BETWEEN THE STAFFS

The Practical Methodology of Score Study for Melodic Instrumentalists

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Abstract

This study examines how non-pianist performers can engage with scores that include a piano part. It offers both technical strategies and artistic approaches for effective collaborative preparation. The discussion begins with foundational considerations and presents a range of representative examples. This research aims to empower melodic instrumentalists to study their scores more independently and interpretively, thereby fostering a richer connection with the repertoire.

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- # Introduction

Music is inherently a social activity. When more than one performer is involved in a piece, communication between performers becomes essential. In order to communicate effectively, each performer must understand what the other is doing. Otherwise, it is akin to speaking different languages without mutual comprehension. Although each performer's expressive role may differ, the musical "language" they use must be unified.

Through the preparation of numerous works with a variety of musicians, I have come to recognize score study as a critical and independent aspect of musical development. Wind and string players, in particular, must be aware of what is occurring in the other part(s). This skillset becomes even more important when musicians rehearse from individual parts rather than from the full score. Listening to recordings while following the score can be helpful, but it is not sufficient for understanding. There are specific methods that can enhance the process of score study.

Nonetheless, it is understandable why score study can be challenging. The piano part typically contains a greater density of notes compared to the solo instrument, often combining bass lines, accompaniment figures, and melodic material. For non-pianists, it can be not easy to discern which elements are essential. Often, instrumentalists work diligently to prepare their own parts in isolation and are ready to present them expressively. However, during rehearsal with the pianist, the unexpected complexity or prominence of the piano part can hinder their ability to fully realize their interpretation. This can lead to either disregarding the piano part or becoming overly dependent on it. Both issues can be addressed through a more thorough and informed score study.

To assist with this unique issue in collaborative work, I present this thesis to act as a guide for score study to advance ensemble skills. It is intended for intermediate-level melodic instrumentalists who are studying solo repertoire with piano. As repertoire becomes more complex and interdependent, the need for deeper engagement with the score increases. Most existing research on score study is framed from the perspective of conductors or composers, often focusing on large ensembles (Battisti & Garofalo, 2000;

Colson, 2015; Golan, 2020). Yet, studying the piano part within solo repertoire presents a distinct set of considerations. Through this guide, melodic instrumentalists will be better equipped to anticipate the broader musical context and shape more cohesive and expressive performances.

- ## Acknowledgement

Many people gave invaluable help to me in writing this thesis. I thank Dr. David Riley, who sincerely taught me and encouraged me to be a collaborative pianist. I also thank Dr. Eunhye Grace Choi, who always provided thoughtful advice on the collaborative piano field. All professors at the University of Oregon, the School of Music and Dance, helped me become a better collaborative pianist. I'm honored to work together with you, get coaching from you, and perform with your students. All the performers with whom I have worked are very appreciated. I have been so glad to collaborate and communicate with you. I would like to show my appreciation to the composers who happily permit me to use their works as examples. My dearest friends – Elaine Martir, Aliyah Saldarriaga, Julianne Shepard, Yongbeom Kim, Alexandar Amick, Tung Nguyen, and Yuet Yang Siew – thankfully provided useful feedback for the paper. Finally, I appreciate my family who have always supported me.

- **Main Contents**

I. Listening and Not Listening

In the piano part, there are passages to which instrumentalists must actively **listen**. These help to determine the musical direction and thereby assist in bringing out the melodic line effectively.

Entrance: Prior to an instrumentalist's entrance, they should be aware of how their part joins the piano part immediately preceding it. In most cases, rather than counting alone, it is more effective to listen attentively to the piano's texture to ensure precise entrances. If needed, be sure to mark your score.

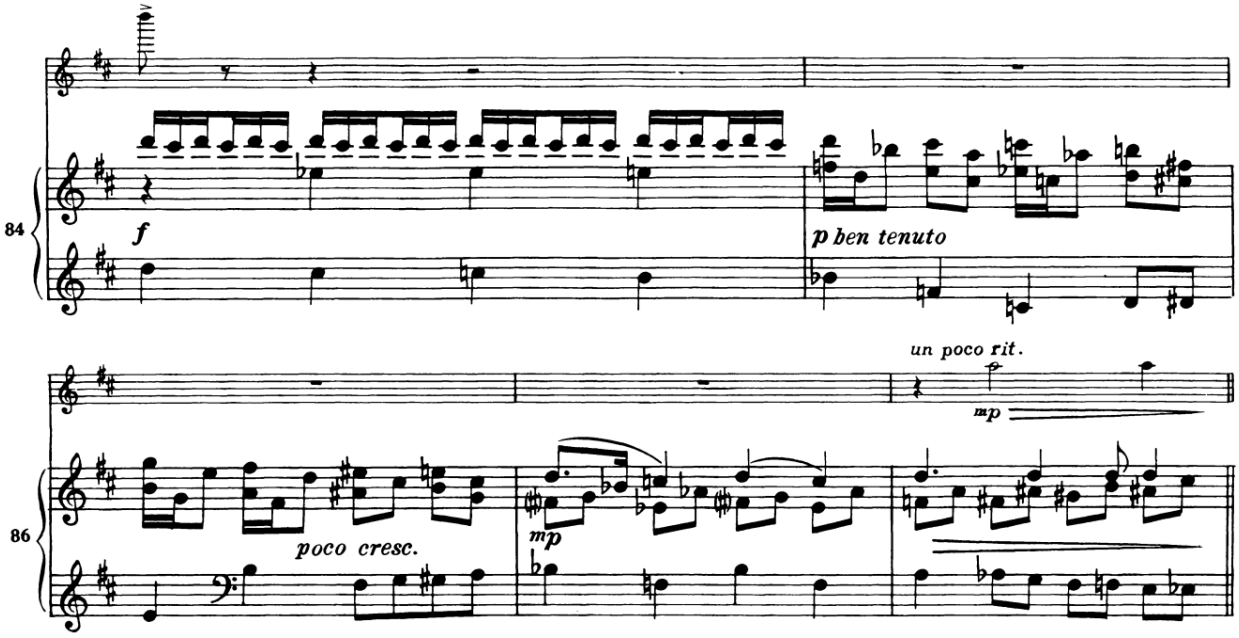


Figure 1: S. Prokofiev – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, 1st mov. mm. 84-88

The violin re-enters at m. 88. To ensure the performer accurately senses the musical timing and can place the second beat of m. 88, listening to the top voice from m. 87 to the first beat of m. 88 is crucial. Depending on the edition, this upper line may already be included in the violin part; if not, it is advisable to annotate it. The next step is to focus on the inner voice on the first beat of m. 88. Since this inner voice is in eighth notes, hearing it will help synchronize the second beat.

Conscious Counting Entrance: Some entrances require conscious counting, especially when preceded by a repetitive pattern.

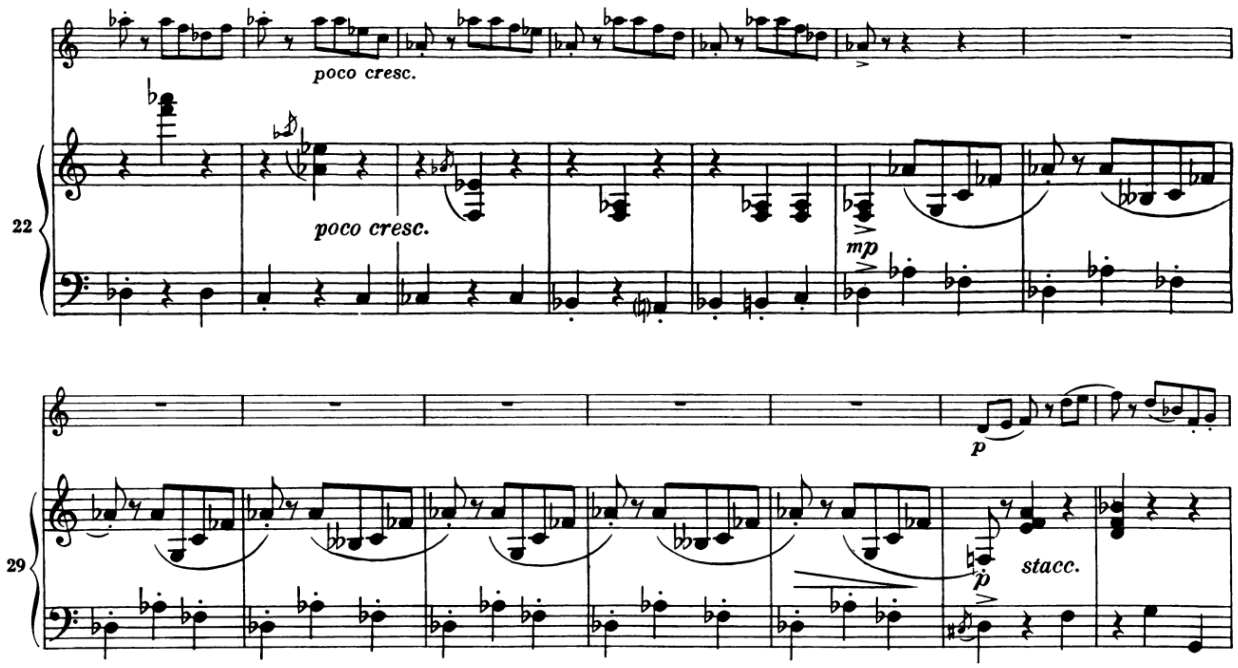
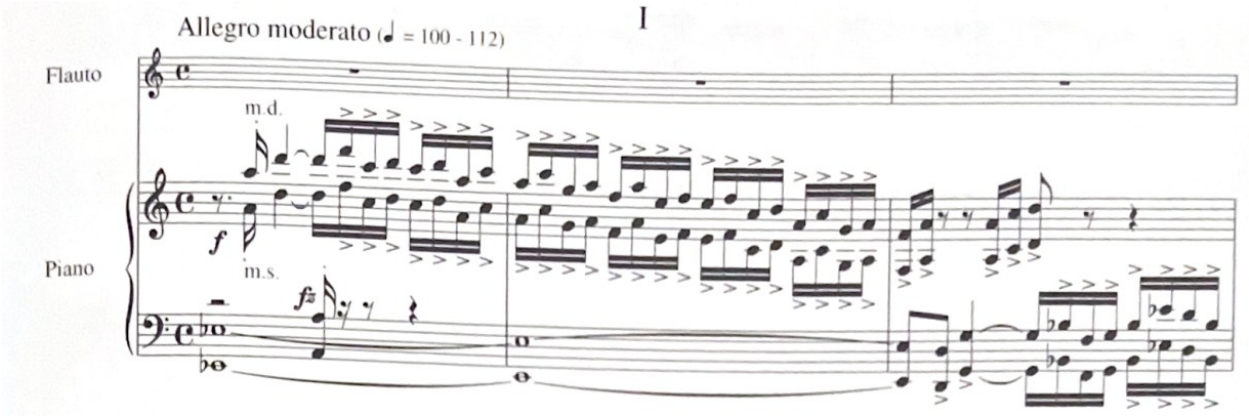


Figure 2: S. Prokofiev – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, 2nd mov. mm. 22-35

In this example above, the piano interlude from m. 27 to m. 33 consists of a repeated short motif, which lacks prominent variation. Even though a single pitch changes (G to B♭♭), the change is subtle. Here, the instrumentalist should count seven measures to prepare for the entrance at m. 34. Determining whether to consciously count or listen depends on the texture, but knowing what occurs immediately before the entrance is essential in either case.



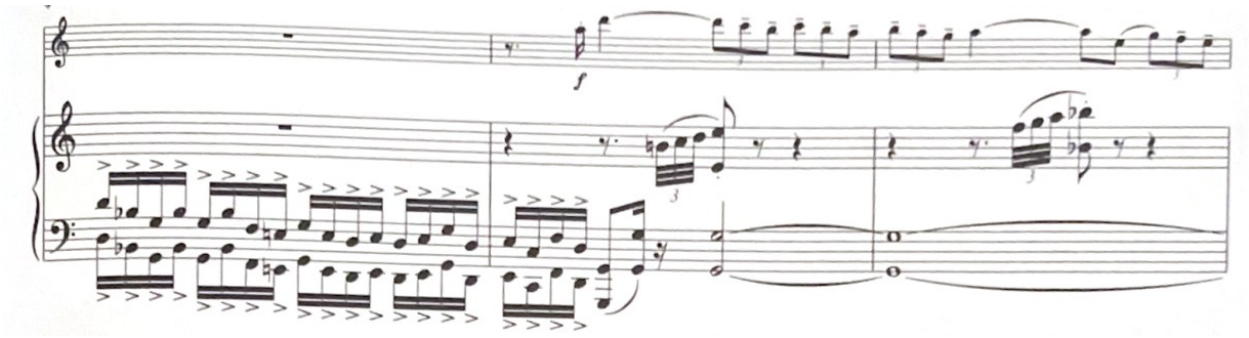


Figure 3: C. Nielsen – Flute Concerto, 1st mov. mm. 1-6

This is another example of an entrance requiring conscious counting, but without a clearly repetitive figure. Due to weak metric accents and ambiguous beat placement, the flutist must memorize the sixteenth-note figure from the third beat of m. 3 until their entrance and count precisely from that point forward, as no explicit guide is provided.

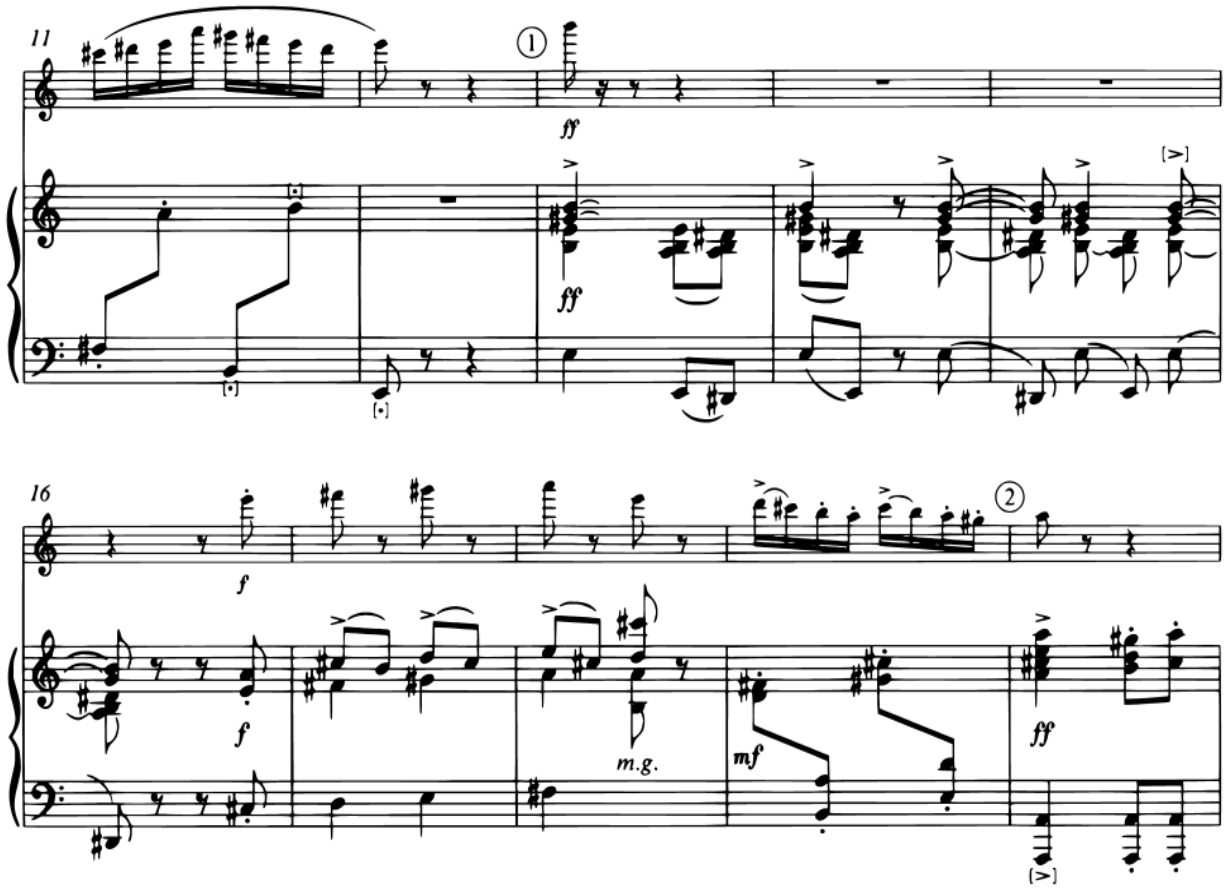


Figure 4: F. Poulenc – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 3rd mov. mm. 11-20

Occasionally, breaks require counting due to off-beat emphasis in the piano part. When clear downbeats are absent, instrumentalists must track rhythmic placement themselves. In this figure, the piano solo from mm. 13–16 emphasizes the off-beat block chords that are in m. 14 and m. 15. This enhances rhythmic vitality but complicates the flute's entrance on the upbeat to m. 16. The flutist should mark the three accented chords and subdivide internally in eighth notes.

Long Notes: When solo instruments hold long notes, the piano part usually has active motion beneath. It is important to be aware of the piano's rhythm—and occasionally pitch—during this time. Sustaining a single note does not demand beat-by-beat precision, which in turn can make it easy to lose temporal grounding. Tracking the piano's motion reinforces rhythmic integrity.

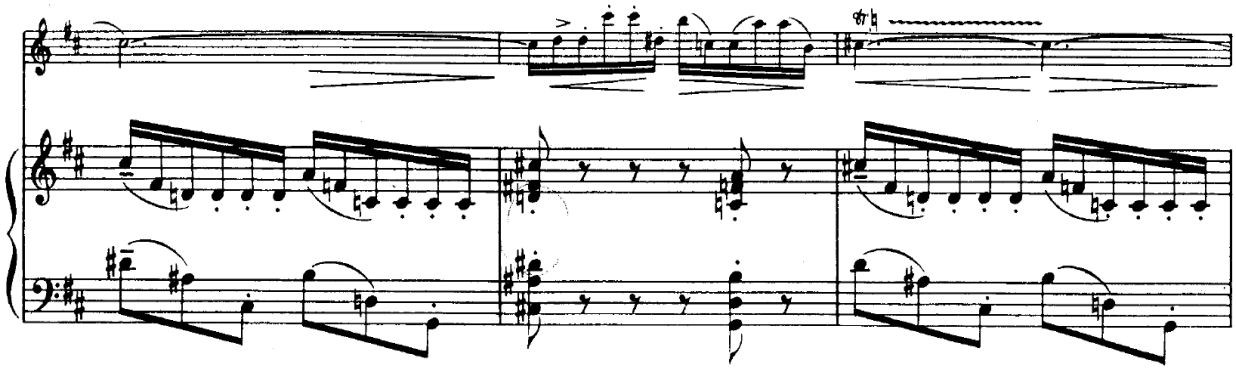


Figure 5: P. Sancan – Sonatine for Flute and Piano, 1st mov. mm. 43-45

Here, there is a trade of sixteenth notes between flute and piano. In m. 43, the flute sustains a long note while the piano articulates sixteenth notes. It is helpful for the flutist to annotate sixteenth notes in both m. 43 and m. 45 to internalize the rhythmic flow prior to executing their own sixteenth-note passage in m. 44. Since the piano only plays two block chords in m. 44, it offers little rhythmic reinforcement. The flutist must rely on internal pulse to maintain accuracy before passing the rhythm back to the piano in m. 45.

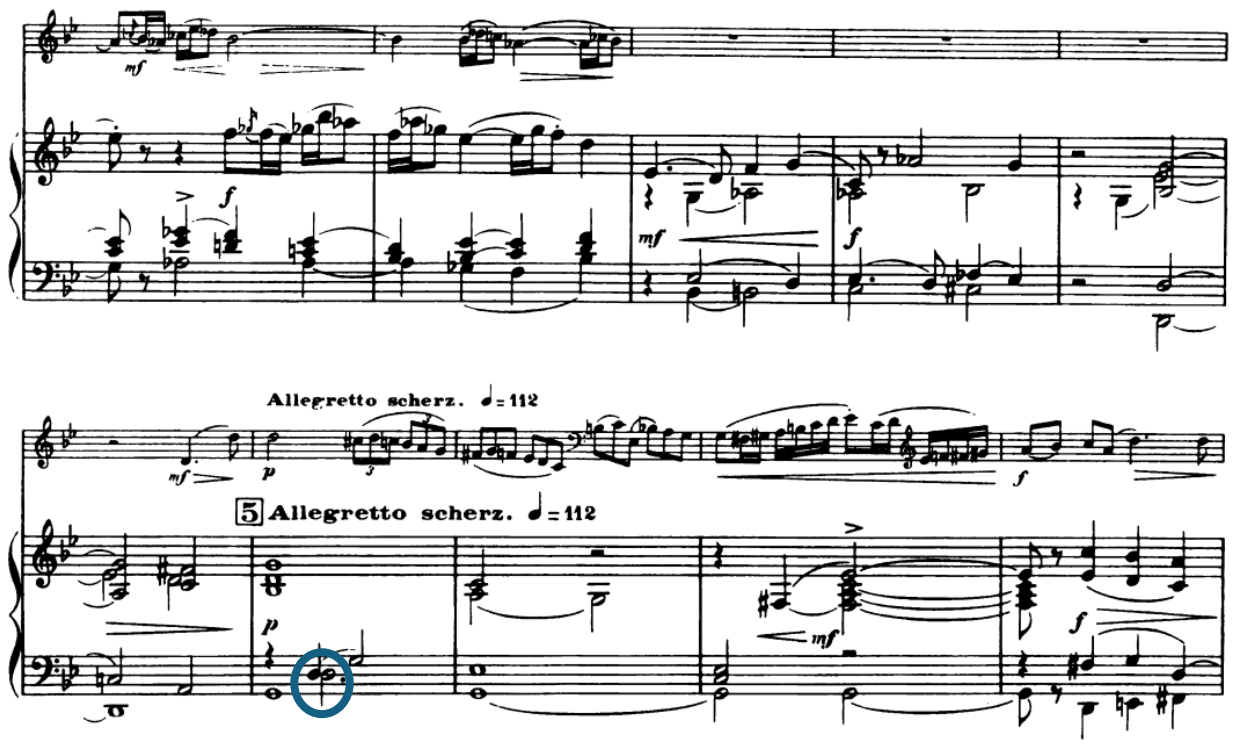


Figure 6: A. Glazunov – Alto Saxophone Concerto, 1st mov. Rehearsal #4 and #5 (Score in C)

(Assuming a pianist using an orchestral reduction.) In this passage, m. 1 and m. 2 involve a stretto between solo saxophone and orchestral voices. Awareness of the rhythmic placement while holding notes (concert B♭ and A♭) is essential. However, the primary challenge lies in the sudden tempo change at rehearsal #5. The orchestral entrance on the second beat of the bar sets the new tempo, while the saxophonist holds two beats. The interval between the first and the second notes provides the initial tempo indication. The saxophonist must listen for the second beat, which is played by the violas in the orchestra.

Break: When the solo instrument has a rest, it is important to determine whether the piano continues or rests as well.

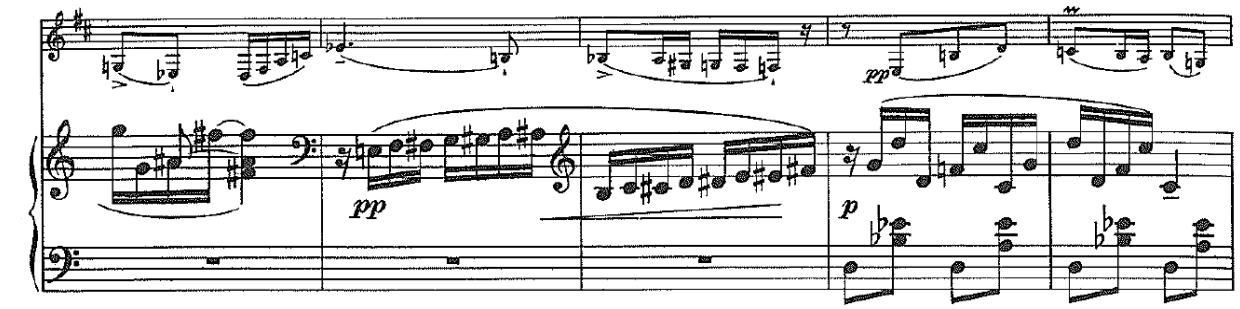


Figure 7: O. Schoek – Sonata for Bass Clarinet and Piano, 3rd mov. mm. 21-25

Here, the piano connects two phrases while the bass clarinet rests. The clarinet phrase ends in m. 23 and resumes in m. 24, separated by a 16th + 8th rest. The piano fills this space with sixteenth notes, bridging the two phrases. The clarinetist should listen for the downbeat of m. 24. In this case, extra time should be avoided to preserve rhythmic drive, though other contexts may call for expressive pacing, to be discussed collaboratively during rehearsal.

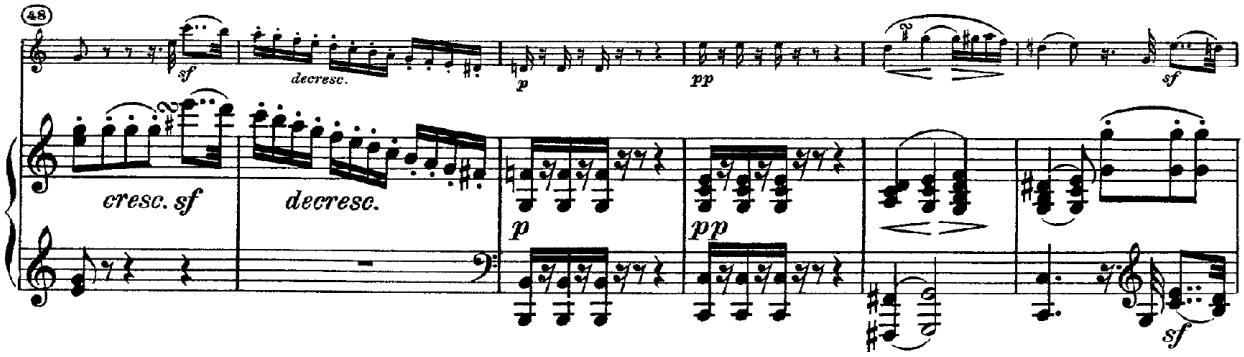


Figure 8: L. v. Beethoven – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3, 2nd mov. mm. 48-53

Conversely, certain breaks involve mutual silence. In measures 50–51, both the violin and the piano rest simultaneously. It is essential that both performers experience the entirety of the rests across these two measures. This moment is particularly significant because it lacks any explicitly notated articulation, yet it remains connected to the preceding staccato gestures. Regardless of how the sixteenth notes in both parts are articulated, they must be performed with equal duration.

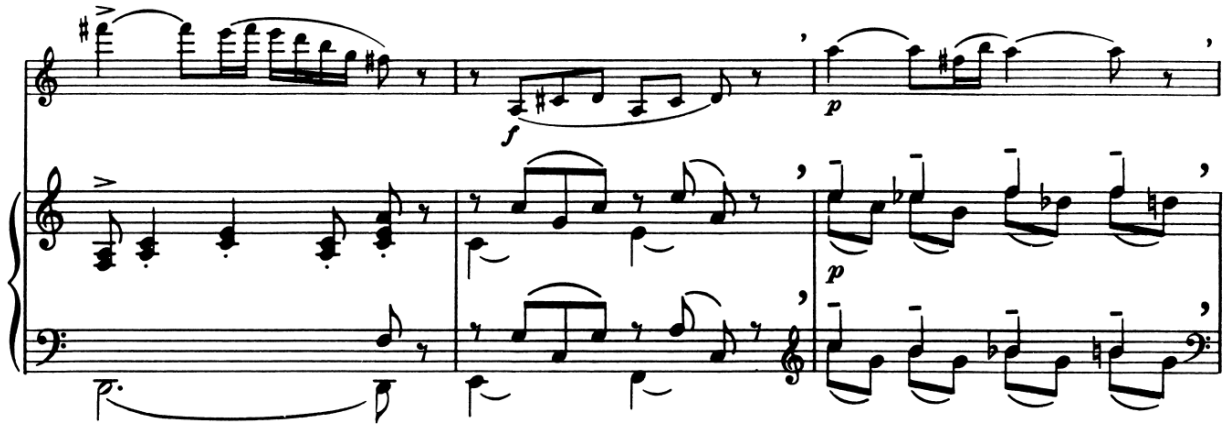


Figure 9: F. Poulenc – Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, 3rd mov. Rehearsal #12

Although this passage includes shared rests, performance choices must be made regarding commas and possible extra time. Commas may be without an extra time, or assigned a specific length (e.g., a quarter rest), or cued between players. Regardless, the instrumentalist must be aware that the break is observed and align the downbeat accordingly.

Bass Notes: When the piano accompaniment lacks a clear feeling of meter, where the bass aligns becomes the most structurally important factor. It supports the solo instrument and helps establish beat clarity. Bass notes usually occur on the beat, but not always; when they do not, instrumentalists must annotate and internalize their actual placement.

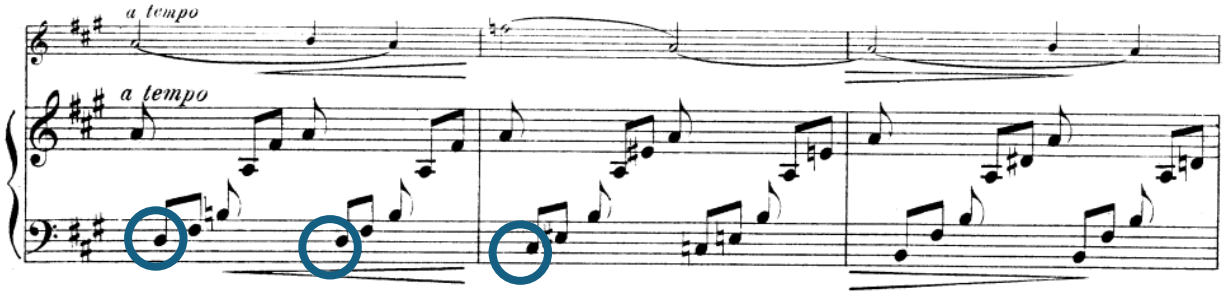


Figure 10: C. Franck – Sonata for Violin and Piano, 3rd mov. mm. 65-67

Here, the bass comes "after" the beat, while the upper voice occurs on the beat. This intentional misalignment may confuse, as players often expect bass to align with the beat. The violinist should understand the relationship between the top and bass notes, in addition to the speed of the triplets. If the

violinist loses the beats in performance, the pianist may lightly accent beats until the ensemble is secure.

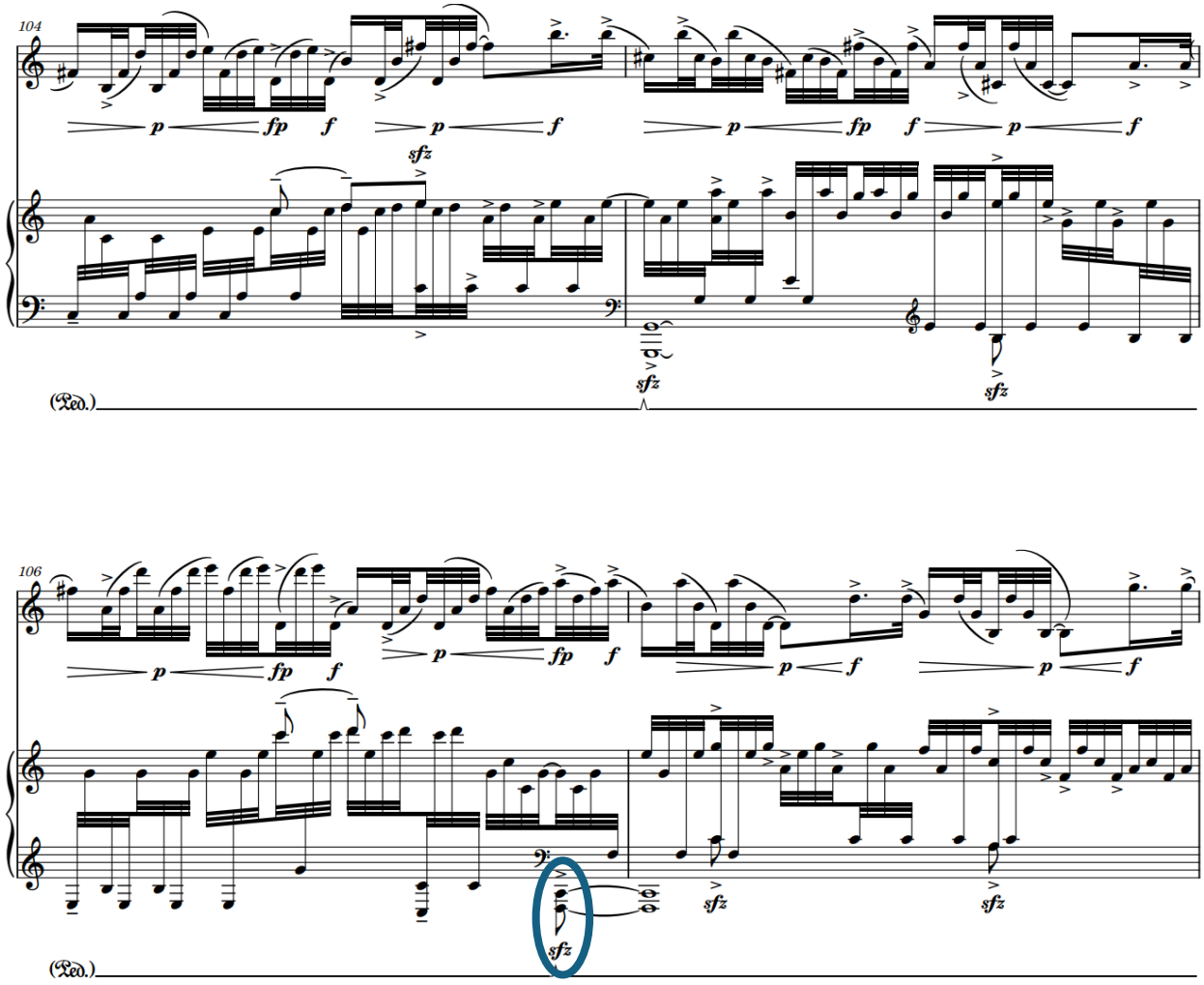


Figure 11: V. Cuong – "Sanctuary" for Soprano Saxophone and Piano, mm. 104-107

In contrast, this passage places the bass note “before” the beat. The accented bass pickup into m. 107 should be marked to separate from the downbeat. Figuring out the placement of bass notes is particularly important in challenging solo passages, such as this one.

