“A VOICE OF MUSIC”

for French horn and Pianoforte

Kerry Milan

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For Emily and James

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A Voice of Music is an arrangement of a piece originally composed
for tenor voice and pianoforte in 1963.
Further information about this can be found in the background notes included on page 12

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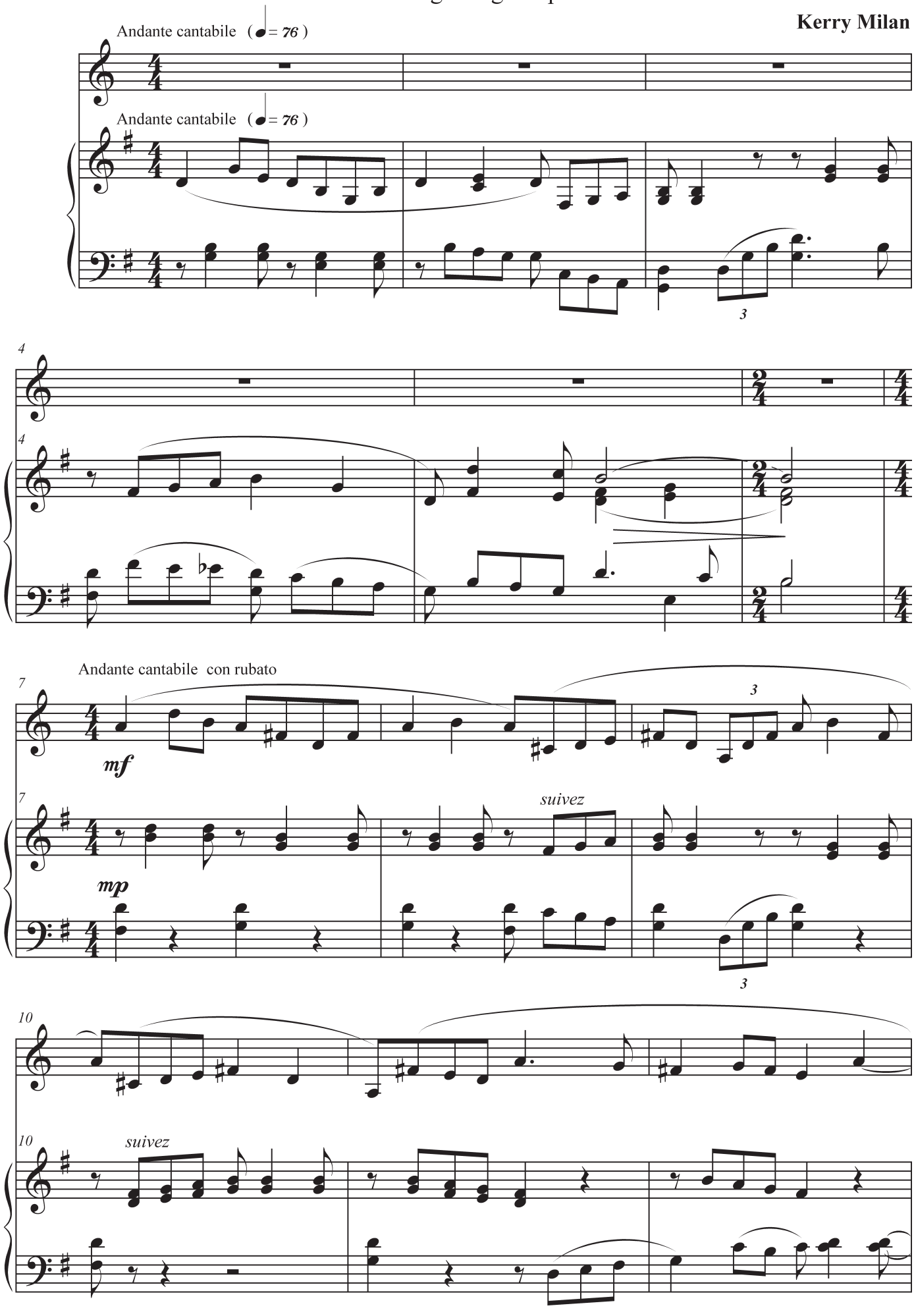
1: I know a green grass path ...

