Violine 1

Johann Benjamin Gross (1809 - 1848)

24 Duos op. 42

"Vortragsübungen für Anfänger im Violoncell-Spiel"

Bearbeitet und herausgegeben für zwei Violinen

von

Albrecht Zumbrunn

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Johann Benjamin Gross (1809 - 1848) wuchs in Elbing (heute Elblag) in Ostpreußen auf. Sein erster Lehre war sein Vater, der Glöckner Georg G. Gross. Er studierte das Cellospiel in Berlin beim Kammermusiker Ferdinand Hansmann, einem Schüler Jean-Pierre Duports.

Seine erste Anstellung fand er 1824 im Orchester des Königstädtischen Theaters in Berlin. 1830 zog er nach Leipzig als Erster Solocellist des Gewandhausorchesters. Er verkehrte dort in den Kreisen von Felix Mendelssohn, Friedrich Wieck, Clara Wieck und Robert Schumann. Nach einigen anderen Stellen wurde Gross 1835 Erster Cellist des Hoforchesters des Zaren im Range eines Kaiserlichen Kammermusikers in St. Petersburg, wo er sich niederliess und sich mit Catharina von Witte aus Reval (heute Tallinn) verehelichte.

Er arbeitete auch als Cellolehrer und komponierte ungefähr 40 Werke, viele davon für sein Instrument, daneben auch vier Streichquartette (die das Cello nicht bevorzugt behandeln).

Er starb 1848 in St. Petersburg an der Cholera[1].

Eine Untergattung von **Duos für zwei Streichinstrumente** sind "pädagogische" Duos für Geigen- und Celloschüler. Wir finden darin neben vielen mittelmässigen Stücken auch sehr gute Kompositionen; man denke nur an Bela Bartòks 44 Duos für zwei Violinen oder Jacques Offenbachs Duos für zwei Celli.

Der Beitrag von Johann Benjamin Gross zu dieser Gattung, "**24 Petits duos faciles pour deux violoncelles**"[2] wie er ihn auf dem Titelblatt der ersten (und meines Wissens einzigen) Ausgabe nennt, fällt ebenfalls auf durch seine musikalische Qualität.

Es handelt sich um einsätzige Stücke von 1 bis 3 Minuten Dauer, formal meist einfache Liedformen, ABA-Formen oder Mini-Sonatensätze. Die Duos sind nach Schwierigkeitsgrad (von der ersten bis zur vierten Lage) geordnet wie bei Bartok und Offenbach. Anders als dort ist die zweite Stimme für den Lehrer bestimmt und oft deutlich schwieriger als die erste (Doppelgriffe!).

Das Zusammenspiel der beiden Instrumente ist einfallsreich variiert - die zweite Stimme übernimmt oft die Führung - und beide Stimmen sind attraktiv für die Spieler. Monotone Begleitfiguren sind fast völlig vermieden. Die Stücke sind rhythmisch und harmonisch abwechslungsreich gestaltet und jedes hat seinen eigenen Charakter. Will man sie als Vortragsstücke spielen, ist es wohl am besten, Bartoks Rat zu folgen und sie nach freier Wahl zu "Suiten" zusammenzustellen.

Die vorliegende Bearbeitung für zwei Violinen ist in zwei separaten Stimmen organisiert. Die jeweils andere Stimme ist jedoch im Kleindruck mitgedruckt. Das sollte vor allem hilfreich sein, wenn die Duos im Unterricht verwendet werden. Um das Umblättern während eines Stückes zu vermeiden wurde teilweise die Reihenfolge der Duos geändert (siehe Inhaltsverzeichnis). Nur die dreiseitige No. 21 braucht eine Photokopie. Dynamische Zeichen - genau dem Original entnommen - gelten stets für beide Stimmen ausser wo die zweite separat markiert ist. Da es sich um "pädagogische" Werke handelt sind Fingersätze und Bogenstriche eingetragen, natürlich für die Violine angepasst. Manchmal wird neben dem einfachen Fingersatz als Alternative auch ein klanglich besserer, schwierigerer Fingersatz vorgeschlagen.

Viel Vergnügen mit den Duos! Albrecht Zumbrunn

[1] Wikipedia: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Benjamin_Groß, dort finden sich weitere Details.
[2] Die originalen Duos für Celli sind von IMSLP in guter Druckqualität erhältlich: https://imslp.org/wiki/24_Small_Easy_Cello_Duos,_Op.42_(Gross,_Johann_Benjamin).

Johann Benjamin Gross (1809 - 1848) grew up in Elbing (nowadays Elblag) in Ostpreußen. His first teacher was his father, the bell ringer Georg G. Gross. He studied cello in Berlin with the chamber musician Ferdinand Hansmann, a pupil of Jean-Pierre Duport.

He got his first job in 1824 in the orchestra of the Königstädtisches Theater in Berlin. 1830 he became First Solocellist of the Gewandhausorchester in Leipzig and frequented the circles around Felix Mendelssohn, Friedrich Wieck, Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann. Gross had several other jobs before he settled in St. Petersburg in 1835 as the first cellist of the court orchestra of the Czar with the rank of an "imperial chamber musician". In the same year he married Catharina von Witte from Reval (nowadays Tallinn).

He also worked as a cello teacher and composed more than 40 works, often for his own instrument, however also four string quartets (which do not give special treatment to the cello).

He died in 1848 in St. Petersburg of cholera[1].

A subgenre of **Duos for stringed instruments** are "pedagogique" Duos for violin and cello students. We find in this genre besides numerous mediocre pieces also excellent compositions; for example Bela Bartòk's 44 duos für two violins or Jacques Offenbach's duos for two celli.

Johann Benjamin Gross's contribution, "**24 Petits duos faciles pour deux violoncelles**"[2] as he called it on the titlepage of the first (and only as far as I know) edition is also conspicuous for its musical quality.

These duos are one movement pieces, 1 bis 3 minutes long, formally mostly simple song forms, ABA-forms oder mini-sonata movements. The duos are ordered by increasing difficulty (first to fourth position) like Bartok's and Offenbach's. The second part is intended for the teacher--unlike in the Bartok and Offenbach duos--and is often considerably more difficult than the first (double stops!).

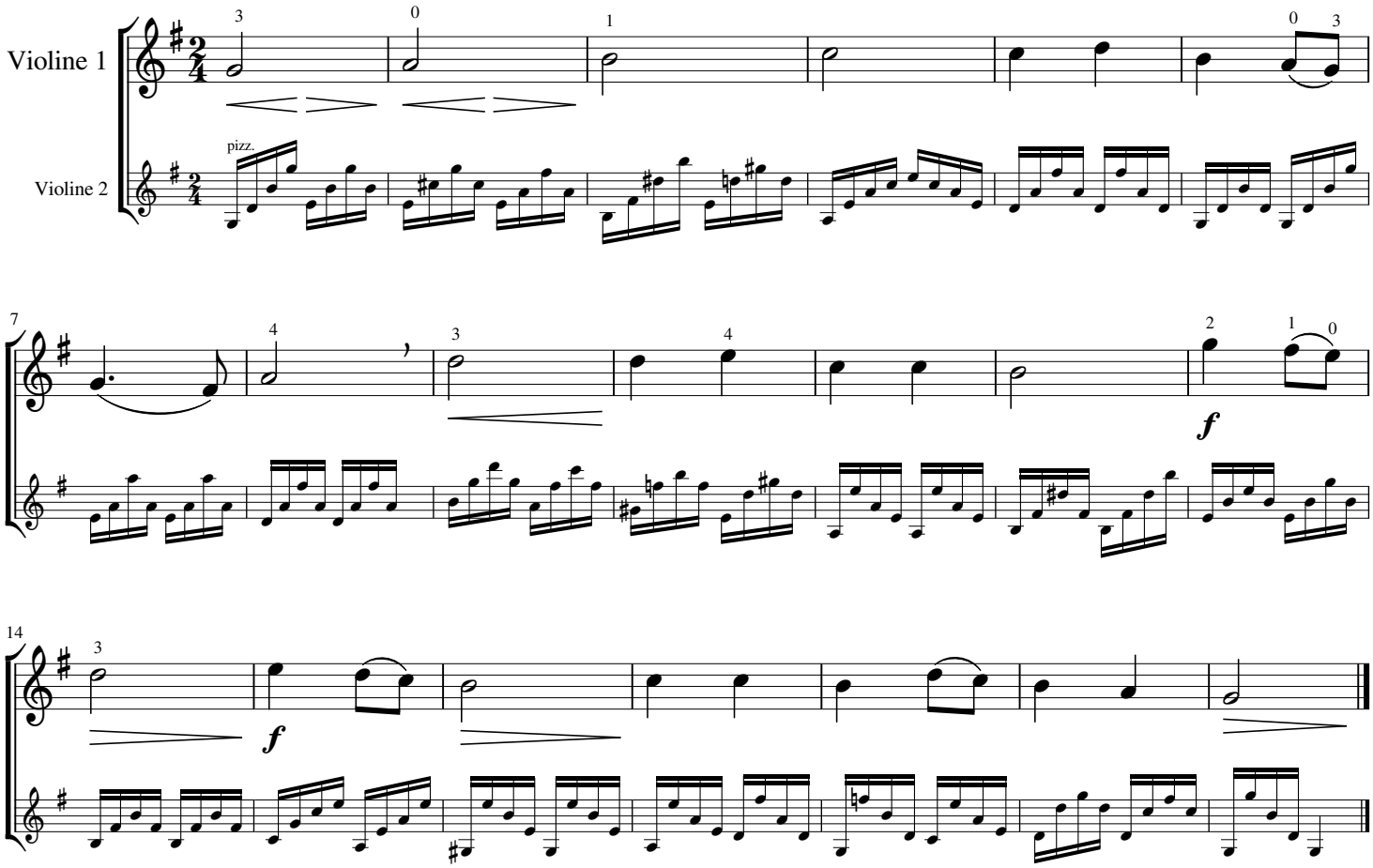
Good, creative part writing--the second voice often takes the lead--makes the pieces attractive to play for both players. Gross avoided monotonous accompanying figures. The design of the pieces is rhythmically and harmonically interesting and varied, each piece having its own character. To use them for performance it is probably best to follow Bartok's advice to assemble a "suite" of a number of freely chosen pieces.

This arrangement for two violins is organized in two separate parts for the two players. In both parts the part not to be played is printed in small print along with the "main" part. This will be helpful if the pieces are used in violin lessons. The sequence of a few of the pieces was altered in order to avoid page turns within a piece (see table of contents). For No. 21--in 3 pages--a photocopy is still required. Dynamic markings from the original were not altered but some additional markings were added for clarity. They always apply to both parts unless the second part is separately marked. These are pieces for violin students. Hence fingerings and bowings were marked, adapted to the violin of course. Sometimes two alternative fingerings are suggested: An easy one and a more difficult one for better sound.

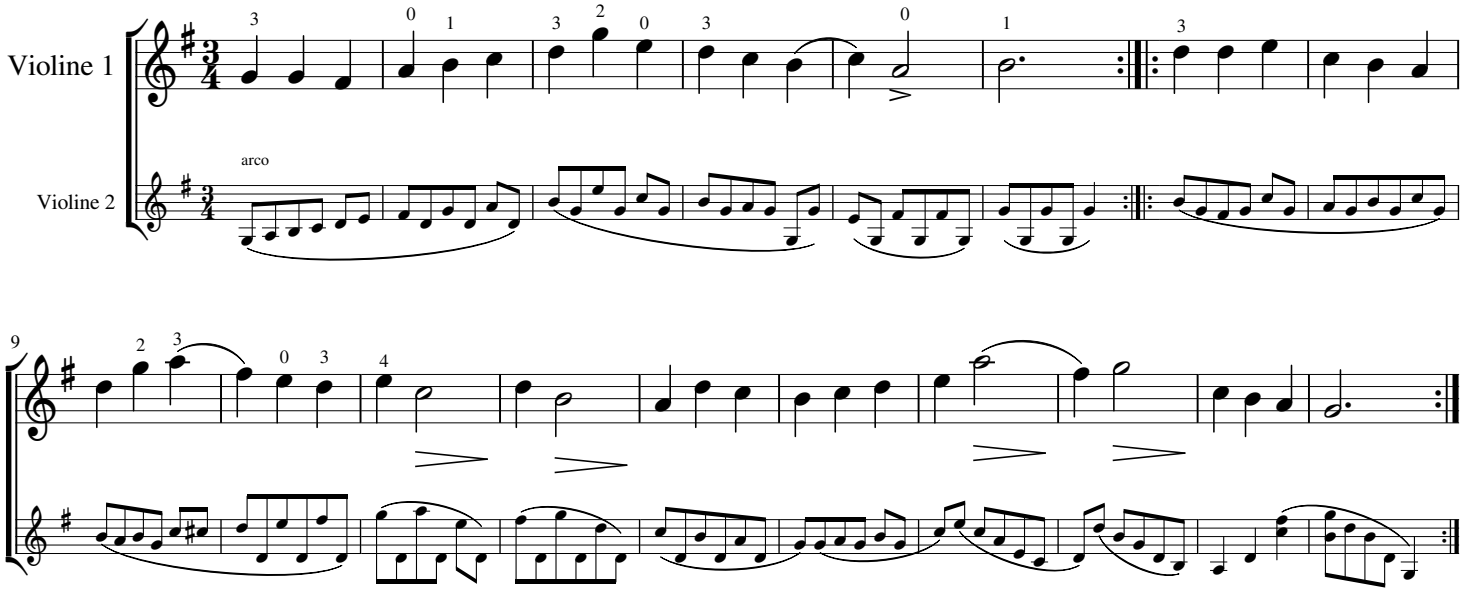
Enjoy these duos! Albrecht Zumbrunn

[1] Wikipedia: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Benjamin_Groß, look there for more details (in German).
[2] The original Duos for two Celli are available on IMSLP in good quality:
https://imslp.org/wiki/24_Small_Easy_Cello_Duos,_Op.42_(Gross,_Johann_Benjamin).

No. 1: Adagio con elevazione



No. 2: Allegretto



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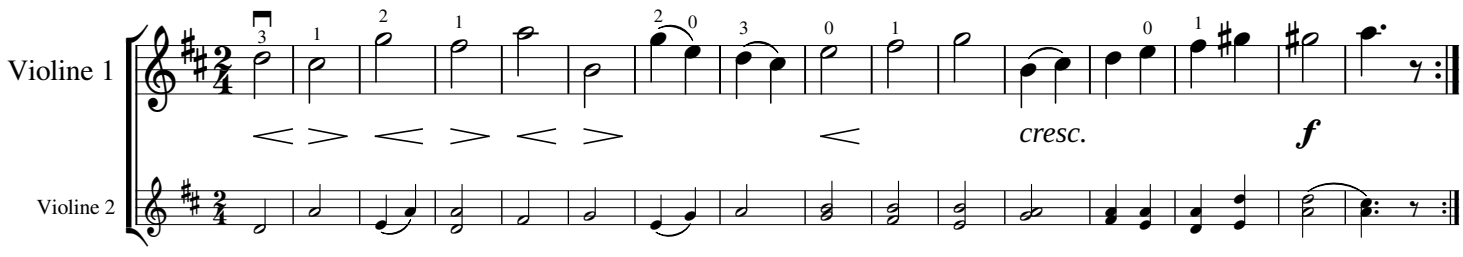

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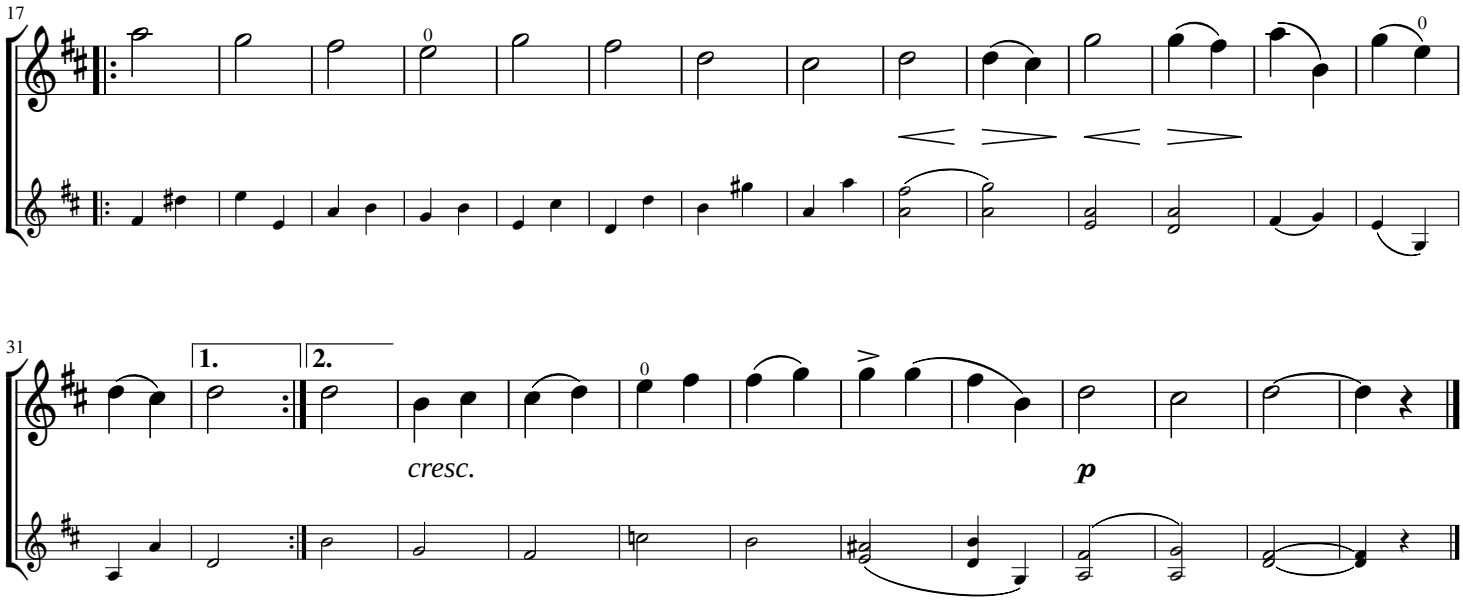

