ANTONÍN JOSEF REJCHA was born on February 26th, 1770, in Prague. He was the son of the Old Town baker, Šimon Rejcha. At the age of nine he was already a chorister at the Church of the Knights of the Cross. He received musical instruction from his uncle, Josef Rejcha (1746—1795), violoncellist in the private orchestra of Count Oettingen-Wallerstein, in Swabia (1774—1785), where he found a second home. Through his Uncle, he got the position of flutist in the orchestra of the Prince Elector and of the theatre in Bonn (1785 to 1794), where, following the death of Cajetan Mattioli, he was appointed director of the Prince Elector Maximilian's orchestra. In Bonn, he studied music with Christian Gottlob Neefe. There he first met Beethoven, with whom, as also with the notable landscape painter and graphic artist, Karl Kügelgen, he attended lectures, from May 14th, 1789, in philosophy (especially Kantian philosophy) and in mathematics, at Bonn University. When the French revolutionary forces took possession of the Köln Electorate and of Bonn, Rejcha left for Hamburg (1794—1799), where he composed his two operas, *Oubaldi ou les Français en Égypte* (1799, book of words by Aug. Kotzebue) and *L'Ermite dans l'île Formose* (1799). After Napoleon's return from Egypt, he settled, in 1800, in Paris. He spent the years 1802—1808, however, in Vienna. There, about 1803, arose his *Philosophisch-praktische Anmerkungen* (MS), written in German, in which he offers a solution to a number of problems in musical theory. In Vienna, he again made contact with Beethoven, with whom he had already become close friends in Bonn. Rejcha once said: '*Fourteen years we lived together (1785—94 and 1802—07) and in our youth we were always like Orestes*

*and Pylades*'. During his sojourn in Vienna Rejcha visited Haydn and counted Albrechtsberger, Cherubini, Salieri and the French violinist, P. Baillot, among his friends. In 1803 he wrote *Thirty-six Fugues for Piano* and dedicated the work to Haydn. It was probably at this time, too, that his piano variations arose, a large-scale work entitled, *L'art de varier*. He rejected the offer of a position as teacher of musical composition to Prince Louis Ferdinand (1801) and of choirmaster in Berlin. During his stay in Leipzig (1805) he tried without success to perform his Cantata based on Bürger's dramatic ballad, Lenore, the presentation of which had already been forbidden by the Viennese censorship. In 1808 he settled for good in Paris, where he married Virginia Enaust (1818) and became fully assimilated to his French environment. On the recommendation of L. Cherubini, he was appointed, in 1818, Professor of Musical Theory and Composition, in succession to Étienne Méhul, at the Paris Conservatoire. Among his pupils were H. Berlioz, Ch. Gounod, C. Franck and others. He also gave private tuition to Franz Liszt. In 1829 he became a naturalized Frenchman. In 1831 he was made Knight of the Legion of Honour for his services and, in 1835, after the death of the composer, Boieldieu, became a member of the French Academy and Inspector of the Conservatoire. He died in Paris, on May 28th, 1836.

Rejcha was an outstanding composer and musical theorist. It has not so far been possible to ascertain the exact number of his works. Rejcha's opus numbers (107 in all) are inexact and unreliable. In addition to a large body of piano compositions, including sonatas, fantasies, études, 36 fugues on his own and on other themes (1803), and a large cycle of variations, *L'art de varier* (from c. 1802—04), he composed a considerable body of chamber works for wind and string instruments (trios, quartets, quintets, one octet, Op. 96, and a work for a combination of 5 string and 5 wind instruments). Of his orchestral works, we may mention at least his two symphonies, Op. 41 and Op. 42, overtures, concertos, etc. He also wrote cantatas, songs with piano and orchestral accompaniment, and was the author of about eight operas, which evoked lively interest. Rejcha's compositions link up stylistically with Viennese classicism, but in the harmony, form and colourful instrumentation are far in advance of their time, anticipating stylistic elements which are a feature of the culminating phase of musical romanticism, and occasionally even pointing to contemporary musical conceptions. In many of his works, Rejcha endeavours to approach his great pattern—Beethoven. The same pioneering quality distinguishes his pedagogical activities and his excursions into the domain of musical theory. It is true that in his works on musical theory he based his views on those of Kirnberger and of Marpurg, but he reached new and original conclusions, which were a great advance on the established musical theories of his time. Nor is there any doubt that the ideas presented in his works had a strong formative influence on the art of musical composition about the middle of the 19th century. His basic works on musical theory are, especially: *Traité de mélodie* (Paris 1814), *Cours de composition musicale* (Paris 1818), *Traité d'harmonie* (Paris 1819 and 1824), *Traité de haute composition musicale* (Paris 1824—26) and *L'art du compositeur dramatique* (Paris 1833). In these studies, Rejcha treats of the relation of melody to harmony, of the use of chromatic scales and intervals, of instrumentation, of the problems of polyphonic composition, of dramatic music, of declamation, of the human voice and of the relation of poetry to music. His bold, well-thought-out and clearly formulated theoretical views point far ahead into the future. Especially pioneering in character are his ideas about the different kinds of contrapuntal work. He made fugal form much freer and so paved the way for the free fugal fantasia, which was to be of great significance for future developments. Rejcha's progressive views on musical theory, which derive from the strict logic of the compositional art, gave a powerful impetus to musical thought, leading to creative developments in which his ideas first found full application as late as in the works of Berlioz and Liszt. His views on musical drama make Rejcha also the intellectual forerunner of the reformatory principles of Richard Wagner.

---

Rejcha's imposing set of variations, *L'art de varier*, Op. 57, which we are publishing in a critical edition in the present volume, arose most probably in the years 1802—04. It comprises 57 variations on a simple, but striking, twelve-bar theme in F major. The theme is presented in a single part, which is successively joined, at four-bar intervals, by other secondary parts. The majority of the variations preserve the original number of bars of the exposition of the original theme, the number being exceeded in only a small group of variations. Formal and characteristic variations (for example, *Marche funèbre*, No 31, *Menuetto*, No 40, *Gavotte*, No 52 and *Fuga*, No 56) follow each other in contrasting succession. Contrast is achieved not only by alternations of key (major and minor modes) and of harmony (diatonic and chromatic variations), but also by changes in the rhythm and tempo, along with the highly effective alternation of melodic with predominantly harmonic variations. The

element of contrast is further underlined by the varying degree of technical difficulty. Thus the variations range from easy to difficult and very difficult, in which all the expressive potentialities of the instrument are brilliantly exploited. The technically exacting variations are, as a rule, homophonic, whereas those that are simpler for the executant are mostly of polyphonic structure. A particularly characteristic example of the polyphonic variations is No 56, for it is written in the form of a free-flowing four-part fugue. It may be said that in each variation Rejcha sets himself an important technical problem and aims to work out all possible kinds of variational techniques. This procedure was determined above all by pedagogical considerations, for Rejcha's set of variations, *L'art de varier*, like his cycle of 36 fugues, from 1803, was originally designed as a contribution to the author's pedagogical work and as a supplement to his theoretical publications.

What was originally, however, intended as a work of instruction grew into a composition of unique artistic value. The comparison at once springs to mind with J. S. Bach's masterpiece of contrapuntal art, *Die Kunst der Fuge*, which in the same way combines pedagogical aims with an imposing artistic conception, even though Rejcha's work, as regards style and artistic value, cannot of course be placed on a footing of equality with Bach's monumental composition. Rejcha's *L'art de varier* is a work of definitely concert character, for the set of variations is written in an effective and highly mature piano technique, so that its performance makes considerable demands both on the artist's technical command of the instrument and on his powers of interpretation.

The internal structure, too, of the set of variations is worked out with consistent care in all its aspects. Its structural uniformity is maintained more especially by those varitions which, at intervals throughout the work, return to an exact quotation of the basic theme presented in the first section. These variations, in which the basic theme occurs in the form of chords, is reminiscent of the use of this device in Promenade, in Mussorgski's set of piano pieces, Pictures from an Exhibition. The structure of the composition is integrated not only thematically (by means of recurrent quotations of the basic theme as a single unit), but also by its contrasting modulational plan and by its dynamico-agogic contrasts. The general architectonic organization of the work then follows a single rising line, from the simple introductory theme in F major to the powerful sonorities of the closing Variation No. 57. This variation, maintained on a single, impressive *unisono* plane, is reminiscent not only of the last movement of Chopin's Sonata in B flat minor, but even of the conclusion of d'Indy's symphonic variations, Istar, Op. 42. And even though this work is more the outcome of constructive cerebral processes than the expression of an emotional experience, which considering the purpose of the work is only natural, it is nevertheless, for the time in which it was written and in respect of its musical idiom, harmonic structure and compositional technique, a quite remarkably pioneering, daring and original work. From the point of view of style, Rejcha here describes a bold arc, extending from the archaic musical style of Variation No 15, reminiscent of Bach's famous Chaconne for unaccompanied violin, to modern musical expression, anticipating not only Late Neo-Romanticism, but even some stylistic elements of musical impressionism. Thus, for instance, the richly modulated Variation No 22 gives a foretaste of Schumann, or Variation No 27, with its passing chromatic tones, and Variation No 38, with its Tristanesque suspensions, forestall the musical idiom of Richard Wagner. The most advanced, in expression and technique, is undoubtedly Variation No 44, whose consistently maintained dynamic demisemiquaver motion and alternation of right and left hand gives it the character of a modern Toccata, reminiscent of the compositional styl of Claude Debussy.

## SOURCES AND LITERATURE

The manuscripts and printed editions of Rejcha's compositions are deposited in numerous libraries and collections of music abroad, especially, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bibliothèque du Conservatoire and the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra in Paris (here is preserved Rejcha's autobiography written in his daughter's hand) in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, where there is the autograph of Rejcha's vocal fugues from 1812, as well as in the libraries in Berlin, Bonn, Leipzig, London, Milan and others. Contemporary editions of his works are also to be found in the Prague University Library, in the Music Department of the National Library in Prague and of the Moravian Museum in Brno (where a catalogue of Rejcha's compositions preserved in the Czech Lands and abroad is available). See also *Robert Eitner* in Quellenlexikon (Vol. VIII, 159 et seq.). Rejcha's compositions were published during the composer's life-time in Bonn, Leipzig, Paris and Vienna. Of the numerous editions of his works, we may mention here a selection from Rejcha's fugues in the *Edice českých klasiků* (Edition of Czech Classics, Praha 1951), and then in the edition, *Musica Antiqua Bohemica*, No 12 (Praha 1953), No 20 (Praha 1954) ahd No 33 (Praha 1957). Rejcha's works on longplaying records Supraphon: Fugues for Piano (DM 5325), Six Trios for Horn, Op. 48 (DV 5259), Quartet in D major for 4 Flutes, Op. 12 (DV 5259), Wind Quintet in G major, Op. 88, No 5 (DM 5508) and Overture in C major, Op. 24 (DM 5178).

Bibliography: *Hector Berlioz*, Mémoires (Paris 1878, 1879 and 1882; on Rejcha's pedagogical activities at the Paris Conservatoire and on his compositional method.) – *Ernst Bücken*, Anton Reicha, sein Leben und seine Kompositionen (thesis, Munich 1912). *Maurice Emmanuel*, Ant. Reicha (Paris 1937).—*Alois Hnilička*, Portréty starých českých mistrů hudebních (Portraits of Old Czech Musical Masters, Praha 1922, 102 et seq.).—*A. Loewenberg*, Annals of Opera 1597–1940 (Cambridge 1943; useful for the chronology of Rejcha's operas).—*Mil. Nedbal*, Ant. Rejcha jako pedagog a theoretik (Ant. Rejcha as Pedagogue and as Theorist, thesis, Praha 1952, typescript).—*Jan Němeček*, Nástin české hudby XVIII. století (Outline of Czech Music in the 18th Century, Praha 1955, 200 et seq.).—*Jaroslav Pohanka*, Dějiny české hudby v příkladech (History of Czech Music in Examples, Praha 1958, Note, p. 43).—*Jan Racek*, Beethoven: Růst hrdiny bojovníka (Beethoven. The Growth of a Hero-Warrior, Praha ²1956, 32–33 and 35).—*Id.*, Česká hudba (Praha 1958, 174–6, 260).—*Ludwig Schiedermair*, Der junge Beethoven (Bonn ²1951). Articles and studies in periodicals: *Hector Berlioz*, Ant. Reicha (Journal des Débats 3. VII. 1836).—*Klaus Blum*, Bemerkungen Ant. Reichas zur Aufführungspraxis der Oper (Die Musik-Forschung VII, 1954, 429 et seq.).—*Jan Branberger*, Čeští skladatelé ve Francii v době revoluce, císařství a restaurace (Czech Composers in France in the Time of the Revolution, Empire and Restoration, Listy Hudební matice-Tempo VI, 1927, 203 et seq.).—*Ernst Bücken*, Beethoven und Reicha (Die Musik XII, 1912–13, 341 et seq.).—*Id.* Ant. Reicha als Theoretiker (ZfMW II, 1919–20, 256 et seq.)—*Jaroslav Čeleda*, Beethoven a čeští klasikové (Beethoven and the Czech Classics, Za hud. vzděláním II, 1926–27, 116 et seq.).—*J. A. Delaire*, Notice sur Reicha musicien, compositeur et téoriste (Paris 1838; Czech translation by J. Fiala in Česká hudba XXXVI, 1933, 263–74). —*Norman Demuth* in Music and Letters XXIX, 1948, 165). —*Jiří Dostál*, Ant. Rejcha (Tempo XVI, 1937, 126 et seq.).*Id.*, Ant. Rejcha (Tempo XVIII, 1946).—*Maurice Emmanuel*, Ant. Reicha, maître de César Franck (Le Correspondent 10. V. 1929).—*Id.*, Ant. Reicha, pédagogue (Le Monde Musical 30. XI. 1930).—*J. N. Forkel*, From the Unpublished Autobiography of Antoine Reicha (The Musical Quarterly 1936, 339 et seq.).—*Alois Hnilička*, Ant. Reicha (Hudební revue VII, 1913–14, 213 et seq.).—*K. B. Jirák*, Pařížská oslava Ant. Rejchy (Hudební věstník XXX, 1937, 2–3).—*W. Lütge*, A. Reicha (Der Bär 1927).—M. S., Ant. Rejcha o lidové písni (Hudební rozhledy IX, 1956, 73).—*Ludwig Schiedermair*, Die Blütezeit der Oettingen-Wallersteinschen Hofkapelle (SIMG IX, 1907–08, 83 et seq.).

*Jan Racek*

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Antonín Rejcha wrote the set of variations, L'art de varier, during his stay in Vienna, most probably in the years 1802—1804, for, in November 1804, the music publishers, Breitkopf & Härtel, announced the publication of this work in the Allg. Mus. Zeitung (Vol. VII, Intel. Blatt II). Maurice Emmanuel states that the work was brought out by the publishing firm of Richault, in Paris, and Franz Pazdírek (Universalhandbuch für Musikliteratur) mentions somewhat vaguely that the work also appeared among the publications of the firm of Fr. Ant. Hoffmeister in Leipzig. As neither of these publications were traceable, I have based this edition solely on Breitkopf's publication. The exact title there runs as follows: *L'art de varier | ou | 57 Variations pour le Piano-Forte | composées et dédiées | A son Altesse Royale | Monseigneur le Prince Louis Ferdinand | de Prusse | par | Antoine Reicha. Oeuvre 57.—Pr. 1 Rthlr. 12 Gr. | | A Leipsic | chez Breitkopf & Härtel.* Plate no. 197, 53 pp. A copy of this edition is deposited in the Music Department of the National Museum in Prague (sign. XII C 234). In this copy, pp. 23—32 are missing, but, thanks to the courtesy of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, I was able to make use of a photo-facsimile of the same edition in their library.

*Notation.* Though the Breitkopf edition is of relatively recent date, it contains numerous slips which have been consistently rectified. For instance, Variation No 7, bar 3, the $c^1$ in the alto was originally shifted backward one quaver; in Variation No 8, bar 3, the natural belonging to the ♭ flat, originally at $d^1$; Variation No 23, bar 7, the first d flat$^1$, not clearly printed in the master-copy, may be read $c^1$, the second demisemiquaver in the second crotchet is then clearly $c^2$, but with ♭ flat on the fourth line of the stave; both notes corrected to d flat$^1$ and d flat$^2$, on the analogy of parallel places; Variation 24, bar 7, the sharp at $a^2$ corrected to a sharp at $f^2$;Variation No 25, bar 3, the third, $f^2$—$a^2$ and $g^2$—b flat$^2$ shifted backward a quaver in the master-copy.

In several Variations, the divison of demi-semiquavers has been adapted to present-day notationor the tails converted into lines (Variation 6, left hand in the master-copy: ). On the other hand, in Variations No 40 and No 41, the division of semiquavers into groups of two has been intentionally preserved, because it is of optical assistance for a correct interpretation. In many places, two-part notation, where it is unjustified and inconsistently introduced, has been abolished by eliminating unnecessary stems. In other cases, stems have been added to achieve consistency in the motion of the parts (e.g., in Variations No 1, bars 11 and 12). Then, in the upbeat with which Variation No 25 begins, the stems of both thirds are made to point up, on the analogy of parallel places and a minim rest inserted. The greatest number of changes of this kind have been made in Variation No 38: bar 1, the semiquavers A B flat B d c appear in the master-copy with the stroke pointing downwards; bar 6, the semiquavers f sharp$^1$ $g^1$ g sharp$^1$ originally had the stems pointing upwards. Bars 4 and 12, the notation of the parts has been unified and the original version placed in a footnote at the bottom of the page of musical text. Finally, in Variation No 24, superfluous naturals have been omitted in the key signature.

In many places, for the sake of clarity and legibility, it has been necessary to transfer several parts from the upper to the lower stave, or from the violin (G) clef to the bass (F) clef, and the other way about.

The numbering of all the variations in Roman numerals carried through in the master-copy has been replaced by the now more common numbering in Arabic numerals.

*Tempo indications* are unchanged.

*Intonation.* Superfluous accidentals have been elected and put in where missing. These are placed in square brackets. Other changes are carried out in the body of the text and the original version always placed in a footnote.

*Ornaments:* The difference between the short and long appoggiatura was not indicated in the mastercopy. In Var. 1, bars 2, 10; Var. 4, bars 5; Var. 34, bars 1, 3, 9, 11; Var. 40, bars 3, 7, 10, 12—16, 27 and 31, the grace-notes have the value of semiquavers; Var. 4, bar 6, exceptionally written as a quaver with a dash through the tail. As in all cases where a short grace-note is intended, the notation is unified to a quaver with a dash through the tail. In var. 37, bar 8, the arpeggio is indicated in the old way (an oblique stroke through the chord). Any ornament inserted by the editor is placed in square brackets.

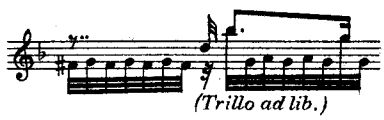
*Dynamic indications and Agogic accents* in the master-copy are preserved unchanged, with a single exception: in the opening weak beat of Variation 42, the diminuendo indication above the first chord in the left hand is omitted and replaced by fz, on the analogy of parallel places. Indications and accents inserted by the editor are placed in square brackets.

*Articulation.* The whole work is provided in the Breitkopf edition with numerous phrasing slurs, so that it was only necessary to indicate the phrasing more consistently and add the staccato indication according to parallel passages.

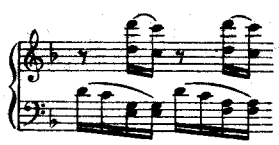
*Fingering.* Fingering is indicated only in one place, namely, in Var. 17, where, however, the numbering of the fingers here proceeding from the little finger to the thumb of the left hand has been changed to conform to modern usage.

*Interpretation.* Vars. 40 and 41 contain two unplayable places. I suggest this alteration:

Var. 40, bar 30:




Var. 41, bar 11:



In conclusion, I wish to thank Jaroslav Pohanka for valuable suggestions in connection with the Editor's Notes and the Annotazioni.

*Dana Šetková*

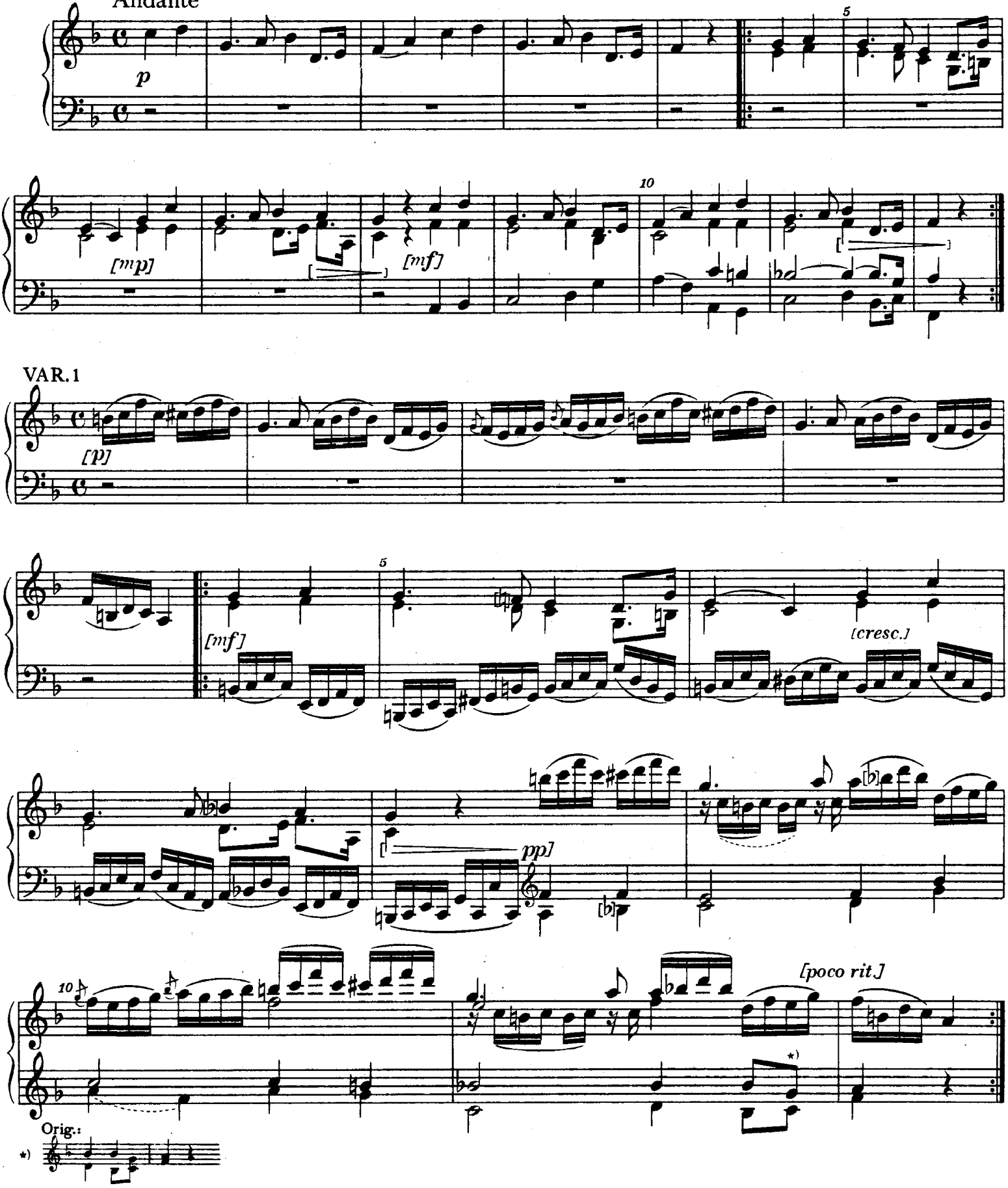
*Translated by R. F. Samsour*

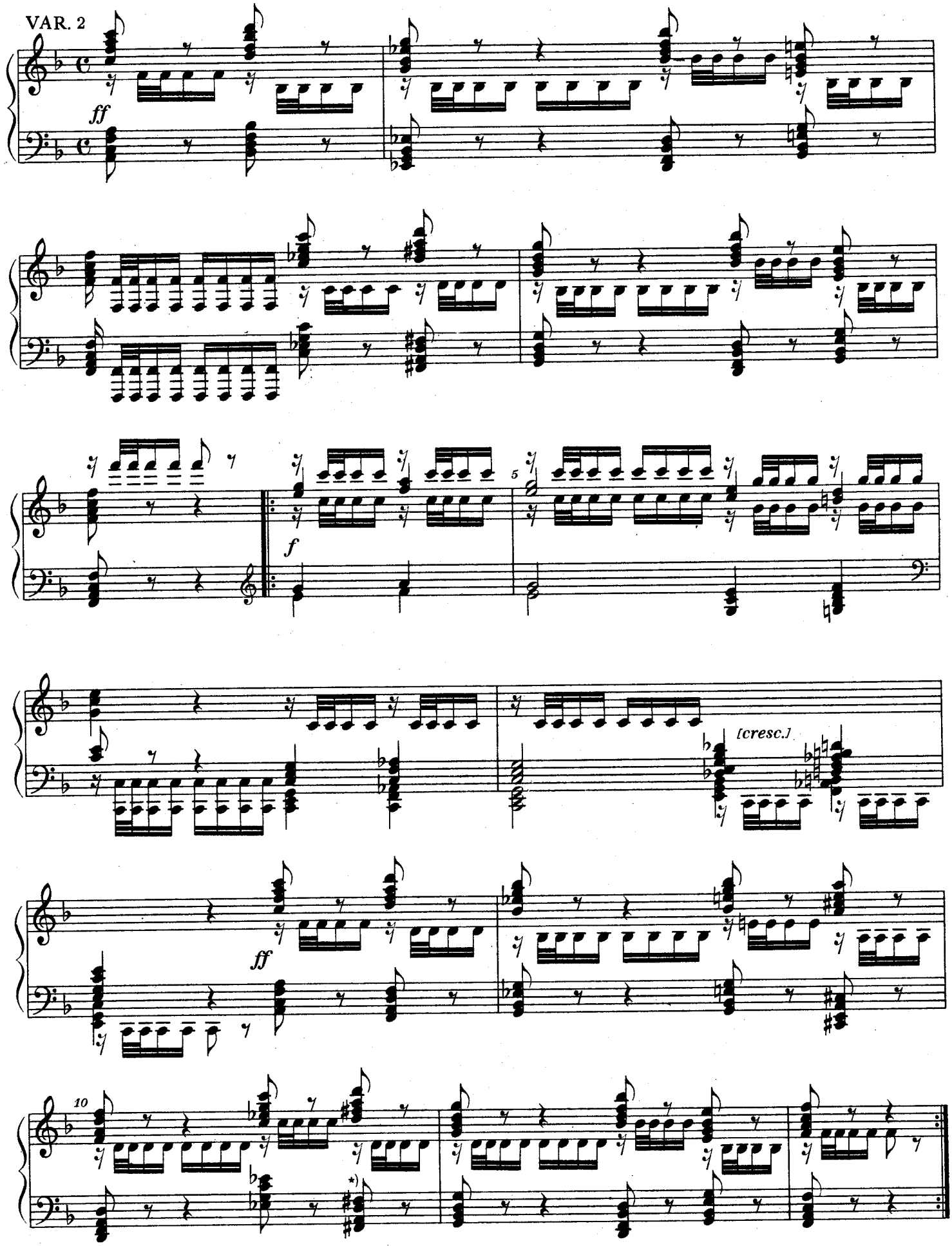
# L'ART DE VARIER

THÈME

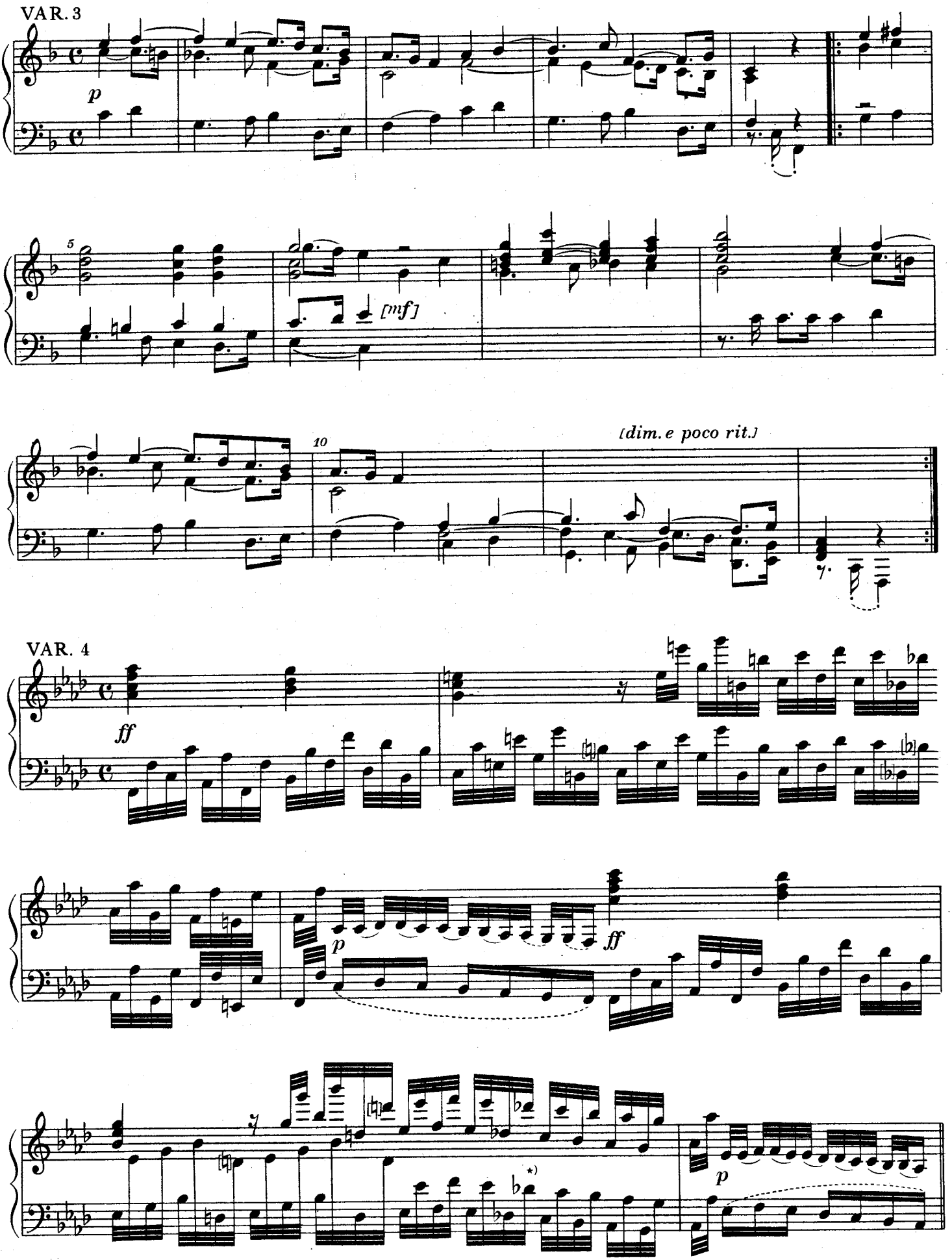
Andante

ANTONÍN JOSEF REJCHA
(1770–1836)

