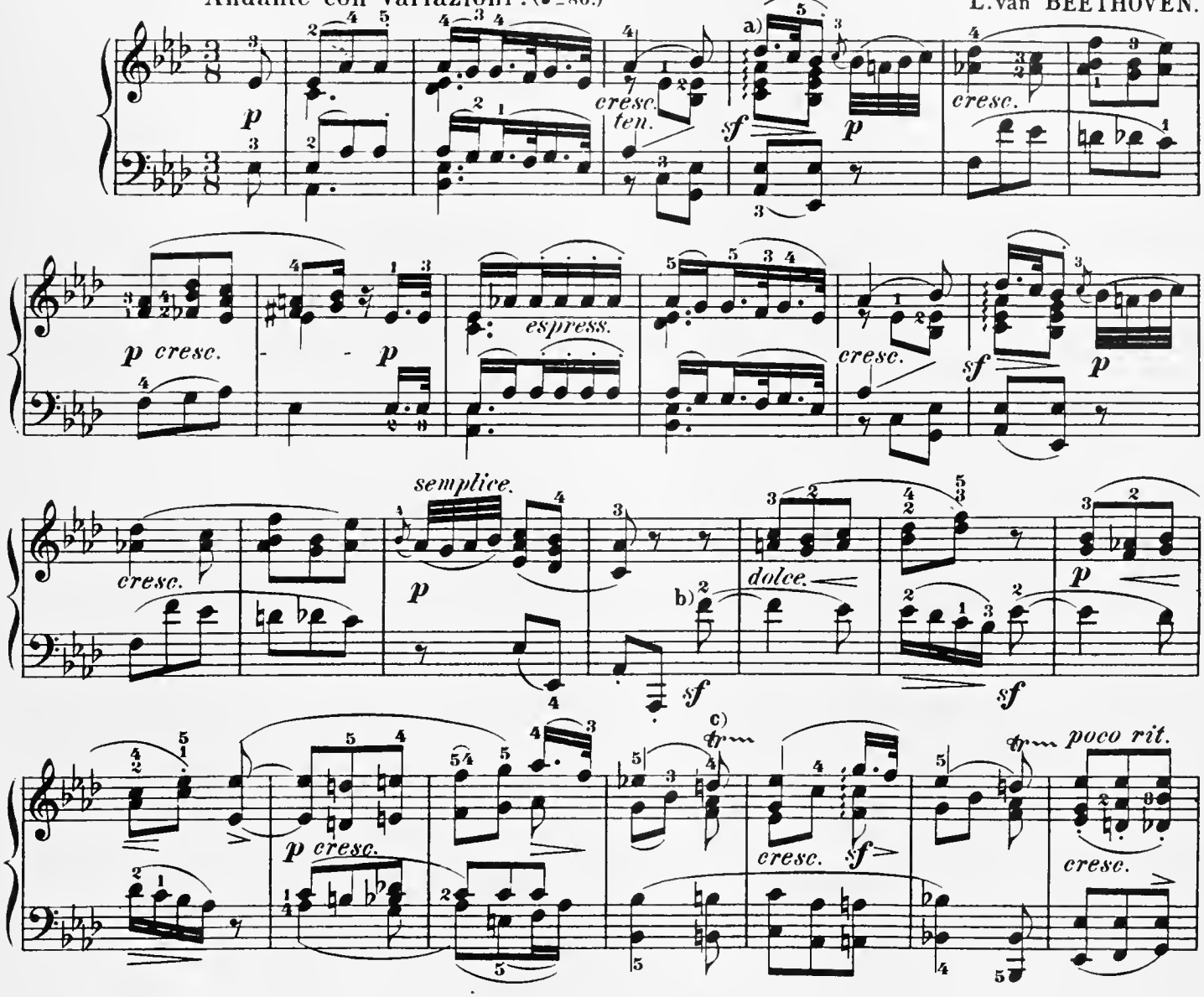
SONATA.

Op. 26.

To Prince CARL von LICHNOWSKY.

Abbreviations: M.T. signifies Main Theme; S.T., Sub-Theme; Tr., Transition, R., Return.

Andante con Variazioni. (♩=80.) L. van BEETHOVEN.



a) This arpeggio-mark is not found in the original; indeed, the Master employed it far more seldom than his predecessors Haydn and Mozart. Isolated exceptions (e.g., in Op. 7, Op. 31 № 2, etc.) simply confirm the easy conjecture, that the arpeggio style of playing was incompatible with his orchestral habit of thinking. Nevertheless, a moderately free use of the arpeggio in this place – and in various others as well – is eminently proper, not only on technical, but still more on acoustical, grounds (for the sake of euphony). The reproach of irreverence is disarmed by pointing to movements 1 and 2 of Op. 109, where we meet with a notation of chords in the form of small tied notes; — in Op. 27 № 2, Finale in C♯-minor, he even definitely indicates the breaking of the chord by rhythmically dividing it. An almost unnoticeable dwelling on the (melodically) most important highest tone is advisable, so as not to alter its relative value to the next. To be played nearly thus: and similarly in meas. 24:

b) The counter-melody in the left hand must be brought out in the same independent relief as the thematic song in the right, and with opposed shading.

c) Here the trill should undoubtedly be rounded off with an after-beat: although the Master desires this only where he expressly writes it (for instance, even in the initial theme of the Sonata with Violin, Op. 96, no after beat must be added).

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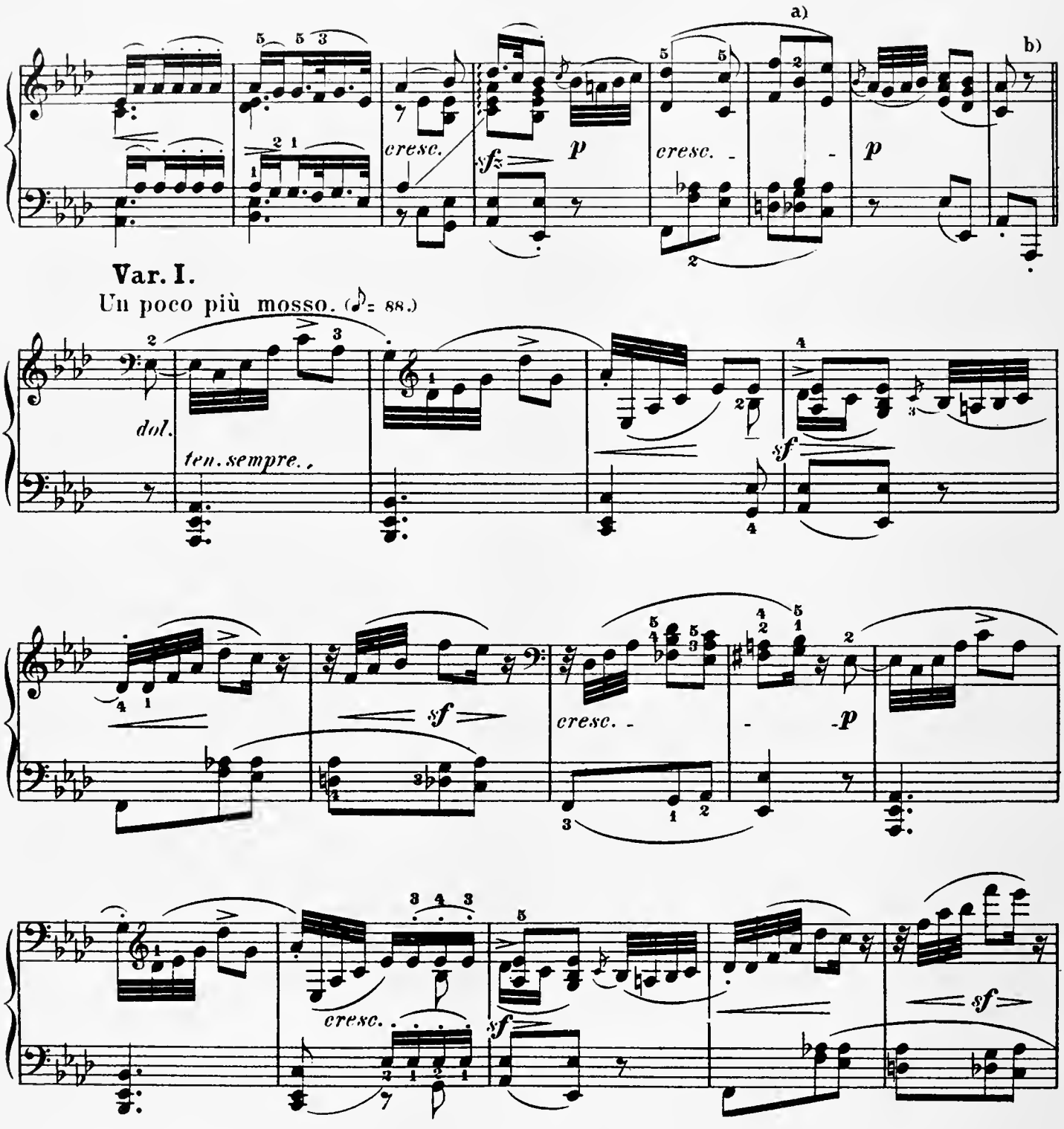
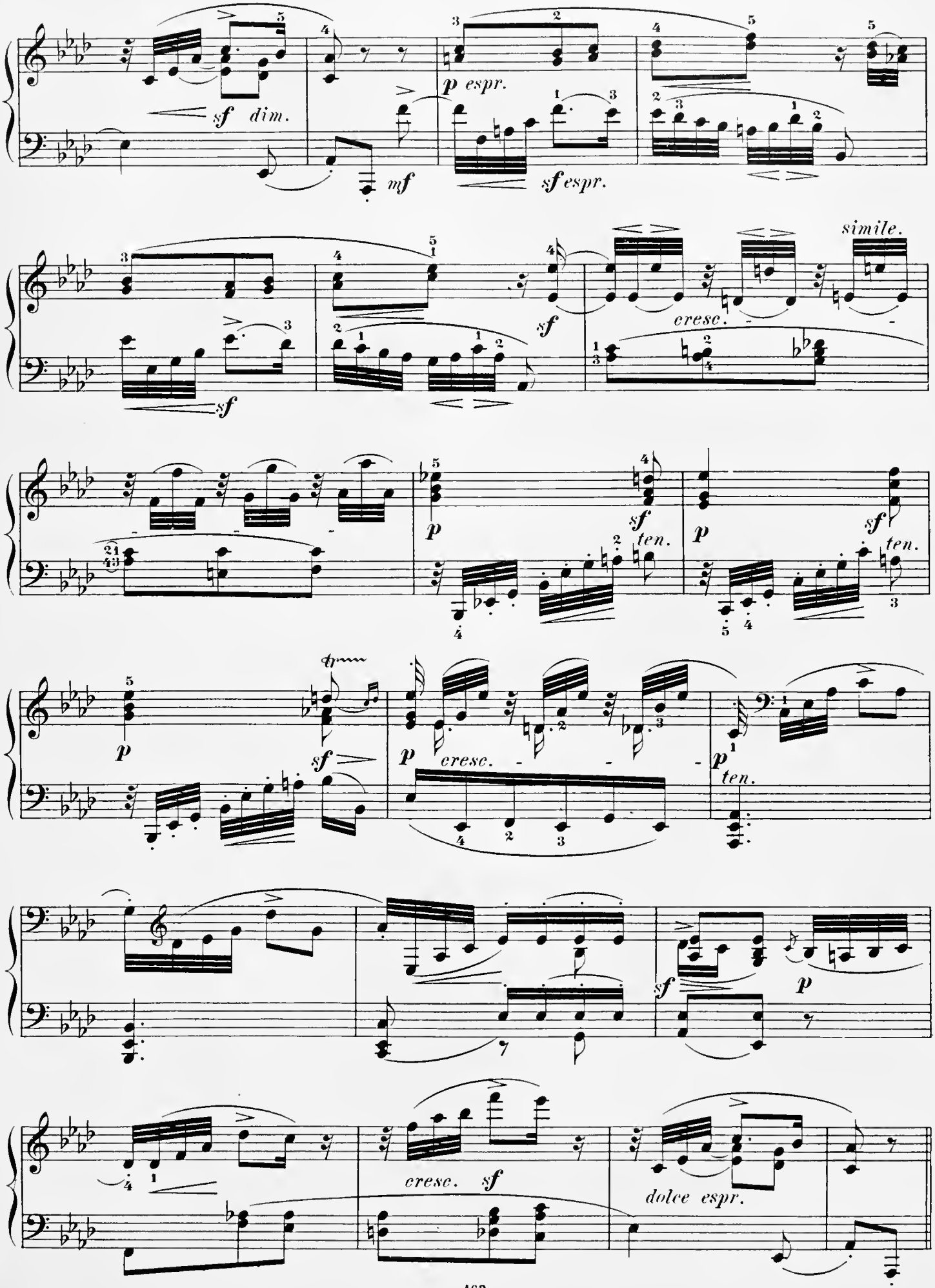


a) This taking of the lower tone of the octave with the left hand, in order to facilitate the *legato* in the melody, is equally applicable to the last eighth-note of the preceding measure.

