Sonata romantica for guitar, op. 58

I discussed in the program notes for my opus 57 guitar Miniatures that it had been taking all of the first decade of this century, or indeed millennium, for me to come to terms with the unfinished or inadequately realized creations from before the demarcational year 2001. Indeed, my opus 75 was composed in 2000 and there has been no new opus number since then. With the completion of this Sonata, I have fulfilled my decree, so, twelve years later, opus 76 is at least now a possibility.

This work landed last on my review list because I found its sketches to be the most …sketchy. A theme and most of a first variation, no slow movement (just the notion that I wanted one in the middle), and some concatenating ideas for a final rondo, but no cohesive sense of how they might fit together (not even of which one would constitute the "main" rondo tune). I did have enough promising material at the time that I felt sanguine in assigning the number 58, but to be honest, the work was essentially composed in January 2012 while I recovered from eye surgery.

It was in fact completed today, my nephew Patrick's birthday, and also that of Franz Schubert, Ponce's model for his own Sonata romántica (my nearly homologous title is Italian, whereas Ponce's is in his native Spanish). The Mexican master entitled one of his movements Moment musical, and certainly my last variation tracks very closely to one of Schubert's Moments musicaux–but earlier in my set we had just heard a variation evoking Rimsky's Flight of the Bumblebee! I'd love to go on citing specific compositional influences, but I know I'd regret doing so later, detecting as I do a different one on fairly every page! Suffice it to say, Ponce's Sonata has the one main influence, whereas mine involves considerably diverse Romantic sources. (For the record, Ponce also has a Sonata clásica, after Sor, whereas the latter is but one of several influences on my own early Sonata classica.)

The variations end with a simple (unaltered) restatement of the initial tema, a device used by any number of Romantic composers (as well as those from the Baroque and Classical eras). The form (and perhaps somewhat the content) of the central intermezzo (small "i" there: the word is simply descriptive; none of the movements has a specific title) owes much to Brahms. And however variegated the content is, the form of my final rondo is influenced by the open-endedness of many I could mention by Schubert. But in a sense these are all nested influences: the most direct vector influencing the proceedings (and this applies to my other guitar Sonata, marked classica, as well) was Manuel María Ponce.

I dedicate the work to my nephew, Patrick Cupo.

Victor Frost
31 I 12
New York City

Performance notes

I have quite a bit to say about the matter of arpeggiation in my performance notes for opus 57, and ask you to review them if they are handy. In the present composition I do not use the n.a. (*non arpeggiato*) prescription that I occasionally do there. I also notice that only the first of the three movements here has any actual arpeggio signs in it. Let me quote from the older notes: "...I have often been delighted over the years when guitarists have broken a chord in my music where such never occurred to me. The problem here is, I do have a few articulations to indicate that certain chords need to be rolled, and I fear that this might be viewed as exclusionary (no marking means, no roll) rather than inclusionary. Feel free to arpeggiate any time you have a mind to do so..."

The transitions between the variations of the first movement might seem to be overly fussily notated. The score gives some idea as to how I hear these transitions, but what is there is simply a guide: if you have different ideas for how to get from one variation to another, please do go with your own interpretation.

Another transition I hesitate about (at least at this writing, while the music is still very fresh…) is the un poco rit. leading into the final presto on the last page of the Sonata. Should it begin where I say, or half a m., or a full m. later? Does it indeed even belong there at all?

The last note in the stems-down voice in m. 98, an E, is really tied to the one opening the next m. But I left out the tie because the note must sound on the downbeat of m. 99 in the stems-up voice.

