Daniel-François-Esprit Auber:
Marco Spada

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Edited and Introduced by

Robert Ignatius Letellier

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D. F. E. Auber (c. 1850). Portrait by Eugène Félix

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INTRODUCTION

Marco Spada, an *opéra-comique* in three acts, with libretto by Eugène Scribe, was first performed at the Opéra-Comique (Deuxième Salle Favart) on 21 December 1852. The opera is set in the Romagna around 1830.

In act 1, the governor of Rome, Prince Osorio, is planning a journey to the Adriatic accompanied by his niece, the Marchesa de Sanpietri, and his aide Pepinelli, but fears the bandits headed by Marco Spada. Angela, the daughter of the Baron de Torrida, offers them hospitality.

In act 2 Pepinelli declares his love for the Marchesa but is repulsed. At a concert and ball during which Angela sings a declaration of love in four languages, a rumour circulates that Marco Spada is among the guests. The Franciscan monk Fra Borromeo, who has been taken prisoner by the bandits, is led in to identify Marco, but fails to see him. As he is leaving, he sees Baron de Torrida, his daughter Angela and her long-lost beloved Fédérici, the governor's nephew, in conversation. He identifies the Baron as the bandit chief, but only to Fédérici and Angela. She chooses to remain with her father despite this revelation, and renounces her beloved, who thereupon publicly announces his engagement to the Marchesa.

Act 3 is set in the bandits' hideout. The Baron/Marco Spada has been fatefully wounded in a successful skirmish with the carabinieri. Pepinelli and the Marchesa, who have been captured, are led in blindfolded. They are forced to marry, with Fra Borromeo officiating, thus leaving a clear path for Fédérici and Angela to realize their love.

The eternal brigand, so much exploited by the librettist, turns up here again. Indeed, the final scene was inspired by Horace Vernet's famous painting *La Confession du bandit* (1833). But this time the recurrence of this favoured robber-type was less successful than in *Fra Diavolo* (1830) and *La Sirène* (1844): public reception was comparatively cool.

The overture is one of Auber's most accomplished. The hushed opening uses the music from Marco Spada's very moving death scene at the end of the opera, the sombre mood achieved by the particular effect of the combination of the upper register of the cellos with the lower register of the first violins. The gentle melancholy and beauty of this introductory theme is particularly affecting. It then moves via descending semiquaver figures on the strings into themes from the extended open scene of act 3, so focussing on the life of banditry and romance, as well as the character of Angela. The dominating subject—lyrical and soaring, fervent but serene—over a pulsing bass, is from the finale of act 2 ("Moi perfide, moi volage, l'abuse et l'outrage"), Angela's sorrowful outcry at Fédérici's engagement to the Marchesa. Her pain is taken up by the Baron in fatherly solicitude; the love between father and daughter is touchingly realized in this exceptional ensemble—one of the composer's best—with its beautiful dominating melody, detailed high soprano line, powerful part for the bass, effective contrasting sections, juxtaposing of opposed reactions, and striking overall panache of movement.

The music has all those features that distinguish the composer's style, as skilled as it is inspired. In act 1, there is a beautiful serenade for Fédérici ("Dans ces forêts sauvages") and a tender paternal aria for the Baron ("Fleur pure et jolie"). Angéla's

couplets “Dans ce séjour tranquille” show a prevalence of cadences within a phrase, with fullstops in every other measure. While this is potentially a formal weakness, it is used to purposeful effect here, capturing a sense of diffidence, rural stillness and peace. Act 2 famously includes Angela’s declaration of love in four languages: Russian, English, Italian, French. The finale is the highpoint of the opera: the grand and moving theme of the stretta already familiar from the overture. Act 3 contains Angela's *chanson* “Fille de la montagne”; and the final scene which is full of noble pathos, presaged in the very opening bars of this work.

The original cast was: Charles-Amable Battaille (the Baron de Torrida, alias the bandit chief Marco Spada); Caroline Duprez (Angela, daughter of Marco Spada); Jean-Jacques Boulo (Fédérici); Léon Carvalho (Prince Osorio, the governor of Rome); Joseph-Antoine-Charles Couderc (Pepinelli); Mlle Andrea Favel (the Marchesa Sanpietri); Bussine (Fra Borromeo); and Elias Nathan and Lejeune (Geronio and Gianetti, bandits).

The relationship between the Baron and Angela, sustained throughout the opera, provided the great bass Charles-Amable Battaille and the bright high soprano Caroline Duprez (daughter of the famous tenor Gilbert Duprez), both rising stars, with the opportunity for an effective working partnership. This was to be consolidated two years later in their assumption of the roles of Pierre and Catherine respectively in Meyerbeer’s *L’Étoile du nord*, also at the Opéra-Comique (16 February 1854).

Marco Spada played for two years only, until 1854, and was not revived. The work was destined for transformation into a ballet five years later. In all, there were a respectable 78 performances. The opera was translated into German, Polish and Swedish, and performed in Brussels, Berlin, Hannover, Dresden, Mannheim, Vienna, Warsaw and Stockholm. It was never given in London, although a drama by J. P. Simpson, based on Scribe’s libretto, with Auber’s overture and incidental music by R. Stöpel, was produced at the Princess’s Theatre on 28 March 1853.

Marco Spada: the ball scene in act 2 (lithgraph from the score)

Théâtre impérial de l'Opéra-Comique.

MARCO SPADA

OPÉRA-COMIQUE EN 3 ACTES,

POÈME DE

M. EUGÈNE SCRIBE,

MUSIQUE DE

D. F. E. AUBER.

Partition pour Piano et Chant

Réduite par A. DE GARAUDÉ.

Prix : 15 fr. net.

PARIS.

J. MEISSONNIER FILS, ÉDITEUR-COMMISSIONNAIRE.

18, RUE DAUPHINE.

Londres, Chappell. Mayence, fils B. Schott

MARCO SPADA,

Musique de D. F. E. AUBER.

PERSONNAGES.	ACTEURS.	EMPLOIS.
LE BARON DE TORRIDA	M. *Battaille*	1re Basse chantante.
FEDERICI	M. *Boulo*	1er Ténor d'Opéra-Comique
PEPINELLI	M. *Couderc*	Ténor comique.
FRA-BORROMEO	M. *Bussine*	Baryton.
LE GOUVERNEUR	M. *Carvalho*	Basse.
GERONIO	M. *Nathan*	3e Basse.
ANGELA	Mlle *Caroline Duprez*	1re Chanteuse légère.
LA MARCHESA	Mlle *A. Favel*	1re Dugazon.

CATALOGUE DES MORCEAUX.

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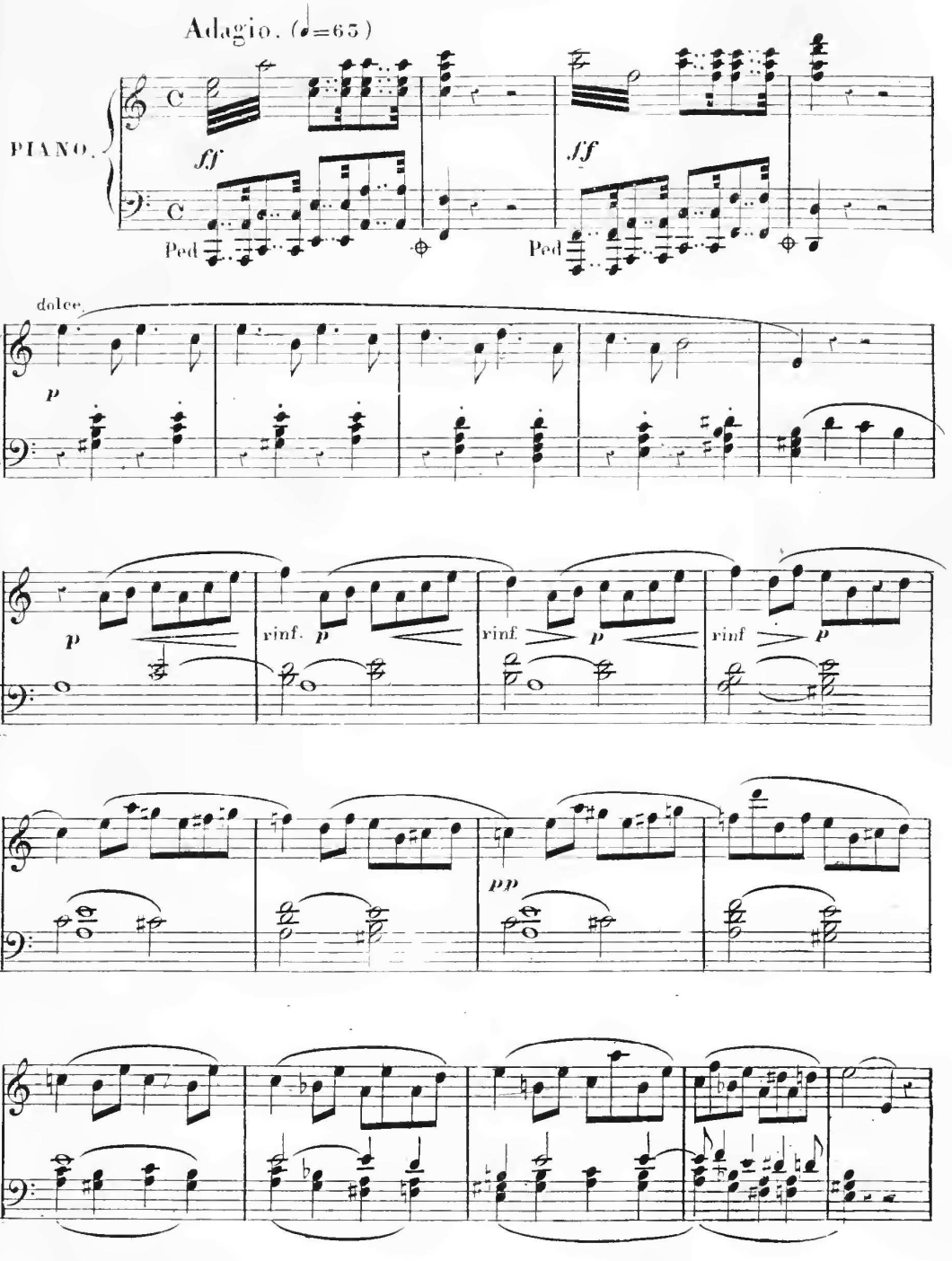
La mise en scène exacte de cet opéra, rédigée avec un soin minutieux, est publiée par M. L. Palianti, auquel on peut également s'adresser pour les dessins coloriés des trois décorations.