Thus far, this chapter has addressed what to listen to. However, knowing when **not to listen** is equally important. Instrumentalists may need to maintain their own part with rhythmic and expressive integrity, regardless of what is happening in the piano part. This does not imply ignoring the piano entirely, but rather avoiding reactive alterations based on active piano passages.

Poly-Meter: In some instances, bass notes do not correspond to the meter. Here, the accompaniment features groups of four eighth notes, while the solo part is in 3/8. The performer should listen for beats other than the bass notes – such as – accents and high notes that appear every second beat, which align more clearly with the 3/8 meter.

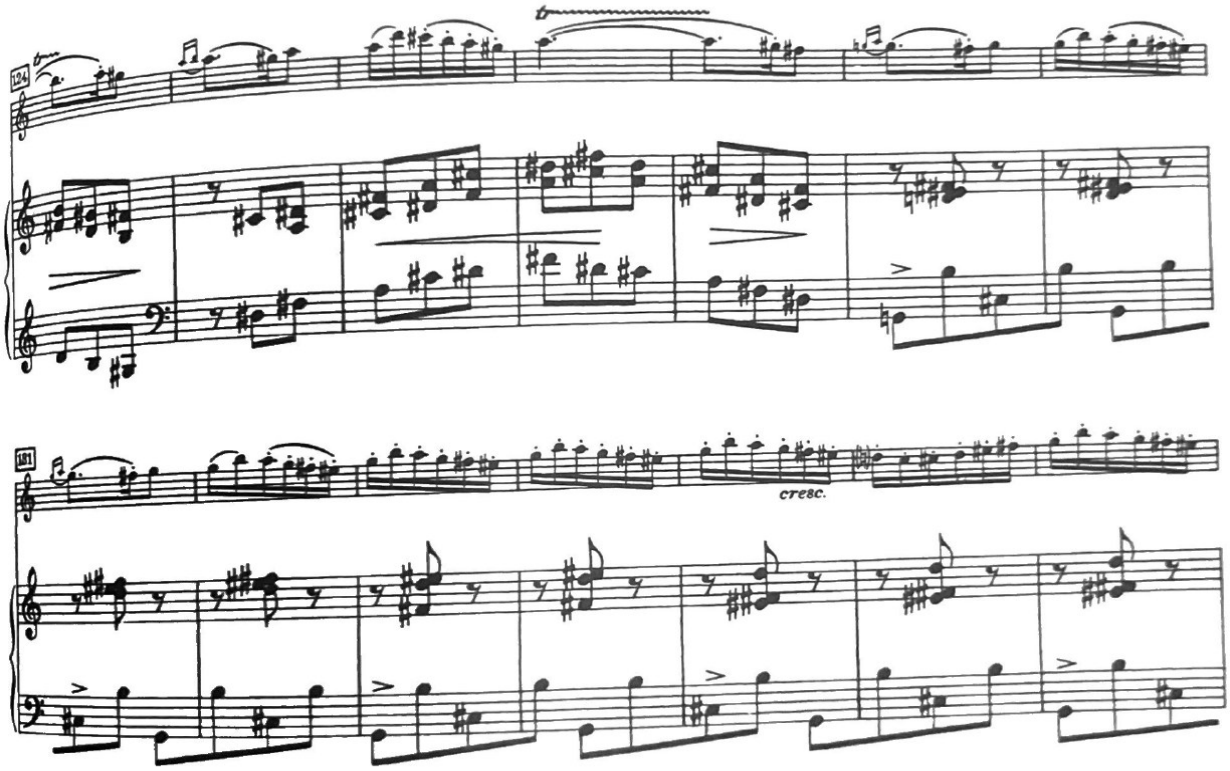


Figure 12: A. Khachaturian – Violin Concerto, 3rd mov. mm. 124-137

Poly-Rhythm: Occasionally, the soloist and pianist play in different rhythmic groupings, such as 2:3, 3:4, or 4:5. In such instances, it is critical for the instrumentalist to listen only for shared beats and disregard competing groupings, maintaining strict adherence to their own rhythmic structure.

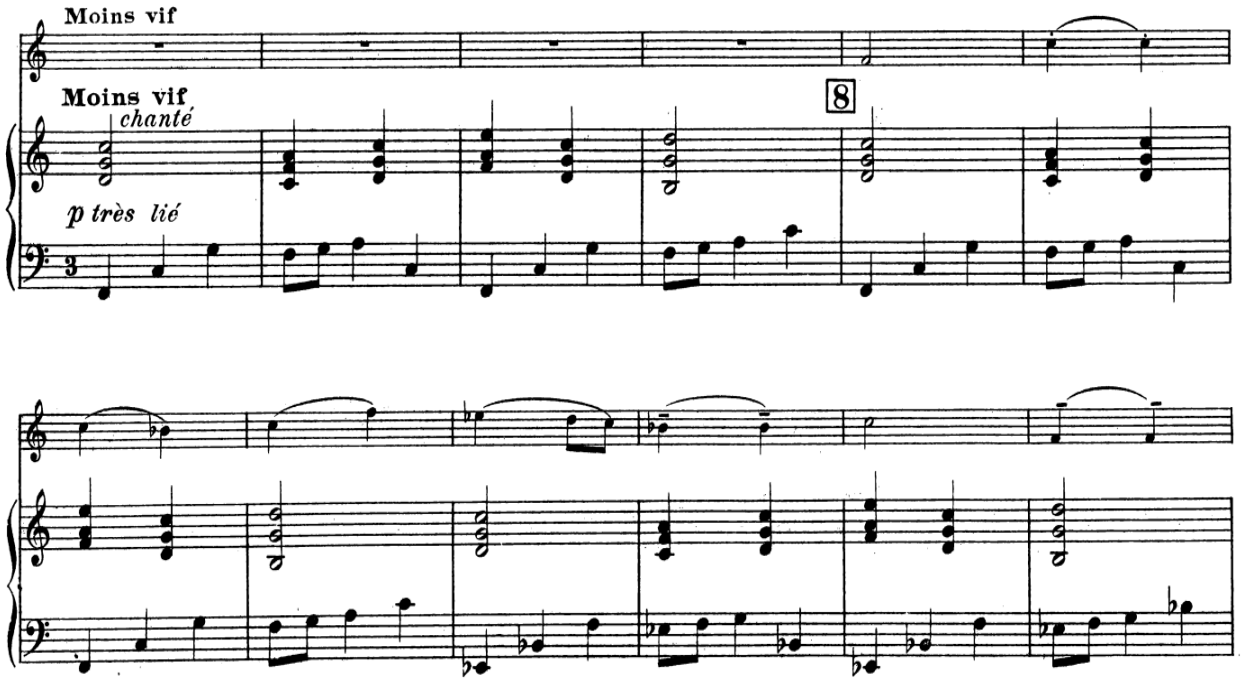


Figure 13: D. Milhaud – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, 2nd mov. mm. 119-130

Here, the pianist's left hand is in groups of three, while the right hand and the violin are in groups of two. The violinist should locate beats from the bass and right-hand chords but avoid being influenced by the ternary subdivision in the left hand. This is especially important in m. 127, eighth-note subdivision.

Modern Texture: In modern repertoire, composers often intentionally disconnect the solo instrument and piano, sometimes specifying independence in the notation itself.

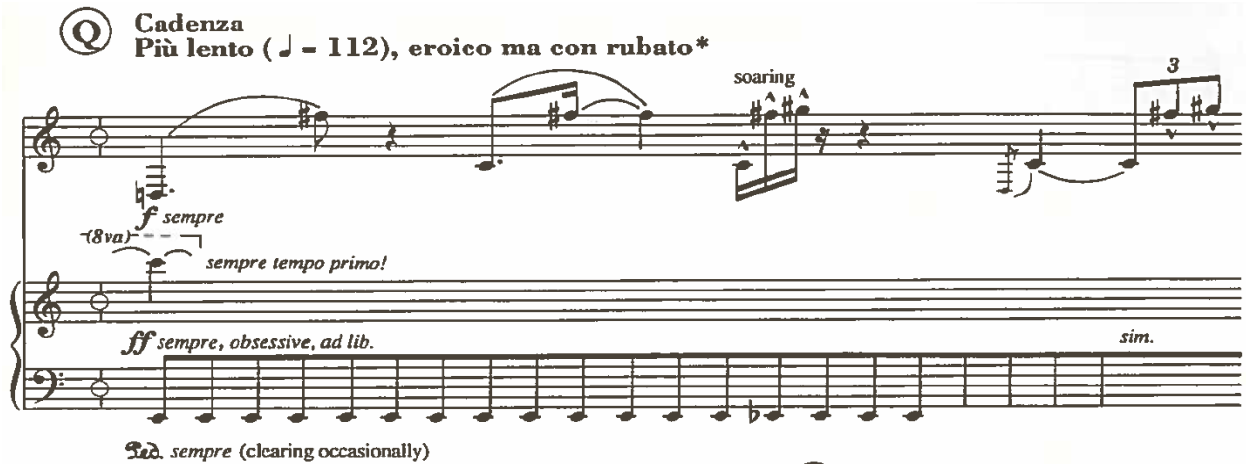


Figure 14: W. Albright – Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, 1st mov. Rehearsal #Q (Score in C)

This passage is explicitly marked as independent, with the instruction “sax and piano are independent, but piano follows sax.” The two instruments even have a different tempo; the saxophone is in quarter note = 112, but the piano is in tempo primo (quarter note = 126). The saxophonist must remain focused solely on their own line, trusting that the pianist—playing from the score—will follow as required.

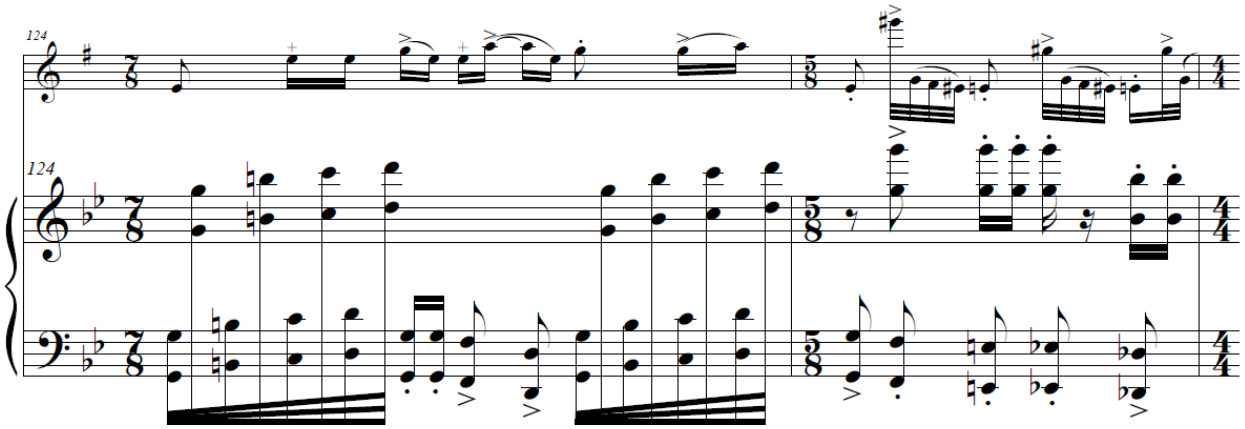


Figure 15: J. D. Michat – "5 Visions Amoureuses" for Alto Saxophone and Piano, mm. 124-125

Here, the piano part includes an accelerando that is not mirrored in the saxophone line. The pianist must execute the accelerando based on quarter-note duration, while the saxophonist plays steadily. In such contexts, listening may be counterproductive because the saxophonist could also execute an accelerando. The key is the alignment of notes after accelerando. Awareness of the other part is necessary; being influenced by the other part is unnecessary.

II. Leading and Following

During ensemble collaboration, both leading and following are essential components. Depending on the musical texture, each performer must determine who will lead and who will follow. Difficulties arise when both performers attempt to lead, as this often results in conflicting musical interpretations. Conversely, if both performers passively follow, the music lacks direction. Optimal outcomes typically occur when one performer leads while the other follows.

Leading the Main Melody Tempo: When the solo instrumentalist carries the primary melody and the pianist plays a standard accompaniment figure, the soloist generally holds interpretive authority. This includes control over tempo, phrasing, and expressive timing. The instrumentalist should present a clear musical intention and communicate this to the pianist, rather than adapting to the accompaniment. This collaborative dynamic is often more intuitive when the soloist's part features denser rhythms. However, even when the piano part is rhythmically active, the instrumentalist may still assume the leading role.

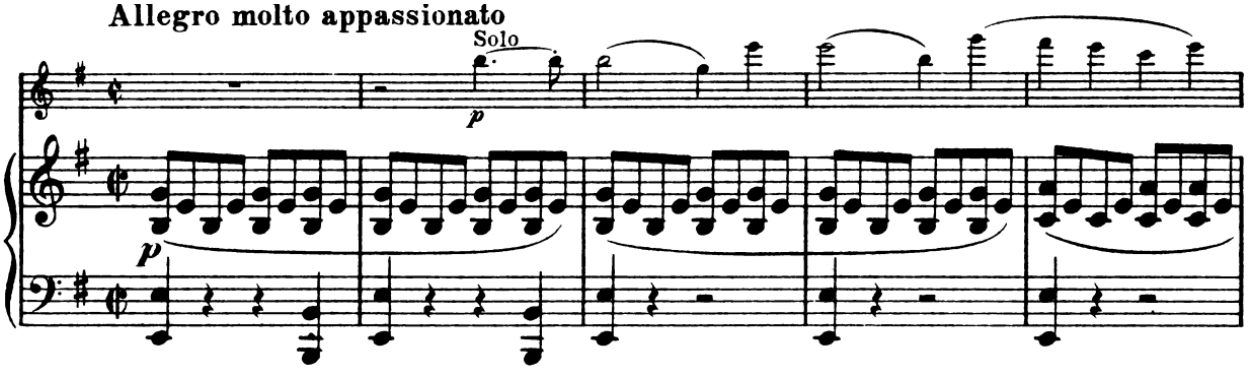


Figure 16: F. Mendelssohn – Violin Concerto, 1st mov. mm. 1-5

In this example, the piano accompaniment enters one and a half measures before the solo violin. Thus, the pianist initially establishes the tempo. Nevertheless, the violin assumes the primary melodic role. The violinist should set the metronome marking prior to rehearsal and convey it clearly. If interpretive changes in tempo are desired during the performance, the violinist must express them decisively, prompting the pianist to adjust accordingly.

Leading the Main Melody Phrasing: Leadership extends beyond tempo to phrasing. When the solo instrument presents the main melody and the piano provides rhythmically dense accompaniment, instrumentalists may wish to apply expressive variations, such as tempo rubato or dynamic shifts. These should be communicated explicitly to the pianist.

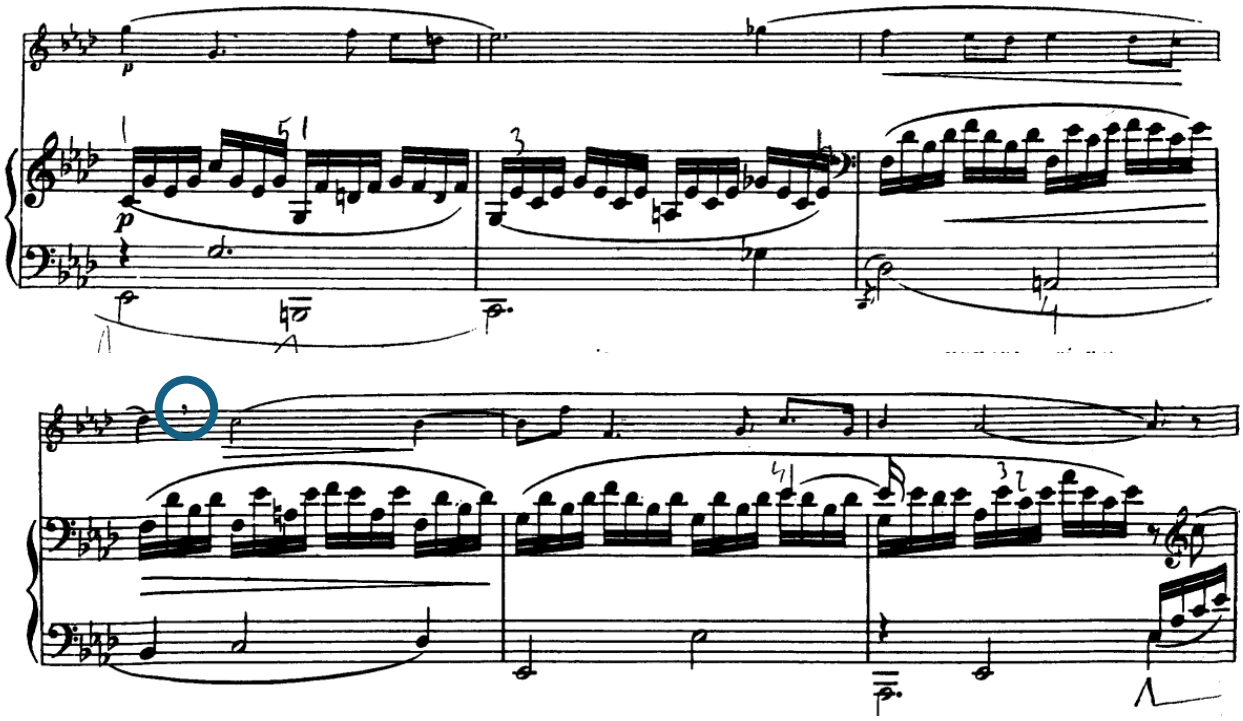


Figure 17: Ch. M. Widor – Suite for Flute and Piano, III. Romance, mm. 10-15

In this excerpt, a breath mark appears in m. 13 of the flute part, but not in the piano part, which continues with uninterrupted sixteenth notes. The flutist must decide whether to take extra time at the comma and also communicate the duration of this pause. The timing of the second beat of m. 13 should be at the flutist's discretion and movement, not dictated by the pianist's rhythm. This is a case where the breath mark appears only in the solo line. Refer to *Figure 9* for an example where both parts include a breath mark and for a discussion on shared phrasing decisions.

Ritardando and Accelerando: When tempo changes occur, it is essential to determine who initiates and leads these shifts. Leadershkip may originate from either the soloist or the pianist, depending on textural

features. Typically, the performer with the denser rhythmic material assumes control of tempo change.

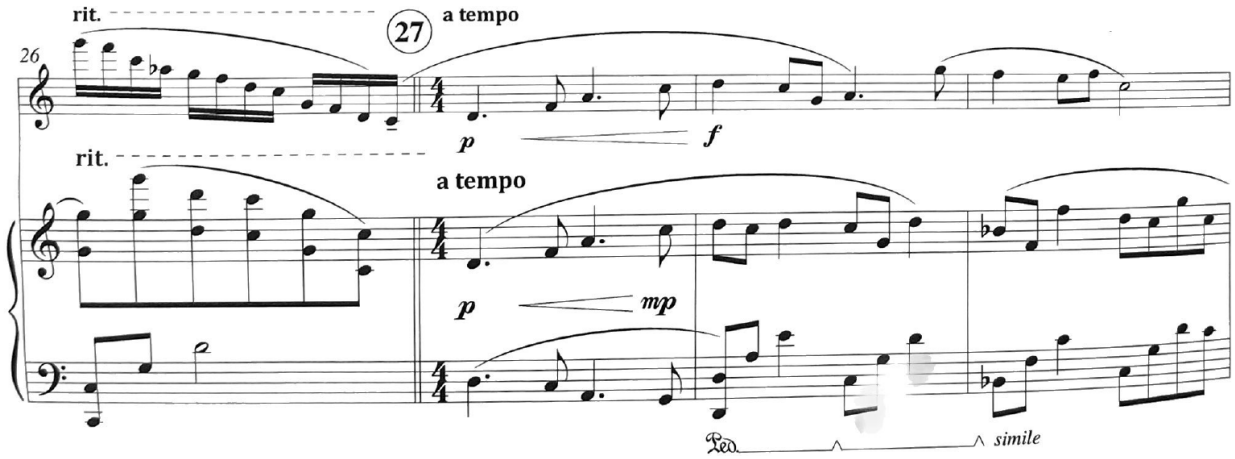


Figure 18: W. Linthicum-Blackhorse – "Mnicakmun" for Flute and Piano, 1st mov. mm. 26-29

Here, the flute plays continuous sixteenth notes under a ritardando indication, while the piano features eighth notes. The flutist should lead the tempo decline, with the pianist following closely. The flute has a phrasing change after the penultimate note of m. 26. By the flutist leading the tempo decline, they can naturally decide the length between two phrases, as well as the length of the last note with tenuto.

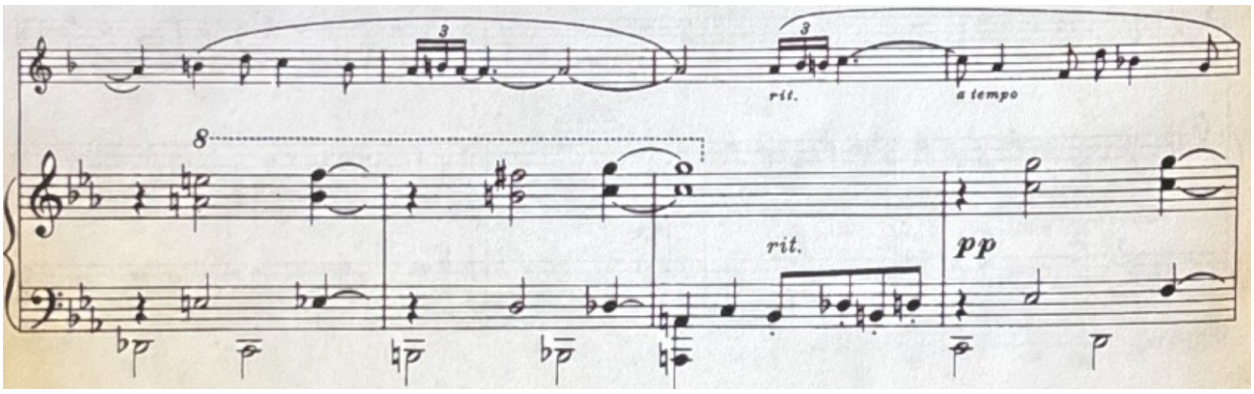


Figure 19: H. Villa-Lobos – "Fantasia" for Soprano Saxophone and Piano, 1st mov. Rehearsal #5

By contrast, some tempo changes are led by the piano. In these instances, it is crucial for the instrumentalist to remain responsive. In *Figure 19*, the ritardando is primarily guided by the piano, particularly after the saxophone introduces a triplet figure in the third measure. While the triplet contributes to the slowing motion, the saxophone sustains a pitch (C) through the remaining measures. Therefore, the pianist governs the continuation and placement of the ritardando. The saxophonist must

understand that the piano part remains rhythmically active during the sustained note and should avoid overemphasizing the triplet, preserving space for the pianist's subsequent ritardando.

When a "*colla parte*" marking appears in the piano part, it designates the pianist as the follower in tempo changes. Sometimes the colla parte is in the solo part, which designates the instrumentalist as the follower. The composer typically writes a texture that allows for feasible following. Nonetheless, the leading performer must remain aware of the follower's capabilities.

Figure 20: C. de Bériot – Scène de ballet for Violin and Orchestra, Valse Moderato

In the second system of this example, the piano part includes a "colla parte" marking. The violinist, who carries the more expressive gestures, should determine the extent of the "poco rallentando" in the 7th measure. However, to ensure a natural tempo transition, the violinist must listen attentively to the placement of the pianist's eighth notes and align the rallentando accordingly. This is because the piano notes are located at the violin's rests.

Deepened Ritardando and Accelerando: In more complex textures, tempo modifications may not fall

under the authority of a single performer. Instead, leadership may shift back and forth. In such cases, achieving organic coordination is paramount.

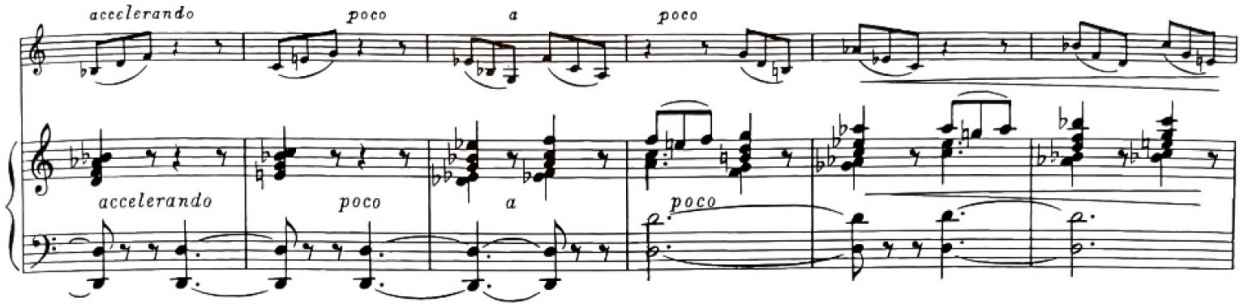


Figure 21: R. Planel – "Prelude et Saltarelle" for Saxophone Alto and Piano, Saltarelle

This passage features a gradual accelerando. The saxophonist initiates the tempo increase across the first three measures. In the fourth measure, the piano continues the accelerando while the saxophone rests. Subsequent entries alternate leadership between performers. This exchange should resemble the natural acceleration like a bouncing ball gaining momentum.

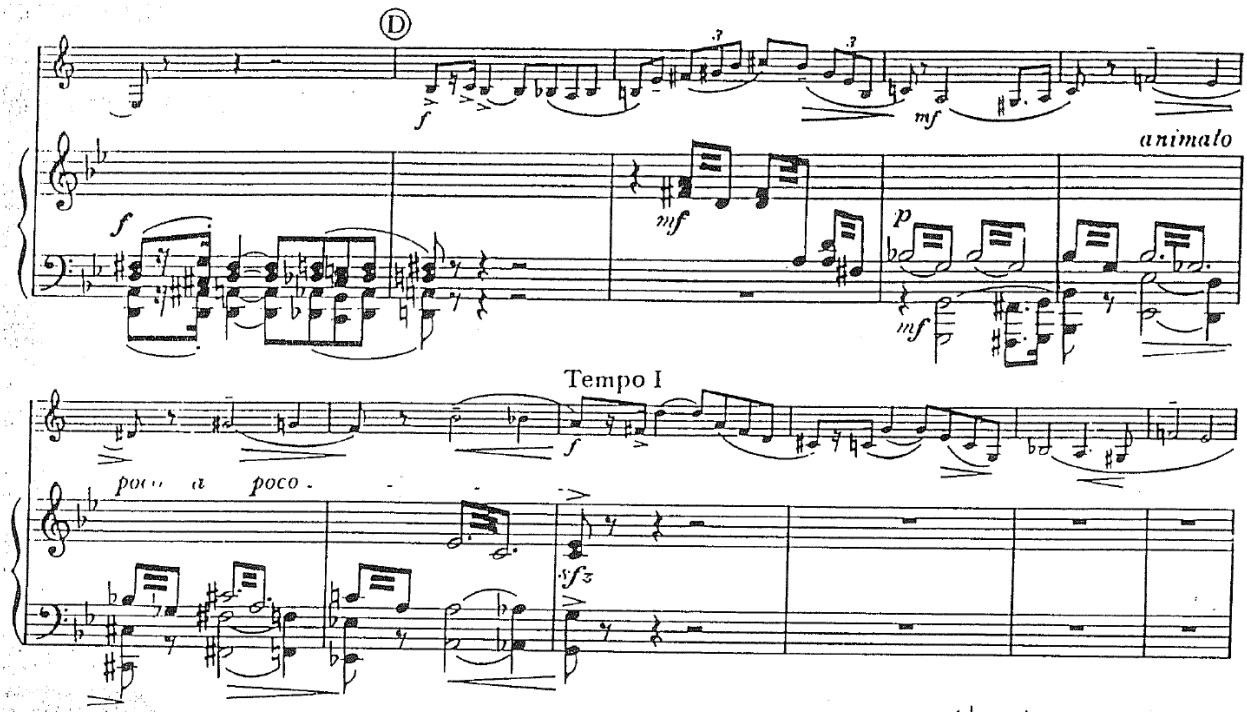


Figure 22: E. Bozza – "Ballade" for Bass Clarinet and Piano, Rehearsal #D

At times, tempo changes occur in unison, which is typically more challenging. Both performers must internalize and embody the tempo change together, rather than allowing one to lead while the other

follows. Beginning in the fourth measure of rehearsal #D, an *animato poco a poco* marking appears. This directive gradually propels the music forward, culminating in the seventh measure of rehearsal #D. The tremolo in the piano's right hand exists outside the metric framework; it does not allow the performer to perceive the beats with clarity. Consequently, the solo bass clarinet line in combination with the piano's right hand drives the *animato*. Attentive listening and a shared focus on the organic shaping of the tempo change are crucial for maintaining ensemble synchronization.

New Tempo After the Tempo Change: Regardless of who initiates the tempo change, both performers must agree on the new tempo. This is especially critical when the leader of the tempo change differs from the leader of the new tempo. The transition may either be smooth ("landing") or abrupt ("disconnecting").

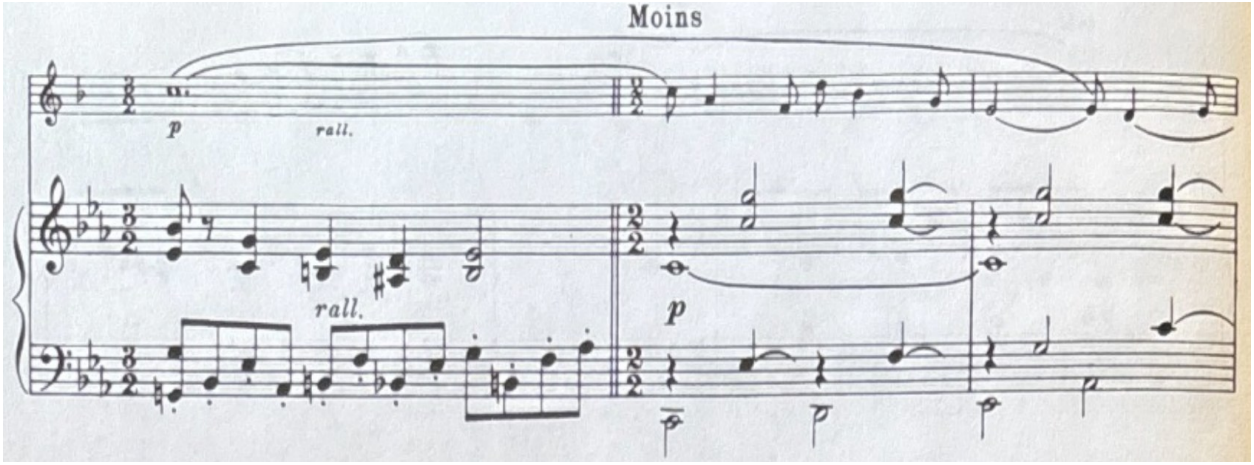


Figure 23: H. Villa-Lobos – "Fantasia" for Soprano Saxophone and Piano, 1st mov. Rehearsal #4 and #5

Here, the piano leads a short two-beat ritardando using moving eighth and quarter notes. However, the subsequent tempo ("Moins") is slower and introduced by the saxophone with rhythmically dense material. The saxophonist must listen carefully to the preceding ritardando and align with the newly established tempo. If the ritardando is not enough for the landing to the intended new tempo, the saxophonist should request adjustments.

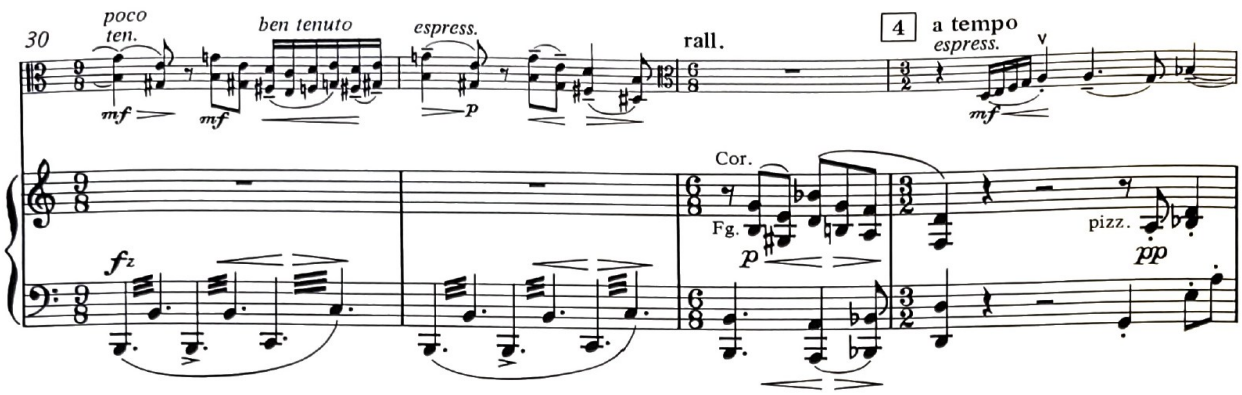


Figure 24: W. Walton – Viola Concerto, 1st mov. mm. 30-33

This excerpt illustrates a tempo disjunction. In m. 32, the accompaniment executes a ritardando, but the return to the original tempo is led by the violist in m. 33. The violist must immediately reestablish the previous tempo. Although a brief interpretive delay followed by acceleration is acceptable, they should ensure that the recovered original tempo is reached by the second beat of m. 33.

