FROM THE SOUNDBOARD ARCHIVE

Elsa Just's Ständchen for Guitar Trio

The Guitarist's Album

MATANYA OPHEE (1991)

FINALLY, I FIGURED OUT how to present a piece of ensemble music in this column, without forcing you to tear off pages from your cherished copies of *Soundboard*, which must be unpalatable for you. I certainly do not wish to encourage anyone to xerox pages. A guitar trio in score form: what a lovely solution to our dilemma, and particularly when it is such a pleasant and simple piece, which can be used to great advantage by students with a modicum of familiarity with the fingerboard. When you perform this piece, make sure that your players all have their own copies of this issue of *Soundboard*. If they don't, do encourage them to become members of the GFA. Also, note that some handwritten fingering changes have been left untouched. You may agree with these changes, or you may not. The original is quite readable.

The piece appeared in the musical supplement to the German guitar magazine *Der Gitarrefreund* in Munich in its May–June issue of 1920. The actual copy comes from the collection of the Viennese guitarist Max Danek, one of the leading members of the I.G.V., the International Gitarristische Vereinigung. I was fortunate to buy a large portion of that collection in the old Doblinger antiquarian music store a couple of years ago.

The title *Ständchen* means simply "serenade." The identity of the composer is somewhat of a mystery, since no first name is provided but rather a place of birth or residence. The German city of Breslau is no longer German. It is now part of Poland, and it is called Wrocław. It is home today to some very fine young musicians, among whom we can count Krzystof Pełech, who almost made it to the GFA competition in Pasadena, if not for some bureaucrat in the American consulate in Warsaw. Second-prize winner in the 1990 Tychy, seventeen-year-old Waldemar Gromolak, also hails from Wrocław. And of course, the city has some very talented guitar teachers, like Piotr Zaleski and Marek Zieliński.

The best I can do about our mysterious composer from Breslau/Wrocław is to ask old reliable (most of the time, anyway) Josef Zuth in his 1926 *Handbuch der Laute und Gitarre.* One entry in Zuth's seems to fit both the family name and the place of residence. Here it is in translation:

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> JUST, Elsa, born November 14, 1894, in Buxtehude, near Hamburg, and died June 2, 1919, in Breslau, received her earliest musical instruction from her father Prof. Arthur Just, studied under Max Puchat in the Breslau Conservatory, where later she herself became a member of the faculty. Just is known primarily as a composer of piano music together with bowed string instruments, as well as a composer of guitar music. She published some remarkable pieces in the magazine *Der Gitarrefreund* in 1917 and 1919.

My collection of the musical supplements of *Der Gitarrefreund* is rather substantial but in no way complete. I haven't been able to check the 1917–1919 issues. The fact that Zuth does not mention the 1920 issue may be an oversight or a simple mistake. I do feel, however, that the person described in the entry above is most probably the composer of this delightful trio. One wonders what else we would have had from this young woman who died at the tender age of twenty-five.

