SELECTIONS

from the

German Requiem of Johannes Brahms

In loving memory of
Dr. Susan Kuzniewski
(1951-1996)

Scored for 12 trombones

arranged by

Bob Reifsnyder

MUSIC from the

BONE MASS COLLECTION

VOLUME SIX

@2020

About the Composer

The "German Requiem" of Johannes Brahms (1833-97)) was composed between 1865 and 1868 and is his first truly successful composition. Before its premiere, Brahms was not highly thought of as a composer; after its premiere, he rapidly became one of the musical treasures of Viennese society. The impetus for its composition is often tied to the death of his mother in 1865, but sketches of the work date back to his time in the Robert Schumann household 10 years earlier.

There is no relationship between this creation and the Latin Mass; not only is the text in German, but the purpose was humanistic instead of liturgical. That does not prevent the many performances that take place today in churches and cathedrals. The overwhelming mood of the composition is indeed sacred and is treated as such by the musical community.

The original version was in six movements, with what became the fifth movement added soon after its original premiere. Since that movement is almost entirely a soprano solo, and does not lend itself well to transcription for trombone choir, I have chosen to arrange only the original six movements, with three of them excerpted.

I have also dedicated this arrangement to my late wife, Susan Kuzniewski, who died of Breast Cancer in 1996. It was the only major choral composition that we performed together on stage, as well as being a work that seems to describe her musical spirit perfectly. She was a wonderful singer, but much more devoted to her dutiès as mother of our three children. All four of us are severely diminished by her absence.

About the arranger

Bob Reifsnyder, a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy, has two degrees from Juilliard and a Doctorate from Indiana University. As a trombone teacher, he has served on the faculties of the Juilliard Pre-College Division, Indiana University, Indiana State University, and Ithaca College. As a professional trombonist, he has been a member of the West Point band, the National Orchestra of New York, the Spoleto Festival orchestra, Goldman Band, Ringling Brothers, the German orchestras of Bielefeld, Kaiserslautern and Solingen, Terre Haute Symphony, Tri-Cities Opera, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Manitowoc Symphony and the Wisconsin Philharmonic. As a gig musician, he has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, the orchestras of Wuppertal and Dusseldorf in Germany, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Syracuse Symphony, Binghamton Pops, Ithaca Opera, the Wisconsin orchestras of Sheboygan, Oshkosh, Green Bay and the Fox Valley Symphony.

Notes for this arrangement

1. Performance- These works are designed to add to the performance repertoire of the low brass choir.

2. Clef reading- These arrangements will hopefully also serve as advanced clef practice for trombonists playing the top parts. It is unfortunate that clef reading skills don't seem to be a priority for many contemporary trombone teachers, but the ability to transpose at sight remains a prerequisite for becoming an excellent professional musician. Please keep in mind that the first time one has to ask a conductor for a transposed part is likely the last time one will perform with that ensemble!

3. Scoring- There is some octave displacement to keep the individual parts within the comfortable range of the performing instruments and to establish the alto trombone as the highest voice.

4. Range- The basic range of these transcriptions is from high D to low B. For each of the three quartets, the ideal mix would be alto, .525 bore tenor, .547 bore tenor and bass trombone.

5. Breathing- There are no breath marks in these transcriptions; that is perhaps the most personal decision a brass player ever makes. There are, however, notes left out in extended passages that would be otherwise impossible to perform well, hopefully in the most appropriate locations.

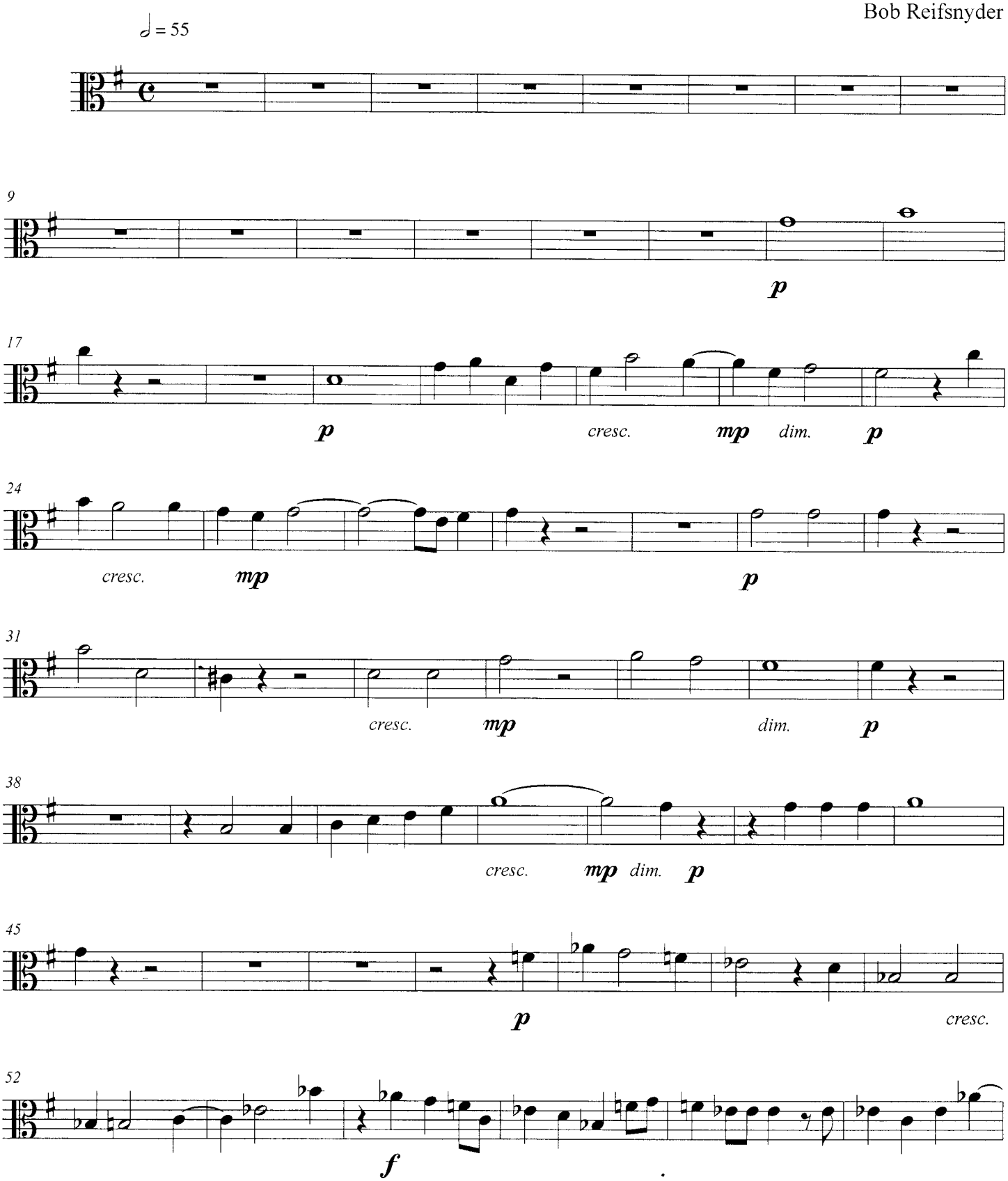
Trombone 7

"Selig sind, die da Lied tragen"

from " A German Requiem"