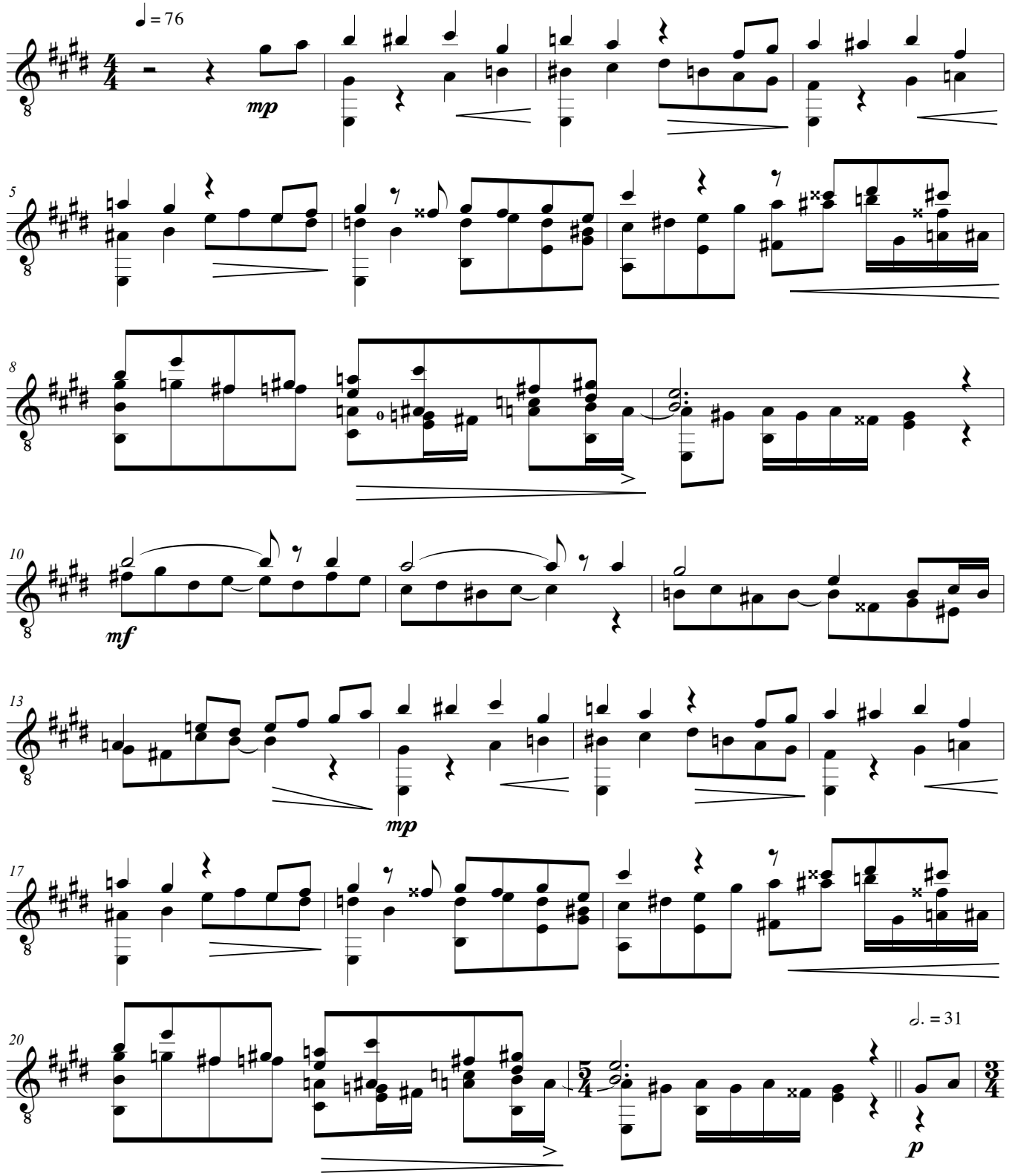
to Patrick Cupo

Sonata romantica

for guitar, op. 58

I

Victor Frost



