Viardot
An Hour of Study
Vol. 1

Adopted by the Paris National Conservatory of Music.

1. In the first place, care should be taken that the Piano-forte is at the correct pitch and perfectly in tune.

2. If the pupil accompanies herself, she should be seated as high as possible: and a small mirror should be placed on the desk so that she can observe her features, as well as the movement of her mouth. She should sit upright, the head slightly raised.

3. If the pupil is sufficiently a musician, and has an ear correct enough not to require her to play all the accompaniment, it is preferable, so soon as the exercise is well understood, that she should sing standing. In so doing, she must take care to hold herself erect, a little arched backwards, the head should be slightly elevated, the eyes looking straight forward, and the body resting firmly on the feet without swaying backwards and forwards, or from side to side.

To avoid these two equally ungraceful motions, the feet should be placed somewhat in the second position in dancing: the weight of the body on the backward foot.

4. The pupil must breathe very slowly and very deeply, *through the nose*, with the mouth closed; and the breath must be held a moment before commencing to sing each exercise. Too much pains cannot be bestowed to the habit of taking a long respiration through the nose.

There are several advantages to be derived by breathing through the nose. First: the air is less cold when it reaches the larynx, which is thereby not rendered dry. Secondly; the opening of the mouth unnecessarily is avoided, as well as that noise in breathing which is so painful and unmusical. Later, when it becomes requisite to inhale a deep breath very quickly, the lips may be opened so that the air may be taken through both the nose and the mouth at the same time. But at first, it is all important to become accustomed to breathe through the nose.

5 Great care must be taken to avoid any rising of the root of the tongue, or its becoming rigid while singing.

6. The mouth must be moderately and naturally open; and the jaw, as well as the head must remain without movement.

7. The note should always be attacked accurately and boldly; without any sort of gliding, but similar to a note struck on the piano; without forcing it from the chest, contracting the throat, or anticipating it with an aspiration which produces the bad effect following:

8. The exercises must be sung with the full natural voice; without effort; without changing the vowel; with the same degree of power throughout the entire extent of the voice; and without any shading, except when indicated.

9. The pupil should not sing longer than a quarter of an hour at a time.

10. Whenever the pupil perceives that something is wrong: either that the intonation is not pure, the breath not properly taken, or that the quality of the tone is defective, she should immediately stop. When, after the lapse of a few seconds, during which the throat resumes its normal position, she should begin again; concentrating all her attention on the passage in which her singing was defective.

11. In fine, from the moment the pupil sits down to the piano, she should concentrate her mind on what she is about to study, and not permit her thoughts to wander from it. If she does not feel disposed to give it her undivided attention, it will be better to postpone the attempt.

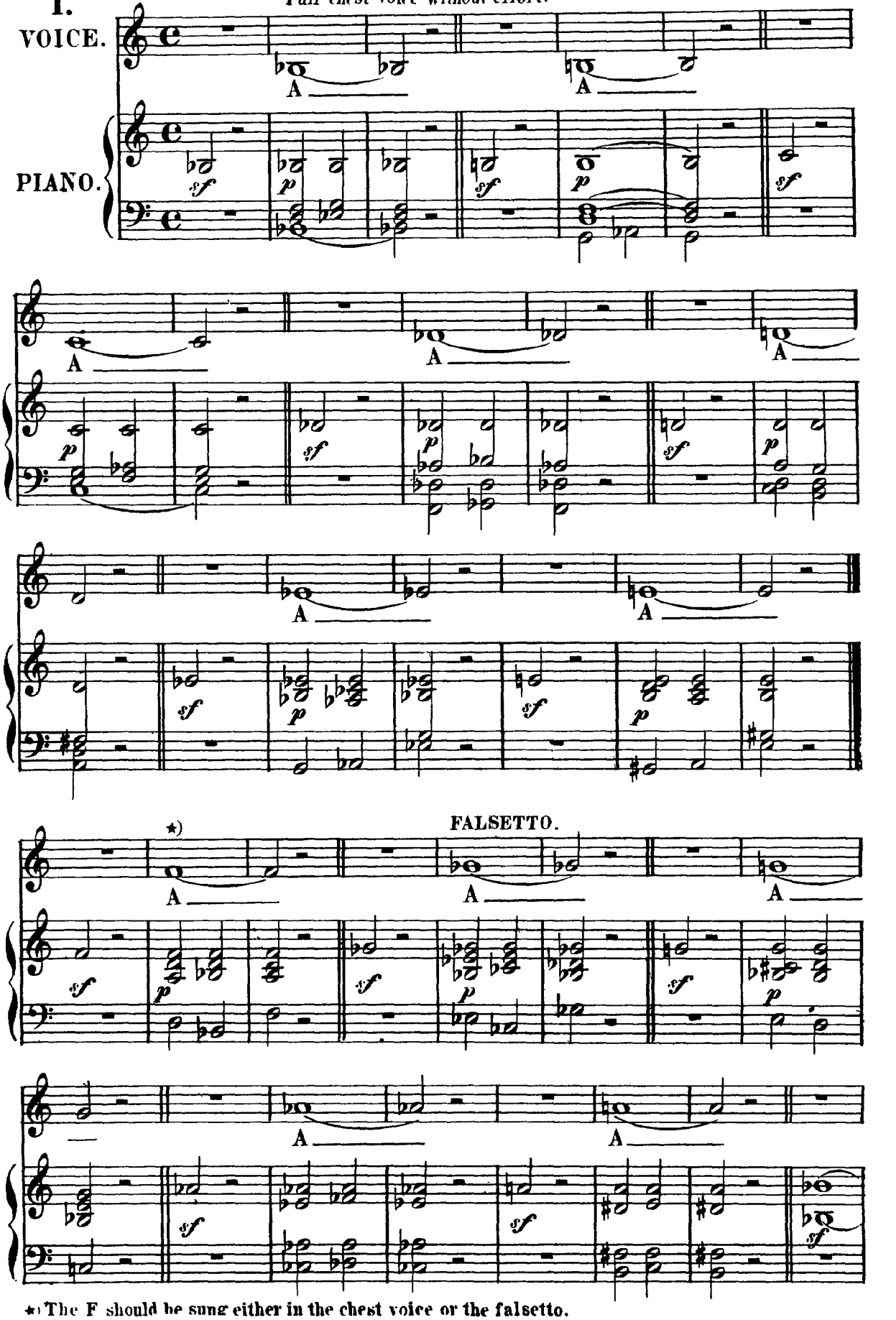
Exercises.

1.

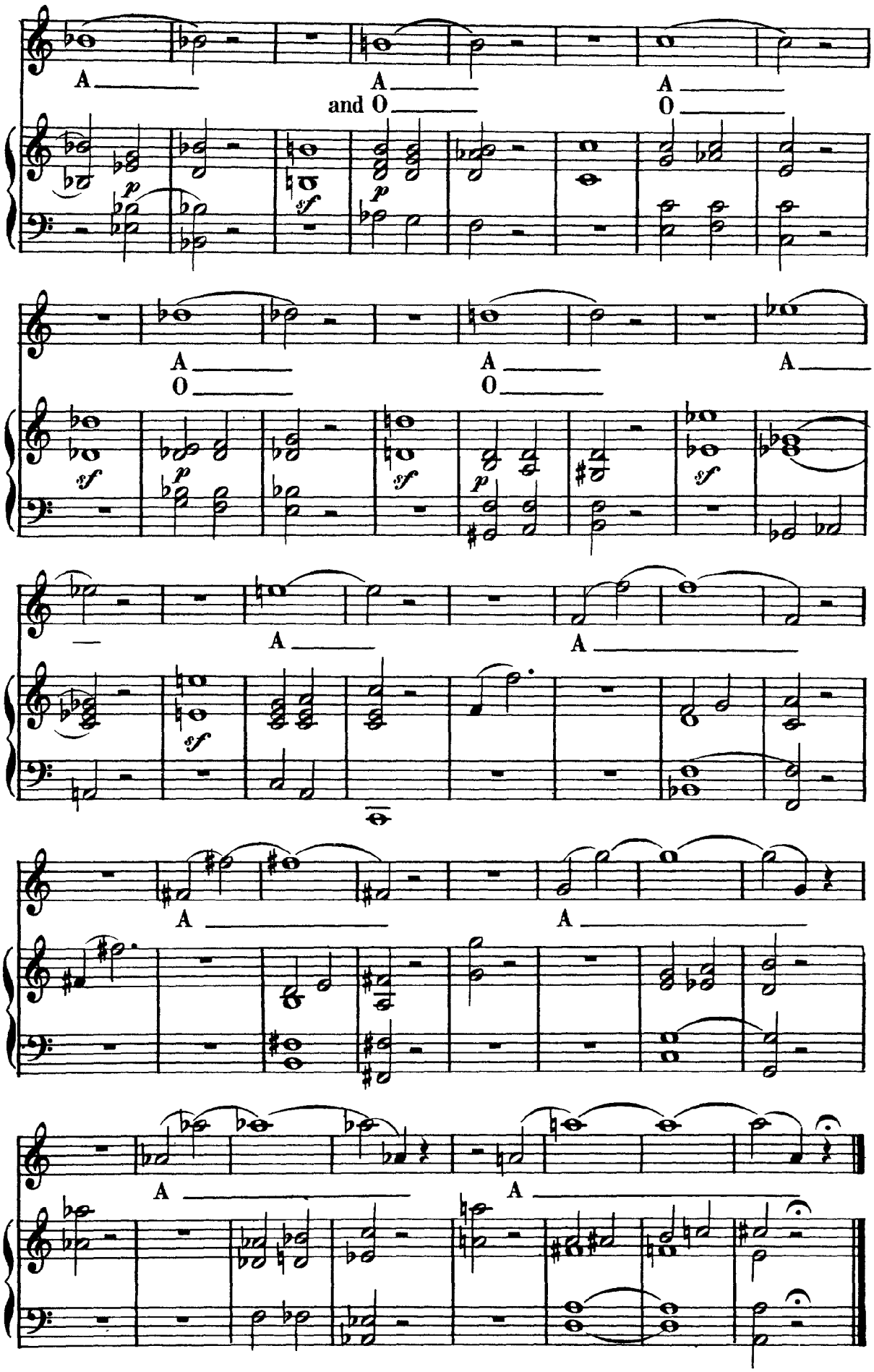
Moderato. Full chest voice without effort.

VOICE.

PIANO.



*) The F should be sung either in the chest voice or the falsetto.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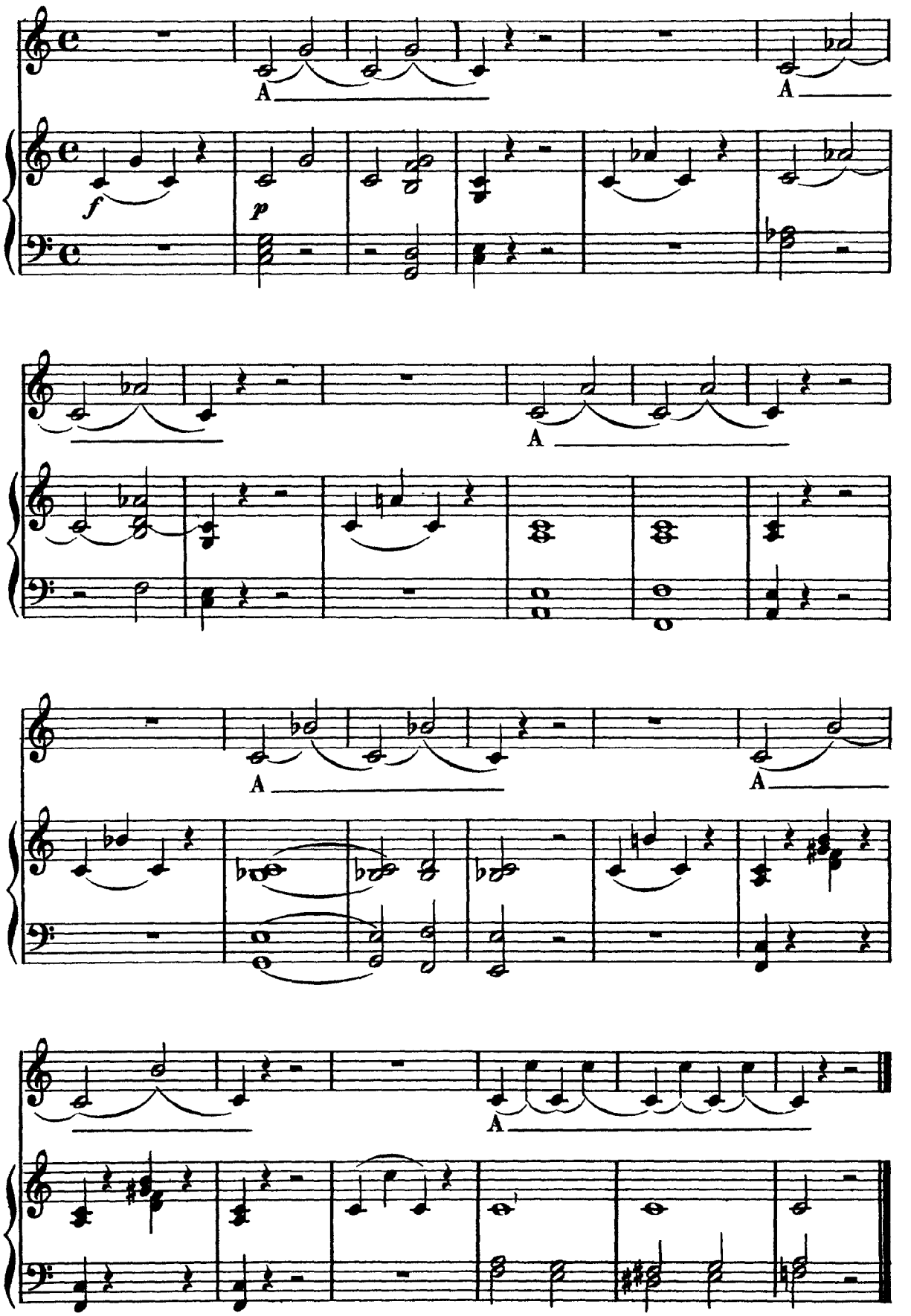
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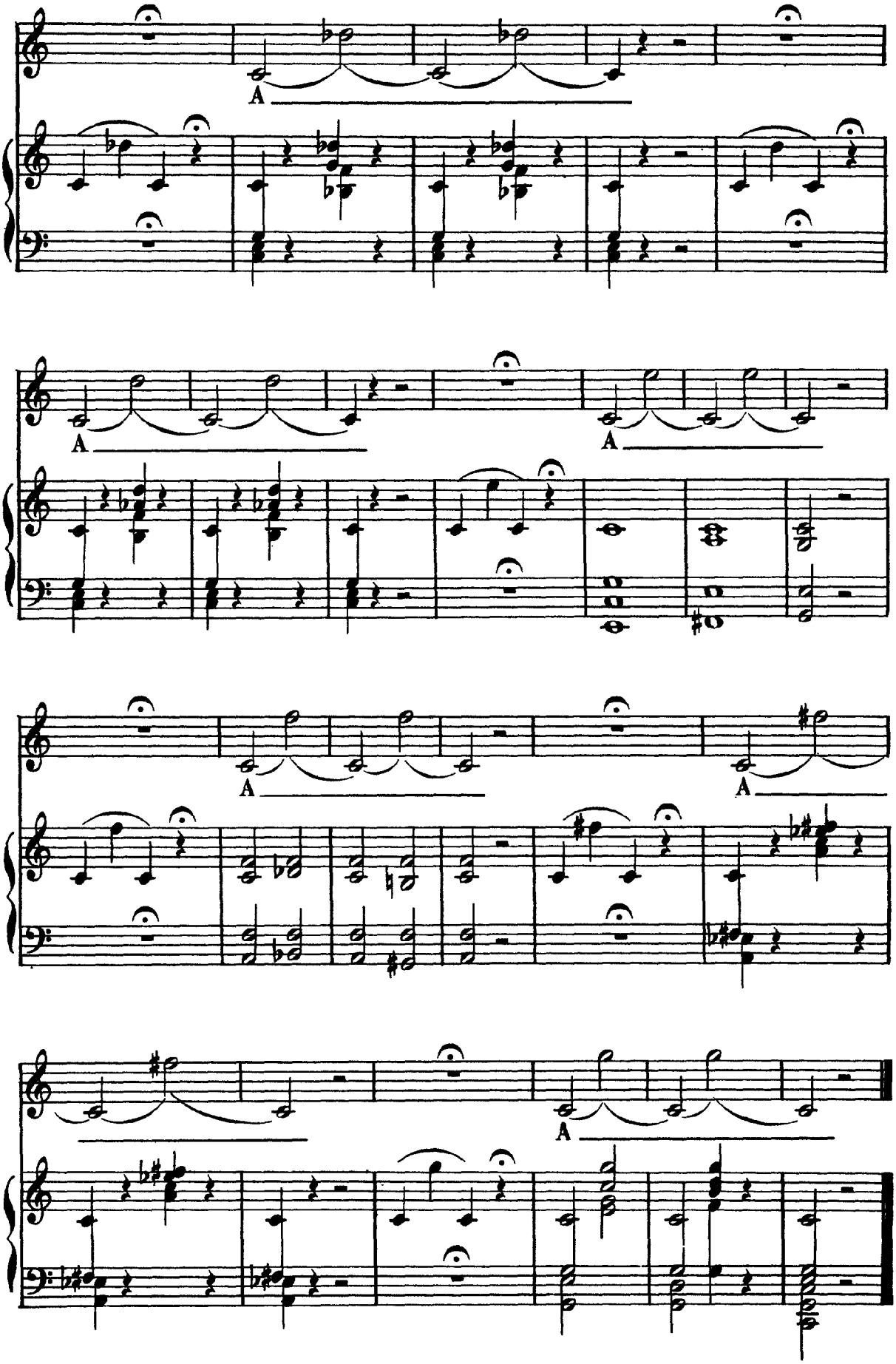
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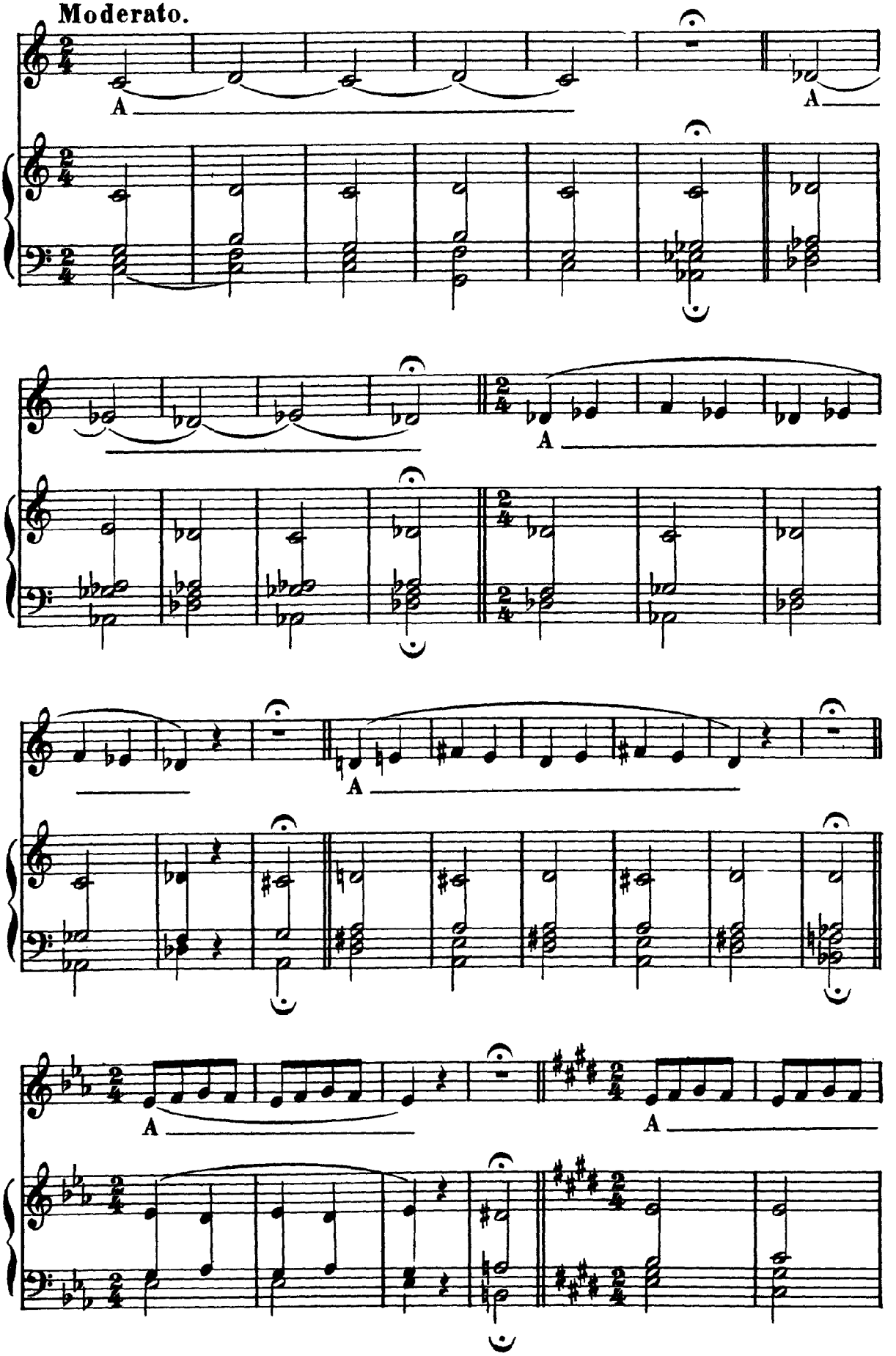
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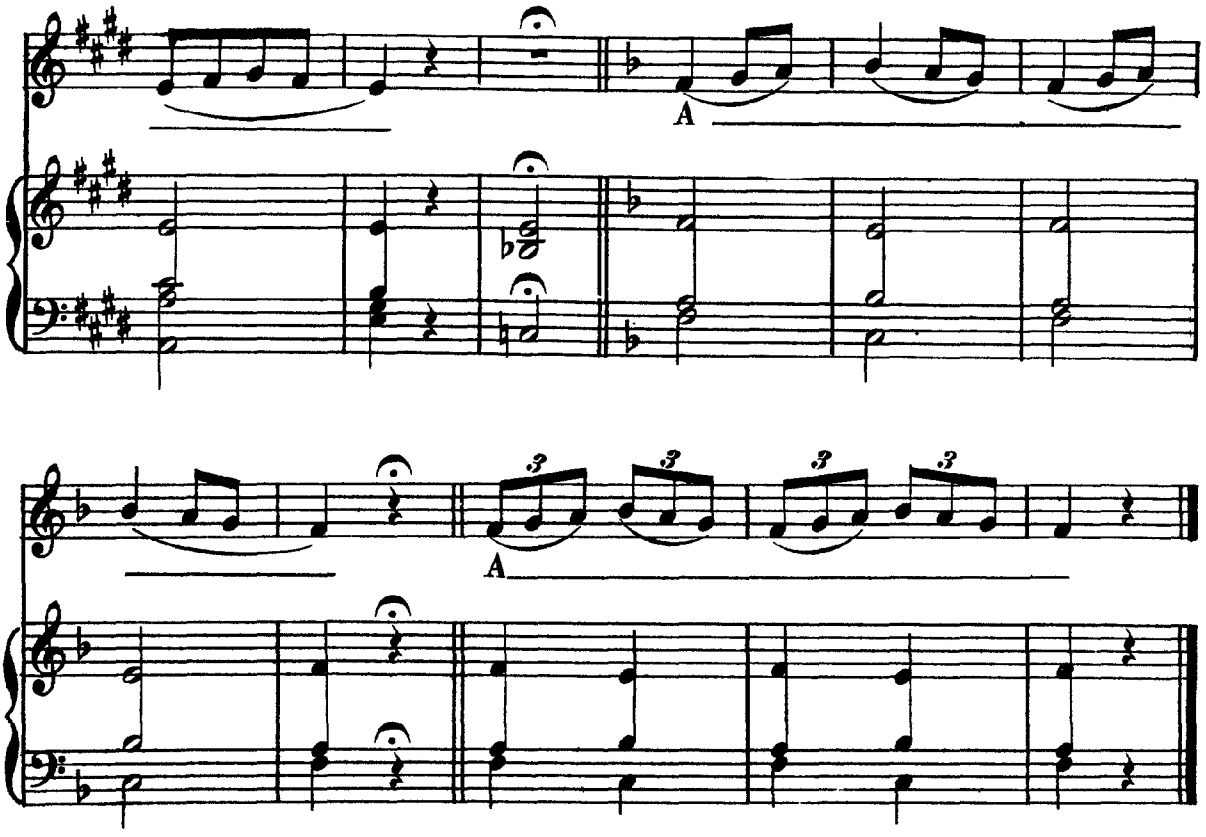
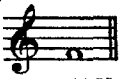


Should the pupil find difficulty in any of the exercises, she should, before attempting them with the voice, play them on the piano until she has them well in her mind. She should never fatigue her voice by trying to sing what she has not comprehended musically. Care must also be taken not to sing notes so high or so low as to necessitate making an effort to produce them.

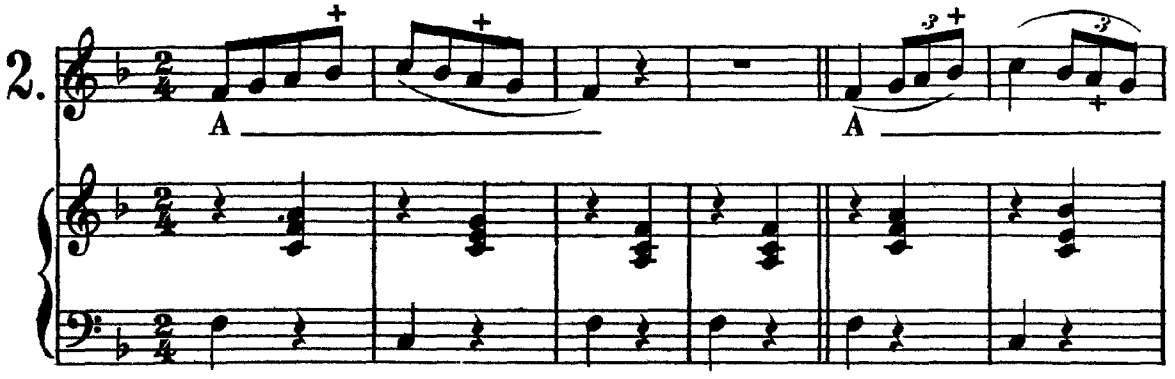
The sign +, placed above or below notes, signifies that care must be taken to avoid singing them too sharp or too flat: which is a grave defect of intonation very common in pupils.

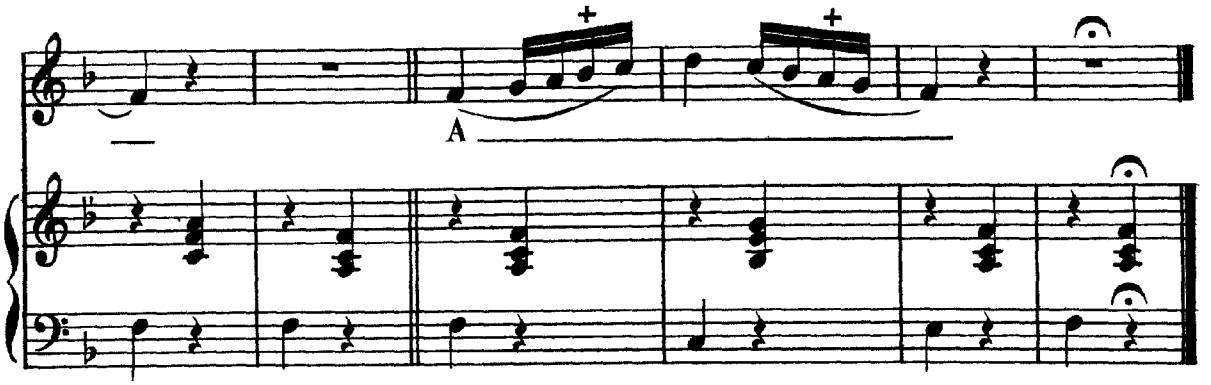
In general, the interval of the semitone is apt to be too great, both in ascending and descending. It is, therefore, the intervals from the third to the fourth, and from the seventh to the octave of the ascending scale, and from the octave to the seventh, and from the fourth to the third of the descending scale that require the strictest attention.

Another habitual fault must also be avoided; namely, that of singing the first note of the exercise, the tonic, too sharp.

Each exercise should at first, be sung slowly; afterwards, as the pupil acquires greater facility, the tempo may be encreased until the exercise, Nº 8. can be executed with a single respiration. Care must be taken to sing as high as Fa  in the chest-voice, both ascending and descending.

Whenever the pupil is compelled to take breath in the middle of an exercise, she should stop after the first note of the measure, respire through the nose and the mouth, without any grimace or noise, and then recommence by singing the same first note.

