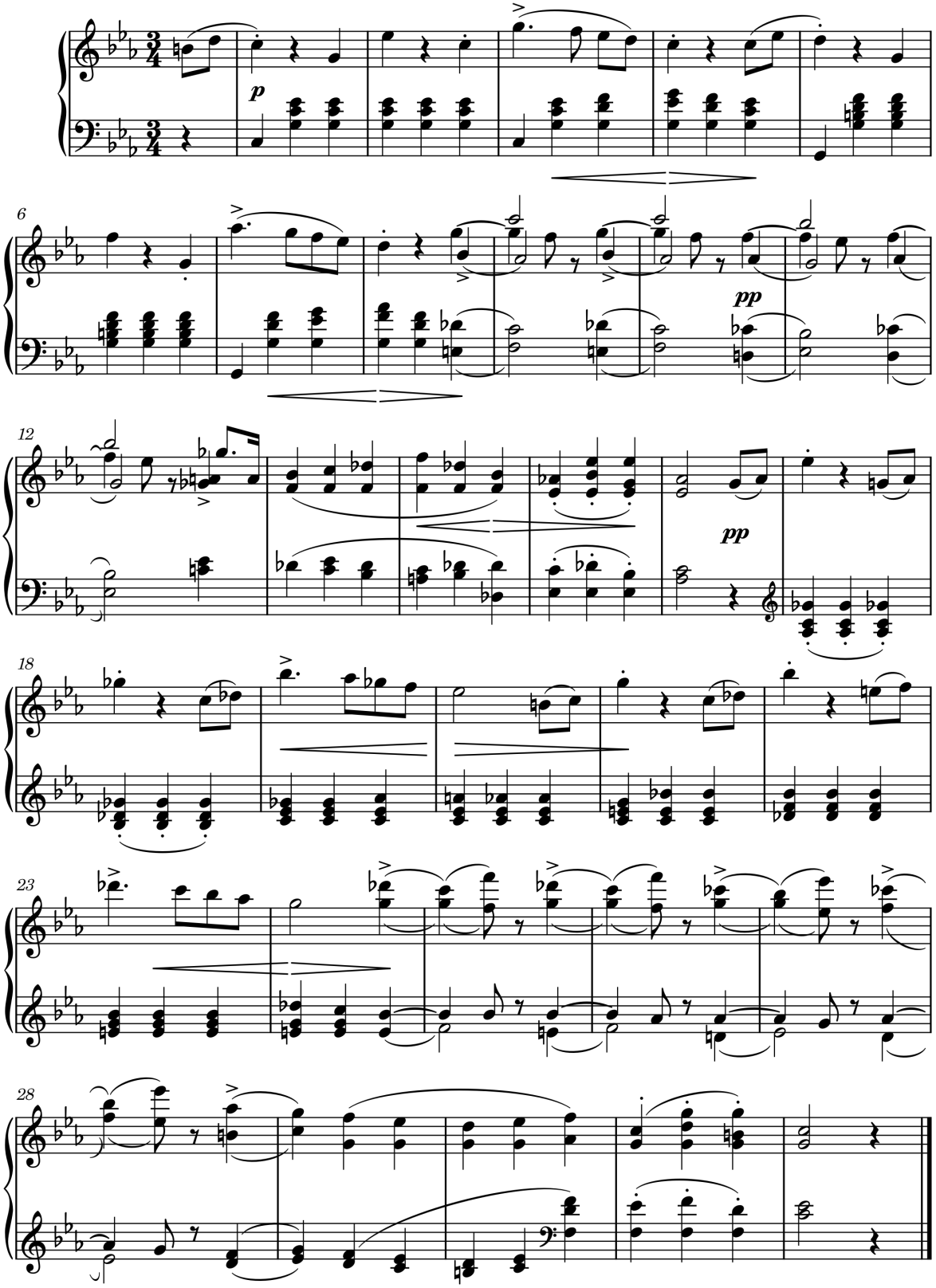
Waltz D.718

Franz Schubert

Schubert's Waltz D.718 artfully interweaves harmonic layers with great attention to detail:

The harmonic asymmetries and ambiguities are particularly evident in the excessive use of the shortened dominant seventh chord—that is, a dominant seventh chord without a root—which was already used in Bach's time to denote the diminished chord.

The diminished chord first appears in the upbeat to **measure 9** as a diminished chord on E. If one imagines the root note C, one sees that a V-I cadence from C7 to F minor is intended. Schubert uses the shortened dominant seventh chord more than a dozen times, especially in his reworking and refinement of Diabelli's Rosalie.