b) In so-called bravura variations, intended to exhibit an applause-craving virtuosity, a pause after the theme, and between the several variations, is justifiable; but the art-form of the Variation, Beethoven's own peculiar creation, will not bear such a chilling interruption. The player should rather strive to attain flowing continuity, and to render the transitions (for instance, the acceleration in the tempo which is indispensable to the Third Variation, to prevent any effect of dragging) as imperceptible as possible.


sf dim.
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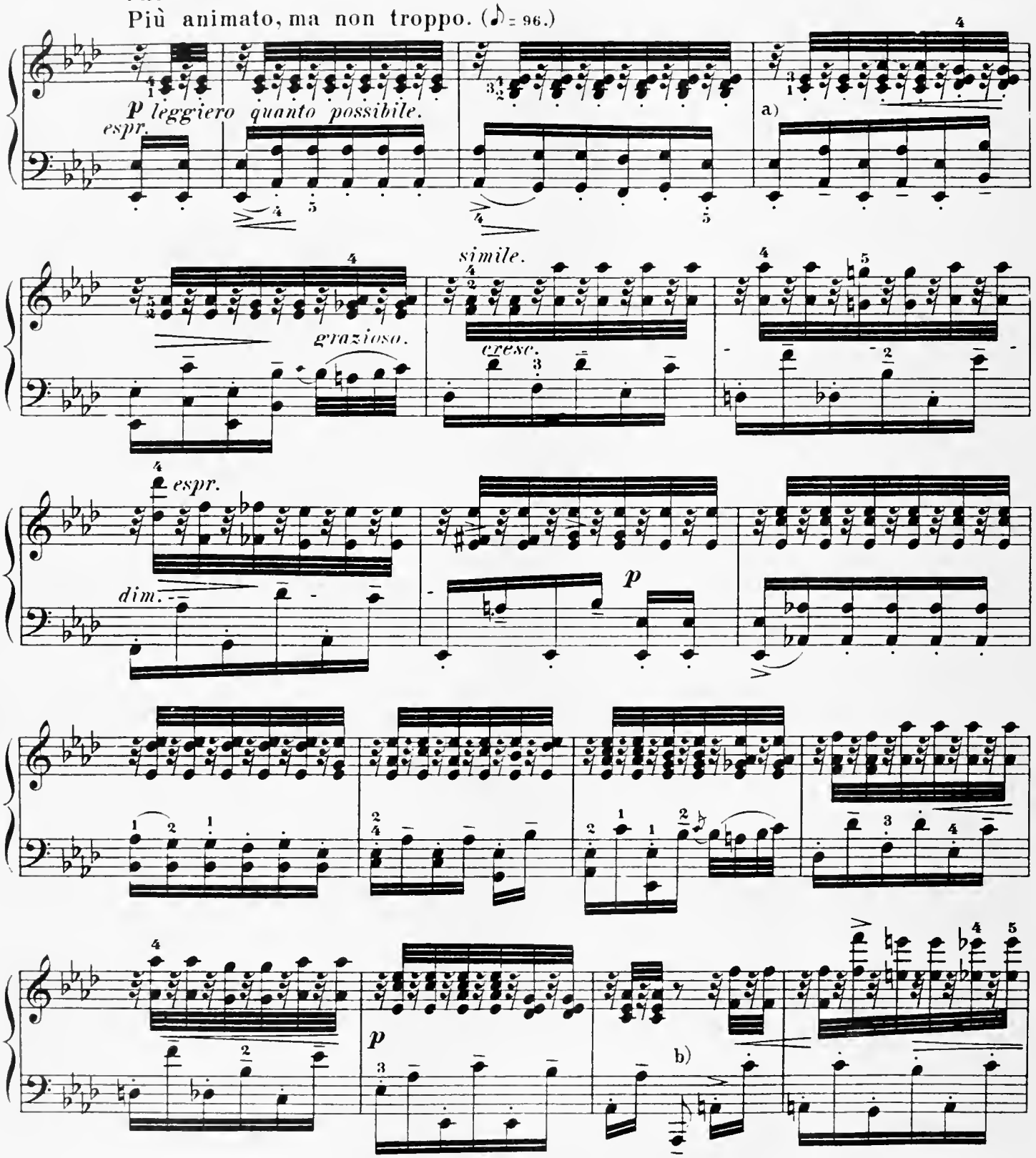
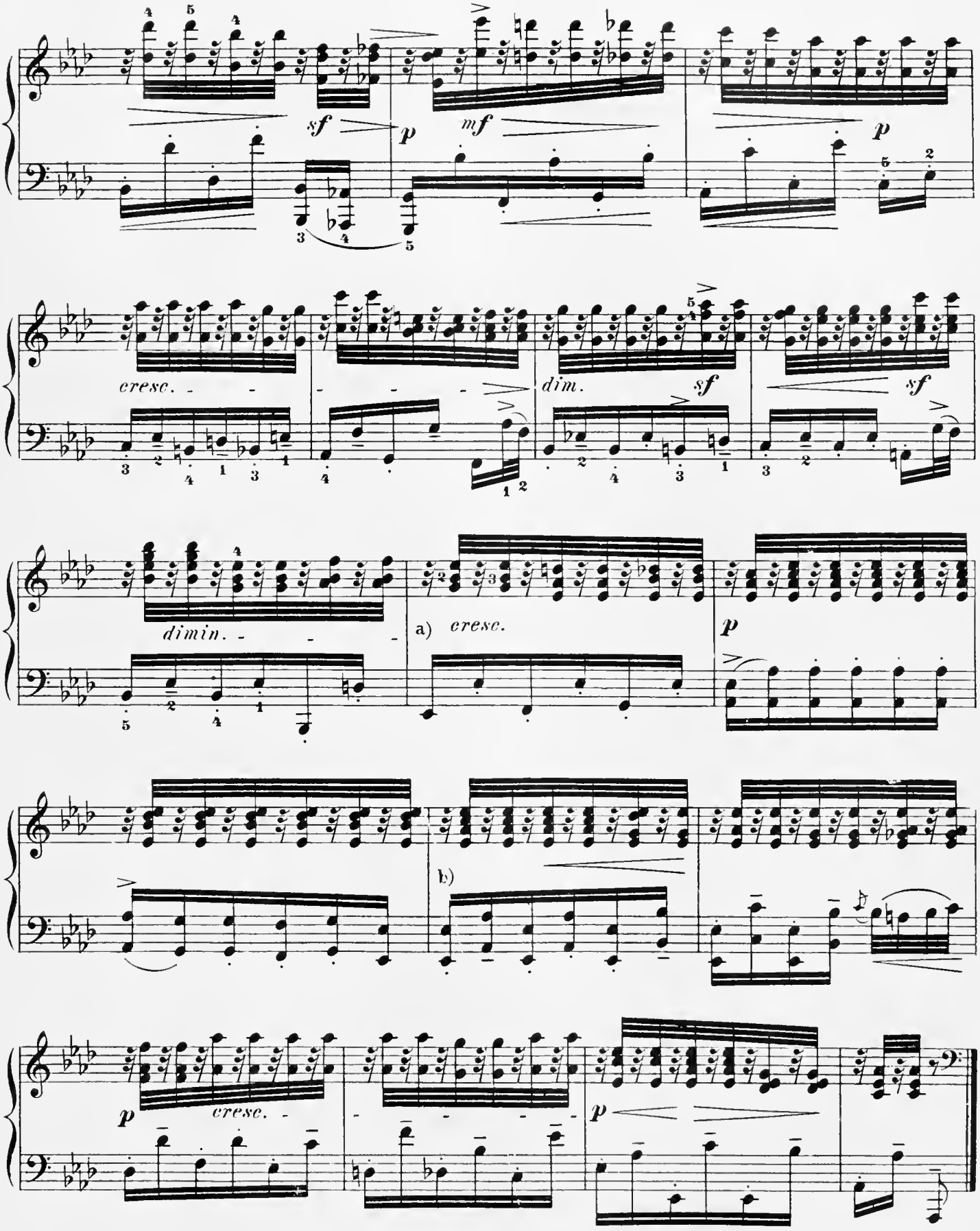
Var. II.

Più animato, ma non troppo. (♪ = 96.)



a) The melody contained in the after-striking sixteenth-notes, while making itself felt throughout, must be played no louder (though a trifle *more firmly*, as indicated by the short dash _) than the anticipating bass notes alternating with them. Do not neglect to give due weight to the middle parts in the right hand, which are so essential as an harmonic filling.

b) A slight delay on the second eighth _ a momentary pause, as if at a semicolon _ is needful to introduce the remoter key (F-major) in which the middle section begins. This nuance may also be observed both in the Theme and the other Variations, although less imperatively demanded in these cases by euphonic considerations.

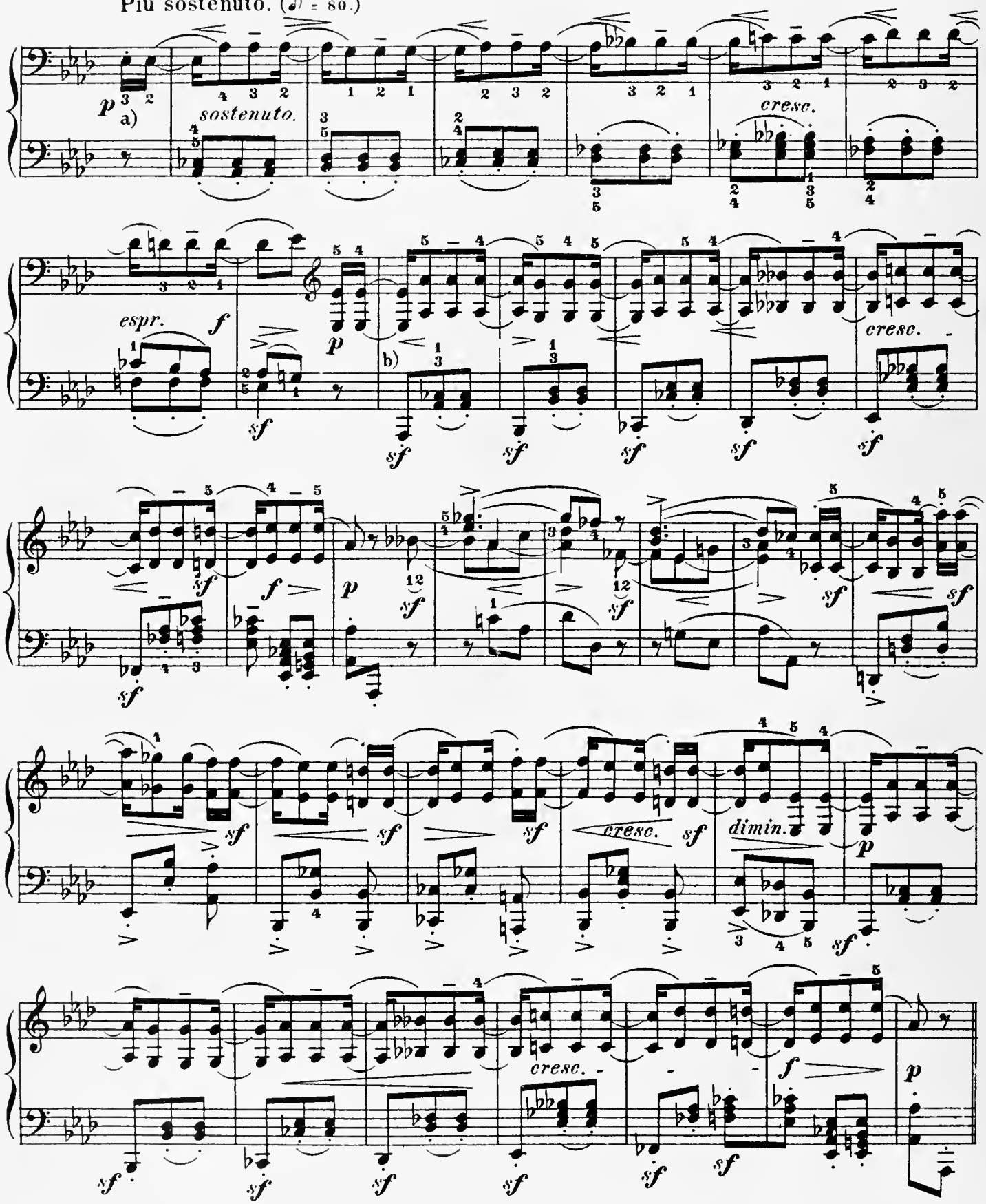


a) The *crescendo* in this retrogressional measure is borrowed from the original transition in the Theme, the shading and expression of which must be studiously followed in the performance of each Variation.