Paris. — Imprimerie de L. Martinet, rue Mignon, 2.

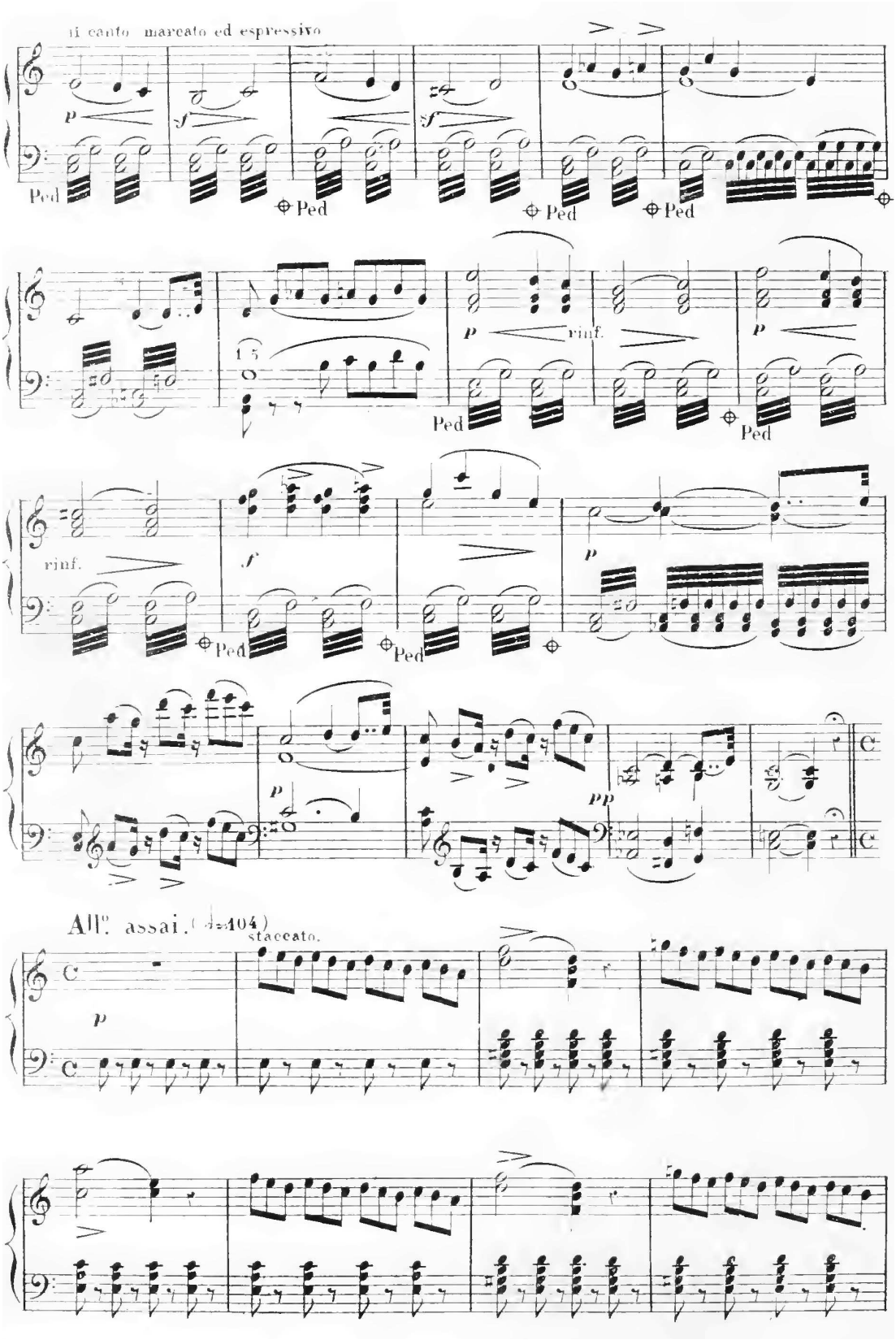
MARCO SPADA.

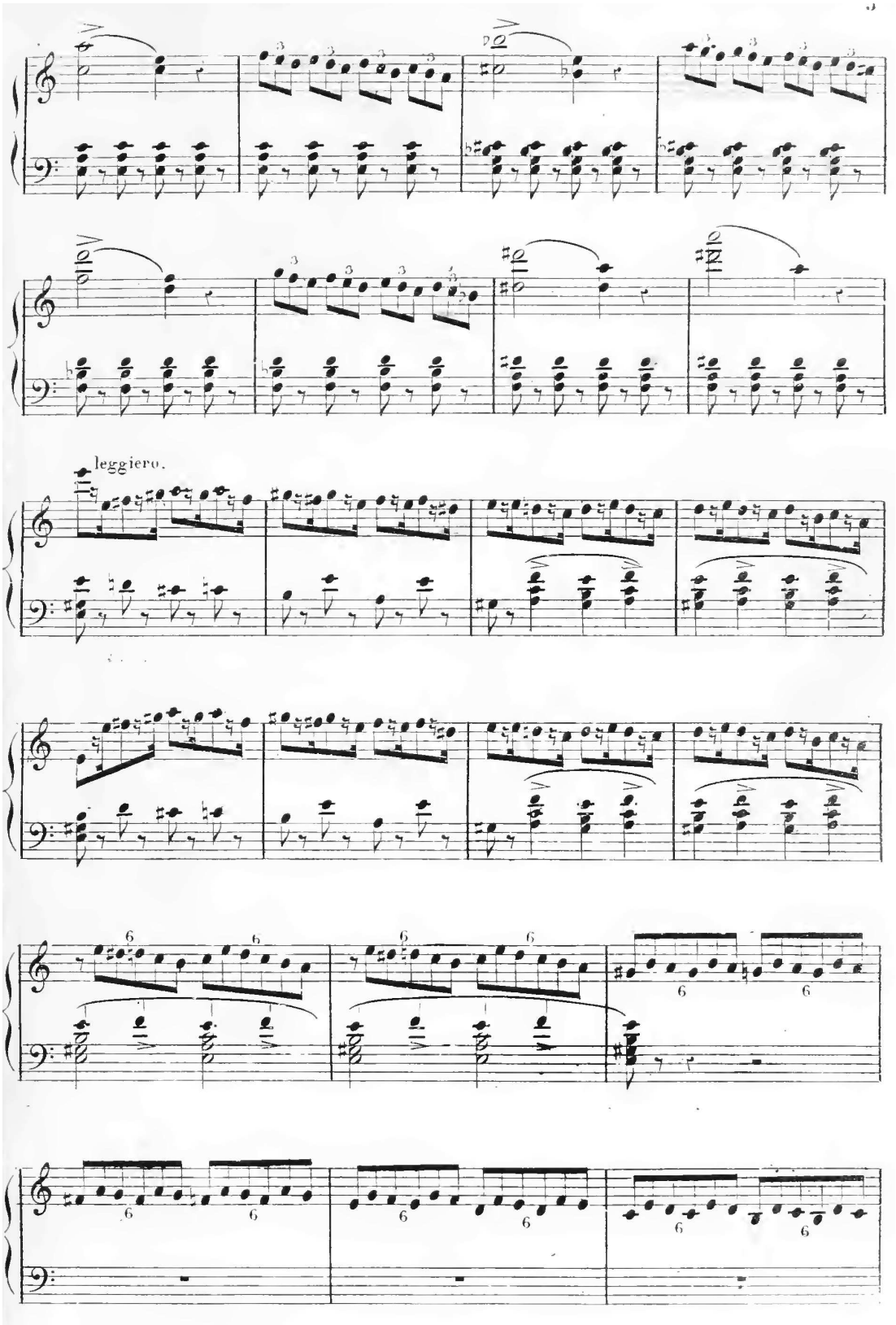
Musique de D. F. E. AUBER.

OUVERTURE.



Imp Thierry rue Bergère à Paris.


