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The Piano Works of ROBERT SCHUMANN

edited by

E. PAUER.

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ROBERT SCHUMANN.

ROBERT SCHUMANN, the youngest of five children, was born on the 8th of June, 1810, at Zwickau, where his father, August Schumann, was in business as a bookseller and publisher. At the age of six he was put to school, where he at once became the favourite of his playfellows, and by always taking the lead in their games, even at this early age seems to have prefigured the ambitious strivings of his later years; but with book-learning he does not appear to have made more than ordinary progress. It was then that he received his first lessons in pianoforte playing, from Herr Kuntzsch, Bachelor of Arts, and teacher of music in the Lyceum of Zwickau; but whether this was on account of any special talent he evinced, or as a matter of course, has not been ascertained. It is recorded, however, that Herr Kuntzsch's lessons exercised such a power upon his youthful and excited mind, that of his own accord, and without any knowledge of theory, he at once began to put his thoughts upon paper. The earliest of these juvenile compositions, consisting of small dance tunes, dates from his seventh or eighth year. The gift of extemporising, too, was simultaneously manifested in proportion to the manual proficiency he had attained. His skill in portraying scenes and feelings in tones was great. He is said to have been able to sketch so precisely and comically the characteristic traits of his schoolfellows, who stood around him at the piano, that they would burst out laughing at the accuracy of their portraits. About the same time a turn for literary composition, which as a musical critic he subsequently brought to such perfection, manifested itself in his writing plays, which his elder brother Julius and his schoolfellows helped him to act, while his father looked on approvingly. Any attempt to follow Schumann during his boyhood would lead us far beyond our scope. That his father was not averse to his following music as a profession, appears from the fact of Weber's being consulted as to the lad's talents, and requested to undertake his musical education. This plan, however, was not carried out. At the age of sixteen, he had the misfortune to lose his father. At eighteen, in deference to the wishes of his mother, who was strongly opposed to her son's making music his profession, he entered the University of Leipzig, March, 1828, with a view to studying law. Here he took some lessons from Friedrich Wieck, who has aptly been termed "a born pianoforte teacher;" but they could not have been many, for the following year he migrated to the University of Heidelberg, again entering as a law-student. It was now that he became fully conscious that art and not law was his real vocation. He spoke to his mother, and Wieck was appealed to, to decide the matter. He pronounced in favour of music, and Schumann's mother withdrew her objections. Accordingly, at Michaelmas, 1830, he returned to Leipzig, and again put himself under Wieck's tuition. His impatience to become a virtuoso led him to invent mechanical contrivances for imparting strength and agility to the fingers. These experiments unhappily had the opposite result of almost depriving him of the

use of his hands for pianoforte playing. Disappointed now in his hope of ever qualifying himself as a public performer, he determined to devote himself to composition. With this end he put himself under Heinrich Dorn, from whom he now received his first systematic theoretical instruction. Leipzig became his home, and it was here that the most important of his musical creations first saw the light. Of the year 1834 Schumann himself spoke as "the most remarkable of his life." It was then that he founded the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, a paper which, as he says in the preface to his "Collected Writings," aimed at the elevation of German art, whether by a reference to the great old models, or by fostering rising talent. For ten years he fulfilled the duties of editor with the utmost zeal and enthusiasm. On resigning the post, it must have been with feelings of satisfaction at having done much towards assuring the reputation of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Hiller, &c., and of having assisted in introducing to the musical world such men as Bennett, Berlioz, Brahms, Chopin, Franz, Gade, Heller, Henselt, Verhulst, &c. In September, 1840, Schumann was married to Friedrich Wieck's daughter Clara. To his love for her, many of his best works doubtless owe their inspiration. He himself says, in a letter to Dorn, that Clara Wieck "was nearly the sole cause" of a number of works he composed for the pianoforte between the age of thirty-five and forty; and Wasielewski adds, "It was she again who gave the decisive impulse which induced him to take up the lyrical style." In December, 1844, on their return from a tour to Russia, which lasted several months, Schumann and his wife took up their abode in Dresden; here they remained till 1850, when Schumann was called to Düsseldorf, to fill the post of municipal musical director, formerly held by Mendelssohn, Rietz, and Hiller. Here that dreadful mental malady, with which he had already been threatened, overtook him, and led to an attempt at suicide. On Monday, February 27th, 1854, during a visit from his physician, Dr. Hasenclever, and a musical friend, Albert Dietrich, he suddenly left the room. In a dressing-gown and with bare head he hurried off to the Rhine bridge and threw himself into the stream. Some sailors saved his life, but for what an end! He spent the remaining two years of it, with his mind hopelessly deranged, in a private asylum at Endenich, near Bonn, till, on the 29th of July, 1856, the angel of death called his weary spirit home.

In appearance Schumann was of middling stature, and slightly corpulent, his bearing calm and dignified. Though simple in manner and generally reserved, with intimate friends he could be most genial. In his profession he was severely conscientious, hardly ever allowing himself to speak hastily or angrily under the most irritating circumstances, but to vulgarity or malevolence he was inexorably opposed. He recognised with cordial warmth all that was great, wise, and talented in others, and though not approving of the new dramatic music of Italy and France, he showed an enthusiastic interest in foreign art. By his death the modern world of music lost one of its most richly and highly gifted creative spirits—one of its most elevated high-priests.—"*Musical Record*," *September*, 1873.

