Concerto for Violin, Op. 77

Concerto for Violin, Op. 77

by Johannes Brahms

A Facsimile of the Holograph Score

With an Introduction by Yehudi Menuhin
and a
Foreword by Jon Newsom

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS · WASHINGTON · 1979

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Brahms, Johannes, 1833-1897.
Concerto: for violin, op. 77.

Original, with corrections by Joseph Joachim, in the Music Division, Library of Congress.
1. Concertos (Violin)—Scores. I. Joachim, Joseph, 1831-1907. II. Menuhin, Yehudi, 1916- III. Newsom, Jon.
ML96.5.B75 [M1012] 785.6'7'104 78-26635
ISBN 0-8444-0307-5

The monogram *JB* on the cover is reproduced, considerably enlarged, from Brahms's personal notepaper. This specimen appears on a letter from the composer to conductor Hermann Levi. Whittall Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress.

Printed In The United States Of America

FOREWORD

SINCE THE AUTOGRAPH full score of Brahms's Violin Concerto came to the Library of Congress in 1948 it has, of course, been carefully preserved, photographed, and exhibited. But more importantly, it has also been made available in the Music Division to performers and scholars from all corners of the world, as was the intention of the donor, Fritz Kreisler. Mr. Kreisler had decided to auction his private library for charity but believed that the Brahms manuscript was a treasure that, instead of passing again into the hands of a private collector, should become for all time available to the international public served by the Library.

Facsimile publication of the Brahms manuscript, through a bequest of Mrs. W. Duncan McKim, is especially appropriate, for it not only furthers Mr. Kreisler's original objective by making this invaluable score available to researchers unable to travel to the Library of Congress, but also stands as a tribute to the generosity of two contemporary musicians. Born Leonora Jackson, Mrs. McKim was a pupil of Brahms's collaborator, Joseph Joachim, and herself became a concert violinist. Her benevolence has provided resources in the Library for the furtherance of interest in works for the violin and the education of students of the instrument, as well as the publication of this facsimile.

For guidance on this project, the Library turned to Yehudi Menuhin who most graciously provided an eloquent and uniquely informative introduction that could only have been written by a virtuoso intimately familiar with the Concerto, its history, and the problems and challenges it presents to the performer today. It only remains here to draw the reader's attention to a few additional resources for the study of Brahms's composition and to provide some technical information for users of the facsimile.

Brahms's collected correspondence (published by the Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, Berlin) includes two volumes of letters exchanged between Brahms and the great violinist Joseph Joachim, to whom the work is dedicated and from whom Brahms received valuable guidance, partly on the orchestration but largely in the writing and editing of the violin part itself. The letters between Brahms and Joachim are an invaluable guide to their working relationship, traces of which are so well preserved in the manuscript score reproduced here.

Brahms initiates the collaboration on the Concerto in two letters dated August 21 and 22, 1878 to Joachim. He sends Joachim the solo violin part to a work quite different from the piece that was to be first publicly performed on January 1 of the next year and then published several months later after more revisions. Indeed, the piece was originally to be in four movements, two of which were finally discarded, and Brahms needed advice on the technical feasibility of the solo part. He would be satisfied, he writes, if Joachim would just comment on passages that are difficult, uncomfortable, or impossible. On August 24 Joachim replies with enthusiasm that he is anxious to see the score and looks forward to a meeting. By mid-October Joachim, writing from Berlin, is already requesting a trial with orchestra and hopes for a performance on New Year's Day.

Brahms's November reply from Vienna is hesitant. He has considered "offering his fingers" at the piano for Joachim's concert, but then he feels that his aversion to concertizing has too firmly taken root. On the other hand, he is dismayed to think of Joachim playing the Concerto everywhere while he stands dumbly on the sidelines. And so, he has had a solo part copied and might send it to Joachim with the full score as well—is that, he asks sardonically, not a gesture of friendship and hospitality! Brahms also notes that "the middle movements have fallen by the wayside—naturally, they were the best," and that he has substituted a "poor adagio." Finally, Brahms decides to go ahead with the concert and, having considered and rejected other cities for the premiere, concludes: "We might as well bestow the pleasure on the Leipzigers." On December 12 he writes to Joachim that "the orchestral parts will be ready in time for the first of January in case you want to play the piece in Leipzig." (Play it they did, in a performance that, as Mr. Menuhin so amusingly informs us, was memorable not only as the premiere of a masterpiece.)

Shortly after this premiere, Brahms and Joachim were again revising. In Brahms's postcard of January 21, 1879, we learn that Joachim is preparing for his tour of England and Brahms wants a copy of the solo part to show to a less accomplished violinist. He writes: "I fear, you are not audacious and rigorous enough. Only through many deletions and alterations can you impress me!"

Three days later, in a letter dated January 24, Brahms mentions corrections written in red in the score he is about to send to Joachim. His remarks are of particular interest because of the prominence of red ink corrections in the facsimile reproduction here. He writes: "Should you have someone available who has the disposition and time to correct the parts again, exactly, and particularly the corrections indicated in red in the score, it would suit me well." But it is not really important, he adds, since he hopes to make still further corrections. And he firmly reiterates his wish that Joachim work critically and rigorously on editing the solo part and the score.

The red markings to which Brahms refers are almost certainly the bold pencil markings for the orchestra, not the fine, red-ink emendations for the solo violin. One can make this assumption with some confidence, since the corrections mentioned by Brahms are, as he says, in "the parts," not in the solo part. Also, other evidence from the letters and from comparisons between the score and the separate violin part indicate that the red ink emendations in the solo line of the full score were added later in the year. Mr. Menuhin comments on this in his introduction.

Throughout February and March Joachim is in London, and the rewriting continues. Joachim requests that he be allowed to keep the score for a March 22 performance. Brahms agrees, saying that "it is no misfortune for the piece and the world if you keep the Concerto longer." But he also expresses anxiety over seeing how increasingly and rigorously Joachim's handwriting is showing up in the score and solo part and, with signs of growing impatience, wonders whether the piece is not now sufficiently playable and strong enough musically to be published. Joachim suggests, near the end of March, that in view of his imminent return the two might meet somewhere along the Rhine to discuss further revisions. If that is not possible, he will send the score to Frankfurt with bits of white paper inserted at places where the orchestral accompaniment might, for the comfort of the soloist, be made thinner by either eliminating the contrabass or cutting sustained notes in the strings or winds. Otherwise, Joachim is becoming more and more pleased with the piece and reports successful performances in London. He especially likes the

first movement, which he has played from memory the last two times.

Mid-May finds Brahms in a playful but bristly mood. The arrangement for piano and violin is going to the engraver, and Brahms the composer, always eager for bold, sweeping suggestions about his work, is now satisfied with the composition in general. Brahms the pianist, however, is becoming increasingly peevish over important details of articulation in the violin part and disagrees with his friend the violinist over various ways in which phrasings and slurs, dots and dashes are to be interpreted. "Lieber Jussuff," he begins his letter of mid-May, perhaps to assert with a kind of verbal bear-hug the old solidity of their youthful friendship in preparation for the blast to come. He has written Simrock, his publisher, that Simrock would have had the piano score if Joachim "had finished scribbling in the violin part." And then he asks since when and on what authority Joachim writes a certain sign for *portamento* when it means nothing. Joachim wants to write one thing and Brahms another. Is it necessary? Why should a certain marking "mean something different to us than to Beethoven?" Joachim's replies are models of tactful reasoning. "The greatest masters of composition," he writes, "have been (and are) primarily or entirely pianists. . . ." He then proceeds to argue a difference of point of view regarding these marks for violinists and pianists. But Brahms is not convinced, and the friendly dispute continues into the summer.

This correspondence between composer and performer suggests the existence of at least one full score, one piano score, possibly two solo violin parts, and many orchestral parts, all undergoing any number of revisions and being transported back and forth across continental Europe and to and from London. The early solo part that belonged to Joachim is now in Berlin, and a second, later solo part intended for the engraver was recently acquired for the Library of Congress by the Heinemann Foundation. The full score, largely in Brahms's hand, is here reproduced in facsimile, with its multiple colors and different textures of pen and pencil. (A color key with speculative comments precedes the facsimile.)

The manuscript solo violin part in the Library's collections (the "Stichvorlage," or copy for the engraver), marked, no doubt, by Joachim and others, is not in Brahms's hand. Most of the changes indicated in it appear in the full score, but it is uncertain whether they were transferred directly from the solo part to the score or whether one or more missing links in the form of early drafts, or other solo parts, for example, played a role. Although the solo violin part is not reproduced here, Mr. Menuhin does discuss some interesting points relating to it. In his discussion, the term "holograph score" refers to the full manuscript reproduced in facsimile, while "solo part" refers to the engraver's copy of the solo violin part.

In conversation Mr. Menuhin has expressed reservations over the desire of many performers and scholars to have a definitive text of a musical work. It is important, of course, to know all we can of a composer's intentions, but no score can be final. Intelligent readings of either neatly engraved publications or rough freehand drafts usually raise more questions about a score than they answer. In this respect, it is hoped that our facsimile publication of Brahms's Violin Concerto will succeed in introducing those healthy doubts that make the work of thinking musicians worthwhile.

JON NEWSOM

INTRODUCTION

I SOMETIMES FEEL, in those weary moments of travel, that the performing musician has perforce to work as hard as any unskilled laborer. Almost immediately, however, the converse thought springs to my mind—for I know how supremely privileged I am to have such materials as the Brahms Violin Concerto to work with.

It is a great honor for me to be able to join that illustrious line of my predecessors—Georges Enesco, my teacher, who once played under the baton of Brahms, and Fritz Kreisler, whose lovely playing of this work still echoes in my ears—and to comment upon this original Brahms manuscript. I have always felt a peculiar frisson upon seeing for the first time the actual handwriting of a master composer, alive with its irregularities, its visible impulses, its detectable moments of ease and worry, of joy and despair. It leads one straight to the heart of the matter, to the mind of the man who wrote the composition. No printed score can offer one such insights. But this manuscript is something very special. It is not only a provocative document revealing a master at work. It records vital aspects of the collaboration between two masters—the composer and the performer. And theirs is a kind of relationship which is essential to the music of our civilization but is too often overlooked or taken for granted.

It is one hundred years since the close friendship between Johannes Brahms and the great virtuoso Joseph Joachim culminated in the Violin Concerto. Joachim, his senior by two years, was in the very prime of his life and career and not yet married. Brahms worshipped the already committed Clara Schumann. Both men embraced wholeheartedly a friendship which began in 1856 and for a quarter of a century fulfilled the highest ideals of reciprocal commitment and loyalty so curiously similar to those indissoluble ties bred in times of war and adventure—quite different situations from those in which the two men lived. It was the kind of friendship which flourished in the milieu of German university life and was most deeply expressed through music. Music was in fact considered to be as manly an art as fencing—both were, on the one hand, intense aesthetic disciplines achieved by the constant exercise of great skill and, on the other, unashamedly emotional arts demanding passionate dedication. Does real *Brüderschaft* of this kind still exist today?

Indeed, this Concerto is the product of a romantic age and a chivalrous one. And Brahms completely fulfilled the traditions of chivalry. To be sure, both Brahms and Joachim loved women, but each did so in his own particular way. Fourteen years younger than Clara Schumann, Brahms respected her total devotion toward and admiration of Robert Schumann, and when

she had to face the anguish of watching her beloved husband—that most genial, selfless, and generous of men—become inexorably consumed by the very fire of his enormous creative gifts, Brahms was at her side ready to serve his muse, Clara, with dedication—looking after the children when she had to travel, writing letters for her to publishers and conductors, and performing every menial task possible to alleviate her tragic circumstances and show his love.

It is supremely natural that Brahms's character should appear so perfectly reflected in his music. We can instantly recognize the infinite tenderness, the never-failing generosity, nobility, and strength, the robust yet principled discipline of his music, the ineffable longing and then, at times, the bursts of virility, of rhythmic determination. It is paradoxical that Brahms's nature, his very goodness, his tenderness toward women, eventually brought about a parting of the ways between him and Joachim. To a lesser degree than with Clara Schumann, Brahms had extended his chivalrous attentions to Joachim's wife, Amalie Weiss, arousing the egotistical Joachim's self-torturing morbidity and suspicion. But it was Brahms's selflessness that compelled him to offer Amalie the very kind of understanding of which Joachim was incapable. Though Brahms tried hard to reconcile their differences in the years before he died, the friendship with Joachim was never restored to its original fervor.

It is most touching to think of Brahms's fruitless efforts to bring Joachim and his wife together through the music that he composed for them: two songs for contralto and viola obbligato.

The fascination with Hungarian music is one of the qualities which both these great musicians shared, with Brahms probably owing his understanding of the Hungarian idiom to Eduard Reményi, the Hungarian violinist with whom he first traveled as accompanist in 1852. It is amusing and significant that when, on one occasion, Brahms found the piano tuned too low for Reményi's violin, he gladly transposed the Beethoven sonata they were playing by a semitone, demonstrating not only his unusual technical facility at the keyboard but also the exceptional compatibility between the Hanseatic composer—for Brahms was born in Hamburg—and the Eastern European virtuoso. Since the violin can be tuned with ease to the pitch of the inflexible piano—although with a sacrifice to the sonorities that are characteristic of the violin on certain pitches at a particular tuning—a pianist is far more likely to demand that the player of another instrument tune to his pitch than he is to undertake the task, at best an inconvenience requiring adjustments in fingerings, of transposing the piano part.

Joachim was always fascinated by the world of the gypsy violinist. I myself feel that the violin belongs to the itinerant. It is an instrument of nature, an evolution of the earliest, most primitive bowed instruments which still can imitate those first sounds—a bird's song or human cries—and even express nostalgia for abandoned places and the passionate vibration of the heart, the constant musical improvization which must be the fate of those who travel unarmed through strange lands.

Just as Joachim was a composer as well as a performer, Brahms was a performer as well as a composer—an excellent pianist devoted to the great composers of the past, so much so that the music of Bach made him wonder aloud whether there was any point in further composition. Brahms also venerated Schubert and Mozart. Both Brahms and Joachim belonged to their time and composed for their time but appear to have understood perfectly the natural historical progression in musical style.

The relationship between the performer and the listener was much closer and even simpler before the advent of the expanded orchestra, the great concert hall, and the large audience of the nineteenth century. Those rare occasions when closeness has been reestablished are usually the result of some accidental—and often comical—breakdown of the rigid formality peculiar to our modern concerts. Indeed for Brahms, who was notoriously shy, such intimacy with the audience had unfortunate origins on at least one occasion. At the historic premiere by Joachim of Brahms's Violin Concerto on New Year's Day, 1879, Brahms, who was to conduct, appeared at the last minute before his ill-humored Leipzig audience, his attire in disarray. The effect of the indecorous informality of his gray street trousers was, in the course of the performance, to be outdone by the unfolding spectacle of those same trousers slipping beyond the point where the most supportive spectators could prolong their suspension of disbelief. Brahms had forgotten to fasten them. The Concerto ended before the anticipated sartorial denouement, but the scandalized Leipzigers had been utterly distracted and there is no record that they were so much impressed by the newly offered composition as by its author's narrow escape from the consequences of his personal neglect.

Such stories make charming but pertinent and illustrative digressions. And even better, they humanize the subject in a way that is positive as long as one believes that the fact of Orpheus, with or without suspenders, is more vital than the myth of Orpheus preserved in marble, with or without the obligatory fig leaf. But they may, as in this case, also distract one (as did Brahms's trousers) from the principal matter at hand!

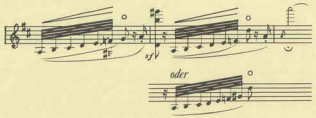
If I pay particular attention to the relationship between composer and performer, if I briefly analyze the consonances and dissonances that obtain in the differences of approach between composer and performer in the making of a piece of music, it is because I am looking over my shoulder into the past. There, with growing envy, I find in my imagination an inner vision of Mendelssohn and Ferdinand David working closely together on Mendelssohn's lyrical concerto, or of Brahms and Joachim testing and changing and triumphantly concluding. And yet, years later I myself was to know that marvellous sense of sharing in an evolving idea when Bartók would send me sections of the solo sonata which he was composing for me.

In Brahms's time, the university requirements of definite separation of the ways between composer and performer and the consequent fragmentation of musical experience had not yet occurred. As I write these words one hundred years later I can say with relief and abounding pleasure that a reconciliation has taken place—composers have once more become performers (Béla Bartók, Benjamin Britten, and Aaron Copland, for example) and performers have become composers (Leonard Bernstein, Antal Dorati, and André Previn, among others). Even some violinists aspire to this category!

From the moment they met, so it is said, Brahms and Joachim exchanged a continuous stream of contrapuntal exercises in the pursuit of perfecting their knowledge of the discipline of music. Joachim was an excellent composer—in fact, some of the alterations to the manuscript solo violin part of Brahms's Violin Concerto and certain suggestions of orchestration and dynamics in the score reproduced here are more than proof that Joachim's conception of the work was that not only of a violinist but also of a considerable composer. As an example, take the little scale preceding the high A immediately before the cadenza ushering in the final *poco*

più presto coda when he adds the G sharp to the scale, thus continuing the progression of G, G sharp, to A. This is not merely a violinist's amendment for comfort—it is undeniably a composer's.

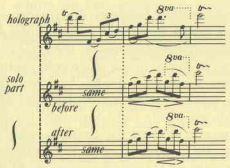
In the separate manuscript part, not reproduced here, the violin part (holograph page 98, measure 2) reads:



We know of no version like this in Brahms's hand, but he certainly must have approved of it. It appears in the facsimile in red ink on page 98.

Certain *forte-pianos* and *pianissimi* during the orchestral accompaniment on page 9 of the score, as well as the deletion of voices in the clarinets and trumpets, as on pages 12 and 13 of the score, a part where the orchestra generally plays far too loudly even now, temper the music as much as they satisfy violinistic requirements.

Of course Joachim, like all soloists, requires from the composer more considerate treatment of the limits of violin dynamics. In the violin solo the changes are always from *forte* to *poco forte*, from *poco forte* to *mezzo forte*. And the dynamics are always made subtler and softer. For example, in the solo part at measure 149 of the first movement the swell is shortened and delayed, indicating the desire for quietness and dreaminess, stressing that only a passing dynamic accent and absolutely no crescendo are wanted.

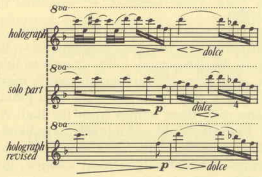


On the other hand, Joachim permitted, and possibly even suggested, increasing the dynamic markings from *forte* to *fortissimo* in certain parts of the *tutti* (holograph page 25, measure 4) before the second great *tutti* in the first movement.

It is interesting to note Joachim's boundless respect for the composer, for even where he offers a better solution he writes it in modestly below the part and never deletes the composer's original writing.

I always find it most revealing to see not simply the notes and words in a manuscript but the deletions. These demonstrate far more succinctly how the composer's mind worked in the first place as well as how his thought evolved from its conception. It is one of the reasons why this particular manuscript is so fascinating. It throws a new light on Brahms, whose scores otherwise were always so perfect and showed no trace of their preceding incarnations or embodiments. For example, it is revealing that the slow movement was first marked *un poco larghetto* in ink and then changed to *adagio*. This correction appears in blue crayon to the right of the original inscription (holograph page 57). It was probably changed to *adagio* when Brahms decided to indicate *più largamente* over the middle section instead of *più sostenuto*, which appears in the solo part but not the score.

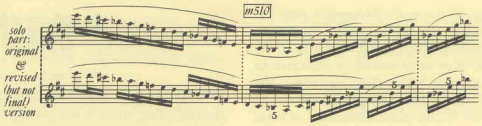
We can also trace, in the score (holograph page 64, violin solo, last measure) and the solo part, the evolution of the slow movement just before the return of the *tempo primo*. In a previous incarnation, as indicated in the solo part three measures before the *tempo primo*, the solo violin was to play syncopated high Cs leading to the high D. These, no doubt, were discarded, as were the busy figurations canceled in the score, because the serenity of that moment required a minimum of motion, a minimum of action, and perfect poise and equilibrium.



In comparing the solo part and the score one might be tempted to speculate that the score may have been written after the solo part—or at least that it was not the source from which the solo part was copied. This raises the possibility that the part was copied from an even earlier draft of the Concerto. An example supporting this view is that the soloist has a four-note chord at the beginning of measure 168. This full chord appears in the holograph (page 17, measure 1); originally the solo part only had a three-note chord, the E being added later in red ink.

But might it not have been added in brown ink in the full score, thereby not giving the appearance of having been a correction? Or again, might not the copyist, working from our holograph score, have merely made an error in the solo part, the error being corrected later in red ink?

Another point of interest and subject for speculation is the solo passage at measures 509 to 511 of the first movement (holograph page 50, measure 7 through page 51, measure 1). The original opening triplet was copied faithfully in the solo part and then scratched out. The improvements made by Joachim in the ascending *arpeggiati* that appear in the score in red ink are also incorporated in the solo part but only as corrections in brown ink, with one point clarified somewhat in pencil. Did Joachim make the erasures, deletions, and brown ink corrections in the solo part himself and later transfer them in red ink to the score? Or did Joachim first make the corrections in the score, with the copyist clumsily trying to decipher the correct reading from the score and making his own corrections as he figured it out? It should be noted that neither the score nor the part clearly represented the final reading. In the first and all subsequent editions the second quarter of measure 510 has a quintuplet: the F-sharp is deleted. Joachim first suggested that six-note figure in a letter to Brahms dated May 13, 1879, an indication at least that the red ink additions were not made before then, more than four months after the first performance. The final correction might have been made as late as in the engraver's proofs.



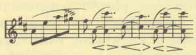
In that wonderfully serene and yet warm opening with violas, cellos, bassoons, and horn there is a uniform rhythm which, despite the undulating eighths at the oboe's entrance, continues unchanged for the first sixteen bars of the piece. I love the trancelike but pulsating quality of this music. Here, as he often did, Brahms evokes a soft and receptive mood under whose spell he summons his muse. As in the opening of the G-major String Sextet, we find a form of sublime listening, a form of divine awakening, of visitation. The Violin Concerto probably has the most extraordinary example of a musical "climb" from total serenity to an apogee of grandeur to be found in any concerto. Even in the first four bars of the first *forte* in the opening *tutti,* there are still no accents indicated, which means that it must grow and swell; it must never be hammered or pounded.

Joachim's adjustments to the orchestral dynamics, as I have said, were certainly not always designed to make them softer. He had a keen sense of the dramatic possibilities inherent in the music and the orchestration and specifically of the dramatic contrast called for beginning with the sustained *fortissimo* at page 3 of the holograph. The preservation, indeed, the boldly reinforced dynamic "ff" in that forceful *tutti* section, followed by the intensely quiet orchestral passages marked respectively "p" (measure 43, holograph page 4, measure 5), "pp" (measure 53, holograph page 5, measure 3), and "ppp" (measure 59, holograph page 5, measure 8), testify to his understanding of the work in its dramatic as well as its lyrical aspects. For between *fortissimo* and three *pianos* there is quite a gap! Otherwise, as I have said, during the violin solos, Joachim, for whom I feel a secret sympathy, always reduces the volume of the orchestra.

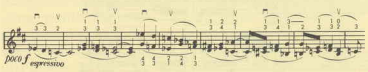
The solo violin enters in the rhapsodic, gypsy, Hungarian tradition in leaps, exaggerations, and syncopation in the *appogiatura.* Fully attuned to this spirit, Joachim, at measure 102 (holograph page 9, measure 6), already finds a way to improve the solo passage that arpeggiates over three strings from the high A to the open D. Brahms would undoubtedly have liked to hear as much as possible of the resonance of the A and D open strings. But the only rational solution, given the best possible method of fingering, was to keep just the second A of each group instead of constantly rocking back and forth between the A and the D. Yet this indicates Brahms's original wish for an even, rich sonority—subtler than the effect of dynamic contrasts. Indeed, I find the above-mentioned brief alteration in the solo part at measure 149, where the swell is pushed forward and compressed, very characteristic of the strong but subtle mood of not only that passage but many others. In this case, it simply means that there must be no *crescendo* along those four repeated improvisatory statements from measure 152 to 163 (holograph page 15, measure 5 to page 16, measure 5) until a small swell to the top D. But there is a greater implication in

such sensitive dynamic articulation: this concerto is truly *for,* not *against*, the violin, as has cynically been said. And the temptation for the soloist to approach the work in a combative frame of mind must be resisted.

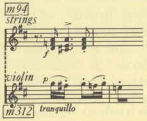
The extraordinary C at measure 210 (holograph page 21, measure 1), which allows the violinist with a small hand unsuited to the technical demands of playing tenths to break the tenth, is characteristic of the German emphasis on musicality rather than violinistic virtuosity. Paganini, that brilliant and flamboyant Italian, would never have even permitted an *ossia* to double-stops of tenths, much less composed a passage facilitating their execution by breaking them. Also, the corrected phrasing of the preceding five thematic notes (holograph page 20, last measure, through page 21, measure 1) is both musical *and* violinistic, for that revised phrasing allows the violinist to use three bows on the subsequent three figures that begin with the leap to high C.



At measure 304 (holograph page 29, measure 11), where the violin enters in the middle of the development, Joachim might have been so kind as to contribute a fingering, as it is an awkward passage at the best of times. May I suggest:



In the following hesitating section with the sixteenth-note figure beginning at measure 312 (holograph page 30, measure 7), most violinists ignore the dot at the end of the slur over the pairs of sixteenth notes. That dot is thematic. It is directly related to the figure that appears so often in the orchestra, and which the solo violin plays just before the recapitulation . That is the recurrent semitone figure which is heard for the first time in the very last *forte* section of the opening *tutti* as the solo violin is ushered in (measure 94, holograph page 8, measure 7). The dot on the last note of this three-note figure and the dot over the second note of the two sixteenths of those three-note groups in the tender *tranquillo* section of the development indicate the same phrasing. Enesco, my great teacher who played under Brahms, always insisted on that. The dot over the final eighth note that appears in the three-note figure of the *forte* sections indicates both that the note is short and that it must be separated from the preceding one. In the *tranquillo* section, of course, it must be done with extreme gentleness and no hint of harshness; the second of the two slurred notes should always be slightly separated from the following eighth note.



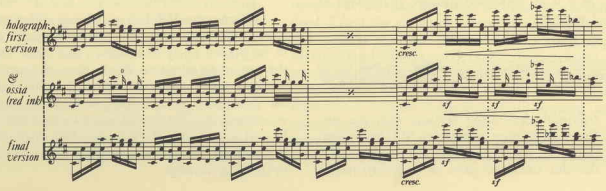
At measure 365 (holograph page 36, measure 9) the solo violin has a high B. In the holograph that note is to be played so as to continue the octave doubling of the preceding measure. But in the solo part, it is interesting to see the harmonic inserted on the high B merely for convenience, something which a strong violinist would not do. He would want to maintain the octave line to include the B. Why Joachim made this change is puzzling, but the deletion of the lower octave B stands in the final version.

I was interested to see that one of my favorite short orchestral *crescendi,* covering only two notes at measure 456 (holograph page 45, measure 8) on the F-sharp and E in the first violins and supported by the other strings and a pair of horns, was a later addition and not a first inspiration. For though it seems such an exuberant and spontaneous outpouring of goodness and generosity, Brahms's original intent was, in fact, to have the opposite effect: a *decrescendo*. The change to *crescendo*, boldly marked in blue crayon and presumably in Brahms's hand, is almost never effectively executed in performance, for it requires a swell from very soft to extremely full on just two slurred eighth notes.

After the cadenza in the coda, in the solo part, the most important indication, *tranquillo* (measure 527, holograph page 52), appears as an addition in pencil, though it was apparently an original part of the holograph score and not an emendation. As for the altered phrasings, they are simply those of the practical violinist who knows how to execute the composer's intentions by effective bowing; Brahms, of course, was a pianist, not a violinist. Joachim has shortened his longer phrase marks in order to allow himself more freedom for bowing. But these bows, as Brahms's original phrasings show, must be played most smoothly.

The opening pair of triplets at the last entrance of the solo violin in the second movement (holograph page 66, measure 6) help prepare for the last movement, and so the ending of the slow movement is also a transition to the brilliant finale. Such little things are often overlooked by players, but I personally feel that awareness of and attention to such details help one give a sense of unity and conviction to the performance.

In the solo part there is an *ossia* that is copied as an actual change into the holograph score in the third movement (holograph page 71, measures 3 through 8). While interesting enough to illustrate, it has, I am glad to say, been abandoned. The introduction here of the brilliant figures that are to be heard later with greater effect is premature. I should like to add that, in the altered version, there is a repeated open-string E that, if the change had been retained, should at least not have been played open. The student of this work is invited to compare this passage with its more brilliant return (holograph page 90), where the corresponding change *has* been retained (e.g., page 90, measure 10; page 91, measures 1, 3, and 4). There, the change gives the passage the freshness of introducing a new figure, and its effectiveness would have been diminished had the changes on page 71 been retained. Here is how the passage in its first appearance on page 71 seems to have evolved:



In contrast to the above-mentioned change, the revisions at the last measure of page 72 and the first measure of page 73 in the solo violin's two short six-note statements are great improvements over the original, where the open A would just make the passage, clearly intended to be brilliant, sound too dark and muddy.

Beginning at letter *B* (holograph pages 75-76), Joachim has helped articulate the contrast between the strongly accented and separated dotted eighths and sixteenths of the rising scale, on the one hand, and the slurred dotted eighths and sixteenths that follow, on the other.

The solo part reveals that twelve measures after letter *D* at the recurrence of the very first theme (holograph page 82, measure 2) there is the marking *teneramente* (tenderly). This appears in red ink two measures later in the holograph score. In the solo part it has been cancelled, apparently at the same time *dolce* was added there, and *teneramente* appears again at the point corresponding to the spot where it was added in red in the holograph score. But in the solo part it was finally crossed out, and so the solo part is closer in this respect to the published version, where only the *dolce,* apparently an original marking in the holograph score, remains. It seems that *teneramente* and *dolce* wrestled in Brahms's and Joachim's minds as contenders for the role of being the word most expressive for the passage in question. Does all this tell us more about how the passage should be played than does the finished printed score, neatly engraved, with all signs of equivocation struck out by the composer, editors, and publisher? The very publication of this facsimile testifies to our belief that it does. In this case, the consideration of *teneramente* is a valuable indication of how the passage should be played. Of course, it cannot be played too softly, for it must have a robustness commensurate with the orchestration, which is fairly thick, and with the warmth and rhythmic drive of the last movement. Perhaps that is why Brahms finally deleted *teneramente* and wrote *dolce* instead. To Brahms, *dolce* always meant a slightly warmer, somewhat richer texture than it would have, say, to Mozart or Beethoven.

The passage marked *ossia* in the solo part but finally converted to a revised reading in the holograph score (page 82, measure 5) is a great improvement over the original, having a singing instead of a hiccuping quality. It is interesting that both the revisions on page 82, measures 5 to 6, and page 83, measure 7, through page 84, measure 1, appear first as alternate readings and not absolute revisions. Did Joachim submit them to Brahms as *ossia* out of a sense of diplomacy born of his innate respect for the composer, leaving him with the decision on the relative merits of the alternate readings? Or did Brahms himself compose both versions, offering them to his colleague for the latter's expert advice as a violinist?

Joachim's improvement beginning with page 97, measure 6, already mentioned, is a touch of pure genius. He manages to build up a much more intense attack in the revision, to which he has added the *energeticamente* indication. Rhythmically it is so much better than Brahms's original conception that I am convinced the composer was happy to accept it.

In connection with the conclusion of this passage, I have already mentioned the G-sharp introduced in the progression to the high A before the *poco più presto.* Regarding that tempo marking, I remember Enesco's very specific instruction that it not be played *presto,* for it quite literally means a *little* faster. It should certainly never be gabbled and should retain Brahms's definition and weight. Everything that he said and did was considered and substantial. There was nothing trivial, flimsy, or flighty about Brahms, nor anything coquettish or affected. Above all, the important point is that what is *presto* to Brahms would be *allegro* to anyone else.

Although it is not entirely clear on the last page of the holograph, the ascending scale was originally to begin on A. This is changed in the solo part and made to begin on D, the tonic, a far better choice.

On pages 60 and 61, we see one of Brahms's most characteristic markings: dots with a slur over them, a form of enunciation, *parlando*. The individual articulation of these notes is marked and yet they are not totally separated. Brahms also uses an indication Elgar no doubt adopted and which (though it is not fair to say of Elgar that it is an imitation) shows that both men shared something extraordinary: musical sensibility that reveals an emotional kinship. It is demonstrated by the use of a *forte* which is both *espressivo* and *dolce* and even allows a warm, gentle *fortissimo*. In their natures we can trace the same basic temperament, totally unaggressive and yet grand and often overwhelming, though never expressed by cruel hammerblows or sudden angular melodic contours.

The more I reflect on Brahms, the more deeply I understand my great master, Georges Enesco, who adored him, for on looking back with maturer eyes than those of a thirteen-year-old, I recognize that they were two of a kind, both late-nineteenth-century models of untarnished chivalrous behavior. Enesco's own life was proof of it. The two men—Enesco, the Rumanian, totally absorbed by the Viennese-German traditions, playing under Brahms himself in Vienna, and Brahms, from the Hanseatic town of Hamburg, strangely attracted by the wild Hungarian and gypsy folk idioms—had, nonetheless, much in common. The only admonition I ever received from Enesco was when I performed the Brahms Violin Concerto in New York under Bruno Walter in 1932. Enesco came to the rehearsal and took me severely to task for having played the last movement far too quickly. He made me work on it with him for an hour and forfeit my lunch in order to restore that proud elegance, that incisiveness, that warm and generous space which I had totally omitted. I was later fascinated to see, in the *allegro ma non troppo*, that *ma non troppo* is written twice in the full score, vindicating beyond any doubt Enesco's conception.

As throughout the Concerto, the manuscript here stands delicately between the composer's concept and the mute, seemingly fixed score we see in a printed edition. One can almost feel Brahms, in his insistent *ma non troppo,* urgently seizing the only notation available to convey a spiritual quality quite beyond all notation. The manuscript tantalizes one in that it bears this trace—and yet bears only a trace. The living concept which Enesco felt so strongly and communicated so insistently to me could be transmitted in full only by one who had personally received it. Once again, we find evidence of the wonderful power and importance of a personal tradition in music.

As an American violinist schooled in European traditions, and as a contributor to an American publication of this rare and very European manuscript, I am quite sensitive to the assets and dangers of my perspective. A story told to Robert Schauffler by another American violinist, Arthur Abell, who had spent many years abroad and knew Brahms well, is especially appealing to me. Mr. Abell describes a touchingly delicate moment of conversation in which personal sympathy and tact elicit from Brahms a remarkable commentary on his inner life as a composer. Critics have challenged the authenticity of Mr. Abell's accounts, and there is of course no way of settling their questions finally. But this is precisely the nature of personal communication—that it is unsettling, suggestive, elusive, and, finally, beyond precise verification. Mr. Schauffler has included the story in his book *The Unknown Brahms*:

Mr. Arthur M. Abell, an American violinist, was one of the few who could make the Master talk intimately about his own work: "A year before Brahms died," said Mr. Abell, "he asked me whether I played the banjo. 'No,' I replied. 'Why?' 'Because at Klengel's I met an American girl who played for me, on that curious instrument, a sort of music which she called Ragtime. Do you know this?'—And he hummed the well known tune which goes to the words:

If you refuse me,
Honey, you lose me.

