MUSIC FOR BRASS No. 281

MARCO BORDOGNI

43 BEL CANTO STUDIES

for

TUBA (or Bass Trombone)

ROBERT KING MUSIC published by ALPHONSE LEDUC Editions Musicales

175, rue Saint-Honoré – 75040 Paris cedex 01

AL 28 604 Réf. : AB

STUDY SUGGESTIONS

While it is not feasible to give detailed instructions for playing each of the studies, the following general suggestions will be helpful in attaining correct and effective performance.

GENERAL CHARACTER

These etudes, originally for voice, have traditionally been treated as legato studies when adapted for instruments. In this edition legato phrase markings have been used freely to emphasize their prevailing cantabile character, and to indicate phrase-groupings for purposes of breathing.

Within groups so marked a generally legato style should be employed; however the various degrees of semi-legato or "soft-tonguing" which lie between the extremes of détaché and complete legato should also be resorted to for specific purposes: to impart greater definition, to heighten rhythmic effects, and to mark sub-groupings within phrases. It is not practical to give markings for all possible variations of articulation as it would overload the page; also, their application would depend greatly upon the characteristics of individual players and instruments. However, a few have been inserted where it seemed especially important for style. Tenuto marks (dashes) under the phrase markings indicate here not only very full duration, but also (except at the ends of phrases) an additional weight and intensity of tone, for expressive purposes. Dots under these markings indicate soft-tonguing sufficient to give some definition, but without separation, and without additional weight.

The études are by no means all alike in character, and it is desirable to study each one thoroughly to find the tempo, mood and rhythmic qualities appropriate to it, as well as to perfect the execution.

TEMPOS

The metronomic markings are based on three factors: the musical character of each study, the demands imposed by the physical nature of the tuba, and the presumed ability of the "typical" player at each level of difficulty. It is recommended that they not be greatly varied for performance. The fastest possible tempo seldom conveys the character of a piece, nor is it conducive to development of precision and consistency. The more advanced studies will furnish sufficient challenges to any player's agility and flexibility. Rapid movements should of course be studied at considerably slower speeds, and then gradually brought up to the tempos marked.

Tempos should be held very steady throughout each movement. The character of these melodies is essentially classical, and is best conveyed through dynamic shaping of phrases, and through refinement of articulation. Rubato and any marked tempo fluctuation are not appropriate here. The studies should be played with the metronome as a check occasionally, but not habitually as a crutch. Try to develop the metronome within yourself to a high degree of reliability.

BREATHING

Phrase-lengths are realistic for tuba players of average physical endowment and well-trained breathing technique. Commas in parentheses indicate breath to be taken if the player cannot comfortably render the longer phrase. Where no rest occurs at breathing points, be sure to take time for the breath away from the preceding note, to avoid delaying the following attack.

DYNAMICS

It has been considered best to use dynamic indications rather conservatively. Often the nature of the melodies does not clearly mandate a certain dynamic level for each section, and any editorial choice will be to a degree arbitrary. The markings which do appear are intended only to bring out the main structure of the piece, and to illuminate a few expressive highlights which might otherwise be overlooked. They can be taken as feasible and appropriate, rather than obligatory. What is primarily important is that the student accustom himself, not necessarily in any one study, but over the many, to employing with assurance and discrimination a full scale of dynamics, from a pianissimo which however retains clarity and presence, to a molto forte of real dramatic power, which yet stops short of the harsh and overbearing.

Also of great importance are the shadings within the phrase, which are generally impractical to spell out in detail. In music of this period the phrase typically has a "center of gravity" corresponding to the key words in a written or spoken sentence, and the player must, by subtle variation in the intensity of tone, convey an impression of motion toward it, and then of release and relaxation as the phrase is rounded off. It is this intelligent shaping of the phrase that raises it to the dignity of a statement, rather than a mere succession of pitches, and it must become second nature to the interpretive artist before expressive playing is possible.

RHYTHMIC DEFINITION

The shortest notes are the most important in defining a rhythmic grouping. They must be enunciated very precisely, and with a shade of emphasis as necessary for clarity; however this must be done with restraint, as it becomes pedantic if exaggerated. Syncopated notes call for a suggestion of accent at the beginning, and frequently a slight tapering away of the tone after the attack. Be sure to avoid any suggestion of a secondary accent or swelling of the tone where the beat would normally fall.

ORNAMENTATION

Gruppetti, appoggiature and other embellishing figures are often encountered in these melodies. "Correct" interpretation, which has derived mainly from keyboard practice, is in many cases ill-suited to the tuba and other large, low-pitched instruments; the figures may sound "difficult" if played in strict rhythm and tempo. It is often desirable to begin the embellishment a fraction of a beat earlier, to give it time to speak in a graceful and leisurely manner. All the notes in any embellishing figure must sound clearly and at a dynamic level with the context. Trills where indicated should be considered as optional. Often they will lie well for tubas in some keys but badly for others.

The quality of melodic expression represented here is very much in the mainstream of Western musical tradition, being organically related both to the earlier eras and to the most significant music of our own time. The instrumentalist who fails to make himself thoroughly at home with these melodies from the "golden age of bel canto" and who is not prepared to play them beautifully as regards both style and technique will not be able to perform with assurance and authority the works of later masters.

The character of these studies makes it necessary to set them principally in the middle and upper portions of the tuba's range. Rather than working on them exclusively for long periods, it is advisable to alternate with other materials, such as Blazhevich: 70 Etudes for Tuba (MFB #2002), Vasiliev: Etudes for Tuba (MFB #2004), and Kopprasch: 60 Selected Studies for Tuba (MFB #2006), which make free use of the lower register as well.

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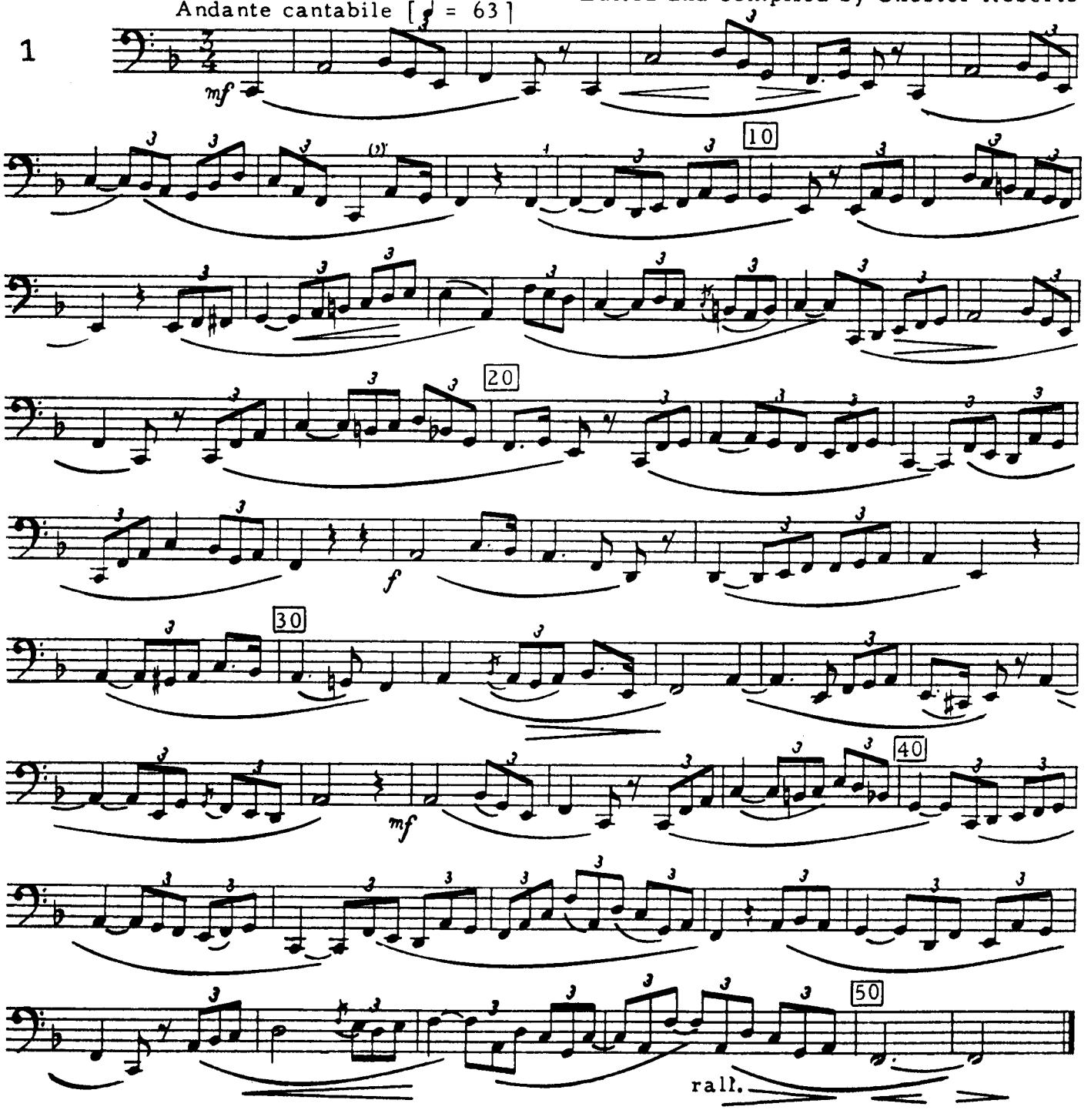
Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1972

BEL CANTO STUDIES

MARCO BORDOGNI
Edited and compiled by Chester Roberts



Since the triplet predominates, be careful that ♫ does not become ♩ ♪. Where notes are repeated in a legato line, tongue the second one, for example, the first note of measure 10. This does not apply where the tie is printed, as in measures 48 and 49. The desired effect here is one of syncopation.

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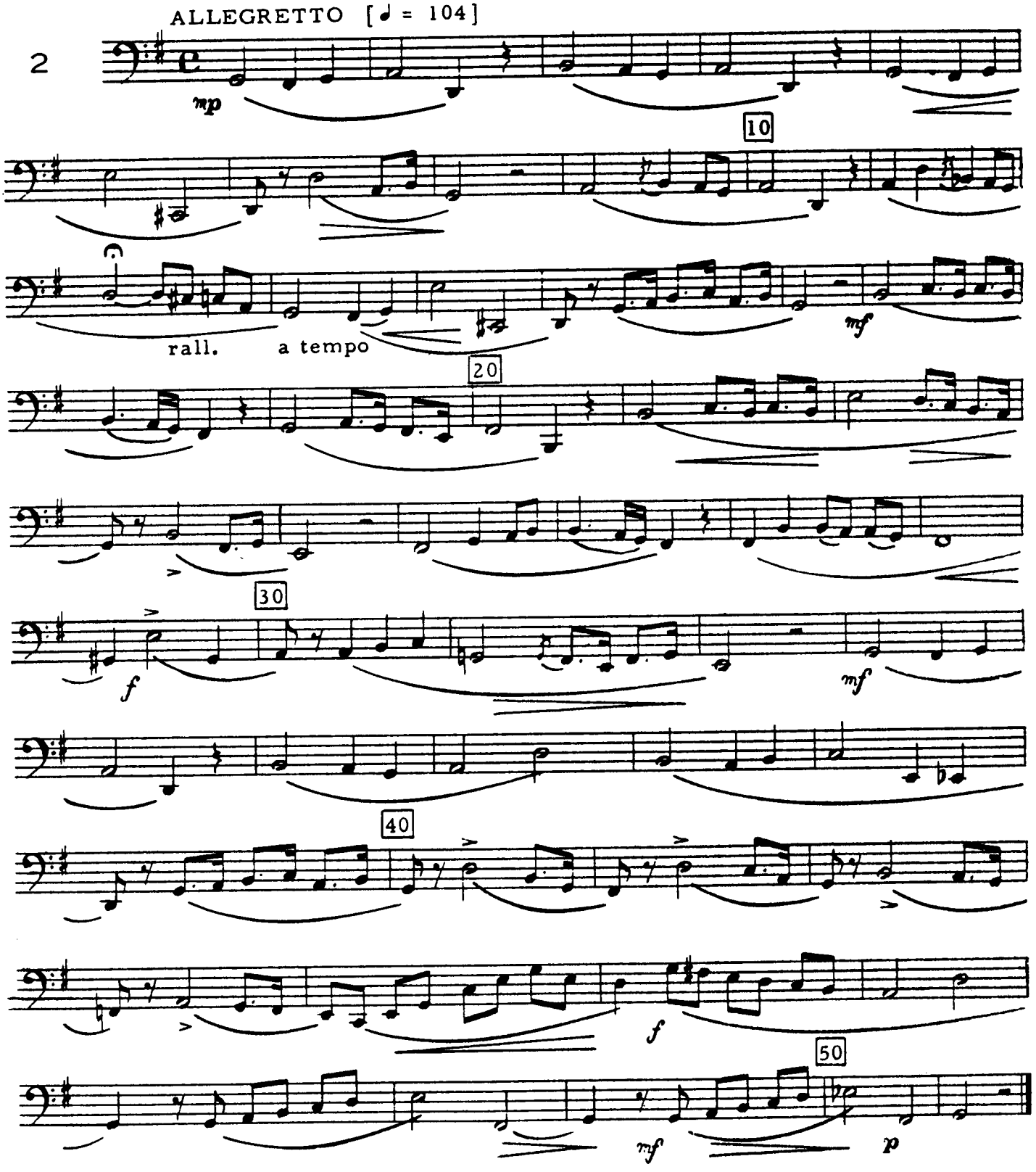
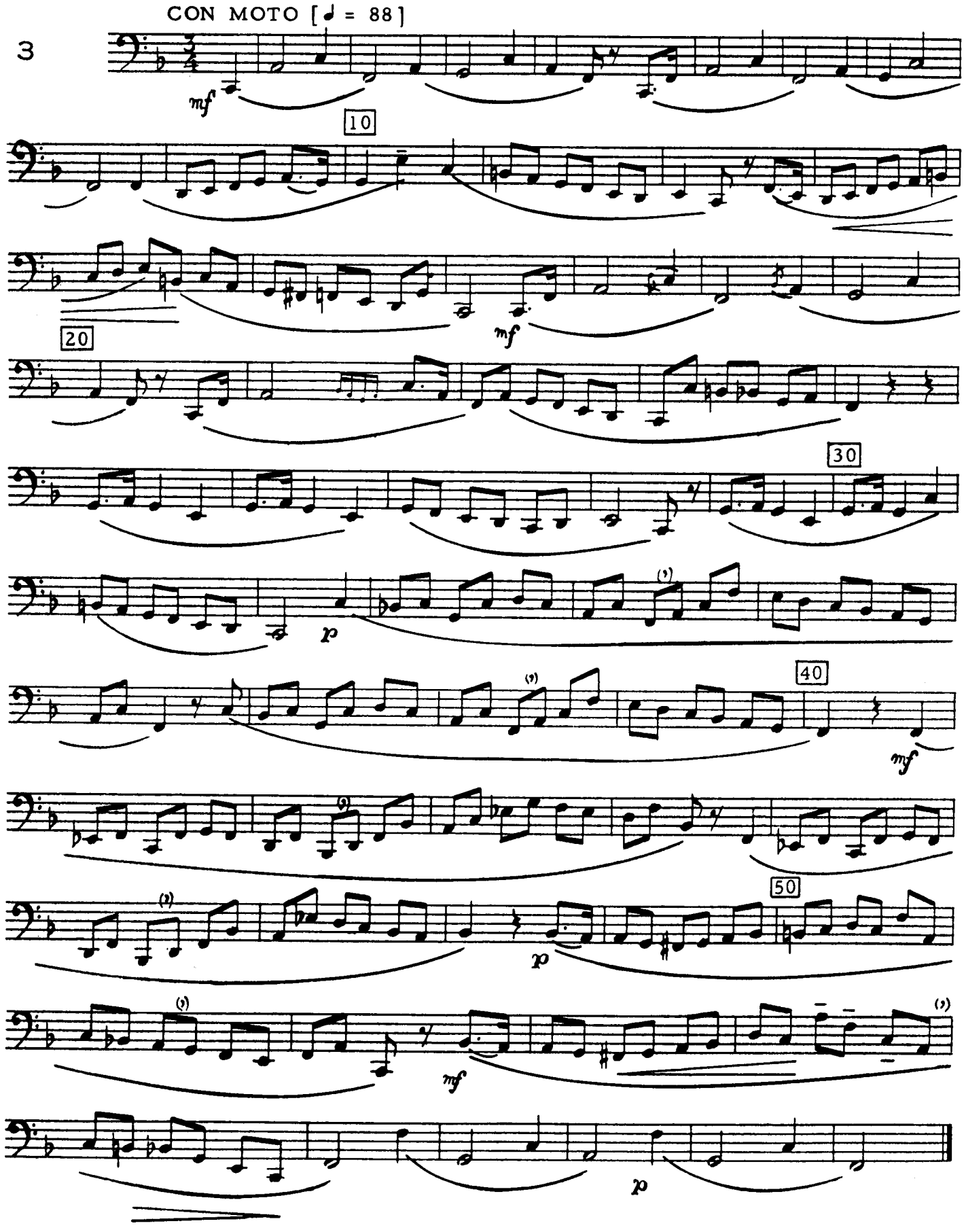
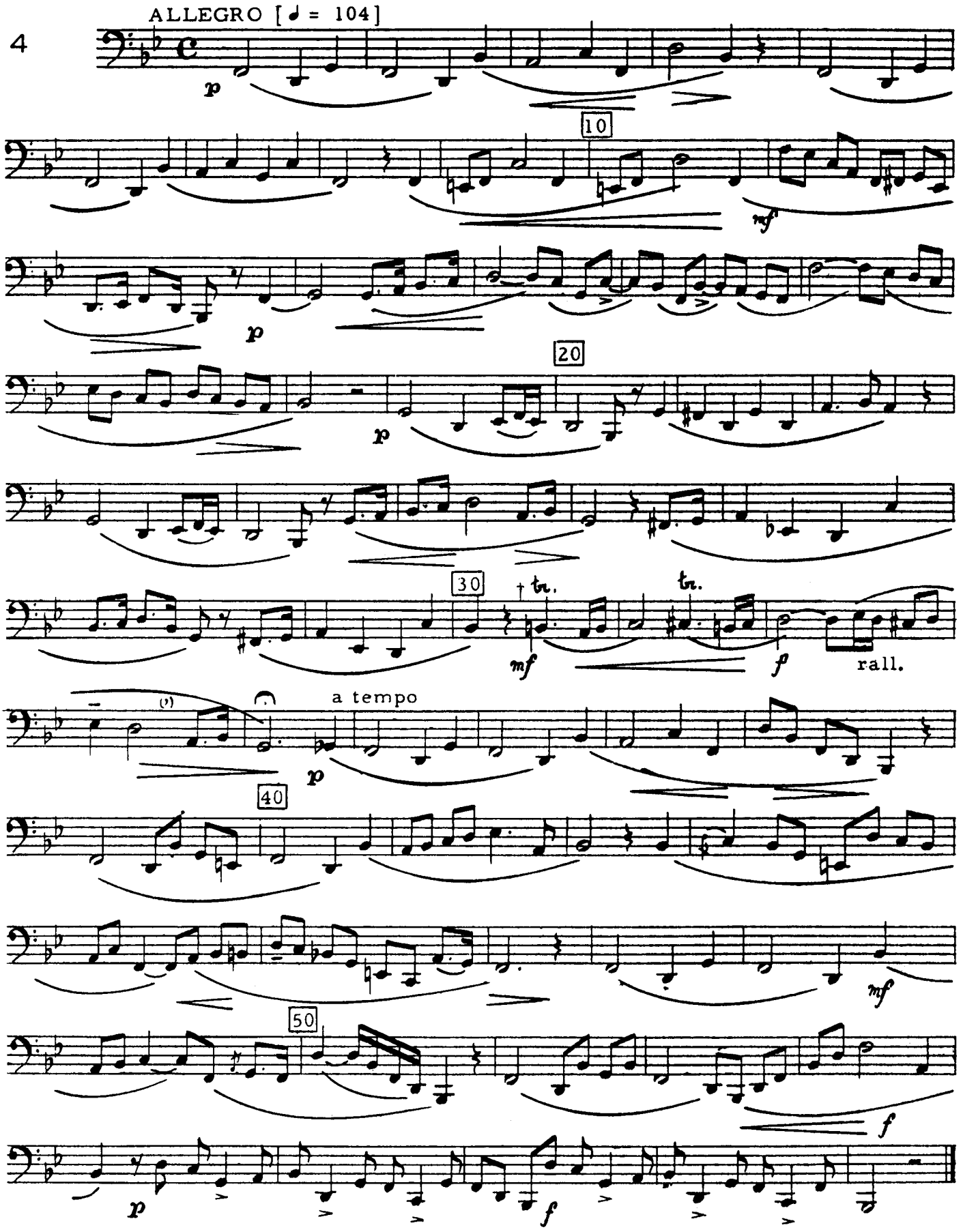
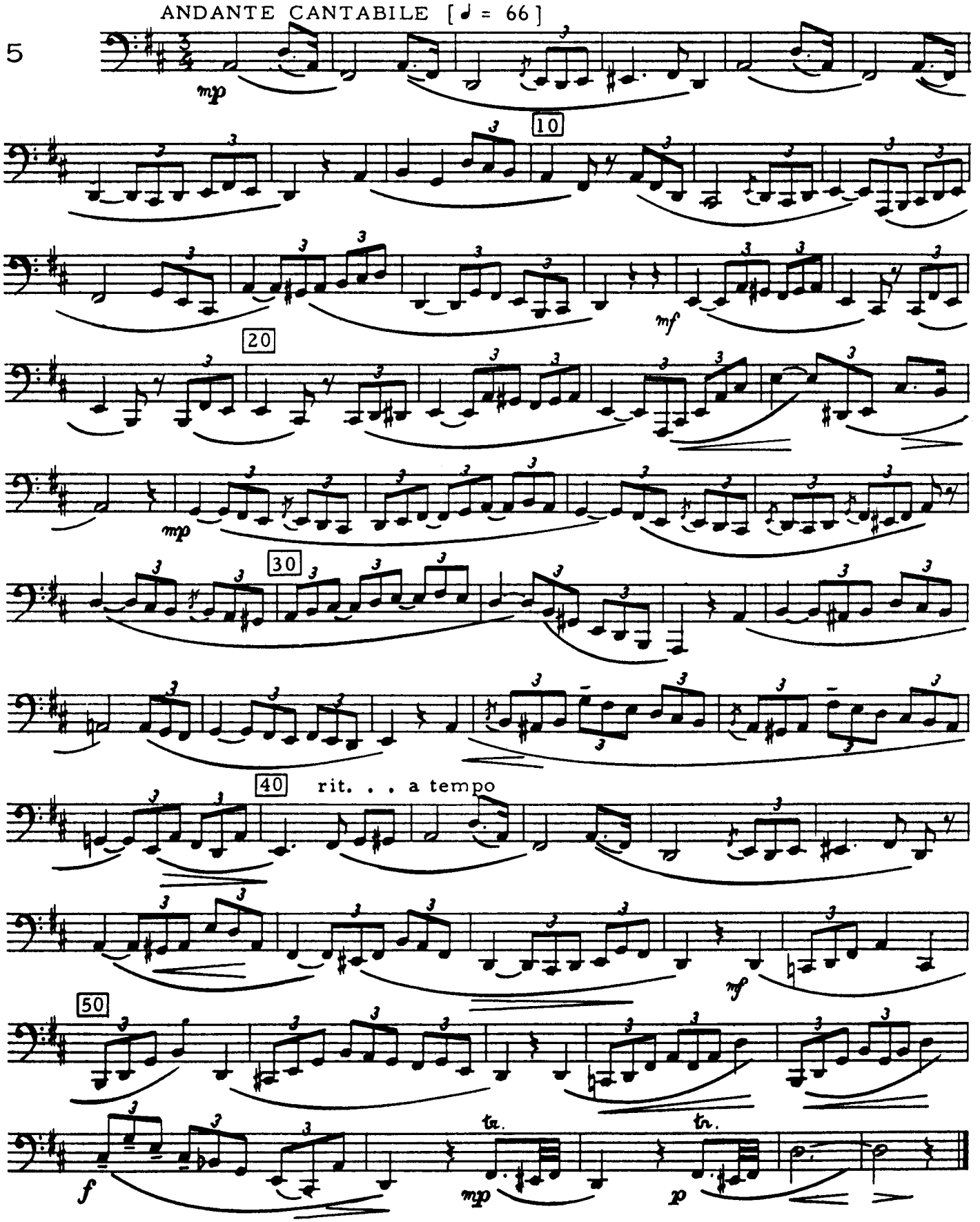


Since the rhythmic character of a piece depends mainly upon the rendition of the shortest notes, the ♩. ♪ figures in the above study must be played with vigor and precision. It is a very common fault that the sixteenth note does not project equally with the dotted eighth.


