Fall 2024 Percussion Placement Auditions

For questions, contact:
Michael Compitello
compitello@asu.edu

Repertoire:

- Marimba
  - Toshimitsu Tanaka
    - *Two Movements for* Marimba, movement 1
- Marimba or Xylophone
  - Morris Goldenberg: Etude 18 from *Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba, and Vibraphone*
- Timpani
  - Richard Hochrainer: Etude 40 from *Etüden für Timpani*, vol 1
- Snare Drum
  - Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherezade*
    - Mvmt III: D-G
    - Mvmt IV: 4 before N to 19 after N
    - Mvmt IV: P-Q

General Preparation Tips

The audition should reflect your very best playing, as it will influence your seating in ensembles for the entire year. That said, with preparation and organization, you can feel prepared without anxiety.

Preparation Tips:

- Study the music! Look carefully at the dynamics, articulations, and other phrase markings
- Listen to recordings from reputable performers to get a sense of appropriate tempo, character, mallet choice, and other information.
- As you practice, keep track of difficult passages. Make them your focus more than the ones that are easier for you to play.
- Work to make a list of the technical and musical challenges you face, isolate down, and work on them as part of your warm-up routine.
- Be creative as you practice to ensure you develop mastery and not just mimicry.
- Practice performing. Make sure to schedule time to run through all of the pieces. Playing for friends, peers, or teachers is a great way to simulate performance anxiety

Repertoire-Specific Tips

Marimba: Tanaka

Play this piece with FOUR mallets

While there are many great recordings of this piece, I recommend Ji Hye Jung's:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-4CFoauAEA

- Implement: I recommend a mallet that does not have a lot of fluff, which will allow you to work less hard to achieve a clean and crisp sound. Remember that you will be playing at the top of the instrument, so choose accordingly.
- Character: mercurial, quickly changing between extremes.
- The dynamics are a clue to the phrasing. While it is important for you to do the dynamics exactly, understand that they support larger phrases in the music. Look at what changes whenever the dynamics change, and think about how you can highlight these shifts in character.
- Use the meter to help make your phrases
- In your first practice session, come up with a good sticking for each passage, and write it down! This may change in the course of your practice, but it's important to develop consistency in your approach.

Marimba or Xylophone: Goldenberg

Play this piece with TWO mallets

- Work to keep your mallets low to the keyboard, and watch the positioning of the hands to make sure that you are getting a good beating spot.
- When striking the edge of the accidental bars, be sure to strike as close to the edge as possible to ensure a clear tone.
- Practice SLOWLY!
- In your first practice session, come up with a good sticking for each passage, and write it down.
- Focus your practice on the difficult passages, and NOT on running the piece through

Timpani: Hochrainer 40

- Playing timpani is all about doing simple things perfectly. Make that your focus for these two short solos.
- Intonation is critical! Use a tuning fork as a reference pitch, and tune accordingly. For no 40, sing down from A to F, and then tune the C using the F as a reference pitch.
- Play this etude on the middle 2 timpani (29" and 26")
- Stroke type: focus on clear sound with a natural rebound. Timpani are very sensitive to muscular tension, so work to completely relax your wrists, starting by dropping the mallet into the head and then later working to lift the mallet off of the head with more articulation is desired. Your arms do not need to be significantly involved, although they do move with the stroke.
- Beating spot: work to find beating spots on both drums which are timbrally equivalent. To do so, your mallets should be a little closer to the rim on the 26" than the 29" drum
- Character is essential. Give each section of the piece a different musical character, working to make as much contrast as possible using dynamics, color, inflection, and articulation.
- Muting: practicing muting the note values, and then without any muting at all. Choose something in between. For example, mute on beat 2 of the 1st measure of line 4, to help the *pp* dynamic.

