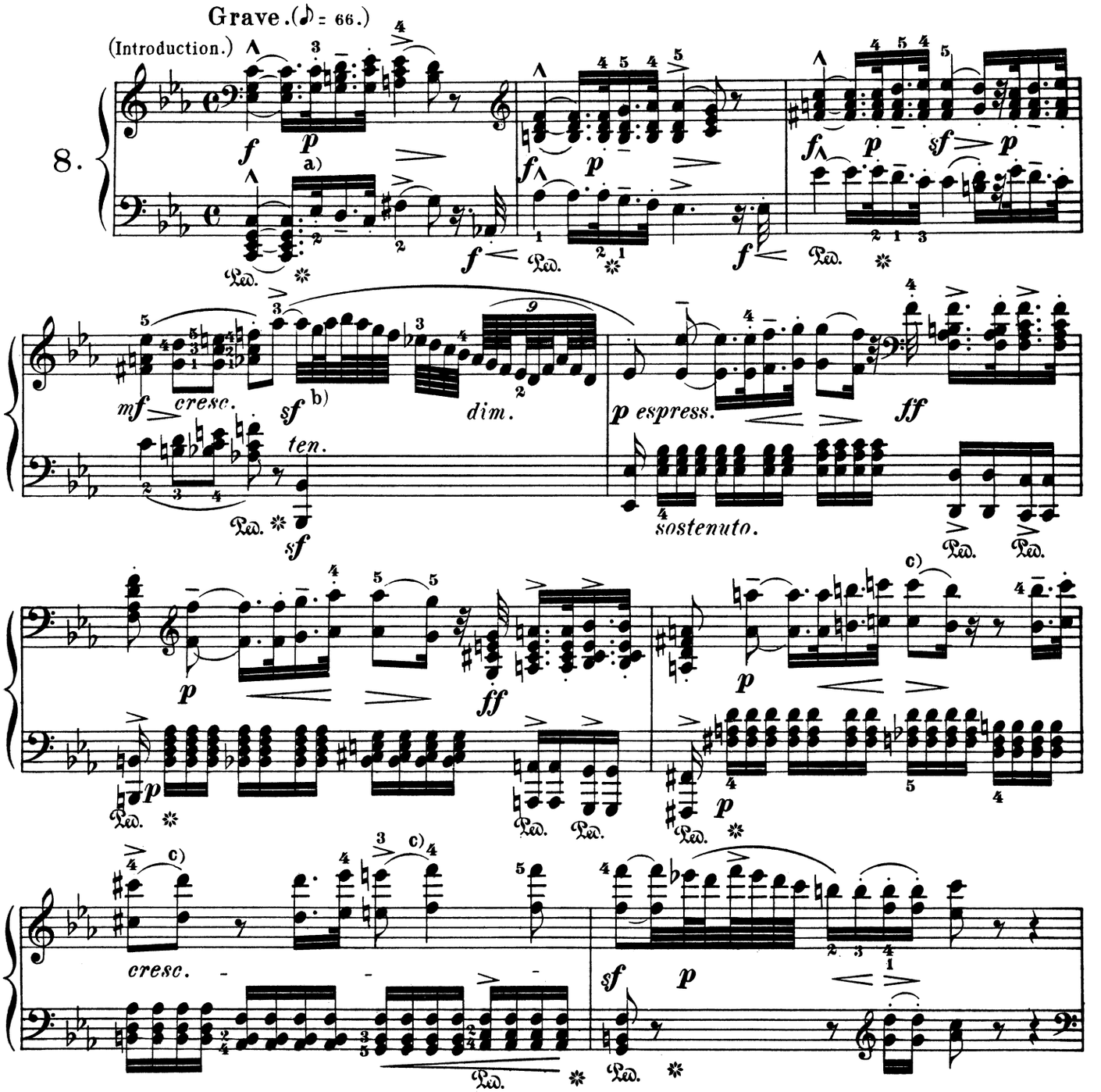
to Prince Carl von Lichnowsky

SONATA

in C Minor
"Pathétique"

Ludwig van Beethoven
Op. 13

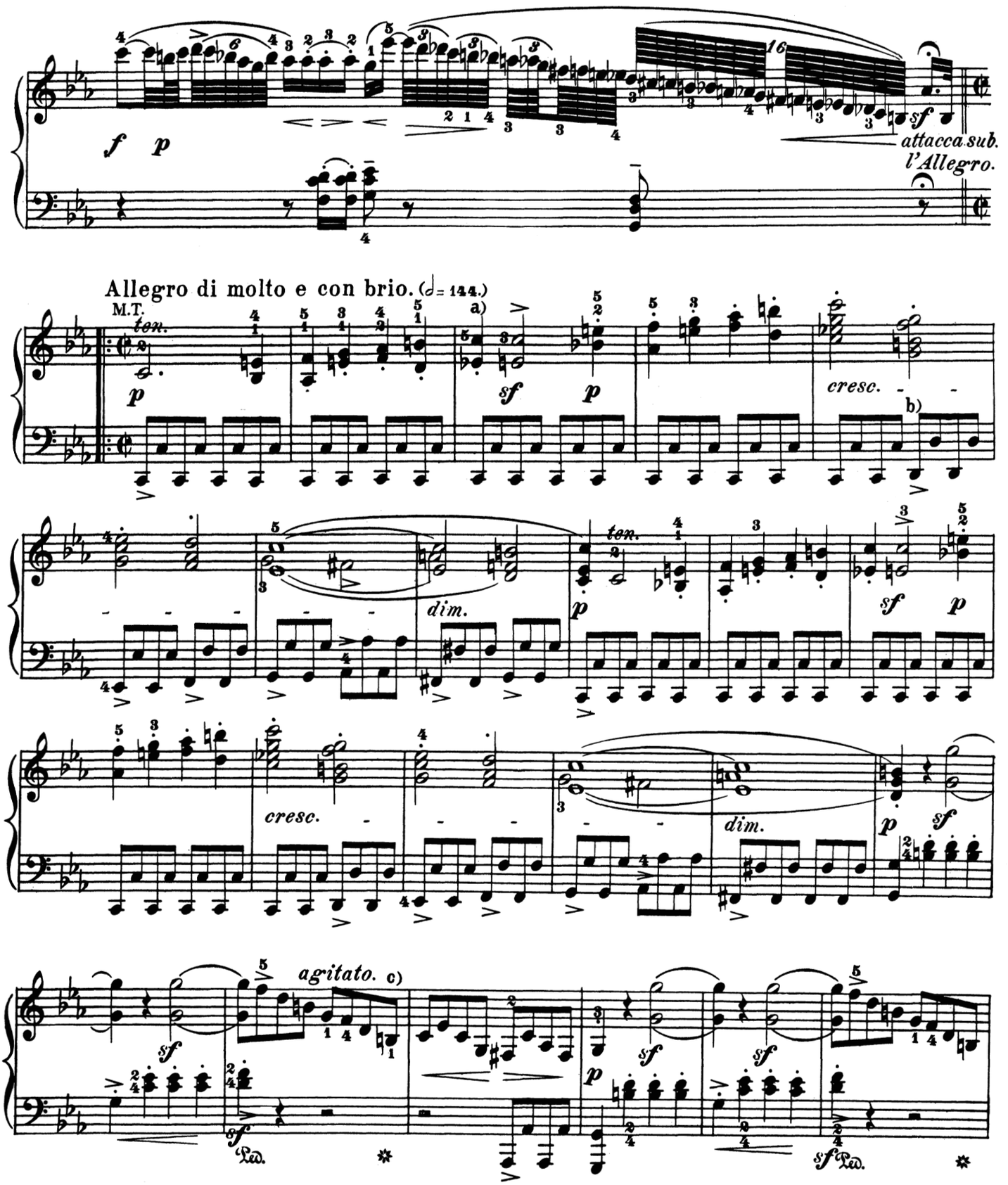
Abbreviations: M.T. signifies Main Theme; S.T., Sub-Theme; Cl.T., Closing Theme; D.G., Development-group; R., Return; Tr., Transition; Md.T., Mid-Theme; Ep., Episode.



a) The 32nd-note must be perceptibly detached from the next-following dotted sixteenth-note, and this latter sustained for its full value — a mode of execution peculiar to such rhythms in the old masters; compare Händel's Prelude to the F-minor Fugue, and Bach's Prelude to the G-minor Fugue in Part II of "The Well-tempered Clavichord."

b) This run should be performed expressively, and in the second half with a slight retardation, so as to bring out the melodic outlines.

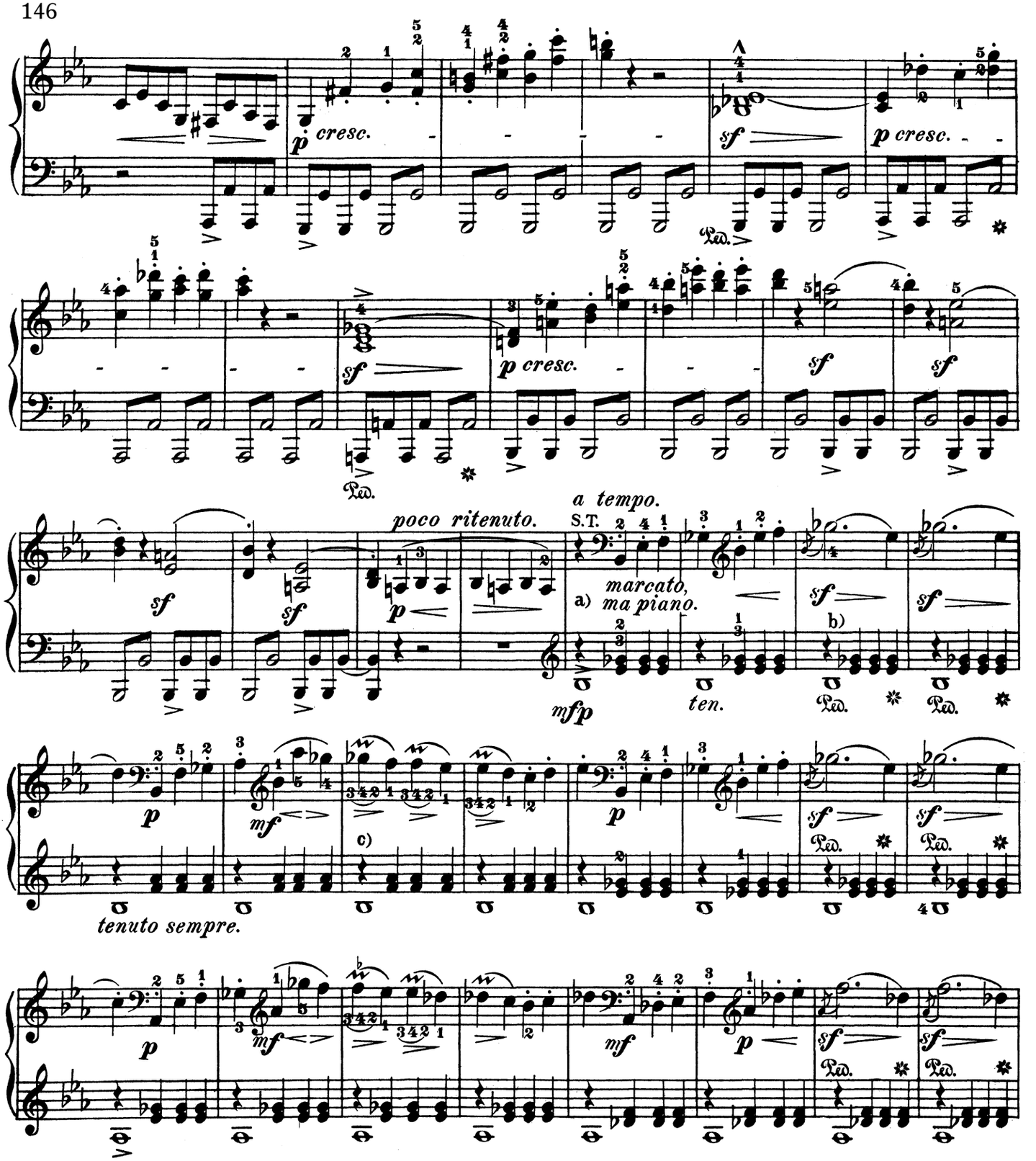
c) Carefully observe the increasing value of the "lifting-note;" the first time, the sixth eighth in the measure is only a sixteenth-note; in the next measure, the D on the second eighth is a full eighth-note, while the F on the sixth eighth becomes a quarter-note. This effects a melodic intensification.