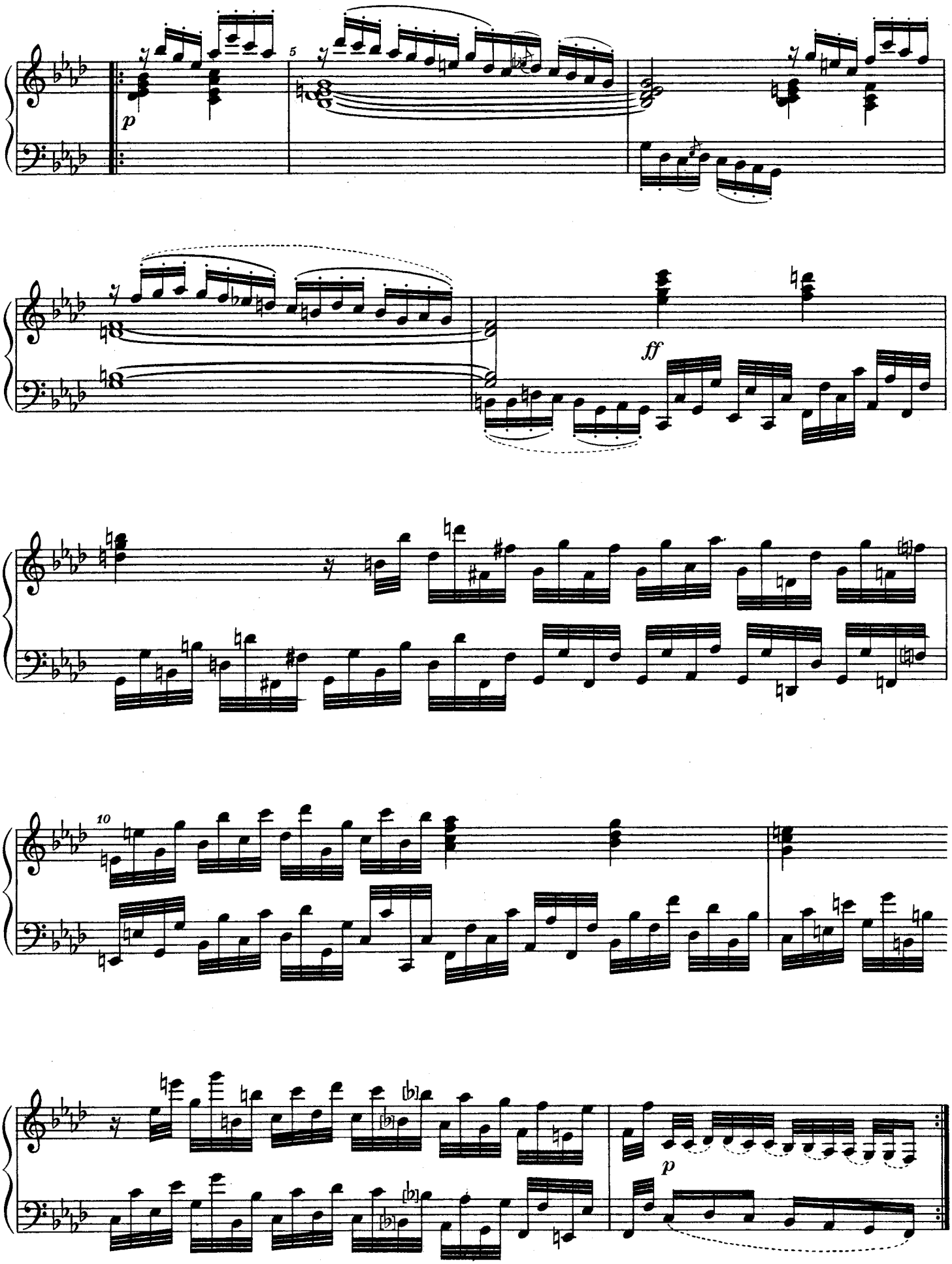


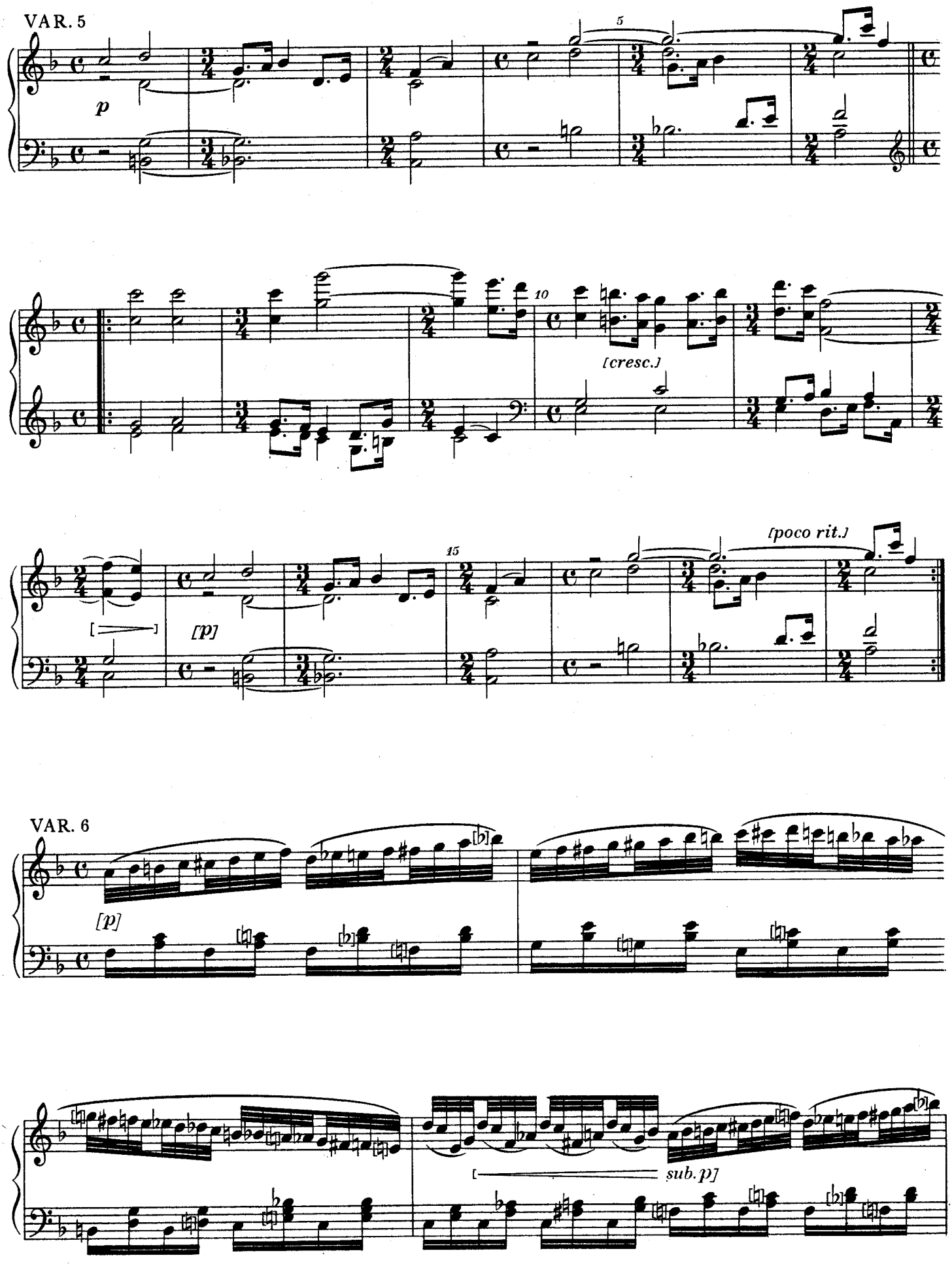


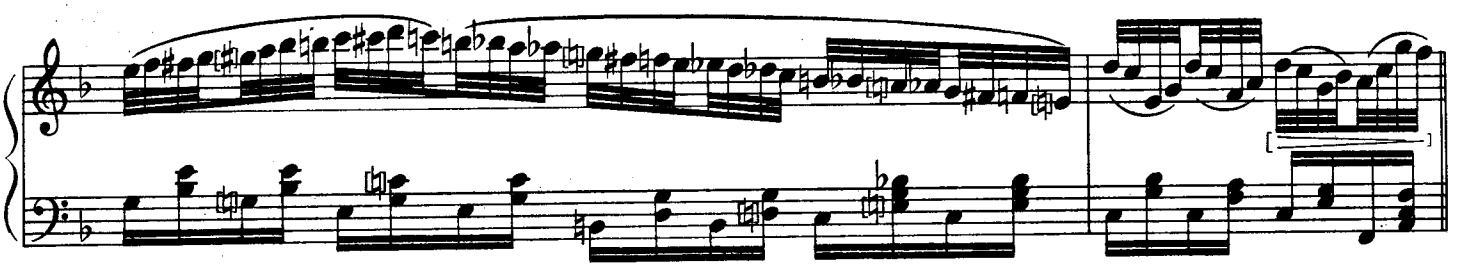

*) Fis-A-c-fis

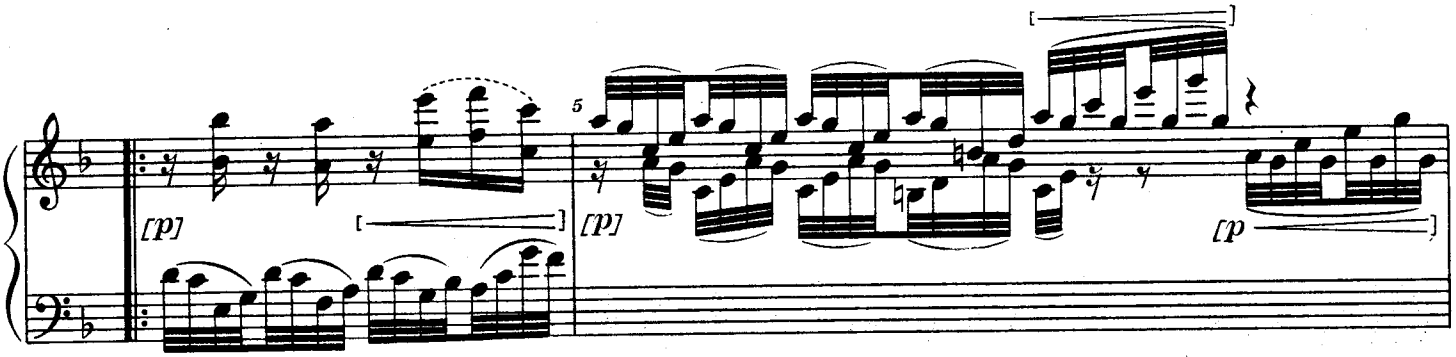


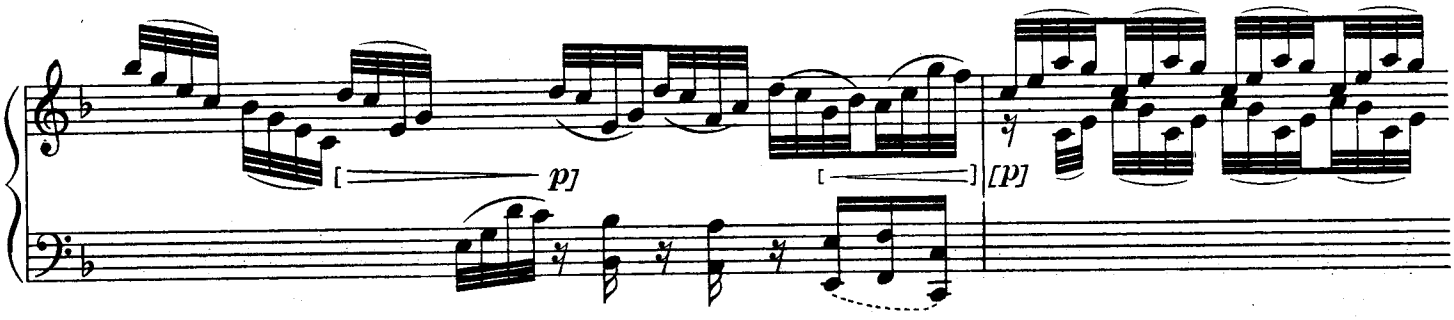

*) hes

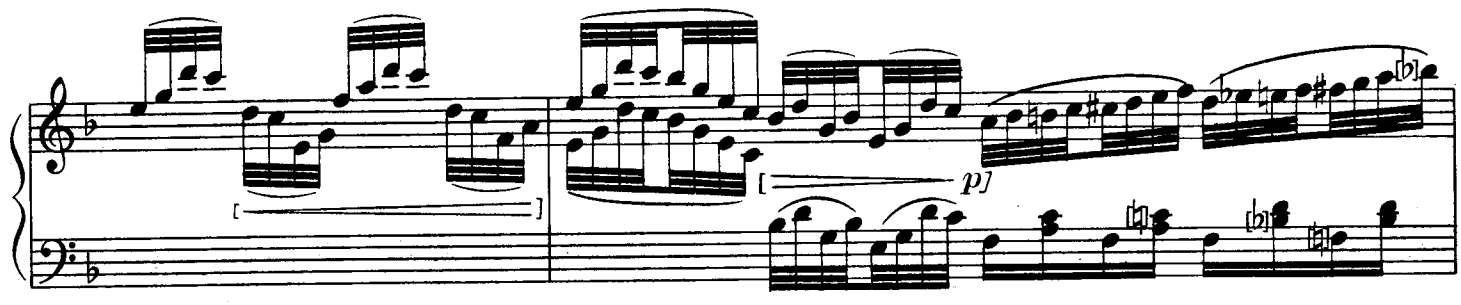

5
p
ff
10
p

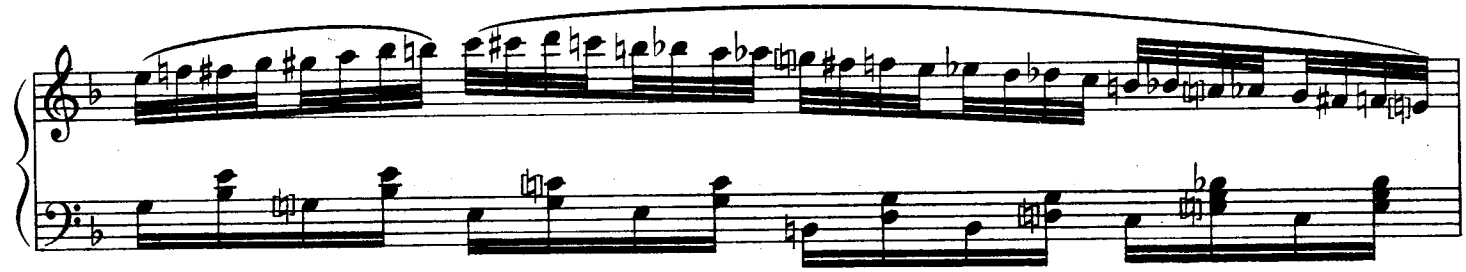

VAR. 5
p
5
10
[cresc.]
15
[poco rit.]
[p]
VAR. 6
[p]
sub. p]

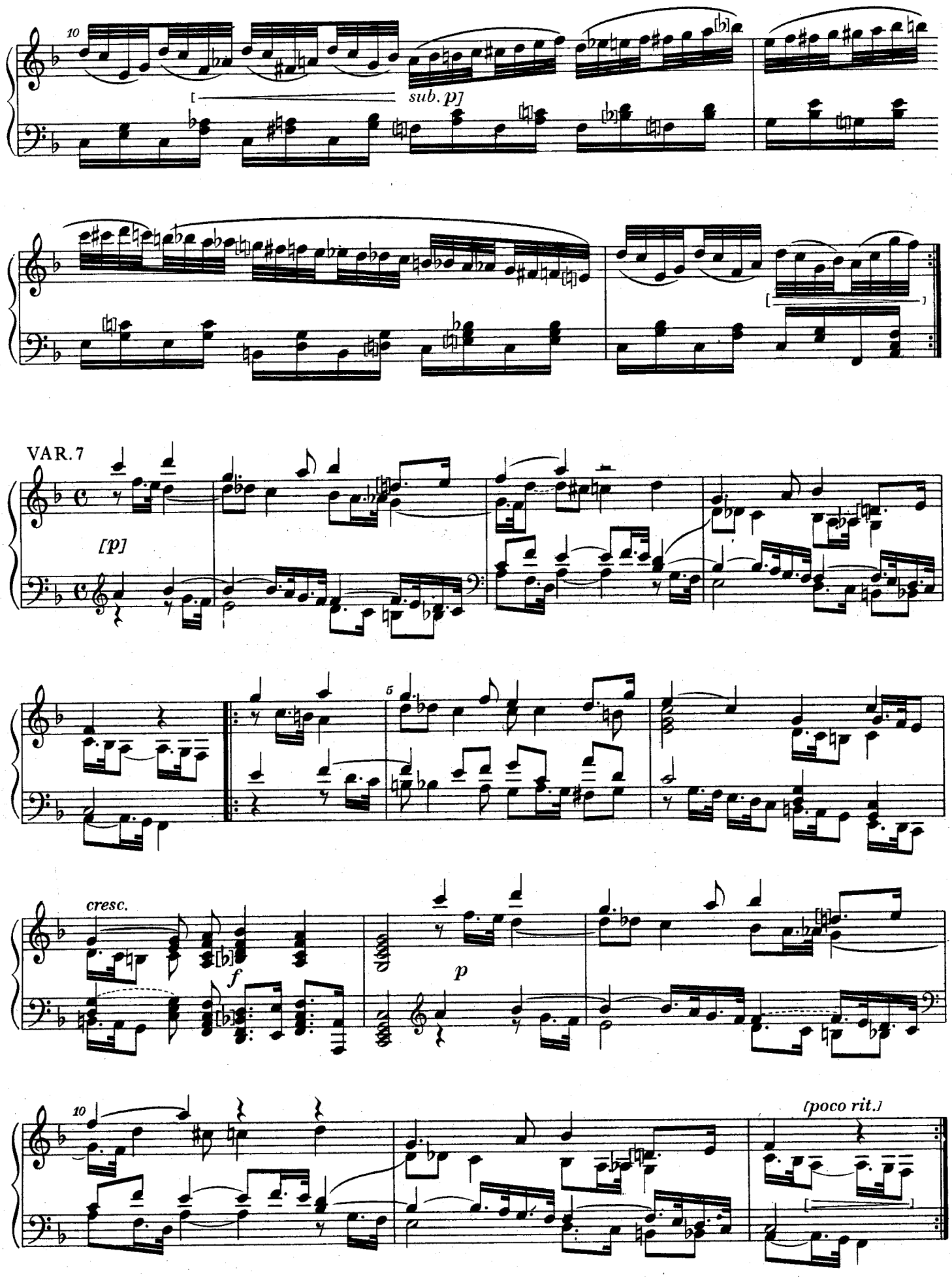



5
[p]
[p]
[p

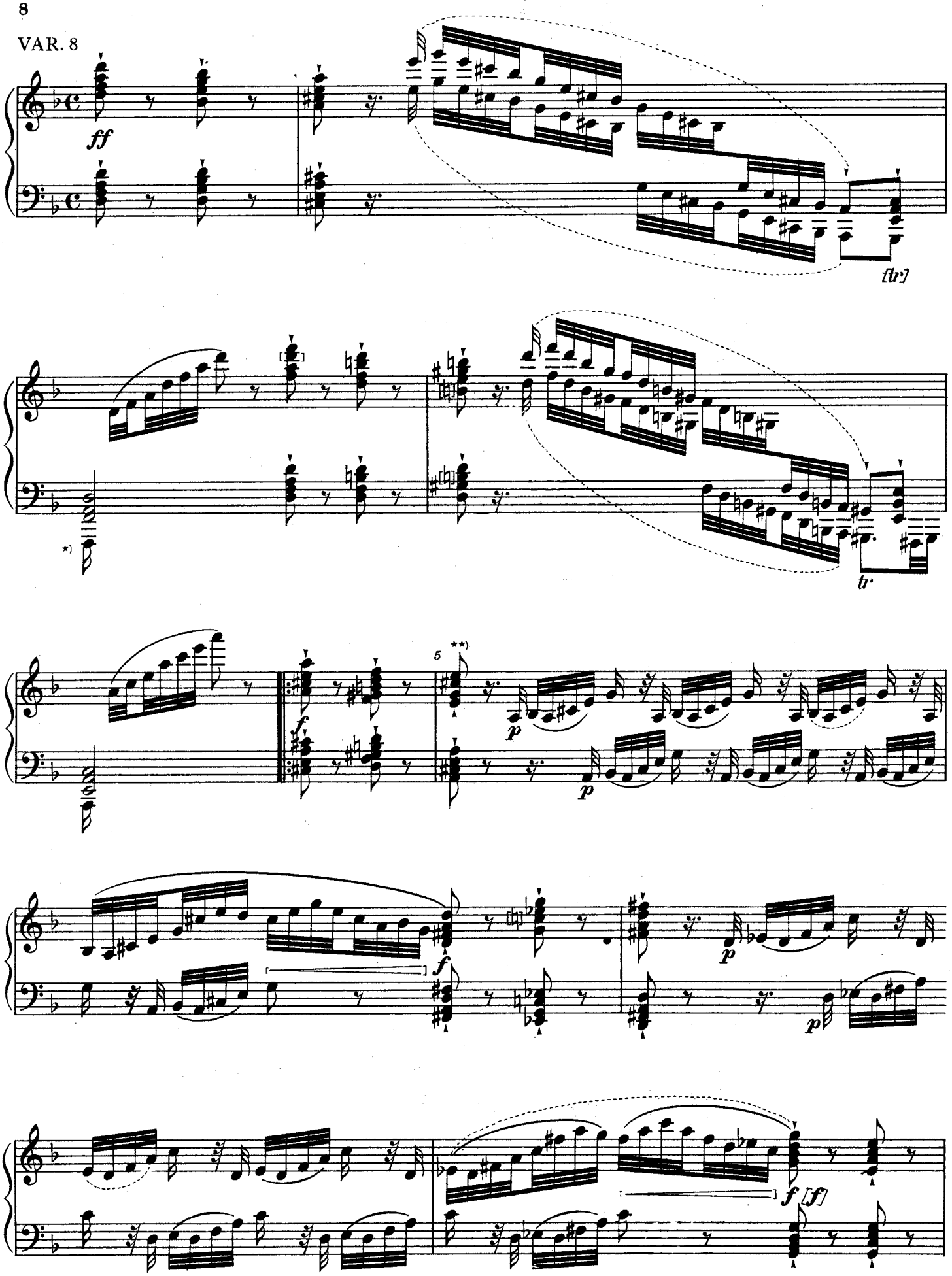

p]
[p]


p]

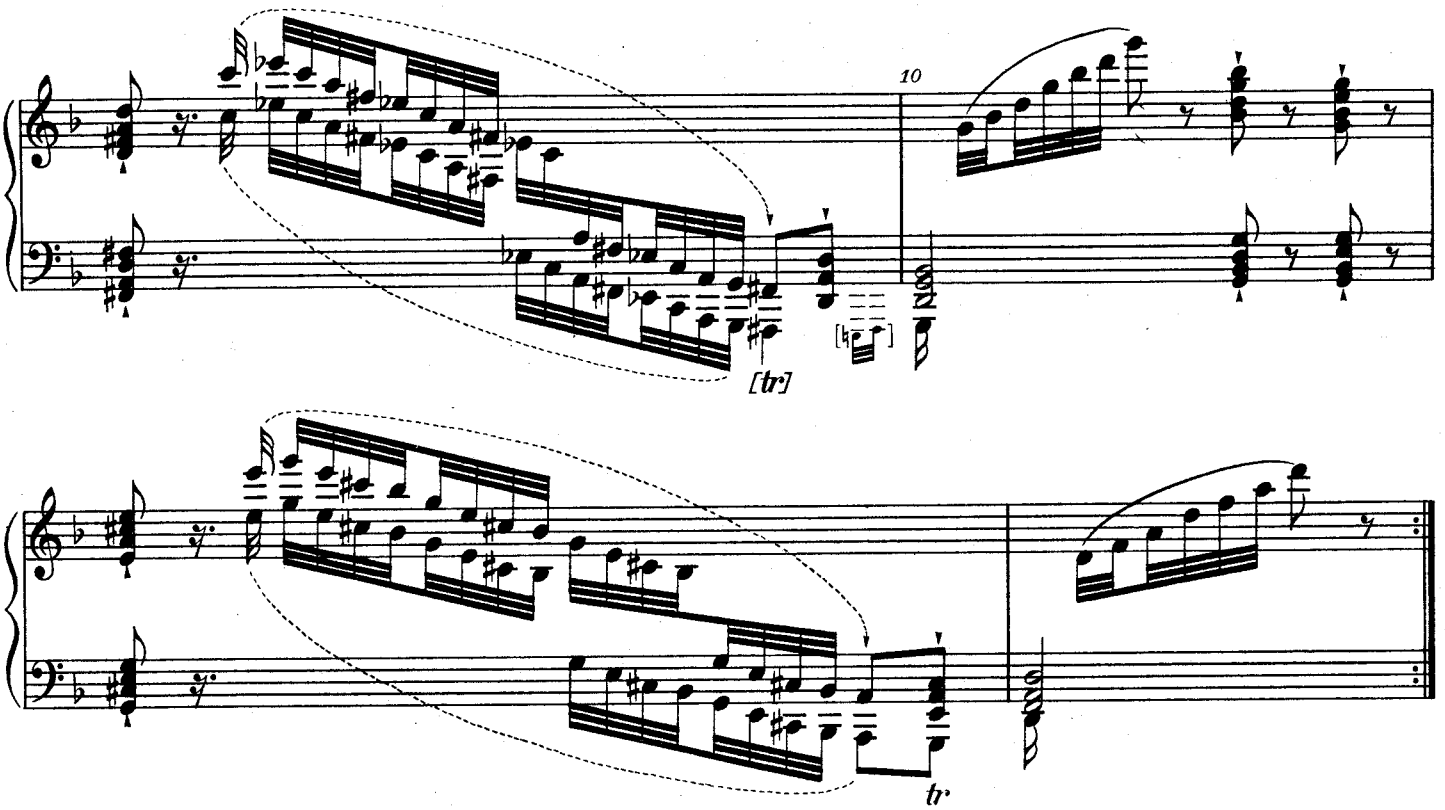



10
sub. p]
VAR. 7
[p]
5
cresc.
f
p
10
(poco rit.)