CON MOTO [♩ = 88]
3
mf
10
20
mf
30
p
40
mf
50
p
mf
p

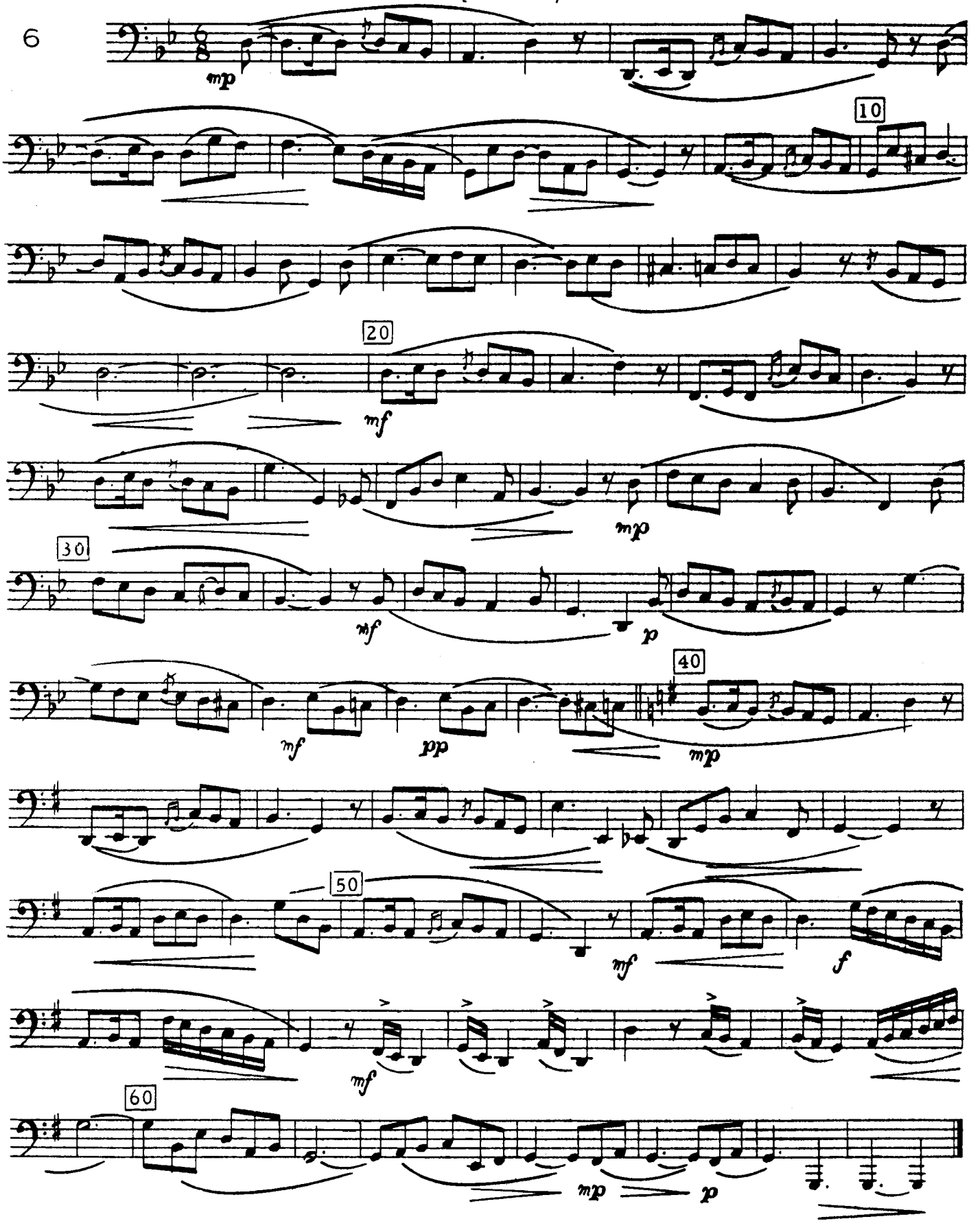


Trills are optional. These lie well for BB♭, C and F tubas, but badly for E♭.

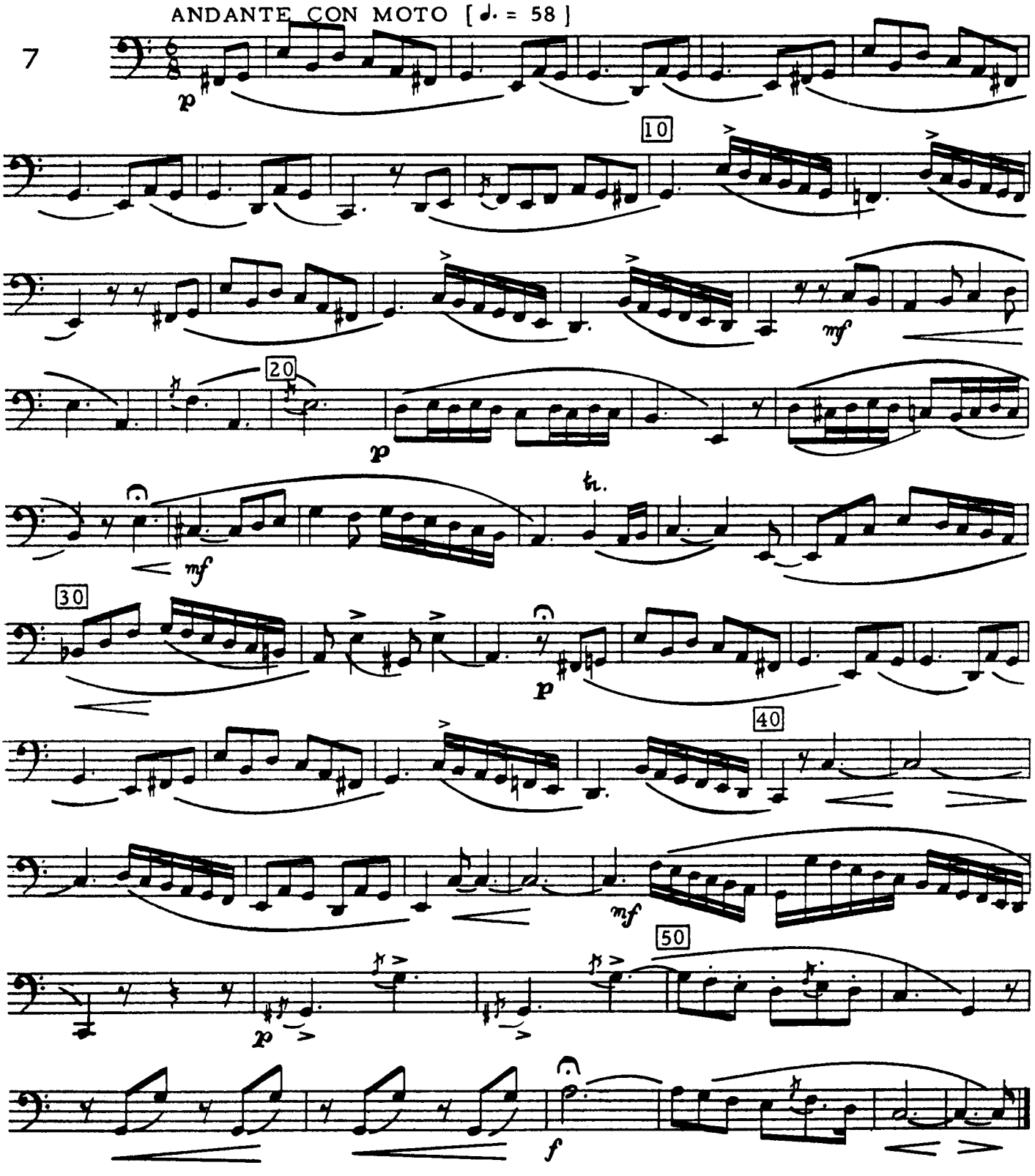


In the slow tempo indicated, the foregoing study is a good test for breath control. Take ample breath according to the length of the phrase, then practice rationing to avoid expending it too freely at the beginning.

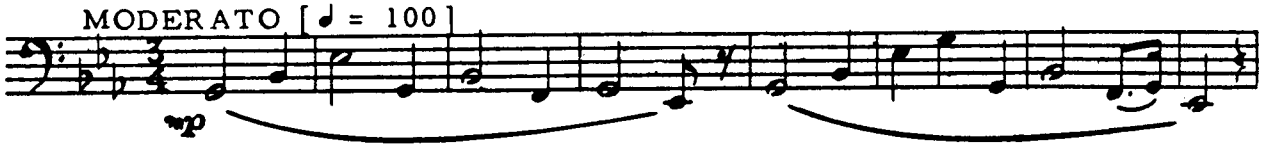
ANDANTE PASTORALE [♩. = 54]

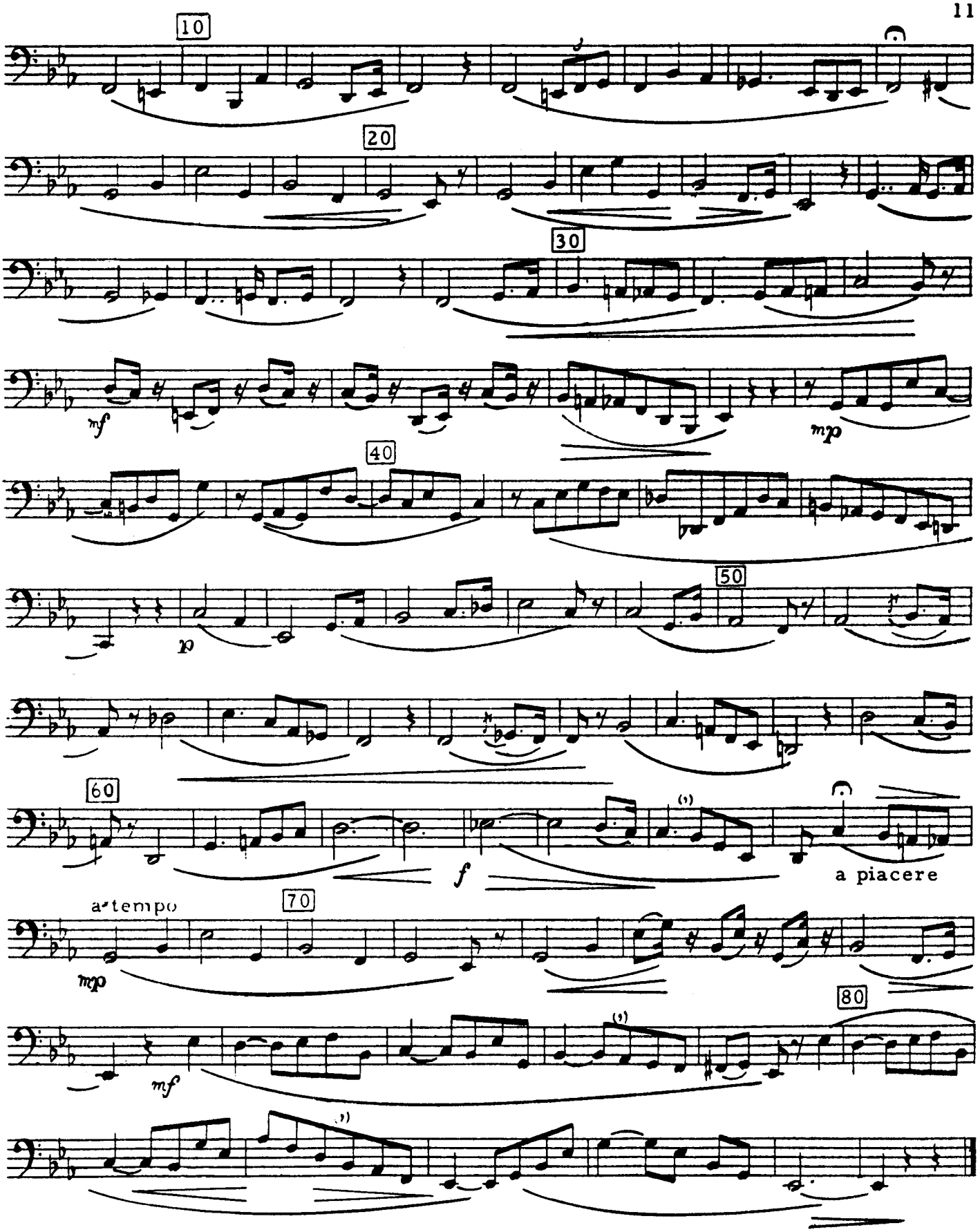


7 ANDANTE CON MOTO [♩. = 58]



8 MODERATO [♩ = 100]

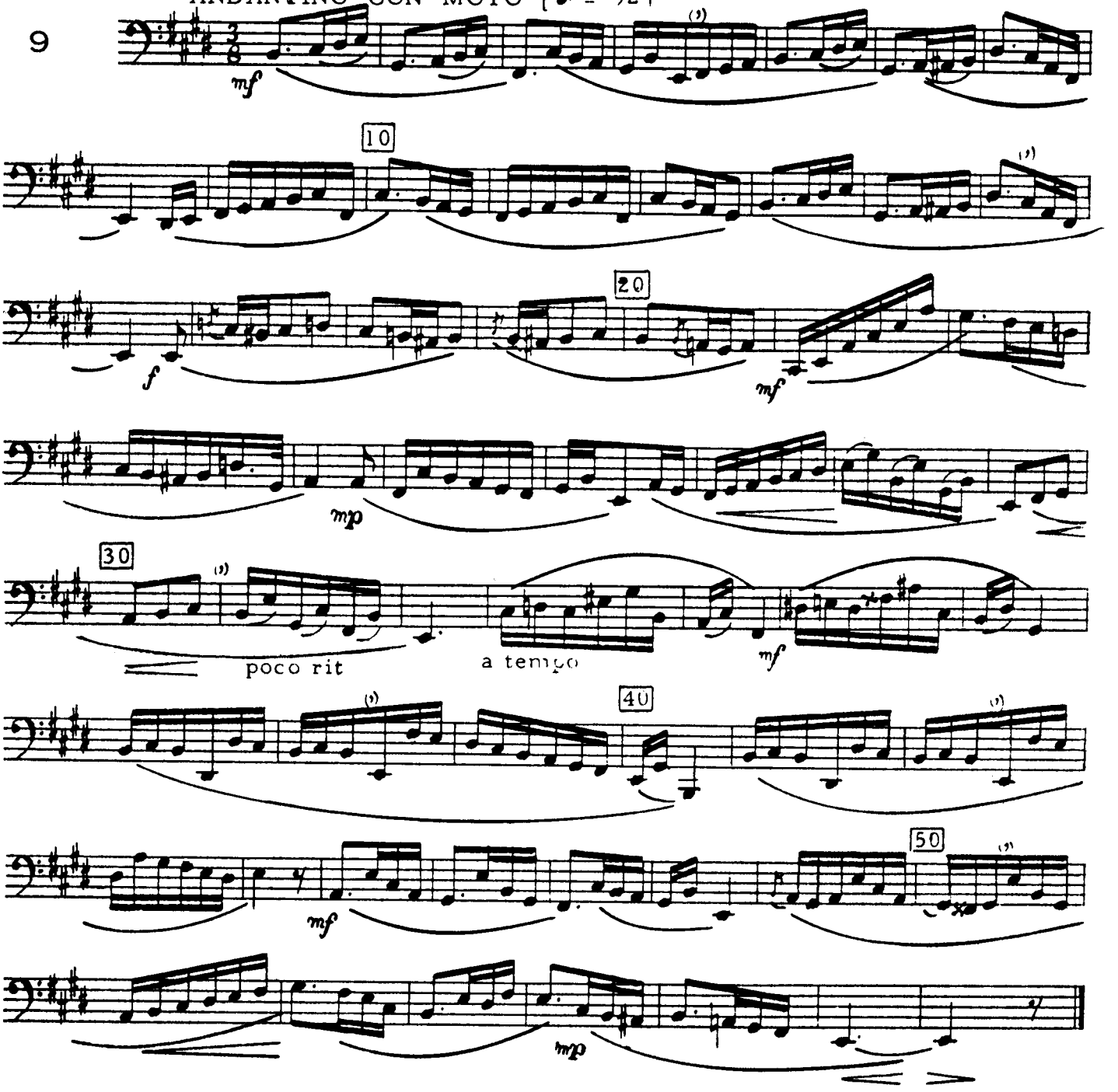




The above study is rather longer than preceding studies. It will help your endurance to breathe deeply by free expansion in the abdominal area, and to remove the mouthpiece from the lips wherever the rest is sufficiently long to permit it.

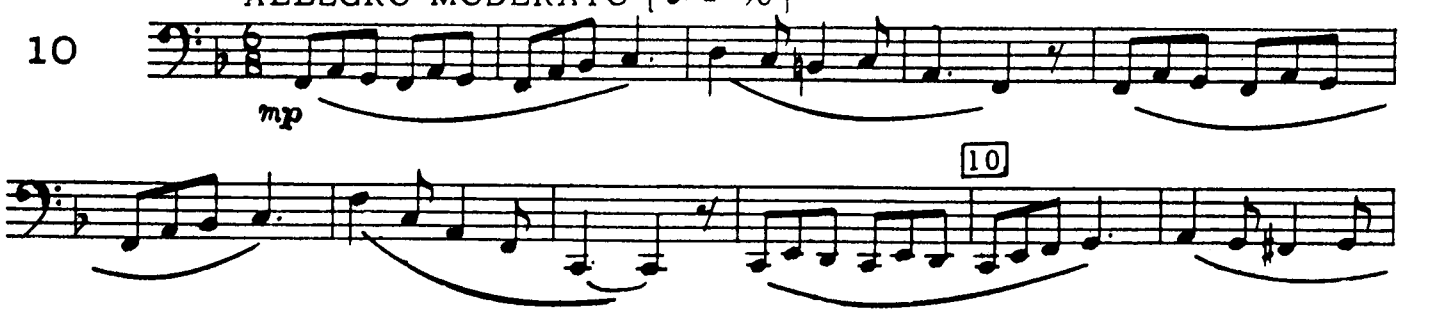
9

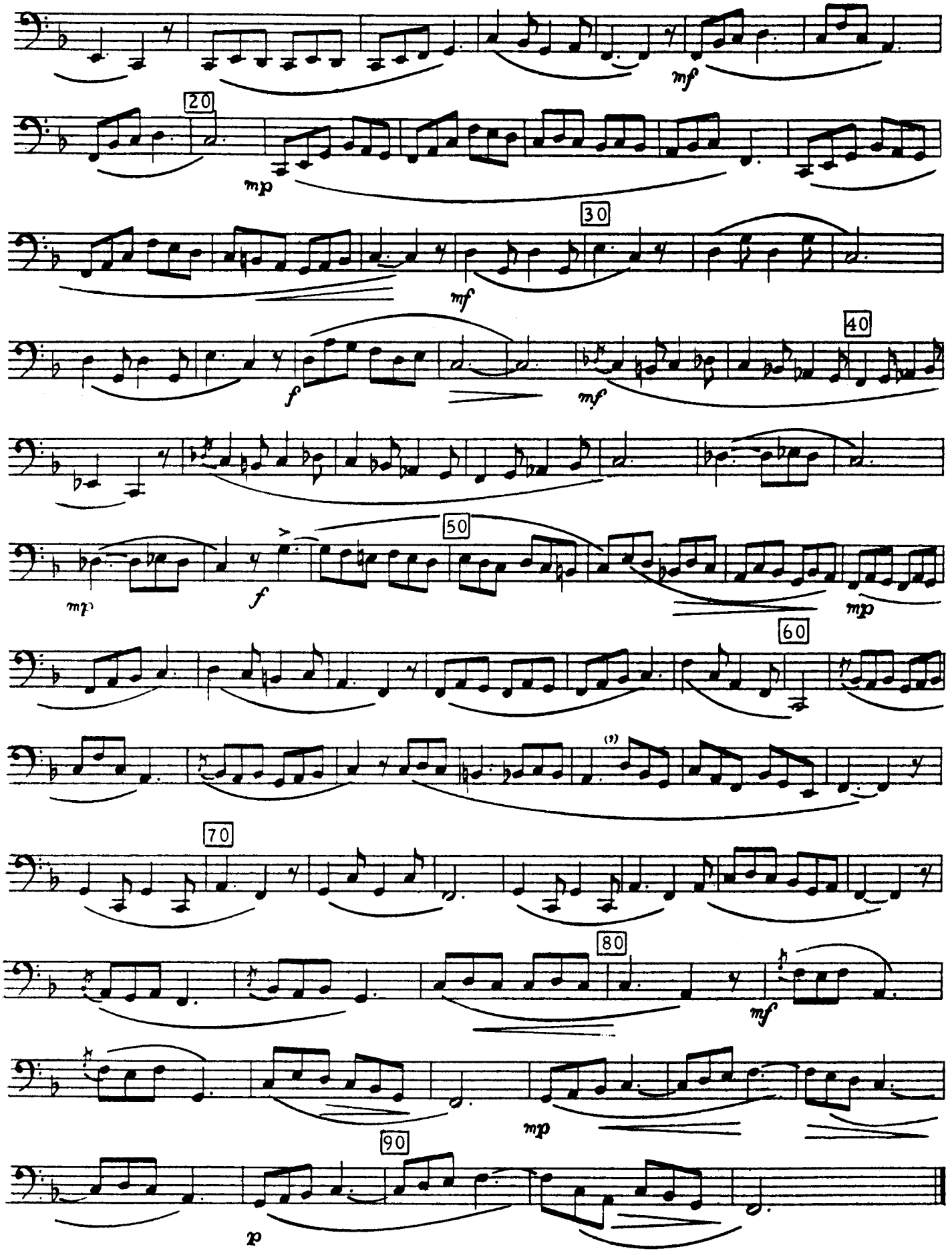
ANDANTINO CON MŌTO [♪ = 92]



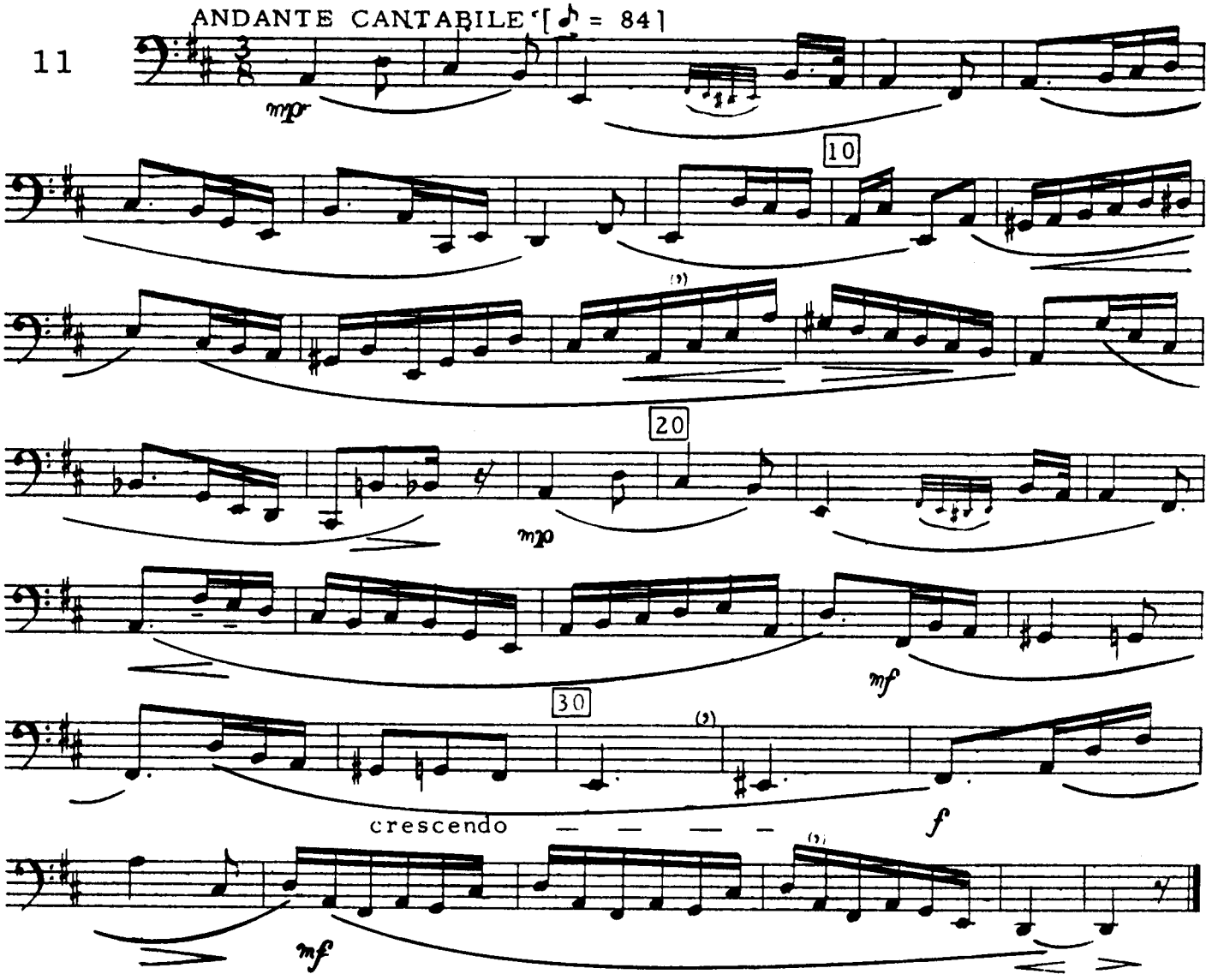
10

ALLEGRO MODERATO [♩. = 96]

