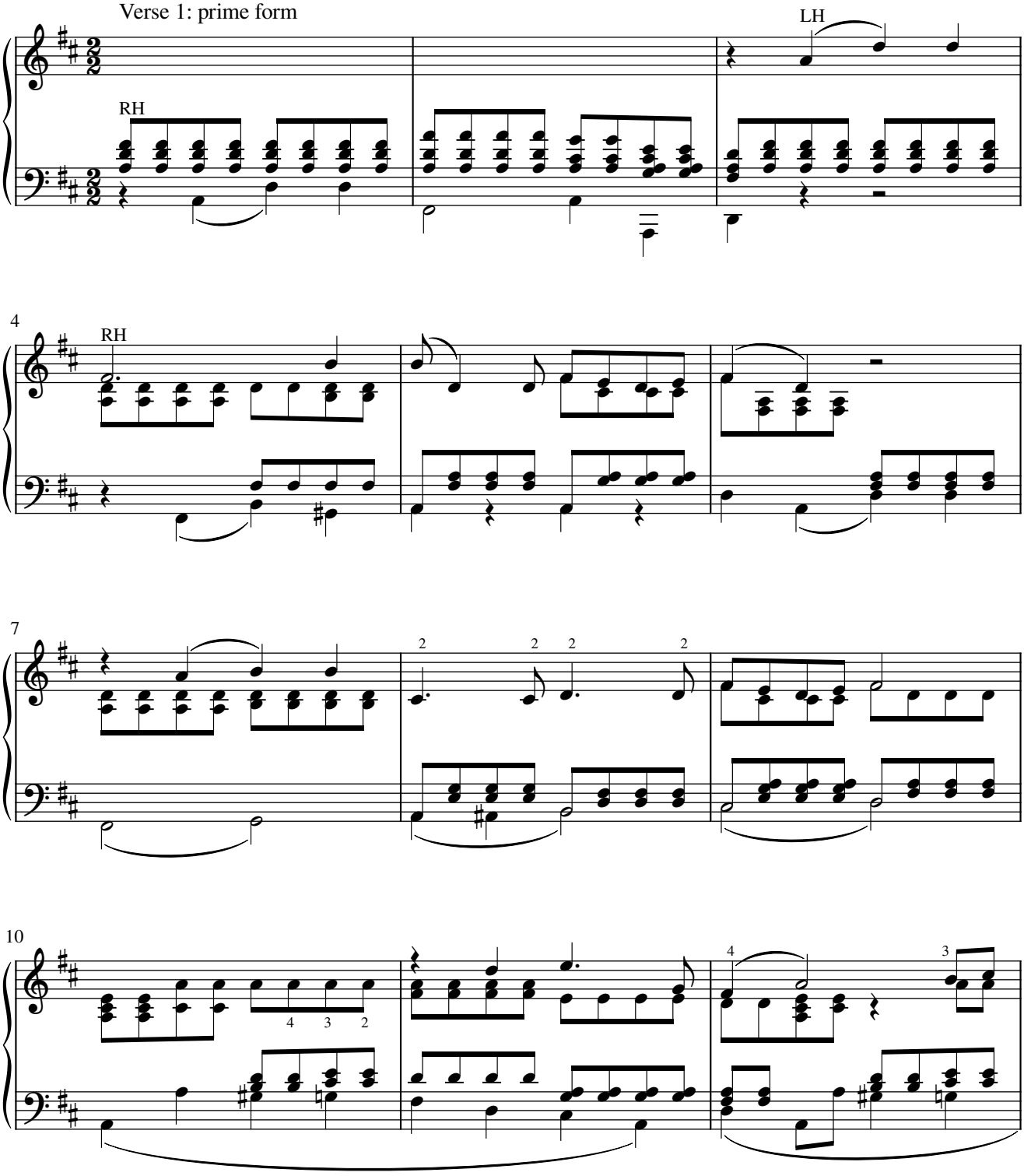
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2020

Prime Form and Inversion

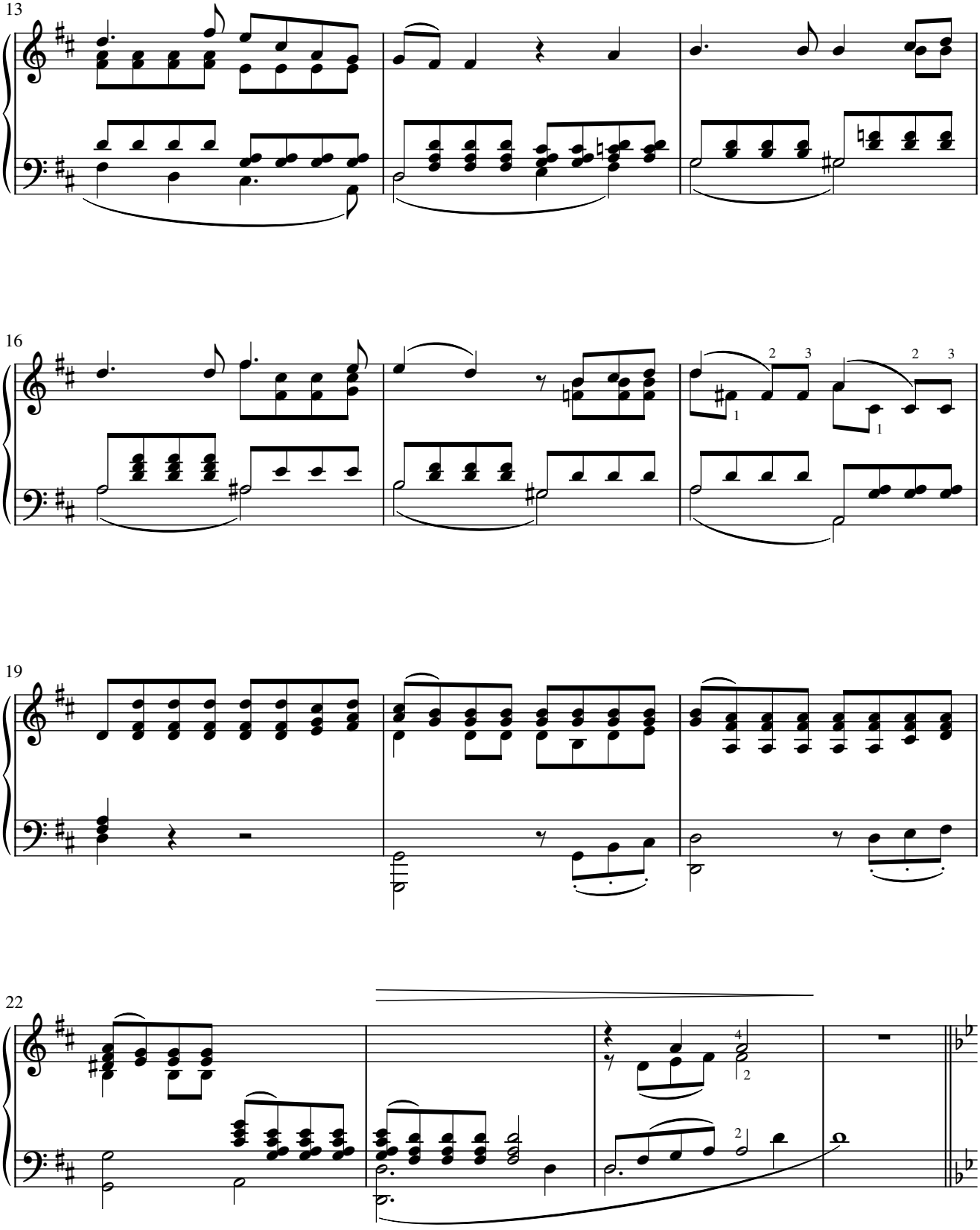
after ‘An die Musik’ Op. 88 № 4 by Franz Schubert
To Graeme McNaught who has published enchanting inversions on YouTube
including ‘An die Musik (reflected)’, recorded in 2012, uploaded in 2014

