W. Jay Sydeman

Sonata

for Cello and Piano

(c. 1984)

Arts Aeturnum Productions

The cello sonata initiates my 20-year Nevada City period. I wrote it for two musicians living there, one of whom (the pianist) retreated to Holland and never came back. I hope my sonata was not responsible for his headlong flight. It oughtn't have been, as it is essentially a mainstream piece which has enjoyed many performances since that time.

The first movement has a somewhat mysterious and (oddly enough) exalted quality. The second is quite bravura, mainly in the piano. The third has an inward spiritual quality, while the fourth is a fugue in the great tradition. A well-rounded showpiece for both instruments.

– W. Jay Sydeman, March 2012

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the New York Times, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is part of a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, "The Mind of a Composer", 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration:
I. Maestoso – circa 3:30
II. Allegro – circa 1:30
III. Maestoso – circa 3:30
III. Handelian allegro – circa 3:15

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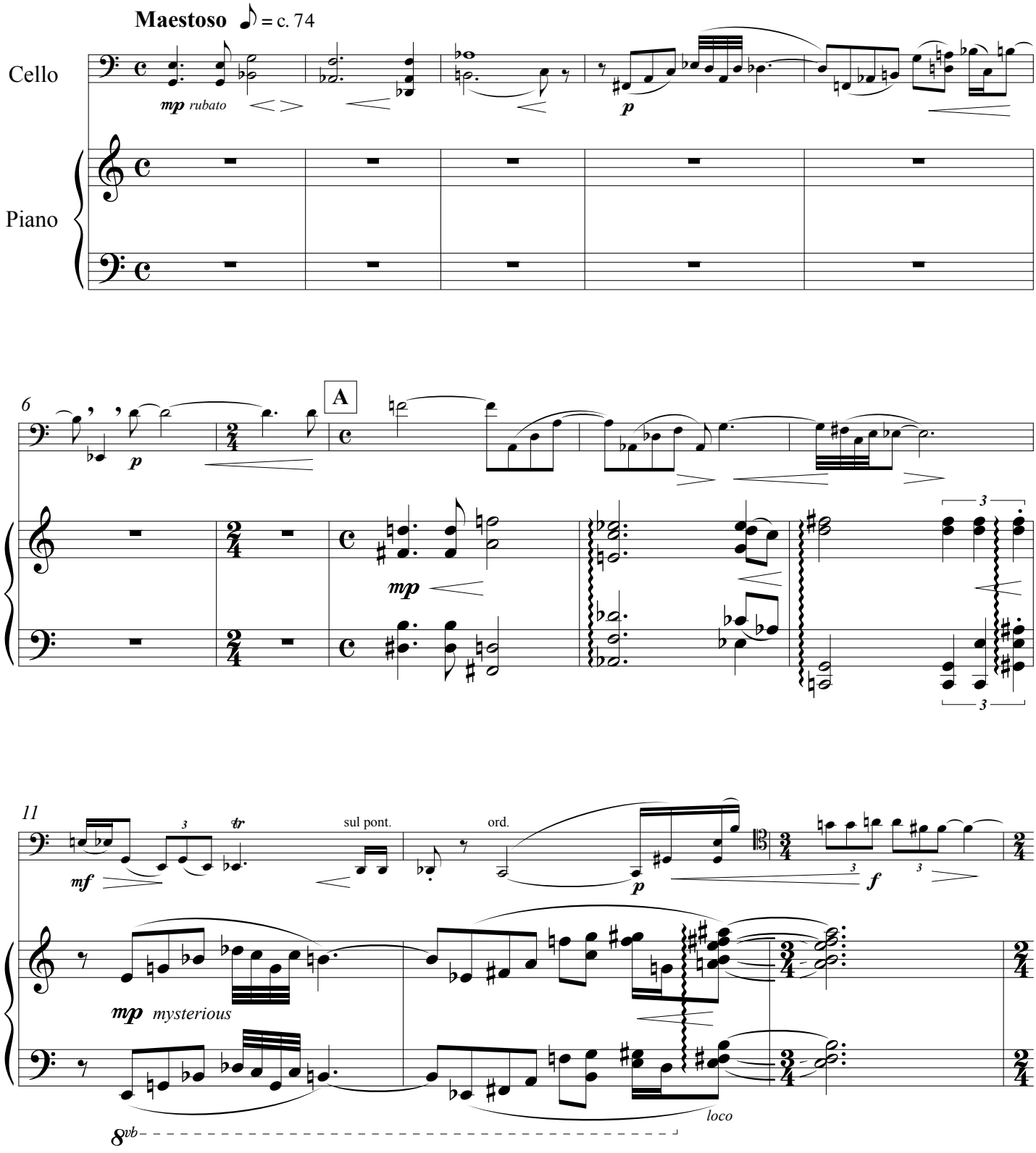
Edited and engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA) in consultation & collaboration with the composer.

Sonata
for Cello and Piano
I.

W. Jay Sydeman
(c. 1984)



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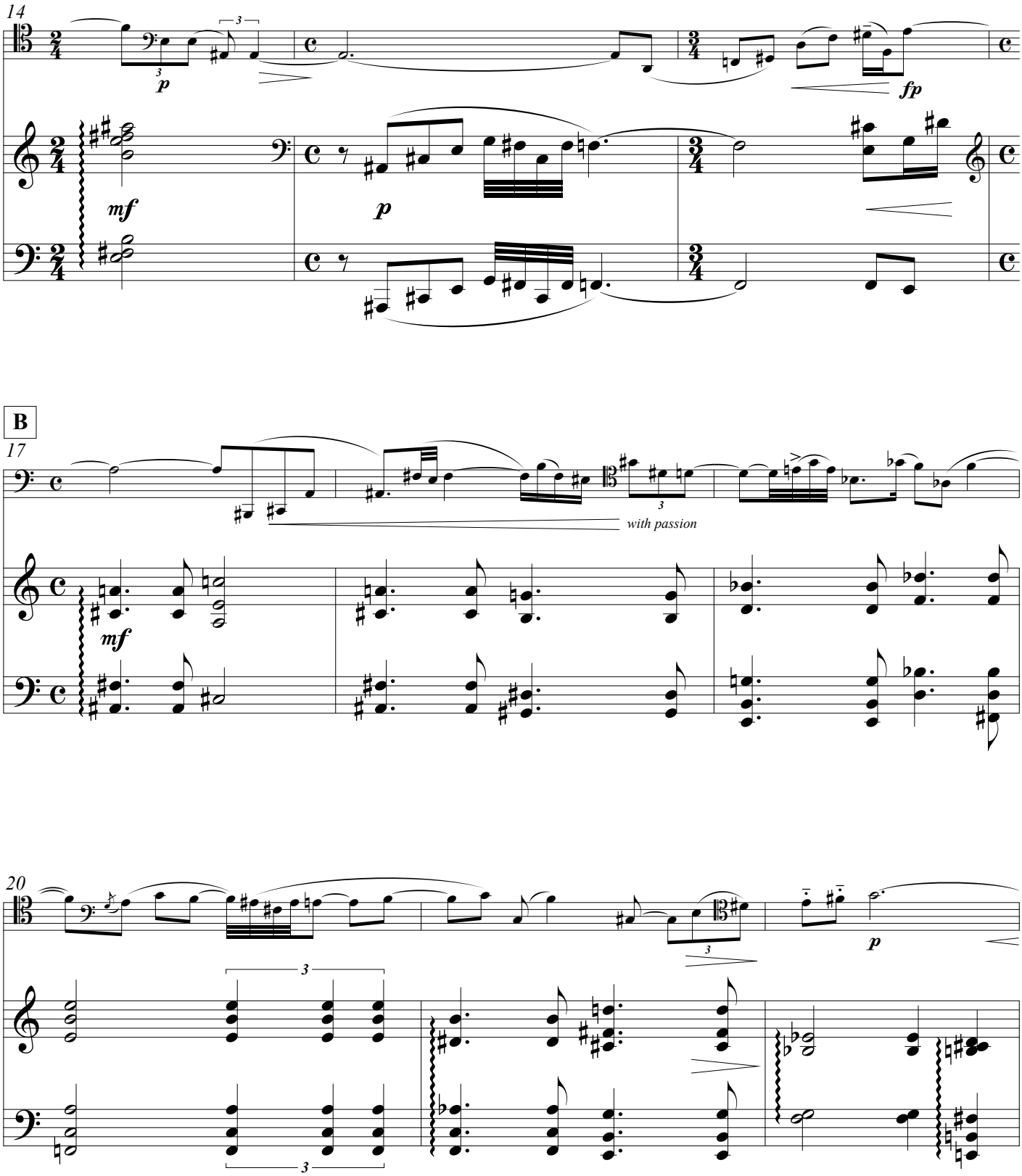
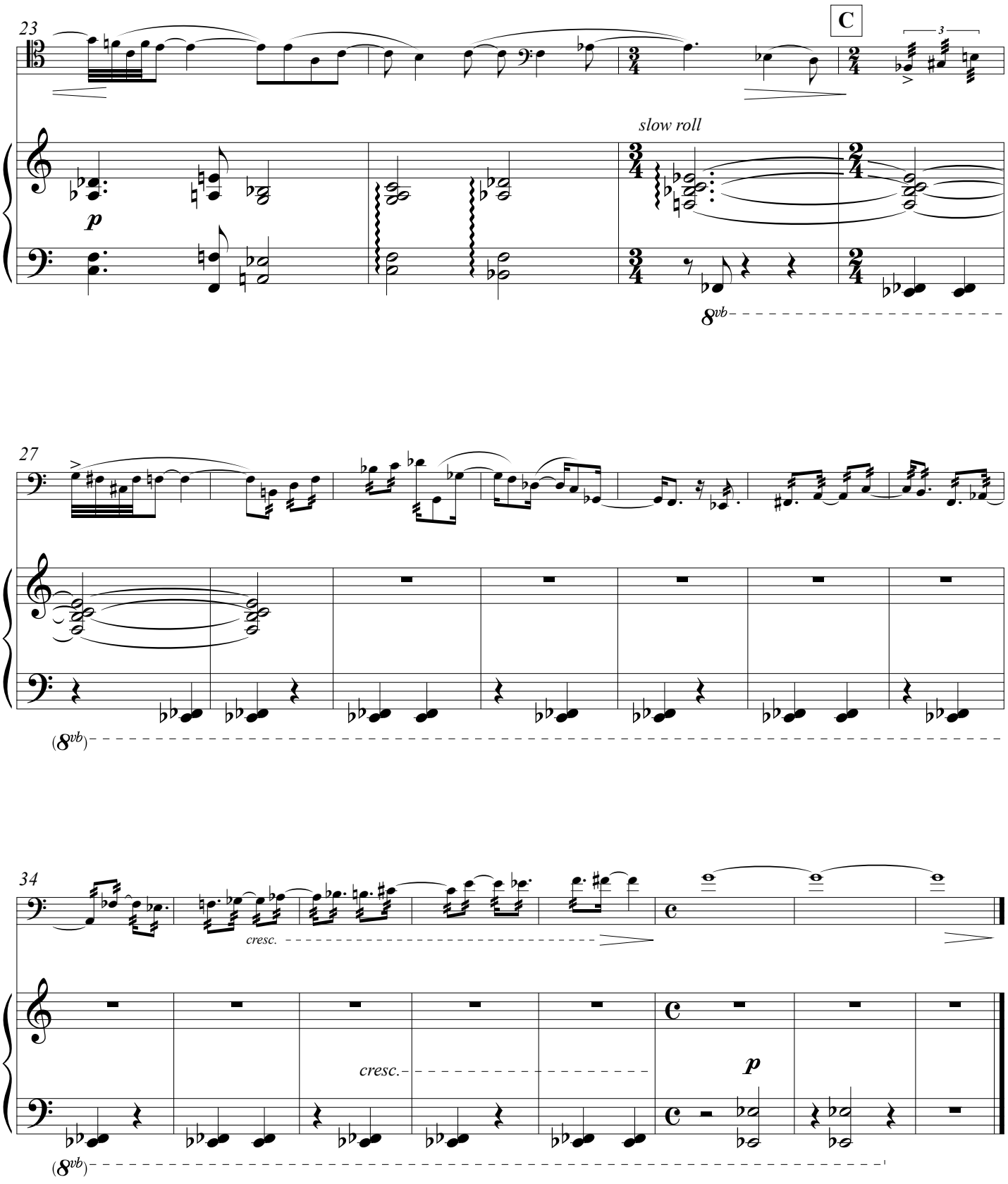

