Bass Clarinet

Suite of Music by Willam Byrd

for Three B-flat Clarinets and Bass Clarinet

by

Sean Osborn

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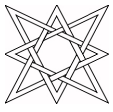

Octogram Press

Suite of Music by William Byrd, for Clarinet Quartet by Sean Osborn - 22 minutes

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Program Notes:

All of these pieces, except the second, are from The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, a collection of 297 pieces written between 1562 and 1612 by such composers as John Bull, Orlando Gibbons, Giles Farnaby, Peter Philips and William Byrd. It is unlikely that the collection was put together during the composers' lives, and many of the same works appear in other folio collections of the day.

The virginal is a keyboard instrument similar to the harpsichord, and is named after England's Elizabeth I, the virgin queen. The pieces in the FVB were never meant to be exclusively performed on the virginal, and sound wonderful on any keyboard instrument.

The FWB compositions all employ an early variation technique known as a chaconne: variations are written over a recurring chord progression that starts with the theme. *Pavana* is in binary form (AB).

I. *O Mistriss Myne* (FVB LXVI)- Lyrics by William Shakespeare, written for Feste in *Twelfth Night*. A young lover entreats his lady to stay and give him kisses "good and twenty." The tune is by Thomas Morley, a student of William Byrd's, who died shortly after the play premiered in 1602.

II. *Pavana. The Earle of Salisbury* - The pavane is a 16th-century Italian dance for procession. It was composed in memory of Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury (sixth creation), a close advisor to both Elizabeth I and James I, who had died on 24 May 1612, with two accompanying galliards.

III. *Galiarda* (FVB XCIV)- A popular dance all over Europe in the Renaissance, the galliard was one of Elizabeth I's favorite dances. It is a dance in 3 (or 6), usually involving five steps (short, short, short, long, short). Though it is a fast dance, the two galliards in this suite are instrumental works with many ornaments, so the tempo is slower. In this galliard, Byrd uses a lot of close canons and imitative counterpoint, obscuring the 3-beat. In fact, the opening sounds like it's in 5!

IV. *Galiardas Passamezzo* (FVB LVII)- A galliard with the popular passamezzo-antico chord progression. This piece uses the rhythmic device of a hemiola (augmentation of 3) that occurs in the third pair of bars every 8 bars. This piece is also in the Byrd-collected *My Ladye Nevelles Booke* from 1591, as *The Galliarde to the Nynthe Pavian*. Instrumental galliards were often written as "after dances" to instrumental pavanes.

V. *The Carmans Whistle* (FVB LVIII) - Also collected in MLNB, the title refers to a "carman" or what we would know as a carter or delivery person today, and their habit of whistling, which they say helped them control their horses. The song dates from the Tudor era, and risqué lyrics have survived, including a version entitled *The Courteous Carman and the Amorous Maid*.

VI. *Tregian's Ground* (FVB LX) - This ground has an unusual chord progression, involving F, C, and G major chords, all in the key of A minor. The title likely refers to Francis Tregian, Jr., amateur musician, copyist, and fellow Catholic to Byrd. Many people feel that it was he who copied the entire FWB while in Fleet Prison for debt and recusancy (refusing to attend Anglican services).

Performance suggestions:

Modern notation has been used for Ornaments. Mordents should begin on the main note (not above or below). Feel free to add additional ornaments, take some away, or change the ones marked. Commas have been marked at sections that should be separated. Ritardandos preceding the commas are customary. Dynamics are not original, and should be supplemented by bringing out the important line.