Air on the name:

„ABEGG"

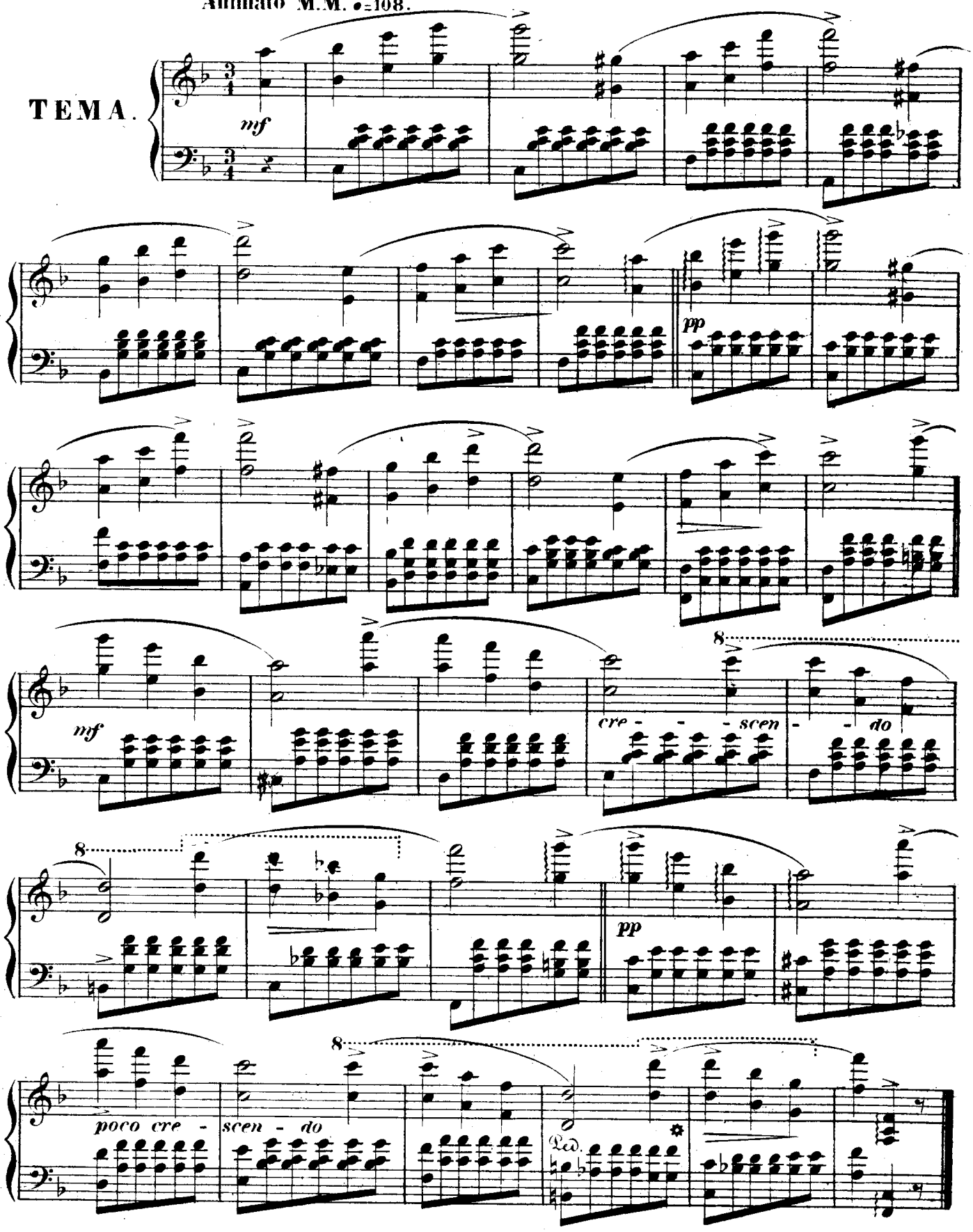
with Variations.

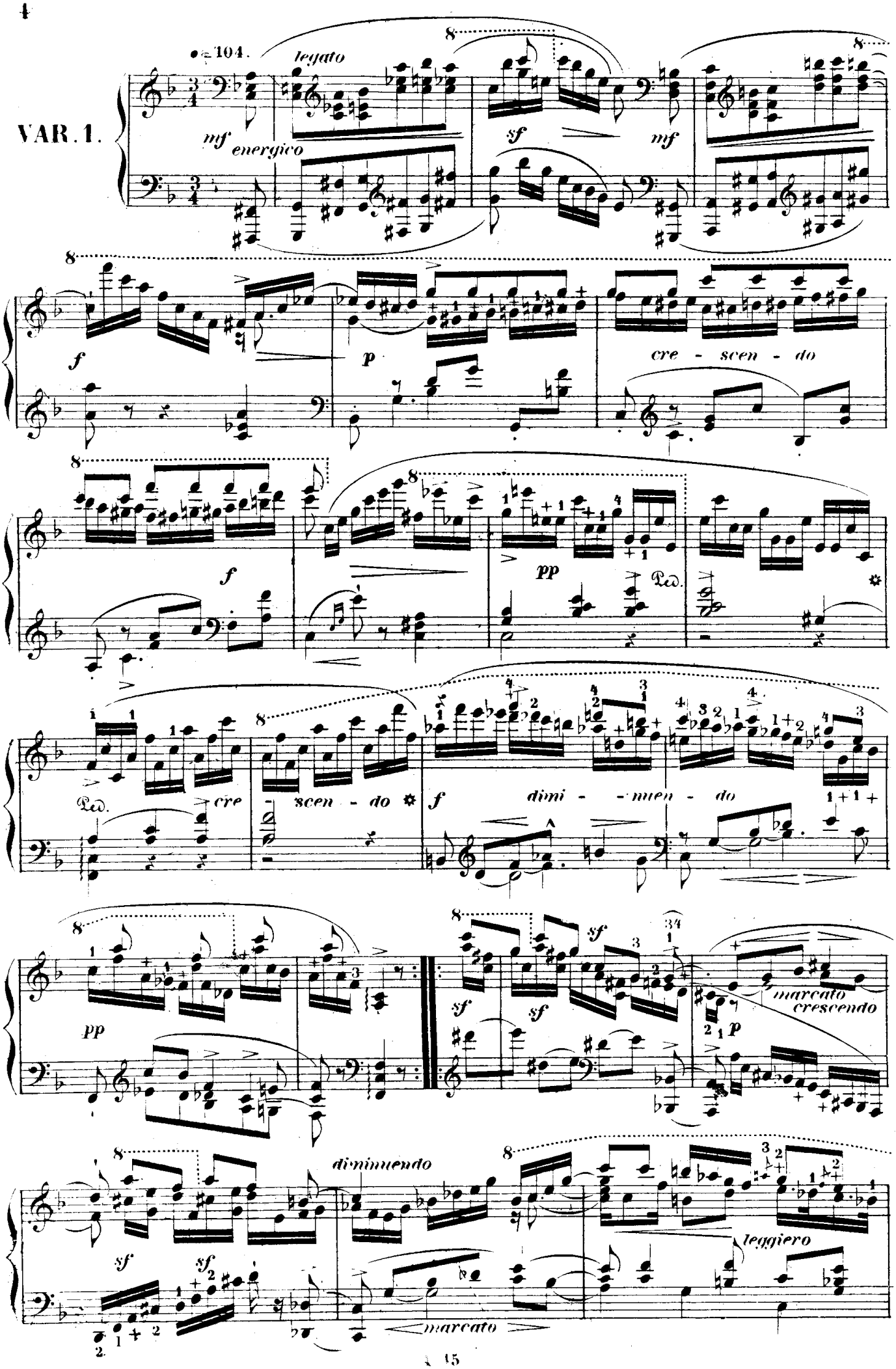
Composed 1830.

