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Variations from a Dark Room

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Publication Date
2020

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Variations from a Dark Room

Adam Lutz

Performance Notes

This piece is a theme and variation set, presented in reverse. It begins with the variation that is most removed from the theme, and throughout the duration of the piece, the theme is further and further crystallized, until that is all we are left with. The subsections (seven variations and the theme) can be separated into four sections. Variation VII and Variation VI are to be thought about as one section. This is where the theme is most ambiguous. This section should be approached patiently and cautiously, for though it is vague, the theme is still present, and this as well as other material in this section will come back throughout the piece. The next section is Variation V alone. It is the longest variation in the piece, and is the first time the entirety of the theme can be seen clearly (if one knows what it is). Though it is atonal, the performer should recognize and highlight the still present harmonic motion, particularly with chromatic lines in the accompaniment to the melody. Variation IV and Variation III are the most exciting and most expressive variations of the piece, and are to be thought of as one section. The theme is fully realized in the accented notes of the right hand in Variation IV, and should be brought out, since this is the first time it is stated completely uninterrupted. Aside from a dynamic dip in the transition between the two variations, this entire section should be loud and passionate. Variation III should be played extremely expressively, flowing very freely through all the feathered beams and non-feathered beams. The final section is the two remaining variations and the theme itself. The emotion and intensity of the entire piece slowly unravels throughout these three subsections, and the performer should try to express this as best as he/she can. This section is supposed to be very delicate, utilizing mostly the crown of the mallet and the node of the bar, when appropriate.

Specific Performance Notes

Measure 26 - This measure is to be repeated as many times as the performer feels necessary. The first time it is played, the whole note is to be respected at the tempo of the previous measure. From there, the tempo (and subsequently the speed of the rhythm) should increase while the space between iterations of the gesture should decrease, the grace notes fattening further and further, until finally it sounds nearly identical to measure 27. It is at this point that the performer should continue.

Measure 69 - This whole note roll should begin as all the rolls had previously in the chorale. But through the duration of the fermata, the performer should relax the double vertical roll (both within the hands and between hands) until a clear but still sustaining pattern emerges of mallets 1 2 3 4 striking respectively. The transition from that to the next measure (same exact notes and marginal difference in speed) should be imperceptible.

Measure 124 - This measure should feel like you are slowly giving up on the written rhythms and disintegrating into a roll. It is not imperative that the performer strictly adhere to the written rhythms if he/she feels the desired effect could be accomplished in a different way.

