McGillicuddy's Rant

Theme and 10 Variations for Solo Guitar

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Clark Winslow Ross

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McGillicuddy's Rant (1980-2003)

Clark Winslow Ross

Variations on McGillicuddy's Rant was composed in sections over a twenty-three year period, and I only heard a performance of the complete set for the first time in 2005. The theme was written in 1980, around the time I started taking composition lessons. Before it had a name, I played it for my guitar teacher, who said, "Why don't you call it McGillicuddy's Rant?" I have no idea why he said this, but I found this title phonetically pleasing, so I used it. I also arranged the theme for piano, which appears in a collection of mine called "11 Short Piano Pieces." According to the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., it turns out that a musical "rant" is "a lively country dance... a variety of the polka step in an anacrusic 6/8 or 2/4 rhythm which is hopped or skipped." My theme, which is slow and meditative, thus has no apparent connection to an actual Rant, but by the time I learned this I had become too fond of the title to change it; besides, a phonetically-pleasing title is a terrible thing to waste.

The ten variations were written at various times over an eighteen year period, and are all short character-pieces: (Theme), Jig, Wistful and Nostalgic, Scherzo, Bluesy, Arabesque, Bluegrass, Folk Dance, Chorale, Prelude, and a (modified) Reprise. It is the kind of theme that lends itself easily to variations, so more may follow in the future.

Clark Winslow Ross's compositions have been performed in England, Ireland, the United States, and across Canada by some of Canada's finest musicians, ensembles, and orchestras. He was Composer-in-Residence at Ireland's Waterford New Music Week in 2003, and has won Young Composer's Awards in national competitions by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. He has also received over 20 commission grants from various funding agencies, including the Canada Council, the CBC, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. Clark is the founder and Artistic Director of the Newfound Music Festival, held every February in St. John's, and was a founding member and later President of Continuum, the Toronto-based new-music group. He serves on the national executive of both the Canadian League of Composers and the Canadian Music Centre.

Born in Maracaibo, Venezuela, Clark was raised there and in Caracas (Venezuela), Lima (Peru), Lennoxville (Quebec), New York City, Fort Lee (New Jersey), Brussels (Belgium), and Toronto, where he attended university. Upon receiving a Mus.Doc. (composition) degree from the University of Toronto in 1992, he began working at Memorial University's School of Music, where he is currently an Associate Professor, teaching composition, orchestration, theory, electronic music, and classical guitar. He was awarded Memorial University's President's Award for Outstanding Research (1999) in recognition of his extensive compositional activities. He is married to Dr. Jennifer Porter (professor of Religious Studies, Memorial University), and has three children (Alexander, (b. 2004), Andrew (b. 2001), and Julia (b. 1990). His interests outside of family and music include baseball, cats, cooking, ethnic food, reading, writing short stories, and invigorating jumping dances.

Other works for classical guitar, downloadable from Clark's website: **www.clarkross.ca**

- *Andrew Jacob's Ragtime Blues* (guitar solo; 2001)
  http://www.clarkross.ca/Progr-AJsRgtmBlues.htm.

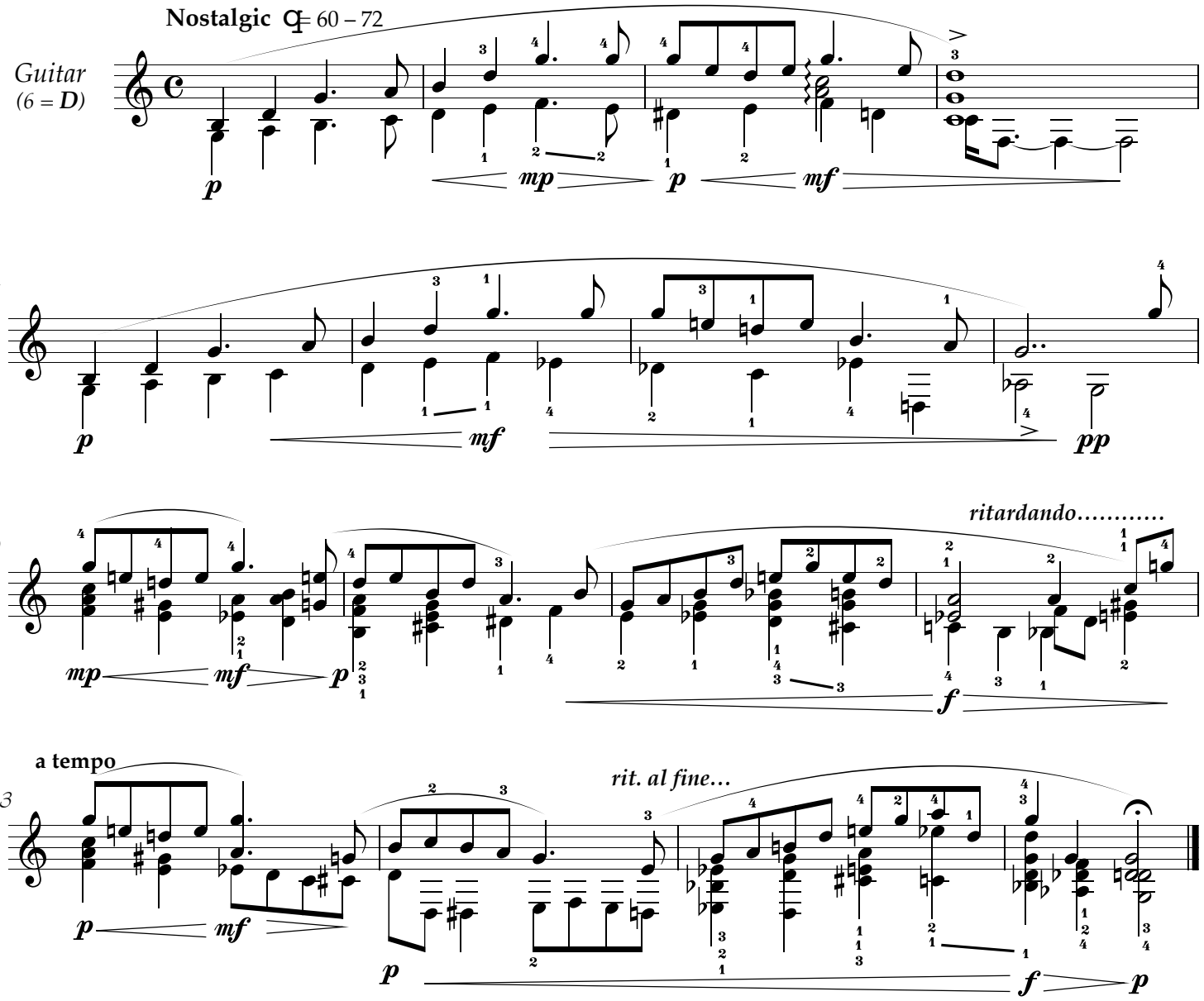
- *I sleep and my soul awakens* (guitar and string quartet (CBC commission); 2005)
  http://www.clarkross.ca/Score-I_sleep+soul.pdf

