FINGER GYMNASTICS

FOR THE PIANOFORTE

BY

I. PHILIPP

OP. 60

Philadelphia
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PREFACE

It is a very common error to believe that the quality and power of tone—the *brilliant* quality—depends solely on the perfection of the instrument on which one plays.

On certain pianos the tone is more or less ready-made, say some. How false! Listen to Busoni or Paderewski, Hofmann or Guiomar Novaes, and you will be ready to give due credit to the difference in the quality of the sonority of the virtuoso. No! Each artist has his own sonority, which is, so to speak, the reflection of his own mind, the manifestation of his sensibility. The conformation of his hand; the nature of its bone and muscle; the fineness or hardness of the skin; the form, tapering or large, of the tips of the finger; the temperament of the executant, all have their influence on the quality of tone obtained by the virtuoso.

"Touch" is a matter of great refinement in tone production, which can only be developed to perfection through hard work. The gradation, the variety of tone, is one of the greatest difficulties of the piano, and also one of the qualities which one should seek to acquire if one has the ambition of true talent. Tone, then, is by no means something ready-made. The method employed to make the piano speak under good conditions varies sensibly according to the nature of the keyboard action—whether it is light or heavy, and whether it is prompt or sluggish in the impulsion of the hammers and their return to their point of departure. The finest grand pianos respond in the most docile way to the most delicate pressure of the fingers. But one does not always have perfected instruments.

A too great ease in going down, a too great sluggishness of the keys, the non-flexibility of the mechanism are all to be taken into account equally in playing. It is true that a very clever pianist will find ways and means to deal with an imperfect instrument by modifying its execution. This absolute command of the keyboard is, however, very rare.

Dynamic Signs Have a Relative Not a Positive Value

The signs indicating the accents which modify the tone, augmenting or diminishing the sonority, have not an absolute signification. Their interpretation varies in accordance with the character and movement of the piece, and, above all, the particular expression of each phrase. A *sforzato* in a passage of sweetness will evidently be less forceable than one in a passage of strength.

The signs are the same, but the manner of expressing them varies according to the character of the piece which one interprets, be it tranquil or passionate, sweet or brilliant. We repeat then: Sonority is modified under the intelligent, sensible, reasoning action of the fingers. It can be firm, mellow, energetic or brilliant. The tone can vary its tint infinitely according to the organism of the artist, according to his open-hearted or his dreamy nature, according to his more or less impressionable character, according to his impulsive or reflective temperament. A short, fat hand; a long, fine hand; a hand bony or brutal, have not at all the same tone. But the spirit of observation, coupled with intelligent work, can always modify the native dispositions.

Do Not Force the Tone of the Piano

One should not demand of the piano more than it is able to give. Our modern instruments offer extraordinary and sufficient resources. To play louder than one should is to affect the carrying power of the tone unfavorably. A singer who yells does not make himself heard any better than one who keeps close to the natural volume of his voice. The tone becomes harder—but thrills less and is wanting in intensity. If one allows himself to follow the example of certain virtuosos in giving free rein to what some call "temperament," one may succeed in "making an exhibition of himself," but not an exhibition of fine piano-playing. This is not brilliant playing.

In other respects *nuances* play a most important role. One should submit to the indications of the author whose works he is supposed to interpret. Variety, richness of *nuances*, accentuation which is correct and conforms to the laws of good taste, all contribute to render the play vital and brilliant. The spirit of interpretation denotes an interesting organization in the case of the artist. It is his task to penetrate into the sentiment, the particular expression of each work, to analyze the manner in which the ideas present themselves, succeed each other and develop themselves, are served by the effects of sonority, harmony and rhythm. It is his to identify himself with the spirit of the composer, without renouncing his own individuality.

Objective Correctness Not Sufficient

The best photographs have one fault which excludes them from the domain of art. They have not been *thought and felt*. Music has also her photographers; they are the pianists who reduce themselves to nothing more than the objective mind which operates in place of the soul which feels, the intelligence which interprets. Playing, which is brilliant without expression, without style, produces no effect. "Style adds a perfume to the work," a certain master has said.

Touch and Tone

But we arrive at length at the manner of working at tone which alone gives the play brilliancy. The nature and intensity of sonorous vibrations is directly *en rapport* with the impulsive force which gives rise to them. Such is the point of departure of the art of sonority. In imitation of the violinist who modifies the strokes of his bow, the pianist should modify his articulation. But in front of the body, the arms must be supple and free, the hands light. Notwithstanding this, the fingers should keep a certain firmness. Prolonged slow practice imparts a perfect sureness. That is the ideal of all executants, as a lack of sureness is something hopeless.

Slow Practice Cannot Last Forever

But this slow practice is not practical for *constant* use. The changes of accent, the modifications of rhythm and modifications of tone going from *ff* to *pp* and passing through the intermediate nuances *mf—mp* and *p*, are to acquire rapidity. Reflective and intelligent work will give them this precious result: *tone* and *rapidity*. The *slower one practices, the more one must articulate;* without violence, of course, but *kneading* the keyboard: *the more one approaches rapidity, the less one must articulate.* One ought to be able to play each technical passage even *faster* than its real movement. One should master the technic for the sake of being able to play musically.

Material for Technical Practice

To acquire brilliancy, the study of scales and arpeggios (both with the regular fingering, and with the fingering of all like the key of C) is absolutely necessary. It will be of benefit to work rhythmically, and with all possible different nuances. I counsel also the practice of thirds; sixths; hands crossing; one *piano* the other *forte;* one hand *staccato,* the other *legato.* In one of my articles, *Essay on the Scale,* I have indicated a rhythmic manner of working which can also be applied to arpeggios and which will give certain results.

Importance of the Pedal

The correct and clever use of the pedal is also of great importance for brilliant playing. The pedal, on the one hand, gives force, glitter, fullness, richness; on the other hand, sweetness, charm and grace. But, on the contrary, to employ the pedal falsely has for its effect the deplorable effacement of clearness, confusing the design of the melody and making trouble with the harmony.

The pedal has been styled the soul of the piano. There is something of truth in this application. The pedal helps to banish from the piano tone its quality of *dryness.* Well employed, it permits one to draw from the piano a series of the most charming and beautiful musical effects. The damper pedal (miscalled "loud pedal"), the soft pedal (*una corda*) alone, or the two used in combination, multiply the nuances which a pianist of talent obtains from the piano. The pedal, properly used, depends on the sensibility of the ear, the taste, the spirit of the virtuoso. In general, one may say that any playing which does not sound very clear has too much pedal. The employment of the pedal is so intimately bound up with the poetic contents of the work interpreted, with the personality of the executant, with the perfection of the instrument, that it is difficult to give absolute rules.

—ISIDOR PHILIPP.

To James Huneker

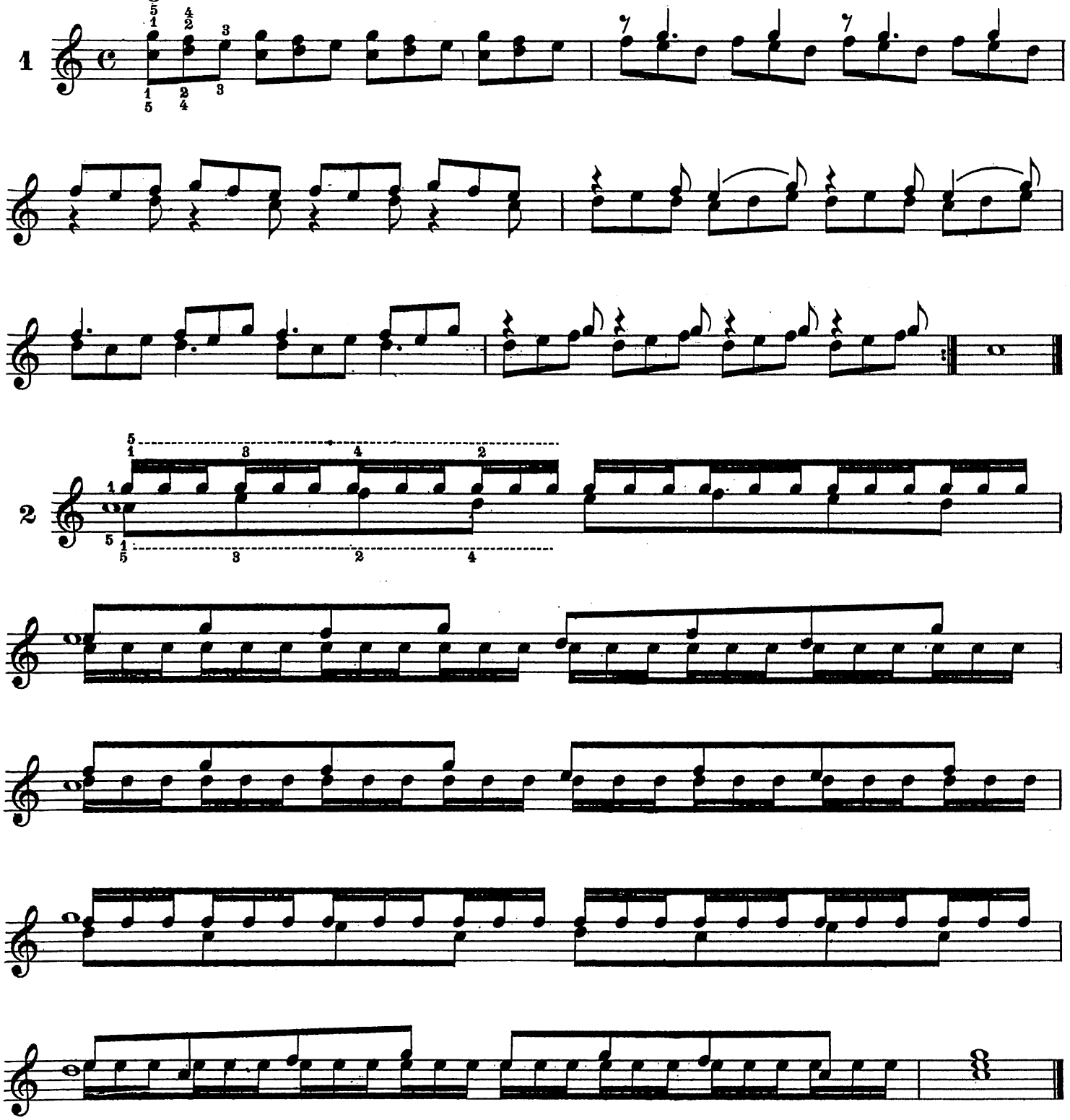
FINGER GYMNASTICS

I. PHILIPP, Op. 60

In all Keys, major and minor.
Dans tons le tons majeurs et mineurs.

Each measure 4 times.
Chaque mesure 4 fois.

Allegro



Note. Some of these exercises are taken from works which are neglected at the present time, by such writers as Dreyschock, Pacher, Stamaty, Bertini, etc.

Others are by more modern writers, such as Heller, Saint-Saëns, G. Mathias. Most of them are new.

Nota. Quelques uns de ces exercises sont pris d'ouvrages tombés anjourd hui dans l'oubli, tels que ceux de Dreyschock, Pacher, Stamaty, Bertini, etc.

D'autres viennent de quelques Maîtres modernes tels que Heller, Saint-Saens, G. Mathias. La plupart sont nouveaux.

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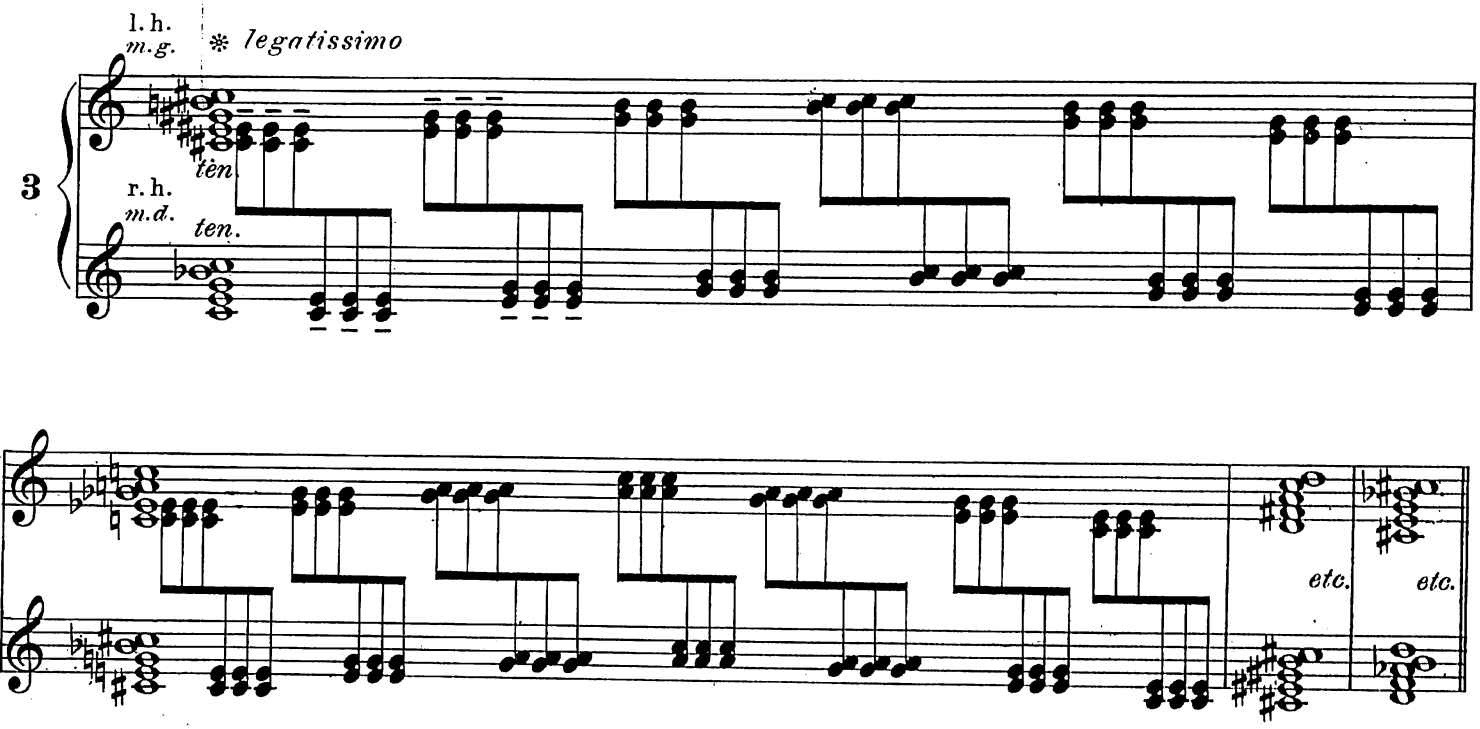
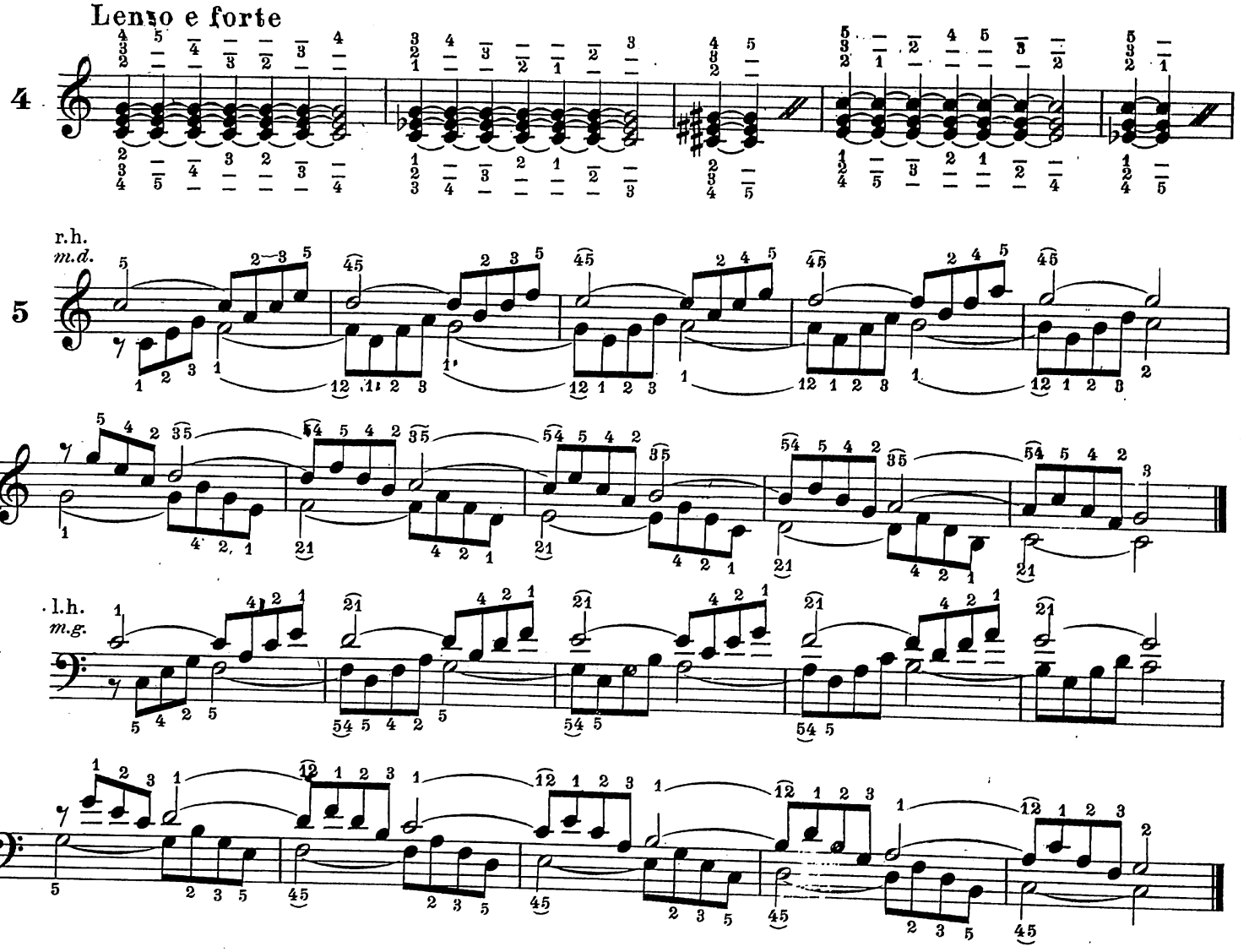
Molto lento



* To be held down silently
* *Les rondes muettes*

Lento e forte



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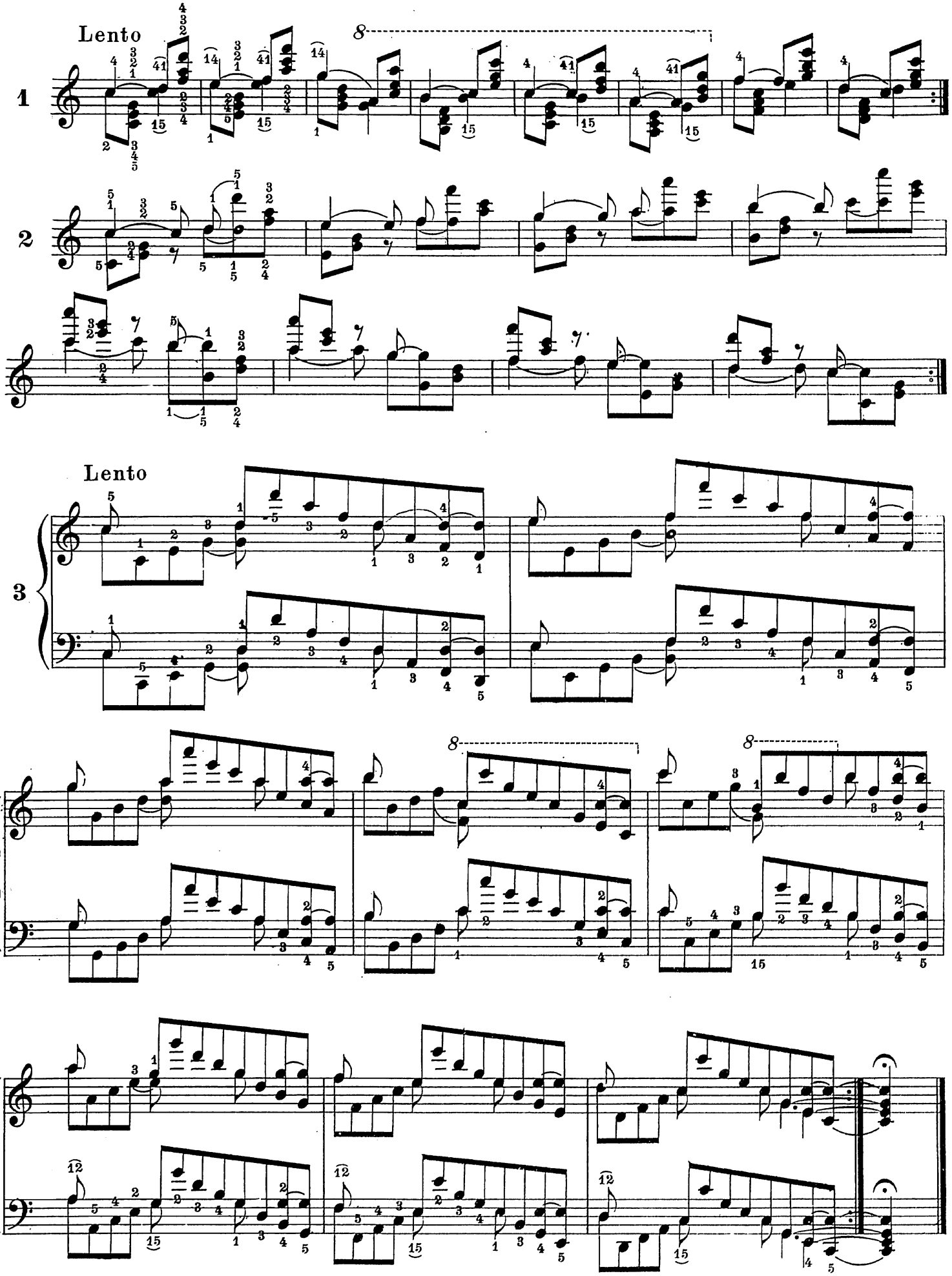
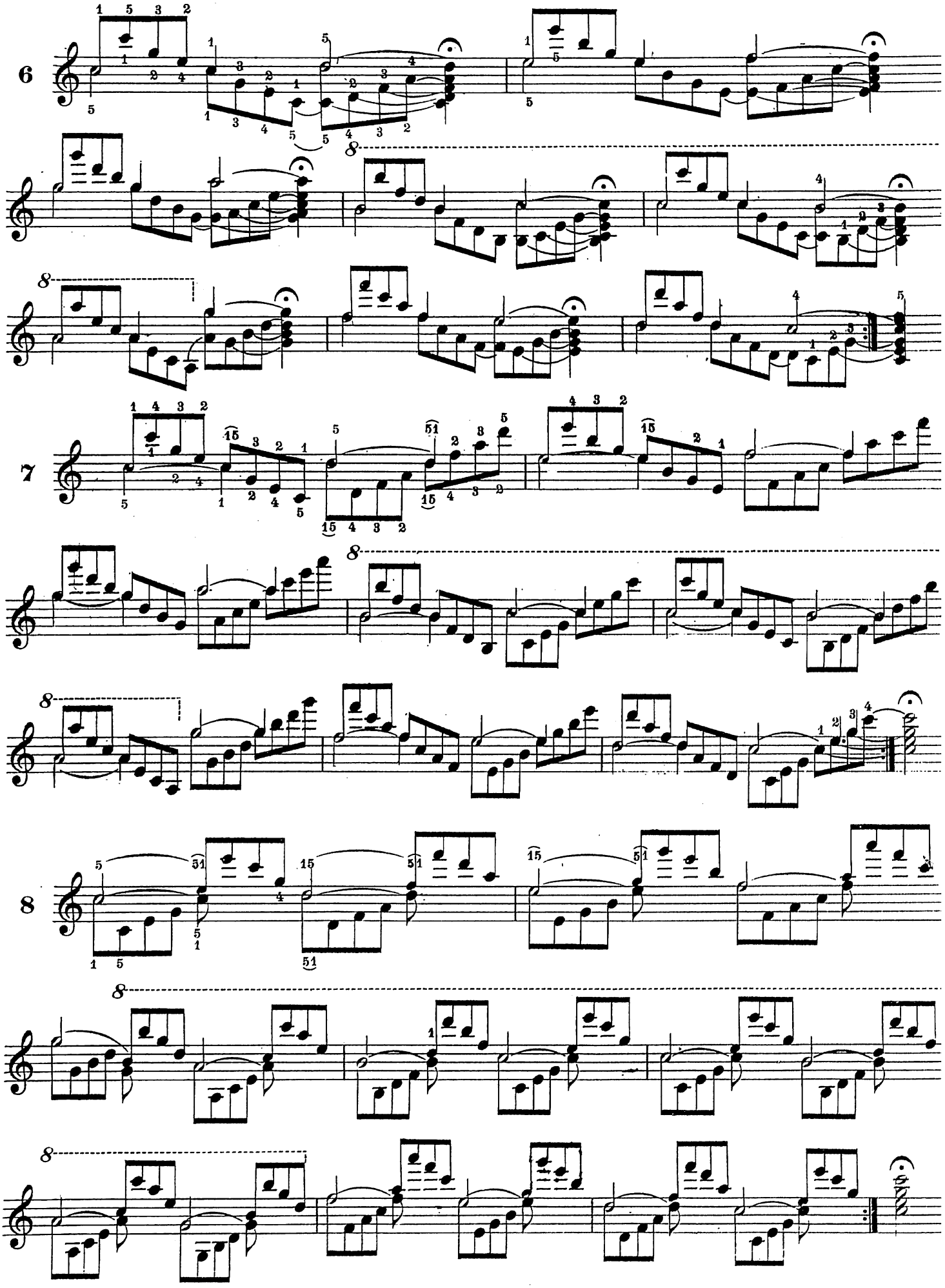
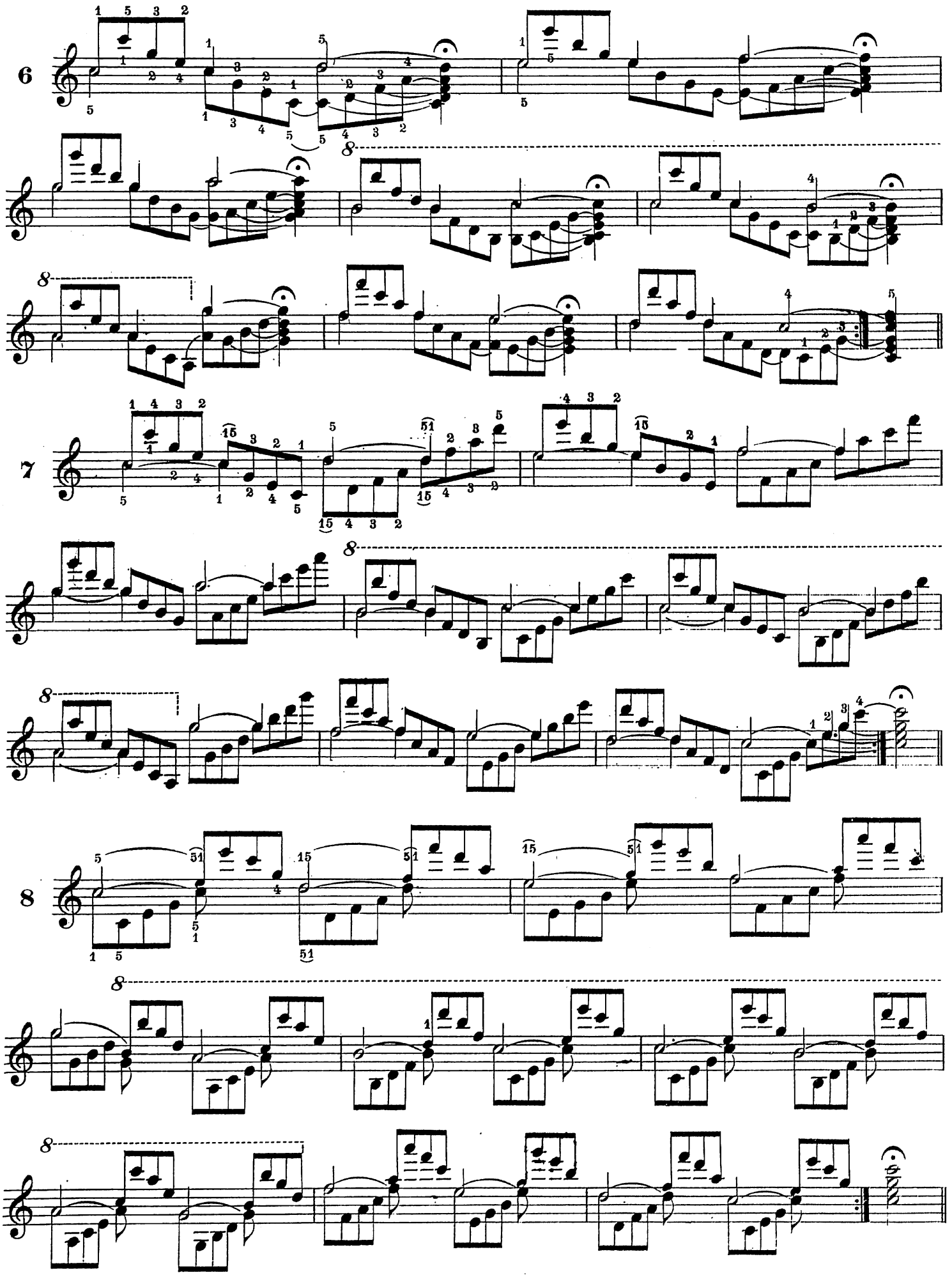