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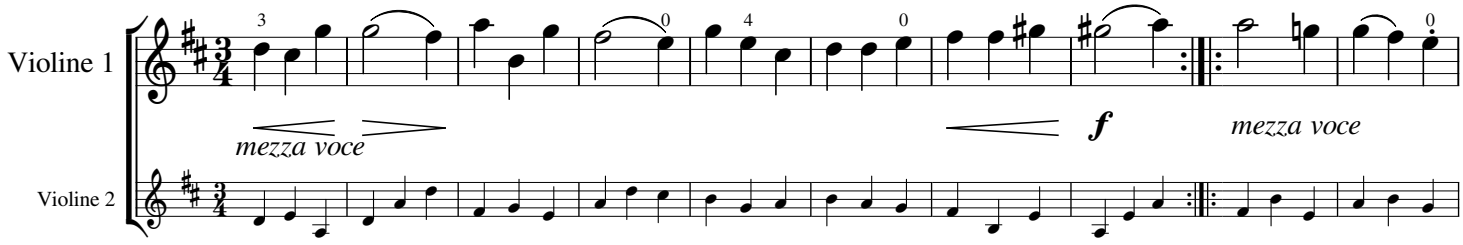

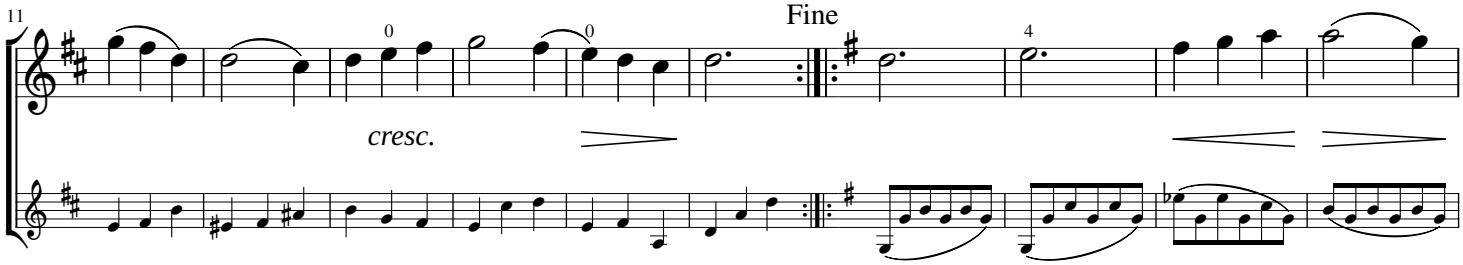

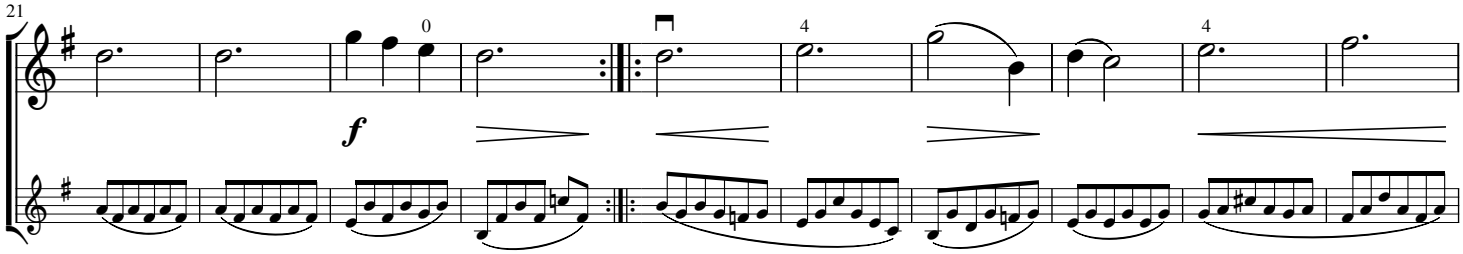

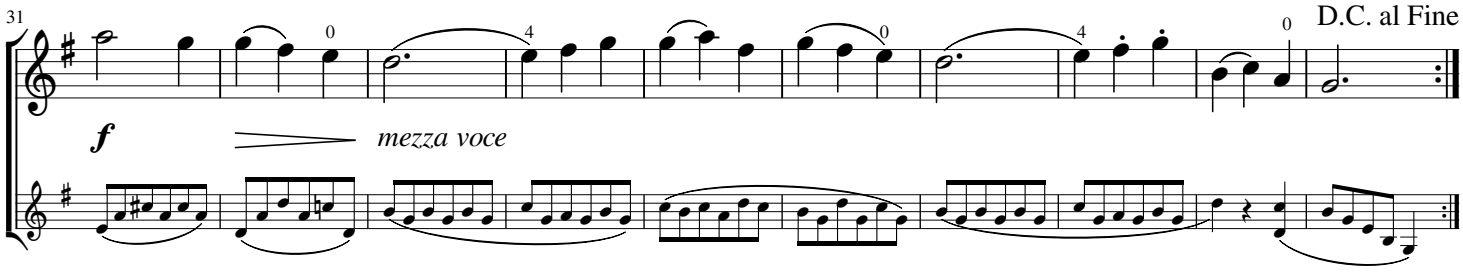

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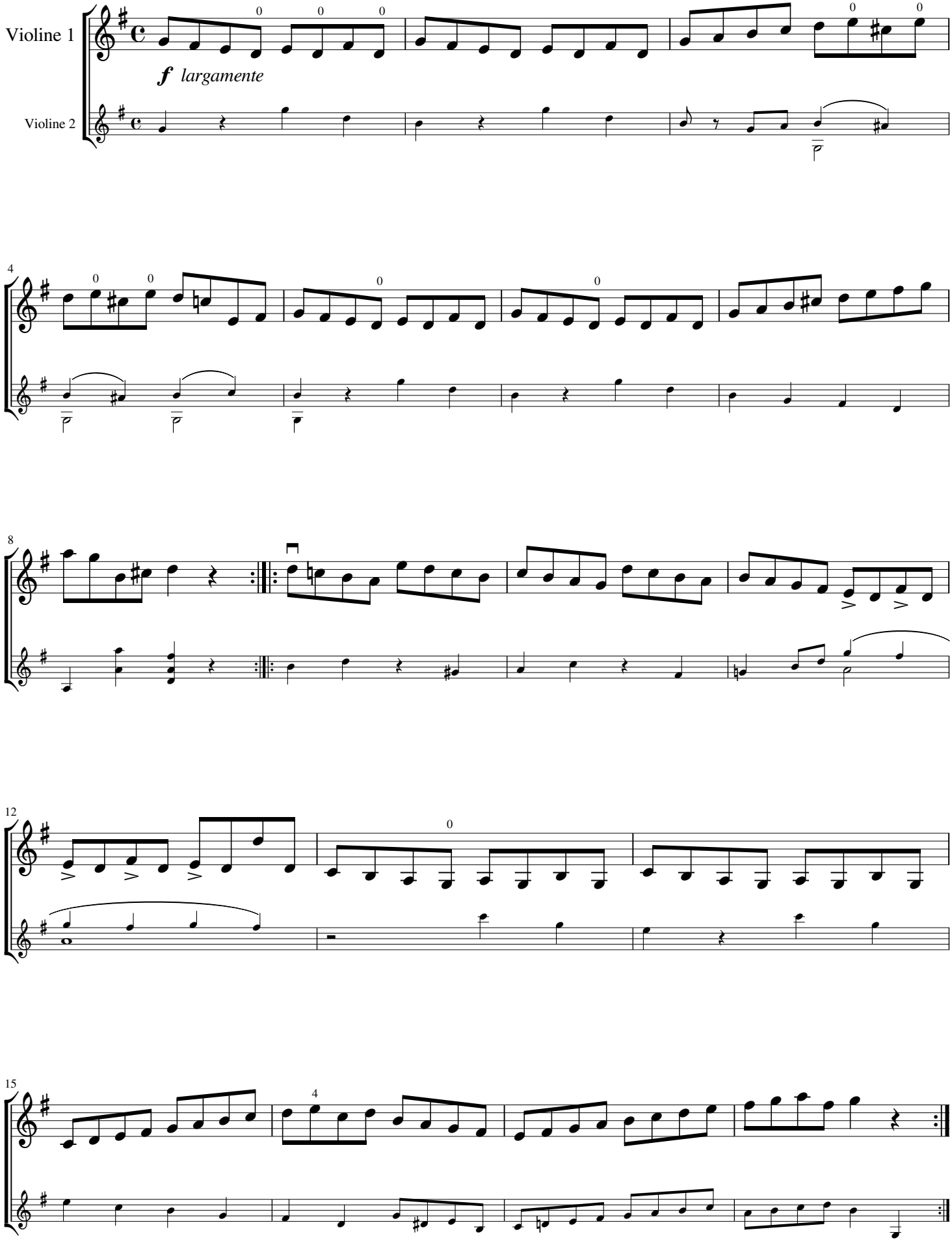
No. 5: Allegro



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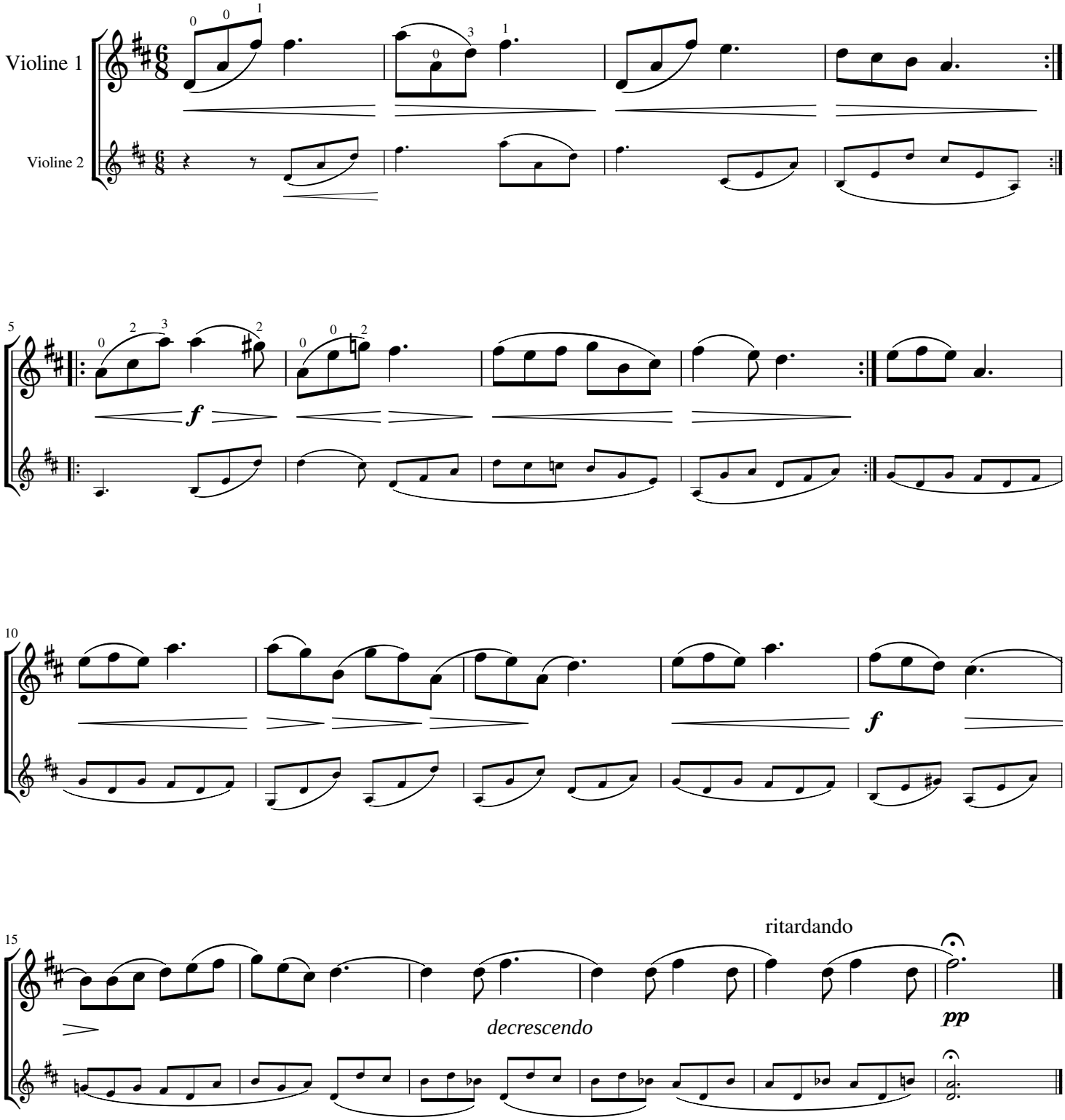
No. 6: BARCAROLE. Allegretto



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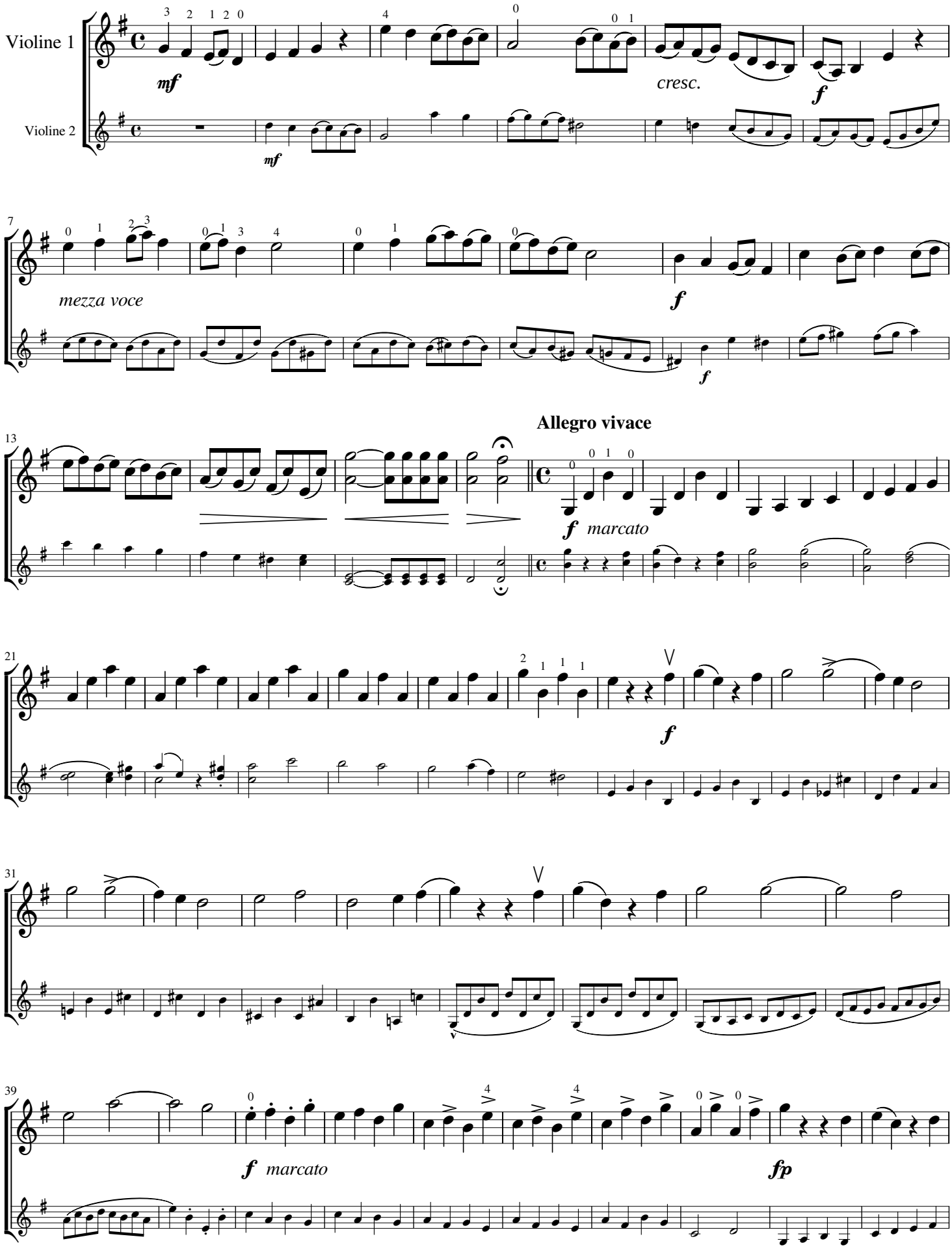
No. 7: Largo



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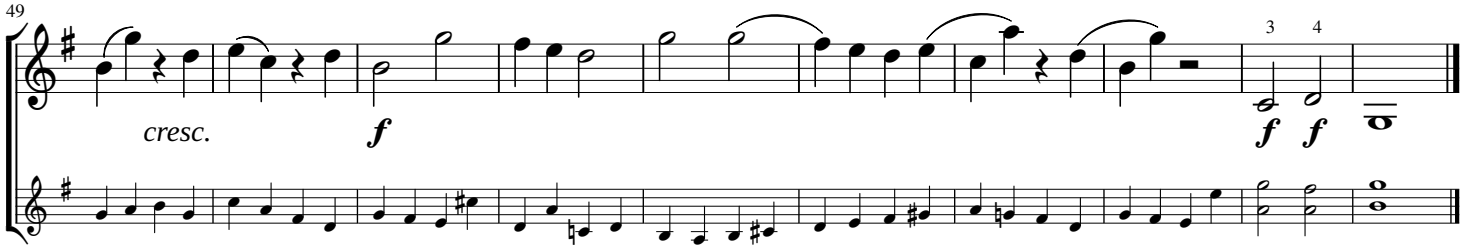