Another Following Cases: Beyond clear instances of leadership, performers must remain attentive even in less complex textures. Instrumentalists should assert collaborative leadership when desiring a change, such as a different tempo, by playing confidently and making eye contact with the pianist.

Conversely, pianists may prompt instrumentalists to follow in situations not explicitly indicated in the score. These interventions typically fall into three categories:

1. The instrumentalist's teacher requests a different tempo. In such cases, the pianist supports the student by reinforcing the instructor's preferences.
2. The instrumentalist begins to **rush**, often due to performance adrenaline. The pianist counters by maintaining a steadier pace to stabilize the ensemble.
3. The instrumentalist **drags**, either for expressive reasons or due to technical difficulty. The pianist must restore the appropriate tempo, requiring the instrumentalist to follow the correction.

Regardless of specific roles, successful collaboration depends on mutual awareness, adaptability, and clear musical communication.

III. Signals

Signals begin and end the collaboration between musicians. Effective signaling ensures temporal cohesion and shared expressive intent. This chapter addresses the visual and auditory modalities of signaling, and strategies for their effective implementation.

Cueing: Effective cueing establishes tempo, character, and dynamic trajectory. Cues may vary in length, size, energy, and style—ranging from a full inhale to a subtle sniff, from lifting an instrument to a mere eyebrow movement. Instrumentalists should experiment with diverse cueing techniques to determine the most appropriate approach based on musical texture and context.

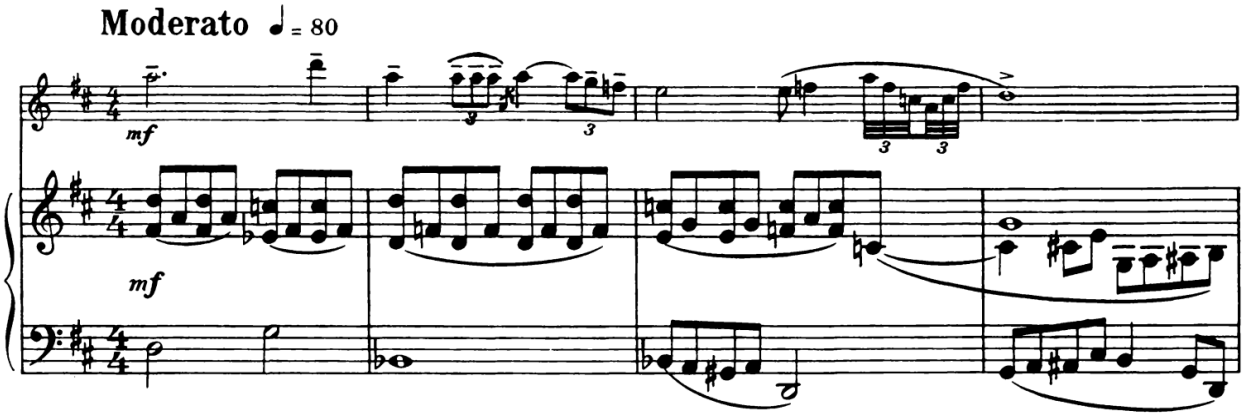


Figure 25: S. Prokofiev – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, 1st mov. mm. 1-4

A well-executed cue at the outset of this passage can establish the intended tempo. This may be conveyed through a quarter-note or half-note cue. Regardless of the length, clarity is essential so the pianist can play the eighth notes in measure 1 at the violinist's desired tempo. Though it may appear that the pianist determines the tempo, the violinist's cue plays a vital role in setting it. An effective cue prevents initial disjunction in tempo between performers.

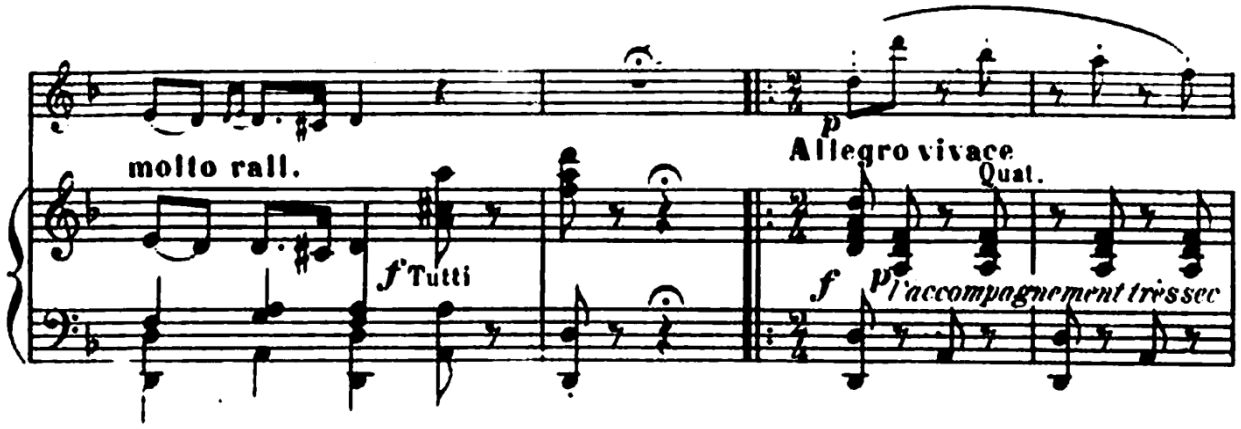


Figure 26: V. Monti – Csárdás for Violin, mm. 20-24

Certain cues demand greater vividness, depending on the musical texture. Compared to *Figure 25*, this excerpt requires a sharper, more energetic cue due to its faster tempo, dry articulation, and light 2/4 meter. These qualities can be communicated in the cue. The accompaniment's strong downbeat accent further justifies a forceful cue, highlighting how awareness of the accompaniment part can inform cueing strategies.

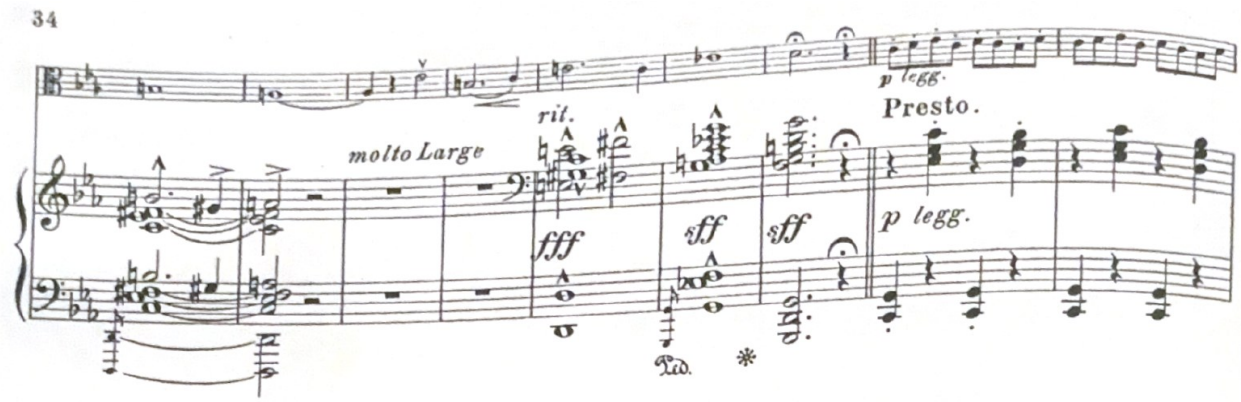


Figure 27: Y. Bowen – Sonata for Viola and Piano, 3rd mov. Presto

This excerpt calls for a subtle cue, one that only the pianist may perceive. The movement begins with a dramatic tempo shift from *molto Largo* to *Presto*, which should be reflected in the brevity and intensity of the cue. The cue should be subtle but sensitive. Despite its size, the cue must accurately embody the new tempo to support the piece's overall dramatic structure.

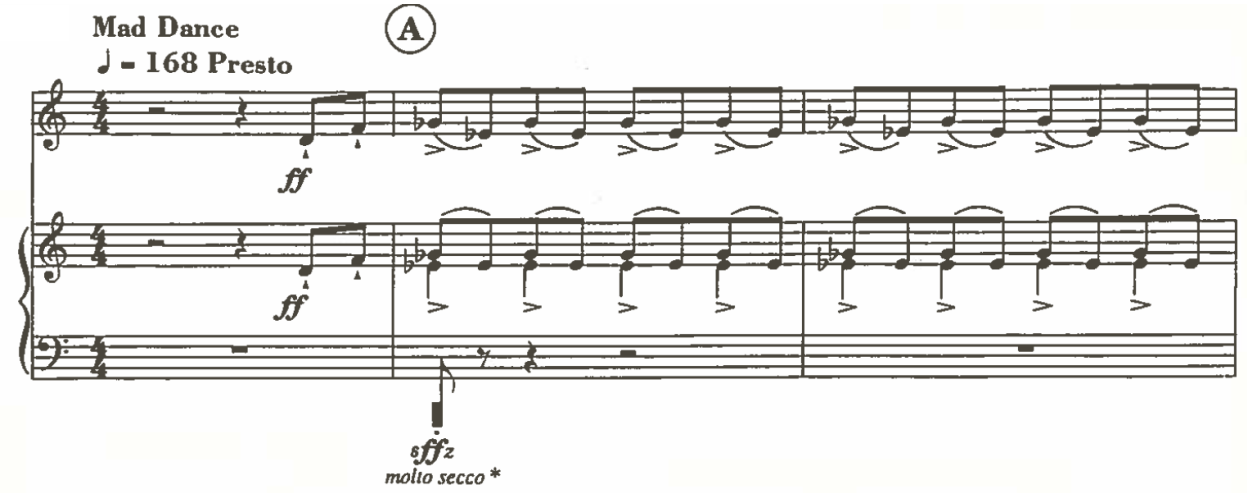


Figure 28: W. Albright – Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, 4th mov. Rehearsal #A

This is a contrasting example that requires a highly emphatic cue. The musical character—marked by *fortissimo*, *staccatissimo*, dense piano clusters, and the expression *"Mad Dance"*—demands a bold, aggressive cue to initiate the movement with conviction. This type of cue works only if it makes musical sense.

Off-the-downbeat Pickup Cue: While the expressive quality of cues has been discussed thus far, the indication of beat placement is equally crucial—especially when entrances occur off-the-downbeat. Situations where both players enter together on an offbeat, or with varying pickups, require detailed rehearsal dialogue to ensure precision. In *Figure 28*, the saxophonist and pianist enter on an on-the-beat pickup. In this case, **Down-cue on beat 1, up-cue on beat 3** are recommended. This provides a natural lead-in and facilitates a feeling of duple meter (in 2). Although the music is in common time, it actually works as a cut time due to the fast tempo. Once familiar, the cue on beat 1 can be omitted for a more streamlined presentation. While the saxophonist should initiate the cue, the pianist must also feel the cue, more than starting the note without feeling the meter.

There is no right answer for cueing off-the-downbeat entrance, nevertheless these processes will help:

1) Feel the intrinsic meter of the music, be aware that it's either in fast 4 or in slow 2, either in fast 2 or in slow 1, either in fast 3 or in slow 1.

2) Make a two-action cue, typically a down-cue at first and and an up-cue following.

3) Omit the first action, practice to enter with just the up-cue.

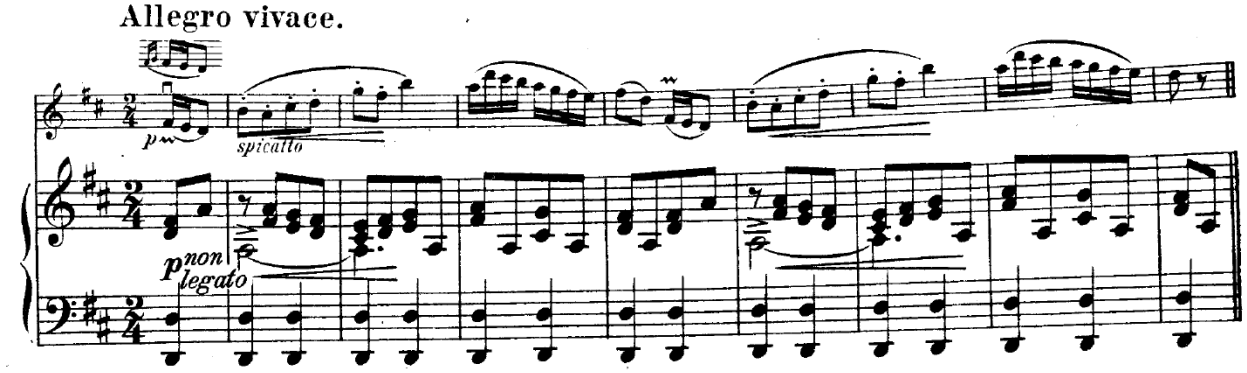


Figure 29: J-M. Leclair – Sonata for Violin No. 3, "Tombeau" 4th mov. mm. 1-8

This passage presents another instance of an off-the-downbeat pickup. The three preparatory steps remain valid in this context. Given the fast tempo, it is more likely to be perceived in 1 rather than in 2. Accordingly, there should first be one complete empty measure having a down-cue at the downbeat, followed by an up-cue at the downbeat of the pickup measure. Once this process becomes familiar, the violinist may initiate solely with the upbeat cue, omitting the preceding downbeat cue. These steps facilitate explicit cueing and establish the correct tempo.

Cueing for off-the-beat Pickup: The first note could be placed not on the downbeat, nor the on-beat of the pickup. It usually requires at least two preparatory gestures.

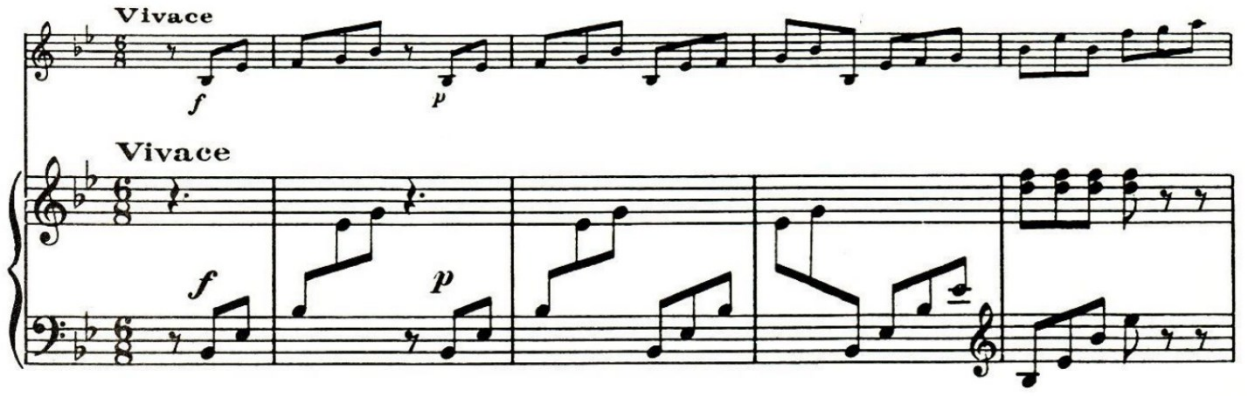


Figure 30: I. Stravinsky – "Suite Italienne" for Violin and Piano, III. Tarantella, mm. 1-4

This is example of off-the-beat pickup cueing, with concealed metric accents. Two cues are necessary—an up-cue on the implied downbeat of the pickup measure, and a down-cue on beat 2, treating the 6/8 meter as duple. The accentual patterns (e.g., five, five, four eighth notes) must be internally felt rather than dynamically emphasized. These irregular groupings contribute to the work's rhythmic vitality.

Cuing in the Context: Cueing is not only for the beginning. In contexts with fermatas, tempo shifts, or prolonged silences, explicit cueing becomes indispensable.

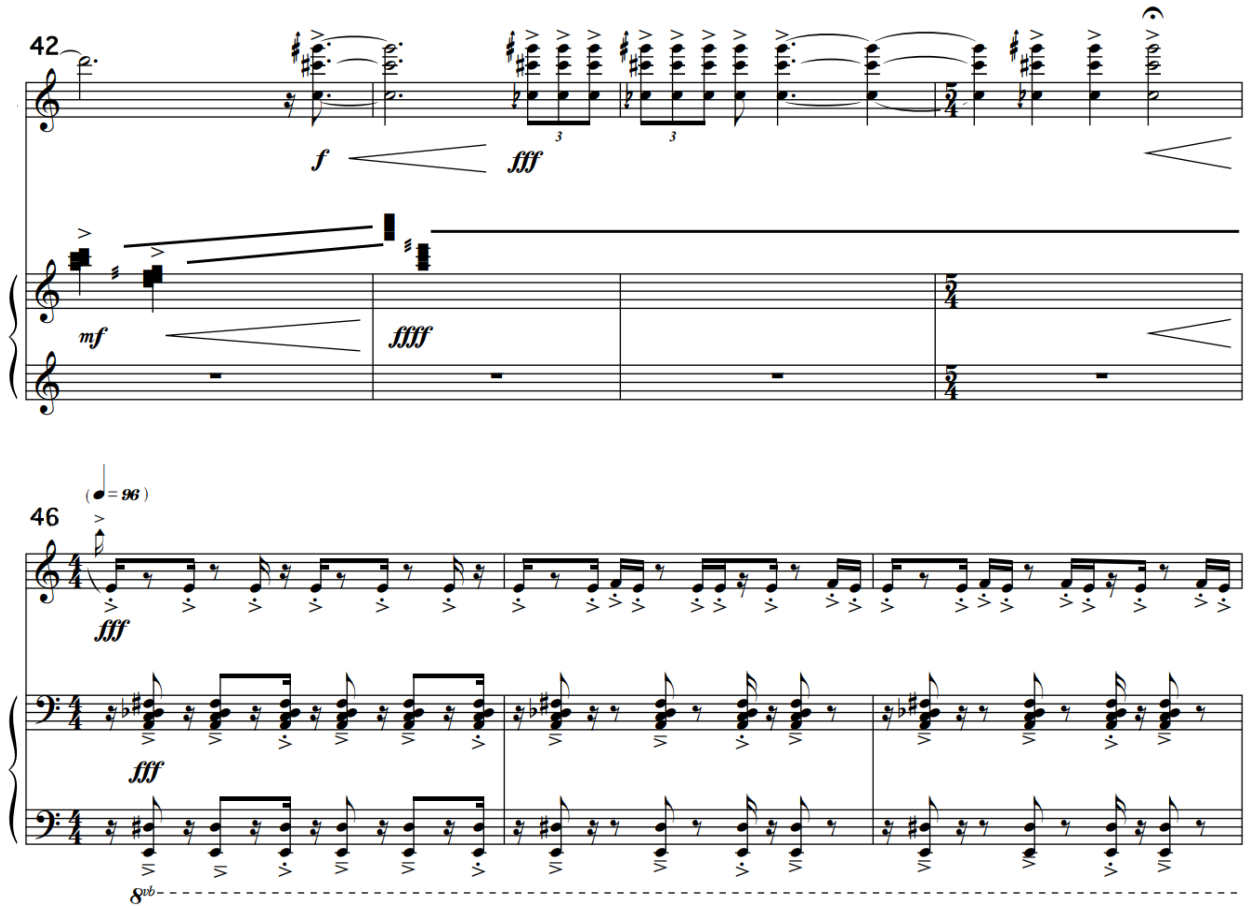


Figure 31: N. Šenk – "Impetus" for Alto Saxophone and Piano, 2nd mov. mm. 46-48

Here, the saxophonist must determine the length of breath and grace note entry following a fermata, and this decision should remain consistent across performances. The complexity of mm. 46–48, where material is exchanged between players, underscores the importance of temporal consistency. Writing out

each other's rhythm—or even a unified rhythm that ultimately the audience will listen—can help both performers internalize the tempo and coordinate their entries.

Receiving a Cue: Pianists often initiate cues in passages where their entrance is earlier than the instrumentalist's entrance. The duration of the cue defines the tempo and prepares the soloist for a precise entrance.

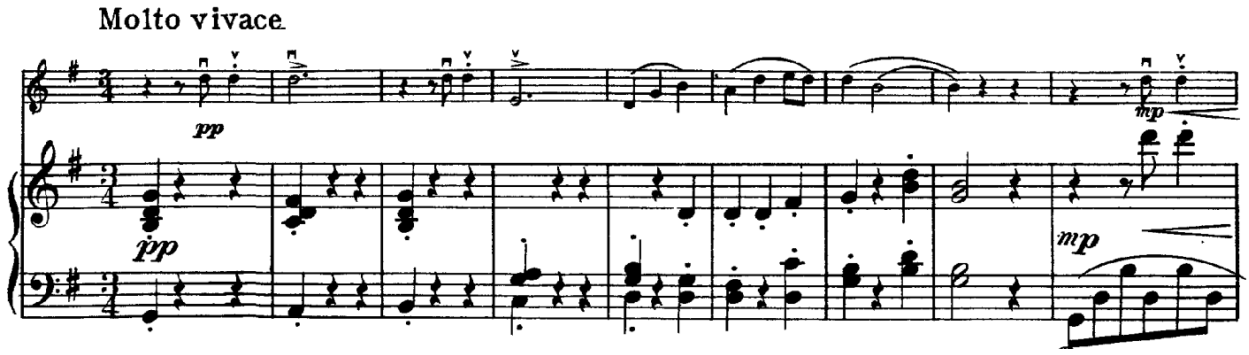


Figure 32: A. Dvorak – Sonatina for Violin and Piano, 3rd mov. mm. 1-9

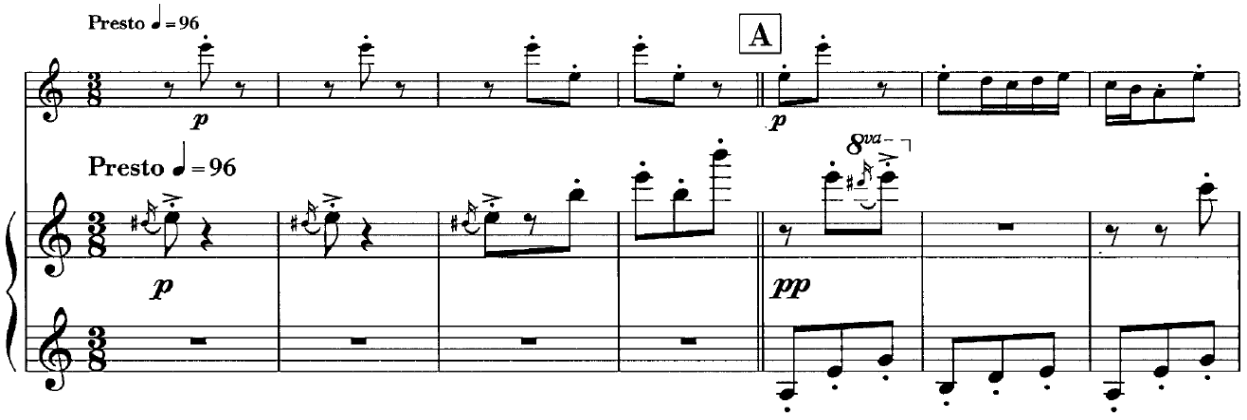


Figure 33: Y. Uebayashi – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 2nd mov. mm. 1-7

Both examples involve a downbeat piano entrance followed by a solo line. Cues can span either a full measure or a single beat. A full-measure cue encourages a more relaxed, "in-one" feel and gives the soloist additional preparation time. A one-beat cue offers greater immediacy and expressive sensitivity but demands quicker reaction. The performers should discuss it during the rehearsal and decide either way. Personally, in Dvořák (*Figure 32*), a full-measure cue is preferable due to its block chord structure. Uebayashi (*Figure 33*), with its more fluid phrasing, benefits from a shorter cue to maintain its delicacy.

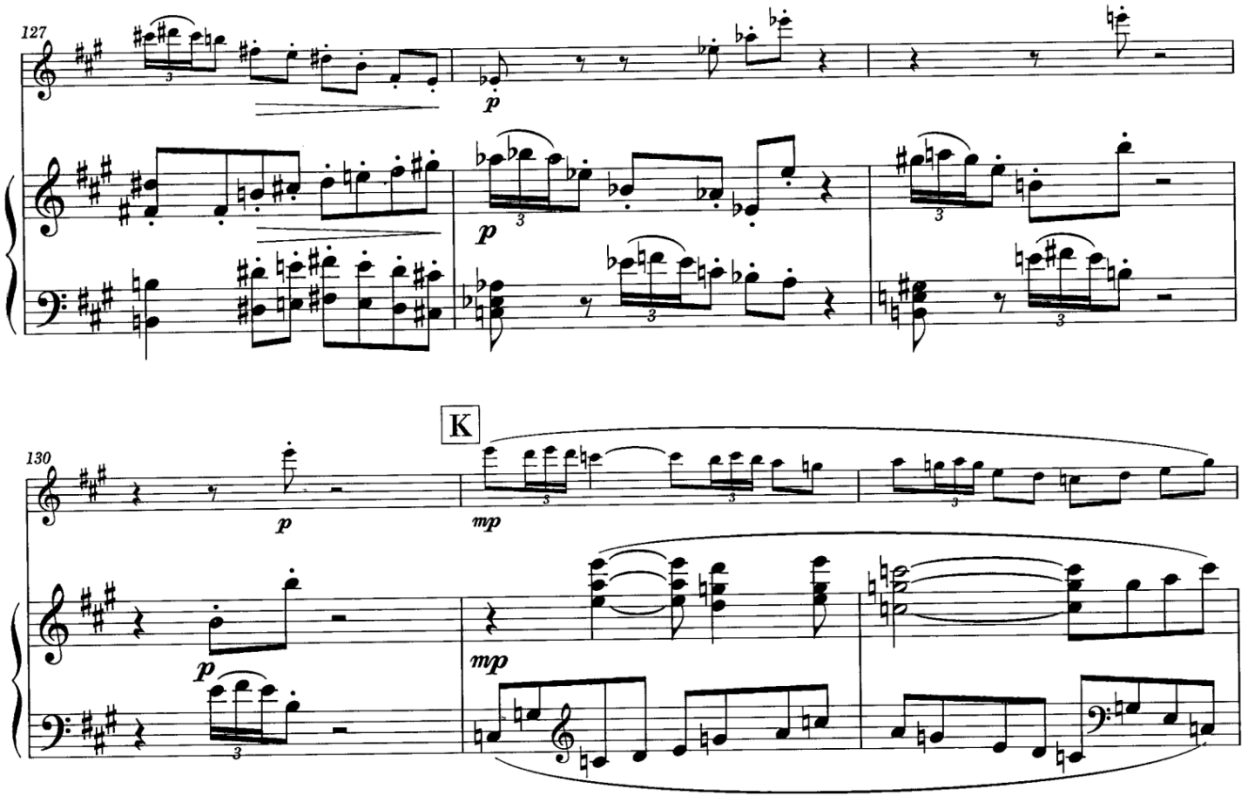


Figure 34: Y. Uebayashi – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 4th mov. mm. 127-132

Cue reception is often contextual. In mm. 129–130, a triple-beats silence blurs the metric pulse. The piano enters on beat 2 of m. 130, followed by the flute an eighth note later. Unless both players can confidently synchronize on beat 2, the pianist should cue on beat 1. Subsequent silence in m. 130 beats 3 and 4 necessitate a flute cue going to m. 131. These silent moments are often more challenging than playing active notes. Performers must fully internalize and share the silence to ensure accurate and expressive entrances.

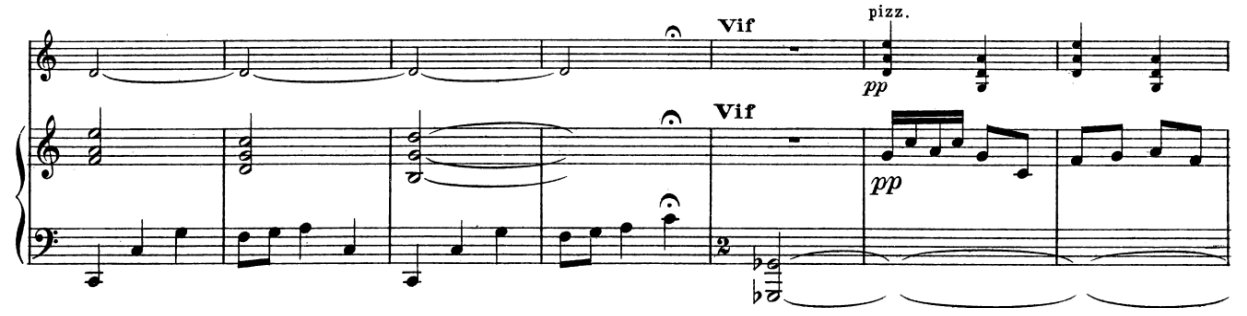


Figure 35: D. Milhaud – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, 2nd mov. mm. 143-149

When the piano texture is thematically or rhythmically dominant, the pianist should cue and the instrumentalist should receive—even if both players enter simultaneously. After the fermata in m. 146, the tempo shifts, but the transition note in m. 147 lacks the clarity to establish a new tempo. Hence, a cue is needed on beat 2 of m. 147 to set the tempo for m. 148. Given that the piano introduces the new melody and the violin plays a secondary role, the pianist should cue and lead the transition. Memorizing the tempo of the *Vif* section in advance will facilitate smoother coordination.

Rehearsal cue: In rehearsal settings, a pianist may provide cues even when they are not musically mandated, particularly if a section poses repeated difficulties or lack of a confidence. Instrumentalists may also request cues from the pianist for added support. Sometimes it is needed due to under-rehearsal. As familiarity develops, the frequency and intensity of such cues can be gradually reduced and ultimately eliminated. This process enhances ensemble trust and autonomy.

Sound Projection: When instrumentalists give or receive a cue, there is a tendency to focus exclusively on the exchange of signals, potentially overlooking the necessity of projecting sound toward the audience. Regardless of signal exchange, the F-holes of string instruments and the bells of wind instruments should face consistently. The ultimate aim of secure cueing is to enhance musical delivery to the audience—not merely to establish internal communication between instrumentalist and pianist. For this reason, it is advisable to conduct initial rehearsals with the musicians facing one another; however, once the ensemble reaches performance readiness, players should reorient toward the audience and rehearse in a larger space. Performing at least once in the intended stage formation is particularly beneficial, as performers cannot fully assess their sound from the audience's perspective.

Cutoff: Whereas cueing initiates sound, cutoff functions to terminate it. The final notes of phrases or movements are often extended—sometimes sustained, sometimes tapered—and it is essential that both performers conclude simultaneously. Typically, the instrumentalist initiates the cutoff gesture. The most

common technique involves an up–down–up motion, with both performers releasing sound at the downward gesture.

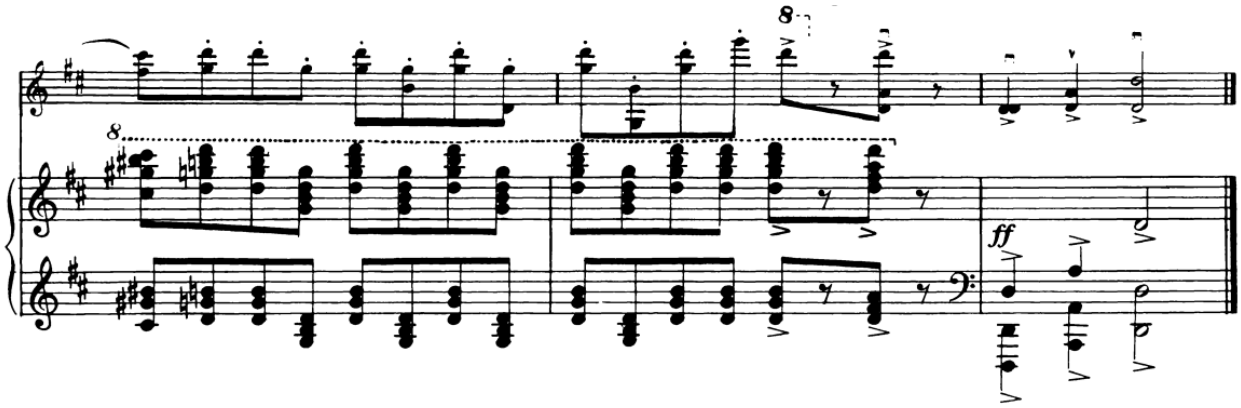


Figure 36: S. Prokofiev – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, 4th mov. mm. 172-174

This figure presents two interpretive options for concluding the sonata: either slowing down to the end or maintaining the original tempo. If the performers choose to employ *allargando*, the final note should be lengthened and the cutoff motion correspondingly slower. Conversely, if they decide to remain in tempo, the cutoff should be more compact and agile. Regardless of the tempo, a larger and more definitive cutoff gesture is advisable, given the fortissimo dynamic and accented articulation at the conclusion. The tempo at the conclusion determines the cutoff's pacing, while the dynamic level influences the size and intensity of the motion.