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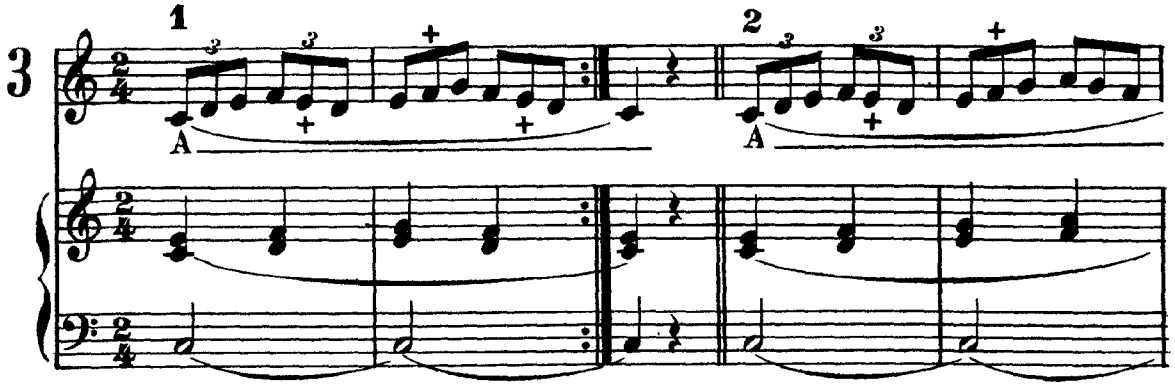
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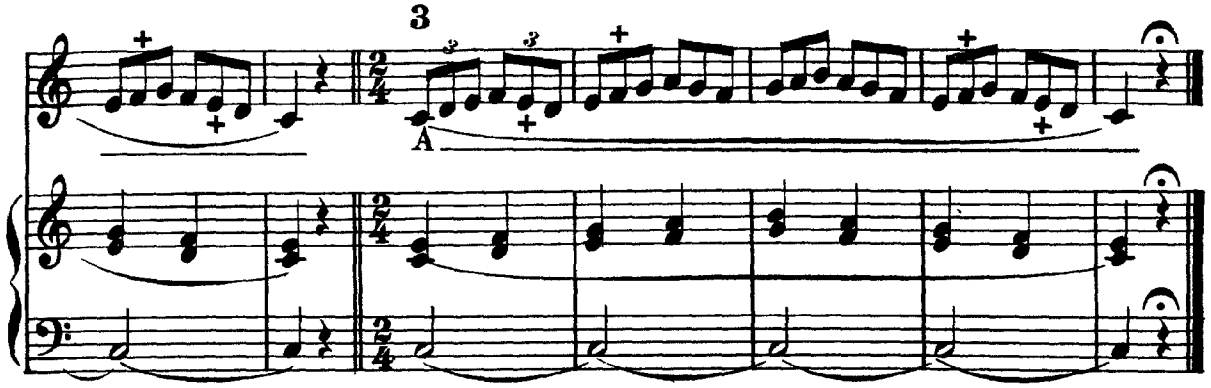
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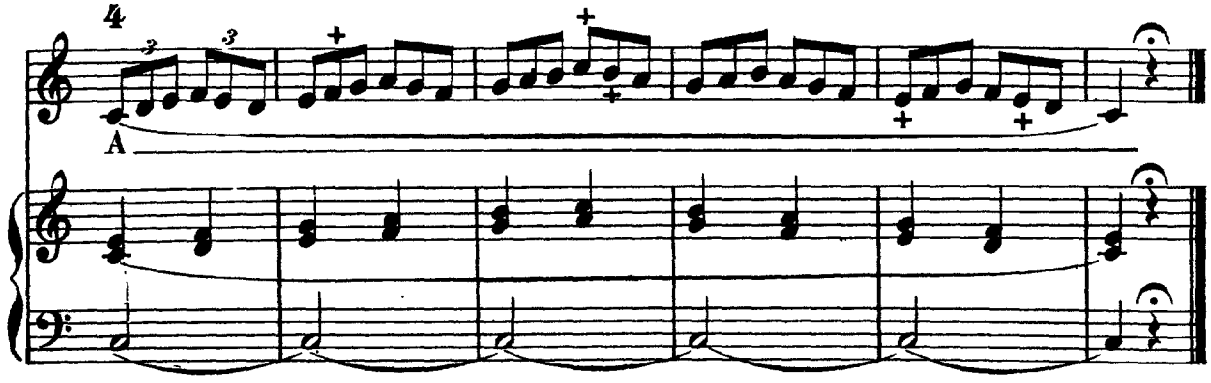
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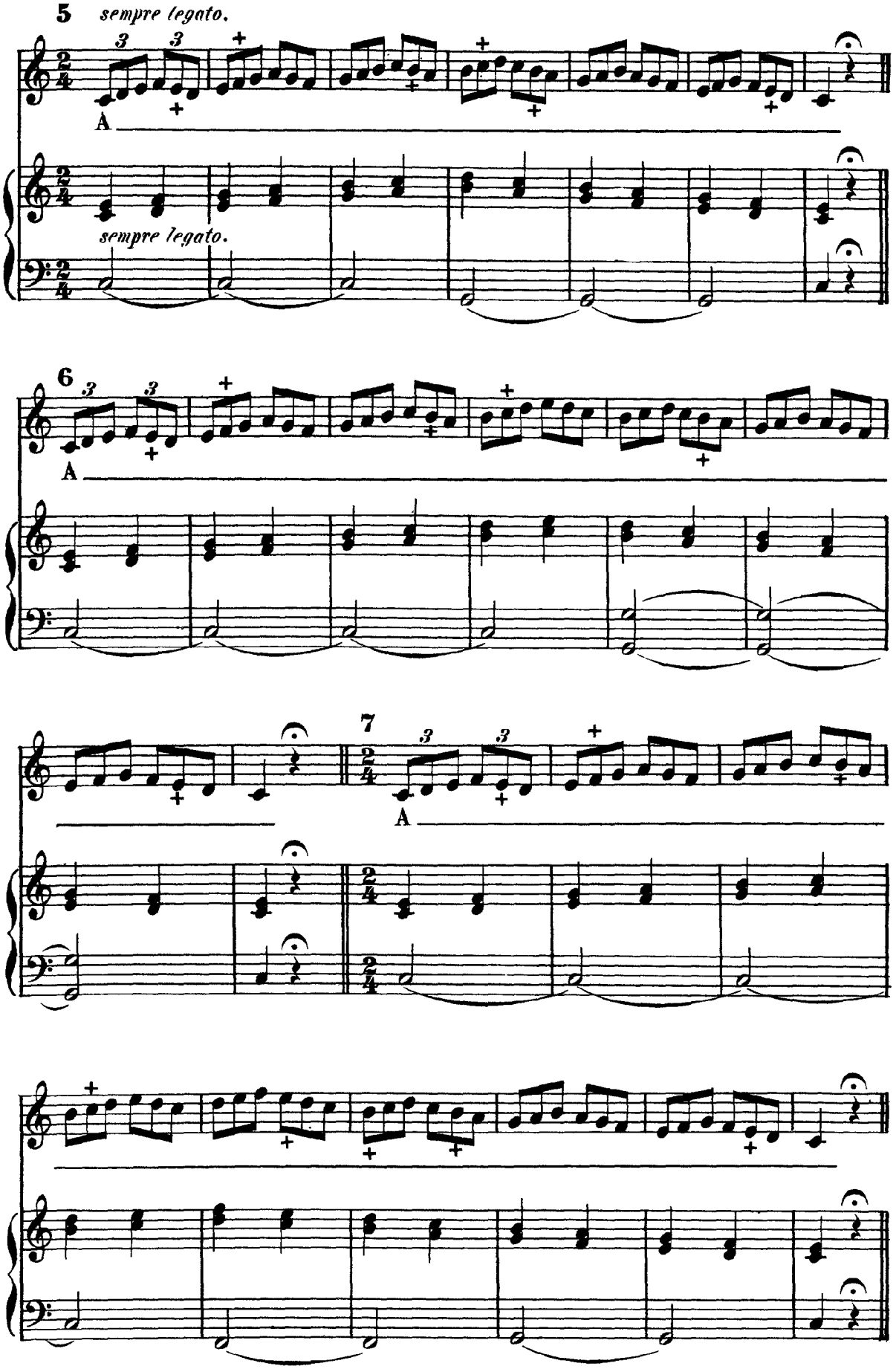
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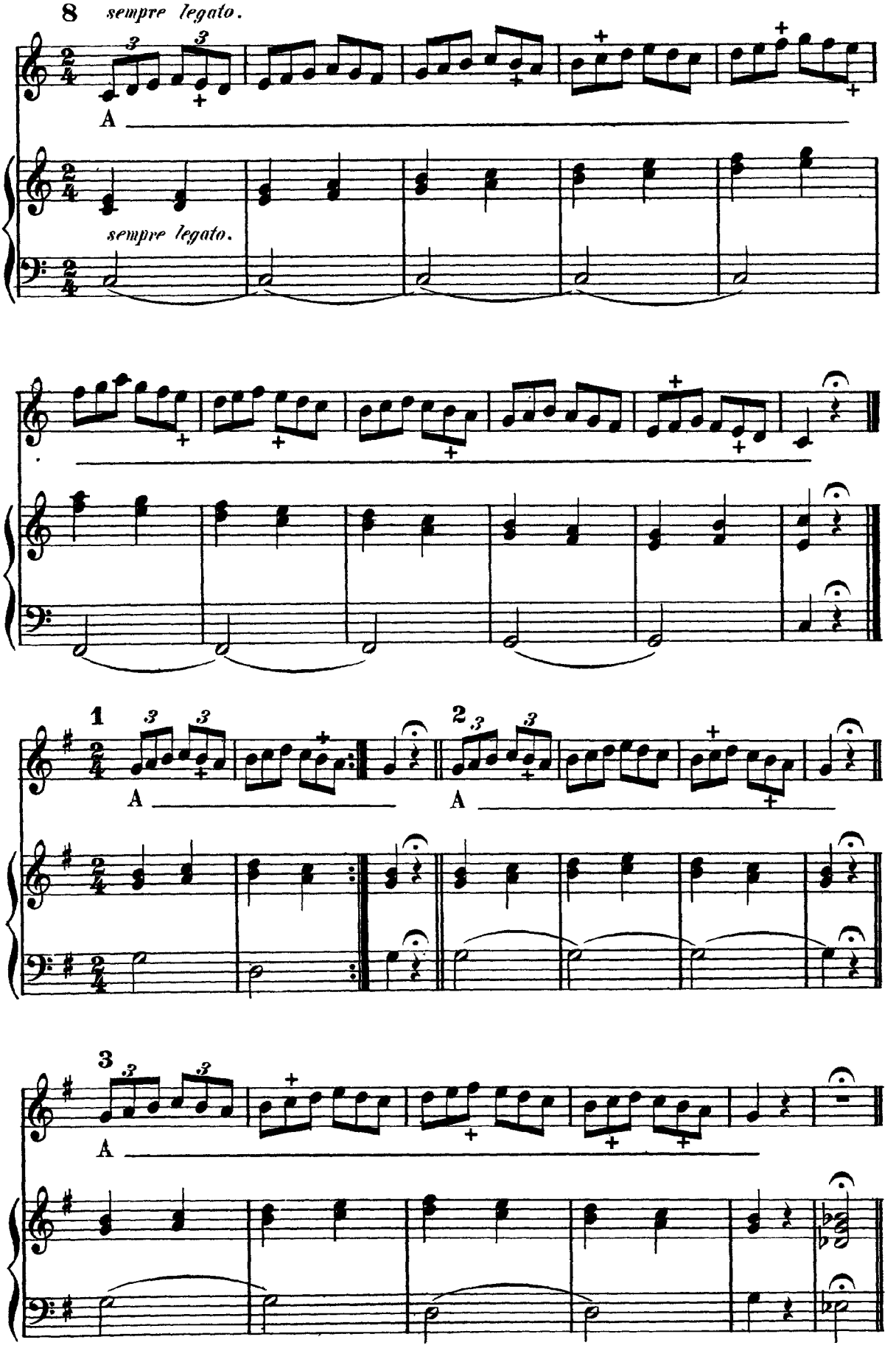
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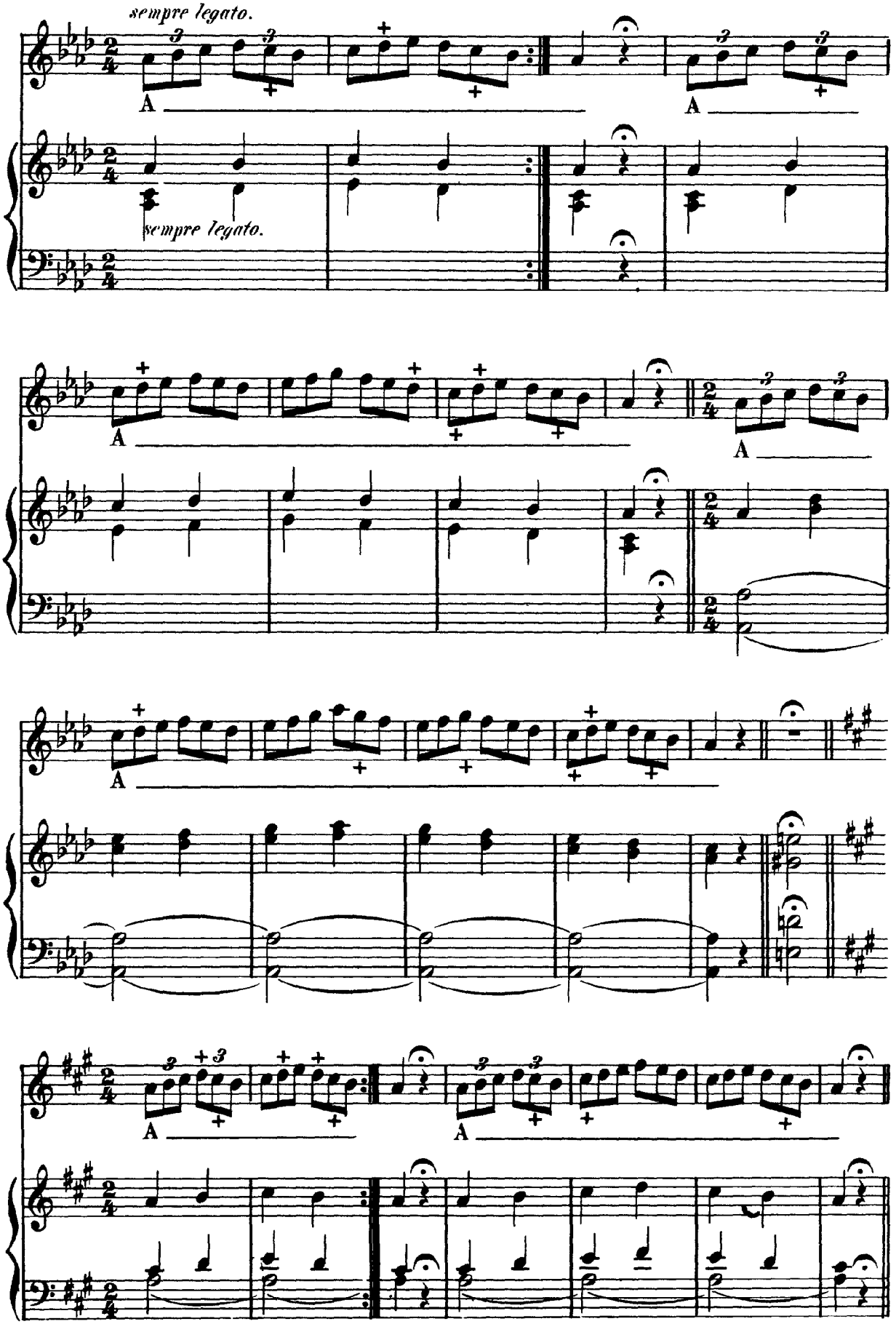
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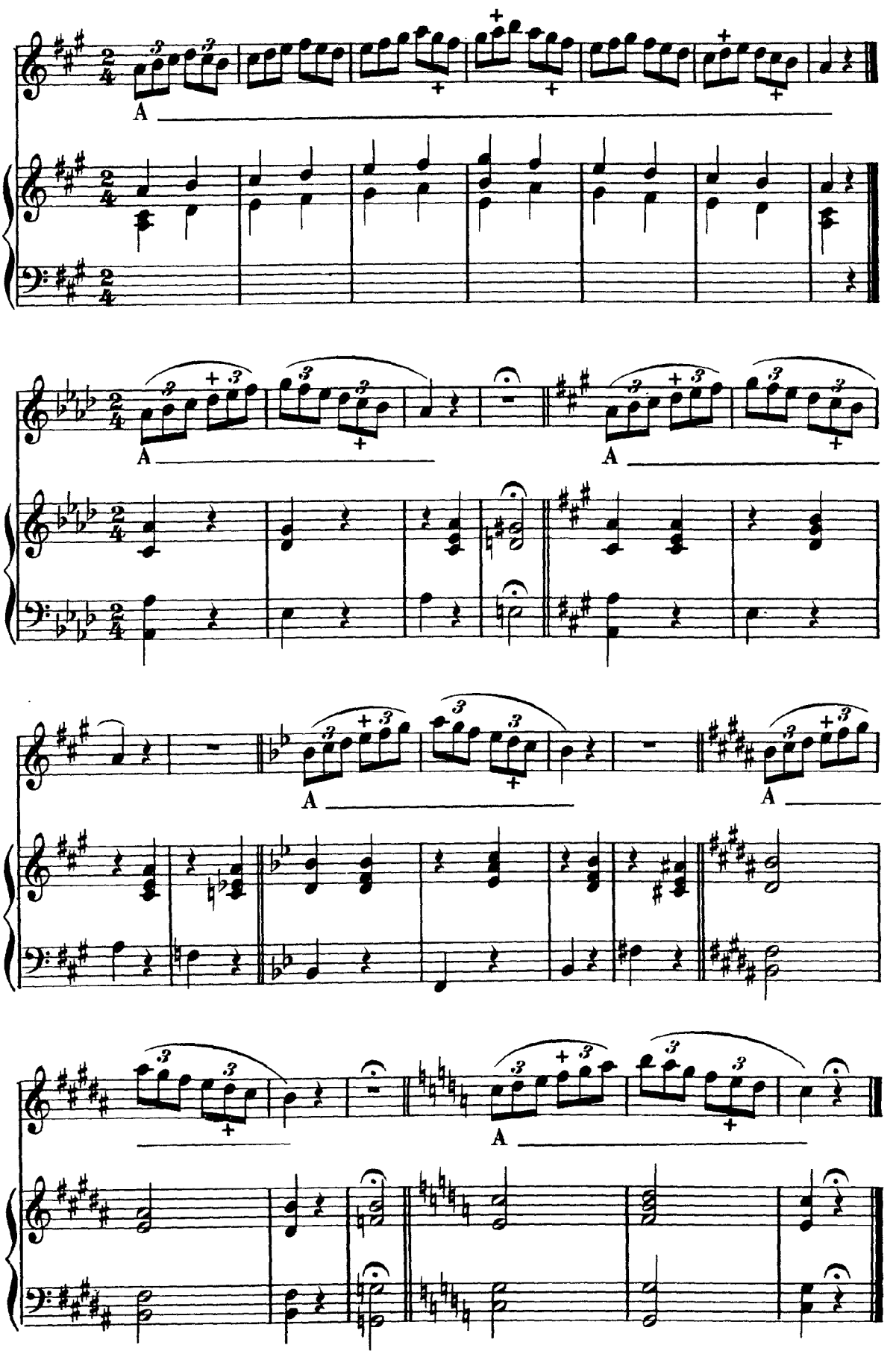
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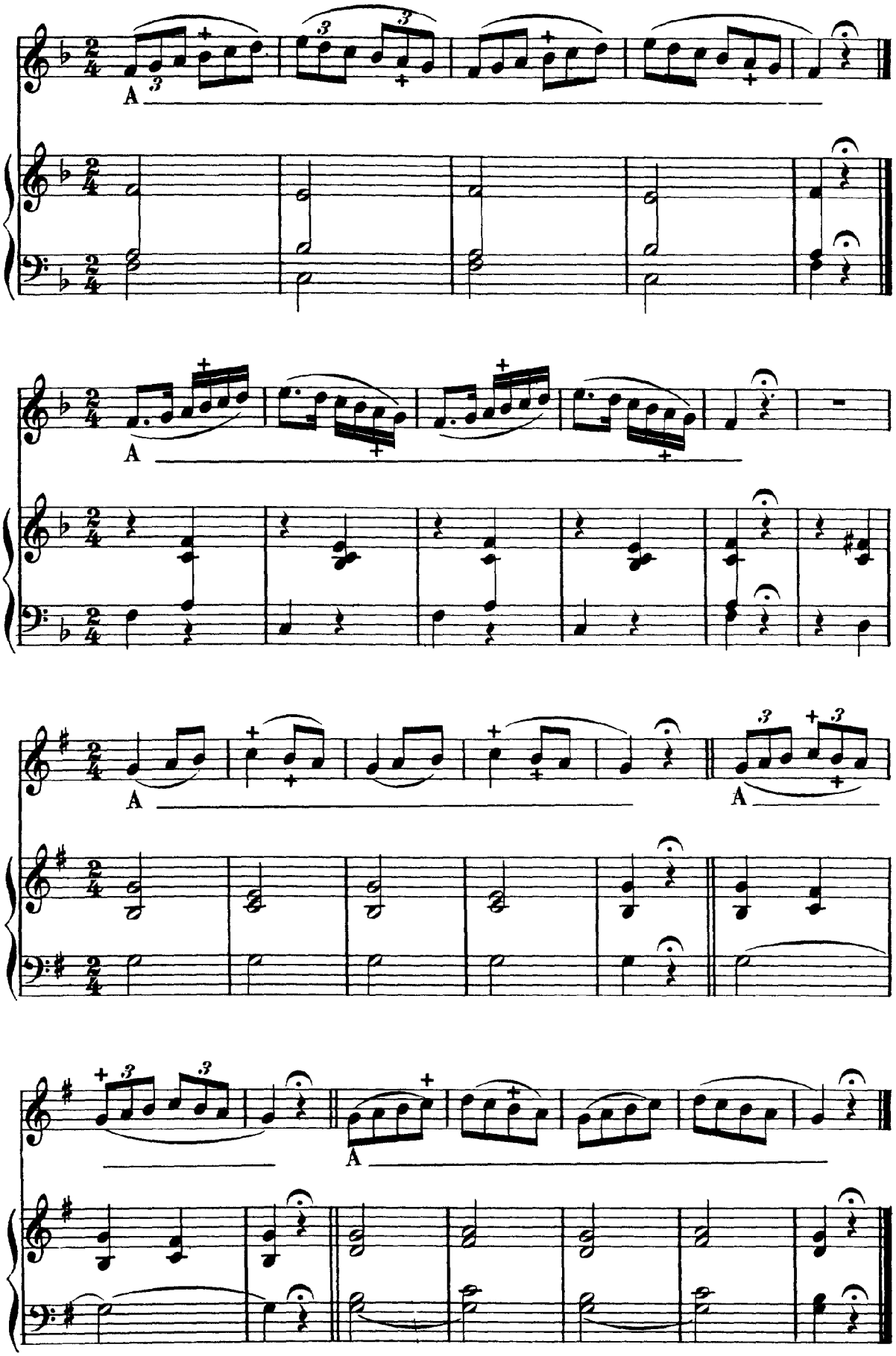
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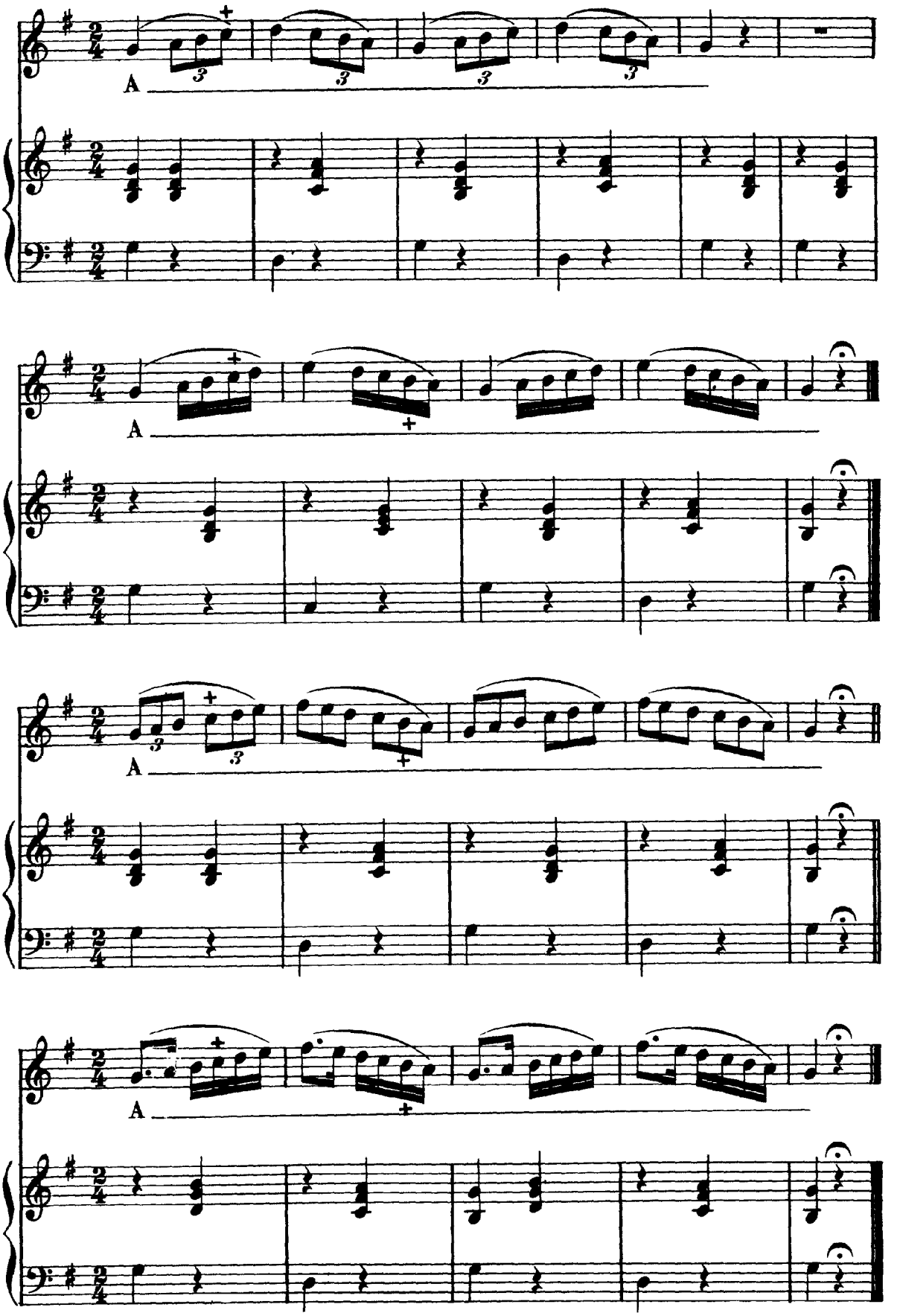
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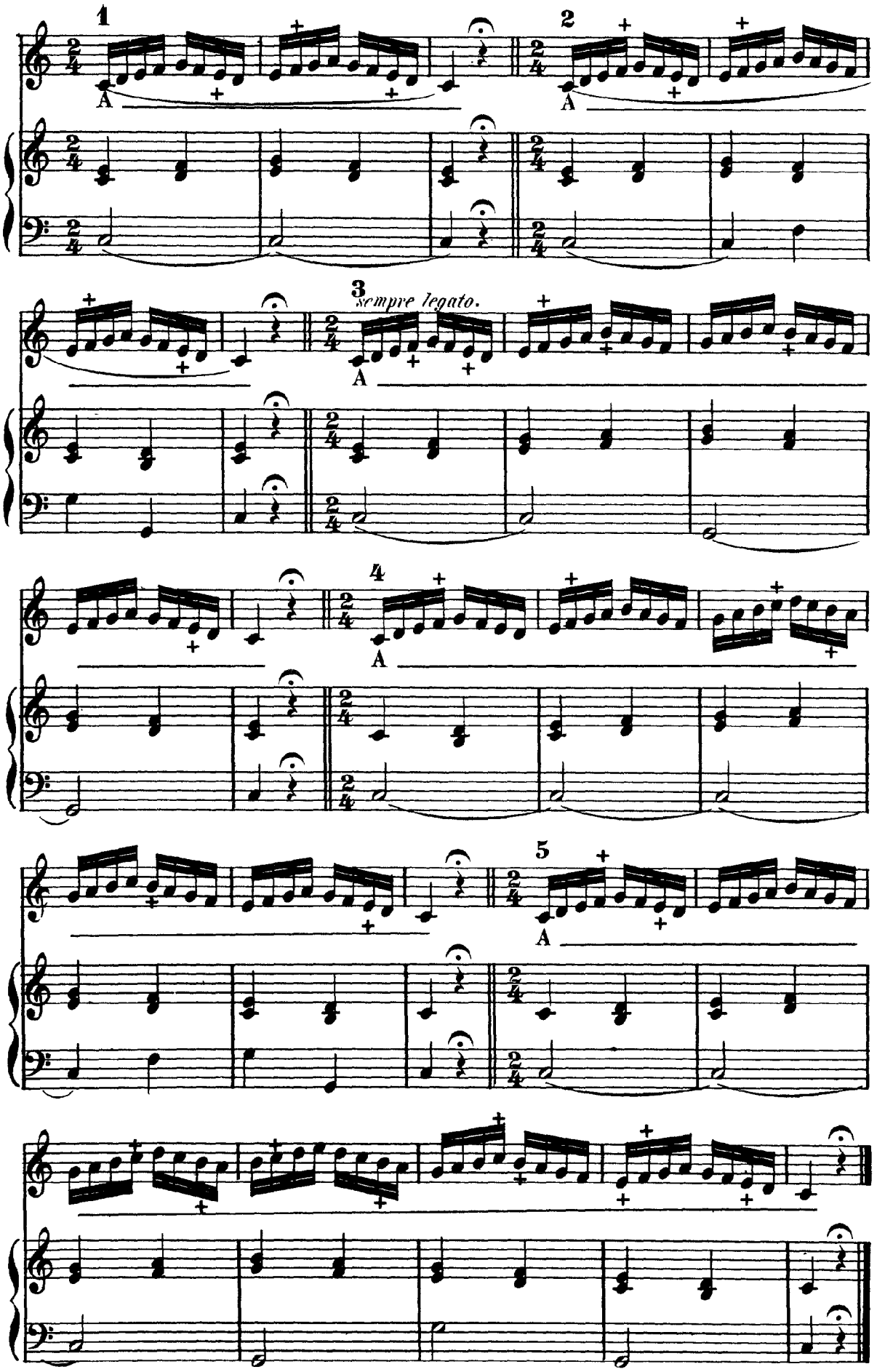
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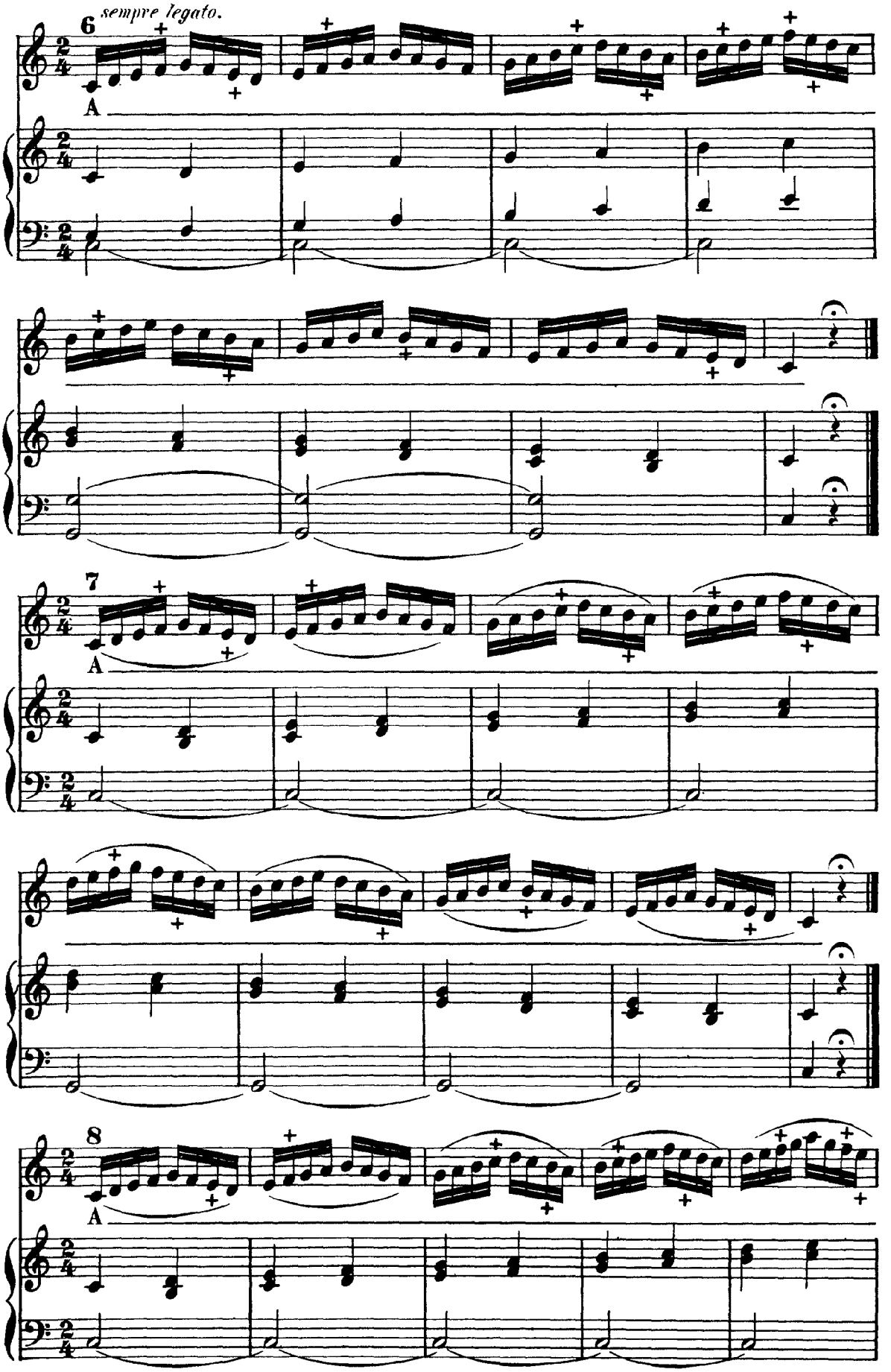
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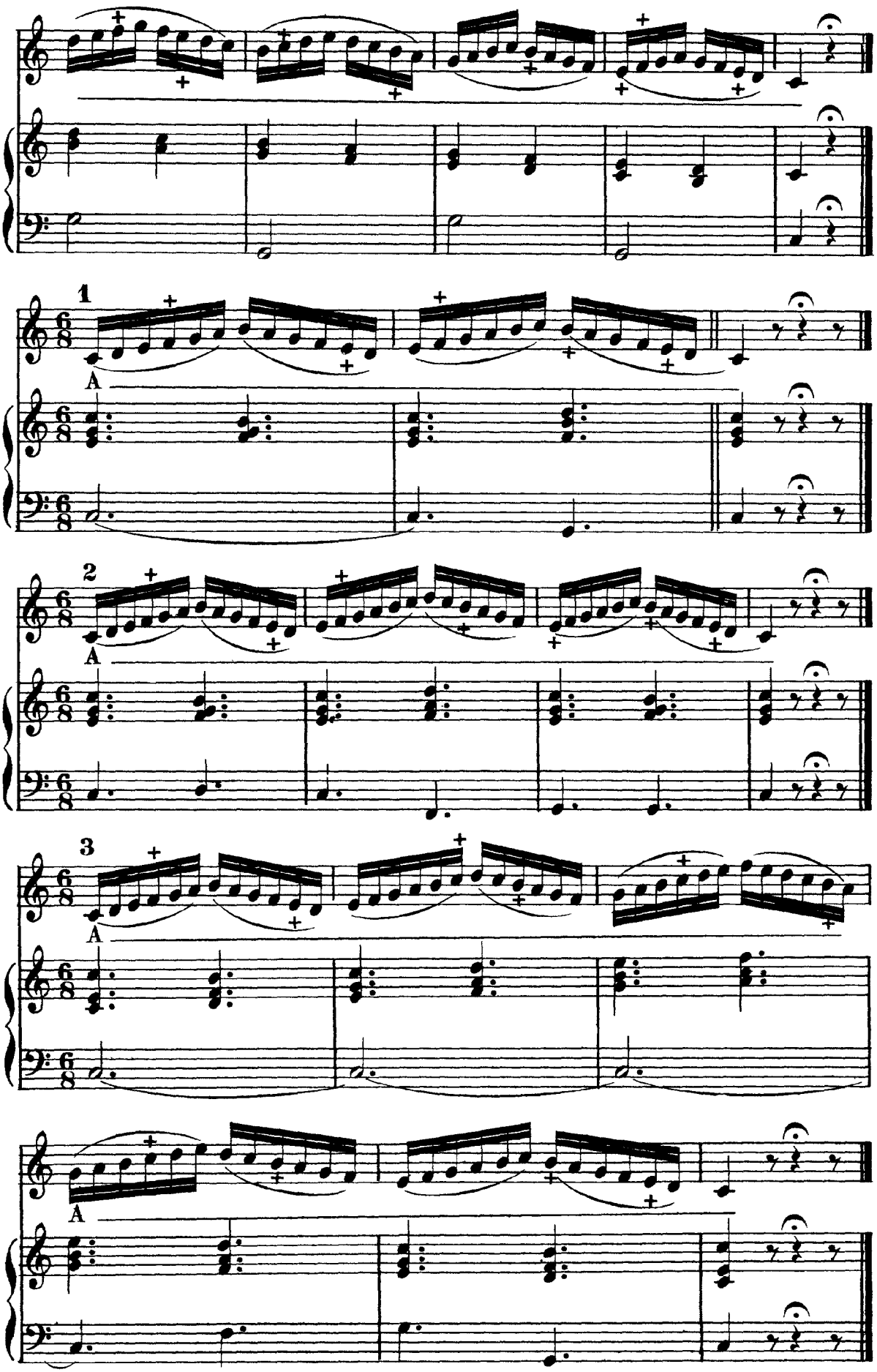
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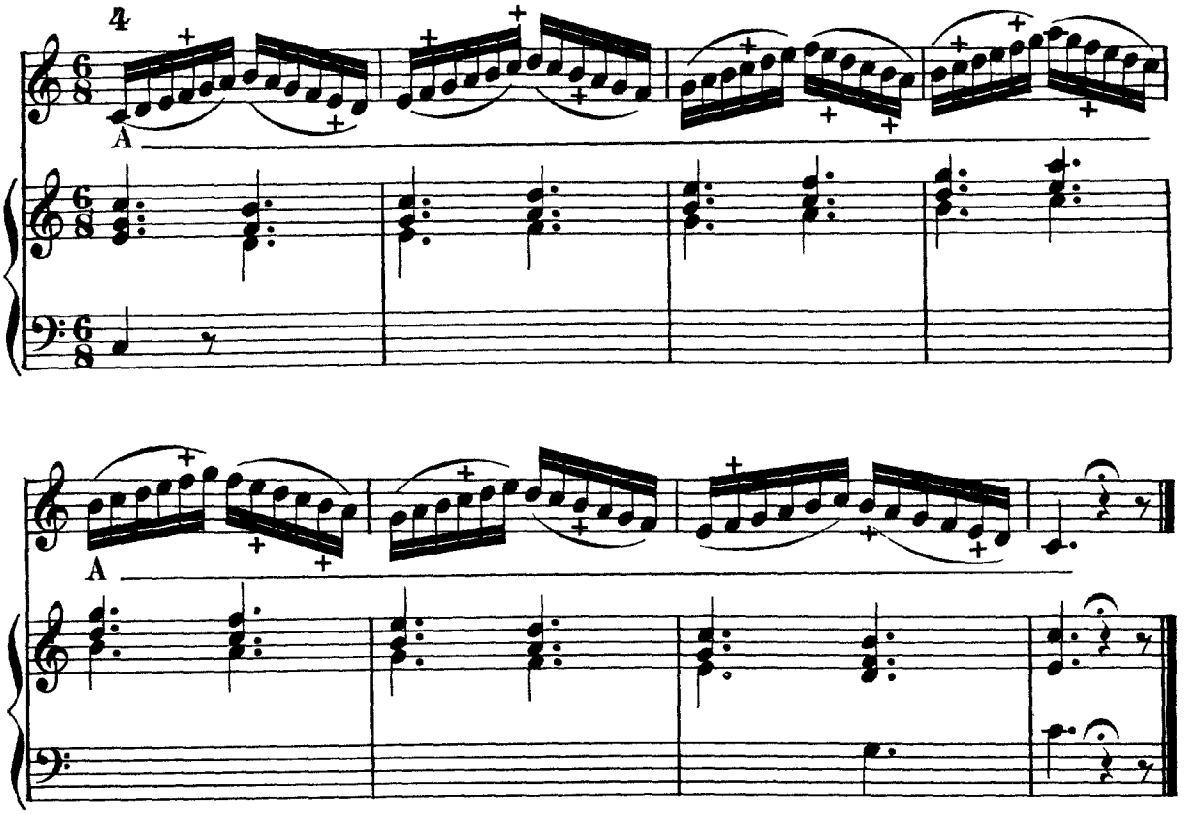
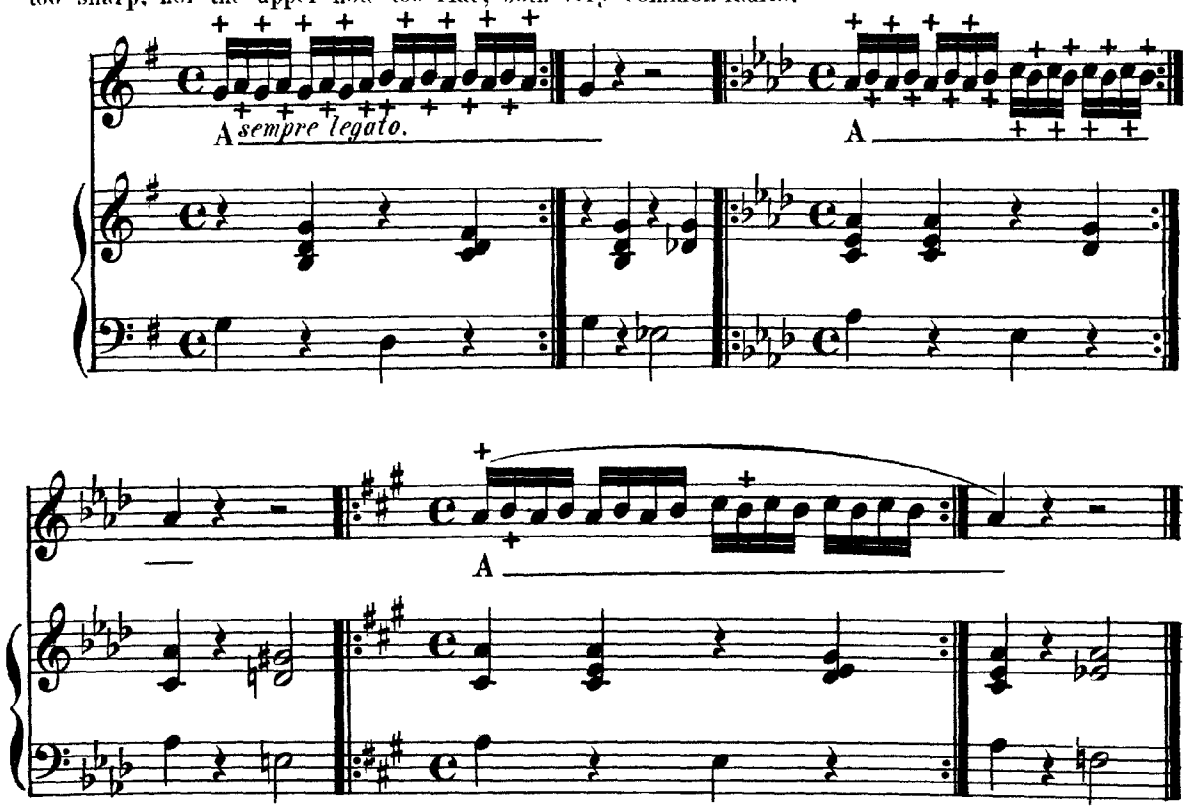
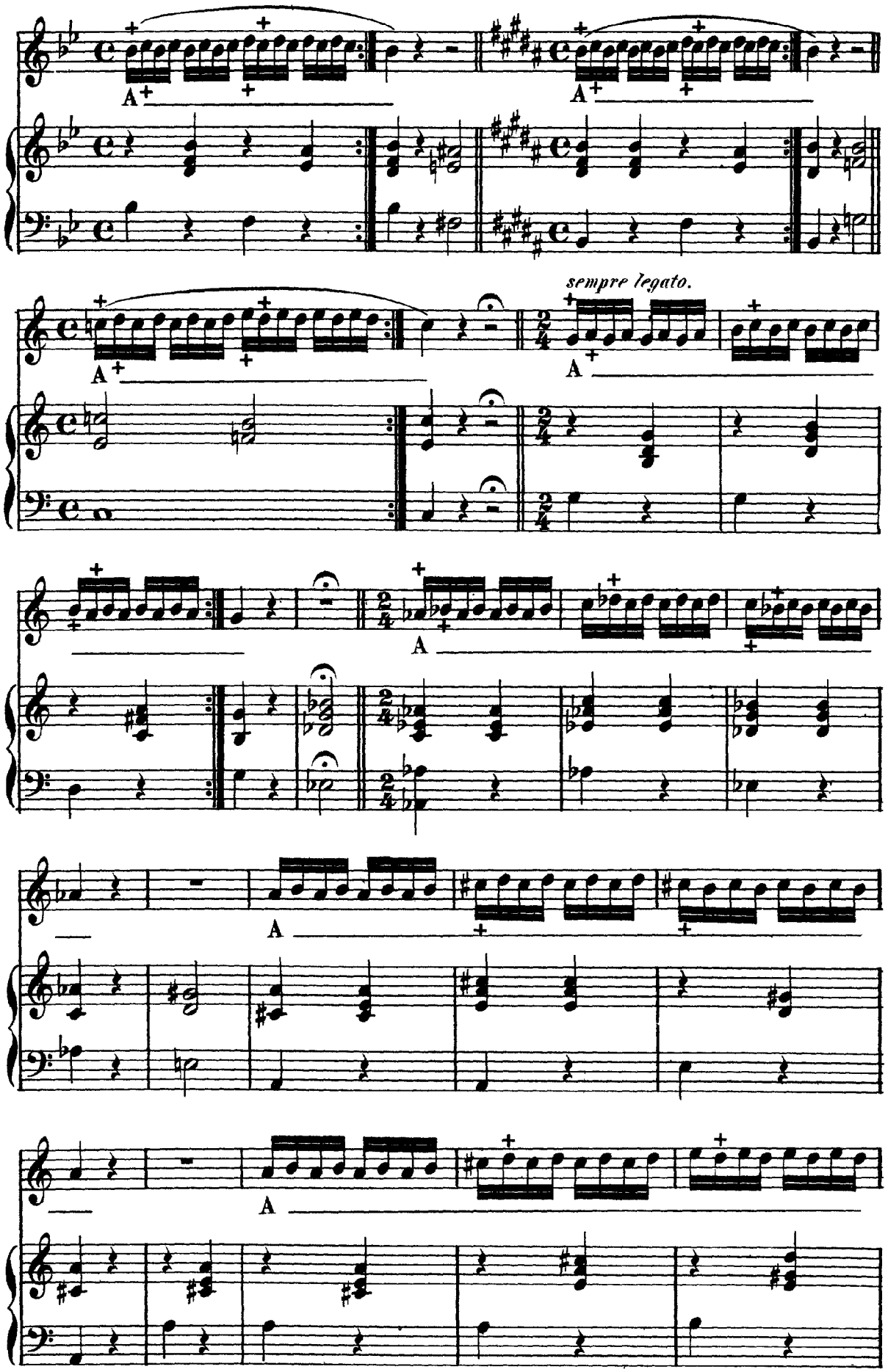


In the following exercises great attention must be paid that the lower note should not become too sharp, nor the upper note too flat; both very common faults.