Brahms

Bob Reifsnyder



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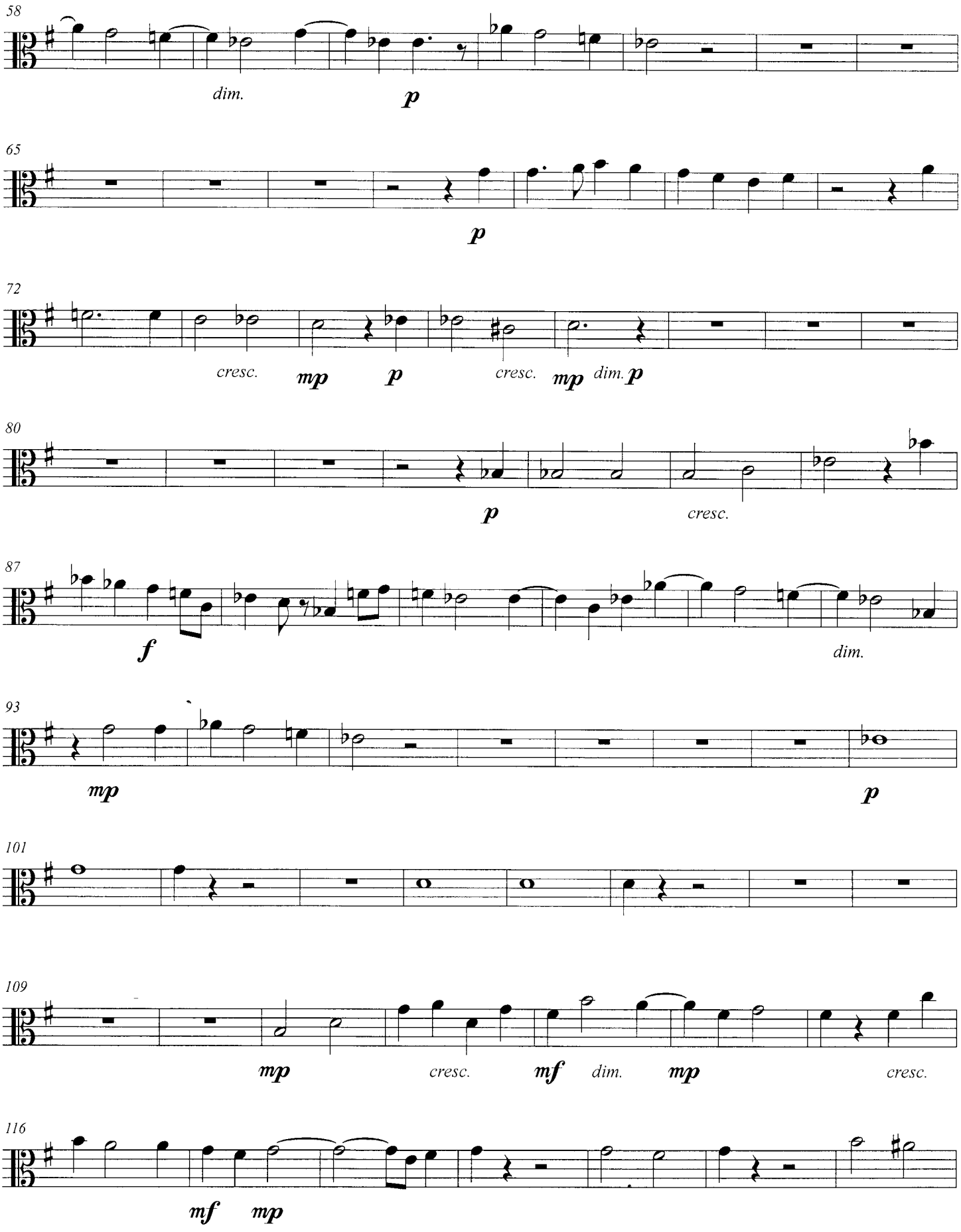
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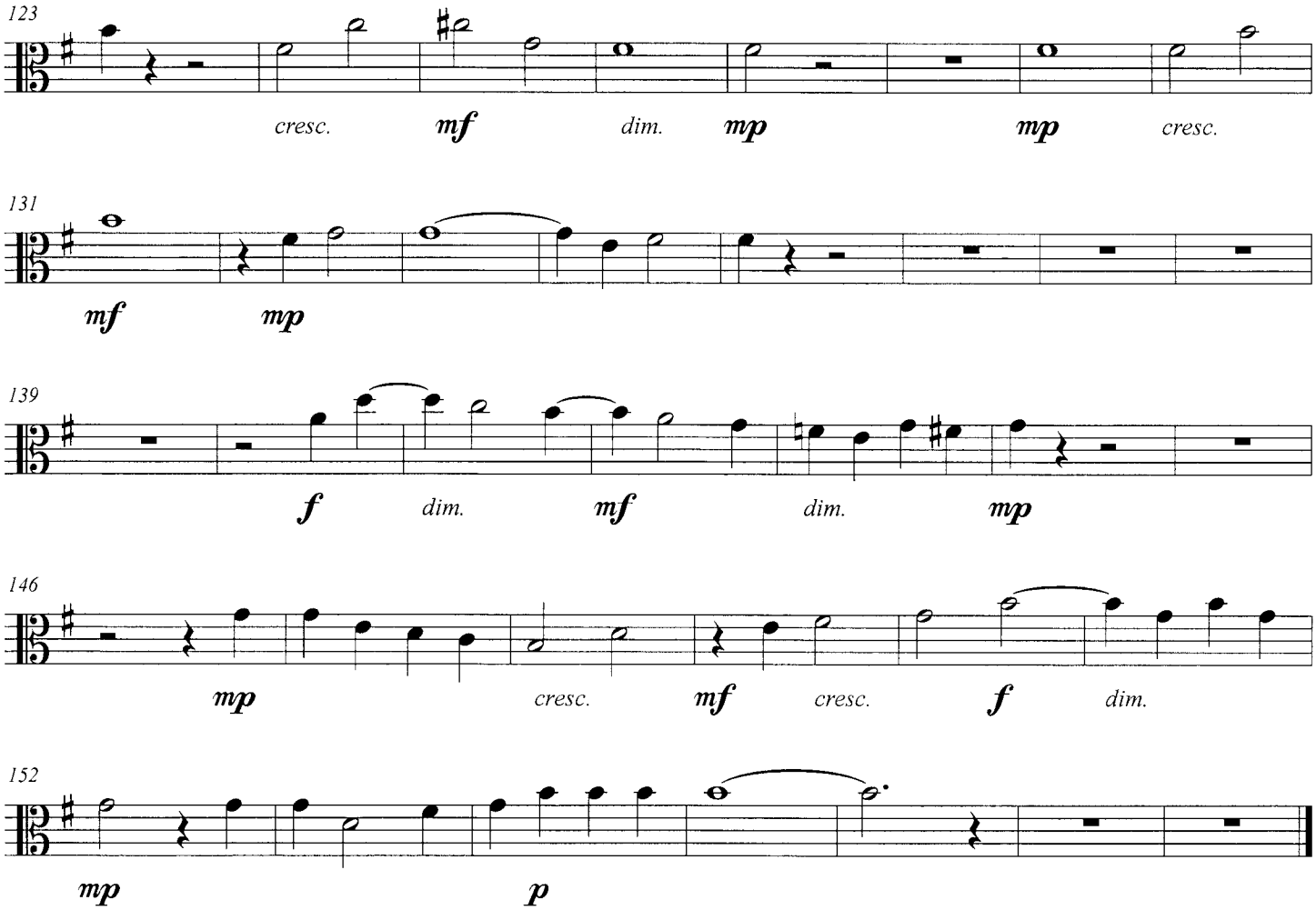
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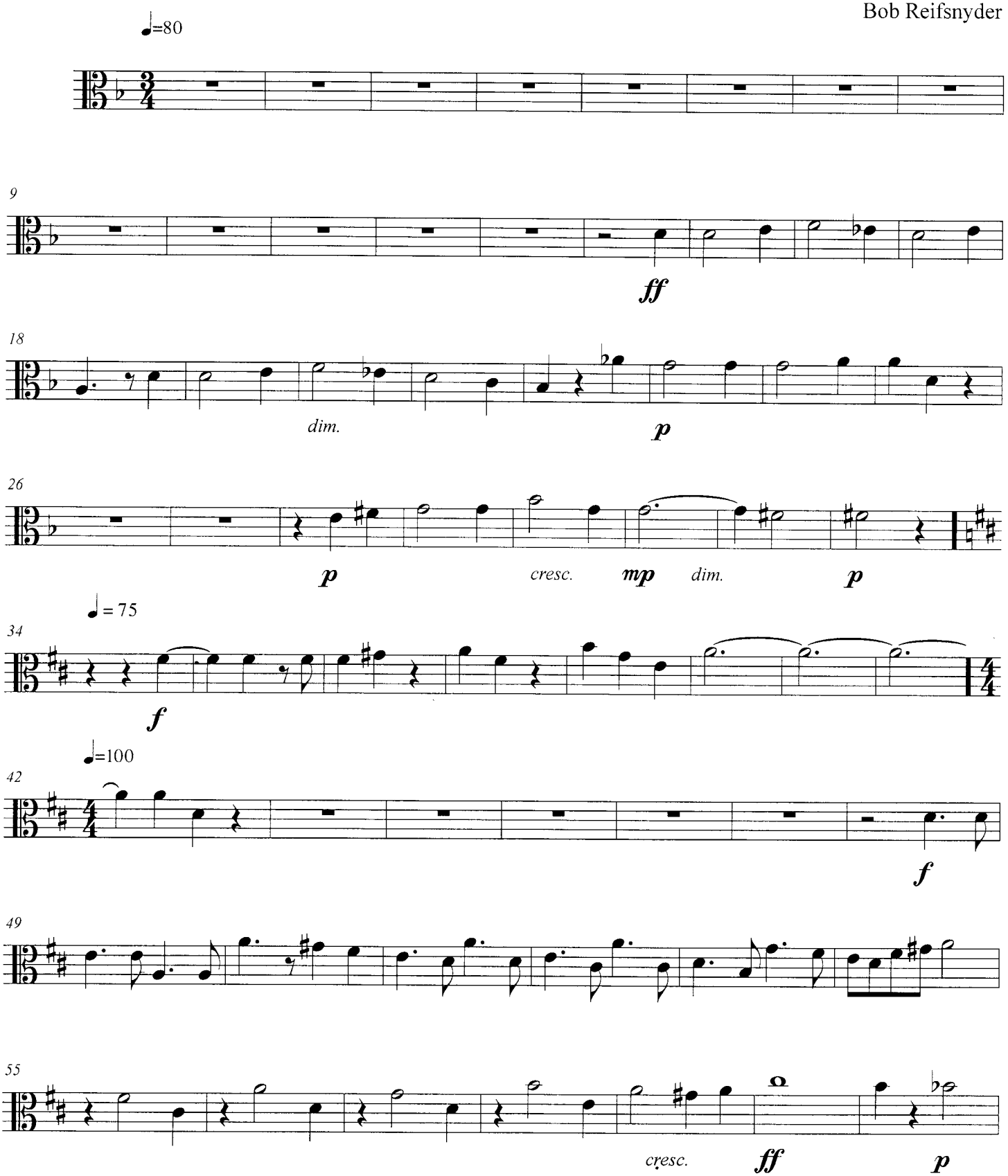
Trombone 7

Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras (excerpt)

from the "German Requiem"

Brahms

Bob Reifsnyder



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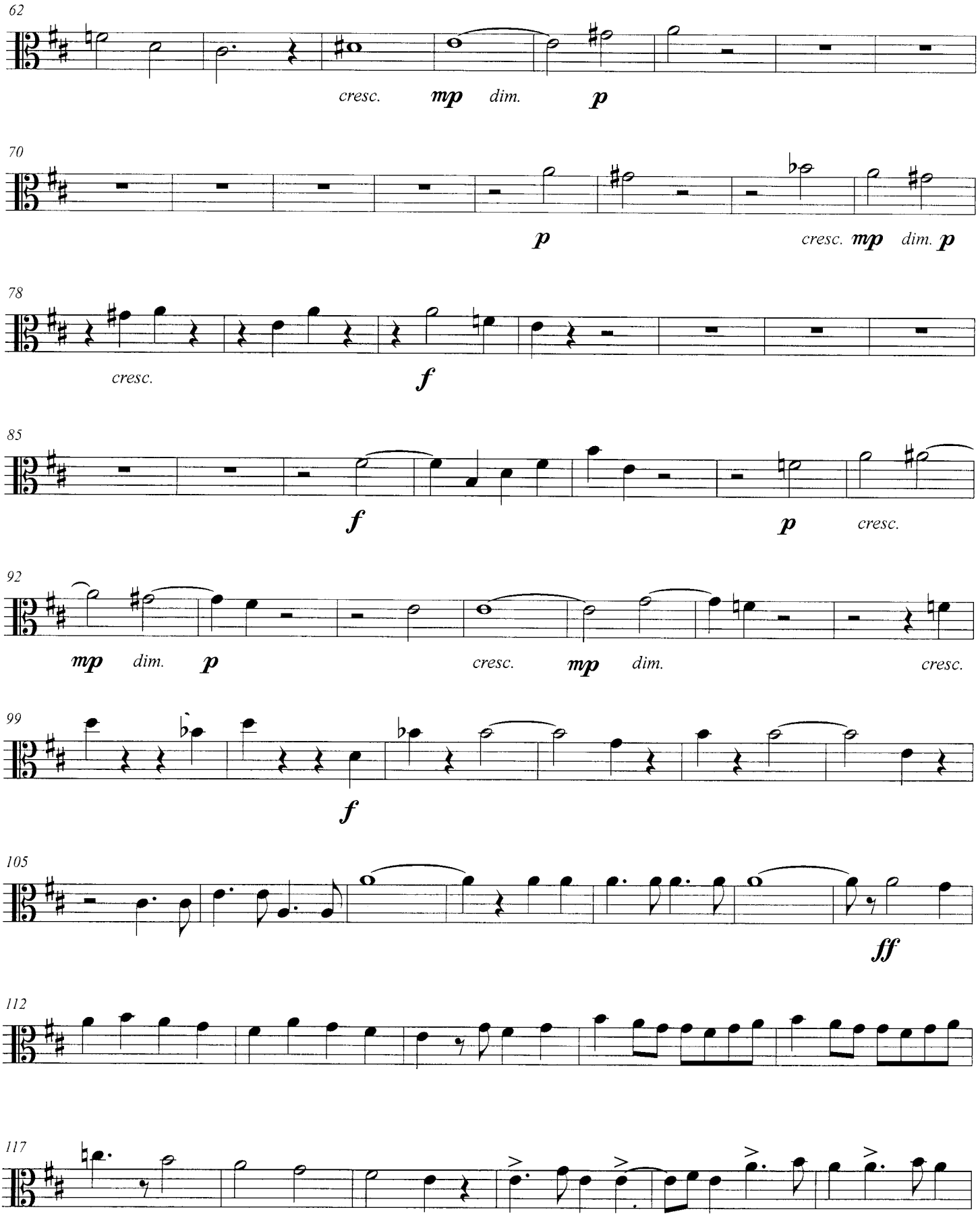
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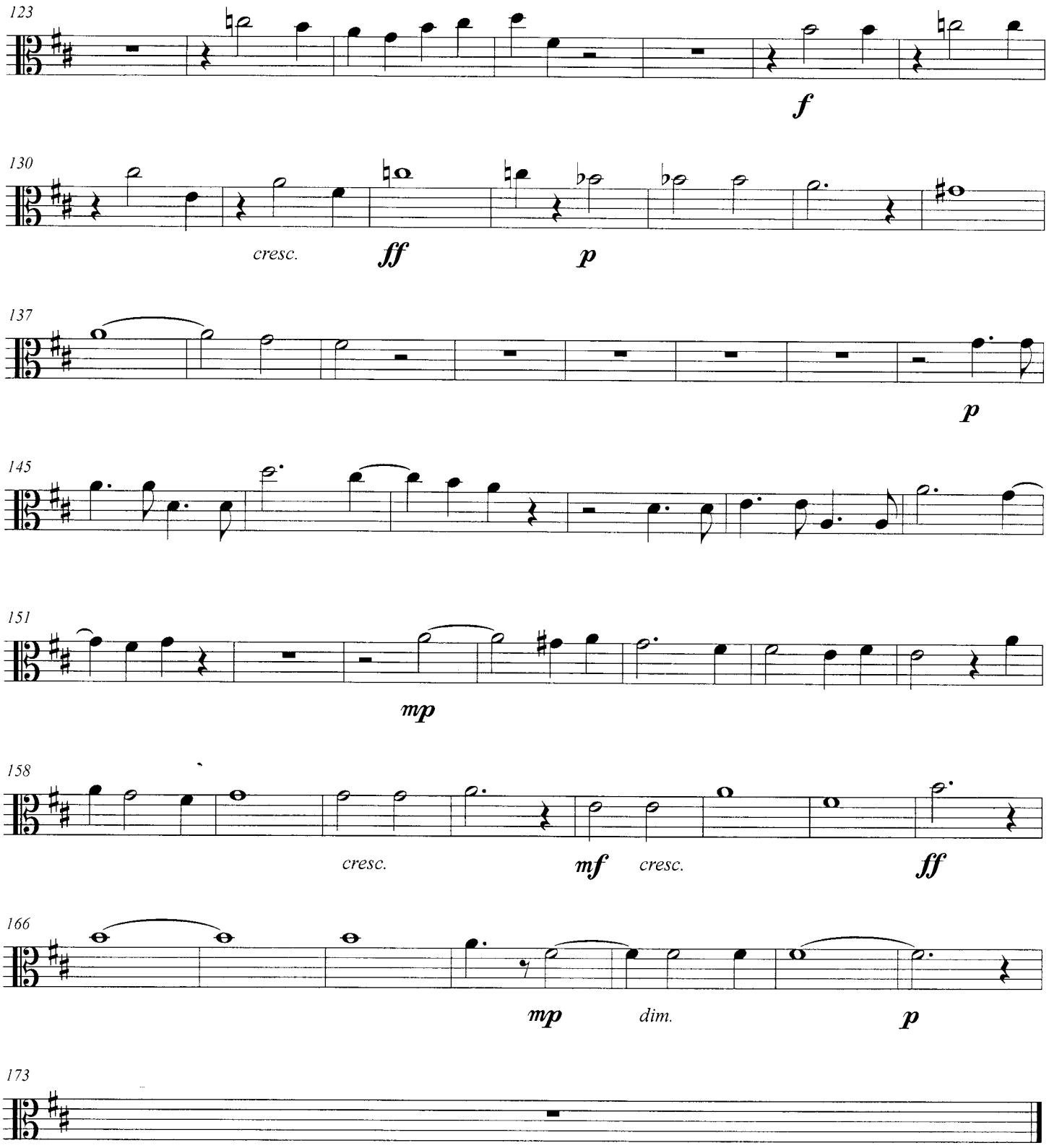
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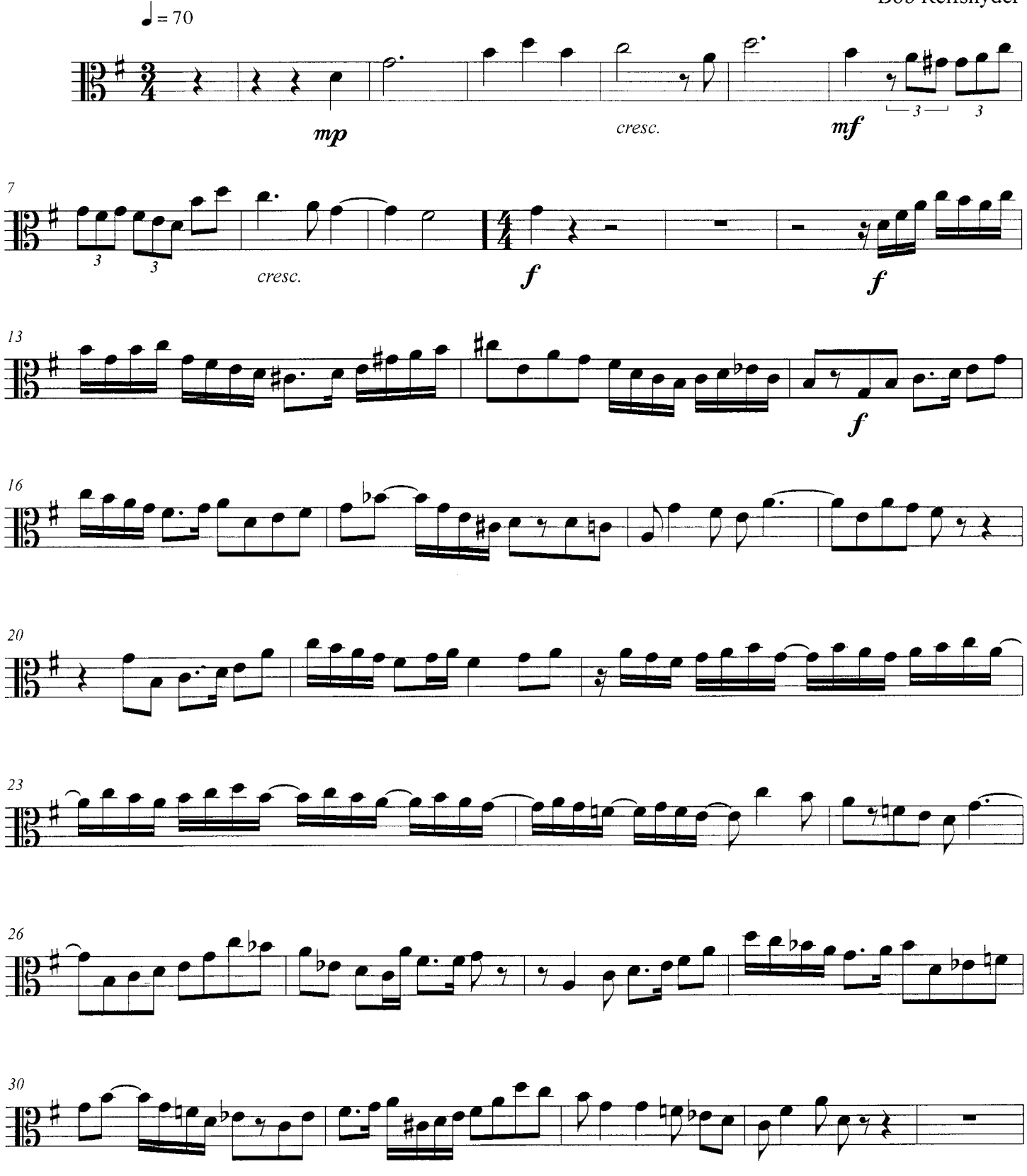
Trombone 7