Il canto marcato ed espressivo
All.o assai. (♩=104)
staccato.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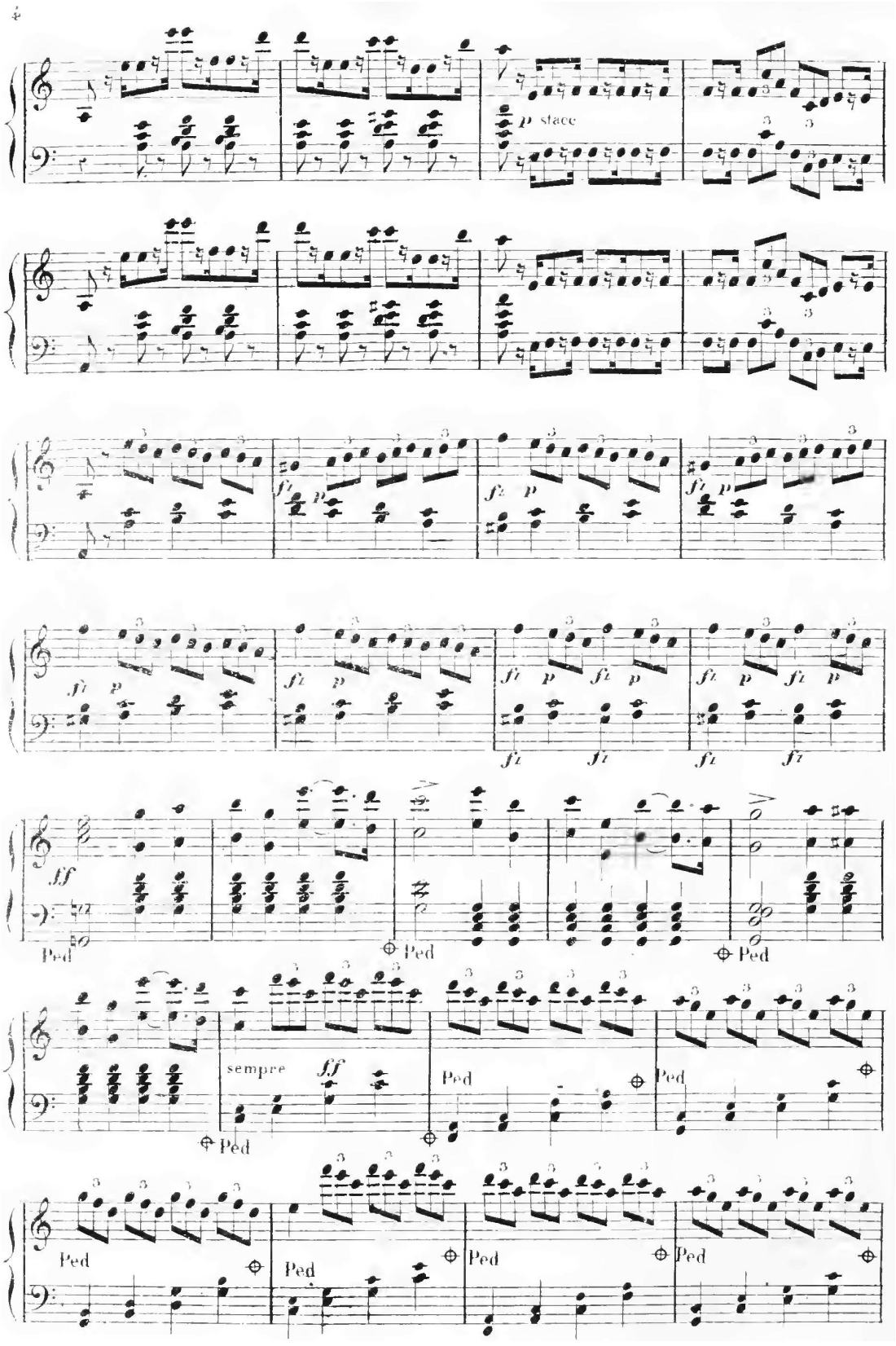
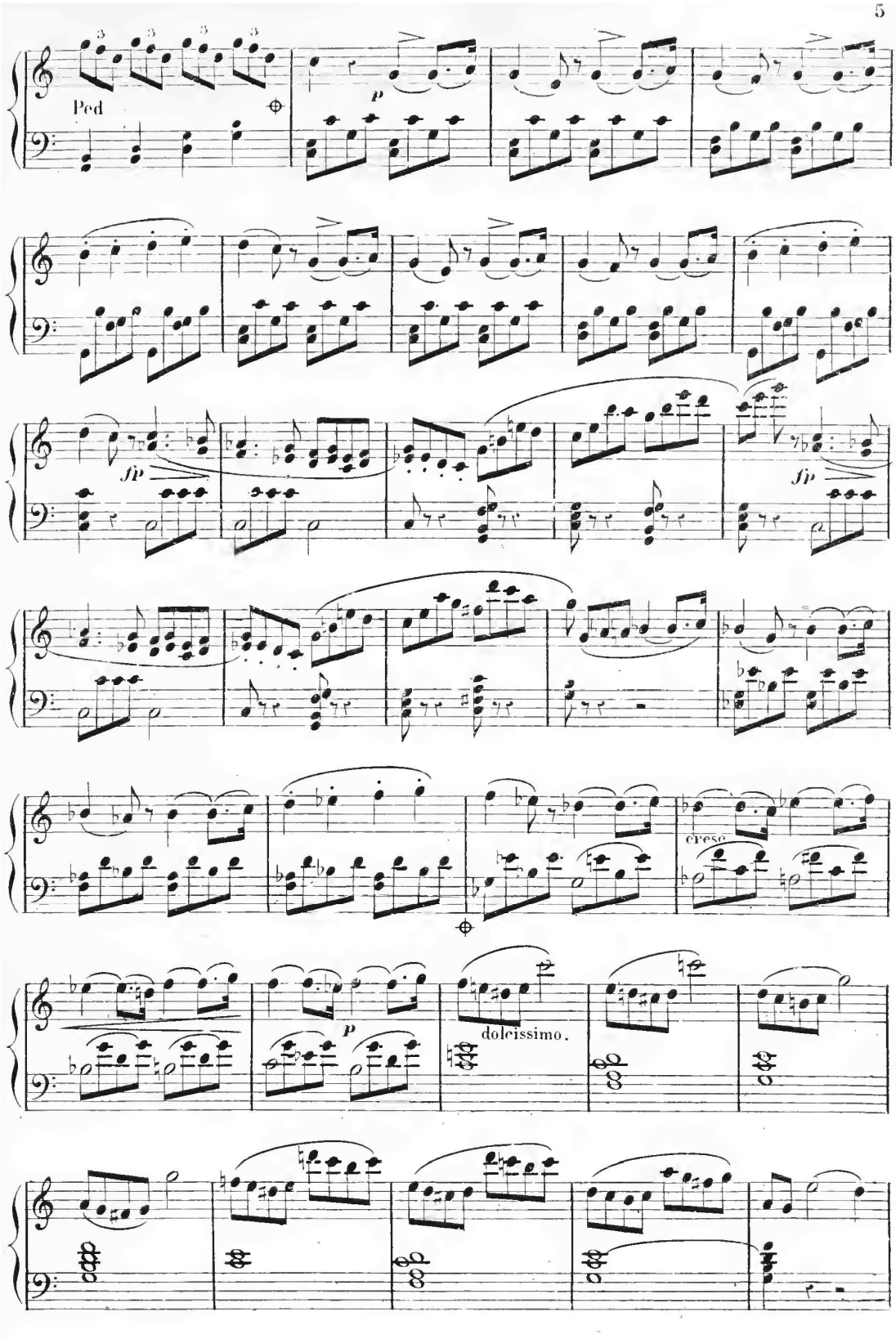
