John Carbon

Tarantulatella

for piano

JC COLLECTIONS
The Music of American Composer **John Carbon**

Tarantulatella was composed in 2005. Some have speculated that the Italian Tarantella was originally inspired by a dance that originated around the town of of Taranto, Italy, in the 16th century. There was a plague of tarantulas. Victims, supposedly bitten by the spiders, went into a trance, and could only be cured by the wild dance that became known as the Tarantella.

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Born in Chicago in 1951, John Carbon studied composition at Rice University and at the University of California at Santa Barbara, where his teachers were Thea Musgrave, Paul Cooper, and Peter Racine Fricker. He is now Professor of Music at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Carbon's music--which has been gaining prominence in the past few years due to an increasing number of high-profile performances and recordings--includes three operas, *Marie Laveau*, *Benjamin*, and *Out of this World,* along with many choral, orchestral, vocal, and chamber works.

Carbon has a special flair for the virtuosity and drama needed for concertos, and has completed works in this genre for clarinet, violin, piano, and most recently double bass. Mr. Carbon's work has been performed in New York at Merkin Concert Hall, Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher and Alice Tully Halls at Lincoln Center, Boston's Symphony Hall, and Prague's Smetana Hall. Premieres of Carbon works have been presented by the New York Chamber Symphony, the Czech Radio Orchestra, and the Alaria Chamber Ensemble of New York. His *Rhapsody for Clarinet and Orchestra* (premiered under Gerard Schwarz at Avery Fisher Hall in November of 1997) was hailed by New York Times critic Allen Kozinn for "its demandingly agile clarinet line that wove its way through a variegated orchestral fabric .... rich in coloristic effects of the sort that create a sense of depth rather than artificial glitter."

Recordings of Carbon's music include his *Violin Concerto*, released on *Three American Concertos* (MMC 2059), performed by Violinist Peter Zazofsky with Gerhardt Zimmermann conducting the Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra. *Fanfare* critic Robert Maxham praised the concerto for the "...finale's dazzling kinetic virtuosity," and in *American Record Guide* Bill Faucett commented on the concerto's "....many moments of genuine beauty..." Also becoming well known is the *Clarinet Concerto*, in a spectacular and highly-acclaimed performance with soloist Richard Stoltzman on MMC 2031 with the Warsaw Philharmonic, and *Notturno* for Trumpet, Harp, and Strings, performed by Gerard Schwarz (with Jeff Silberschlag on trumpet) and the Seattle Symphony on *Delos.* (New Yorkers had a chance to hear *Notturno* live when it was performed by George Manahan leading the New York Chamber Symphony in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in April, 1999). Other recordings include two orchestral works--*Hommage à Trois*, played by the Slovak Radio Symphony under Szymon Kawalla on Vienna Modern Masters 3011, and *Inner Voices* on MMC 2003 with the Warsaw Philharmonic under Robert Black--and a chamber work for flute and guitar, *Paseos*, on CGS 1024223.

Performances have included several premieres by Ensemble Giverny, with members of the Portland Symphony Orchestra, at the Portland Art Museum, as part of the release of a widely broadcast compact disc recording released by Moonbridge Recordings, *Waterlilies; Musical Visions of Monet*, in conjunction with the opening of the museum's exhibit centering on the late paintings of Monet. The much-acclaimed chamber music group Alaria, with guest clarinetist Doris Hall-Gulati, performed *Dreamspiral* by Mr. Carbon in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 1999 as part of their chamber music series. Premieres have included those by the Philadelphia Trio in Weiss Center for the Performing Arts at Bucknell University of *Do Not Go Gentle* and a new chamber music setting of arias from the composer's opera *Benjamin* in Merkin Concert Hall, New York City. Most recently, performances have included those by the Philadelphia-based Network for New Music, Trio Fedele, cellist Stephen Balderston, pianist Edith Orloff, and an appointment as American composer in residence at the 2nd Annual Santa Barbara Chamber Music Festival in June, 2004.