Robert Schumann Op. 1.

Animato M.M. ♩=108.

TEMA.




VAR. 1.
♩= 104.
legato
mf
energico
sf
mf
f
p
cre - scen - do
f
pp
Ped.
cre
scen - do
f
dimi - - nuen - do
pp
sf
sf
sf
marcato
crescendo
p
diminuendo
sf
sf
marcato
leggiero

8

1. 2.

f *ff* *fz* *fz*

♩ = 112.

VAR. 2.

p *crescendo* *f*

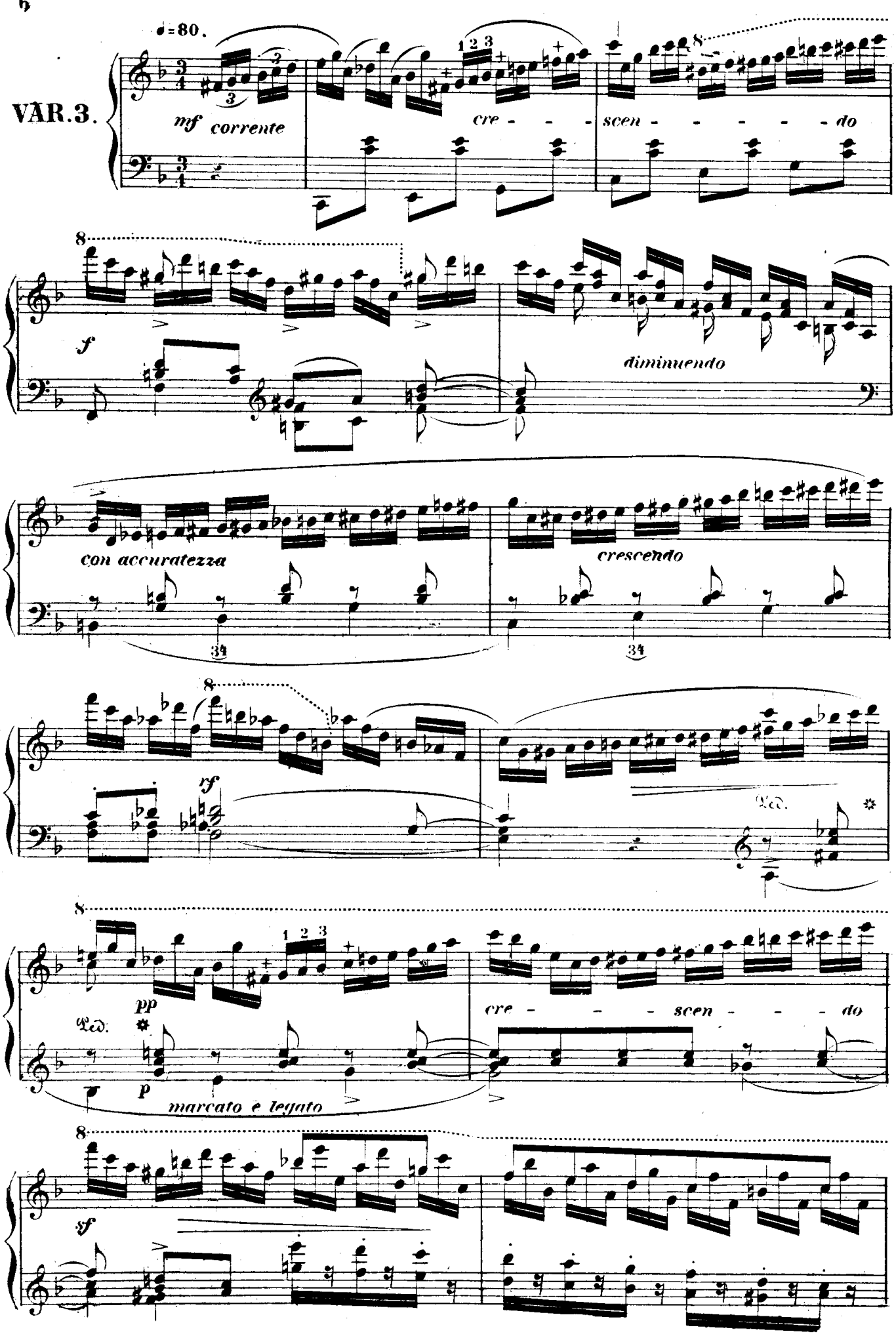
Basso parlando

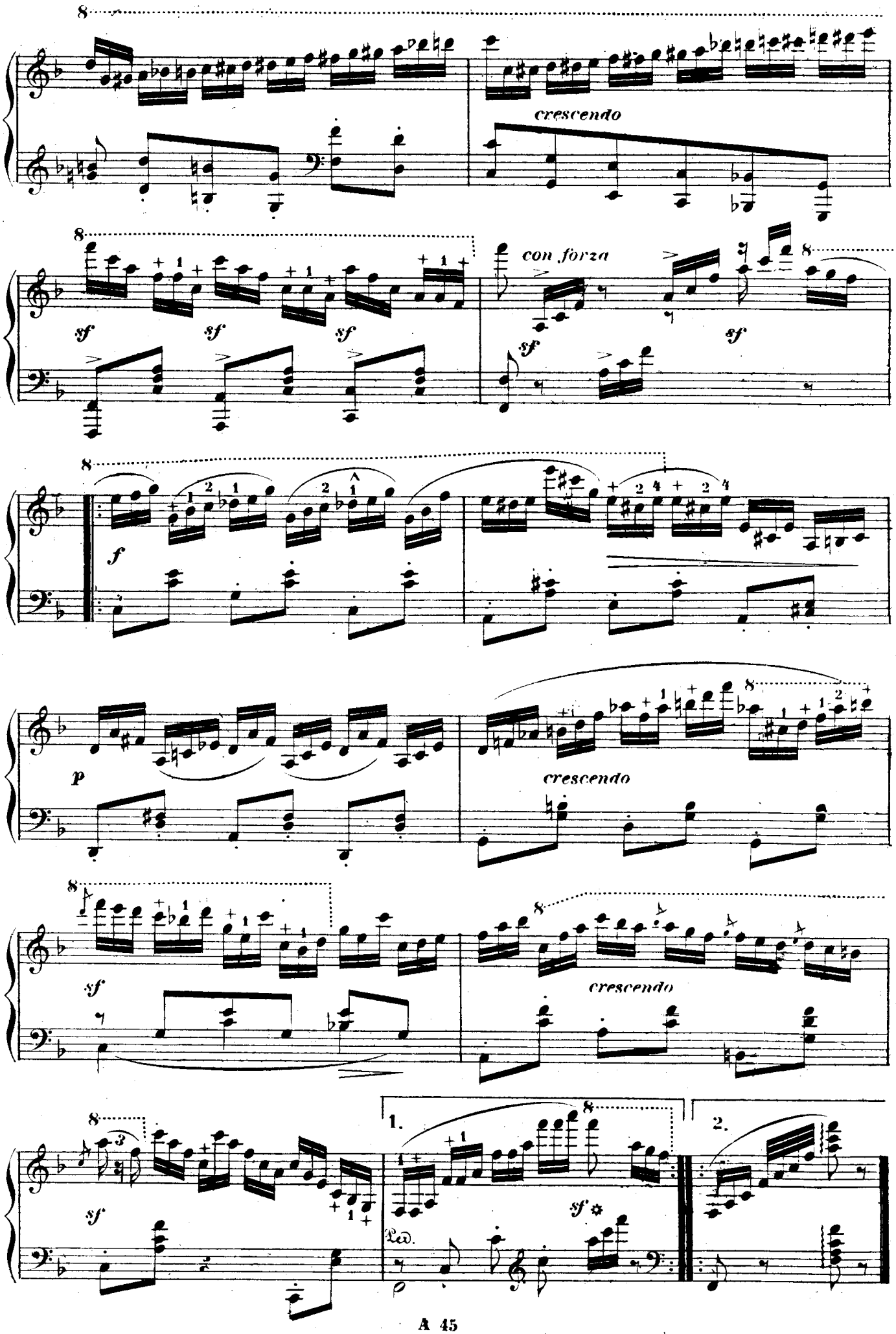
diminuendo *poco ritenuto* *pp* *sempre tenuto*