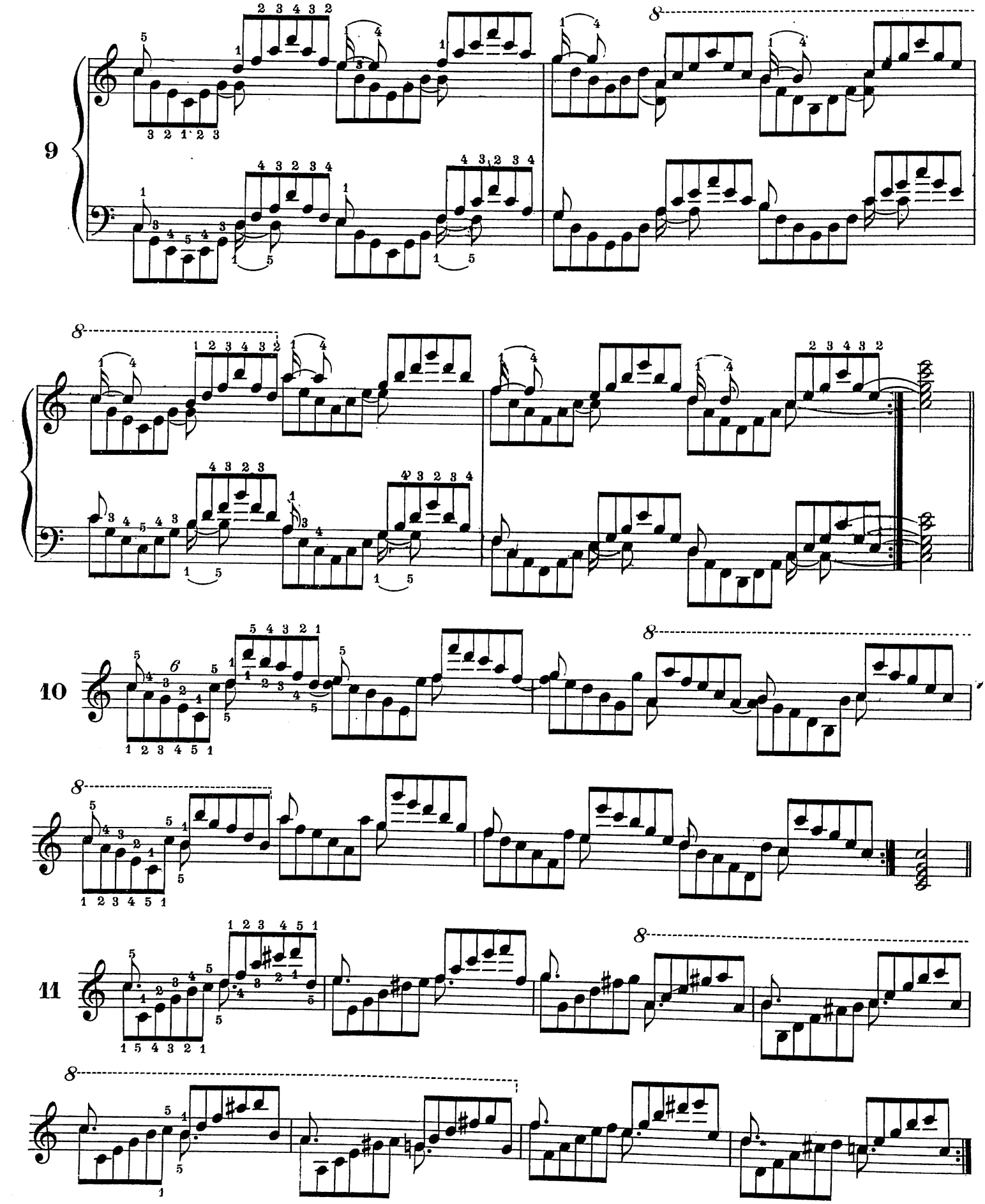
Lento

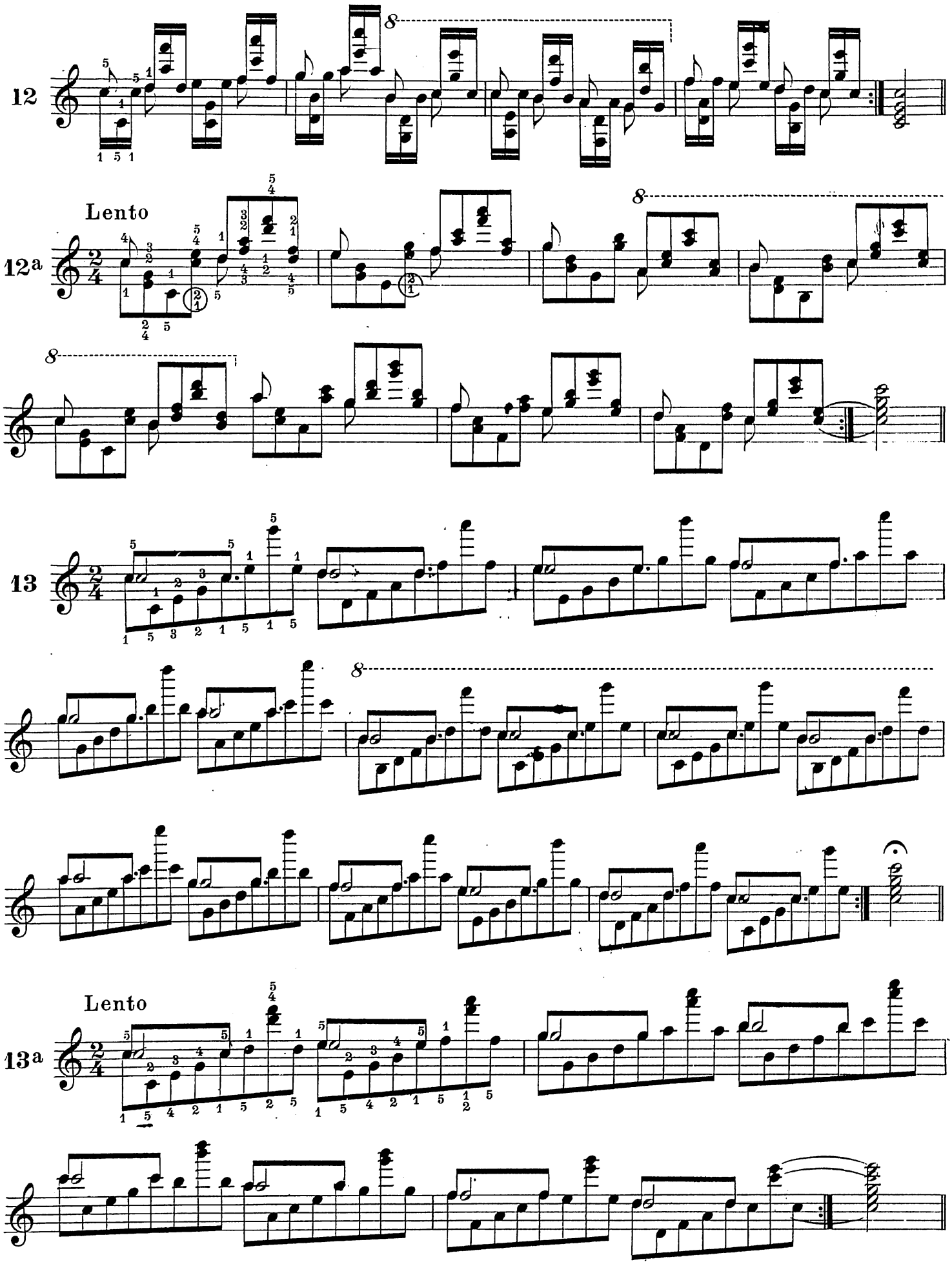


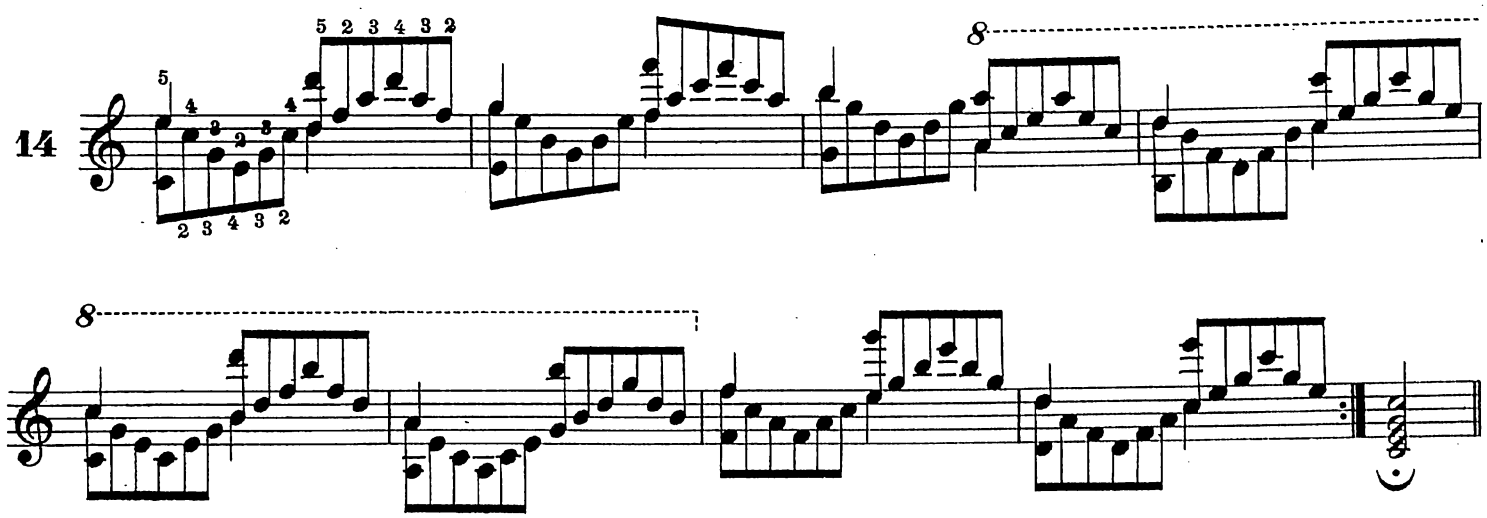
Lento

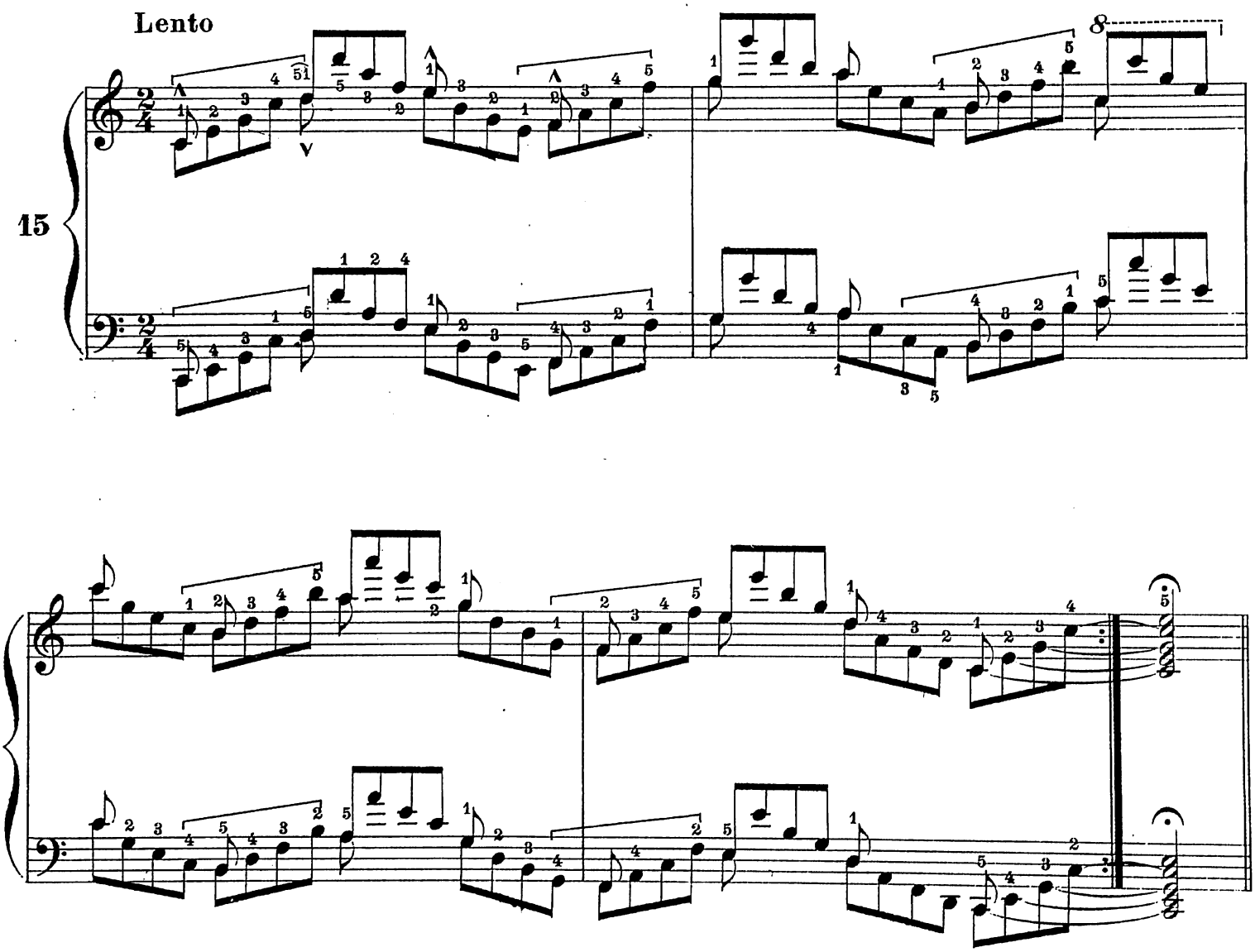


Hold all the notes as long as possible
Les notes tennes le plus possible

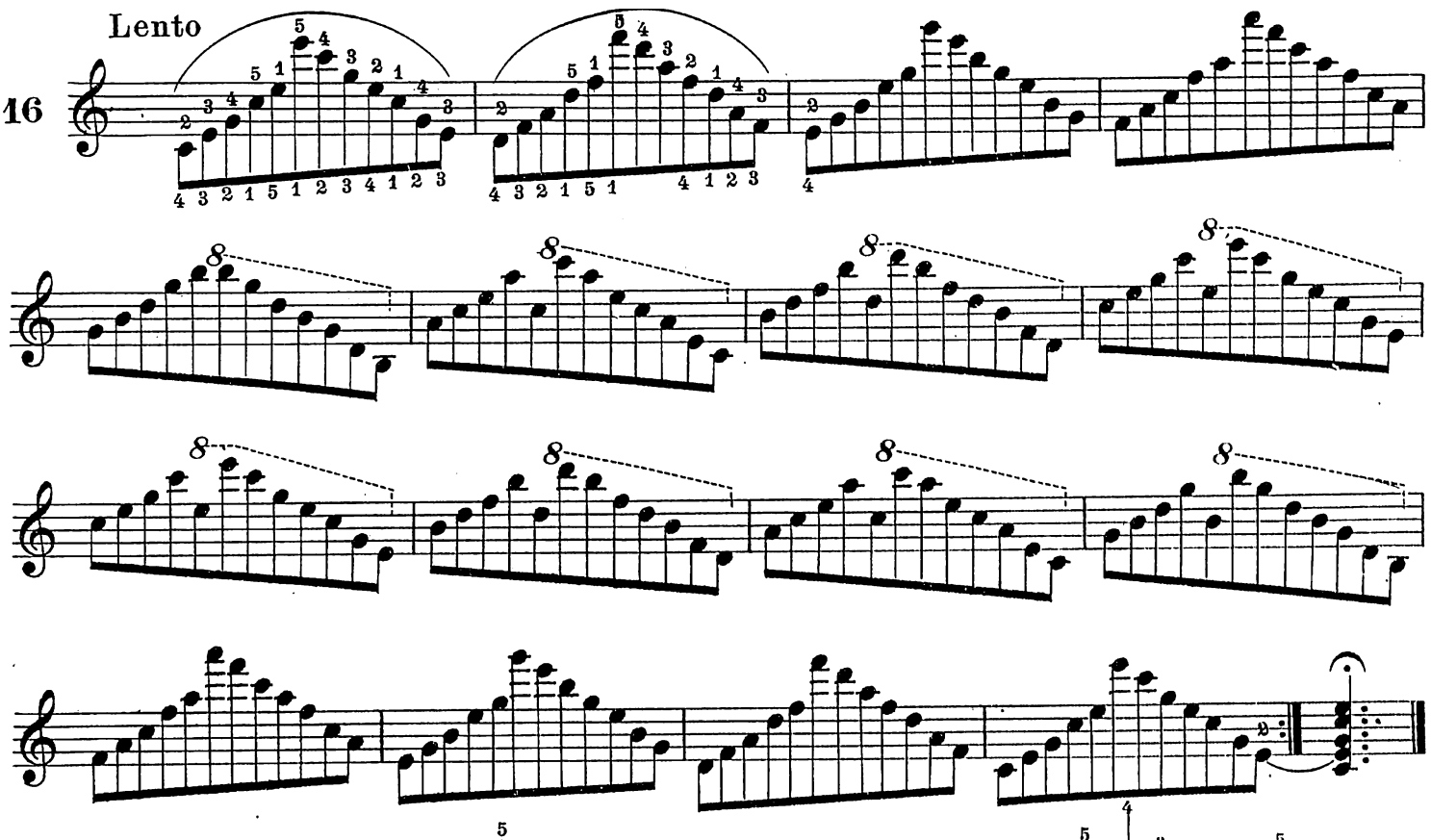



12
Lento
12a
13
Lento
13a

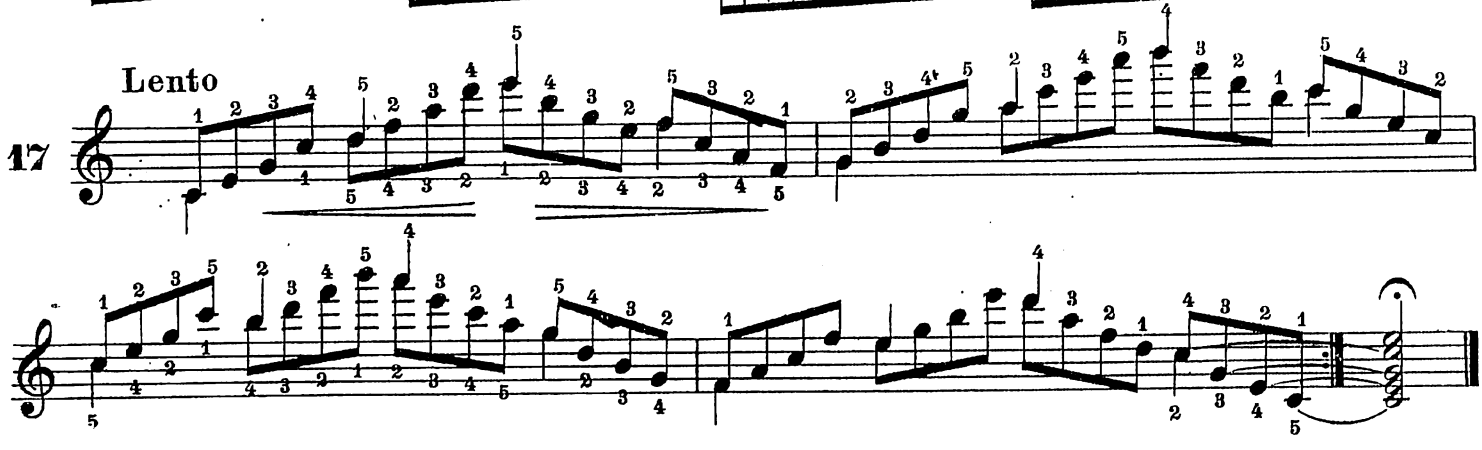

14
8
8


Lento
15
8

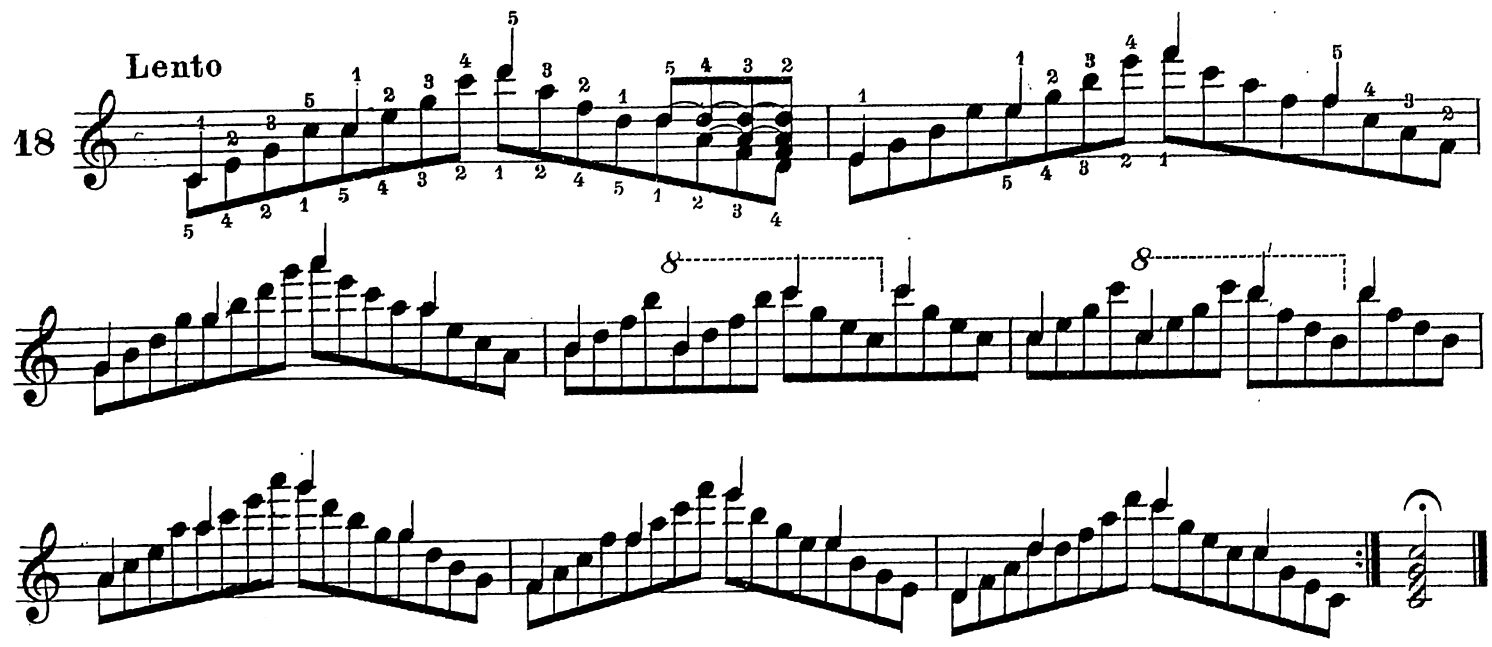
16 Lento



17 Lento



18 Lento



Lento poi Allegro

19

8

8

etc.

Lento

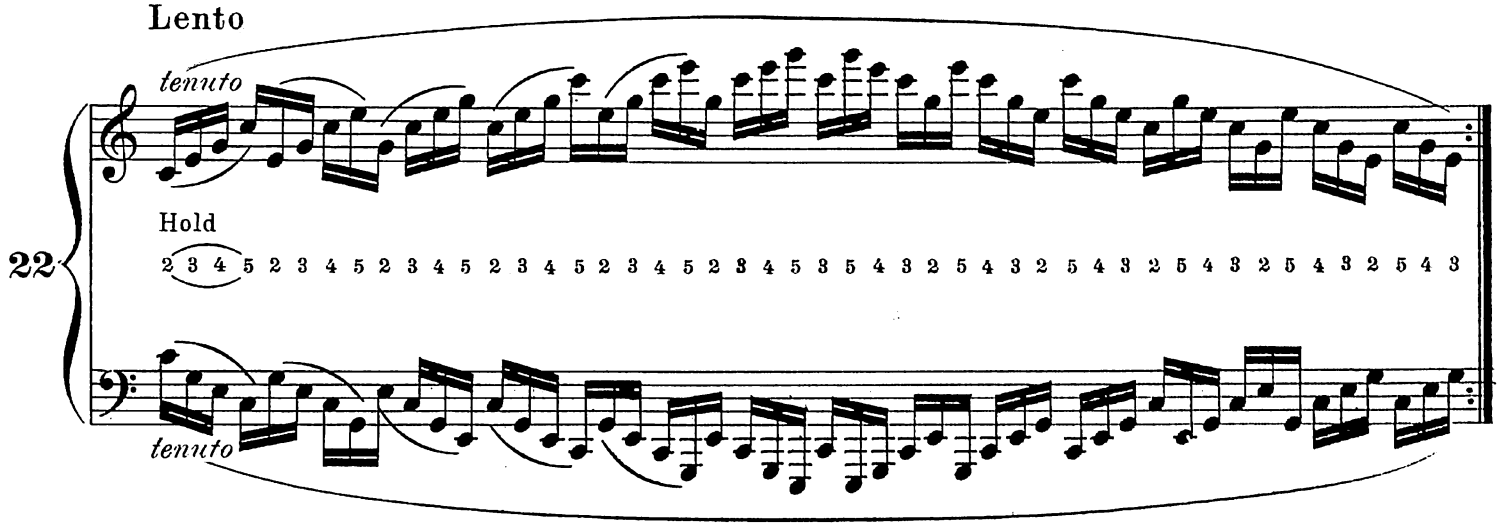
20

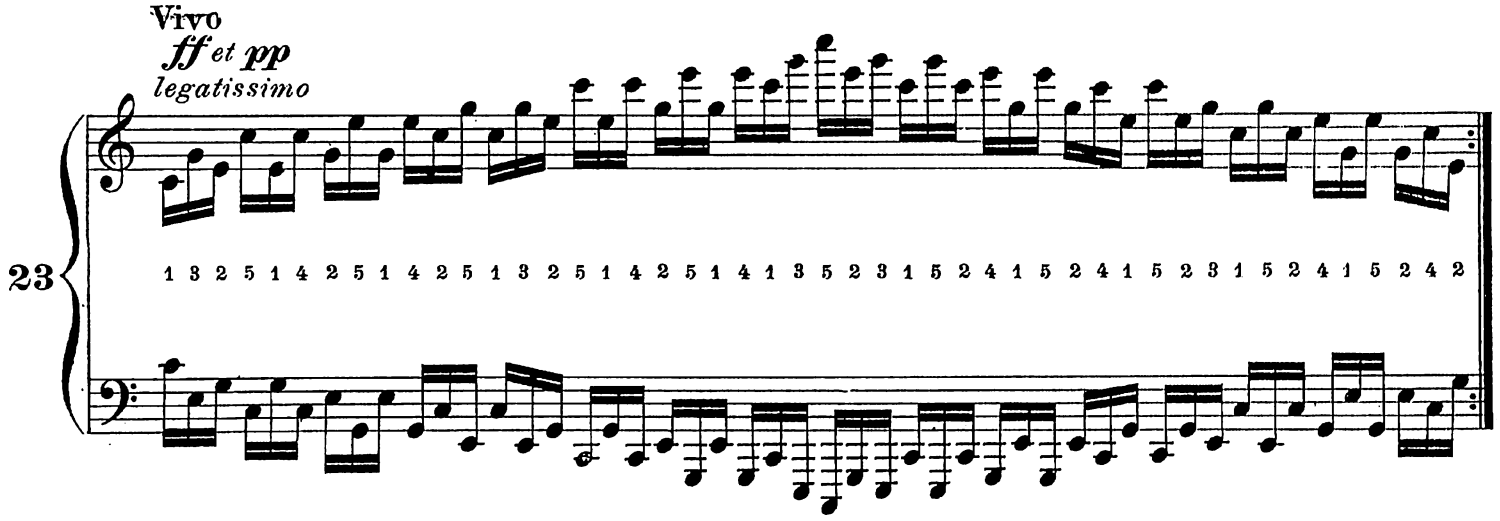
In all keys

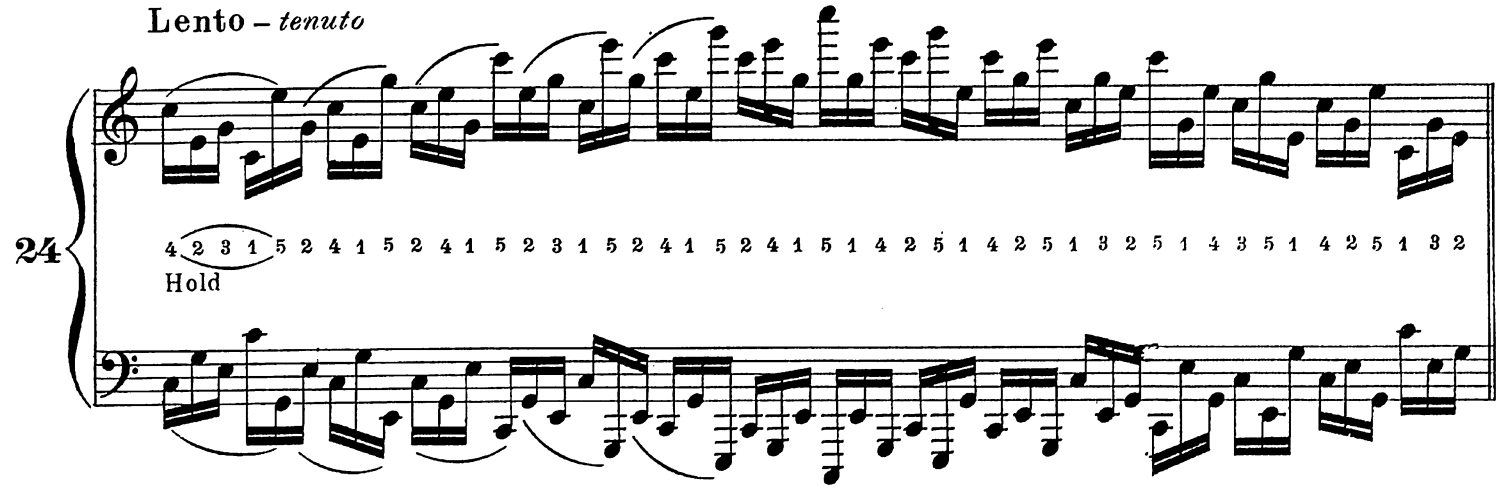
21

mf

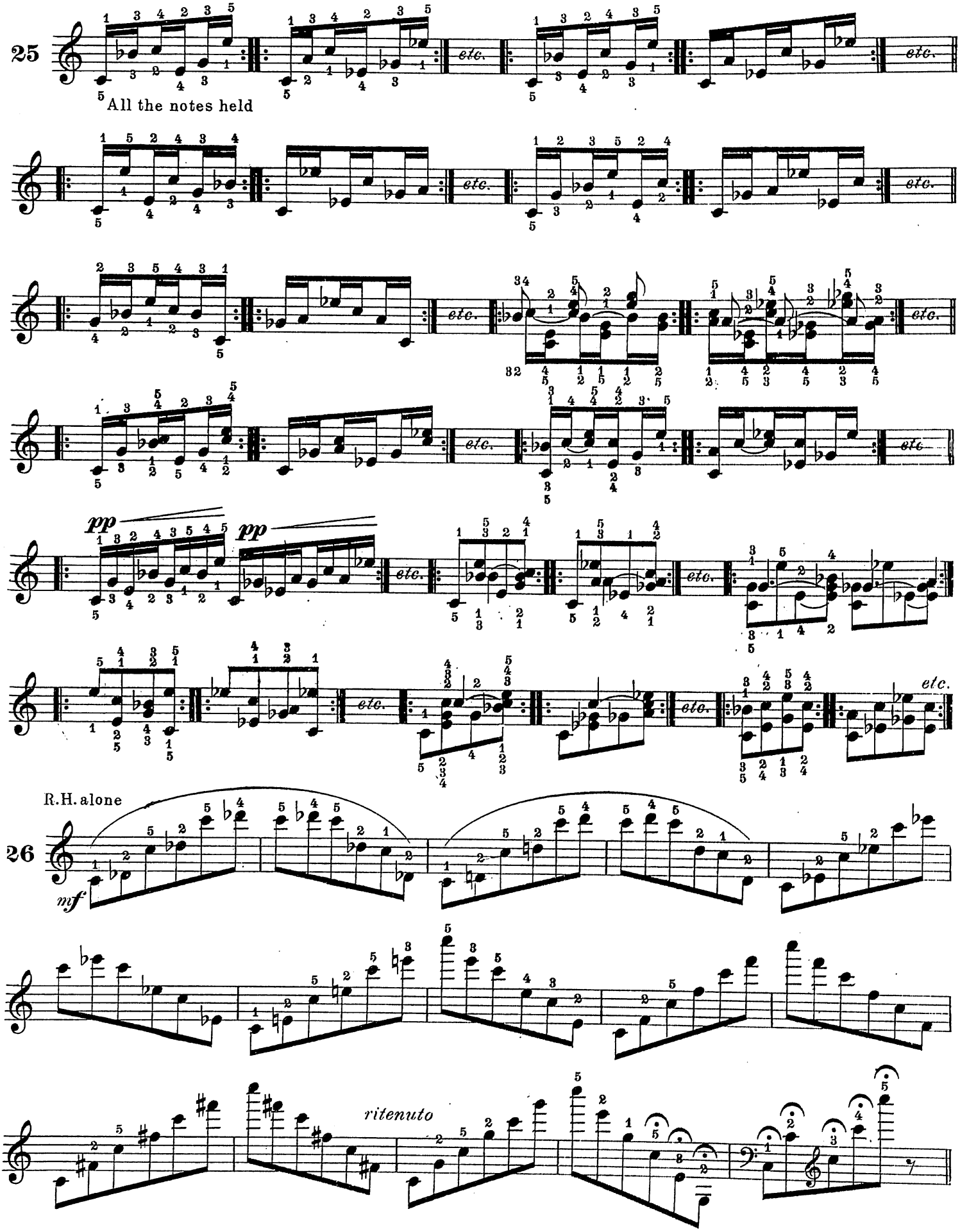
pp


Lento
tenuto
Hold
22
2 3 4 5 2 3 4 5 2 3 4 5 2 3 4 5 2 3 4 5 2 3 4 5 3 5 4 3 2 5 4 3 2 5 4 3 2 5 4 3 2 5 4 3 2 5 4 3
tenuto

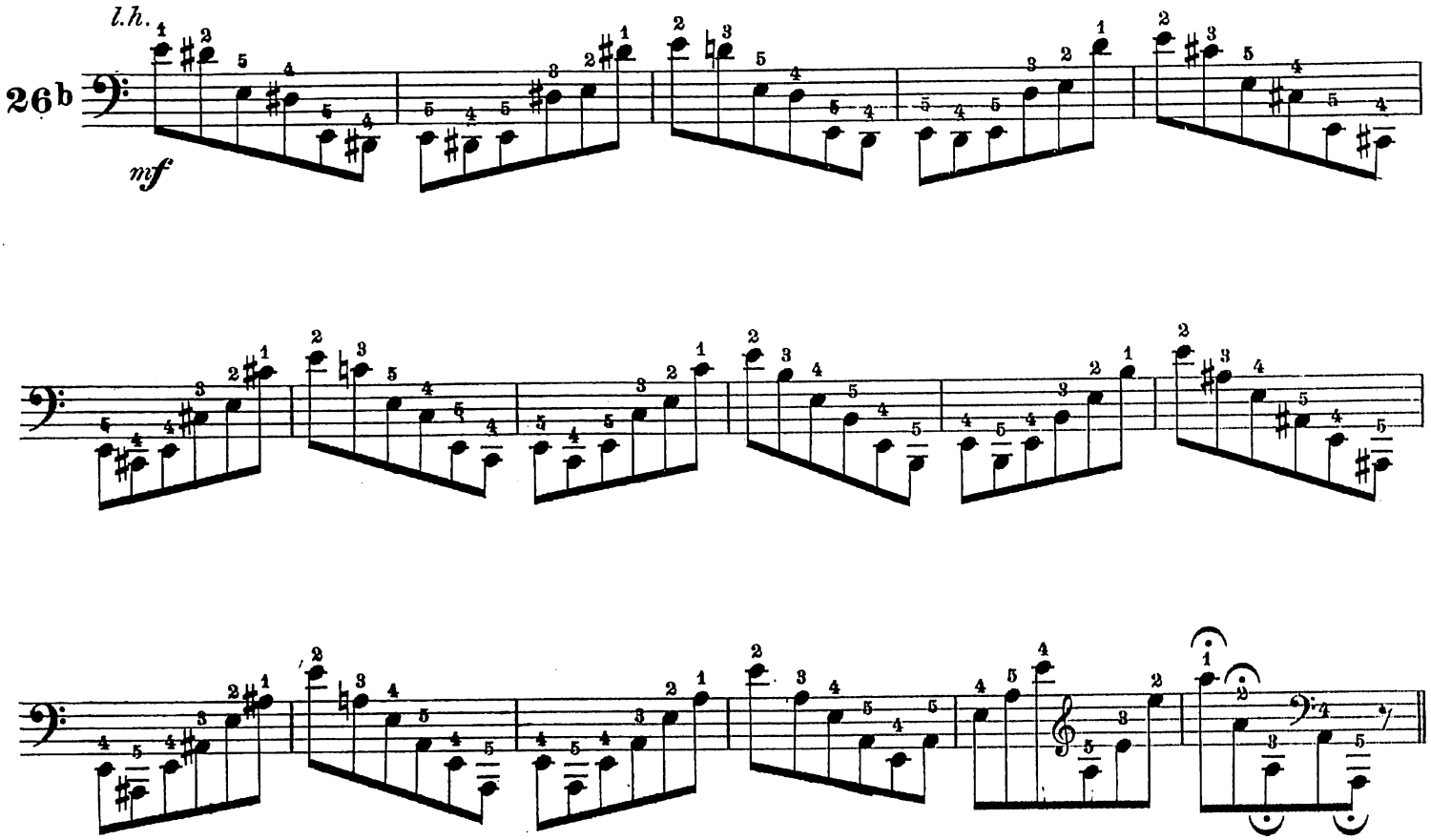

Vivo
ff et pp
legatissimo
23
1 3 2 5 1 4 2 5 1 4 2 5 1 3 2 5 1 4 2 5 1 4 1 3 5 2 3 1 5 2 4 1 5 2 4 1 5 2 3 1 5 2 4 1 5 2 4 2


Lento – tenuto
24
4 2 3 1 5 2 4 1 5 2 4 1 5 2 3 1 5 2 4 1 5 2 4 1 5 1 4 2 5 1 4 2 5 1 3 2 5 1 4 3 5 1 4 2 5 1 3 2
Hold

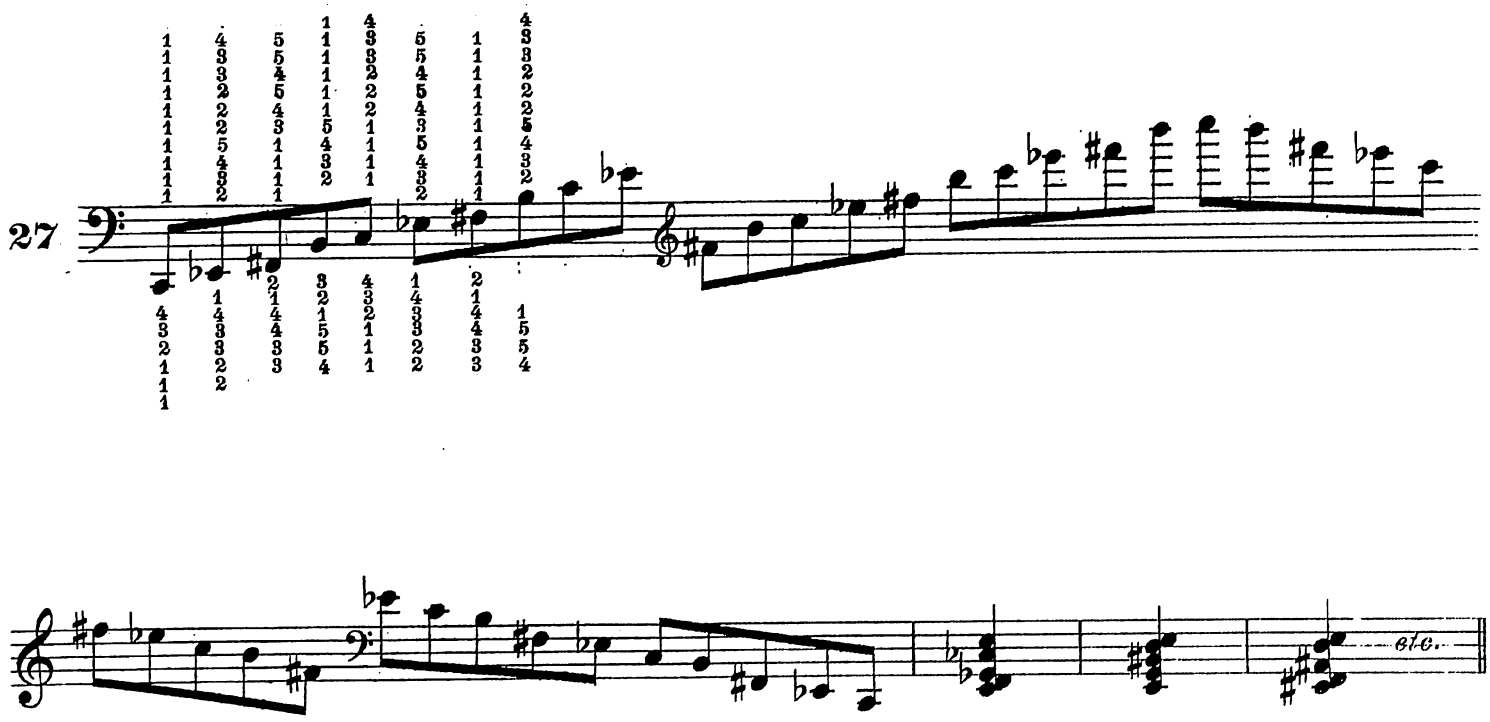
Lento e tenuto – poi allegro e p. *in all keys*



Lento

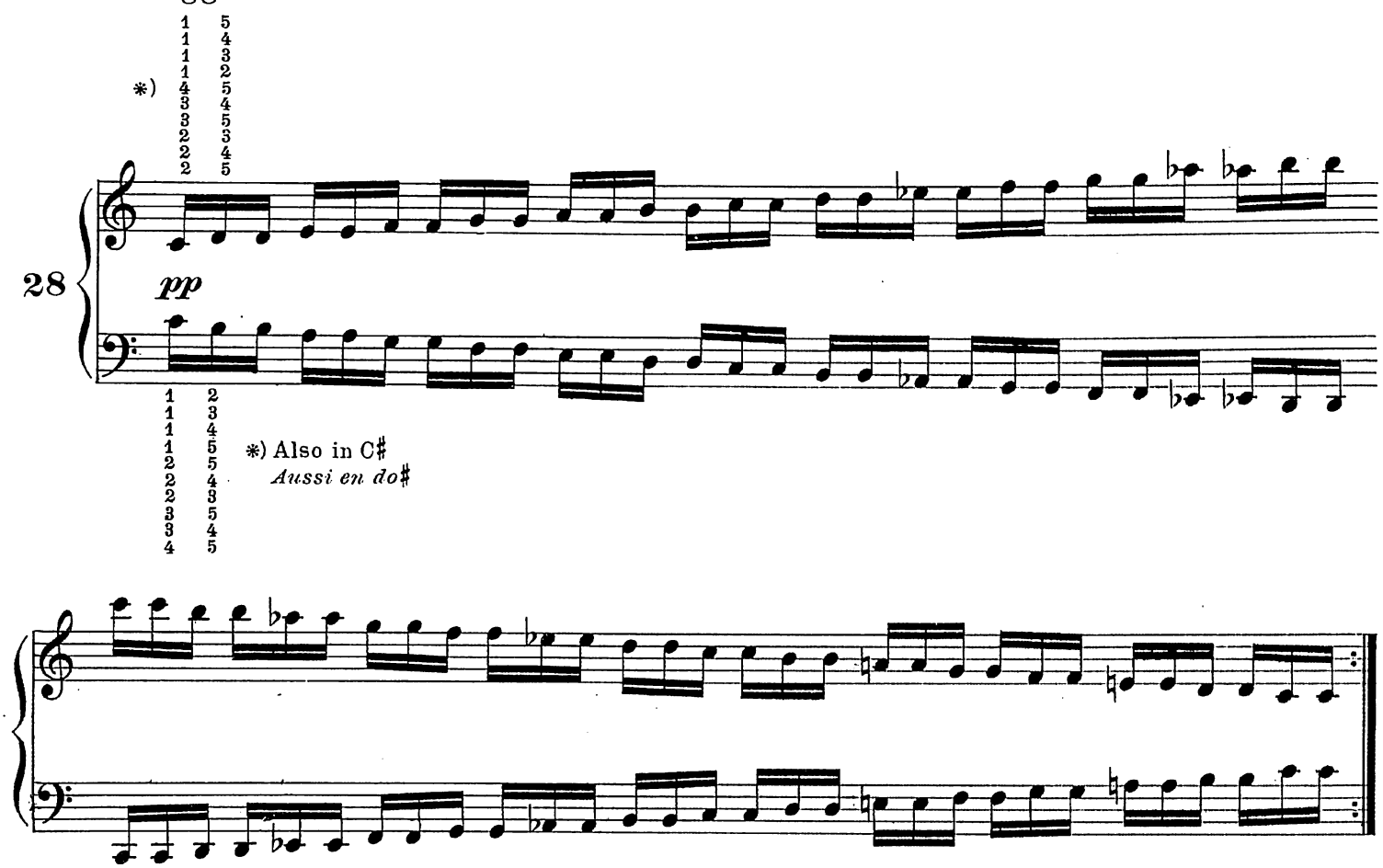


Lento, at first. *Lent d'abord*

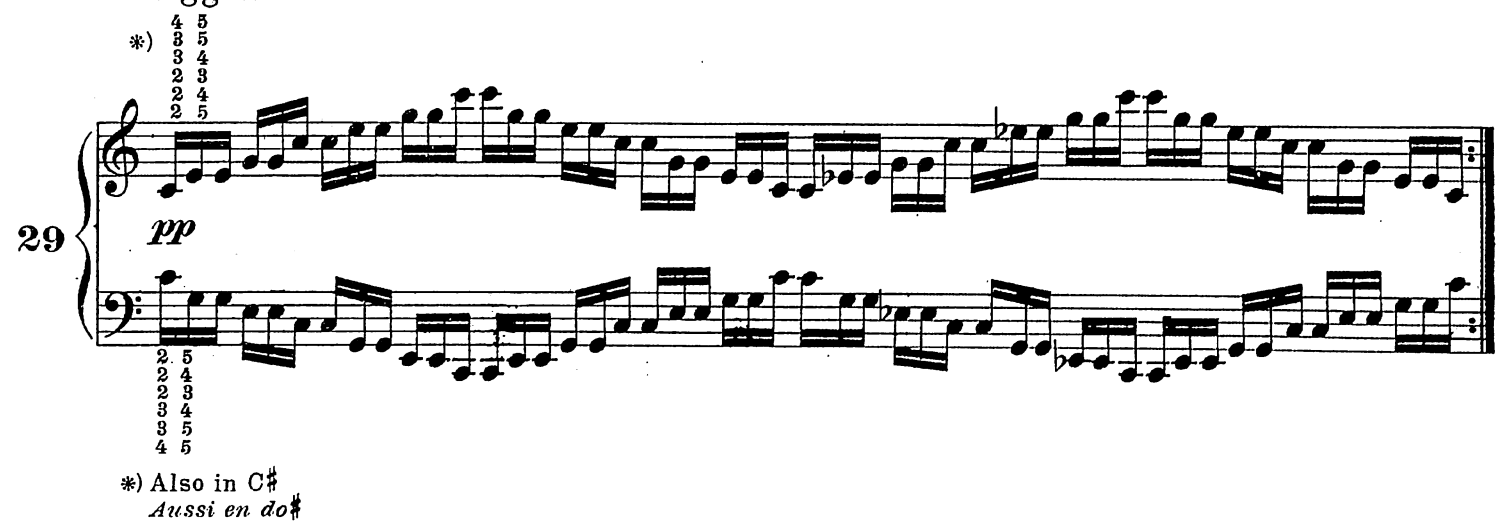


Flexibility — Souplesse

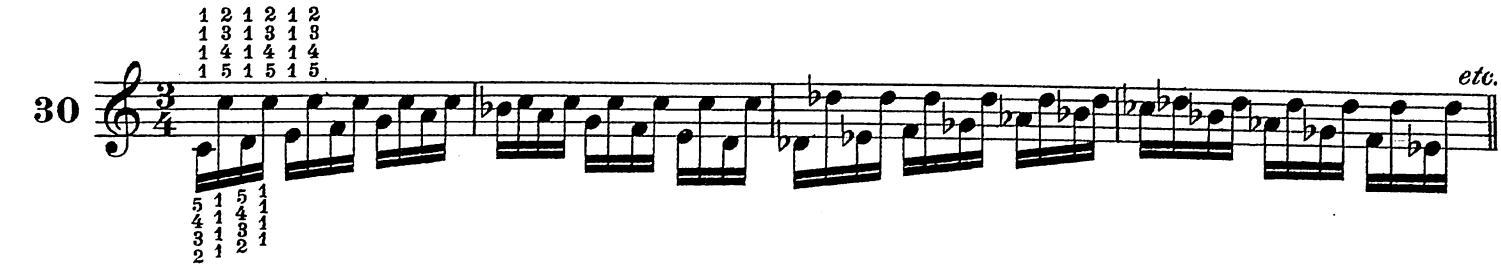
Leggiero



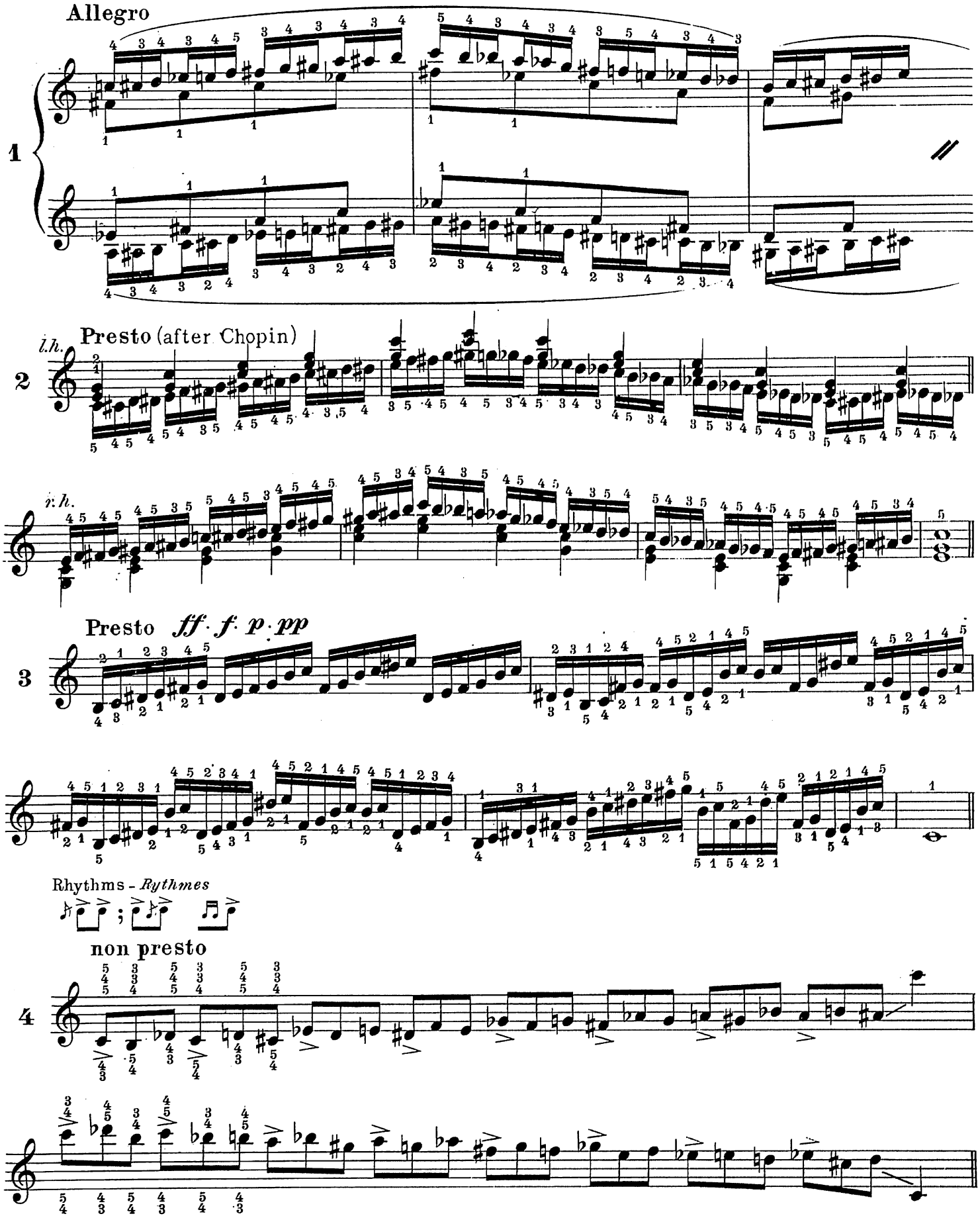
Leggiero



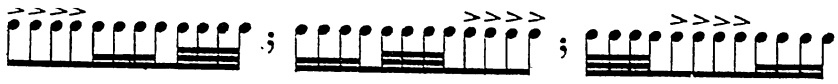
Vivo e piano



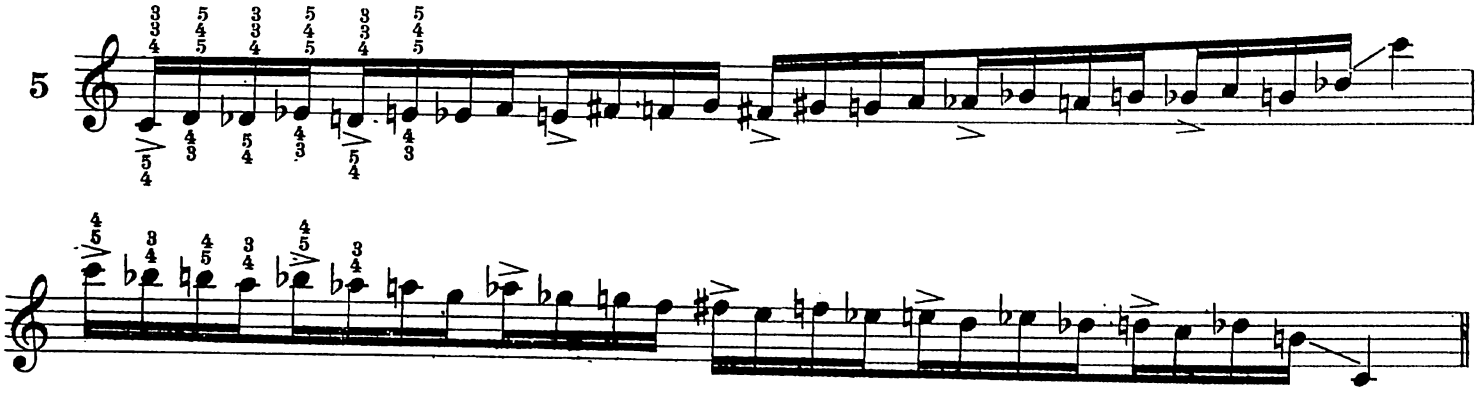
Chromatic Exercises — Exercices Chromatiques



In 12 note groups
Pour 12 notes:

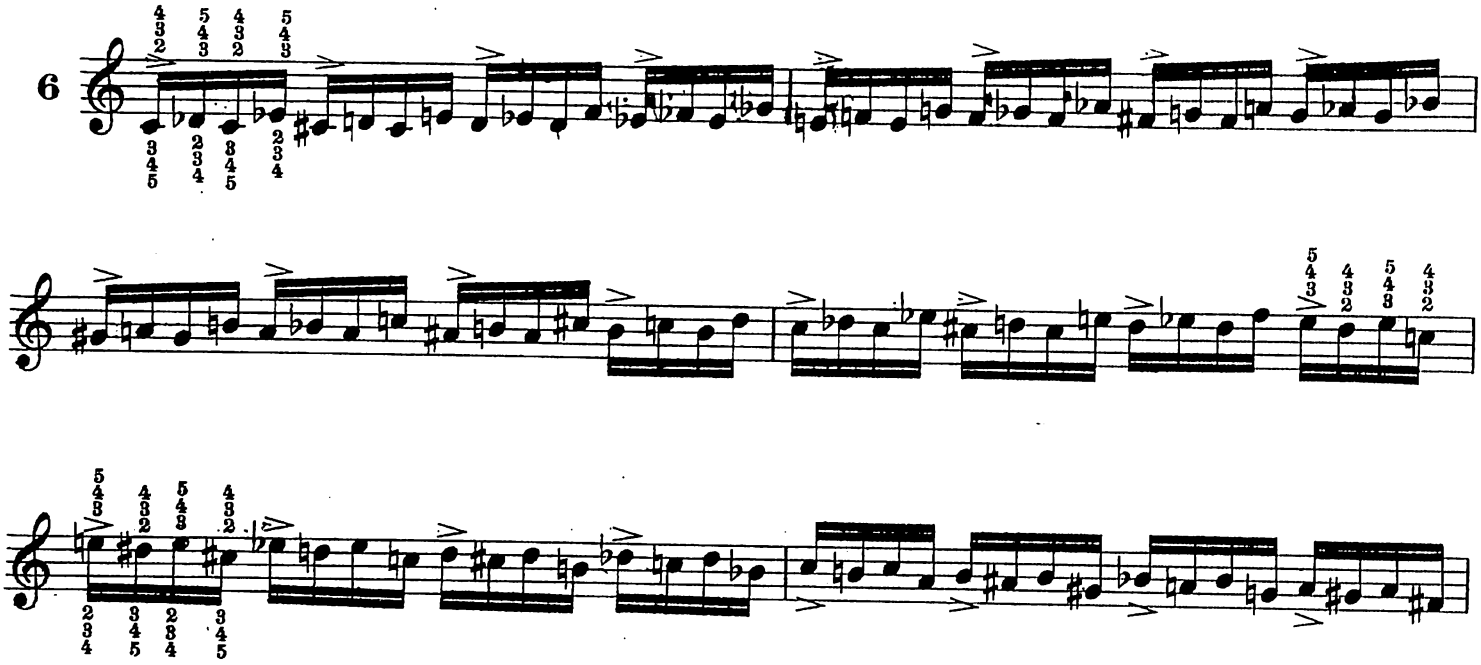


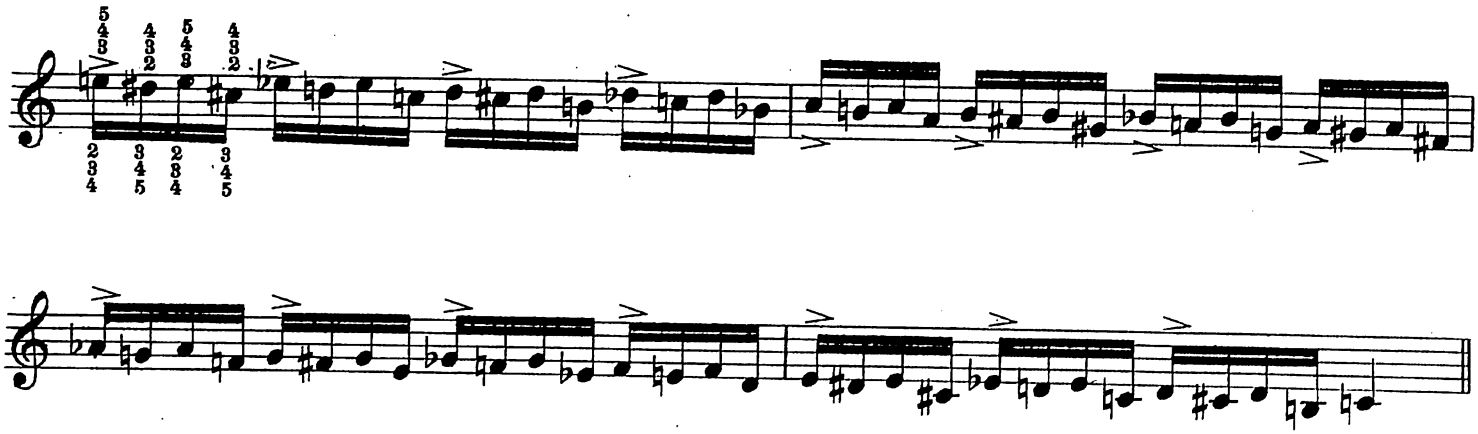
5

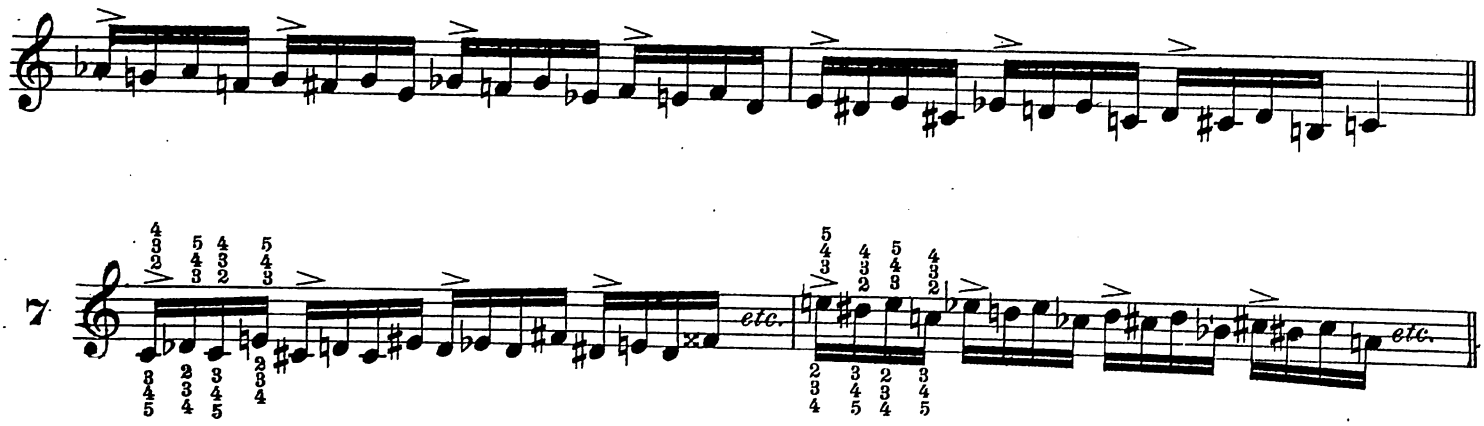


In rhythm of 16 notes
Rhythm, pour 16 notes:

6





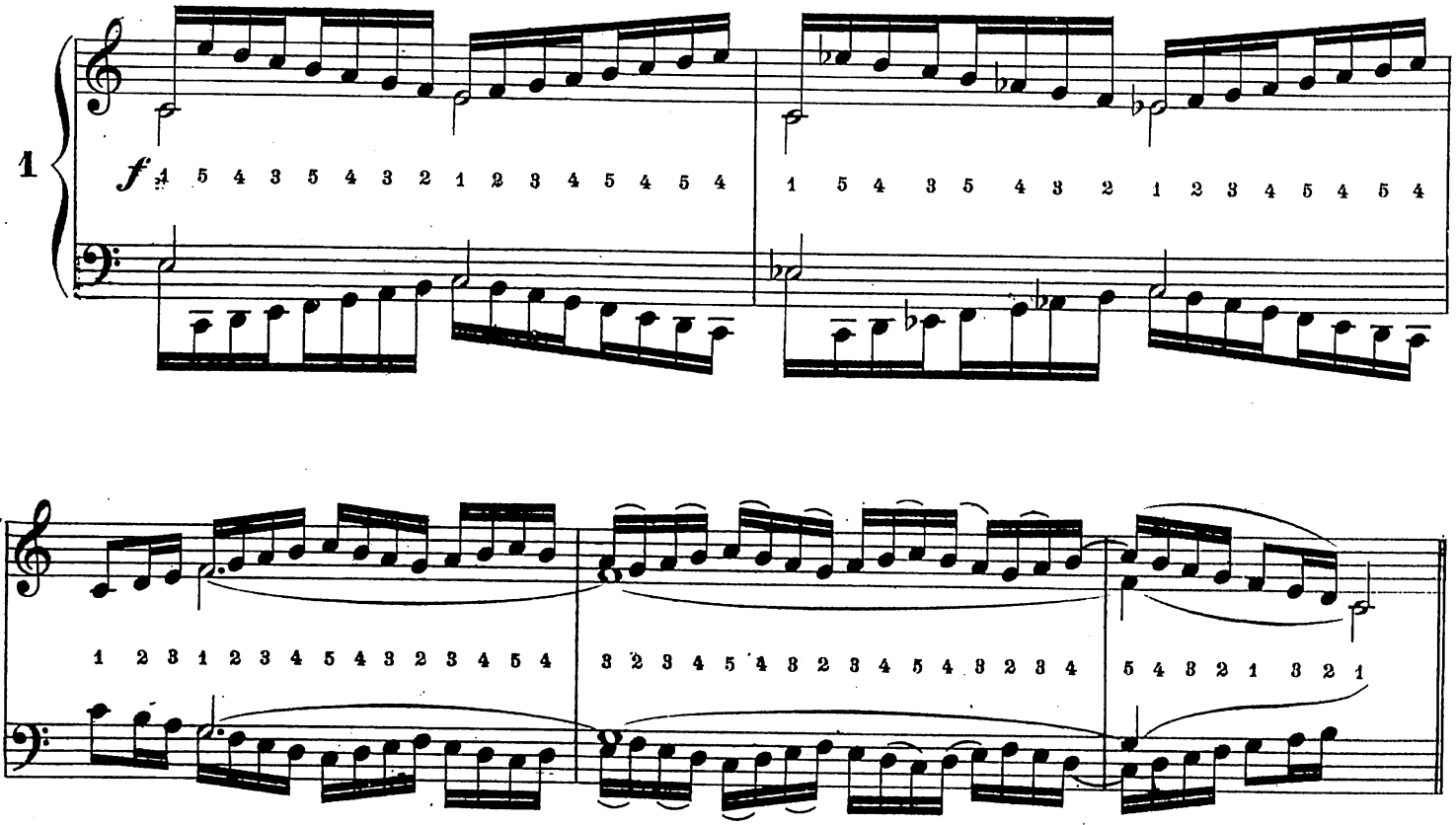


7

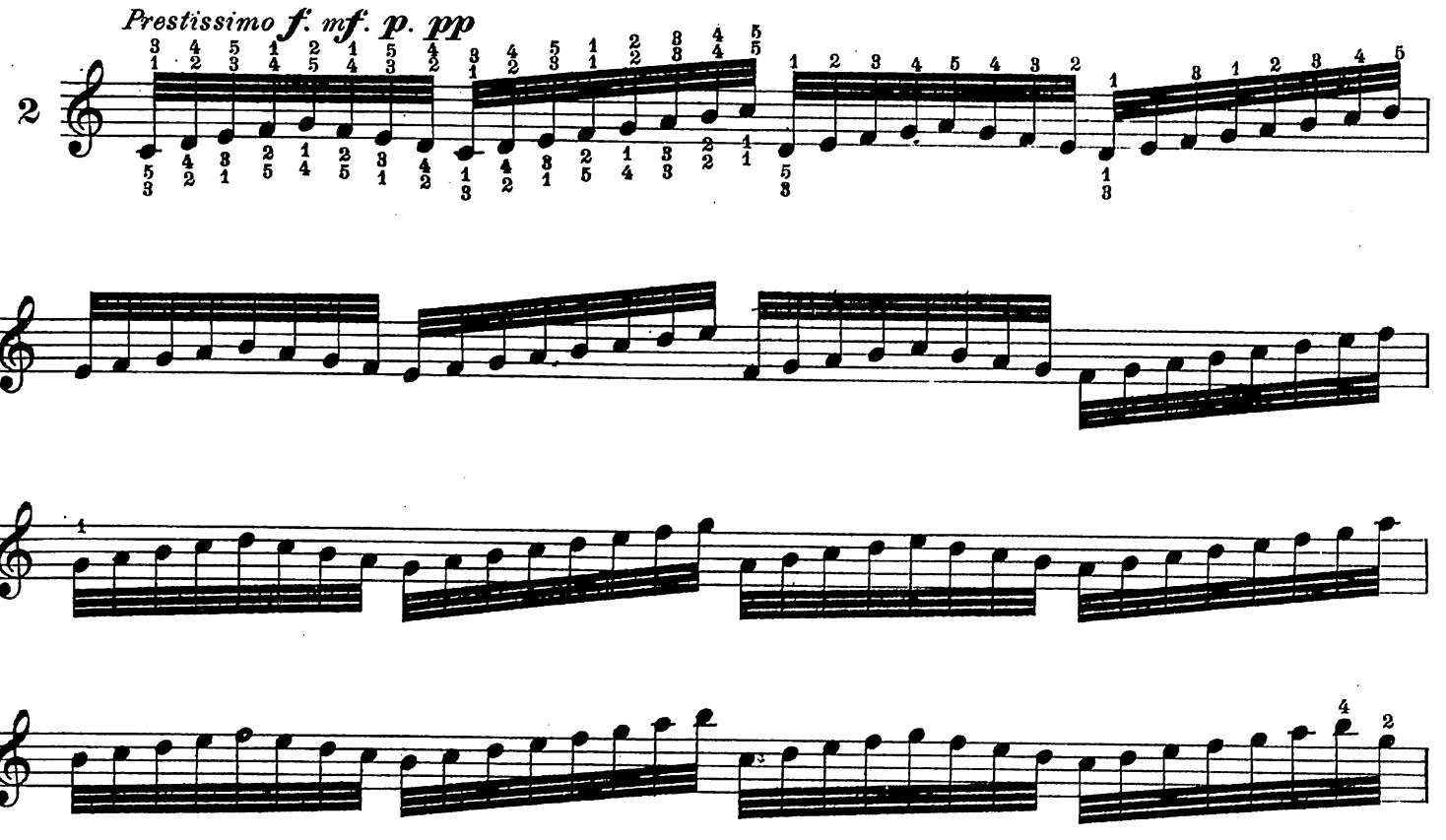
Scales — Gammes

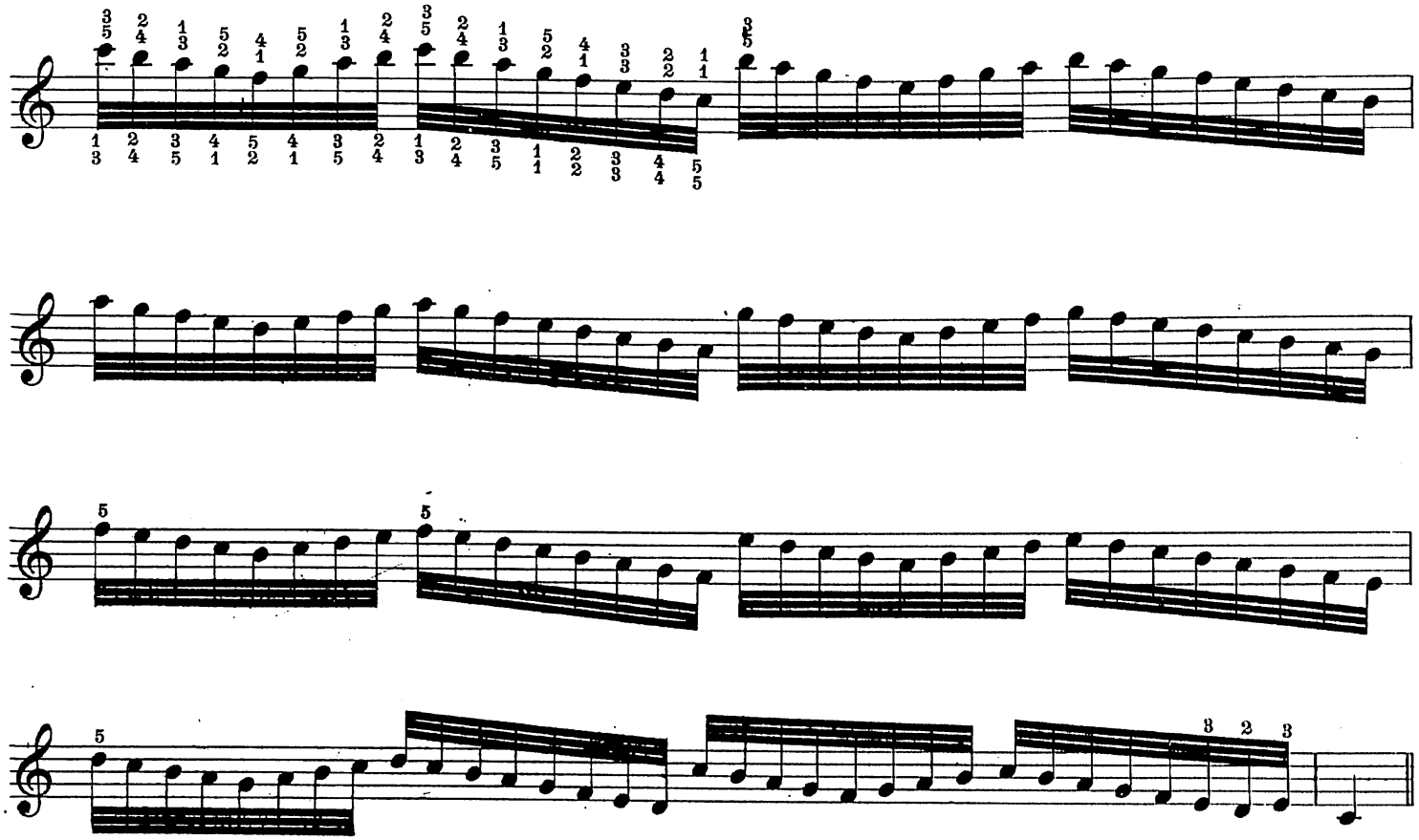
In all Keys
Dans tons les tons

Lento

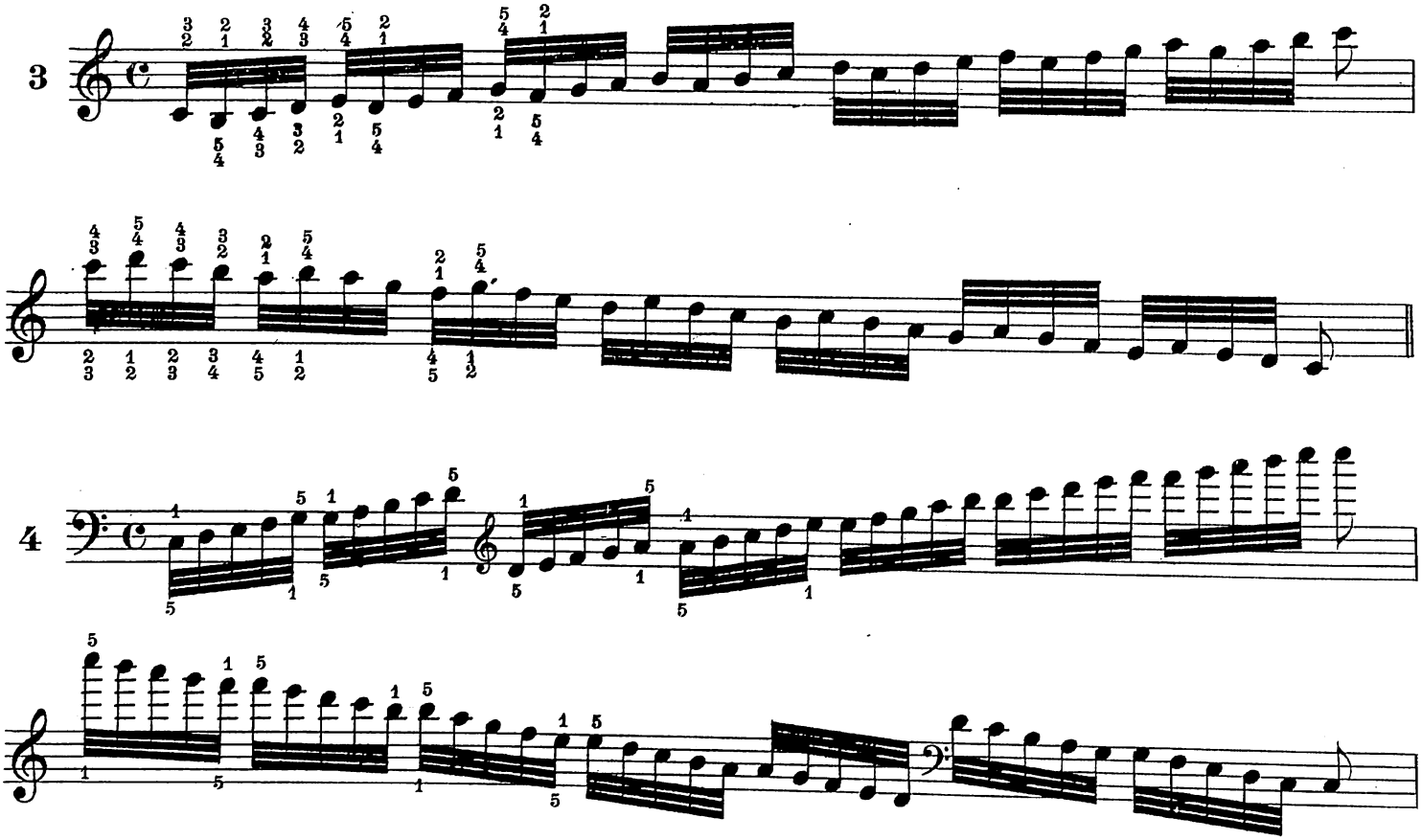


In all Keys
Dans tons les tons

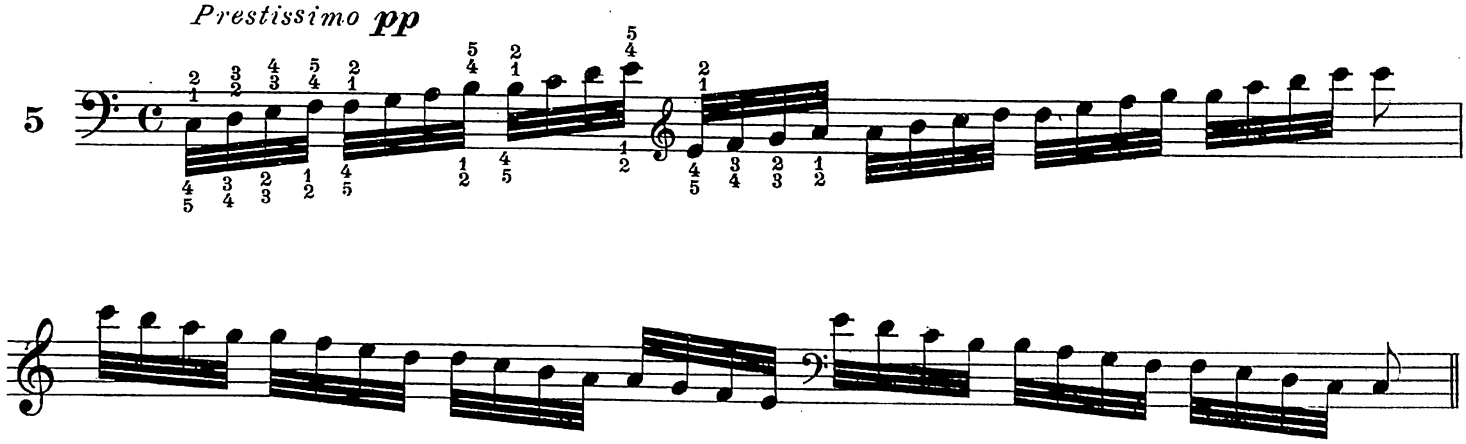




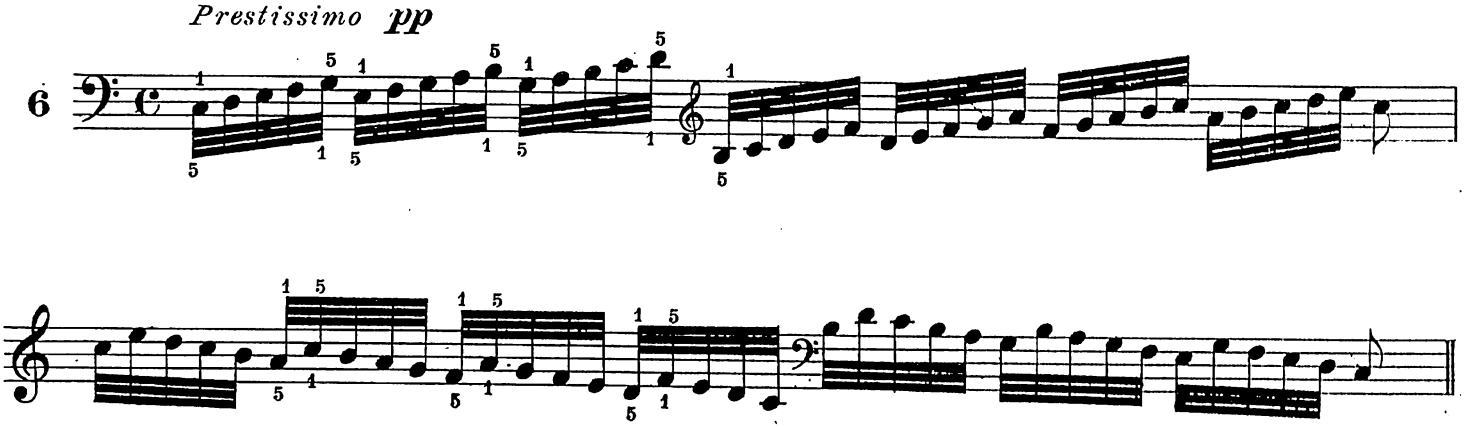
legatissimo ***f*** *– poi leggierissimo* ***pp***



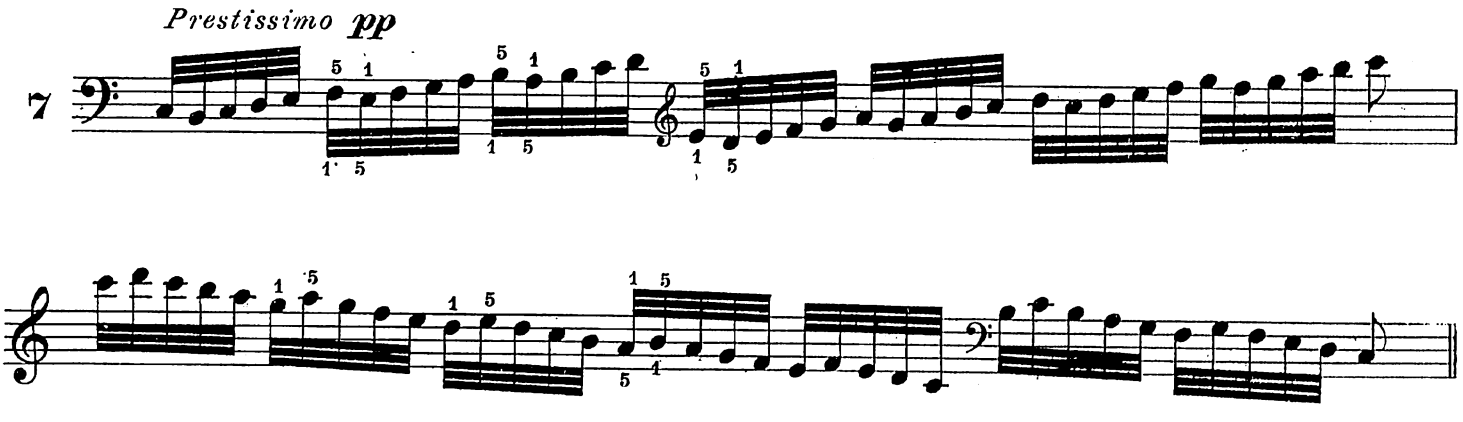
5 *Prestissimo* ***pp***



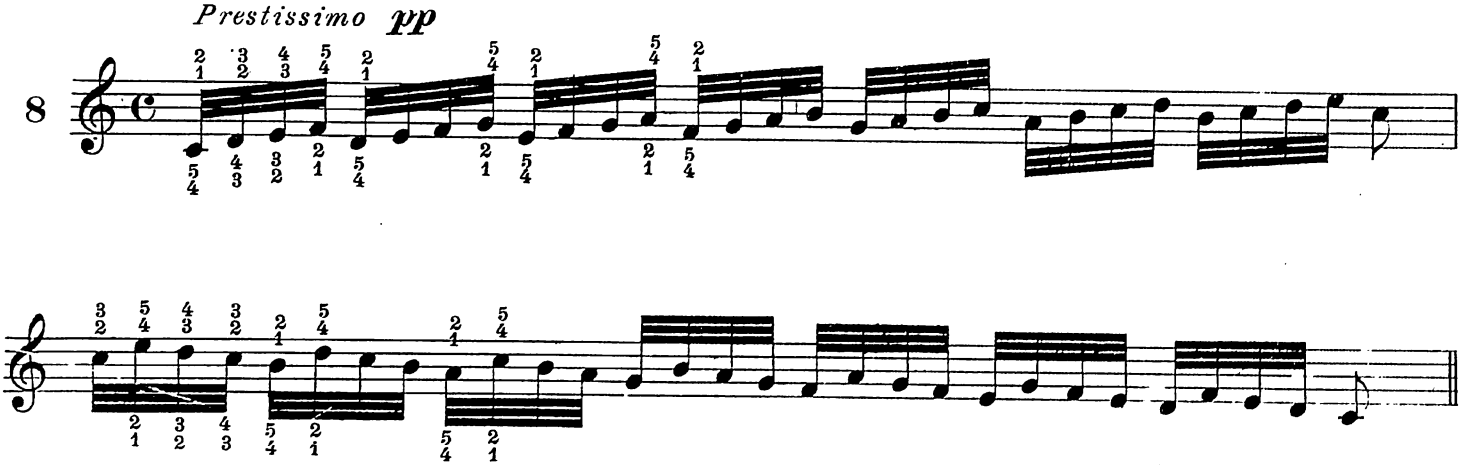
6 *Prestissimo* ***pp***



7 *Prestissimo* ***pp***



8 *Prestissimo* ***pp***



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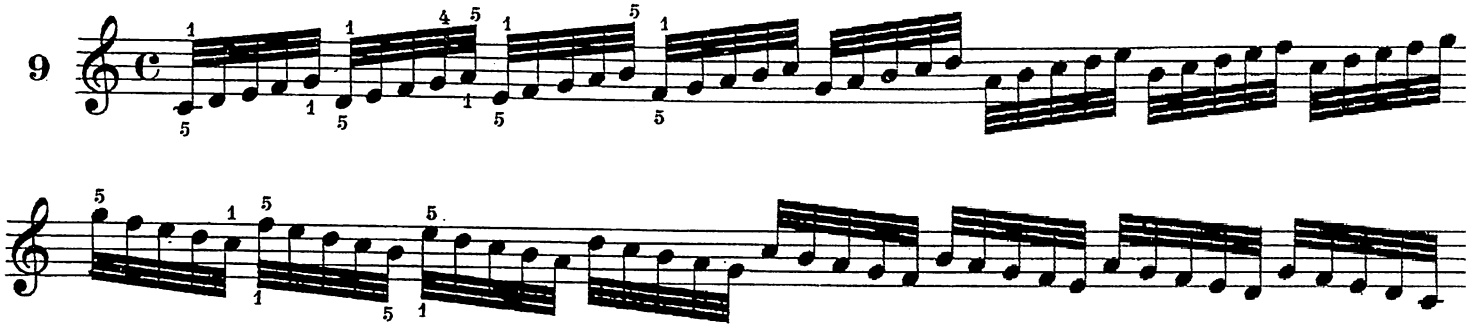
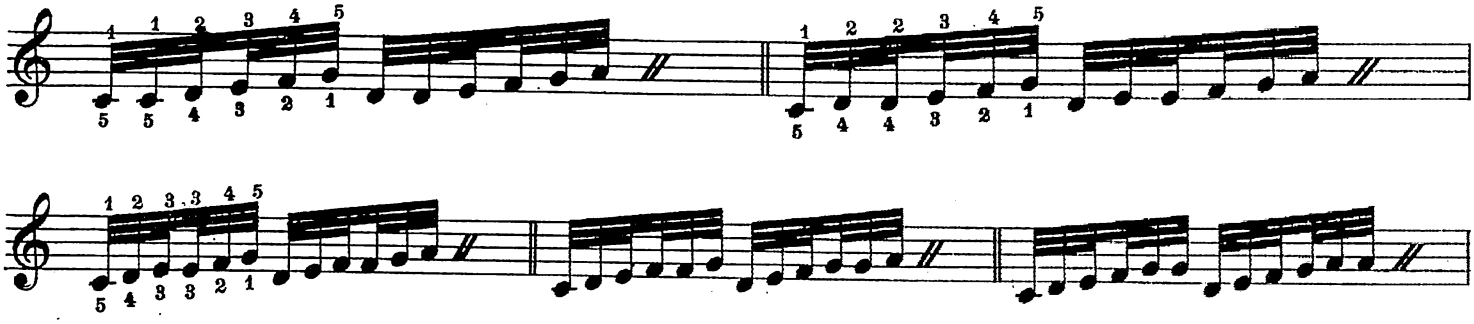


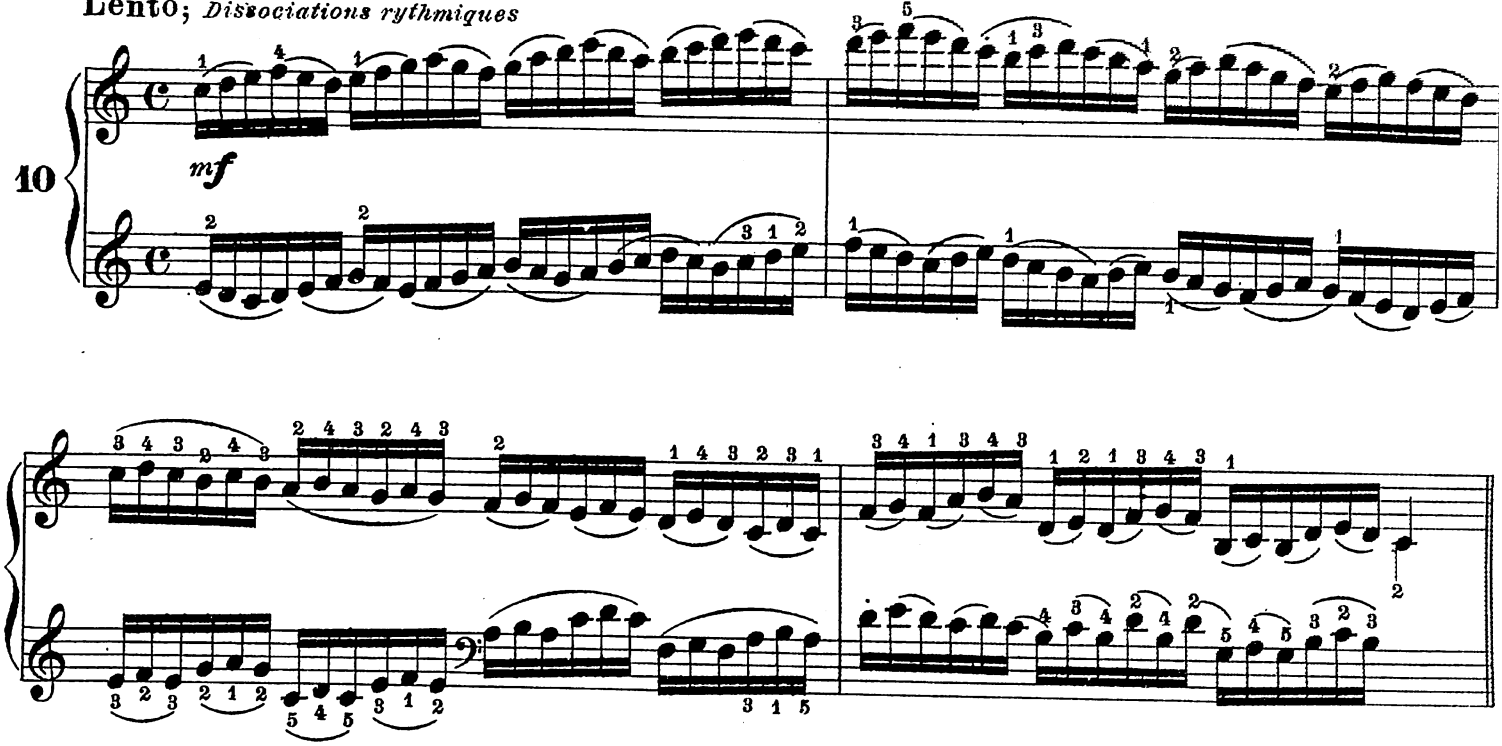
Variations of Nº 9
Variantes pour le 9



Varied phrasings
Lento; *Dissociations rythmiques*

10

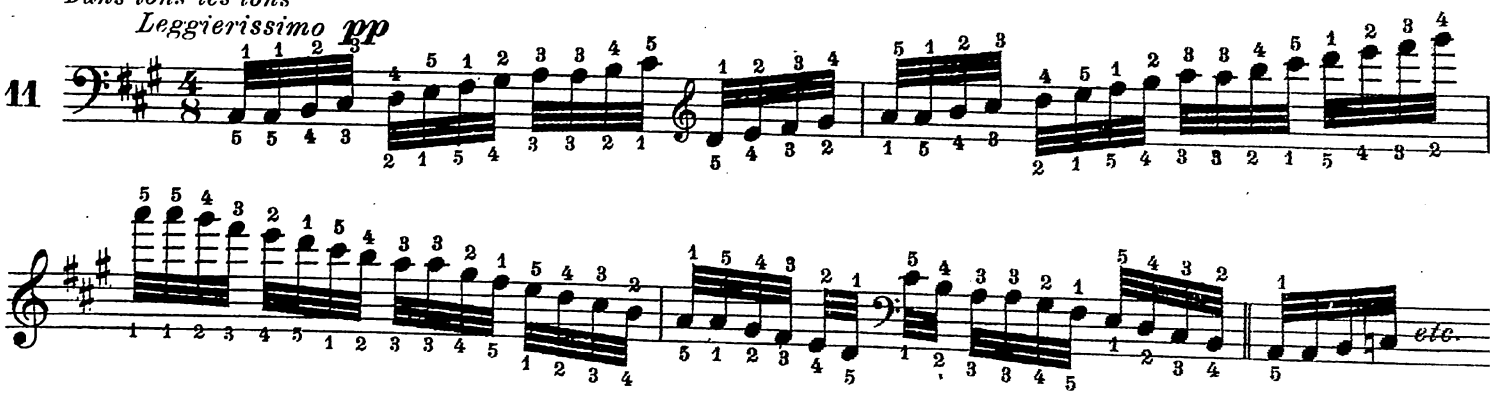
mf



In all Keys
Dans tons les tons

Leggierissimo *pp*

11

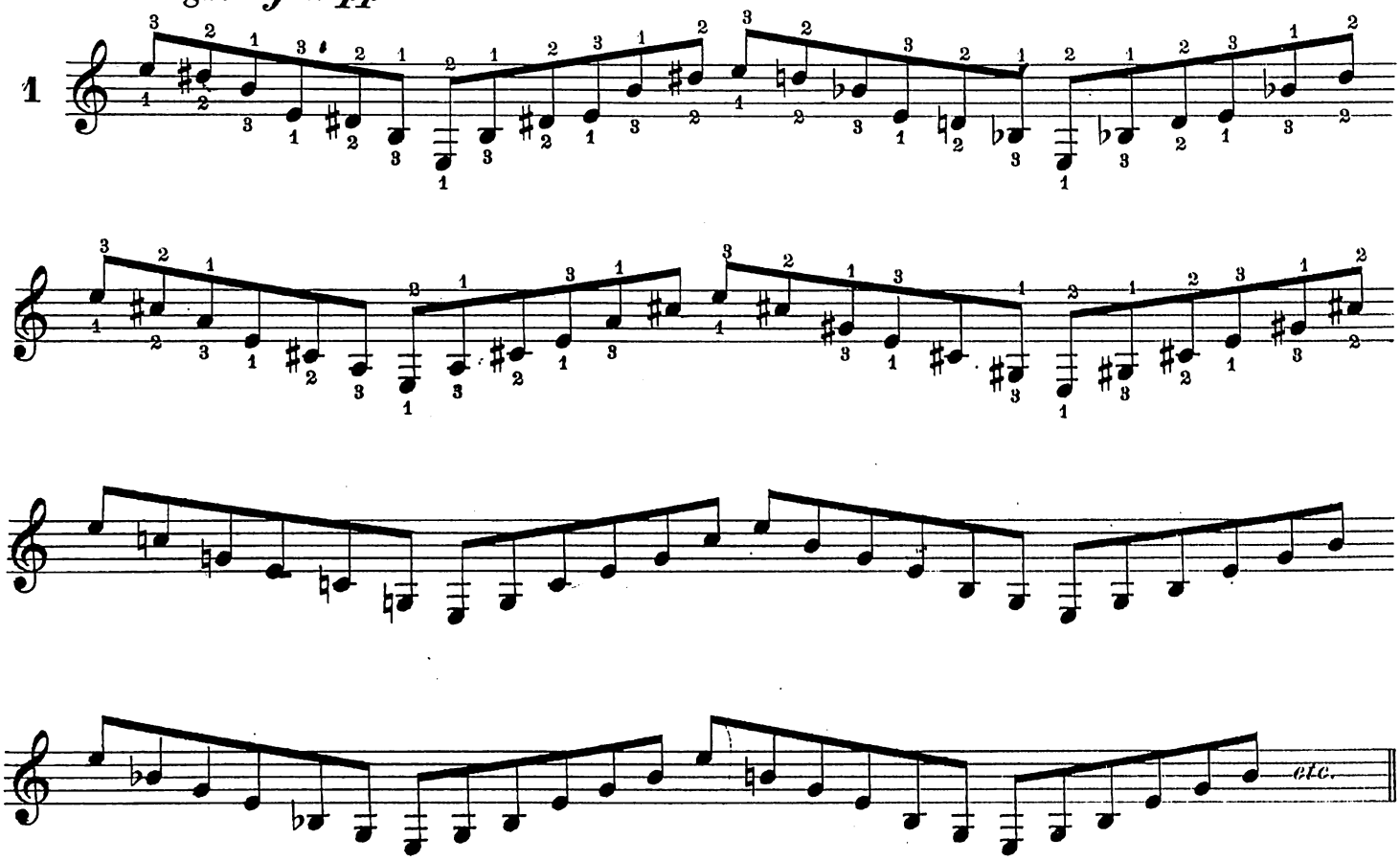


etc.

