University of Montana
ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers

Graduate School

1965

String Quartet Number One

John Rex Cubbage
The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd
Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
Cubbage, John Rex, "String Quartet Number One" (1965). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 9365.
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/9365

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

STRING QUARTET NUMBER ONE

By

John Rex Cubbage

B. A. College of Great Falls, 1962

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Music

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1965

Approved by:

Lawrence Perry
Chairman, Board of Examiners

Fred S. Honkala
Dean, Graduate School

AUG 9 1965
Date

UMI Number: EP72679

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI EP72679
Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.
All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

"String Quartet Number One" is a one movement work possessing a modified sonata form. Although the latter portion has the mood of a separate scherzo, it derives too clearly from the opening theme to be defined as such. The total organization is ternary in both a tonal and thematic respect. Its conceptual essense is the statement of an idea which undergoes a process of disintegration and final reintegration.

The horizontal construction is one of linear continuity. Two contrapuntal approaches are manifest: the simultaneity of two different melodies and developmental extension of a single subject by means of reducing it to its smallest component parts which are in turn transformed by contrapuntal devices and woven into a three or four part texture consisting of fragments derived from the same subject. The first twelve bars contain the two germinal ideas which generate the totality of the subsequent material. This rigid thematic economy creates the tightly knit unity of a fugue.

Quite traditionally, the harmonic conception is triadic with the key firmly established as E minor. It departs from Nineteenth Century practices, however, by extending the triadic matrix to incorporate the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth as chord members equal in rank to the third. This renders the harmonic vocabulary more equivocal and affords greater melodic freedom. Tonality is identified by chromatic movement and linear gravitation towards a central tone rather than by clear-cut chordal cadences. Also, polytonal techniques are utilized in the treatment of keys.

The exposition comprises two themes initially stated together, the secondary theme of which serves as the accompaniment for the principle theme. The principle theme, introduced in the third bar by the first violin, is inter-

vallically characterized by its falling minor second and a salient augmented fourth and is readily recognizable throughout the course of the piece. Its chromatic nature is contrasted by the secondary theme, which possesses no chromatically altered tones and chiefly utilizes the major second and fourth. The viola states this idea at the first bar and the second violin sequentially repeats it in the seventh bar. The mood of the first is melancholic and restless while the second suggests serenity and resolution. The principle theme is extended with considerable imitation among the parts to bar thirty-two where a fugue-like stretto reiterates a partial statement of the first theme in the dominant key. Ensuing, a short modulatory transition introduces the contrasting homophonic second theme in the unexpected key of F major.

The line of demarcation between the exposition and development is not rendered easily discernible by a sectionalizing closing theme. In bar sixty-three the second violin signals the development when it departs from the secondary theme with a variated re-entry of the principle subject while the other voices continue the other theme which now assumes an accompanimental role. The viola and cello in bar seventy form a melodically lavish dialogue treating material from both themes in D major. An episodic passage in F sharp minor commencing with an abrupt tempo change sets the mood for a more extensive reworking of the original themes which become assimilated in a free-flowing progression of melody with imitative interplay among the various lines. After passing through a horizontally implied polytonal treatment of A major, C sharp minor, B flat major, A minor, and C major, the assimilation gives way to a canonic interlude between the first and second violin in strict duple meter clearly perceptible as a derivative of the second theme. The canon accel-

erates until the eighth note equals the value of the original sixteenth note of the previous tempo and the structure reduces to a repetitious succession of a four note figure of sixteenth notes which gradually fades away.

A radical change in feeling occurs at bar 149 where the viola and cello vigorously introduce a disguised version of the principle theme over which the first and second violin still continue the four note figures slowly slipping into oblivion. Inasmuch as a return to E minor is felt here, the re-entry of the cello and viola at first glance might be considered the beginning of an altered recapitulation. The presence of the following development would then be construed as a second development within the recapitulation. From a purely thematic standpoint, however, the theme at 149 is too far removed from its original source to suffice as the recapitulation. In this respect it would seem more sensible to regard this as a prolongation of the development. An even more extreme developmental dissection at bar 162 confirms this. At this point the principle theme disintegrates into its smallest element, a single descending minor second which serves to punctuate the dotted-note rhythm of the altered principle theme. Mirror symmetries govern the movement of the minor seconds at bar 164. Here, the first and second violins start at the interval of a fifth, but while the first violin descends in half steps the second violin simultaneously plays the inversion so that after four notes they have contracted to a harmonic minor second. Similarly, the contrary motion occurs in reverse so that the total effect is one of intervallic contraction and expansion. Finally, the cello and viola temporarily relinquish the dotted-note rhythm to join the first and second violin in their symmetries first heterorhythmically then homorhythmically. At bar 191 the theme under-

goes a series of pyrotechnical metamorphoses characterized by octave transfers and runs. The cello and viola accompany this with a dotted-note, spasmodic transformation of the same theme.

After an extensive process of gradual thematic intergration, the first violin heralds the recapitulation at bar 260 with the first exact restatement of the principle theme. A climactic intensity is achieved by the postponement of any resolution and an increase in tempo. A homophonic construction of the theme at bar 274, a reduction to the original tempo at bar 277, and a final resolution in E minor draws the work to an unmistakable conclusion.

STRING QUARTET NUMBER ONE

By

John Rex Cubbage

B.A. College of Great Falls, 1962

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Music

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

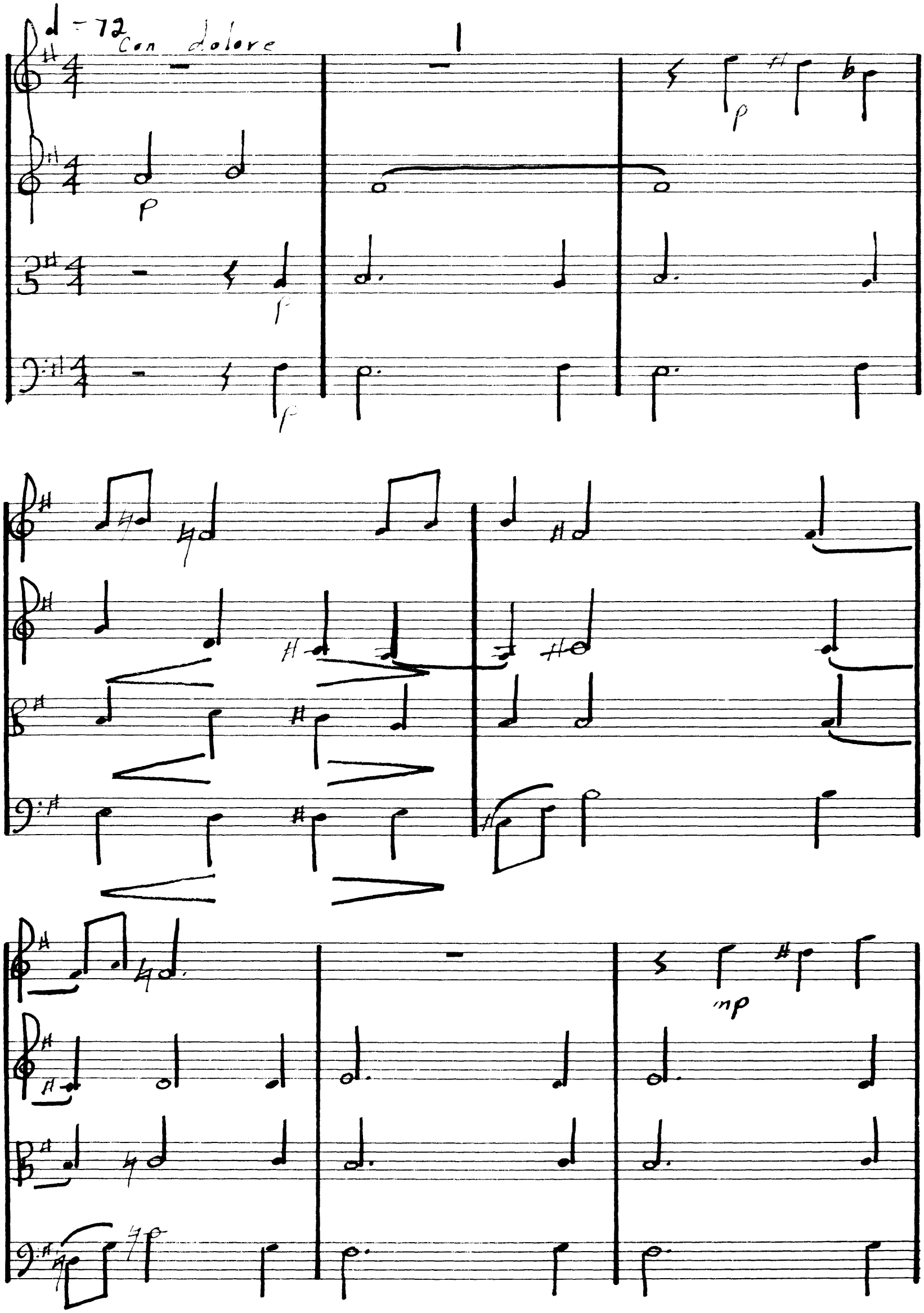
1965

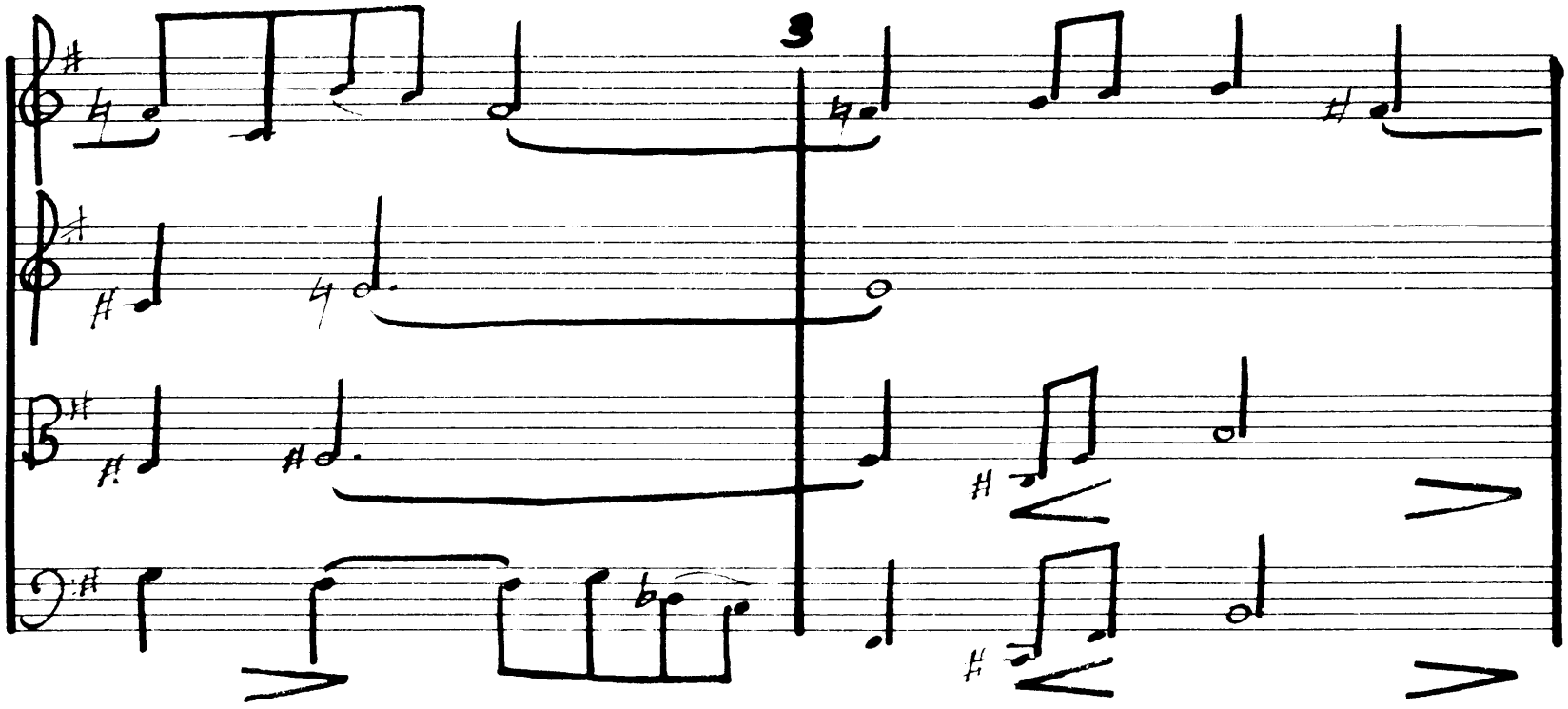
Approved by:

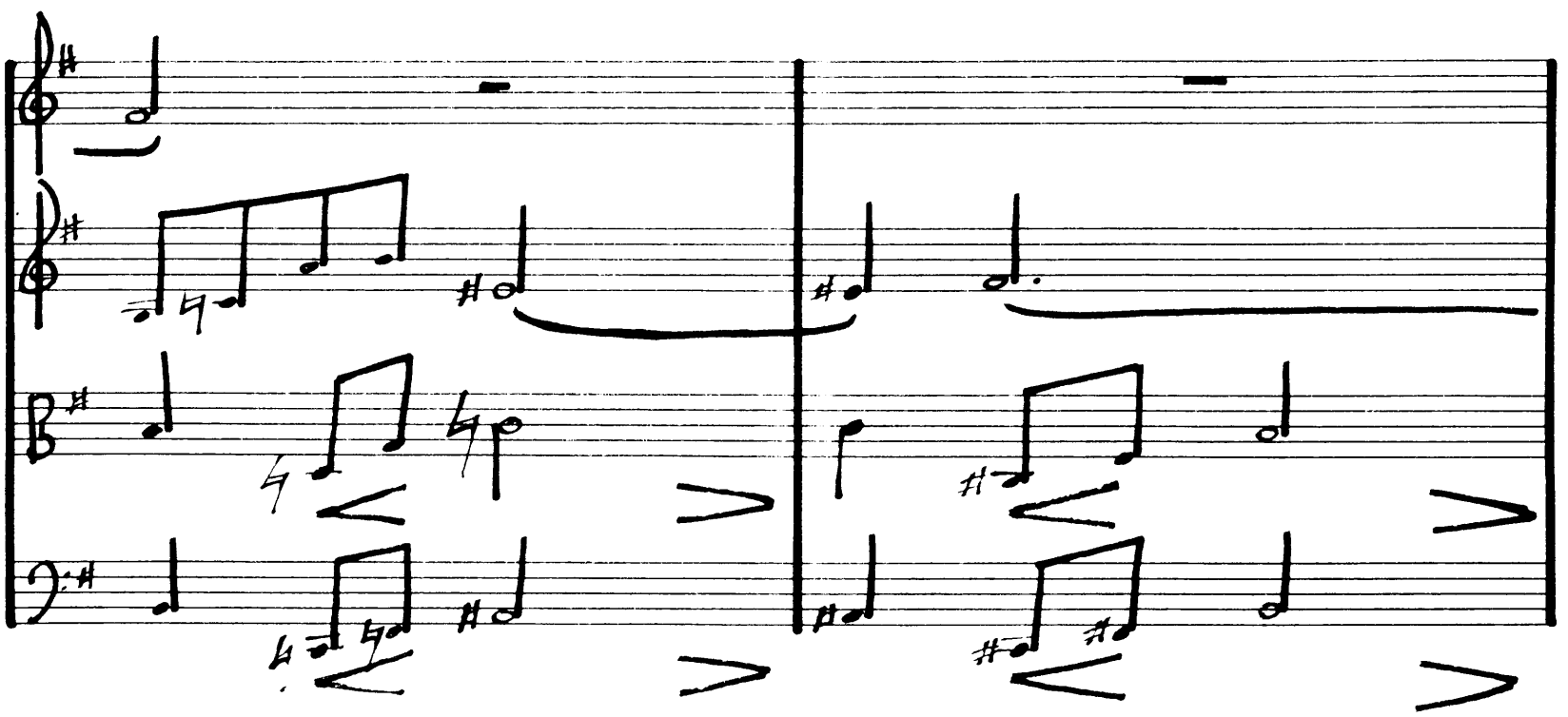
Laurence Perry
Chairman, Board of Examiners