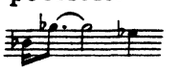
a) The relation between the movement of the *Introduction* and the *Allegro* is properly this: That a whole note in the latter is exactly equivalent to an eighth-note in the former. Consequently, the *Allegro* may be begun at the rate of M.M. ♩=132, which movement would not, however, be fast enough further on, in view of the passionate character developed.

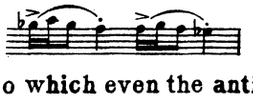
b) In tremolo-figures like these, the player should be content to mark only such bass notes (and then only at the first stroke) as indicate a new progression in the harmony.

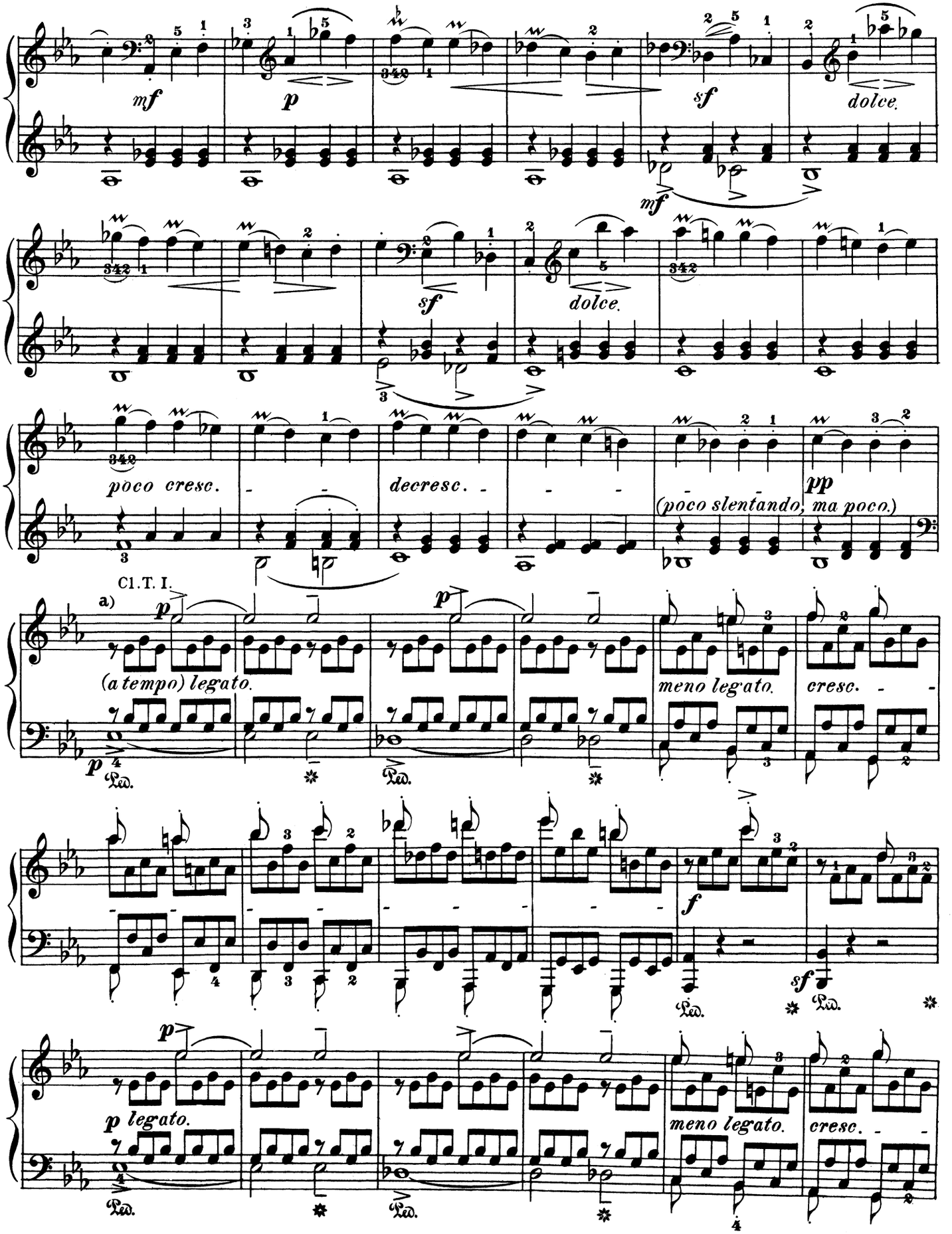
c) The direction *agitato* also calls for a *non legato* as strict as possible, which, of course, must not impair the evenness of the movement.



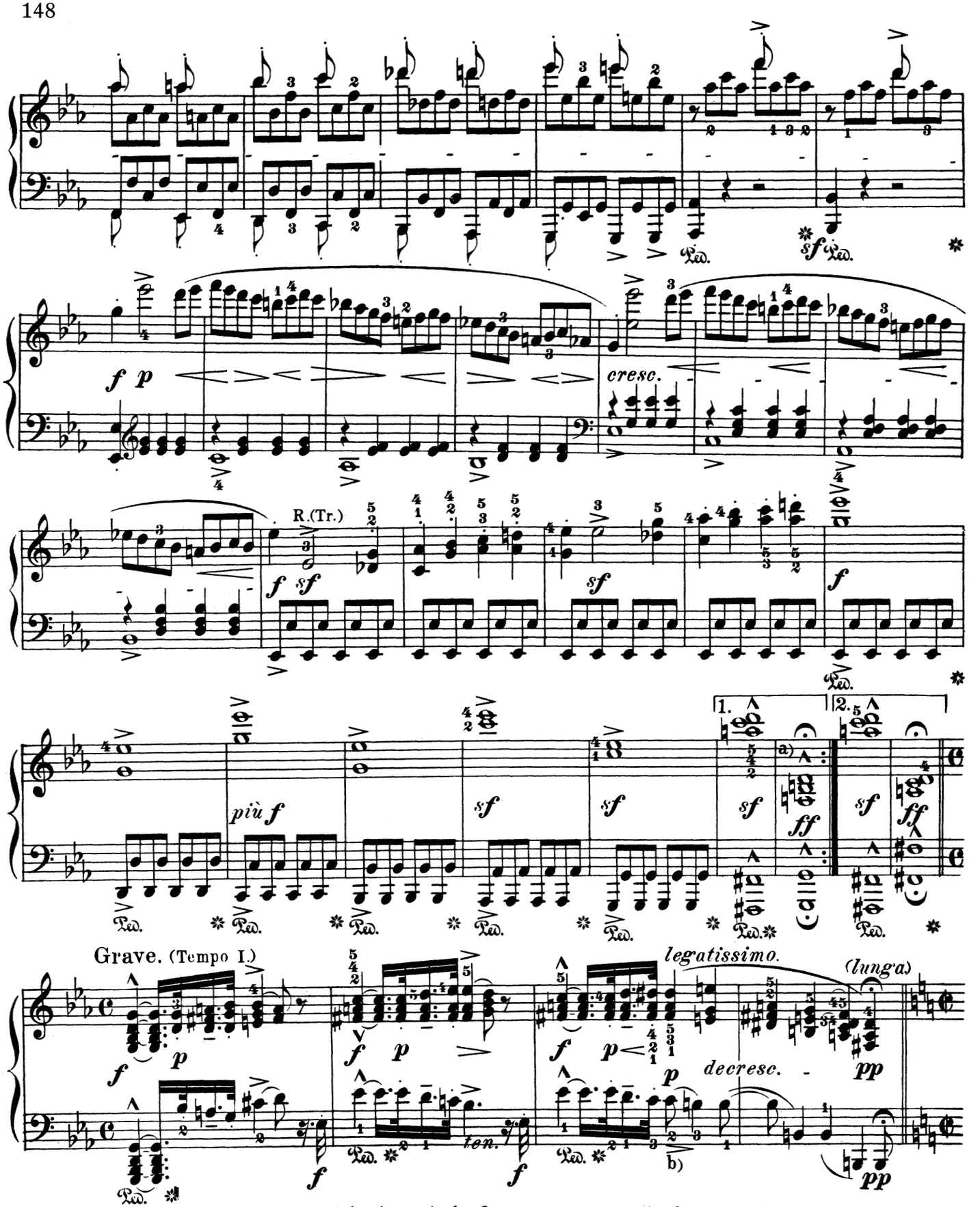
a) Although this *"second"* subject, too, is passionately agitated, the unvarying tempestuous sweep of the first cannot be kept up throughout. Play the first measure of each four-measure period—the preluding bass—somewhat more quietly, the following three with all the more animation; shade the 16 measures in Eb-minor differently from the parallel passage in Db-major; in short, invest the entire dialogue with the most varied coloring possible.

b) Execution:  according to the familiar rule, that all graces take their value from, and are played within, the value of the principal note.

c) Execution:  according to the same rule; beware of the facile and tasteless triplet in eighth-notes, to which even the anticipated passing shake would be preferable, though against the rules.

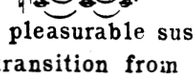


a) These first 4 measures are to be played without the least retardation, yet very quietly, and with no accentuation of the accompaniment.