Mäßig (♩ = 96)

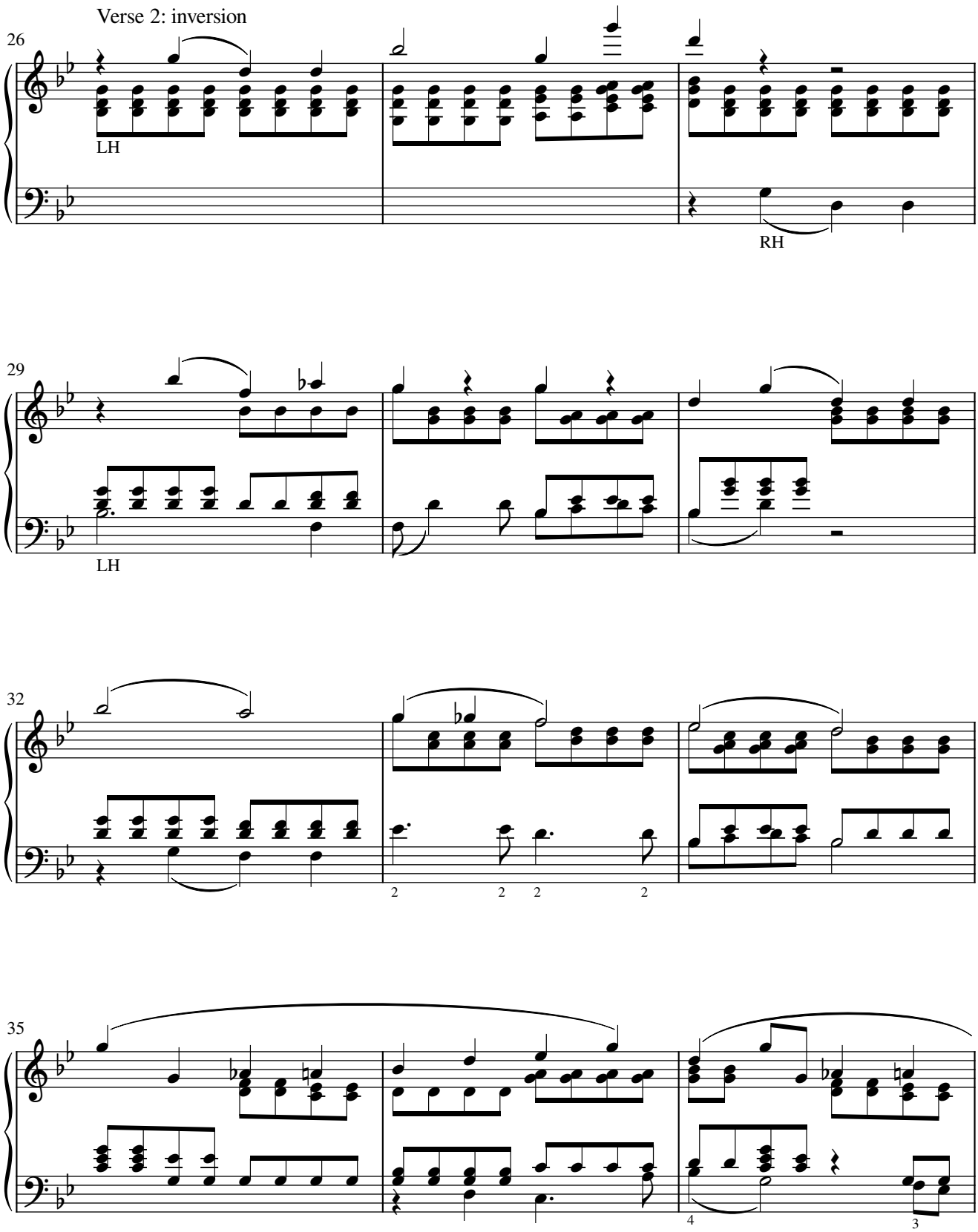
Verse 1: prime form



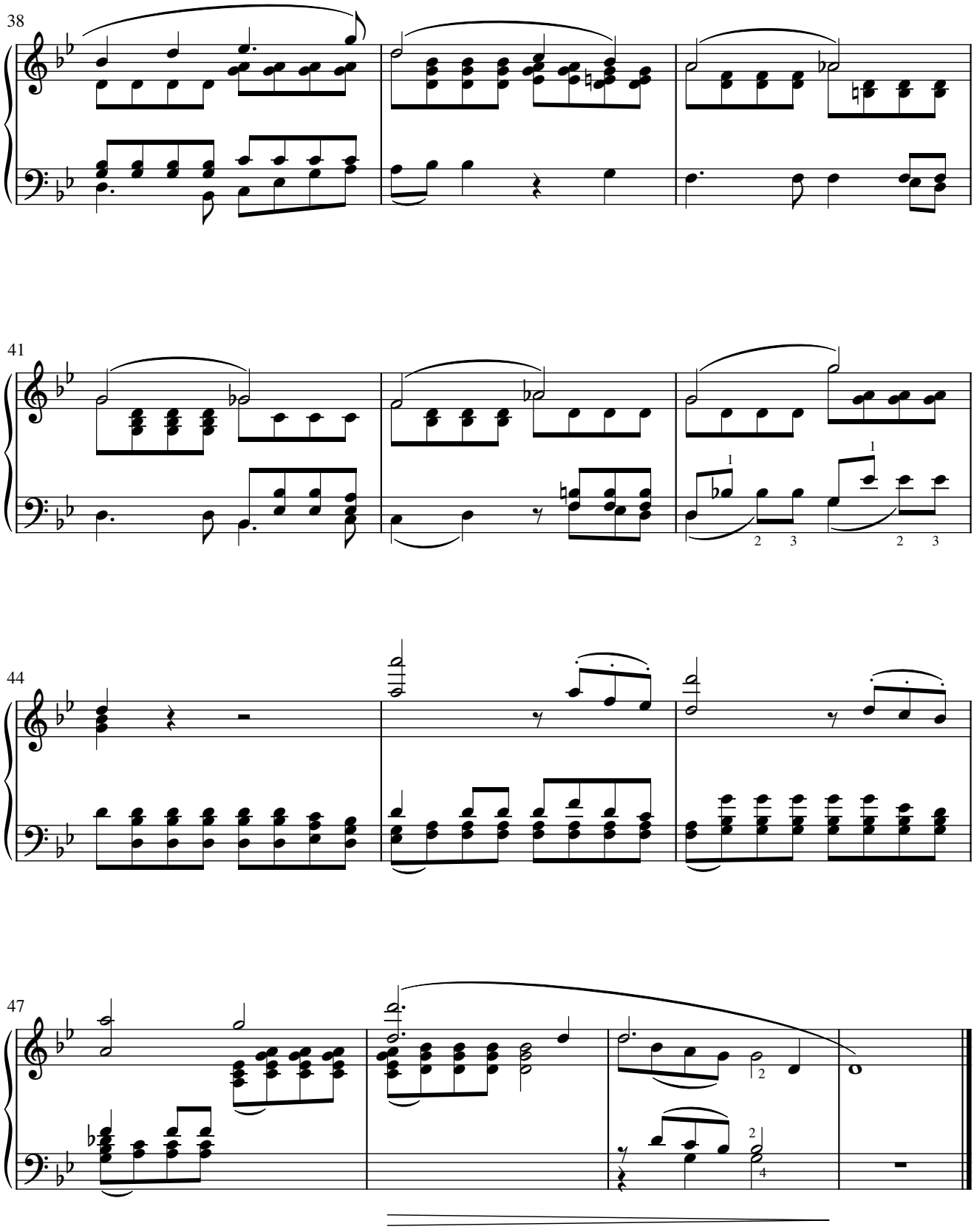
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2021



Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2021



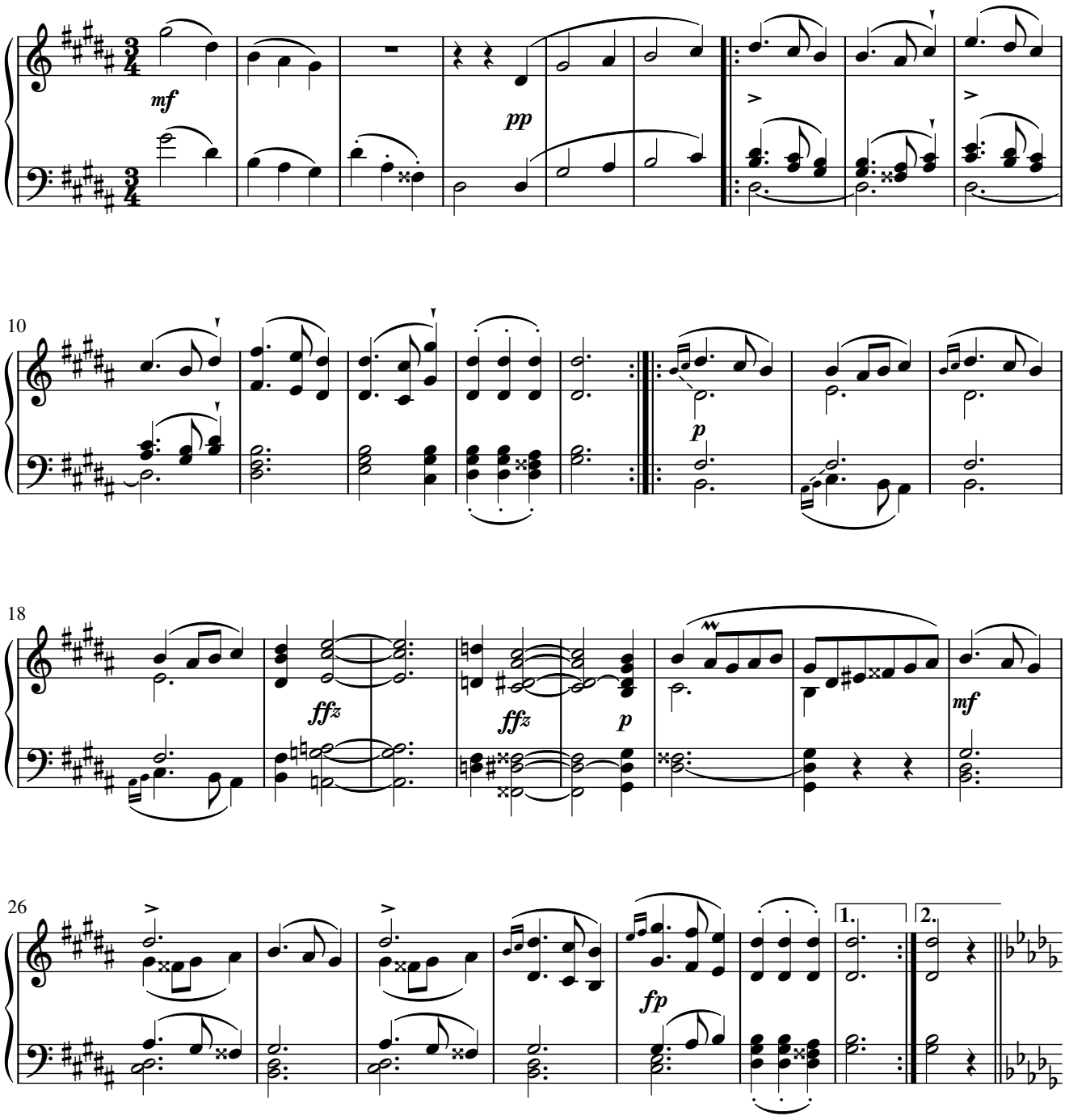
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2021



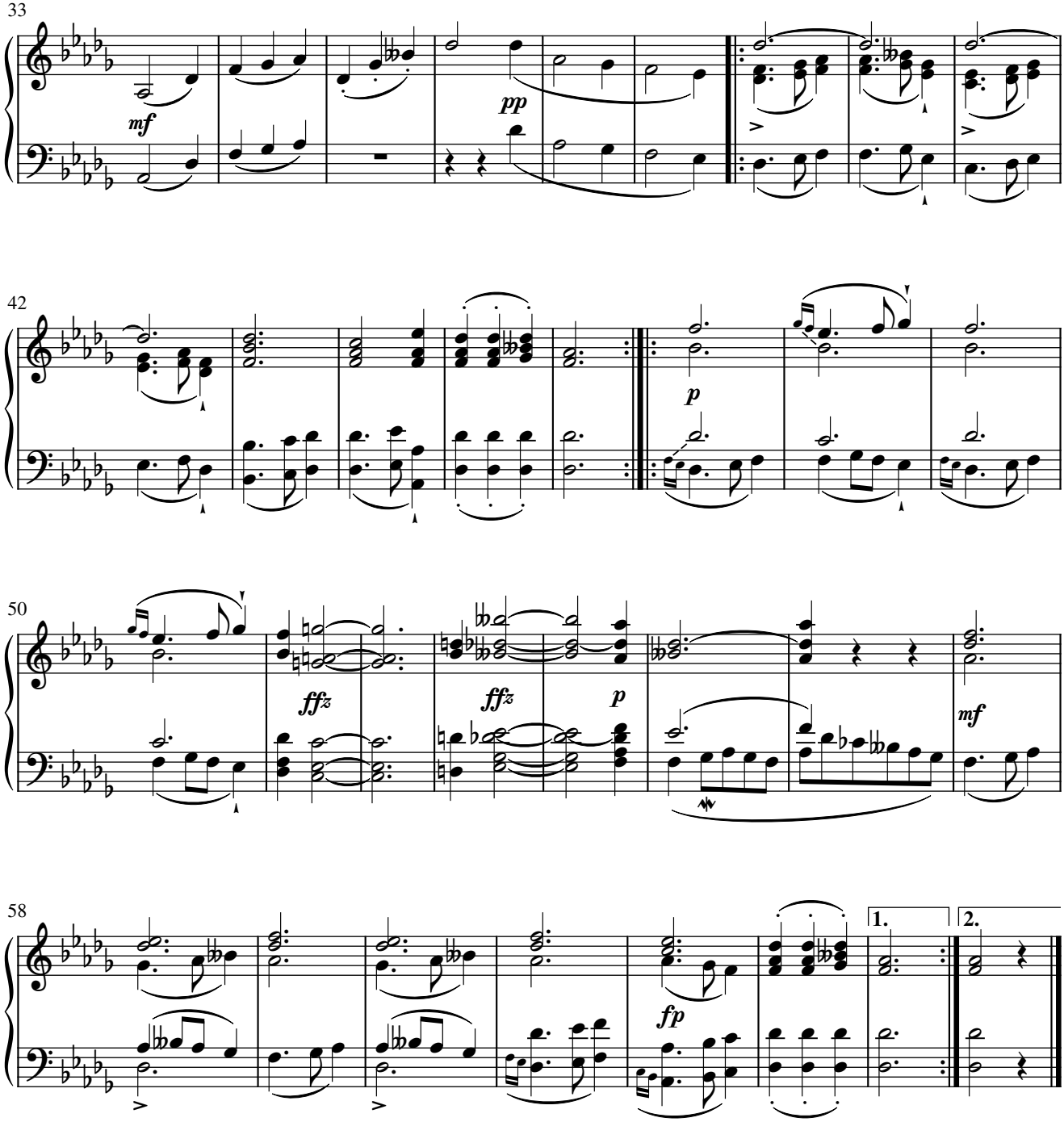
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2021