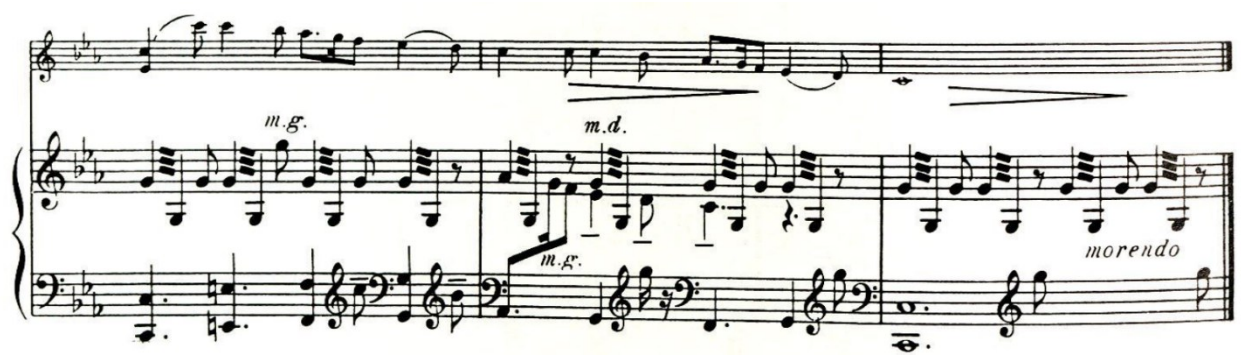


Figure 37: I. Stravinsky – "Suite Italienne" for Violin and Piano, II. Serenata, mm. 30-32

There are instances in which the instrumentalist must wait for the pianist to complete a figure before initiating a cutoff. This typically occurs when the piano accompaniment fades out rather than ending with

sustained final chords. In this figure, the violinist should listen attentively to the *morendo* (implying gentle fade out) and determine the moment of release accordingly. A *ritardando* in the final measure, while not notated, may be musically appropriate. Whether the last note is extended or ends within the flow of the phrase, both performers must arrive at a shared decision, with the violinist particularly attuned to the piano's final gestures.

Breathing Together: In a duo performance, coordinated breathing is essential. This is not simply a cue from one to the other, but a reciprocal, bidirectional exchange. Breathing together with synchronized duration ensures a cohesive entrance following a rest and enhances musical continuity. This practice is especially important when both performers release, rest briefly, and then re-enter simultaneously.

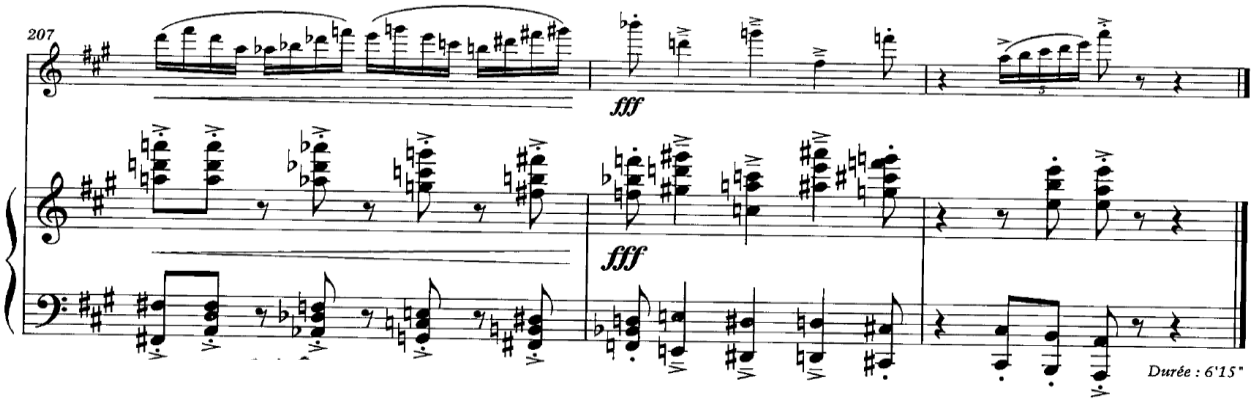


Figure 38: Y. Uebayashi – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 4th mov. mm. 207-209

This example presents a rhythmically complex conclusion involving syncopation, silence, and quintuplets. Due to the energetic character of the passage, there is a risk of rushing in the penultimate measure. Once rhythmic consistency is established, both performers should share a breath on the downbeat of the final measure. This does not necessarily entail a full inhale, but rather a mutual internalization of the downbeat. Observing the rest together enhances ensemble unity and facilitates a synchronized final entrance.

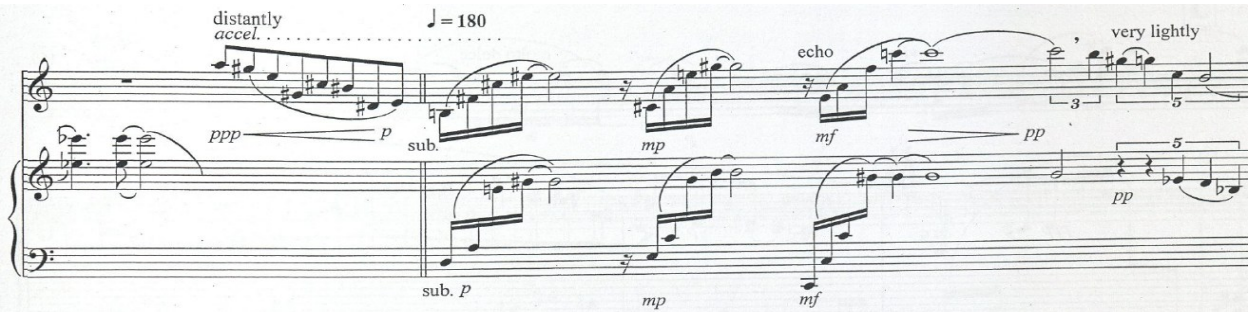


Figure 39: J. A. Lennon – "Distances Within Me" for Alto Saxophone and Piano, Rehearsal #H

Instances of unison rhythm frequently require coordinated breathing. In this passage, depending on how the saxophonist approaches the pickup into the double bar, the pianist may or may not require a cue for the *subito piano*. If the saxophonist executes the *accelerando* fluidly and avoids delaying between the final pre-double bar note and the first note following it, cueing may be unnecessary. Nonetheless, a shared breath during the sixteenth rest preceding the *mezzopiano* is recommended. Though brief—akin to a sniff due to the fast tempo—it contributes to rhythmic cohesion and enhances the precision of the following sixteenth-note figures. In contrast, the subsequent *mezzoforte* section is inequal, as the saxophone enters after the piano's bass attack. In this case, the pianist should offer a cue—either a quarter-note or eighth-note length—based on the saxophonist's comfort.

Contemporary textures with ambiguous meter and temporal fluidity demand advanced ensemble coordination. In such cases, nuanced signal exchange substantially improves performance integrity.

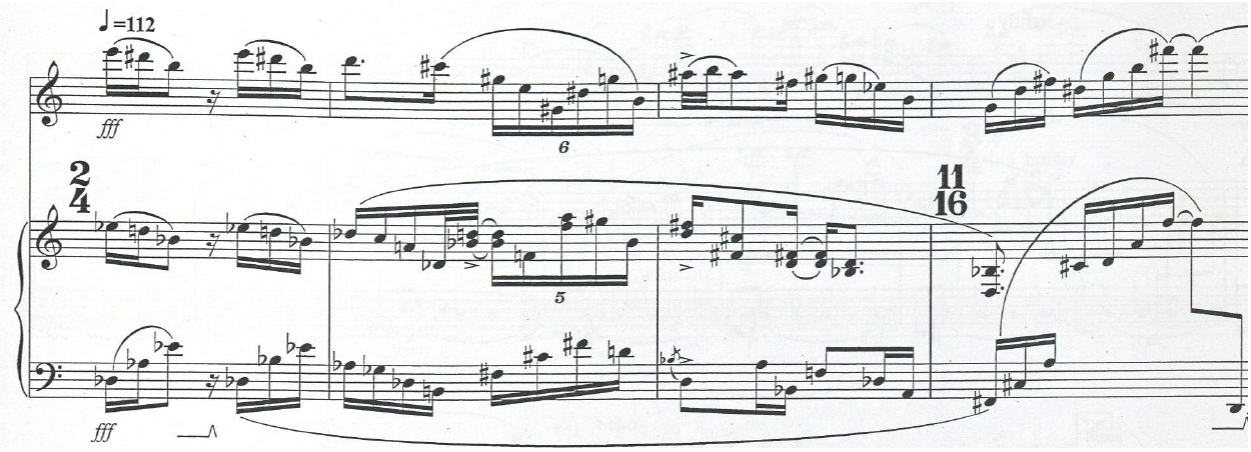


Figure 40: J. A. Lennon – "Distances Within Me" for Alto Saxophone and Piano, Rehearsal #K

This first measure requires simultaneous breathing. It is intended by rests and sudden silence as indicated by the pedal release on the second-beat sixteenth rest. Precision in observing the rest is crucial, given the ease with which performers can misalign. Furthermore, metric grouping must be carefully considered: while the score may imply 2/4, the phrasing functions more effectively as 5/8 + 3/8. Accents placed at the onset of each saxophone pattern (notably the written high E) support this interpretation. Shared awareness of these groupings, in conjunction with accurate rest articulation, facilitates coordinated back-and-forth release and entrance. See also *Figure 8* and *Figure 29.* These earlier examples also contain shared rests, requiring both performers to fully internalize each eighth/quarter rest to ensure synchronized entrances.

IV. Dynamics and Timbre

This section addresses the timbral palette available to the ensemble. In a piano part, all notes exist within a hierarchical structure—some are more prominent or functionally important than others. This hierarchy is often apparent and must be discerned by the collaborating soloist. When the piano shifts its color or dynamic nuance, the soloist must be attuned to that shift and decide whether or not to respond with a corresponding timbral adjustment.

Emphasis: If notes are marked with notations of emphasis—such as *accents, sforzato, sforzando, or fortissimo*—it is evident that certain pitches will emerge more prominently. All master composers incorporate such emphases purposefully. These emphatic markings typically influence the phrasing of solo parts.

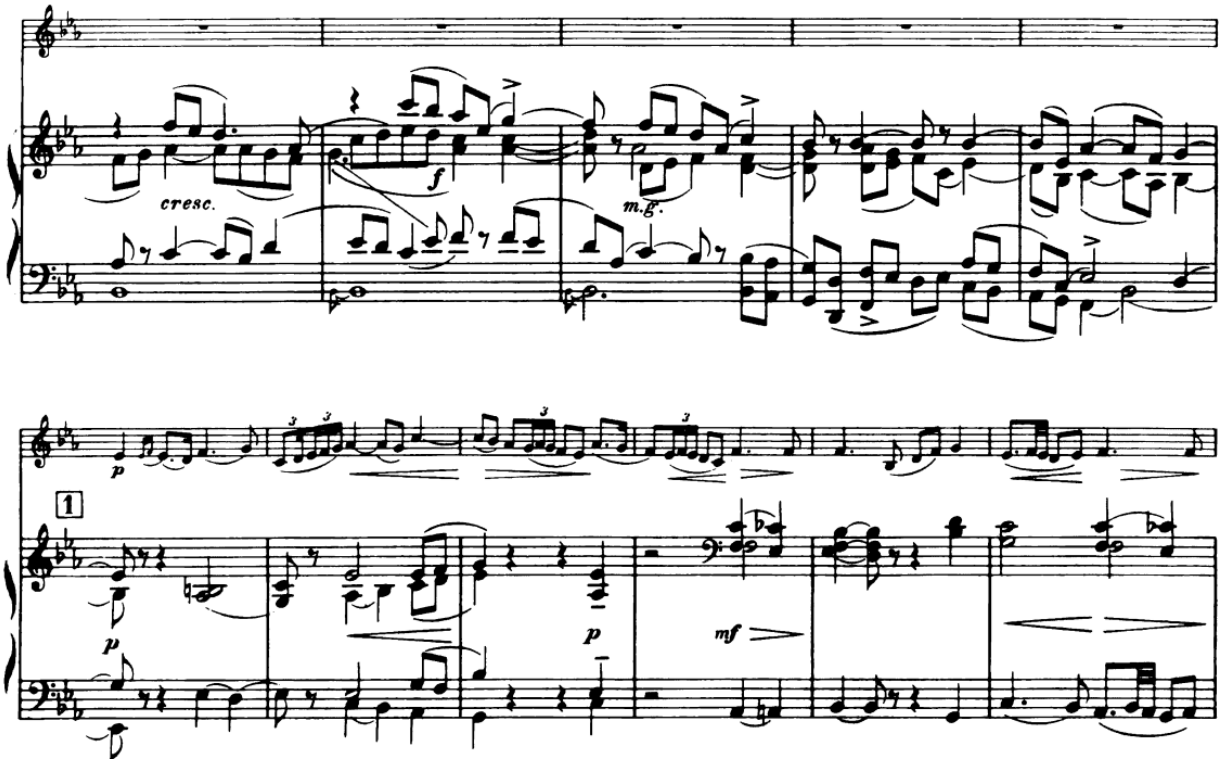


Figure 41: A. Glazunov – Alto Saxophone Concerto, Rehearsal #0 and #1 (Score in C)

This figure demonstrates upbeat accents from the second to the fifth measure. Their role is to destabilize

the metric regularity so that the downbeat at Rehearsal #1—the saxophone entrance—gains prominence without requiring a notated dynamic accent. Such upbeat accents frequently appear at cadential moments. If the saxophonist misinterprets the accented notes as downbeats, it may result in rhythmic misalignment at the entrance. Recognizing the function of these accents mitigates that risk.

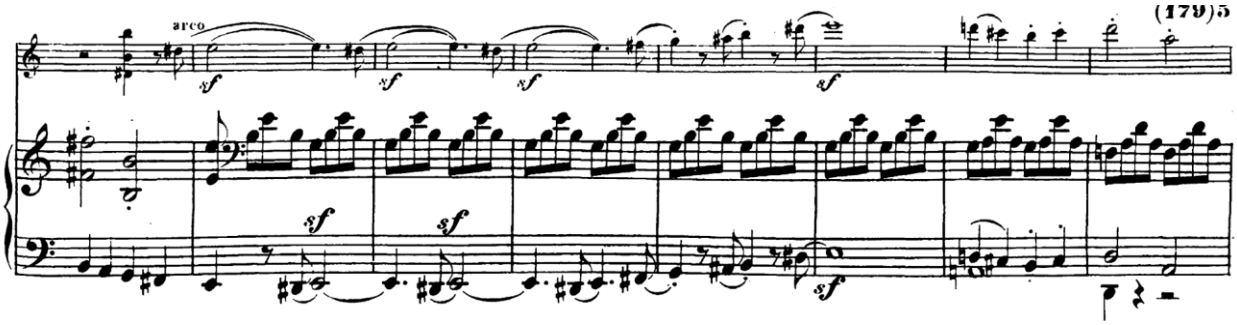


Figure 42: L. v. Beethoven – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 9 "Kreutzer" 1st mov. mm. 156-163

Accented notes can also signify musical dialogue. In mm. 157-159, the *sforzato* markings alternate between the piano and violin, creating a conversational texture. The tension gets higher by fragments in mm. 159-160. Soon, the downbeat of m. 161 features a simultaneous *sforzato* in both parts, marking the climax of the phrase. As a result, there are two ways of using *sforzato* – one in conversation and the other in unity. By recognizing and responding to these, the violinist gains interpretive direction and ensemble cohesion.

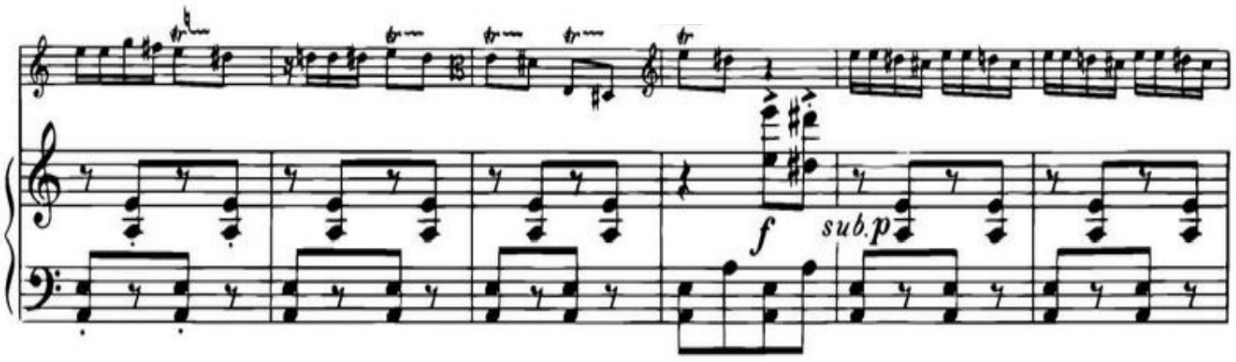


Figure 43: B. Bartok – Viola Concerto, 3rd mov. mm. 7-12

Accents also occur when the soloist is at rest. Here, m. 10 features a tutti entrance with marked accents. The solo viola prepares the orchestral arrival by reiterating an intervallic figure (e–d#) four times. While the viola's line is independent, it functions to build tension leading into m. 10 and pass it ot the orchestra.

As no other instrument anticipates this material before the second beat, the burden of shaping this arrival falls mainly on the violist.

Pitch: Pitch is essential for all melodic instruments, but its salience varies depending on the harmonic context and its relationship to the piano part. A frequent scenario involves the solo instrument and piano sharing a pitch or similar material. When this occurs, tuning discrepancies become more audible, even if the figures are not identical.

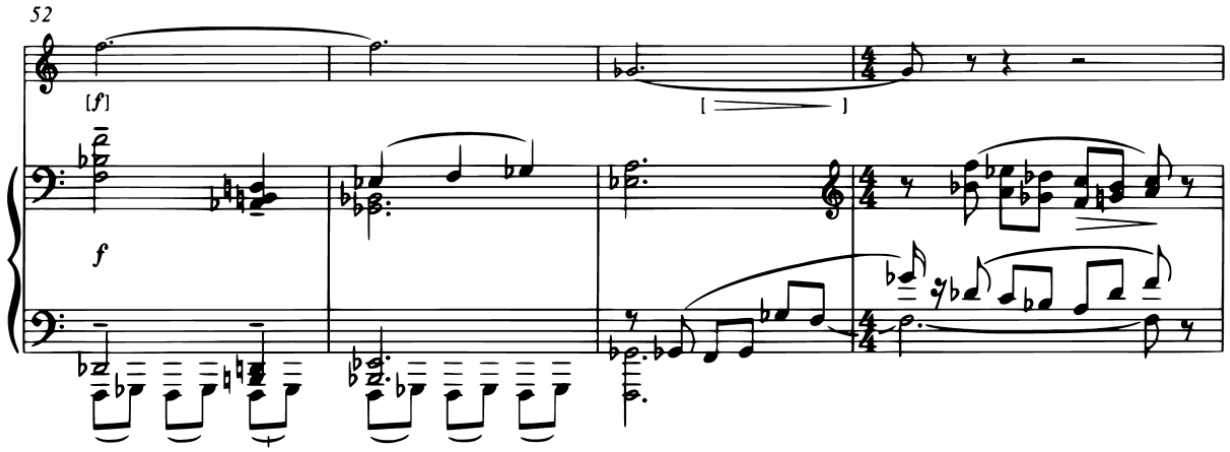
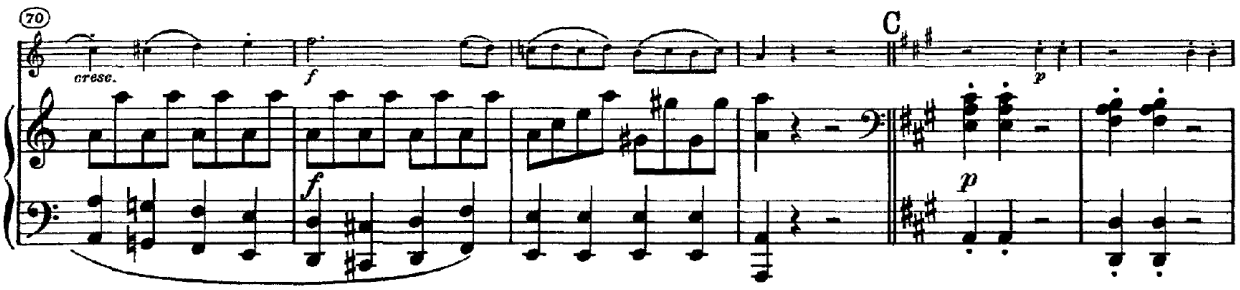


Figure 44: F. Poulenc – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 2nd mov. mm. 52-55

In m. 54, the flute plays a G♭—the ninth of the chord—creating a minor second with the bass note in the piano. Although the piano's chord is thickly voiced and located in a low register, the flute's in-tune execution is essential. Additionally, the piano reiterates the G♭ at the same range as the flute in m. 55. The flutist must maintain consistent pitch across the decrescendo of m. 54 to ensure a seamless handoff to the piano without any perceptible pitch sag.



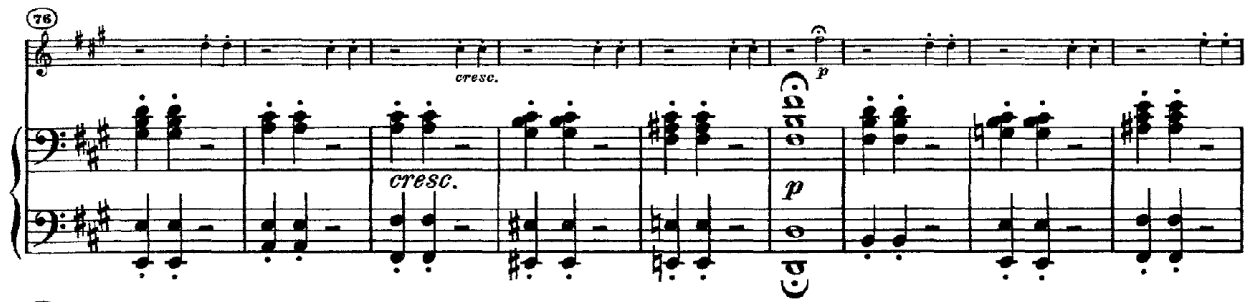


Figure 45: L. v. Beethoven – Sonata for Violin and Piano No.4, 3rd mov, mm. 74-84

Even when the same pitch does not occur simultaneously in both parts, its recurrence carries structural weight—particularly in sparse textures. In this figure, the violin reiterates the piano's upper notes, one beat later and at the distance of an octave higher. Because of this repetition of pitches, and the absence of other concurrent material, the accuracy of intonation becomes especially perceptible.

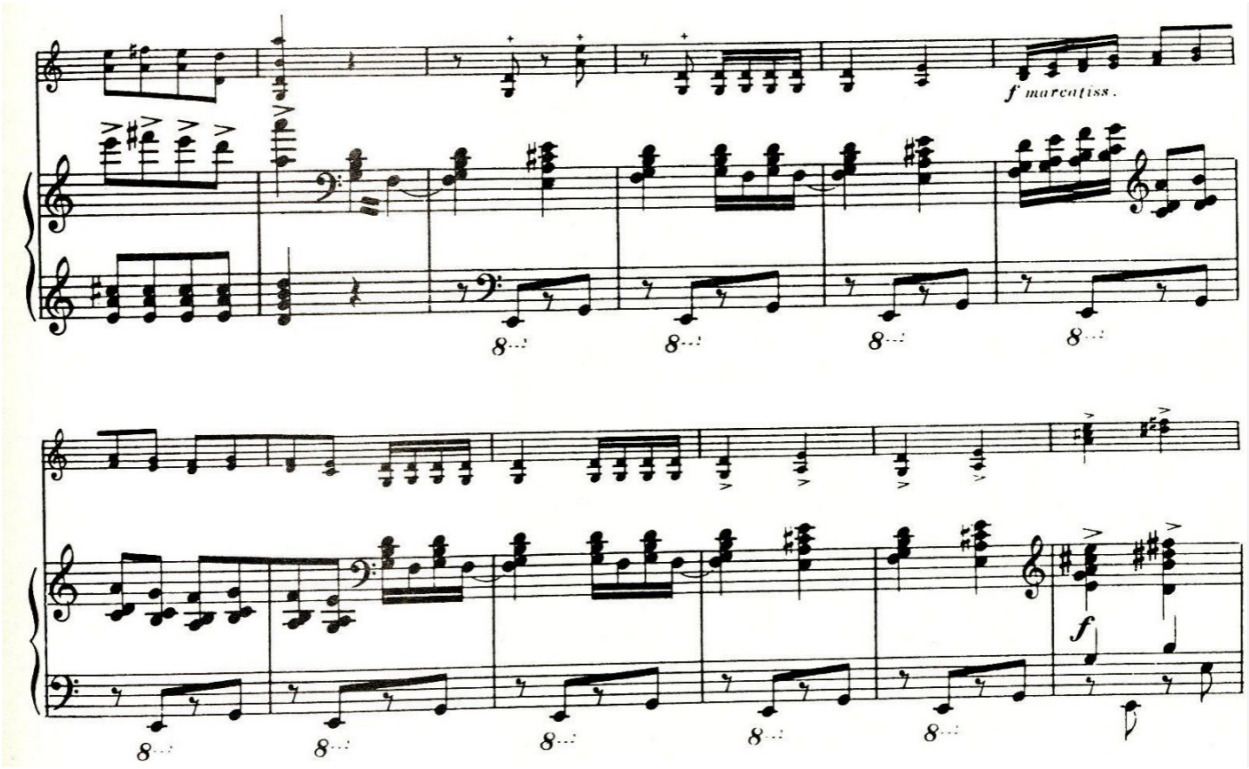


Figure 46: I. Stravinsky – "Suite Italienne" for Violin and Piano, VI. Minuetto e Finale, mm. 138-149

Pitch alignment becomes particularly perceptible when the piano and soloist share melodic material with different harmonic implications. From m. 143, the violin's and piano's top notes coincide, although harmonized differently. The violin plays in thirds, while the piano frames the line with fifths and sixths.

Matching the top pitches across these textures reinforces the perception of a unified harmonic motion.

Special Harmony: The piano's harmonic capacity affords it a unique role in establishing musical color and tension. The solo part, often linear, may not thoroughly indicate underlying harmonic changes. Understanding these harmonic shifts offers performers crucial insight into phrasing, shaping, and dynamic nuance.

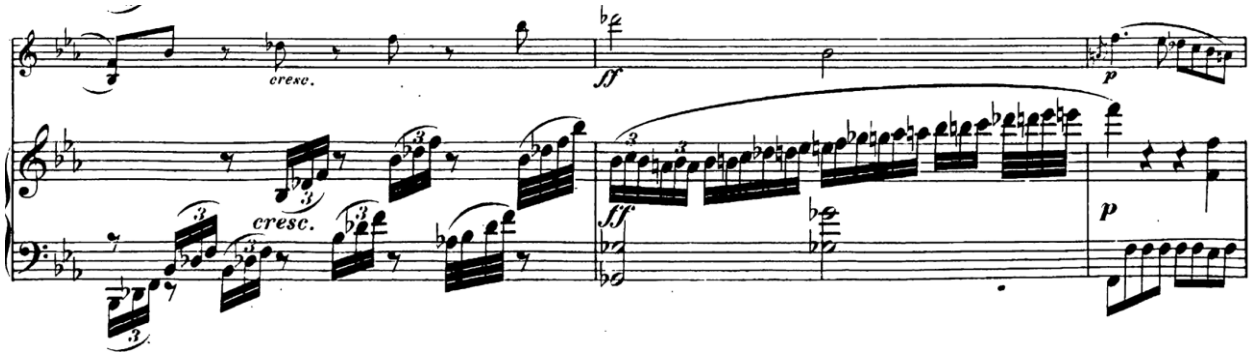


Figure 47: L. v. Beethoven – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3, 1st mov. mm. 21-23

From the solo part alone, the chordal shift between m. 21 and m. 22 may be imperceptible. However, mm. 21 outlines the tonic of B♭ minor, while m. 22 reveals a German 6th. This harmonic shift justifies the fortissimo marking and sudden increase in tension, which then resolves into the dominant in m. 23. Understanding this harmonic trajectory enables performers to execute more meaningful dynamic contrasts and intensity control.

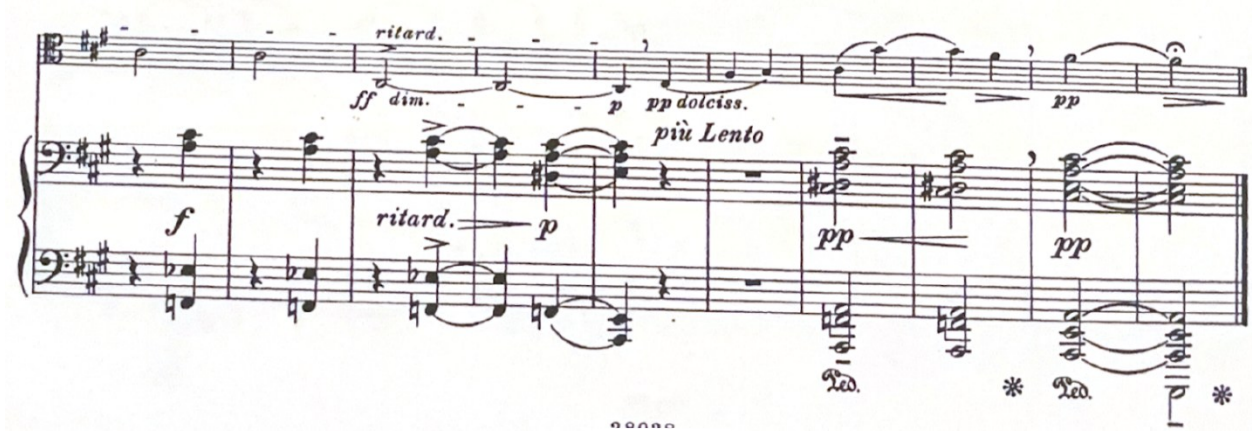


Figure 48: Y. Bowen – Sonata for Viola and Piano, 2nd mov. Last 10 measures

Here, the harmonic tension unfolds visibly. Over the first four measures, the piano has the alternative German 6th chord, including augmented-major seventh sonorities. It intensifies until a dynamic release in the fifth measure, resolving into the tonic. Notably, the viola sustains a C♯ across these harmonic shifts. Awareness of this harmonic progression supports a violist's purposeful diminuendo from fortissimo to piano.

The alternate German 6th reappears in 7th and 8th measures. The viola's high B, which is an appoggiatura and a suspension, gain expressive power when their dissonant function is understood. Recognizing these notes as non-harmonic tones allows for the effective deployment of tension and release—avoiding mischaracterization as stable harmonic tones.

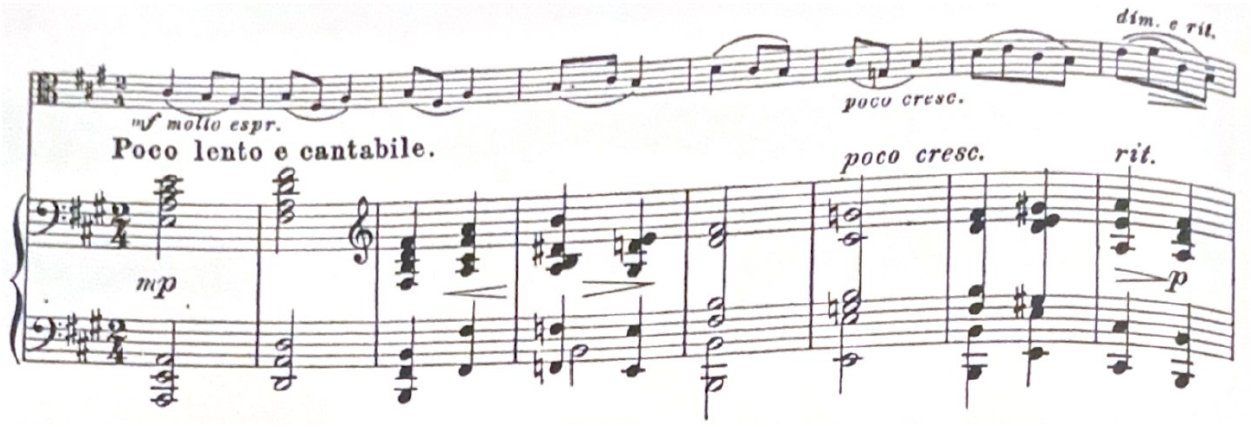


Figure 49: Y. Bowen – Sonata for Viola and Piano, 2nd mov. mm. 1-8

In some cases, the solo part does *not* notate the piano's harmonic color changes. The first four measures present a diatonic viola melody, while the piano introduces a French 6th chord, emphasized with a dynamic hairpin. Even though the viola lacks such markings, mirroring the piano's content at mm. 3-4 with a slight accent and shaping enhances the musical expression.

