Le Lac des Cygnes

(THE SWAN LAKE)

A ROMANTIC BALLET IN FOUR ACTS

CHOREOGRAPHY BY MARIUS PETIPA AND LEV IVANOV

Music by

TSCHAIKOWSKY

ARRANGED FOR PIANOFORTE BY

GRANVILLE BANTOCK

ILLUSTRATED EDITION

Foreword by Cyril W. Beaumont

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Other photographs, with the exception of Alicia Markova, as presented by the Sadlers Wells Ballet.

PAXTON · LONDON

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Le Lac des Cygnes

SINGAPORE
1973
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INTRODUCTION

LE LAC DES CYGNES is the first and best loved of the three ballets composed by Tschaikovsky. Something of this is due to the skill with which the authors of the book, V. P. Begitchev and Geltser, have recaptured the romantic atmopshere of enchantment and sorcery so typical of German mediæval legend; but the main attraction of the ballet is Tschaikovsky's melodious score, so admirably suited to expression in dancing, and so well attuned to the varying moods of the action. Again, apart from *GISELLE,* there is no other ballet which affords the *ballerina* such opportunities for the display of her abilities as a mime and as a dancer in the pure classical tradition, at once the most difficult and most beautiful of all forms of ballet.

LE LAC DES CYGNES, which falls into four acts, was first produced at the Bolshoy Theatre, Moscow, on February 20th/March 4th, 1877, for the benefit of a *danseuse* called Karparkova; the choreography was by Julius Reisinger. It would seem to have been a mediocre production, for about a third of the score was omitted and replaced by dances borrowed from other ballets, the costumes and settings were indifferent, and the conductor was almost an amateur. In view of these drawbacks, it is not surprising that the ballet was a failure. But Tschaikovsky felt this to be due not to defects in production, but to his own shortcomings as composer. Indeed, he promised to write a new score for a further production at St. Petersburg, but he died in 1893 without having realised this plan.

The death of Tschaikovsky having stimulated renewed interest in his work, Marius Petipa, the famous choreographer and director of the St. Petersburg branch of the Imperial Ballet, sent to Moscow for the original score of *LE LAC DES CYGNES.* He found the story so much to his taste and the music so inspiring that he submitted a request to the director of the Imperial Theatres that the ballet should be revived. The director agreed, but, as he wished to represent it in a proposed memorial performance of Tschaikovsky's work, and time was pressing, it was decided to produce the second act only.

Petipa sketched out the general style and character of the dances, and entrusted the actual choreography to his assistant, L. I. Ivanov. This second act was presented at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, on February 17/29, 1894. Almost a year later, on January 15/27, 1895, the ballet was performed in its entirety for the benefit of the Italian *ballerina,* Pierina Legnani. Here, again, Petipa roughed out the details and left their realisation to Ivanov. The ballet, with score intact, and with new choreography, achieved an outstanding success.

Since then it has formed part of the permanent repertory of most State companies, as well as that of several privately owned organisations. In the latter case it is more usual for the second act only to be given, since this is practically all dancing and includes a large proportion of the best numbers, while the choreography of this section is remarkable for its sustained quality. In England, the first full length version of *LE LAC DES CYGNES* was presented by the Vic-Wells Ballet. This important revival, with choreography reconstructed by N. Sergeyev, was performed at the Sadlers Wells Theatre, London, on November 20th, 1934, with Markova as Odette-Odile, and Helpmann as Prince Siegfried.

What is the story of this ballet, whose action takes place in mediæval Germany?

Act I.—In the grounds of his castle, Prince Siegfried is giving a birthday feast to his friends. It is interrupted by the arrival of his mother, who, upbraiding him for the company he keeps, reminds him that on the morrow he must choose a bride. The festivities end with a general dance, when the passing overhead of a flight of swans inspires the Prince and his companions to form an evening hunting-party.

Act II.—A misty lake-side. A group of swans, led by one bearing a crown on her head, glide over the water. As the swans reach the bank they become changed into beautiful young women. One of the Prince's friends enters the glade and, seeing the swans, calls to his companions to shoot them. Siegfried is the first to arrive. But the swan-girls and their leader, Odette, entreat the Prince not to loose his crossbow. She explains that she is in the power of a magician who assumes the shape of an owl, and can only return to her natural form between midnight and dawn, and that the spell cannot be broken until she is loved by one who has never loved before. The Prince, already in love with Odette, offers to kill the enchanter, but she tells him that the magician, whose name is Rotbart, will only die when someone gives his life for her. With the dawn, Odette and her companions are changed back into swans, enter the water, and glide away.

Act III.—The ballroom of the Prince's castle. Noble guests present their daughters as prospective brides, but Siegfried finds none to his taste. Then Rotbart, who has assumed human form, enters with his daughter, Odile, whom he has caused exactly to resemble Odette. The Prince, persuaded that Odile is Odette, asks for her hand in marriage, which is accorded. He does not see Odette beating her wings at the window in vain endeavour to warn him. At the same moment, the room is plunged into darkness, and Rotbart and Odette disappear. Too late, the Prince realises that he has been tricked.

Act IV.—At the lake-side, Odette is in despair, and tells her companions that she cannot live without the Prince. Siegfried appears and implores her forgiveness, which she grants, but, being unable to live without each other, they drown themselves in the lake. This mutual sacrifice for an ideal breaks the spell, the magician dies, and the lovers are reunited.

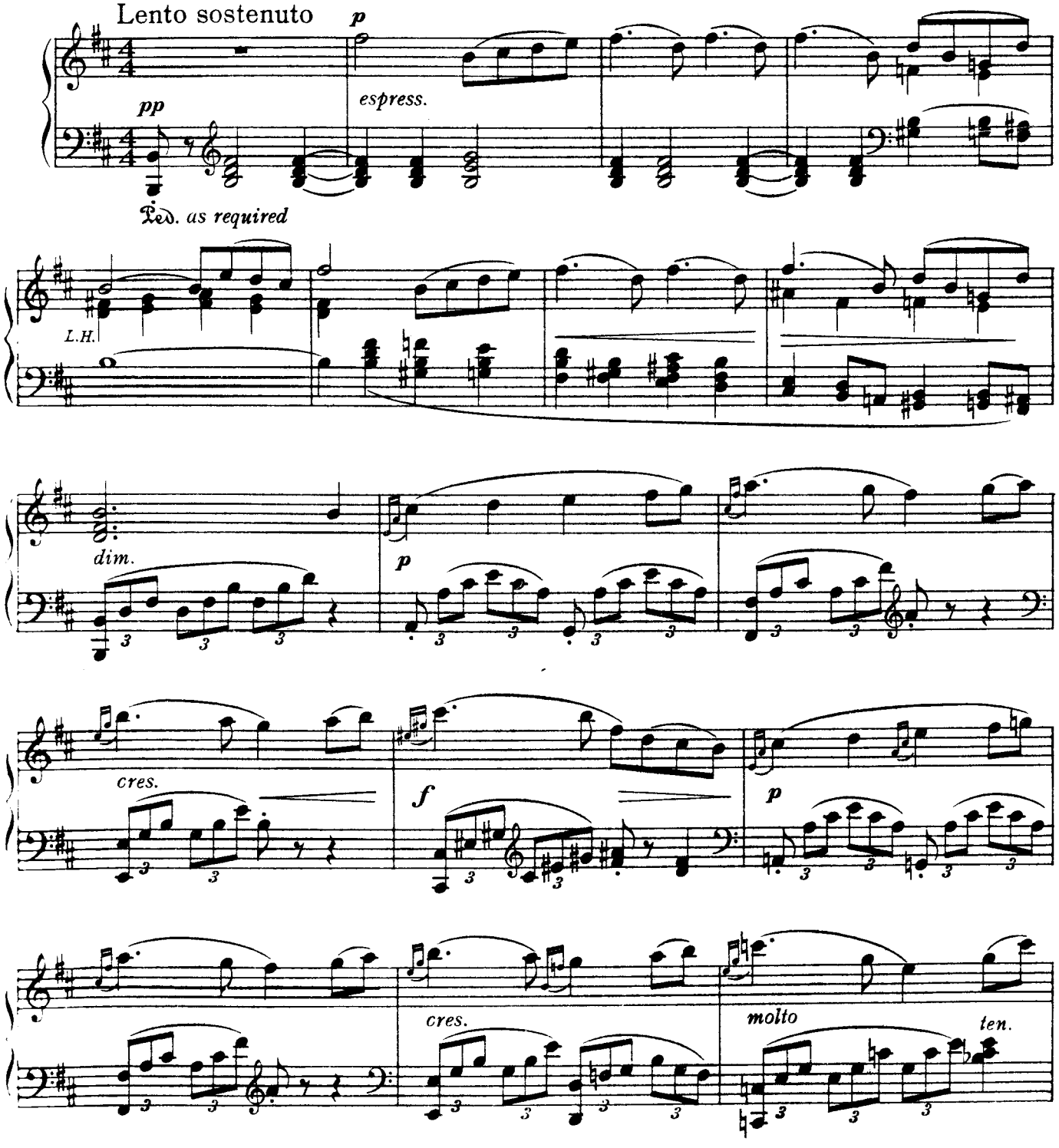
When, owing to certain companies being on tour, it is not possible to see a particular ballet, it is no small consolation to have the music of it, for the playing of particular melodies, thanks to their associations, releases all those charming visions which the memory of past performances has made captive. But the music of *LE LAC DE CYGNES* is hard to come by nowadays. For this reason alone, lovers of ballet will be grateful to the publishers of this selection, whose enterprise has made available so many well-known themes at a price within the reach of all.

Cyril W. Beaumont

I
Scene
(Approach of the Swans)

Arranged by
GRANVILLE BANTOCK

Music by
TSCHAIKOWSKY



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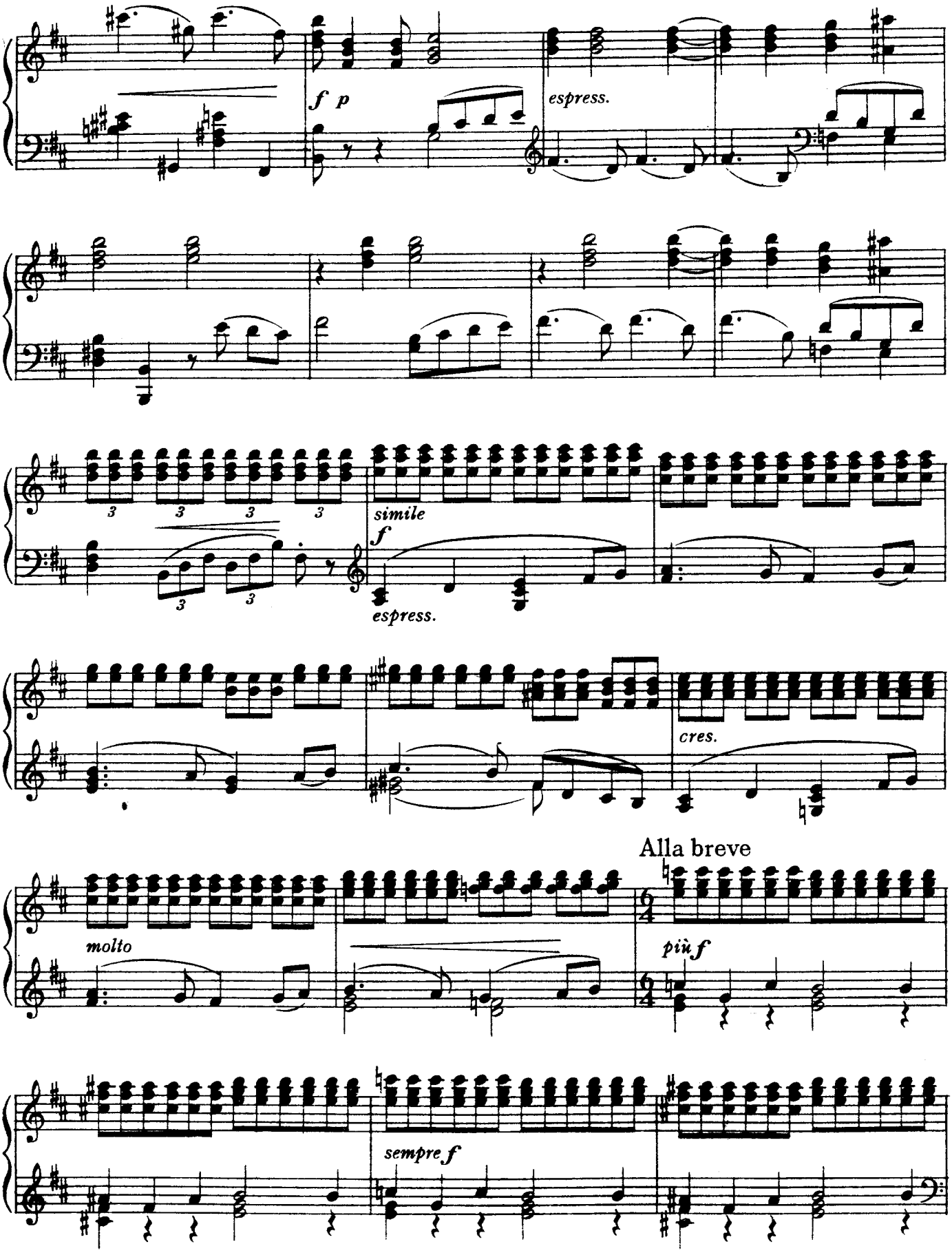
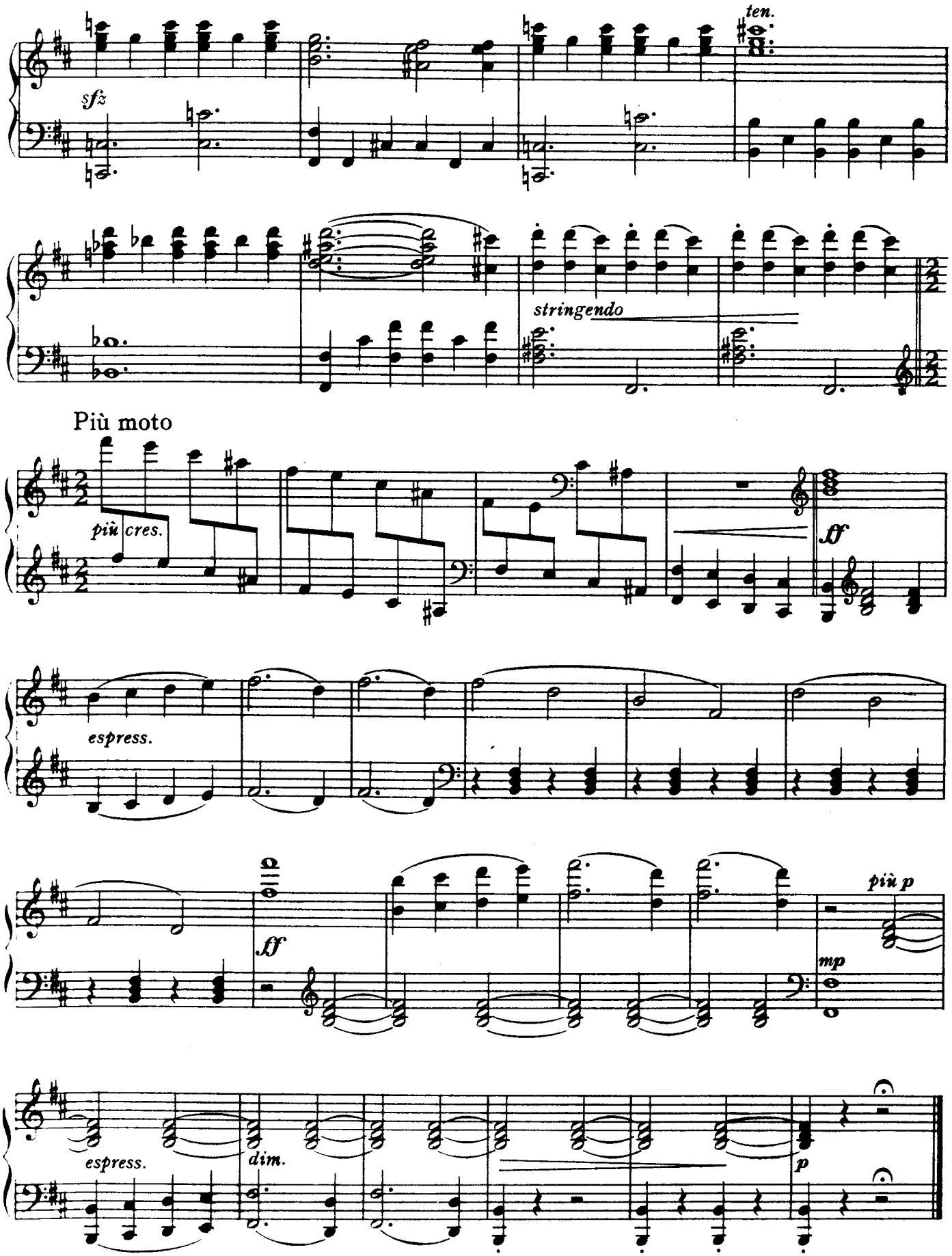
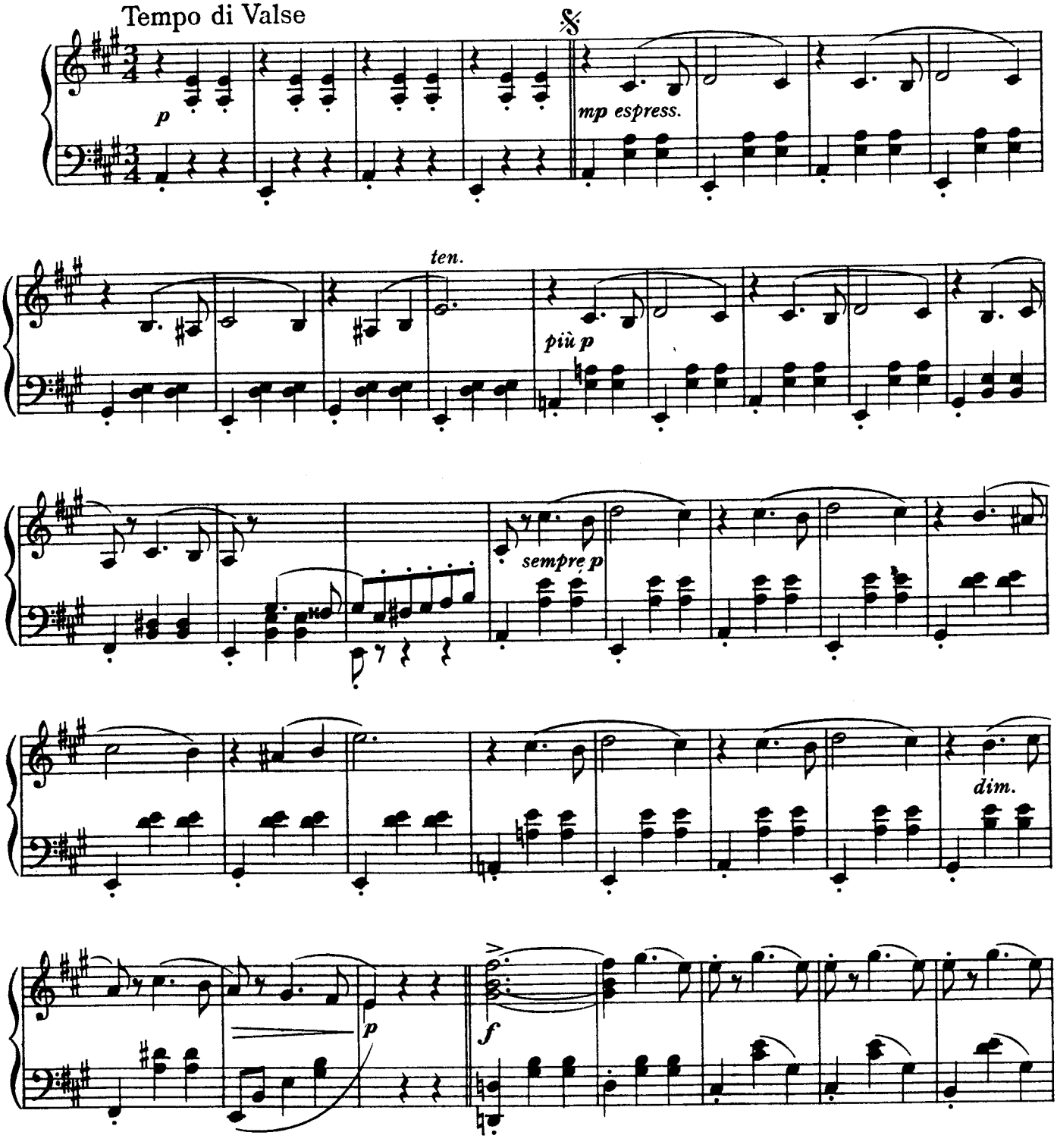
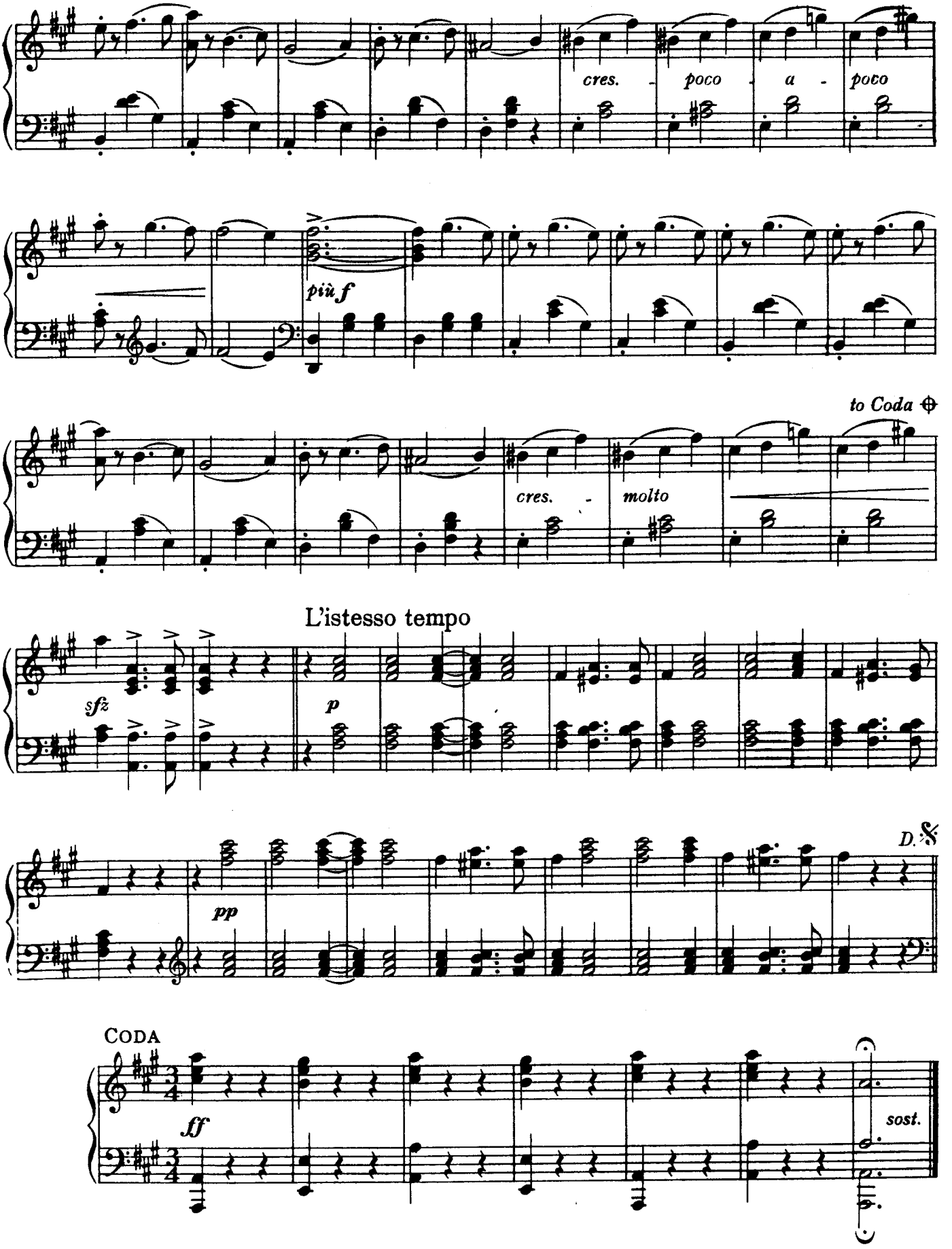