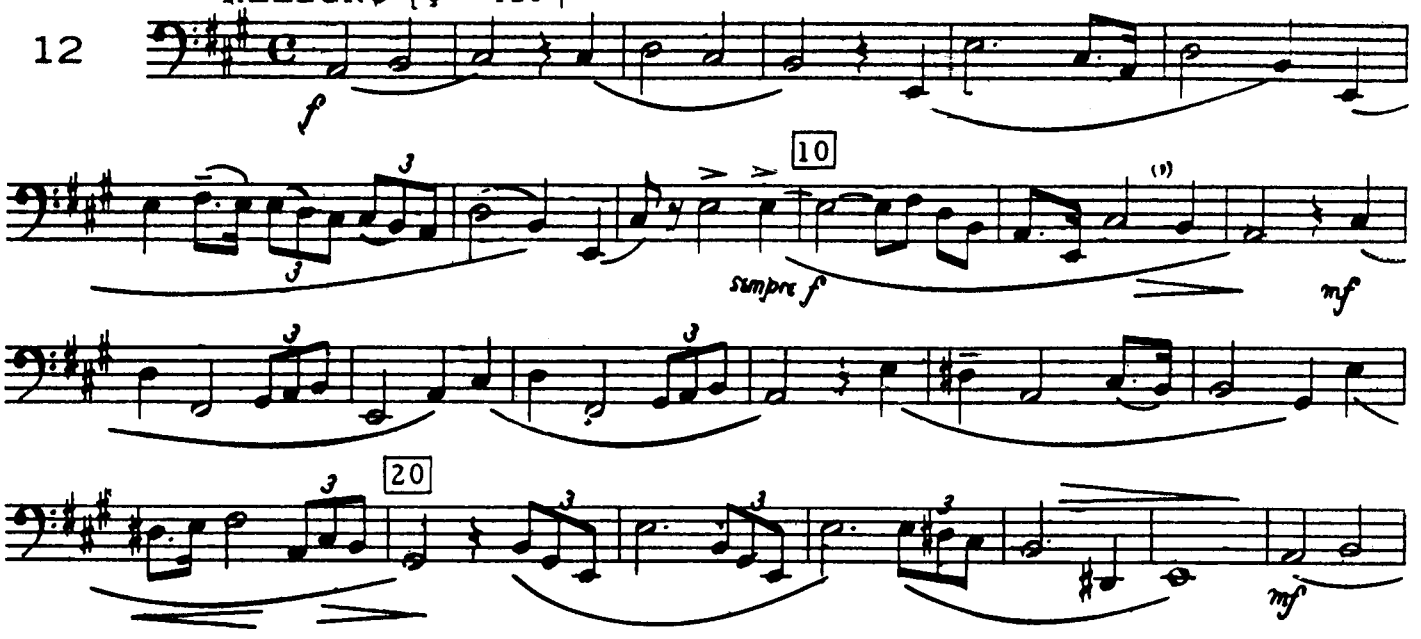


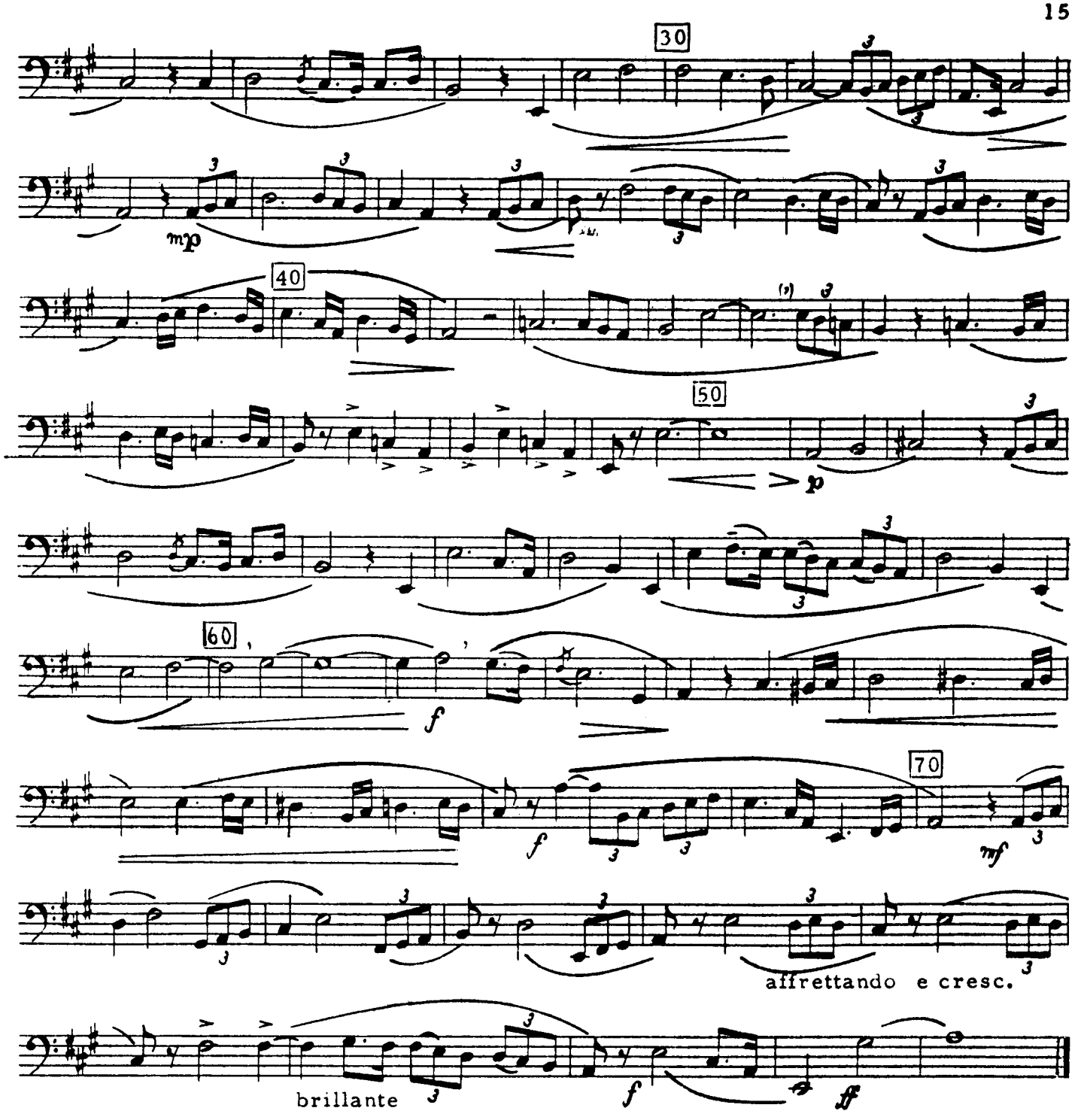

mf
20
mp
30
mf
40
f
mf
mp
f
50
mp
60
70
80
mf
mp
90
p

11 ANDANTE CANTABILE [♪ = 84]



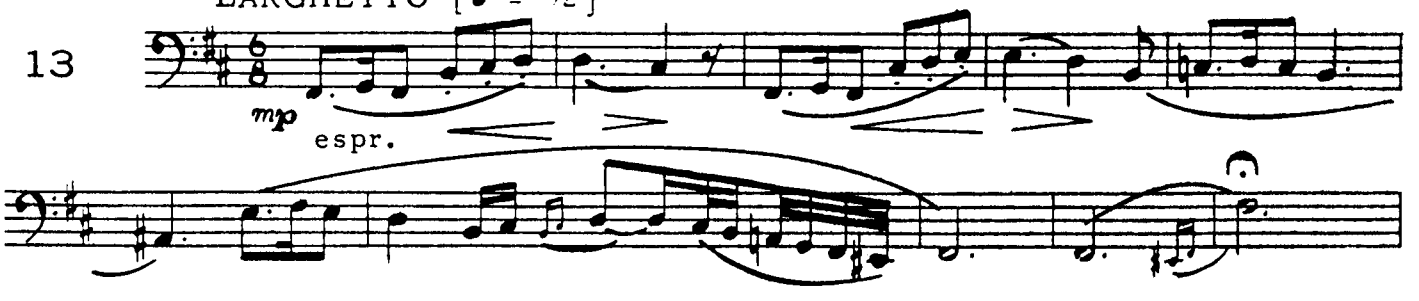
12 ALLEGRO [♩ = 120]

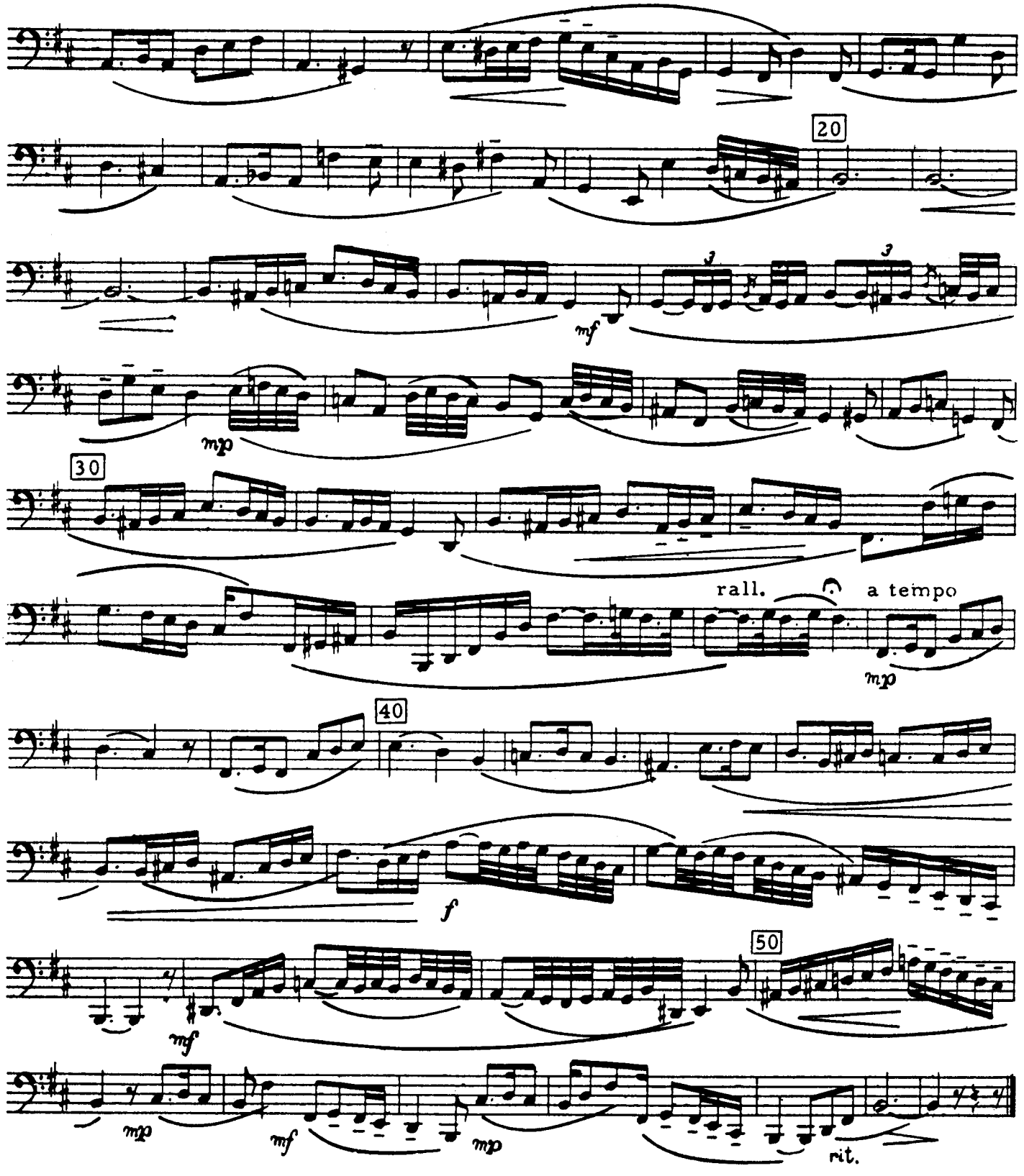




LARGHETTO [♪ = 92]

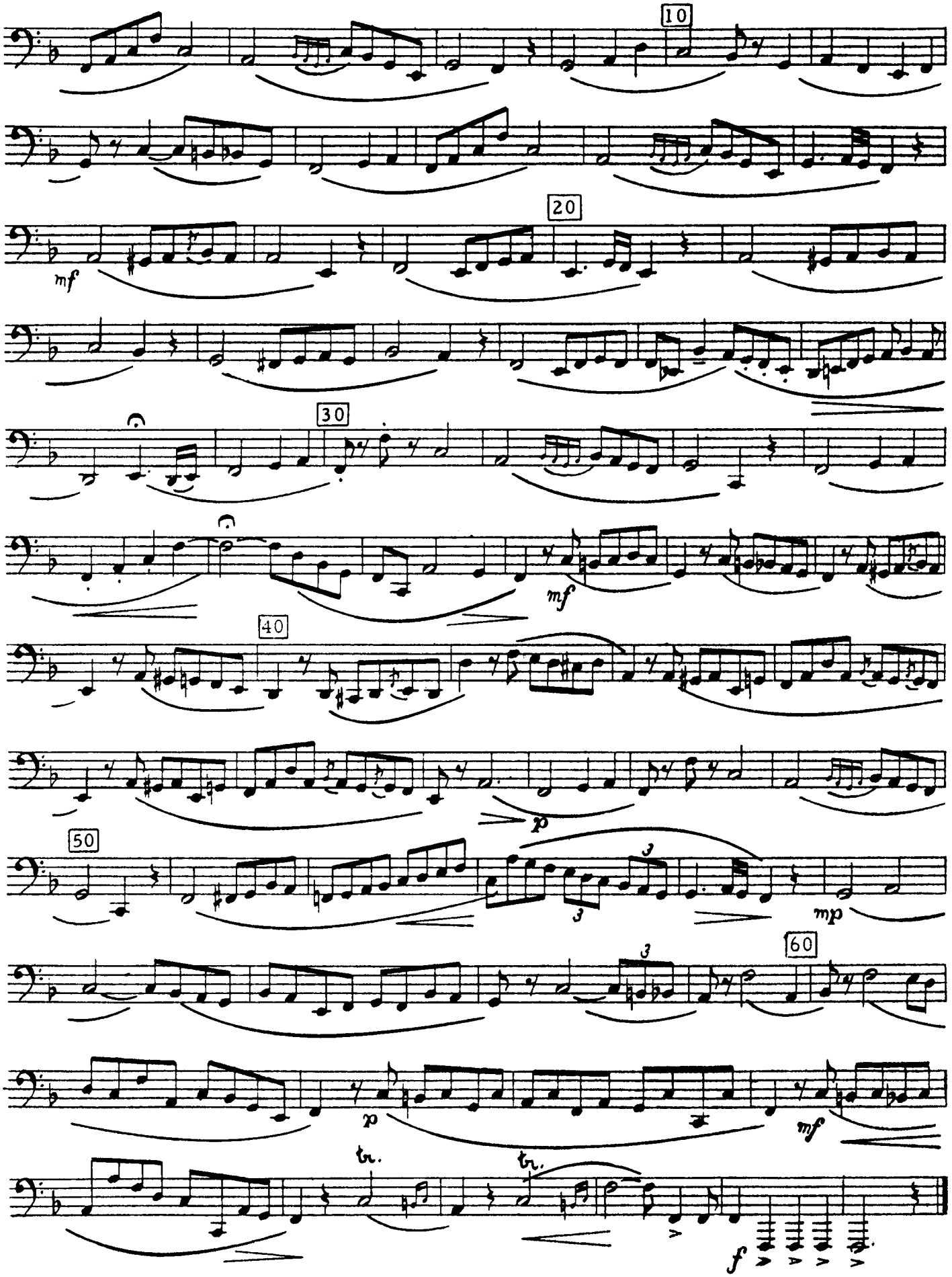
13

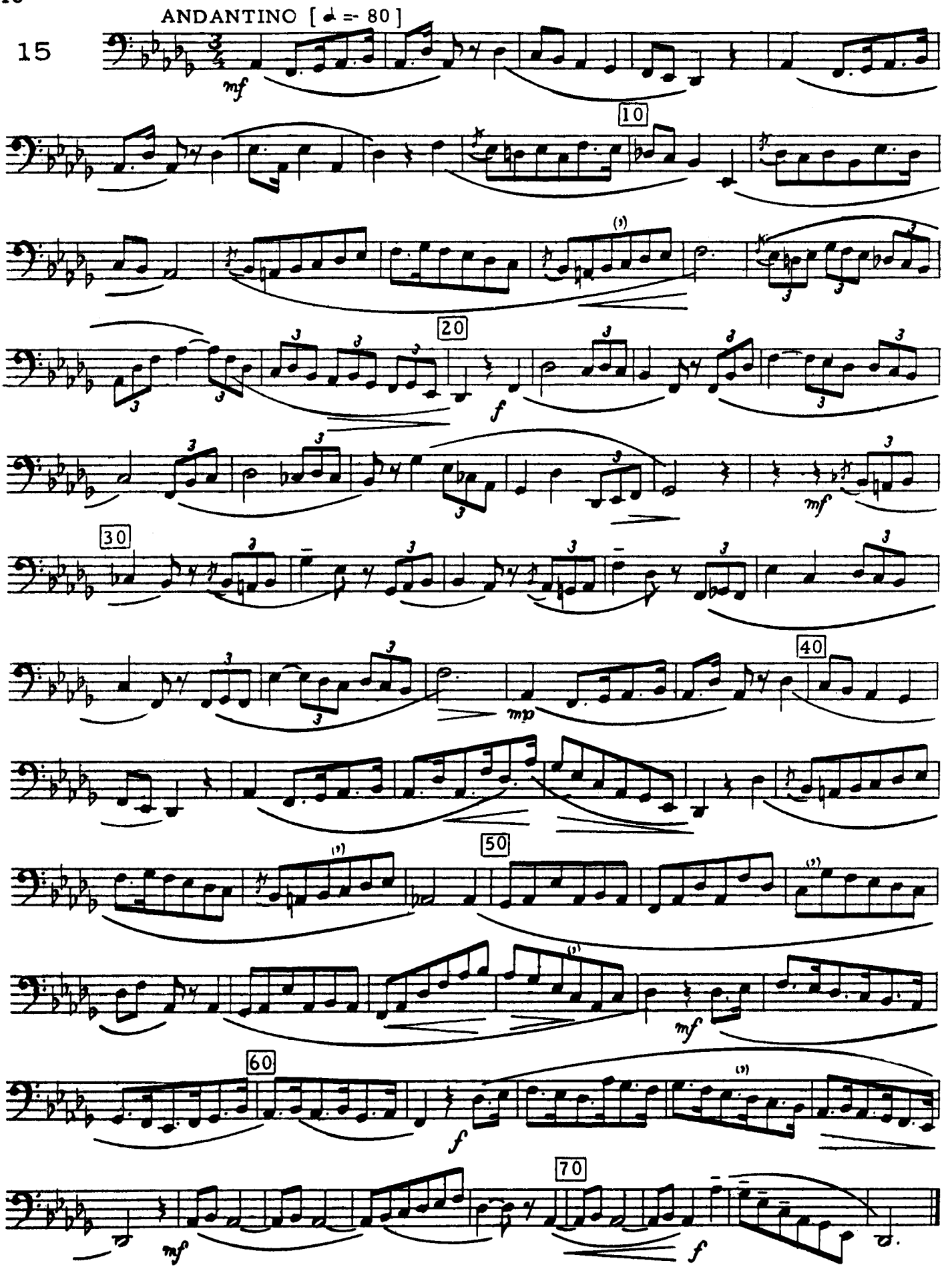


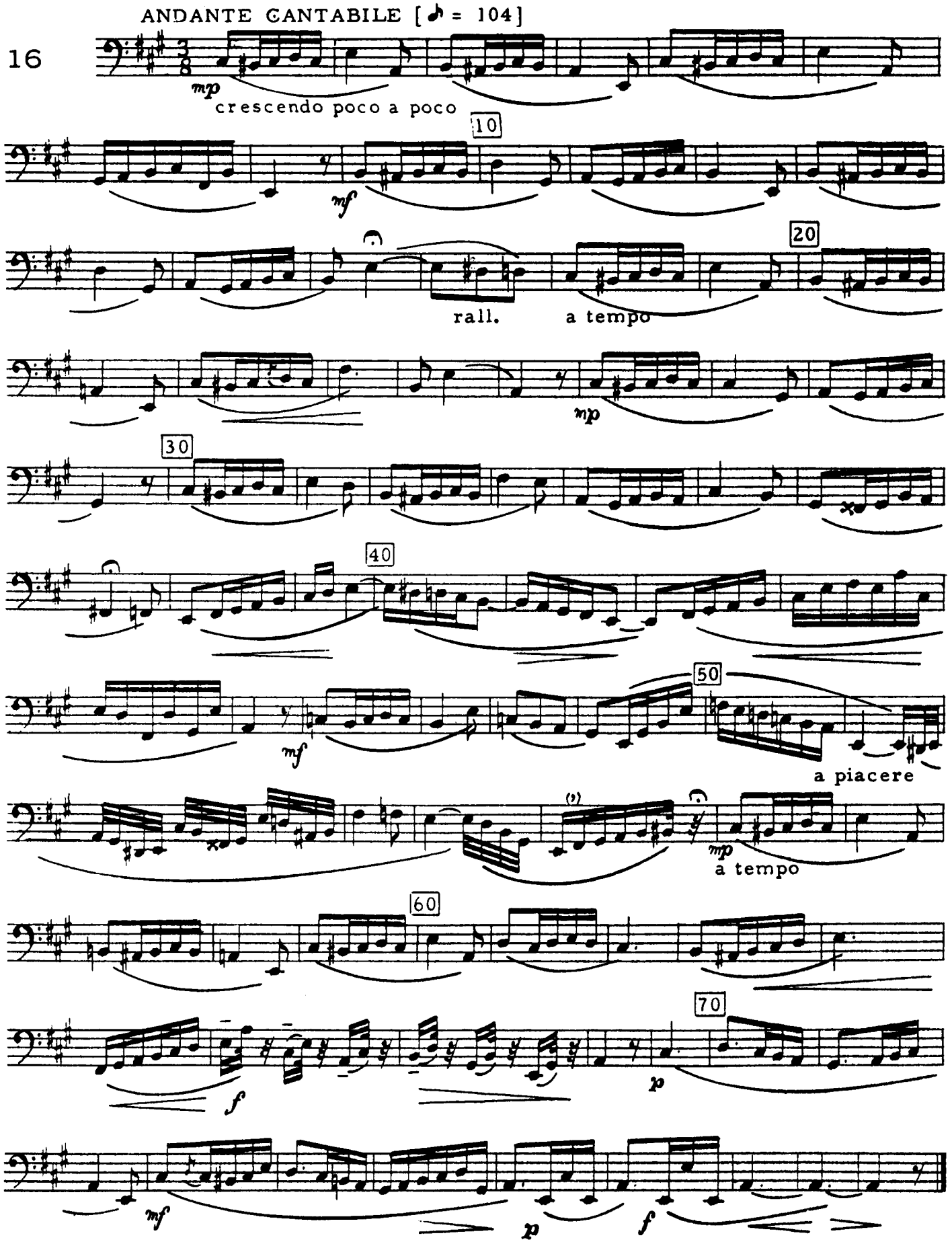


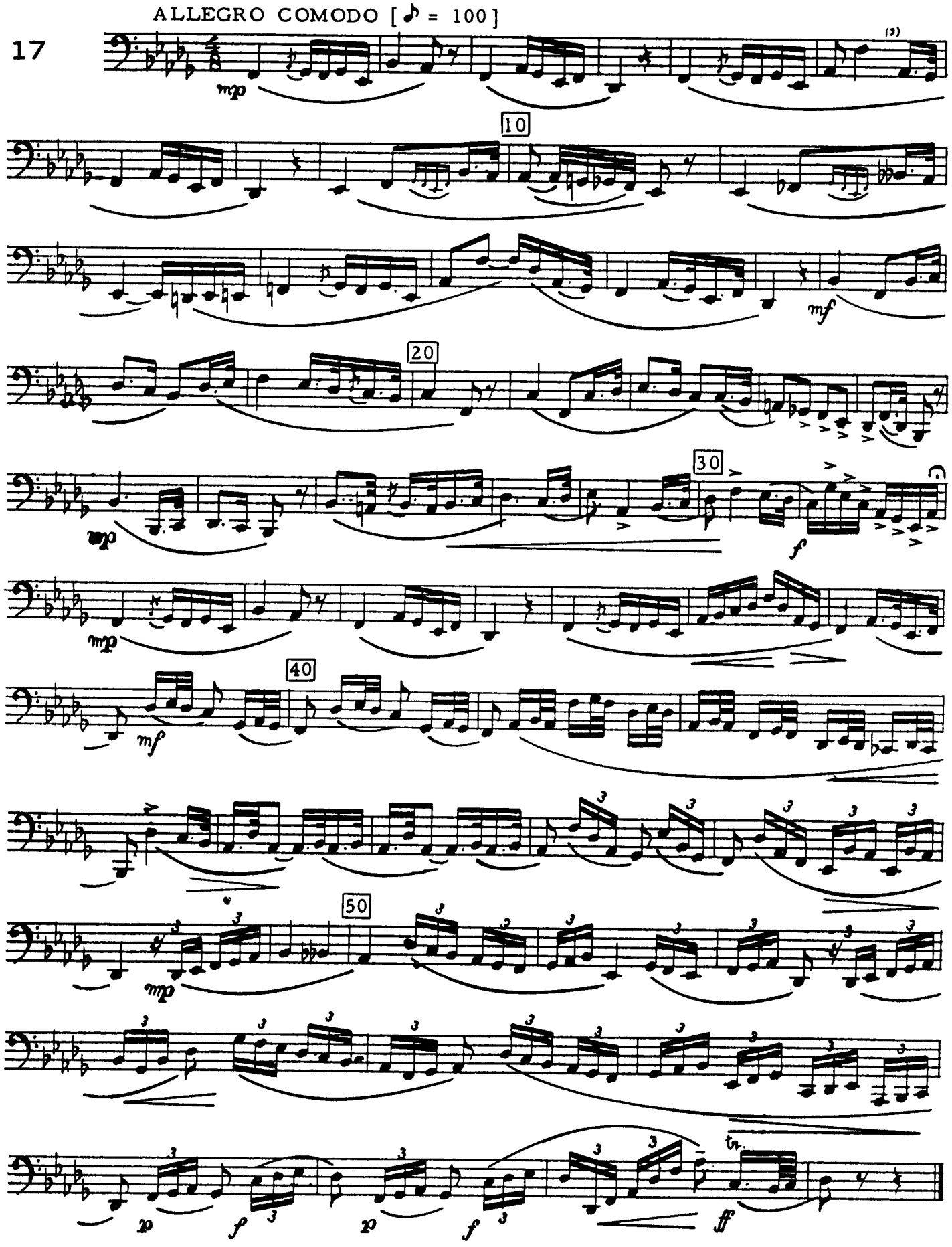
ANDANTINO QUASI ALLEGRETTO [♩ = 58]