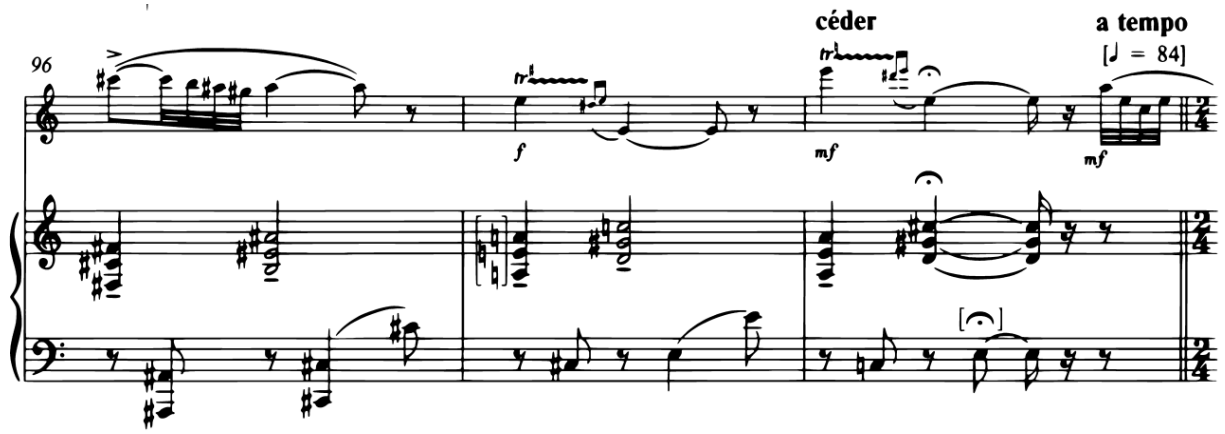


Figure 50: F. Poulenc – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 1st mov. mm. 96-98

Coloristic transformation can also arise through modality shifts. This example transitions from major to minor, and back again to major, and again to minor. It is a frequent device in transitional passages. The C♮ at m. 97 subtly ushers in a minor vibe. It returns to C♯ in m. 98, which is the last note to feel a major key. This brings closure to the preceding large major section and starts the following minor section. Though the flute merely sustains E, this note functions as a tonal axis. The flutist should adapt their tone color to mirror the harmonic shift implied by the piano, a hallmark of refined ensemble performance. This instability contributes to the smooth transition.

Receiving the Energy: Musical collaboration is organic. When the pianist introduces meaningful material before a soloist's entrance, the soloist should respond to the context rather than initiating a separate idea. The forward momentum must be preserved through dynamic listening and shaping.

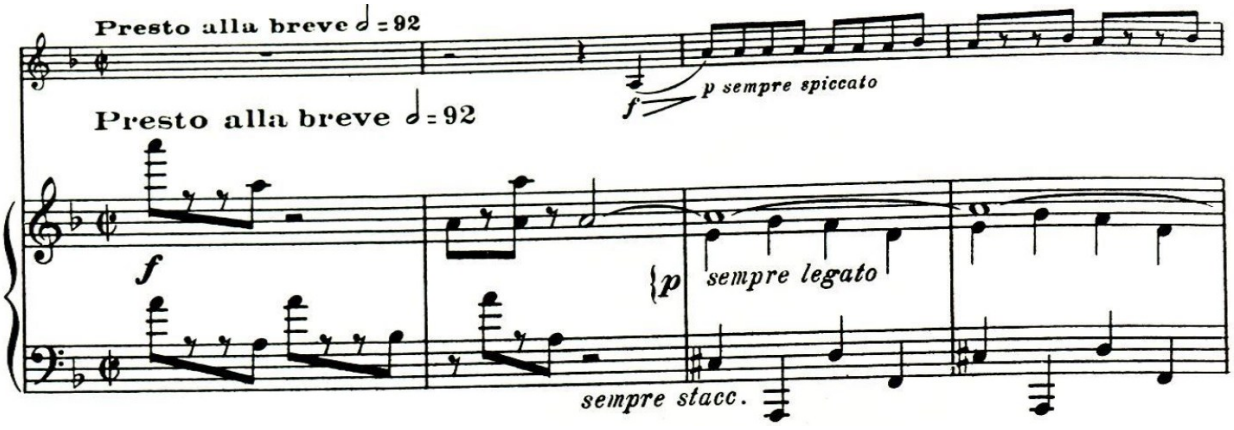


Figure 51: I. Stravinsky – "Suite Italienne" for Violin and Piano, V. Scherzino, mm. 1-4

This figure exemplifies an energy transfer at the opening. The piano's rhythmic introduction propels the violin's entrance, which should be interpreted as an extension of the preceding figure. The true melodic material begins in m. 3. The piano sustains the final note as the violin enters, enabling both performers to calibrate energy through repeated rehearsal.

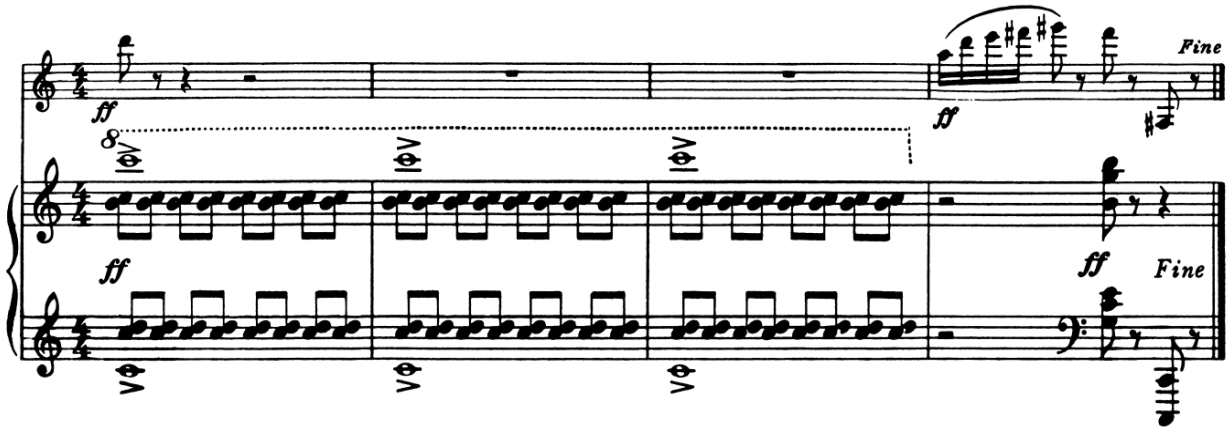


Figure 52: F. Poulenc – Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, 3rd mov. Rehearsal #14

Energy transfers also occur at a piece's conclusion. Here, the piano builds intensity over three measures before stopping. The clarinet then enters with a flourish. The clarinetist must absorb and extend the piano's momentum. The absence of accompaniment at the clarinet's entrance underscores the importance of energetic continuity, demanding interpretive foresight from both performers.

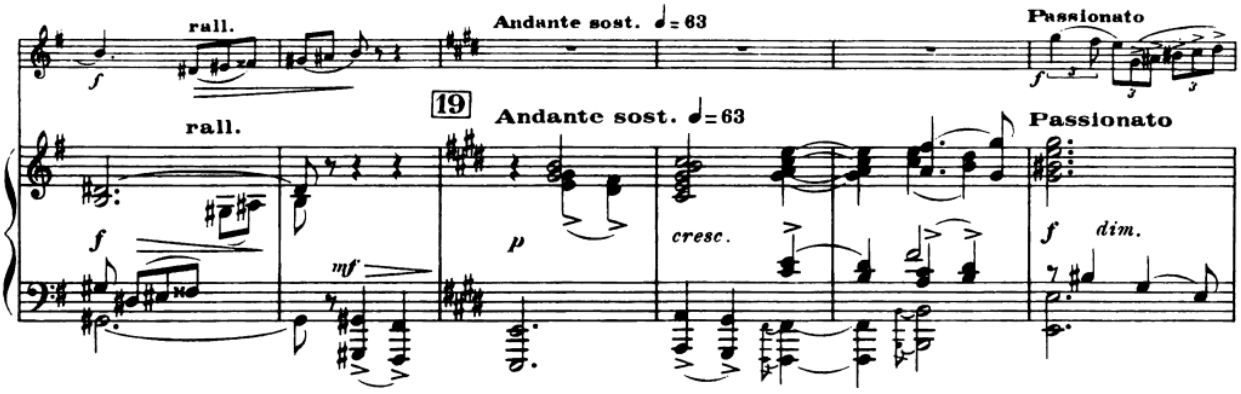


Figure 53: A. Glazunov – Alto Saxophone Concerto, Rehearsal #18 and #19 (Score in C)

In this figure, the piano part increases tension before passing it to the saxophone. Unlike the previous examples, the energy is not present from the start of Rehearsal #19 but grows into a climax, marked

Passionato. The saxophonist must join this intensified soundscape immediately. The final augmented triad requires particular emphasis to convey its dissonant power. The saxophonist reinforces this harmonic tension by projecting the concert pitch G♯.

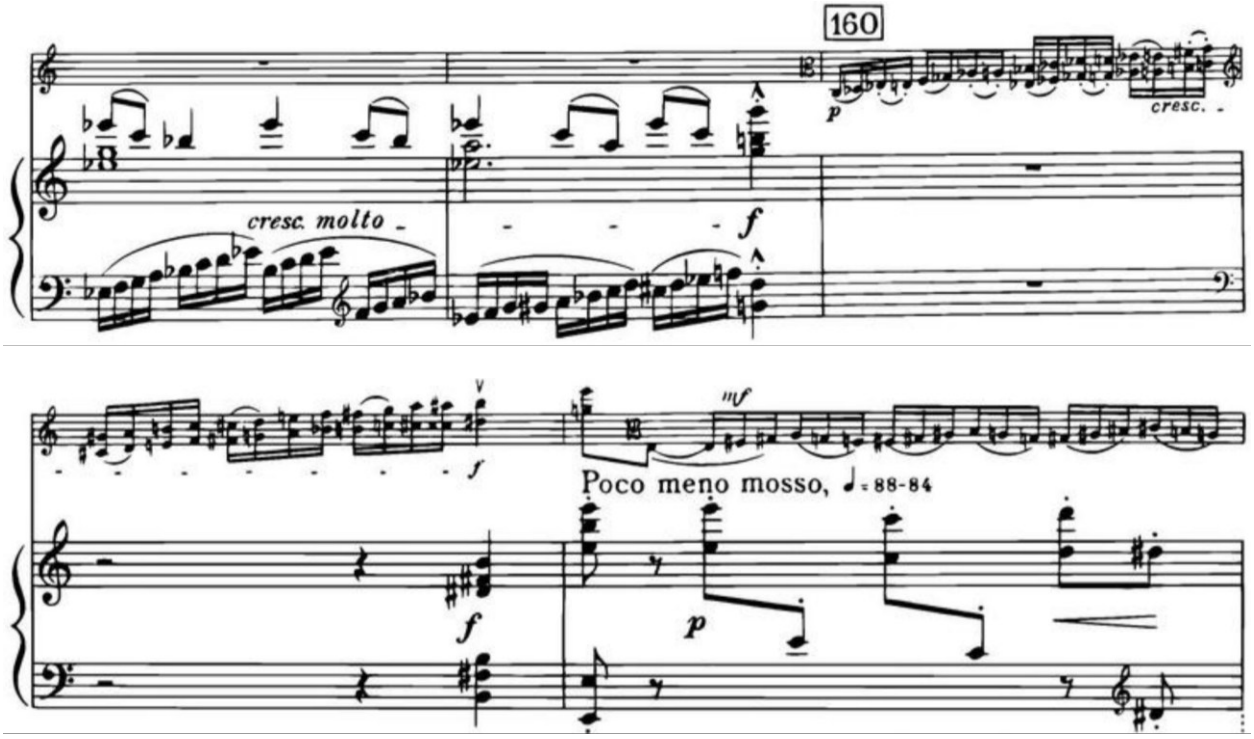


Figure 54: B. Bartok – Viola Concerto, 1st mov. mm. 158-162

Not all energy transfers are evenly connected. Some involve deliberate drops in dynamic to support a broader dramatic moment. This example illustrates a temporary drop followed by a powerful crescendo. The solo viola enters at piano, yet the gesture is not a new beginning but a continuation. The performer must maintain tension throughout the drop to ensure coherence within the larger phrase trajectory.

Passing the Energy: Conversely, soloists often stop gestures then the piano continues. Awareness of how long and how intense the piano's continuation will enable the soloist to create proper space for the pianist. At times, composers require unexpectedly truncating phrases for solo instruments or interruptions between the solo instruments and the piano. Though potentially awkward in solo practice, these gestures gain contextual meaning in ensemble.

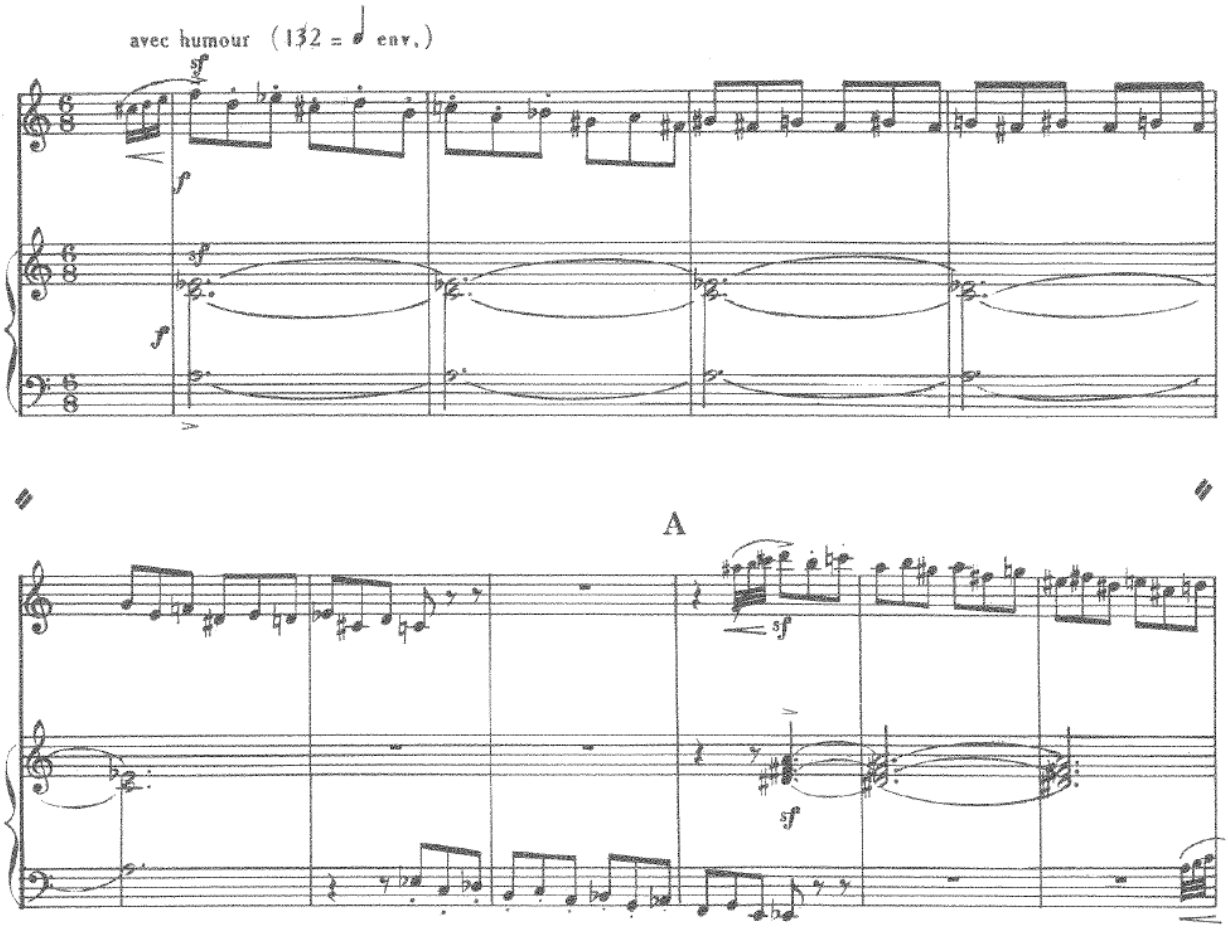


Figure 55: I. Gotkovsky – "Brillance" for Alto Saxophone and Piano, 2nd mov. mm. 1-10

Once the saxophone concludes its downward motion at m. 6, the piano part assumes the continuation at the same pitch. (The score is transposed, so the saxophone's final note in m. 6 sounds as E♭ in concert pitch.) The complete descent resolves at the second beat of m. 9. For the saxophonist, this marks an earlier exit from the downward trajectory than the phrase's structural conclusion. Thus, the saxophonist should not treat m. 6 as a phrase ending, but rather pass the musical momentum to the pianist, allowing them to complete the phrase at m. 9.

This act of passing energy illustrates that the soloist is not always responsible for initiating or concluding ascending and descending. Depending on the texture, the soloist may enter mid-ascent, appear at the climax, or exit prior to the descent's resolution. The pianist then carries forward or completes the trajectory. Recognizing this yields a more cohesive and organically integrated performance.

Matching Timbre: The piano often presents figures that, while not traditionally accompanimental, are highly interrelated with the solo line. In these cases, the piano frequently adopts a texture similar to that of the soloist. Familiarity with the piano part and its expressive markings can offer the soloist significant insight into interpretive decisions.

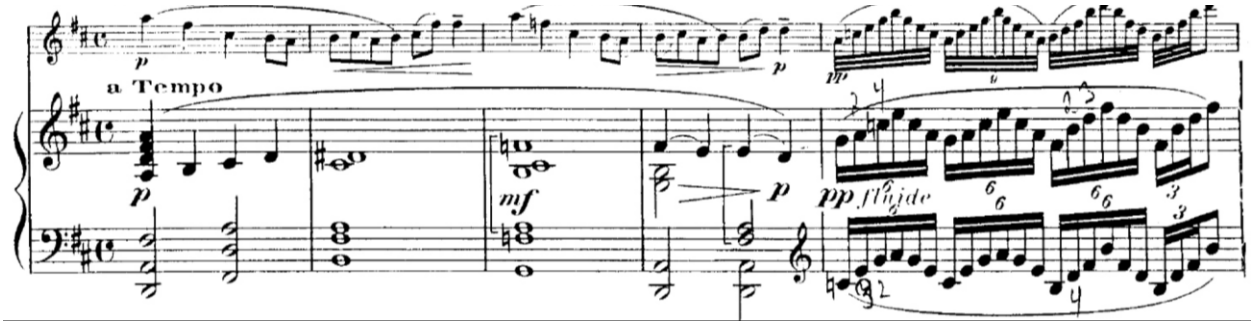
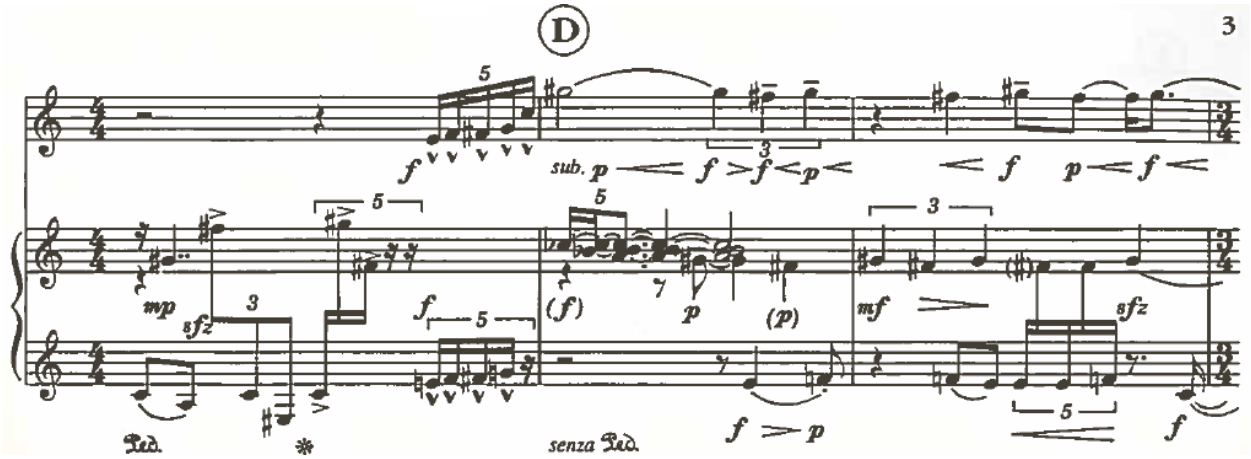


Figure 56: P. Gaubert – Sonata for Flute and Piano No. 3, 2nd mov. mm. 10-14

The first four measures consist of chordal accompaniment alongside a linear melodic line. However, in the final measure, the accompaniment shifts to an arpeggiated figure in a contrasting rhythm from flute's arpeggio. This deliberate rhythmic mismatch creates a veiled and misty timbre. In such passages, capturing the expressive character is more critical than executing the 6:8 rhythm with mechanical precision. Additionally, the piano part is marked *fluide*—a direction that, despite its absence in the flute part, suggests a shared expressive quality. When expressive markings appear solely in the accompaniment, they often imply that the composer attributes expressive agency to the piano at that moment. The soloist must then decide whether to join or contrast that character.



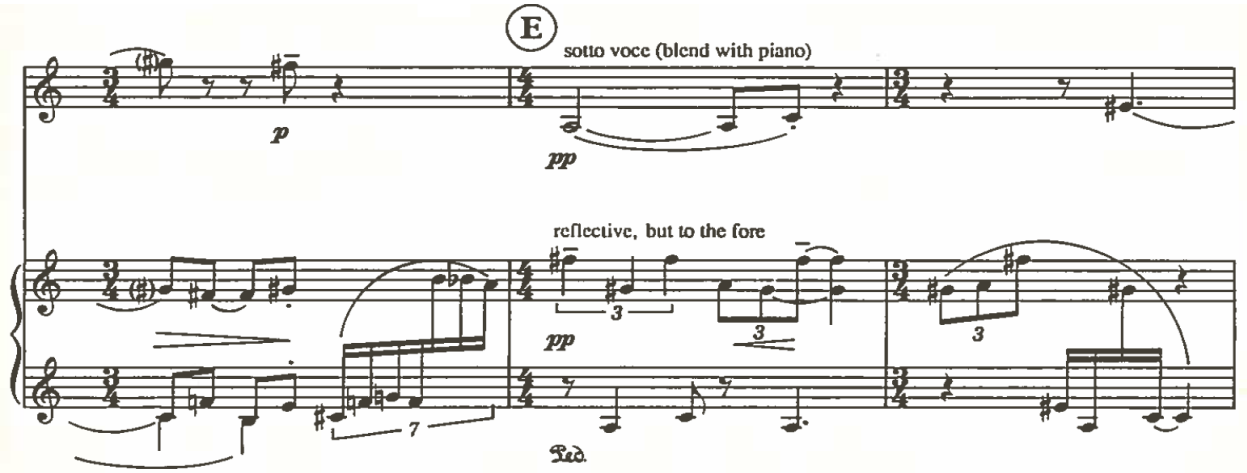


Figure 57: W. Albright – Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, 1st mov. Rehearsal #D and #E

When the piano part assumes the leading role in a section, it is essential to recognize its timbral qualities and to match them accordingly. This becomes particularly important in moments of color change, when the piano has a leading role in the subsequent section. At rehearsal #D, the music is characterized by pronounced dynamic contrasts and narrow voicing, with both performers sharing equal significance. By contrast, at rehearsal #E, the piano assumes the primary role. The composer even inscribes the instruction "blend with piano," a verbal indication that exemplifies how modern composers frequently employ written directives to elaborate hierarchical relationships. At rehearsal #E, the piano part is marked by a softer dynamic, subtler dynamic shifts, wider intervals, and a harmonic richness that stands in contrast to the preceding section at rehearsal #D. This observation proves particularly valuable for enabling the saxophonist to blend effectively with the piano. Attending to such contextual nuances is indispensable for an informed performance.

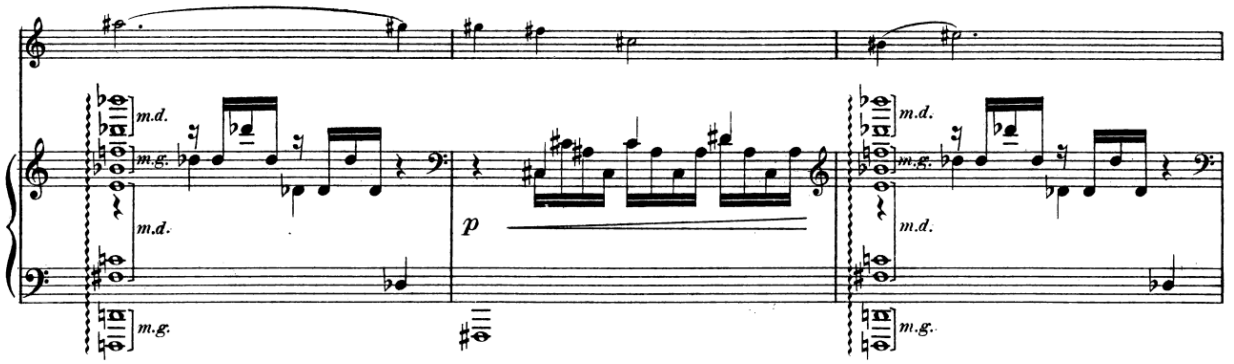


Figure 58: D. Milhaud – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, 4th mov. mm. 48-50

When chords are written with *arpeggio notation*, they gain an ornamental emphasis. The soloist must understand the quality of these arpeggios and adjust their playing accordingly. In mm. 48 and 50, Milhaud writes two expansive arpeggios supporting the violin's principal melody. The violinist must project the melodic line clearly to prevent it from being obscured by the dense texture of the piano. Additionally, broad-range arpeggios such as these inherently require temporal space; the first beat should be slightly lengthened to accommodate the gesture's breadth.

Same Melody with different timbres: In many pieces, the solo part and the piano part have the same melody in different measures. Making the phrasing, articulation, and dynamics the same is the fundamental way to match timbre. However, some cases need a different timbre despite the same melody. There is usually a musical reason that explains it.

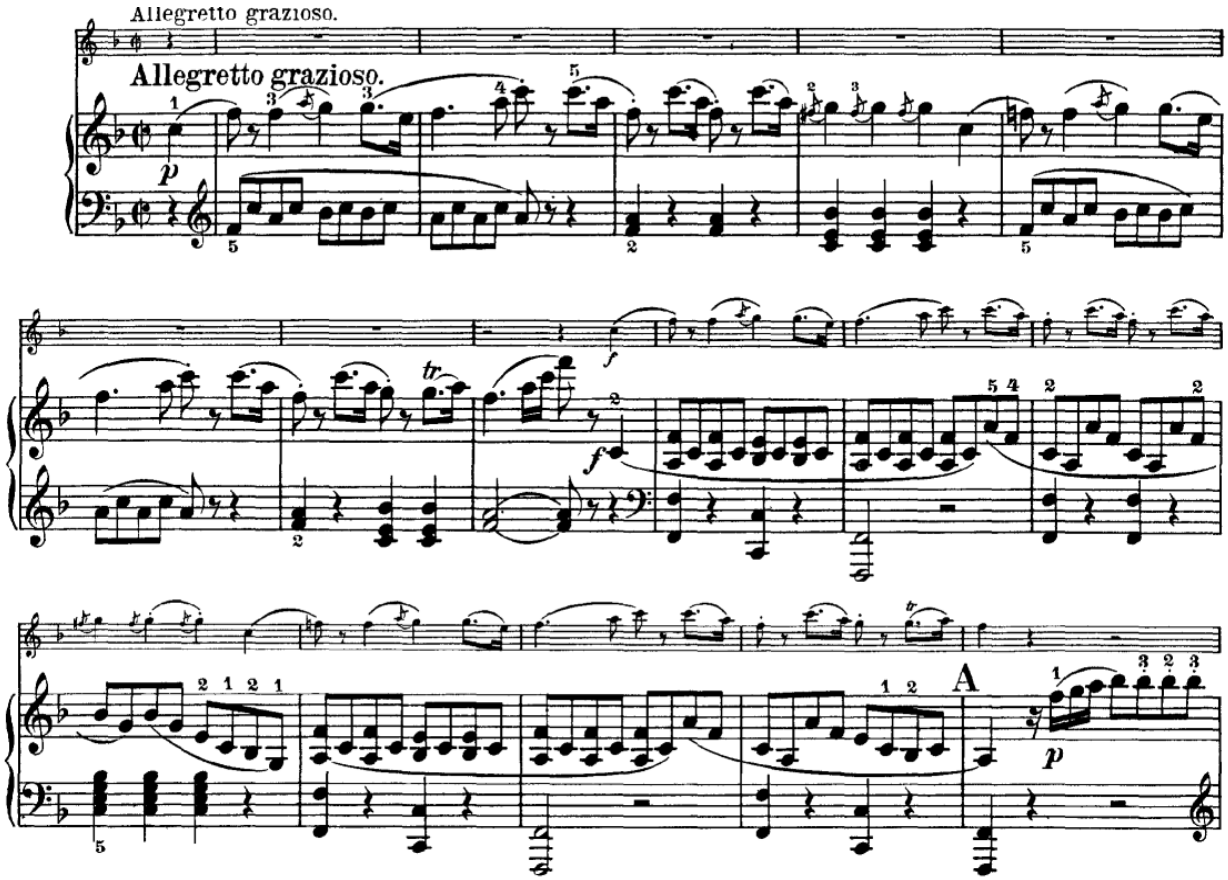


Figure 59: W. A. Mozart – Sonata for Violin and Piano K. 376, 3rd mov. mm. 1-11

This excerpt provides an example where two entrances of the same melody should sound consistent but different. Both piano (m. 1) and violin (m. 9) present the melody. Certain musical elements—such as staccato length and execution of trills—should remain consistent. However, the accompanying textures diverge significantly. At m. 1, the accompaniment is soft and confined to the upper register. At m. 9, the texture is grander, spanning a wider range of the keyboard and reinforced by octave doubling in the bass, evoking the resonance of a double bass. Whereas the accompaniment at the beginning changes every two measures, creating marked contrast, the passage from mm. 9–16 maintains a more consistent figure. The dynamic markings also differ between the two statements. Consequently, the piano melody at m. 1 and the violin melody at m. 9 should employ contrasting timbres by controlling tone color, dynamics, and phrasing.

Contemporary Textures: These often explore diverse timbral possibilities. A common technique is the muted string, where the pianist damps the strings with a finger or other designated material. It produces a short, percussive sound despite notational values indicating longer durations.

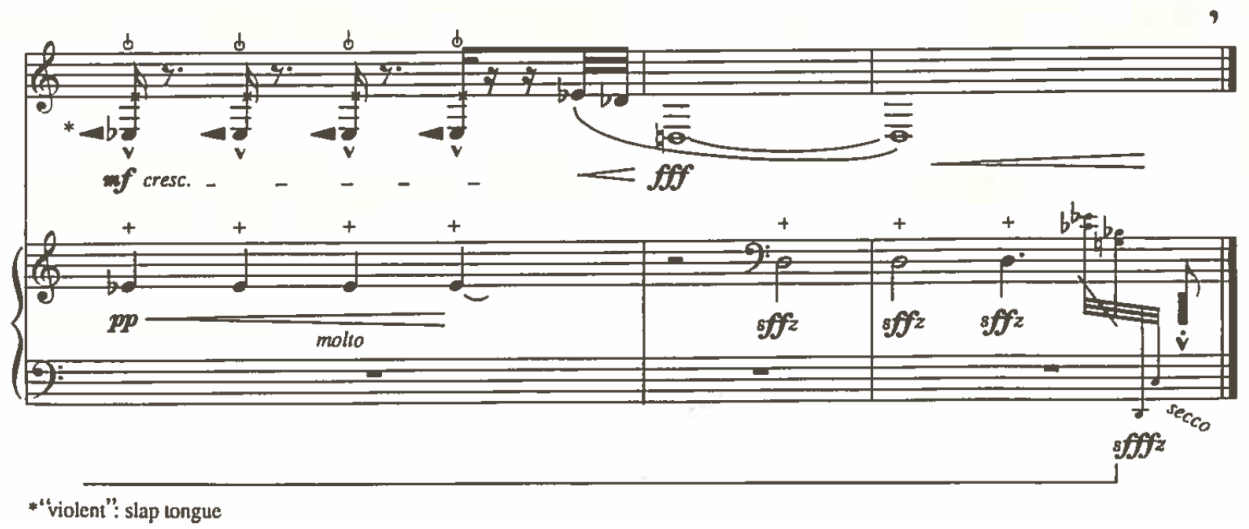


Figure 60: W. Albright – Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, 4th mov. Rehearsal #O

Here, although the piano plays quarter notes, the muted technique renders them effectively as staccato, resting sounds. Simultaneously, the saxophone employs aggressive slap tonguing. These two sounds

together create a unified, sharply articulated texture, with the saxophone taking dynamic precedence. In the following measures, however, the two instruments diverge in texture. The saxophonist must project forcefully without piano reinforcement, while the pianist may bring out the muted D more fully, no longer needing to remain dynamically subordinate.

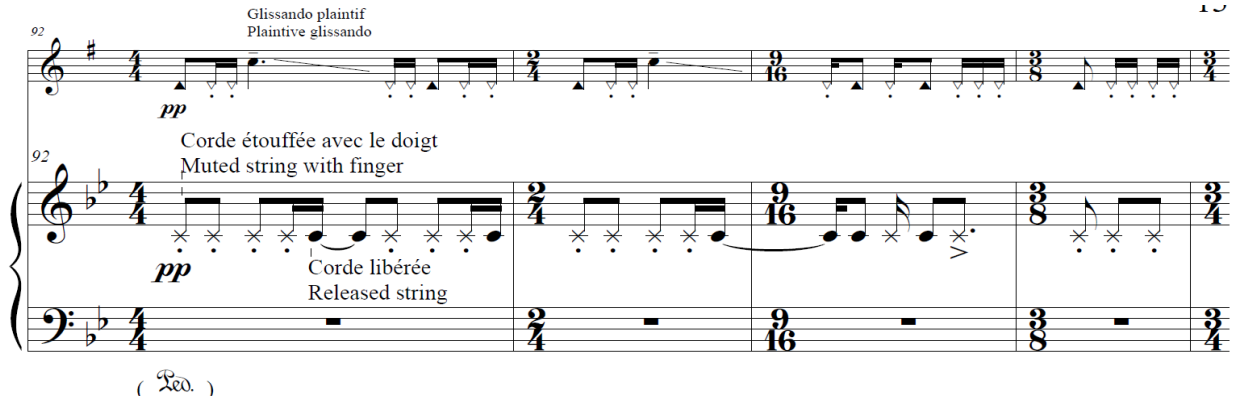


Figure 61: J-D. Michat – "5 Visions Amoureuses" for Alto Saxophone and Piano, mm. 92-94

This passage provides another instance of muted string technique. (Here, a filled triangle indicates a slap tongue with pitch; a hollow reversed triangle indicates a slap tongue without pitch.) The result is a percussive interplay reminiscent of a percussion duo. The essential interpretive question lies in the irregular alternation between pitched and non-pitched sounds. Both performers must determine the degree of percussiveness and duration of their articulations in response to one another. Comparing the saxophone's slap tongue without pitch to the piano's muted attack allows the duo to shape a cohesive and intentional sonic texture.