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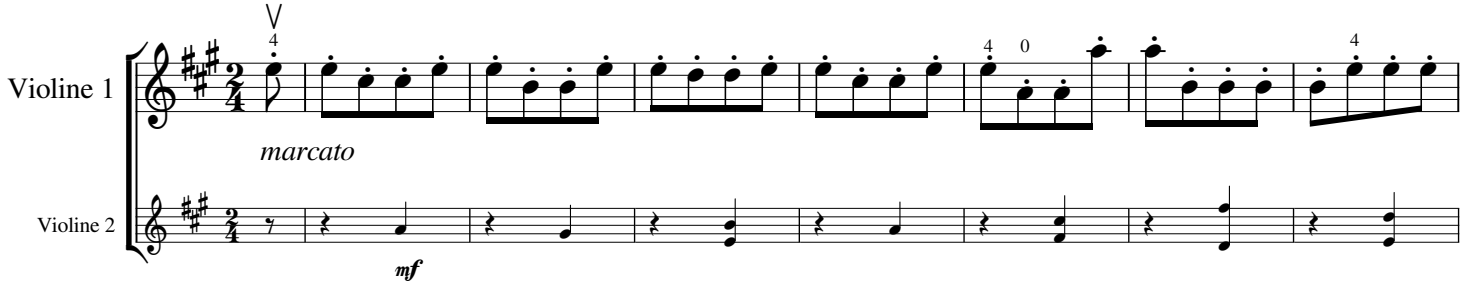

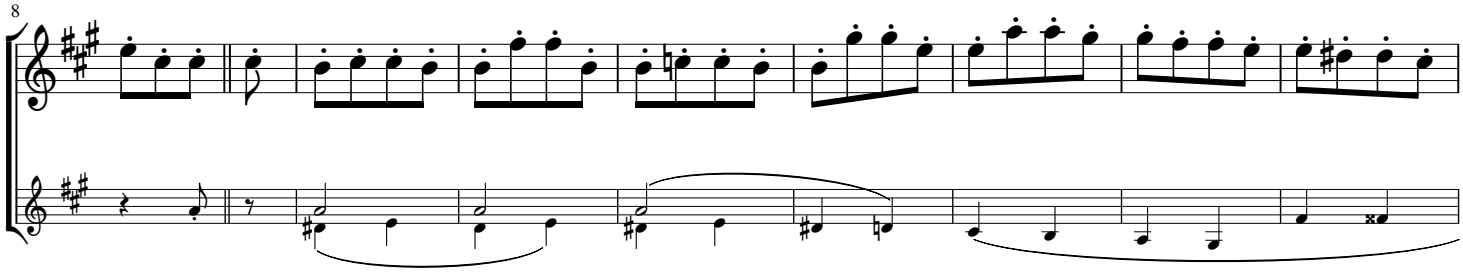

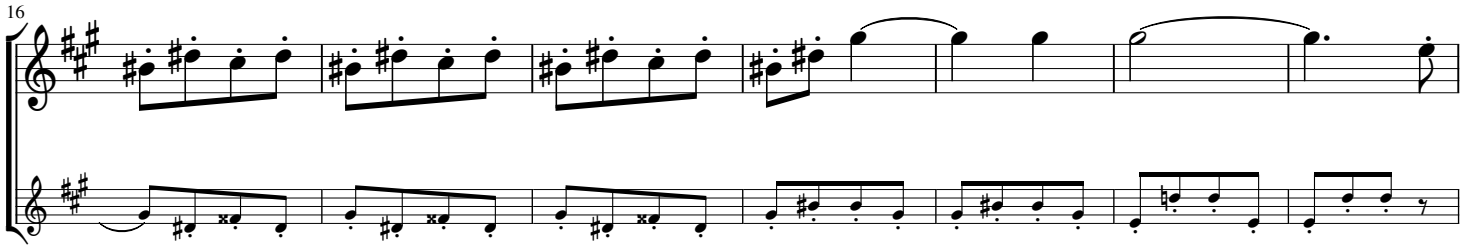

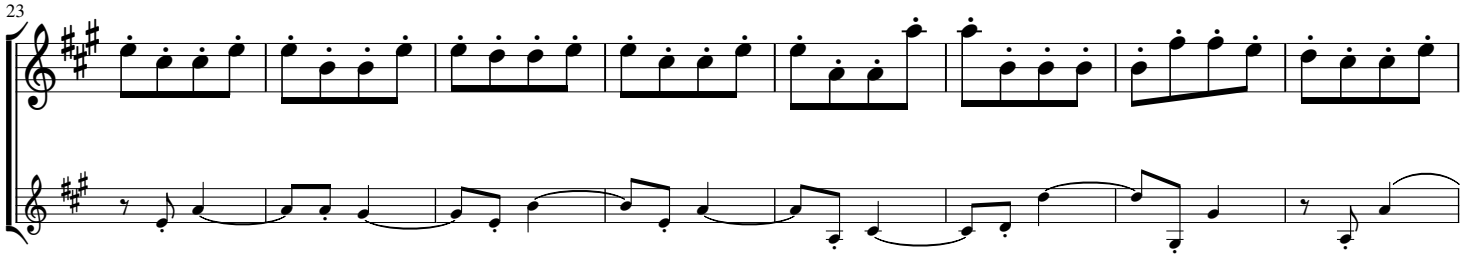

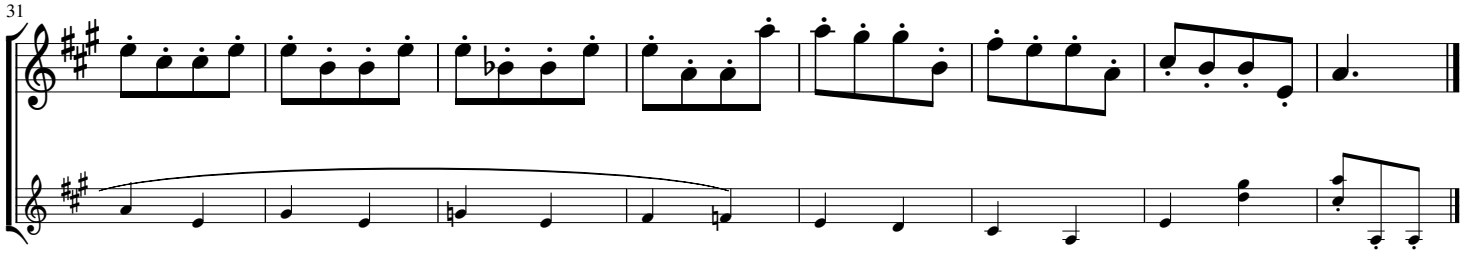

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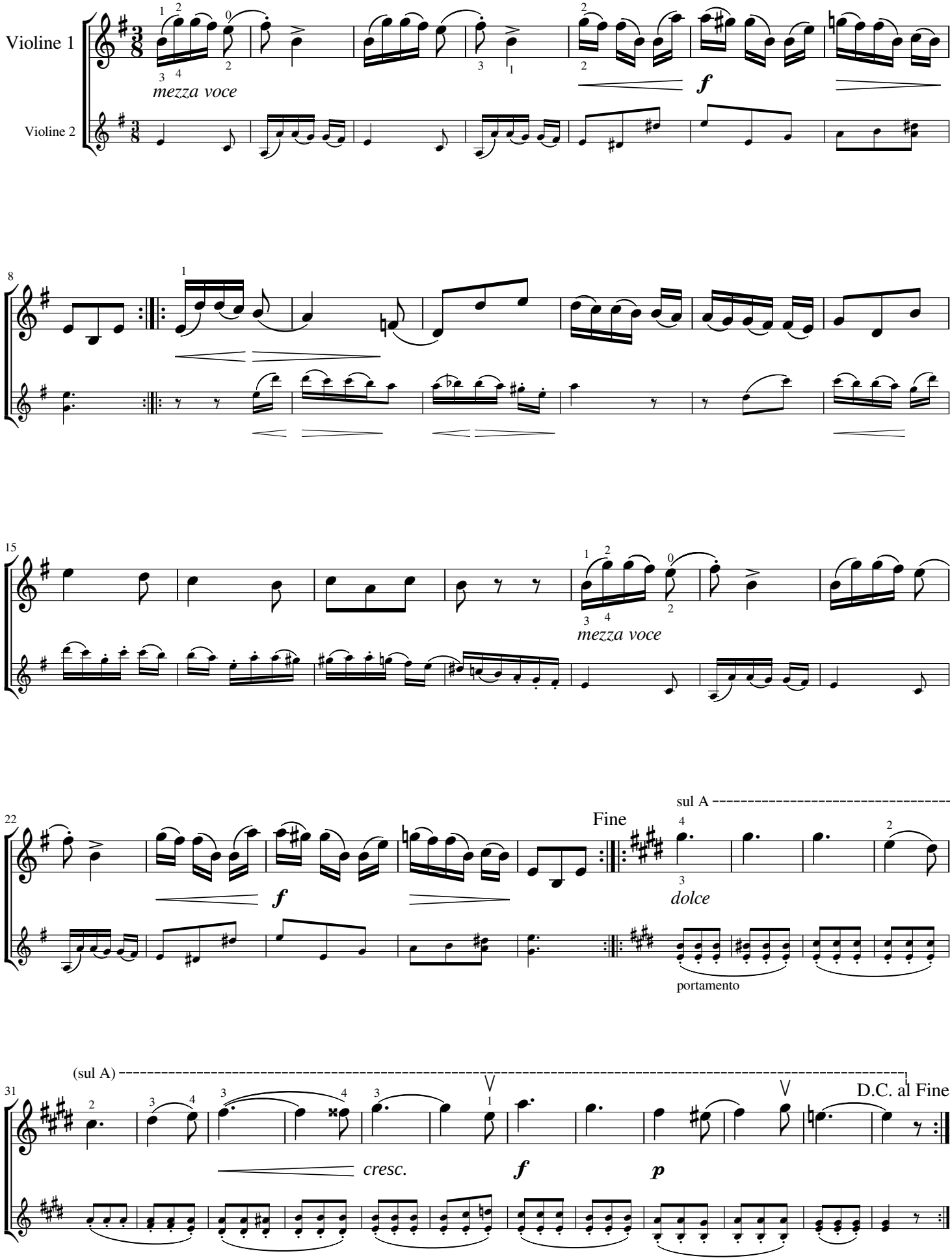
No. 9: Allegretto



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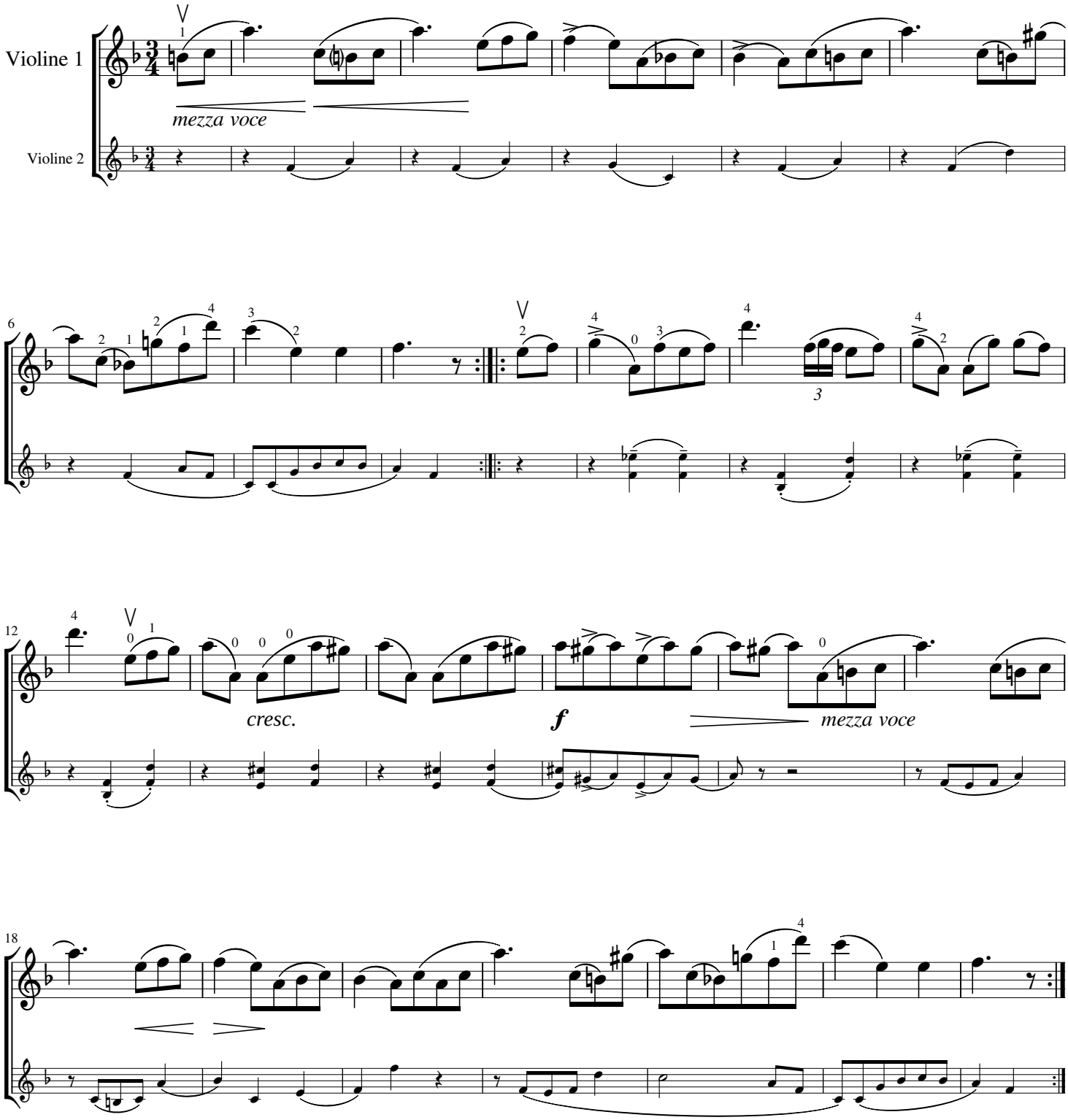
No. 10: Moderato assai



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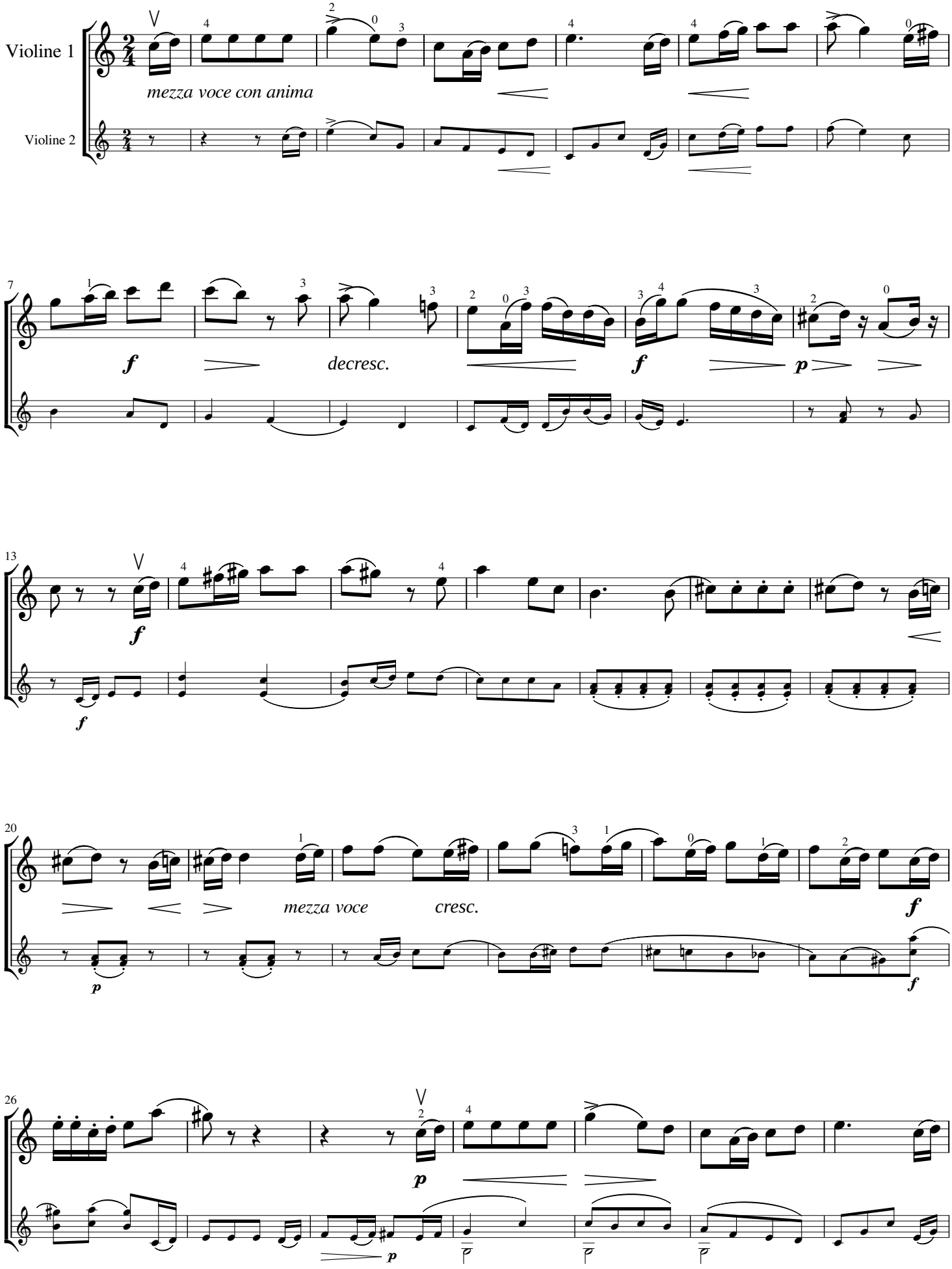
No. 11: Andantino