Kerry Milan



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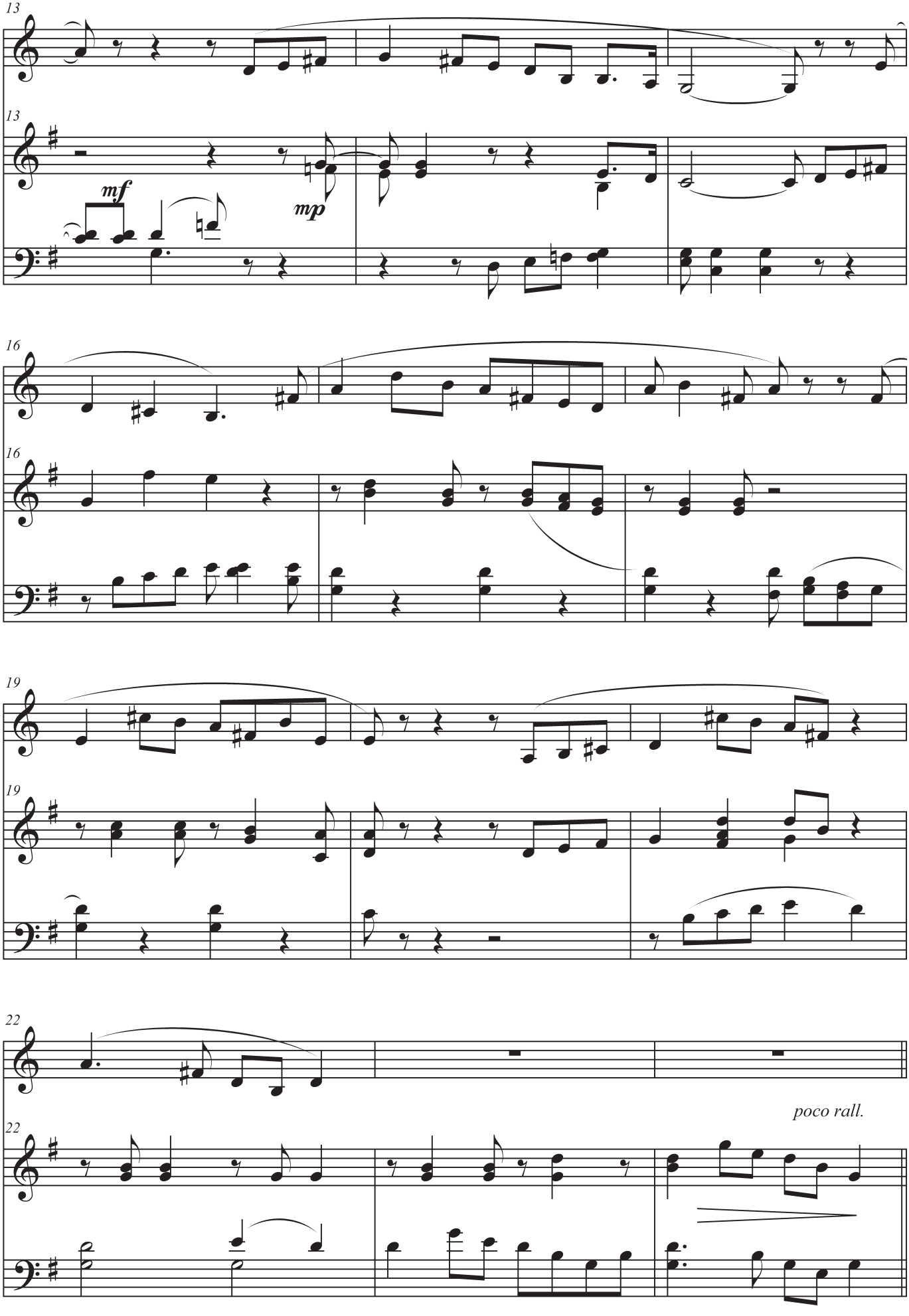
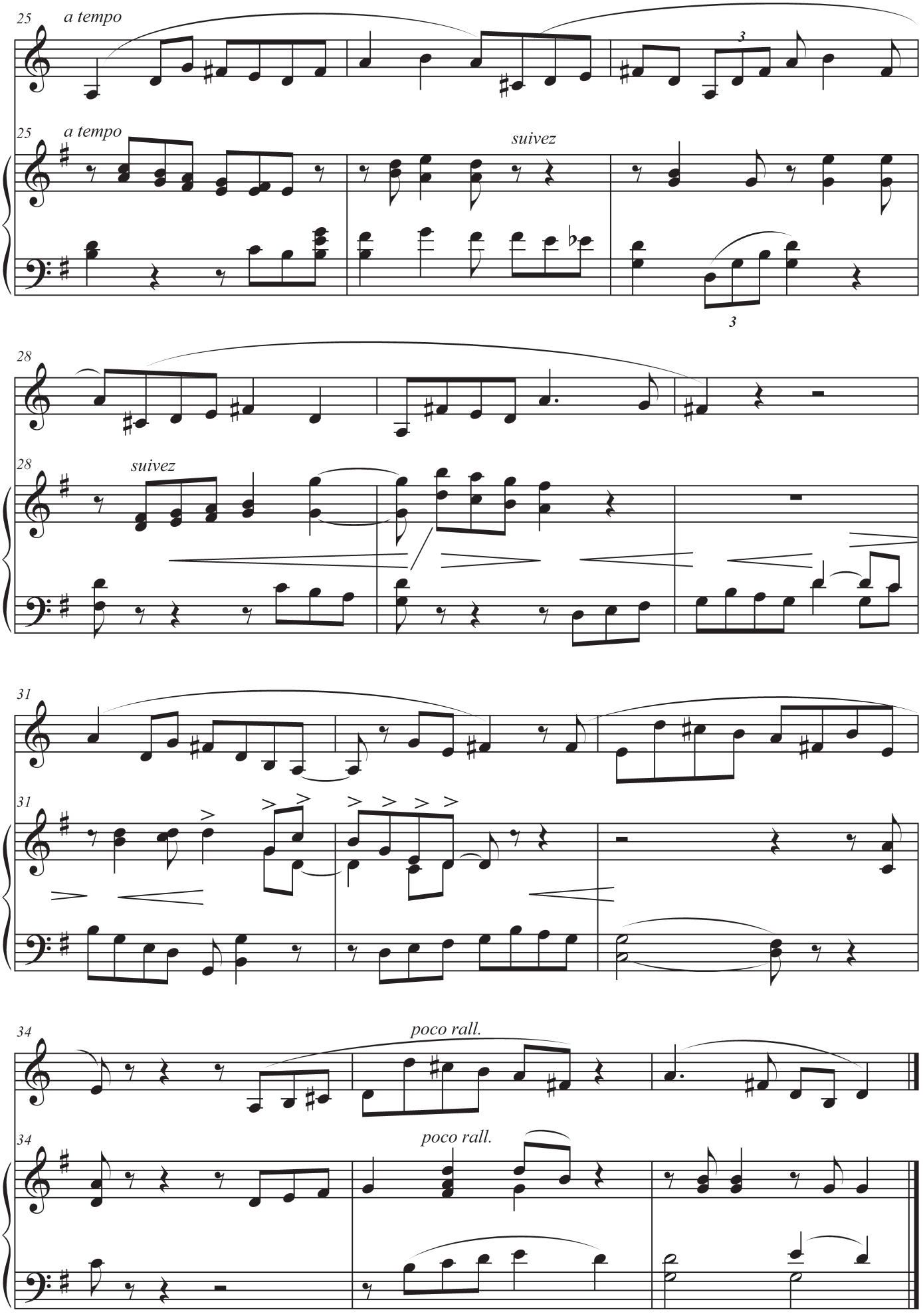

