W. Jay Sydeman

For Violoncello and Piano

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(2003)

Arts Aeturnum Productions

This piece was written in 2003 for performance at a festival in Dornach, Switzerland. A sort of solid lyric piece, not necessarily flitting around in the extreme high register, was requested, and so it is. I am rather partial to the dark lower strings anyway… as a (somewhat) violist, I resent cellists noodling about in my register.

In any event, the piece is in the grand romantic tradition in writing for both instruments (although quite slippery tonally). This lyricism frames a dancelike middle part, with a great deal of thematic interplay between the instruments, before returning to a further development of the opening idea. The piano writing is quite linear with countermelodies often accompanying the cello part.

– W. Jay Sydeman, September 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: circa 5:45

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

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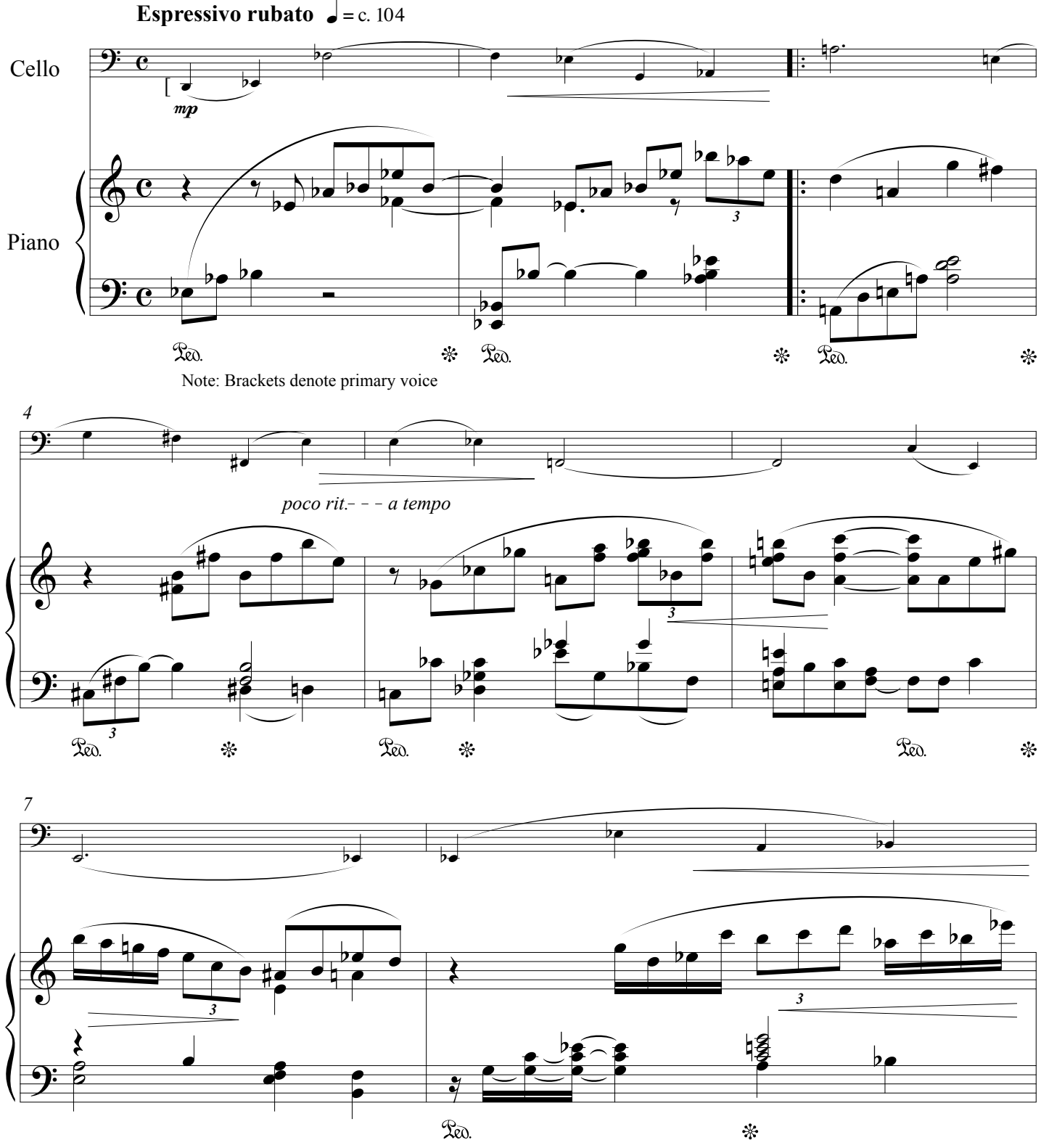