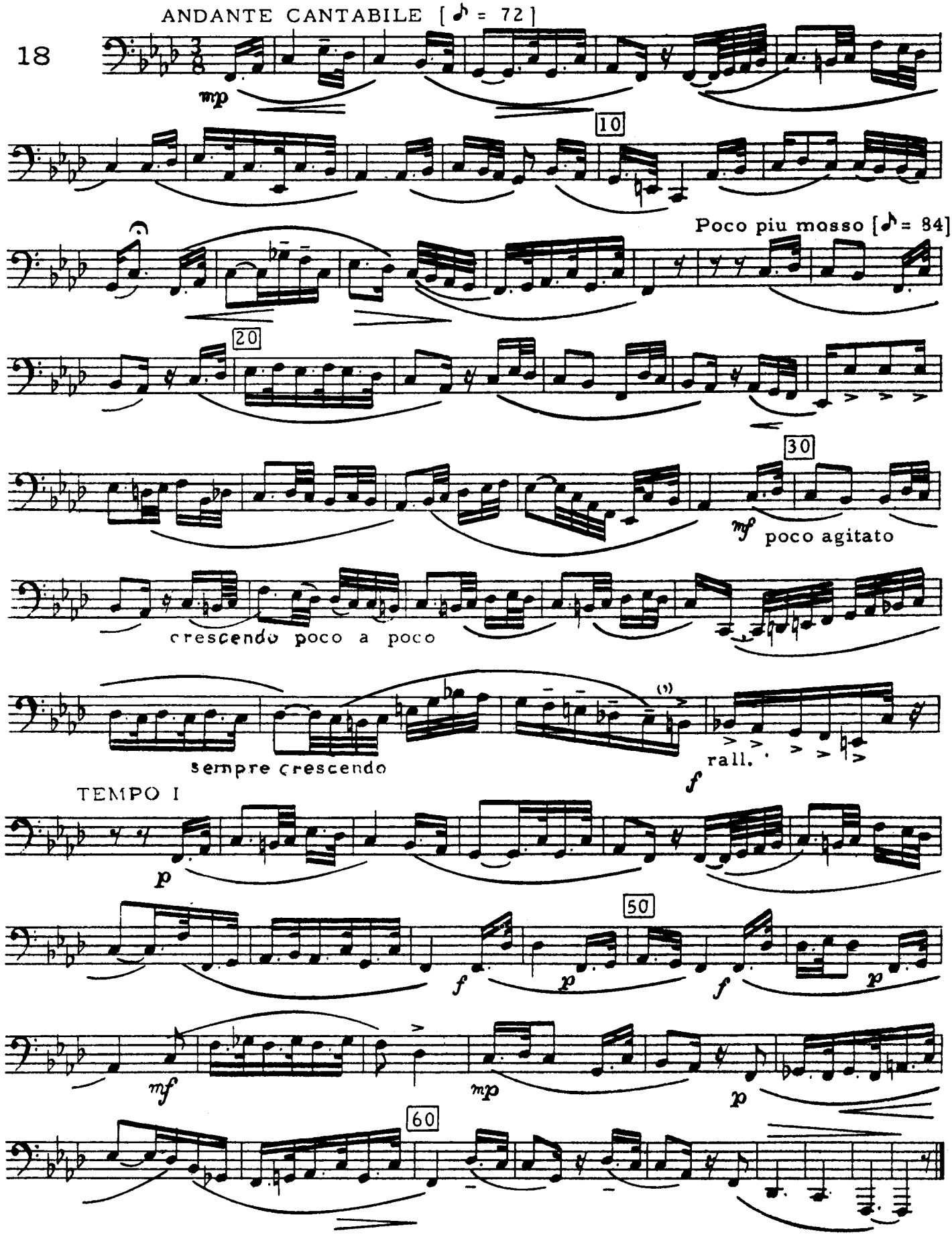
14

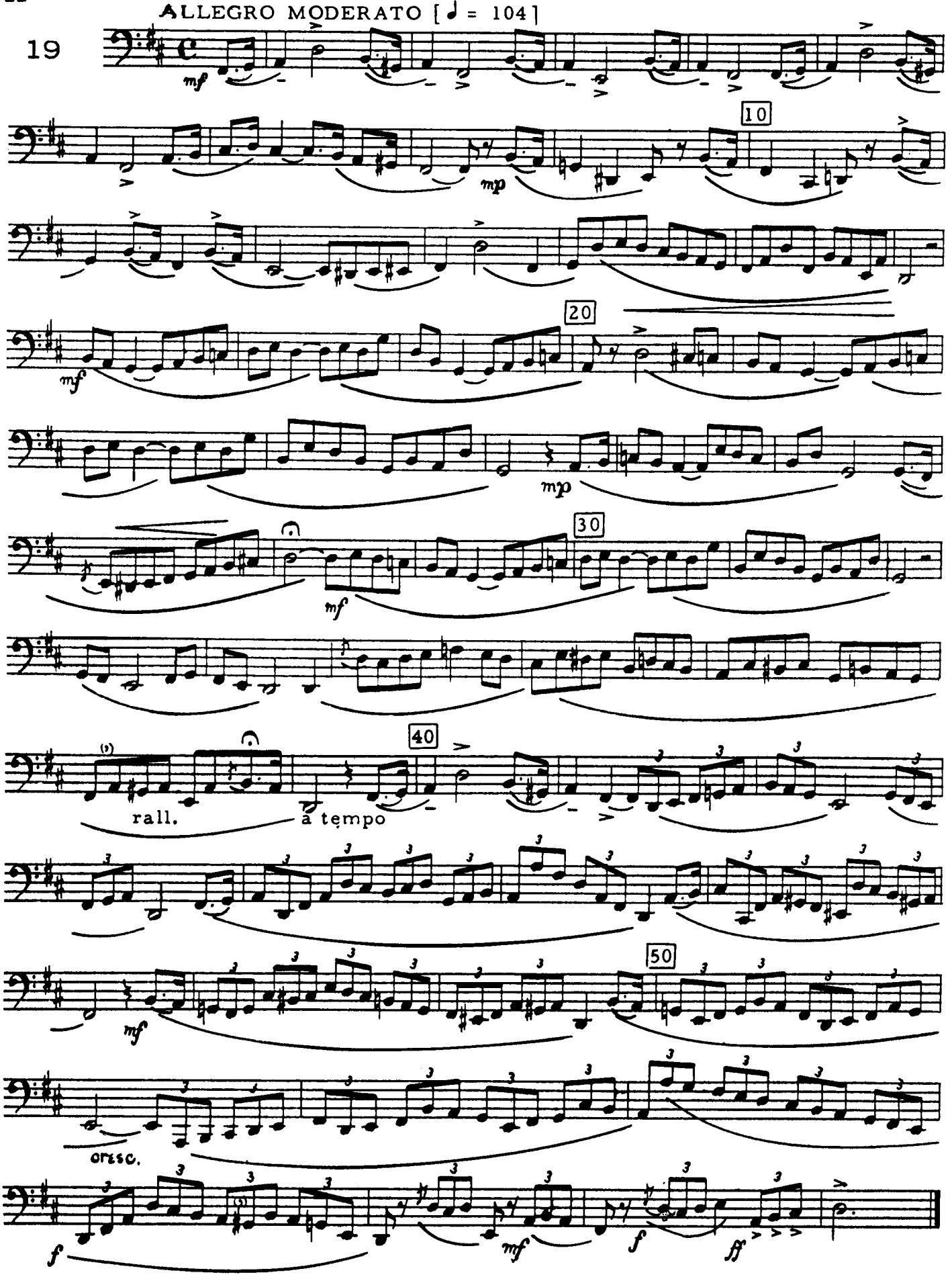

10
20
mf
30
mf
40
p
50
mp
60
p
mf
tr.
tr.
f

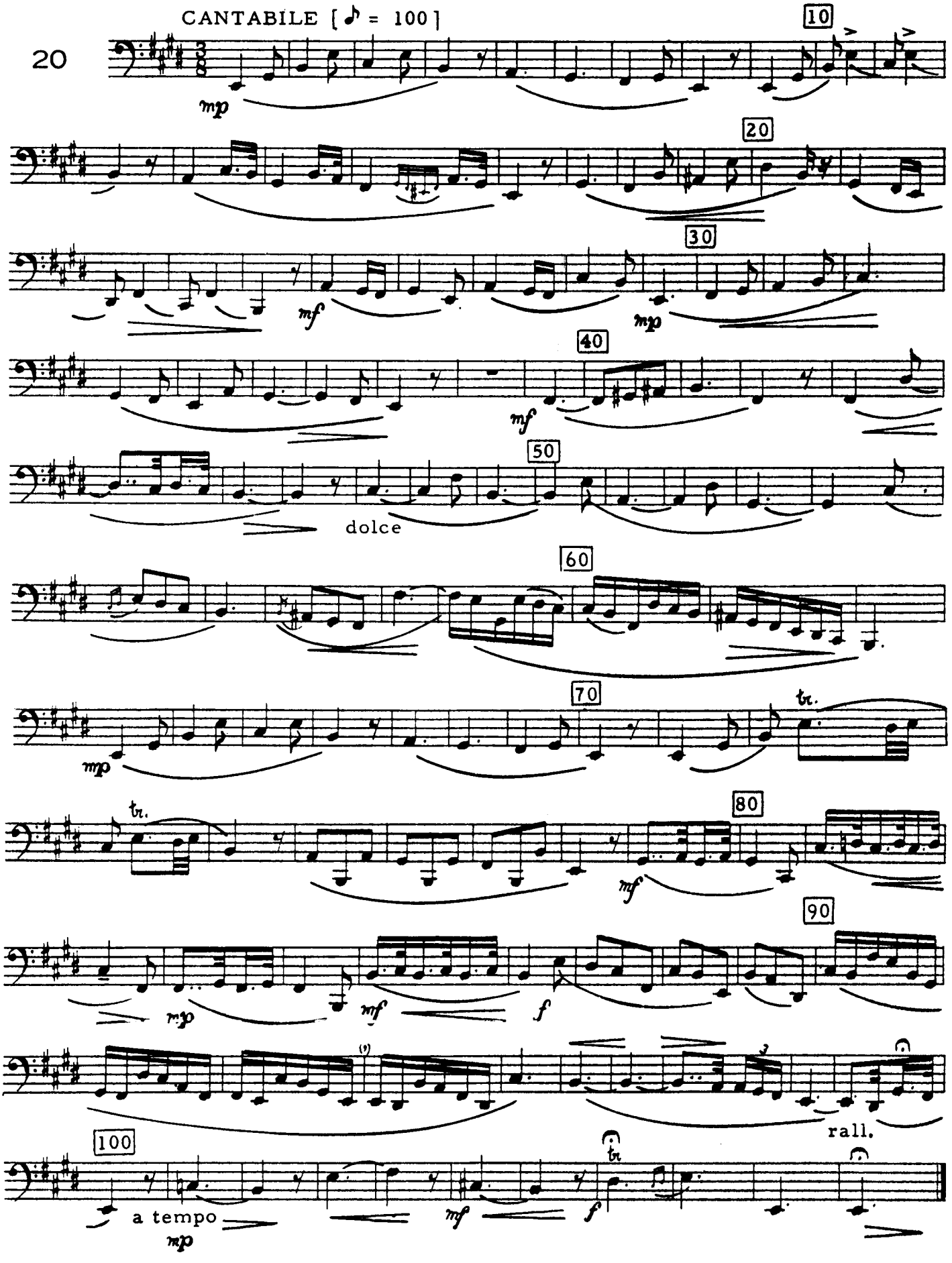

ANDANTINO [♩ = 80]
15
mf
10
20
f
mf
30
40
mp
50
mf
60
f
70
mf
f


ANDANTE CANTABILE [♪ = 104]
16
mp
crescendo poco a poco
10
mf
20
rall.
a tempo
mp
30
40
50
mf
a piacere
mp
a tempo
60
70
f
p
mf
p
f

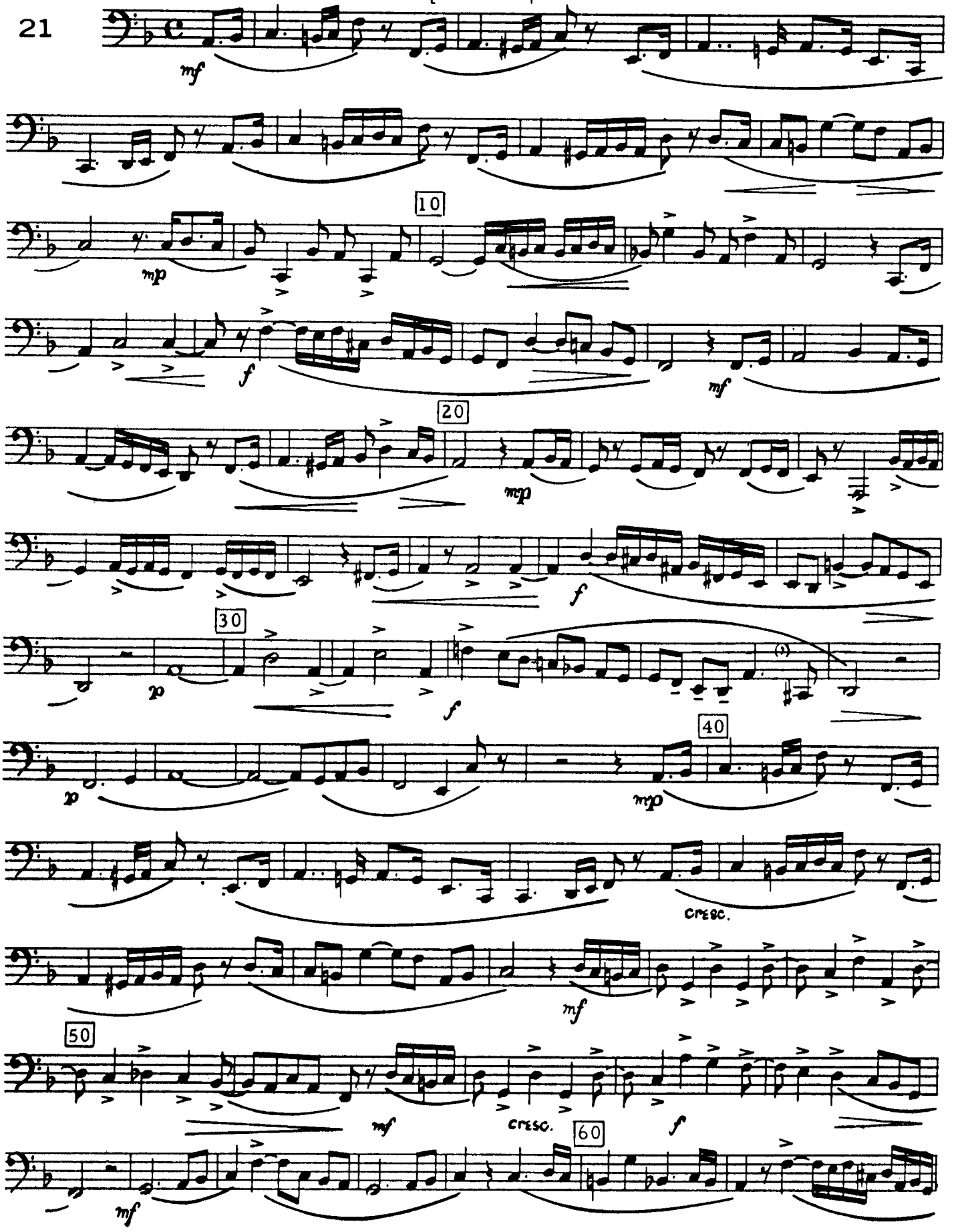

ALLEGRO COMODO [♪ = 100]
17
10
20
30
40
50
mp
mf
f
p
ff
tr.

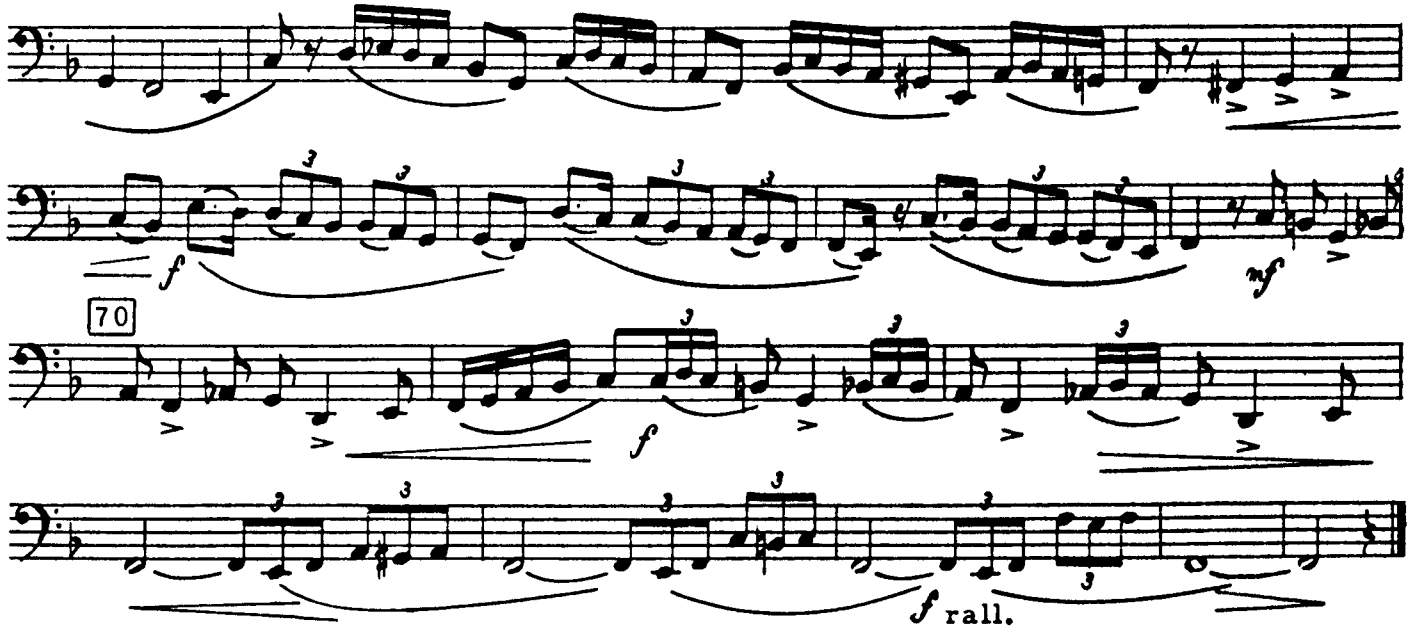

ANDANTE CANTABILE [♪ = 72]
18
mp
10
Poco piu mosso [♪ = 84]
20
30
mf
poco agitato
crescendo poco a poco
sempre crescendo
ralL.
f
TEMPO I
p
50
f
p
f
p
mf
mp
p
60


ALLEGRO MODERATO [♩ = 104]
19
mf
10
mp
20
mf
mp
30
mf
40
rall.
a tempo
50
mf
cresc.
f
mf
f
ff

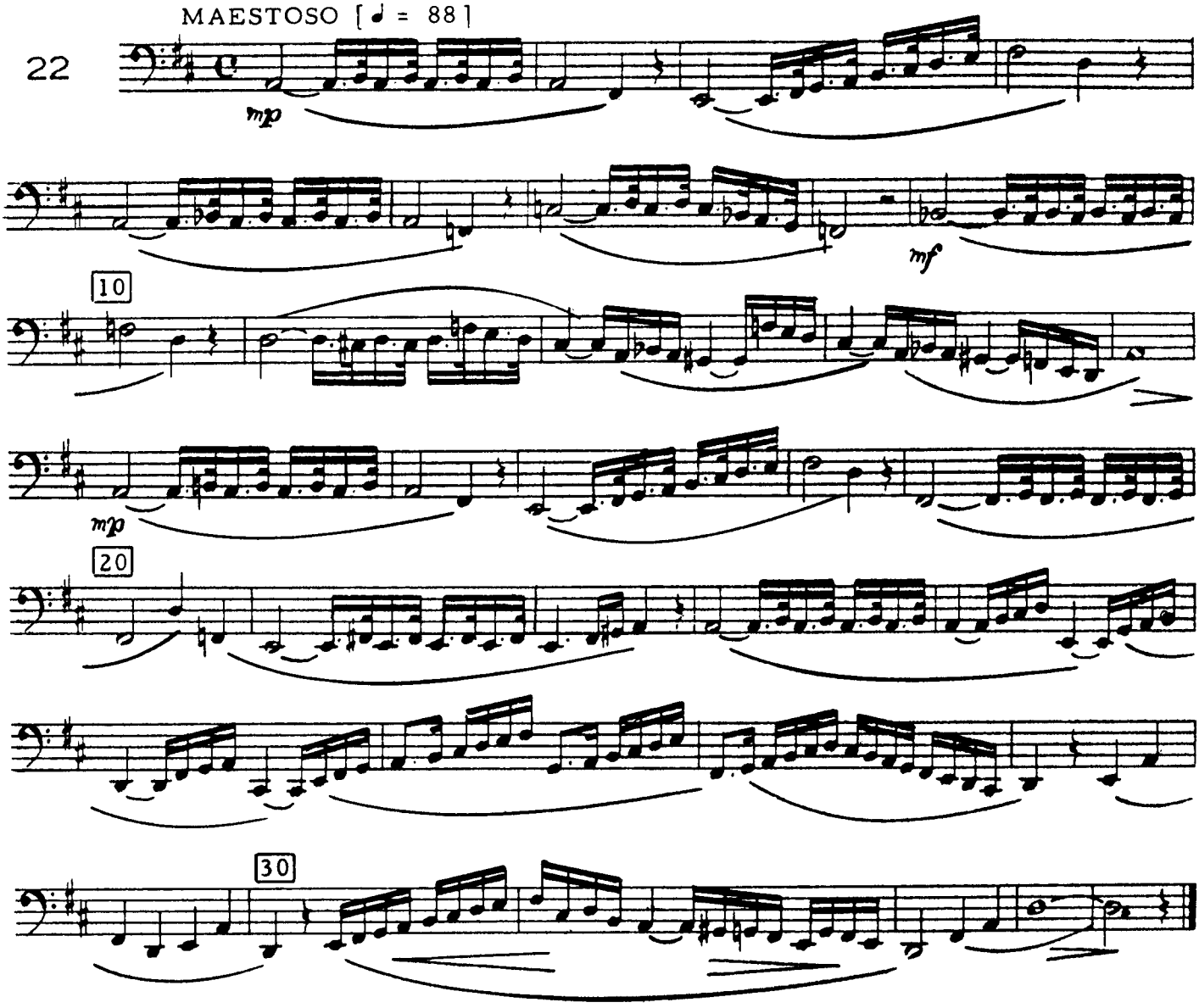

CANTABILE [♪ = 100]
20
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
mp
mf
dolce
tr.
rall.
a tempo

ALLEGRO MODERATO [♩ = 104]



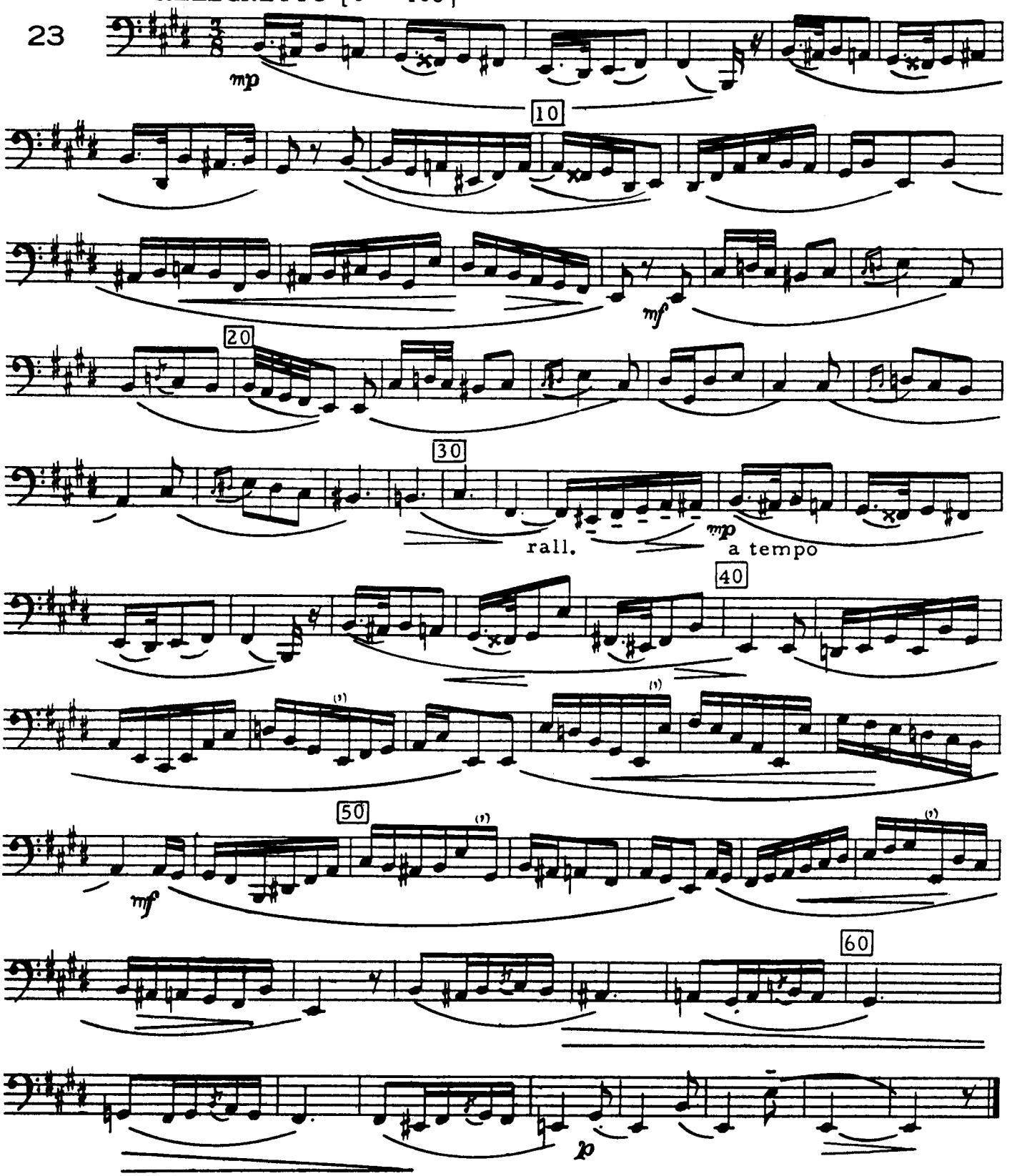


MAESTOSO [♩ = 88]