b) Observe the accompanying middle part in this and the next measure:

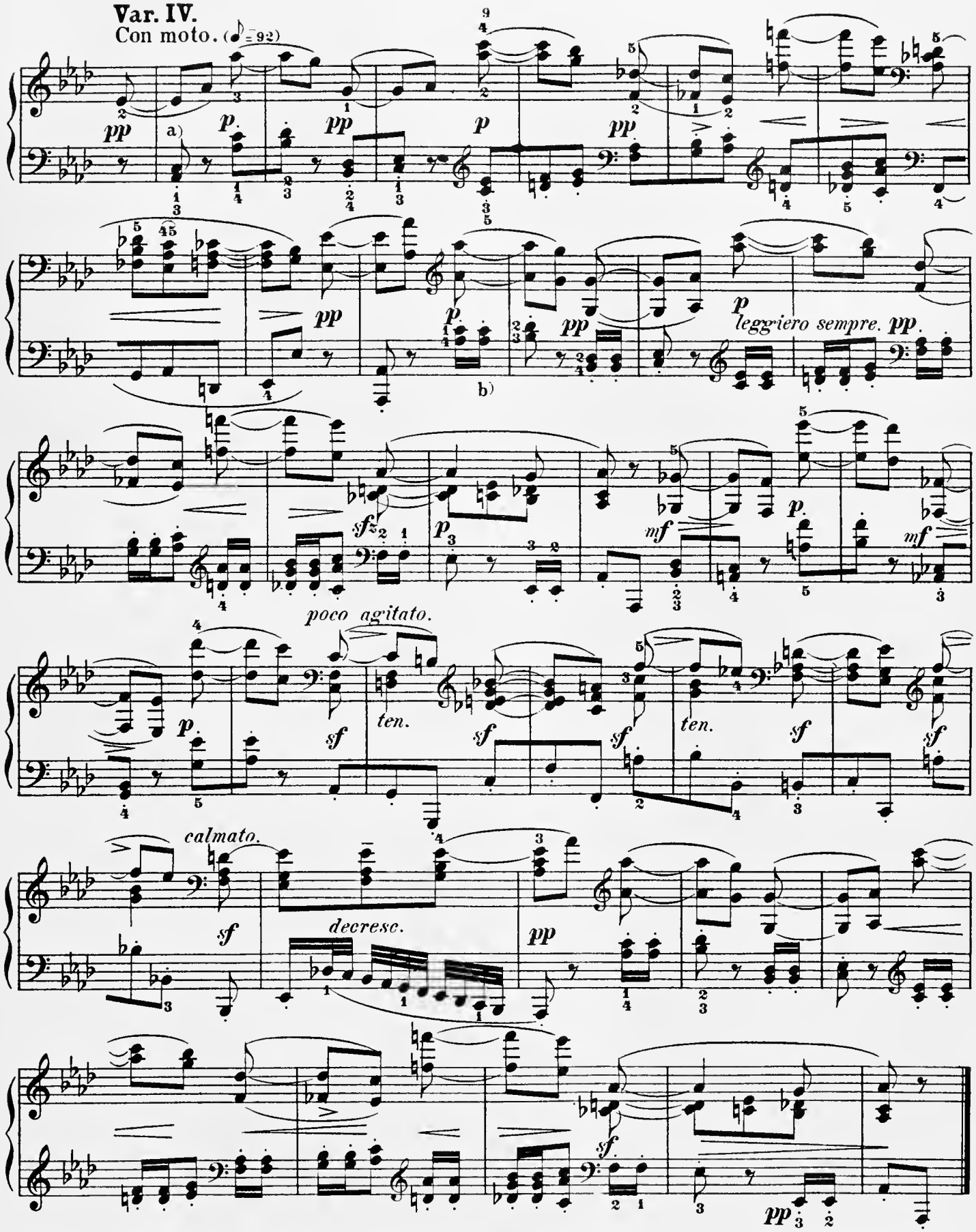
Var. III. (Minore.)

Più sostenuto. (♪ = 80.)



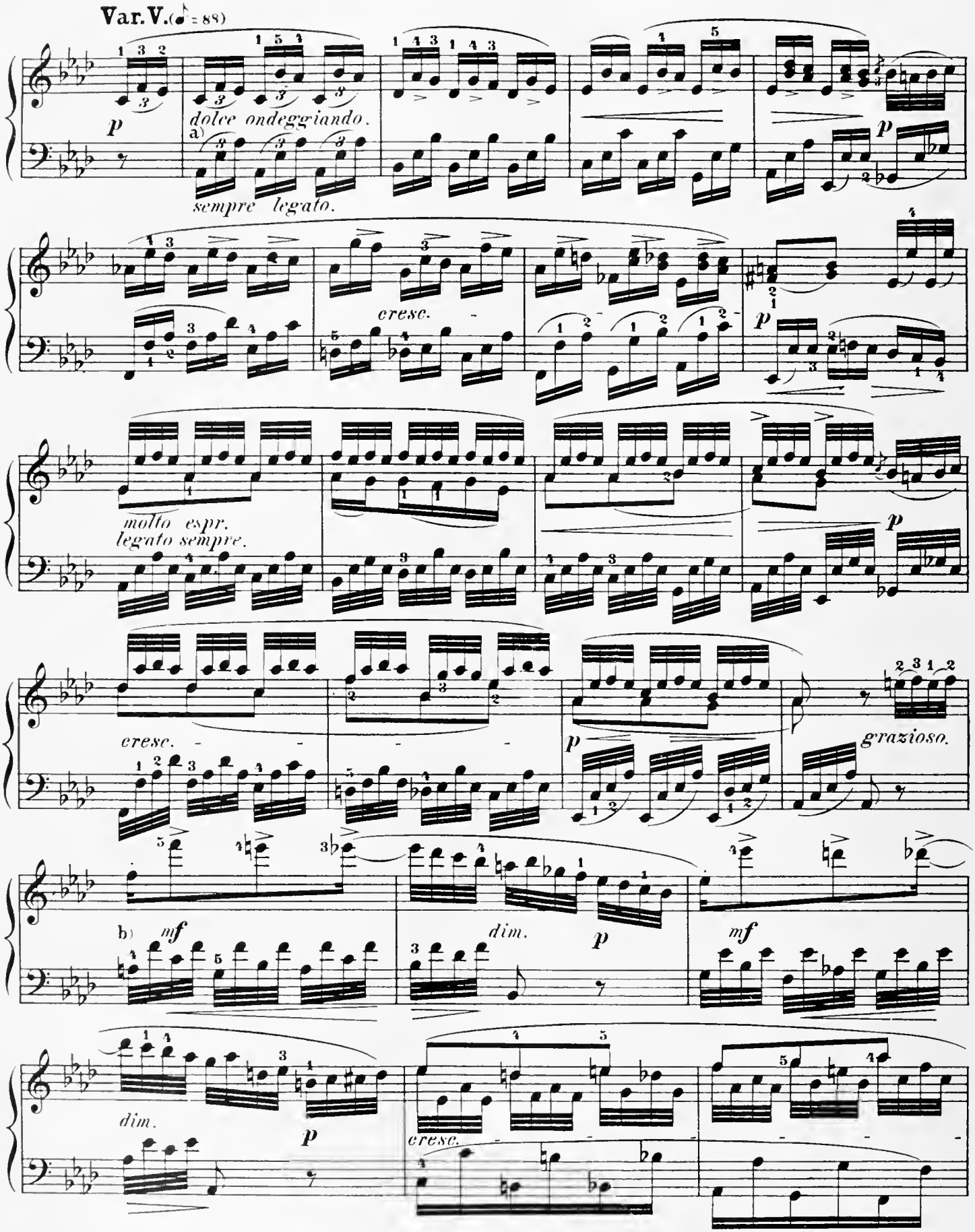
a) A signature of seven flats is unnecessary, and confuses the pupil's eye. Hummel, in his E♭-minor quintet, was also content with the signature of the major key.

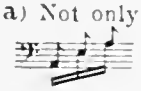
b) The sforzato-sign *sf* always applies only to the note or chord over or under which it stands — a rule carefully to be observed throughout this Variation and the next-following.



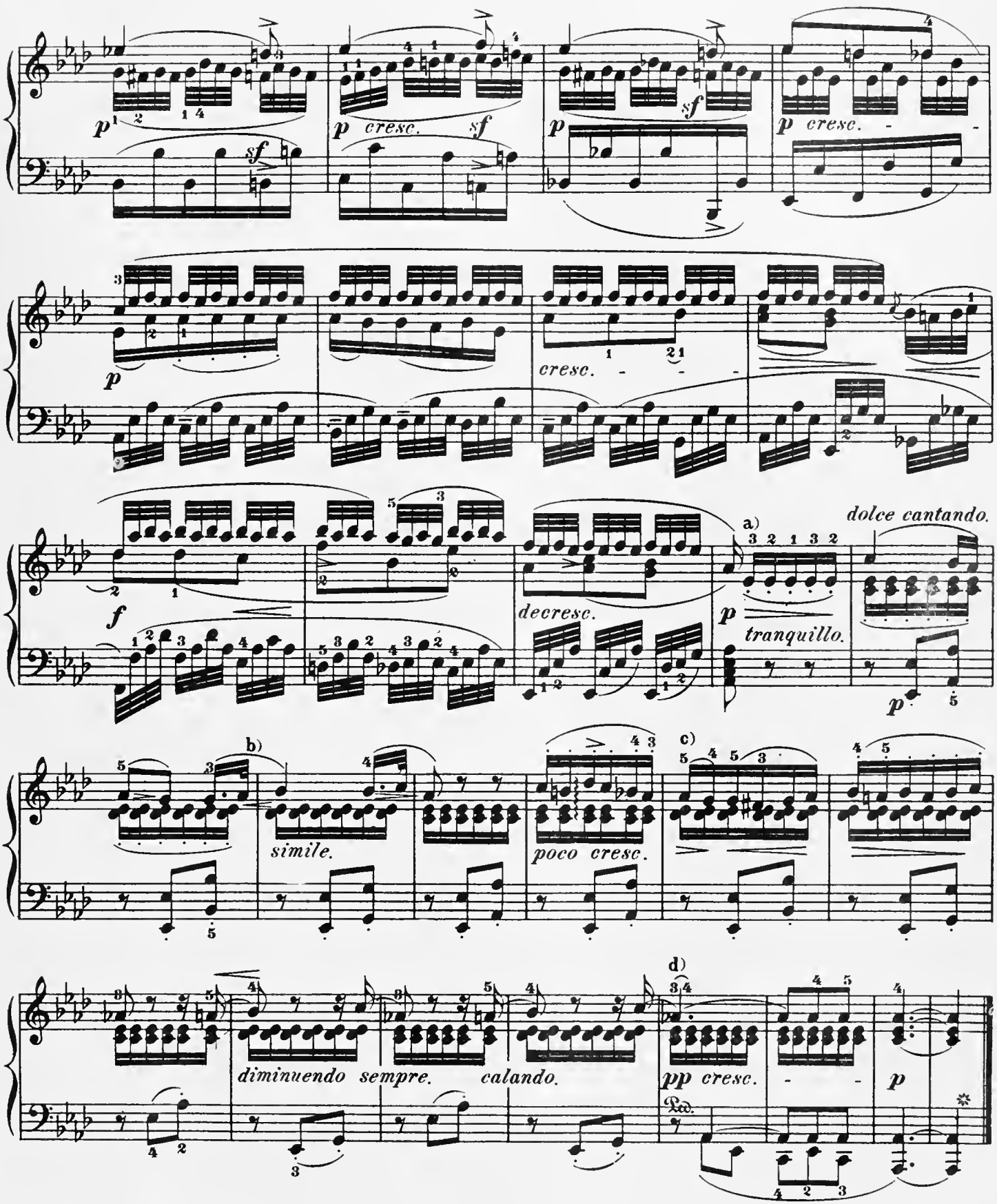
a) The dialogue-form characteristic of this Variation (whose mode of presentation, more especially the alternation between different registers, has often been imitated, particularly by Mendelssohn) requires, in our opinion, a corresponding characteristic shading, for which, especially in the middle section, we have marked a free mode of execution, easily modifiable according to individual taste. In the *sforzatos* themselves (meas. 20-25) certain gradations must be observed, as *sfz f*, *sfz mf*, *sfz p*,— in short, one should attempt to "color," but without interfering with the requirement of fluent execution (with sharp contrasts of *legato* and *staccato* in the two hands).