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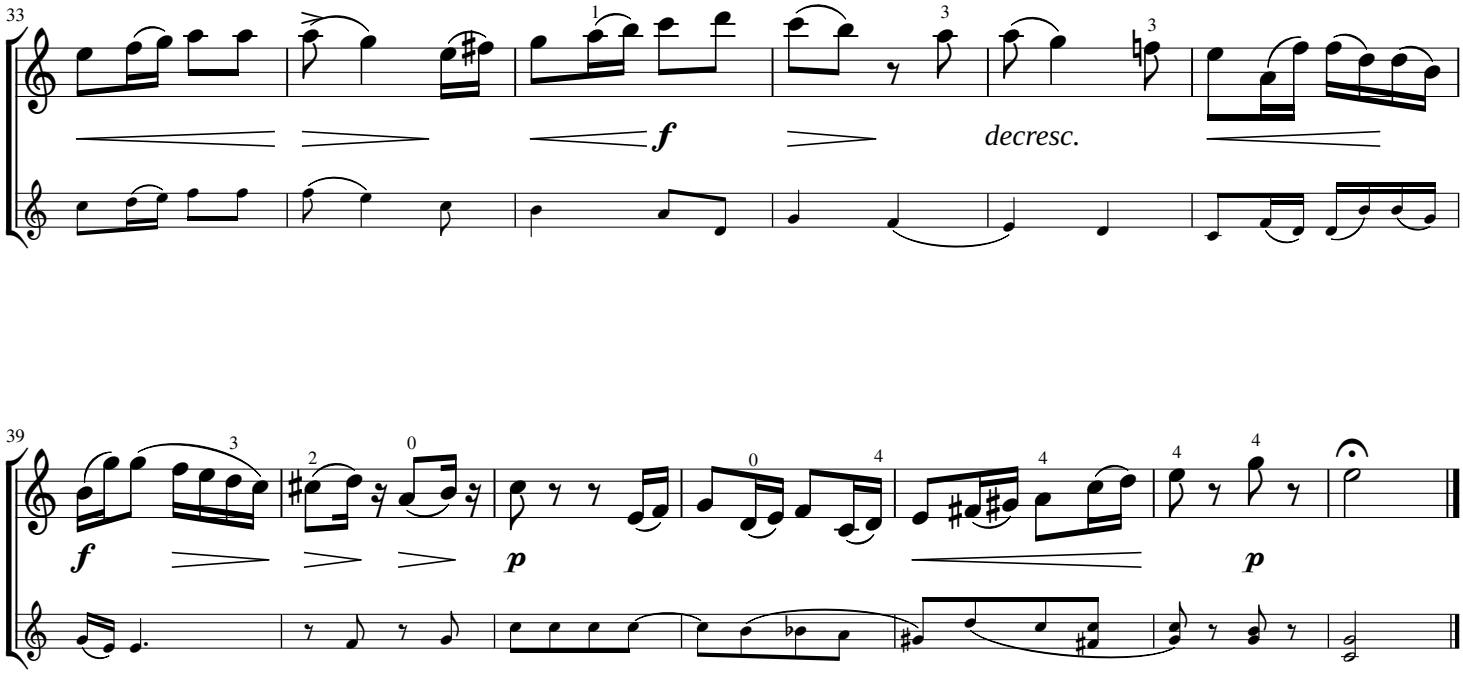

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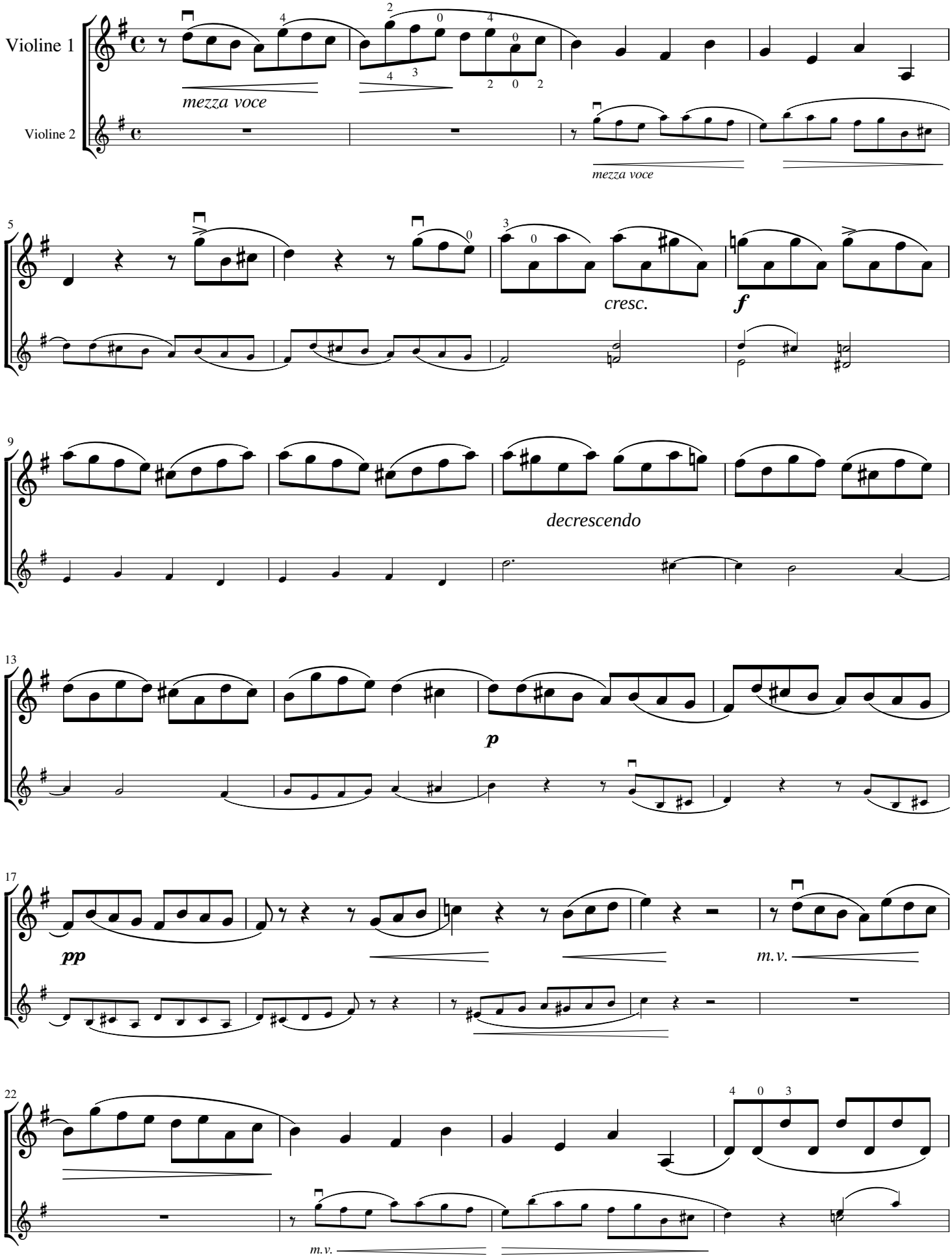
No. 12: Allegro moderato



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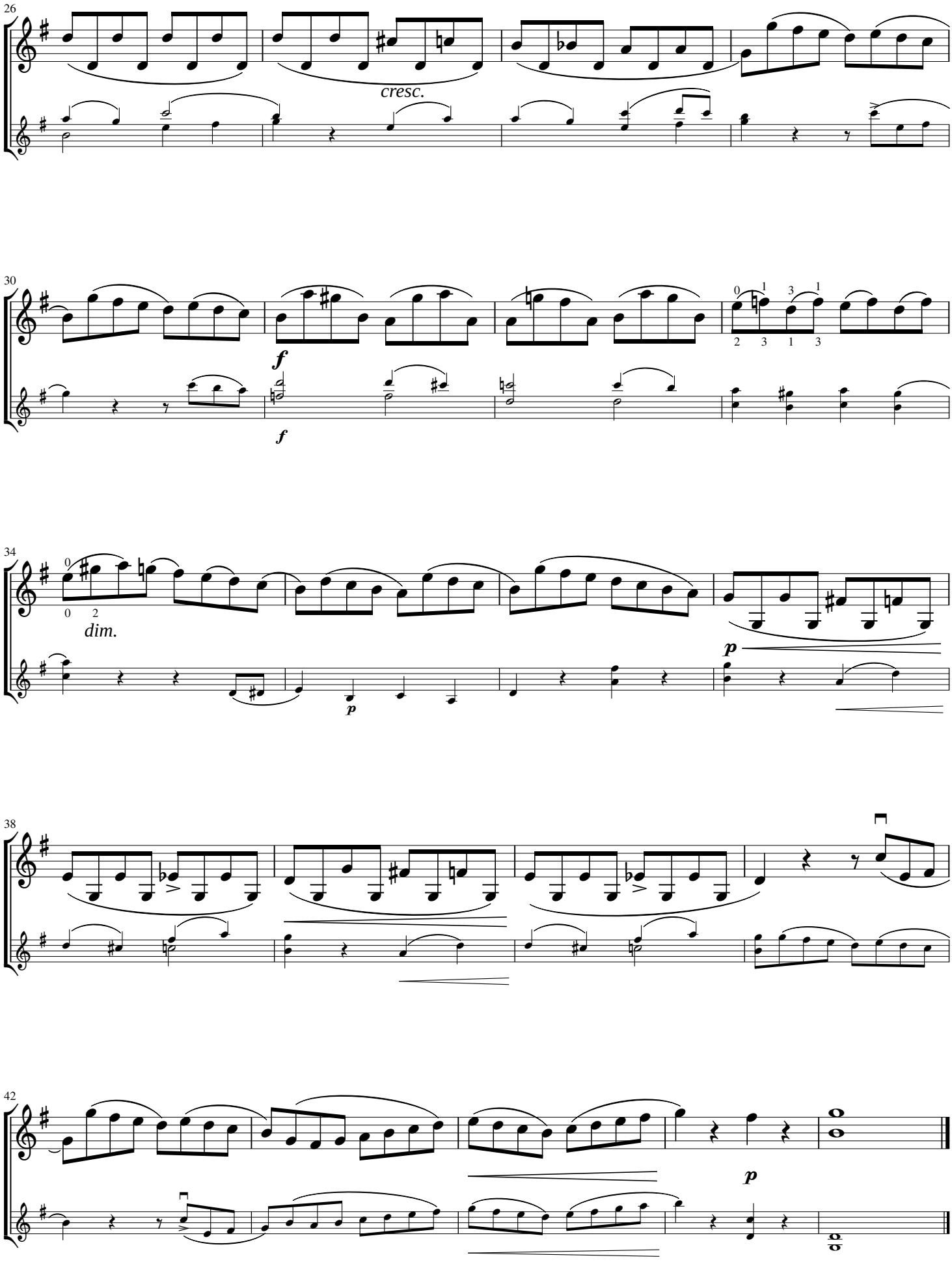

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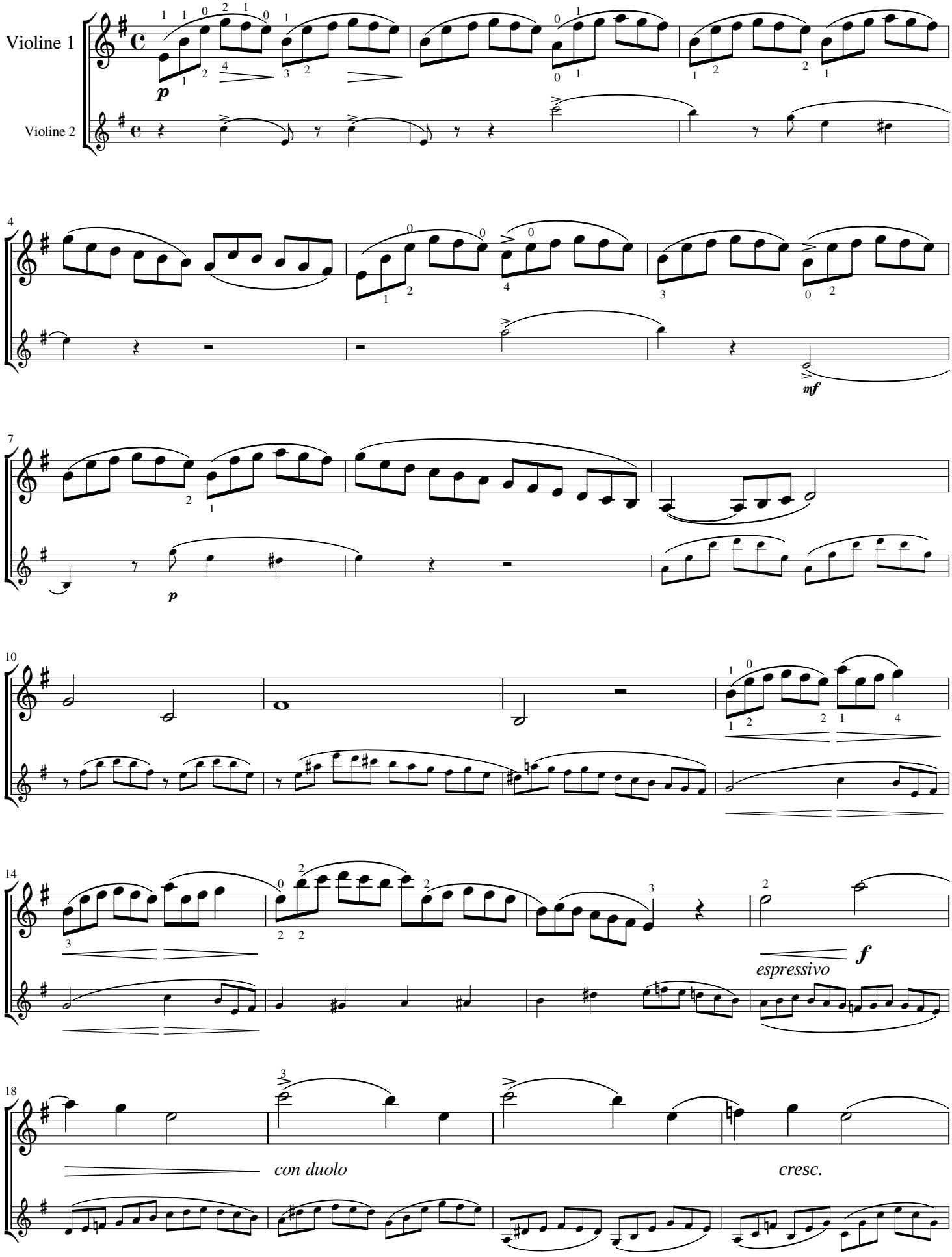

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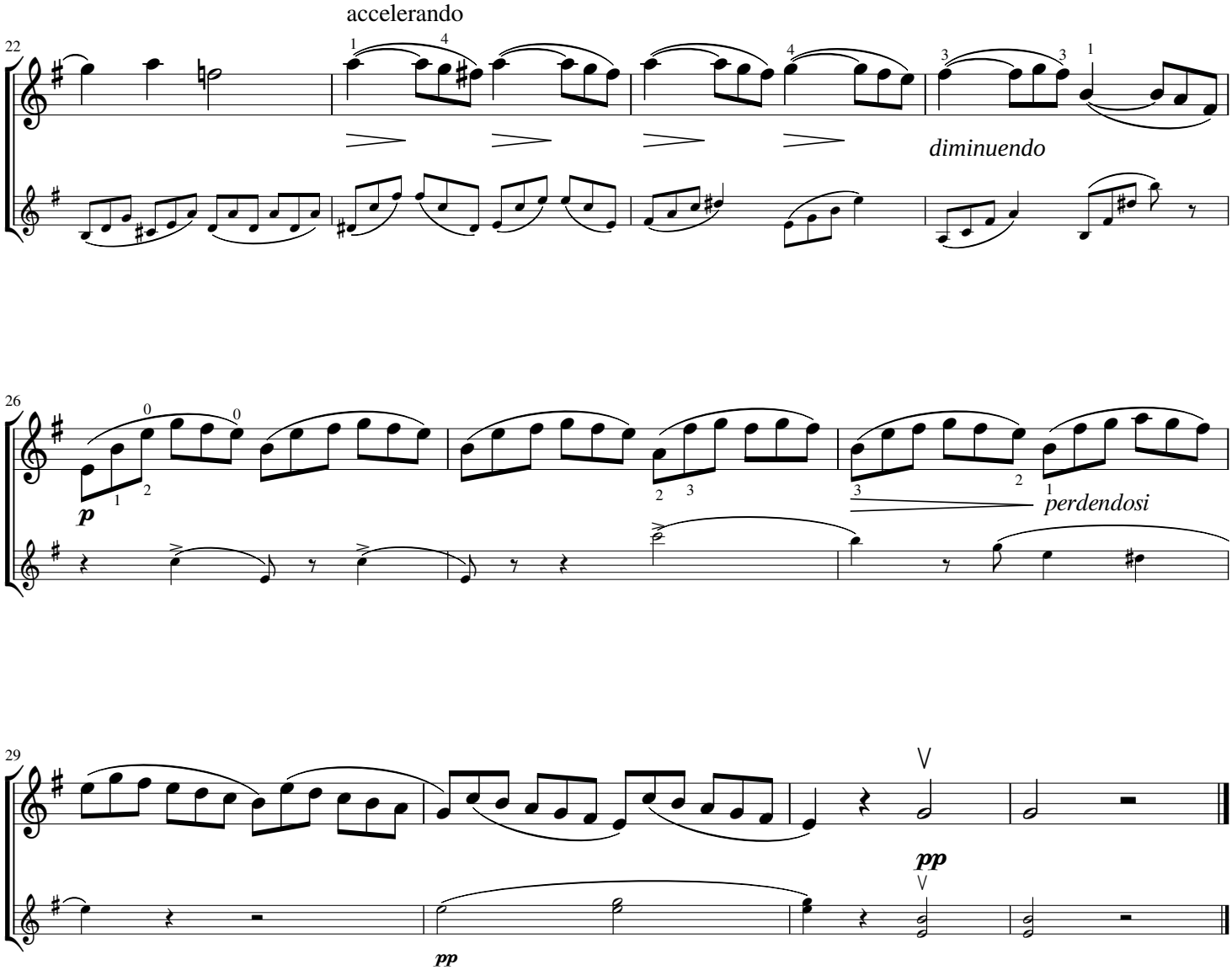