Contact Clark Ross via E-mail at: clark@mun.ca, or through his website

Variations on *McGillicuddy's Rant*

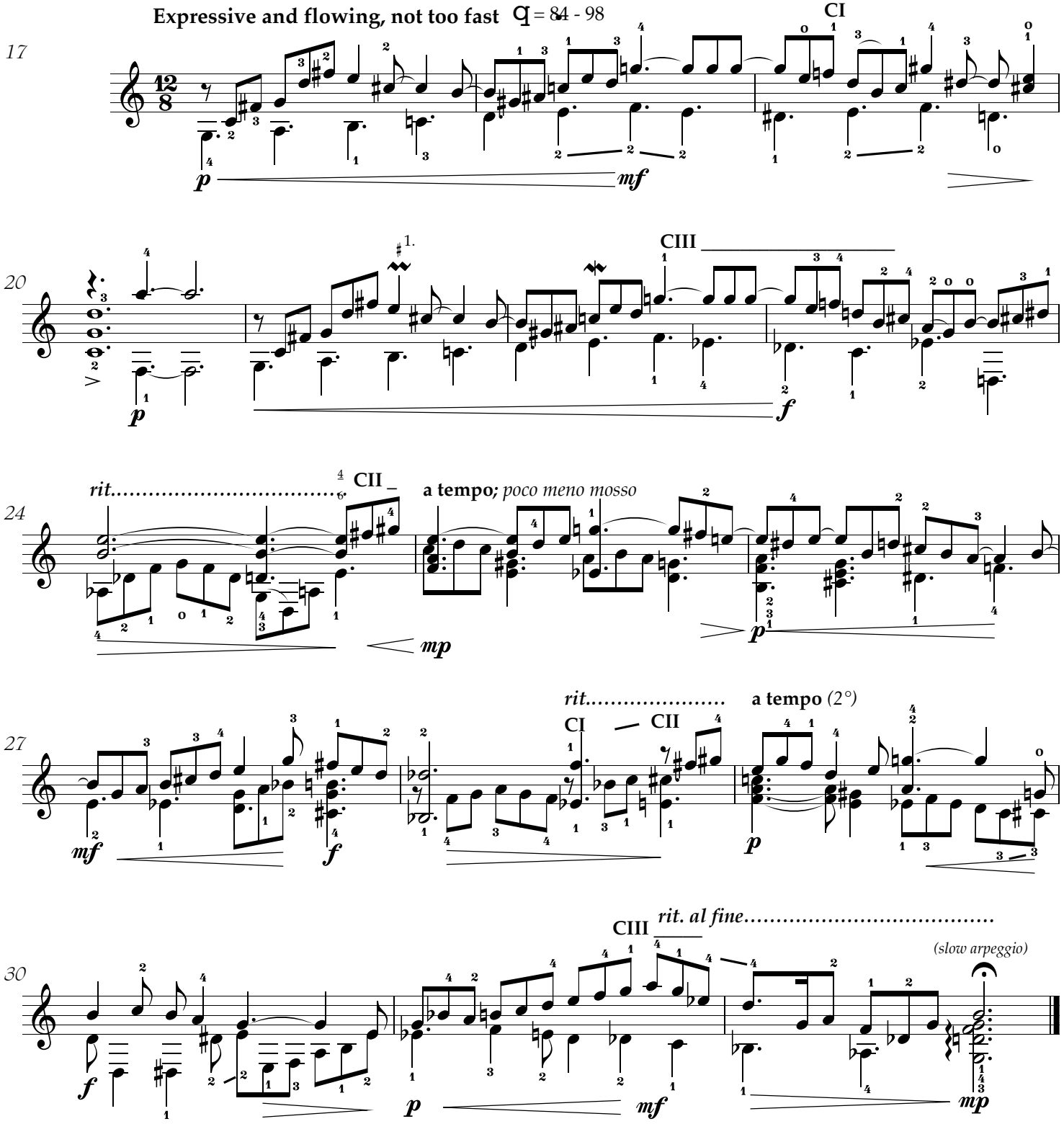
Clark Winslow Ross

Theme



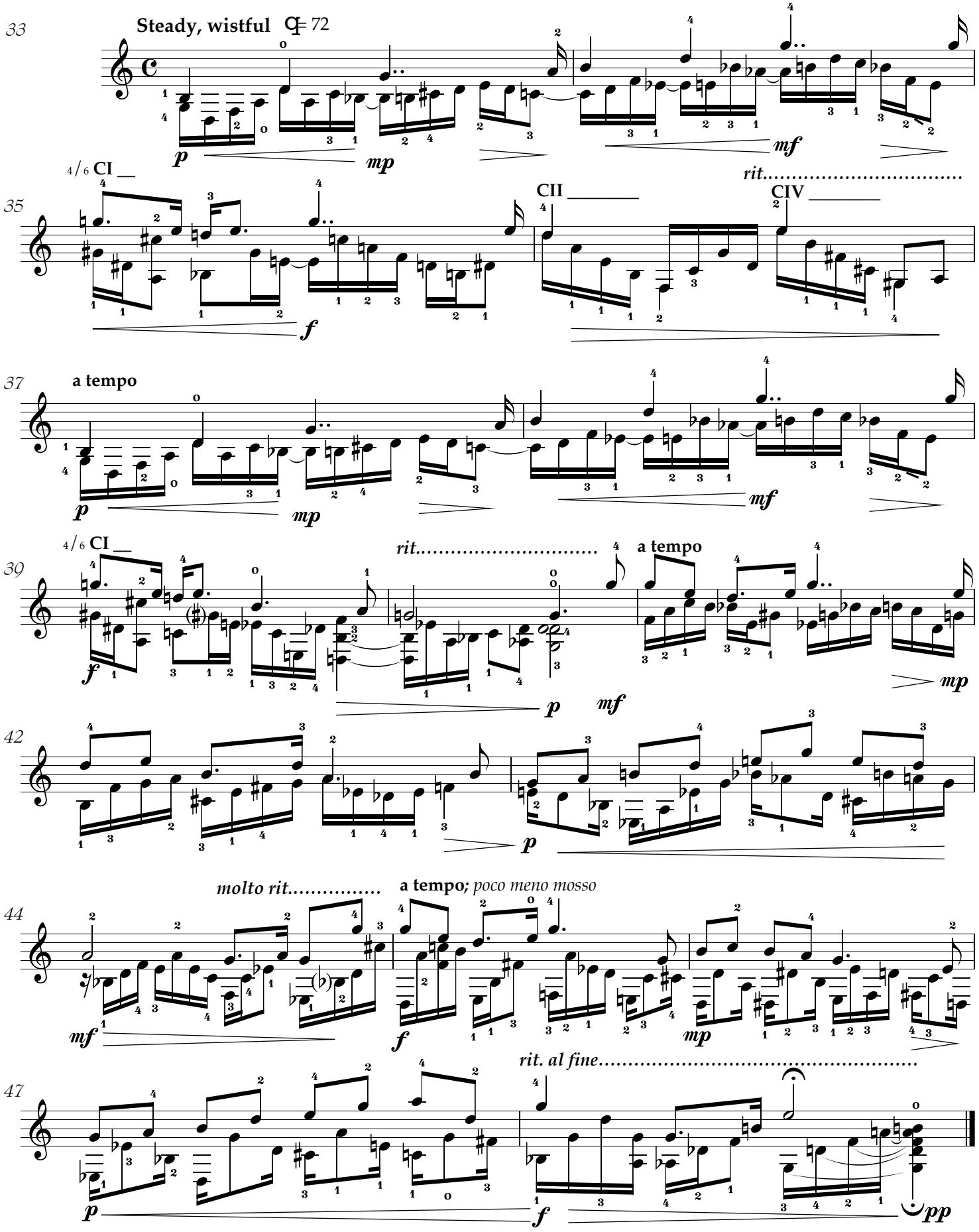
Theme ©1980 by C. W. Ross;
