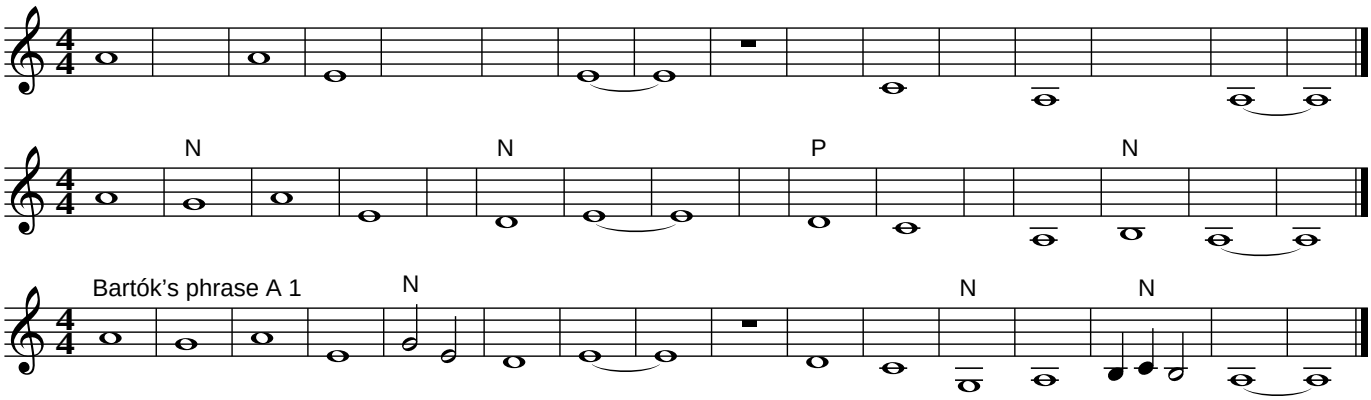
Recomposing Bartok's Mikrokosmos no. 42

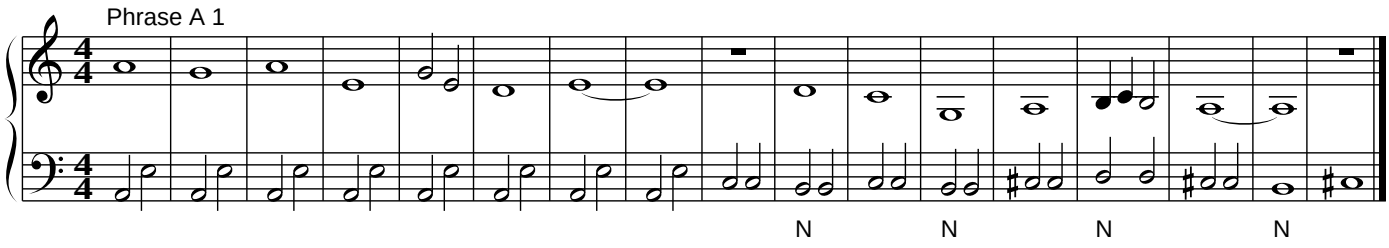
Objective: a binary form based on voice exchange

The two−part Bartok's Mikrokosmos no. 42 can be described as two phrases A1 and A2. Phrase A2 is a varied repetition of the 17−bar phrase A1. The key feature of that varied repetition is voice exchange: the upper voice of A1 becomes the lower voice of A2 and the lower voice of A1 in a varied way the upper voice of A2.