'Well,' the Master continued, with a far-away look in his eyes, 'I thought I would use, not the stupid tunes, but the interesting rhythms of this Ragtime. But I do not know whether I shall ever get around to it. My ideas no longer flow as easily as they used to.'

"This remark gave me an opening for certain questions that I had longed to ask him ever since I had first met him five years before—questions concerning his mental processes while composing. Joachim had told me that Brahms was exceedingly difficult to draw out on the subject of his inspirations, but the illustrious composer's mood was right, the setting was ideal, so I ventured and won.

"'Apropos of your flow of ideas,' I asked, 'do you ever have, when composing, sensations such as those described by Mozart in a letter to a friend? He wrote: "The process with me is like a vivid dream.'"

"'Yes, I do,' replied Brahms. 'Mozart is right. When at my best it is a dreamlike state, and in that condition the ideas flow much more easily.'

"'Are you conscious when in this state?'

"'Certainly, fully conscious, otherwise I would not be able to write the ideas down as they come. It is important to get them on paper immediately.'

"'Do you ever lose consciousness while in this mental condition?'

"'Yes, sometimes I become so drowsy that I fall asleep, and then I lose the ideas.'

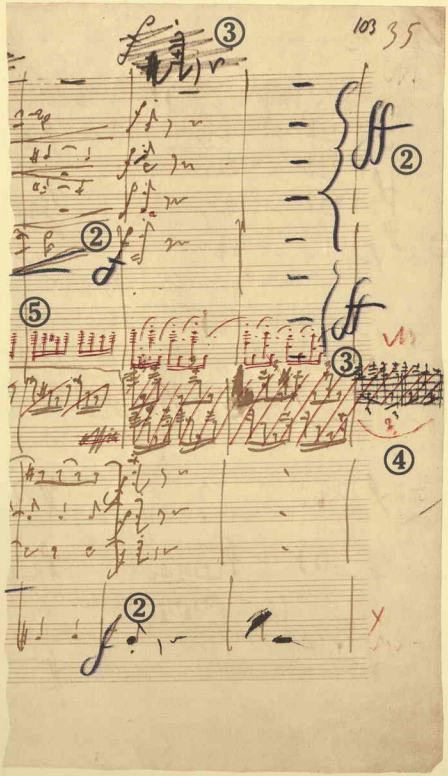
"'Can you do anything to induce this dreamlike state?'

"'Yes, I early discovered that to obtain good results certain conditions had to be met. First of all, I have to be absolutely alone and undisturbed. Without these two requisites I cannot even think of trying to compose.'

In closing my little dissertation, and in the same spirit in which Enesco advised me, may I make a plea to my fellow violinists of all ages and those yet to be born. Too often I have heard the Brahms Concerto played as might a bull in a china shop, using it in the most brutal way as a vehicle for power and potency, an exhibition of sheer muscle. It is, as I hope I have pointed out in the preceding pages, so much more than that. Its misinterpretation is as often the conductor's fault as the soloist's. Let no artist forget how important humility is when facing great works, and let him never use them as mere vehicles for personal display.

YEHUDI MENUHIN

Facsimile



Color Key

Considerable creative effort is often involved in producing standard music notation that is aesthetically pleasing as a form of graphic art. In preparing a facsimile, on the other hand, the objective is to reproduce a manuscript as exactly as possible in terms of size, color, and texture of paper and writing materials, without regard to aesthetics. The sole criterion is that the facsimile be faithful to the original. The Brahms Violin Concerto reproduced here is significant not as a finished work but as a historical document which reveals stages of creation as the composition was being polished. The definitive version is the first printed edition for which Brahms certainly corrected the engraver's proofs. Details are revealed in this facsimile that might otherwise be considered flaws as in the case of a painting whose earlier states are revealed by x-ray photography. A color guide is being provided as a key to the interpretation of the creative efforts which combined to produce this masterpiece.

The score is reproduced here by offset lithography using a 250-line-per-inch halftone screen. The contrast of the original has been softened to retain the lighter details but still provide an even background upon which to overprint the various colors with the most consistent results. The standard four-color (magenta, cyan, yellow, and black) separation method in which screened halftone impressions are superimposed was considered inadequate for this facsimile, since clarity and the ability to distinguish the various colors and textures of pen and pencil would be sacrificed by this method. Instead, up to five additional line-color separations, each carefully masked by hand, have been overprinted so that only the portions where there is additional writing have been inked on the plates used for each color. The dark red ink is thus not a composite of, say, a densely screened primary red mixed with a lightly screened primary blue. It is printed as a solid color with one specially mixed ink laid down over the impression used for the original brown ink of the manuscript. The specific markings are as follows:

1—Brown Ink
For the first draft Brahms used brown ink over a smooth white paper that has yellowed only slightly. Variations in the speed of his strokes, in the pressure upon his pen, and in the ink itself are reflected in the density and contrast of his writing.

2—Blue Pencil
These bold markings, made with a soft pencil, were probably also done by Brahms, who conducted the Leipzig premiere. They are the typical markings a conductor makes when he is not concerned with correcting or changing the score but rather with emphasizing dynamics or indicating important reference points such as rehearsal letters.

3—Grey Pencil
Most of the changes in orchestration were made with a hard grey pencil. Although Joachim suggested many of these changes in order to make the orchestra more transparent or emphasize a bass line here and there, the changes, often bold and hasty, are probably in Brahms's hand. An anomaly is the neatly written violin part added in the margin and then deleted.

These pencil markings posed the greatest problems in printing because it was necessary to provide sufficient density to indicate a clear emendation in a different color without losing the transparent quality of the pencil which permits one to see what has been crossed out.

4—Red Pencil
Much like the bold blue markings, the soft red pencil additions appear to have been done by Brahms. In this instance, he has queried the grey pencil revision of the solo violin part in the margin. Elsewhere, he has reinforced dynamic markings and also changed them.

5—Dark Red Ink
These careful additions are, with a few exceptions, revised passages for the soloist. Undoubtedly they reflect Joachim's suggestions and quite possibly are in his hand. This example, written in very fair copy, is typical.

6—Orange Pencil
On a few pages there are bold markings made with a soft orange pencil. Page 73 contains an example. They do not seem to be of great consequence but are faithfully reproduced here for the student who wishes to speculate on their meaning. Possibly Brahms went through the manuscript with an orange pencil or crayon in hand before committing it to publication, marking points for his or his publisher's consideration.

Allegro con fuoco.

Largamente.

2 Flauti

2 Oboi

2 Clarinetti in A

2 Fagotti

2 Corni in D

2 Corni in E

2 Trombe in D

Timpani in D. A.

Solo Violino

B. kein Abkürzungen!

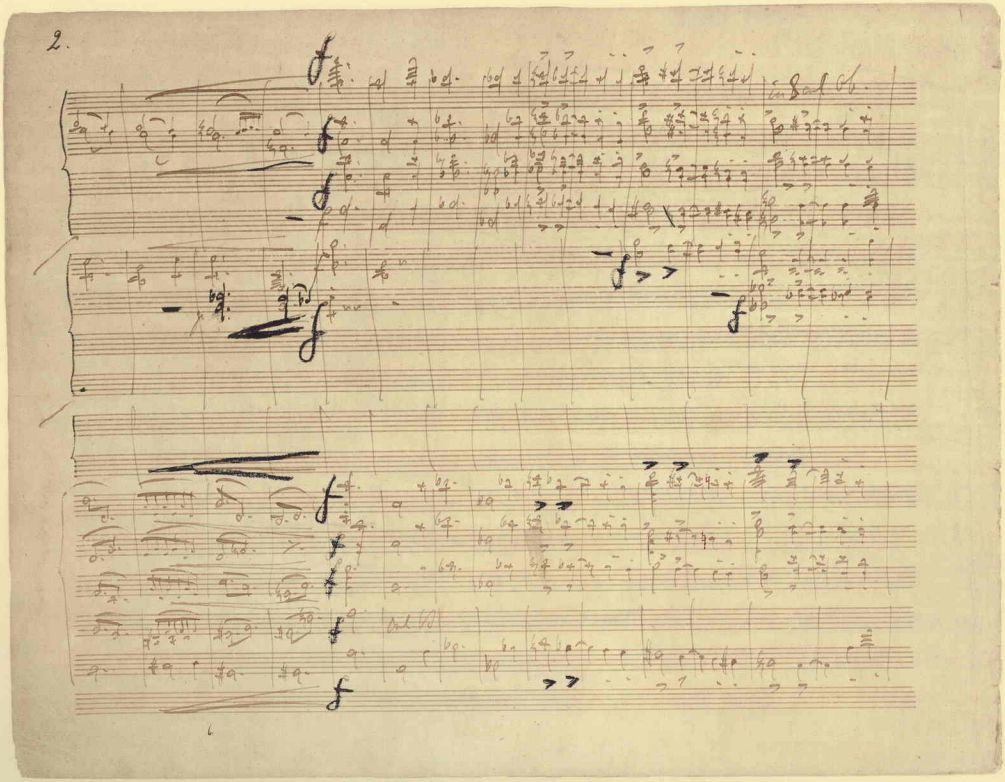
1ste Violini

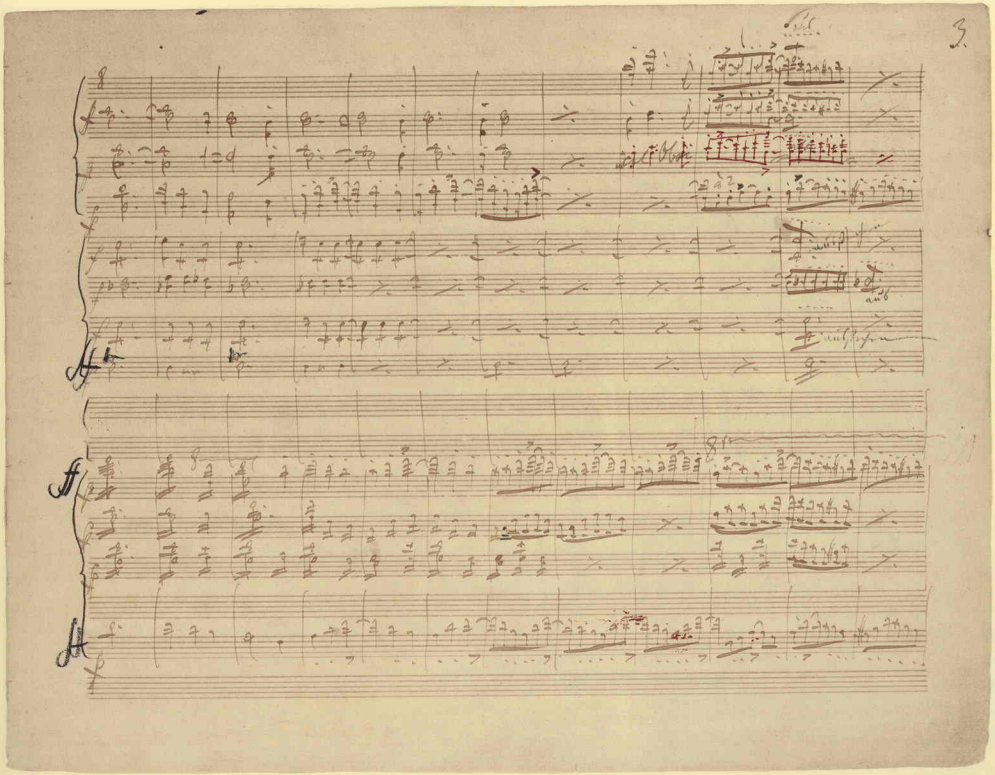
2de Violini

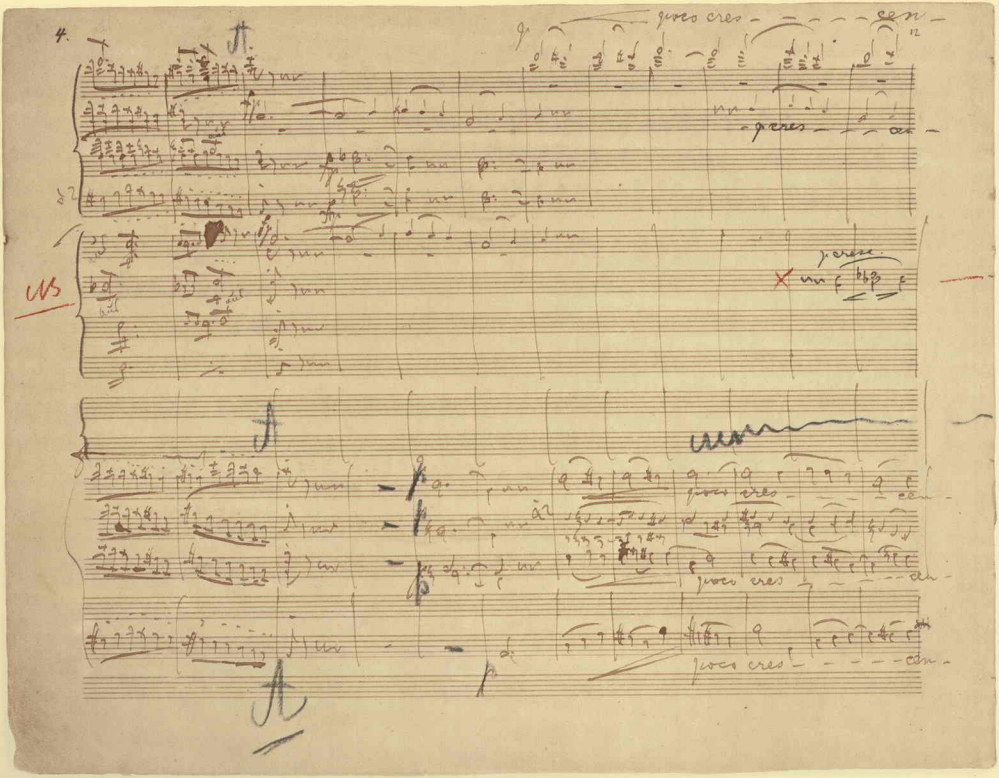
Viole

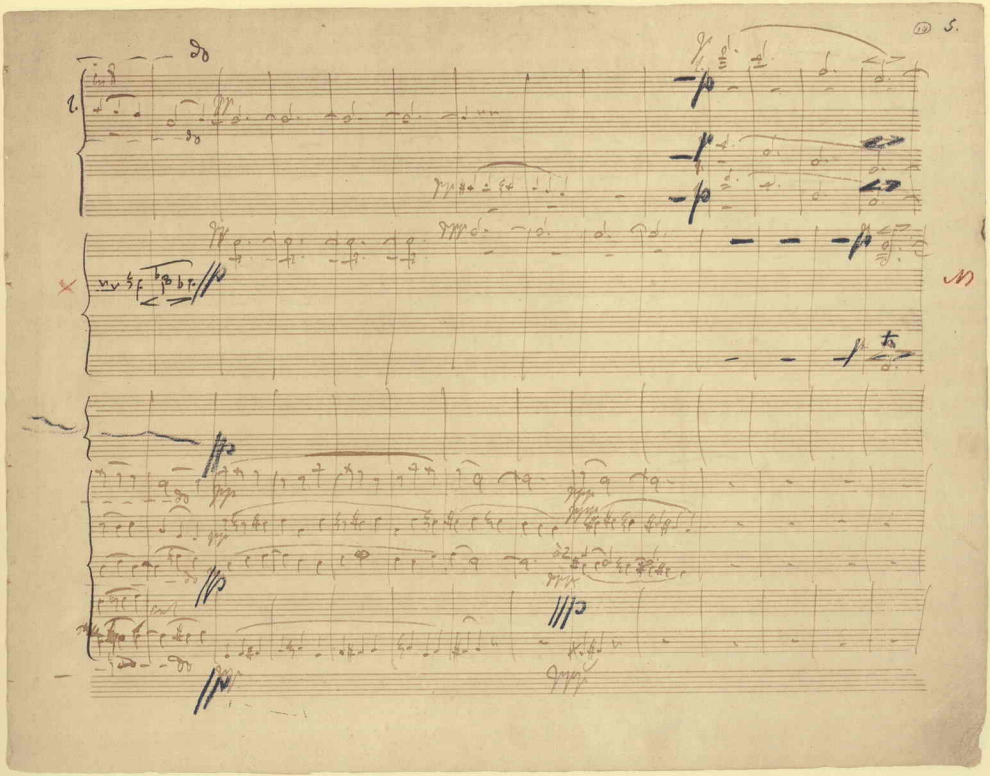
V. Cello

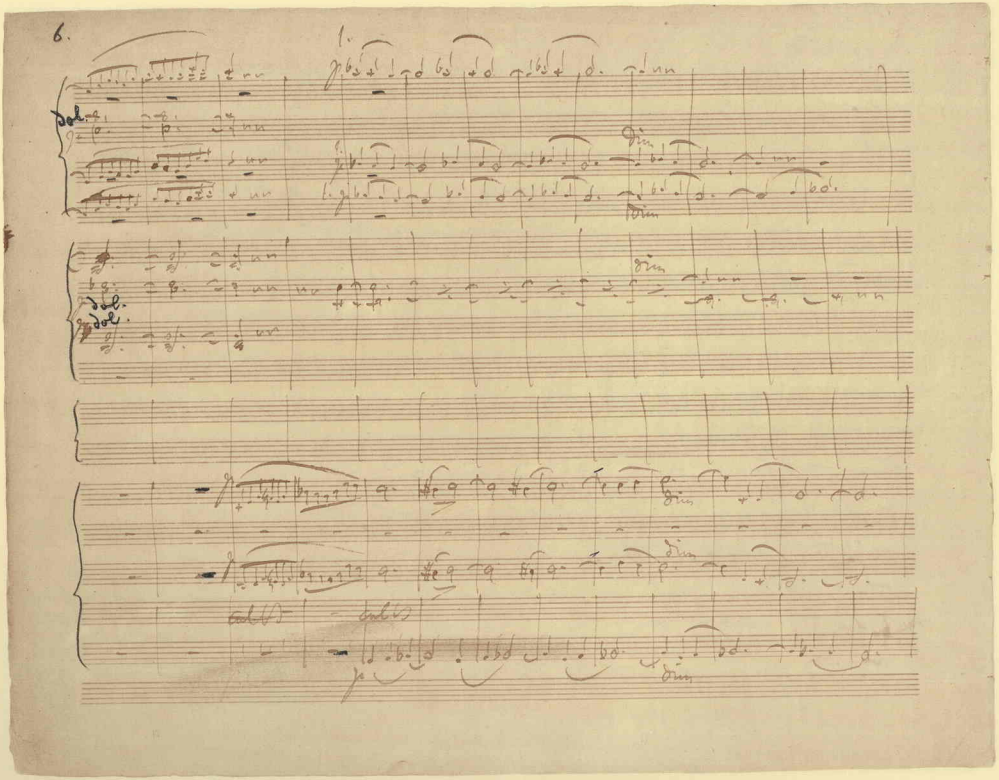
Cont.


2.


3.


4.
poco cres
poco cres
poco cres
poco cres
poco cres

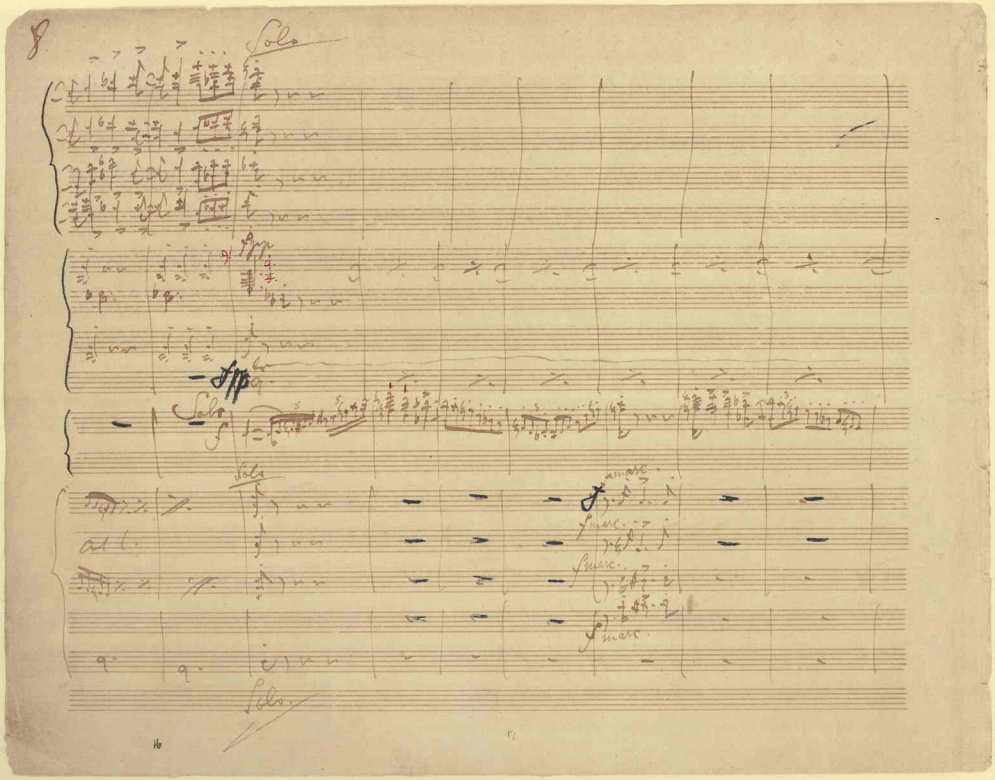

5.

