Twenty-two pieces
for the piano · Domenico Scarlatti

Edited & Fingered by G. Buonamici

DOMENICO SCARLATTI was the famous son of a still more famous father, Alessandro Scarlatti. He was born at Naples in 1685, or, as some say, 1683. He studied music at first with his father, and then at Rome, under Gasparini. Fétis argues loosely that because Domenico was the most distinguished harpsichordist in Italy, he therefore must have taken lessons of Bernardo Pasquini, the celebrated organist of Santa Maria Maggiore.

Domenico began his public career as an opera-writer; for then, as now, in Italy, desire for stage-glory spurred the musician. His operas were forgotten long ago; and there is dispute about the titles of some of them. Yet writers of the 18th century admired these dramatic works. Burney speaks of the descriptive accompaniment of an aria, in which "the rolling of the billows and distraction of the crew during a storm and shipwreck are admirably painted by the orchestra."

In 1708 Scarlatti met Handel in Venice. The story—probably apocryphal—runs that he heard Handel play at a masquerade, and exclaimed, "'Tis the famous Saxon, or the Devil." But this tale was told of others before Scarlatti was born. At Rome, Cardinal Ottoboni presented Scarlatti as the chief exponent of Italian organ and harpsichord playing in the friendly contest with Germany, represented by Handel. The tradition is that Handel showed superiority as an organist; that on the harpsichord they were of equal strength, or that if there were disparity, the advantage was to Scarlatti. To the time of his death each was never weary of praising the skill and the personal character of the other.

And then Scarlatti wrote cantatas and church music at Rome. In 1715 he succeeded Baj as the chapel-master of the Vatican basilica. In 1719 he went to London as the *maestro al cembalo* of the Italian Opera. It is said that in 1720 his "Narciso" was produced in London. The next year he went to Lisbon, for the King of Portugal found pleasure in his art, and chose him teacher to his daughter, Magdalene Theresia, afterward the Princess of the Asturias, and, later, Queen to Ferdinand VI. of Spain. In 1725 he went back to Naples, where Hasse saw him. He visited Rome, but there was little for him to do in Italy, and in 1729 he was called to the court at Madrid to give lessons to his royal pupil again. When her husband ascended the throne, Scarlatti played nightly in the Queen's chamber, and he was held in highest favor. Scarlatti died in 1757; some say at Madrid, others, at Naples.

The last years of his life, Scarlatti was "too fat to cross his hands as he used to do," and the pieces composed by him in 1756 are on that account not so difficult as the earlier pieces written for the princess. Sacchi, in his life of Carlo Broschi, says that Scarlatti was—like some other well-known musicians—a passionate gamester; that he thus wasted his substance; that his family after his death was supported by his old friend, the renowned singer known on the stage as Farinelli.

* * *

There are several editions of the works of Scarlatti for the harpsichord. The first edition of the first book is rare: it contains only 30 pieces. The title is "Essercizi (sic) per gravicembalo di Don Domenico Scarlatti, cavaliere di San Giacomo e Maestro de (sic) serenissimi principe e principessa delle Asturie." The date of publication is unknown, except that it was before 1746. The most complete of later editions is that published in 1839 at Vienna and edited by Czerny.

When Burney was in Vienna, he met a physician named L'Augier, who knew Scarlatti intimately in Spain. "Scarlatti frequently told L'Augier, that he was sensible he had broke through all the rules of composition in his lessons; but asked if his deviations from these rules offended the ear? and, upon being answered in the negative, he said, that he thought there was scarce any other rule, worth the attention of a man of genius, than that of not displeasing the only sense of which music is the object." L'Augier also told Burney that in many passages Scarlatti imitated "the melody of tunes sung by carriers, muleteers, and common people." Hasse, the husband of Faustina, and as clever a critic as composer, said that Scarlatti was possessed of "a wonderful hand as well as fecundity of invention."

Scarlatti is very near to our generation. He pays scanty attention to formalism. His "Sonatas," like his "Studies," are "sound-pieces." There is little regard for fugal construction, dance foundations of the suite, contrapuntal traditions. Running passages of thirds and sixths, broken chords in contrary motion, the necessity of quickly crossing the hands:—these novel features must have excited much wonder, as his contempt for the rules against consecutive fifths and octaves awoke undoubtedly the indignation of pedagogues. Seldom does he weave a contrapuntal web. His speech is pungent, decisive. The short themes are like rapier-thrusts. They are repeated with singular insistance. He loves to surprise in rhythm. He is seldom sentimental. The slow movement bores him. Ideas are thick and fast; they run at lightning speed; yet they do not jostle each other, for the expression is pellucid. The idea is never lost in development. Take the sonata in D major "a tempo di ballo;" how simple is the characteristic identifying figure, and how important it becomes by skilful reiteration. Scarlatti wrote music for his instrument, not music that might be, if necessary, played on it. How perennially fresh, sparkling, graceful! The wit and humor are for all time, all lands; just as the "Celestina" of de Rojas, near four centuries old, is to-day a delight, strained as it is through the sieve of translation. For above all has the music of Scarlatti the flavor of personality. It throws out agreeable quickening perfumes, while the harpsichord music of too many of his contemporaries and followers is scentless and stale.

PHILIP HALE.

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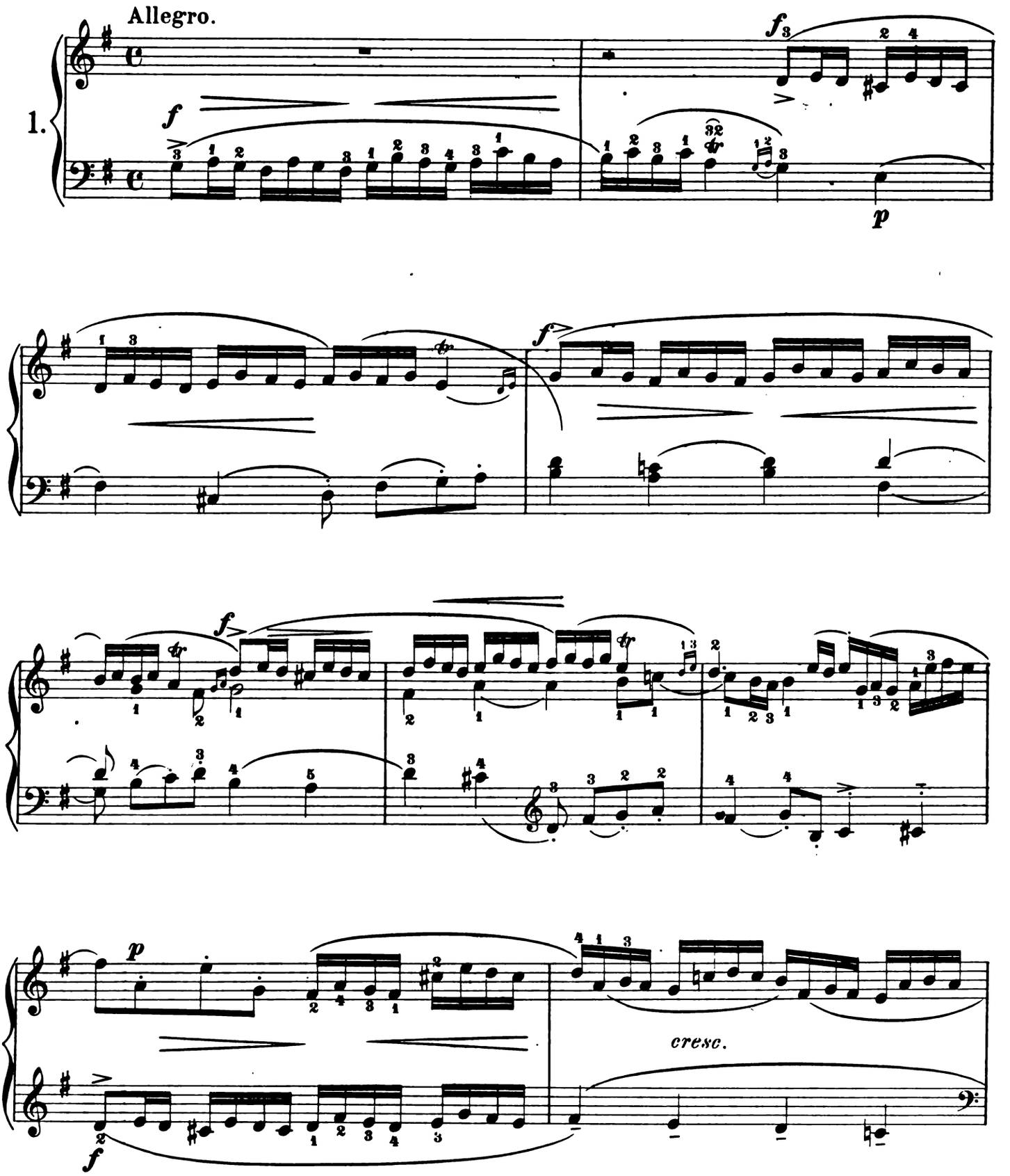
Prelude.

DOMENICO SCARLATTI.



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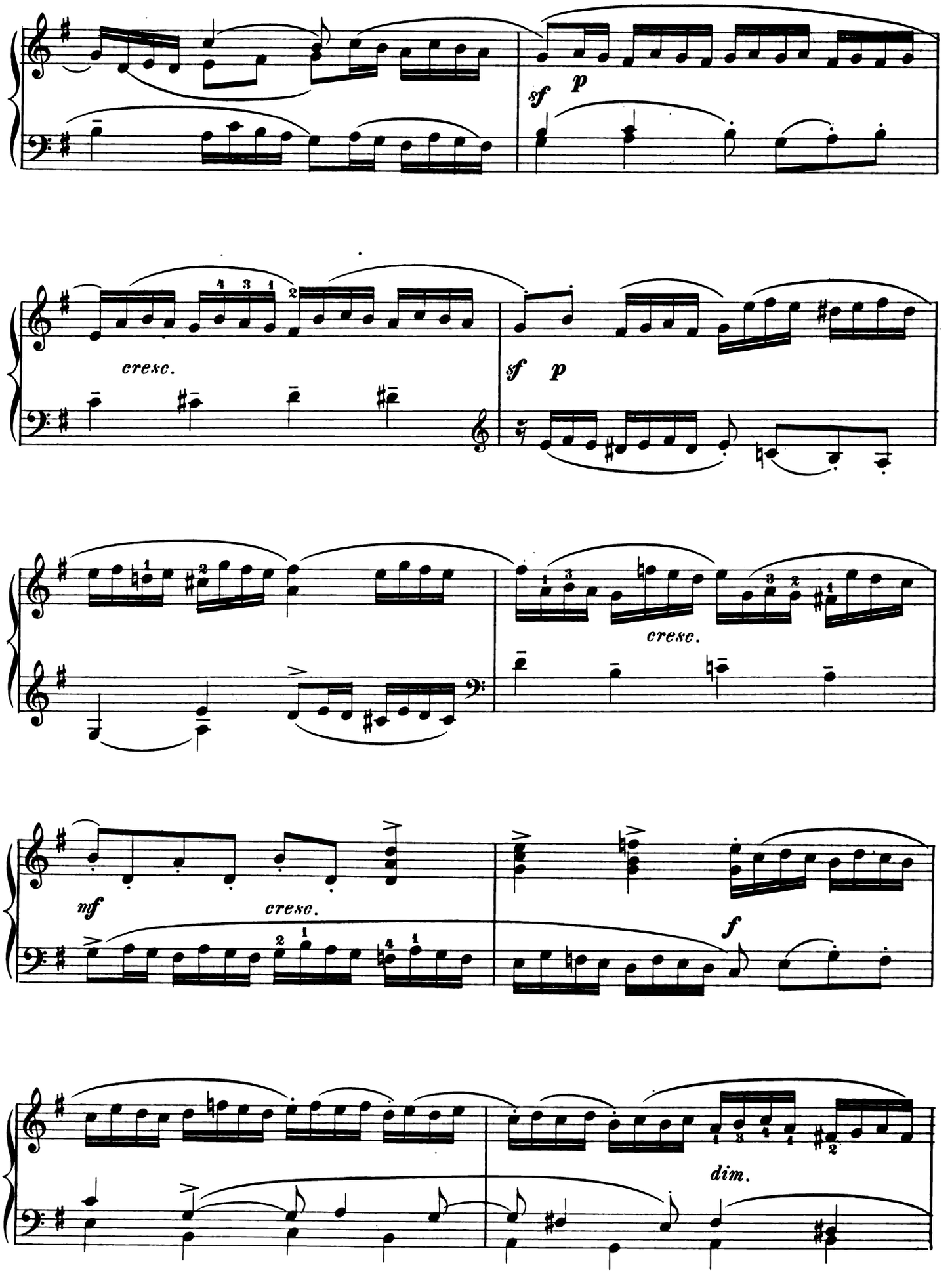
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sf p
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mf
cresc.
f
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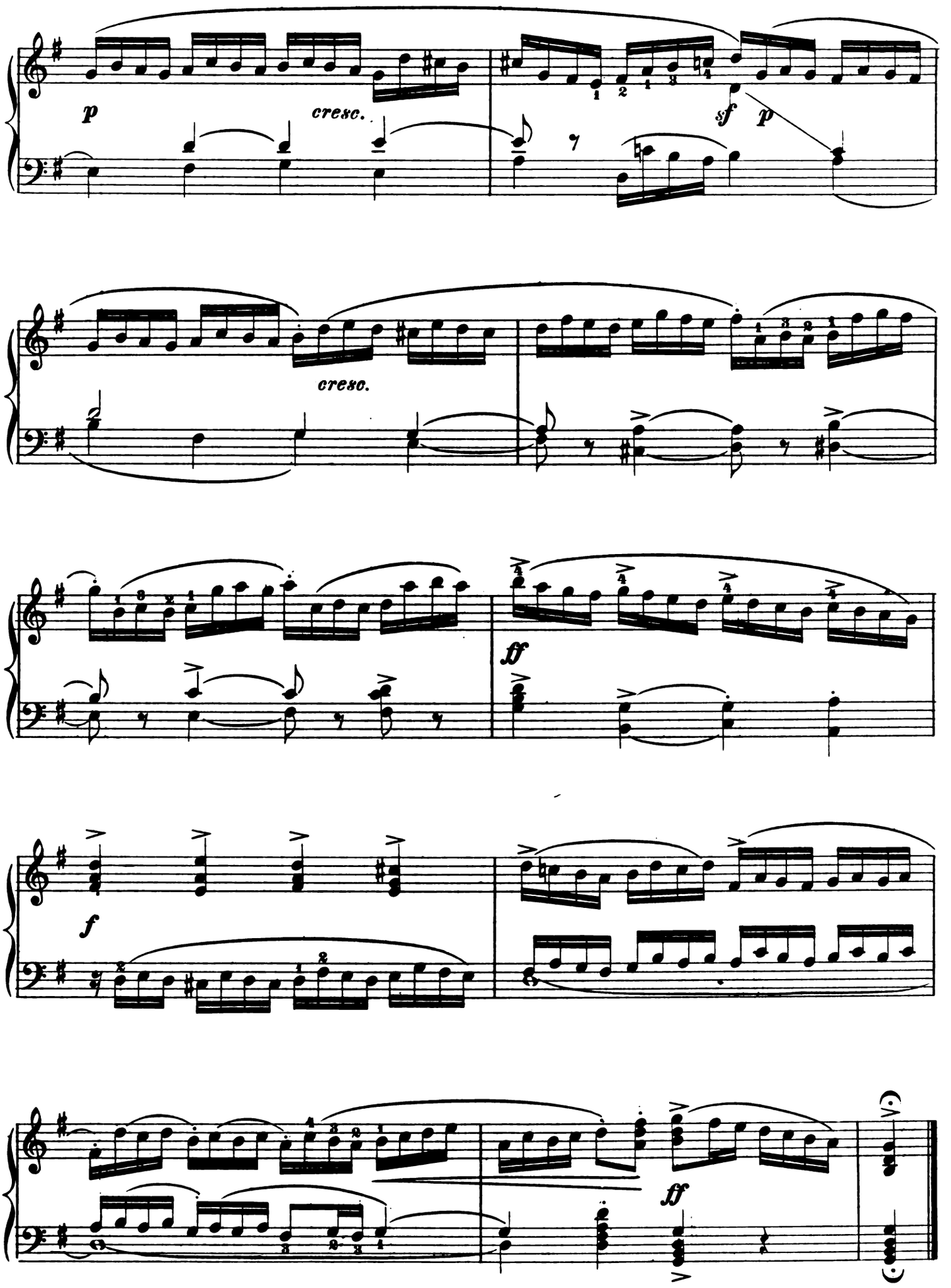
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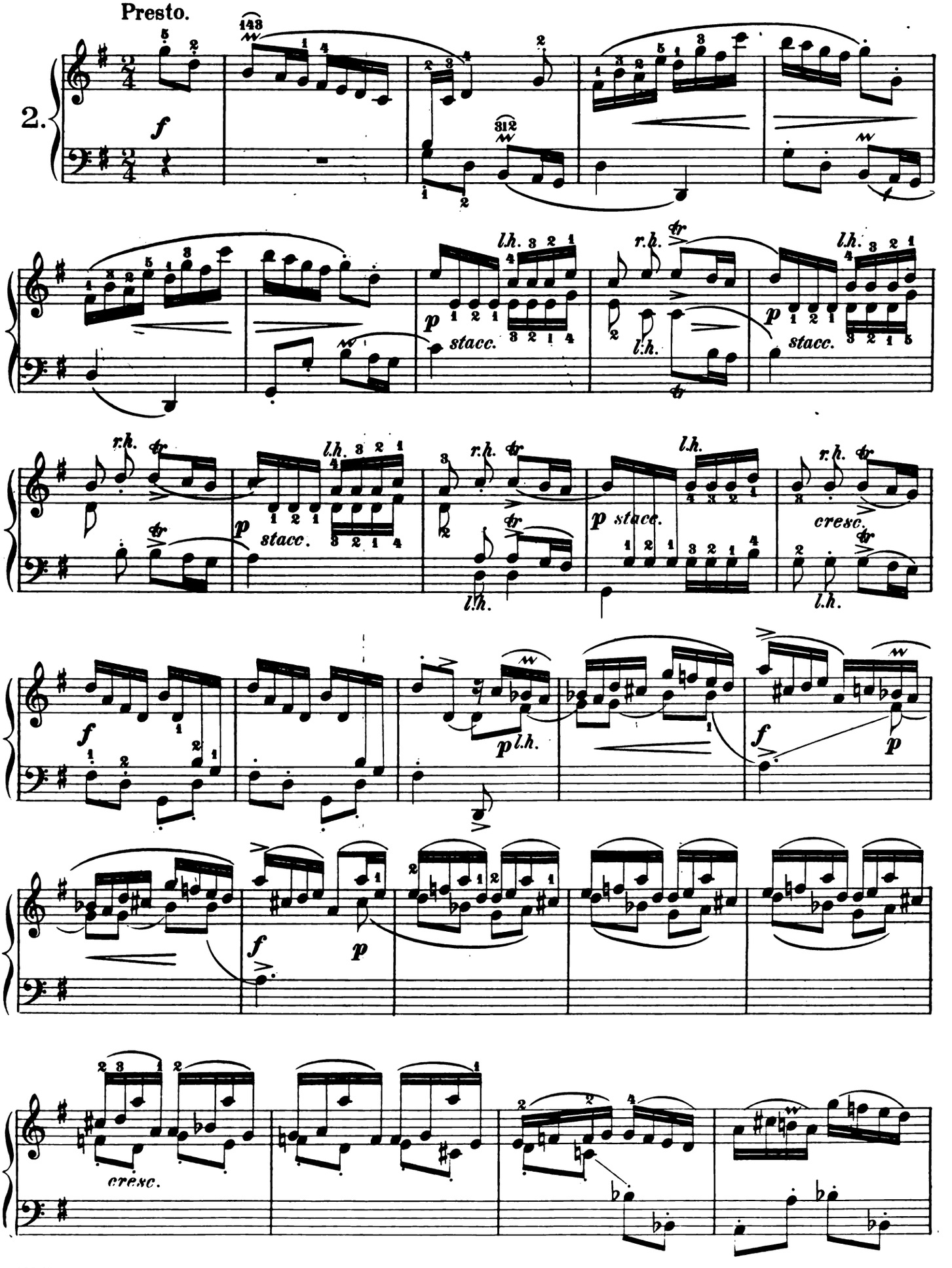
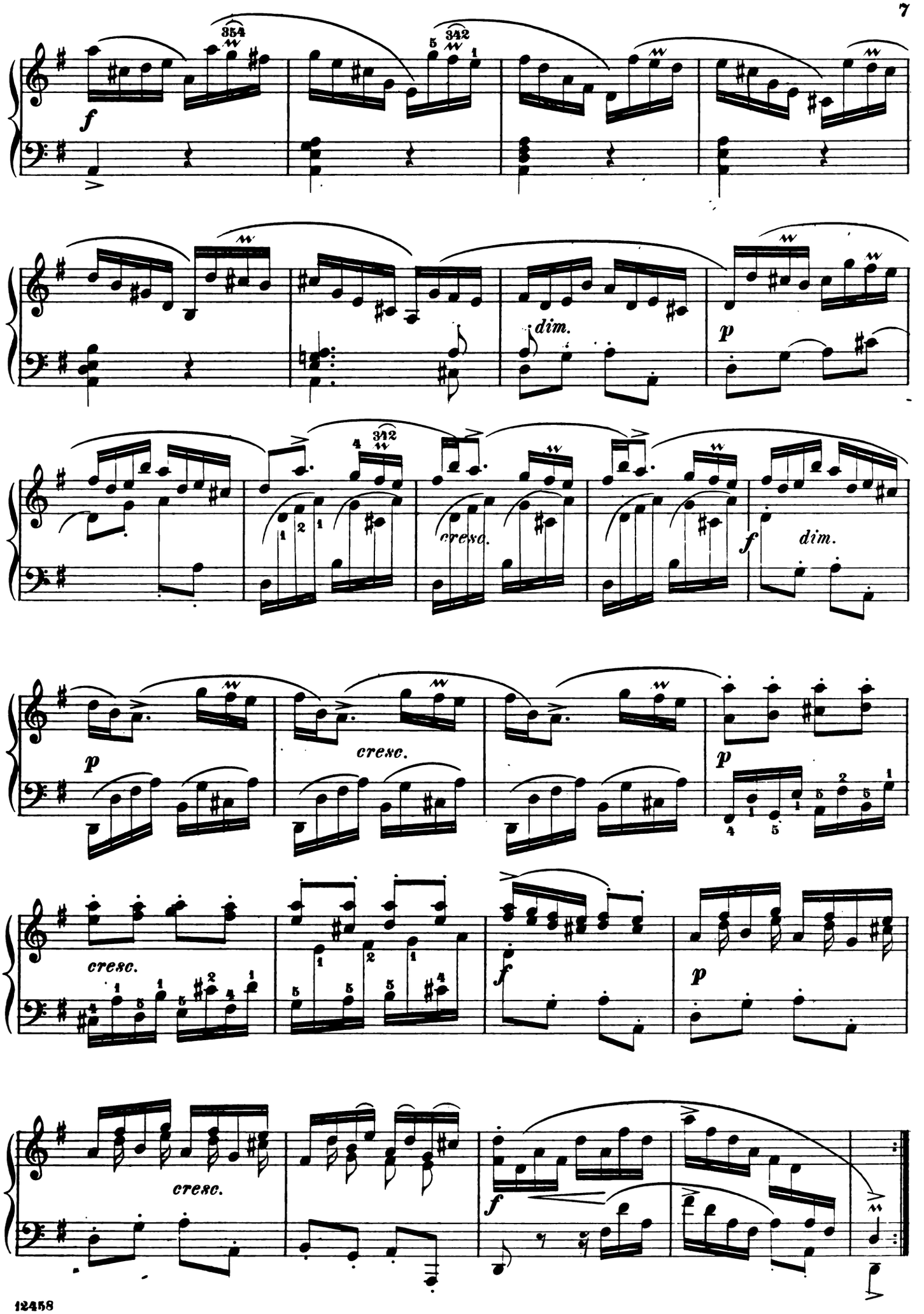
cresc.
sf
p
cresc.
ff
f
ff

Toccata.

Presto.

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cresc.
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dim.
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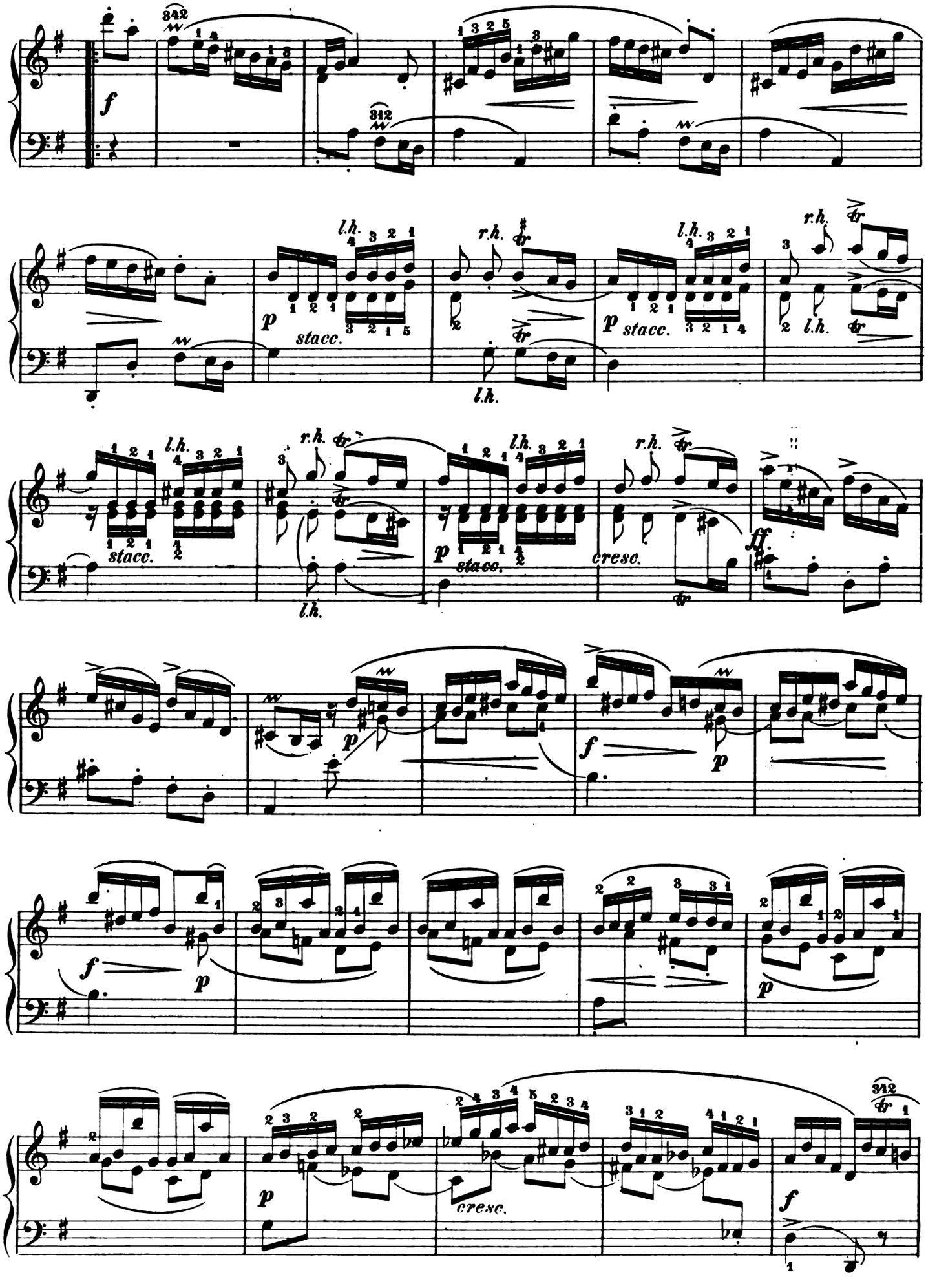
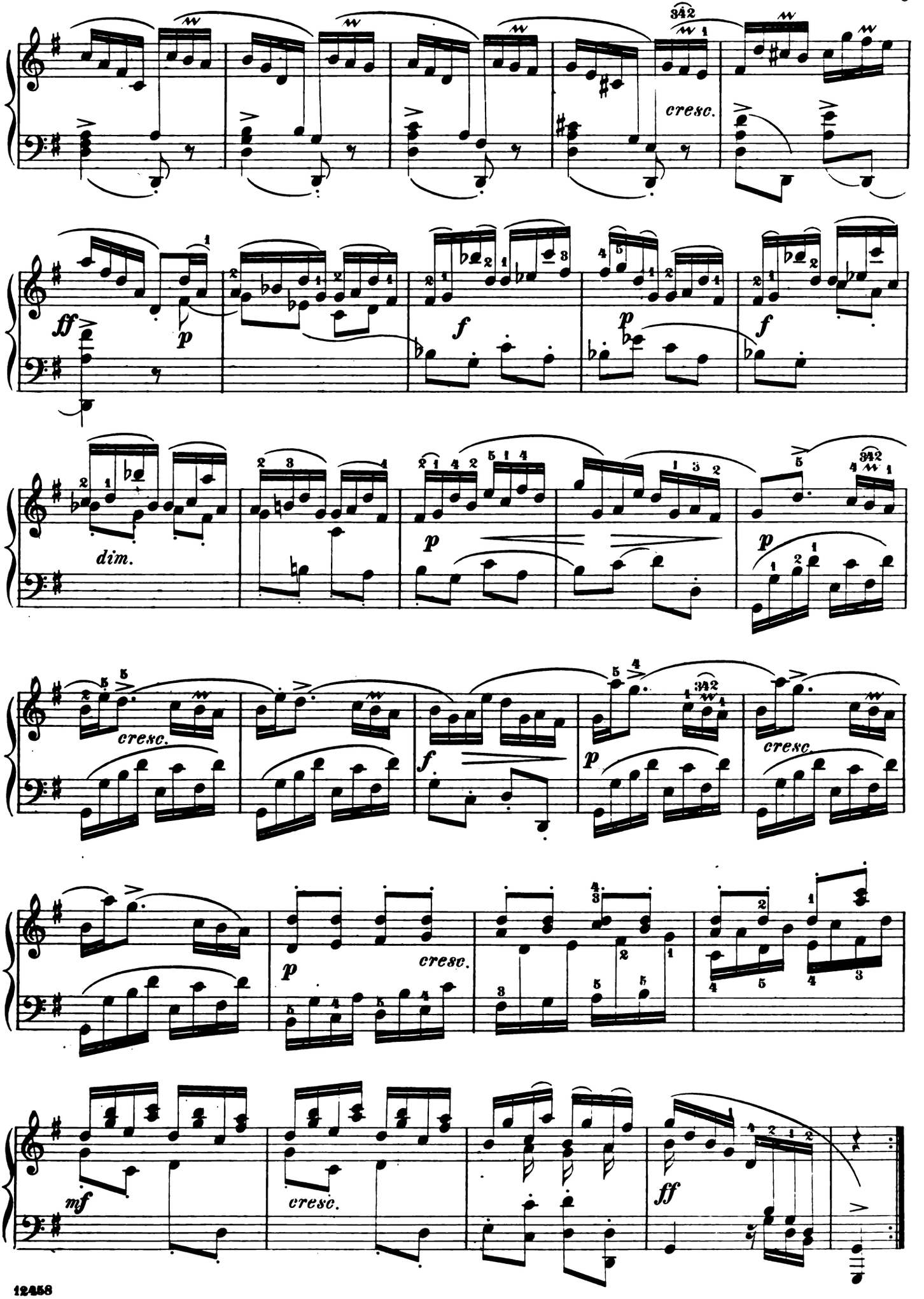
cresc.
p
cresc.
f
p
cresc.
f


f
p
stacc.
l.h.
r.h.
tr
cresc.
ff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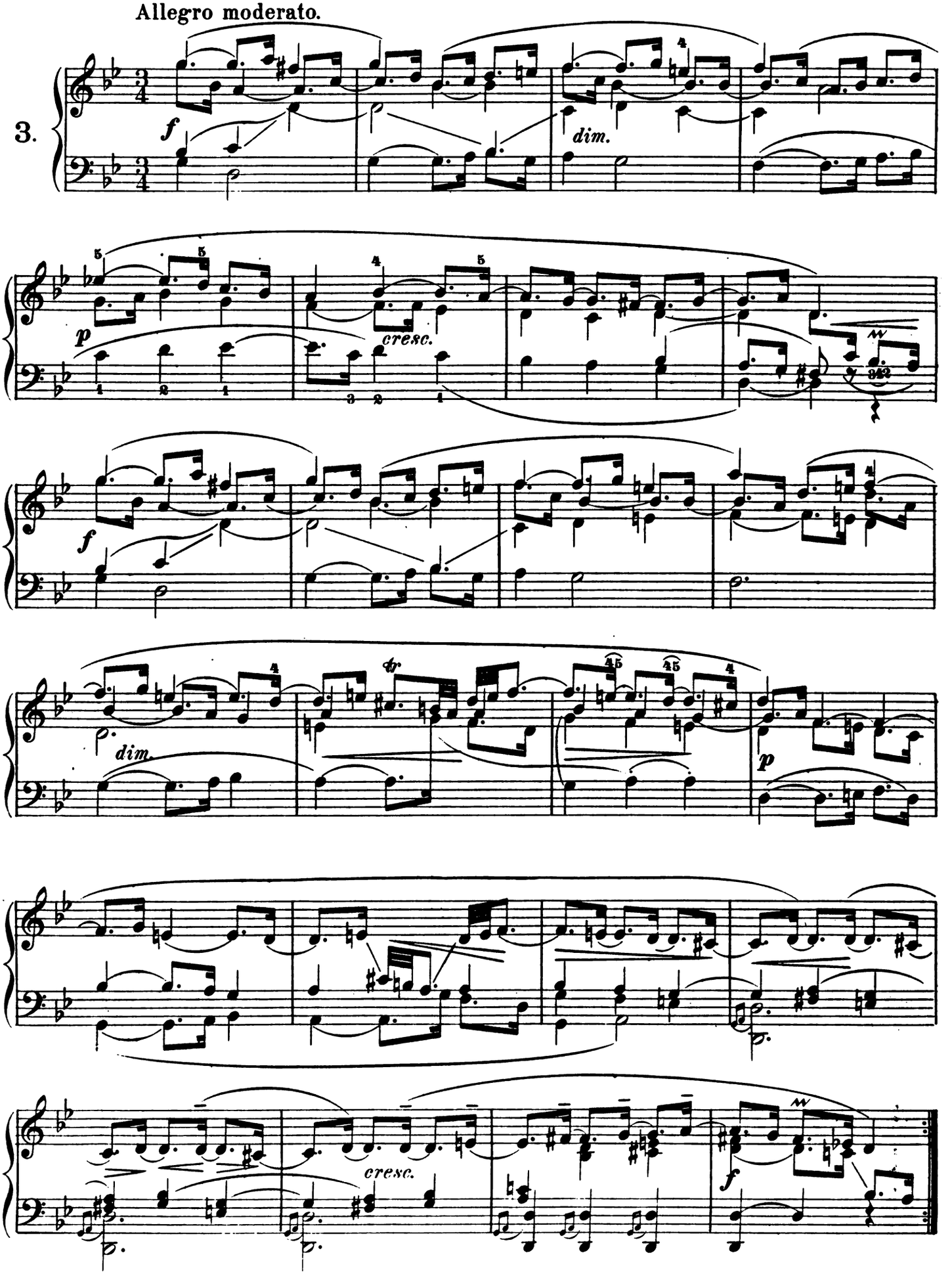
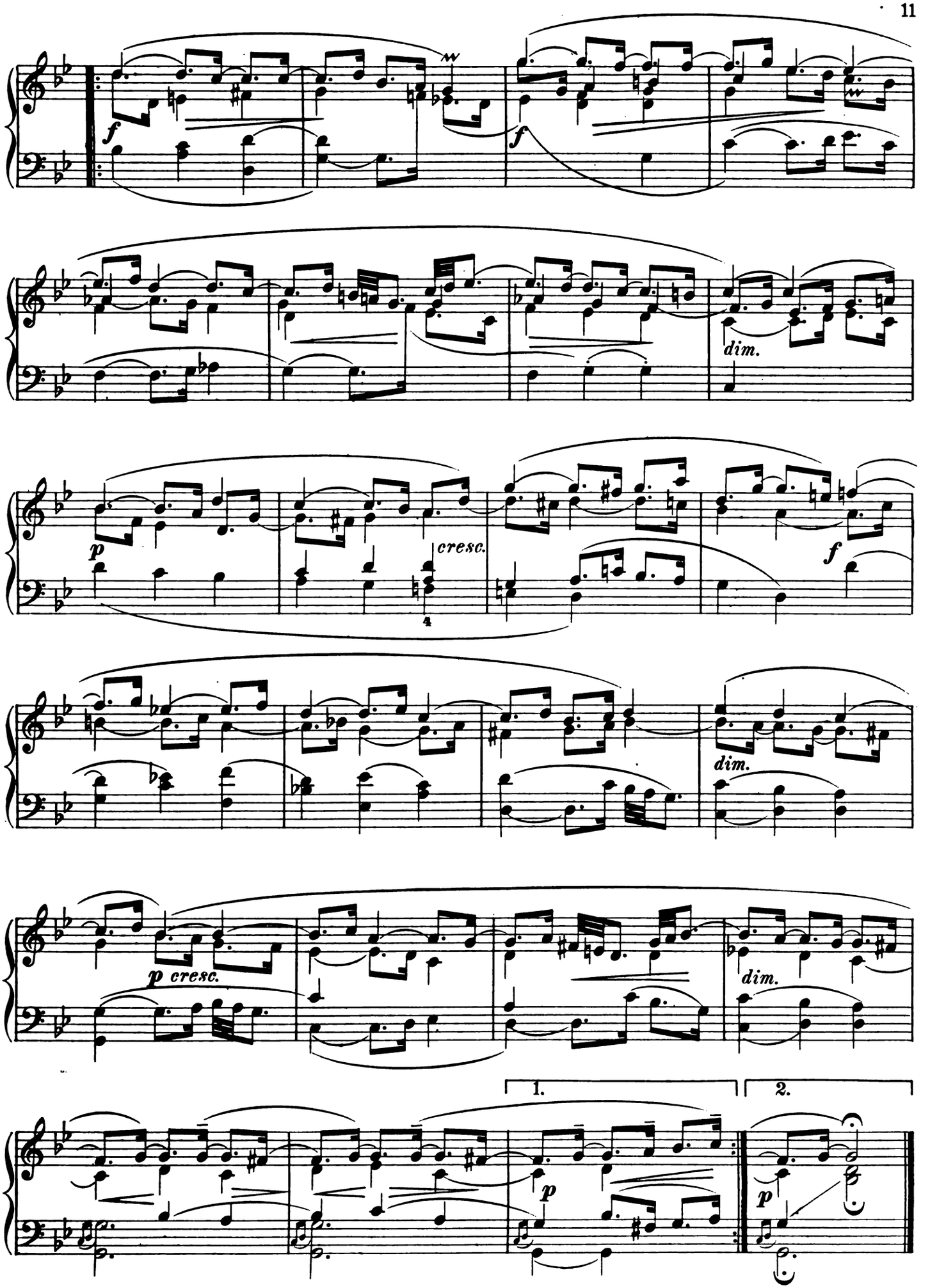
ff
p
f
p
f
dim.
p
p
cresc.
f
p
cresc
p
cresc.
mf
cresc.
ff

Sarabanda.