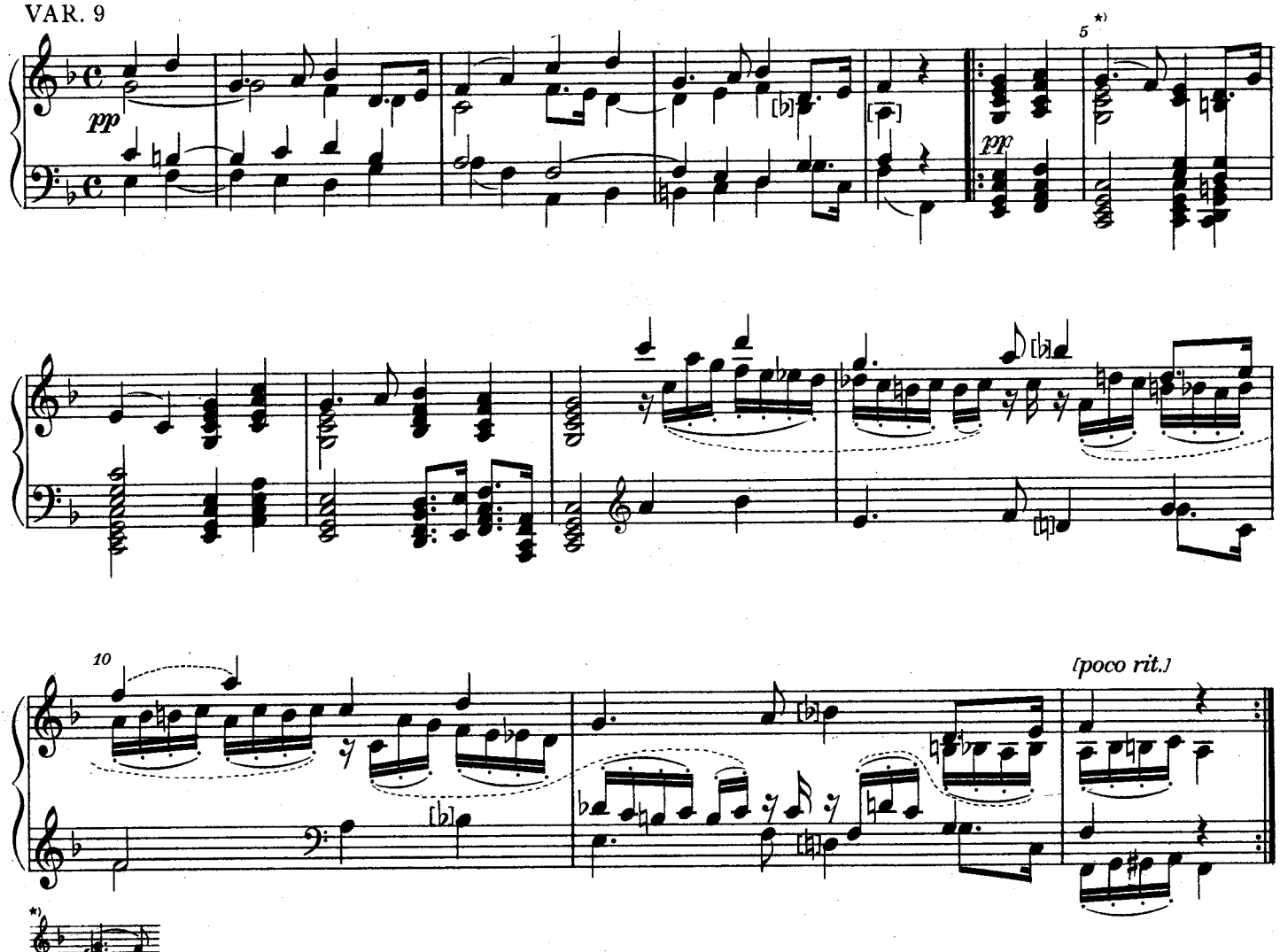
VAR. 8



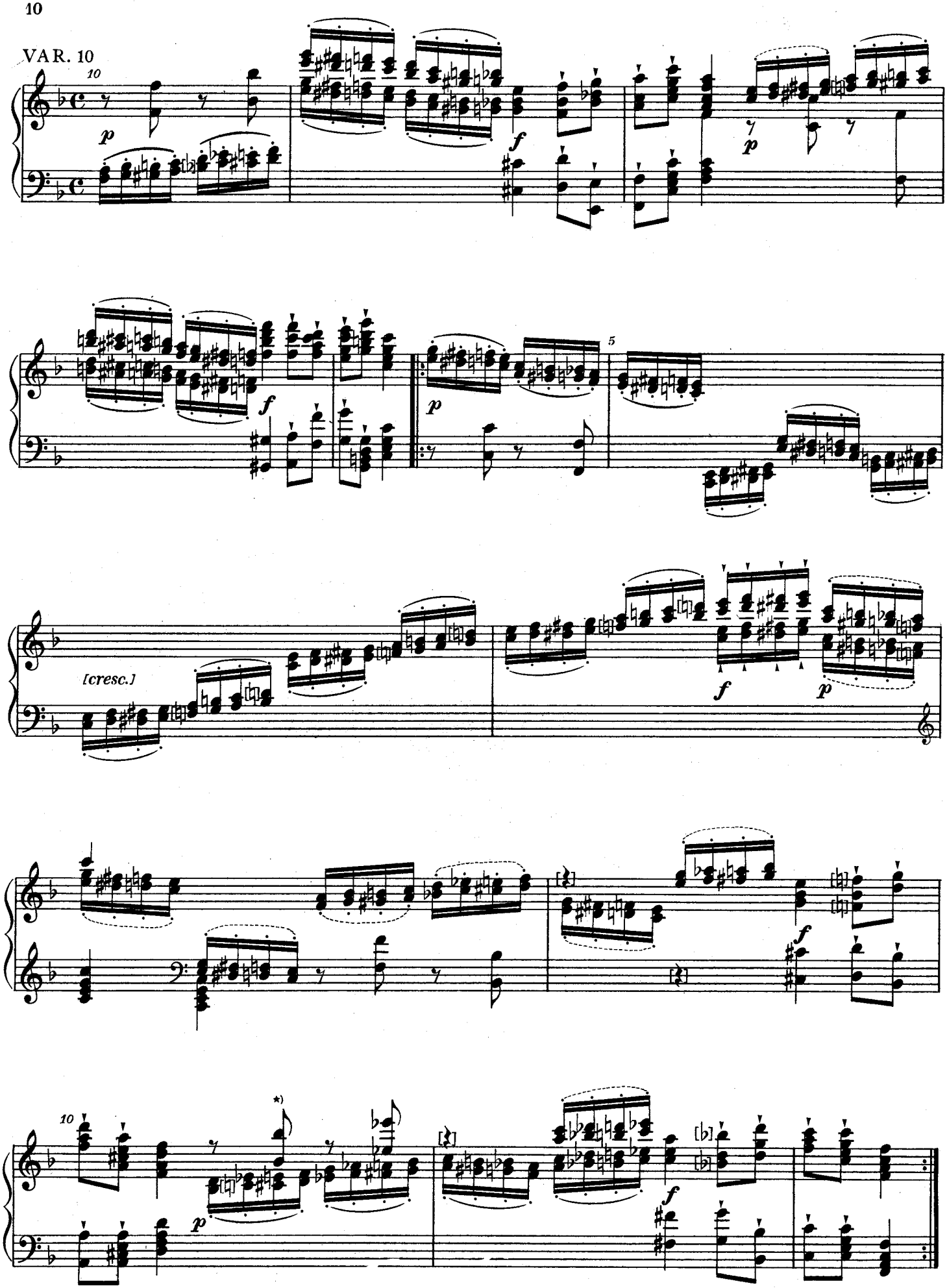

*) $F_1$




VAR. 9

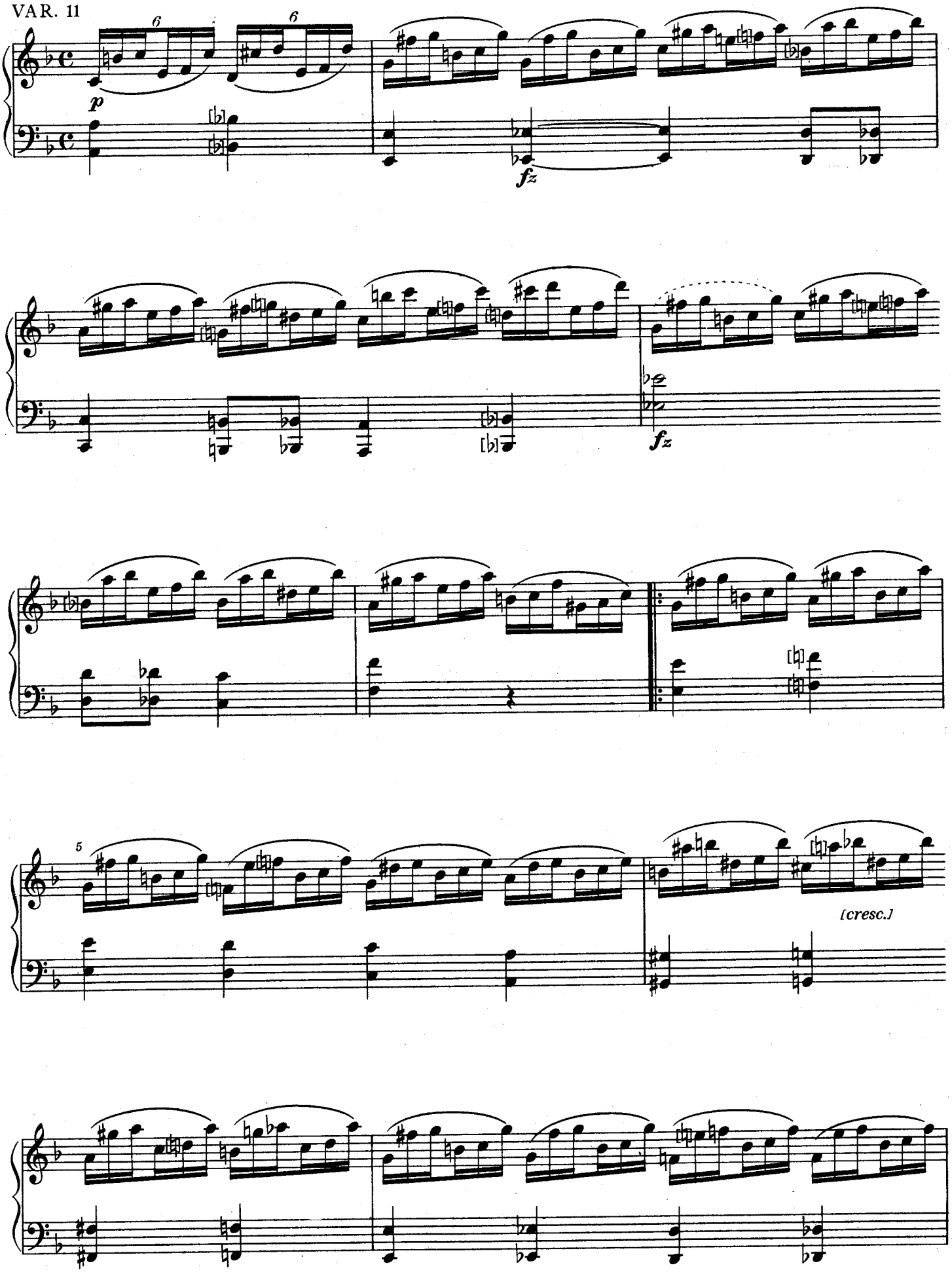


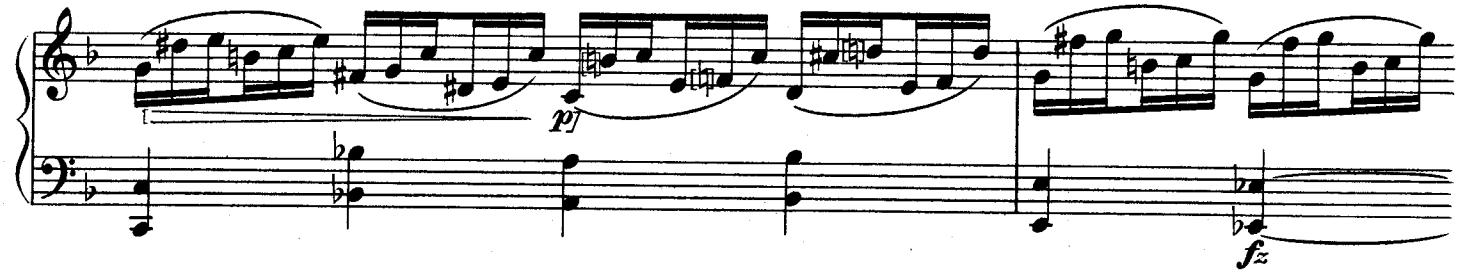
VAR. 10

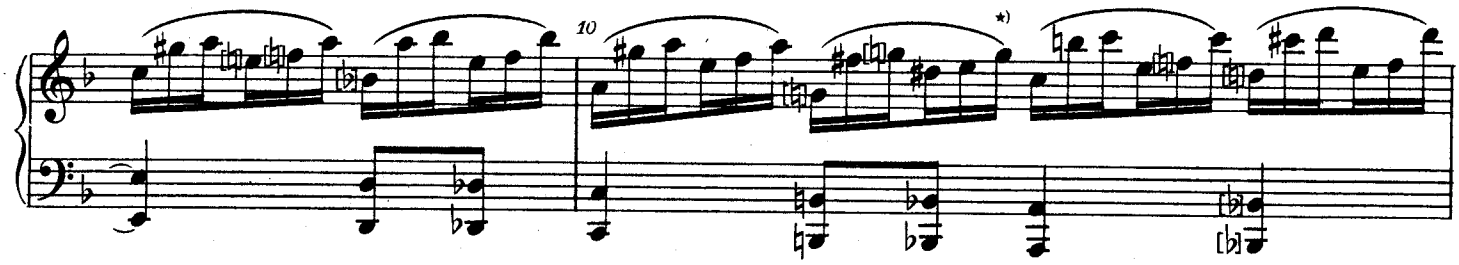


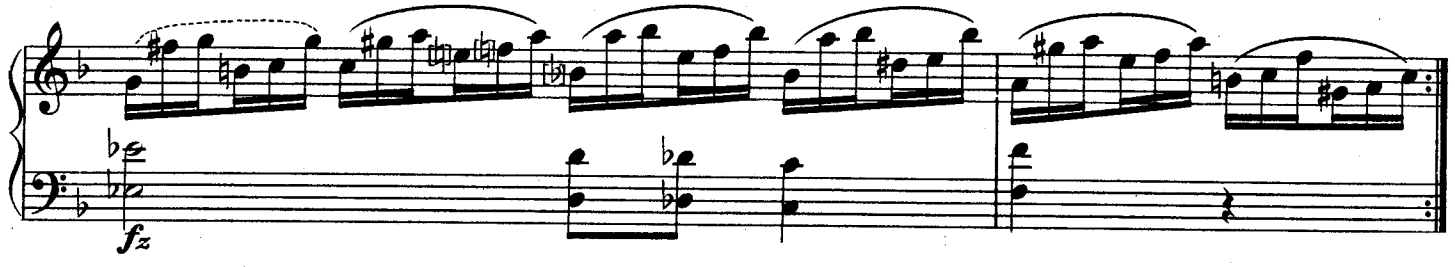

*) hes$^2$
d$^2$

VAR. 11

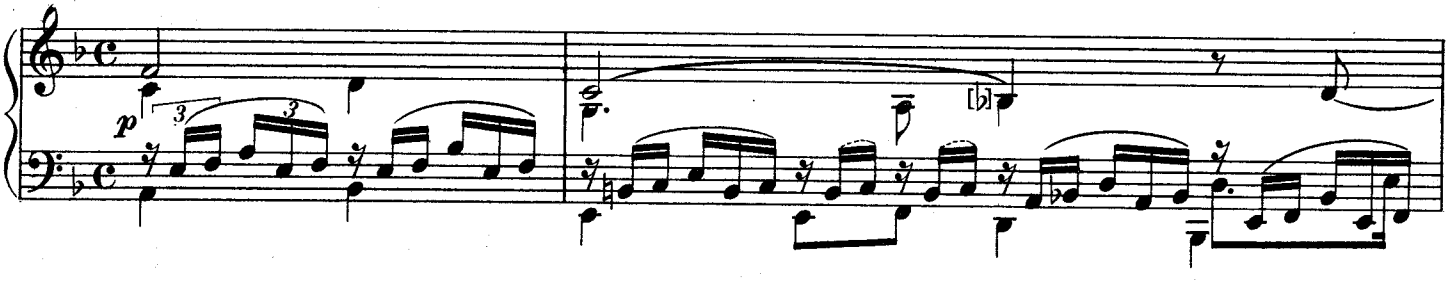


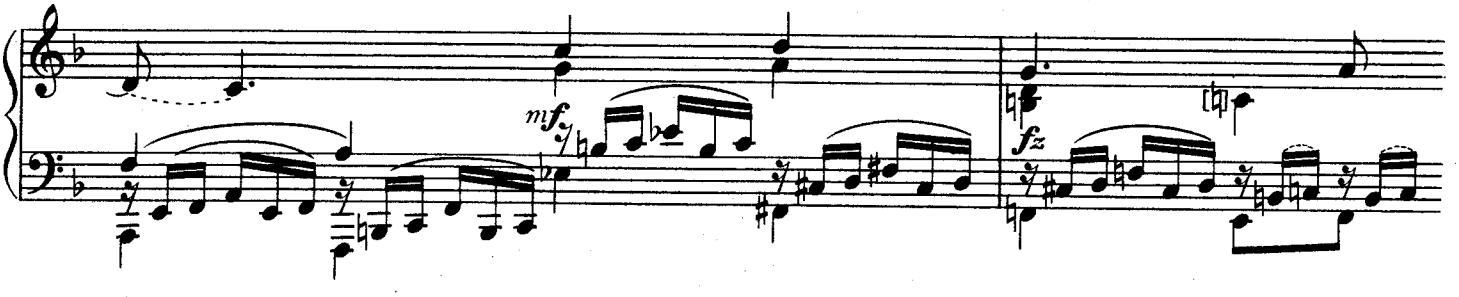


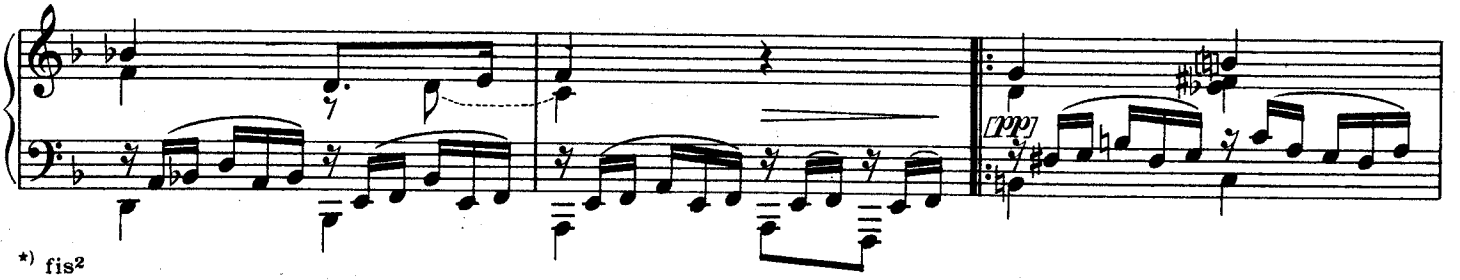



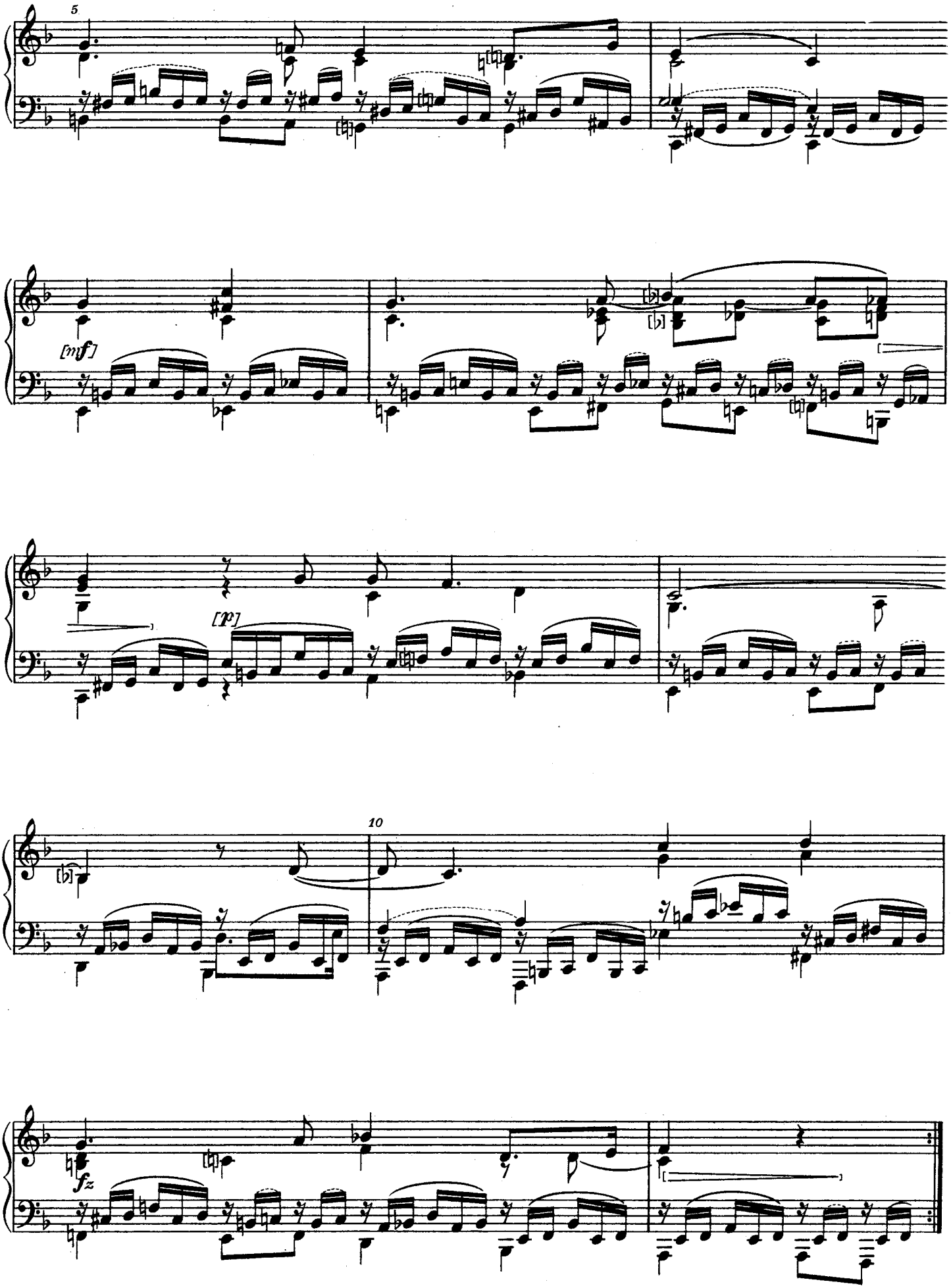

VAR. 12



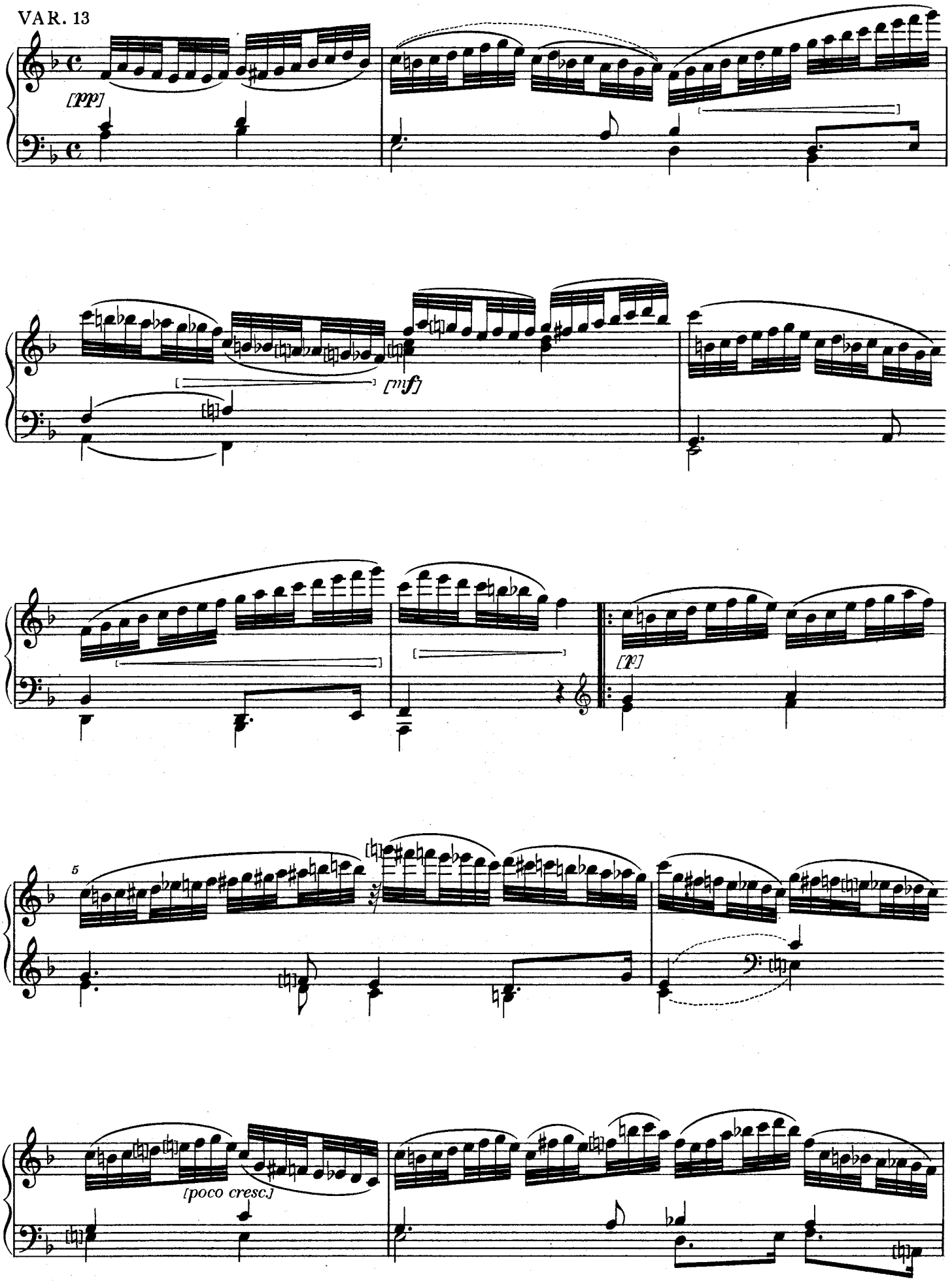



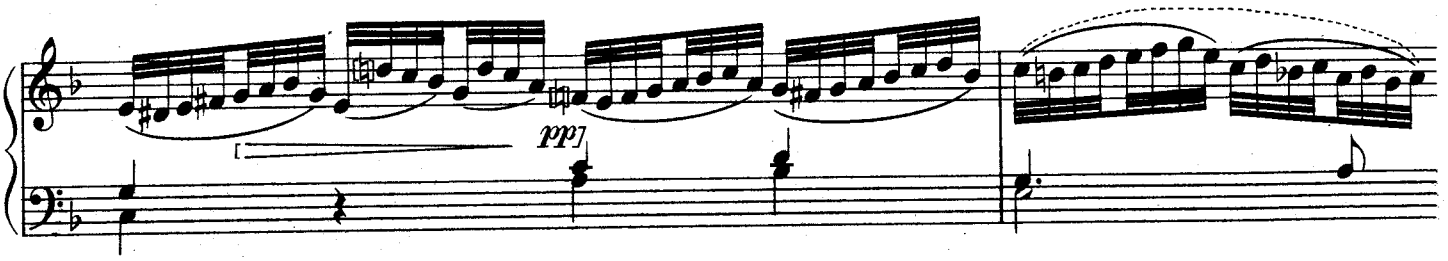



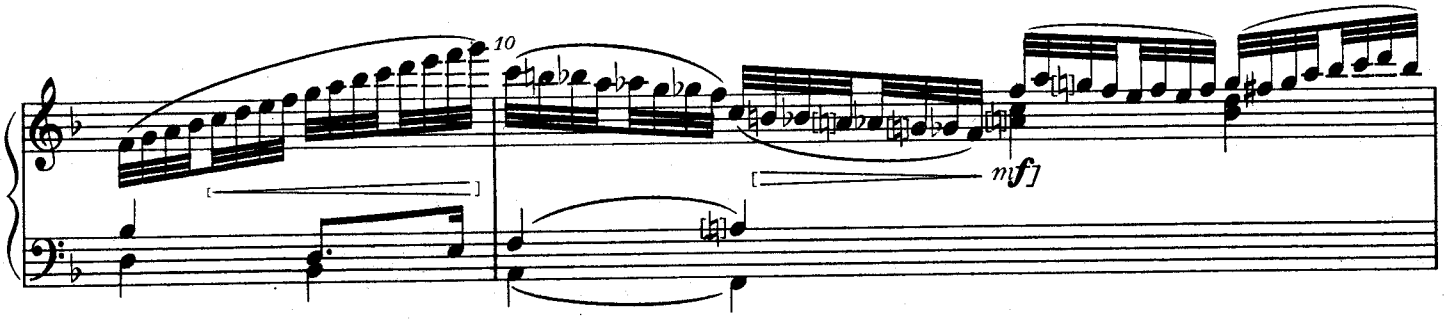

*) fis²

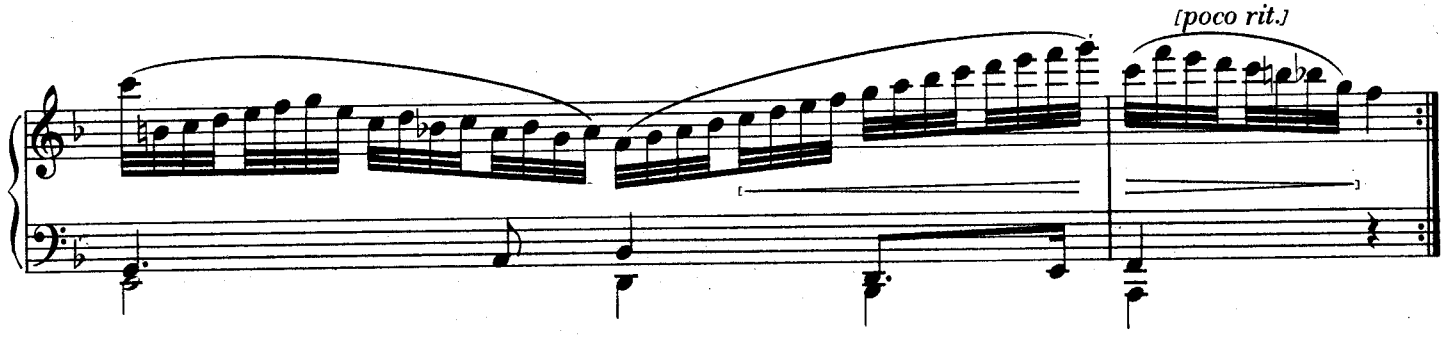

5
[mf]
[p]
10
fz

VAR. 13

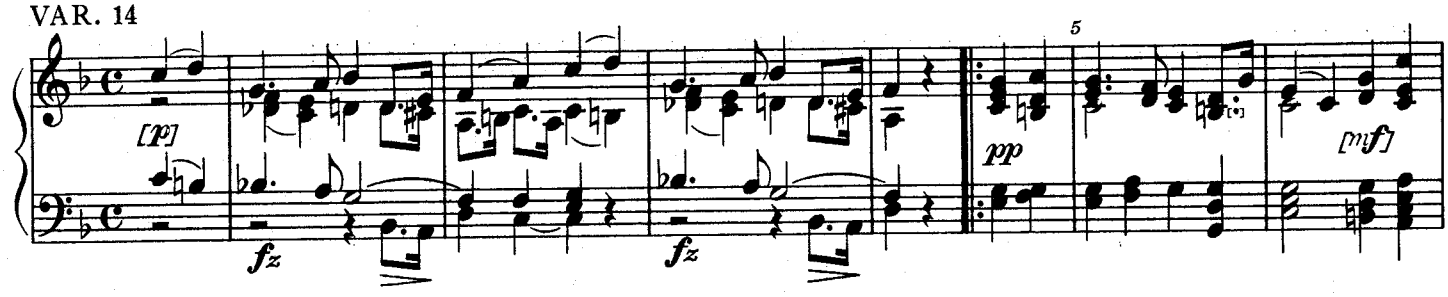


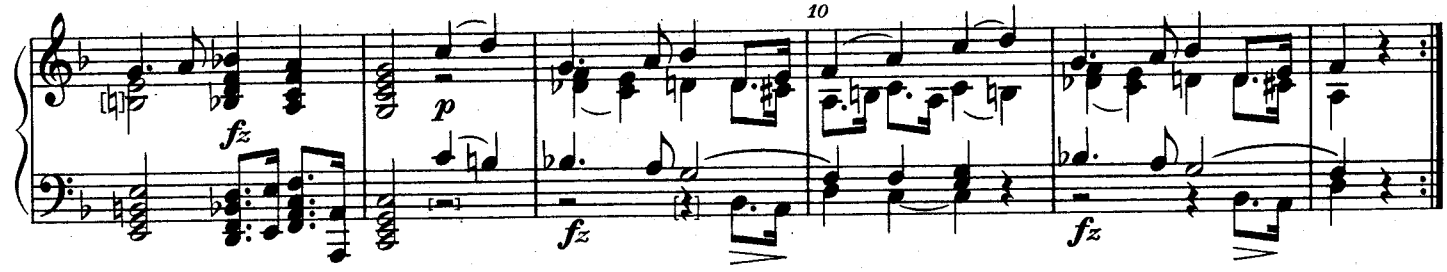


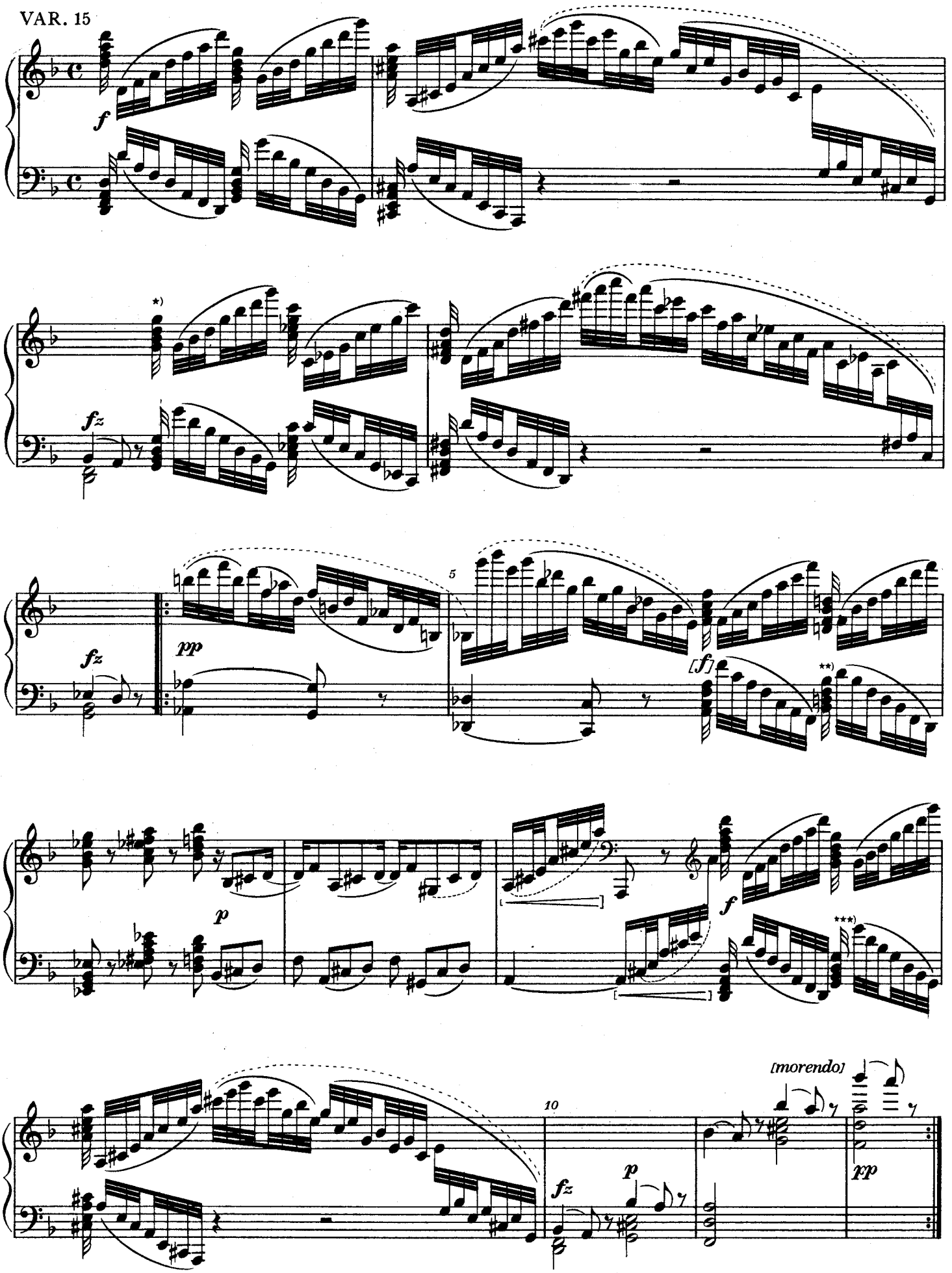




VAR. 14



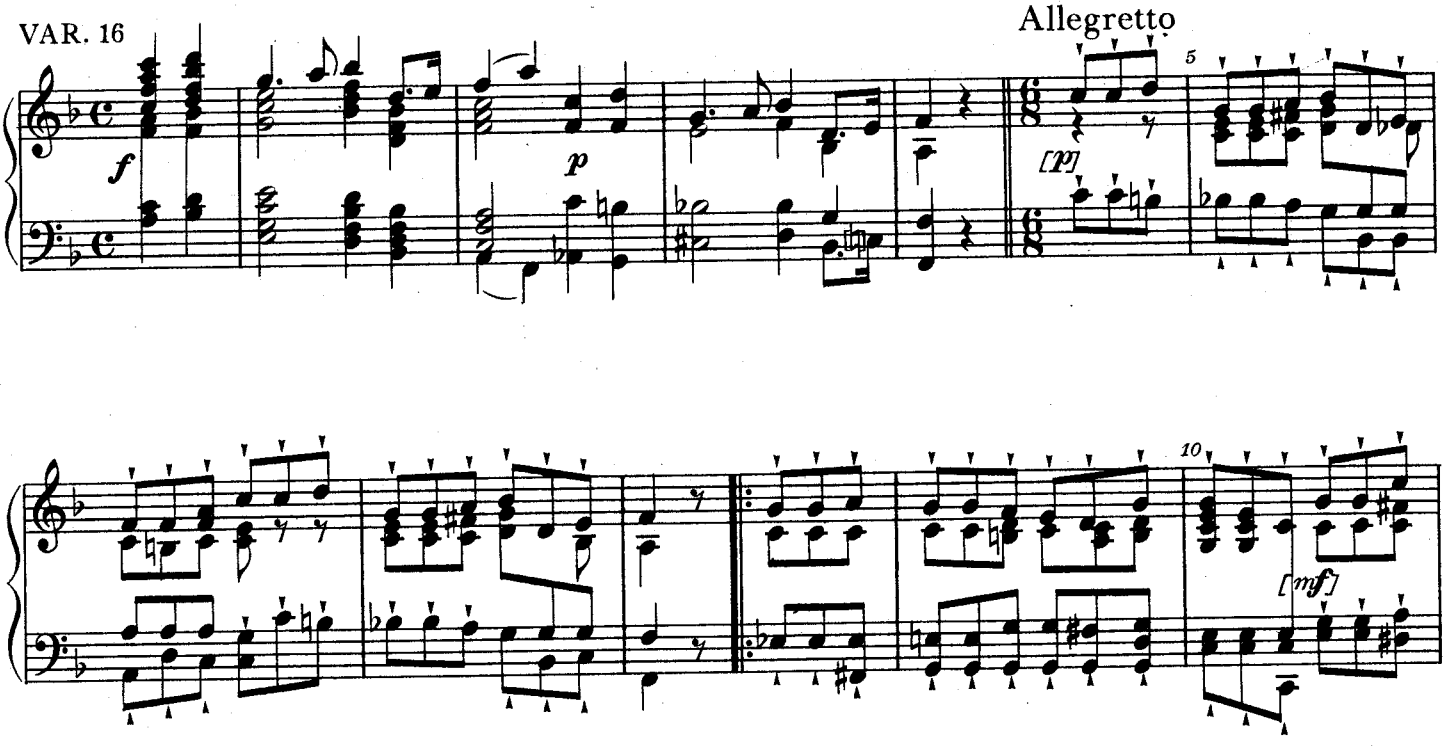
VAR. 15




*) g¹-hes¹-e²-g² **) Hes-e-g-hes ***) G-Hes-e-g

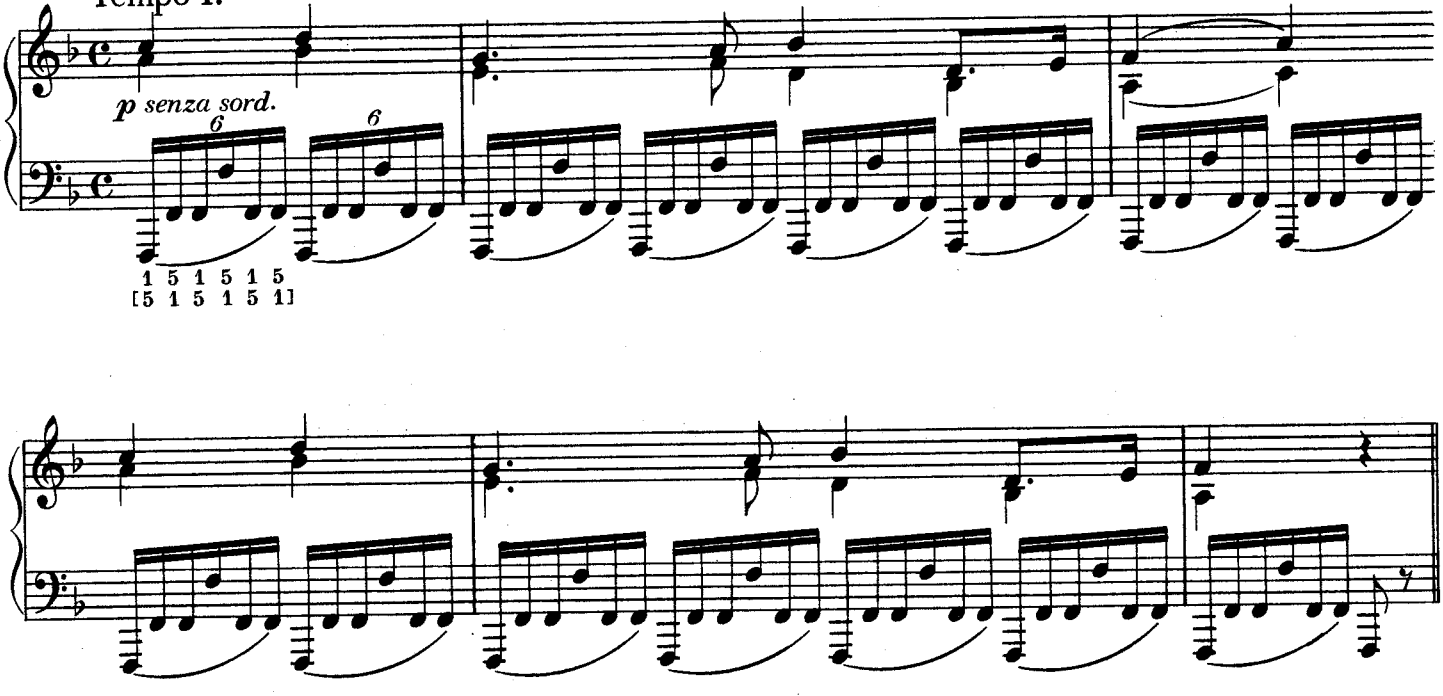
VAR. 16

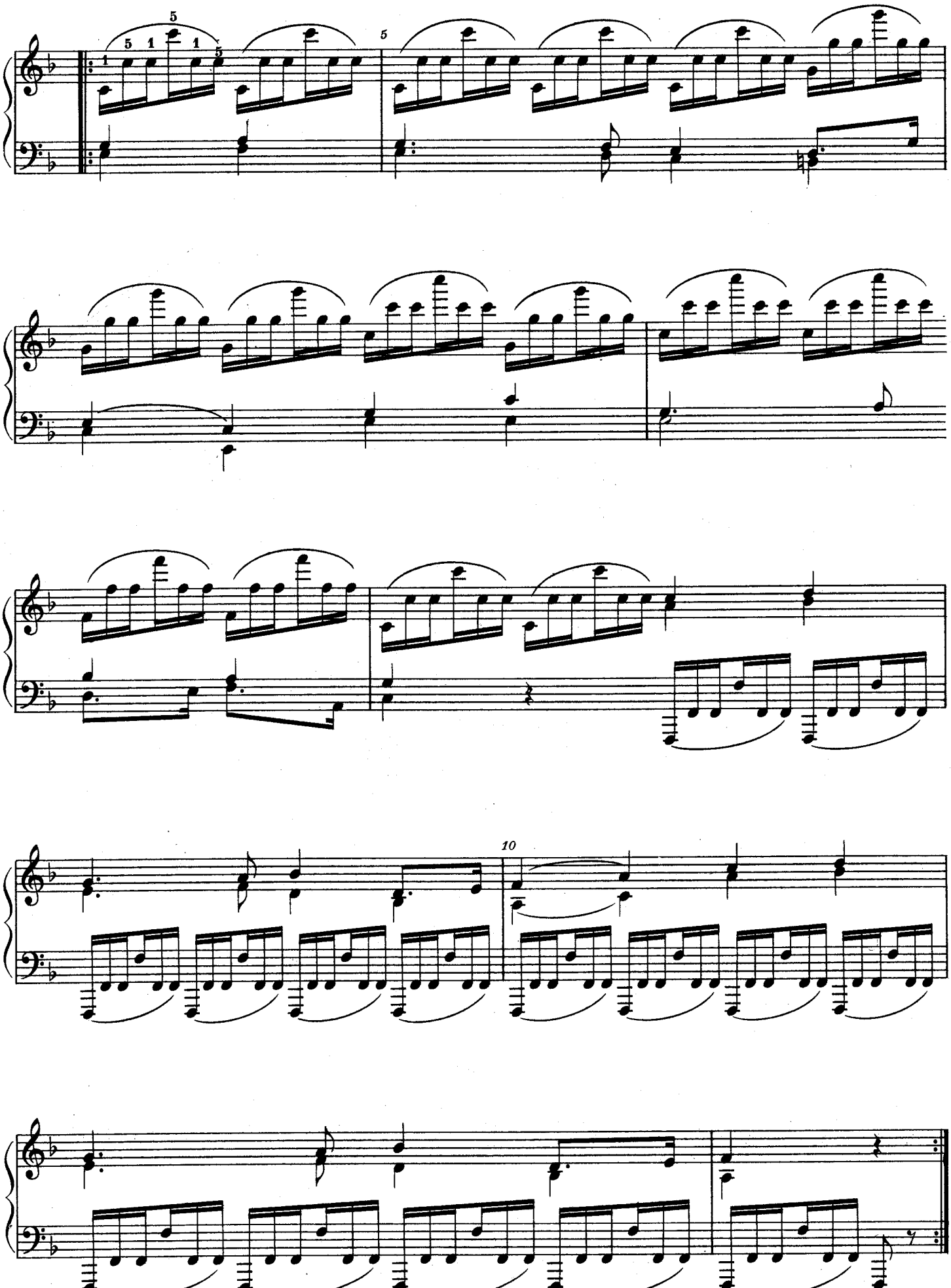
Allegretto

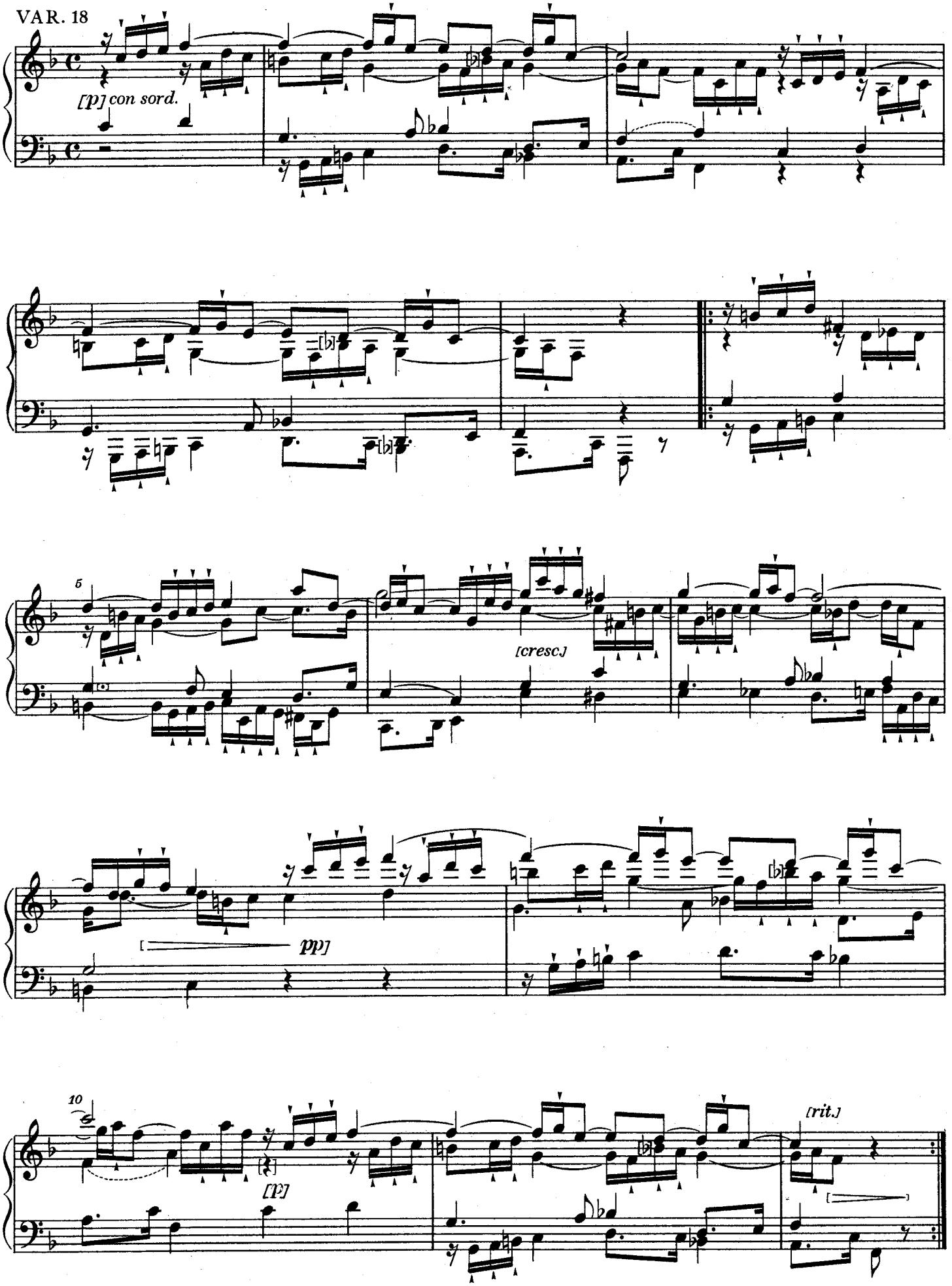



VAR. 17

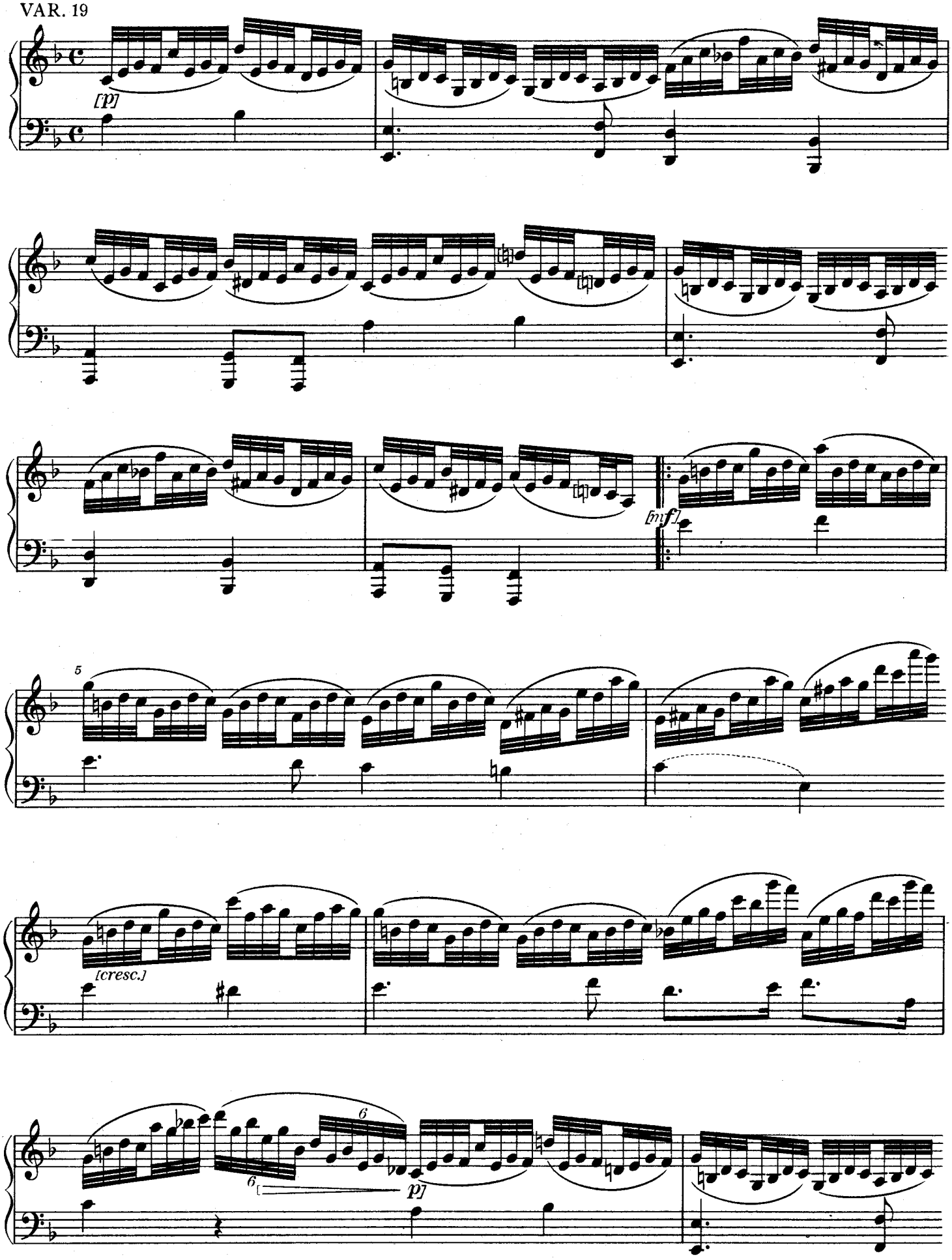
Tempo I.