14
p
fp
mf
p
B
17
mf
with passion
20
p


23
C
3
slow roll
p
8vb
27
(8vb)
34
cresc.
cresc.
p
(8vb)

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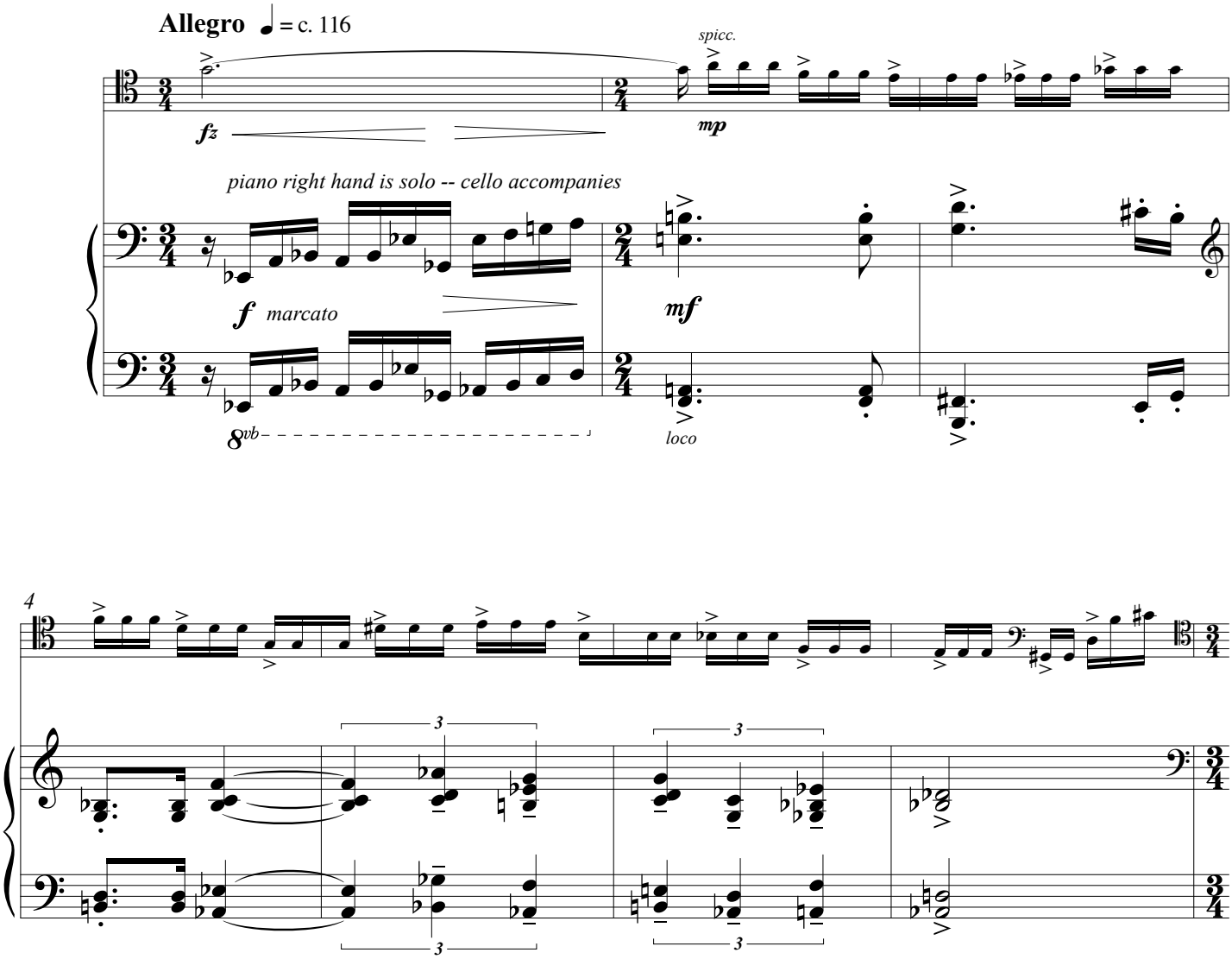