In July, 2002, MMC Recordings released *John Carbon*, a recording of the composer's *Piano Concerto, Rasgos, Rhapsody for Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra and Ghost Town Sketches,* with conductors Vladmír Valék, Maron Alsop, Gerard Schwarz and David Stock conducting the Czech Radio Orchestra, Concordia Orchestra of New York City, the New York Chamber Symphony, and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, with soloists pianist William Koseluk, violinist Claire Chan, clarinetist Doris Hall-Gulati, and members of the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. In 2005-2006 recording releases included *Rasgos,* for violin, harp and winds, performed by Claire Chan with Concordia Orchestra, conducted by Maron Alsop and the premiere recording of *Endangered Species*, a new double bass concerto commissioned by bassist Richard Fredrickson for an MMC release. This work was recorded by the Slovak Radio Orchestra in Bratislava, Slovakia, in November, 2002. Performances in 2006 included a fully staged production of *Benjamin*, the composer's comic opera with libretto by Sarah White at Franklin & Marshall College as part of the National 300th Celebration. A live-performance version of this performance was released by Zimbel Recordings in November, 2007.

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Tarantulatella

for piano solo

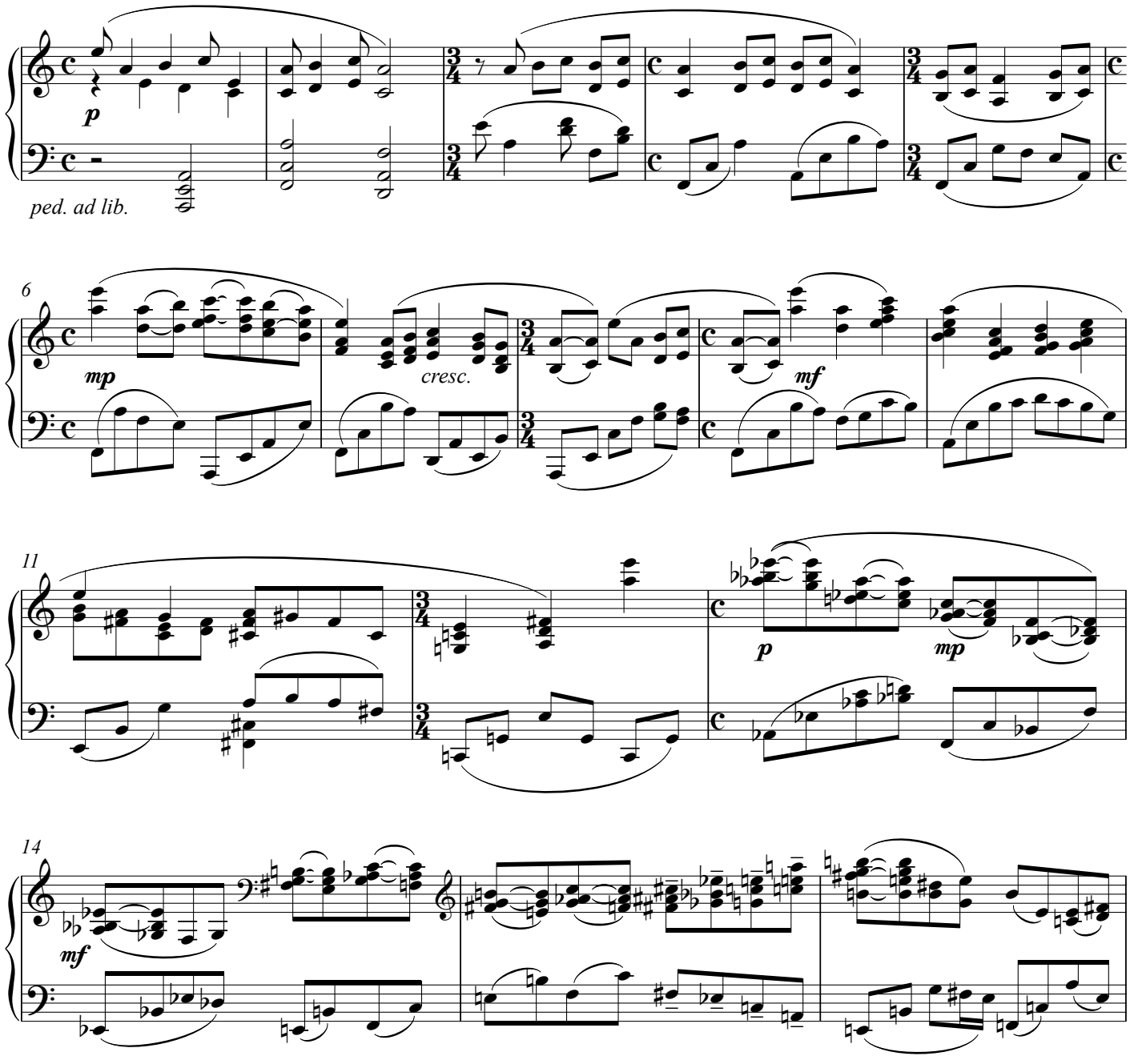
Legend states that between the 15th and 17th centuries an epidemic of tarantism swept through the town of Taranto in southern Italy. This was as a result of being bit by the poisonous tarantula spider. The victim, which is referred to as the tarantata, was almost always a woman but never a high ranking lady or one of an aristocratic upbringing. Once bitten the tarantata would fall into a trance that could only be cured by frenzied dancing. People would surround the victim while musicians would play mandolins, guitars and tambourines in search of the correct rhythm. Each beat would have a different effect on the tarantata causing various movements and gestures. Once the correct rhythm was found it was almost certain that the tarantata was cured. -Anthony Parente