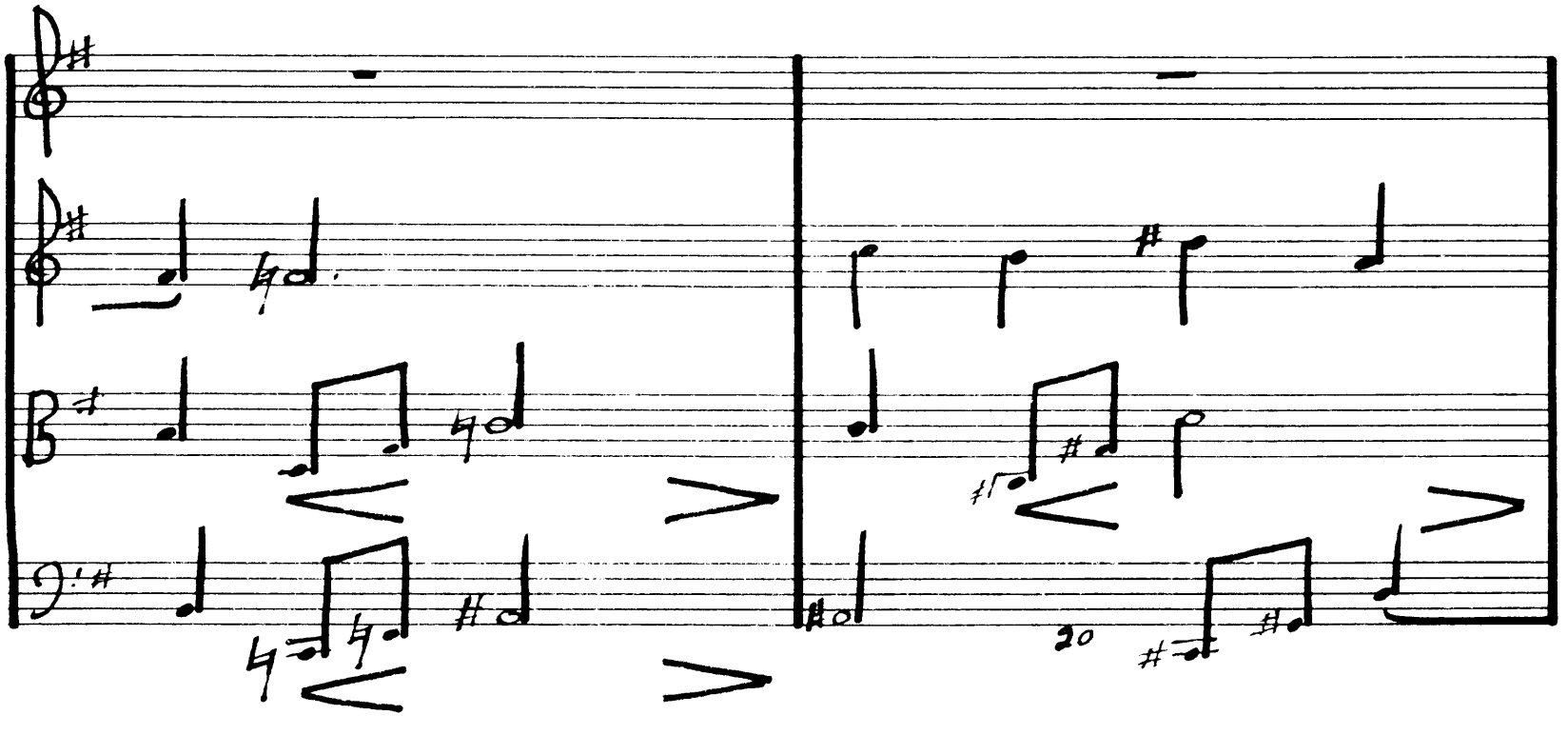
Fred S. Honkala
Dean, Graduate School

AUG 9 1965
Date

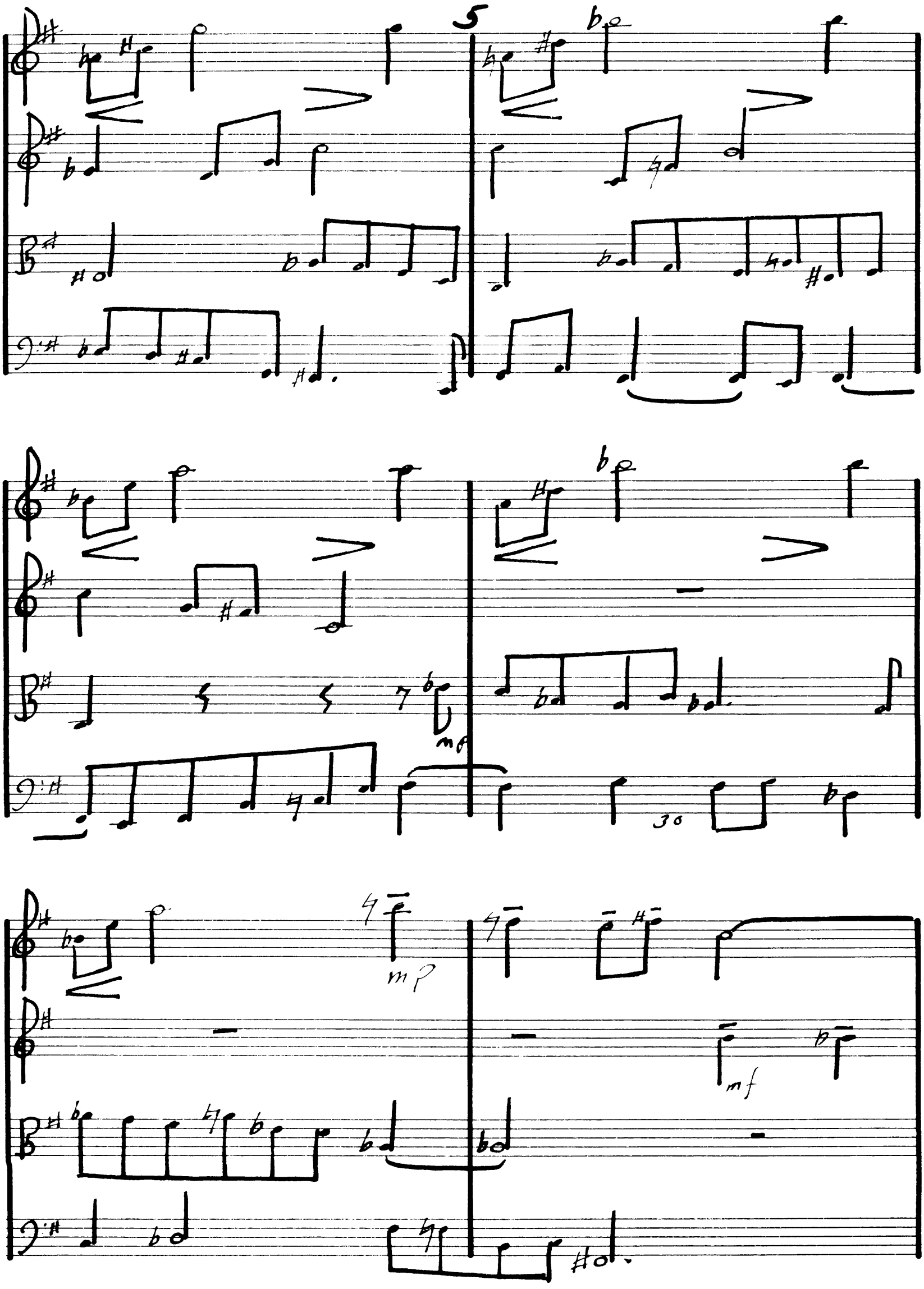

♩ = 72
Con dolore
1
p
mp


3




20

mp
mp
p


5
mp
30
mp
mf

mf

mf

6

mf

dim

dim

dim

dim

Ritard --

Ritard --

Ritard --

Ritard --

7

Con tranquillito

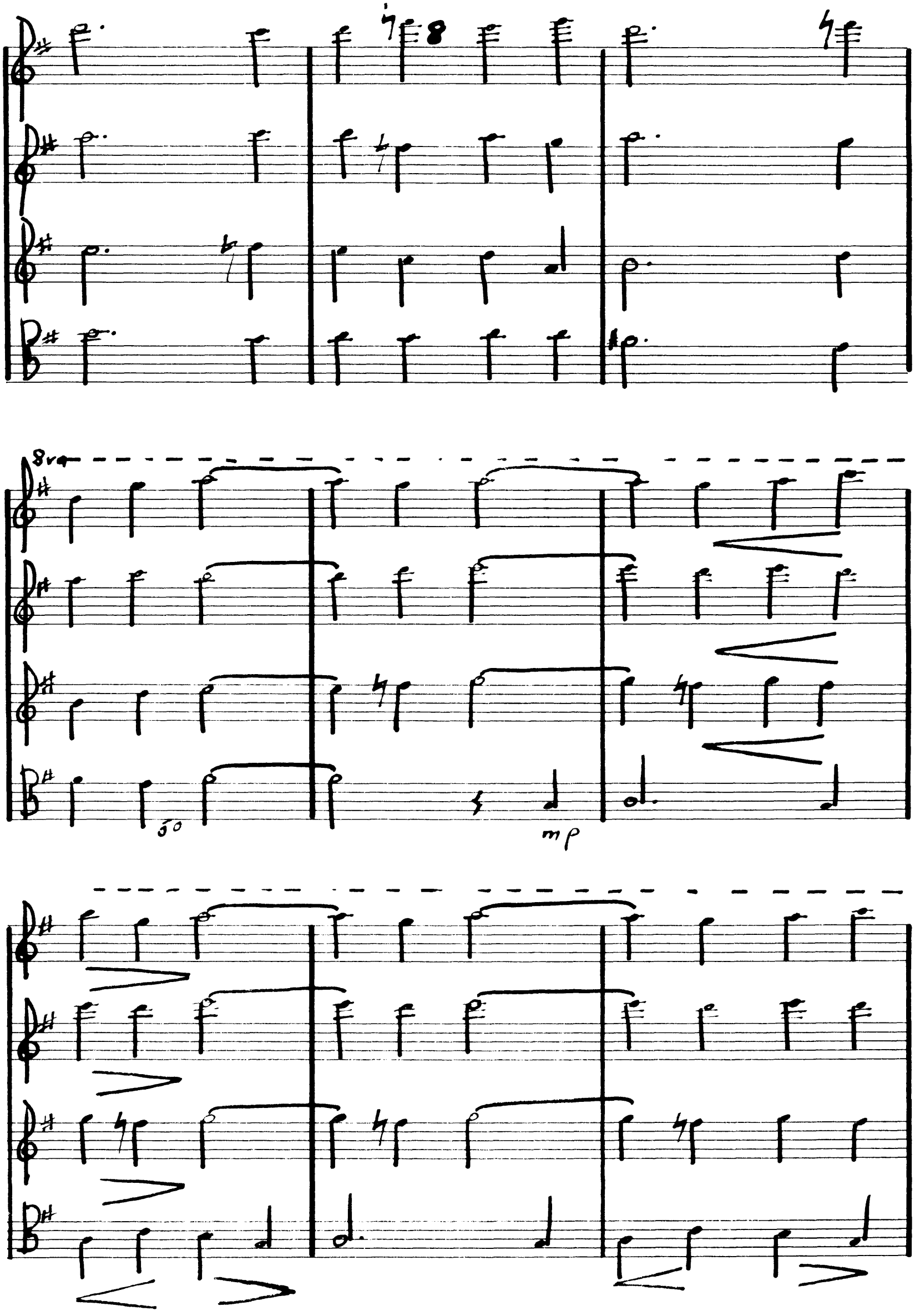