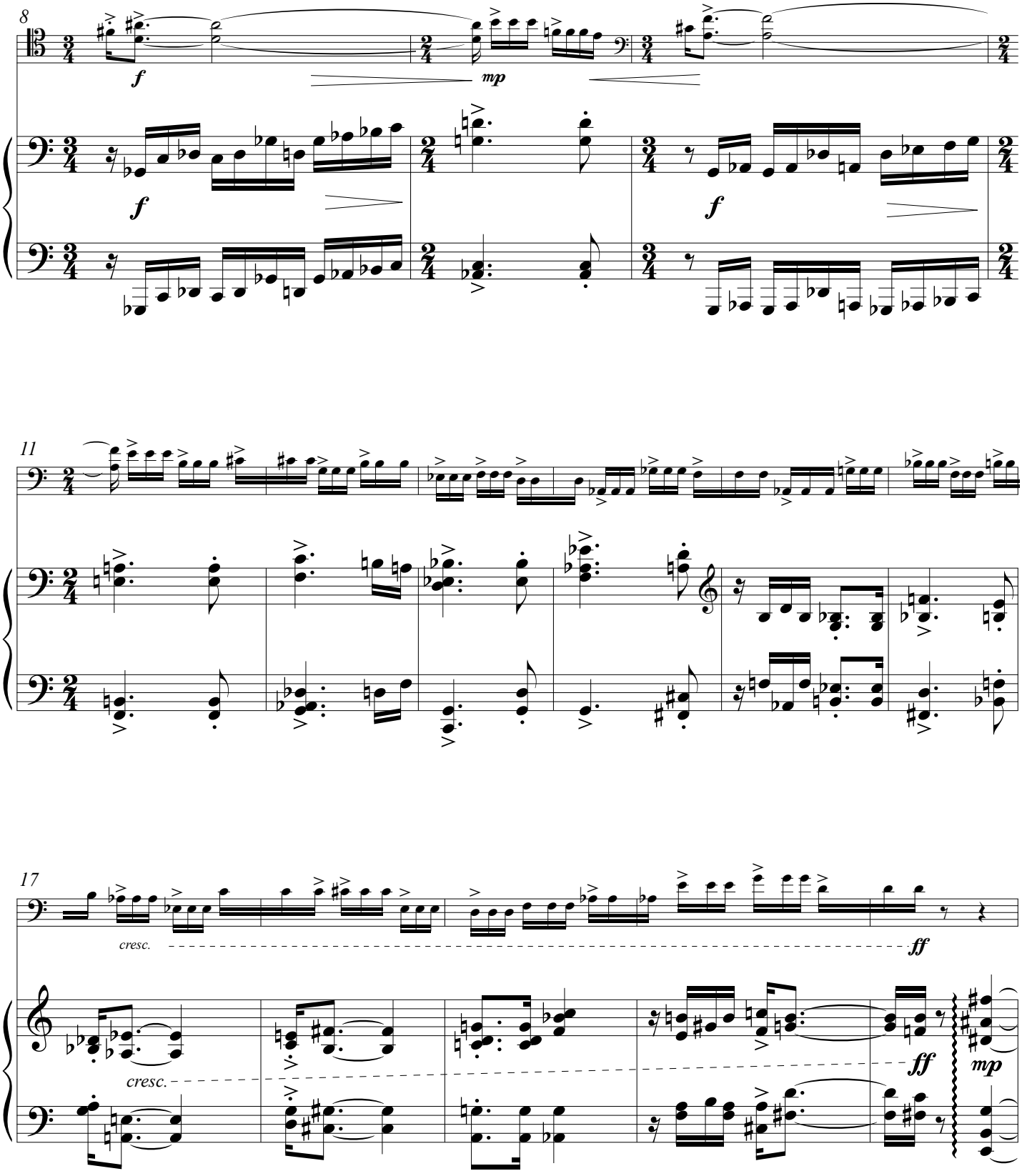
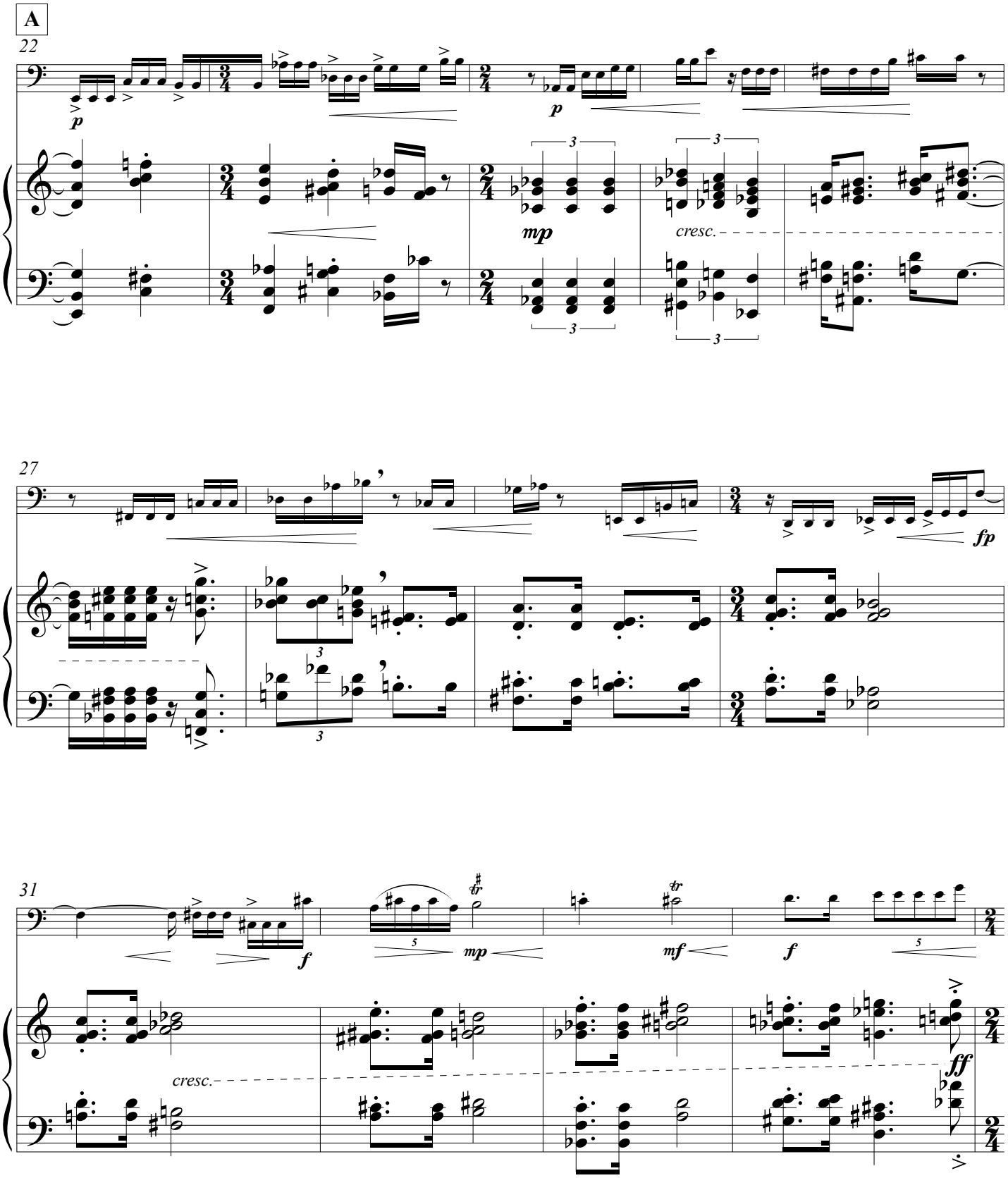
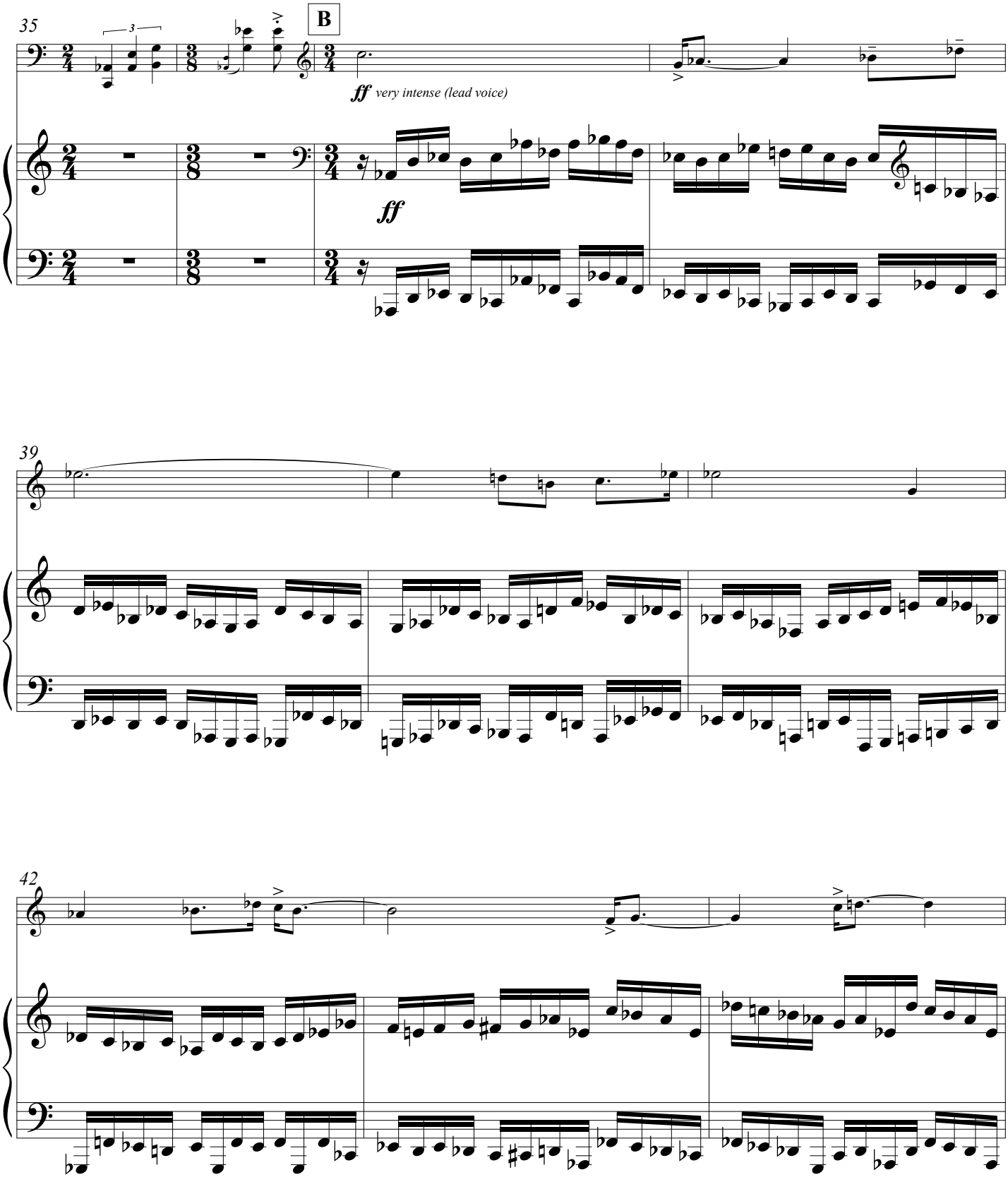
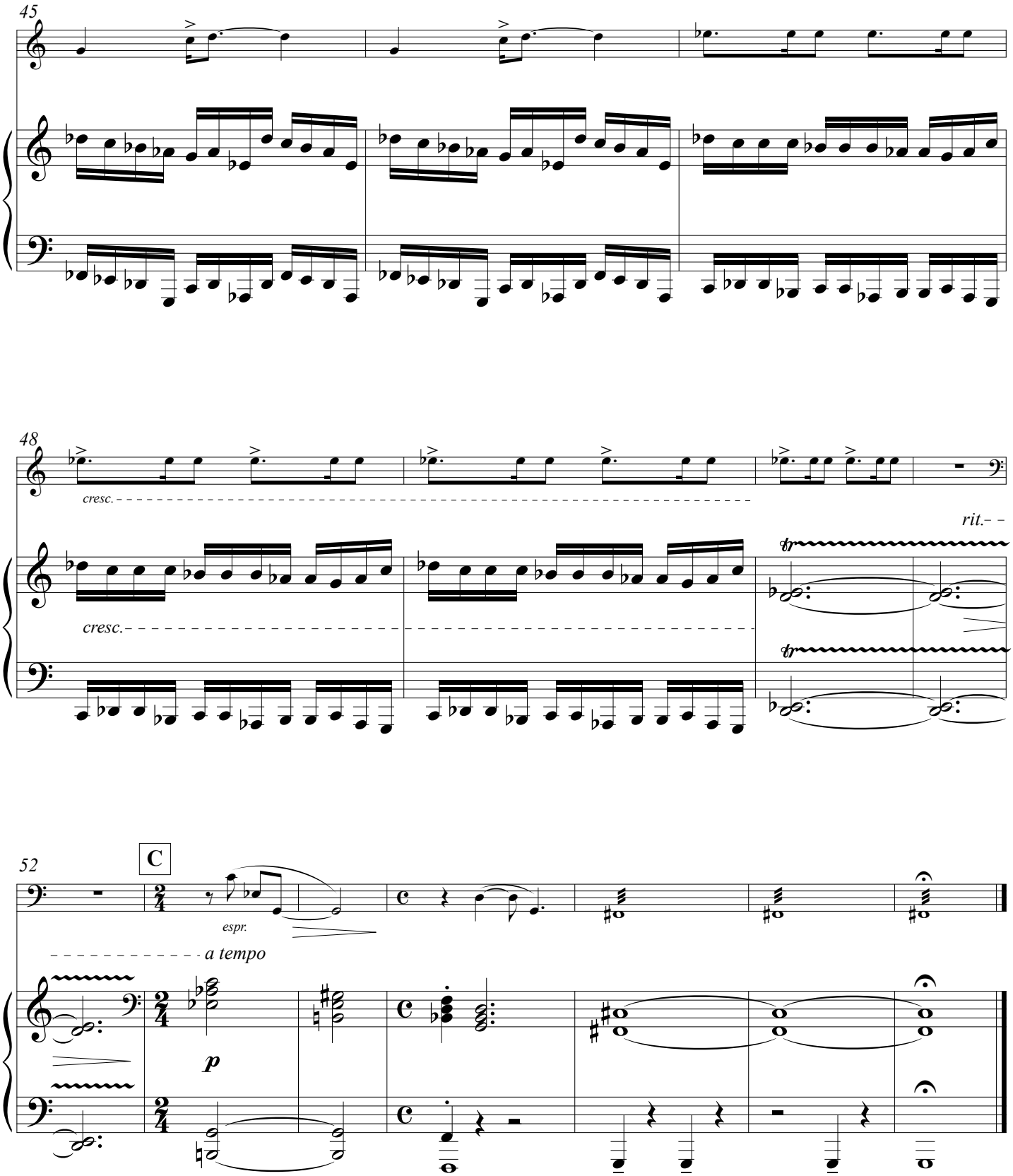
II.