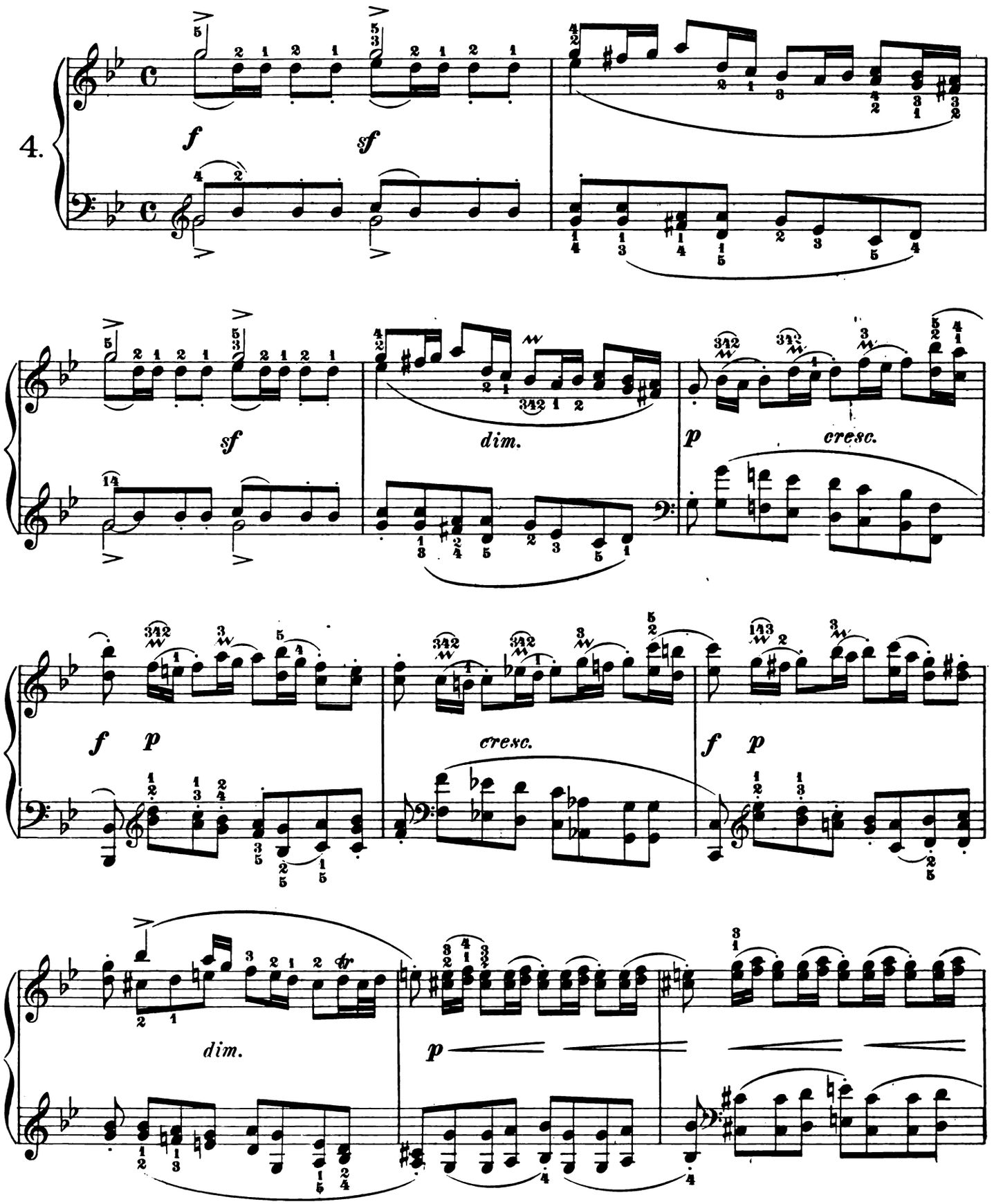
Allegro moderato.

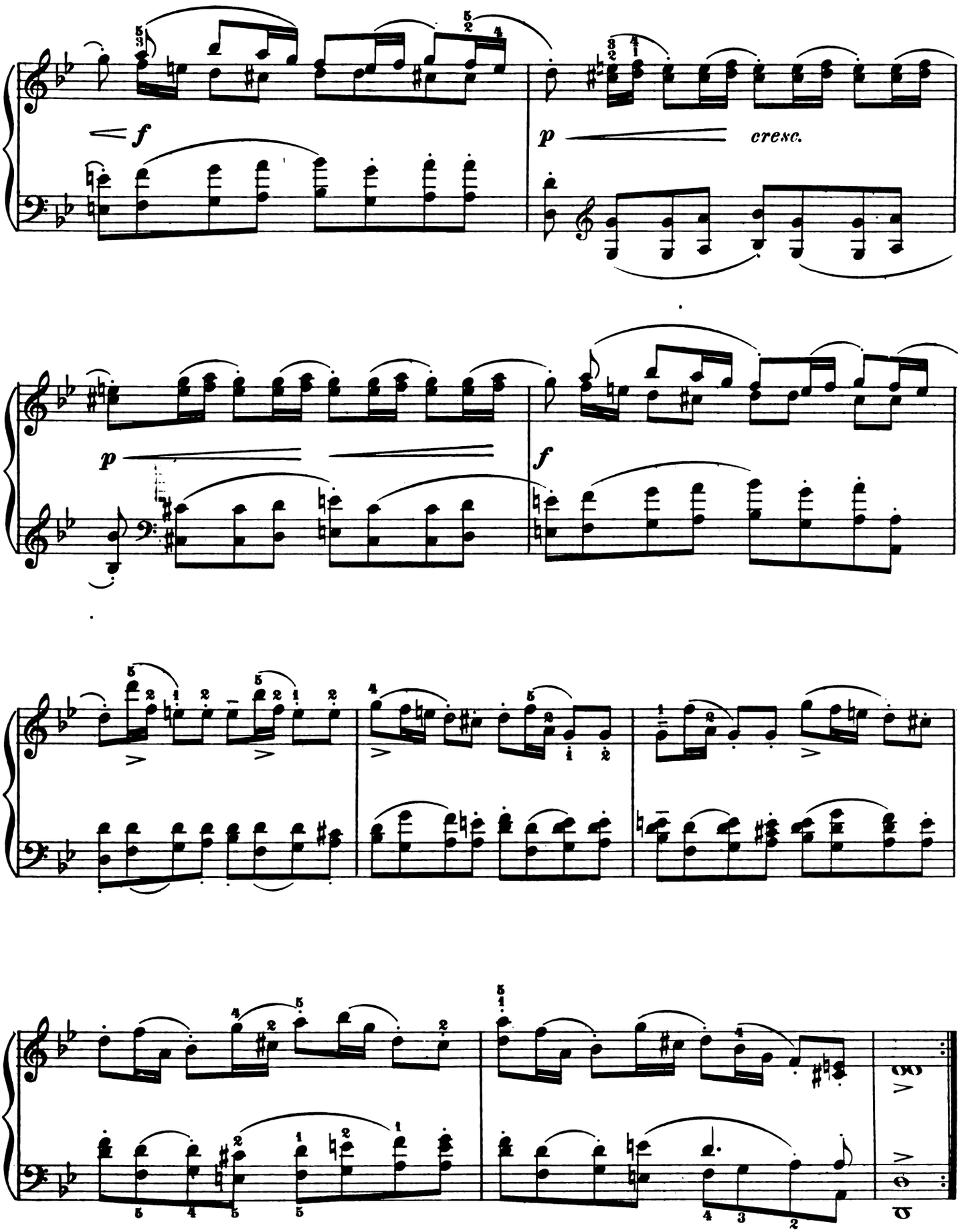



f
f
dim.
p
cresc.
4
f
dim.
p cresc.
dim.
1.
2.
p
p

Burlesca.

Allegro.




f
p
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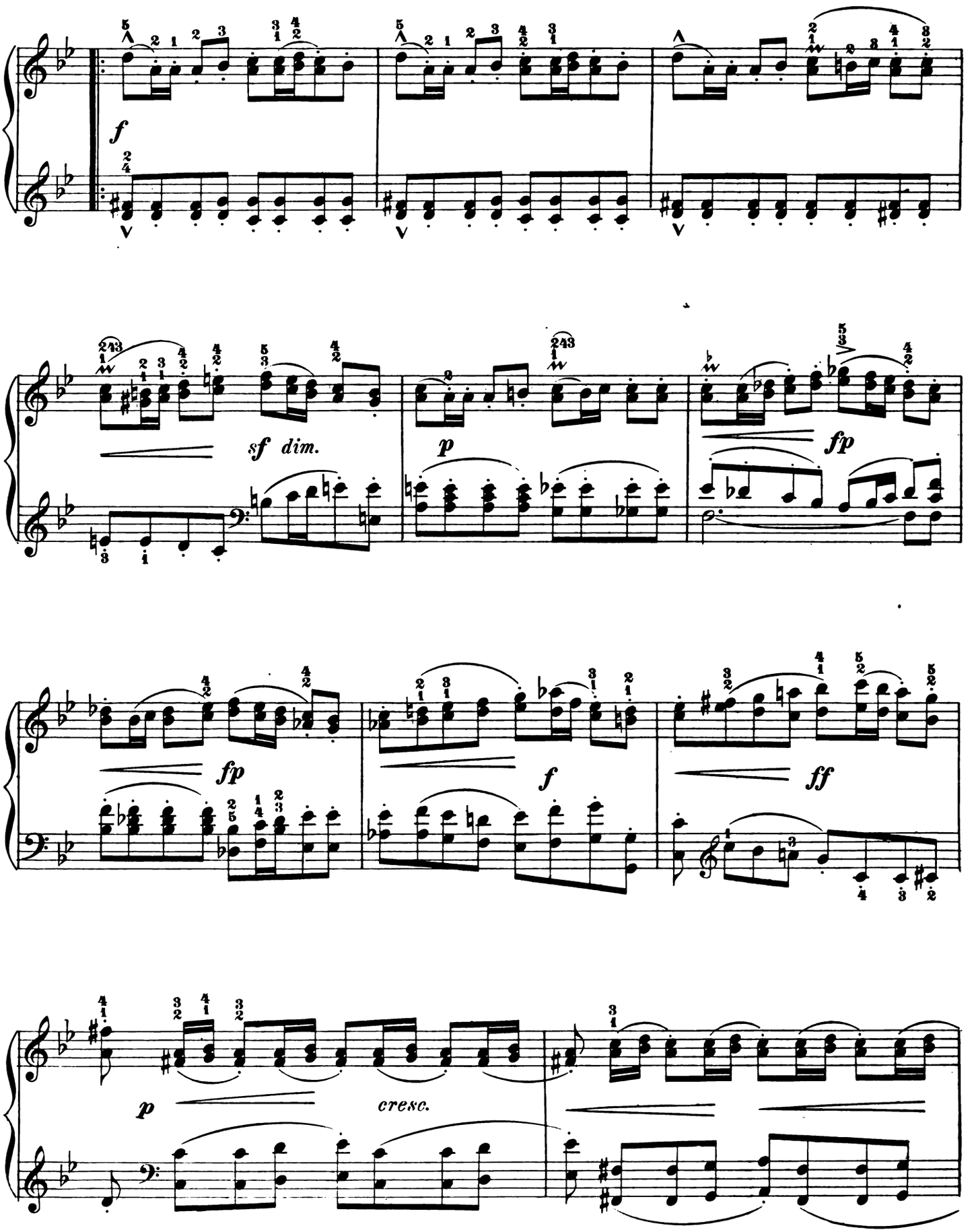
p
f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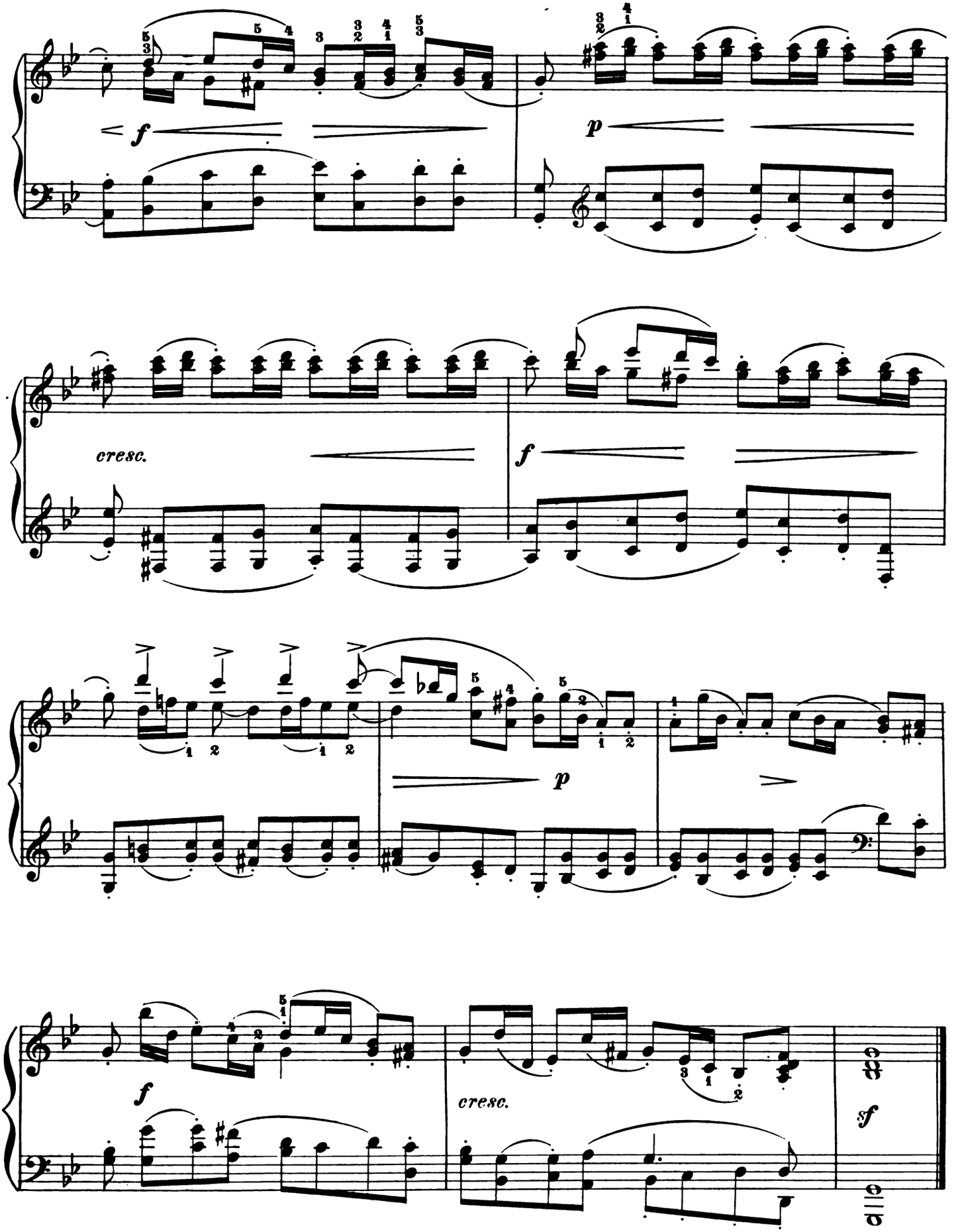
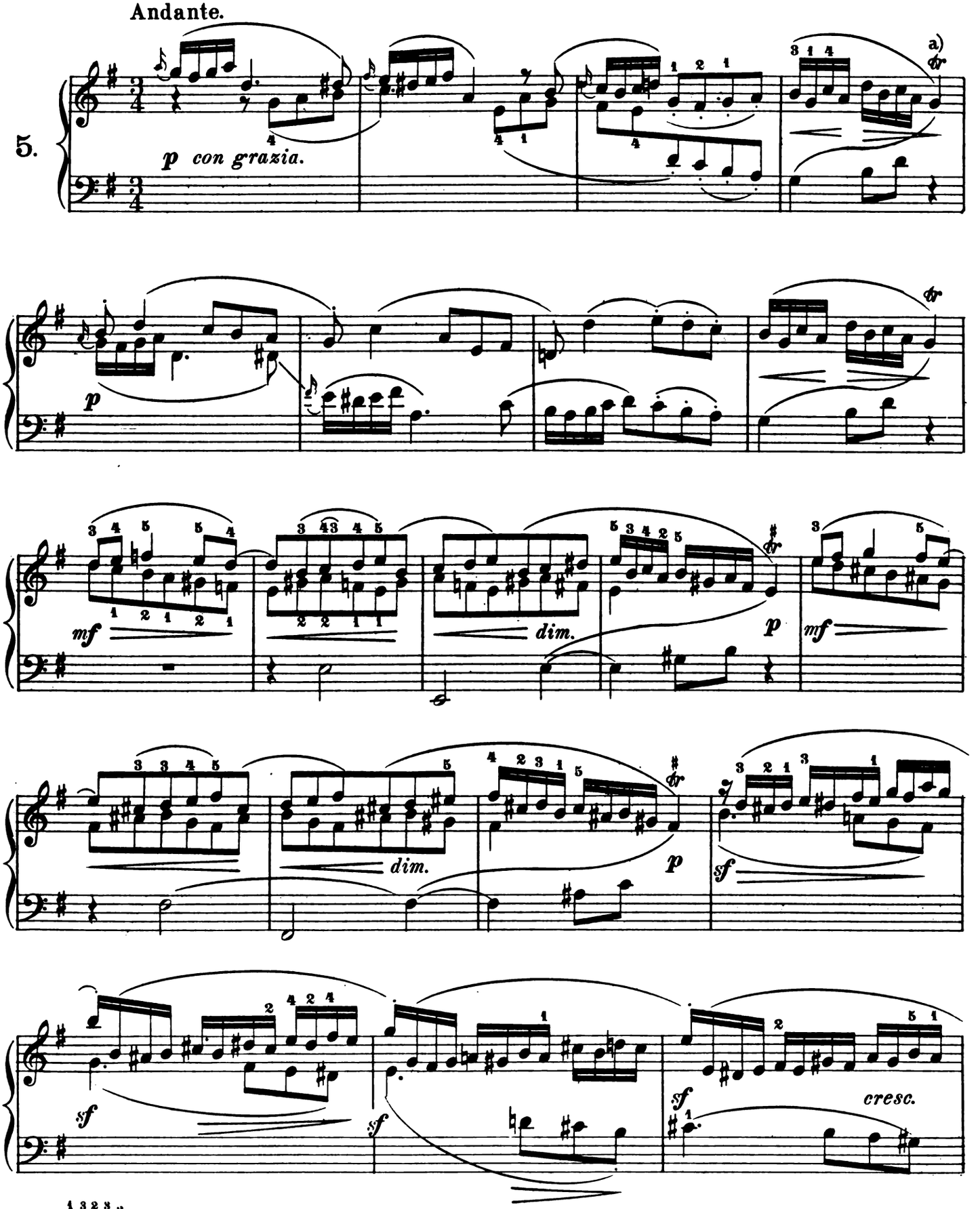
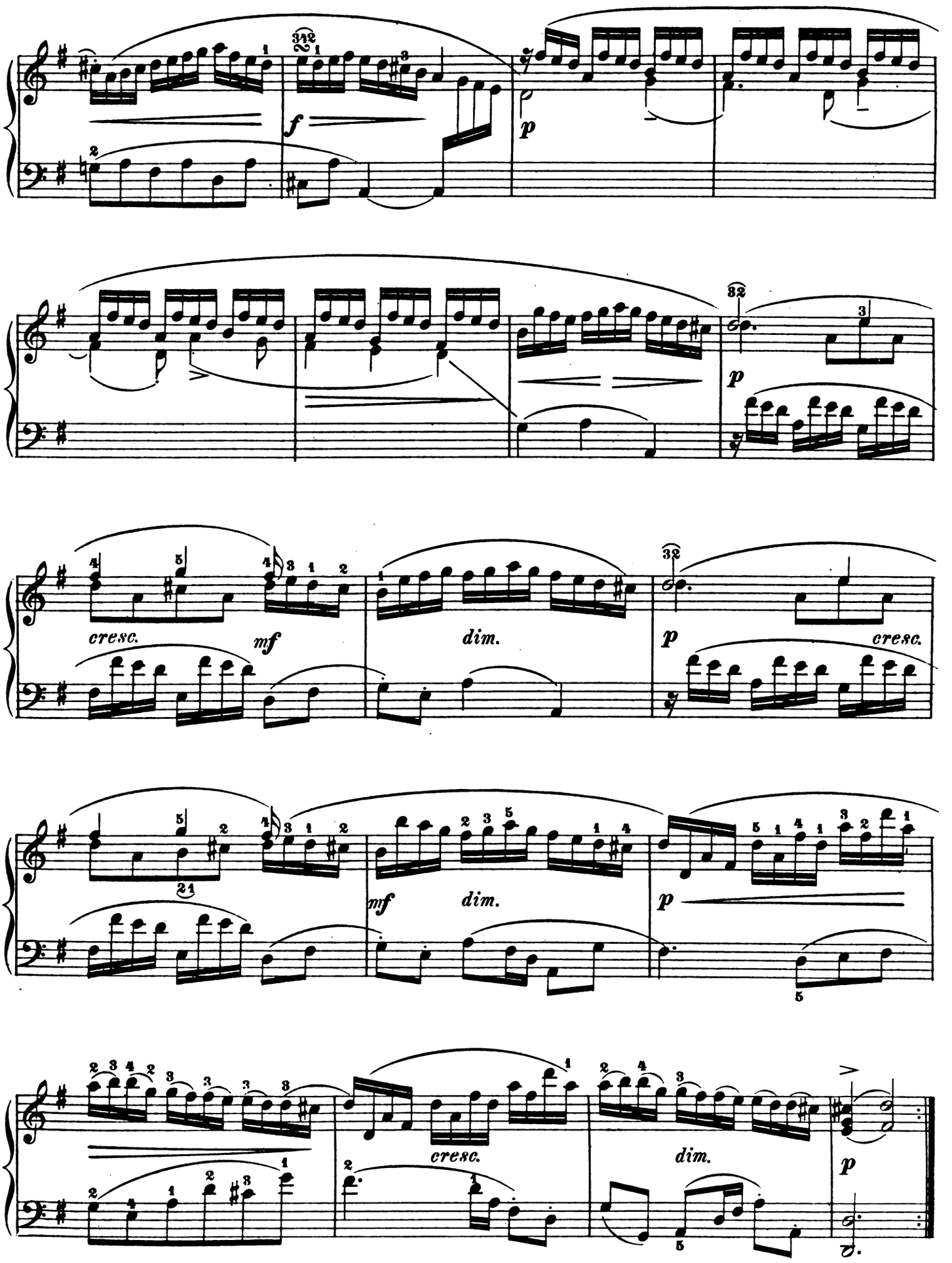
sf dim.
p
fp
fp
f
ff
p
cresc.

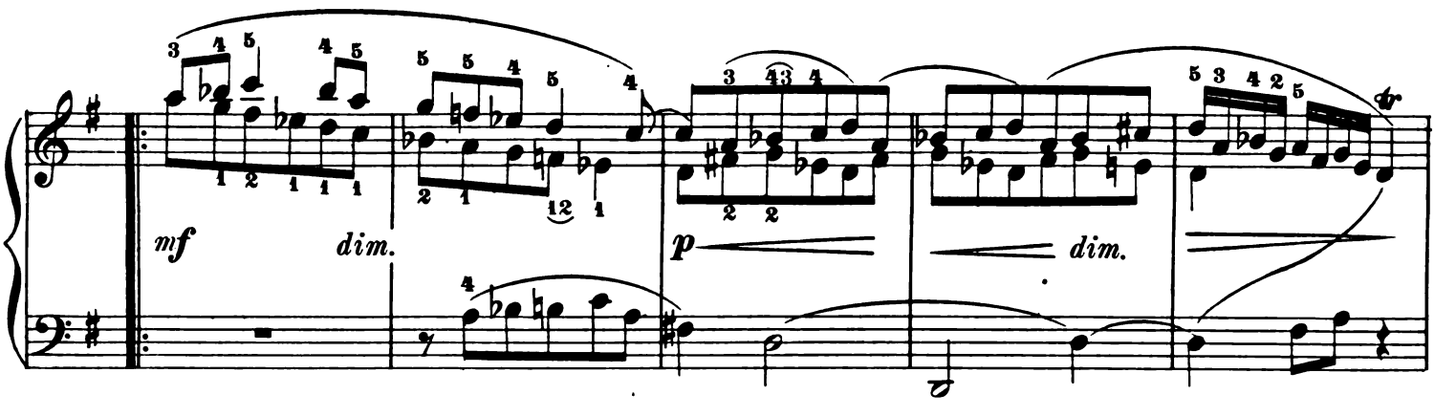

f
p
cresc.
f
p
f
cresc.
sf

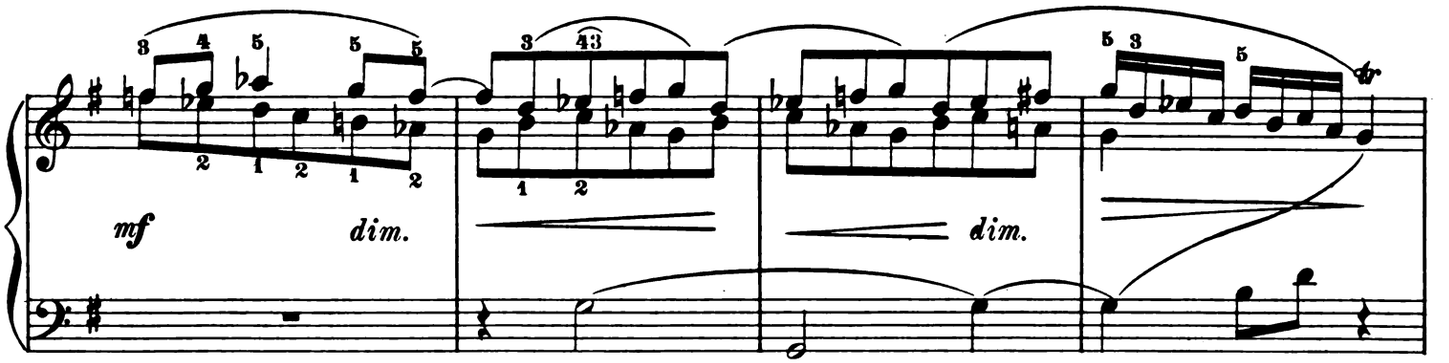
Menuetto.

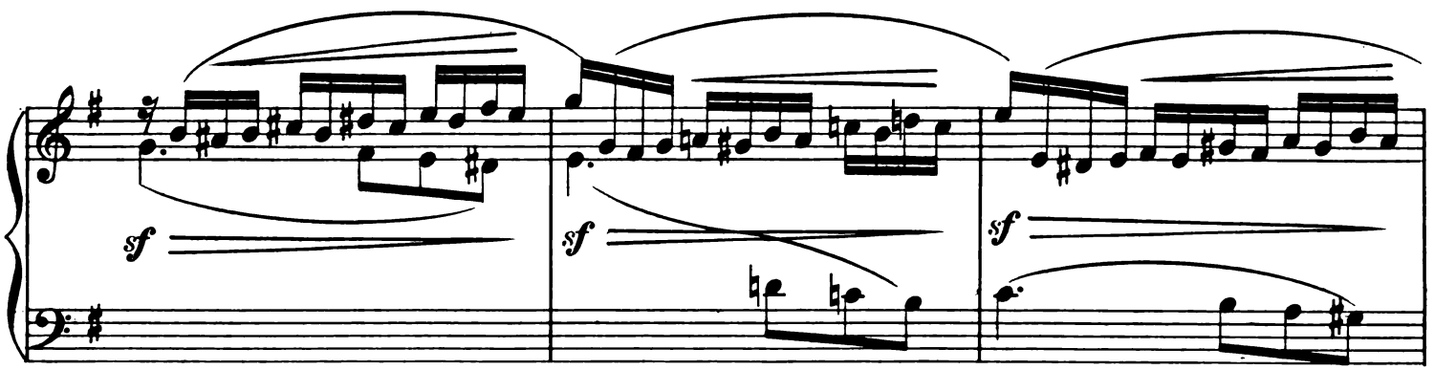
Andante.

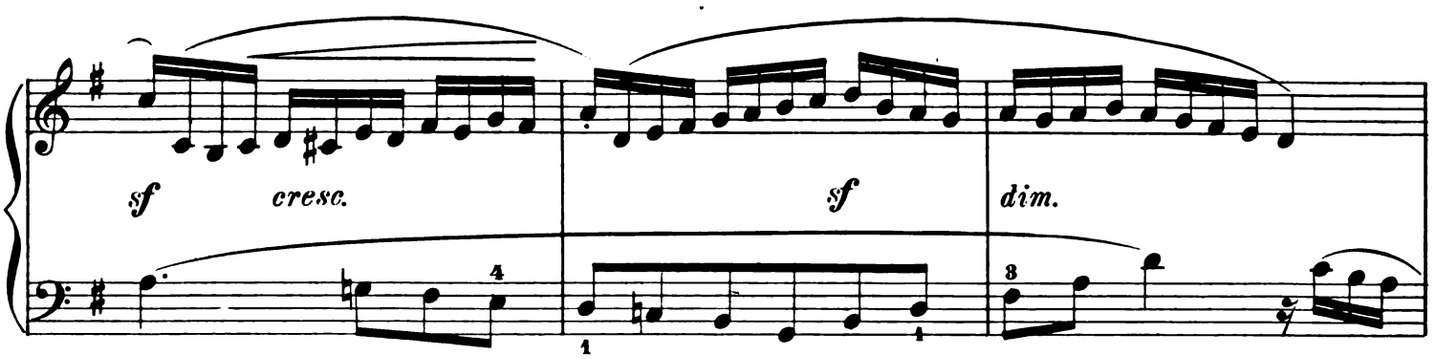


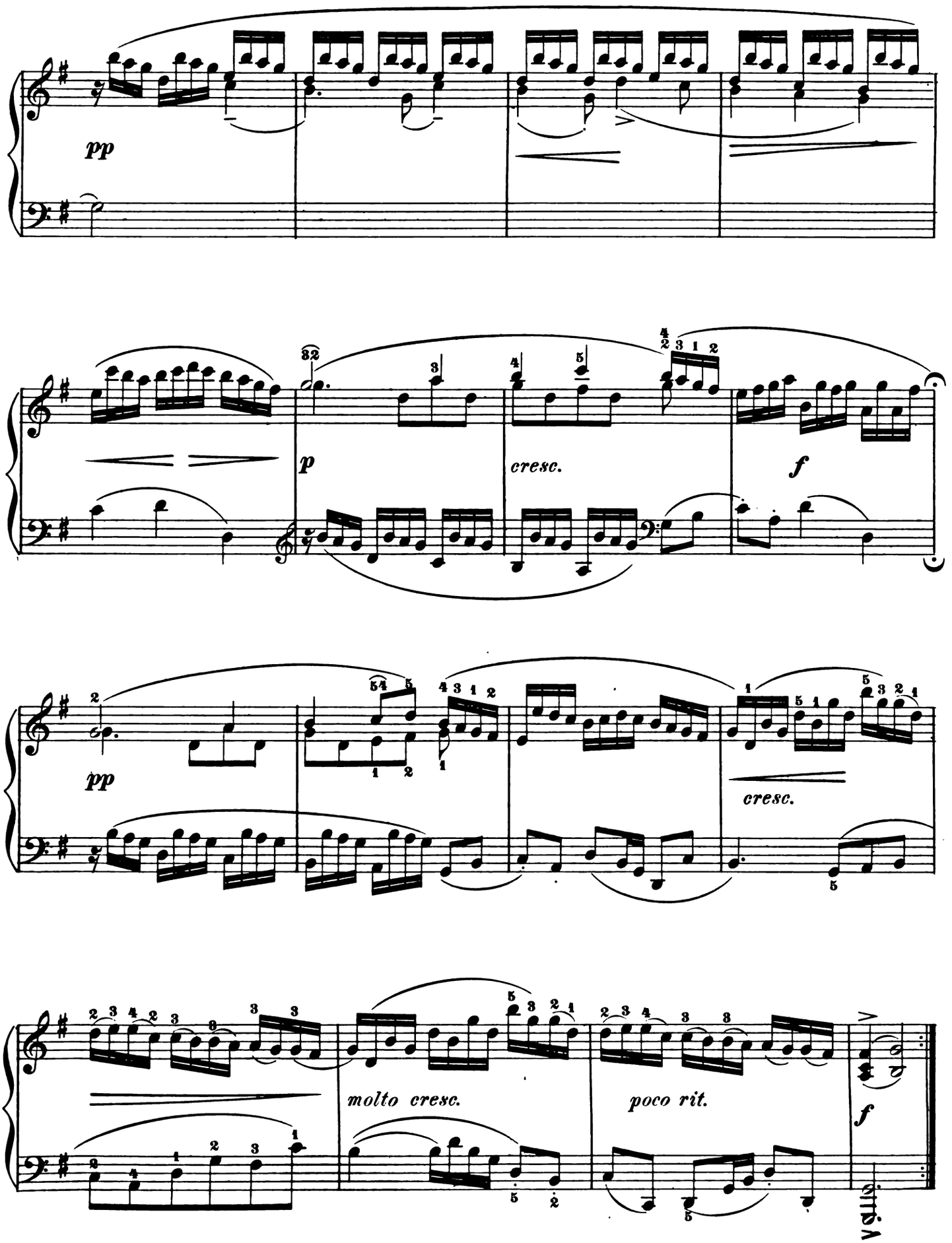

f
p
p
cresc.
mf
dim.
p
cresc.
mf
dim.
p
cresc.
dim.
p


mf
dim.
p
dim.


mf
dim.
dim.