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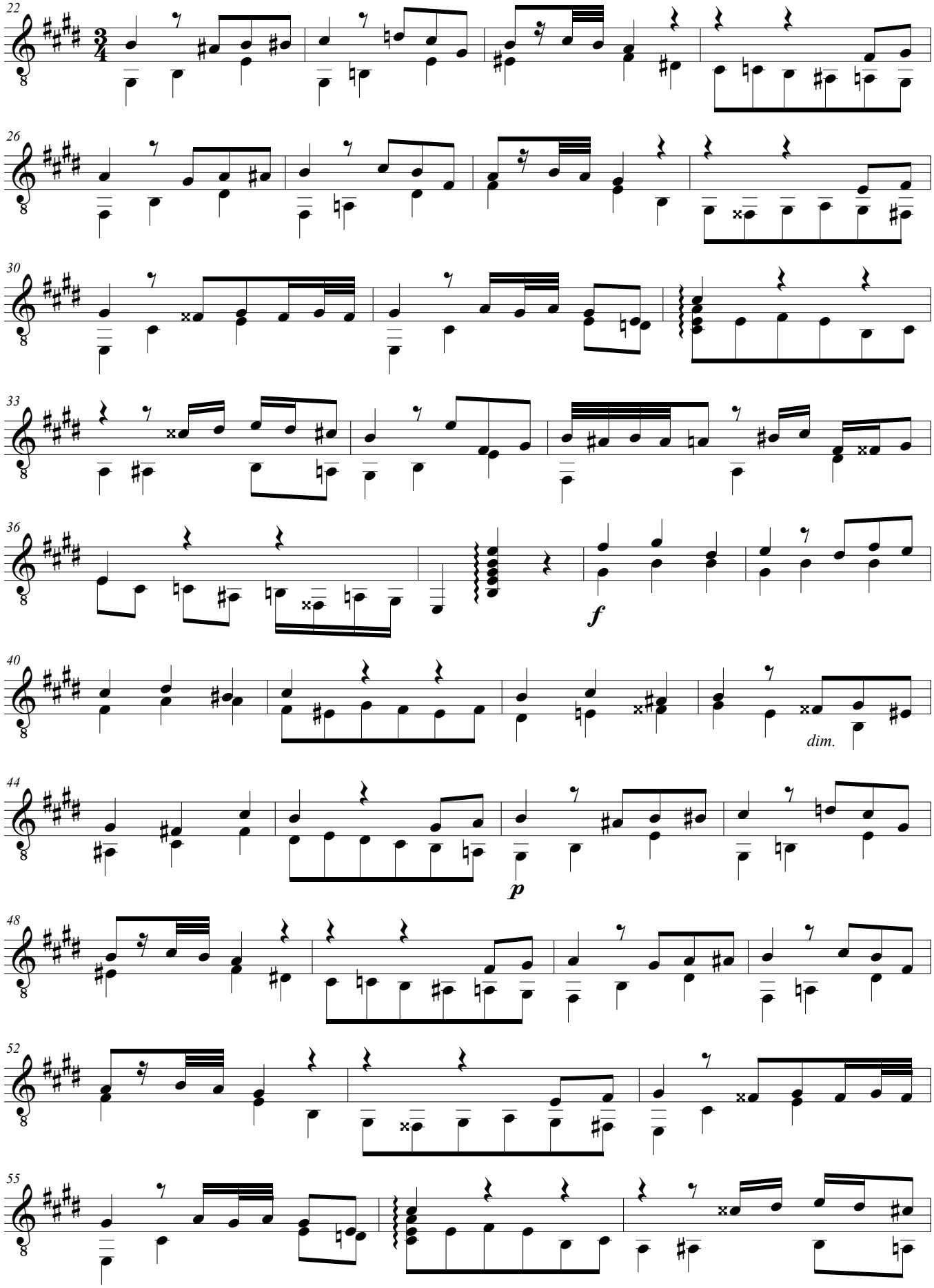
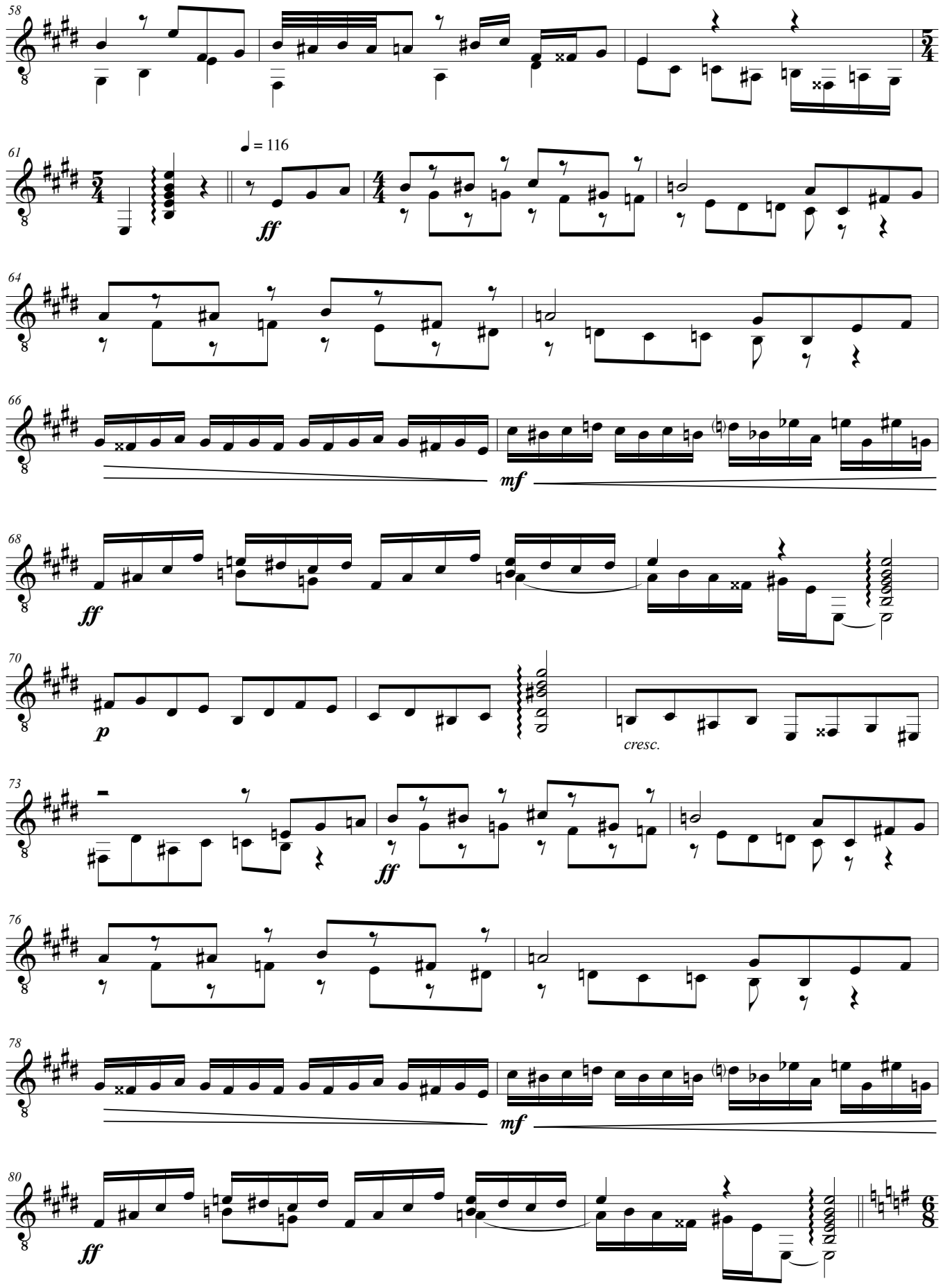
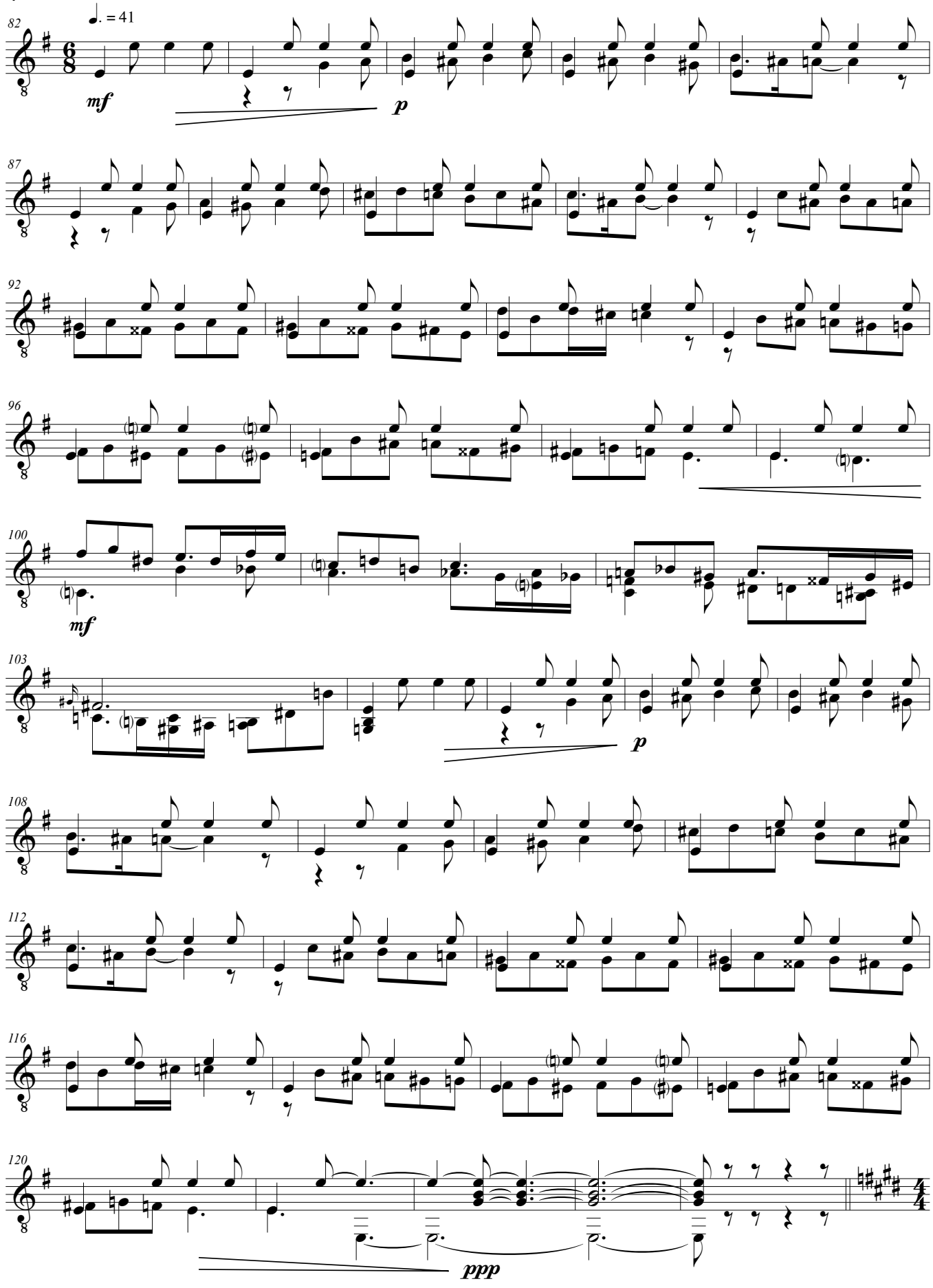
