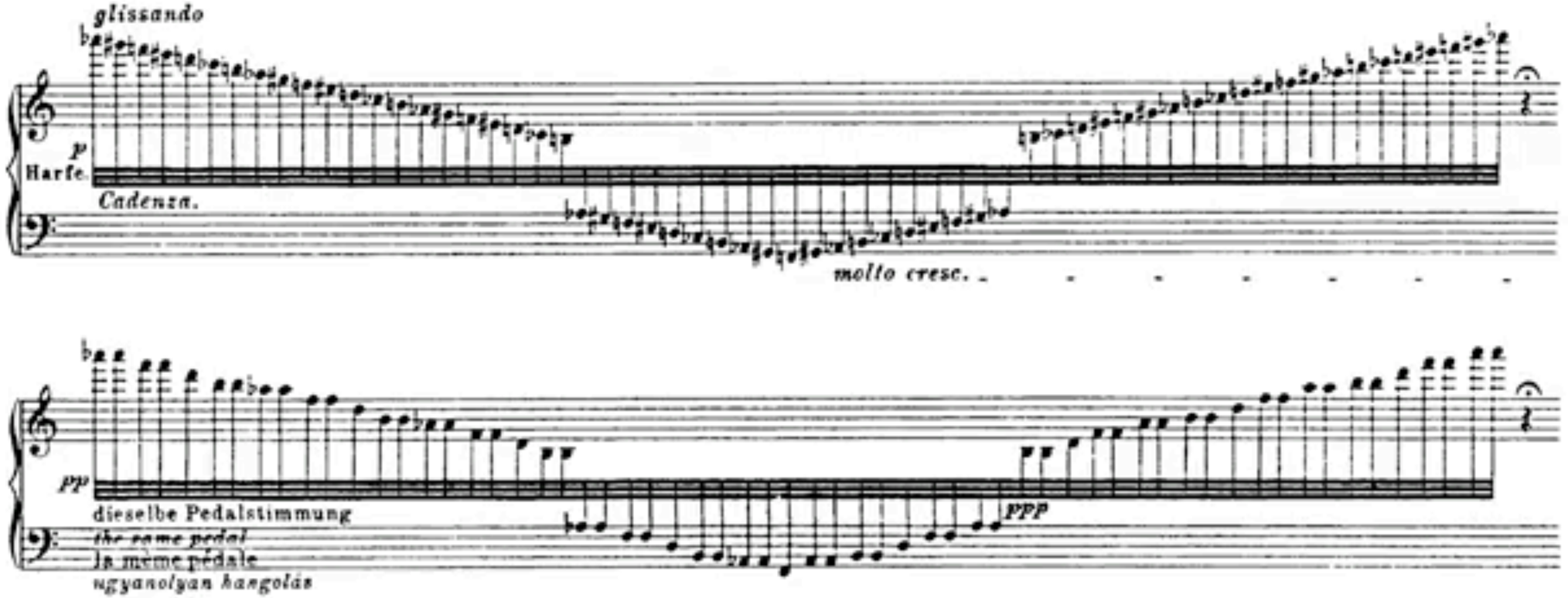
DIMINISHED AND AUGMENTED

DIMINISHED-SEVENTH CHORD

Kong (The Cave)


glissando
p
Harfe.
Cadenza.
molto cresc.
pp
dieselbe Pedalstimmung
the same pedal
la même pédale
ugyanolyan hangolás
ppp

It was the ‘expressive’ chord of that time. Wherever one wanted to express pain, excitement, anger, or some other strong feeling – there we find, almost exclusively, the diminished-seventh chord.

Arnold Schoenberg

Every shock, every horror, every rape and abduction, every surprise, every apostrophe, every curse – and sometimes even desperate invocations – are underscored by the diminished–seventh chord.

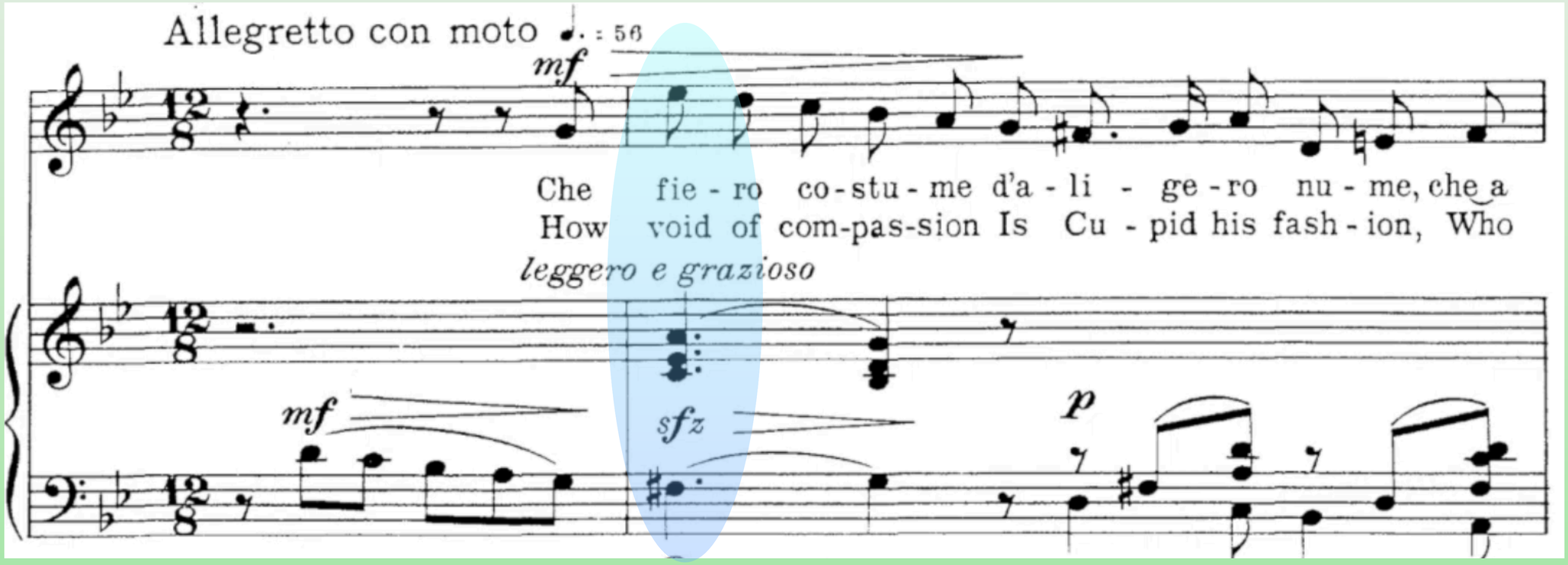
Luigi Dallapiccola .

Tenore
GIACINTO PRANDELLI

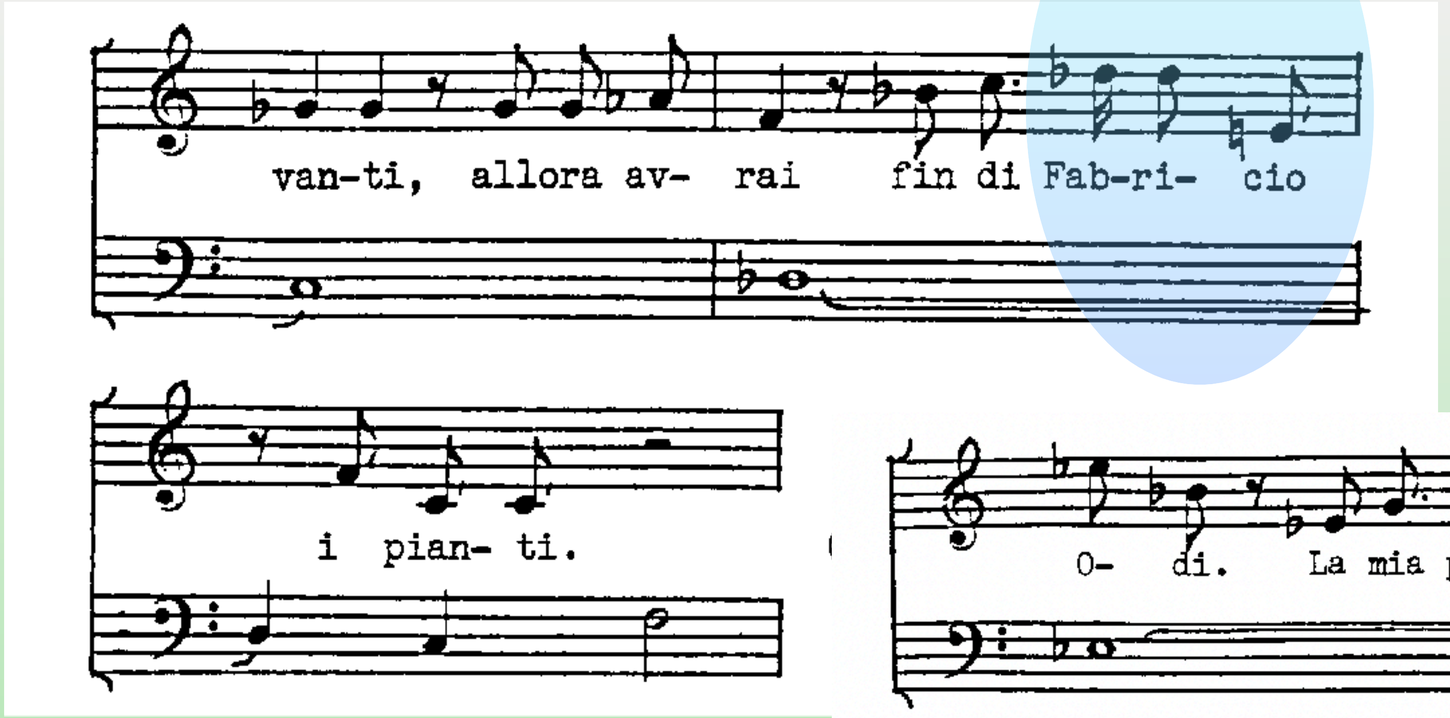
(Giovanni Legrenzi)
CHE FIERO COSTUME

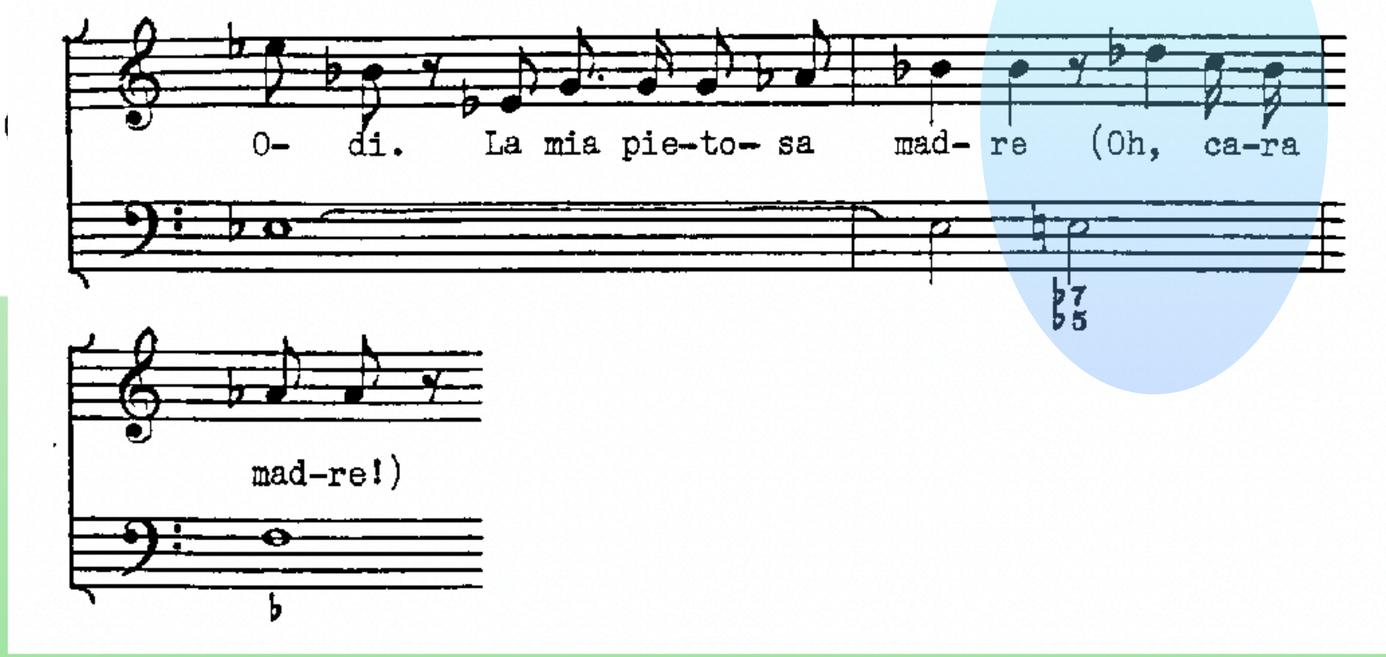
anno di incisione 1953

Giovanni Legrenzi, Che fiero costume (1674)