p

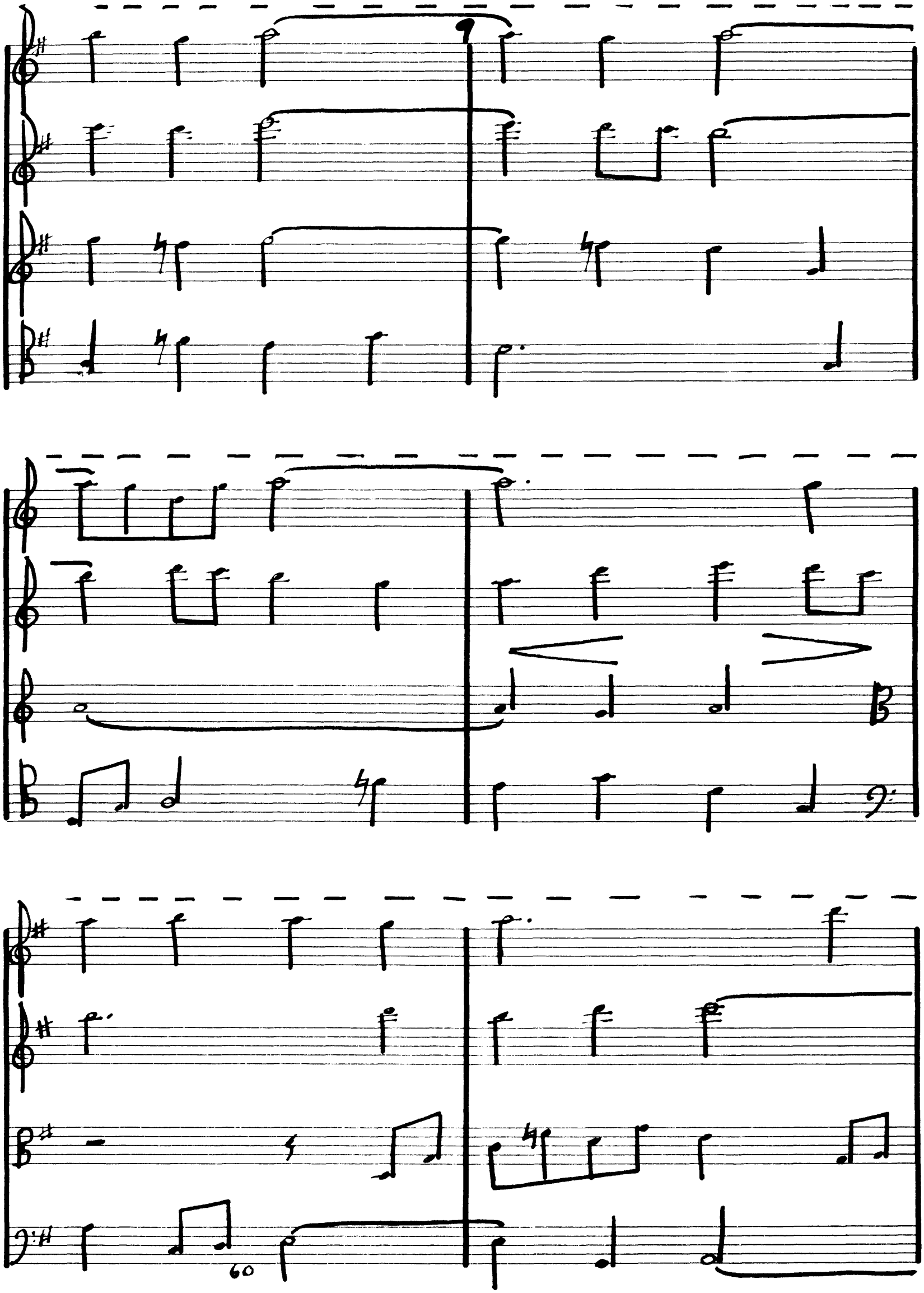
p

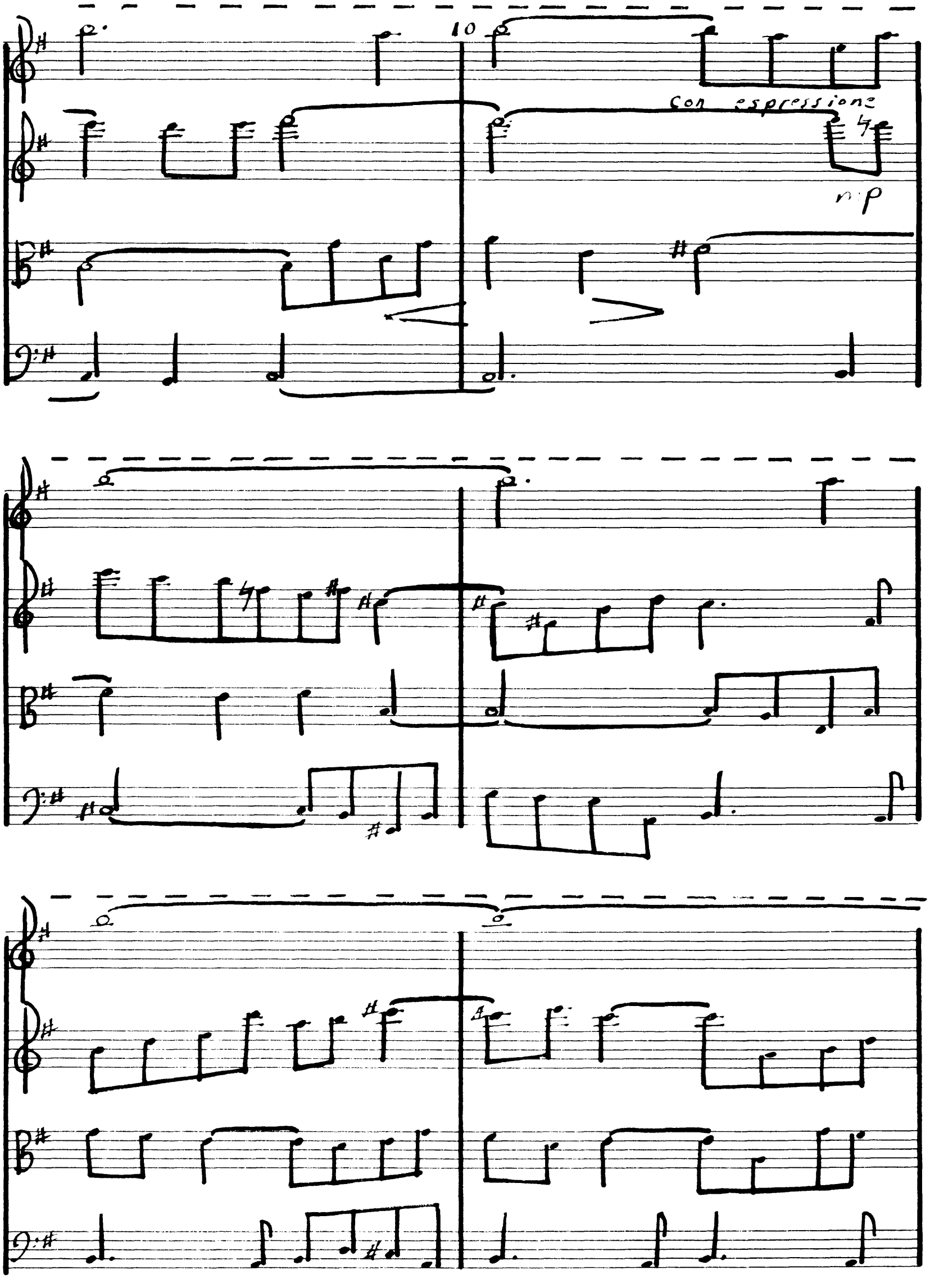
p

p

40


8va
mp




10
Con espressione
mp

dim

dim

pp

pp

Con espressione

mf

70

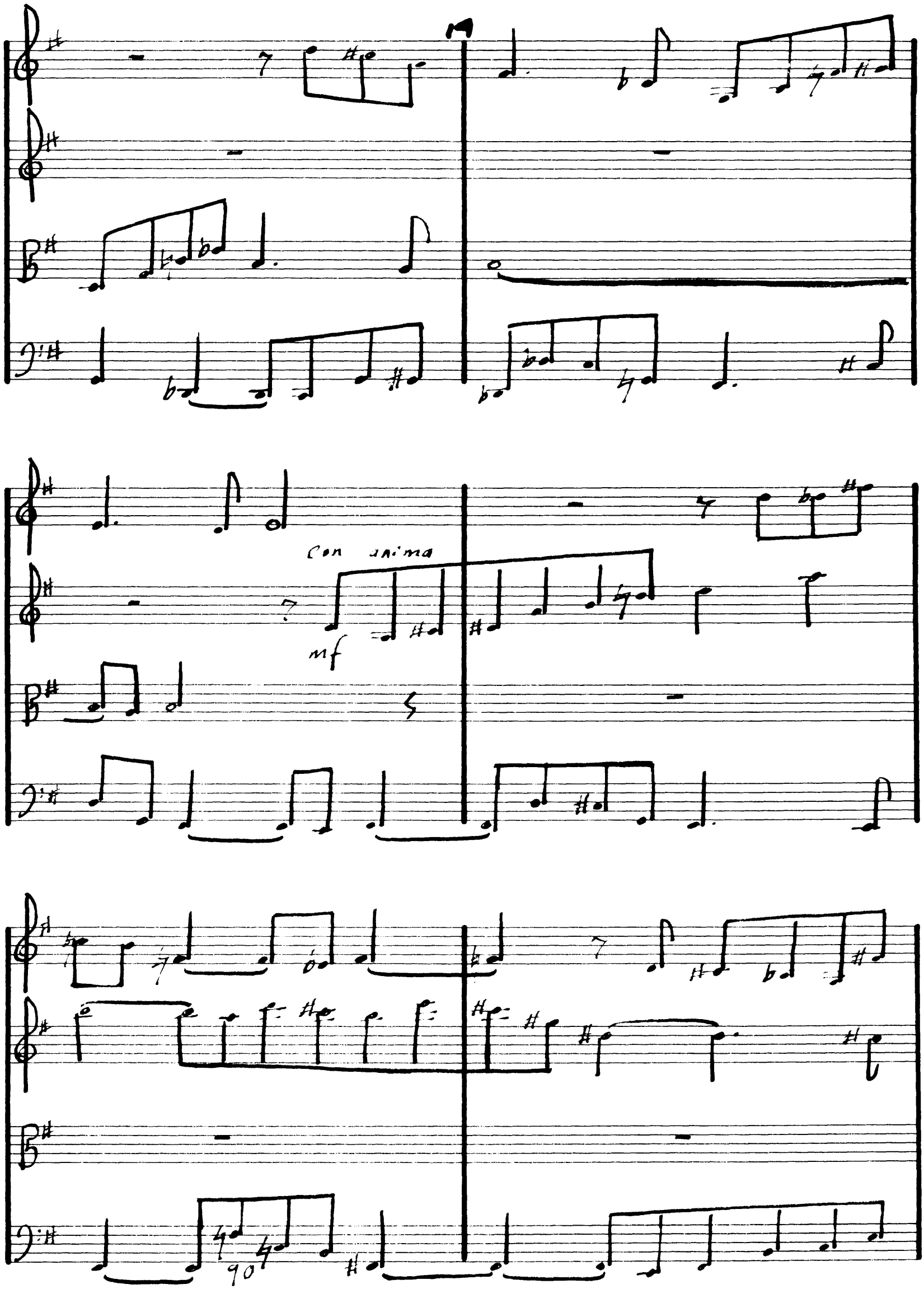
Con

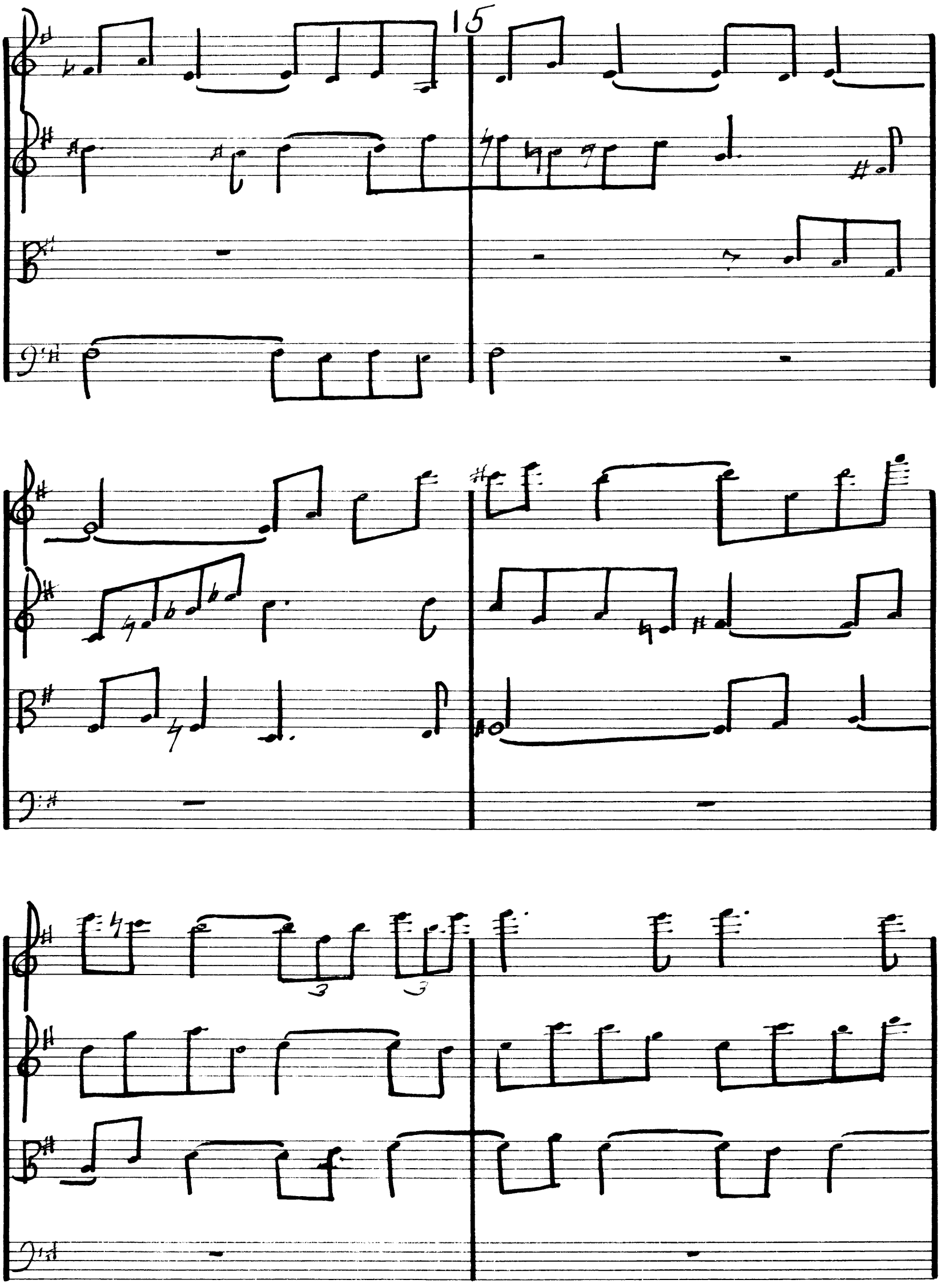
mf

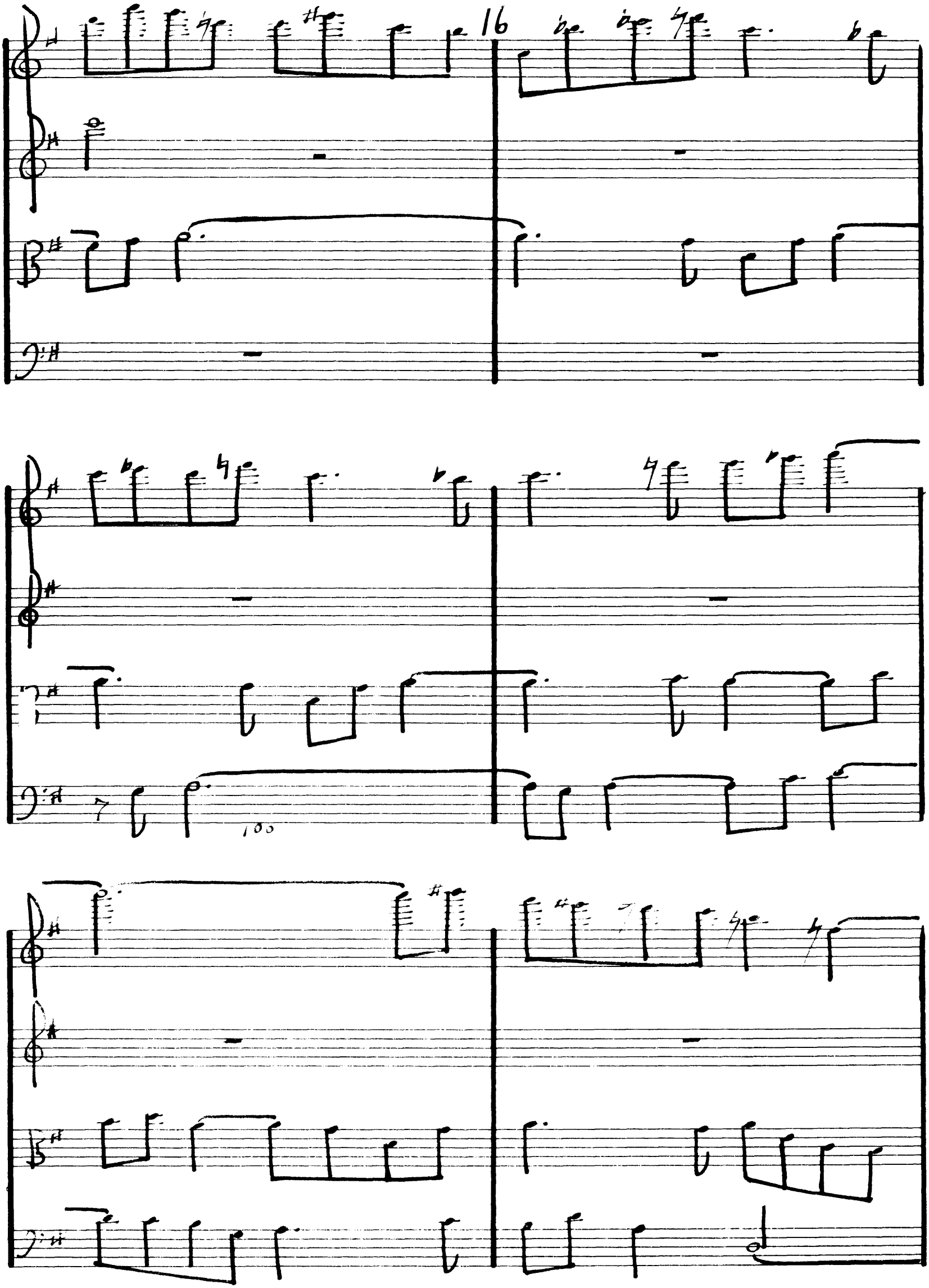
espressione