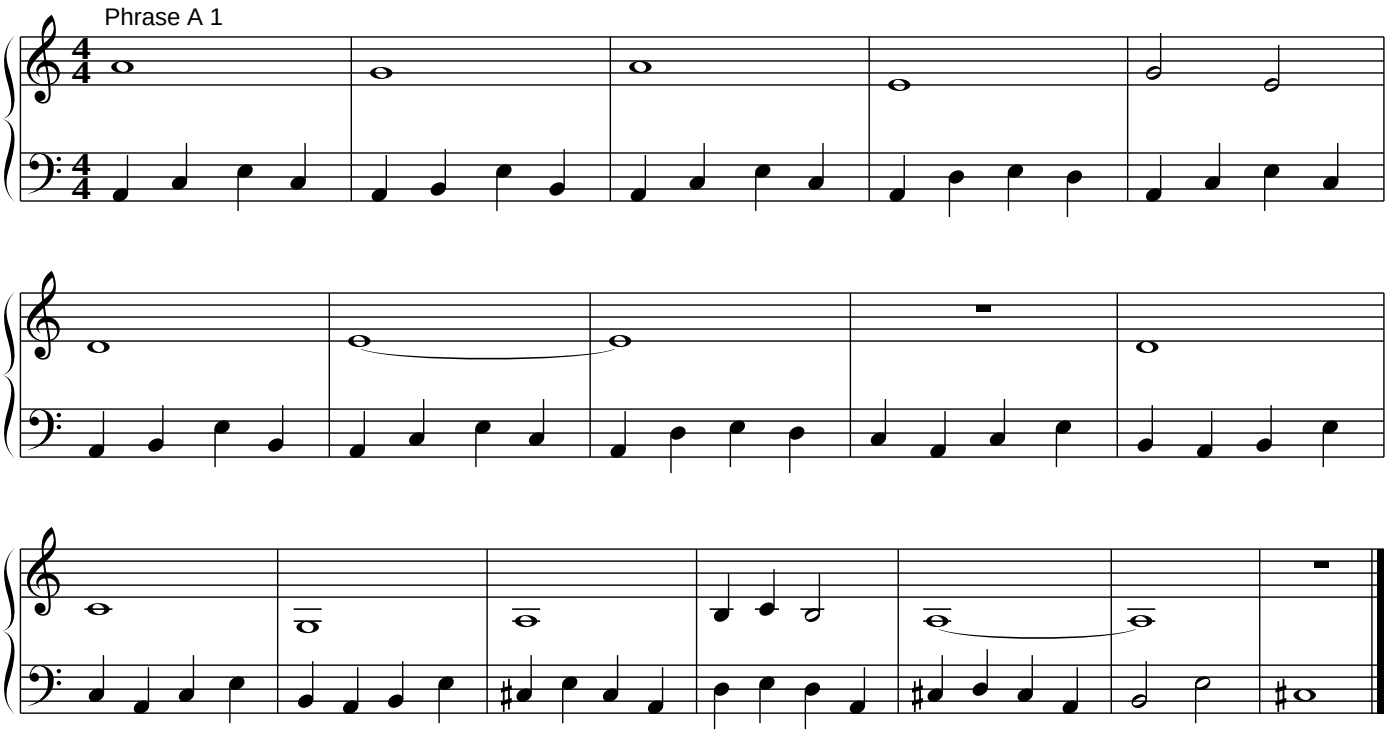
Step 1: the basic structure of the upper voice of phrase A1 is the triad A−C−E. In Bartók's version each tone of this structure is elaborated with neigbour tones (N) and passing tones (P).



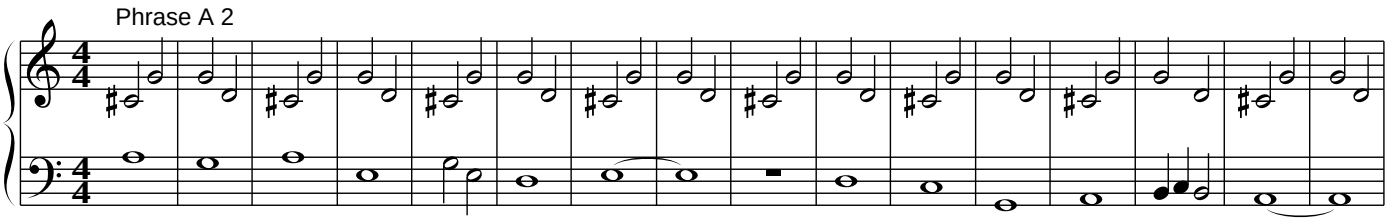
Step 2: The accompaniment of phrase A1 is based on the same structure, the triad A−C−E. At the beginning a repetition of the tones A and E. Then a diminution of tone C with lower neighbour tone B and upper neighbour tone D. Note the alteration of C to C sharp, which becomes the new main tone of phrase A2.