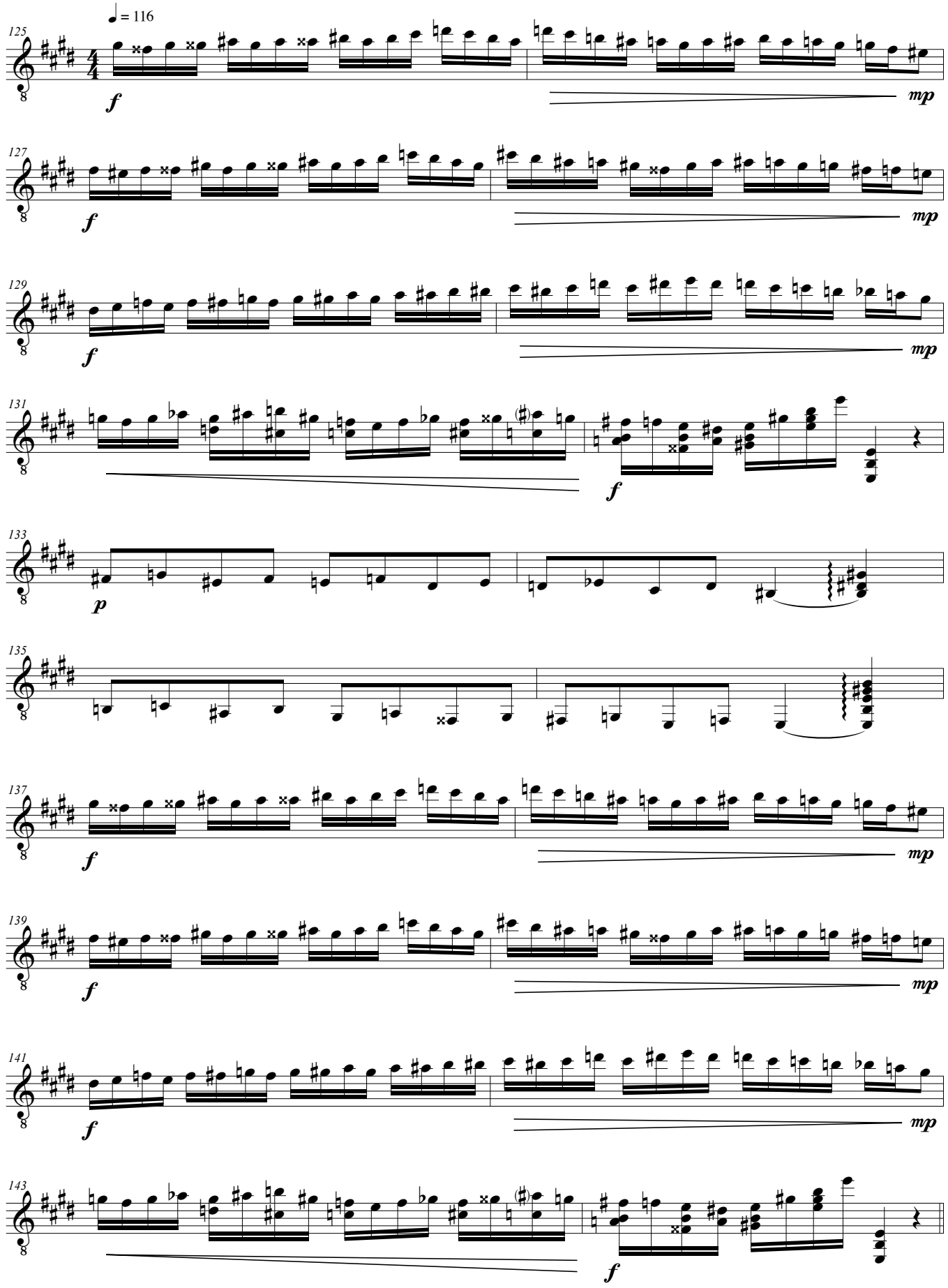
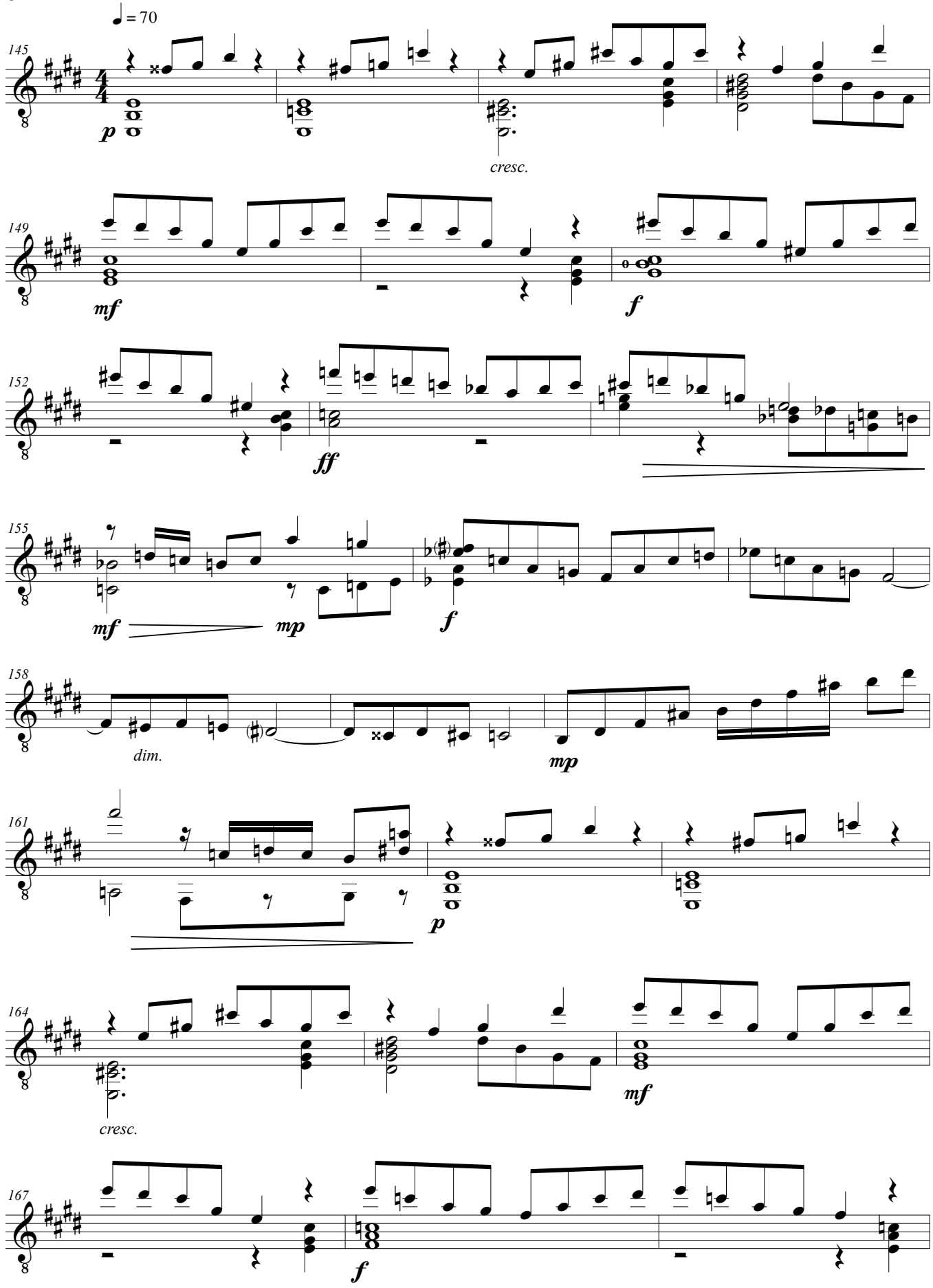
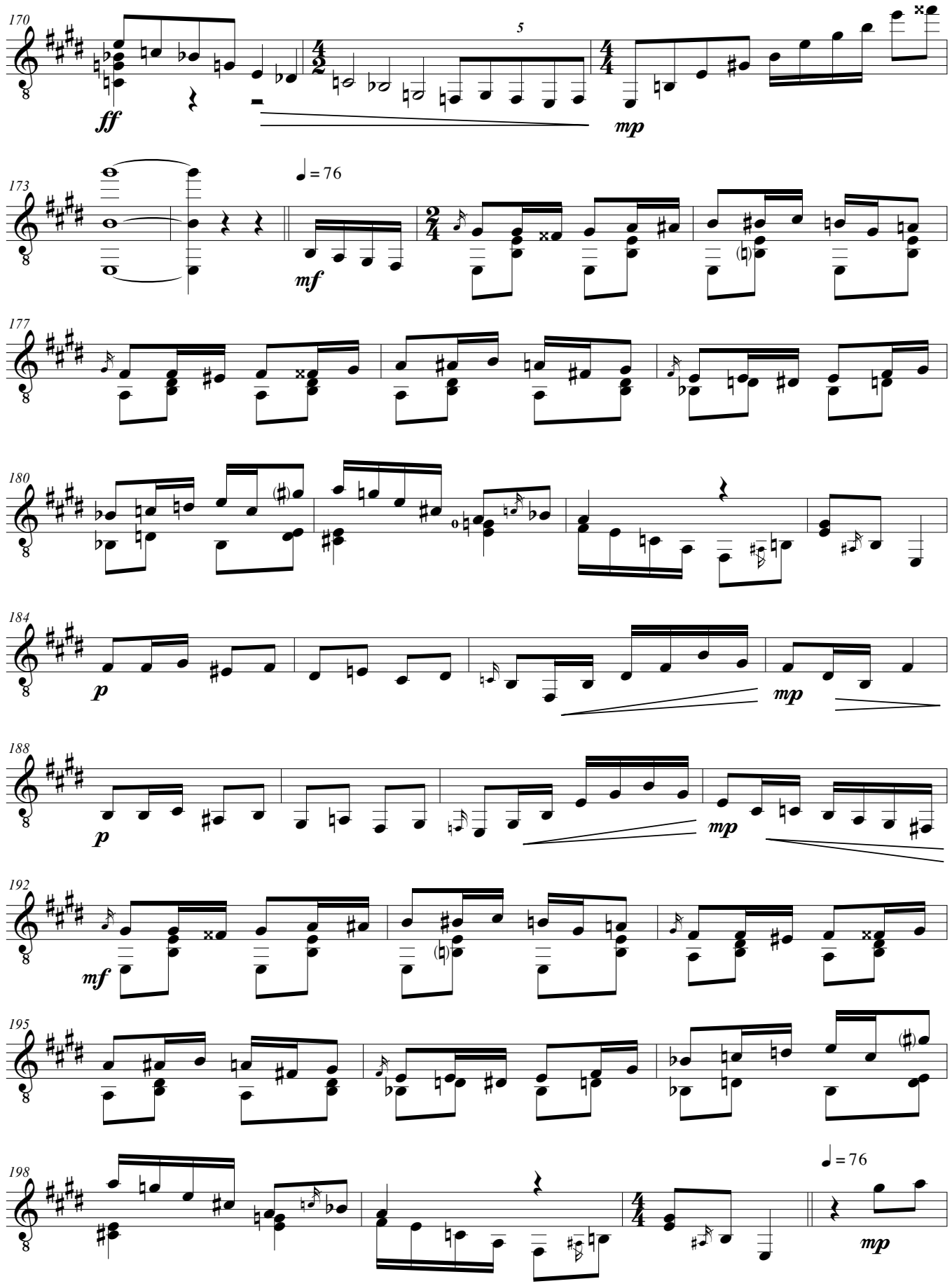