Prime Form and Inversion

after an Allegretto by Franz Schubert
from Sonata D. 840 in C major, movement III, Trio



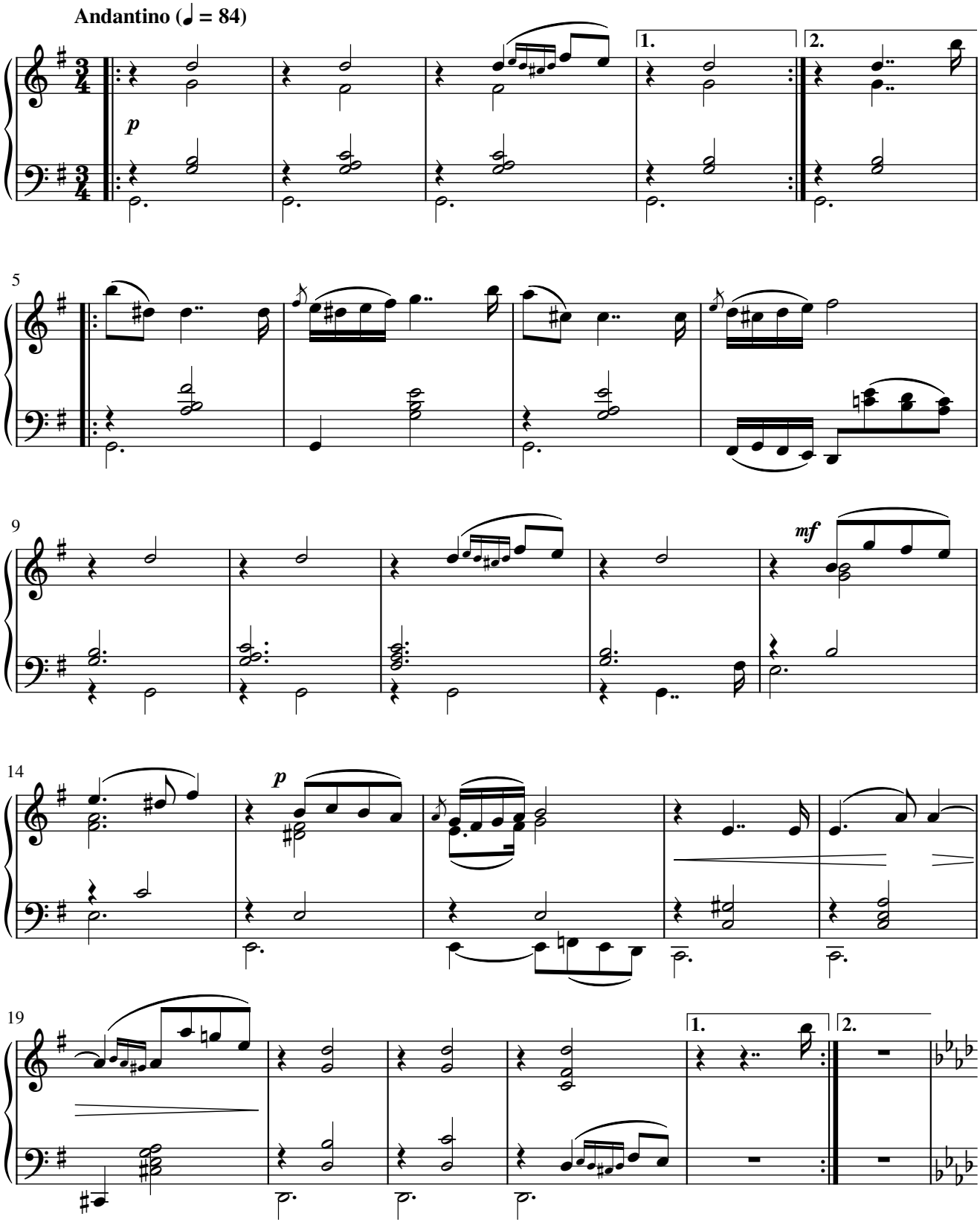
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2021



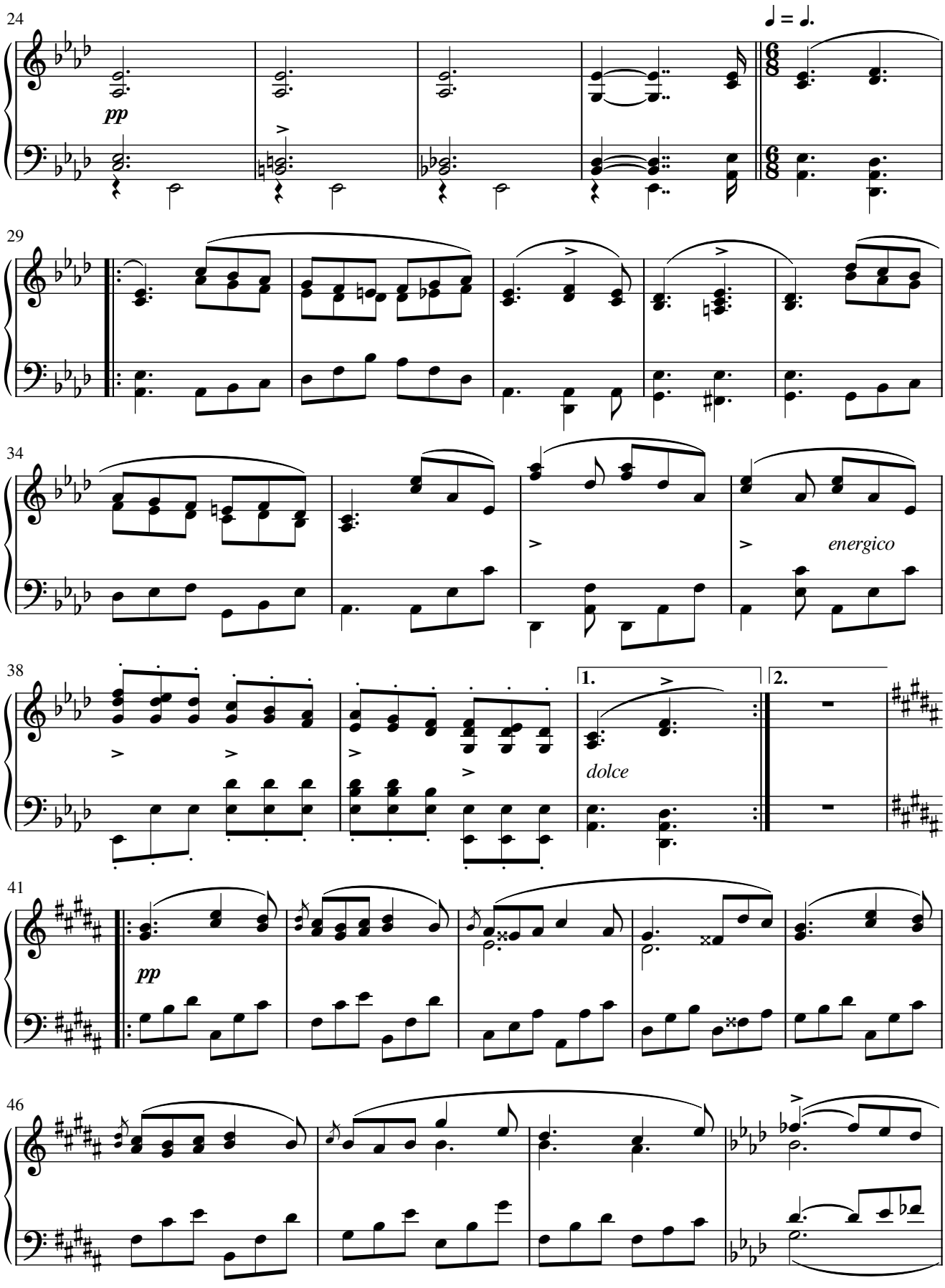
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2021