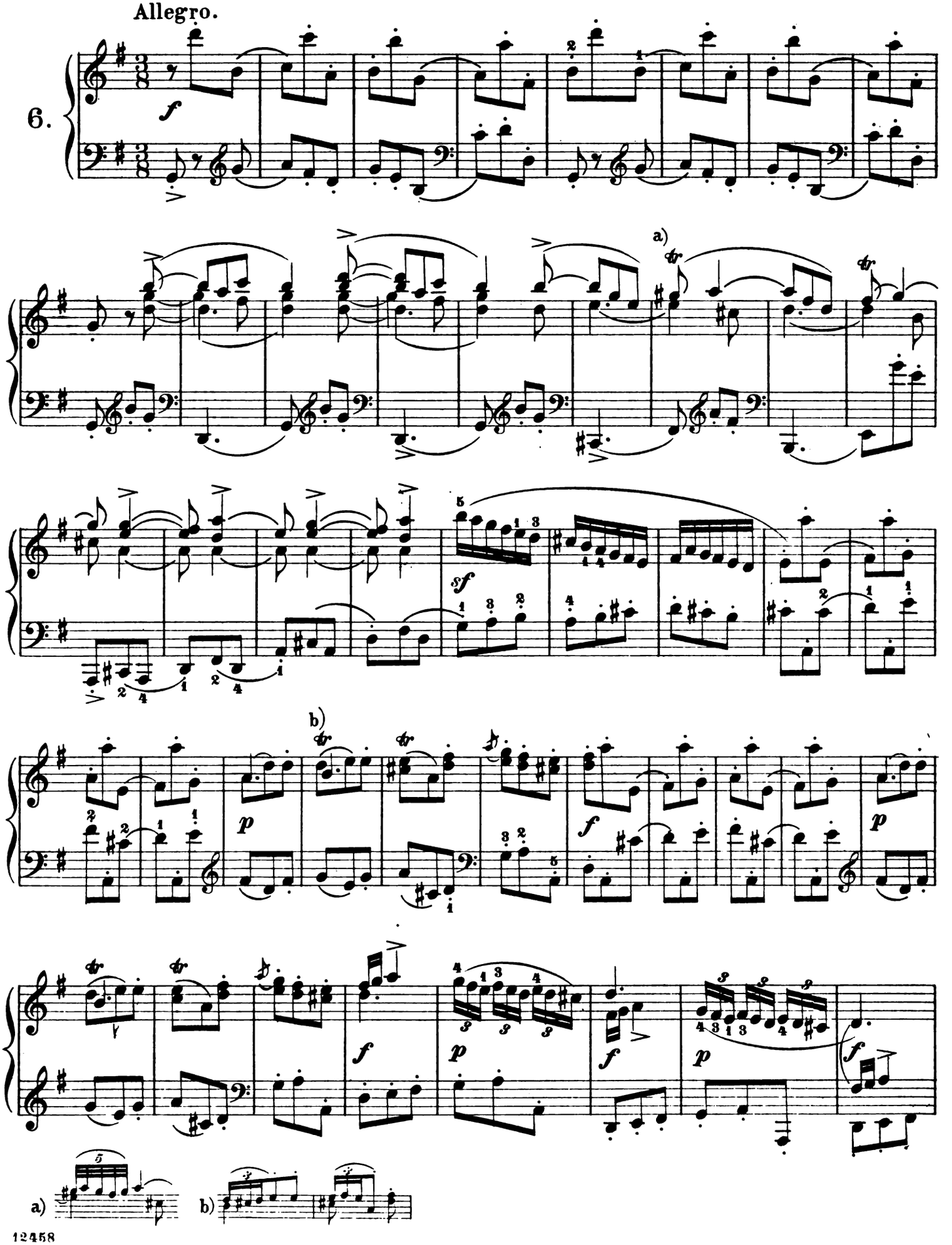

sf
sf
sf

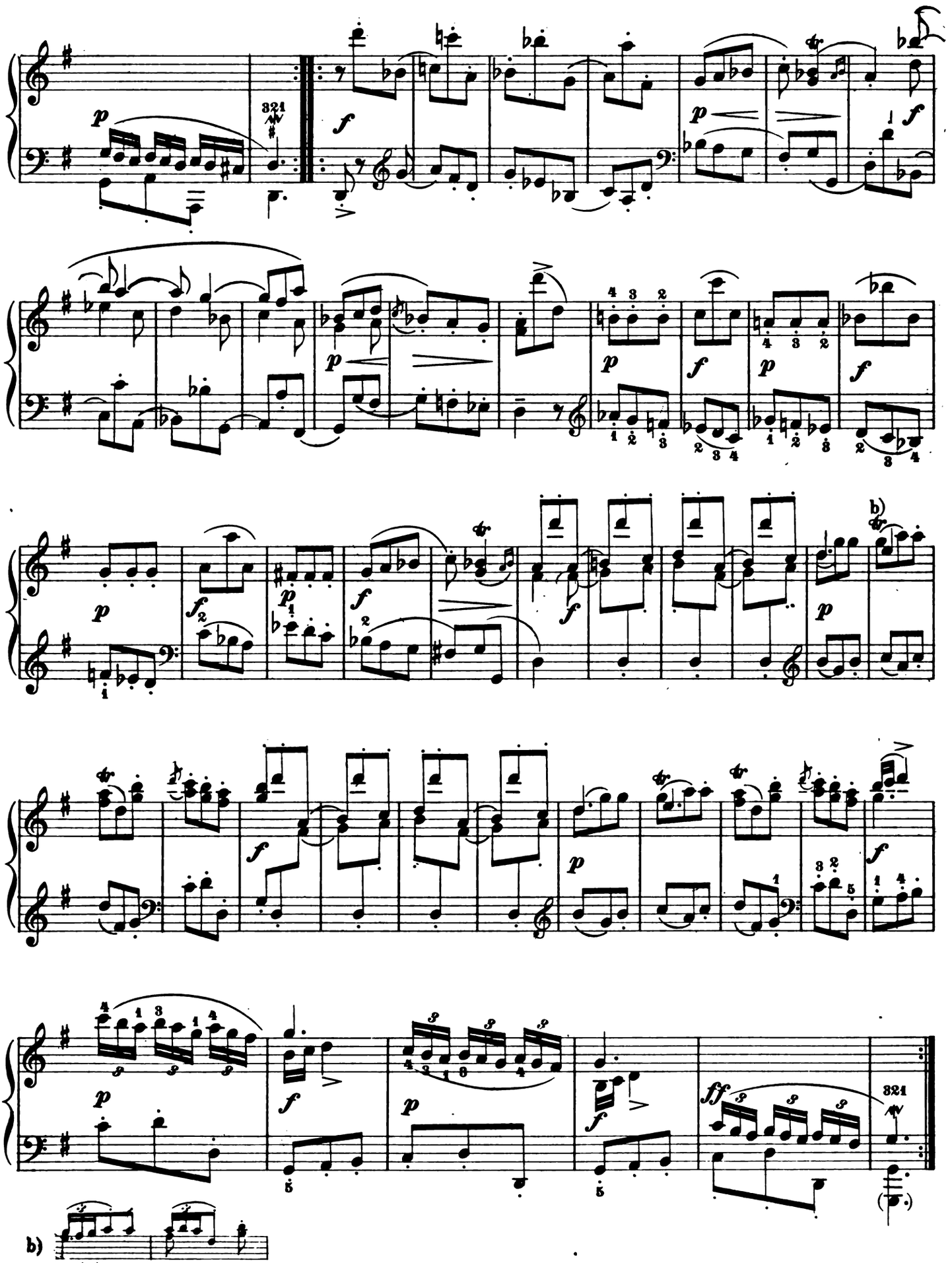

sf
cresc.
sf
dim.


pp
p
cresc.
f
pp
cresc.
molto cresc.
poco rit.
f

Gigue.

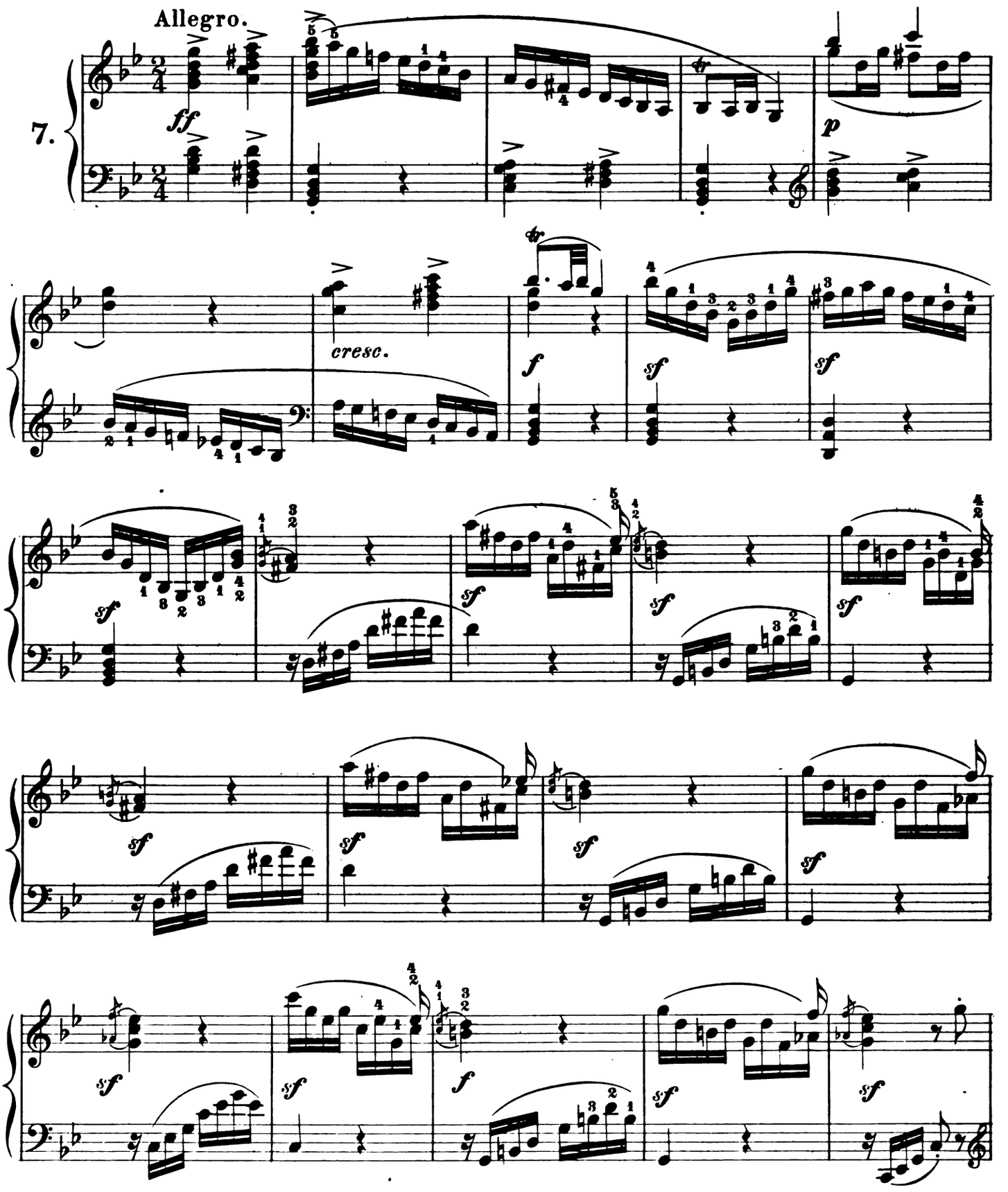
Allegro.

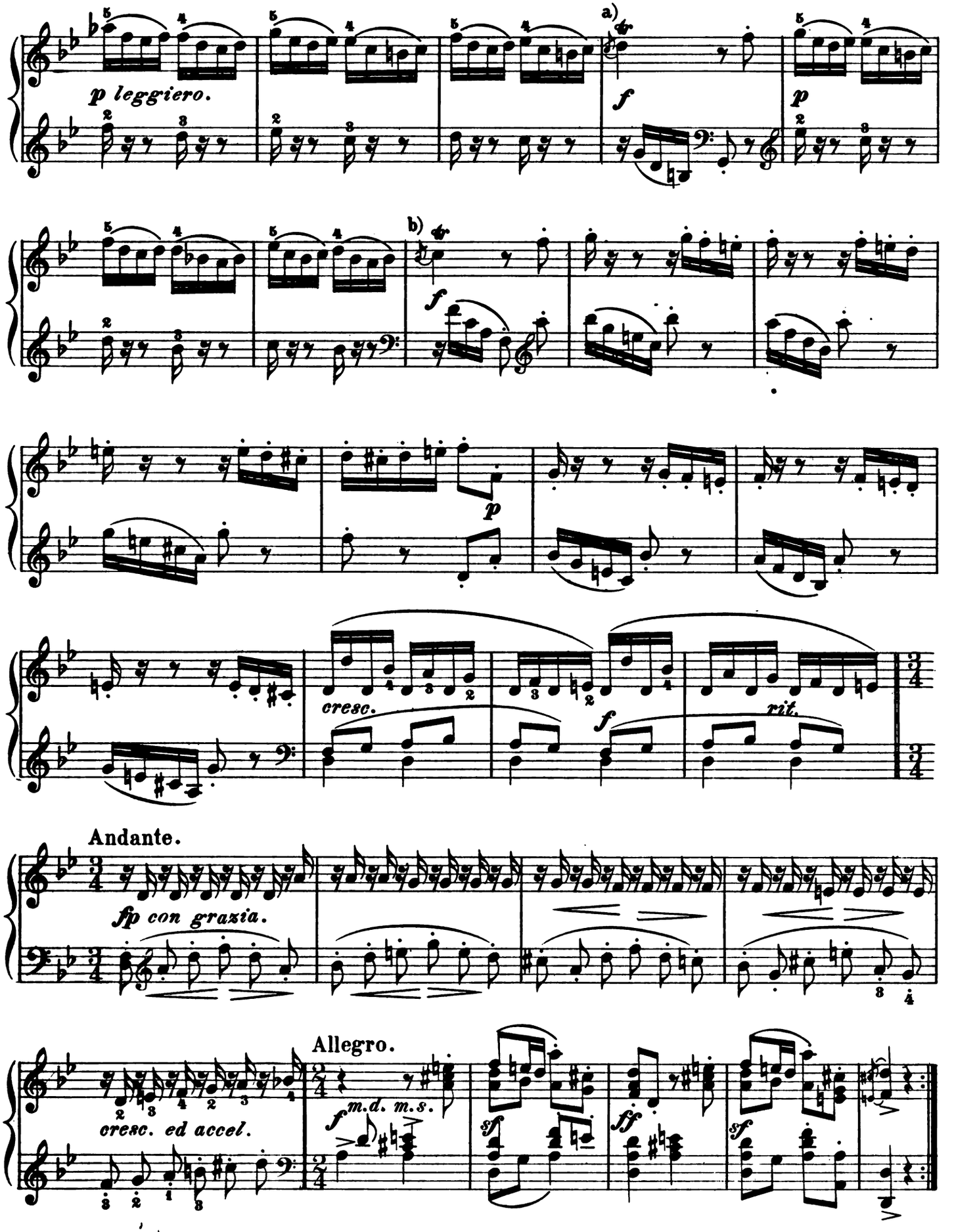




b)

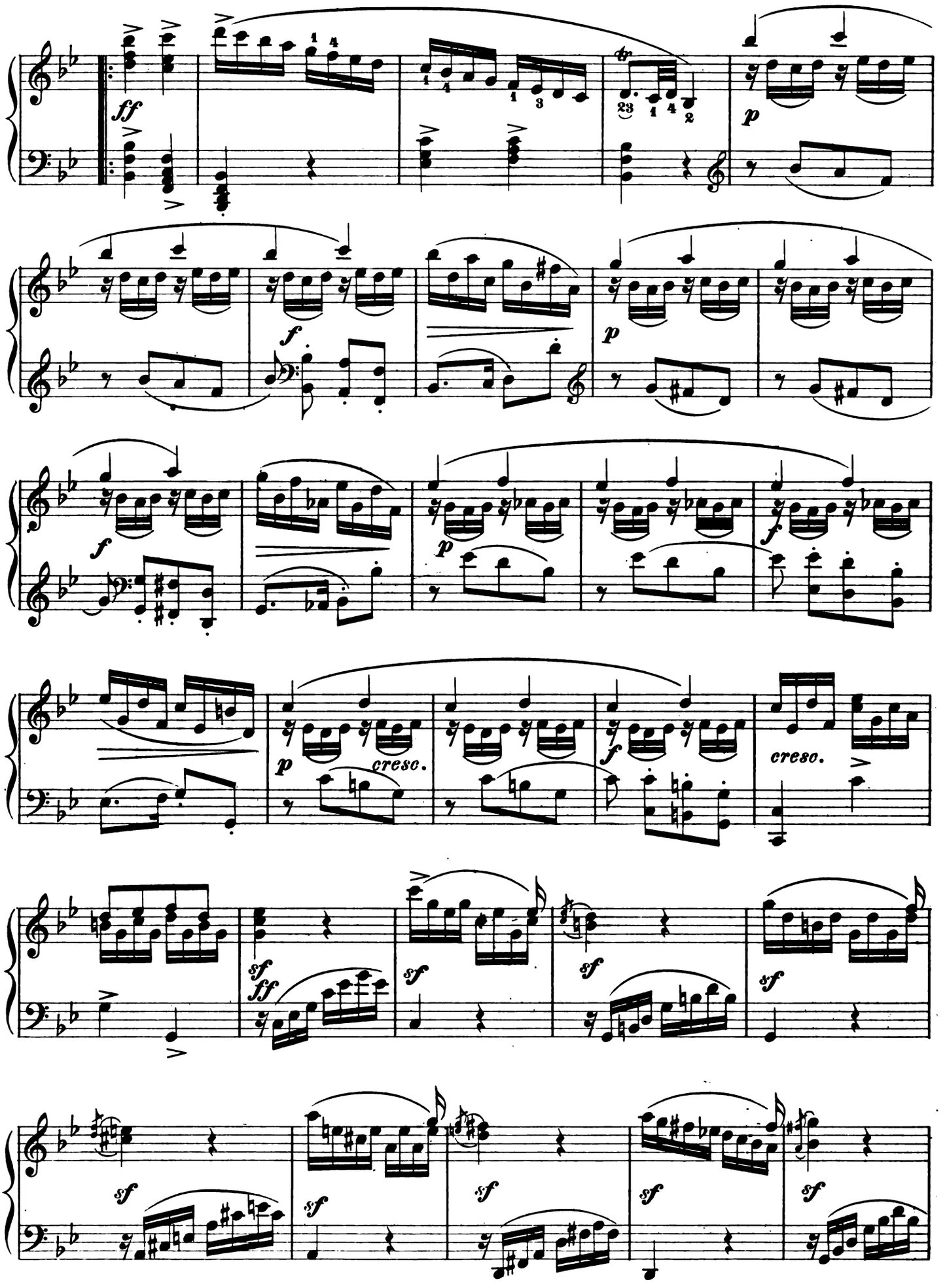
Sonata.

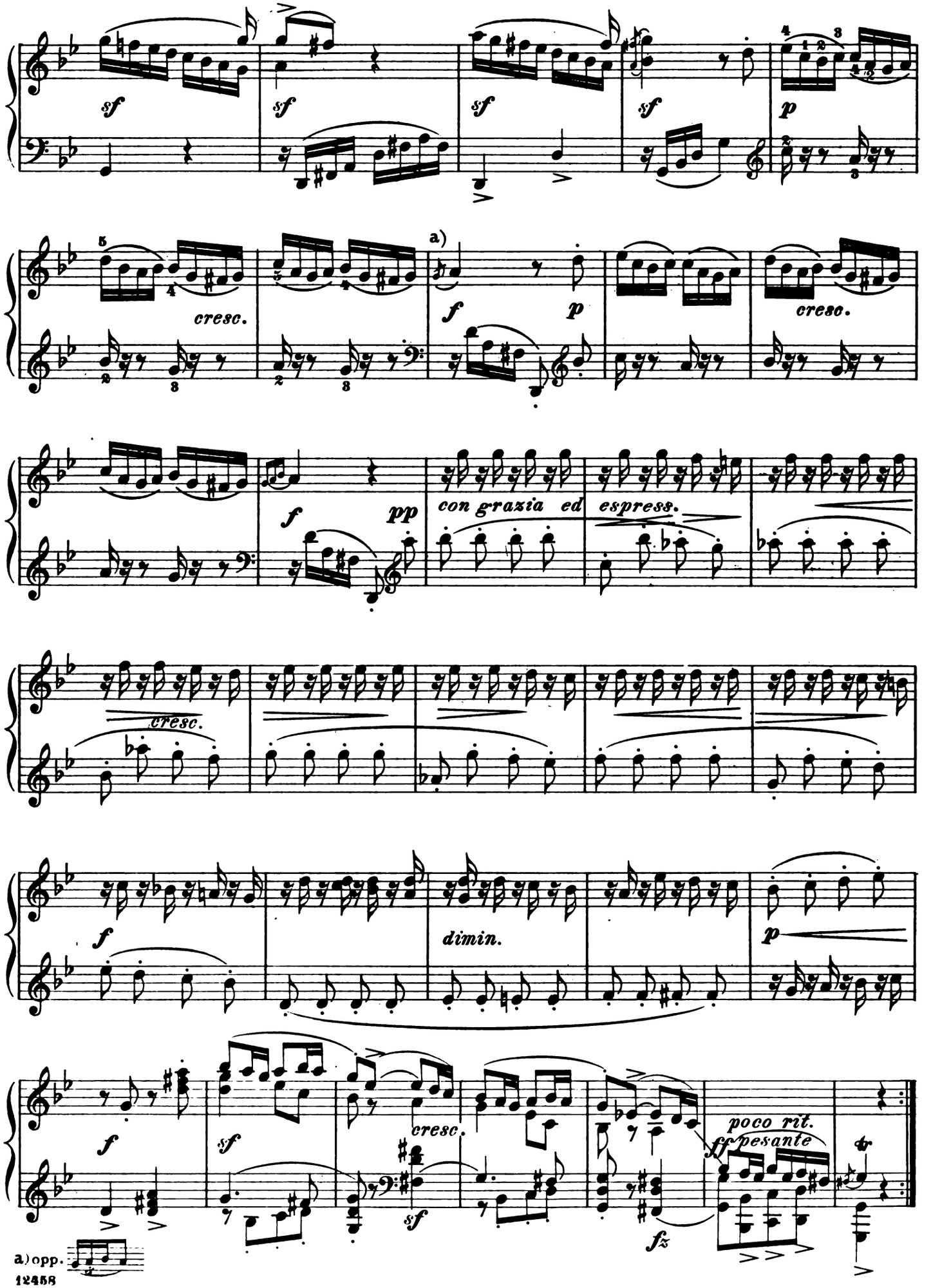




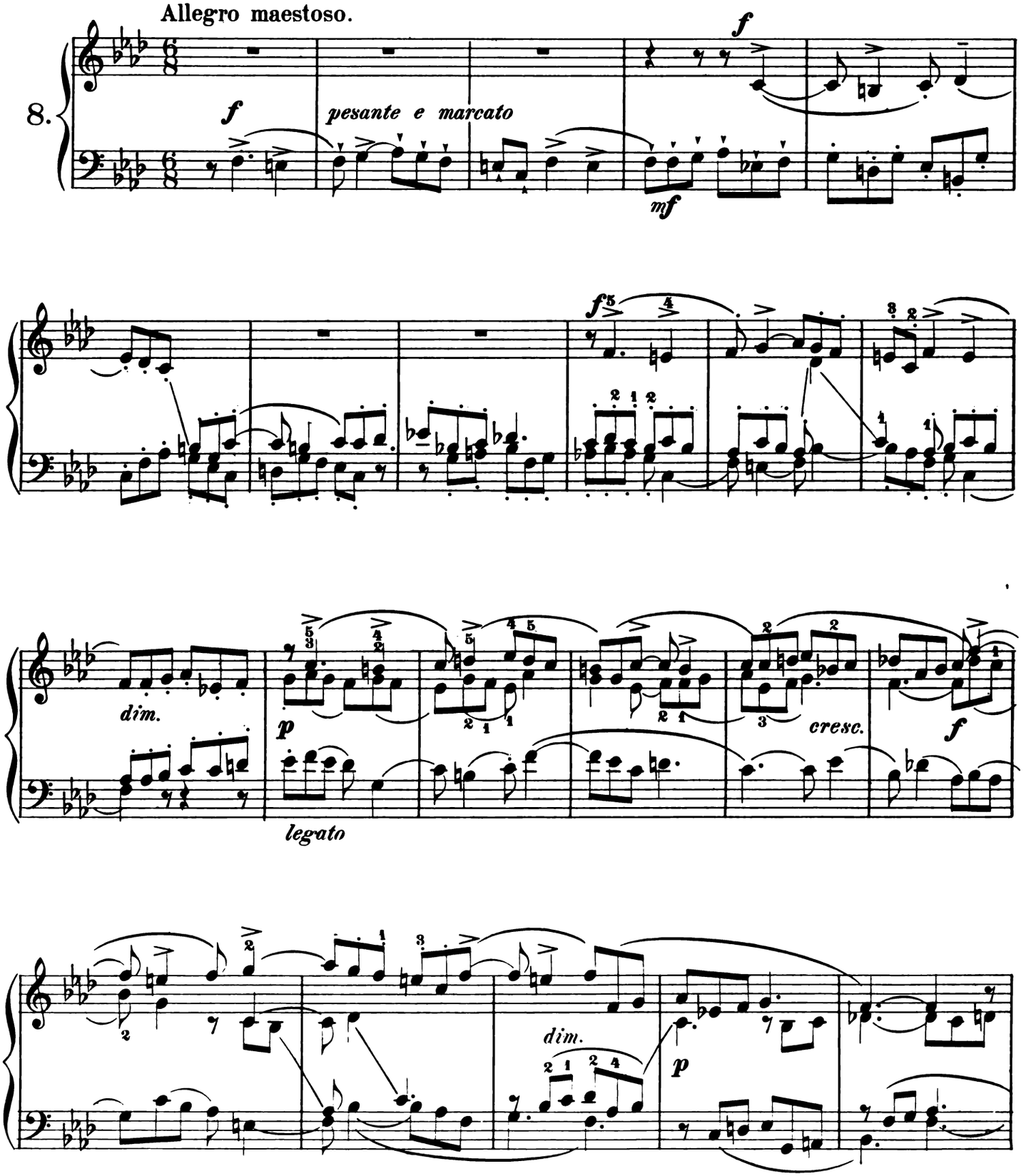
a) 1 2 3 1 3 2

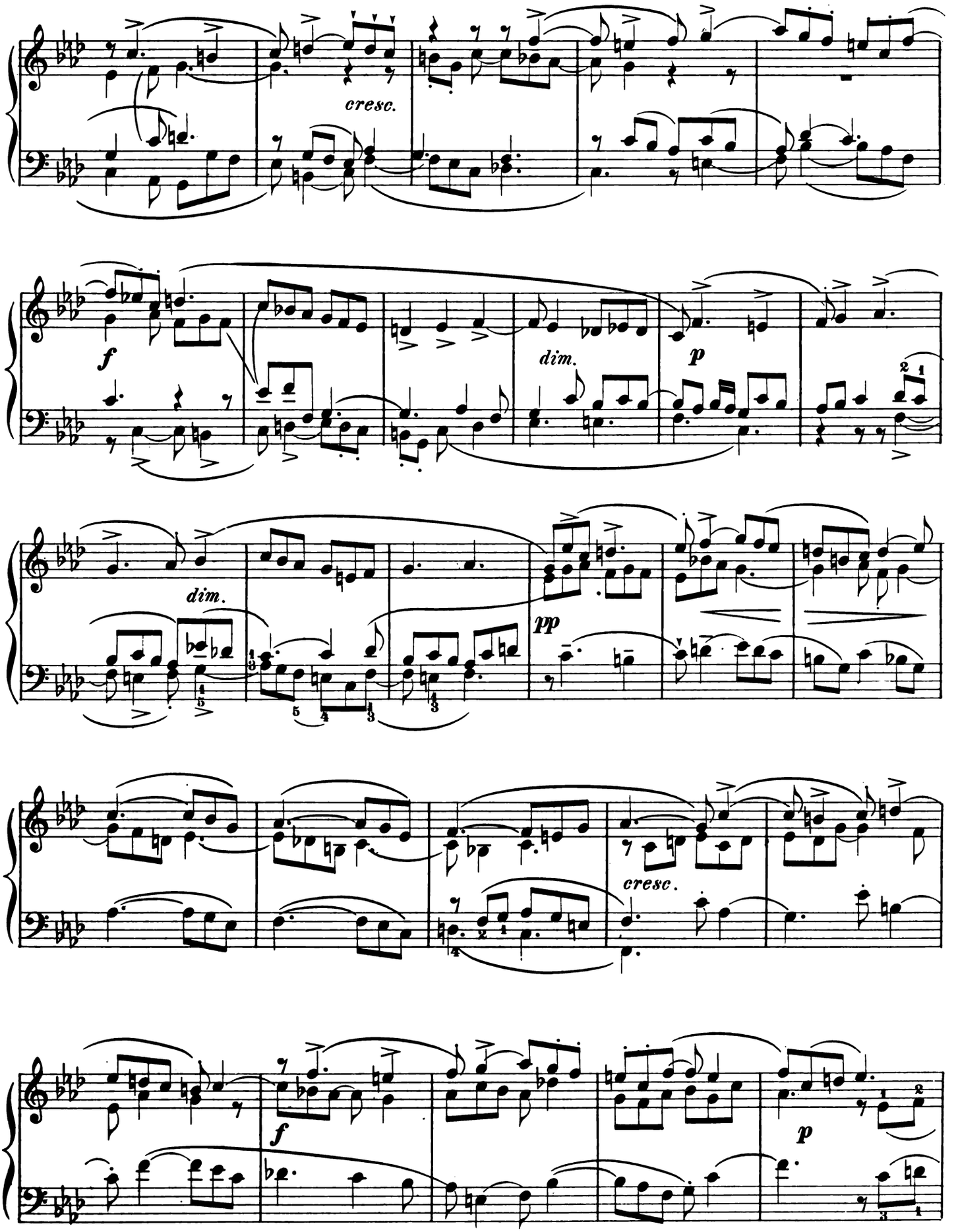
b) 2 3 4 1 3 2

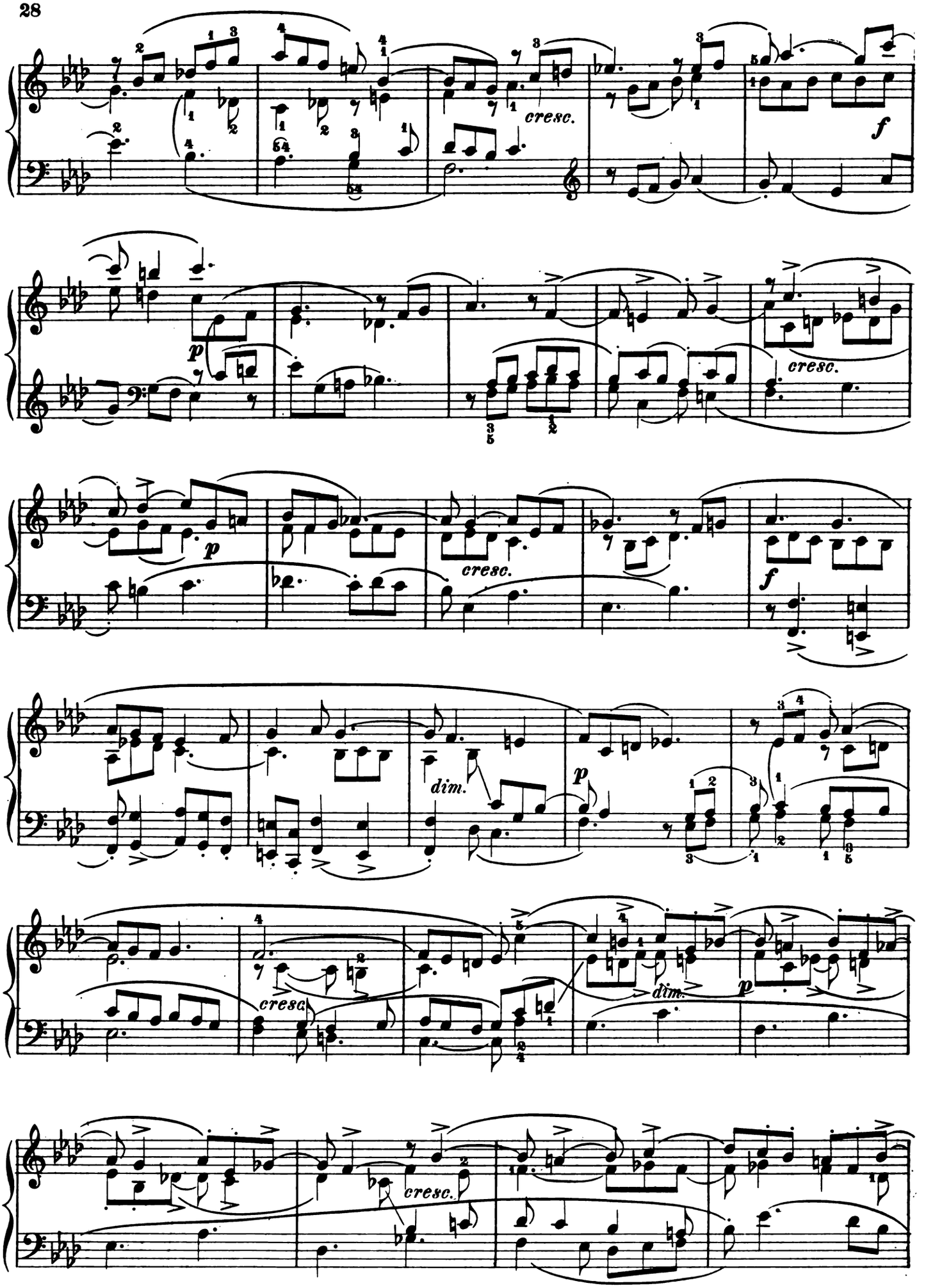

ff
p
f
p
f
p
f
cresc.
cresc.
sf
ff
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf
sf

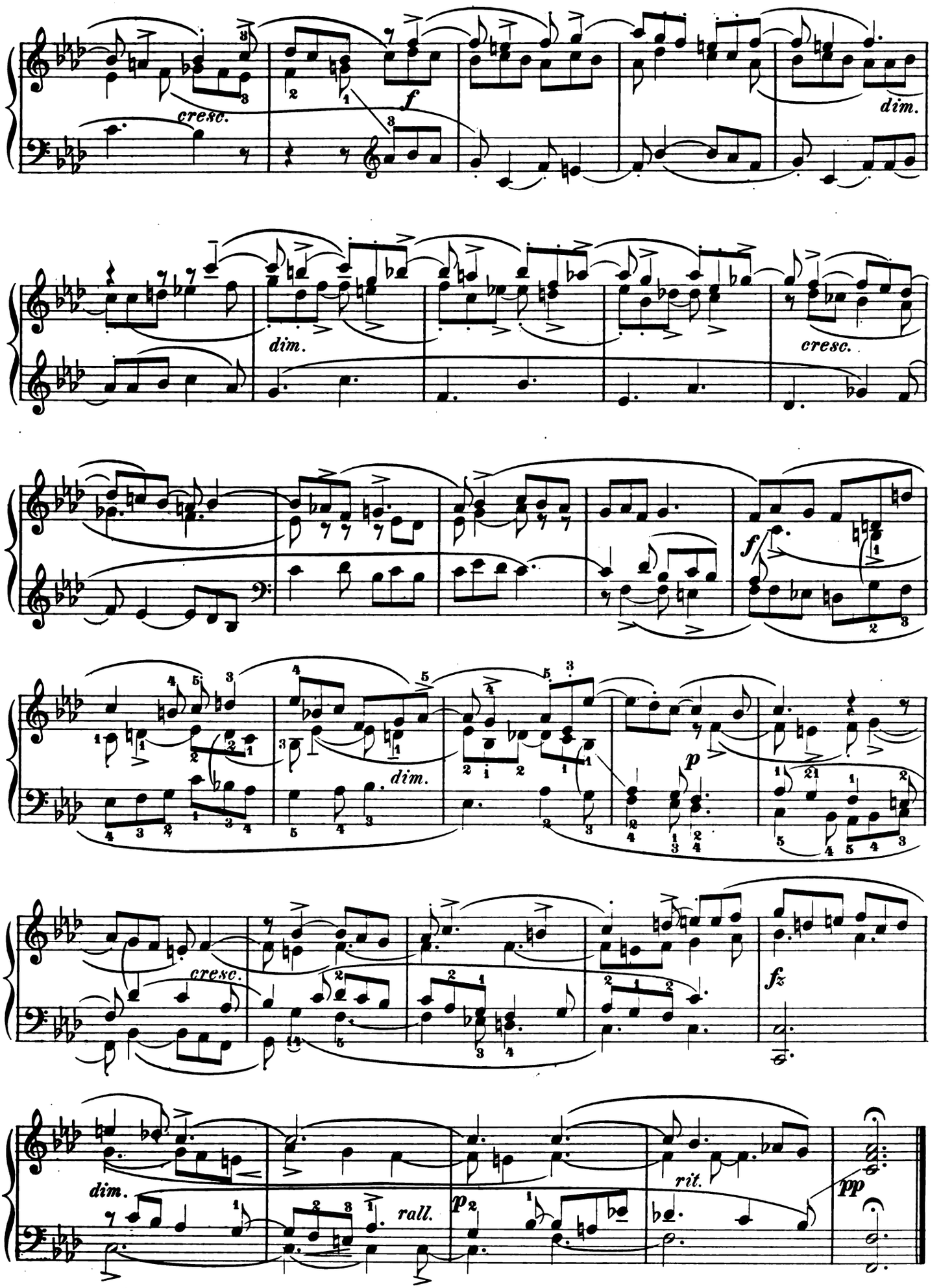

sf
sf
sf
sf
p
cresc.
a)
f
p
cresc.
f
pp
con grazia ed espress.
cresc.
f
dimin.
p
f
sf
cresc.
sf
fz
poco rit.
ff pesante
a) opp.