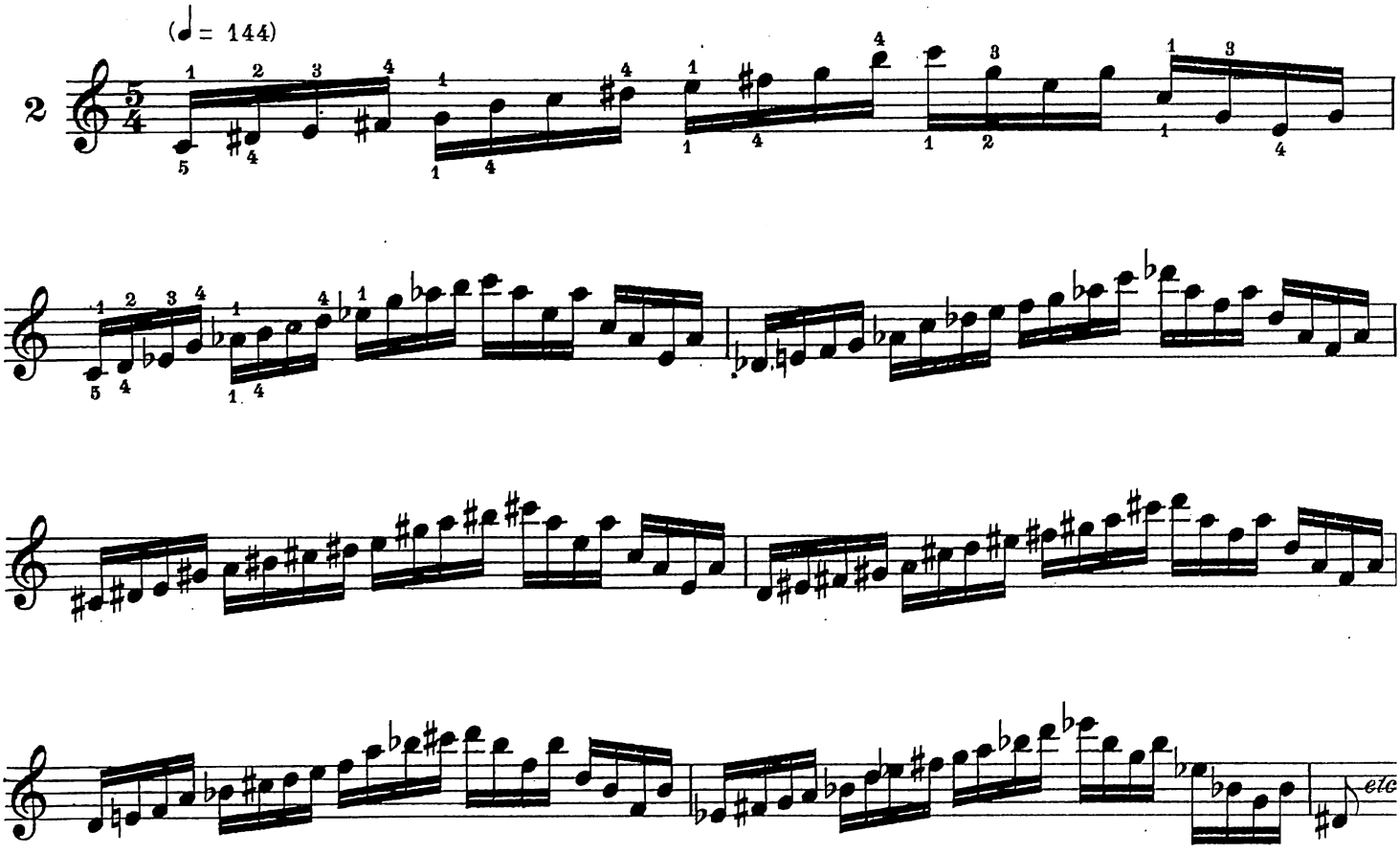
Arpeggios — Arpèges

Allegro *mf et pp*

1



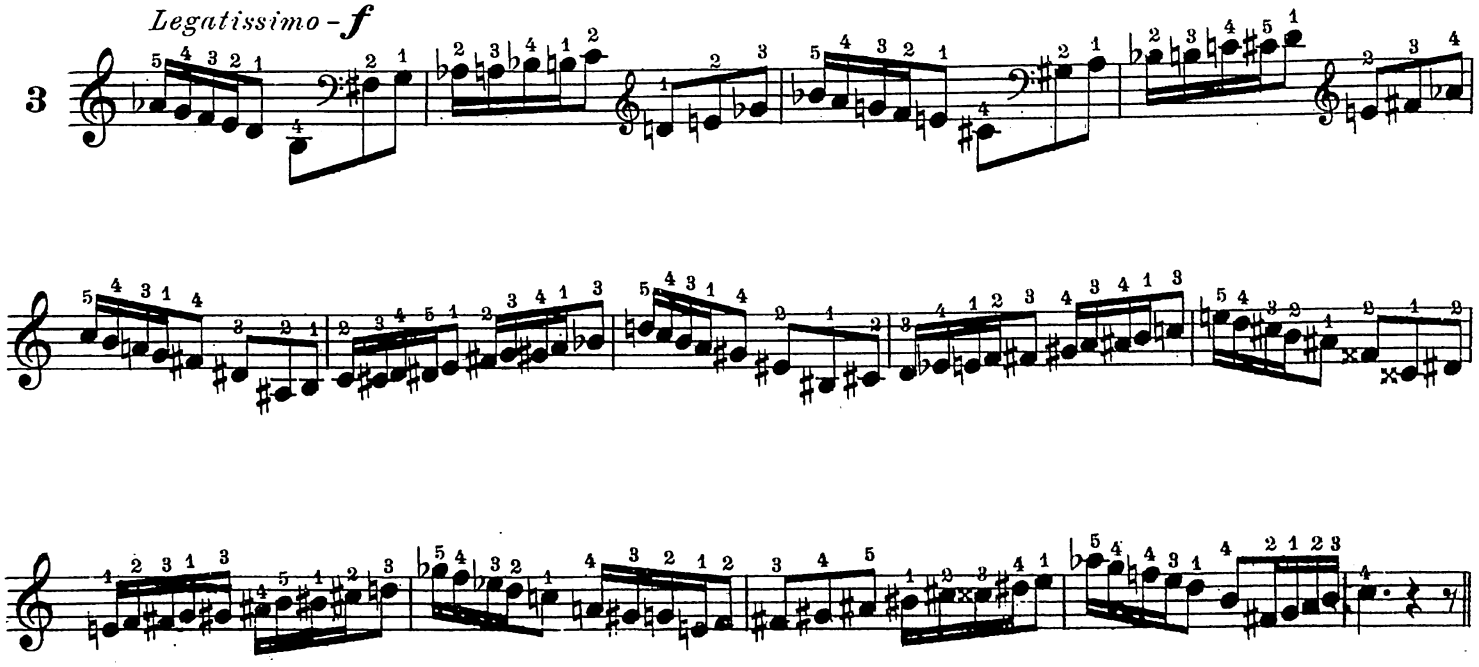
2



Presto (Right hand alone)

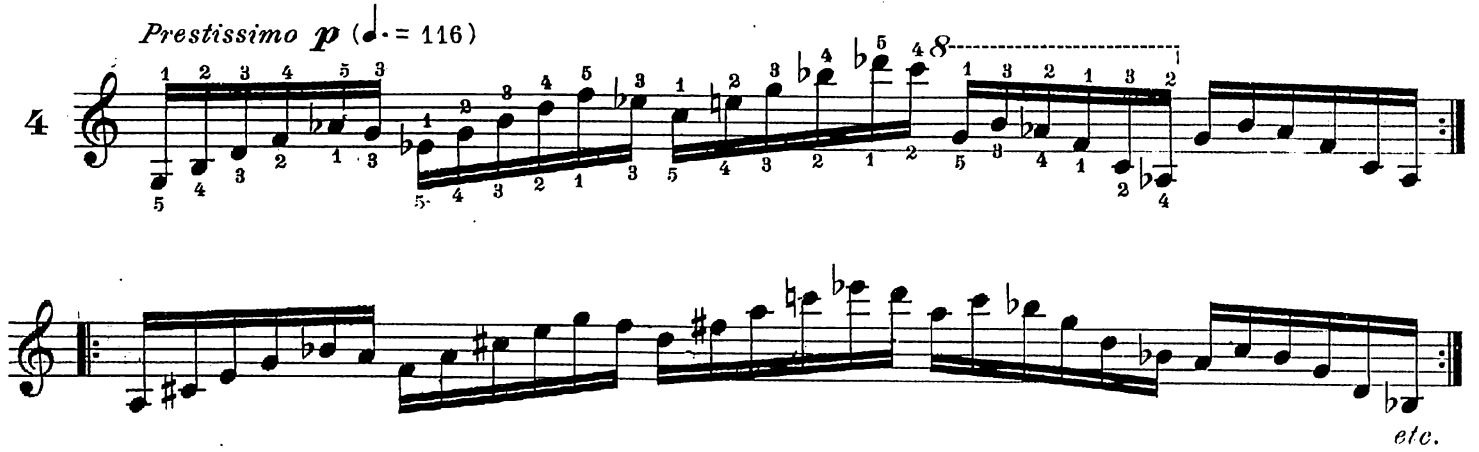
Legatissimo – ***f***

3



Prestissimo ***p*** (♩. = 116)

4

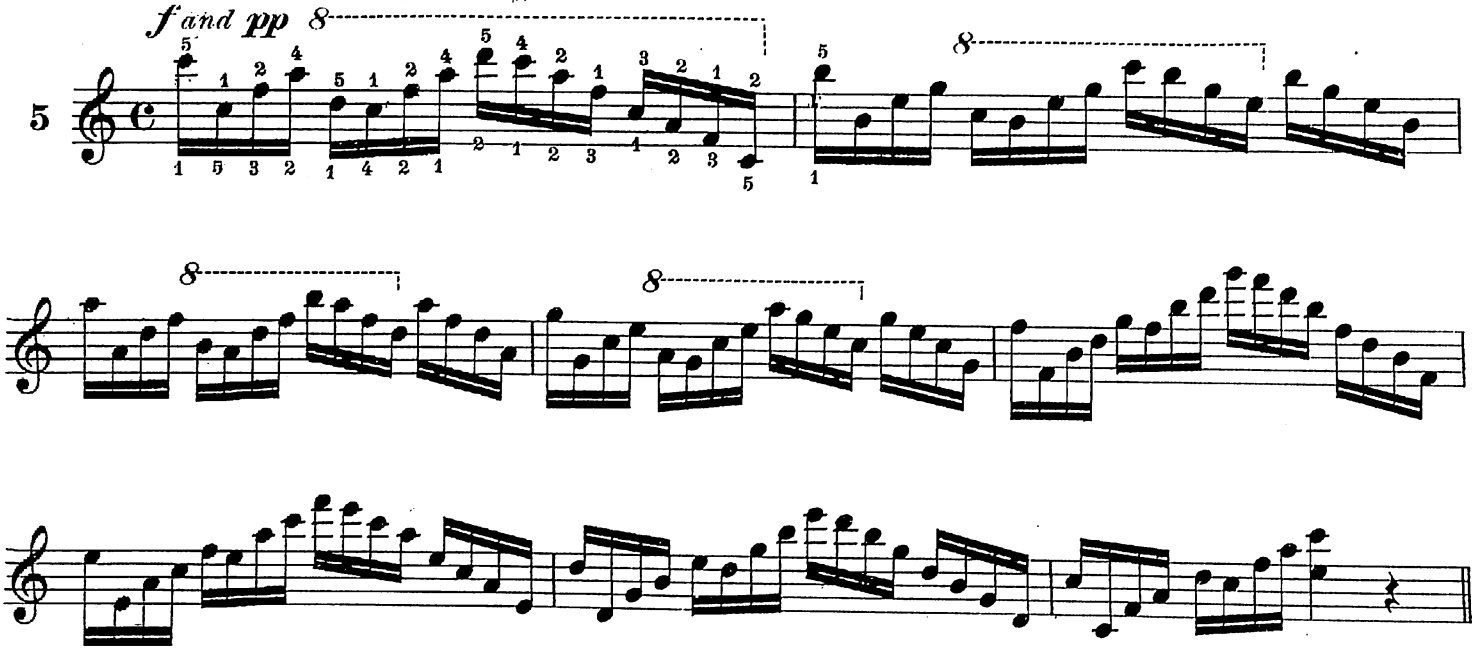


etc.

Presto (♩ = 160) (Also in F♯)

f *and* ***pp***

5



f to *pp* (Other fingerings: 1 3; 1 4.)
f poi pp (*Autres doigtes:* 1 3, 1 4.)

M.M. ♩ = 144

6

M.M. ♩ = 144

7a

Other fingerings: 1 2; 1 3; 1 4; 1 2 3; 1 2 4; 1 2 5; 1 3 5; 1 3 4; 1 2 3 5; 1 2 4 5; 1 3 4 5; 1 2 3 4 5, for slow practise.

Autres doigtes: 1 2; 1 3; 1 4; 1 2 3, 1 2 4; 1 2 5; 1 3 5; 1 3 4; 1 2 3 5; 1 2 4 5; 1 3 4 5; 1 2 3 4 5, *à travailler lentement*

7b

7c

7d

8

In all Keys.

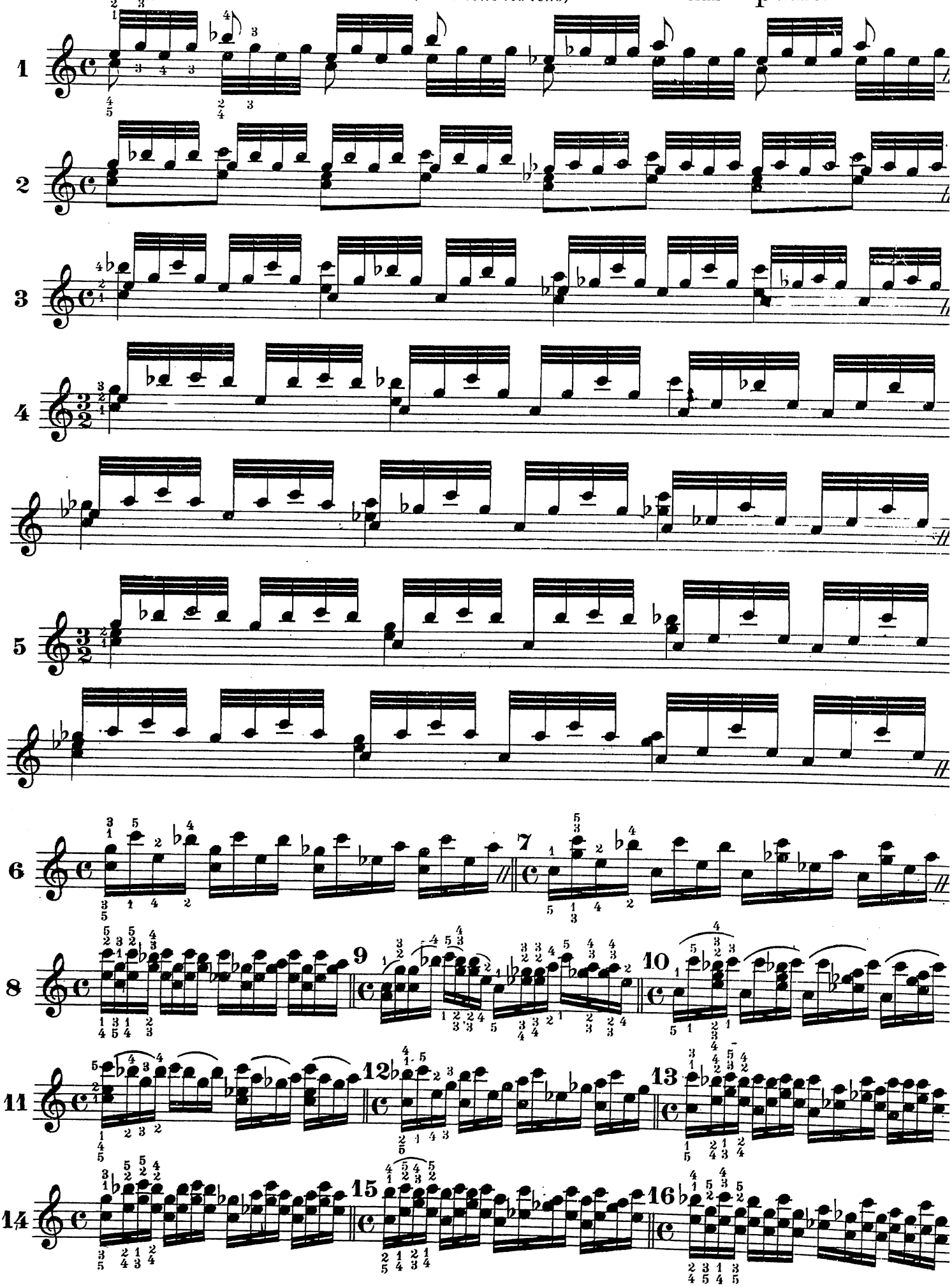
Dans tous les tons.

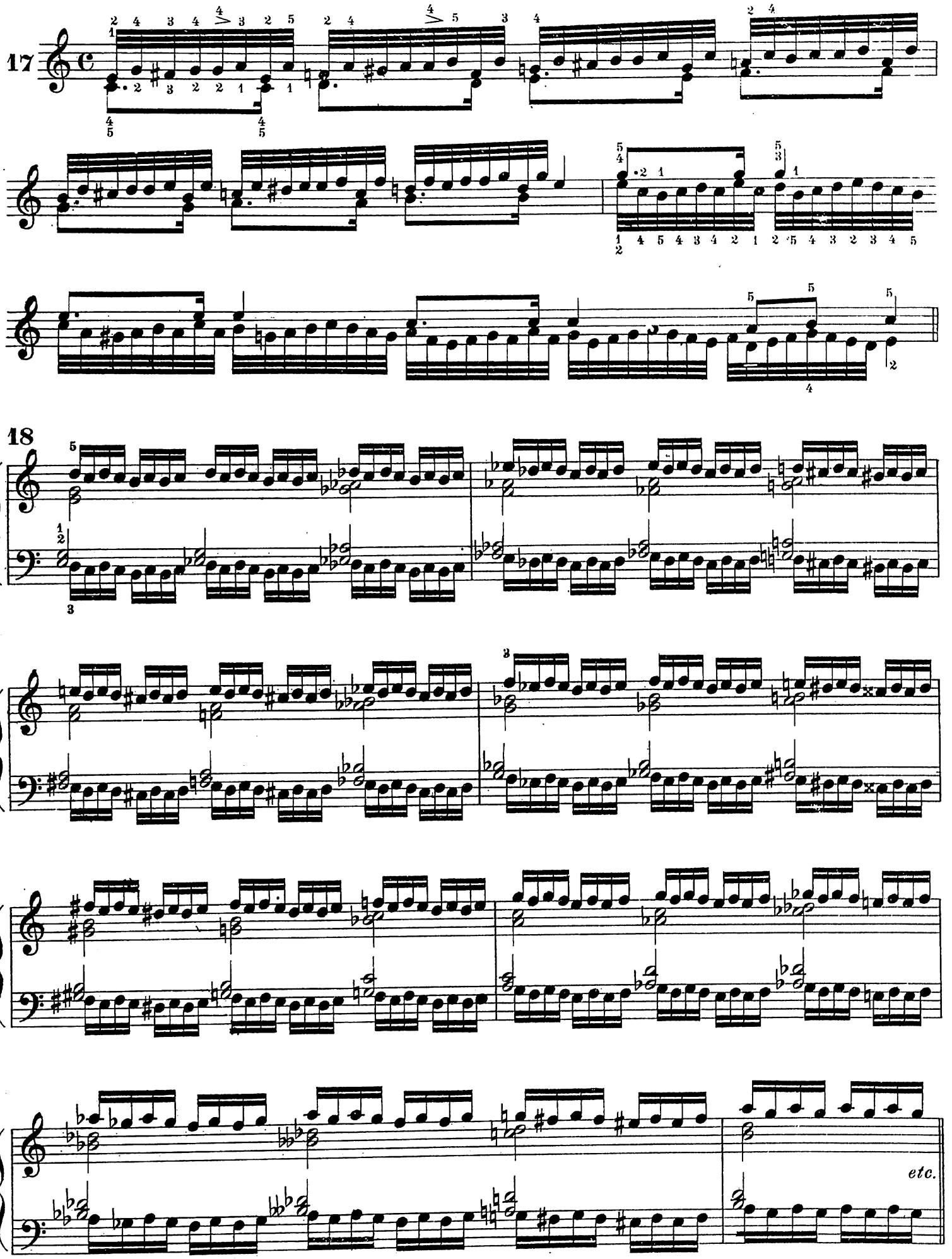
9

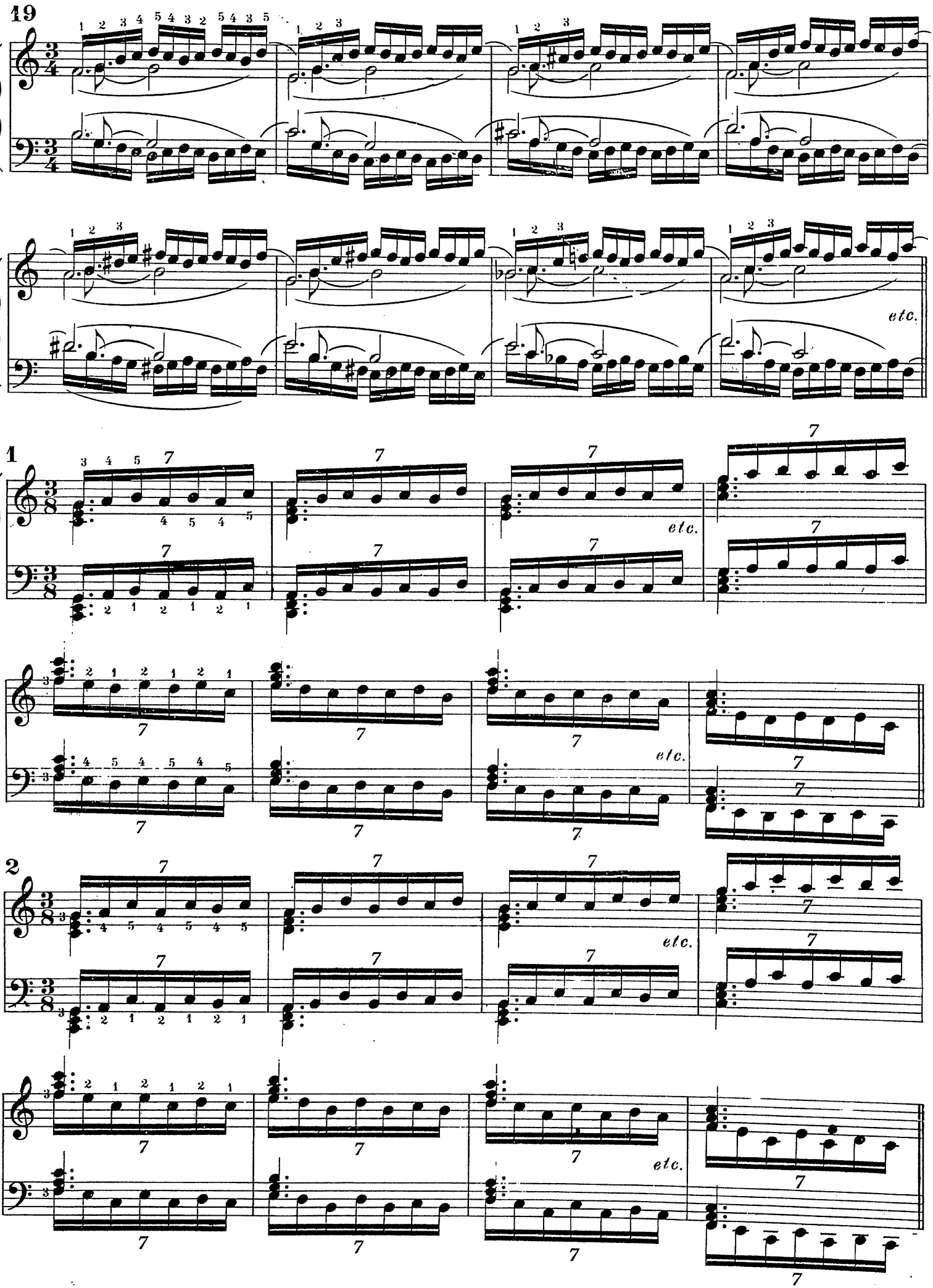
Independence

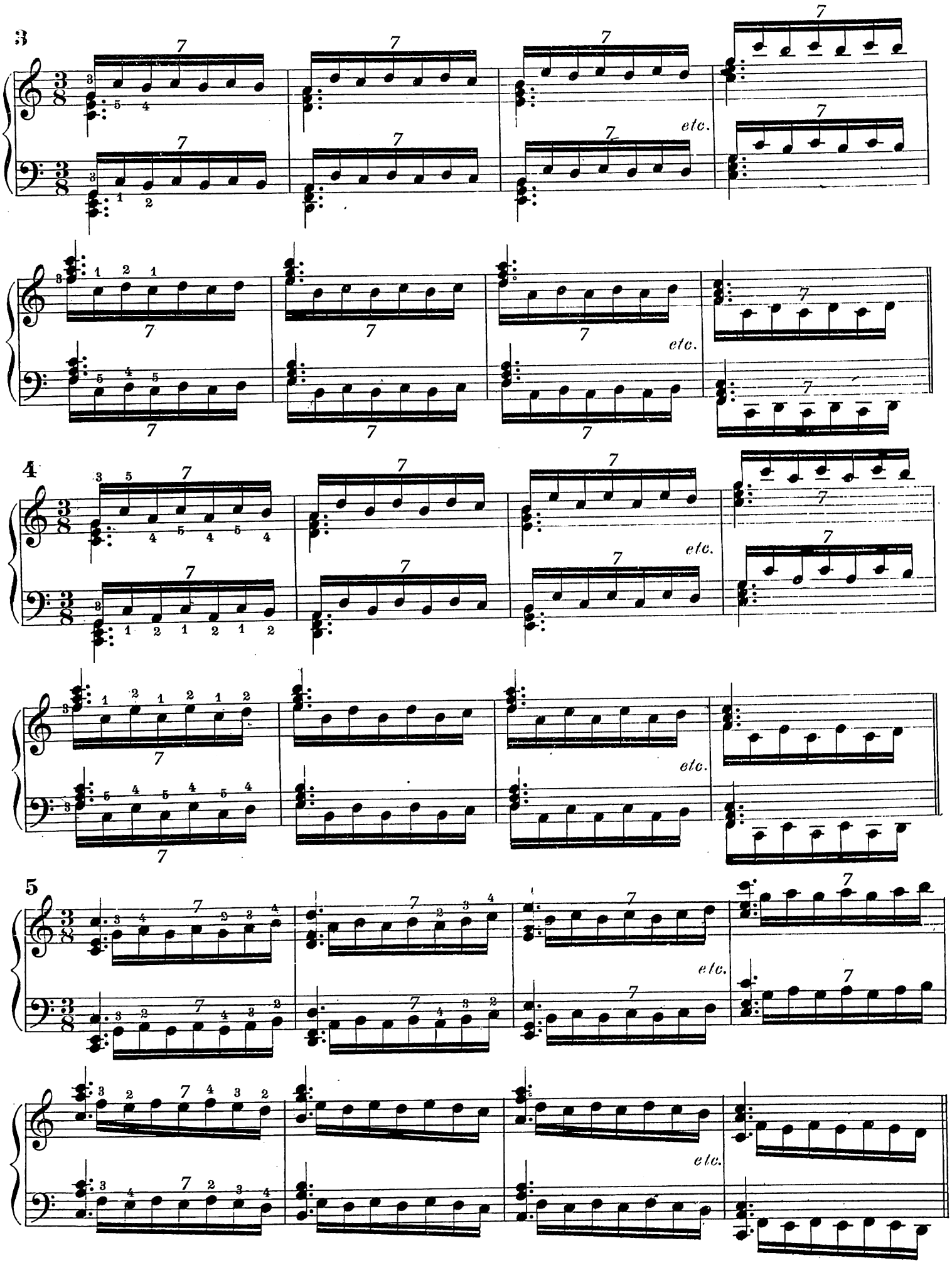
In all the keys
(Dans tons les tons)

Indépandance




17
18
etc.


19
etc.
1
etc.
2
etc.

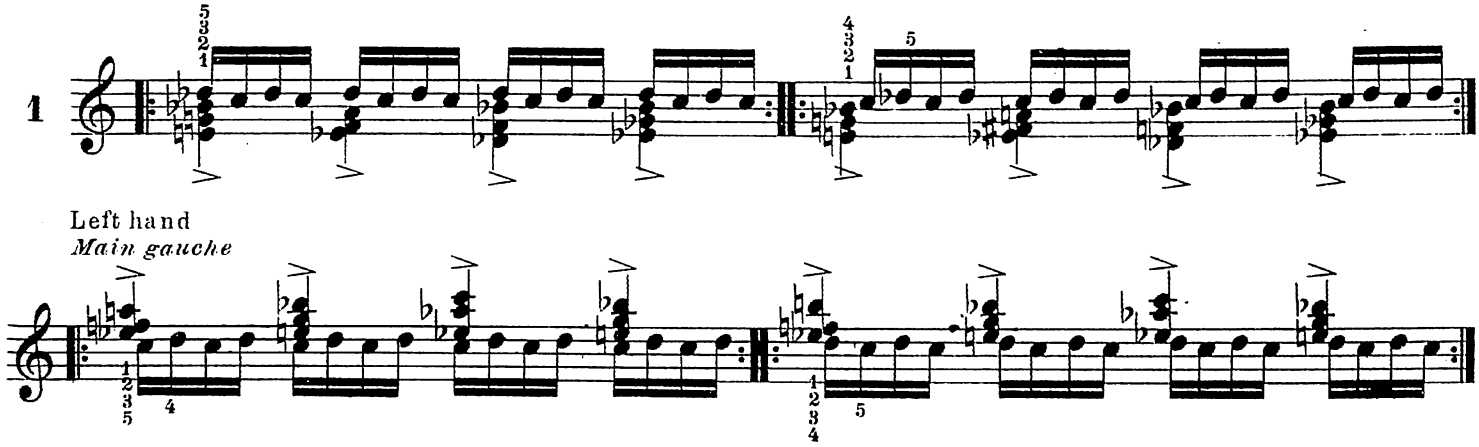

3
4
5
etc.

Trills — Trilles

1

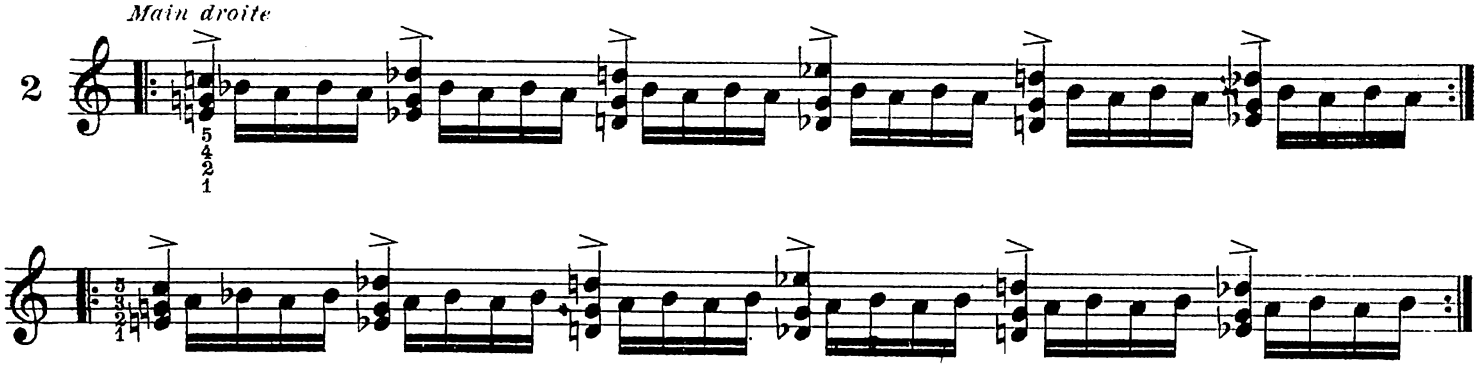
Right Hand
Main droite

Left hand
Main gauche



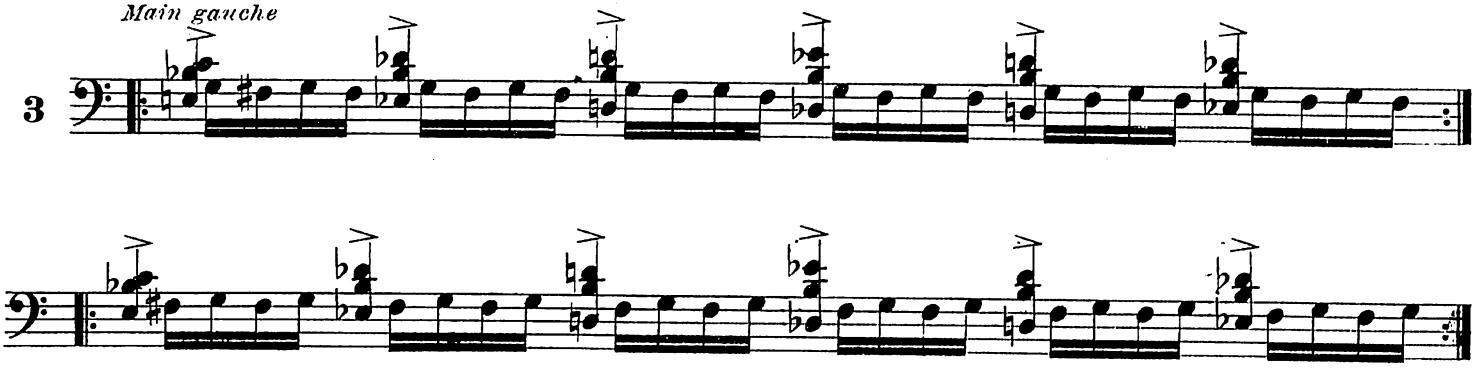
2

Right Hand
Main droite



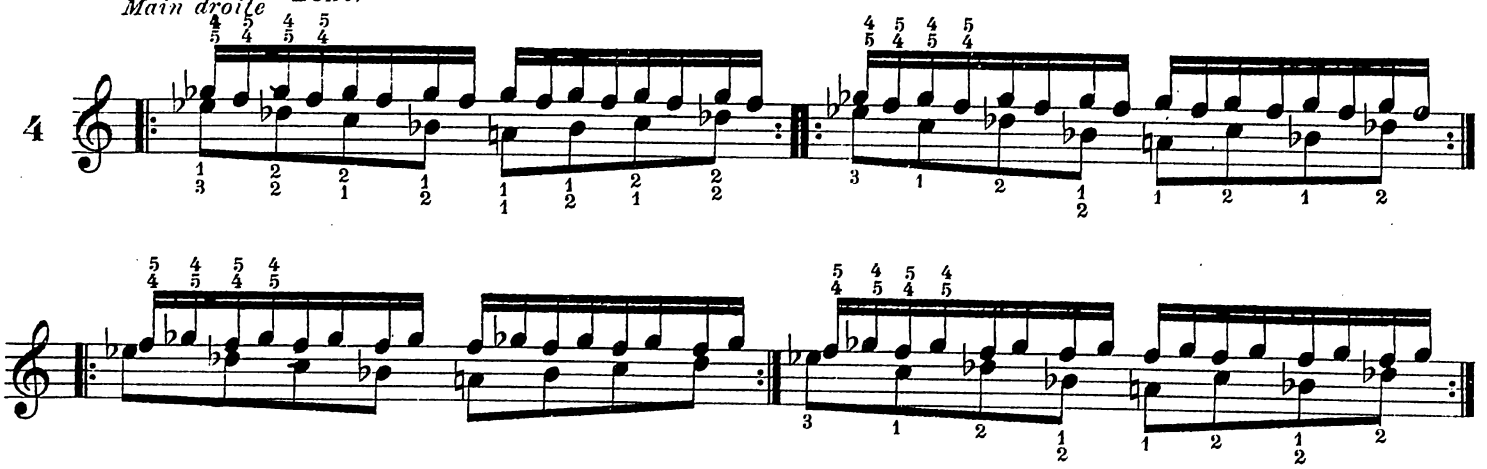
3

Left Hand
Main gauche



4

Right Hand (Lent)
Main droite



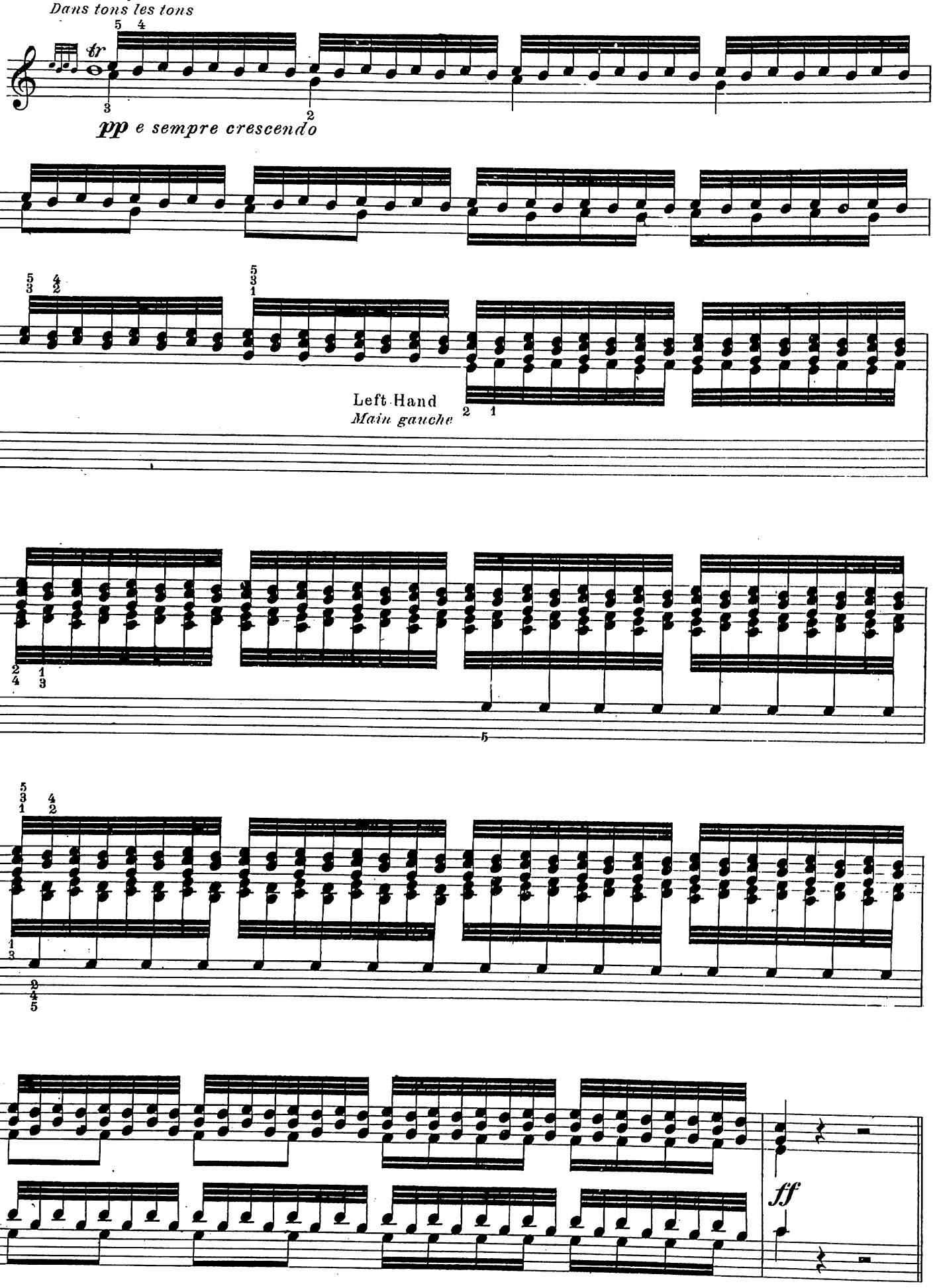
Left Hand
Main gauche

4

5

Vivace

In all Keys
Dans tons les tons



Double Notes

Doubles notes

In all Keys

Presto *Dans tons les tons*

Other fingerings 45/21 45/12 45/13 54/23 34/21 35/21

Autrs doigtes

ff

(2d time *pp*)

(la seconda volta pp)

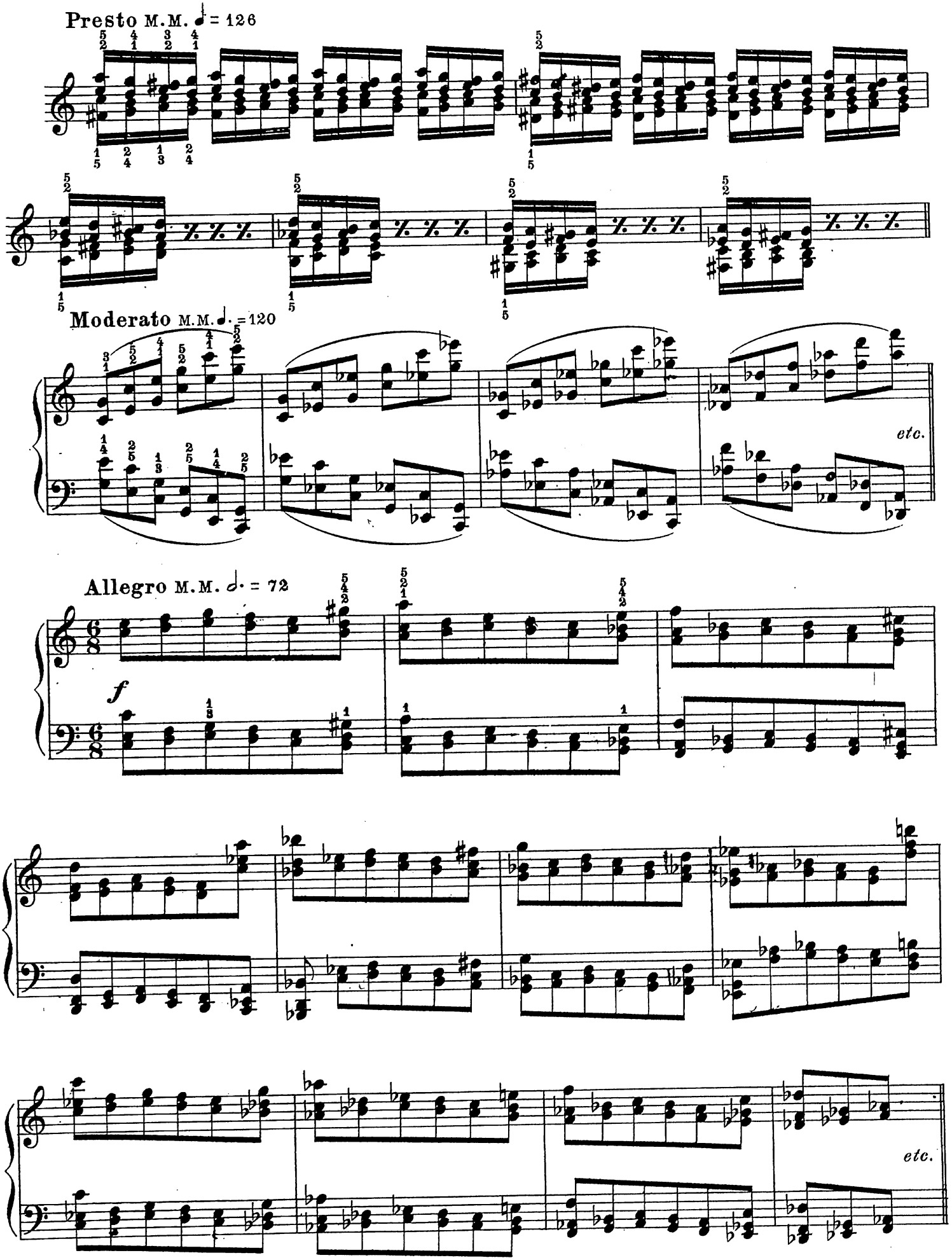
Allegro M.M. ♩=126

etc.