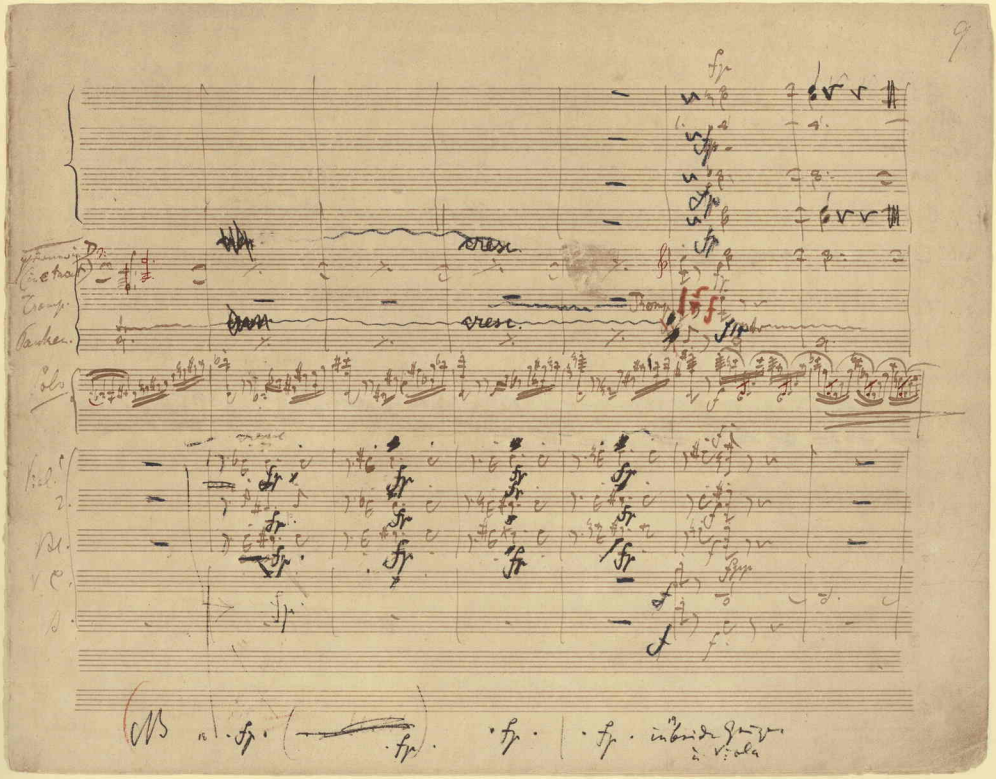

6.
1.
Solo
Solo
Solo

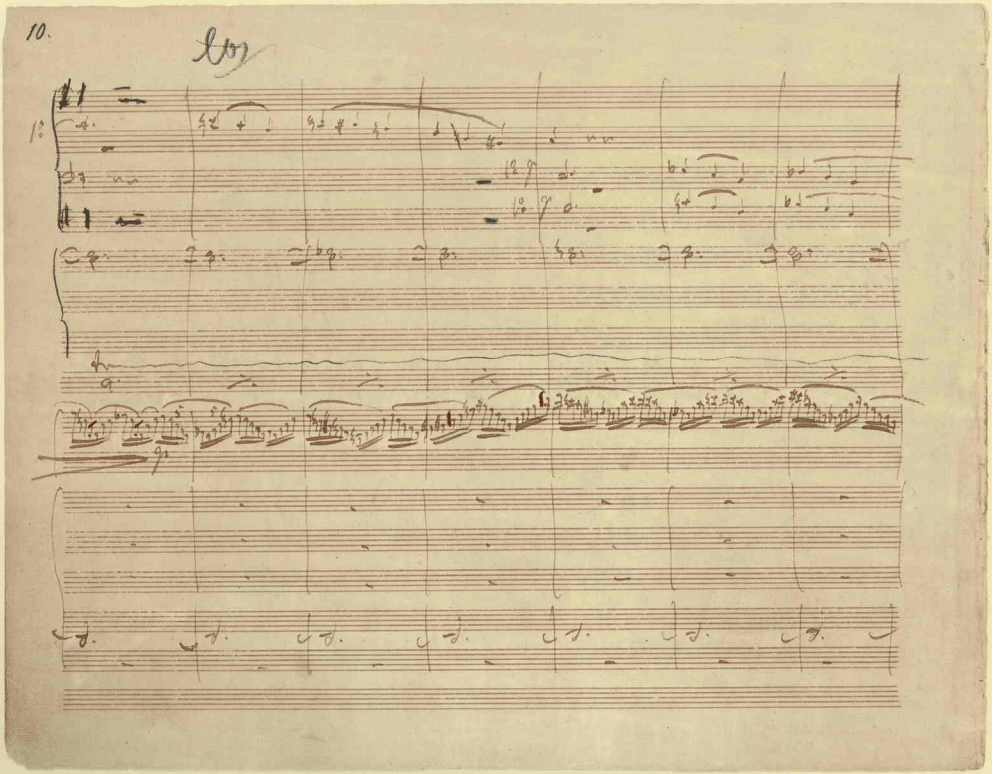
B

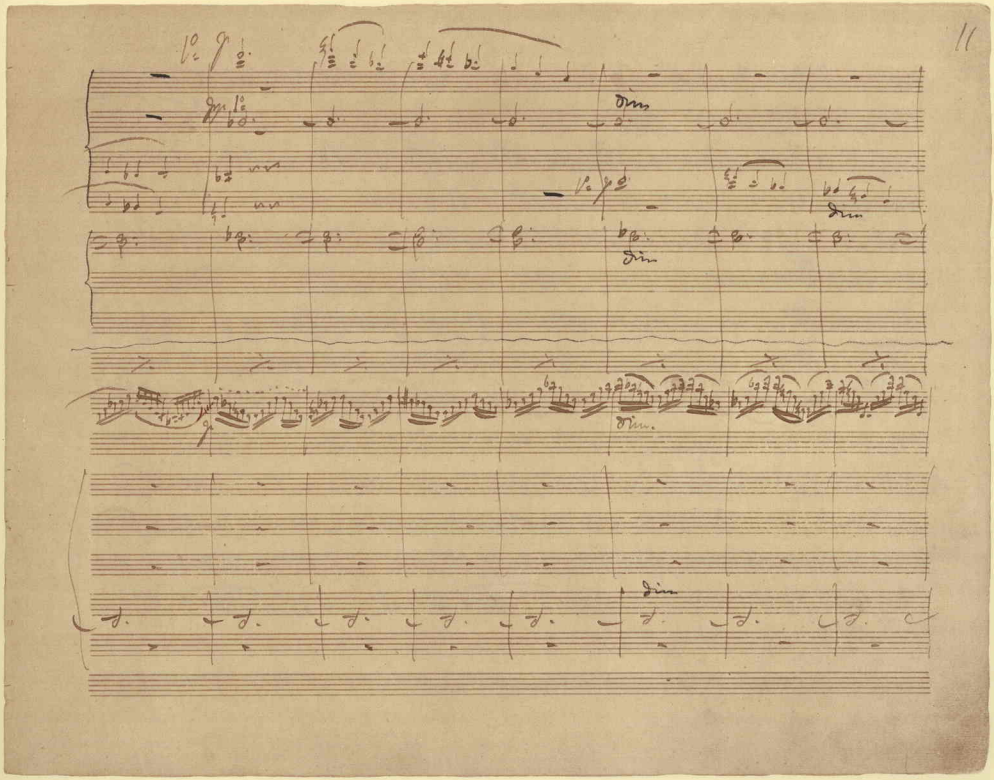
B

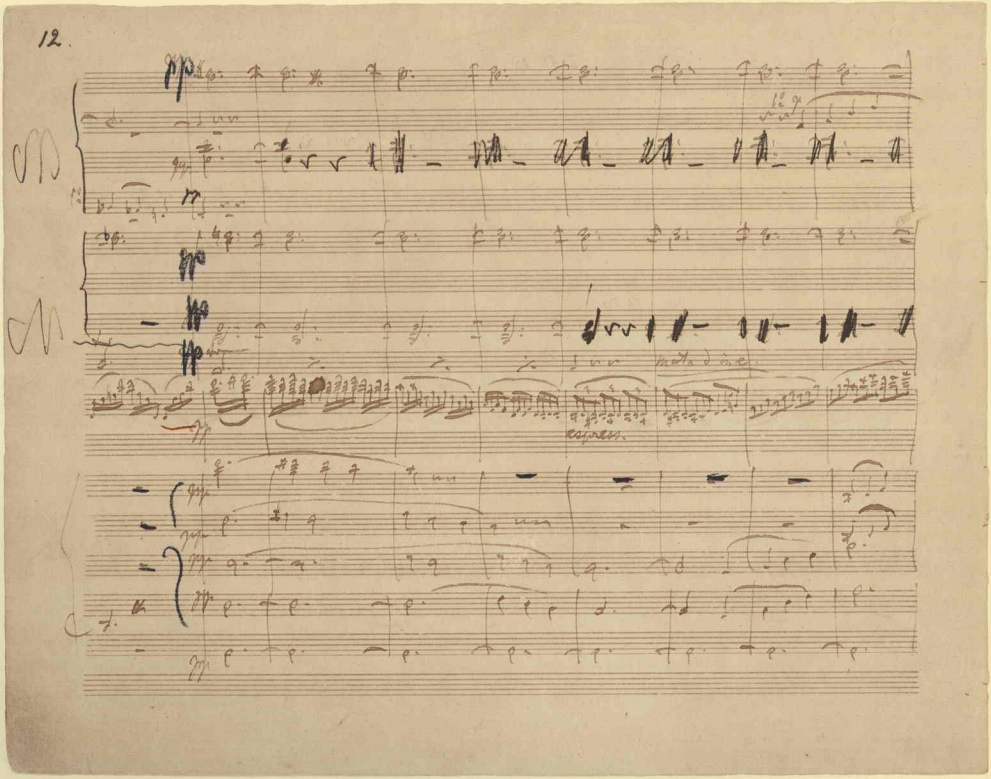
B

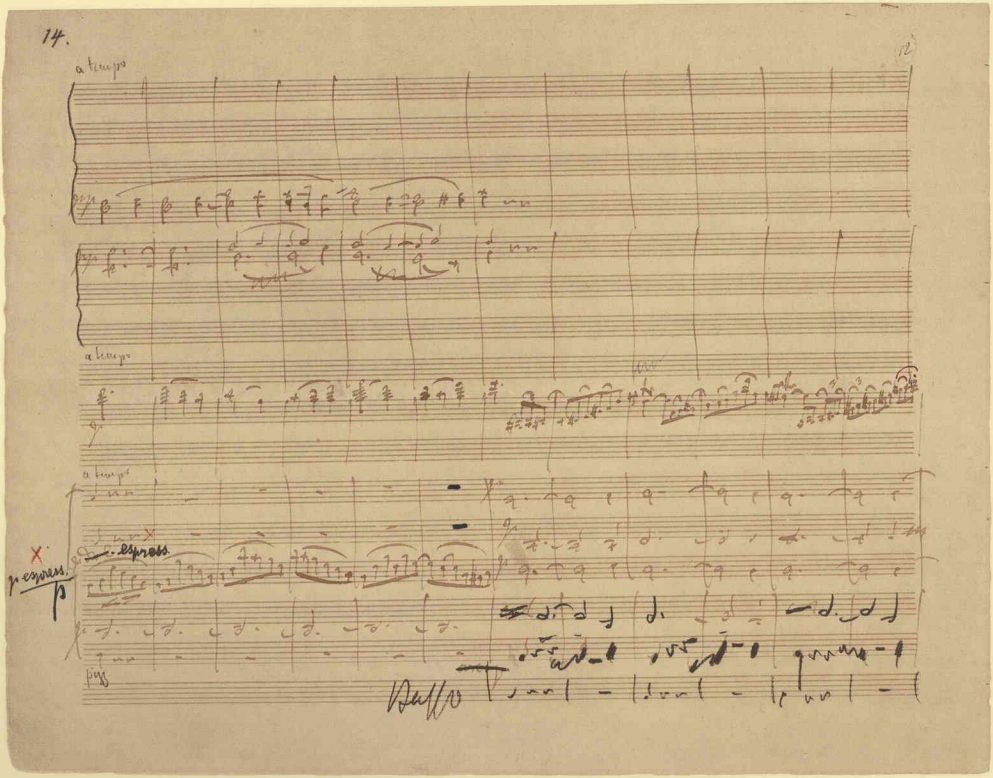

8
Solo
Solo
Solo

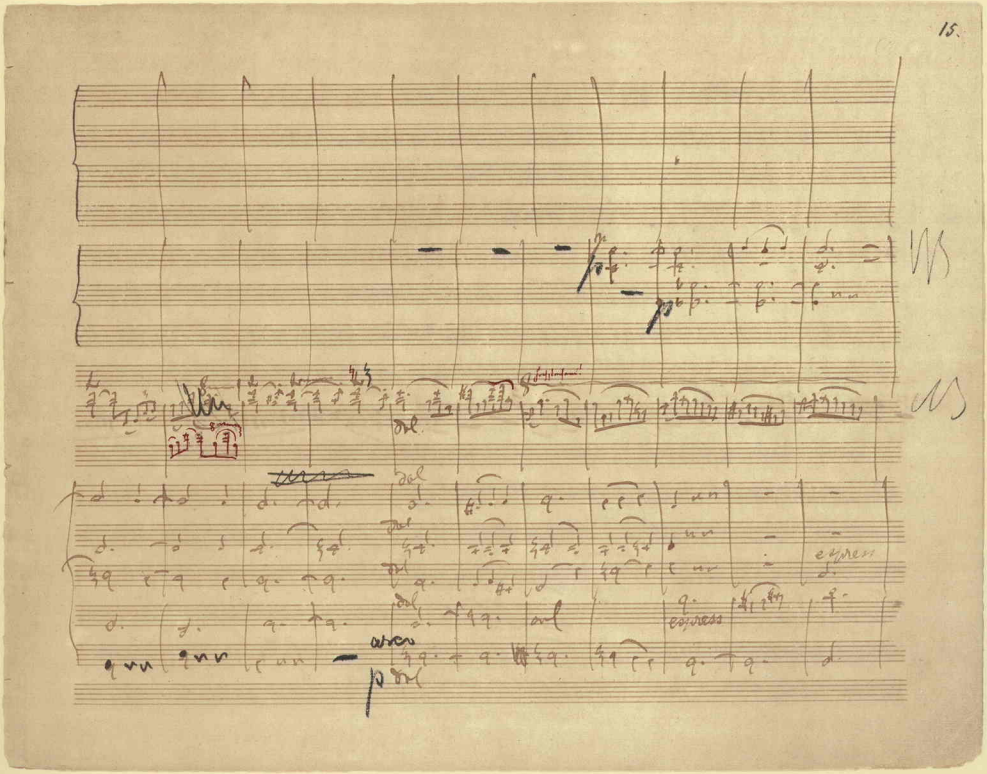

9
Corni
Trompe
Pauken
Vln.
Vc.
cresc.
cresc.
fff
fp
fp
fp

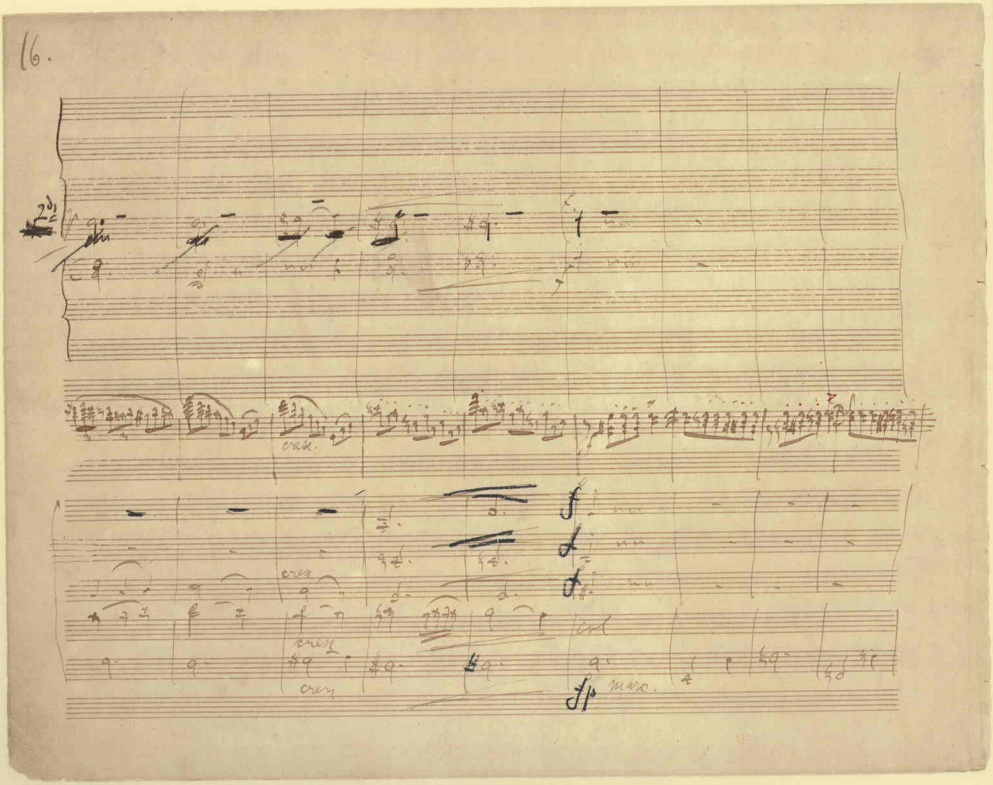


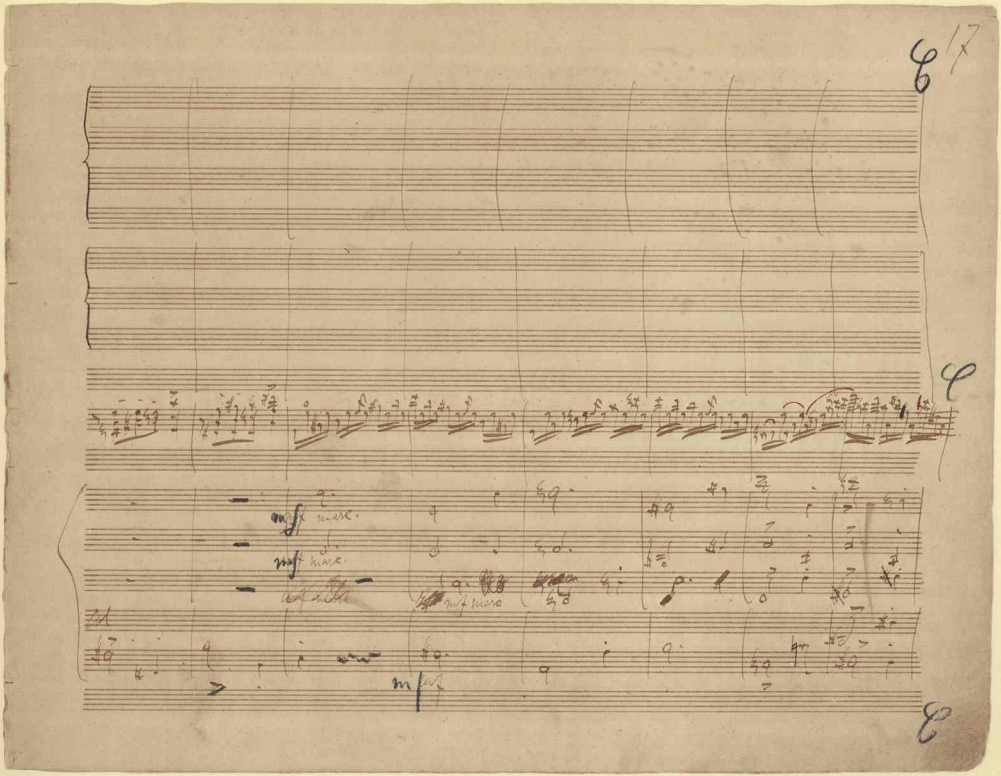

Dim
Dim
Dim
Dim

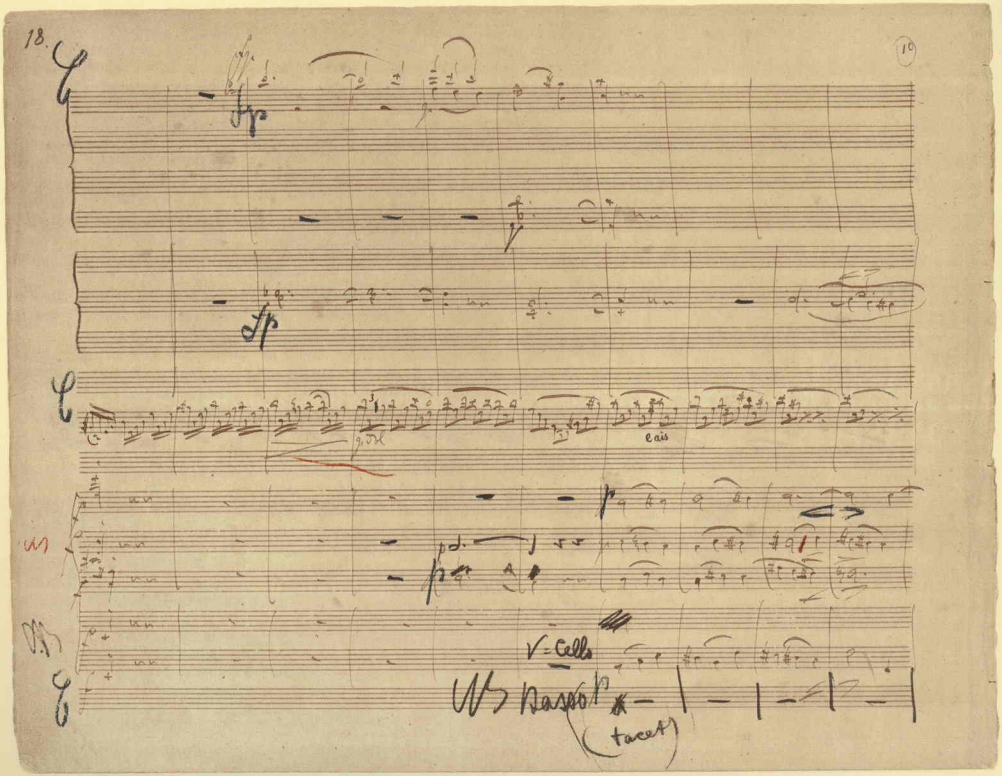

12.
molto dolce
espress.

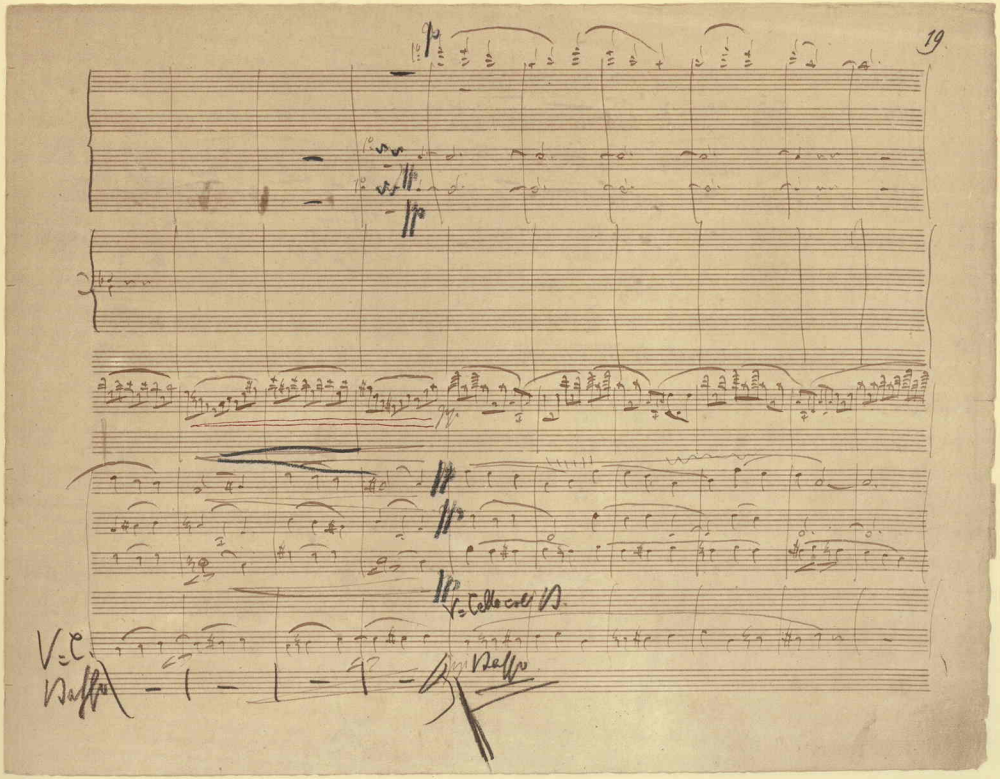

14.
a tempo
a tempo
a tempo
espress.
p espress.
p

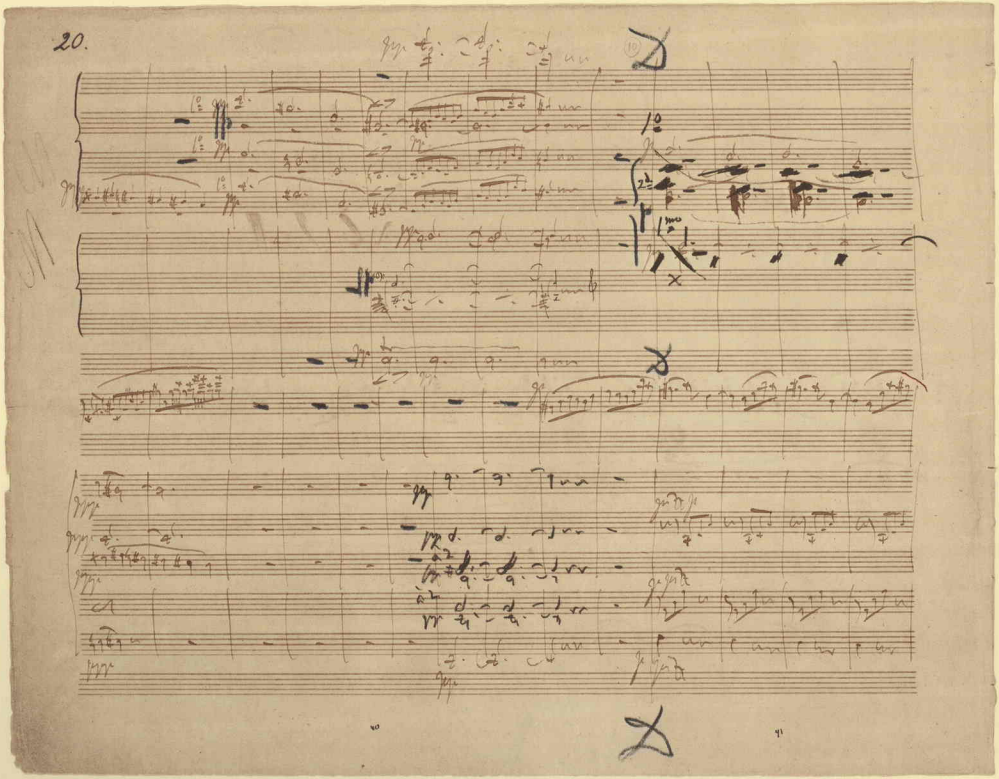

del
del
del

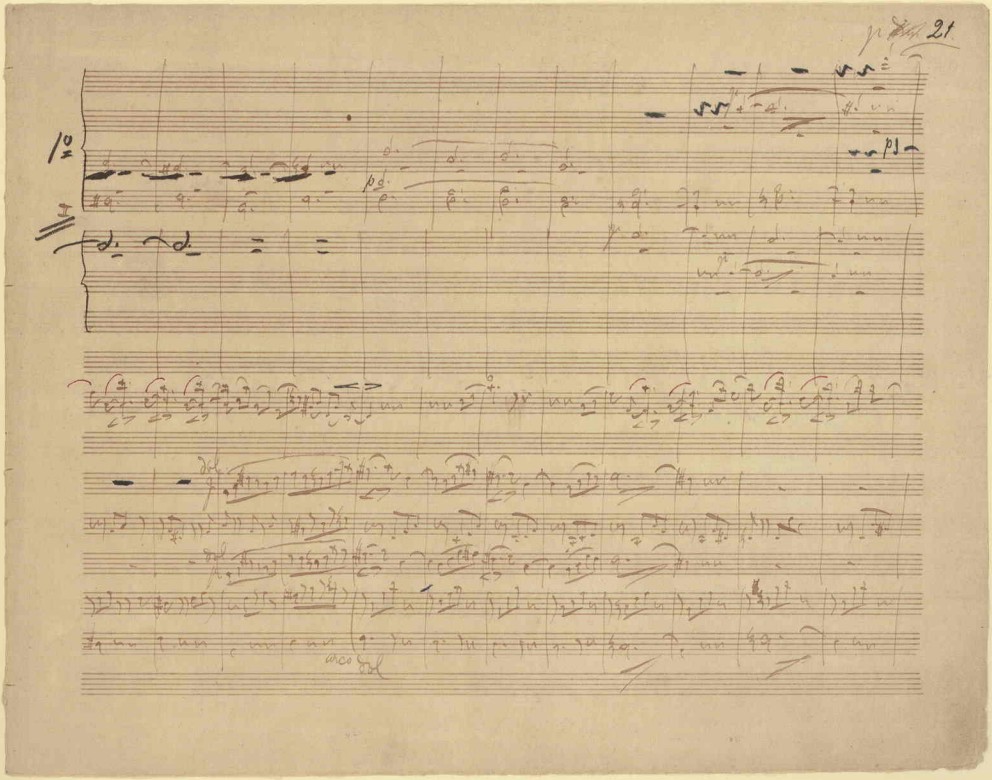

16.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
fp
max.

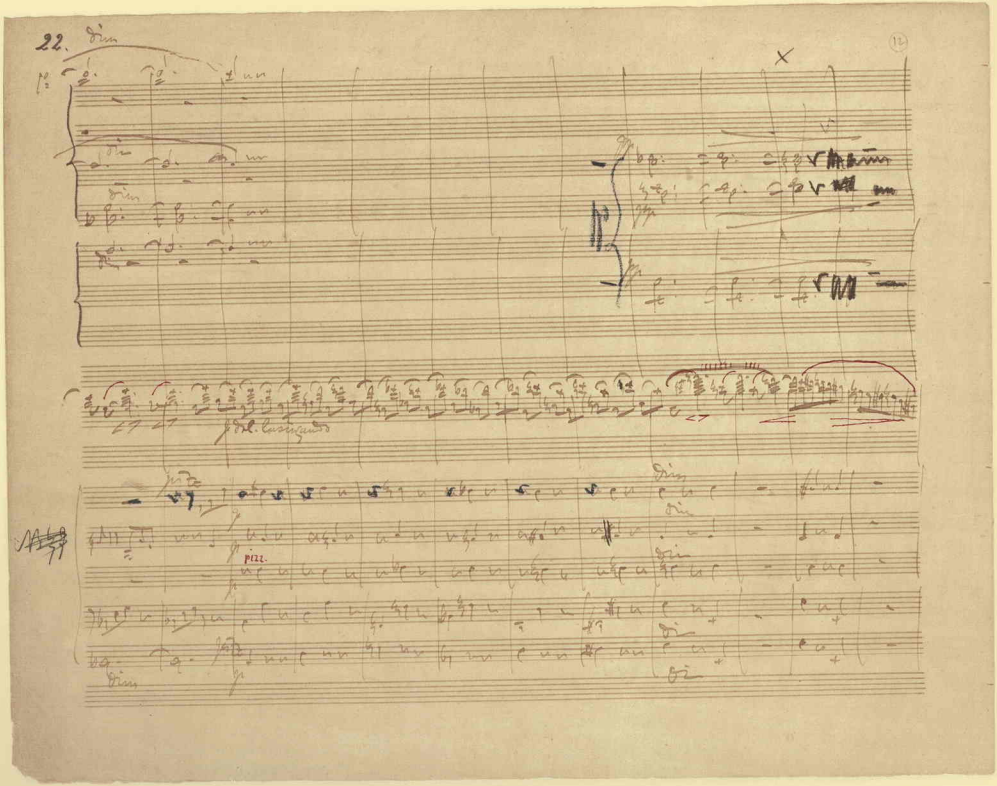

17
mf
mf
mf

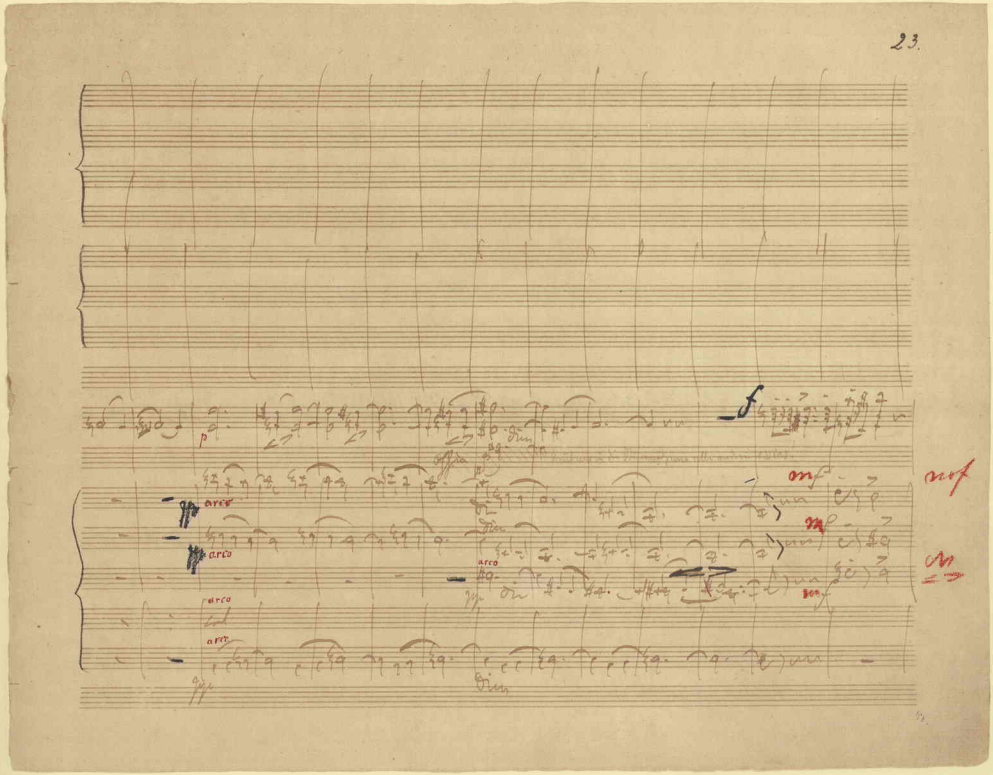

18.
10
p.d.
Cass
V. Cello
Contrabasso
(tacet)

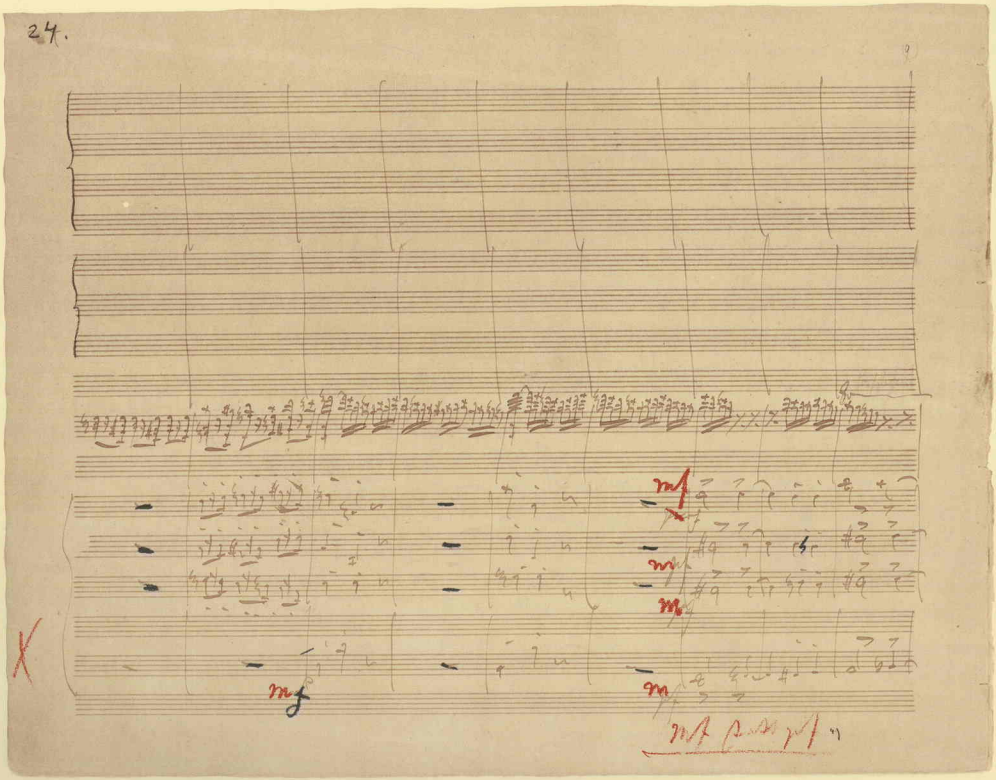

19
V. Cello coll' V.
V. C.
Vaffa
Vaffa

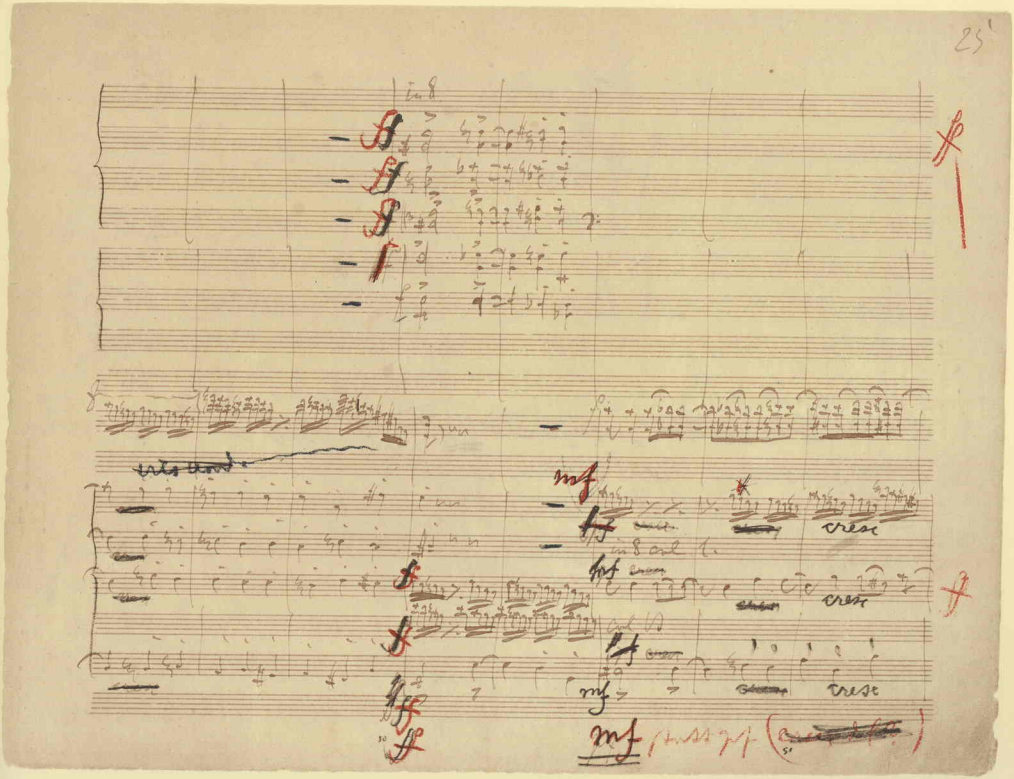

20.

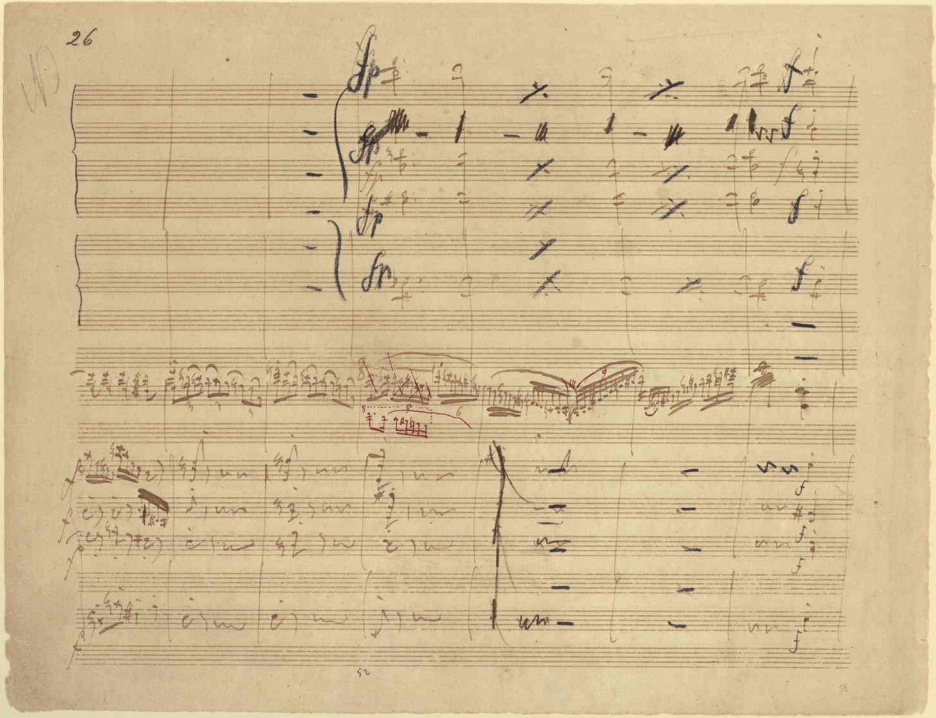

21.
pizz.
arco

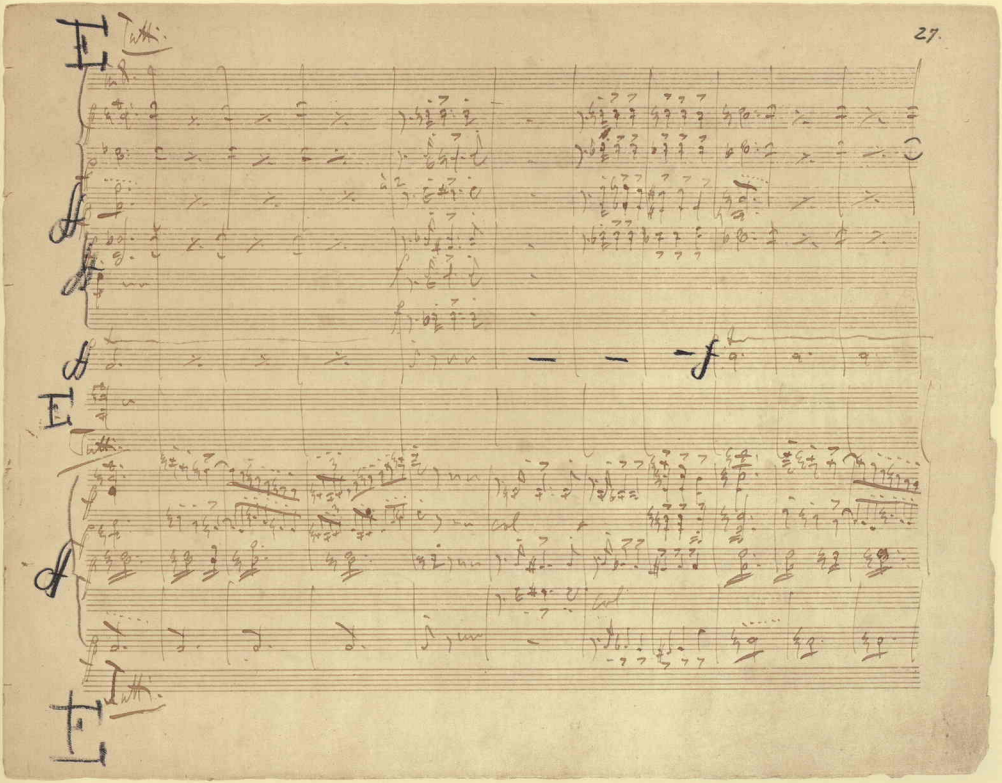

22.
(12)
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.

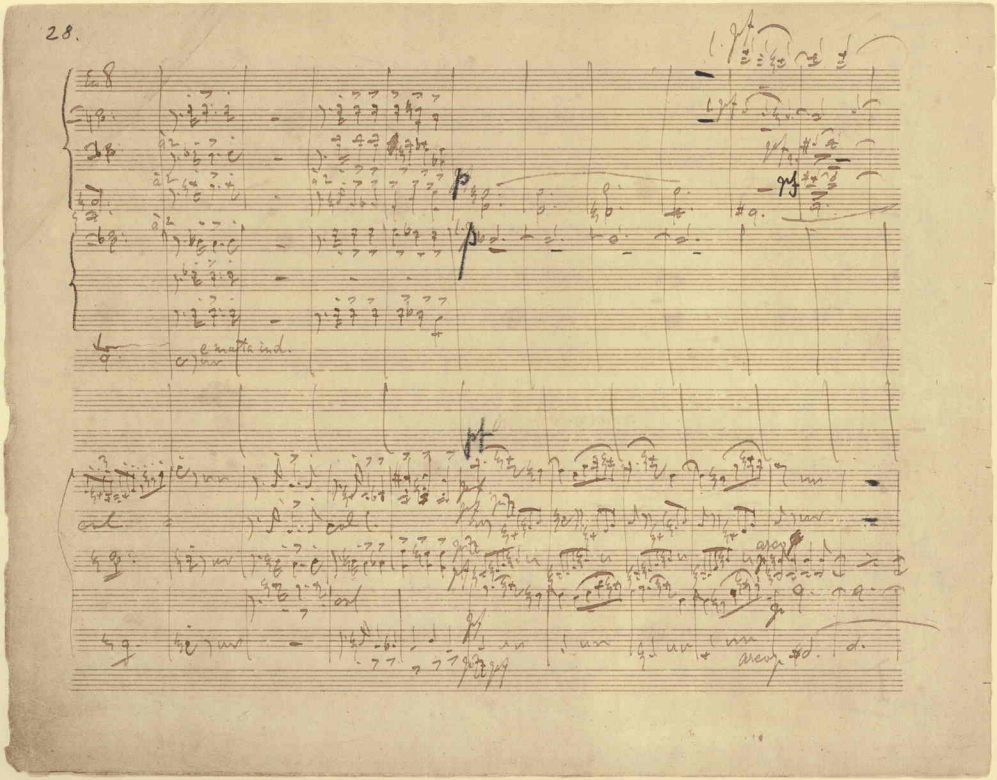

arco
arco
arco
arco
arco
arco
arco


24.
mf
mf
mf
mf
mf


25
mf
cresc
cresc
cresc
mf


26


E
Tutti.
27.
f
E
Tutti.
f
E
Tutti.


28.
p
e molto ind.
pf
pf
pf

Solo.

(12)

dim.

Solo.