Allegro ♩ = c. 116
spicc.
fz
mp
piano right hand is solo -- cello accompanies
f marcato
mf
8vb
loco
4
3
3
3
3


8
f
mp
f
f
11
17
cresc.
ff
cresc.
ff
mp


A
22
p
p
mp
cresc.
27
fp
31
f
mp
mf
f
ff
cresc.


35
B
ff very intense (lead voice)
ff
39
42


45
48
cresc.
cresc.
rit.
52
C
espr.
a tempo
p

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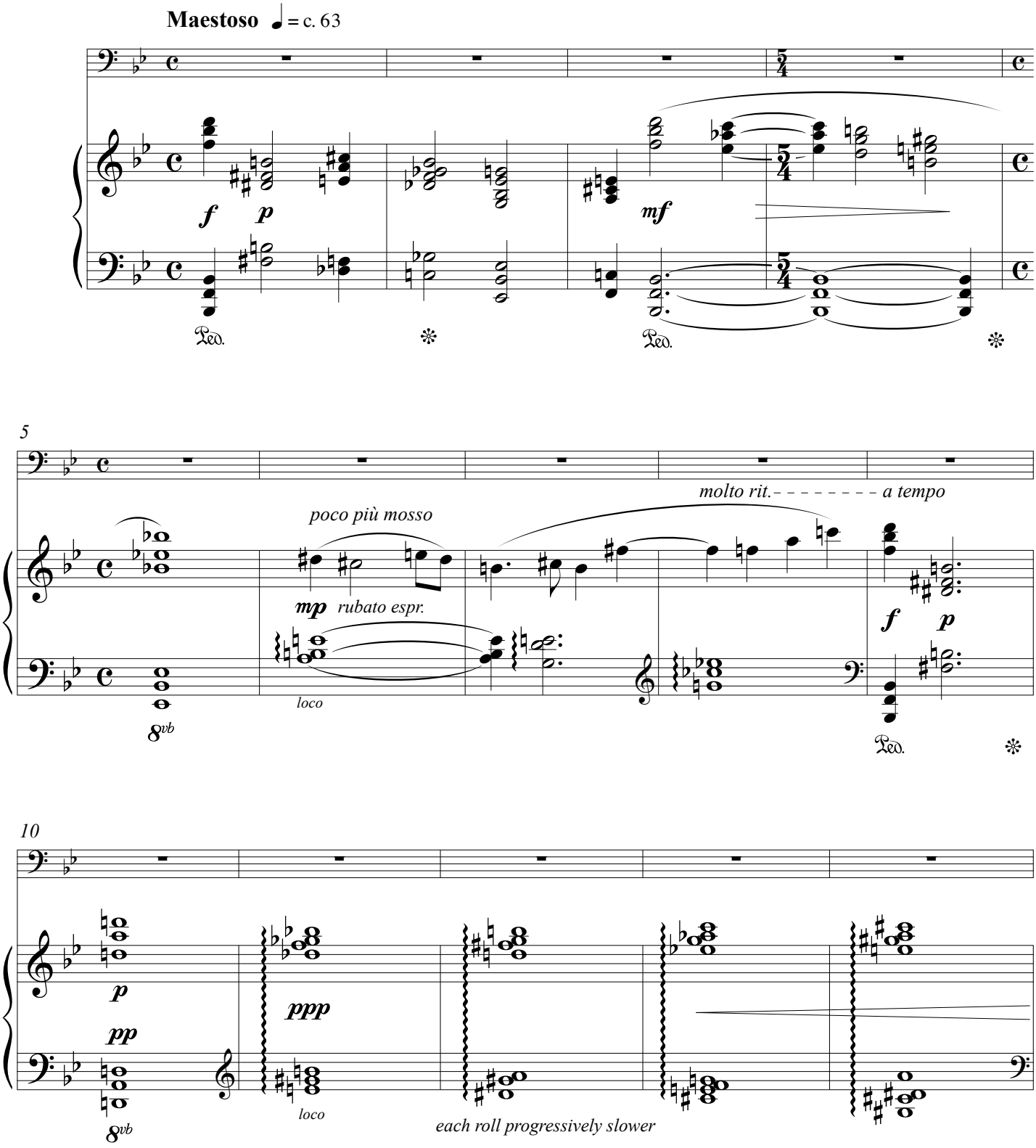
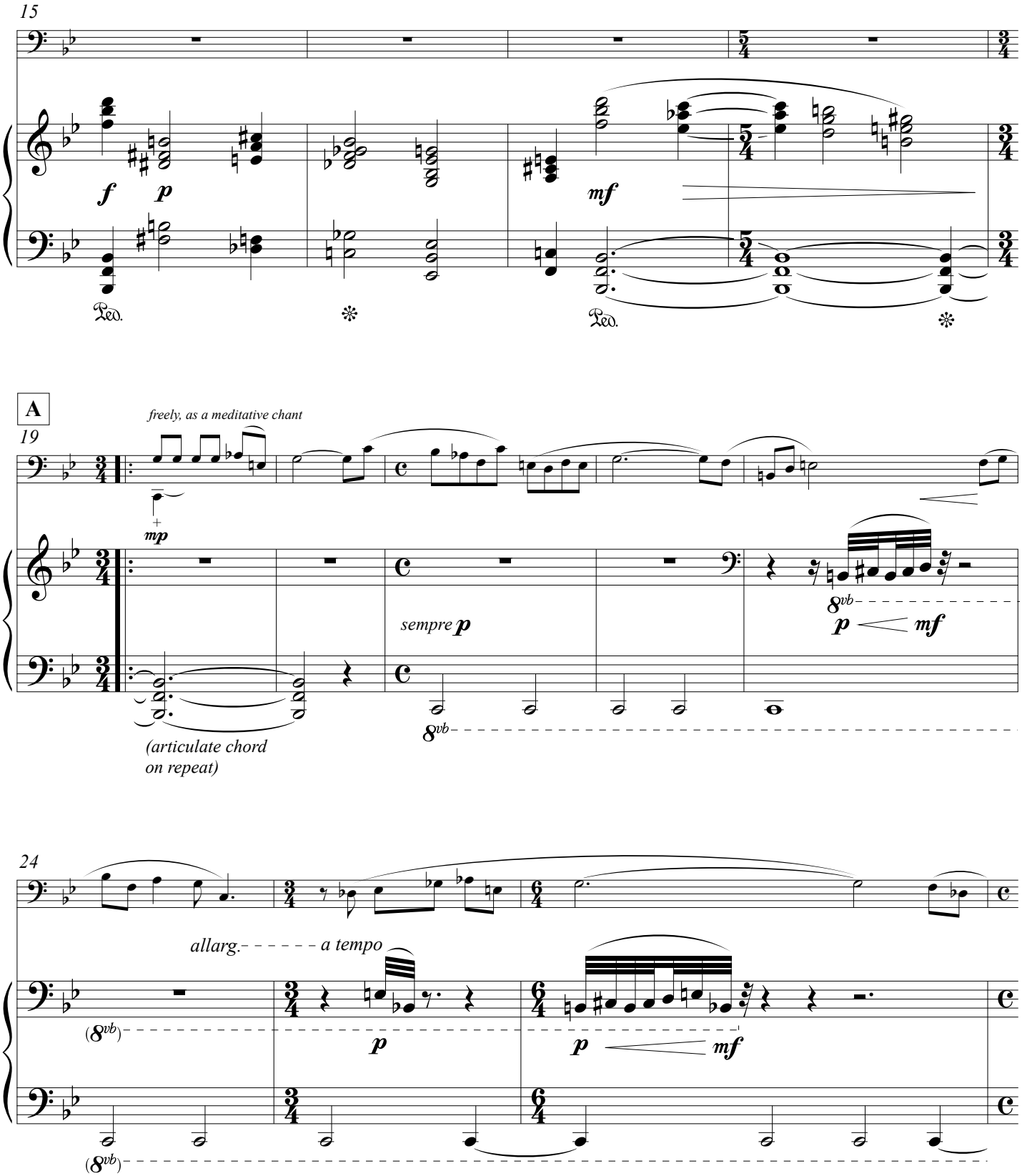
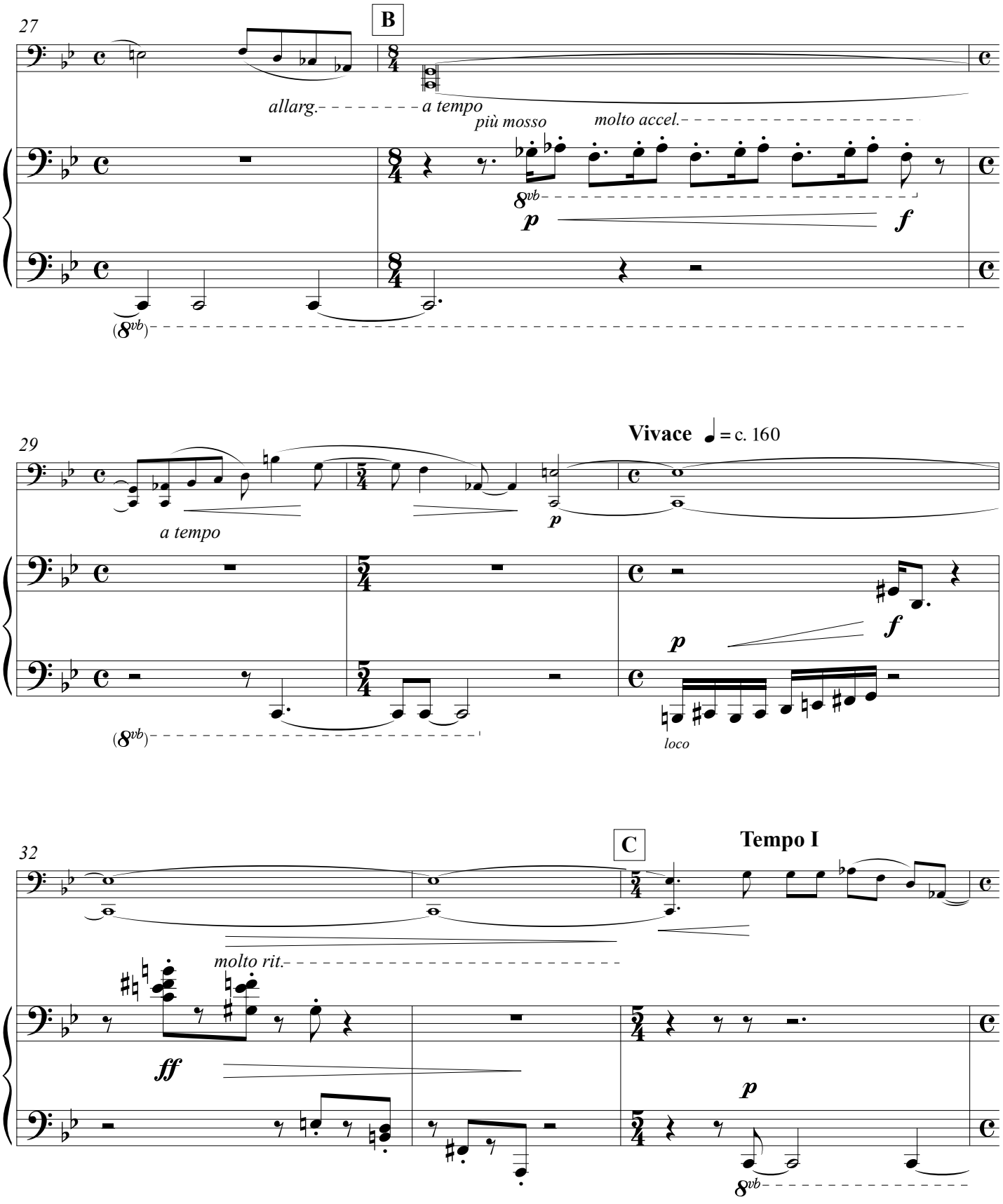
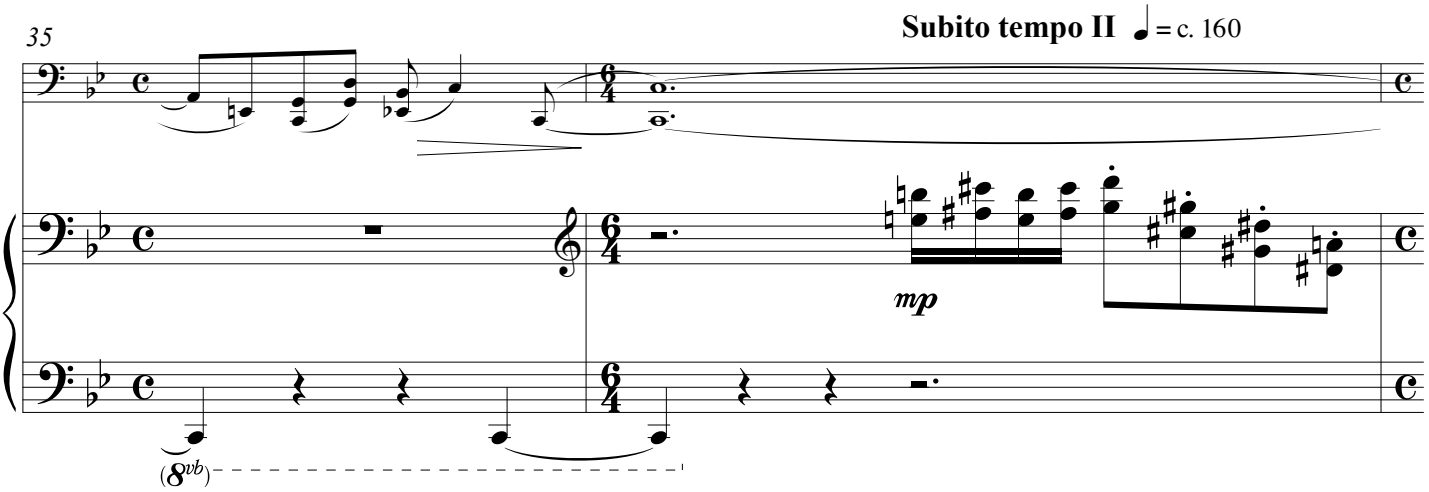
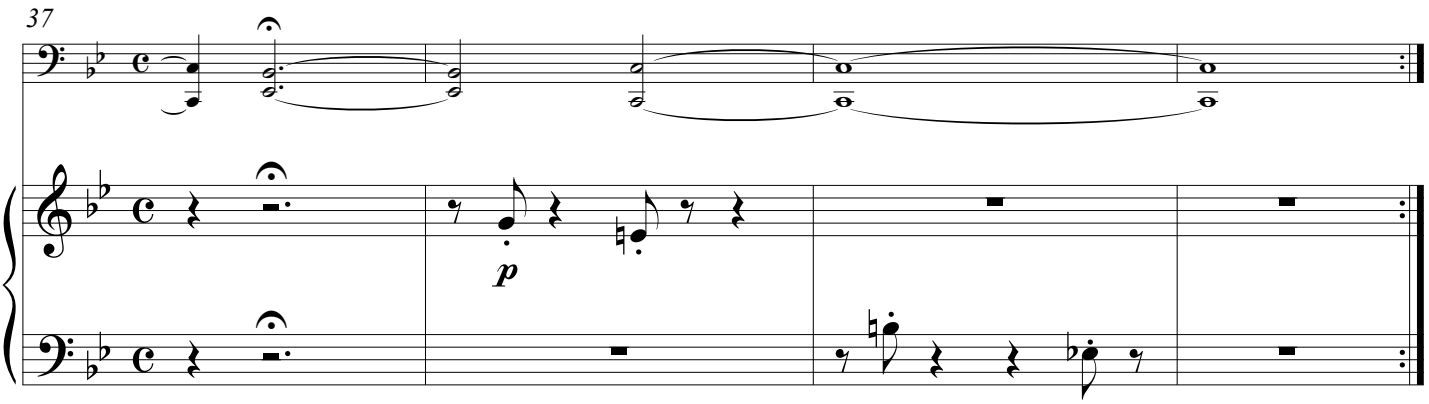
III.