f p
espress.
3
3
3
3
simile
f
espress.
cres.
Alla breve
molto
più f
sempre f


ten.
sfz
stringendo
Più moto
più cres.
ff
espress.
ff
più p
mp
espress.
dim.
p

II
Waltz
(Conclusion of Act I.)

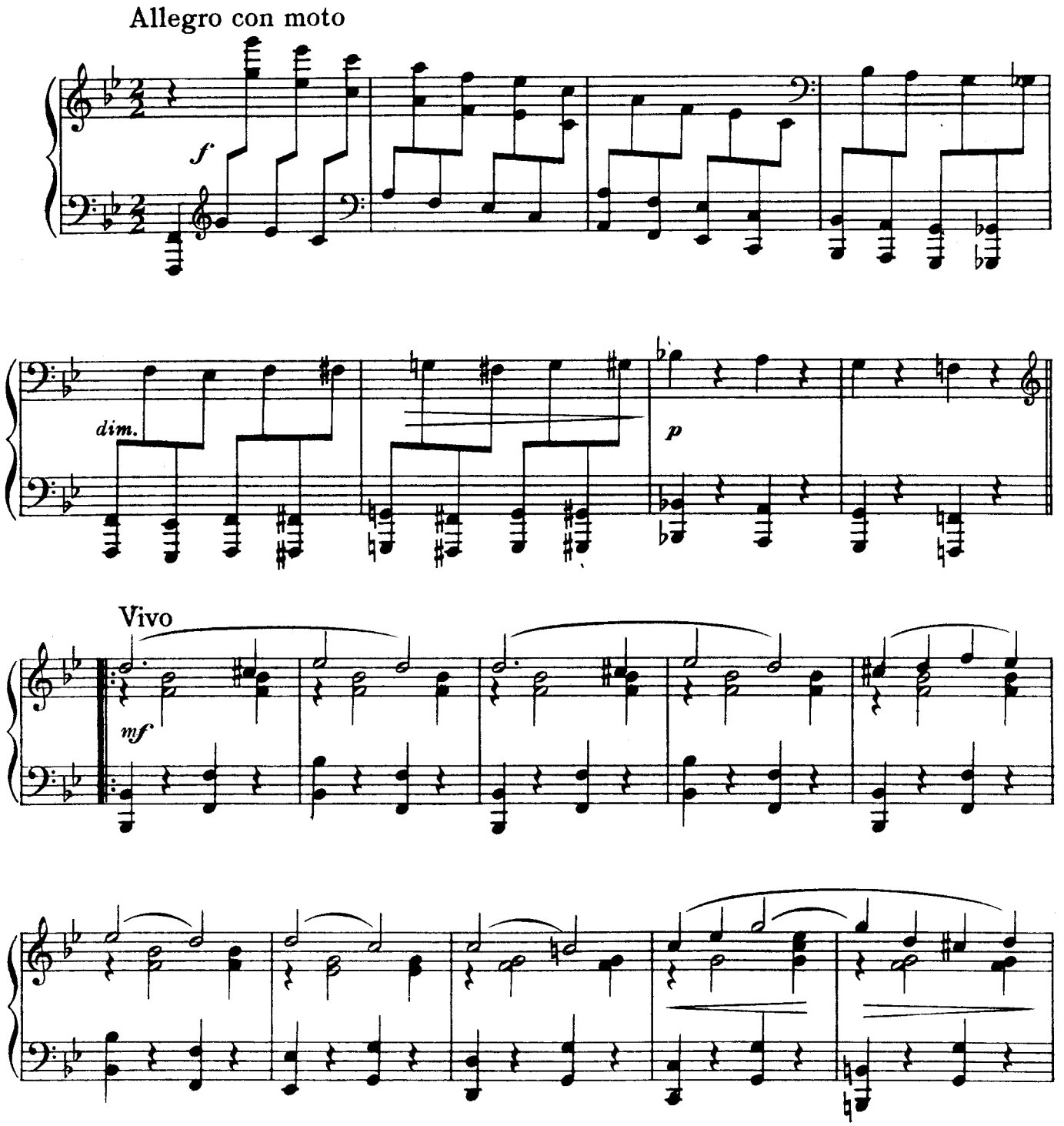


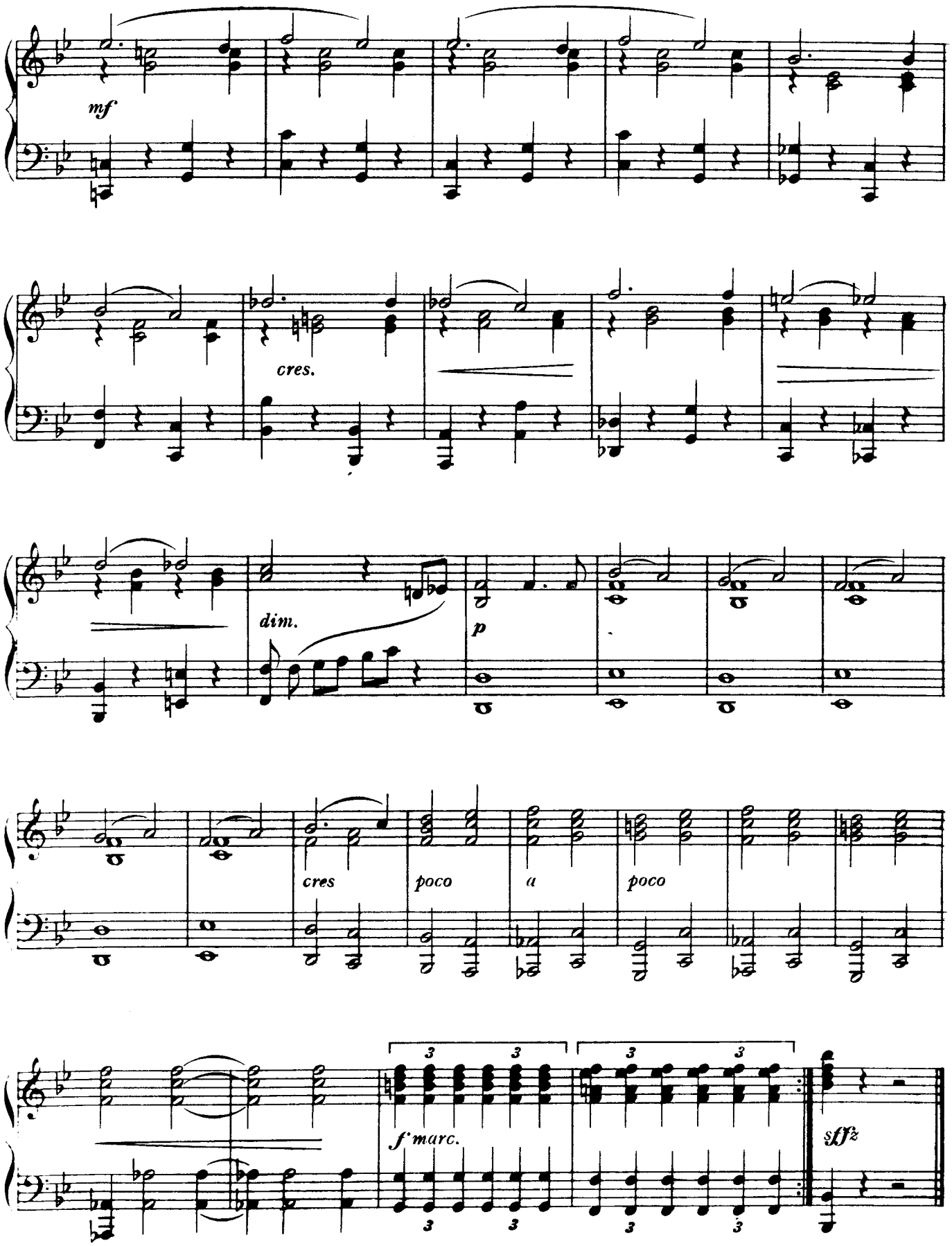

cres. - poco - a - poco
più f
to Coda
cres. - molto
L'istesso tempo
sfz
p
pp
D. ♋
CODA
ff
sost.