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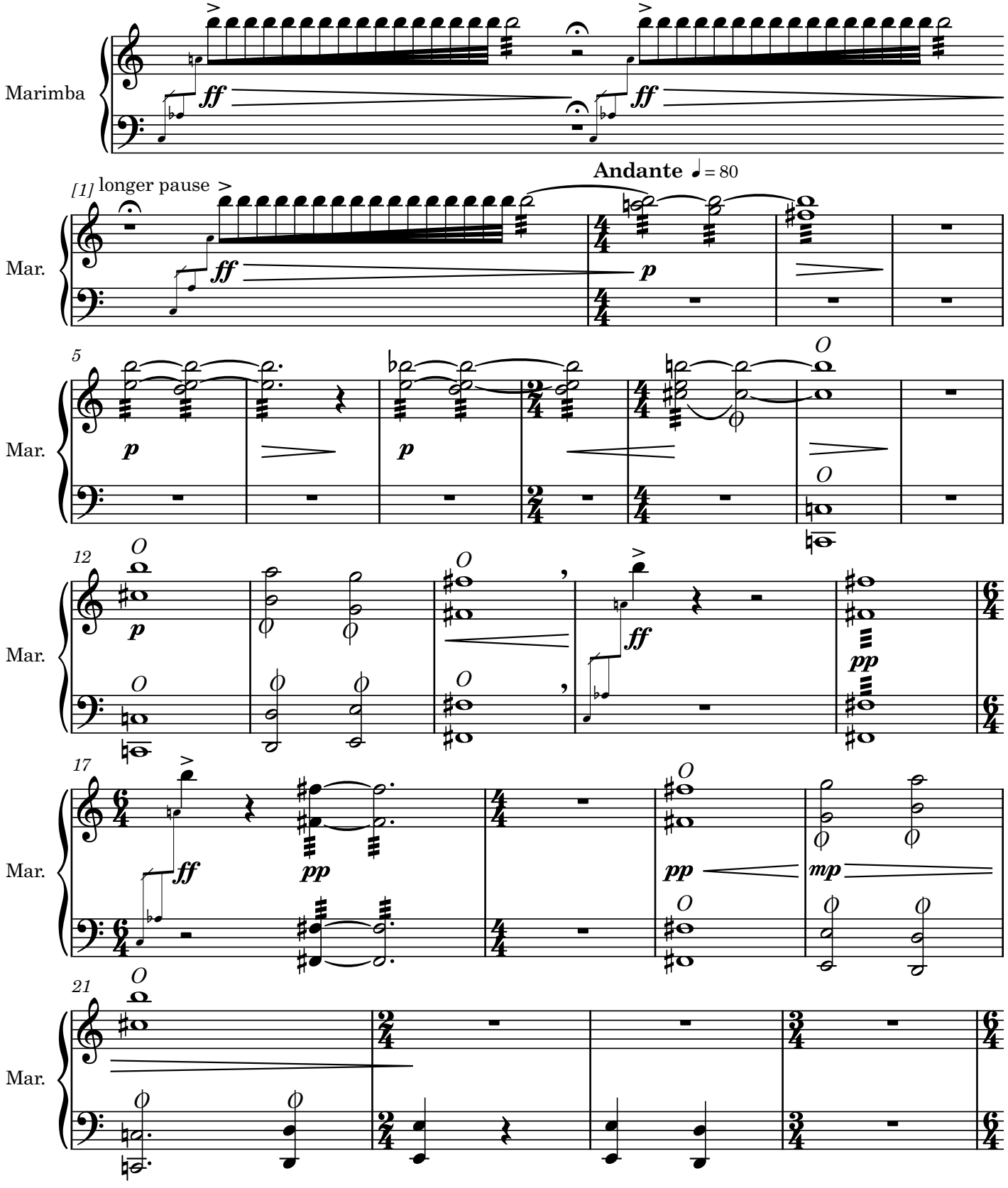