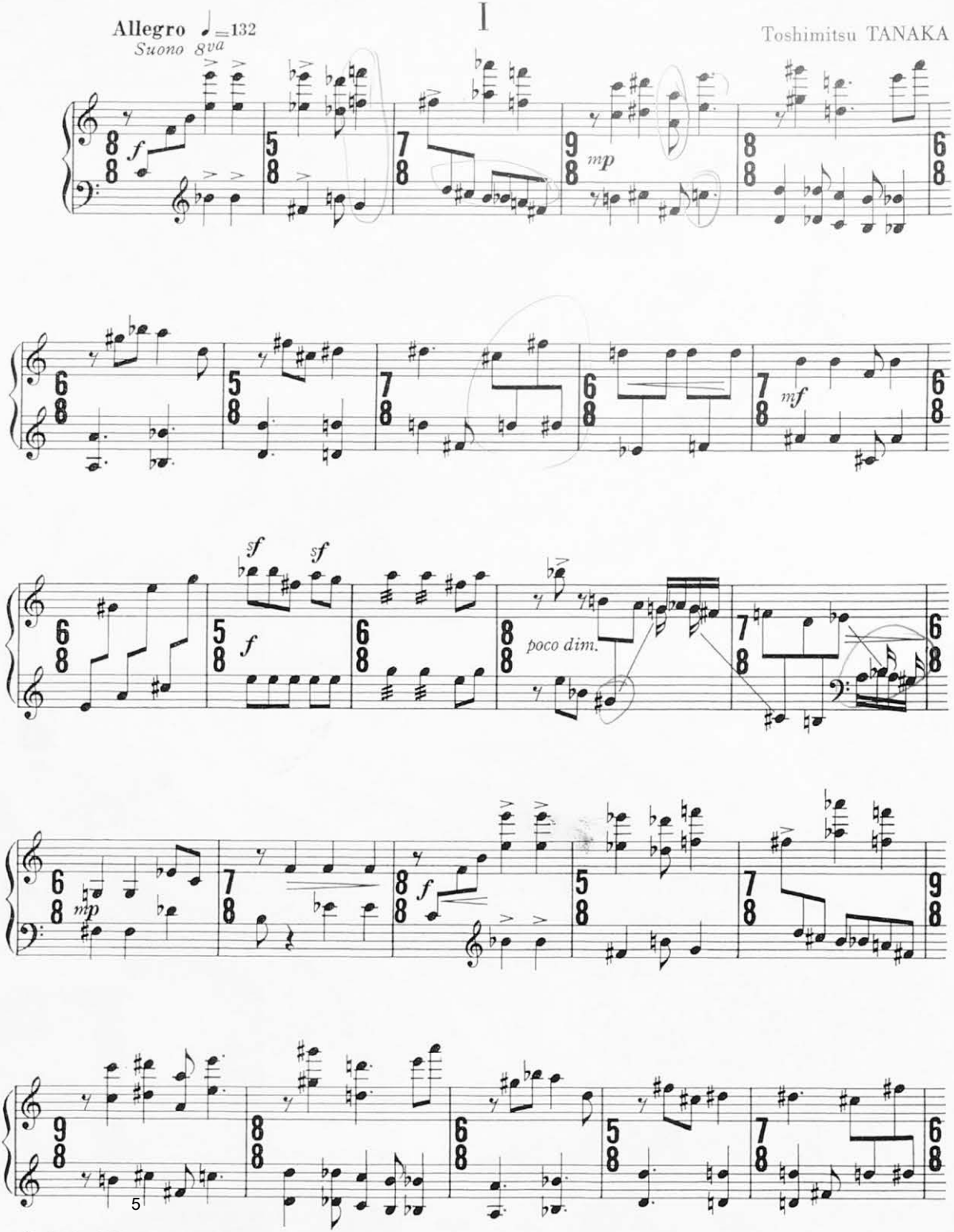
Snare Drum: Scheherezade

- This is the most-frequently asked orchestral excerpt for snare drum. Learn it well, and learn it for life.
- Listen to a number of recordings. Who are you playing with? What do they sound like? How can you match or support that sound?
- Mvmt III: D-G
    - Letter D: these 32nd notes are typically played as double strokes, making the passage a 7-stroke roll followed by three notes
    - Work to inflect this line the way the clarinet player would, with a gentle little leading to beat 4 and then falling away.
    - Challenges in this passage include dynamic contrast, consistency of double, and
        - First, decrease the dynamic challenge by playing the passage loudly
        - Then, decrease the technical challenge by removing the double strokes, playing the skeleton of the phrase to isolate inflection
        - Then, increase the challenge of the passage by extending the diminuendo beyond *ppp*
        - Finally, increase the challenge of the passage by lengthening the doubles
        - These steps are outlined in the attached Scheherezade exercise sheet. NOTE: these exercises are intended to aid in practice, and will not be played at the audition.
- Mvmt IV: 4 before N to 19 after N
    - Focus on an even sound in the *pp* notes. The most difficult part of this passage is the transition from *sfz* to *pp*, so isolate moving from loud to soft and practice it separately from the roll and the *pp* notes.
    - N can be played all with one hand (RRRR…) or alternating. If playing with one hand, work to make sure the notes are not tense. If alternating, make sure the pitch, color, and articulation between both hands is the same.
- Mvmt IV: P-Q
    - P:
        - Metric and rhythmic clarity without tension are key here!
        - The ruffs should be relatively tight and crisp. Make us hear the difference between off-beat and downbeat.
        - Focus on your wrists to articulate the 4th bar of P
        - 9th measure of P and following: it's common practice to play a hair-pin over the 3 measures of 8th notes, matching the inflection of the strings.
    - Q: These are 32nd notes, and should be played as single strokes, either RRlRLRLR-RRLRLRL or RLRLRLR-LRLRLRL, etc.