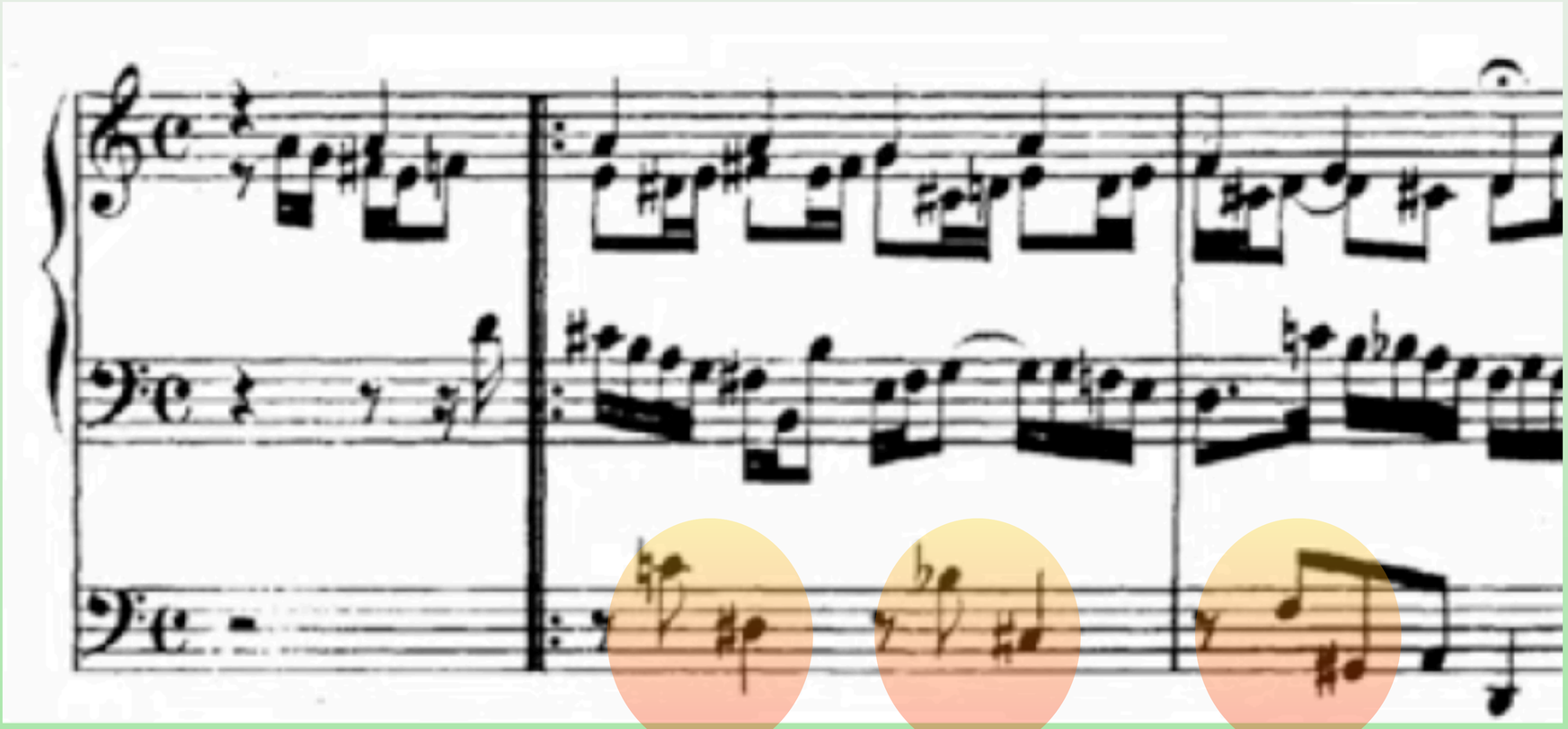


Recitatives from operas by Johann Adolph Hasse (ca. 1740-50)

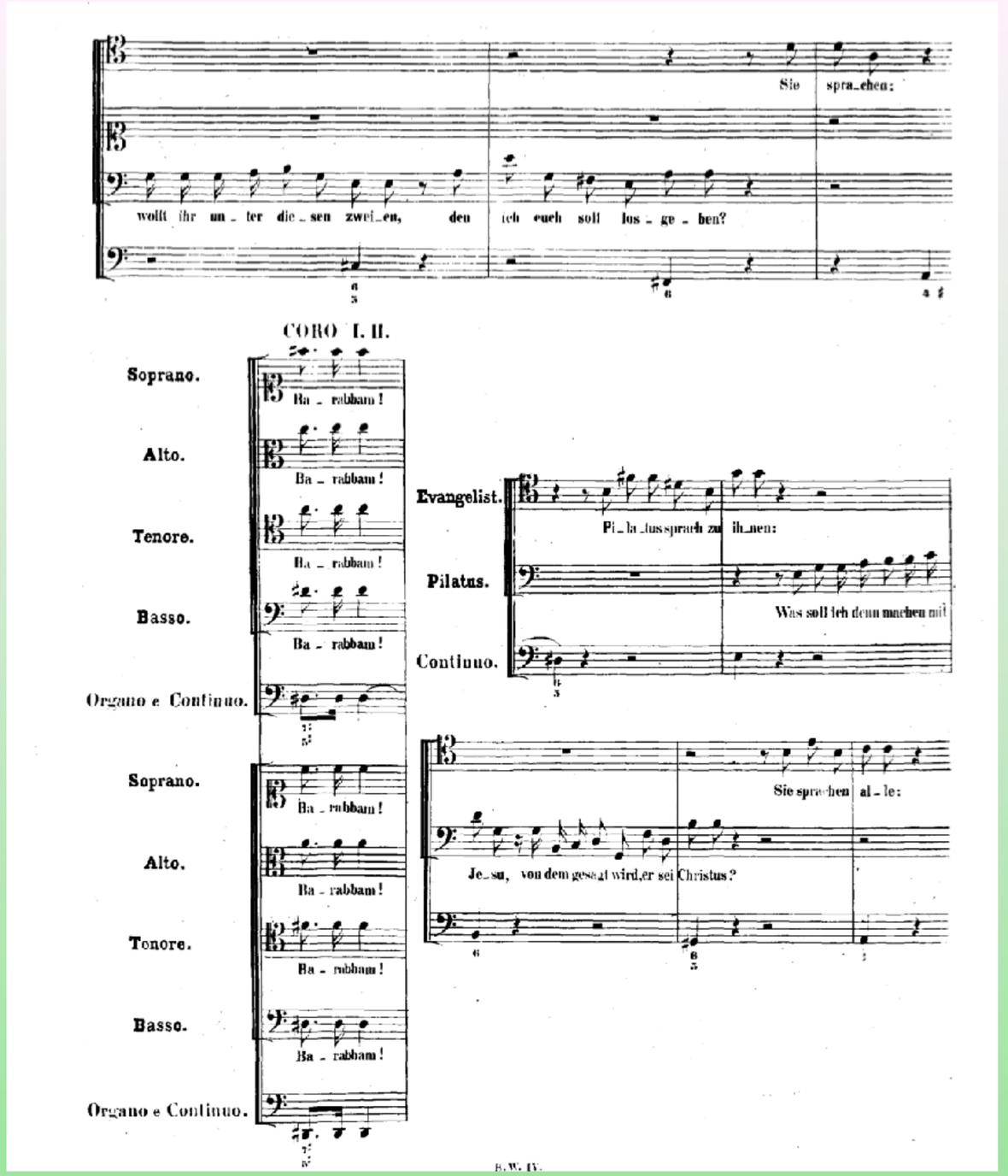




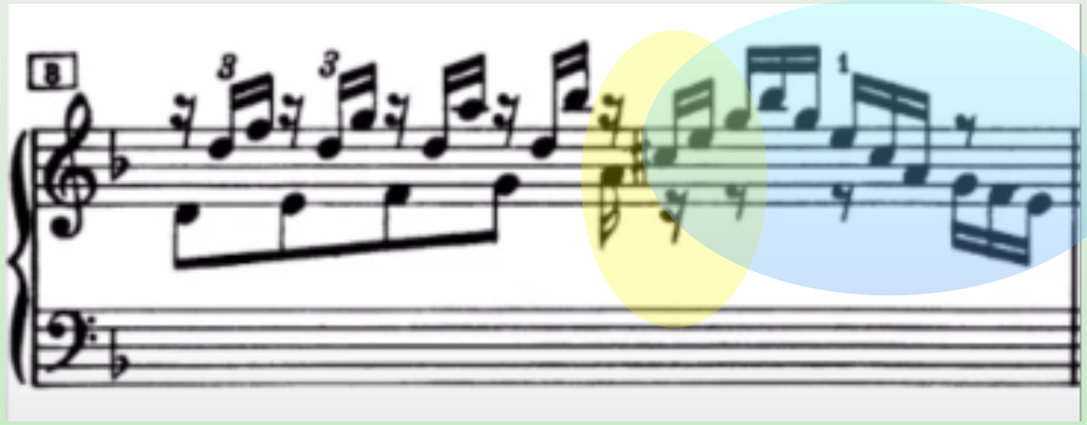
Bach, Durch Adams Fall is ganz verderbt (between 1708 and 1717)



Bach, Matthew Passion, Part II, No. 54

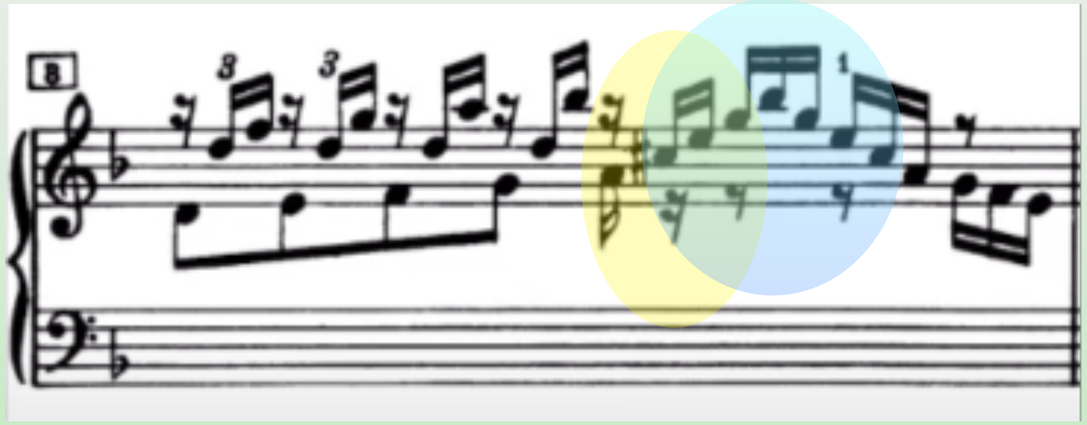


Bach, Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue (ca. 1720)



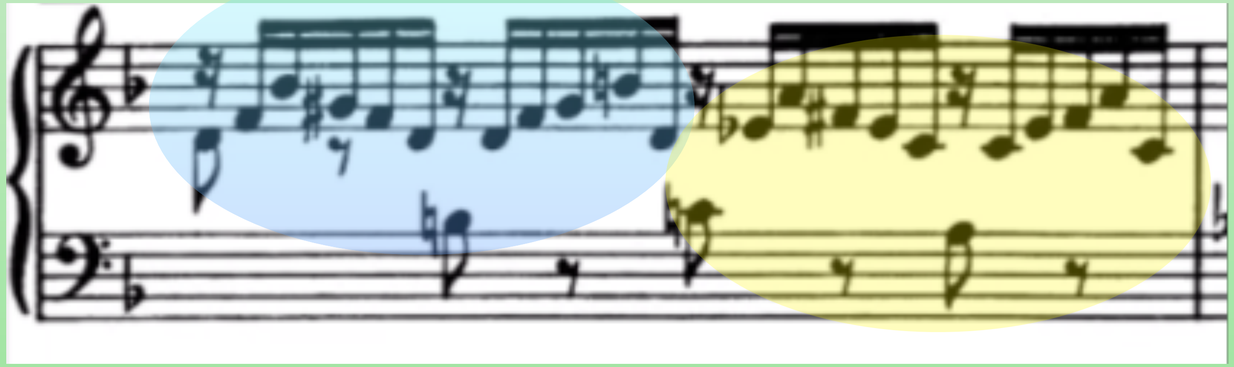
Extension of the dominant seventh chord

Bach, Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue (ca. 1720)