III

Scene

(Act II. Odette tells Siegfried of her enchantment)

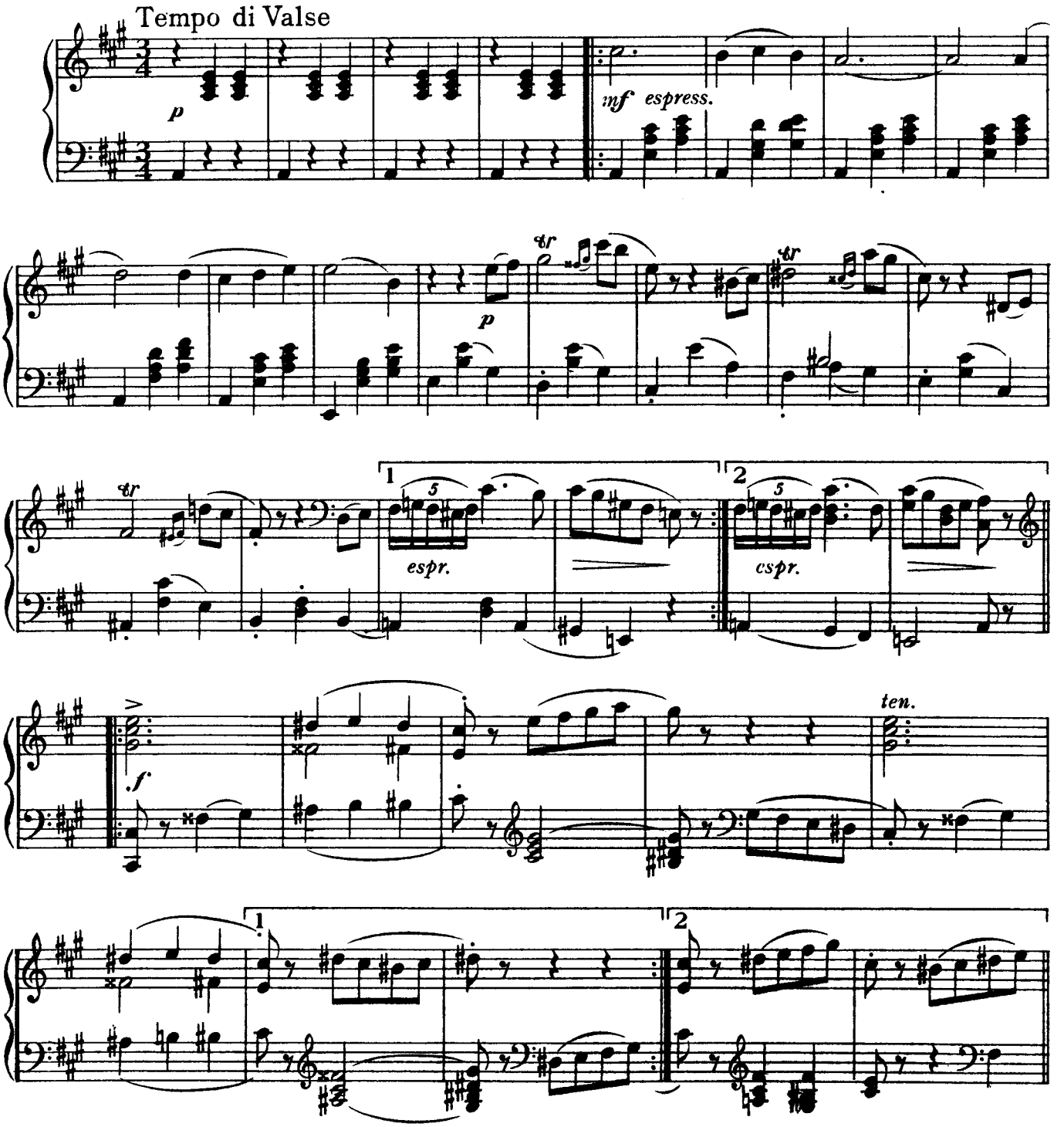


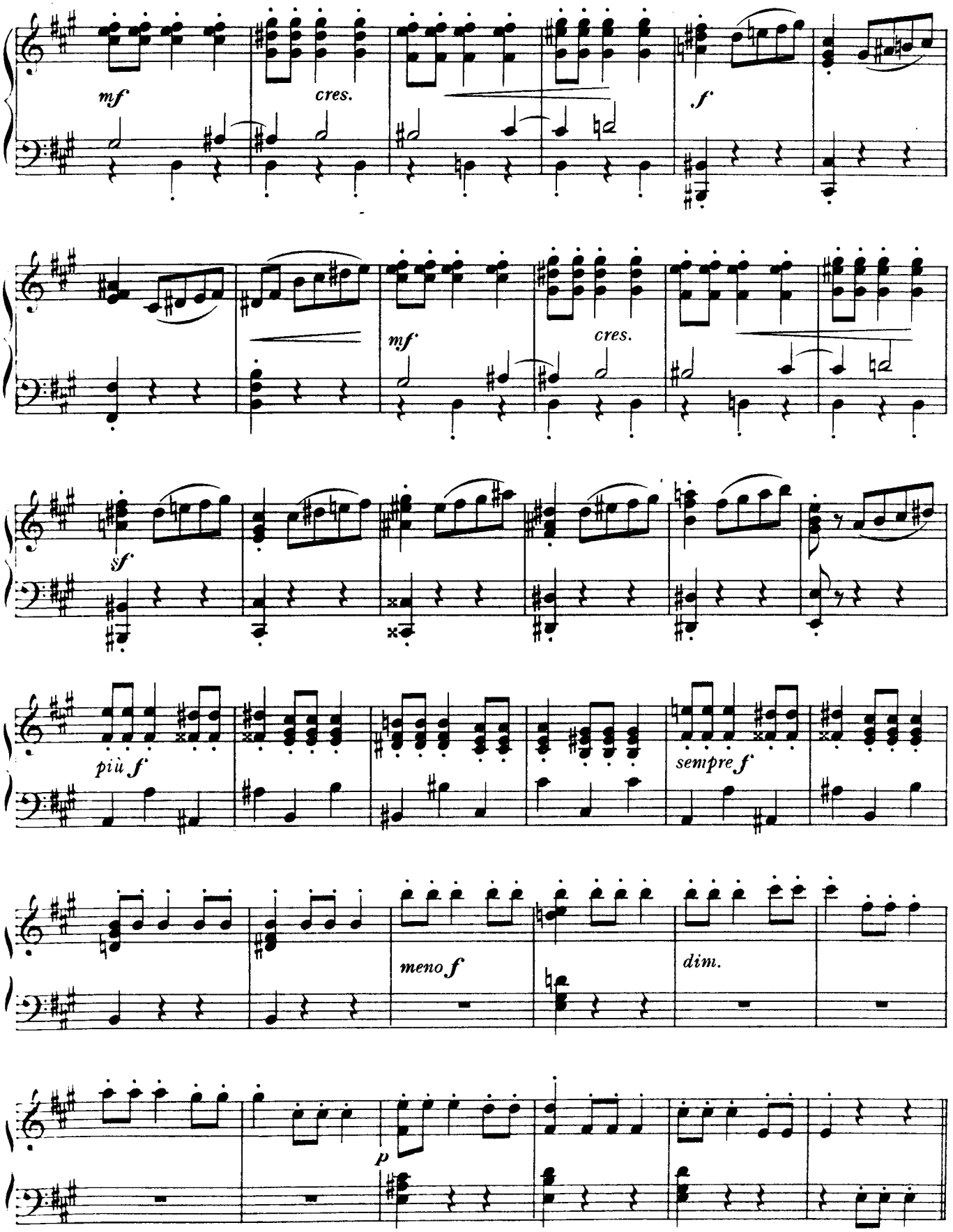

mf
cres.
dim.
p
cres
poco
a
poco
f marc.
sffz

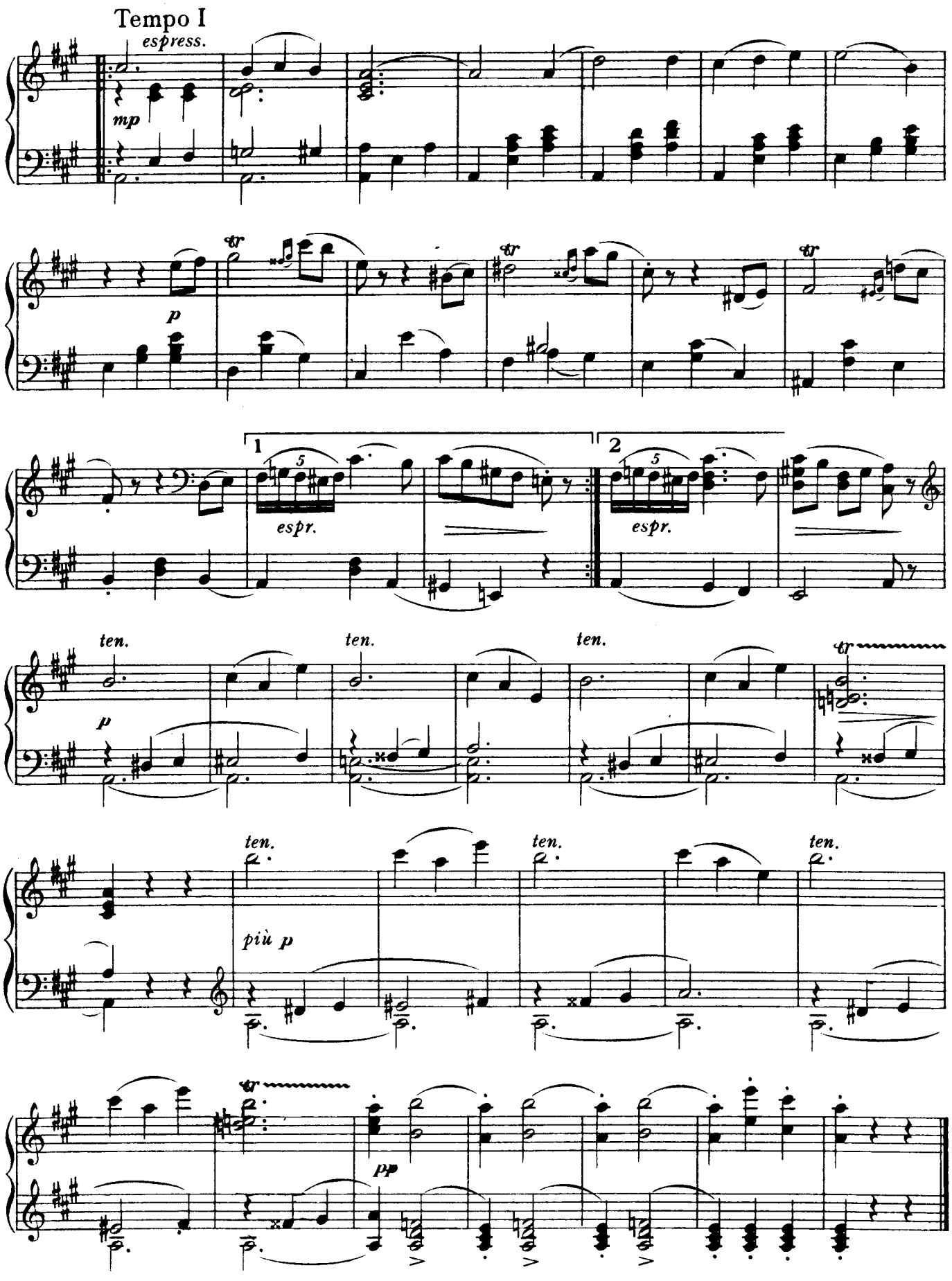
IV

Dance of the Swans

(Act II.)