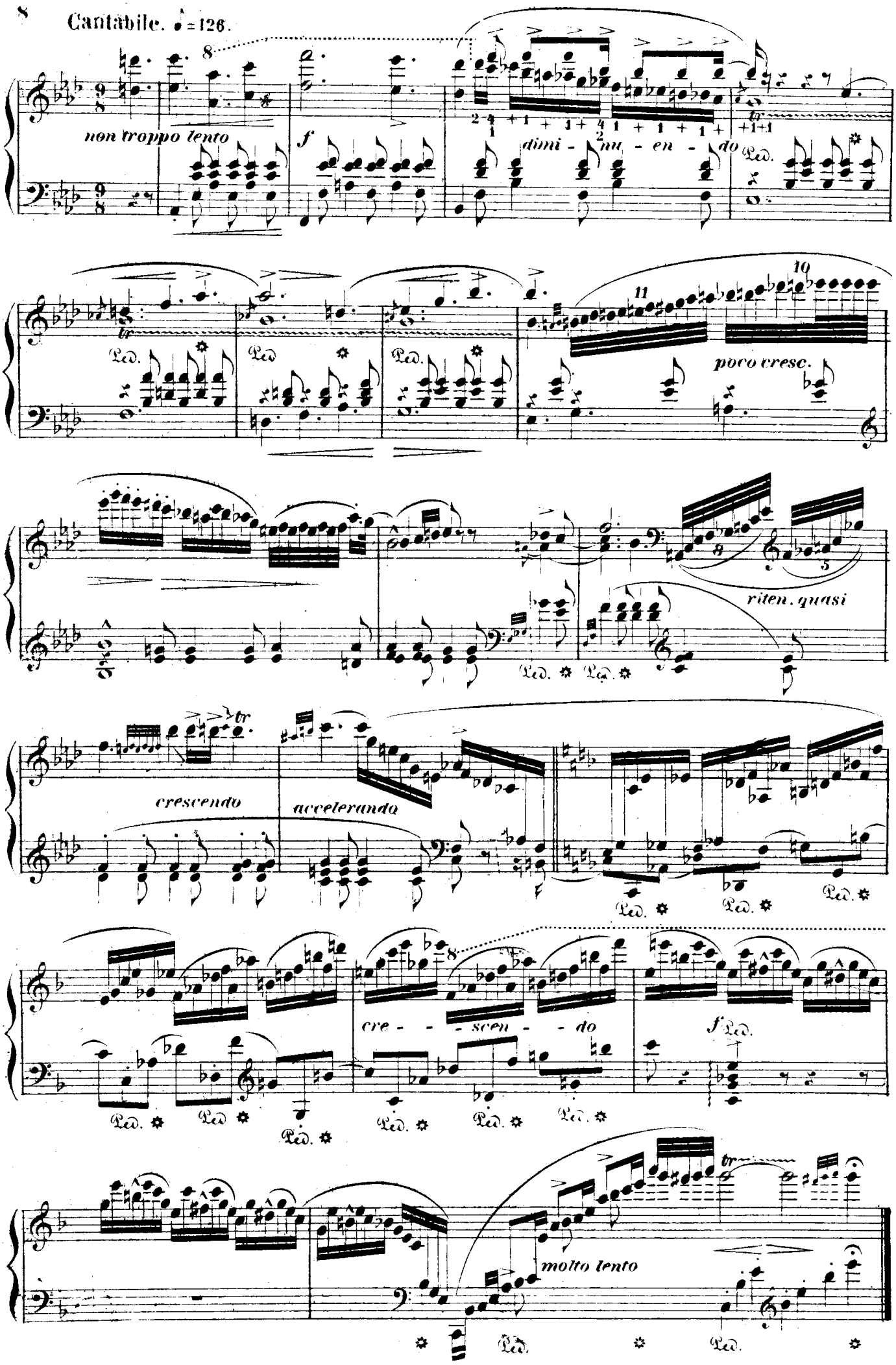
poco ritenuto *p* *p*

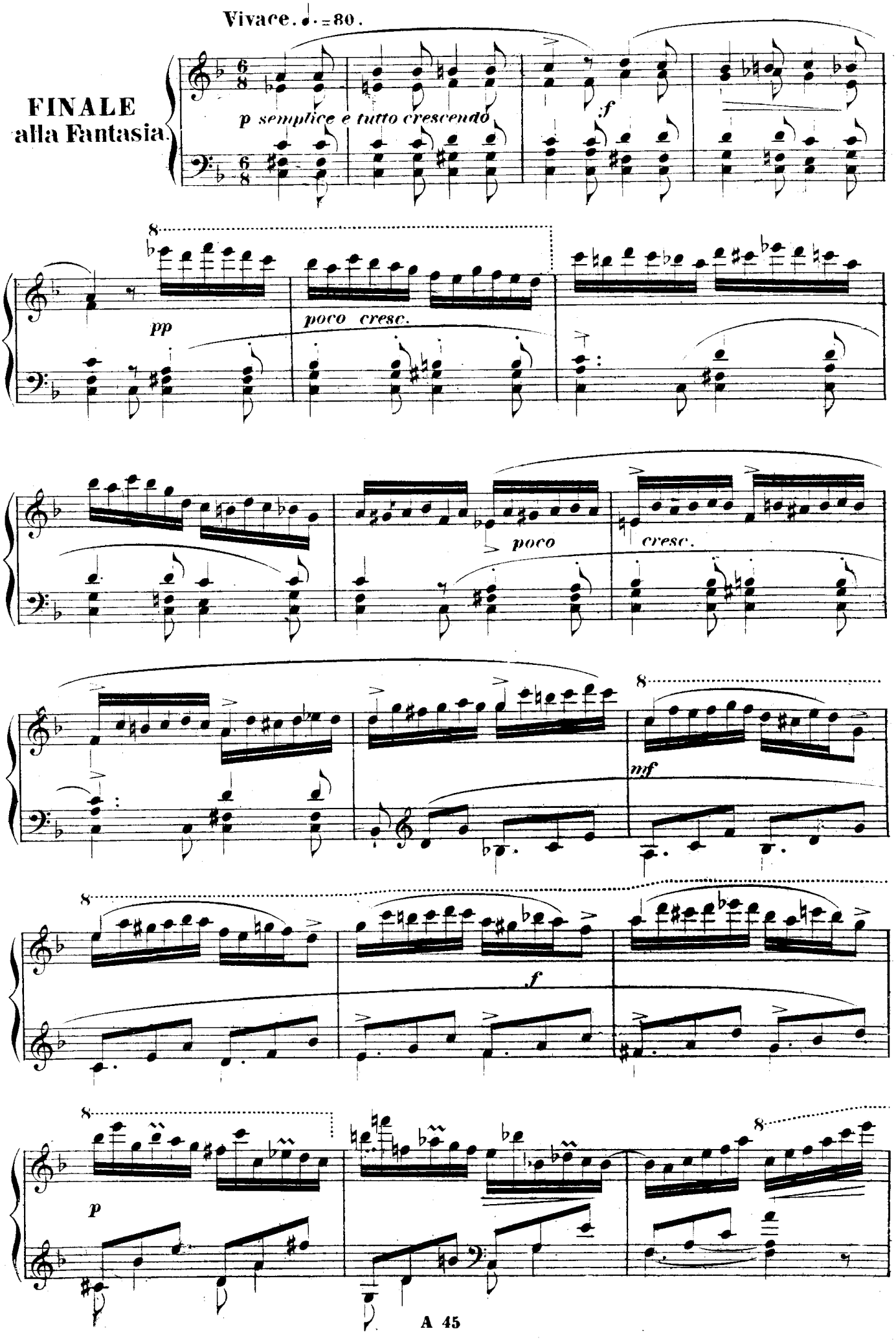