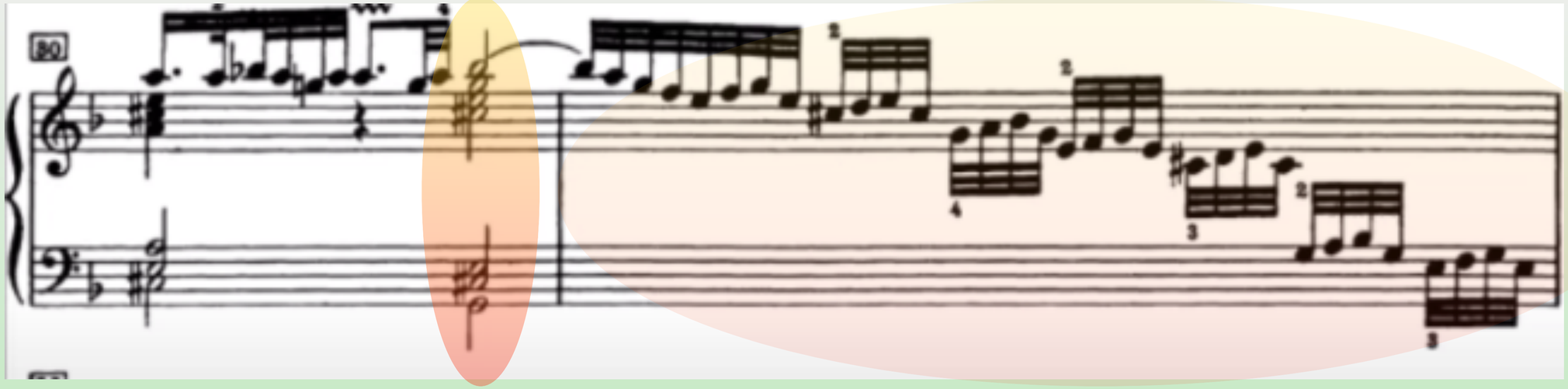


Extension of the dominant seventh chord

Several diminished seventh chords in a row

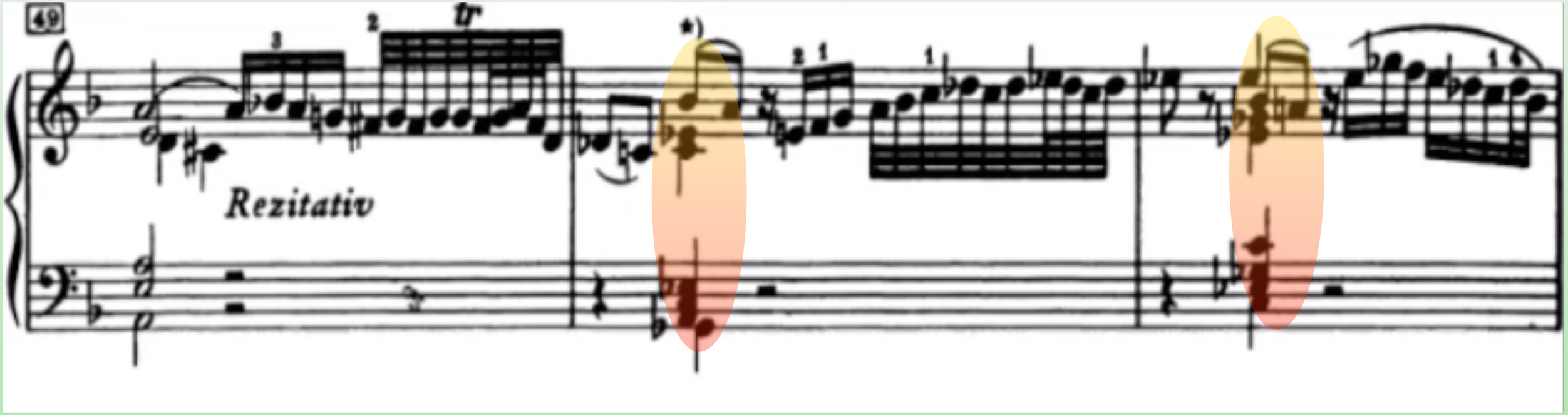


Bach, Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue (ca. 1720)



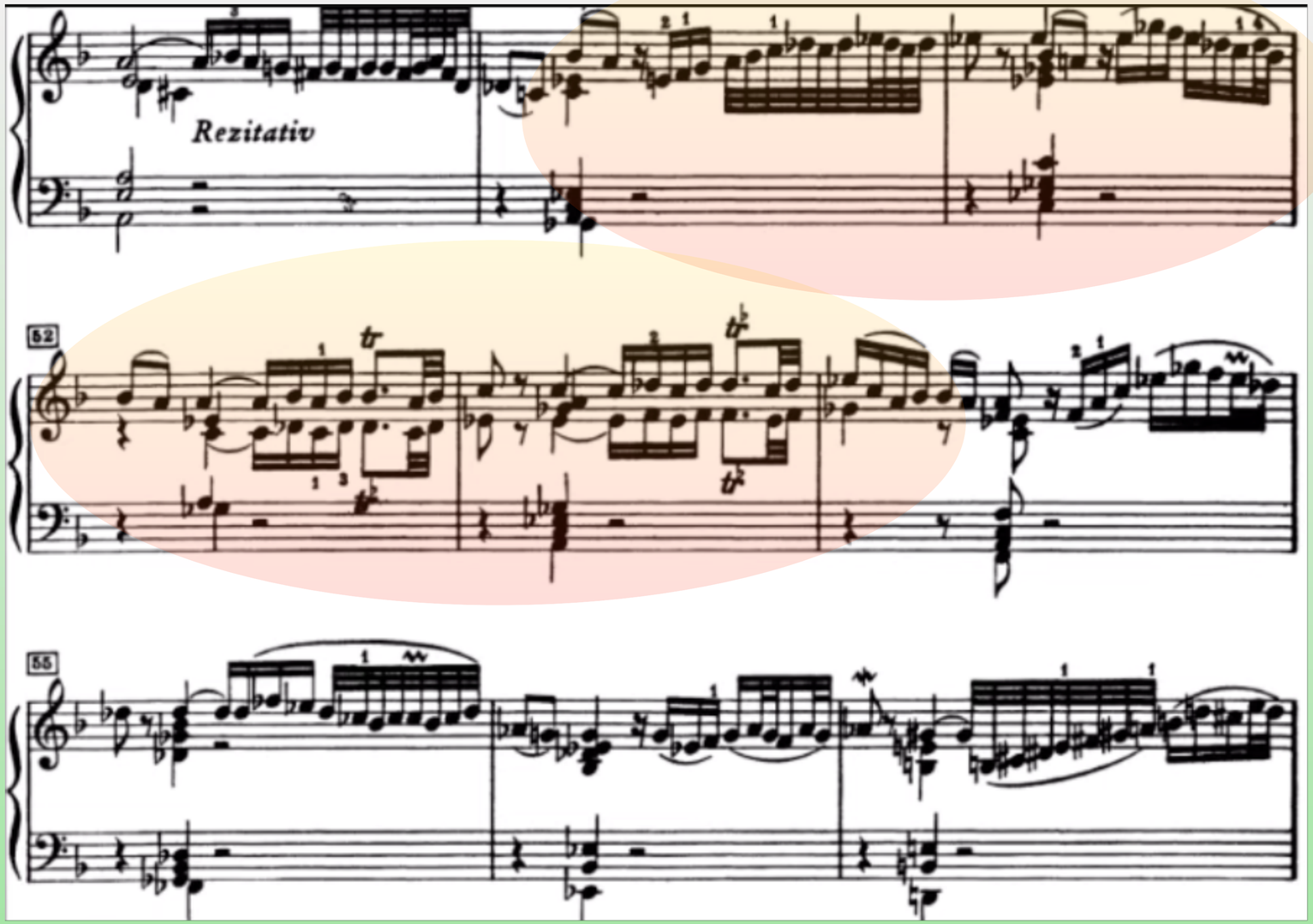
As a dramatic turning point

Bach, Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue (ca. 1720)



With an extra dissonant note in one of the voices

Bach, Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue (ca. 1720)



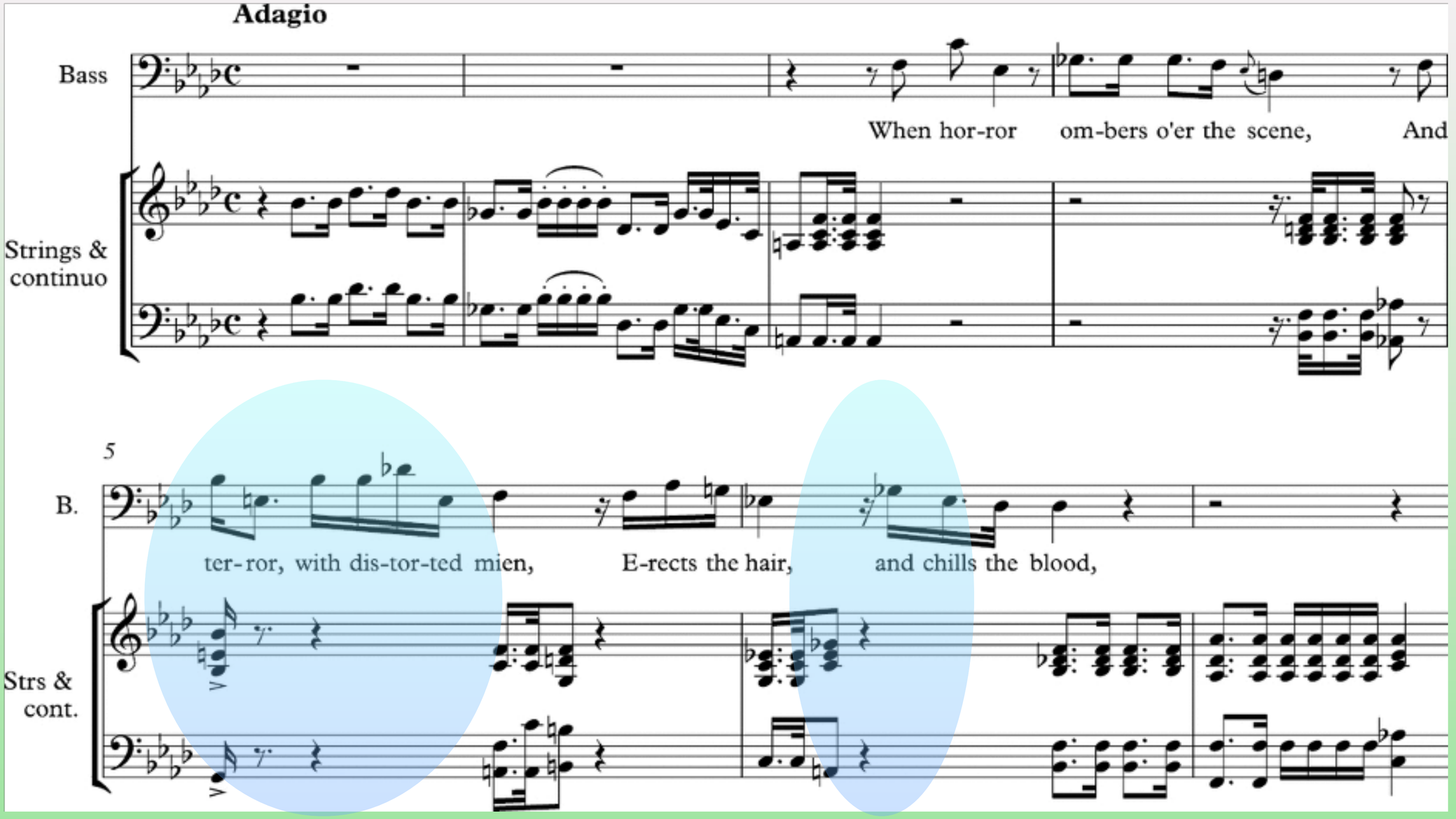
Staying on the same diminished seventh chord for a long time

No chord is more convenient than the diminished 7th as a means of reaching the most distant keys more quickly and with agreeable suddenness.