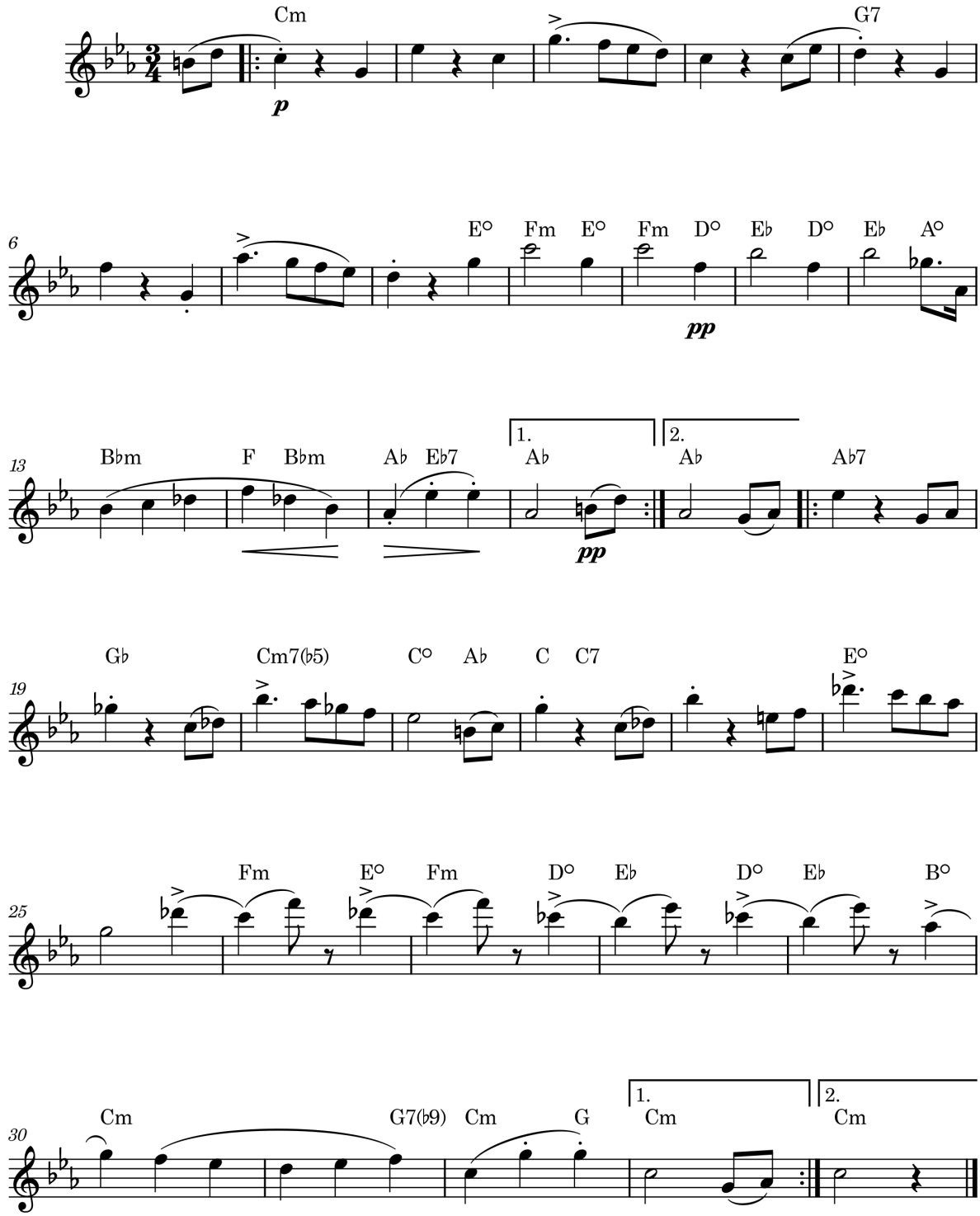
Schubert introduces a surprising twist in **measure 12**, where he reinterprets a diminished C chord as a F dominant chord leading to B-flat minor. He further emphasizes the surprising use of this diminished chord outside the sequence pattern of the Rosalie with the dotted eighth-note figure, which appears only once in the entire piece.

It is astonishing how Schubert ingeniously employs not only the refinement of the harmony but also its delicate simplification. In **measure 21**, the B-flat major chord—actually a shortened dominant seventh chord—points toward D-flat. However, this is initially followed by the mediant C, a half-step lower. Schubert brings out the wonderful change in timbre more clearly on the first beat by omitting the seventh, which on the next beats ultimately leads to B-flat minor, the parallel key of D-flat major.