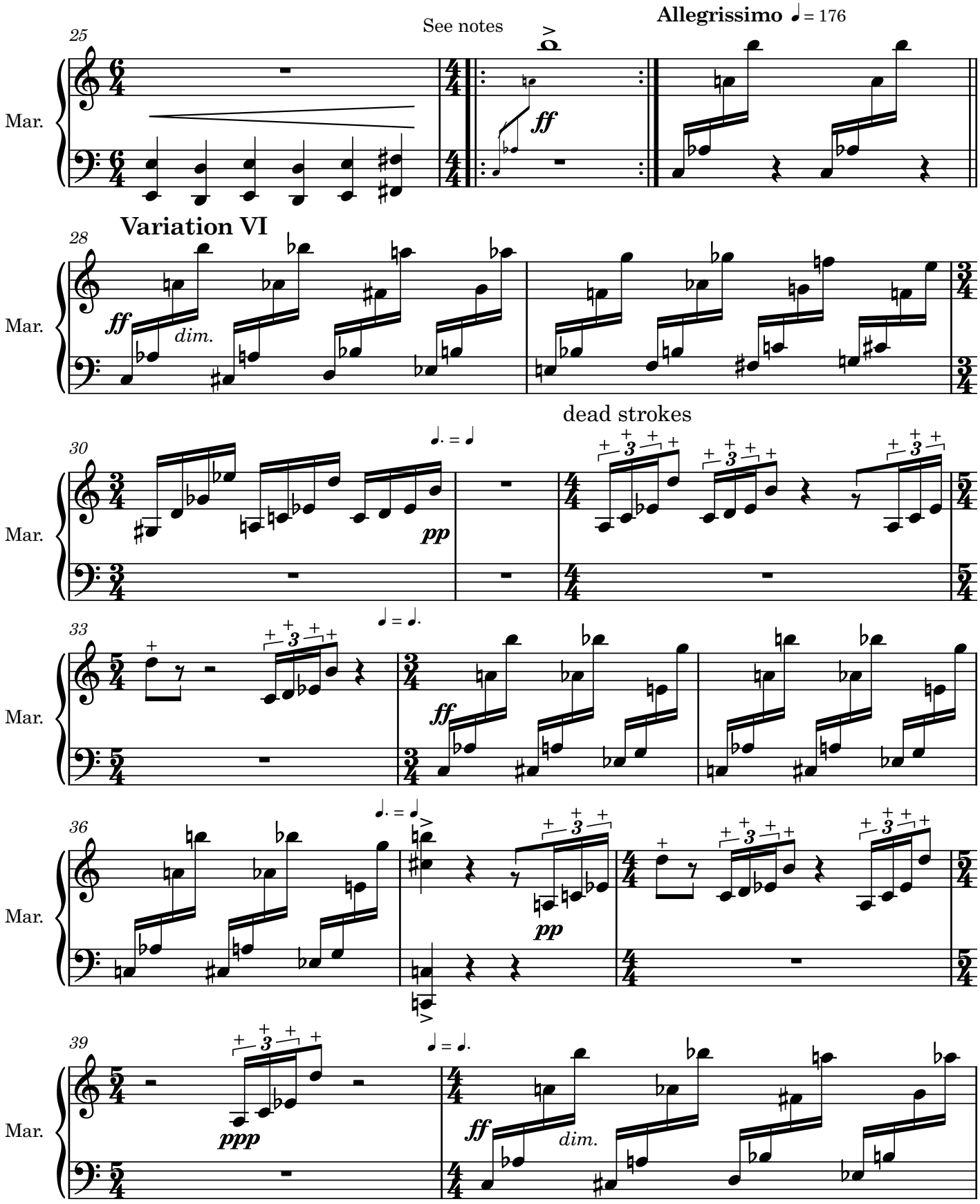