CPE Bach

OMBRA AND TEMPESTA

Boyce, Ode to Shakespeare (1756)



Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime;* that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.

Edmund Burke (1757)

Music is sublime when it inspires devotion, courage or other elevated affections: or when by its mellow and sonorous harmonies it overwhelms the mind with sweet astonishment: or when it infuses that pleasing horror... which, when joined to words descriptive of terrible ideas, it sometimes does very effectually.

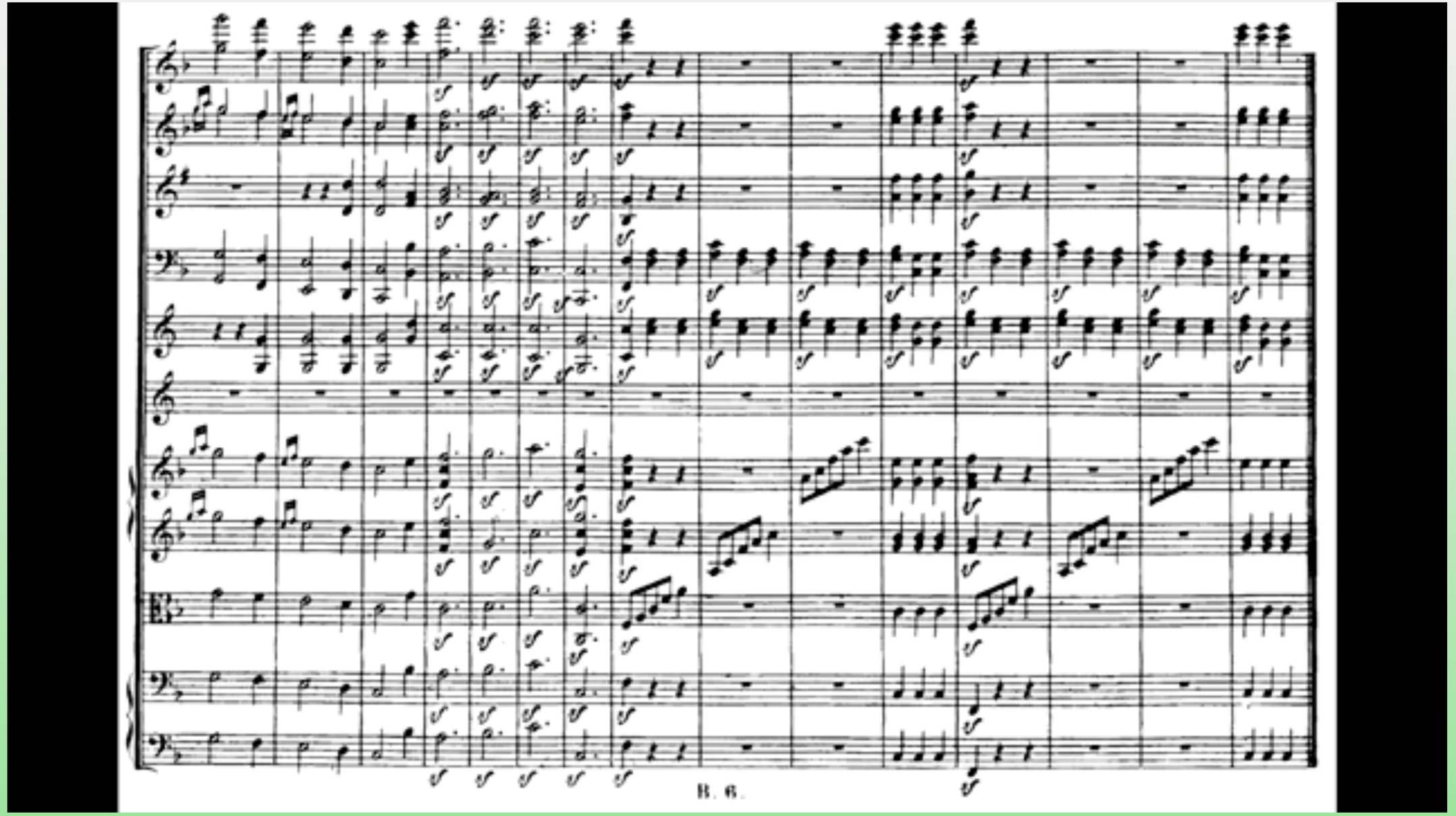
James Beattie 1783

Mozart, Don Giovanni, finale of Act II

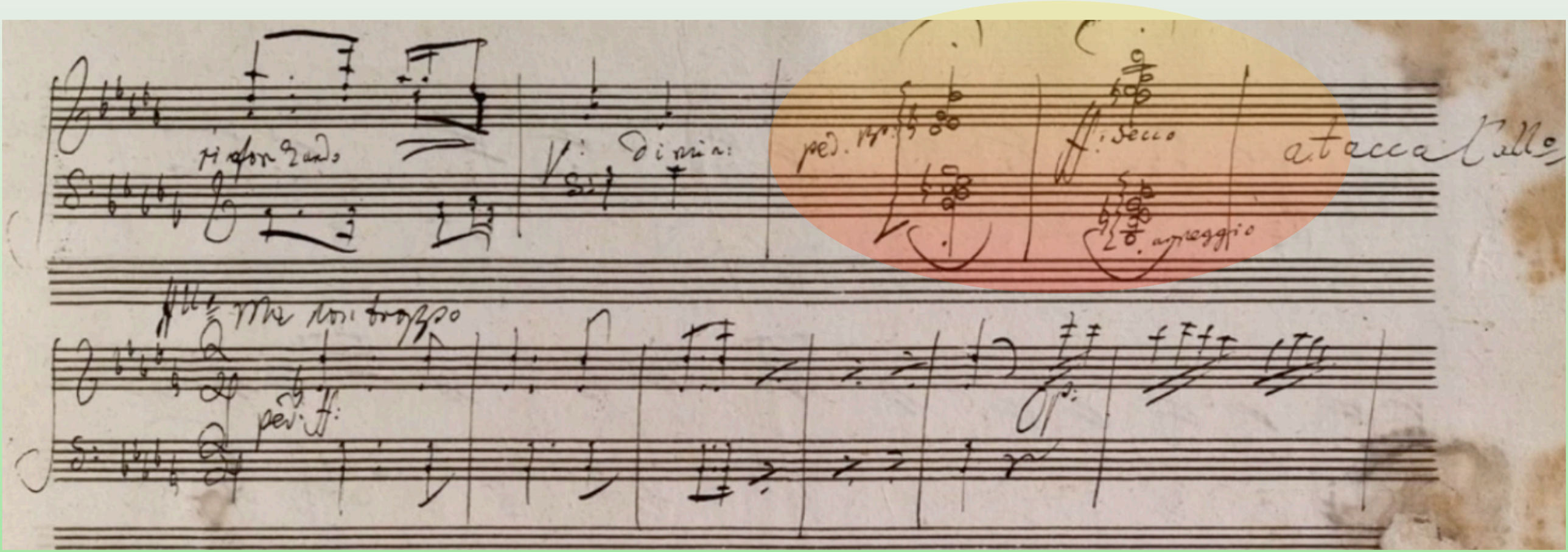
When the harmony and modulation are learned and mysterious, when the ear is unable to anticipate the transitions from chord to chord and from key to key, if the melody and measure are grave, the effect will be sublime.

William Crotch, 1806

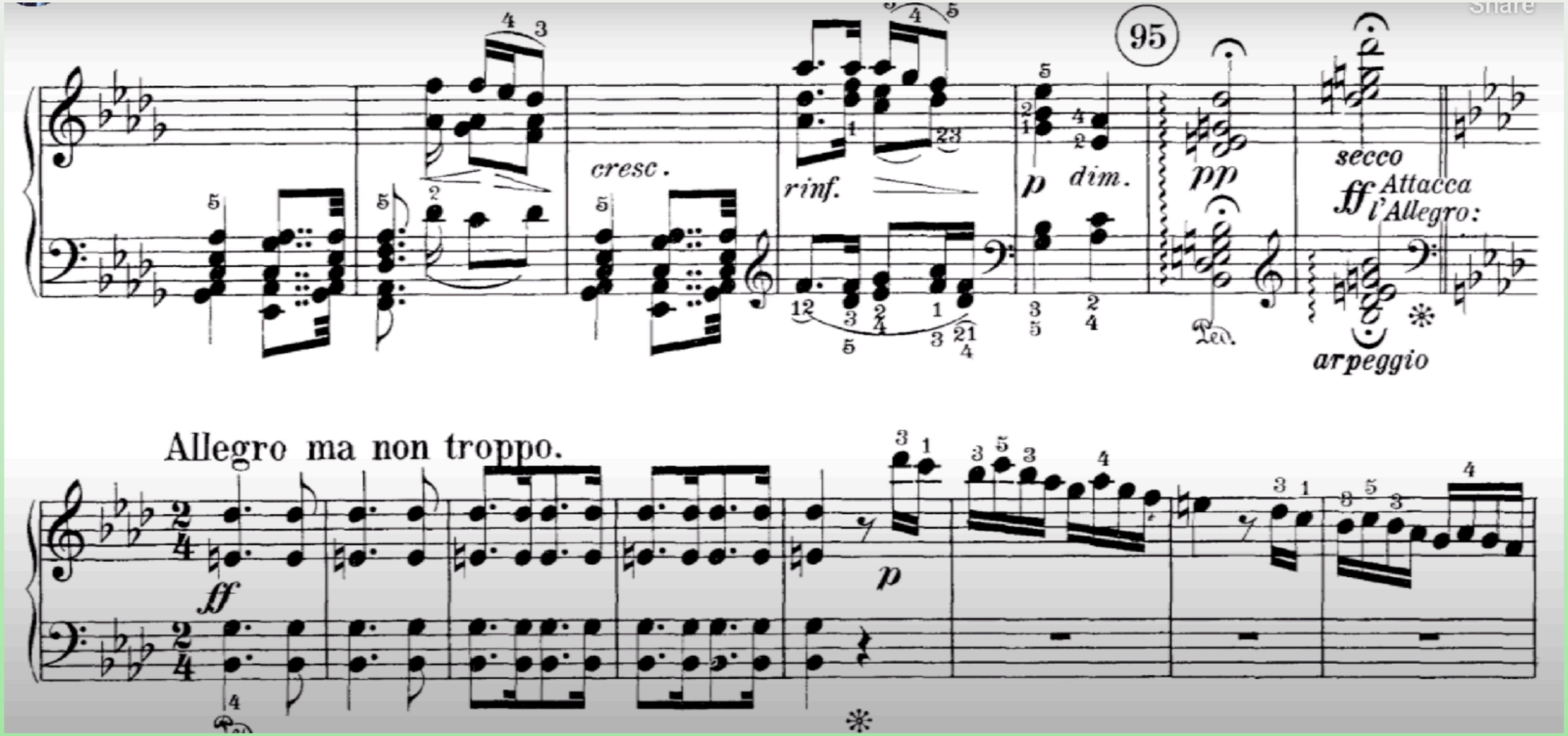
Beethoven, “Pastoral” Symphony, beginning of the “Storm” movement