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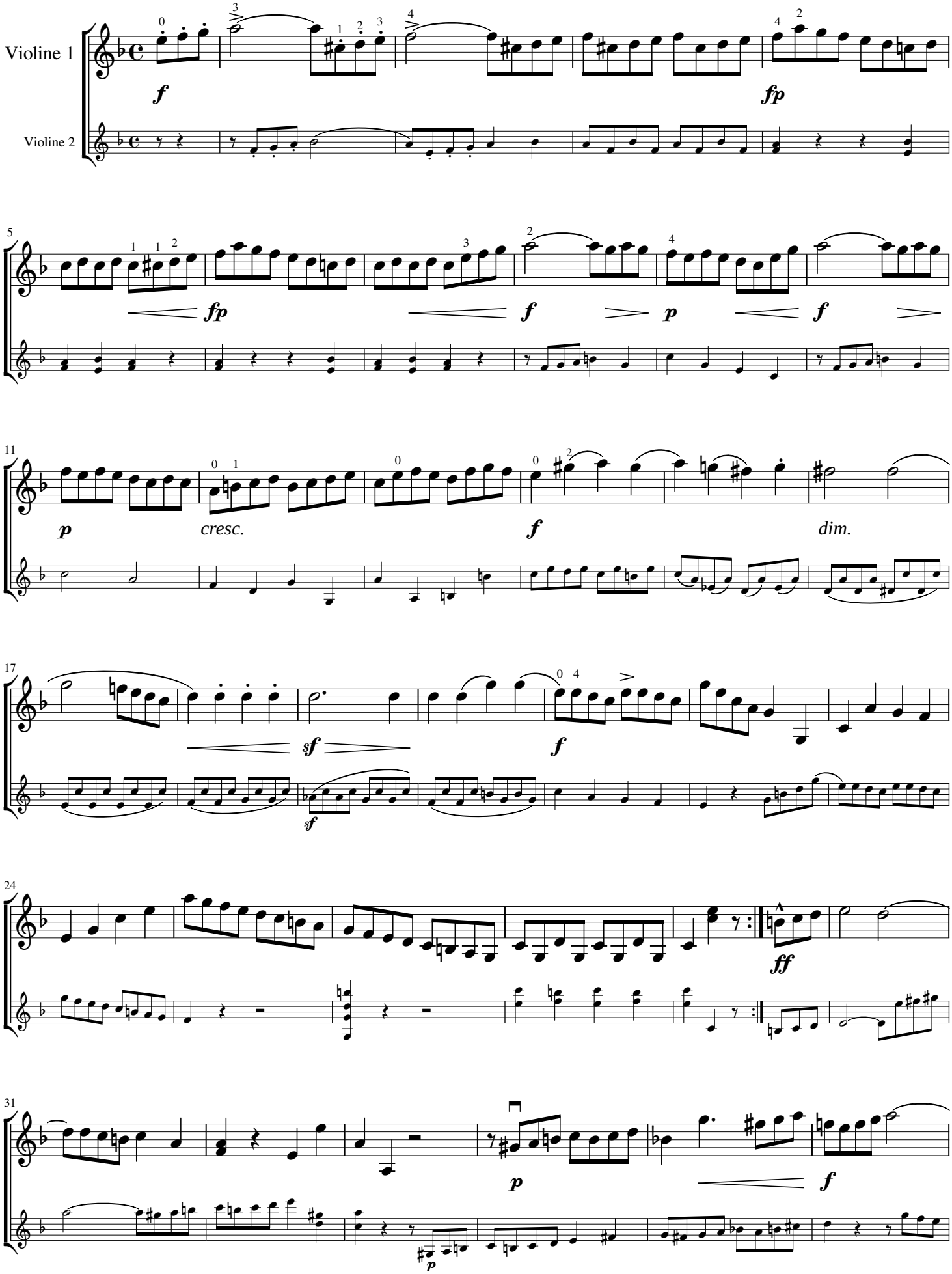
Duo 14: Allegro con fuoco



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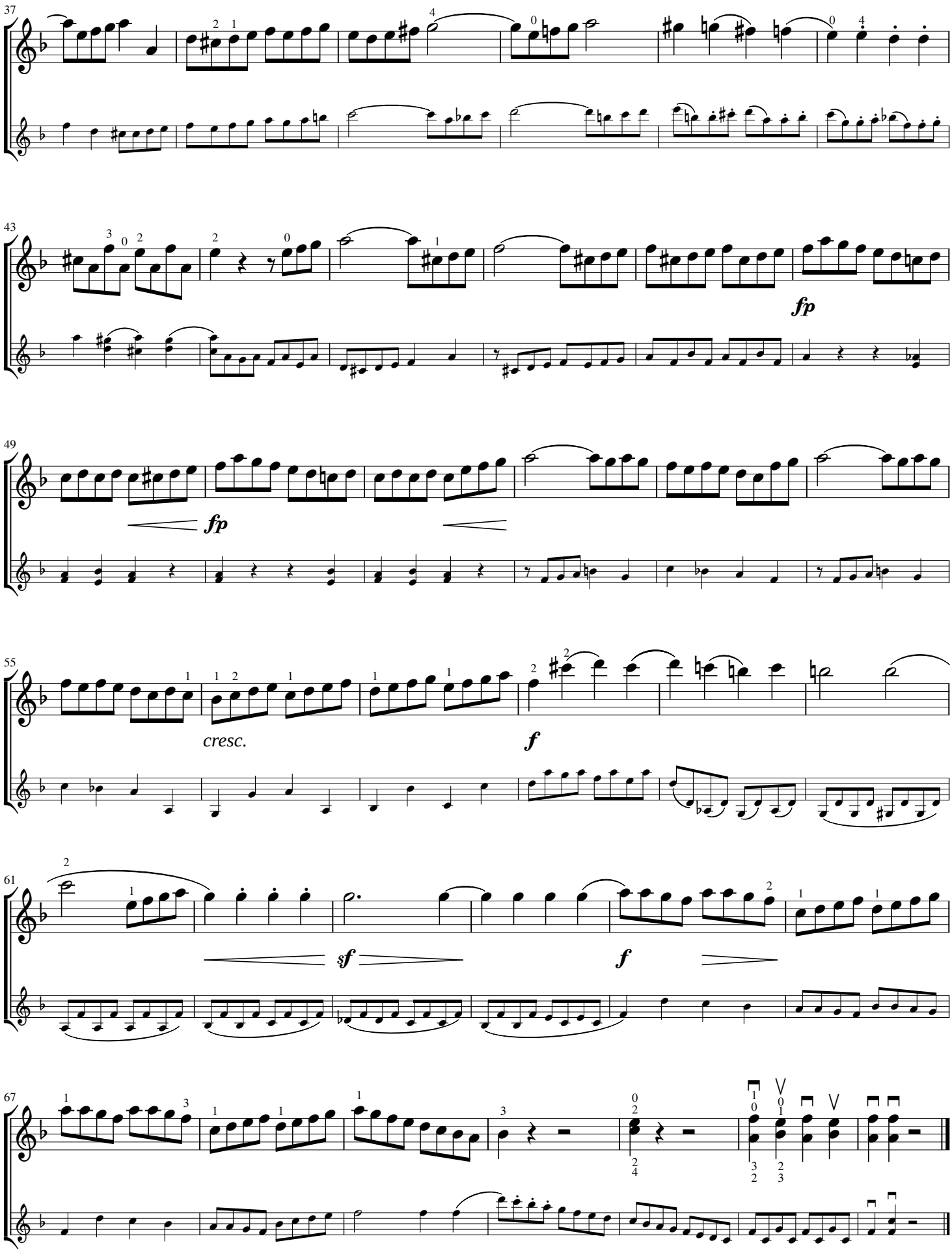

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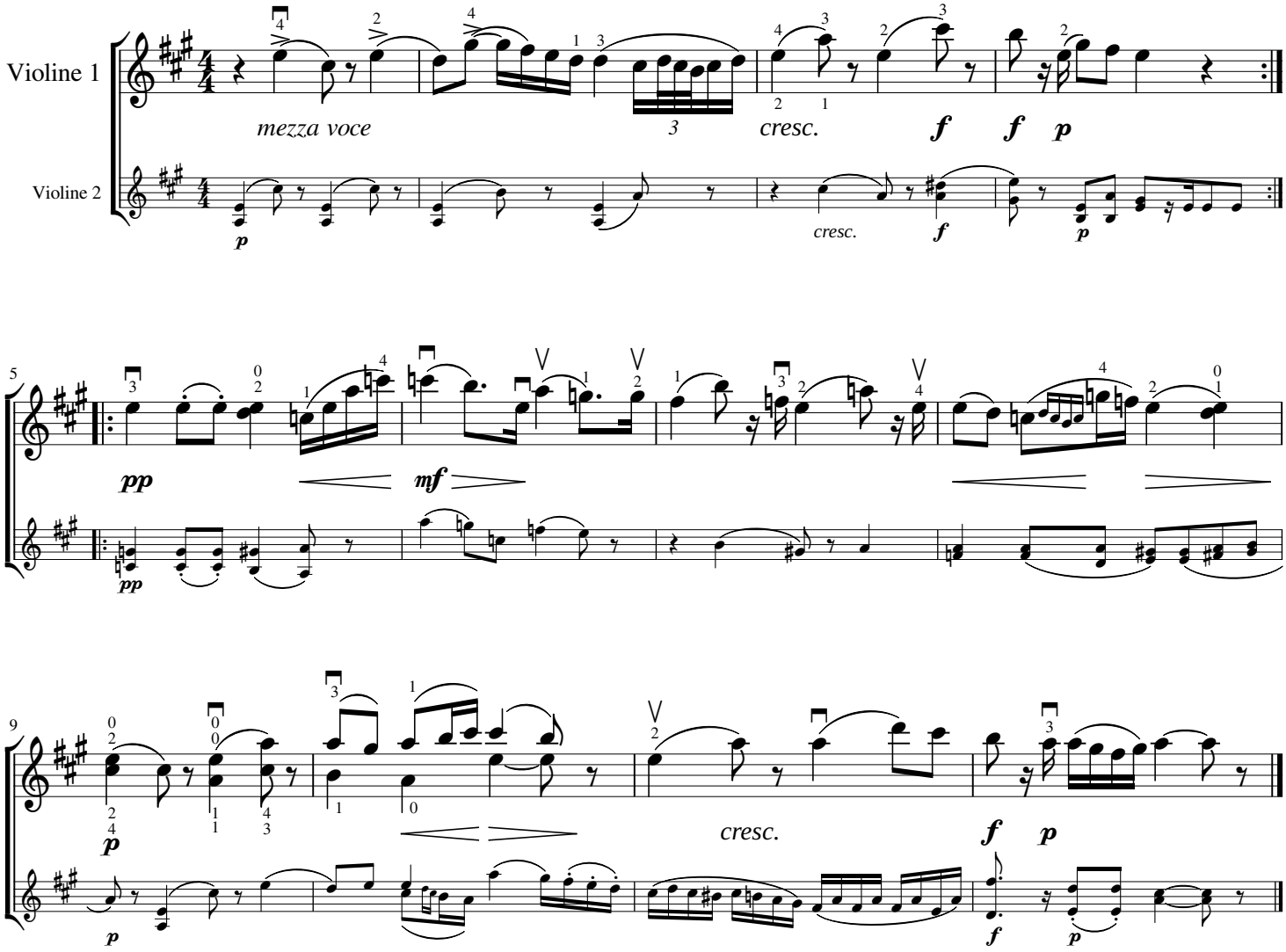
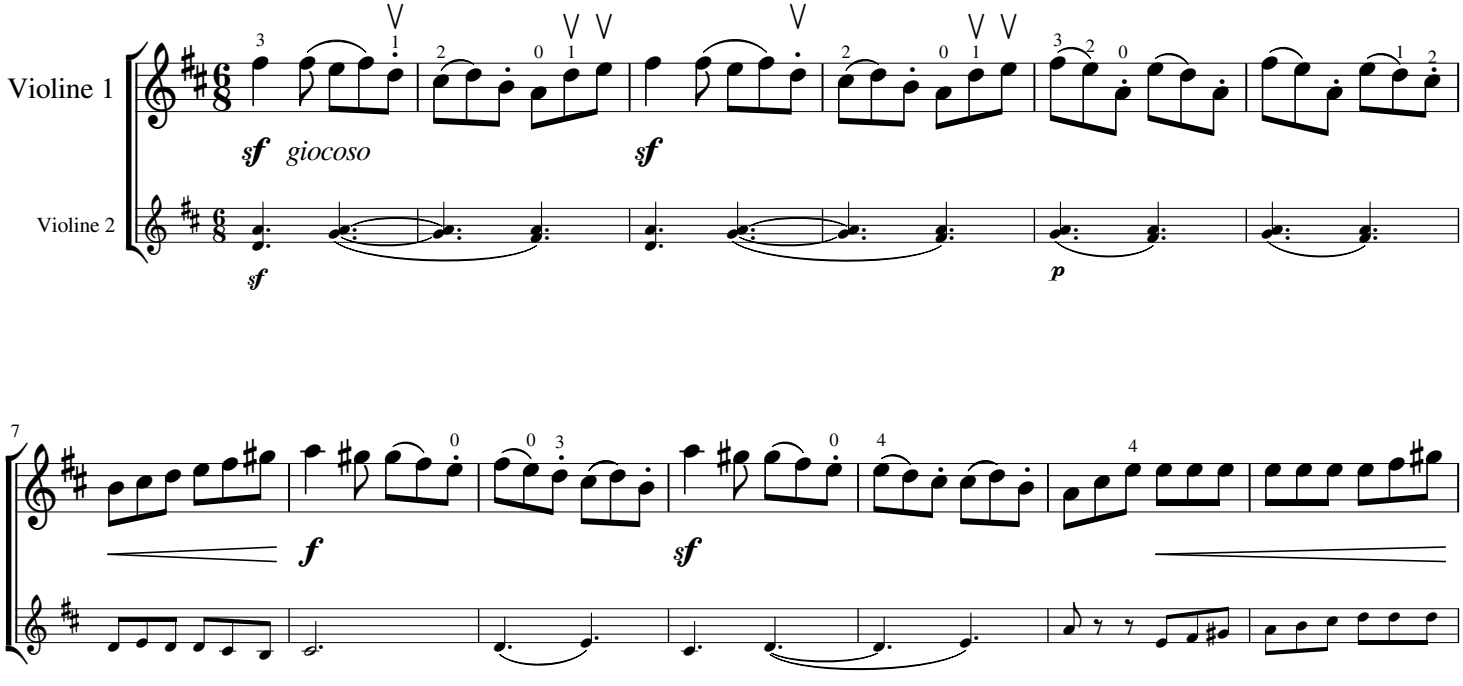
Duo 15: Adagio



Duo 16: Rondino



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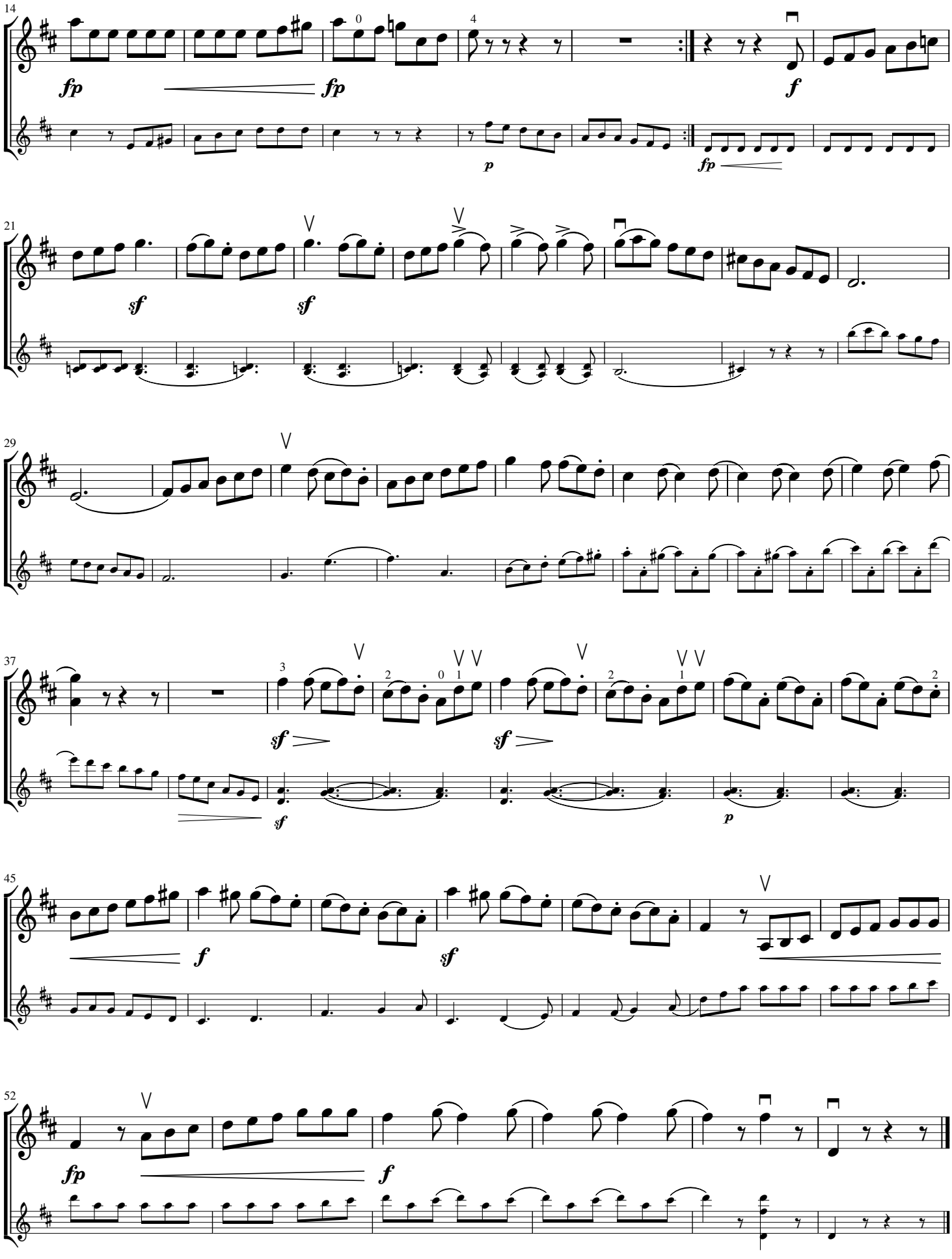