22
26
30
33
36
f
40
dim.
44
p
48
52
55

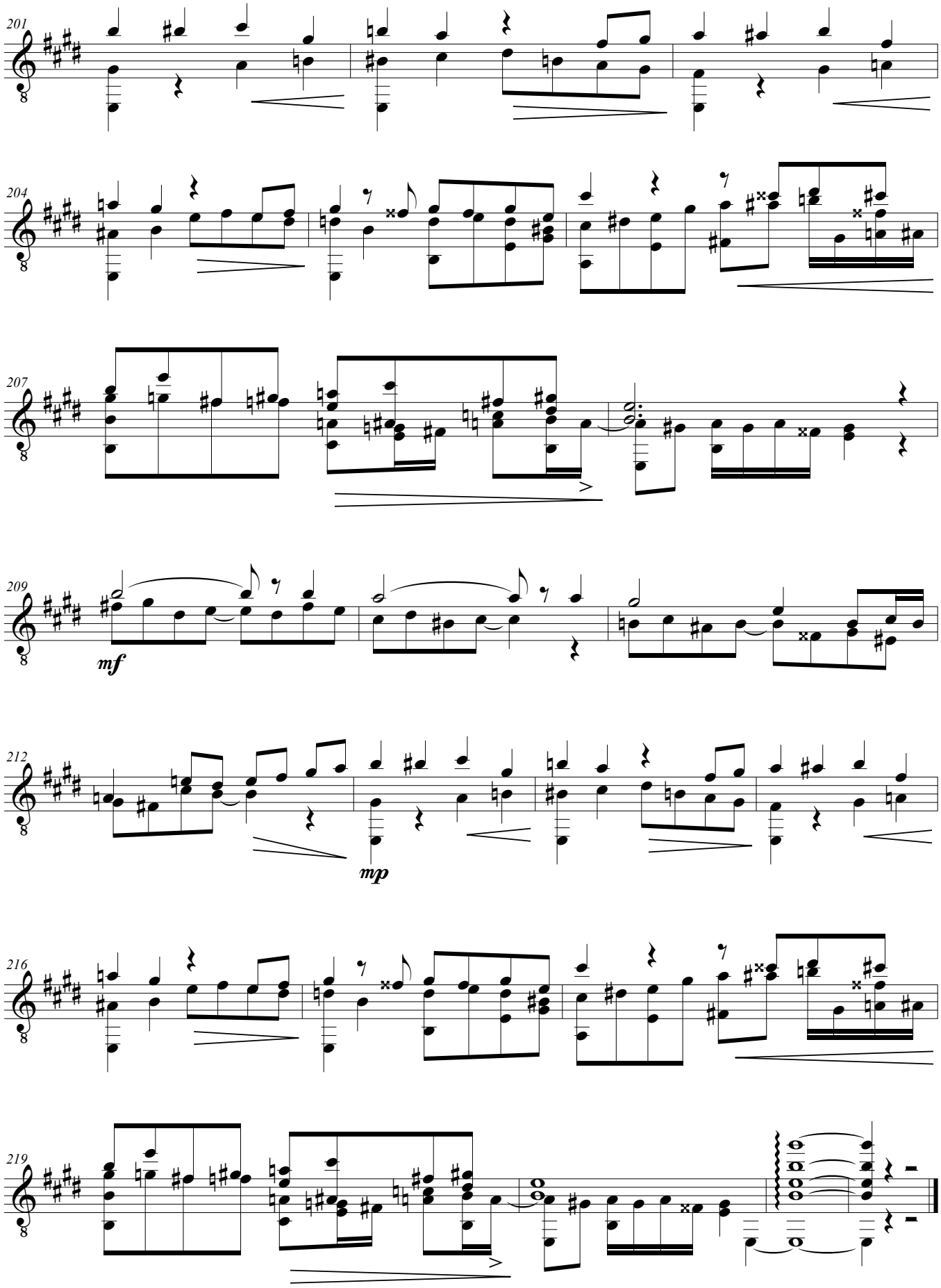

58
61
♩ = 116
ff
64
66
mf
68
ff
70
p
cresc.
73
ff
76
78
mf
80
ff

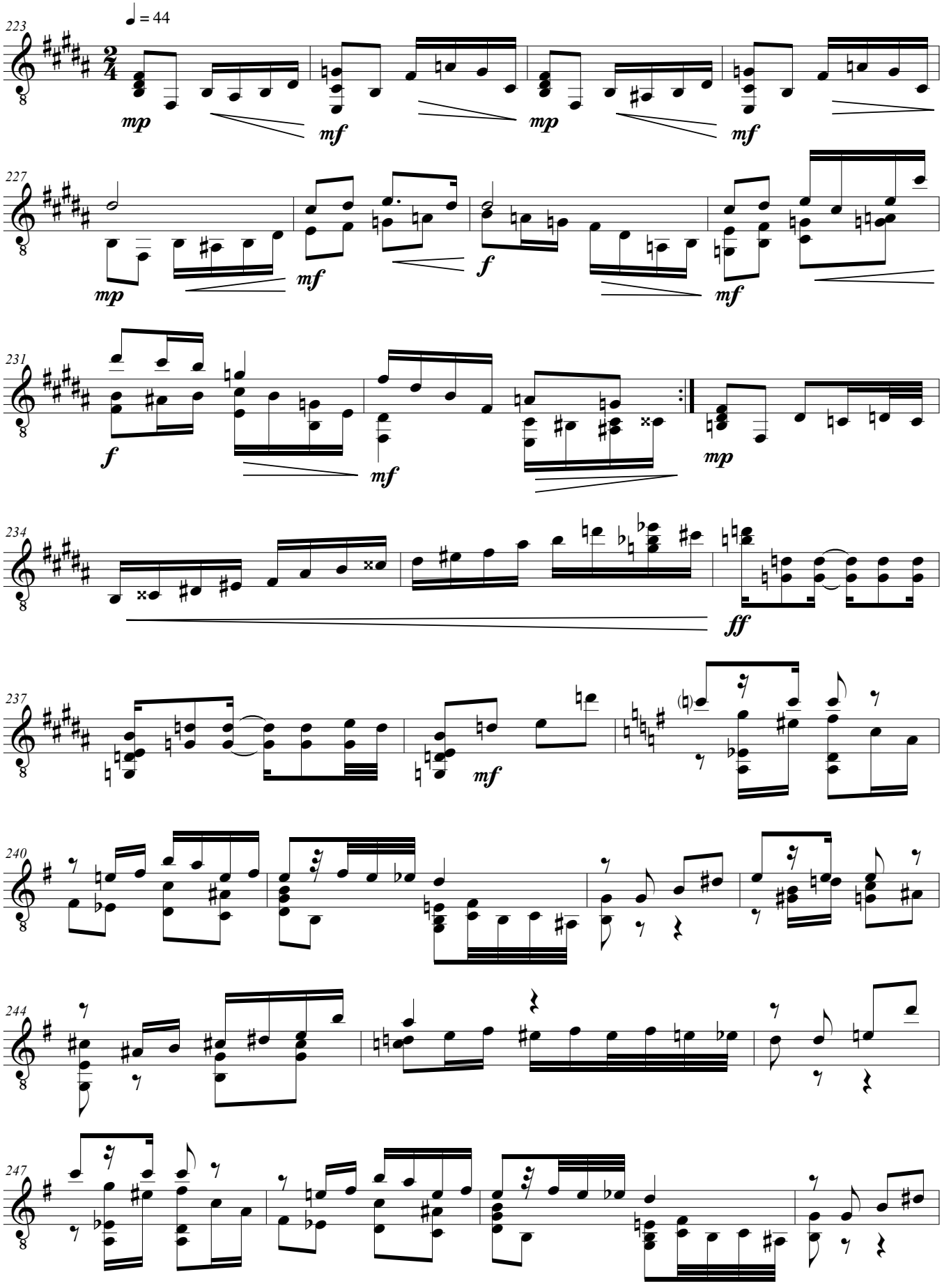

82
♩. = 41
mf
p
87
92
96
100
mf
103
p
108
112
116
120
ppp

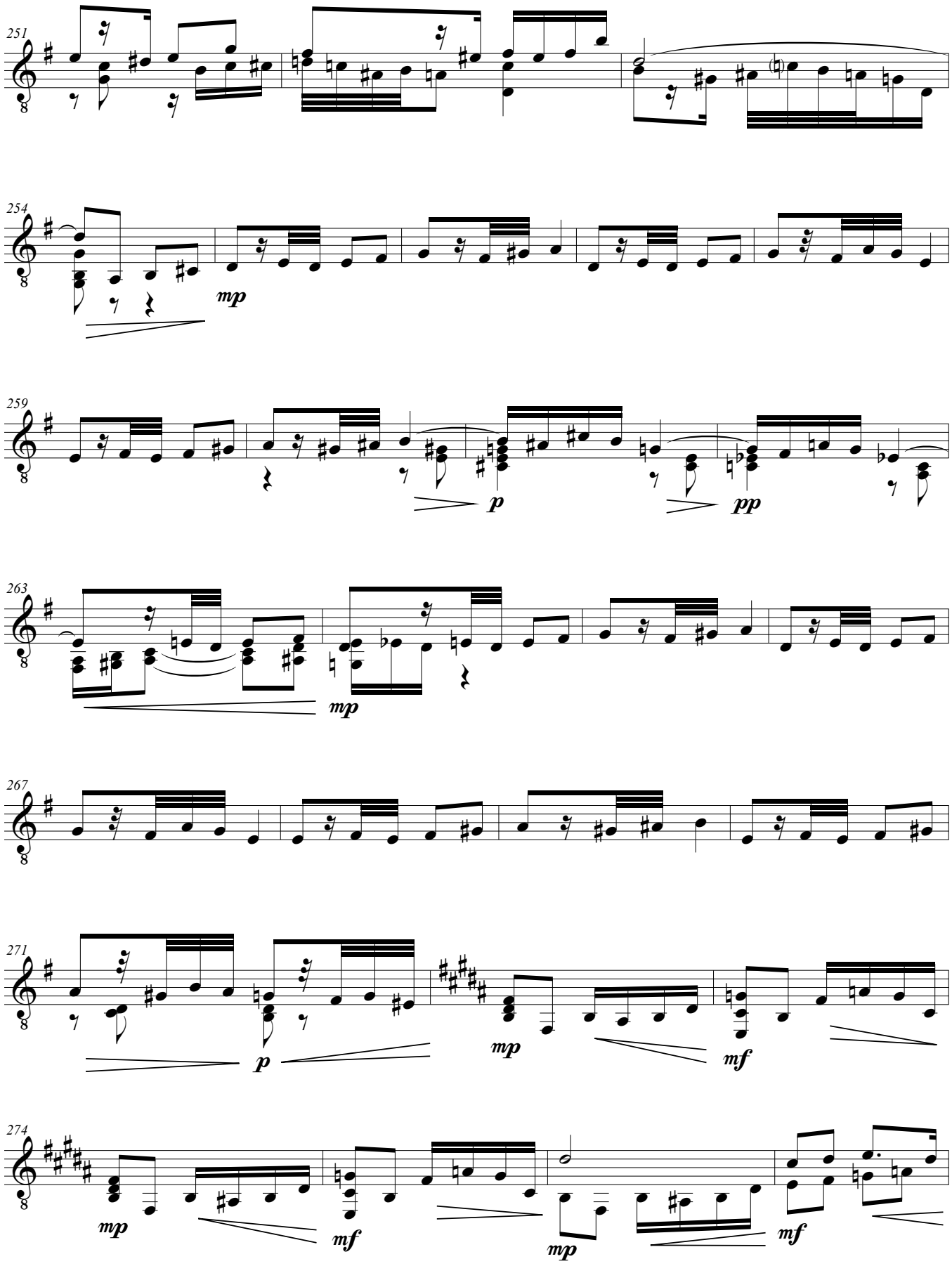

♩ = 116
125
f
mp
127
f
mp
129
f
mp
131
f
f
133
p
135
137
f
mp
139
f
mp
141
f
mp
143
f

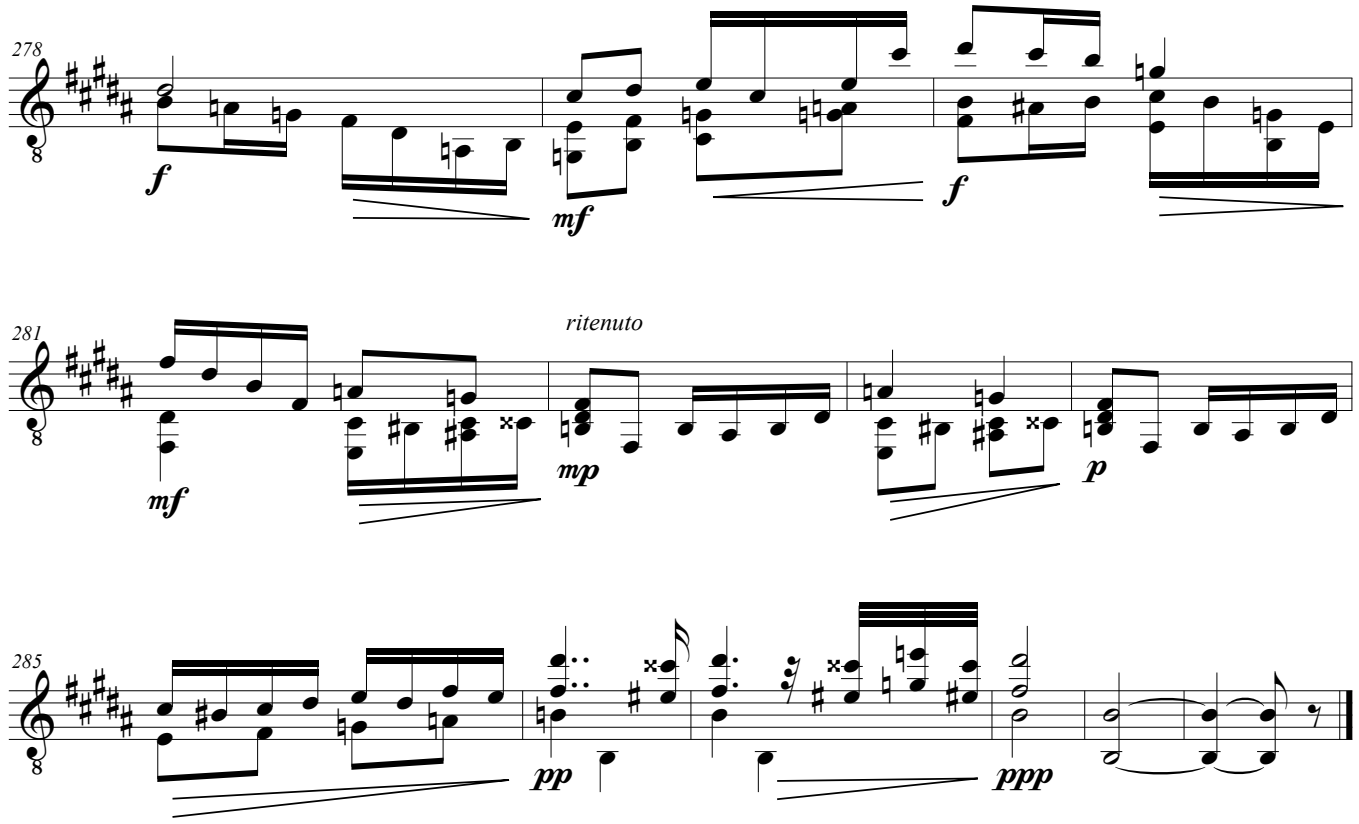

♩ = 70
145
p
cresc.
149
mf
f
152
ff
155
mf
mp
f
158
dim.
mp
161
p
164
cresc.
mf
167
f