13
13
mf
mp
16
16
19
19
22
22
poco rall.


25
a tempo
3
25
a tempo
suivez
3
28
28
suivez
31
31
34
poco rall.
34
poco rall.

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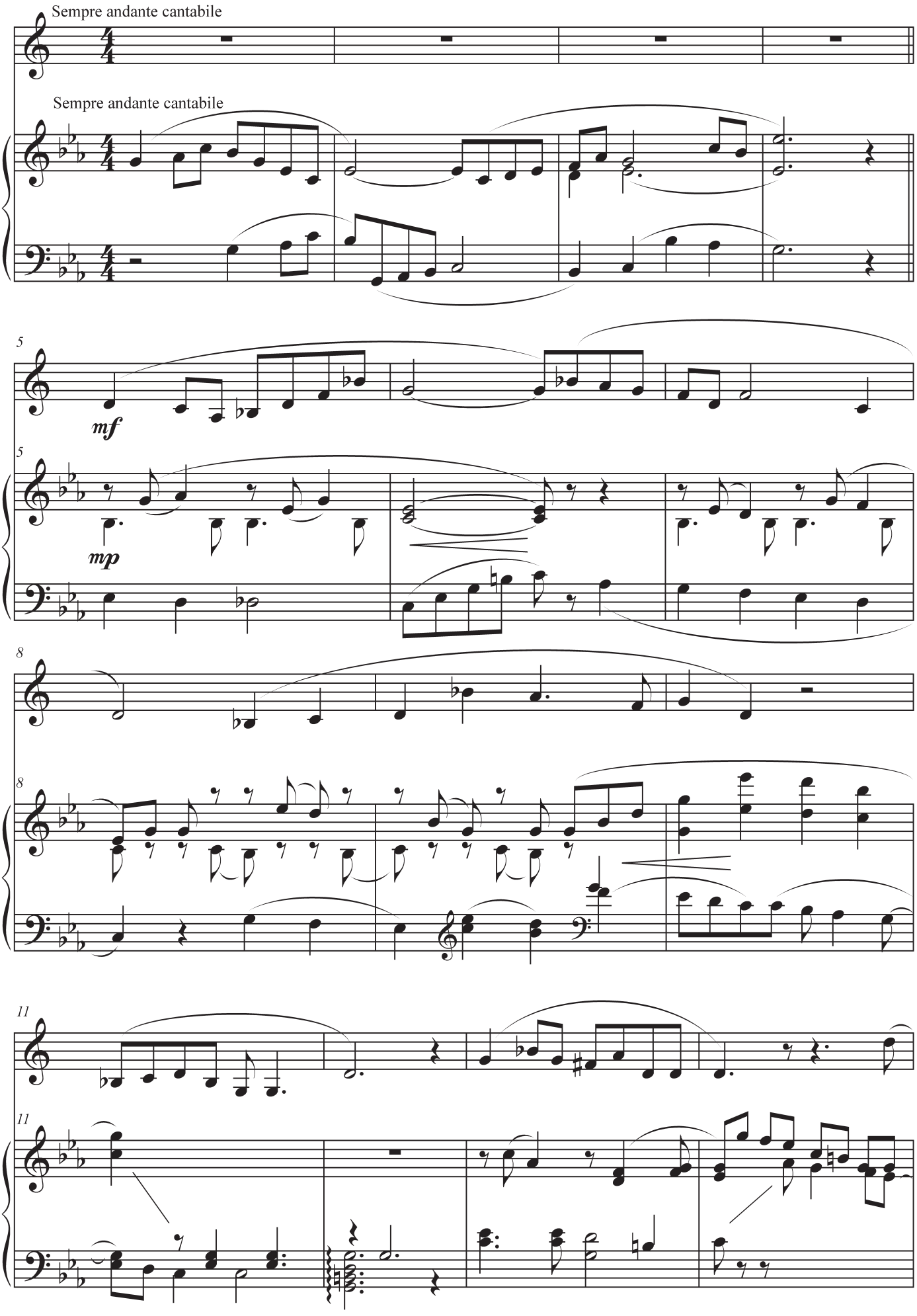
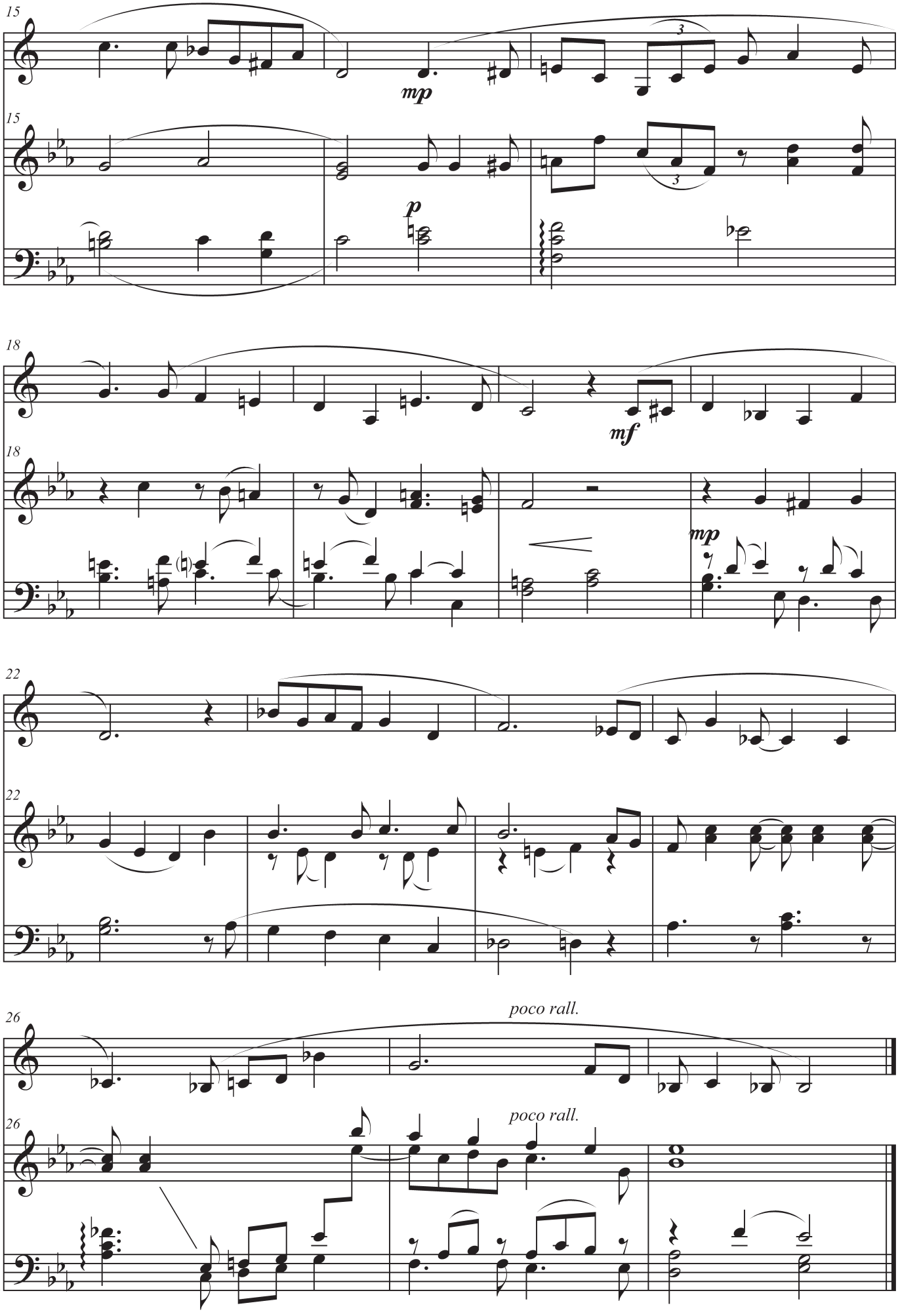