Maestoso ♩ = c. 63
f
p
mf
Ped.
5
poco più mosso
molto rit. - - - - - - - - a tempo
mp
rubato espr.
loco
8vb
f
p
Ped.
10
p
pp
ppp
loco
8vb
each roll progressively slower

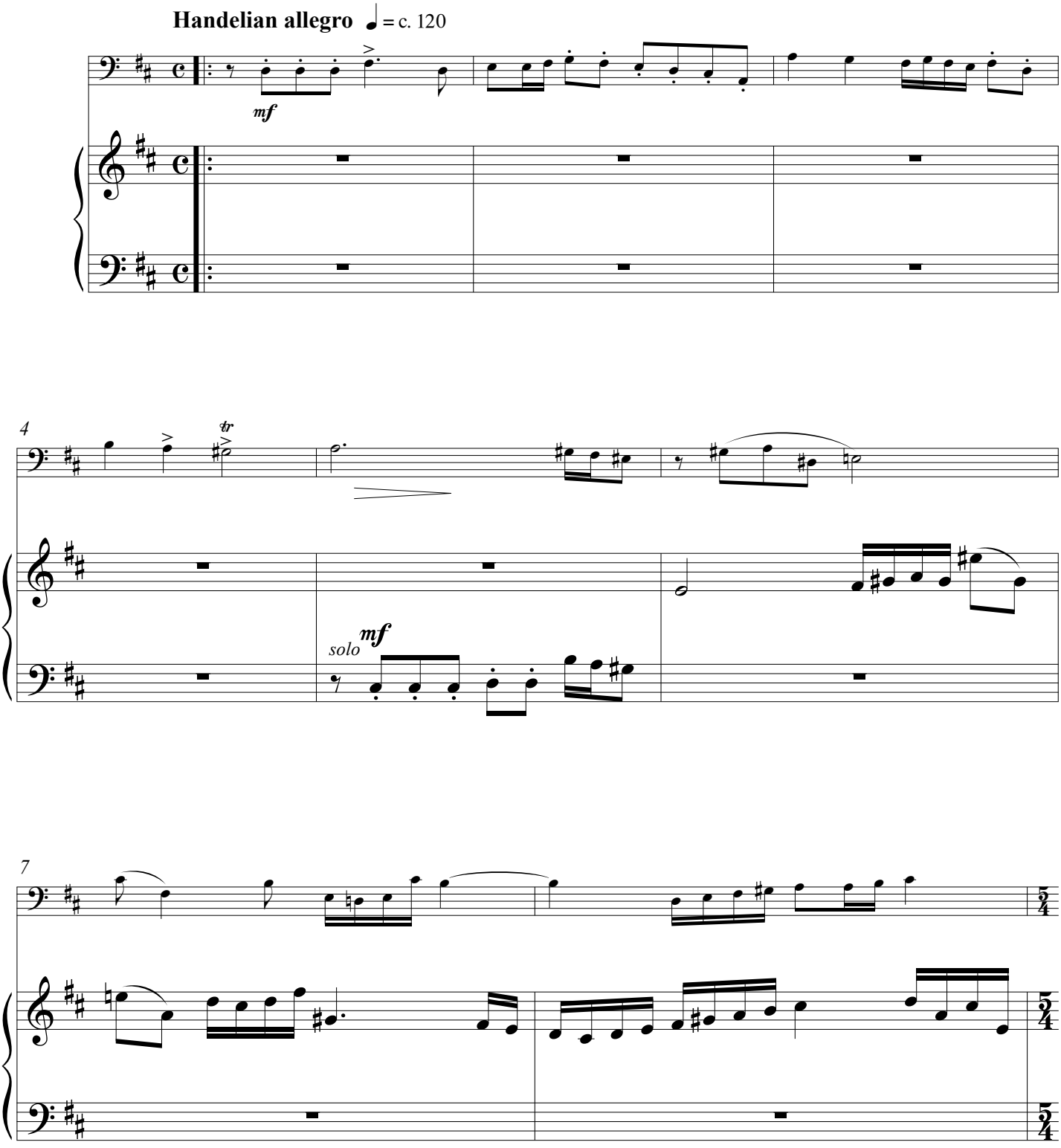

15
f
p
mf
Ped.
Ped.
A
freely, as a meditative chant
19
mp
sempre p
8vb
p
mf
(articulate chord
on repeat)
24
allarg.
a tempo
(8vb)
p
p
mf
(8vb)