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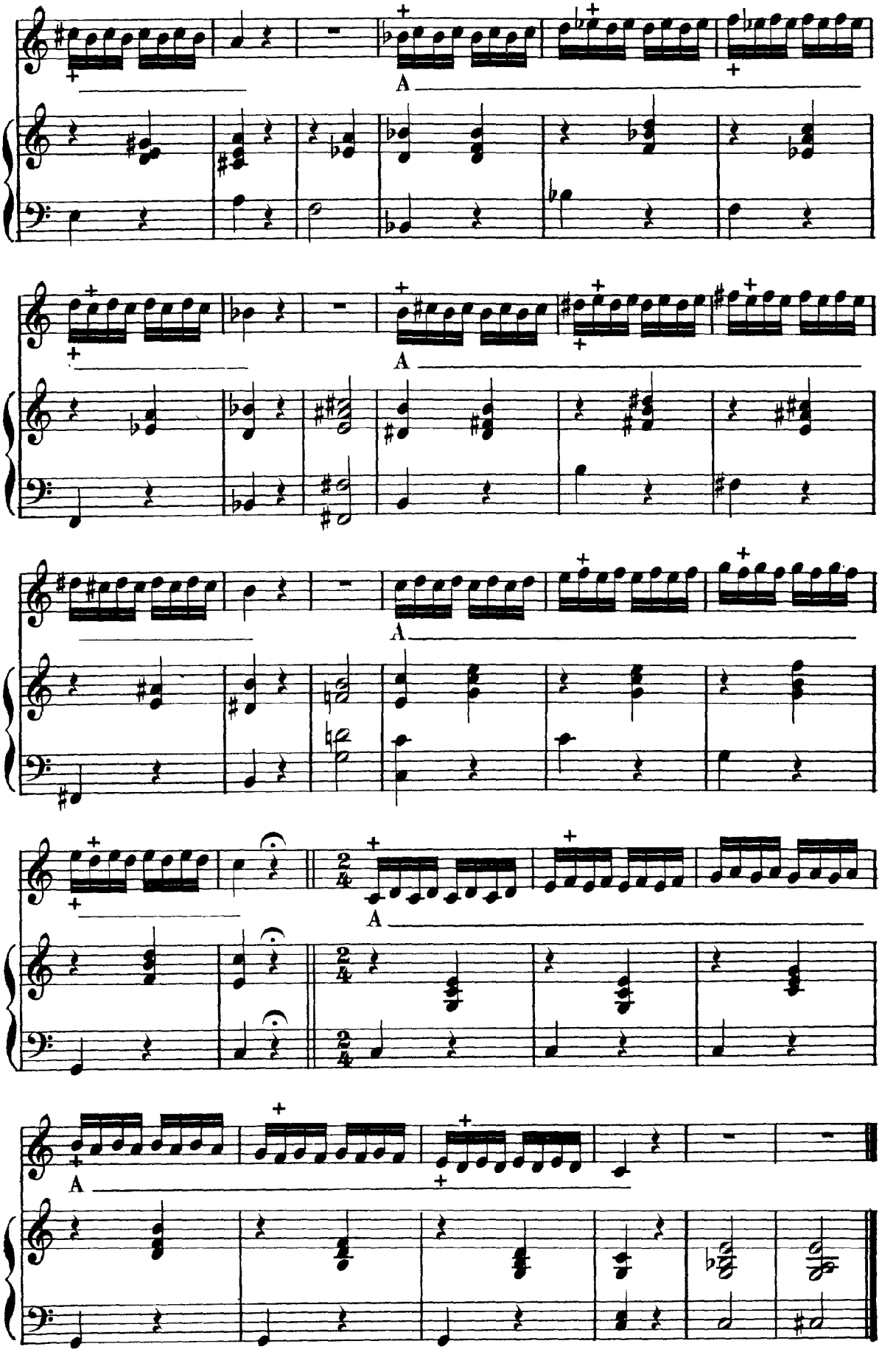
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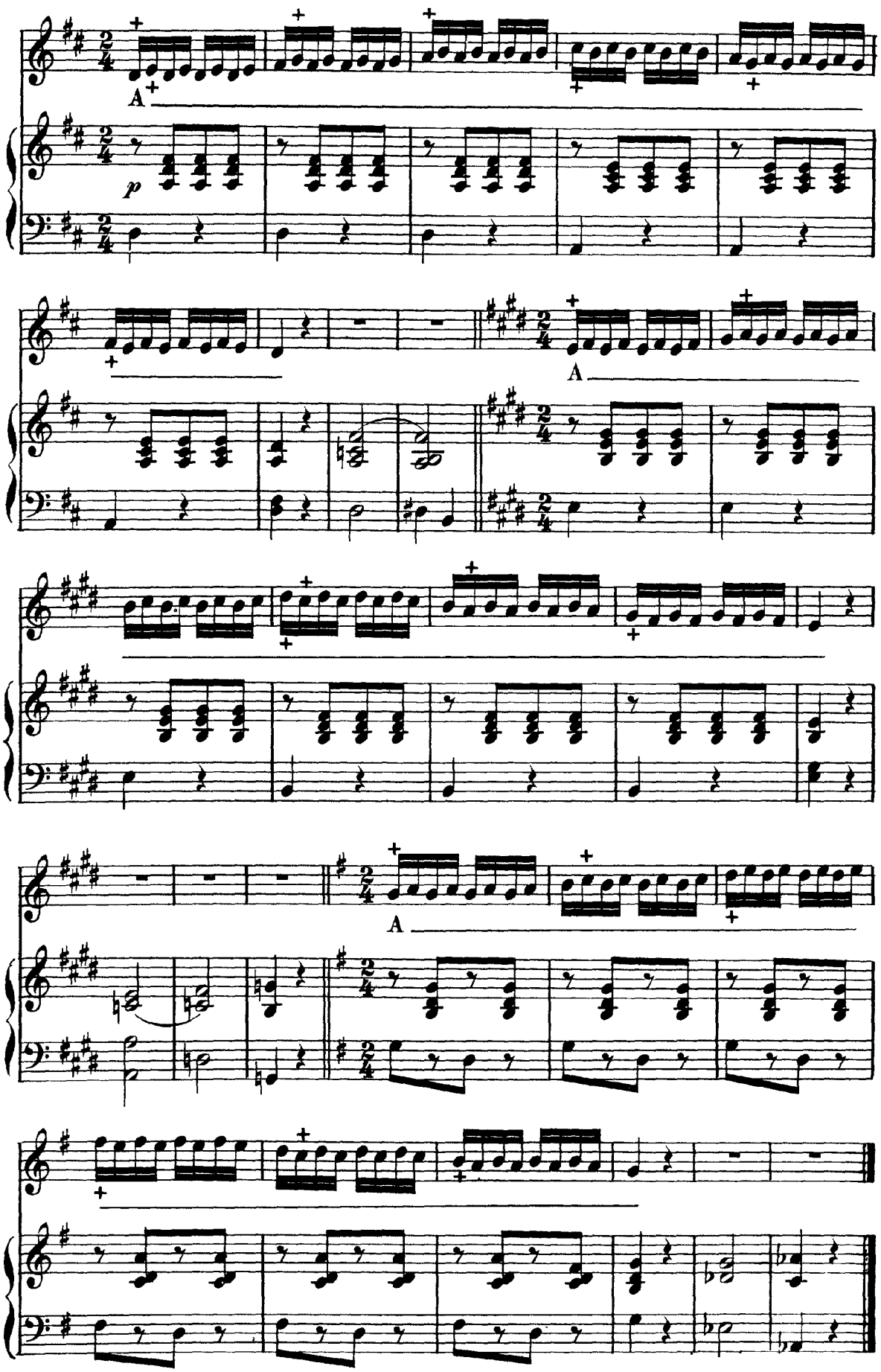
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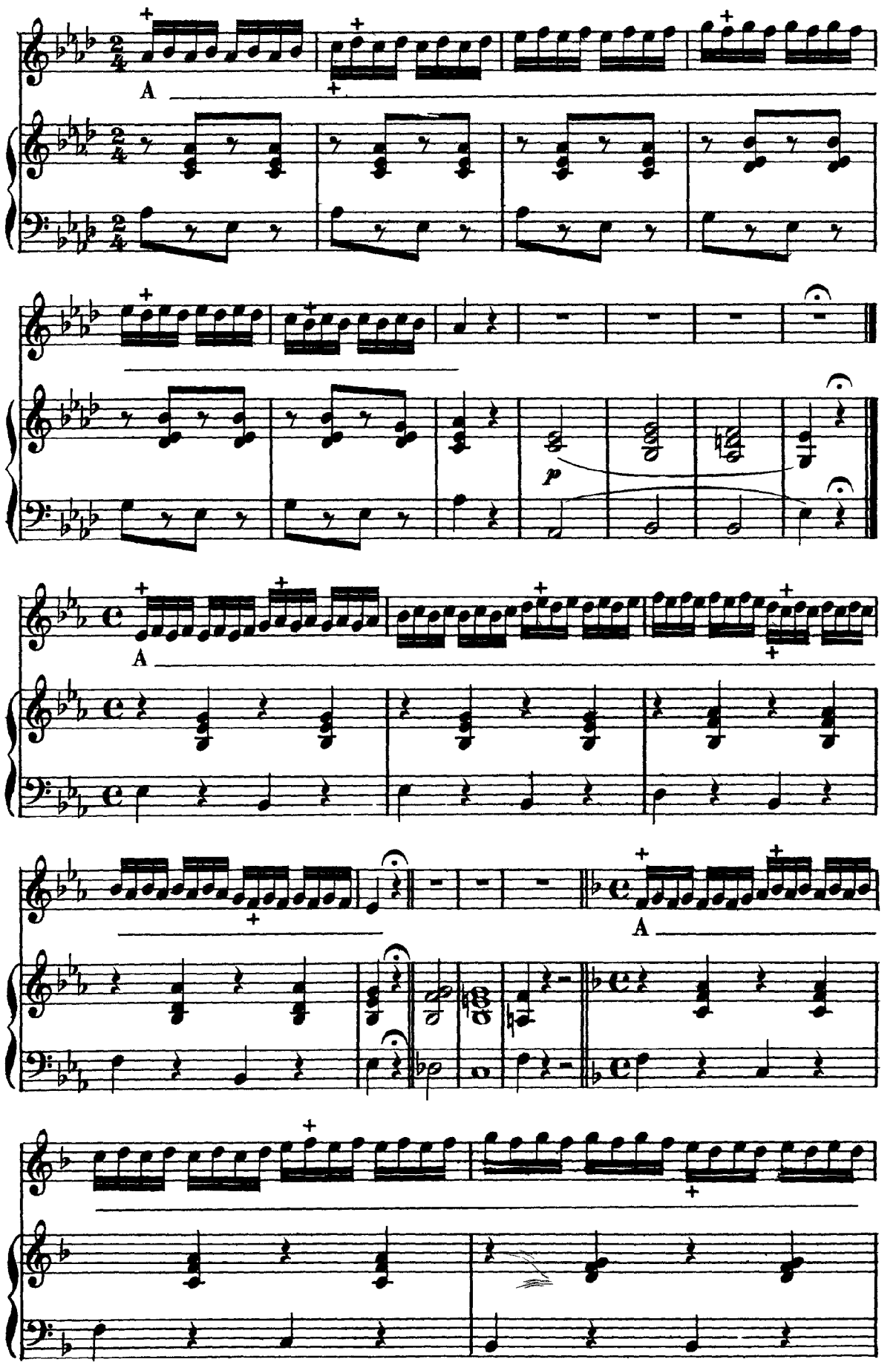
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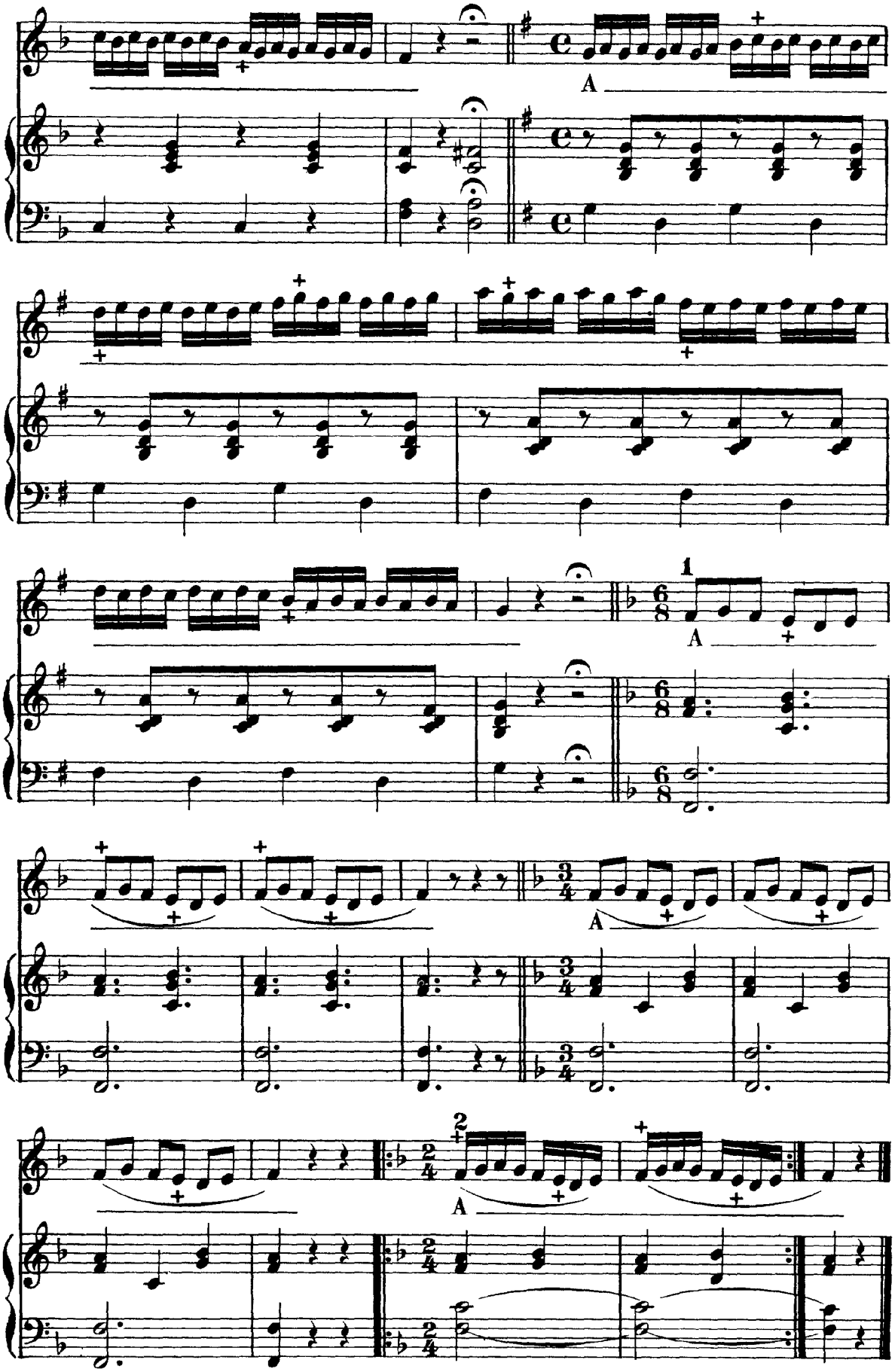
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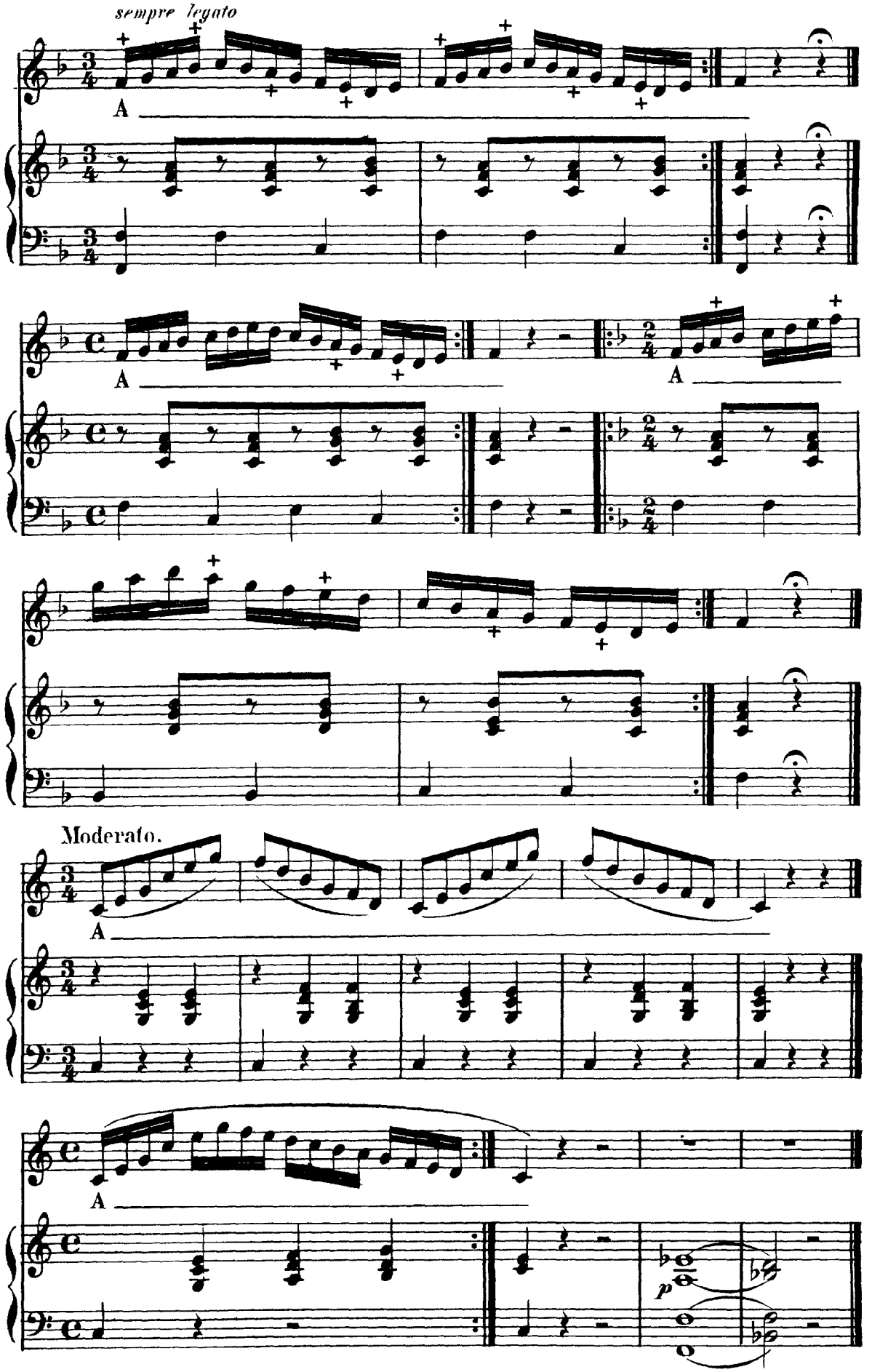
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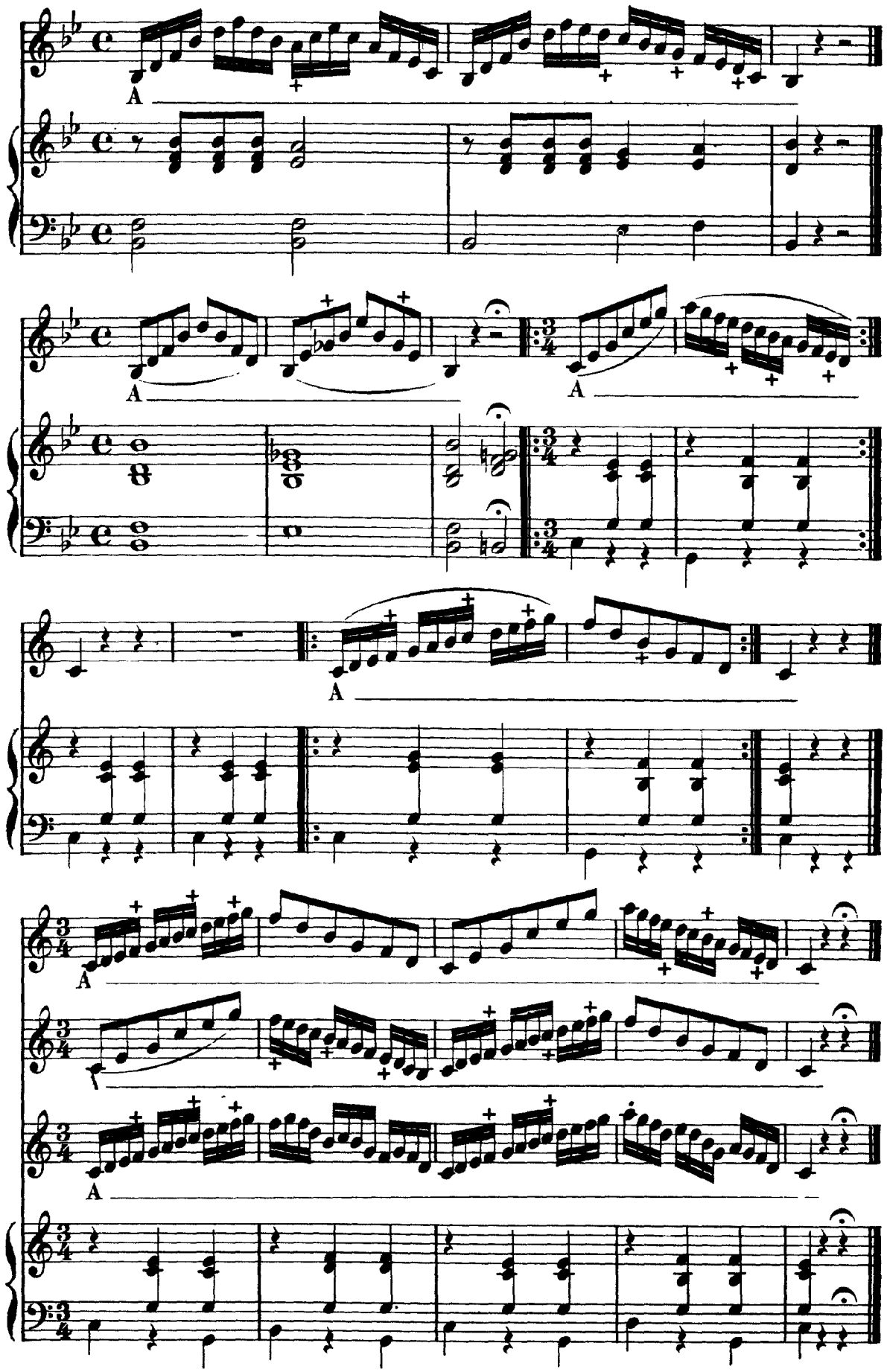
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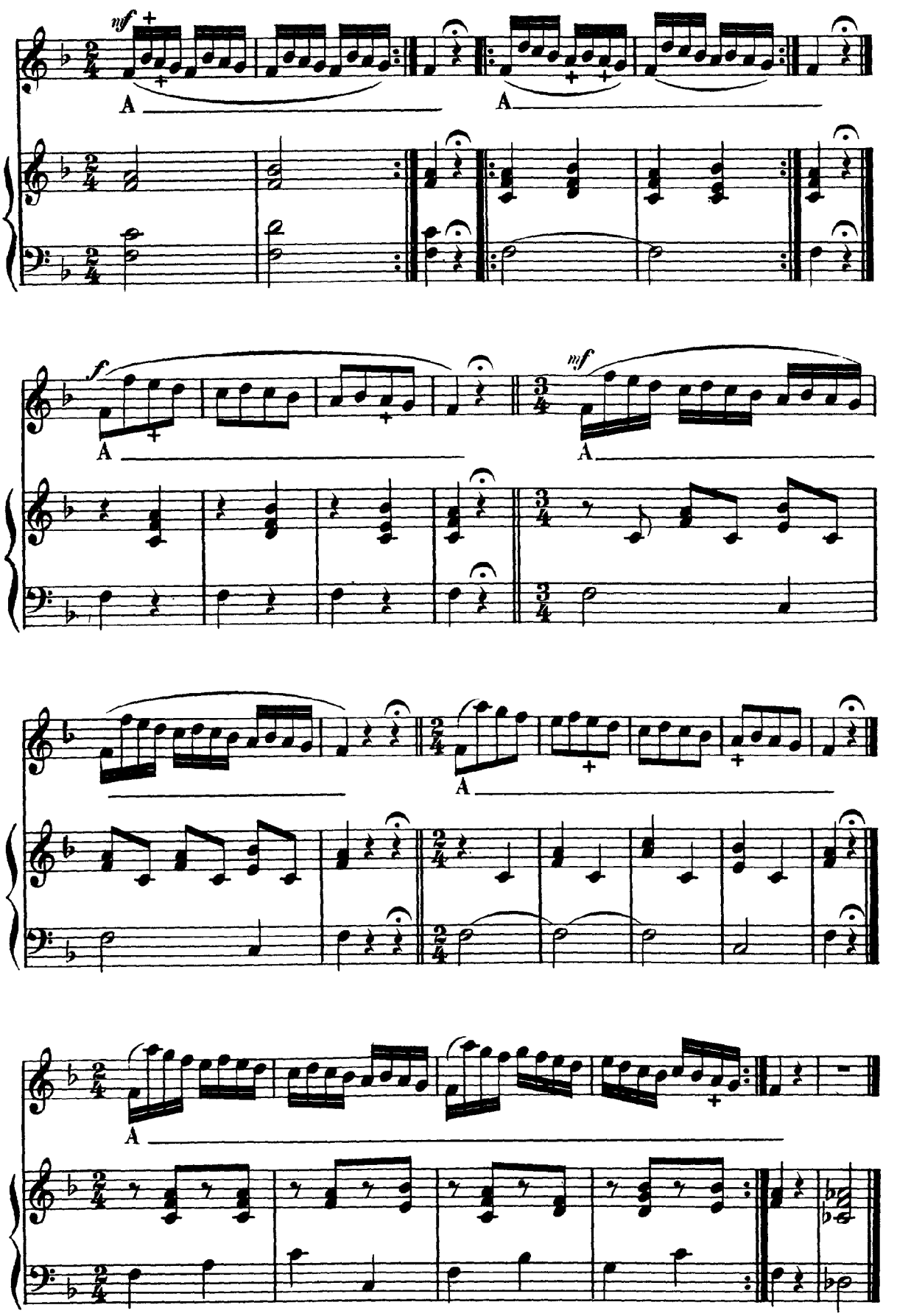
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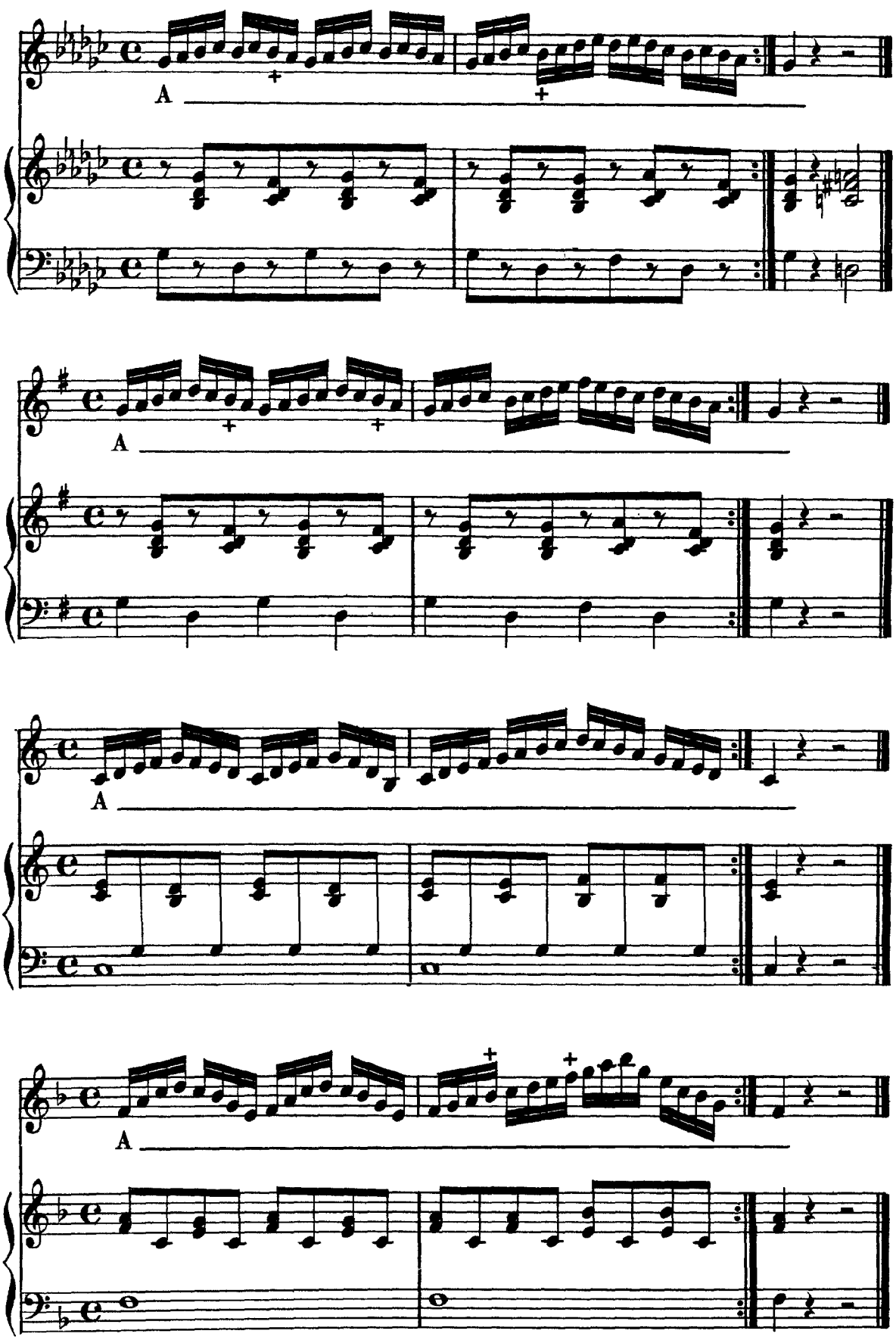
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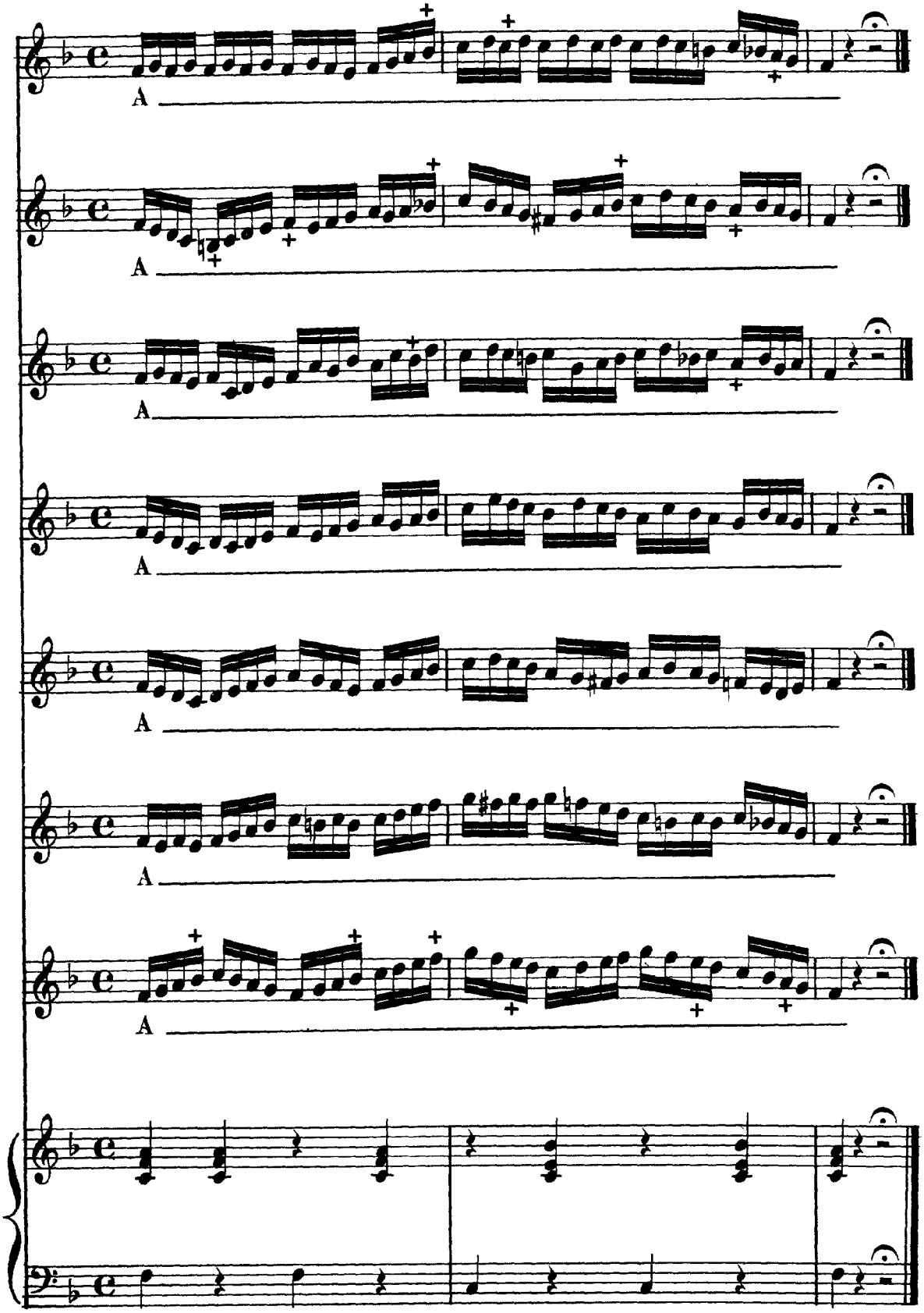
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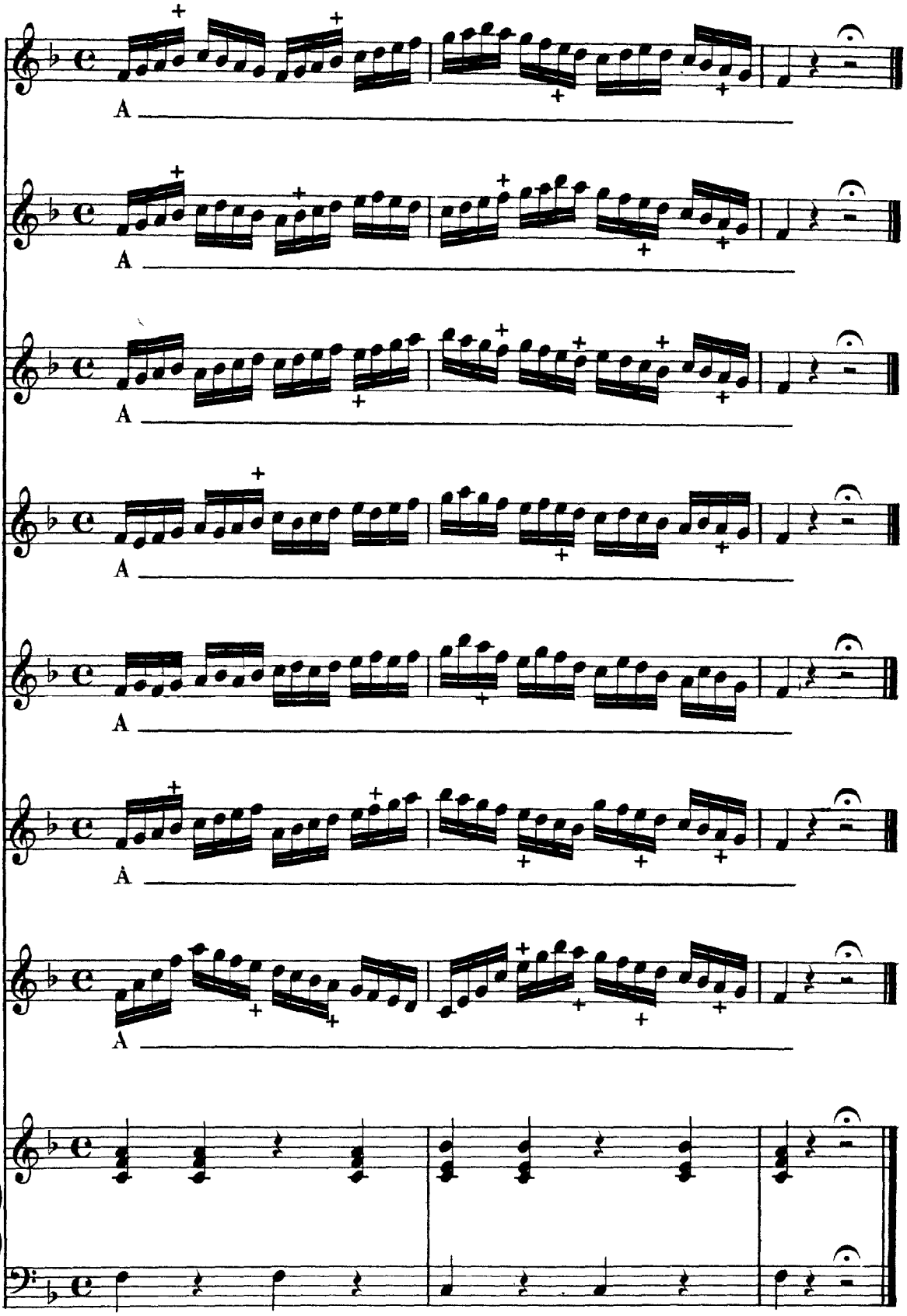
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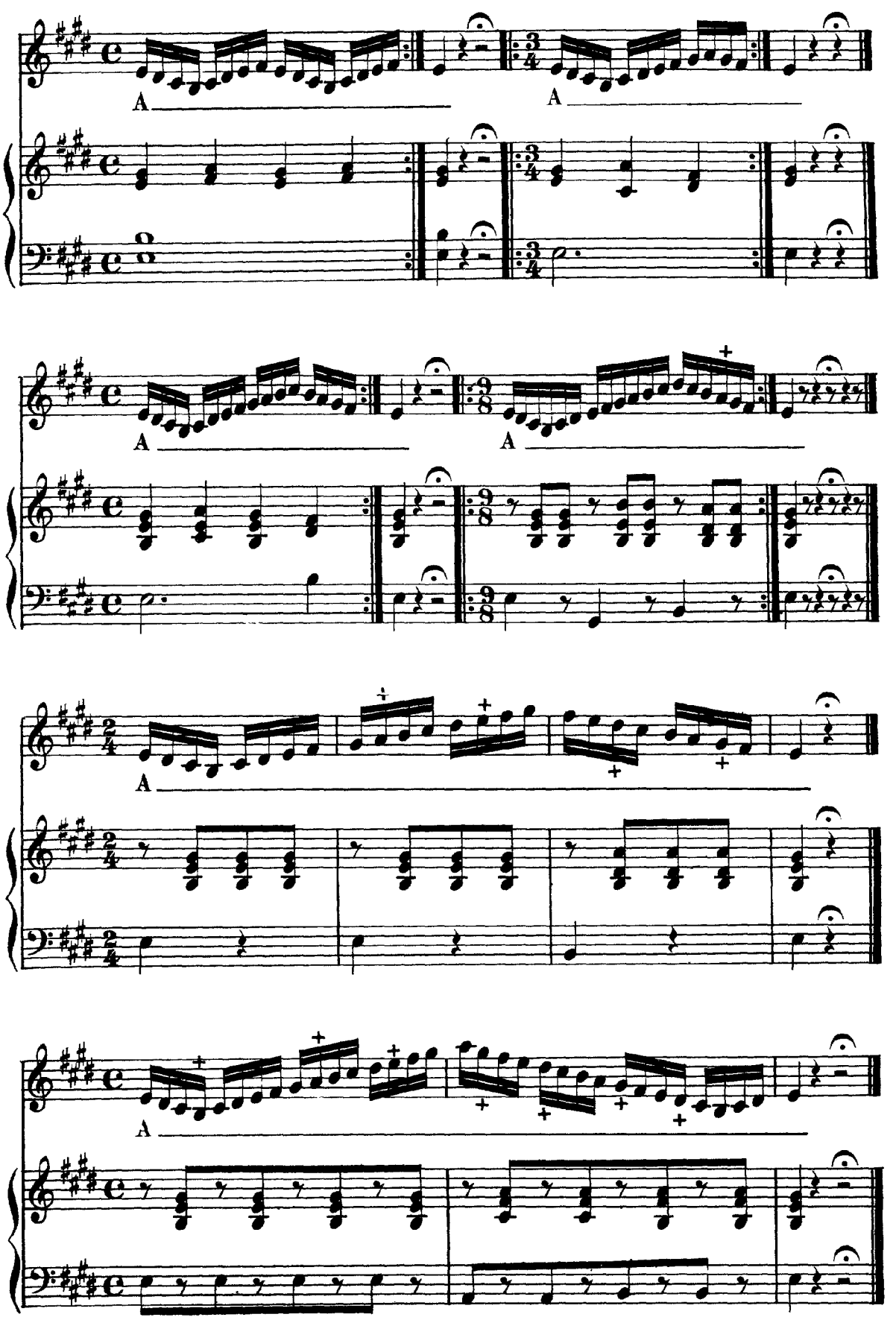
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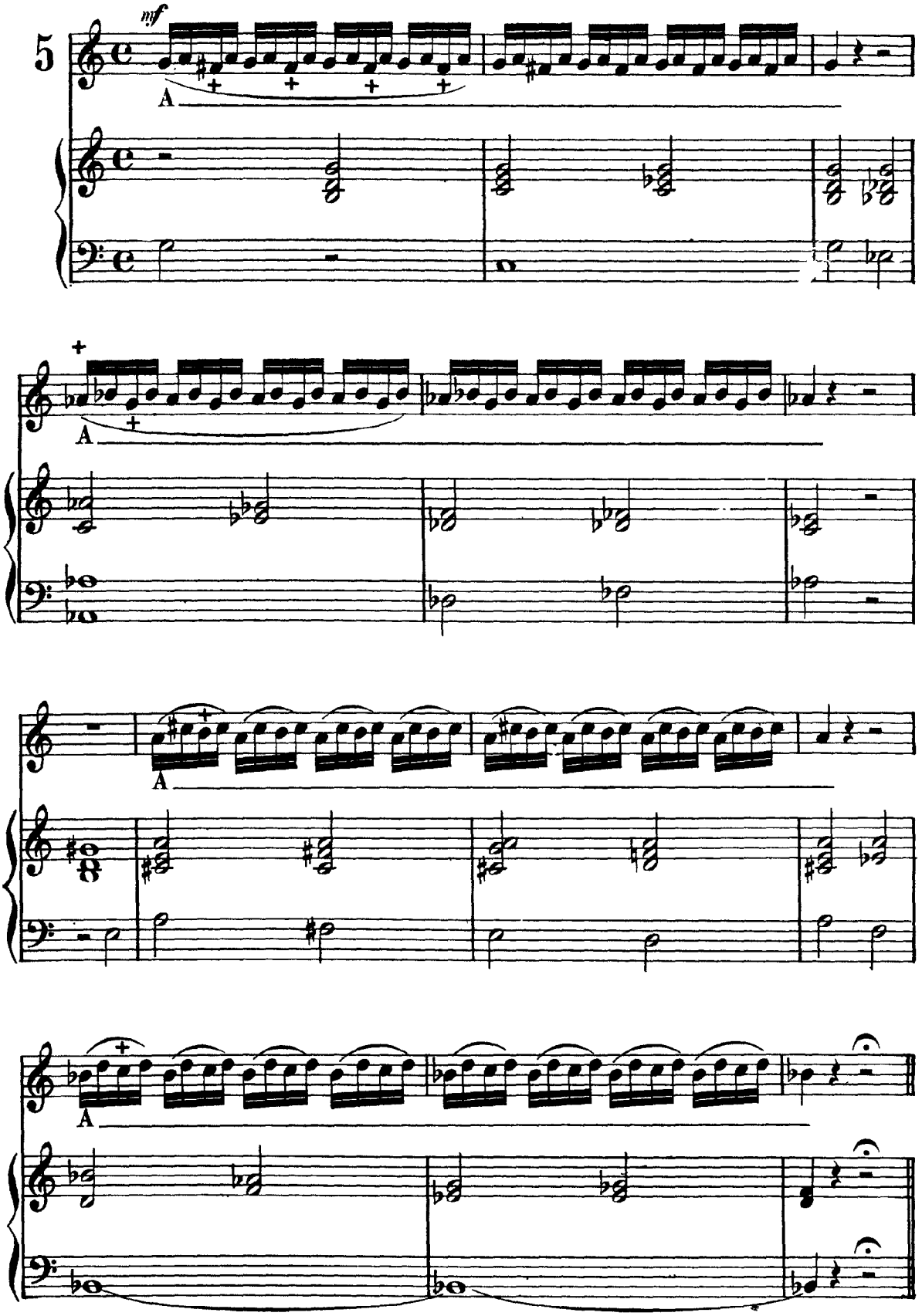
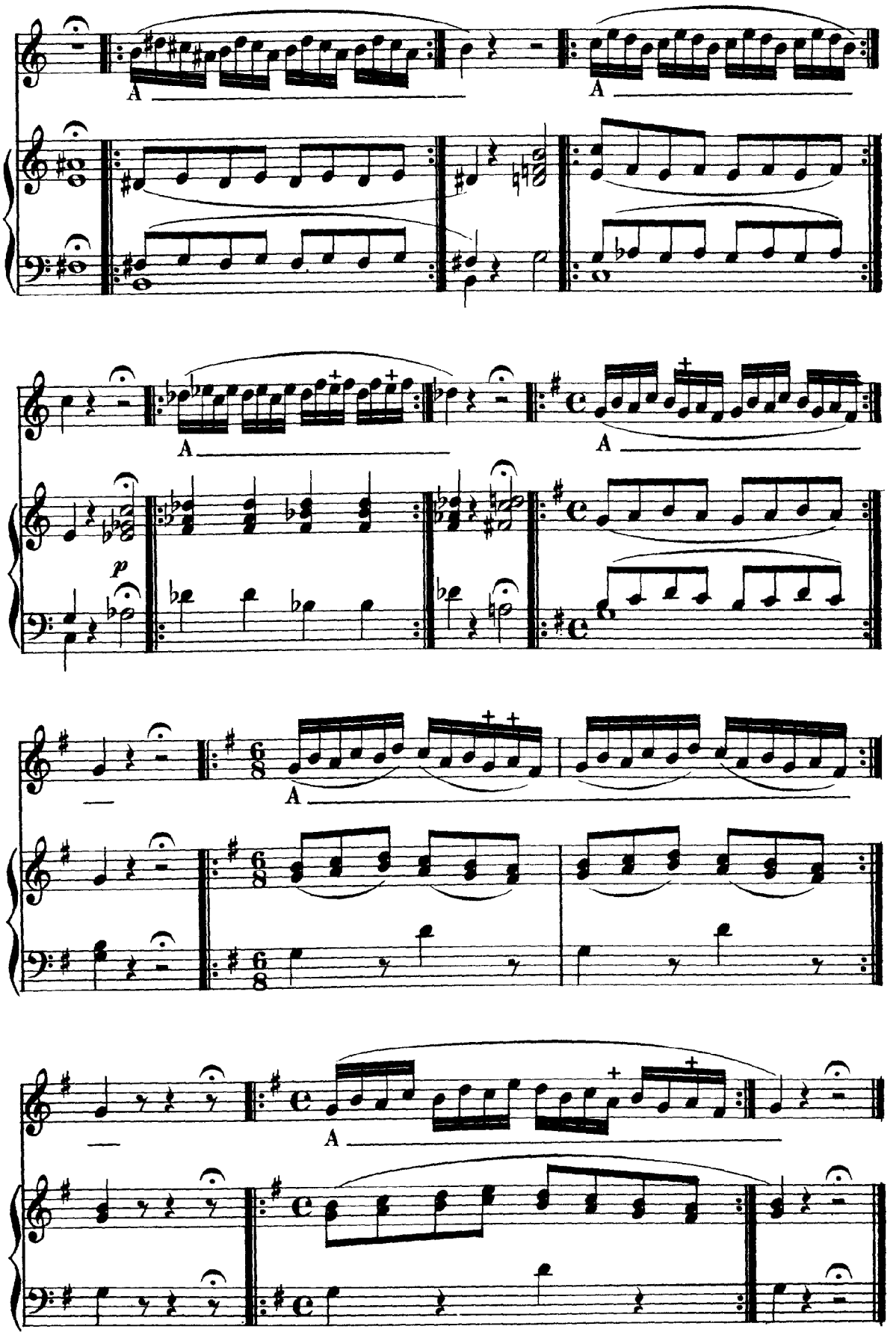
This exercise should be studied slowly, very legato, and mezzo forte. When the intonation is well established, the tempo must be accellerated progressively, until the greatest possible velocity is attained. Directly any rigidity, or resistance in the throat, is felt the pupil should stop, and recommence after some moments of rest.

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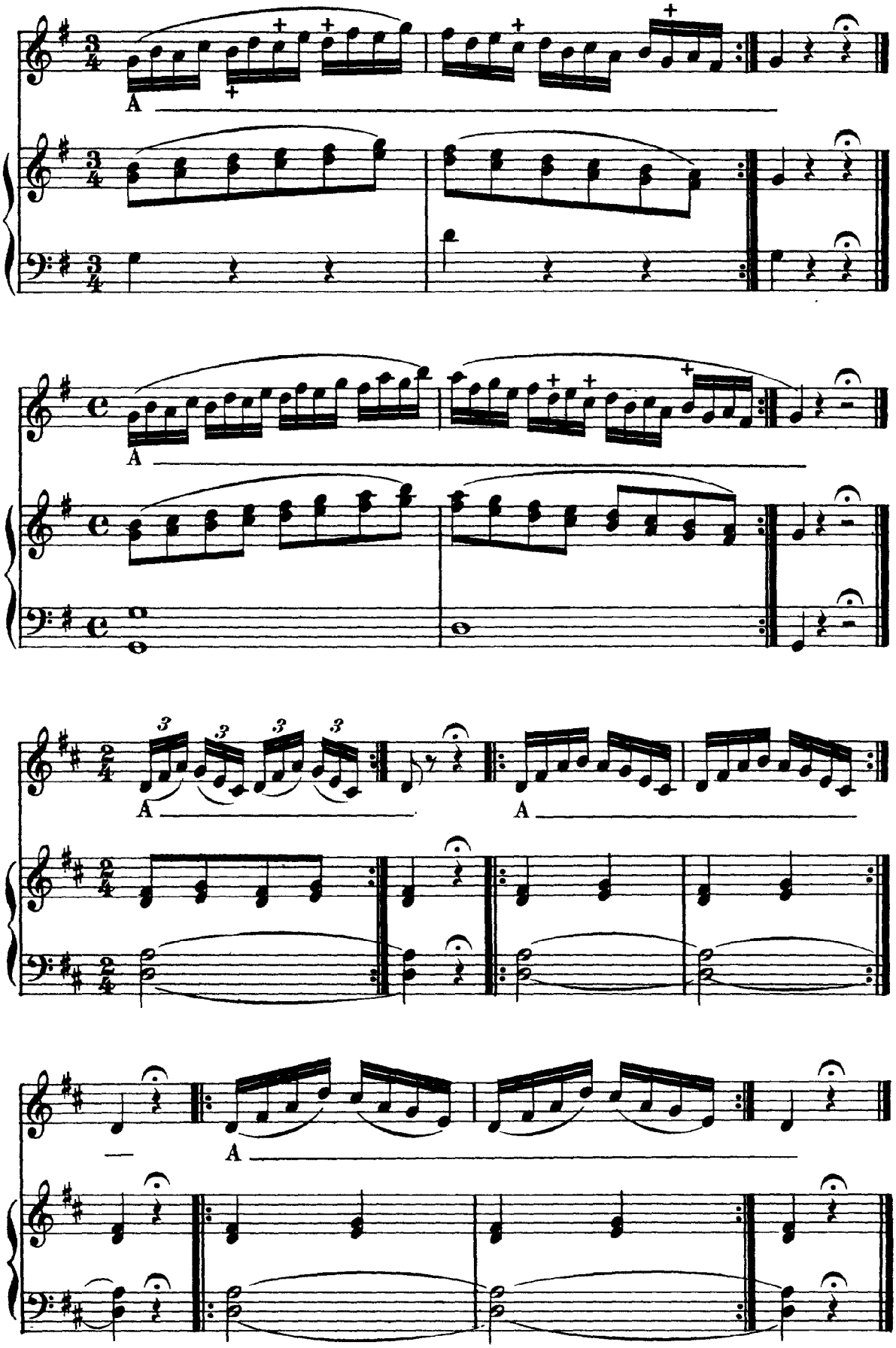
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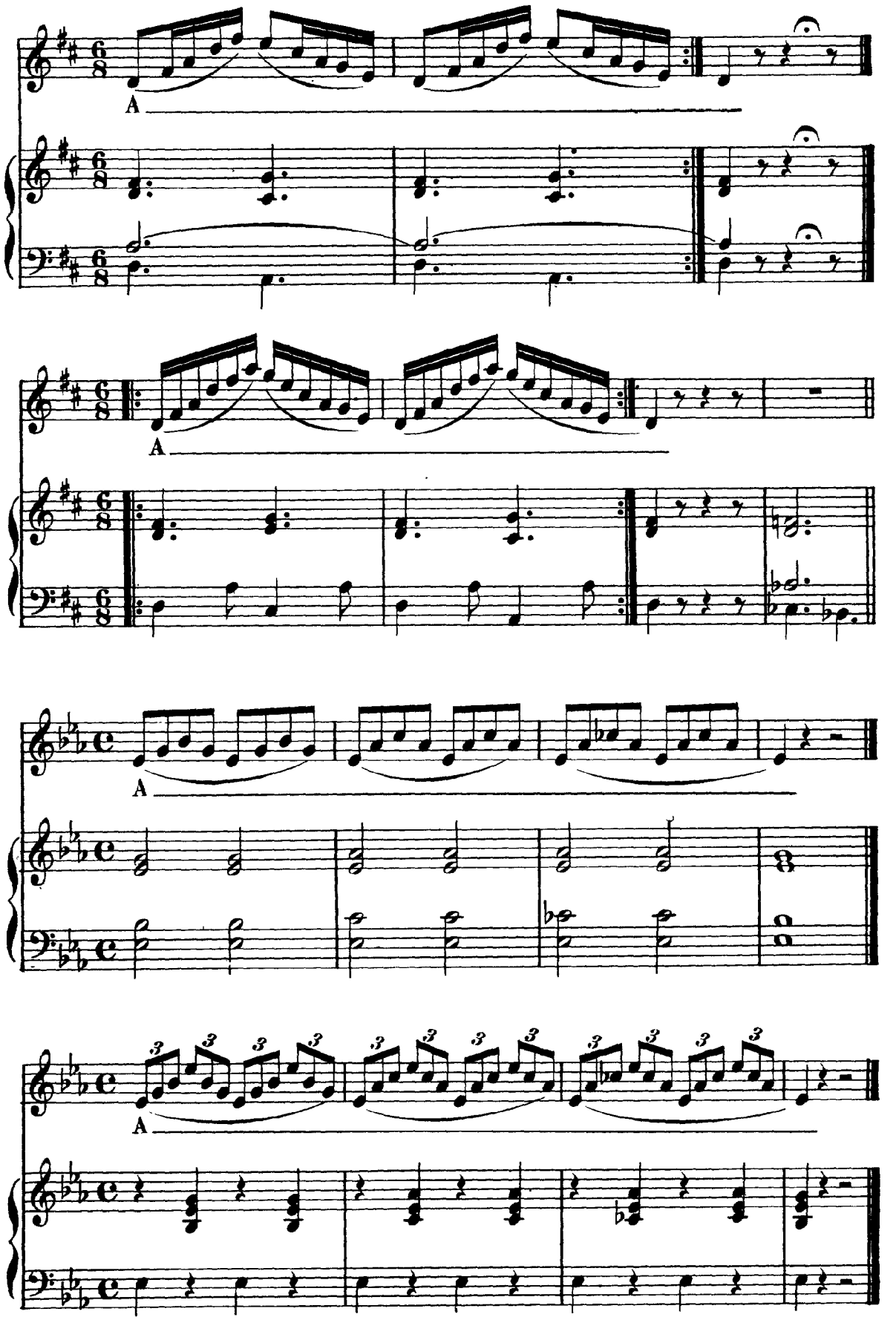
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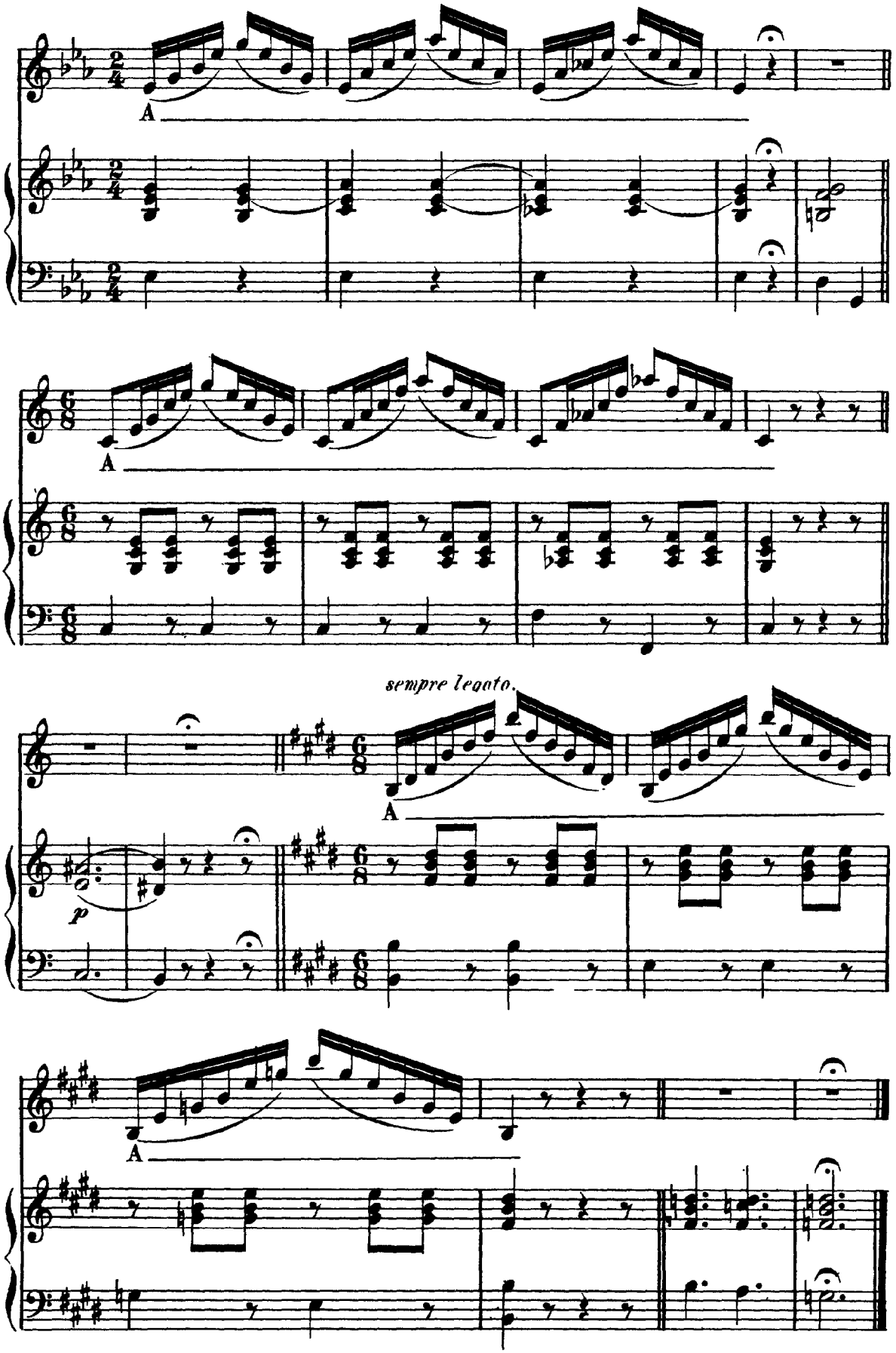
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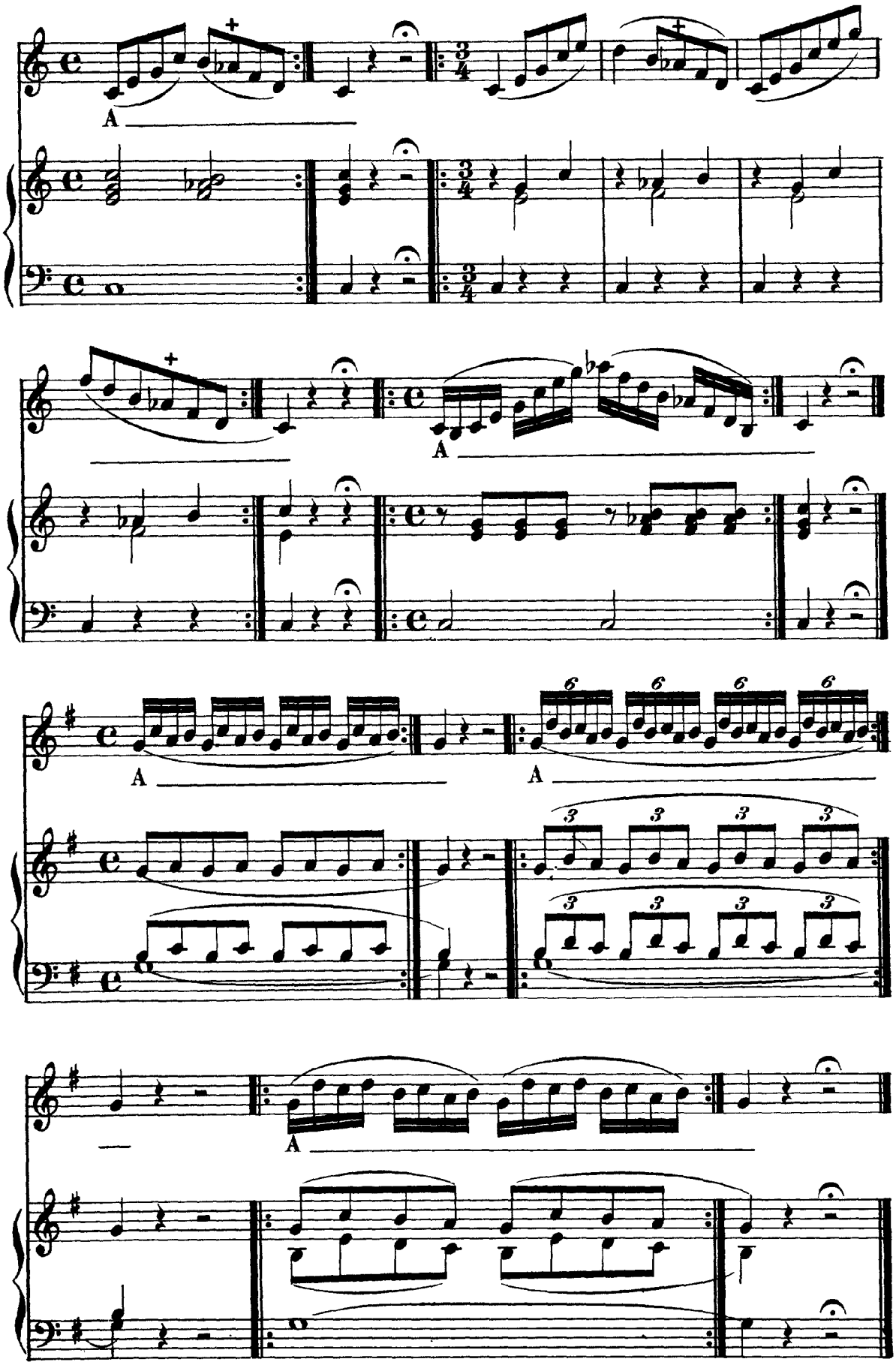
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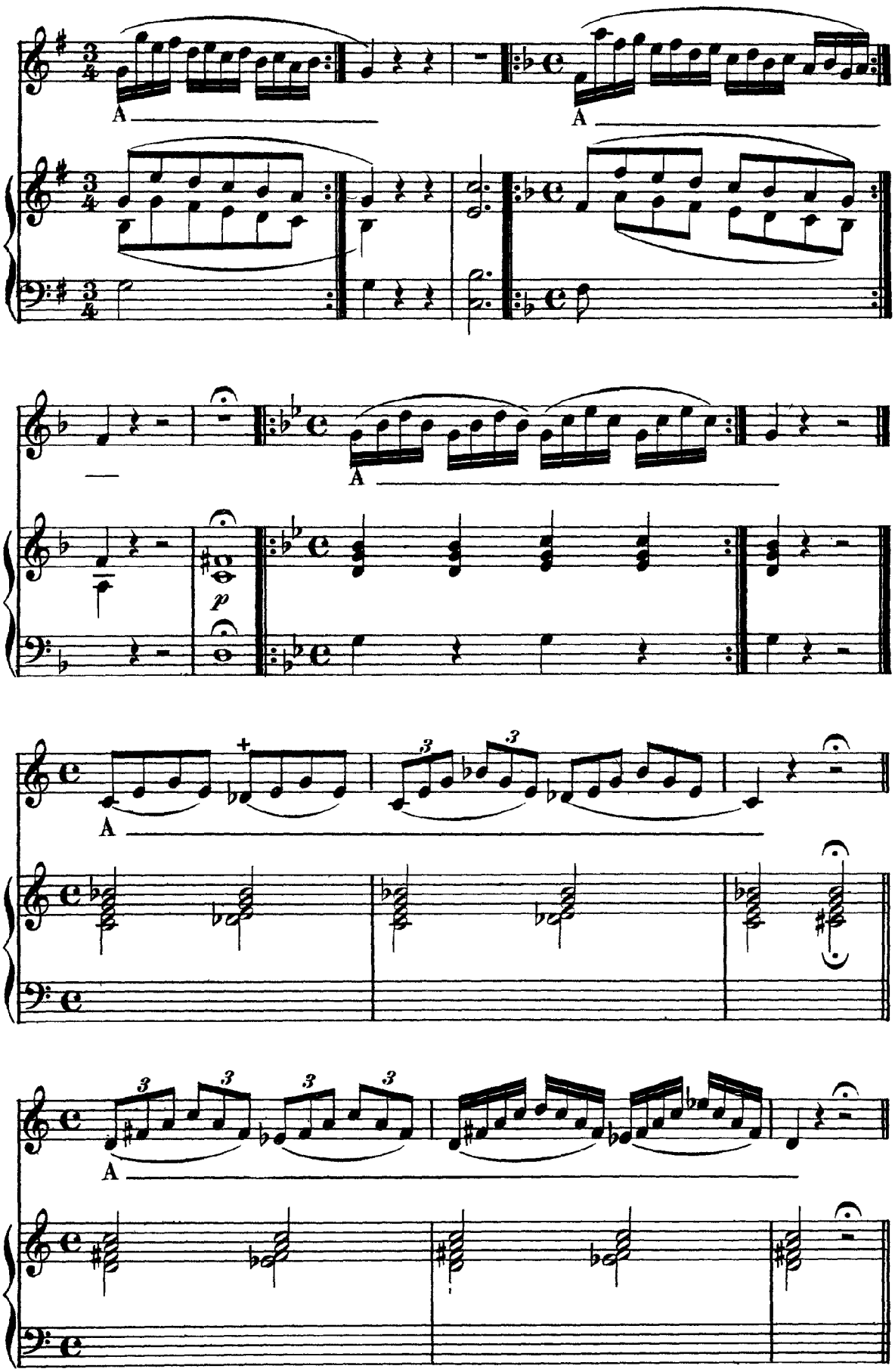
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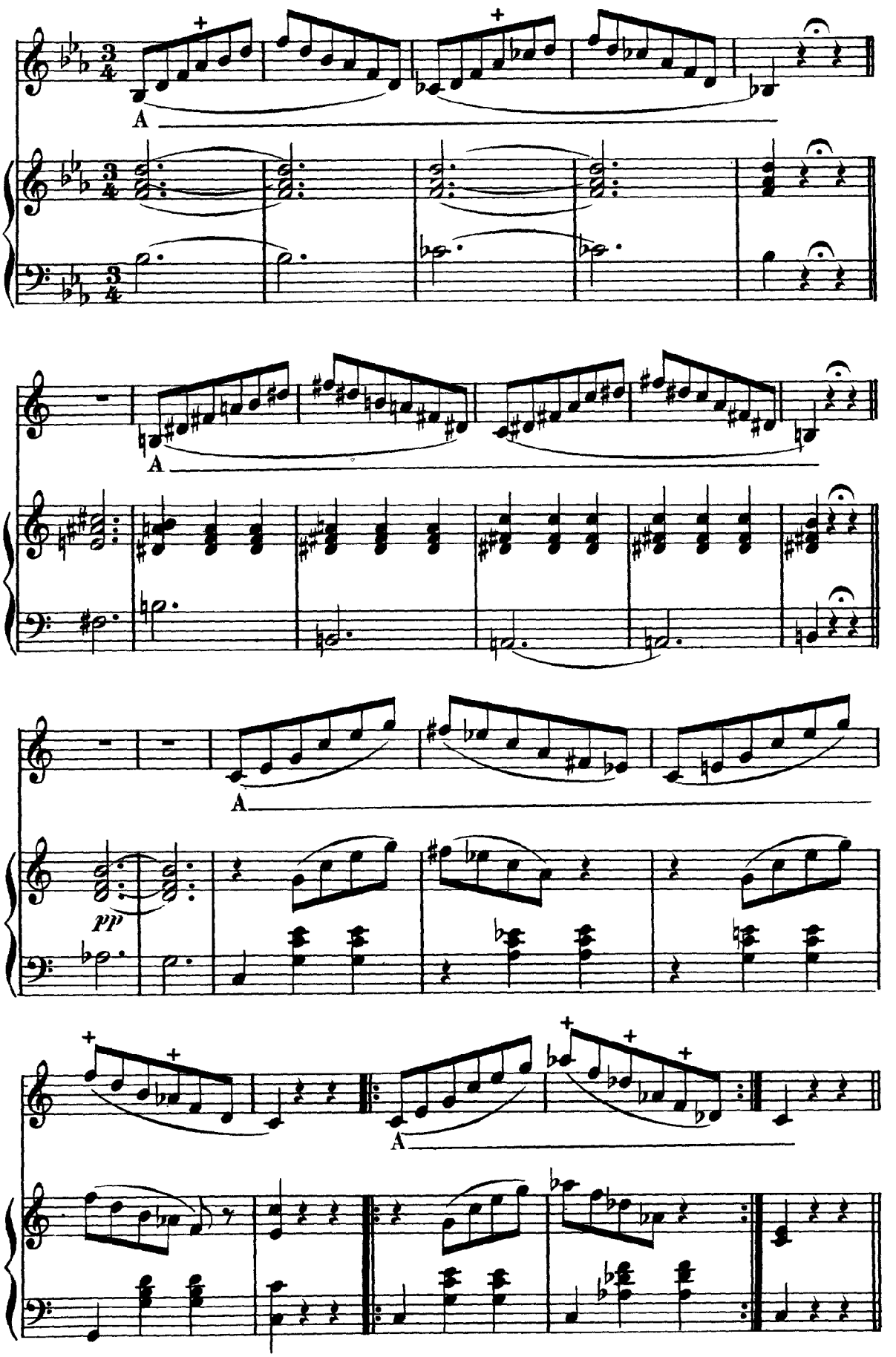
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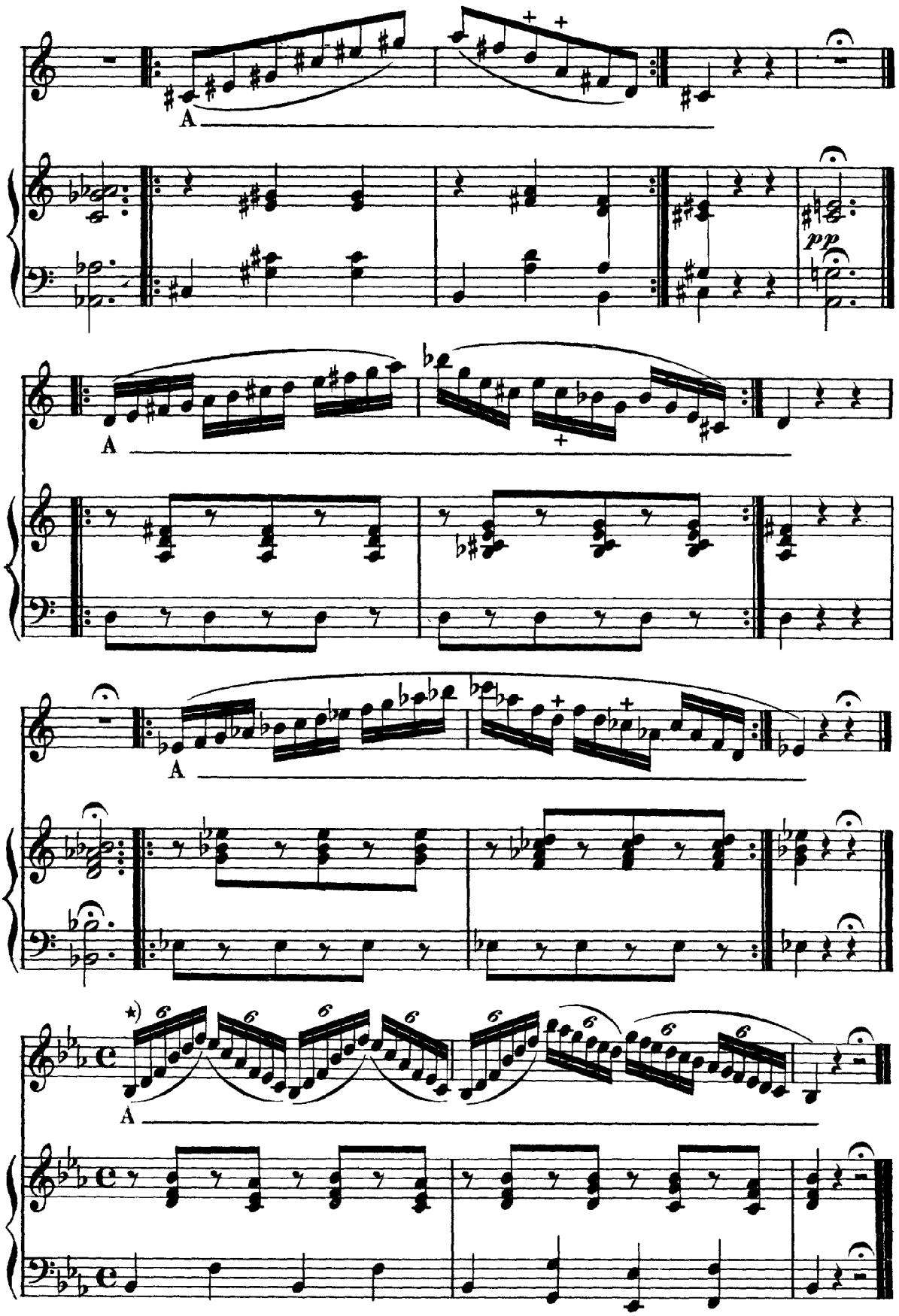


★) N.B. This exercise is a passage for the Violin in the Septuour of Beethoven.