V. Balance

The importance of achieving balance in ensemble performance cannot be overstated. Human auditory perception naturally prioritizes the highest voice, followed by the bass, and lastly the inner voices or accompaniment. This poses a challenge in collaborative settings, particularly because the piano functions not only as an accompanying instrument but also as a solo instrument. Over centuries, keyboard instruments have undergone substantial development, culminating in the modern piano's capacity to produce powerful sound with ease—a trait highly valued in solo piano repertoire. However, this capacity can lead pianists to unintentionally overpower their collaborators in ensemble settings. Another complicating factor is the discrepancy in acoustic experience between the performers on stage and the audience in the hall. What performers hear on stage may differ significantly from what the audience perceives from the auditorium.

This chapter addresses the issue of balance in collaborative performance. Depending on the musical context and the significance of each part, performers must learn when to project their sound and when to blend. This consideration becomes especially critical in textures that deviate from the traditional hierarchy—where the solo instrument carries the melody and the piano provides bass and accompaniment.

Solo Instrument's Accompaniment: There are numerous instances where the solo instrument assumes an accompanying role while the piano presents the principal melodic material. In such cases, the solo line often supports the piano's melodic development while keeping the phrasing. When functioning as accompaniment, the soloist must ensure the piano's sound projects clearly. Moreover, if the pianist is shaping a melodic line, the soloist can support it through nuanced control of dynamics and timing. Even in the absence of the primary melody, the soloist plays an active role in the expressive shaping of the musical texture.

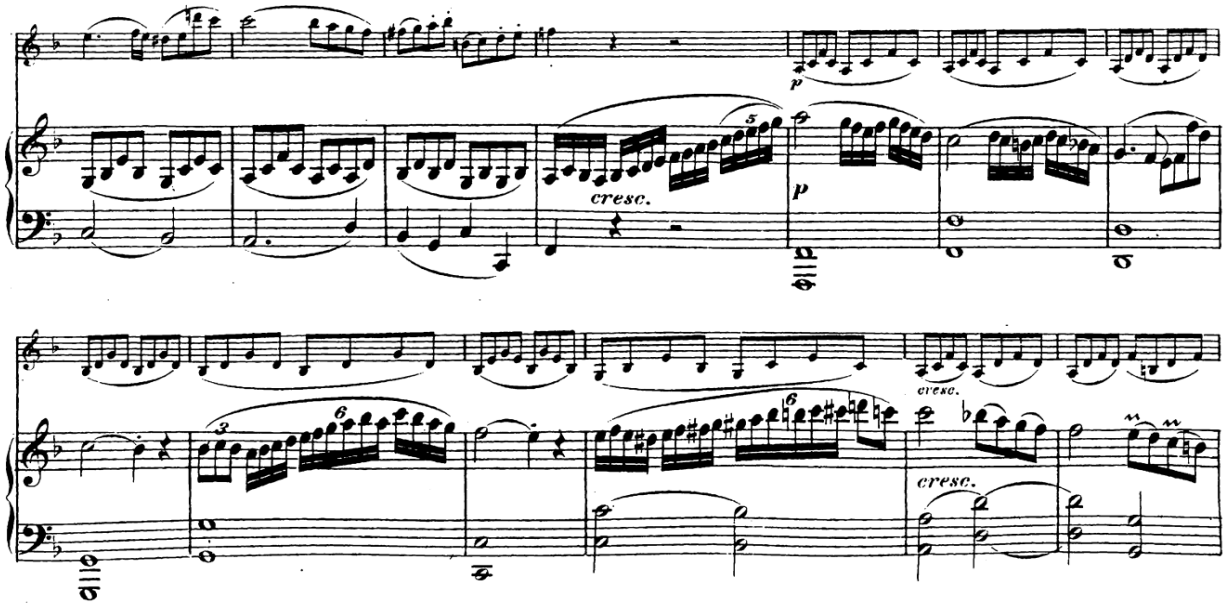


Figure 62: L. v. Beethoven – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 5, 1st mov. mm. 7-19

Until m. 10, the violin carries the melody while the piano provides accompaniment. From m. 11, however, the roles are reversed. Although the violin assumes a background function, it should still participate actively in phrasing through techniques such as dynamic shaping (e.g., hairpins), much like a pianist shaping accompaniment. A deeper understanding of the piano's phrase structure—particularly the tension and relaxation in m. 14 and m. 16—enhances the violinist's interpretive choices and contributes to a more vivid performance.

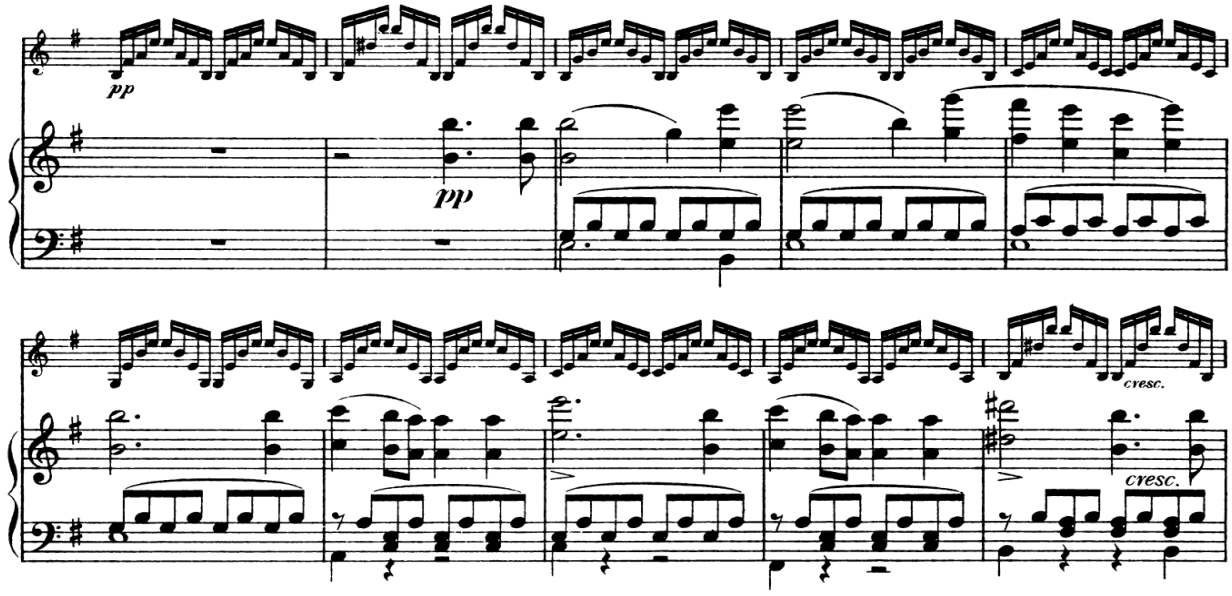


Figure 63: F. Mendelssohn – Violin Concerto, 1st mov. mm. 300-309

While this passage also features an arpeggiated accompaniment figure, it differs significantly from the previous example: the arpeggios begin before the melodic line enters. Whether performed with orchestra or piano reduction, the tempo must be established precisely, as the melody that follows will adhere to it. The part with a busier rhythmic texture—often the accompaniment—carries more responsibility for temporal stability. Additionally, the supporting part still plays a crucial role in shaping the phrase of the main melody.

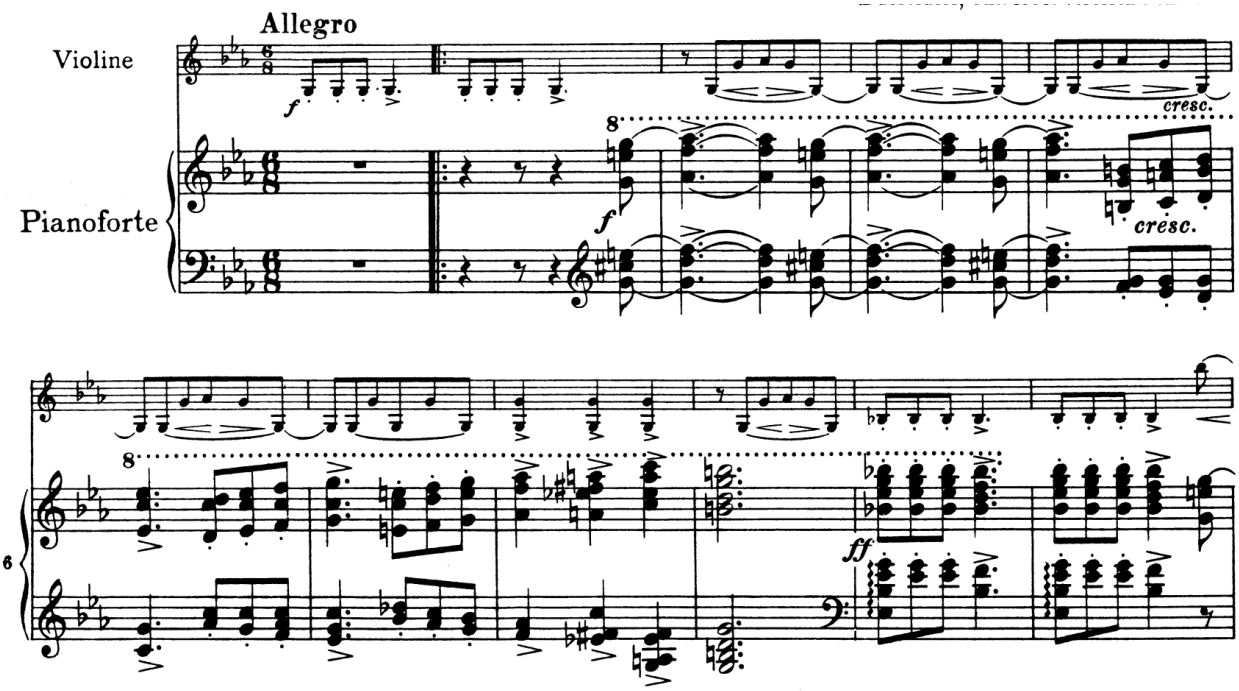


Figure 64: J. Brahms – Sonatensatz (F.A.E. Sonata) for Violin and Piano, 3rd mov. Scherzo, mm. 1-11

Here, the violin part functions as accompaniment, but not in a traditional sense. The violinist must be attuned to the piano's melodic trajectory, particularly its buildup from m. 5 to m. 10. This awareness informs the rationale behind the crescendo marked in m. 5. A hemiola appears in m. 8, and since it is distributed across both parts, rhythmic precision is essential to articulate this metric shift clearly. Furthermore, in m. 9, while the piano sustains a long note, the violin part is active, leading into the fortissimo E♭ Major triad in m. 10. The harmony shifts from dominant (G Major triad) to tonic parallel (E♭ Major triad), and because the piano cannot maintain the same energy on a sustained note, the violin is

responsible for bridging the harmonic transition and energizing the entrance of the fortissimo section.

Solo Instrument's Counter-Melody: When the piano or orchestra holds the principal melody, the solo instrument may carry a counter-melody. In such cases, the counter-melody must be more prominent than a standard accompaniment figure. Both the main melody and the counter-melody should emerge distinctly from the texture, above any background materials.

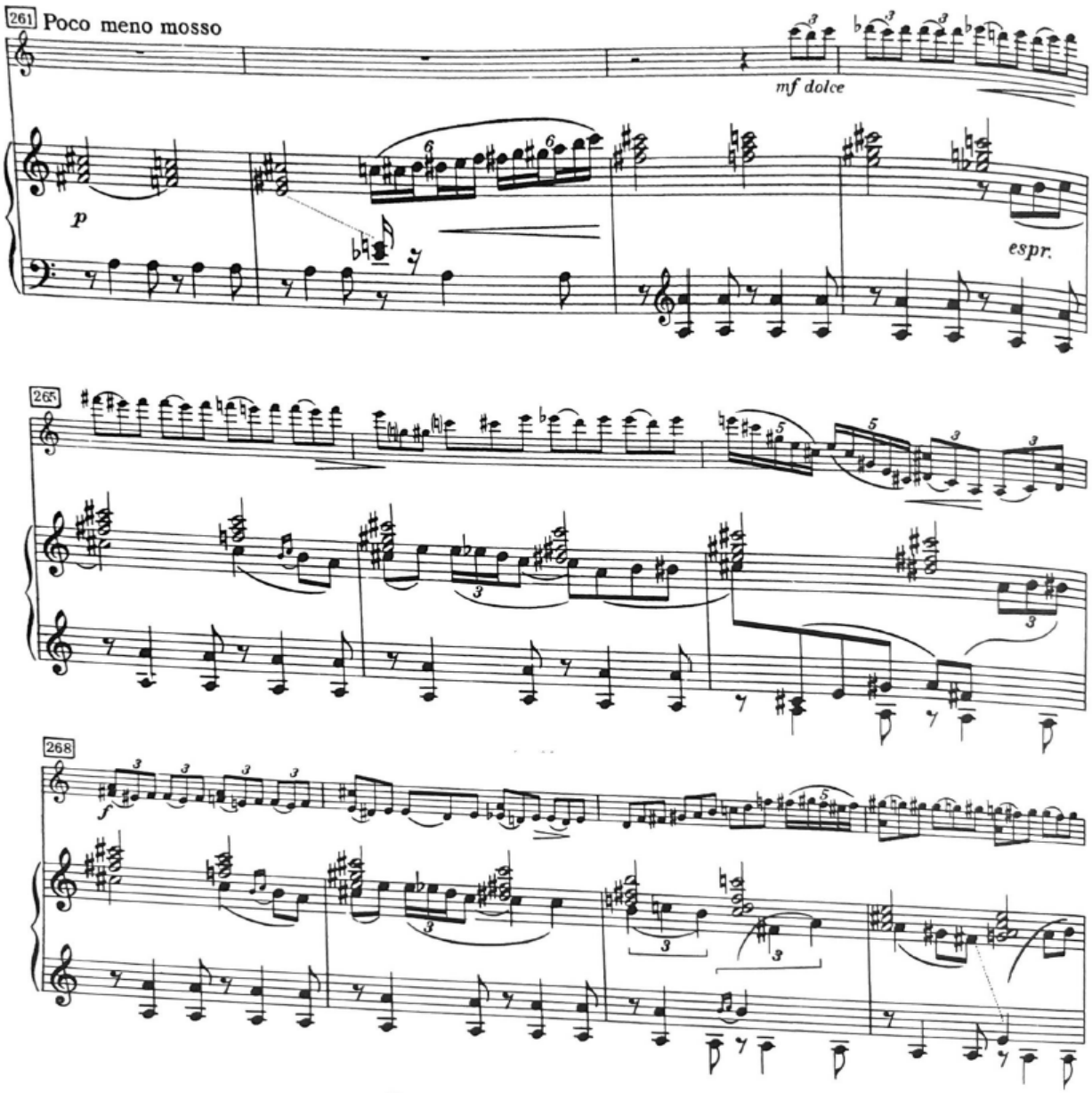


Figure 65: A. Khachaturian – Violin Concerto, 1st mov. mm. 261-271

The main thematic material resides in the orchestra, with the first clarinet introducing it at m. 264. The solo violin enters at m. 263 with a line that, while secondary, is not merely accompanimental. The composer indicates its expressive importance through dynamic markings (*mezzo-forte*), the expression *dolce*, and detailed hairpin gestures. The register must also be considered: in mm. 263–267, the violin part is above the clarinet and thus speaks clearly; however, in mm. 268–269, the violin falls below the clarinet line. To maintain the prominence of the counter-melody in this register, the violinist must play with greater projection. The added dynamic marking (*forte*) serves this purpose, rising a level above the previous *mezzo-forte*.

Same Melody in Different Textures: Many masterworks feature the same melodic material presented in contrasting textures. While this can sometimes be observed by analyzing the solo part alone, examining the full score often provides a more comprehensive understanding. The same melody may be accompanied in a variety of ways—expanded, reduced, varied, or entirely recontextualized. Recognizing these shifts is key to interpreting the melody with nuance and variety.

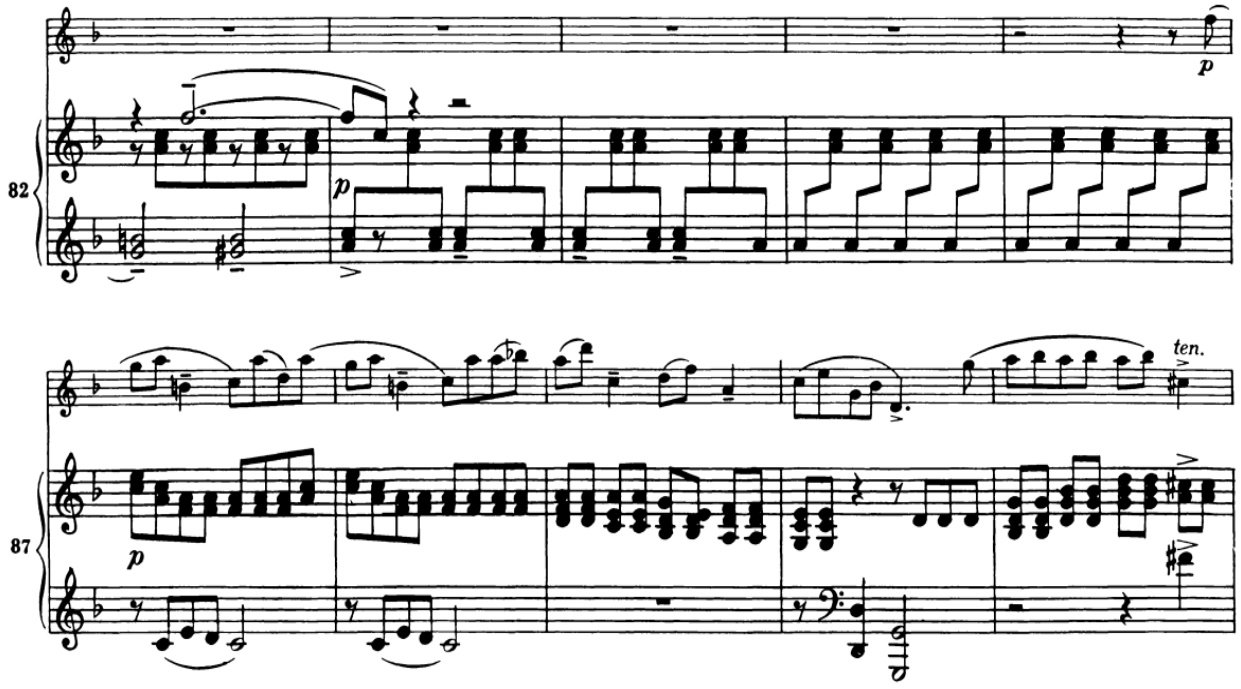


Figure 66: S. Prokofiev – Sonata for Violin and Piano No.2, 4th mov. mm. 82-91

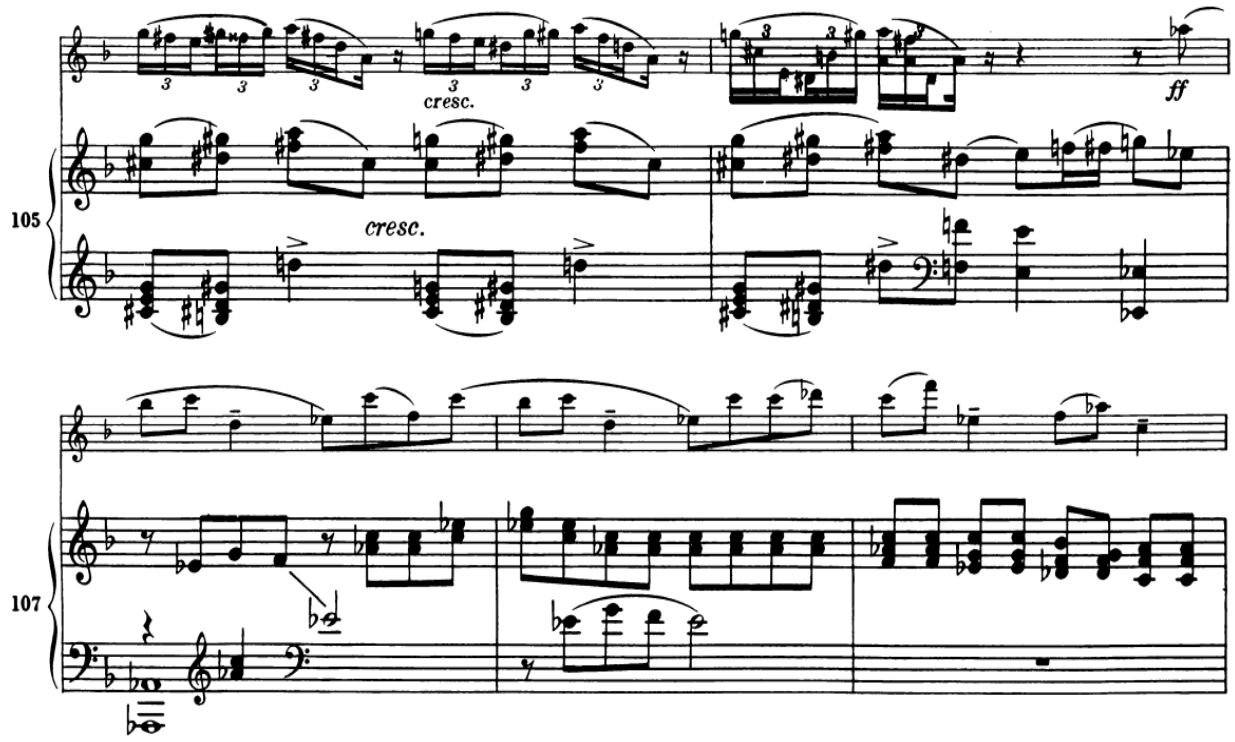


Figure 67: S. Prokofiev – Sonata for Violin and Piano No.2, 4th mov. mm. 105-109

The same melodic figure appears beginning on the pickup to m. 87 and again on the pickup to m. 107. In examining the solo part, one notes the transposition up a minor third and the dynamic shift from *piano* to *fortissimo*. Beyond, the full score provides further insight: m. 87 lacks a defined bass line, whereas m. 107 features a strong, low octave bass. Due to this, the range in m. 87 is compact, while m. 107 occupies a significantly wider range. This breadth justifies the more expansive character required at m. 107, contrasting with a potentially more delicate expression at m. 87.

Understanding the musical preparation leading into these melodic statements is also essential. The passage from m. 82 to m. 87 gradually thins in texture, culminating in four measures without melody, thereby setting the stage for the softer yet radiant entry at m. 87. In contrast, m. 106 features ascending tension in both range and dynamic level, culminating in the fortissimo statement of the theme in m. 107. Music is a continuous art form, and what precedes a given section greatly informs its character. Repeated figures can serve as effective tools for shaping ascent or descent, and these two excerpts exemplify both strategies.

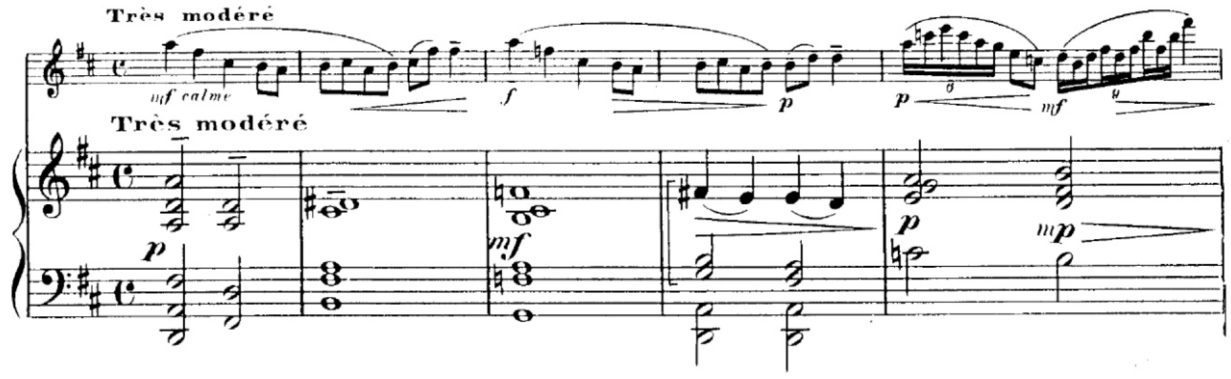


Figure 68: P. Gaubert – Sonata for Flute and Piano No. 3, 2nd mov. mm. 1-5

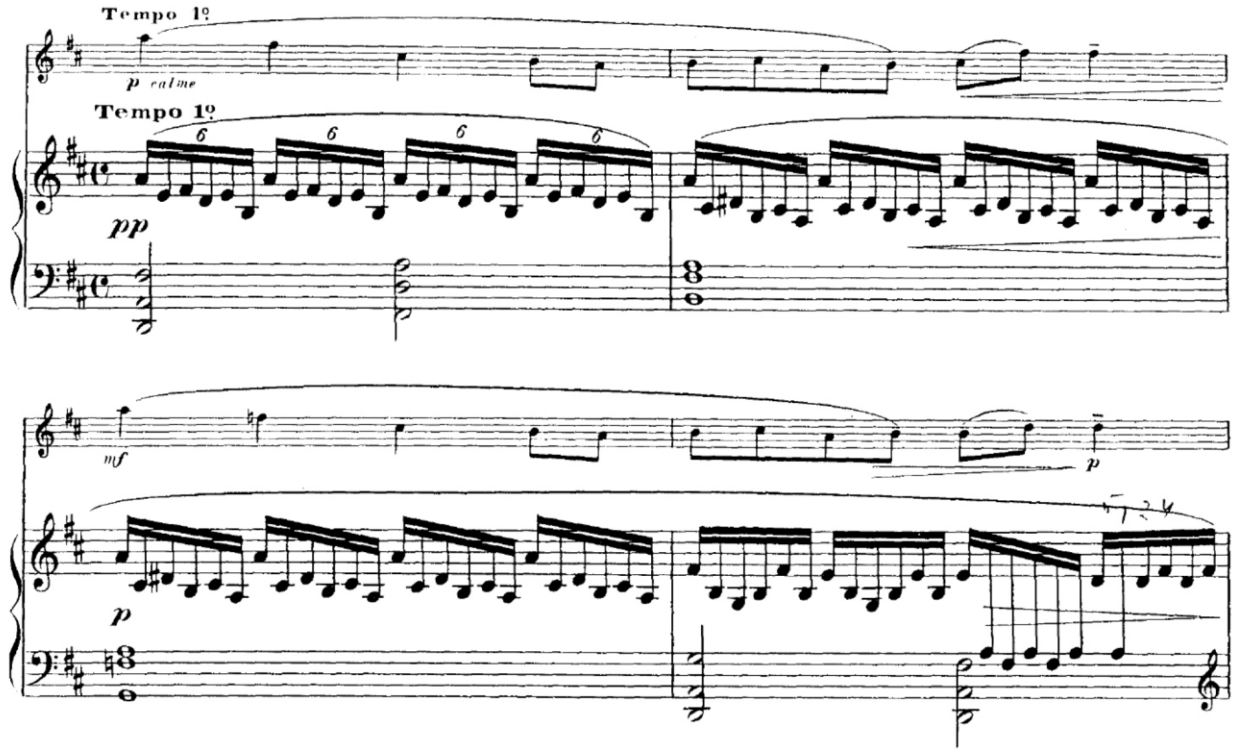


Figure 69: P. Gaubert – Sonata for Flute and Piano No. 3, 2nd mov. mm. 59-62

Although the melody and harmony remain consistent across *Figure 68* and *Figure 69*, the rhythmic treatment in the piano part is notably different. A common method of variation involves breaking a chordal block into multiple moving notes. In *Figure 69*, the sextuplets add a new texture. Moreover, the dynamic level is reduced by one or two degrees compared to *Figure 68*, resulting in a lighter and more fluid character. With this phrasing, the flutist may exercise more interpretative freedom in *Figure 68* with respect to dynamics and timing. In contrast, *Figure 69* requires more coordination with the pianist due to

the continuous motion of the sextuplets.

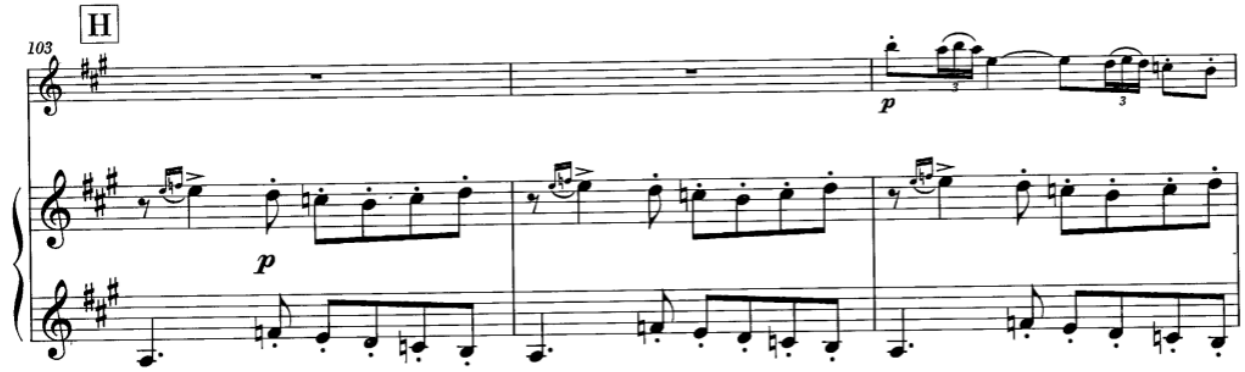


Figure 70: U. Uebayashi – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 4th mov. mm. 103-105

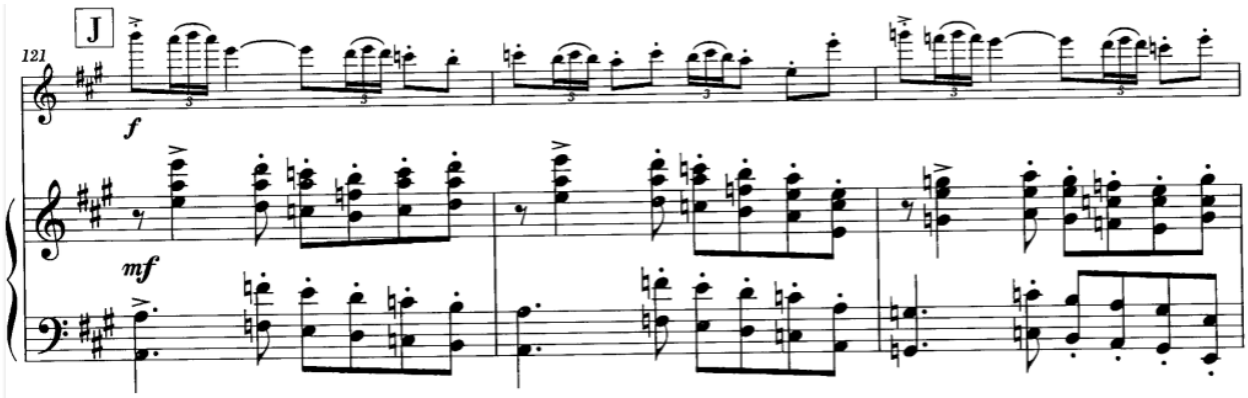


Figure 71: U. Uebayashi – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 4th mov. mm. 121-123

While the rhythmic structure in both parts remains the same in *Figure 70* and *Figure 71*, the texture in *Figure 71* becomes significantly more expansive. The piano part of *Figure 70* contains single-note lines, whereas that of *Figure 71* employs octaves with added harmonies and the doubled bass. The flute line is transposed an octave higher and marked with a louder dynamic. Although these differences may be observed in the flute part alone, the flutist's awareness of the piano's expanded texture informs interpretative decisions: a lighter sound matches the thinner accompaniment in *Figure 70*, while greater sonic weight is required in *Figure 71*.

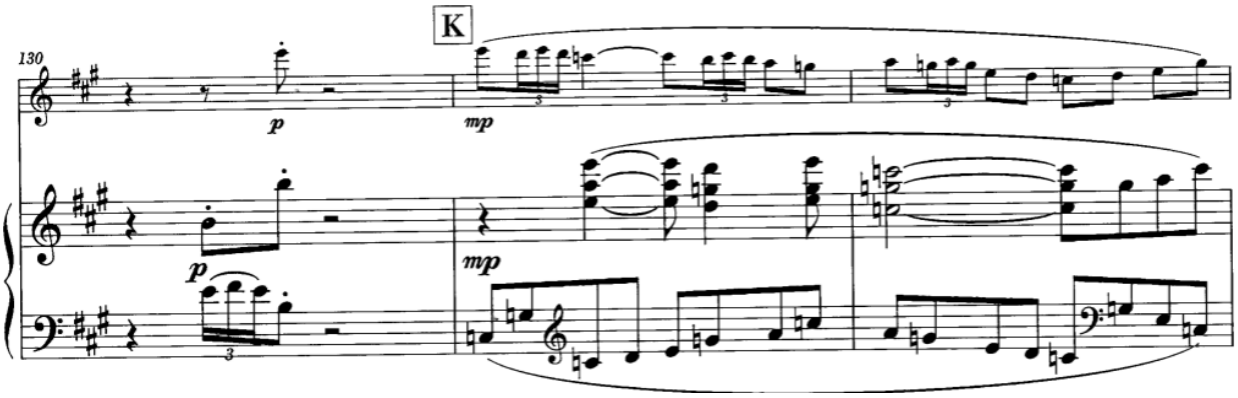


Figure 72: U. Uebayashi – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 4th mov. mm. 130-132

This passage presents the same melodic content but with altered articulation and accompaniment. *Figure 72* features long slurs in both parts, replacing the previous staccato articulations. These elongated notes reduce the percussive quality of syncopations, contributing to a more lyrical character. Awareness of this color shift will aid both performers in establishing a suitable expressive quality.