poco a poco *decrescendo* *p* *pp*

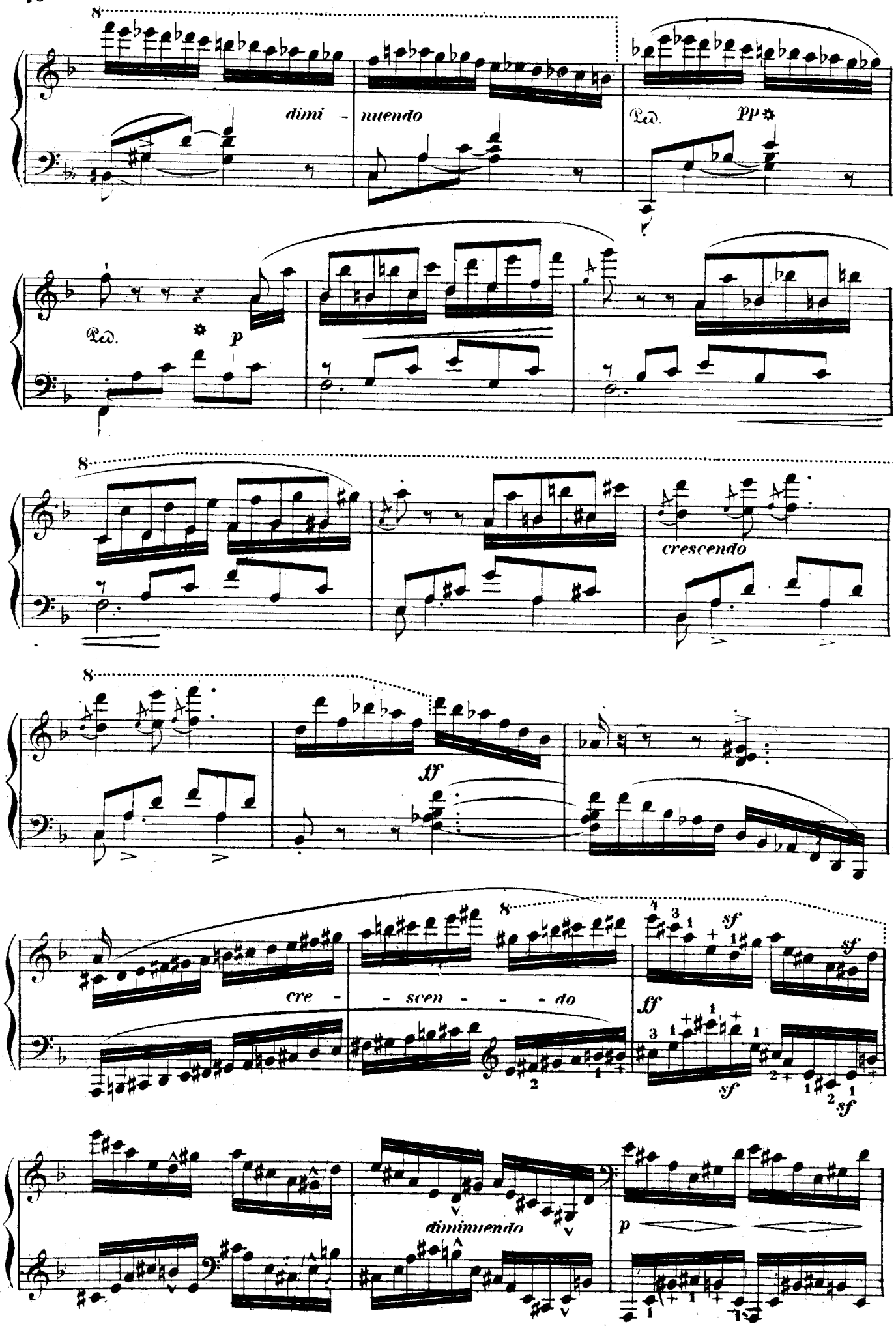
1. 2.