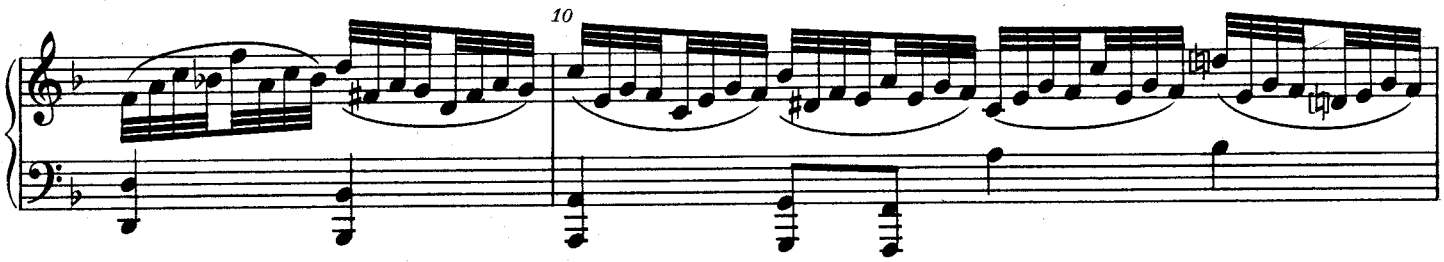


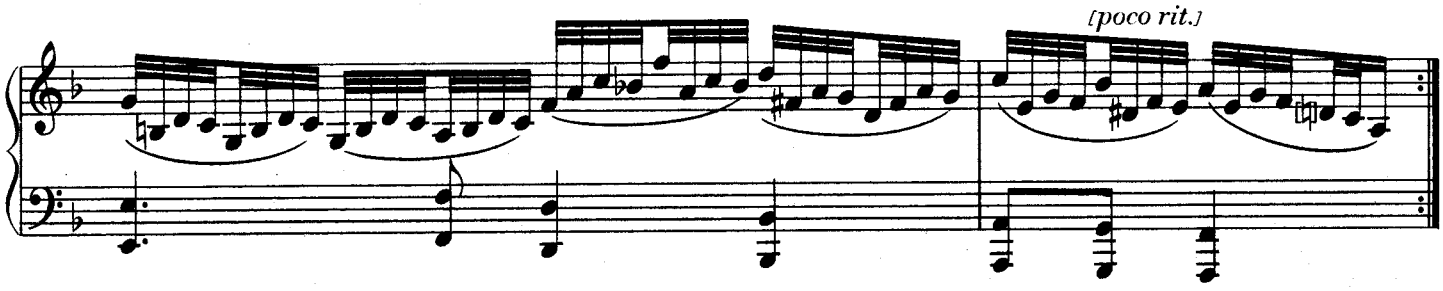


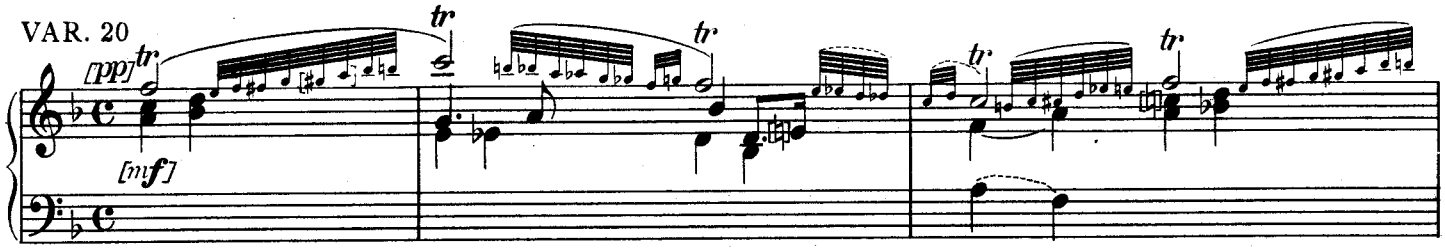

VAR. 18
[p] con sord.
5
[cresc.]
[pp]
10
[p]
[rit.]