Fugue.


Allegro maestoso.
8.
f
pesante e marcato
f
mf
f
dim.
p
legato
cresc.
f
dim.
p


cresc.
f
dim.
p
dim.
pp
cresc.
f
p


cresc.
f
p
cresc.
p
cresc.
f
dim.
p
cresc.
dim.
p
cresc.


cresc.
f
dim.
dim.
cresc.
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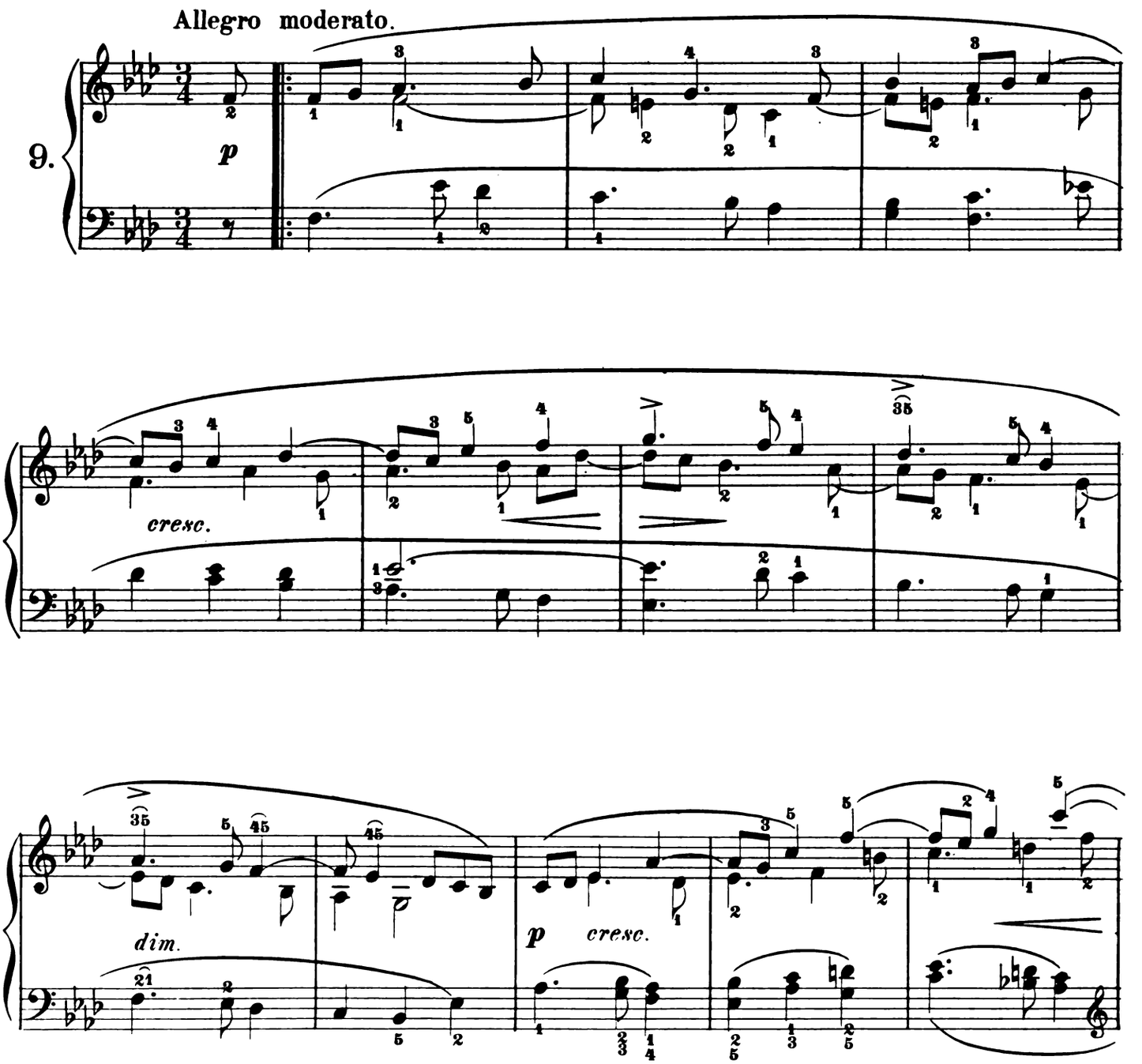
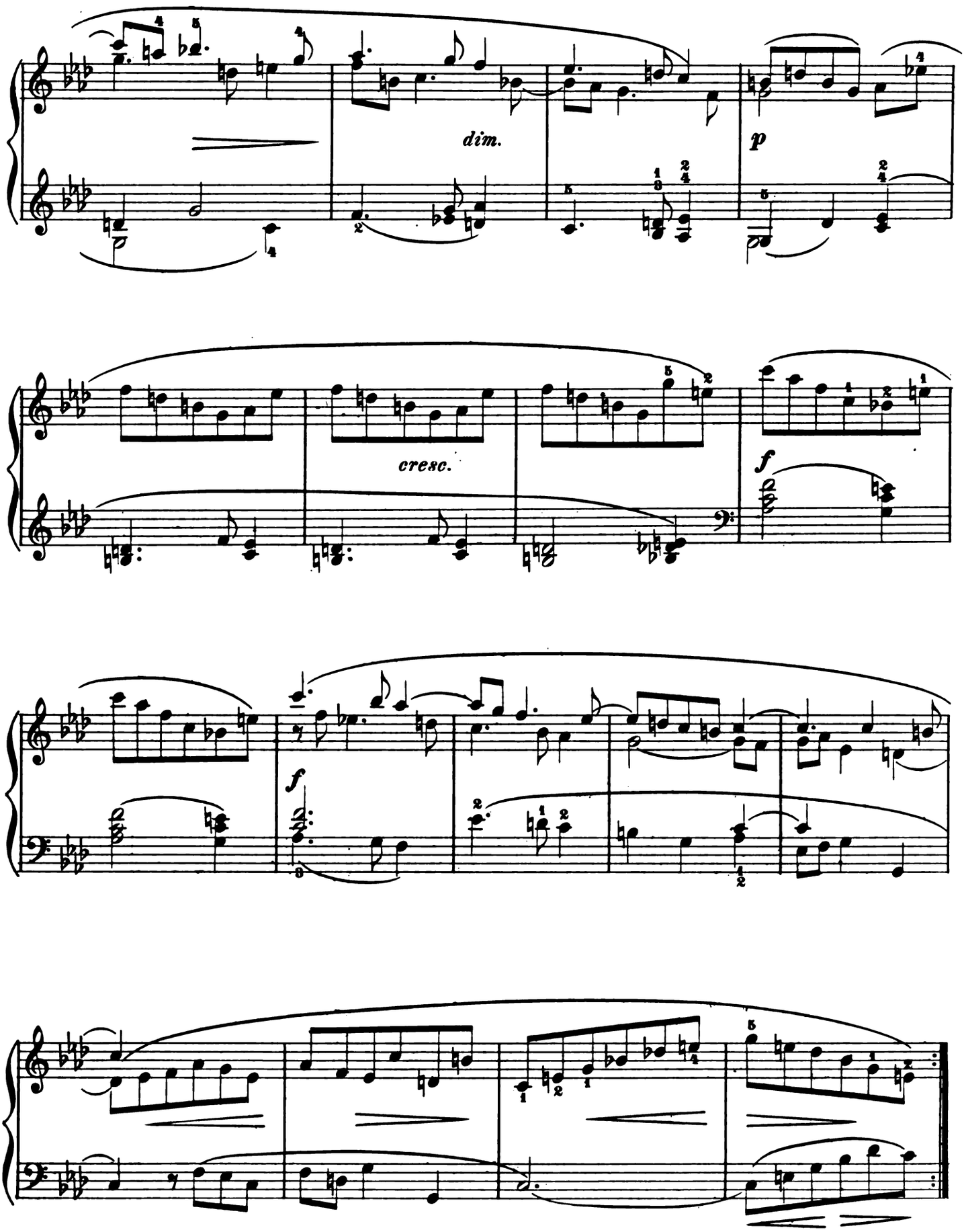
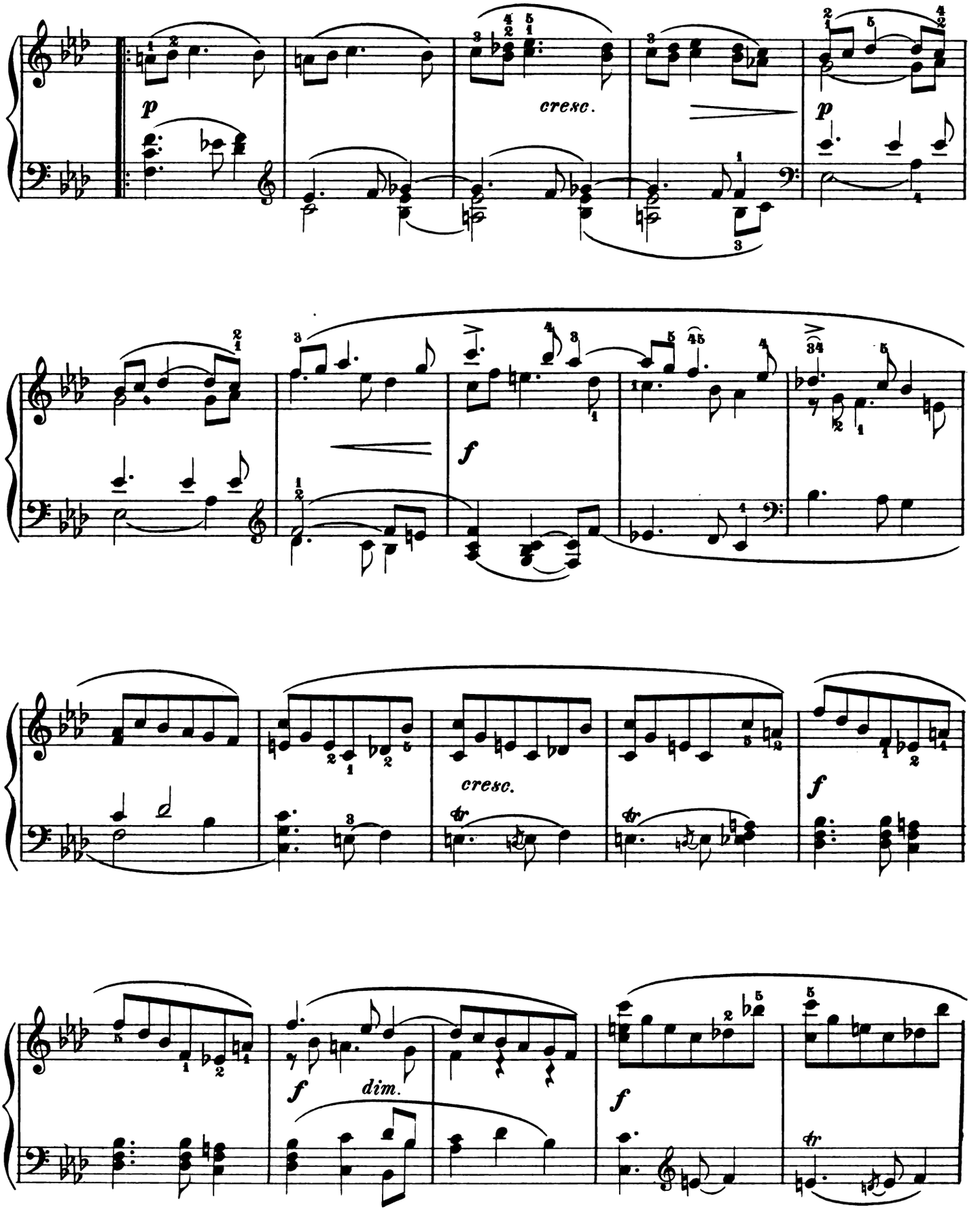
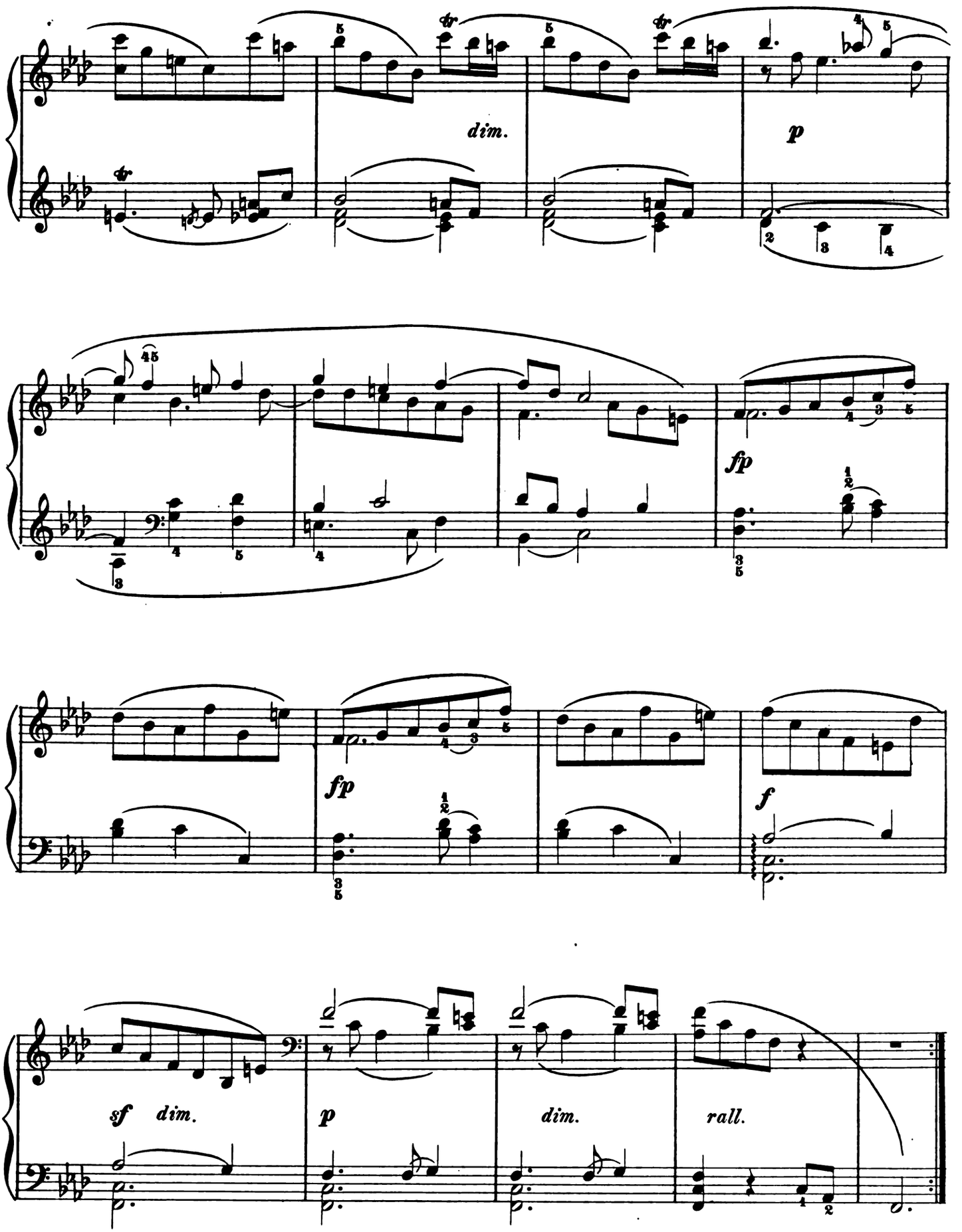
dim.
p
cresc.
fz
dim.
rall.
p
rit.
pp

Courante.



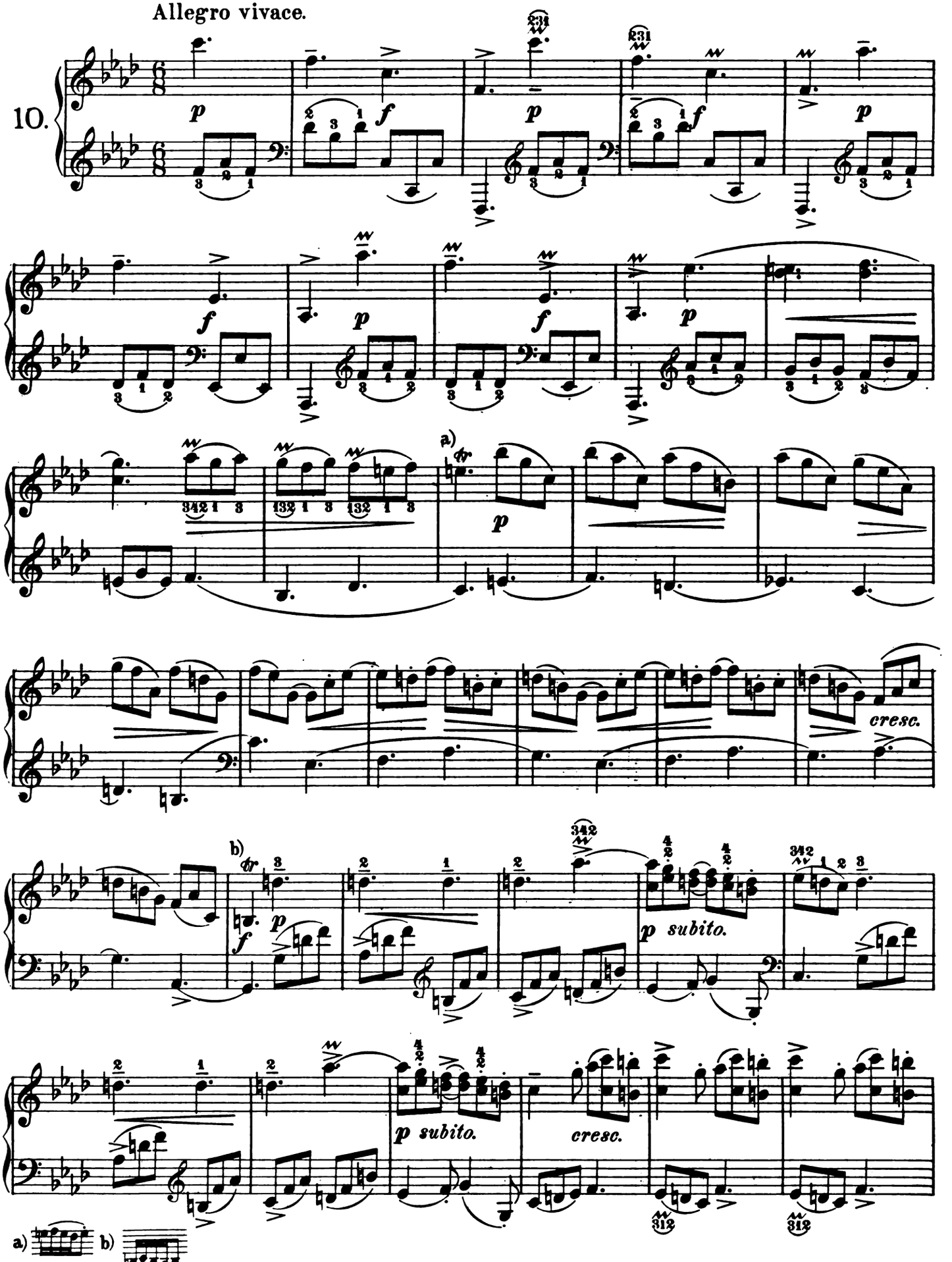

dim.
p
cresc.
f
f

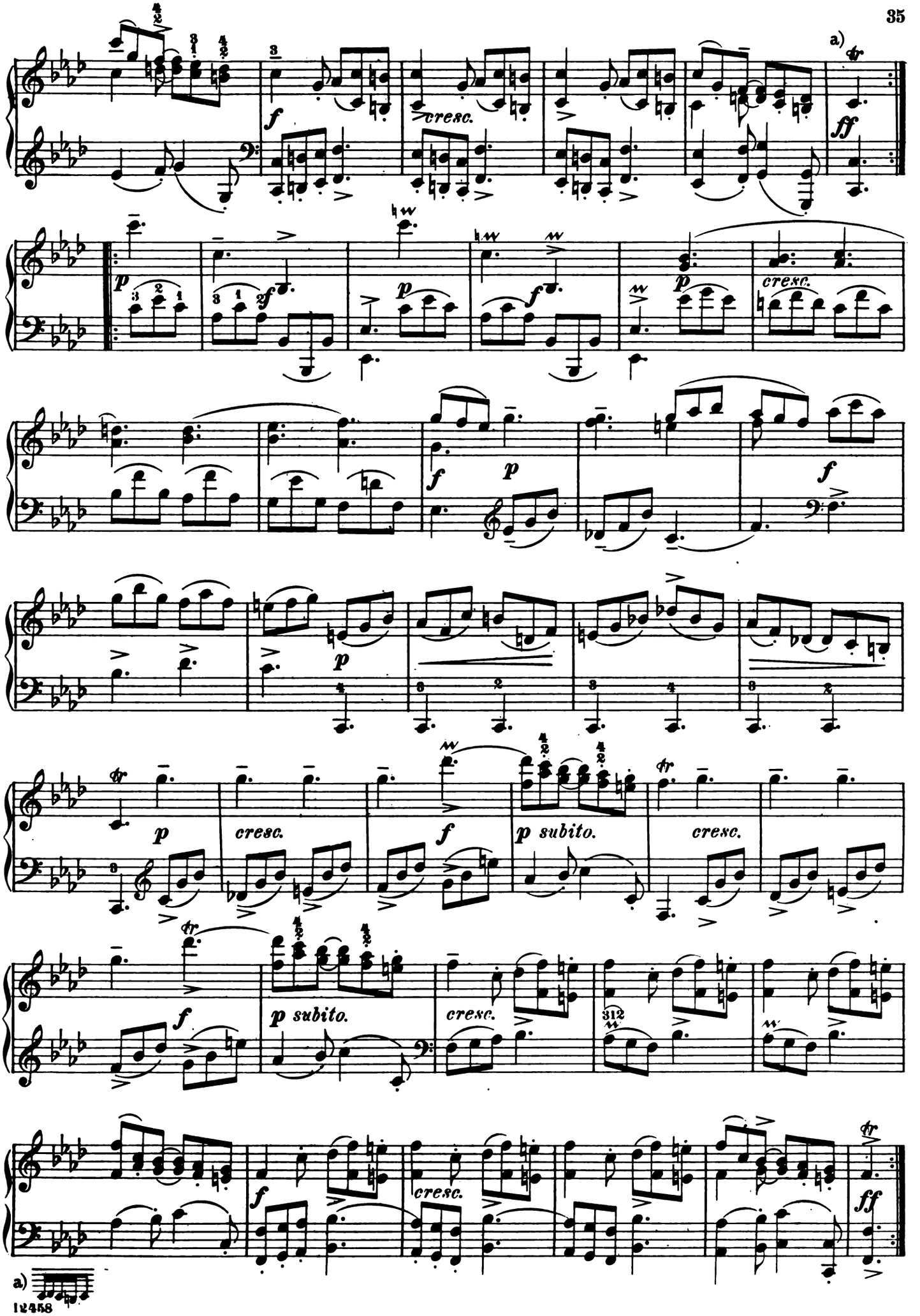

p
cresc.
p
f
cresc.
f
f
dim.
f


dim.
p
fp
fp
f
sf dim.
p
dim.
rall.

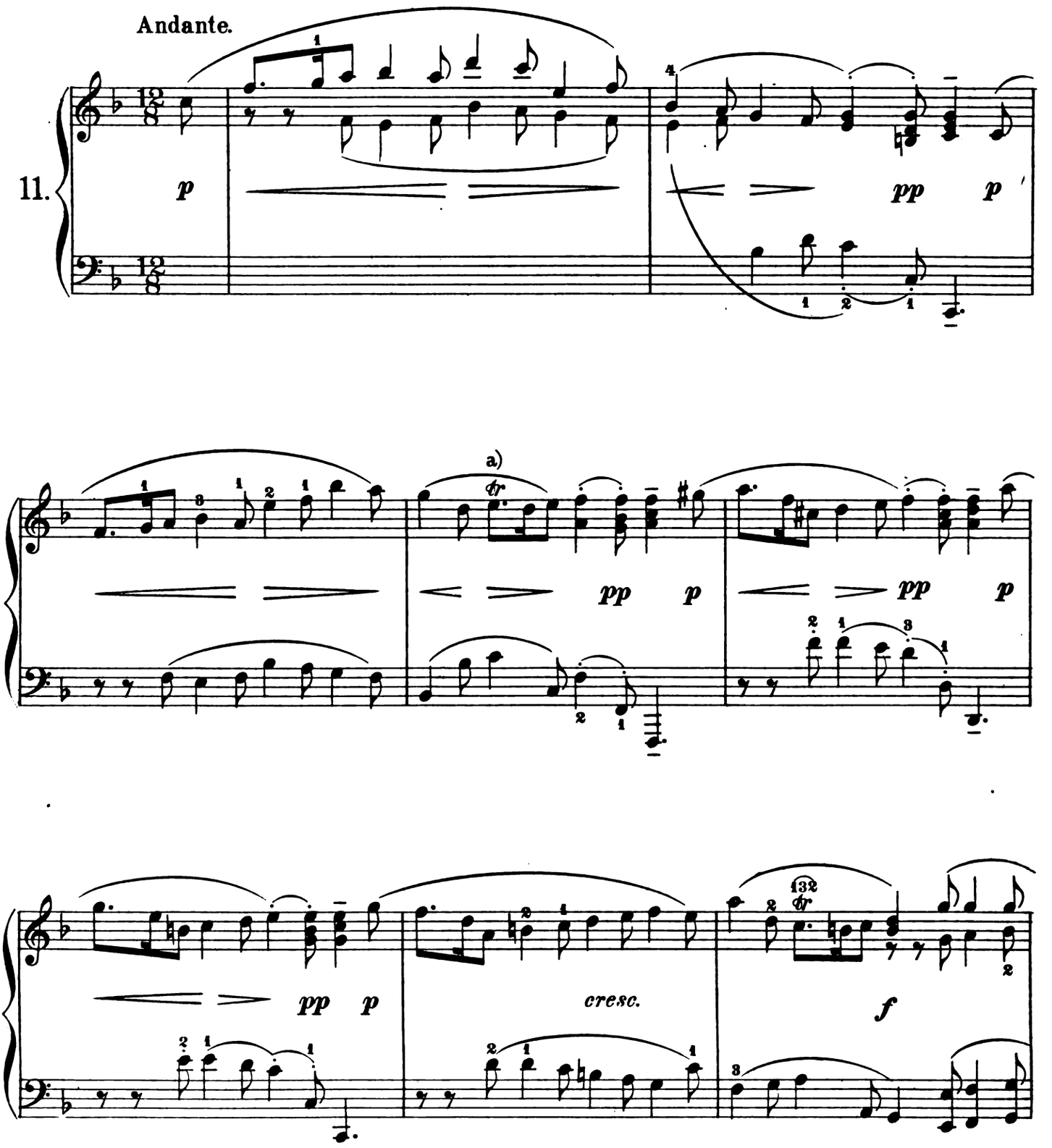
Capriccio.

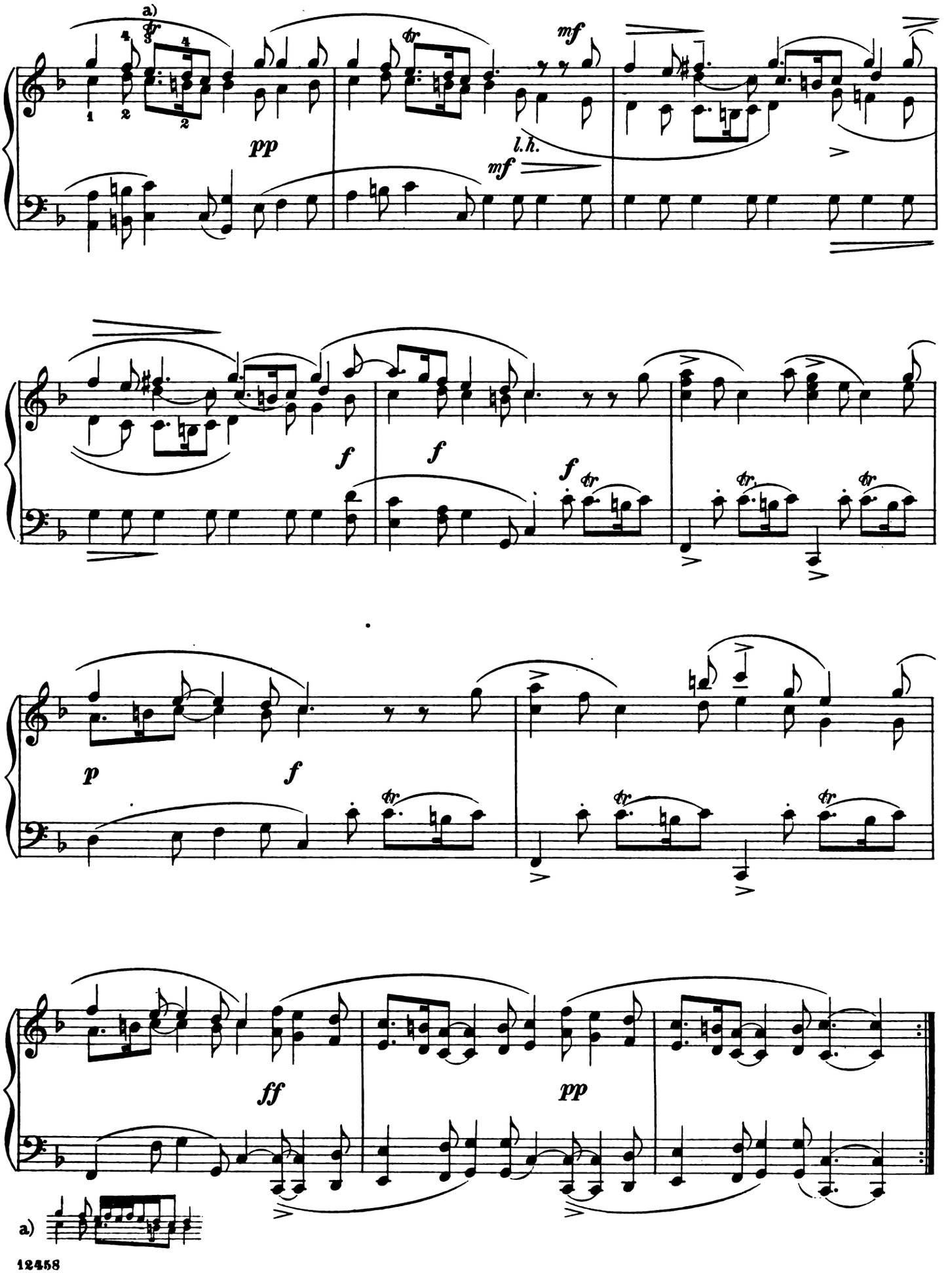
Allegro vivace.