Another example of sonic sophistication: In **measure 31**, the dominant seventh chord initially sounds without the third, which gives it a captivating open timbre just before the end. Schubert finds a bold voicing for the F minor chords in the Rosalie. These are interlocking, nested fourths.

Variation on an Waltz by Diabelli D.718

Franz Schubert



Tips for improvisation:

It is helpful to work out the three-part structure:

–Vocal line (bars 1–8)
–Rosalie (bars 9–14)
–Full cadence to the dominant key (bars 14 to 16)

The vocal line should be played as such: a melodic line in seconds with appoggiaturas and long sustained notes.

The Rosalie can be harmonically emphasized with arpeggios.

The shortened dominant ninth chords can also be played as appoggiaturas. Scale: Half-step/Whole-step (octatonic)

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For the full cadence, a standard II-I-V-I lick can also be played.

In the **second part**, the main challenge is to find a natural-sounding transition from A-flat major to C major between measures 21 and 22

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The solution used for the Rosalie in the first movement can be repeated or varied in the second.

The harmonic C-minor scale is recommended for the closing cadence.

Harmonic structure of Diabelli's original

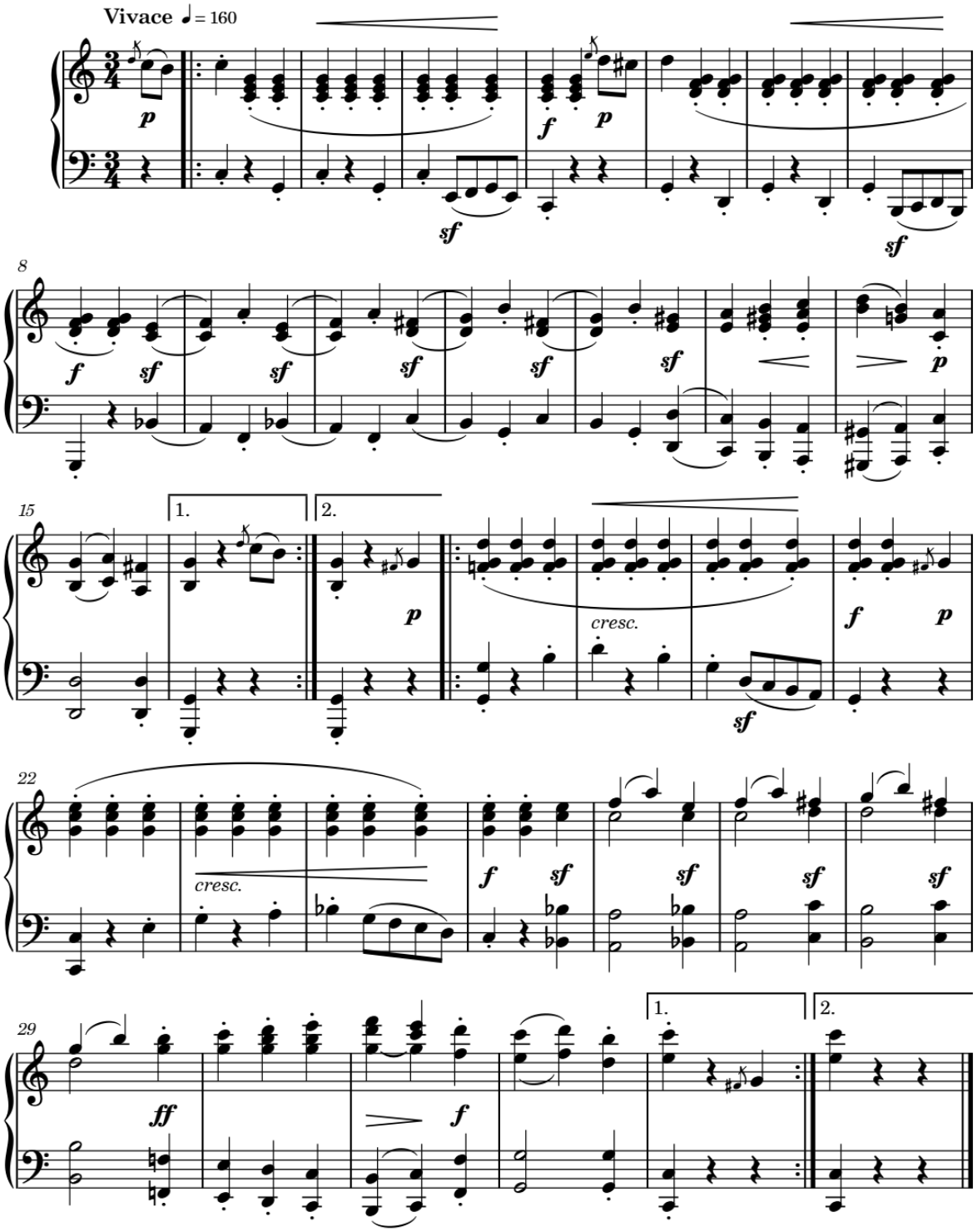
C				G7			C7
F	D7	G	E7	Am		D7	G
G7				C		C7	
F	D7	G	G7	C		G	C