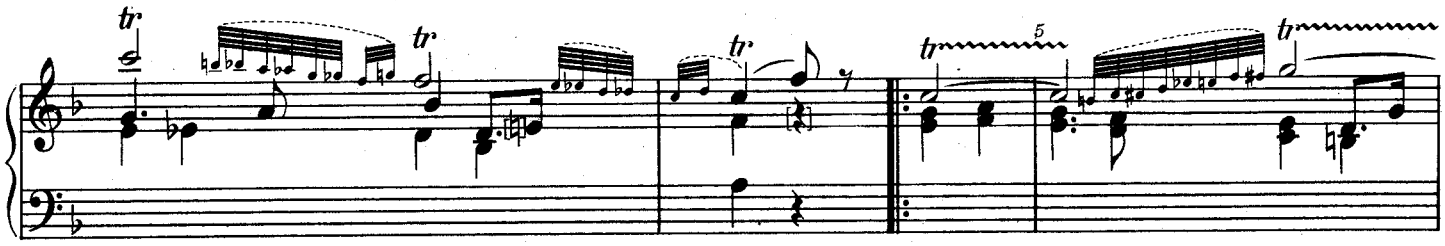
VAR. 19

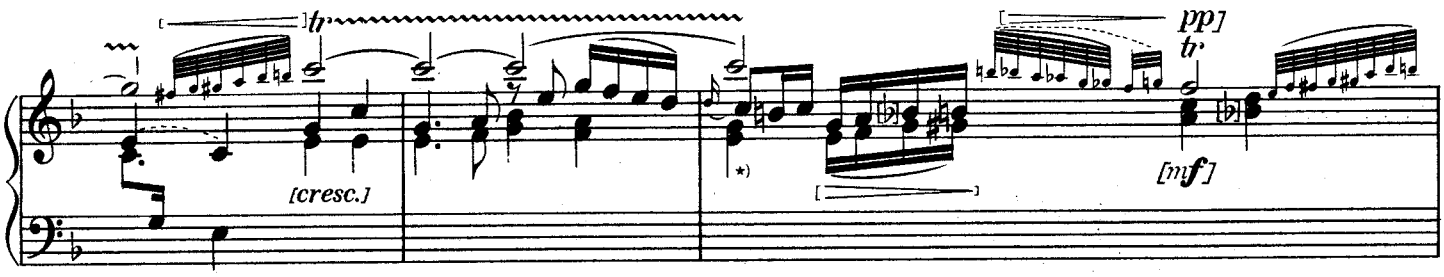


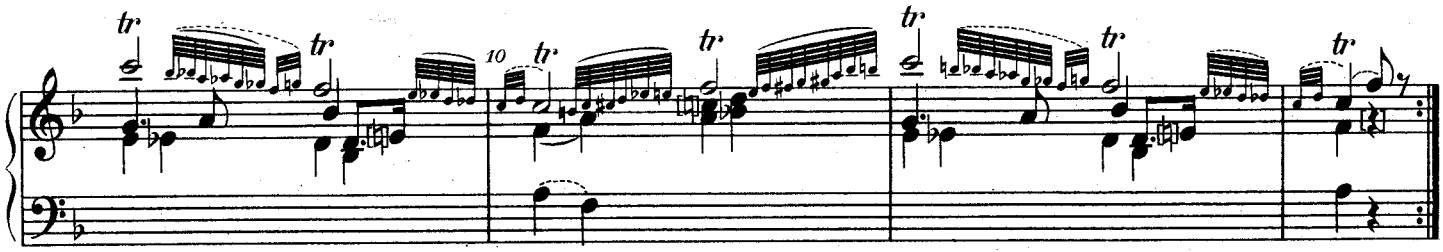


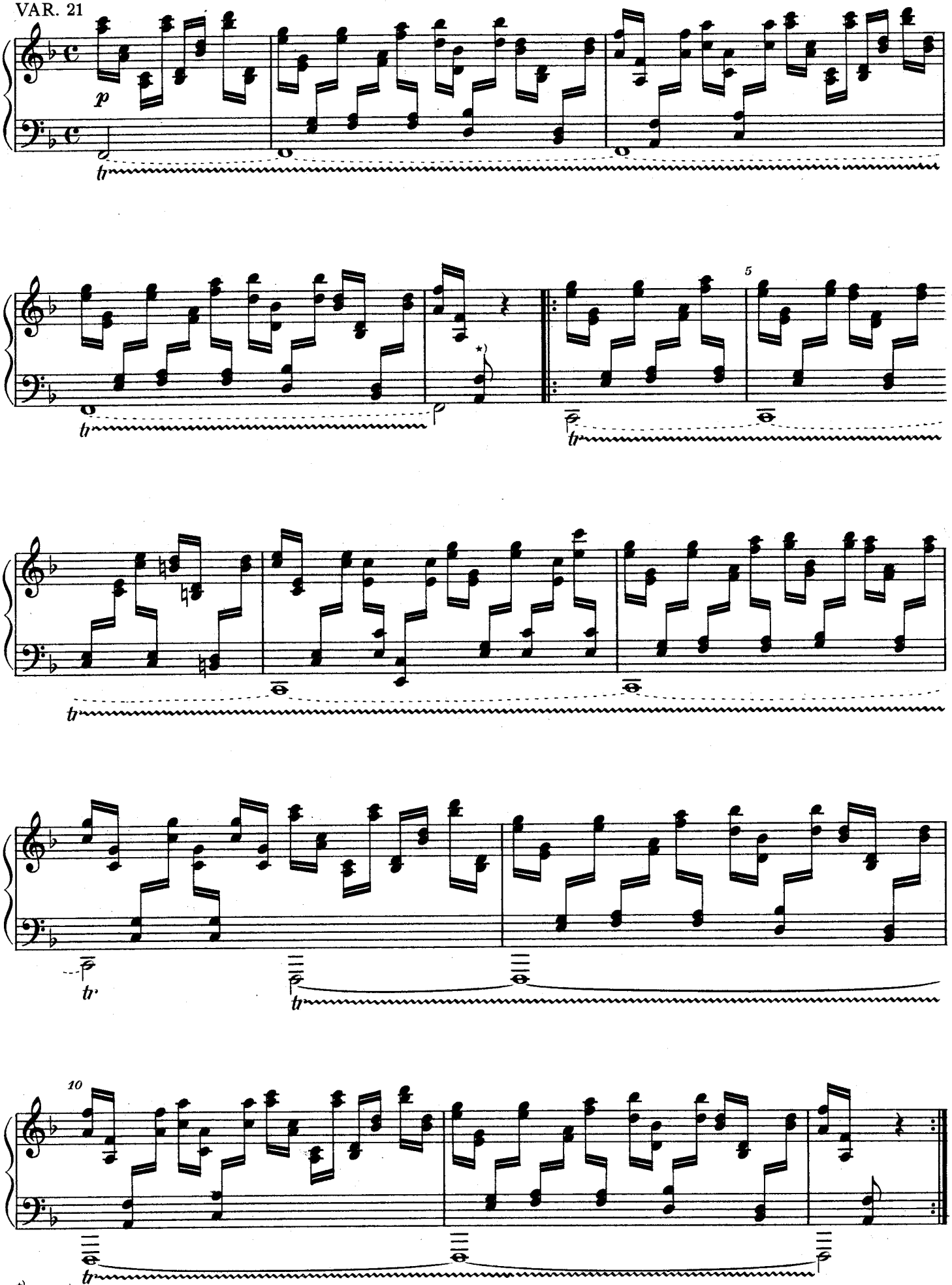



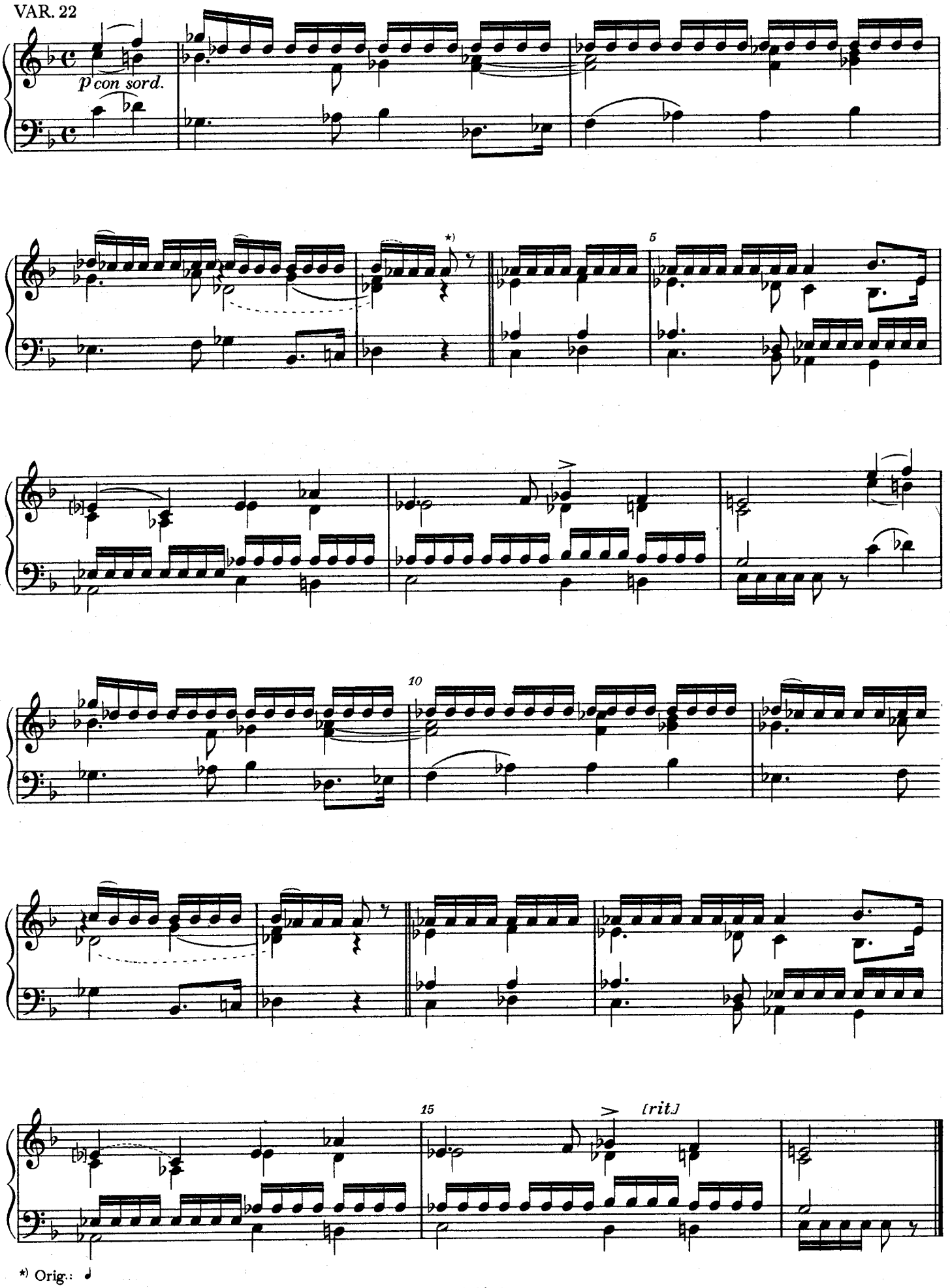



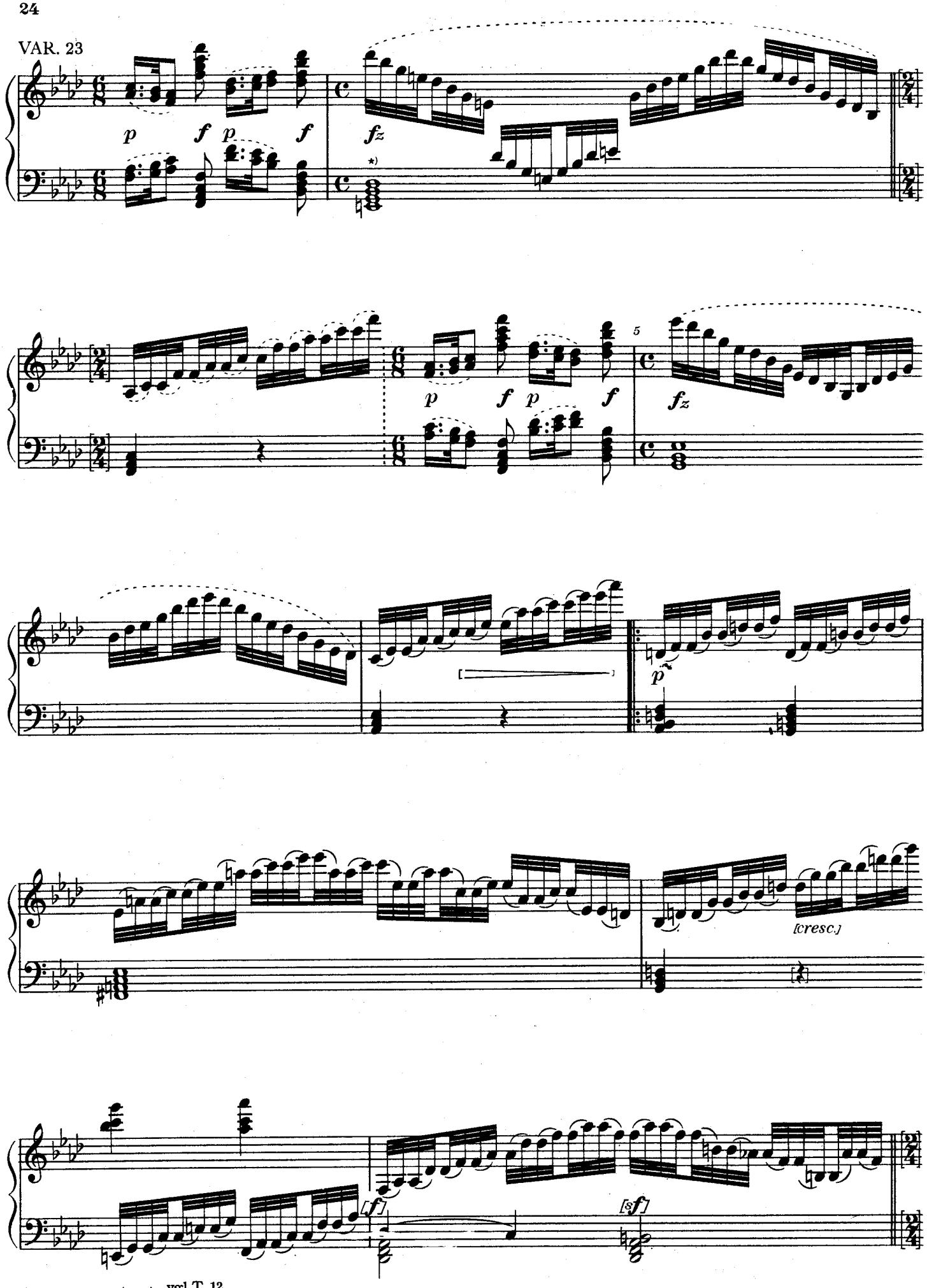

*) g¹
d¹

VAR. 21

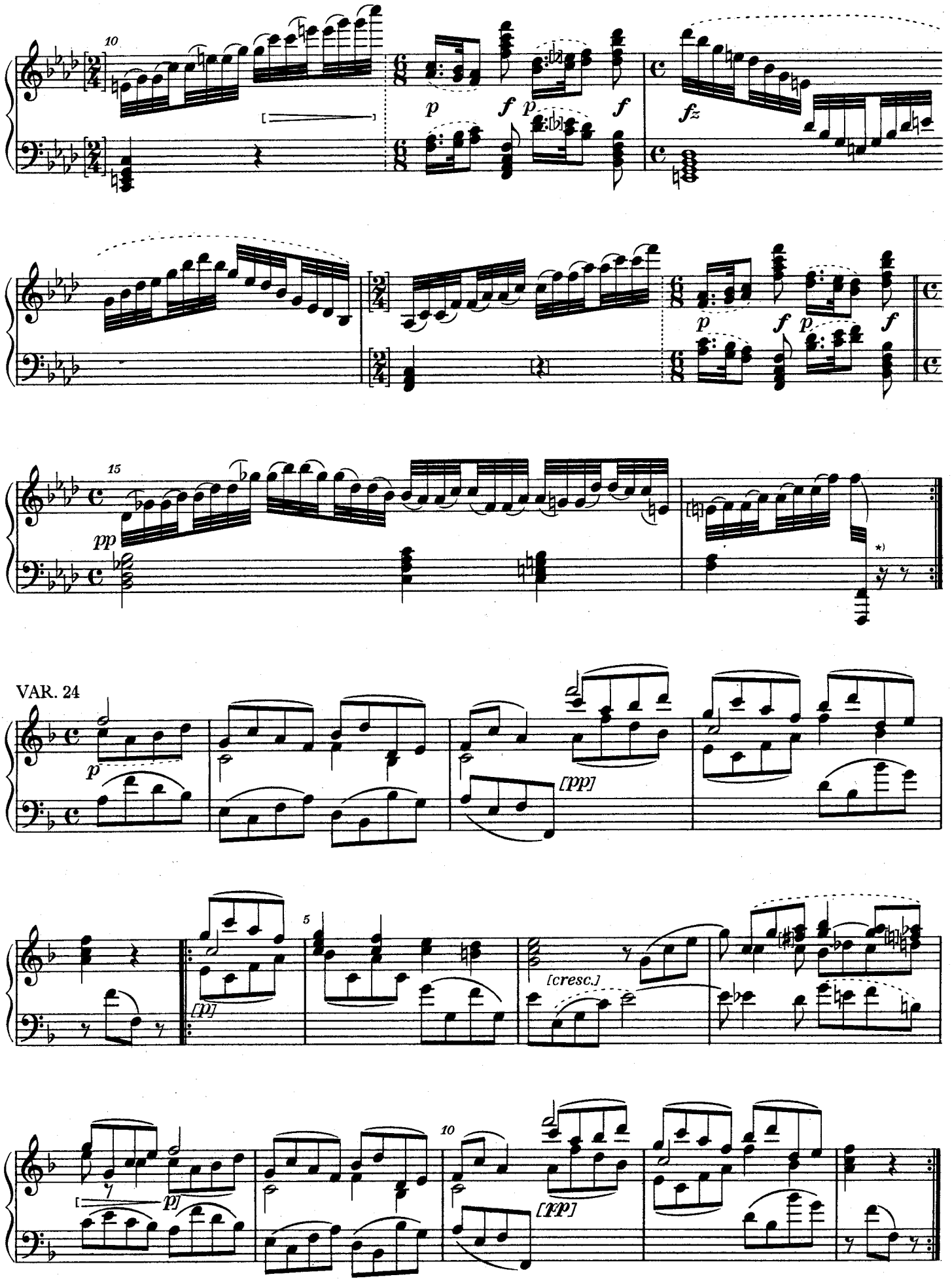




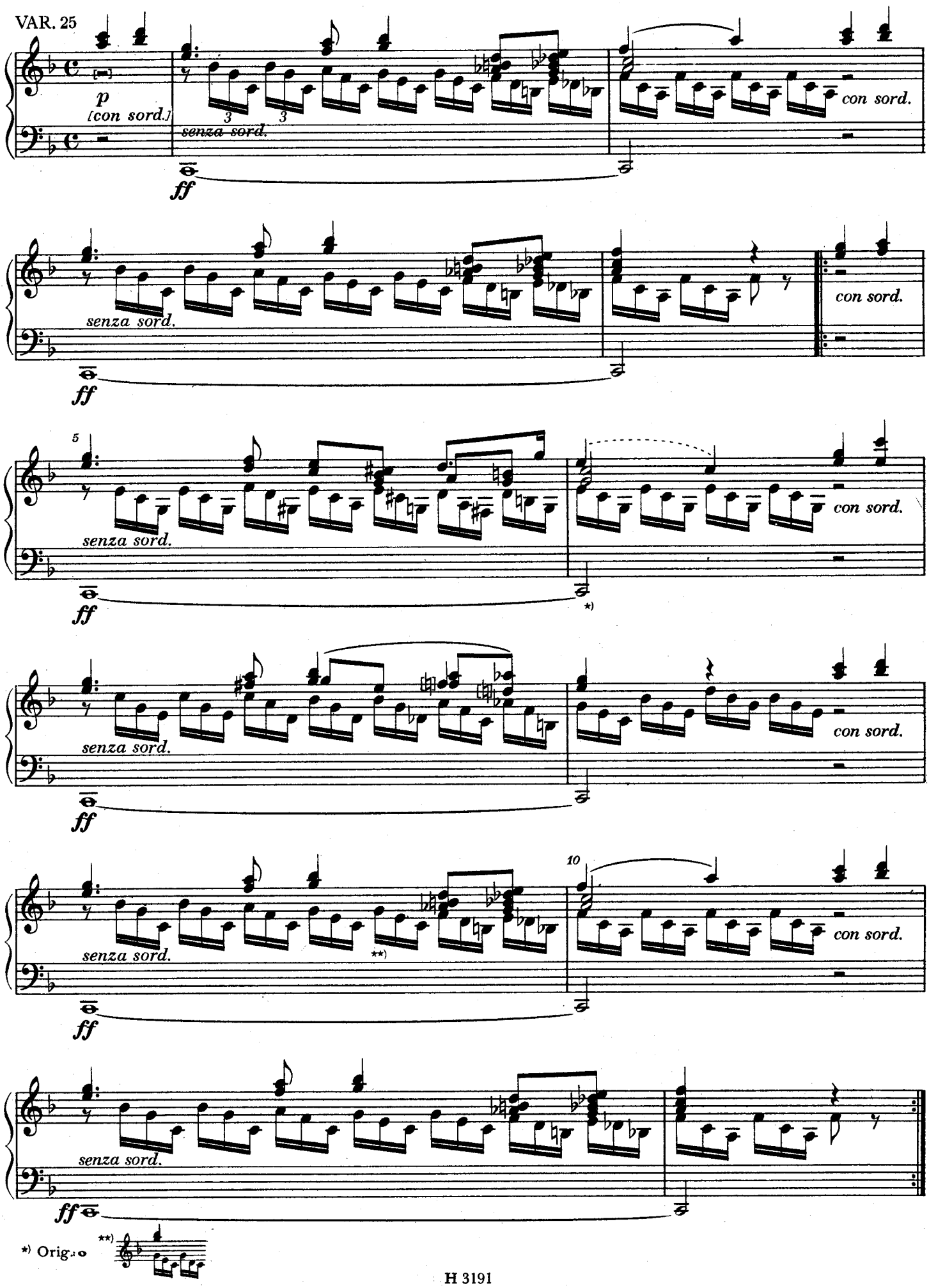

*) Orig.: ♩

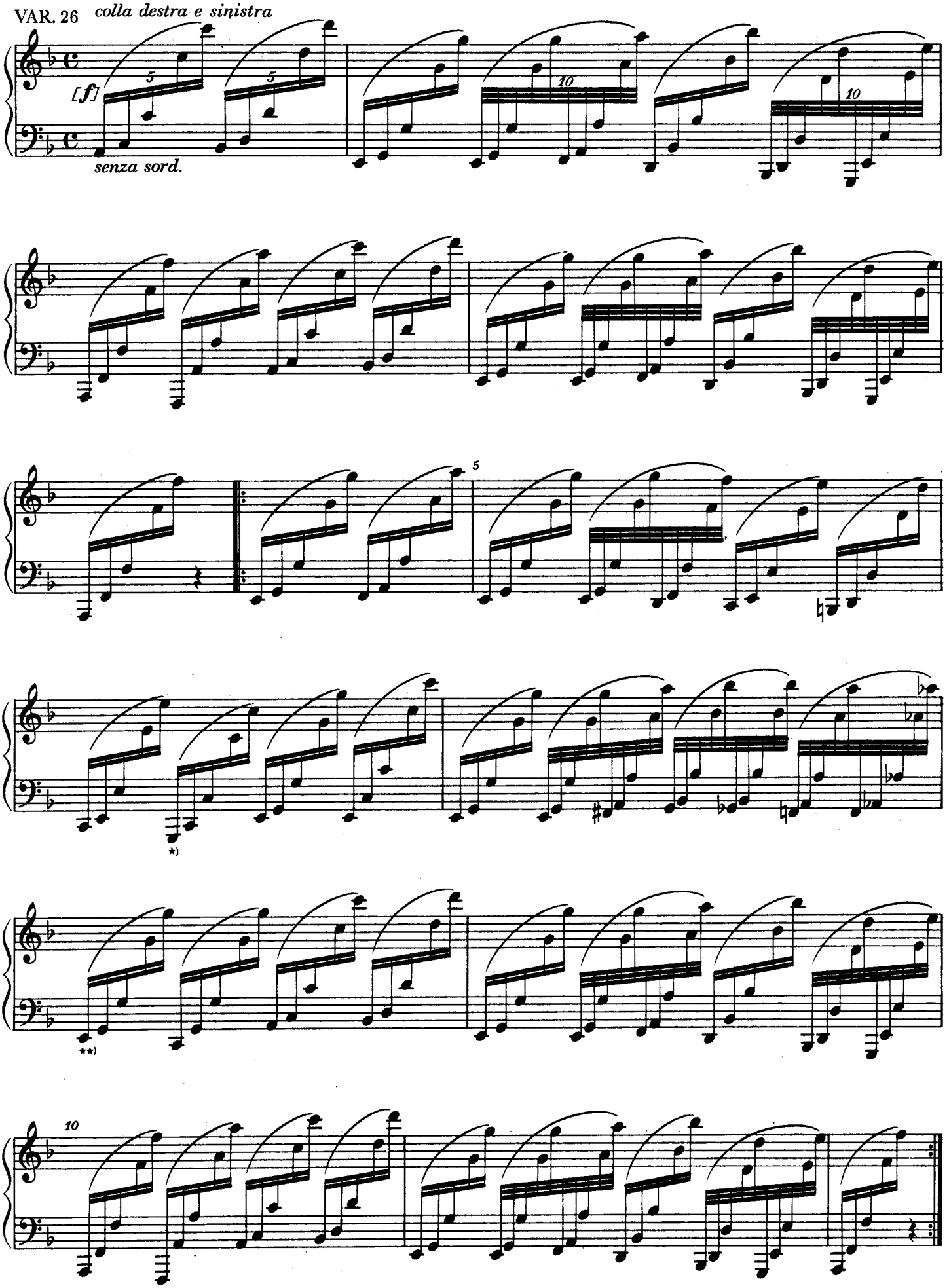



*) E-G-Hes-es (sic!); vgl T. 12 / see b. 12

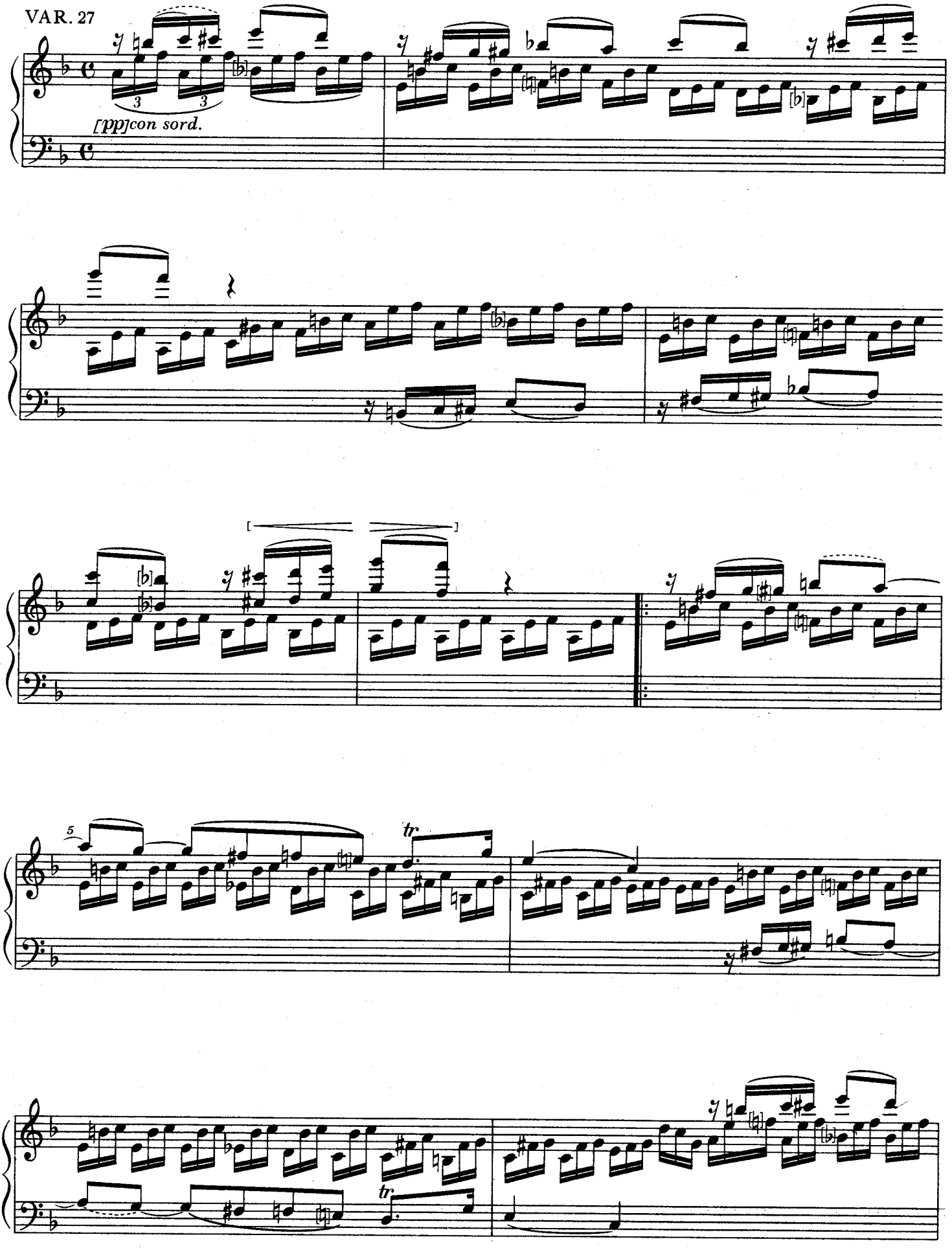


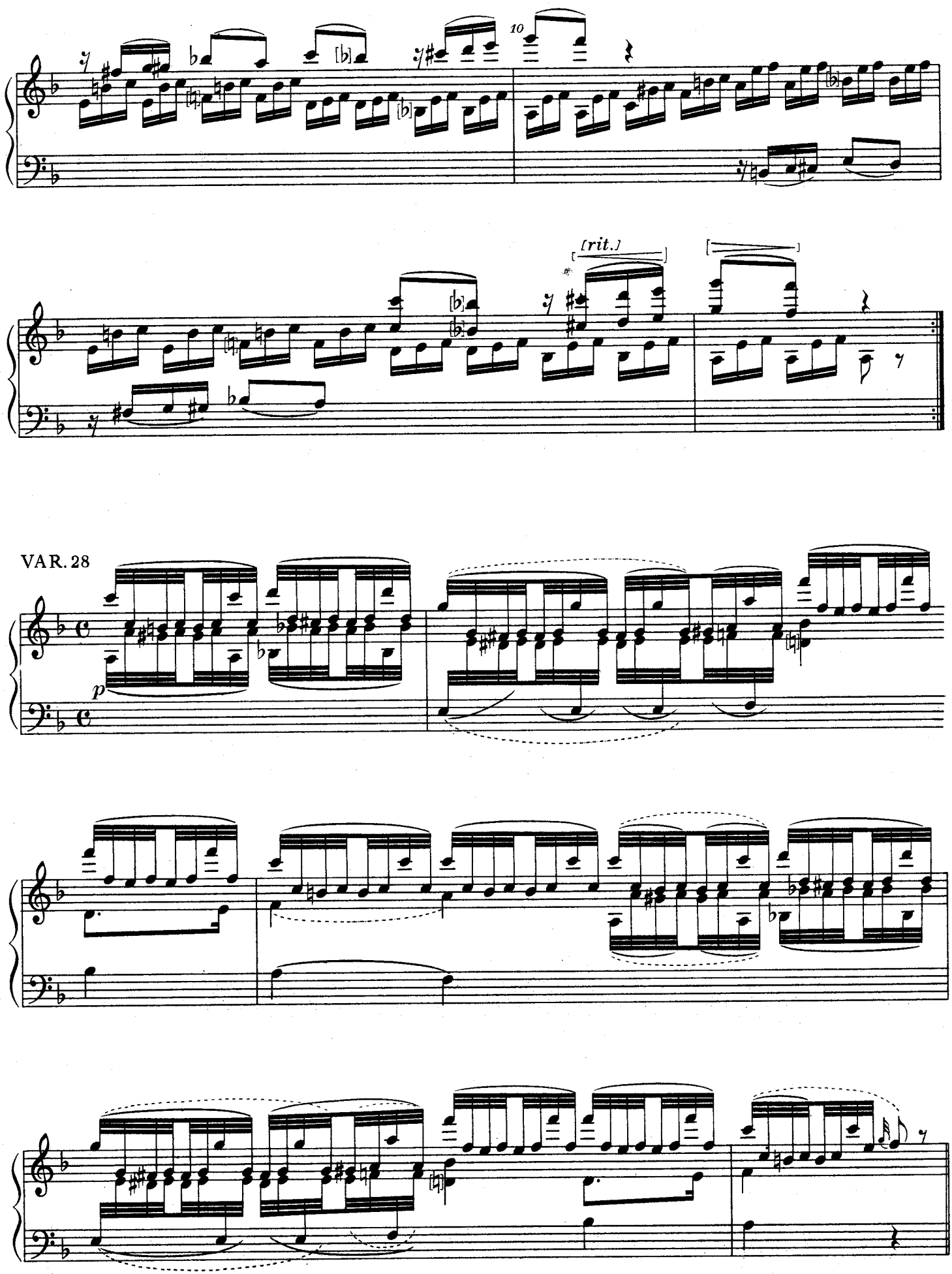

*) Orig.: 𝅗𝅥 𝅘𝅥

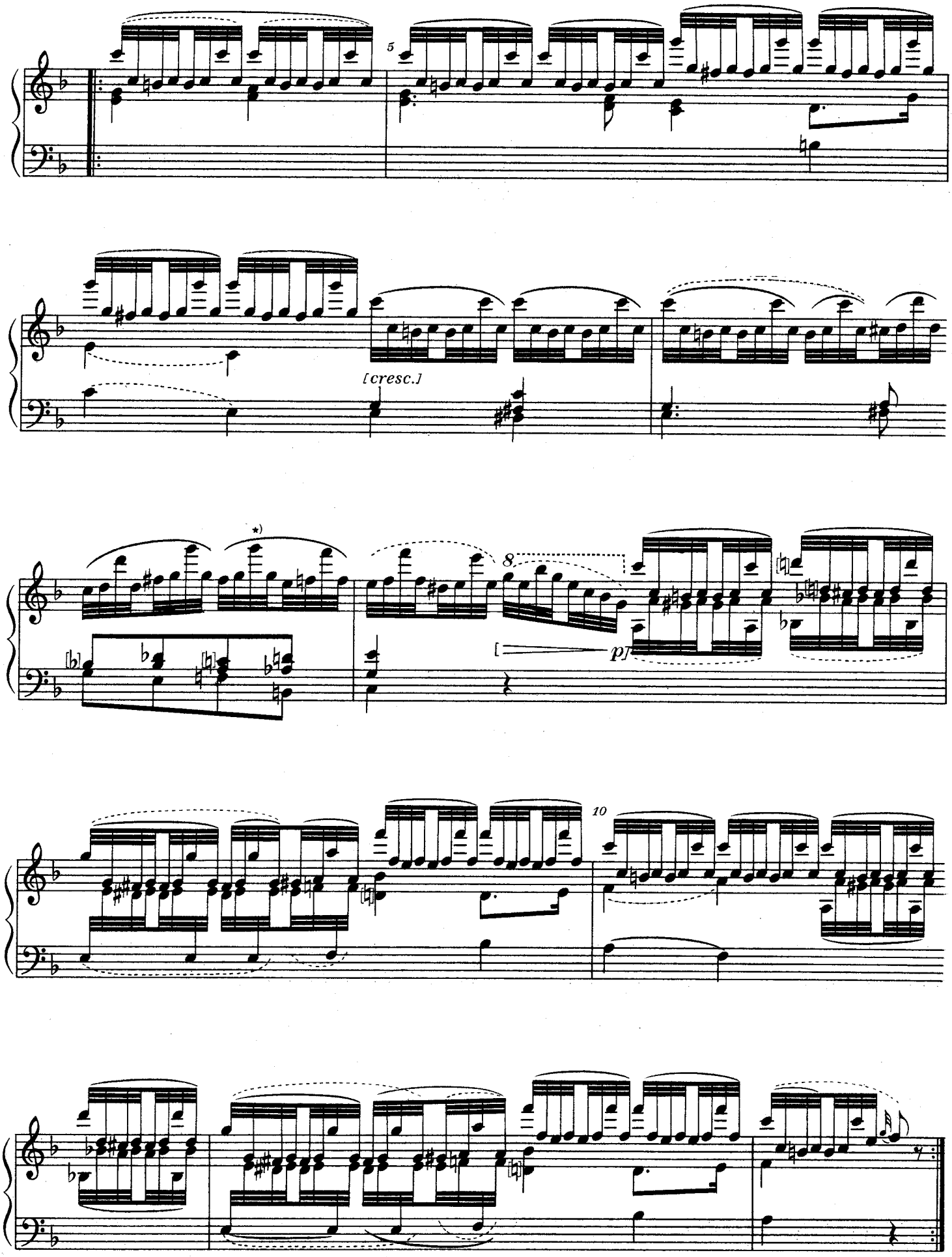

VAR. 25
p
[con sord.]
senza sord.
con sord.
ff
5
*)
10
**)
*) Original



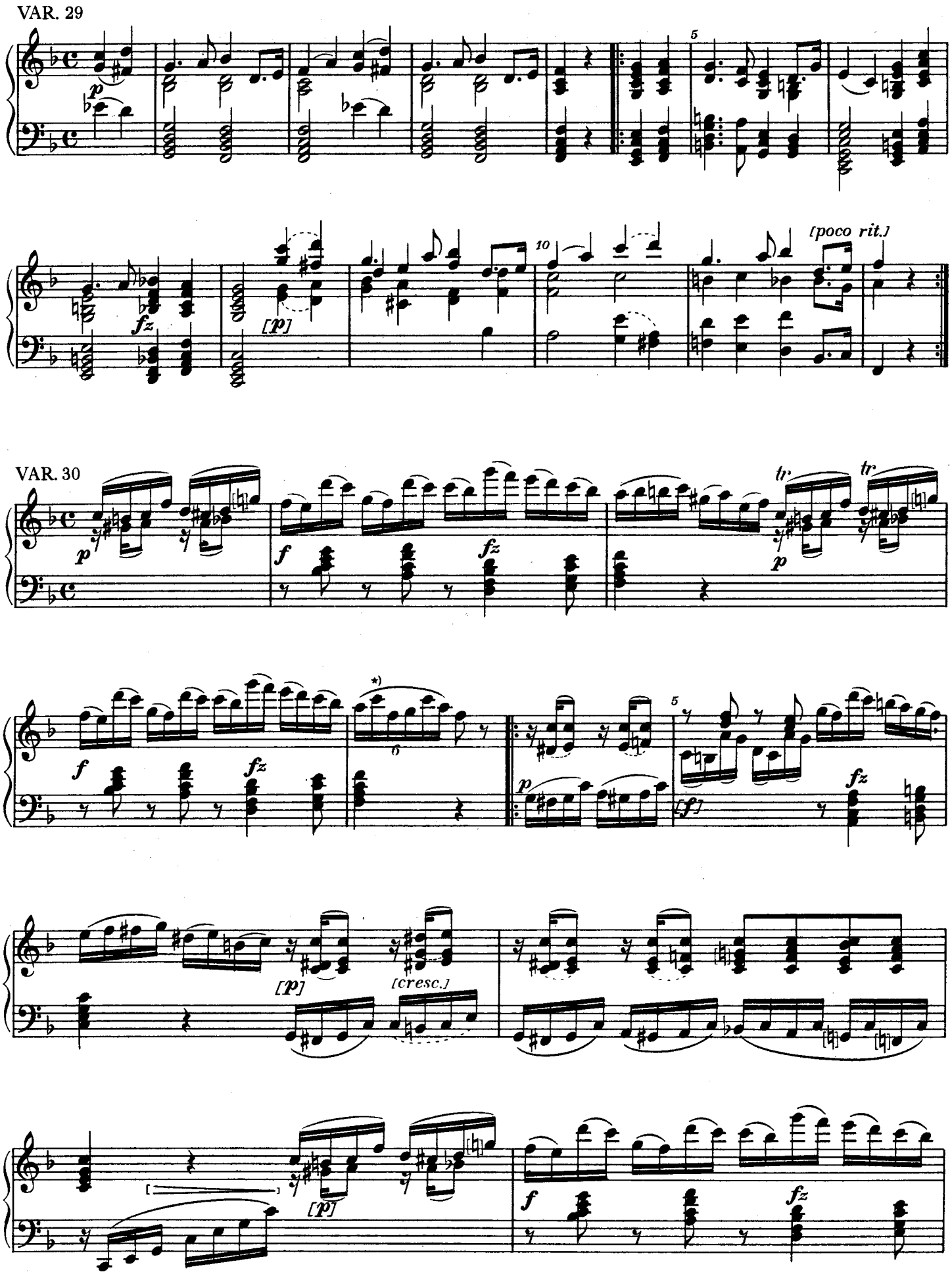

*) $A_1$ **) C


VAR. 27
[pp]con sord.
tr
tr

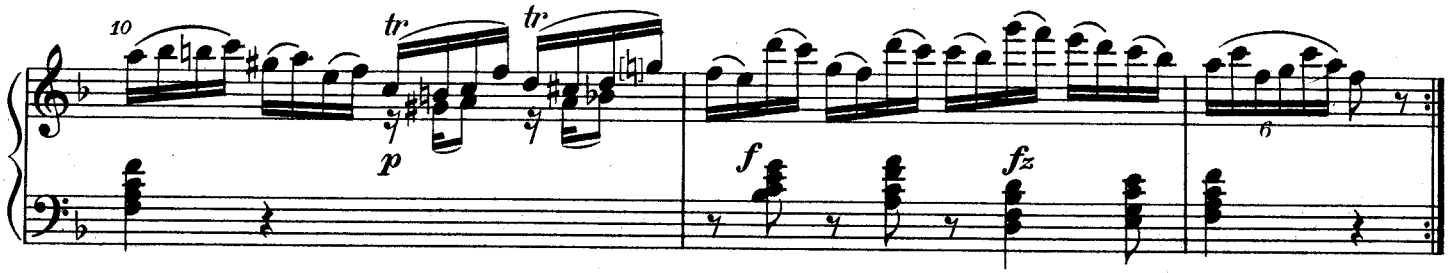

10
[rit.]
VAR. 28
p




*) e3

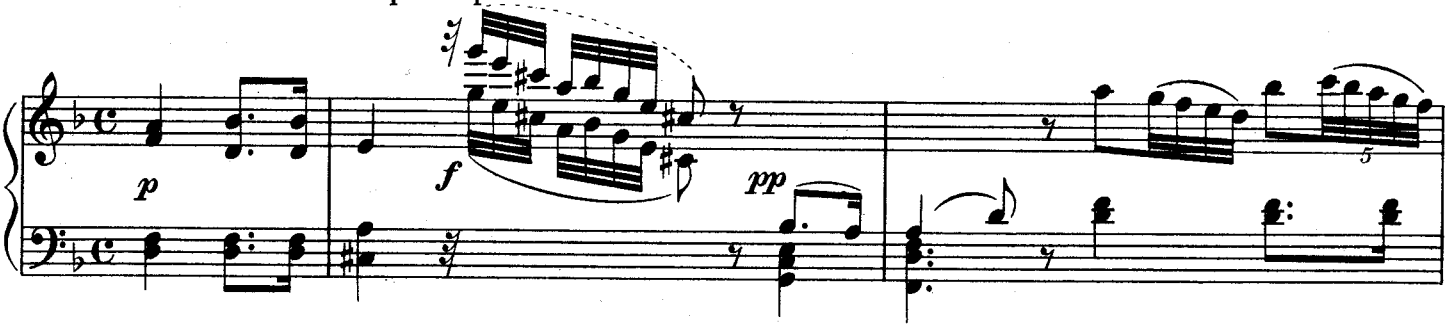


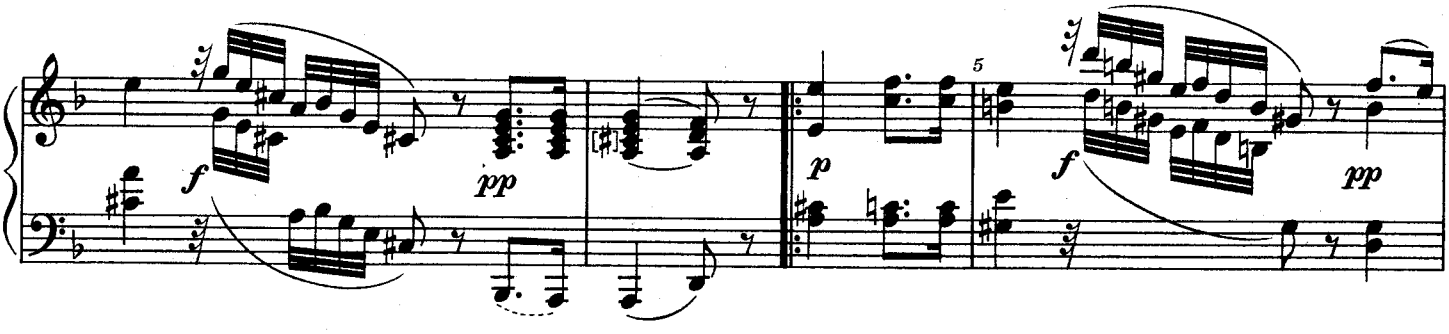

*) hes 2

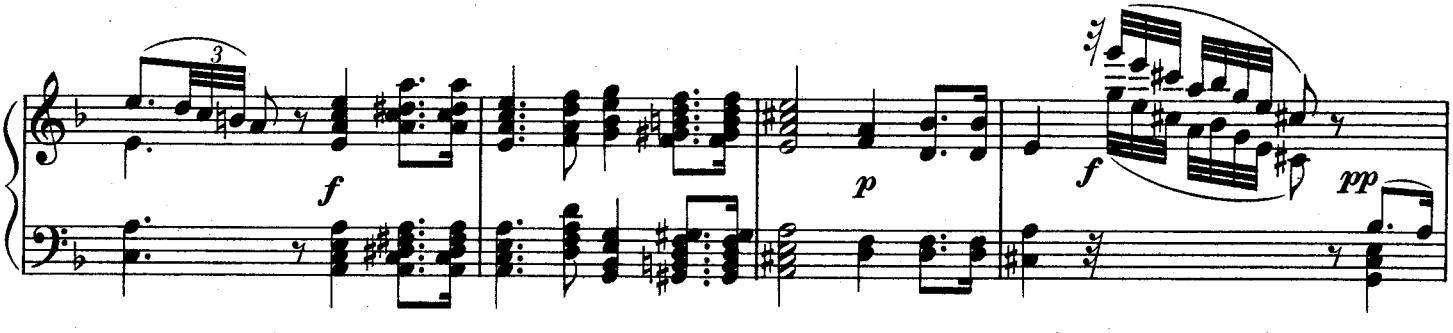


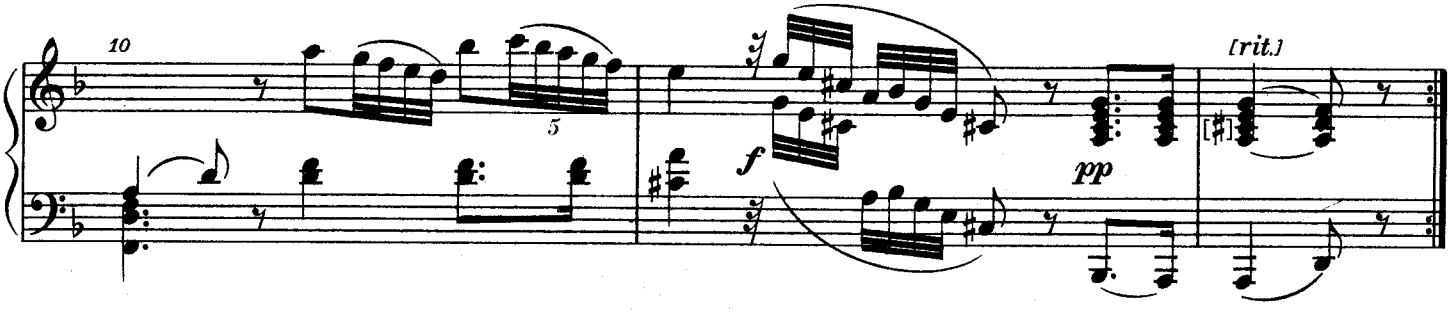

VAR. 31

Marche funèbre.Un poco più lento

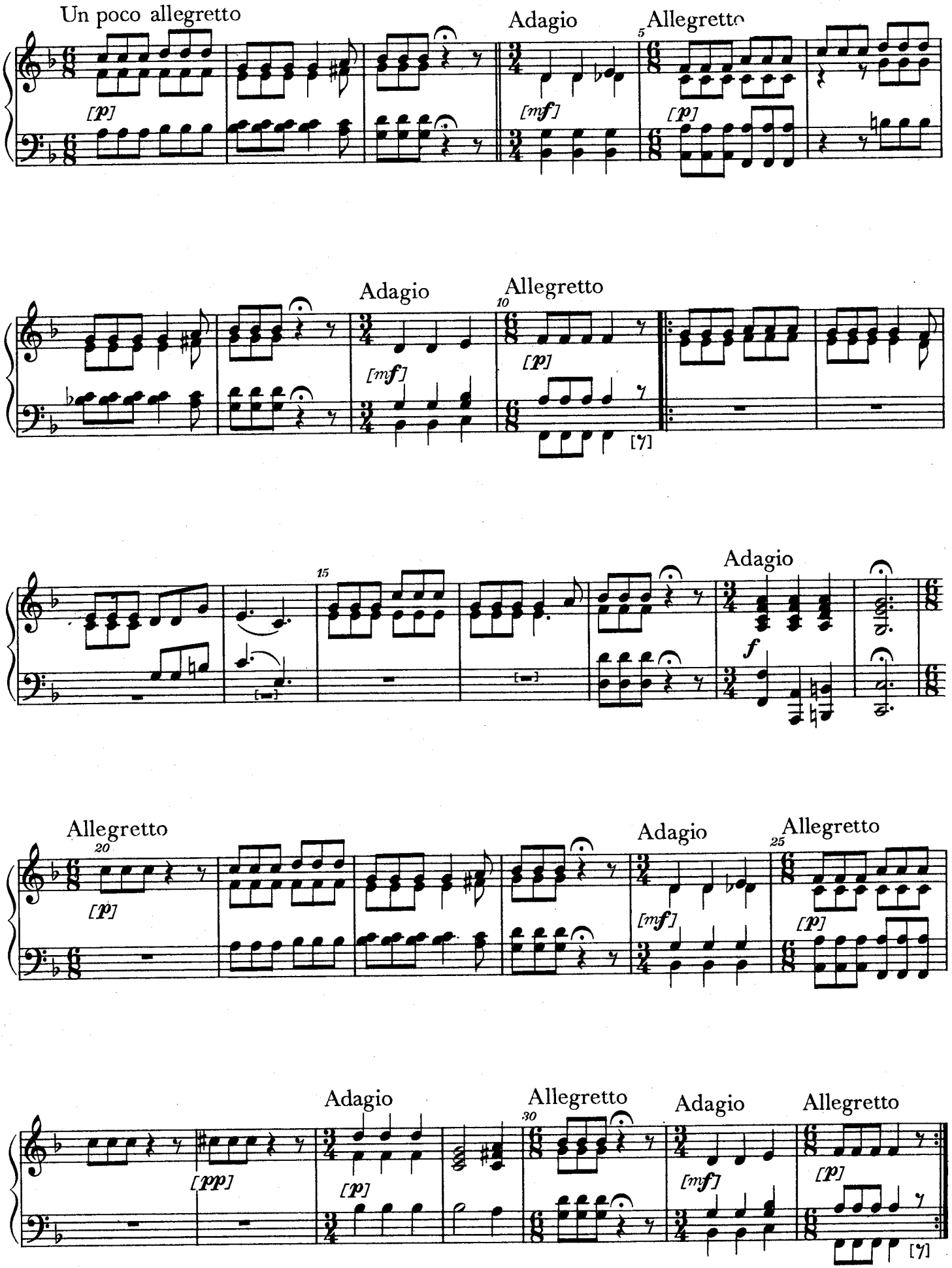


VAR. 32


Un poco allegretto
Adagio
Allegretto
5
[p]
[mf]
[p]
Adagio
Allegretto
10
[p]
[mf]
[7]
15
Adagio
f
Allegretto
20
[p]
Adagio
[mf]
Allegretto
25
[p]
Adagio
Allegretto
Adagio
Allegretto
30
[pp]
[p]
[mf]
[p]
[7]

VAR. 33

Tempo I. *)

[mf]

[7]

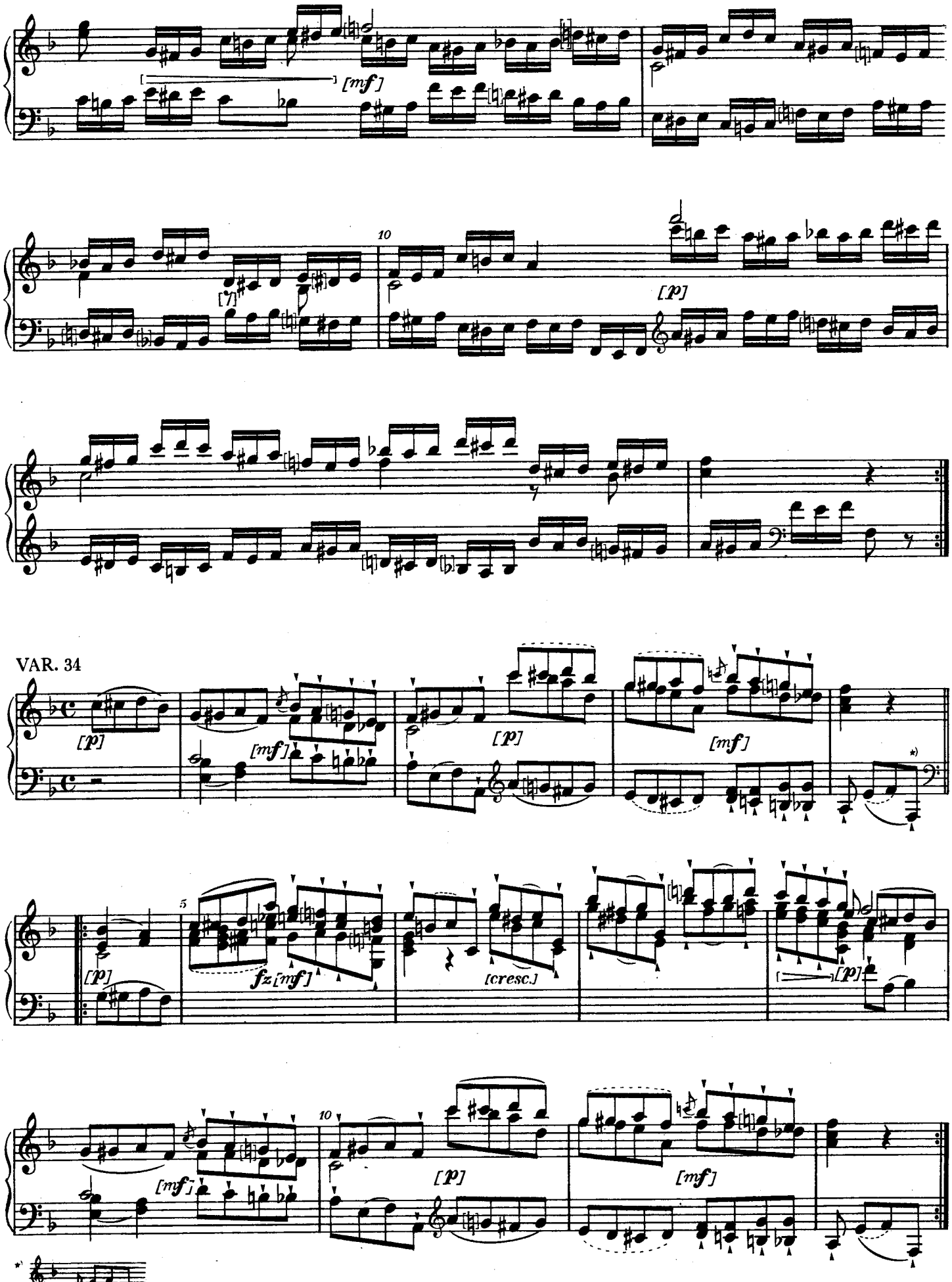
[p]

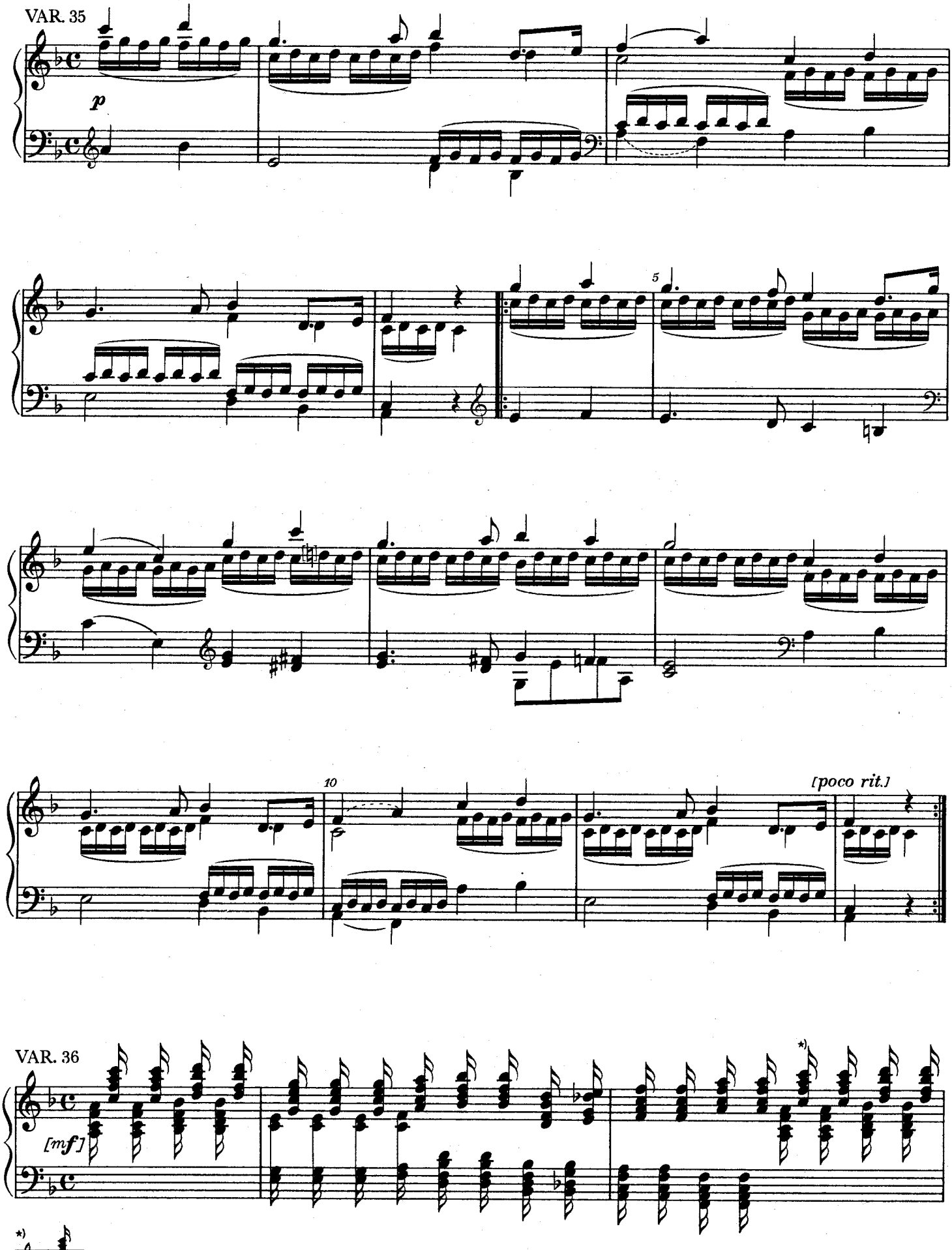
[mf]

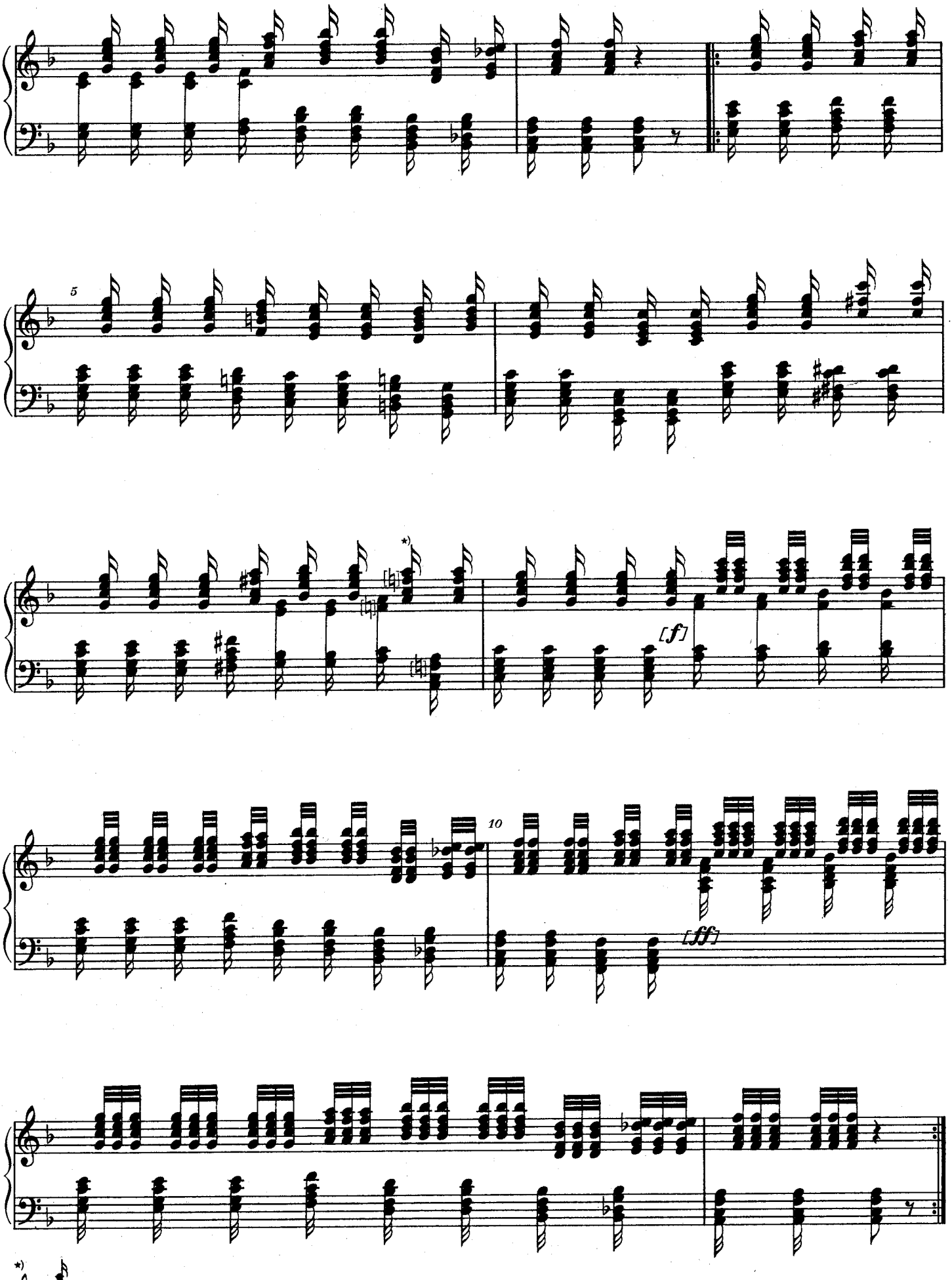
5

[cresc.]