Allegro M.M. ♩ = 126

(legatissimo)

Allegro M.M. ♩ = 132


Presto M.M. ♩ = 126
Moderato M.M. ♩. = 120
etc.
Allegro M.M. 𝅗𝅥. = 72
f
etc.

Presto M.M. ♩.=152

p

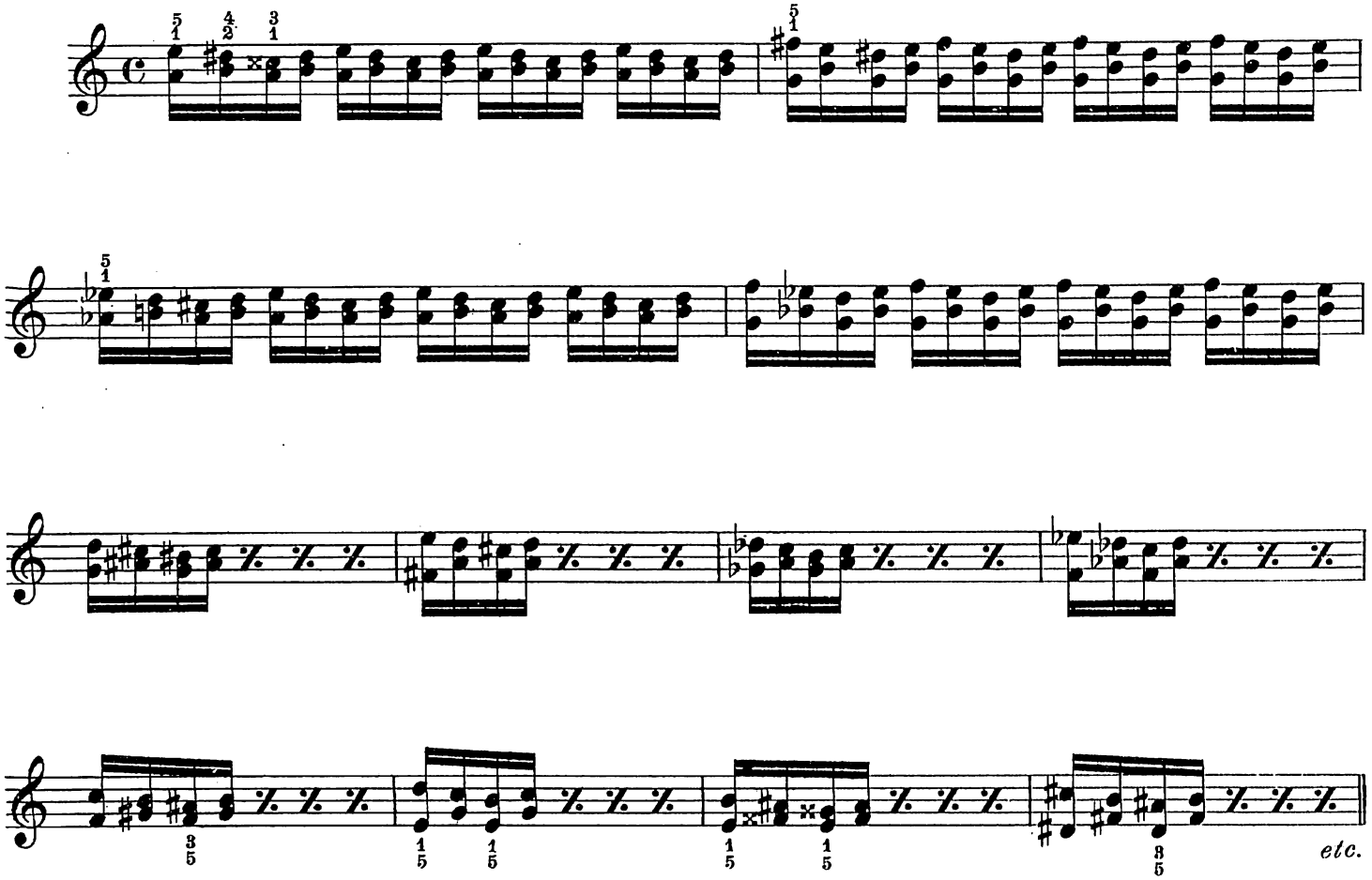
8

Presto 𝅗𝅥 = 120

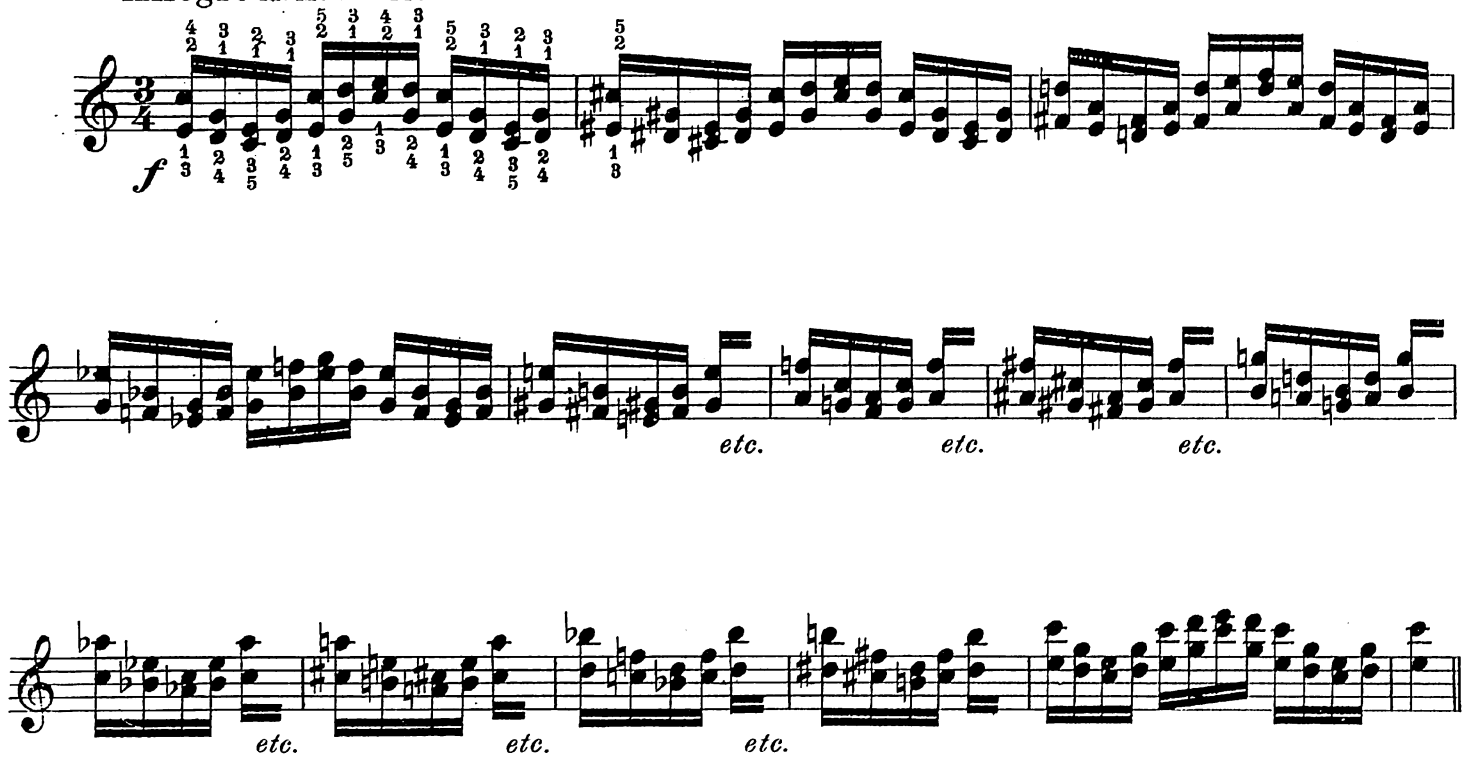
8

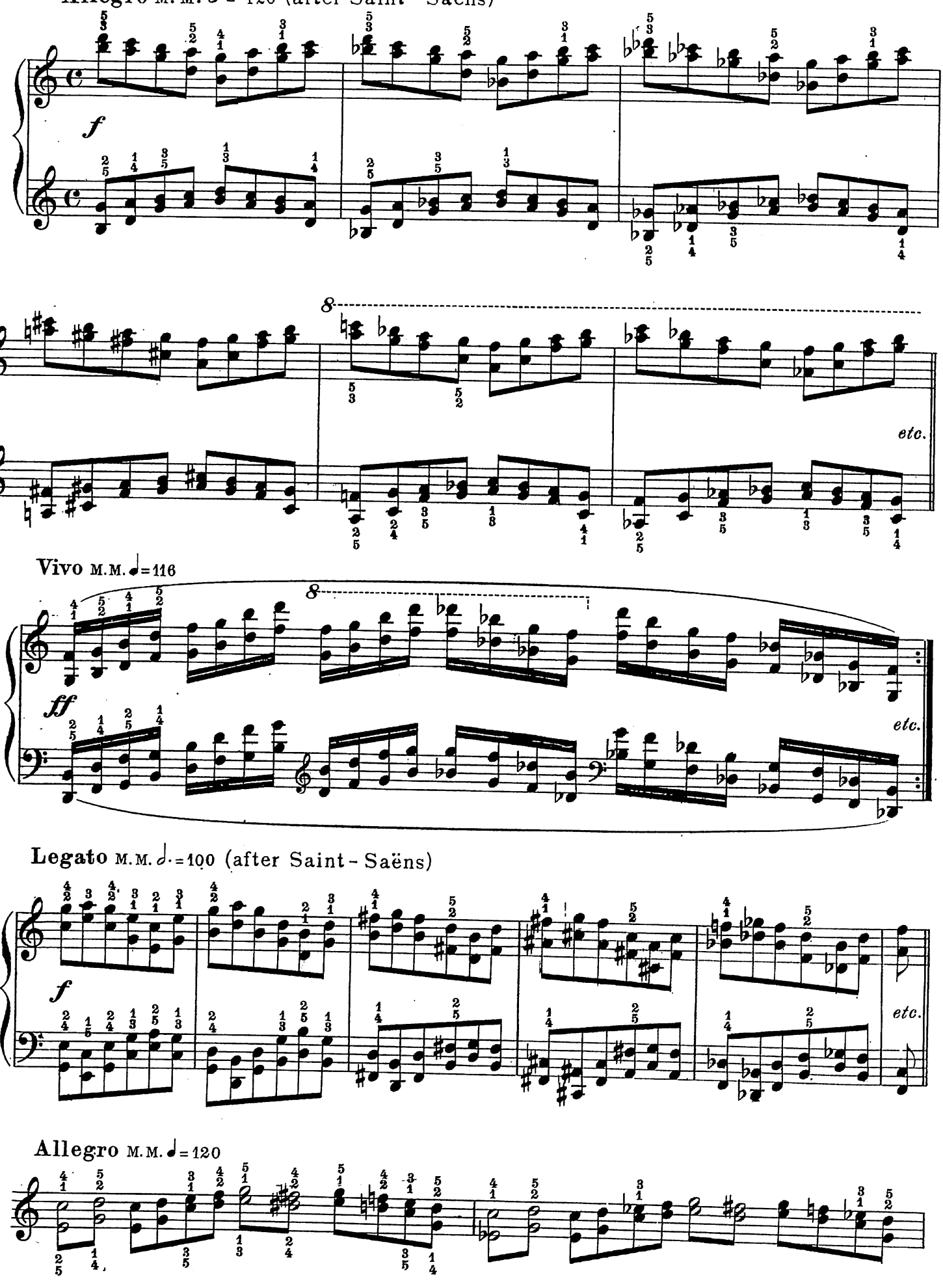
etc.

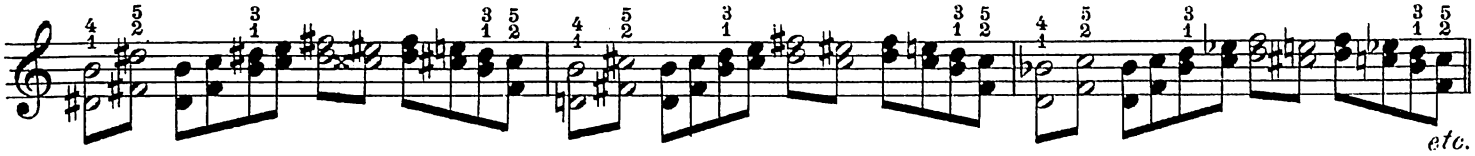
Presto – *pp* M.M. ♩=132



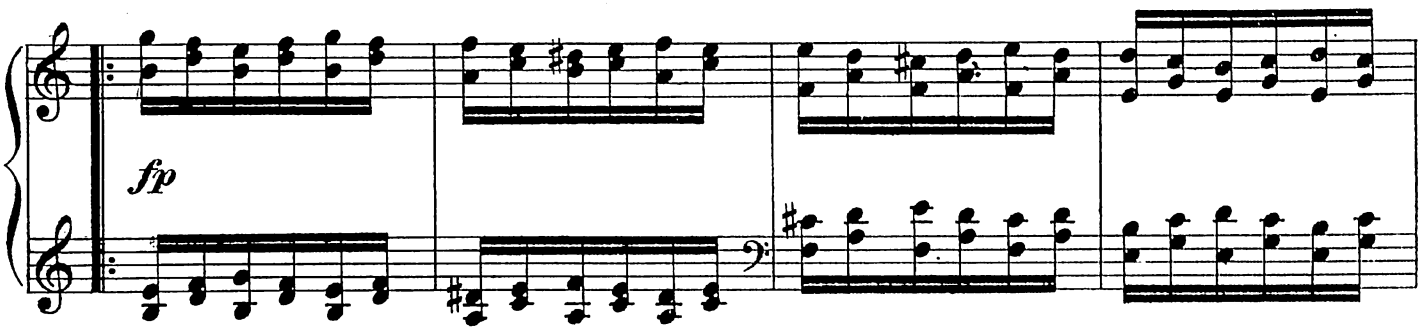
Allegro M.M. ♩ = 116

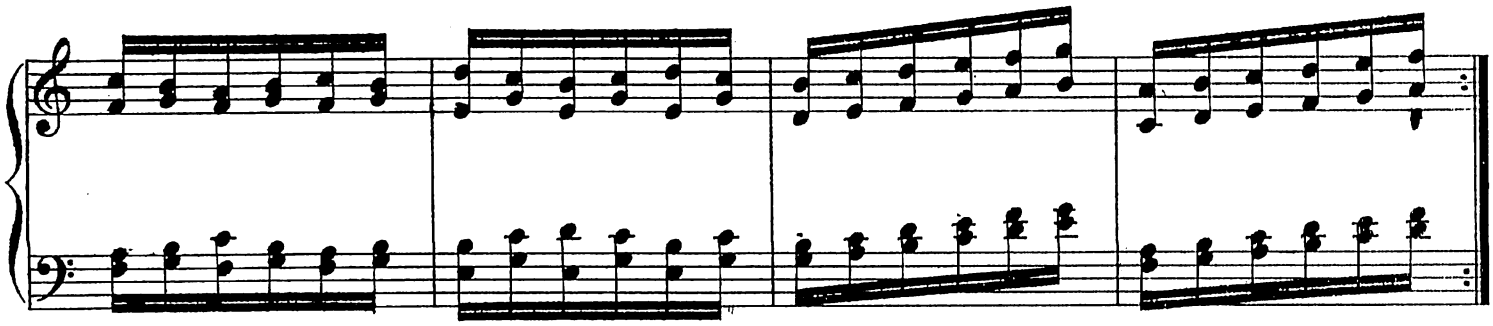


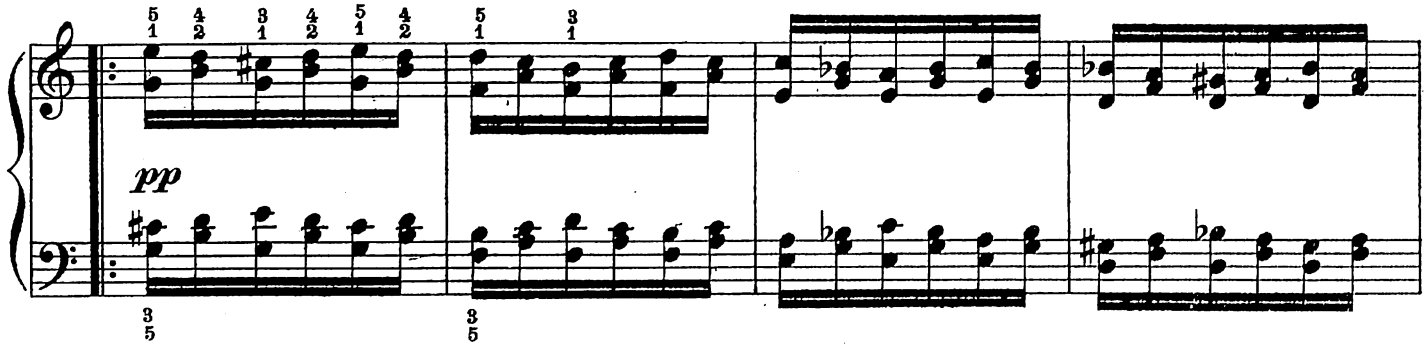

Allegro M. M. ♩ = 120 (after Saint - Saëns)
f
8
etc.
Vivo M.M. ♩=116
ff
etc.
Legato M.M. ♩.=100 (after Saint - Saëns)
f
etc.
Allegro M.M. ♩=120

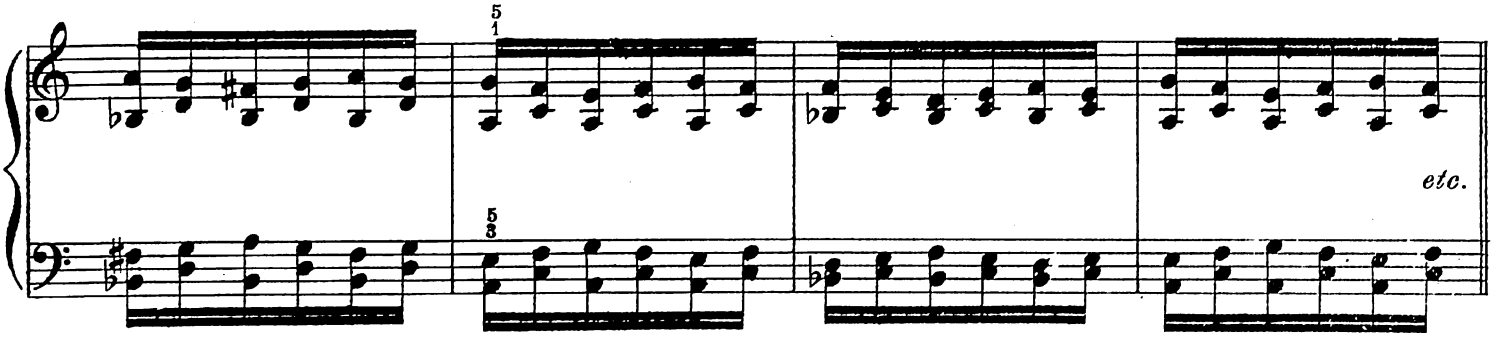


Presto M.M. ♩.=76 (after E. M. Delaborde)

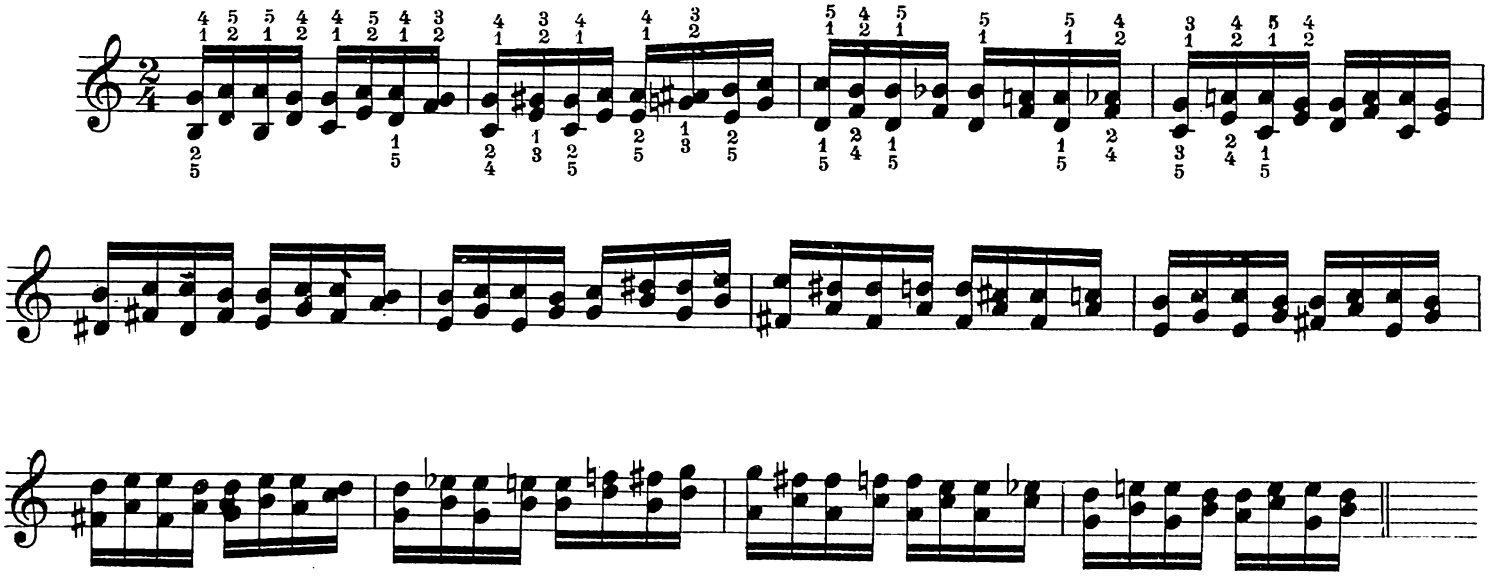




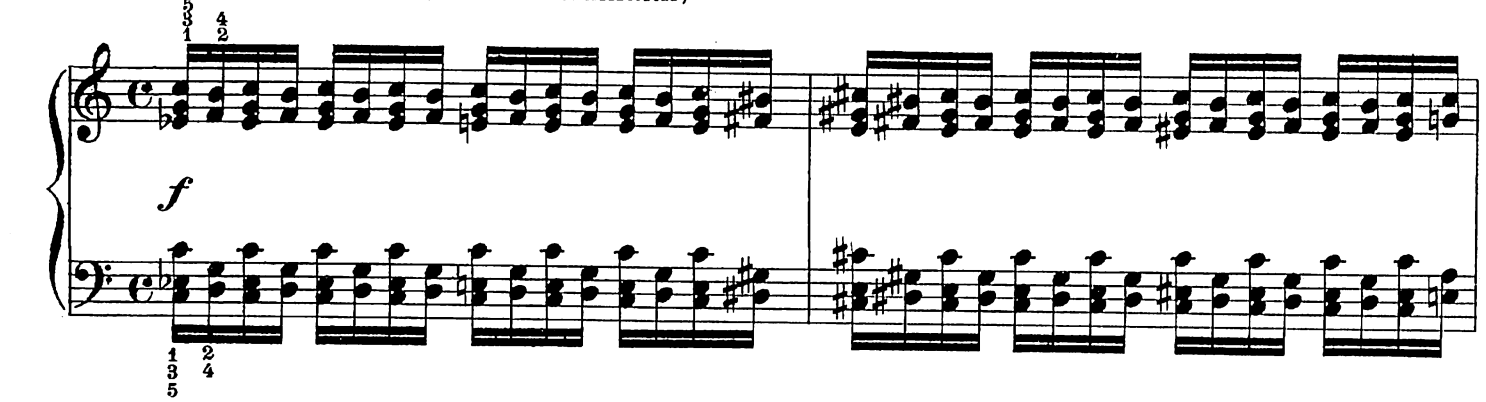


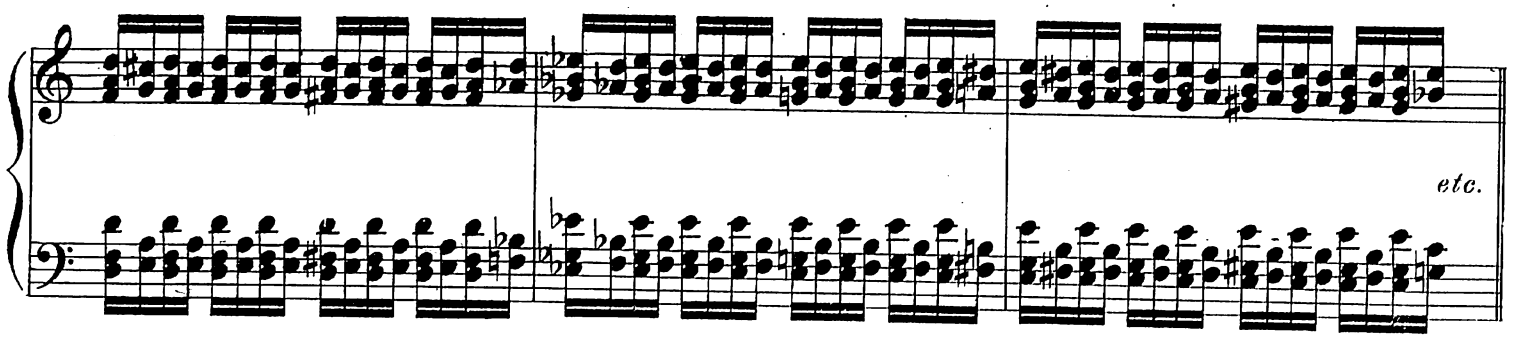


Leggierissimo M. M. ♩ = 126

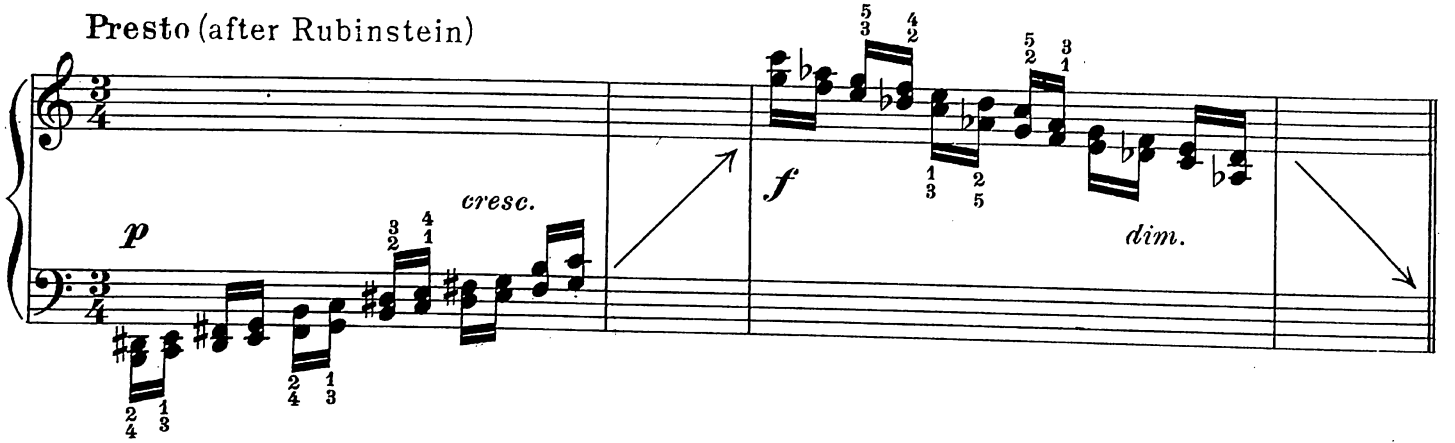


Andante M.M. ♩=112 (after Schumann)

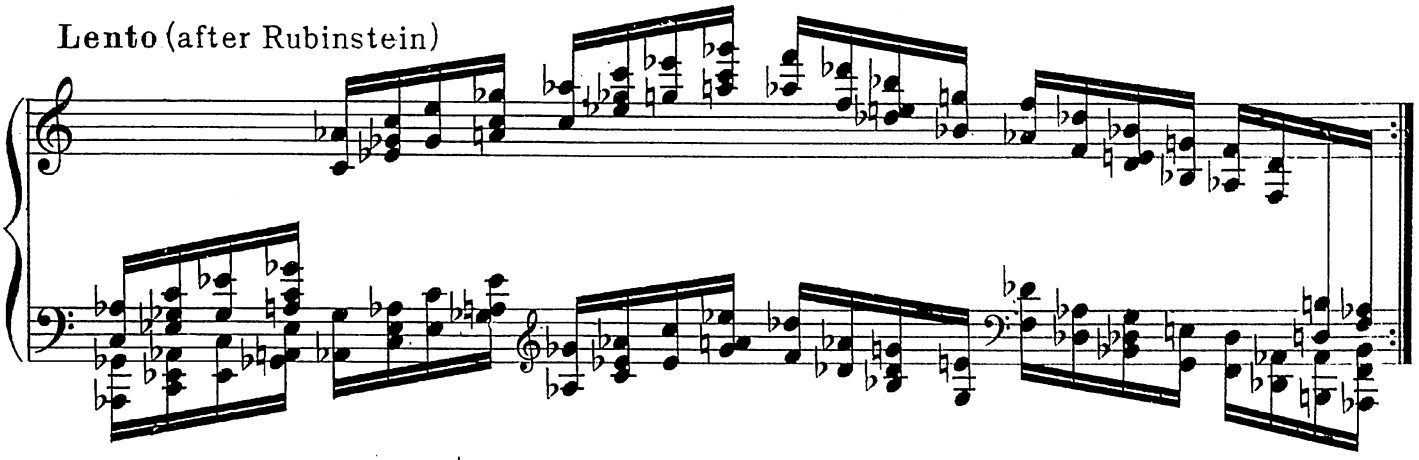




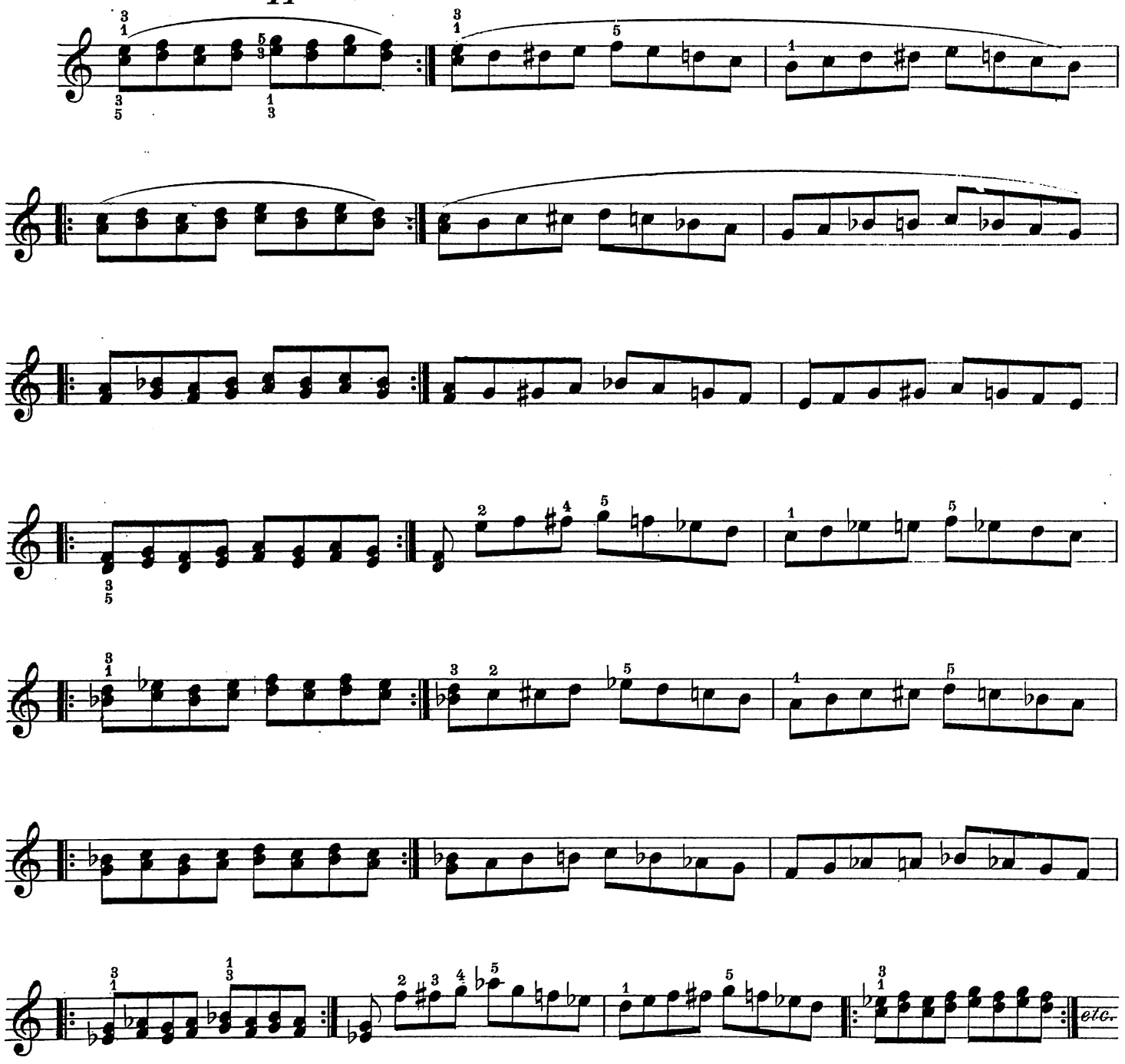
Presto (after Rubinstein)



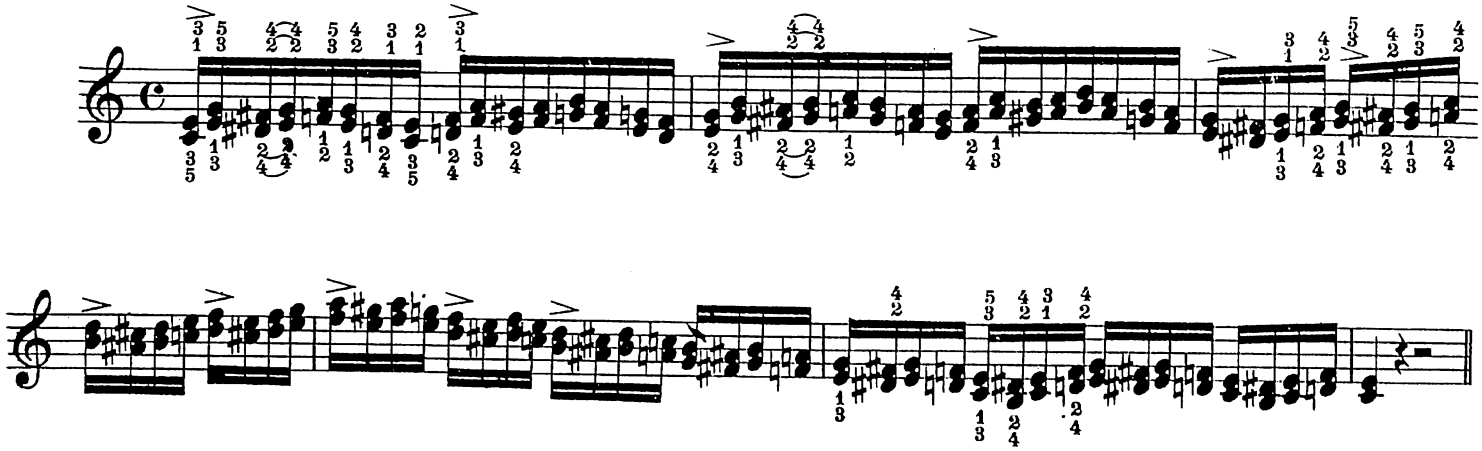
Lento (after Rubinstein)



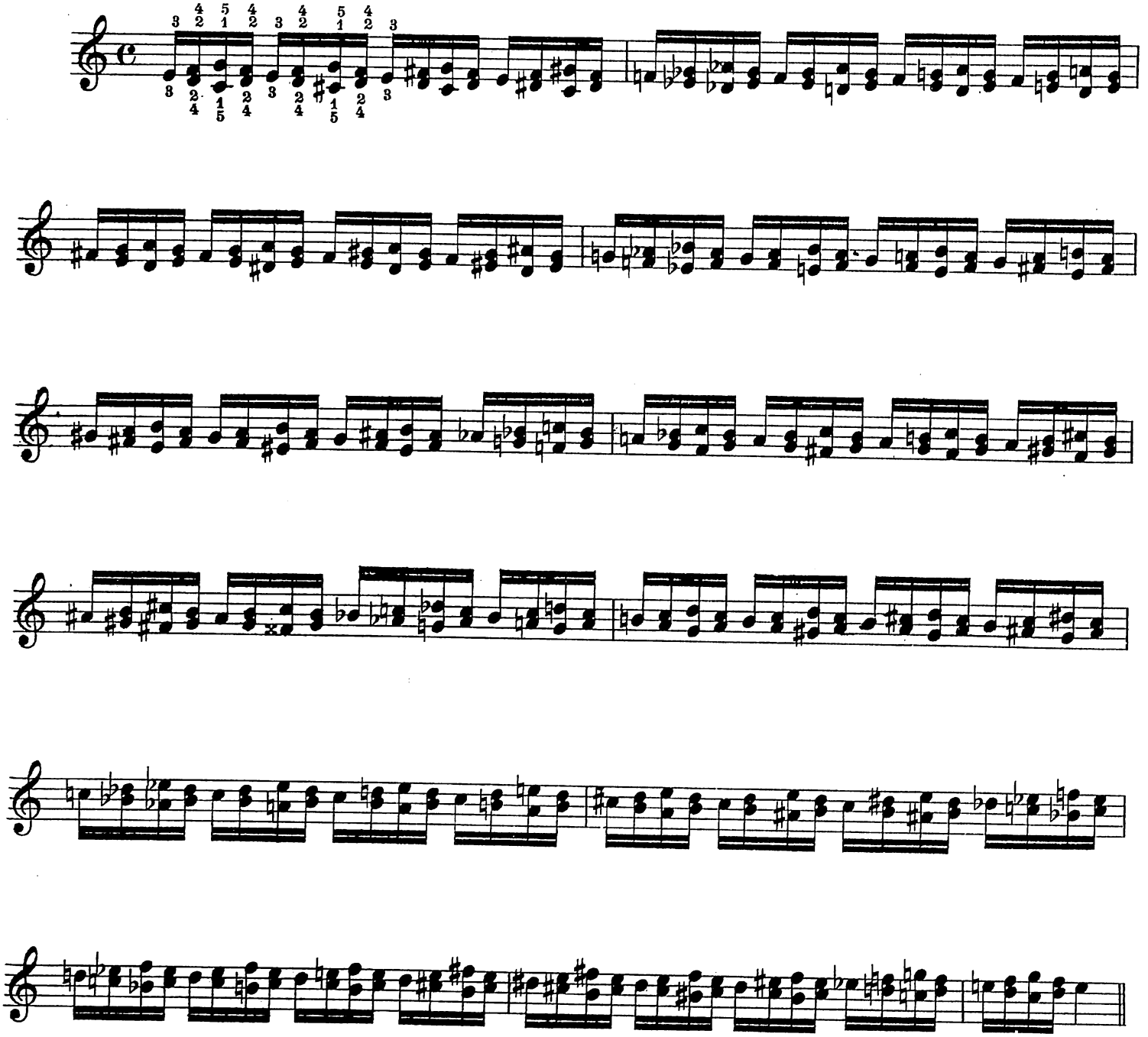
Prestissimo – *pp* M. M. 𝅗𝅥 = 144

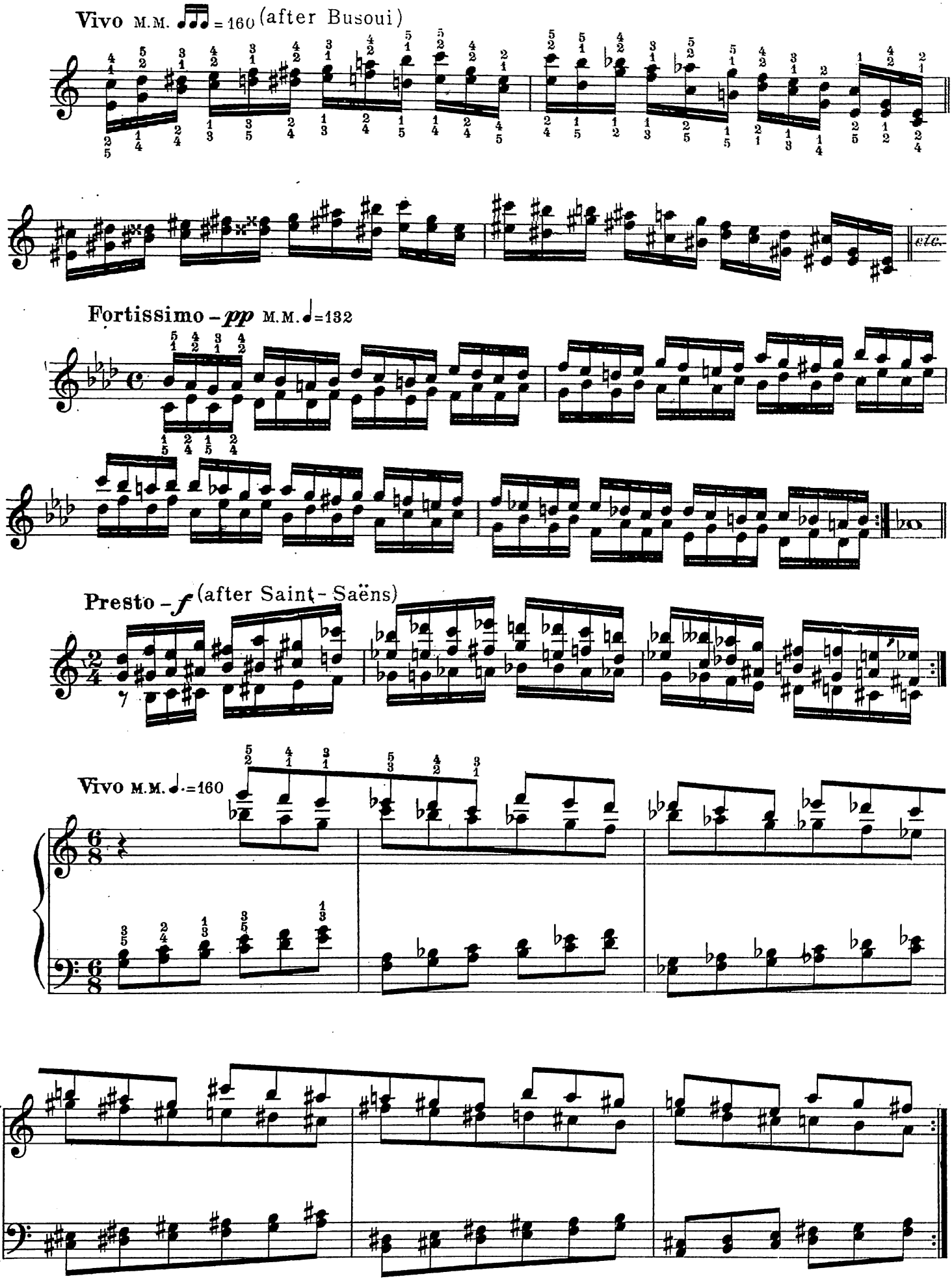


Presto



Presto (after G. Mathias)