Viardot
An Hour of Study
Vol. 2

Adopted by the Paris National Conservatory of Music.

Suggestions.

Throughout the entire course of her studies, and even after they are finished, the pupil will do well to begin her daily practice with sustained tones, followed by some exercises in graduated volocity.

We deem it useful to recall to mind which are

The faults to be corrected.

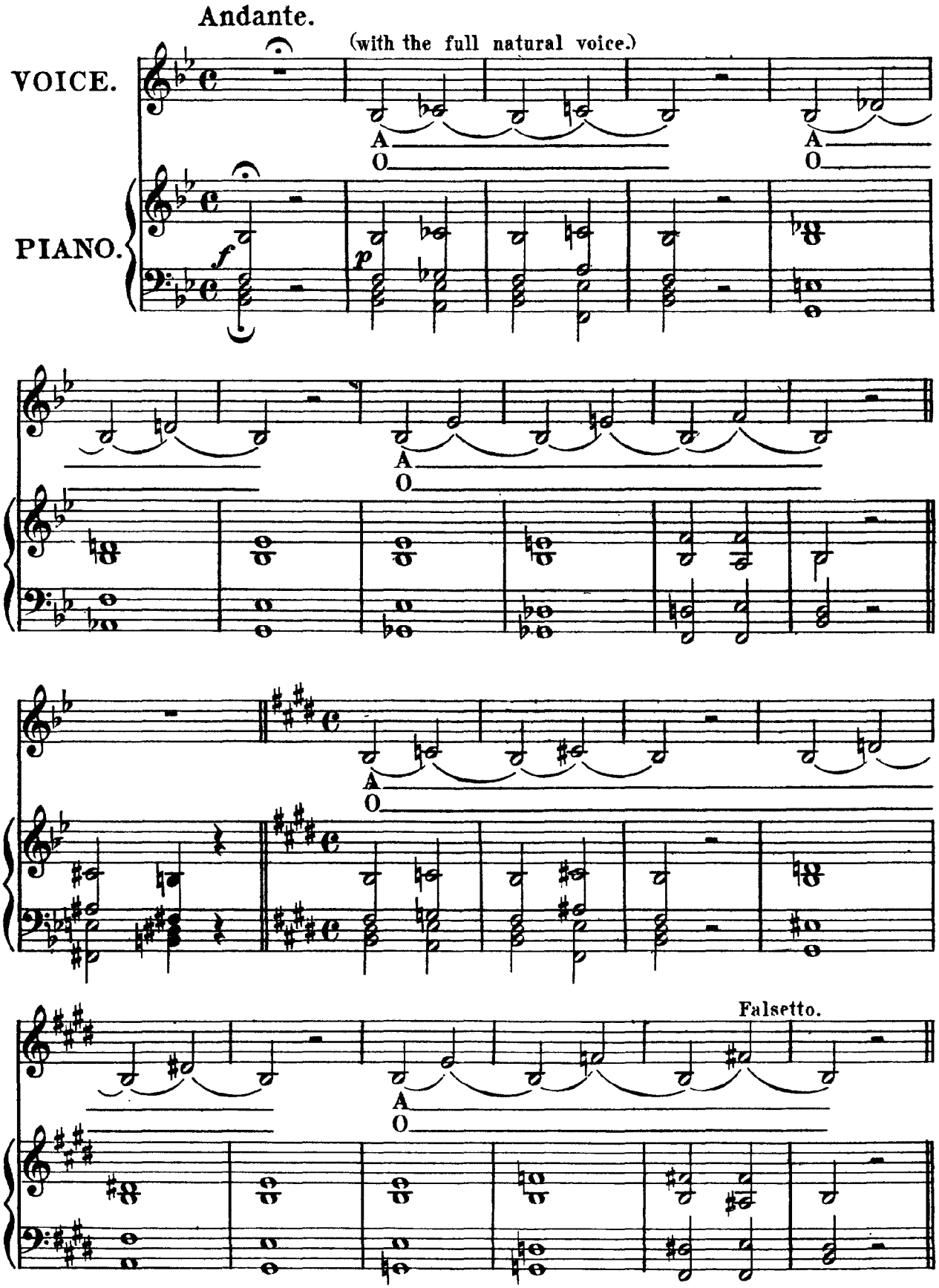
1. A respiration which is uneven, or superficial, or noisy, or short. Respiration, being the foundation of vocal art, cannot be too carefully and conscientiously attended to, as has been explained in the 1st Series of this work. It should become inaudible and invisible. This is the secret of the singer.
2. Attacking the tone downwards, or with an aspirate.
3. Uncertainty of intonation.
4. Defective quality or tremulousness of tone.
5. A vocalisation which is uneven, hard, either jerky through aspirates, or tame and vacillating through lack of accentuation, such as is called in Italian ("savonade.")

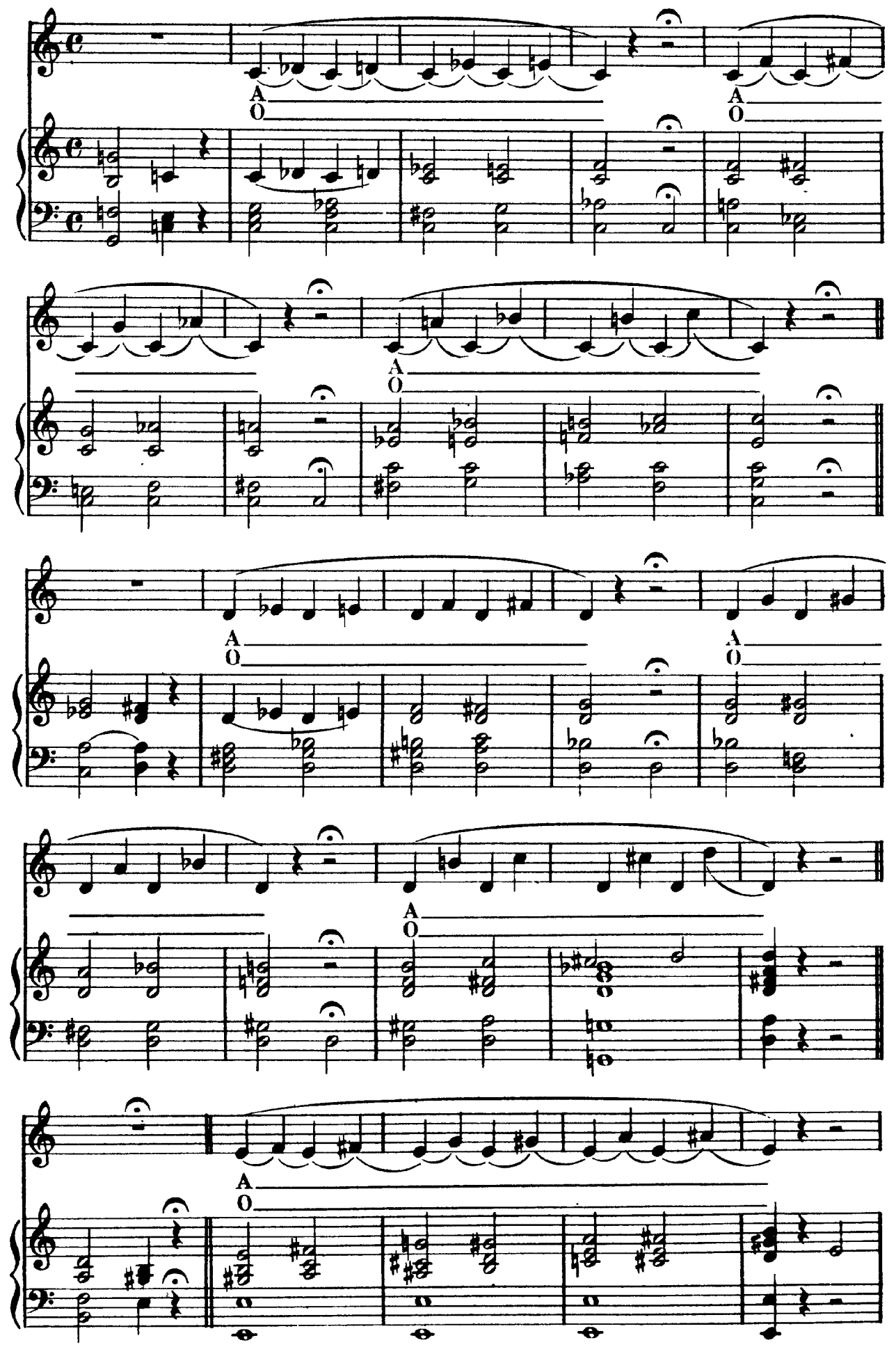
The qualities to be acquired.

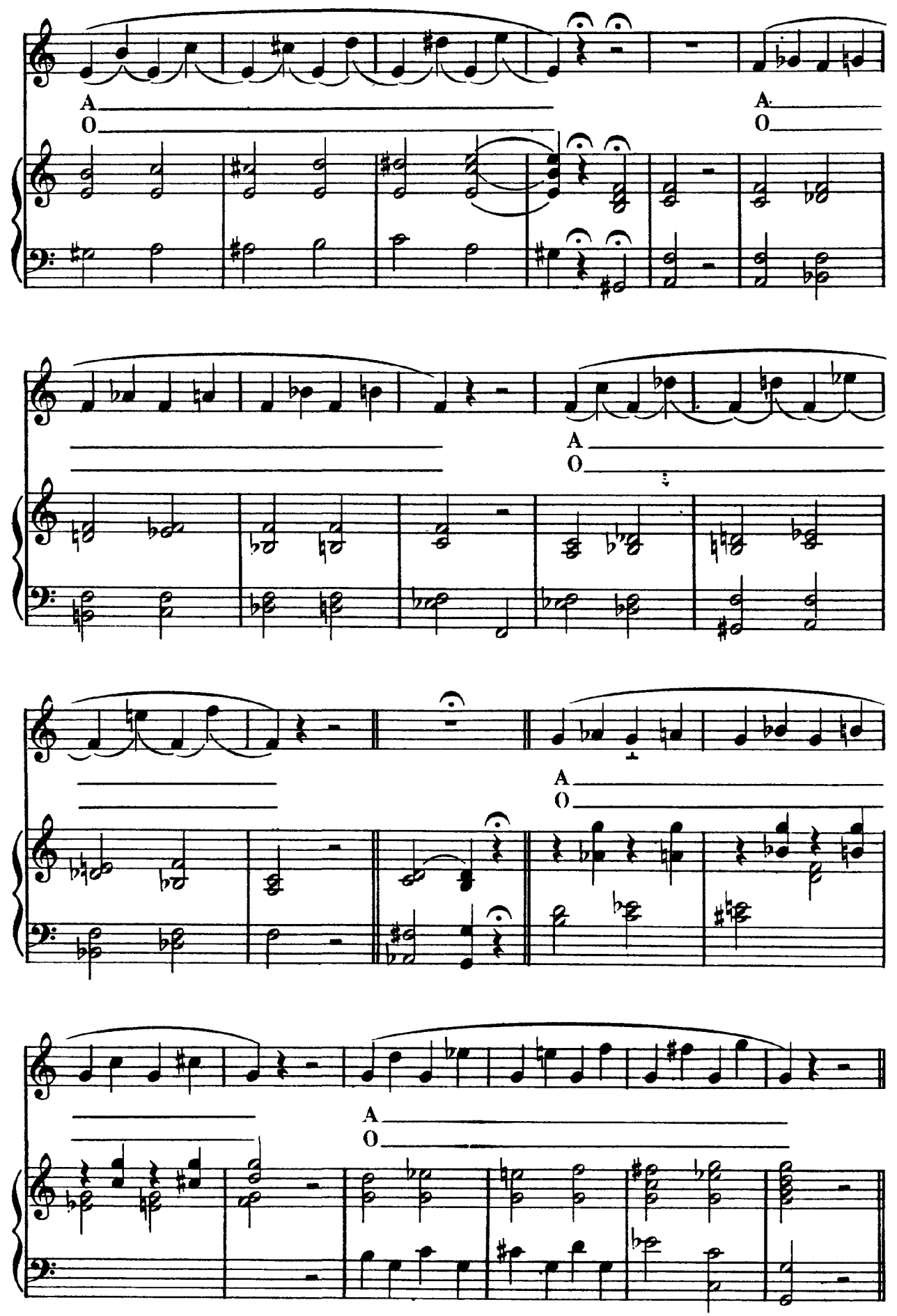
1. A respiration which is slow or rapid, according as is required by the phrases, through the nose, or through the nose and mouth simultaneously. Without a profound study of respiration we can never become complete masters of our voice and our singing. It is necessary, therefore, to give to the study of it quite special care and attention.
2. Free and pure attack of the note emitted.
3. Exactness of intonation.
4. Quiet steadiness and good quality of the voice.
5. A vocalisation which is even and well-proportioned to all the degrees of velocity; as if we were concerned with the mechanism of the fingers on the keyboard of a pianoforte.

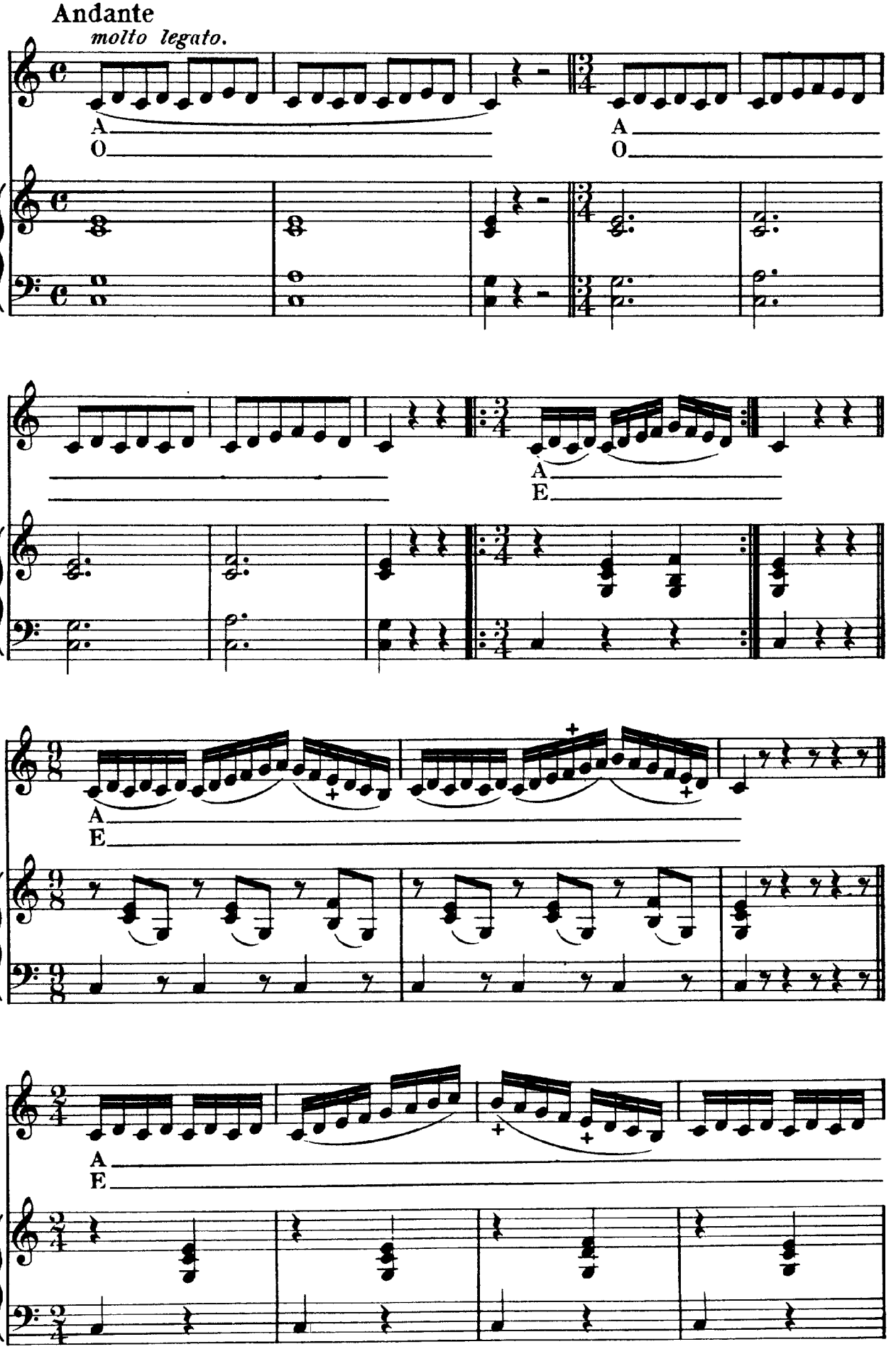
It is assumed as a matter of course that the pupil has worked out the exercises of the 1st Series of "An Hour of Study" before commencing the present one, so as to have been in this way prepared for the difficulties which the latter contains.

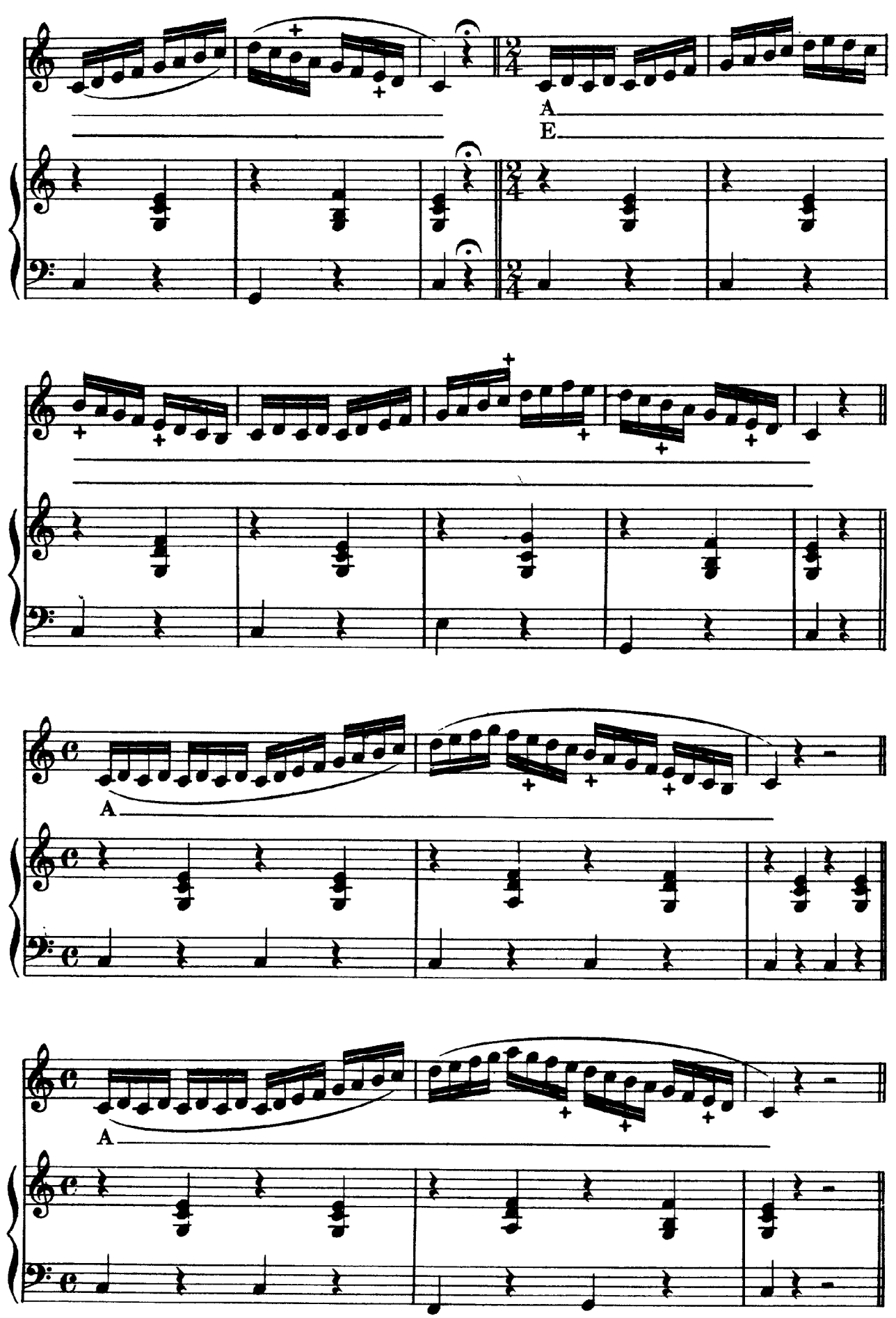
EXERCISES.

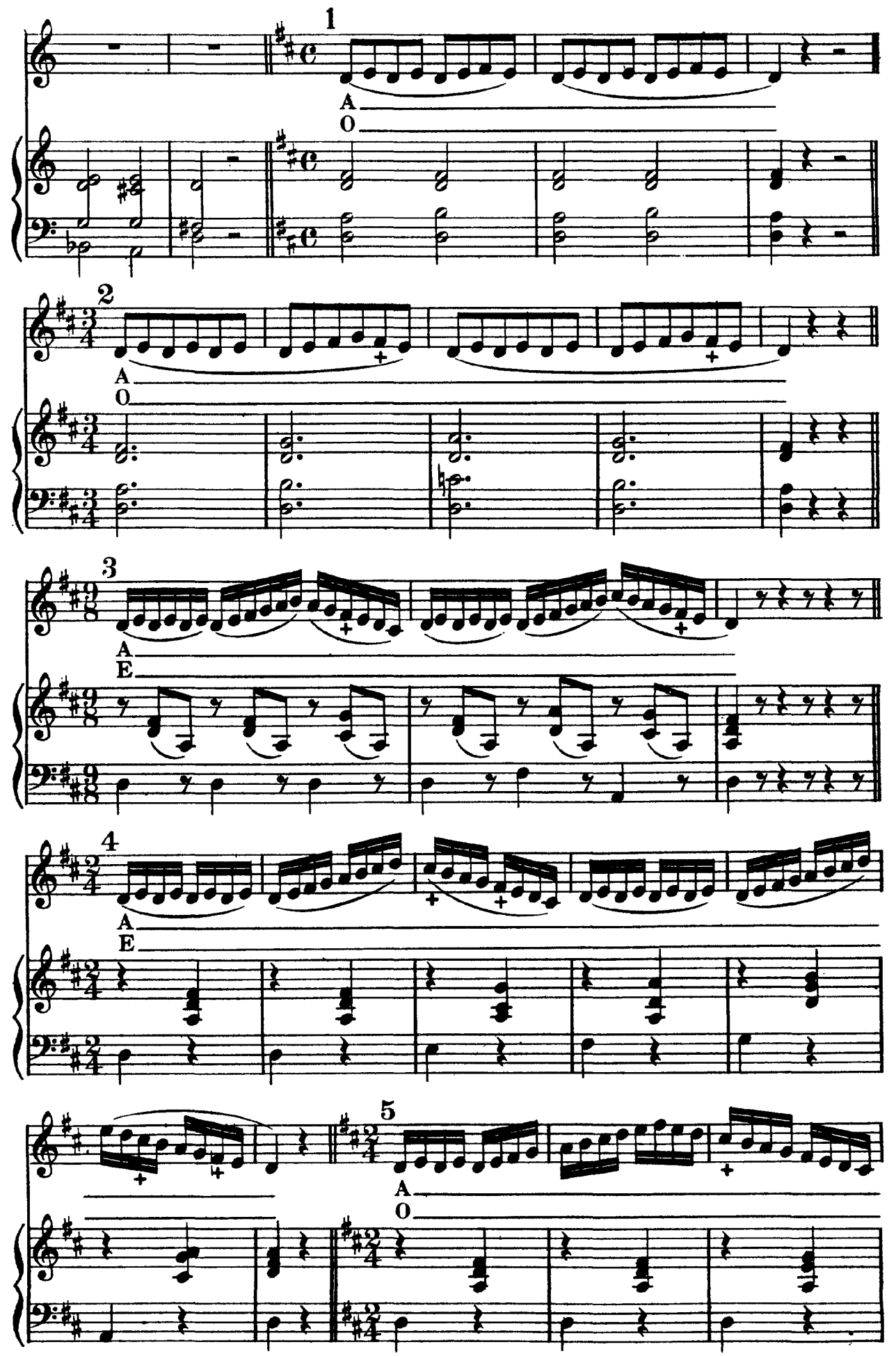

Andante.
(with the full natural voice.)
VOICE.
PIANO.
A
O
Falsetto.

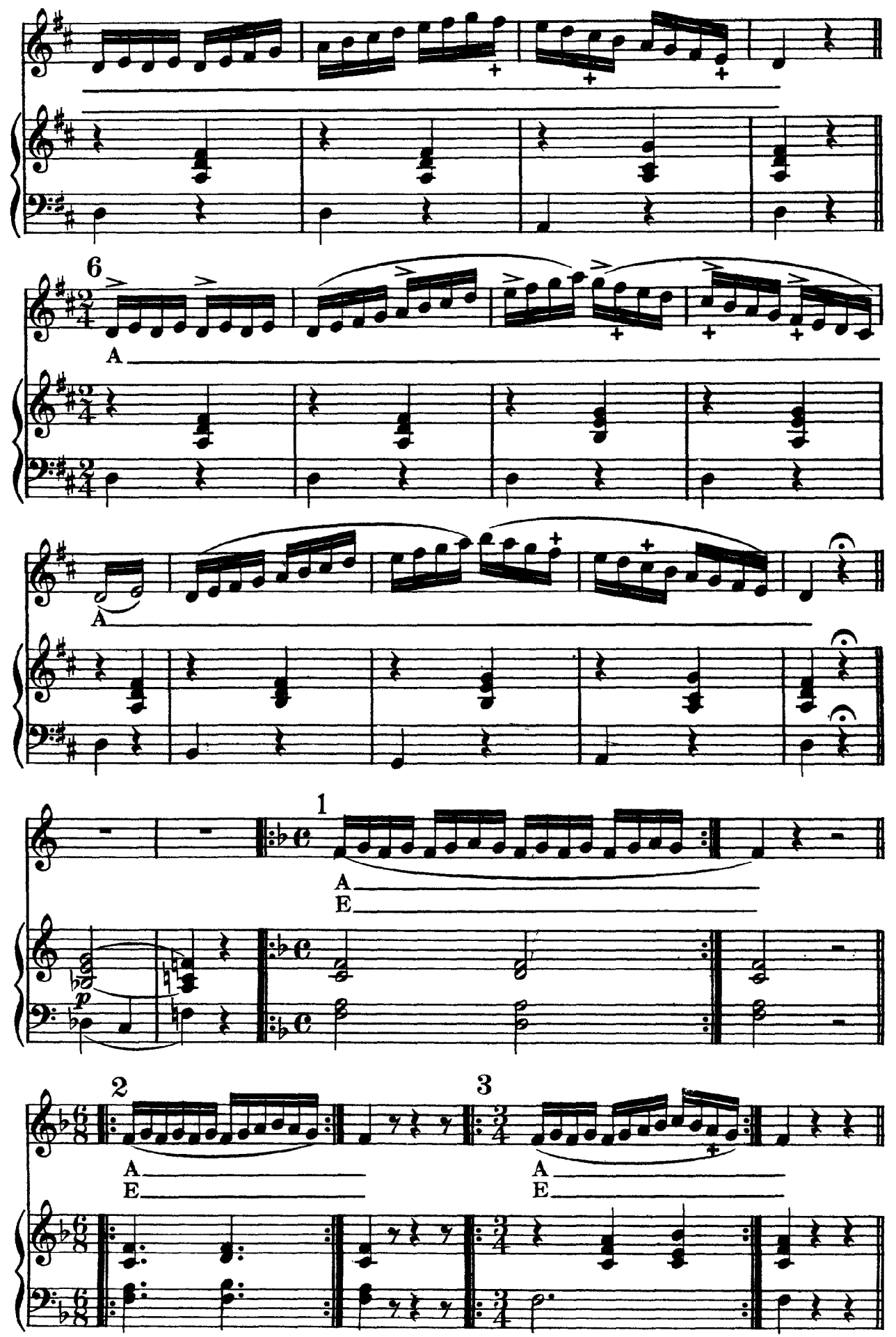

A
O
A
O
A
O
A
O
A
O
A
O
A
O
A
O

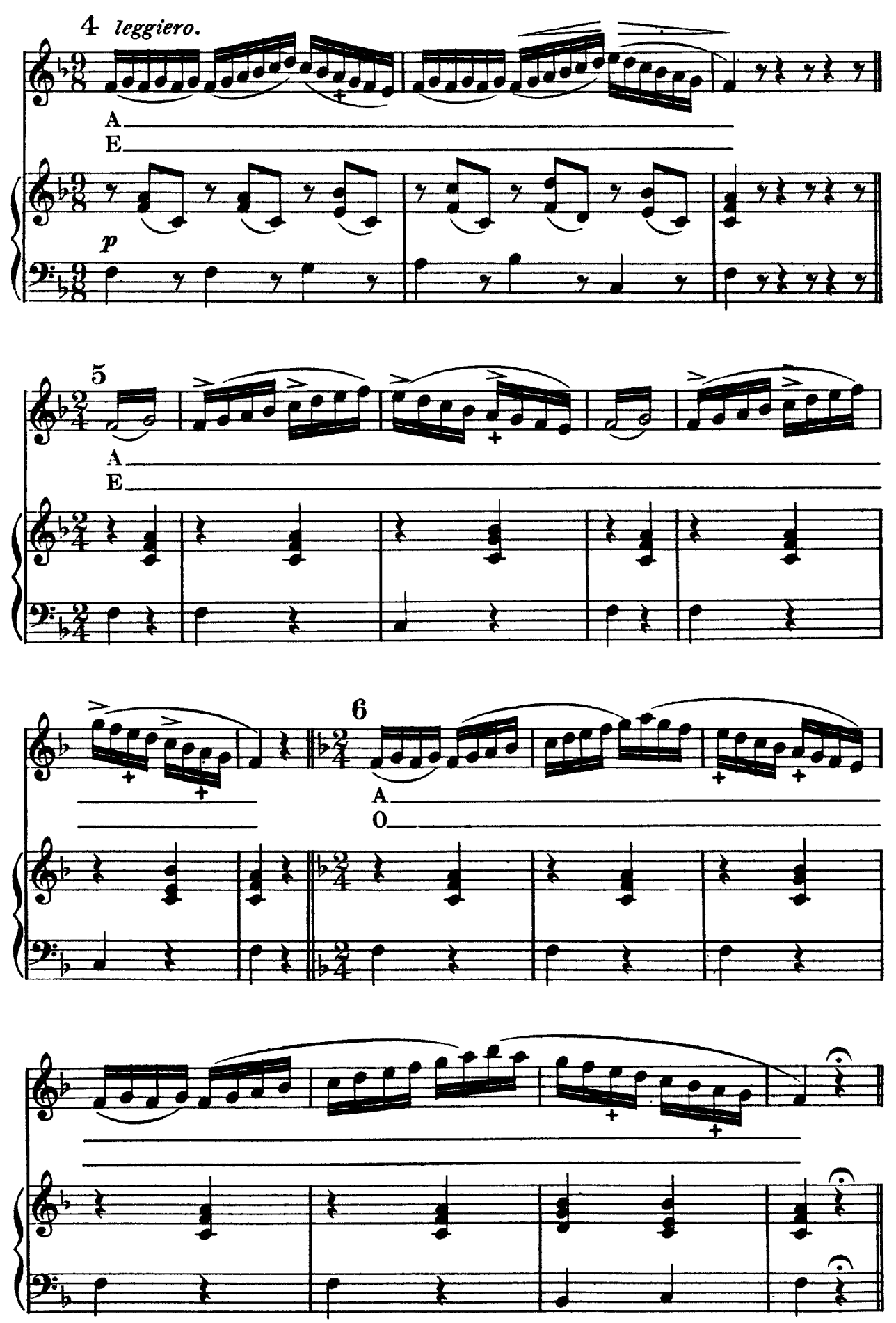

A
O
A
O
A
O
A
O
A
O
(Rest.)

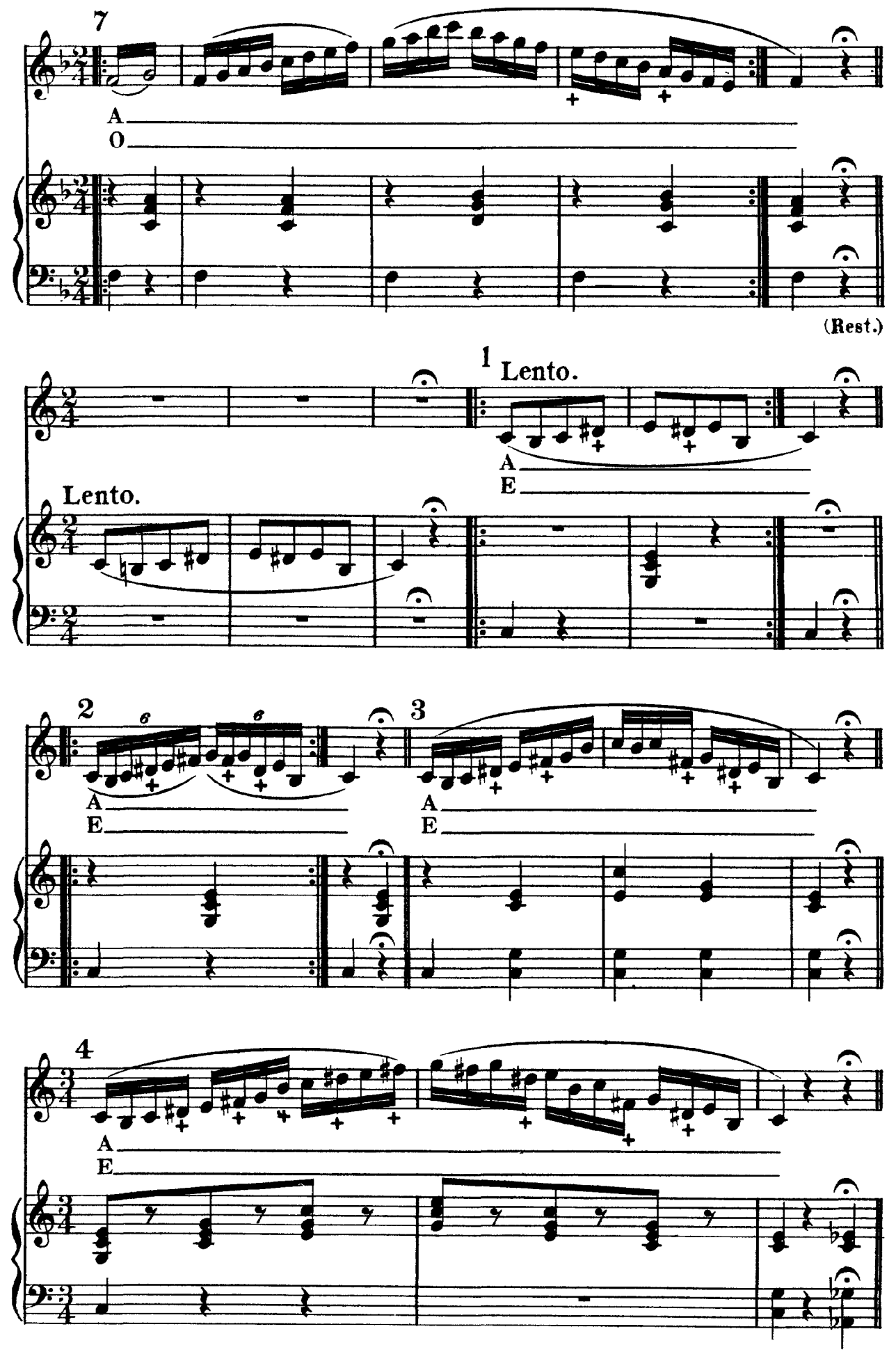

Andante
molto legato.
A
O
A
O
A
E
A
E
A
E

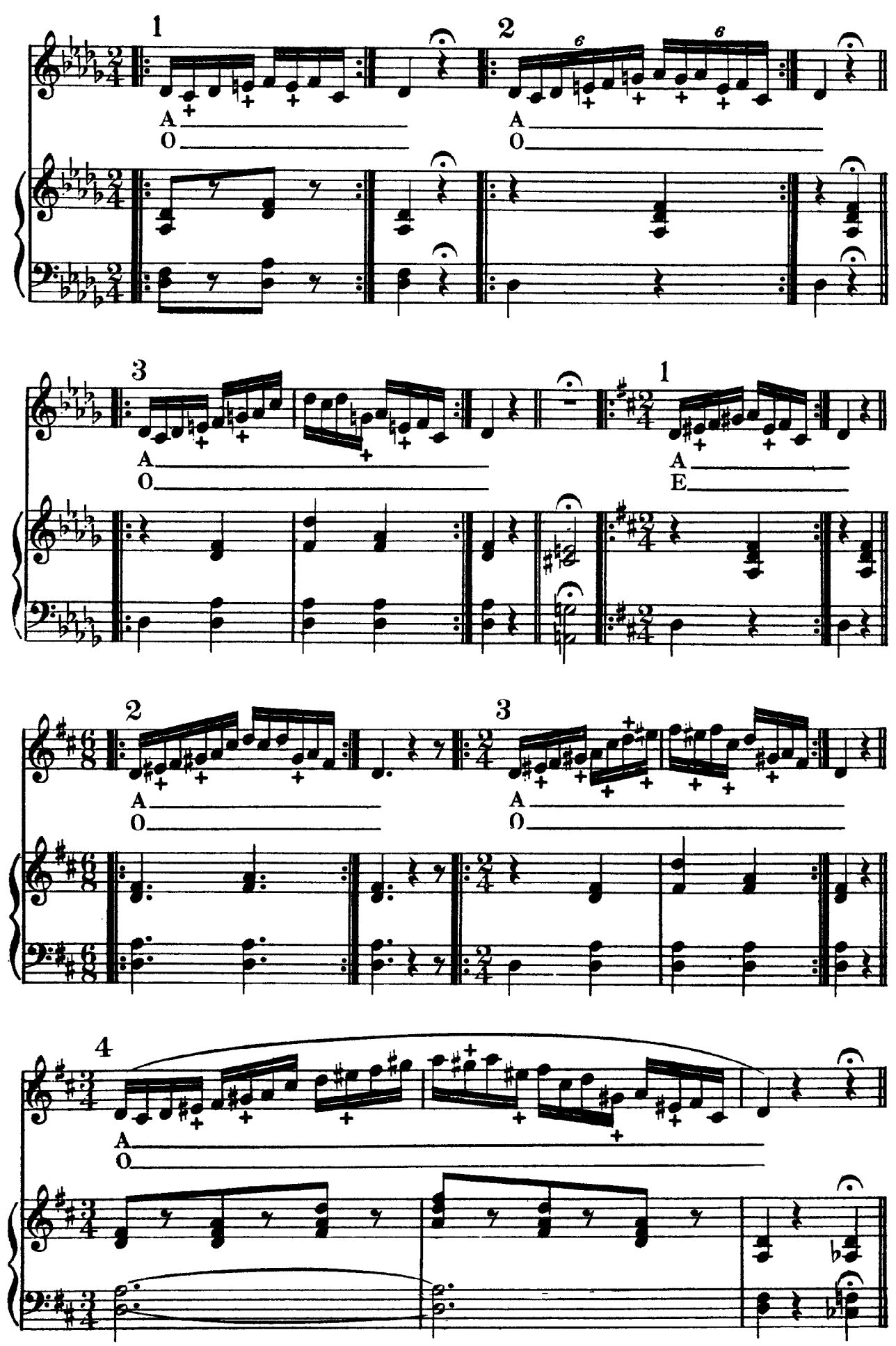

A
E
A
A

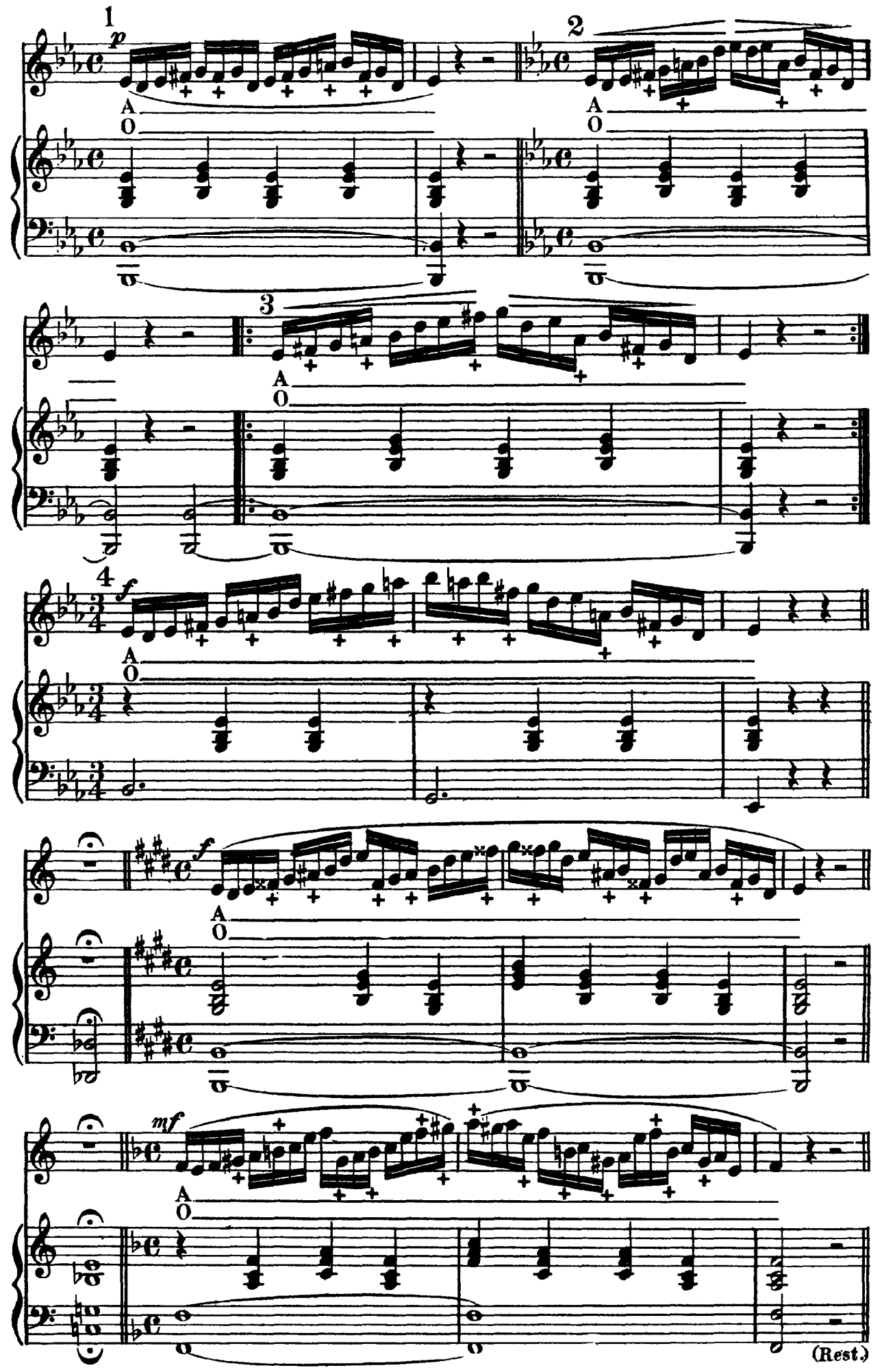

1
A
O
2
A
O
3
A
E
4
A
E
5
A
O


6
A
A
1
A
E
p
2
A
E
3
A
E


4 leggiero.
A
E
p
5
A
E
6
A
O

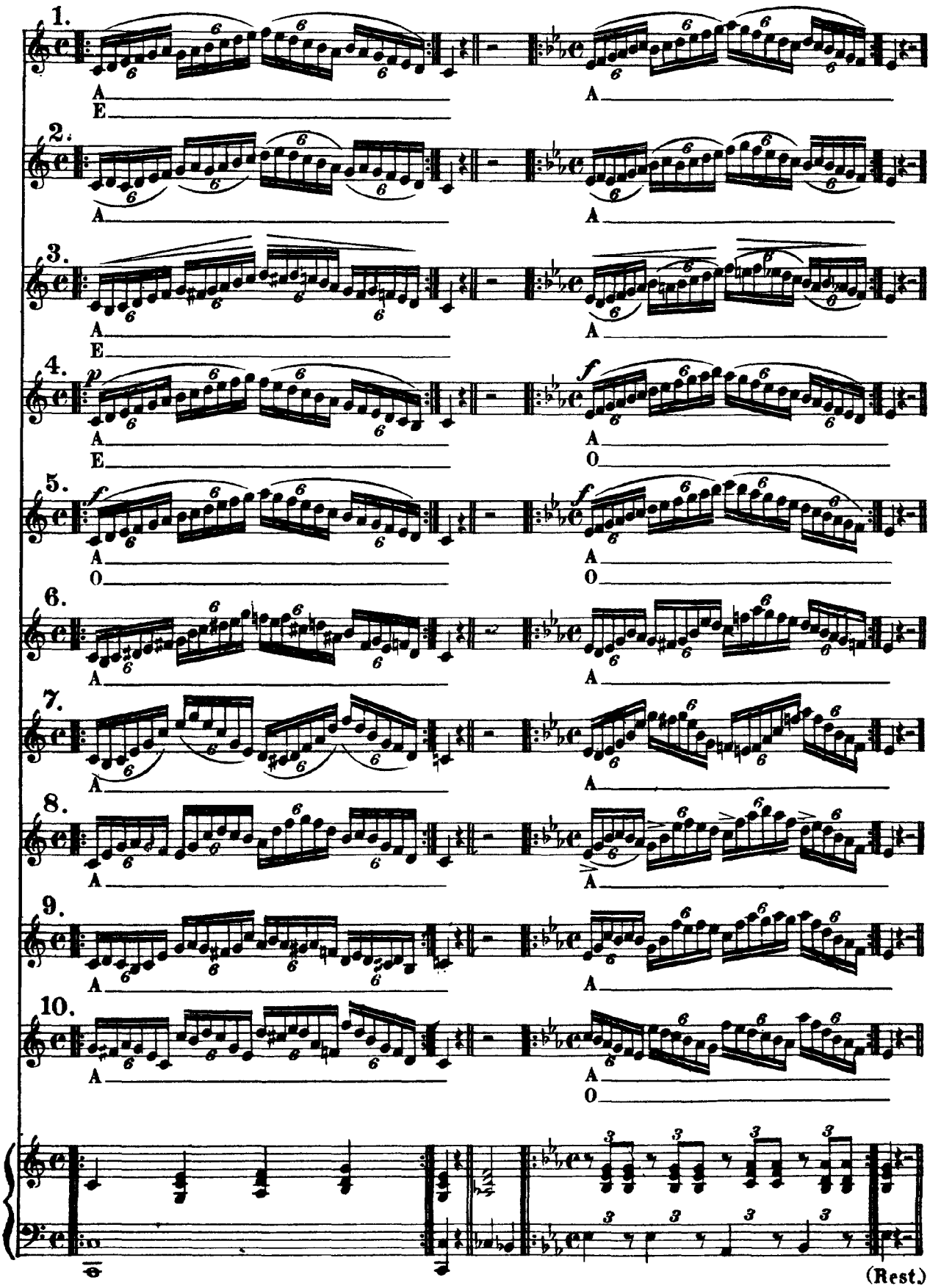

7
A
O
(Rest.)
1
Lento.
A
E
Lento.
2
6
6
A
E
3
A
E
4
A
E


1
2
3
1
2
3
4
A
0
E

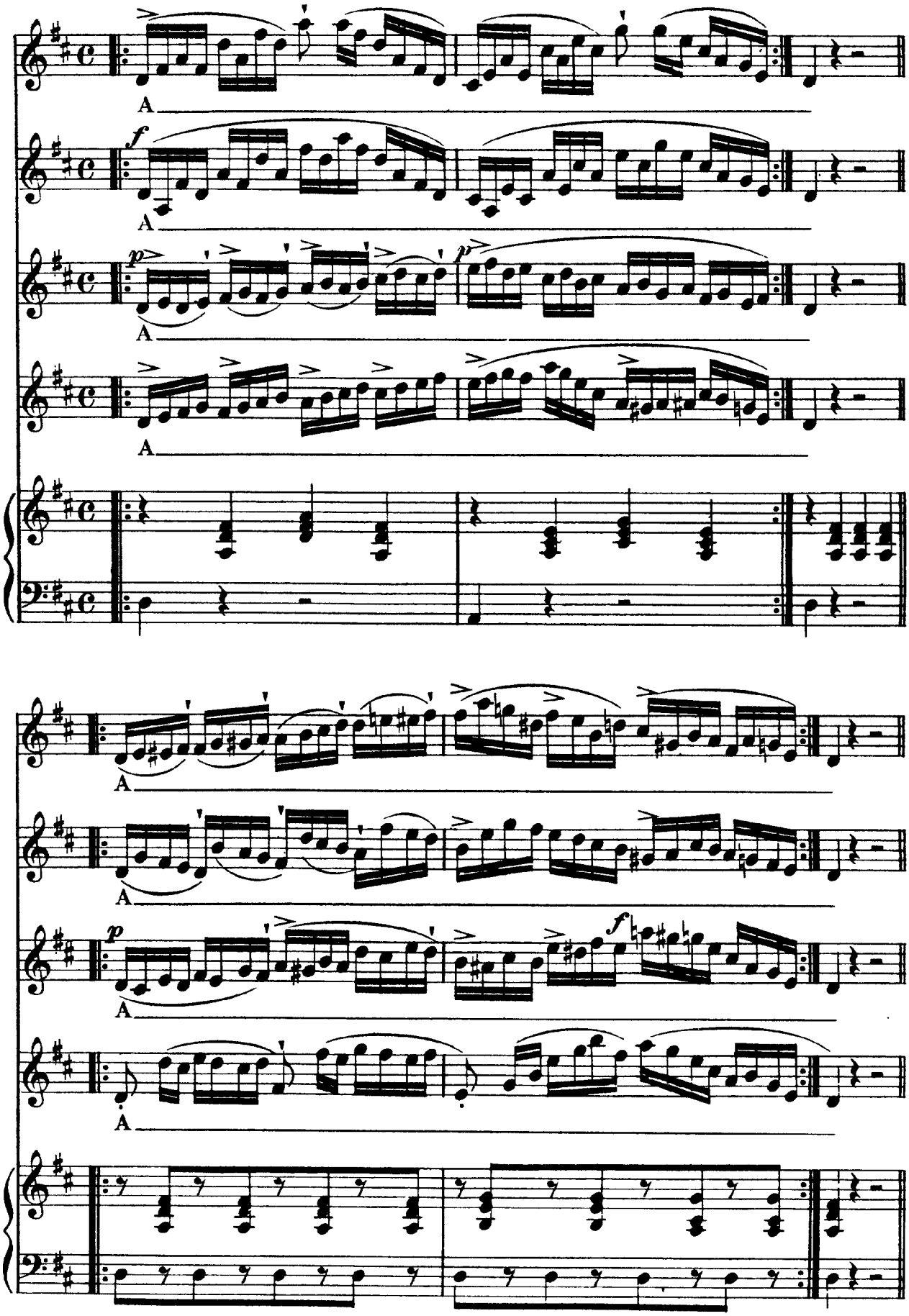

1
p
A
0
2
A
0
3
A
0
4
f
A
0
f
A
0
mf
A
0
(Rest.)