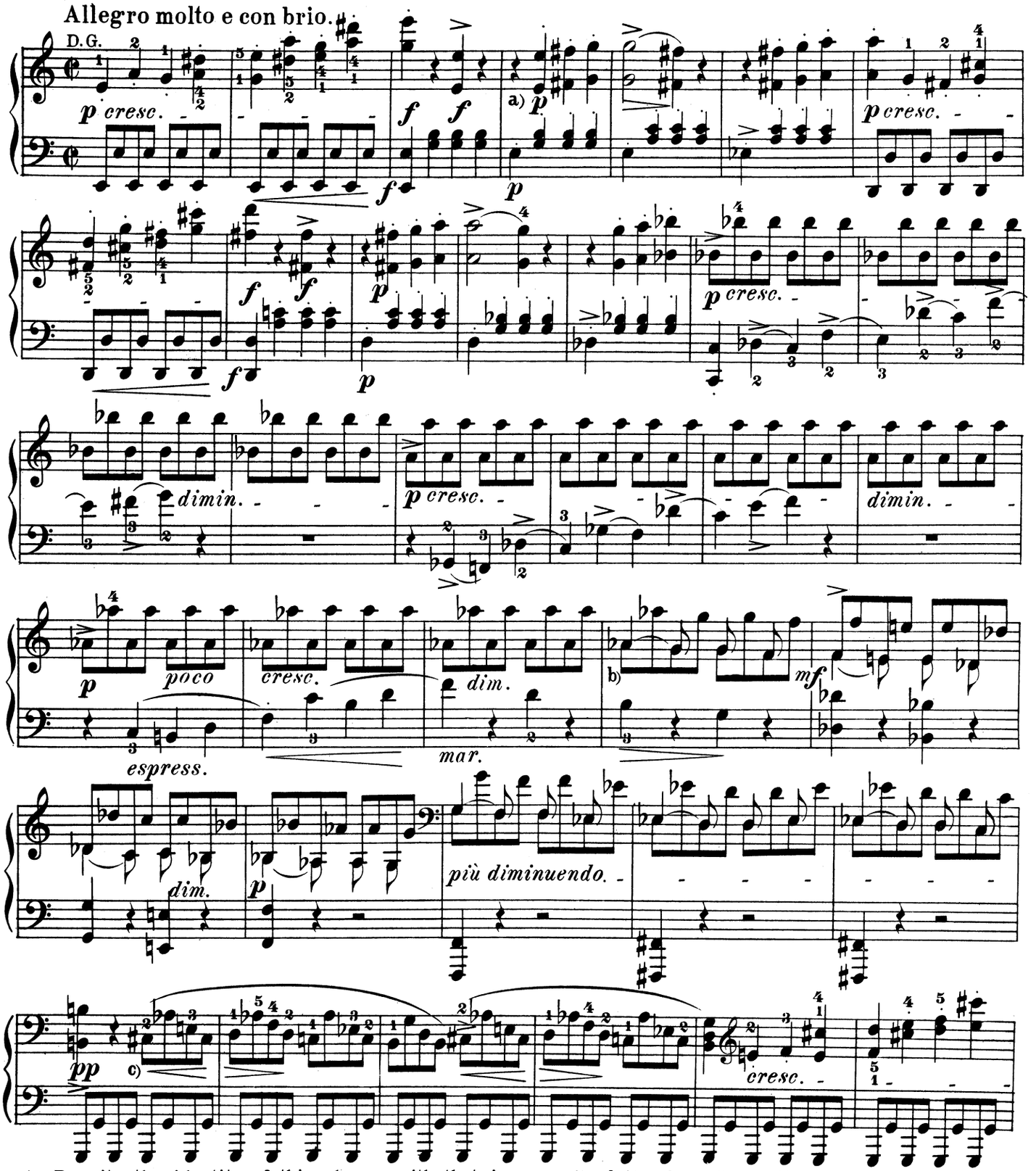


a) The hold (pause) must be sustained precisely 3 measures, so as to form another 4-measure period.

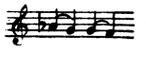
But a quarter-rest should precede the reprise of the first division:

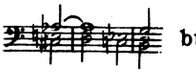


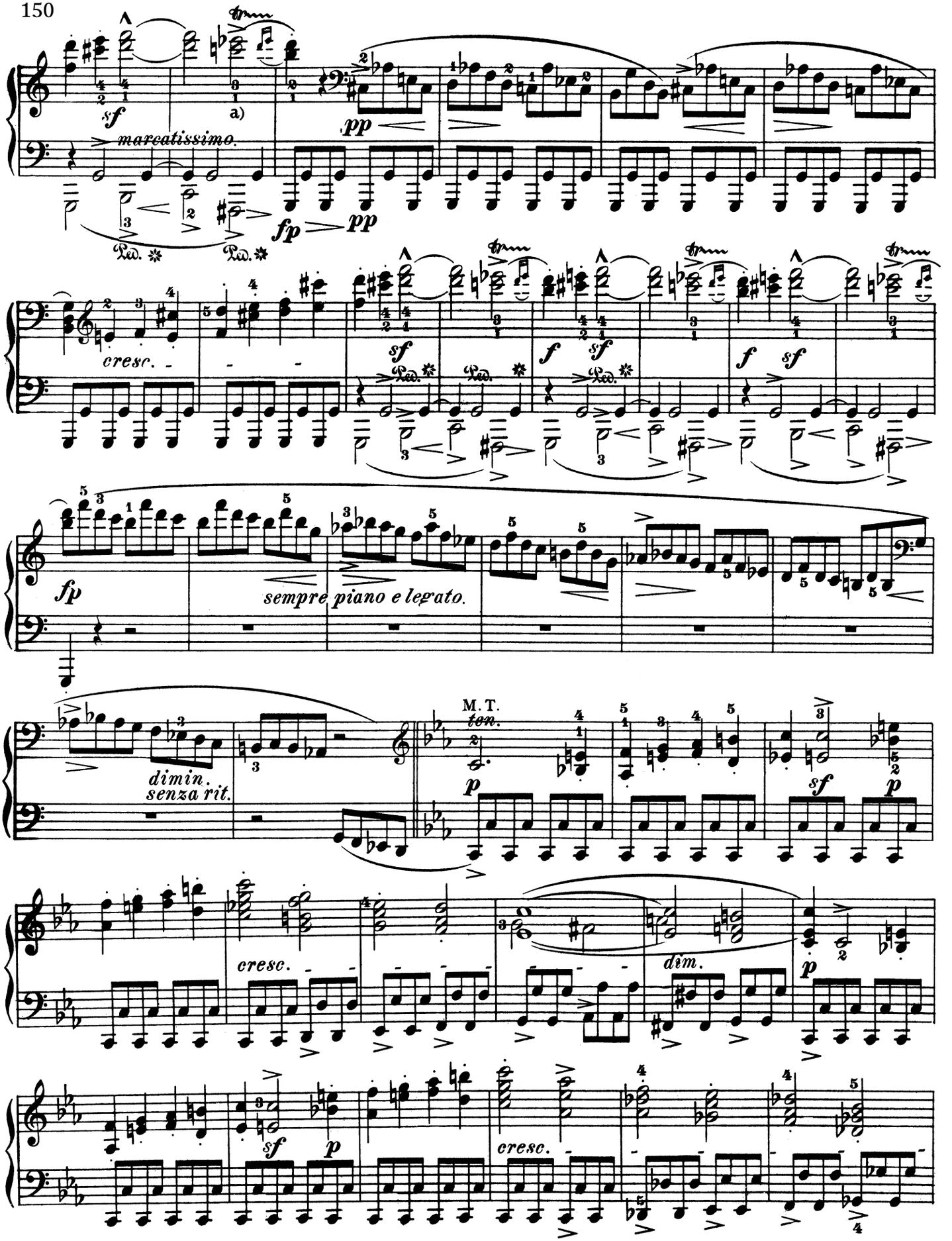
b) Retard the entrance of the B in the bass, in order to enhance the pleasurable suspense attendant upon the enharmonic change of the diminished chord of the seventh in the transition from G-minor to E-minor; and play the following passage throughout with full dreamy freedom.

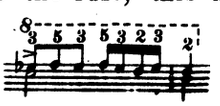


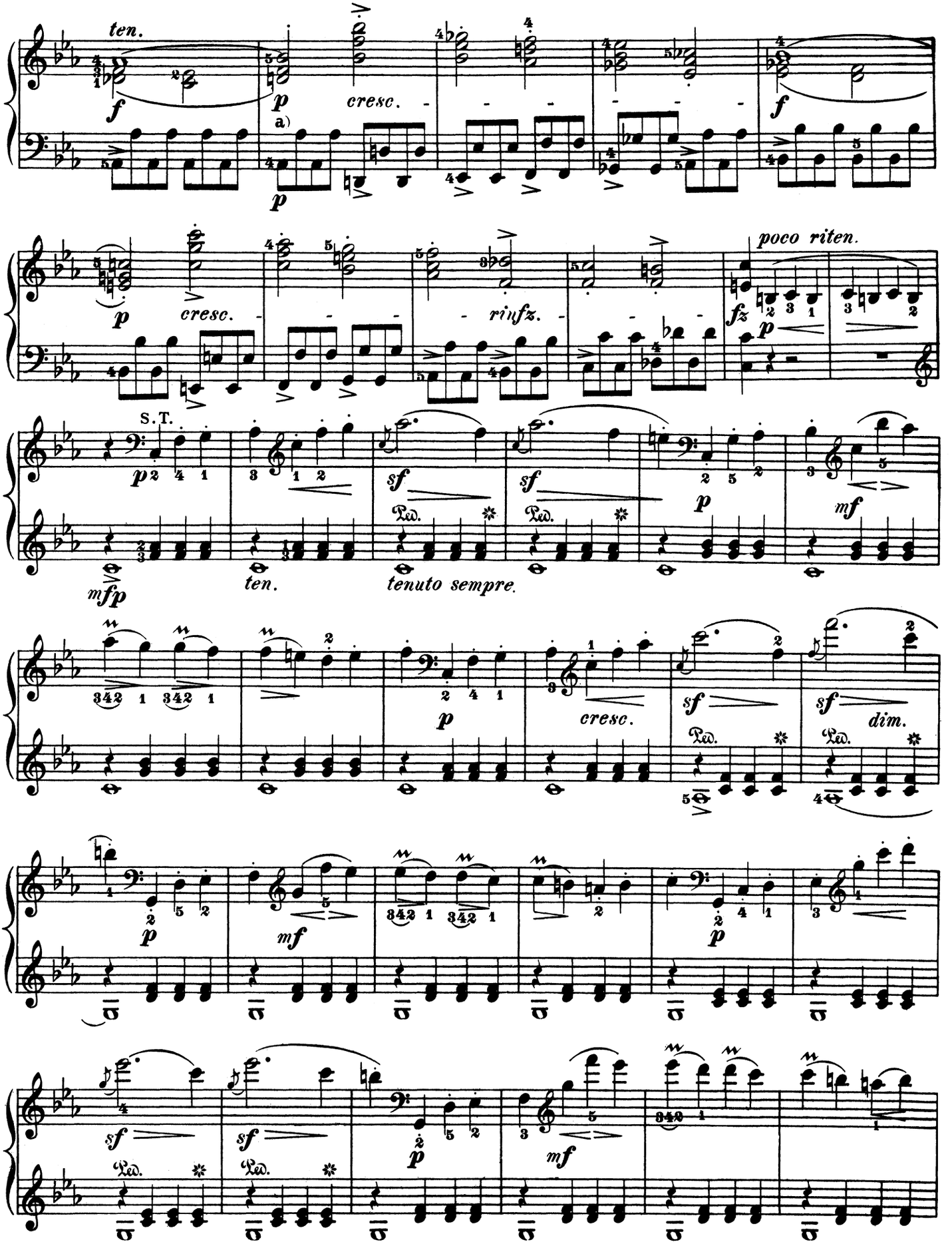
a) Despite the identity of this phrase with that in meas. 5 of the first *Grave,* it must now be played with a wholly different expression — or, rather, with none whatever, this being rendered necessary by the doubled rapidity of the movement (♪ in the *Grave* = 𝅗𝅥 in the *Allegro*).

b) Although the phrasing  etc. would more nearly correspond to the original form of this passage in meas. 7 *et seq.* of the so-called second subject (E♭-minor), it would not be in keeping with the general (progressional) character of the development-section.