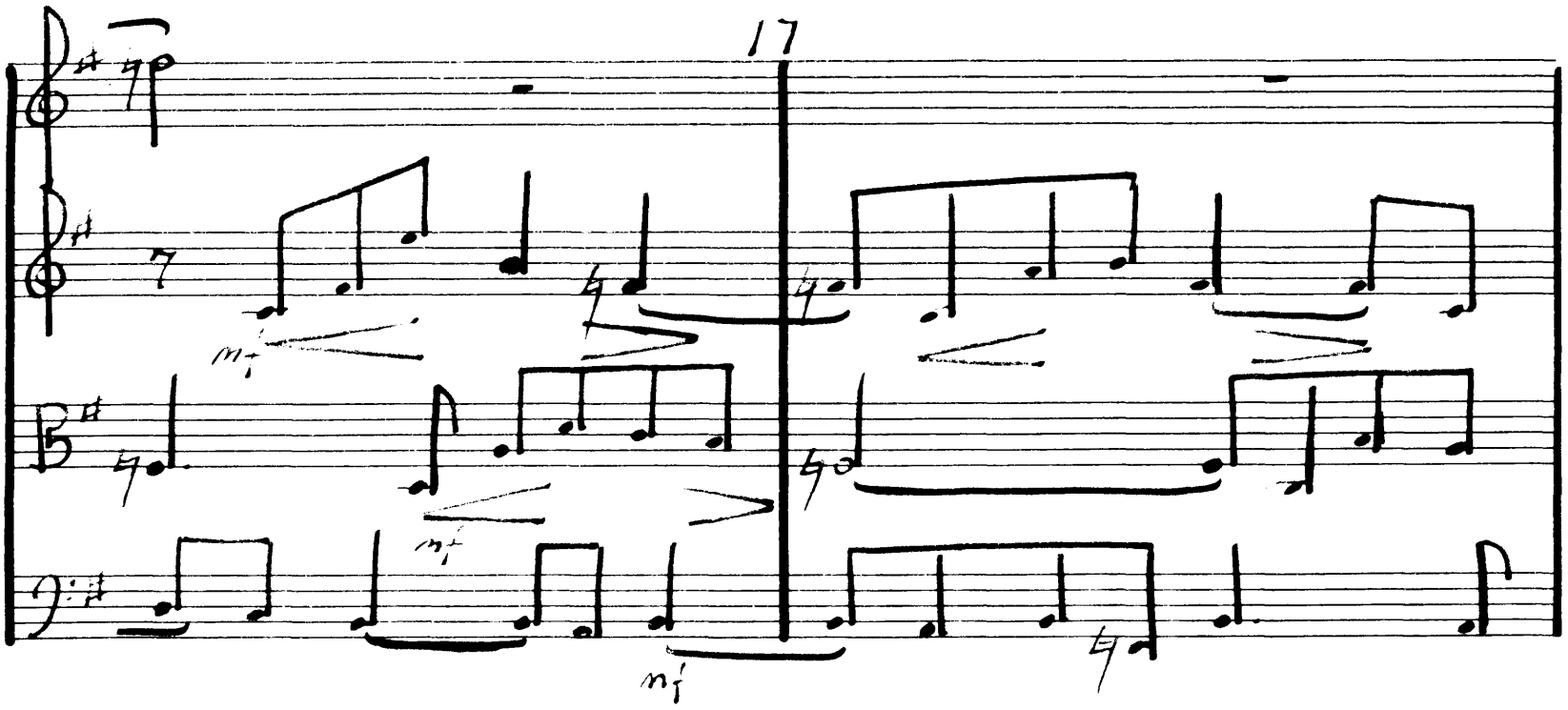
♩ = 92

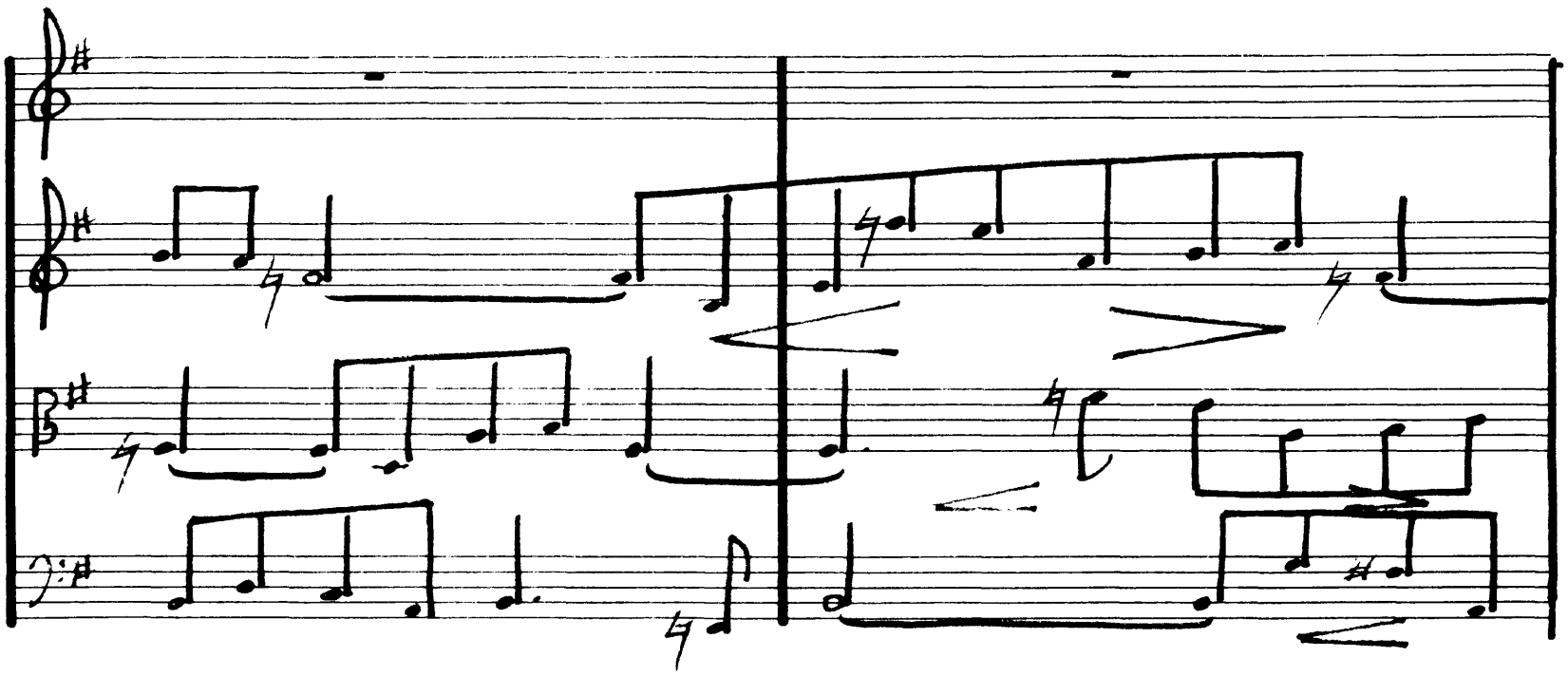
Con anima

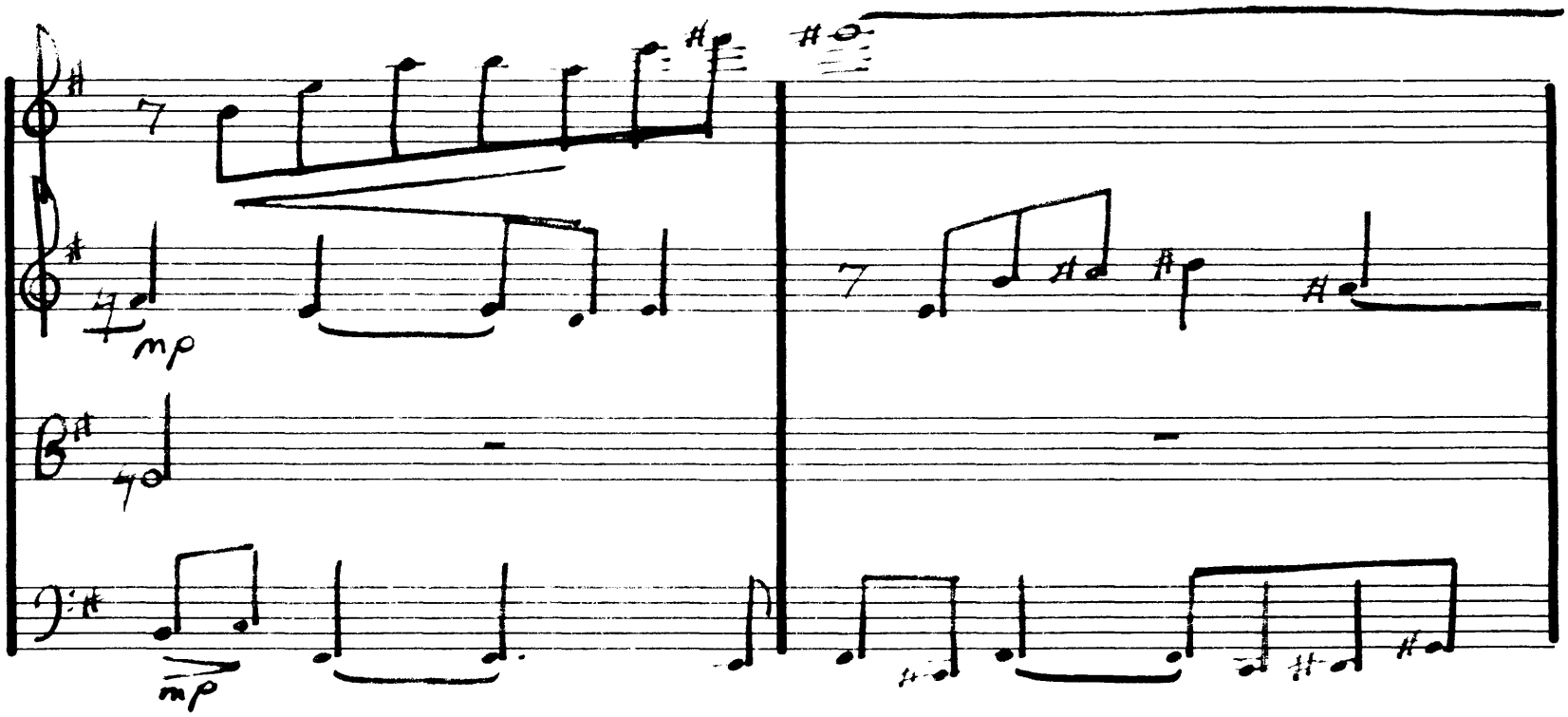

Con anima
mf


15


16
100


7
mf
mf
mf




7
mp
mp
7

18

110

7

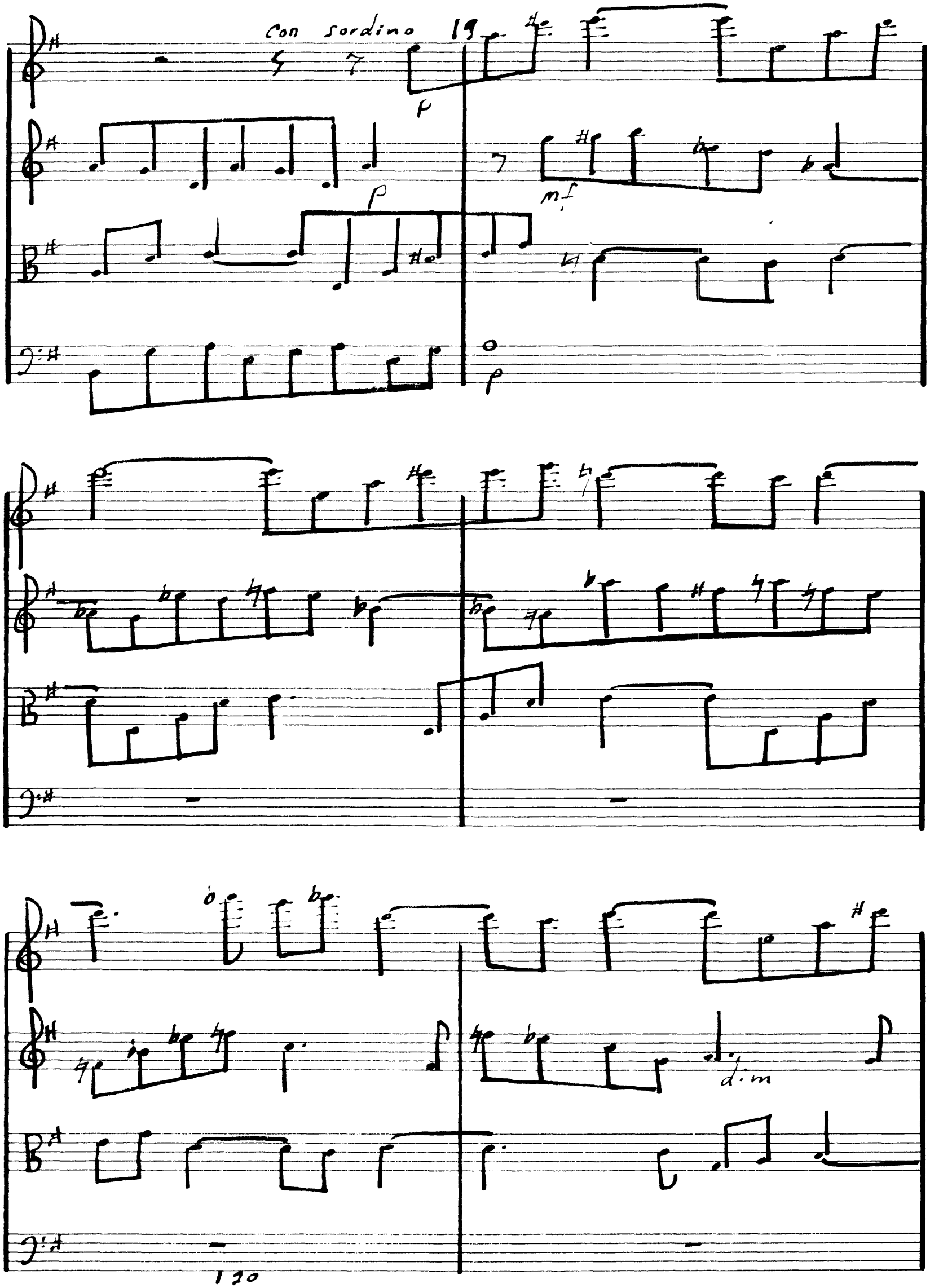
dim

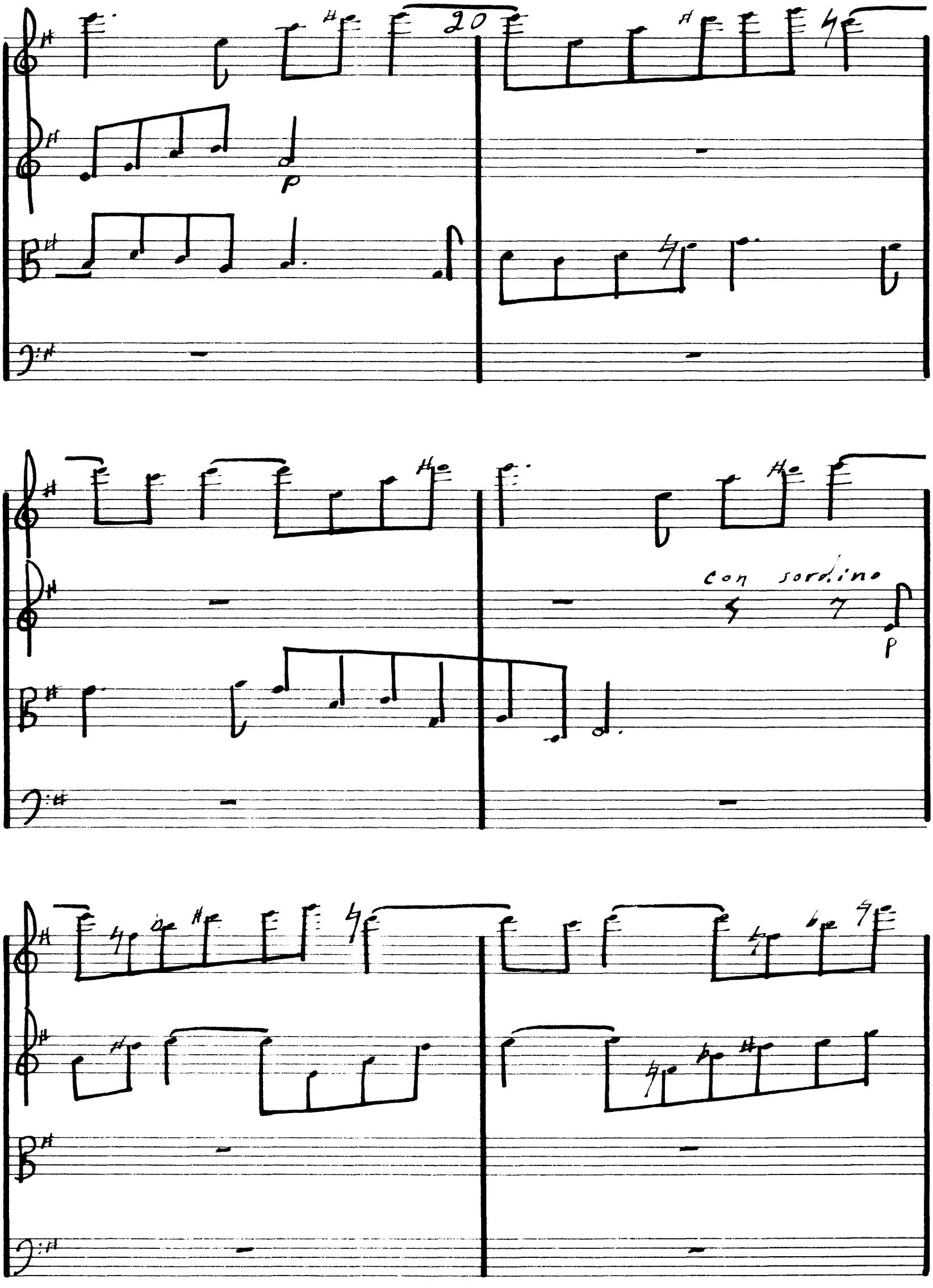
p

dim

dim

dim


Con sordino
19
p
p
mf
p
dim