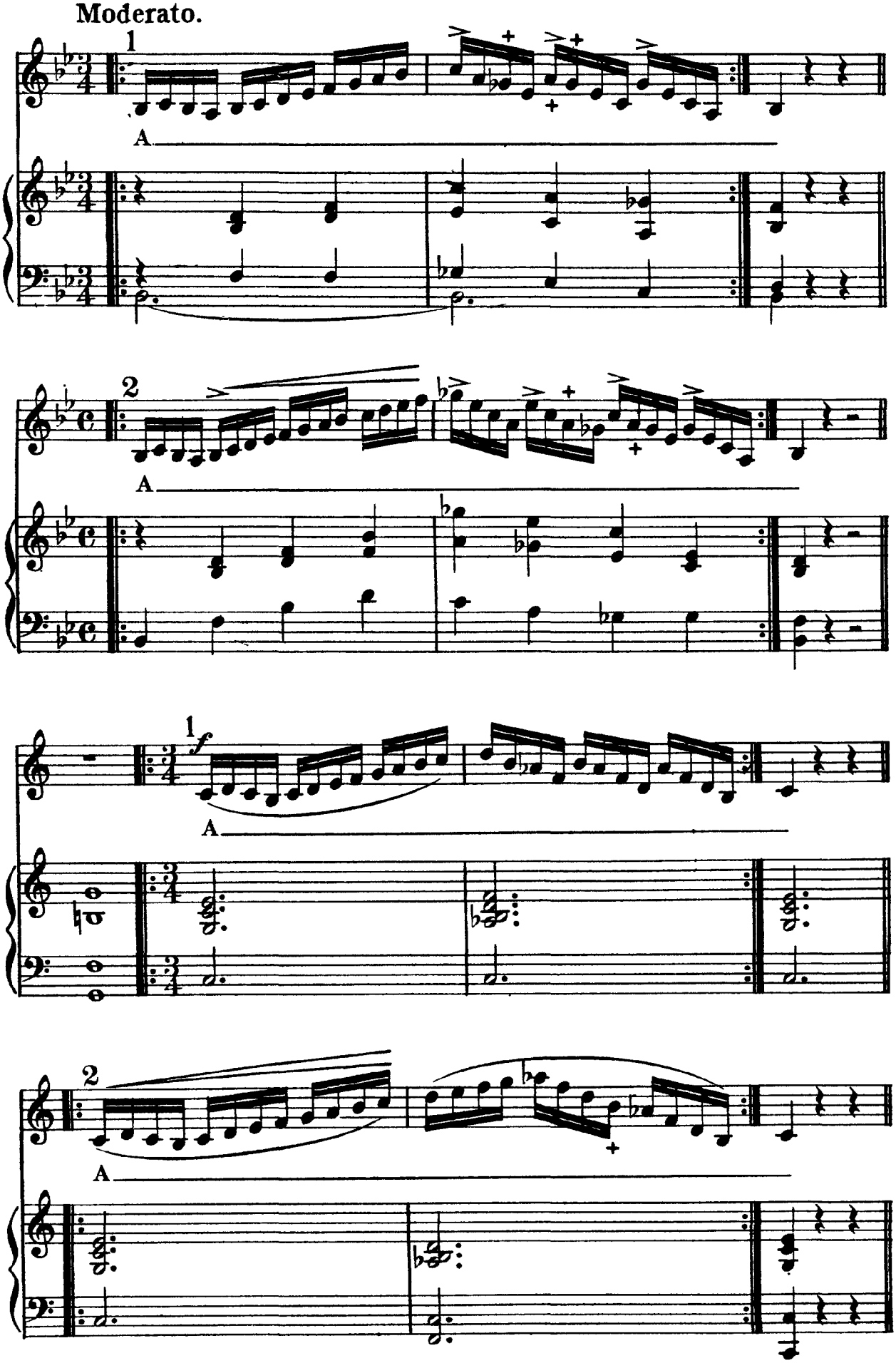
Begin the study of the following exercises in the full natural voice, i. e. without the least effort, asterward adding the shadings and accentuation.

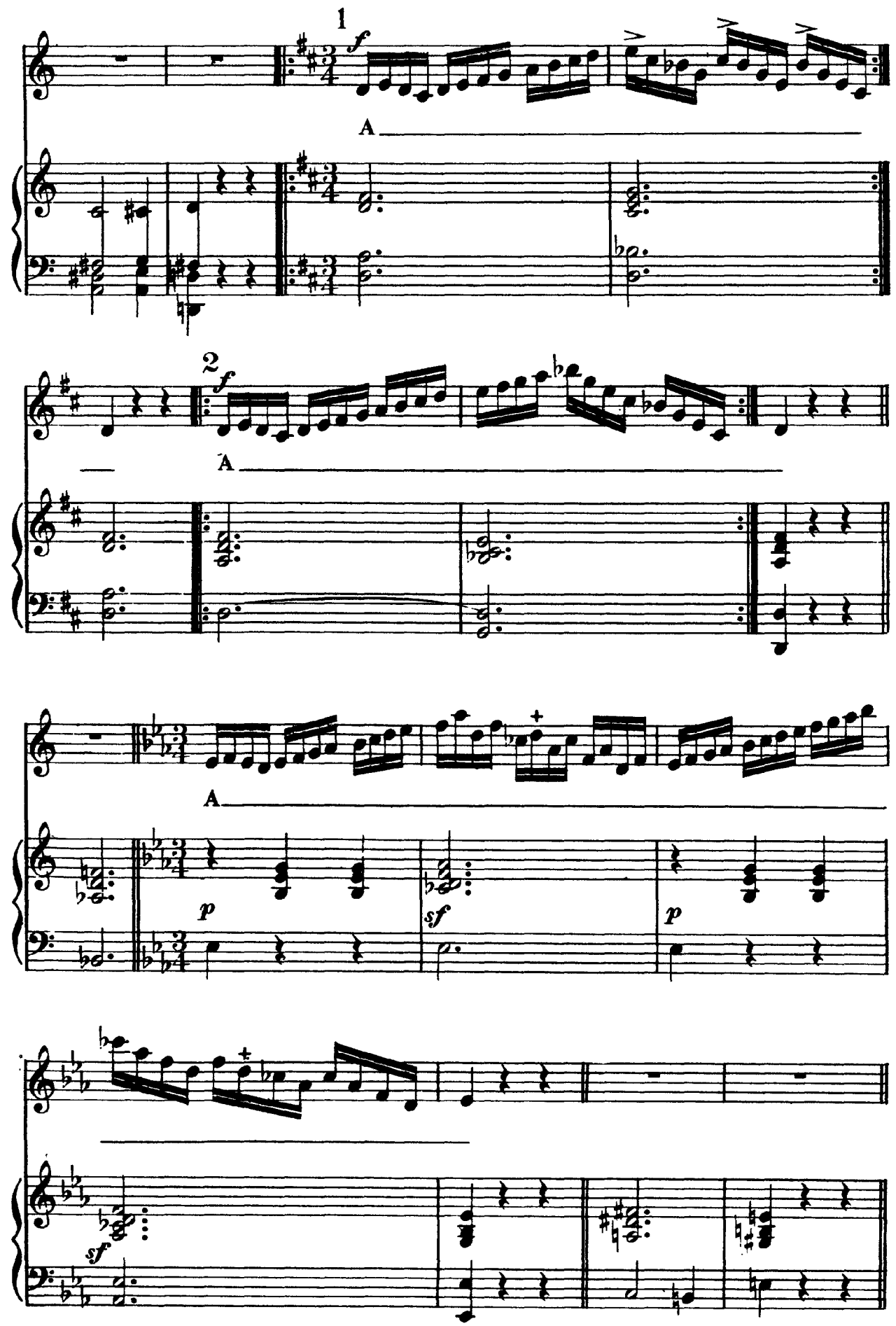
It is hardly necessary to say that each pupil should select the exercises suitable to the extent of her voice.

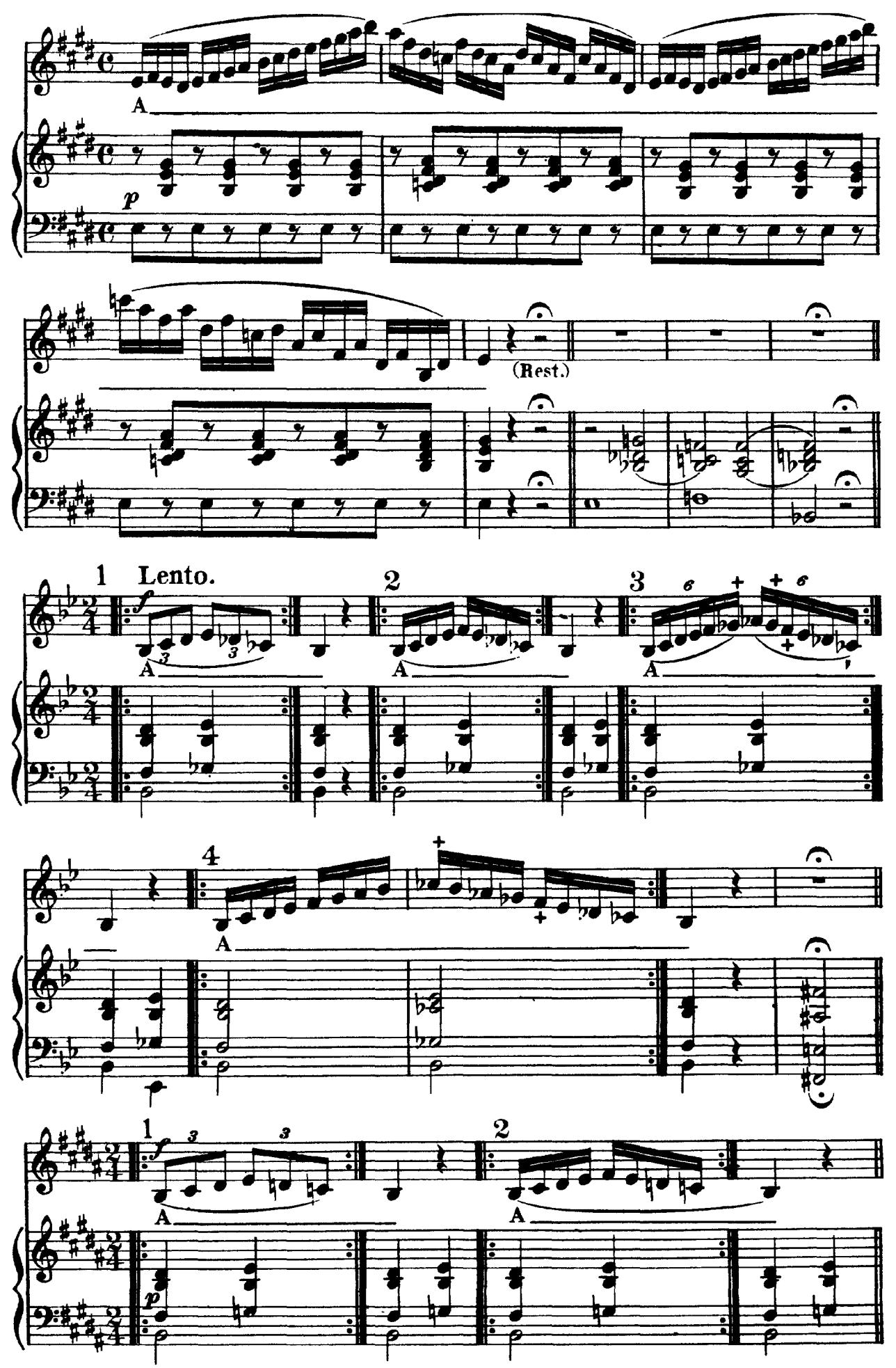


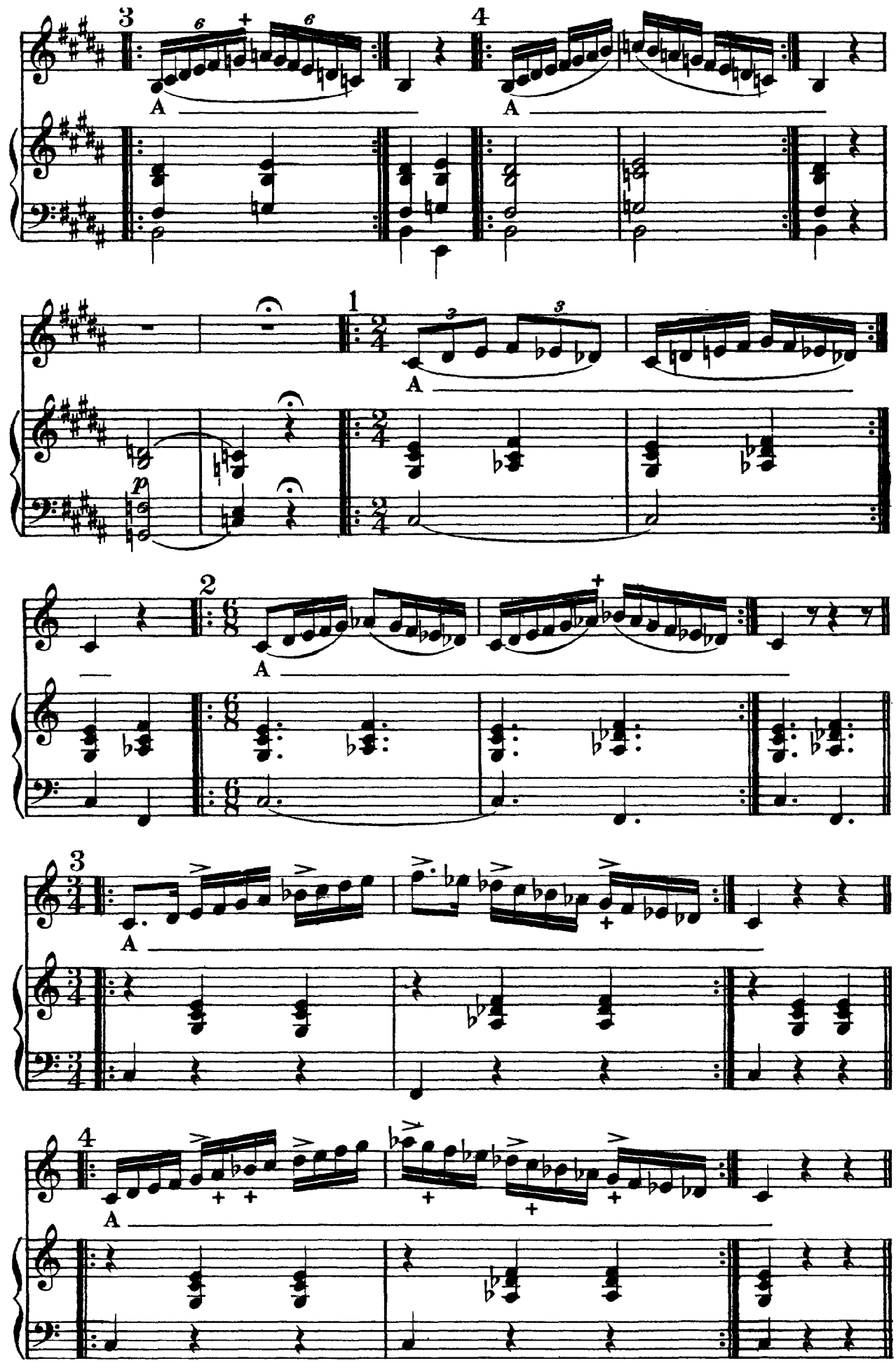
The detached note should be quitted without taking breath.

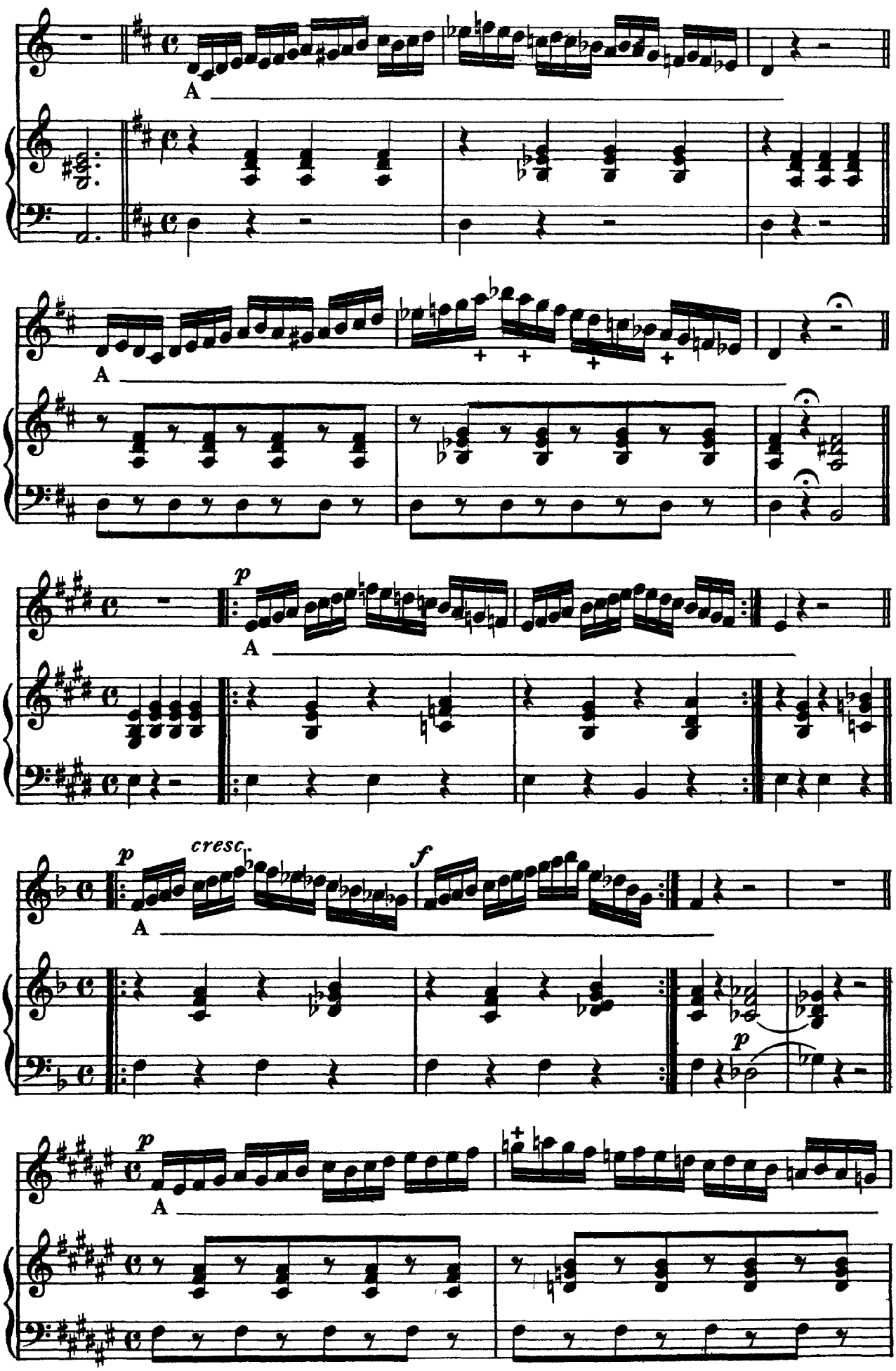


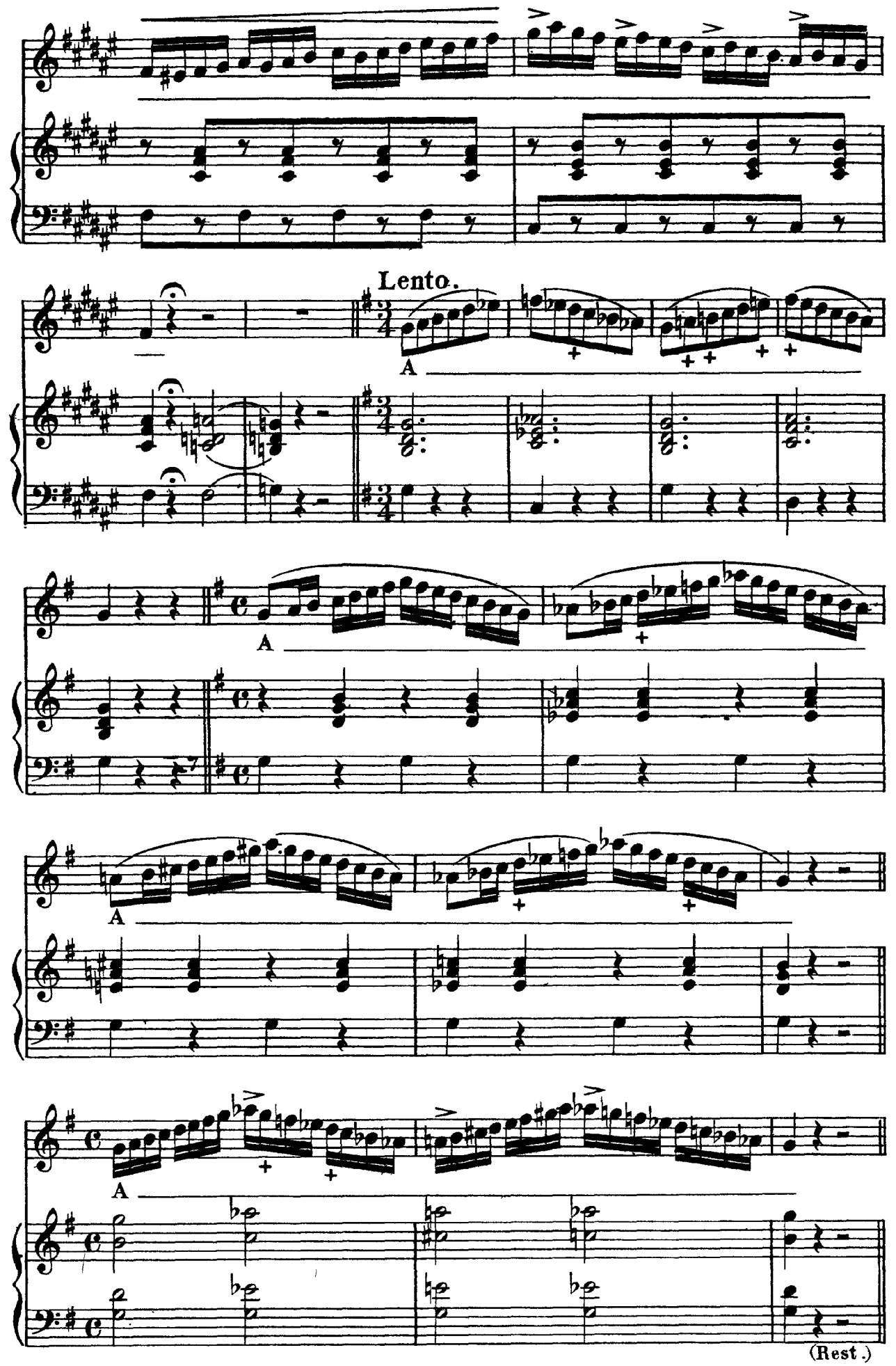

Moderato.
1
A
2
A
1
f
A
2
A


1
f
A
2
f
A
A
p
sf
p
sf


A
p
(Rest.)
1 Lento.
2
3
A
4
A
1
2
A
p

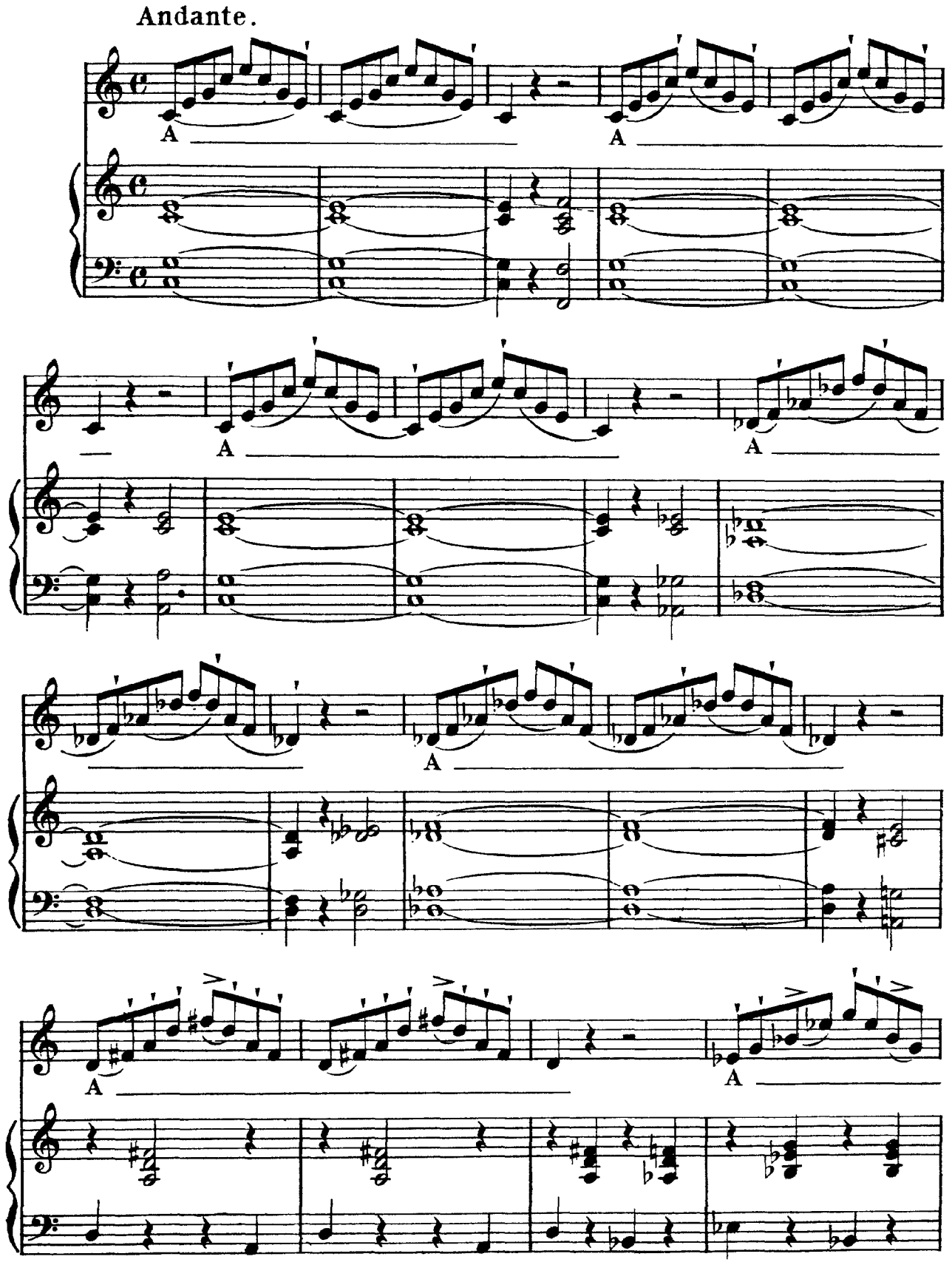

3
6
+
6
A
4
A
1
3
3
A
p
2
A
3
A
4
A

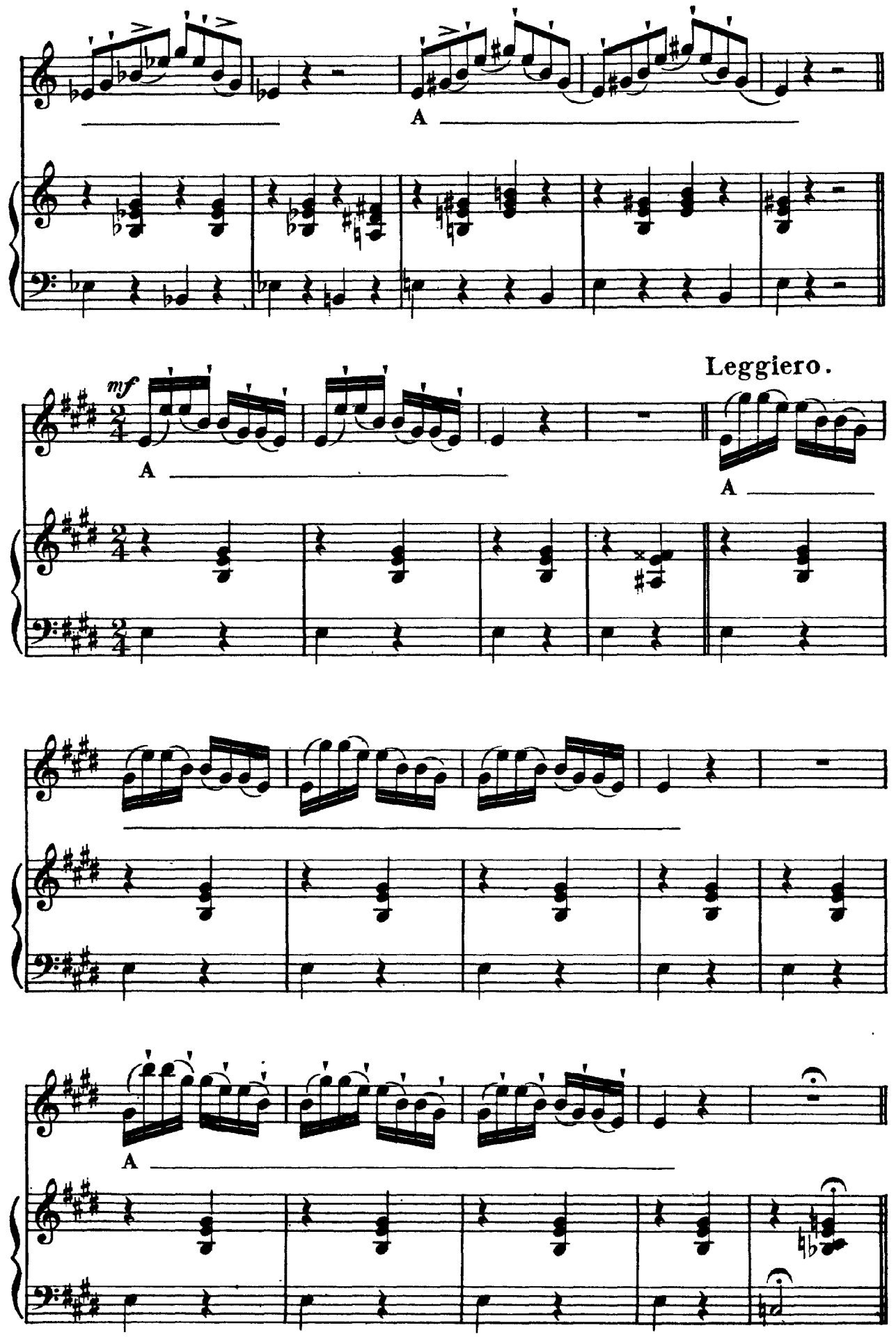

A
A
p
A
p
cresc.
f
A
p
p
A

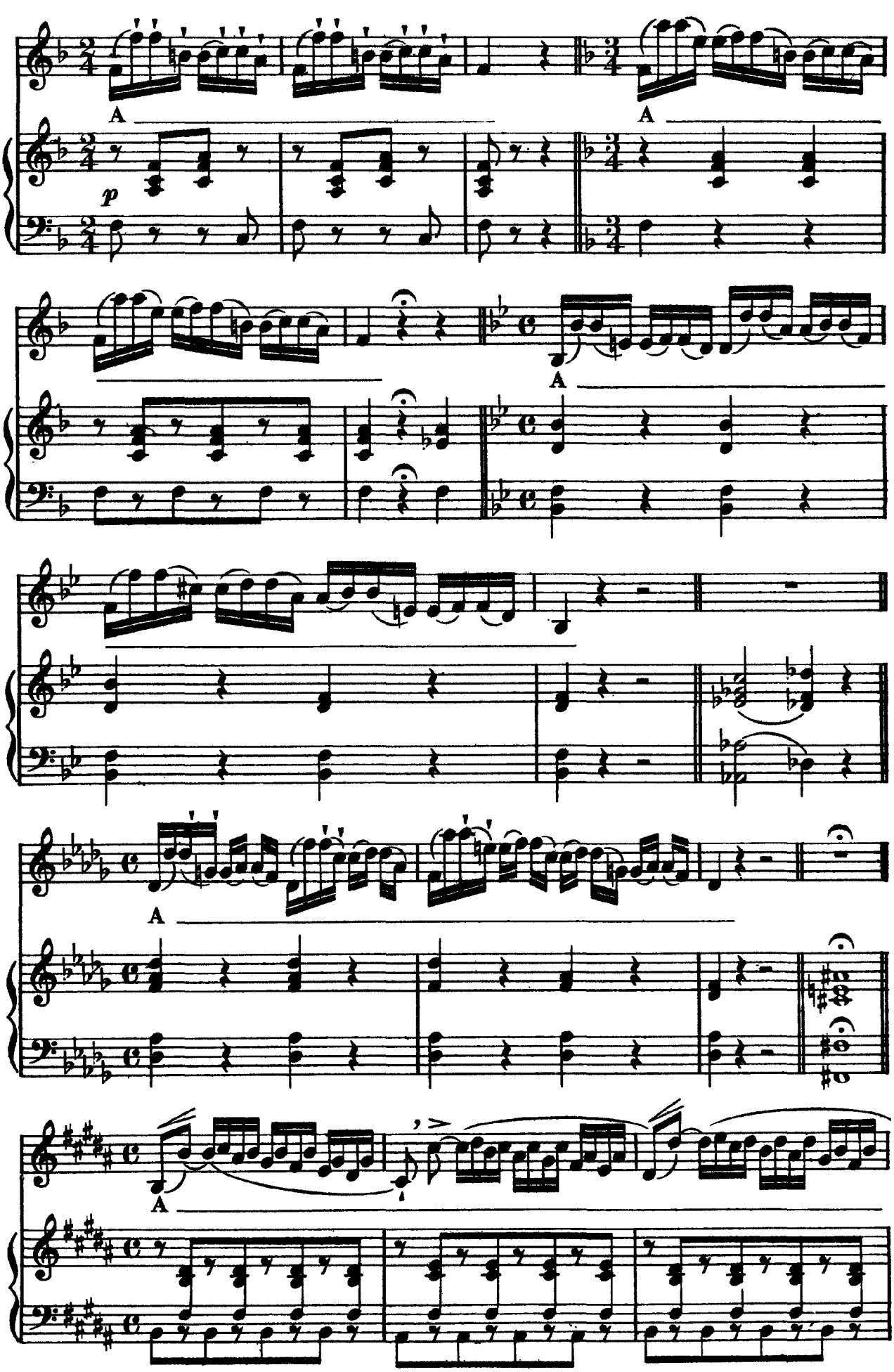

Lento.
A
A
A
A
(Rest.)

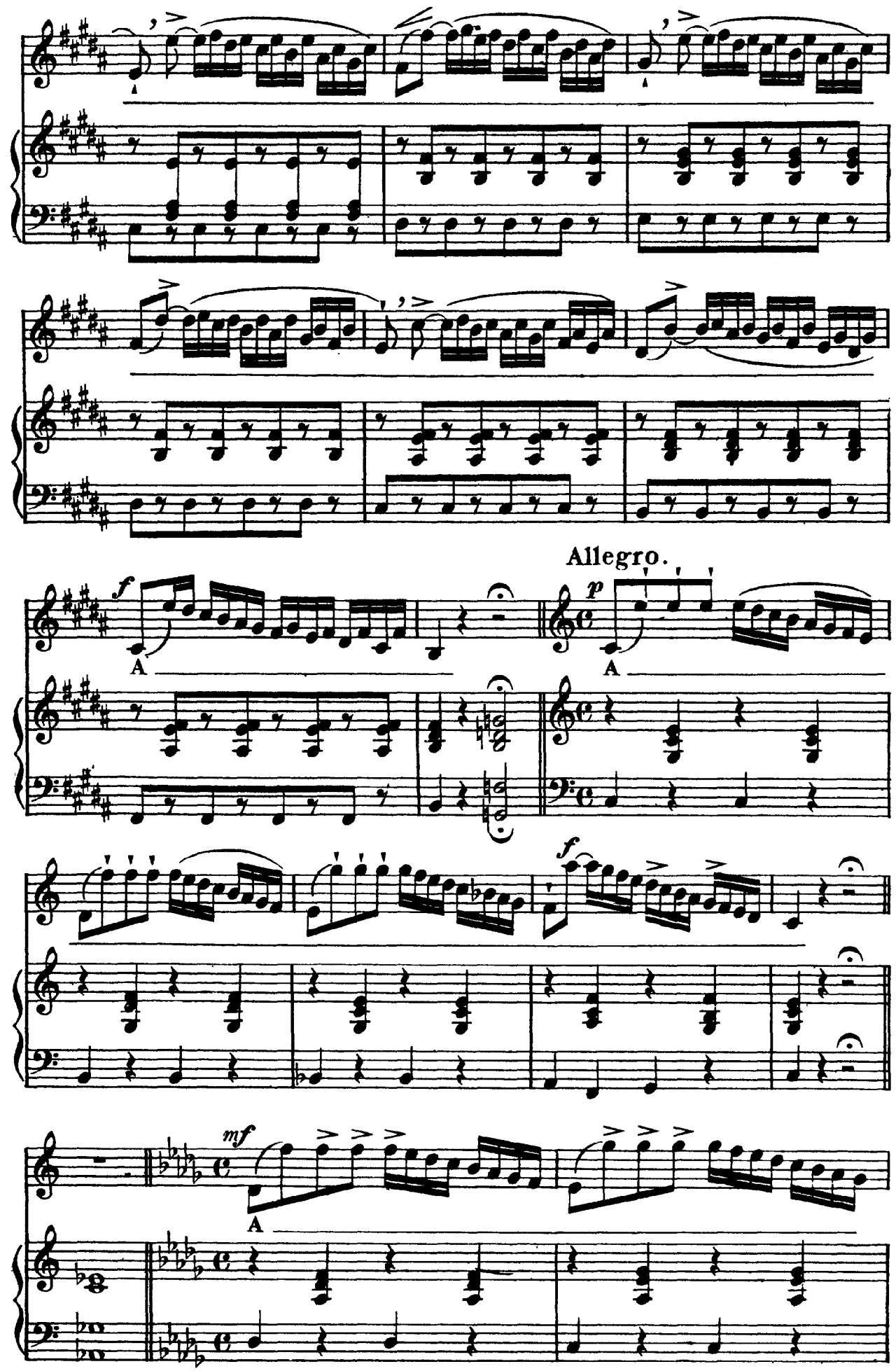
The following exercises should, like all the others, be sung slowly, at first, afterward with the greatest possible velocity consistent with the utmost distinctness.

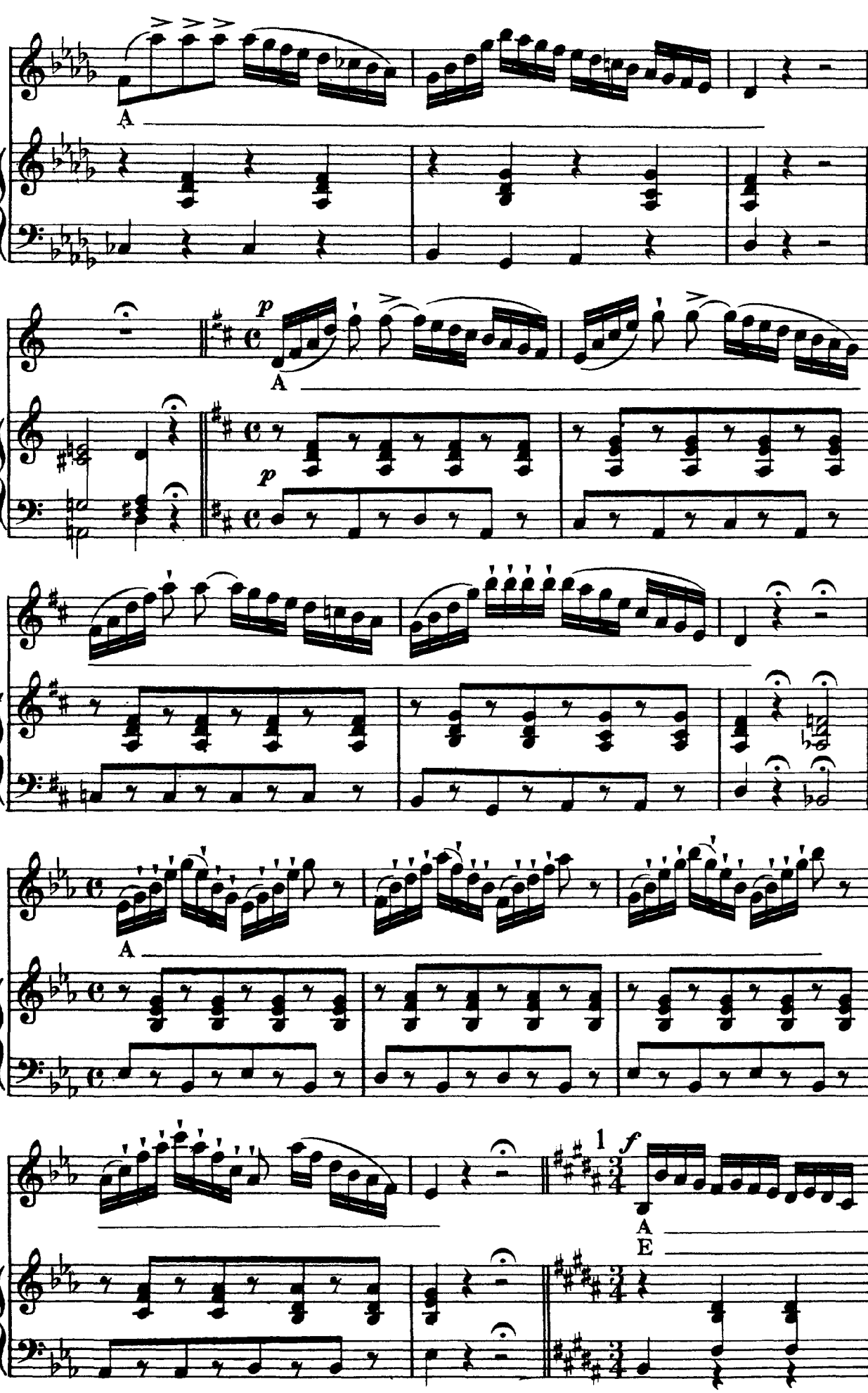
The detached note should be quitted *without taking breath.*