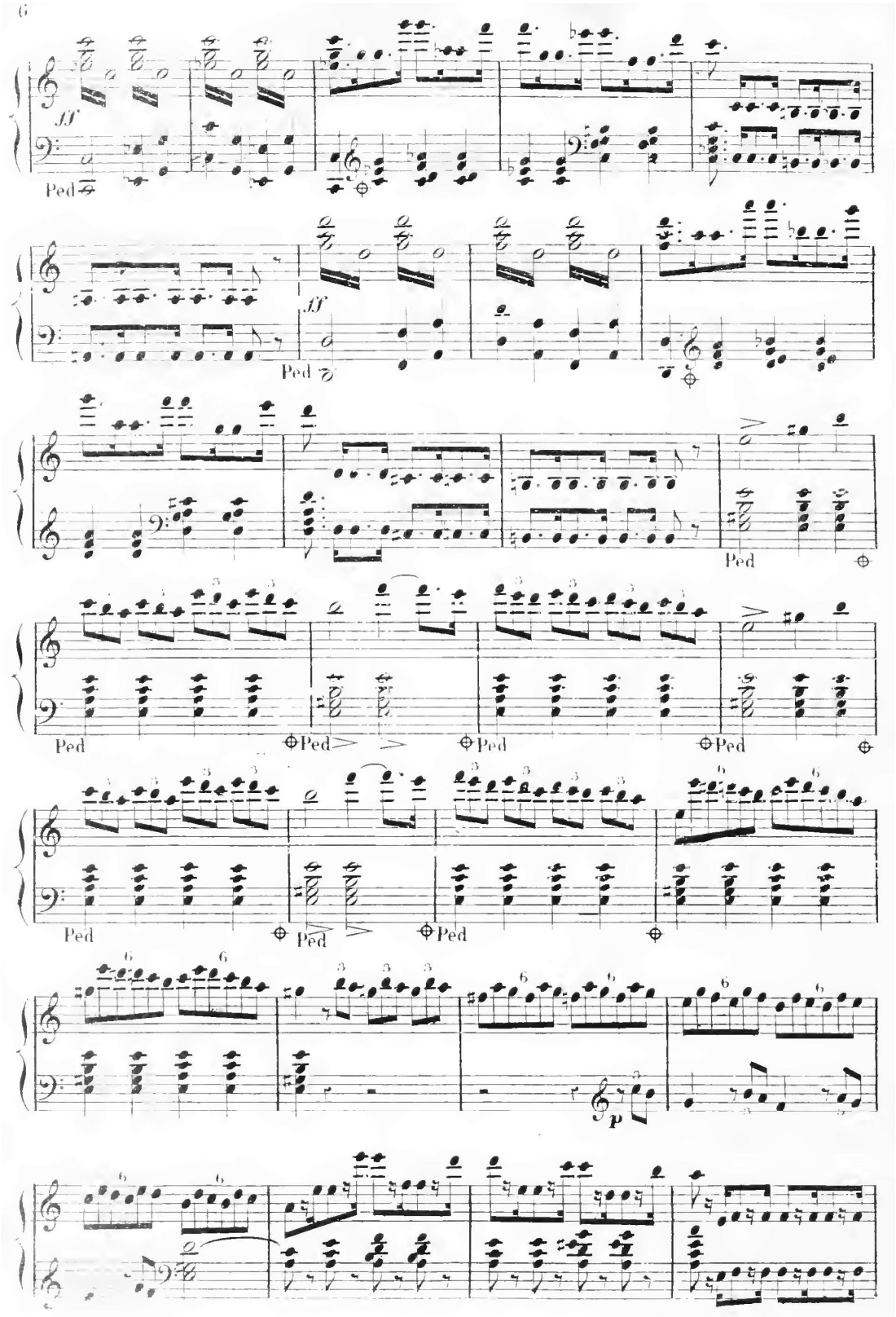
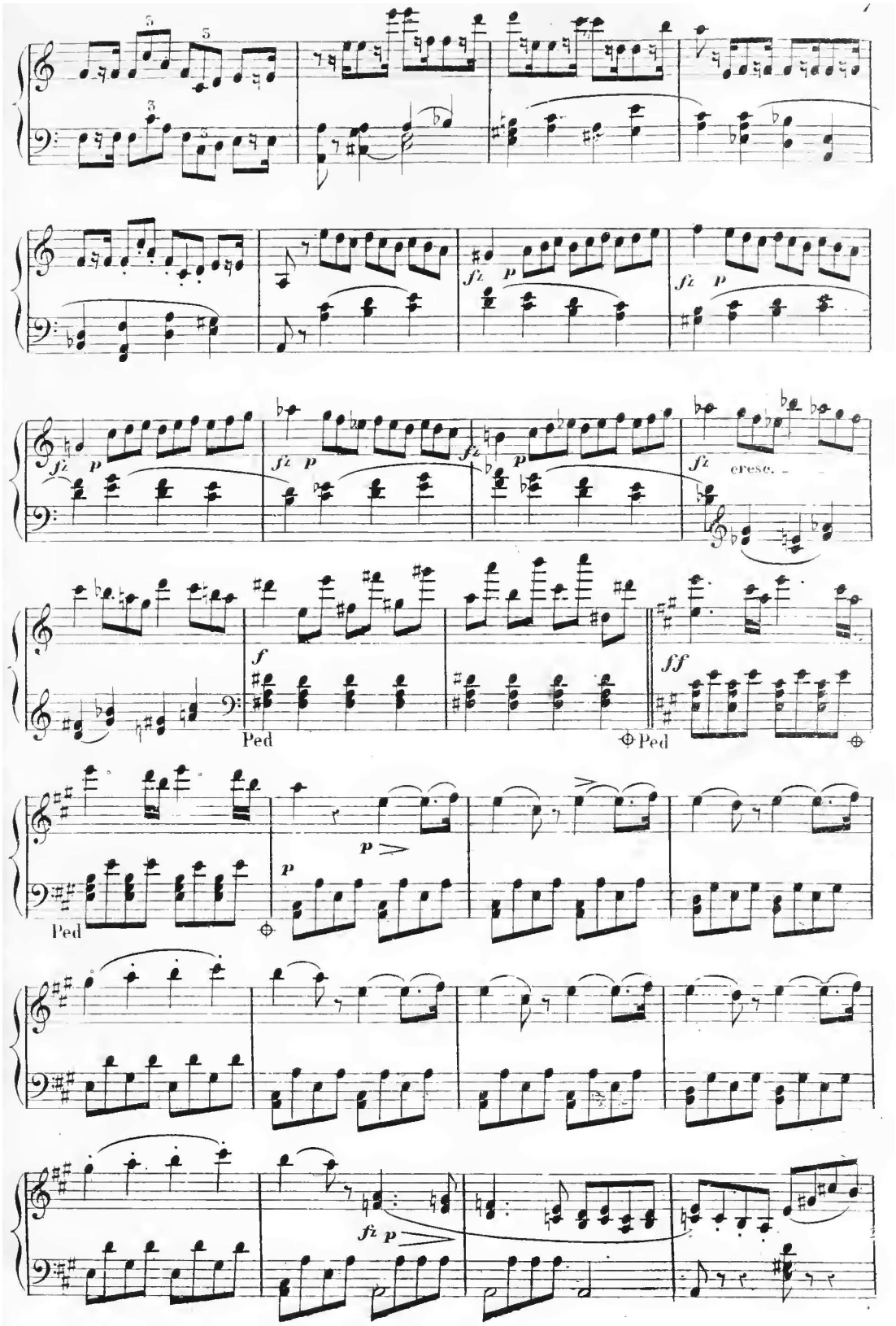
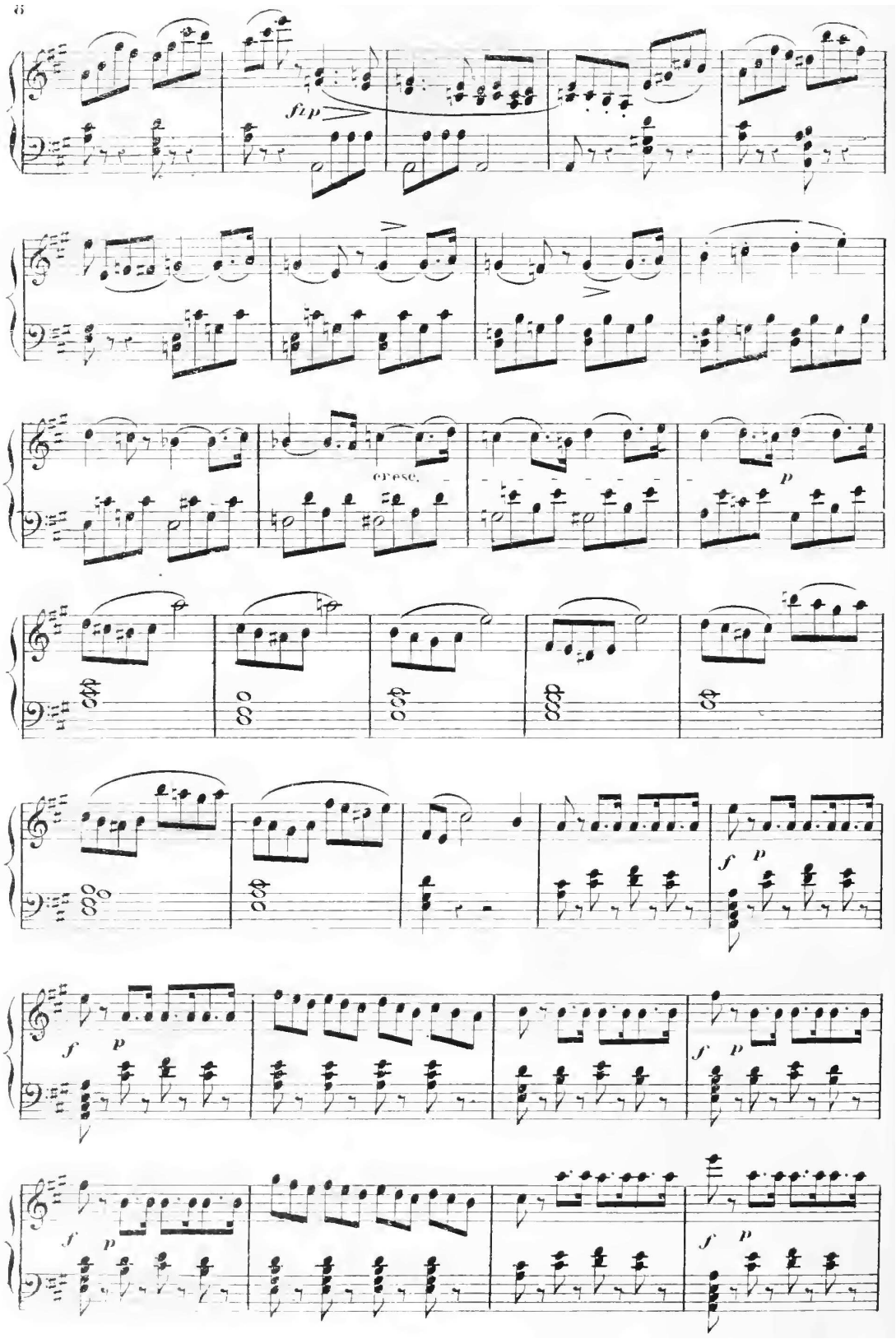
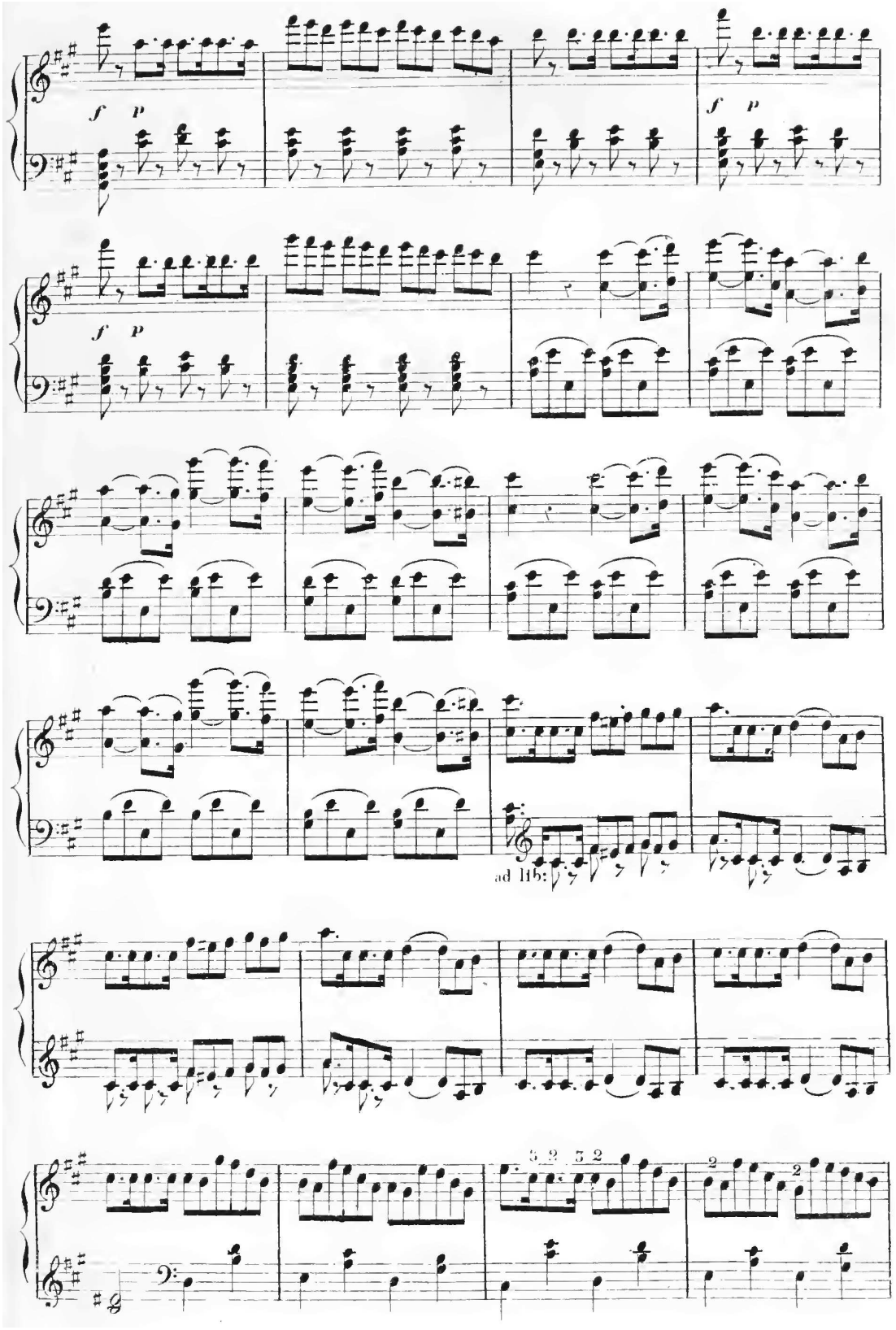