170
5
ff
mp
173
♩ = 76
mf
177
180
184
p
mp
188
p
mp
192
mf
195
198
♩ = 76
mp

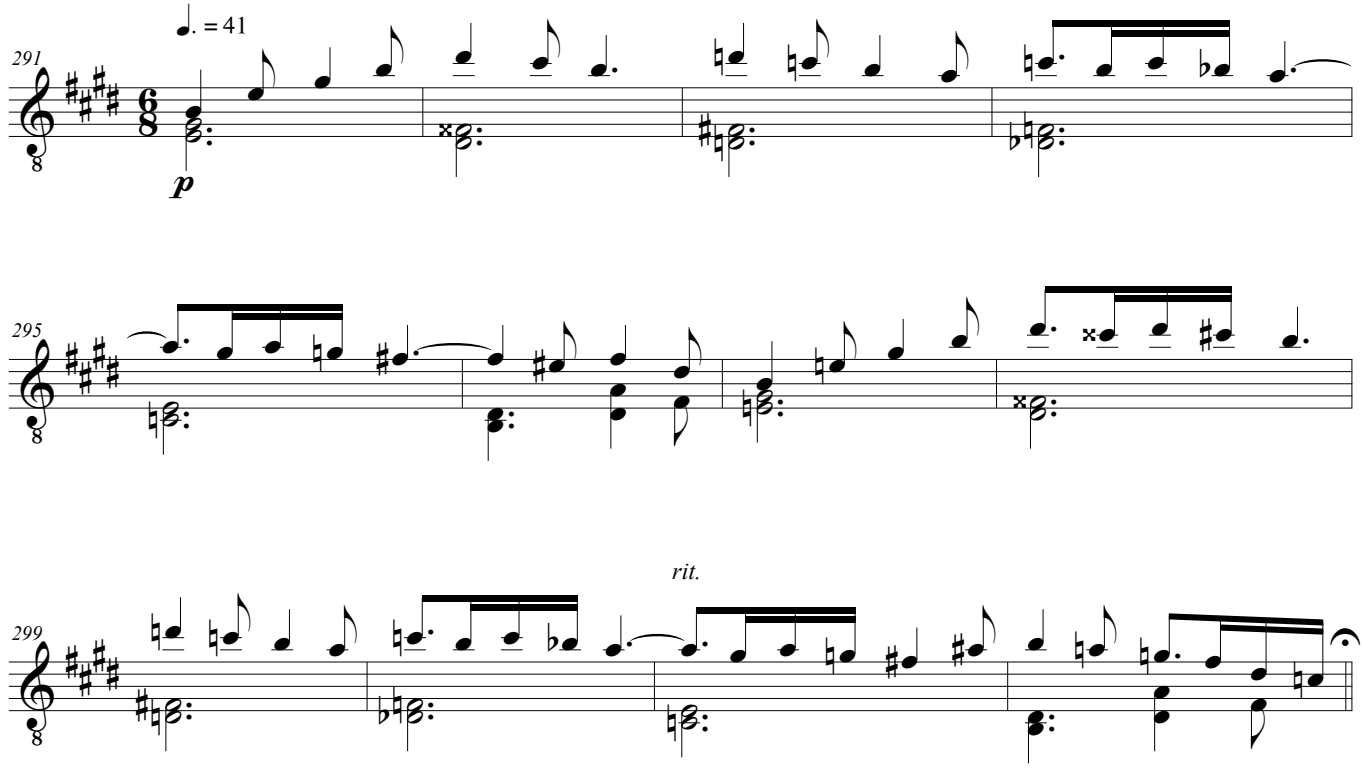

201
204
207
209
mf
212
mp
216
219

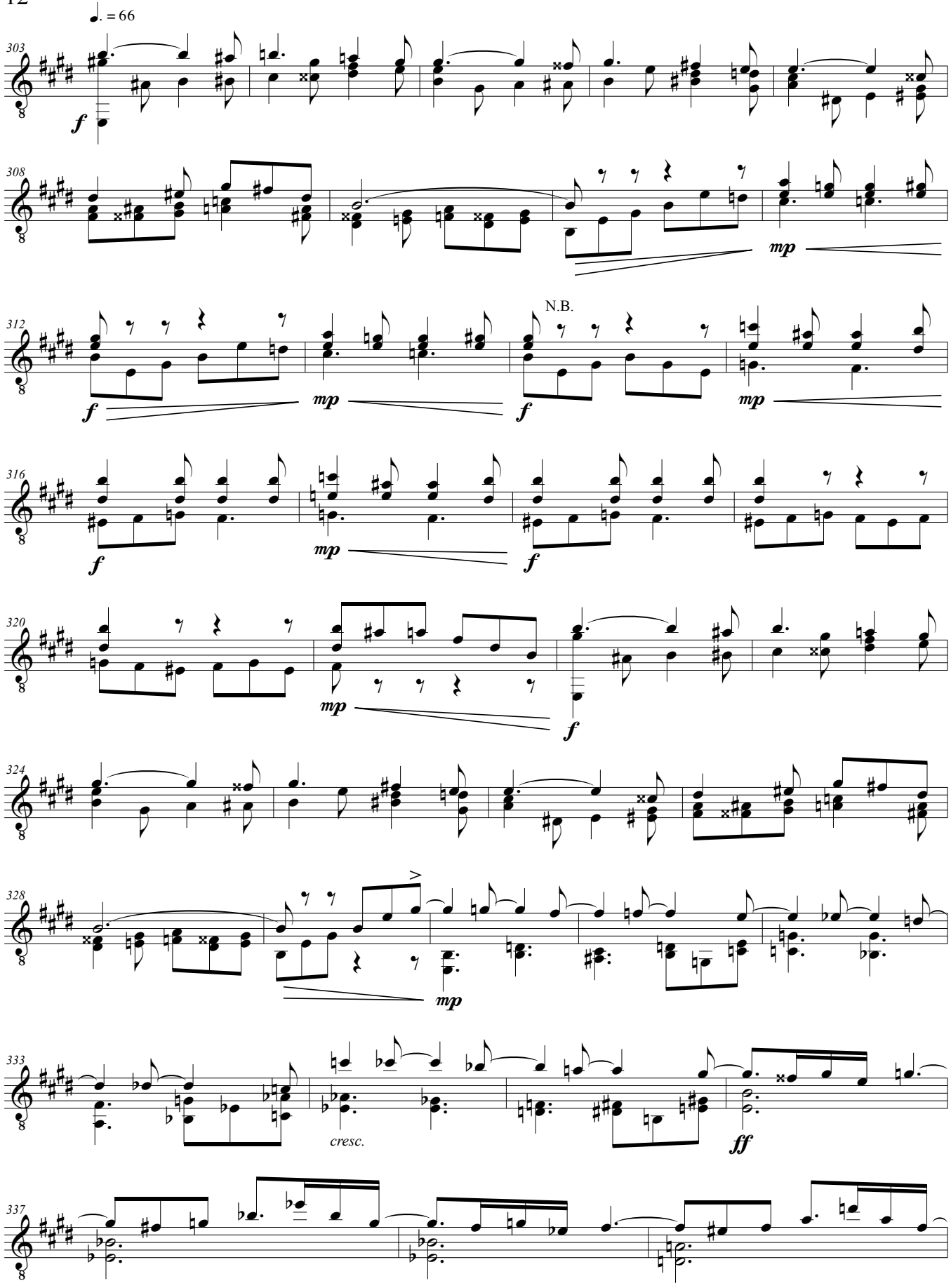

223
♩ = 44
mp
mf
mp
mf
227
mp
mf
f
mf
231
f
mf
mp
234
ff
237
mf
240
244
247


251
254
mp
259
p
pp
263
mp
267
271
p
mp
mf
274
mp
mf
mp
mf

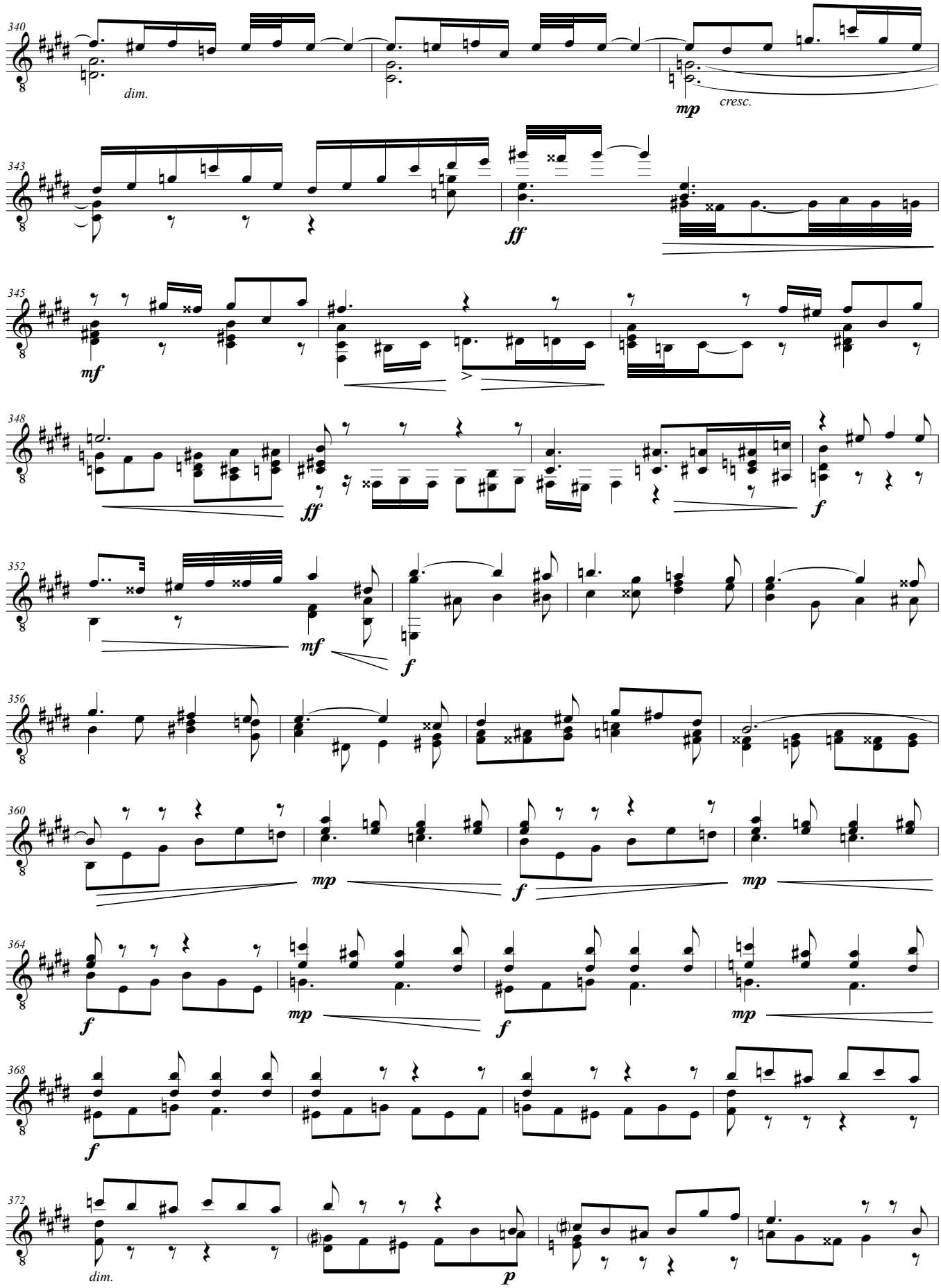