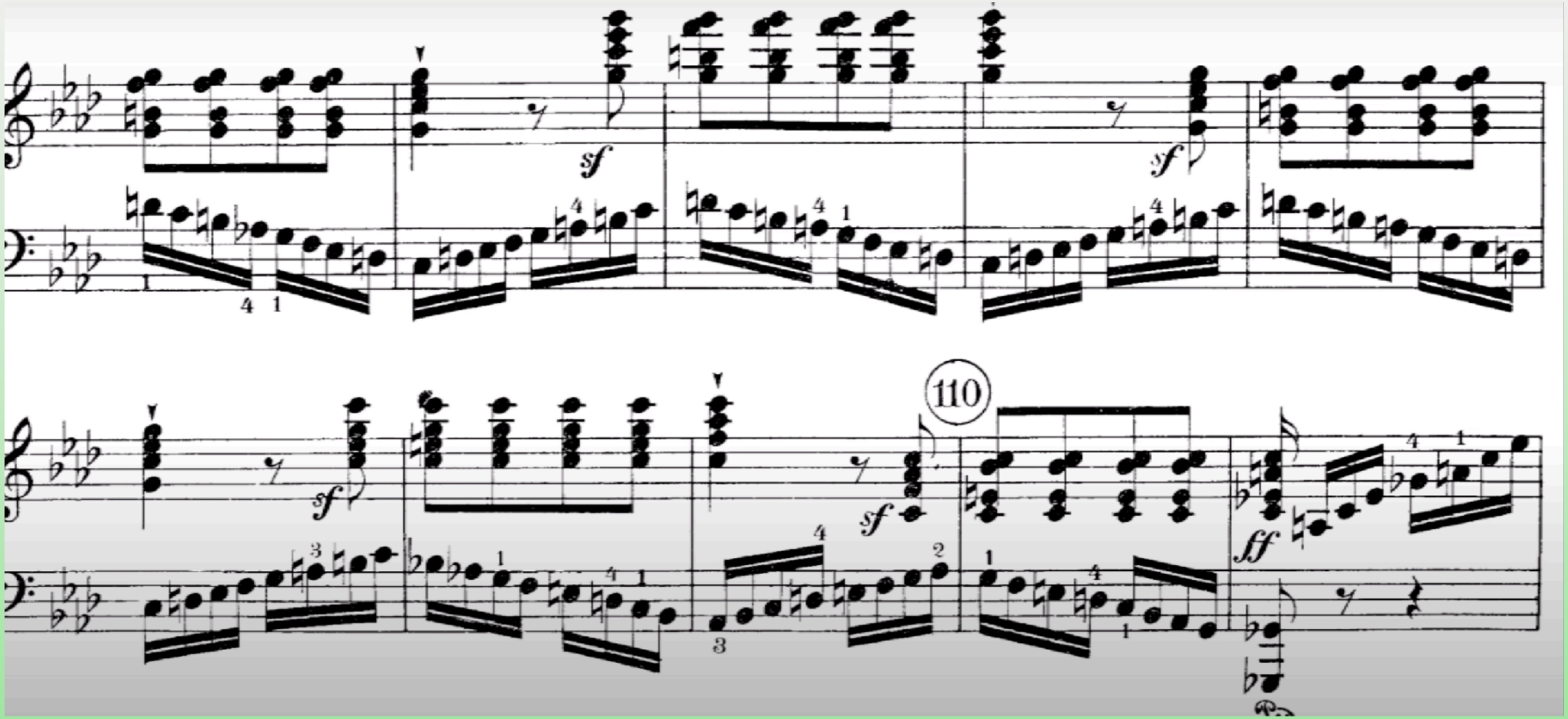
Beethoven, “Appassionata” sonata, transition to the finale



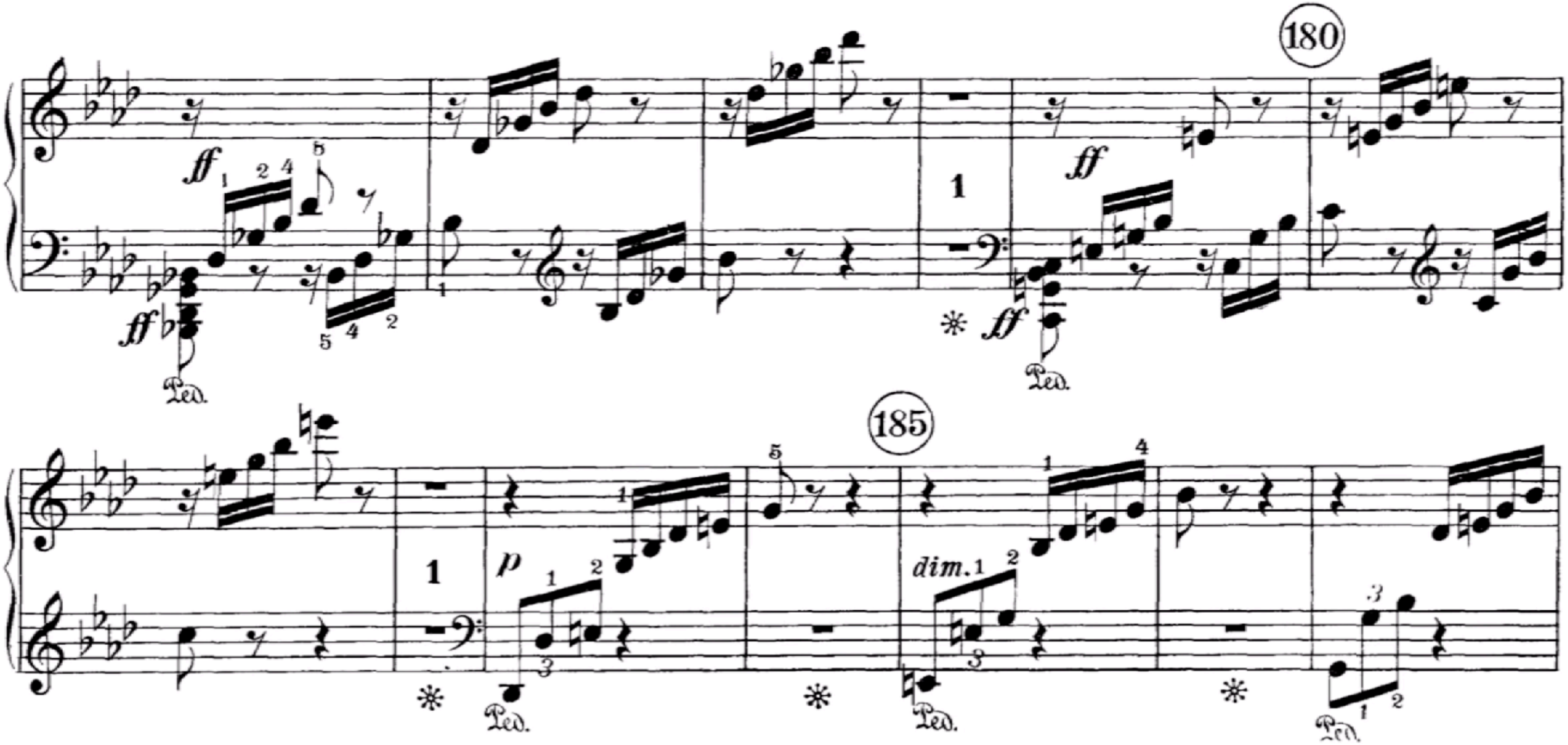
Beethoven, “Appassionata” sonata, transition to the finale



Beethoven, “Appassionata” sonata, finale



Beethoven, “Appassionata” sonata, finale

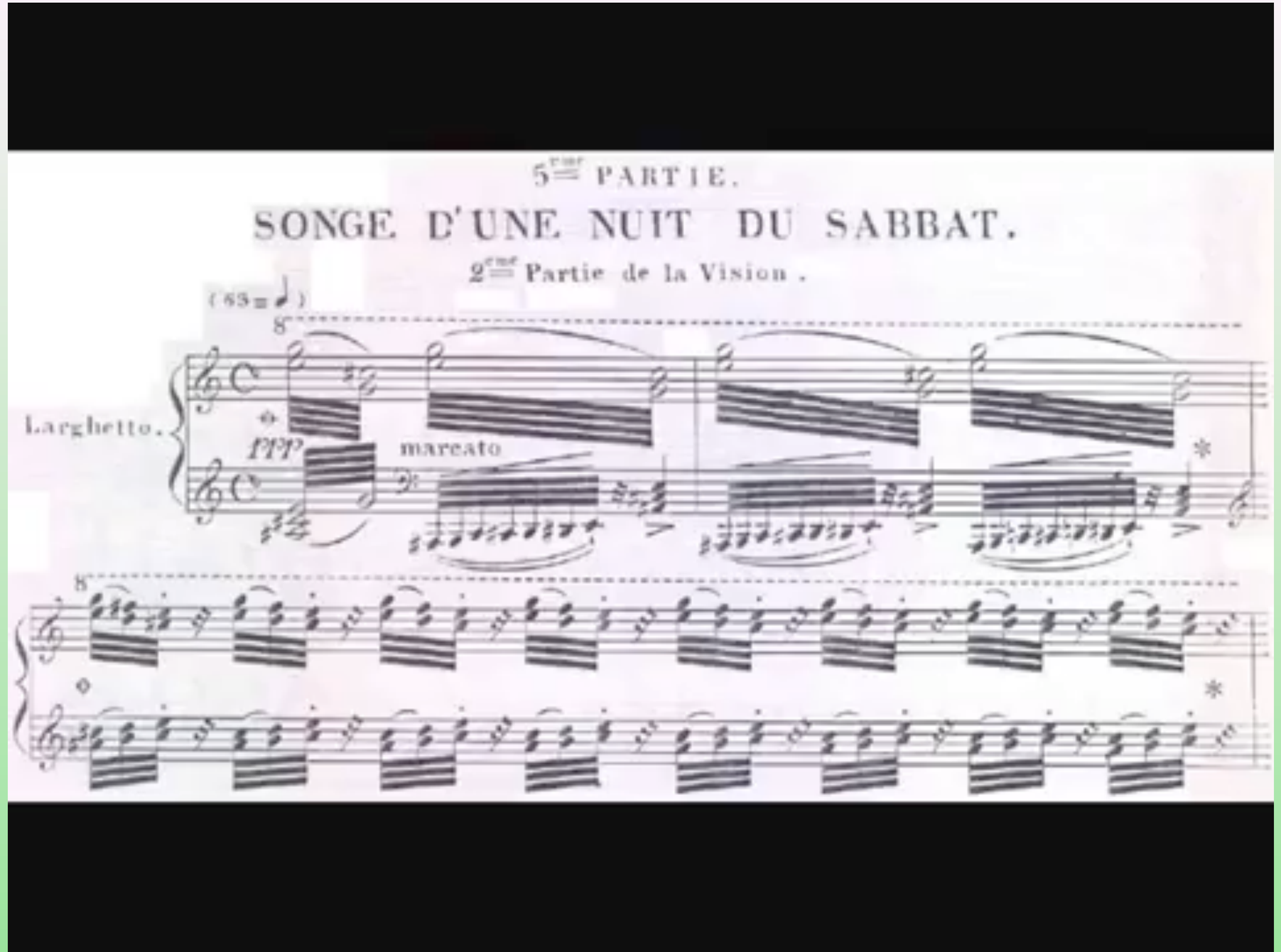


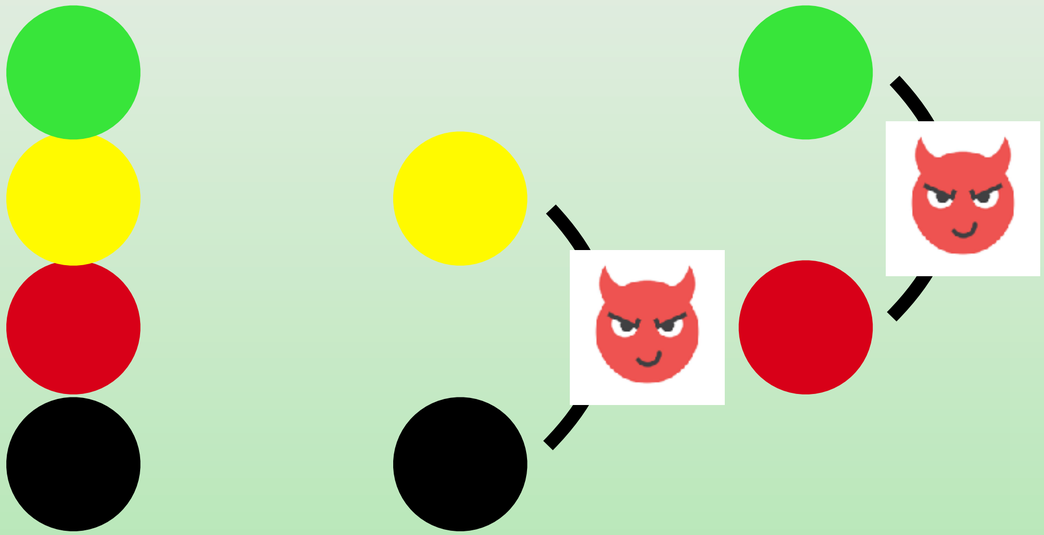
Thea Musgrave, Turbulent Landscapes (2003)

DIABOLUS IN MUSICA?