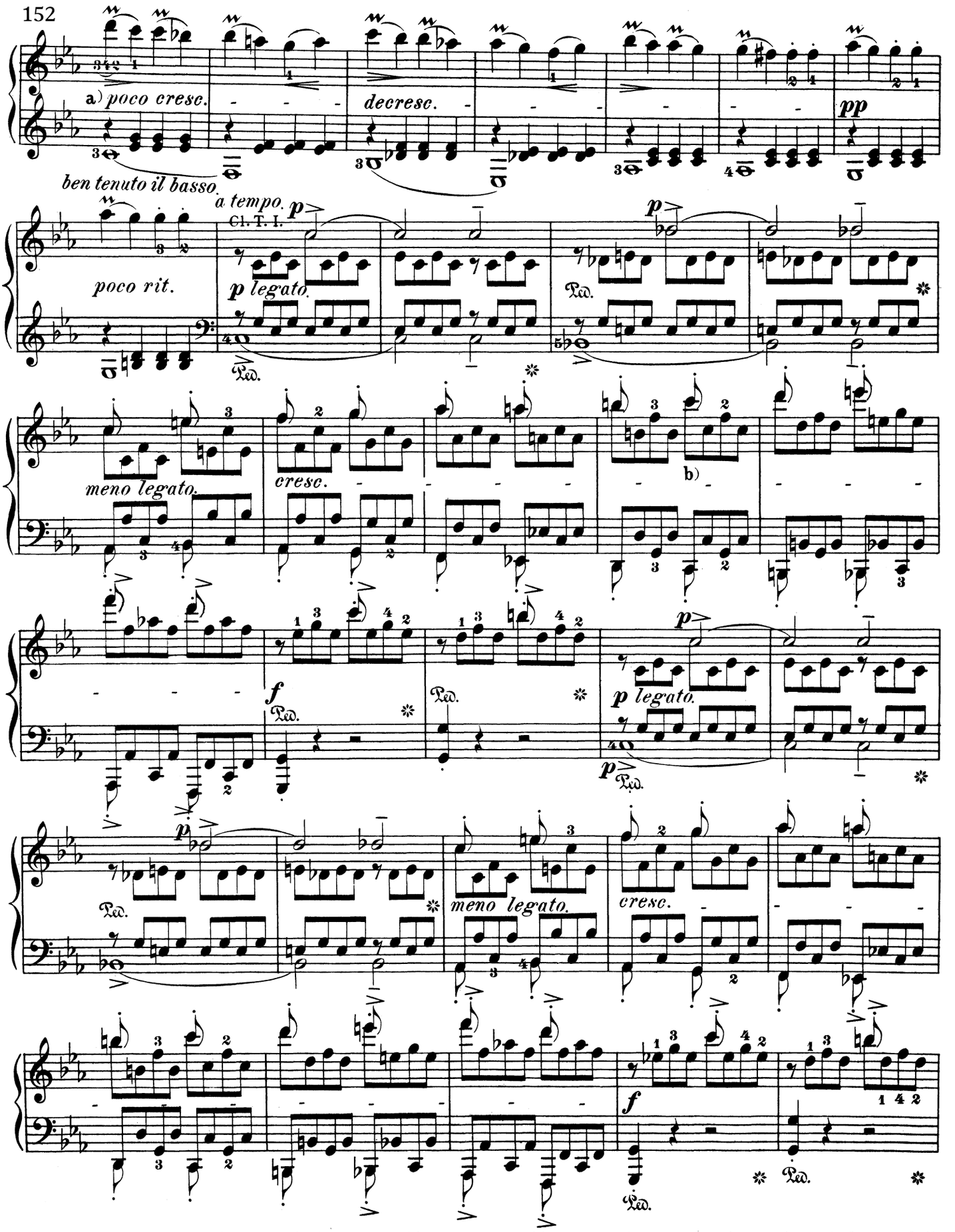
c) The player should slightly sustain the several tones  but not so as to make the movement heavy.



a) As an exception to the rule, this trill must not begin on the auxiliary, so as not to blur the melodic outlines; seven notes  vigorously played suffice in such rapid tempo

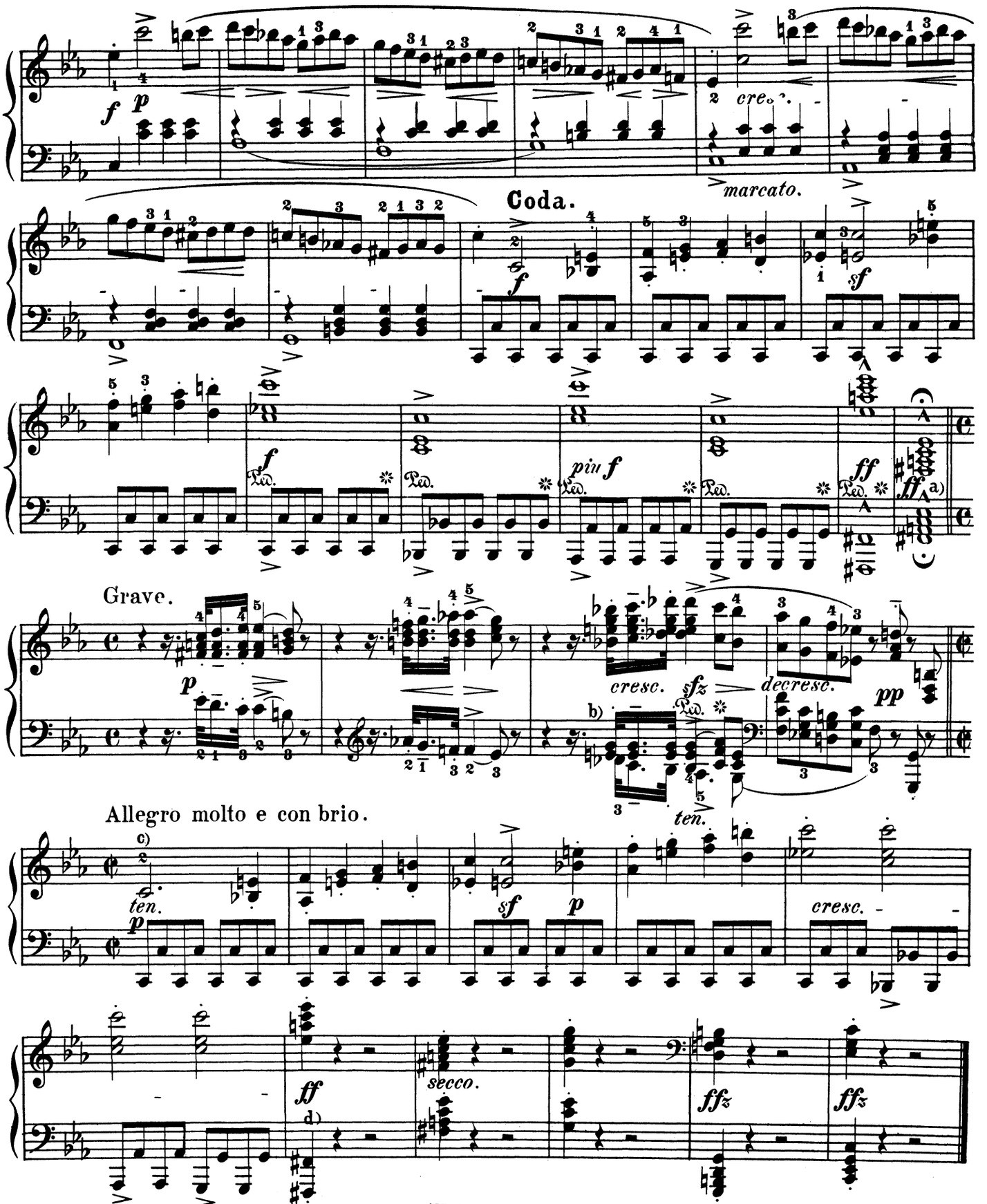


a) **This *piano* must enter abruptly, which requires some practice, especially with the left hand; similarly in the parallel passage 4 measures further on.**



a) In the original the *decrescendo* begins at this measure, which seems to us rather too prolonged for 6 full measures, – the more so, because an actual *forte* would be inadmissible in the preceding; for this reason we consider a *poco cresc.* more suitable for the first two measures.

b) Take care not to play E♭ instead of F in the right hand, as a C-minor chord is out of the question here; the C in both Soprano and Bass is simply a passing-note of the dominant chord.

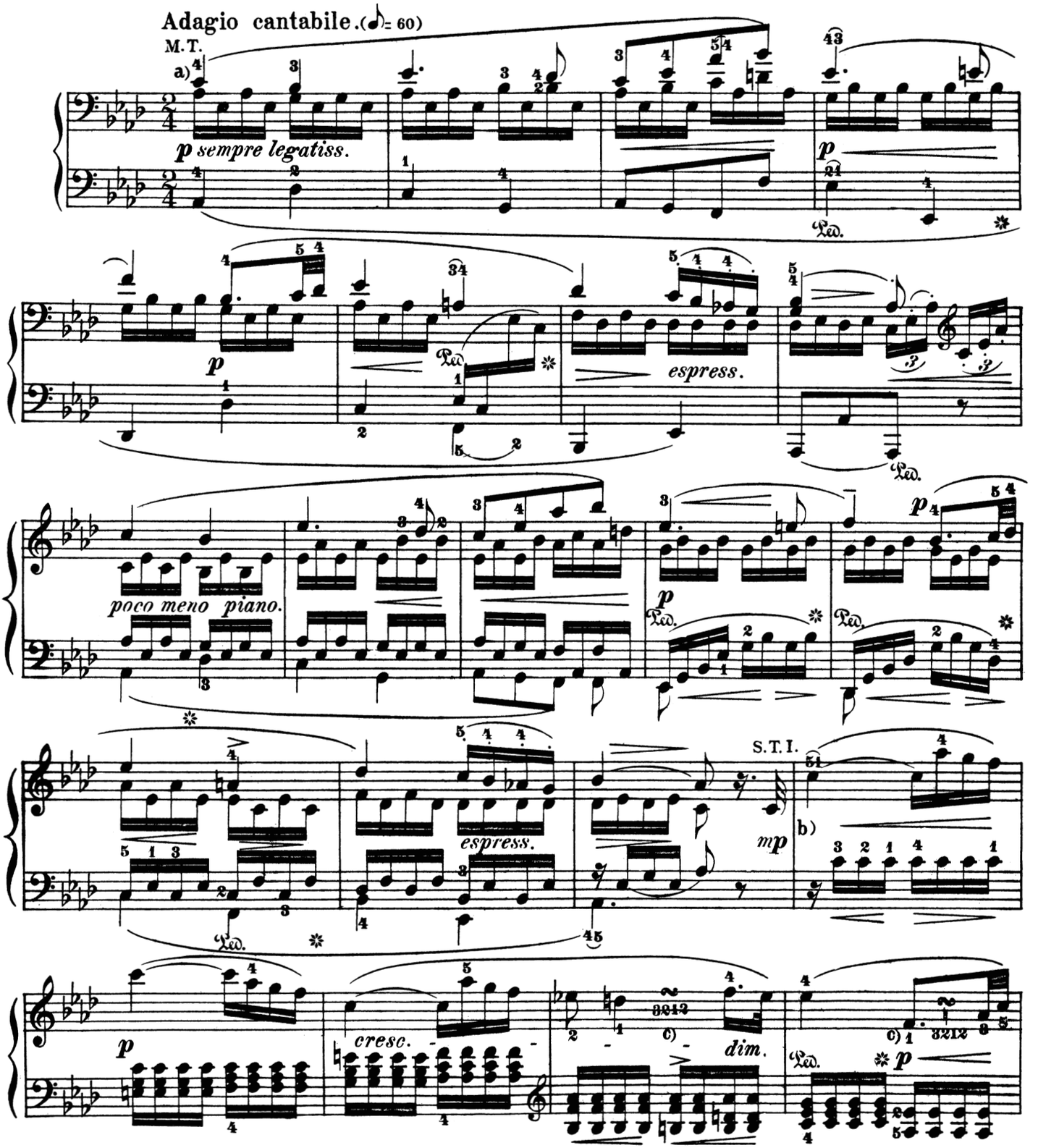


a) Sustain the hold (pause) 3 full measures (comp. {Note a, Page 118); the first holds in the *Grave* have precisely the same duration (subtracting the 32nd-note).

b) The bass note on the third fourth-note must have a penetrating and prolonged tone, in order to be quite audible through the seventh eighth-note as the root of the chord of the sixth.

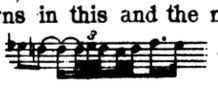
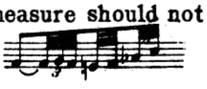
c) This coda cannot be played too rapidly.