Bass Clarinet

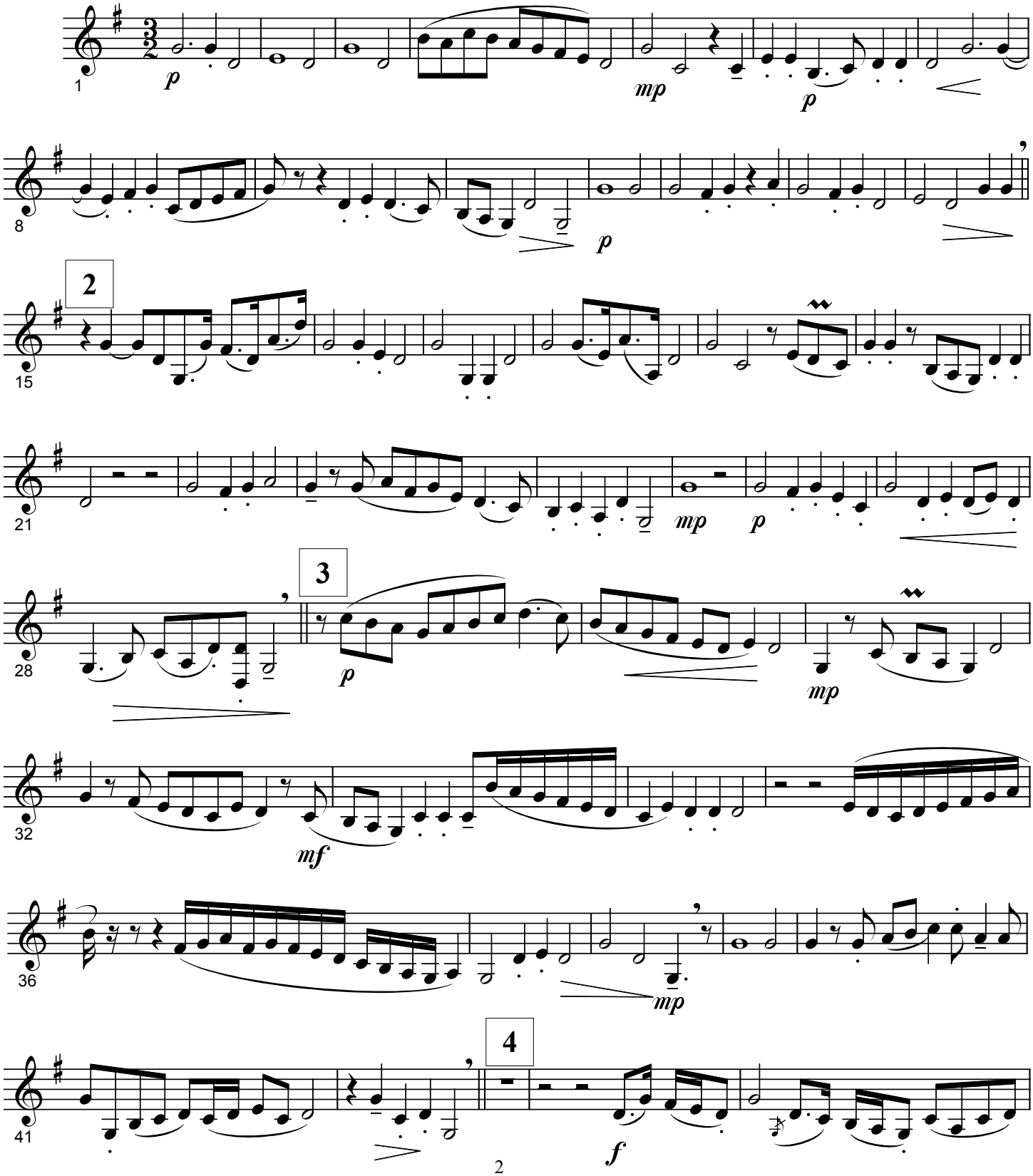
Suite of music by William Byrd

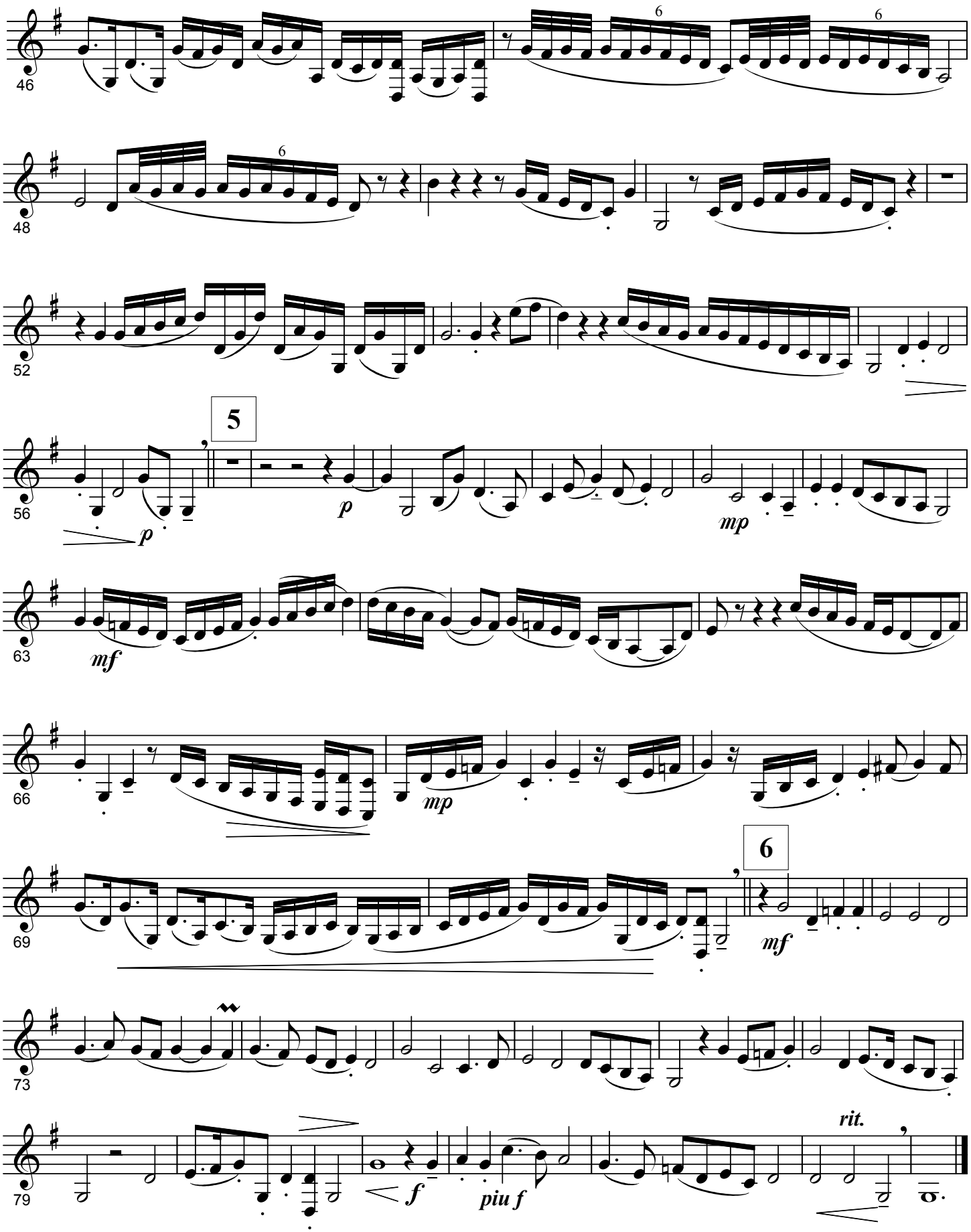
for three B-flat clarinets and bass clarinet

I. O Mistris Myne

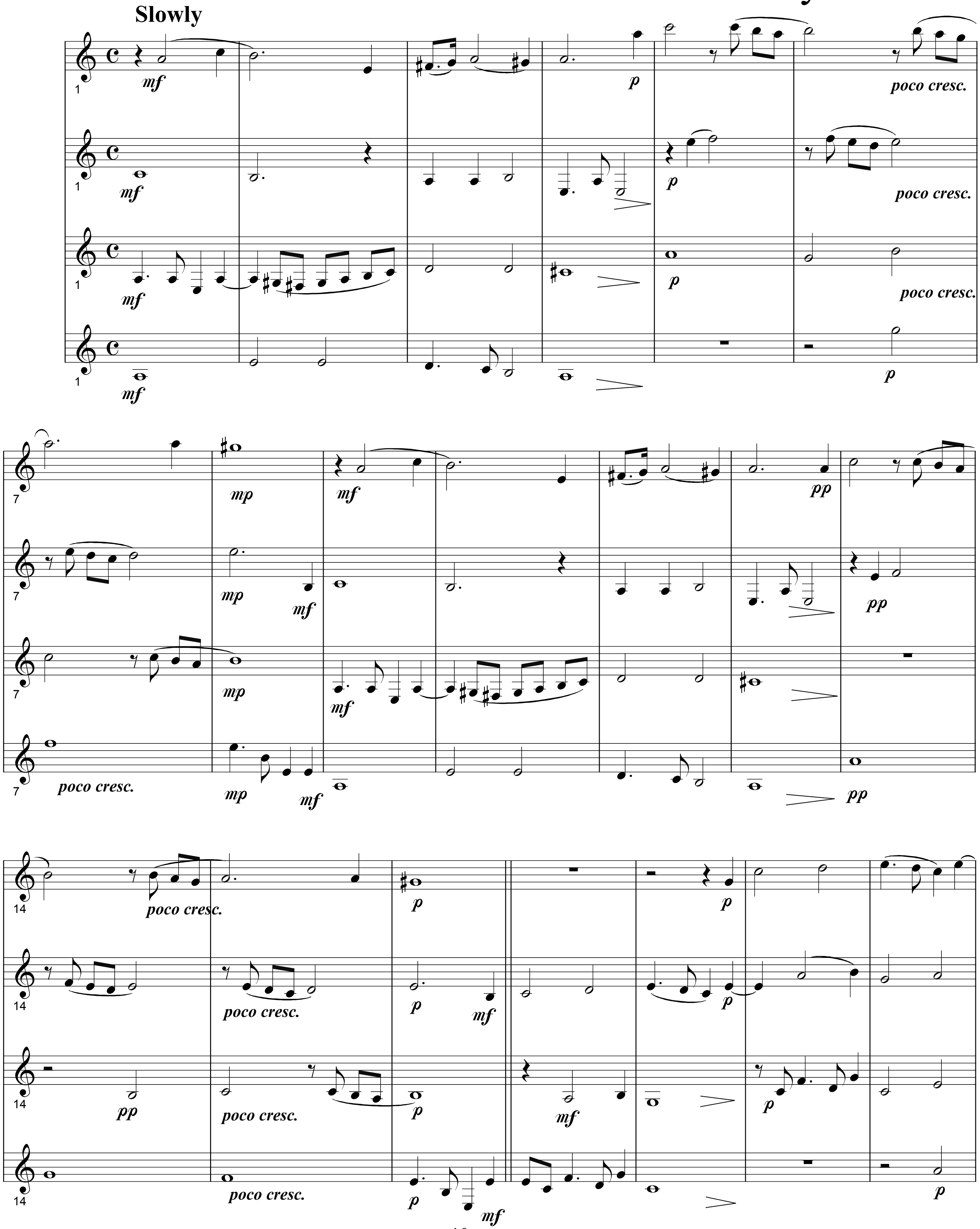
arr. Sean Osborn

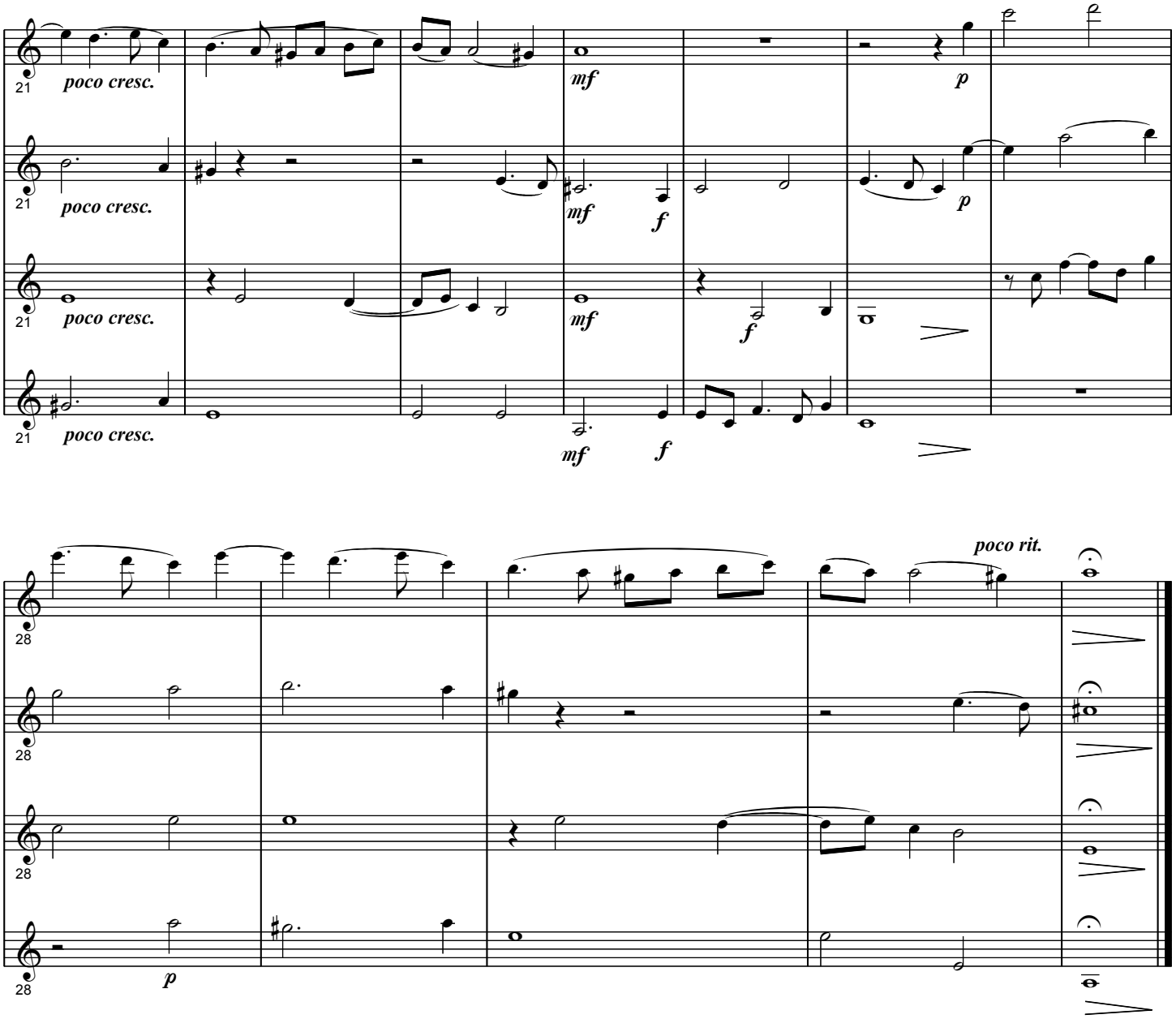
Moderate




46
6
6
48
6
52
56
5
p
p
mp
63
mf
66
mp
69
6
mf
73
79
f
piu f
rit.

II. Pavana. The Earle of Salisbury

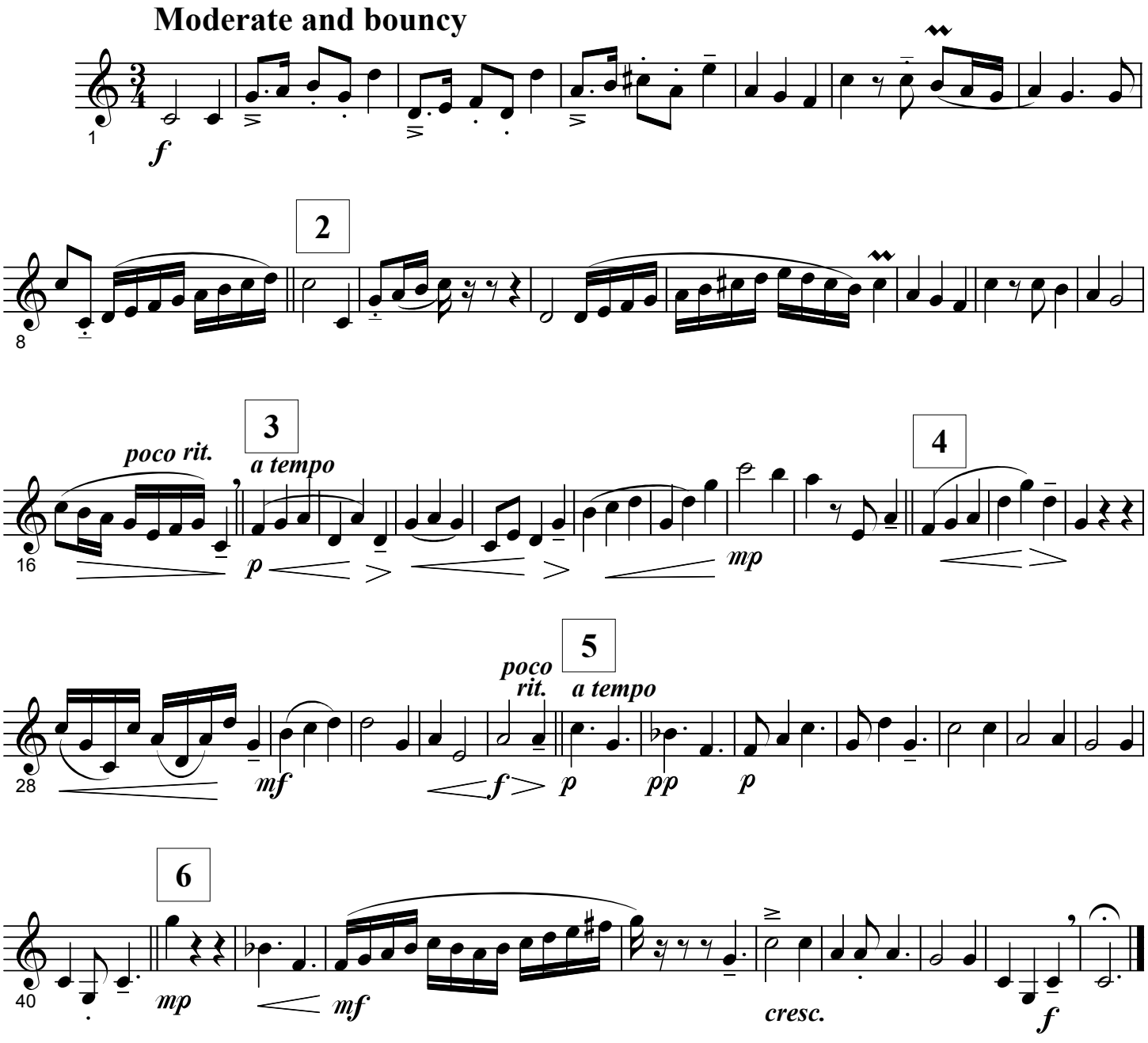



21
poco cresc.
mf
p
f
21
poco cresc.
mf
f
p
21
poco cresc.
mf
f
21
poco cresc.
mf
f

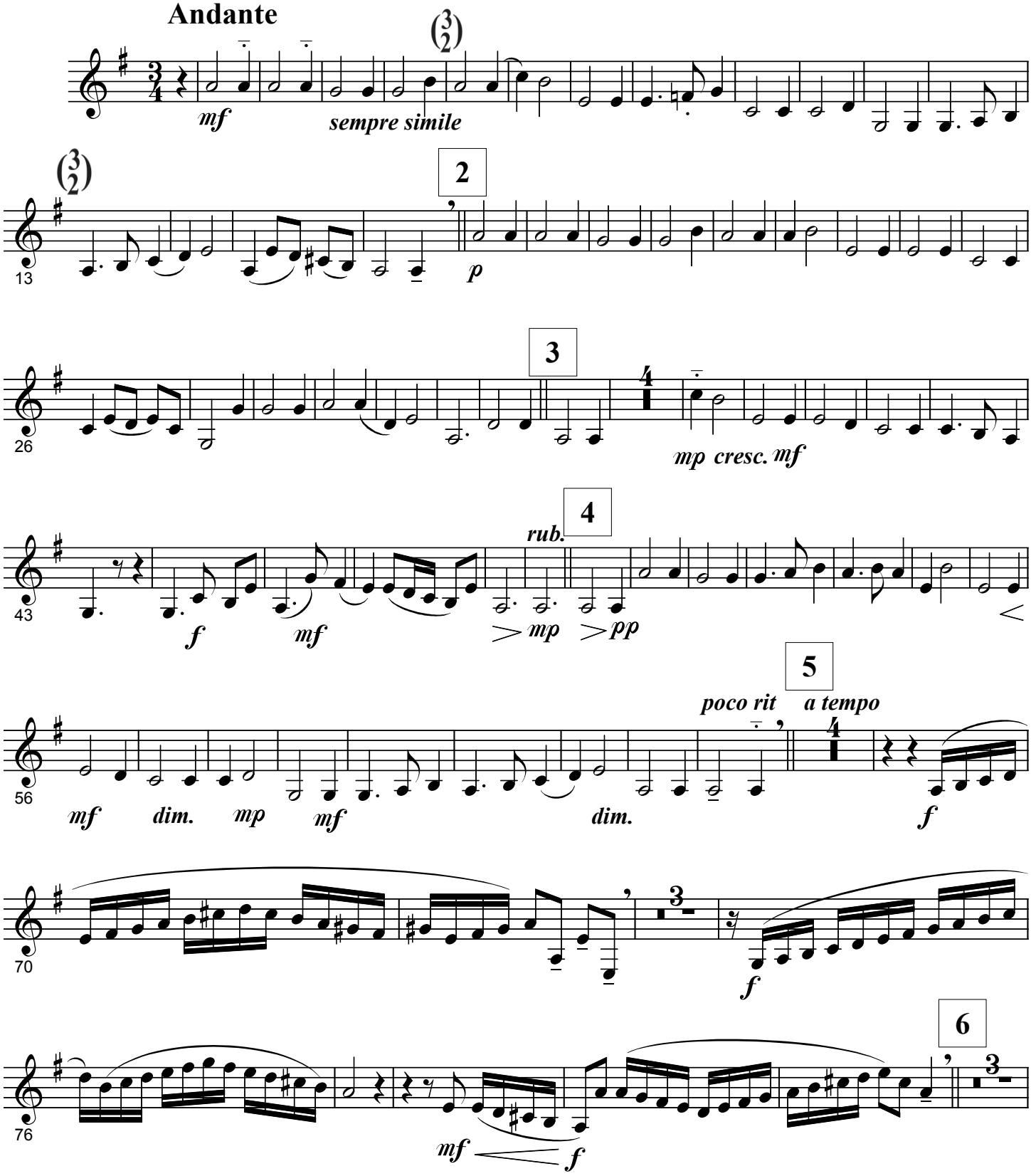
poco rit.
28
28
28
p

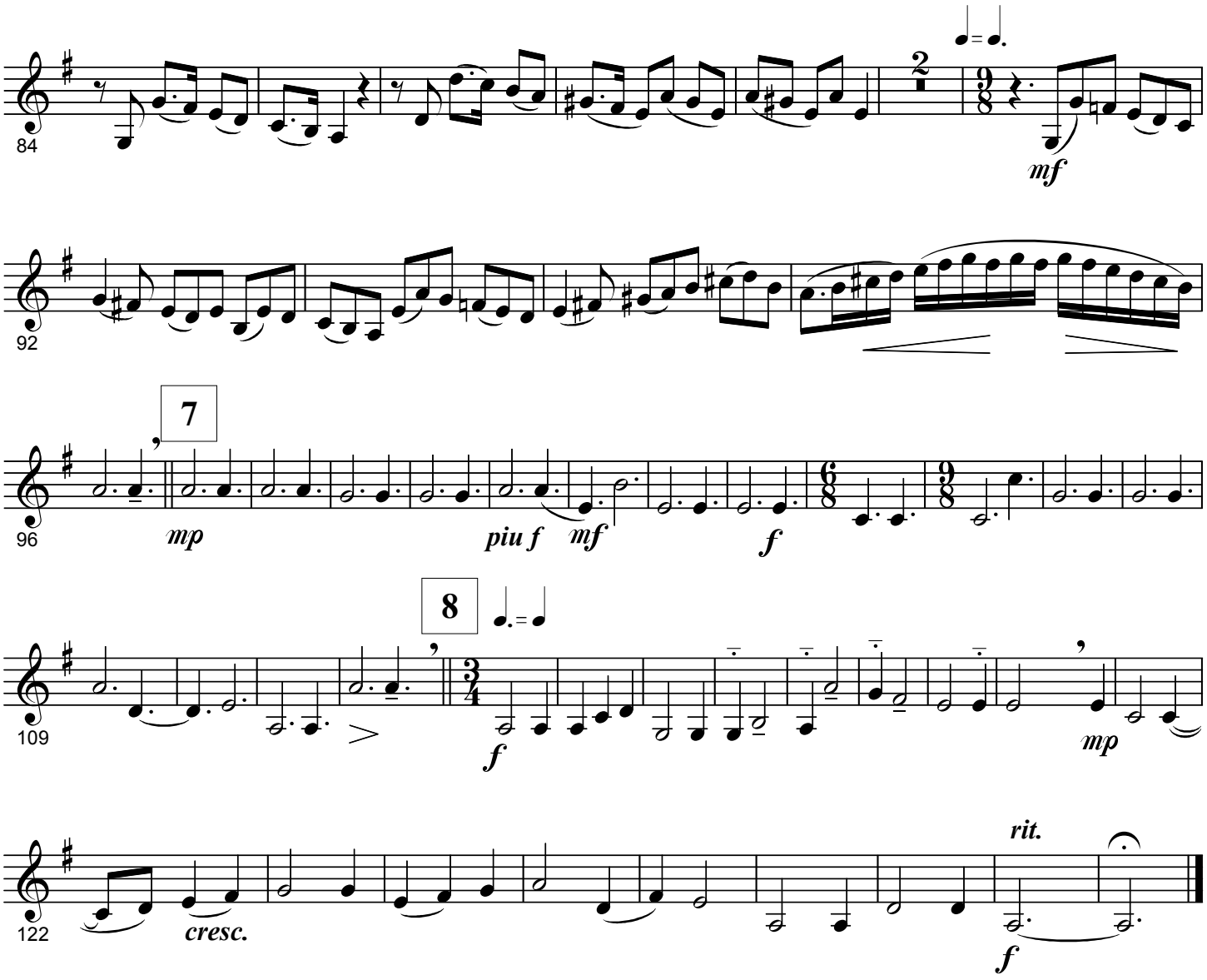
Bass Clarinet

III. Galiarda



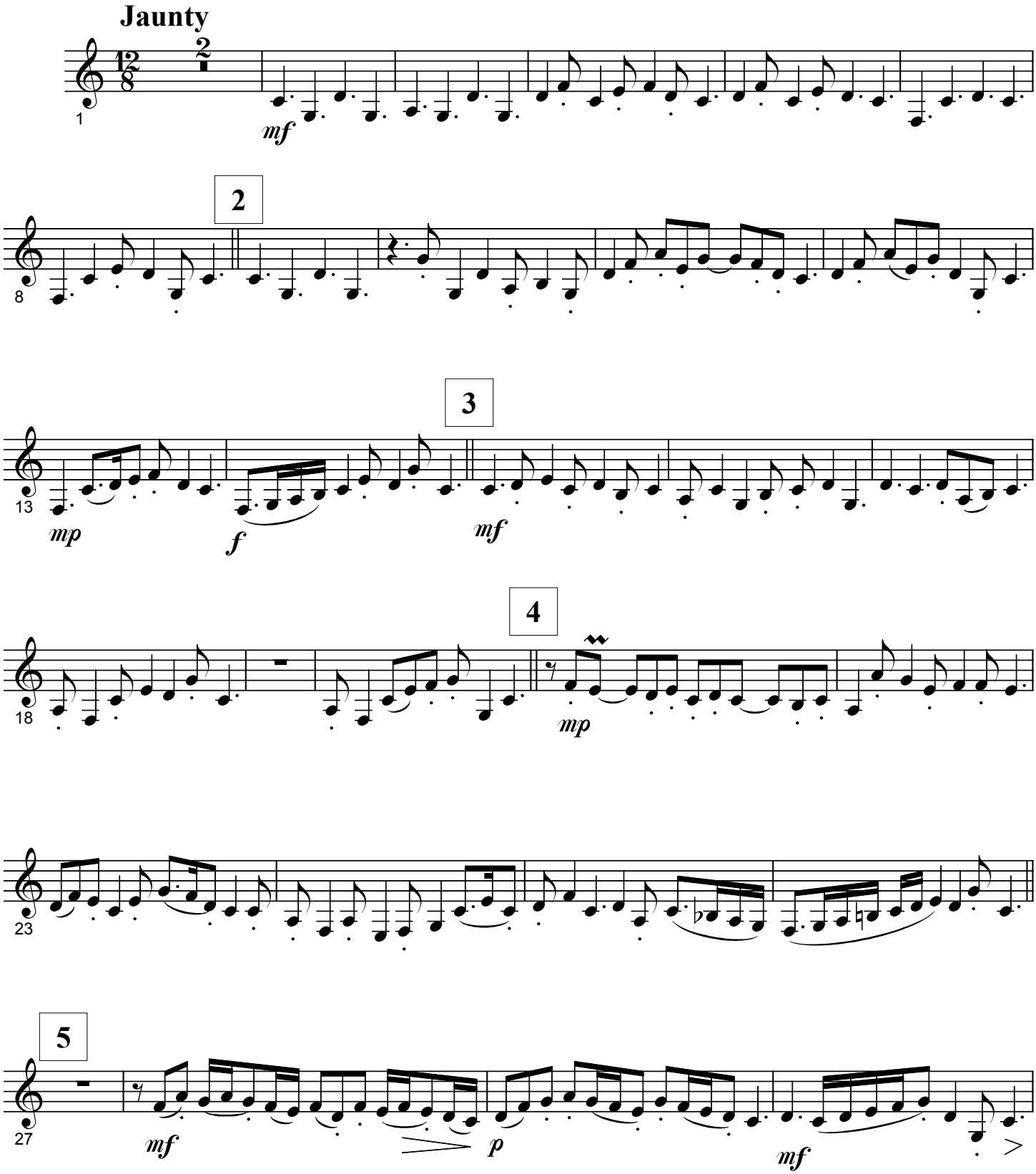
IV. Galiardas Passamezzo

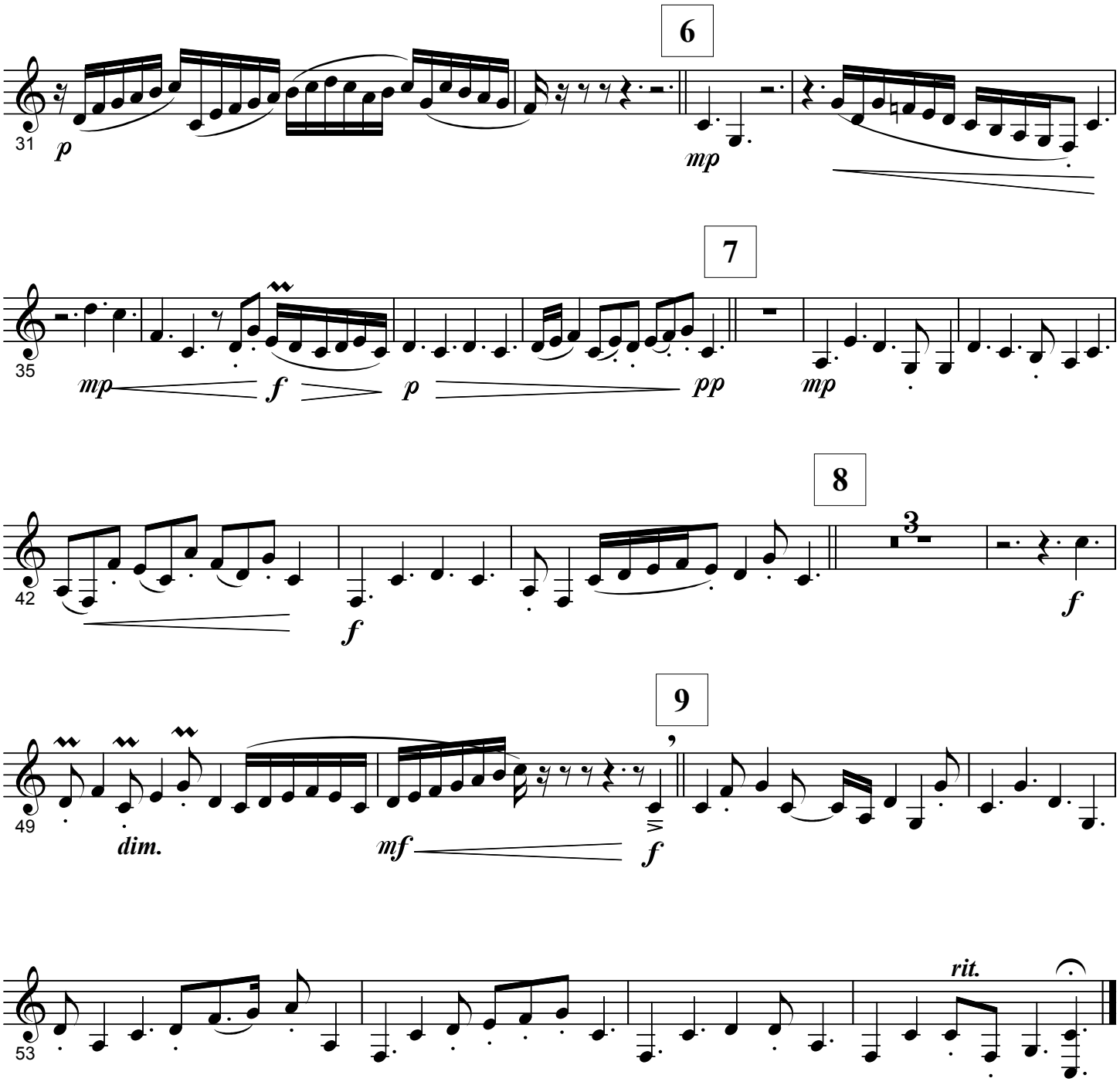



84
2
mf
92
96
7
mp
piu f
mf
f
109
8
f
mp
122
cresc.
rit.
f

Bass Clinetnet

V. The Carman's Whistle

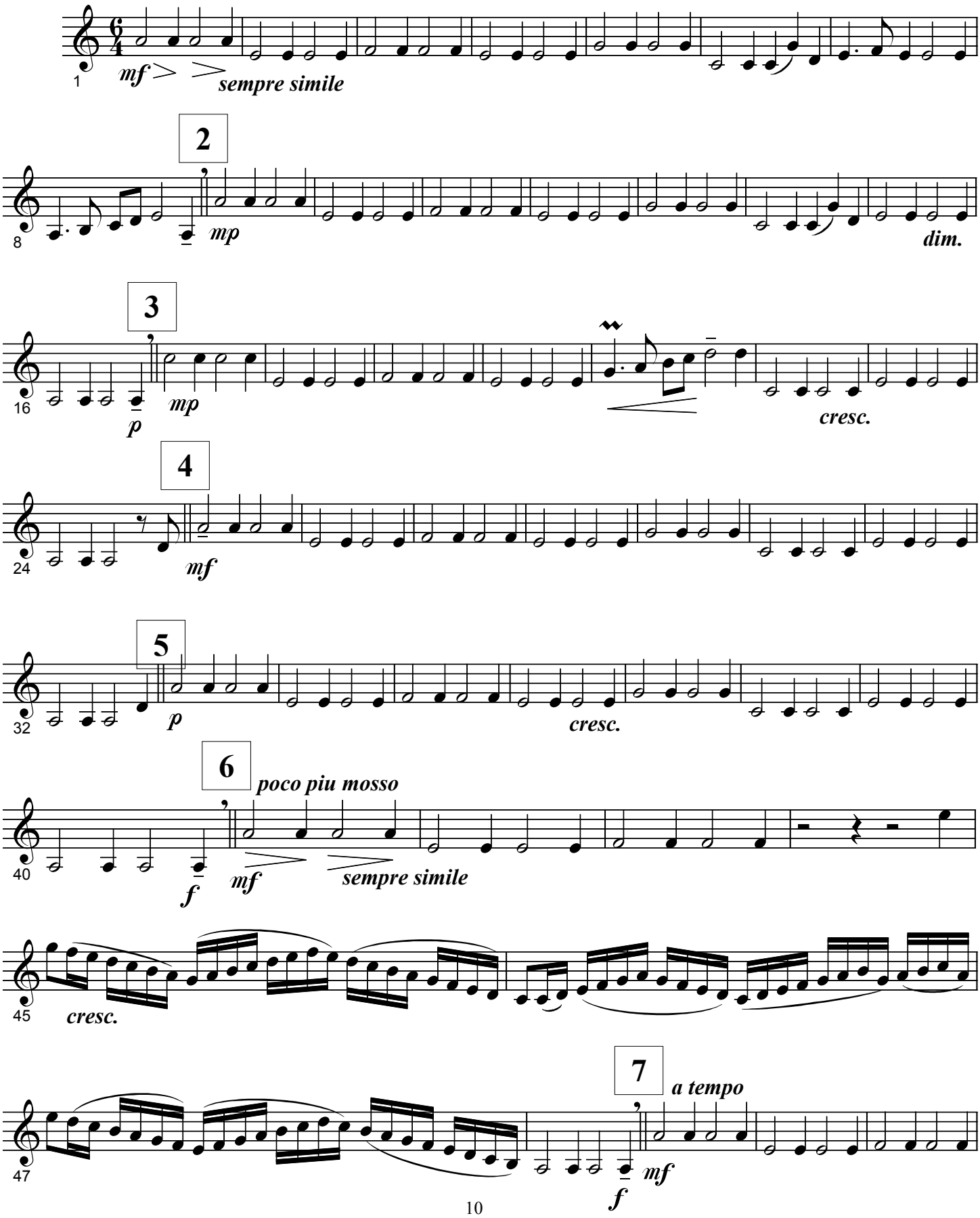


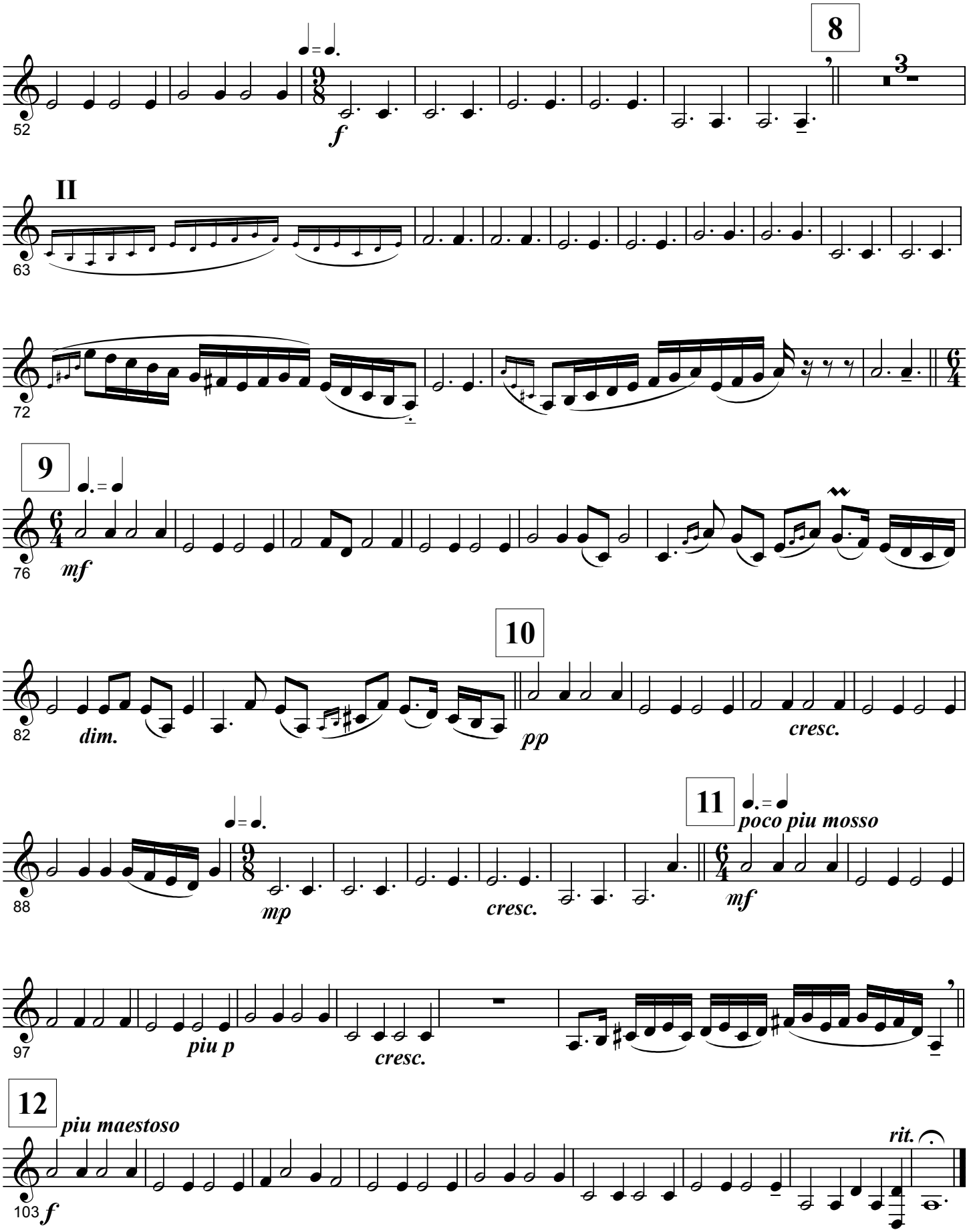

6
31
p
mp
7
35
mp
f
p
pp
mp
8
42
f
3
f
9
49
dim.
mf
f
rit.
53

Bass Clarinet

VI. Tregian's Ground

Andante moderato




8
3
52
f
II
63
72
9
76
mf
10
82
dim.
pp
cresc.
11
poco piu mosso
88
mp
cresc.
mf
97
piu p
cresc.
12
piu maestoso
103
f
rit.