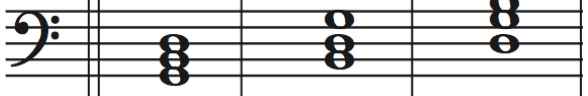
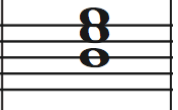
Triads in Second Inversion

MUS 112 – April 3, 2017

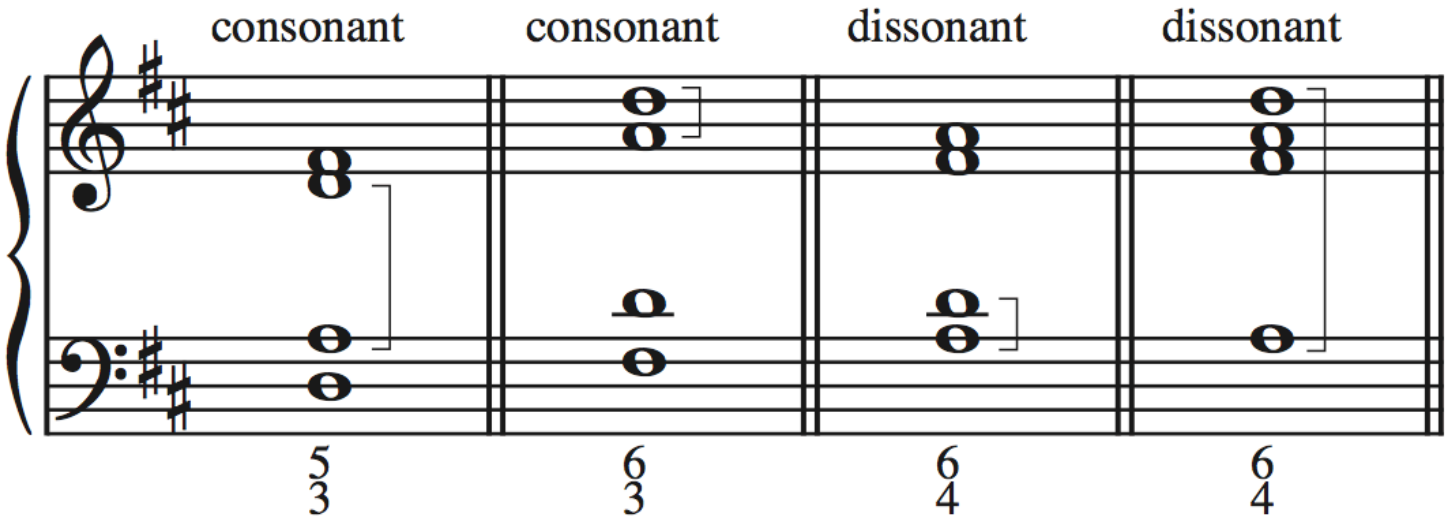
Review: First Inversion Triads

- Third of the chord is in the bass voice
- Uses:
  - As a substitute for root position triads
  - Improve contour of bass line
  - Lessen weight of V and I chords
  - Occur incidentally through an arpeggiated bass
- Sometime occur in a series of parallel sixth chords

Sonority desired			
Complete figured bass symbol	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{6}{3}$	$\frac{6}{4}$
Symbol most often used		6	$\frac{6}{4}$
How to find the root	Bass note	6th above bass	4th above bass

Triads in Second Inversion

- Fifth of the chord is in the bass voice
- Not used as substitutions for root positions chord
  - Unstable sonority