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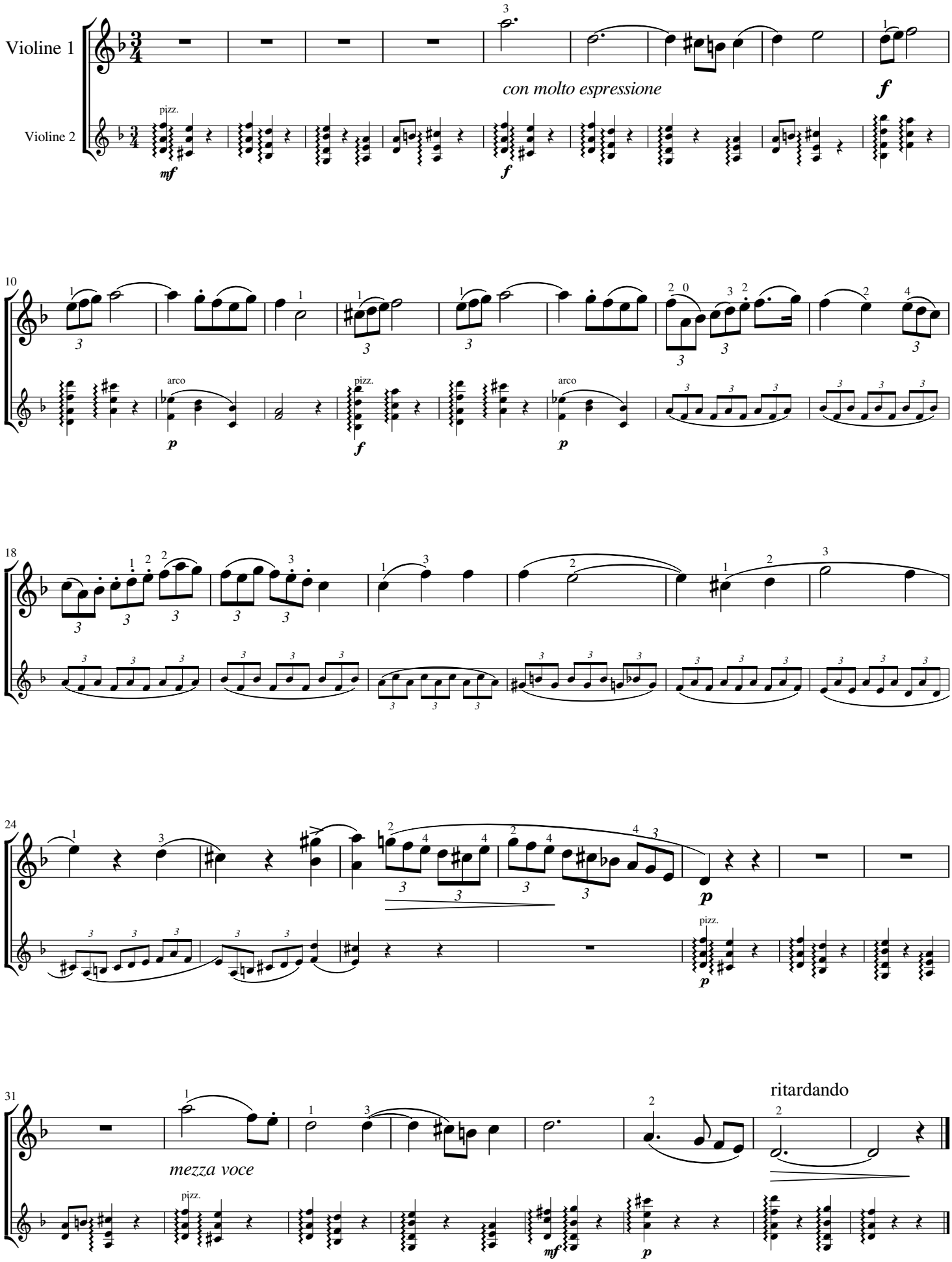
No. 17: ROMANZE. Andante



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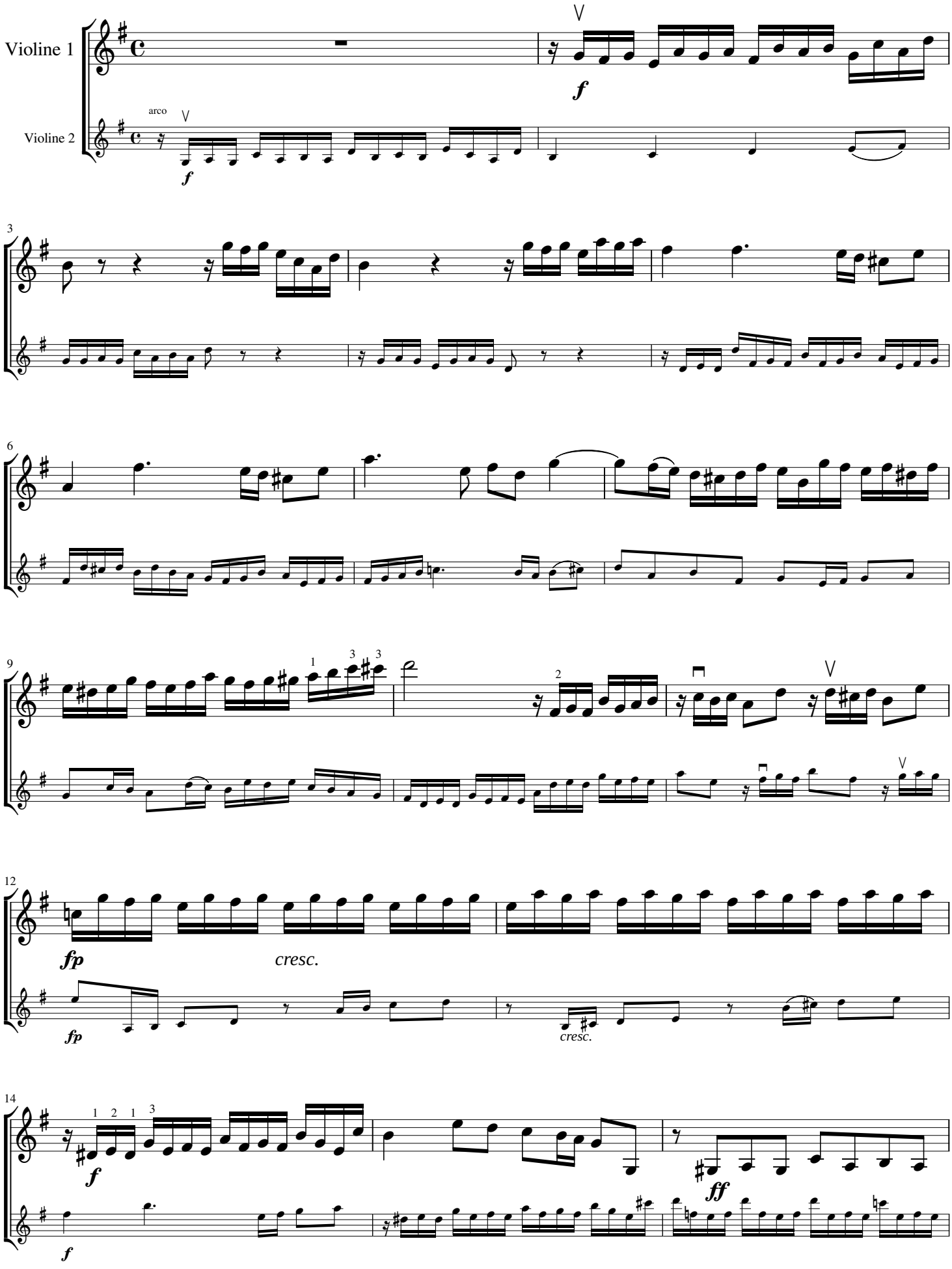
No. 21: TOCCATE. Allegro ma non troppo



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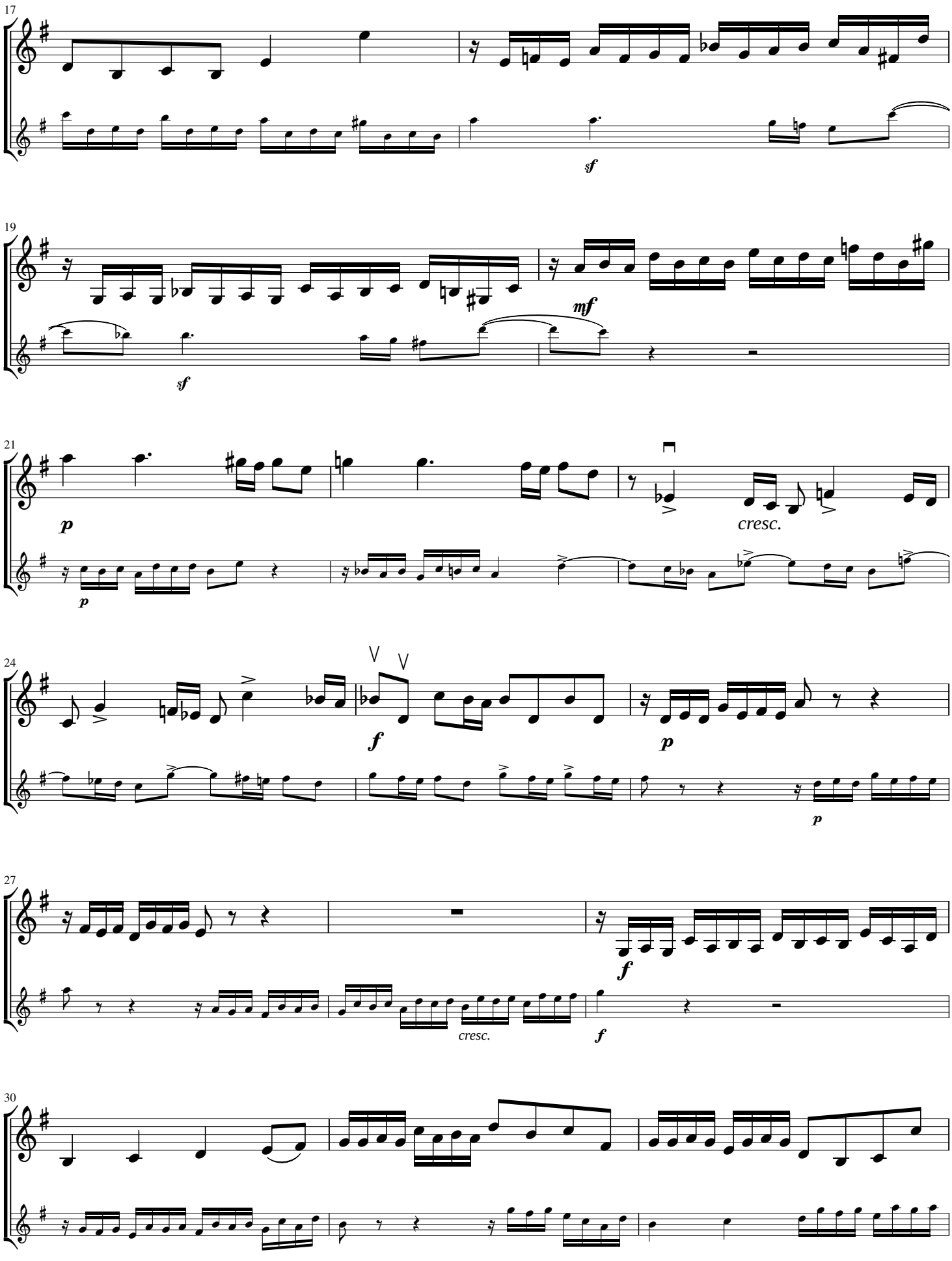

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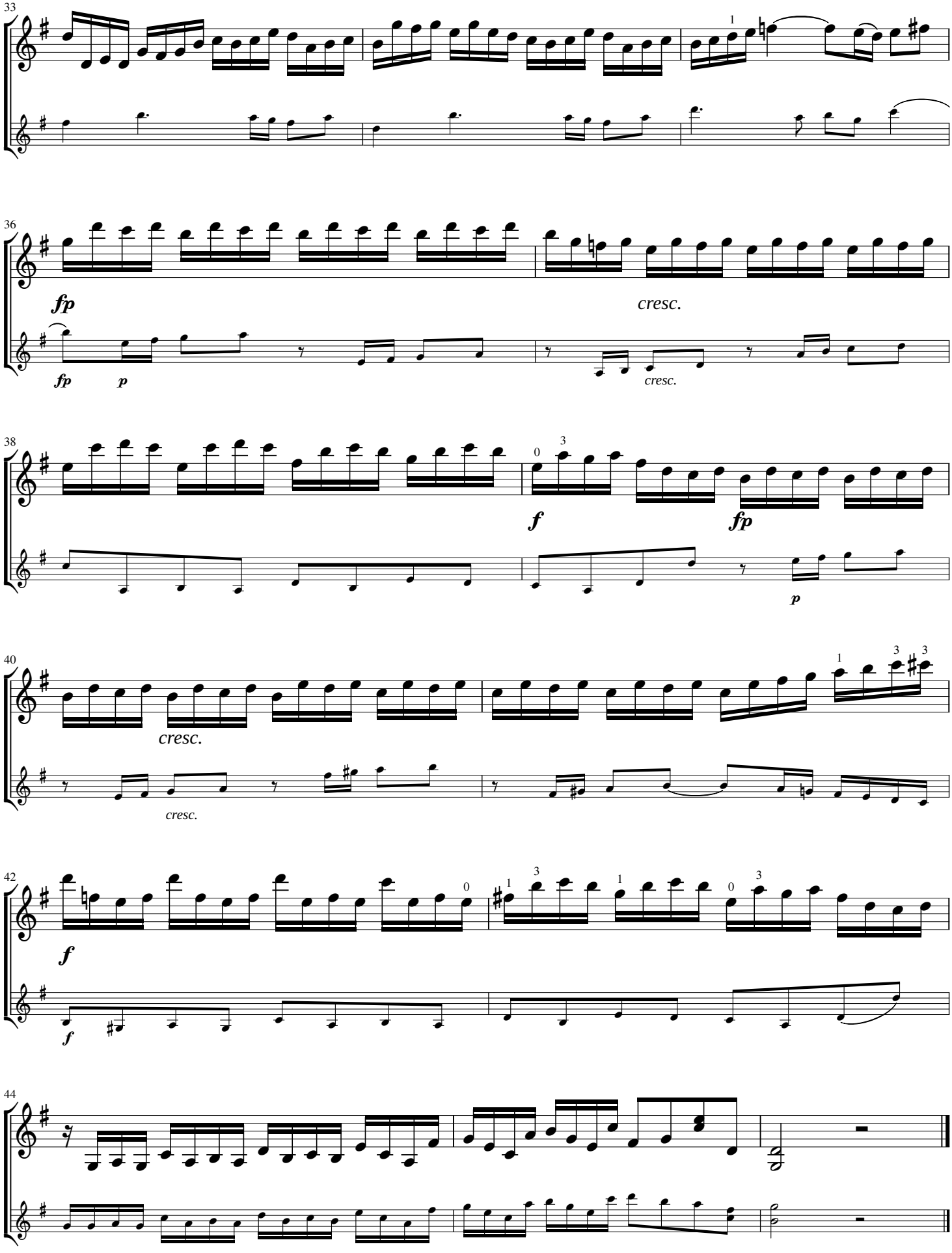

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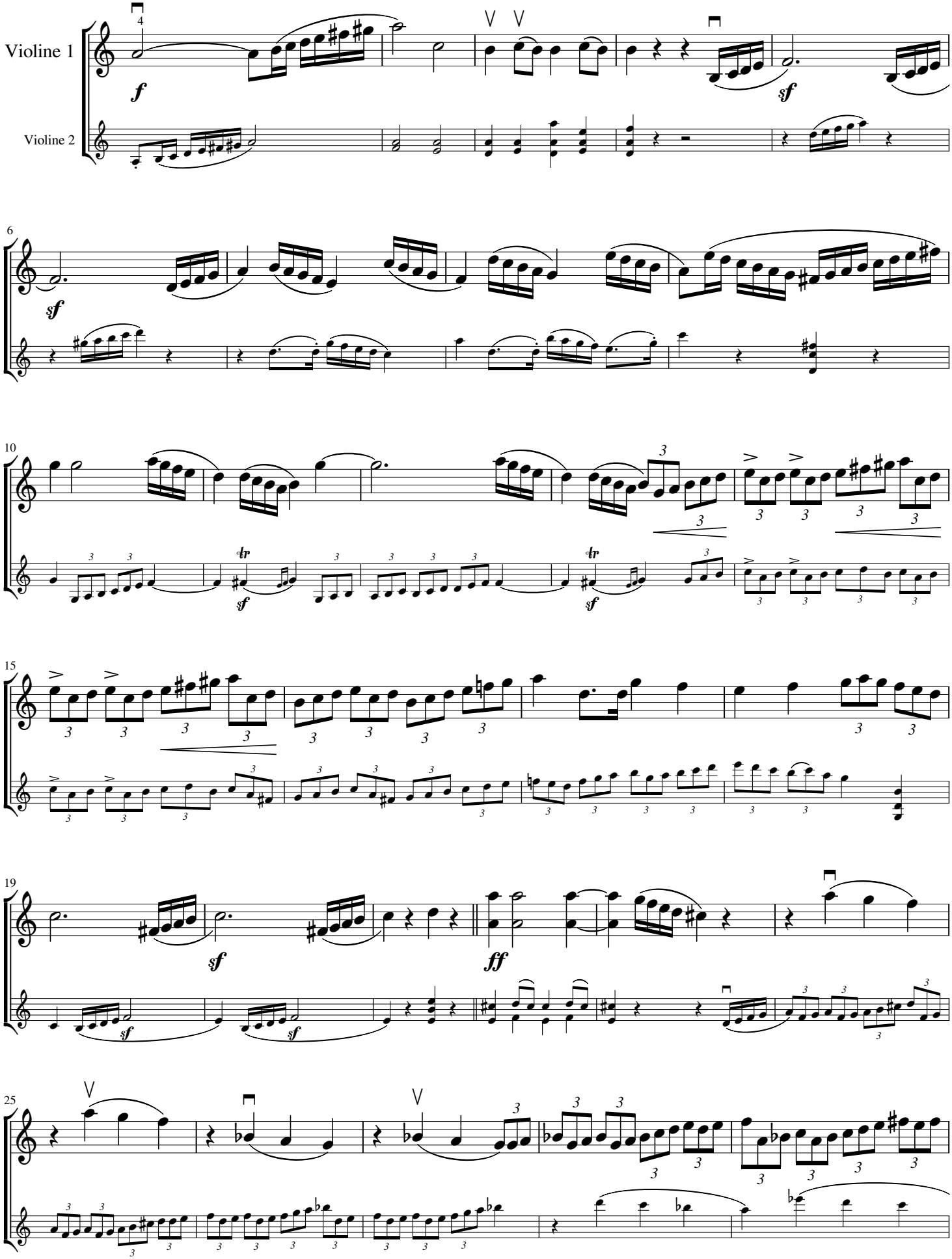
Duo 18: Allegro