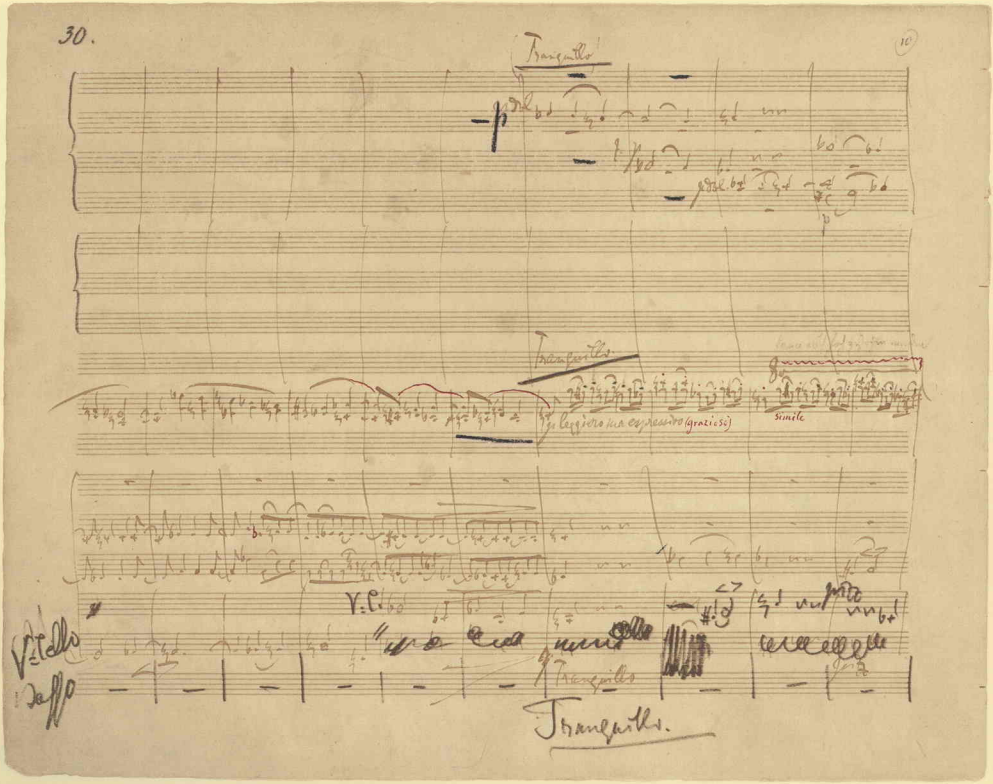
poco espressivo

arco

arco

V.Cello

Solo.


30.
10
Tranquillo
p
Tranquillo
leggiero ma espressivo (graziosi)
Simile
V.le
Vcello
Tranquillo

Vc.

Vl.

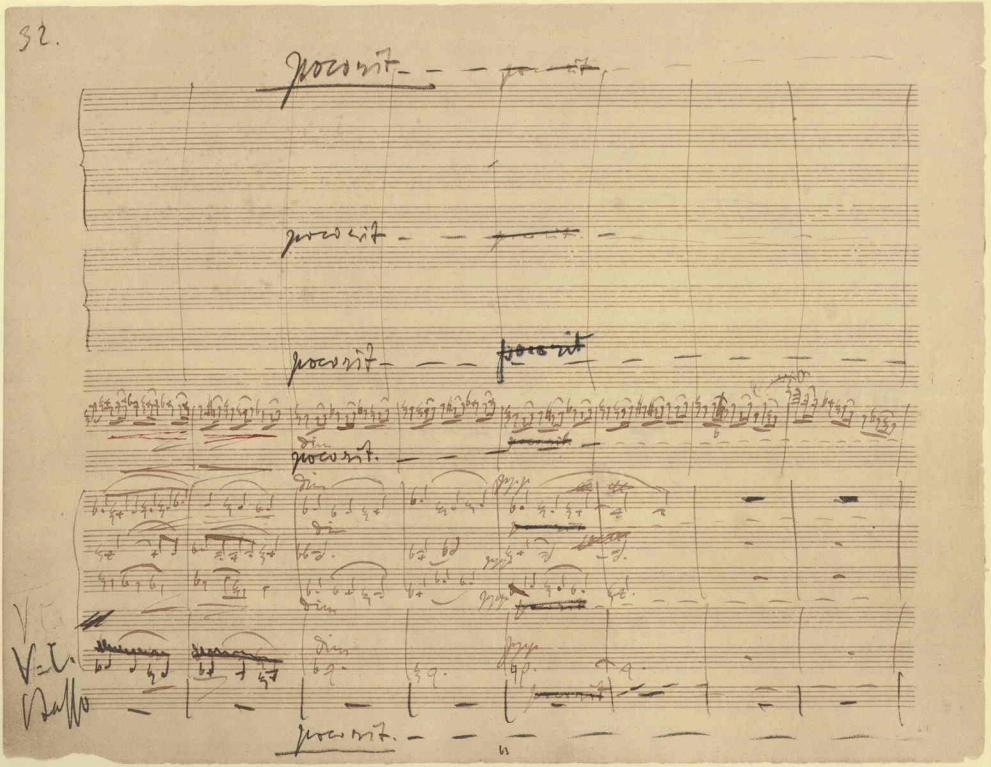
Vl.

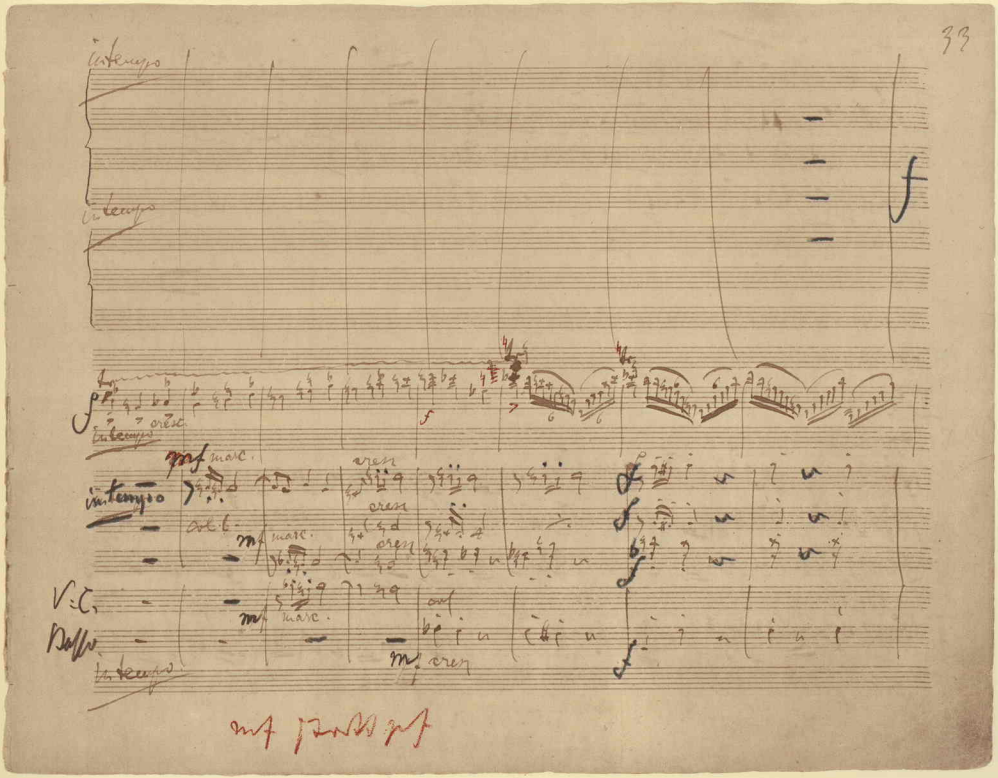
Vc.

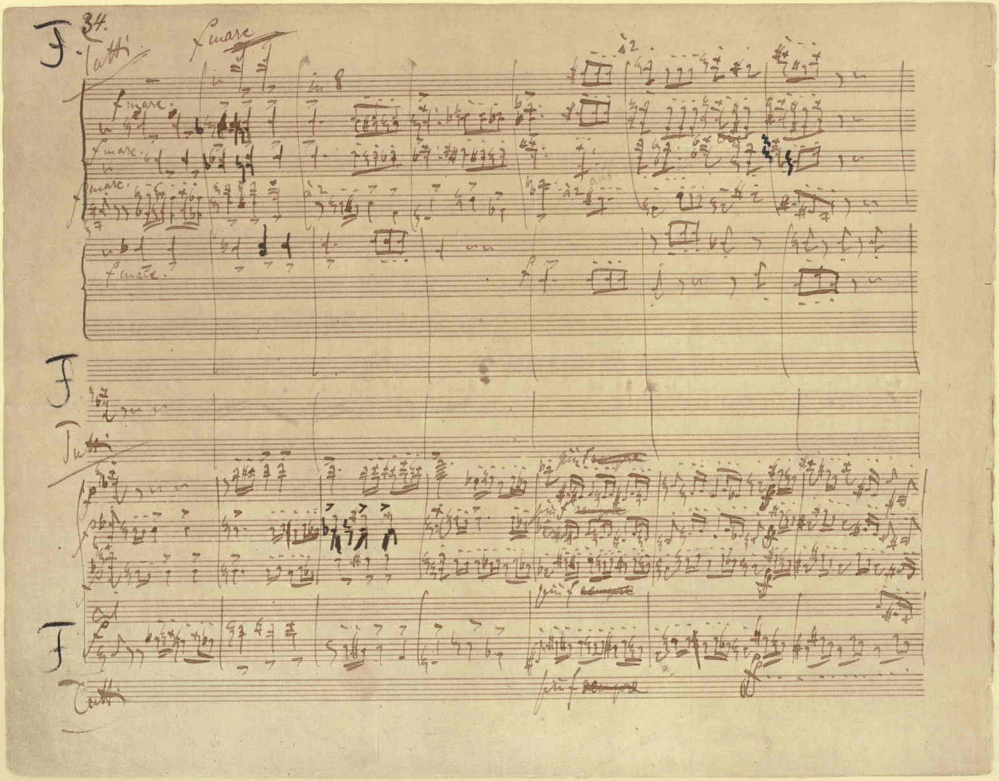
Bass

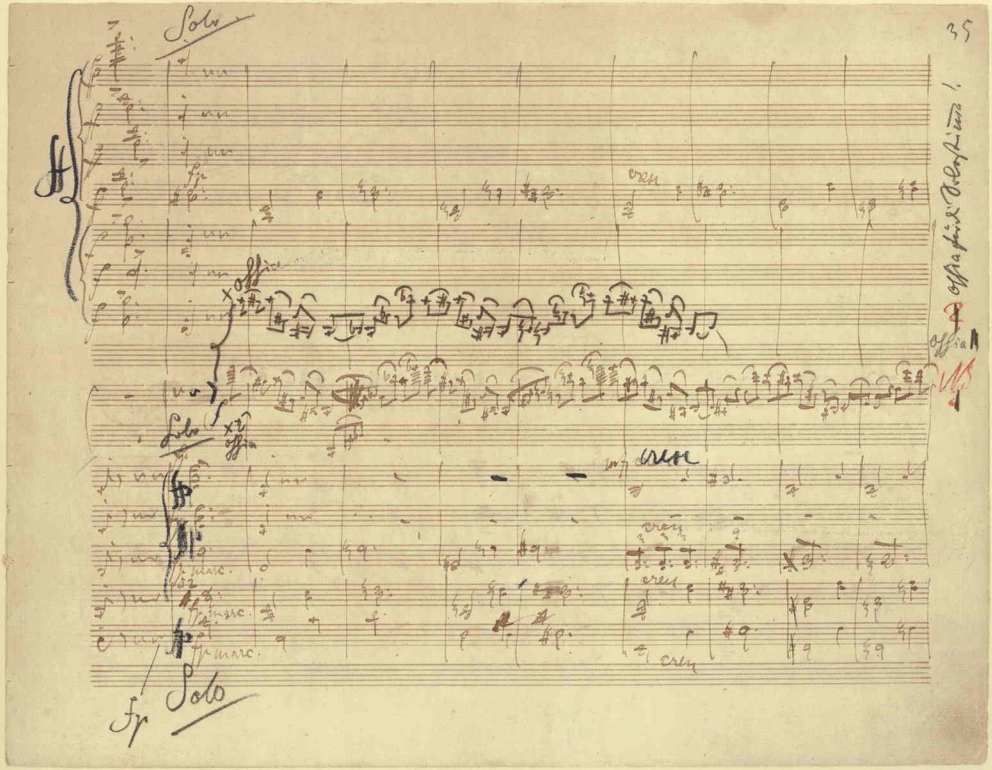
arco

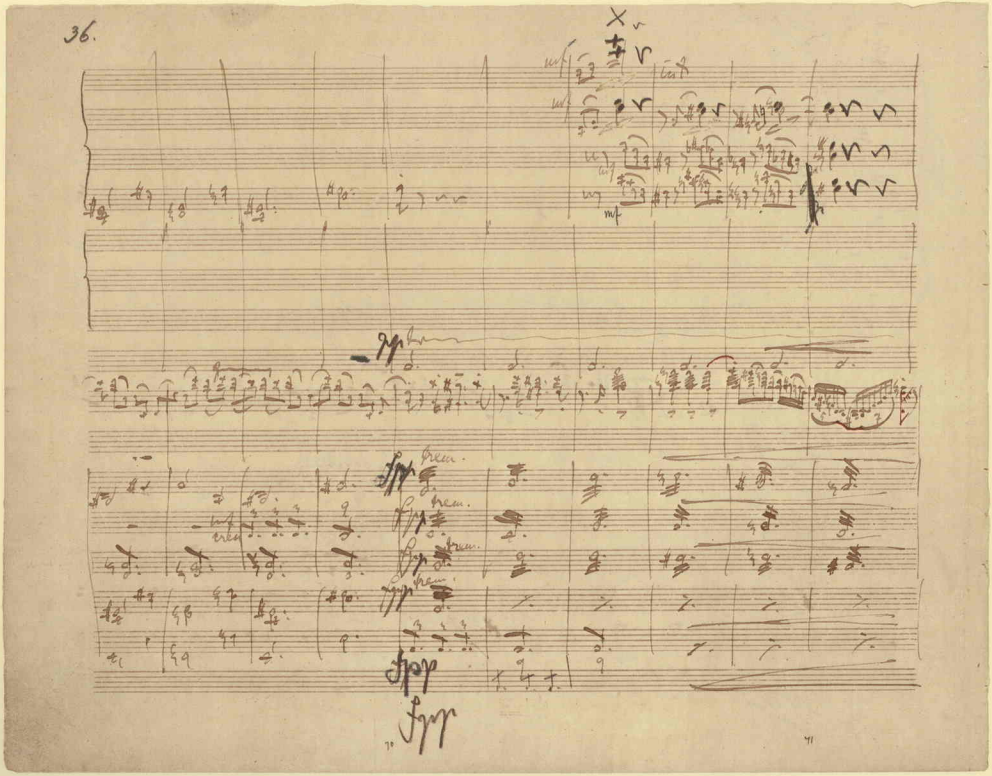
arco

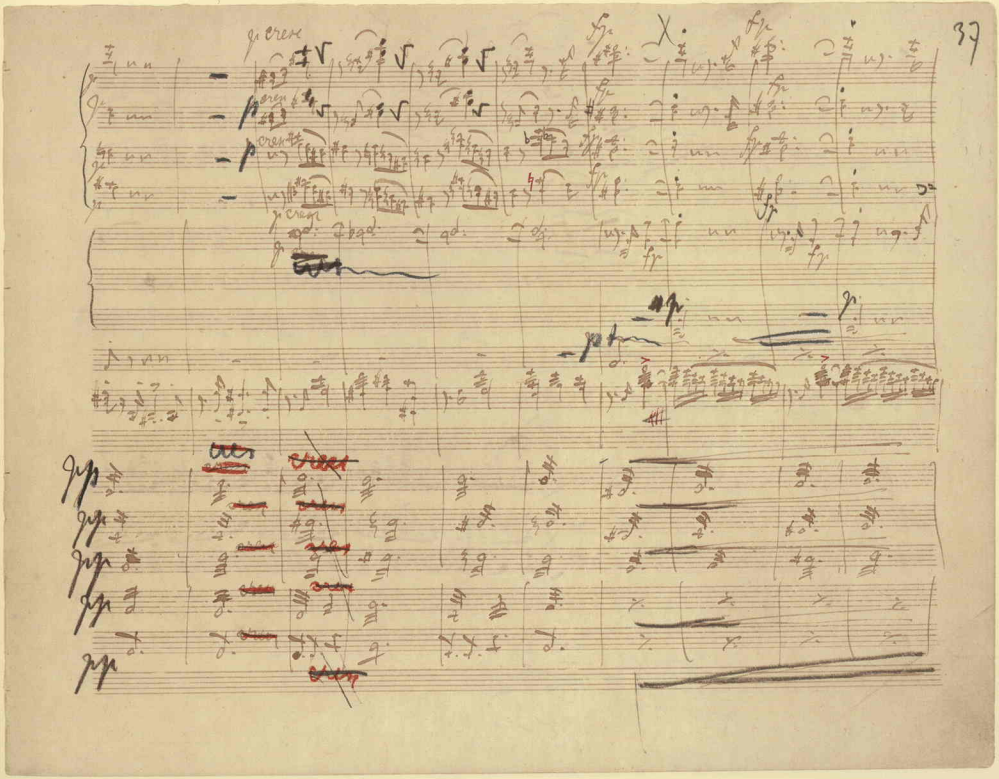

32.
procurit
procurit
procurit
procurit
procurit
Vc.
Vc. I.
Vc. II
procurit

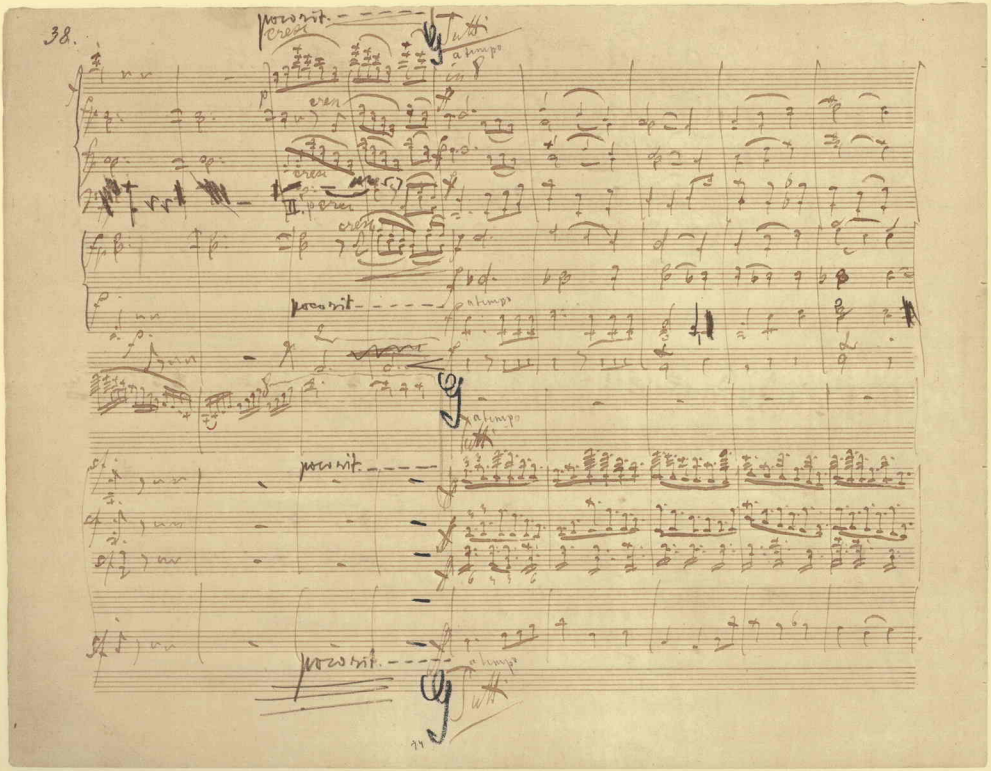

33
in tempo
in tempo
f
cresc.
in tempo
mf marc.
cresc.
in tempo
mf marc.
cresc.
V.C.
mf marc.
Bass
in tempo
mf cresc.
f

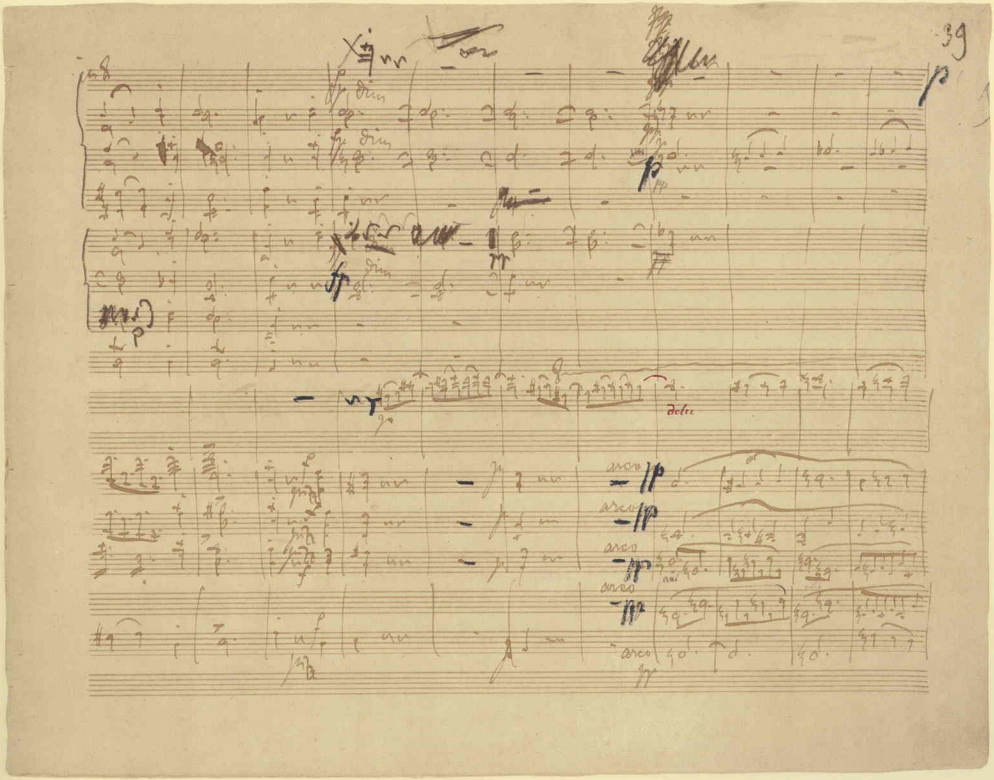

34.
Tutti
Fmare
Fmare
Fmare
Fmare
Fmare
Tutti
Tutti

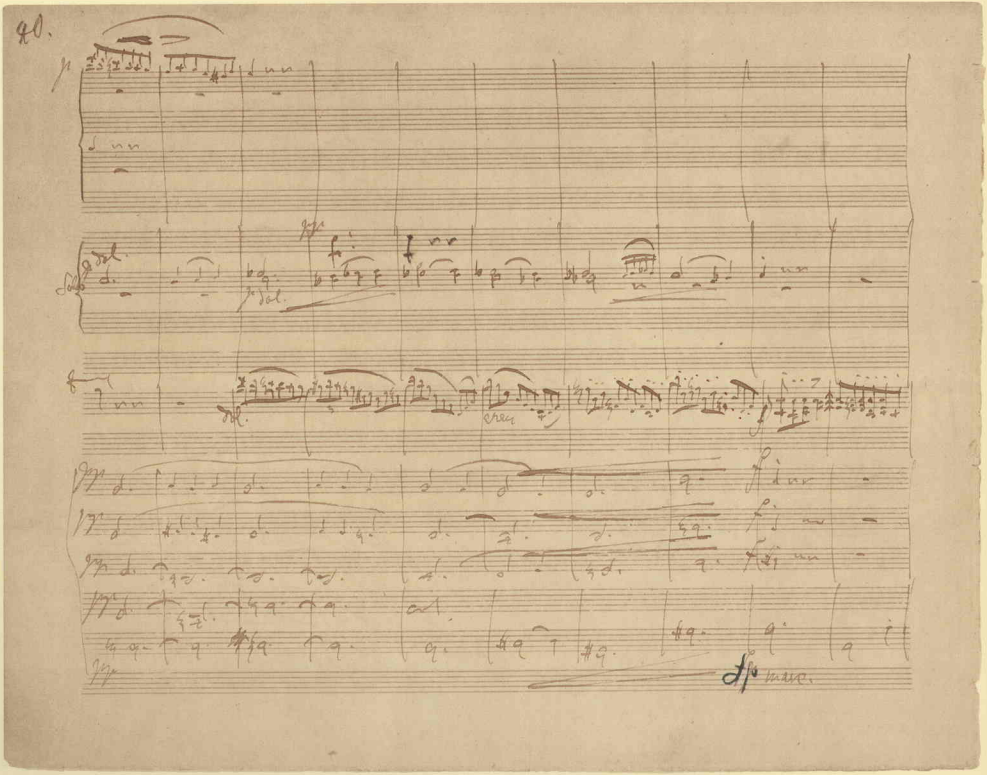

35
Solo
cresc
Solo
cresc
cresc
cresc
Solo
fr

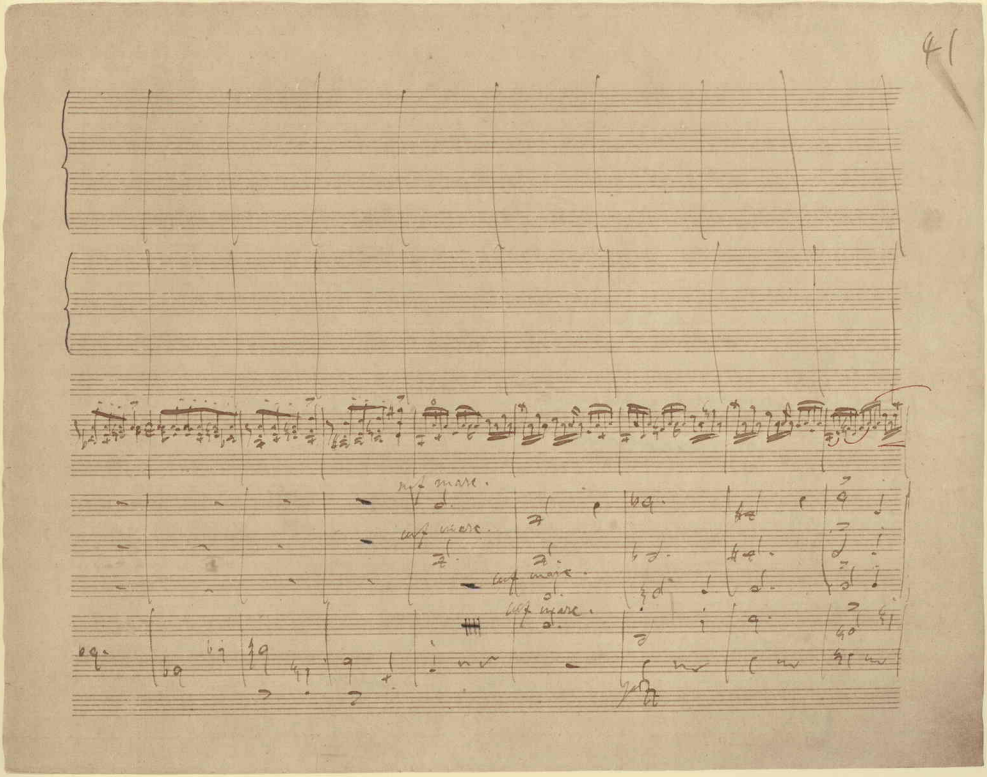

36.
mf
fff
fff

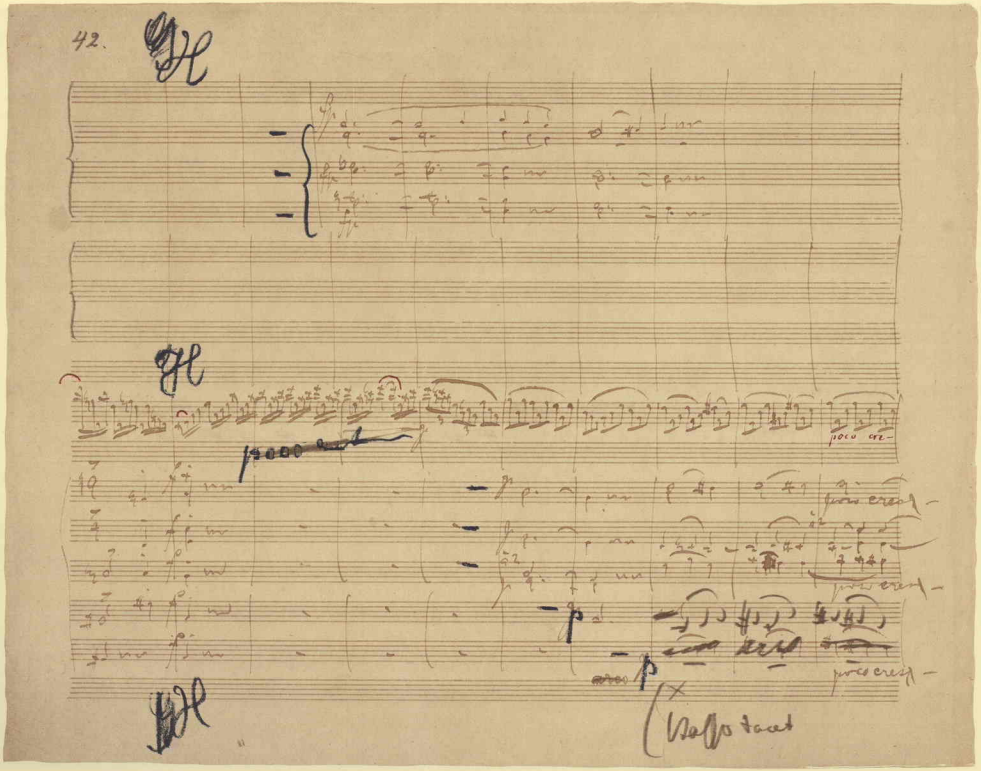

37

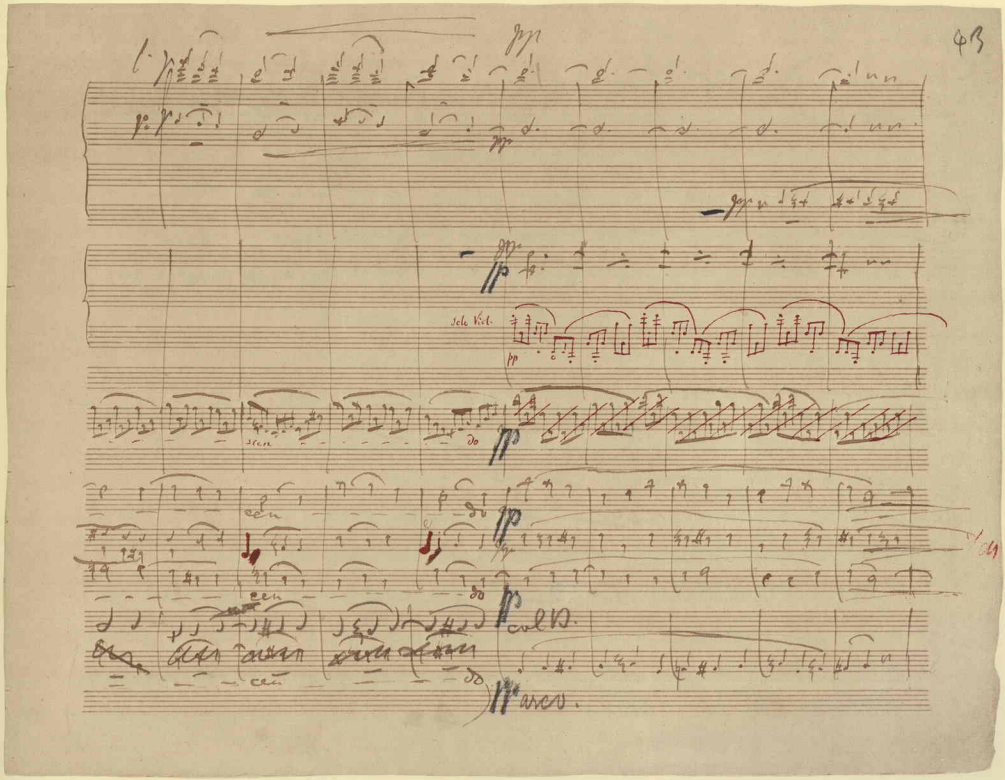

38.
poco rit.
cresc.
Tutti
a tempo
II. pesante
poco rit.
a tempo
poco rit.
a tempo
poco rit.
a tempo

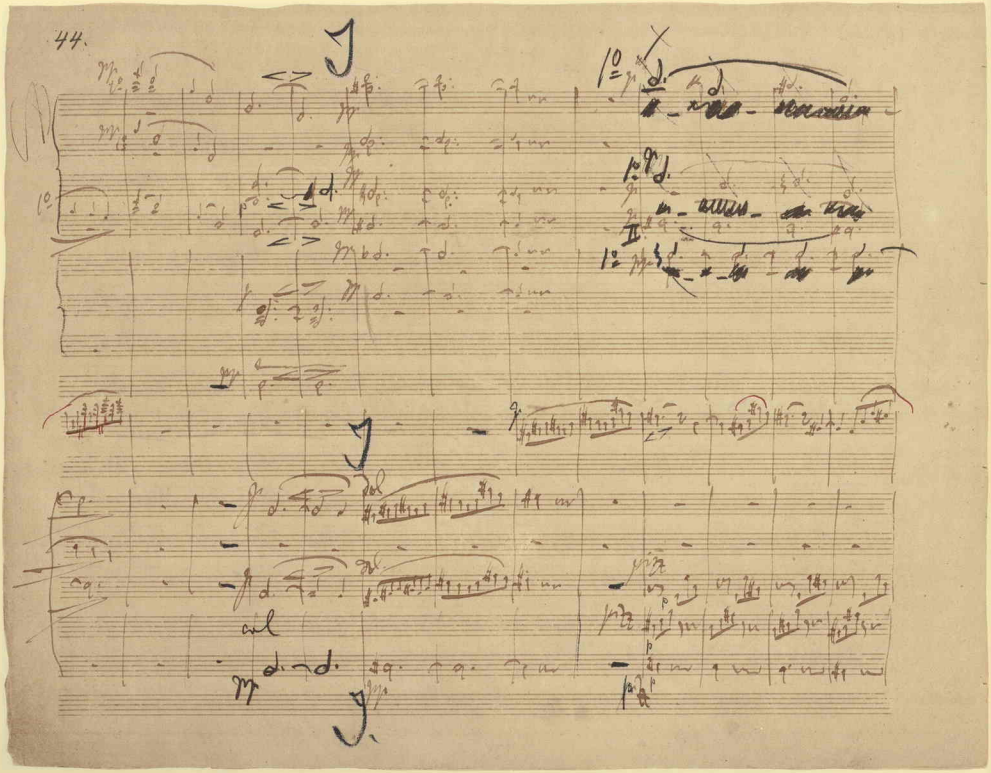

39
div
div
div

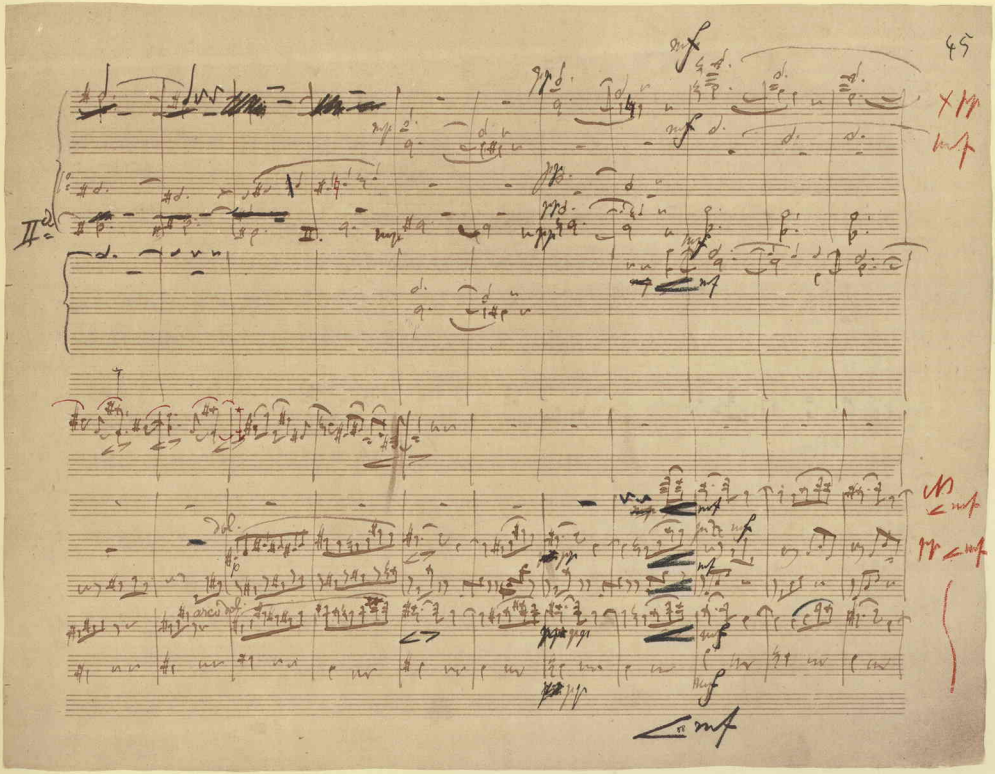

40.
p
f
cresc.
fp
marc.