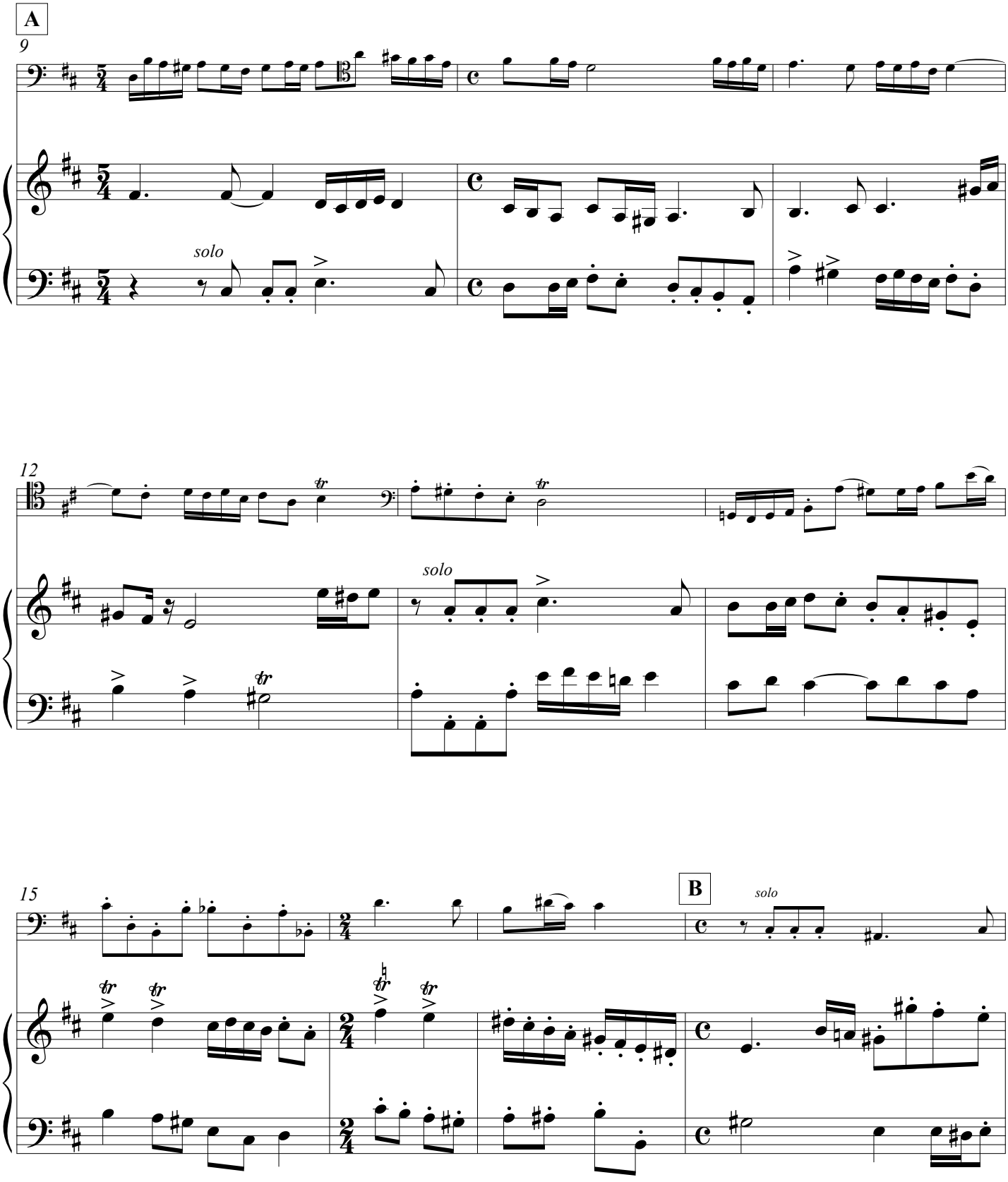

27
B
allarg.
a tempo
più mosso
molto accel.
8vb
p
f
(8vb)
29
Vivace ♩ = c. 160
a tempo
p
f
p
(8vb)
loco
32
C
Tempo I
molto rit.
ff
p
8vb