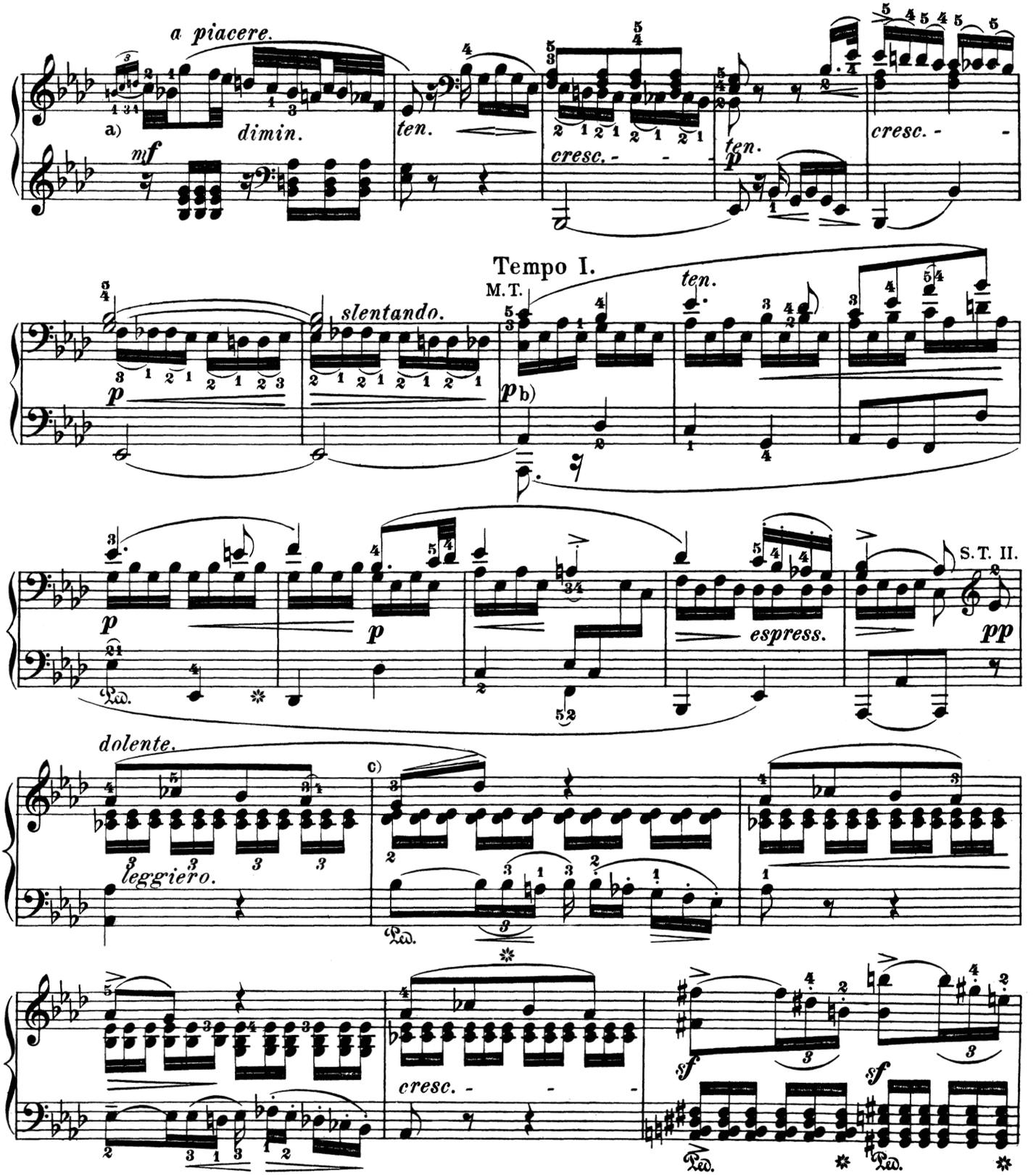
d) It is best not to use the pedal with these chords.



a) To the best of our knowledge no one has yet remarked the striking affinity of the theme of this movement, even with reference to its external melodic structure, to that of one of the loftiest *Adagios* of grandest scope from the Master's last period; — we mean the *Adagio* of the Ninth Symphony, written almost a quarter of a century later. The performance of both demands an equally inspired mood. The player's task, to "make his fingers sing," may perhaps necessitate a more frequent use of the pedal than we have indicated, which must of course be controlled by a most watchful ear.

b) This first middle section of the Rondo (for such this *Adagio* is in form) may be taken slightly *meno andante*, i. e., slower; but no more so than needful (so as not to drag), and, therefore, in only a few places.

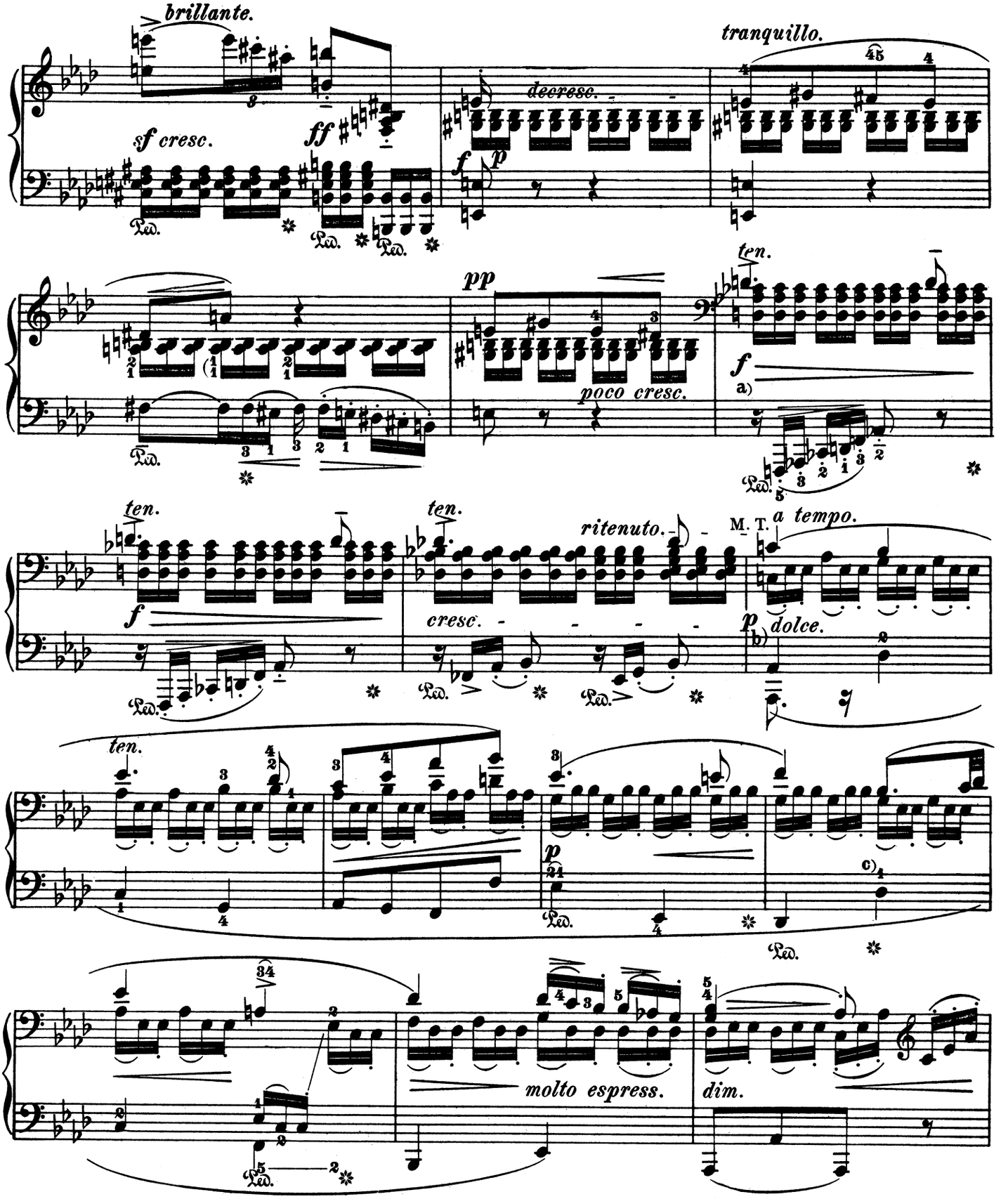
c) The turns in this and the next measure should not commence with, but immediately after, a sixteenth-note in the bass, thus:  and: 



a) A tasteful execution of this grace is impossible in strict time. An abbreviation of the first two principal notes (C and B♭) being quite as impracticable as a shifting of the inverted mordent into the preceding measure as an unaccented appoggiatura, the measure must simply be extended by an additional 32nd-note.

b) In this repetition of the theme. the left hand may be allowed to play a more expressive part; and, on the whole, a somewhat lighter shading of the melody is now admissible by way of contrast to the following (gloomier) middle section.

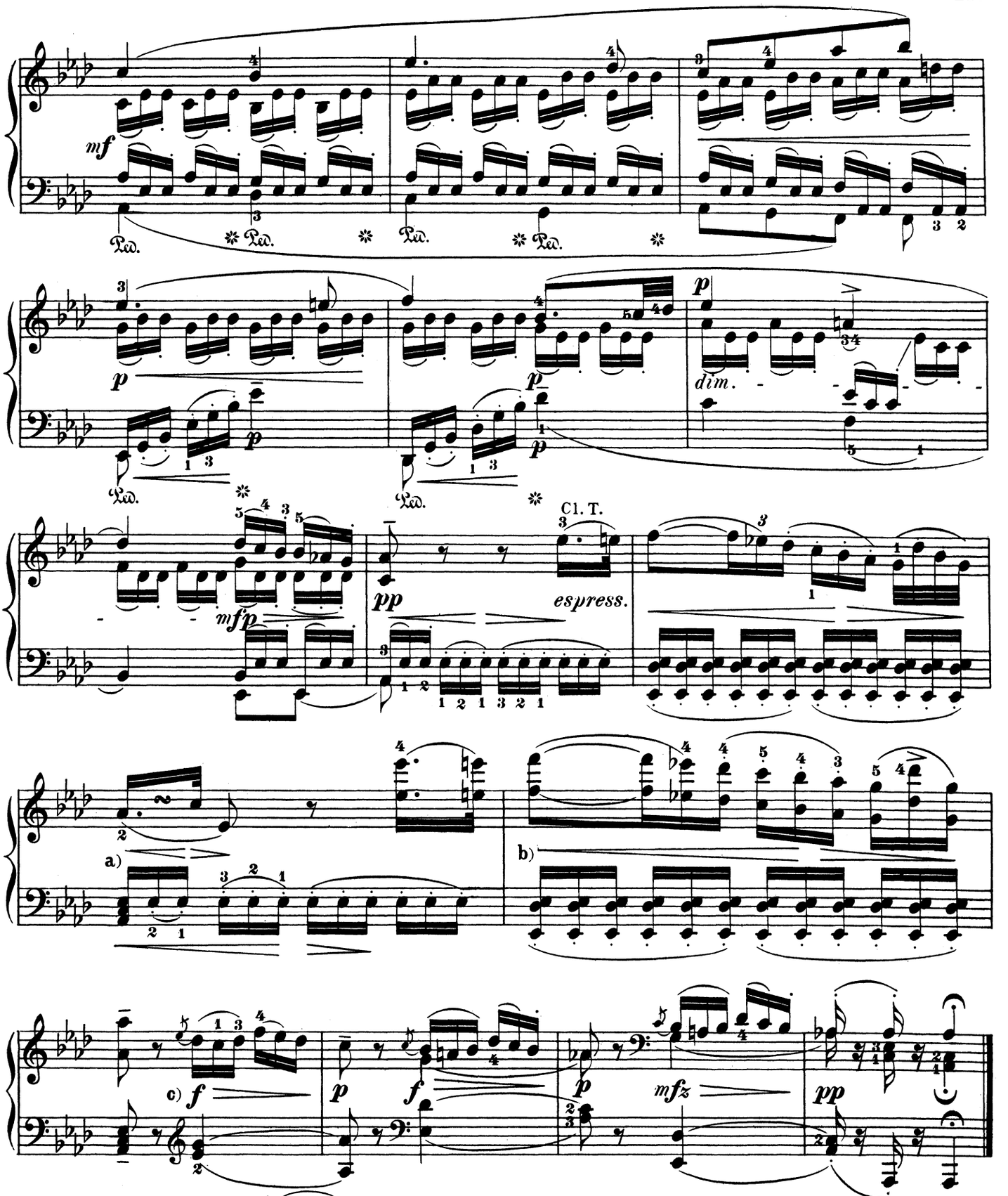
c) The ascending diminished fifth may be phrased, as it were, like a question, to which the succeeding bass figure may be regarded as the answer.



a) It appears advisable slightly to hasten this measure and the next, and then to retard the third not inconsiderably; the former on account of the cessation in the harmonic advance, the latter by reason of the varied modulation, which must be quite free from disquieting haste in its return to the theme.

b) Though strictly subordinated to the melody, the triplets should be brought out with animated distinctness.

c) The two 32nd-notes in the melody may very properly be sounded with the last note of the triplet of 16th-notes in the accompaniment; whereas a mathematically exact division would probably confuse both parts.