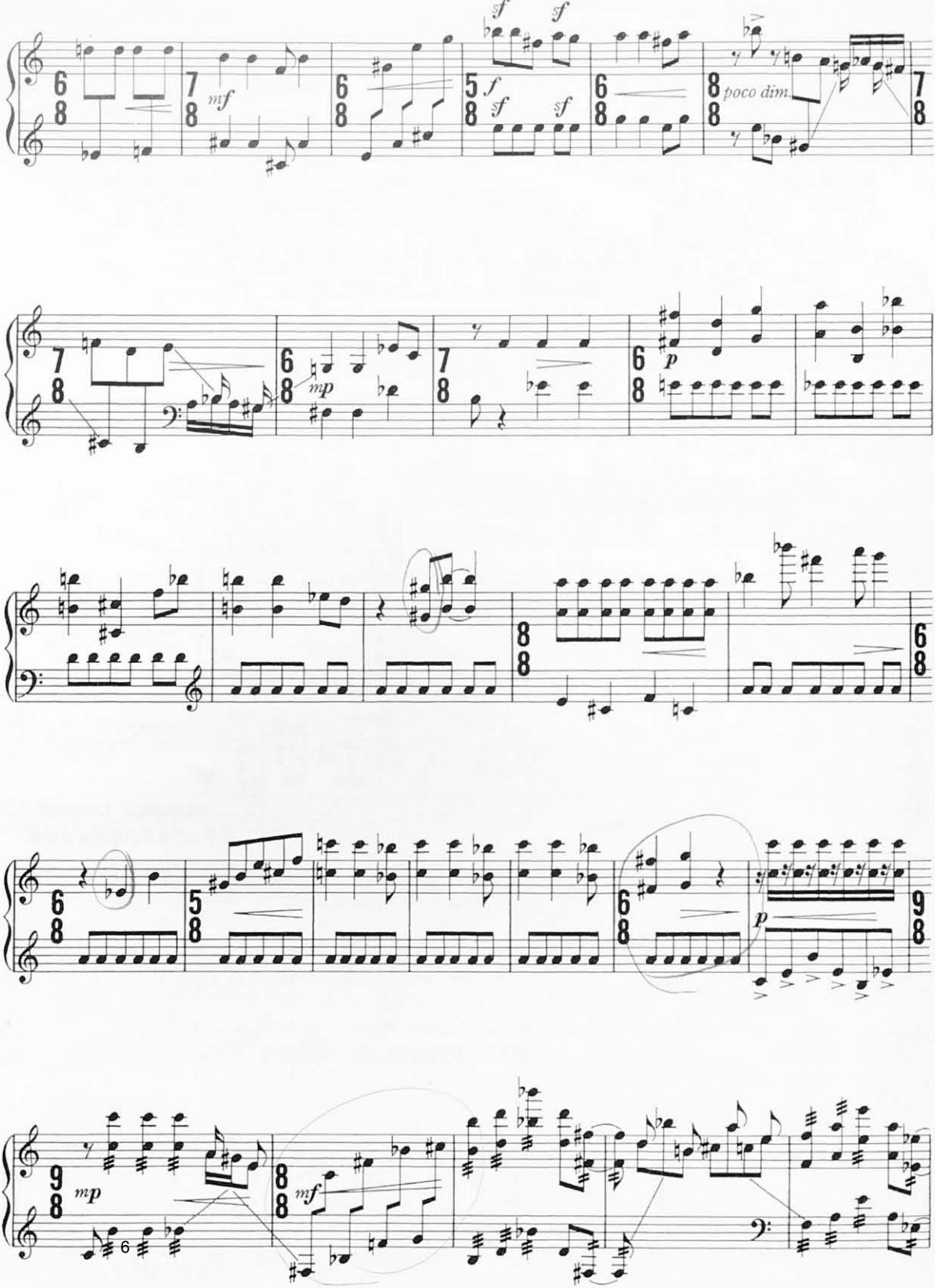
TWO MOVEMENTS FOR MARIMBA

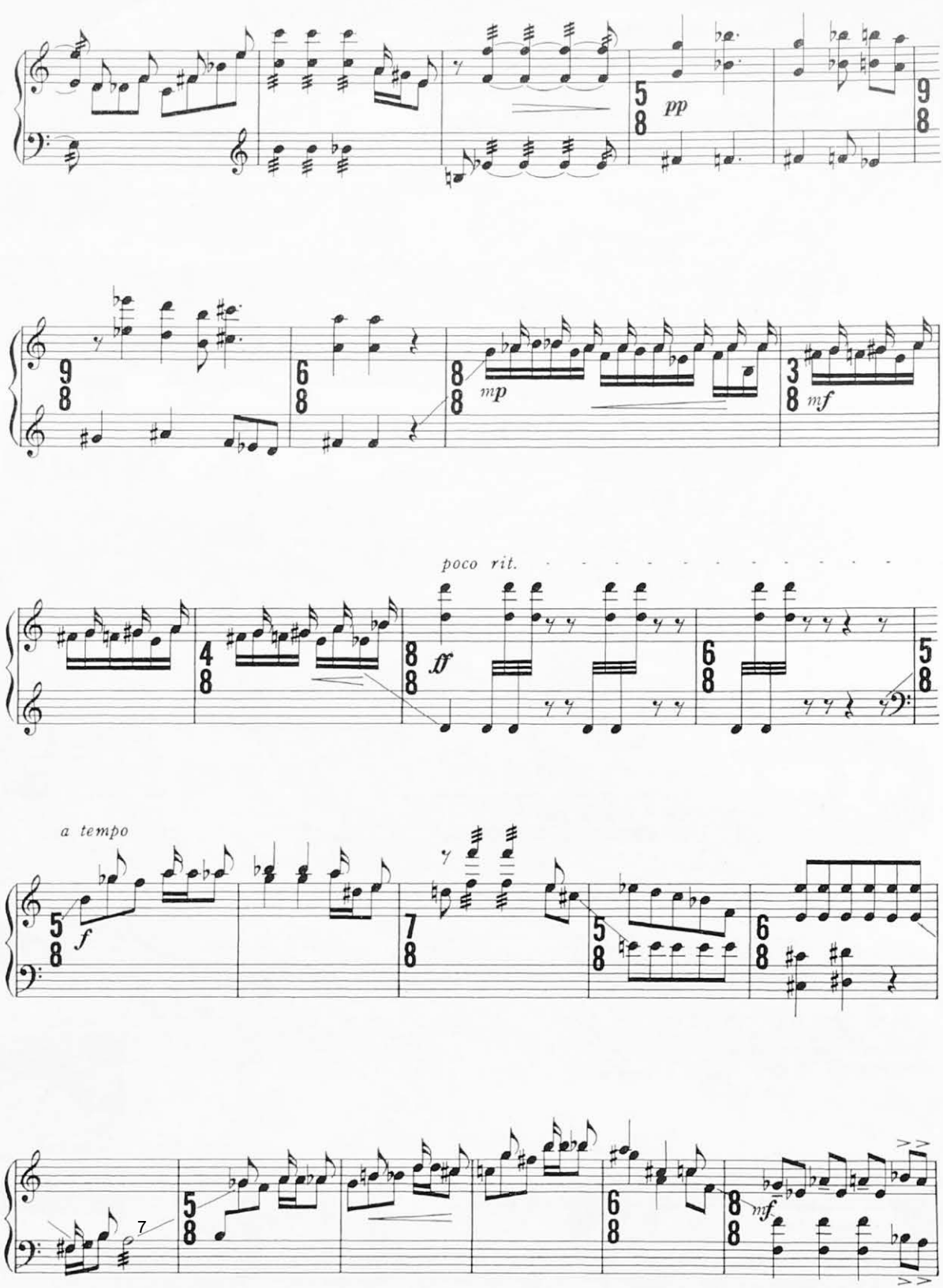
I