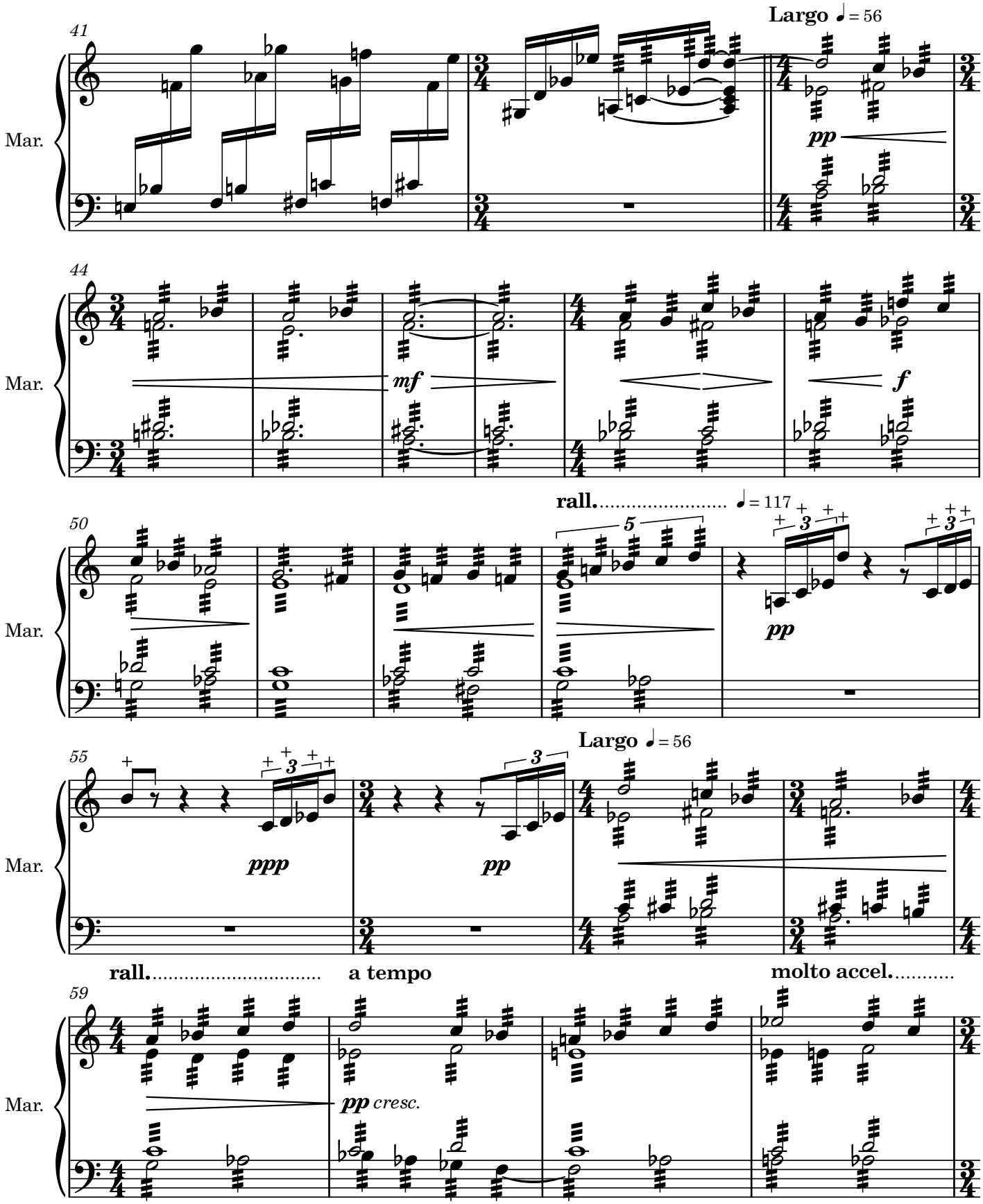
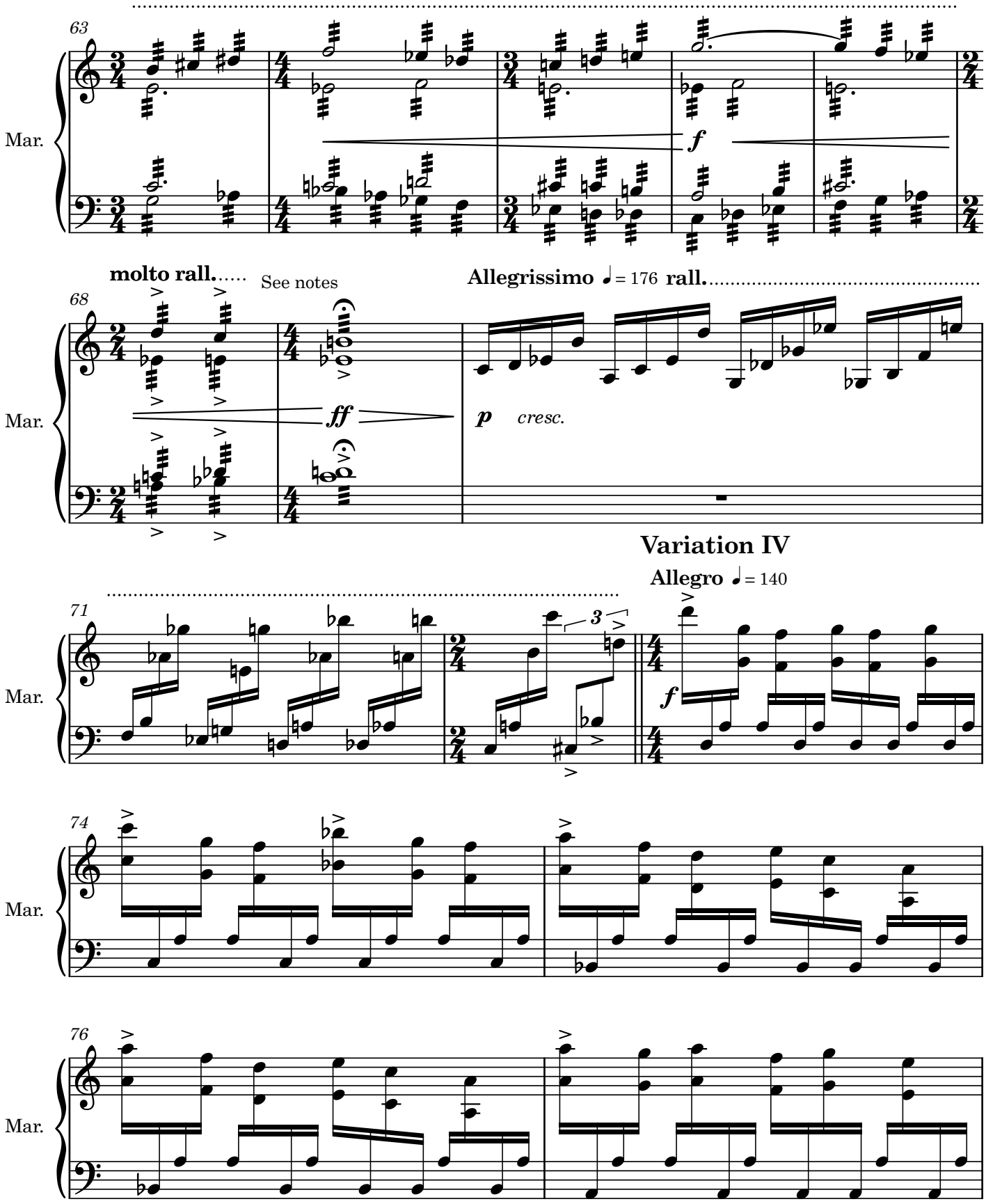
Variation VII