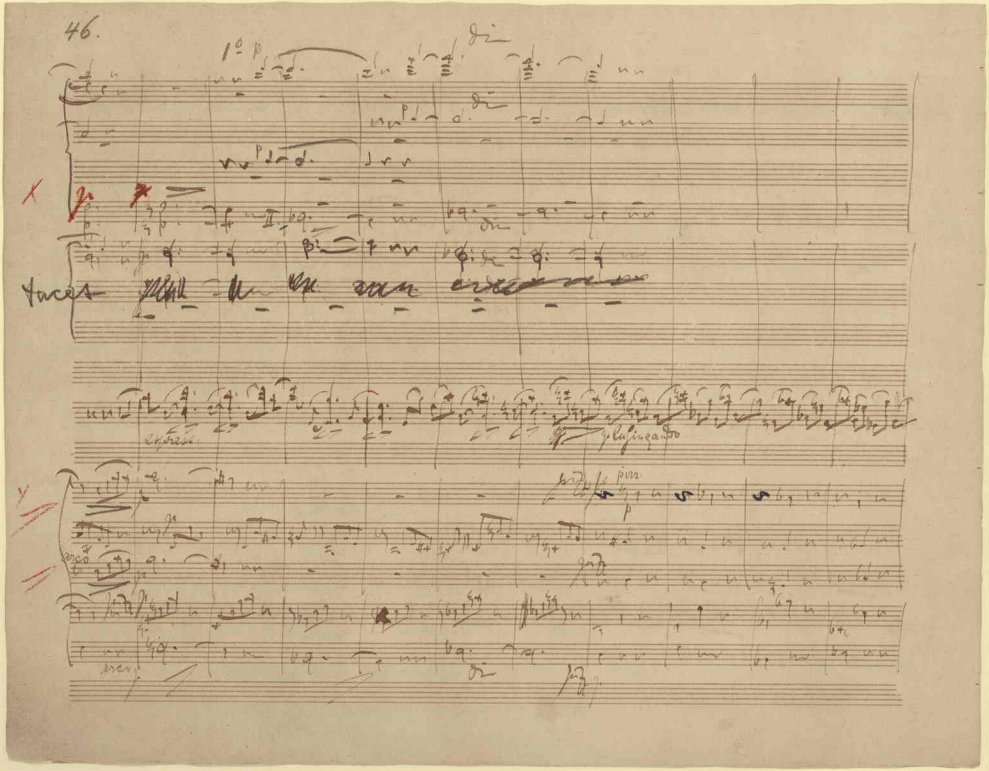

41
vox mare.
vox mare.
vox mare.
vox mare.


42.
poco cresc.
poco cresc.
poco cresc


Solo Vcl.
pp
sem
do
p
cen
do
p
cen
do
p
col V.
cen
do
p
arco.


44.


45
II.
arco


46.
1o
espressivo
più
poco
sempre

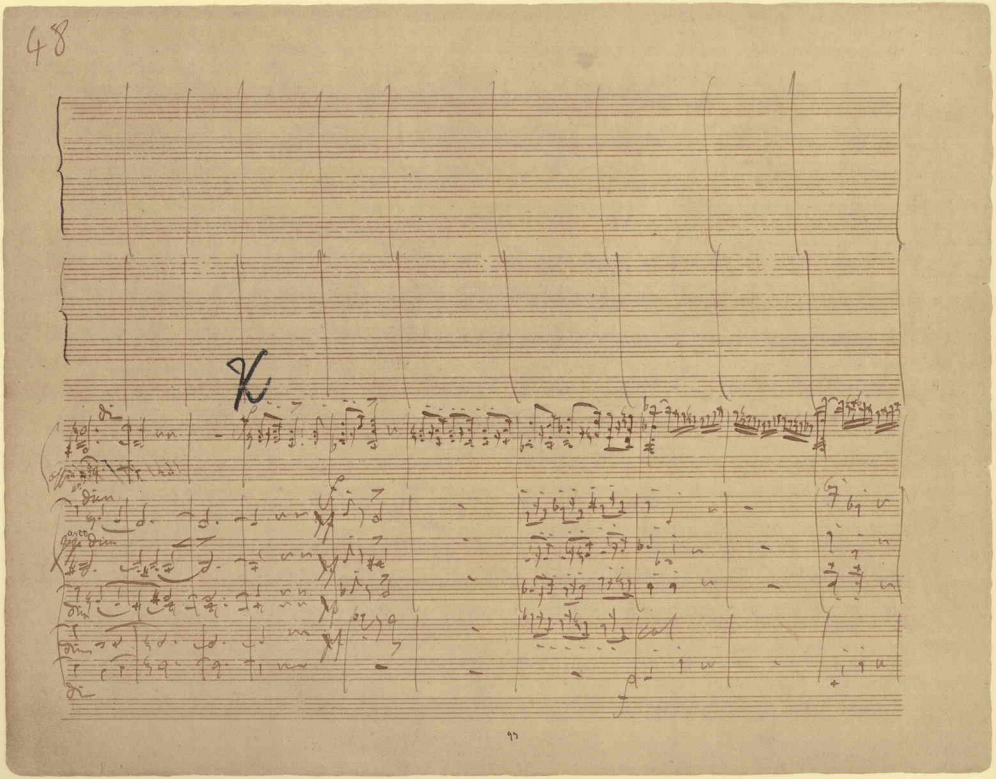
arco

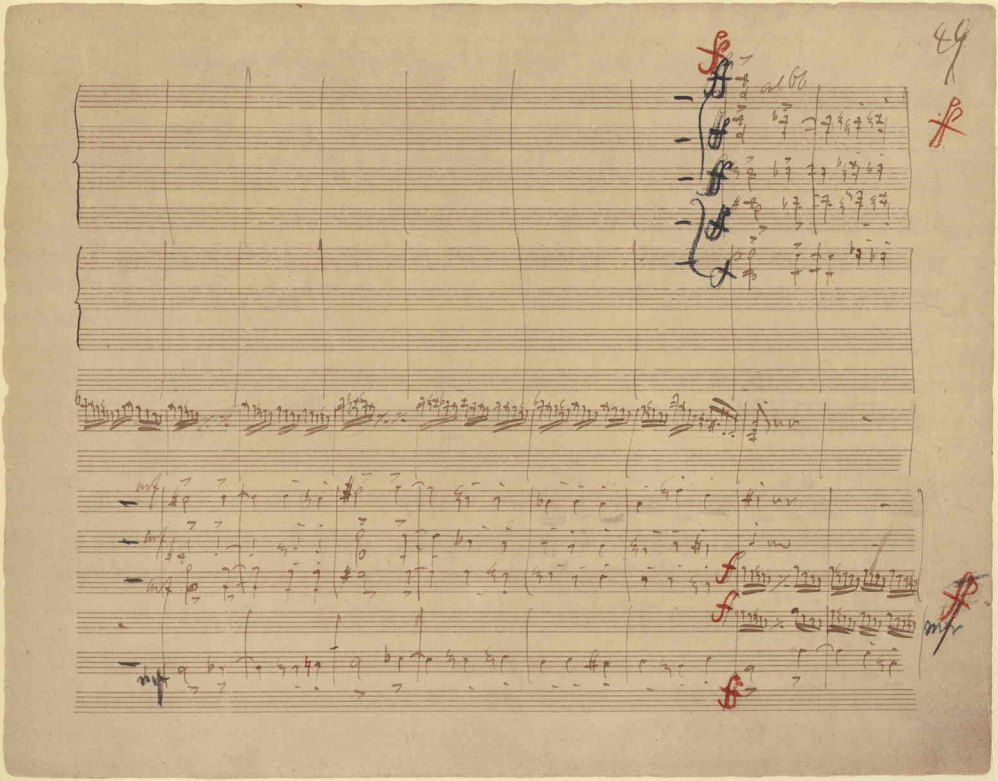
arco

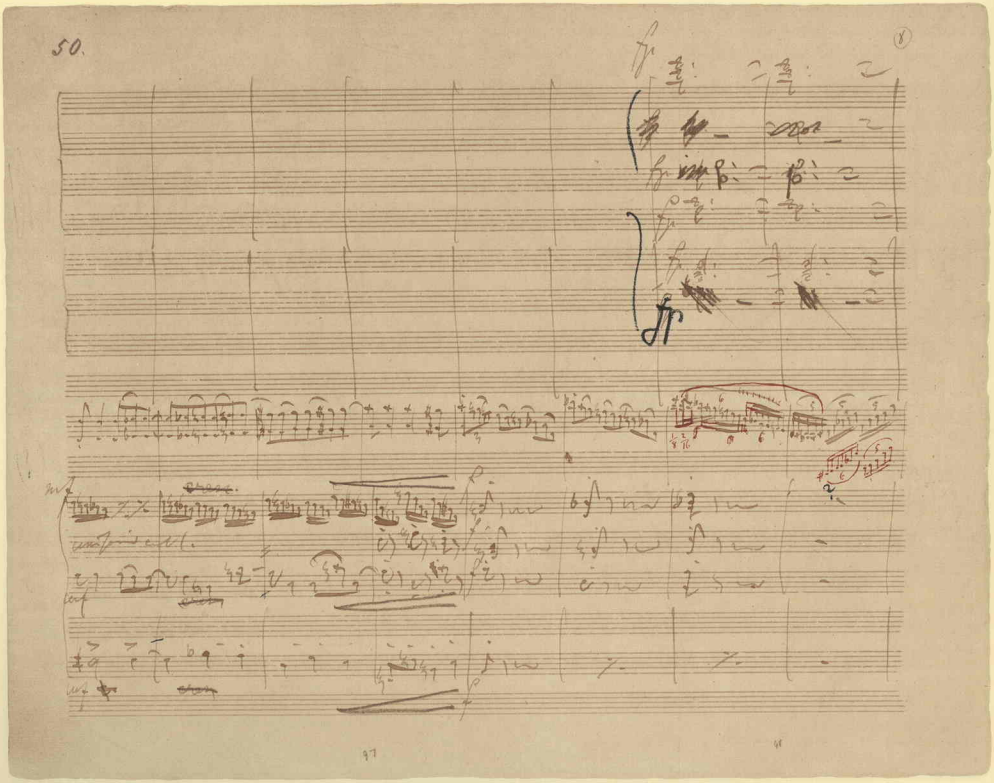
arco

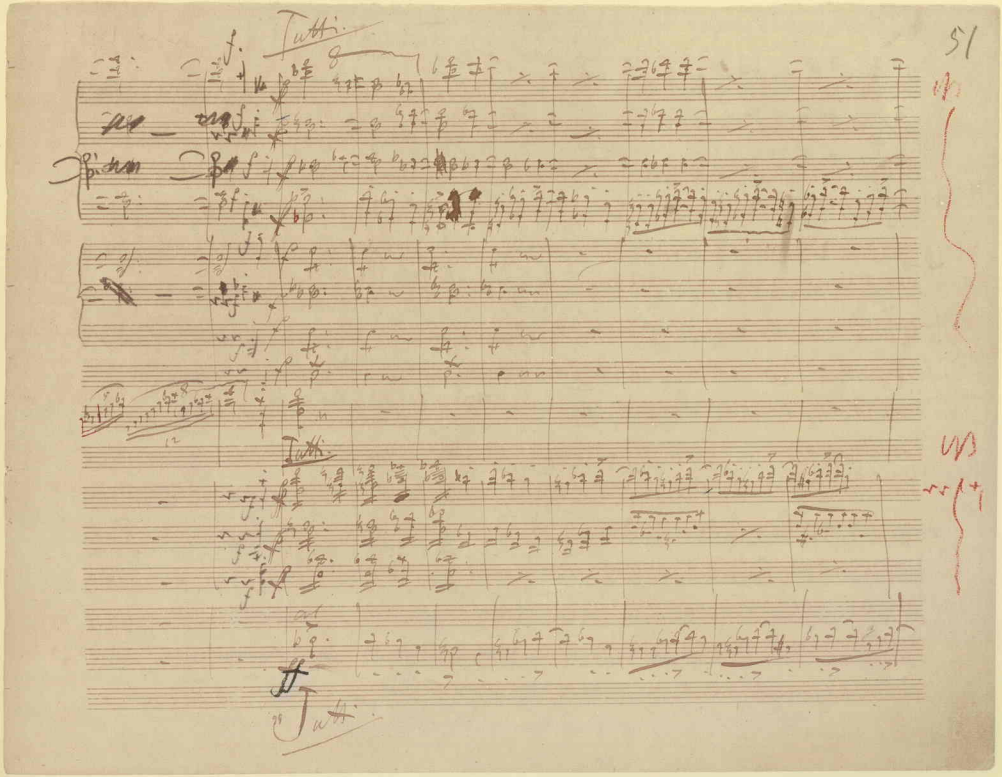
arco

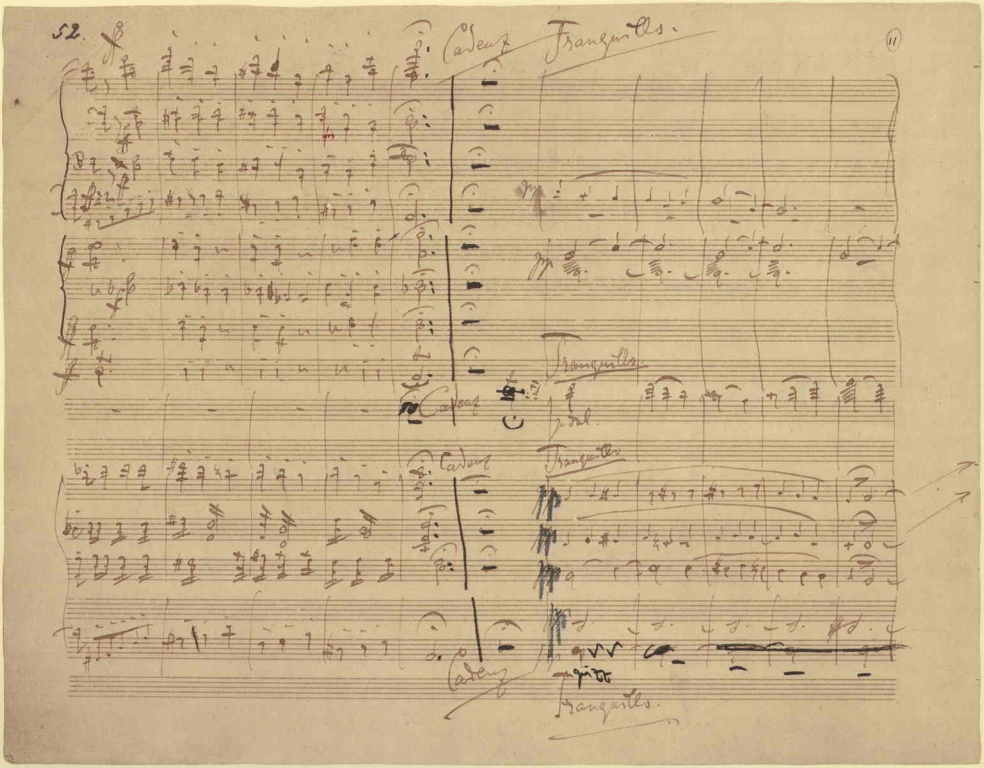
arco

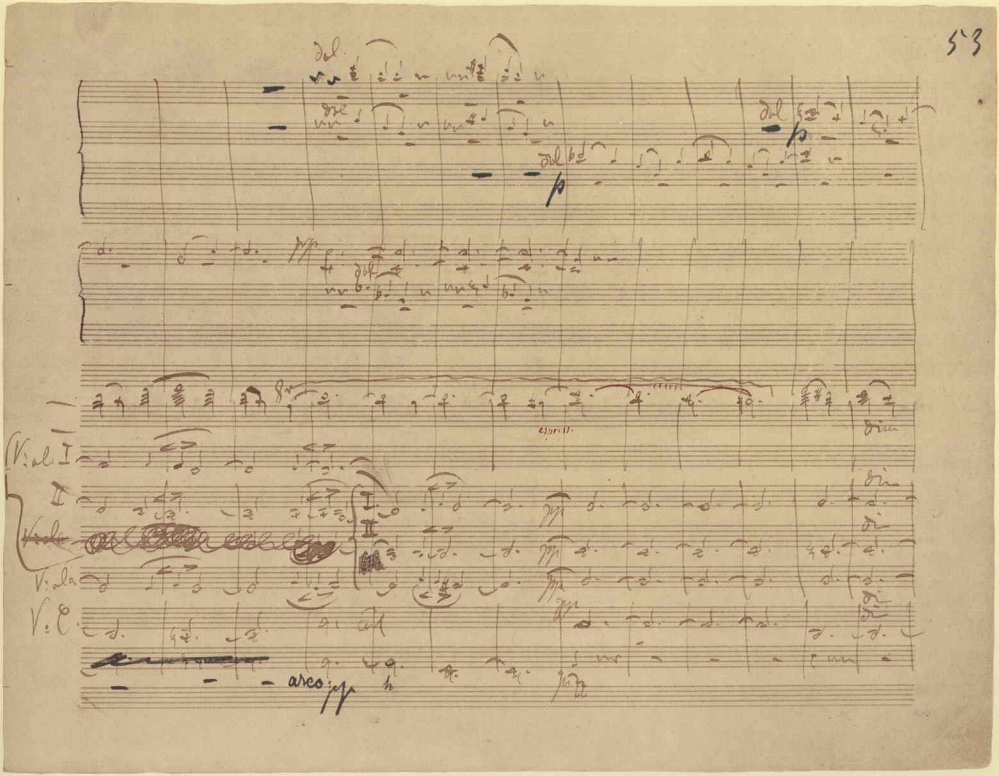

48
K
Dim
Dim
Dim

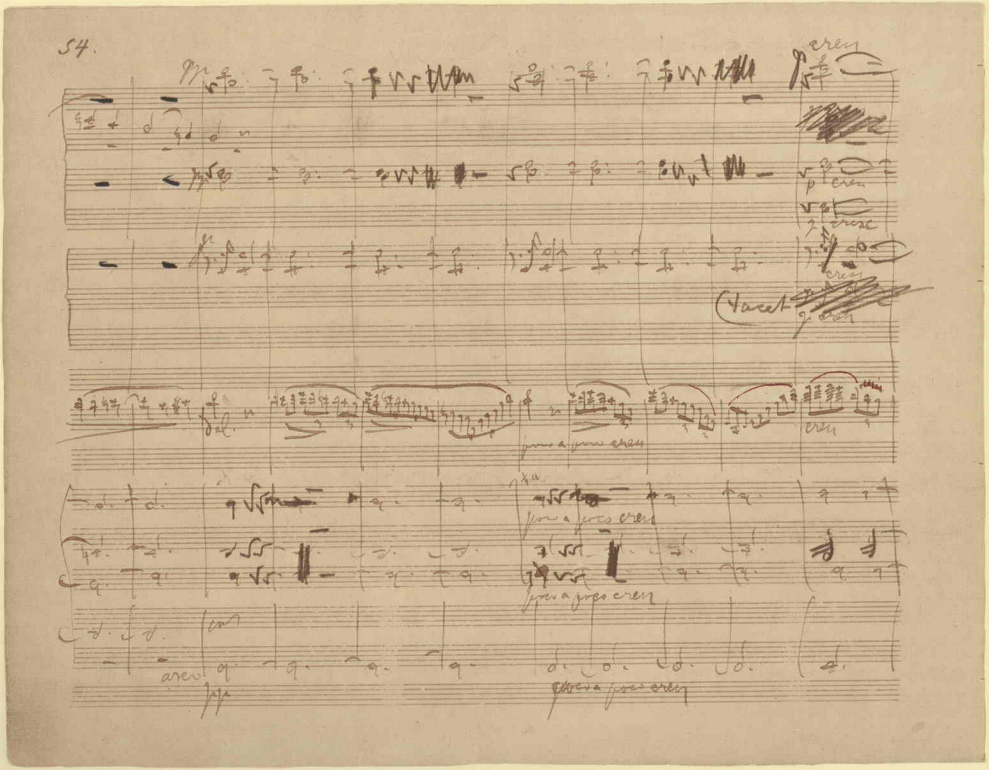

49
ff
ff
ff

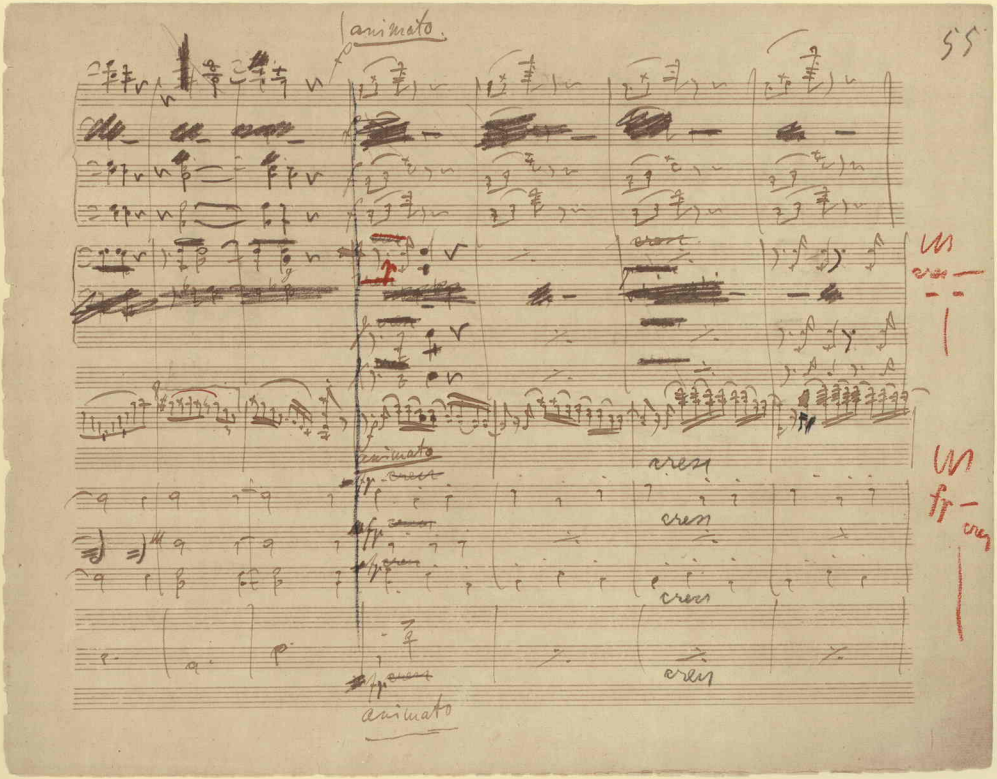

50.
mf
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.

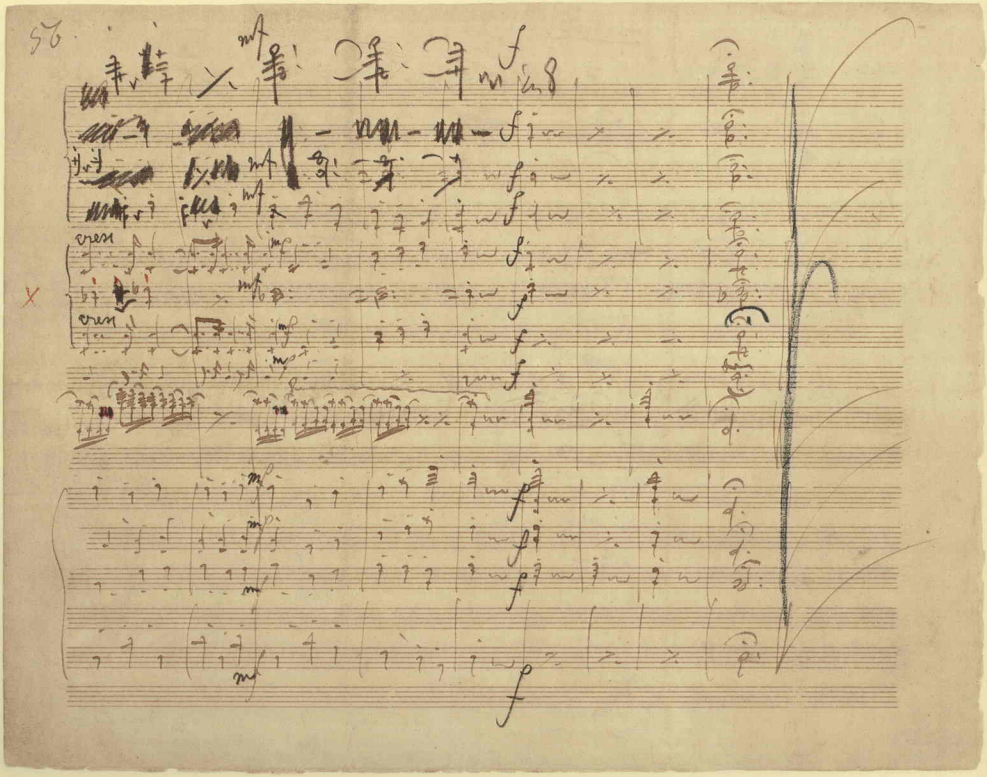

51
f.
Tutti.
Tutti
Tutti

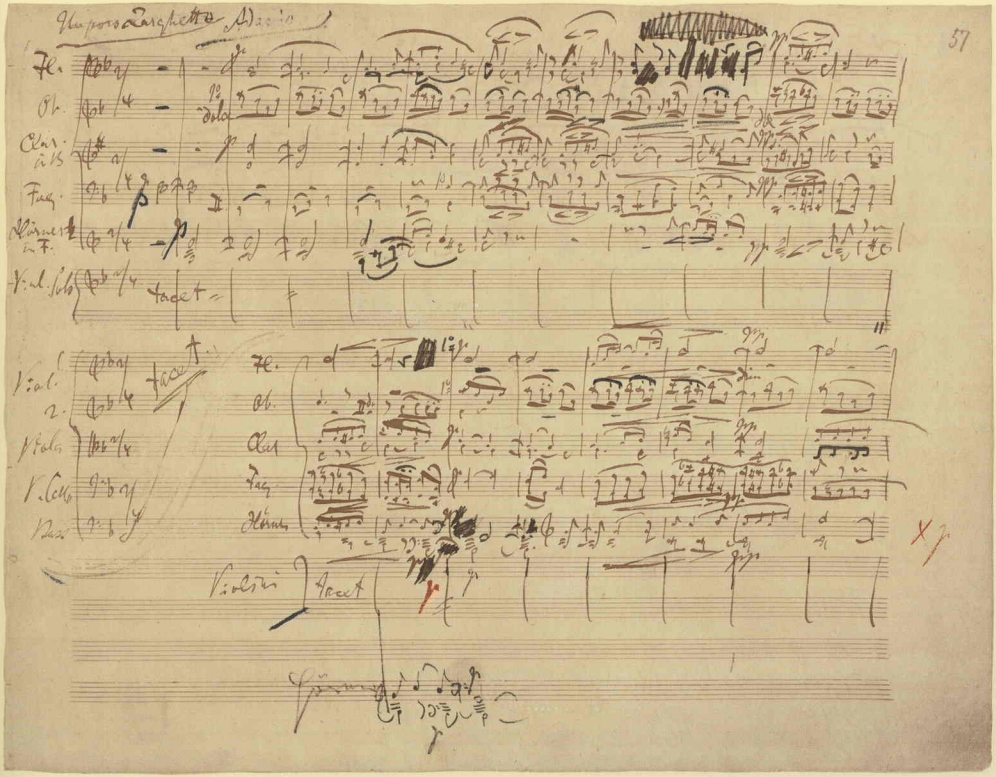

52.
Cadenz
Tranquillo.
Tranquillo
Cadenz
Tranquillo
Cadenz
Tranquillo.

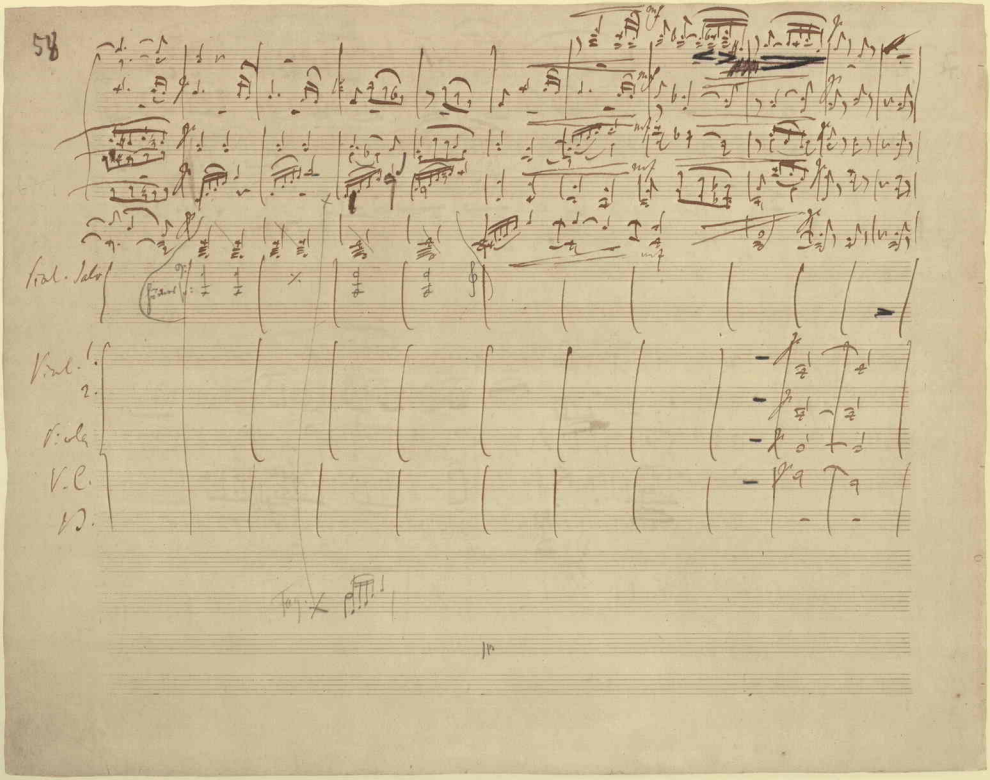

Vial. I
II
Viola
V. la
V. C
arco

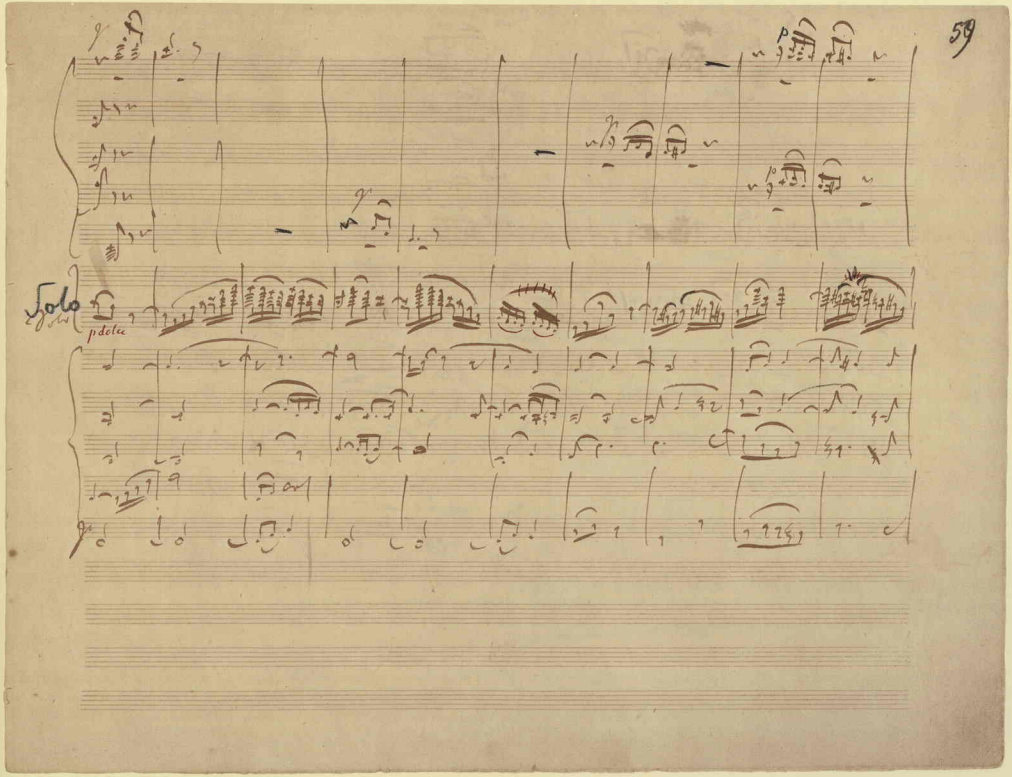

54.
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
(Vacat)
cresc
poco a poco cresc
poco a poco cresc
poco a poco cresc
cresc
poco a poco cresc

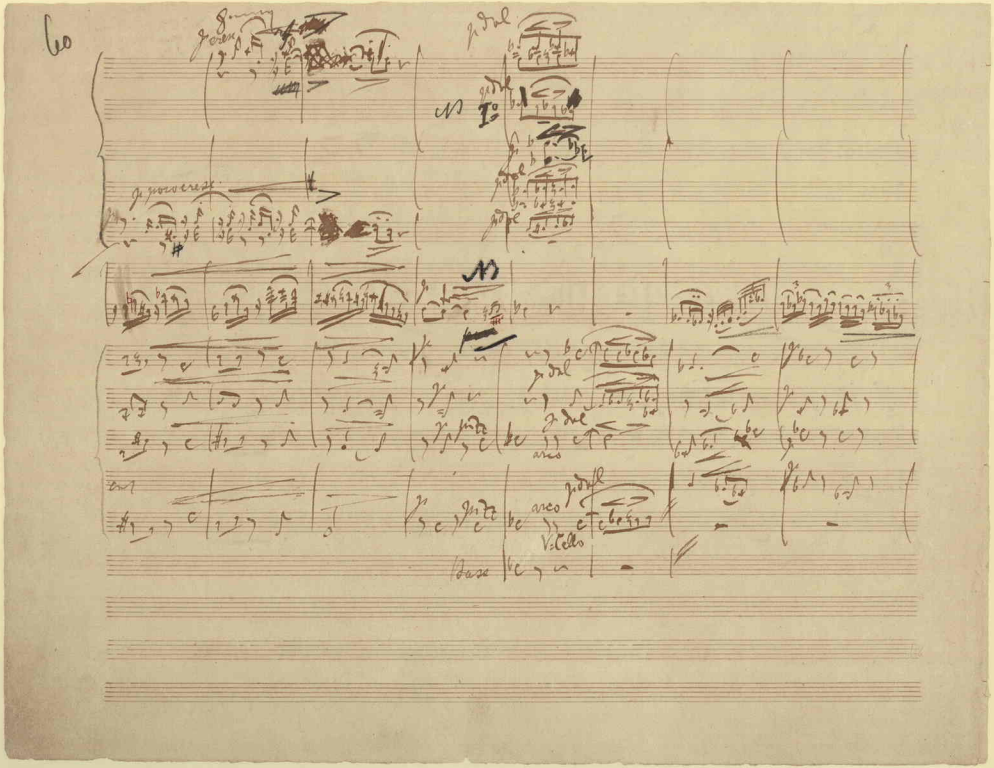

animato
55
cresc
animato
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
animato

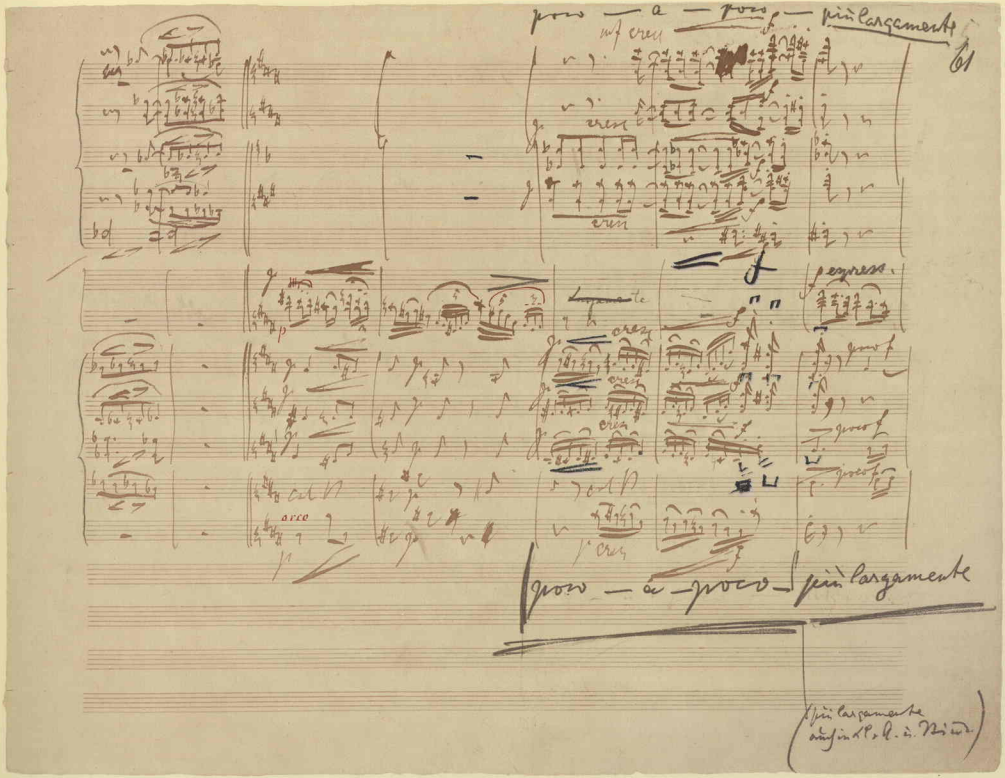

56
mf
f
cresc
cresc

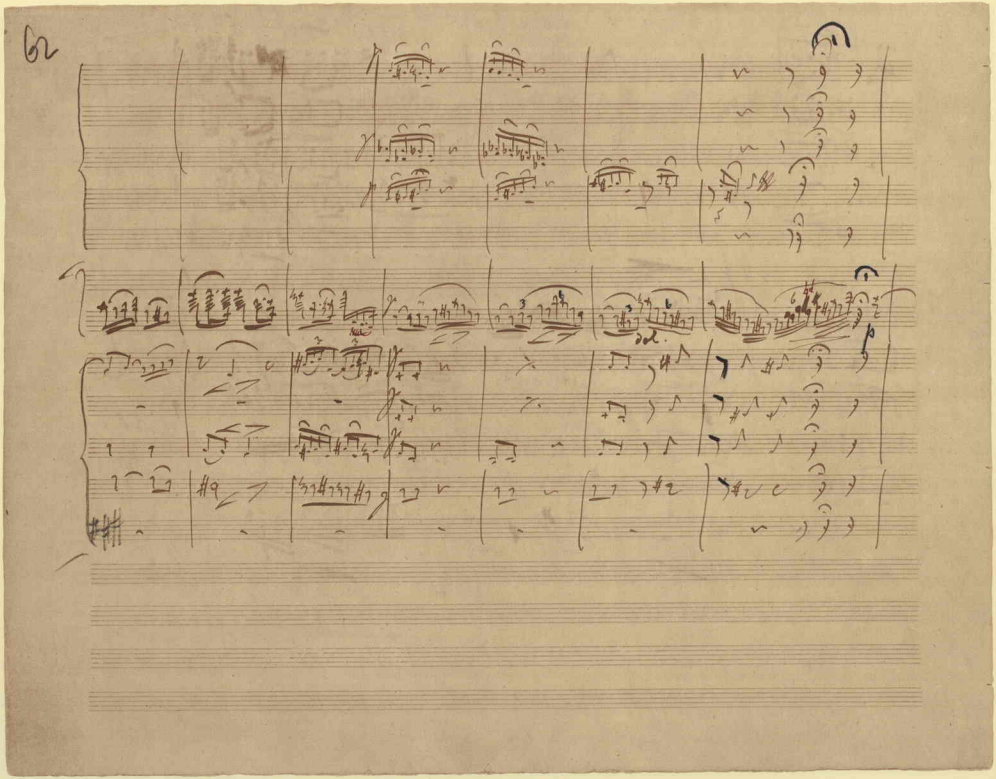

57
Fl.
Ob.
Clar. in B
Fag.
Hörner in F.
Vl. I. Solo
tacet
Vl. I.
Vl. II.
Viola
V. Cello
Bass
Hörn.
Violini
tacet

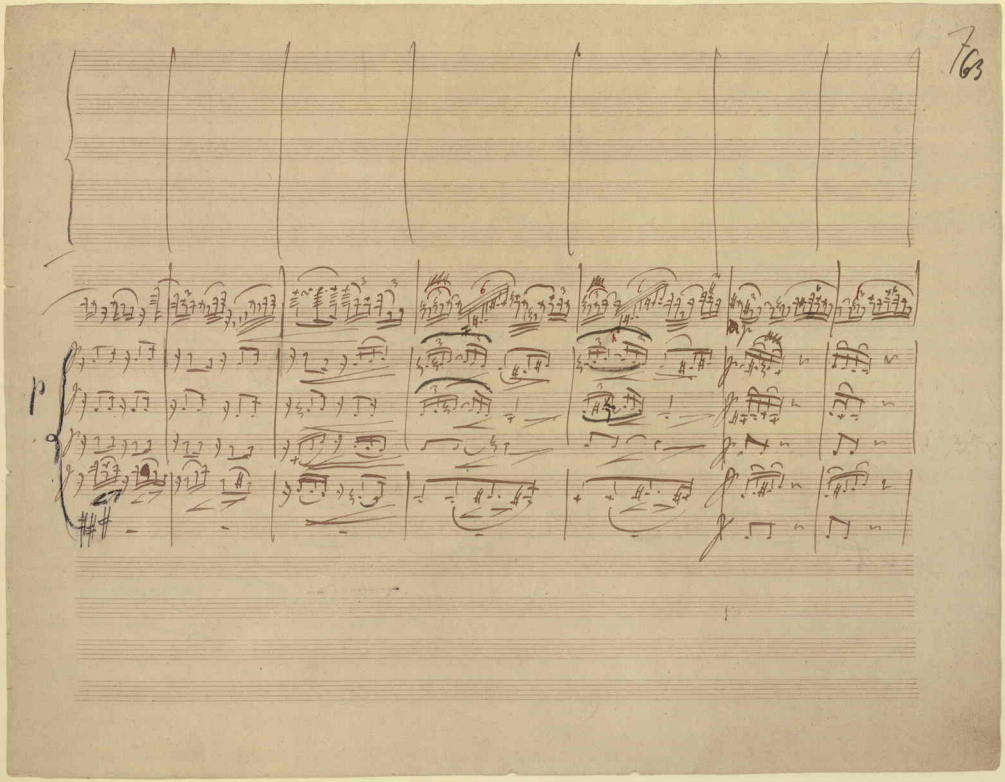

58
Viol. Solo
Viol. 1.
2.
Viola
V.C.
V.D.

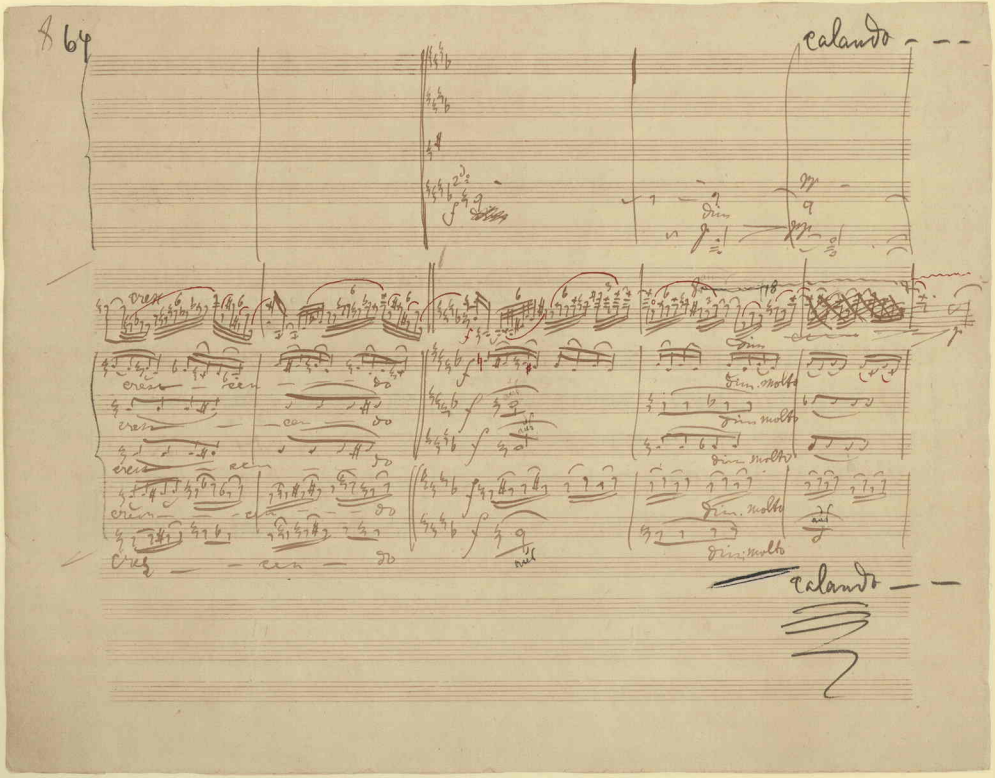

59
Solo
p dolce

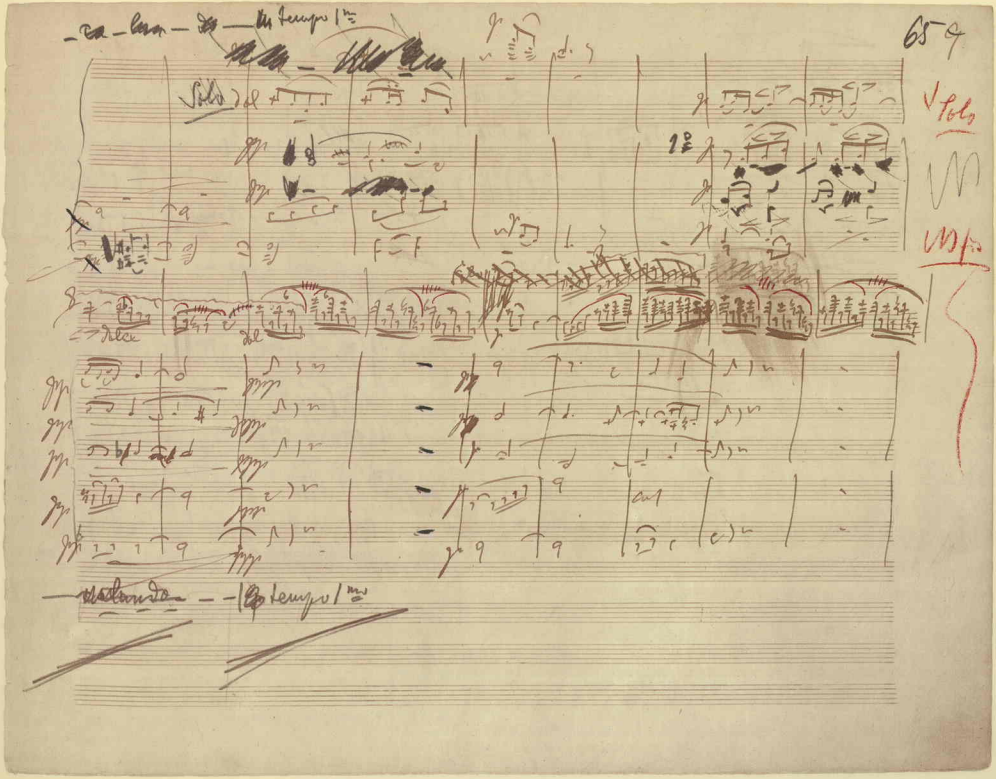

60
arco
arco
V.cello
Basse

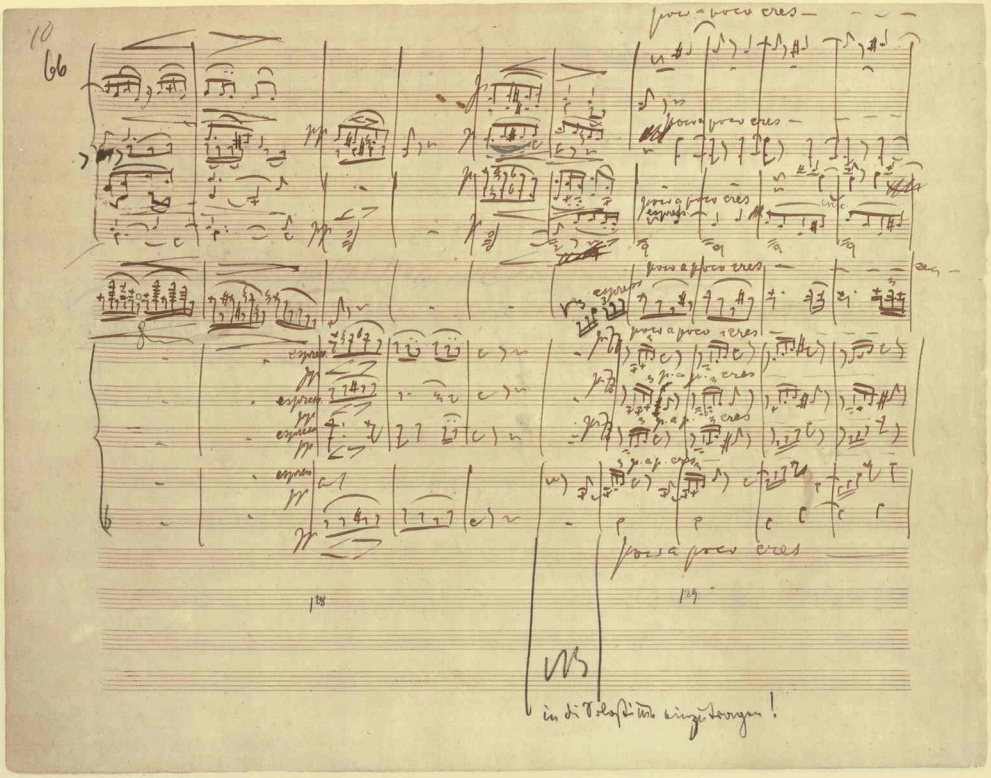

poco — a — poco — più largamente
61
cresc
espress.
arco
poco — a — poco — più largamente
(più largamente
così in A. P. L. d. Mitw.)

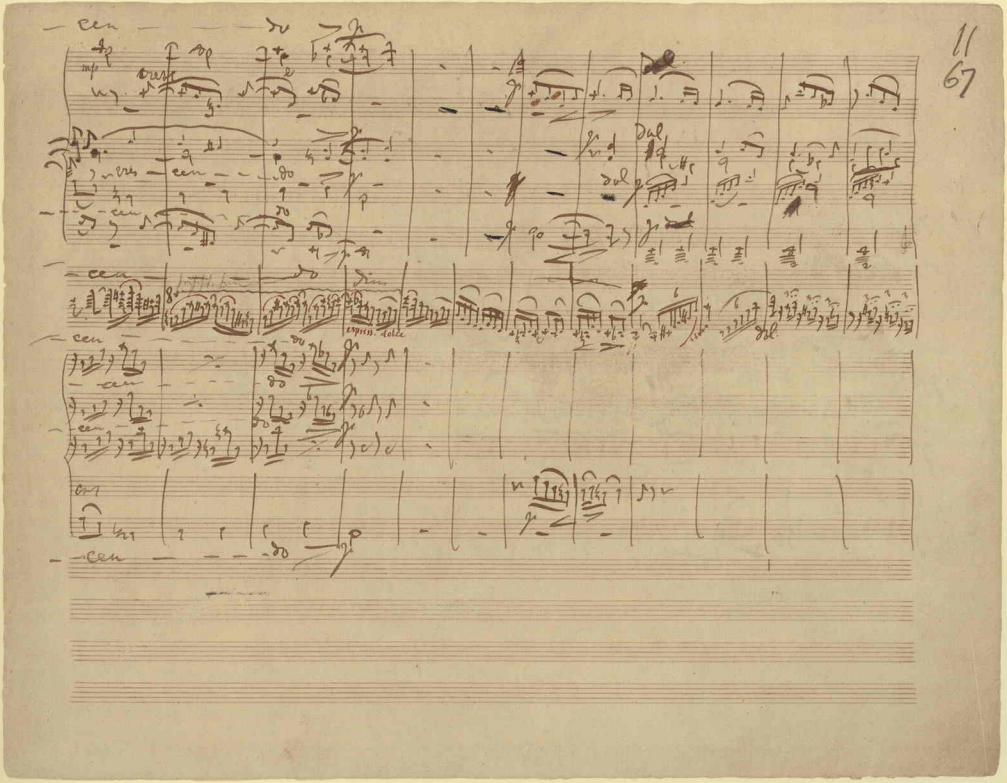

62

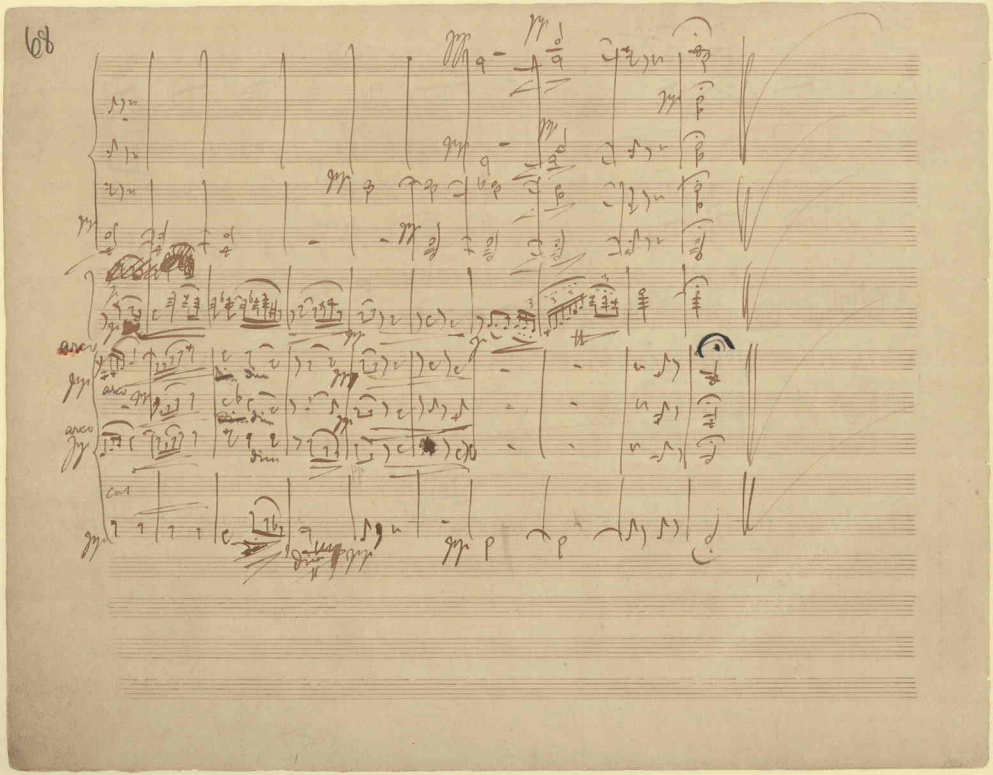

63
p


8 64
calando
cresc
dim
dim molto
calando


65
Solo
1.
rlec
Tempo I.mo


10
66
poco a poco cres
espressivo
128
129
in die Violoncelli einzubringen!


11
67
cen
mp
espress. dolce
dol


68
arco
arco
arco
cresc

Allegro giocoso ma non troppo vivace.

Fl.
Ob.
Clar. in A
Fag.
Corni in D
Corni in E
Tromb. in D
Timpani in D, A.
Solo Violino
Violini 1.
Violini 2.
Contrabb.
Violoncelli
Cembalo

giocoso

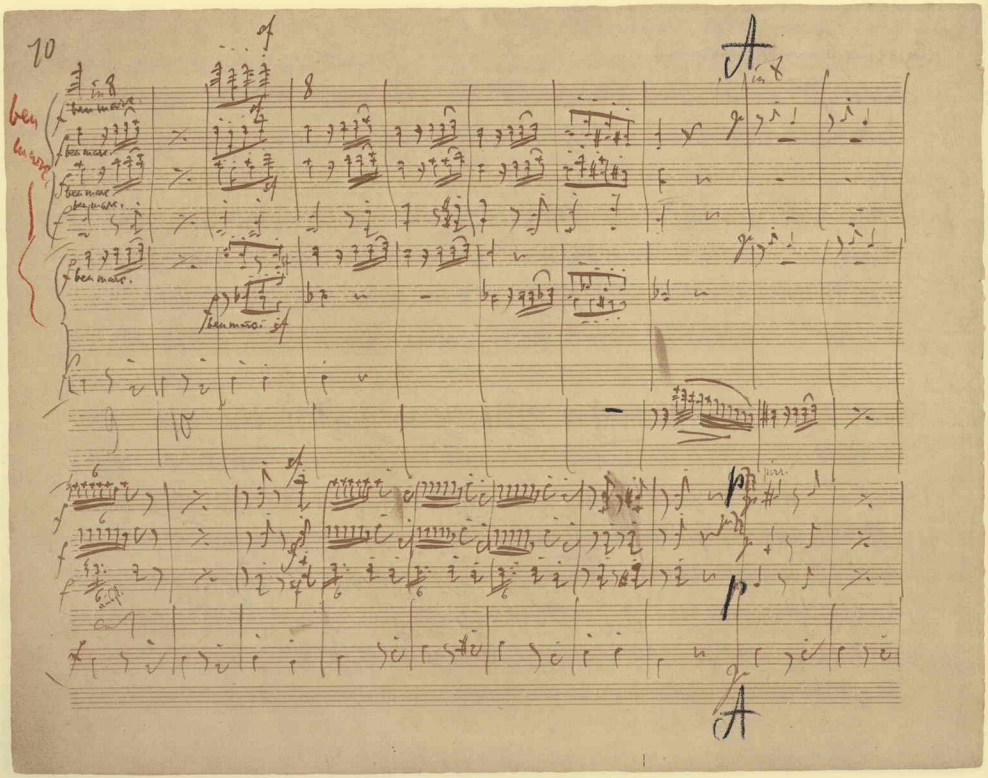
giocoso

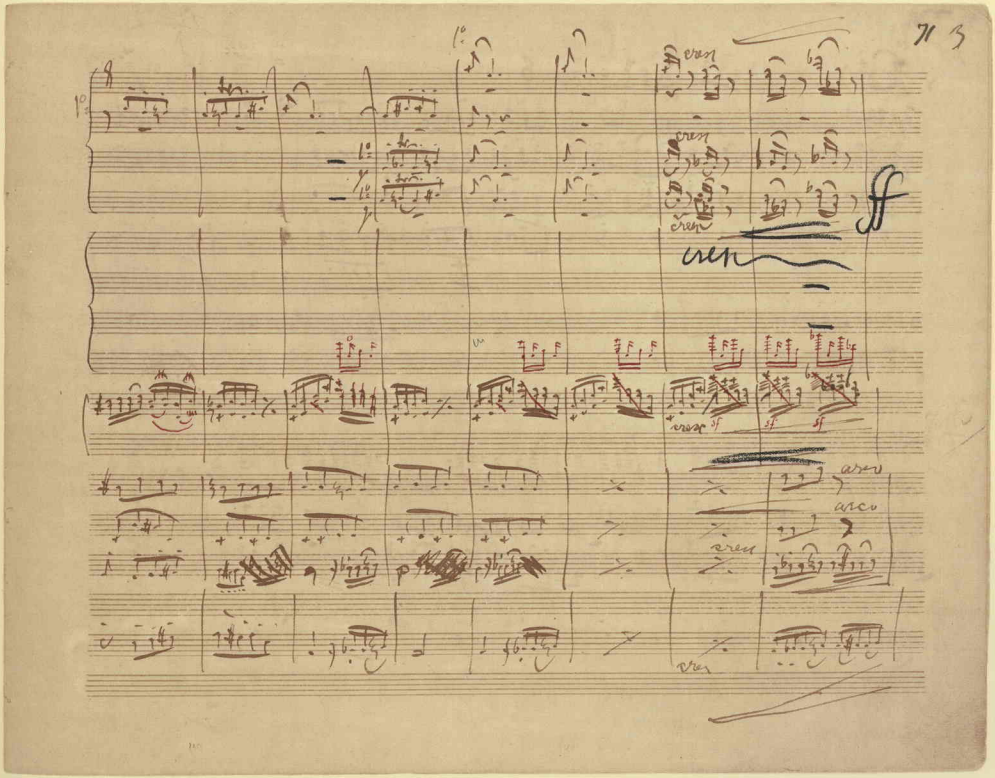
giocoso

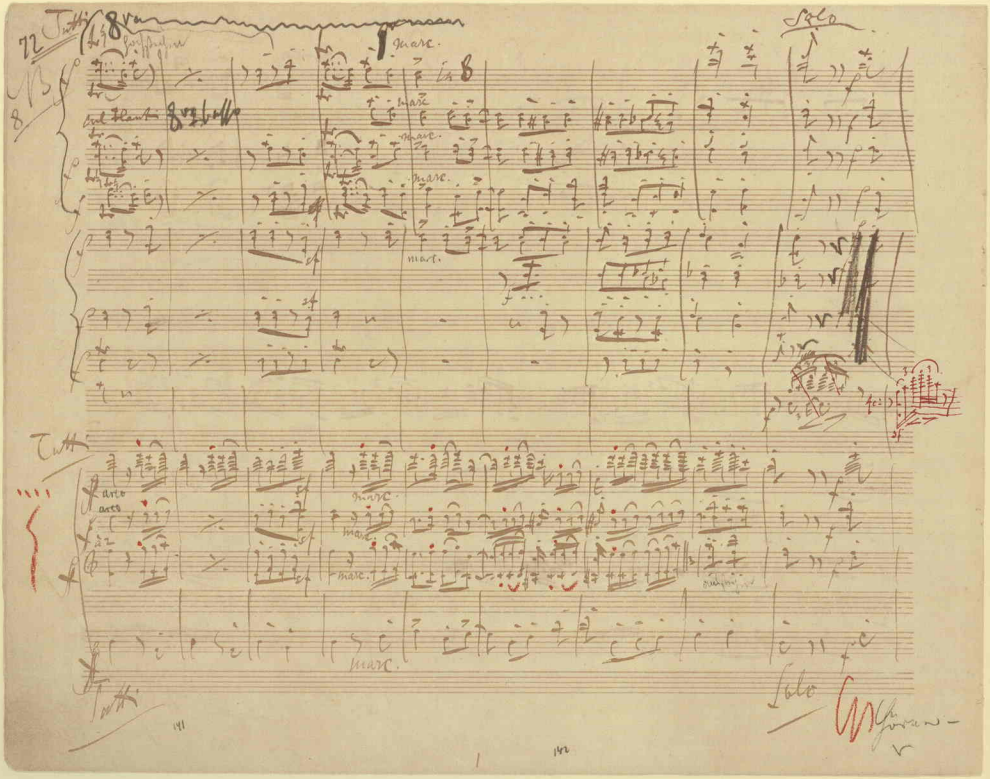
giocoso

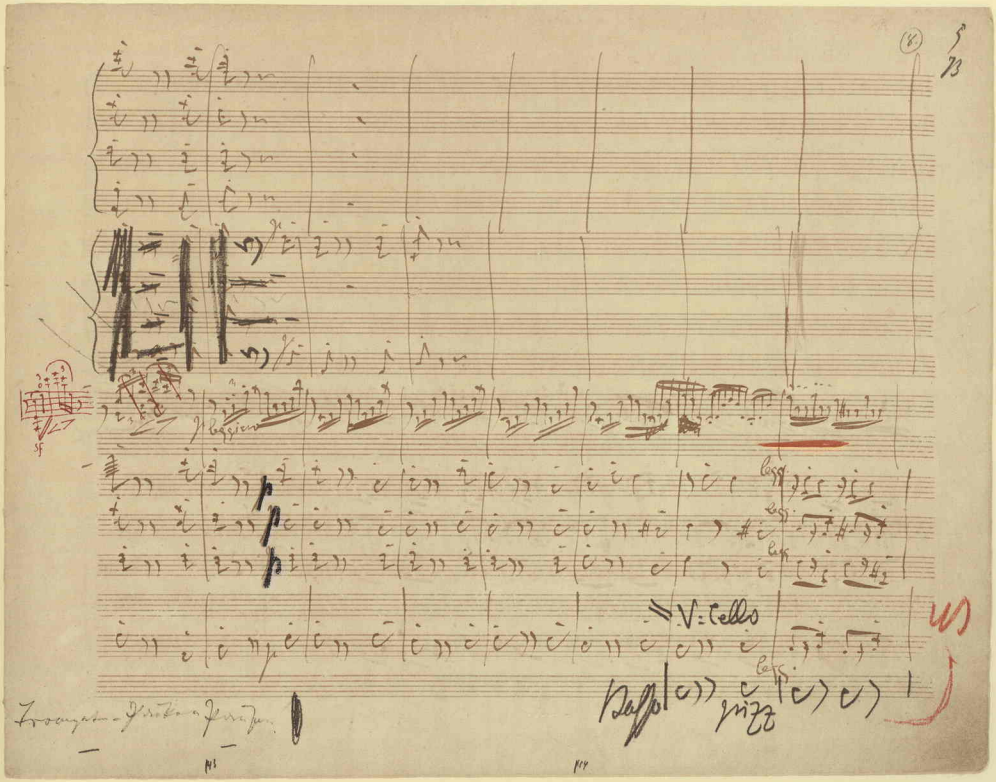
giocoso

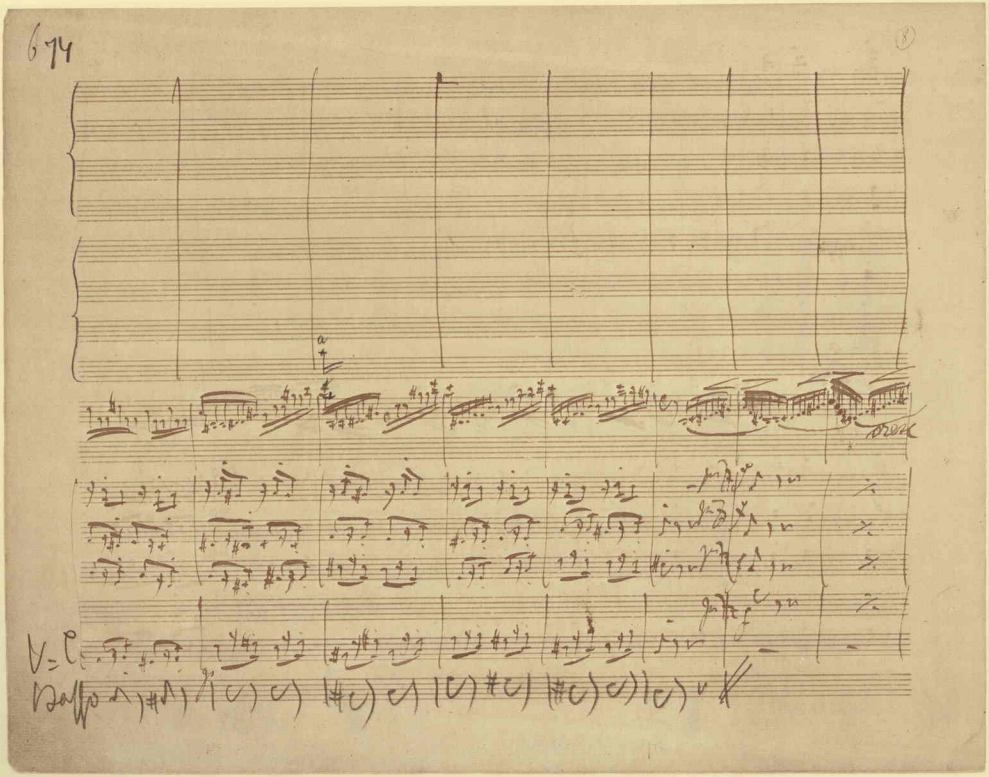
giocoso

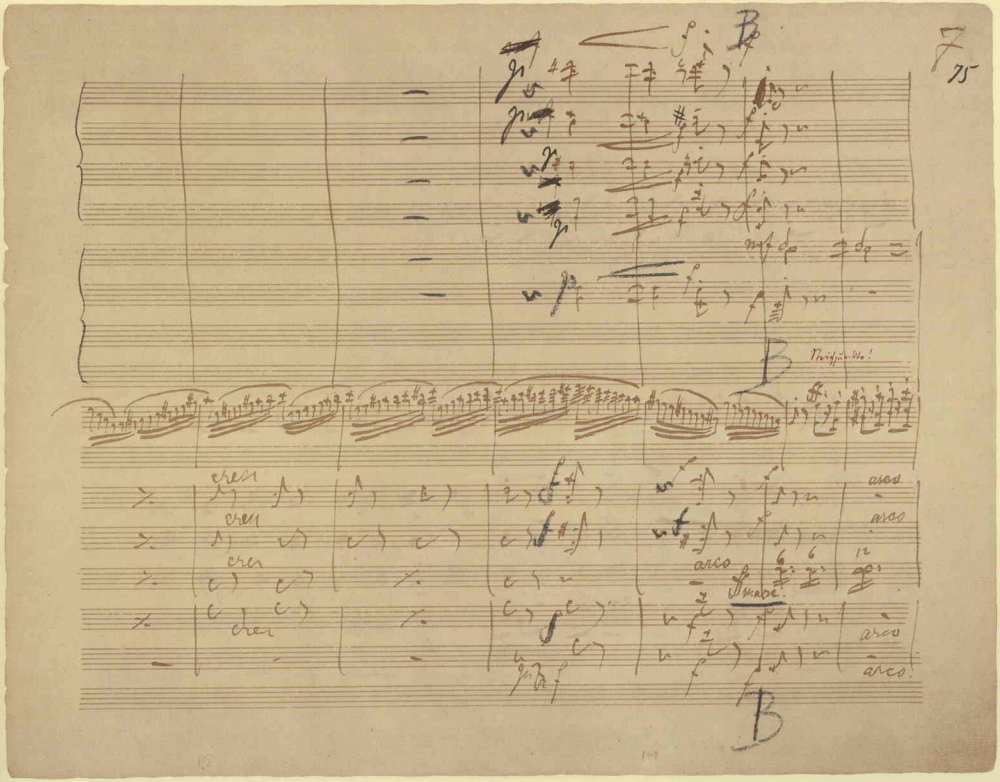

70
A
ben marc.
ben marc.
ben marc.
ben marc.
ben marc.
ben marc.
ben marc.
p
p
A


71 3
cresc
cresc
cresc
ff
cresc
cresc
arco
arco
cresc
cresc


Tutti
Solo
Tutti
Tutti
Solo
141
142


(K)
5
73
Pizzicato
V. Cello
Pizz.
Trompeten-Stürzen-Fenster


Vc
Basso


75
cresc
arco
arco
arco
arco
arco

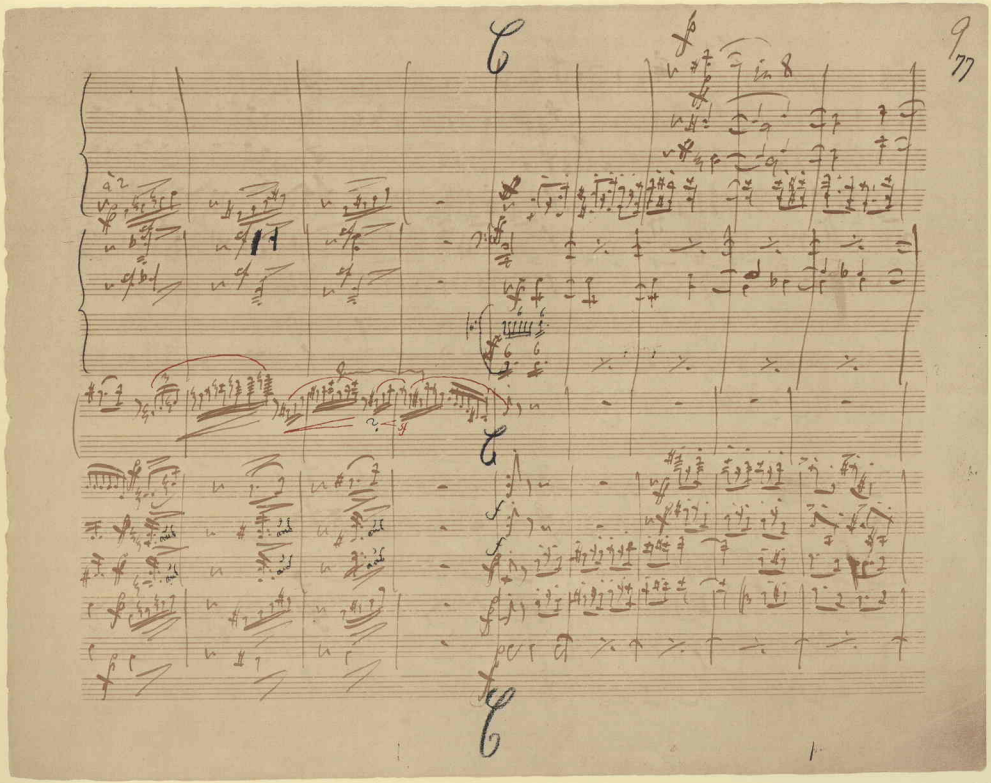
arco

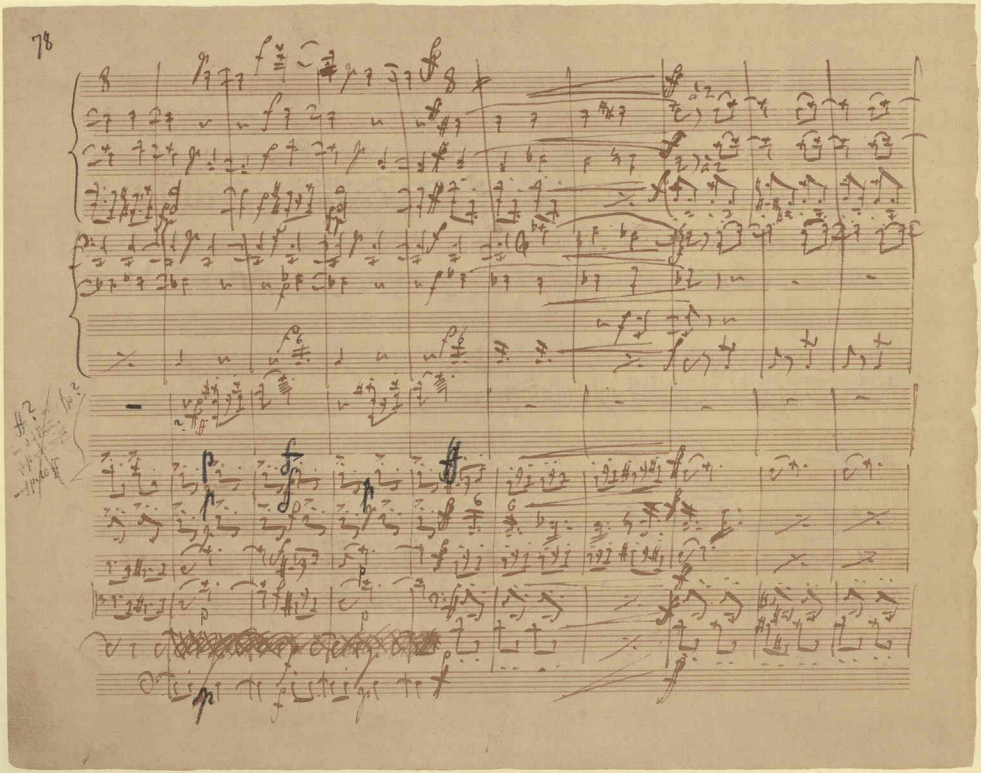
arco

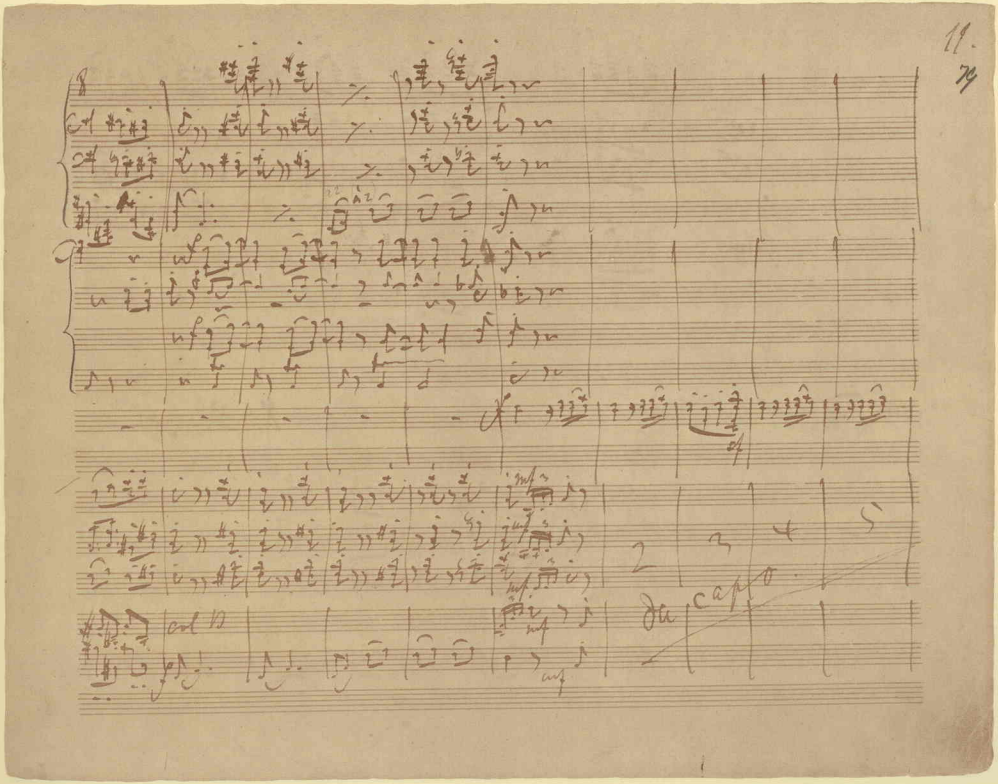
arco

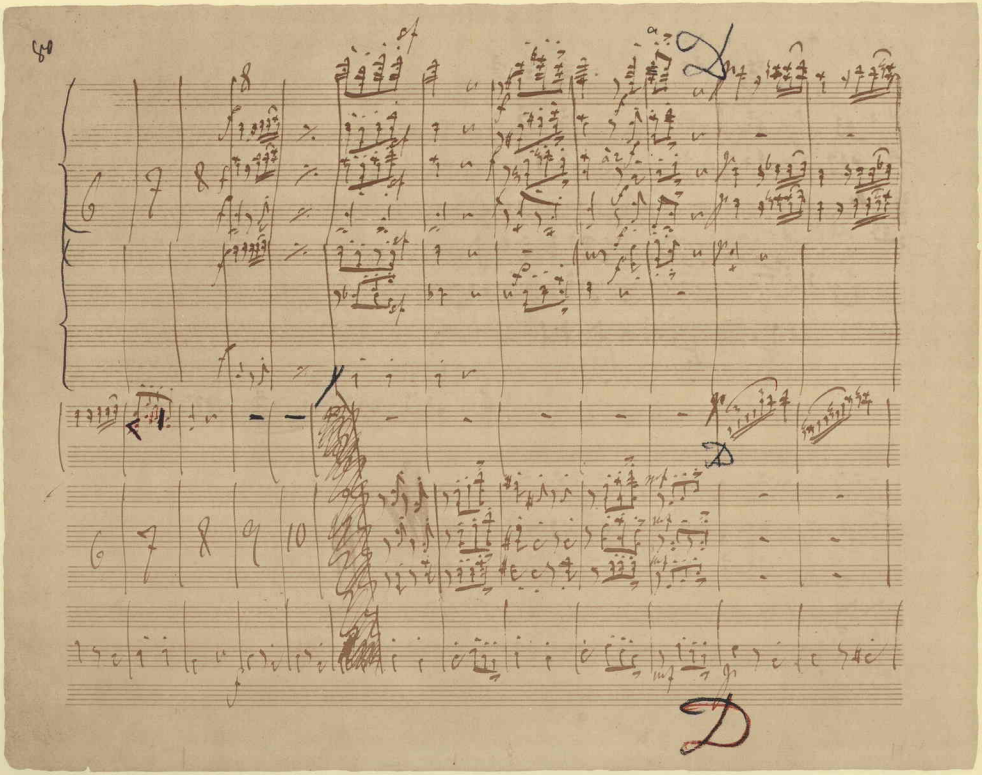
arco

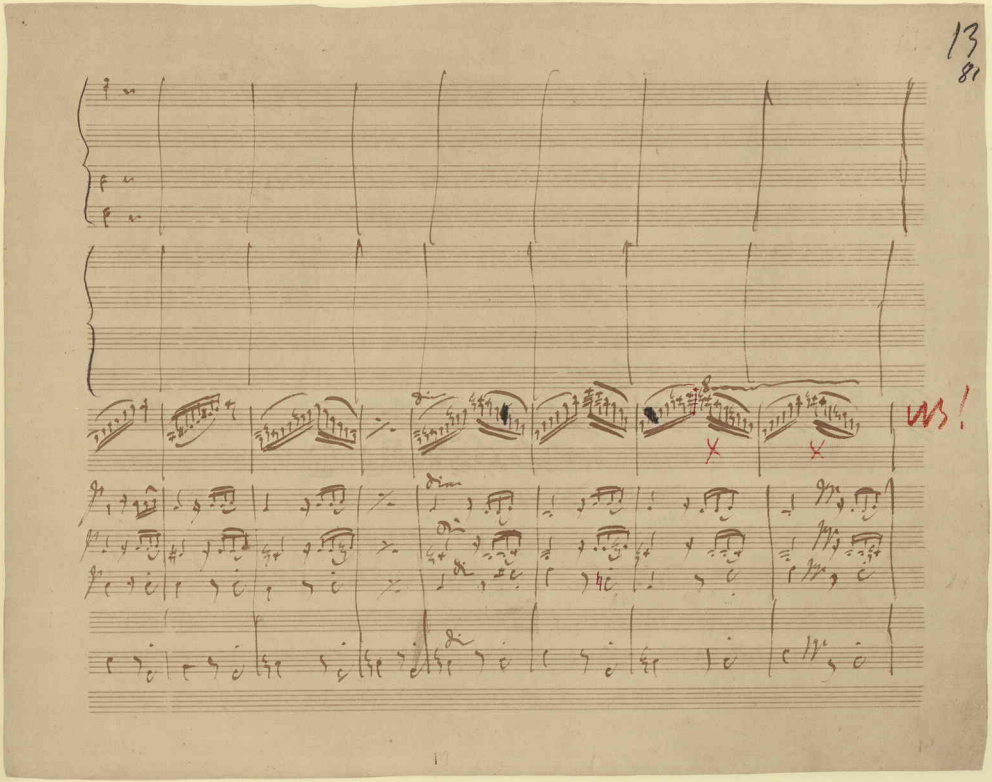
X in Gegenm. Viola fp auf jedes Viertel!

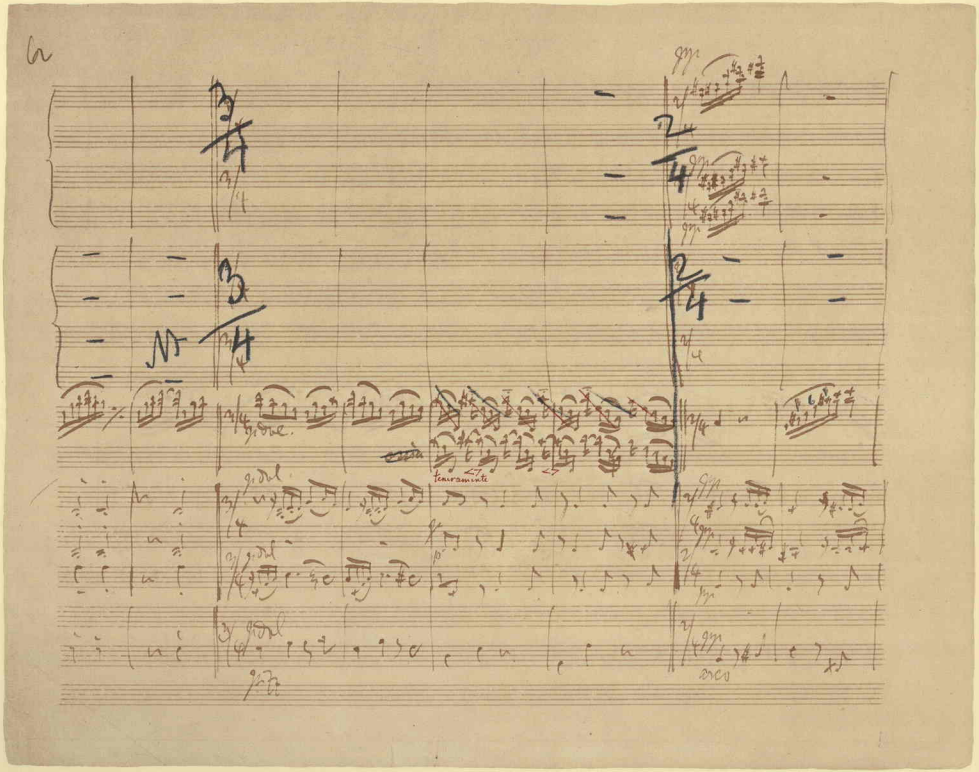


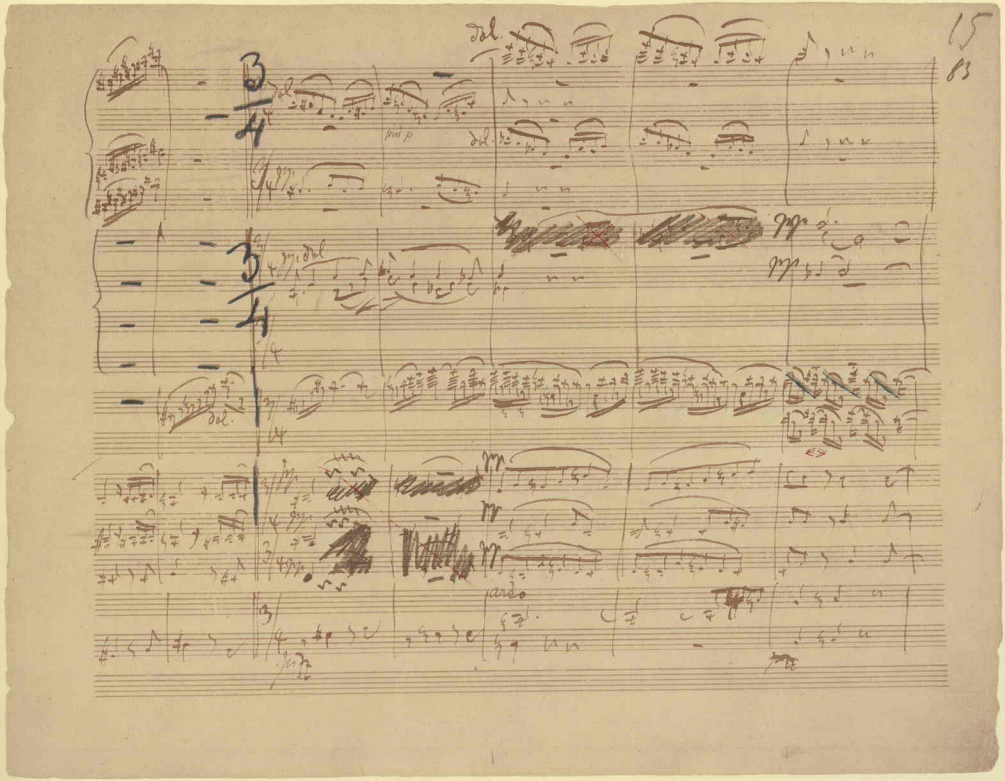


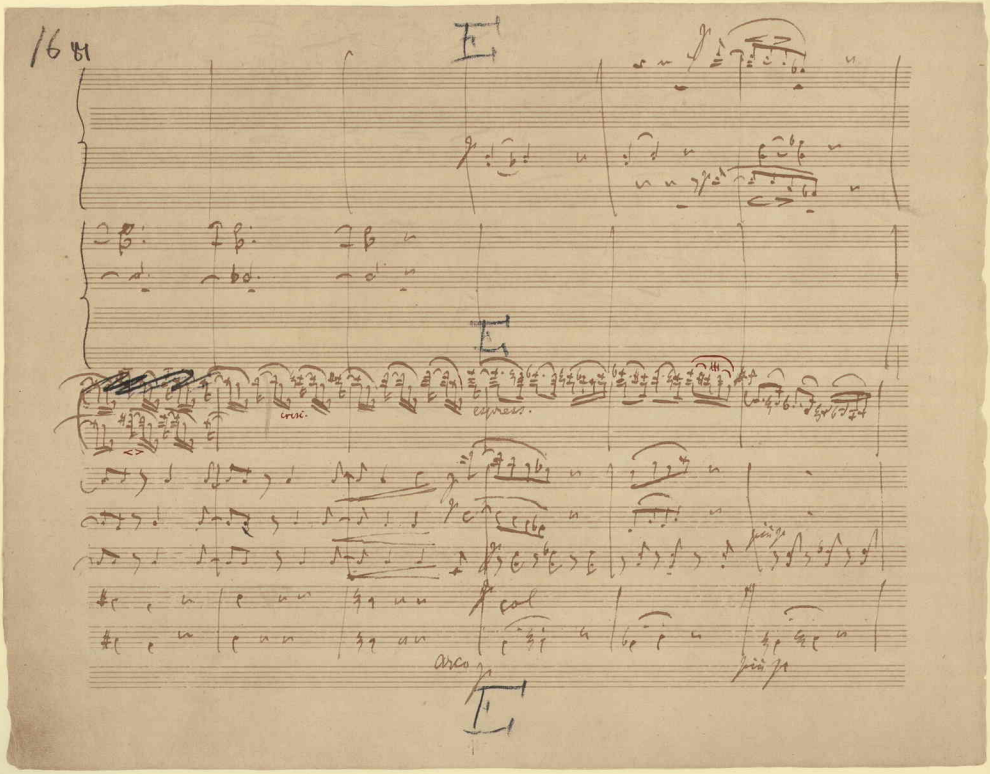

2
3
4
5
ad lib
Da capo

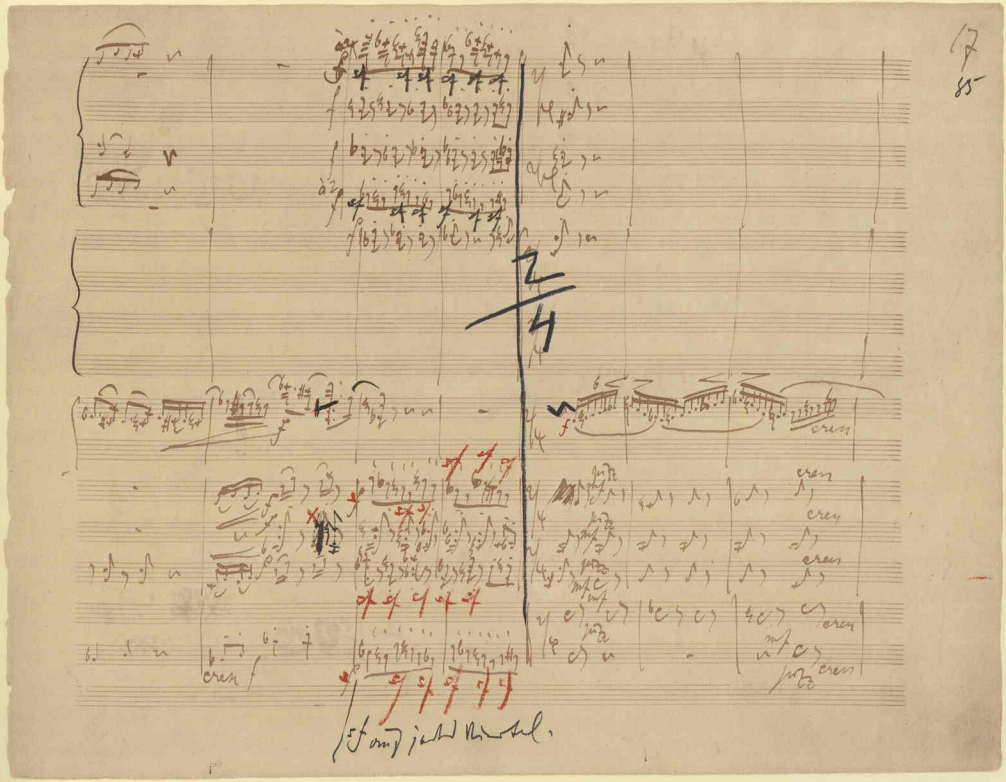


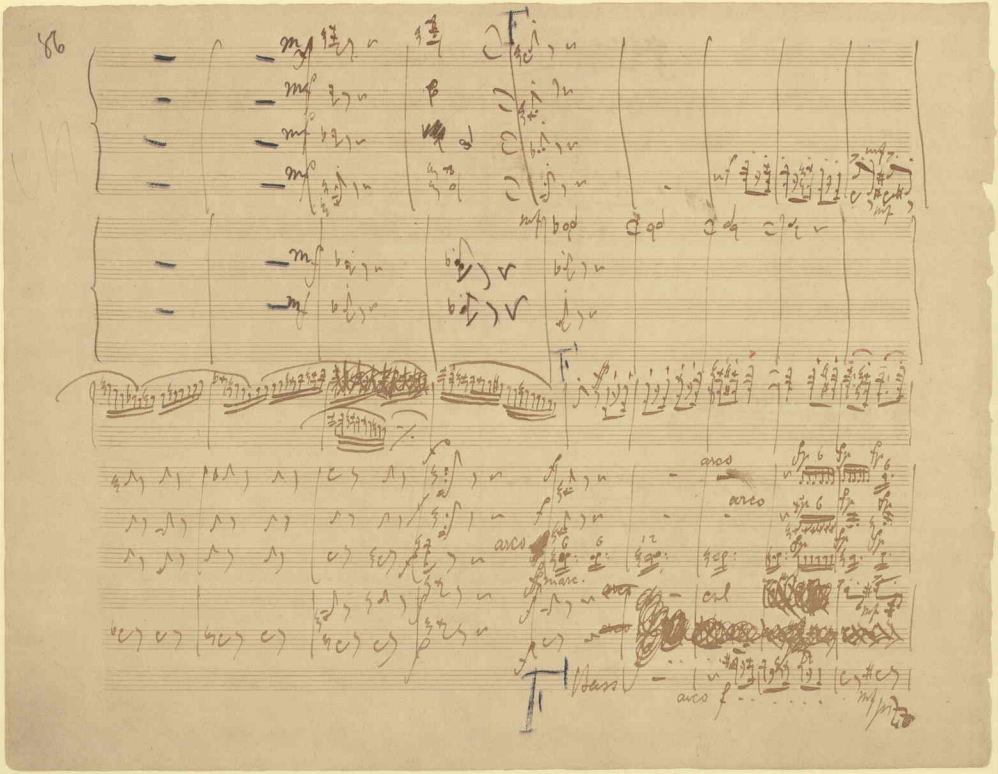

13
81
WS!

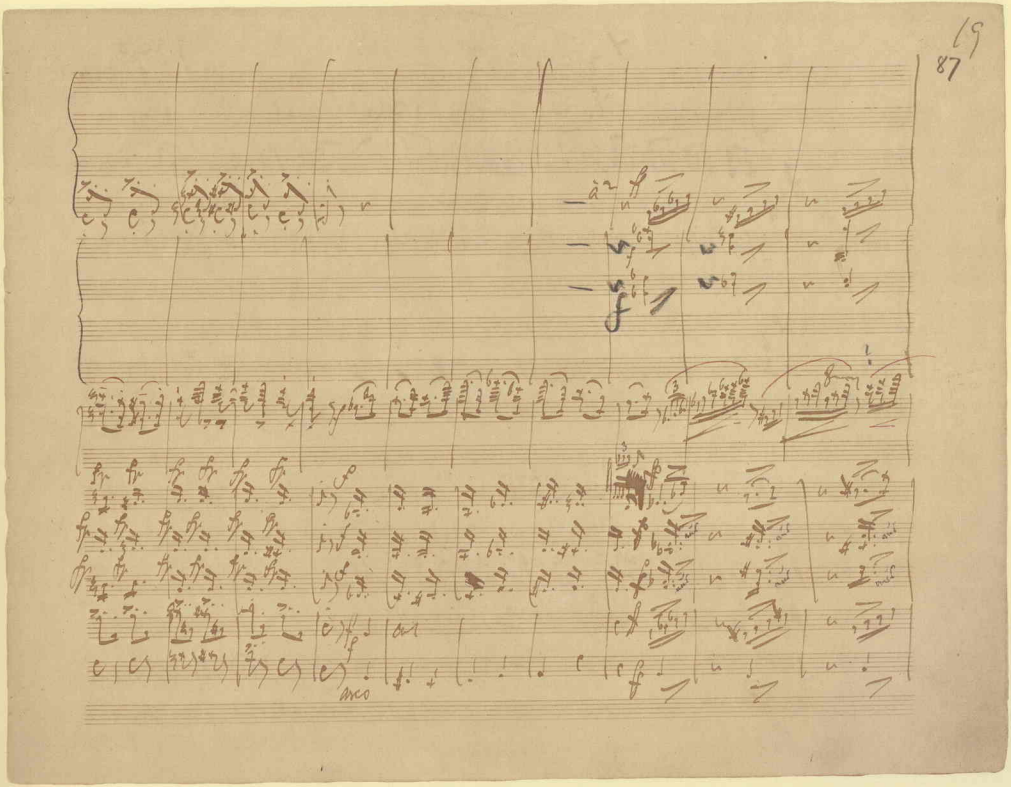

6
g.dol.
tour sourdine
arco

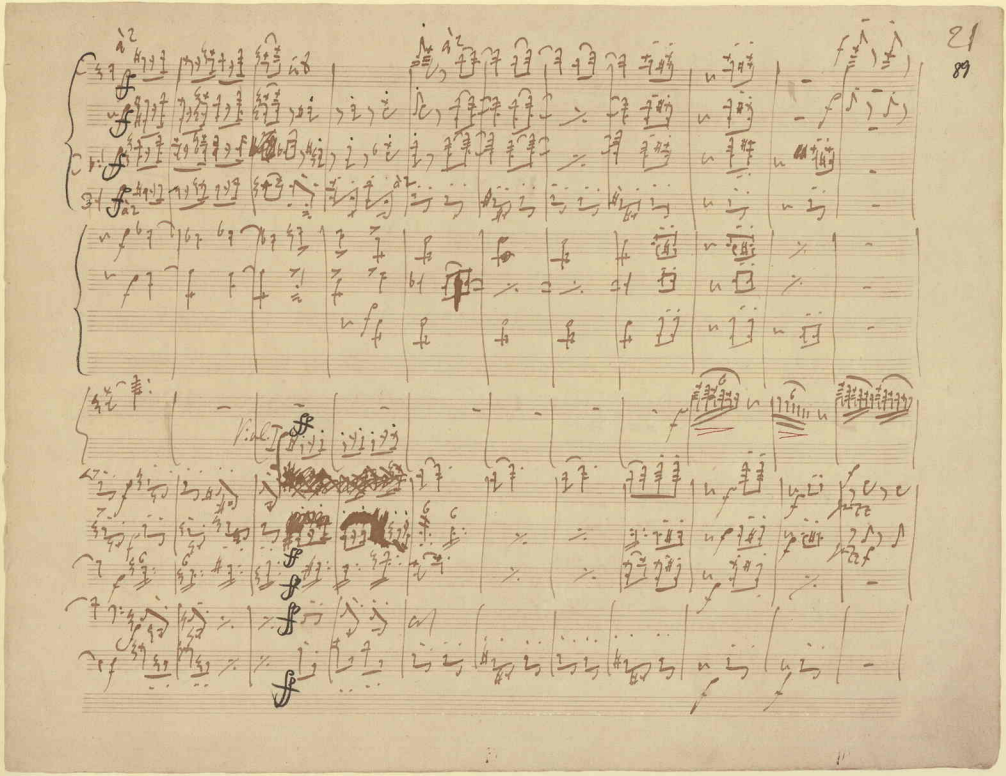

15
83
3/4
3/4
dol.
mi dol
dol.
pizz.
arco

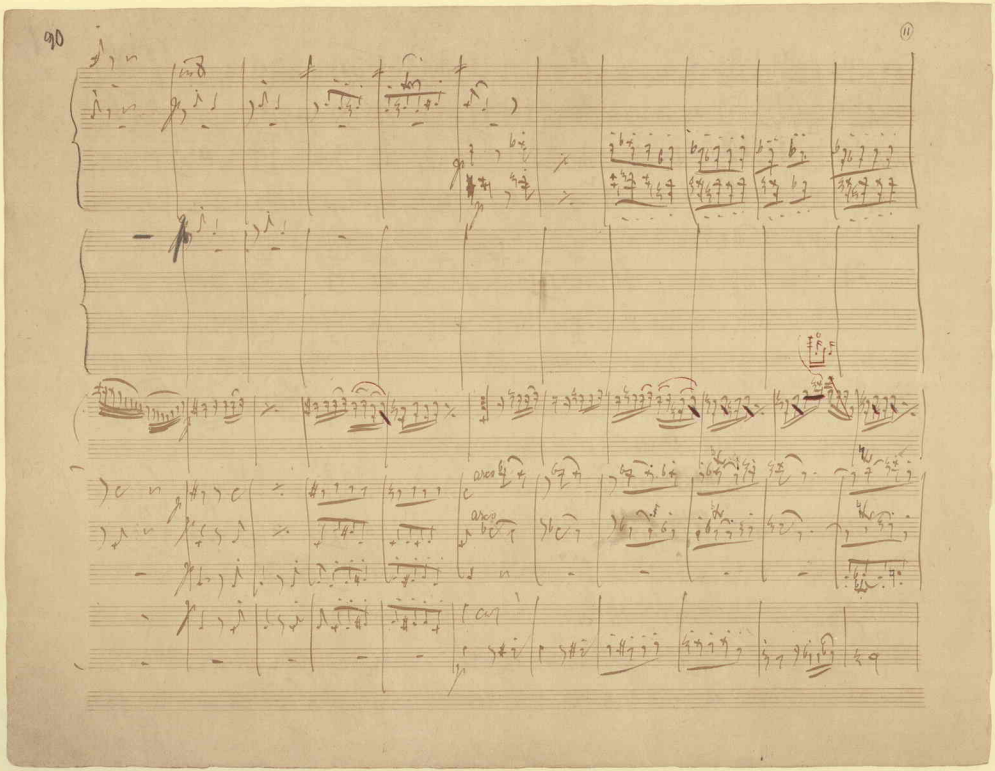

16 bis
cresc.
espress.
arco
arco
più p

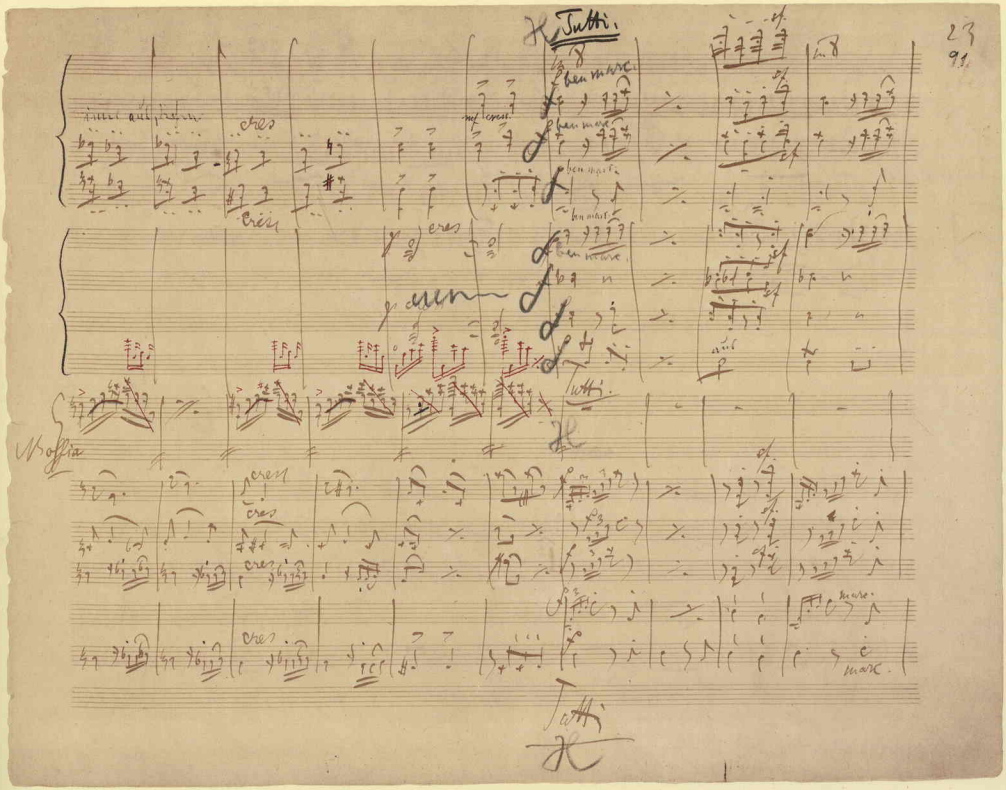

17
85
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc

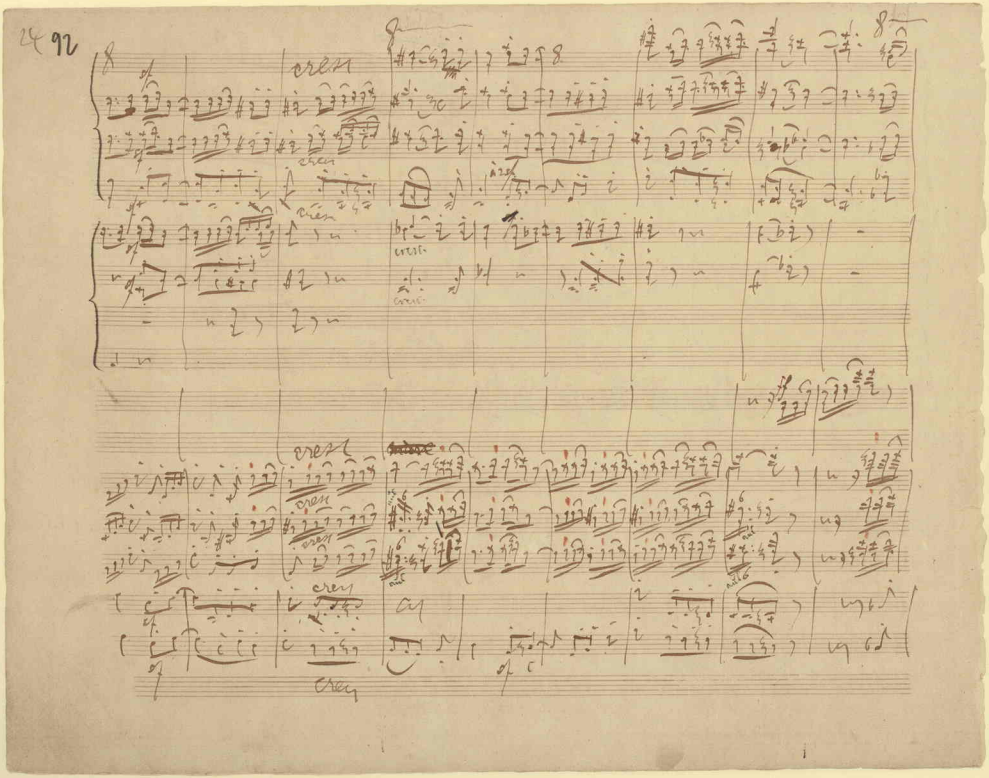

arco
arco
arco
Bass
arco

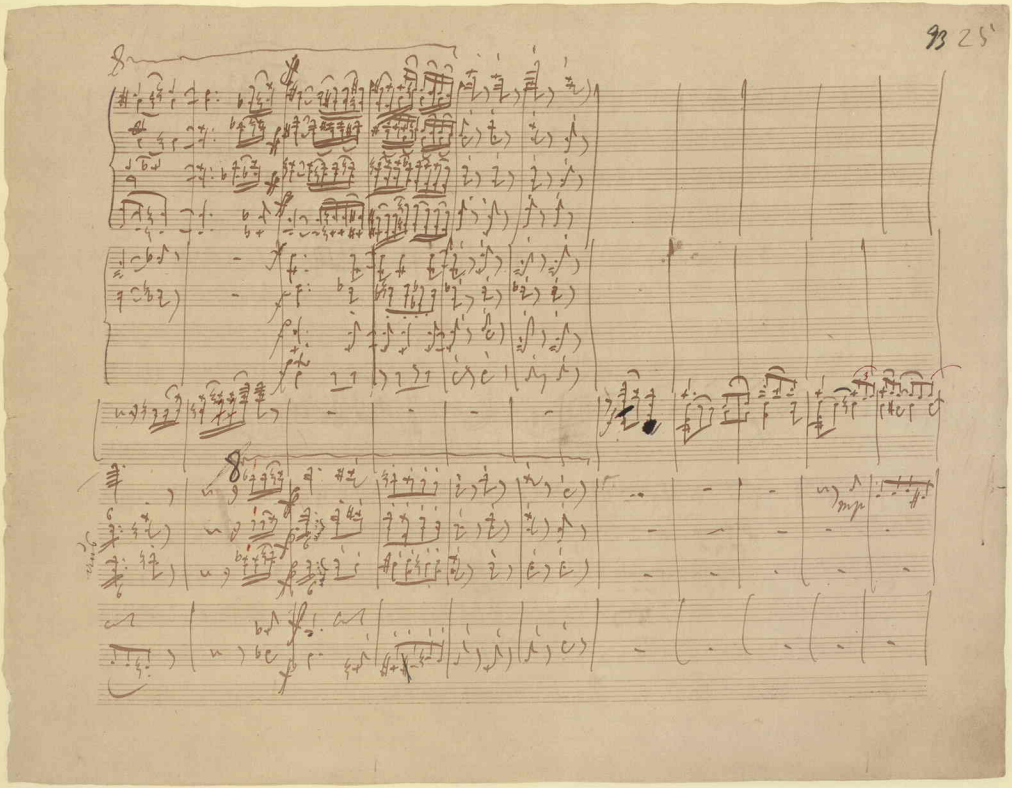

87
arco

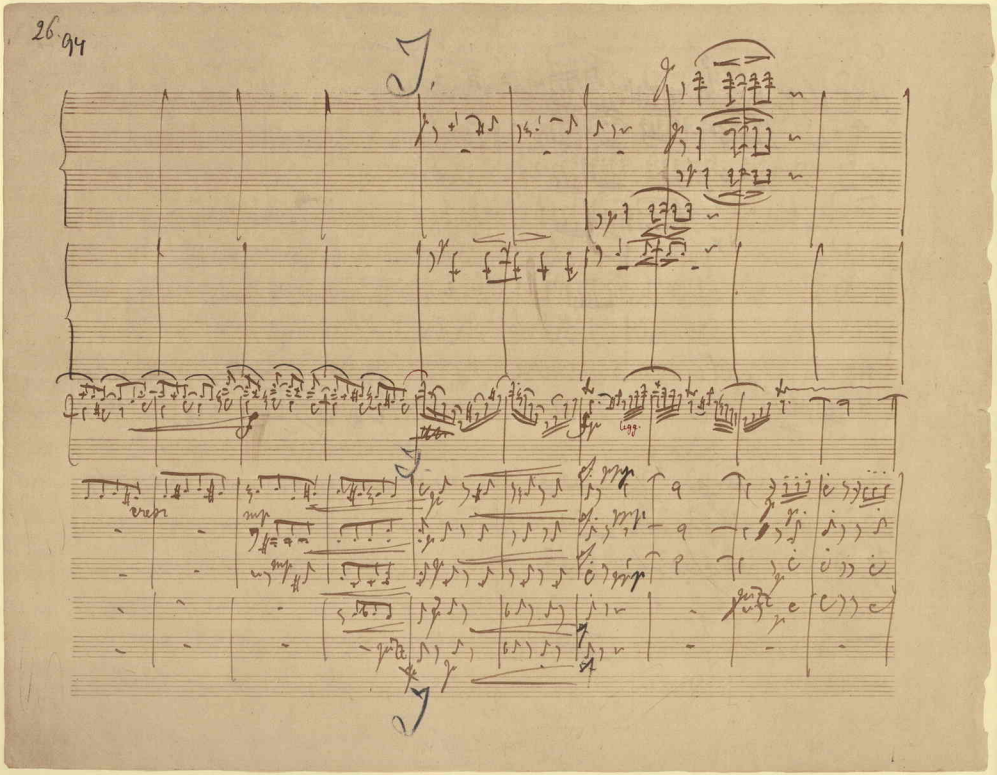

89


90
11

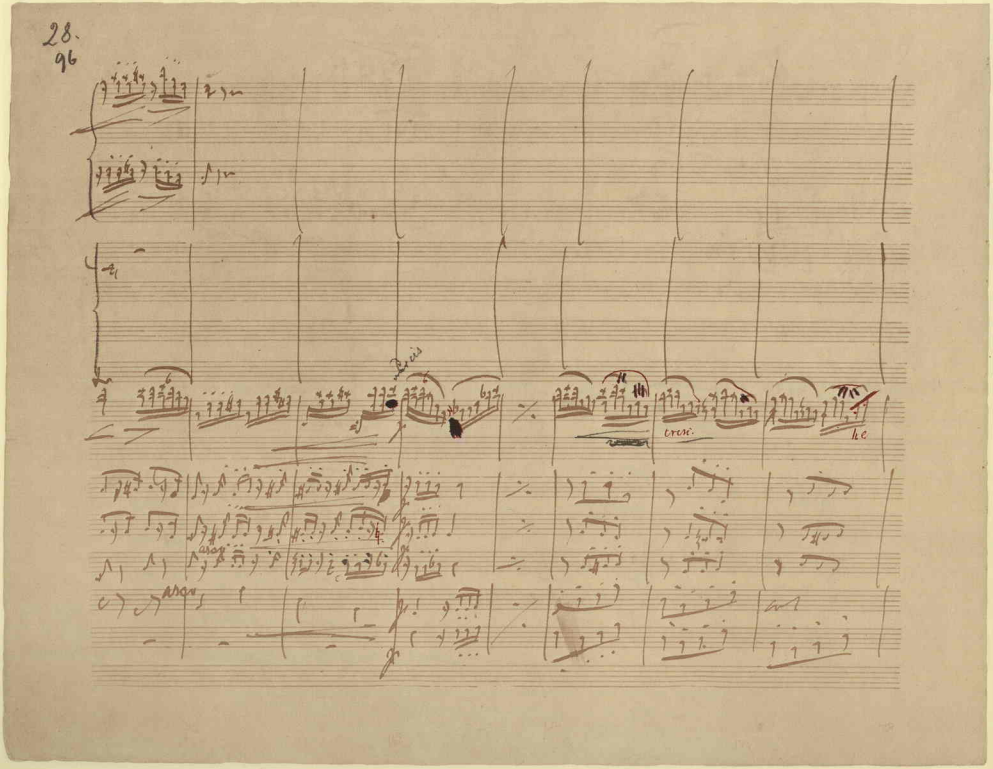

Tutti.
23
91
cres
ben marc.
mf cresc.
Tutti
Tutti

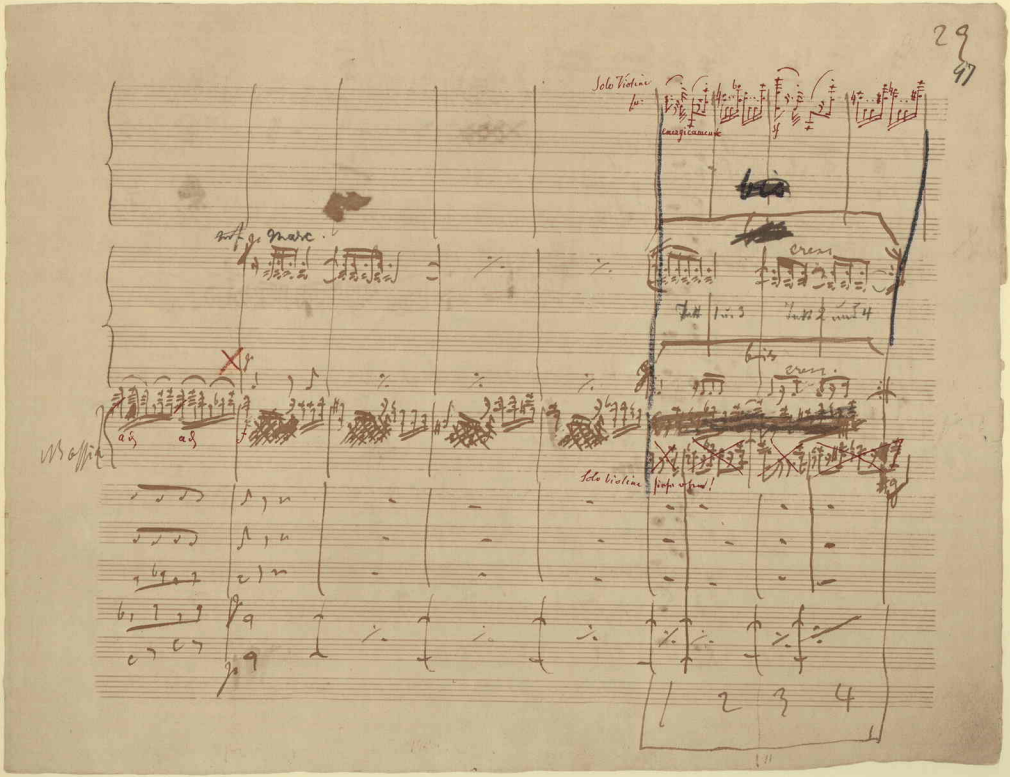

24 92
8
8
cresc
cresc
cresc

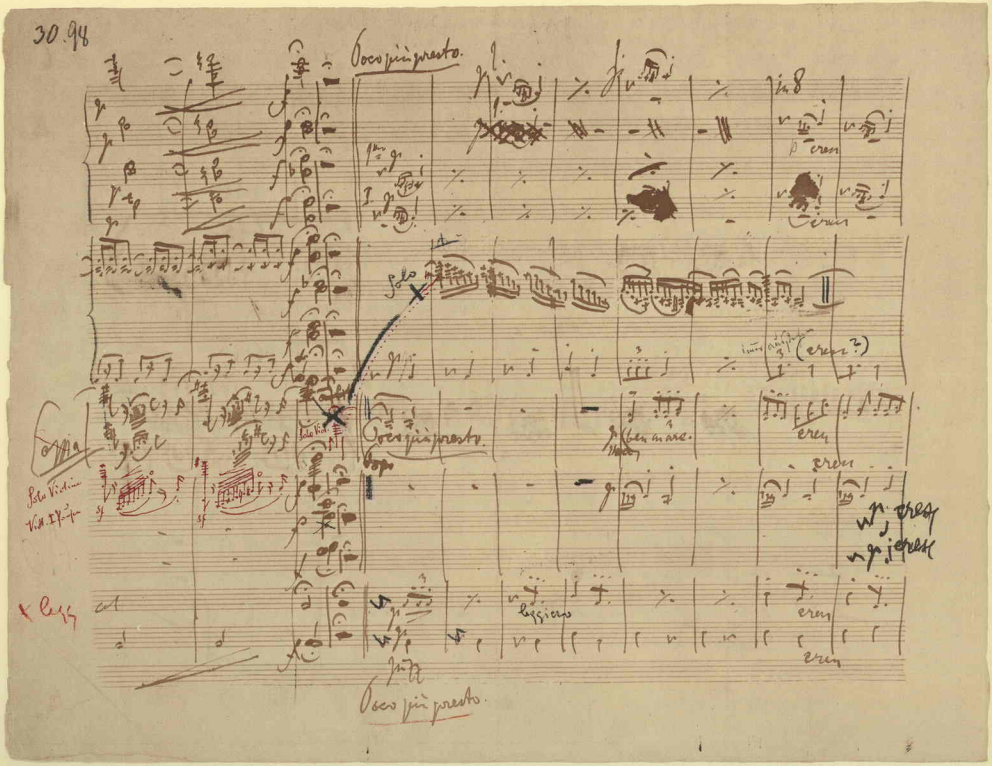

93 25'
mp

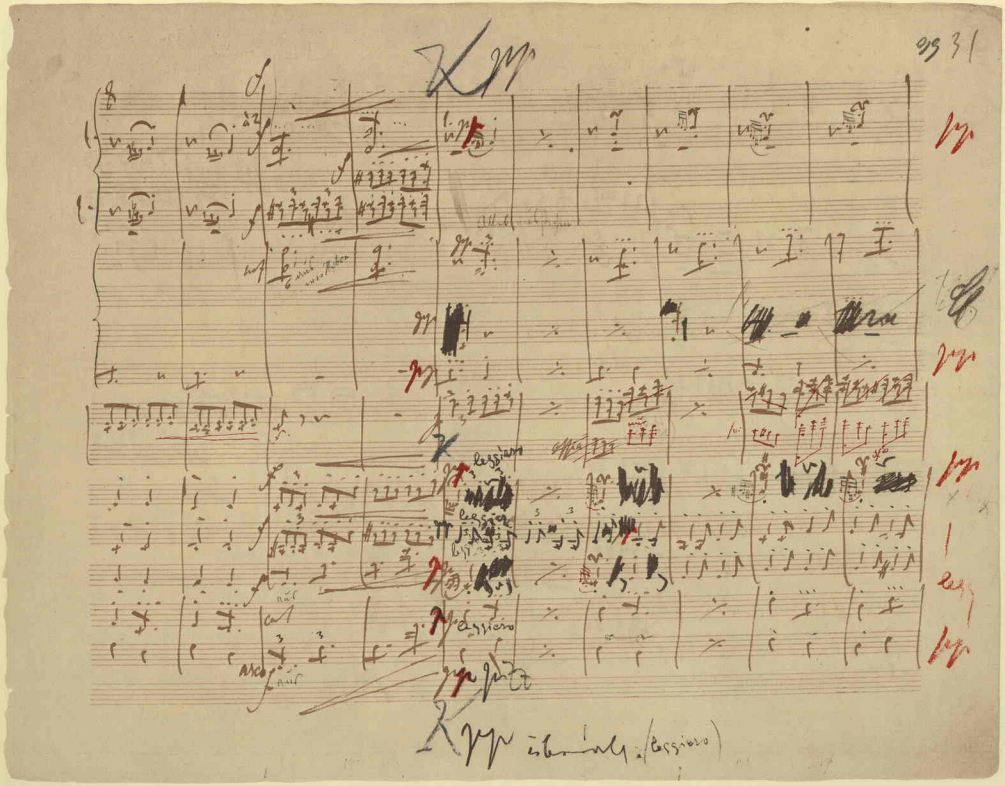

26.94
cresc.
mp
mf
legg.

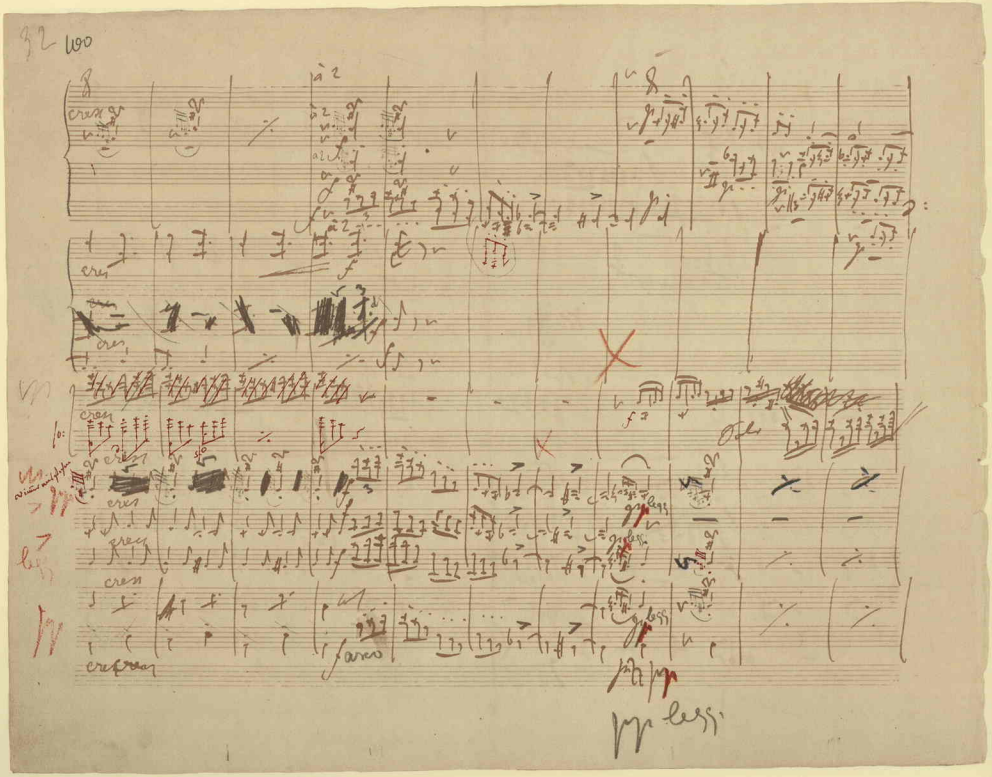
95
27
più p

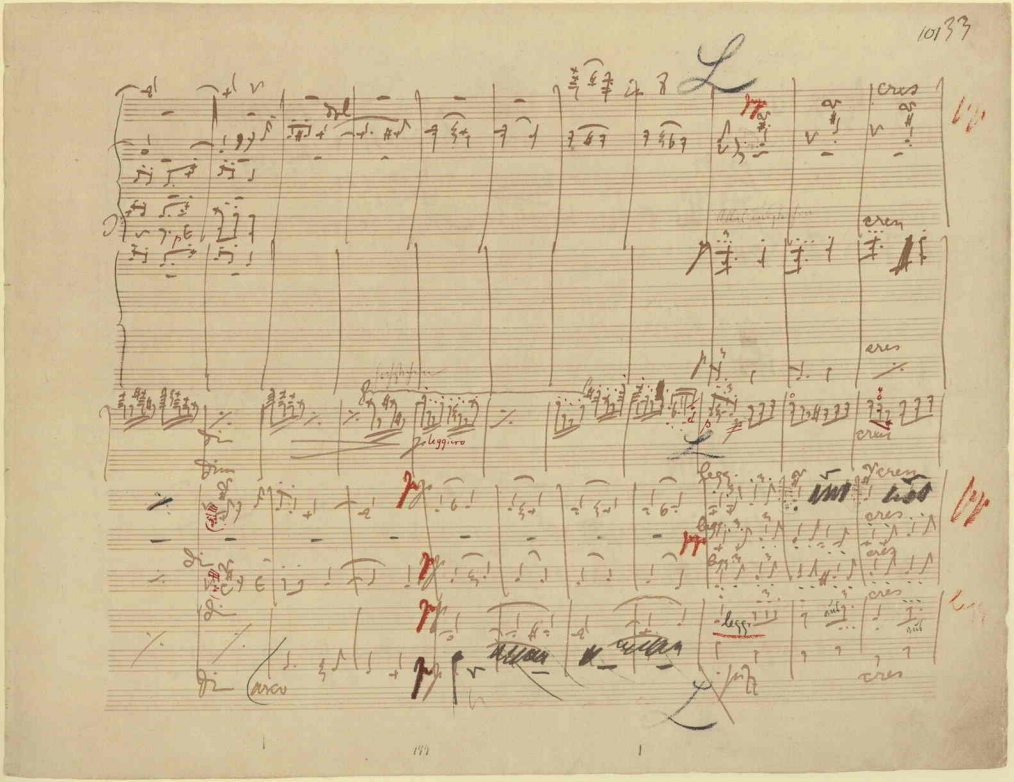

28.
96
trem.
a2

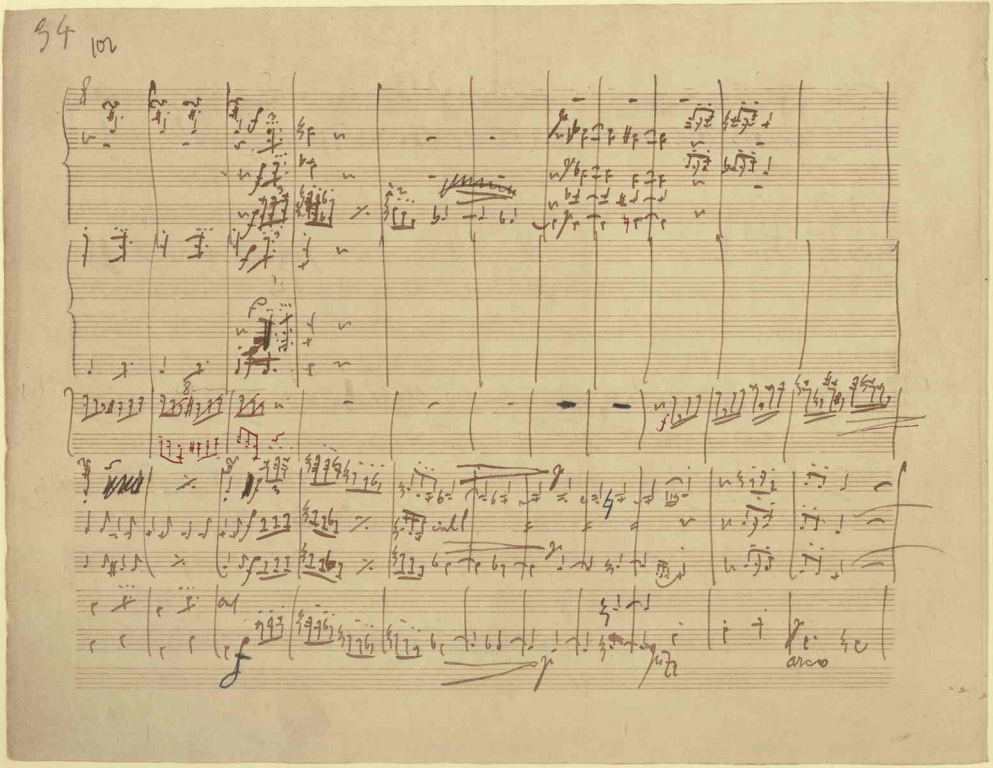

29
97
Solo Violini
tu
Maestoso
Marc.
cresc.
cresc.
Vlc & Cb
Solo violini
[illegible]

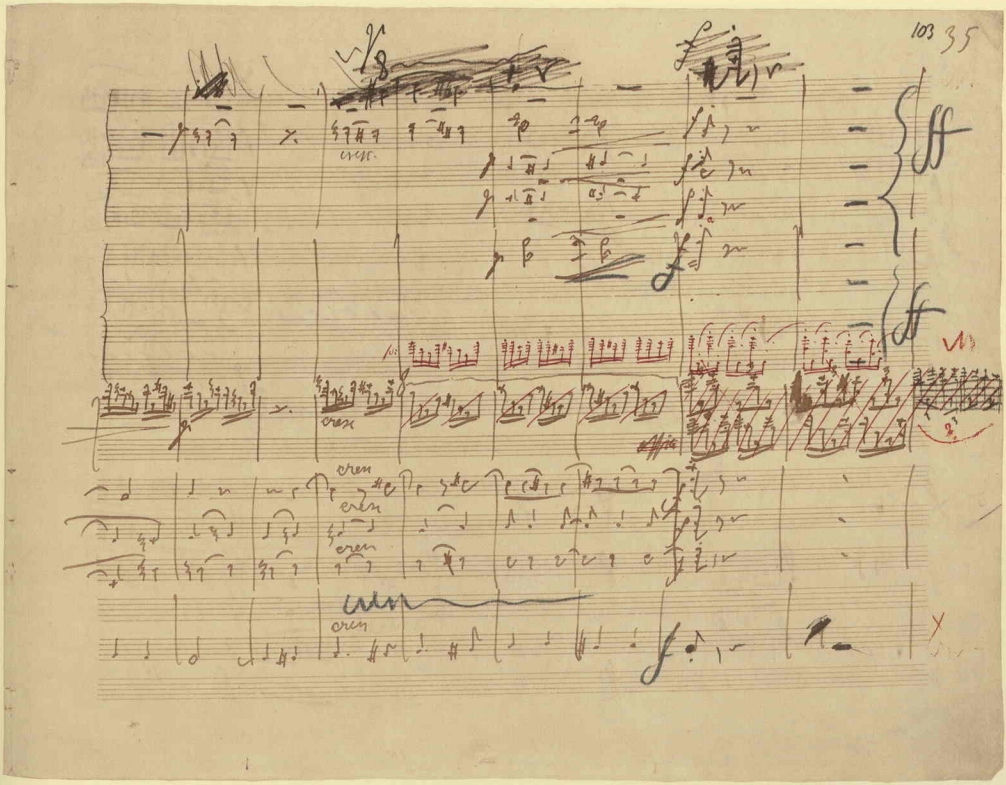

30.94
Poco più presto.
Poco più presto.
Poco più presto.
Solo Violino
Vl. I
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
leggiero

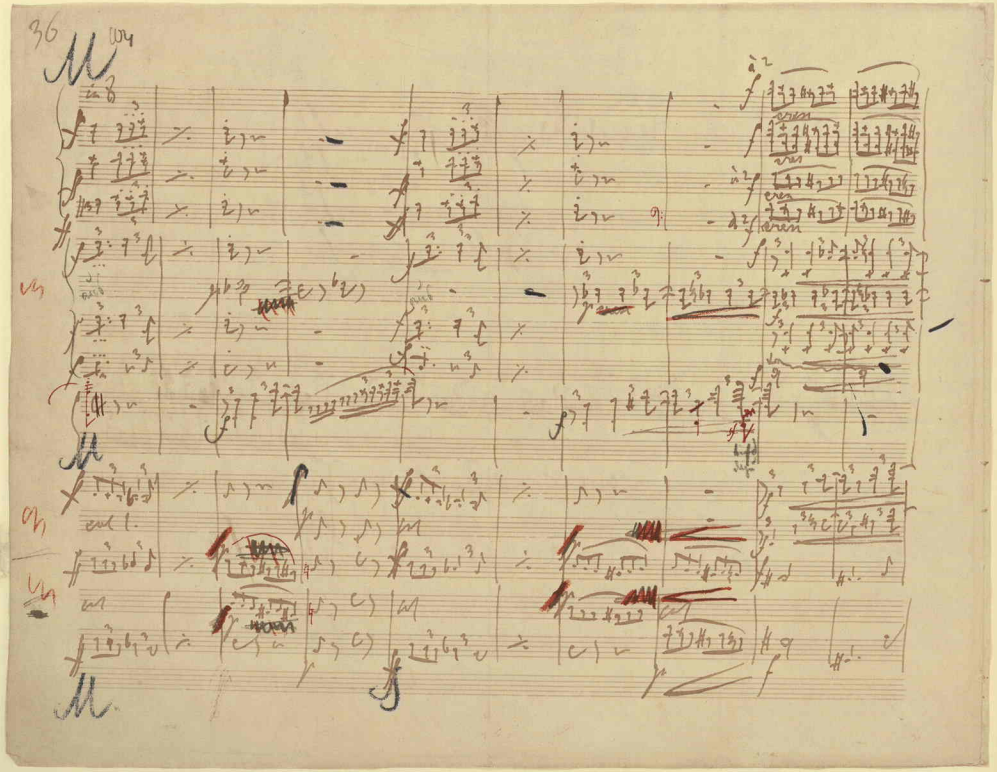


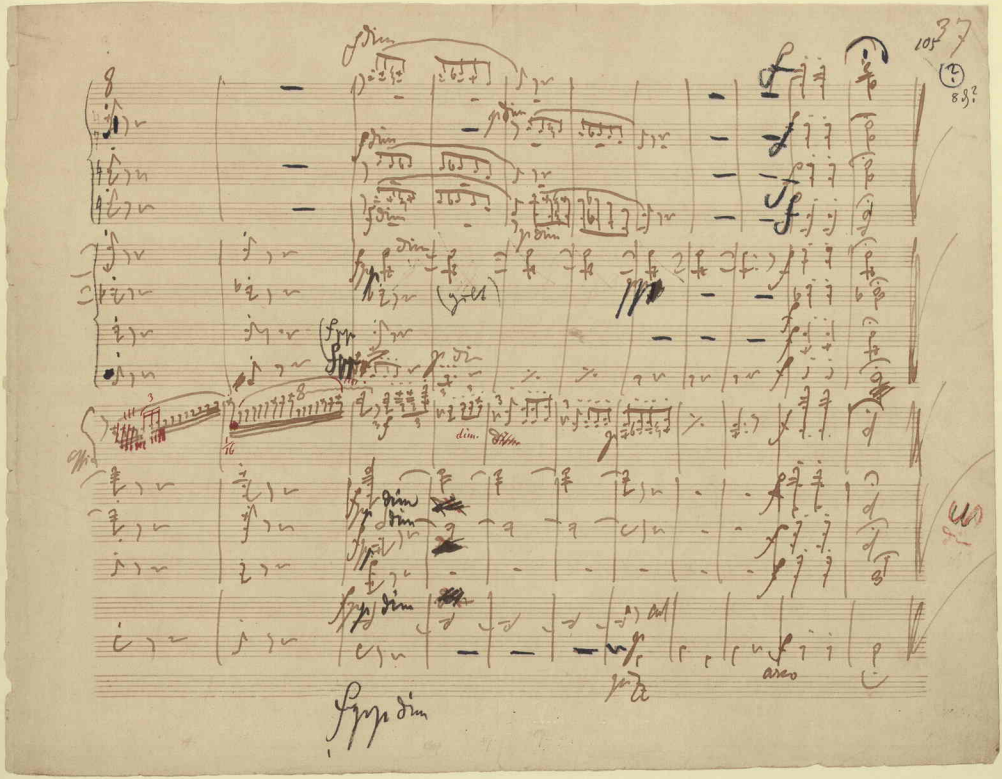

32
100
à 2
cresc
f
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
cresc
f
cresc
cresc
f
cresc
cresc
f


10133
cres
leggiero
leggiero
cresc


54
102
arco


103 35
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.


36
104
M
M
M


105
arco

Johannes Rickens