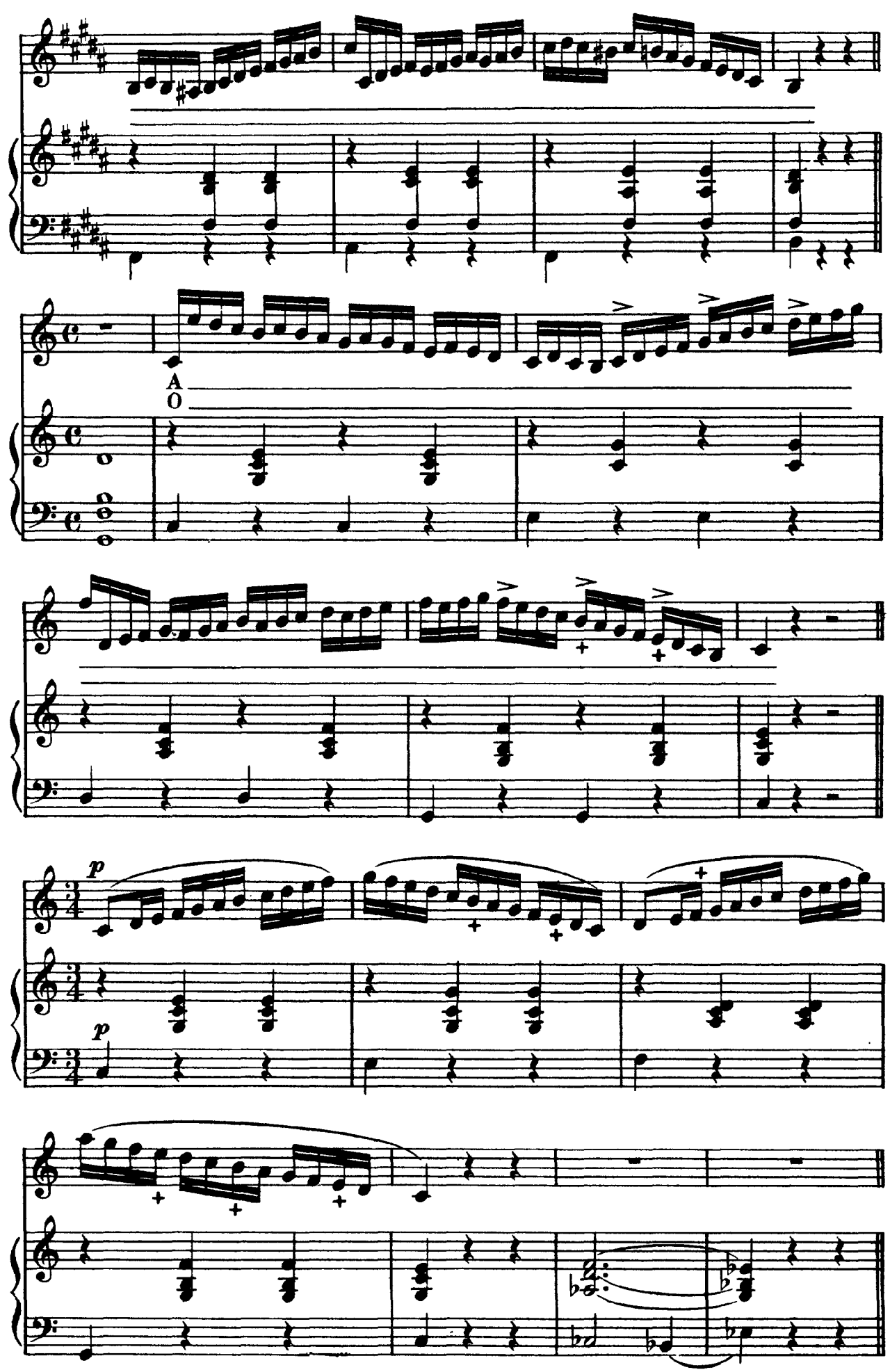


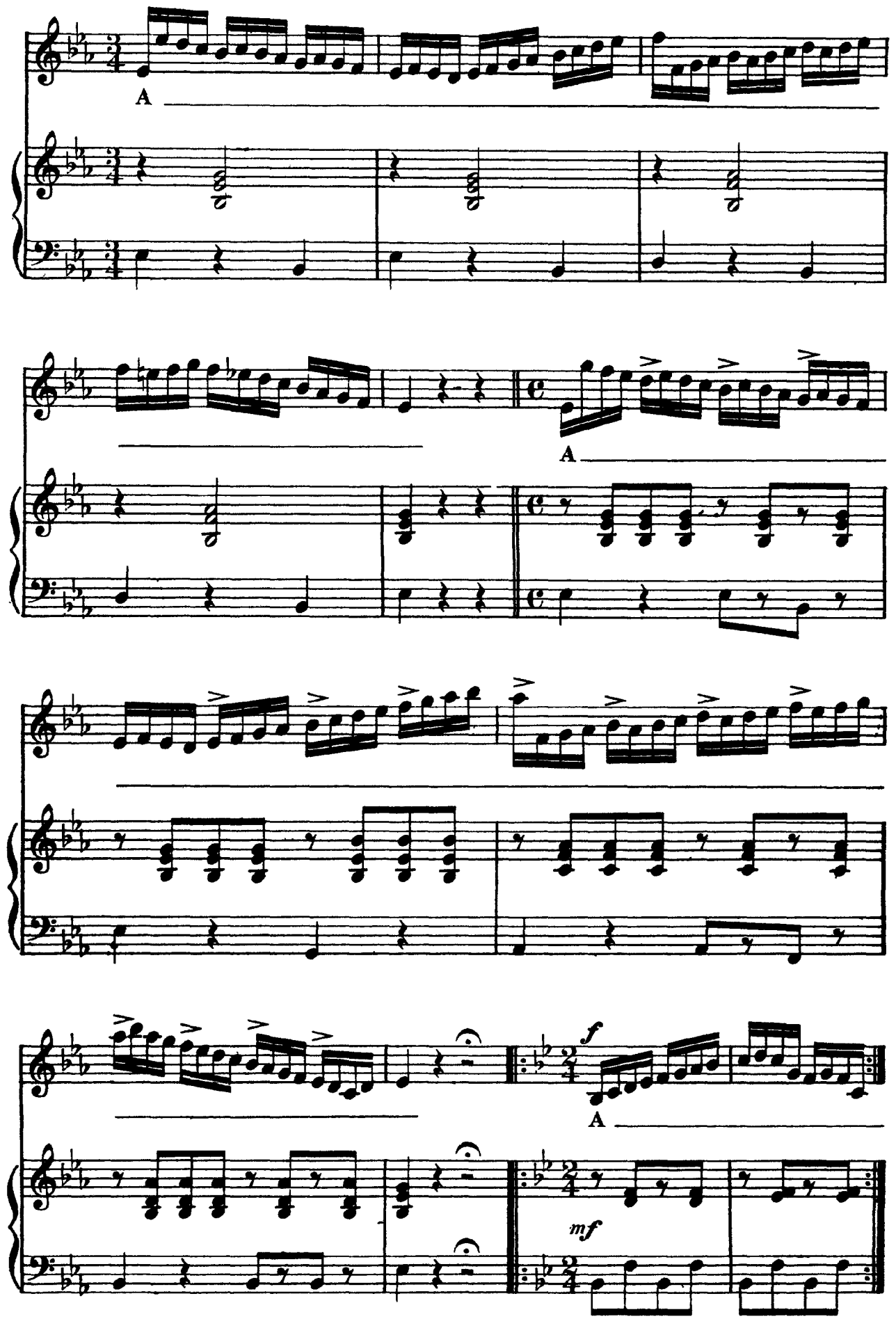

A
mf
A
Leggiero.
A
A

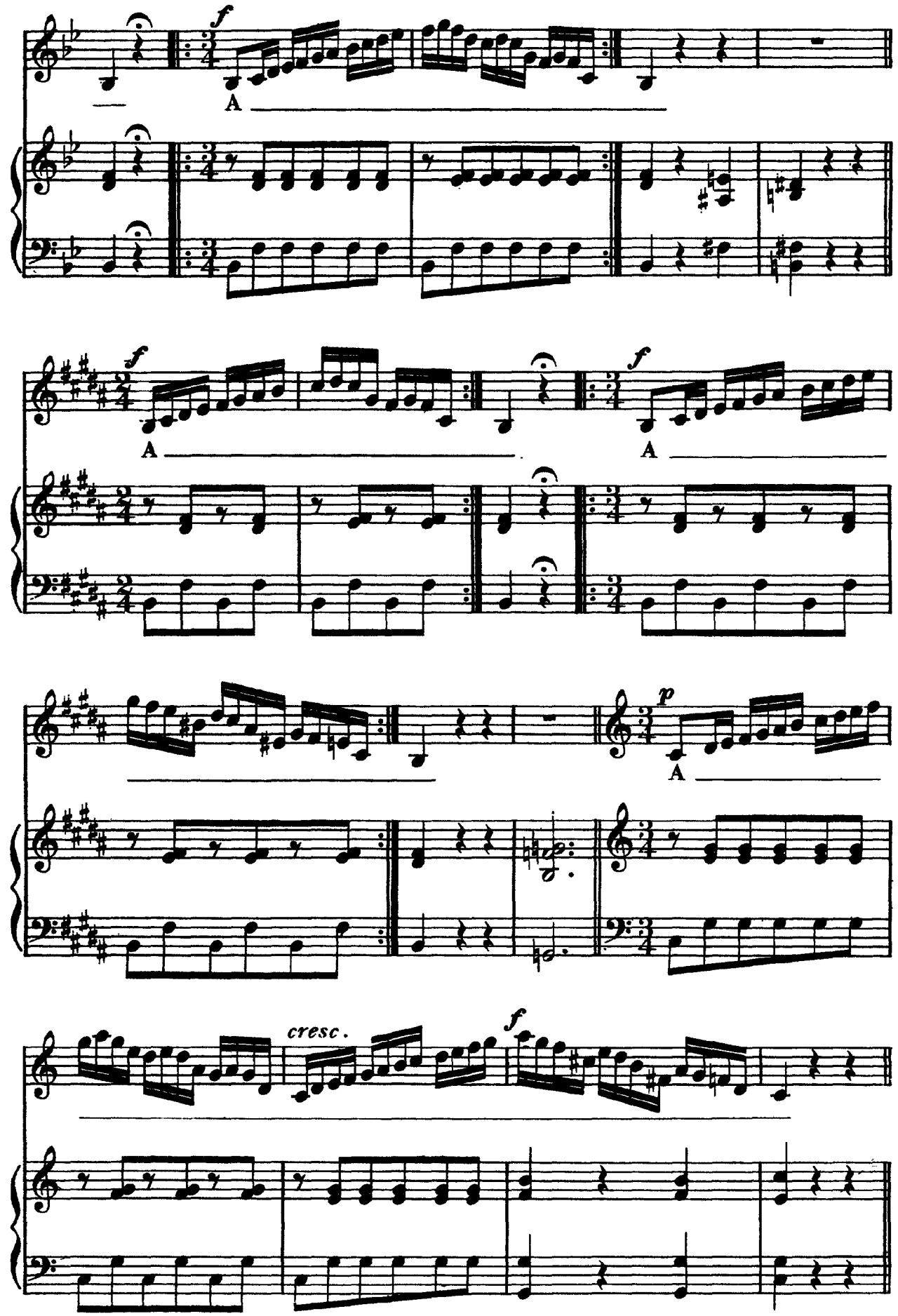

A
A
p
A
A
A

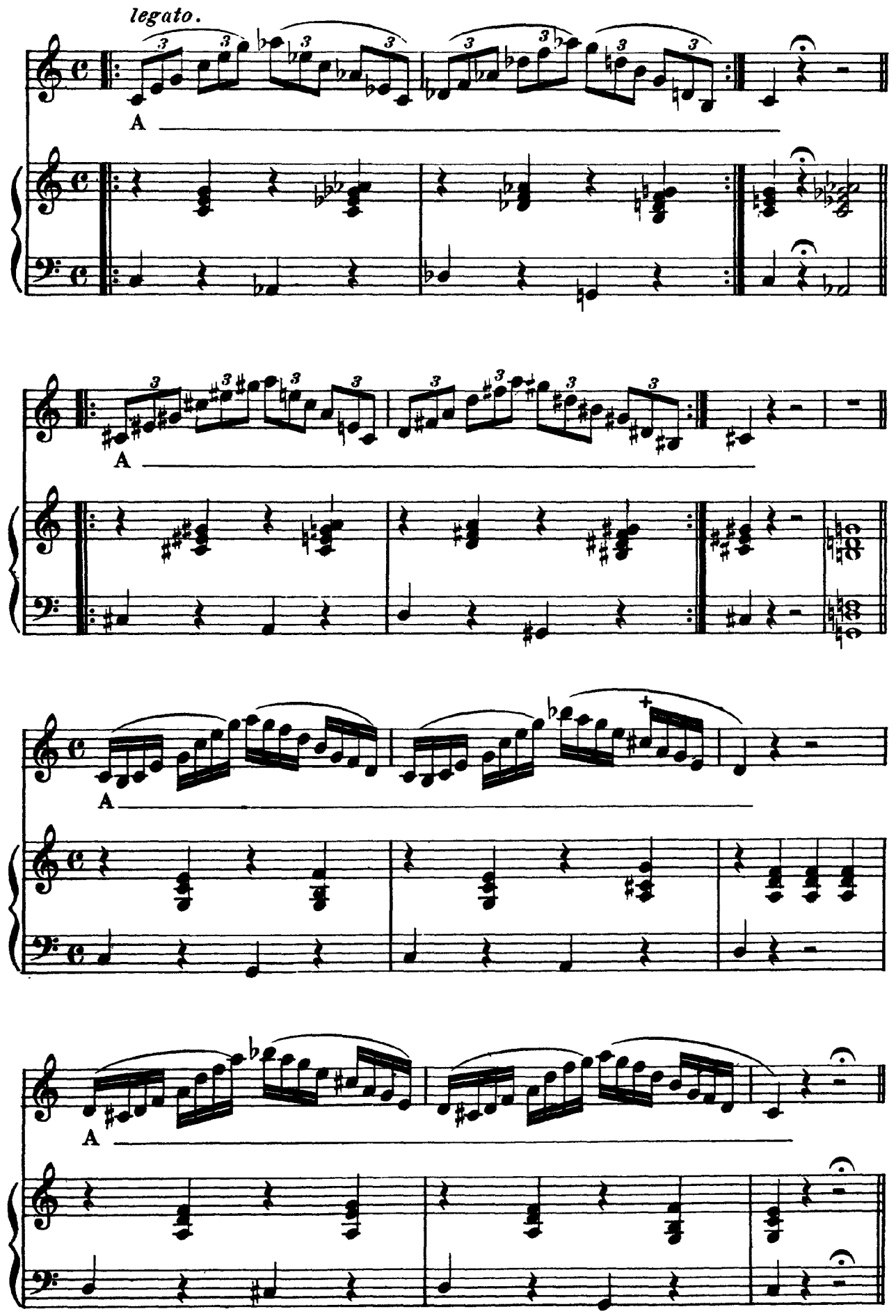

Allegro.
A
A
A

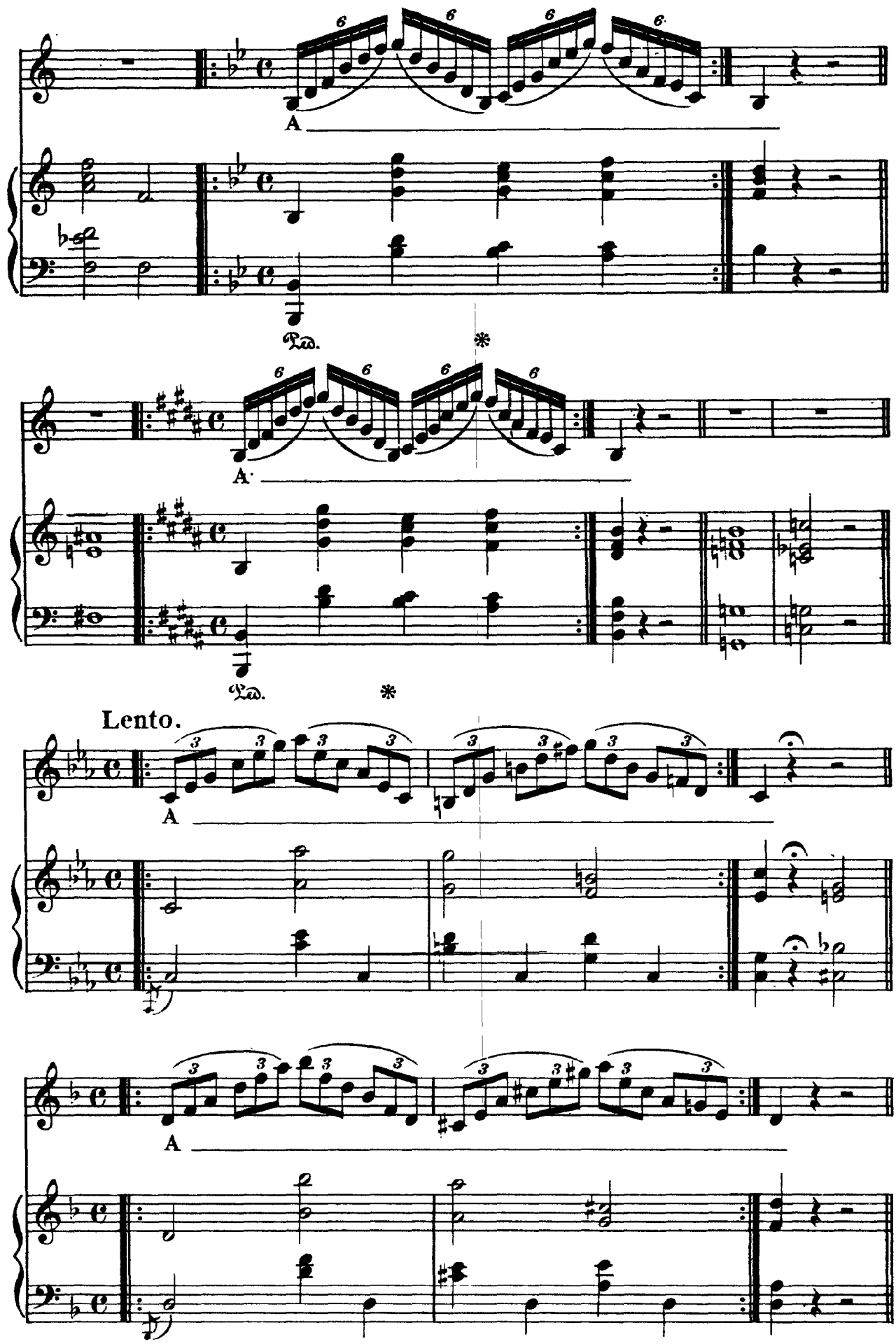

A
p
A
p
A
1
f
A
E

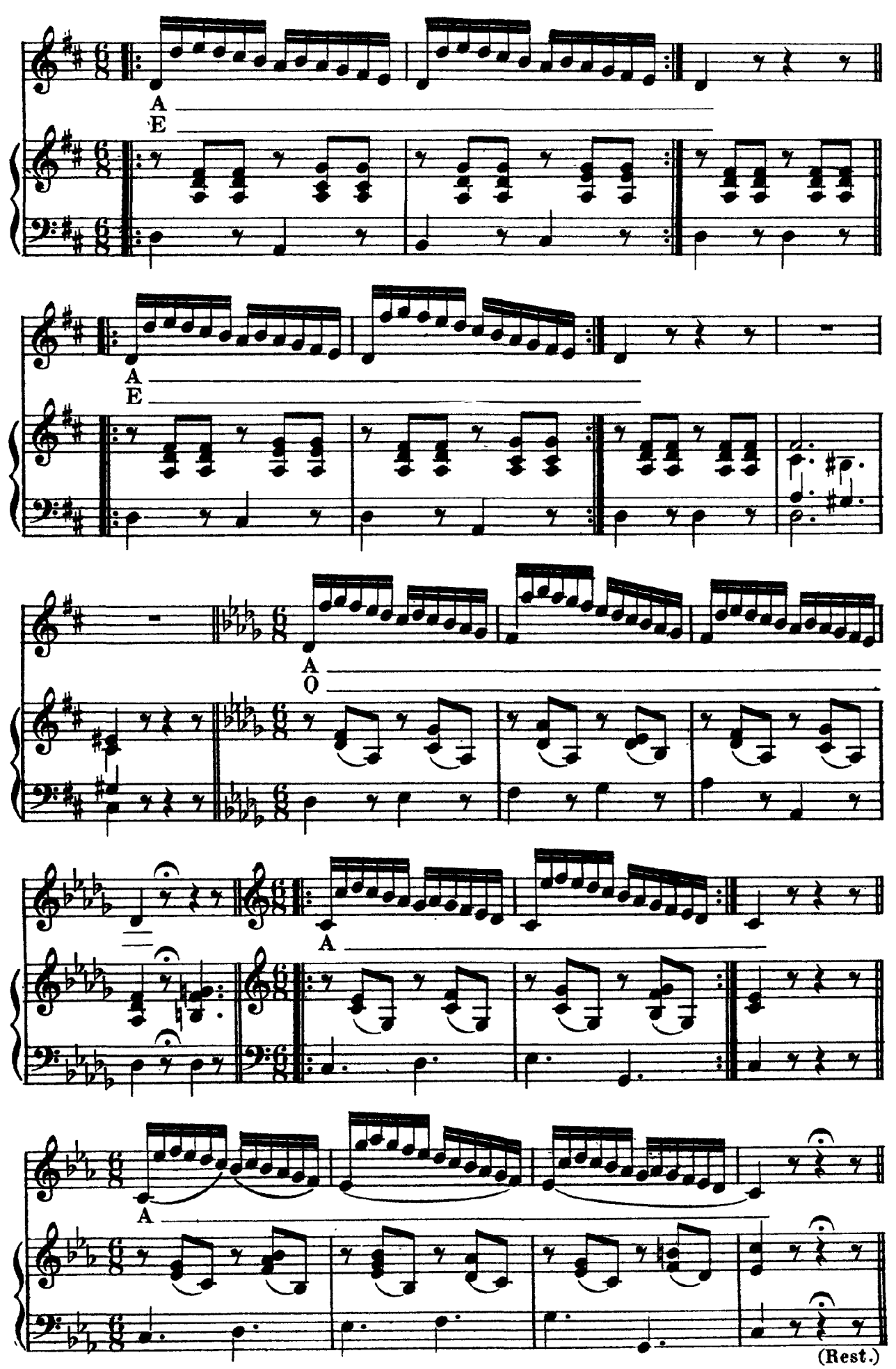

A
0
p
p


A
A
f
A
mf

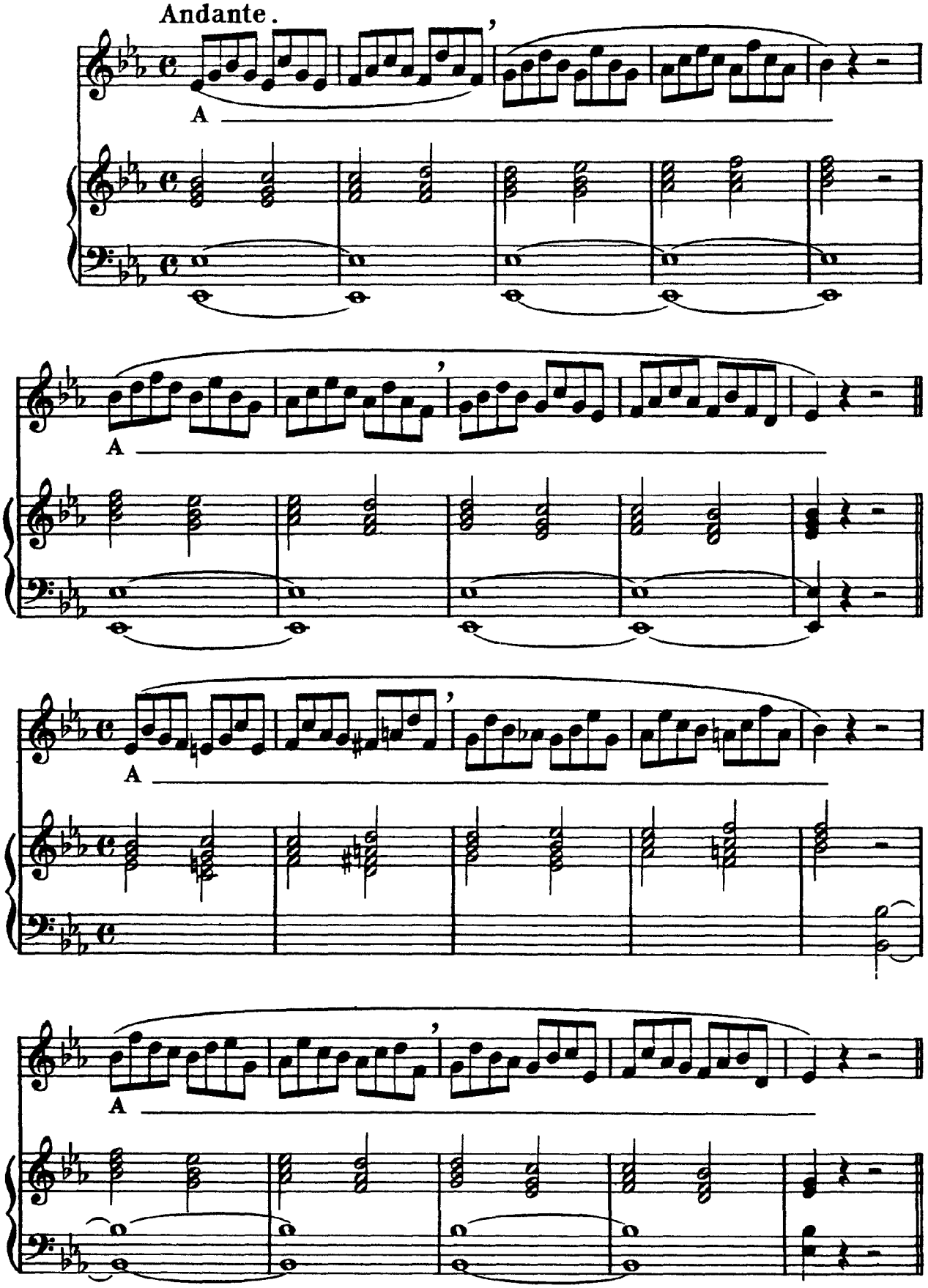

f
A
f
A
f
A
p
A
cresc.
f

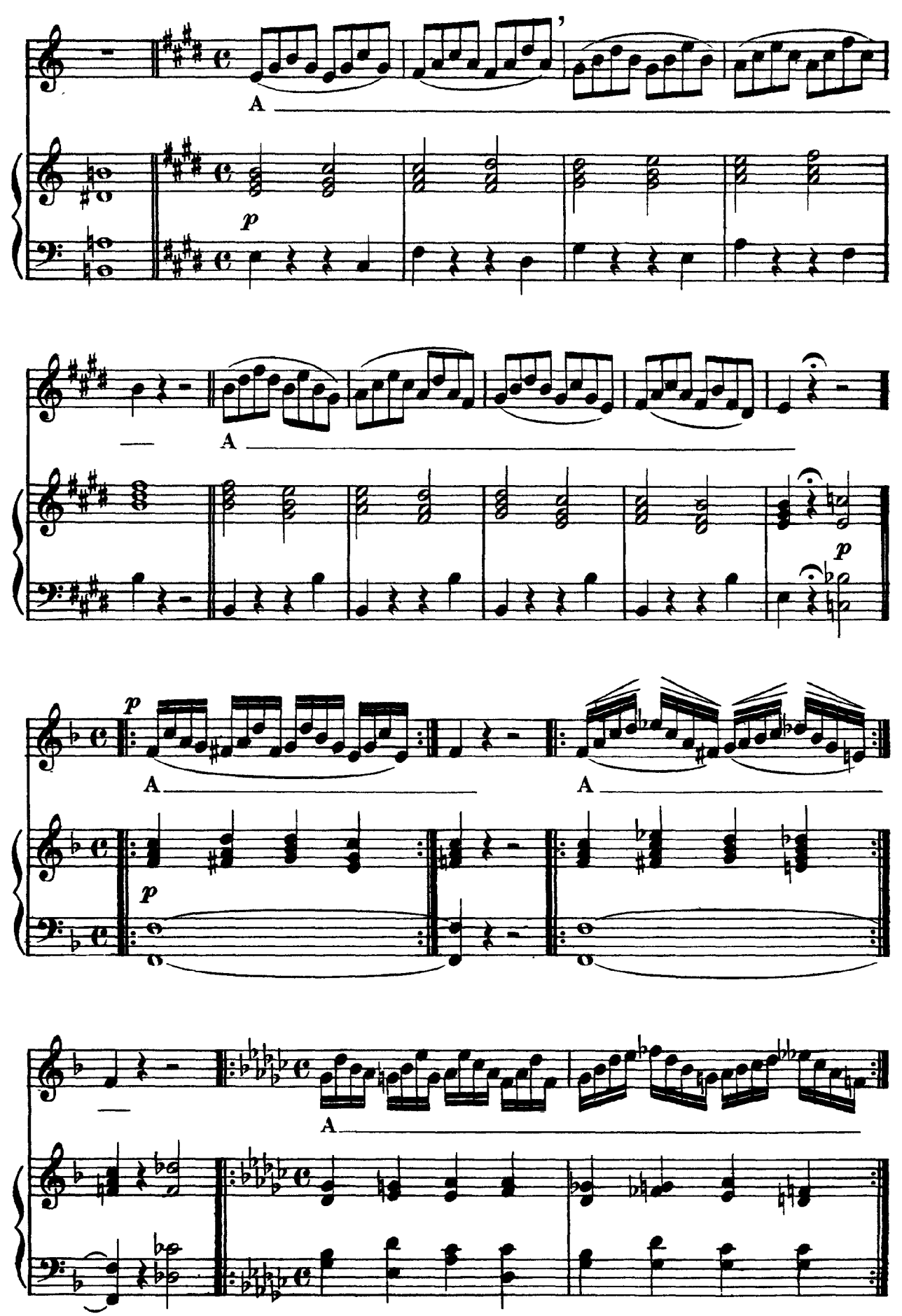

legato.
A
A
A
A

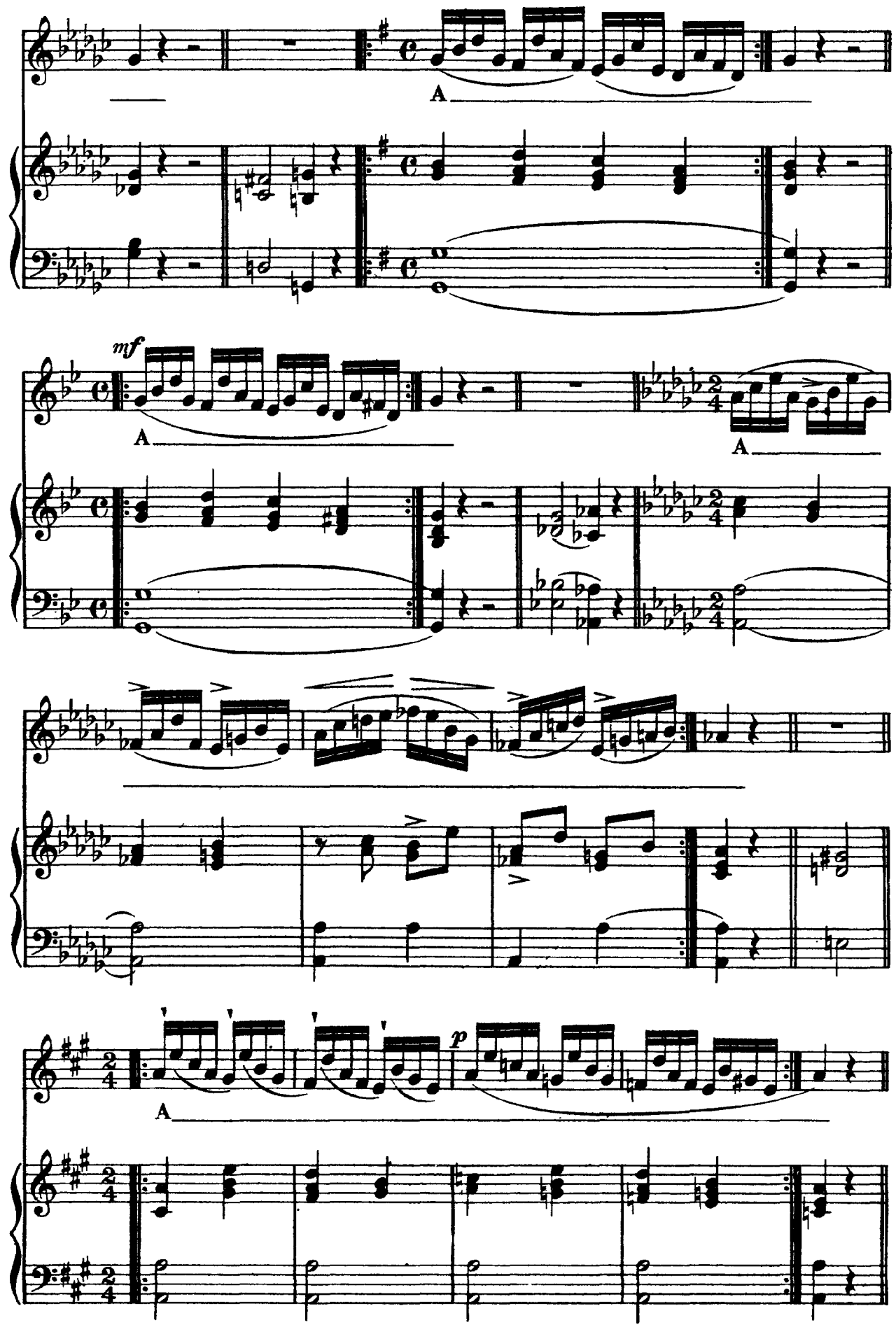

A
Ped.
*
A
Ped.
*
Lento.
A
A

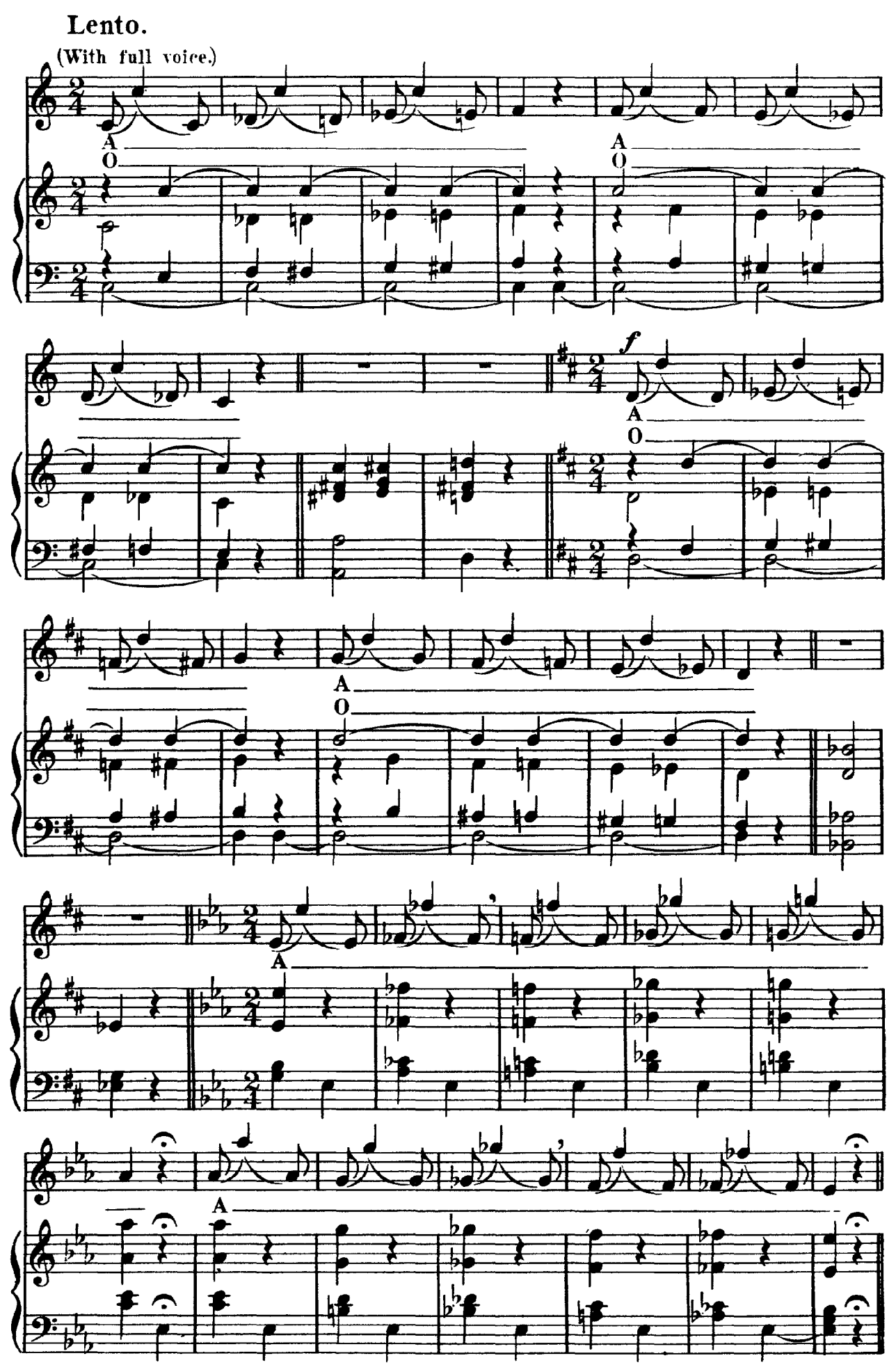

A
E
A
E
A
O
A
A
(Rest.)

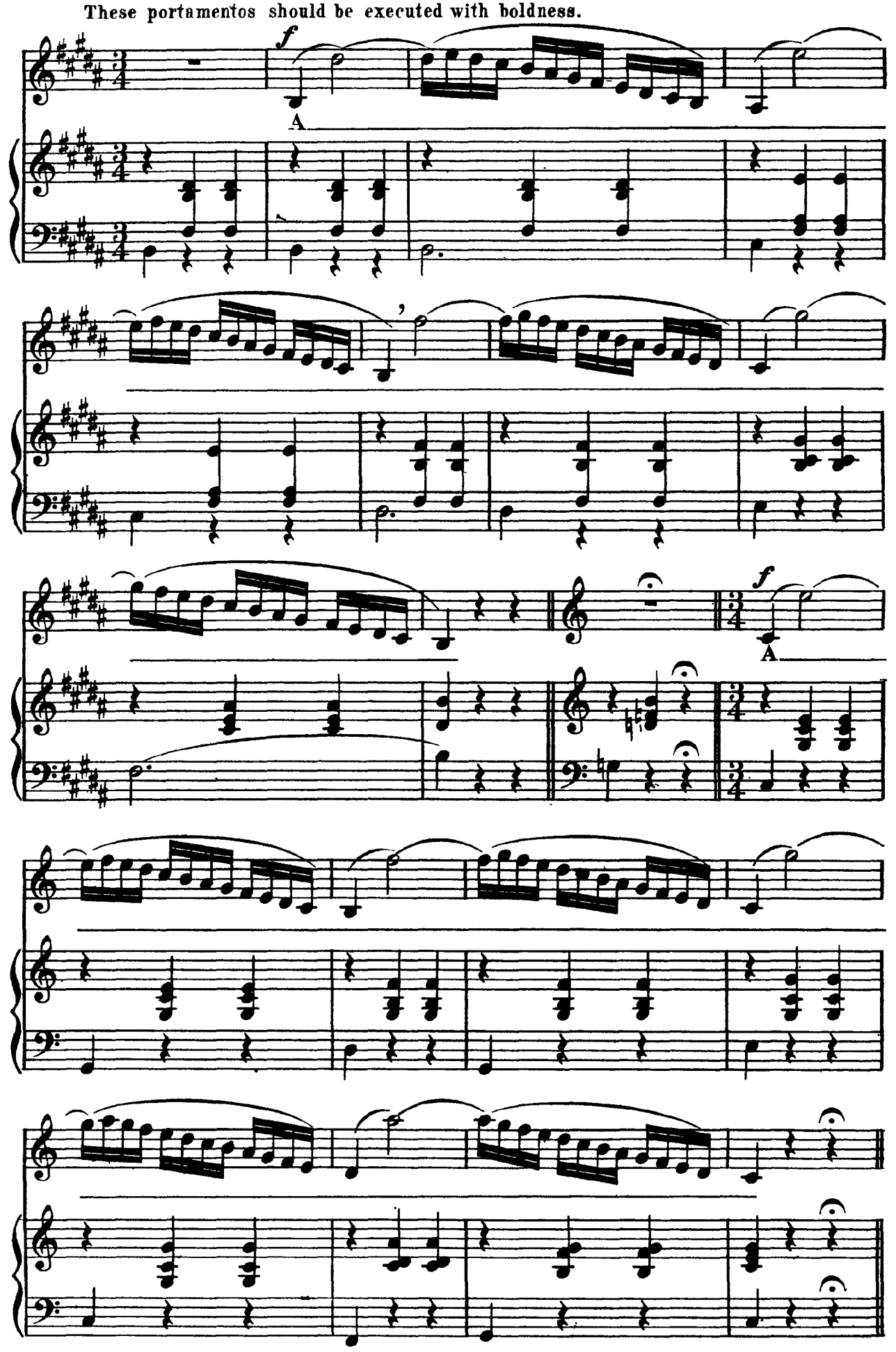
The following exercises being slow, breath may be taken, if necessary, at the end of every second measure.

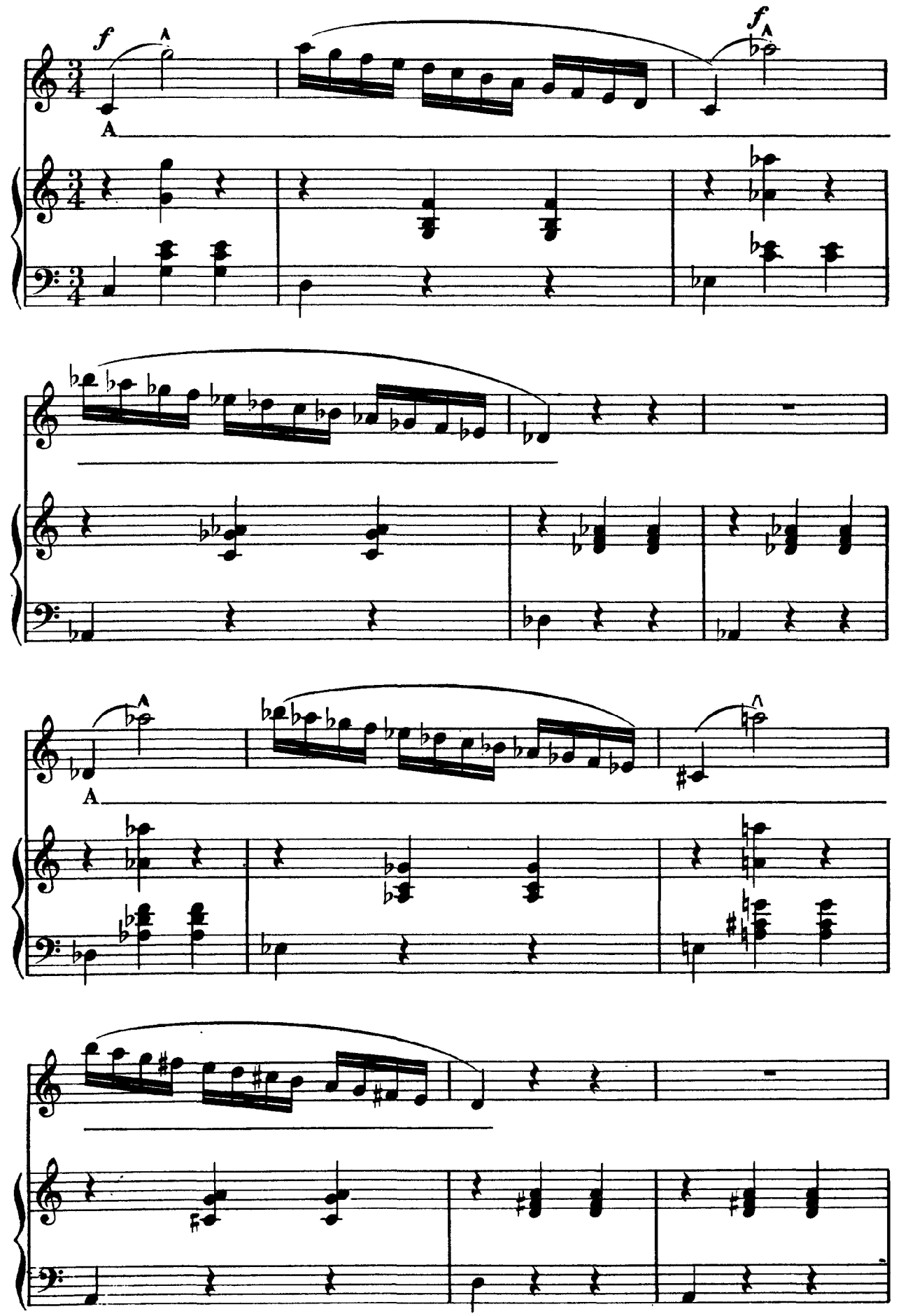


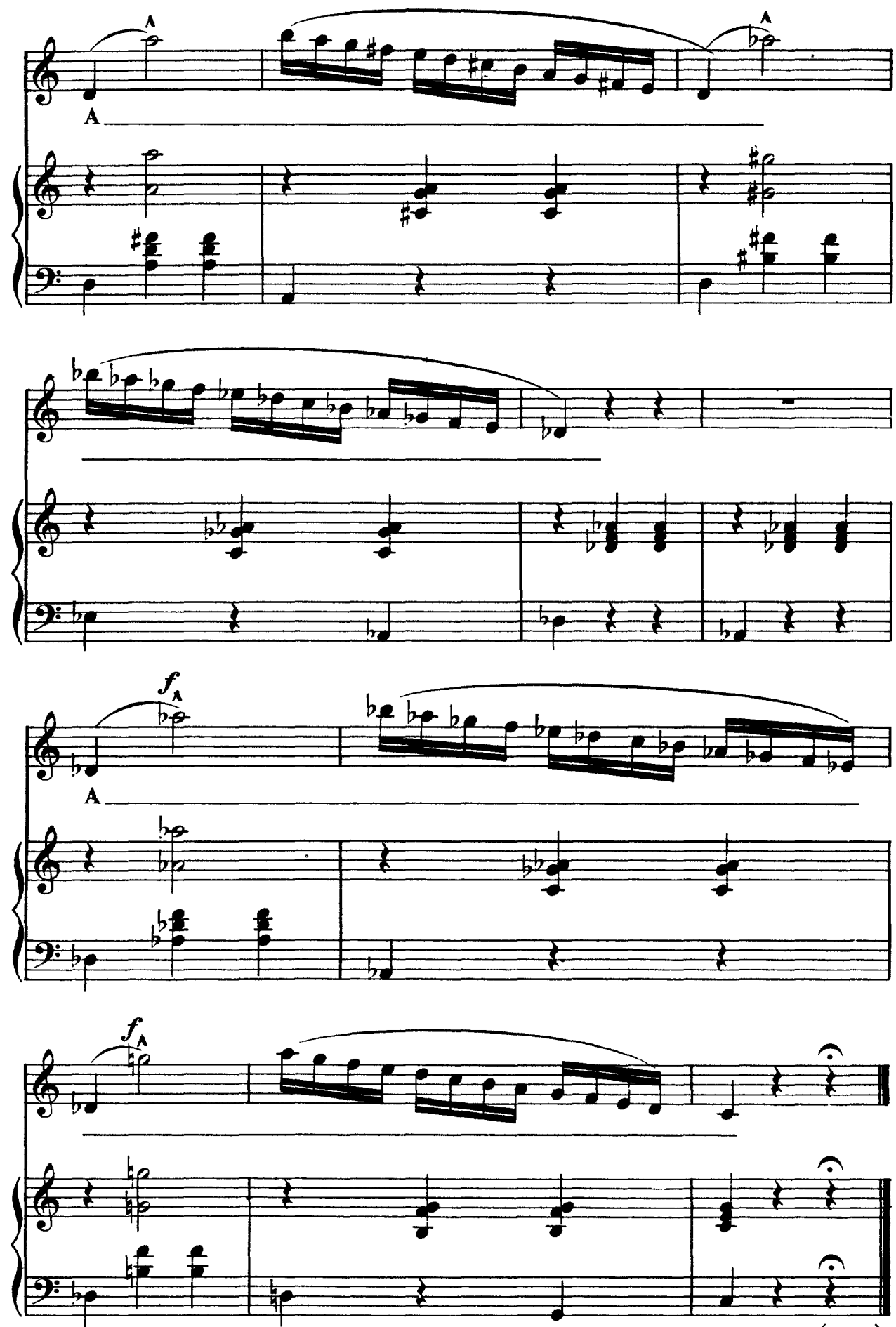

A
p
A
p
p
A
A
p
A

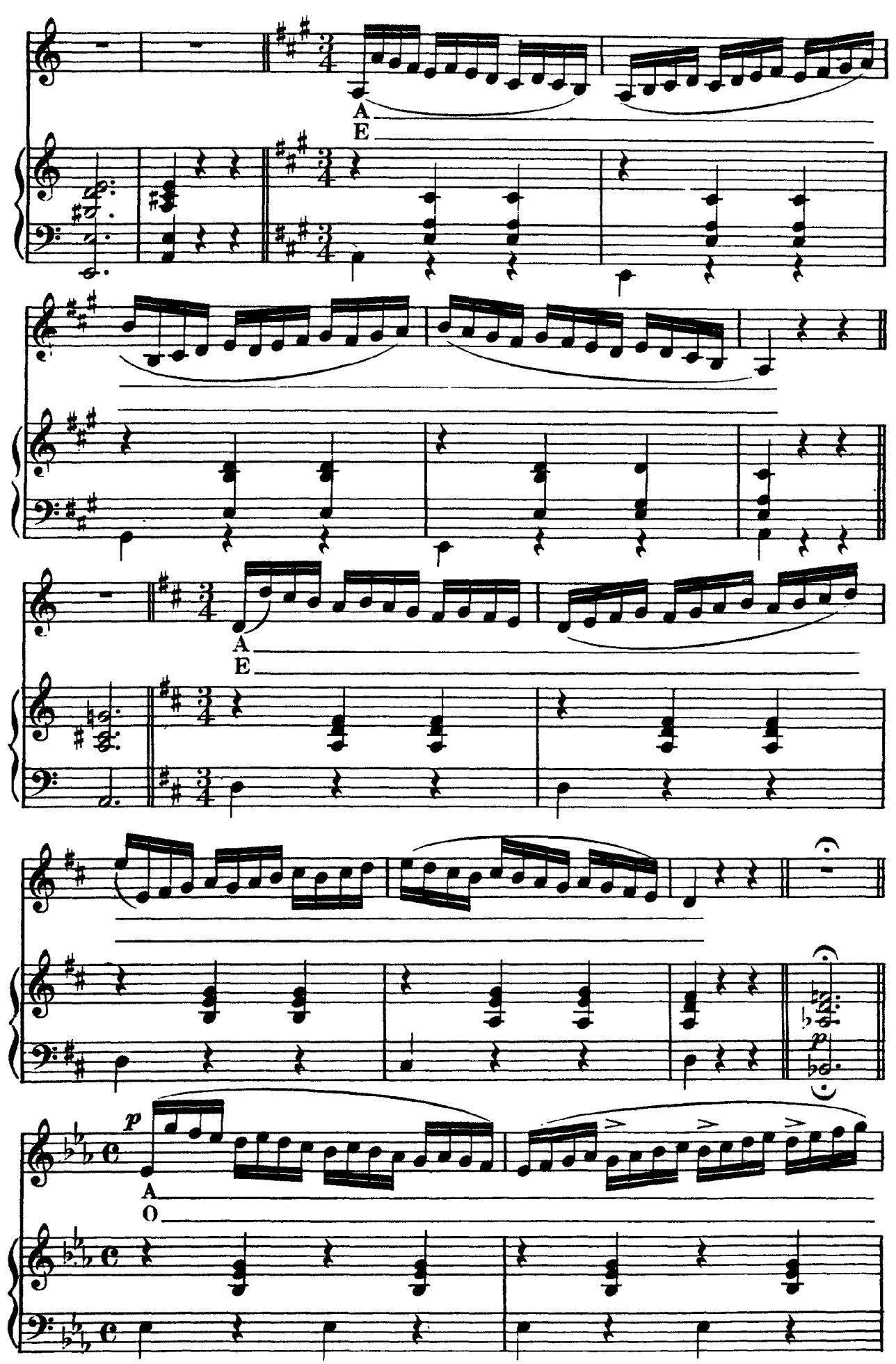

A
mf
A
A
p
A

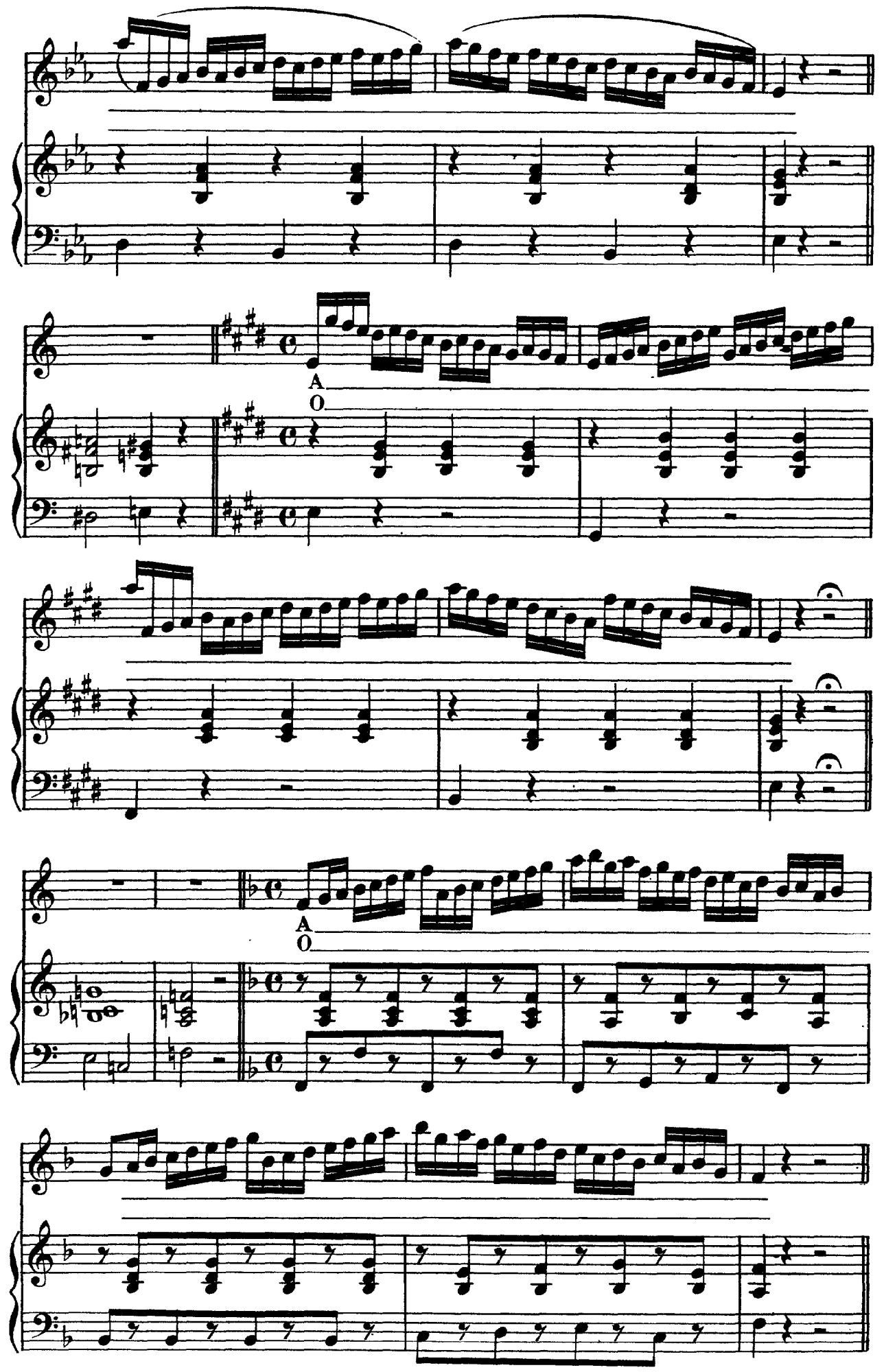

Lento.
(With full voice.)
A
O
f


These portamentos should be executed with boldness.
f
A
f
A


f
A
f
A


A
A
A
f
f
(Rest.)