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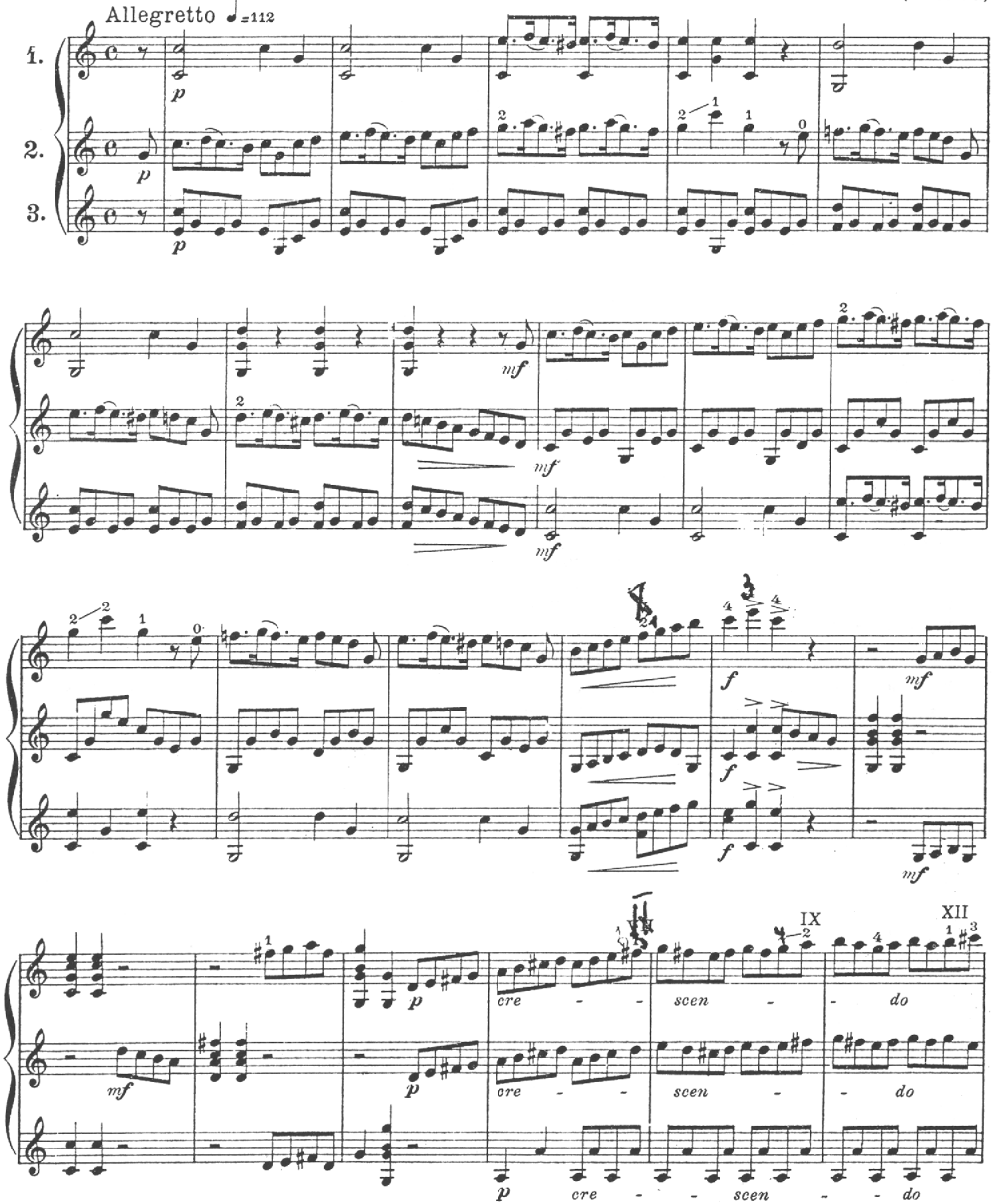
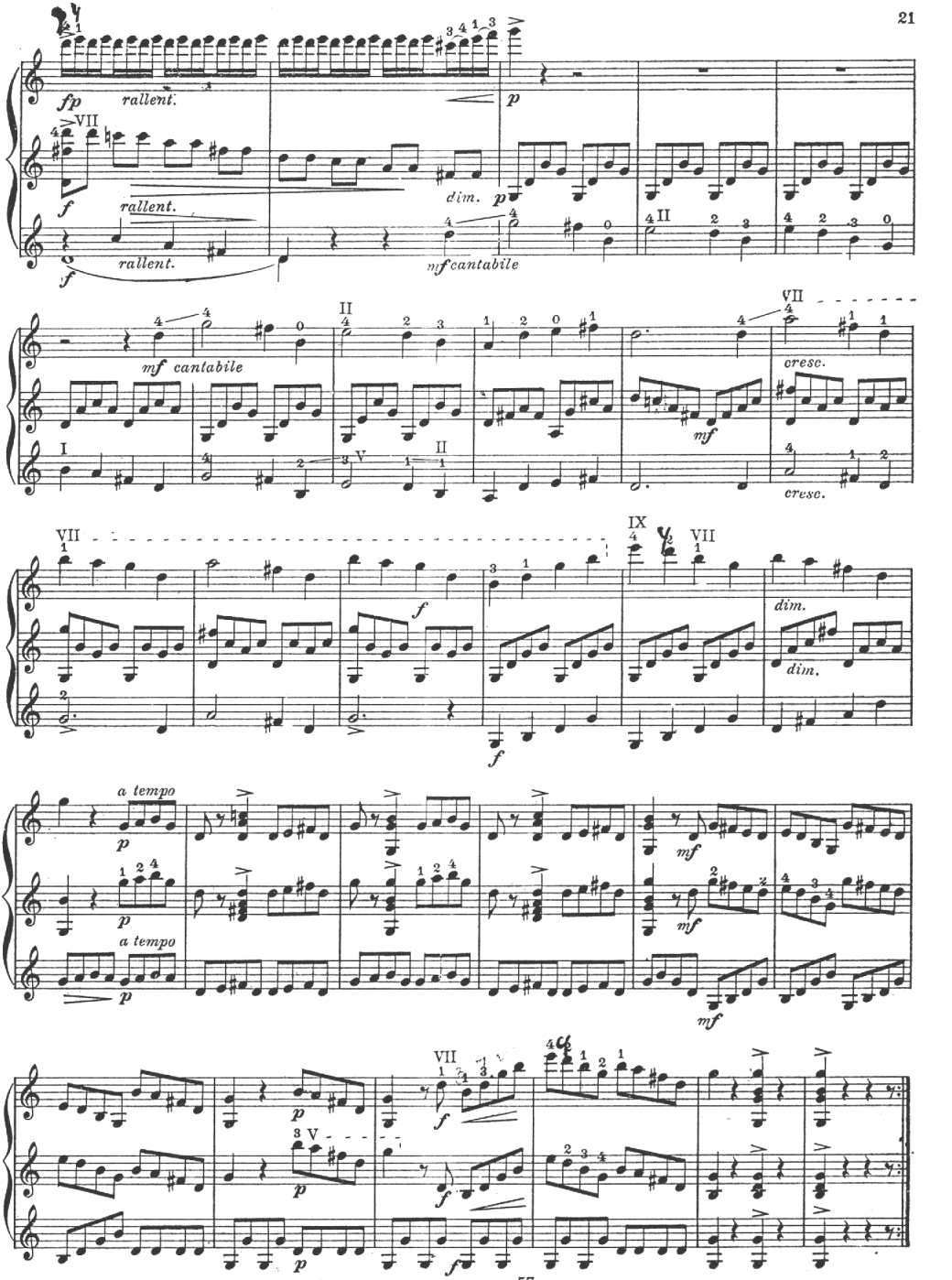
Ständchen.