Harmonic structure of Schubert's Waltz

Cm				G7			C7(b9)
Fm	Bb7(b9)	Eb	F7(b9)	Bbm	Ab Eb7	Ab	

(Db)				C	C7			
Fm					Bb7(b9)	Eb		G7(b9)
Cm								

Diabelli's Waltz

Anton Diabelli

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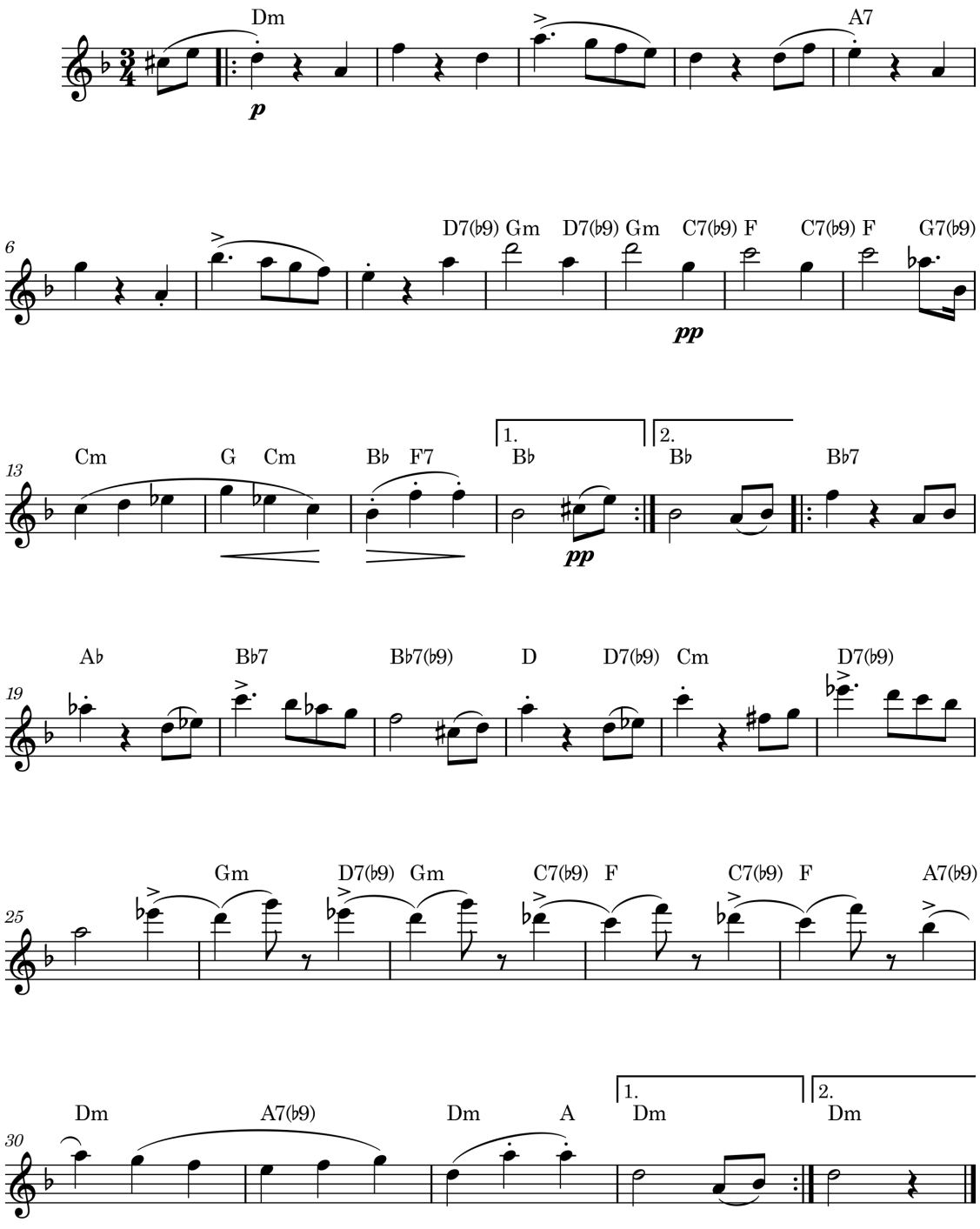
(Bb)