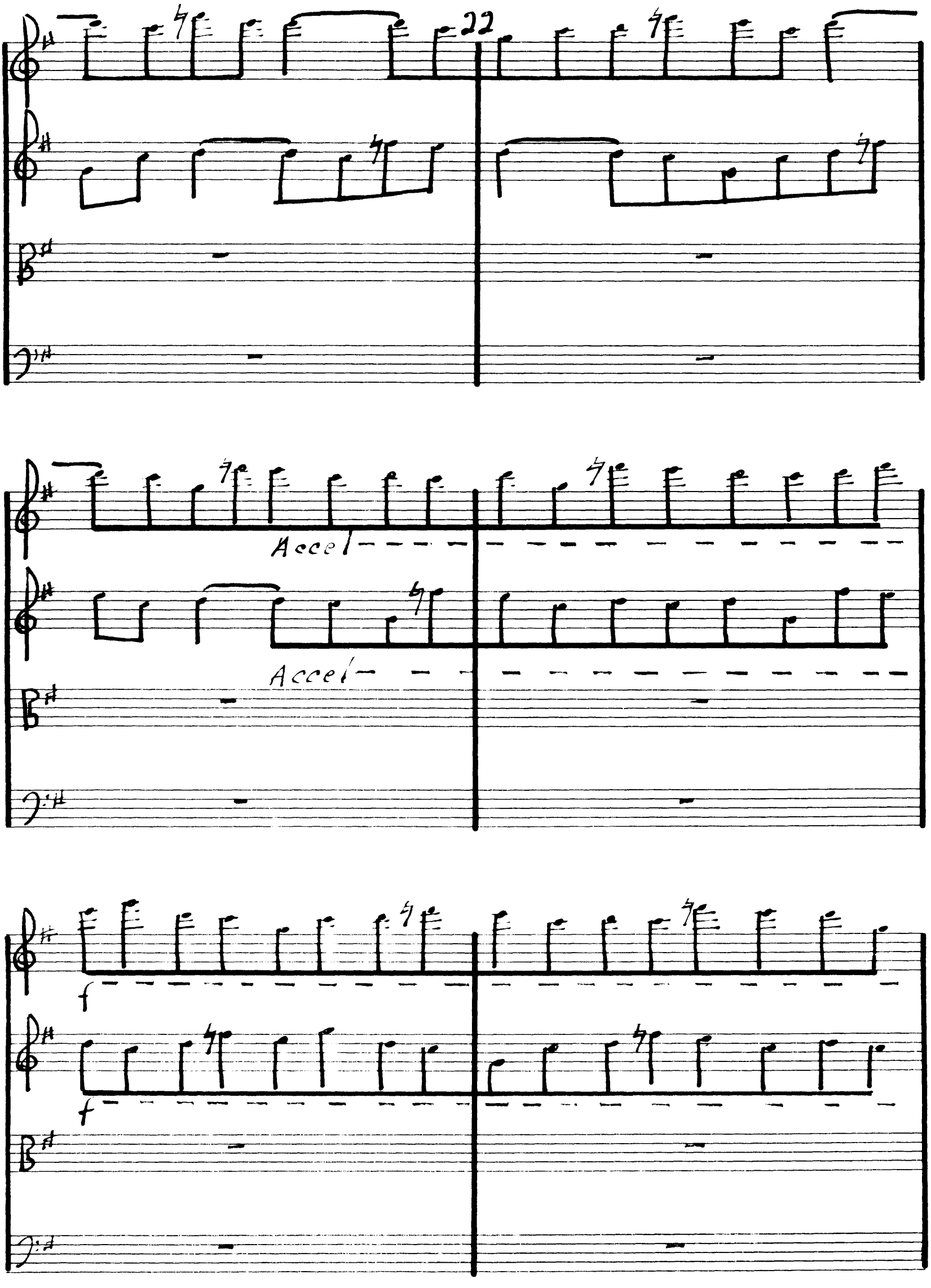

20
p
con sordino
p

21

cresc

cresc

130


22
Accel
Accel
f
f

♩ = 92

23

diminuendo

diminuendo

140

24

diluendo

diluendo

sul tasto

sul tasto

ppp

p

25

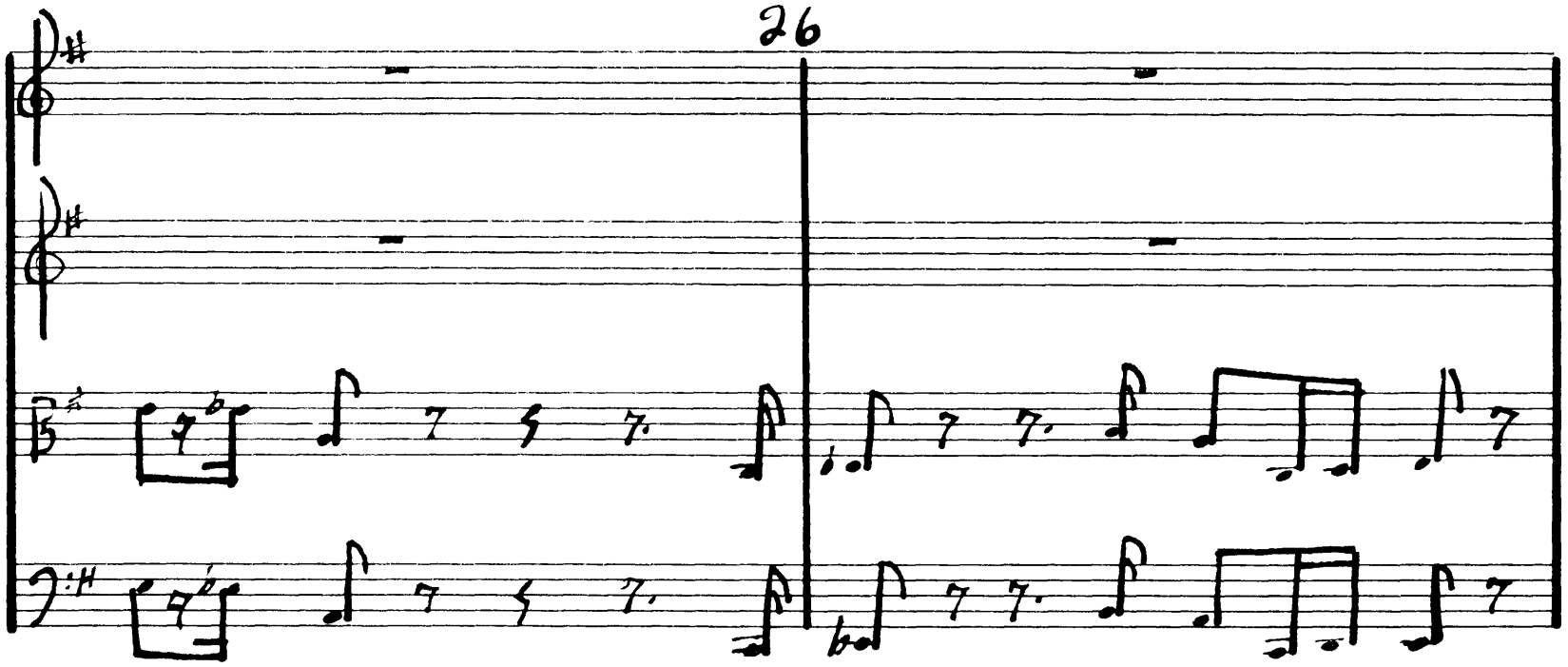
senza sordino

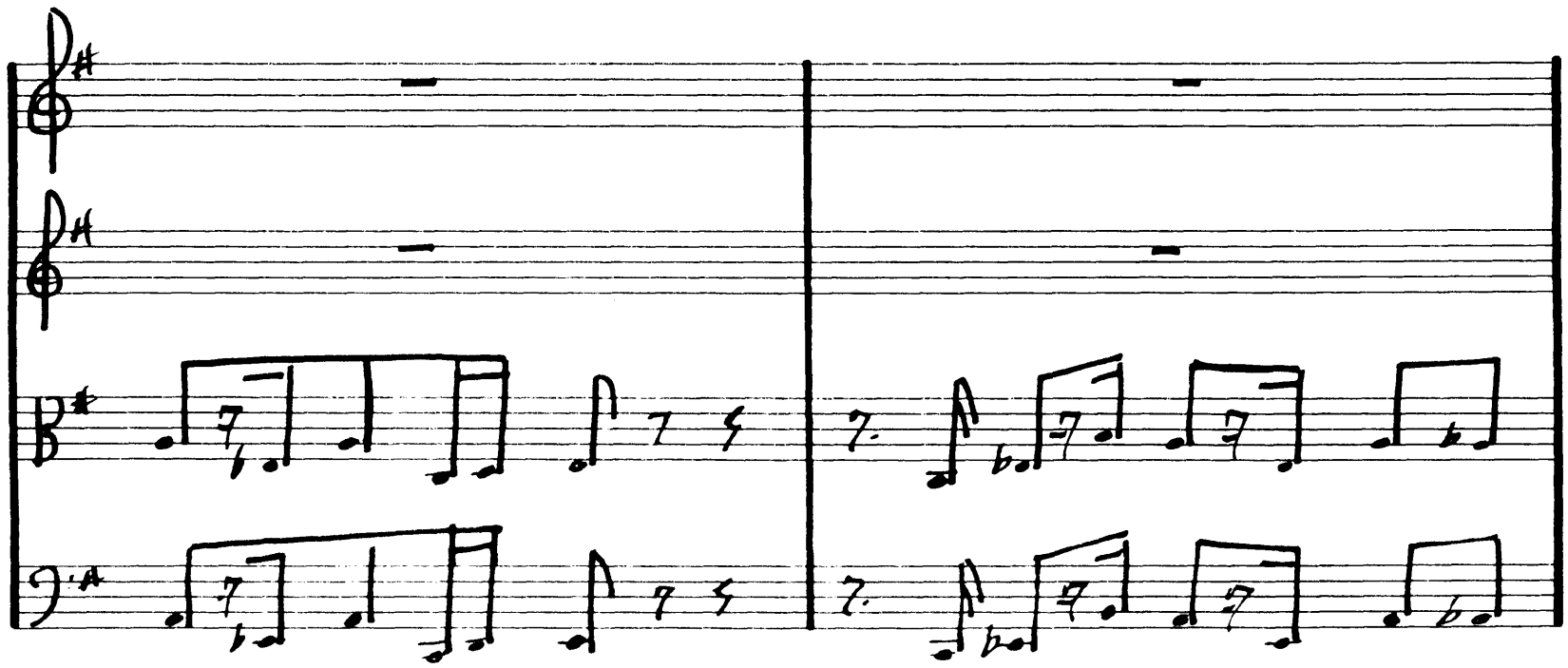
senza sordino

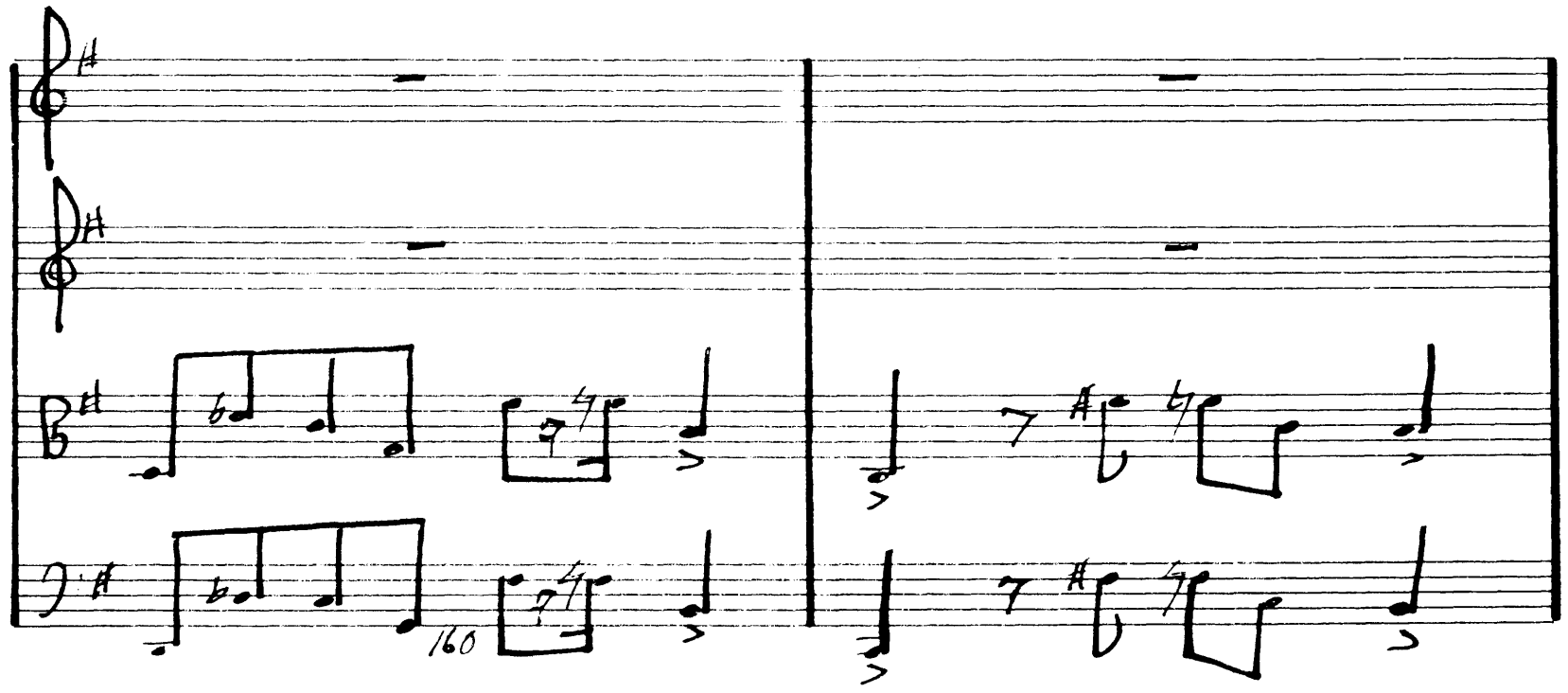