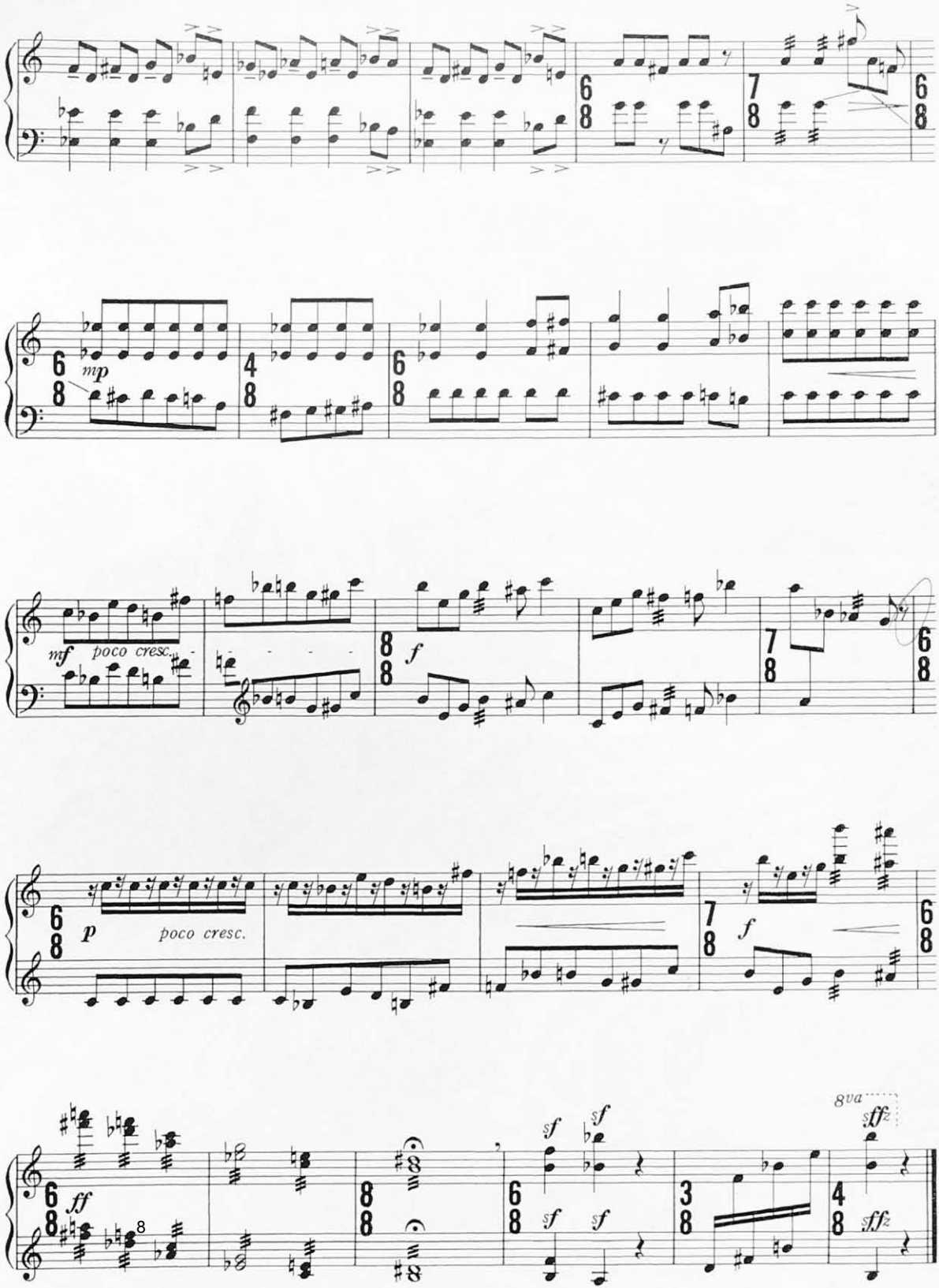
Toshimitsu TANAKA



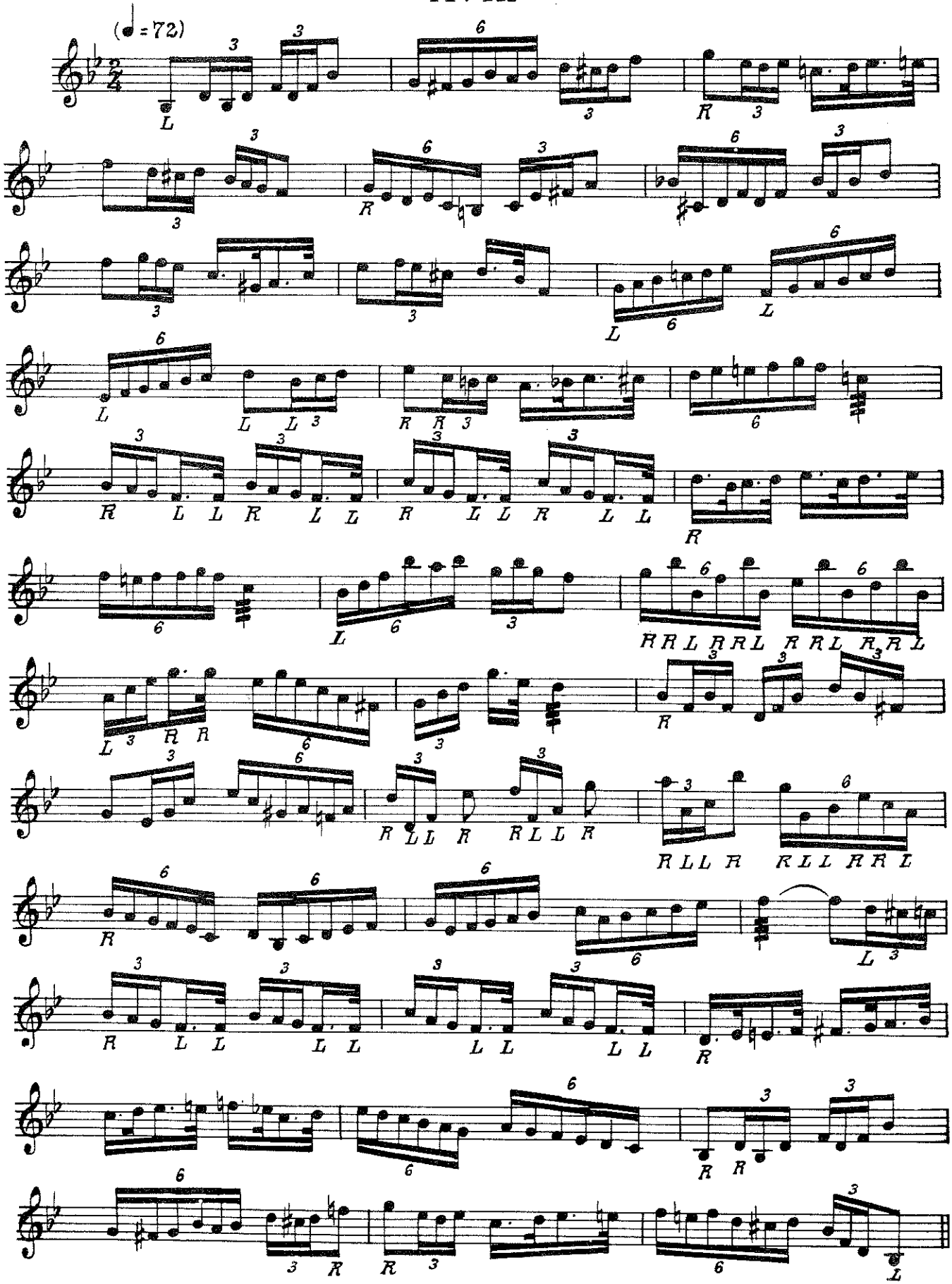
© 1970 by ONGAKU NO TOMO SHA Corp.,
Kagurazaka 6-30, Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan.
International Copyright Secured.