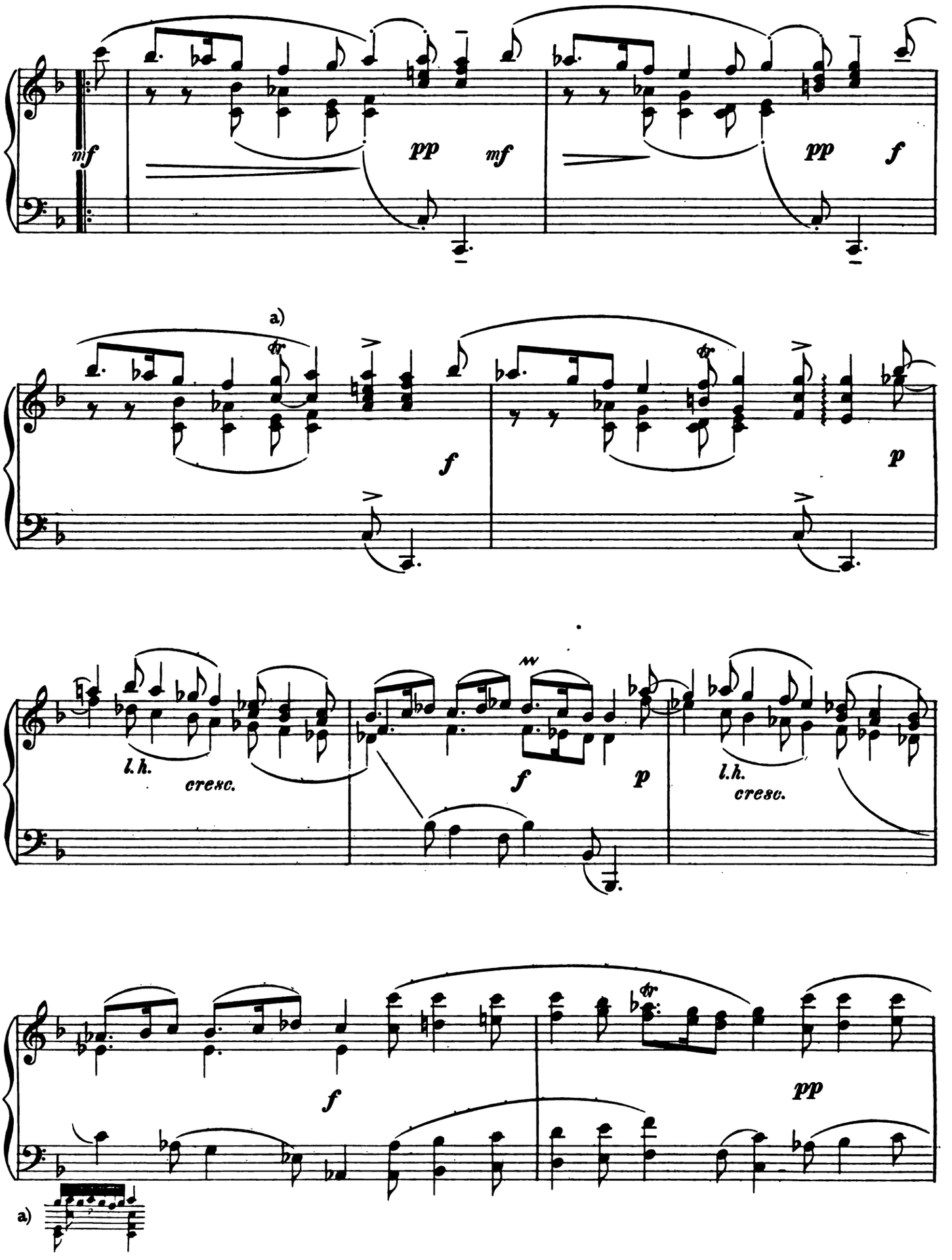


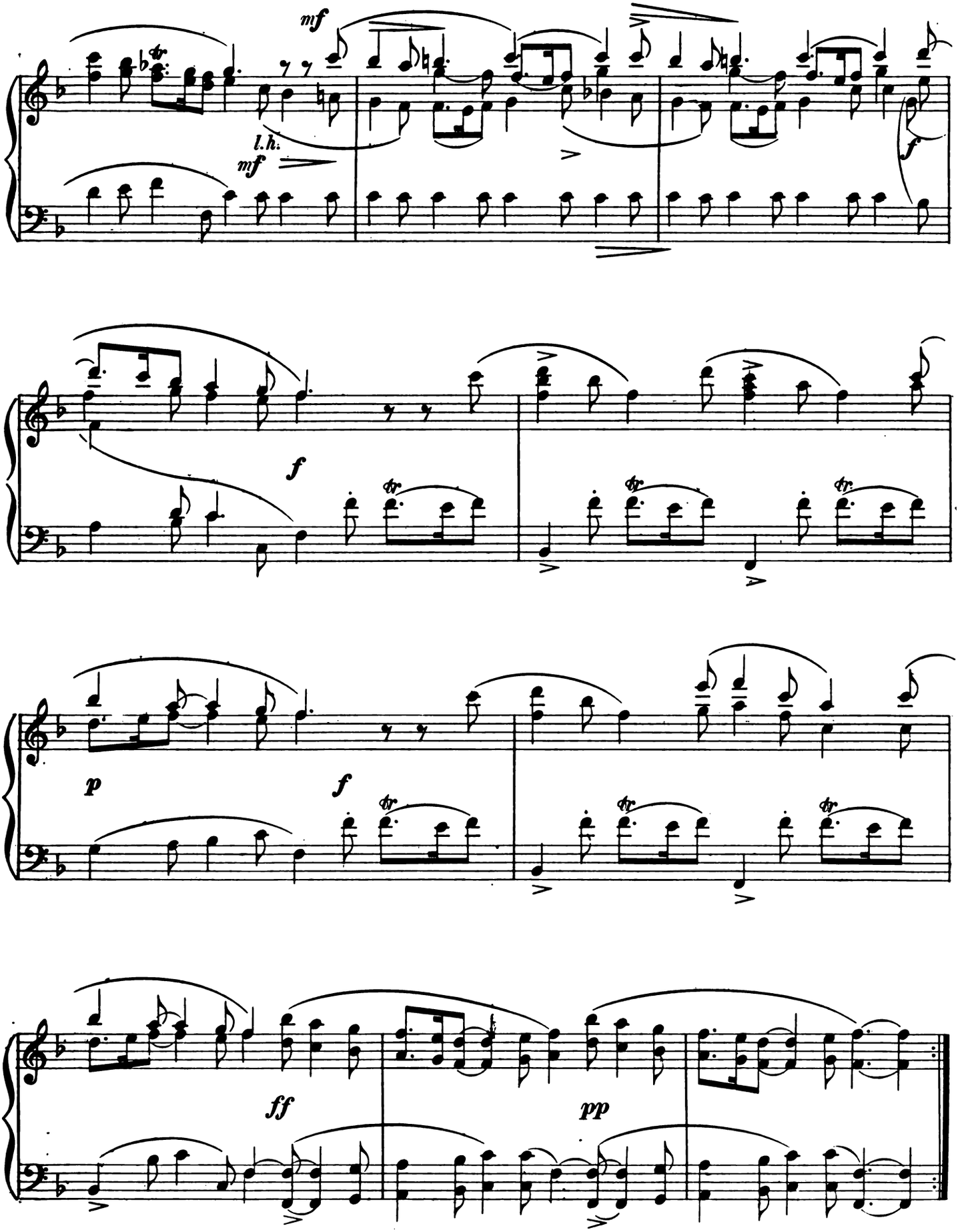

a)
cresc.
p subito.
cresc.
a)

Siciliano.

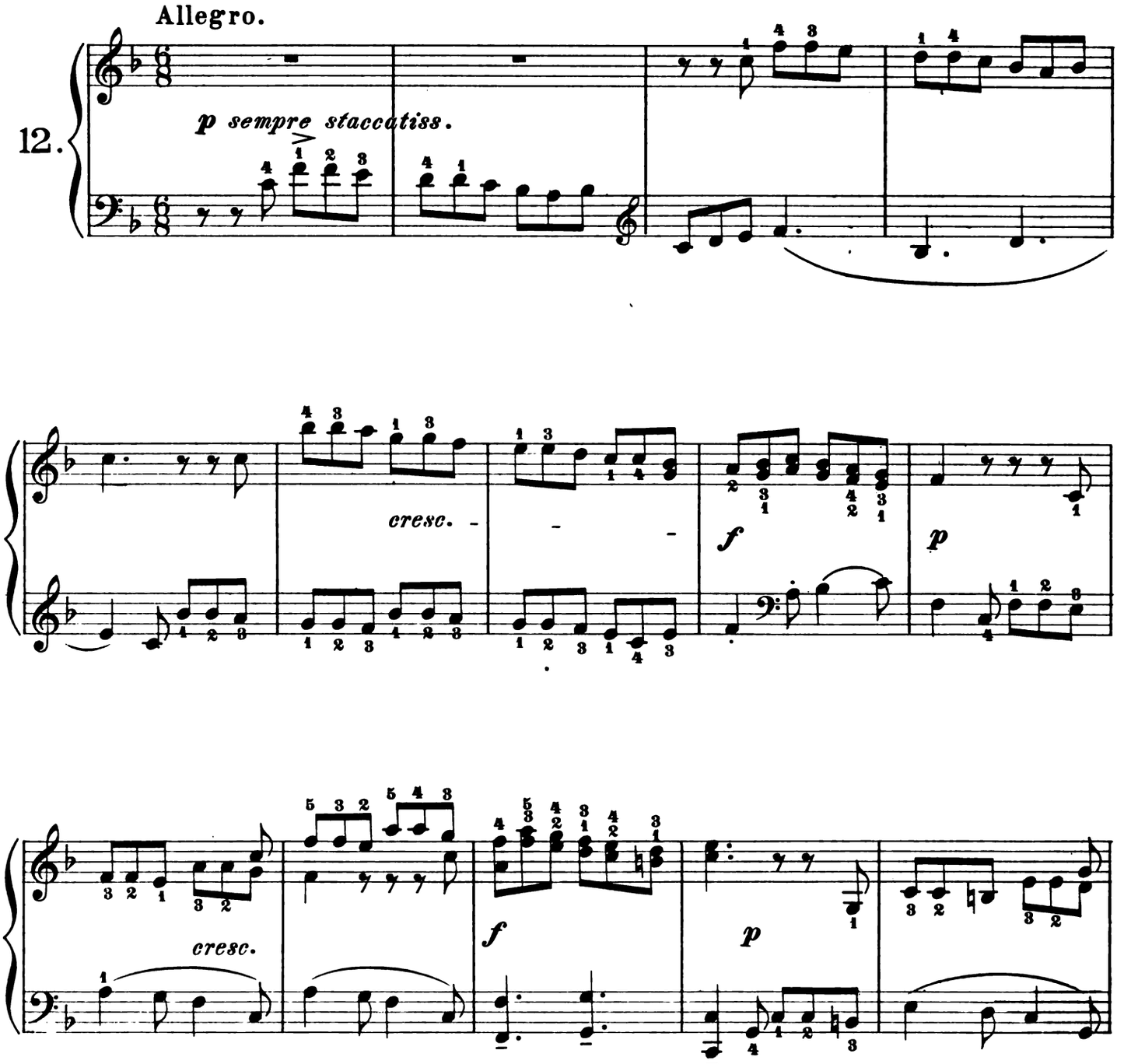


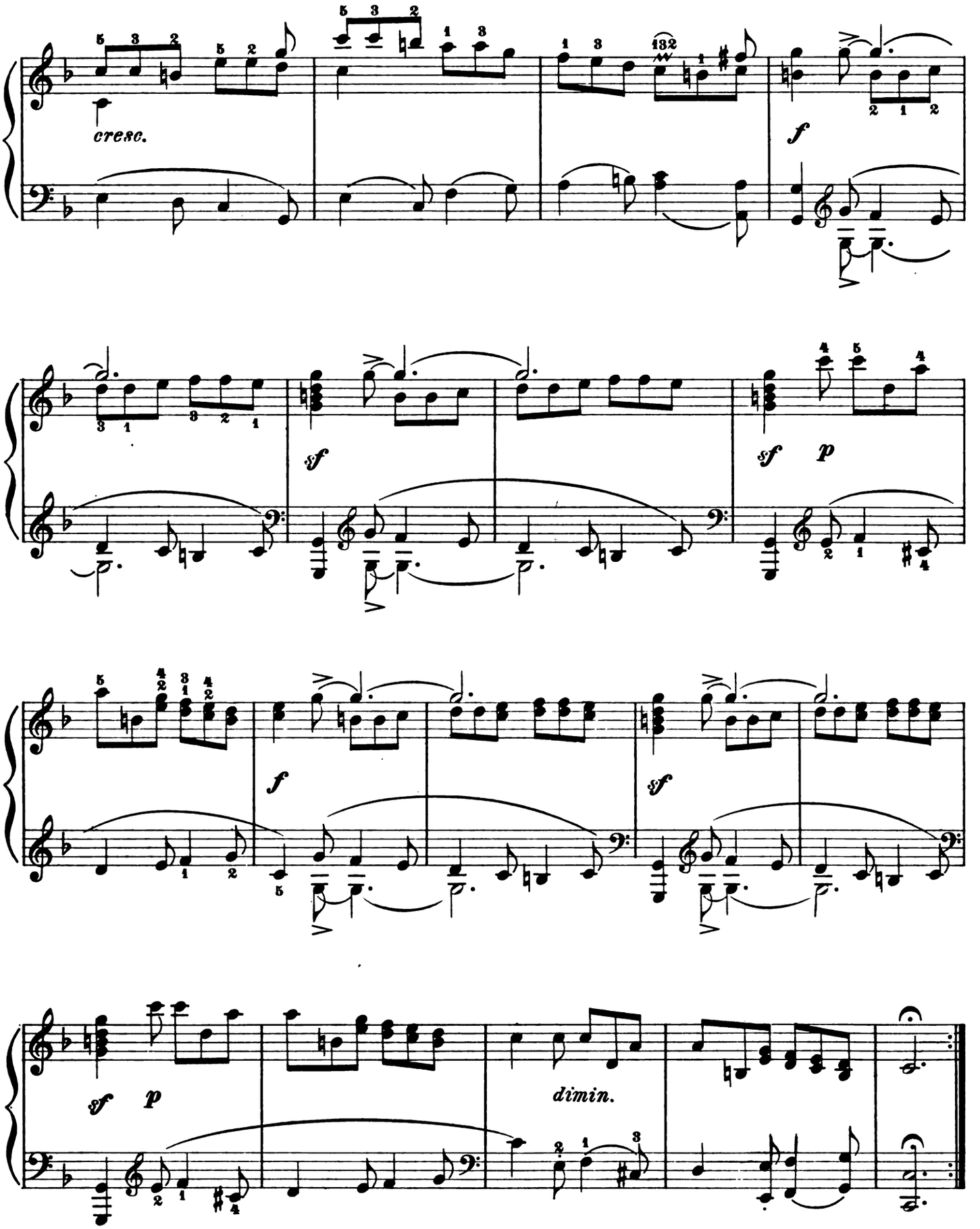

a)
pp
mf
l.h.
mf
f
f
f
p
f
ff
pp
a)

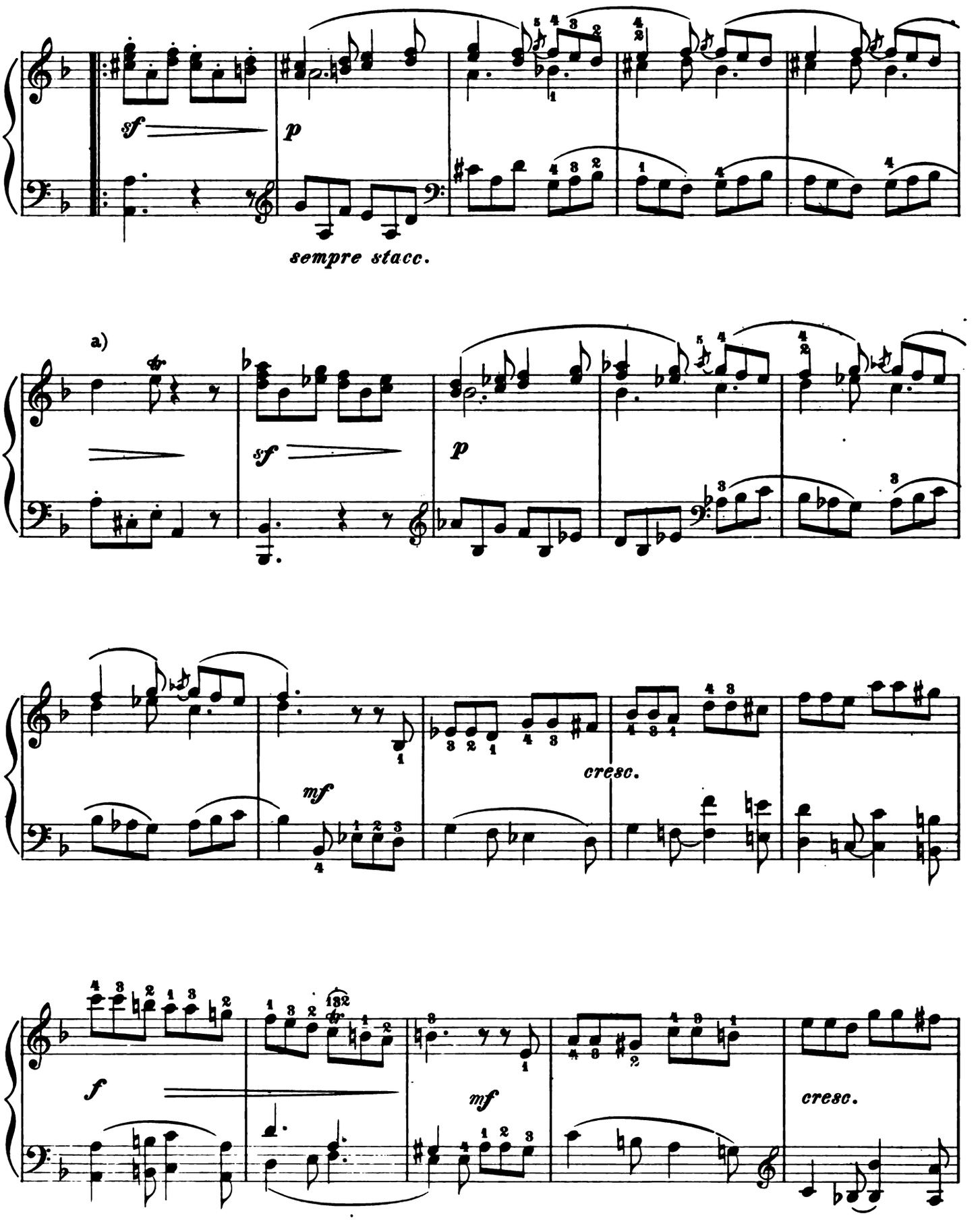

mf
pp
mf
pp
f
a)
tr
f
tr
p
l.h.
cresc.
f
p
l.h.
cresc.
f
tr
pp
a)

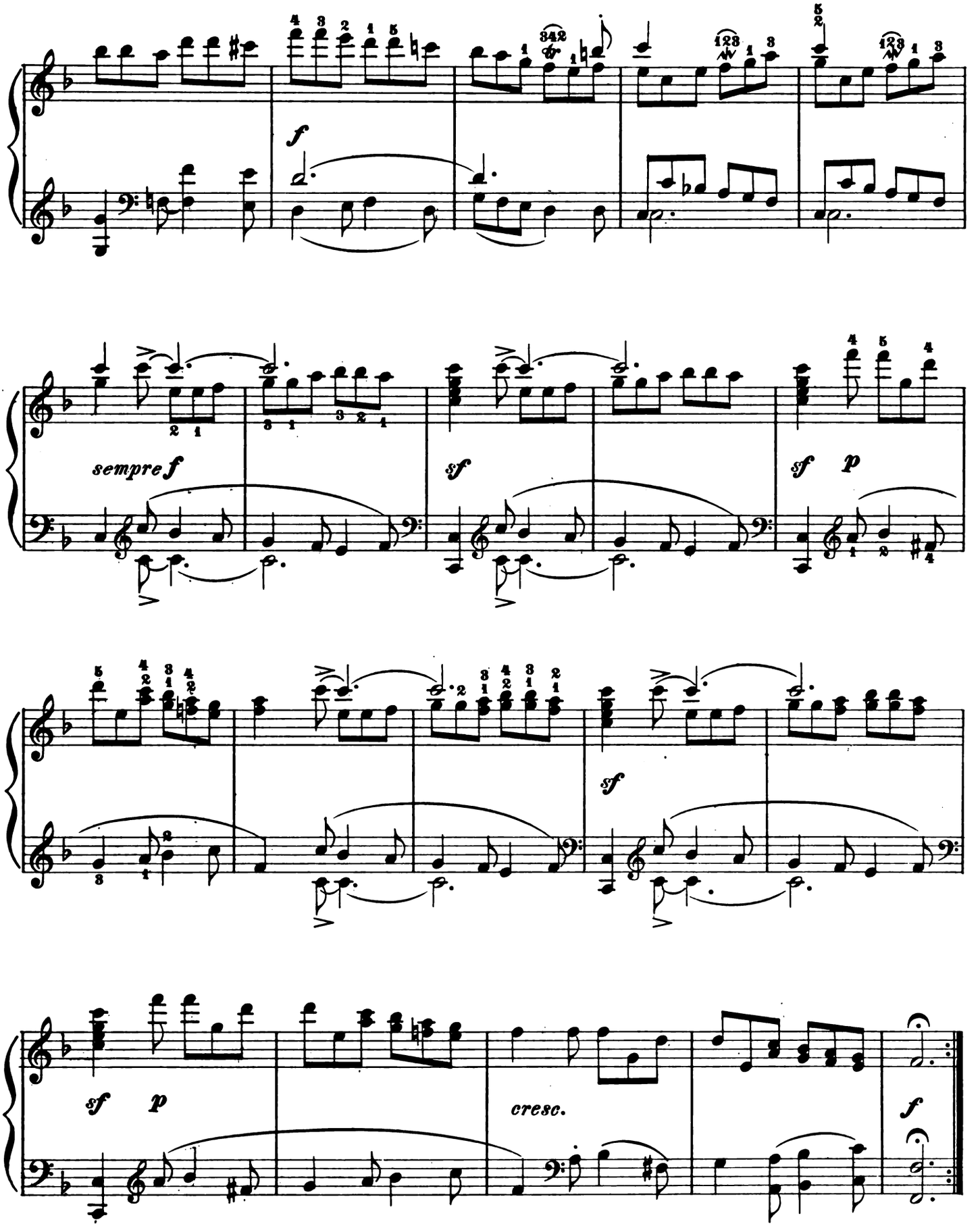

mf
l.h.
mf
f
f
p
f
ff
pp

Scherzo.




cresc.
f
sf
sf p
f
sf
sf p
dimin.

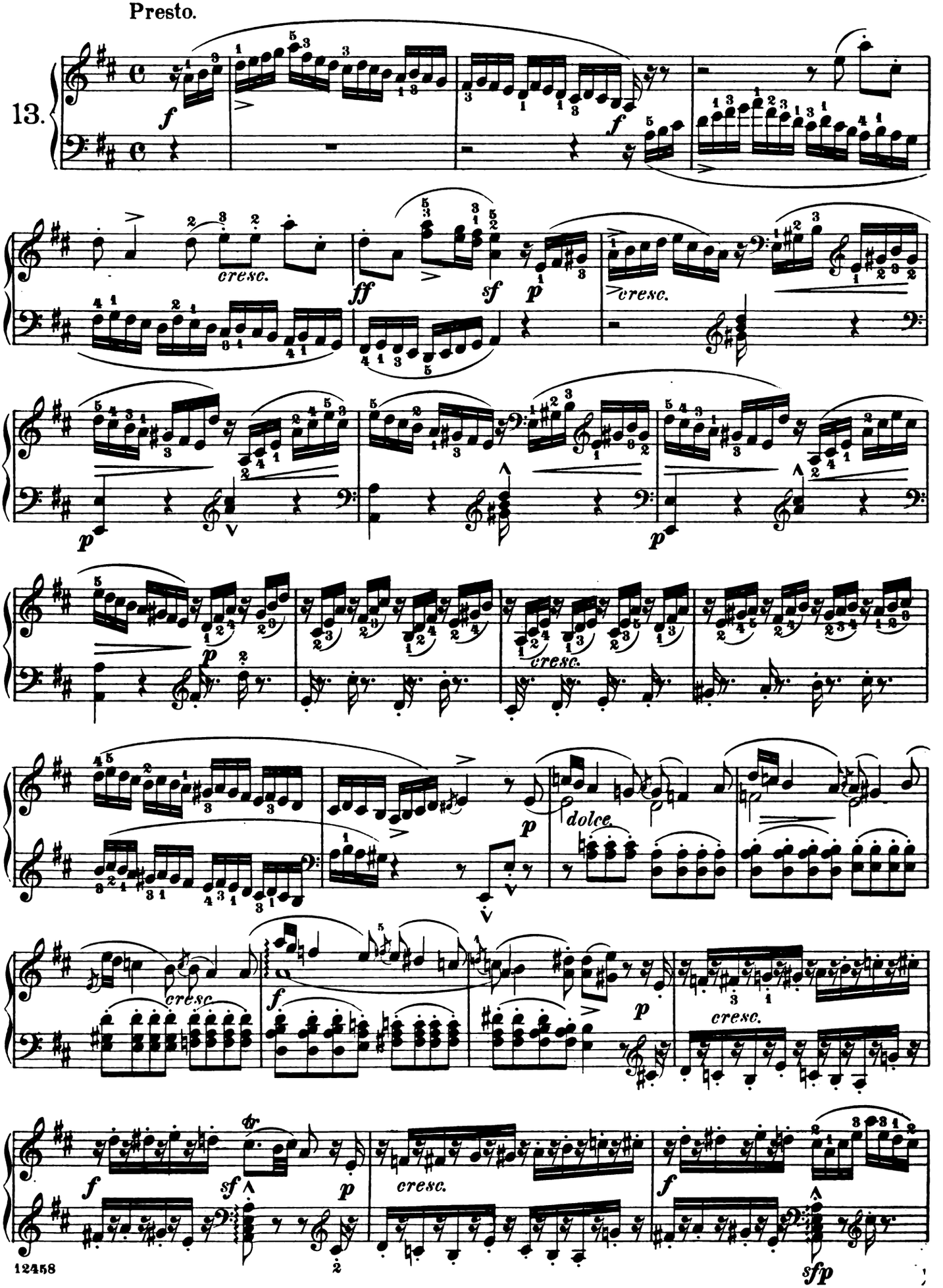

sf
p
sempre stacc.
a)
sf
p
mf
cresc.
f
mf
cresc.
a)

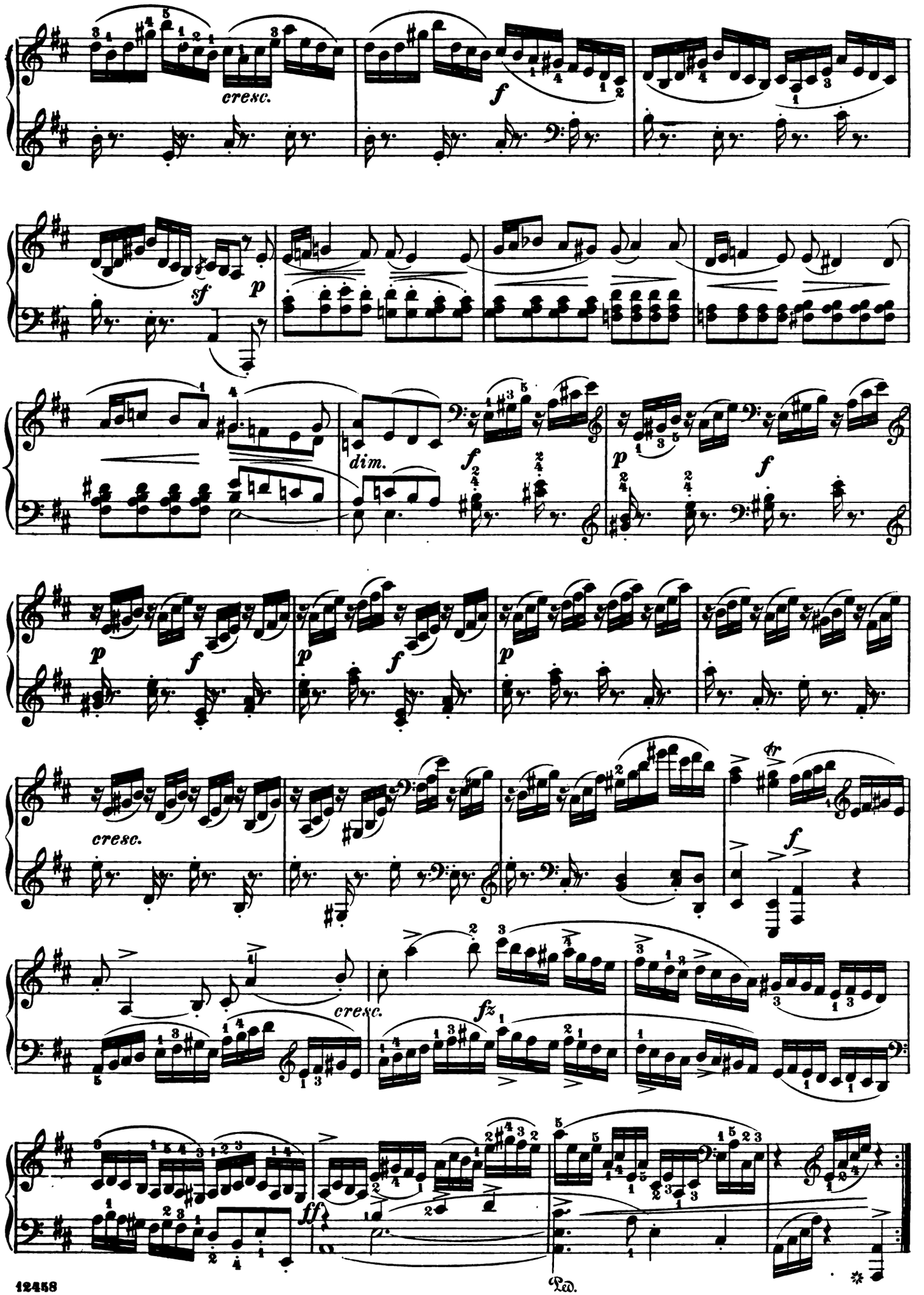

f
sempre f
sf
sf p
sf
sf p
cresc.
f

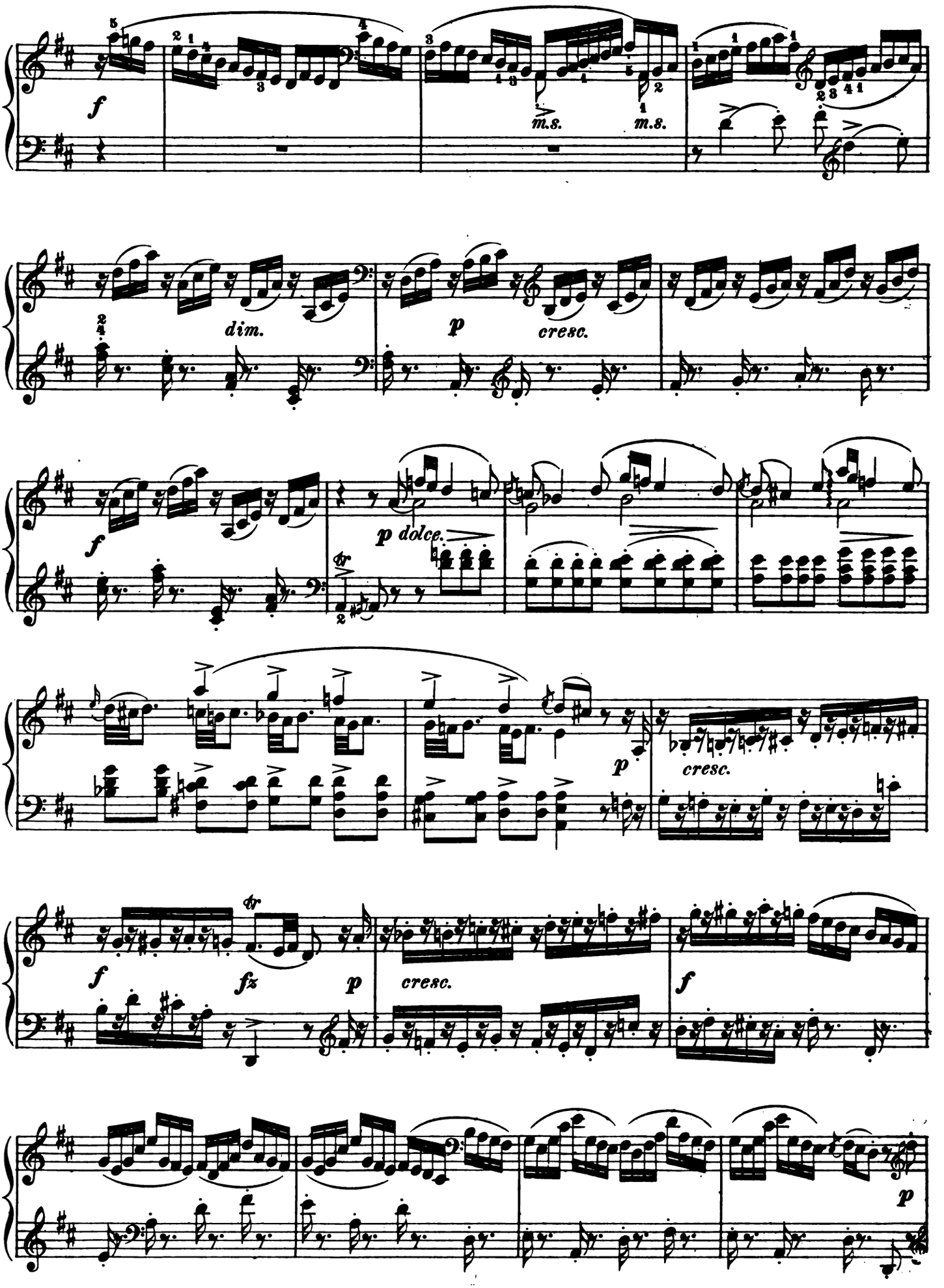
Sonata.

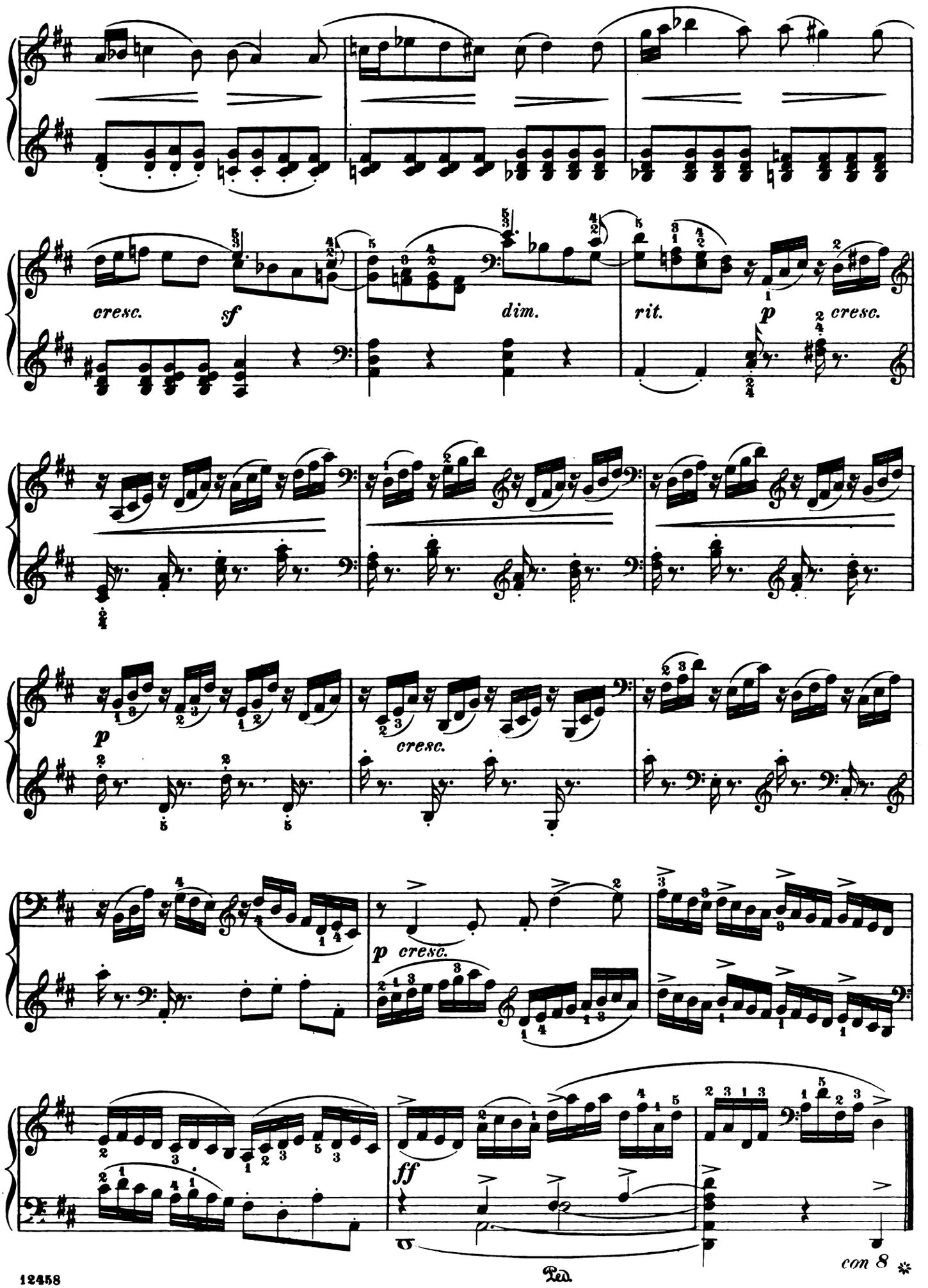
Presto.