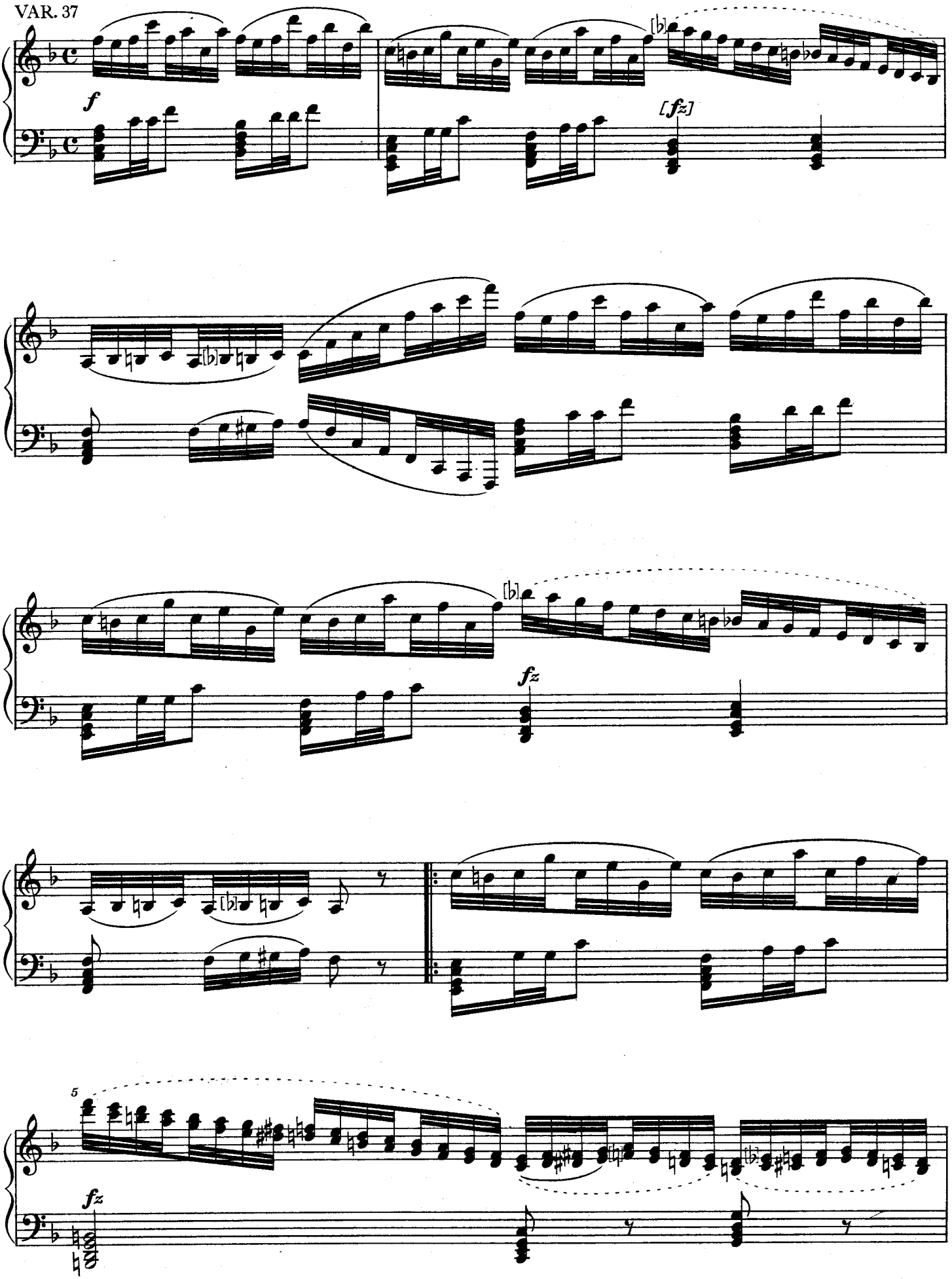
*) Orig.: Tempo maggiore

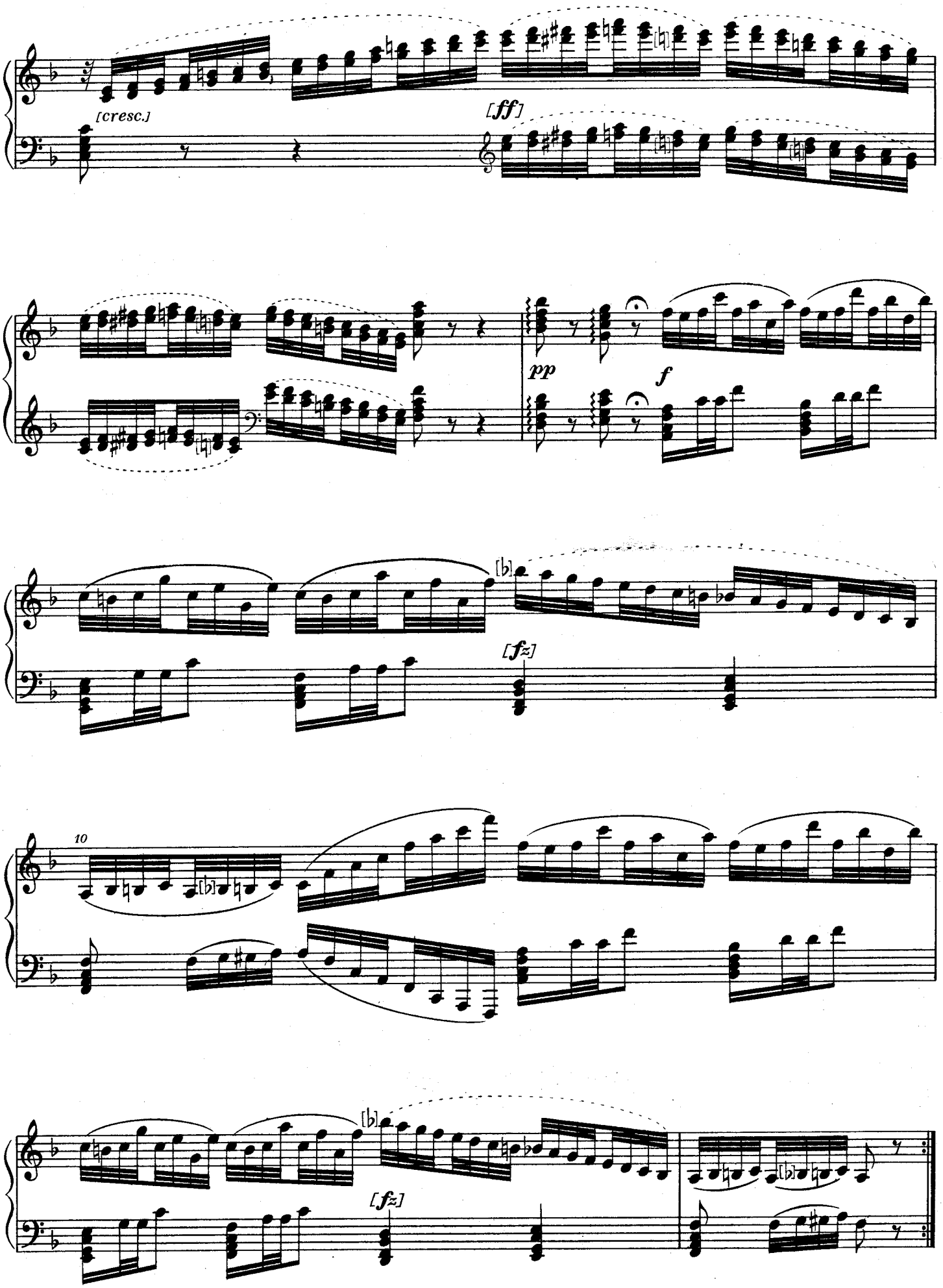

[mf]
10
[p]
VAR. 34
[p]
[mf]
[p]
[mf]
*)
[p]
5
fz [mf]
[cresc.]
[p]
[mf]
10
[p]
[mf]
*)

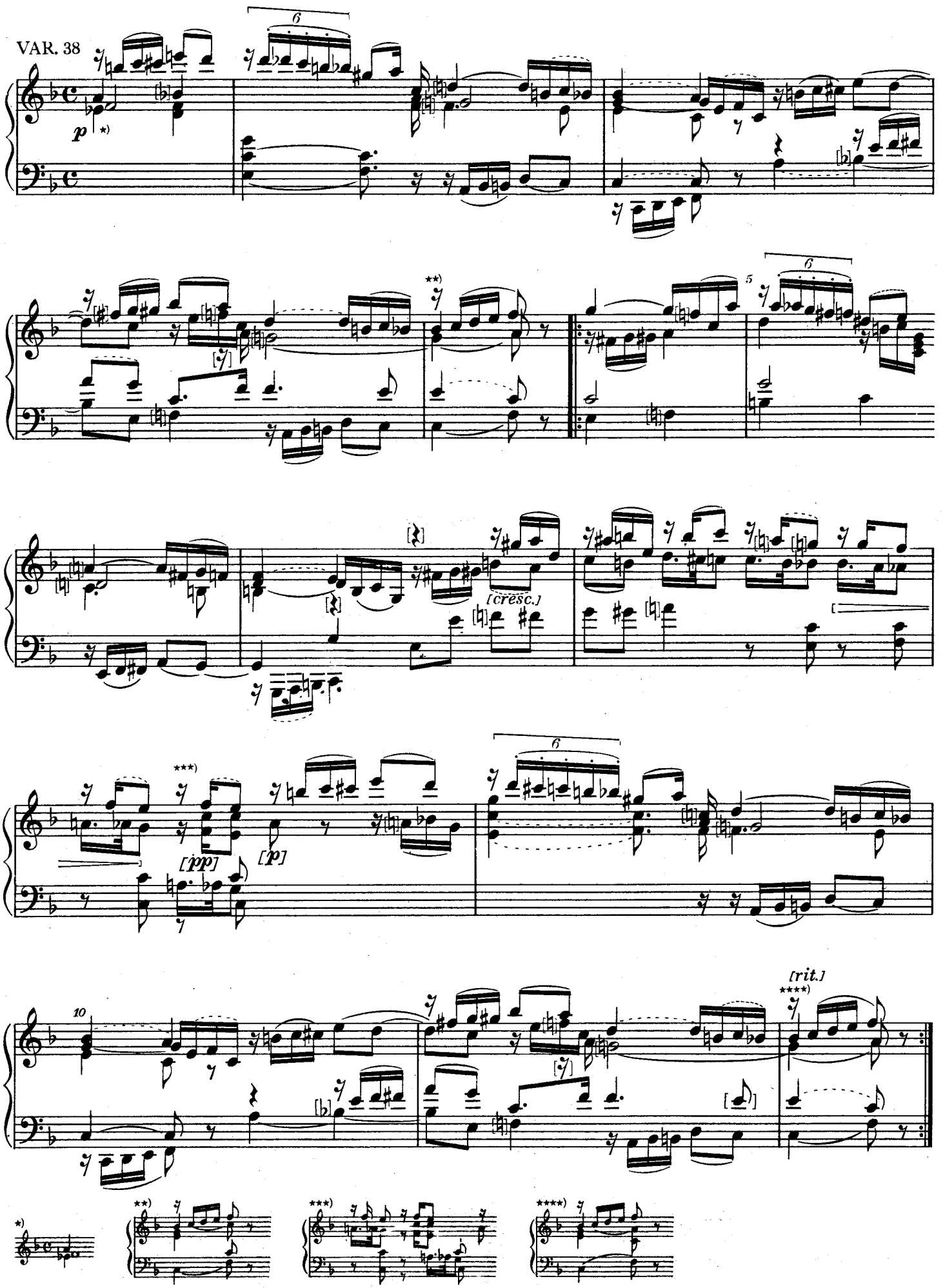

VAR. 35
p
5
10
[poco rit.]
VAR. 36
[mf]
*)
*)

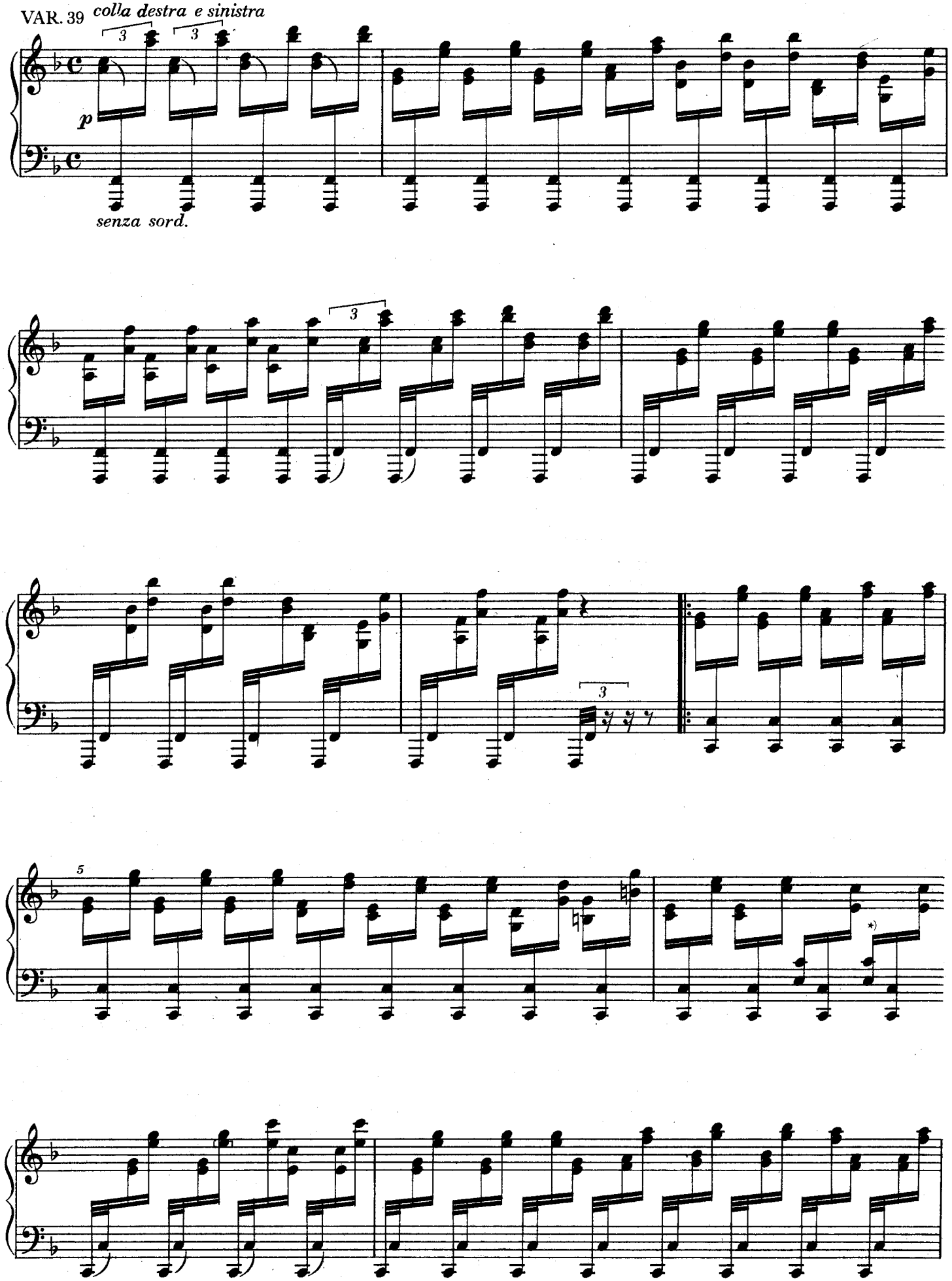

5
*)
[f]
10
[ff]
*)

VAR. 37

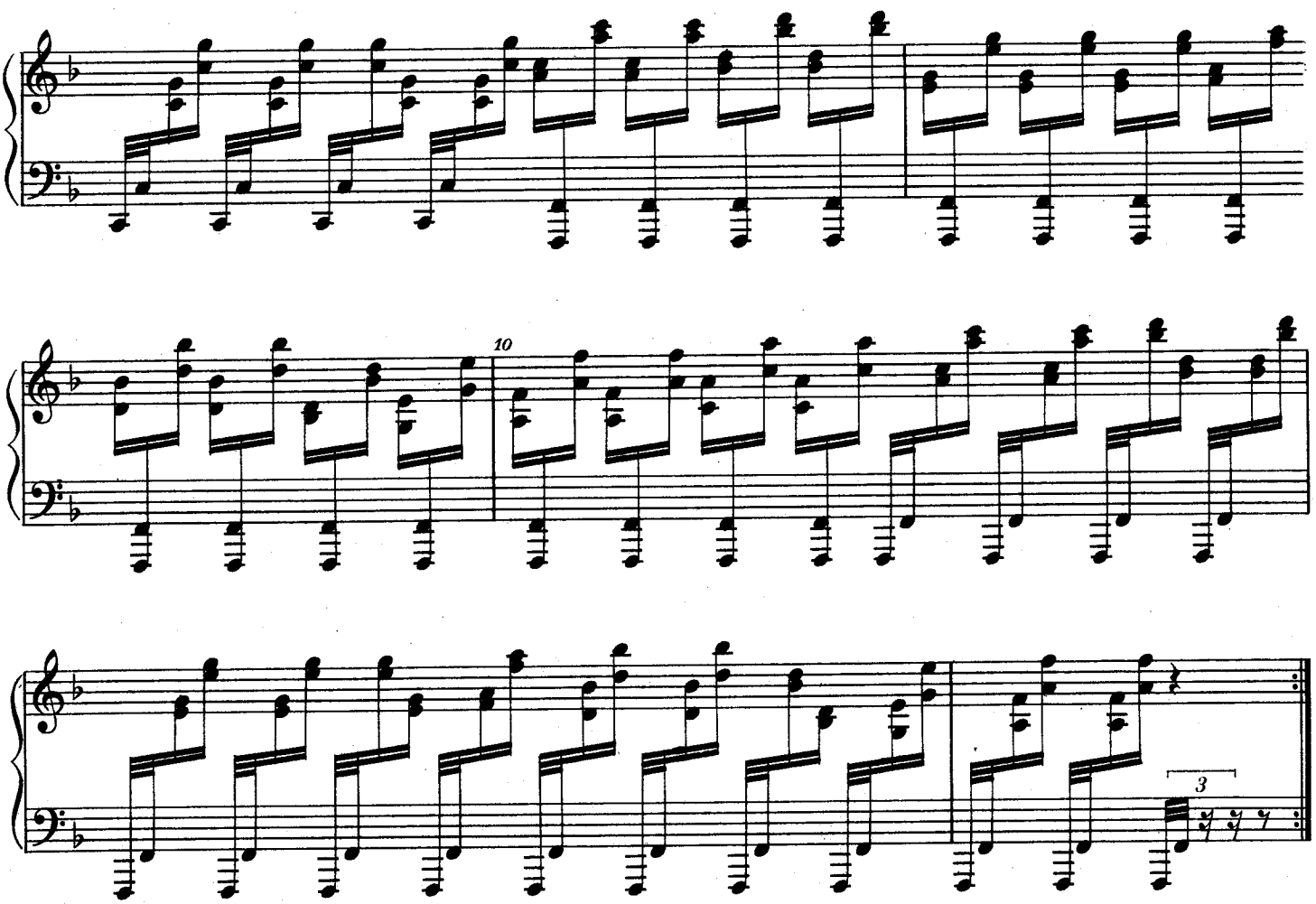



[cresc.]
[ff]
pp
f
[fz]
[b]
10
[fz]


VAR. 38
p
*)
6
**)
5
6
[cresc.]
***)
[pp]
[p]
6
10
****)
[rit.]
*)
**)
***)
****)

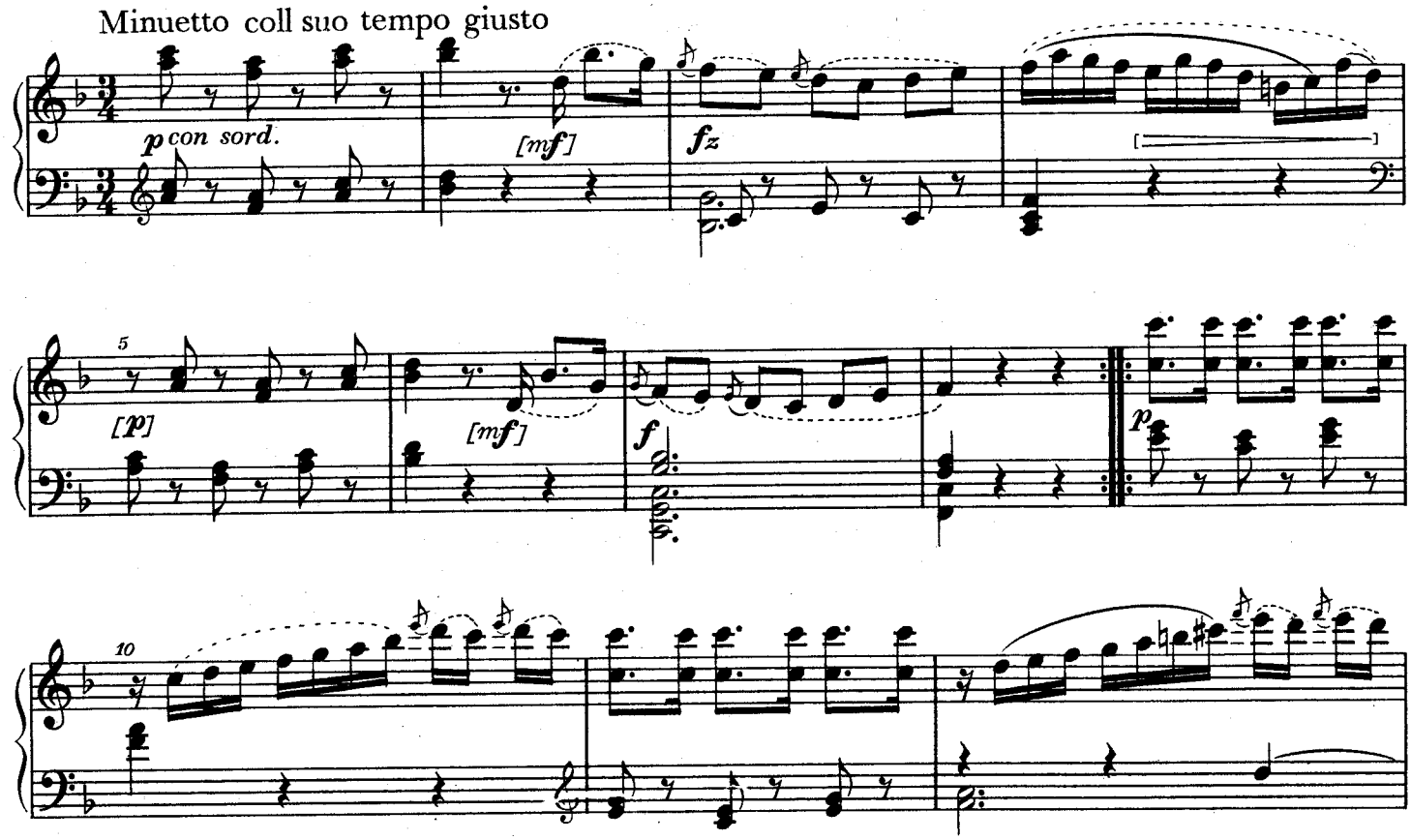


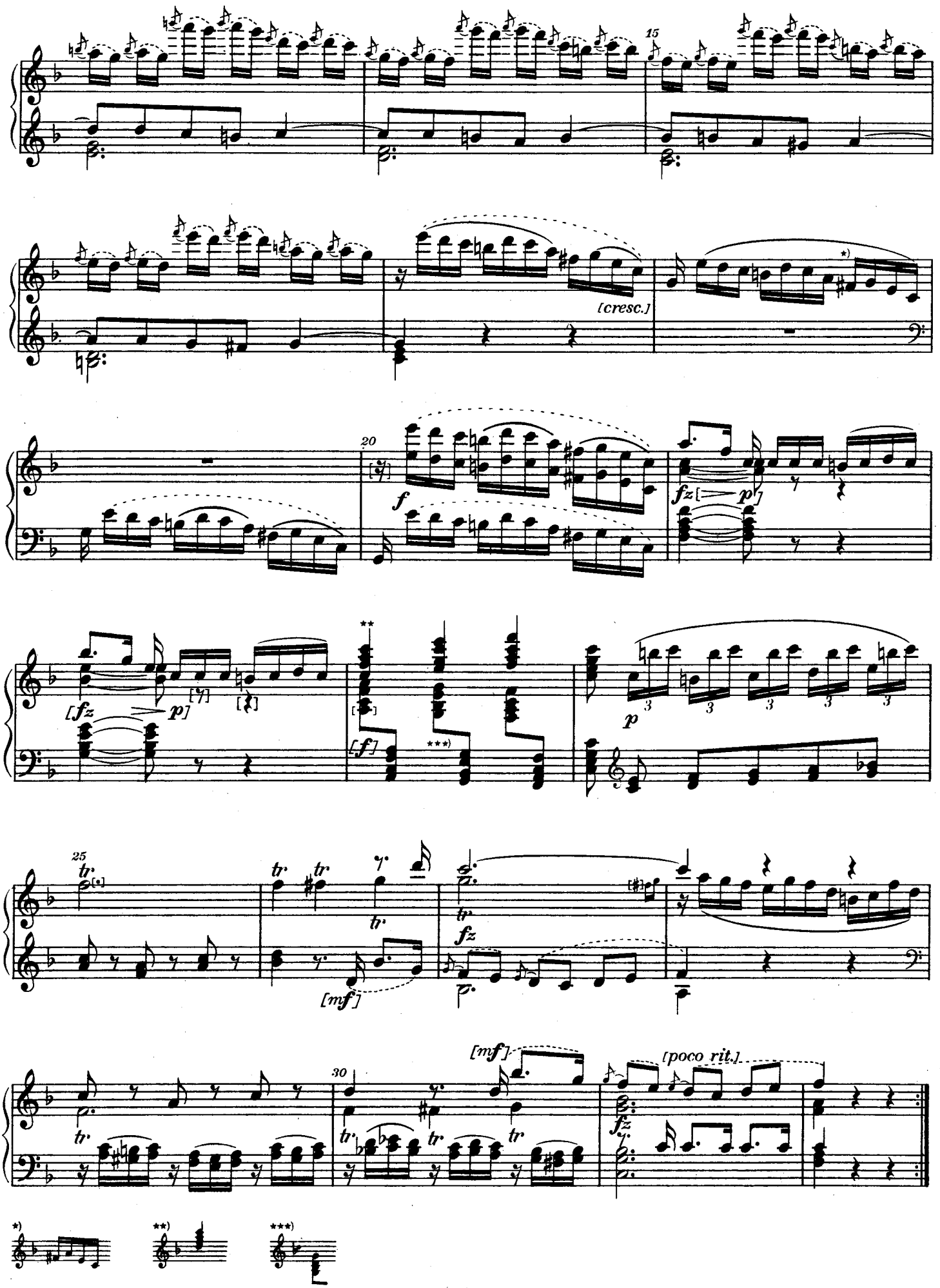

*) C C



VAR. 40

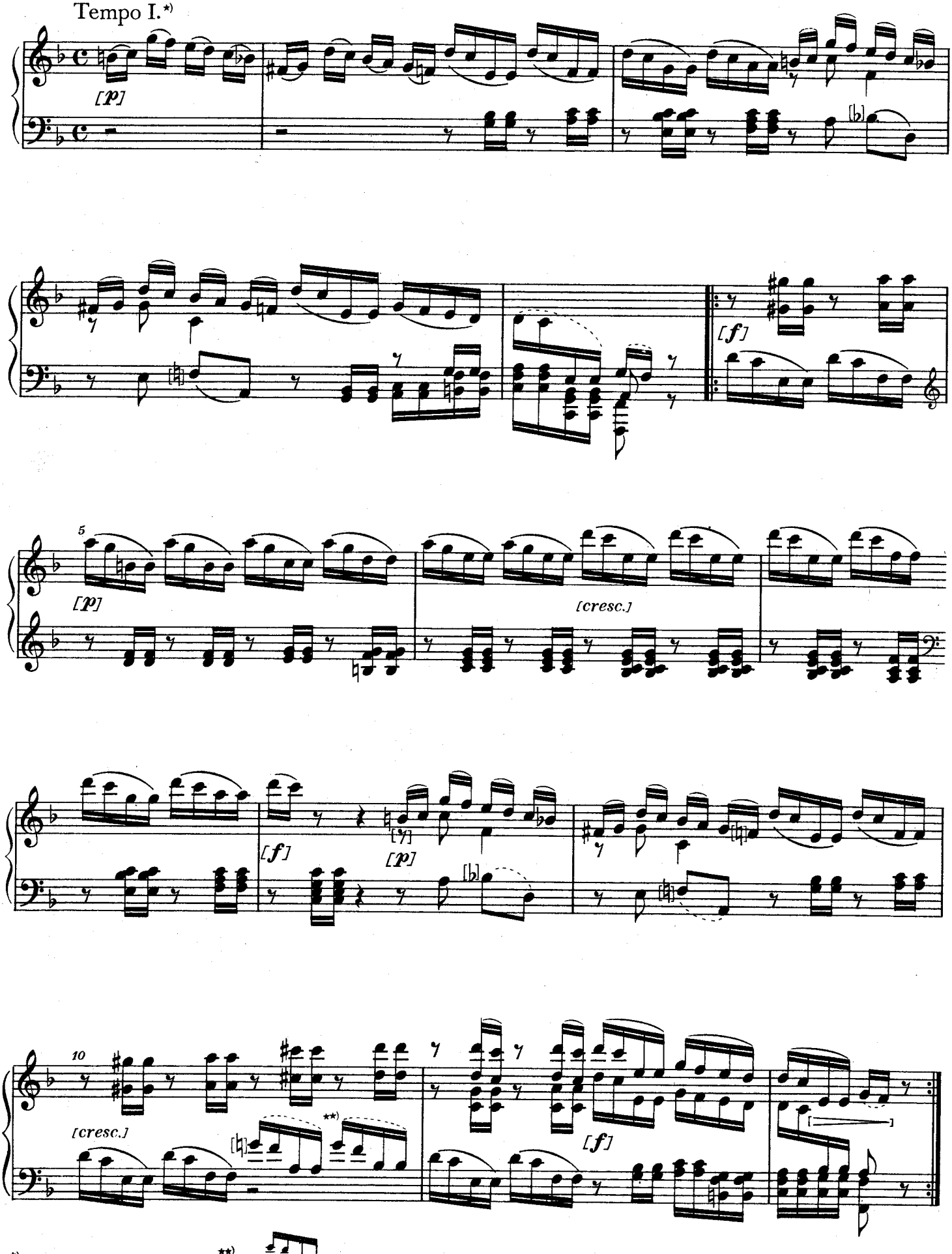
Minuetto coll suo tempo giusto




15
[cresc.]
20
f
fz
p
[fz
p]
[f]
p
25
tr
[mf]
fz
30
[mf]
[poco rit.]
fz
*)
**)
***)

VAR. 41

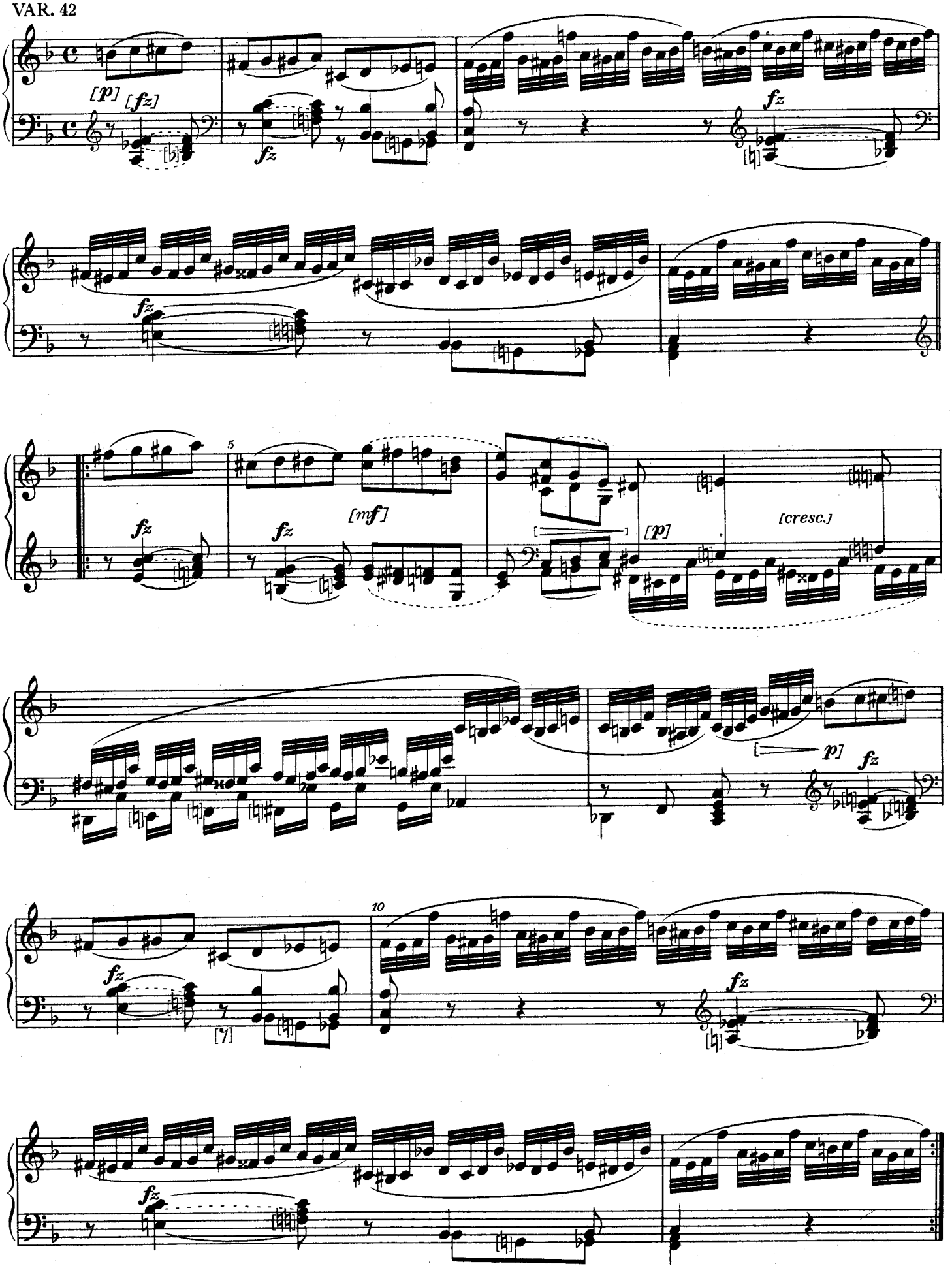
Tempo I.*)