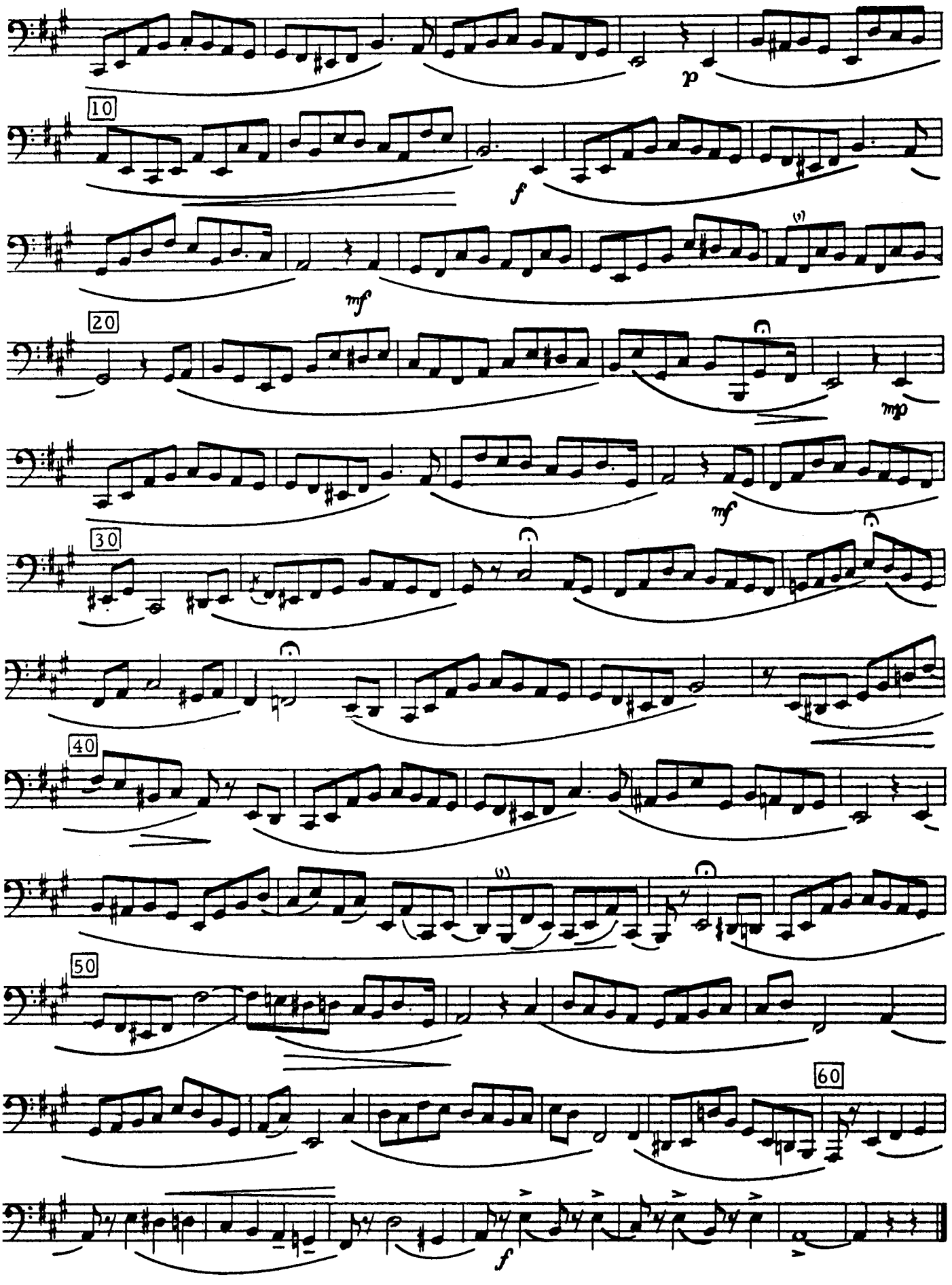
ALLEGRETTO [♪ = 108]

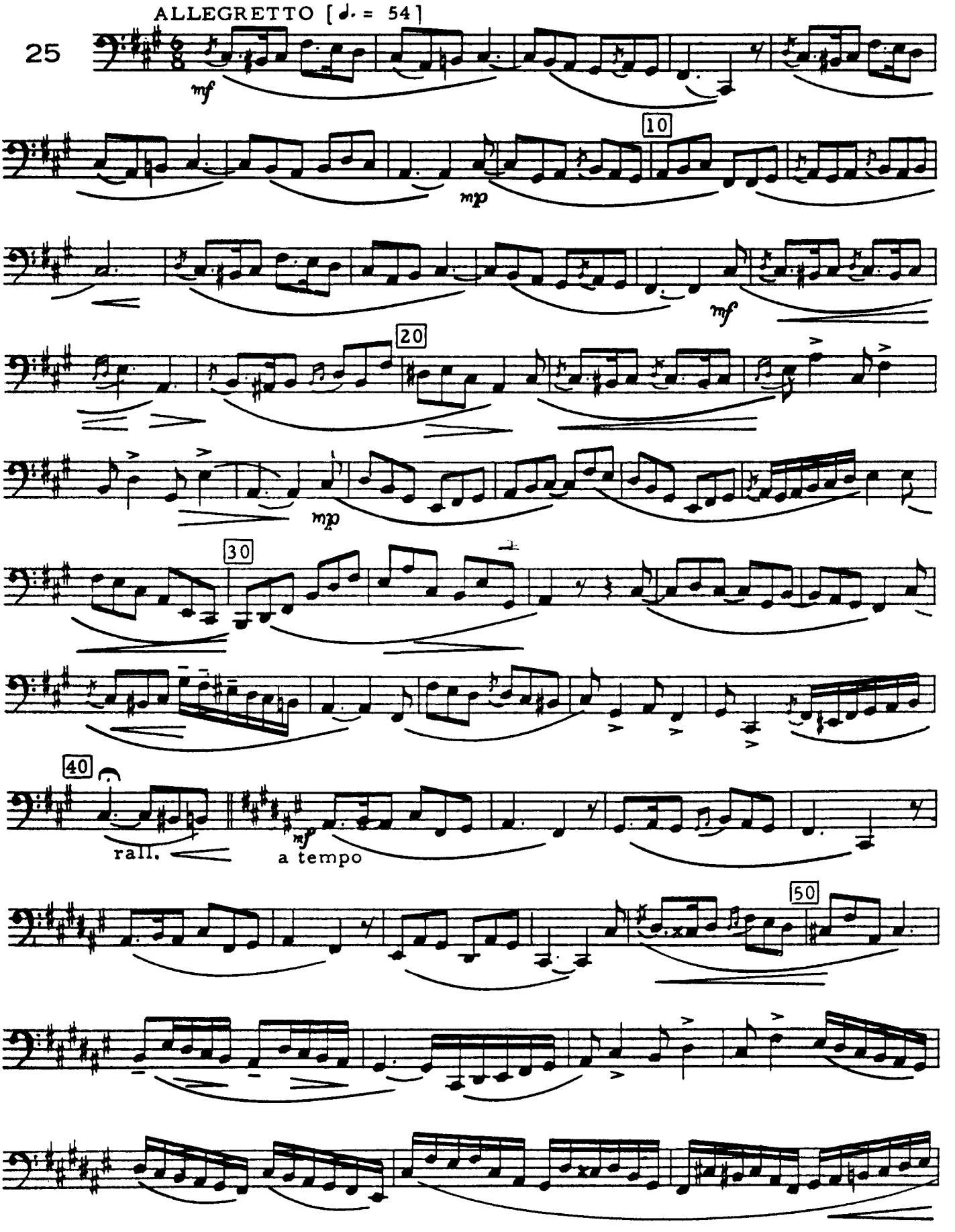
23

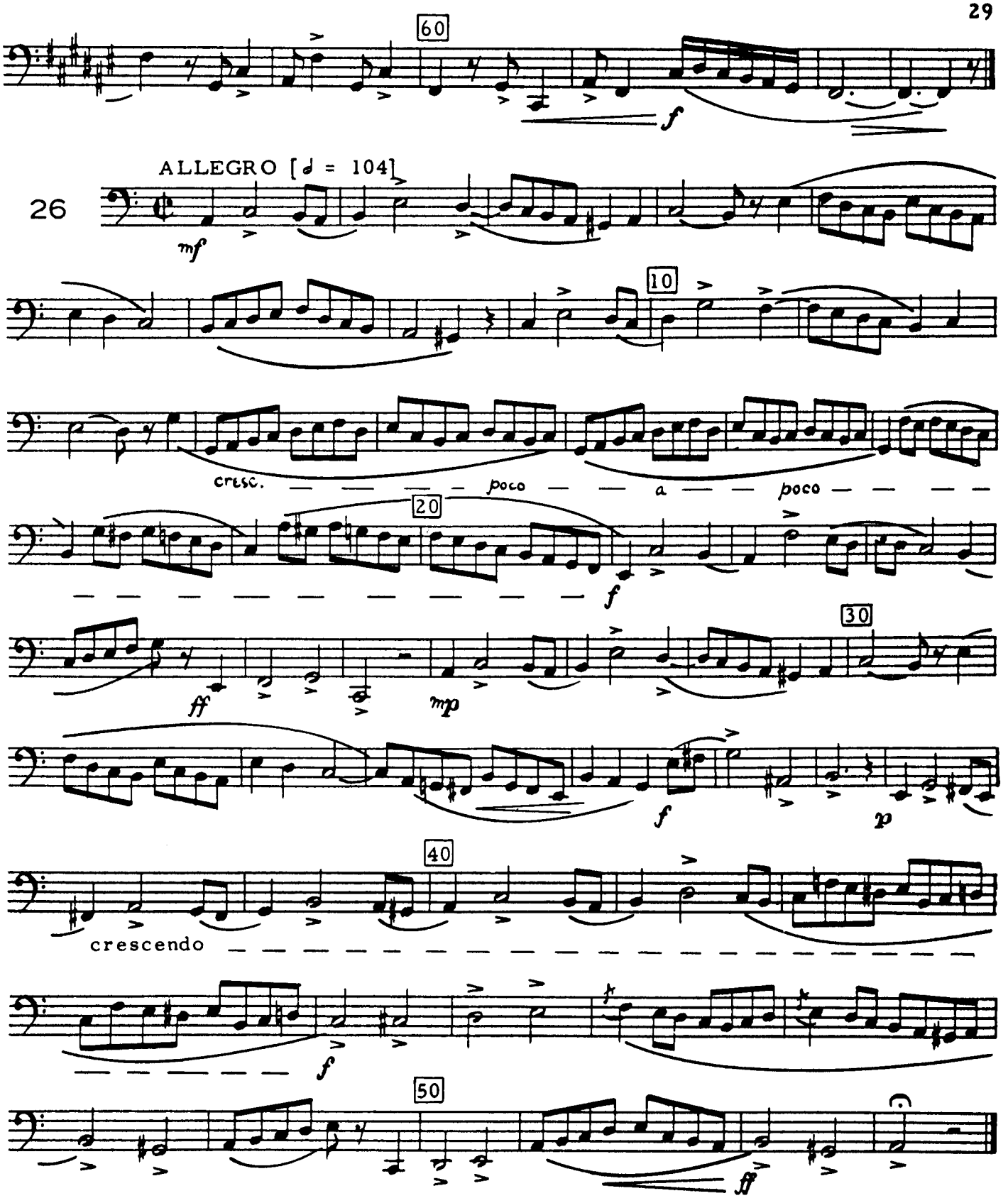


ALLEGRO [𝅗𝅥 = 88]

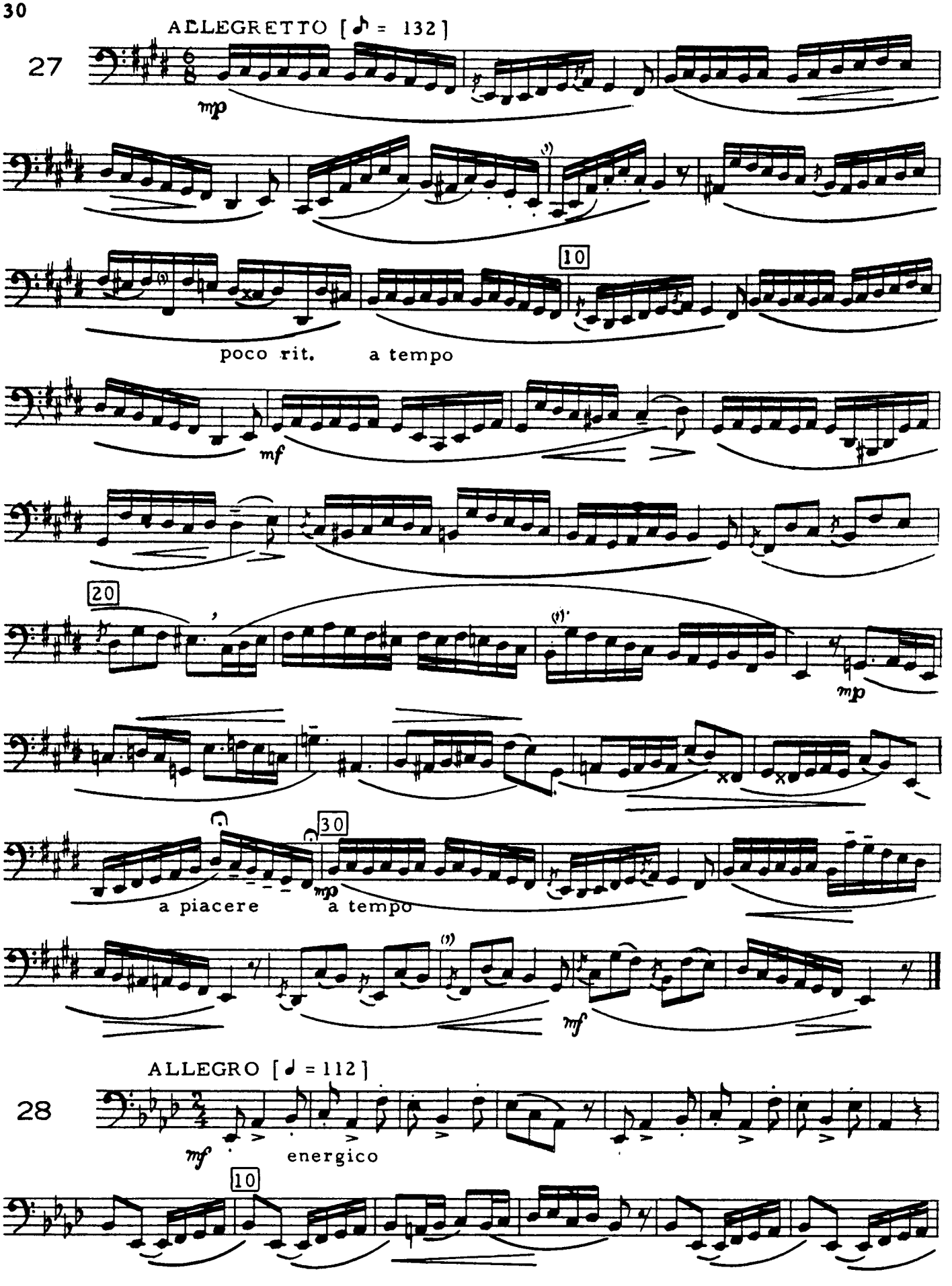
24

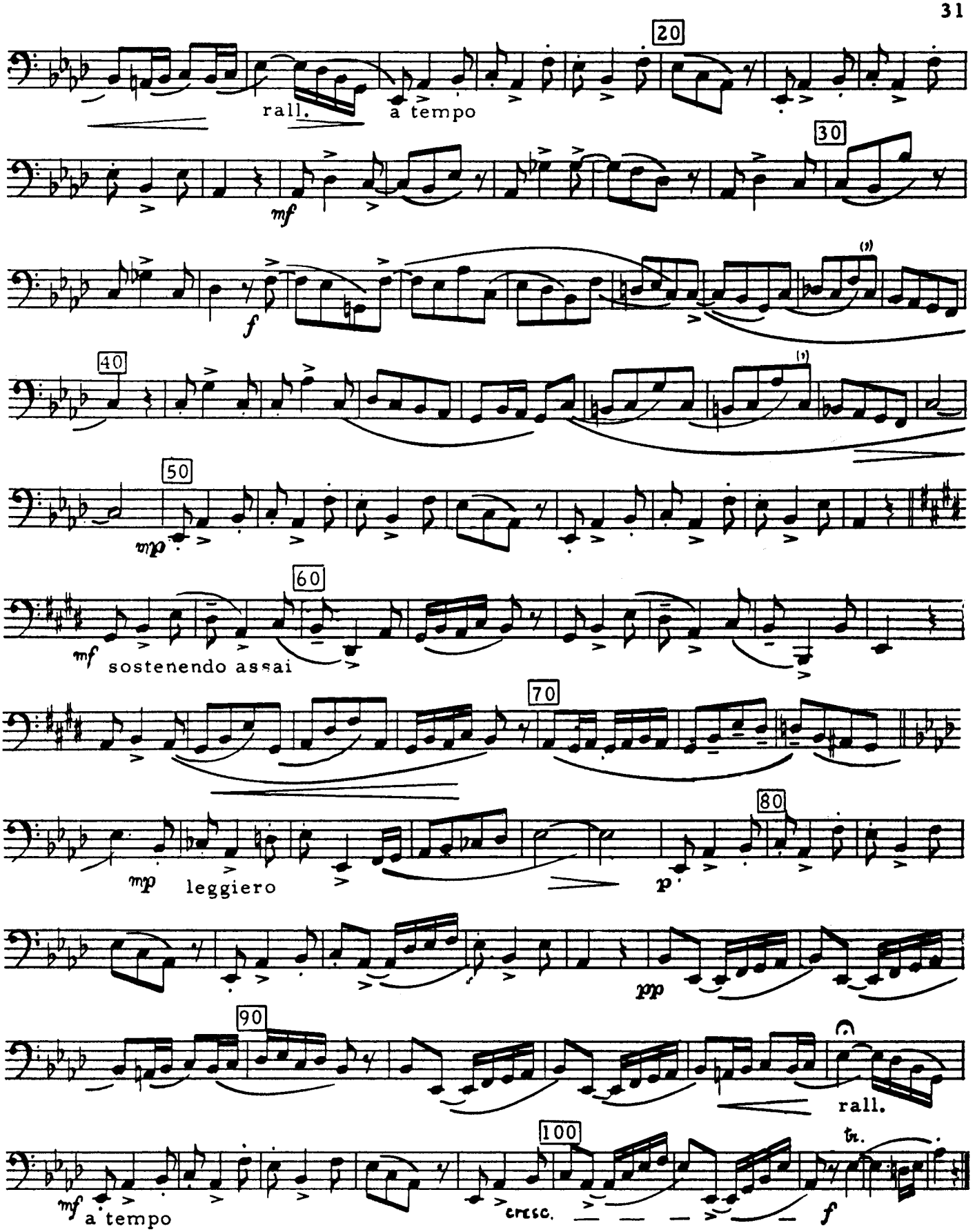

p
10
f
mf
20
mp
mf
30
40
50
60
f


ALLEGRETTO [♩. = 54]
25
mf
10
mp
mf
20
mp
30
40
rall.
mf
a tempo
50

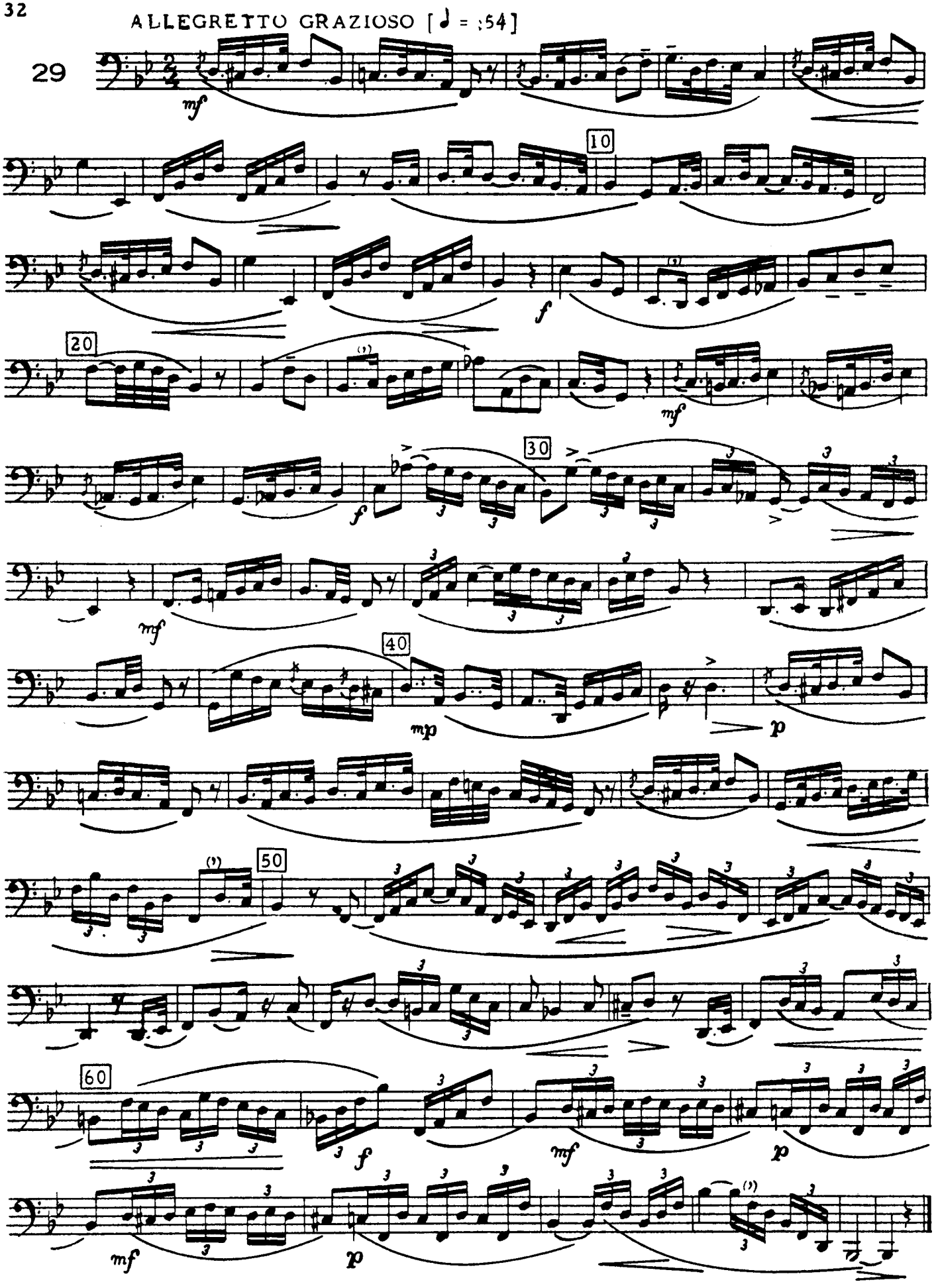


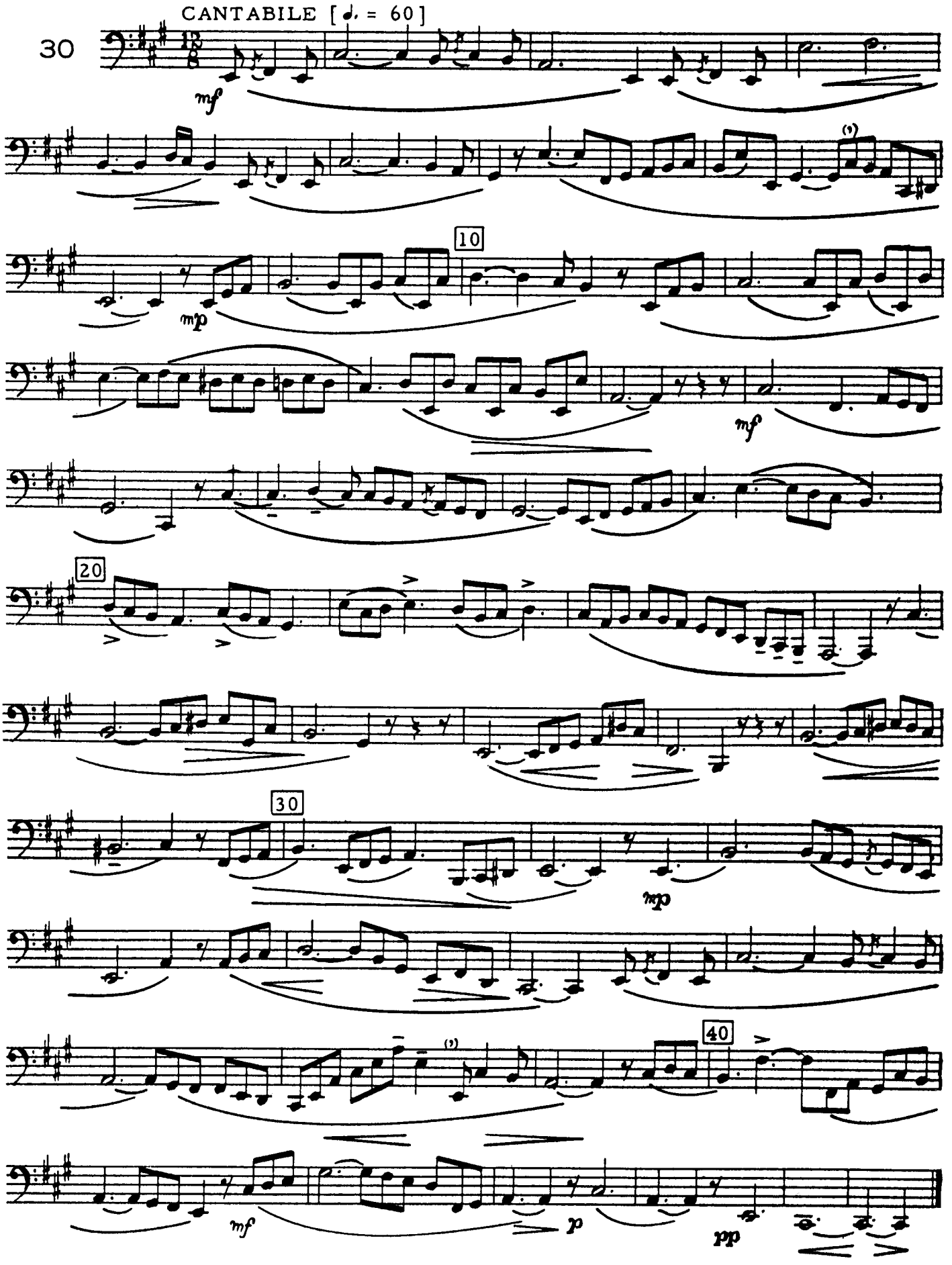
This study is very different in mood from many in this collection. Bring out its energetic character by strong accents, and by short quarter-notes as at the beginning of the first and second measures and at the end of the third measure, and in similar spots throughout the study. After you are familar with the notes, practice this study with the metronome and hone the rhythms to a fine edge of precision.