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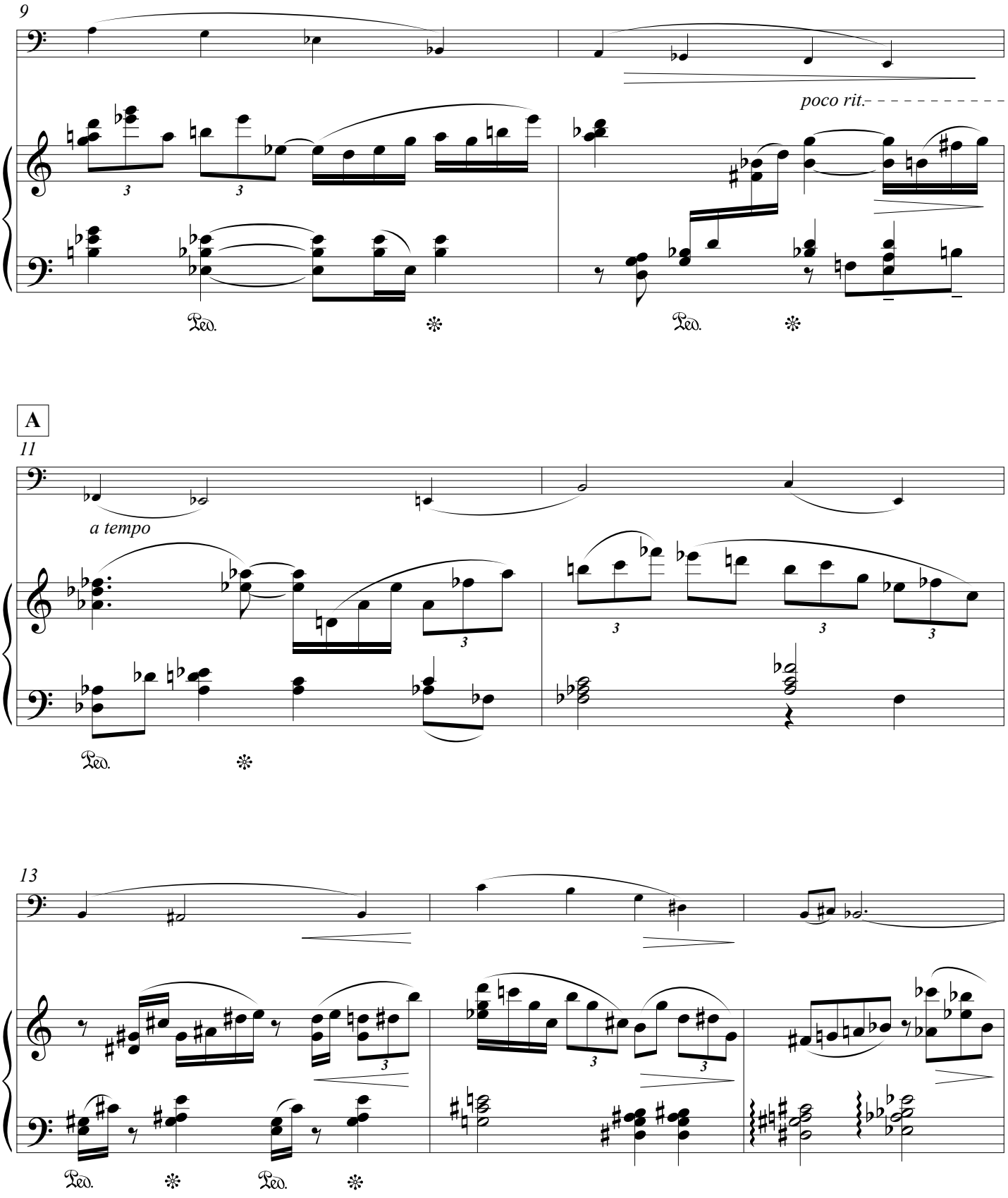