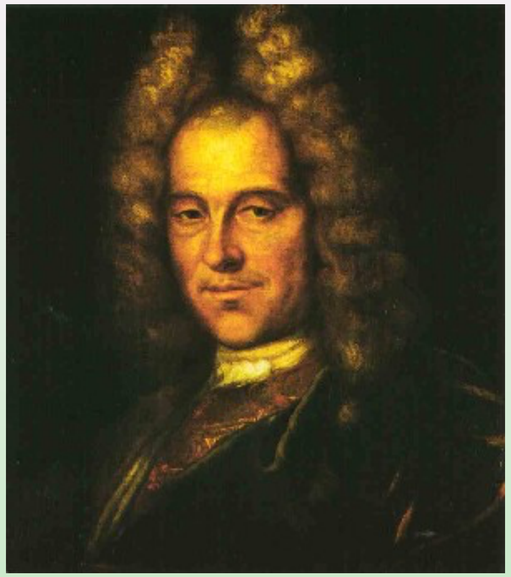
Weber, Wolf's Glen Scene from *Der Freischütz* (1821)

Berlioz, Symphonie fantastique (1830), last movement





TRITONE



JJ FUX "GRADUS AD PARNASSUM"

"mi contra fa – diabolus in musica" (1725)

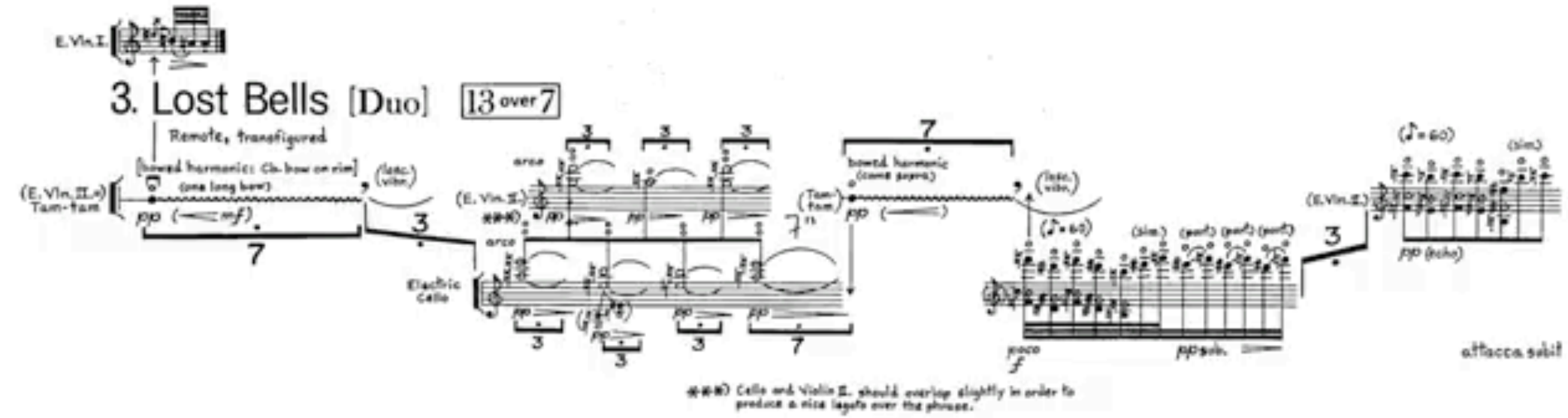
"older singers ... called this pleasant interval... 'the devil in music'

(Mattheson, 1739)

The nature of a tritone as a dissonance is hostile to nature, it is annoying and irritating to human hearing.

Johannes Tinctoris (1477)

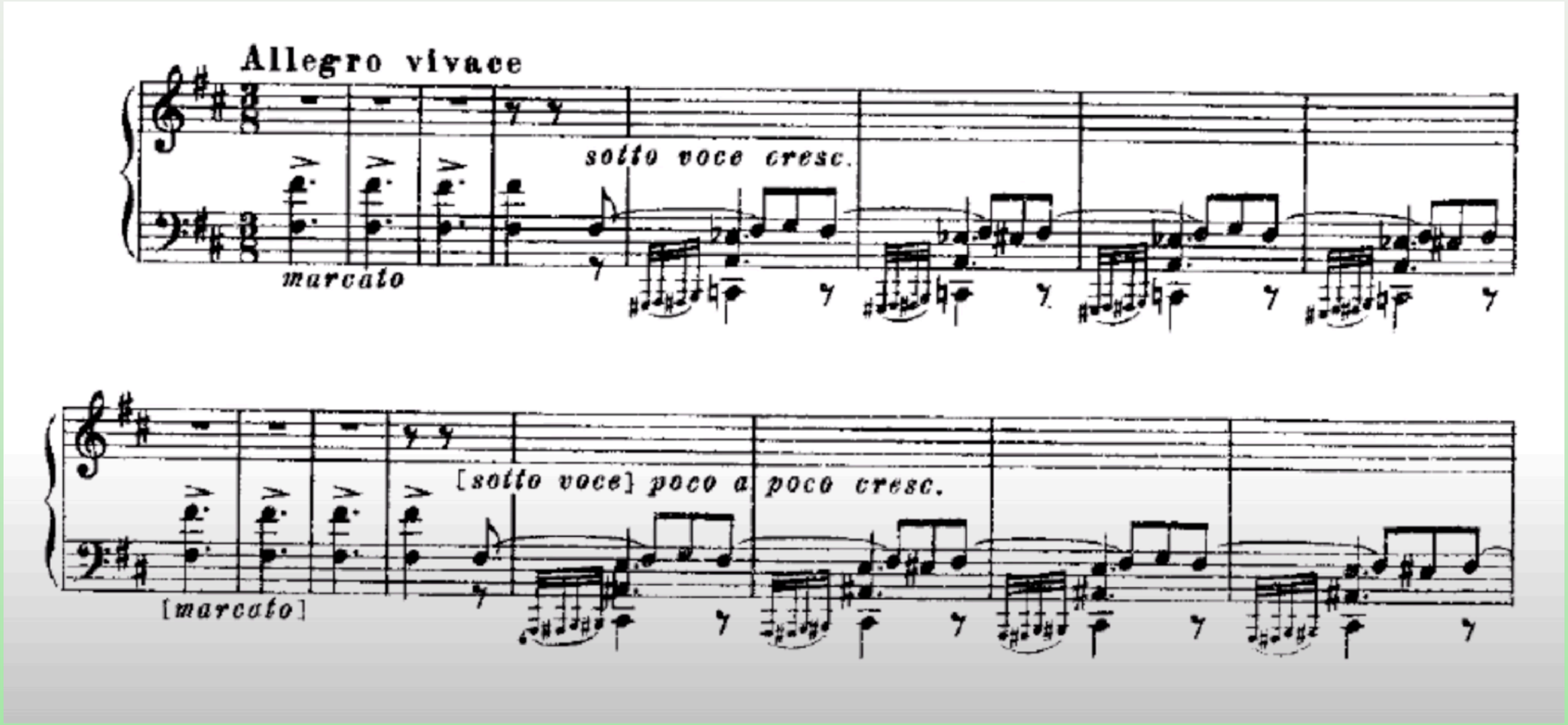
George Crumb, Black Angels (1971)



EDITION PETERS

LISZT'S DEMONISM

Liszt, Reminiscences of *Robert le Diable* (1841)



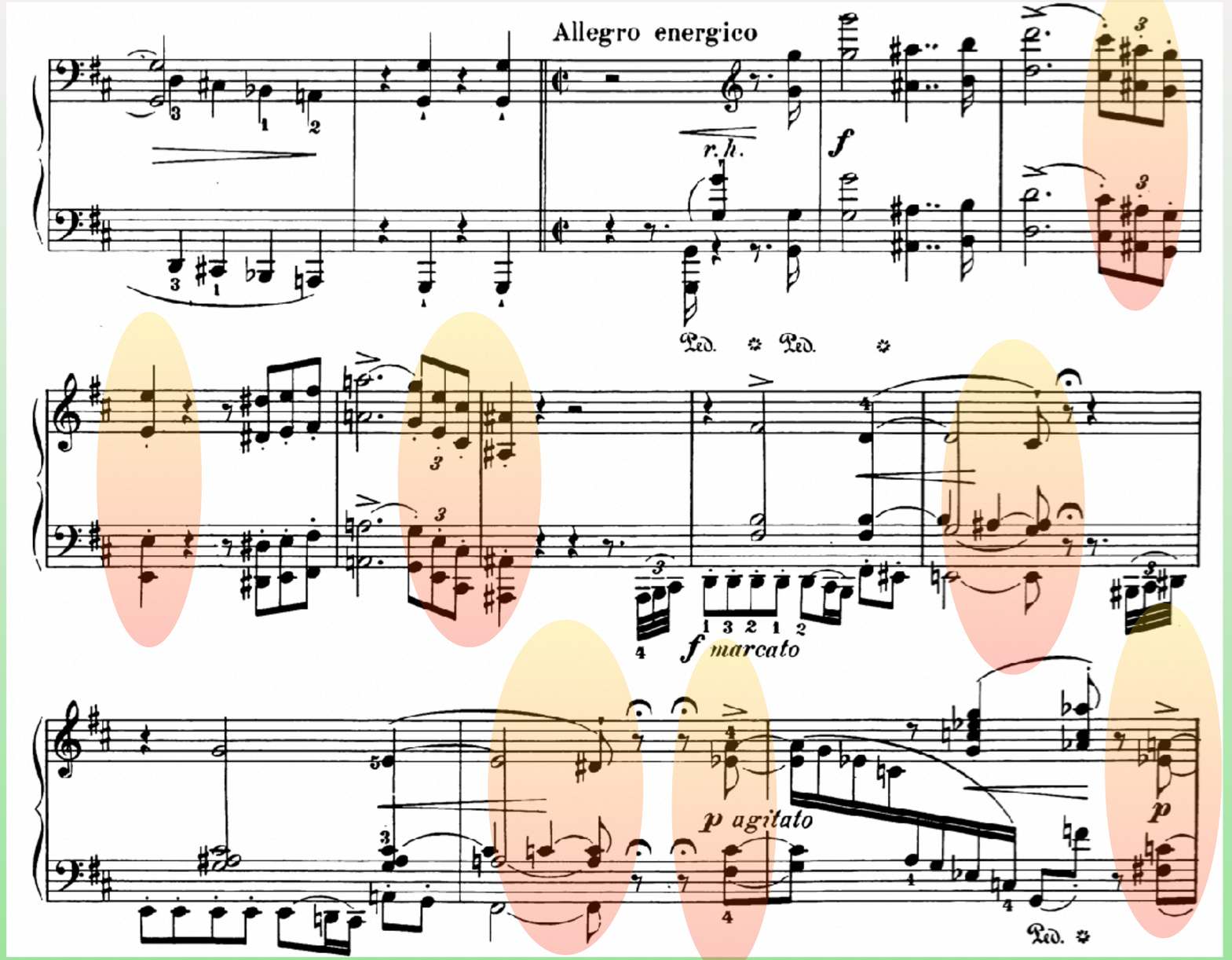
And now the demon’s power began to awake; he first toyed with the public, as if to test it, then gave it something more profound, until every single listener was drawn up into his art; and then the entire mass of the audience began to rise and fall exactly in accordance with his will. With the exception of Paganini, I have never encountered any artist who possessed to such a high degree Liszt’s powers of subjugating, elevating, and leading the public.