p stacc
fz p
ff
Ped
sempre ff

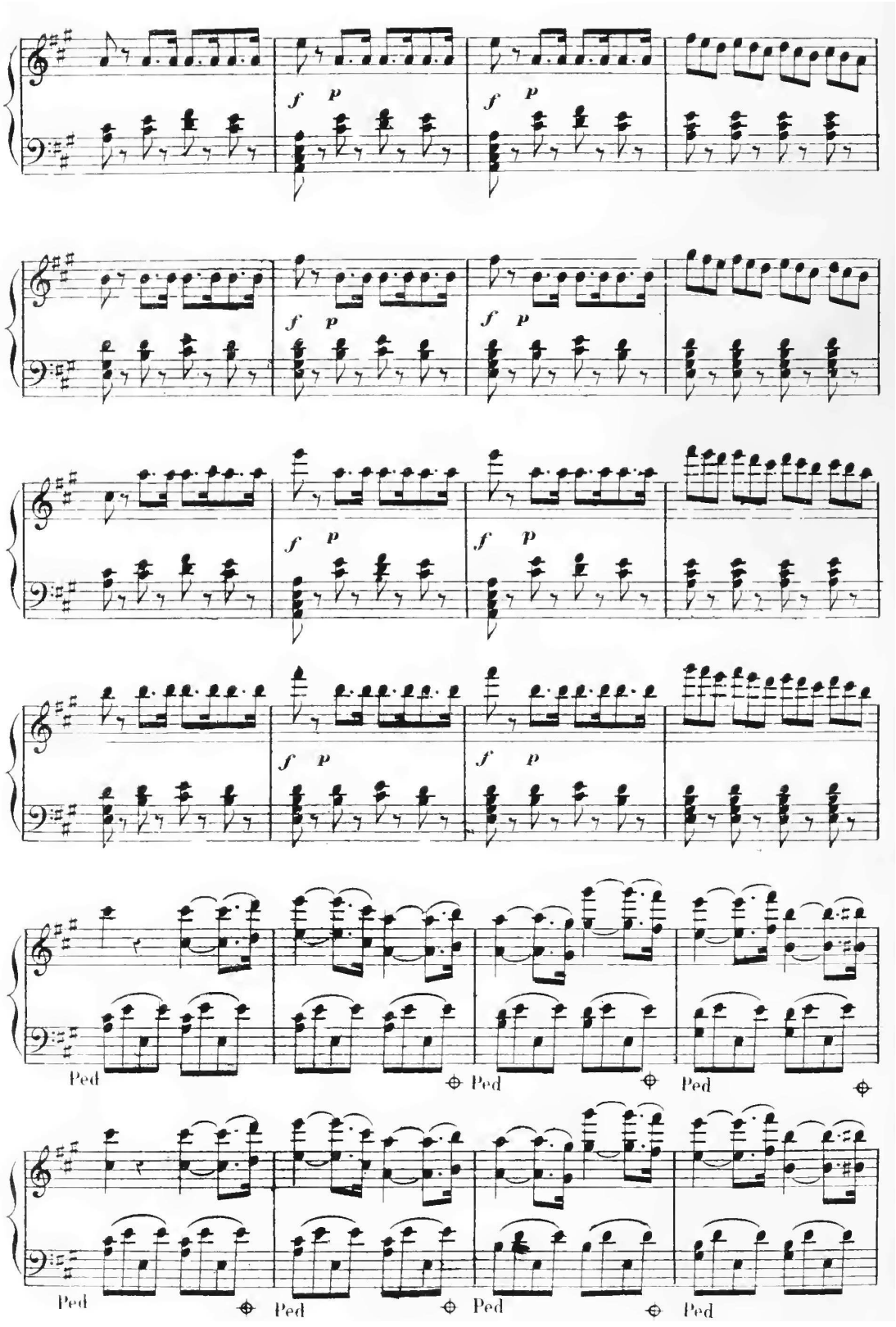

5
Ped
p
fp
fp
cresc
p
dolcissimo.


6
ff
Ped
ff
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
p


fz p
cresc.
f
ff
Ped
Ped
Ped
p
fz p


6
fz p
cresc.
p
f p
f p
f p
f p
f p


f p
f p
f p
ad lib:
5 2 3 2
2 2


f p
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Ped
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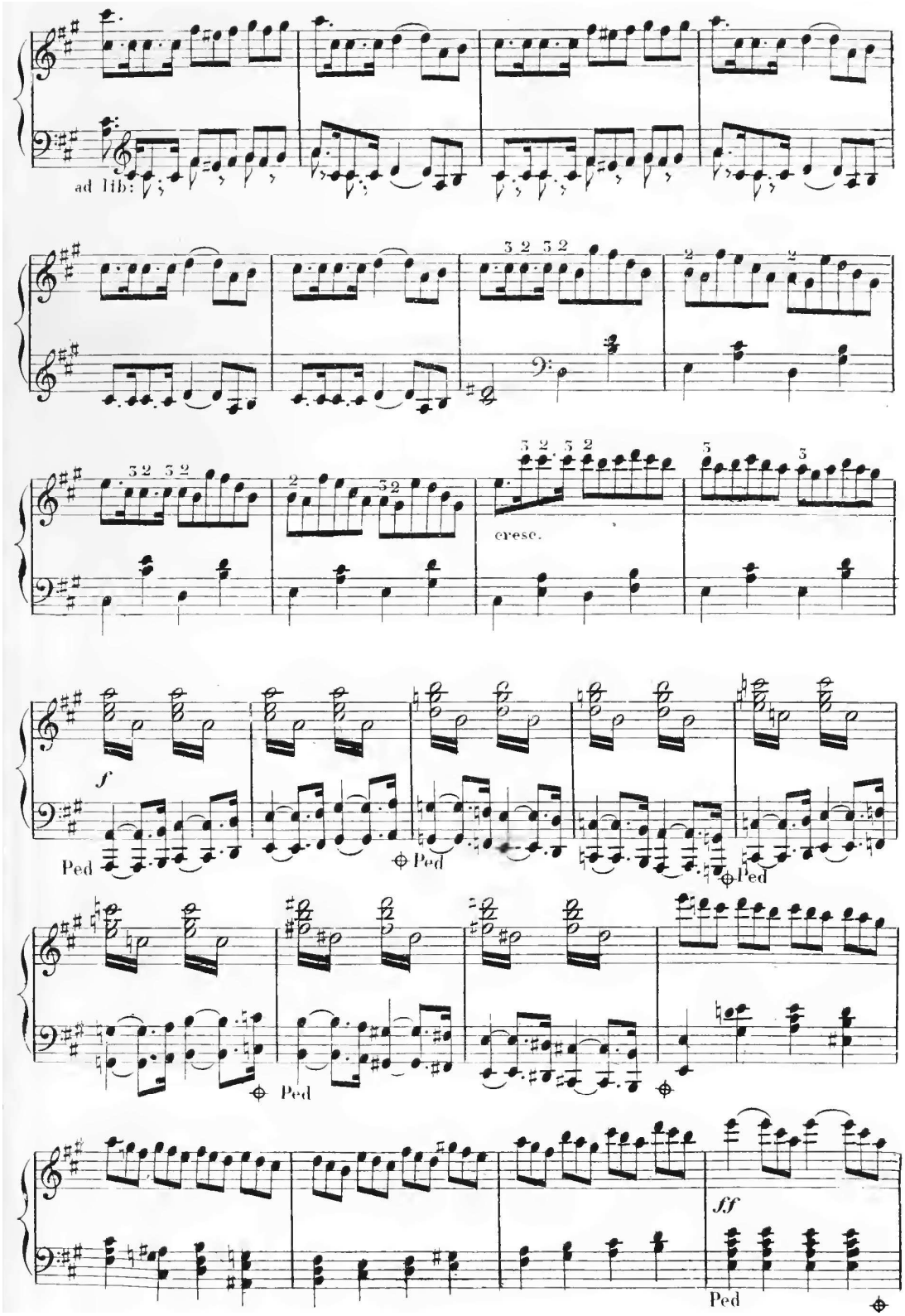