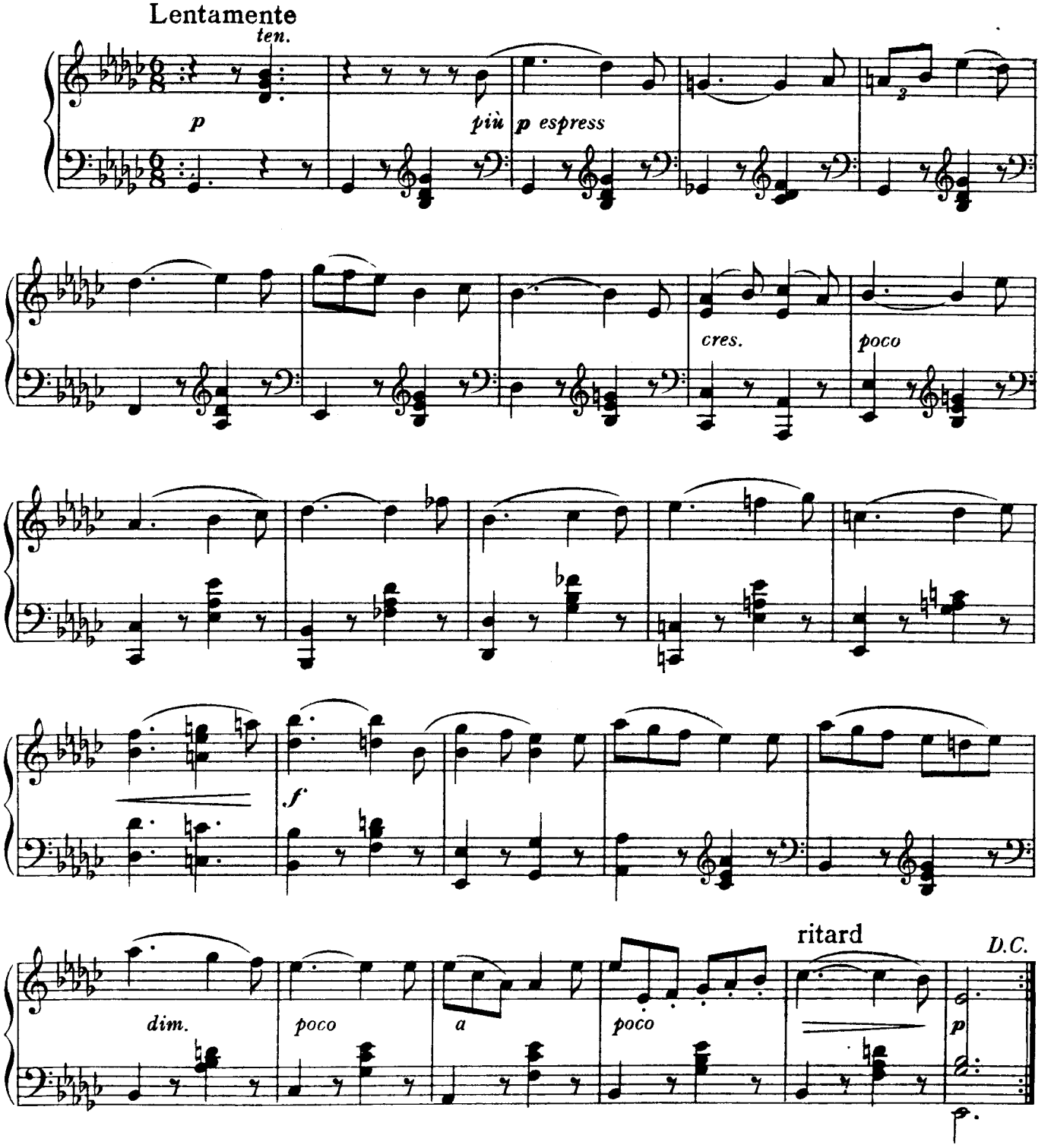

mf
cres.
f
mf
cres.
sf
più f
sempre f
meno f
dim.
p


Tempo I
espress.
mp
p
1
espr.
2
espr.
ten.
ten.
ten.
p
ten.
ten.
ten.
più p
pp

V

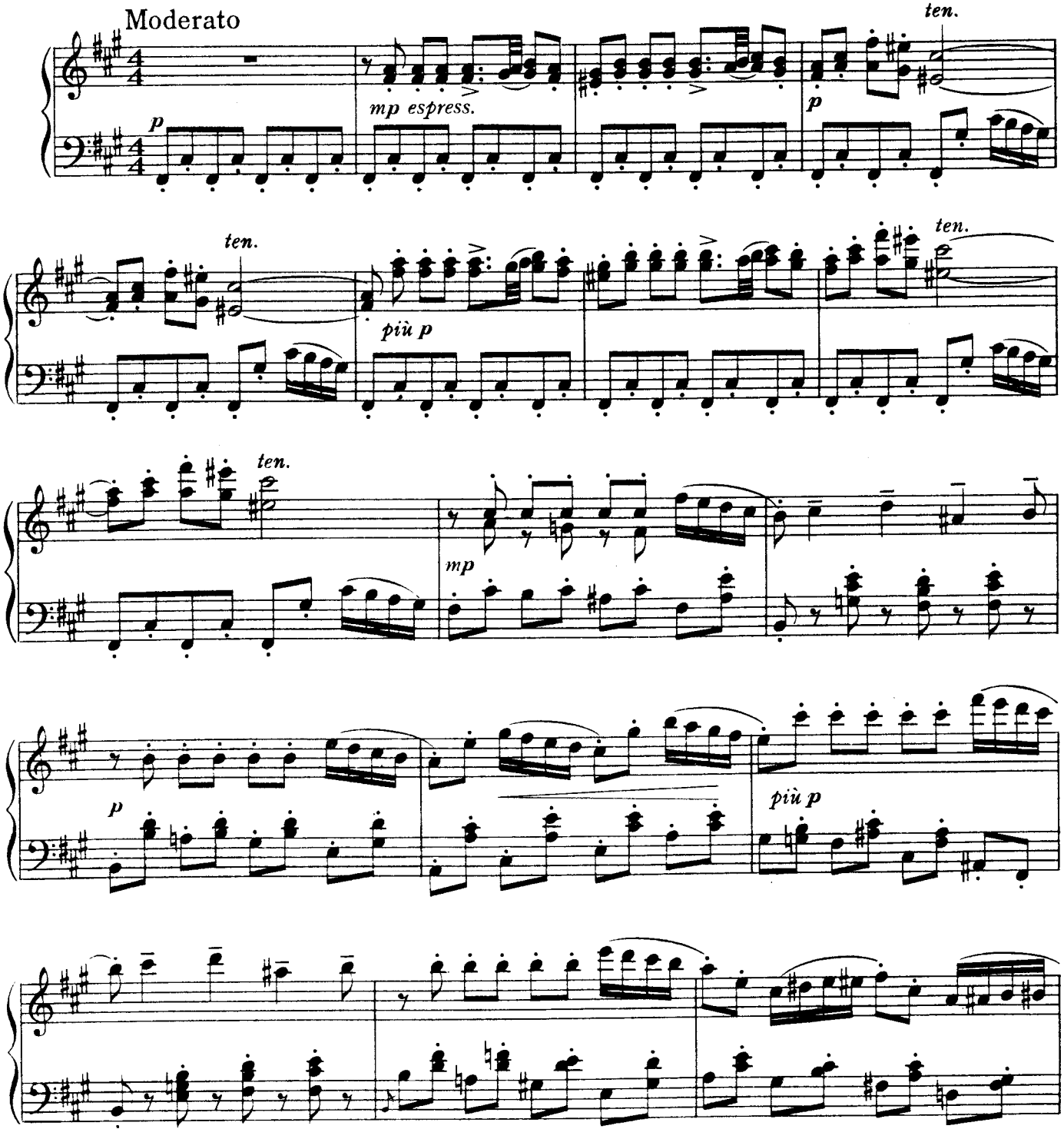
Pas de Deux

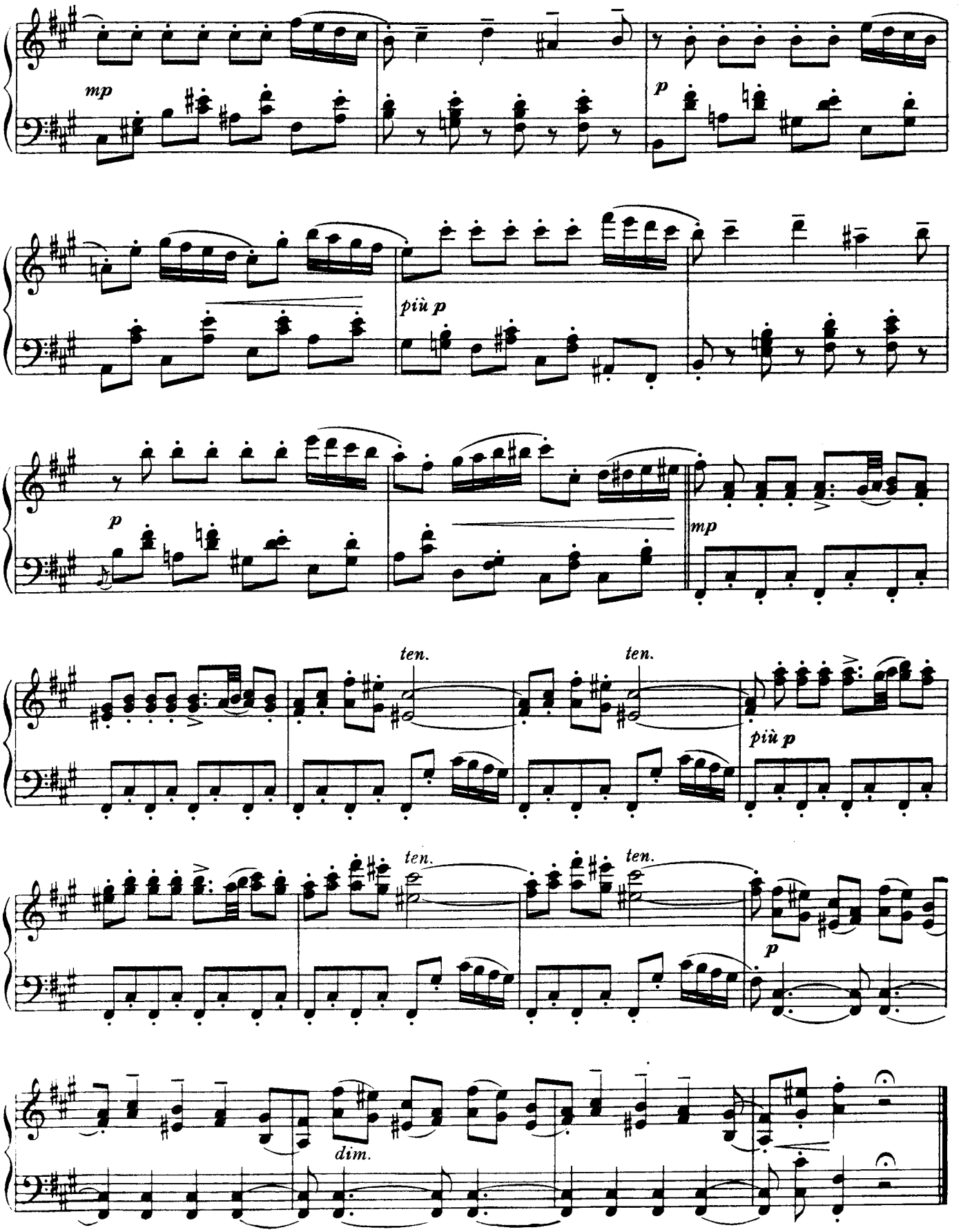
(Act II. Odette and Siegfried)



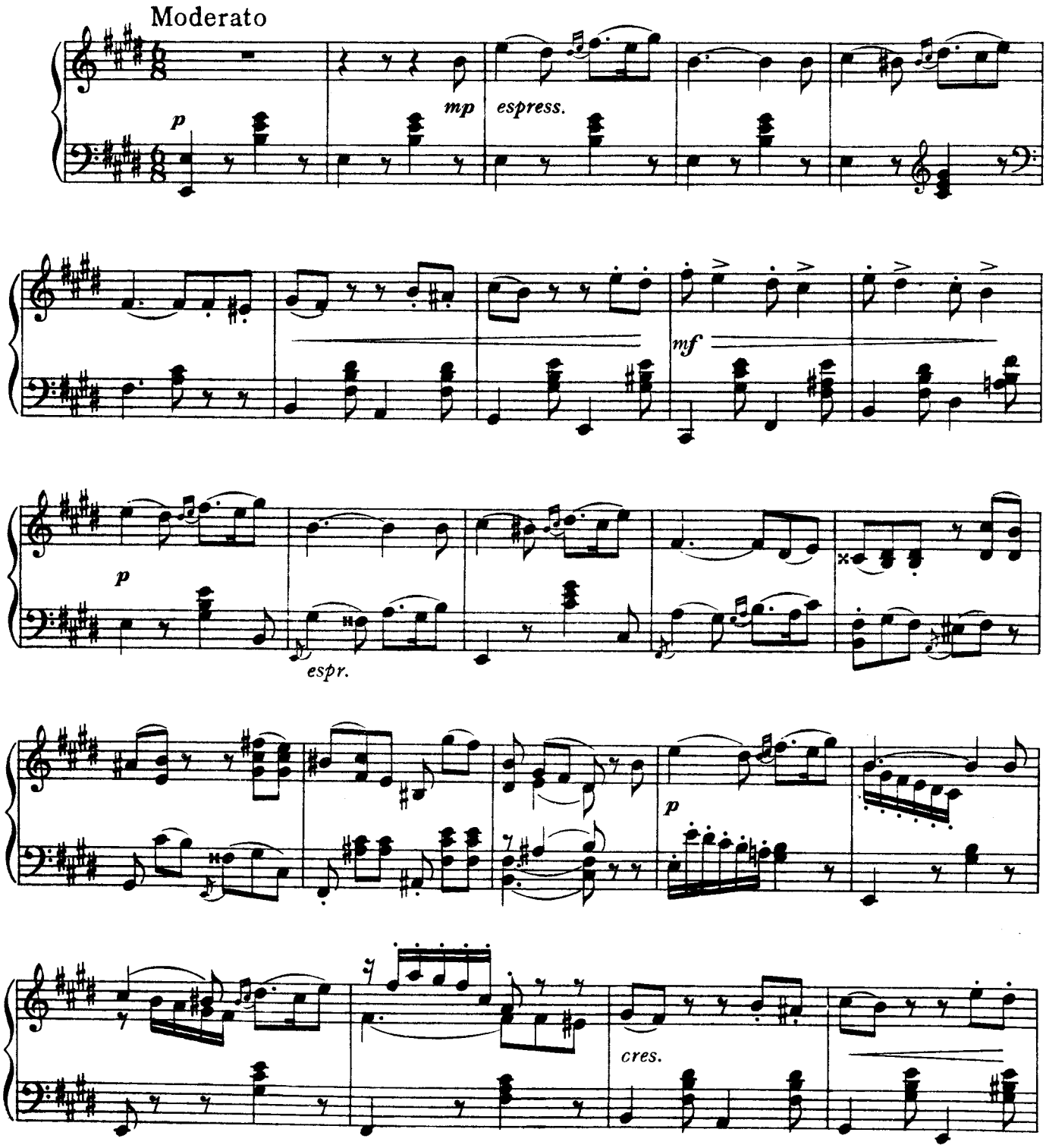
VI
Dance of the Cygnets

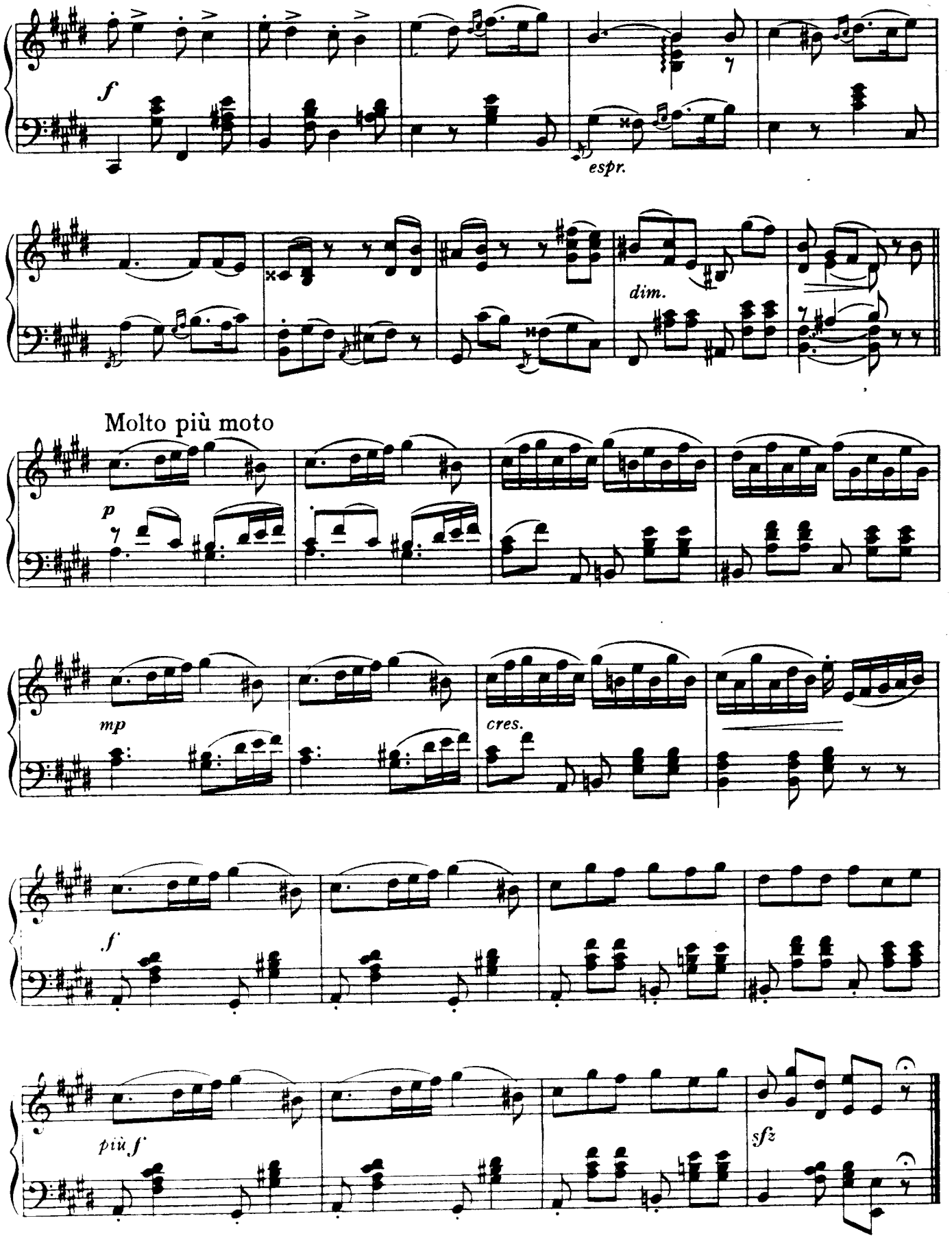
(Act II. Pas de Quatre)




mp
p
più p
p
mp
ten.
ten.
più p
ten.
ten.
p
dim.

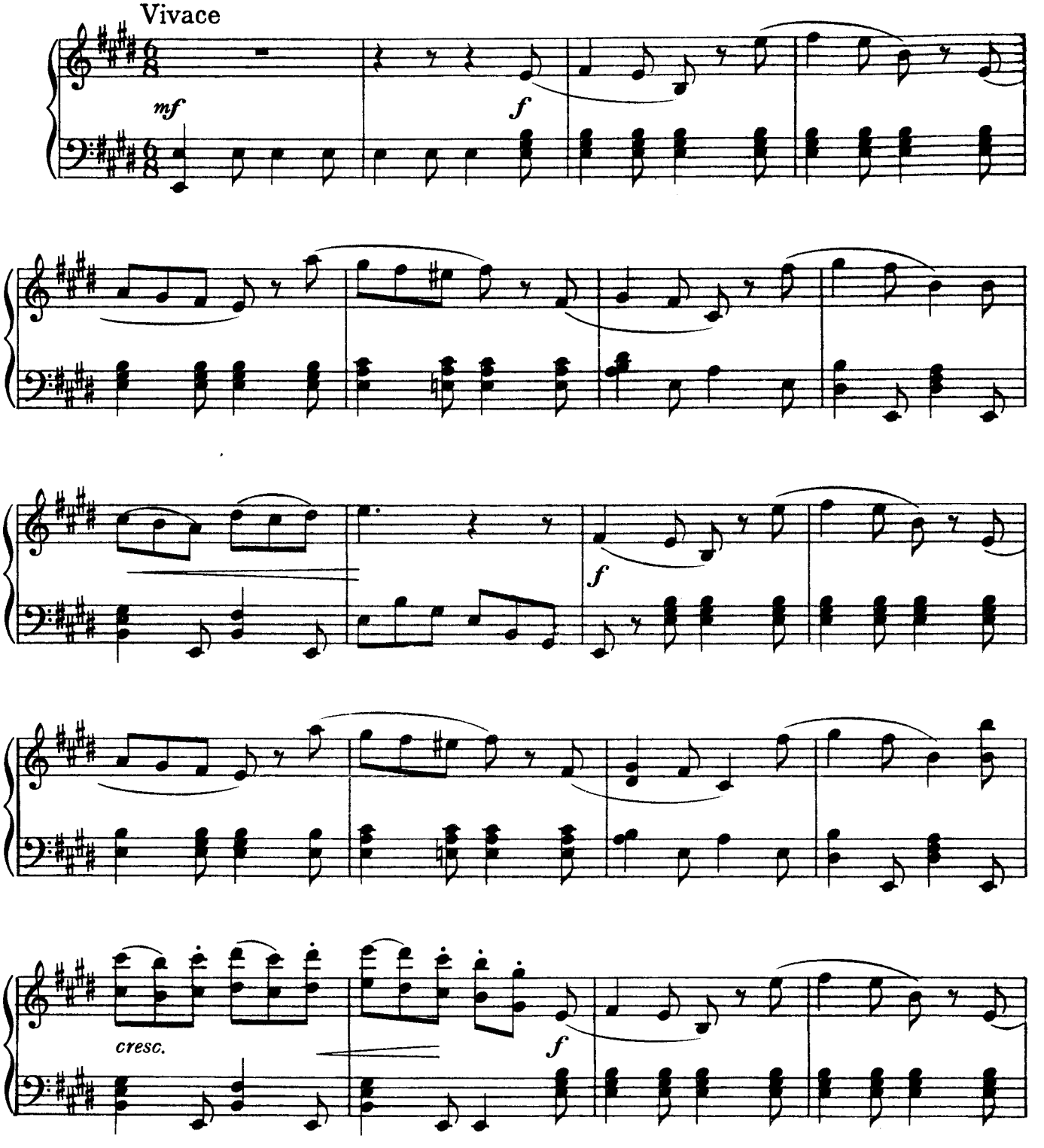
VII
Pas Seul
(Act II. Odette)