(Robert Schumann, 1840)

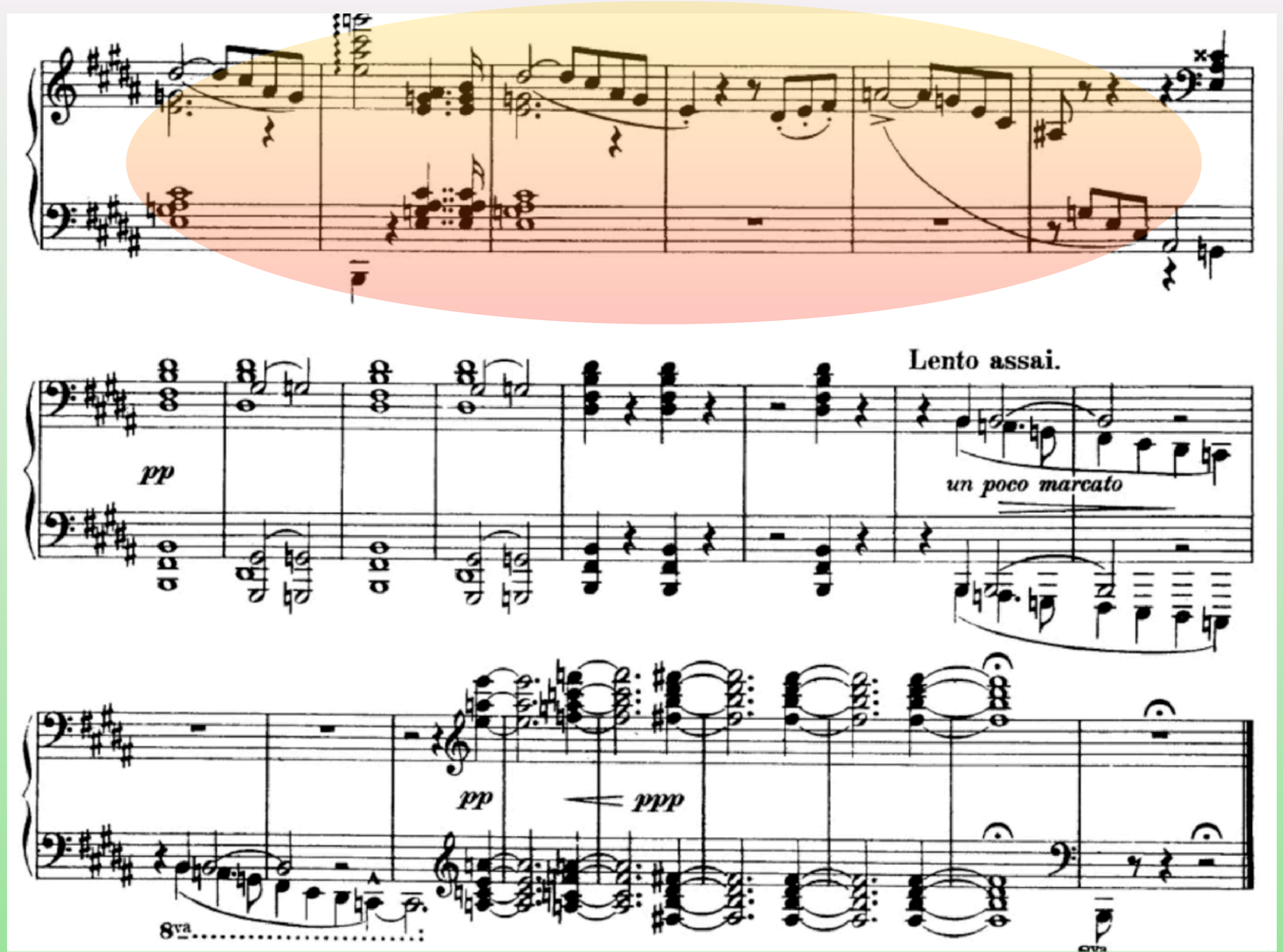
He played, as always, with a truly demonic bravura. He lorded it over the piano, like a devil (I know no other way to express it).

(Clara Schumann, 1851)

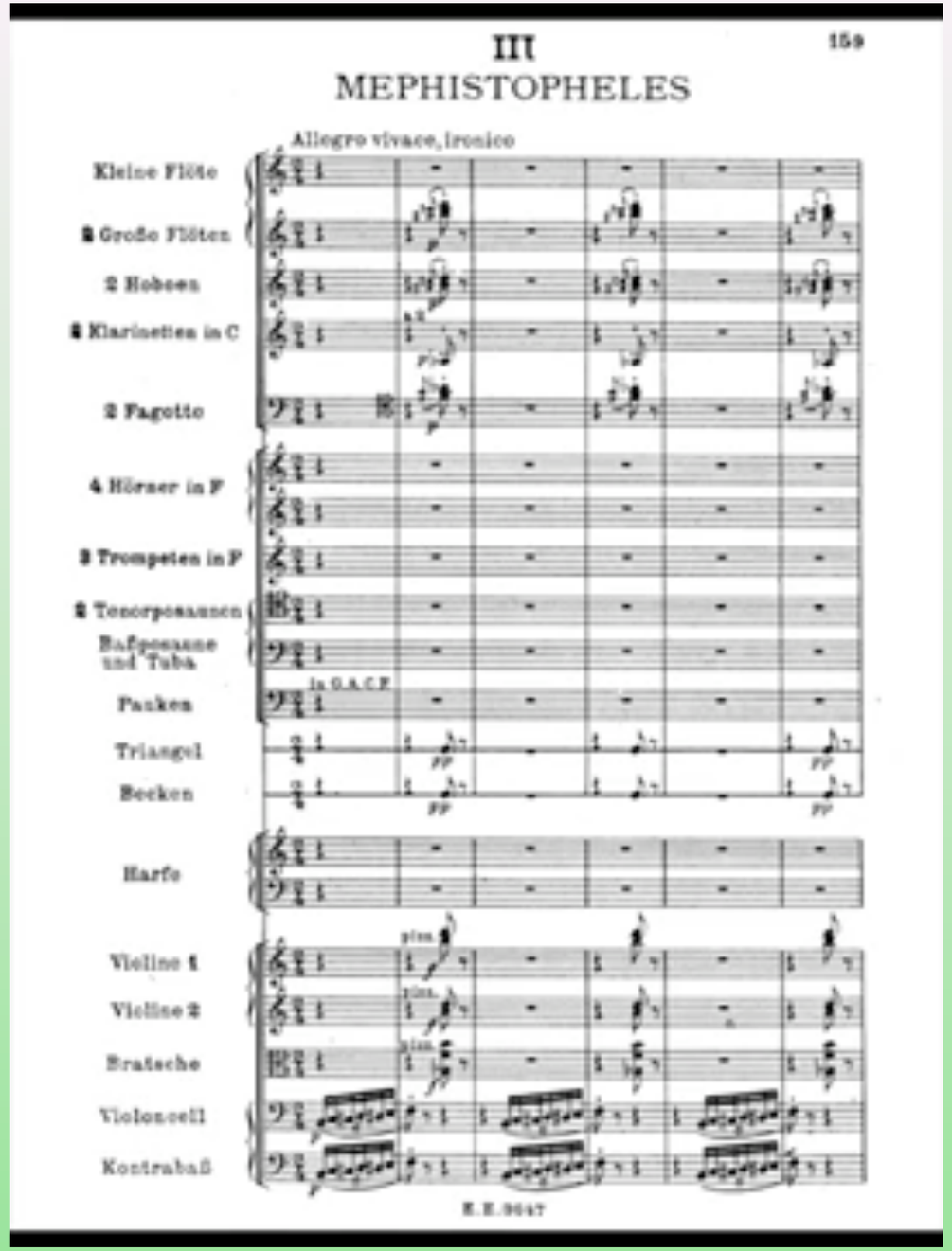
Liszt, Piano Sonata in B minor (1853)



Liszt, Piano Sonata in B minor (1853)



Liszt, Faust Symphony (1857)



AUGMENTED TRIAD

Rameau (1722): “accord de la quinte superfluë”/ chord of the augmented fifth

Heinichen (1728): chord of “extraordinary hardness”

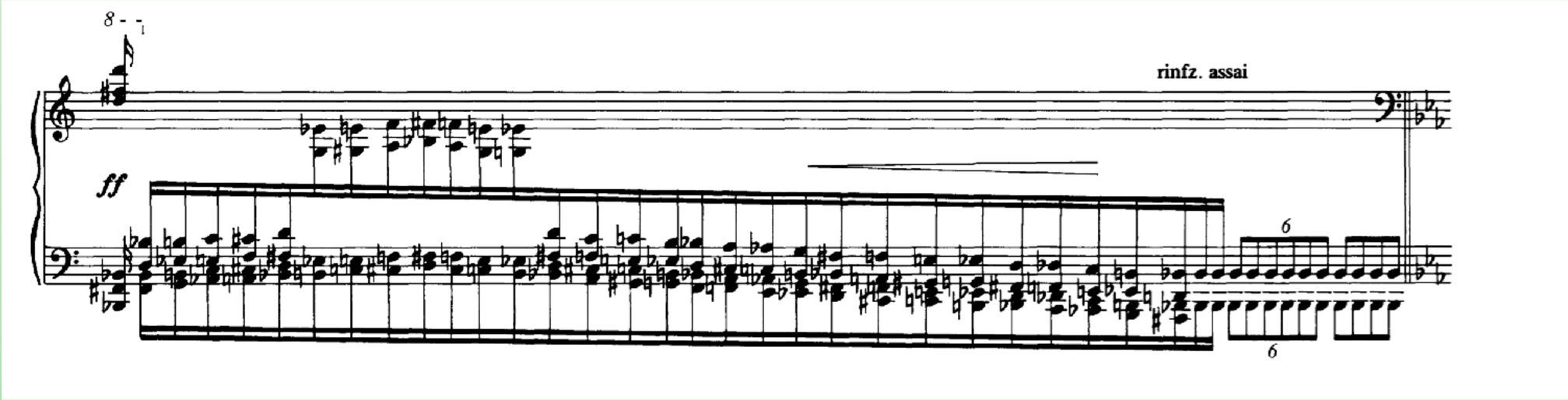
Sorge (1747): “sharp musical spice”

Kirnberger (1776): “quite useless”

Haydn, String Quartet Op. 54, No. 2, Trio of the Minuet (1780s)

AB Marx (1850): “if we [take] the major triad and raise the fifth, we are confronted by the shrill sound of the augmented triad. No-one has ever dared to use several of these triads in succession, and we should do nothing to encourage this.”

Liszt, Pensée des morts (1853):

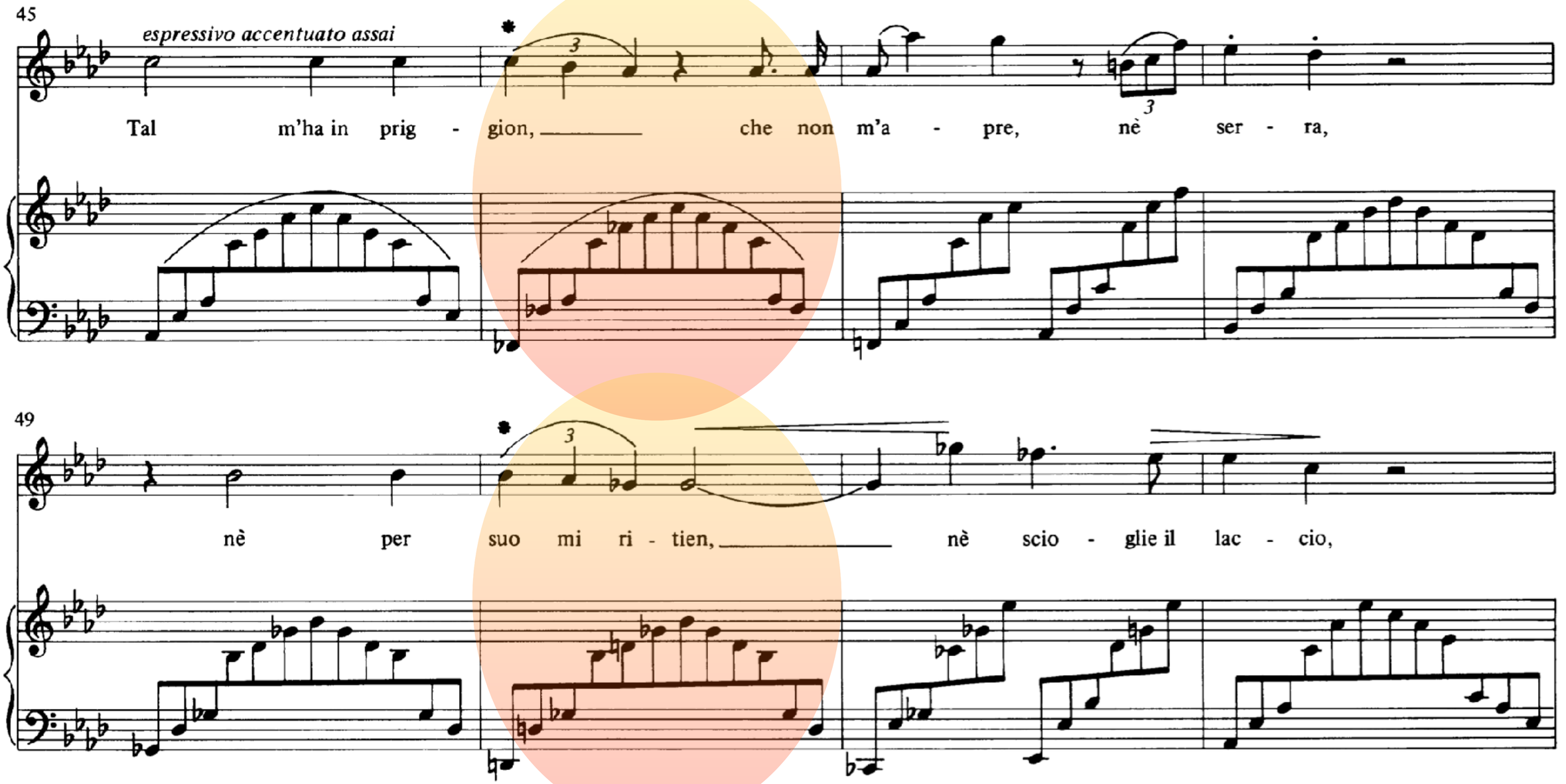


The augmented triad was still something remarkable at the time. Wagner had used these chords for the Venusberg, around 1845, but I had written them for the first time already in 1841...