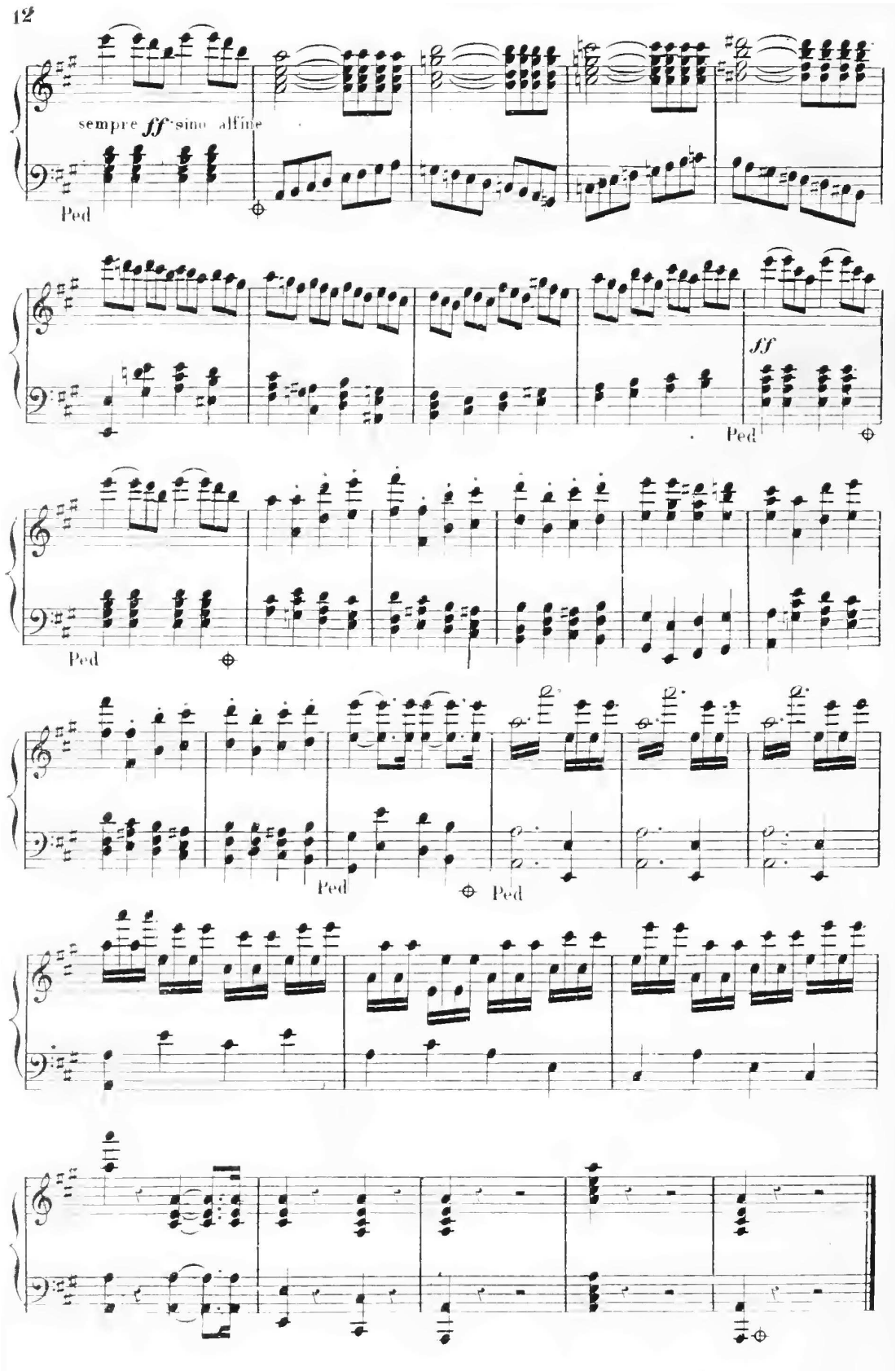
Ped


ad lib:
cresc.
f
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped
ff
Ped


12
sempre ff sino alfine
Ped
ff
Ped
Ped
Ped
Ped

N.° 1.

CAVATINE ET QUARTETTO.

RÉP: C'est ce que nous voulons.

Allegro vivace.

ANGELA.

LA MARCHESA.

PEPINELLI.

LE GOUVERNEUR

All.° vivace.

PIANO.

f

ANGELA.

C'est le signal... en - fin, c'est vous!

fp

(à part)

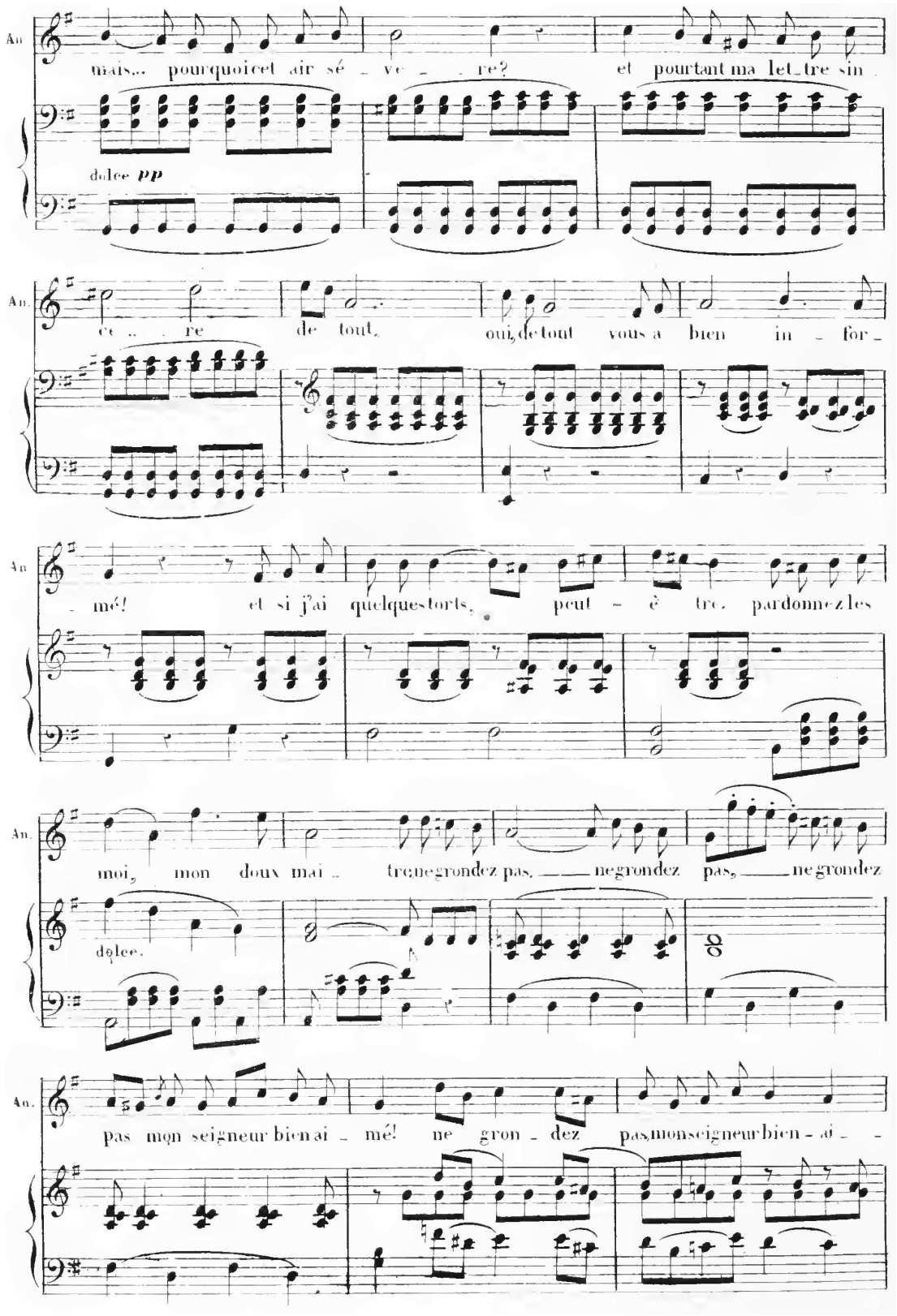
All.° non troppo. (d'un air caressant.)