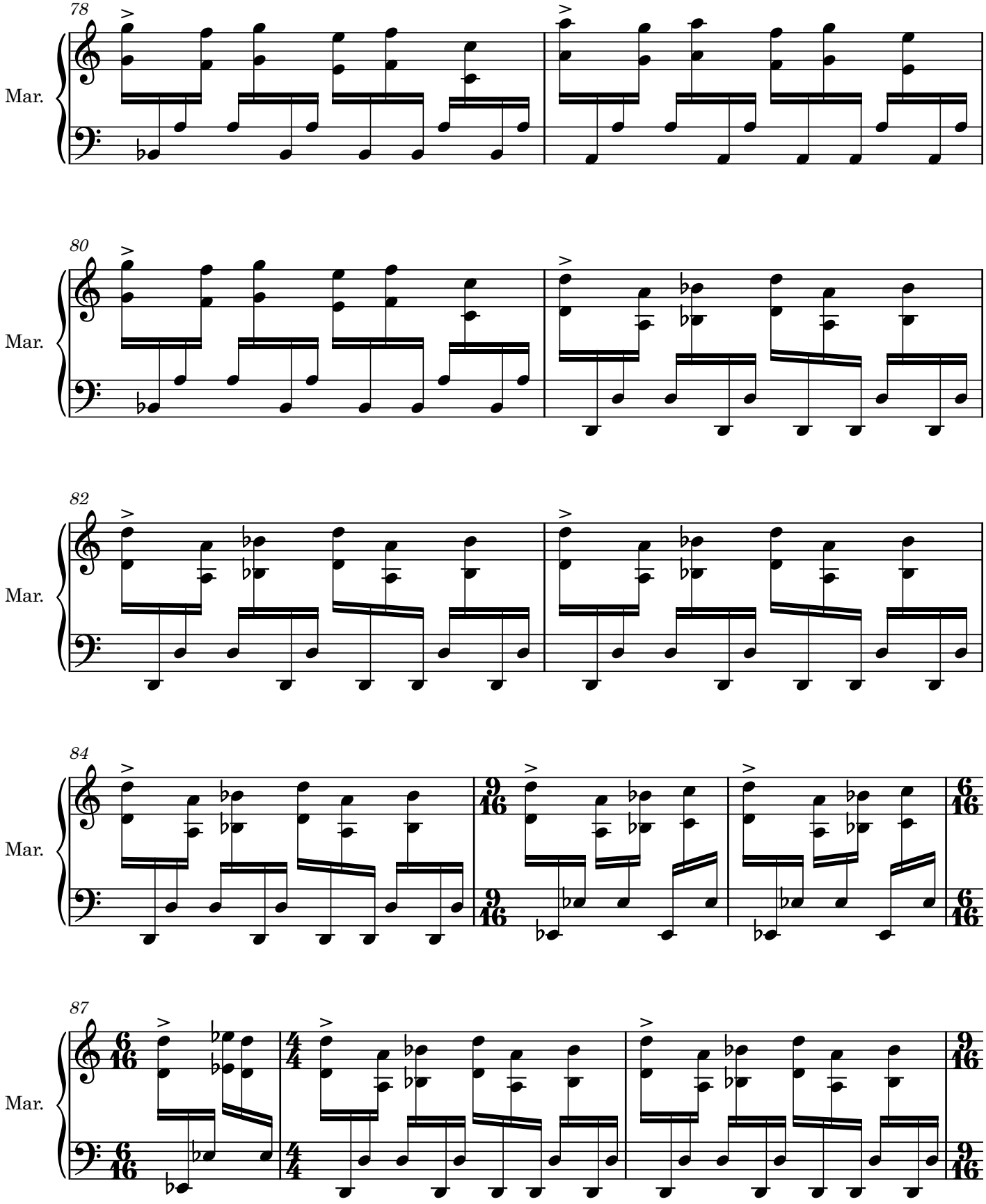


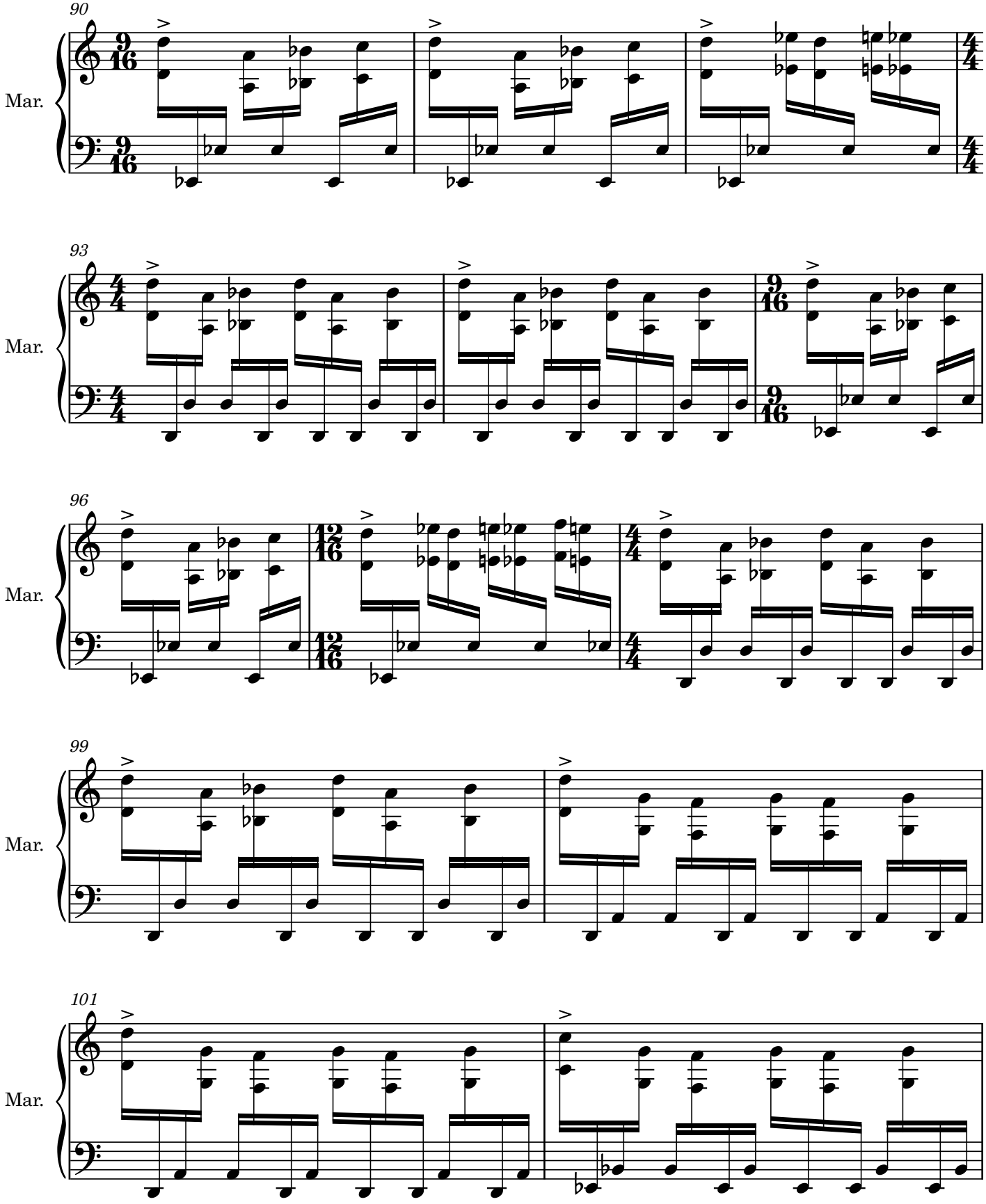

25
See notes
Allegrissimo ♩ = 176
Mar.
ff
28
Variation VI
ff
dim.
30
dead strokes
pp
33
ff
36
pp
39
ppp
ff
dim.