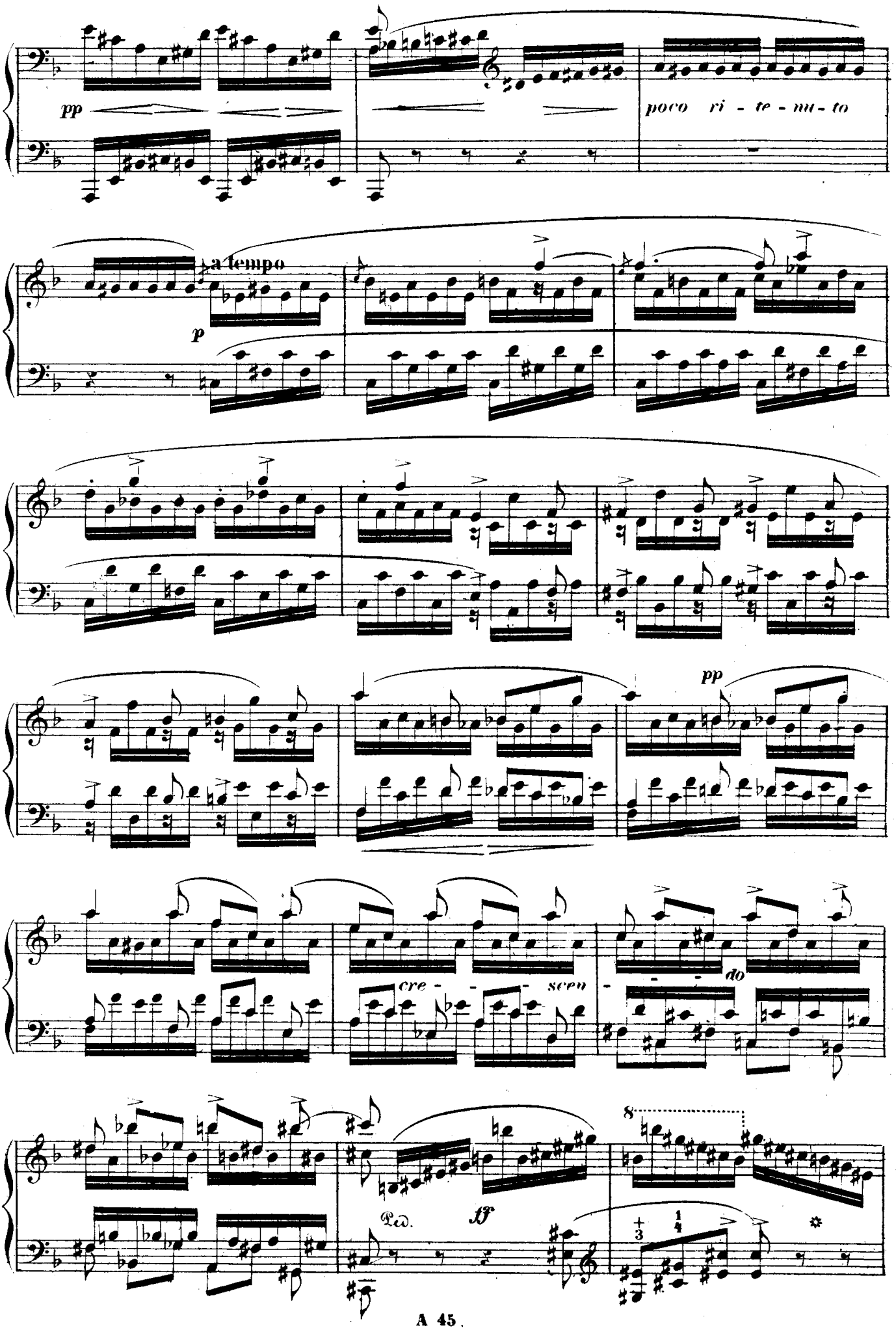

VAR. 3.
♩=80.
mf corrente
cre - - - -
scen - - - - - - do
f
diminuendo
con accuratezza
crescendo
rf
Ped.
pp
Ped.
p
marcato e legato
cre - - - scen - - - do
sf