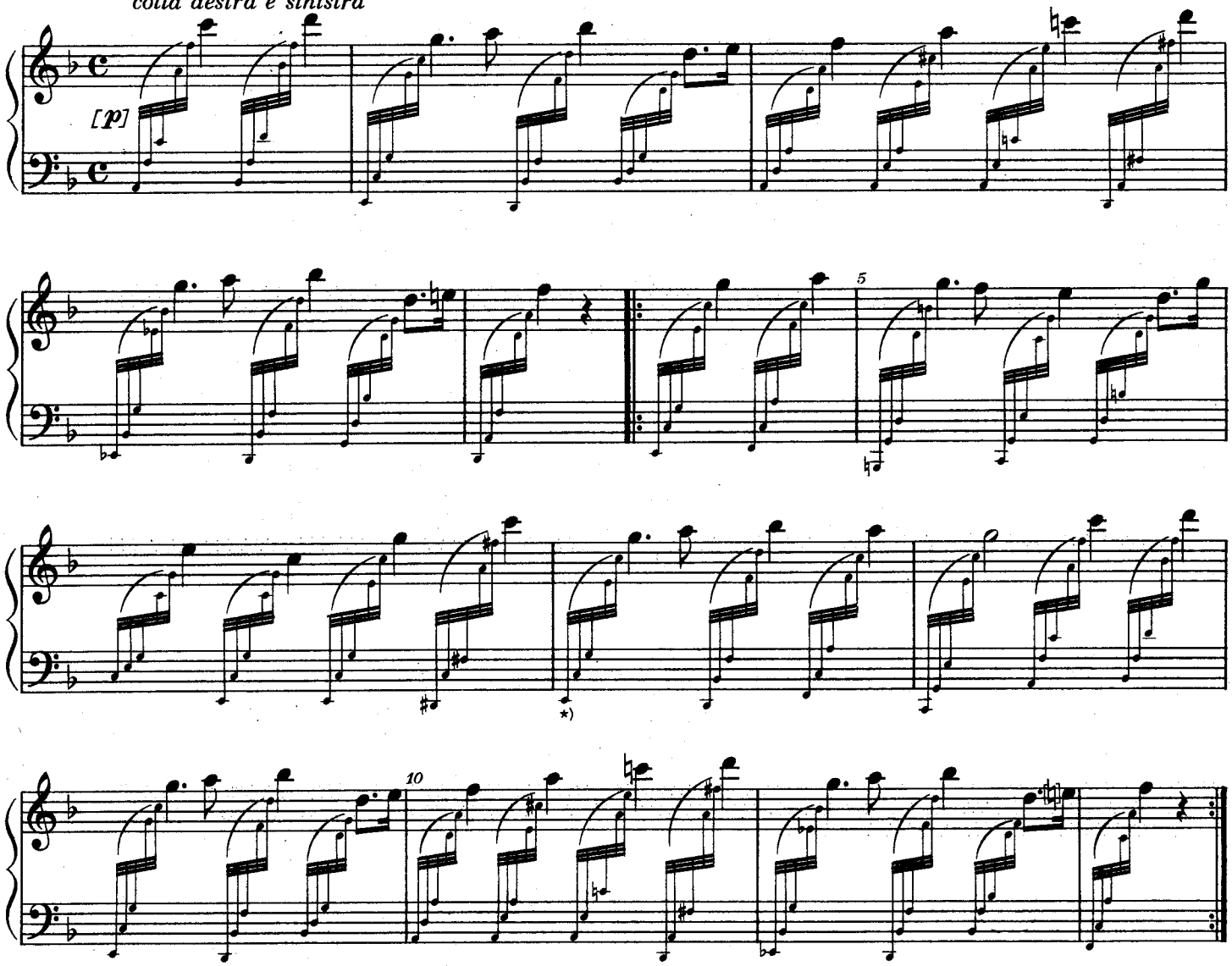

*) Orig.: Tempo maggiore

**)

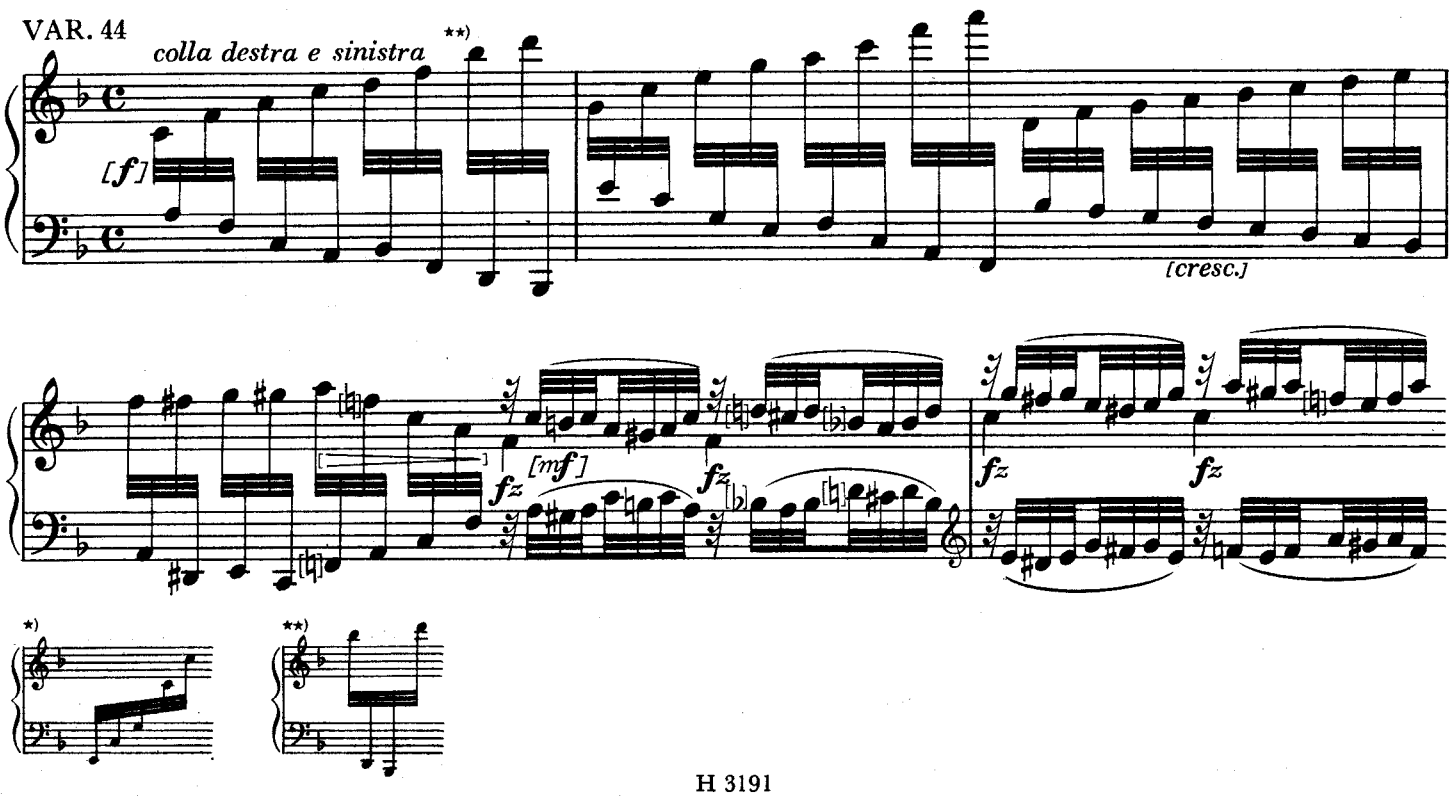
VAR. 42

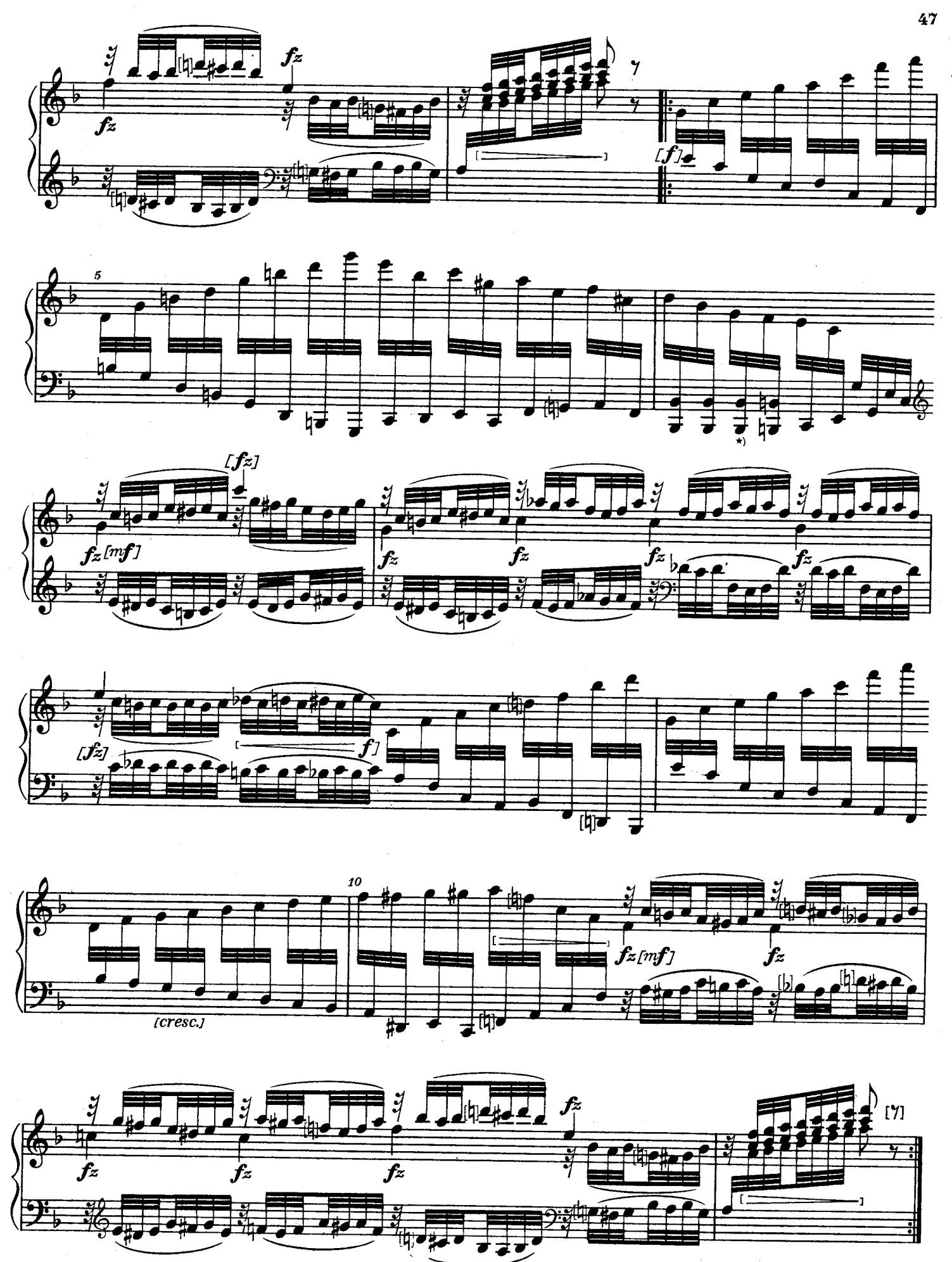


VAR. 43 *colla destra e sinistra*



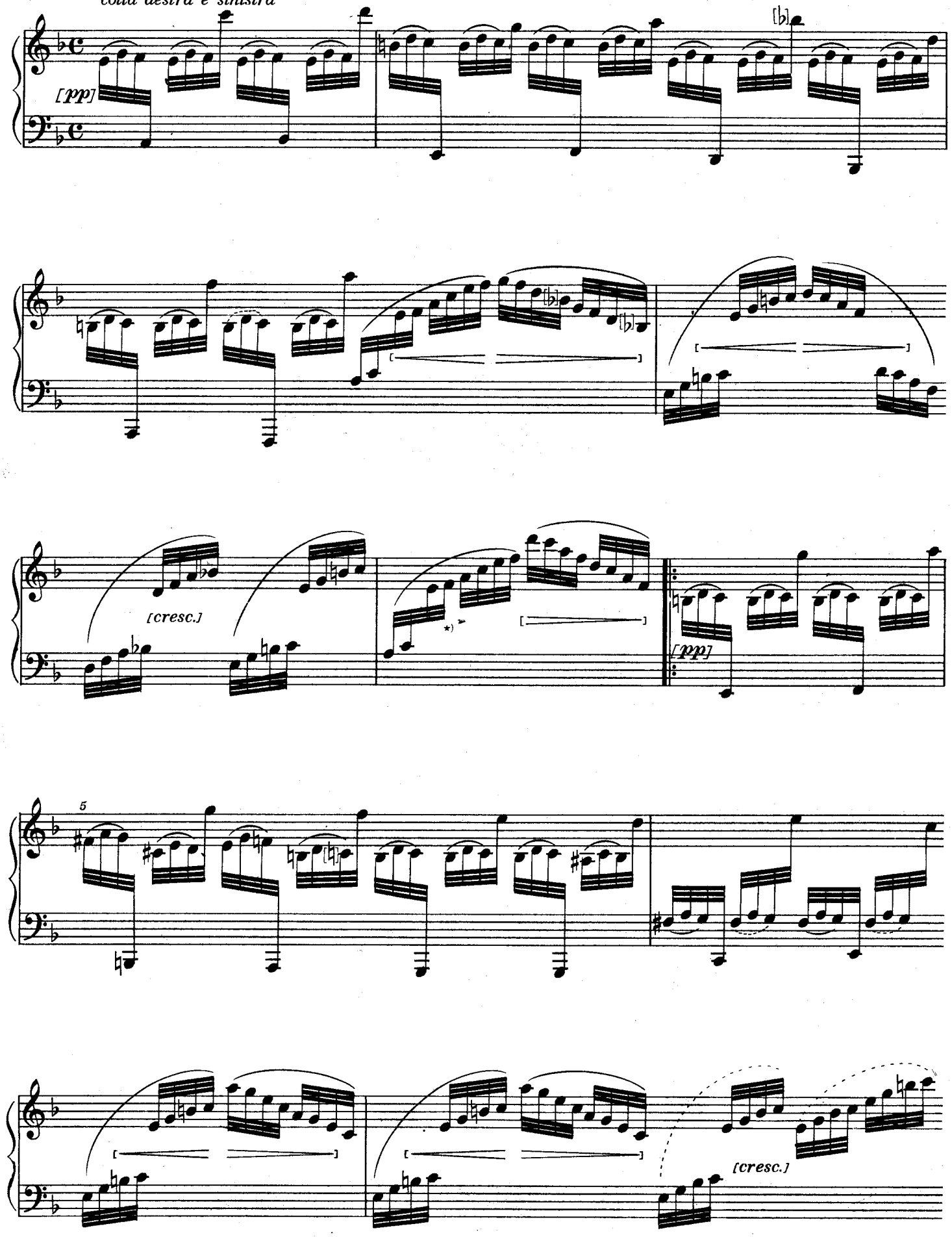

VAR. 44 *colla destra e sinistra* **)



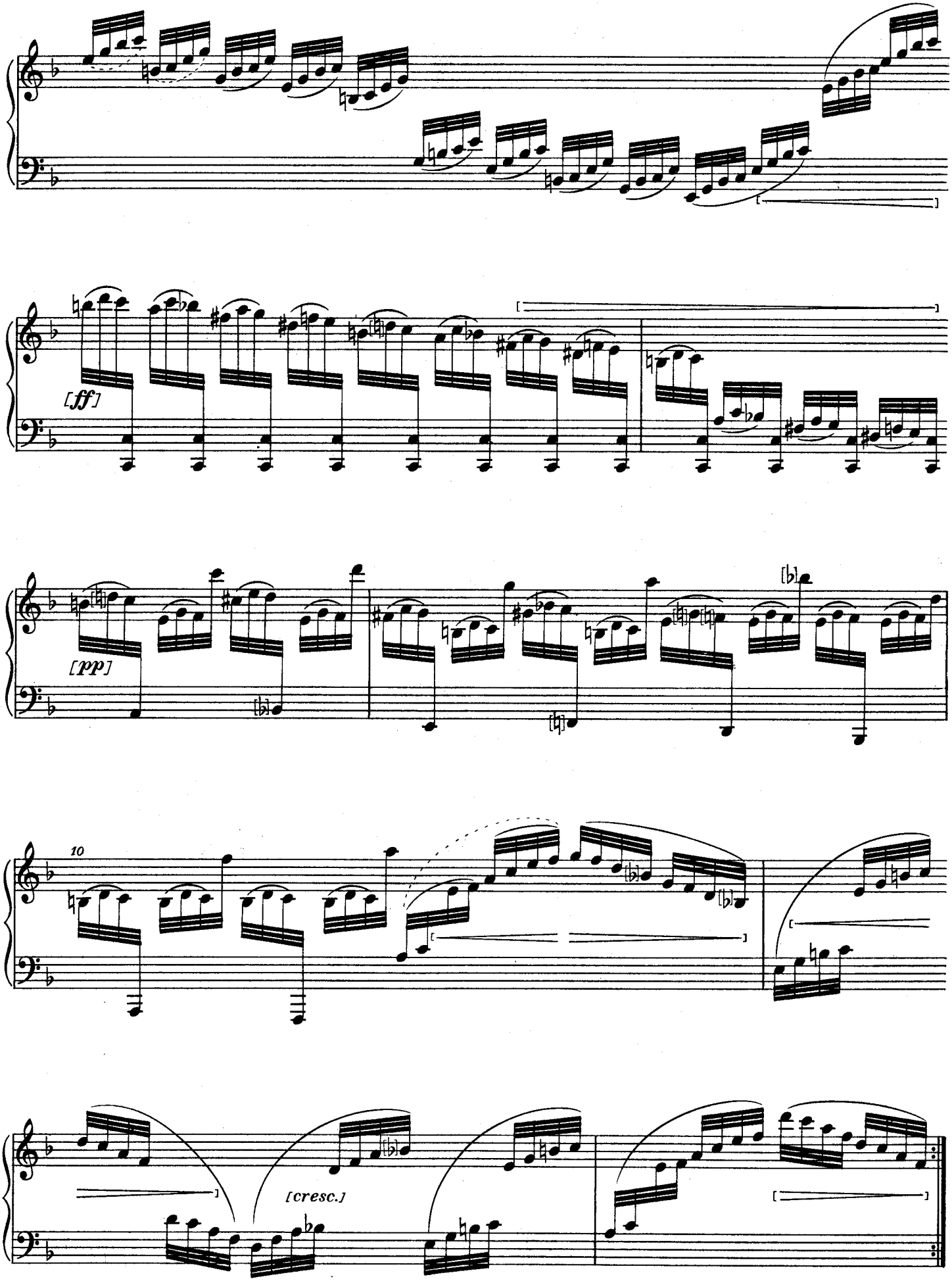



*) A
Hes¹

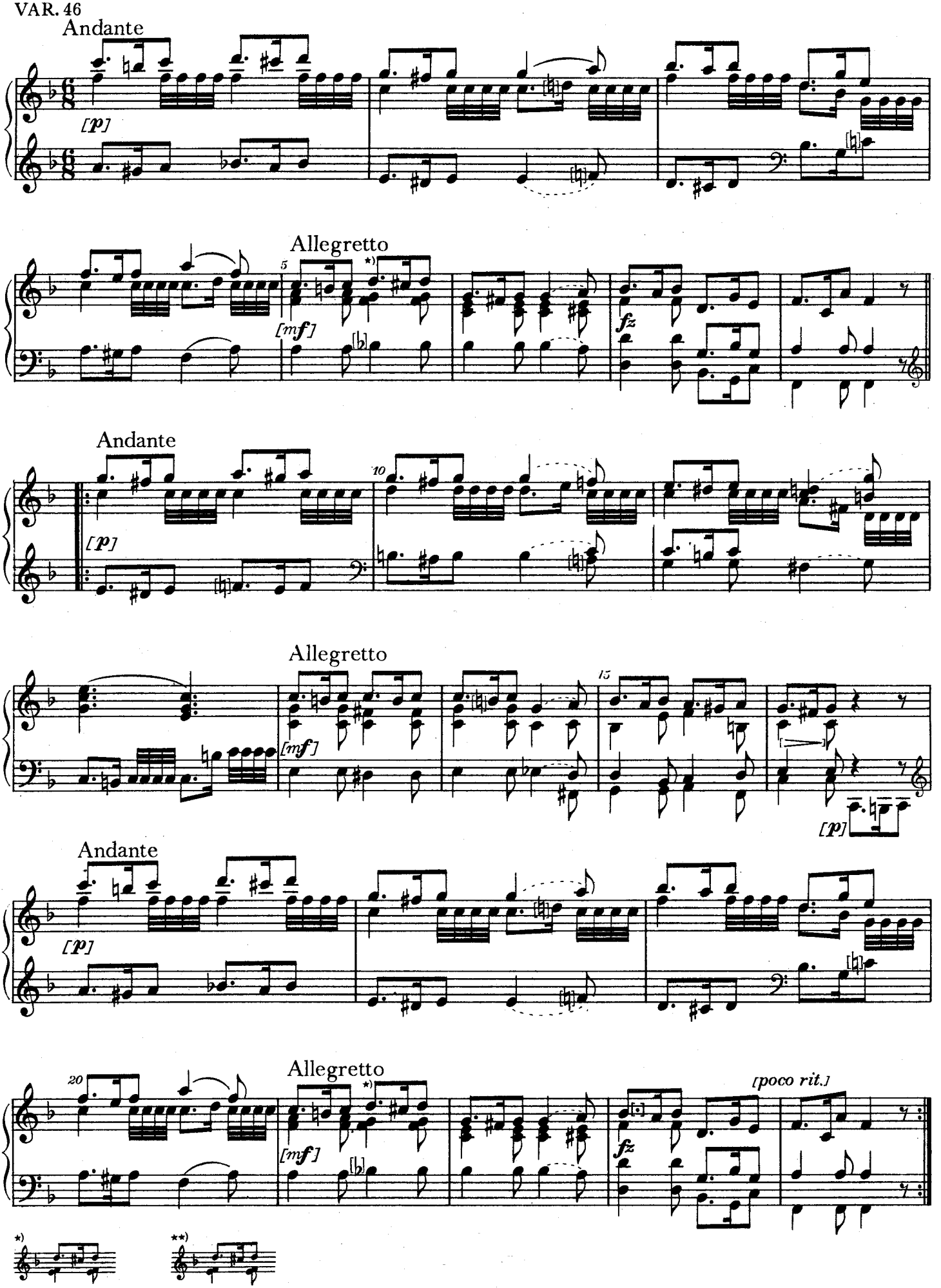
VAR. 45 *colla destra e sinistra*




*) g¹


[ff]
[pp]
10
[cresc.]

VAR. 46


Andante
[p]
Allegretto
5
*)
[mf]
fz
Andante
10
[p]
Allegretto
15
[mf]
[p]
Andante
[p]
Allegretto
20
*)
[mf]
fz
[poco rit.]
*)
**)

VAR. 47

Tempo I.*)

[mf] staccato

**)

[p]

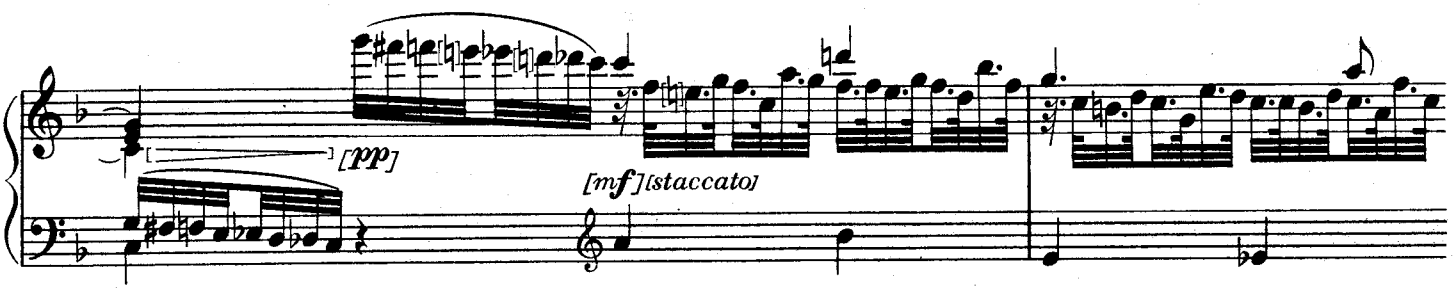
5

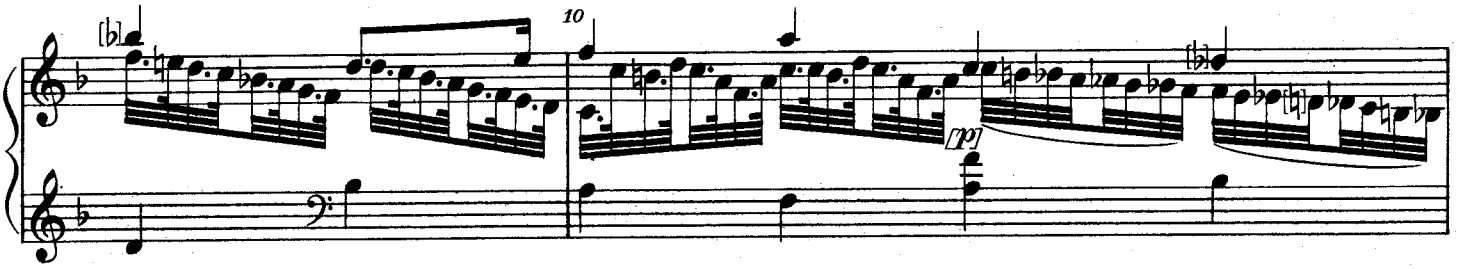
[mf] [staccato]

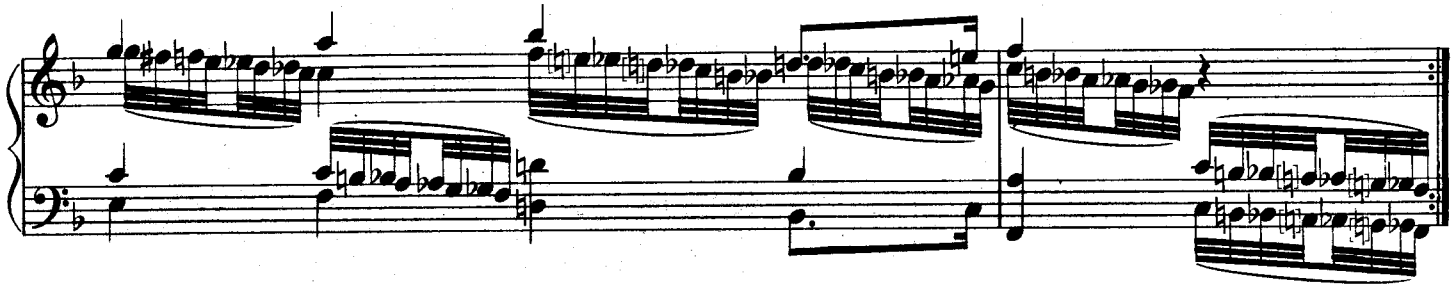
***)

[p]

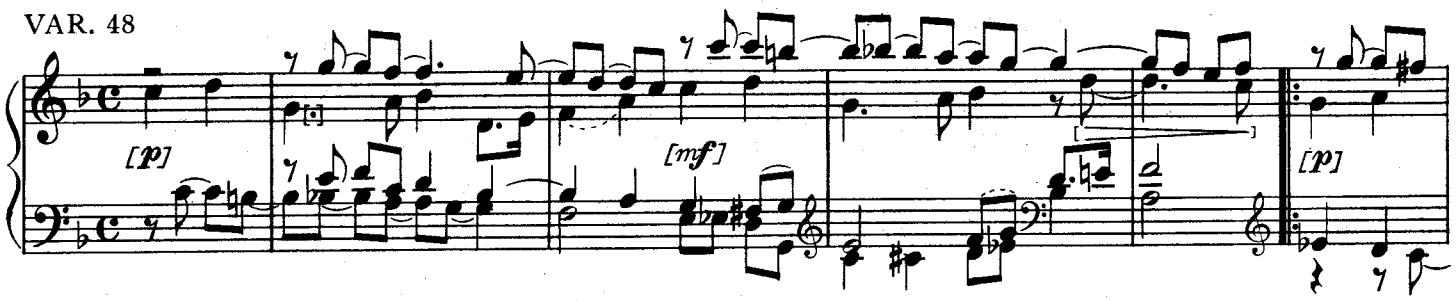
*)Orig.: Tempo maggiore **)d² ***)Orig.: ♩