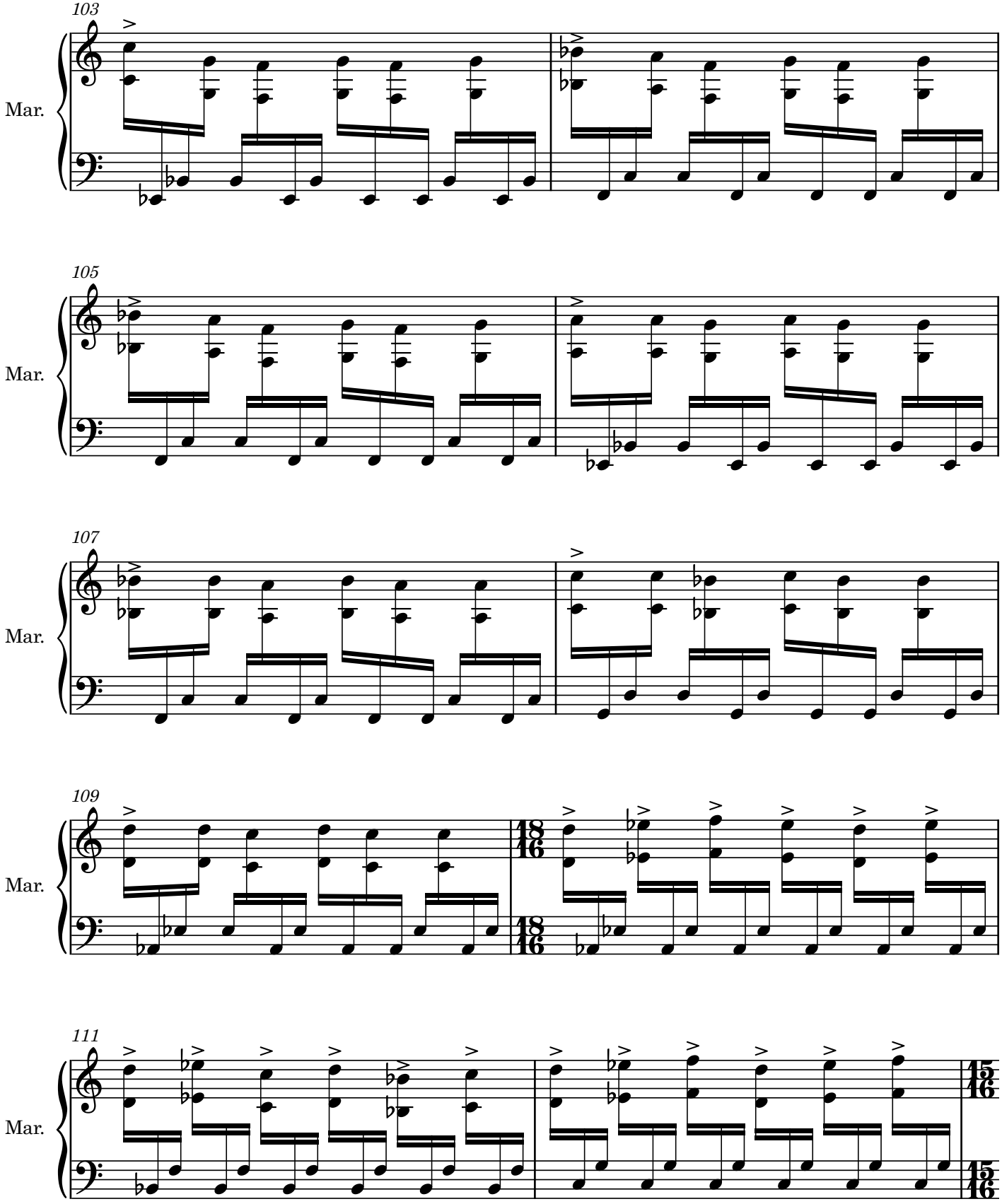
Variation V

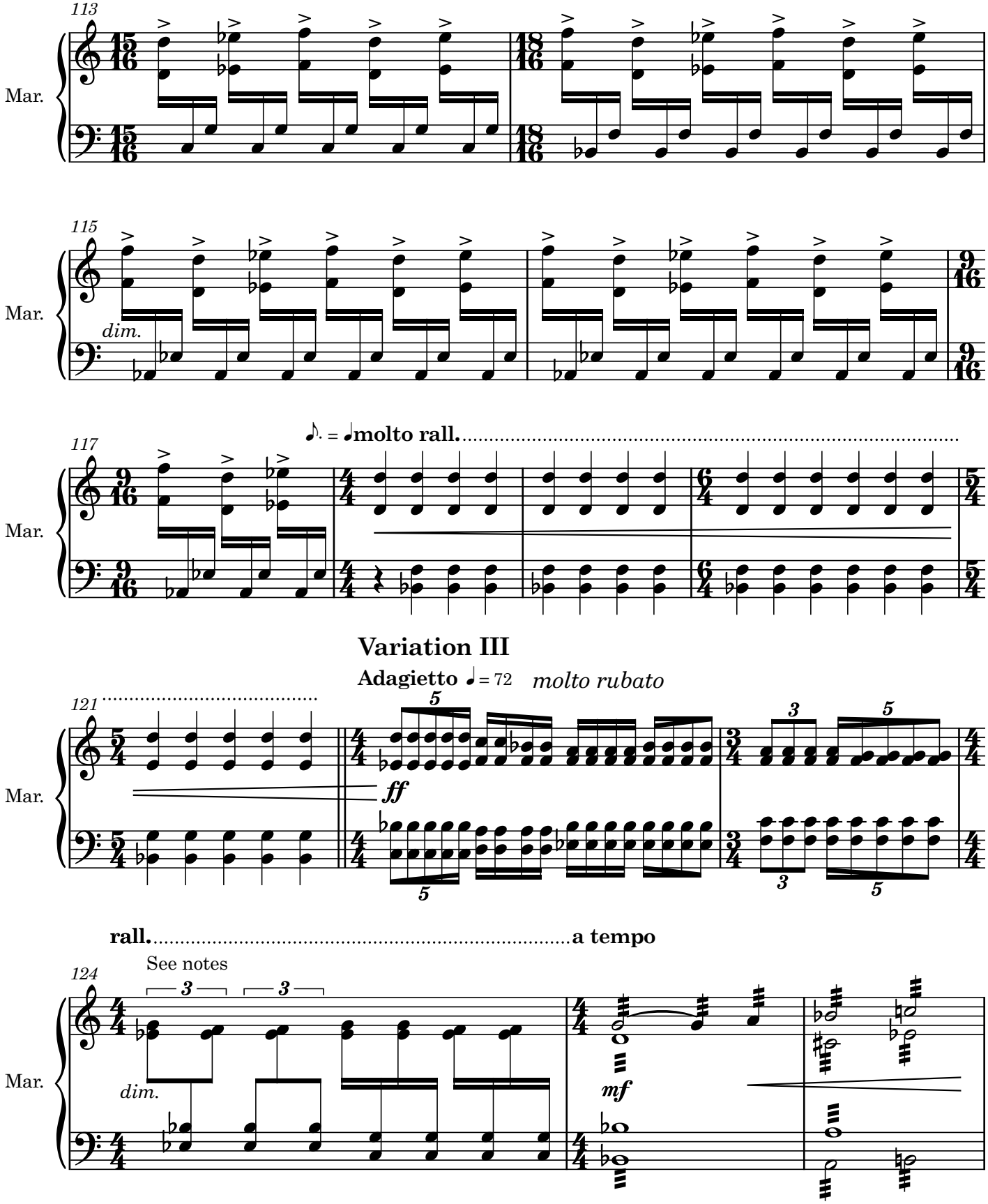

Largo ♩ = 56
41
Mar.
pp
44
mf
f
rall. ♩ = 117
50
pp
Largo ♩ = 56
55
ppp
pp
rall.
a tempo
molto accel.