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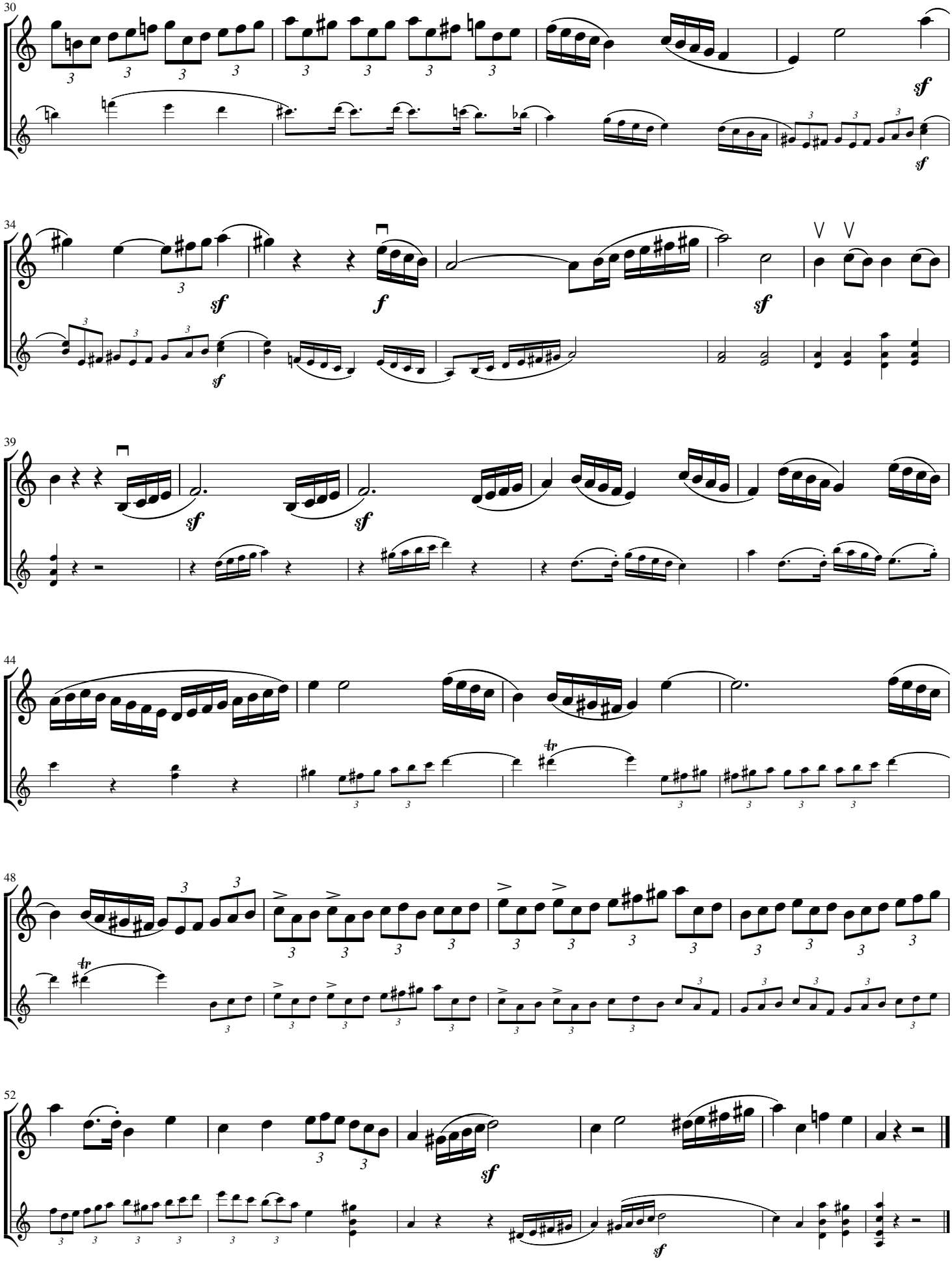

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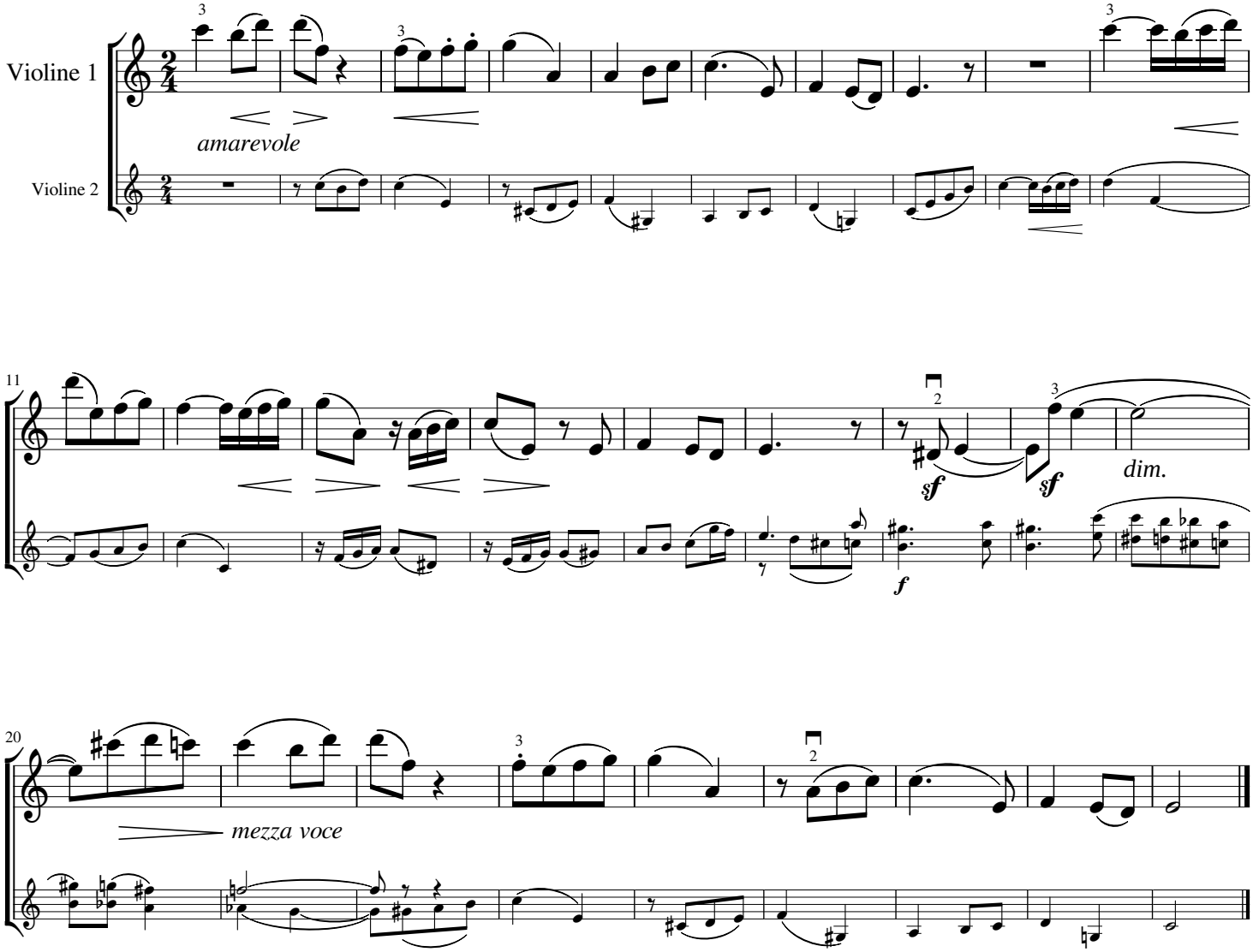
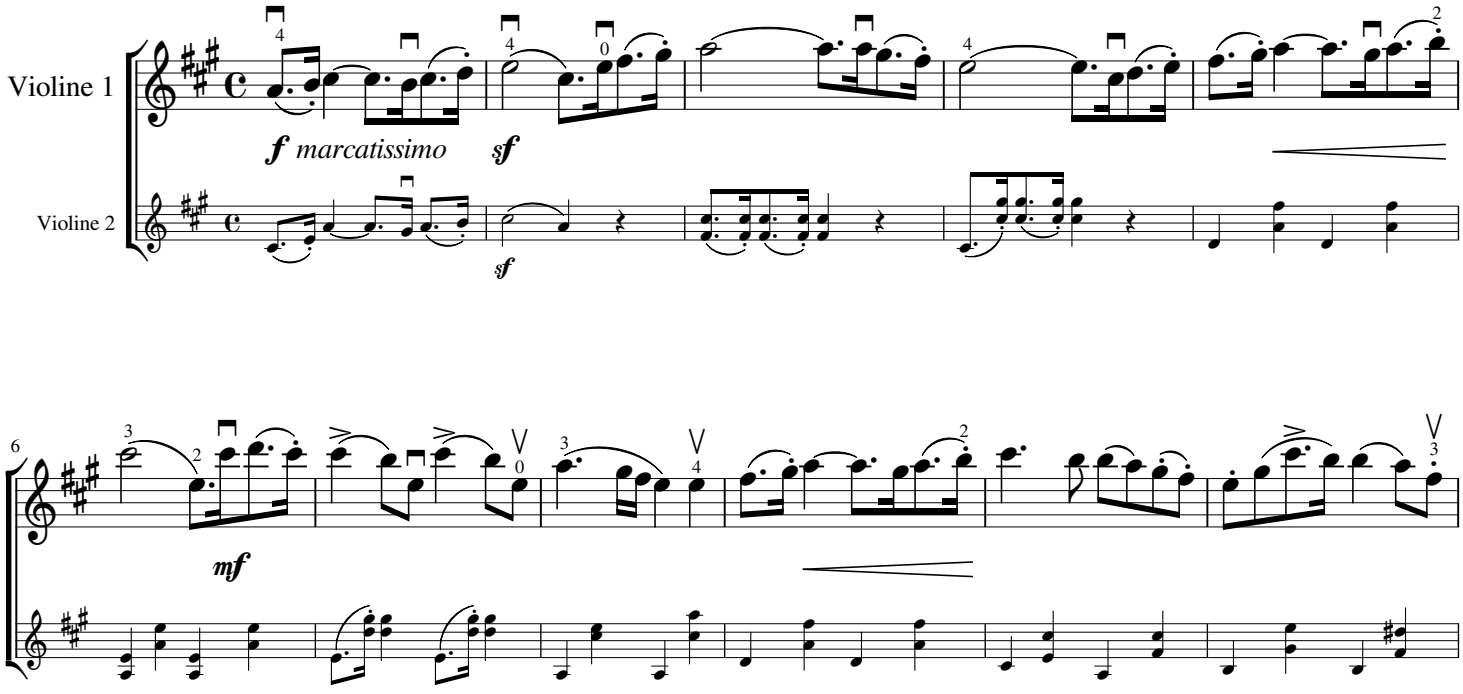
No. 19: Andante sostenuto