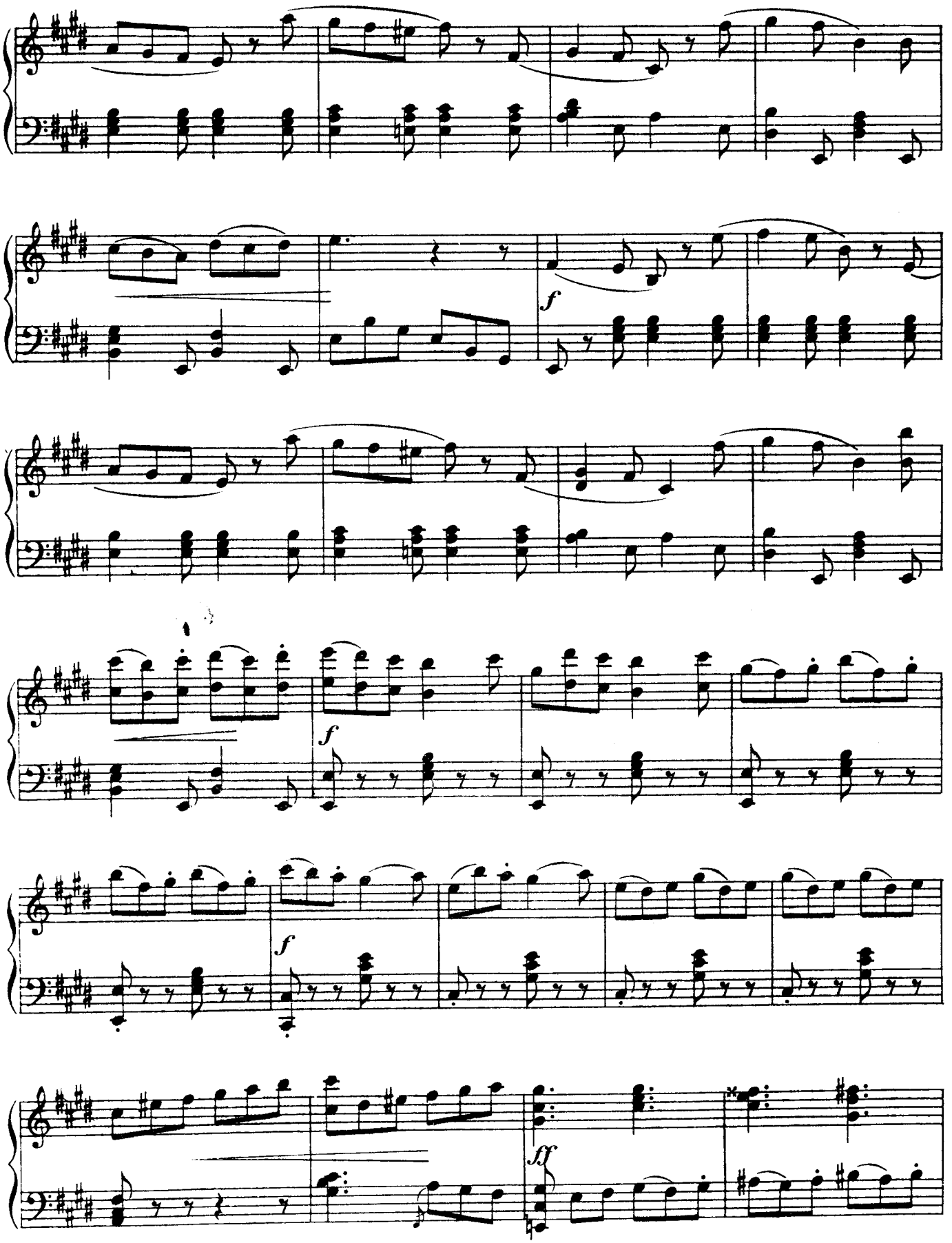


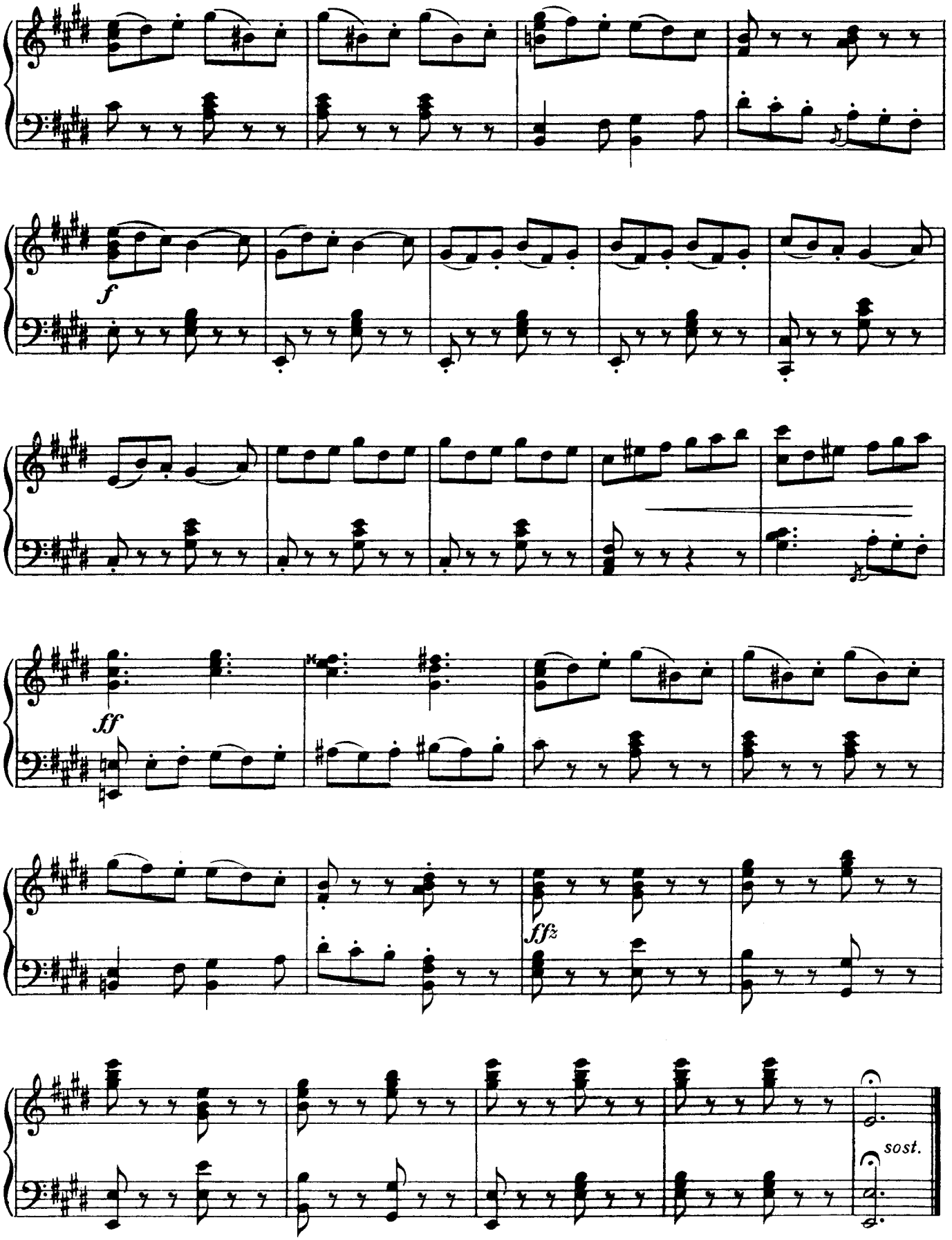

f
espr.
dim.
Molto più moto
p
mp
cres.
f
più f
sfz

VIII
Coda

(Act II. Ensemble)

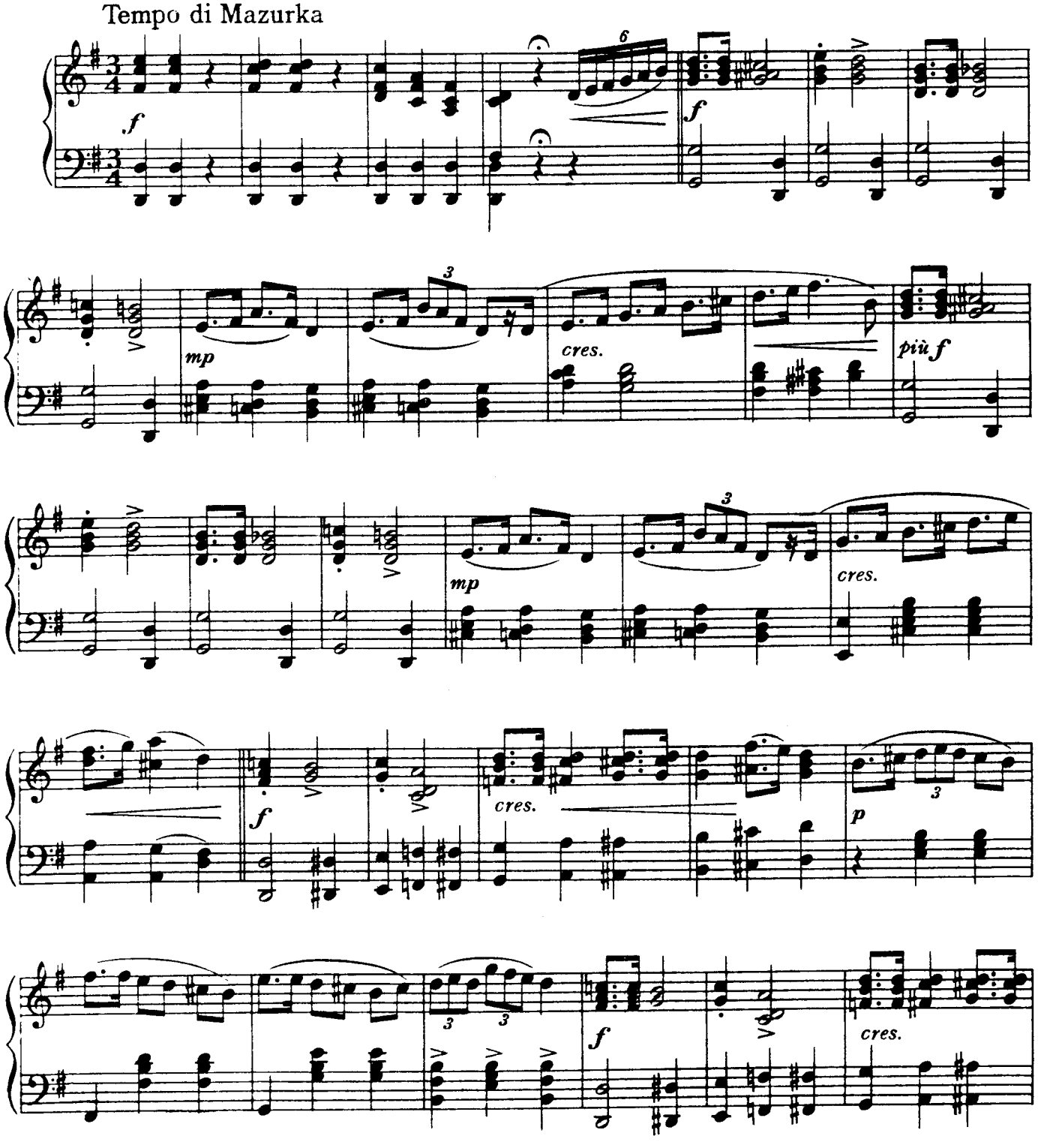


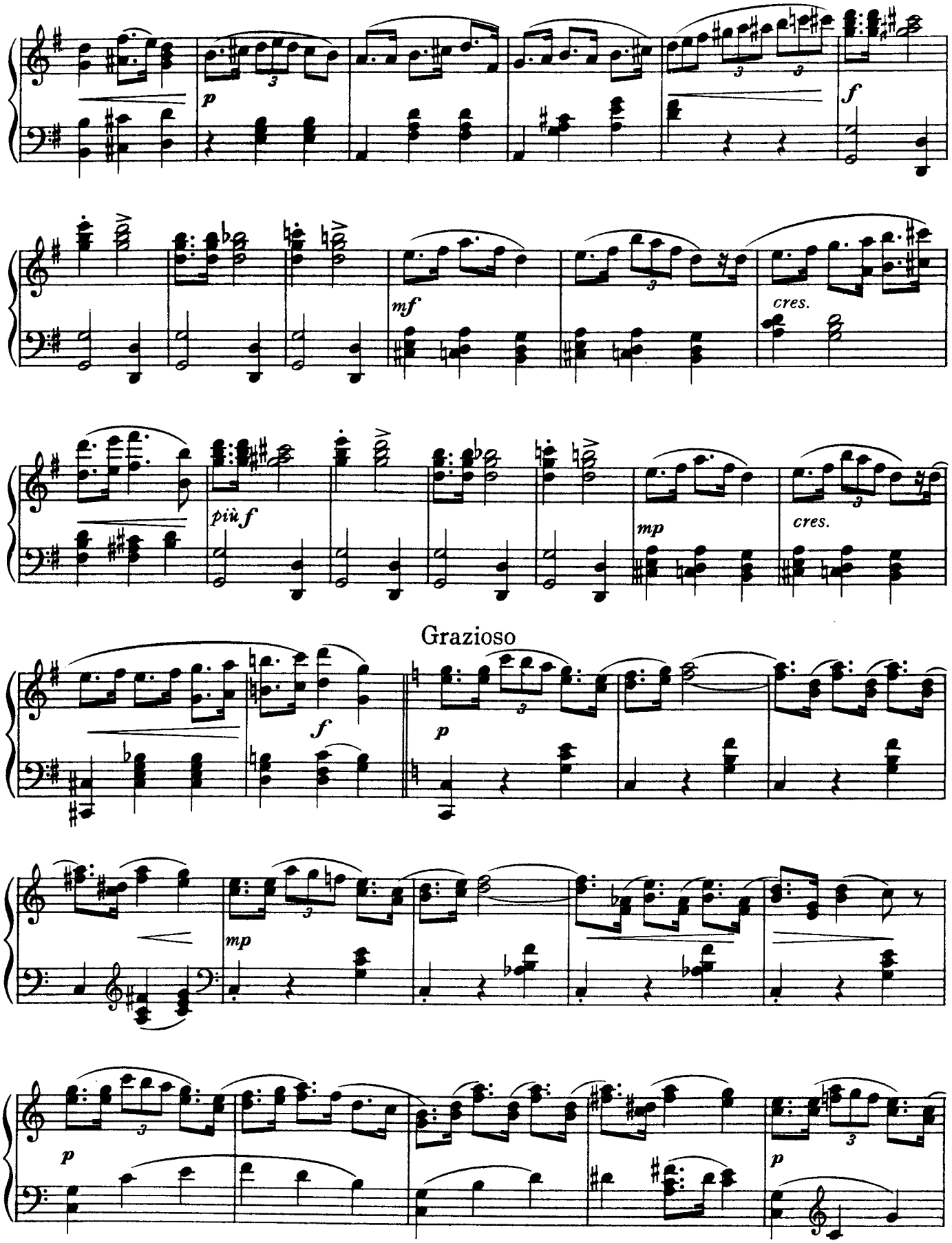

f
f
f
ff

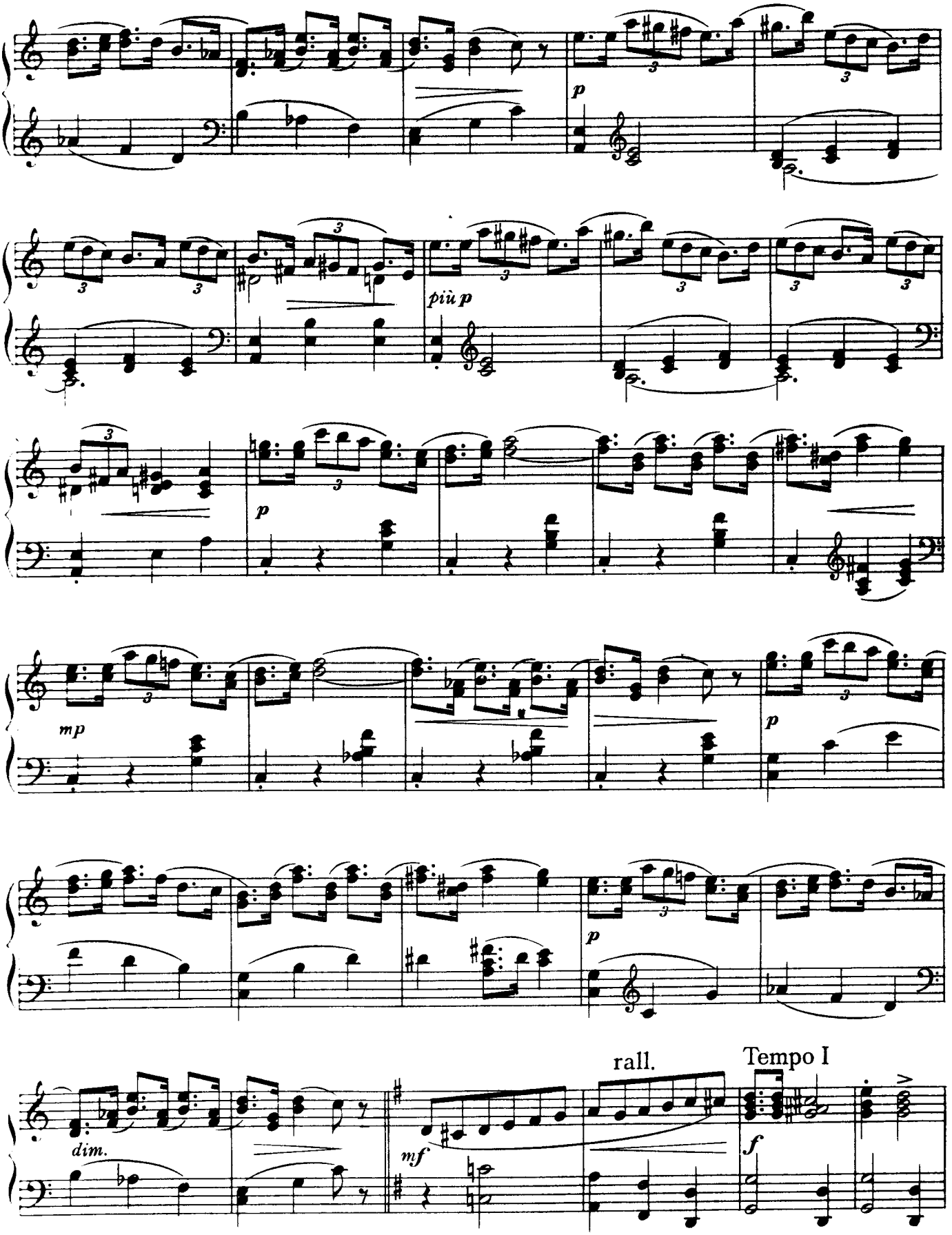

f
ff
ffz
sost.