ALLEGRETTO [♪ = 132]
27
mp
10
poco rit.
a tempo
mf
20
mp
30
a piacere
mp
a tempo
mf
ALLEGRO [♩ = 112]
28
mf
energico
10

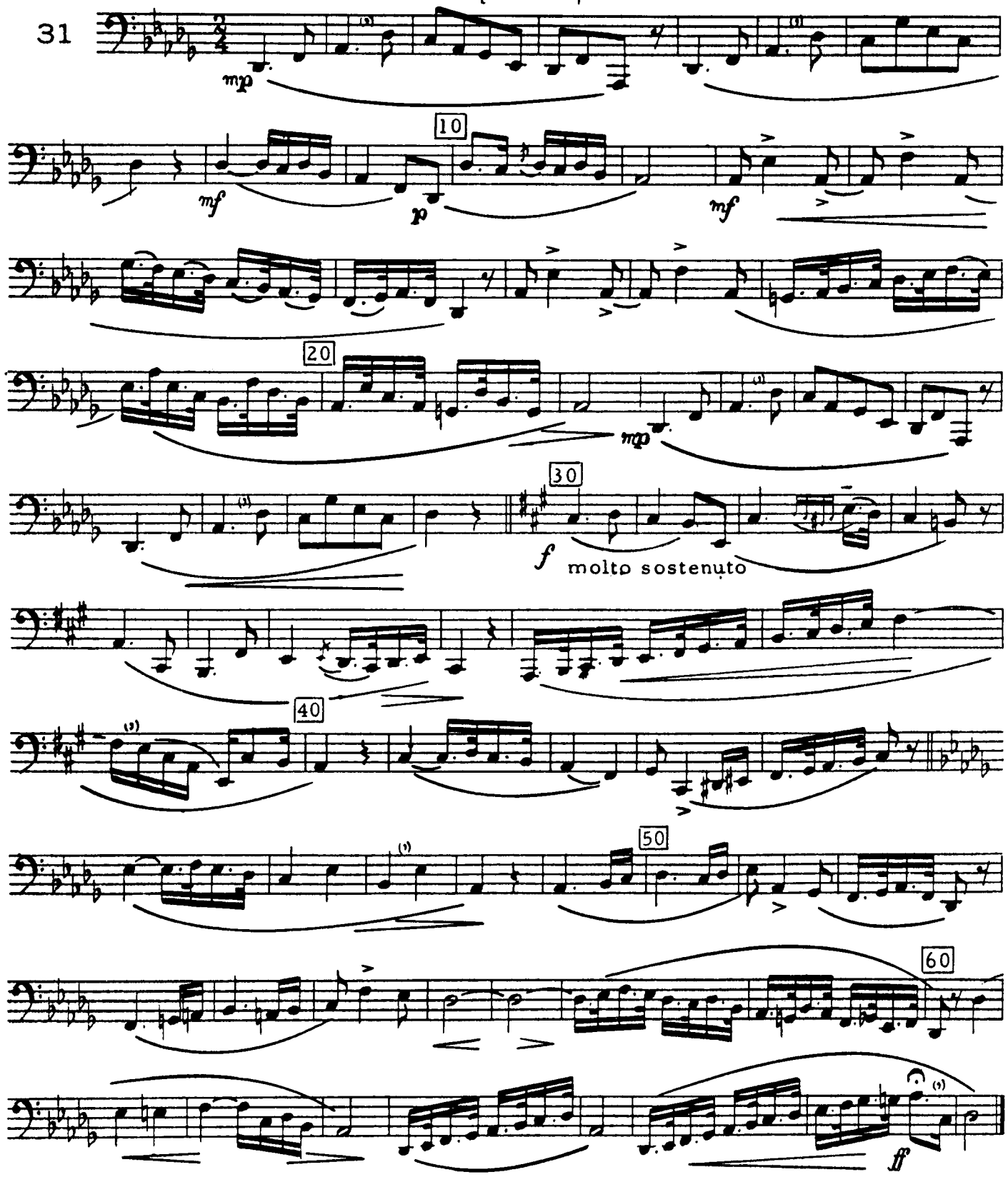


The energetic, strongly rhythmic character of this study demands staccato eighth-notes. Accented quarter-notes should be held to full value, but tapering after the attack, with a quality of vibrancy or "aliveness". Note the change in character of the E major section.

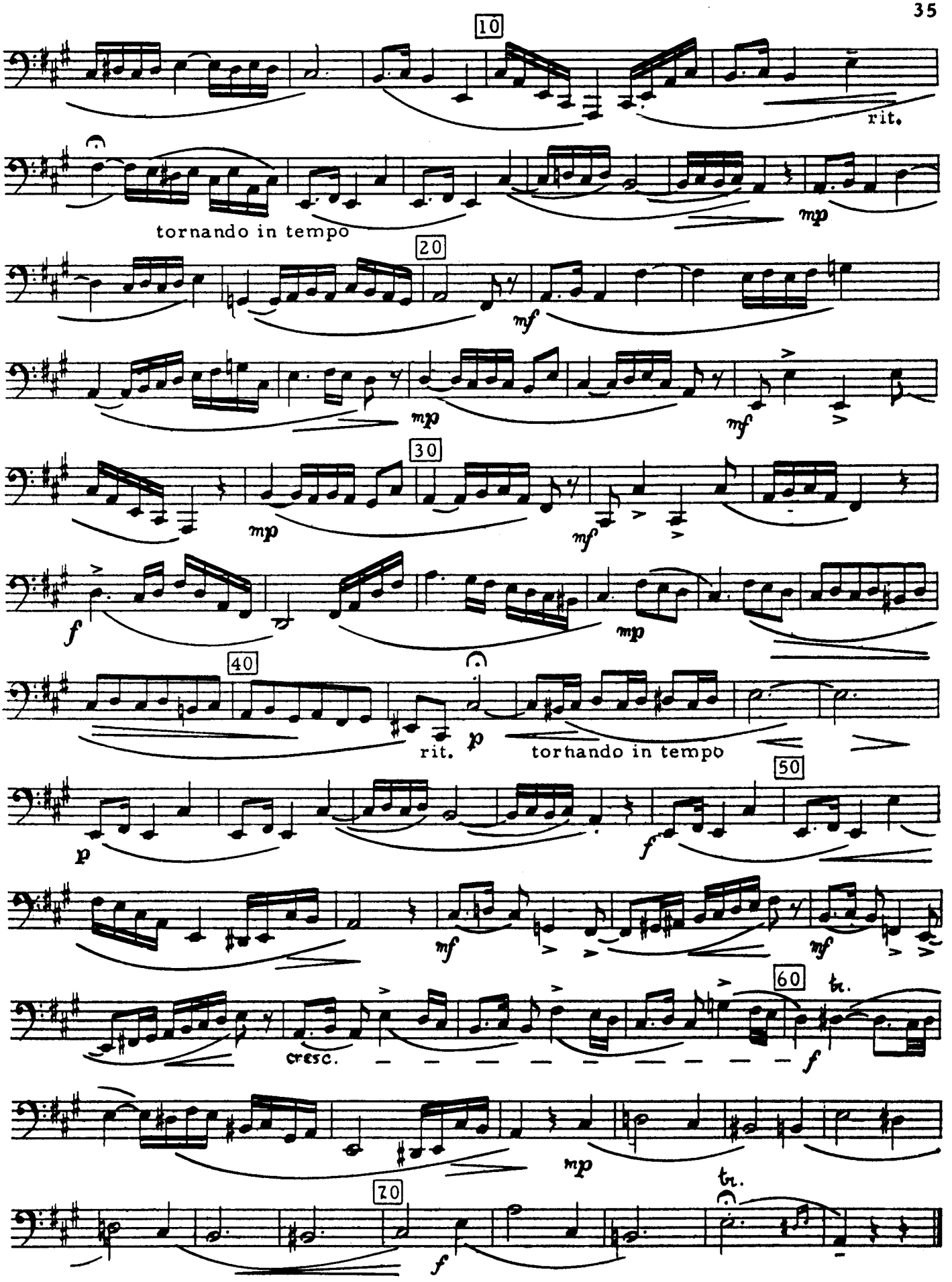

ALLEGRETTO GRAZIOSO [♩ = ;54]
29
mf
10
f
20
mf
30
f
mf
40
mp
p
50
60
f
mf
p
mf
p

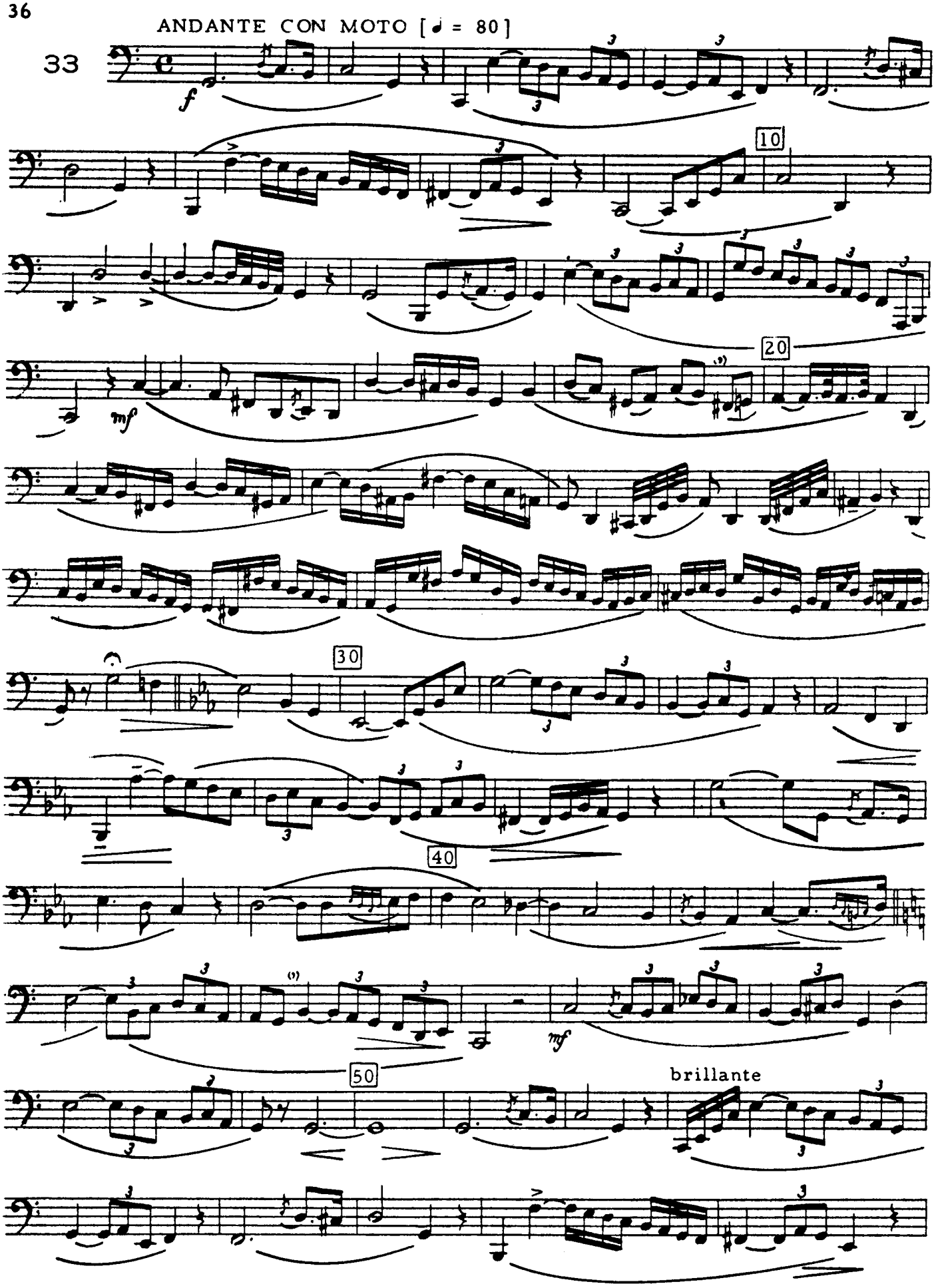

CANTABILE [♩. = 60]
30
mf
10
mp
mf
20
30
mp
40
mf
p
pp

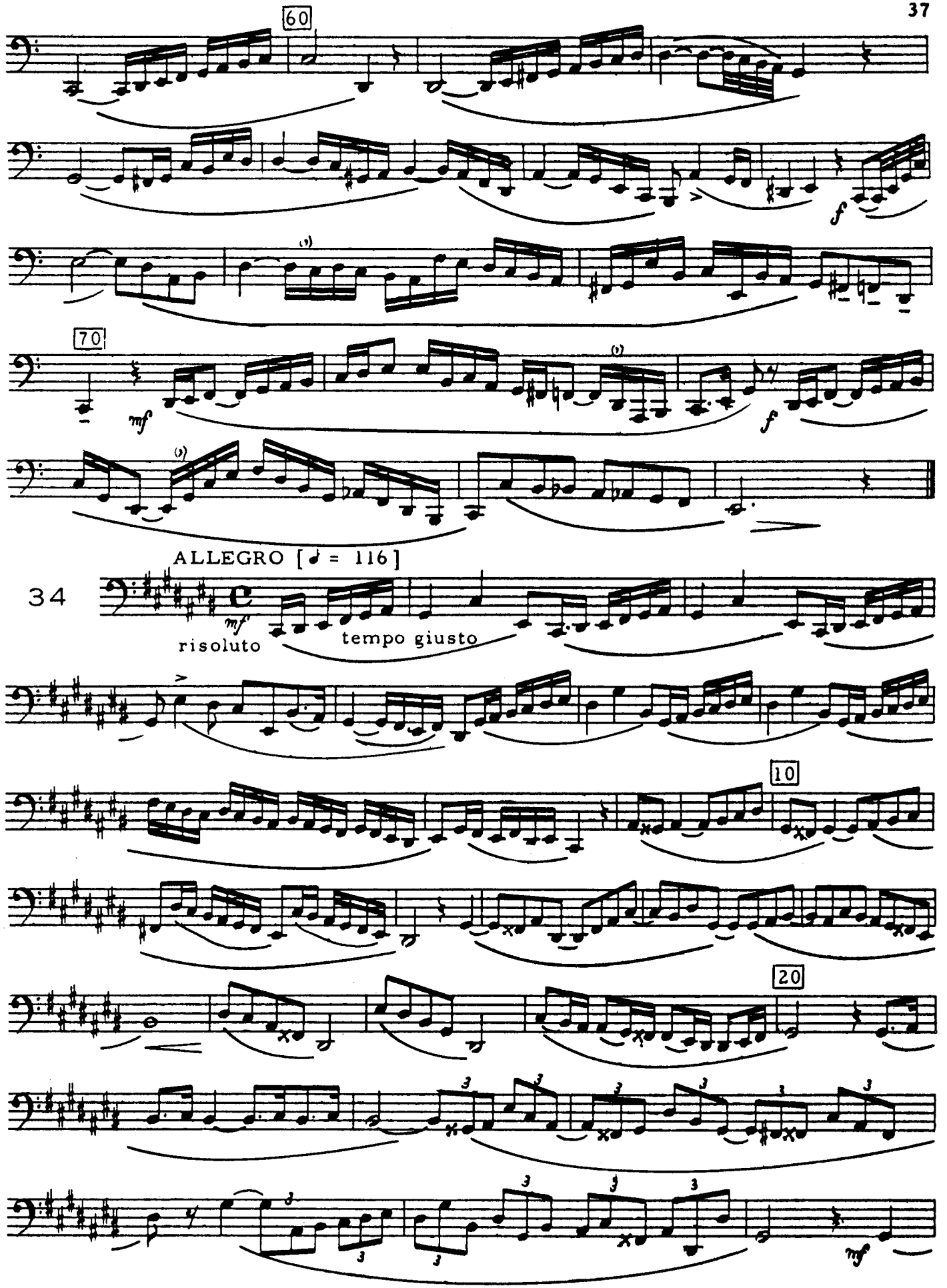
ANDANTINO CON MOTO [♩ = 76]

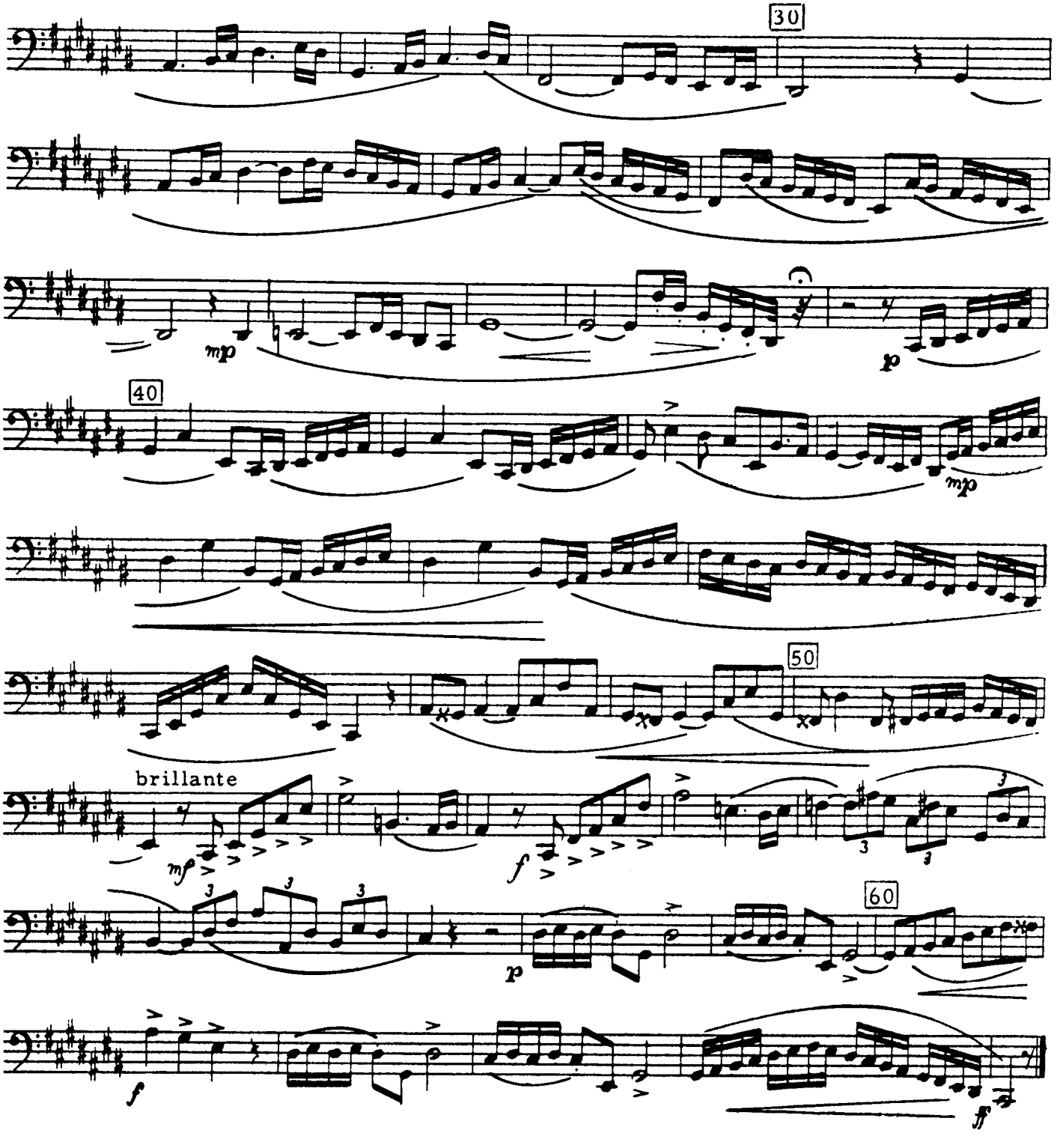


ALLEGRO [♩ = 104]


10
rit.
tornando in tempo
mp
20
mf
mp
mf
30
mp
mf
f
mp
40
rit.
p
tornando in tempo
50
p
f
mf
mf
60
tr.
cresc.
f
mp
tr.
70
f