"Herr, lehre doch mich (excerpt)

from the "German Requiem"

Brahms

Bob Reifsnyder



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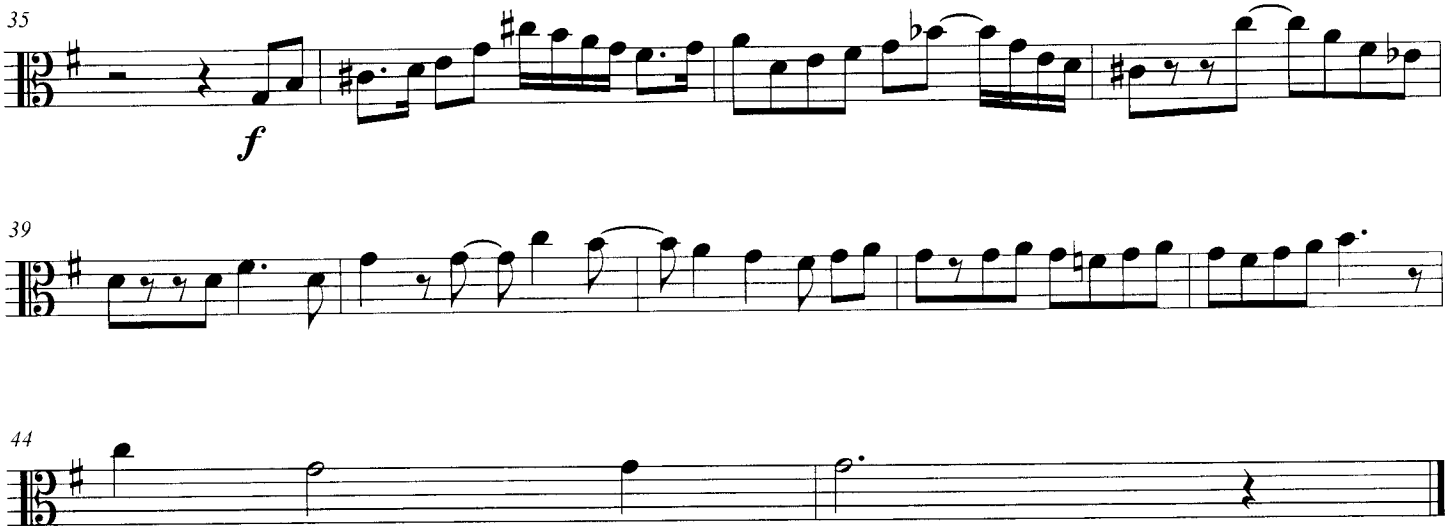
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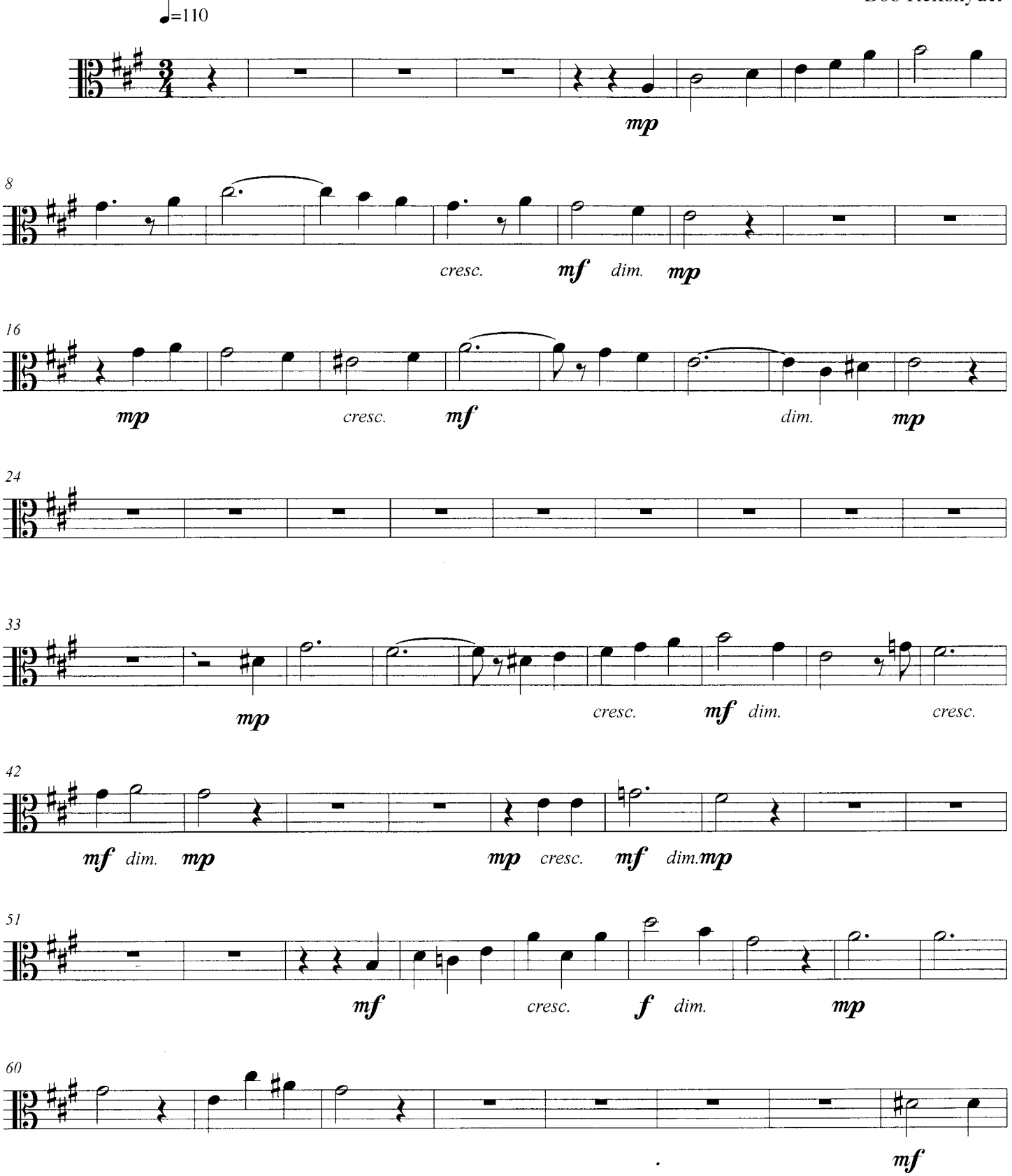
Trombone 7

"Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen"

from the "German Requiem"

Brahms

Bob Reifsnyder



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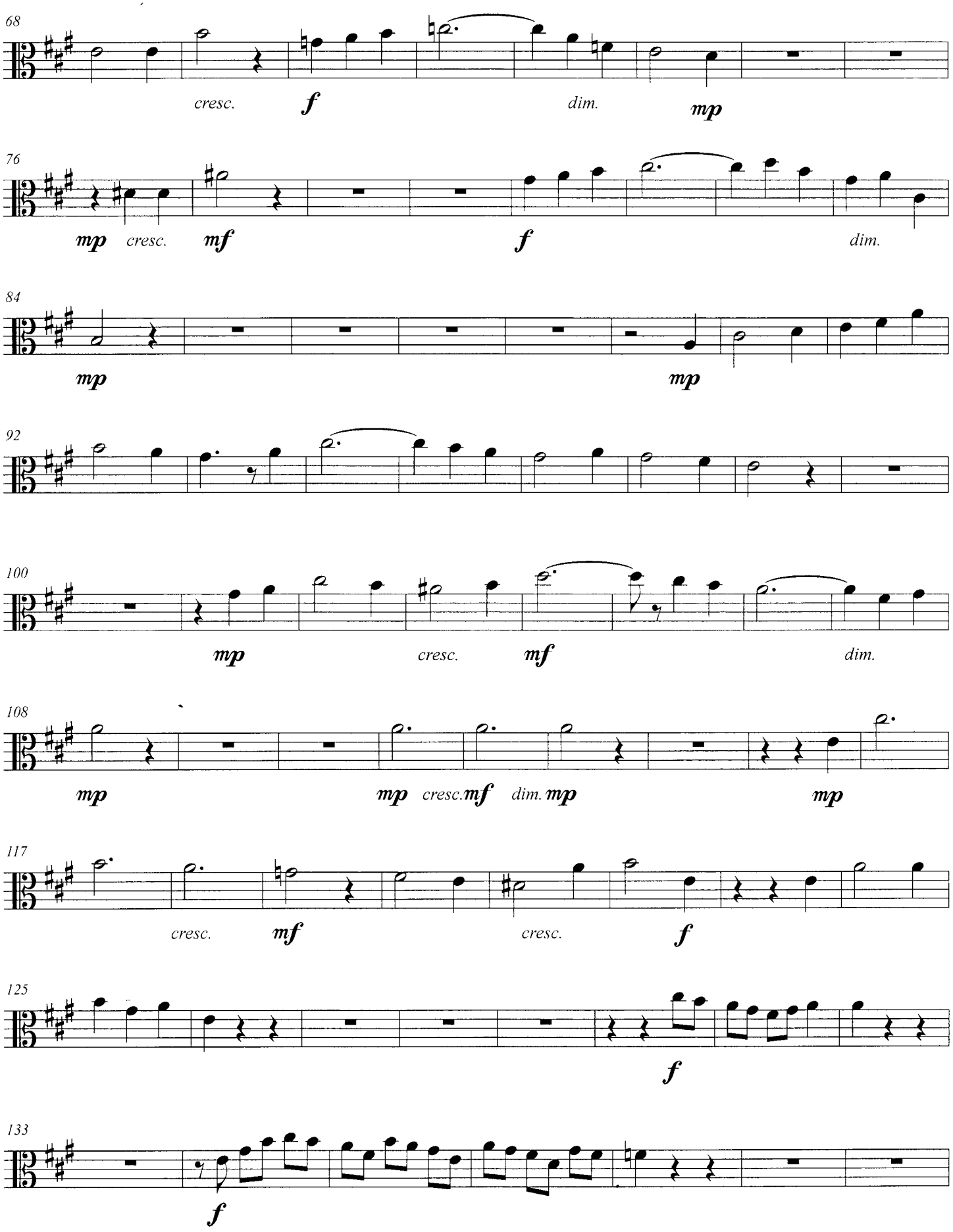