Con ira

Con ira

150






160

cresc

cresc

cresc

cresc

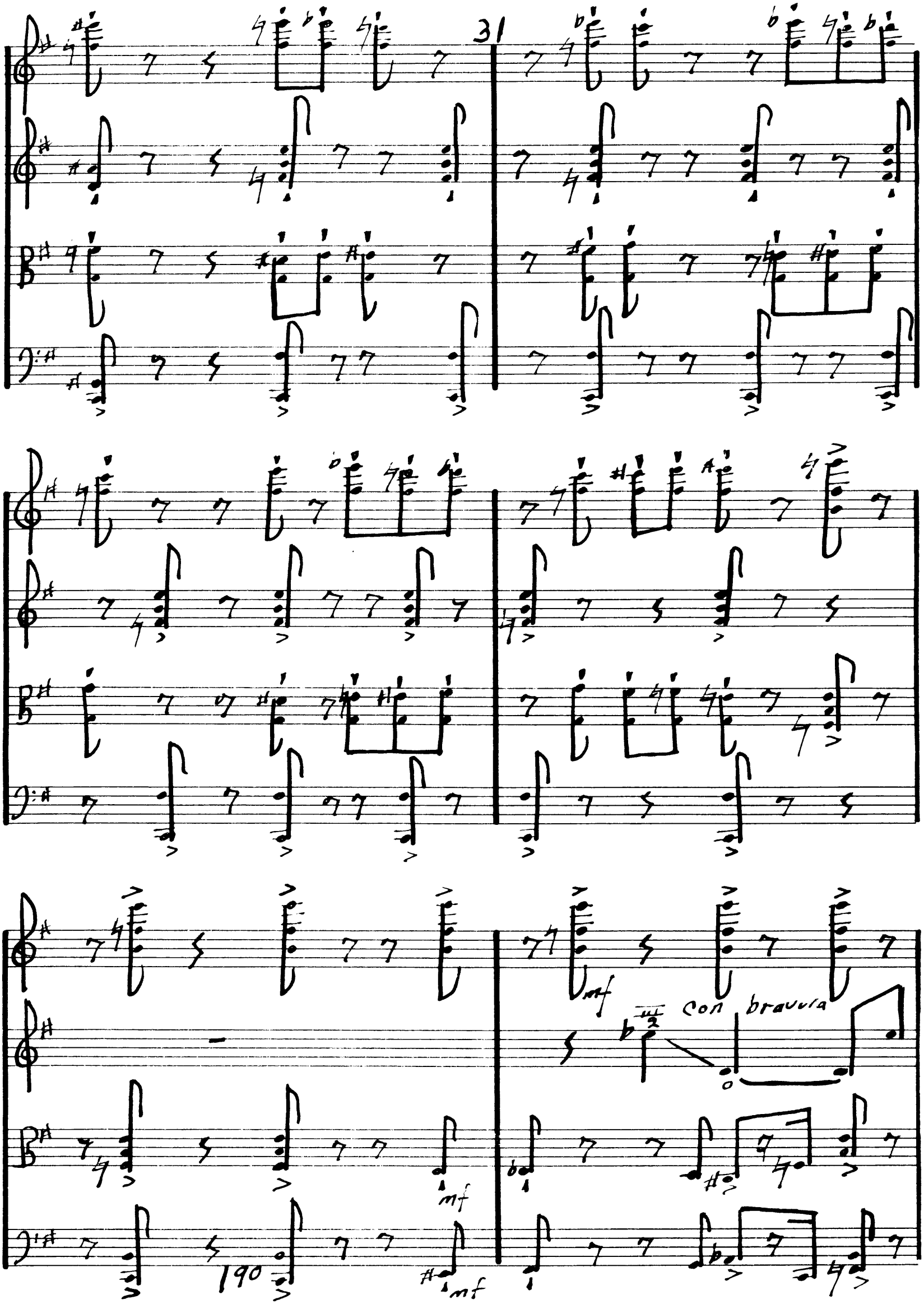
ff

ff

ff

30

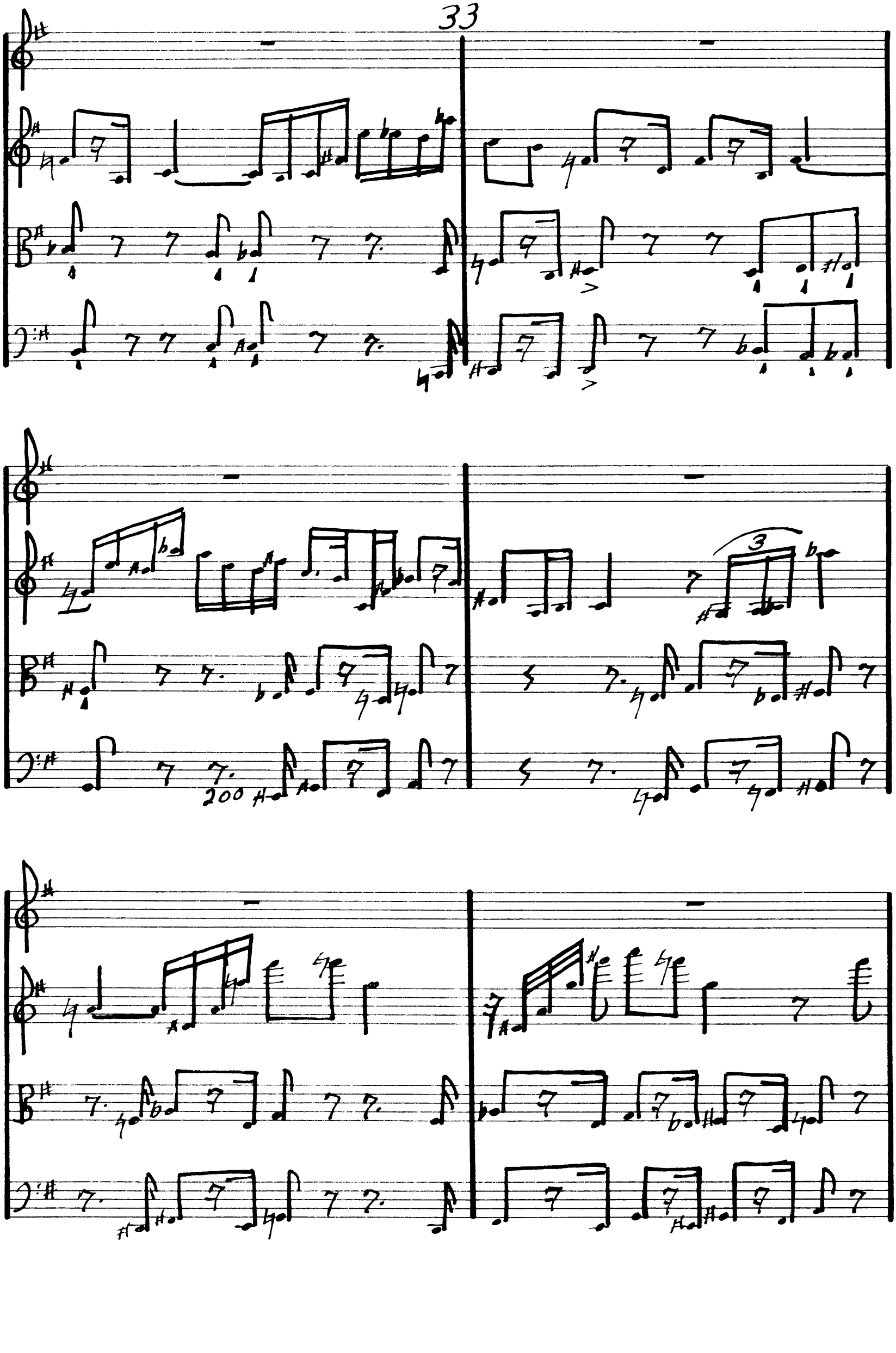
180

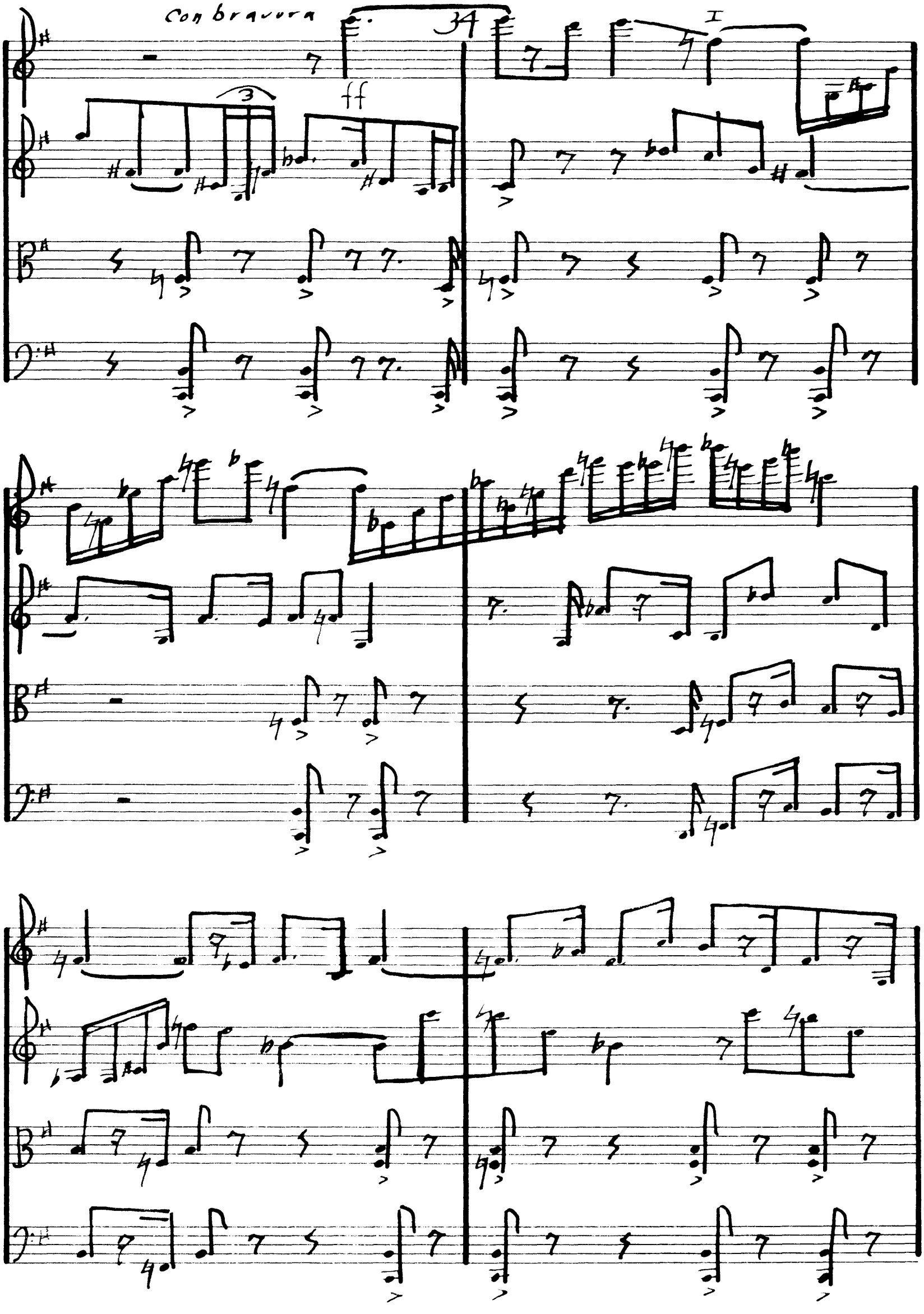

31
mf
con bravura
mf
190
mf

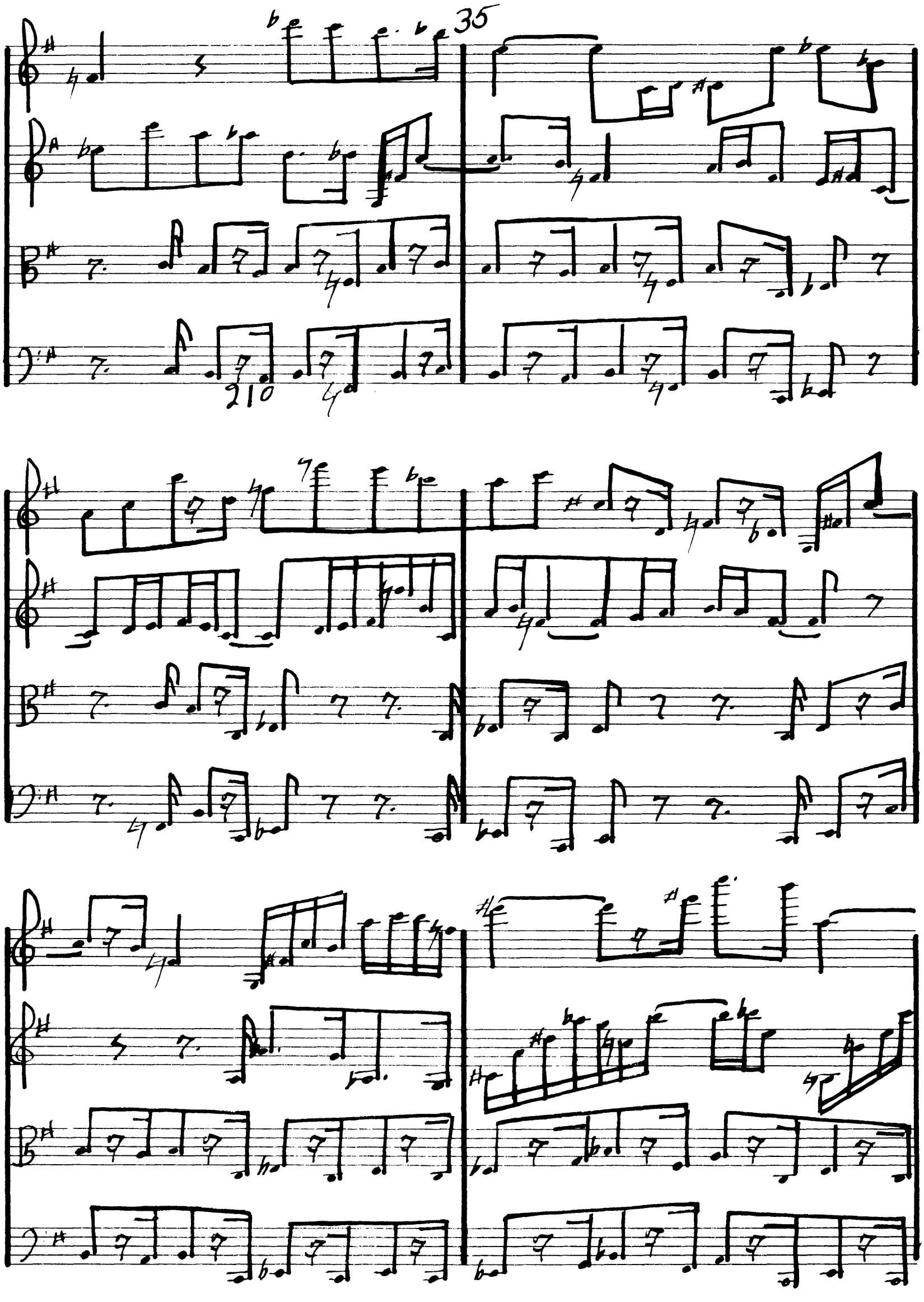
32

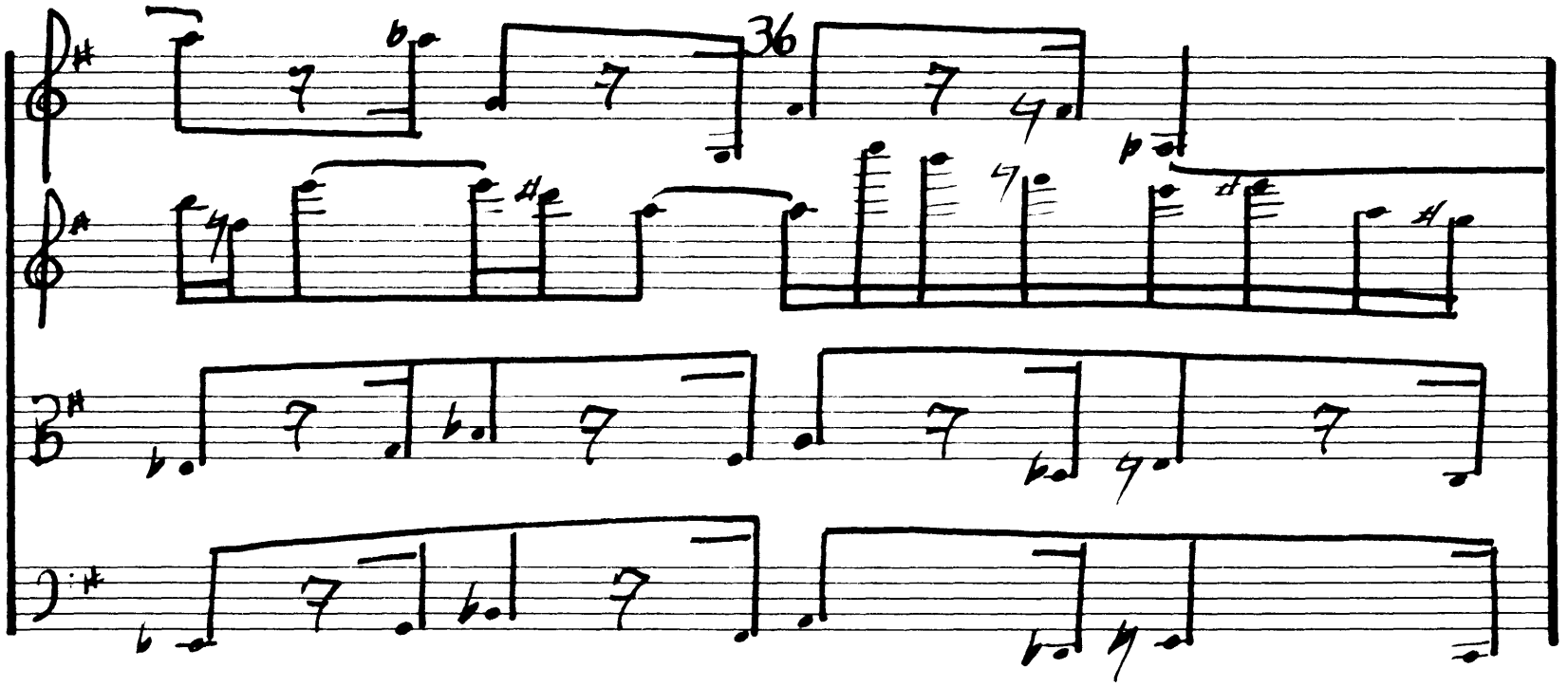
f