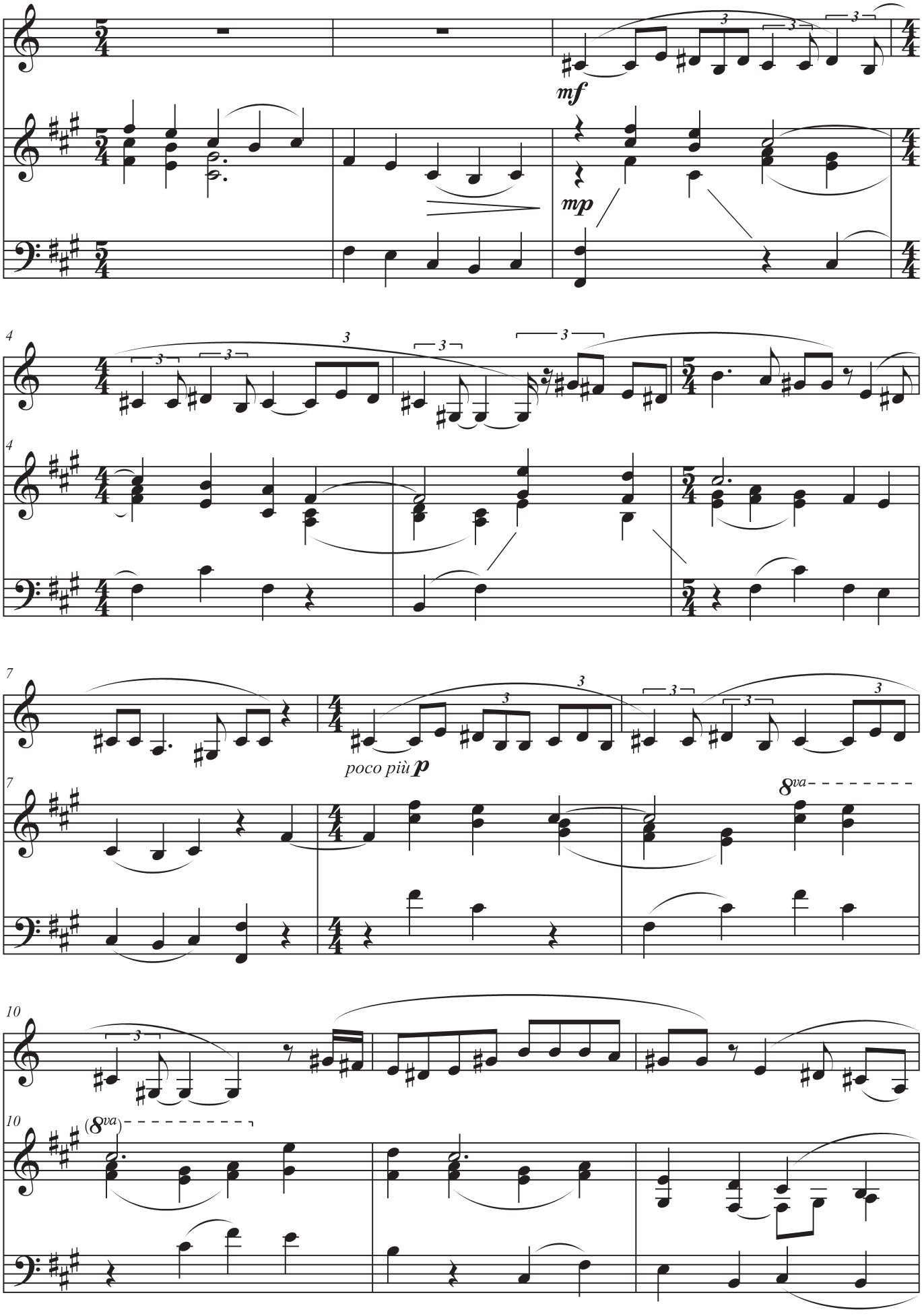
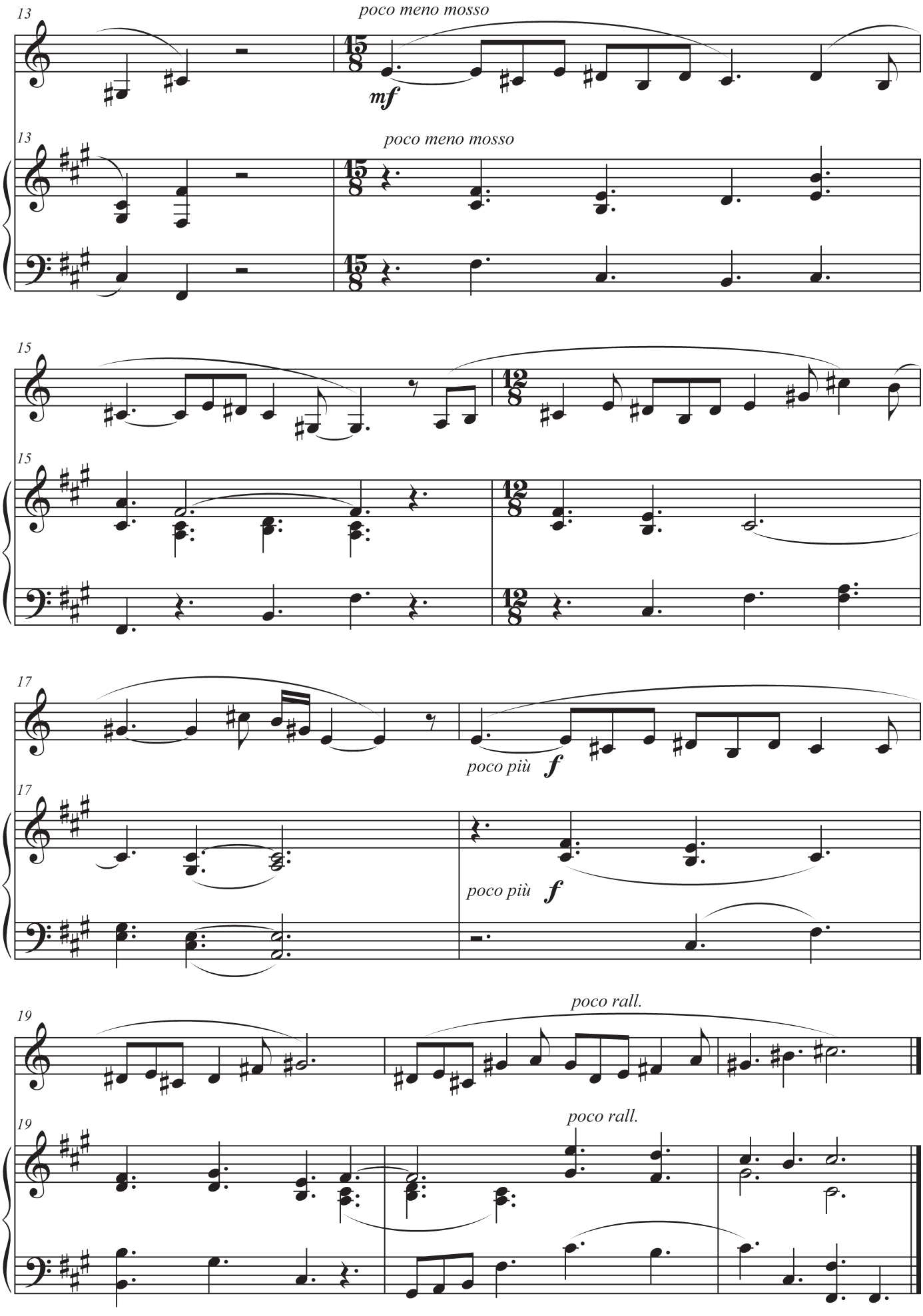
2: Oft on a plat of rising ground ...