mf
sf
f
poco dim.
mp
p
mp
mf

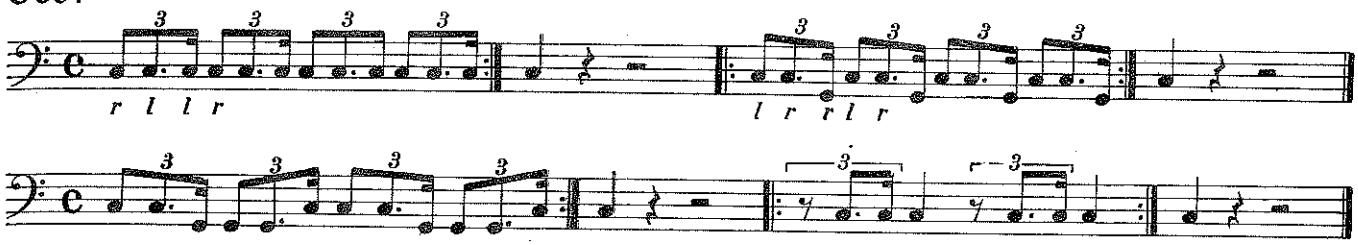

pp
mp
mf
poco rit.
ff
a tempo
f
mf


mp
mf
poco cresc.
f
p
poco cresc.
f
ff
8
sf
sf
sf
sf
8va
sffz
sffz

XVIII

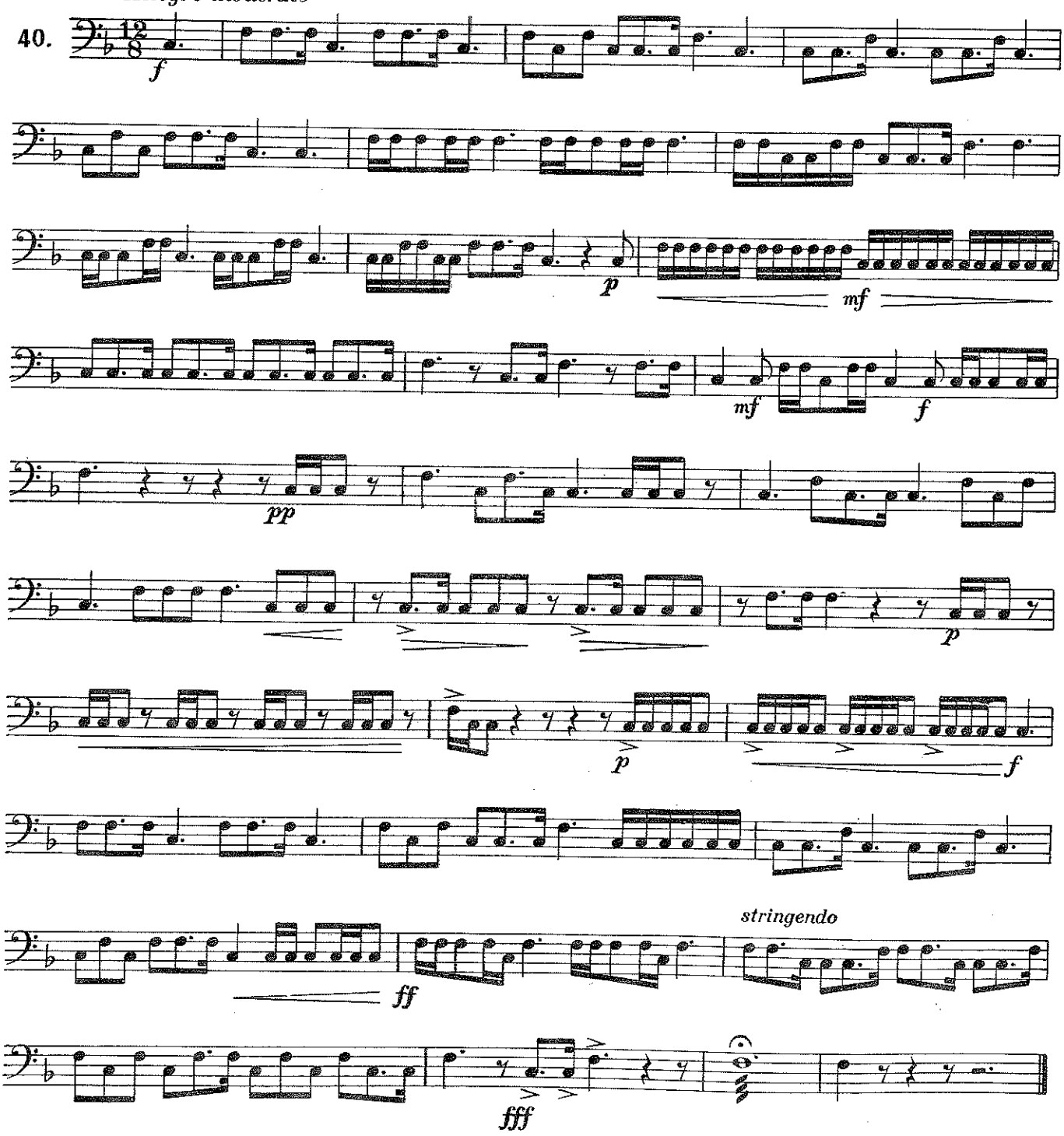


Übe :



Allegro moderato

40.



Übe täglich!

D. 9638

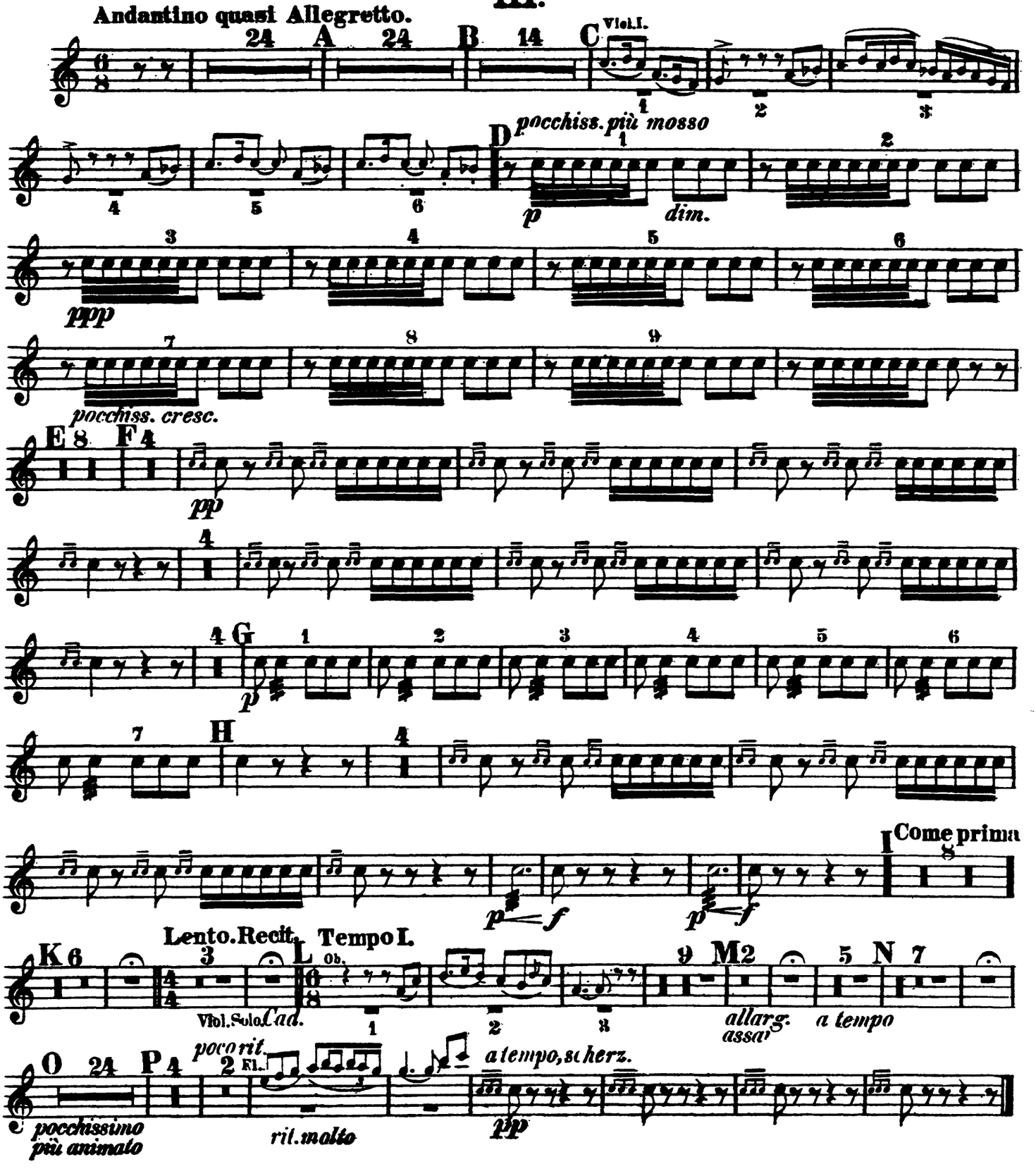
Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Scheherazade, Op. 35

Tambur piccolo.