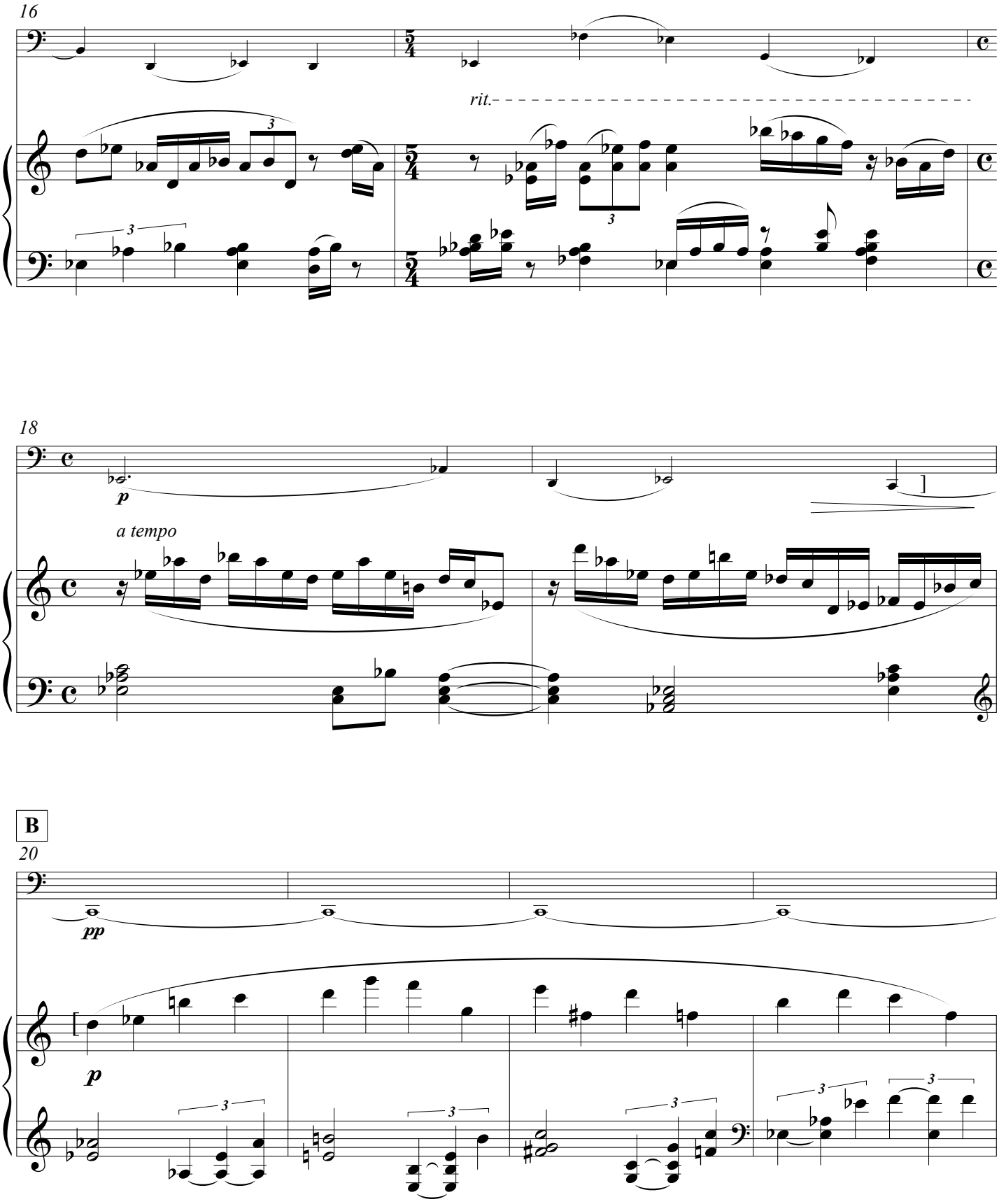
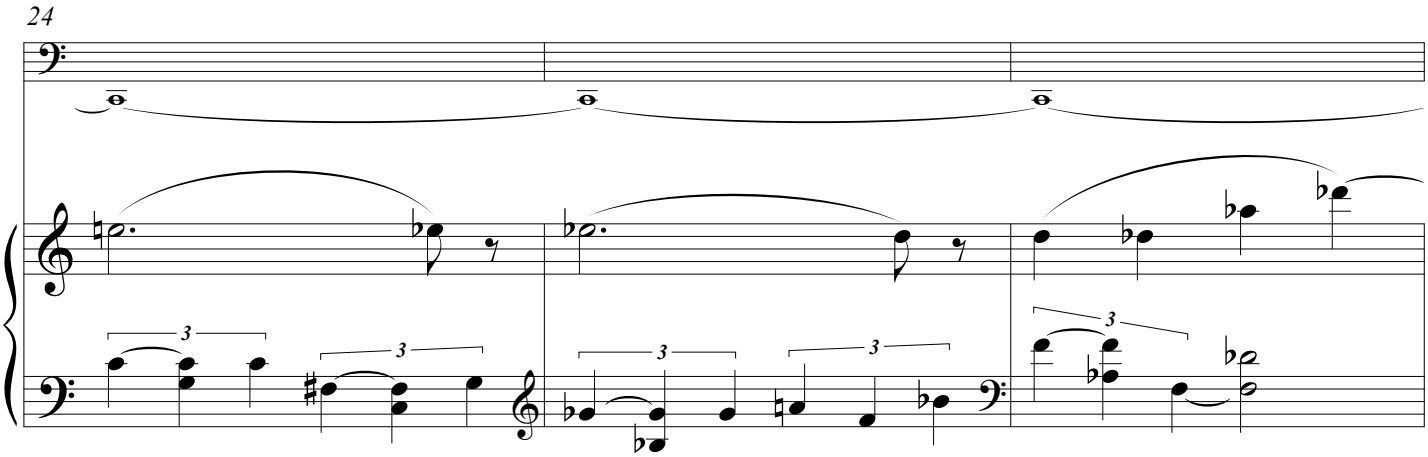