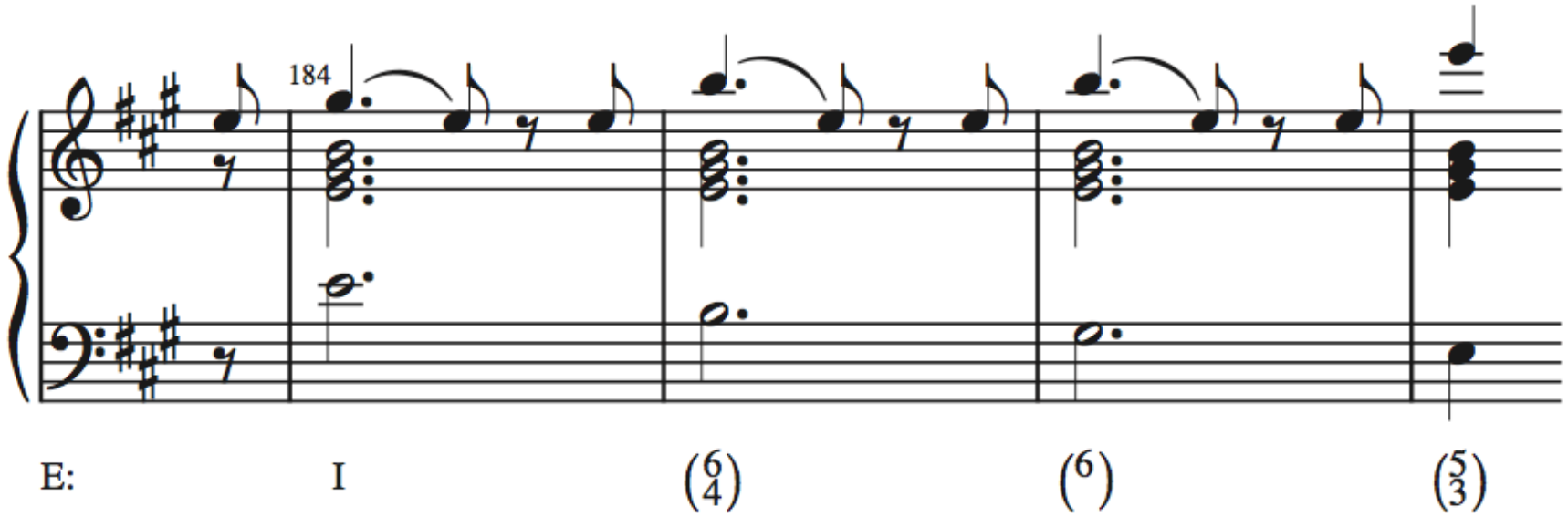


Uses of Second Inversion Triads

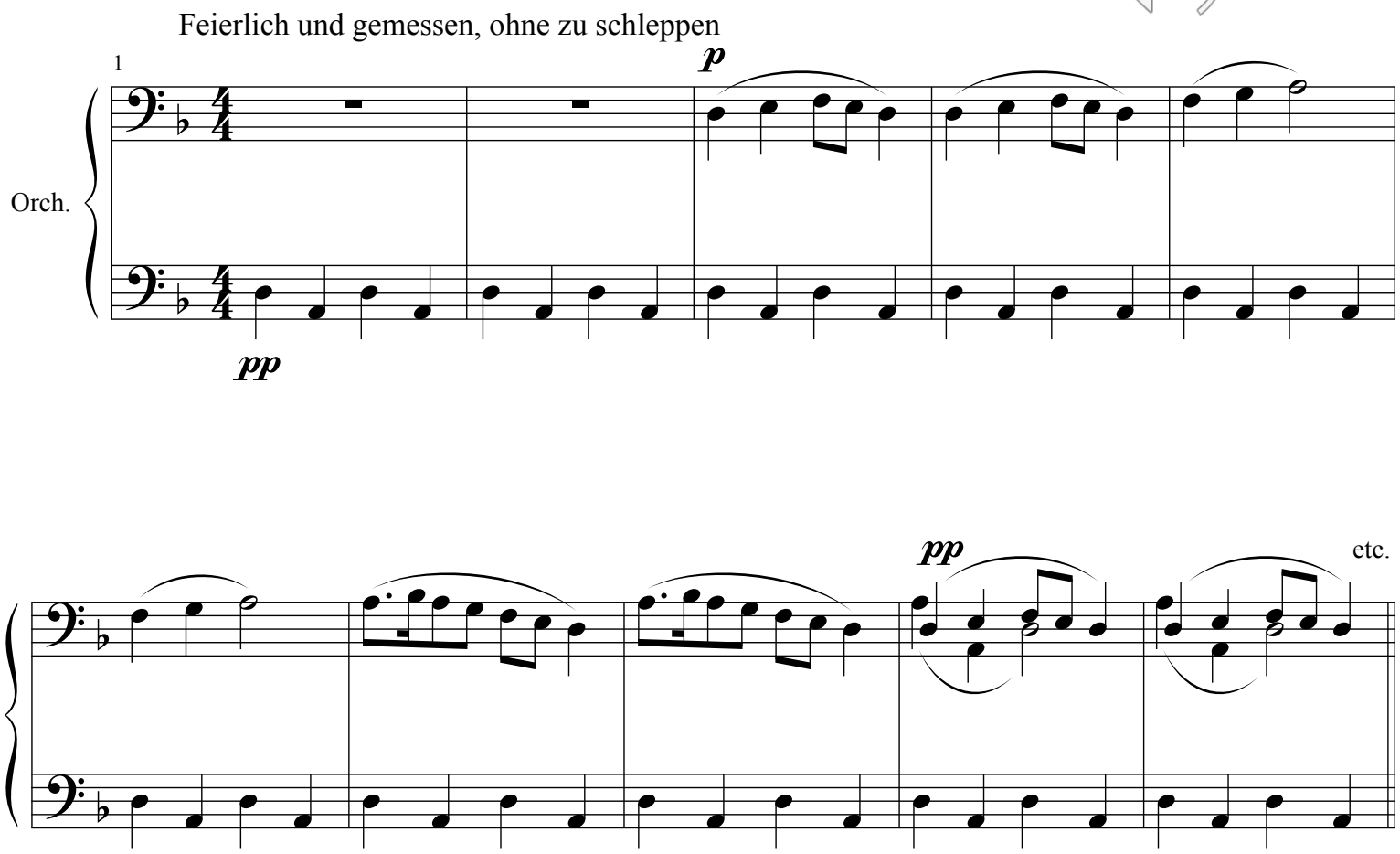
- As second inversion triads are more unstable than root and first inversion chords. Our uses of them in tonal-stlye writing are restricted to:
- Incidental Use
  - Arpeggiatied Bass
  - Melodic Bass
- Stereotypical Use
  - Cadential Six-Four
  - Passing Six-Four
  - Pedal Six-Four

Bass Arpeggiation

- Just as with first inversion triads, second inversion triads can incidentally occur when the bass voice is arpeggiating.
- You need to decide if the chord is ***functioning*** as a six-four chord by taking into account metric placement, duration, and register.