b) The normal fingering for *staccato* passages in thirds is elsewhere $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{1}$, the latter on white keys.



a) Not only the bass notes, but also the harmonic middle parts (as the first note in the right hand), may be held down:  this is, indeed, indispensable for the production of the pianistic euphony evidently aimed at here by the composer.

b) Here the executant should remember the counter-melody for the right hand in the Theme:



a) This charming Coda must end dreamily, as if lost in reverie, but not begin so; therefore, no perceptible change in the Tempo should be made, letting the *calando,* both as regards tone-power and movement, creep on very gradually.

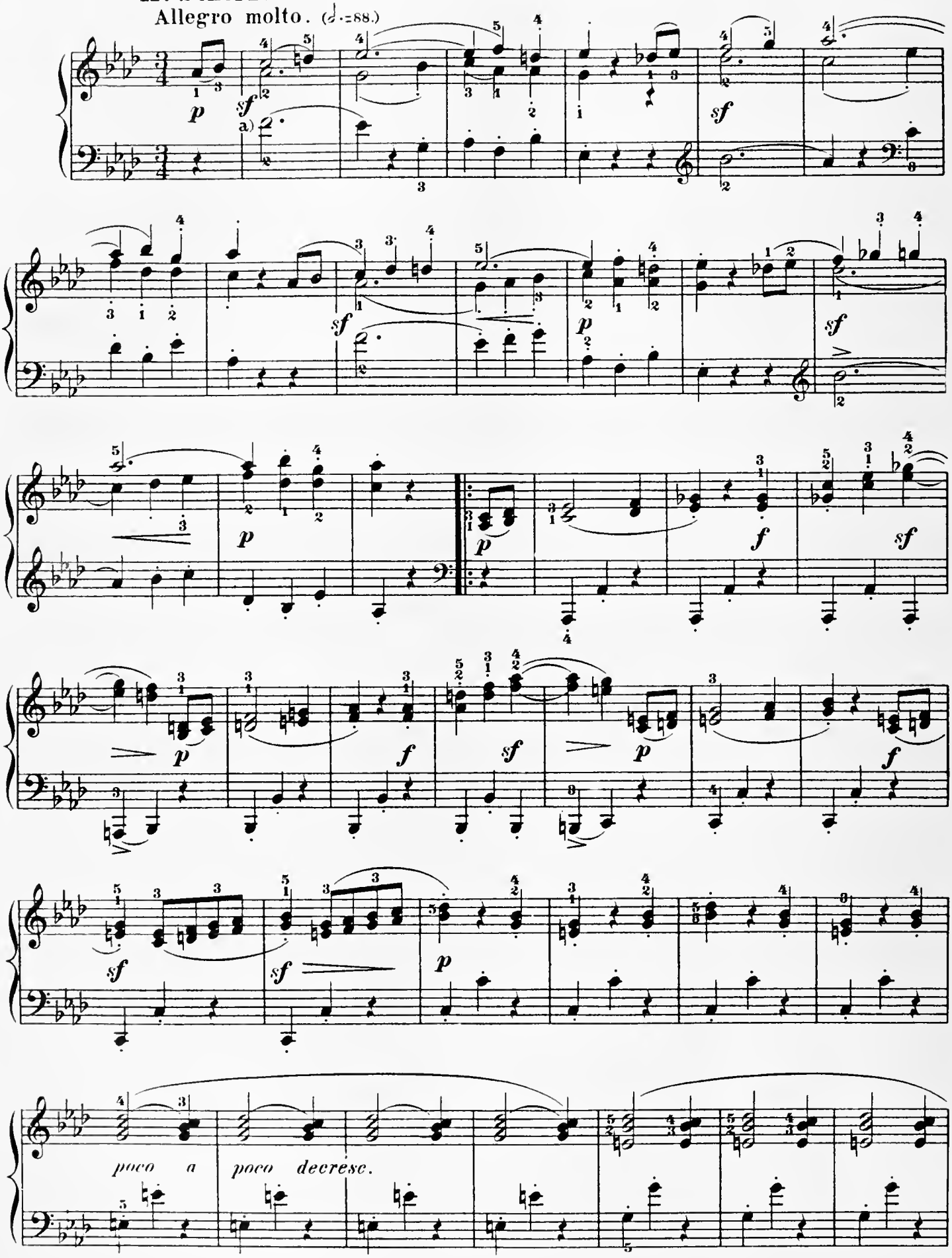
b) Some new editions have the unjustifiable alteration:

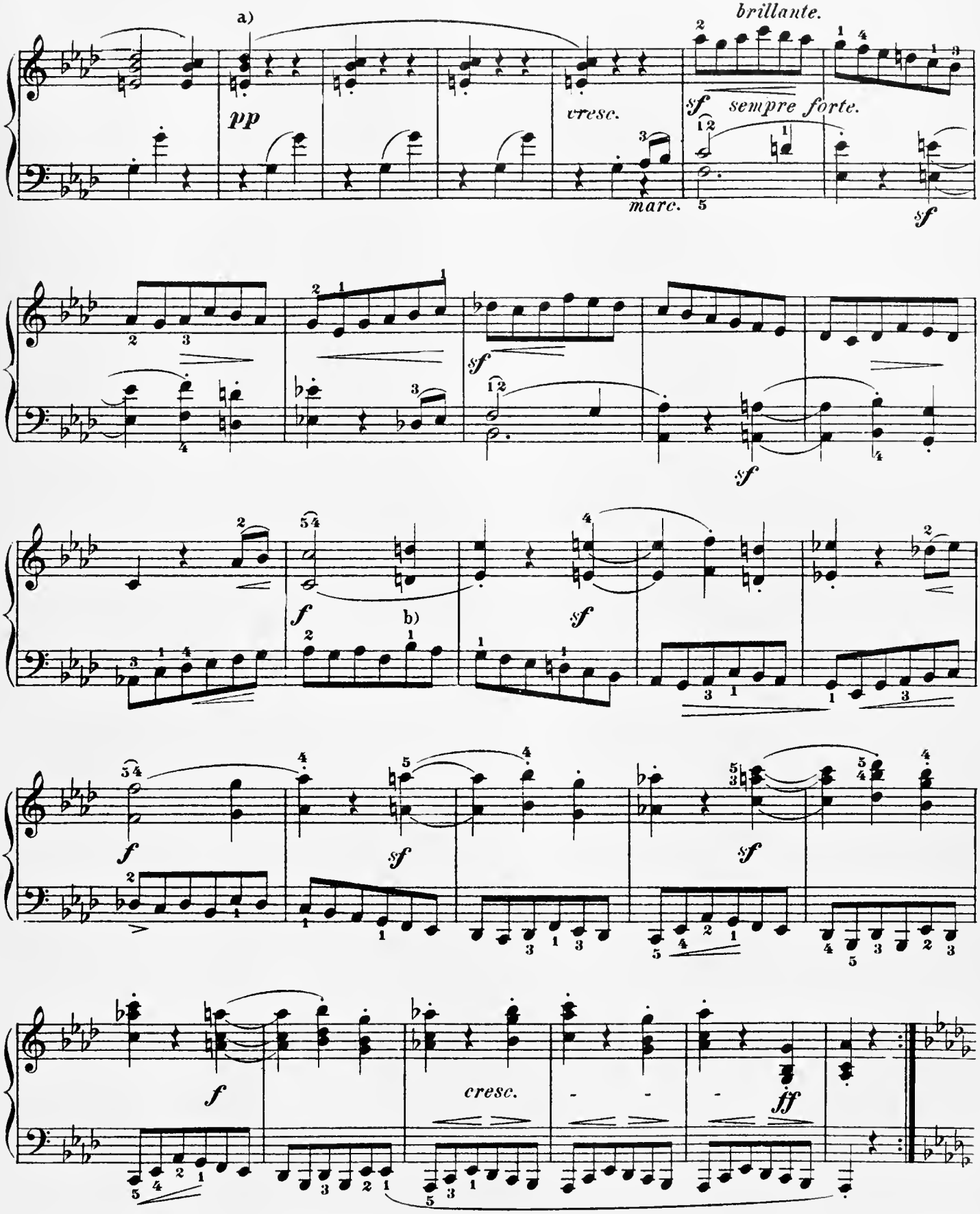
c) A strict *legato,* and not, as in the measure preceding and following,

d) The shading *pp* < > *pp* marked in some uew editions is incorrect.

