ALFRED CD EDITION

KUHLAU

SIX SONATINAS OPUS 55 FOR THE PIANO

EDITED BY WILLARD A. PALMER FROM THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

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Cover art: View from The Round Tower of the western part of Copenhagen
by H. G. F. Holm (Danish, 1803–1853?)
Watercolor, ca. 1837
Bodil Bierring Billeder, Copenhagen

Friedrich Kuhlau was born in Hanover, Germany, on September 11, 1786, and died in Copenhagen, Denmark, on March 12, 1832. His parents moved to Hamburg while he was very young, and there he had the good fortune to study music with Christian Freidrich Gottlob Schwencke, the music director of St. Katherine's church. Schwencke had been a student of the famed Johann Philipp Kirnberger, who studied with Johann Sebastian Bach in the years 1738–41. Thus Kuhlau could boast of a direct musical lineage to the great Bach himself. He also had the distinction of winning the respect and friendship of Beethoven, whom he met during a visit in Vienna in 1825. On that occasion, Beethoven wrote a clever and humorous canon on Kuhlau's name, "*Kuhl, nicht lau,*" (cool, not lukewarm).

As a young musician, Kuhlau enjoyed a solid reputation as a piano teacher in Hamburg, and gave his first public recital there in 1808. Shortly afterwards, he published his first piano sonatas and several other works. In 1810 Hamburg was annexed to the French Empire, and Kuhlau moved to Copenhagen to avoid conscription into Napoleon's army. His success in Denmark was remarkable. He became a member of the orchestra of the Royal theater, and was allowed to present a concert of his own works. This brought such high acclaim that he was commanded to play before the queen. He wrote a great number of successful operas, and soon became known as "the great Danish composer."

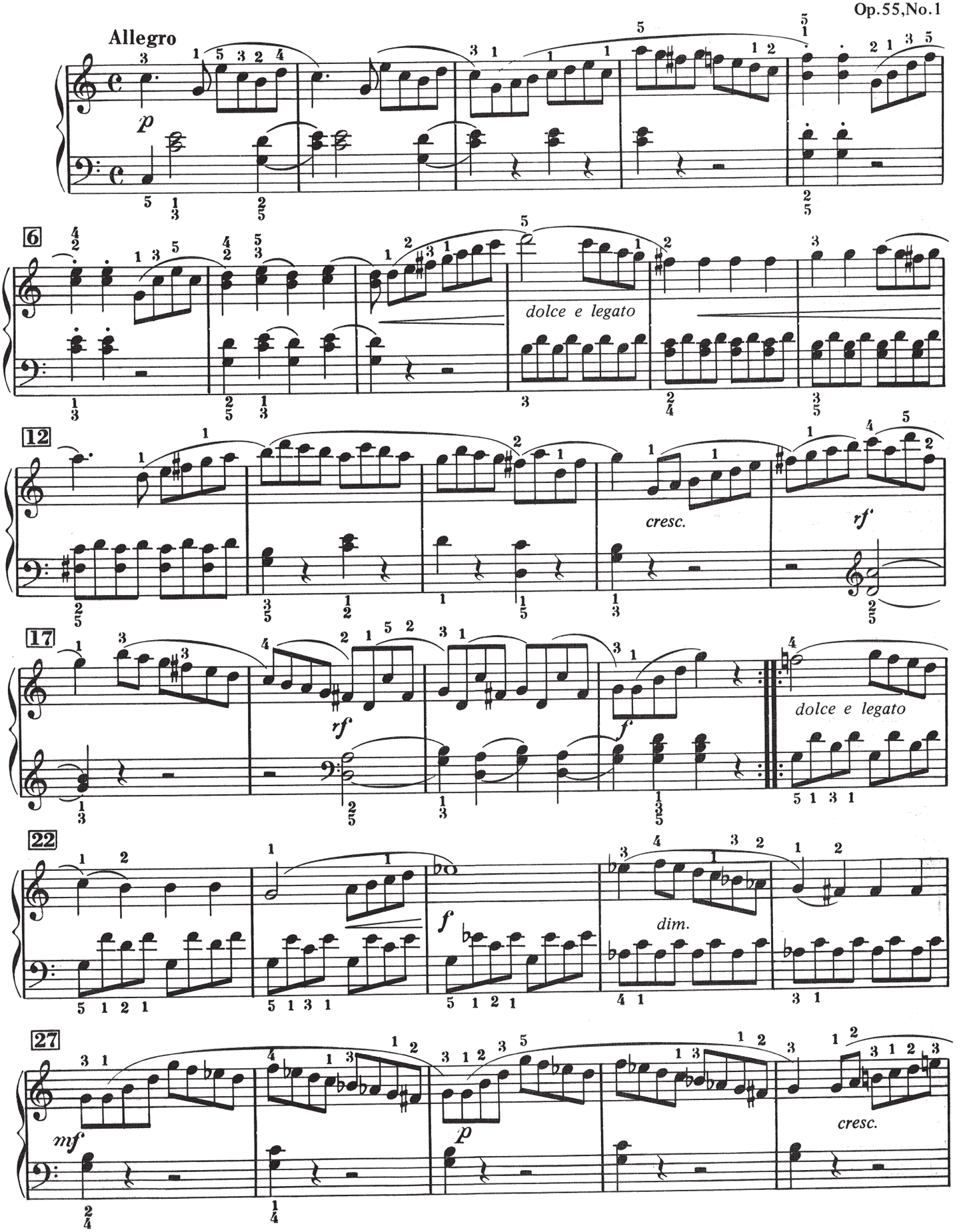
In 1813 Kuhlau was appointed to a member of the Royal orchestra at the king's court, where he played flute as well as piano. For this he received a rather small salary, but was able to supplement it with his income from his many published compositions. Although he was never married, he retained a large household of relatives, for whose welfare he made himself personally responsible.