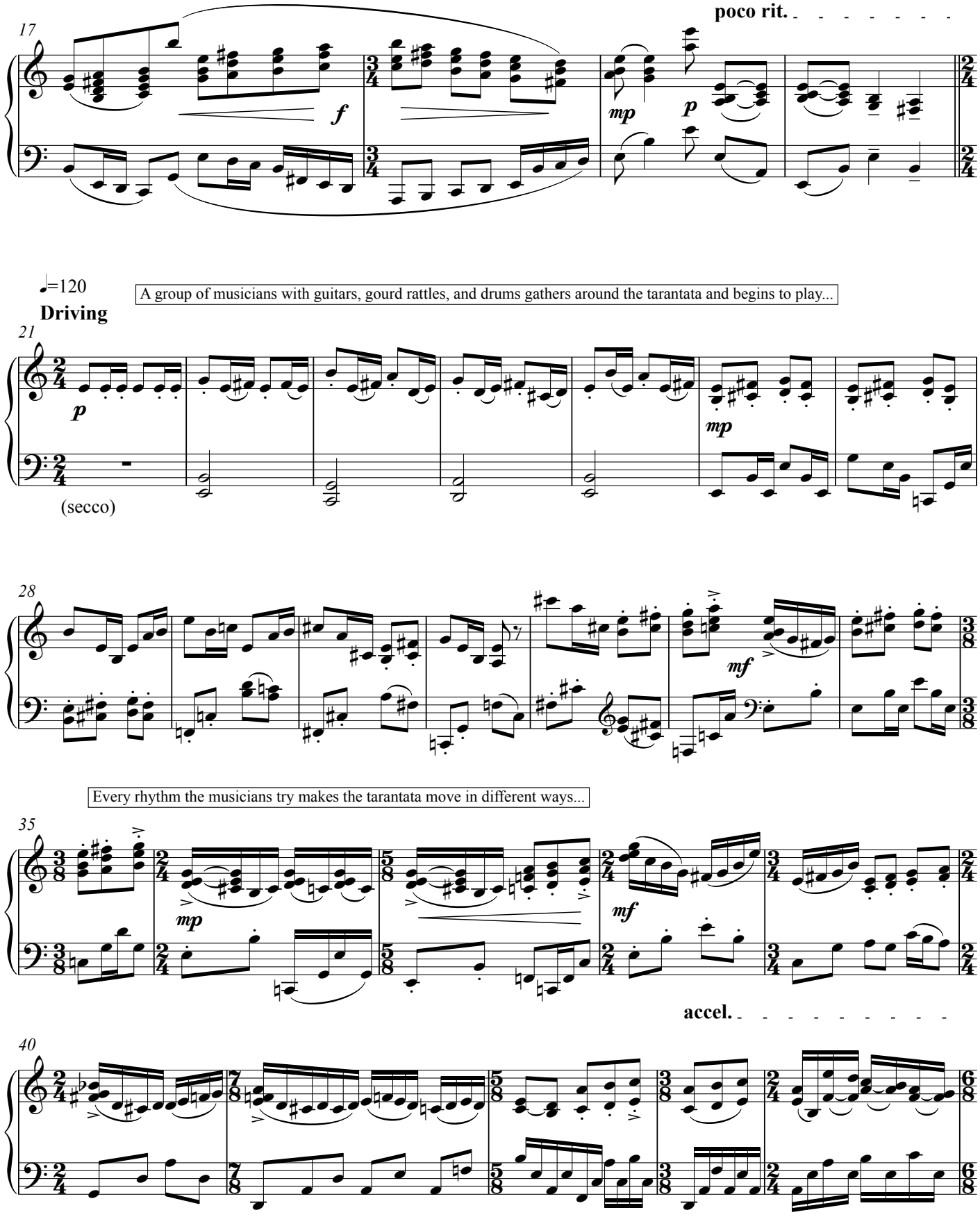
♩=72

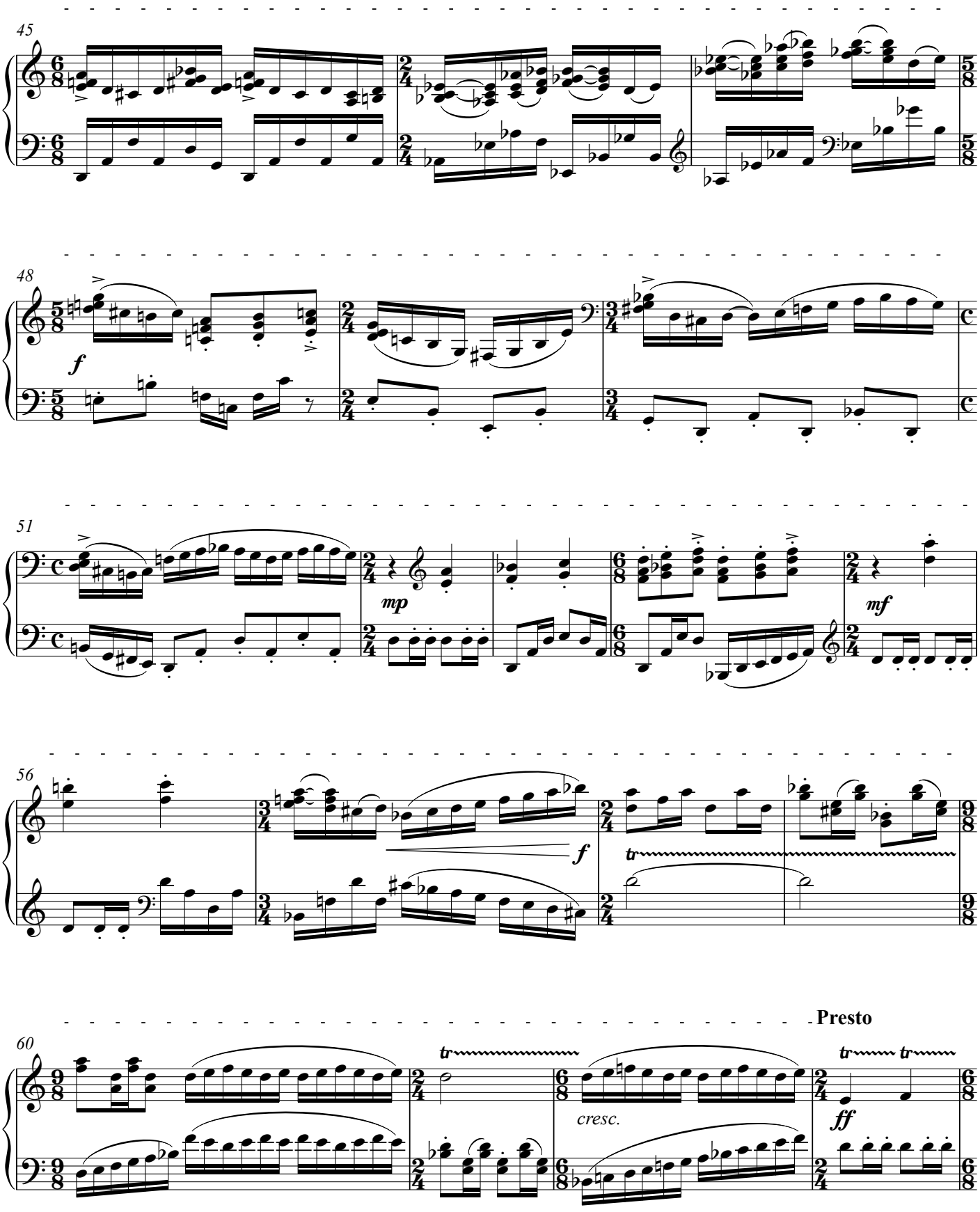