I. II. tacet.

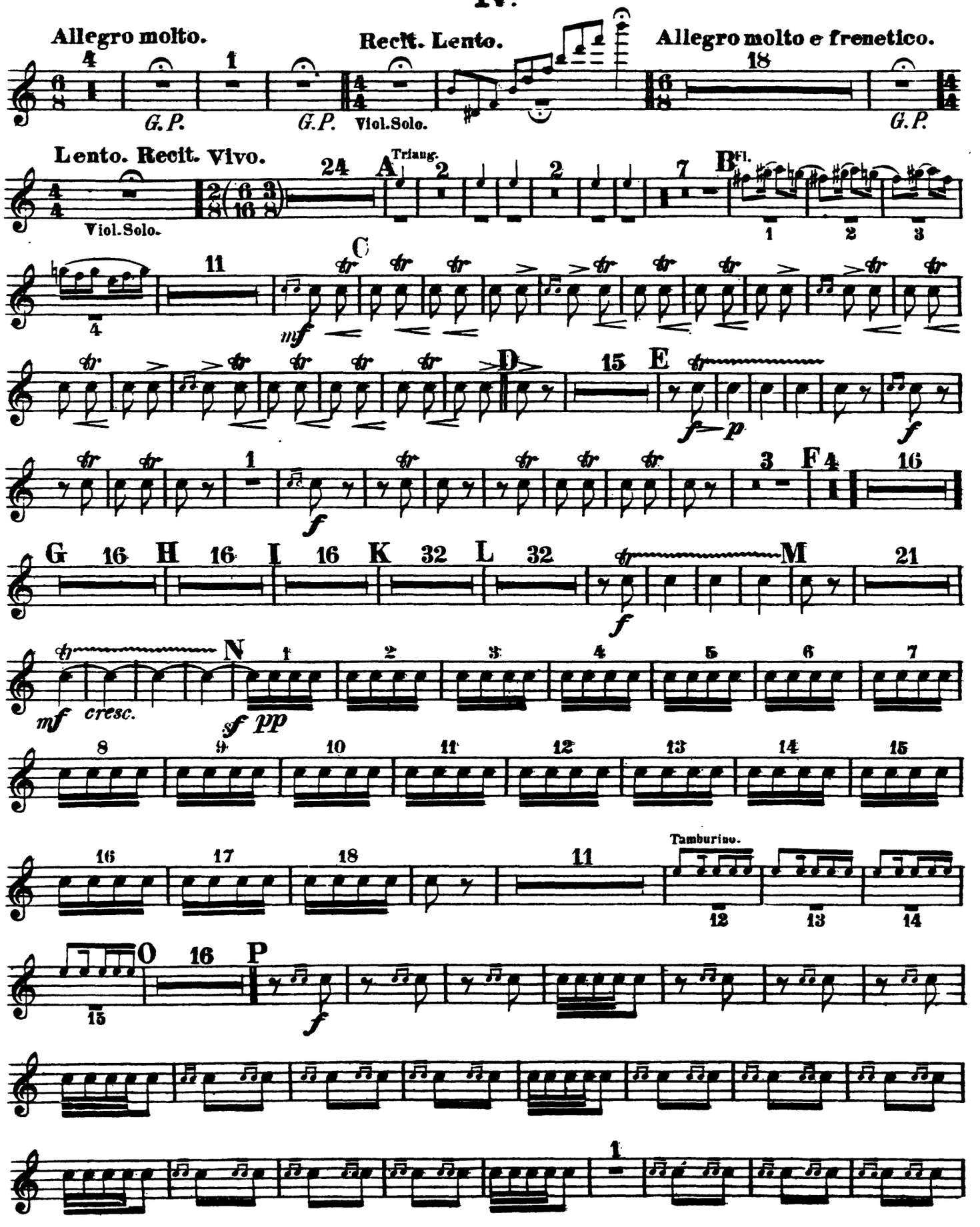
III.



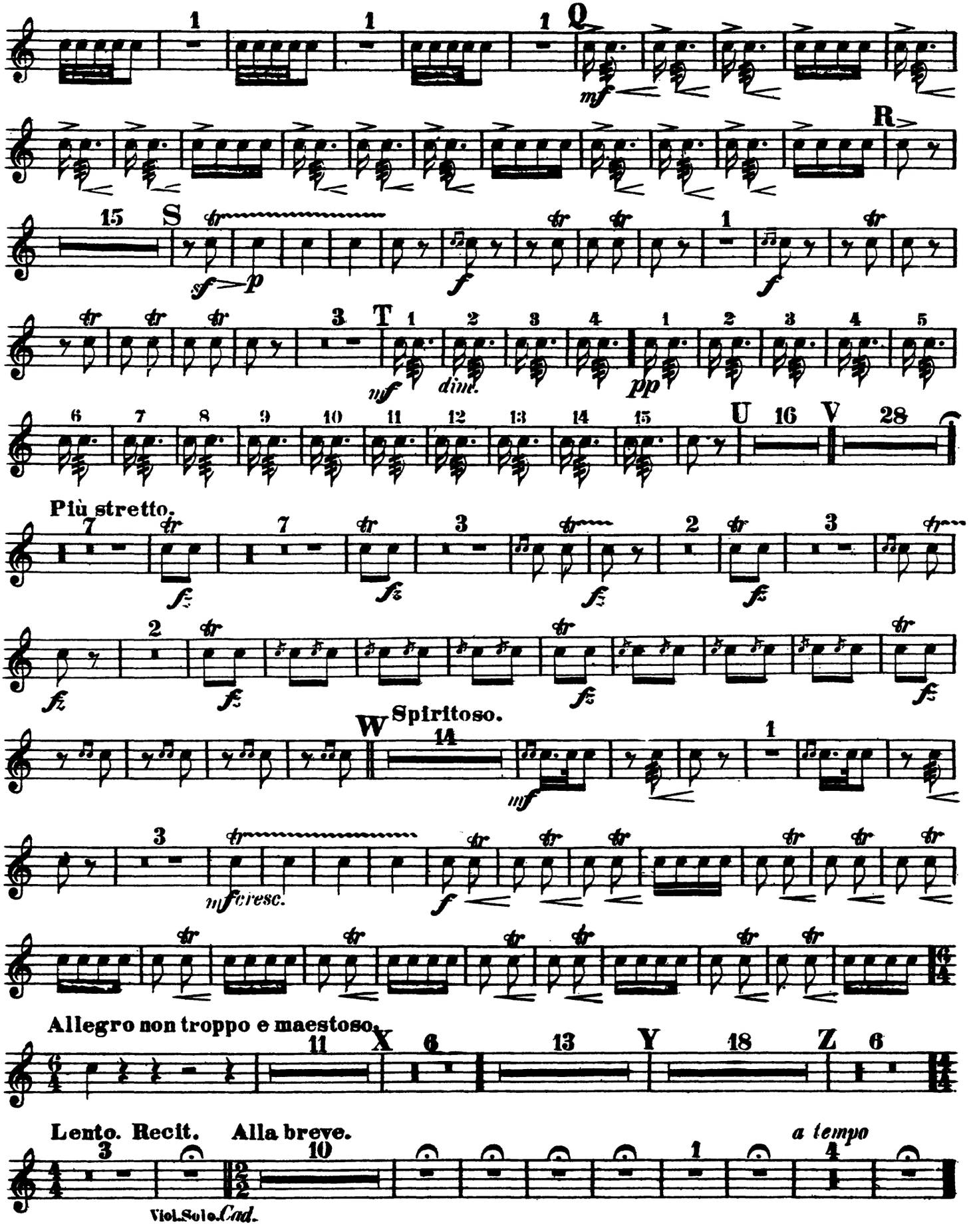
z

Tambur piccolo.

IV.



Tambur piccolo.

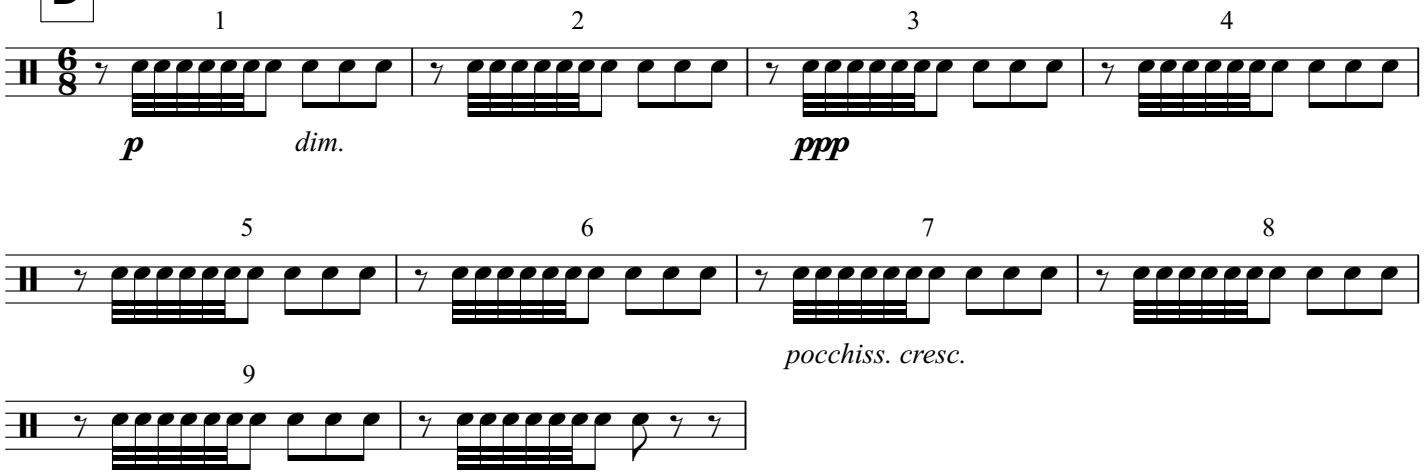


Scheherezade Exercises

As written

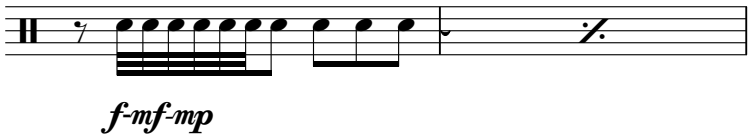
Michael Compitello

D ***pocchiss. più mosso***



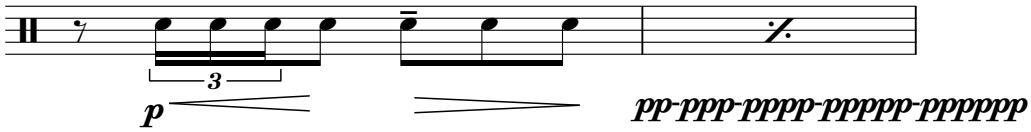
Decrease dynamic challenge

1



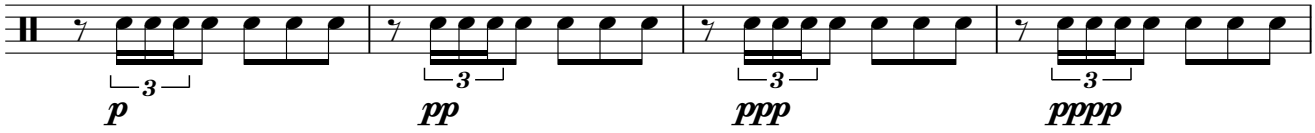
Decrease technical challenge to isolate work phrasing a number of dynamics

2



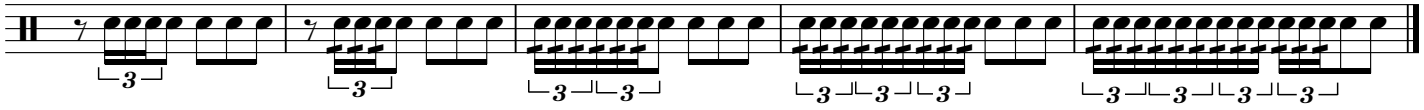
Increase challenge by extending dynamics

3



Increase challenge***s*** by extending length of doubles

4



© 2021 by Michael Compitello
michaelcompitello.com