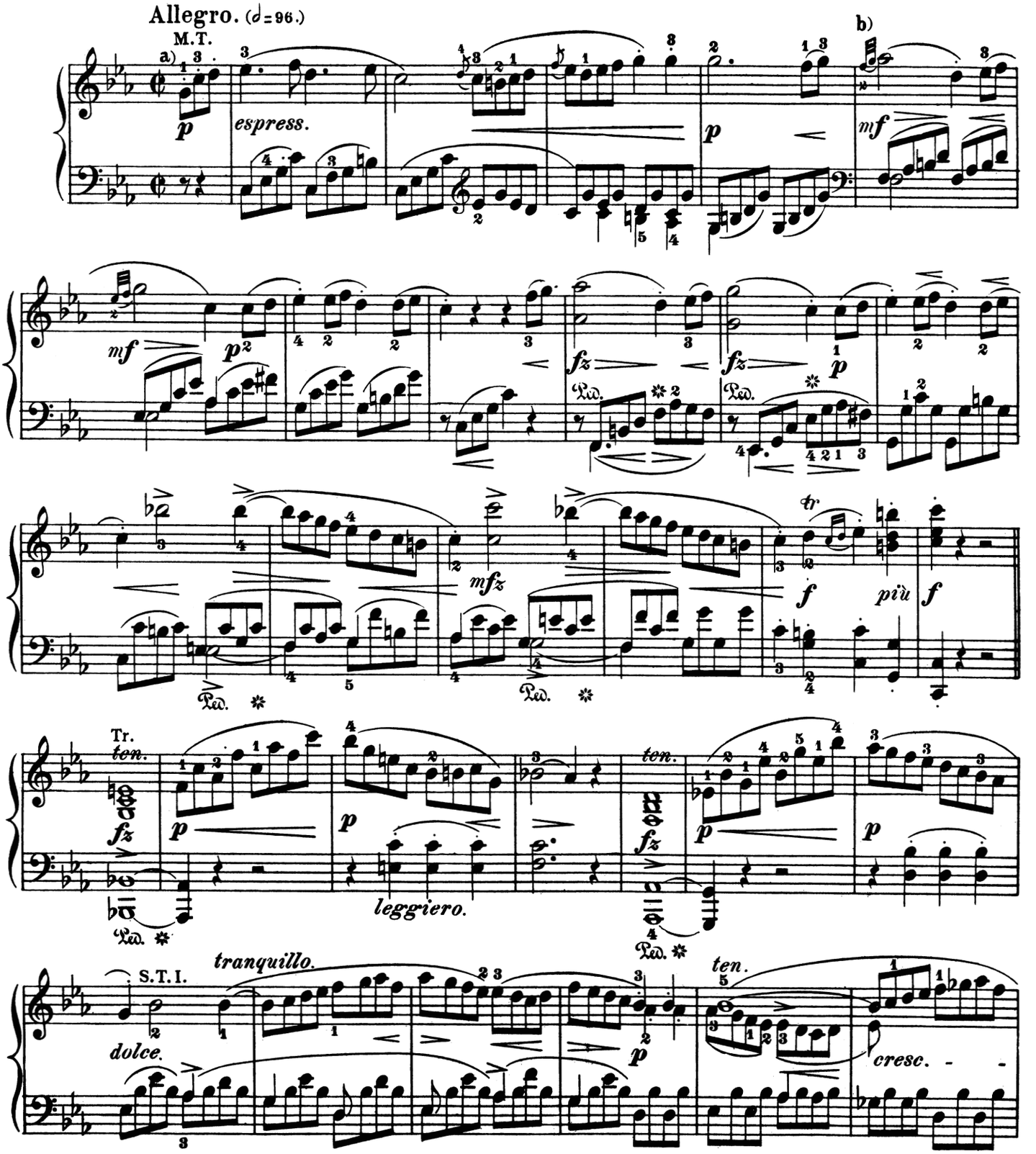
a) Execute like a triplet:

b) In the original, the shading of this passage is marked differently from that two measures before, the *diminuendo* already beginning with C, and not with A♭ as here marked. This latter nuance – the prolongation of the *crescendo* – appeals to our feeling as the more delicate, "more tenderly passionate," to quote Richard Wagner's happy remark on the "Interpretation of Beethoven."

c) Mark the separation of the slurs in this figure and those following; the six notes sound trivial if slurred together.

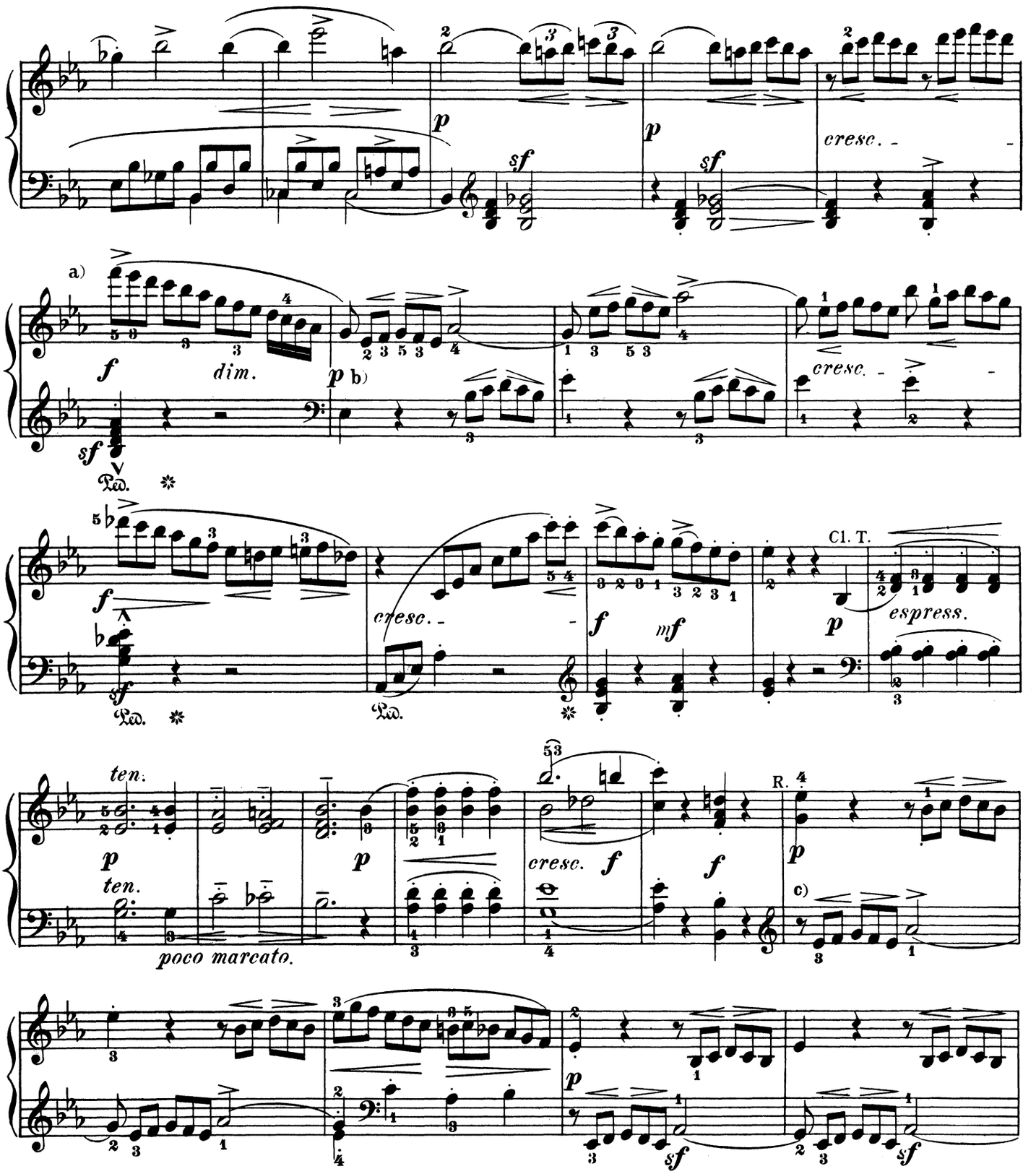
Rondo.

Allegro. (♩=96.)



a) Although this third movement is less "pathetic" than the preceding ones, the player alone will be to blame should the Pathetic Sonata end apathetically. The original, to be sure, contains only the most indispensable expression-marks, which it has been the aim of our Edition to supplement efficiently; as, for example, by the *crescendo* ending *piano* in measures 2-3, by emphasizing the distinction to be made, in the figures for the left hand, between the parts (tones) which are essential (independent) organic elements, and those which are mere harmonic filling; etc.

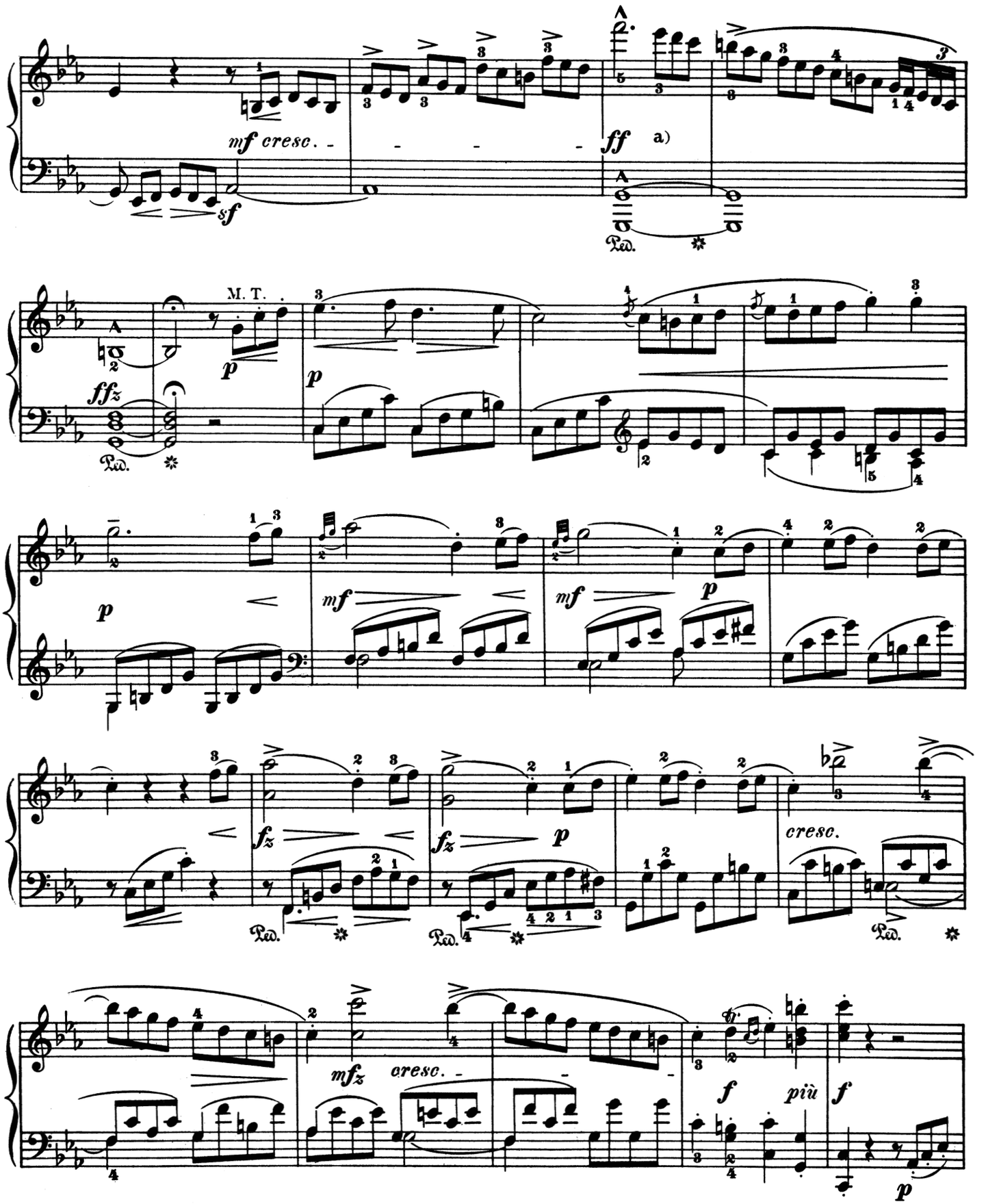
b) In executing this grace, the player must be careful not to produce the effect of parallel octaves with the bass (F-A♭, and in the next measure E♭-G); rather than this, the slide might be treated as an appendage to the foregoing notes.