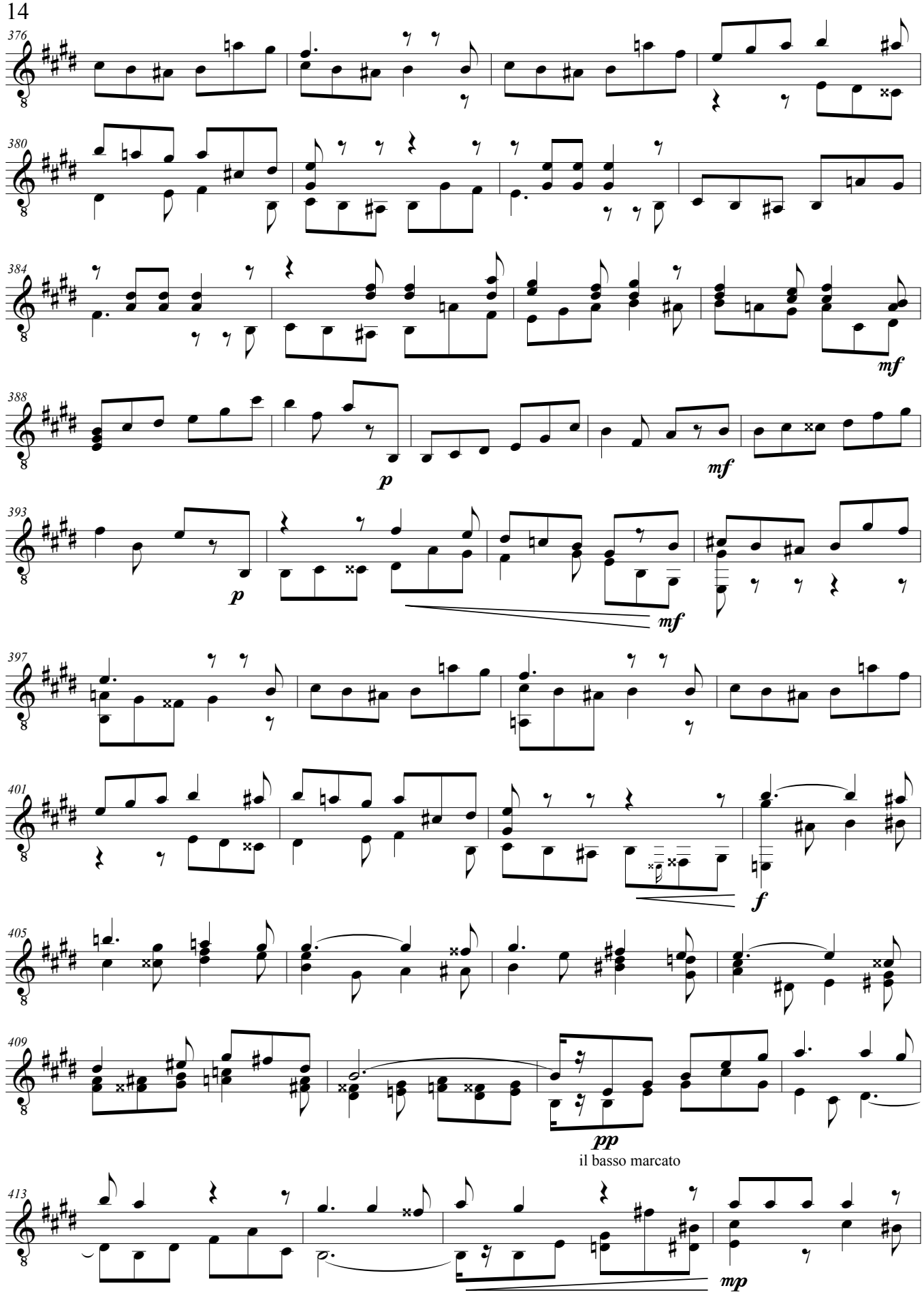
III

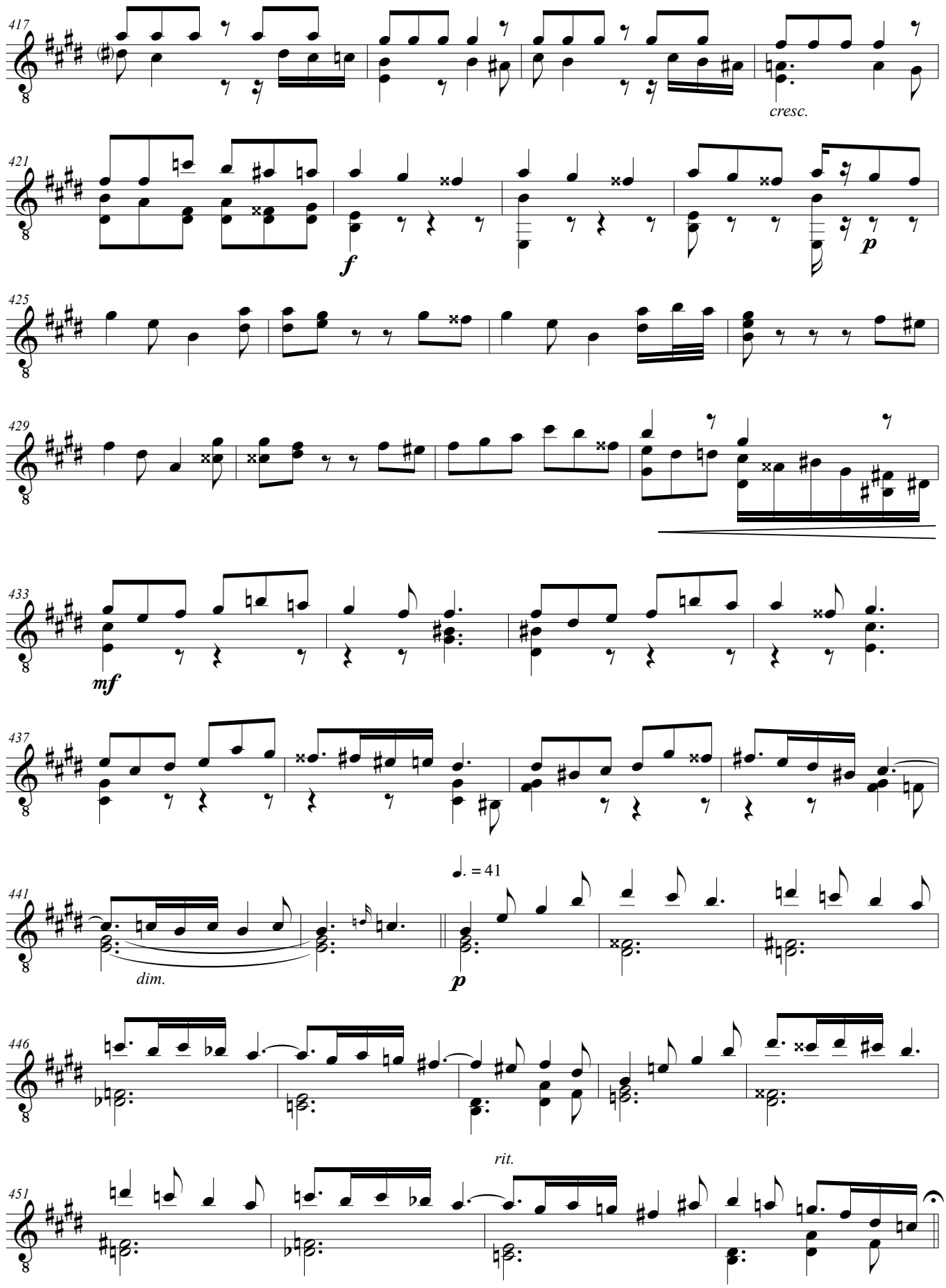


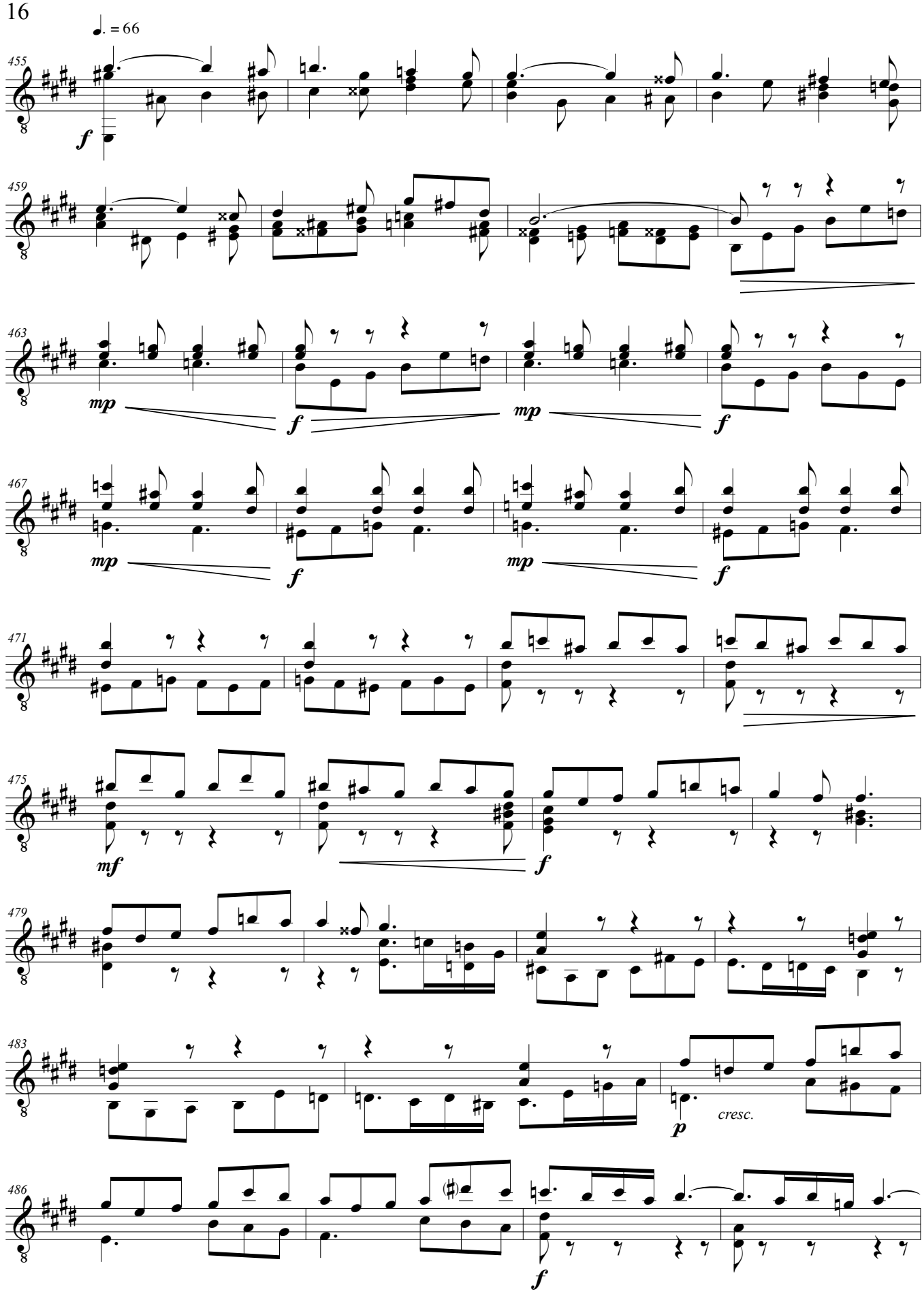


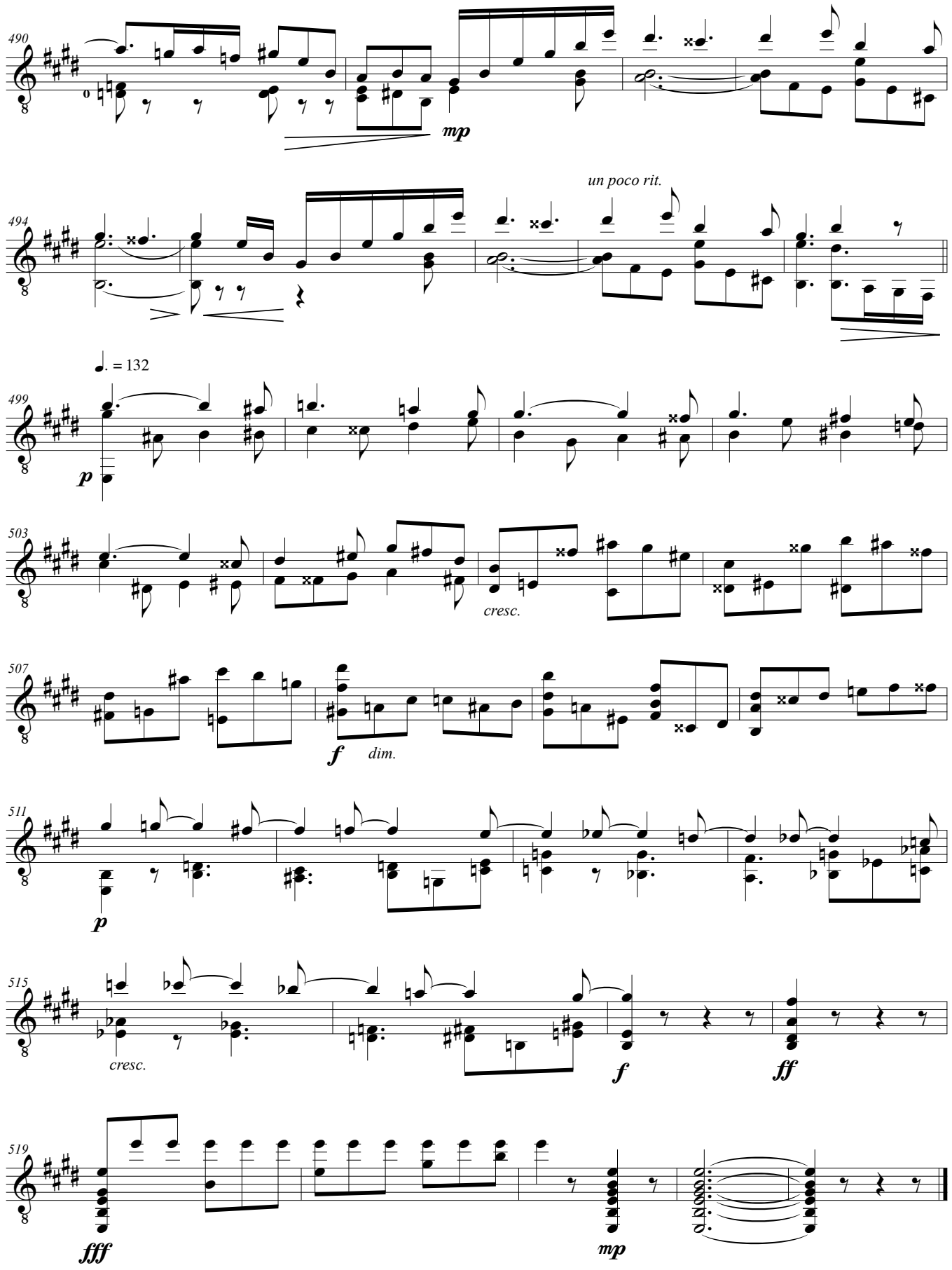
N.B. No decrescendo here. Subito ***mp*** in the next m., as well as two and six mm. after that.


340
dim.
mp
cresc.
343
ff
345
mf
348
ff
f
352
mf
f
356
360
mp
f
mp
364
f
mp
f
mp
368
f
372
dim.
p


376
380
384
mf
388
p
mf
393
p
mf
397
401
f
405
409
pp
il basso marcato
413
mp


417
cresc.
421
f
p
425
429
433
mf
437
441
dim.
♩. = 41
p
446
rit.
451


♩. = 66
455
f
459
463
mp
f
mp
f
467
mp
f
mp
f
471
475
mf
f
479
483
p
cresc.
486
f


490
mp
un poco rit.
494
♩. = 132
499
p
503
cresc.
507
f
dim.
511
p
515
cresc.
f
ff
519
fff
mp