Variations 1, 2, 3, & 4 ©1983 (revised 1987); Variations 5 & 6 ©1990; Variation 7 ©1995; Variations 8 & 9 ©2003

Variation 1 — Jig



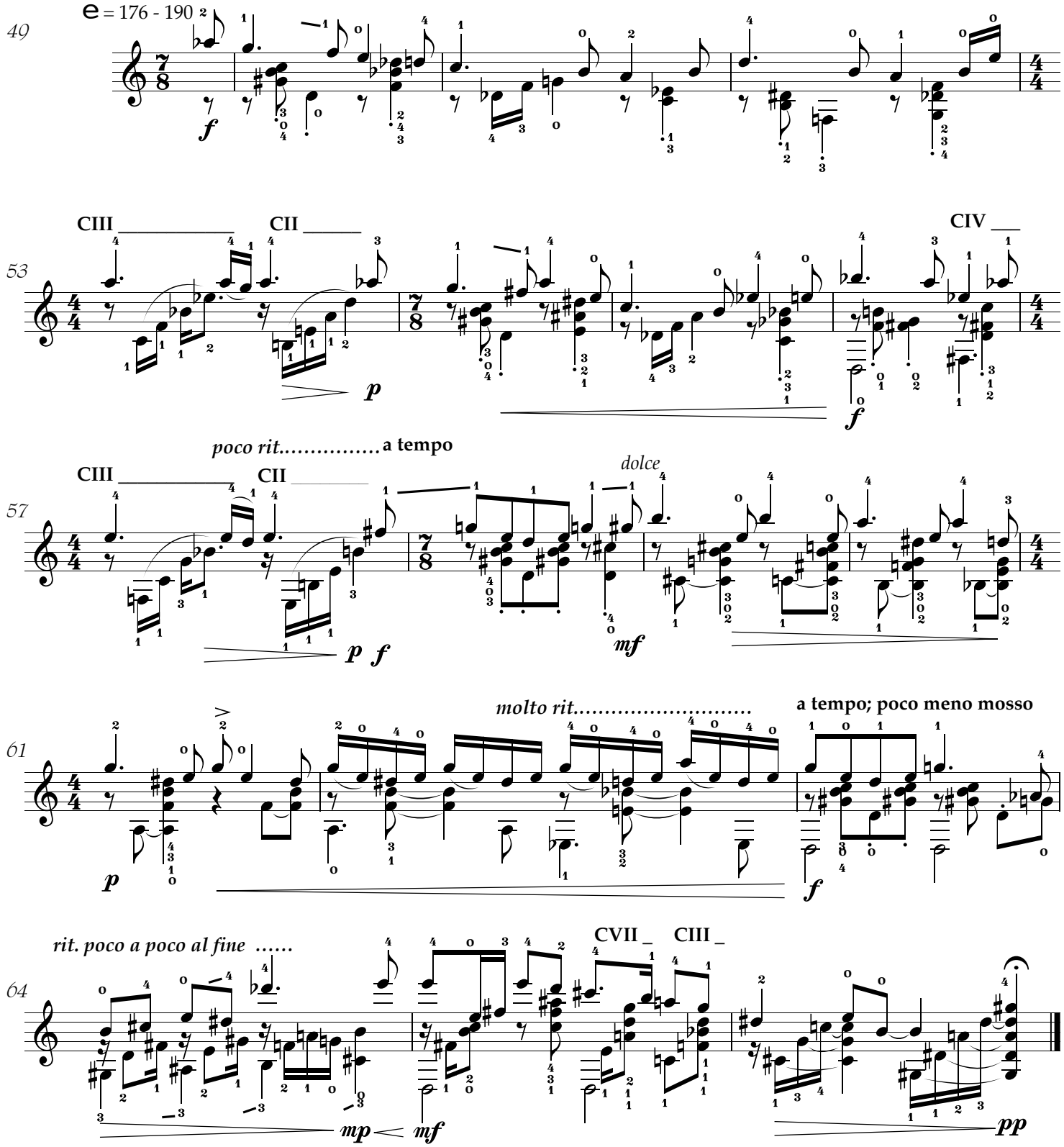
1. Feel free to add a few more decorations (trills and/or mordents) to this line if so moved.