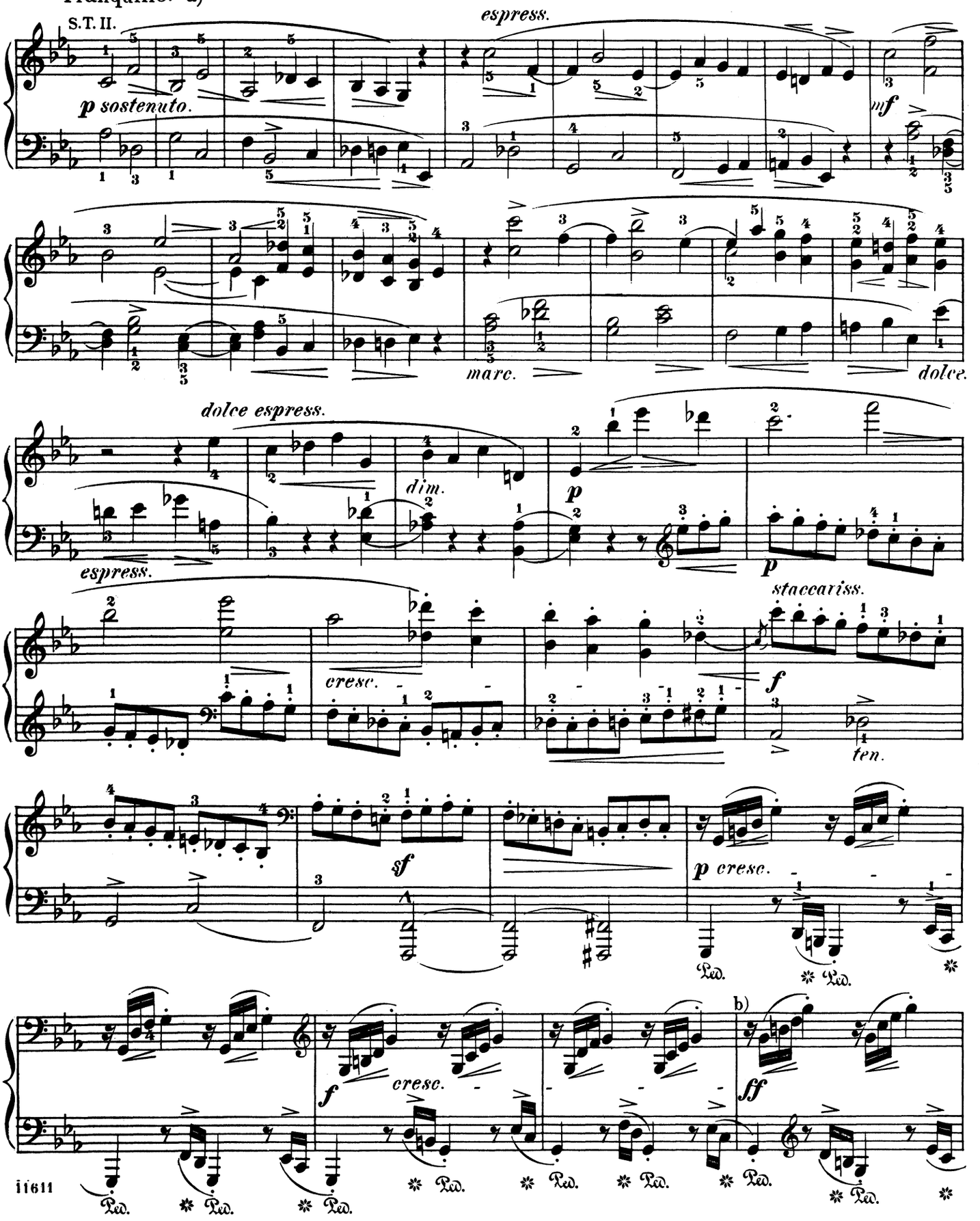
a) There can hardly be a doubt that the Master was compelled, by the restricted compass of the keyboard of his day (only up to F³), to content himself with the fifth of the dominant chord, instead of rising to the higher seventh (Ab) as in the three other parallel passages. A change in conformity with his original intention is impracticable, however, because the ensuing measure would then be made to lie an octave higher, and would sound somewhat thin for the first time (it is immediately repeated in the octave).

b) These imitations, although *piano,* must be played with great animation, and not in that characterless *legato* which might be called anti-symphonic.

c) The preceding Remark applies equally to this and similar passages.

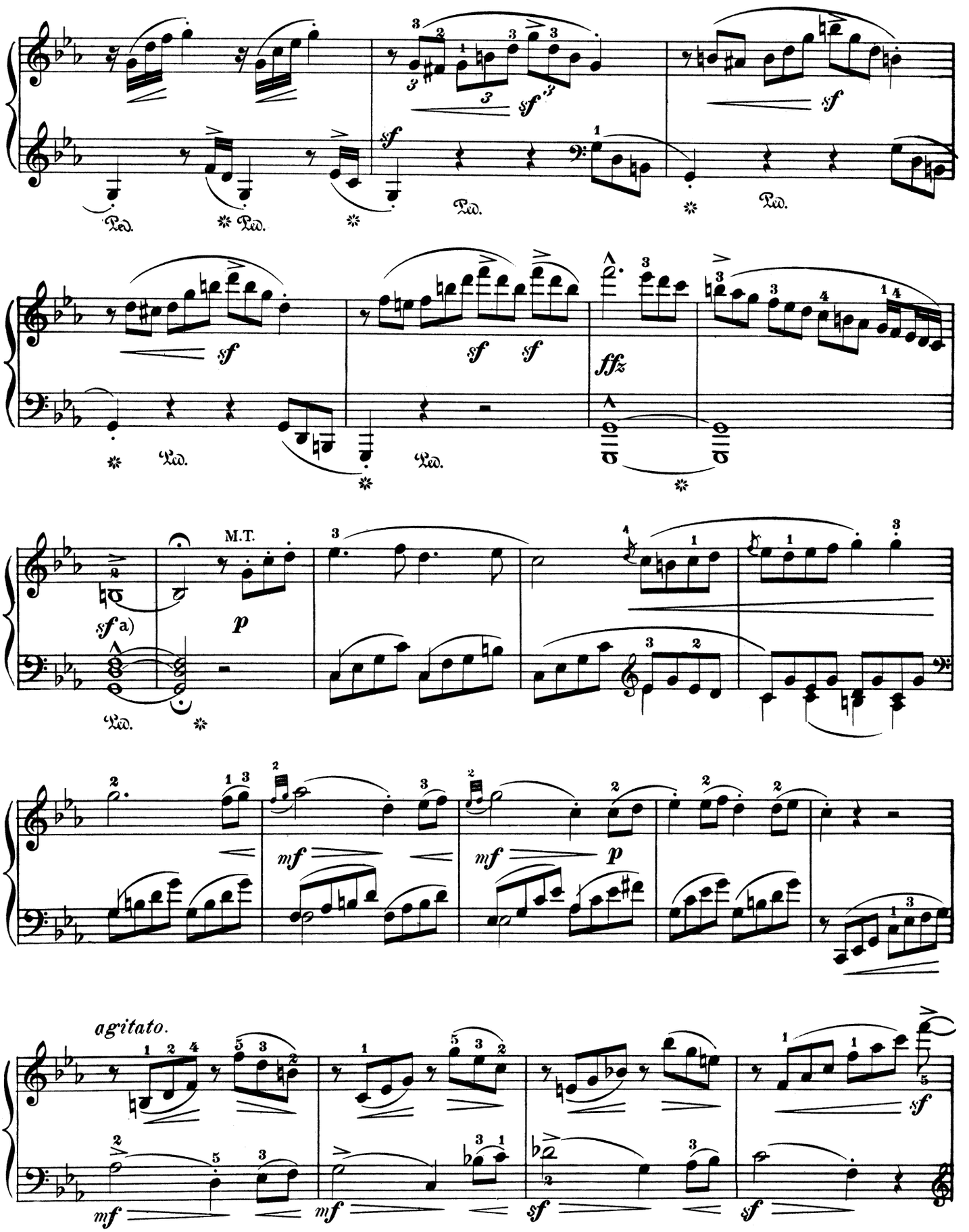


a) The fingering given by us serves to aid in executing this run with the exact rhythmic divisions desired by the composer. The hold which follows appears really superfluous; for, by the prolongation of the chord through $1\frac{1}{2}$ measures, all demands of the pulsing rhythm — which goes on even during the rests of a piece — are fully met.