Vivo M.M. = 160 (after Busoui)
etc.
Fortissimo – pp M.M. = 132
Presto – f (after Saint-Saëns)
Vivo M.M. = 160

Octaves and Chords

Octaves et accords

(Also in A♯)
(Aussi en do♯)

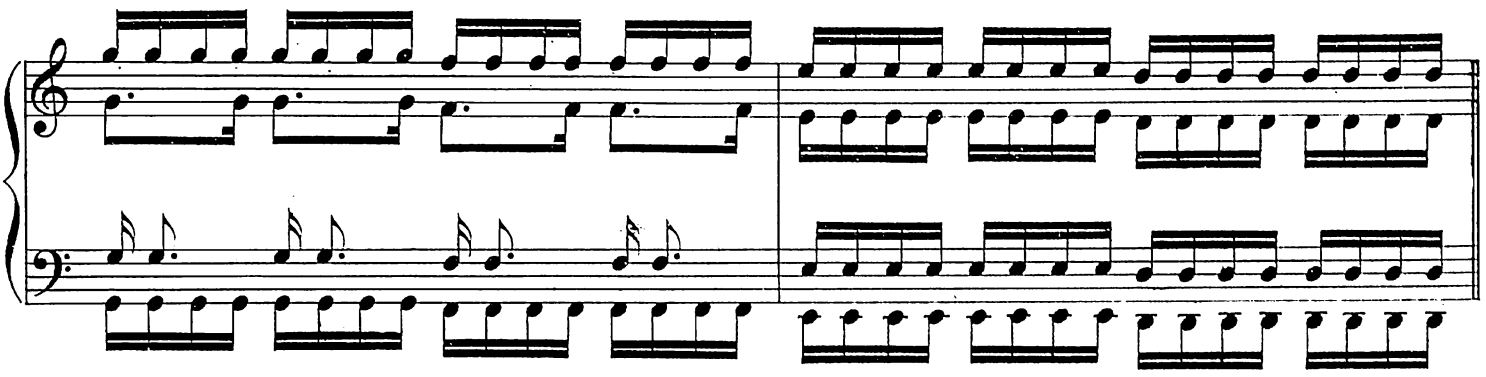
Wrist work
Jeu du poignet

Presto M.M. ♩=160

1

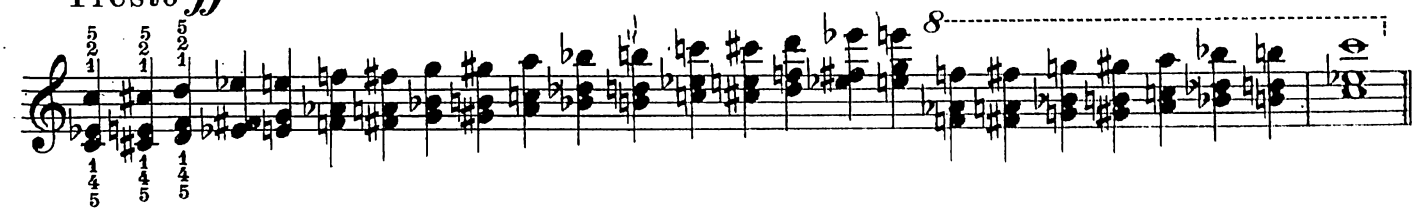
Presto M.M. ♩=120

2



Presto *ff*

3

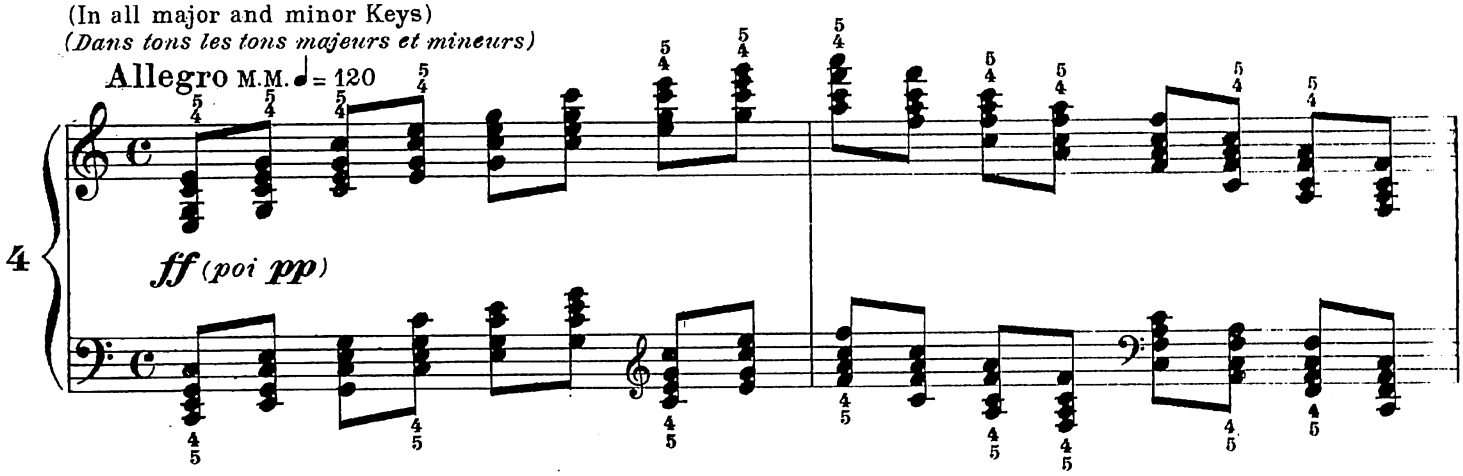


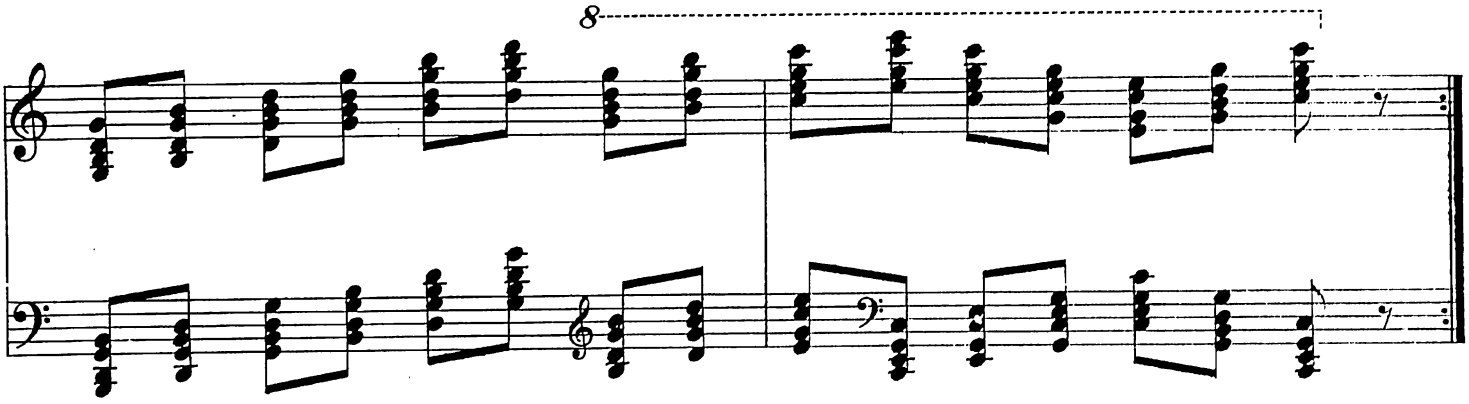
(In all major and minor Keys)
(Dans tons les tons majeurs et mineurs)

Allegro M.M. ♩ = 120

4

ff (poi pp)

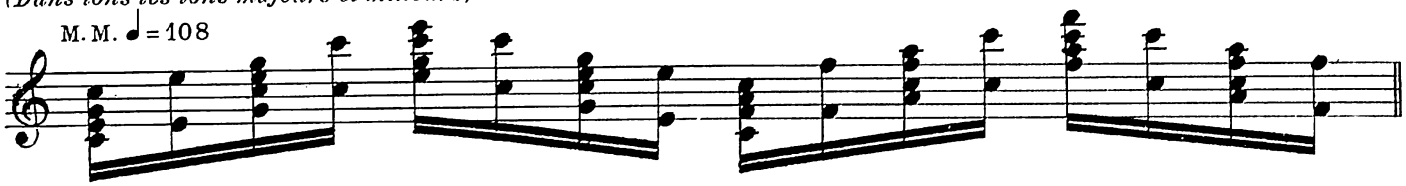


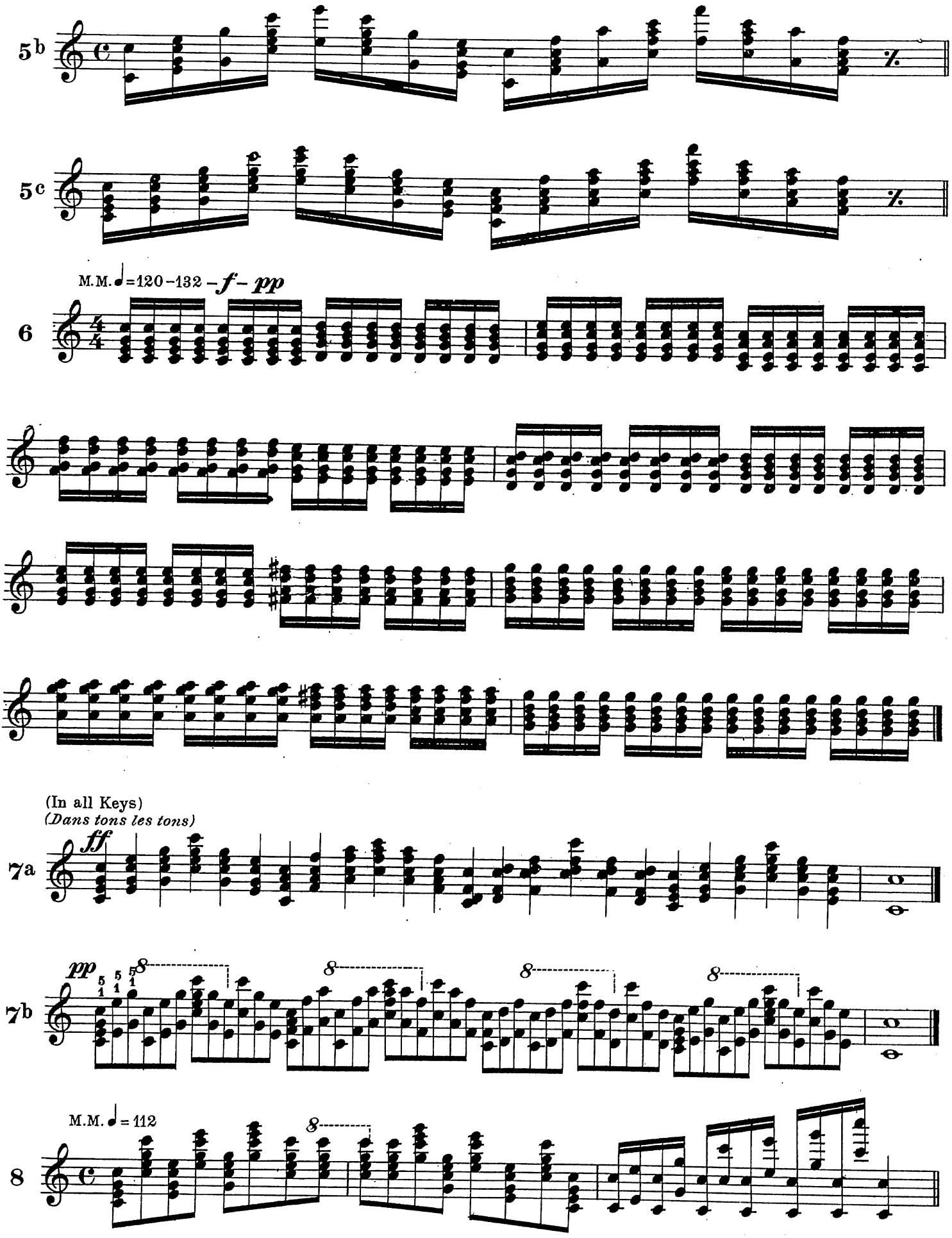


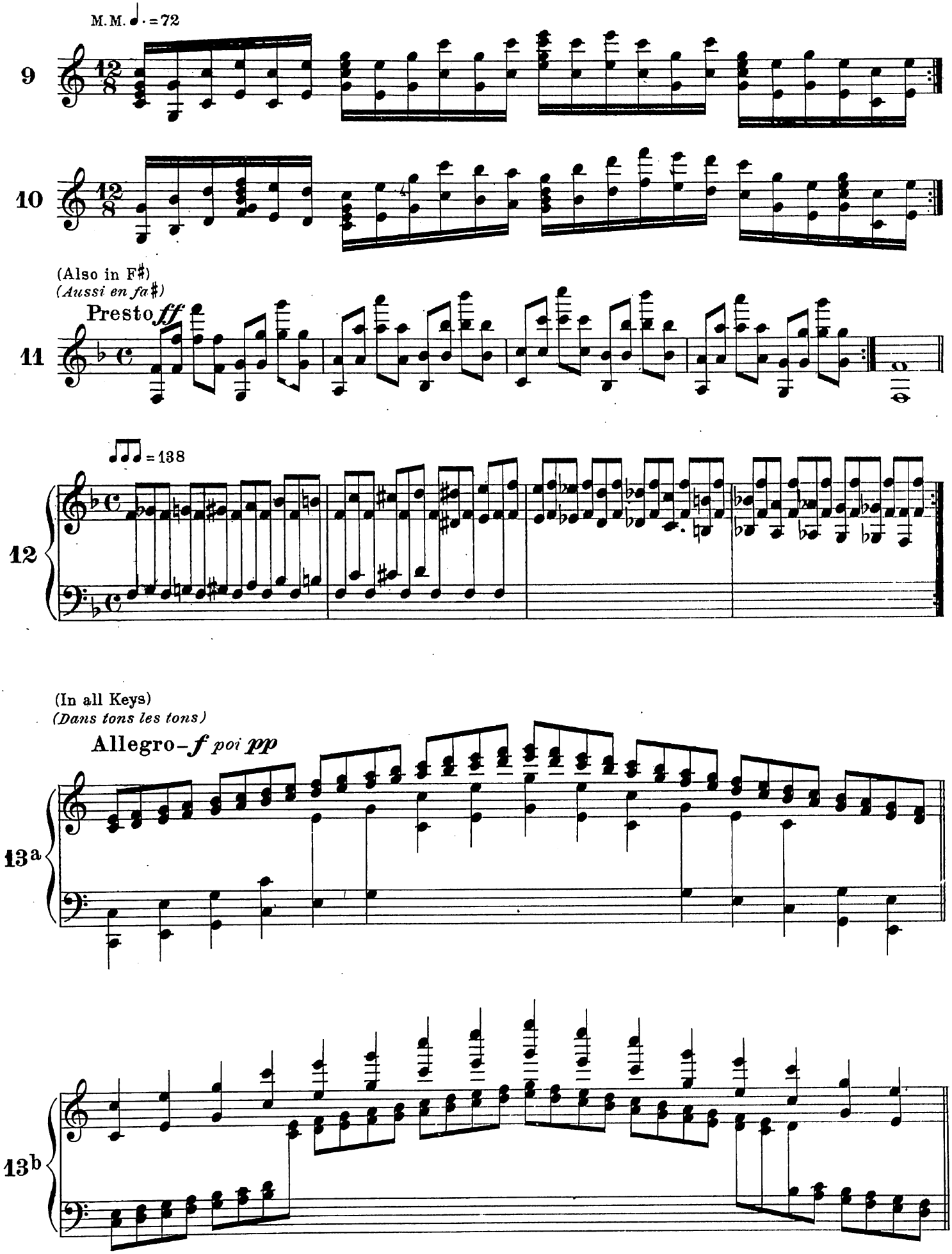
(In all major and minor Keys)
(Dans tons les tons majeurs et mineurs)

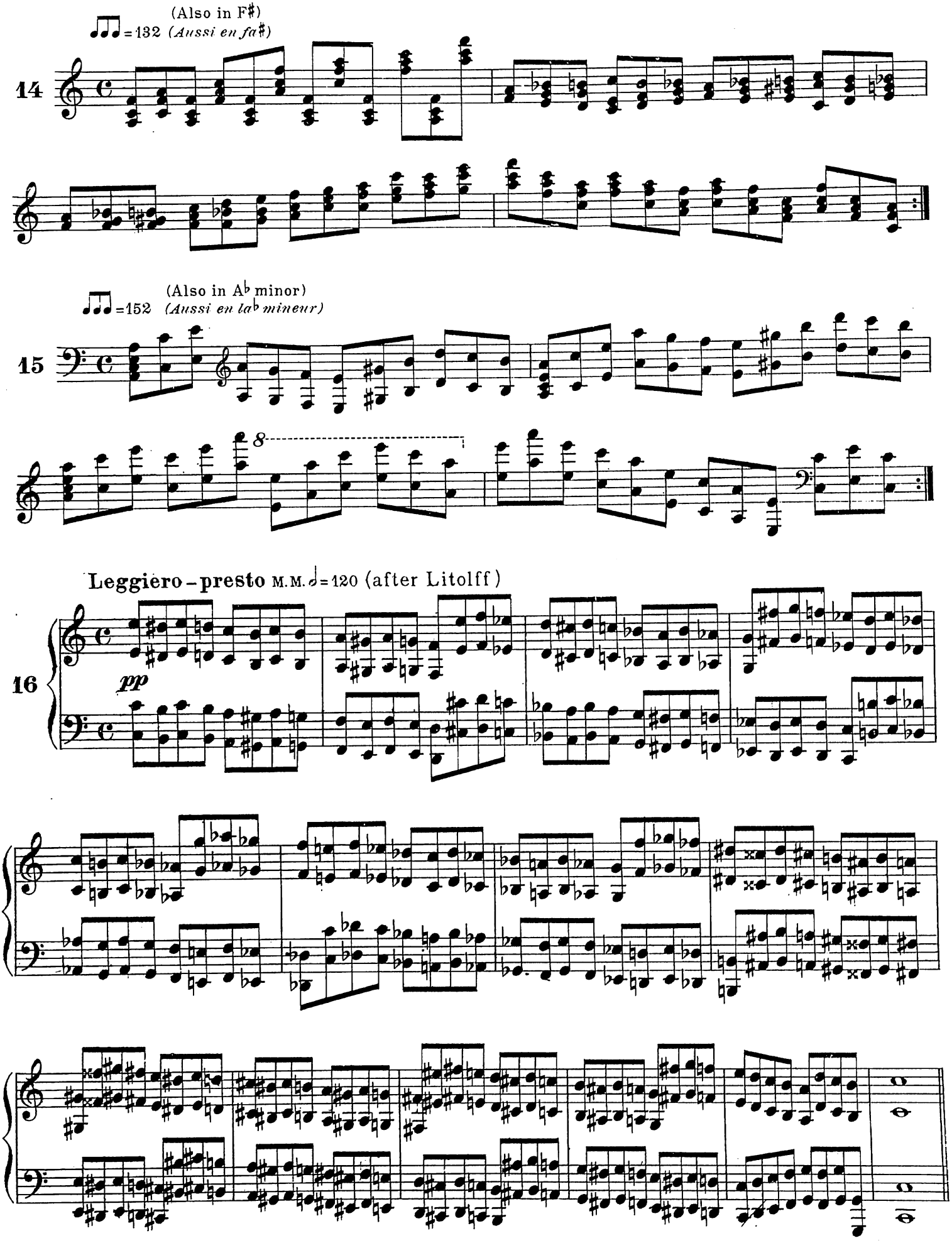
M.M. ♩ = 108

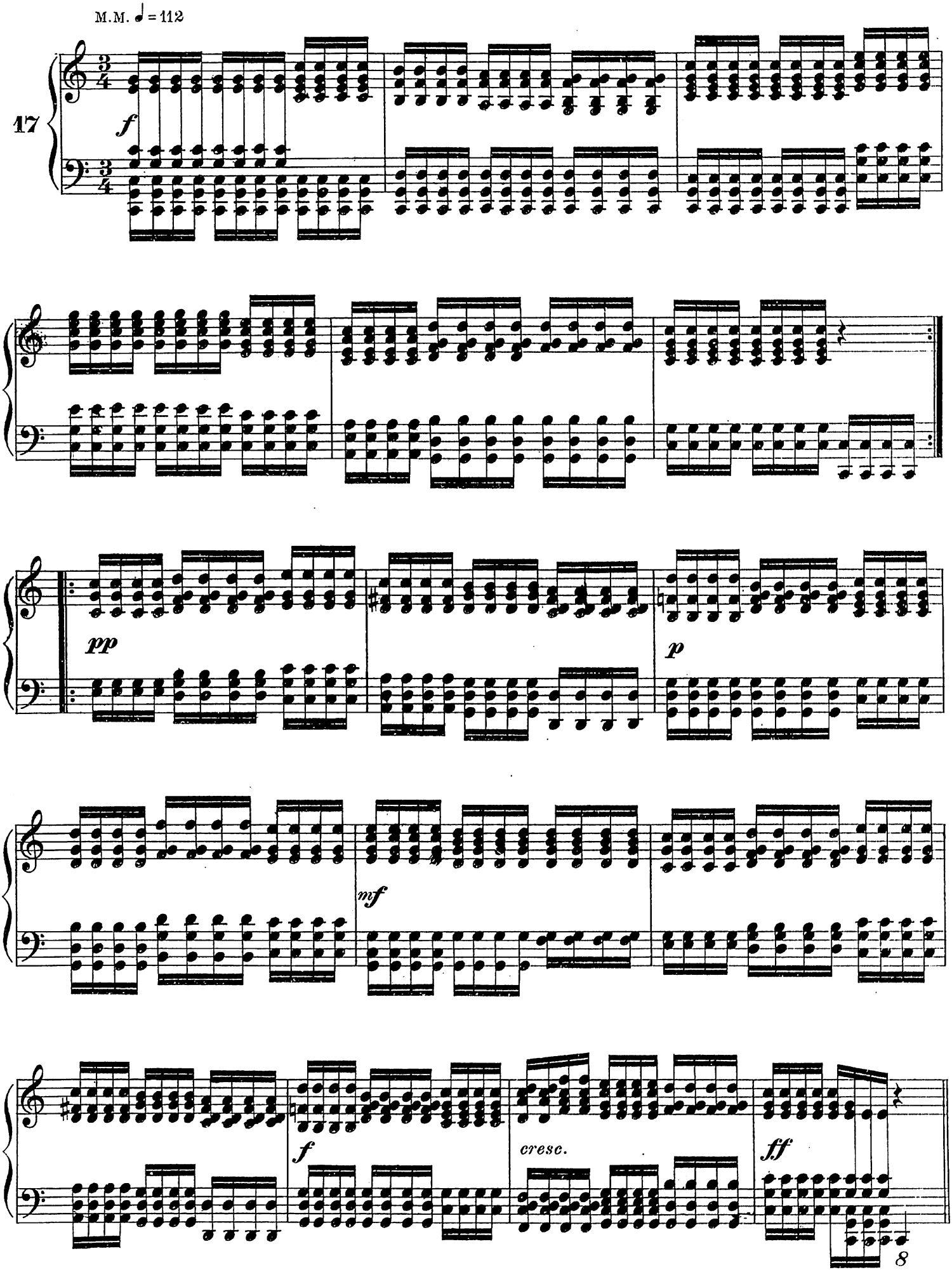
5a

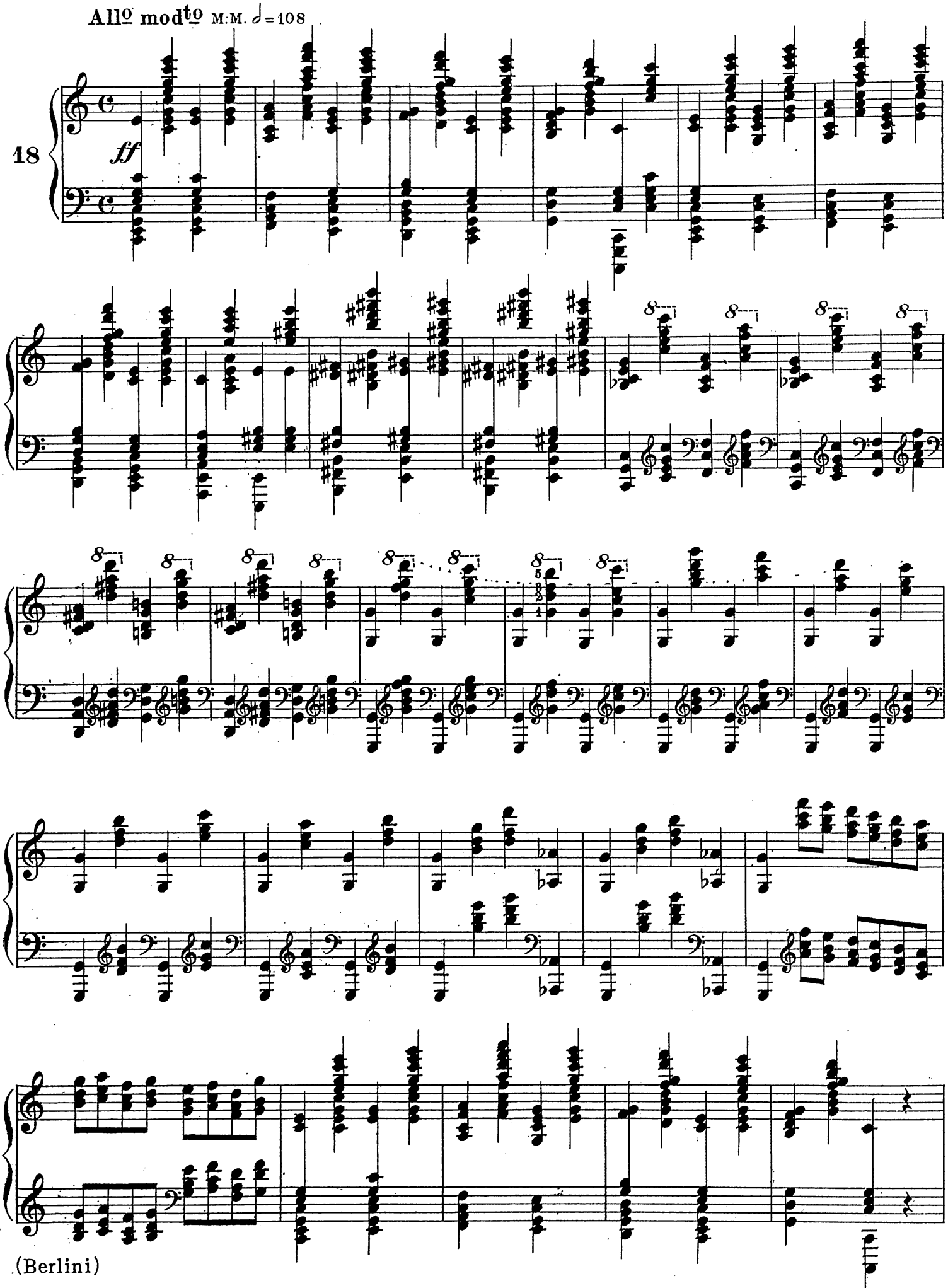



5b
%
5c
%
M.M. ♩=120-132 – f – pp
6
(In all Keys)
(Dans tons les tons)
ff
7a
pp
8
7b
M.M. ♩= 112
8

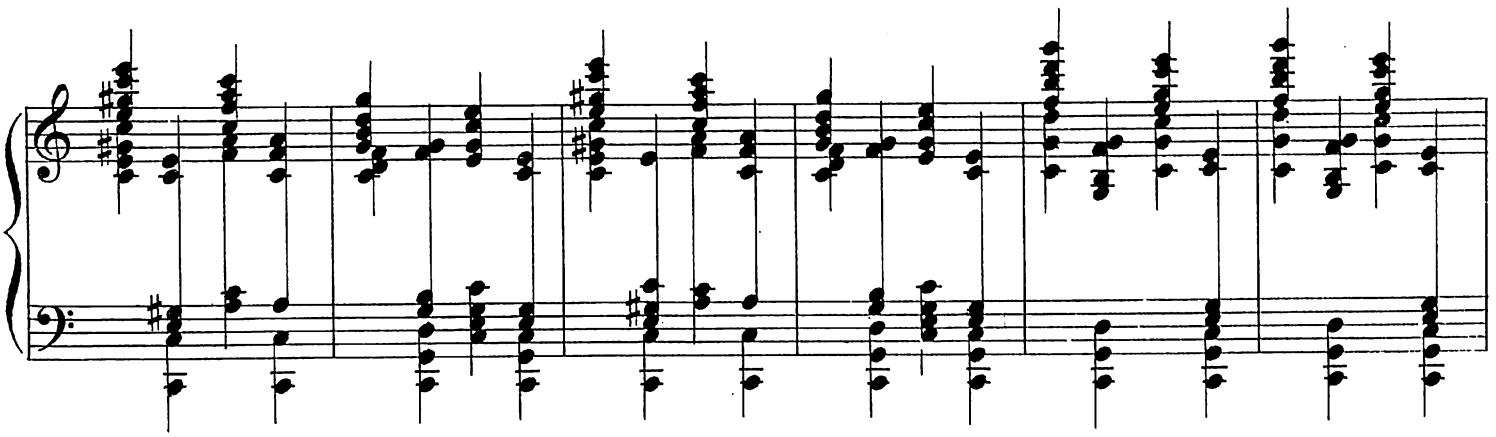

M.M. ♩. = 72
9
10
(Also in F♯)
(Aussi en fa♯)
Presto ff
11
♪♪♪ = 138
12
(In all Keys)
(Dans tons les tons)
Allegro – f poi pp
13a
13b

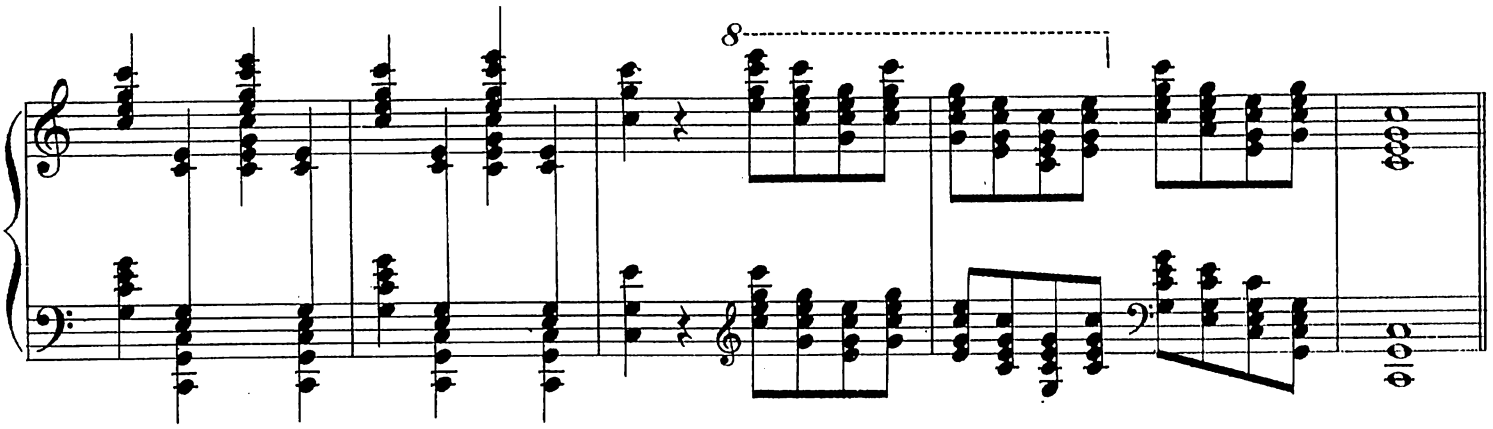

(Also in F♯)
♩♩♩=132 (Aussi en fa♯)
14
(Also in A♭ minor)
♩♩♩=152 (Aussi en la♭ mineur)
15
8
Leggiero – presto M.M. 𝅗𝅥=120 (after Litolff)
16
pp


M.M. ♩ = 112
17
f
pp
p
mf
f
cresc.
ff
8



(Berlini)





Presto

r.h.
m.d.

19 a

pp

l.h.
m.g.

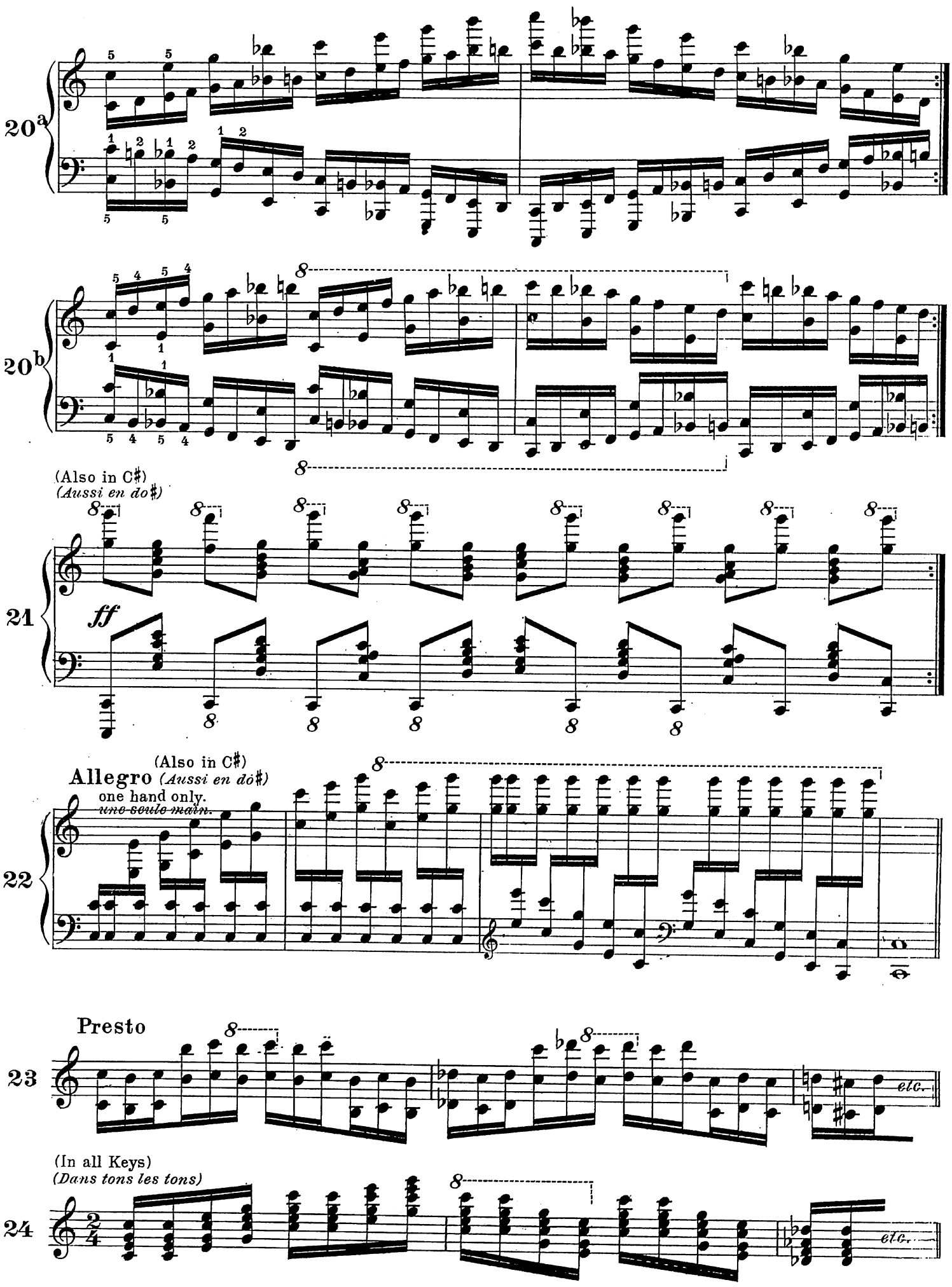
19 b

pp

Hands together
2 mains ensemble

19 c

pp


20a
20b
(Also in C♯)
(Aussi en do♯)
21
ff
(Also in C♯)
Allegro (Aussi en do♯)
one hand only.
une seule main.
22
Presto
23
etc.
(In all Keys)
(Dans tons les tons)
24
etc.

(Also in C♯)
(Aussi en do♯)

Prestissimo

crescendo sempre

25

pp

ff

Presto

fz

26

cresc. sempre

fz

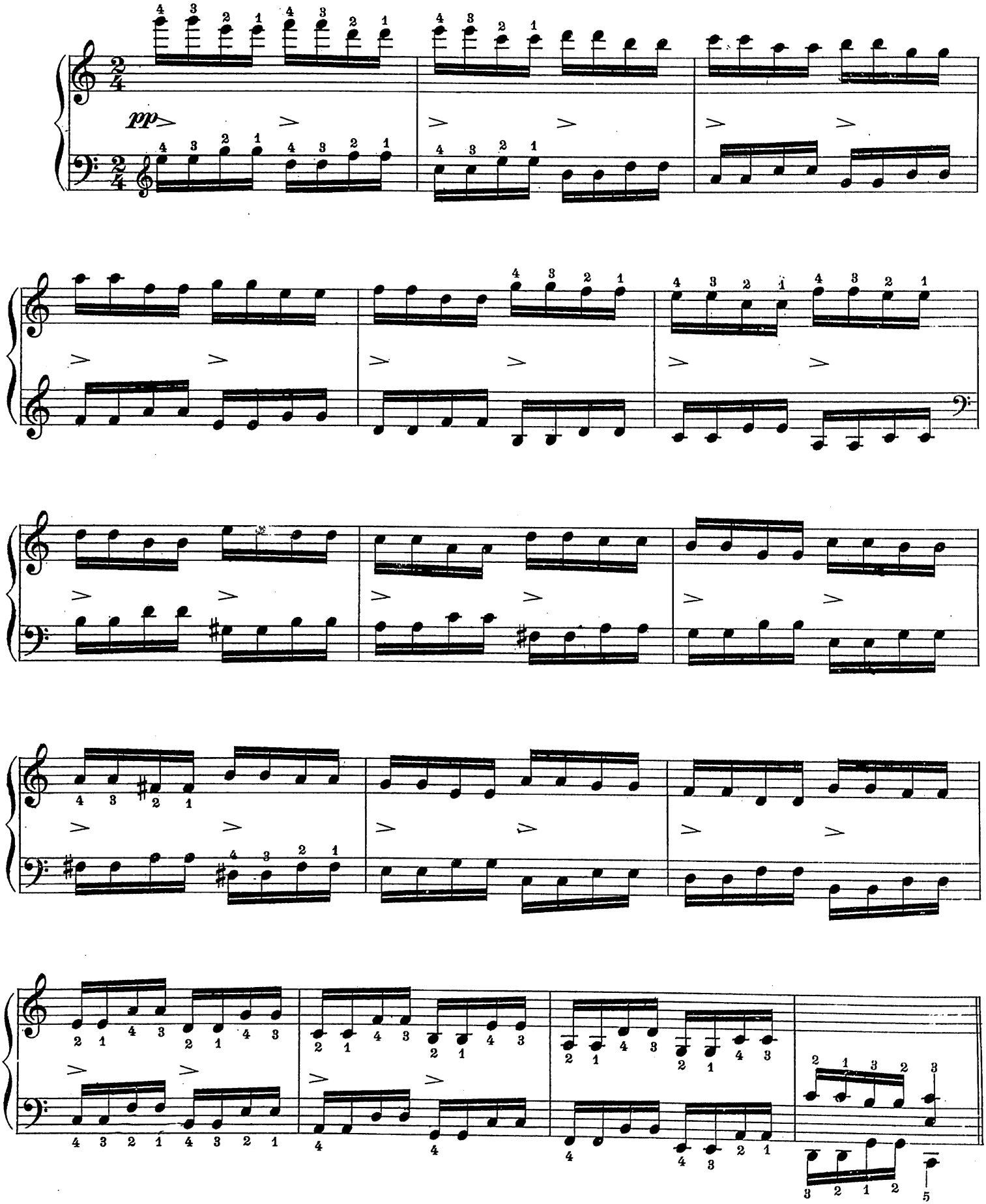
sff

Other fingering: $\frac{4}{2} = \frac{4}{3} = \frac{5}{3} = \frac{5}{1} = \frac{5}{2} = \frac{3}{2} = \frac{2}{1} = \frac{3}{1} = \frac{4}{1}$.
Autres doigtes :

Repeated Notes — Notes repétées

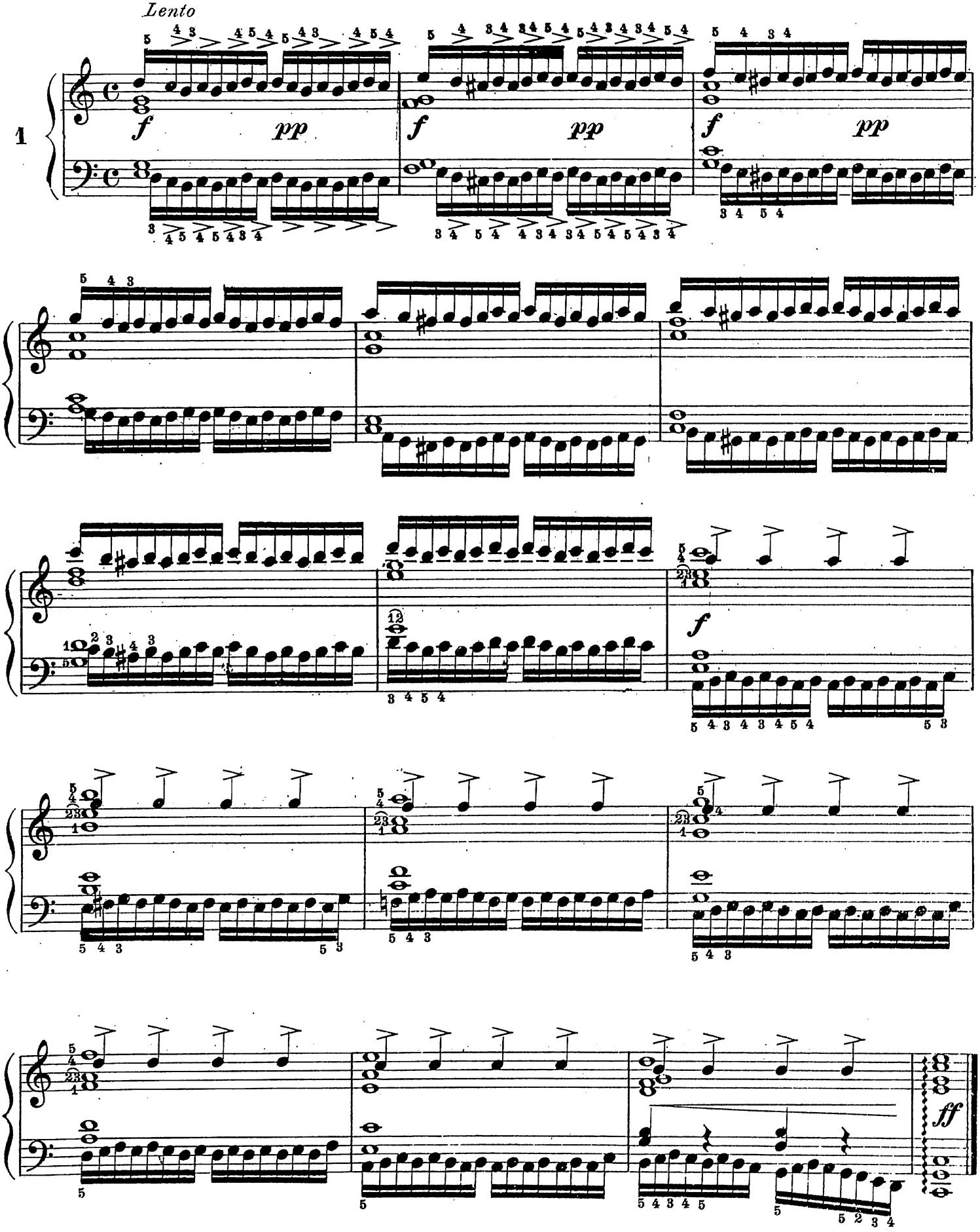
(Also in C♯)
(Aussi en do♯)

Presto M.M. ♩ = 144



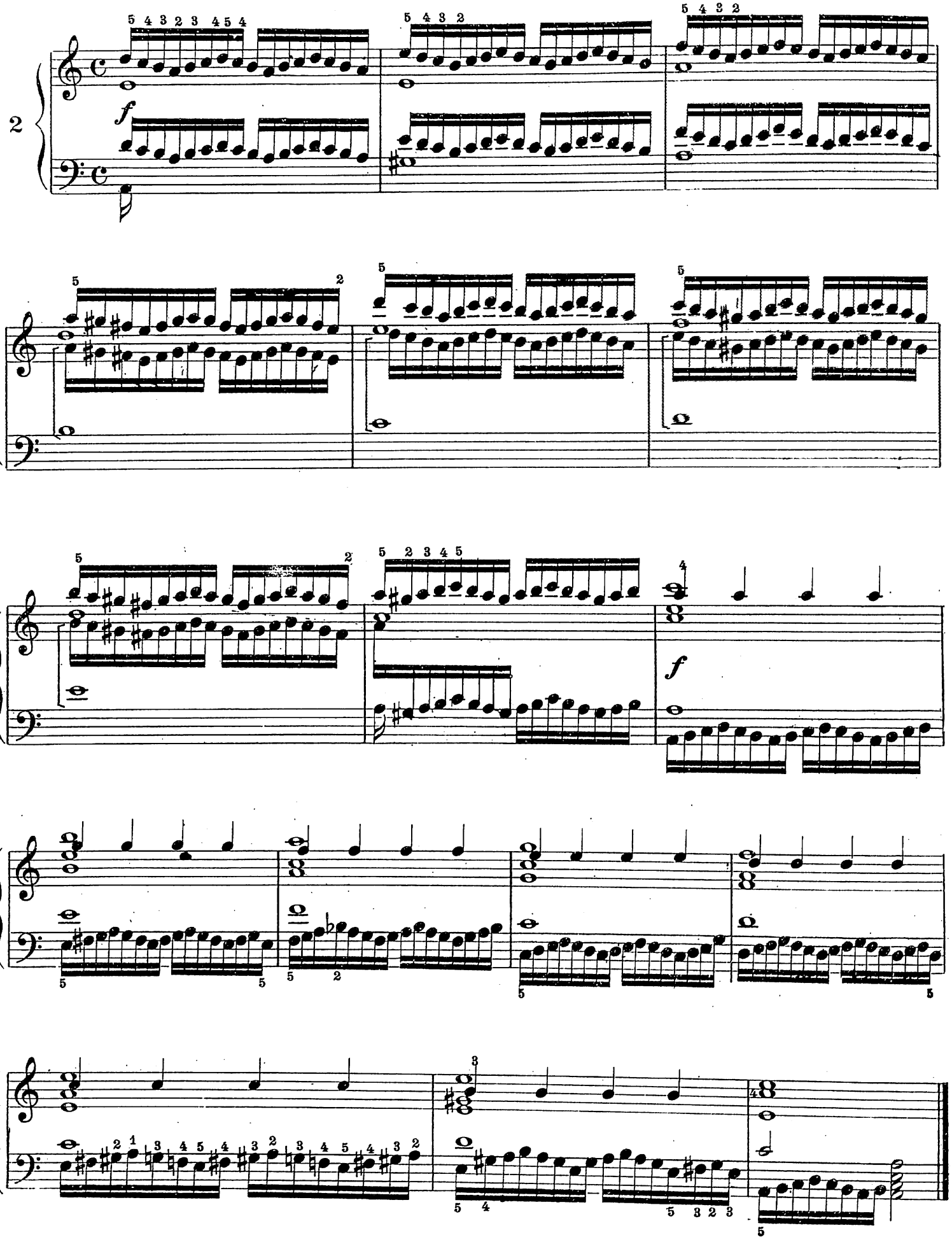
Daily Exercises — Exercices journaliers

Lento

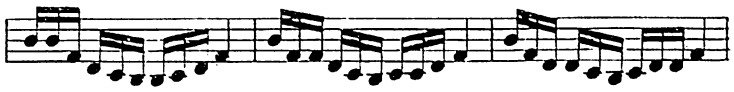


To be played *f*, then *mf*, and *pp*.

D'abord f puis mf et p.



One note repeated twice, thus;
Une note repétée, ainsi:

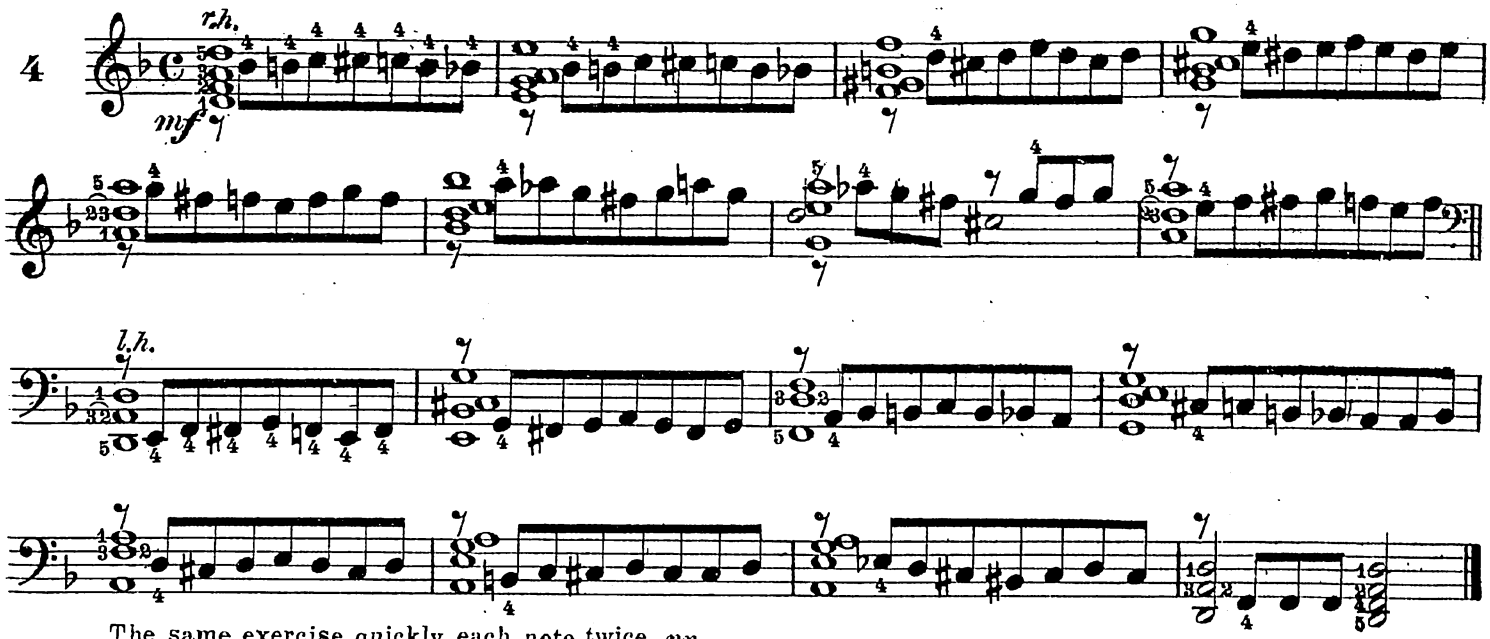


etc.

3

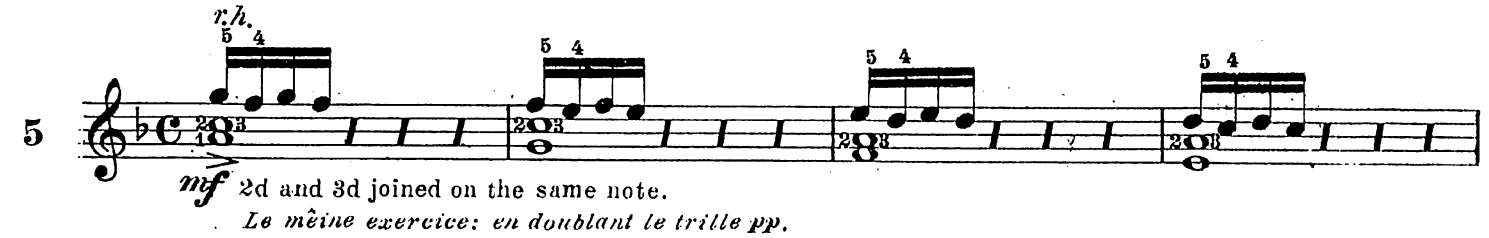
f (puis pp et vite)

Practice also in B
Travailler aussi en Si



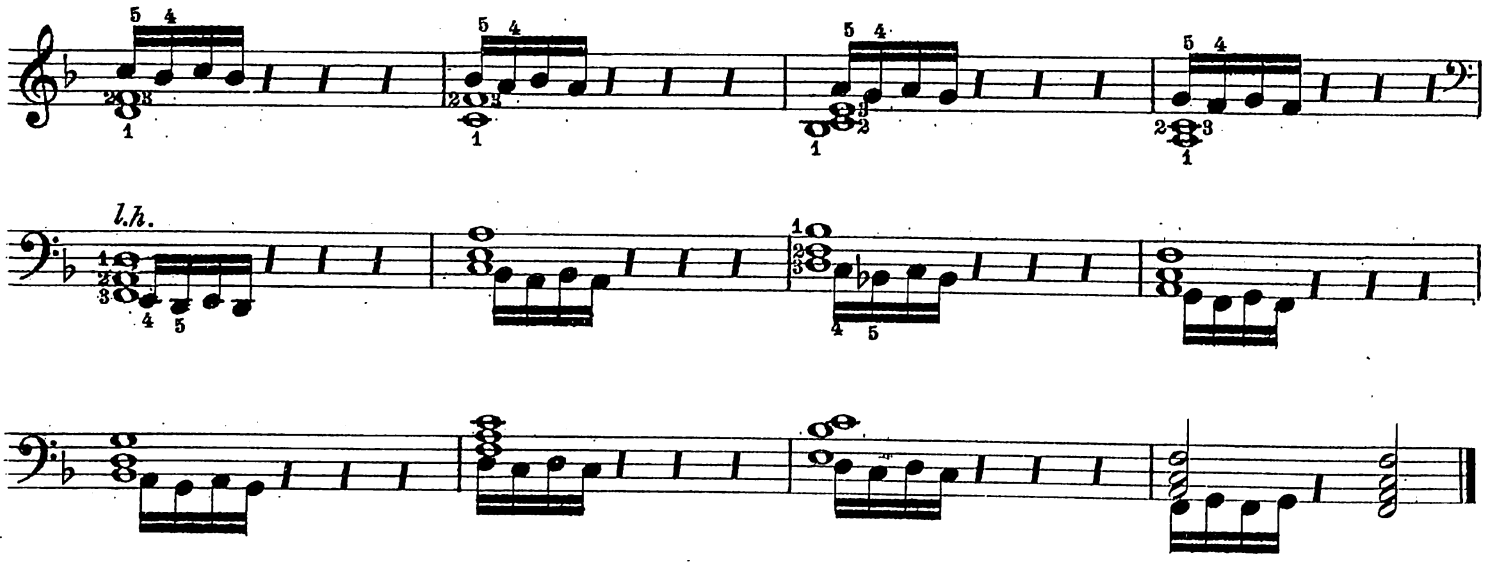
The same exercise quickly, each note twice, *pp*

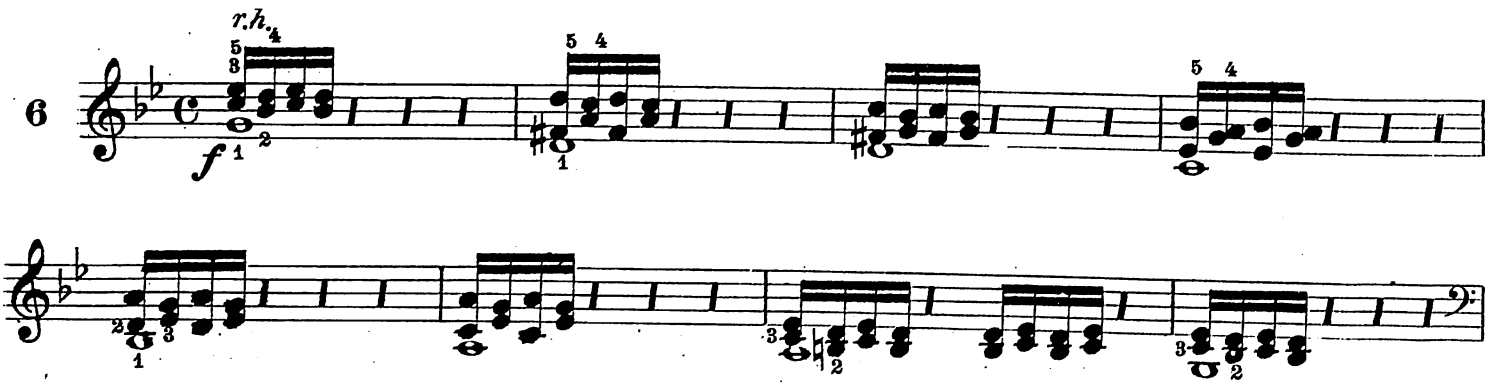
Même exercice: Vite, en répétant chaque note 2 fois, pp

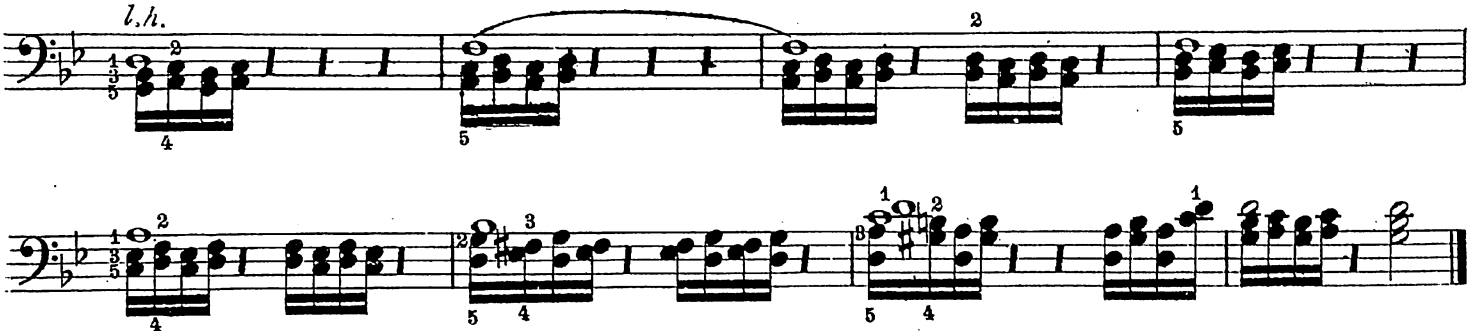


2d and 3d joined on the same note.

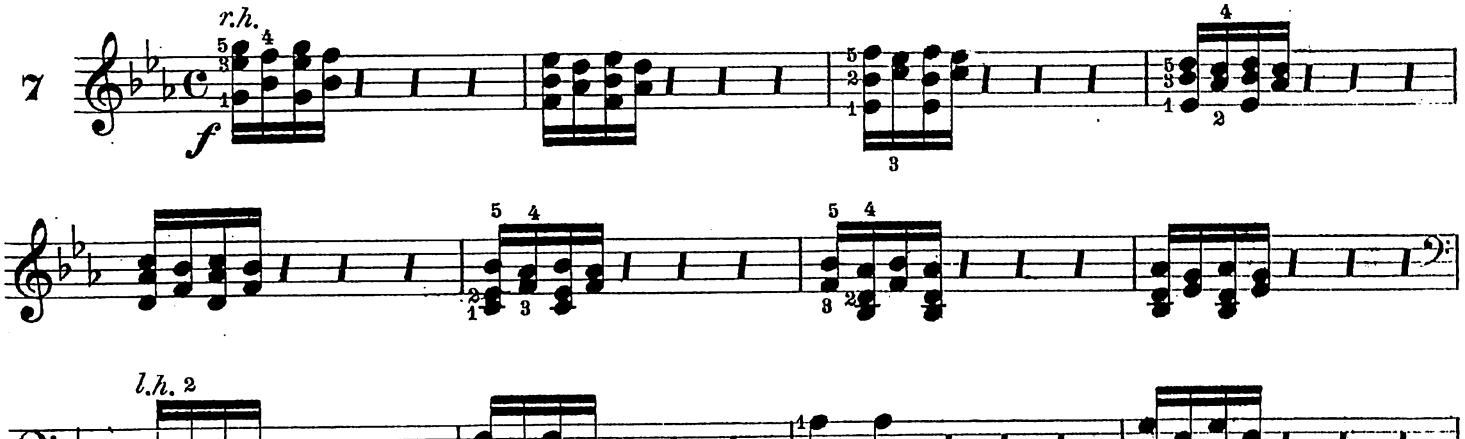
Le même exercice: en doublant le trille pp.

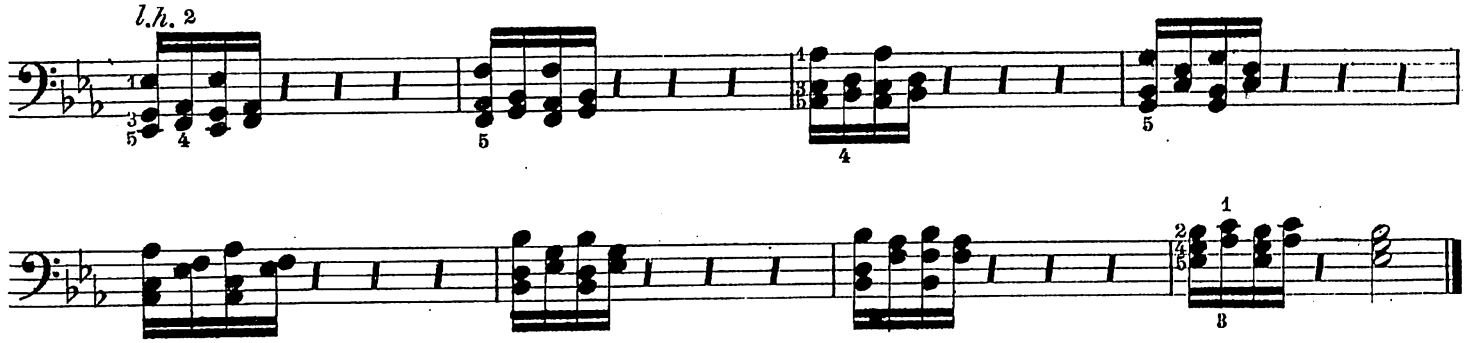


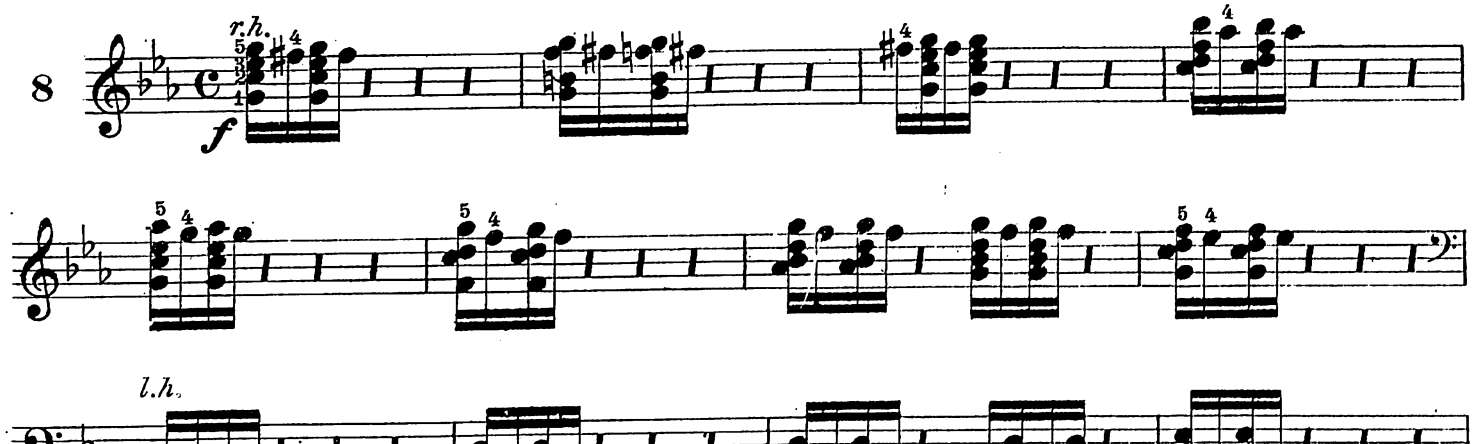


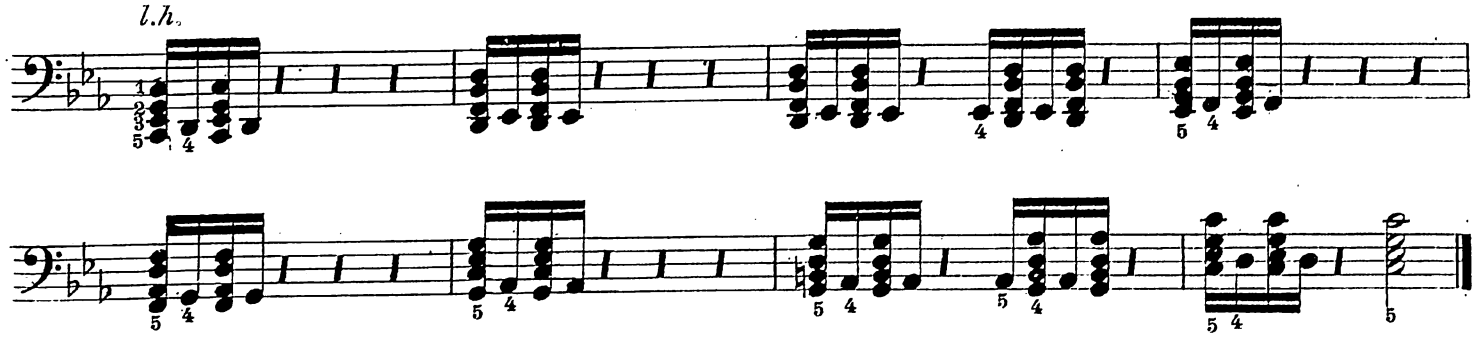


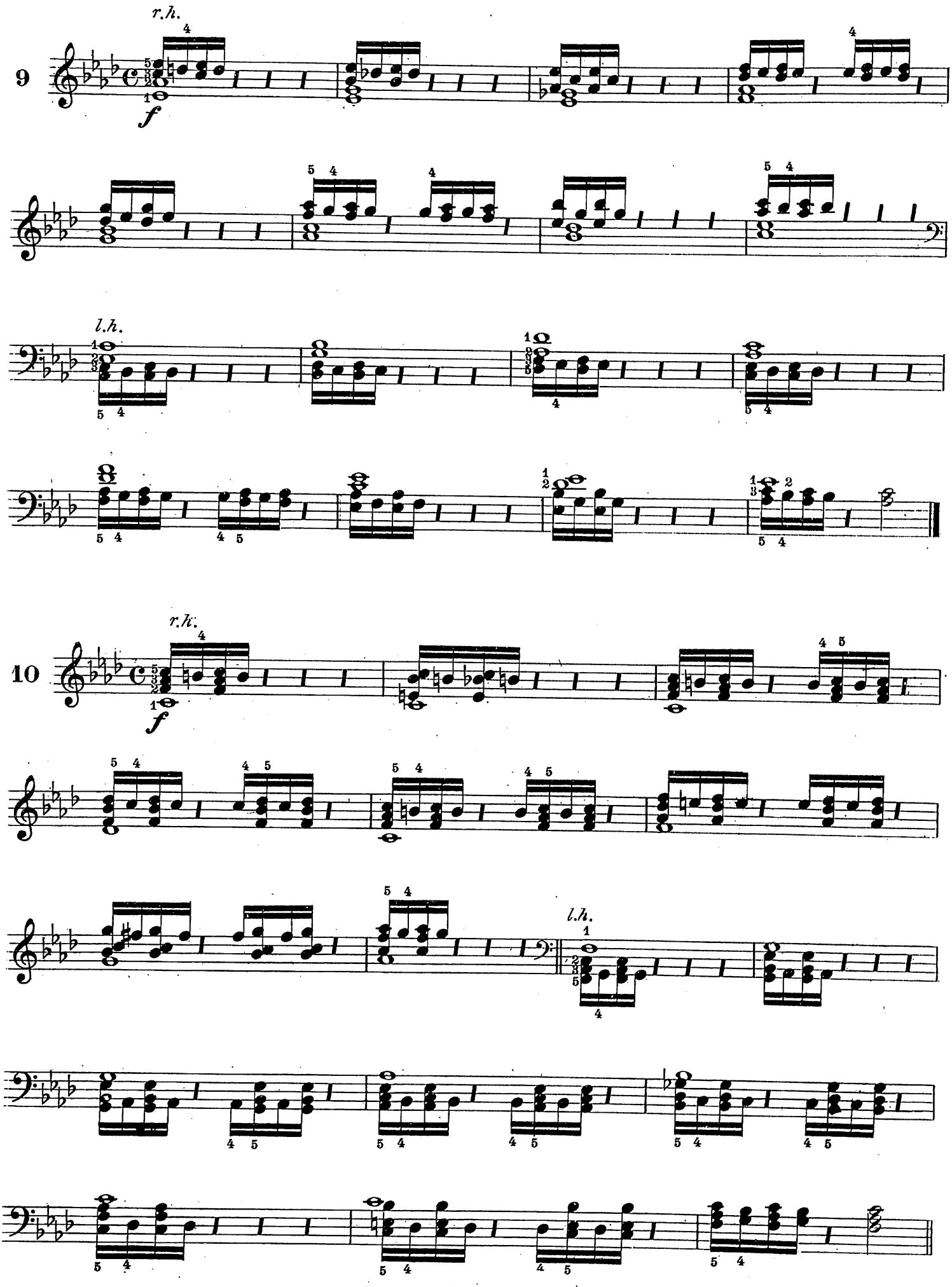
The same exercice in triplets.
Le meme exercice en triolets

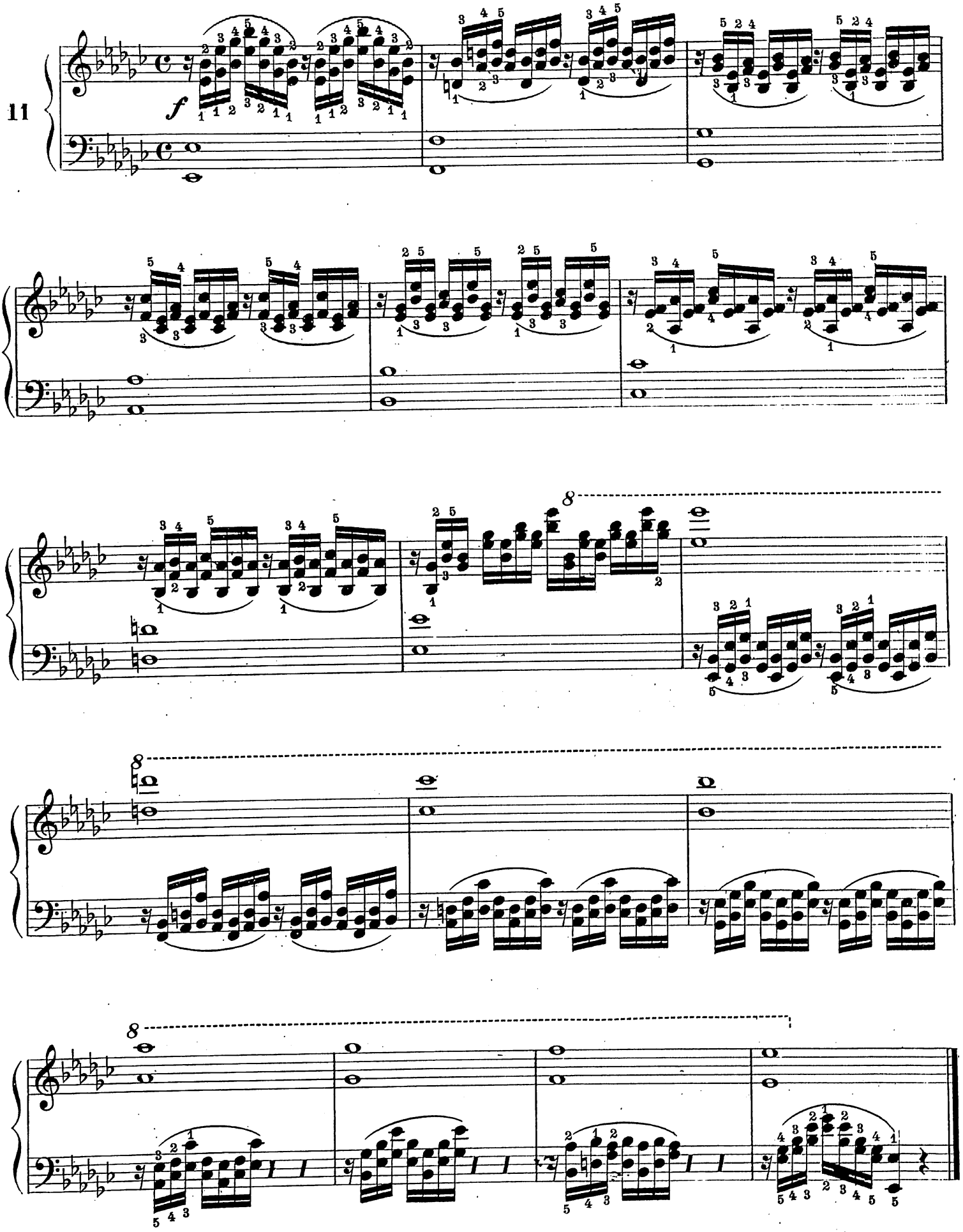






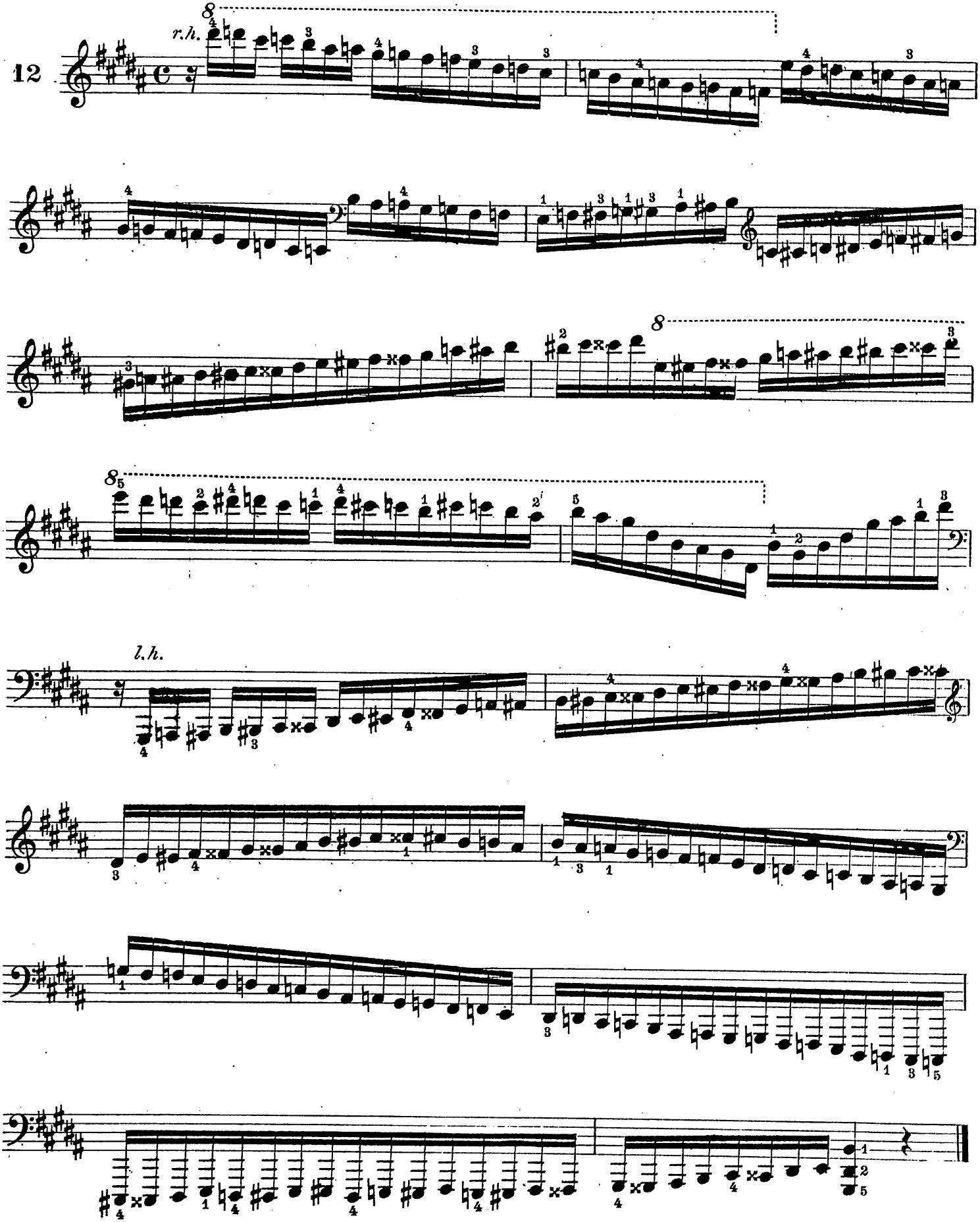



r.h.
9
f
l.h.
r.h.
10
f
l.h.



Practice at first the upper part of each double note passage alone, holding all the notes as long as possible.
Travailler d'abord la partie supérieure des doubles notes seule, en tenant toutes les notes le plus possible.

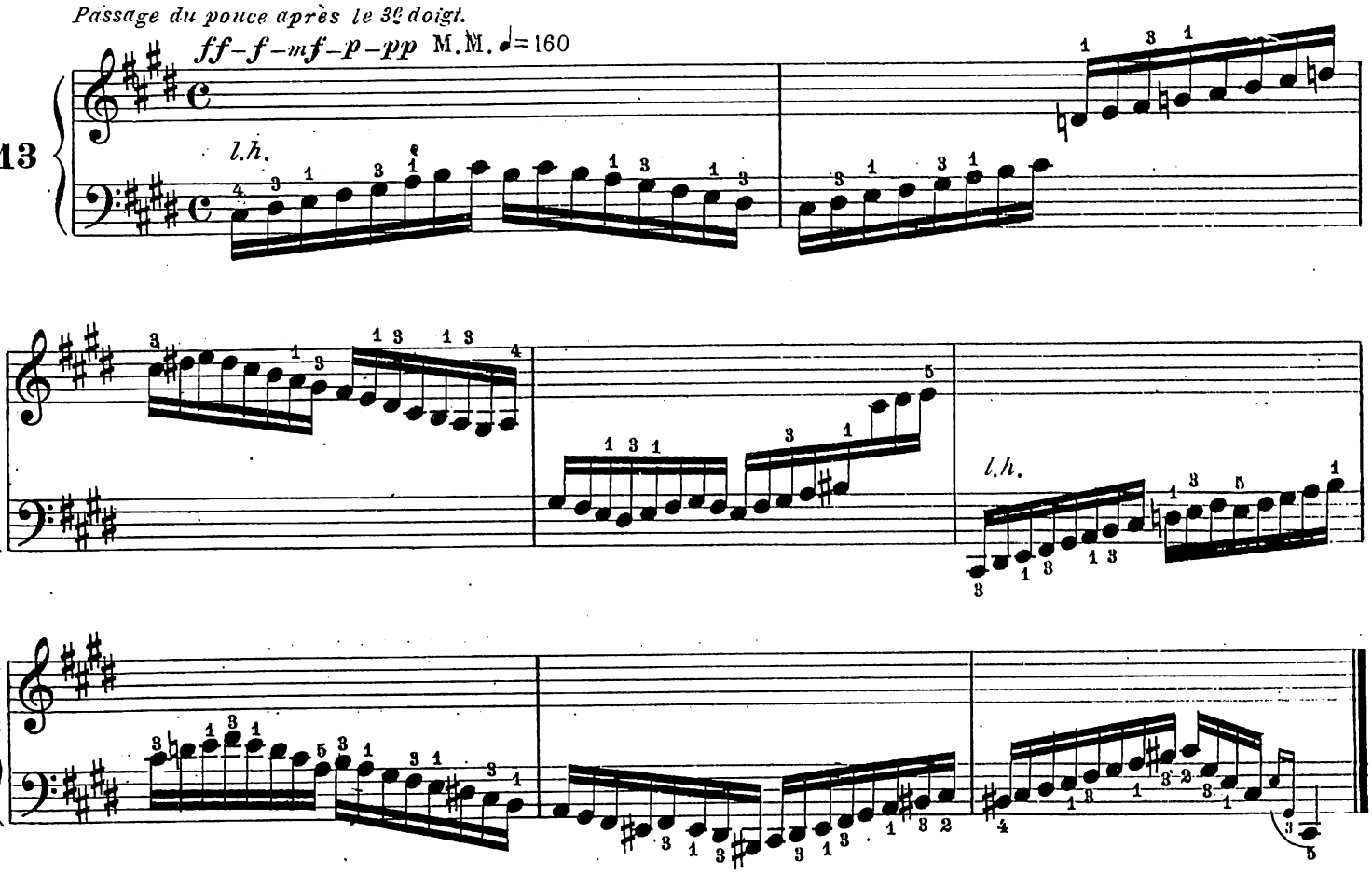
Preparatory fingerings: 12;13,14,15,23,24,25,34,35,45 || 123,234,345,135,135,125,145 ||
Doigtés preparatoires: 1234,2345,1345,1235,1245 || 12345



Same preparatory fingerings.
Memes doigtes preparatoires:
Thumb under the third finger.
Passage du pouce après le 3e doigt.

13

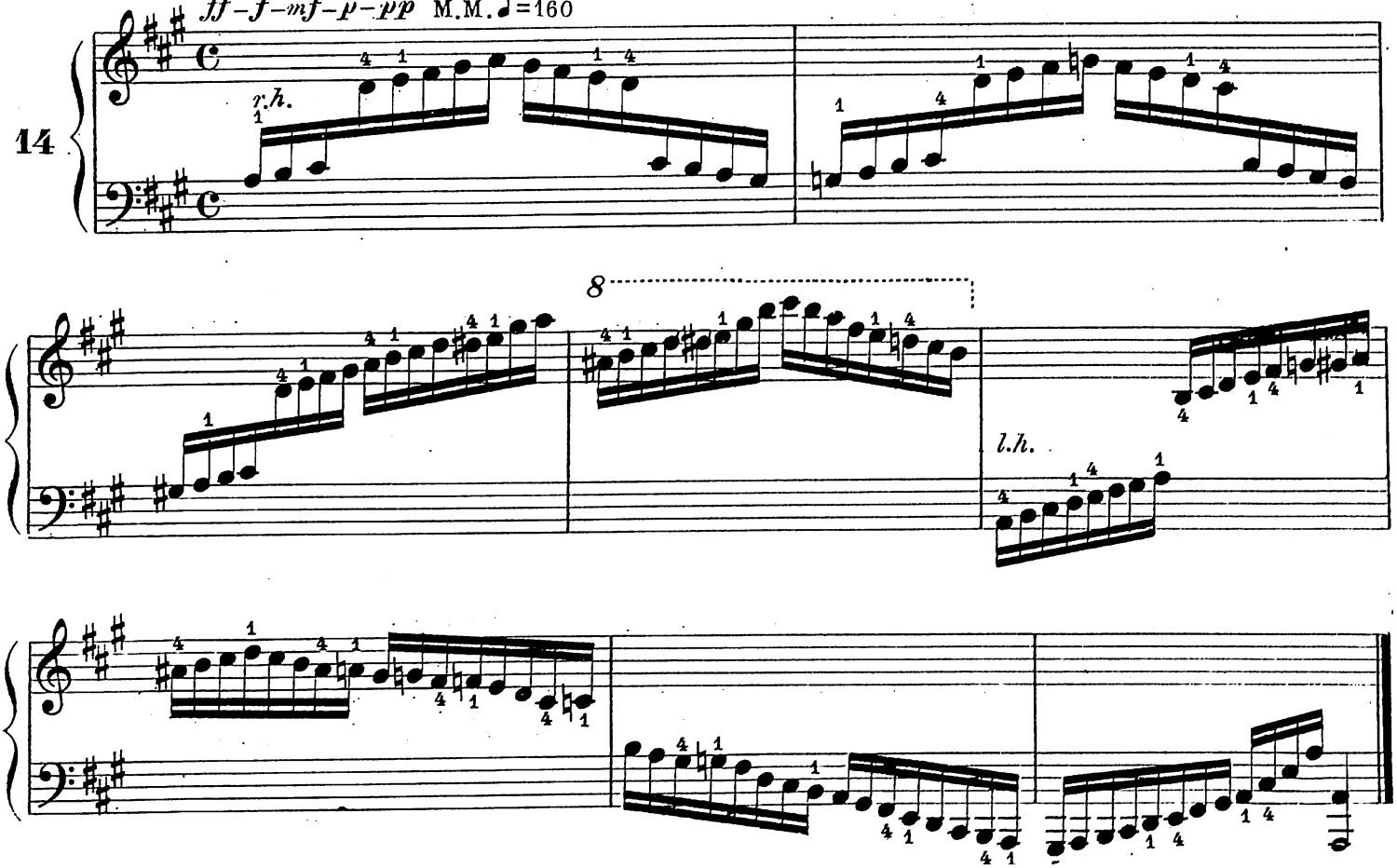
ff – f – mf – p – pp M.M. ♩=160



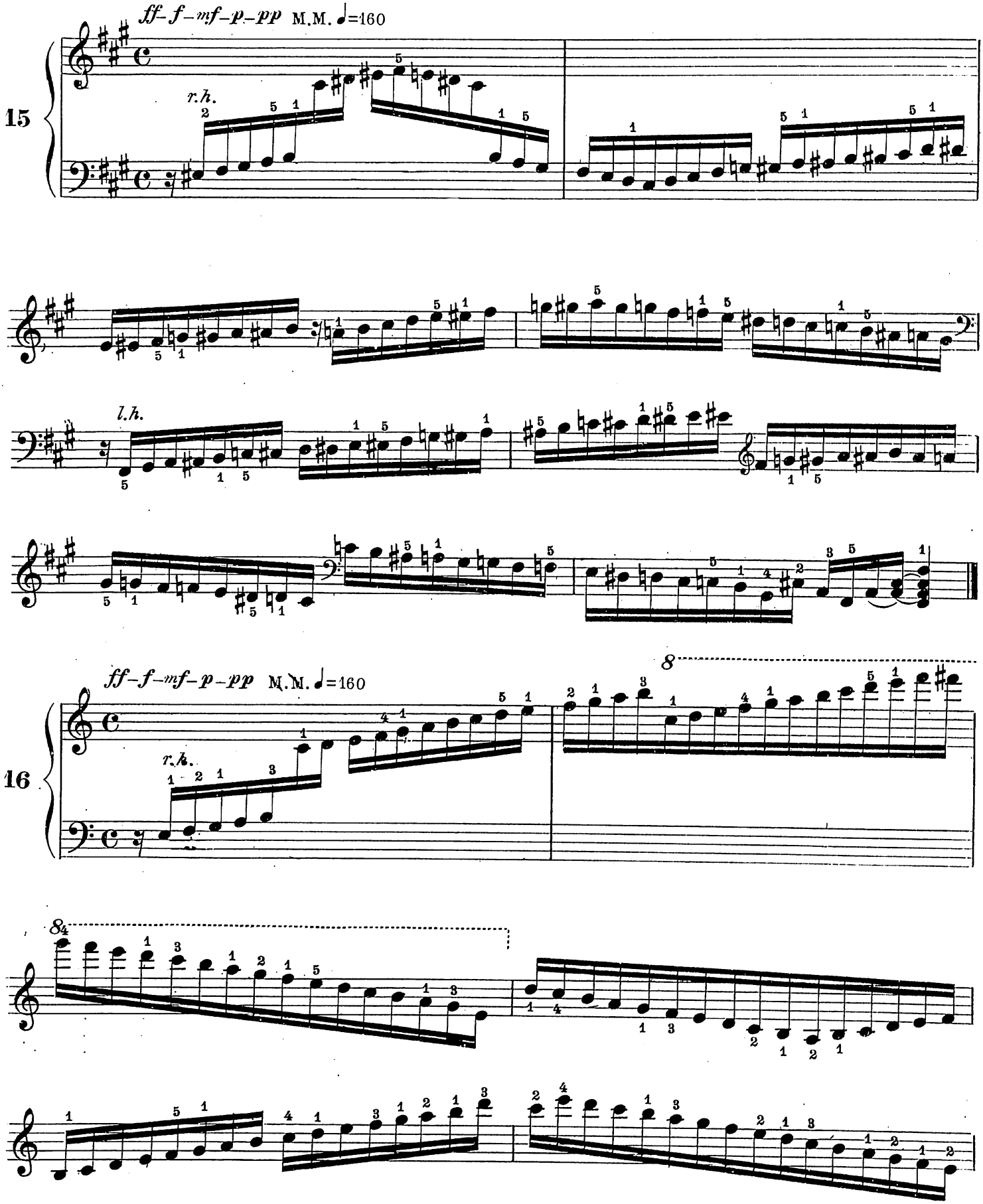
Thumb under the fourth finger.
Passage du pouce après le 4e doigt.