59
pp cresc.

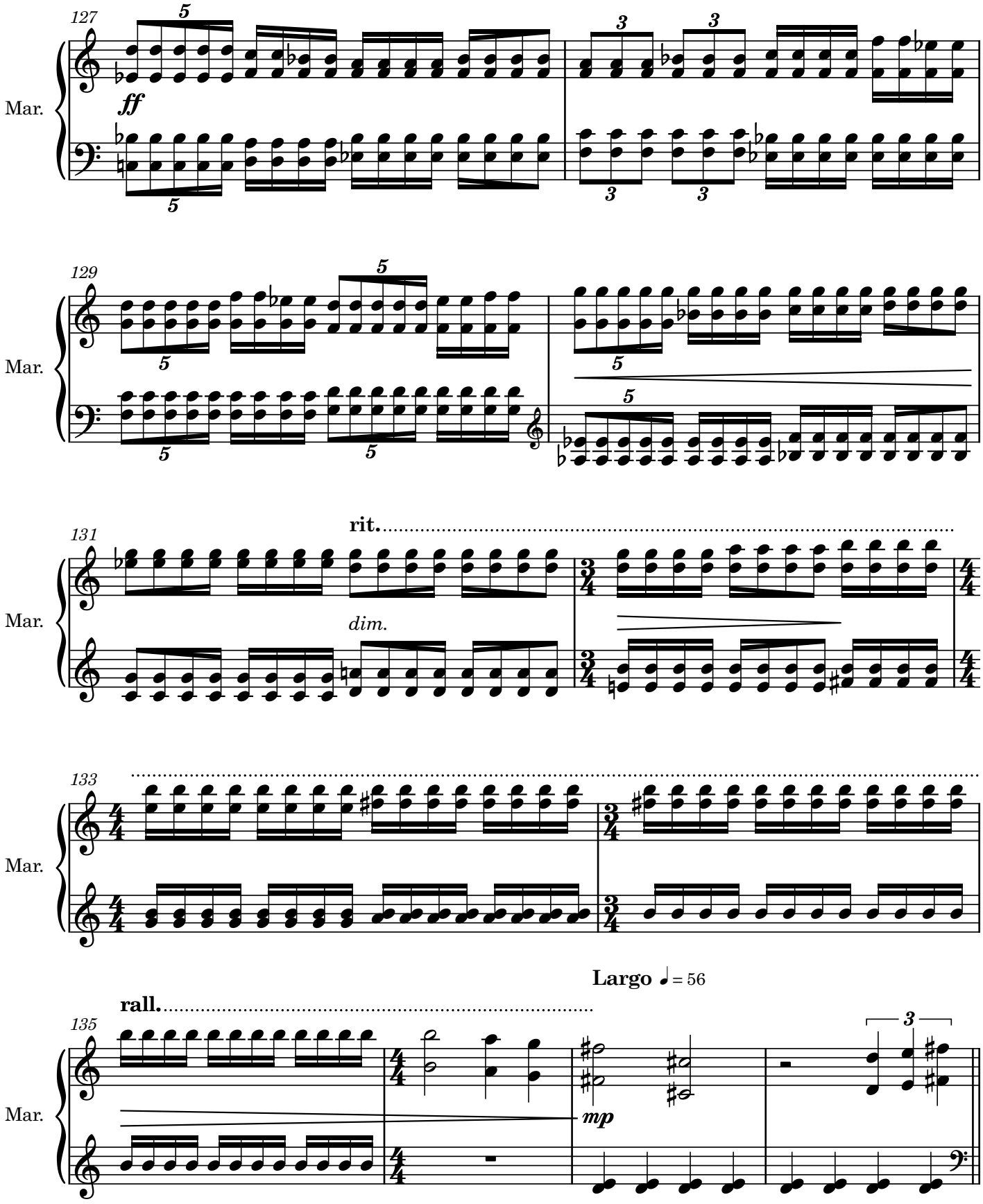

63
Mar.
f
molto rall.
See notes
68
Mar.
ff
Allegrissimo ♩= 176 rall.
p cresc.
Variation IV
Allegro ♩= 140
71
Mar.
3
f
74
Mar.
76
Mar.