II. Scherzo.

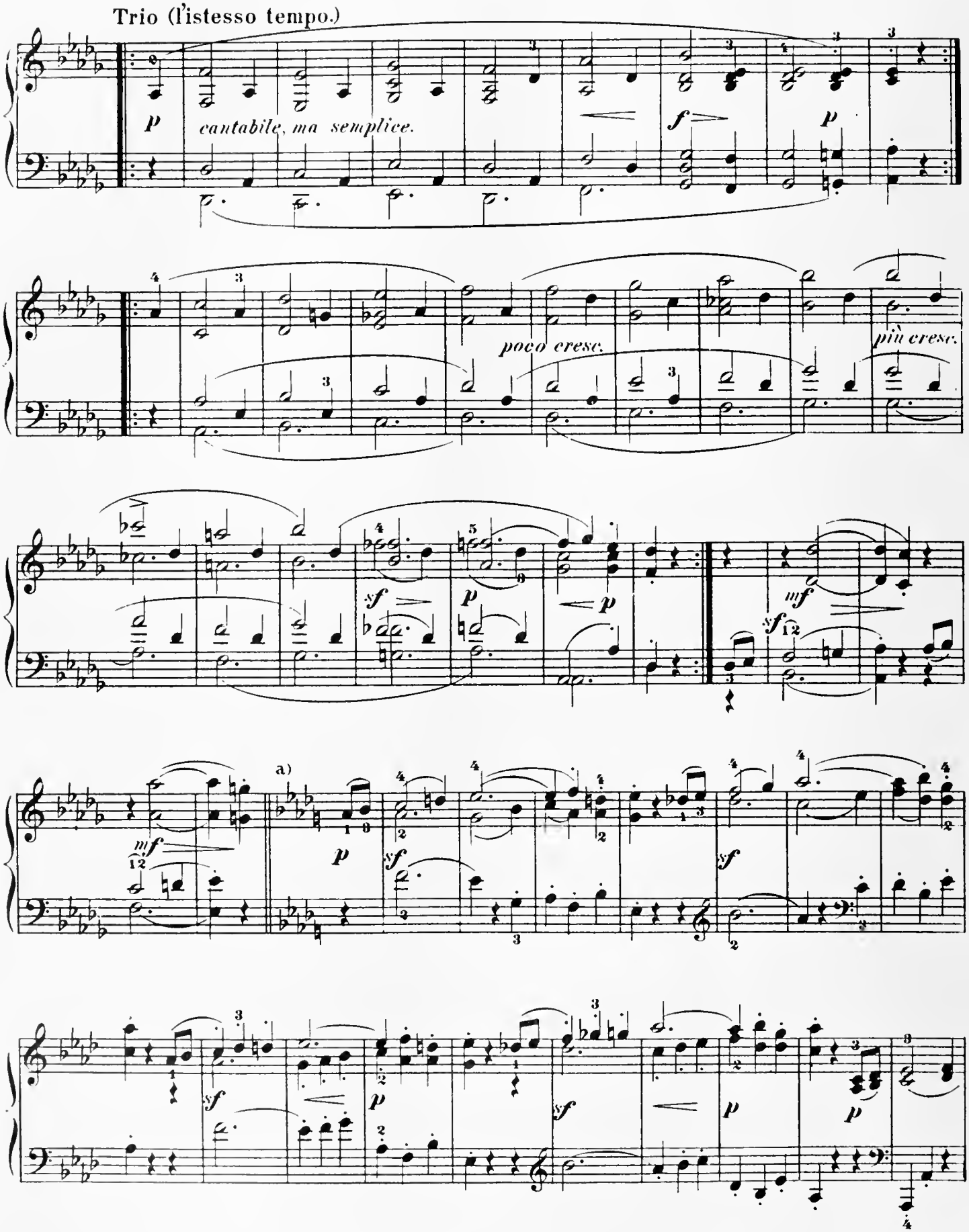
Allegro molto. (♩.=88.)



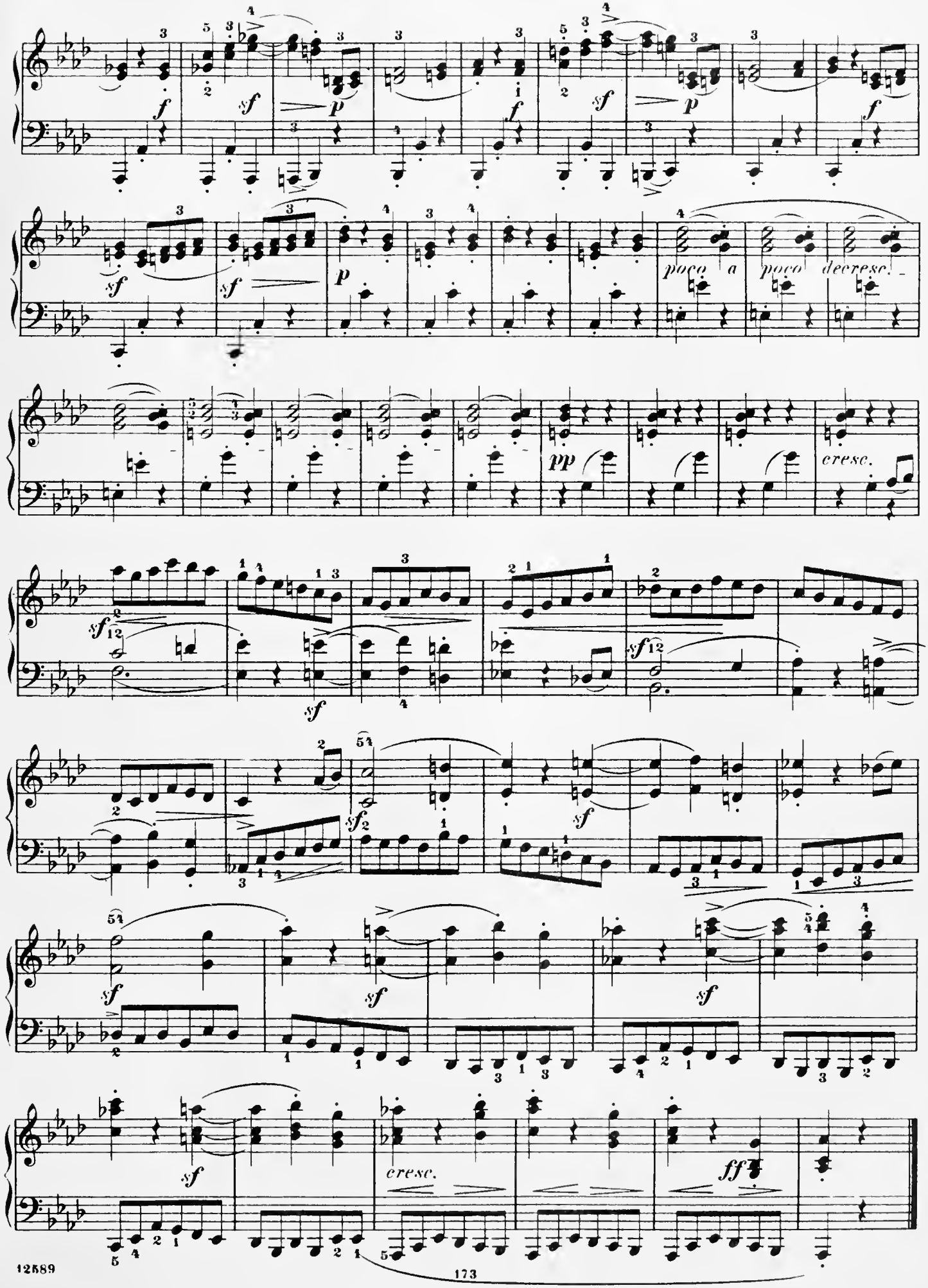


a) The player should resist any inclination to retard; the more so, as these twelve measures before the reprise of the Theme are to be regarded, in themselves, as a *ritardando* of ample length.

b) It is quite as absurd to forbid the use of the thumb on black keys, as to forbid the substitution of a longer finger for this, the shortest of all, when thereby an unnecessary change in the position of the hand could be obviated, in deference to any pedantic system of fingering. In fact, every Beethoven player ought to prepare himself for any emergency – extraordinary demands on his technique – by diligently practising the scales in the flat keys with the fingering for C-major, a plan first suggested by Bertini.

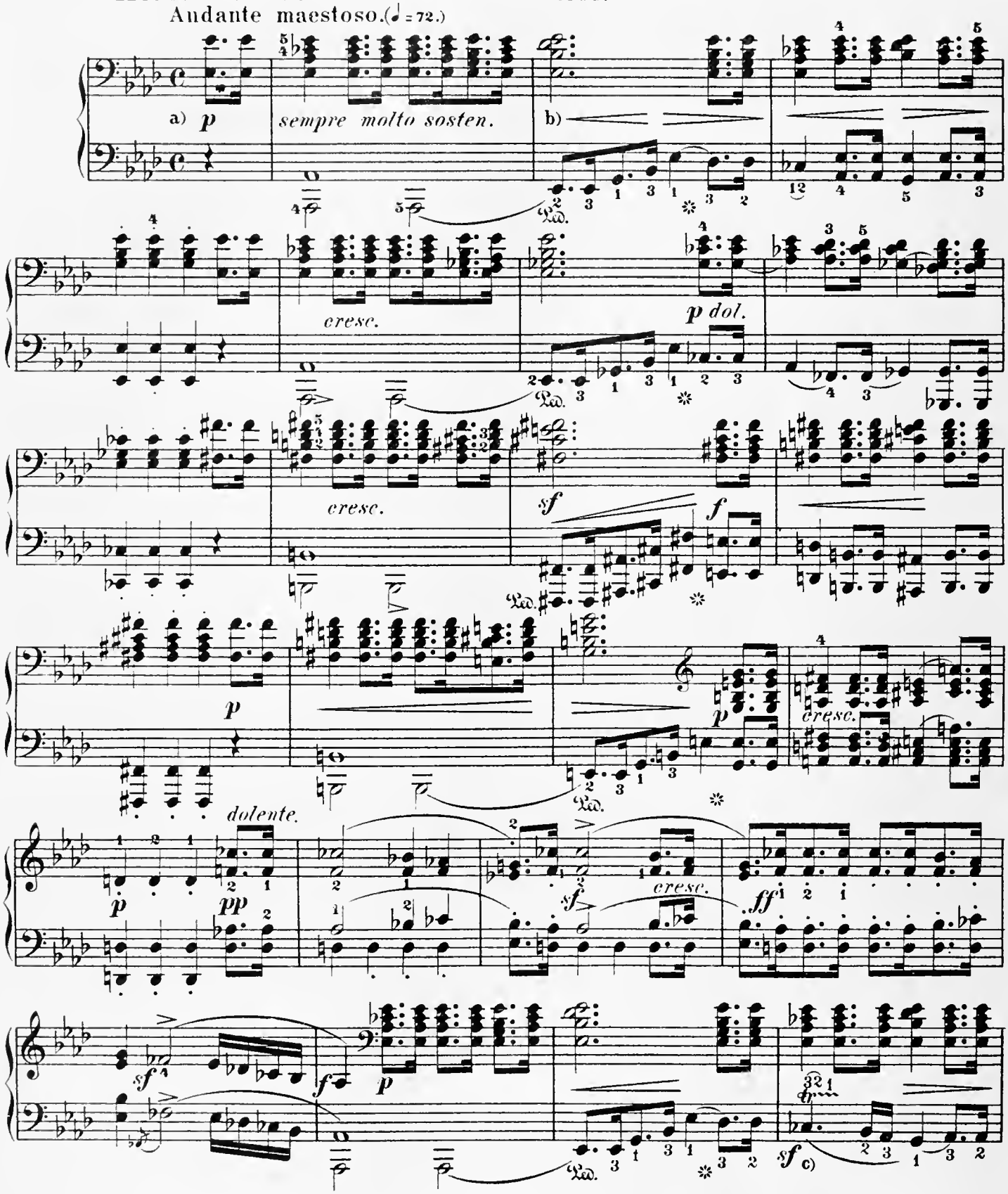


a) A brief pause before the reëntrance of the Scherzo would be entirely in keeping with a humoristic conception of these four genuinely Beethovenish transitional measures. They ought then to be played rather emphatically, as if angrily dismissing the trio-theme, and the reprise of the scherzo-theme taken up in a graceful, bantering style.


poco a poco decresc.
cresc.
cresc.
ff

III. Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un eroe.