Variation 2 — Nostalgic



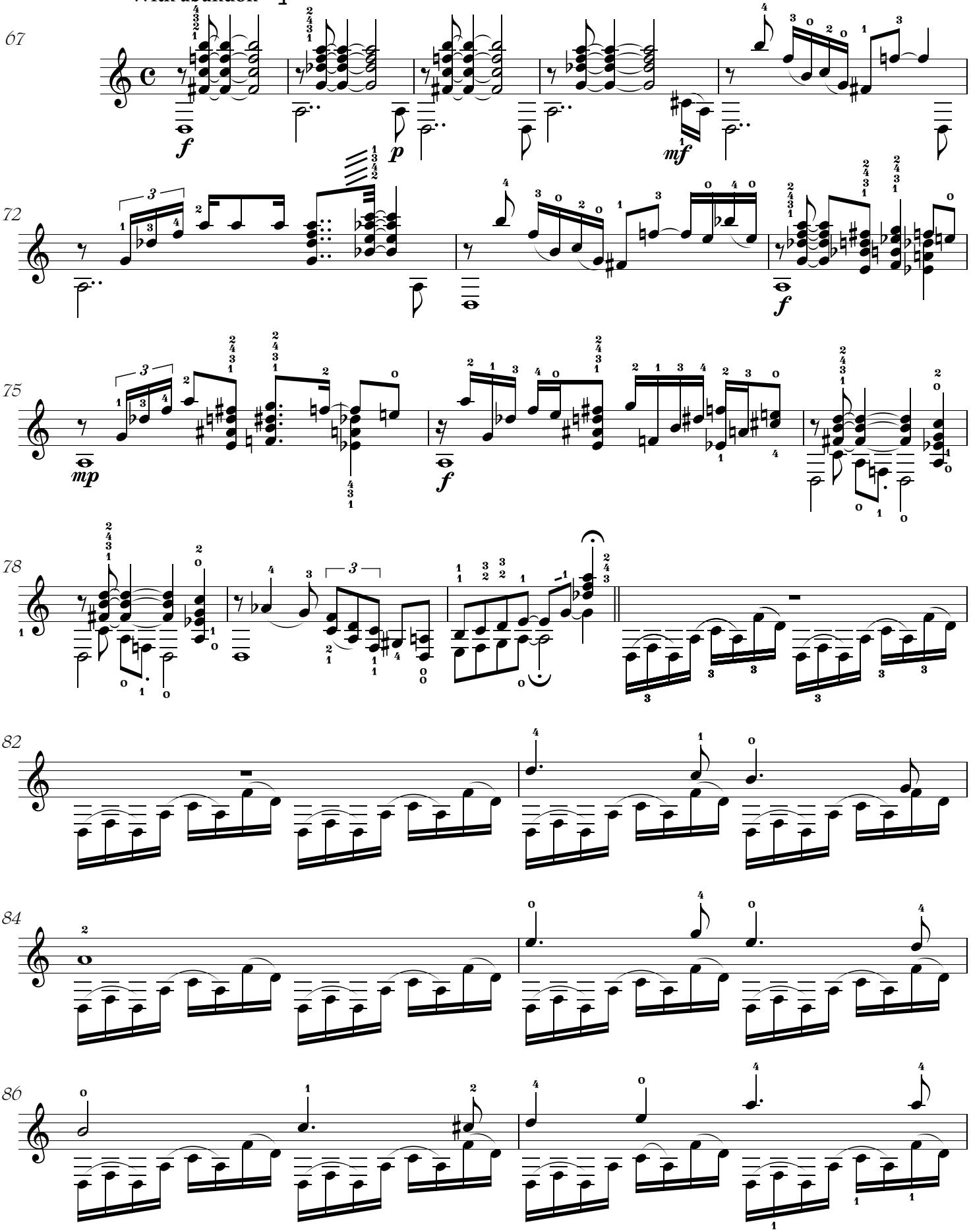
Variation 3 – Scherzo

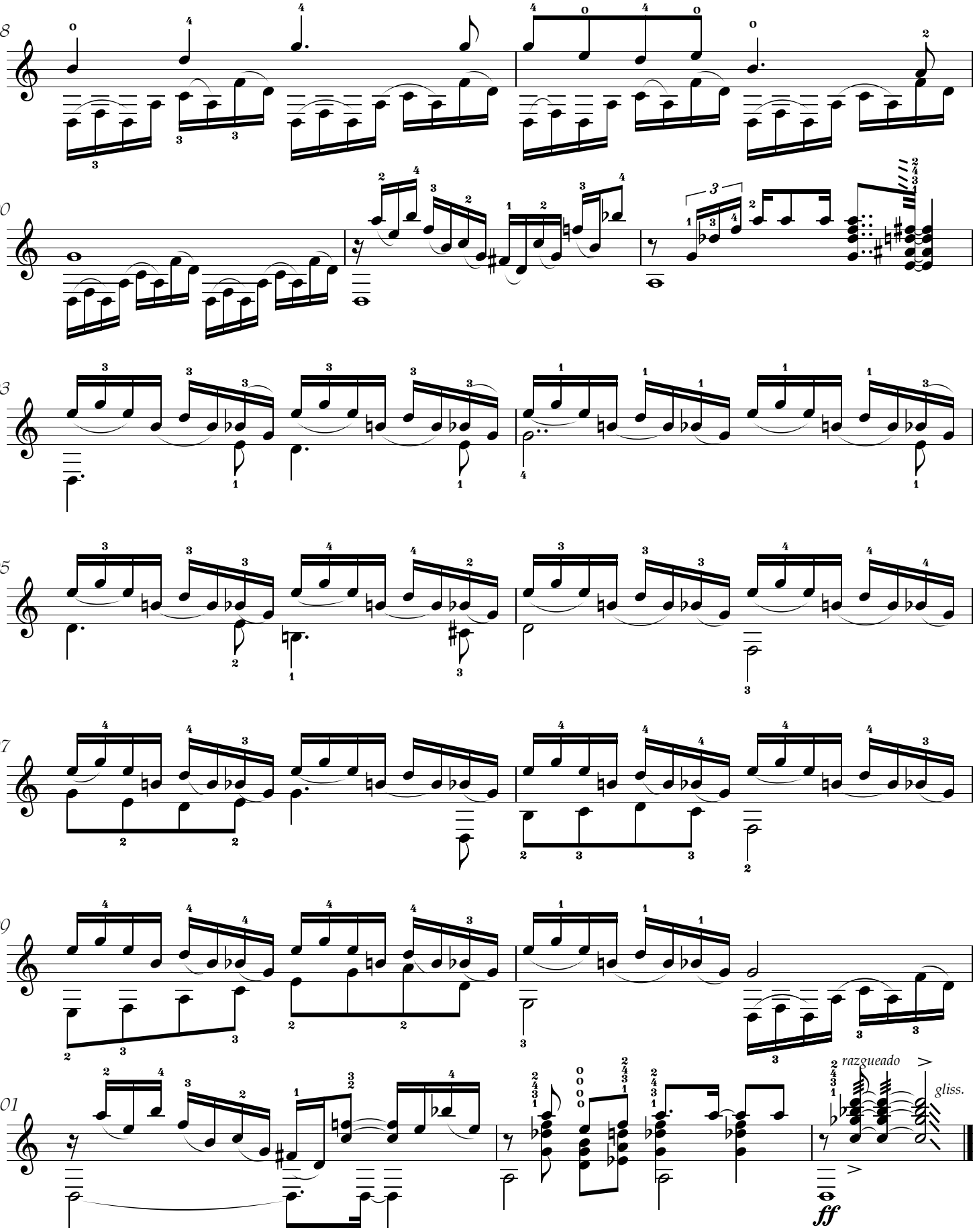
Playful (but maybe a little soulful towards the end)