Für 3 Gitarren.

Just (Breslau)




fp
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VII
f
rallent.
dim.
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rallent.
f
mf cantabile
II
mf cantabile
VII
cresc.
mf
I
V
II
cresc.
VII
IX
VII
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dim.
dim.
f
a tempo
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mf
p
a tempo
mf
p
VII
f
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V
f
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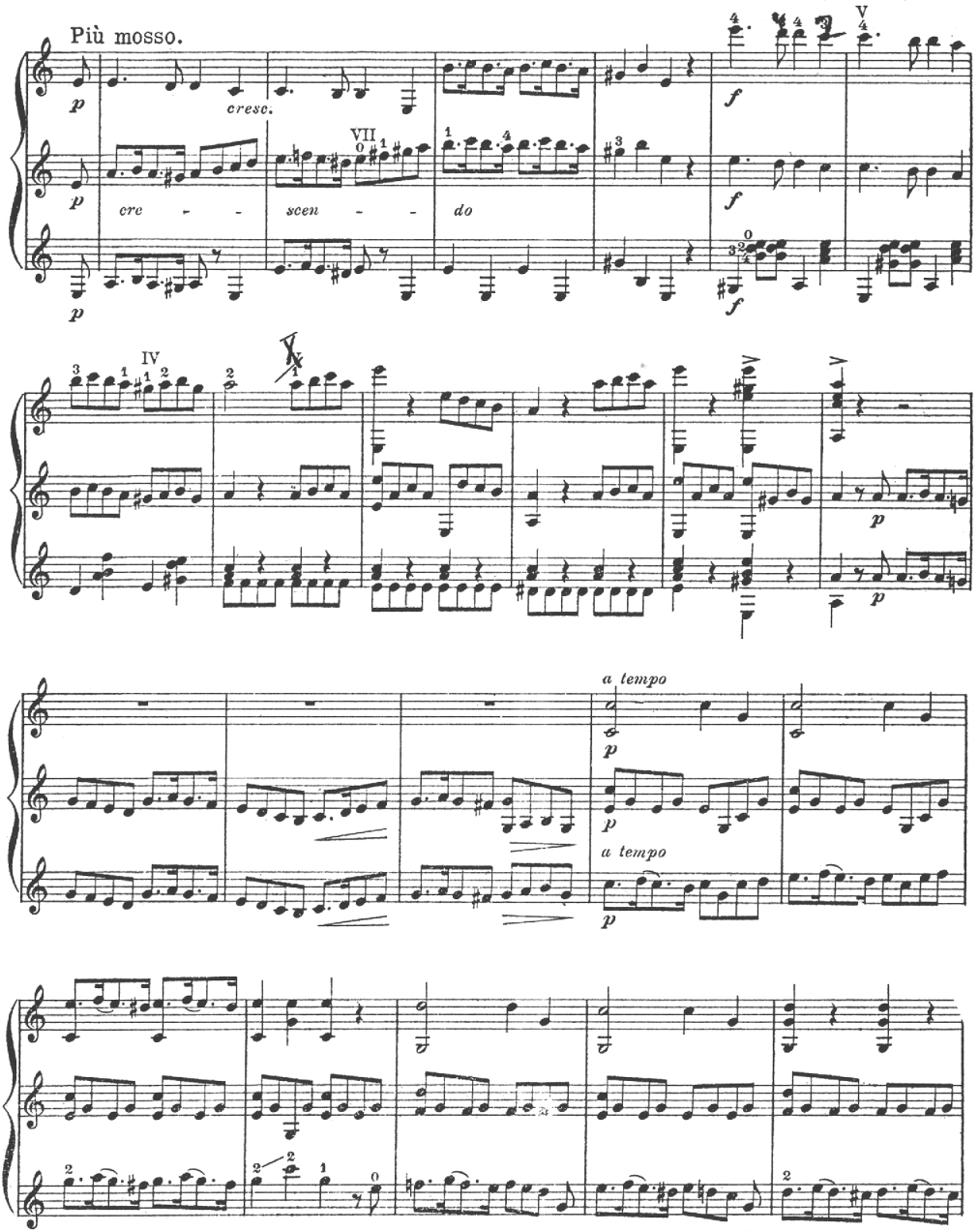
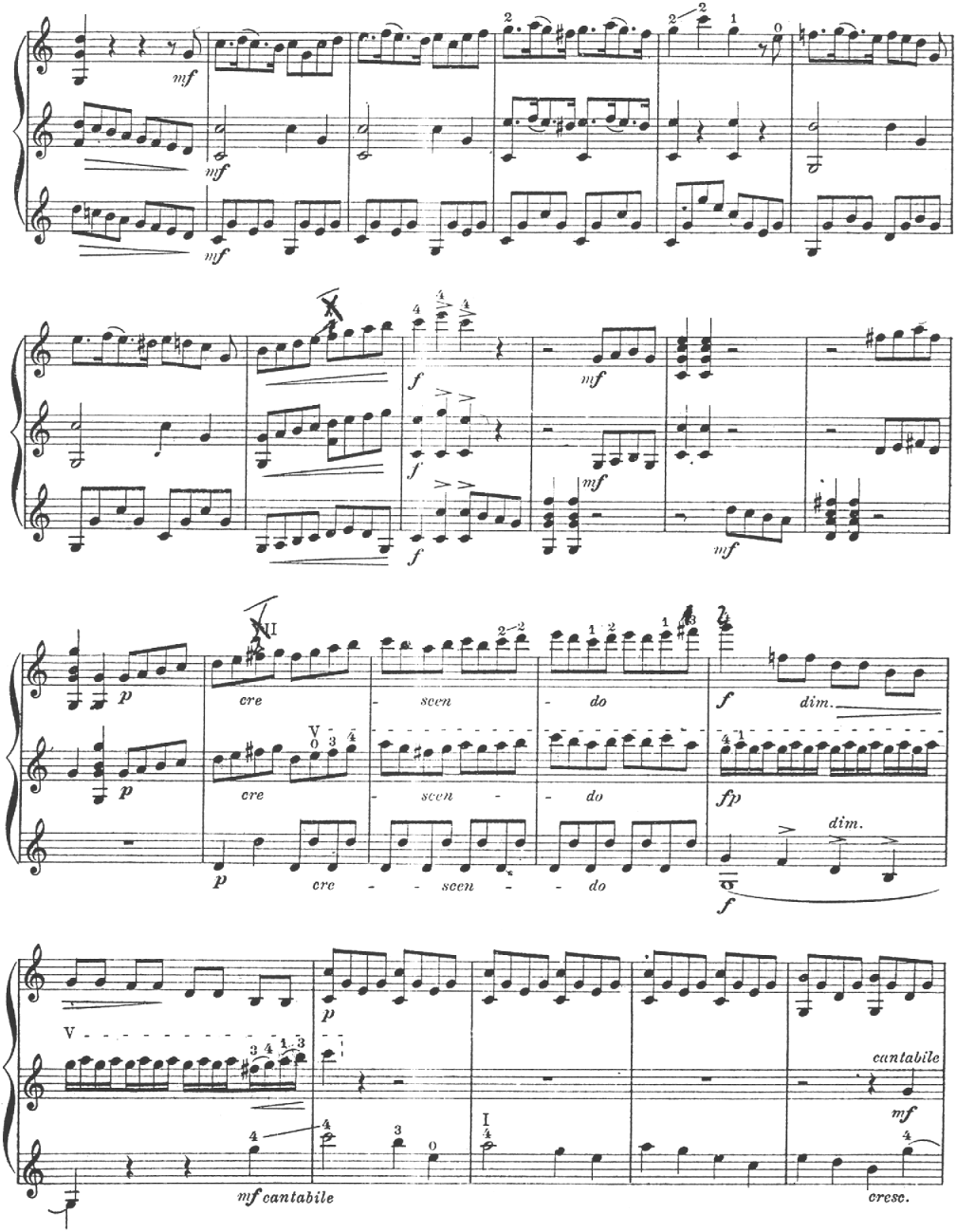
f