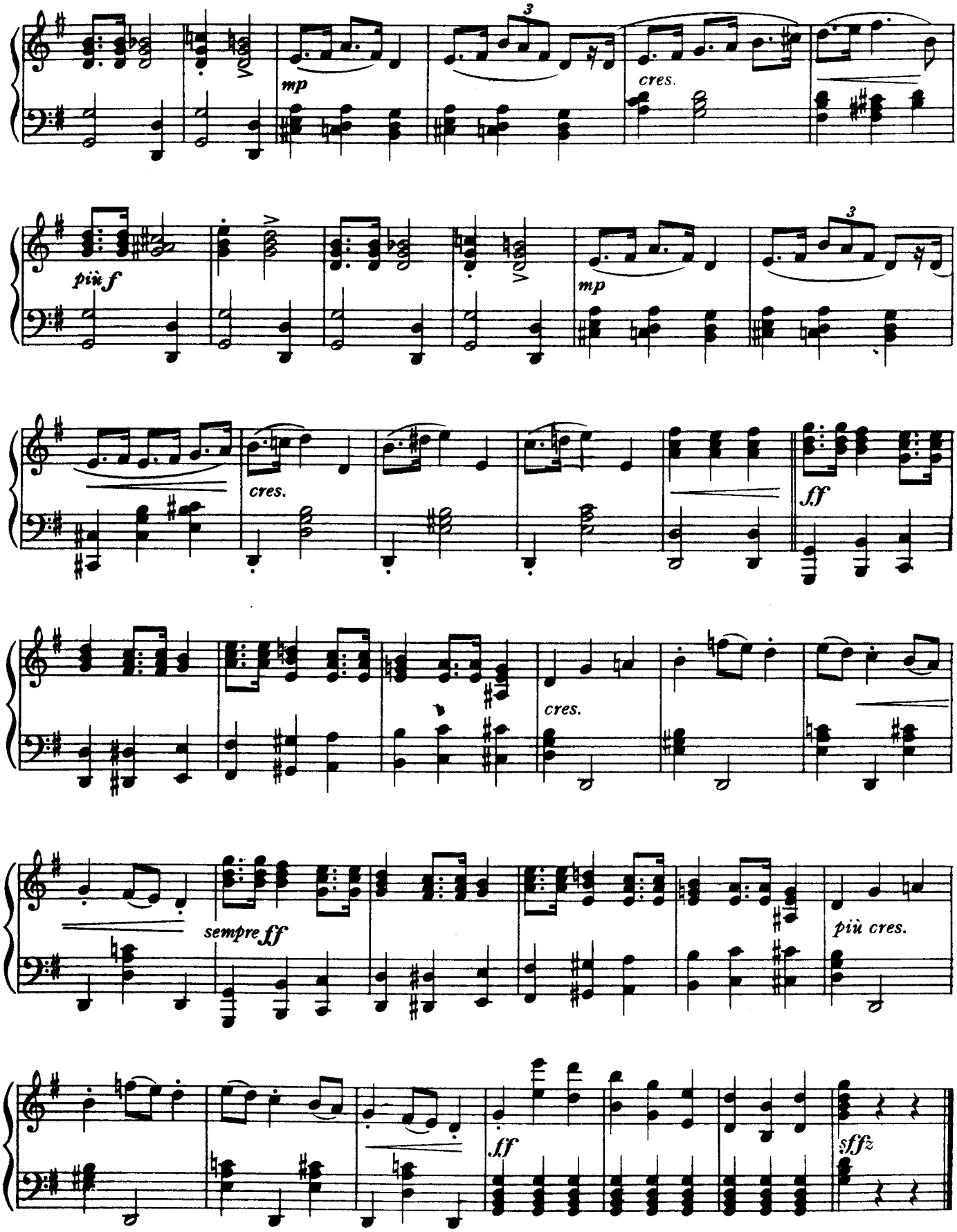
IX
Mazurka
(Act III.)

Tempo di Mazurka




p
f
mf
cres.
più f
mp
cres.
Grazioso
f
p
mp
p
p


p
più p
p
mp
p
p
dim.
mf
rall.
Tempo I
f

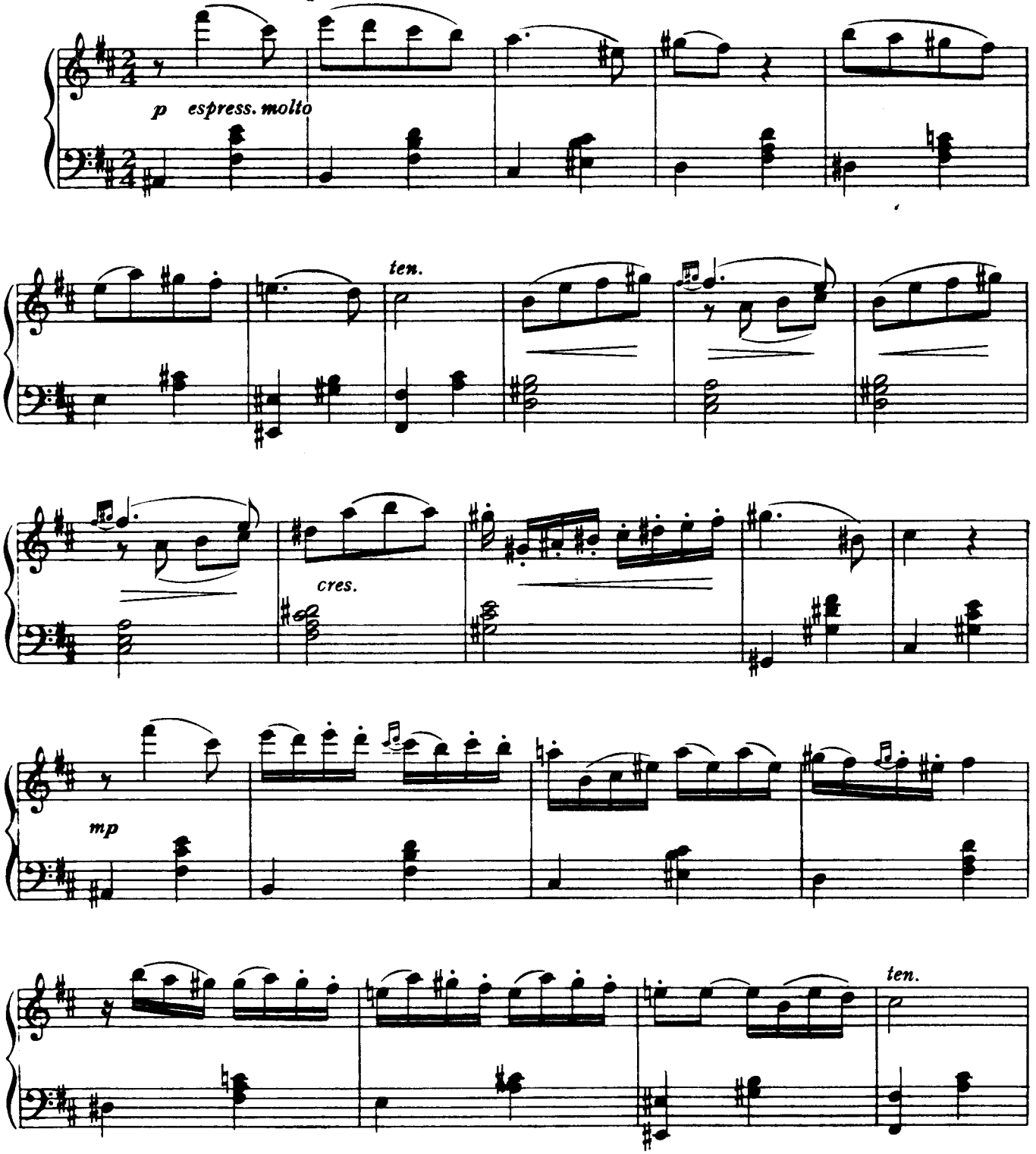

mp
cres.
più f
mp
cres.
ff
cres.
sempre ff
più cres.
ff
sff

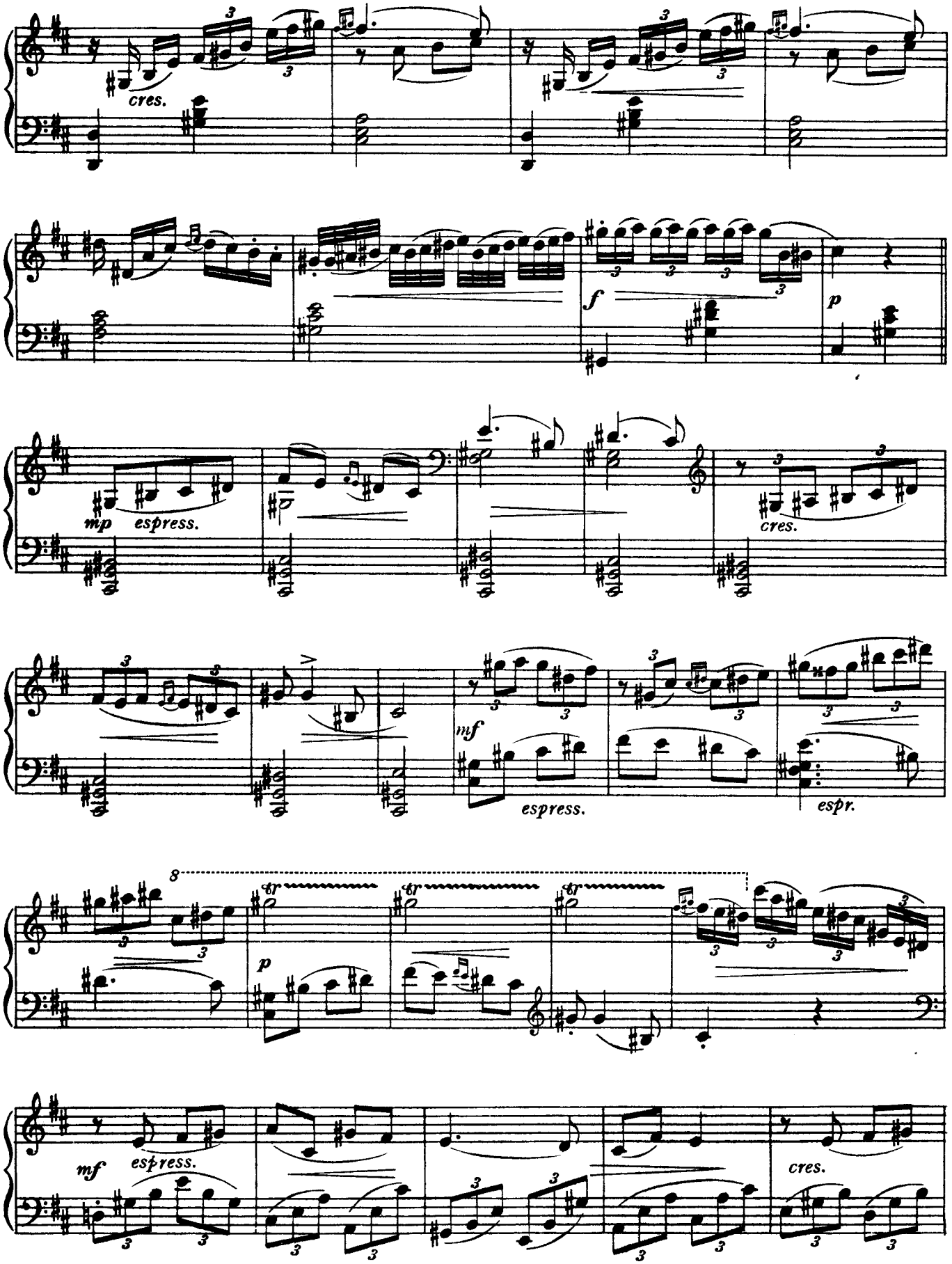
X

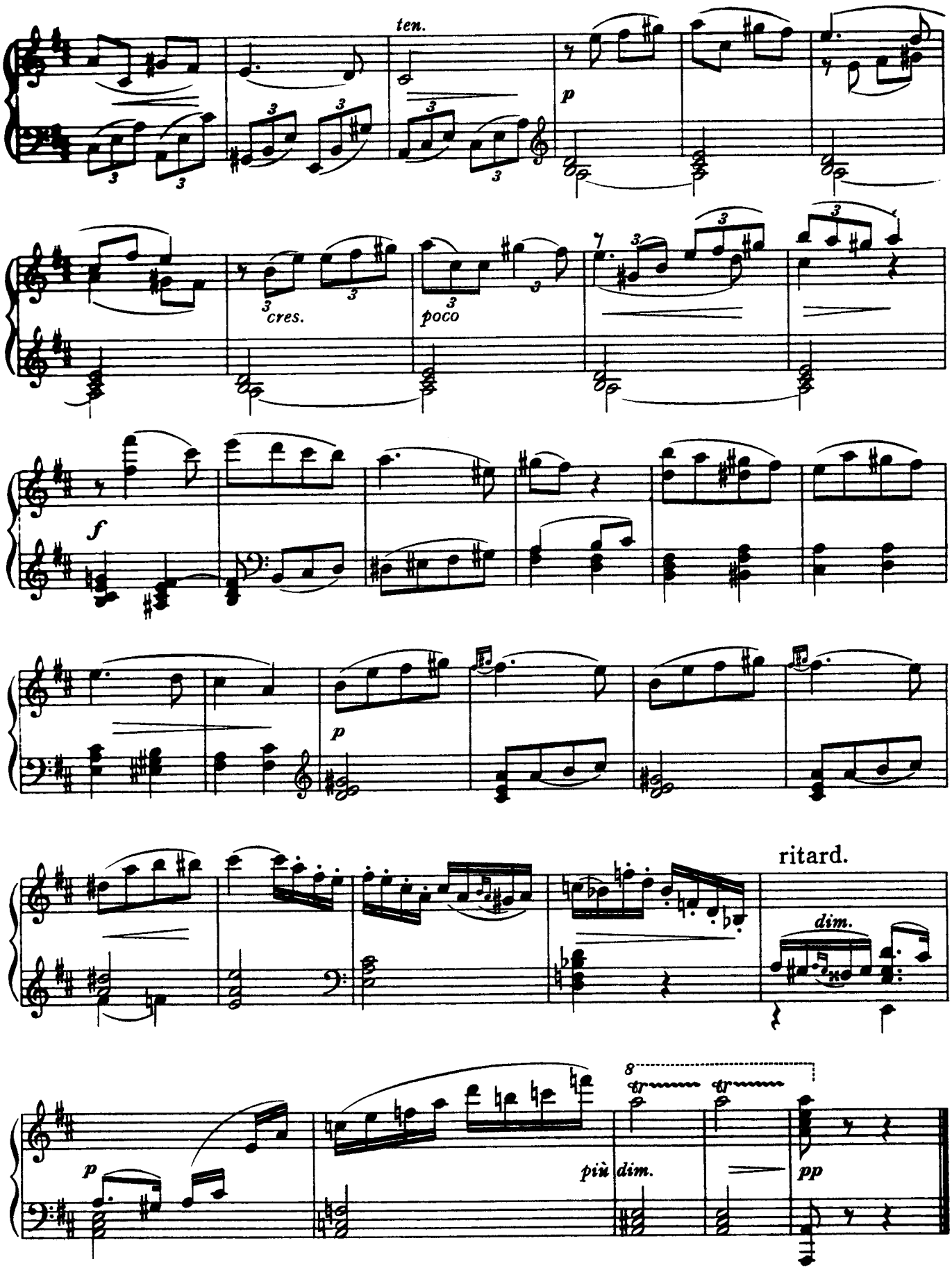
Grand Adage

(Act III. Odile and Siegfried)

Andante con espressione



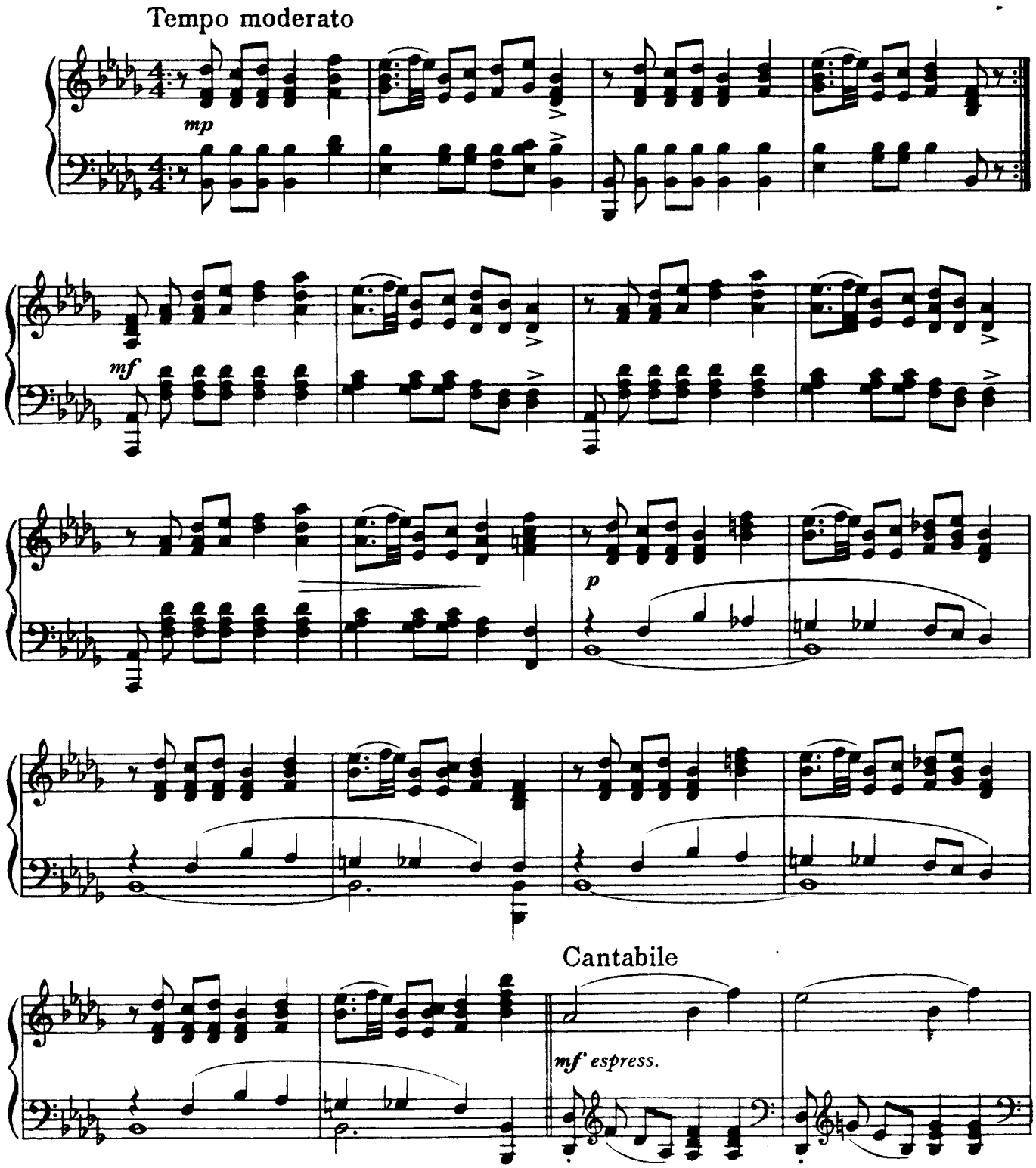

cres.
f
p
mp espress.
cres.
mf
espress.
espr.
8
tr
p
mf espress.
cres.

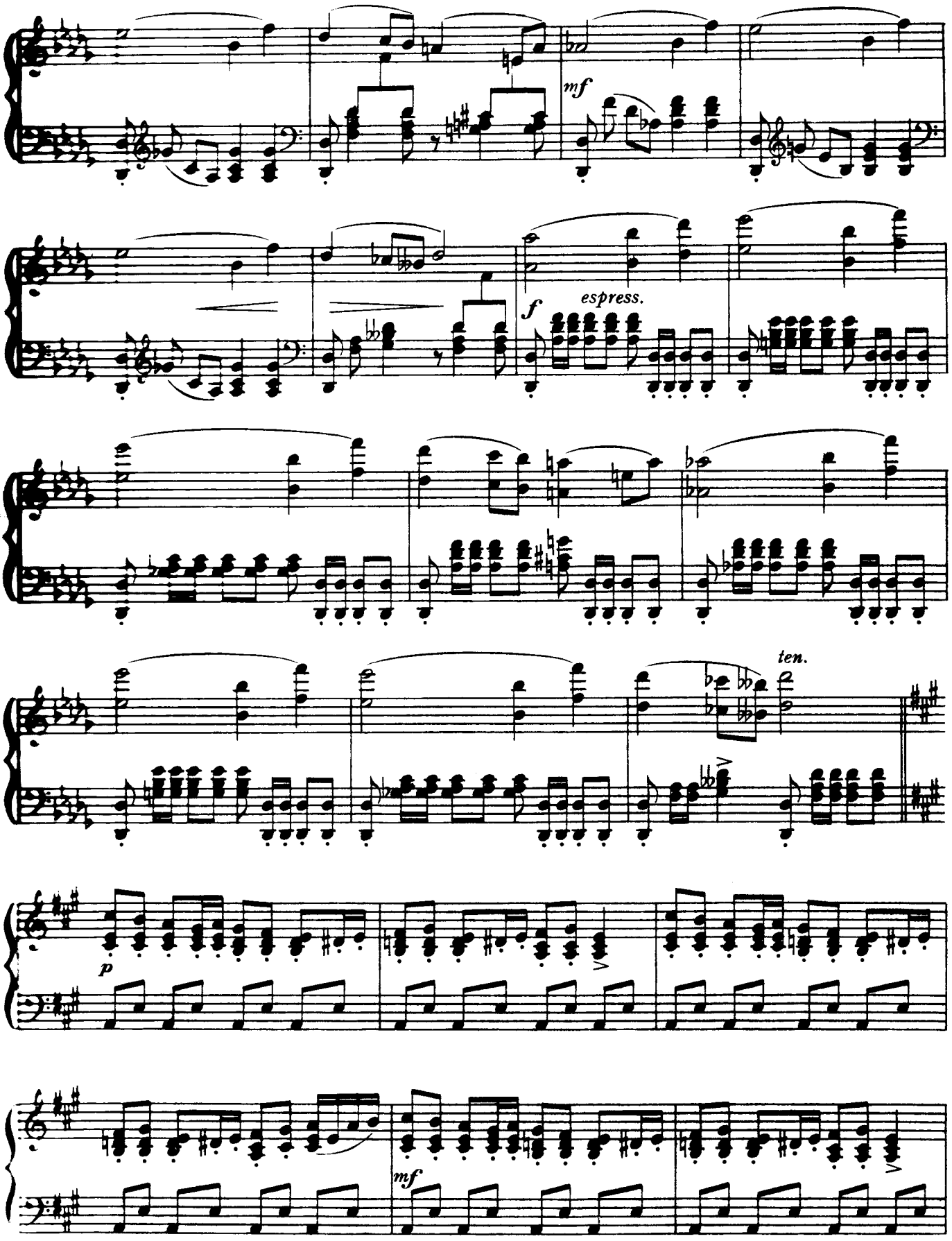

ten.
p
cres.
poco
f
p
ritard.
dim.
p
più dim.
pp

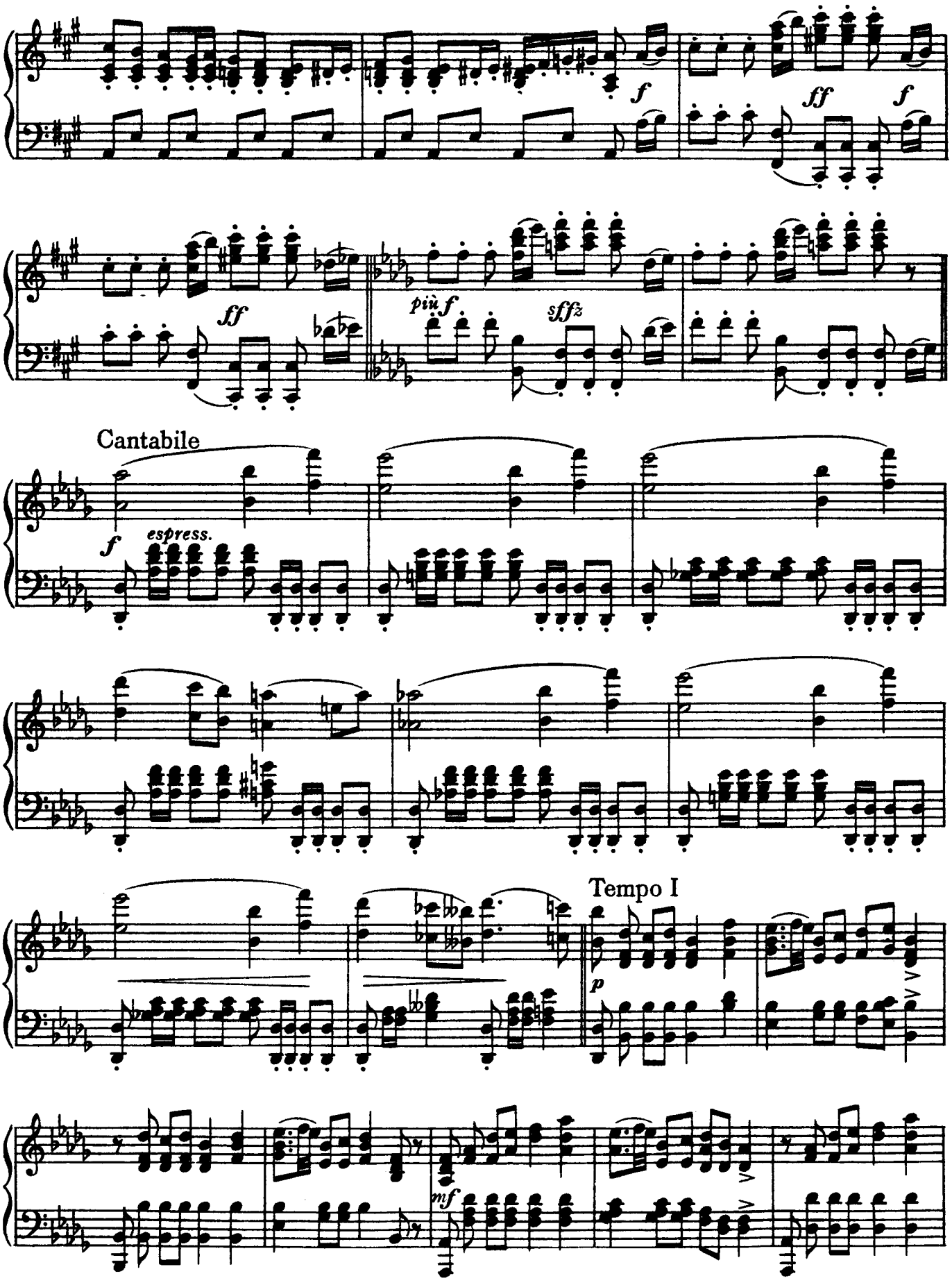
XI

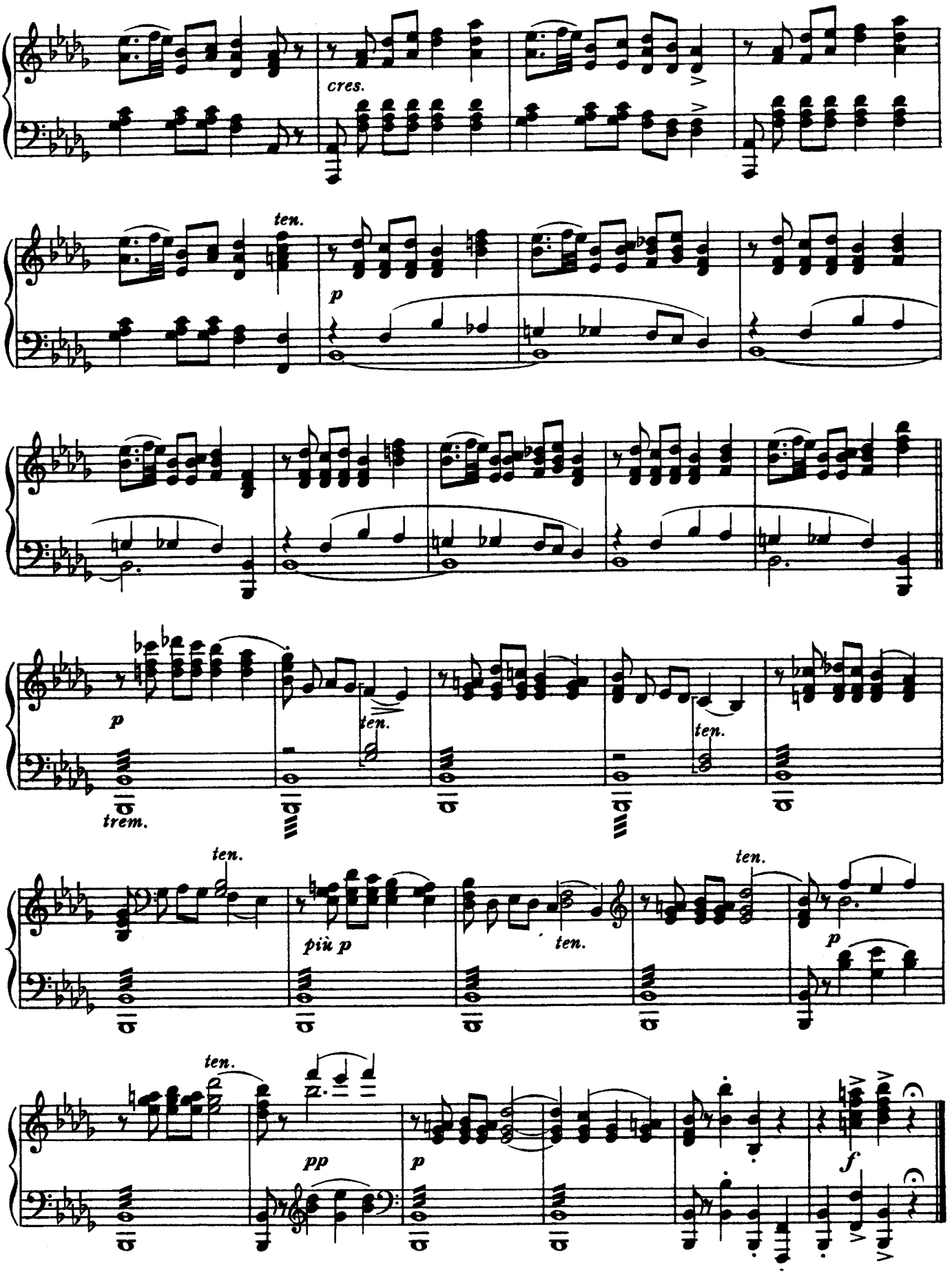
Dance of the Swans

(Act IV.)

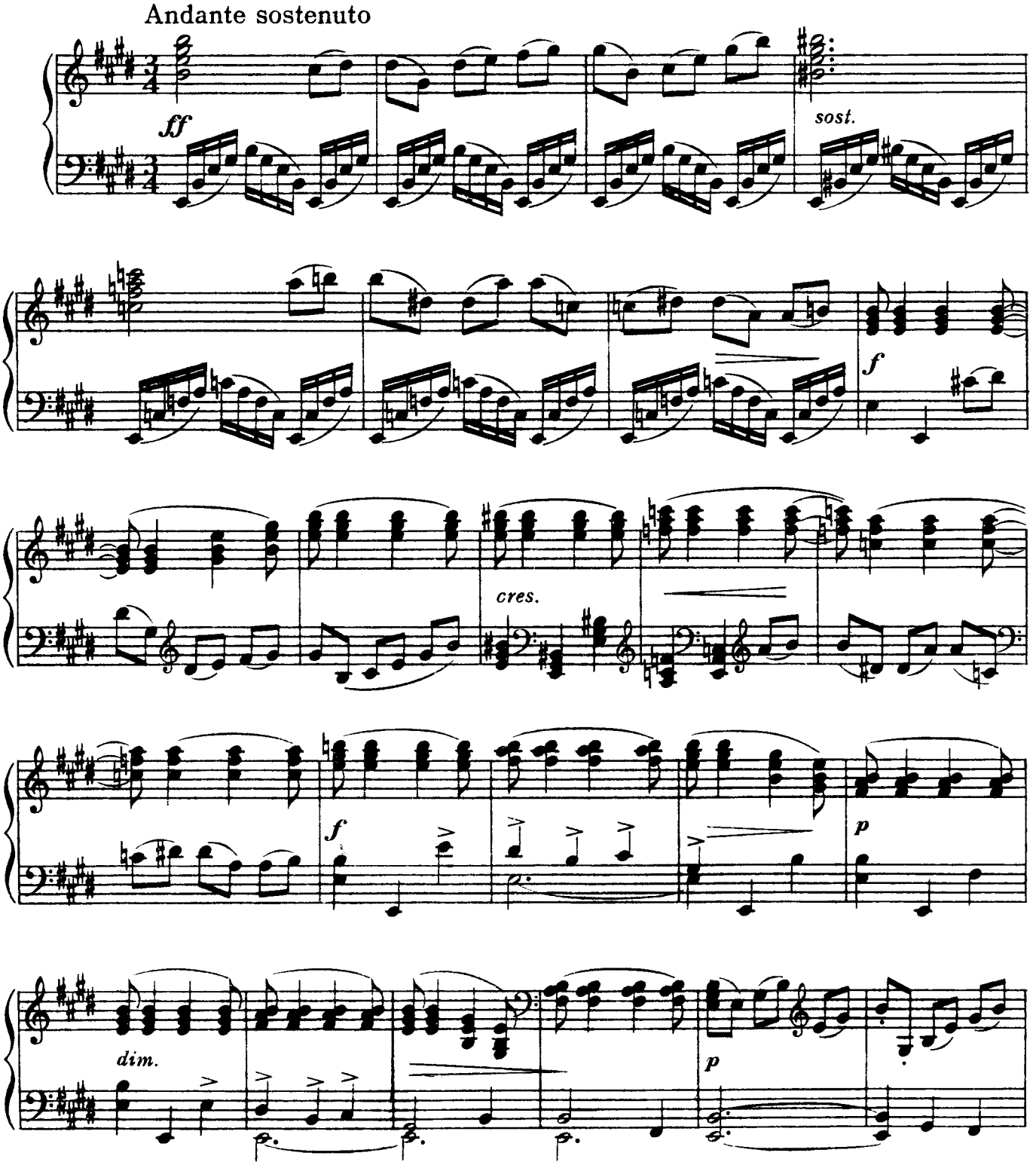


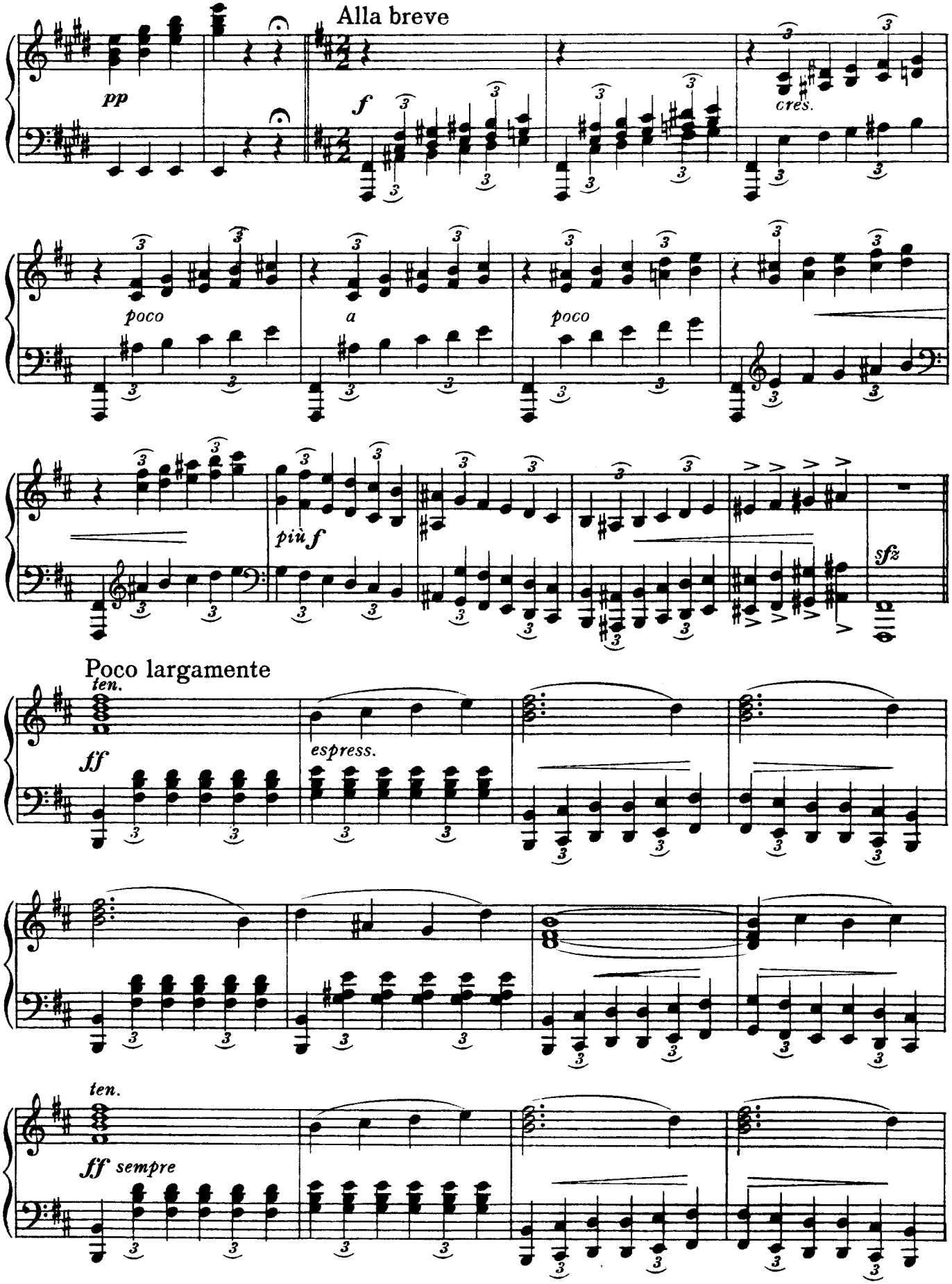

mf
f
espress.
ten.
p
mf

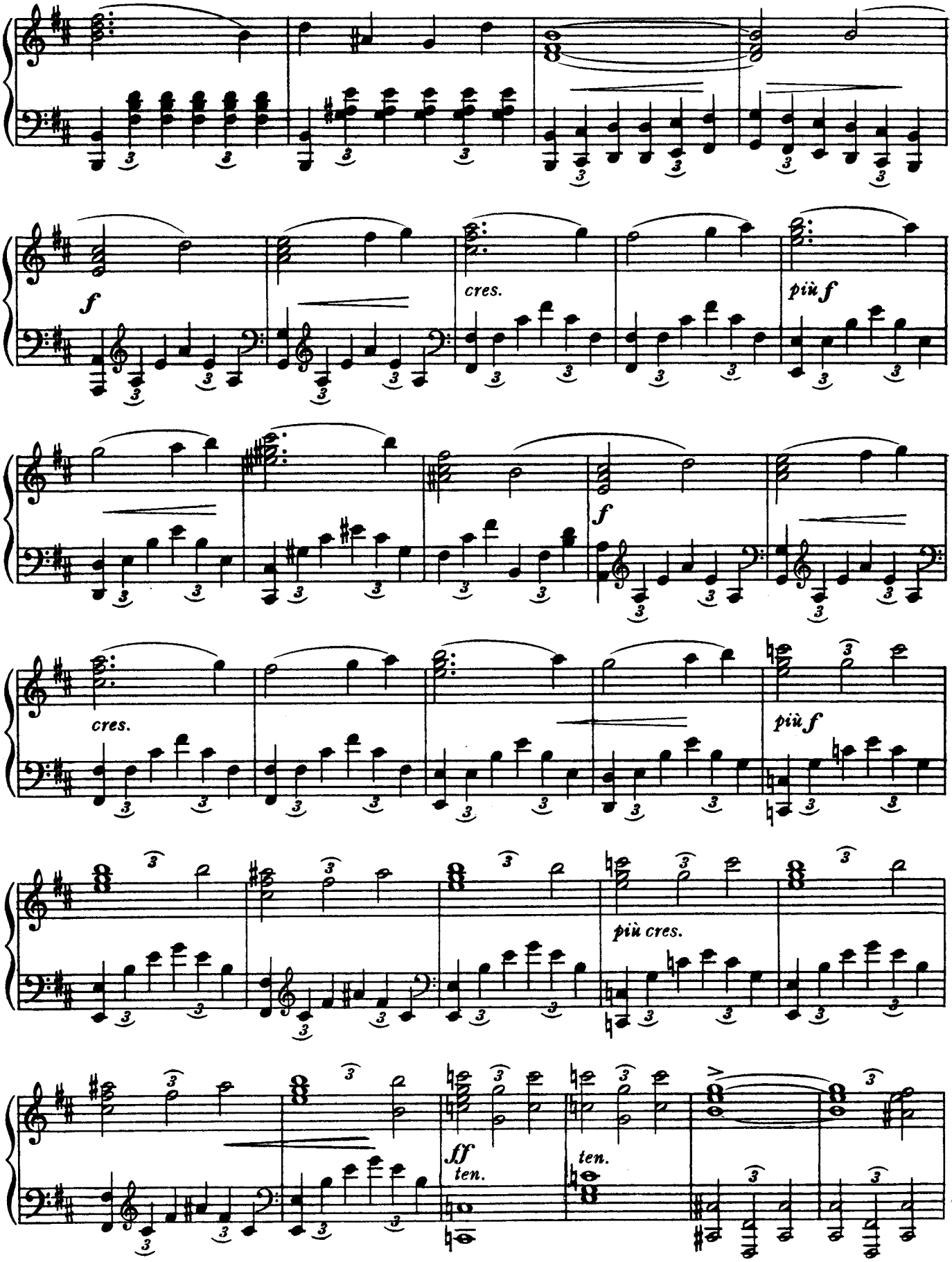

f
ff
f
ff
più f
sffz
Cantabile
f
espress.
Tempo I
p
mf

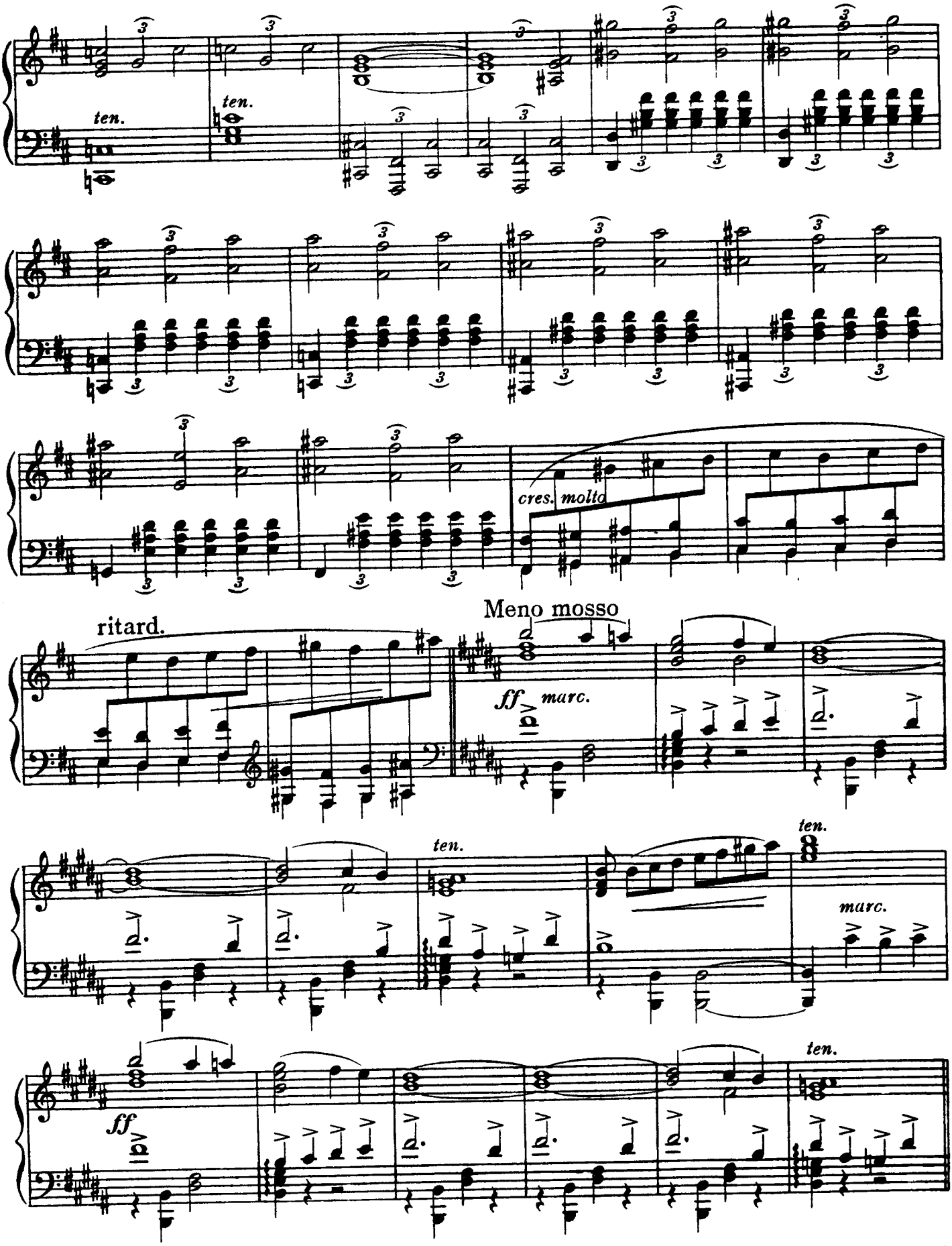

cres.
ten.
p
p
trem.
ten.
ten.
ten.
più p
ten.
ten.
p
ten.
pp
p
f

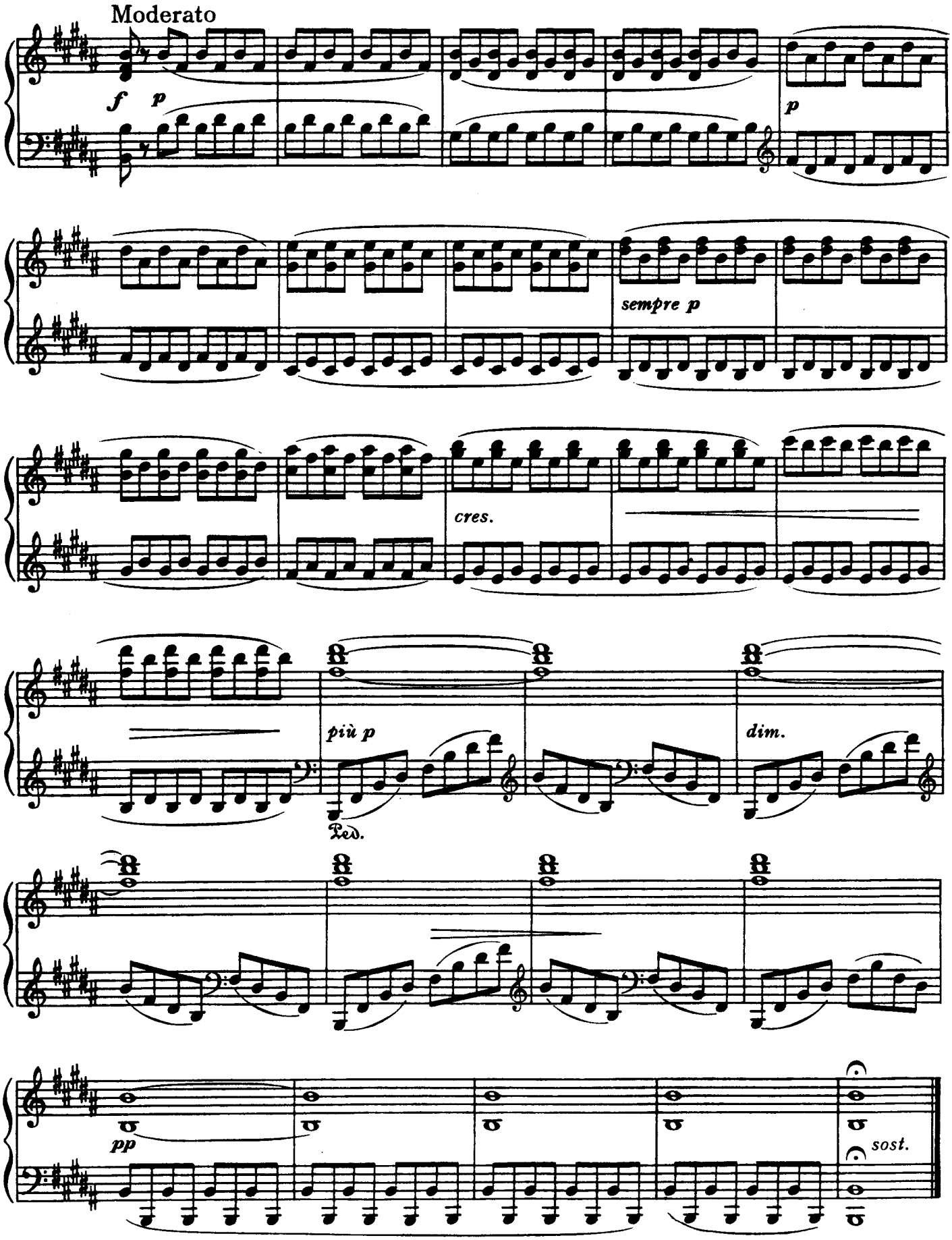
XII
Finale




Alla breve
pp
f
cres.
poco
a
poco
più f
sfz
Poco largamente
ten.
ff
espress.
ten.
ff sempre


f
cres.
più f
f
cres.
più f
più cres.
ff
ten.
ten.


ten.
ten.
cres. molto
ritard.
Meno mosso
ff marc.
ten.
ten.
marc.
ff
ten.



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