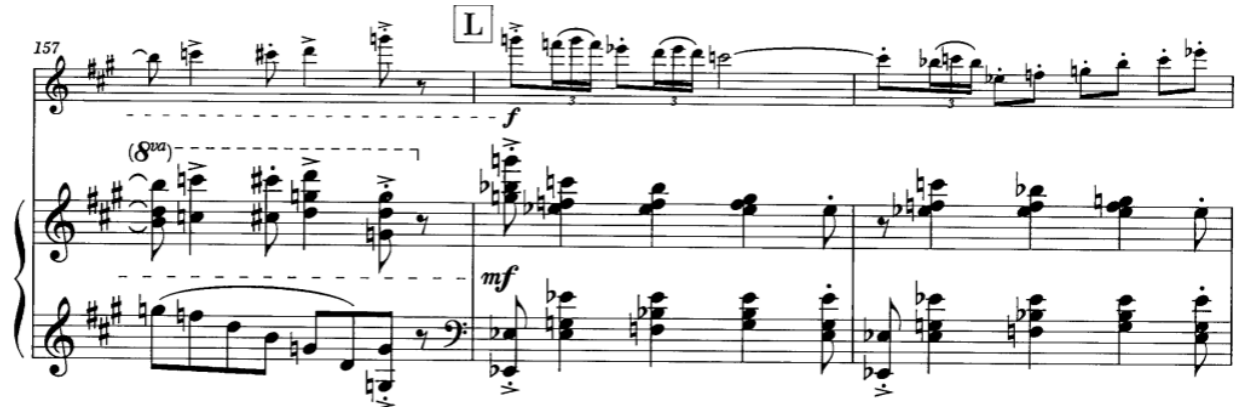


Figure 73: U. Uebayashi – Sonata for Flute and Piano, 4th mov. mm. 157-159

In contrast, *Figure 73* maximizes the effect of syncopation while maintaining the same melody. Each beat in the accompaniment includes a syncopation, creating a forward-driving rhythmic tension. This type of repetitive syncopation typically serves a transitional function, deferring the resolution of strong downbeats until a new section is introduced. Syncopation here is also a functional tool to return to the theme. Section L alternates syncopation with legato phrasing, Section M consists entirely of syncopation, and Section N marks the return of the main theme. The flutist should internalize the rhythmic propulsion generated by the piano part.

Together, *Figures 70-73* exemplify how a single melodic line can acquire distinctly different expressive characters. This demonstrates compositional skill in motivic development and requires performers to respond with interpretive sensitivity. Insight into the piano part reveals deeper structural nuances and facilitates expressive variety.

Canon, Initiated by the Solo Instrument: Canon is a common contrapuntal technique in ensemble repertoire. In some cases, the canon begins in the solo instrument, followed by the piano. Both voices should be equally audible to the listener. When the canon is initiated by the soloist, the first few notes must be clearly articulated to set the tempo and phrasing. The pianist will then respond accordingly. While the soloist leads the initial entrance, the goal is to achieve balance and equality once the canon is underway.

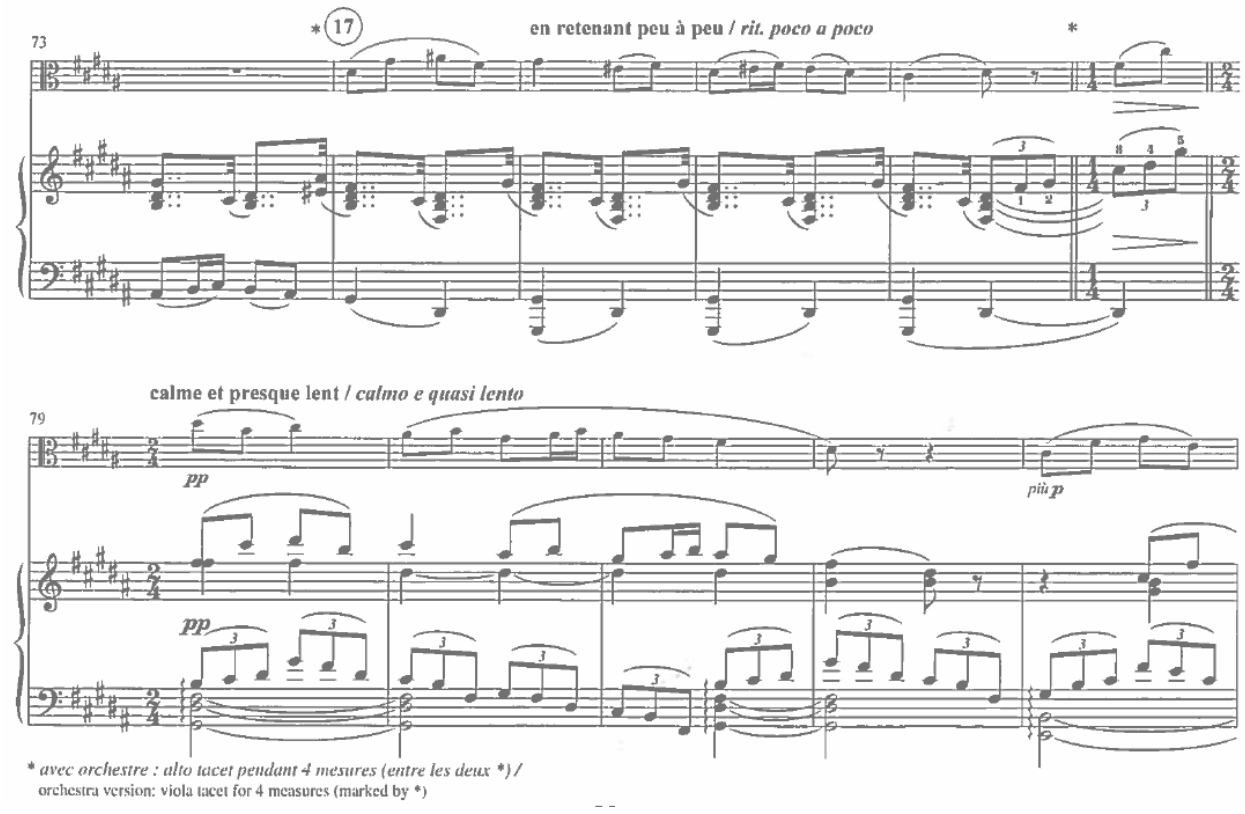


Figure 74: F. Decruck – Sonata for Viola/Alto Saxophone and Piano, 2nd mov. mm. 73-83

Beginning in m. 78, the piano mirrors the viola or alto saxophone one beat later and one octave higher.

The soloist must clearly articulate the first three notes (F♯–C♯–D♯) to establish the canon's integrity, despite the decrescendo. Following this, the soloist must maintain their line without being distracted by the echoing piano voice. In contrapuntal textures like this, performers must simultaneously listen and filter—not only maintaining each of their lines, but also integrating into the polyphonic fabric. This is why a canon is challenging, but so charming.

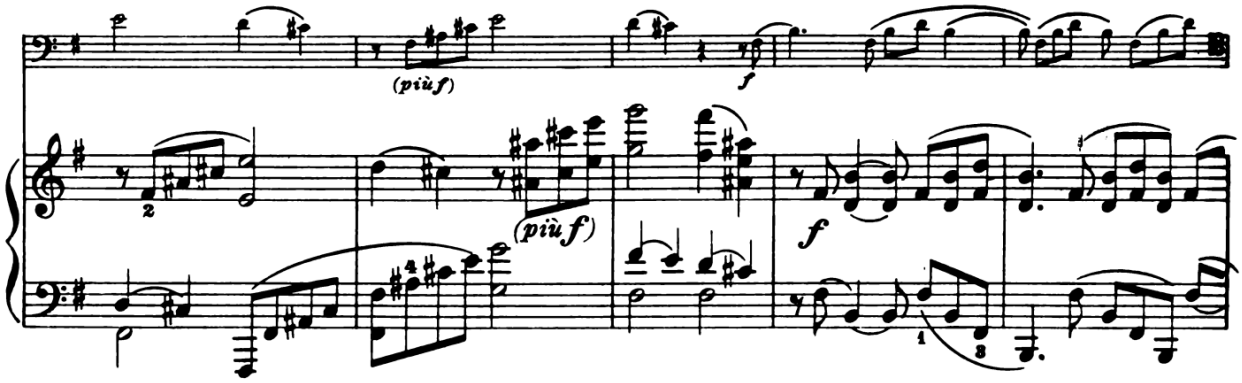


Figure 75: J. Brahms – Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 1, 1st mov. mm. 55-59

Here, the piano also enters one beat later and one octave higher than the cello, beginning in the pickup to m. 58. The first two notes (F♯–B) define the phrasing and character. Notably, the cello sustains a B on the downbeat while the piano initiates its response. Despite the dense texture typical of Brahms, he ensures that each entrance remains distinct. The cellist should set the pickup and downbeat of m. 58 by themselves. Then they must be attuned to the piano's entrance and allow the texture to unfold without obscuring the canon. Unlike *Figure 74*, Brahms's canon is more assertive, consisting of three tonic-based notes and fragmentary motivic cells. Both performers share responsibility in articulating this clarity and vigor.

Canon, Initiated by the Piano: In this scenario, the piano introduces the canon, followed by the solo instrument. It is essential for the soloist to listen carefully and imitate the phrasing faithfully. Again, both lines must be heard clearly and equally by the audience.

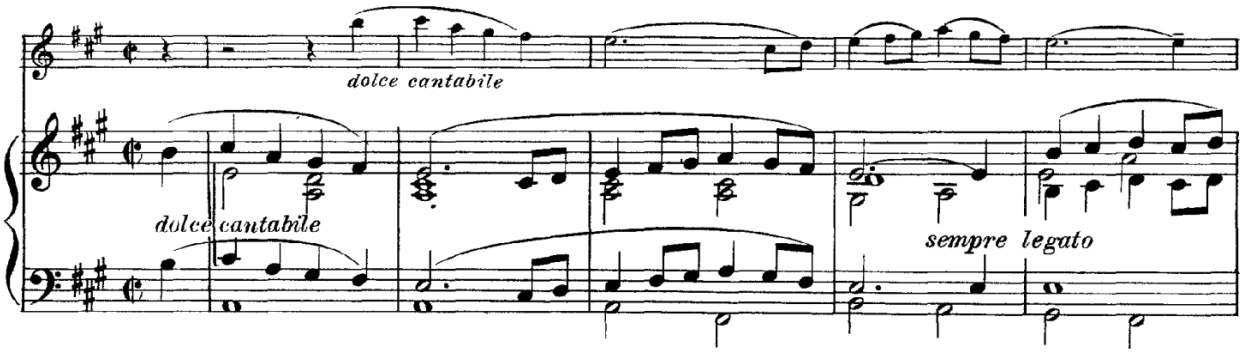


Figure 76: C. Franck – Sonata for Violin and Piano, 4th mov. mm. 1-5

Despite being the opening of the movement, the violin should not sound like it is initiating a new idea. Instead, it must integrate seamlessly into the pre-established texture on the piano. Though the slurring differs between parts in mm. 2–4, this reflects instrumental differences rather than musical contrast. The melody alternates between moving and sustaining lines. Due to the canon, the two instruments trade moving and sustaining lines back and forth. This constant alternation underscores the principle of oblique motion—a foundational characteristic of this movement. Individual practice should avoid over-defining the material; rather, both players should aim to coalesce and finalize the phrasing together.

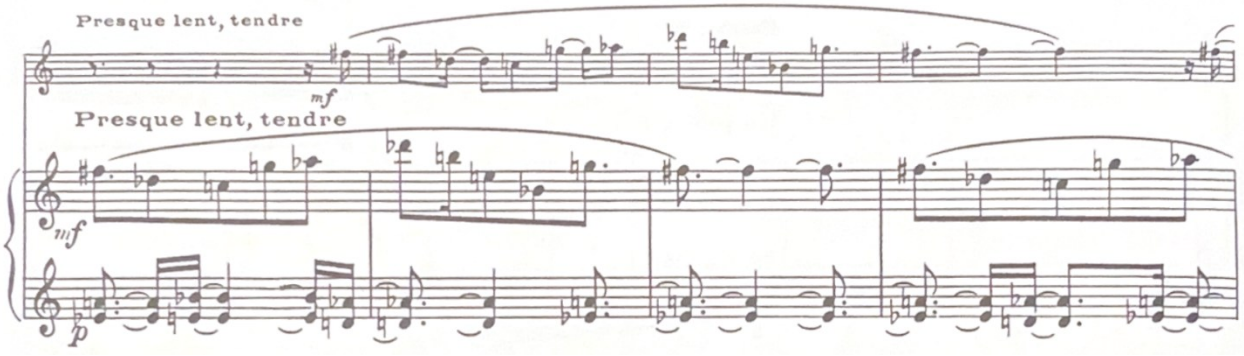


Figure 77: O. Messiaen – "Le Merle Noir" for Flute and Piano, mm. 50-53

Modern repertoire often places the canonical entrance from the unexpected metric location. In this example, the flute's entrance in mm. 51–52 appears metrically ambiguous. However, the piano's left-hand tritone aligns with both the piano's entrance and the flute's entrance, providing a cue. Therefore, the flutist should enter with a sense of accentuation, not as a syncopation. In contemporary music, changing meter serves to divide long, unmeasured passages into comprehensible segments rather than emphasizing

traditional strong-weak beat patterns.

If the canon's entrance is shadowed without musical support, this suggests the composer intended an unexpected or dramatic effect. Performers must then interpret whether each of their entrances should be understated or provocative. In this case, the two canon lines can be inequal.

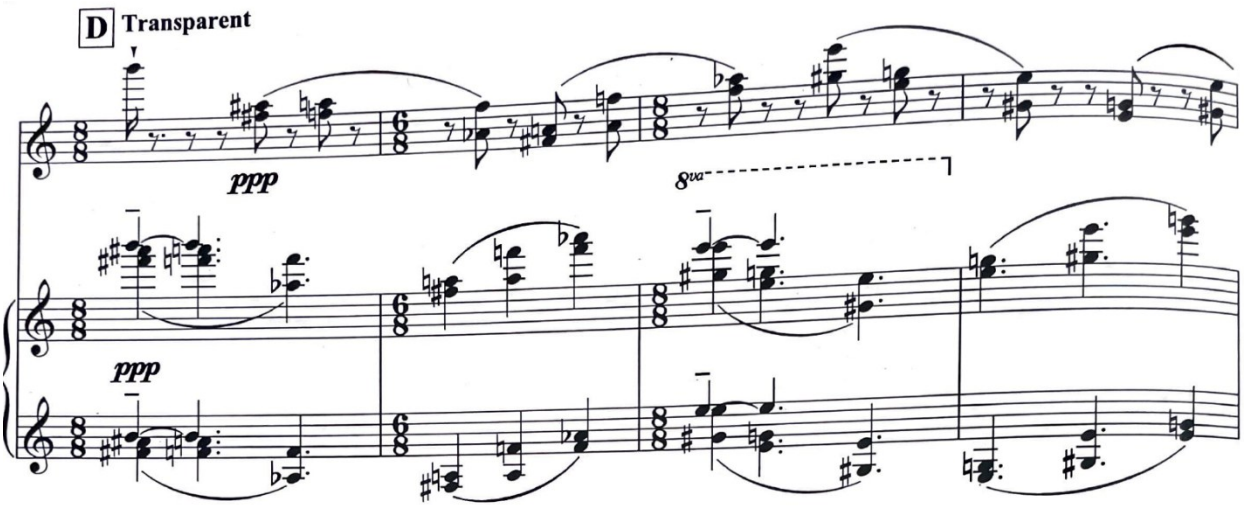


Figure 78: K. Puts – "Ritual Protocol" for Marimba and Piano, 1st mov. mm. 48-51

This passage features a developmental canon in which the notes remain identical, but each note is shortened, and the timing is deliberately inconsistent. The shadowed entries occur in the marimba part after the main melody hits its next chord, creating intentional dissonance. This design diminishes the typical imitative character of a canon. Both performers must understand the structural elements that contribute to this non-traditional canon and highlight them accordingly. For instance, performers may phrase similarly while the percussionist articulates more sharply to emphasize the temporal and textural separation.

Conversational Textures: Duo music frequently contains conversational structures between two or more voices. These dialogues may involve identical or contrasting material, occur simultaneously or sequentially, and be hierarchically balanced or equal. Identifying the nature of the conversation enhances interpretative decision-making and expressive clarity in contrapuntal passages.

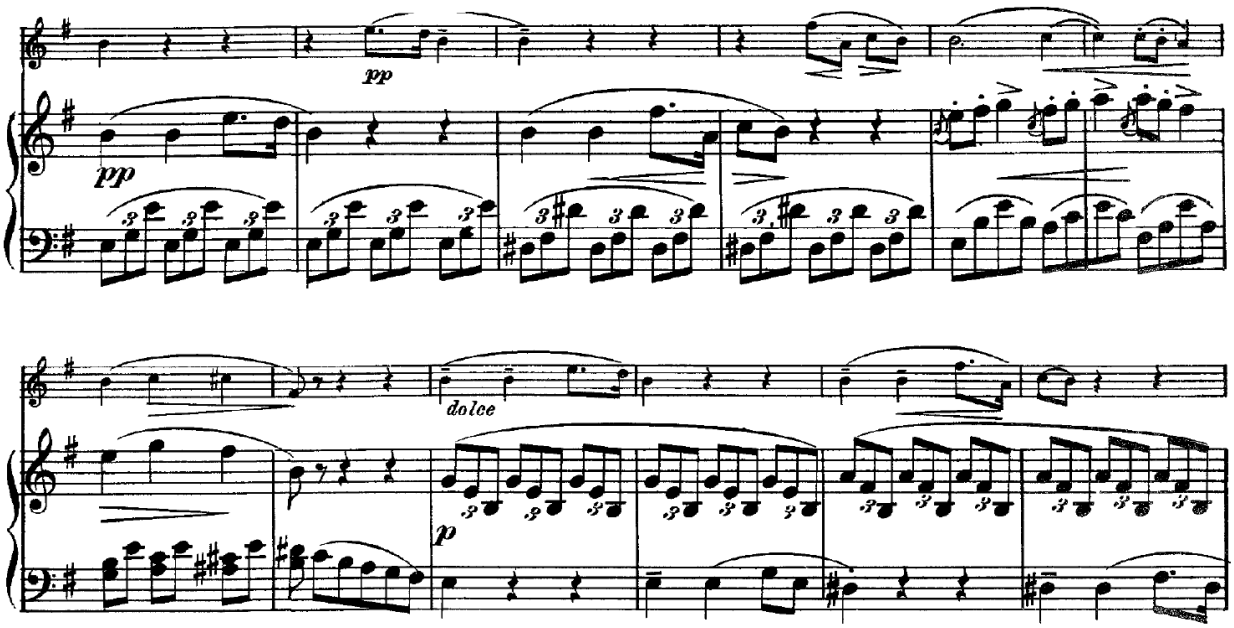


Figure 79: A. Dvorak – Sonatina for Violin and Piano, 1st mov. mm. 37-48

The piano has the main melody from m. 37, and the violin has the main melody from m. 45. Both of them have a conversational texture. In mm. 37–40, the piano introduces a theme followed by the violin's echo. The violinist must recognize their role as respondent, refraining from the piano part. A second conversation occurs in mm. 45–48, where the violin now leads while the piano provides a supportive bass line that imitates the melodic contour. Here, the violinist must recognize their role as a main character, believing the piano bass line will connect while the violinist rests.

Consequently, a step-by-step progress recommends unifying the piano part melody in m. 37 and the violin part melody in m. 45. After that, the performers can set the musical plan for the conversations in mm. 37-40 and mm. 45-48. These two conversations also differ structurally. The first features identical material with non-overlapping entries; the second employs differentiated content with overlapping entrances. These parameters influence whether a passage feels egalitarian or hierarchical and the ensemble coordination should reflect it.

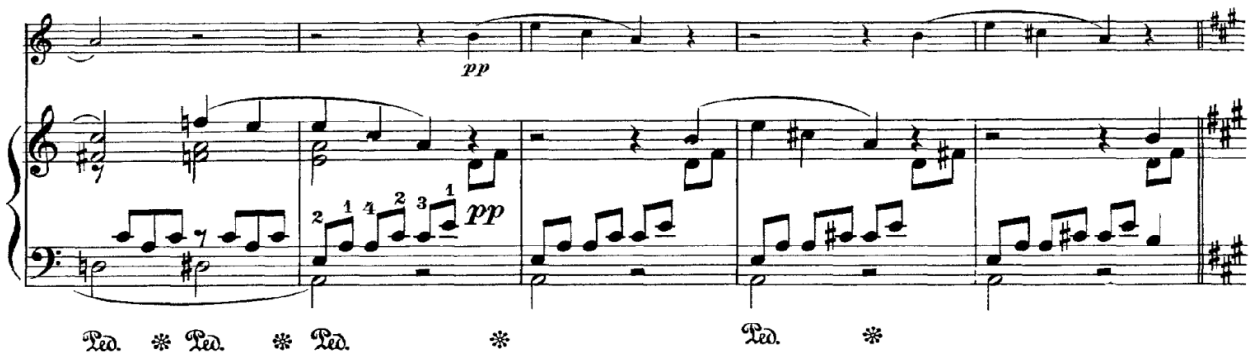


Figure 80: C. Franck – Sonata for Violin and Piano, 4th mov. mm. 180-184

This example presents a non-overlapping conversation using identical material during a transitional passage. Conversational textures are particularly prevalent in episodic sections. In terms of balance, performers should aim for organic pacing and unified phrasing. Volume may be sustained or smoothly changed, but sudden contrasts should be avoided. The transition should feel like a single, continuous melodic line composed of interlocking fragments rather than disconnected exchanges. This also helps get into the next section, which is in canon. The process from conversation in mm. 181-184 to canon should reveal the approach of the two voices to each other.

- ## Conclusion

The piano should be regarded as the instrumentalist's ally. Dismantling the invisible barrier between the instrumentalist and the pianist is essential. Although such a connection may not be established immediately, cultivating a sense of complete musical intercommunication substantially enhances both the quality of performance and the overall process of music-making. Once instrumentalists become familiar with the score, the process of study, and the collaborative nature of ensemble performance, they will perform at an even higher level when accompanied by the piano.

Thus far, five broad concepts have been discussed: listening and not listening, leading and following, signaling, dynamics and timbre, and finally balance. Each of these dimensions should be taken into consideration both before and during rehearsal. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that rehearsal preparation does not guarantee that the actual performance will unfold exactly as envisioned. Factors such as nerves and performance anxiety can cause musicians to lose control. Problems encountered in rehearsal may resurface, and new issues that did not arise in rehearsal may appear unexpectedly in performance. In all cases, however, one principle remains paramount for performance: do not allow the audience to perceive that a mistake has occurred. Instead, allow the pianist to cover the error.

For instance, if the instrumentalist forgets their entrance and begins earlier than indicated, the pianist can omit their own material in order to align with the instrumentalist. Conversely, if the instrumentalist enters later than marked, the pianist can repeat their material to synchronize. If the pianist makes these adjustments and the instrumentalist keeps playing, the error can sometimes go unnoticed by the audience. However, if the instrumentalist actively searches for the pianist's place and adjusts their notes, the mistake becomes evident to all. Moreover, this adjustment is more difficult for instrumentalists, as they are focused on their own part rather than the full score. In such situations, correction is more efficiently executed by the pianist, who plays with the complete score.

Another common scenario arises when the instrumentalist loses temporal alignment during cueing. The most frequent issue is cueing correctly but producing the actual sound slightly behind the beat. This may

occur when the instrumentalist places excessive focus only on the act of cueing, when a string player experiences undue tension in the right hand, or when a wind player holds over tension in the embouchure. If this occurs in performance, the instrumentalist should maintain their own pulse rather than attempting to recalibrate themselves immediately with the pianist. Again, the principle holds: mistakes should not be revealed to the audience. Since the pianist has access to the score, it is preferable to allow them to reorient and locate themselves in the instrumentalist's position.

Once the instrumentalist has studied the score sufficiently, two neutral points should be in mind:

1. **Trusting but not relying upon**: The instrumentalist should trust that the pianist will render the accompaniment as studied the score and will arrive at the correct place. However, the instrumentalist should not rely on the pianist to the extent that they cannot perform independently. The unaccompanied performance should already exhibit high quality, while the addition of accompaniment should serve to enrich it further. Practicing the solo part while simultaneously internalizing the accompaniment facilitates this balance.

2. **Being assertive yet communicative**: Score study also generates ensemble-level interpretive considerations—such as determining leadership roles, cueing strategies, and approaches to phrasing flexibility. The instrumentalist should communicate these ideas to the pianist, allowing them to find ways of supporting such interpretations. Musical reflection on ensemble interaction is as important as reflection on the solo line itself. While pianists are generally willing to incorporate such ideas, they may also disagree due to differing interpretive visions, the piano's condition, or physical constraints. Reaching a negotiated medium that satisfies both performers should be prioritized.

The pianist's role is to support the instrumentalist both musically and psychologically. Accomplished collaborative pianists excel at encouraging instrumentalists to achieve their highest potential. The piano part itself exists to provide this support; composers frequently inscribe detailed musical ideas into the accompaniment. Instrumentalists should take full advantage of this resource. Many instrumentalists remark that it is far more comfortable to perform when supported by a skilled collaborative pianist. Indeed, the ability to communicate musically without recourse to words represents one of the most

profound forms of human connection. This potential is available to all musicians. It is my hope that all melodic instrumentalists will develop the skills of score study, deepen their connection with pianists, and ultimately advance the art of collaborative performance.

- ## Appendix A. Chamber Music

Chamber music requires **multiple lines of communication**. An instrumentalist cannot focus exclusively on communicating with a single performer, as there will be other performers to engage with simultaneously. Therefore, chamber music necessitates a different approach. When instrumentalists study a chamber music score, they must identify which performers play the same material and which play contrasting material. Frequently, more than one instrument performs the same figure, making unison is essential. In many instances, the piano assumes multiple roles. For example, the right hand of the piano part may be doubled with the violin, while the left hand is simultaneously doubled with the cello. Understanding the number of layers in the music is often more meaningful than simply counting the number of performers.

Another crucial factor is **flexibility**. Chamber music inevitably allows less flexibility than a duo. The greater the number of instruments involved, the less flexibility is available. For instance, in a duo, a pianist can quickly adjust to synchronize when the pianist and the solo instrumentalist fall out of alignment with. If a soloist misses an entrance and enters early or late, the pianist's best option is to locate the soloist's position and join them immediately. If the soloist intentionally pushes or pulls the tempo, the pianist can follow suit. However, such adjustments often do not work in chamber music, as they can negatively affect other performer(s). All members of the ensemble must be aligned. If one performer misses the entrance while others are playing, the pianist will not repeat or skip; instead, they will provide a strong on-beat to assist.

Regarding **timbre**, a two-step approach is recommended: (1) ensure all melodic instruments produce a unified sound; (2) have the piano imitate the other instruments' timbres, and likewise have the strings or winds imitate the piano's timbre. The integrity of all melodic instruments should be established before the full ensemble plays together, resulting in a more cohesive outcome.

Furthermore, the mechanism of sound production on the piano differs fundamentally from that of string and wind instruments. The piano is a hammered instrument, and its timbre naturally "decays" over time; it

cannot sustain a single pitch at a constant volume or crescendo within one note. Consequently, matching timbre between the piano and sustained instruments can be challenging.

Based on **instrumentation**, an instrumental chamber music with piano can be categorized as follows:

1. Strings + Piano
2. Winds + Piano
3. Mixed Strings and Winds + Piano

In the first two cases, unifying the sound within the string or wind group is important, particularly in the first case, where all bowed strings share the same method of sound production. In the less common mixed instruments case, string and wind players must understand each other's technical fundamentals. For instance, string players should be aware of wind players' breathing requirements, while wind players should understand string bowing techniques. At times, breathing and bowing must commence and conclude together. Additionally, string players should recognize that wind players require time for the air blow to develop and travel through the instrument, while wind players should note that string players can produce sound immediately upon bowing.

Feeling the Beat: If an instrumentalist's part does not include a note on the downbeat, it is crucial to know which instrument carries the downbeat.

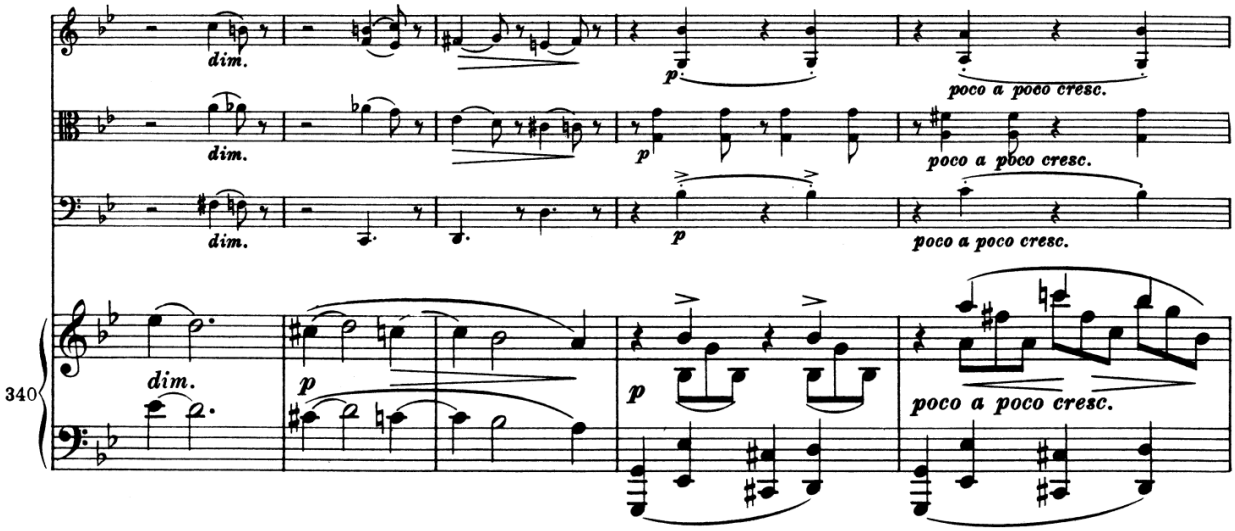


Figure 81: J. Brahms – Piano Quartet No. 1, 1st mov. mm. 340-344

From m. 343, all strings rest on the downbeat. The violin and cello enter on the upbeat, while the viola plays on the offbeat. The violinist and cellist should not be influenced by the viola's part; likewise, the violist should not be influenced by the violin and cello. All should instead listen to the piano's left hand, which provides a steady beat. This can be particularly challenging because in mm. 341–342, all strings share a similar rhythm. Performers must recognize that the musical texture changes in m. 343. Score study should be conducted both vertically and horizontally.

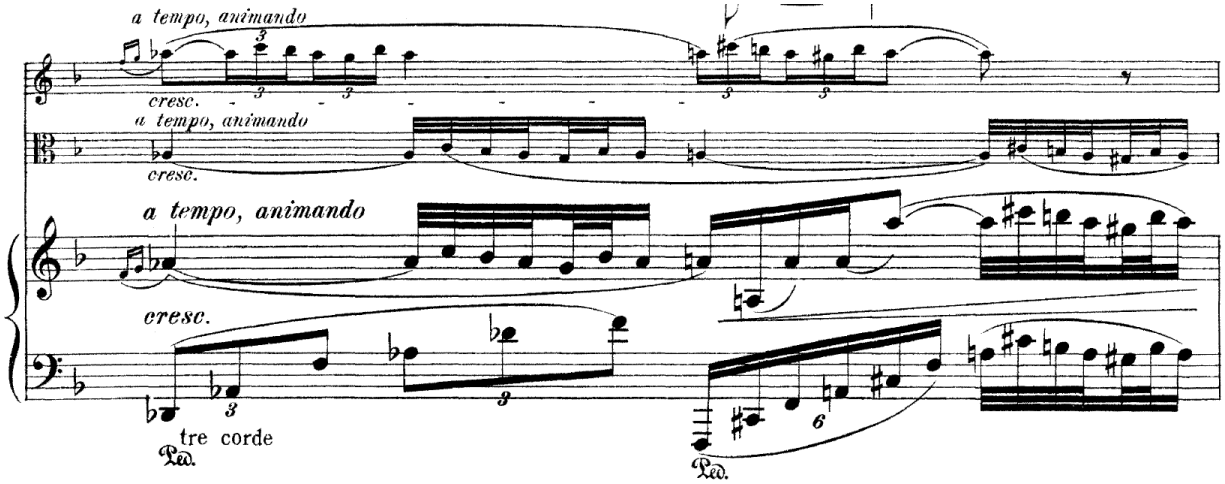


Figure 82: Ch. M. Loeffler – 2 Rhapsodies for Oboe, Viola, and Piano, 2nd mov. m. 77

Conscious beat awareness is also required when notes on the beat are tied. Here, the viola and piano's right hand both have two tied notes. In this case, both the violist and the pianist must feel the 2nd and 4th beats to play the subsequent notes on time. This is especially important for the violist, since the piano's left-hand plays on both the 2nd and 4th beats, while the viola must rely on an internal pulse. The violist should also know which instruments play when they have tied notes: in the 2nd beat, both the oboe and the piano play; in the 4th beat, only the piano plays the left-hand note while the oboe sustains a tie. Moreover, distinguishing similarities and differences in material is vital for ensemble cohesion. For example, the oboe has a similar pitch structure in the first and last two beats, but with slightly different rhythms. Other performers should be aware of these differences to ensure consistent ensemble alignment.

