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The Virtuoso **Piano** Transcription Series

5

Richard Wagner

1813 - 1883

Siegfried-Idyll

(WWV 103)

in einer Klaviertranskription von

in a transcription for piano by

Glenn Gould

herausgegeben von

edited by

Carl Morey

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Preface

In the spring of 1973 in Toronto, Glenn Gould recorded for CBS Masterworks three of his transcriptions for piano of music by Wagner – *Siegfried-Idyll*, *Prelude* to *Die Meistersinger von Nürenberg*, and *Dawn* and *Siegfried's Rhein Journey* from *Götterdämmerung*. Gould had no reservations in principle about performing music at the piano that had been written for orchestra. A few such performances were included in some of his television programmes for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation – for example, the accompaniment for Strauss's orchestral song *Beim Schlafengehen*, an excerpt from *Elektra*, and Ravel's *La valse* – and in private he was a great exponent at the piano of orchestral and operatic music, especially by two of his favourites, Richard Strauss and Richard Wagner. However, he customarily did not write out his transcriptions, the sole exceptions being the three arrangements for the CBS recording, which he notated in full and which were the only such works that he recorded. The manuscripts are in the National Library of Canada (Ottawa).

He was interested in Liszt's transcriptions of Beethoven's symphonies and recorded number five and played the sixth on Canadian radio, but in general he found Liszt to be too "authentic", too literal in rendering the orchestral notes on the piano at the expense of the spirit and the innate quality of the music. Gould took a much freer attitude in his reworking of Wagner's *Siegfried-Idyll* to "rebuild the piece for piano", as he put it. He sometimes changed the register of motifs, and to overcome the inability of the piano to sustain the long held chords of the orchestra, he often enlivened the textures with invented figures that maintain the harmonic continuation of the music and which impart a sense of action to what would be static at the keyboard. For example, in bars 69-71 Wagner wrote sustained chords for the strings that Gould rendered by sounding the separate voices of each chord; in bars 138-139 and 144-145 chords sustained by the winds became an arpeggio figure for the left hand; and in the section at bars 203-215, the solid chords on each beat are broken into an eighth-note figure. In other places, Gould enriches the texture and enhances the listener's perception of motion in the music by the addition of a new voice. In bars 34-35 Wagner wrote a melody and a descending line for the violoncello against sustained chords, to which Gould added an inner voice. Indeed, it was the linear aspect of the *Siegfried-Idyll* that he found attractive. In a CBC radio broadcast in 1973, which he used again as notes for the original recording, he remarked of the *Idyll* that "it's as lyrical as a Chopin nocturne, it makes all its dramatic points through counterpoint, never through percussive effect".

If his "rebuilding" of the piece exploited the linear aspects, his performance of the music emphasized the contrapuntal textures still more with devices that were frankly romantic – rolled chords, the anticipation of a note in a chord, a slight dislocation between the hands, and above all the colouring and emphasis of notes within a series of chords to impart a transparent linear sense in the ear of the listener. As a pianist Gould took so free an attitude to the performance of the *Idyll* that there may at first seem to be discrepancies between the notated and the recorded versions of the transcription, but in almost all cases such apparent differences arise from his extraordinary ability to delineate inner parts, and to treat rhythm with an elasticity that nevertheless remains within an established pulse. It is impossible to convey his manner of performance in a printed edition, but where there are small textual differences between recording and manuscript, the recorded version is usually given authority. Most of the alterations to the written text have to do with the prolongation or emphasis of bass notes and are small liberties that an individual interpreter might take depending on the tempo of performance and the instrument. In bars 4-5 and 360-361 the low E is tied over in the manuscript but in performance the E was repeated as given in this edition. At bars 77-78 the bass F-sharp is written in octaves but only the upper note was played. A few changes to texture were made in performance. In bar 226 the syncopated G appears in the manuscript in octaves between left and right hands but for the recording only the left-hand G was played. At bars 110-111 the whole-note B was not played. A small alteration was made at bar 121 to accommodate a practical problem; the left-hand triplets are fully notated as for the right hand, but in order to reach the bass octave and play a solid chord, the first note of the left-hand triplets was omitted.

Gould made two small alterations to Wagner's text. In bar 144 Wagner specifically indicated that the trill above B-flat is to C-natural, but Gould notated and played C-flat; he moved to C-natural in bar 145. Wagner's score ends with bar 405 but Gould added one additional bar to extend the final E-major chord.

Although he marked the manuscript copiously with details for the technical aspects of the recording, Gould included no tempo indications and only a few dynamic markings. In this edition, all the tempo indications are

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Wagner's, and his dynamic markings have been added in the following passages: the beginning to bar 29; bar 63; bars 91-125; bars 203-237.

Wagner composed the *Siegfried-Idyll* in 1870 for a chamber orchestra of thirteen parts and first performed it on Christmas Day of that year, the birthday of his wife Cosima. For musical and personal reasons the *Idyll* takes its name from *Siegfried*, the third opera in the cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, on which Wagner was working at the time. From the *Idyll* he used the main theme from the opening pages and the theme that appears at bar 150 in the final duet of the opera; and at bar 259 in the *Idyll* he introduced a motive from the opera that is associated with the hero Siegfried, which was also the name of his and Cosima's son.

Although Glenn Gould as a pianist is most renowned for his performances of Bach, Beethoven and Schoenberg, he was devoted to opera and orchestral music of the late nineteenth century and he was an enthusiastic Wagnerian. In 1971 he wrote in a letter, "I suppose that of those composers who represent the later manifestations of romanticism the one who means the most to me is Wagner". During the summer of 1982 Gould assembled an instrumental ensemble in Toronto and on September 8 he completed his rehearsals and recording as conductor of the original version for chamber orchestra of the *Siegfried-Idyll*. It was to be his farewell for he died a month later.

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Siegfried-Idyll

Eingerichtet von/arranged by
Glenn Gould

Richard Wagner
1813–1883

Ruhig bewegt

p

etwas zögernd

poco cresc.

dim.

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19 *noch mehr zurückhaltend*

23

27 *a tempo*
sehr ruhig
p

31

35

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38

42

tr

cresc.

46

50

p

55

tr

tr

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58

poco ritenuto *a tempo*

62

p

66

70

cresc.

75

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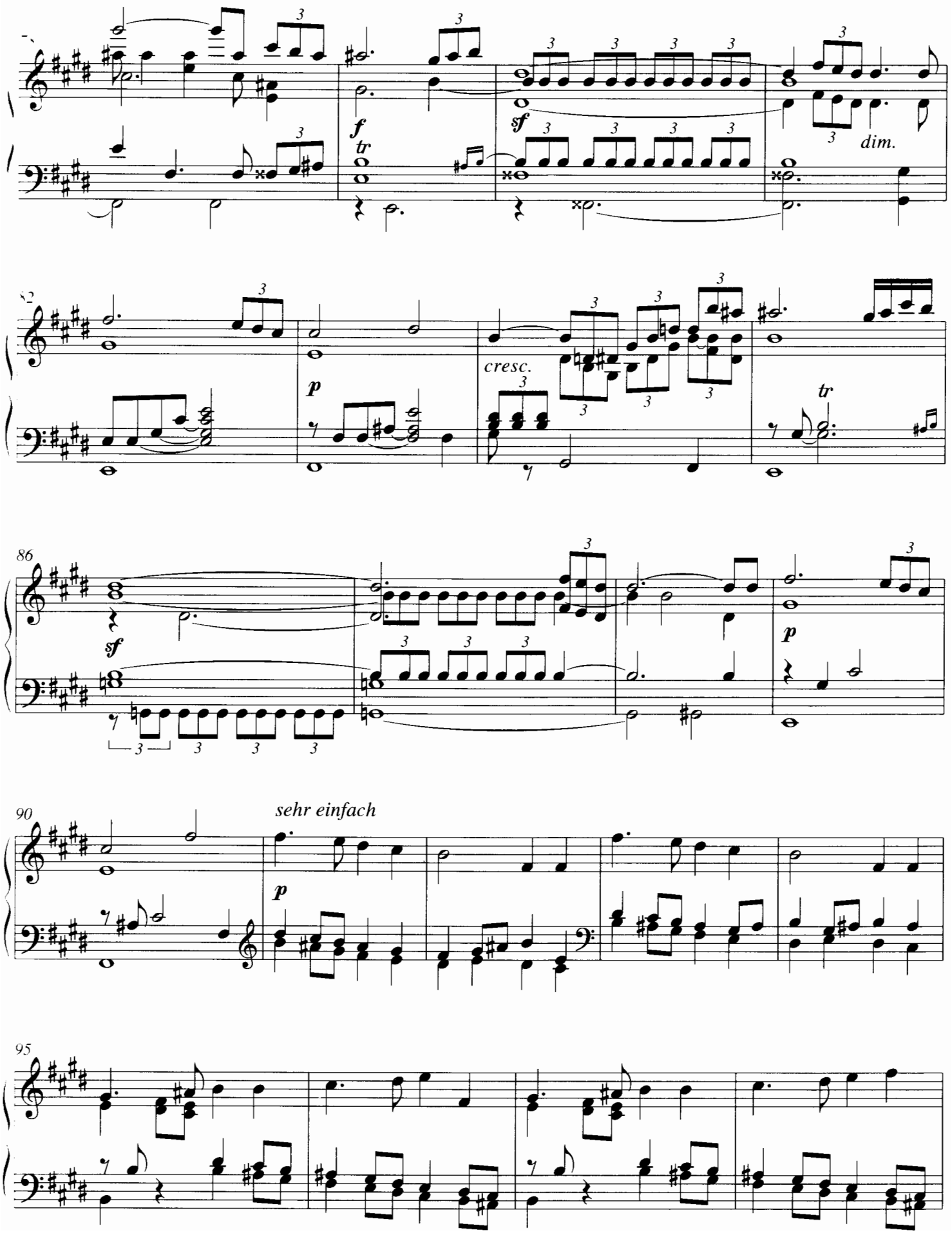

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99

p

103

108

112

117

121

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125

130

134

140

142

144

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Leicht bewegt

148 *rallentando*

154

160 *cresc.* *p*

166 *cresc.* *p*

172 *cresc.*

178 *f* *pp*

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cresc.

dim.

pp

tr

poco cresc.

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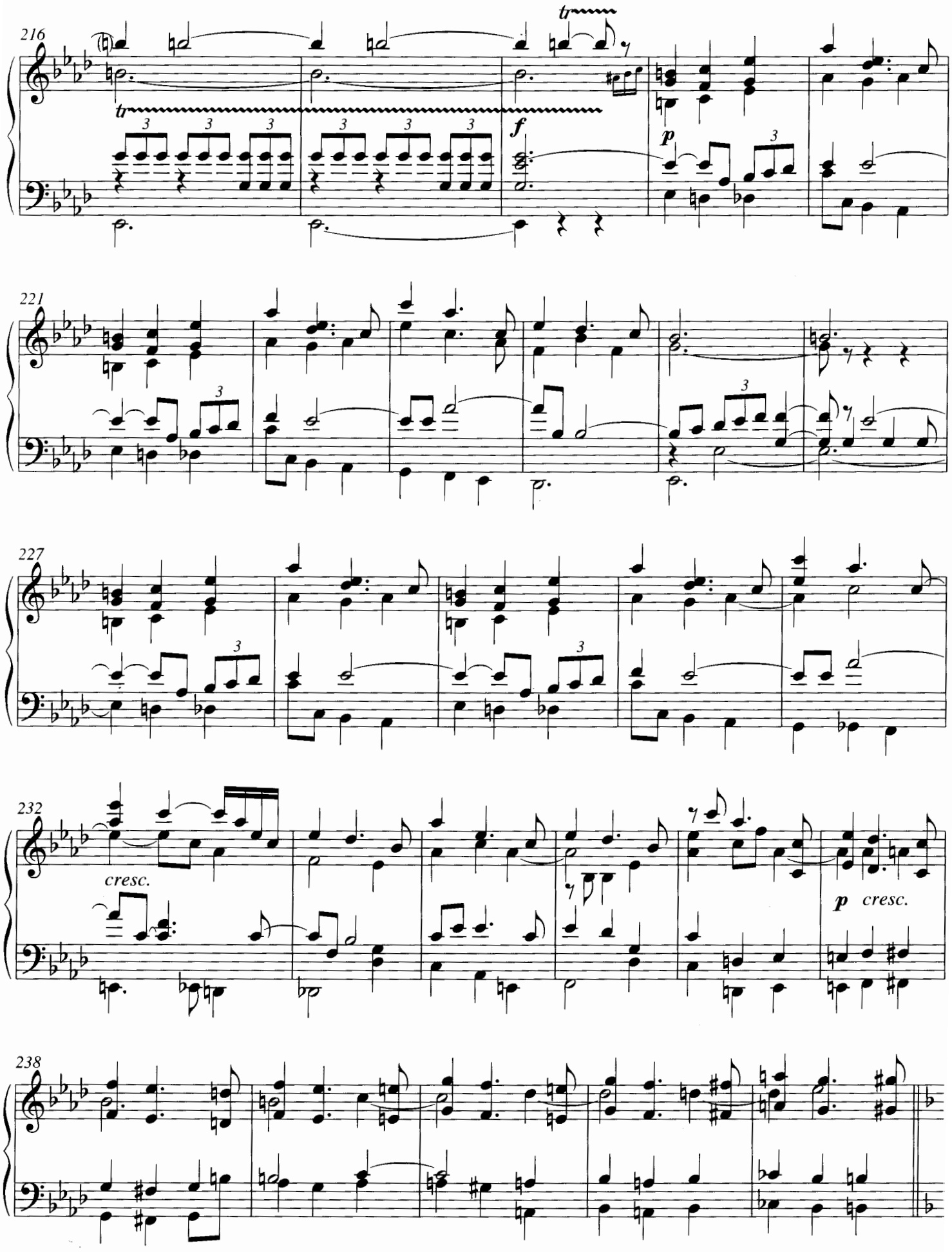

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243

249

255

ff

259 **Lebhaft**

p

264

269

cresc.

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273
cresc.
f
p
276
279
pp
282
cresc.
285
f tr
tr
288
tr
tr
tr
tr

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p

337

cresc.

f

340

sf

dim.

343

cresc.

f

346

sf

dim.

p

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349

353

357

tr

360

363

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sehr ruhig

366

pp

370

373

pp

377

381

cresc.

mf

sf

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385

dim.

più ***p***

bedeutend langsamer

388

dim.

392

più ***p***

396

pp

401

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