Più mosso.
cresc.
cre - - scen - - do
a tempo
a tempo


mf
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mf
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cre - scen - do
f dim.
p
cre - scen - do
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dim.
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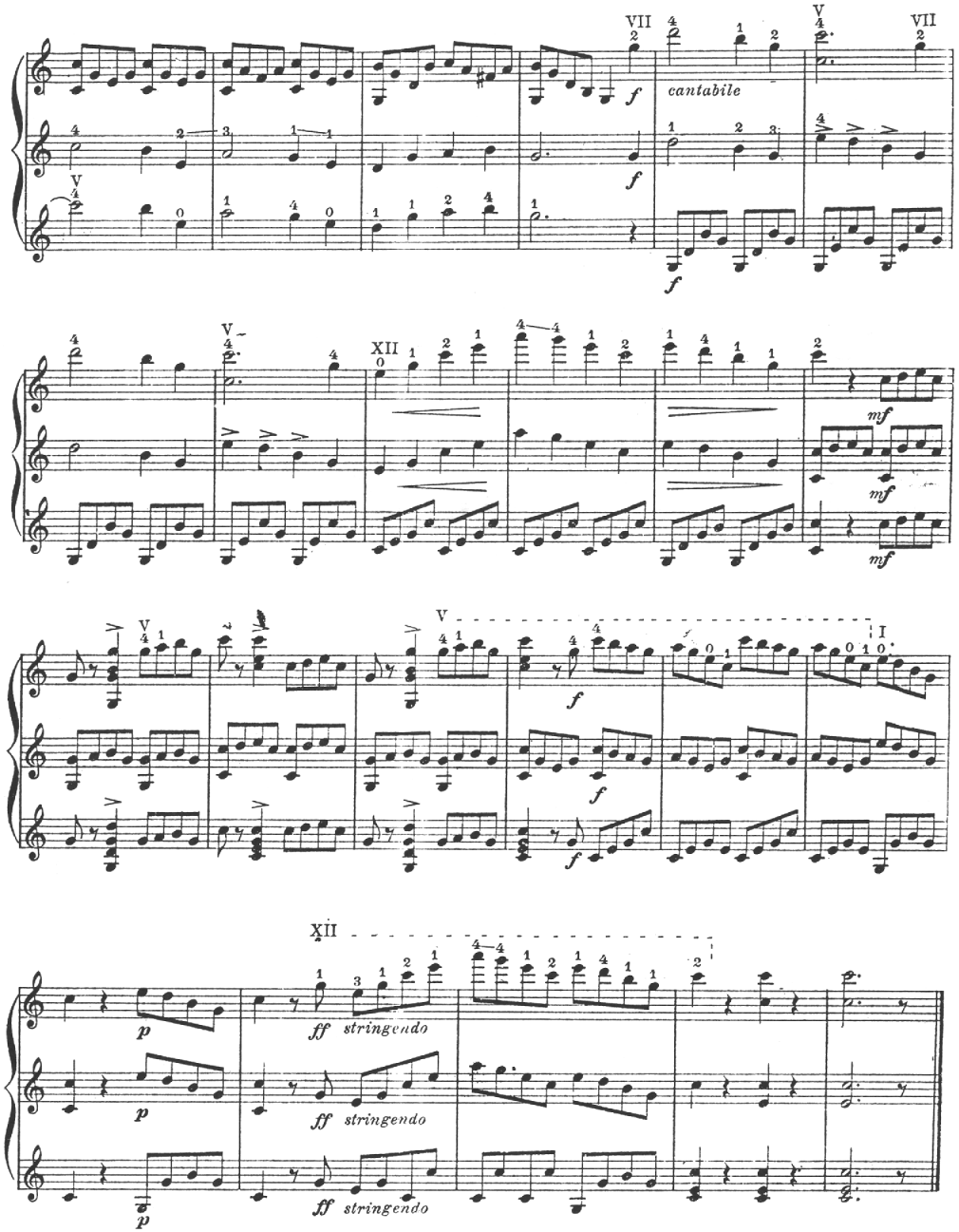
cre - - scen - - do
f
p
cantabile
mf
mf cantabile
cresc.


cantabile
f
mf
ff stringendo
p