Somewhat sadly

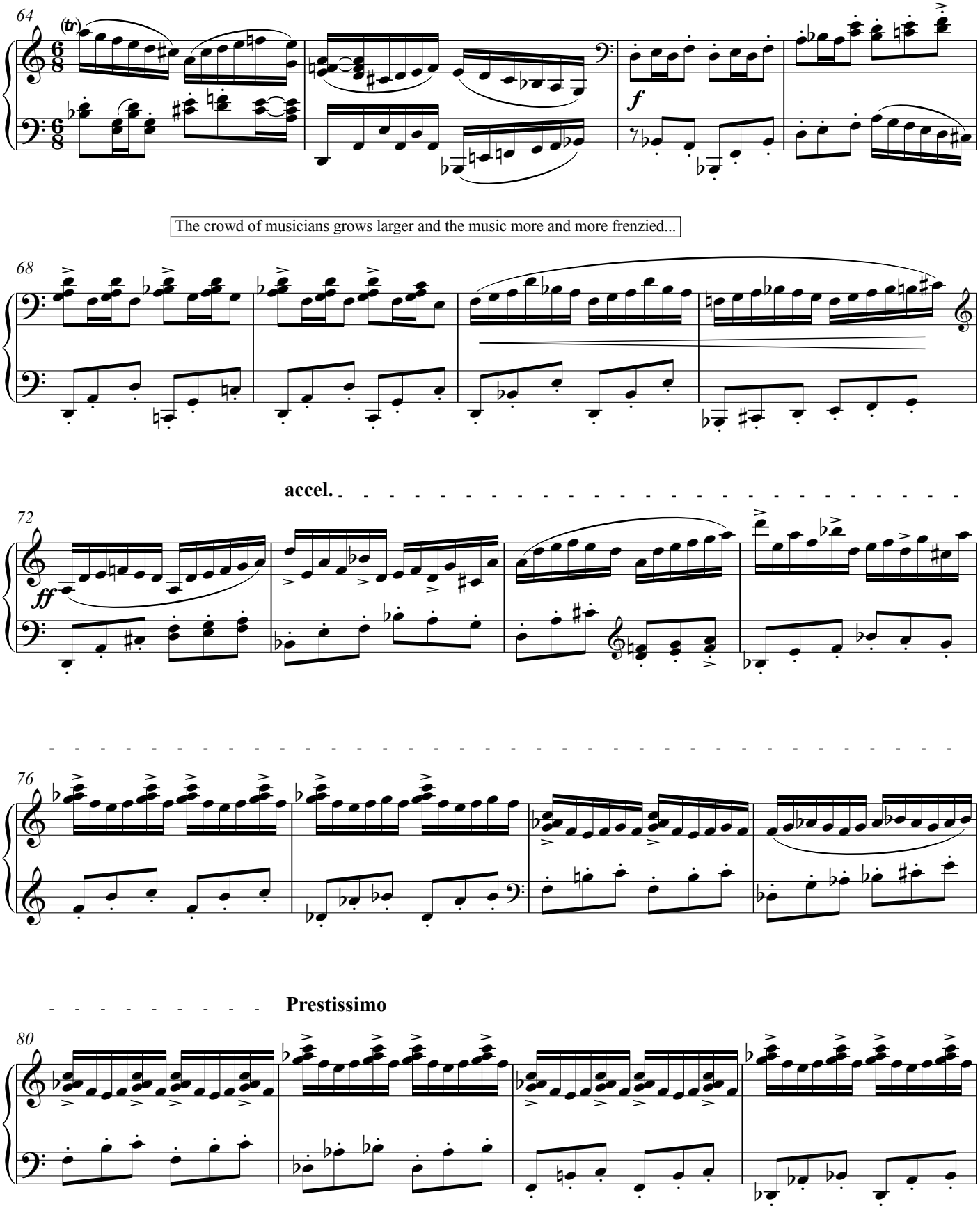
A Navajo tarantata, is seen in a trance, sitting in the afternoon sun, outside Pueblo San Ildefonso, New Mexico...