9
poco rit.
Ped.
Ped.
A
11
a tempo
Ped.
13
Ped.
Ped.


16
rit.
18
a tempo
B
20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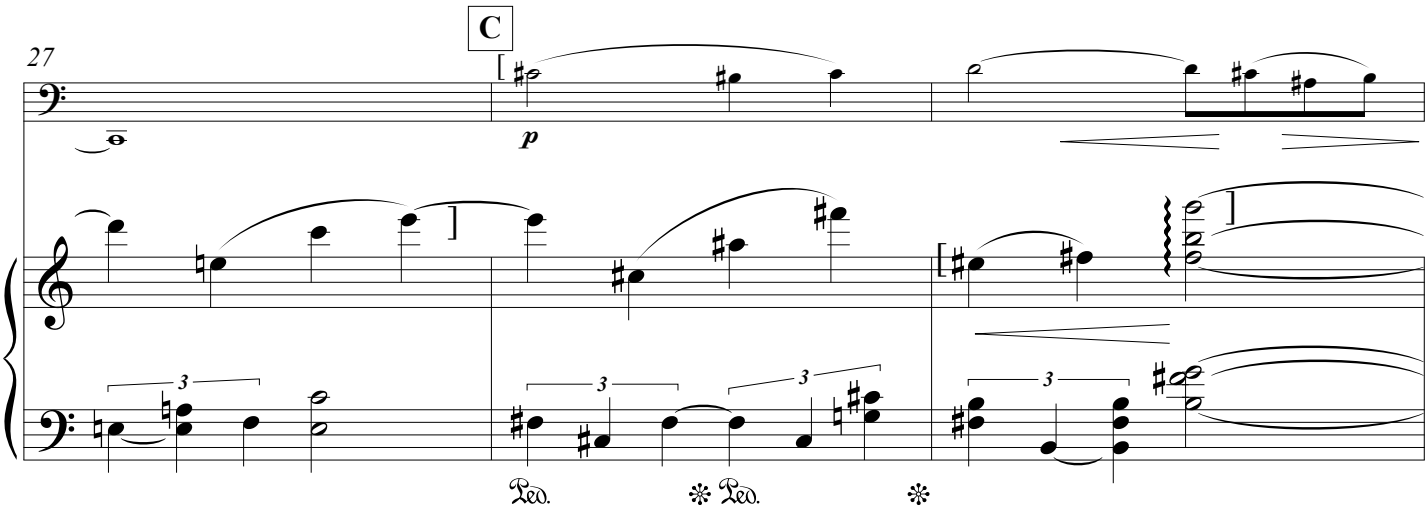
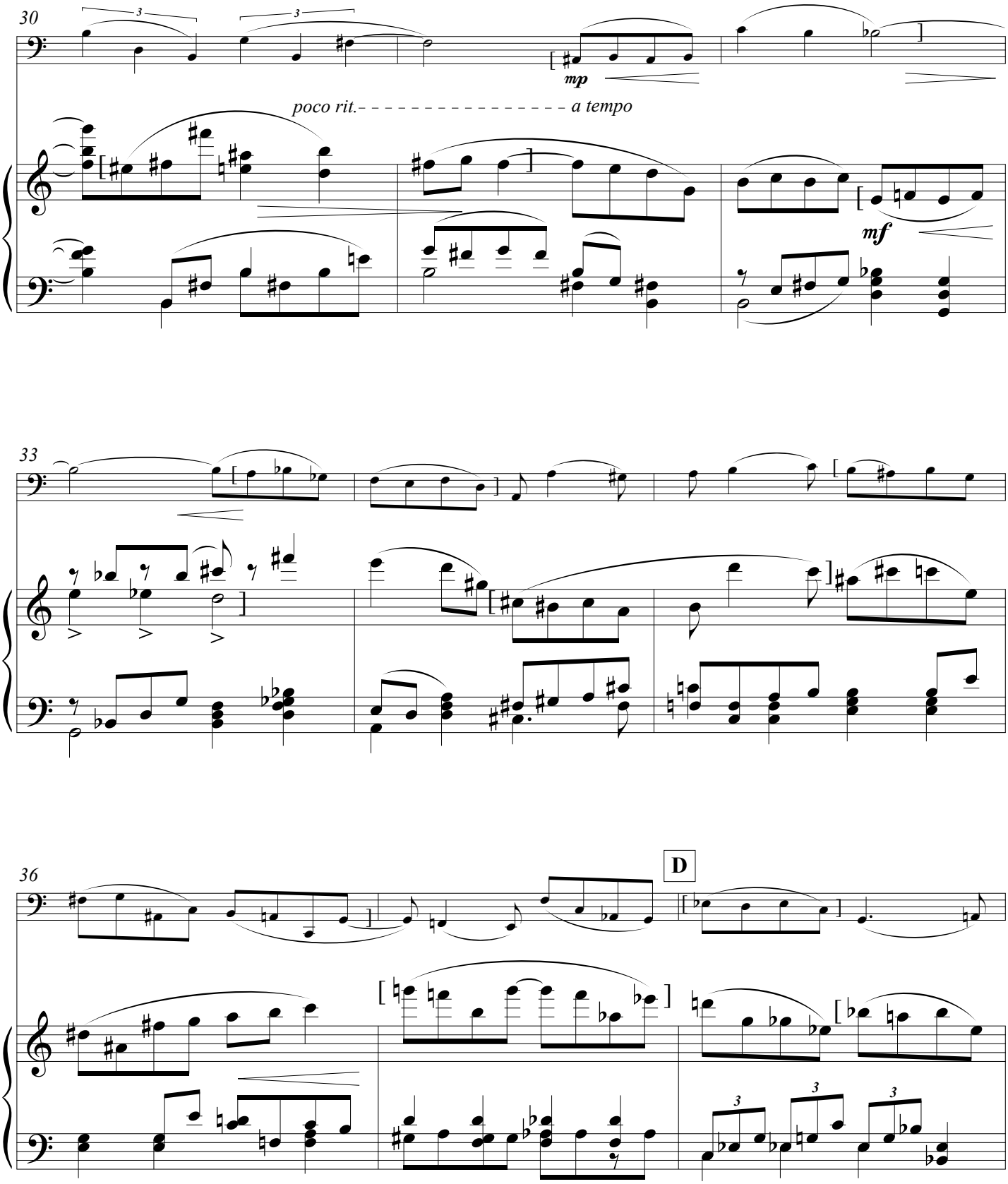
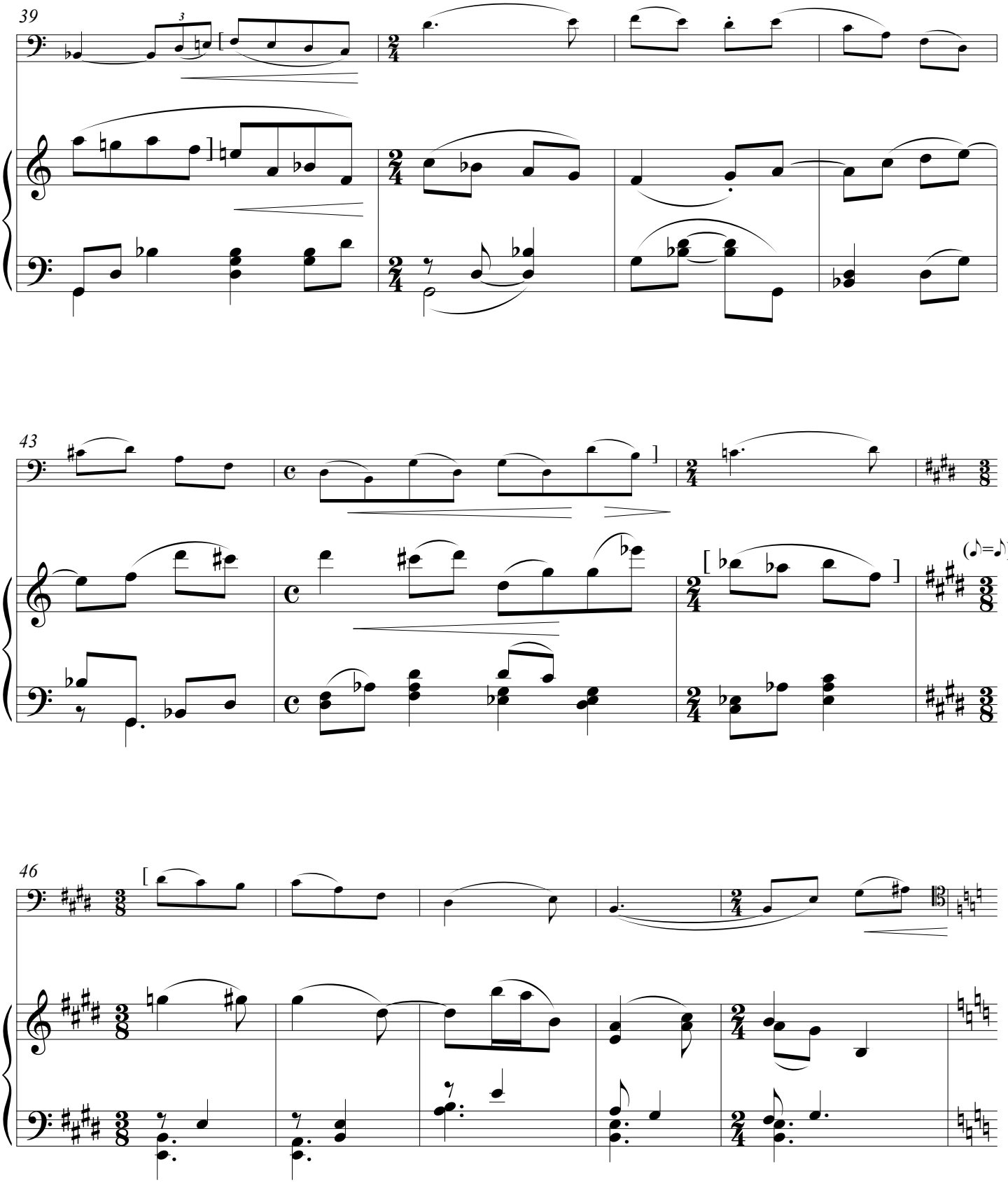