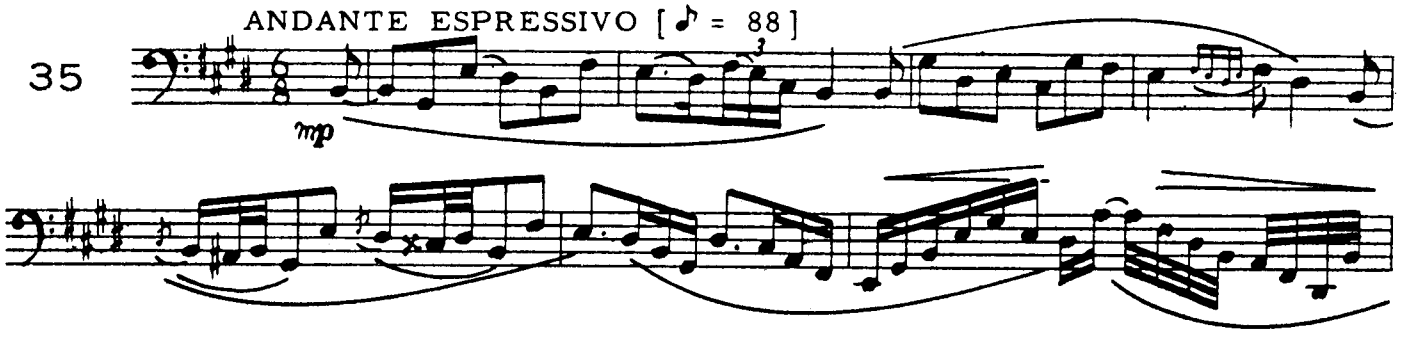

ANDANTE CON MOTO [♩ = 80]
33
f
10
mf
20
30
40
mf
50
brillante

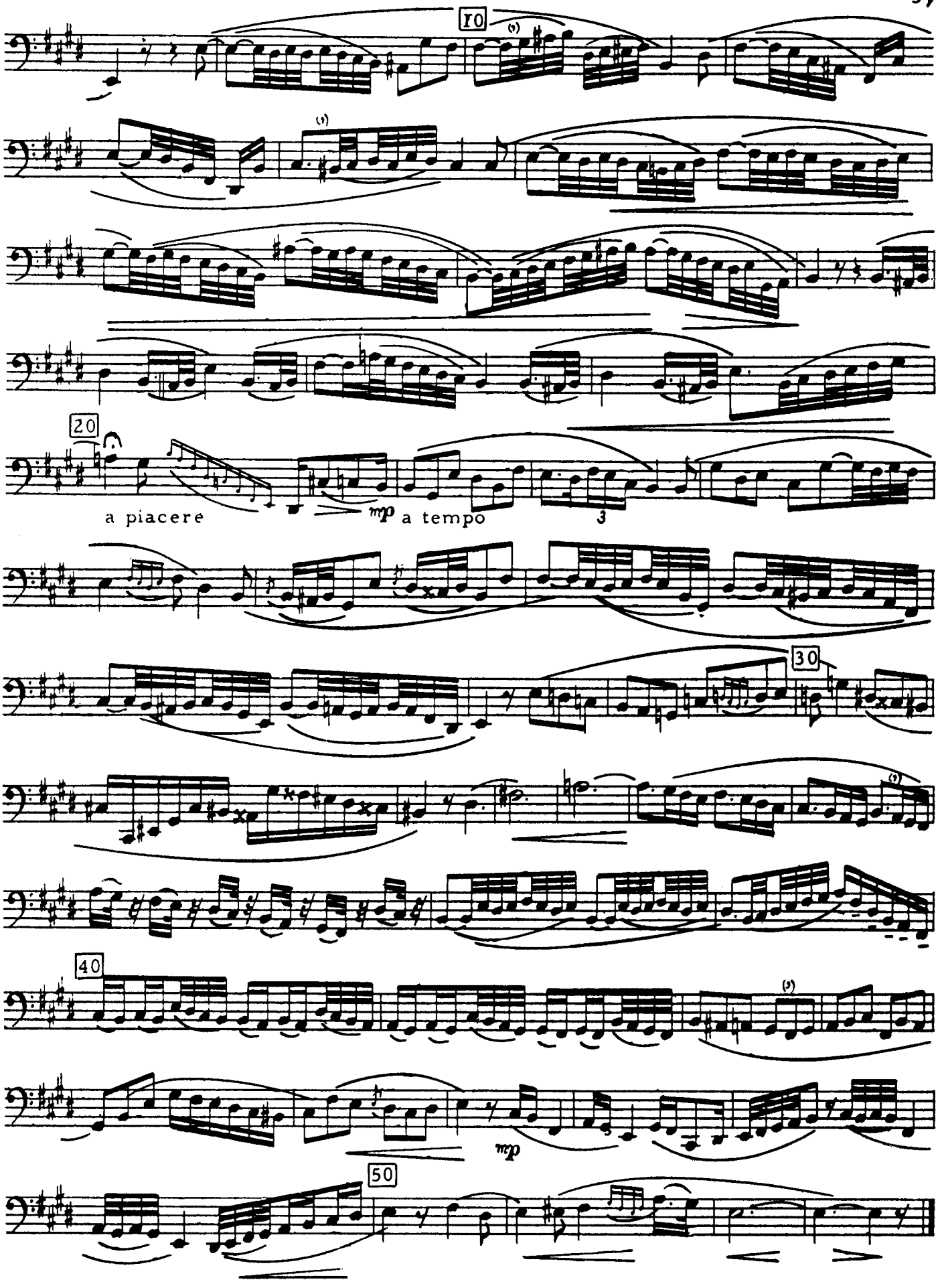

60
f
70
mf
f
ALLEGRO [♩ = 116]
34
mf
risoluto
tempo giusto
10
20
mf

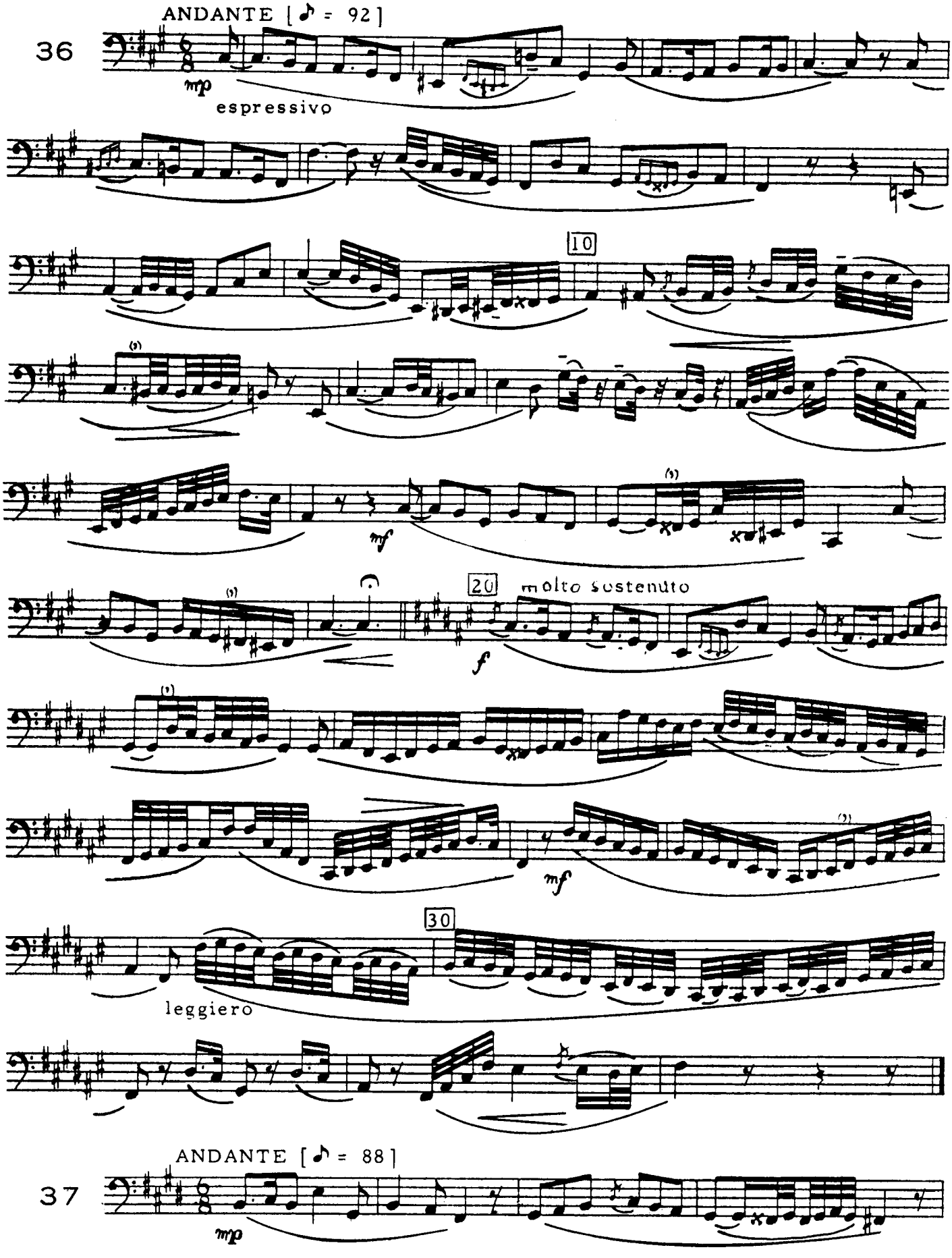


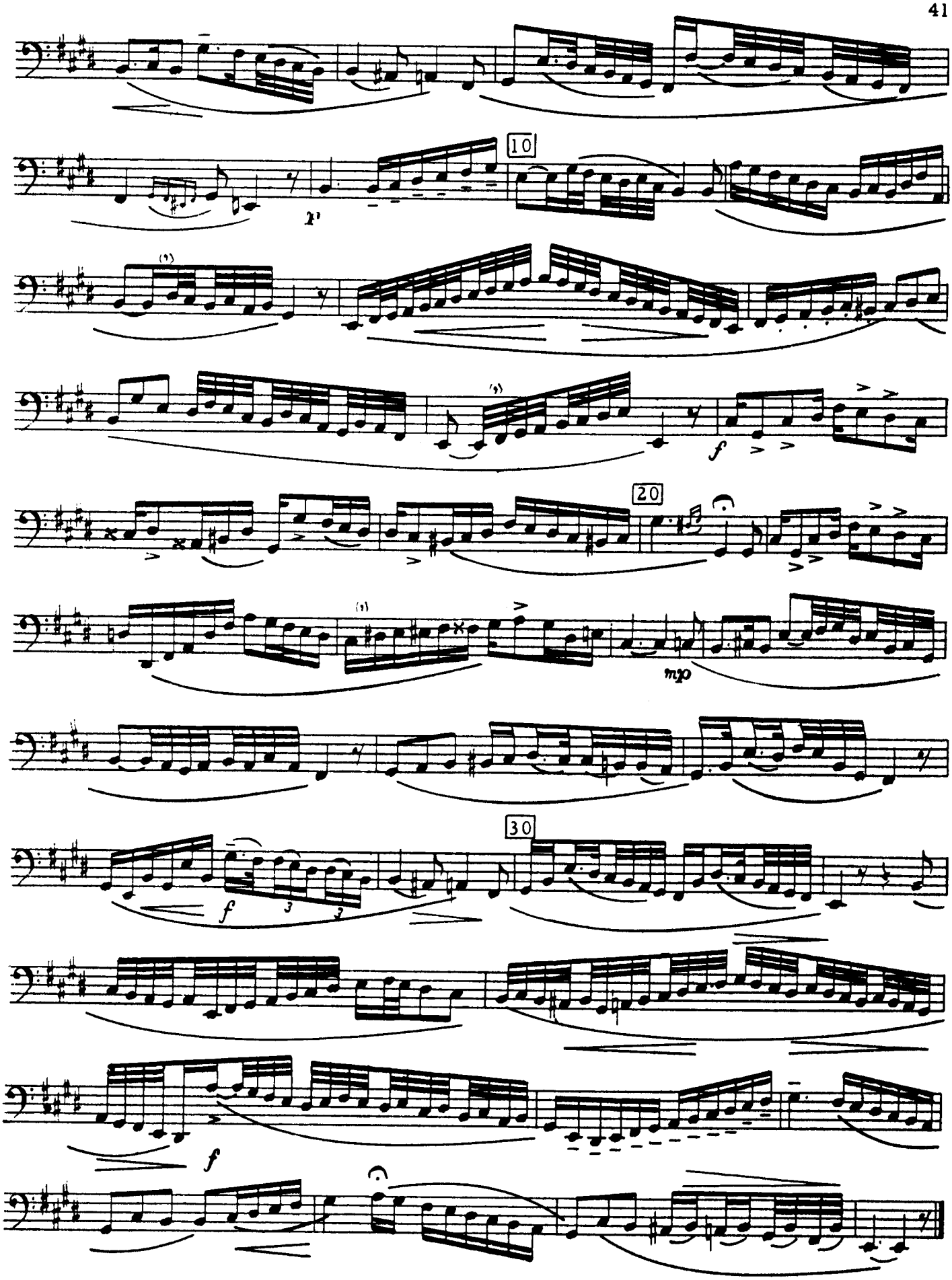
ANDANTE ESPRESSIVO [♪ = 88]

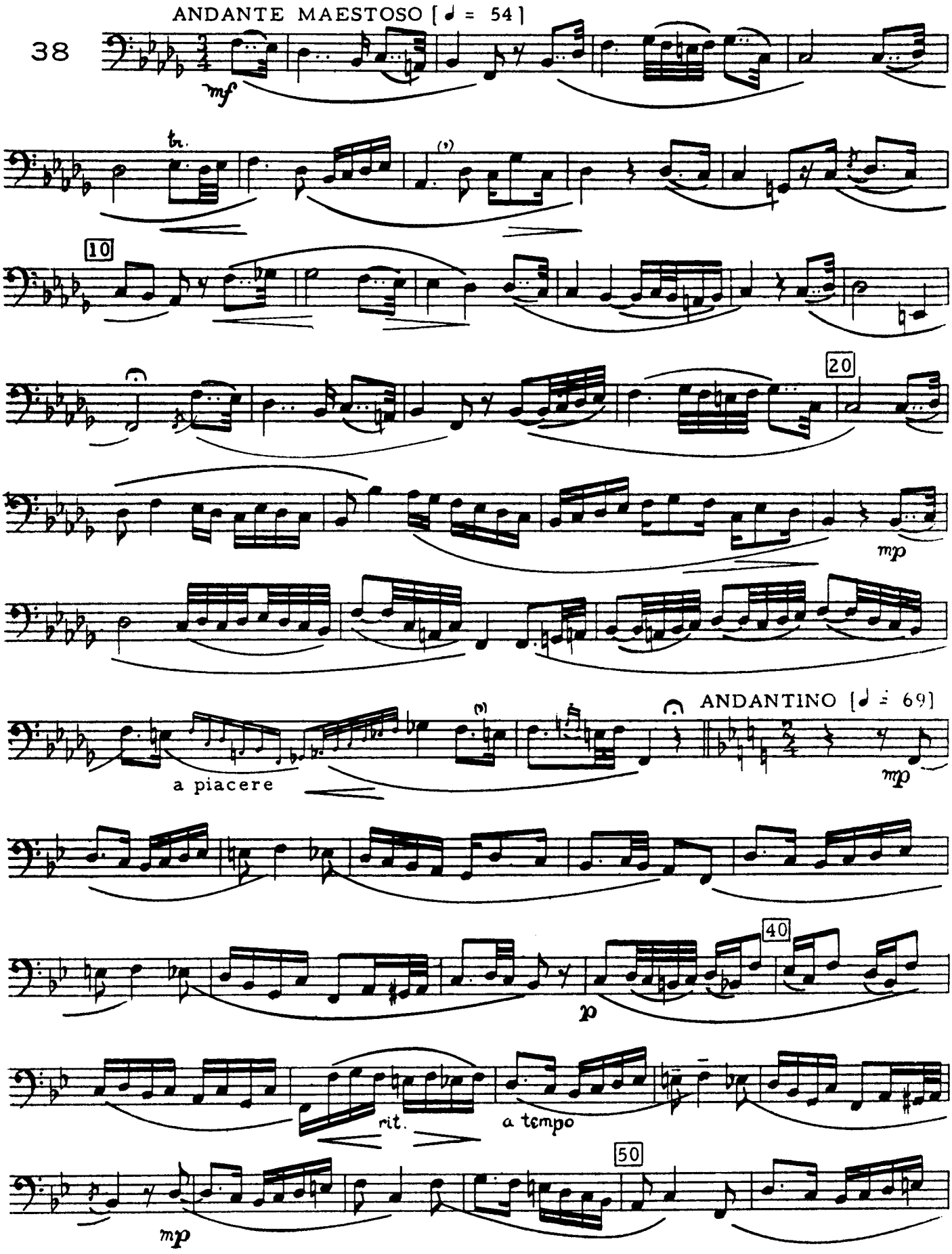
35

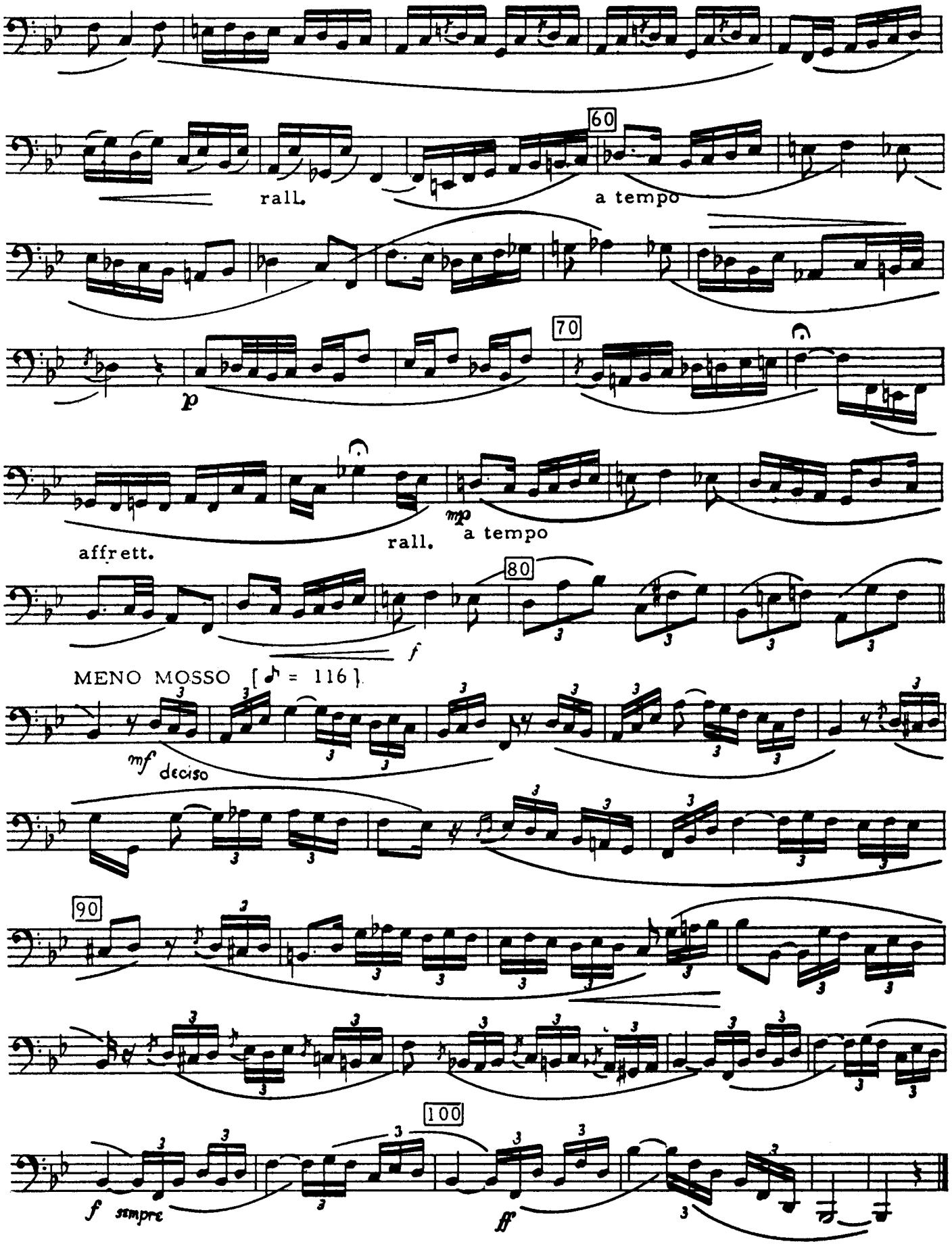


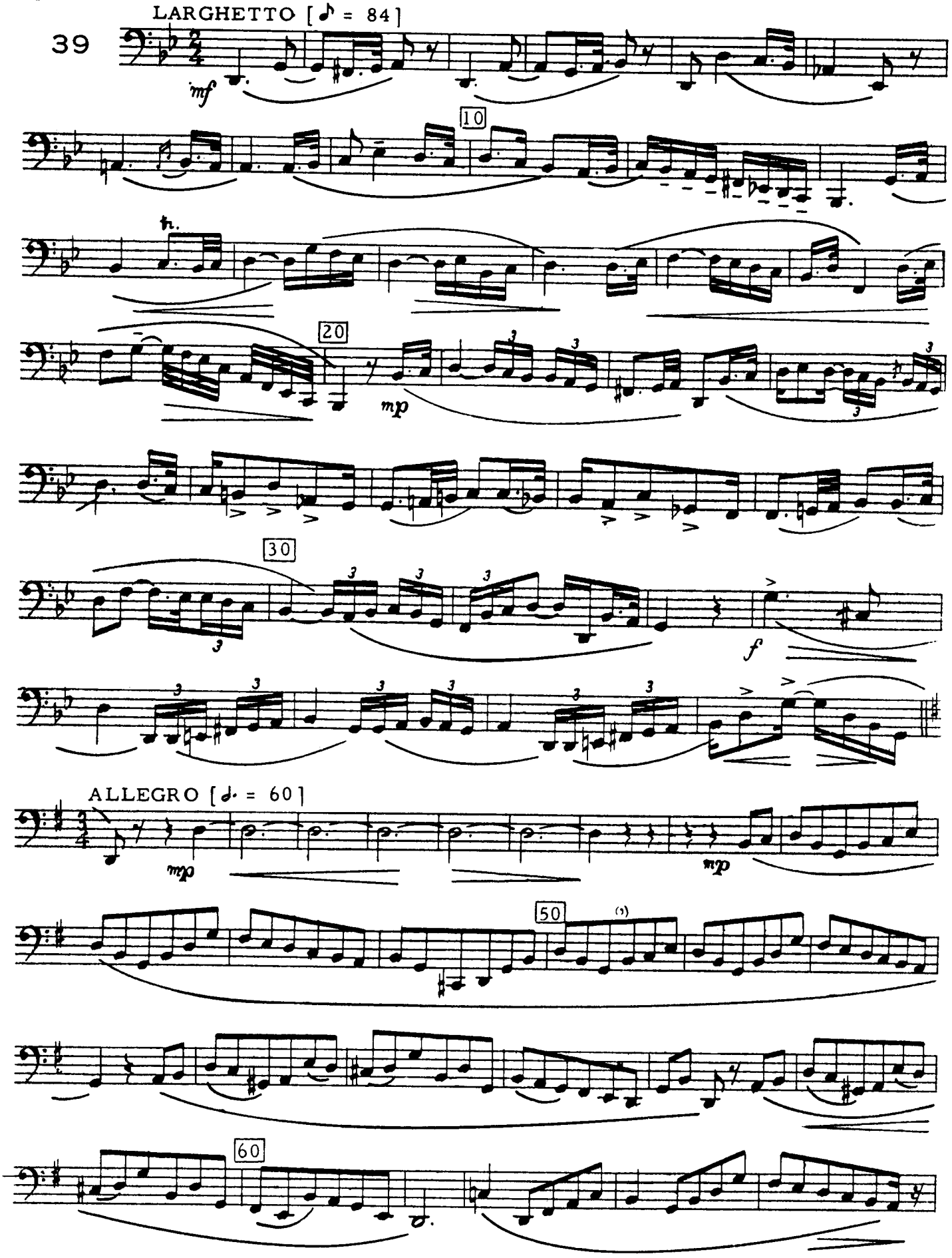

10
20
a piacere
mp
a tempo
3
30
40
mp
50

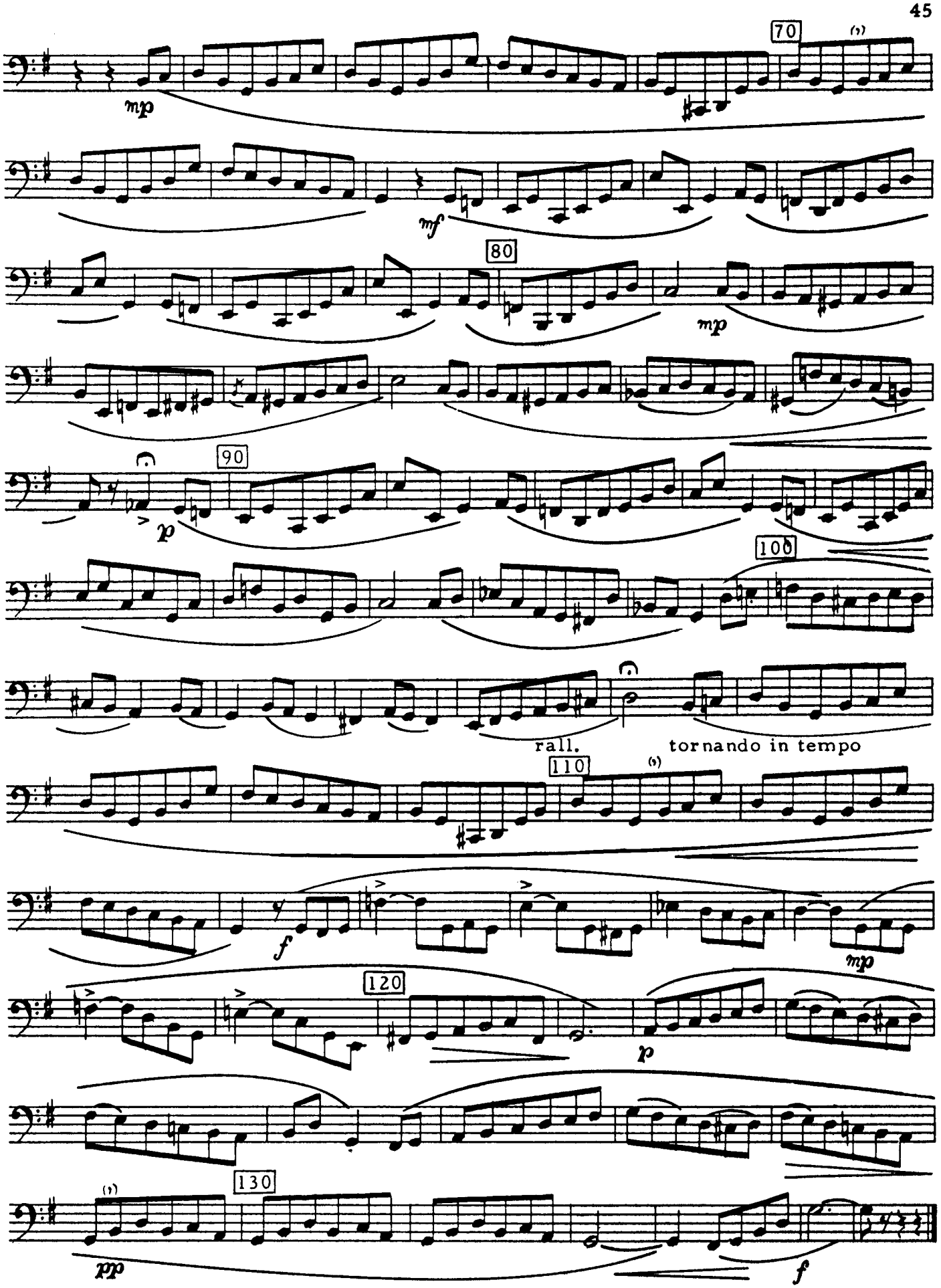

ANDANTE [♪ = 92]
36
mp
espressivo
10
mf
20
molto sostenuto
f
mf
30
leggiero
ANDANTE [♪ = 88]
37
mp