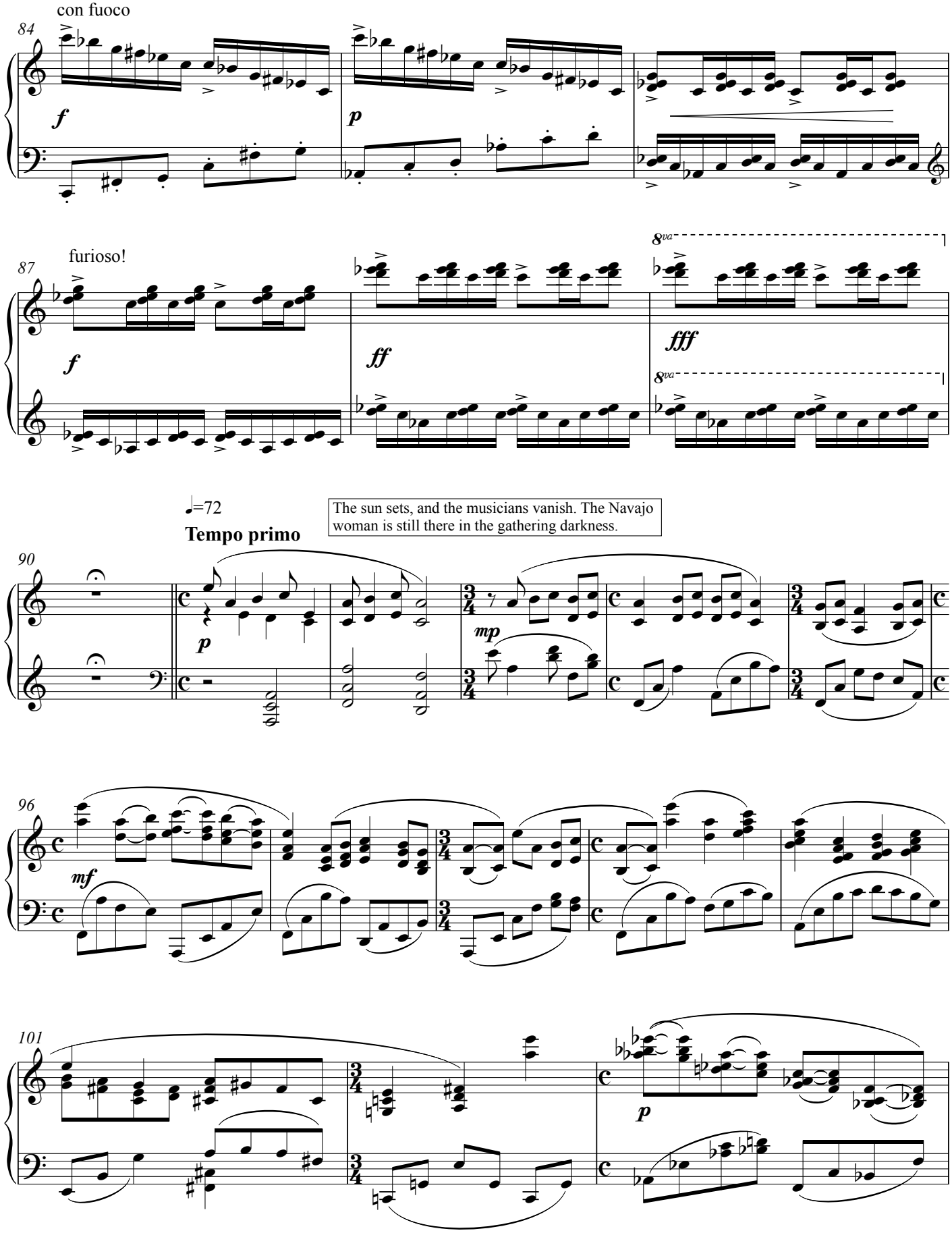
John Carbon (1951-)