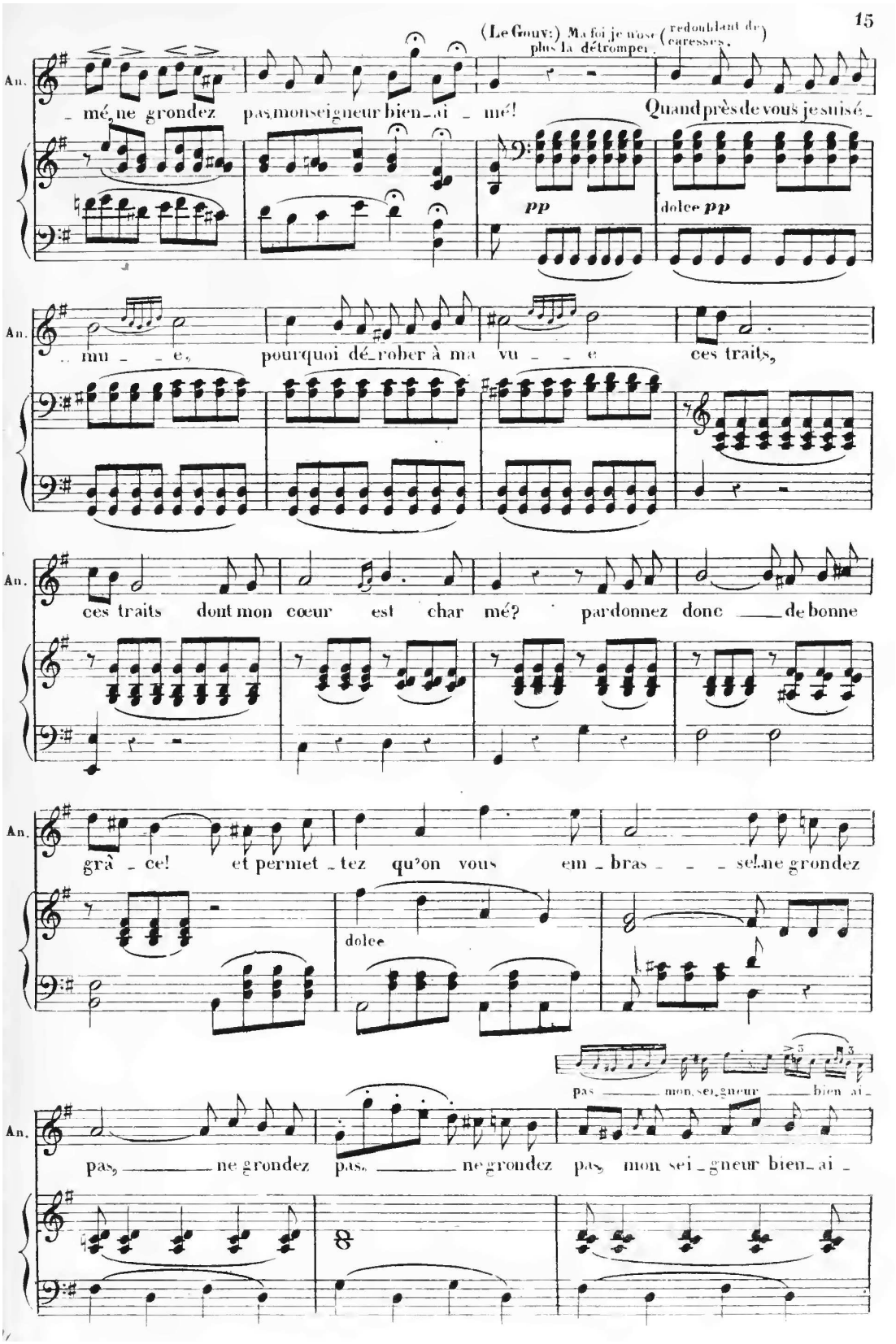
An.

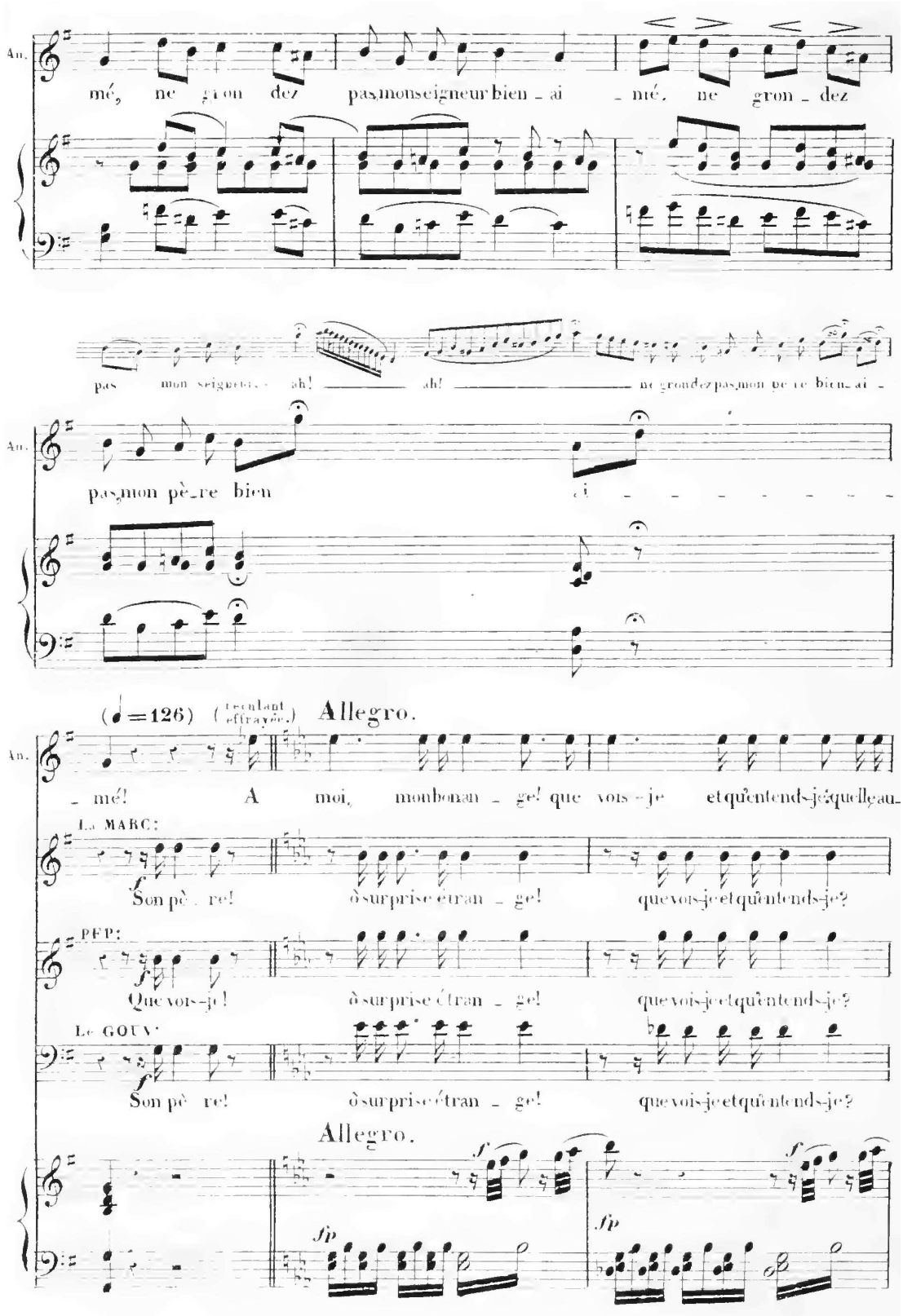
il se tait!.. il est en cour. roux! je m'en dou - tais!.. Eh