Variation 4 – Bluesy

With abandon ♩= 96




88
90
93
95
97
99
101
razgueado
gliss.
ff

Variation 5 – Arabesque

104

Gentle, hypnotic (like a lullaby) ♩= 52

4/6 **CI**

p

107

1/2 **CX** 1/2 **CIX**

1/2 **CVI**

110

1/2 **CV**

113

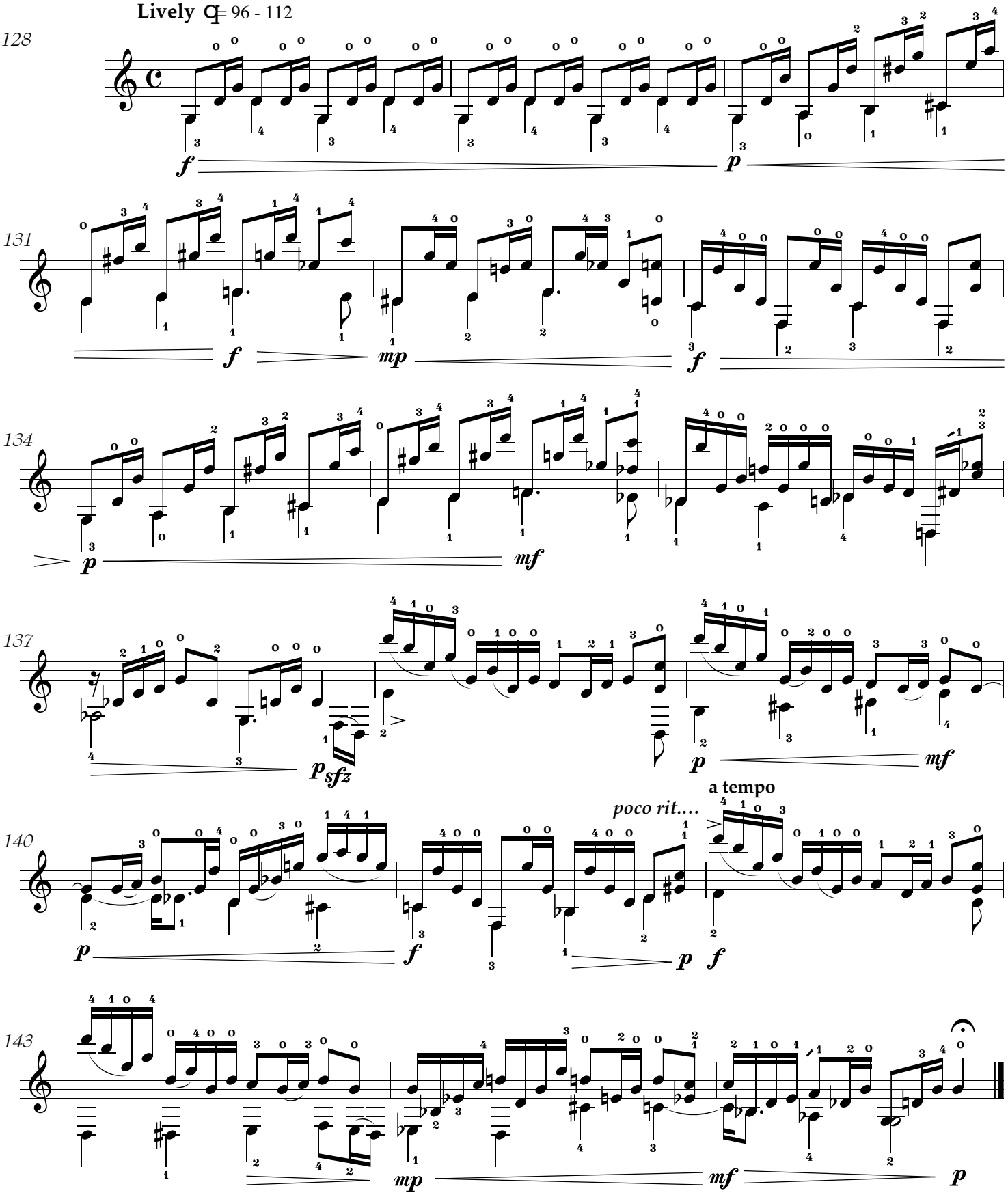
116

119

122

125

Variation 6 – Bluegrass



Variation 7 – Folk Dance

Brightly ♩= 84 - 100

146