13.

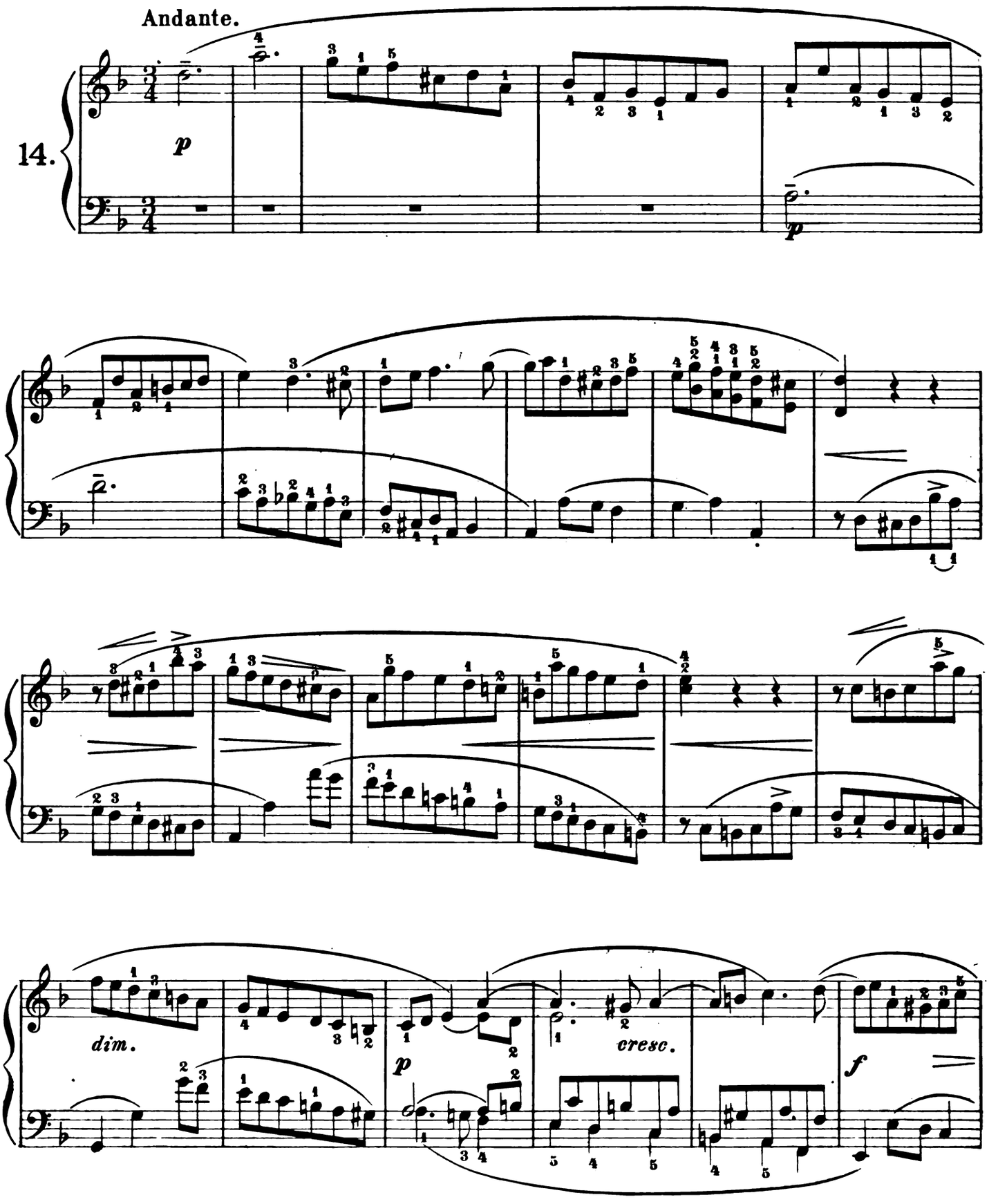


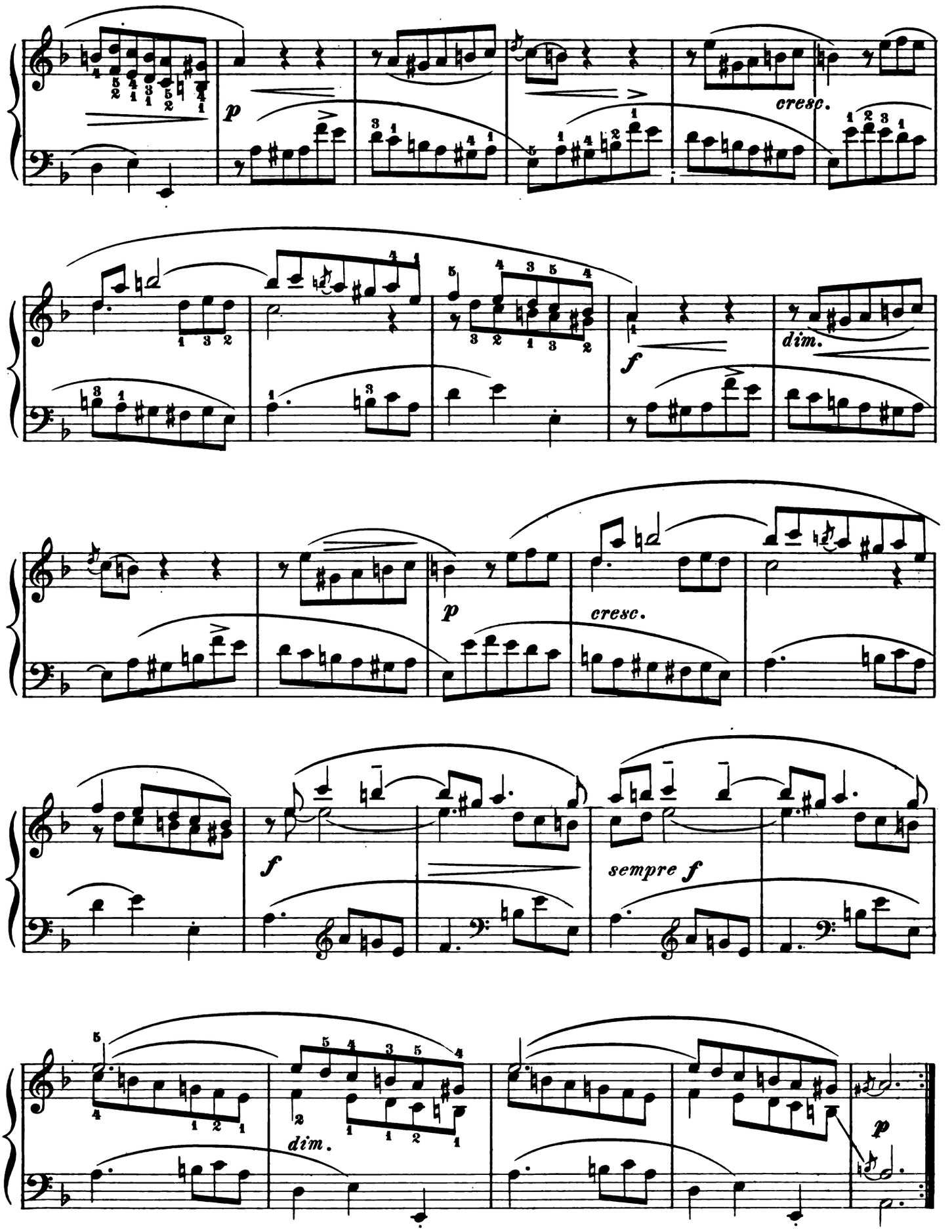

cresc.
f
sf
p
dim.
f
p
f
p
f
p
f
p
cresc.
tr
f
cresc.
fz
ff
Ped.

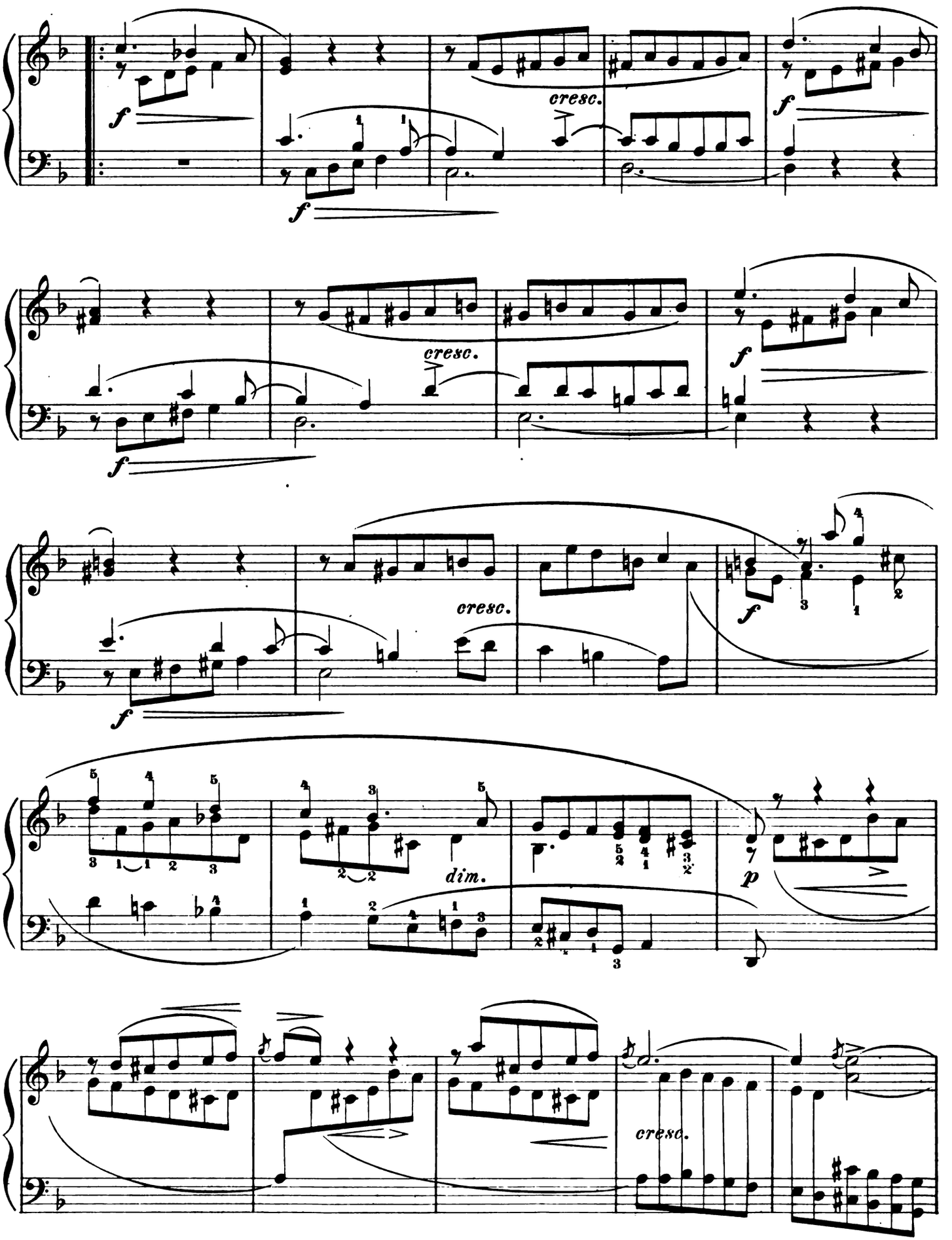

f
m.s.
m.s.
dim.
p
cresc.
f
p dolce.
p
cresc.
f
fz
p
cresc.
f
p

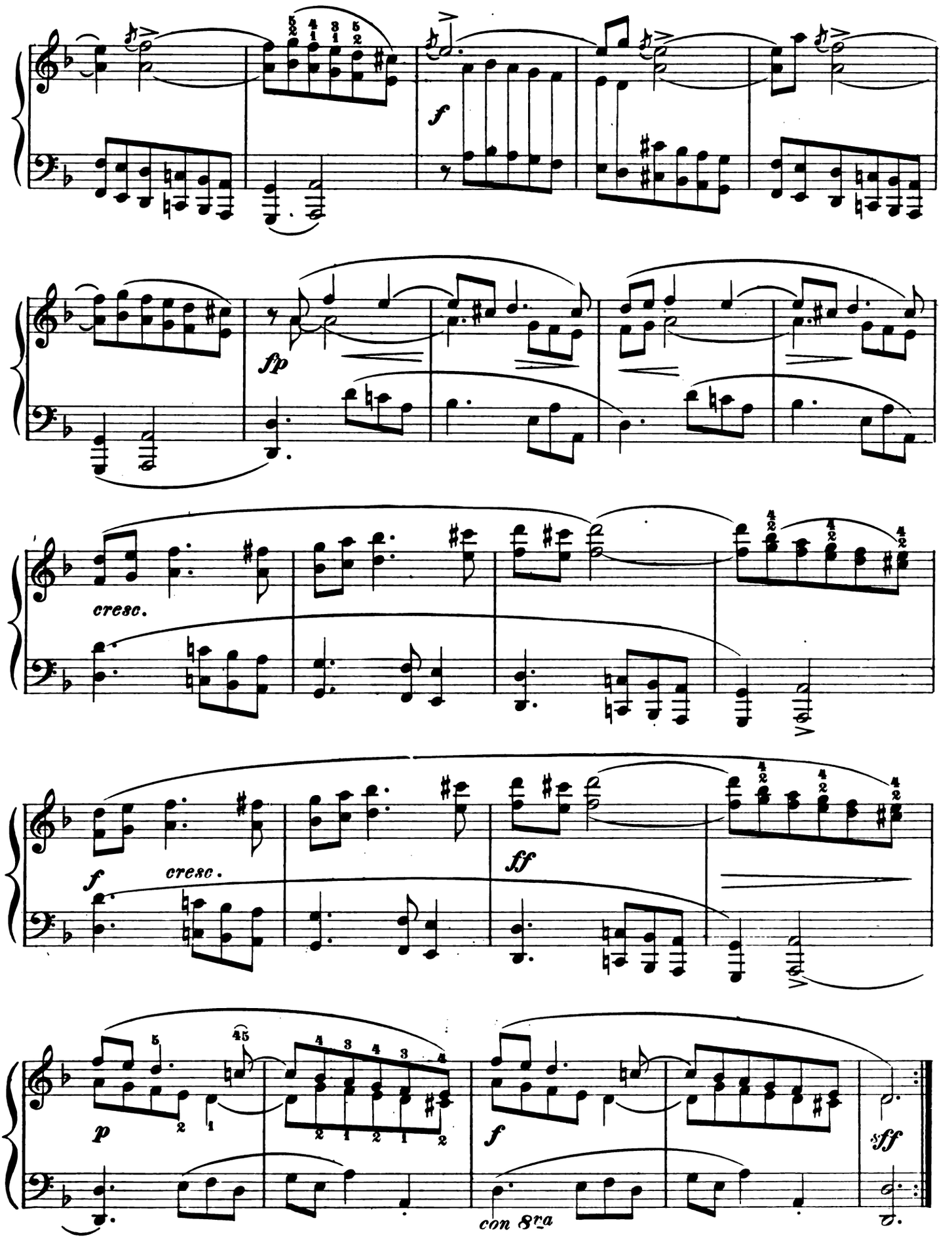

cresc.
sf
dim.
rit.
p
cresc.
p
cresc.
p cresc.
ff
con 8
Ped.

Courante.




p
cresc.
dim.
f
p
cresc.
f
sempre f
dim.
p


f
cresc.
f
f
cresc.
f
f
cresc.
f
f
dim.
p
cresc.


f
fp
cresc.
f
cresc.
ff
p
f
con 8va
sff

Capriccio.

Allegrissimo.

15.

f

p dolce.

f

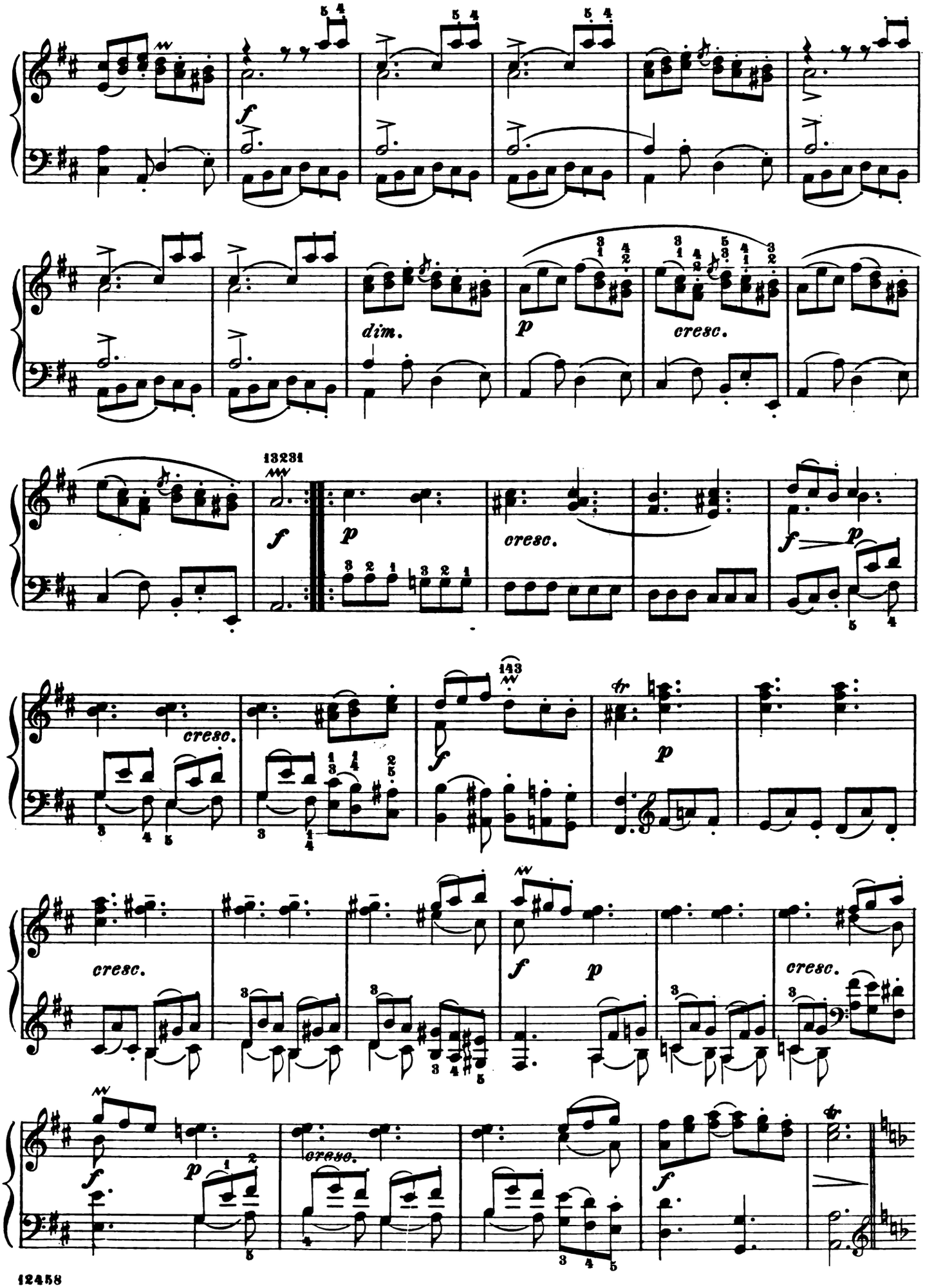
p dolce.

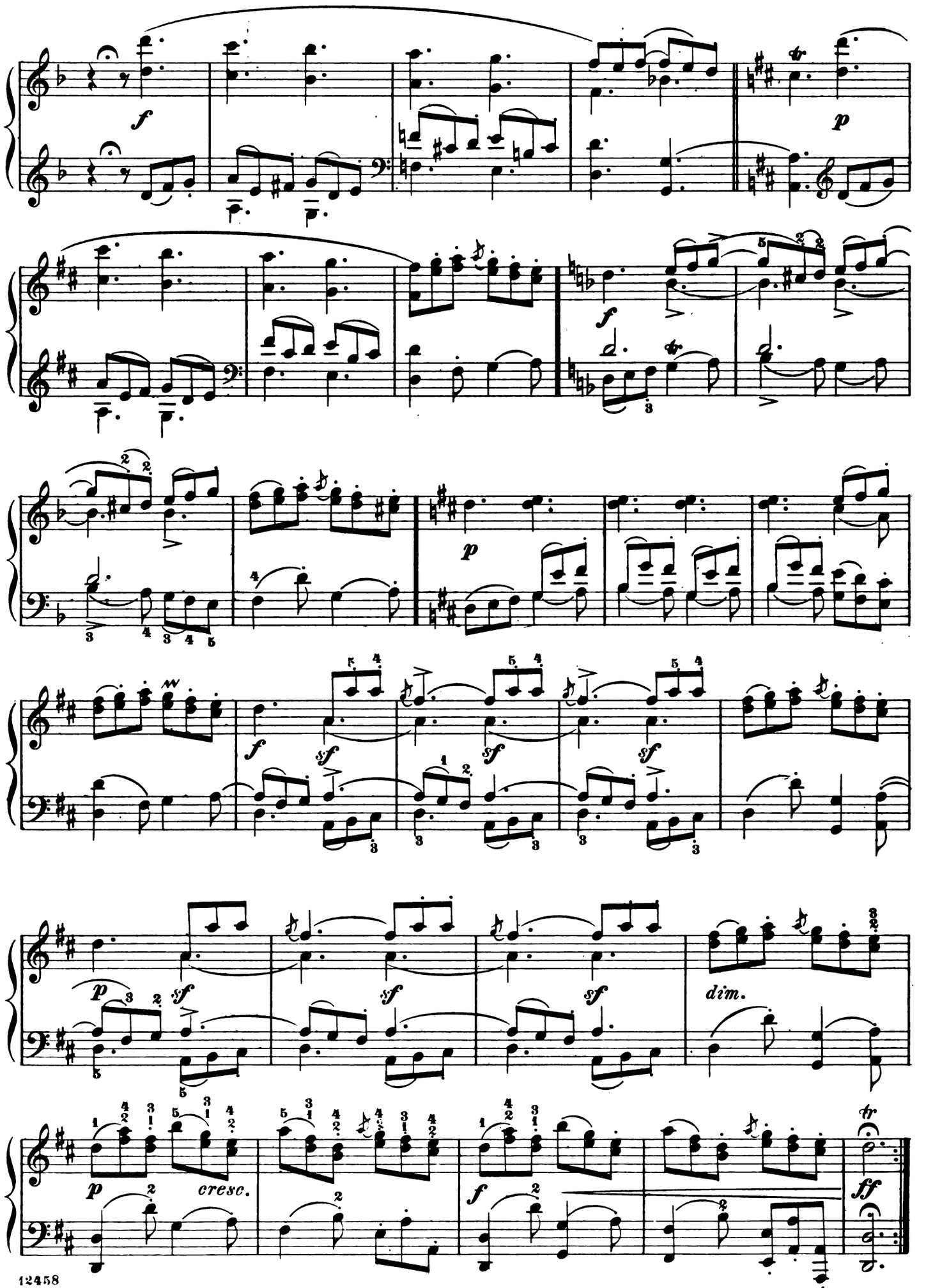
ff

p dolce.

f

p


f
dim.
p
cresc.
13231
f
p
cresc.
f
p
cresc.
143
f
tr
p
cresc.
f
p
cresc.
f
p
cresc.
f

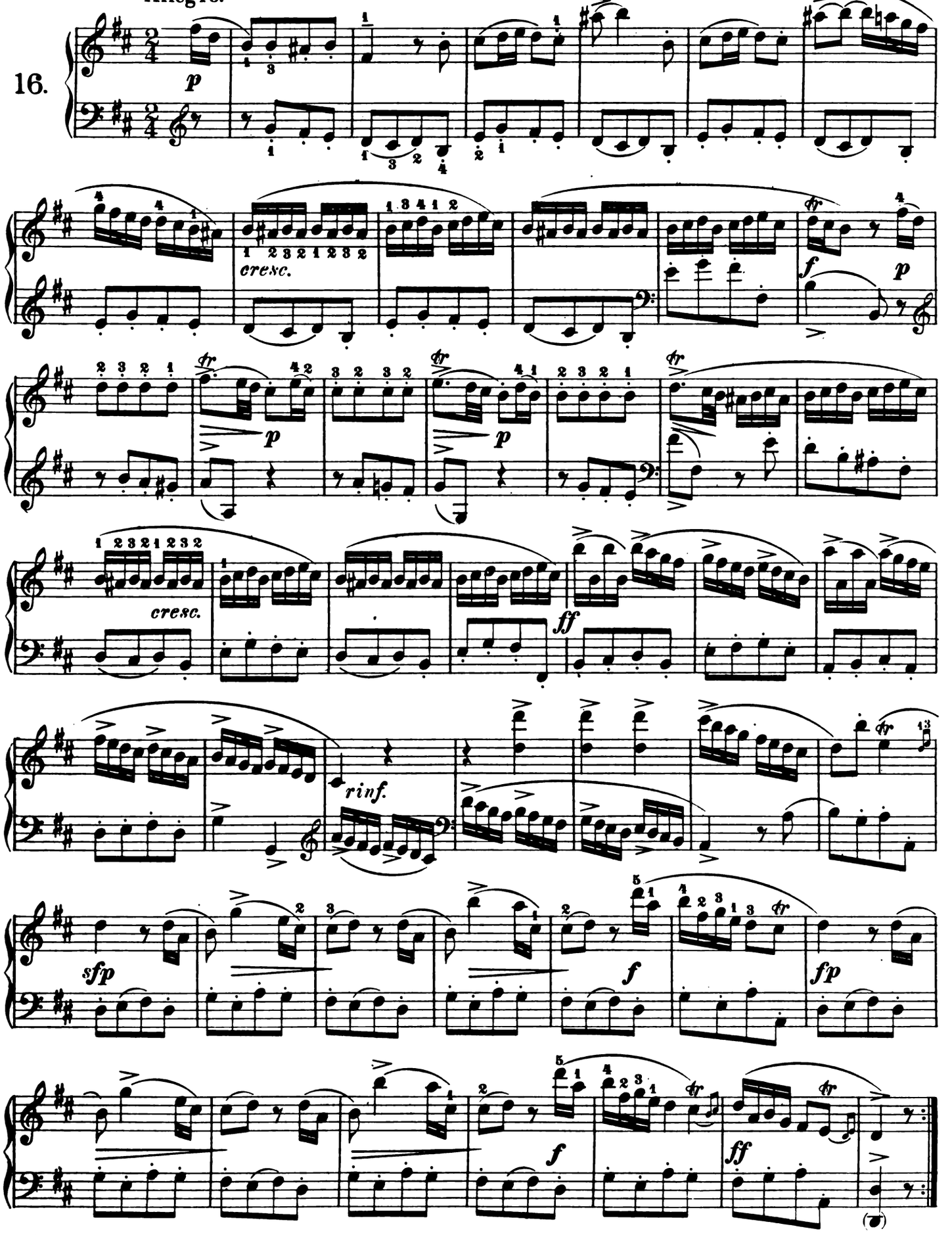

f
p
f
p
sf
sf
sf
p
sf
sf
sf
dim.
p
cresc.
f
ff

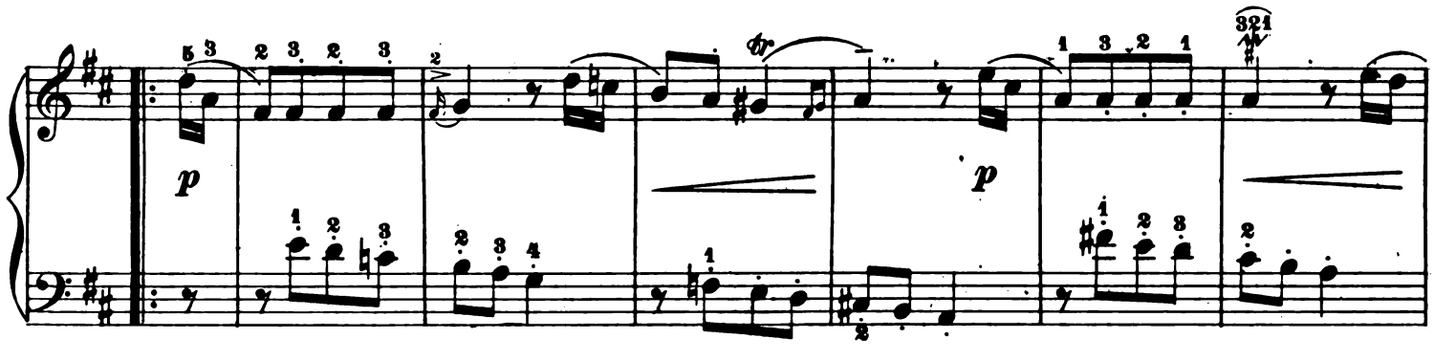
Bourrée.

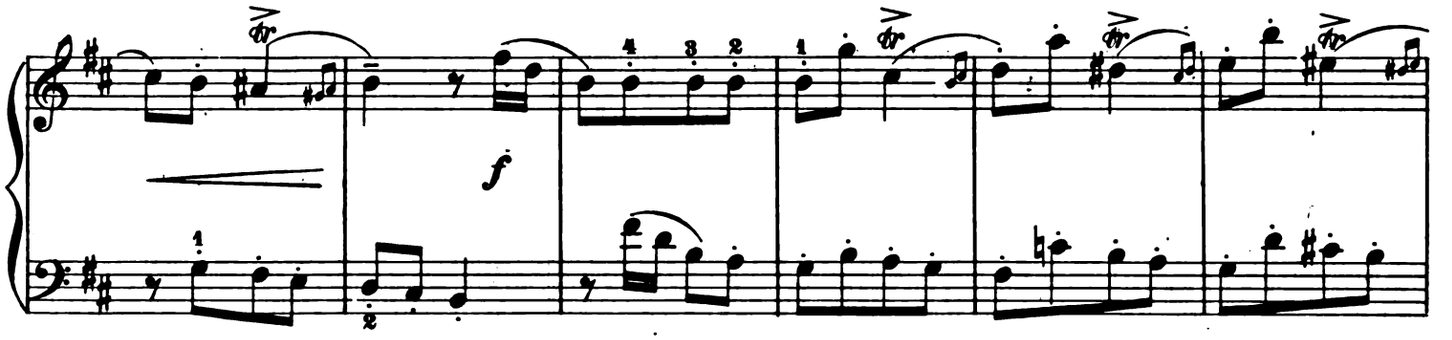
Composed at Aranjuez, A. D. 1754.

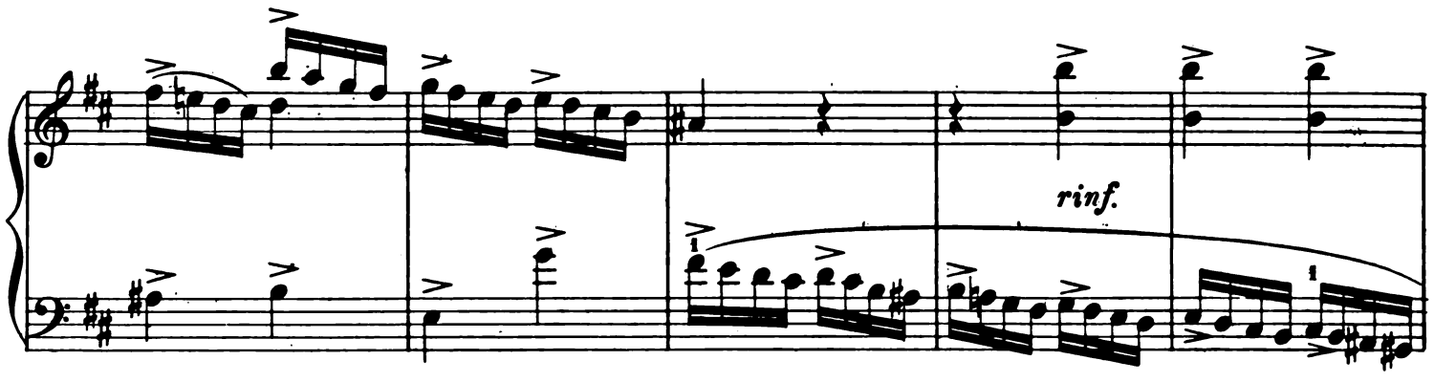
Allegro.

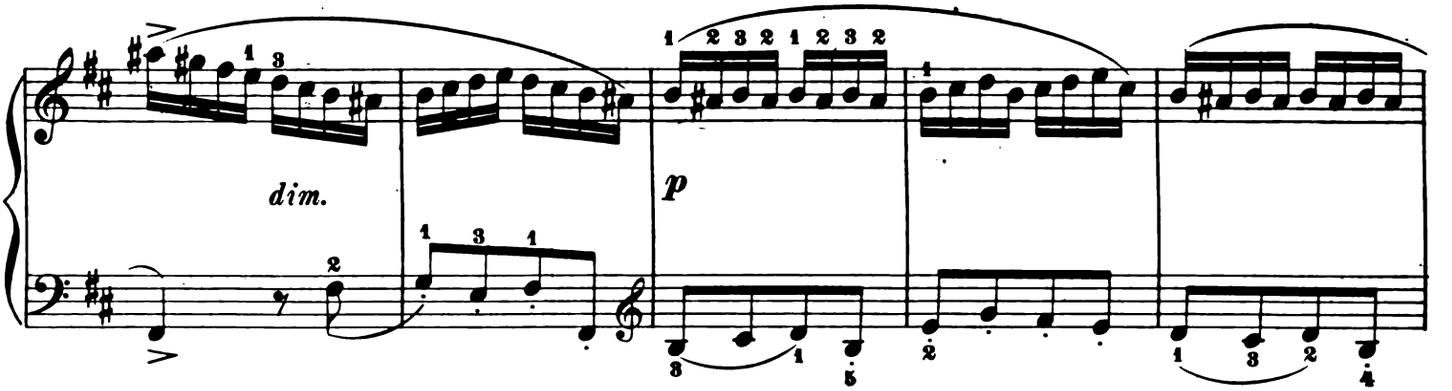
16.