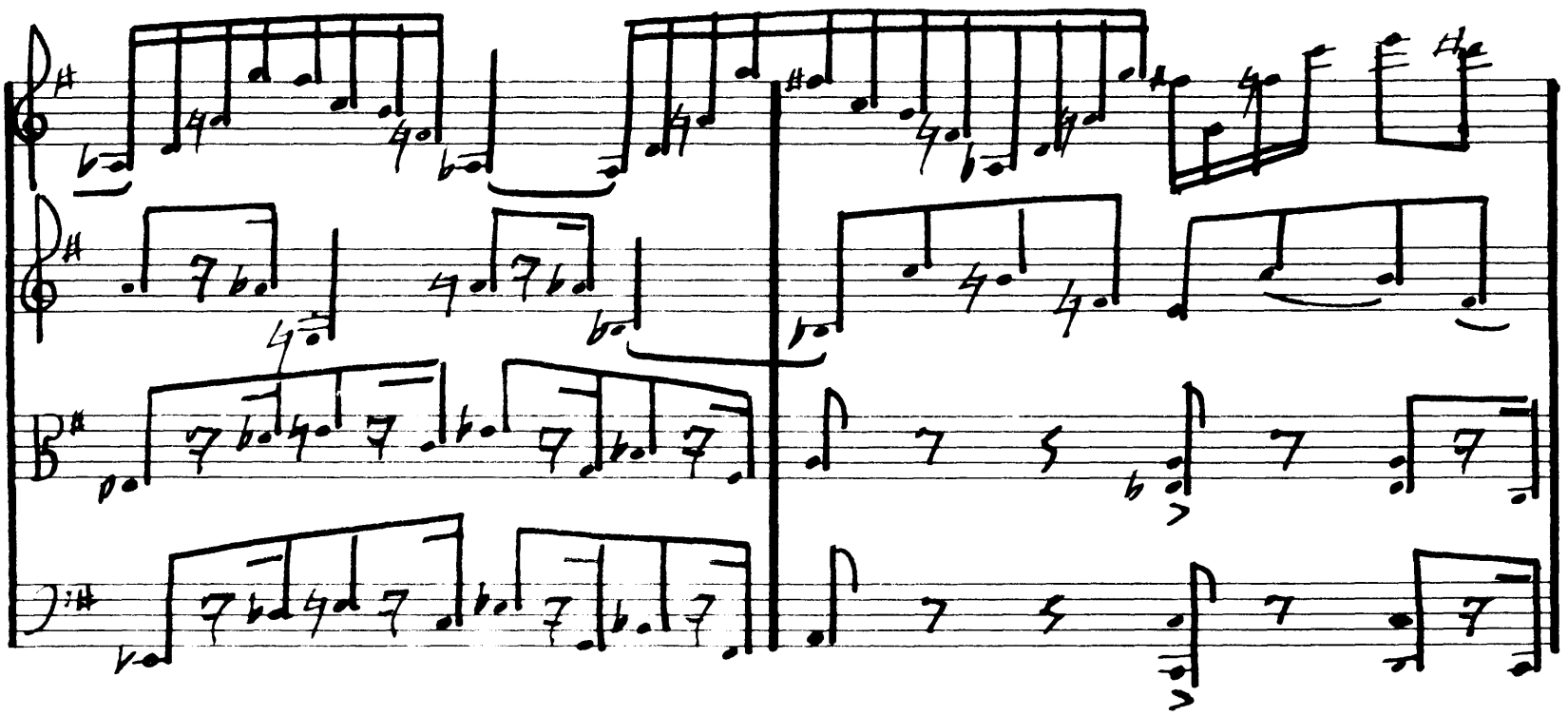
f

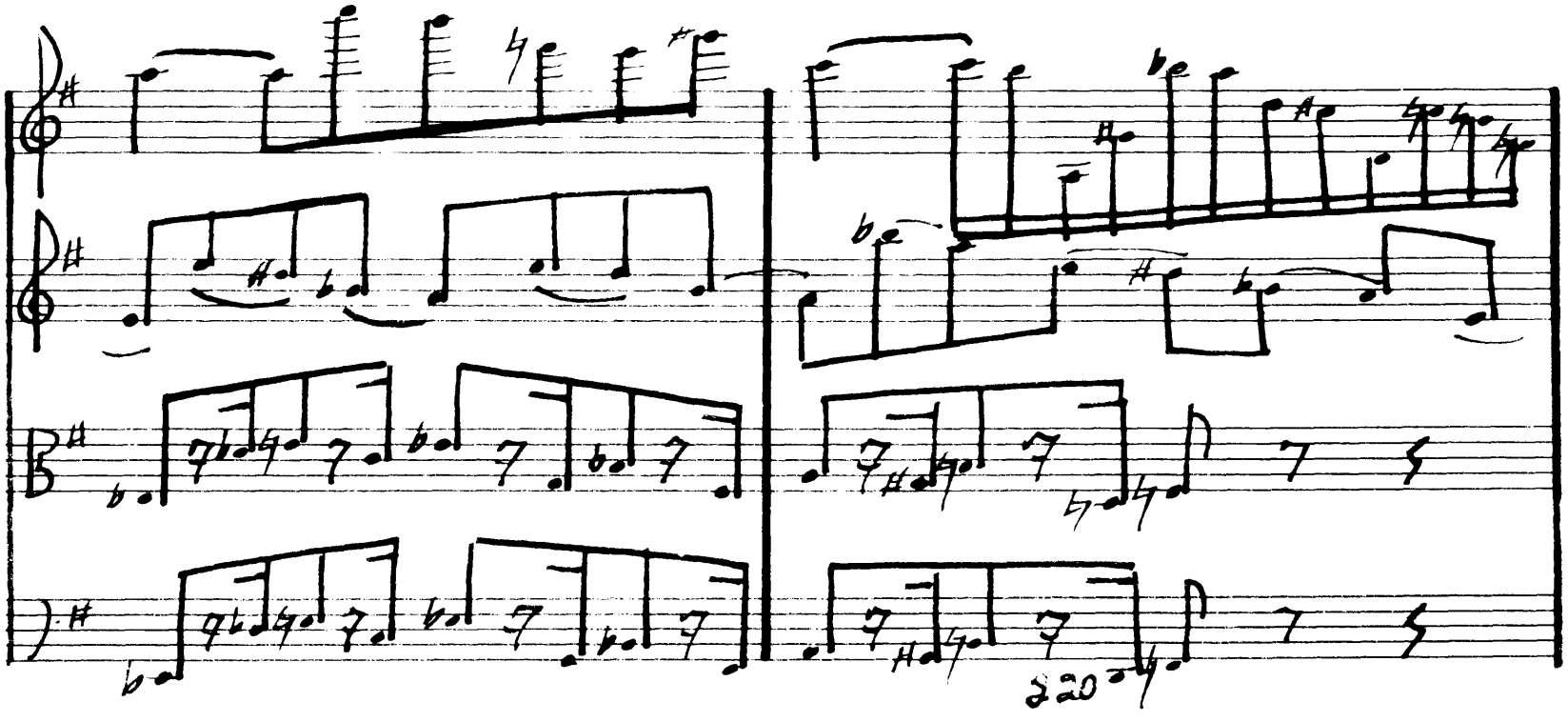


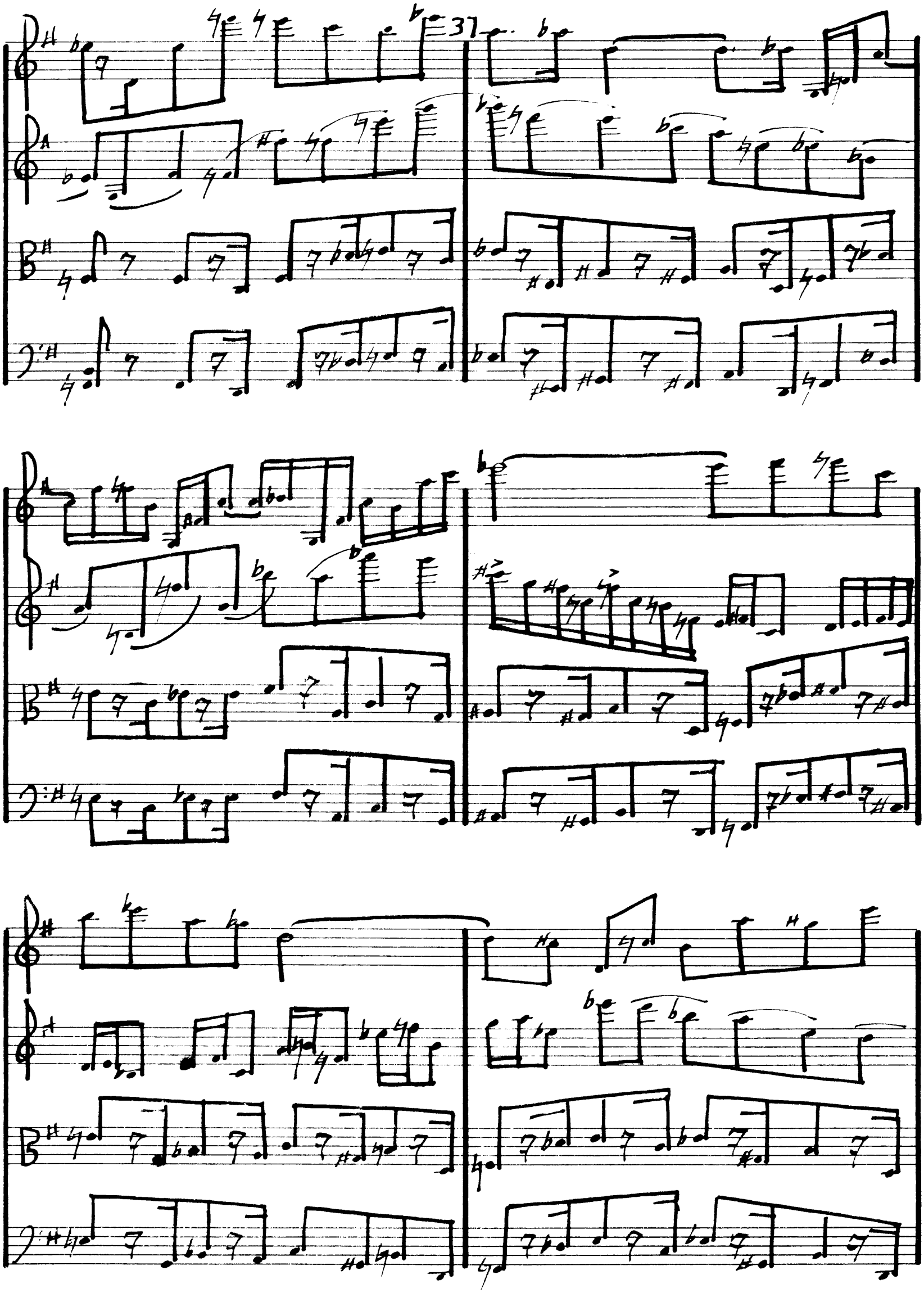

Con bravura
34
I
ff

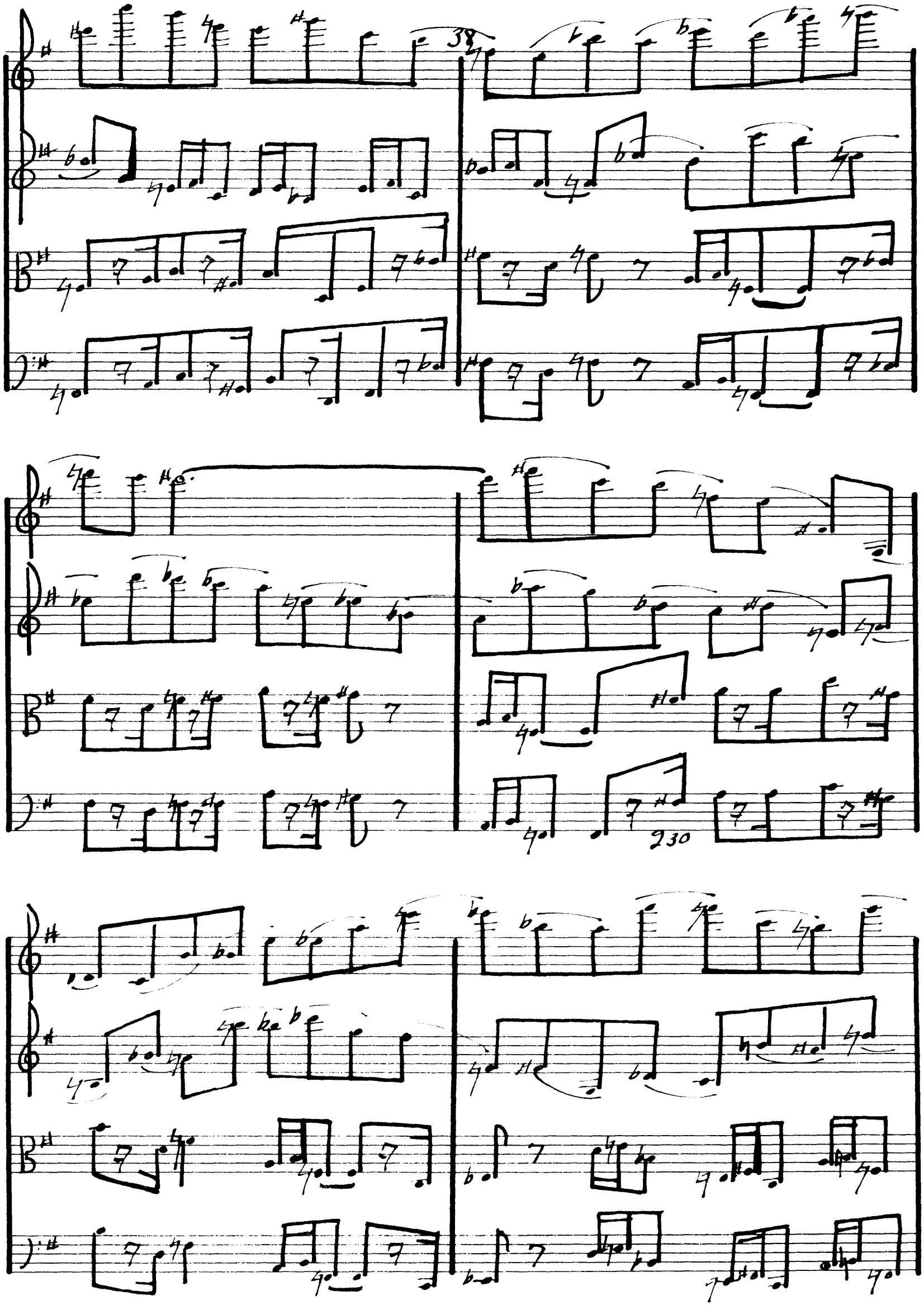

35
210

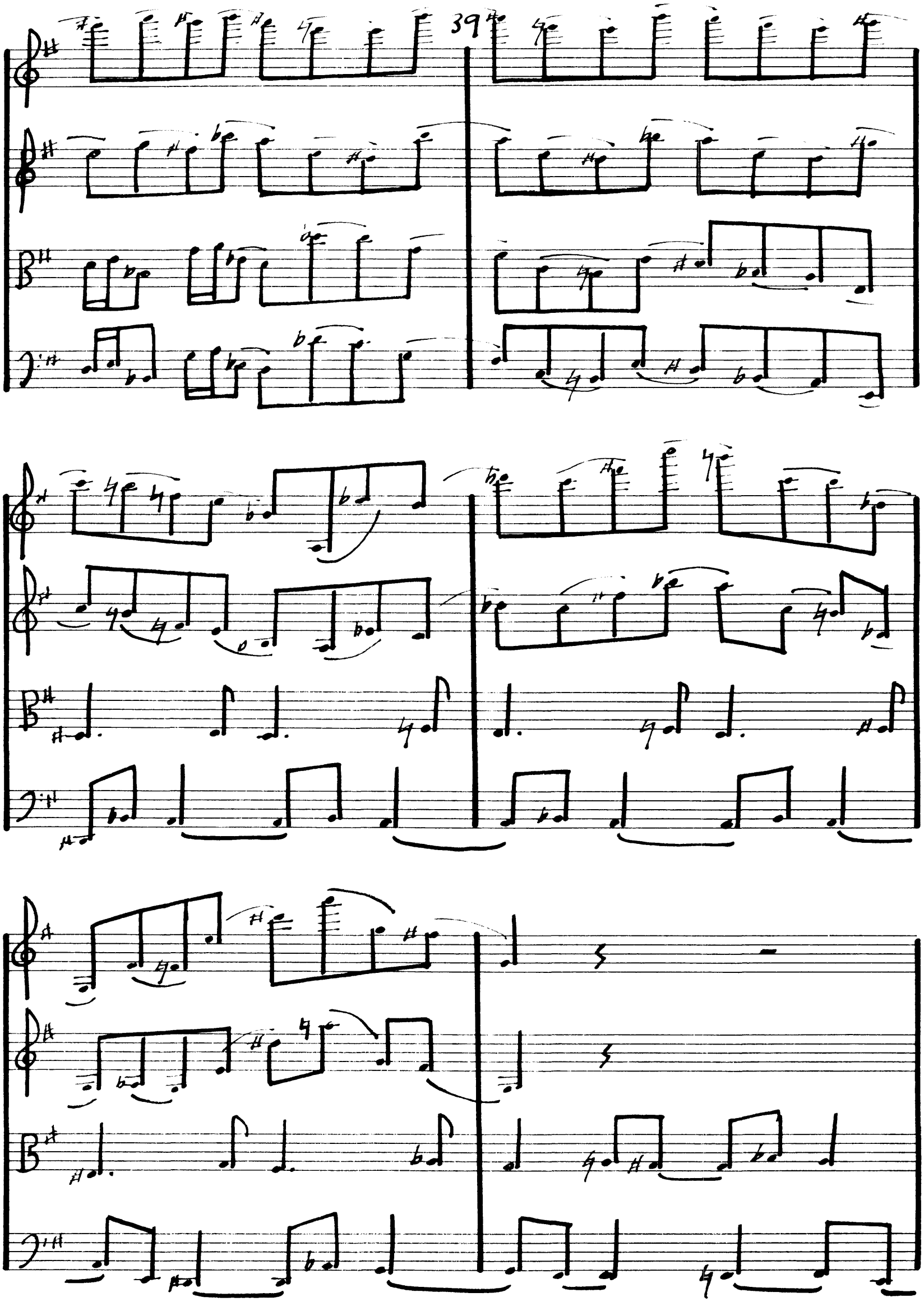

36

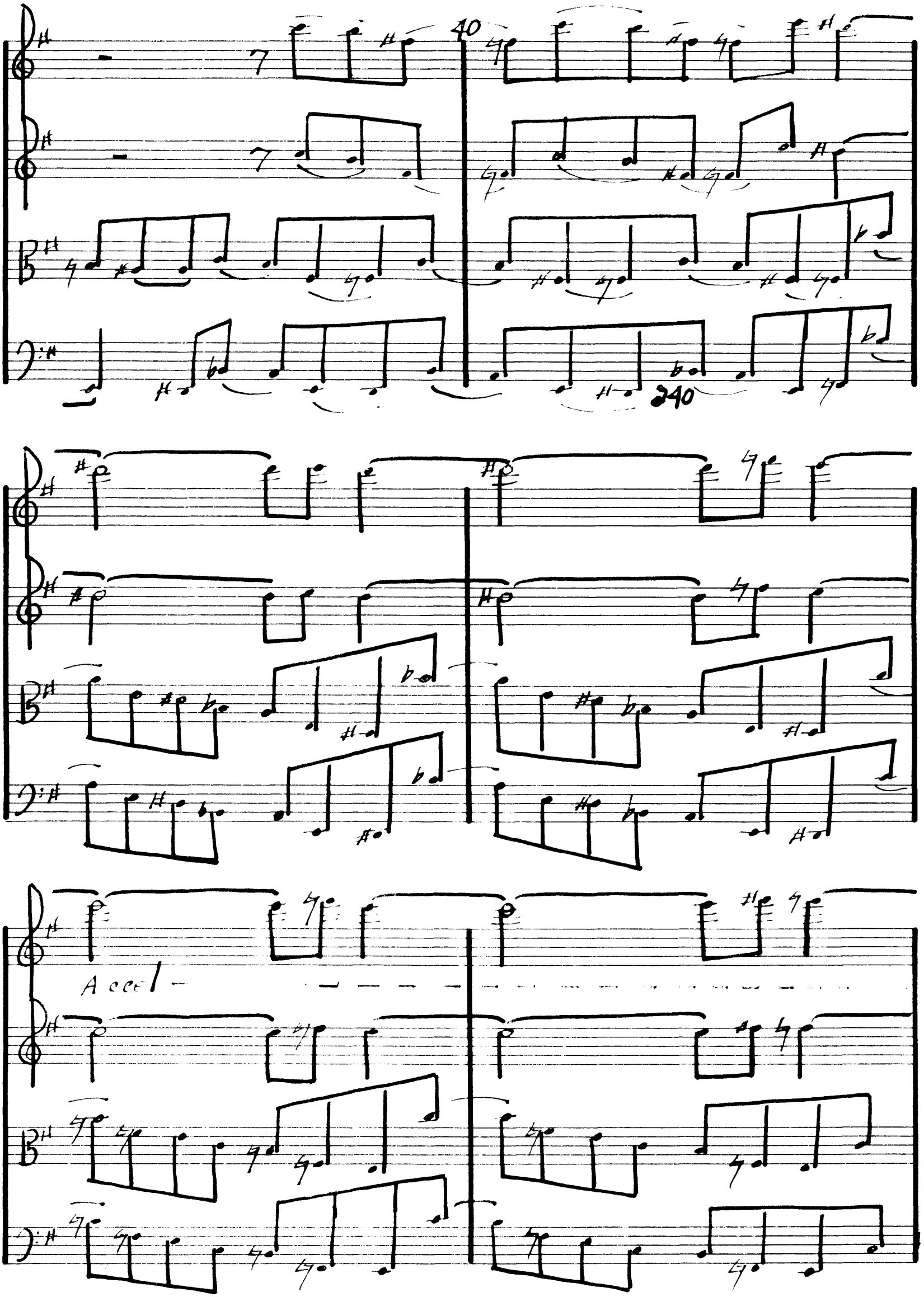


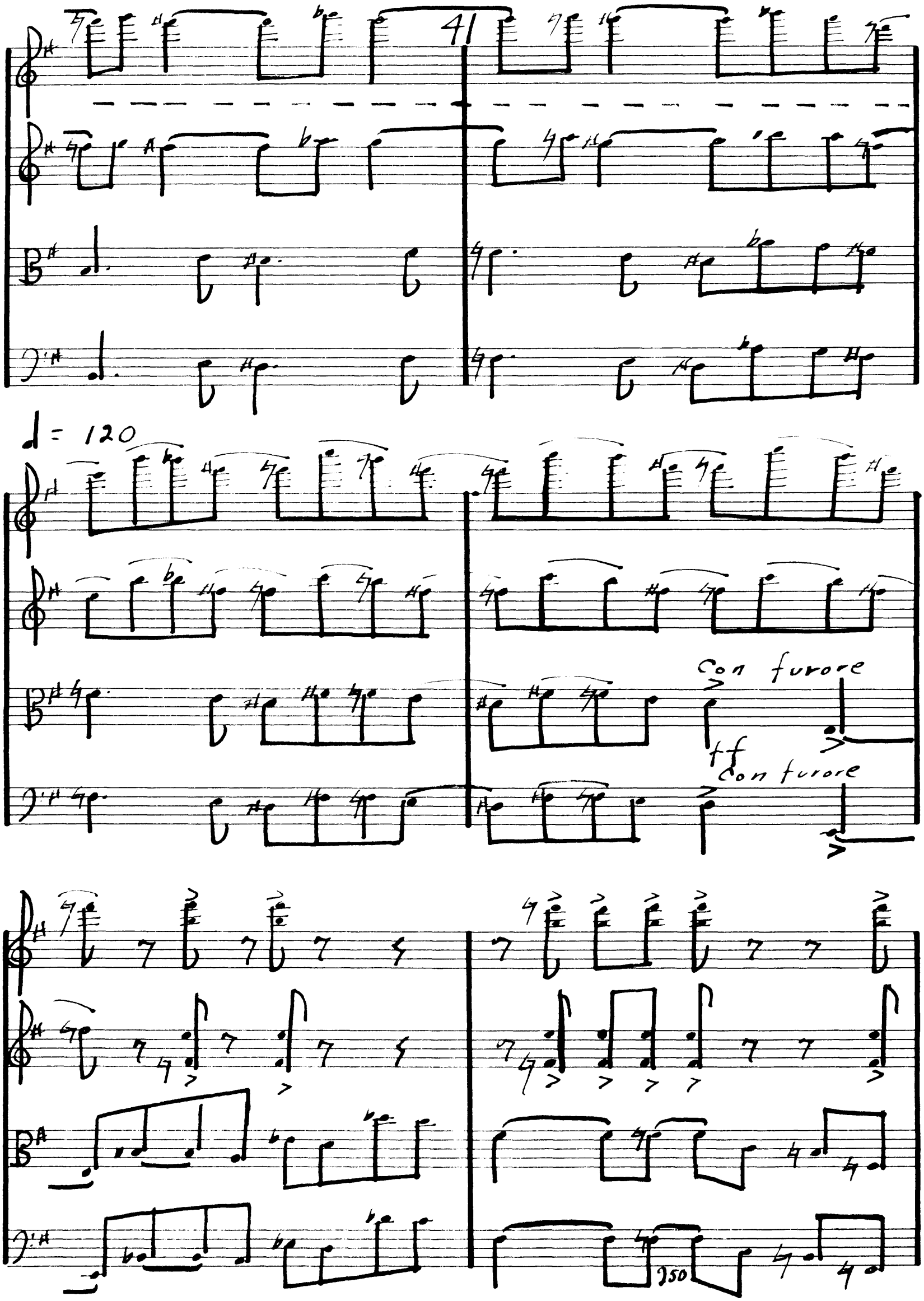

220

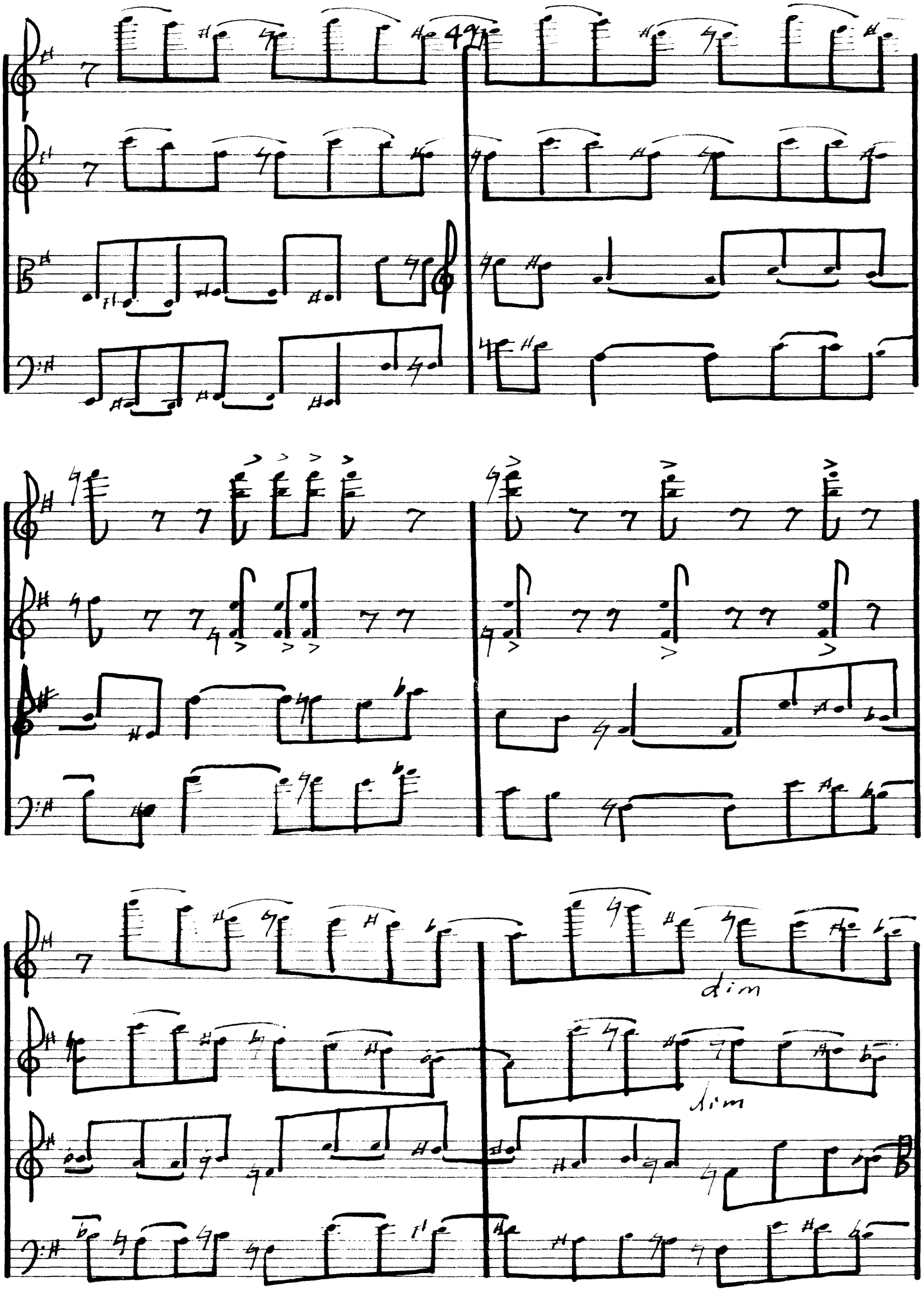