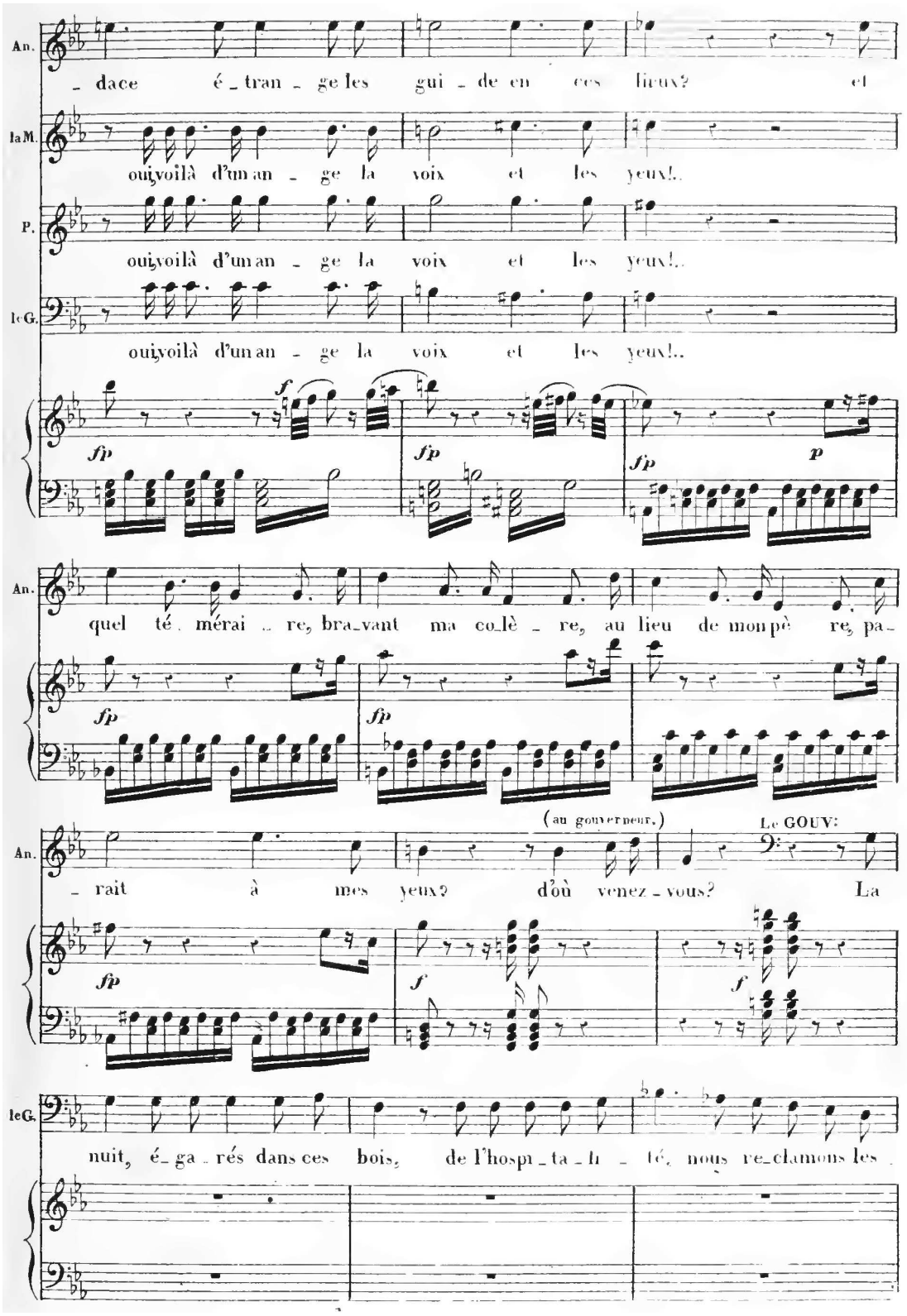
All.° non troppo. (♩ = 84)

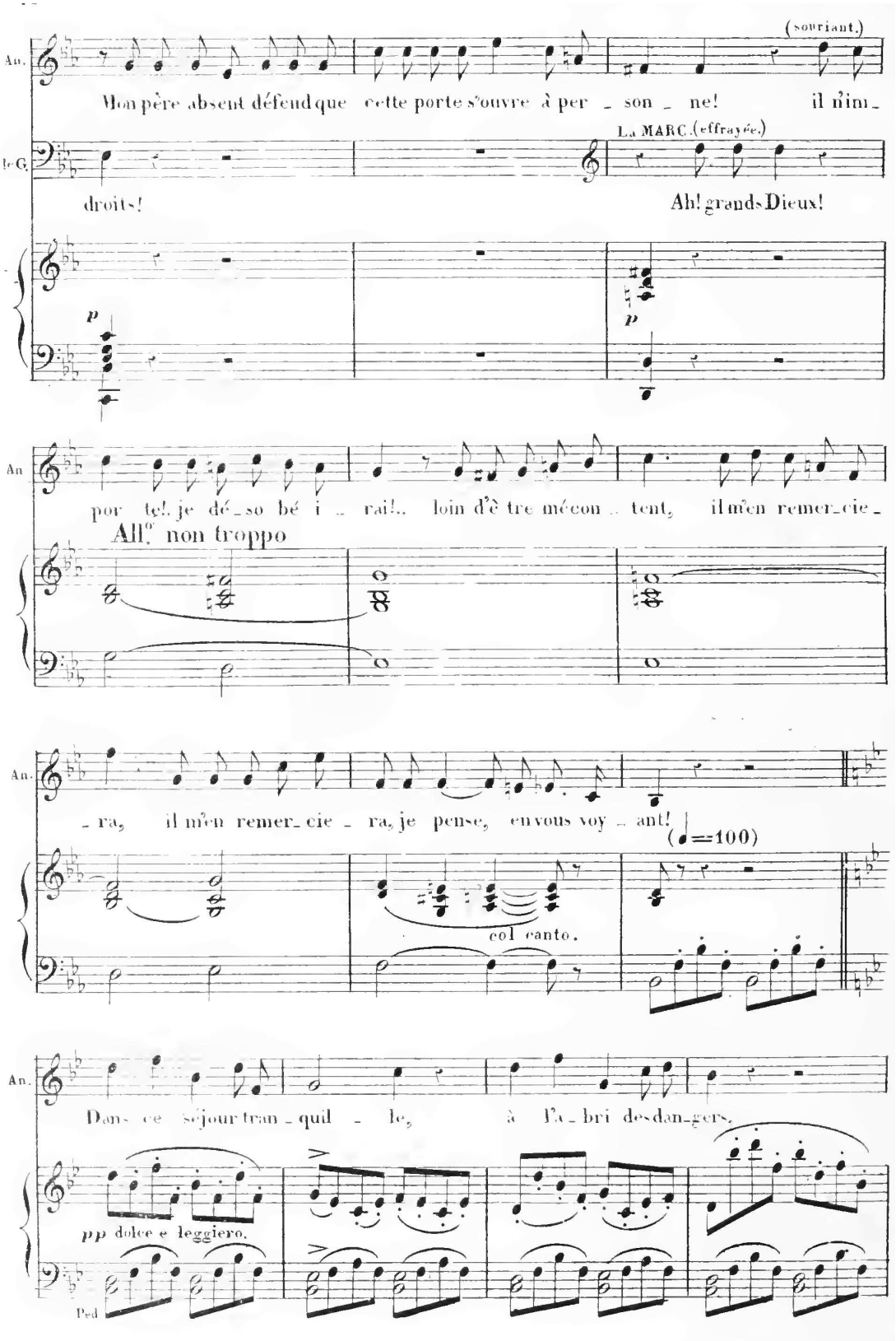
p


An.
mais... pourquoi cet air sé - ve - re? et pourtant ma let_tre sin -
dolce pp
An.
ce - re de tout, oui, de tout vous a bien in - for -
An.
- mé! et si j'ai quelques torts, peut - è tre pardonnez les
An.
moi, mon doux mai - tre ne grondez pas, ne grondez pas, ne grondez
dolce.
An.
pas mon seigneur bien ai - mé! ne gron - dez pas mon seigneur bien - ai -


15
(Le Gouv:) Ma foi je n'ose plus la détromper. (redoublant de caresses.)
An.
mé, ne grondez pas, monseigneur bien-ai - mé!
Quand près de vous je suis é -
pp
dolce pp
mu - - e, pourquoi dé-rober à ma vu - - e ces traits,
ces traits dont mon cœur est char mé? pardonnez donc de bonne
grâ - ce! et permet-tez qu'on vous em-bras - - - se! ne grondez
dolce
pas, mon sei-gneur bien-ai -
pas, ne grondez pas, ne grondez pas, mon sei-gneur bien-ai -


An.
mé, ne gron dez pas, mon seigneur bien - ai - mé, ne gron - dez
pas mon seigneur, ah! ah! ne grondez pas, mon pè re bien - ai -
pas, mon pè - re bien ai - - - - - - - -
(♩=126) (reculant effrayée.) Allegro.
- mé! A moi, mon bon an - ge! que vois - je et qu'entends-je? quelle au-
La MARC:
Son pè - re! ô surprise étran - ge! que vois-je et qu'entends-je?
PEP:
Que vois-je! ô surprise étran - ge! que vois-je et qu'entends-je?
Le GOUV:
Son pè - re! ô surprise étran - ge! que vois-je et qu'entends-je?
Allegro.


An.
- dace é - tran - ge les gui - de en ces lieux? et
la M.
oui, voilà d'un an - ge la voix et les yeux!..
P.
oui, voilà d'un an - ge la voix et les yeux!..
le G.
oui, voilà d'un an - ge la voix et les yeux!..
fp
f
p
An.
quel té - mérai - re, bra - vant ma co - lè - re, au lieu de mon pè re, pa -
(au gouverneur.)
Le GOUV:
An.
- rait à mes yeux? d'où venez - vous? La
le G.
nuit, é - ga - rés dans ces bois, de l'hospi - ta - li - té, nous re - clamons les


(souriant.)
An.
Mon père absent défend que cette porte s'ouvre à per - son - ne! il n'im -
le G.
La MARC. (effrayée.)
droits!
Ah! grands Dieux!
p
p
An
por te! je dé - so bé i - rai!.. loin d'è tre mécon - tent, il m'en remer - cie -
All.o non troppo
An.
- ra, il m'en remer - cie - ra, je pense, en vous voy - ant!
(♩=100)
col canto.
An.
Dans ce séjour tran - quil - le, à l'a - bri des dan - gers,
pp dolce e leggiero.
Ped