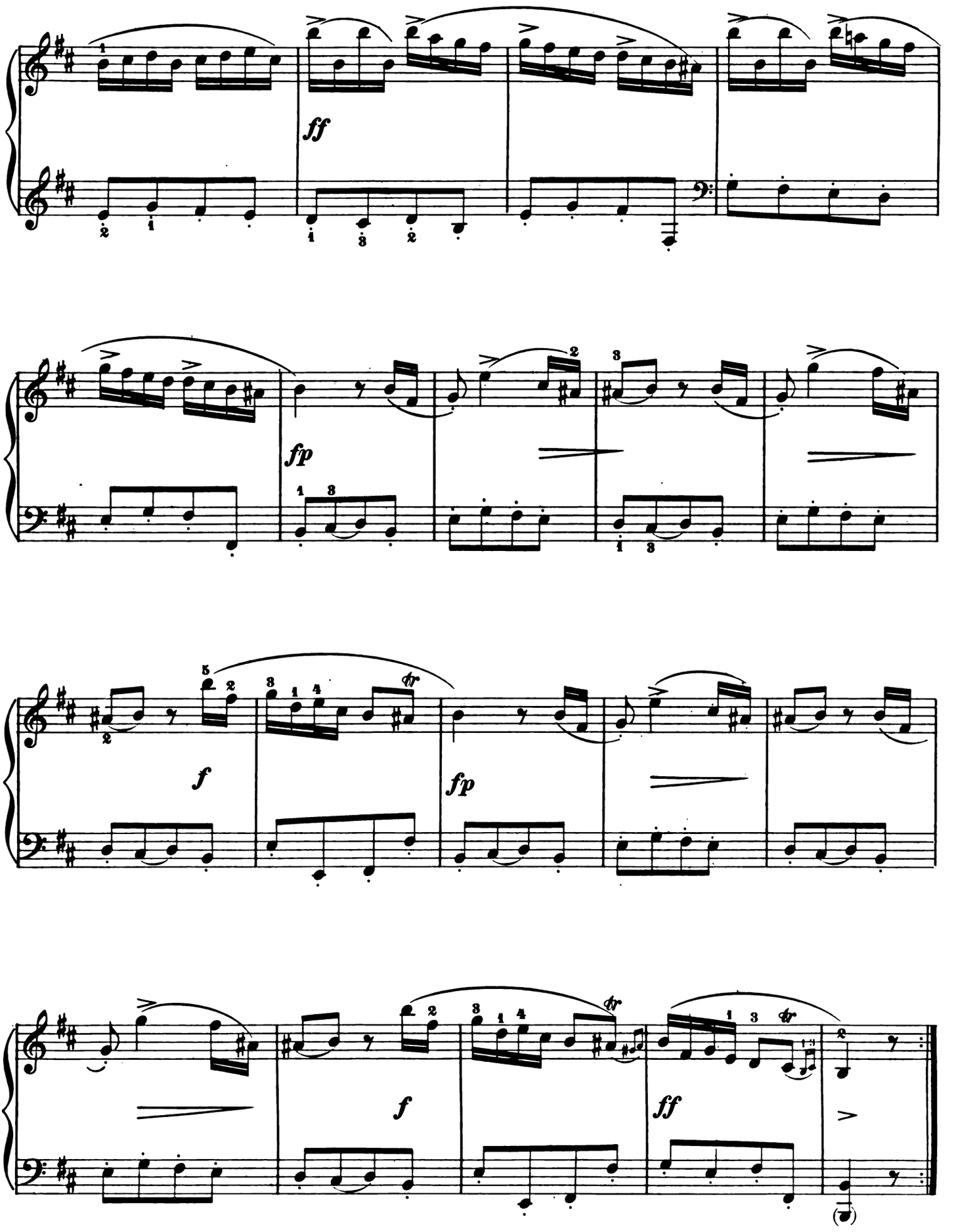



p
p

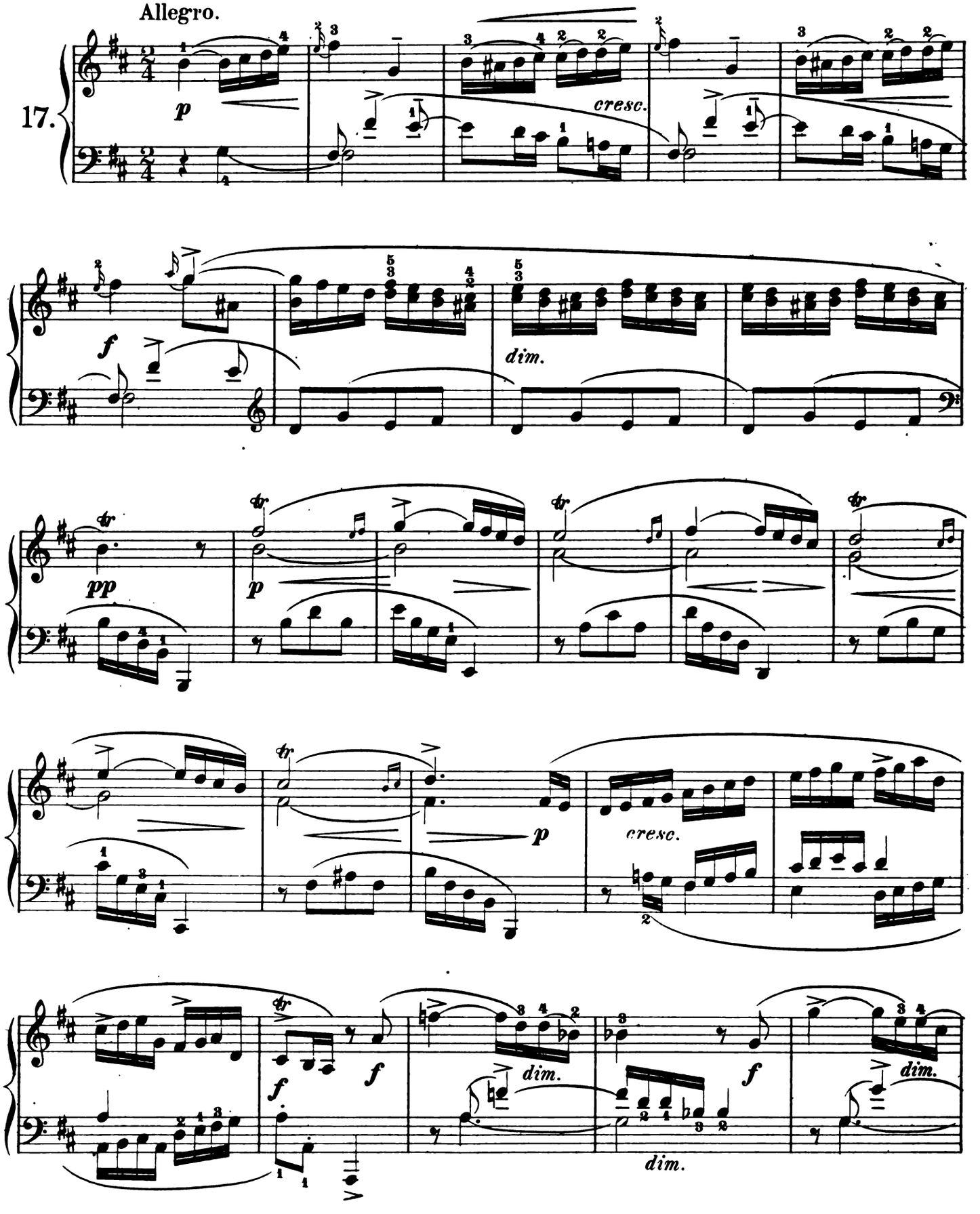

f

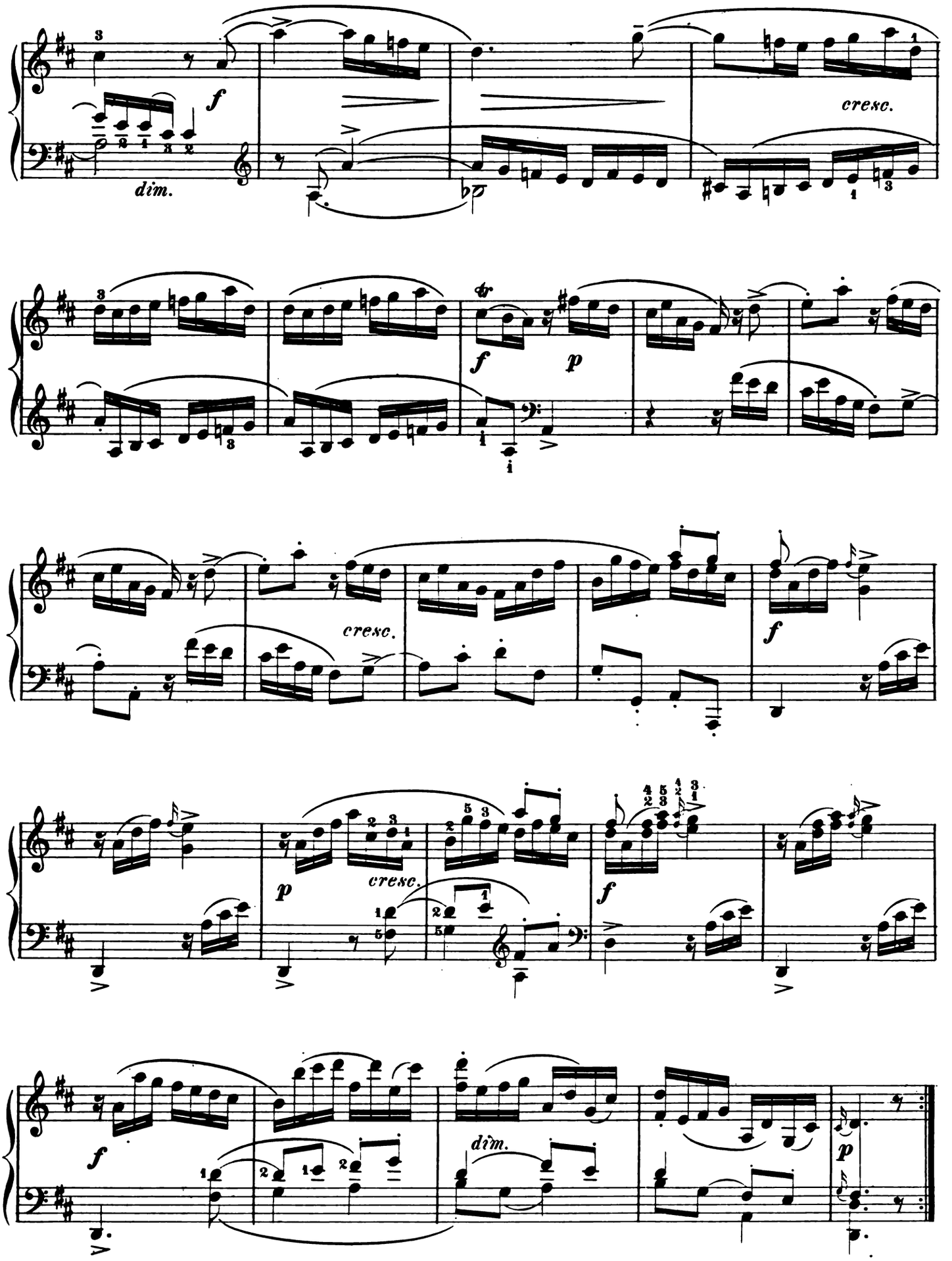

rinf.

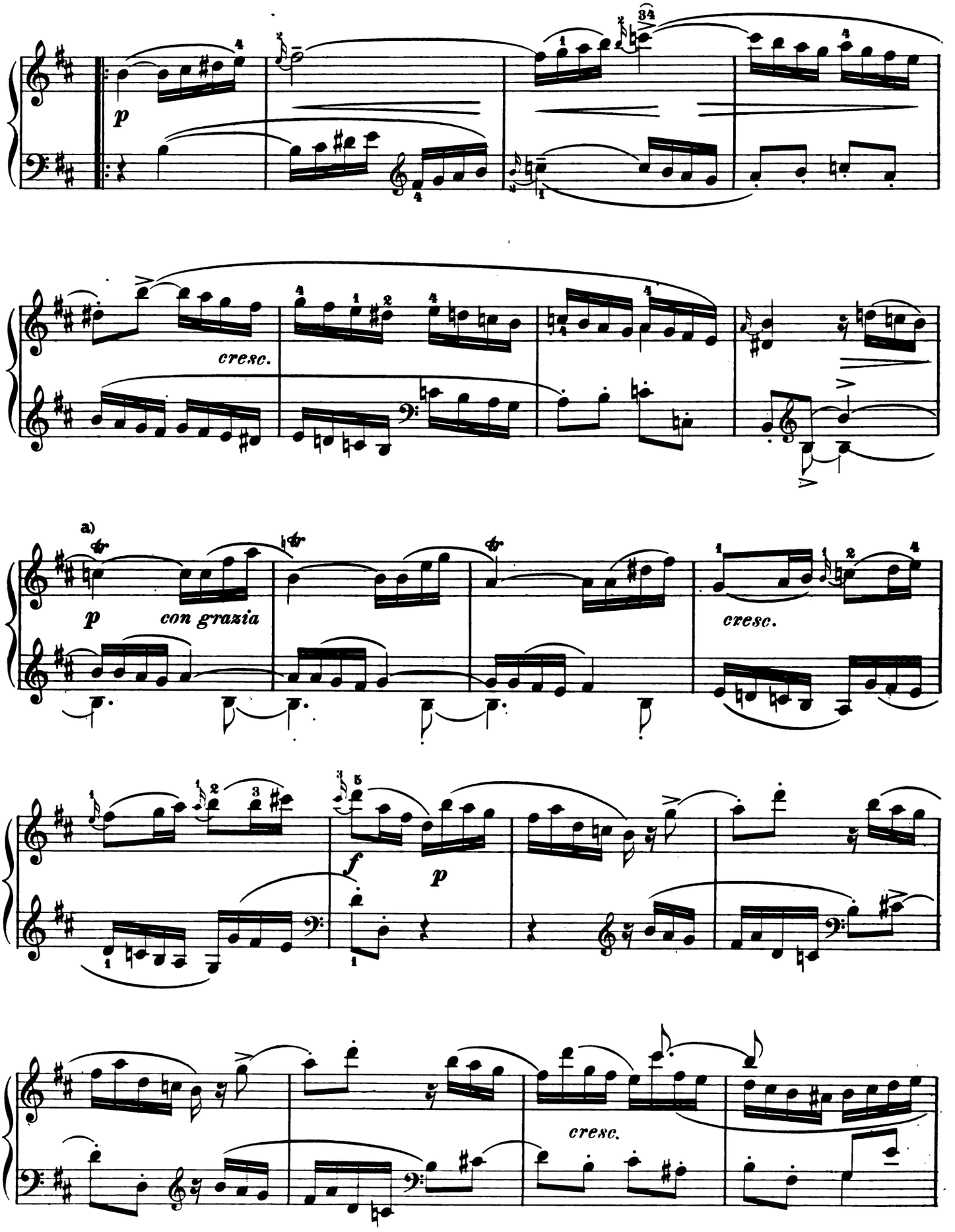

dim.
p


ff
fp
f
fp
f
ff

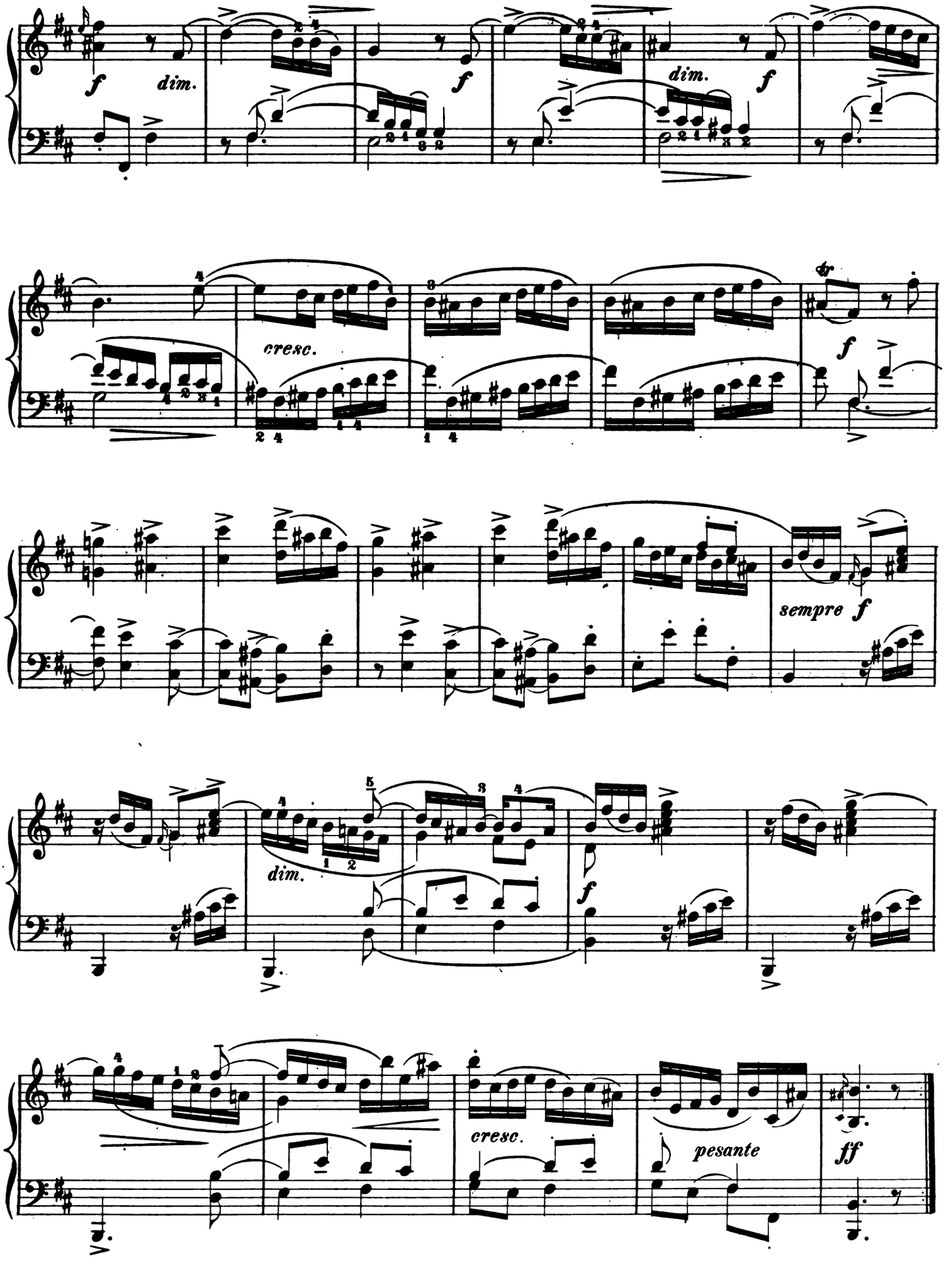
Gavotte.




dim.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
dim.

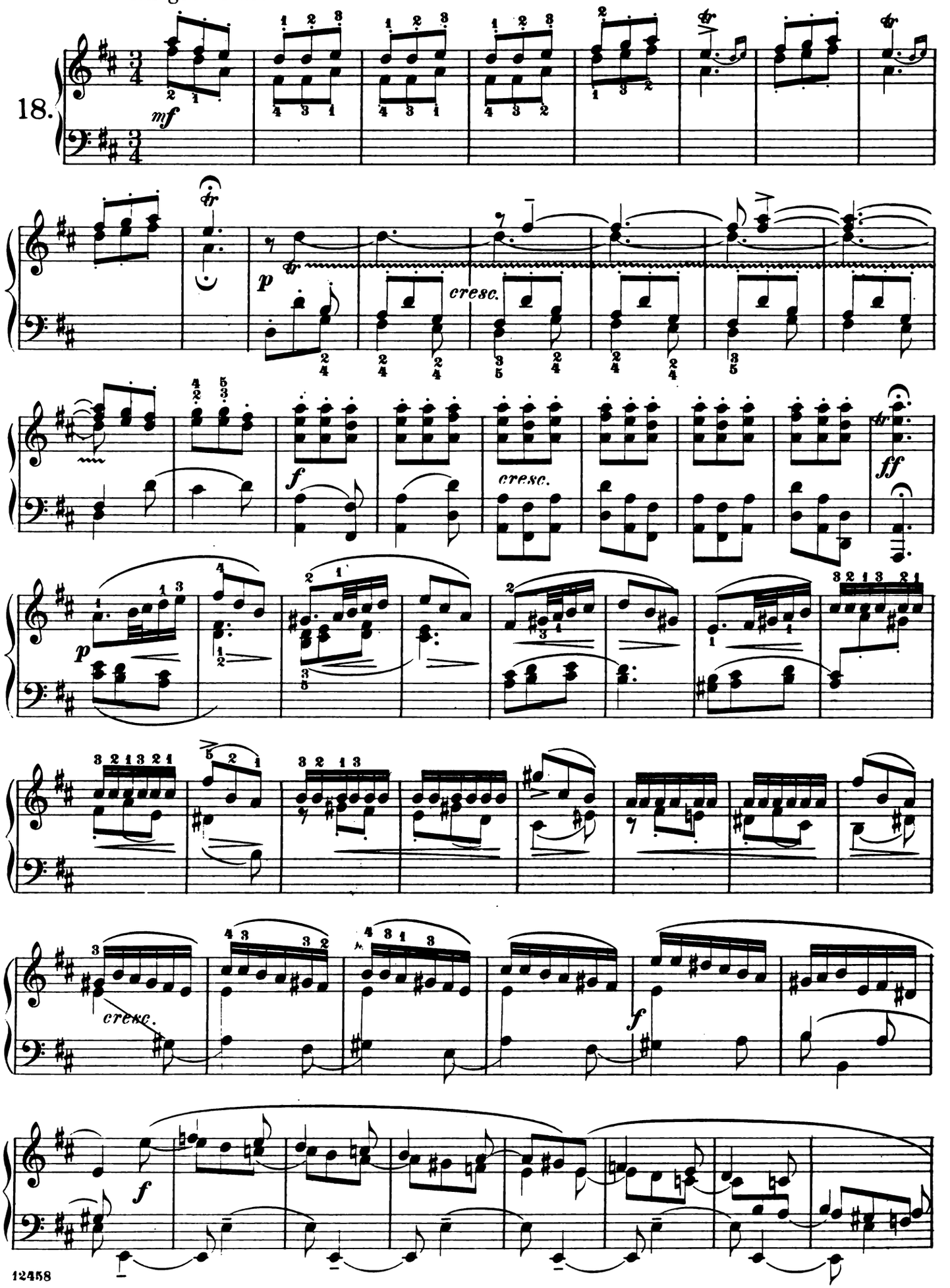


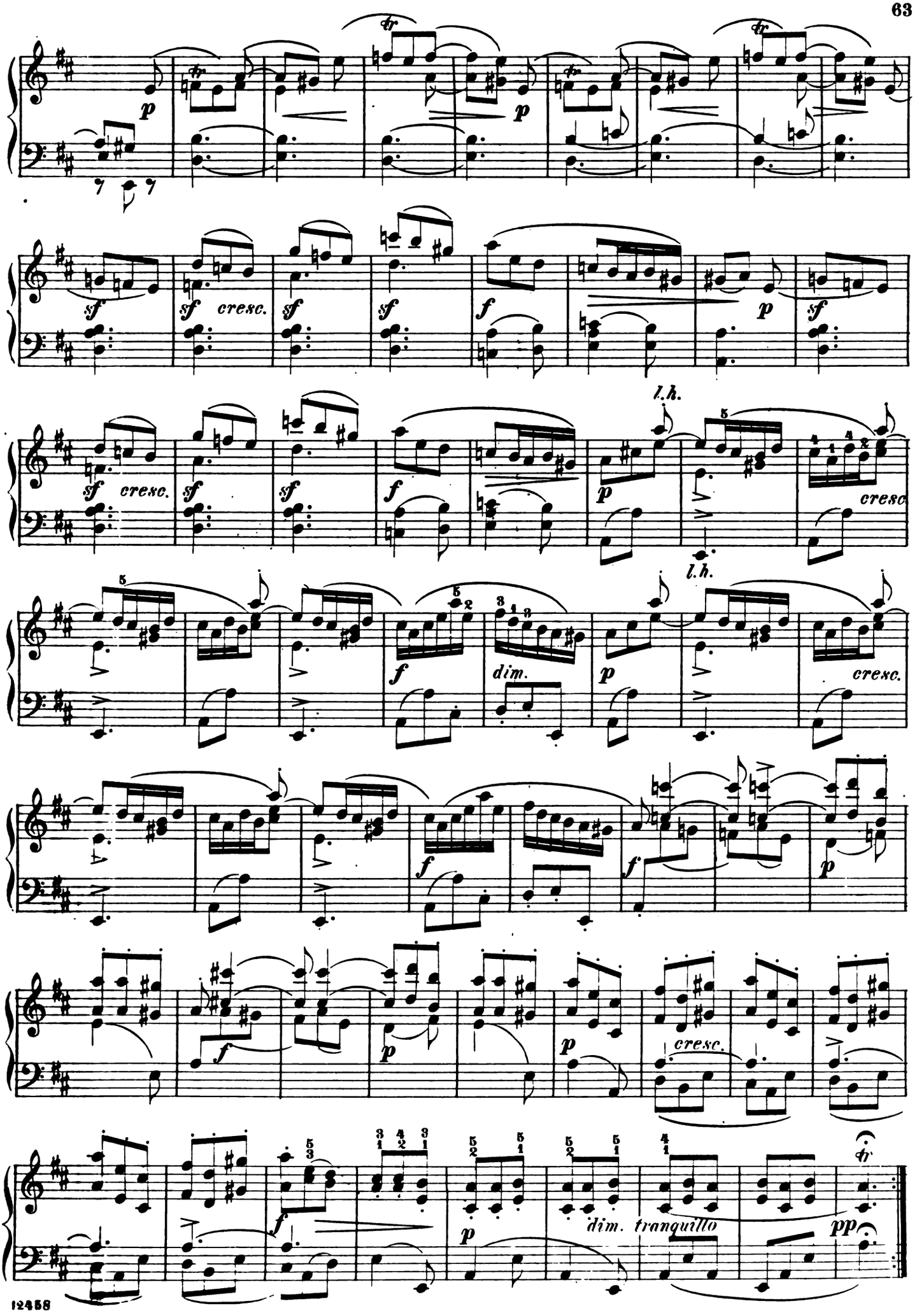
a)

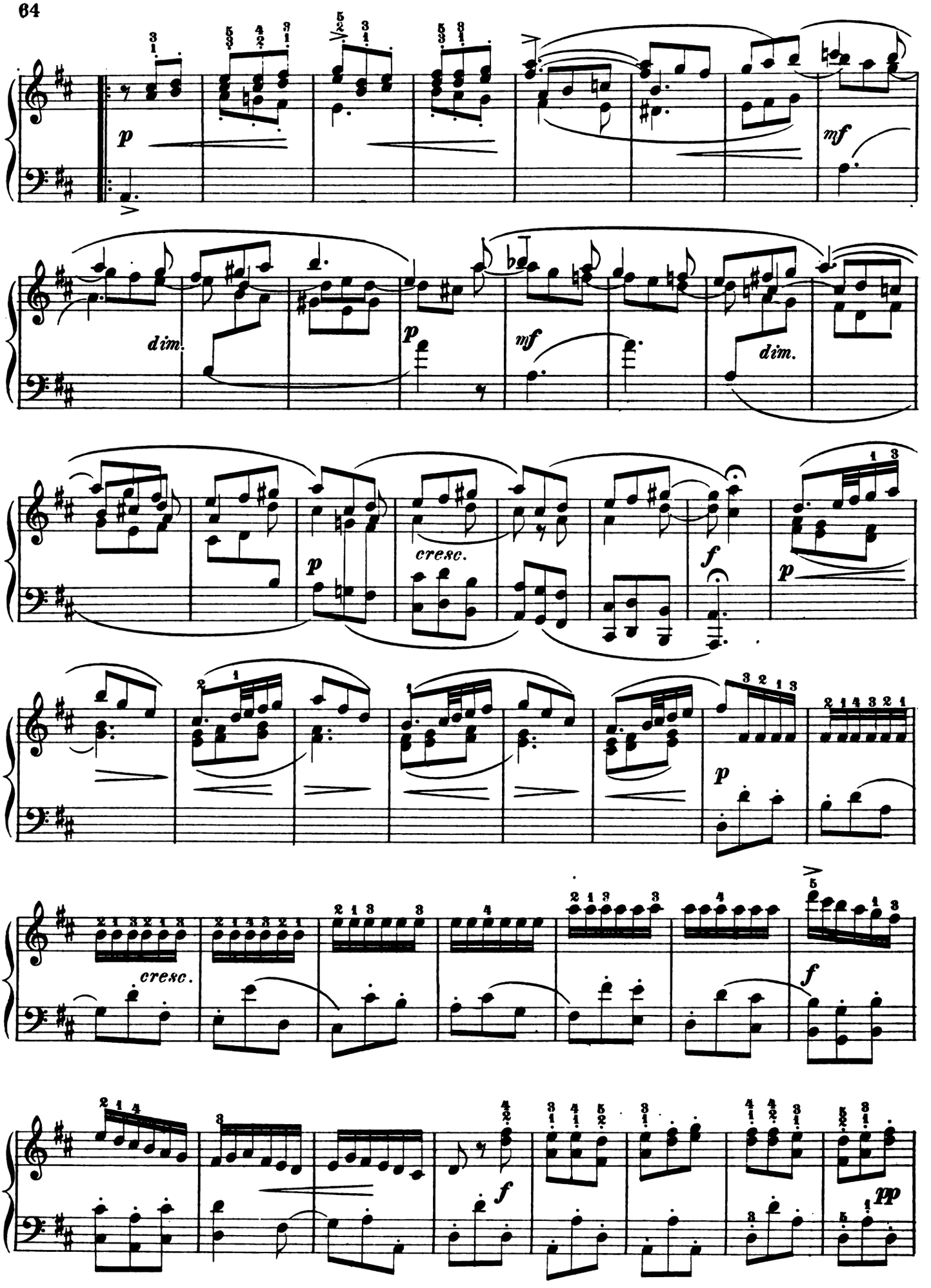

f
dim.
f
dim.
f
cresc.
f
sempre f
dim.
f
cresc.
pesante
ff

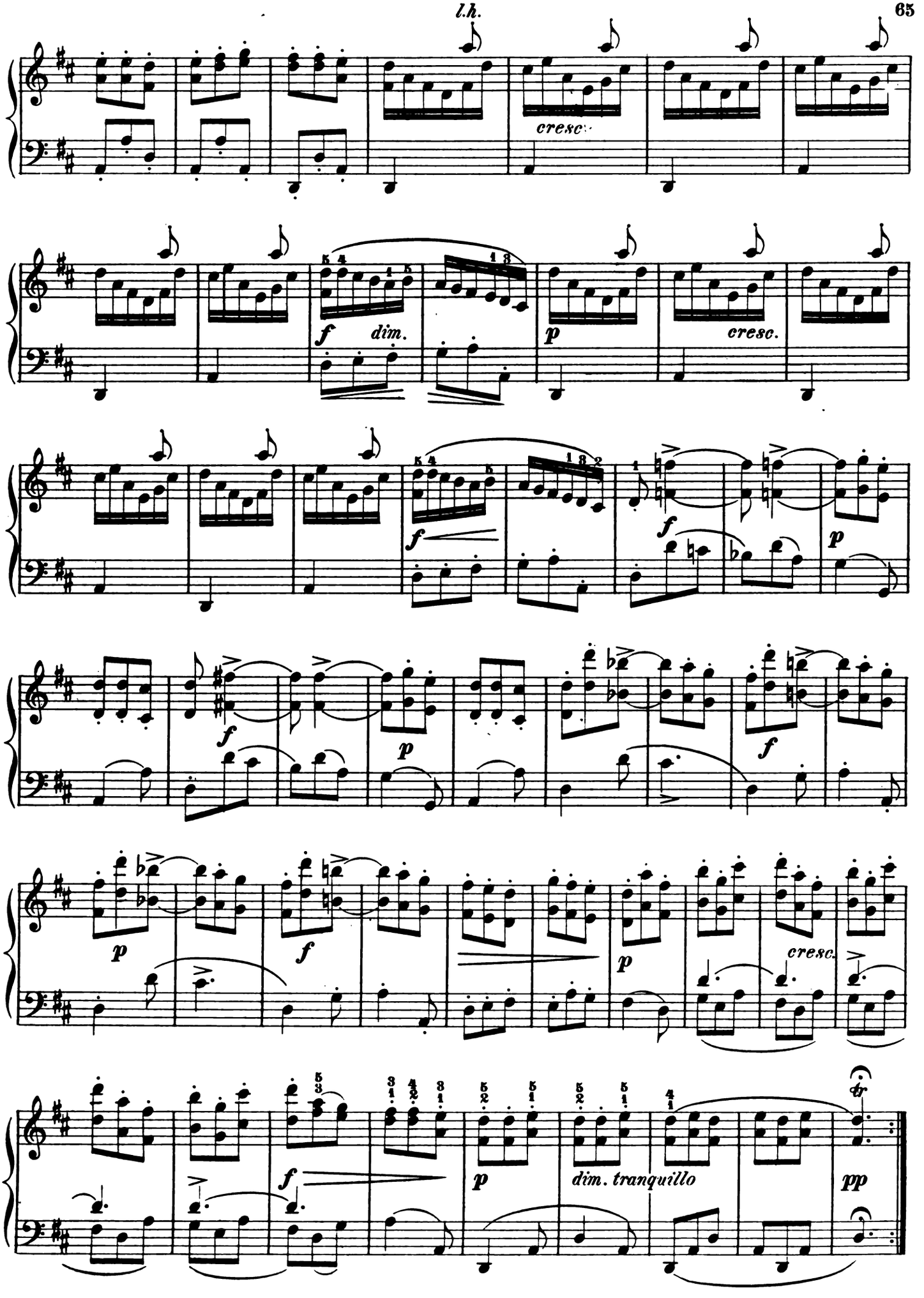
Gigue.

Allegro vivace.




cresc.
l.h.
dim.
cresc.
dim. tranquillo


p
mf
dim.
p
mf
dim.
p
cresc.
f
p
p
cresc.
f
f
pp


l.h.
cresc.
f
dim.
p
cresc.
f
f
p
f
p
f
p
f
p
cresc.
f
p
dim. tranquillo
pp

Pastorale.