A
E
A
E
p
A
O


A
O
A
O

Of the Trill.

A precise and detailed indication of the manner of studying the trill has never been possible, for this study must necessarily be modified according to the differences of throats and voices. Nevertheless, since the entire absence of rigidity is the first condition of a well executed trill, I shall endeavor to explain what is, according to my experience, the surest and most rapid means of remedying this most troublesome of all defects: rigidity.

Persons who have not yet studied singing, even children, generally learn the trill more quickly than anything else, for, if they have no acquired qualities, they have not been able to form bad habits of rigidity in the throat. Thus far I have found but few voices ill-adapted to the trill among my pupils, and not one among those whose studies I have directed from the very first.

This exercise, whose object is to do away with rigidity, should be studied as follows:

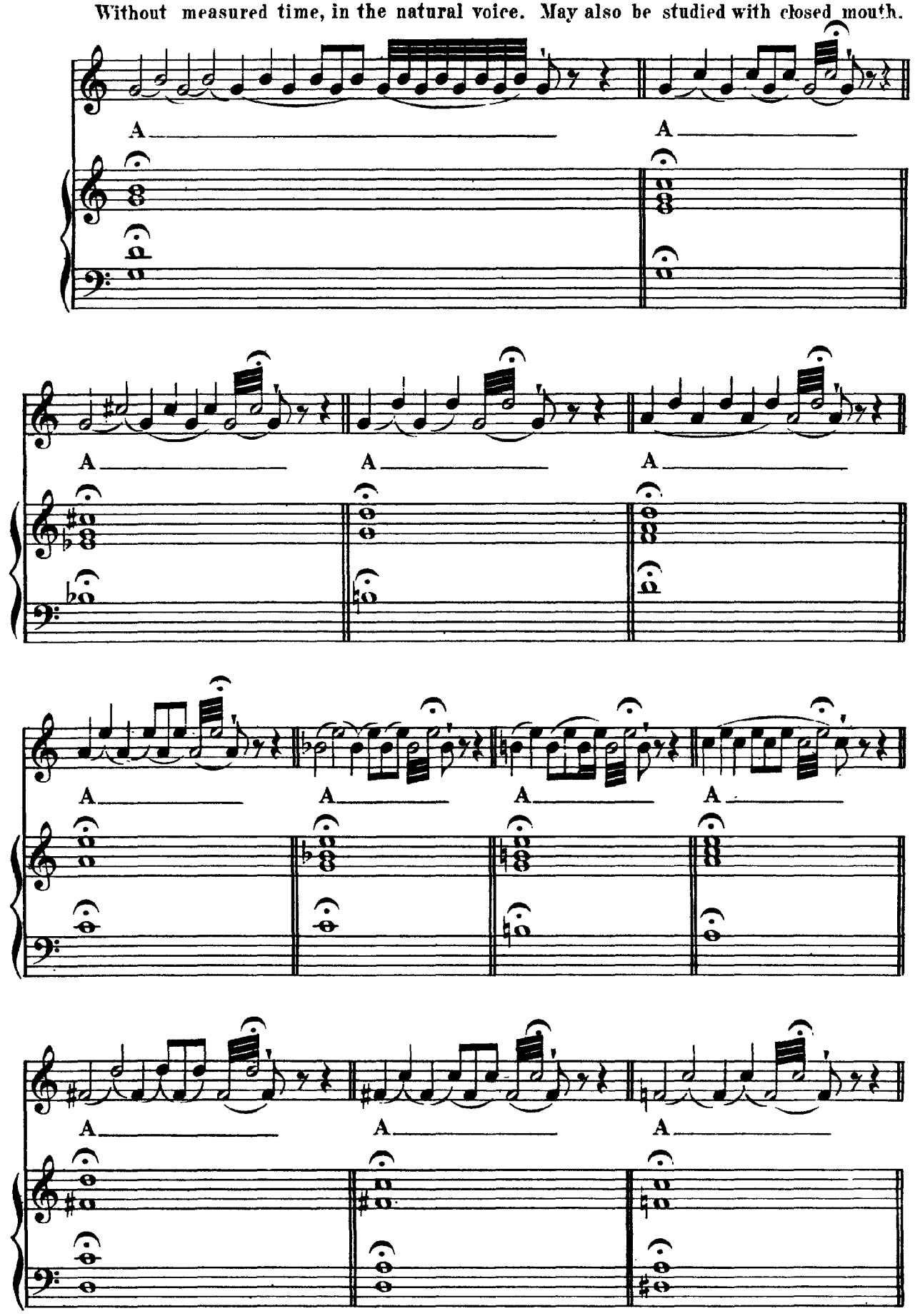
Contrarily to the invariable rule in other cases, take only a *weak* breath; then, without any force, without the least effort, feebly slurring, with an exaggerated carelessness, without beating time, sing slowly two or three times the first two notes, in order to account for the interval; then all at once hasten the movement as much as possible and soon stop suddenly. Unless one take good care to maintain the distance of the interval by widening it as soon as it is perceived to diminish, it will infallibly close up and will end by becoming a useless tremolo.

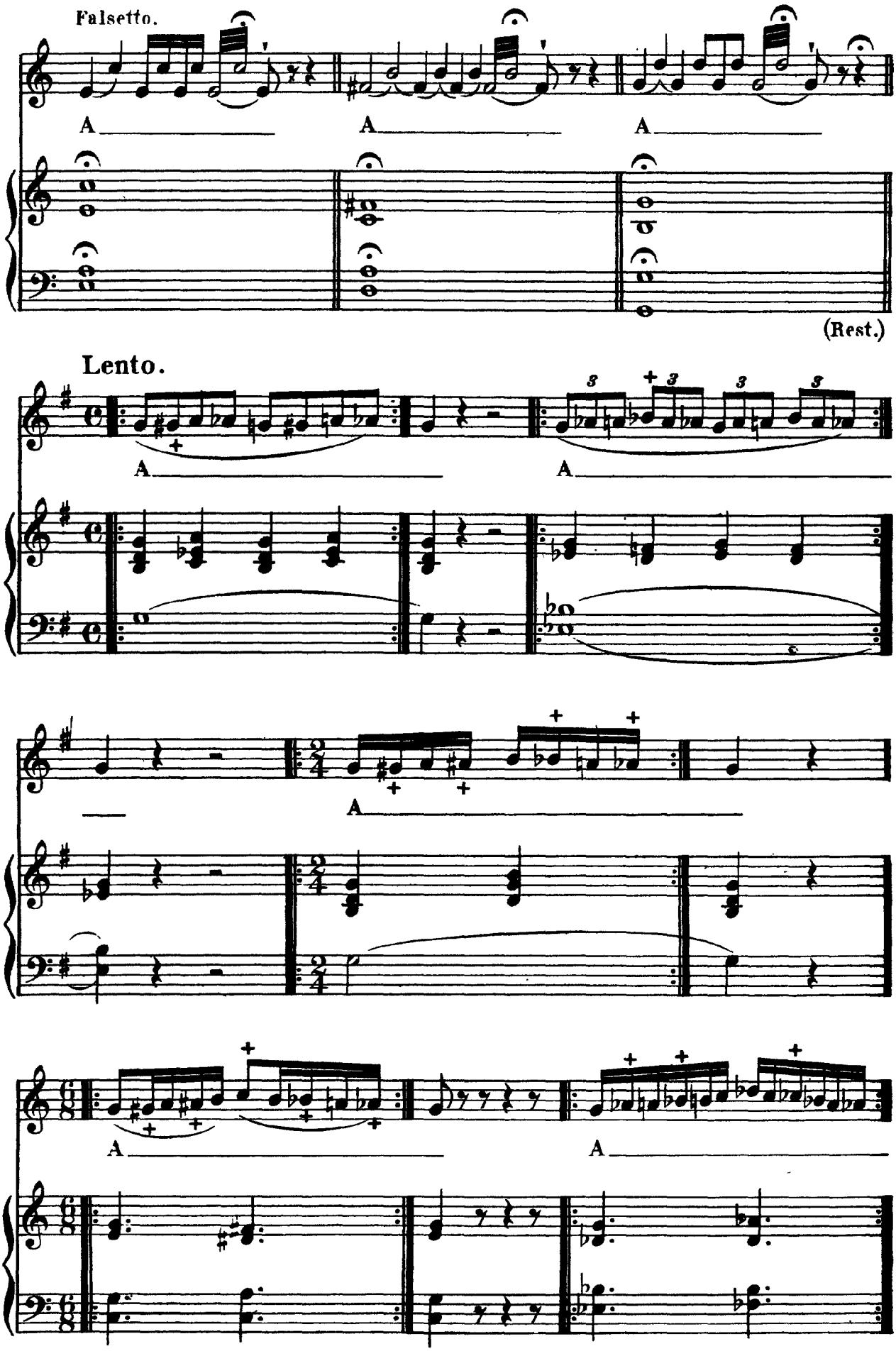
As soon as the least rigidity is perceived, whether in the throat, or in the tongue, or in the muscles of the neck or of the nape of the neck, or as soon as we feel that the eyes are becoming fixed, or notice that the head (or the jaw) makes little nervous motions, or that we involuntarily mark the measure, we should break off at the very instant.

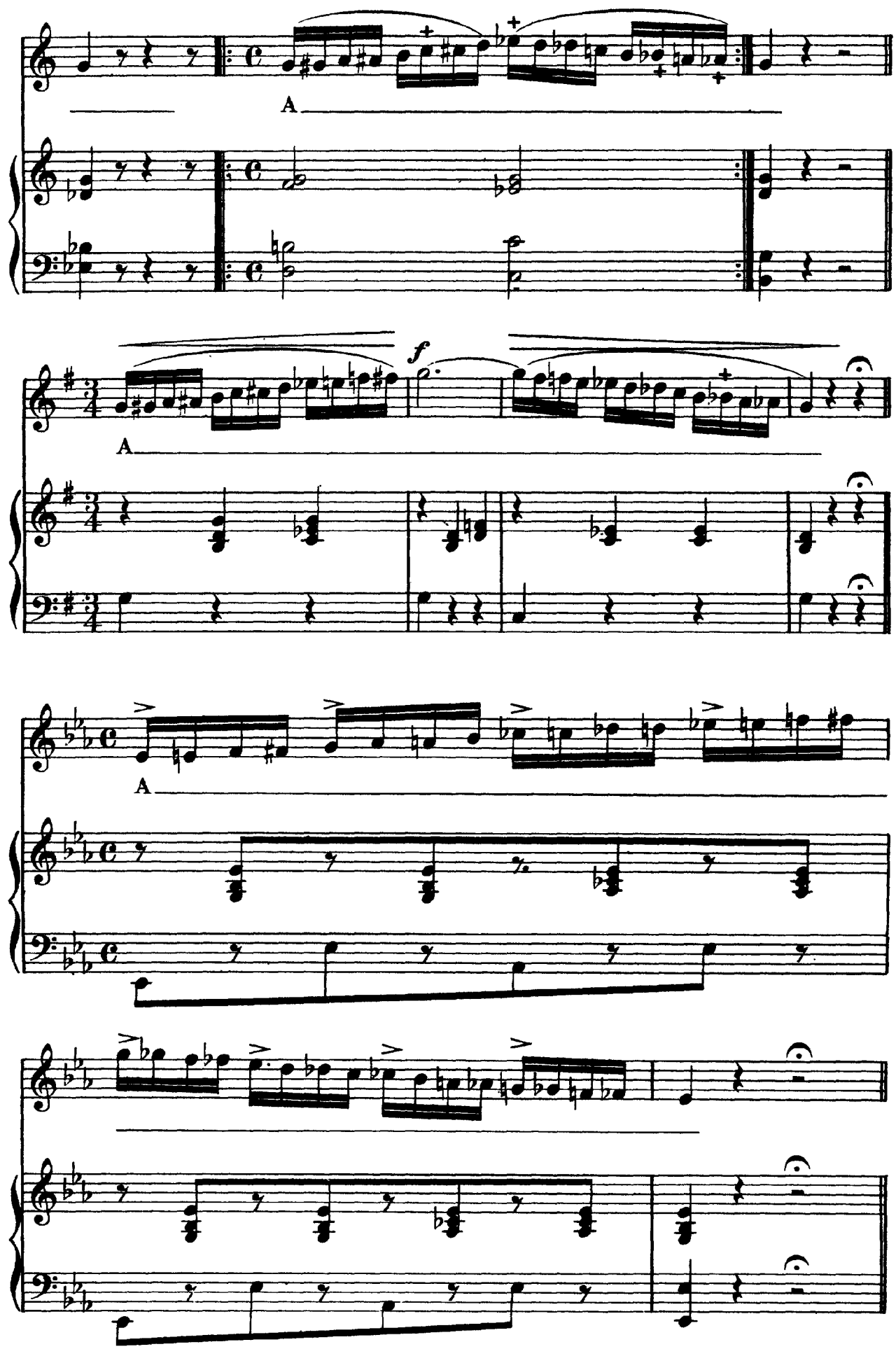
This exercise can be made very often during the day, but not for a long time in immediate succession, for in the beginnings the throat easily becomes rigid. It is not necessary to practise it in the chest-register, and the interval should not be taken lower than a major third.

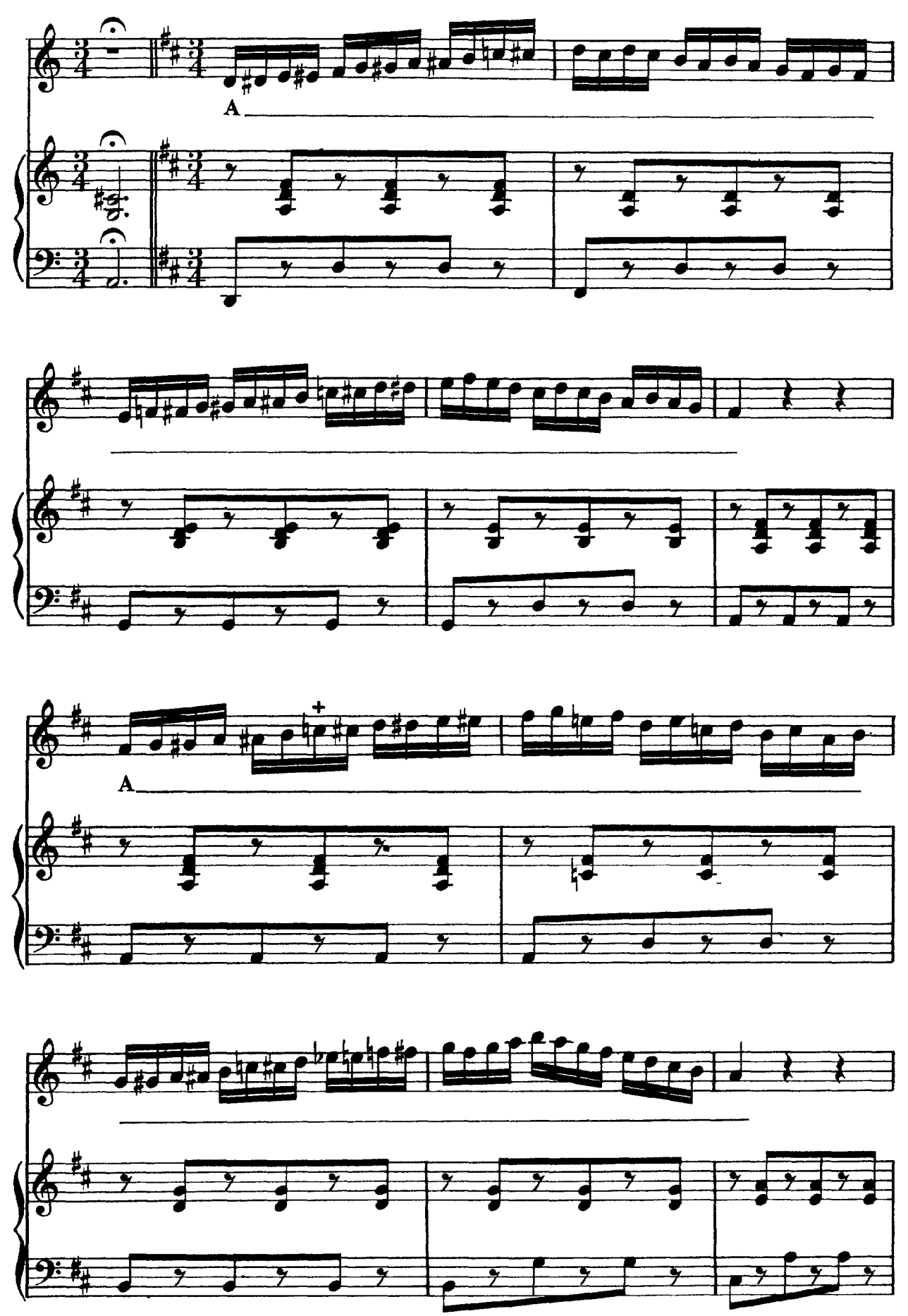
This exercise, which, it must be confessed, has very little music in it, is the counterpart of that of the so-called "dead hand," which pianoforte-pupils have to practise, repeatedly striking chords, in order to do away with the rigidity of the wrists.

Without measured time, in the natural voice. May also be studied with closed mouth.




Falsetto.
A
A
A
(Rest.)
Lento.
A
A
A
A
A
A


A
A
A


A
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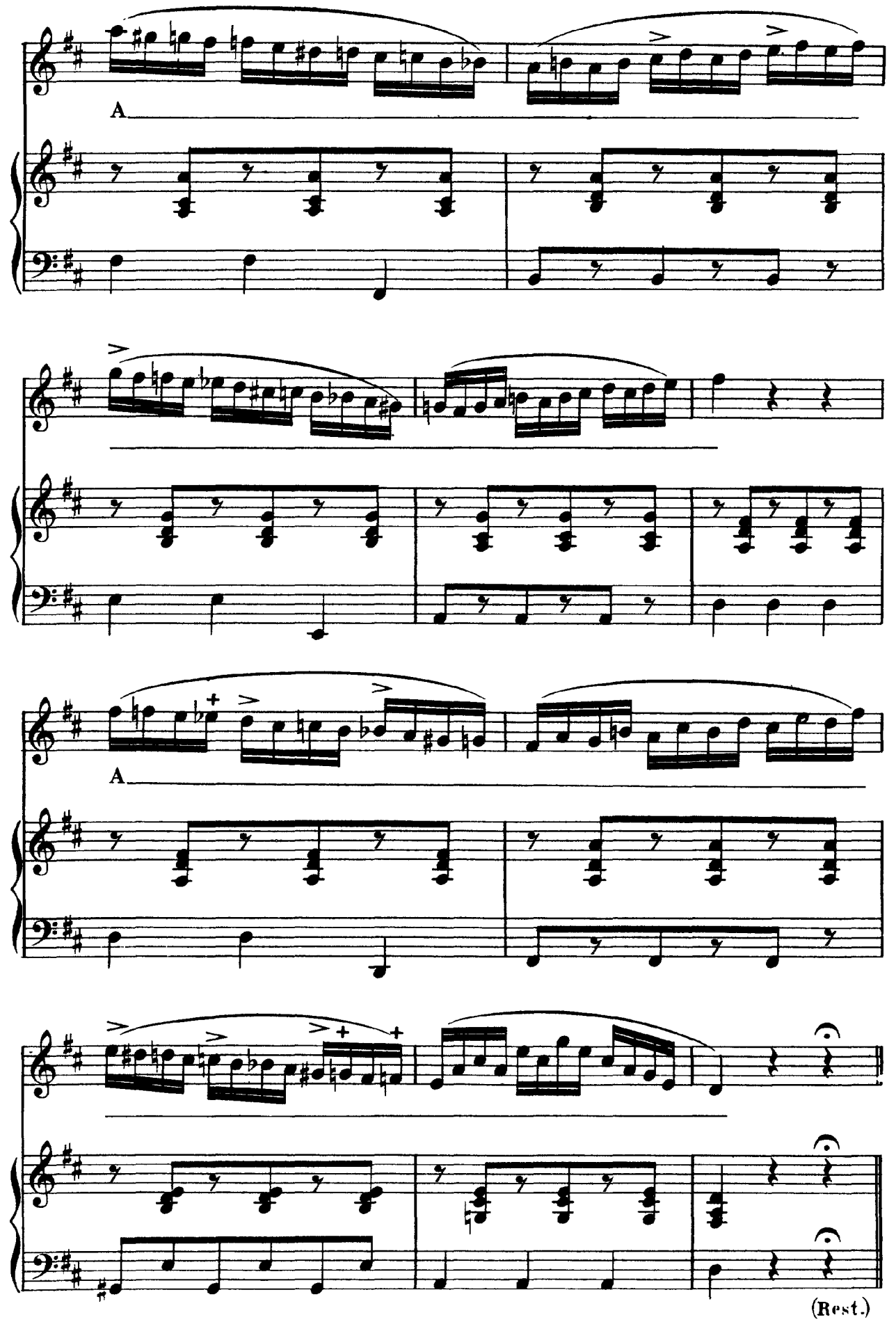
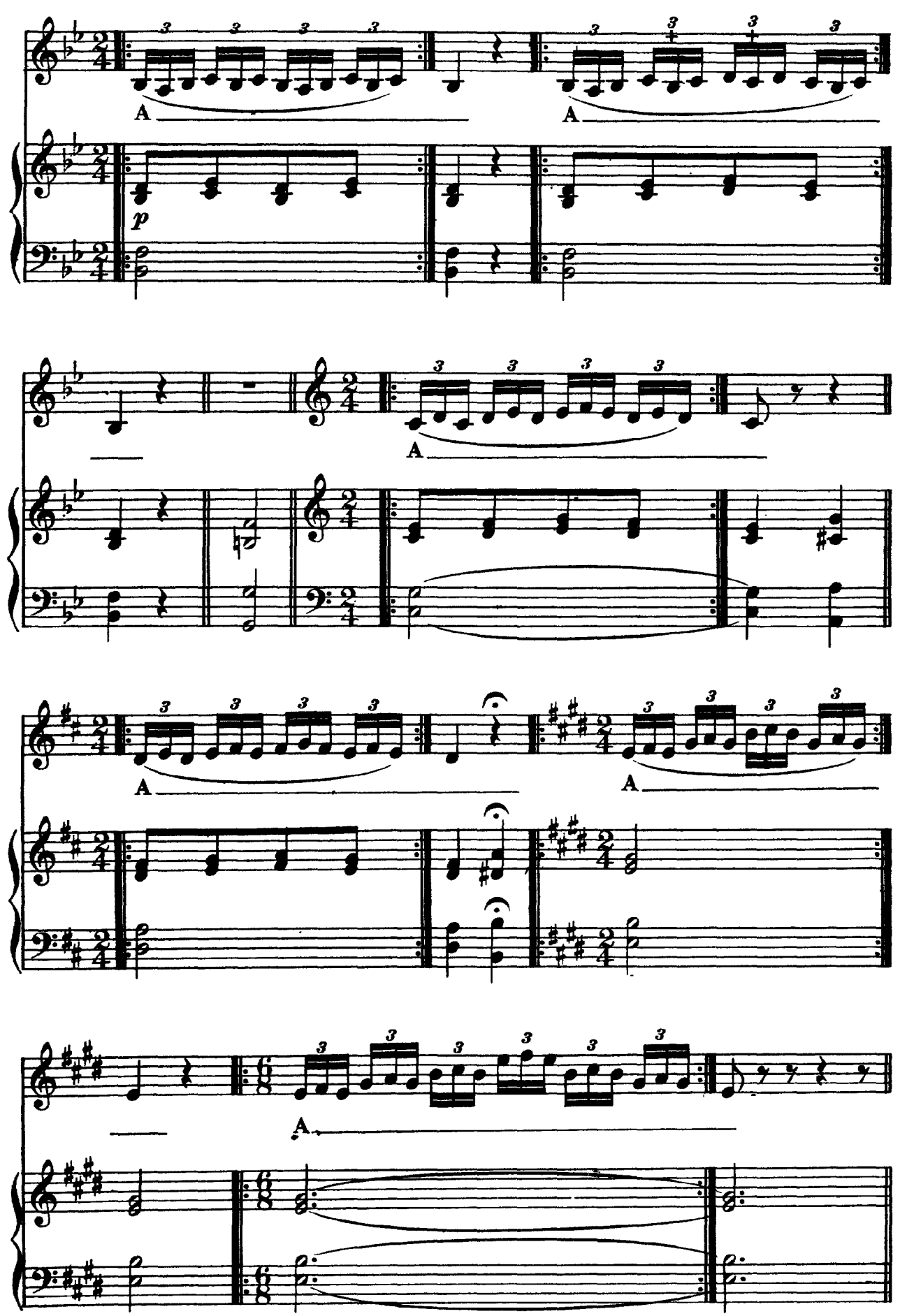
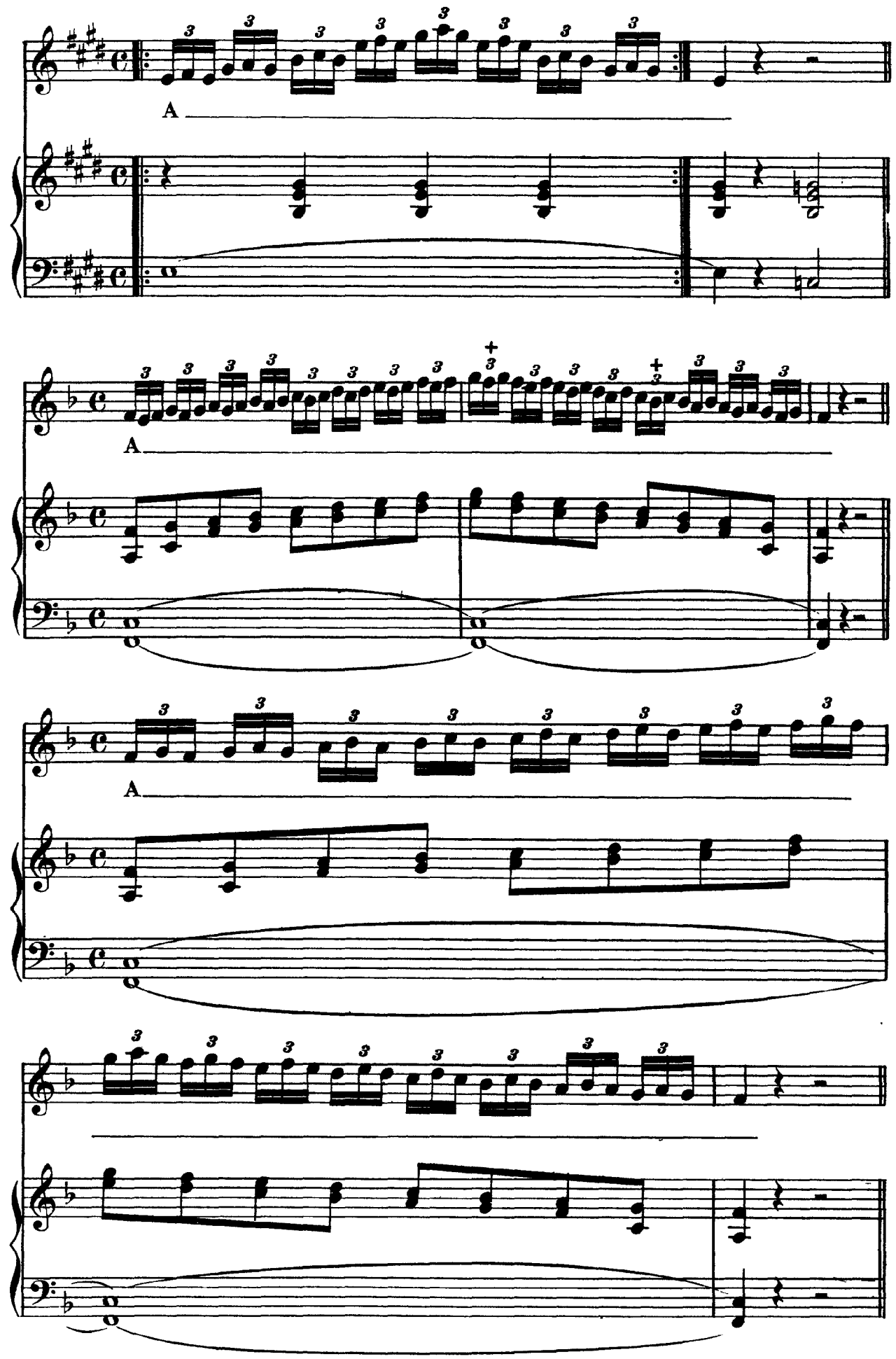
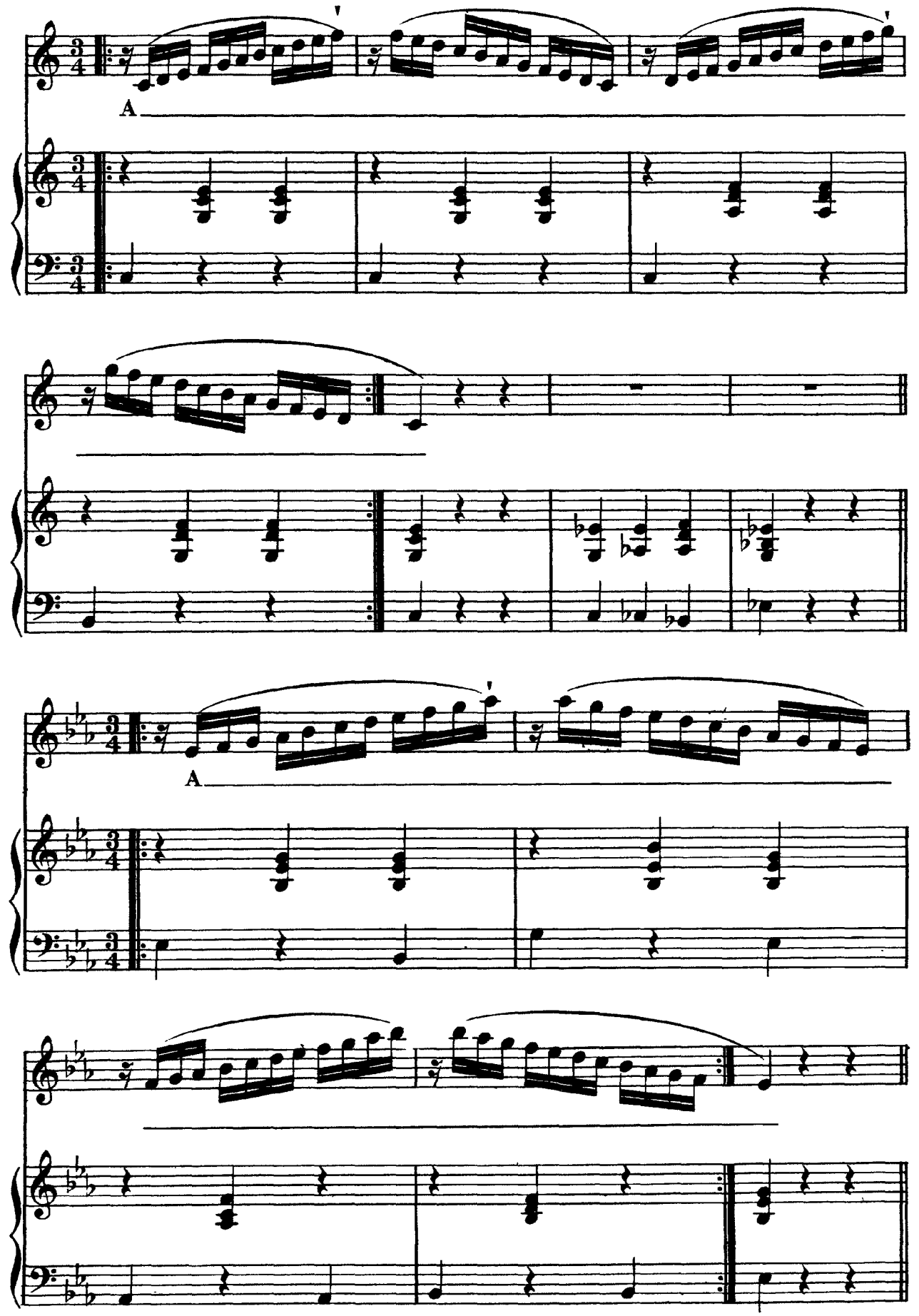

A
A
(Rest.)

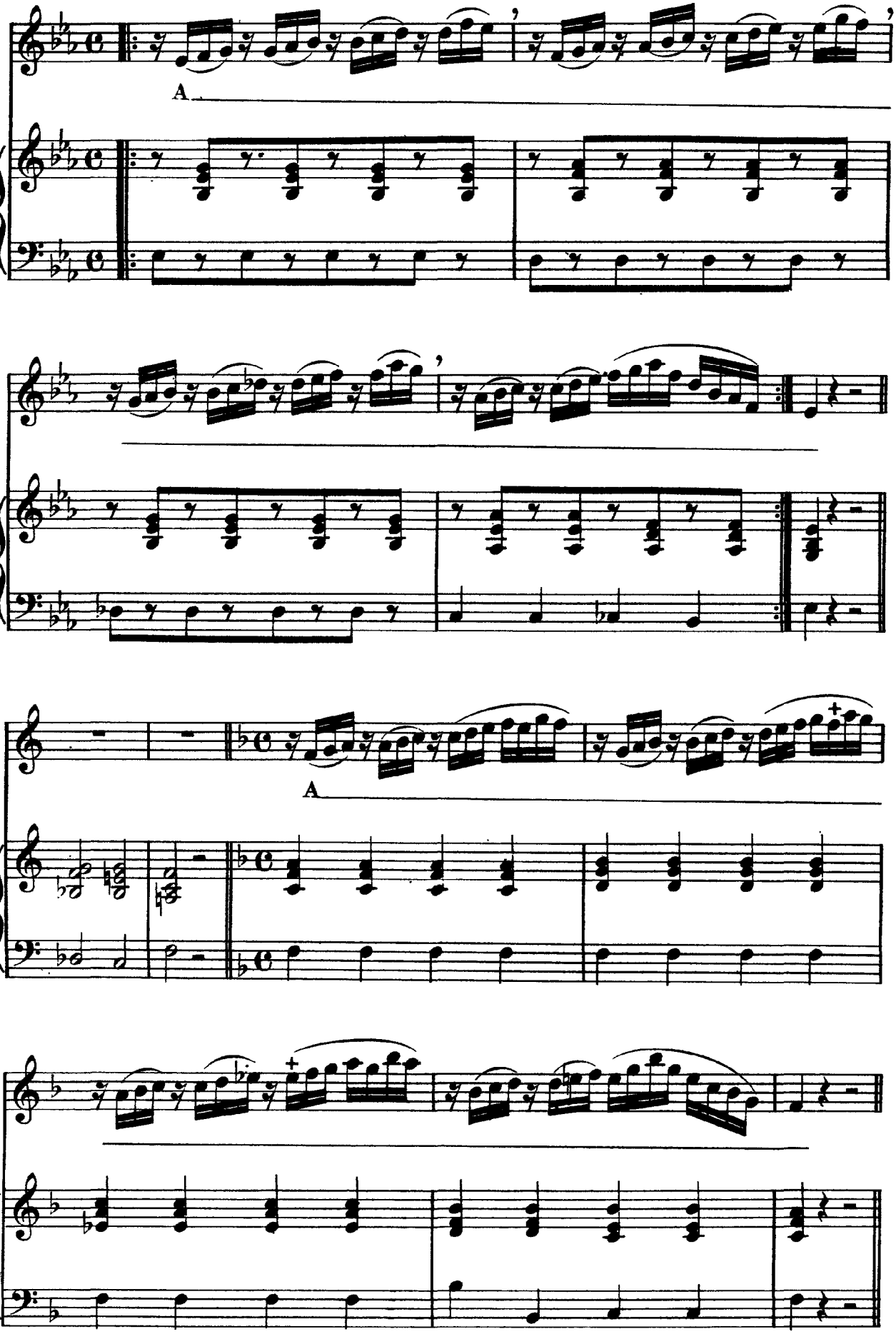

A
A
p
A
A
A
A
A

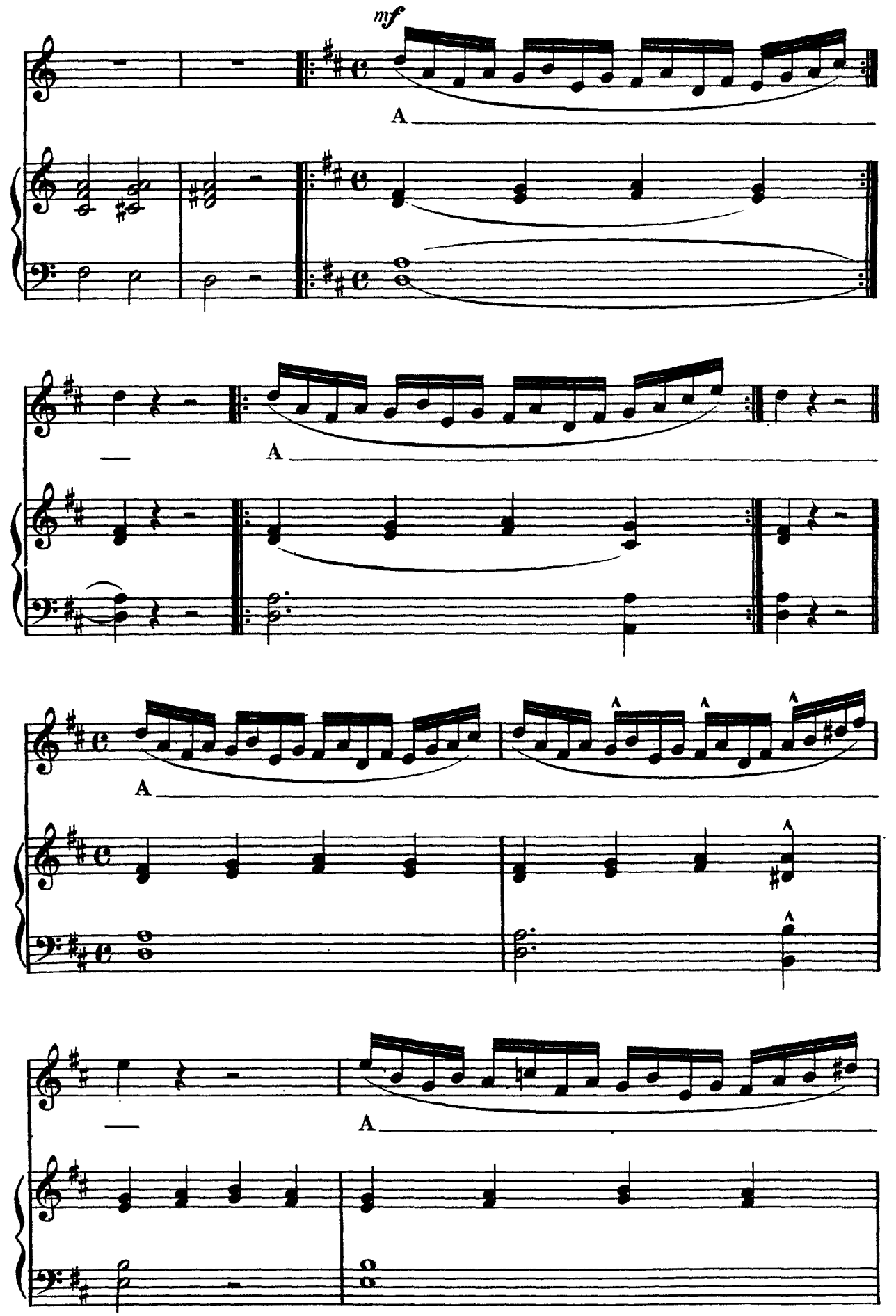

A
A
A

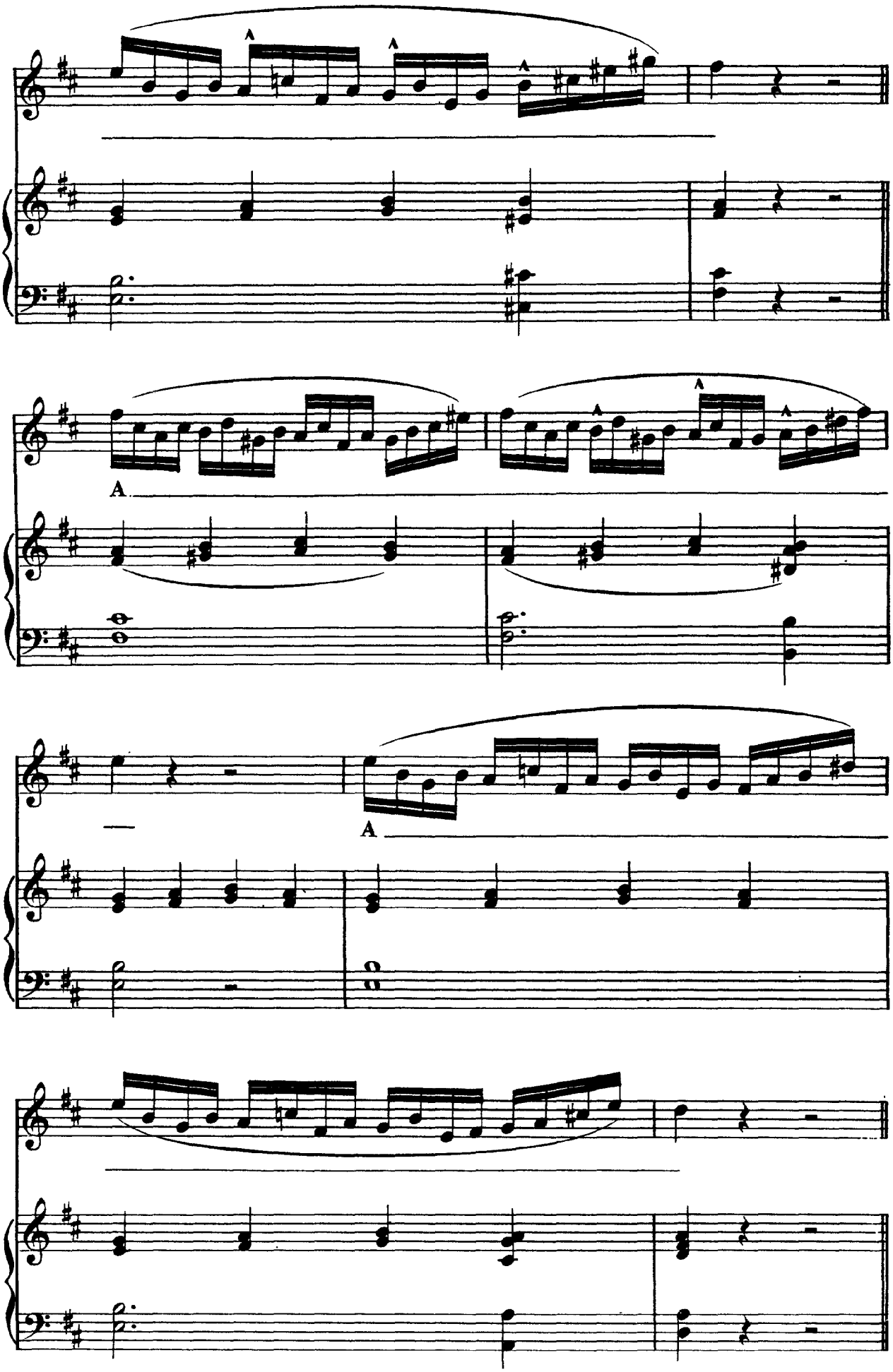
Take breath quickly, without any noise, *through the nose* and *mouth*.

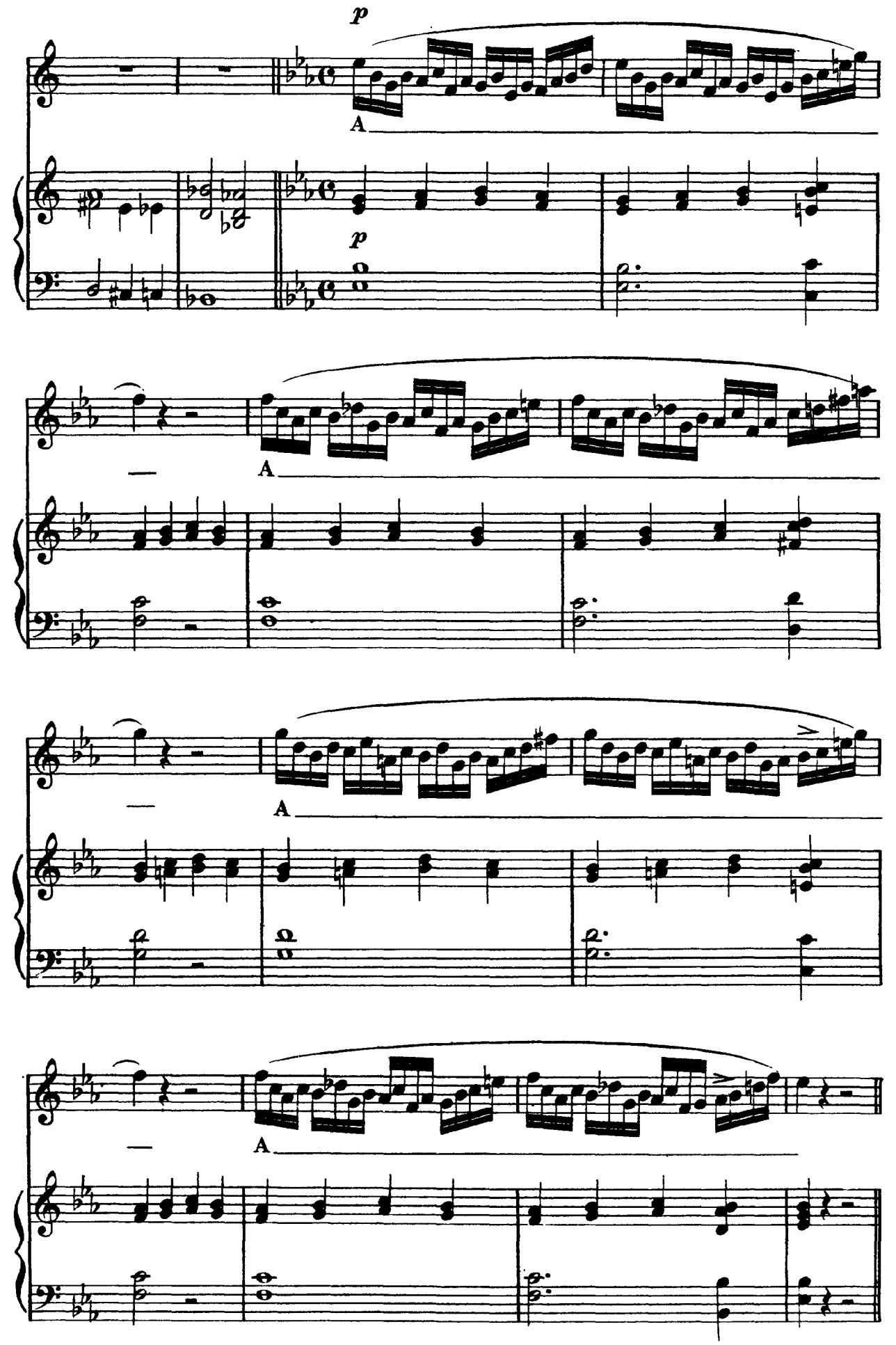


Take breath only at the beginning of the measure, without retarding the time.




mf
A
A
A
A


A
A

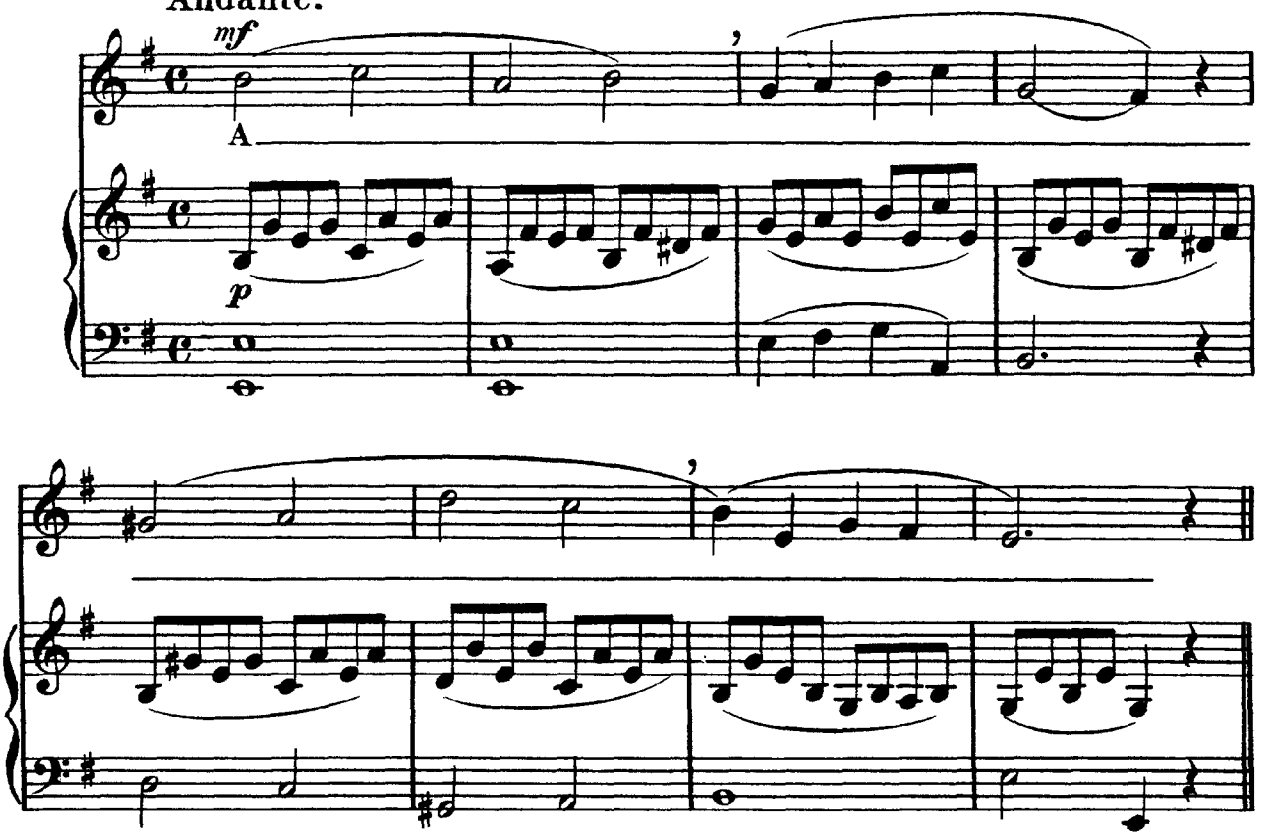

p
A
p
A
A
A

THEME

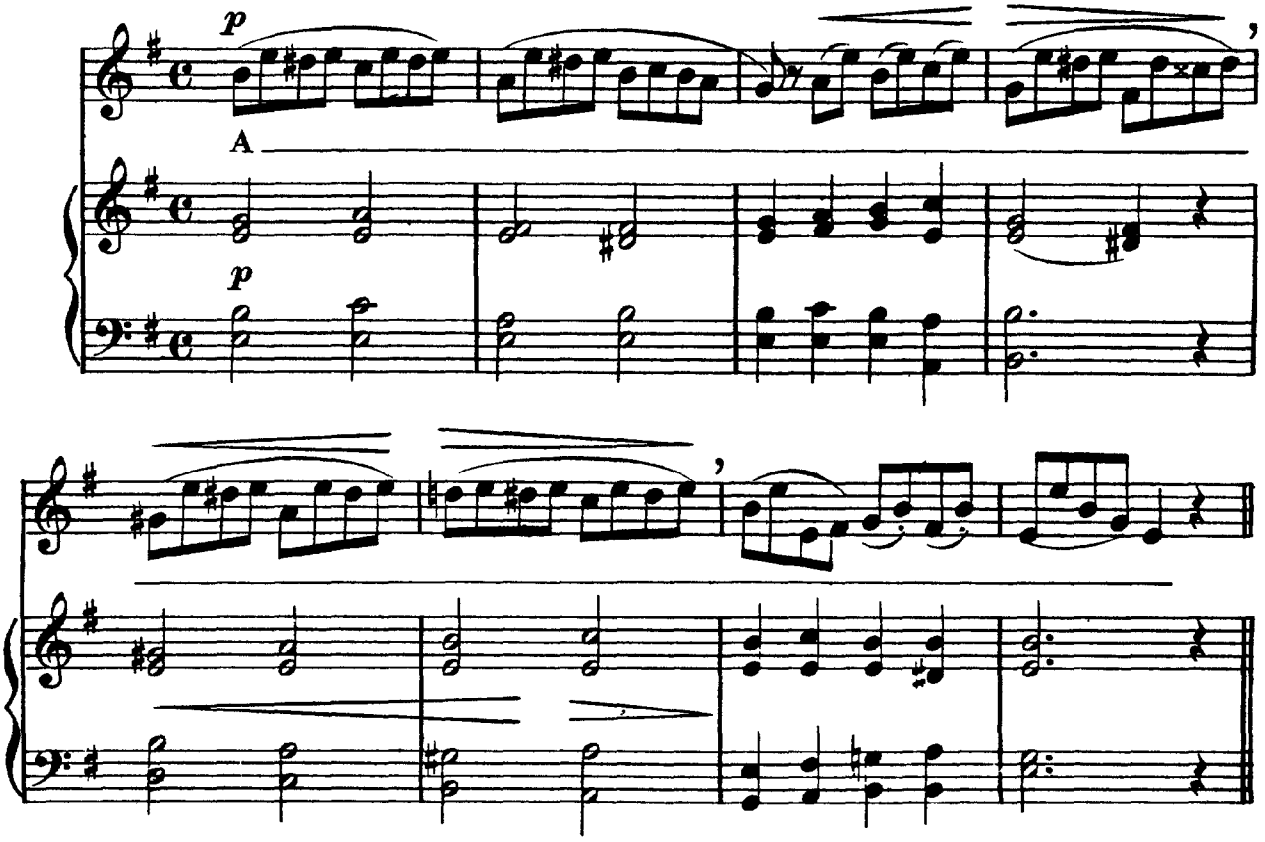
with exercises in variations.