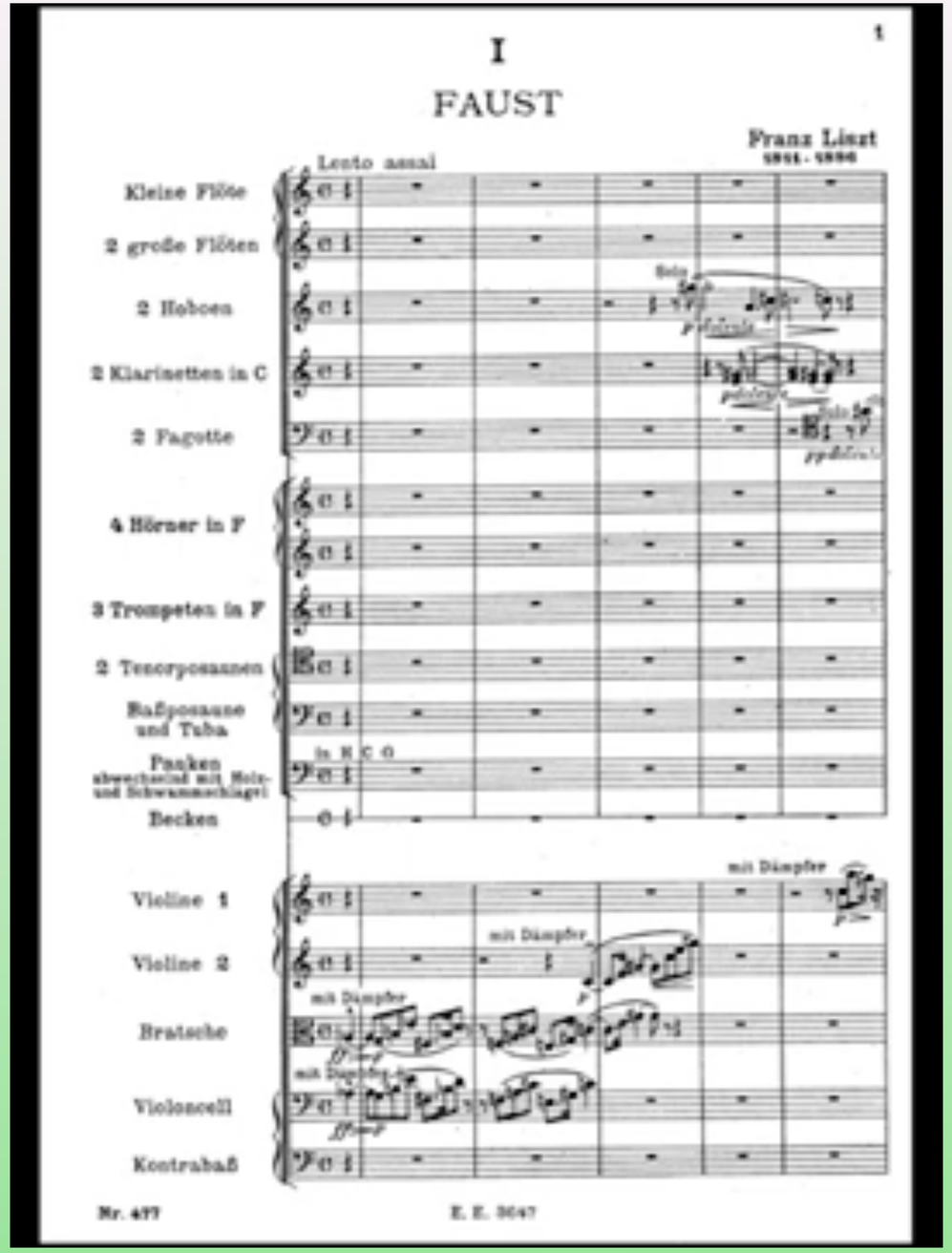
This brought much adverse criticism upon me... But I didn't trouble over the matter.

Liszt, Petrarch Sonnet No. 104 (1841)

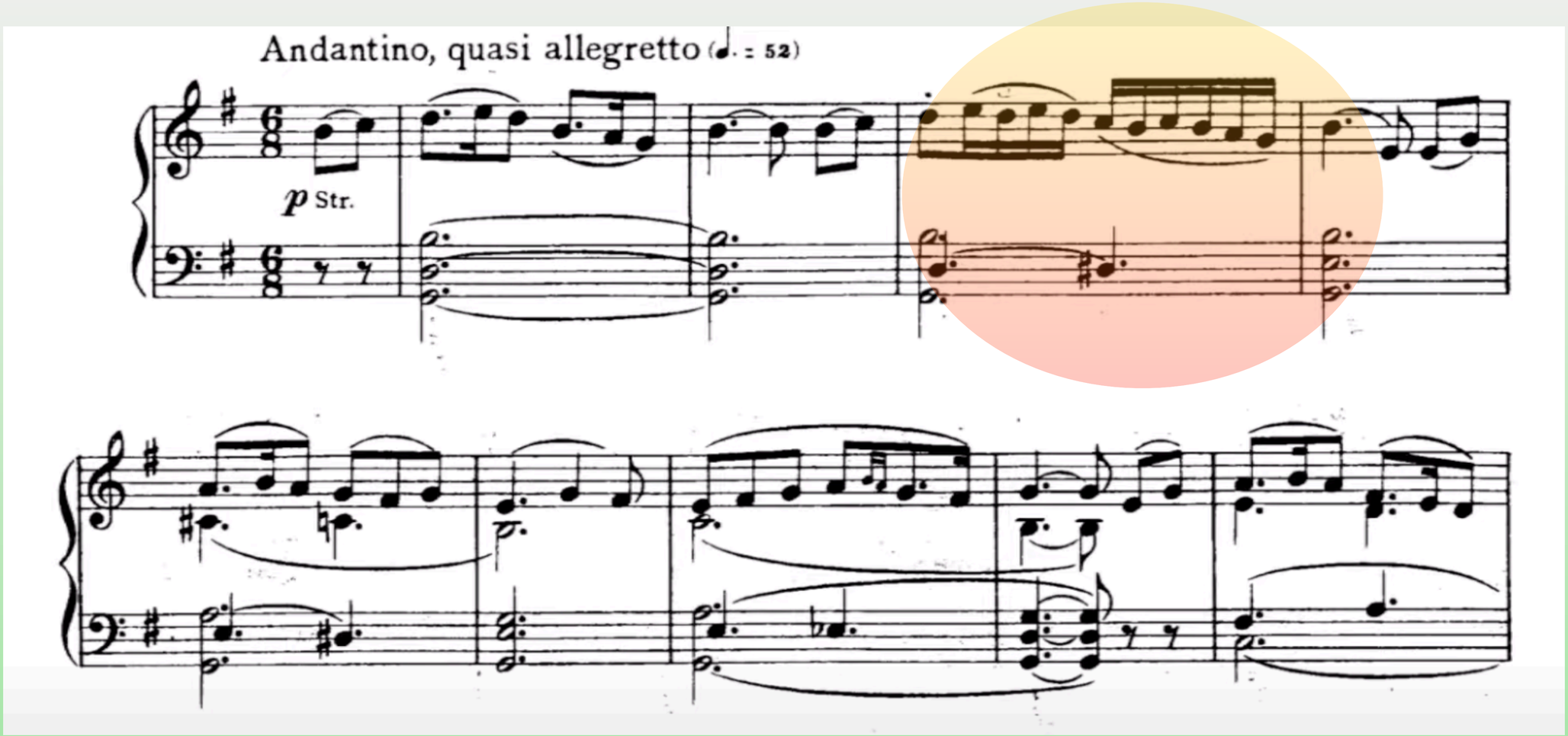
"I find no peace, but have no war to wage.//I fear, I hope, I burn and turn to ice."

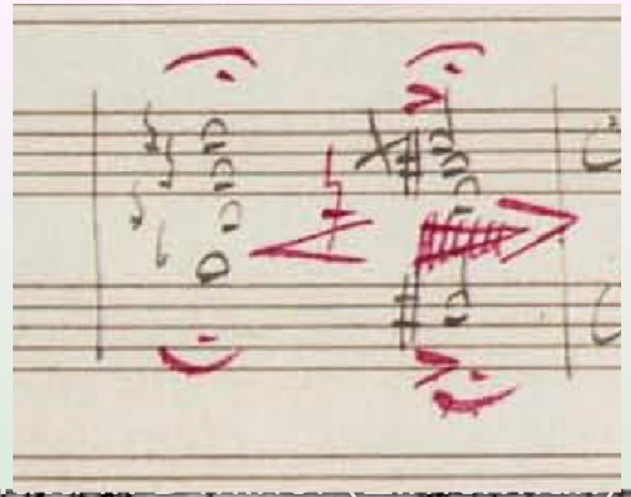


Liszt, Faust Symphony (1857)



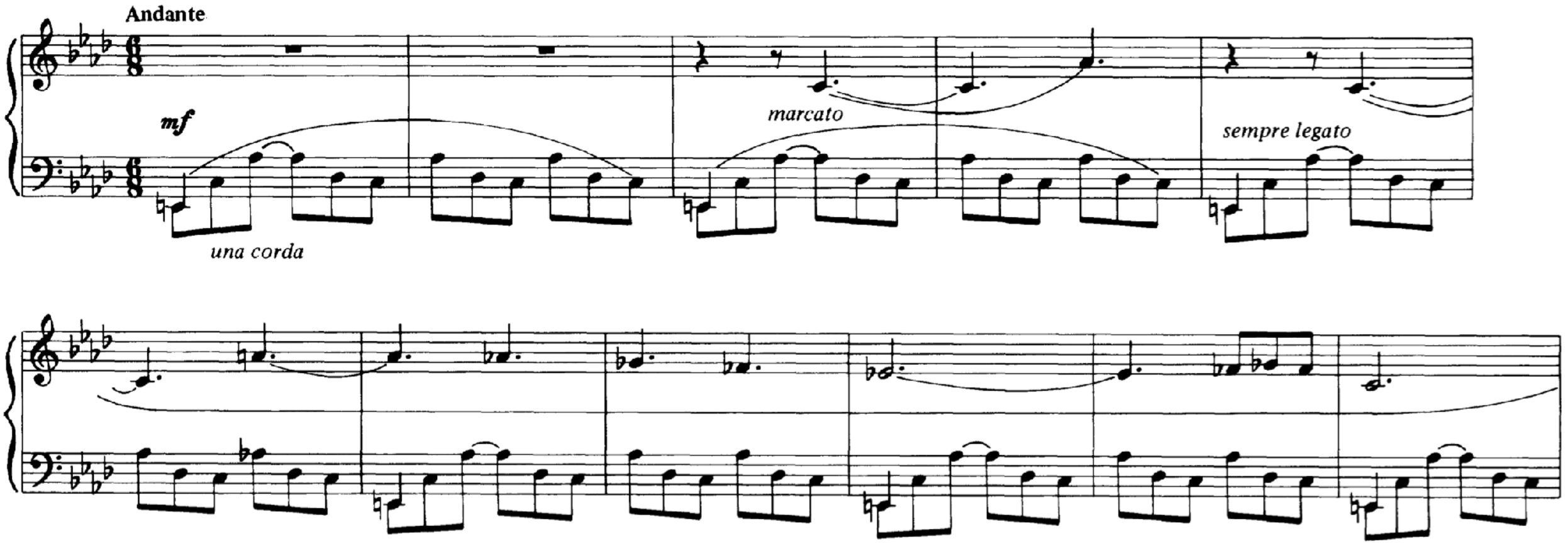
Rimsky-Korsakov, Sheherazade (1888), 3rd movement





Liszt, Piano Sonata in B minor (1853)

Liszt, La lugubre gondola I



Liszt, Bagatelle sans tonalité (Bagatelle without a Key) (1885)

“a highly capricious tone picture which whirls through all the keys and then ends abruptly on a chord of the diminished seventh”

Wilhelm Gottschlag , in reaction to the 1885 premiere

Glinka, Abduction of Liudmila from Russian and Liudmila (1842)

PETER DONOHOE
(PIANO)

DEBUSSY

Voiles (1909)

L’isle joyeuse (1904)