Extended Version

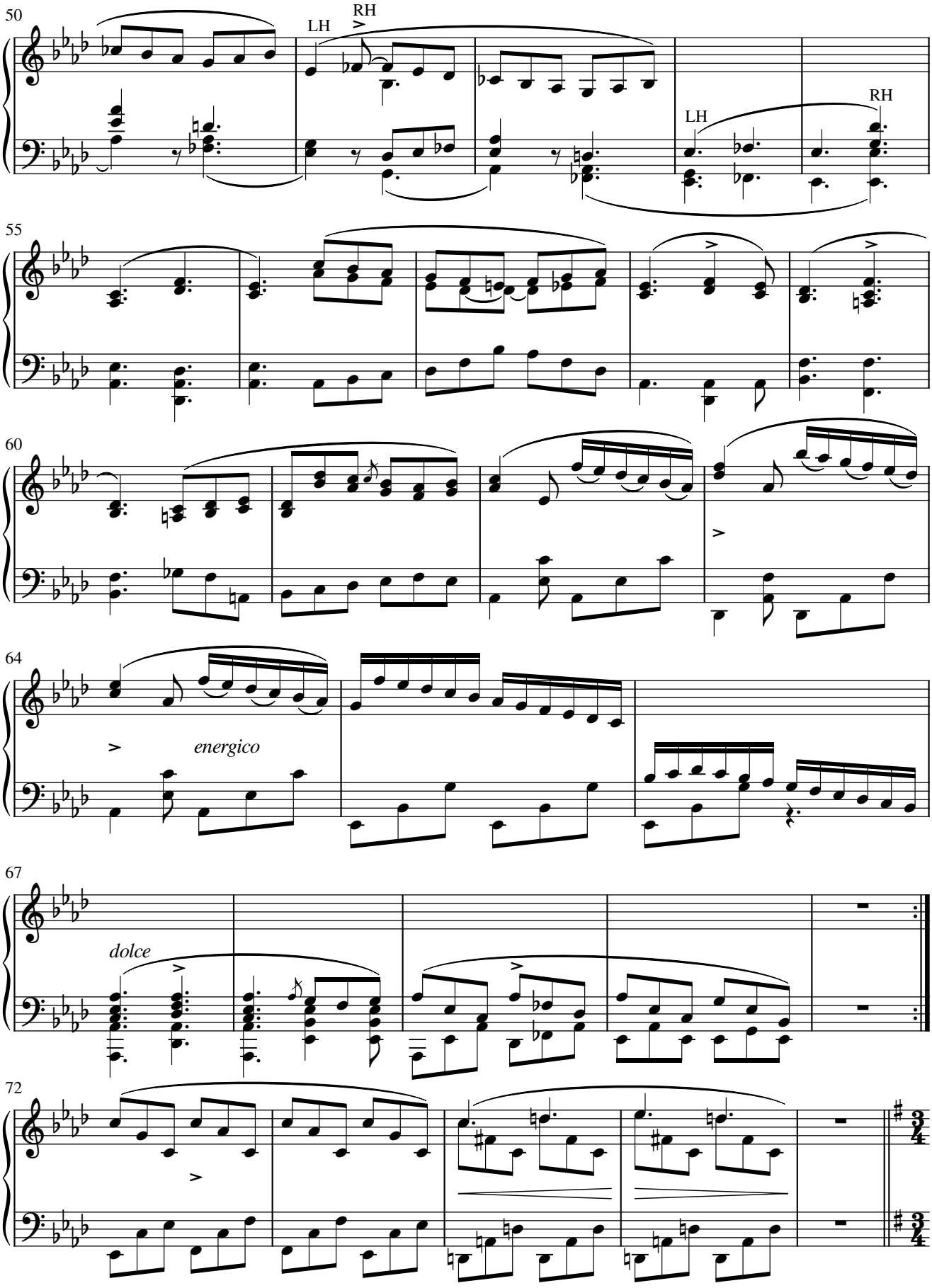
of an orphaned episode by Franz Schubert, serving as Impromptu D. 946 № 4
Outer sections based on models by Carl Czerny and Franz Schubert
Middle section re-using a deleted second episode from Impromptu D. 946 № 1



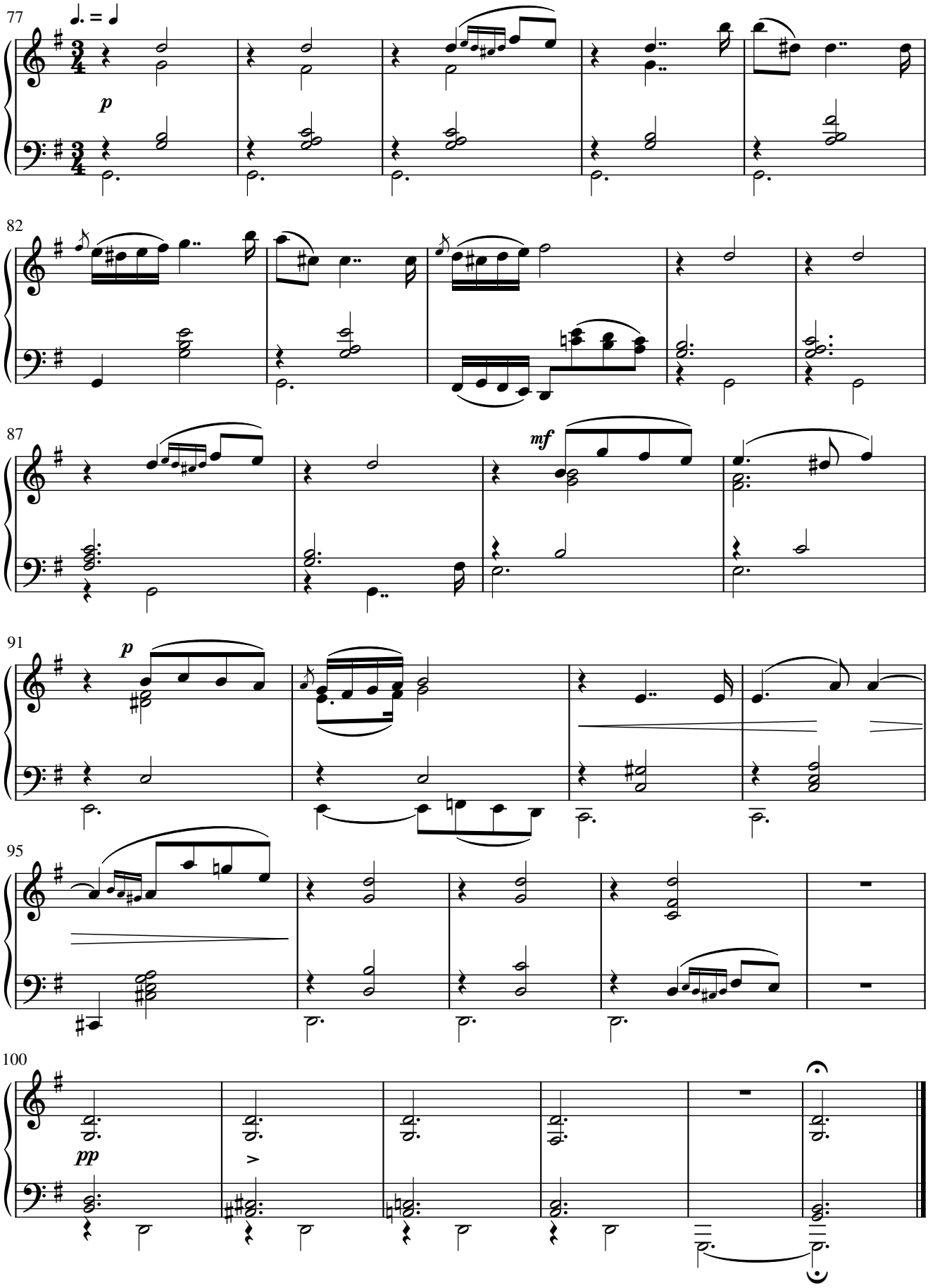
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2002



Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2002



Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2002

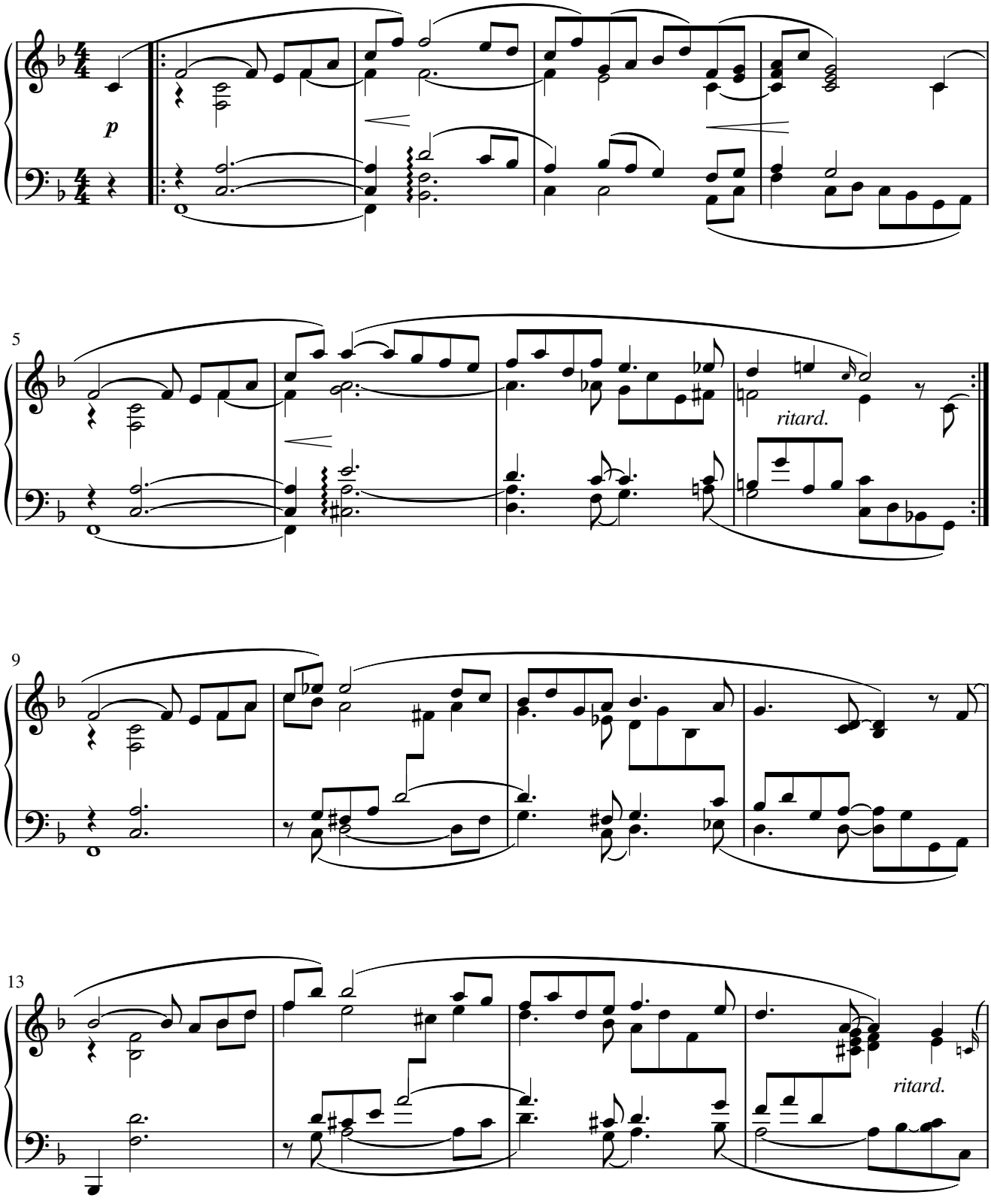


Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2002

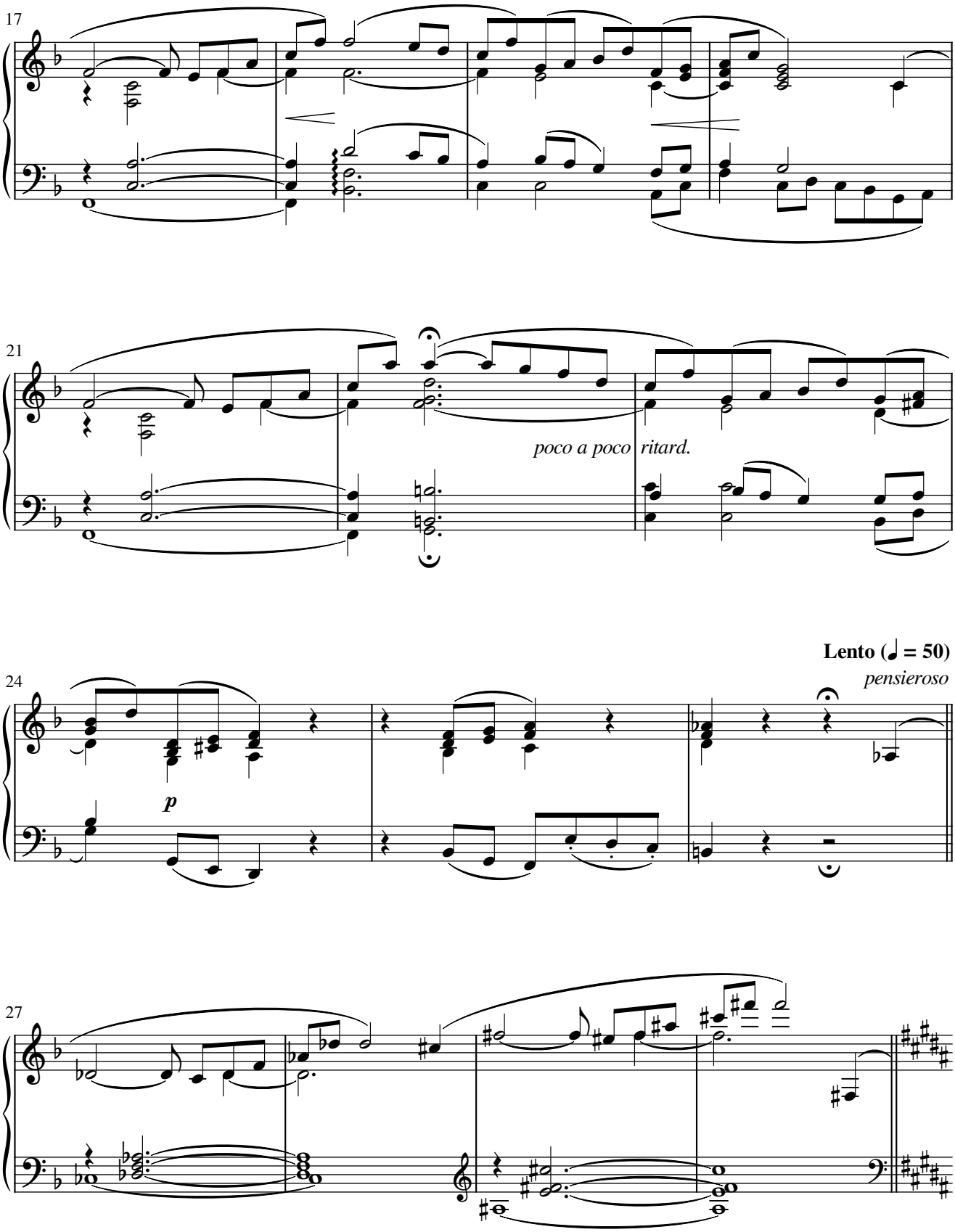
Extended Version