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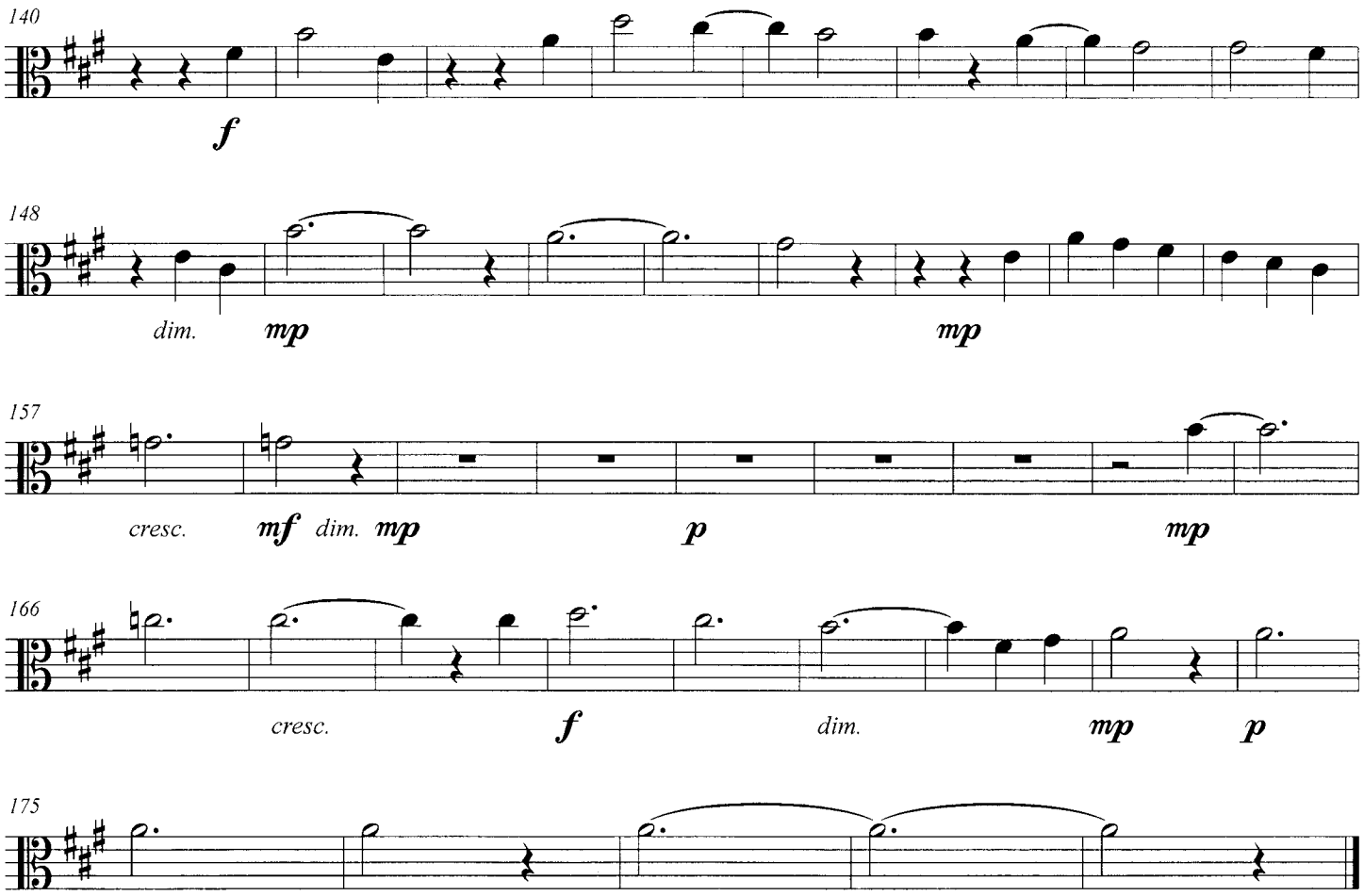
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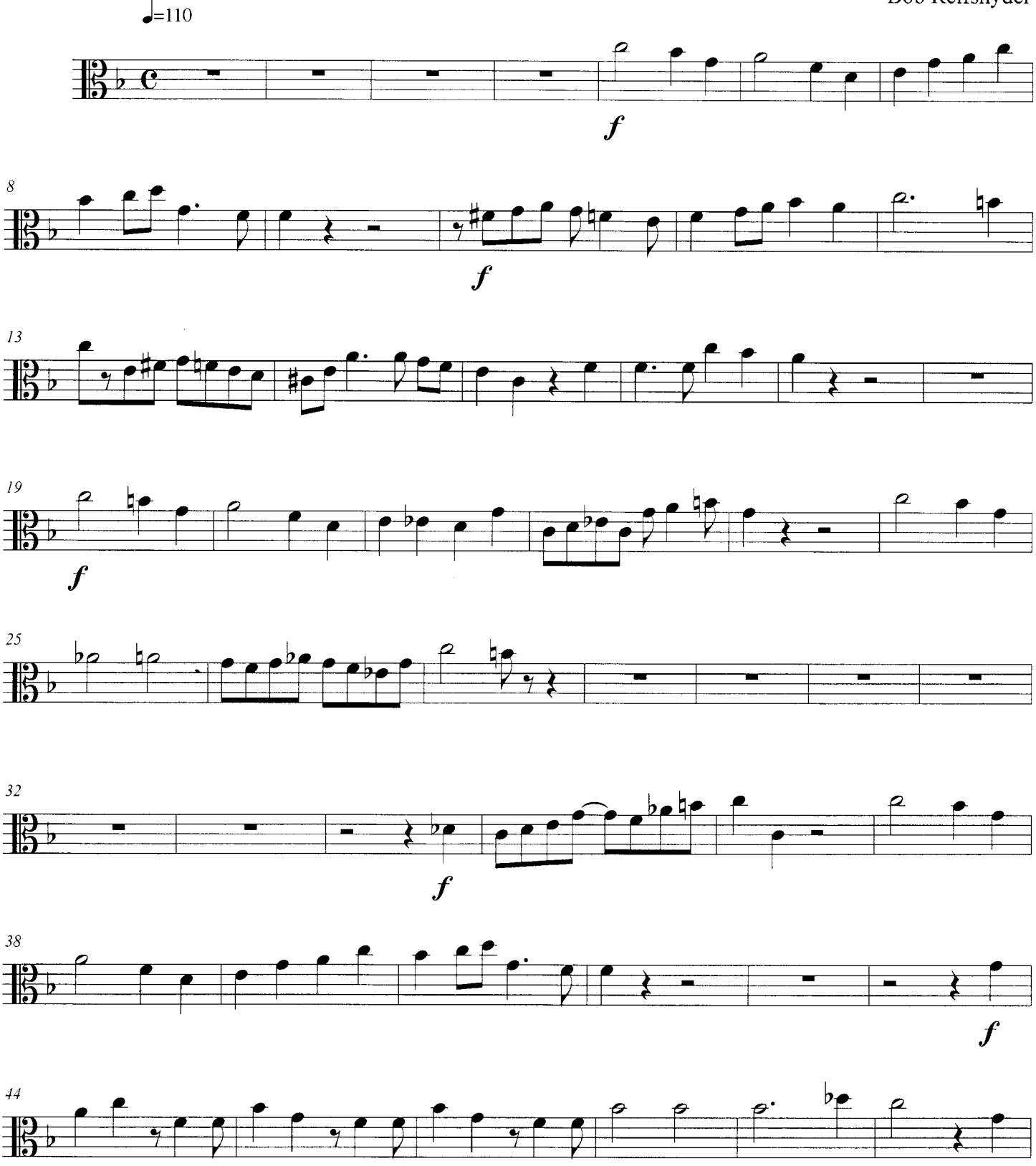
Trombone 7

"Denn wir haben die" (excerpt)

from the "German Requiem"