Poly-Meter: Contemporary chamber music sometimes employs simultaneous different time signatures. Performers must avoid being influenced by other meters, subdividing into the smallest units in both signatures instead. Poly-meter may be written as two distinct time signatures or as a single time signature with an unfitted part.

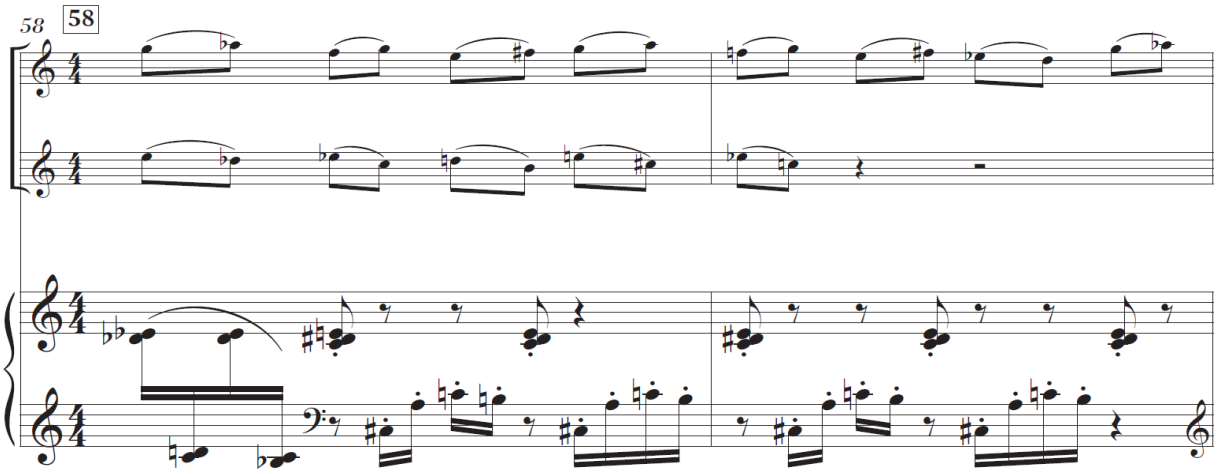


Figure 83: K-M. Murphy – "The Unstoppable Fear Machine" for Soprano Sax, Alto Sax and Piano, 3rd mov. mm. 58-59 (Score in C)

Here, the saxophones are in 4/4 while the piano is actually in 3/8. Even if the pianist conceptualizes their part in 4/4, it will still sound as three 8th notes to the group. The saxophonists must lock in with each other regardless of the piano's subdivision—especially important at a fast tempo. Poly-meter can still offer ensemble supports: even with differing time signatures, musical elements corresponding the same meters can align. (See *Figure 12* for an example.)

Poly-Rhythm: Although it was discussed earlier (see *Figure 13*), poly-rhythms in chamber music can be more complex due to additional layers.

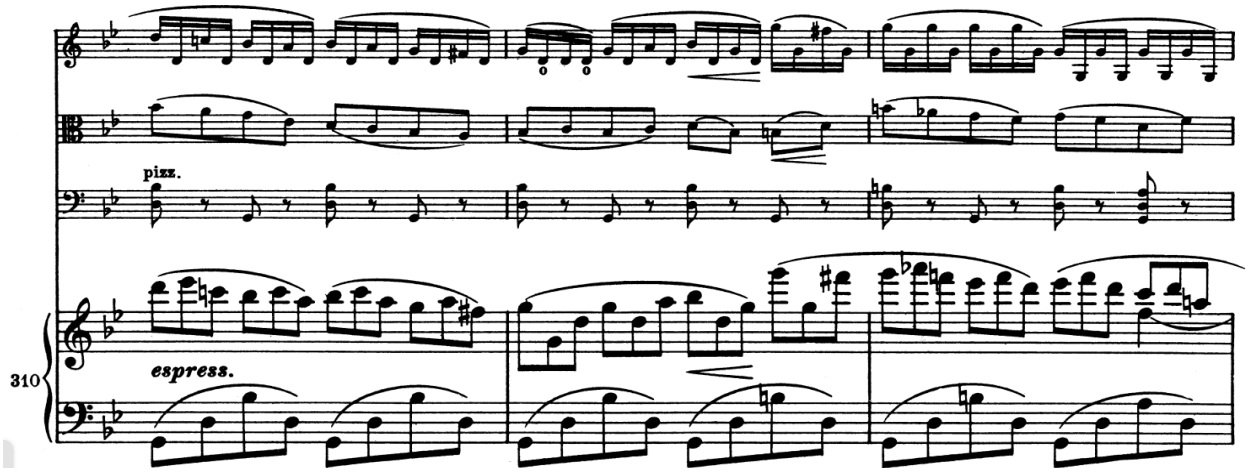


Figure 84: J. Brahms – Piano Quartet No. 1, 1st mov. mm. 310-312

The cello plays one note per beat; the viola and piano's left hand play two notes per beat; the piano's right hand plays three notes per beat; and the violin plays four notes per beat. All players should focus on the cello's pizzicato as the rhythmic foundation. At the same time, performers should avoid over-listening to contrasting parts. For example, the violin and piano's right hand share the same melody but with different rhythms; listening too closely to one another can cause rhythmic inconsistency.

Privilege of Leading: Decisions about leading and following should be made deliberately. Often, the main melody holder leads. However, at times the performer with the densest rhythmic activity should drive the ensemble.

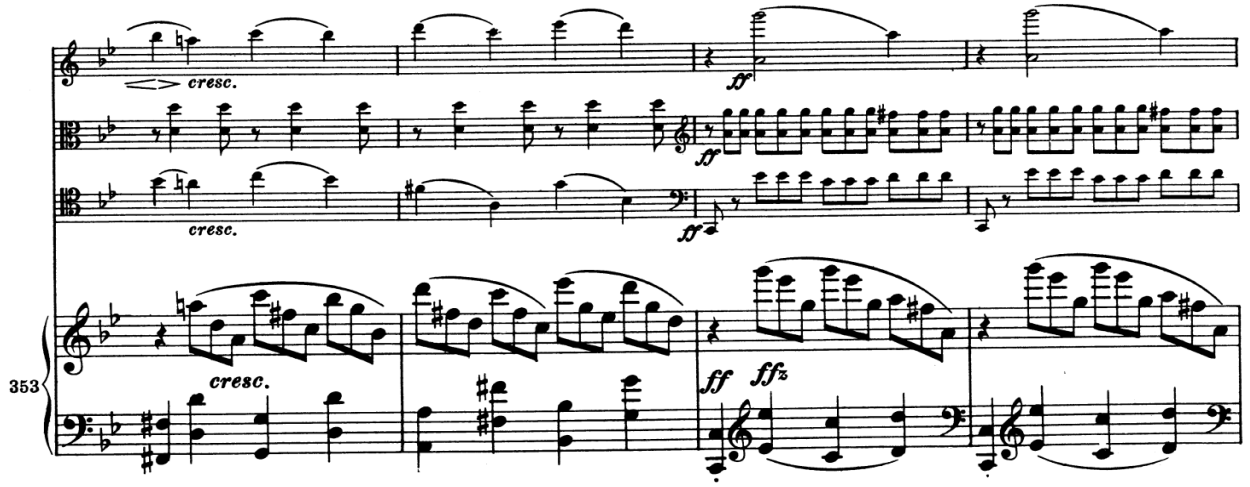
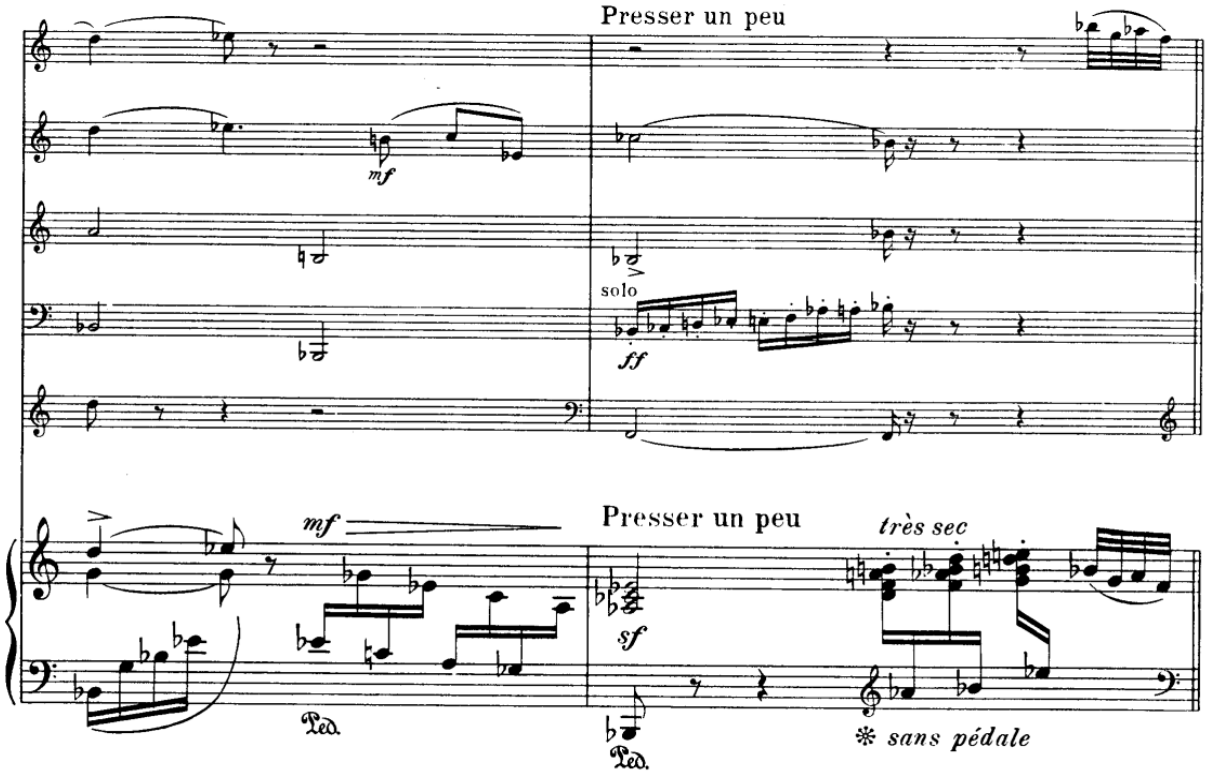


Figure 85: J. Brahms – Piano Quartet No. 1, 1st mov. mm. 353-356

The climax of the movement occurs at m. 355. While the violin plays the main melody, doubled by the piano, it is the "viola"—playing continuous triplets—that drives the passage. Notably, at the downbeats of m. 355 and m. 356, only the viola plays triplets. In performance, the ensemble may choose to stretch these downbeats, with the violist executing the timing. When only one instrument is in motion, it often has greater flexibility in shaping timing. Performers should remember that leadership is not always determined by melodic prominence; sometimes, the most active rhythmic part dictates the pacing.

Tossing Tempo Changes: In chamber music, tempo changes often require coordination among more than three performers. It is easier in the case that one instrument leads the transition entirely; more challenging when multiple performers must connect the change. Each must listen carefully to the preceding performer's tempo and maintain ritardando or accelerando seamlessly.



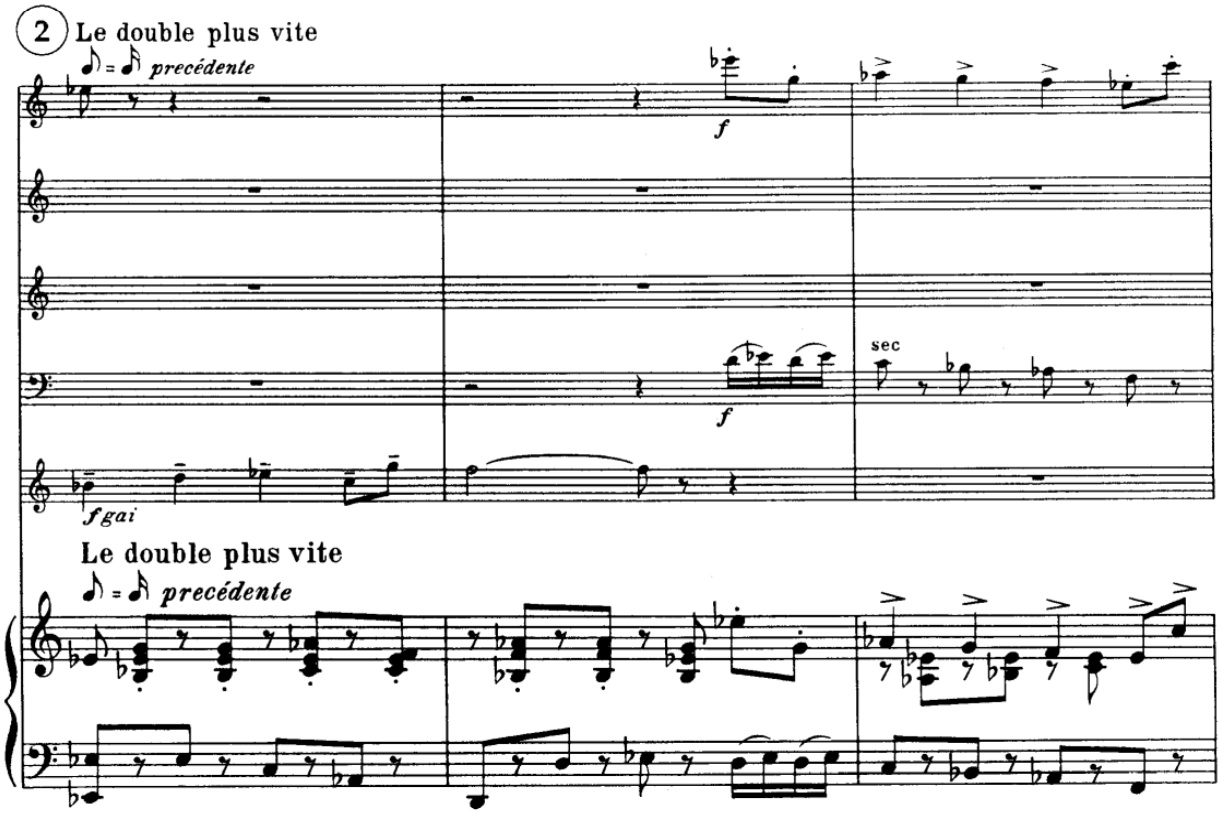


Figure 86: F. Poulenc – Sextet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn and Piano, 2nd mov. Rehearsal #2

Here, the tempo shifts to twice faster pace. The change is passed from bassoon to piano, to flute, and finally to horn. The bassoon initiates the accelerando without completing it, leaving room for the pianist to continue. By the pickup to #2, the flute and piano should already be in the new tempo—meaning the four 32nd notes must match the 16th notes at #2. For the horn player, the pickup's tempo provides the cue for the downbeat. Even with multiple contributors, clarity in each performer's role is essential.

Leading and Following in Tempo Change: Although the performer with the most notes often leads, they must still ensure that others feel comfortable with the shift. Pushes and pulls in tempo should generally occur while others are holding long notes or resting, allowing for greater flexibility without disrupting others' shorter note passages.

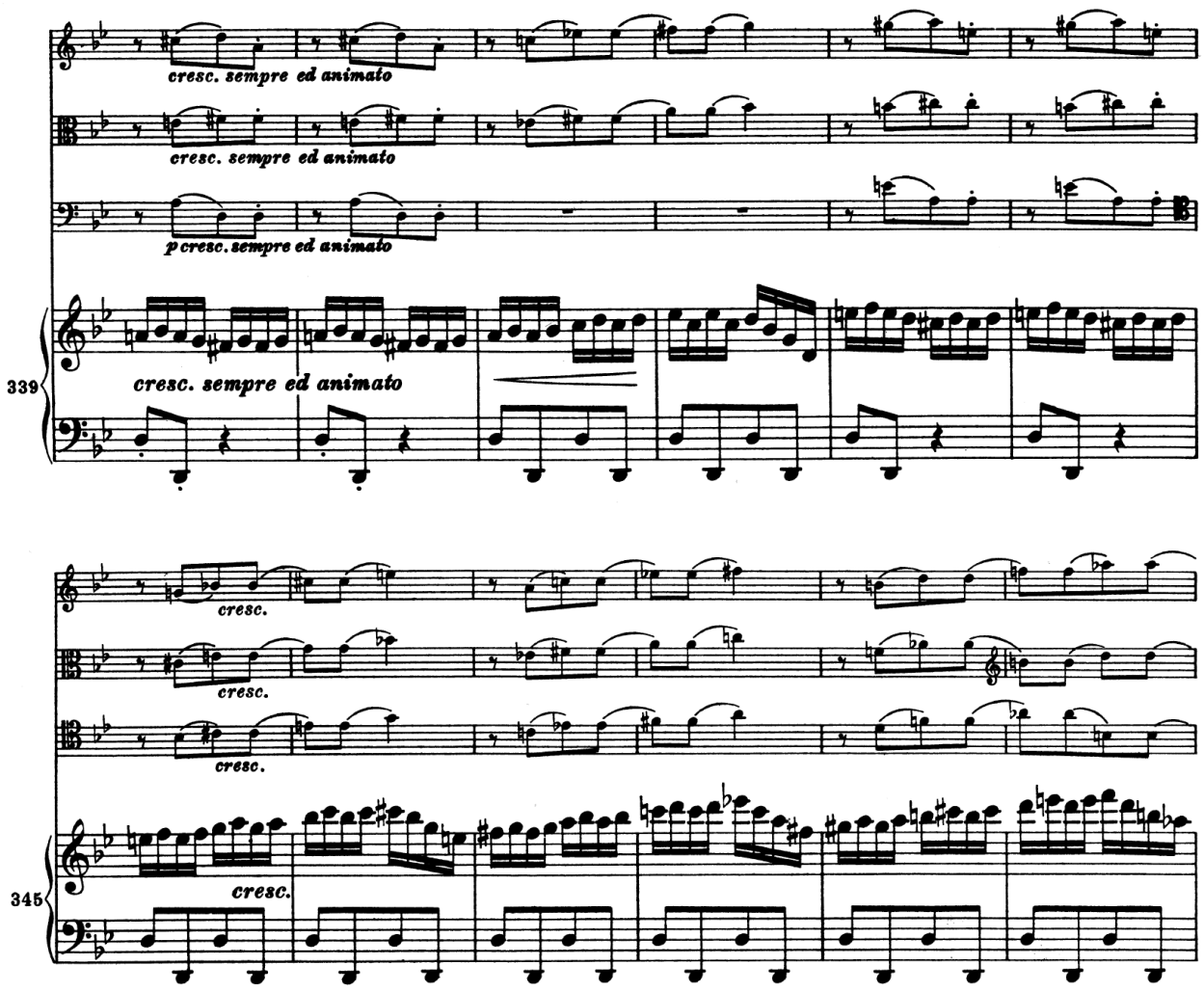


Figure 87: J. Brahms – Piano Quartet No. 1, 4th mov. mm. 339-350

This passage accelerates over an extended *animato* into *Molto Presto*. The piano's 16th notes drive the change, but it is advantageous for the pianist to accelerate mainly when the strings have quarter notes. This prevents the strings from being unsettled by the tempo change, allowing them to focus on their tone. The leader of a tempo change should always prioritize the comfort of the other instruments.

Multilayer Contrasting Textures: While chamber music generally strives for cohesion, it sometimes features intentionally contrasting textures. The challenge lies in making the contrast clear yet synchronized—keeping certain elements distinct while blending others.

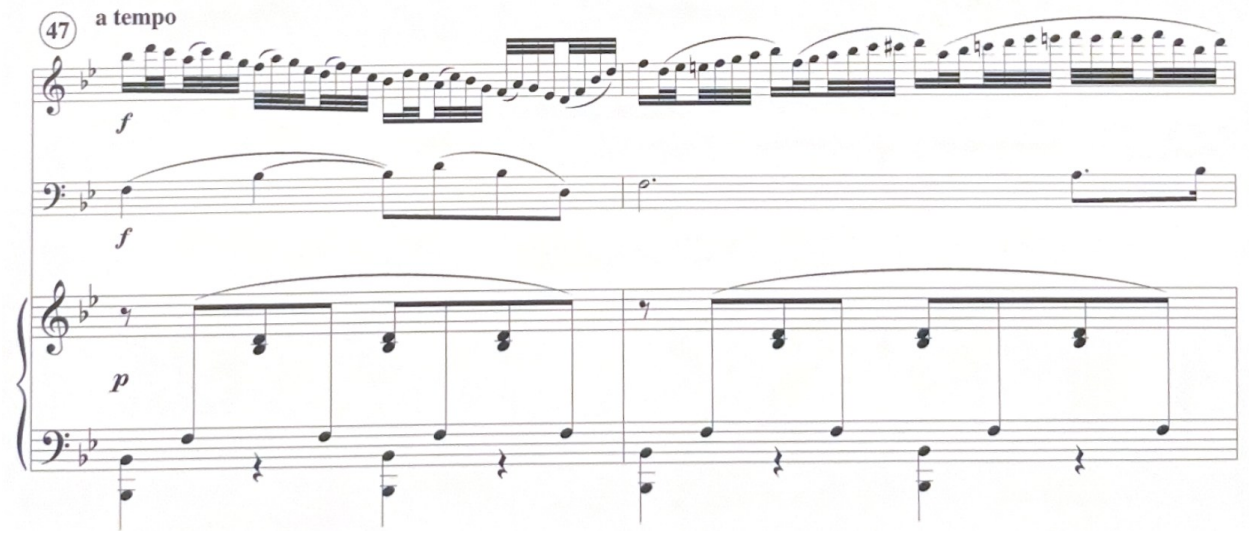


Figure 88: H. Kling – "The Elephant and Fly" for Piccolo, Tuba, and Piano, mm. 47-48

As the title suggests, the piccolo and tuba represent contrasting characters. Although the piccolo's passage is challenging, the pianist must maintain a steady tempo to prevent the piccolo player from losing the beat and to avoid affecting the tuba player. While slowing for a difficult passage might be preferred in a piccolo–piano duo, chamber music demands a different strategy; strict tempo can yield better results in such contexts.

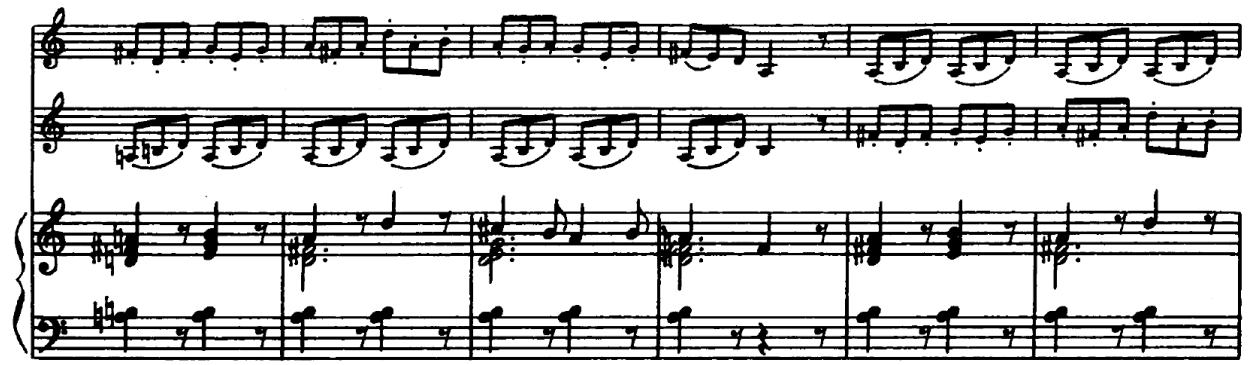


Figure 89: D. Milhaud – Suite for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano, mm. 78-83

Whereas the previous example demonstrates a rhythmic contrast, this instance highlights an articulation contrast. The violin and clarinet share the same rhythm; however, the violin carries the melodic line with staccato, while the clarinet provides an accompaniment with legato. Accordingly, both instruments must differentiate their articulations as distinctly as possible, avoiding any tendency toward a *mezzo-staccato* rendering. Such clarity more effectively conveys the hierarchy within the texture. The same principle

applies beginning at m. 82, when the violin and clarinet exchange roles.

Imitation: Musical imitation, common between solo instruments and piano, also occurs in chamber music, often involving more than three participants. Each performer should know from whom they receive material and to whom they pass it.

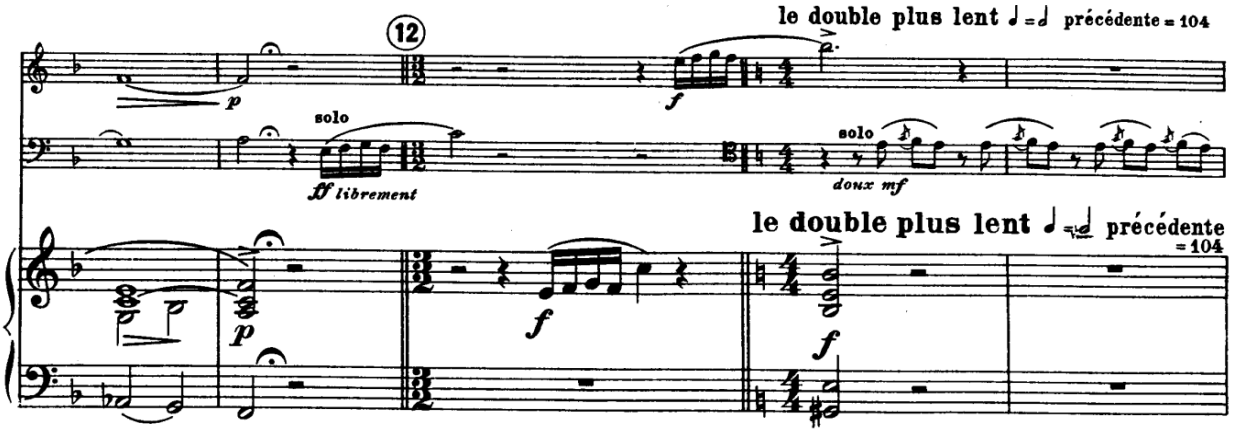


Figure 90: F. Poulenc – Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano, 1st mov. Rehearsal #12

In this transition, Poulenc writes a brief episode that begins with the bassoon, passes to the piano, and concludes with the oboe. The oboe's entry should stand out, as it involves a note change (C to B), is supported by piano chords, and marks the beginning of a new section. The pianist may choose to imitate or contrast the bassoon's nuance, but in either case it must recognize their role as a bridge between bassoon and oboe. The oboist should ensure their episode is distinct. If bassoon and piano play similarly, the oboe can offer contrast; if they differ, the oboe can align with either. The essential point is that the ensemble makes a unified interpretive decision and executes it consistently.

- ## Appendix B. 14 Rehearsal Techniques

Rehearsal includes both discussion and playing. The discussion may concern musical choices or problem-solving. Either way, the subsequent playing should reflect the adjustments that arise from the discussion. Here, I propose various strategies to facilitate these changes.

1 **Rehearsing with a metronome**: Rehearsing with a metronome is useful not only for solo practice but also for group rehearsal. It allows performers to clearly identify what notes other parts are playing on each beat. This method effectively reduces asynchrony and tempo fluctuation. If alignment with the metronome is still problematic, begin at a slower tempo and gradually increase the tempo through repetition.

2 **Metronome subdivision and broad division**: If using the metronome at a given tempo proves ineffective, subdividing the beat can help tighten the ensemble. For example, count eighth notes instead of quarter notes in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4; or count eighth notes instead of dotted quarter notes in 6/8, 9/8, and 12/8. Even though performance does not require this subdivision, it is useful for learning in smaller fragments.

Conversely, broad division can also be beneficial, typically after regular metronome practice. For instance, count half notes instead of quarter notes in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4; or dotted half notes instead of dotted quarter notes in 6/8 and 12/8. This requires more conscious tempo control. Positioned between standard metronome work and rehearsal without the metronome, it enables performers to transition smoothly toward unassisted performance.

Humans naturally perceive beats between approximately 50 and 160 beats per minute. Below 50, beats are subdivided for clarity; above 160, beats are grouped into twos, threes, or fours. Practicing with the metronome outside of this range develops multi-dimensional consistency in tempo.

3 **Visual metronome**: Many modern devices include a visual metronome function, where the screen or light blinks silently. This can be useful in rehearsal: the pianist provides accompaniment guided by the blinking signal, and the instrumentalist plays based on the piano accompaniment. This effectively simulates playing with a metronomic accompaniment. The instrumentalist not only learns the piano part but also recognizes when they rush or drag by aligning with a non-adjusting accompaniment. This approach is particularly helpful when an ensemble's tempo fluctuates excessively.

4 **Pianist playing only one layer**: In problematic passages, temporarily eliminating one layer is often effective. The pianist may play only the right or left hand, depending on which line the instrumentalist should attend to. This allows the instrumentalist to focus more clearly on the essential material before the pianist reintroduces the other layer.

5 **Pianist playing only the on-the-beat notes**: This strategy is especially beneficial when the solo instrument struggles to locate the beats. Accompaniment figures do not always provide an explicit pulse; they may be too diffuse, rhythmically complex, or obscured by off-beat accents or polyrhythms. Synchronizing on-the-beat notes first can therefore serve as a strong initial step.

6 **Pianist Emphasizing only on-the-beat notes**: This represents the next stage after step 5. While maintaining emphasis on-the-beat notes, the pianist gradually integrates the remaining notes with lighter articulation. The instrumentalist can still feel the beat clearly while also perceiving the rest of the accompaniment. If sufficiently trained, the instrumentalist may skip step 5 and begin directly with this method.

7 **Purposefully different tempo**: The pianist deliberately plays at an excessively slow or fast tempo, requiring the instrumentalist to actively adjust. This technique prevents the instrumentalist from

passively following the tempo established by the pianist. Instead, it cultivates the ability to assert and control tempo, a skill essential in both rehearsal and performance. This exercise should be attempted in two ways: organically correcting the tempo, and immediately correcting it. While the organic approach is generally more appropriate, some works demand an immediate adjustment, particularly when there is a deliberate pause followed by a restart.

Furthermore, this method helps the instrumentalist learn to lead accelerando and ritardando. Organic tempo correction parallels these expressive tempo changes, differing only in that accelerando and ritardando have predetermined goals. Leading such tempo changes thus requires planning within a broader interpretive framework.

8 **Rehearsal cues**: Even when the musical texture does not strictly require cues, the pianist can provide additional gestures to support the instrumentalist. These cues may secure entrances, sustain long notes, or assist in musical exchanges. While the piano's sound offers auditory guidance, visible cues provide further reinforcement. As the instrumentalist becomes increasingly accustomed to ensemble performance, such rehearsal cues should be gradually reduced, with the ultimate goal of independent performance.

9 **Looping passages**: If a short passage proves especially difficult to coordinate, repeated looping is highly effective. Each loop should be short. It should last no longer than five seconds, ensuring focused listening to the other part. The loops should be continuous, with no gaps between repetitions.

10 **Backward practice**: When a problematic section arises, performers must not only correct the issue but also integrate it into its broader context. Rather than restarting from the same spot repeatedly, they can gradually build backward. For example, if m. 10 is problematic, after correcting it, they should rehearse mm. 9–10, then mm. 8–10, and so forth, until the section is comfortably embedded within the overall flow. Because music unfolds in time, addressing ensemble challenges in context is

essential.

11 **Playing the same melody in different measures**: When the solo instrument features a particular melody, the piano often presents the same melody in different measures. Both performers can rehearse these passages together to unify articulation, dynamics, phrasing, rubato, and timbre. When not in unison, performers often neglect consistency in tone color; however, the same melody should sound identical unless a specific interpretive reason justifies a difference (see *Figure 59*).

12 **Checkpoint strategy**: If the music is particularly complex and prone to mistakes, performers can establish a checkpoint immediately after the troublesome section. Regardless of what occurs in the problematic passage, they can regroup and continue from this checkpoint. This method serves as insurance rather than an ideal solution, preventing performance breakdowns such as stopping entirely. It is especially valuable when rehearsal time is insufficient or performers feel uncertain about the performance.

13 **Recording and listening together**: Although this does not involve simultaneous playing, it is a highly effective rehearsal method. Performers run through the piece, record it, and listen together. They share observations, identify strengths and weaknesses, and discuss solutions. When focusing on another's part, performers often lose awareness of their own sound; this exercise provides an opportunity to evaluate both parts critically. It is particularly effective after several rehearsals, when refining the ensemble to a higher level. Paradoxically, one meaningful conversation can sometimes resolve an issue that ten rehearsals cannot.

14 **Musical dialogue**: While the previous method is especially effective in later stages of rehearsal, engaging in a musical dialogue is valuable in the early stages of ensemble preparation. Both

performers discuss how they envision projecting the music and their interpretive intentions. This process fosters mutual understanding of musical ideas and helps establish rapport between collaborators. Again, music is inherently a social activity.

- **The List of the Figures**

- ## Reference

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