of ‘Träumerei’ by Robert Schumann
A little birthday present to Gilead Mishory

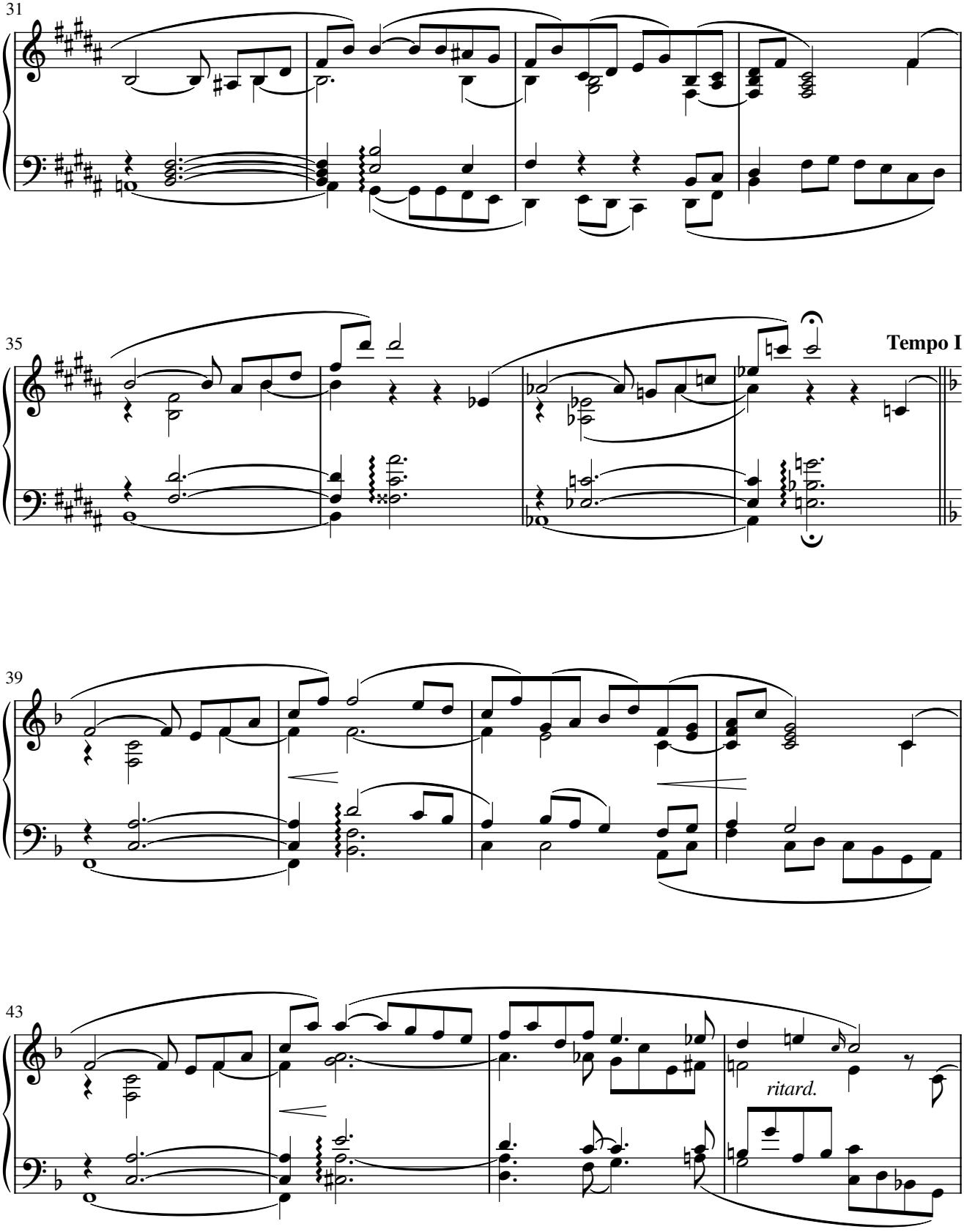
Animato, sempre polifonico e grazioso (♩ = 100)



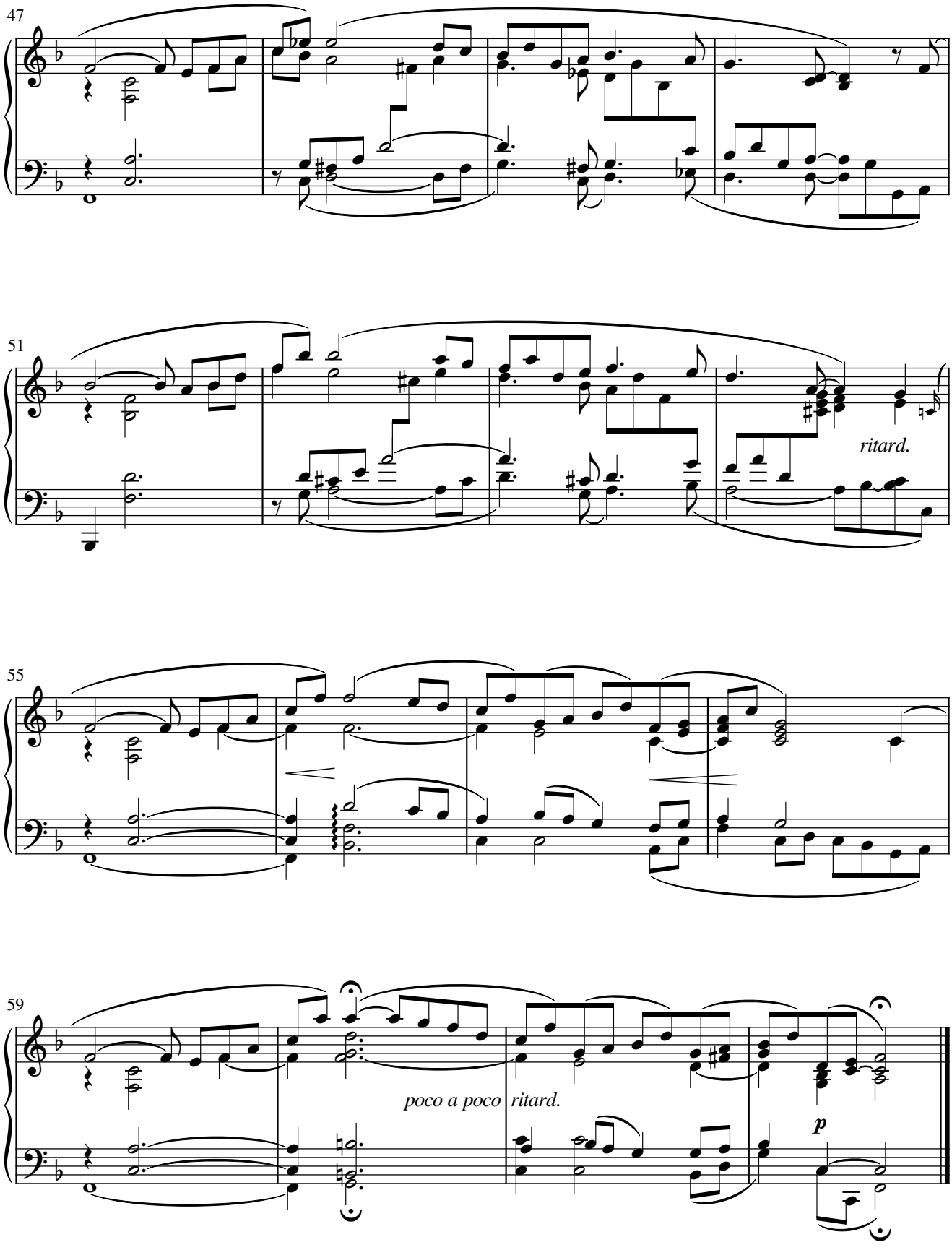
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2020



Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2020



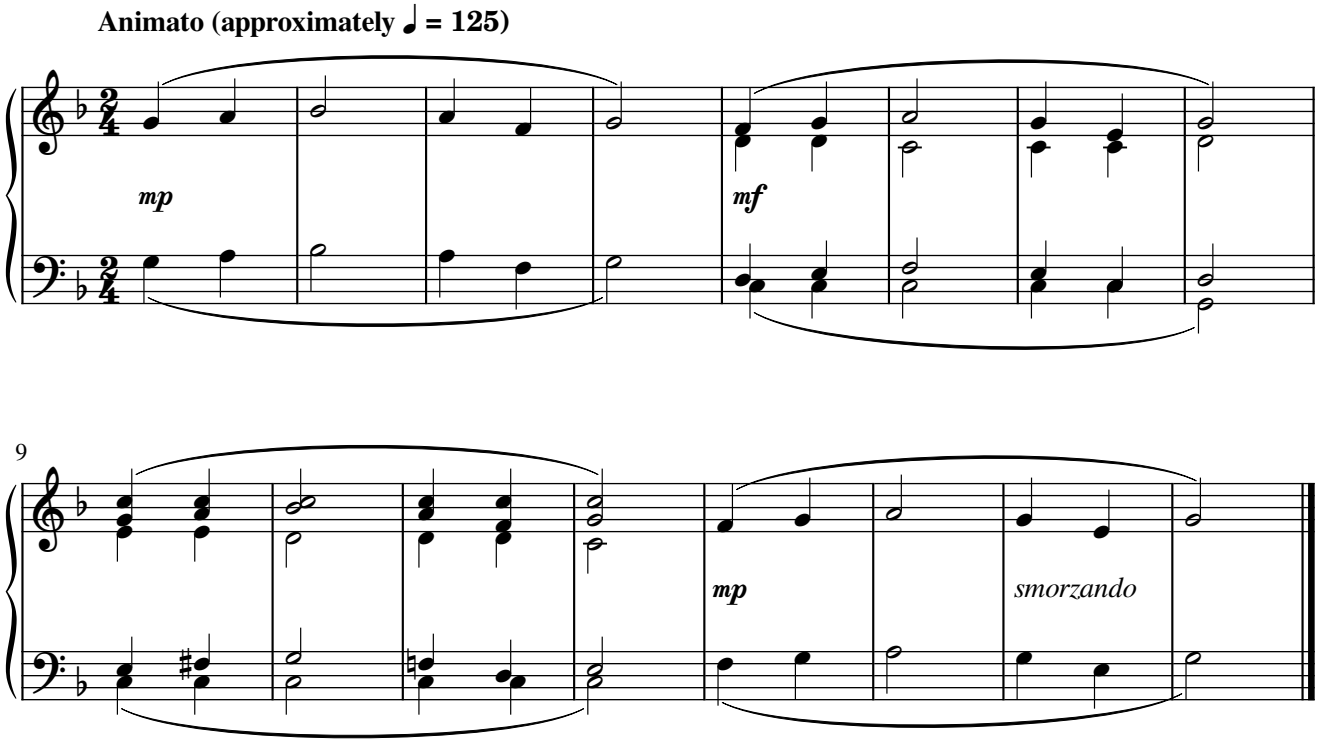
Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2020



Martin Widmaier, Mainz 2020

Interlude

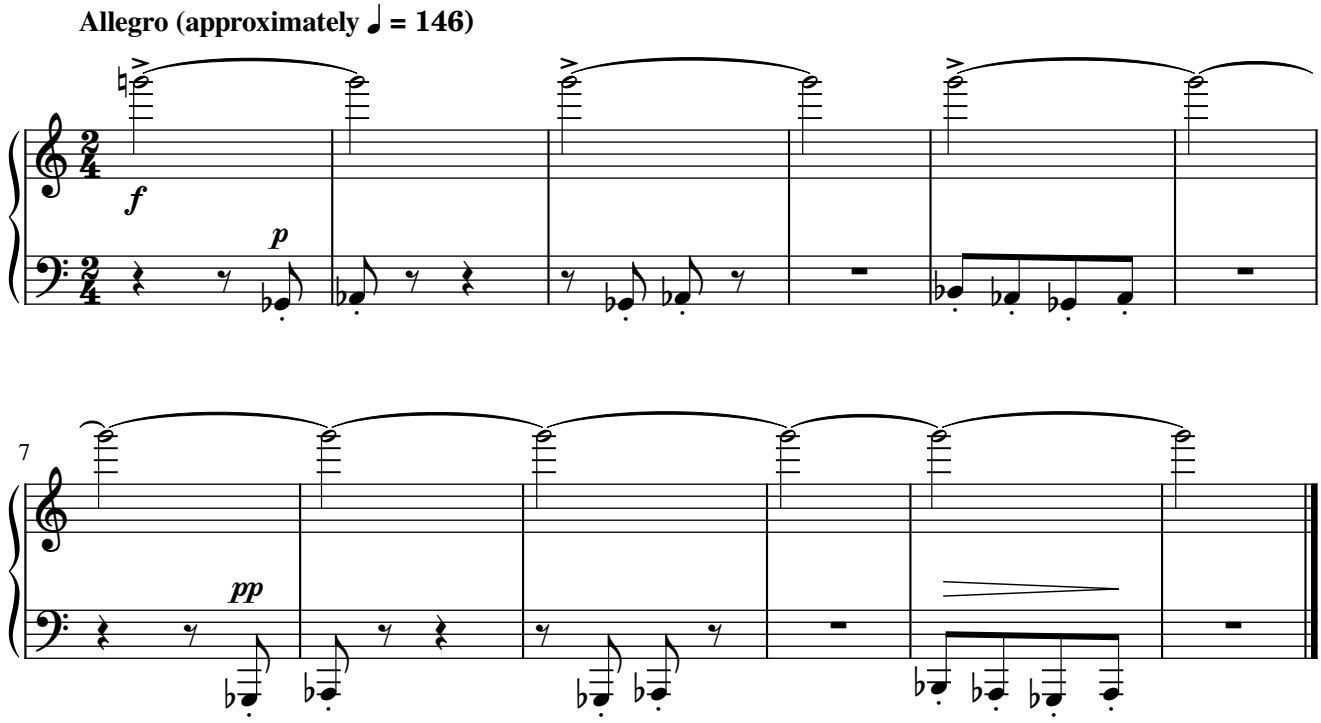
to Mikrokosmos № 125 and 126 by Béla Bartók



Martin Widmaier, Kelsterbach 2025

Interlude

to Mikrokosmos № 142 and 143 by Béla Bartók



Martin Widmaier, Kelsterbach 2025

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,
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Martin Widmaier: *Basic Scales for Piano*, Naresuan University Publishing House, Phitsanulok 2015
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

For **Online Publications**, see www.martinwidmaier.de