Hammer-on with 4 on low G

sfz mp

148

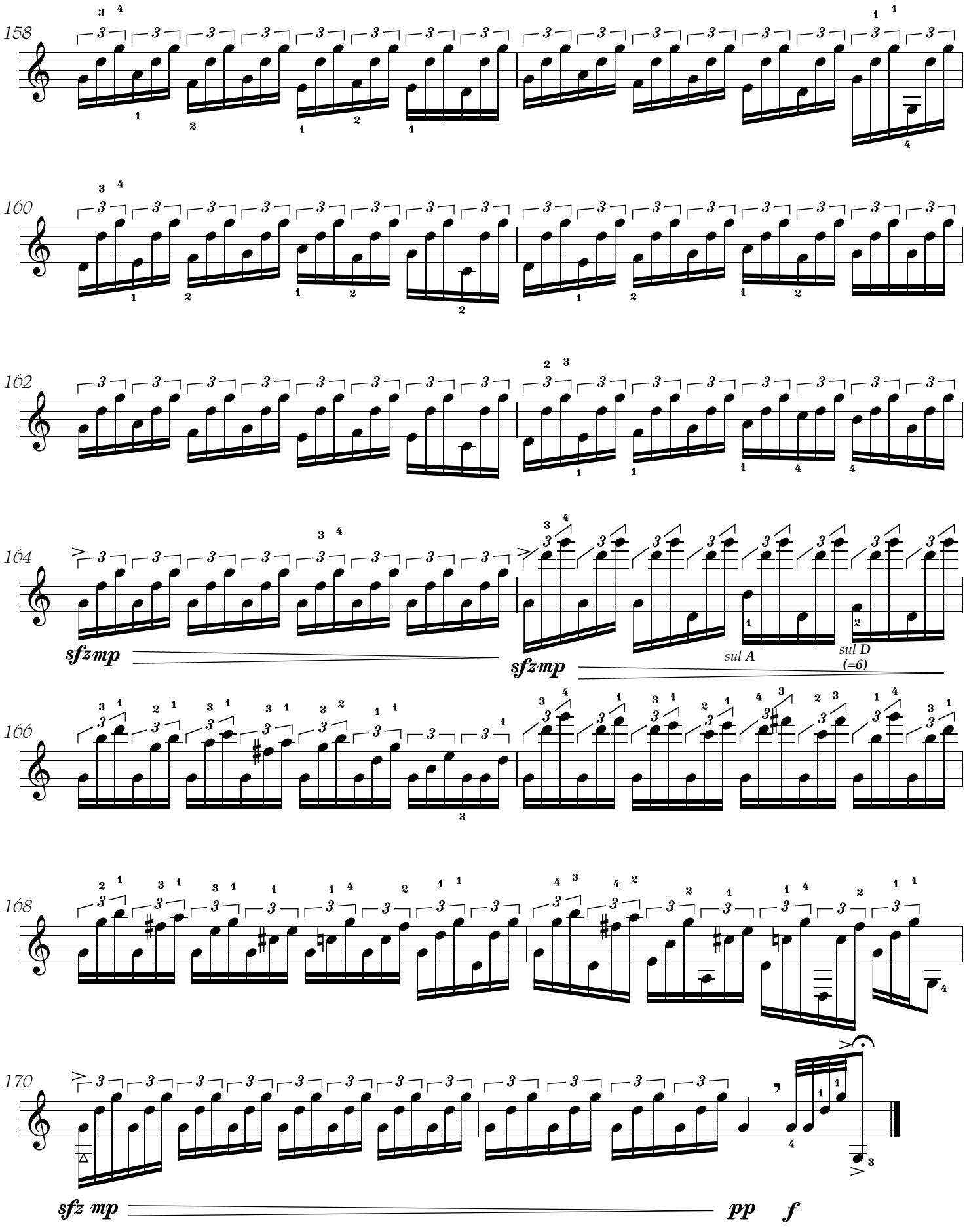
150

sfz mp

152

154

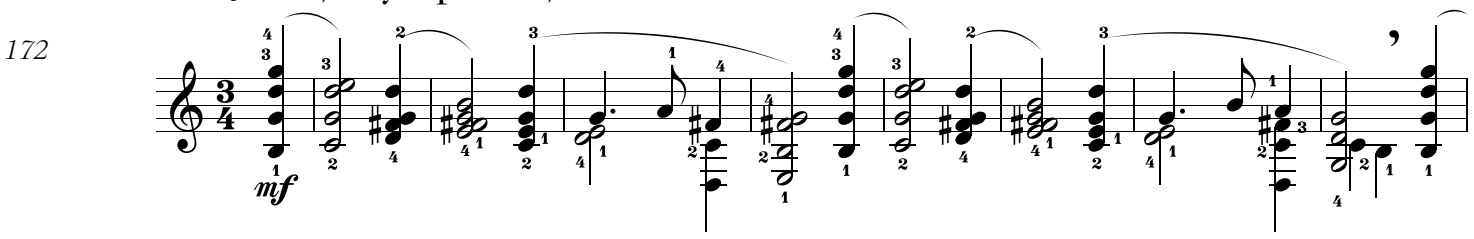
156


158
160
162
164
sfzmp
sfzmp
sul A
sul D
(=6)
166
168
170
sfz mp
pp
f

Variation 8 – Chorale

♩ = 72; **very expressive, soulful**

172



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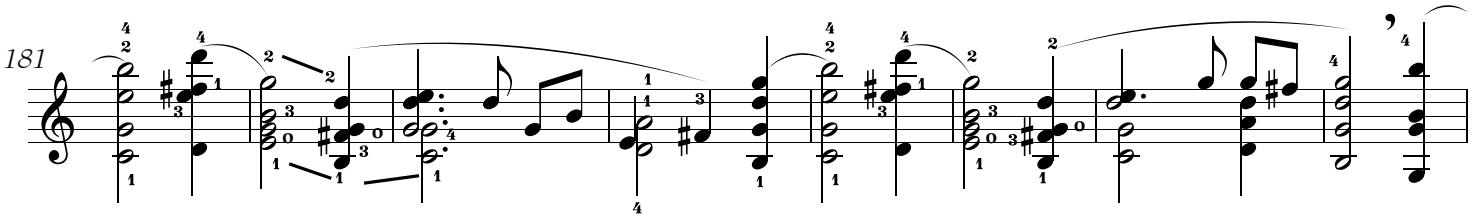