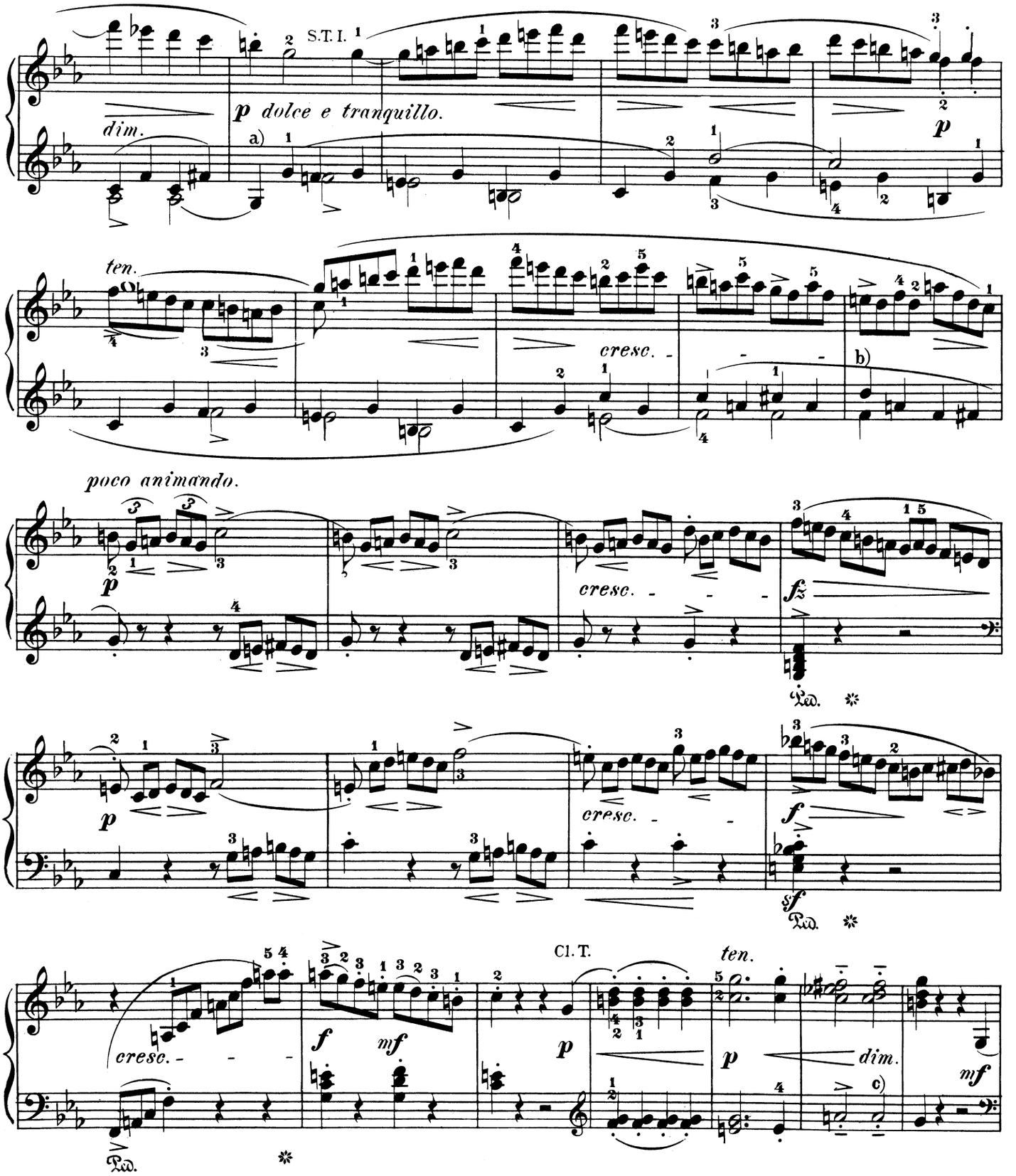


a) The tempo, of course, remains the same, but free from any fluctuating agitation. Observe, that the theme "proper" begins with an ascending fourth, consequently, the left hand should be slightly emphasized in the fifth and sixth measures. This holds good for meas. 13, 14, etc.

b) The mark *ff* is set rather early, in view of the fact, that the intensification continues through the next six measures. For this reason, the player will do well to husband his strength at first.

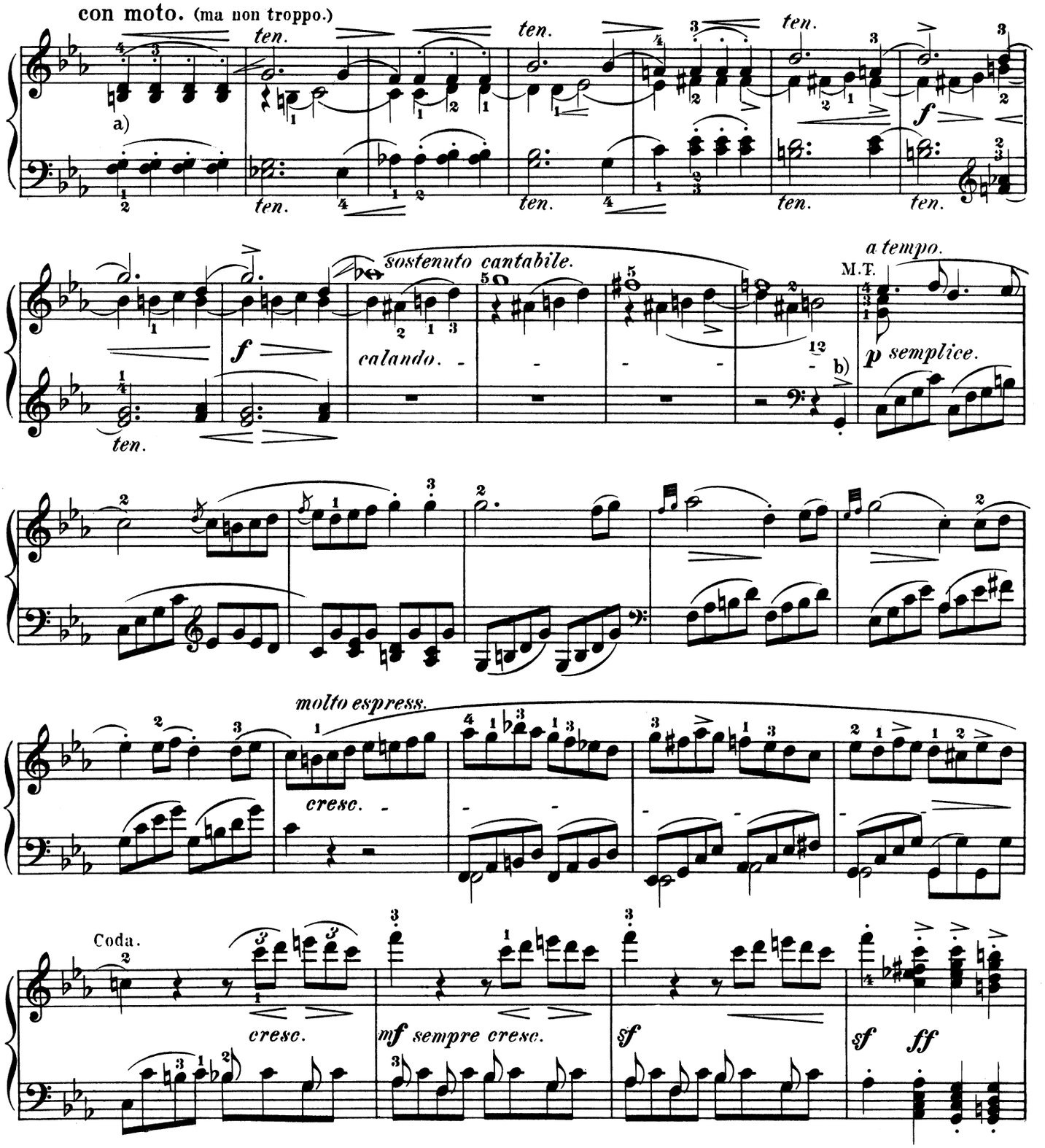


a) The more tempestuously the 12 preceding measures **have been played**, the longer may this hold (see **Note a, page** 160) be sustained.

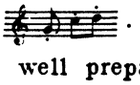


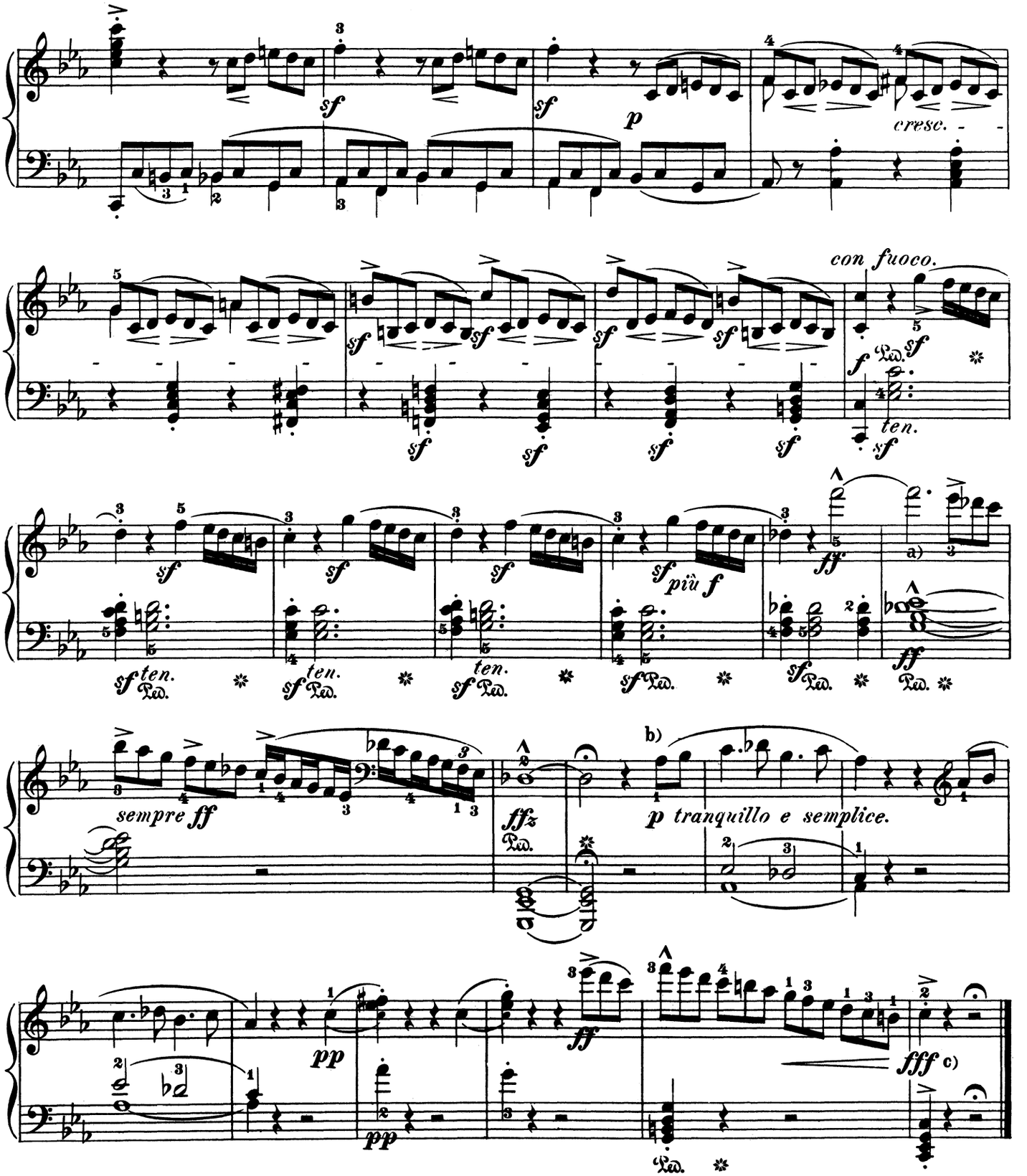
a) The second subject must be played more delicately and quietly here than at its first entrance in E♭ major.
b) A collision of the two parts on D^2 must be avoided by anticipating the right hand by an arpeggio in the left, lifting the left-hand thumb instantly after the stroke; thus:

c) The second note in the bass might, in conformity with the parallel passages in the first division, be A♭.



a) These next 13 measures should be played with considerable freedom as regards tempo, and with a decided independent stress on the lower part in the left hand. Special attention should be paid to the composer's directions concerning both the shading of meas. 6-7 and 8-9, and their phrasing, which is not in one-measure rhythm (as the motive at the first glance apparently invites), but in two-measure rhythm. In proportion to the greater or lesser degree of passion put forth by the player before the *calando,* this latter is to be conceived as a *diminuendo* and *ritardando*. Excess in either direction is, of course, reprehensible.

b) Particularly note the *Auftakt* (fractional initial measure) in the bass, here representing the regular introduction  . By playing the theme wholly without shading on its fourth (and last) appearance, the close is well prepared and led up to.



a) Moderate the tempo on commencing this measure, in order that the ensuing run can be executed precisely according to the given divisions and without the least retardation. The following hold may be sustained very long—as long as the sonority of the piano permits.

b) A *ritardando* in this epilogue would be in bad taste; the tempo must be strictly sustained to the close.

c) The *fff* is found in all the old Editions, — almost the sole instance where this superlative, surely as frequently intended as rarely used is employed by the Master. Hence follows the necessity of an unusually powerful *crescendo* in the preceding run.