15
mp
p
18
mf
mp
22
26
poco rall.
poco rall.


mf
mp
poco più p
8va
(8va)


13
poco meno mosso
mf
13
poco meno mosso
15
15
17
poco più f
17
poco più f
19
poco rall.
19
poco rall.

BACKGROUND

Much of my early work, looking back nearly sixty years, has long been lost; but happily a copy of the manuscript for *A Voice of Music* does still survive, and also a programme (see right), from June 1963 when I was a twenty-year-old student at the Scottish Academy, of a performance there in the Stevenson Hall, by fellow students Roger Crook, tenor, and Anne Strachan piano.

The texts for these three short songs come from widely differing sources: the first, *The Green River,* I found in the college library, the second *(from Il Penseroso)* from my Highers study, the third from a book *Return to the Islands* by the author of *A Pattern of Islands,* who was resident Commissioner in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, just about as far away from Glasgow as one could imagine, both geographically and culturally.

Now two generations later, with a granddaughter herself twenty and in her third year at Oxford, it seemed a good time to give the music another hearing, this time with Emily accompanying her brother James on French horn. The only slight change is that the first section (which would have pushed the horn up to C sharp major) has been moved up a semitone. Here are the words:

(1) "I know a green grass path" *(Alfred Douglas)*

(2) "Oft on a plat of rising ground" *(Milton)*

(3) "Even in a little thing" *(translated by Arthur Grimble)*

I know a green grass path that leaves the field,
And, like a running river, winds along
Into a leafy wood, where is no throng
Of birds at noon-day; and no soft throats yield
Their music to the moon. The place is sealed,
An unclaimed sovereignty of voiceless song,
And all the unravished silences belong
to some sweet singer lost, or unrevealed.

Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide water'd shore,
Swinging low with sullen roar;
Or if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
So is my soul become a silent place.
Oh, may I wake from this uneasy night
To find some voice of music manifold.
Let it be shape of sorrow with wan face
Or love that swoons on sleep, or else delight
That is as wide-eyed as a marigold.

Even in a little thing
(A leaf, a child's hand, a star's flicker)
I shall find a song worth singing
If my eyes are wide, and sleep not.
Even in a laughable thing
(Oh hark! The children are laughing!)
There is that which fills the heart to overflowing,
And makes dreams wistful.
Small is the life of a man
(Not too sad, not too happy):
I shall find my songs in a man's small life.
Behold them soaring!
Very low on earth are the frigate-birds hatched,
Yet they soar as high as the sun.

I have always been so grateful to Roger and Anne for giving what was one of my earliest premières. Like me Roger was born in 1942, sadly dying aged seventy in July 2013. His obituary was covered in the Dundee Courier of 31 July:

> Mr Crook broadcast on TV and radio, singing recitals of songs by classical composers as well as programmes of light entertainment and Scottish songs.
>
> He also appeared as a soloist with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Scottish Radio Orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra.
>
> On the operatic stage he sang the roles of Manrico, Don Jose, Enzo, Tamino, Canio, and Nanki Poo. In oratorio he sang the tenor repertoire with choral societies all over Scotland and the north of England. As the tenor in the Quatrain for 20 years, he arranged many of the songs they performed and recorded.

Thank you, Roger.

Kerry Milan, Stafford, March 2020.

THE ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Session 1962-63

CONCERT OF STUDENTS' COMPOSITIONS

STEVENSON HALL

Friday, 21st June 1963 at 2.p.m.

P R O G R A M M E

1. DIVERTIMENTO (for Strings) — Ronald Walker (Yr.I)

I Allegro
II Adagio
III Waltz, Allegro
IV Finale - Allegro con brio

2. THREE SONGS for Tenor and Pianoforte — Kerry Milan (Yr.III)

(i) "I know a green grass path"
(words Lord Alfred Douglas)
(ii) "Oft on a plat of rising ground"
(from "L'allegro" - Milton)
(iii) "Even in a little thing"
(translated from Gilbert and Ellis)
Isles Song by Arthur Grimble

Roger Crook - Tenor
Anne Strachan - Pianoforte

3. PRELUDE and GROTESQUE DANCE for Pianoforte — Sandra McRae (Yr.II)

Jack Keaney - Pianoforte

4. THREE RELIGIOUS SONGS (Poems by Margot Ruddock) — Ralph Gordon (Yr.II)

(i) "I take thee, life"
(ii) "O Holy water"
(iii) "Take away"

Lana Barclay - Soprano
Jack Keaney Pianoforte

5. TWO NOCTURNES, for voice and pianoforte — Brian Hirst (Yr.I)

(i) "Lay your sleeping head"
(words W.H. Anden)

(ii) "I saw the marsh"
(words Helen Waddell)

Russell Cowieson - Tenor
Brian Hirst - Pianoforte

SHORT INTERVAL

HORN IN F

1: I know a green grass path ...