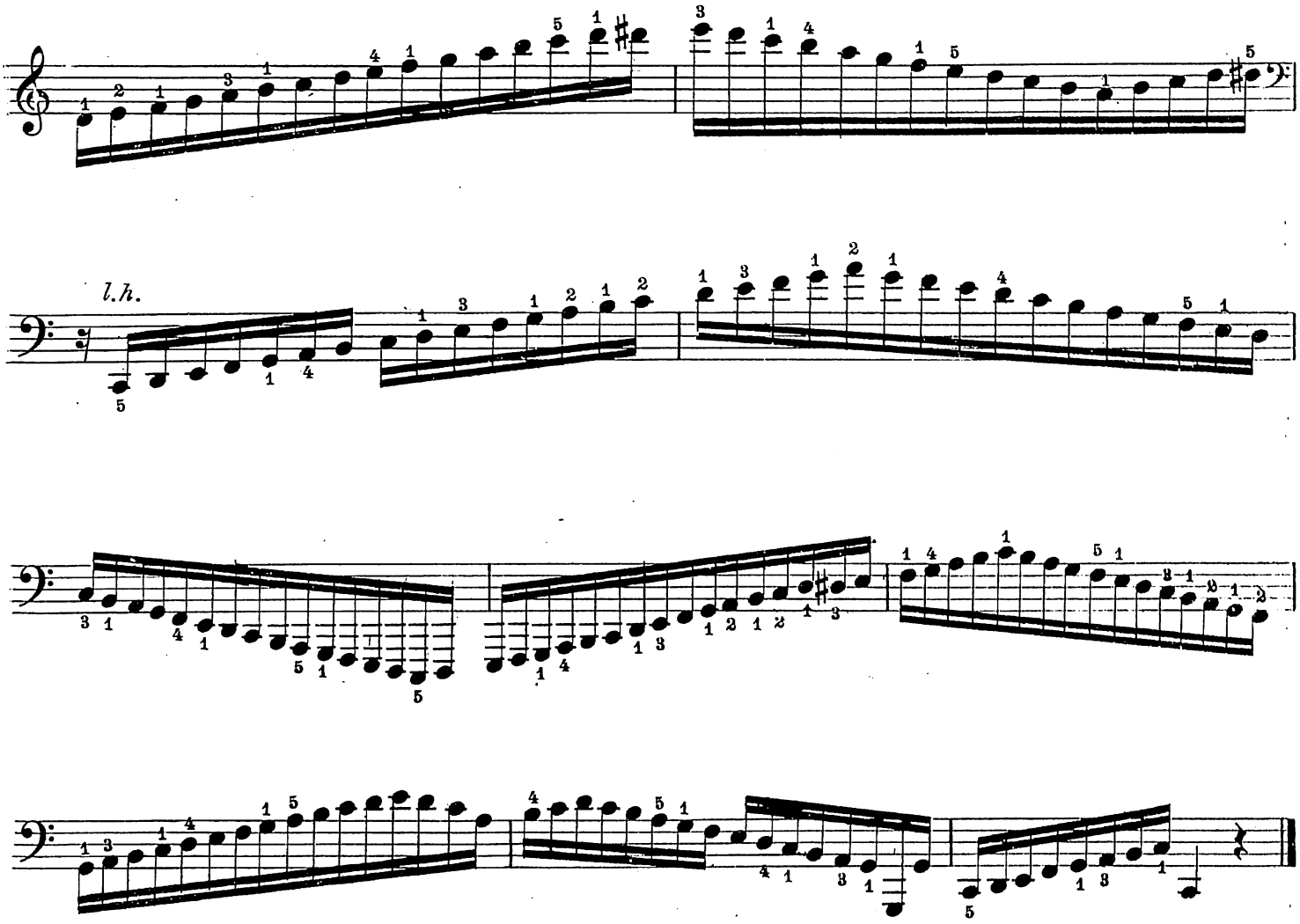
14

ff – f – mf – p – pp M.M. ♩=160



Thumb under the fifth finger.
Passage du pouce après le 5e doigt.

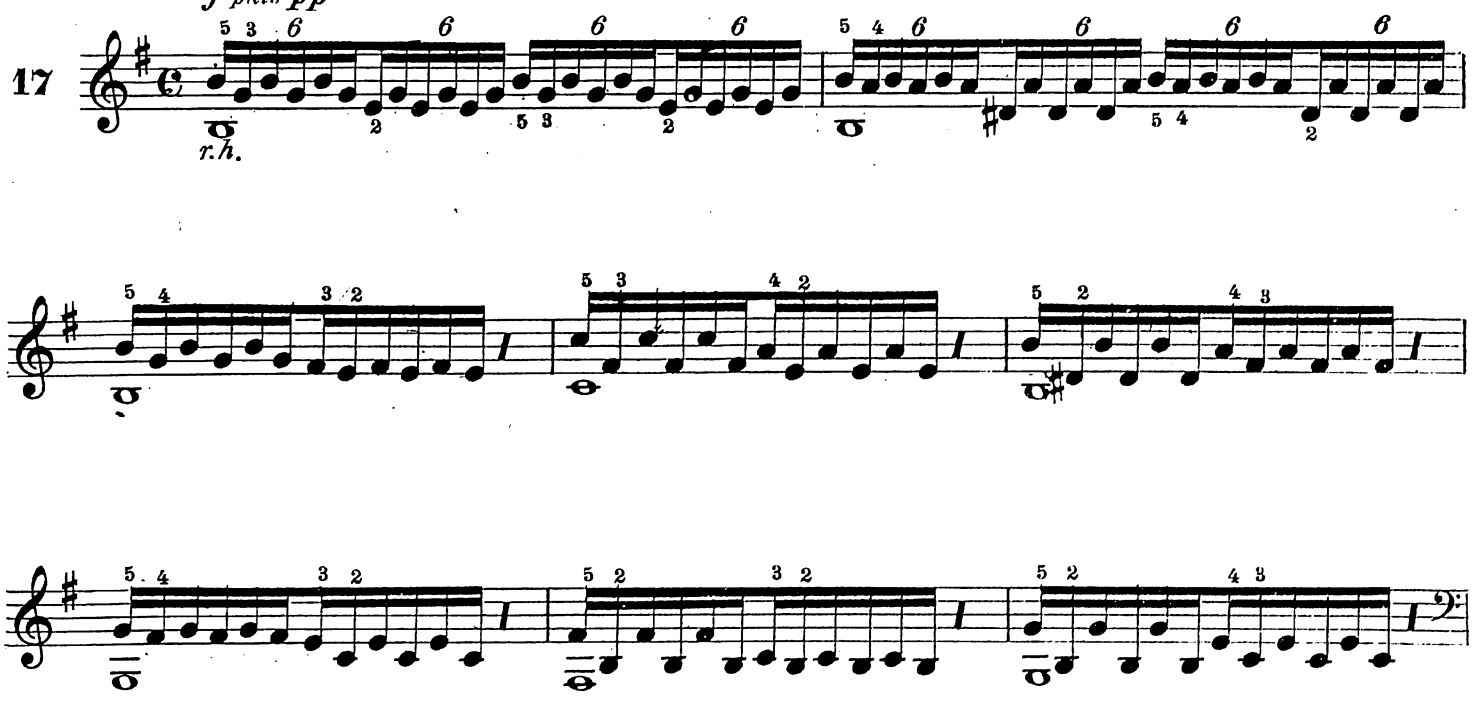


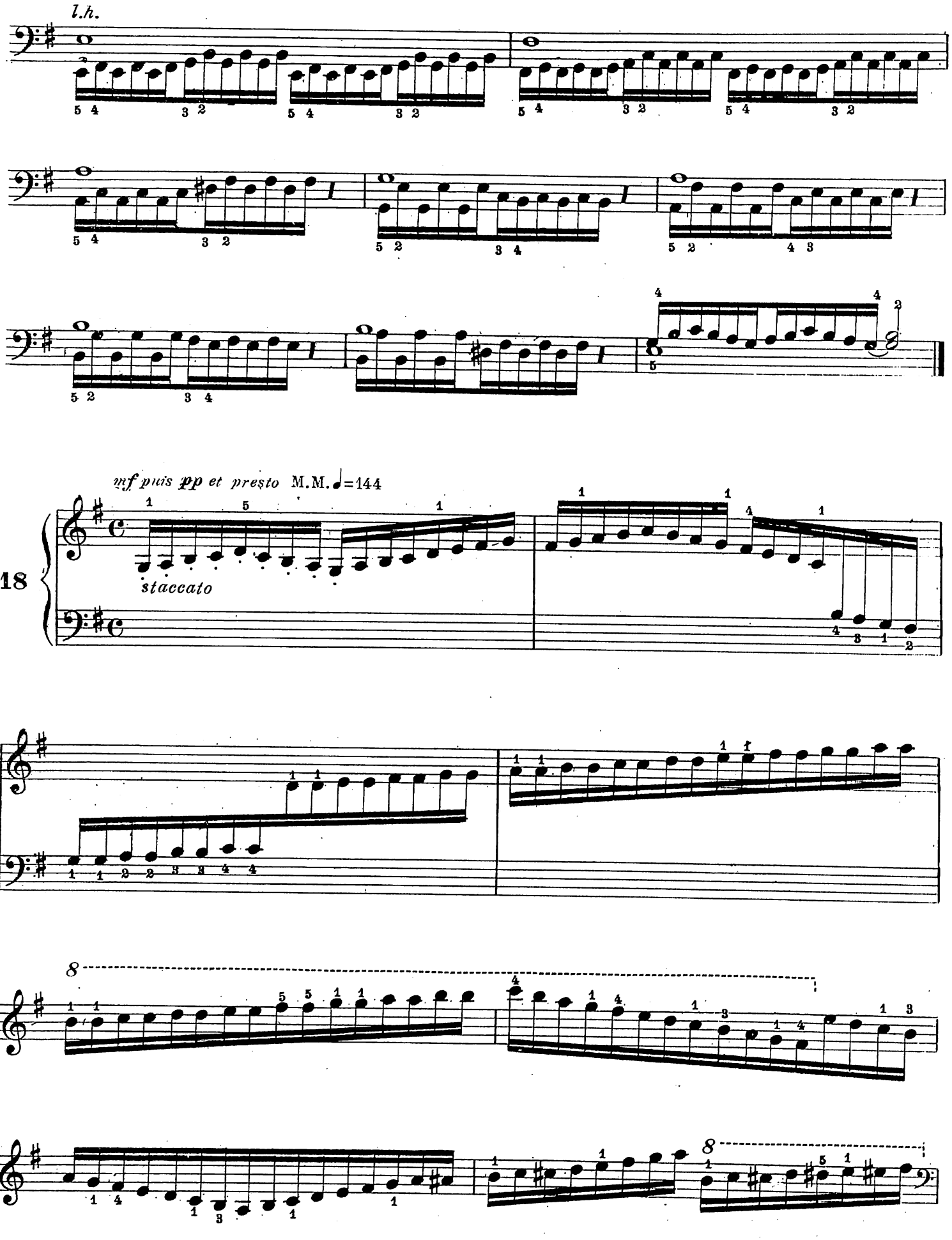


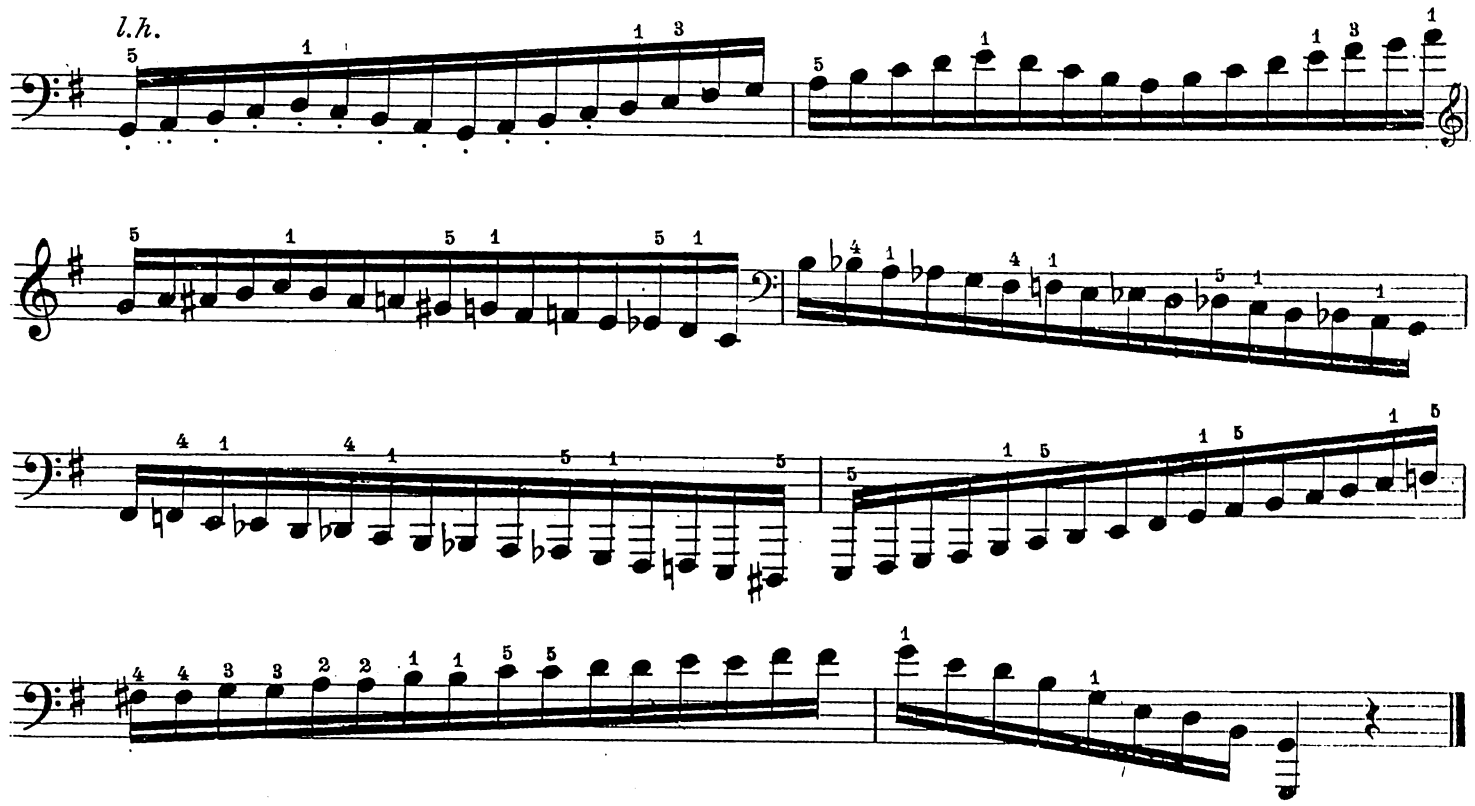
Presto M.M. ♩=160

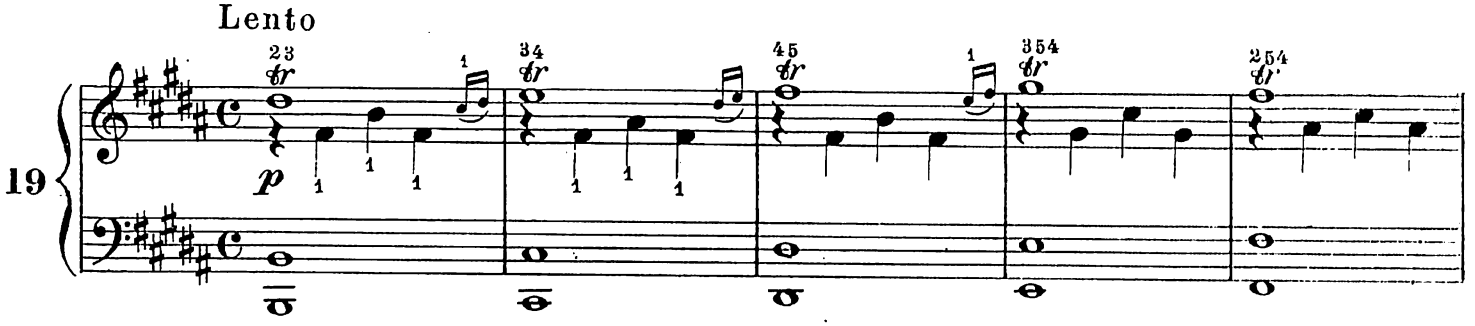
f puis pp

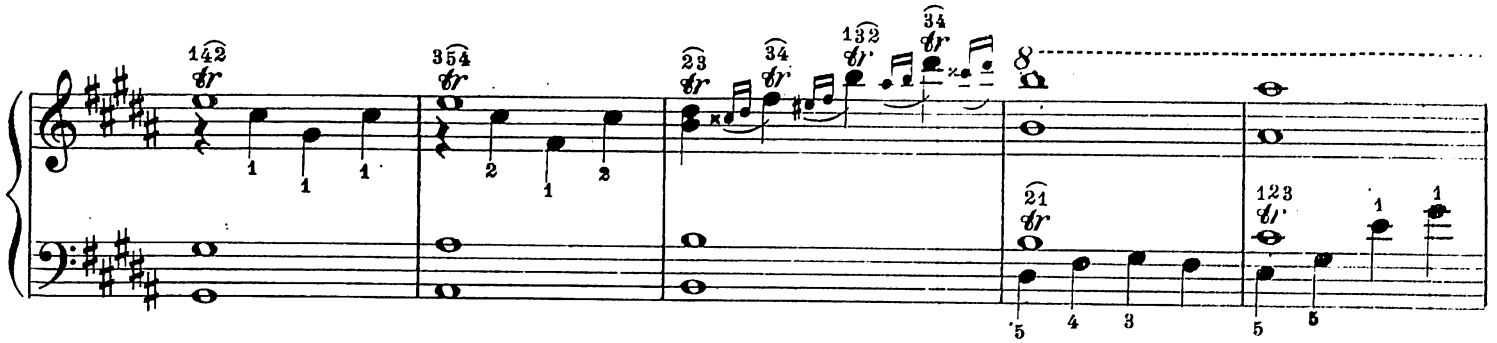
17

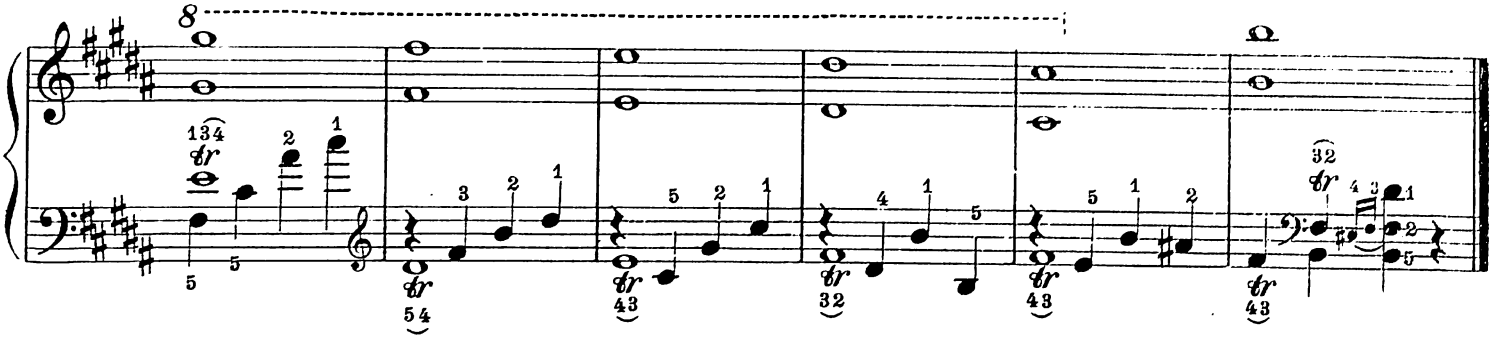



l.h.
mf puis pp et presto M.M. ♩=144
staccato
18
8
8


l.h.


Lento
19
p

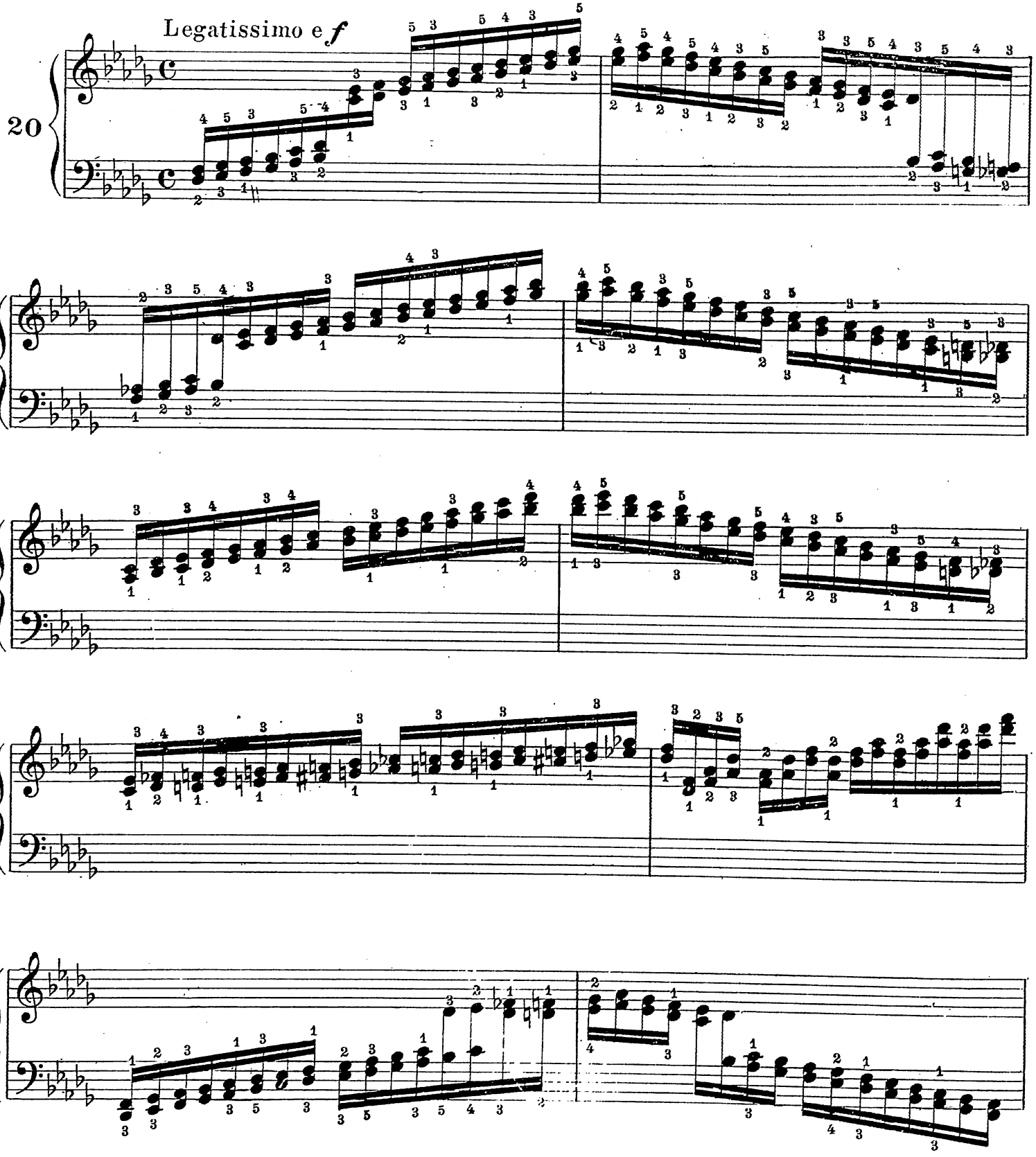


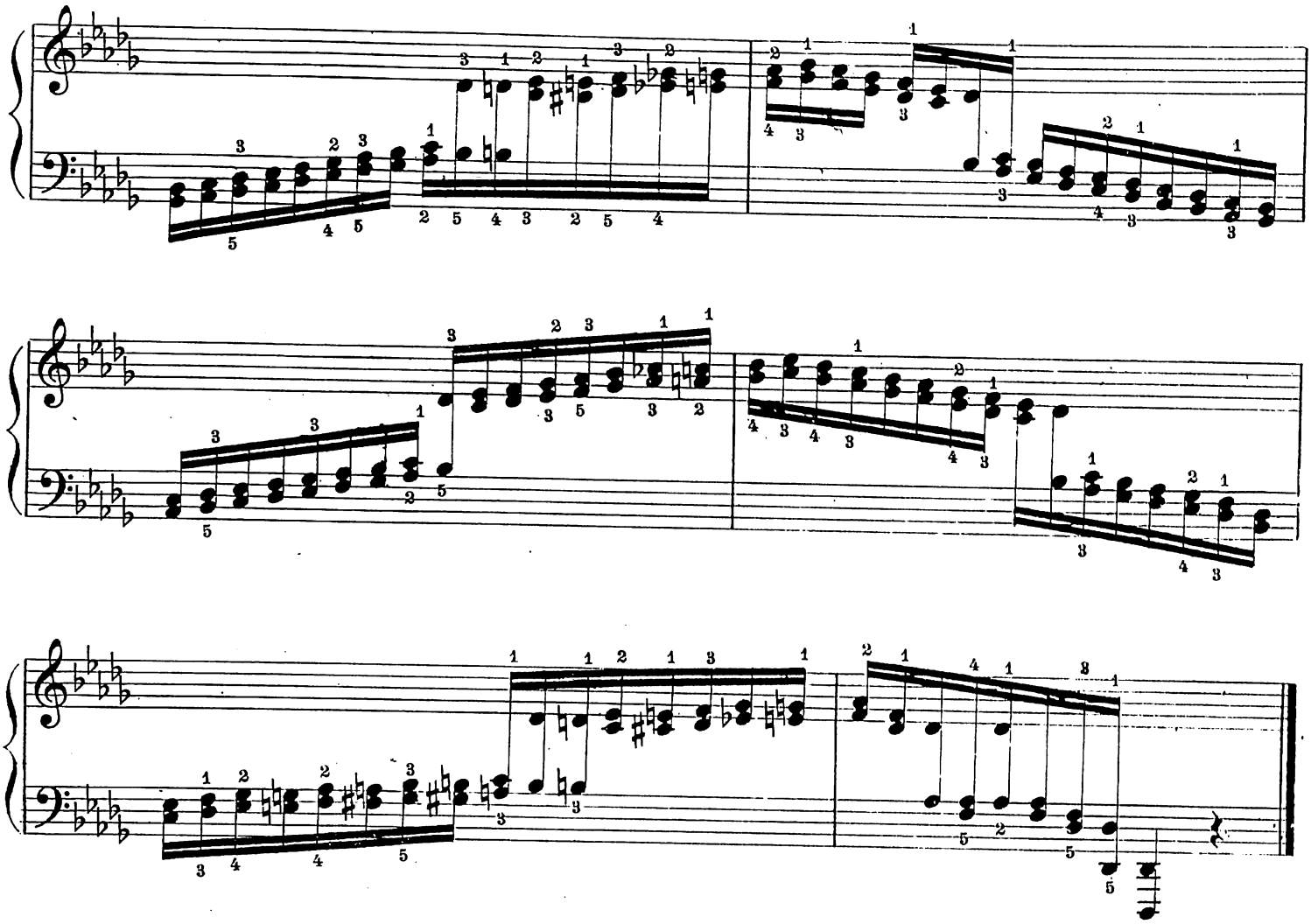


Uniform fingerings to be used:
Doigtes uniformes à employer:
for two thirds: 45 45 45 34 35 45 35 34 45 23 34 45 53 52 15 15 54
pour deux tierces: 31; 21; 12; 21; 21; 13; 12; 12; 23; 12; 23; 31; 31; 31; 34; 23; 23

for three thirds: 345 345
pour trois tierces: 123; 213;

for four third: 2345 3455
pour quatre tierces: 1123; 2134;





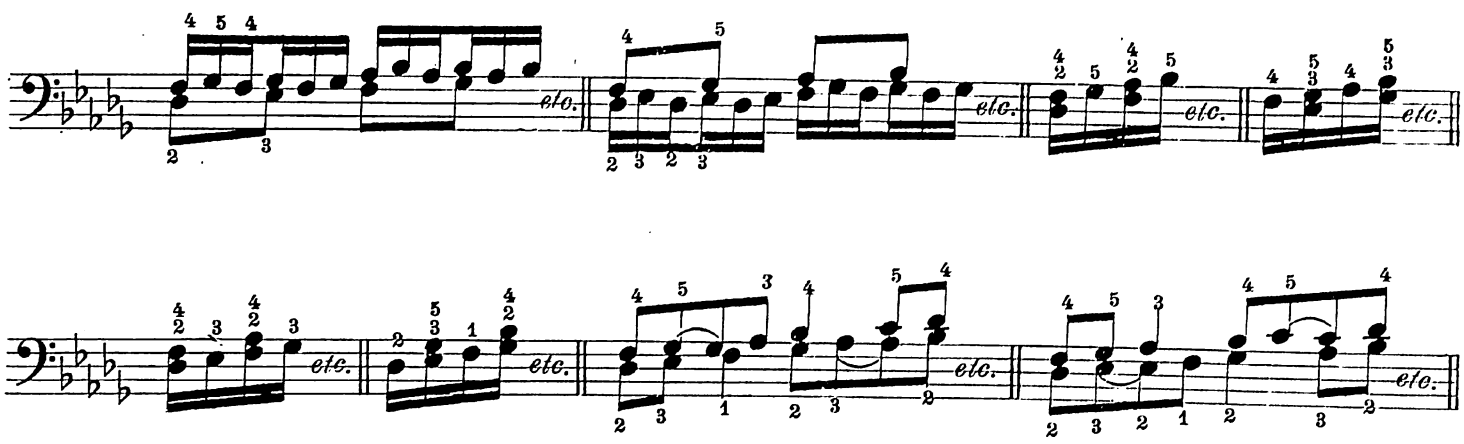
An excellent preparatory exercise is to practice this short study with a single fingering for each third:
Un excellent exercice preparatoire sera de travailler cette petite etude avec le doigte unique pour une tierce:

2 3 4 5 3 4 5 4 5 5
1; 1; 1; 1; 2; 2; 2; 3; 3; 4.

Variations

Practice with the usual fingering each part of the thirds slowly, faster and always legatissimo.
Practice also with the following variations:

Travailler avec le doigte normal chaque partie de la tierce separement lentement puis Vite et toujours legatissimo.
Travailler aussi avec les variantes suivantes:



Uniform fingering for two sixths:
Doigtes uniformes pour deux Sixtes:
23 34 45 35 35 45 54
11; 11; 11;11; 12; 21; 21.

Repeat each group of two sixths, three times. Practice sustaining all the tones, thus:
Repetez chaque groupe de deux Sixtes, trois fois. Travailler en tenant toutes les notes, ainsi:

Variation

21

r.h.

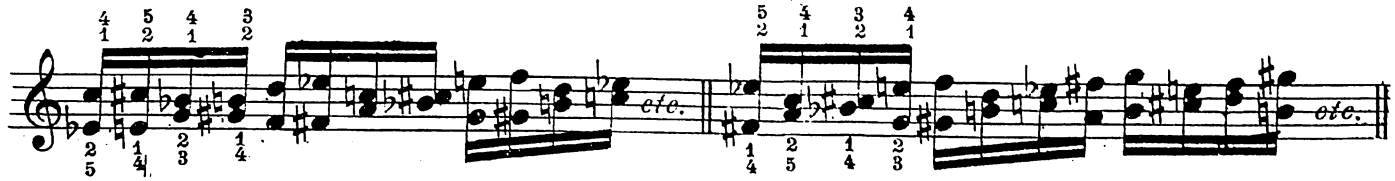
legatissimo e mf

l.h.

On several octaves

22 a

22 b

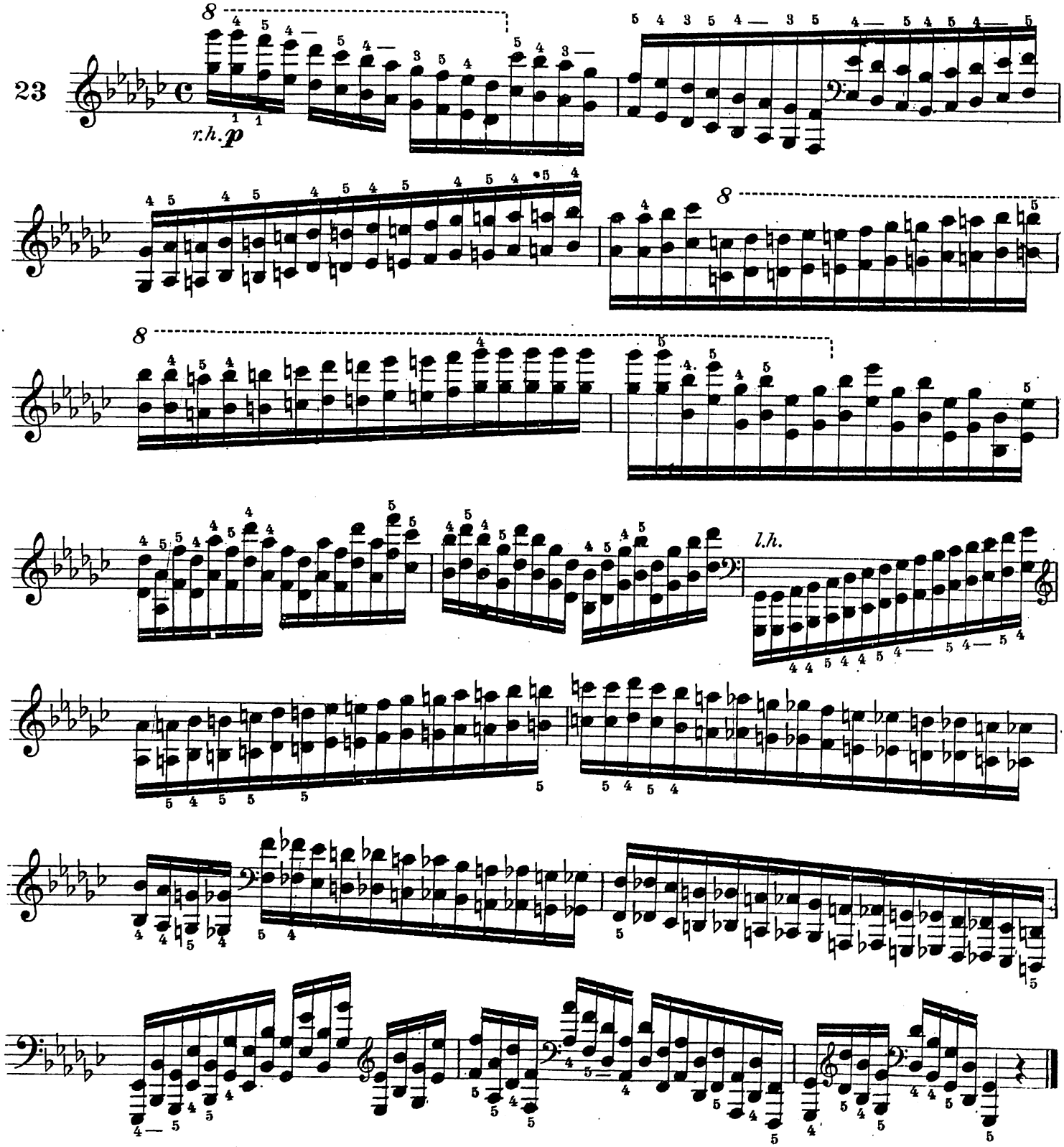


Practice the higher note with 1 and 5 on the same key

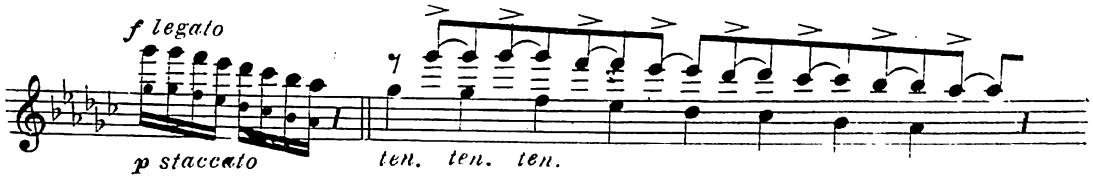
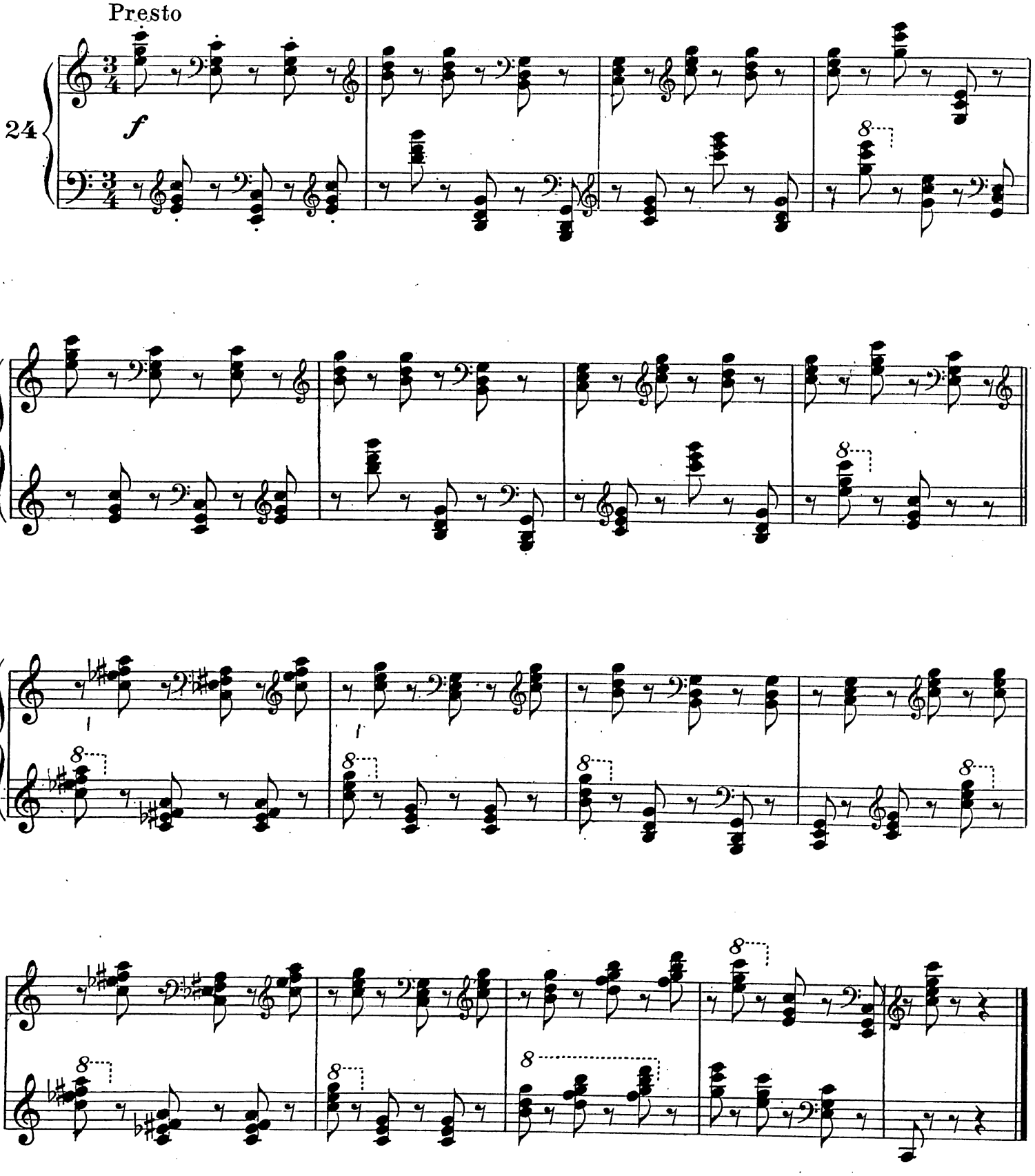
Travailler la note superieure avec le pouce et le è inguieine sur la même touche

Presto M.M. ♩=120

23



Practice thus:
Travailler ainsi:



Presto