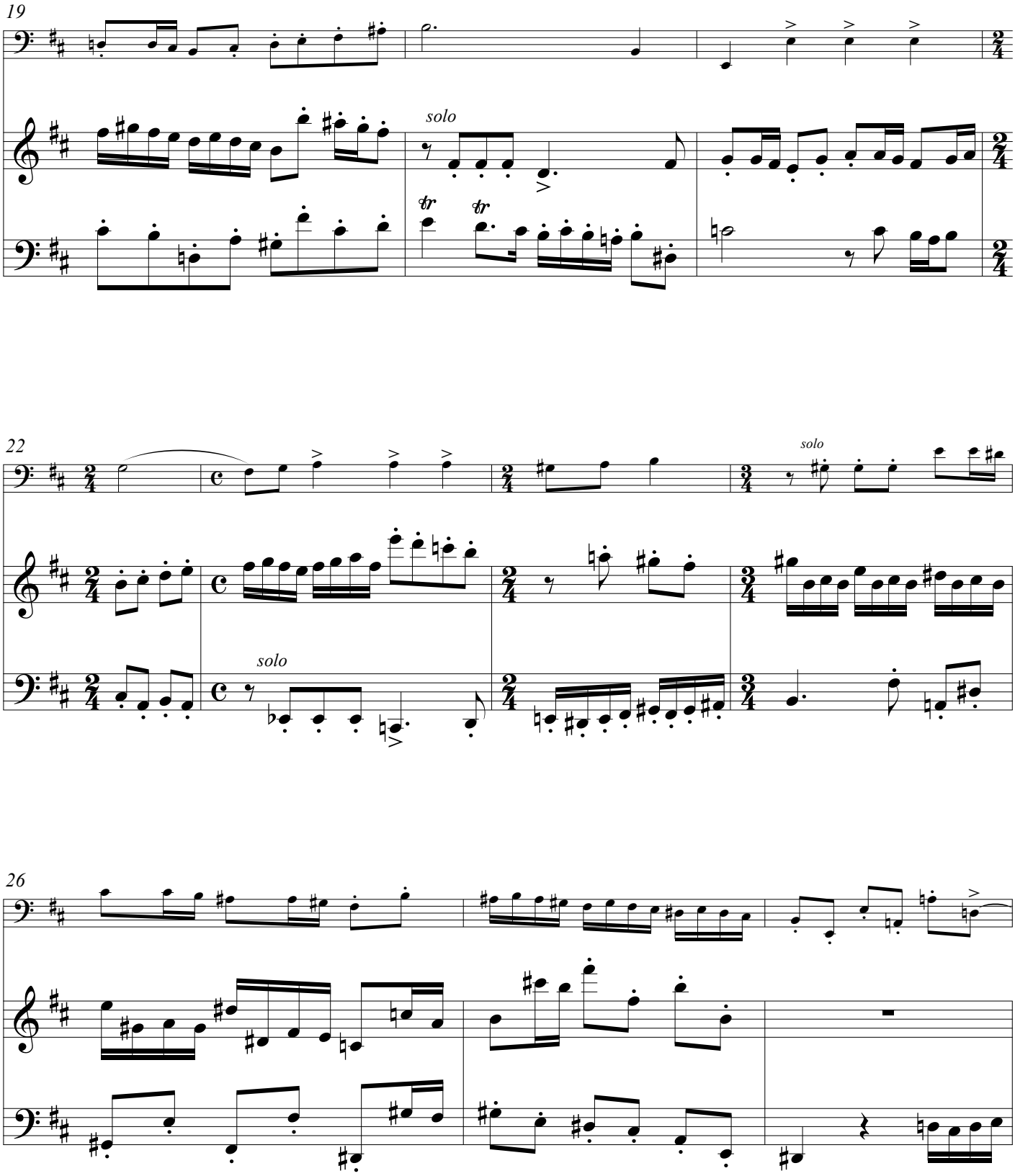

35
Subito tempo II ♩ = c. 160
mp
(8vb)

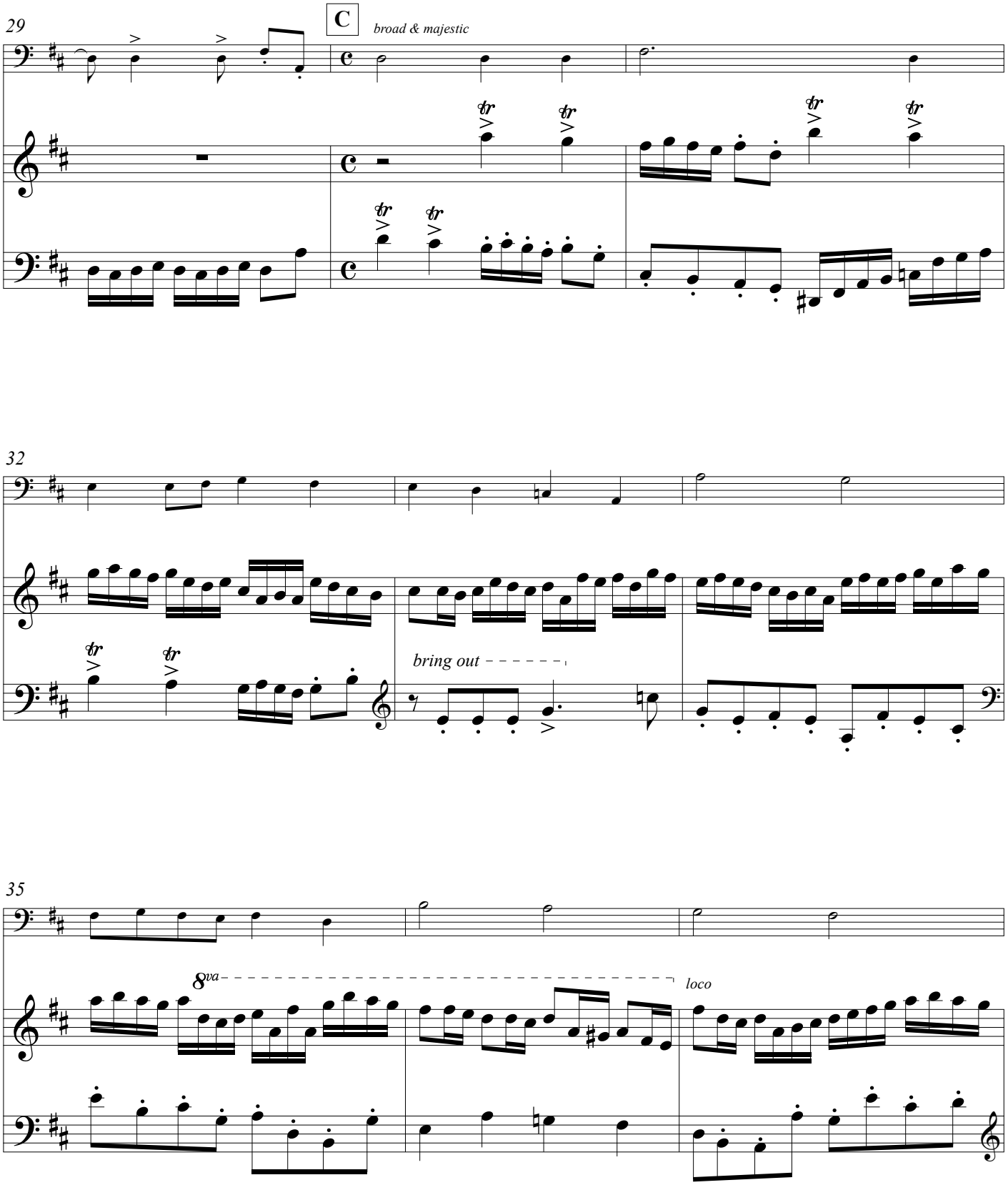

37
p

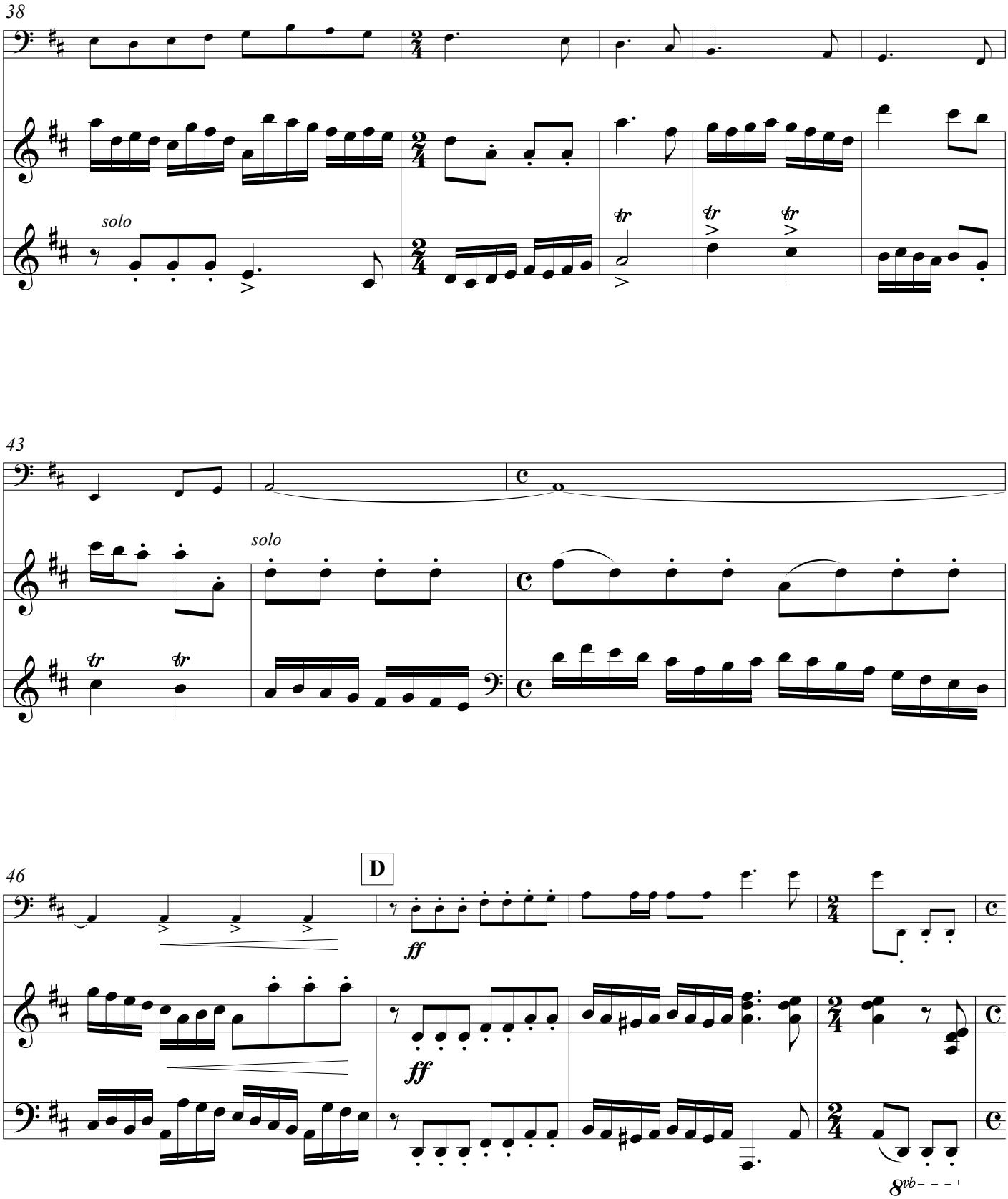
IV.

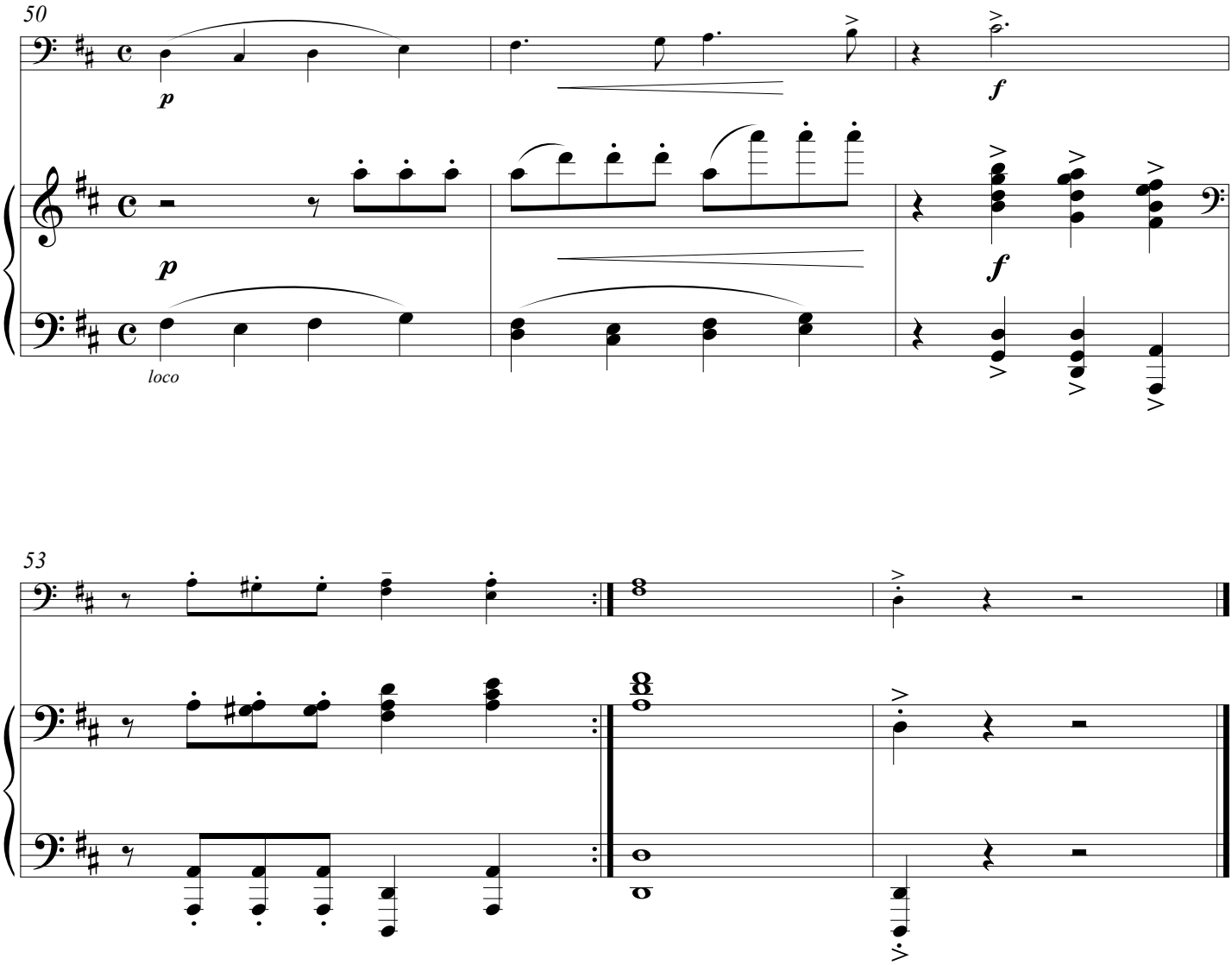



A
9
solo
12
solo
15
B
solo


19
solo
22
solo
solo
26


29
C
broad & majestic
32
bring out
35
8va
loco


38
solo
43
solo
46
D
ff
ff
8vb


50
p
f
p
f
loco
53