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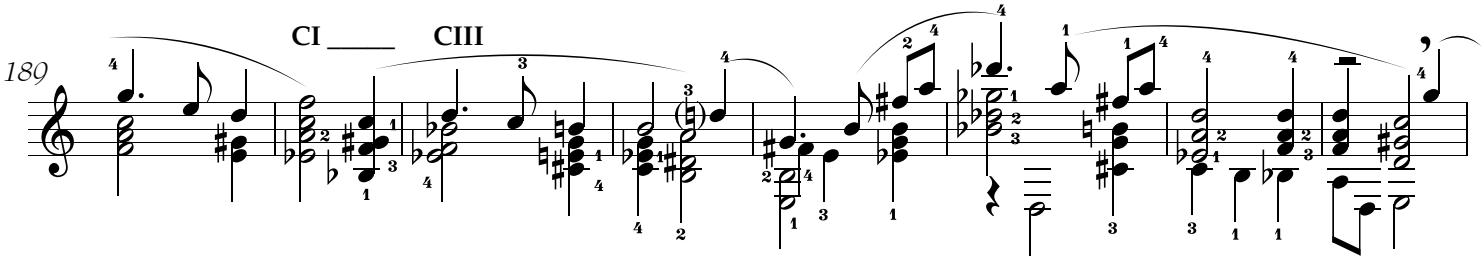
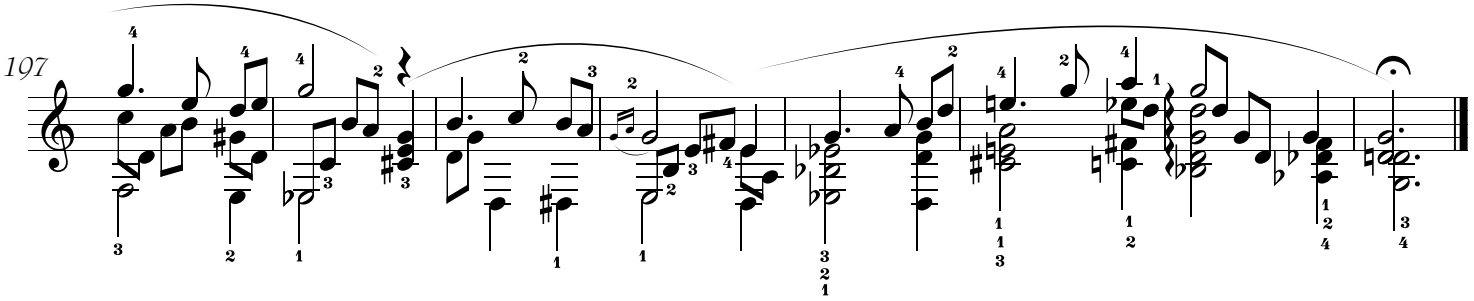
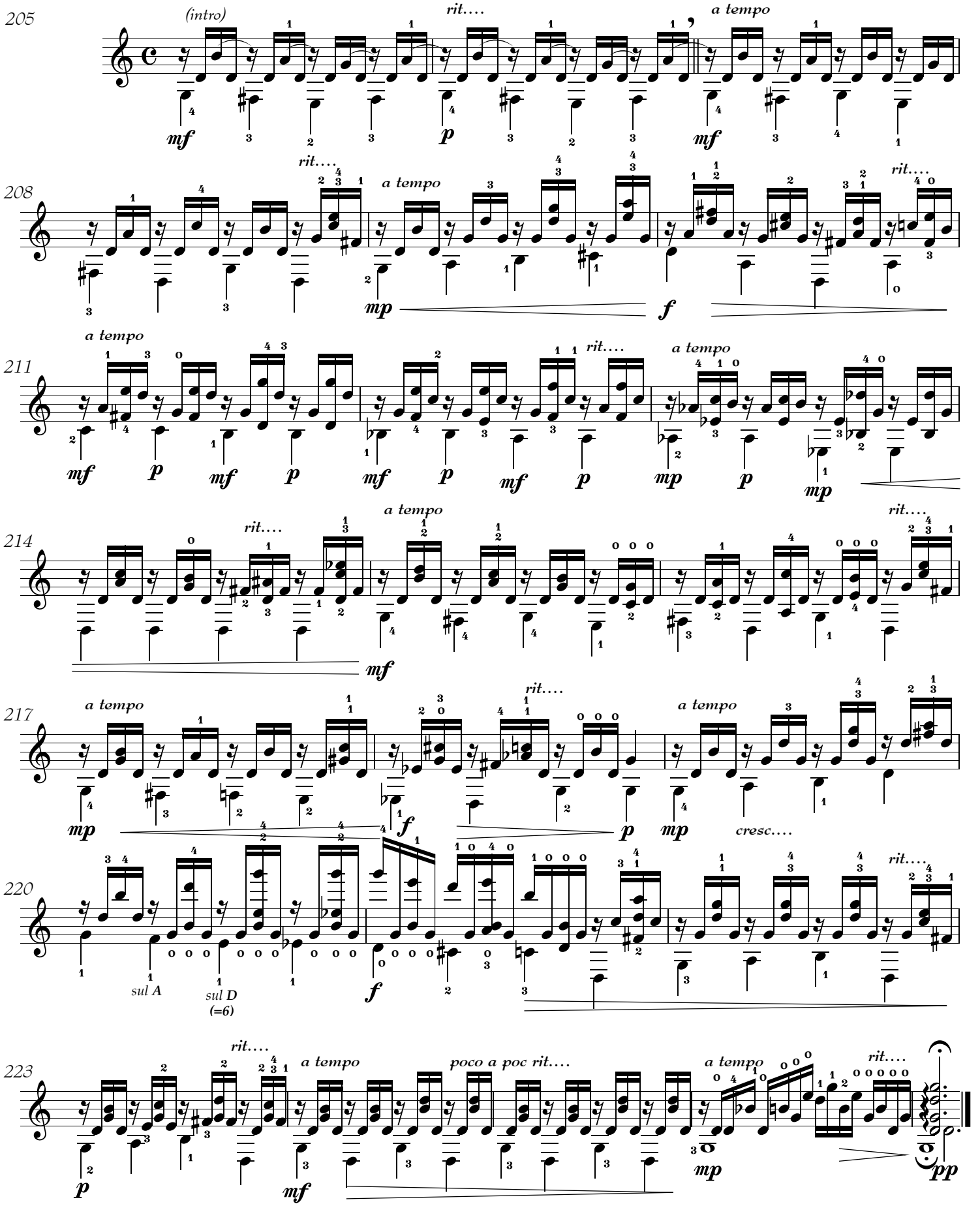