Kuhlau is still widely known for his compositions for flute, and some of his chamber works are still performed. His most valued works are his sonatinas for piano, which are highly valued as study material. These works, composed in the Clementi-Beethoven "legato tradition," are highly expressive, well-constructed works based on classical forms.

Sonatina No. 1

In C Major

Op.55,No.1

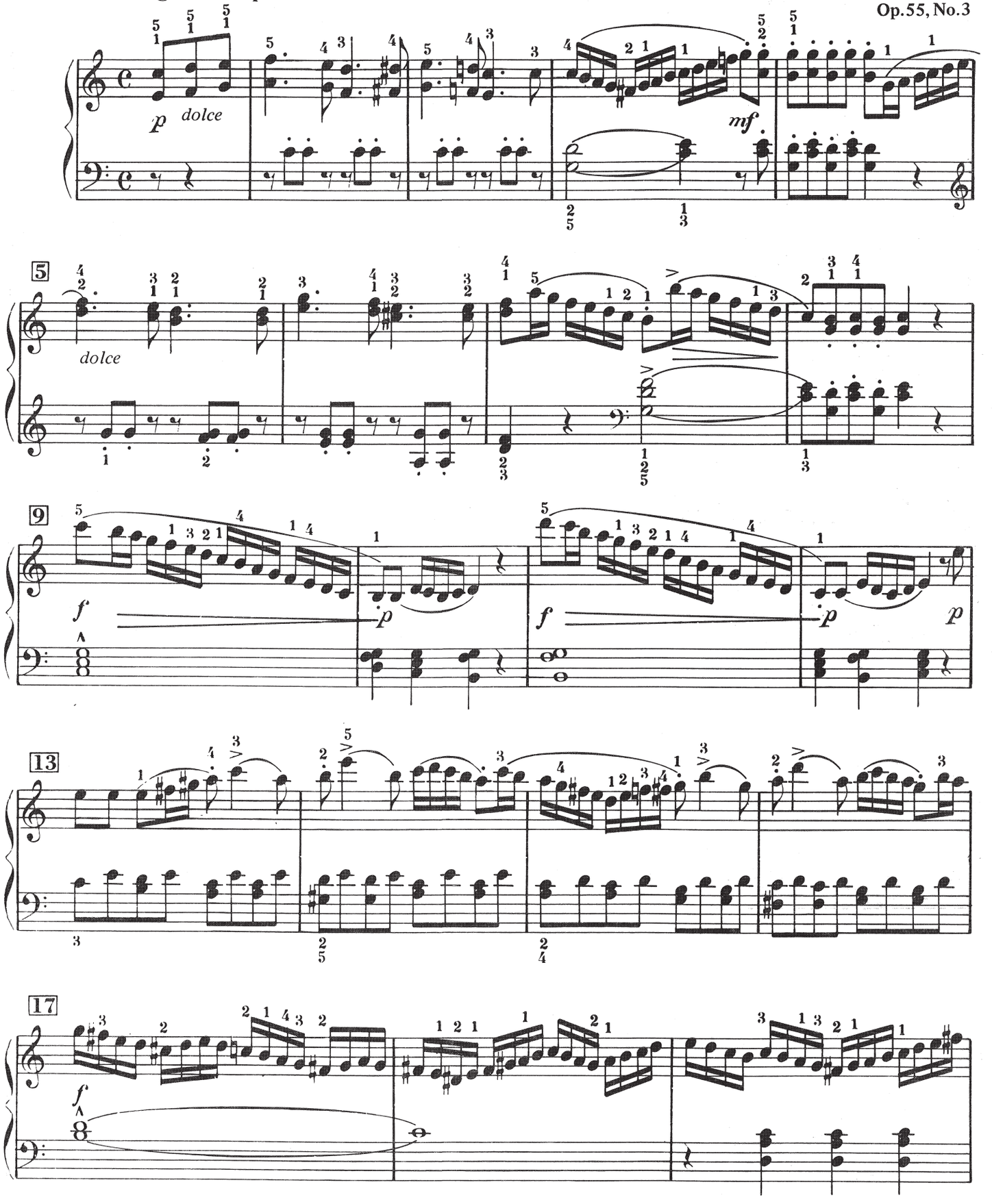


Sonatina No. 3

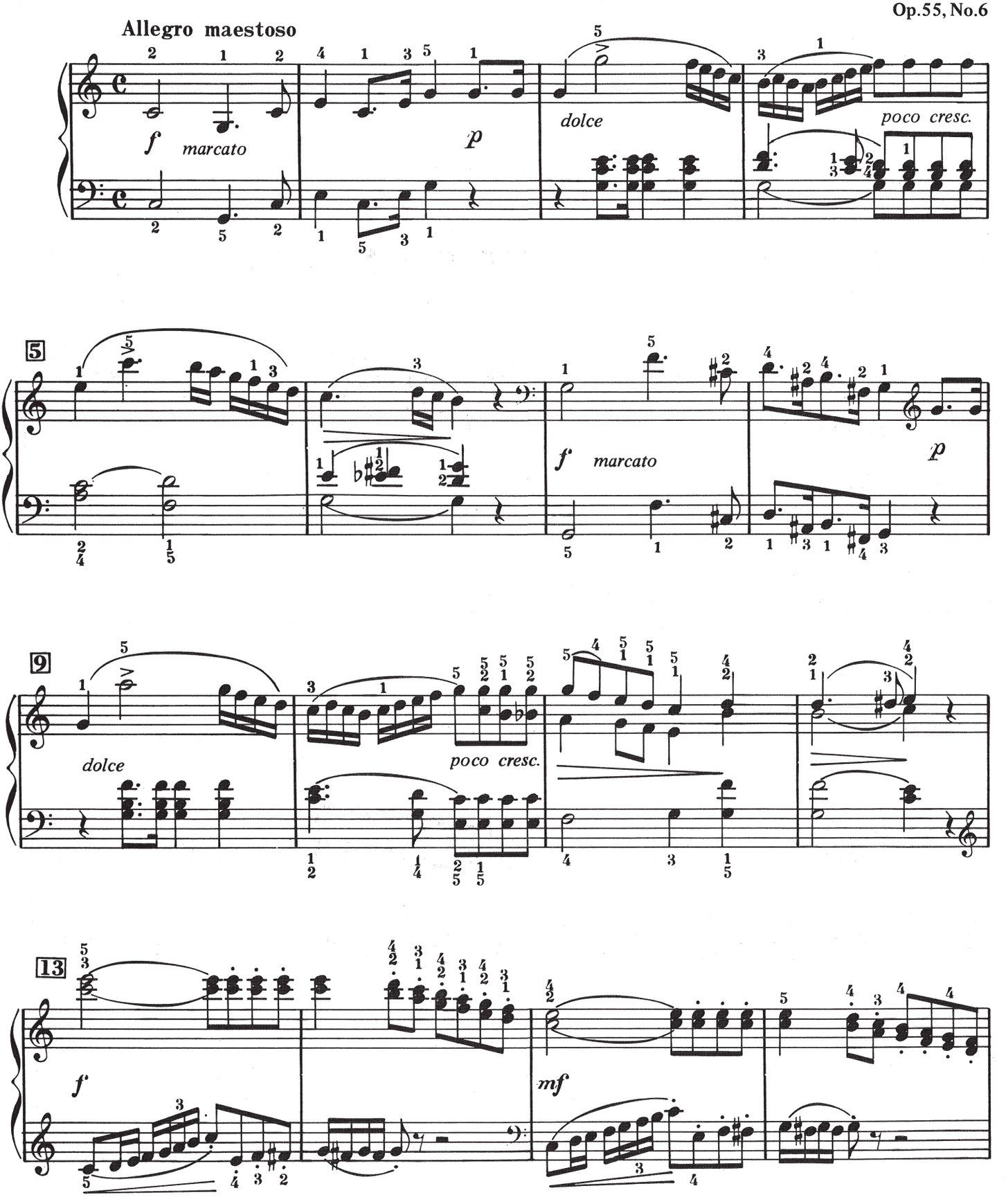
In C Major

Allegro con spirito

Op.55, No.3



Sonatina No. 6

In C Major

Op.55, No.6