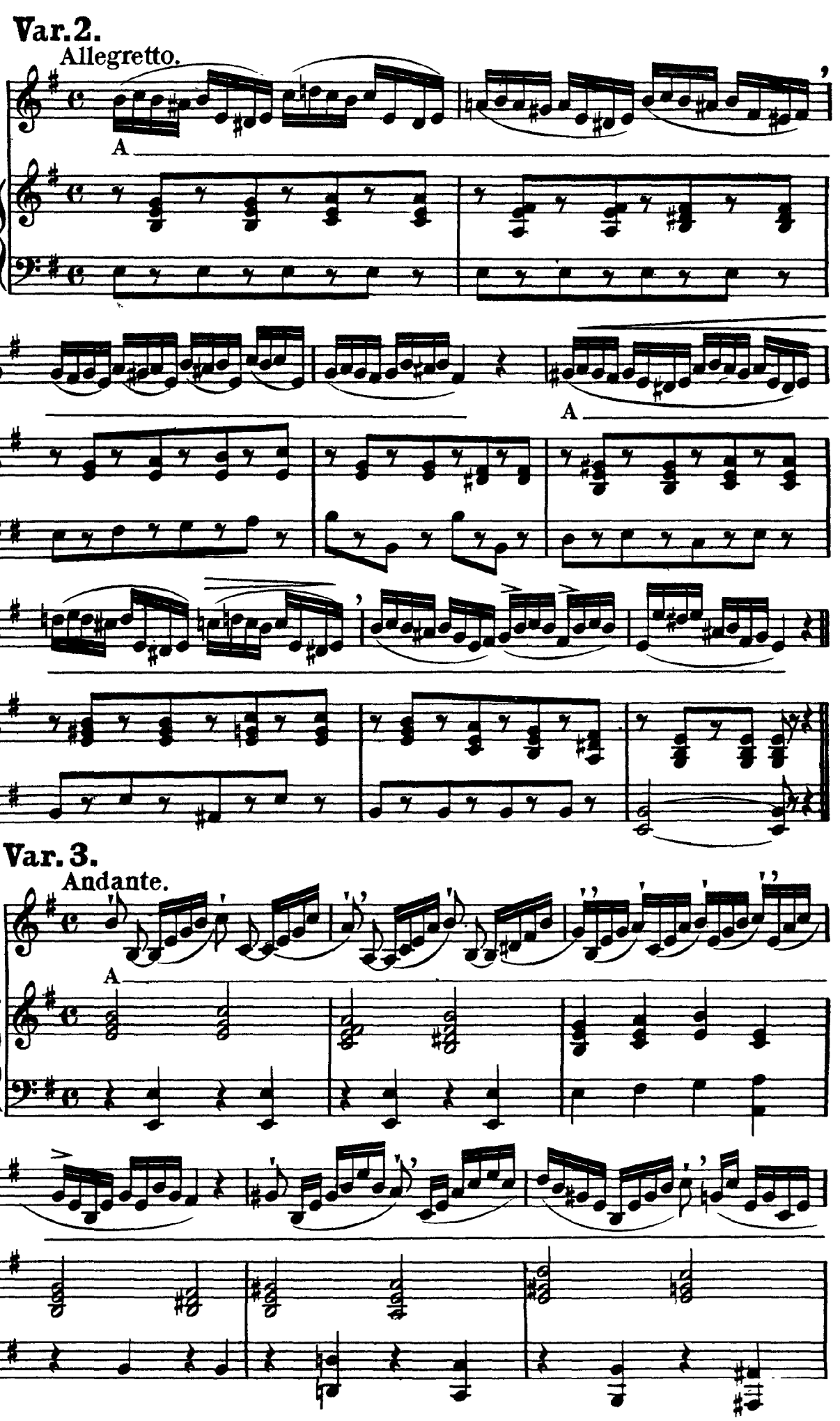
Theme.

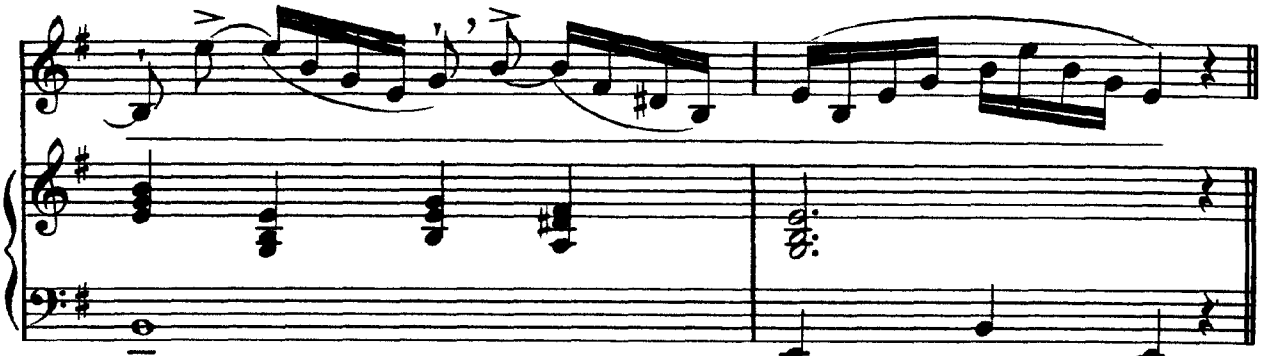
Andante.



Var. I.

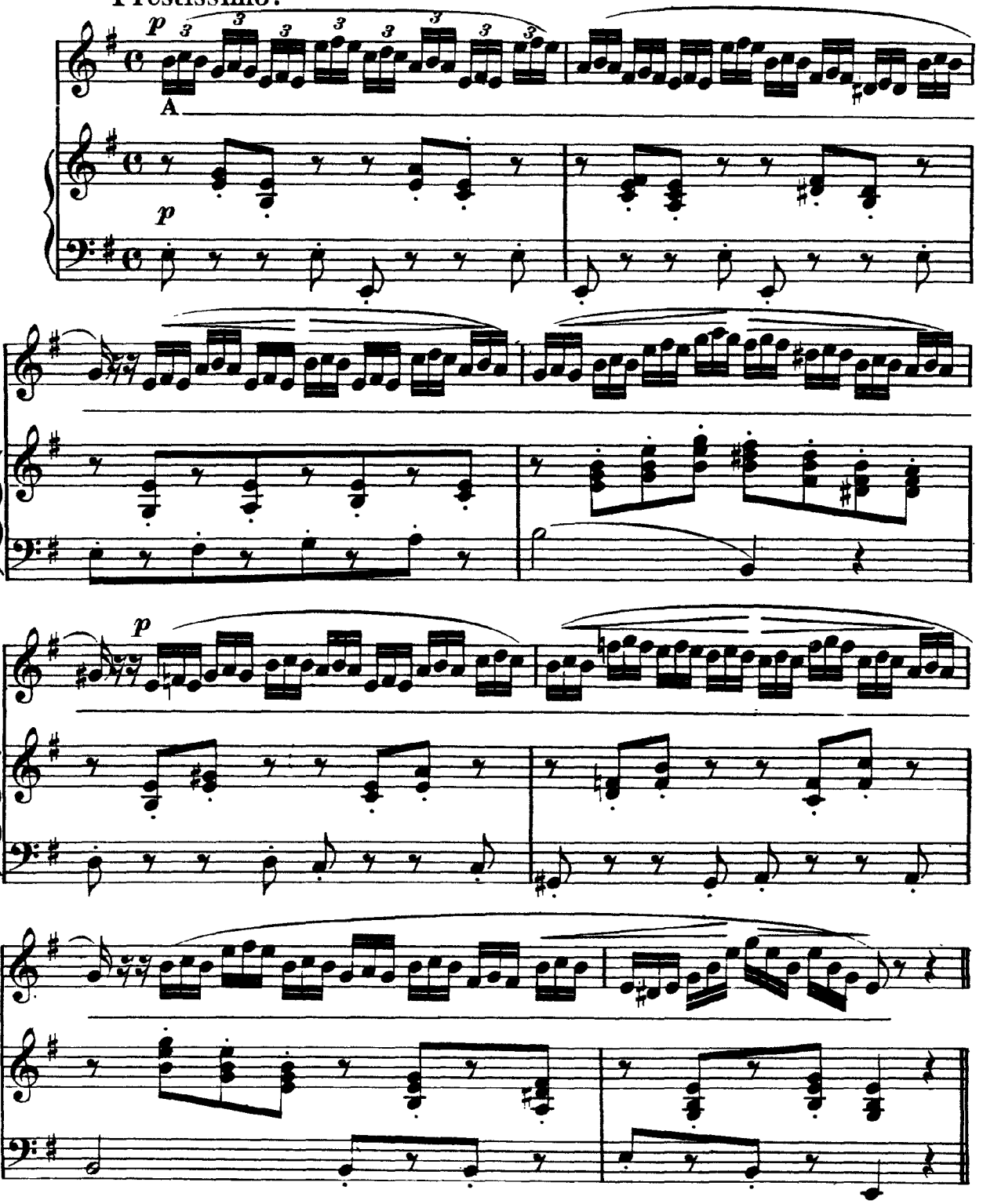


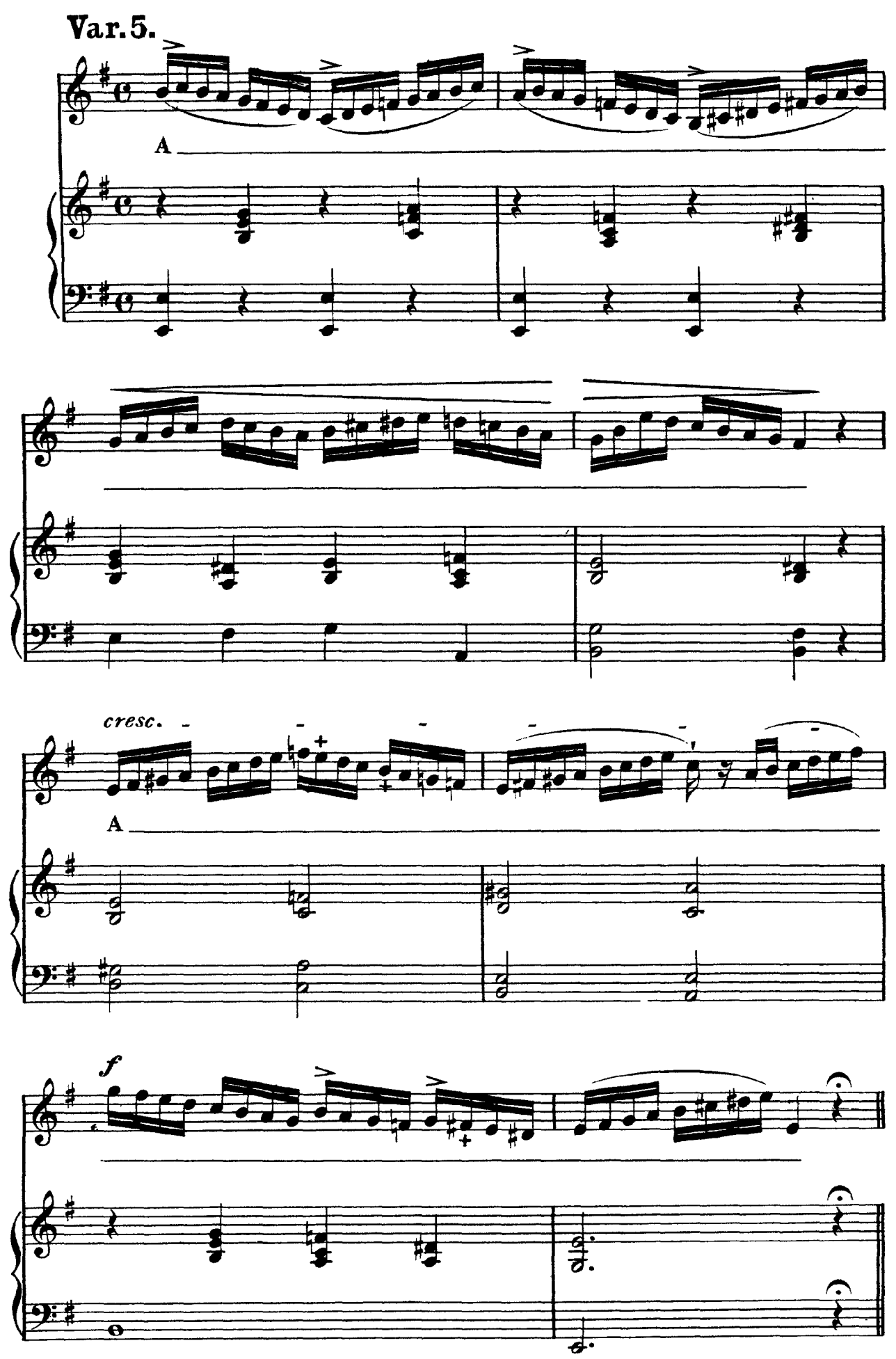

Var.2.
Allegretto.
A
A
Var. 3.
Andante.
A

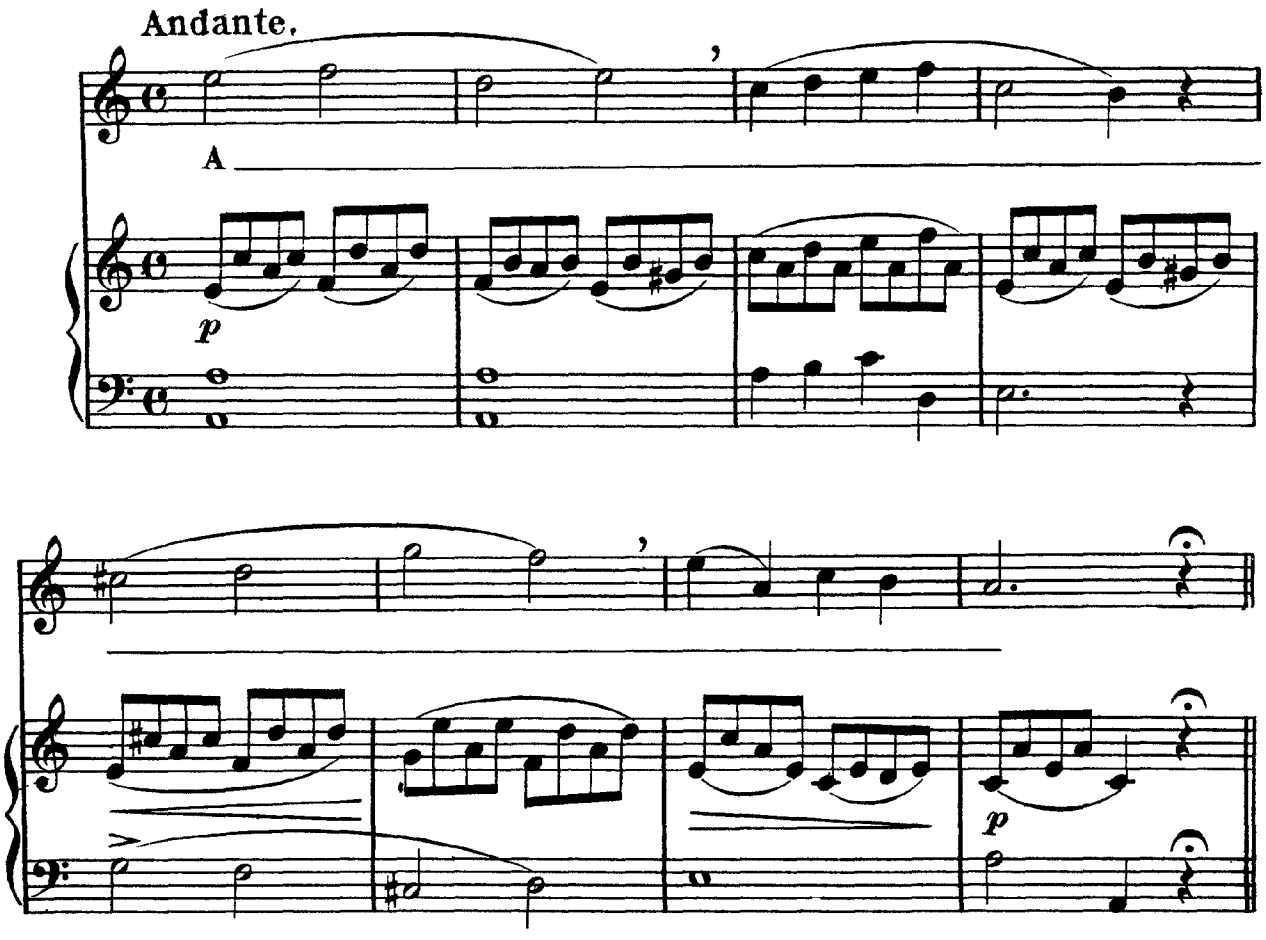


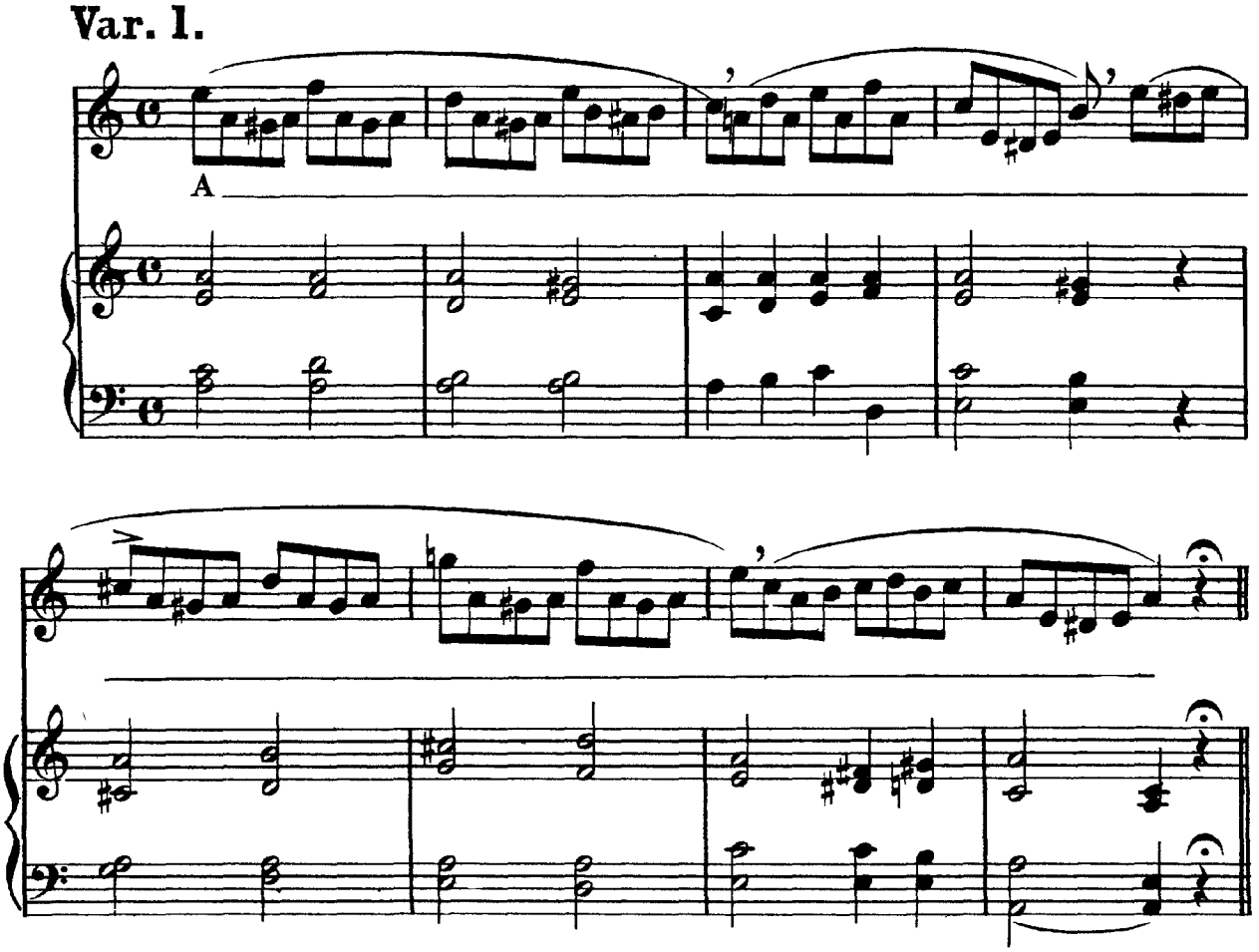
Var. 4.

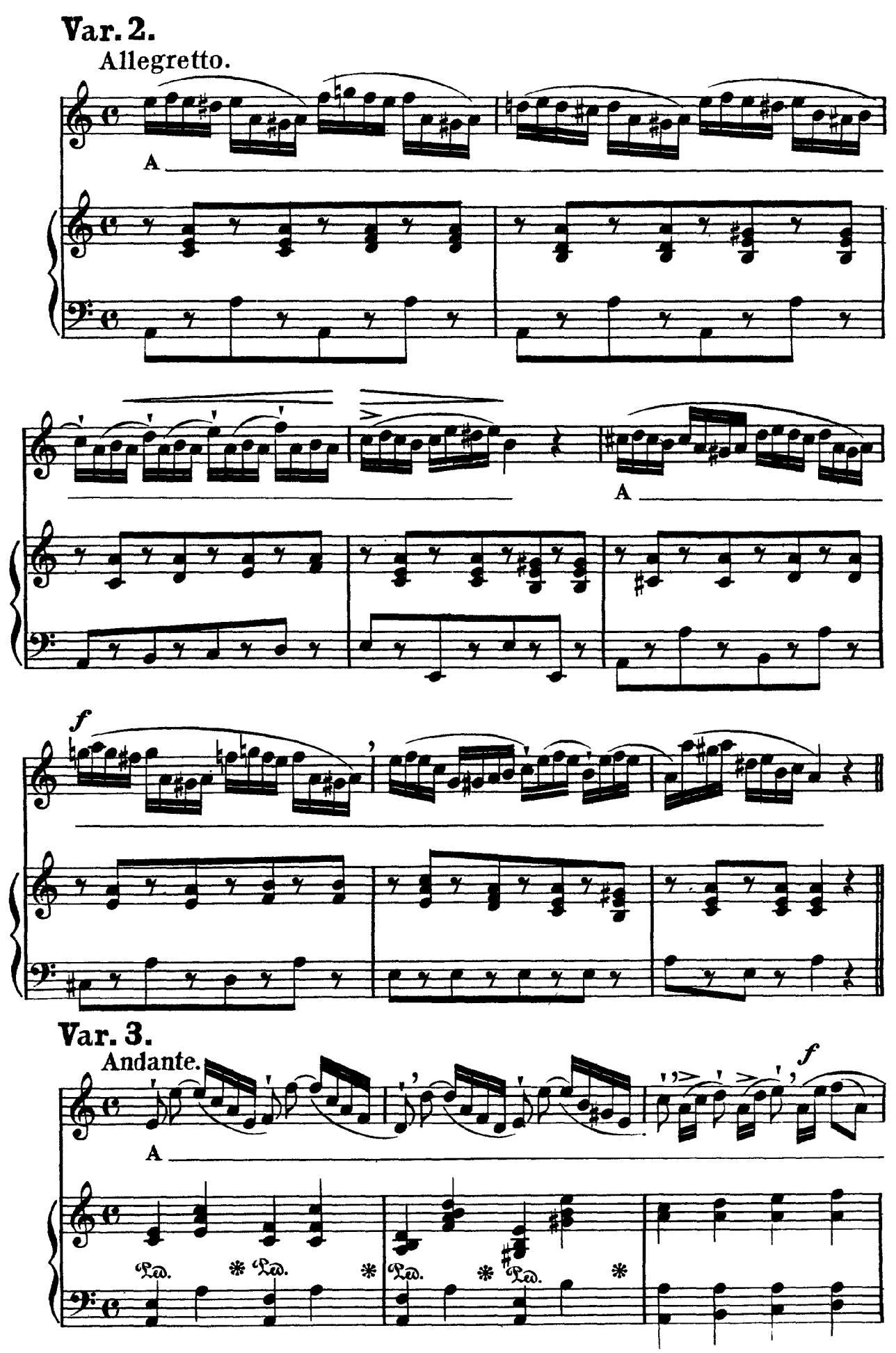
Prestissimo.

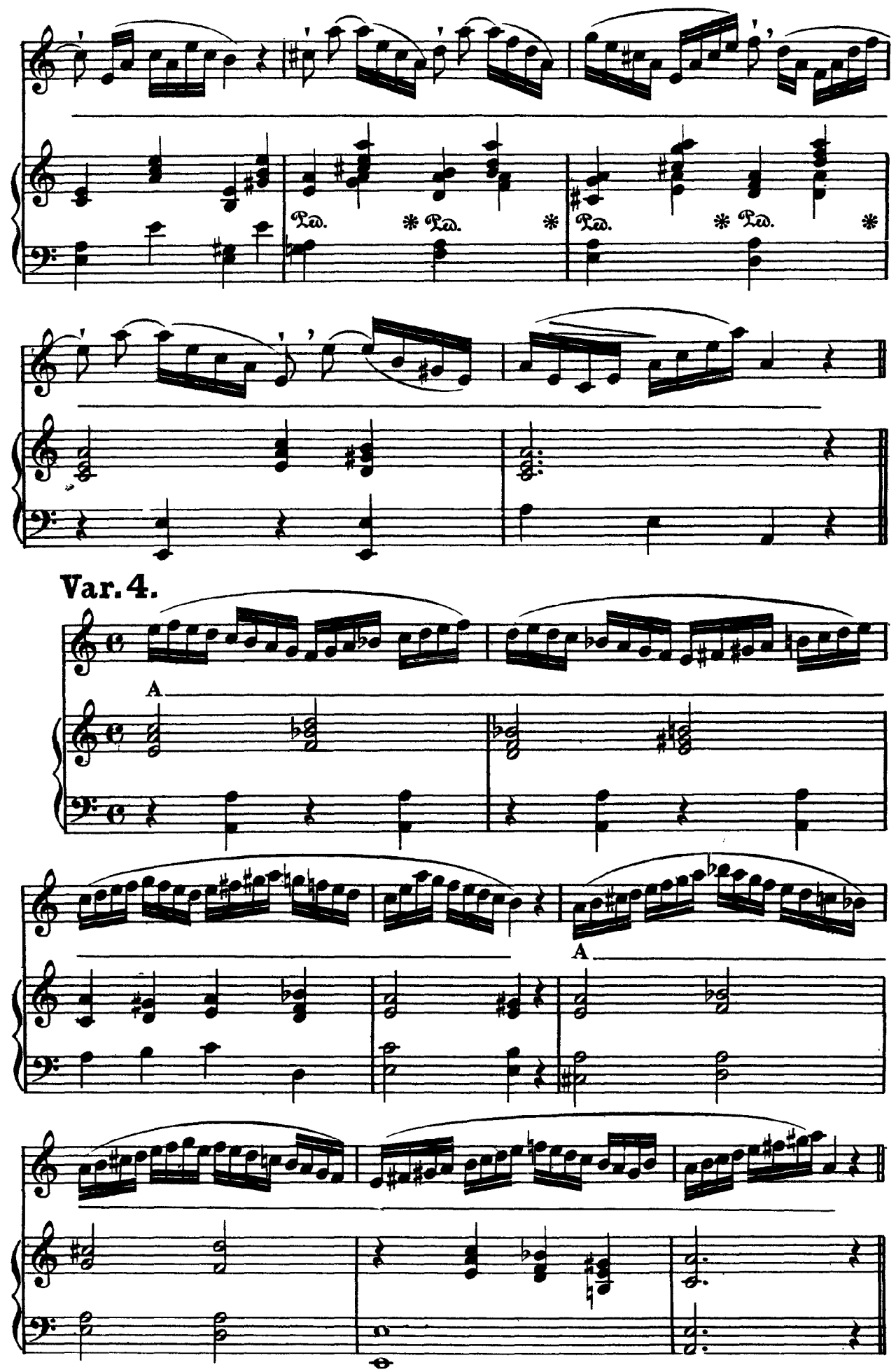


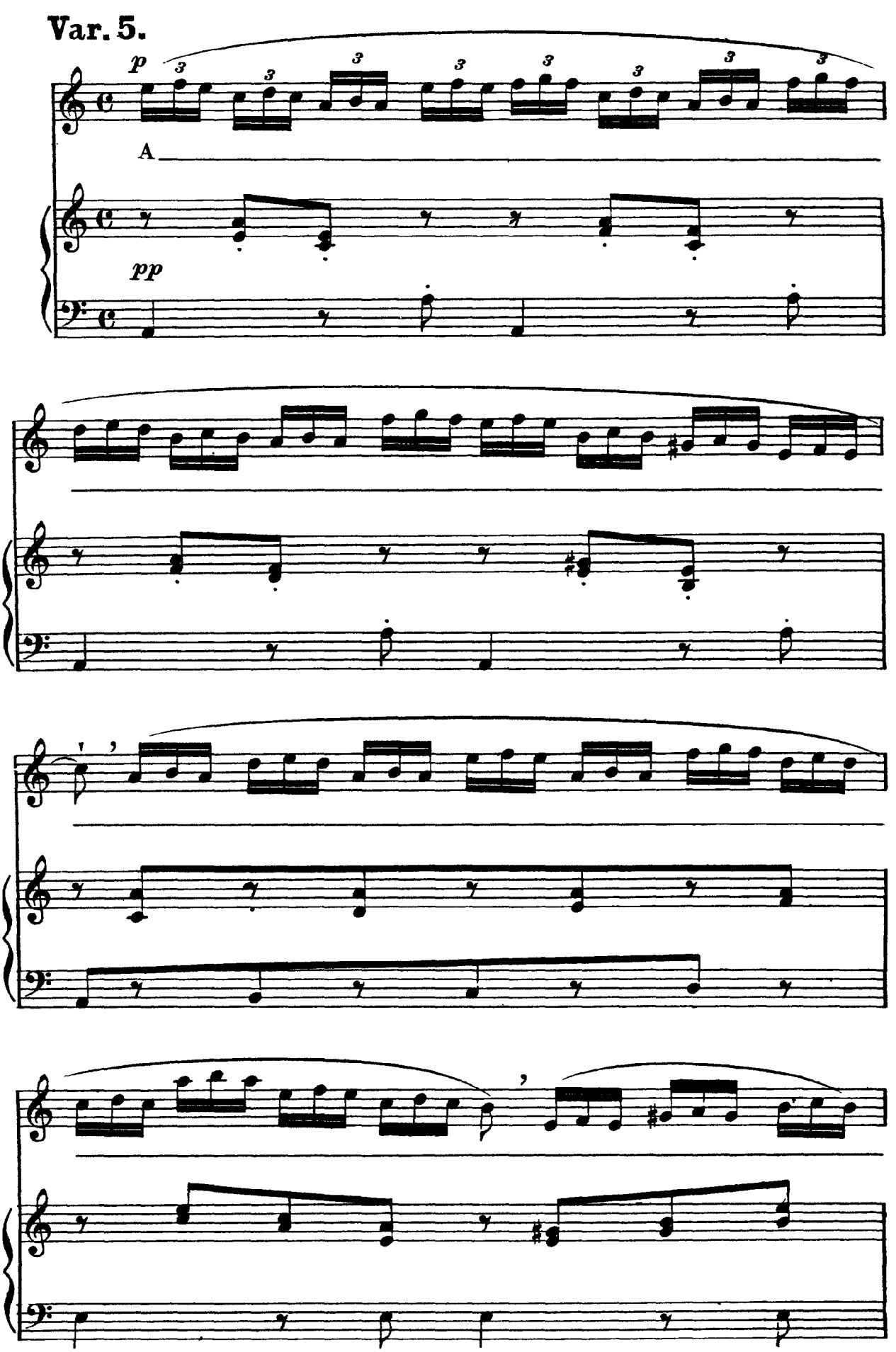

Var. 5.
A
cresc.
A
f

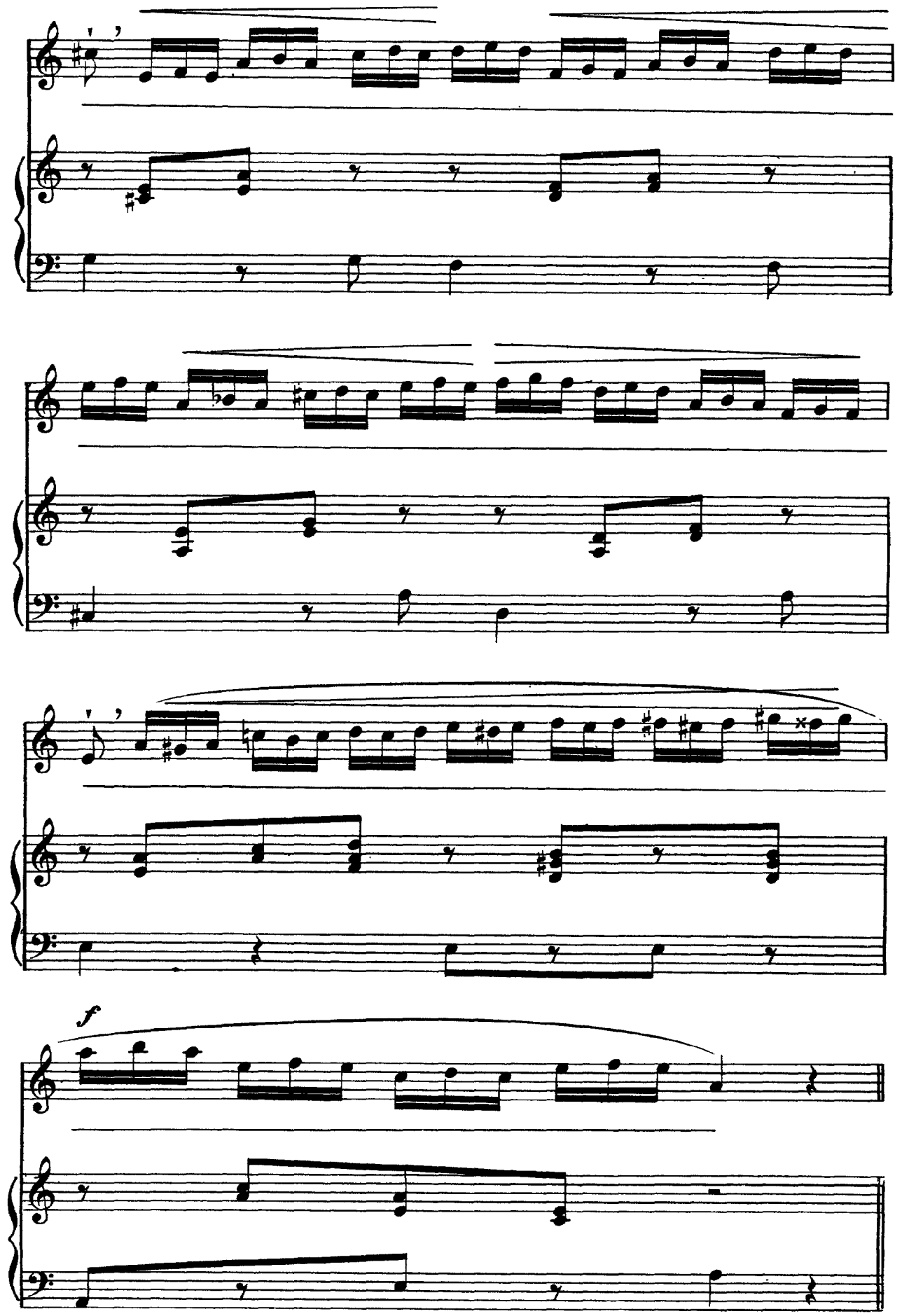

Andante.
A
p
p

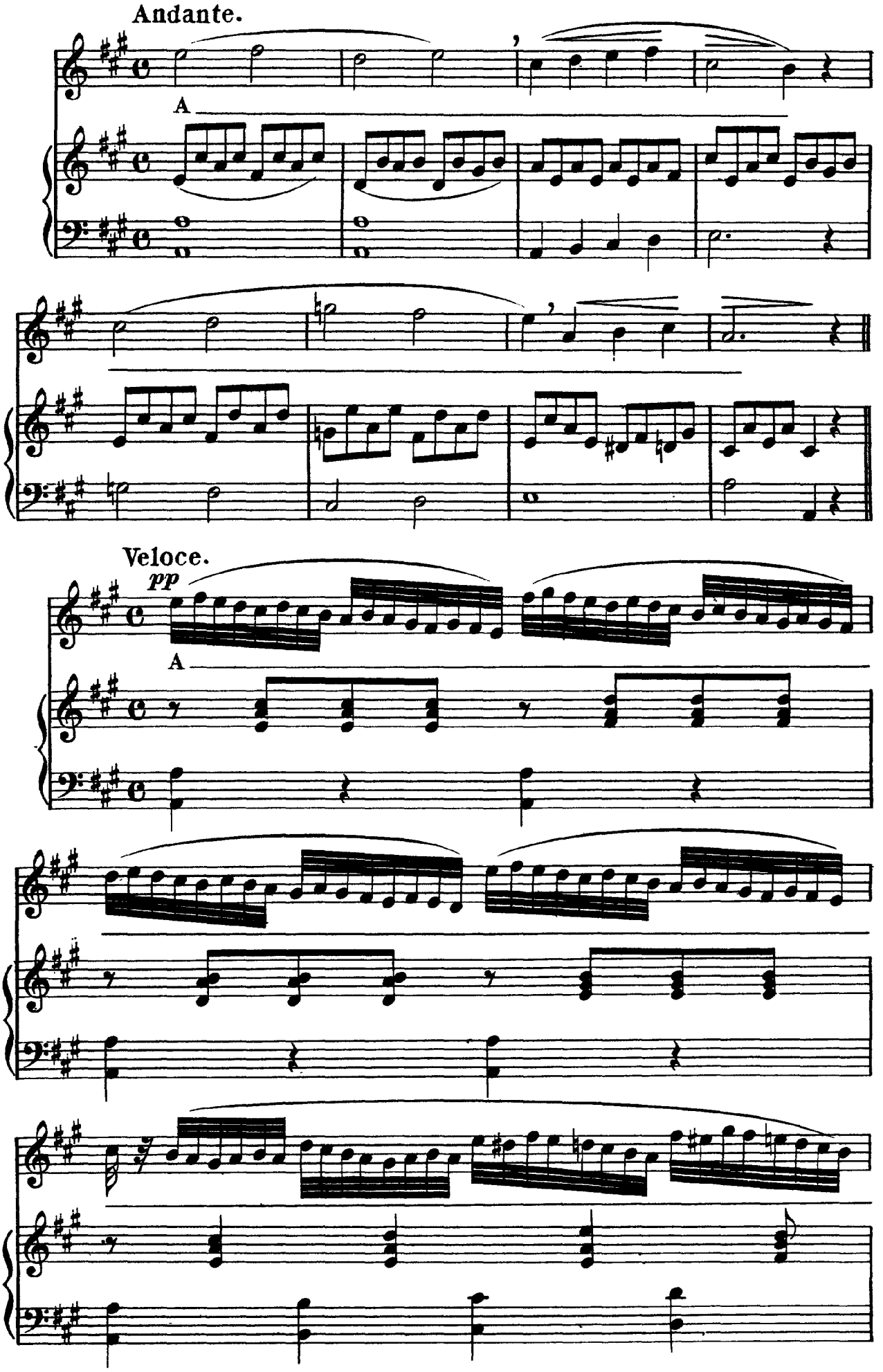

Var. 1.
A

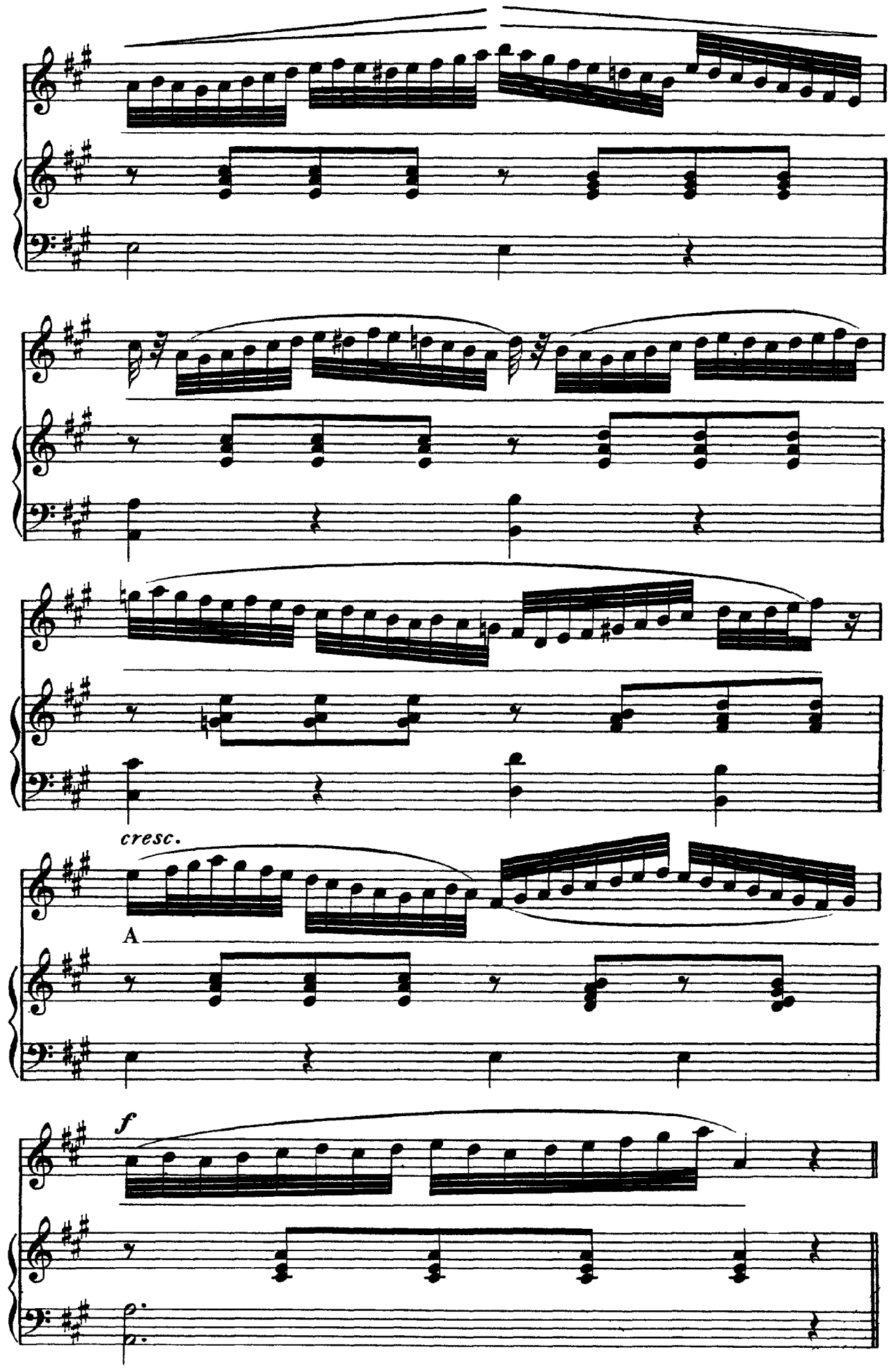

Var. 2.
Allegretto.
A
A
f
Var. 3.
Andante.
A
f
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

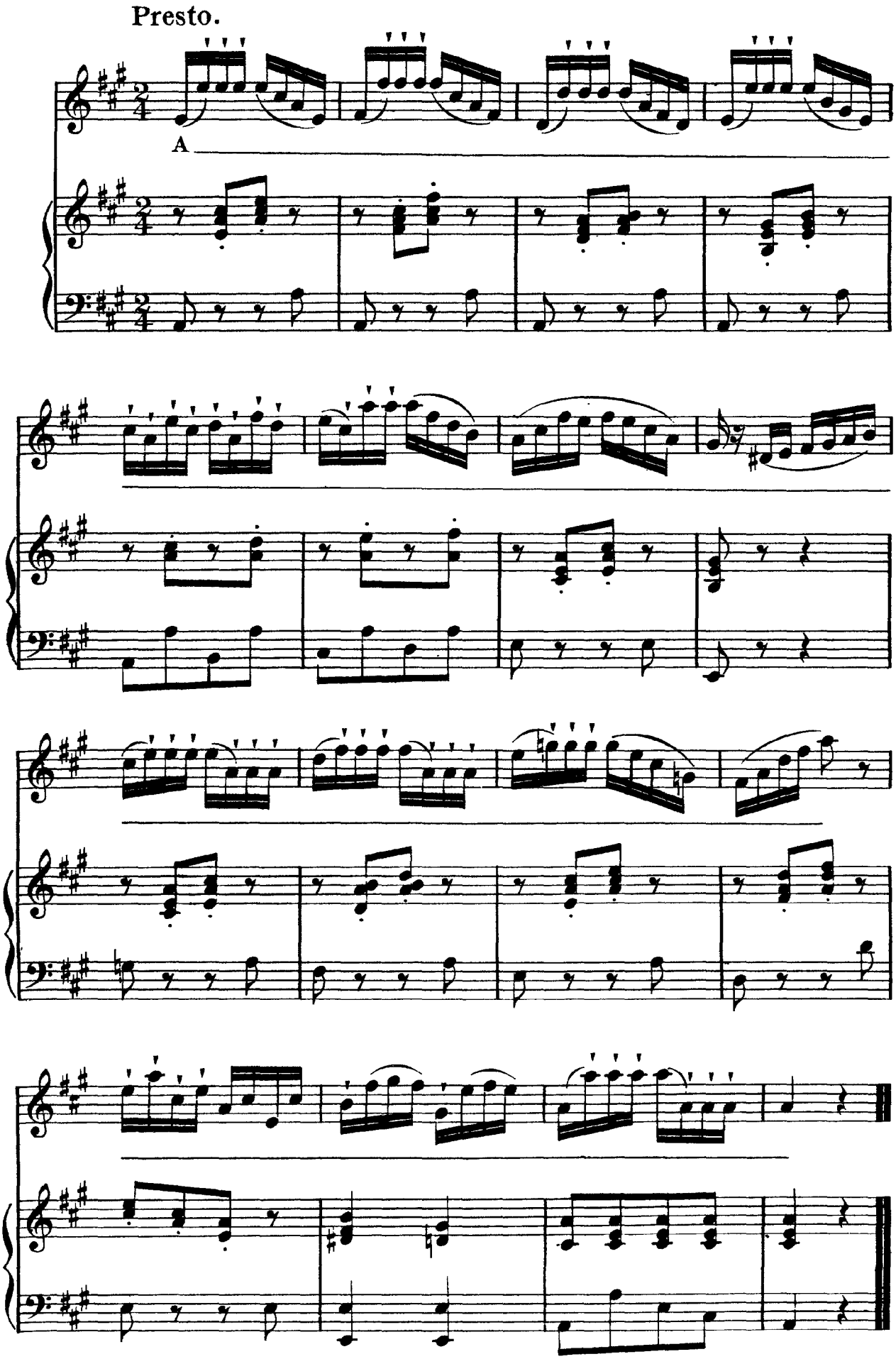

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *
Var. 4.
A
A


Var. 5.
p
A
pp


f


Andante.
A
Veloce.
pp
A


cresc.
A
f


Presto.
A
End of the 2d Series.