Brahms

Bob Reifsnyder



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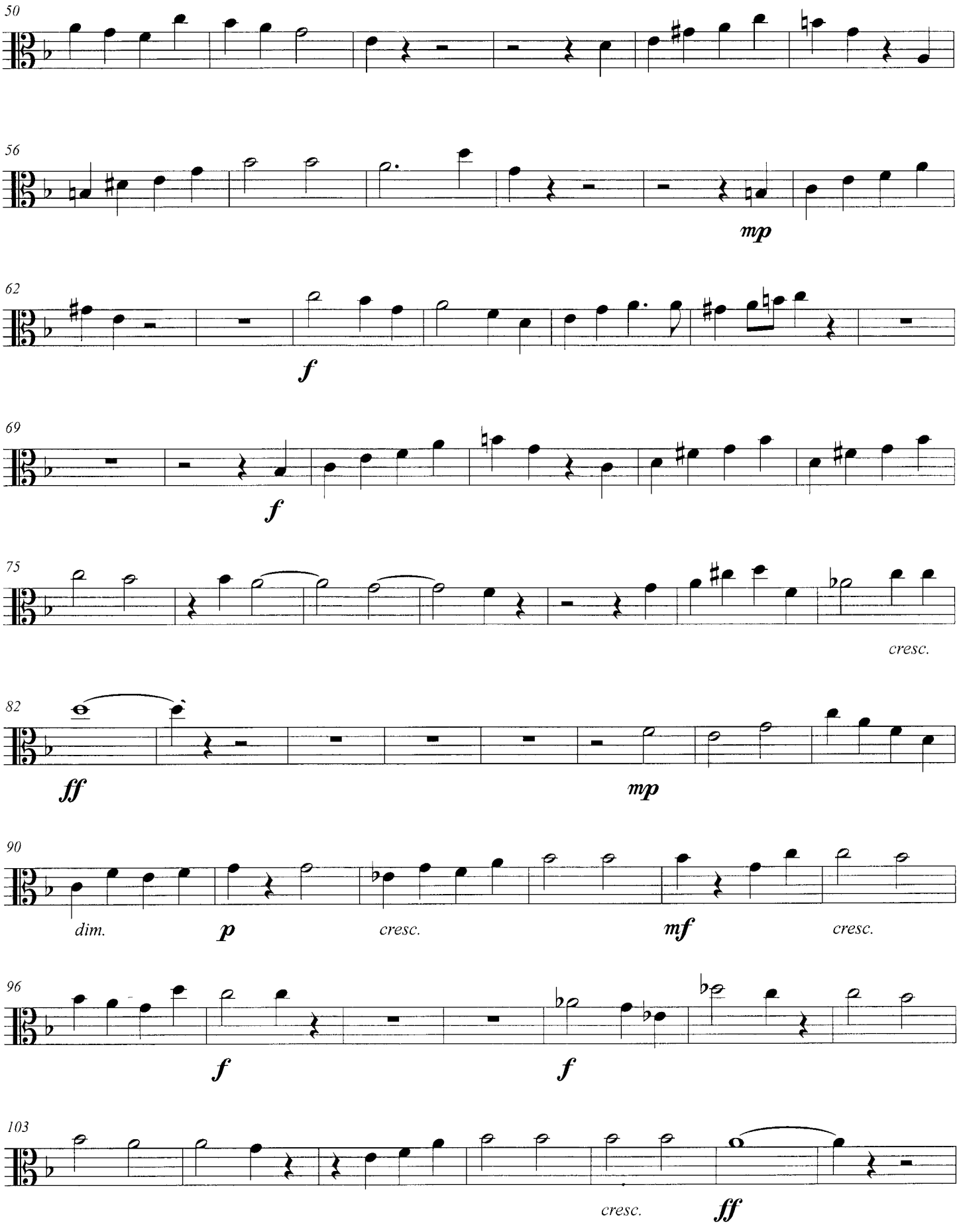
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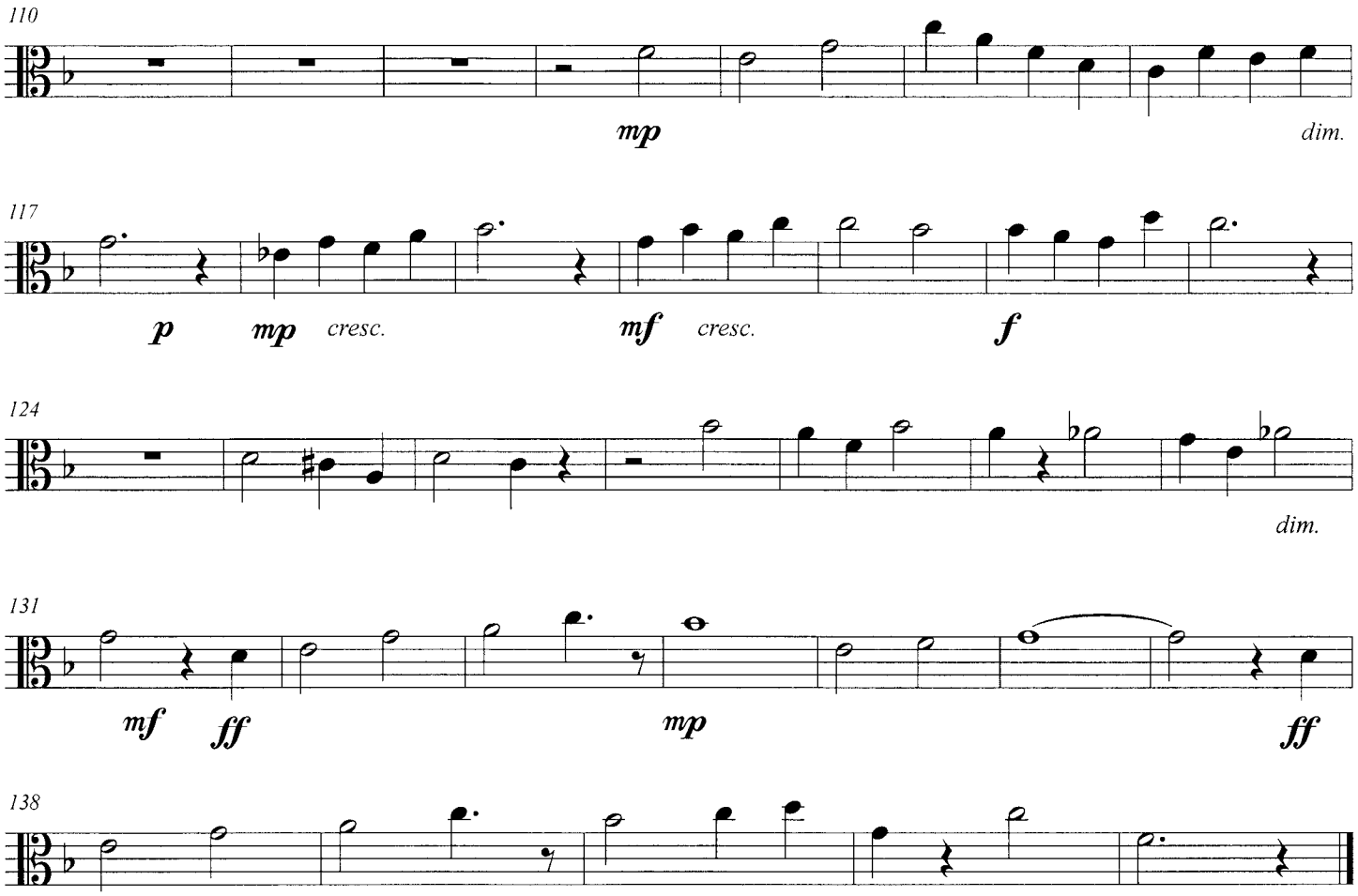
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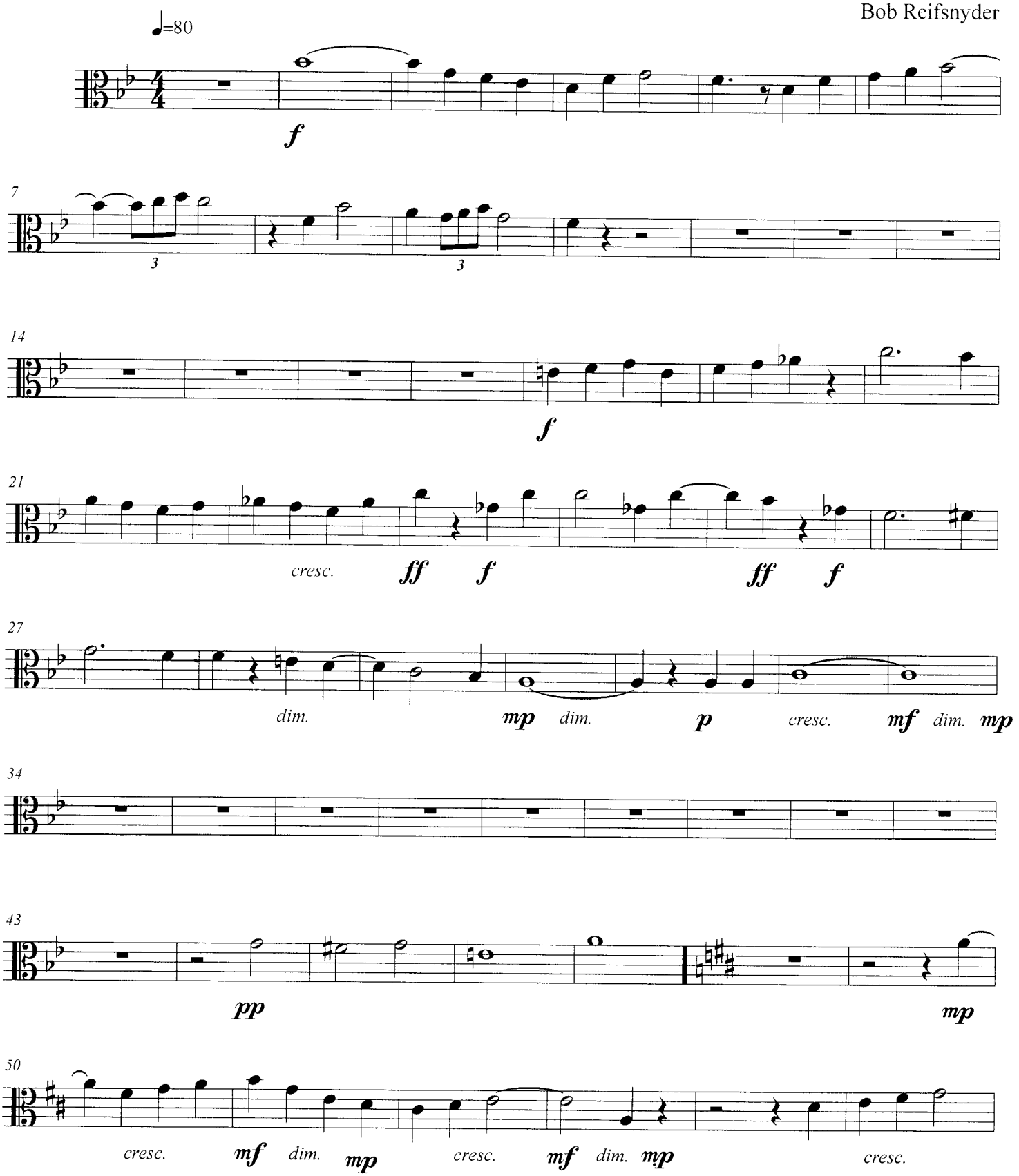
Trombone 7