No. 20: Alla Marcia



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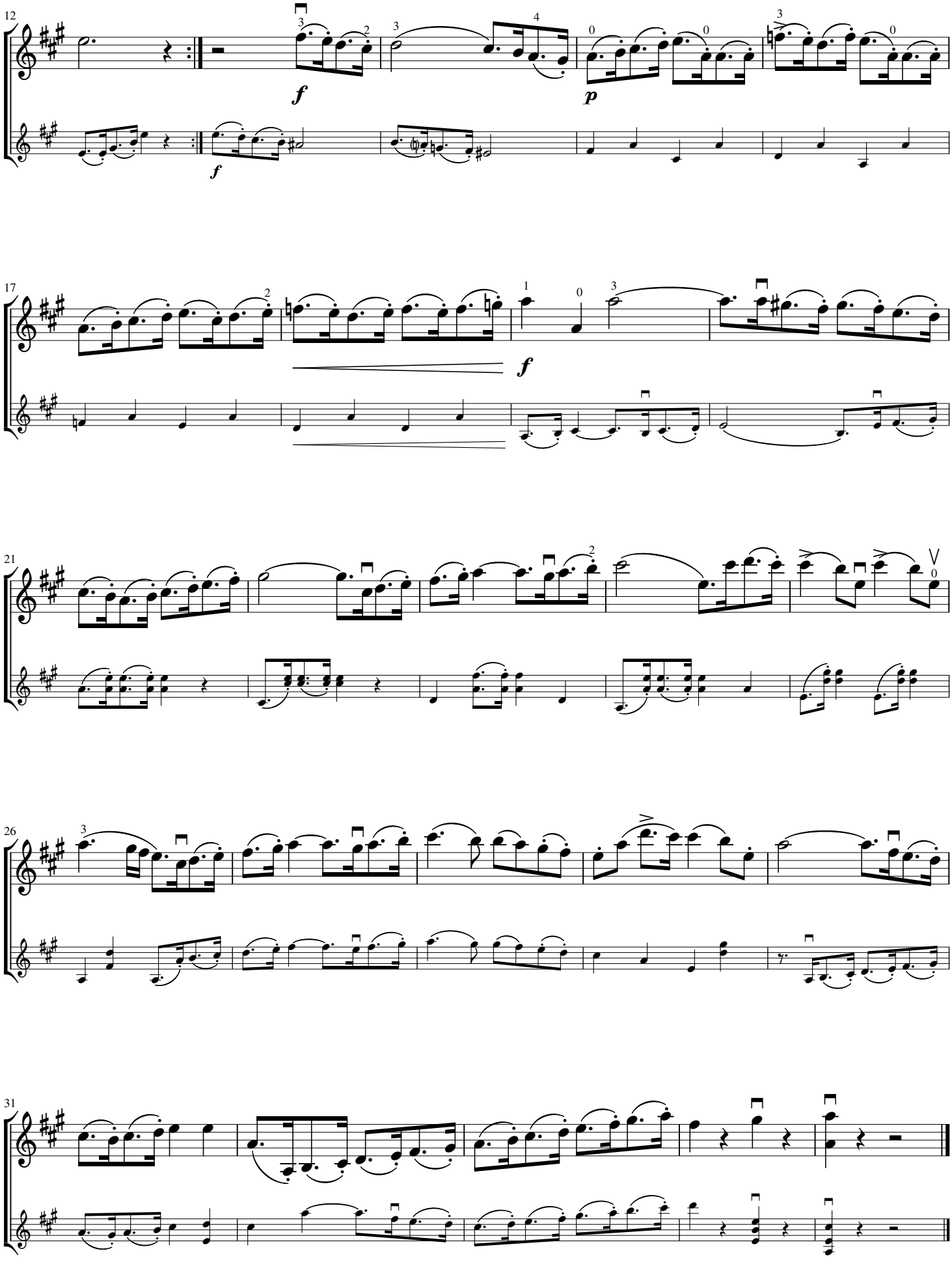
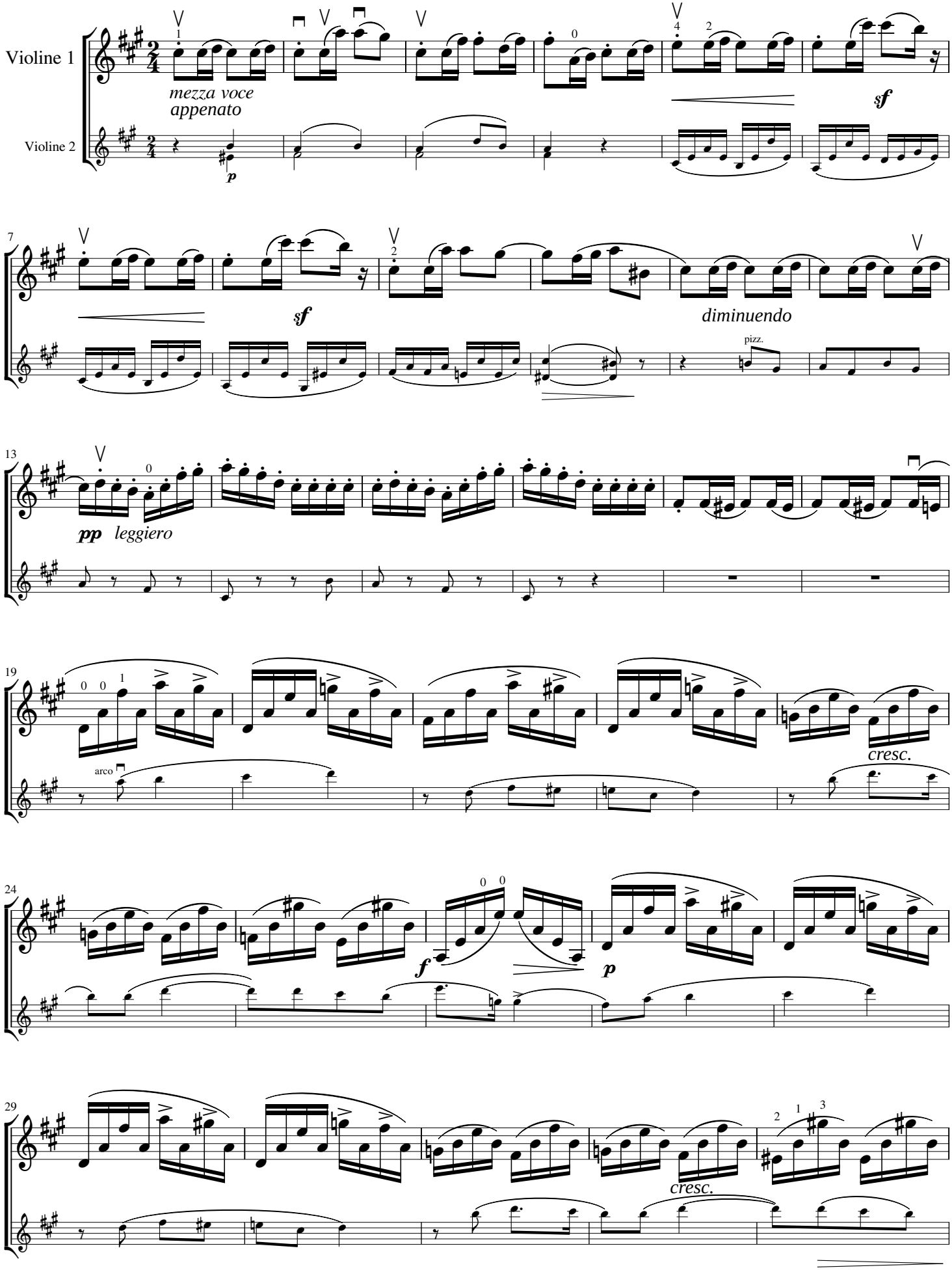
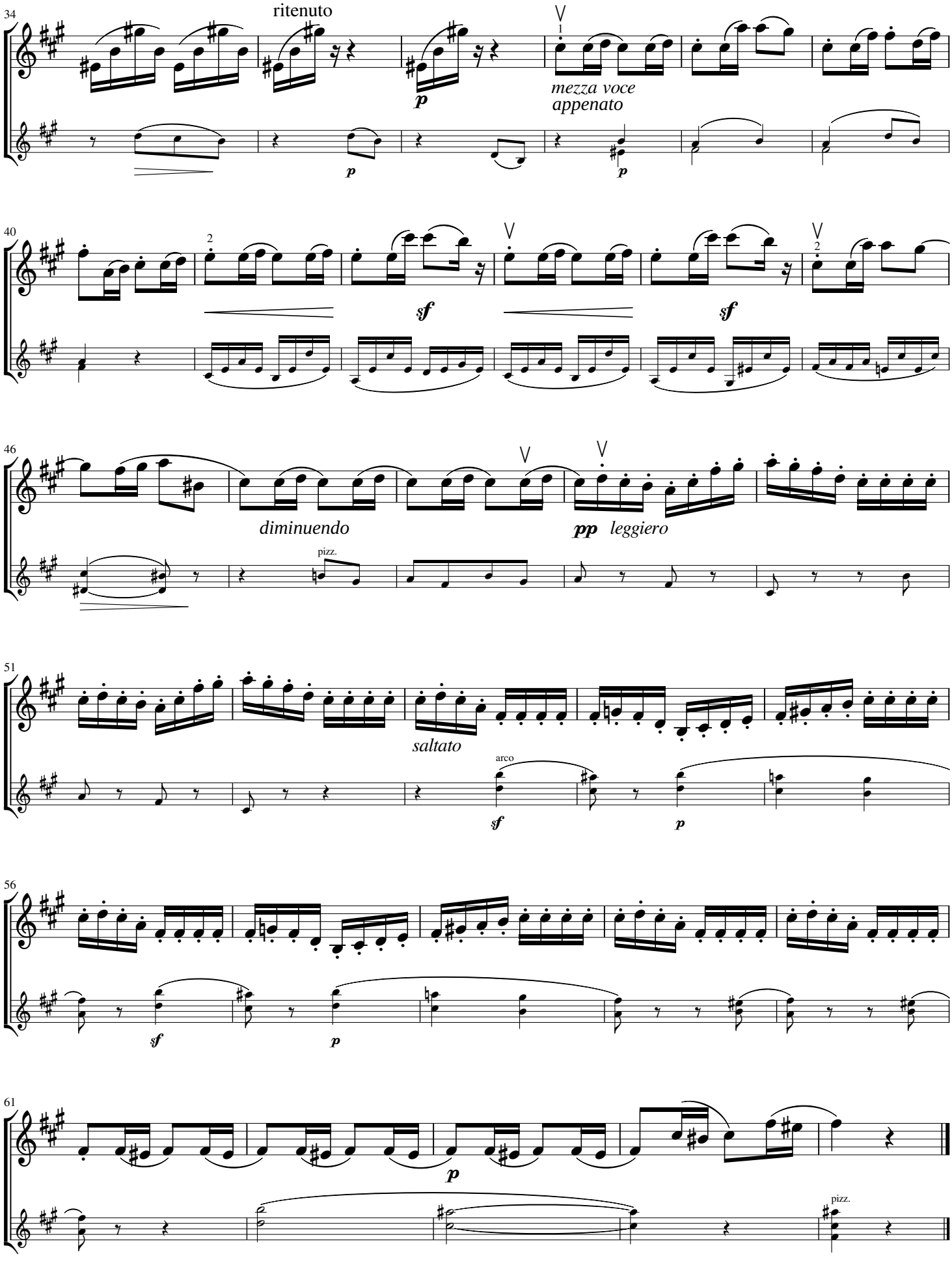


Creative Common Attribution - Non Commercial 3.0

Duo 22: Moderato

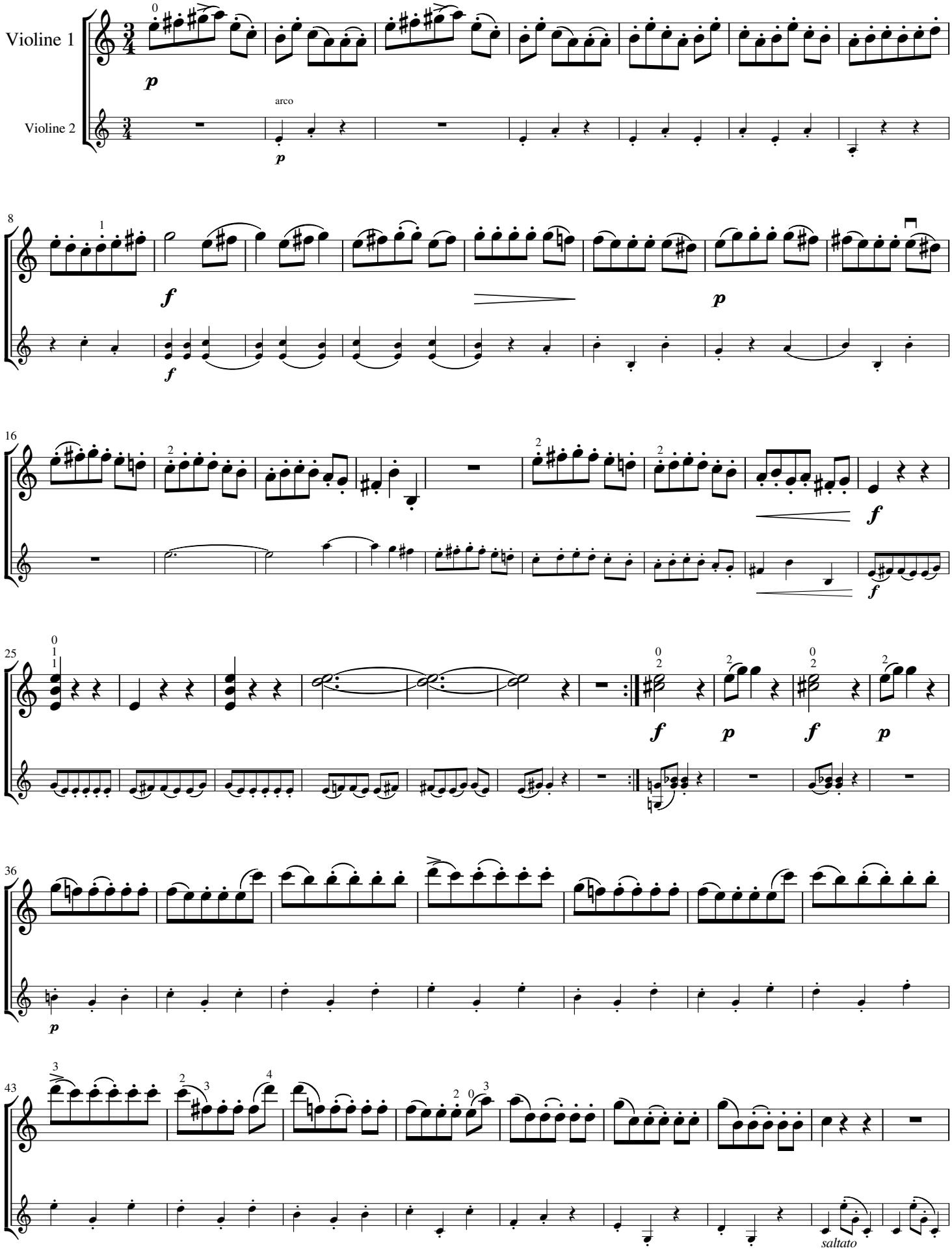


Creative Common Attribution - Non Commercial 3.0

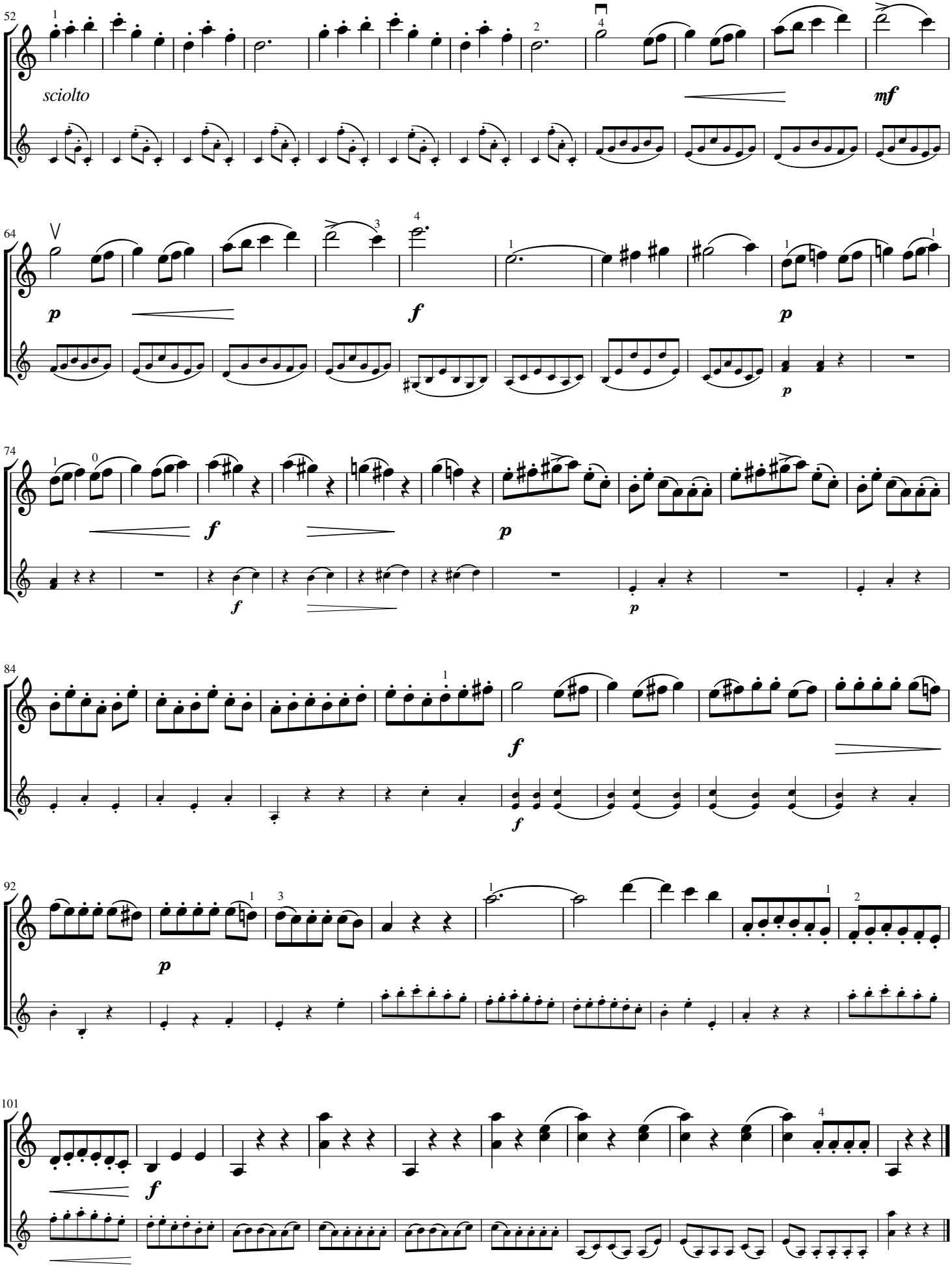


Creative Common Attribution - Non Commercial 3.0

Duo 23: CAPRICE. Vivace

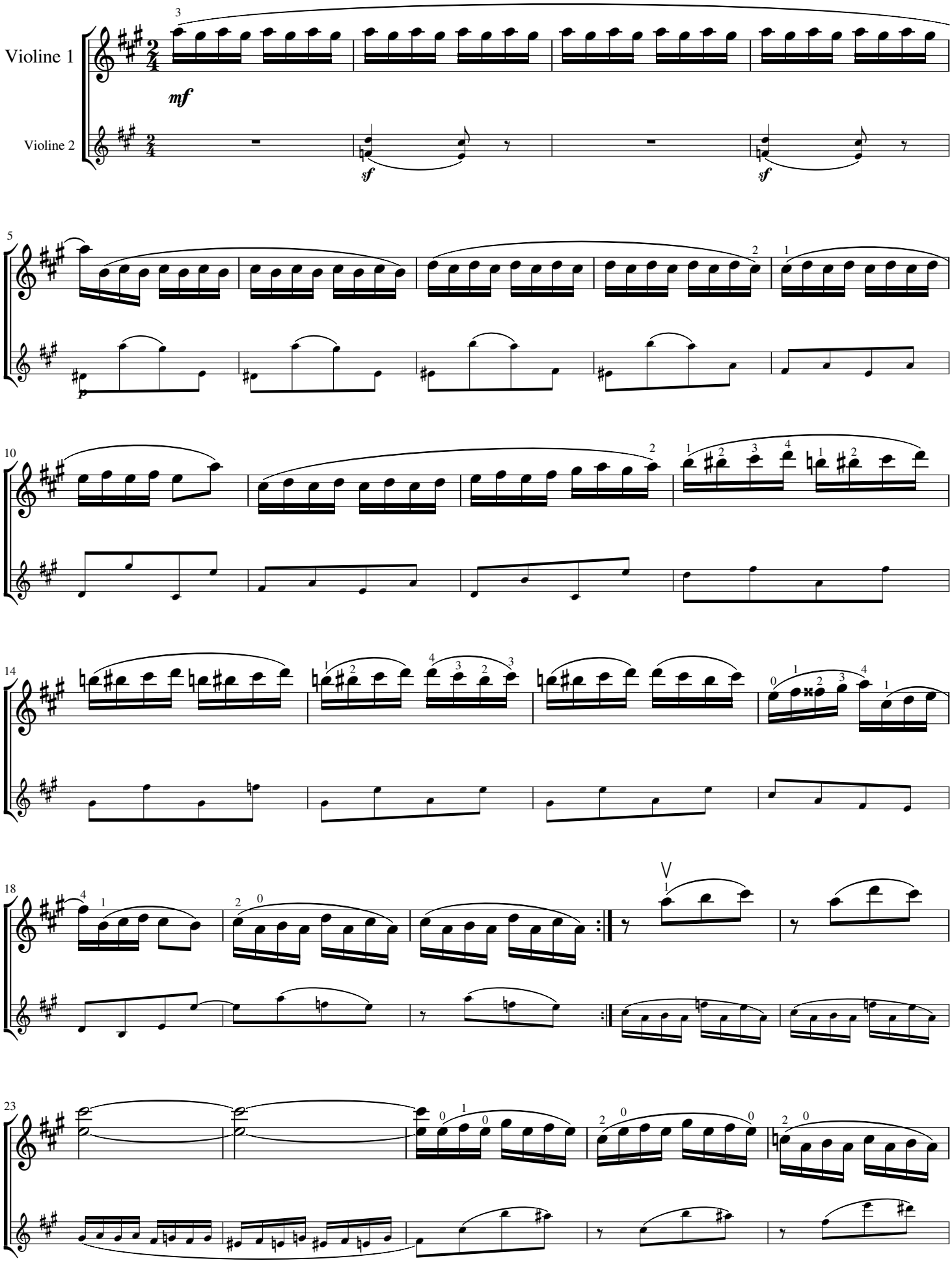


Creative Common Attribution - Non Commercial 3.0



Creative Common Attribution - Non Commercial 3.0

No. 24: Allegro con moto



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