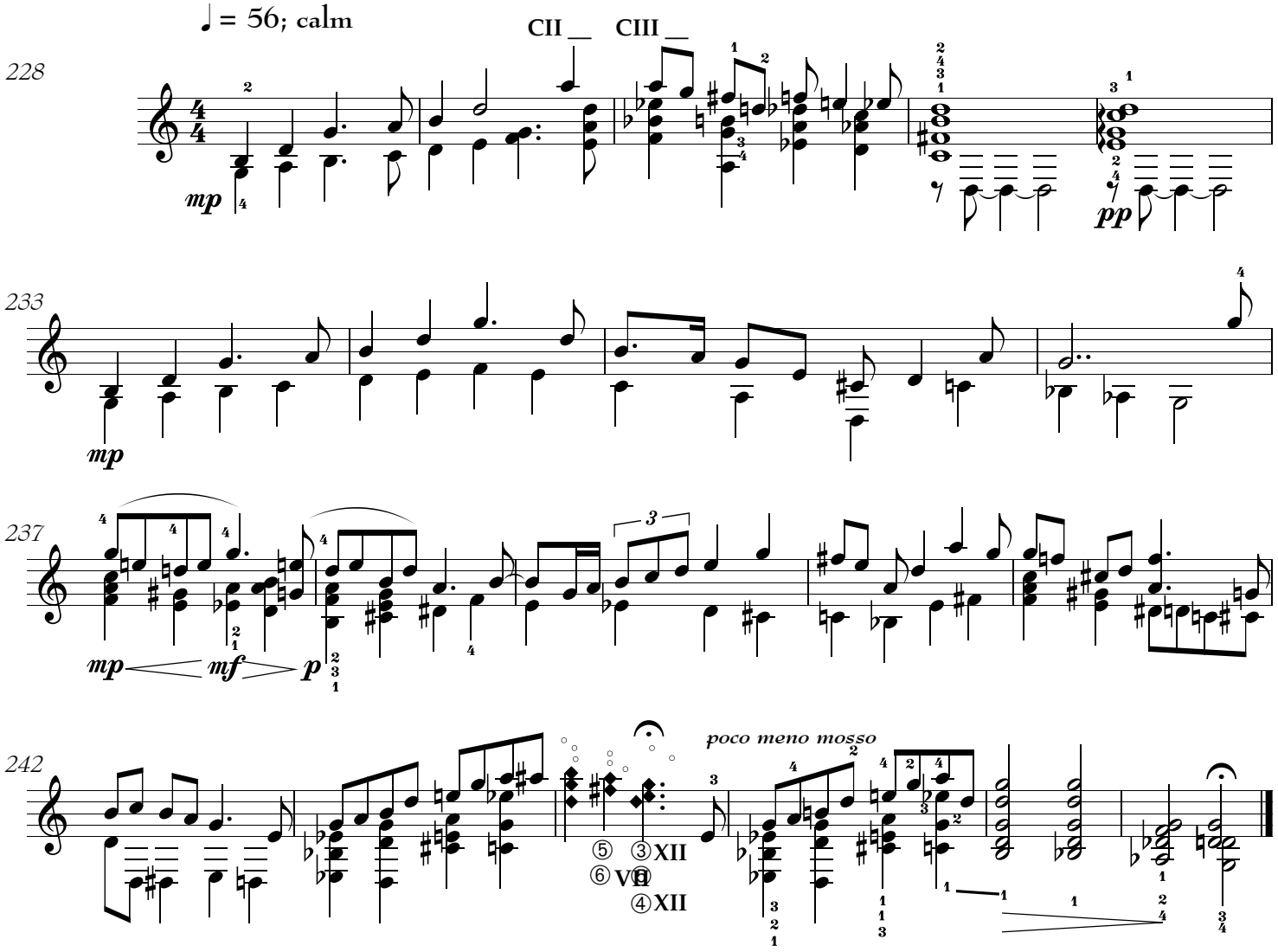


197



Variation 9 – Prelude

♩ = 88 – 96; always expressive, flowing



Variation 10 – Quasi-Reprise