Selig sind die Toten

from the "German Requiem"

Brahms

Bob Reifsnyder



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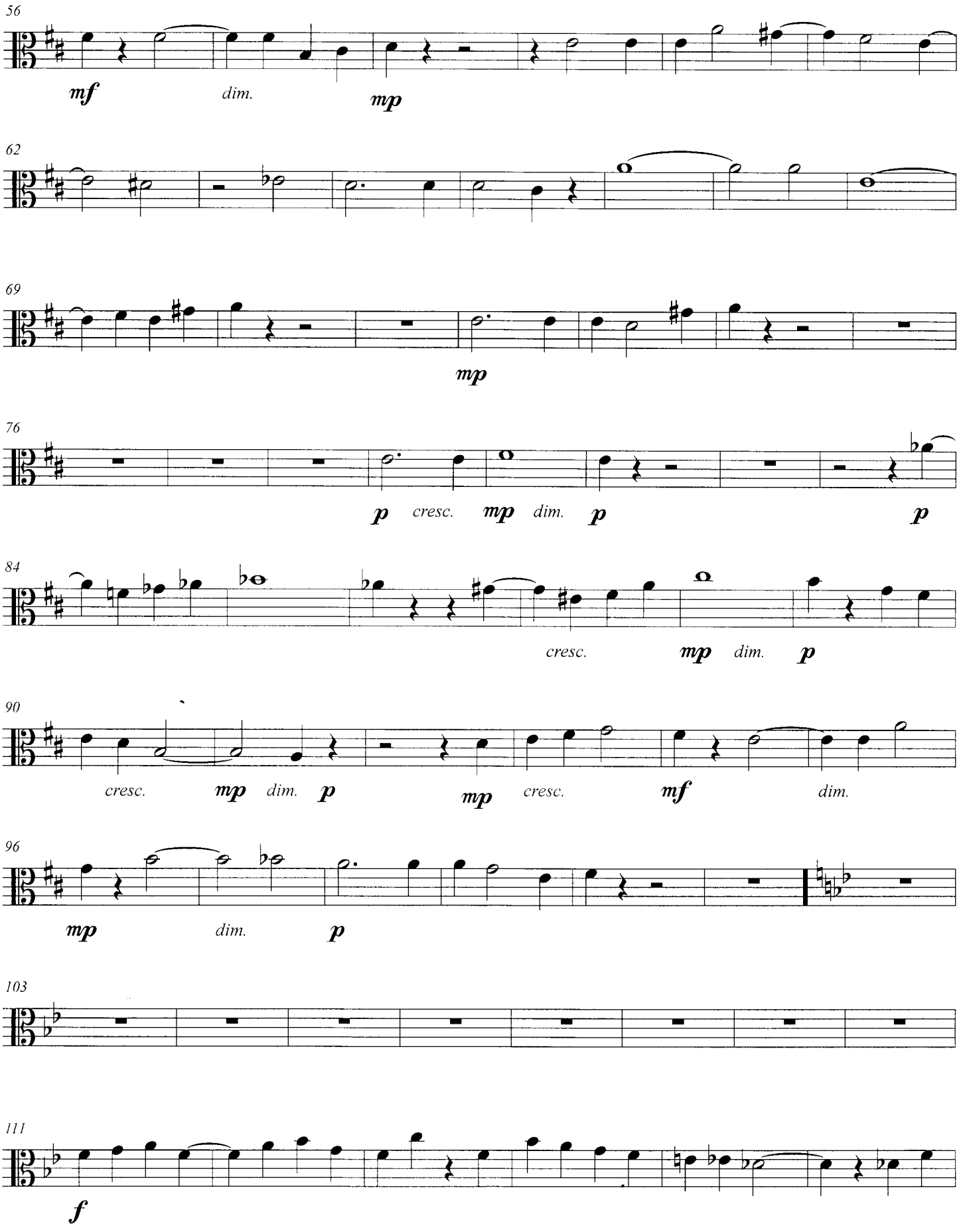
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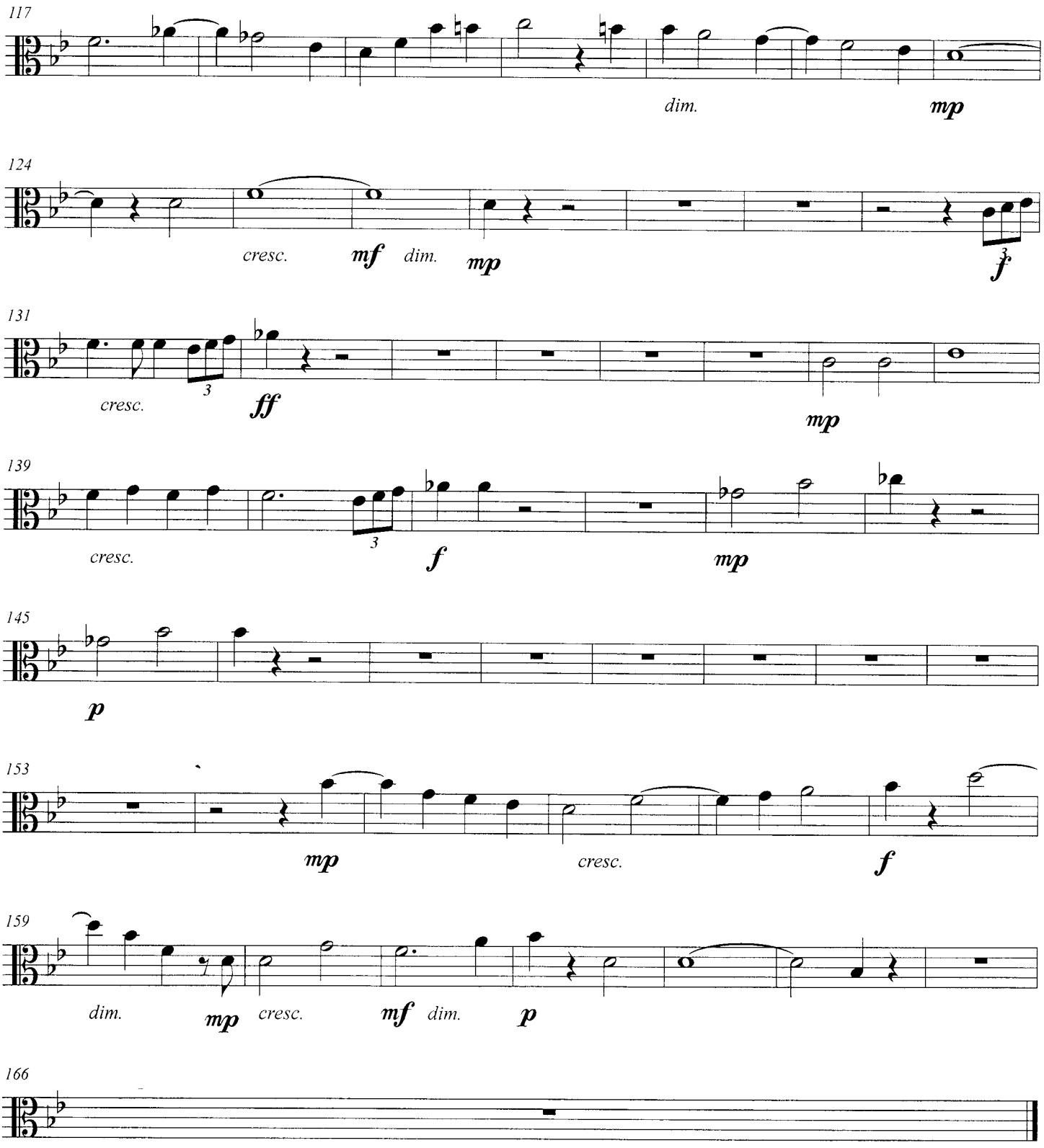
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