37


38
230




40
240
Accel


41
♩ = 120
Con furore
ff
Con furore
250


dim
dim

43

Cresc

Cresc

Cresc

160

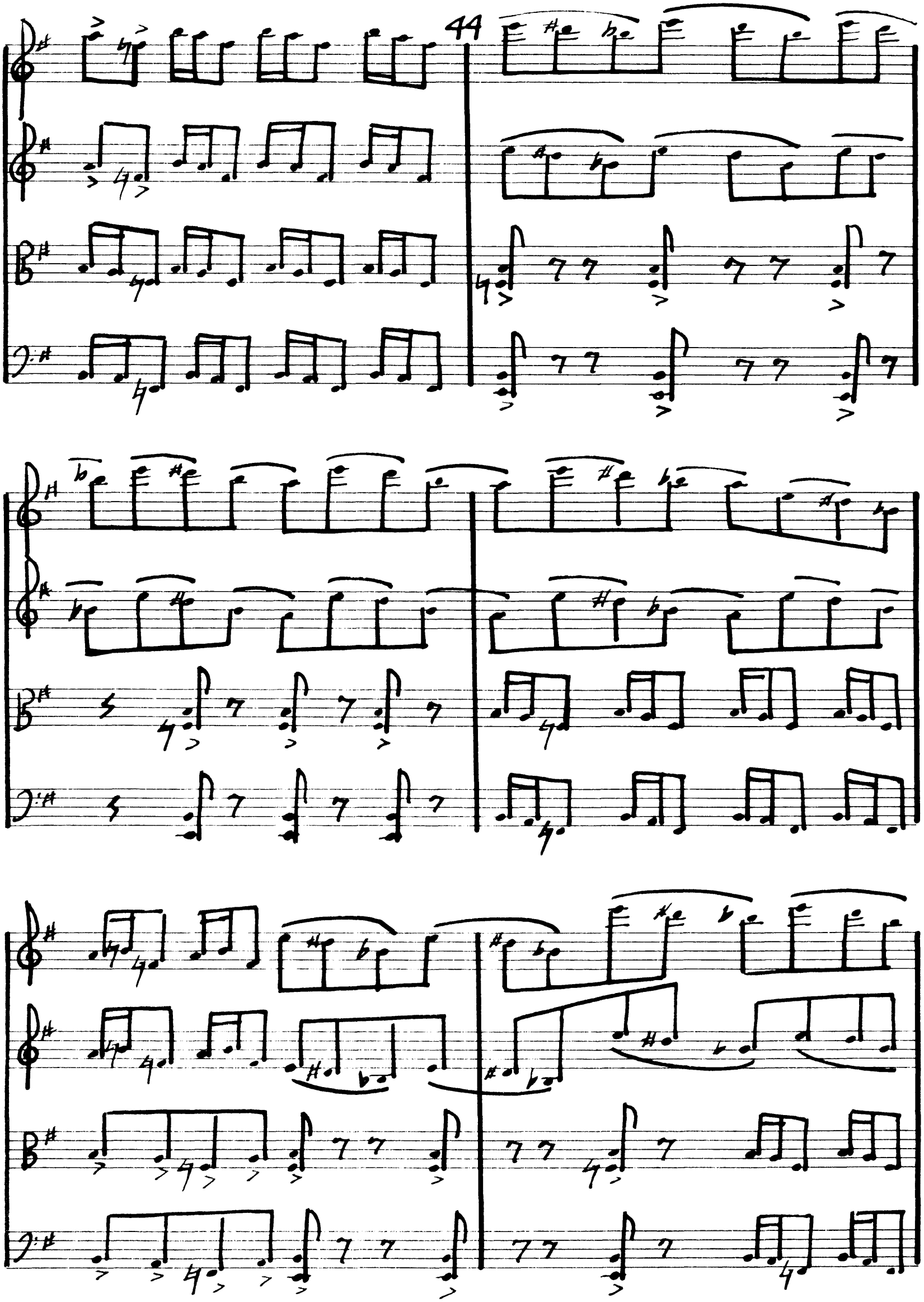
Cresc

ff

ff

ff

ff


44

45

210

cresc

cresc

cresc

cresc

46

Tempo I

fff

fff

fff

fff

sf

sf

sf

sf

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz