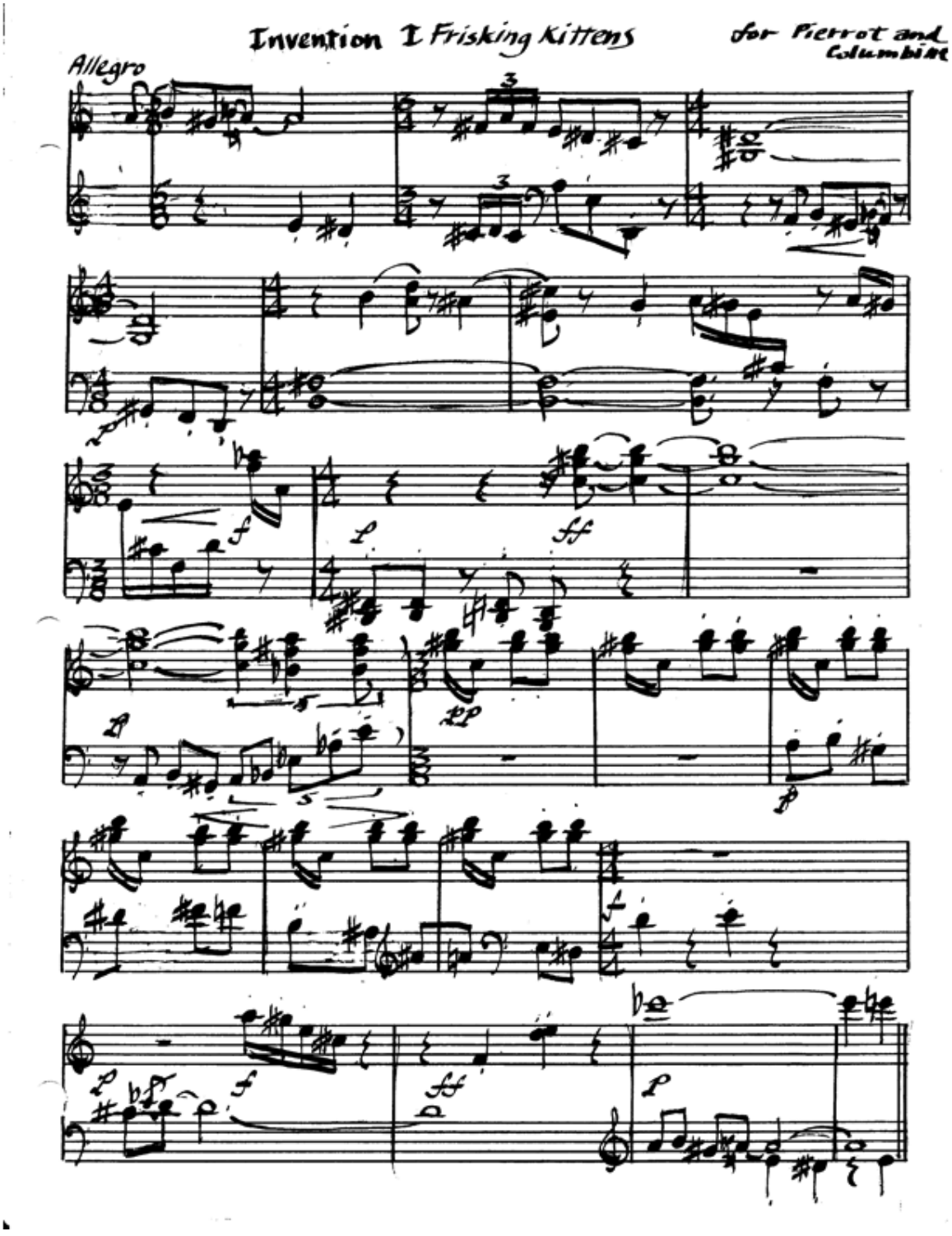
W. Jay Sydeman

Inventions
"Kittens"
for Solo Piano
(c. 1965)

Arts Aeternum



First page of manuscript to "Frisking Kittens"

These inventions were inspired by JS Bach, Pierrot and Columbine. JS Bach needs no introduction, and P&C are of course well known in literary circle… but they were actually my kittens as well. So the inventions pay due technical homage to the great inventions of Bach and equal homage to the playfulness of my kittens.

Just as fine counterpoint is considerably greater than the sum of its part, the experience of P&C rolling about was considerably more so, if you get my drift. My hope is that the music captures both elements.

– W. Jay Sydeman, January 2013

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the *New York Times*, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is part of a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, "The Mind of a Composer," 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration: I. "Frisking Kittens" (Allegro) – circa 0:30
II. "Stalking Kittens" (Andante) – circa 1:15

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for Solo Piano

(for Pierrot and Columbine)

I. "Frisking Kittens"

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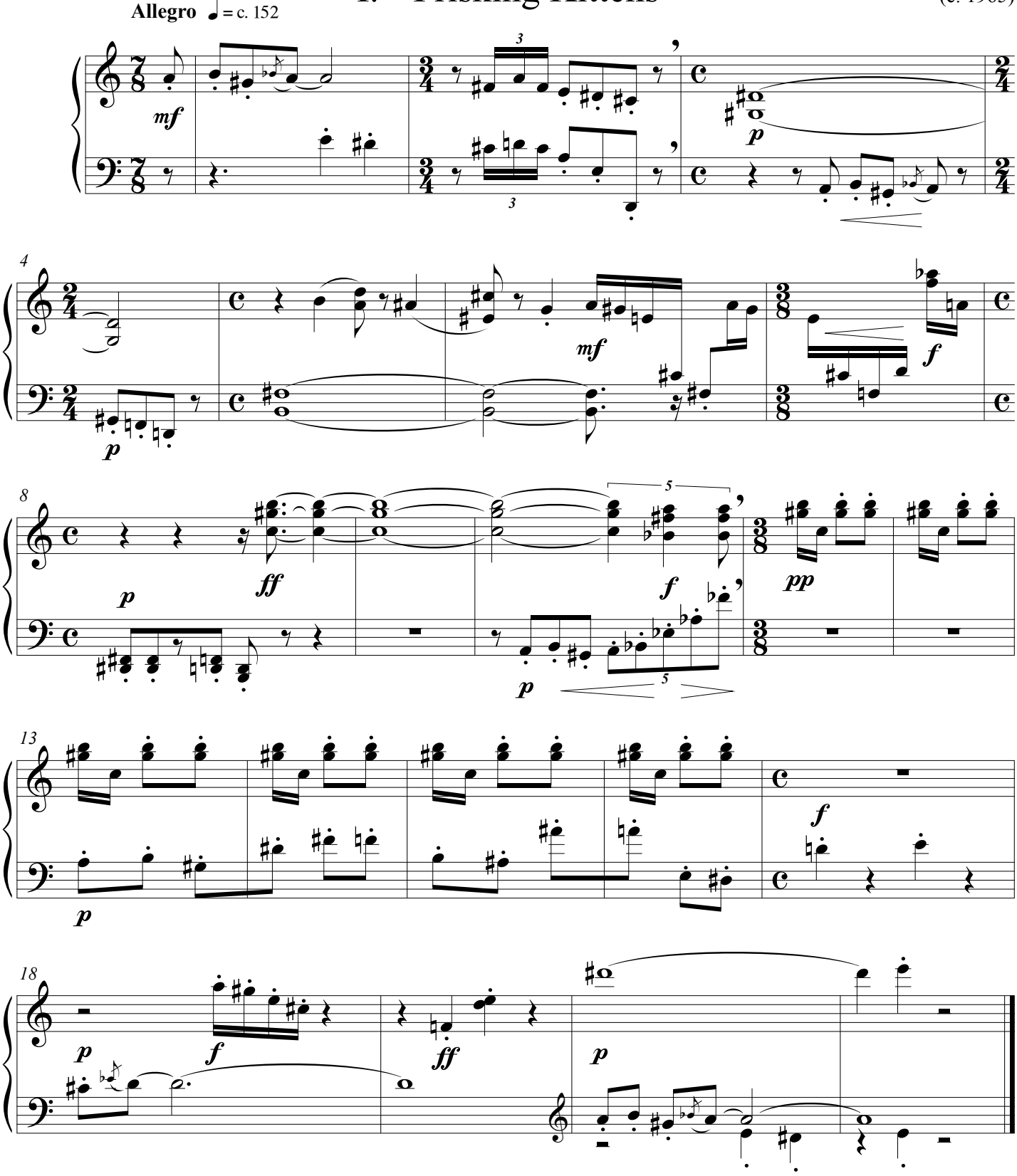

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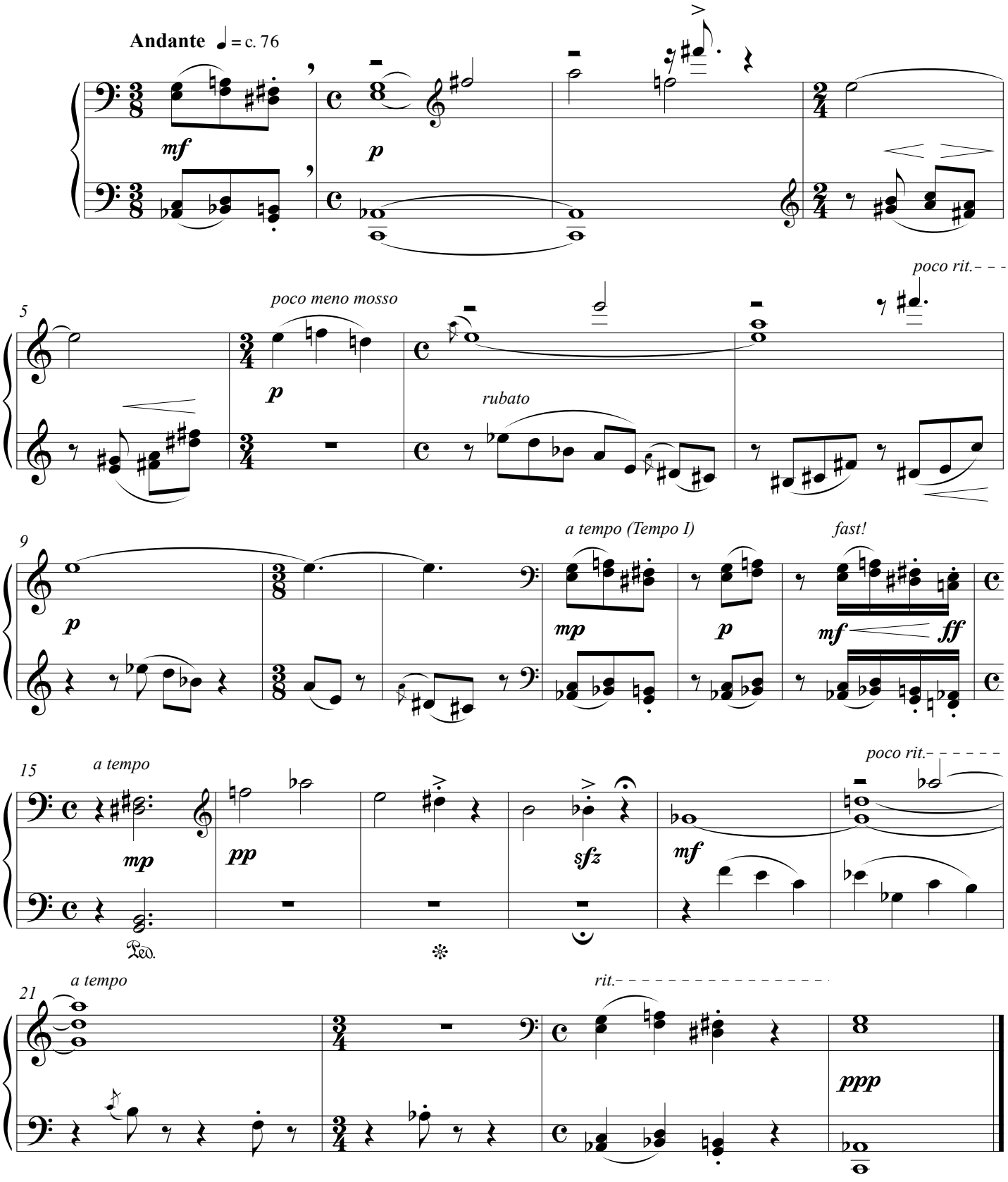
II. "Stalking Kittens"