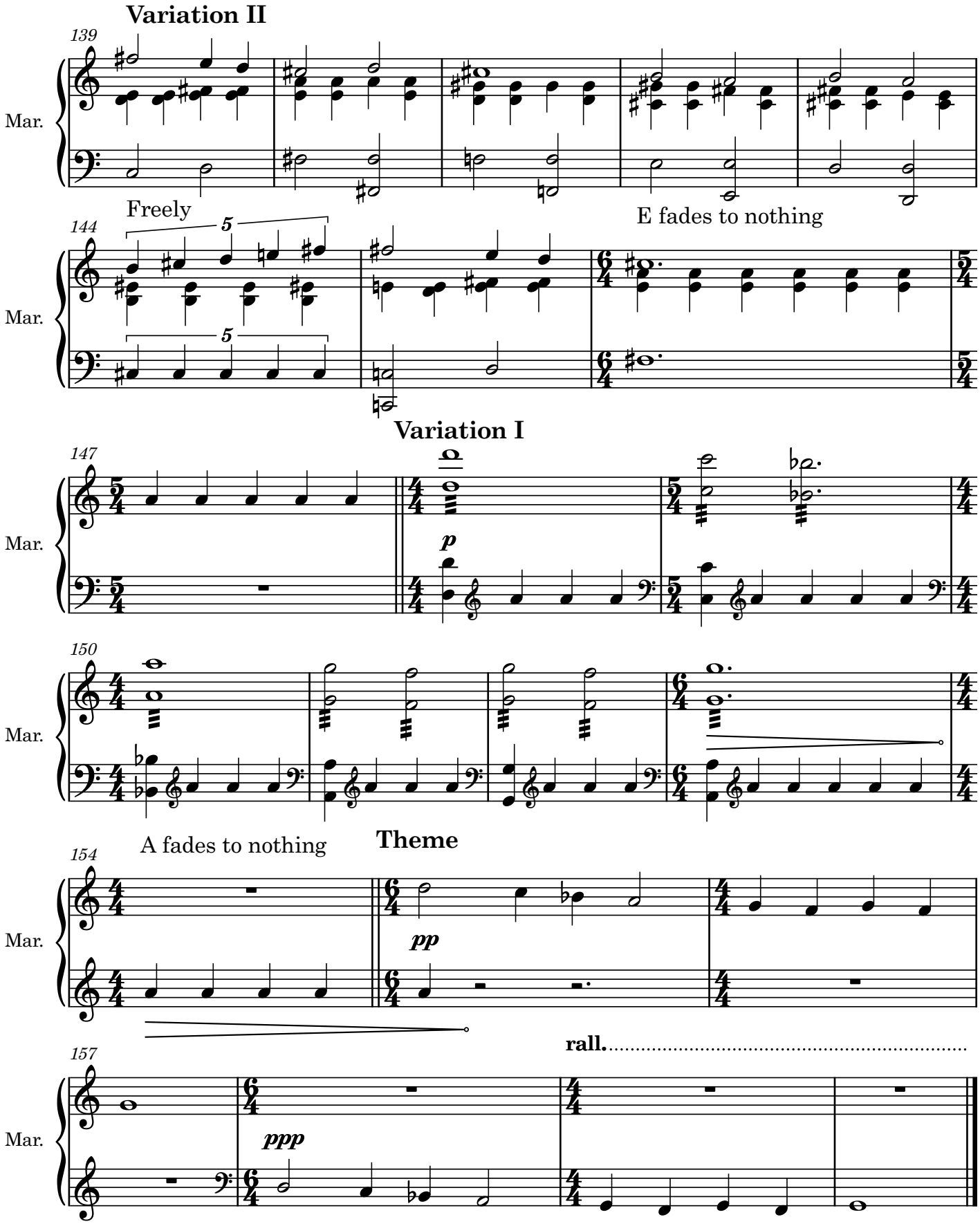

78
Mar.
80
Mar.
82
Mar.
84
Mar.
87
Mar.


90
Mar.
93
Mar.
96
Mar.
99
Mar.
101
Mar.


103
Mar.
105
Mar.
107
Mar.
109
Mar.
18/16
18/16
111
Mar.
15/16
15/16


113
Mar.
115
Mar.
dim.
117
Mar.
♪. = ♩molto rall.
Variation III
Adagietto ♩= 72 molto rubato
121
Mar.
ff
rall.
a tempo
124
See notes
Mar.
dim.
mf


127
Mar.
ff
129
Mar.
131
rit.
Mar.
dim.
133
Mar.
Largo ♩= 56
rall.
135
Mar.
mp


Variation II
139
Mar.
Freely
144
5
E fades to nothing
Variation I
147
p
150
A fades to nothing
Theme
154
pp
rall.
157
ppp