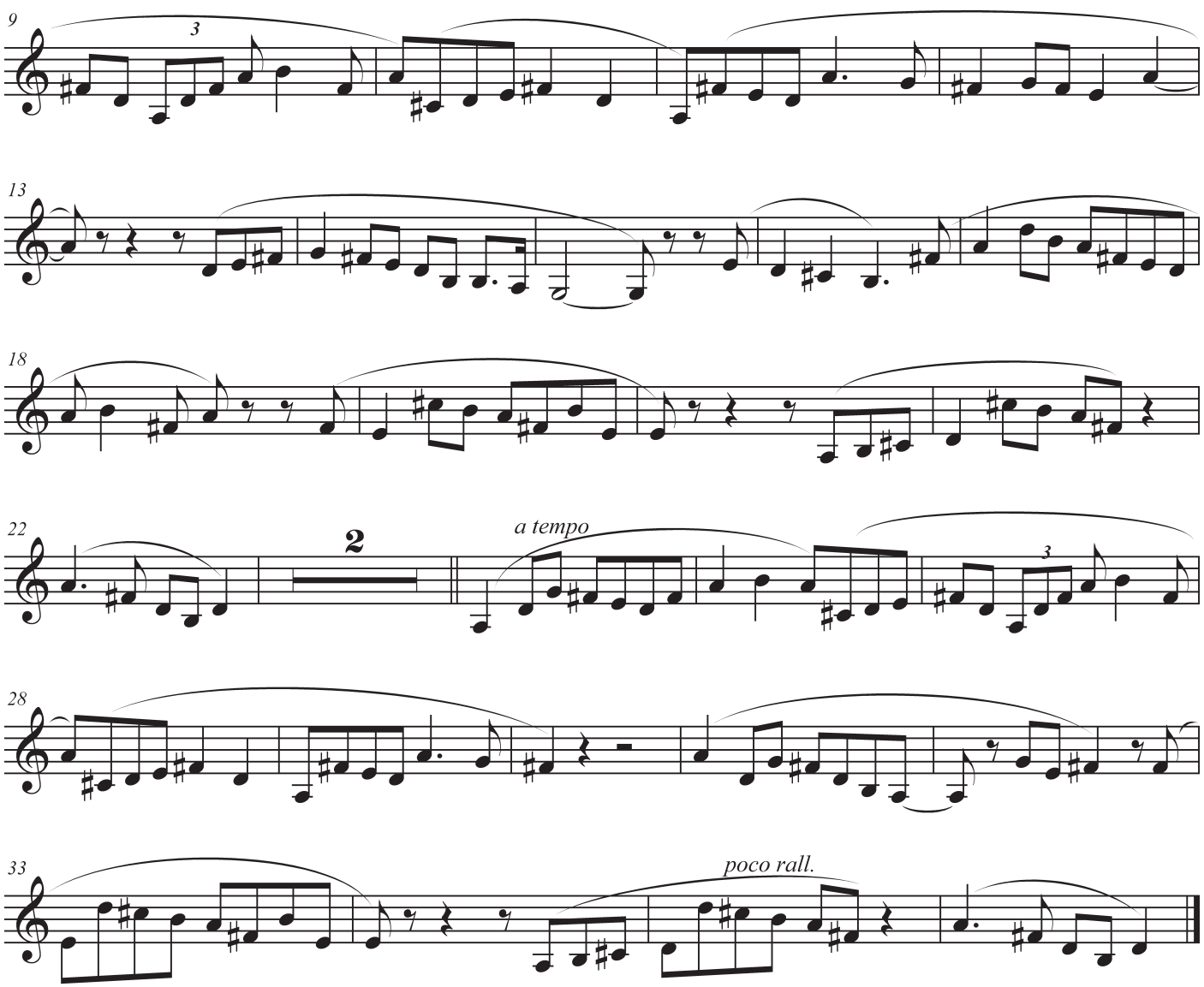
Andante cantabile (♩= 76)