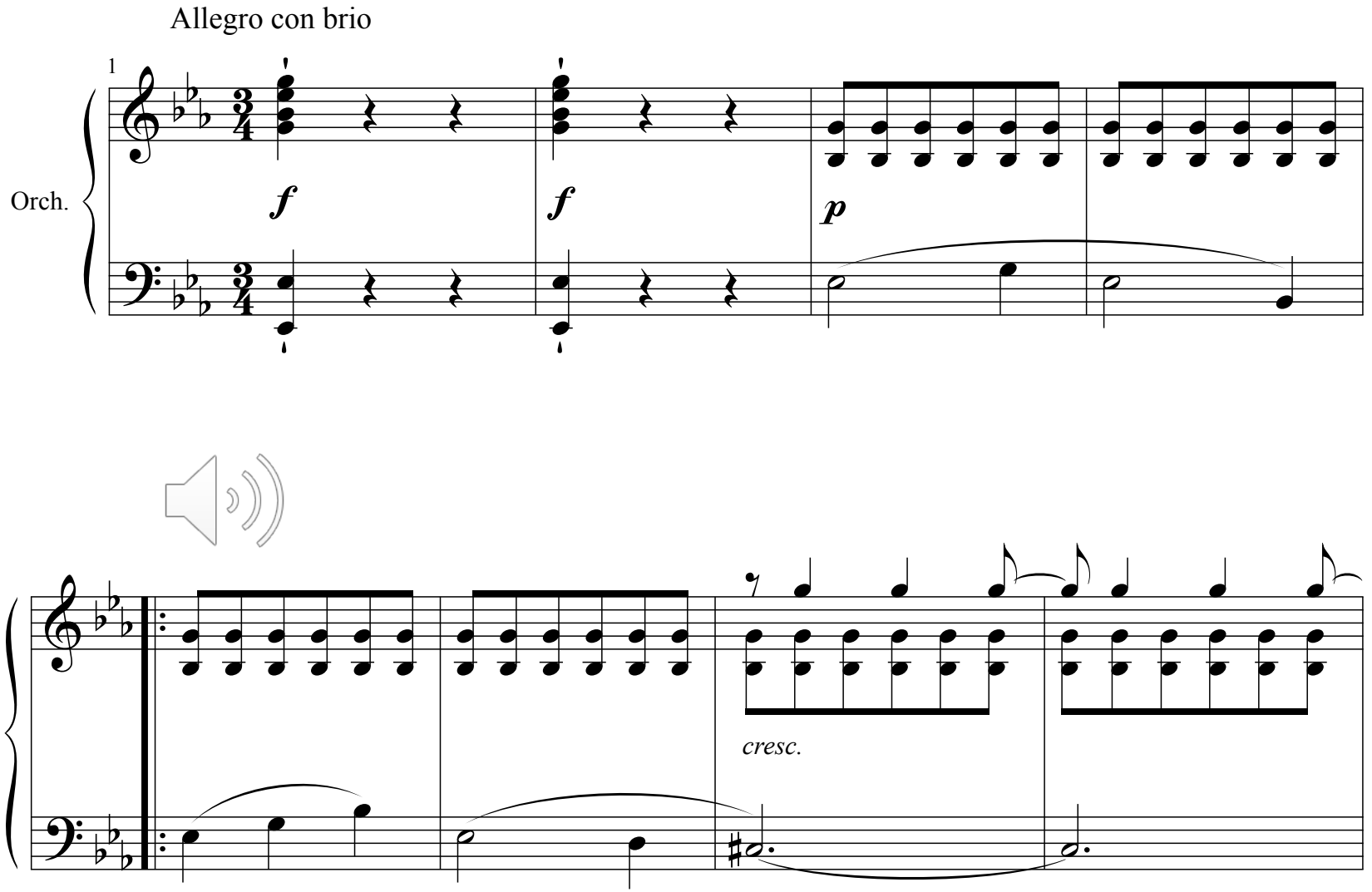
Mahler: Symphony No. 1, III



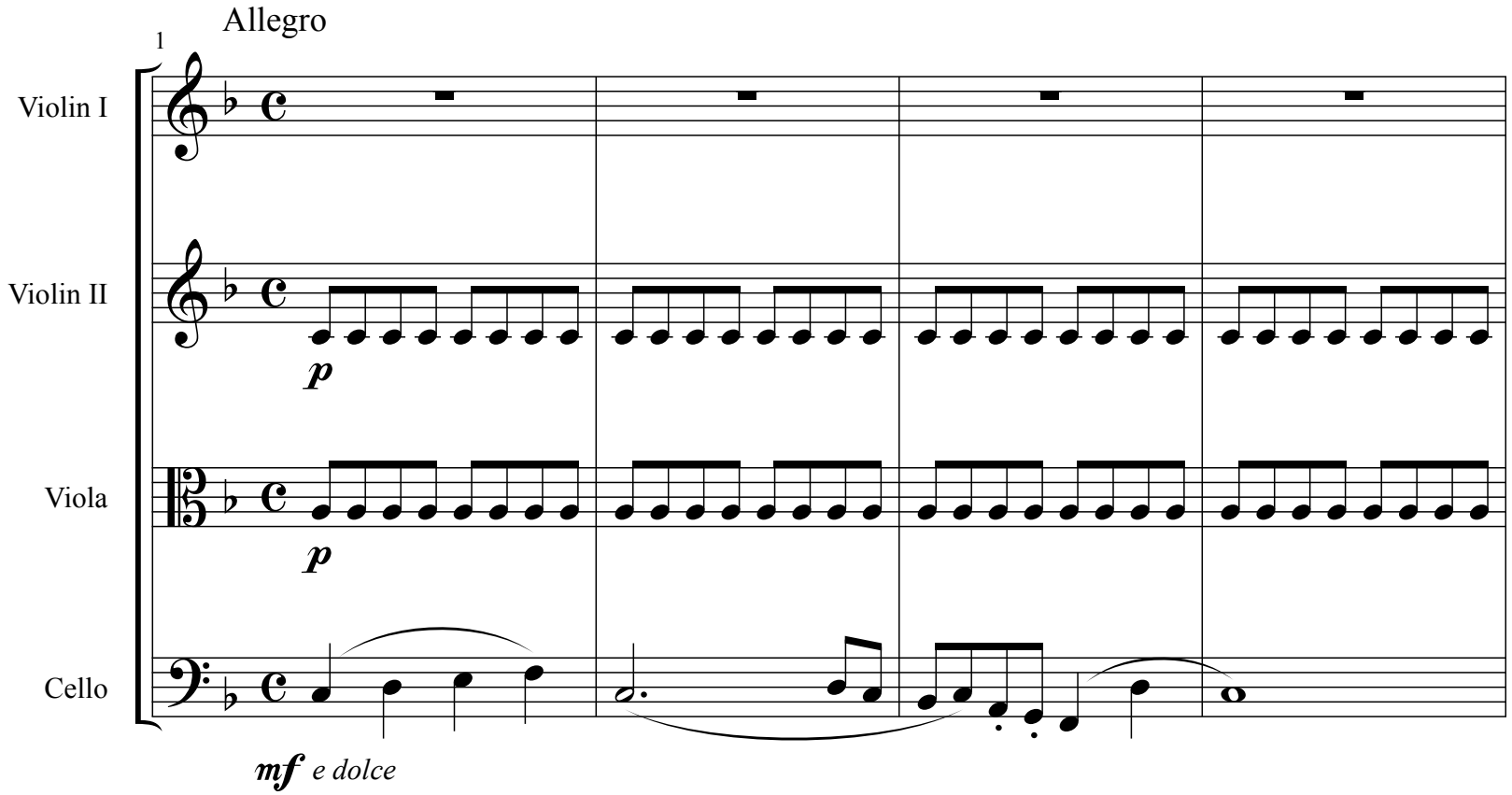
Melodic Bass

- If the bass part has an important melodic line it longer acts in its typical supporting. In this case many types of inversions can occur.
- We stop hearing the bass voice as the harmonic foundation of the music.

Beethoven: Symphony No.3, I



Beethoven, op. 59, no. 1

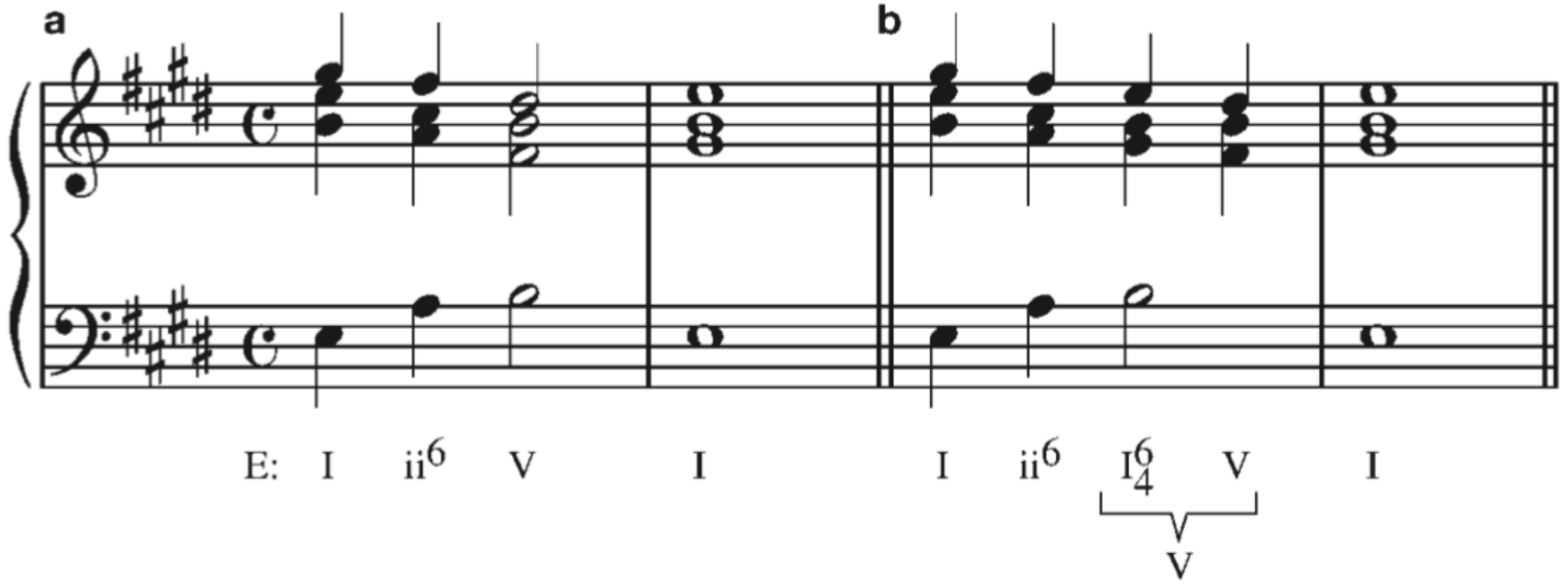


Part-Writing Six-Four Chords

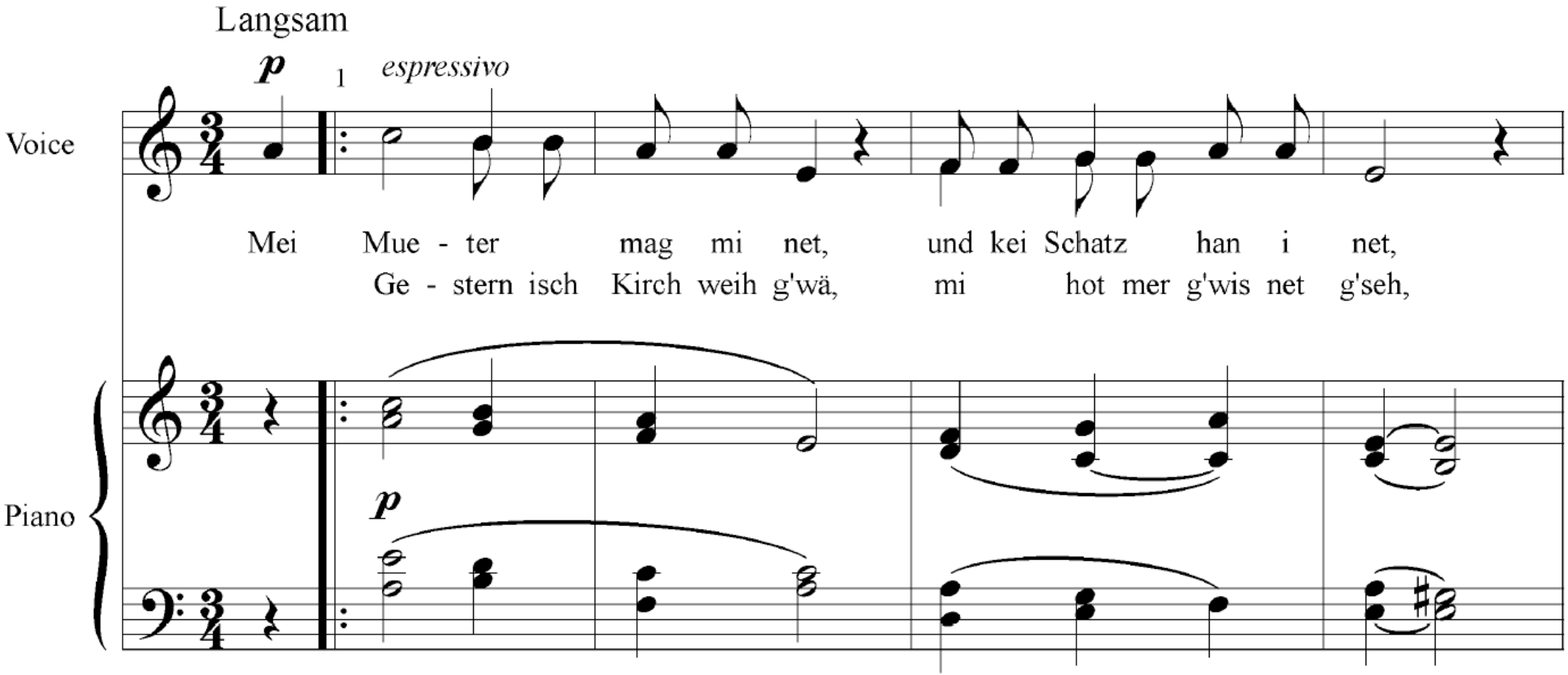
- Four-part texture
  - bass (5th of the chord) should be doubled. Exceptions to this are rarely encountered in tonal music.
  - other voices move as smoothly as possible (often by step) both into and out of the six-four chord.
- Three-part texture
  - all members of the triad
  - sometimes the root or 3rd is omitted, in which case the 5th is doubled

The Cadential Six-Four

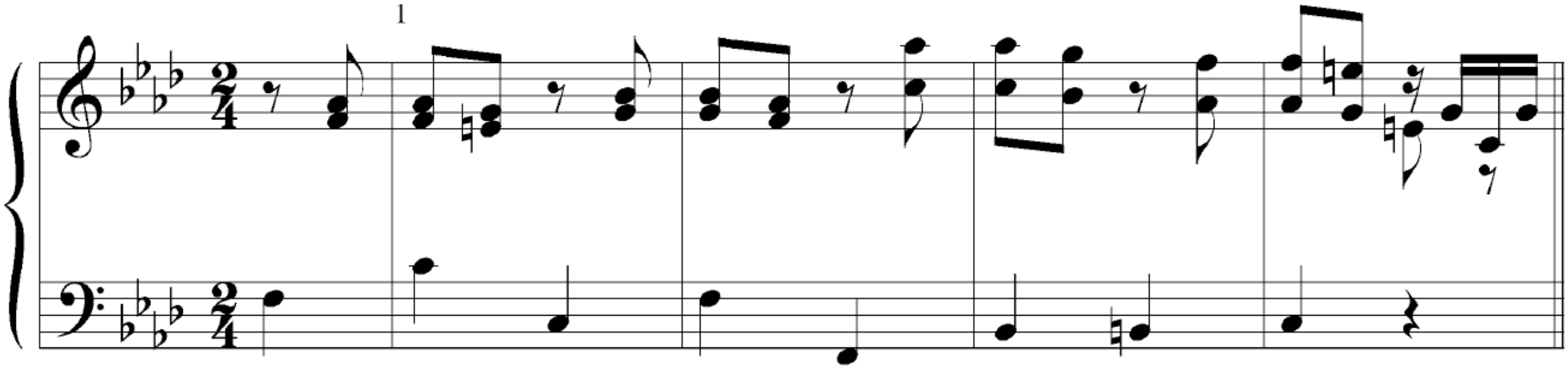
- Tonic six-four that delays the arrival of the V chord
  - It is followed by a V chord
  - Does not function as a tonic chord



Brahms, "Die Trauerende", op. 7 no. 5



Bach, Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II, Prelude in f minor

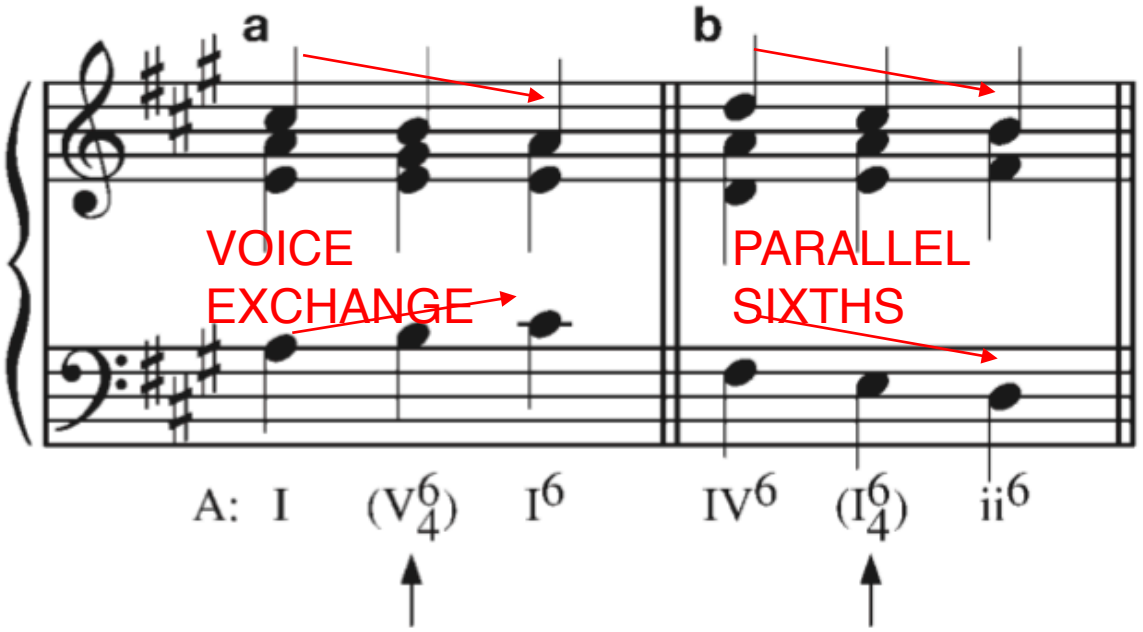


Six-Four Chords (so far…)

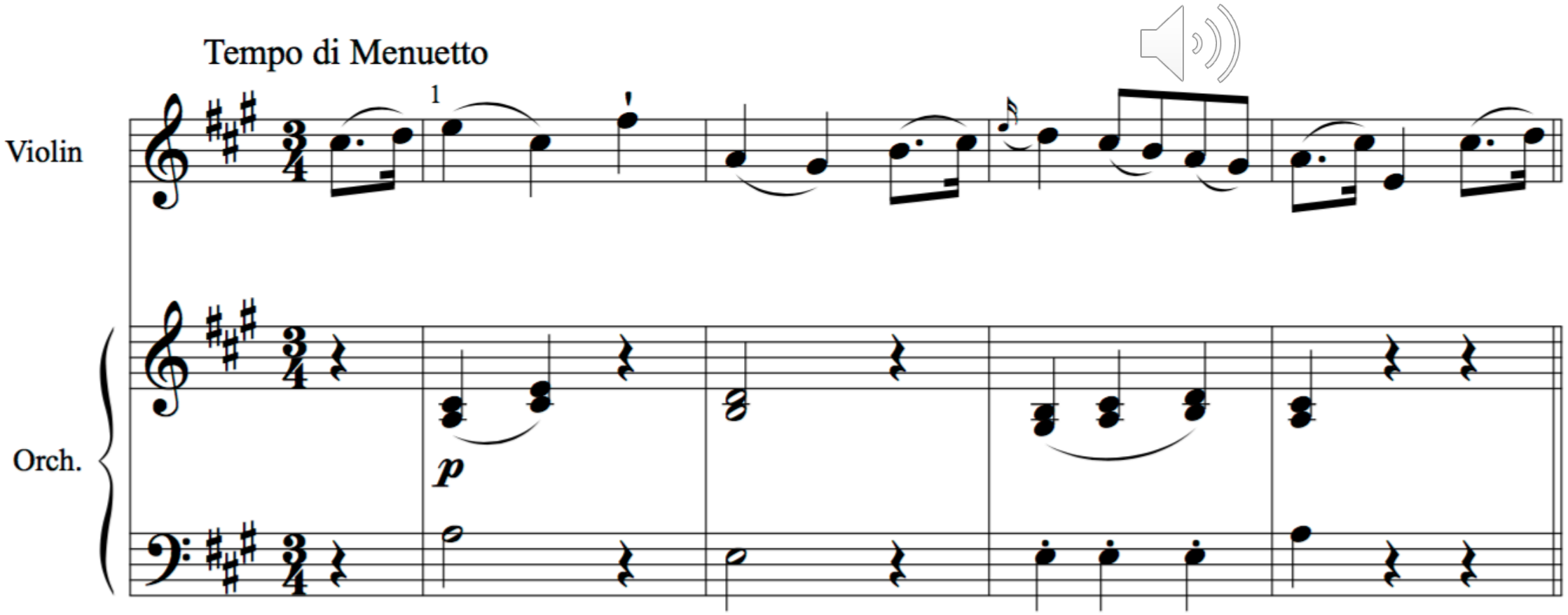
TYPE	Function	Chord
Incidental (Melodic & Bass Arpeggiation)	N/A	Any Chord
Cadential Six-Four	Dominant	Tonic

The Passing Six-Four

- Second inversion that harmonizing the middle note of a three-note scalar figure in the bass.
  - Usually falls on a weak beat
  - Features smooth voice-leading
  - (indicate by placing roman numeral in parentheses)

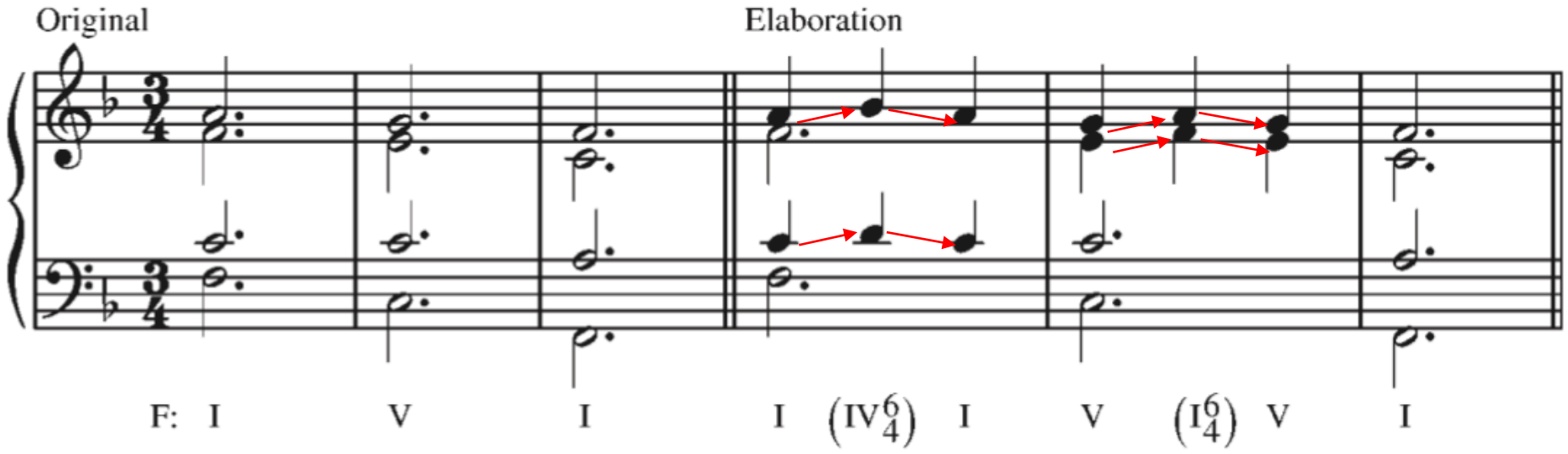


Mozart, Violin Concerto no. 5 in A Major, K. 219, mvt. 3, mm. 1-4

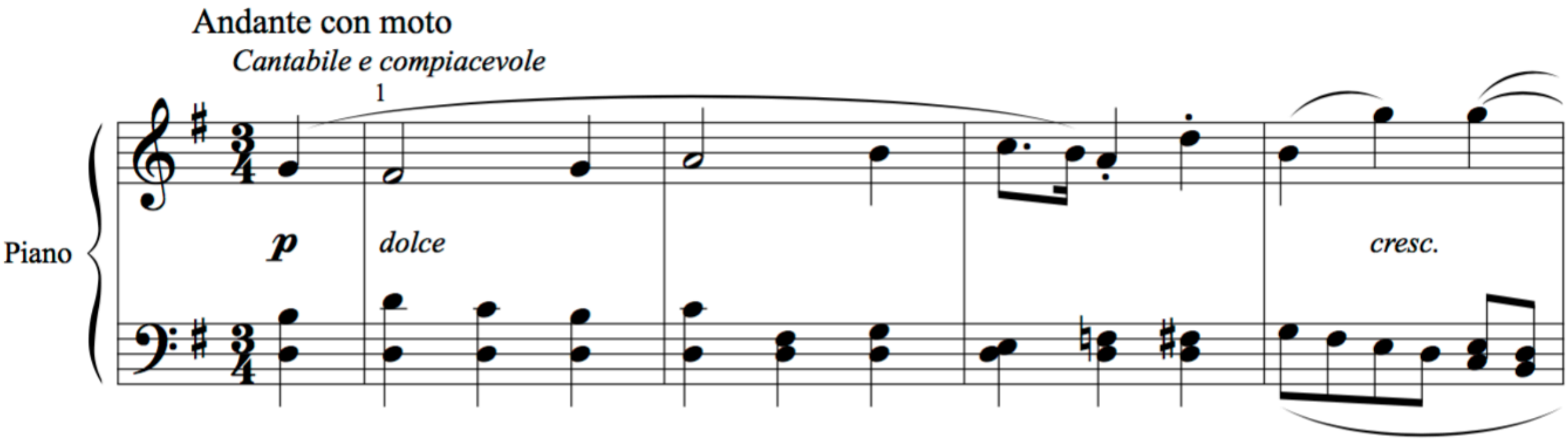


The Pedal Six-Four

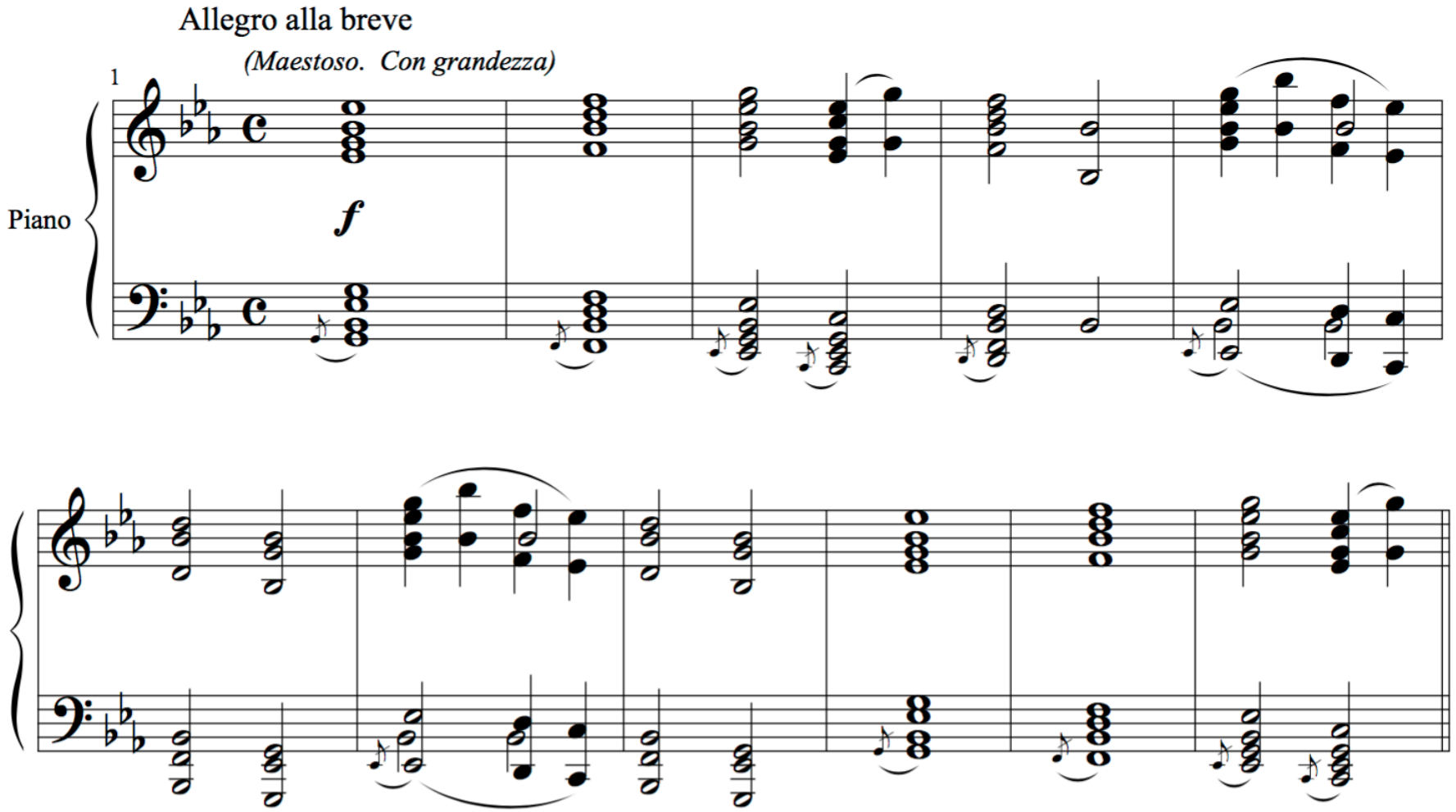
- One way of elaborating a static root position triad is to move the 3rd and 5th of the triad up by step and then back down by step to their original positions.
  - This is a technique to **prolong** a harmonic function



Beethoven, Bagatelle, op. 126 no. 1



Six-Four Chords (so far…)

TYPE	Harmonic Function	Chord	Purpose
Incidental (Melodic & Bass Arpeggiation)	N/A	Any Chord	-N/A
Cadential Six-Four	Dominant	I (i)	-Prolong the Dominant
Passing Six-Four	N/A	Any Common: I (i) & IV (iv)	-Harmonize scalar bass figures -Voice Exchange
Pedal Six-Four	N/A		-Prolong a root position triad

Mussorgsky, Pictures at an Exhibition, "The Great Gate of Kiev”