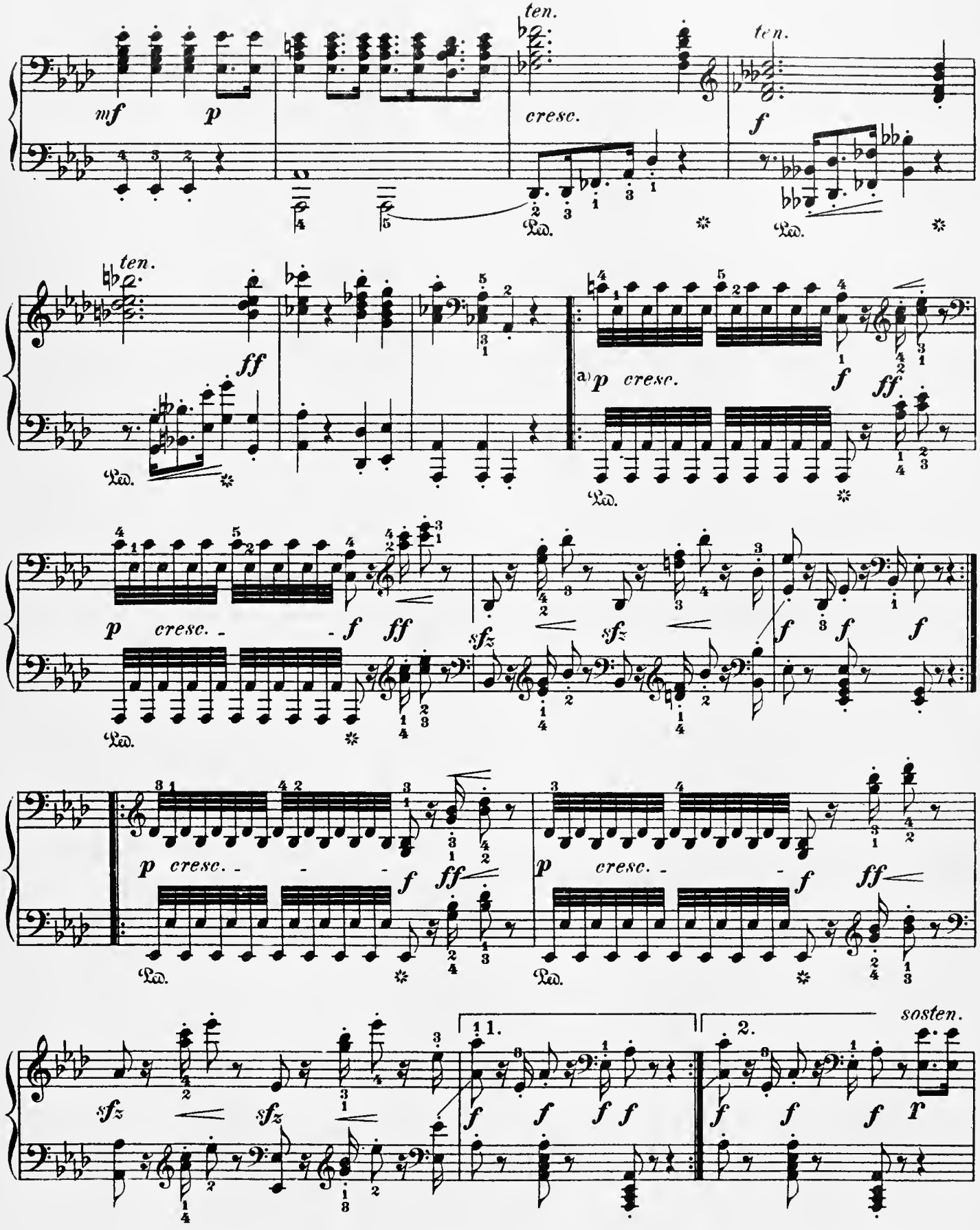
Andante maestoso. (♩ = 72.)



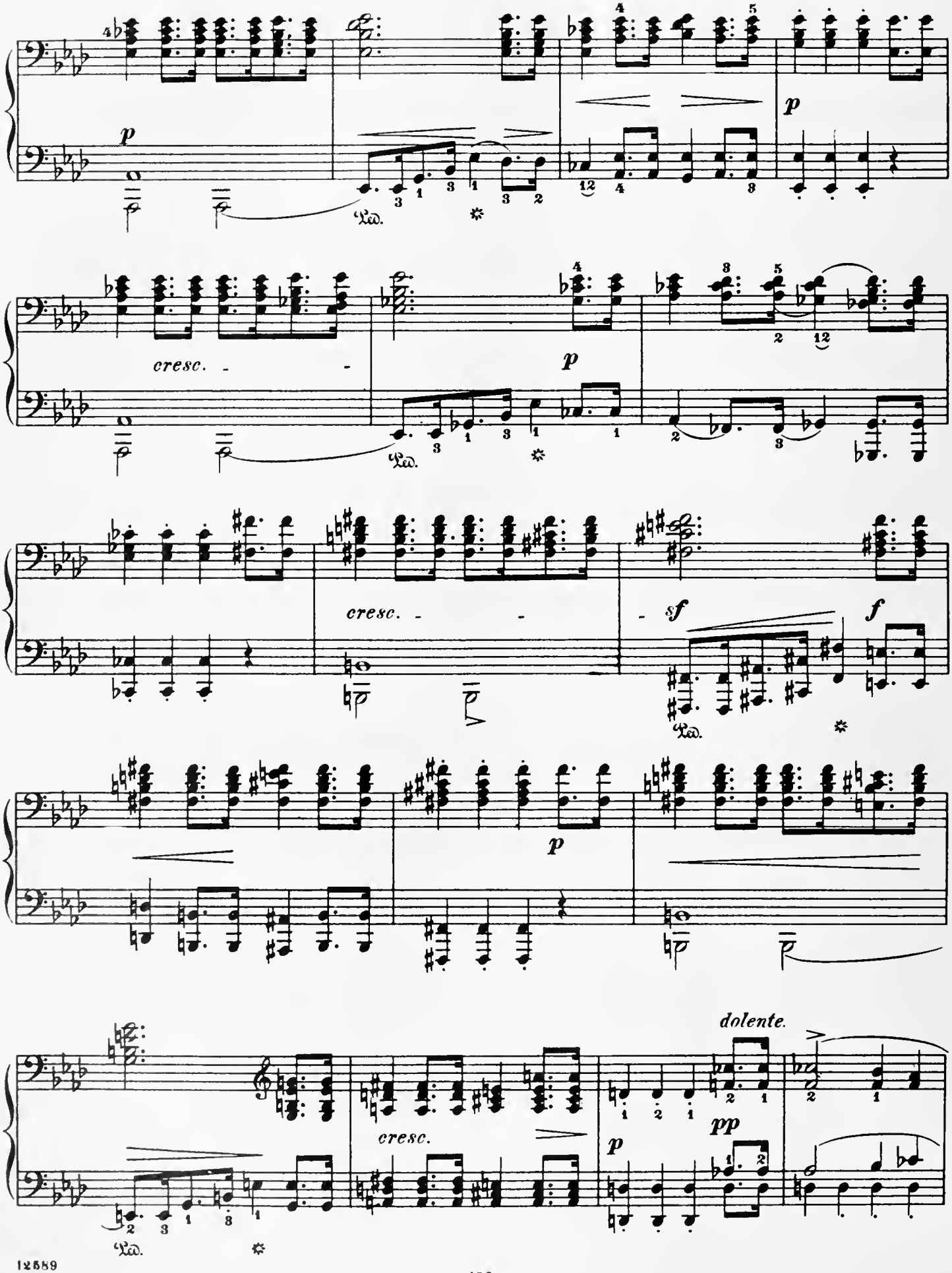
a) In contrast with most of the Master's sonatas, in which the internal psychological connection between the several movements is so marked that their regular succession cannot be interrupted without injury to the effect, this succession is entirely optional in Op. 26. In this particular it might well be called a (modernized) "Suite", no other unity besides that of key being apparent amid the rich and charming variety of its construction. For this reason, its four numbers may either be played each by itself, or in a different succession, – e. g., Dead March, Scherzo, Variations, Rondo, which might possibly be "more effective".

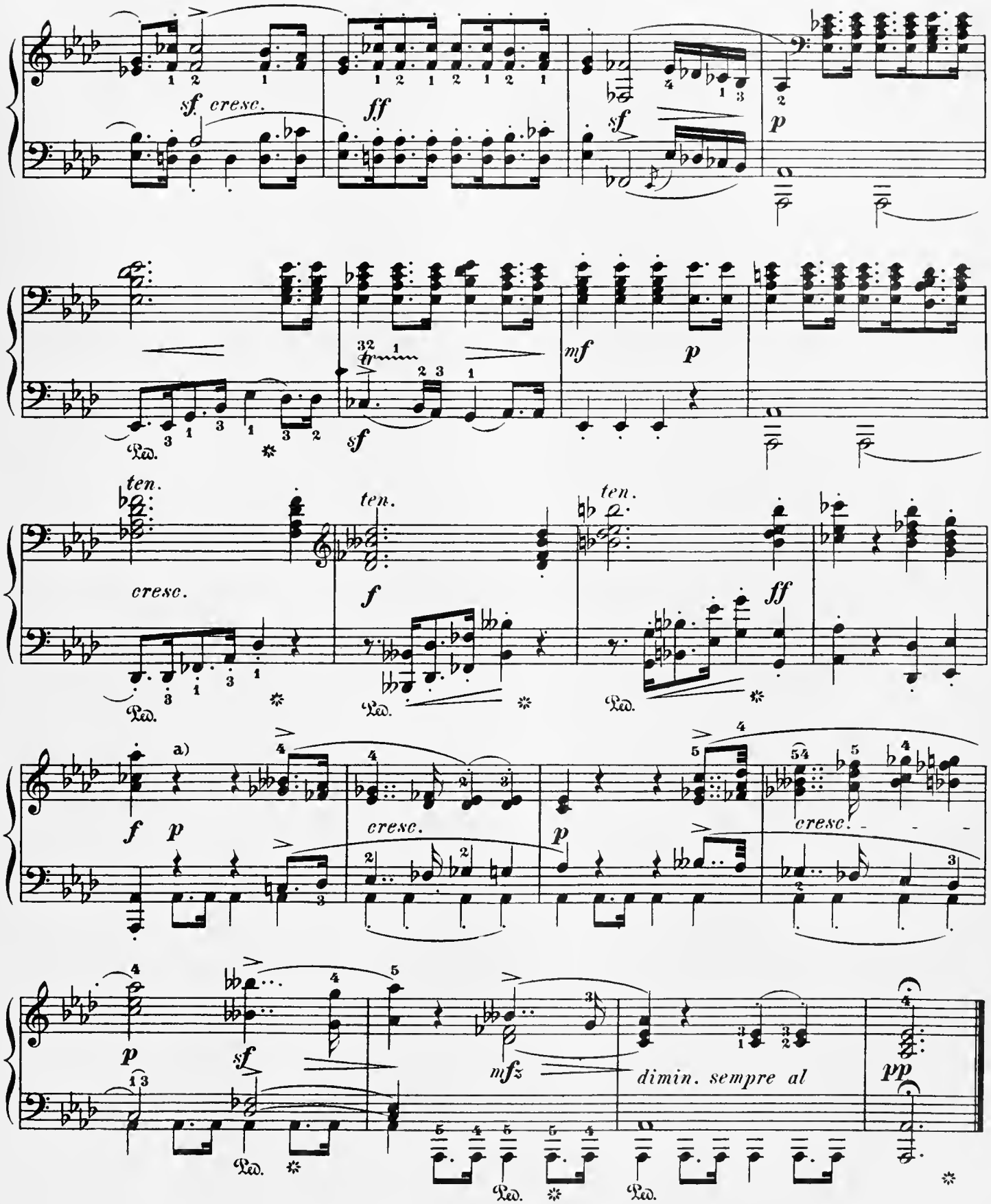
b) The lowest part in the right hand should be quitted to make way for the left on the third quarter, and similarly 4 and 8 measures further on.

c) Take care not to treat the two 16th-notes like the after-beat of a trill; they must be played thus:



a) The change of fingers marked here facilitates the *crescendo* in the tremolo, which must keep strictly to the given number of notes and strive after the effect of a military roll on the drums; in fact, this whole movement is conceived in a distinctly orchestral spirit, and should therefore be felt and colored in its re-production like an orchestral piece.