Franz Schubert



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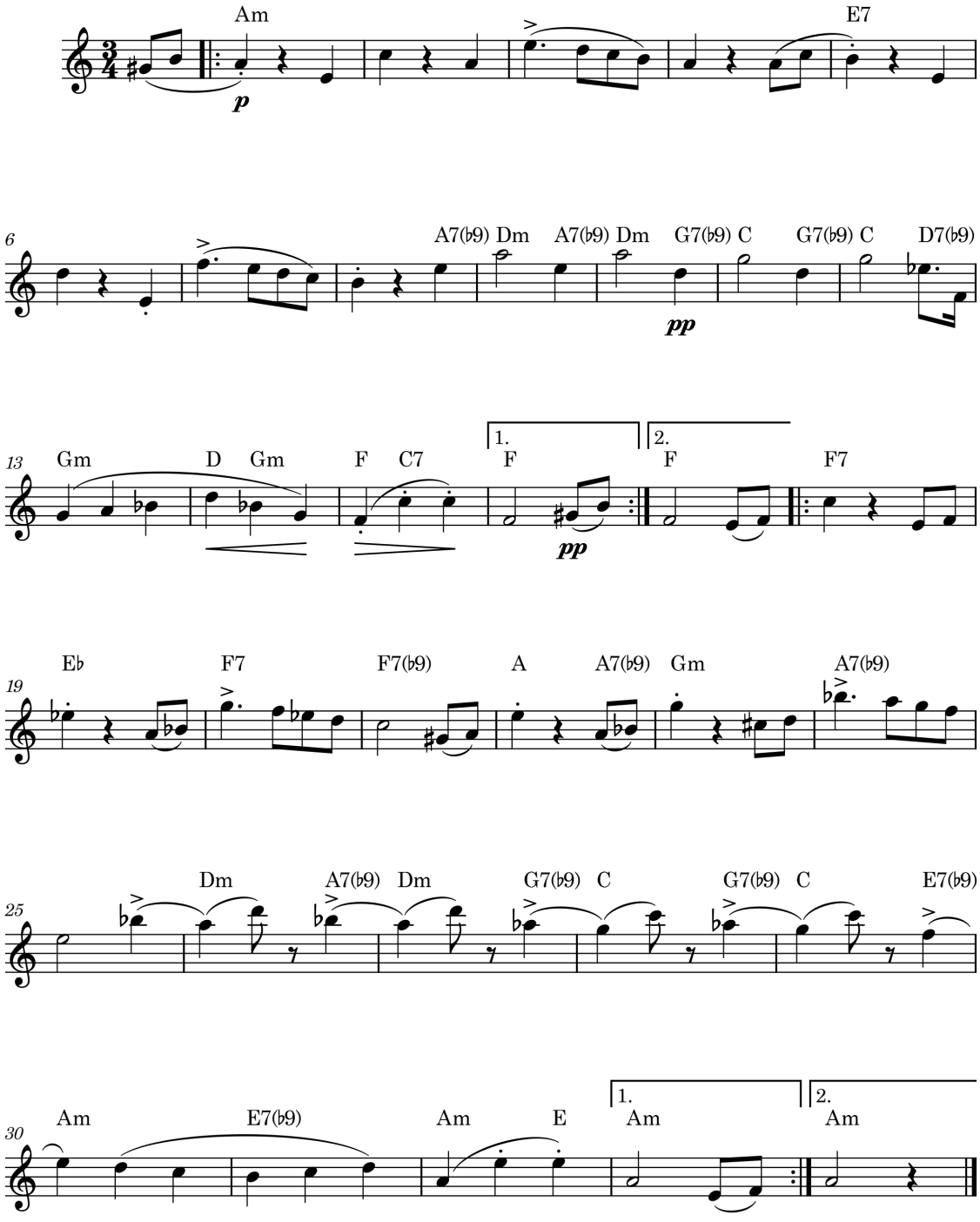
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