Allegretto. (♩= 80)

19.

p

a)

p tranquillo.

senza Ped.

b)

c)

p

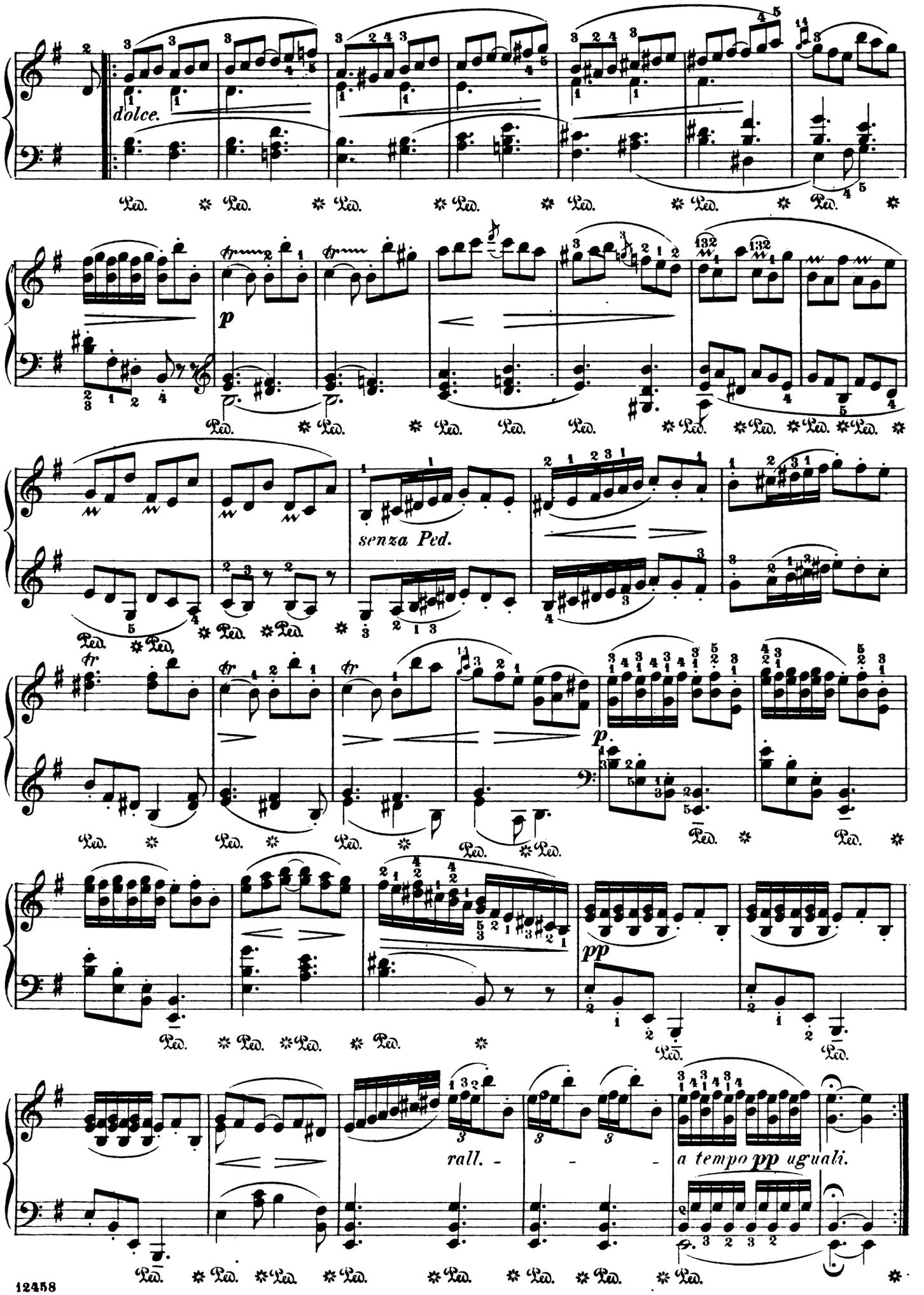
pp

pp

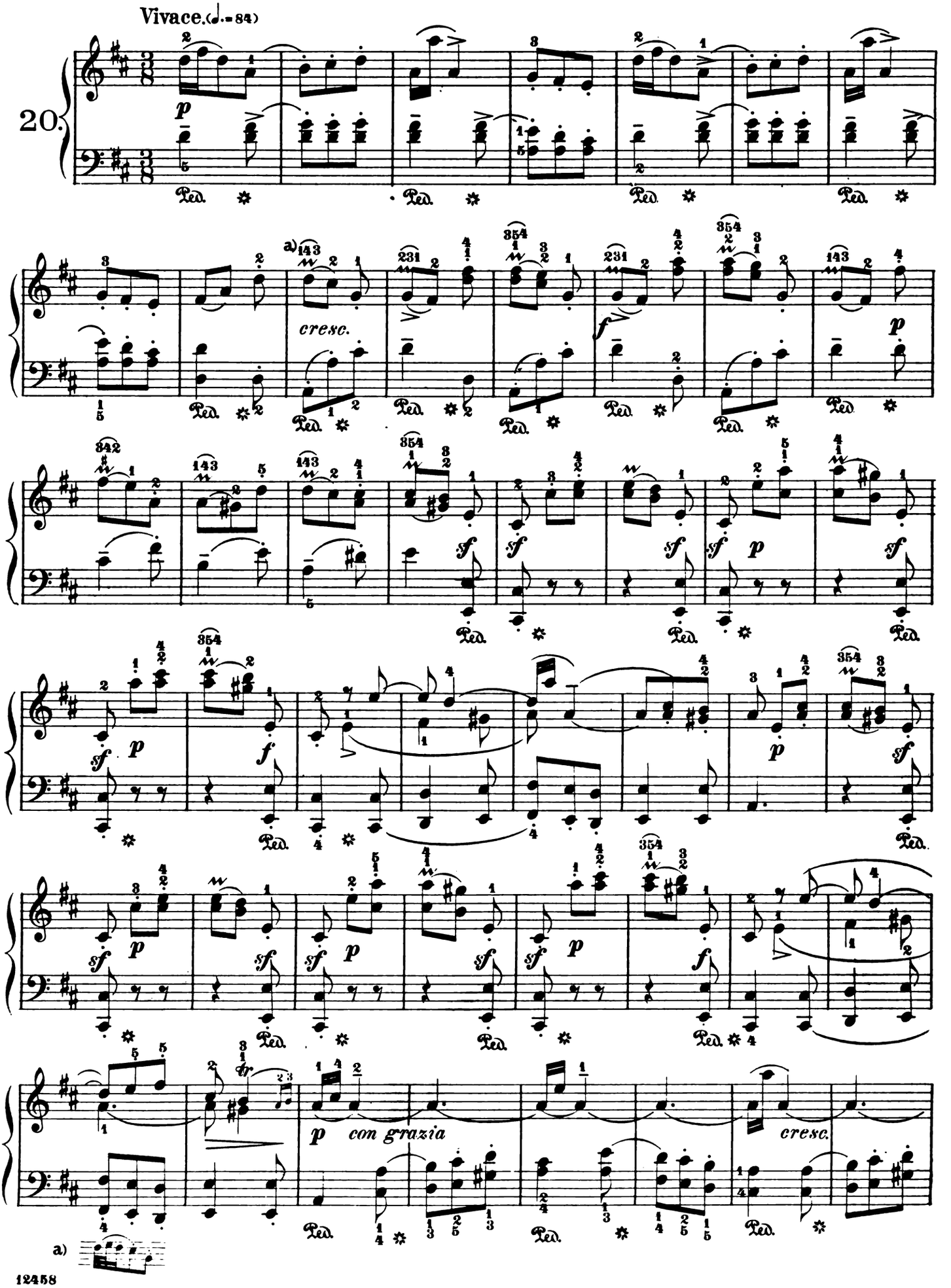
rall.

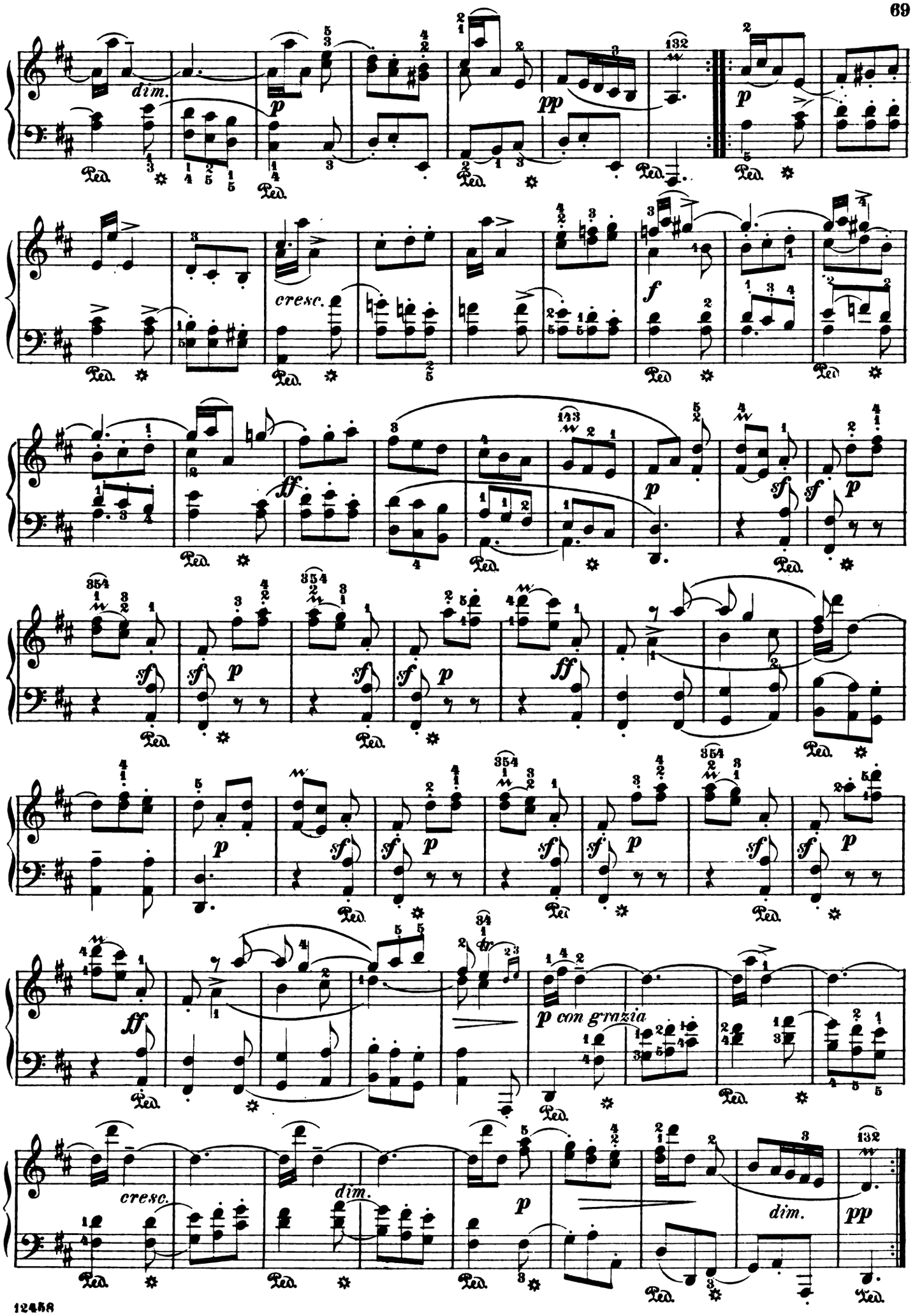
a tempo sempre pp

a) b) c)


dolce.
p
senza Ped.
p.
pp
rall. - - -
a tempo pp uguali.

Tempo di Ballo.

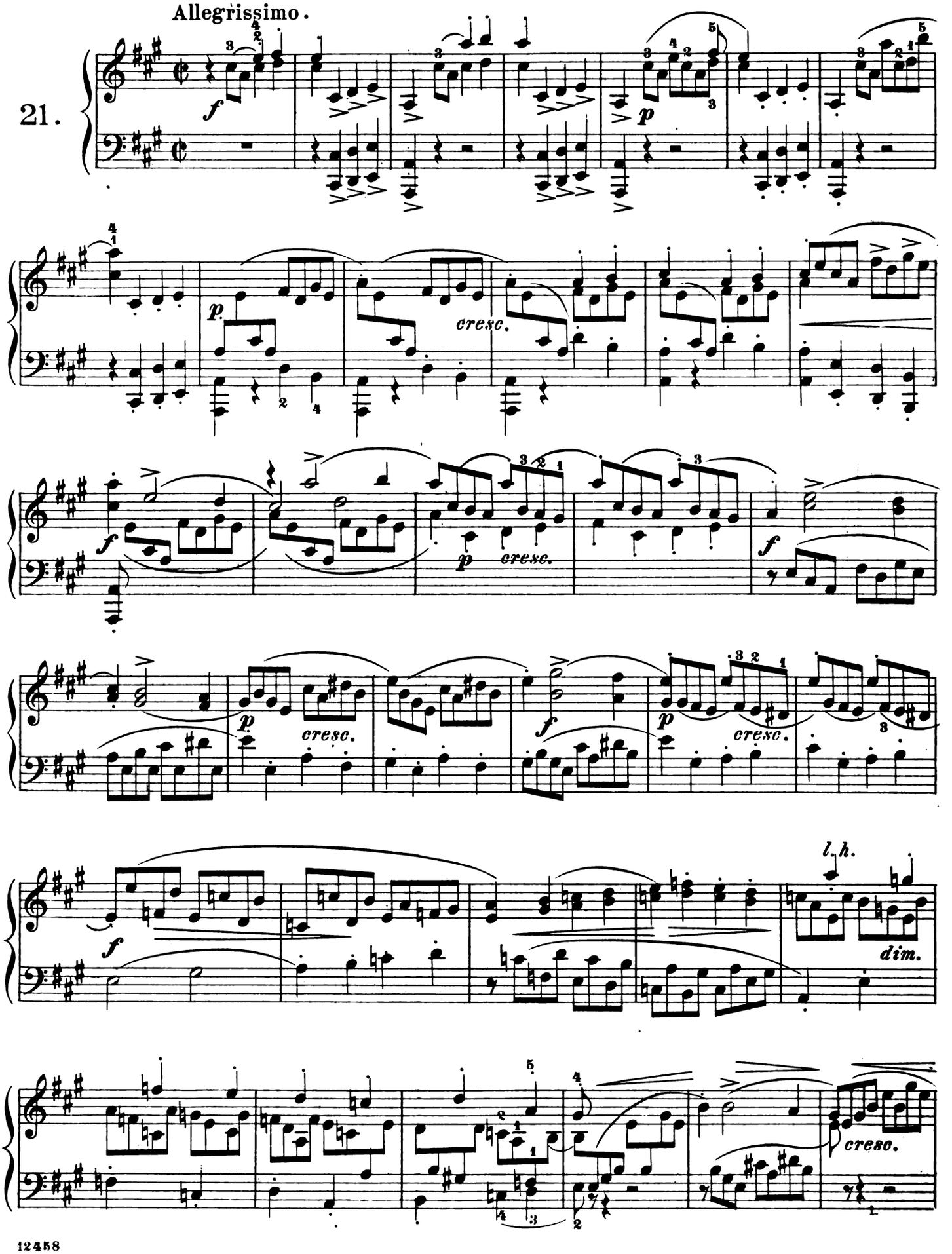


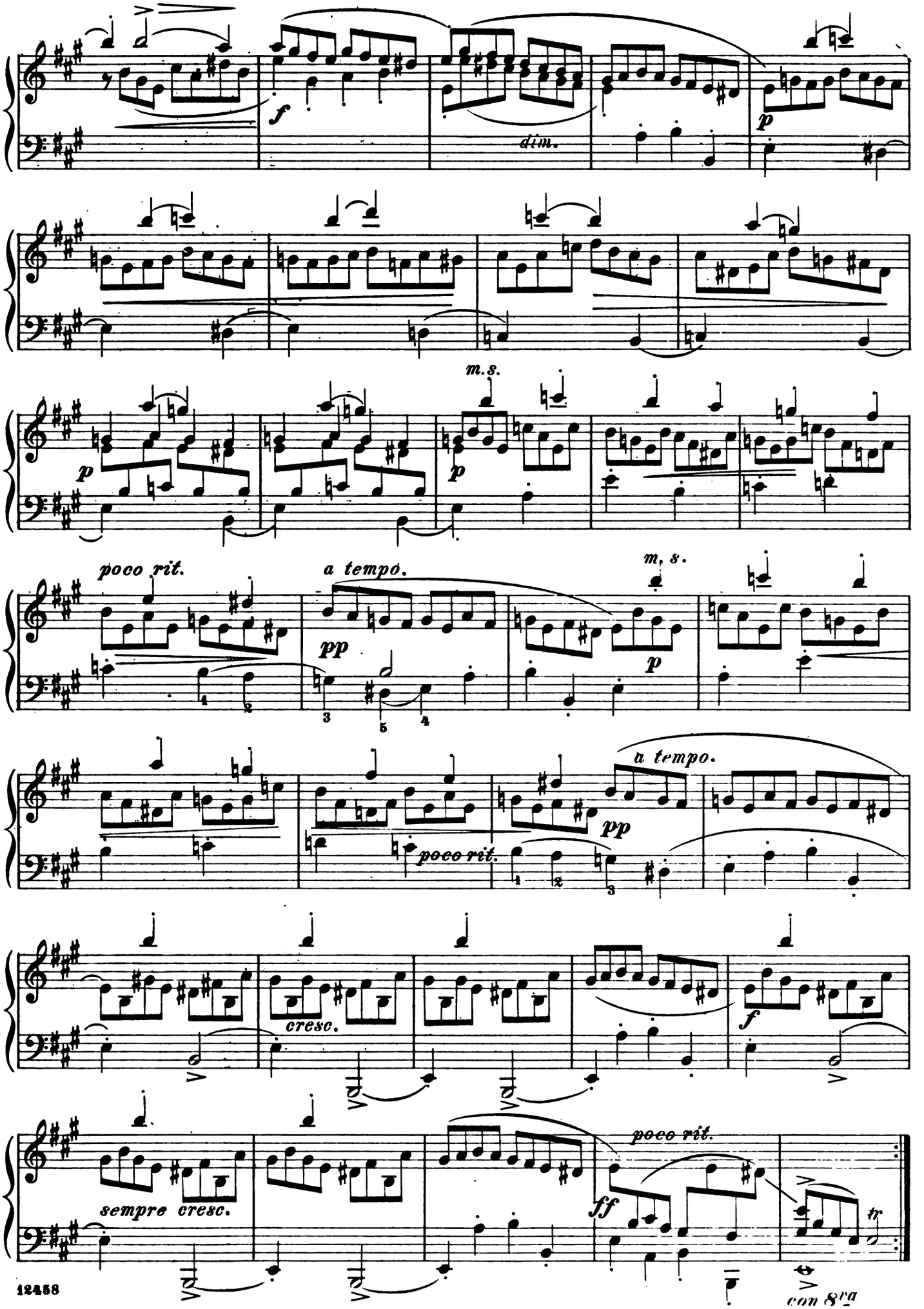

dim.
cresc.
con grazia
cresc.
dim.
dim.

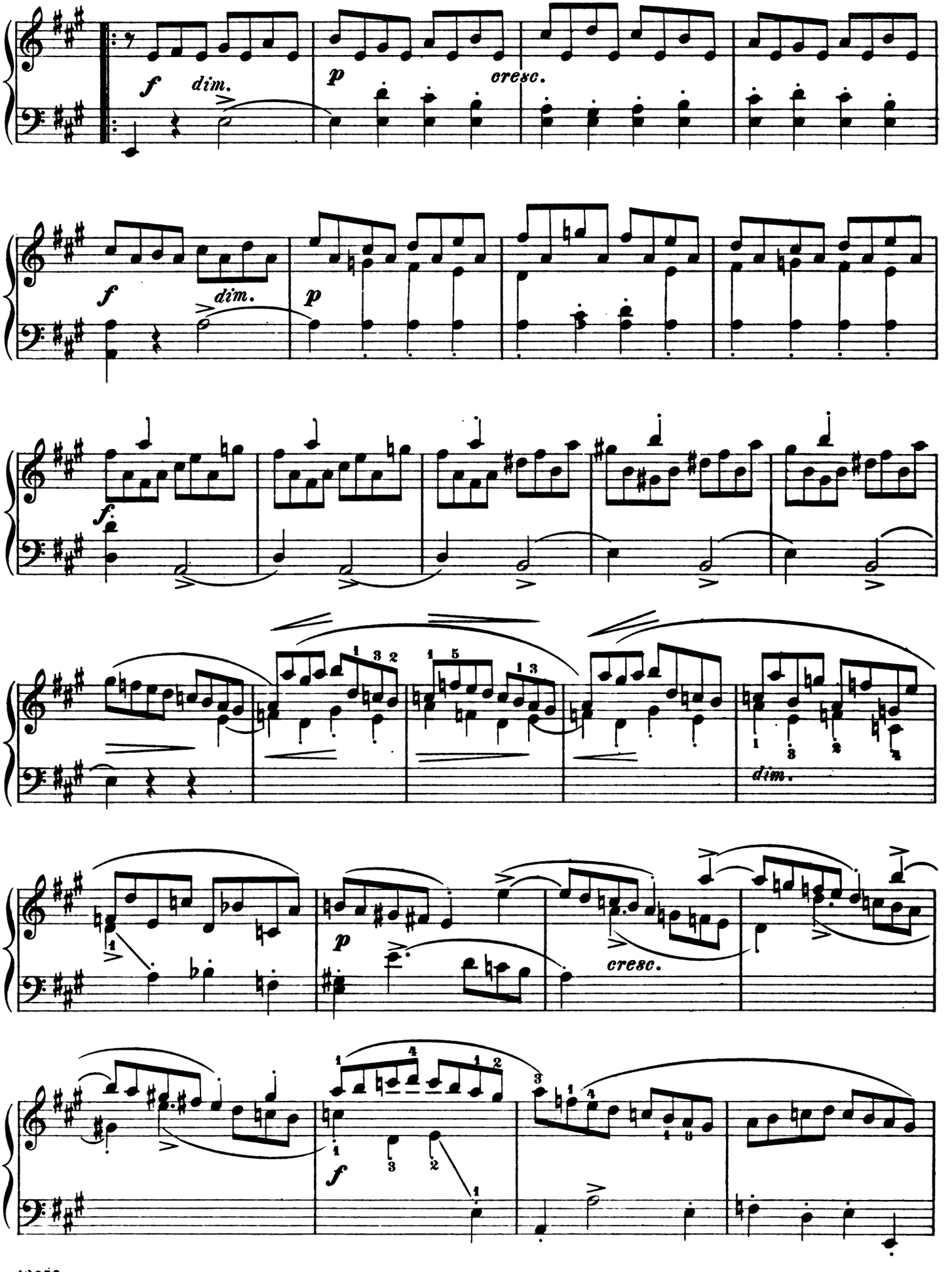
Sonata.

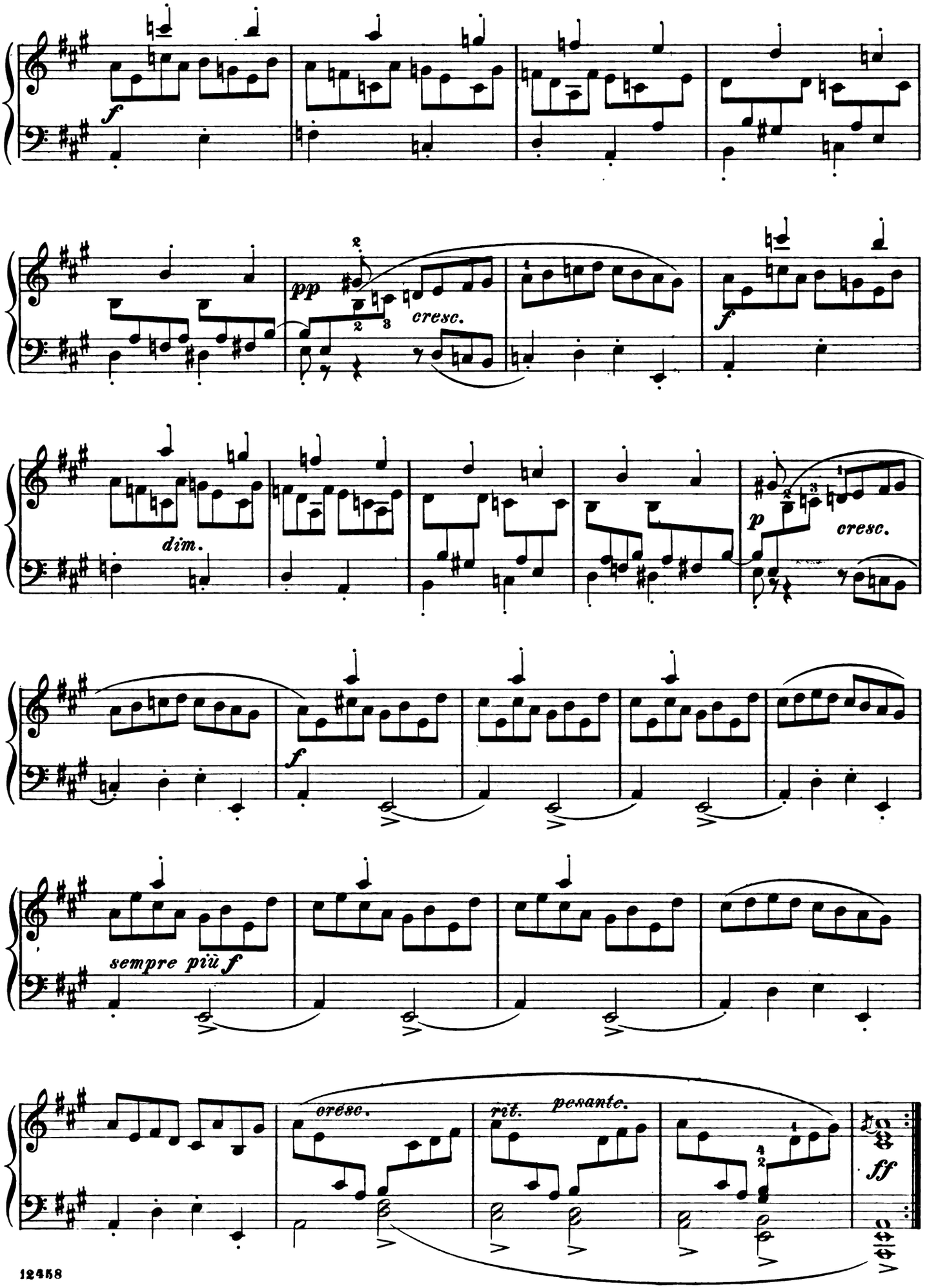
21.

Allegrissimo.

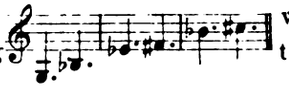



f
dim.
p
m.s.
p
p
poco rit.
a tempo.
pp
m. s.
p
a tempo.
pp
poco rit.
cresc.
f
sempre cresc.
poco rit.
ff
tr
con 8va


f
dim.
p
cresc.
f
dim.
p
f
dim.
p
cresc.
f


f
pp
cresc.
f
dim.
p
cresc.
f
sempre più f
cresc.
rit.
pesante.
ff

The Cat-Fugue.

Scarlatti's pet Cat ran along the keyboard striking  which suggested to the Master the theme of the "Cat-Fugue."

22.

Allegro.

p non legato.

accent.e non legato.

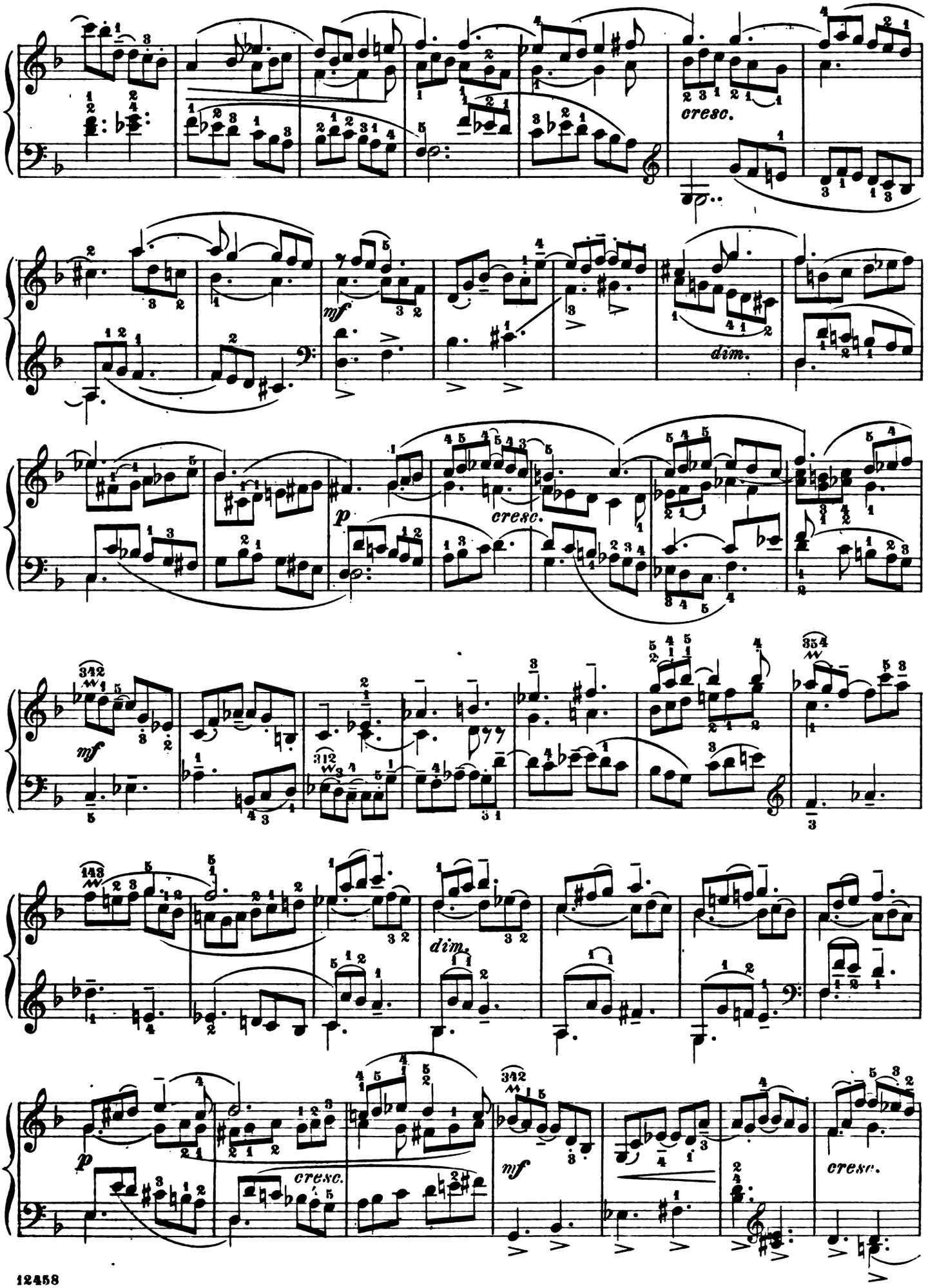
mf

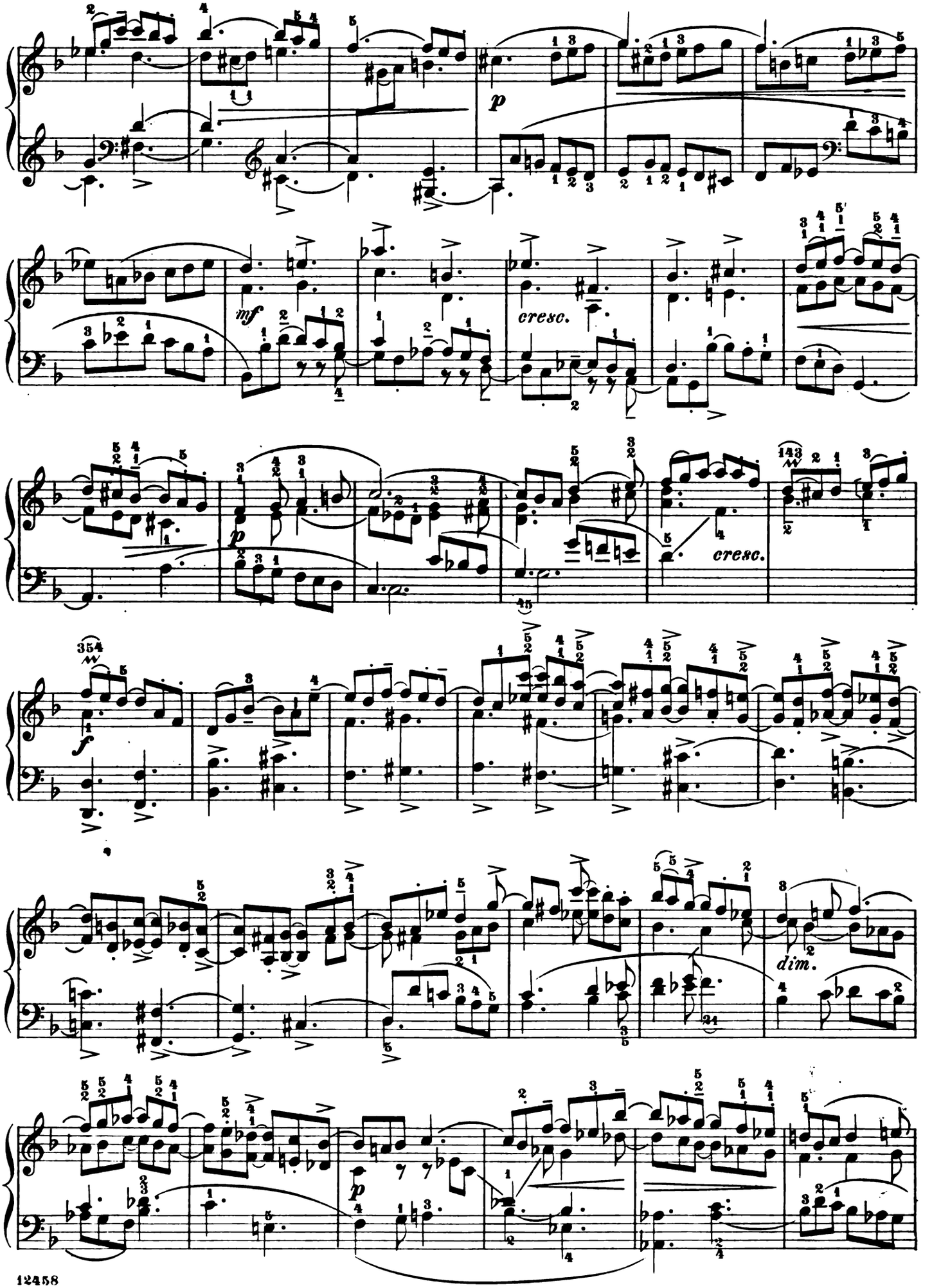
cresc.

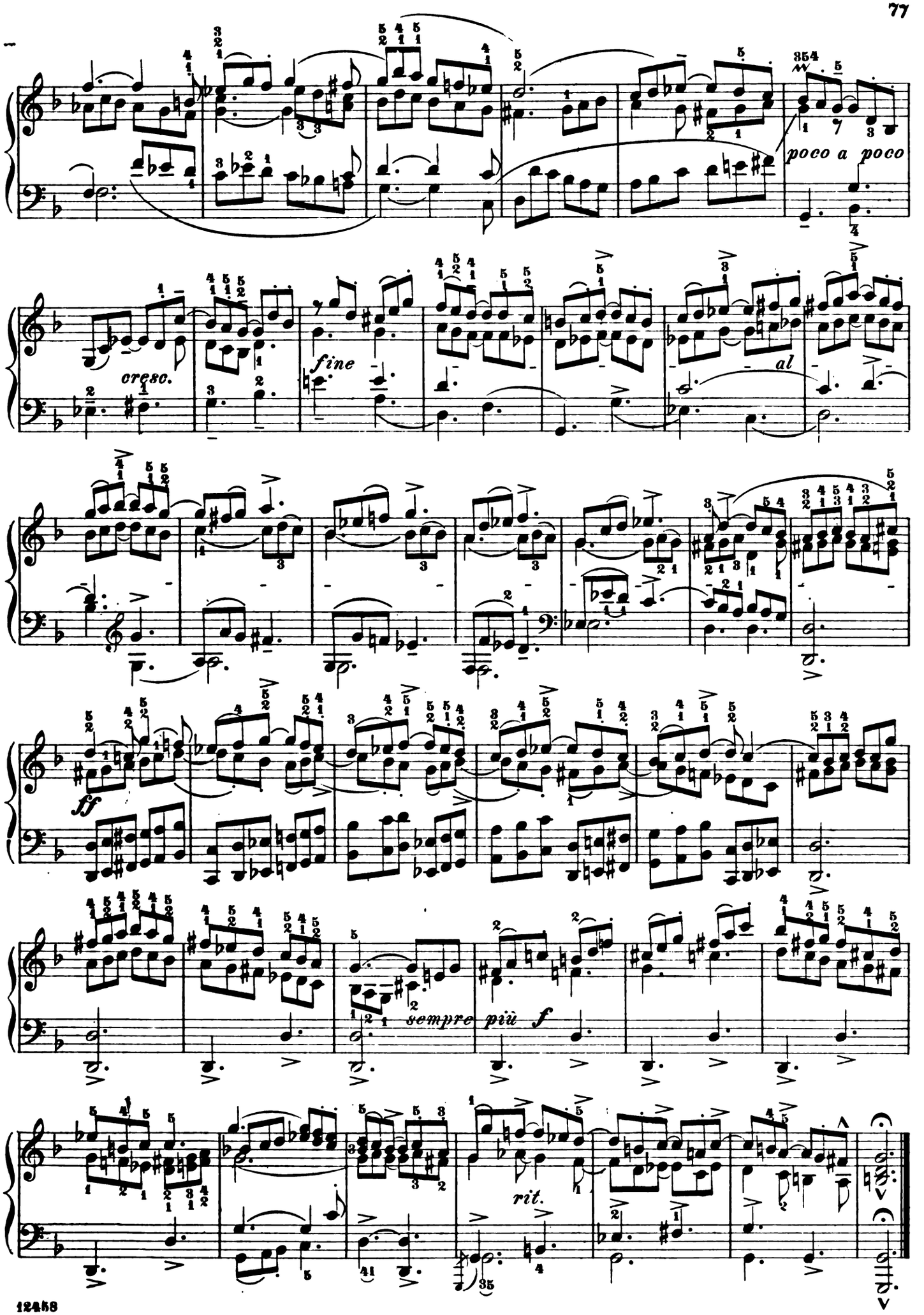
f

dim.

p


cresc.
mf
dim.
p
cresc.
mf
dim.
p
cresc.
mf
cresc.


p
mf
cresc.
p
cresc.
f
dim.
p


poco a poco
cresc.
fine
al
ff
sempre più f
rit.