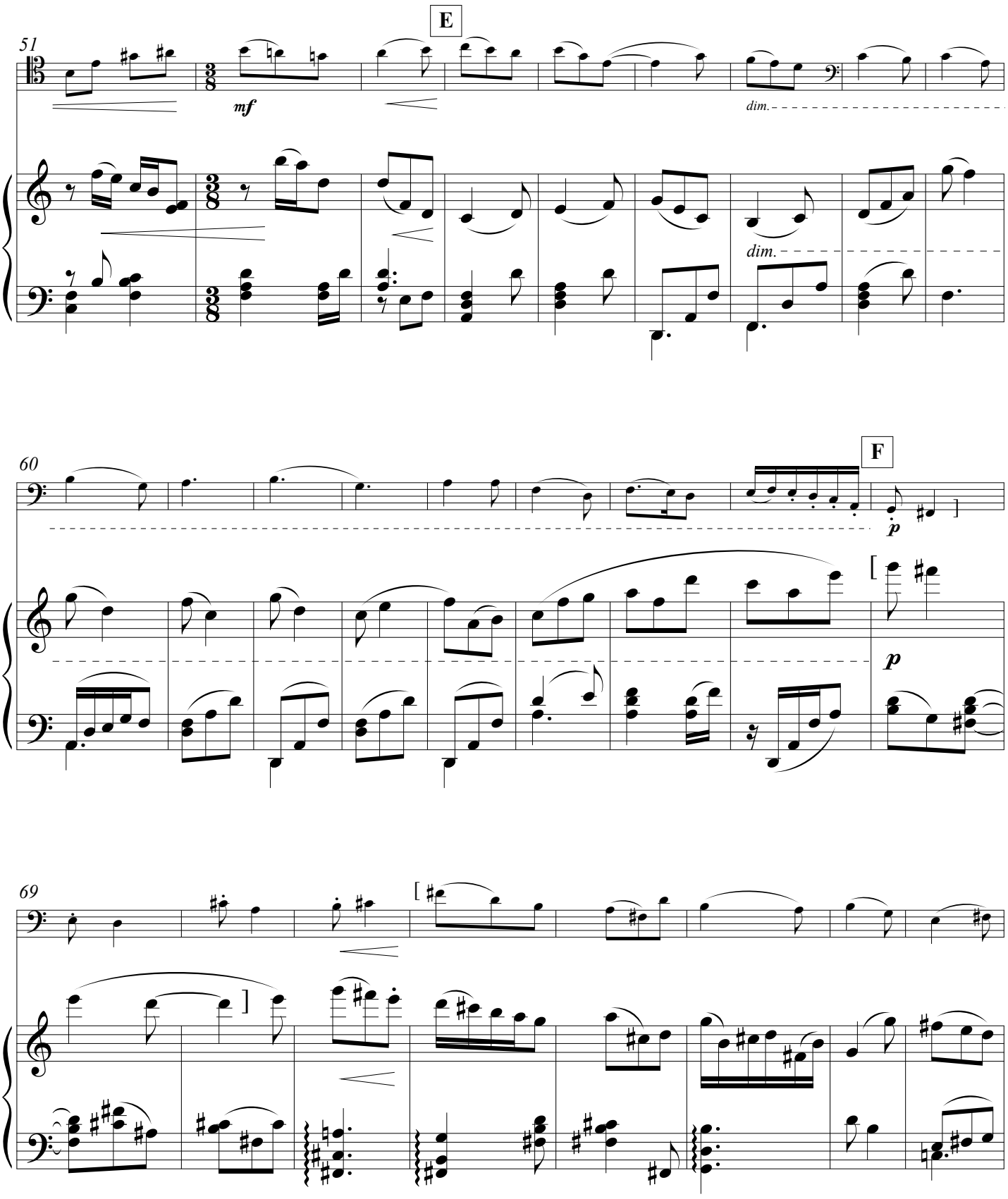
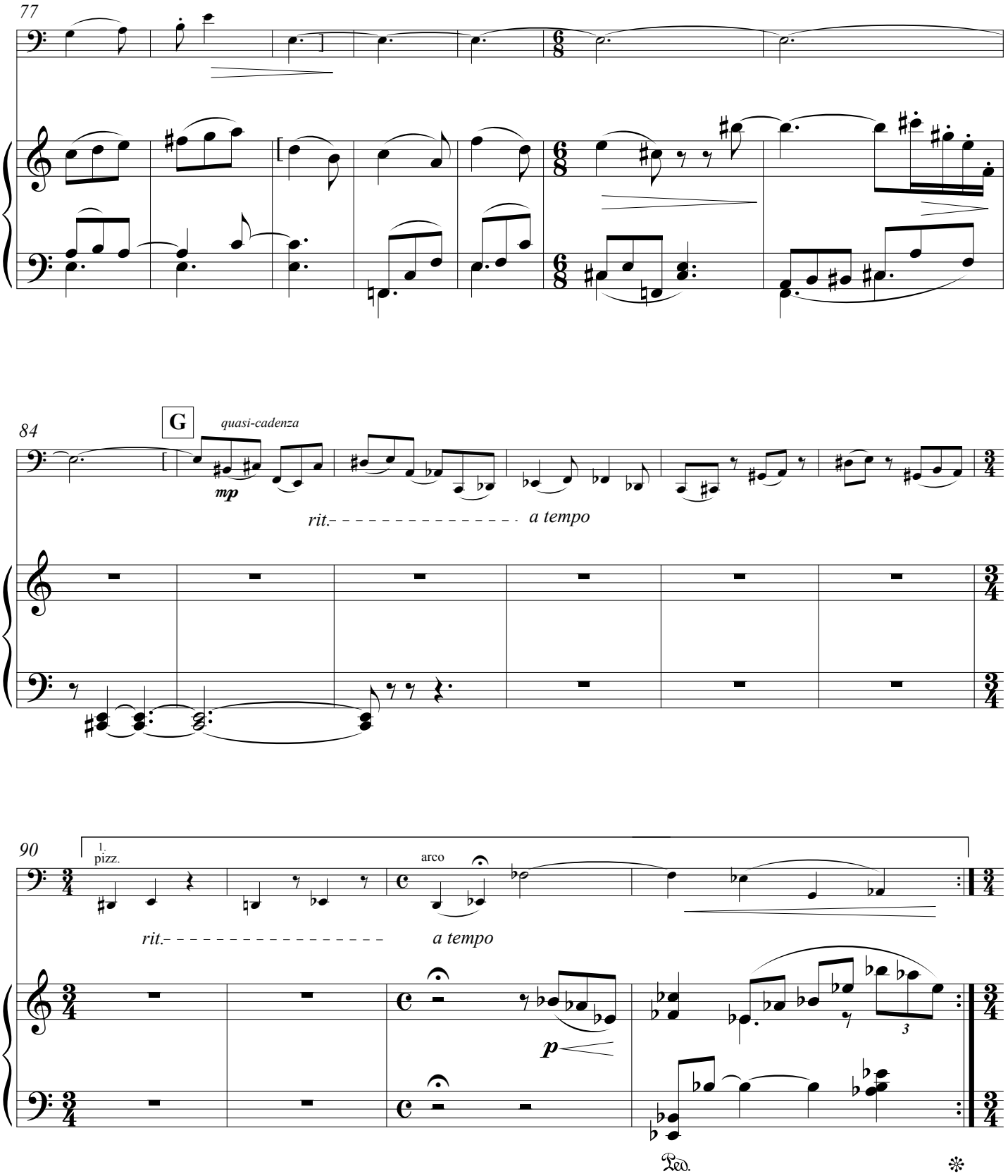
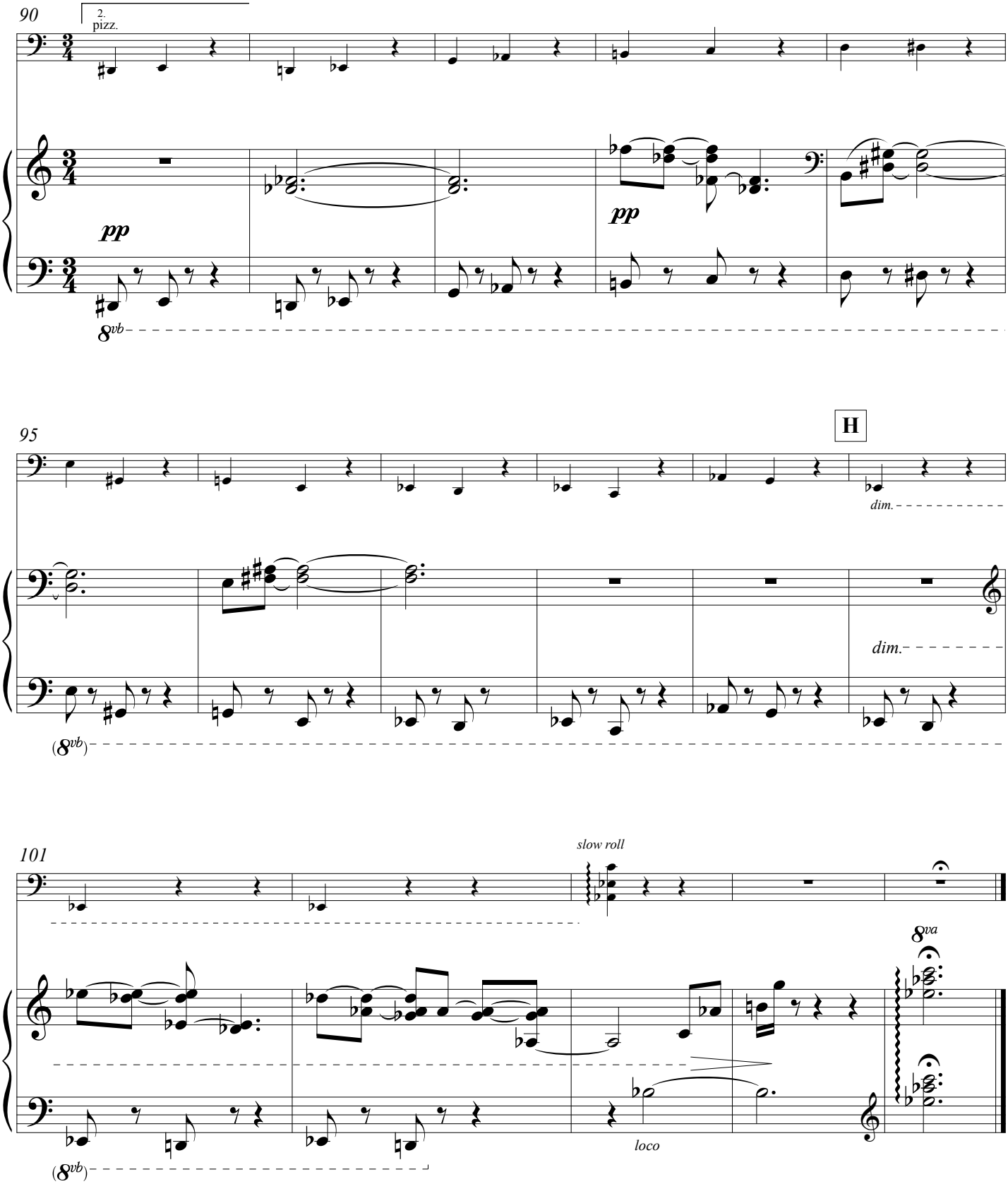

27
C
p
Ped.
Ped.


30
mp
poco rit.
a tempo
mf
33
36
D


39
43
(♪=♪)
46


E
51
mf
dim.
dim.
60
F
p
p
69


77
84
G
quasi-cadenza
mp
rit.
a tempo
90
1.
pizz.
arco
rit.
a tempo
p
Ped.


90
2.
pizz.
pp
pp
8vb
95
H
dim.
dim.
(8vb)
101
slow roll
8va
loco
(8vb)