p
Ped.
cresc.
sf
f
dolente.
pp

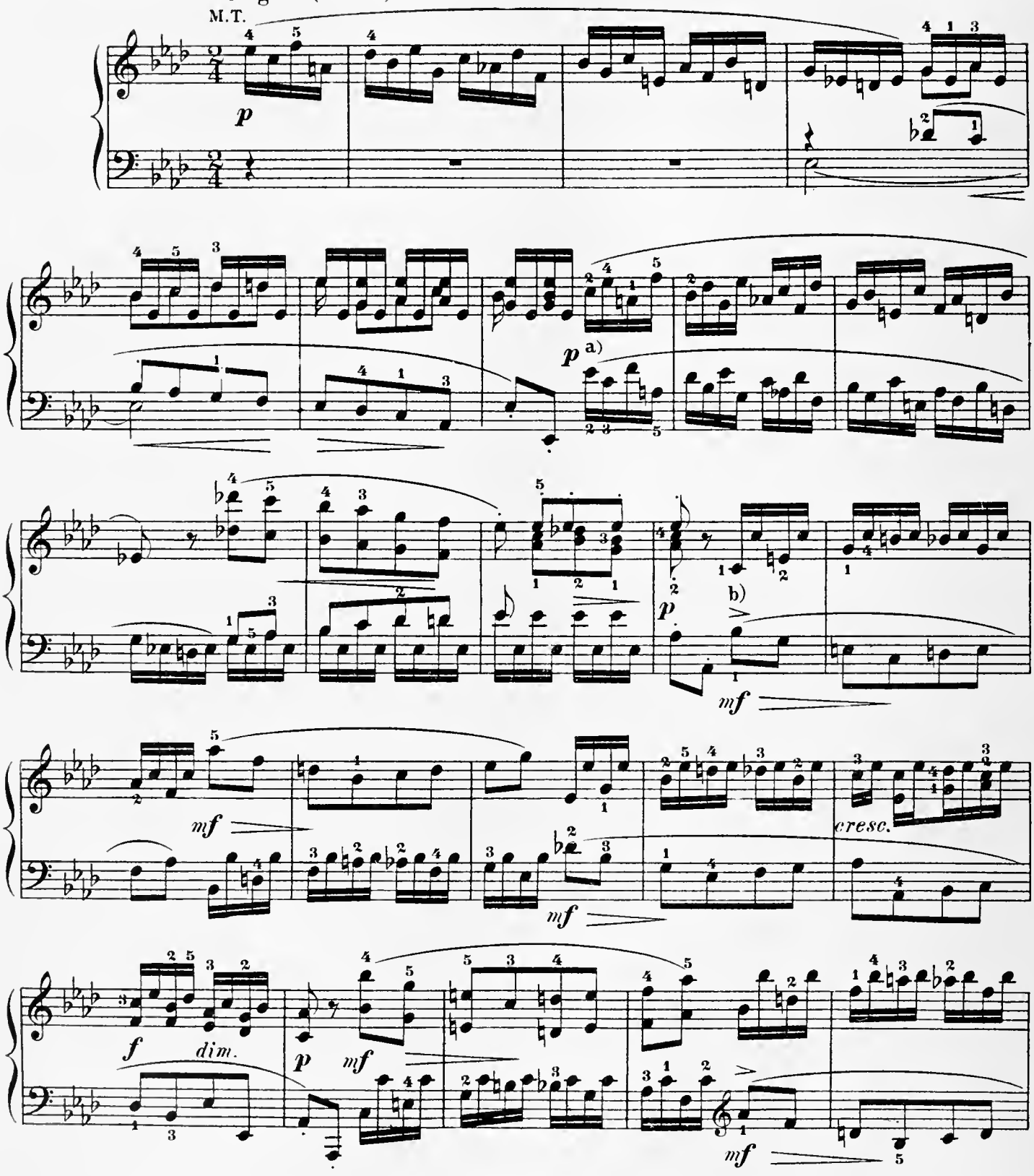


a) This coda must by no means be treated like a "Bagatelle". Both the ascending and descending passages contain the sum, so to speak, of all agonizing woes, concentrated to wellnigh convulsive expression; and in spite of the modulation to major are not to be conceived as a reconciliation — as if their spirit justified an immediate passage to the lively Finale-Impromptu.

IV. Rondo.

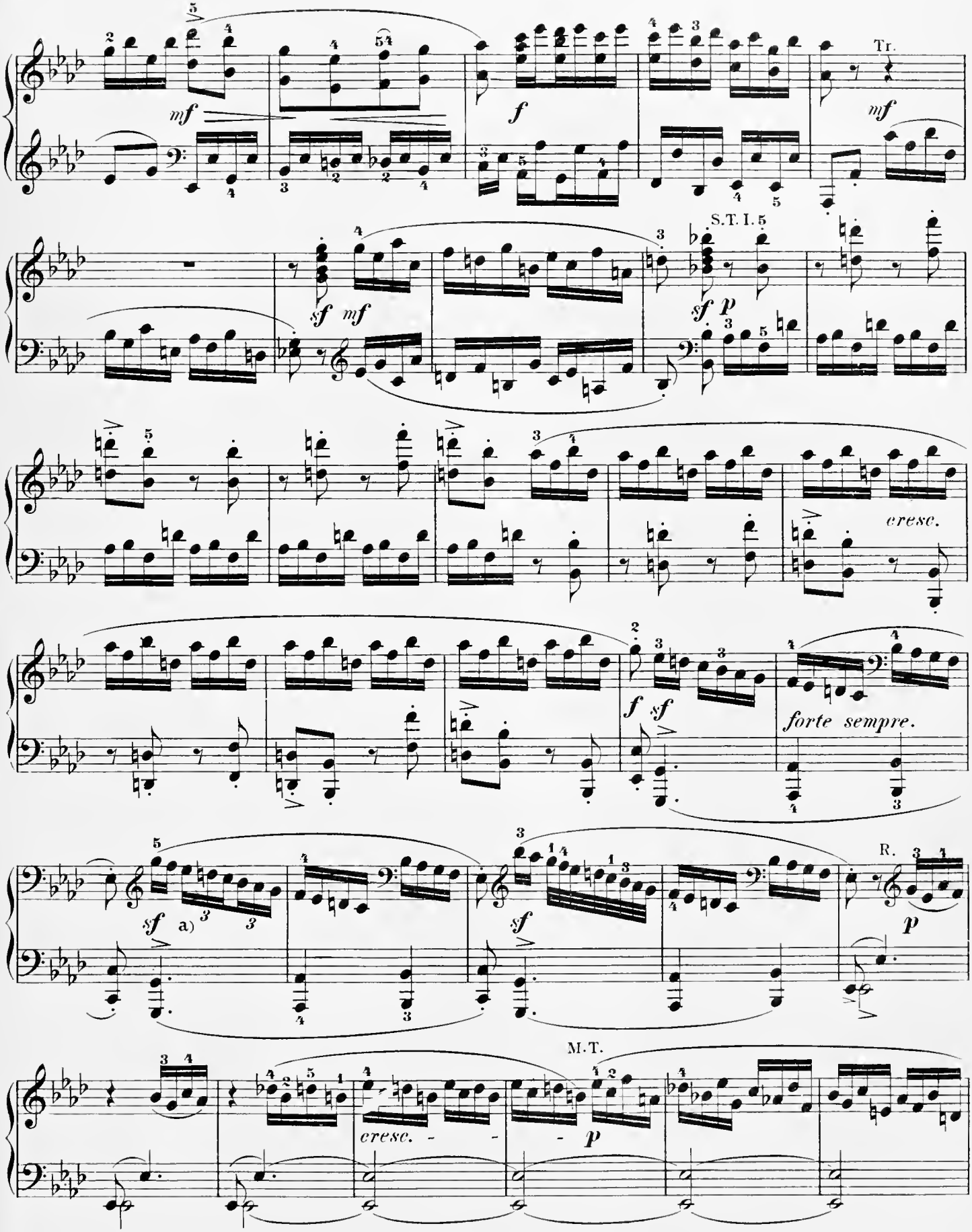
Allegro. (♩ = 116.)

M.T.

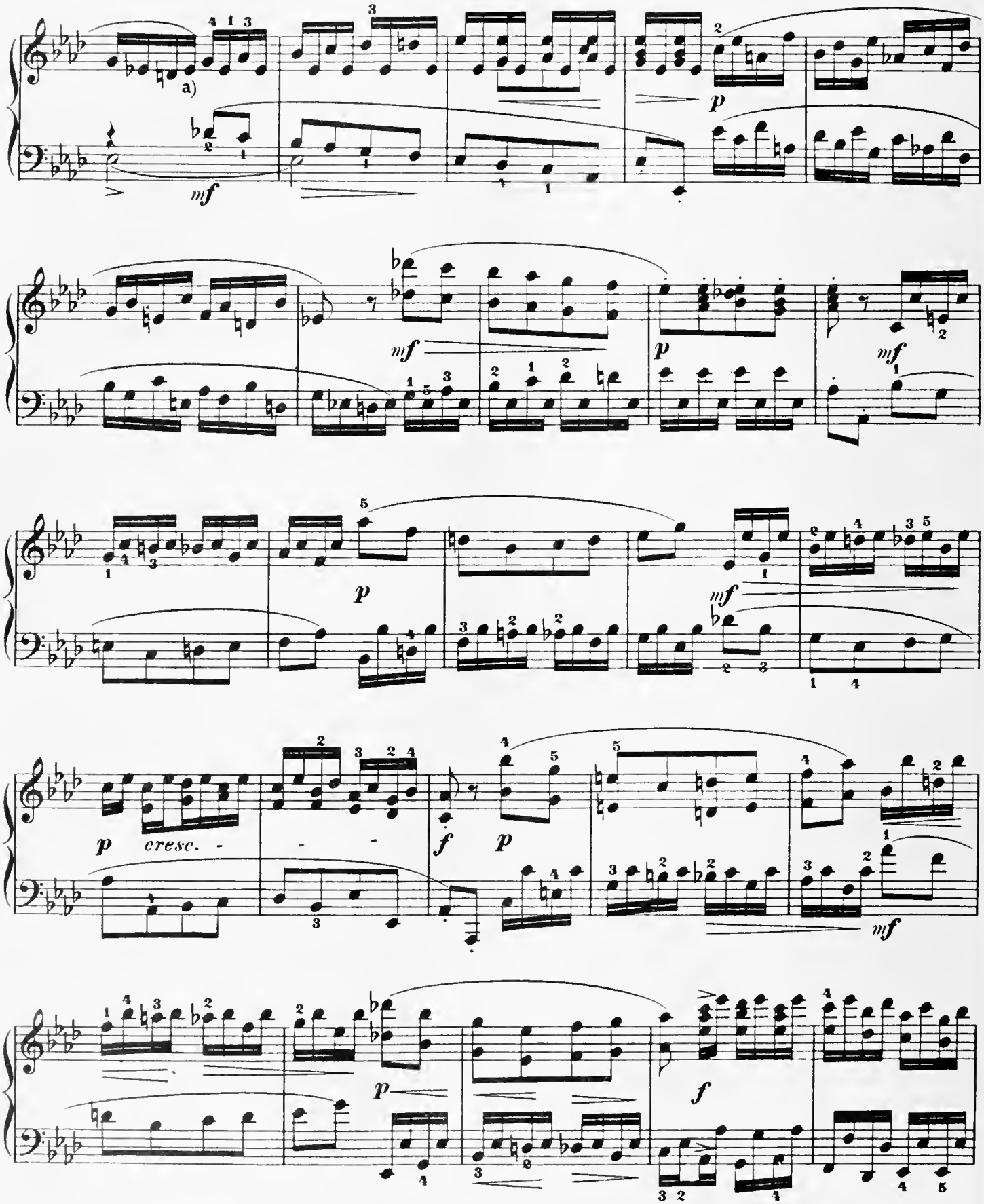


a) Here the Theme proper lies in the lower part; hence the left hand must play somewhat louder than the right, which, though playing the same tones, reverses their order, whereby their melodious connection is dissolved, and their significance reduced to that of a mere figurate accompaniment.

b) Though extremely few expression-marks occur in the original, the material invites so great a variety of shading that we have felt justified in making numerous additions in this regard, in order to prevent the player from falling into an indiscriminating "reading-off" or "rattling-off," such as many self-appointed guardians of the classics still unhappily declare to be canonical.



a) The marking as a sextuplet in the original is doubtless an oversight, and likewise contradicts the twice-repeated marking as a double triplet in analogous passages (20 and 18 measures before the close). A $\widehat{6}$ over sixteenth-notes indicates one triplet of eighths, not two of sixteenths.



a) Variety is the spice of life. For the repetition of the first subject we have proposed a shading different from that first employed; the player may adopt whichever he pleases. The main point is, in any event, *to shade* — to lend life, animation and movement to the performance. The omission of expression-marks on the composer's part is to be regarded simply as a permission for individual freedom of interpretation.