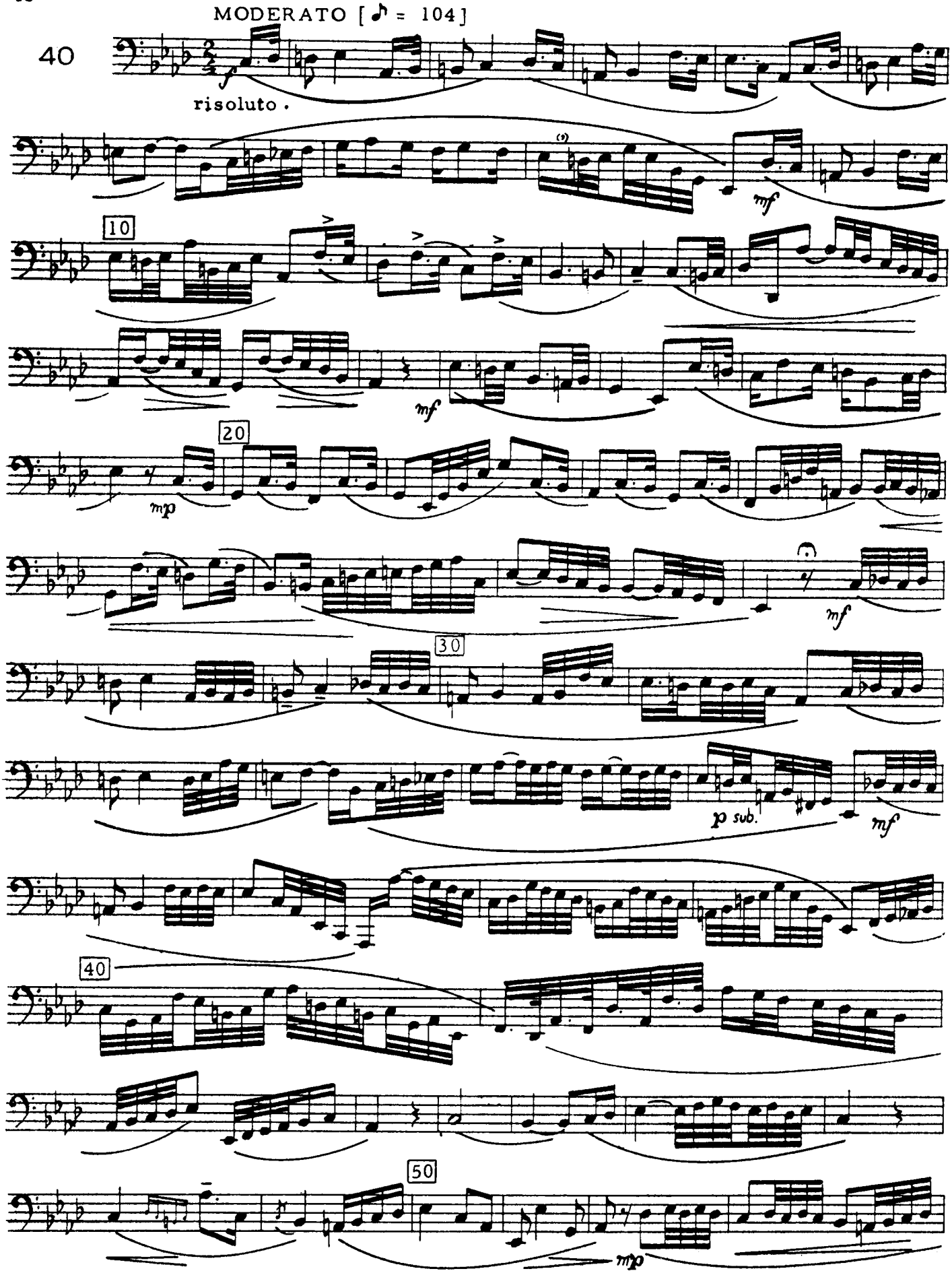

10
20
30
mp
f

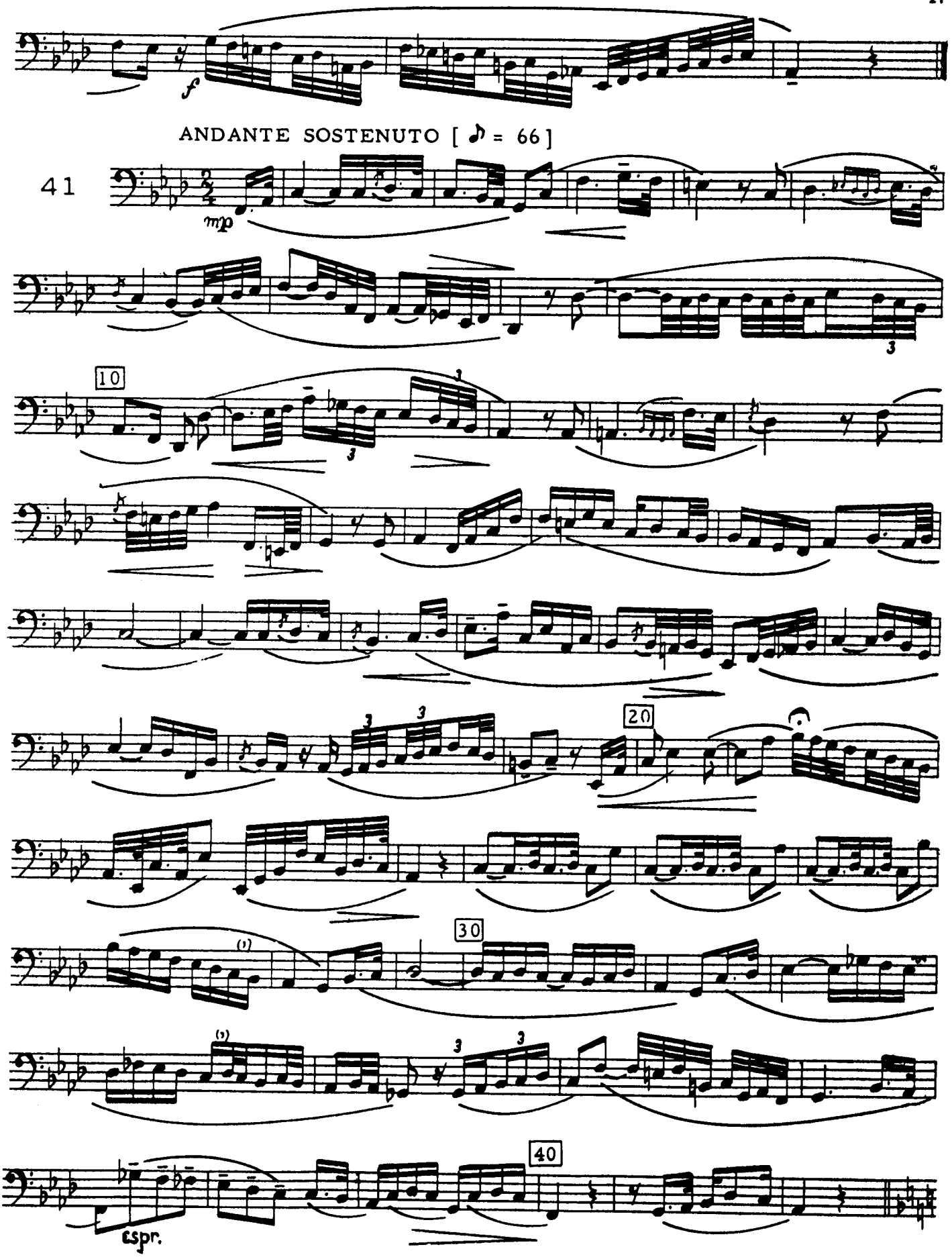

ANDANTE MAESTOSO [♩ = 54]
38
mf
tr.
10
20
mp
ANDANTINO [♩ = 69]
a piacere
mp
40
p
rit.
a tempo
50
mp

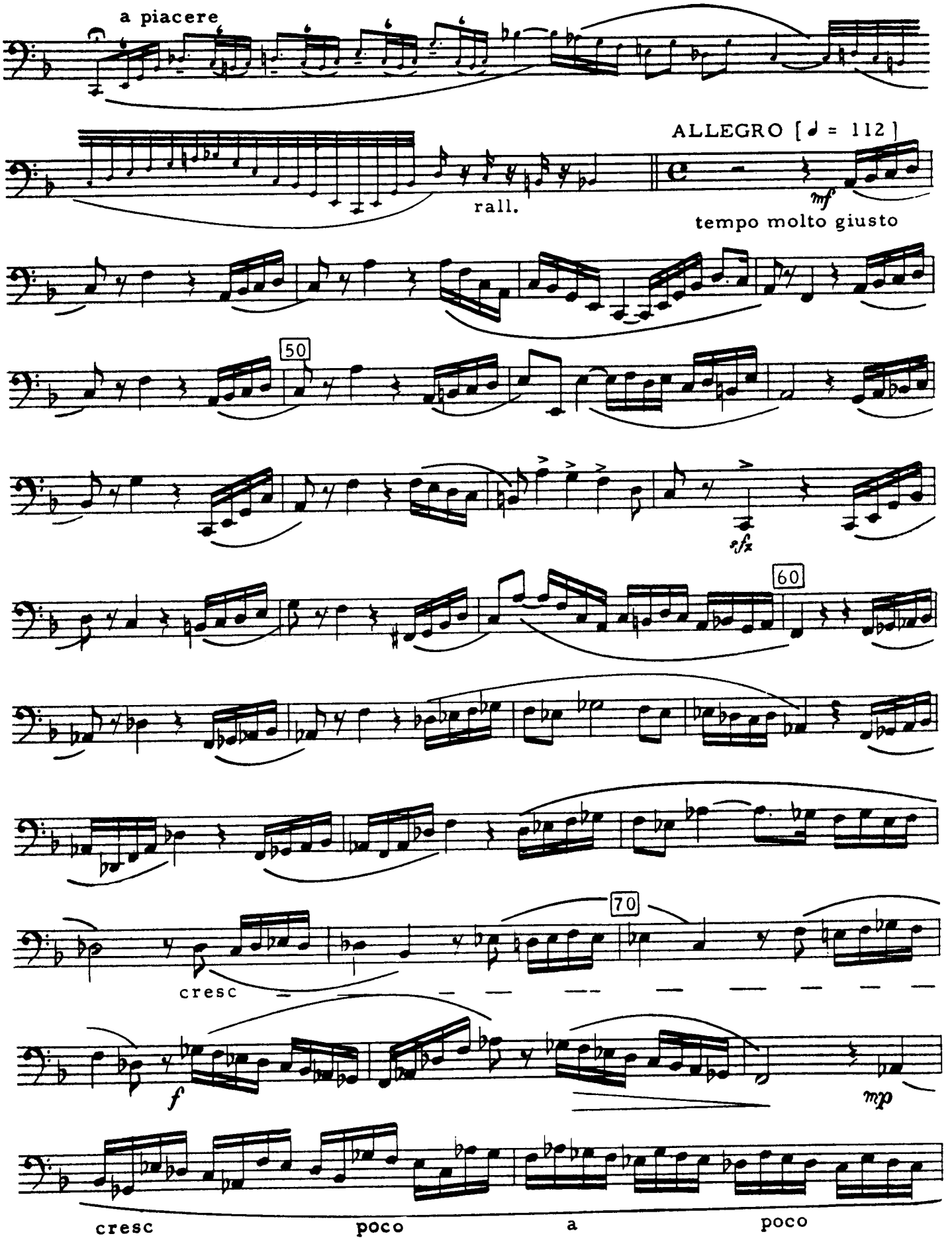

60
rall.
a tempo
70
p
affrett.
rall.
mp
a tempo
80
f
MENO MOSSO [♪ = 116]
mf deciso
90
100
f sempre
ff

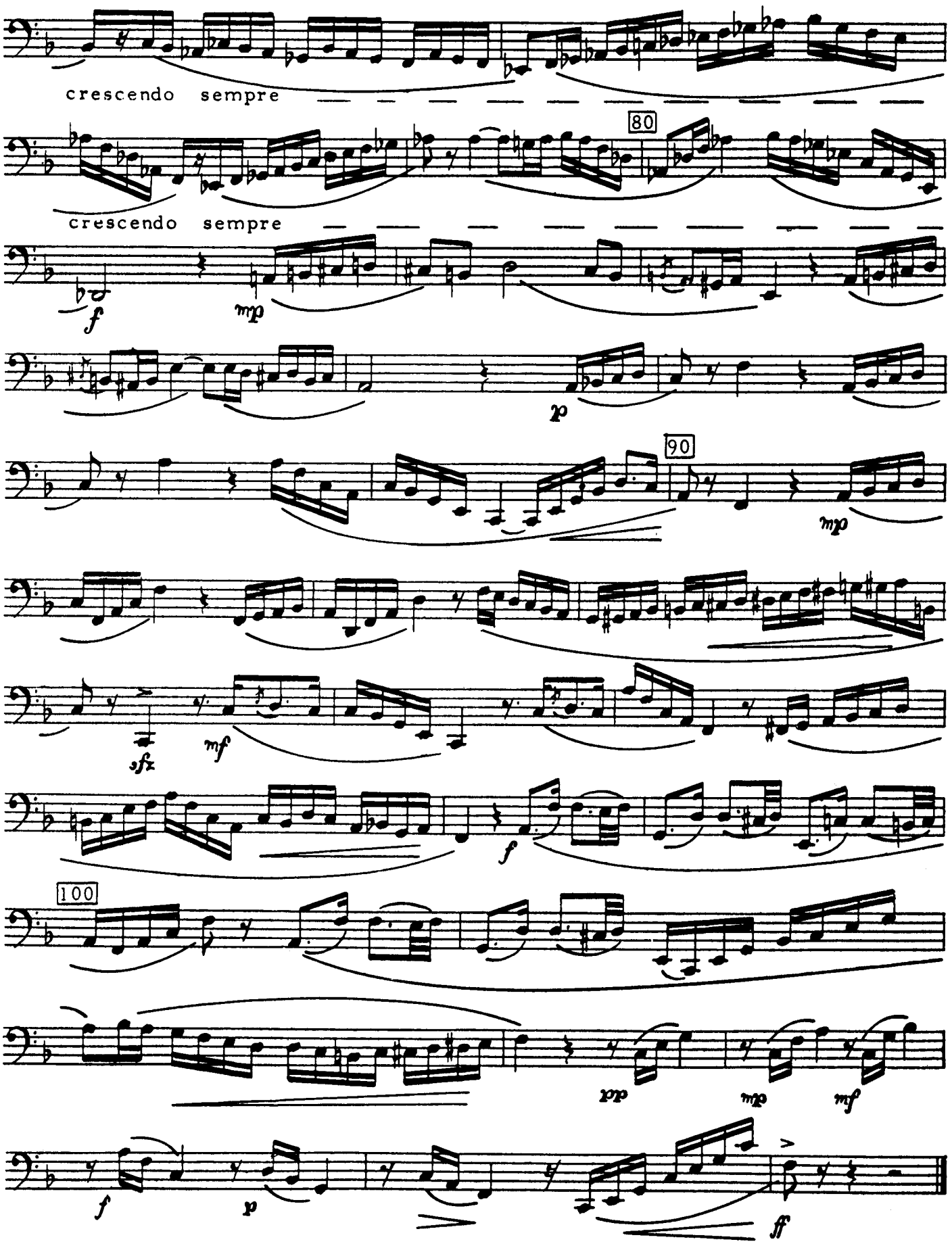

LARGHETTO [♪ = 84]
39
mf
10
20
mp
30
3
f
ALLEGRO [♩. = 60]
mp
mp
50
60

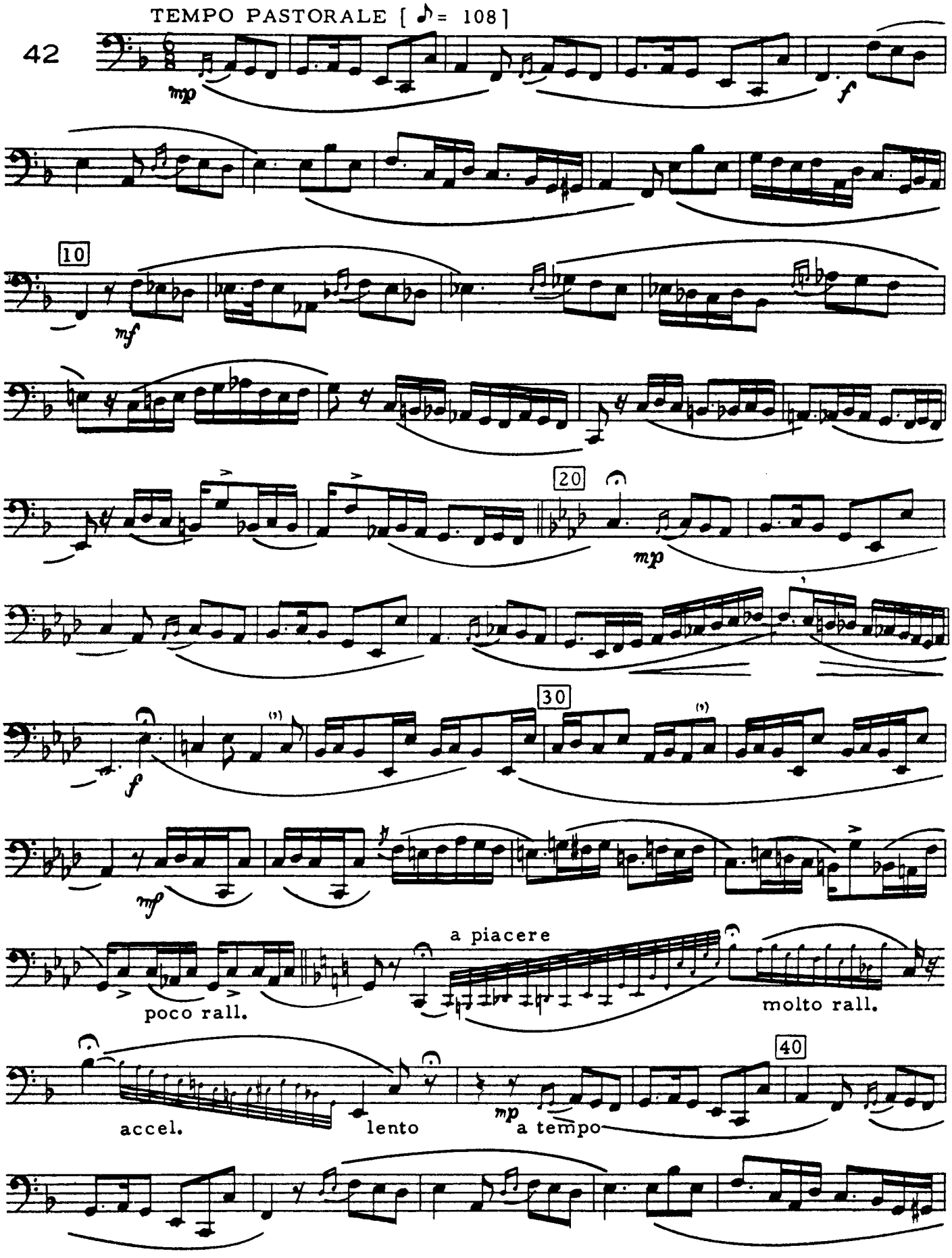

70
mp
mf
80
mp
90
p
100
rall.
tornando in tempo
110
f
mp
120
p
130
pp
f

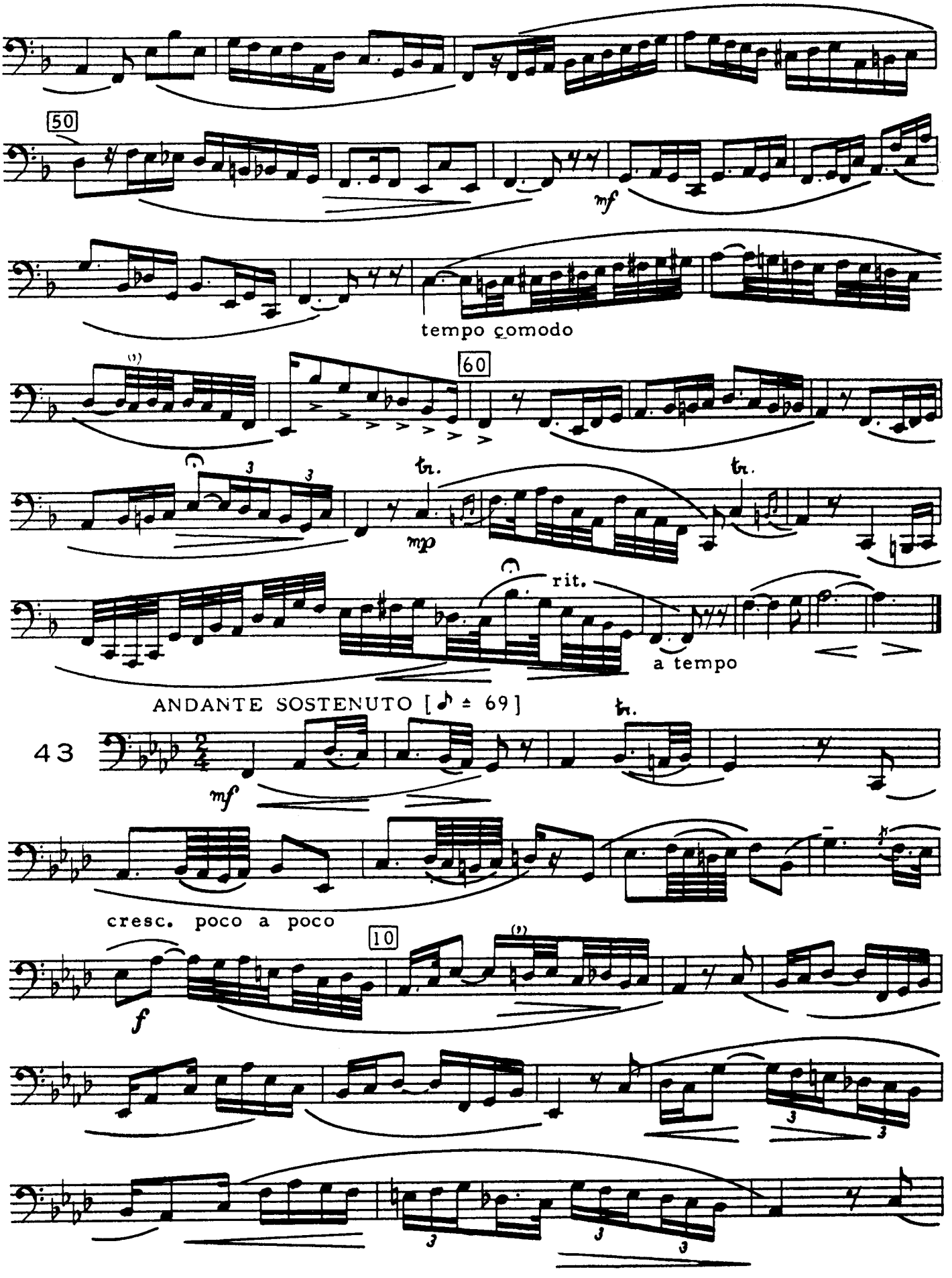

MODERATO [♪ = 104]
40
f
risoluto.
mf
10
mf
20
mp
mf
30
p sub.
mf
40
50
mp

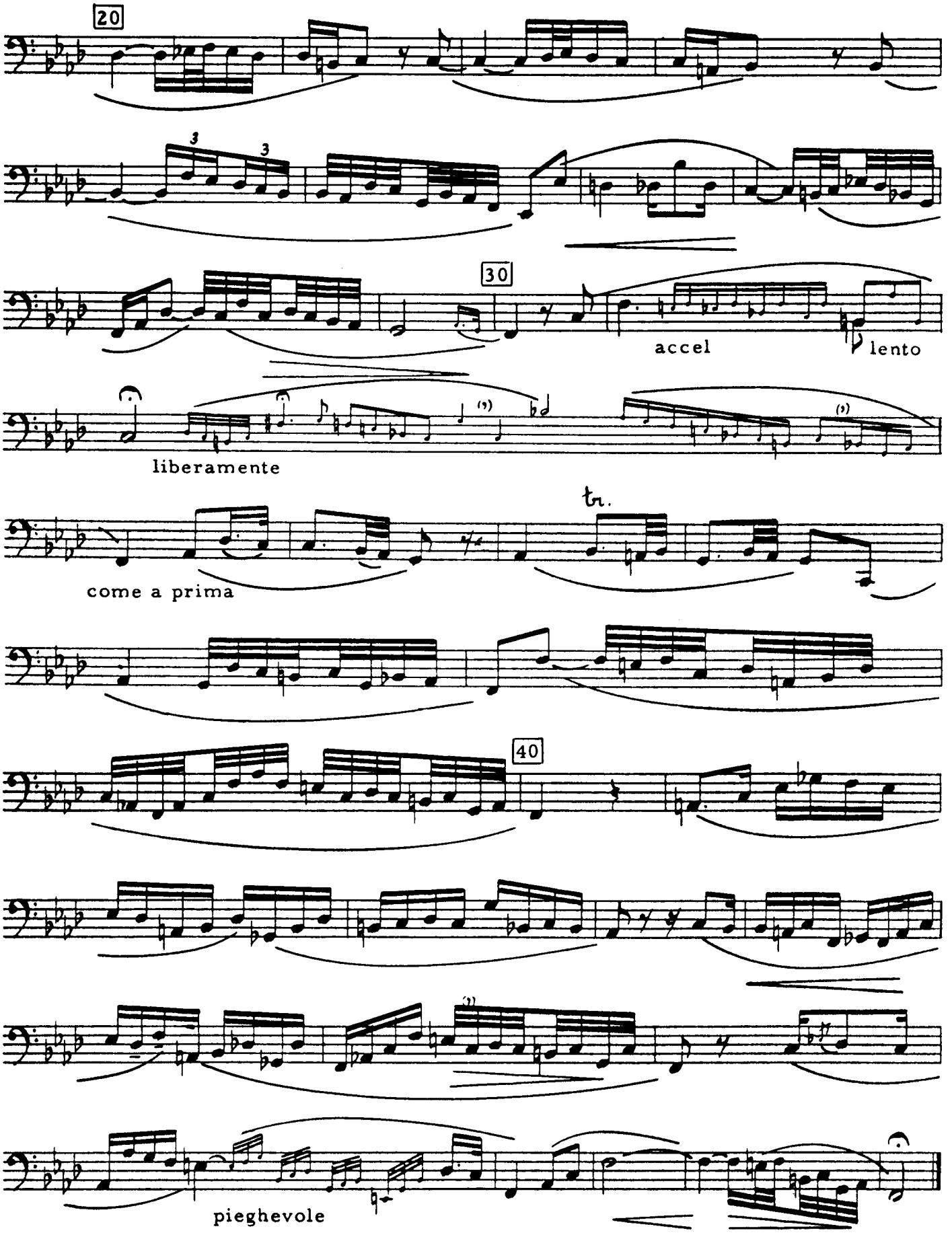

f
ANDANTE SOSTENUTO [♪ = 66]
41
mp
10
20
30
40
espr.


a piacere
ALLEGRO [♩ = 112]
rall.
mf
tempo molto giusto
50
sfz
60
70
cresc
f
mp
cresc
poco
a
poco


crescendo sempre
80
crescendo sempre
f
mp
p
90
mp
sfz
mf
f
100
pp
mp
mf
f
p
ff


TEMPO PASTORALE [♪ = 108]
42
mp
f
10
mf
20
mp
30
f
mf
a piacere
poco rall.
molto rall.
accel.
lento
40
mp
a tempo


50
mf
tempo comodo
60
tr.
tr.
mp
rit.
a tempo
ANDANTE SOSTENUTO [♪ = 69]
43
tr.
mf
cresc. poco a poco
10
f


20
3
3
30
accel
lento
liberamente
tr.
come a prima
40
pieghevole