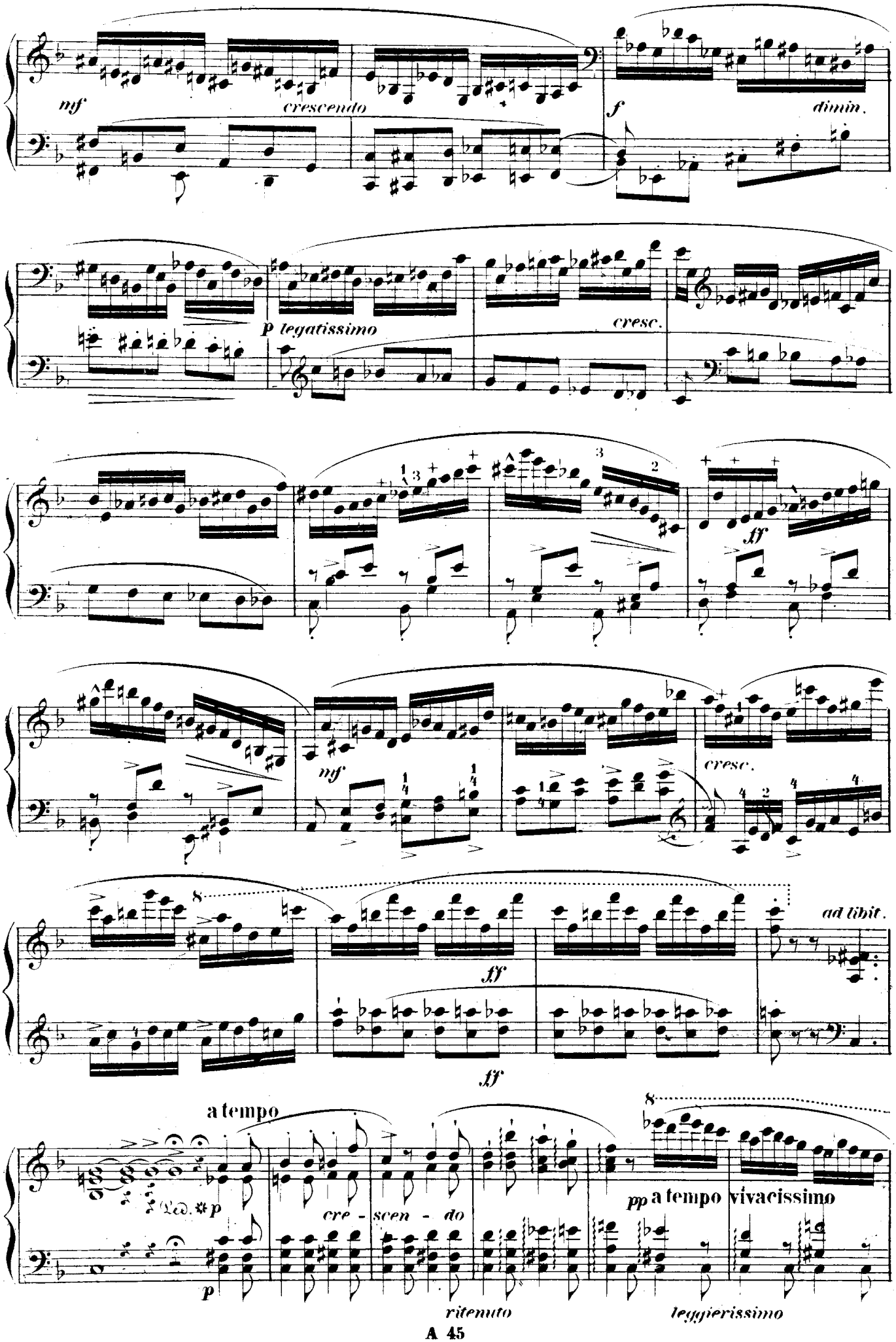

crescendo
con forza
sf
f
p
1.
2.

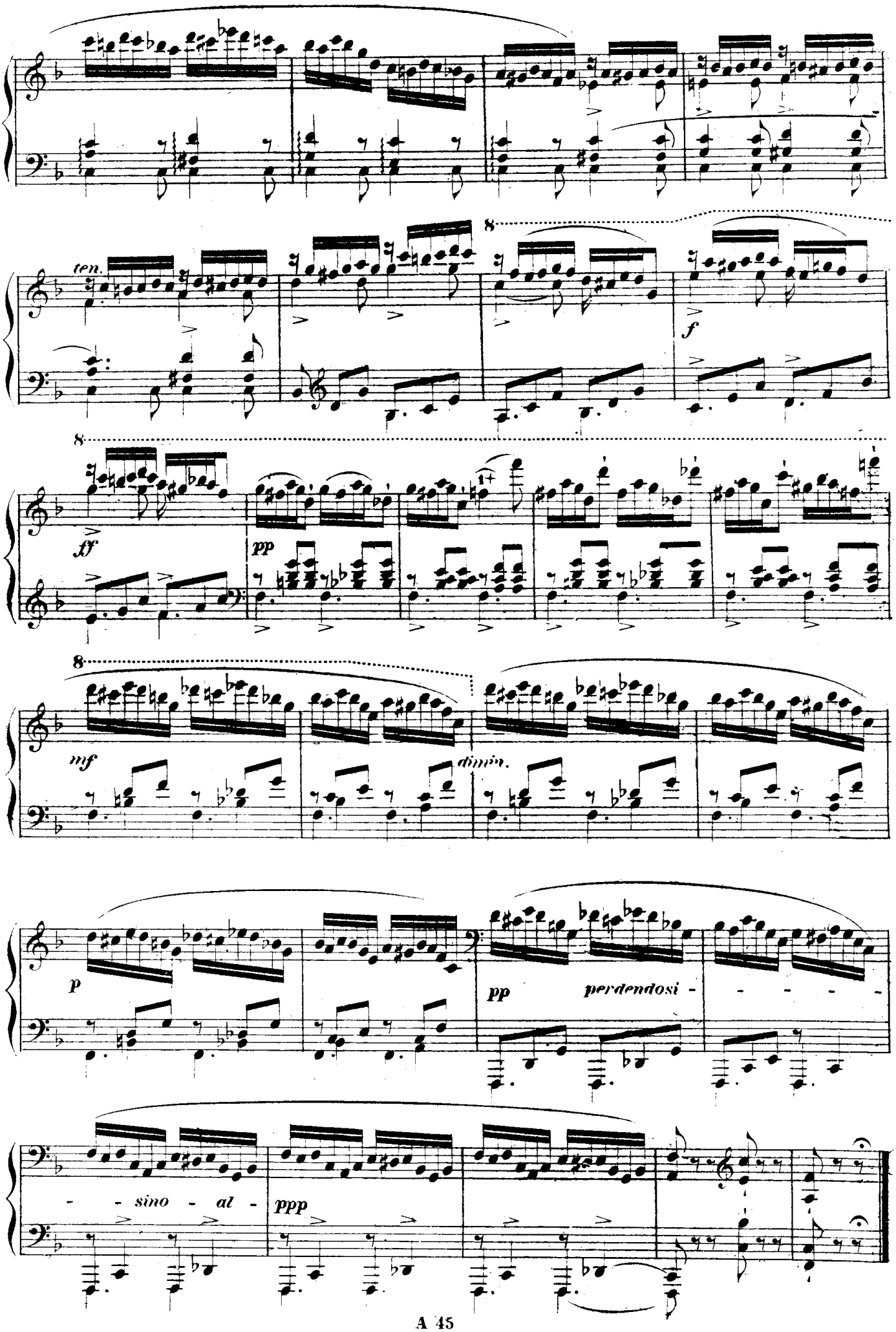

Cantabile. ♩ = 126.
non troppo lento
f
dimi - nu - en - do
poco cresc.
riten. quasi
crescendo
acceleranda
cre - - - scen - - do
f
molto lento
Ped.


Vivace. ♩. = 80.
FINALE
alla Fantasia
p semplice e tutto crescendo
f
pp
poco cresc.
poco
cresc.
mf
f
p


8
dimi - nuendo
Ped.
pp
Ped.
p
8
crescendo
8
ff
8
cre - - scen - - - do
sf
ff
sf
sf
diminuendo
p


pp
poco ri - te - nu - to
a tempo
p
pp
cre - - - scen
do
8
Ped.
ff


mf
crescendo
f
dimin.
p legatissimo
cresc.
ff
mf
cresc.
ad libit.
ff
ff
a tempo
Ped. * p
cre - scen - do
p
ritenuto
pp a tempo
vivacissimo
leggierissimo


ten.
8
f
8
ff
pp
8
mf
dimin.
p
pp
perdendosi - - - - -
- - sino - al -
ppp