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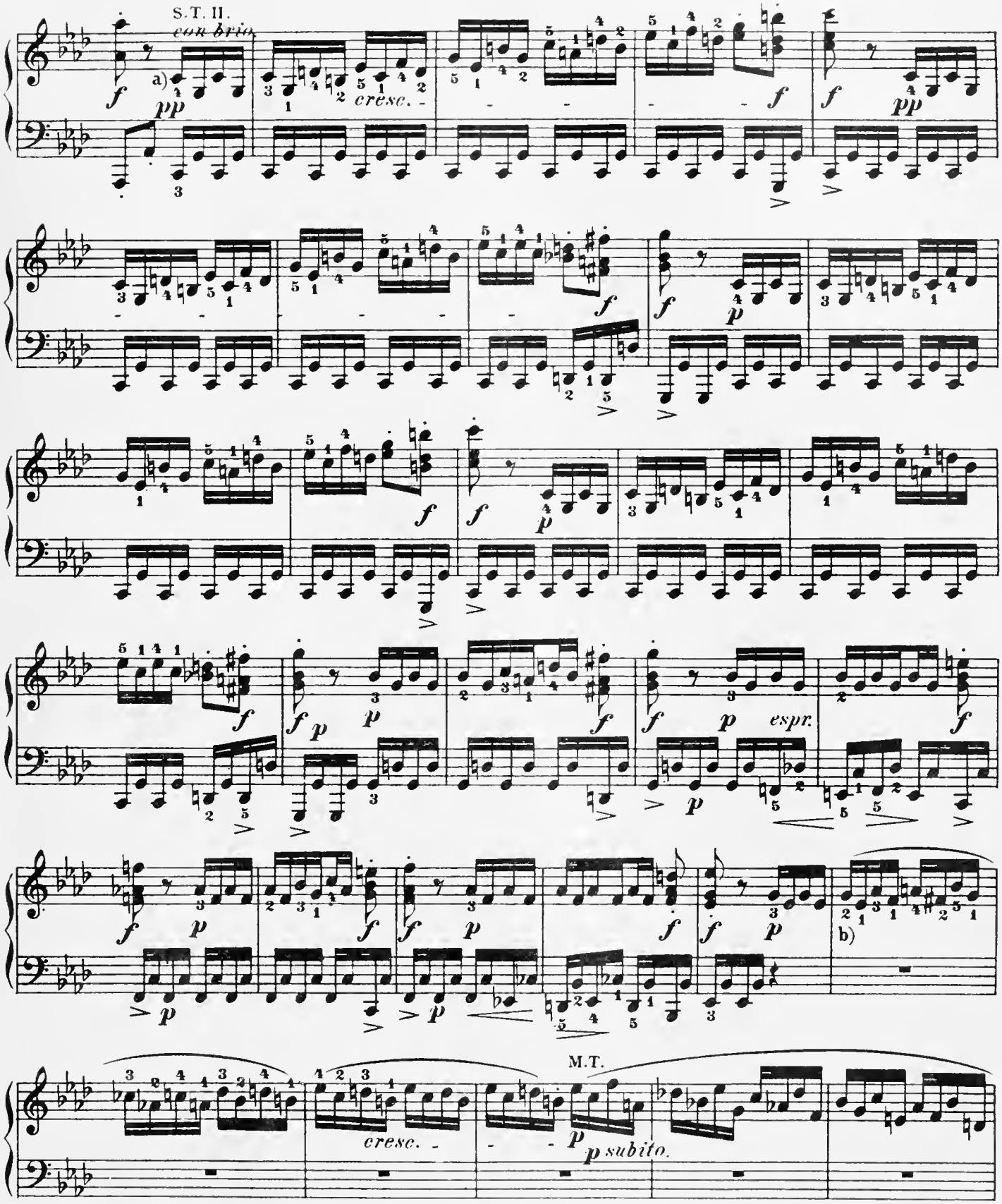
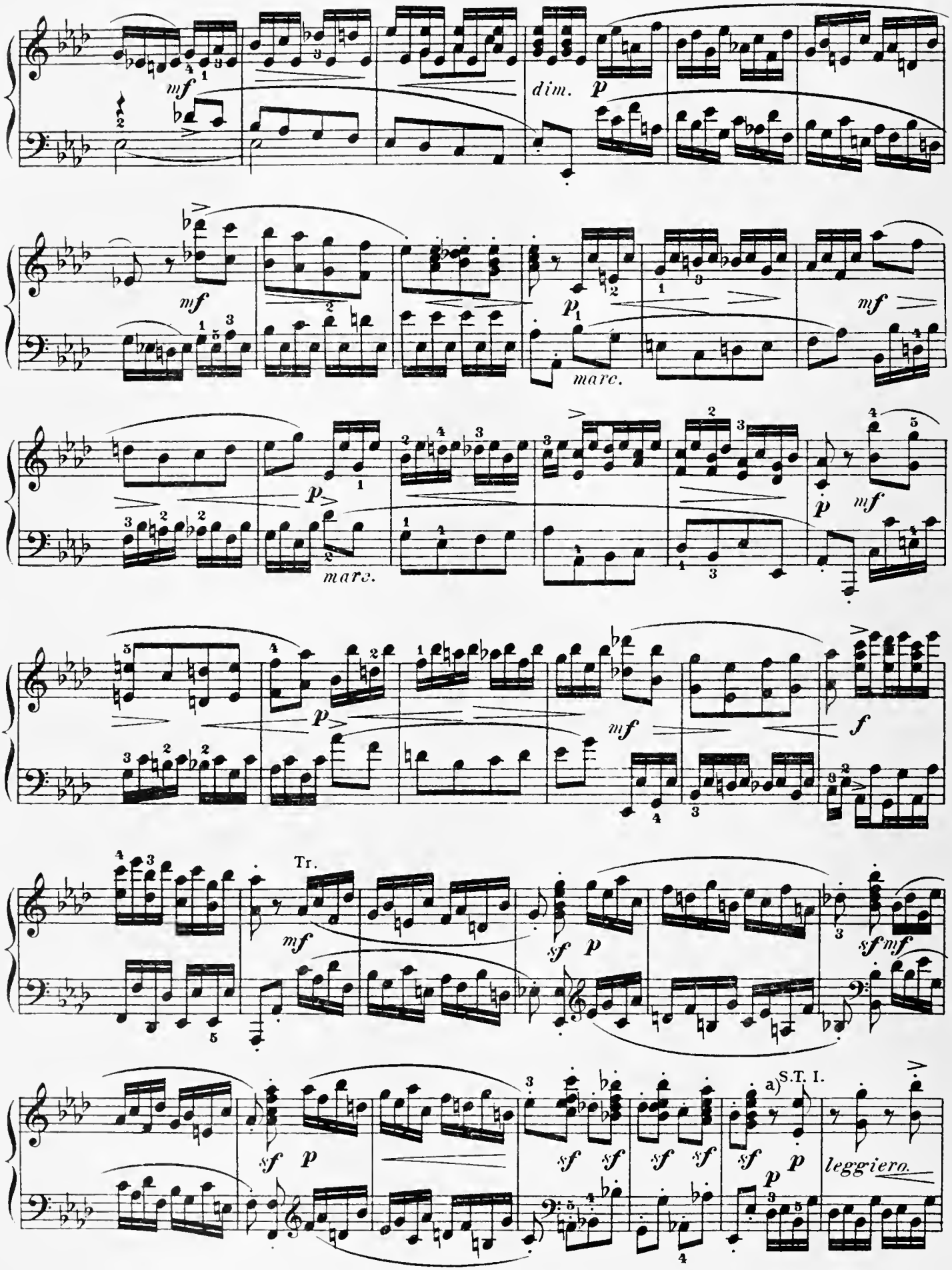
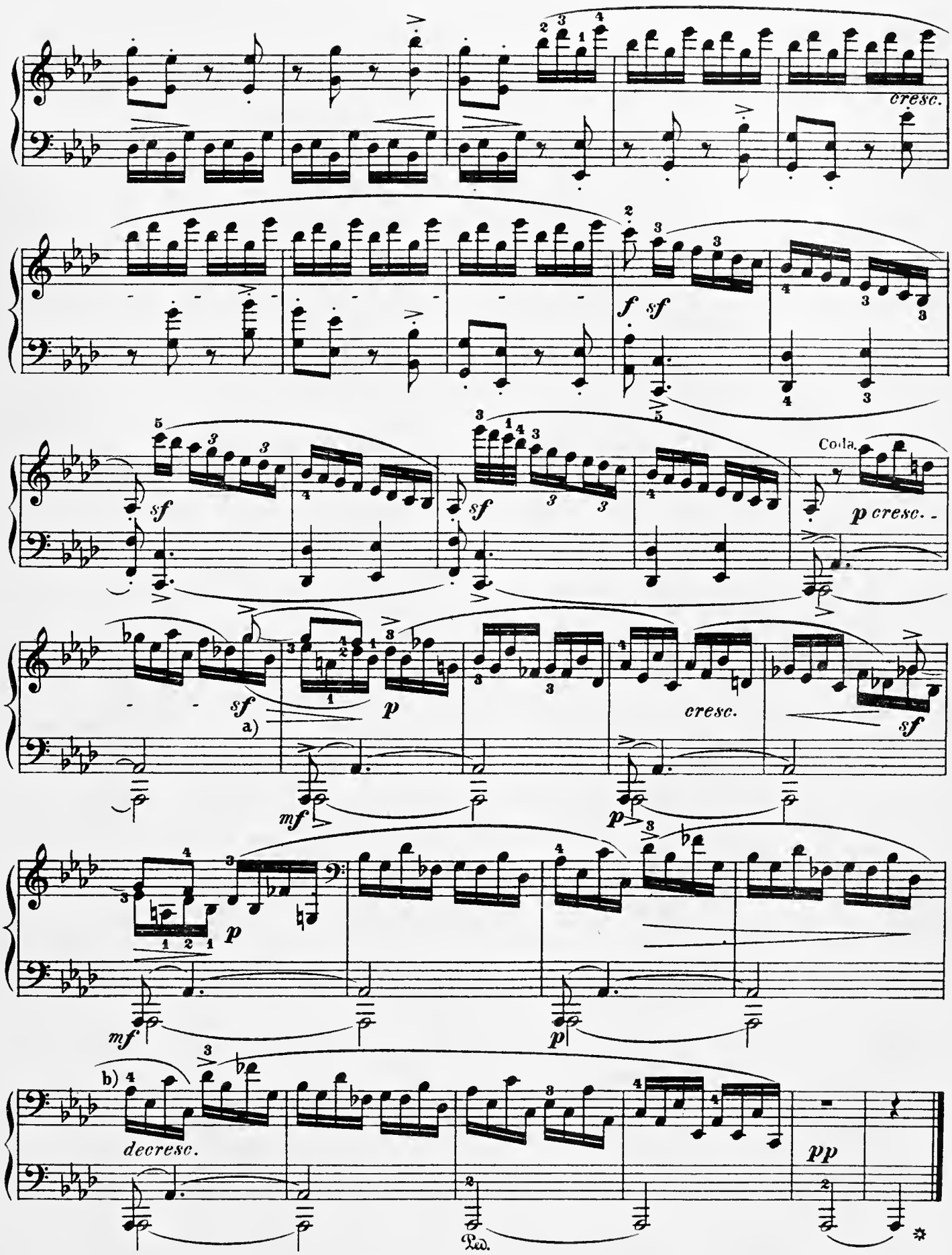


a) This C-minor Episode may be compared, in its character and in the energetic manner of expression suited to it, with the A-minor Episode in the Rondo of Op. 53, or (to quote an example in grander style) with the G-minor Episode in the Finale of the Sinfonia eroica. The fingering, approved by experience, though it may appear peculiar at a first reading, is more reliable than the 3 1 4 1 4 2 after the Clementi-Hummel method, which latter is wanting in regularly recurring points of support.

b) The fingering for passages in broken thirds in *legato* may also be copied from that for simultaneous thirds in *staccato* (comp. Note b on Page 221); thus: 4 2 4 1 4 2 4 1, etc.



a) In *staccato* octave-passages it is best to use the fifth finger instead of the fourth on the black keys as well, to secure uniformity in the position of the hand (and also in the actual down-stroke).



a) To get the *sforzato* effect, which should be strongly marked, a break is necessary, i.e., the finger concerned must be lifted independently.

b) It is needless to say how un-Beethovenish it would be to couple the *diminuendo* with the slightest *ritardando*. Even an acceleration of the closing measures would be more allowable.