5

Andante cantabile con rubato

Kerry Milan

mf



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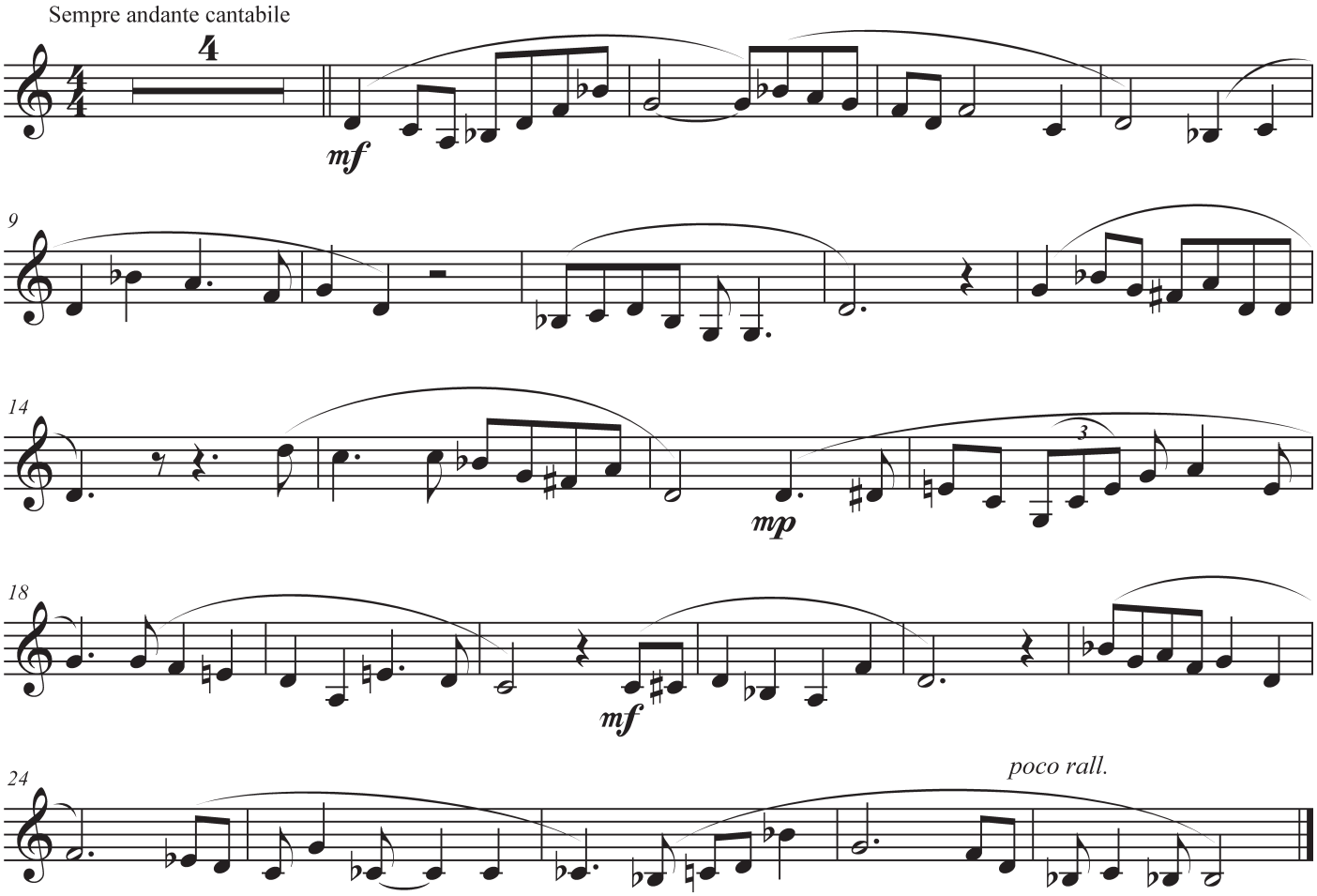
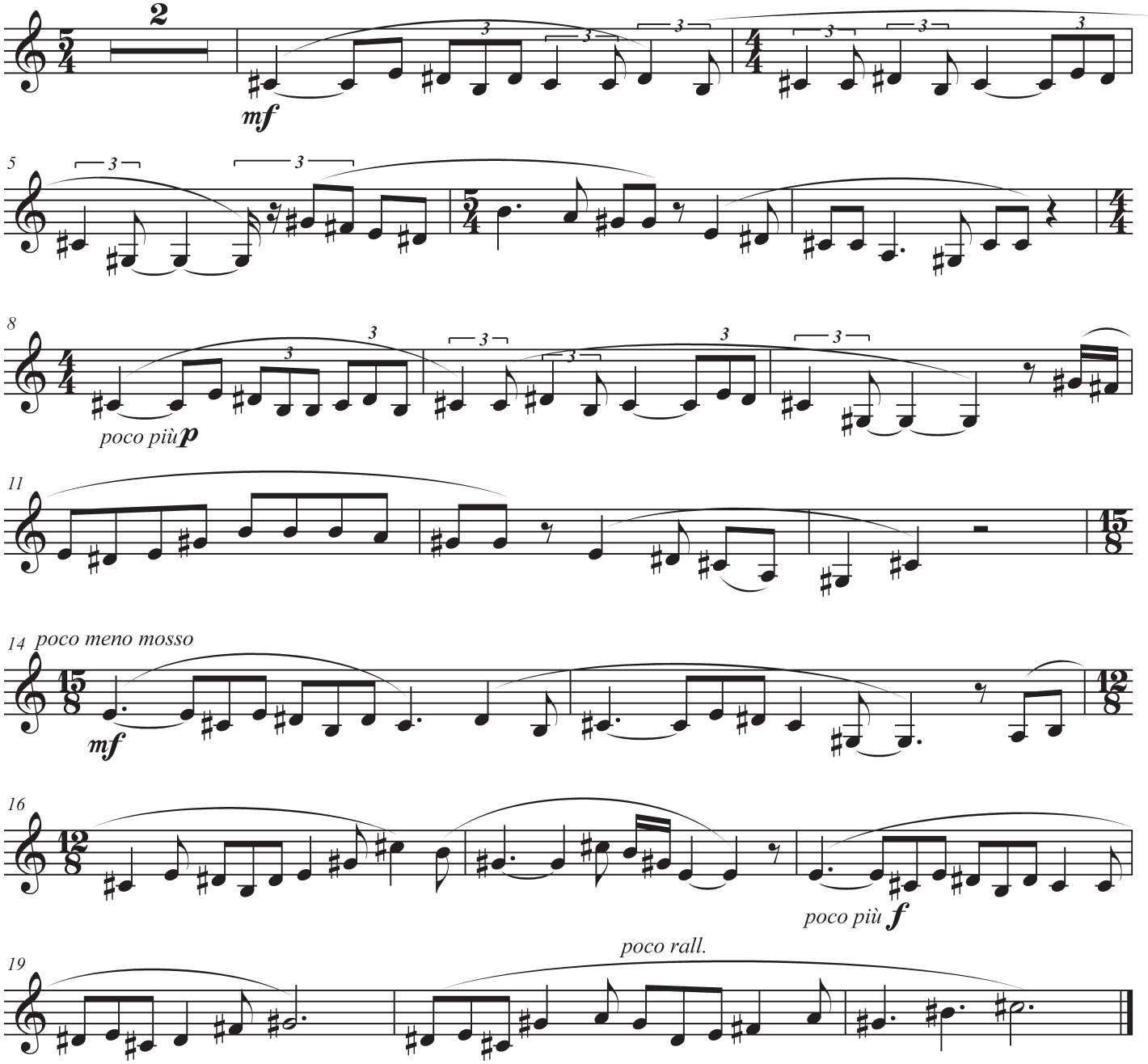
2: Oft on a plat of rising ground ...



3: Even in a little thing ....