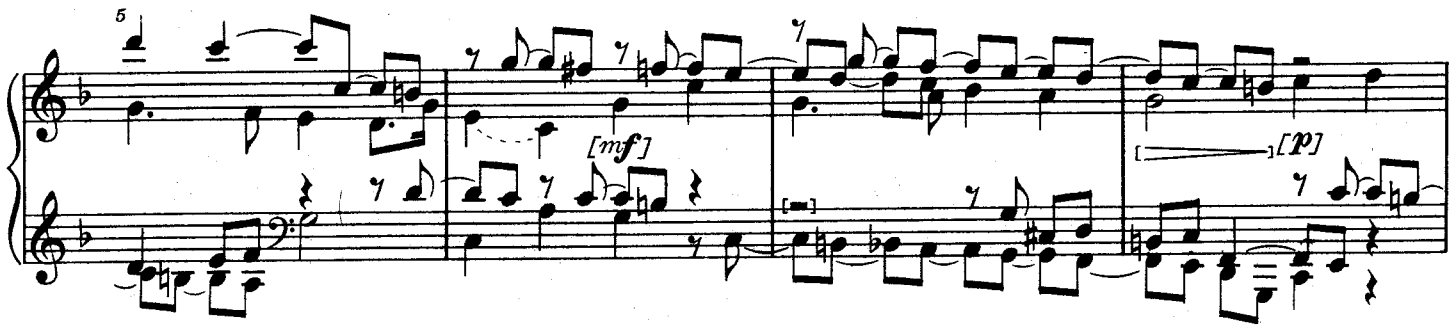


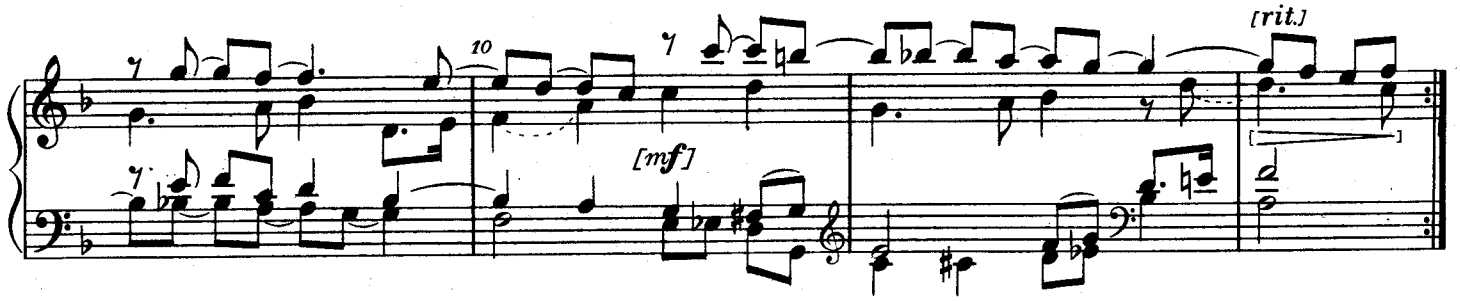



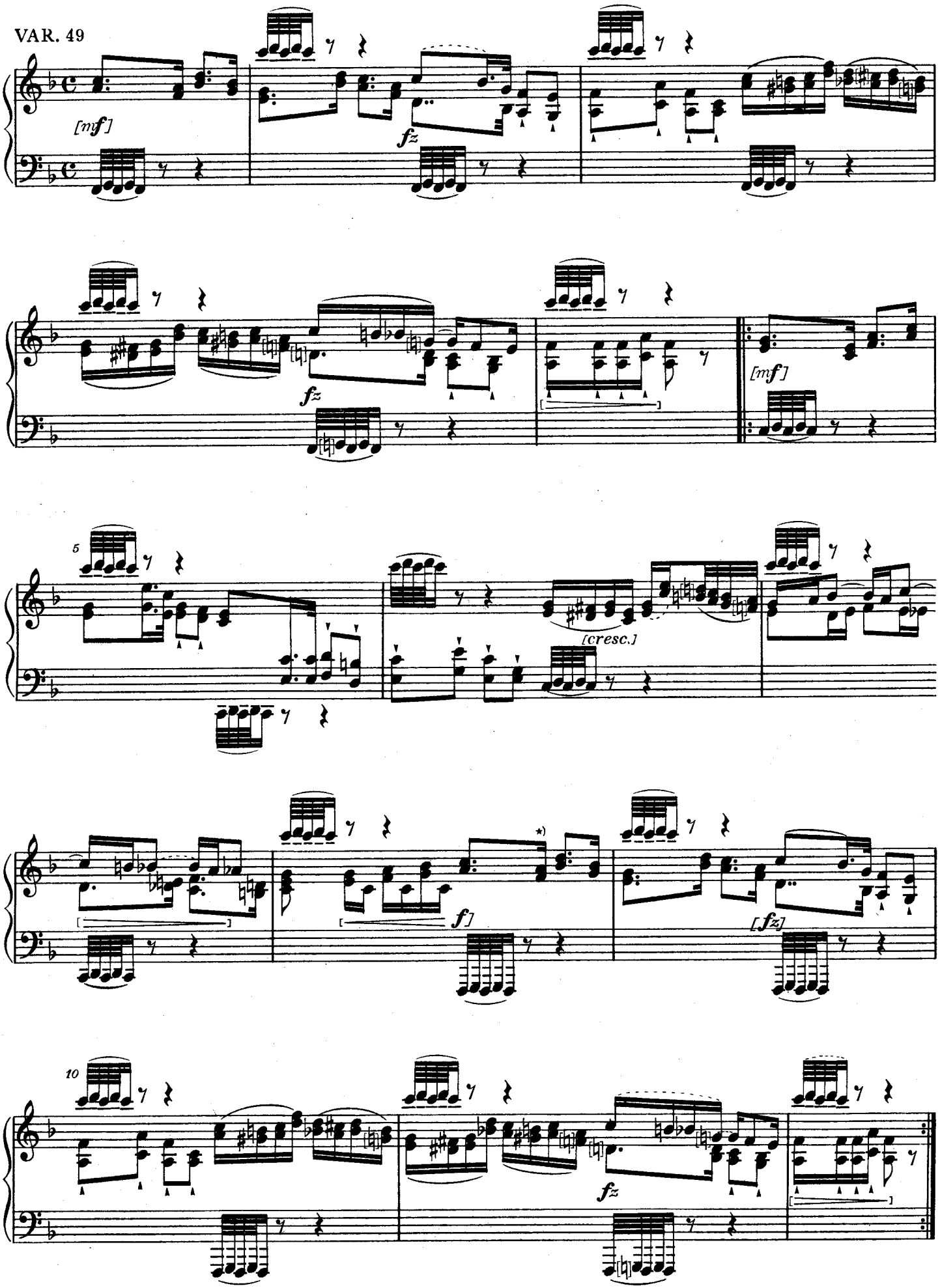



VAR. 48



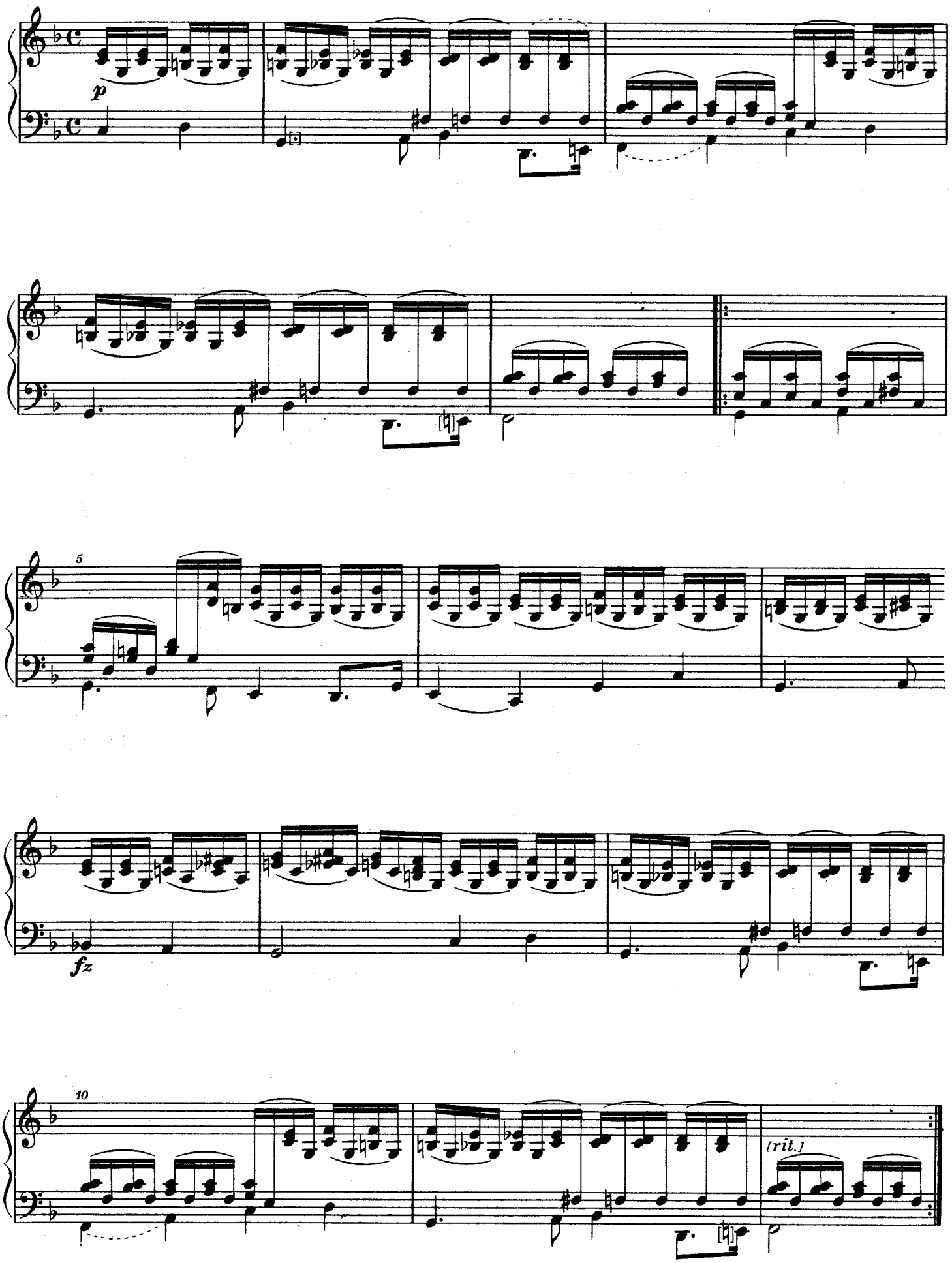



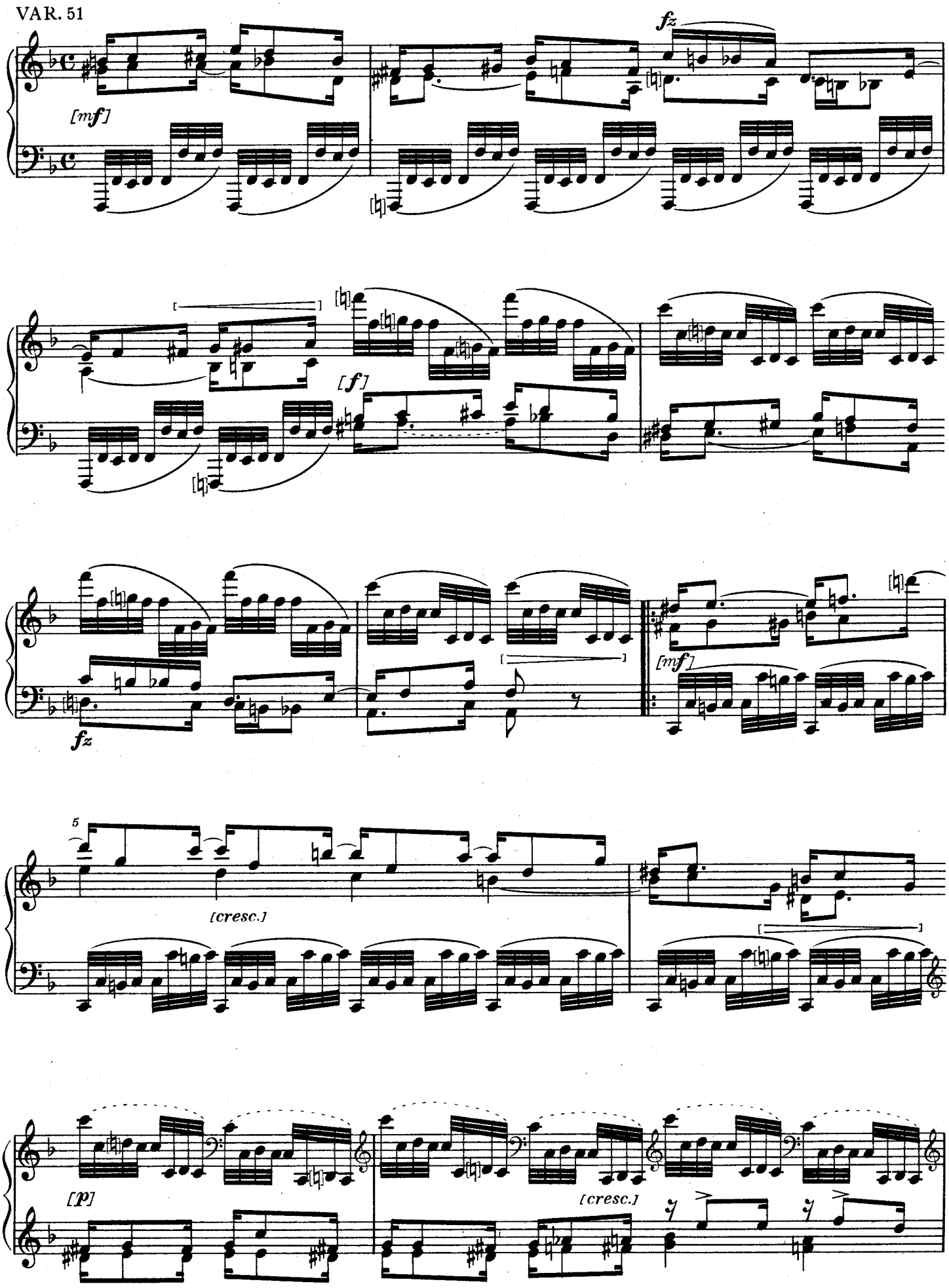


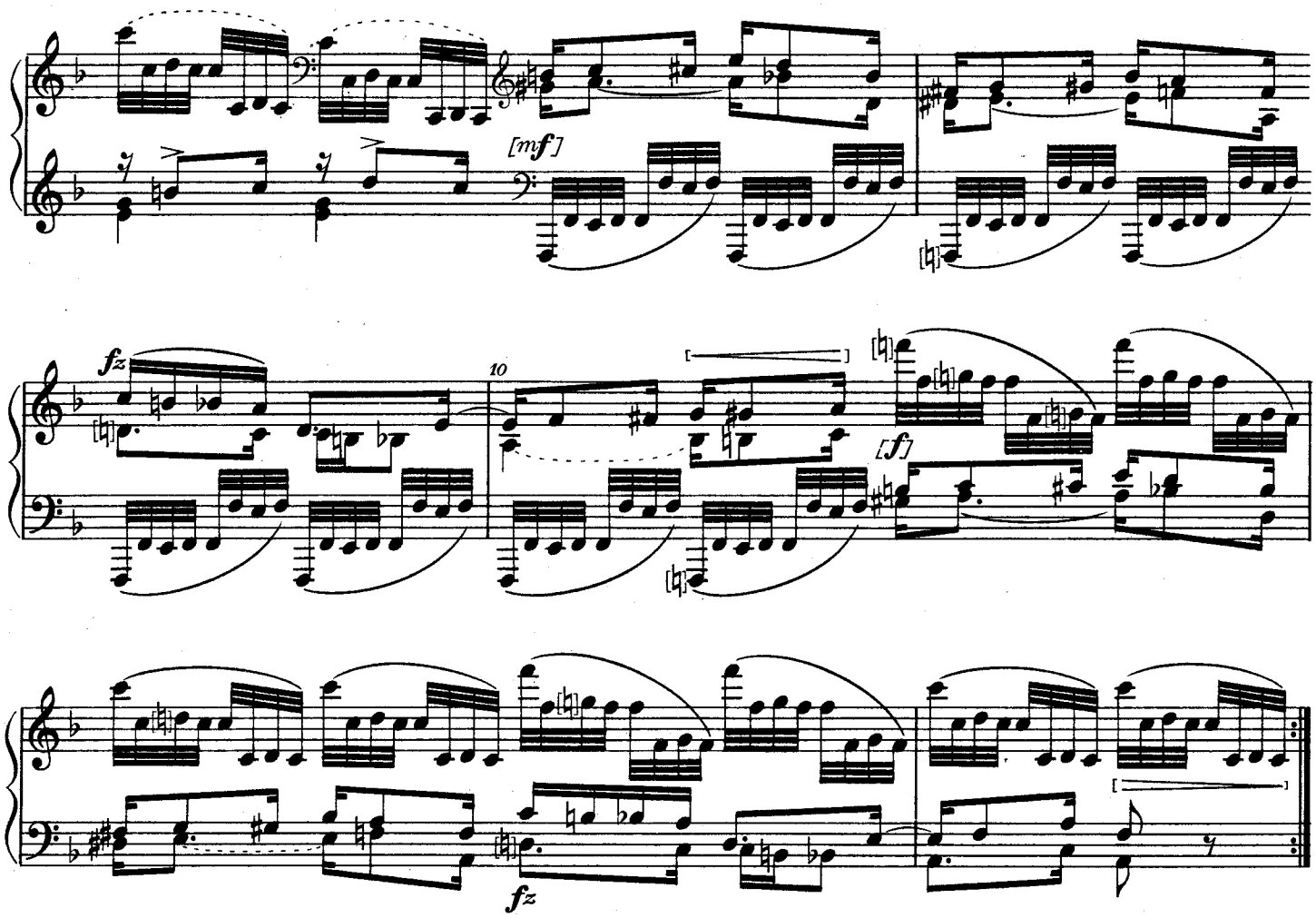

*) hes¹
f¹

VAR. 50



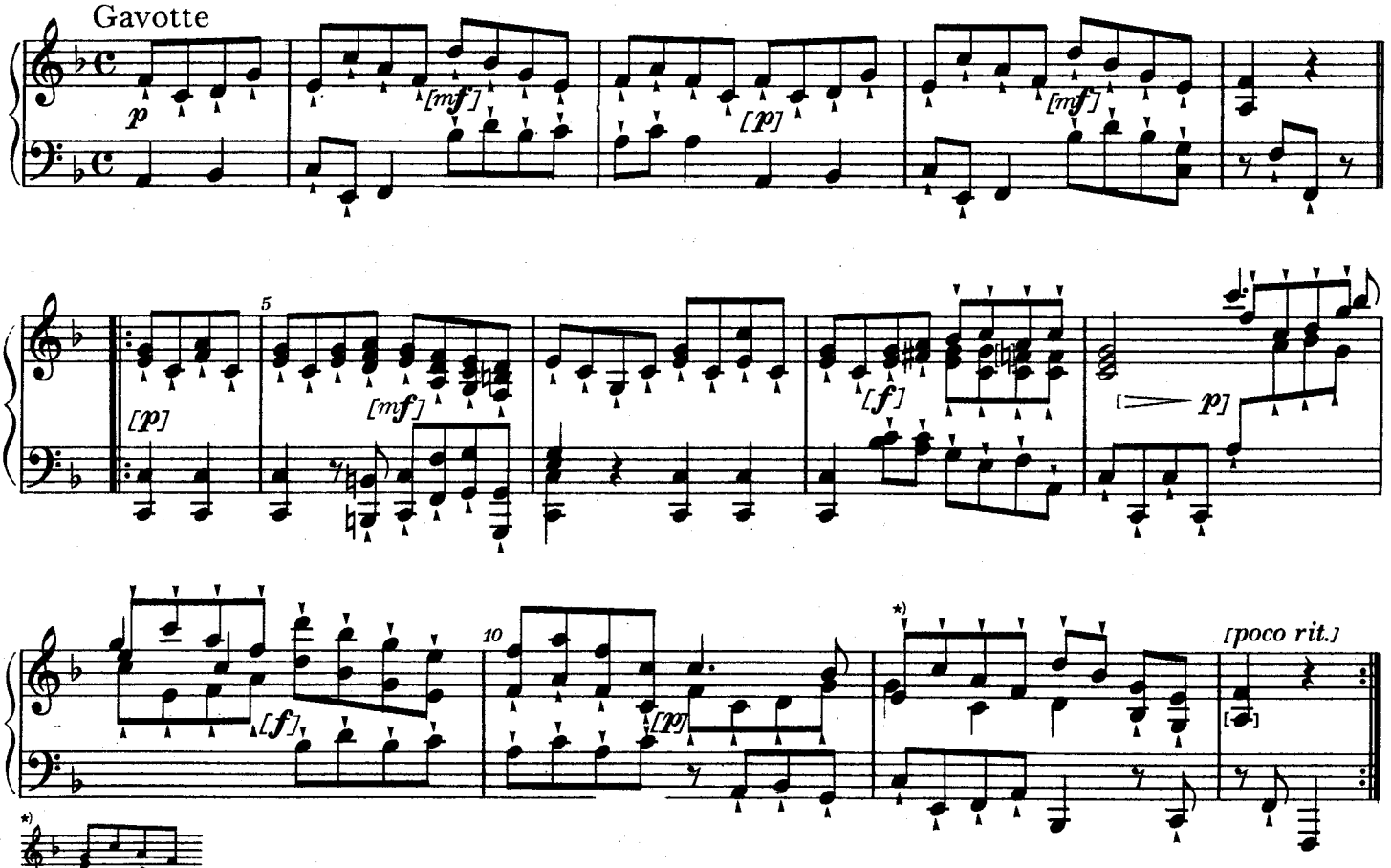
VAR. 51

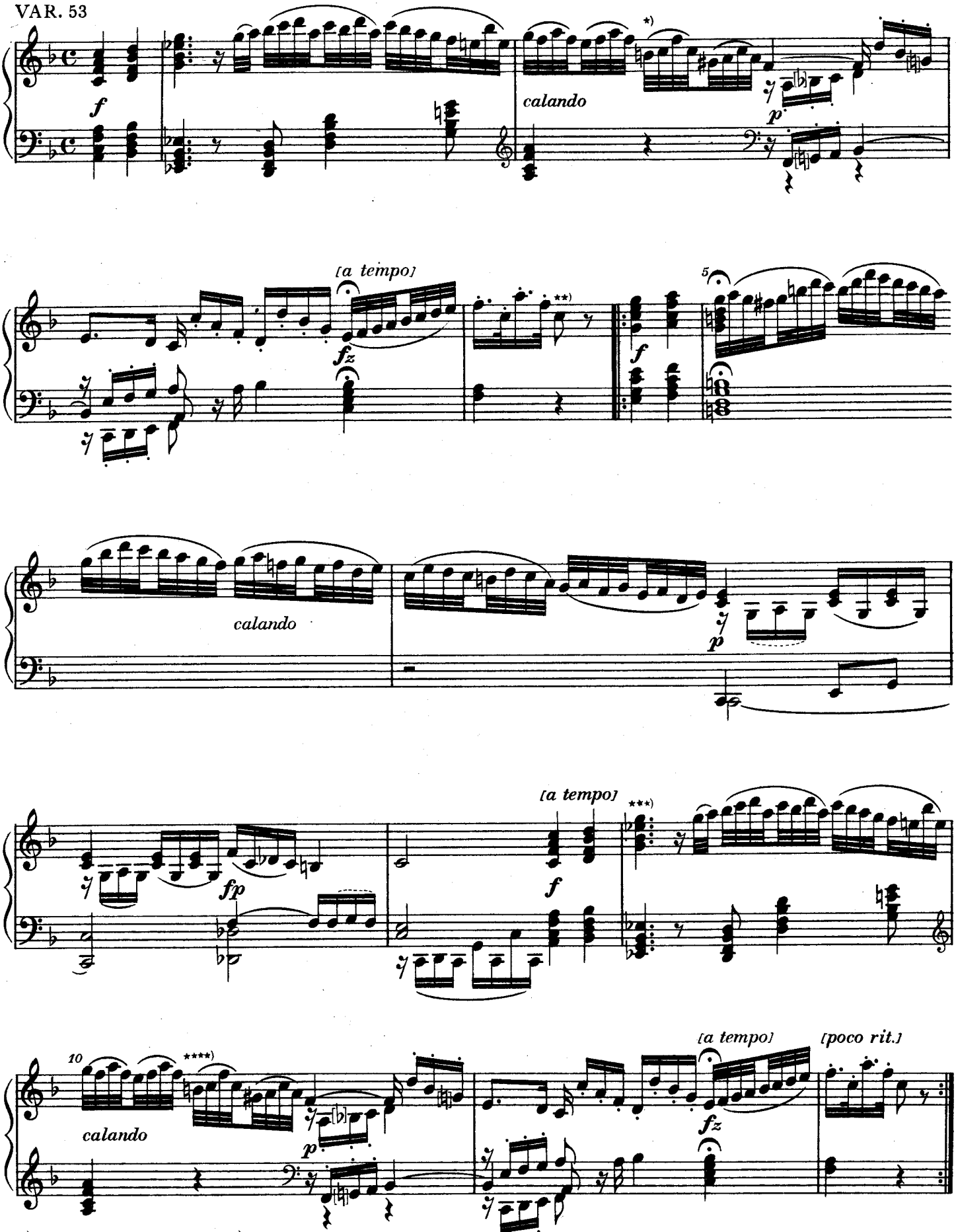




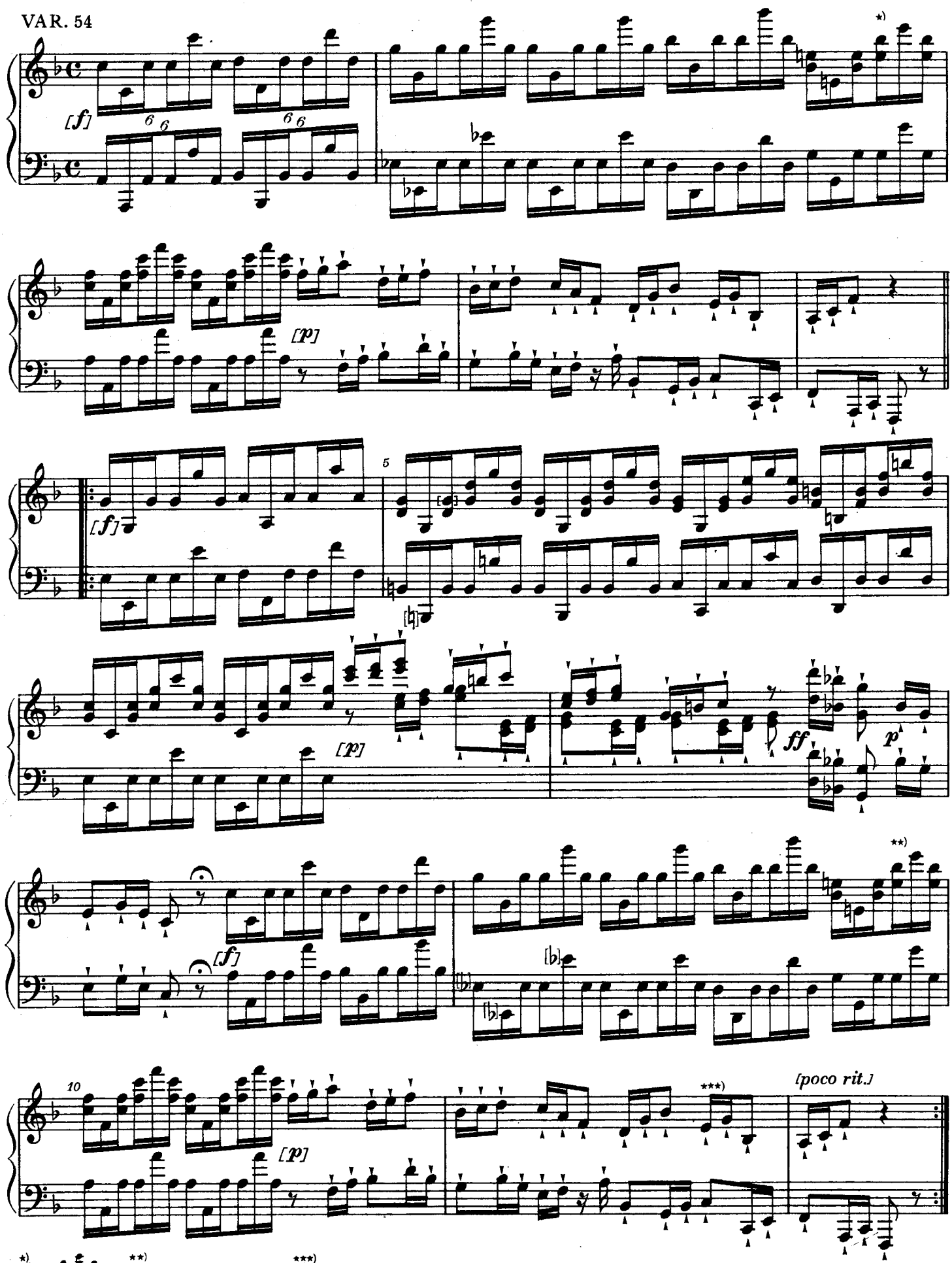

VAR. 52

Gavotte

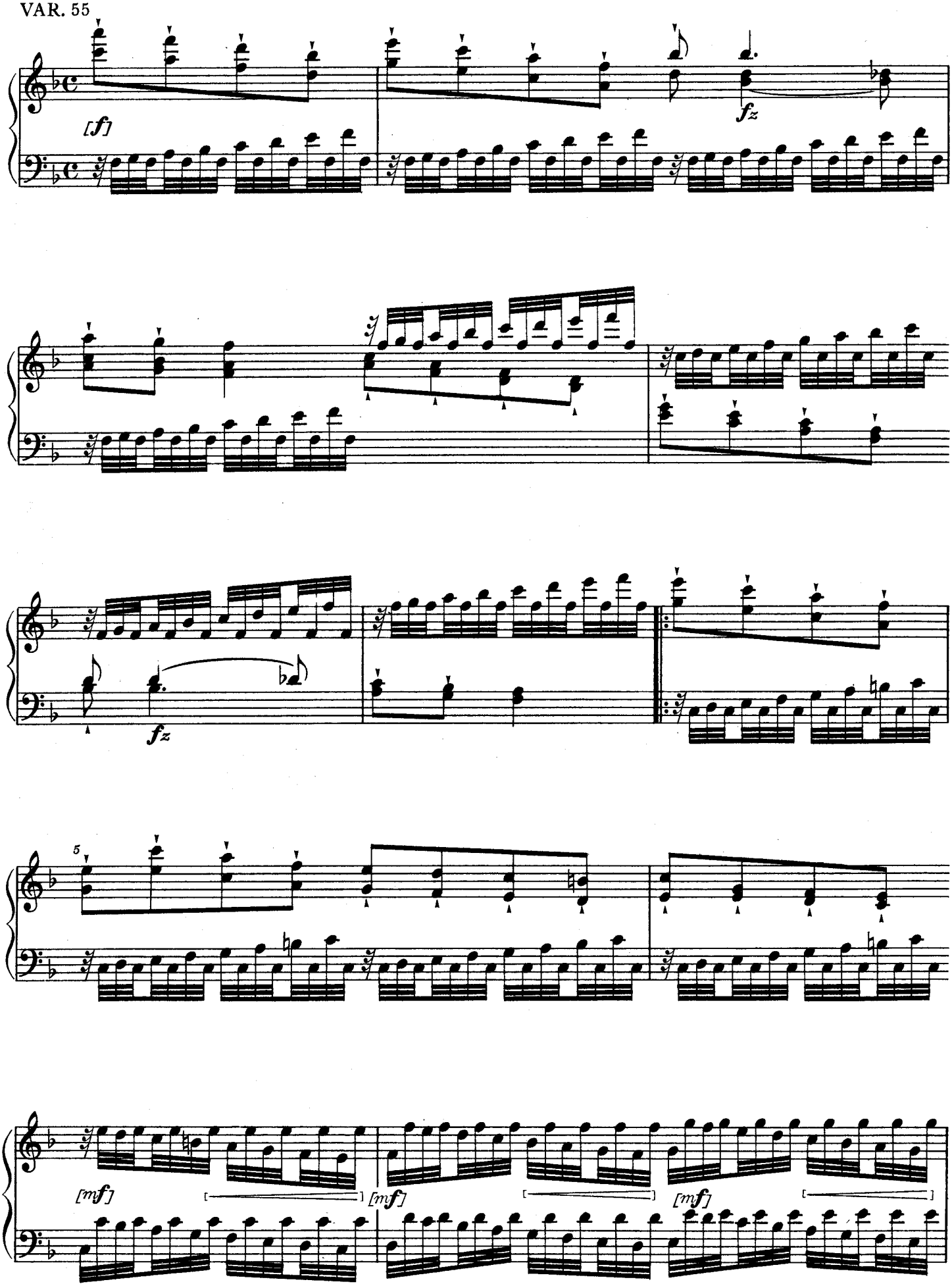


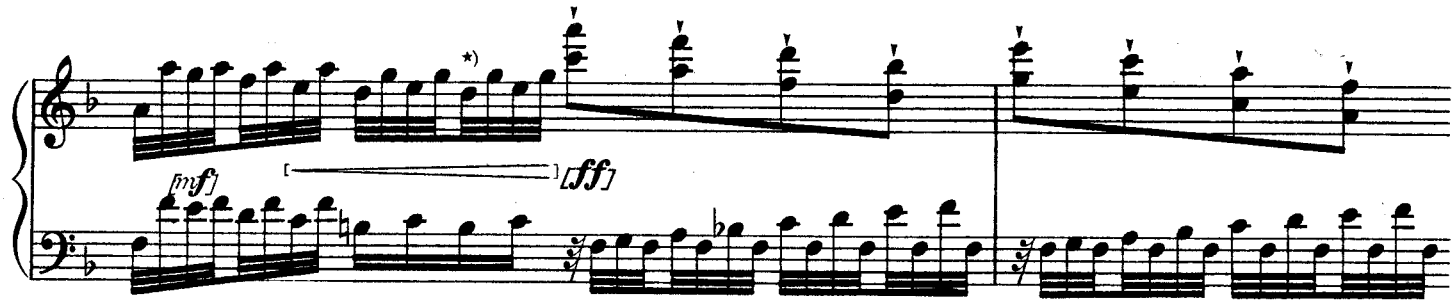

VAR. 53
f
calandо
*)
p
[a tempo]
fz
**)
f
5
calandо
p
fp
[a tempo]
f
***)
10
calandо
****)
p
[a tempo]
fz
[poco rit.]
*)
**) Orig.:
***)
****) Totéž jako v t. 2
Wie Im T. 2
The same as in b. 2

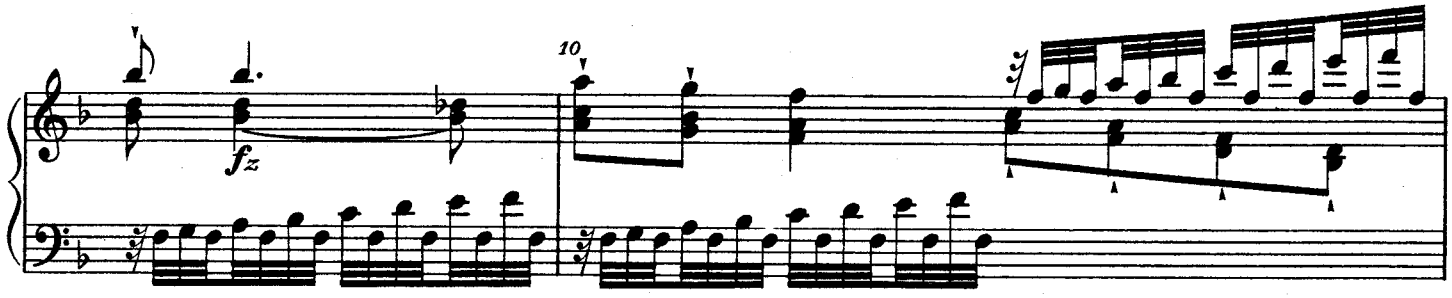
VAR. 54

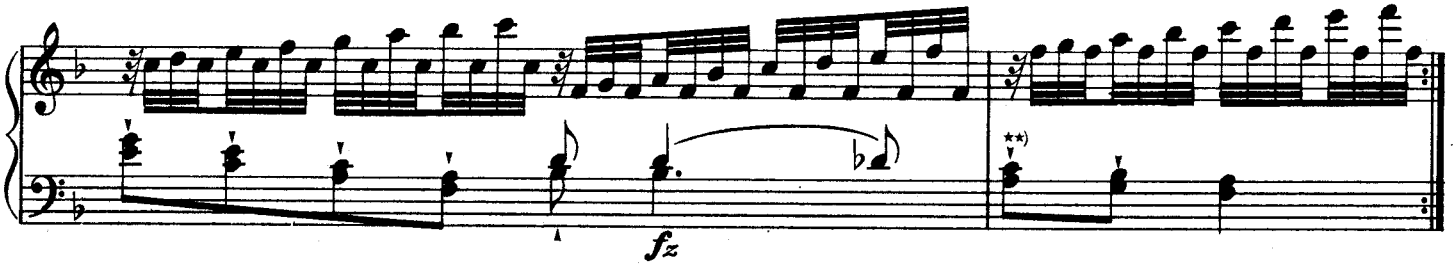


VAR. 55



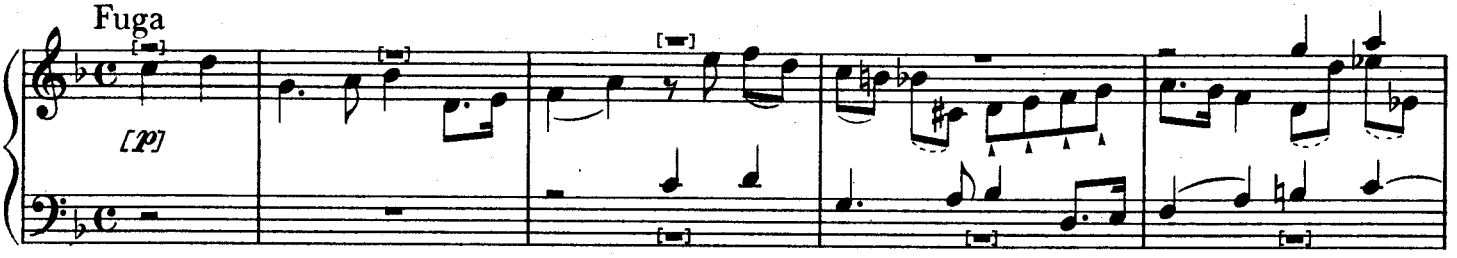


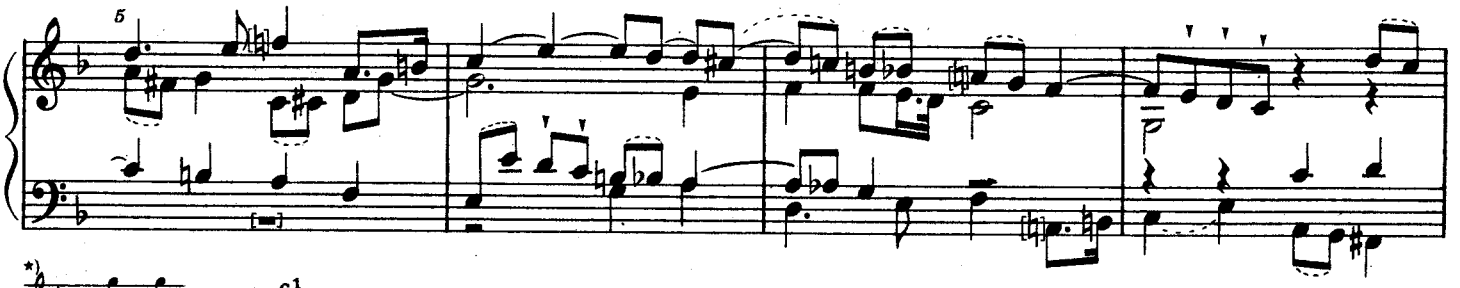



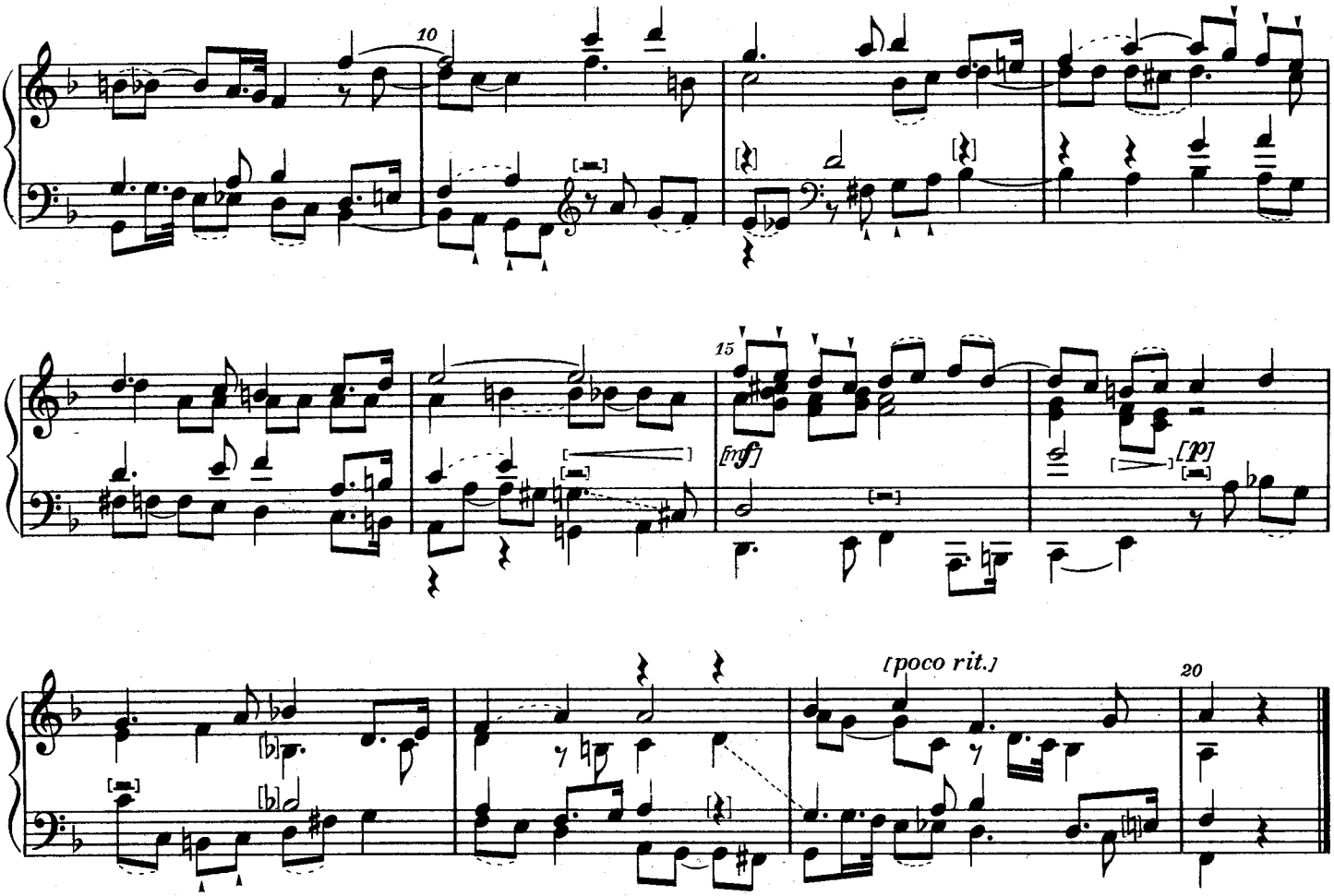

VAR. 56

Fuga



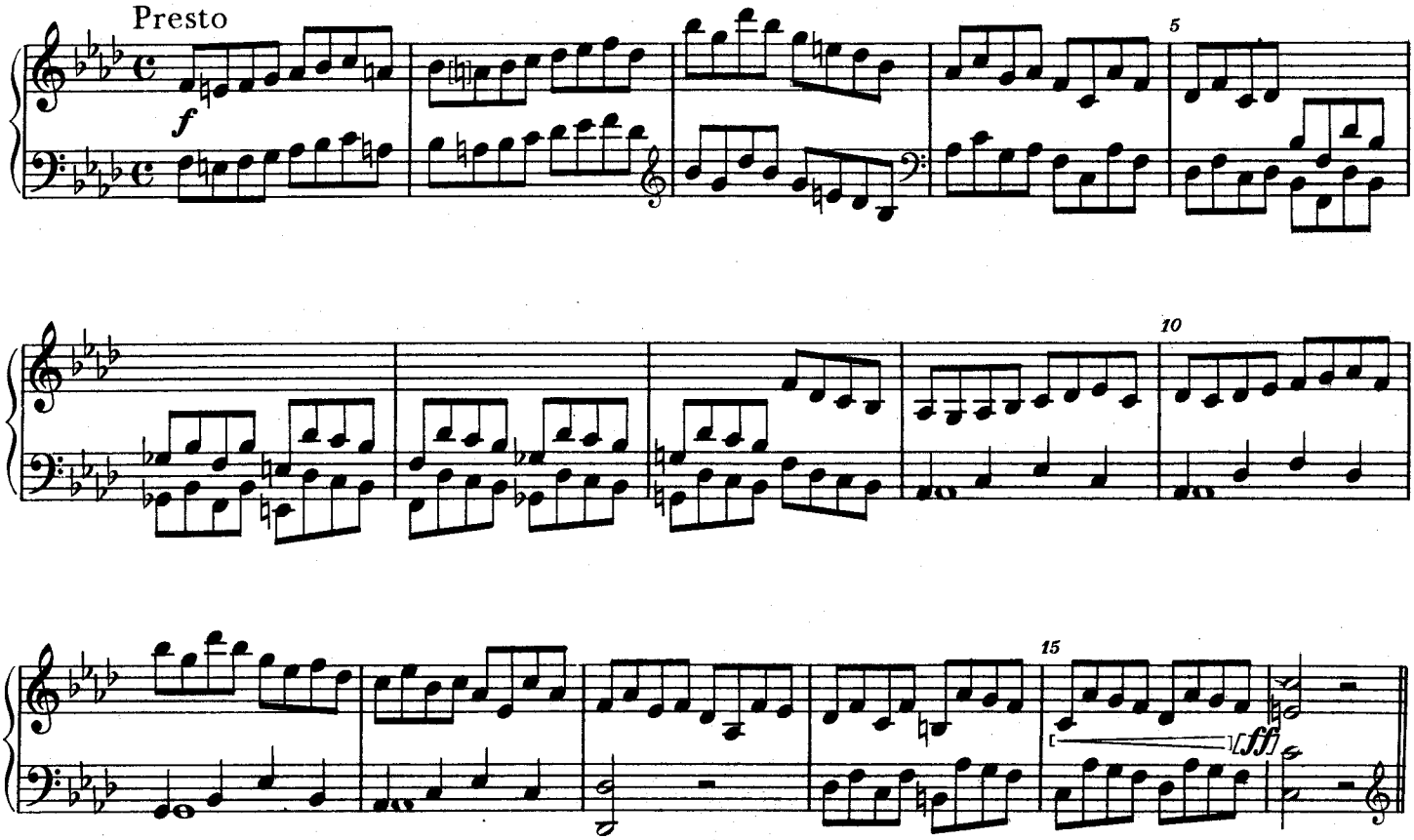



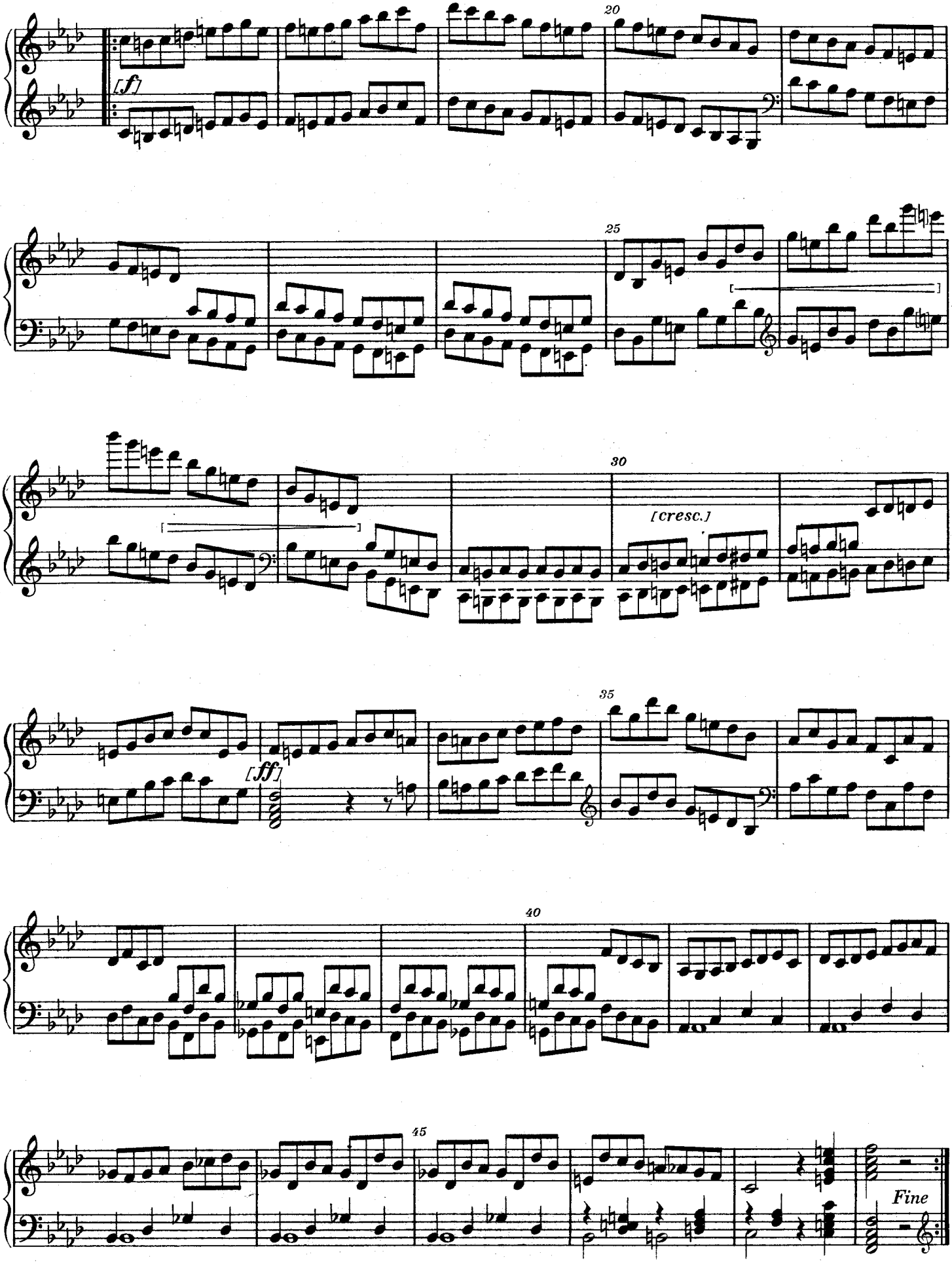
**) c¹
g¹




VAR. 57

Presto




[f]
20
25
30
[cresc.]
35
[ff]
40
45
Fine