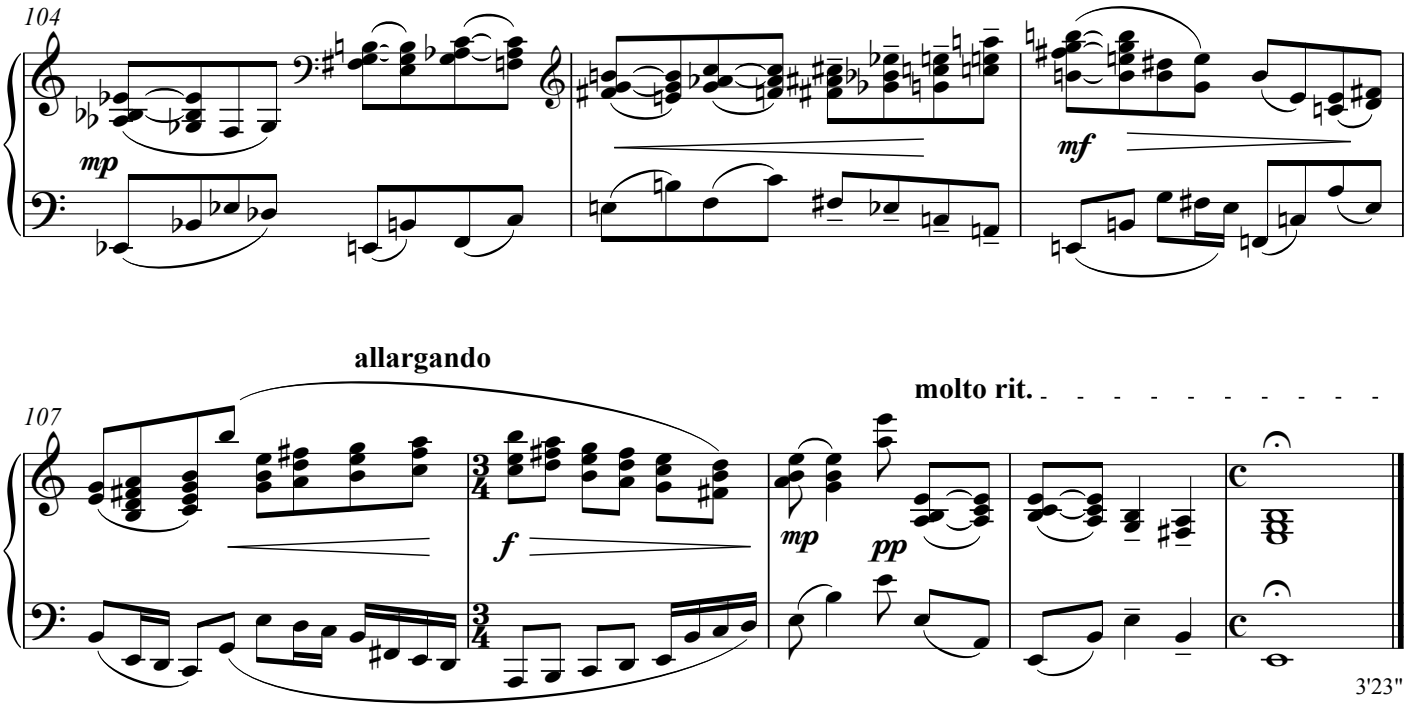



poco rit.
17
f
mp
p
♩=120
Driving
A group of musicians with guitars, gourd rattles, and drums gathers around the tarantata and begins to play...
21
p
mp
(secco)
28
mf
Every rhythm the musicians try makes the tarantata move in different ways...
35
mp
mf
accel.
40


45
48
f
51
mp
mf
56
f
tr
Presto
60
tr
cresc.
ff


64
(tr)
f
The crowd of musicians grows larger and the music more and more frenzied...
68
accel.
72
ff
76
Prestissimo
80


con fuoco
84
f
p
furioso!
87
f
ff
8va
fff
8va
♩=72
Tempo primo
The sun sets, and the musicians vanish. The Navajo woman is still there in the gathering darkness.
90
p
mp
96
mf
101
p


104
mp
mf
allargando
107
f
mp
pp
molto rit.
3'23"