Step 3: it is quite easy to elaborate the lower voice with triad tones and neighbour tones. Bartók's diminution results in a 2−bar varied repetition.

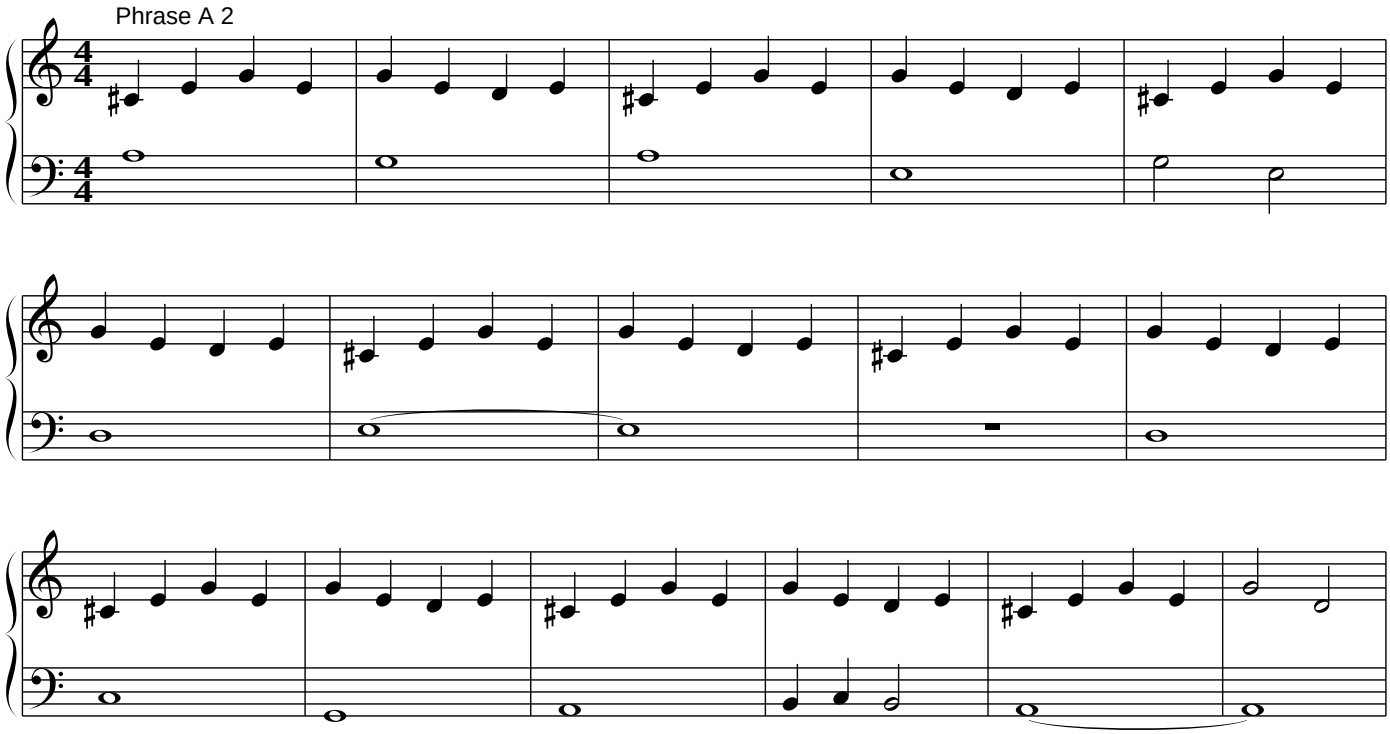


Step 4: the lower voice of phrase A2 is an exact repetition of the upper voice of A1. The upper voice of A2 has the same idea as the lower voice of A1. The unelaborated version is as follows:



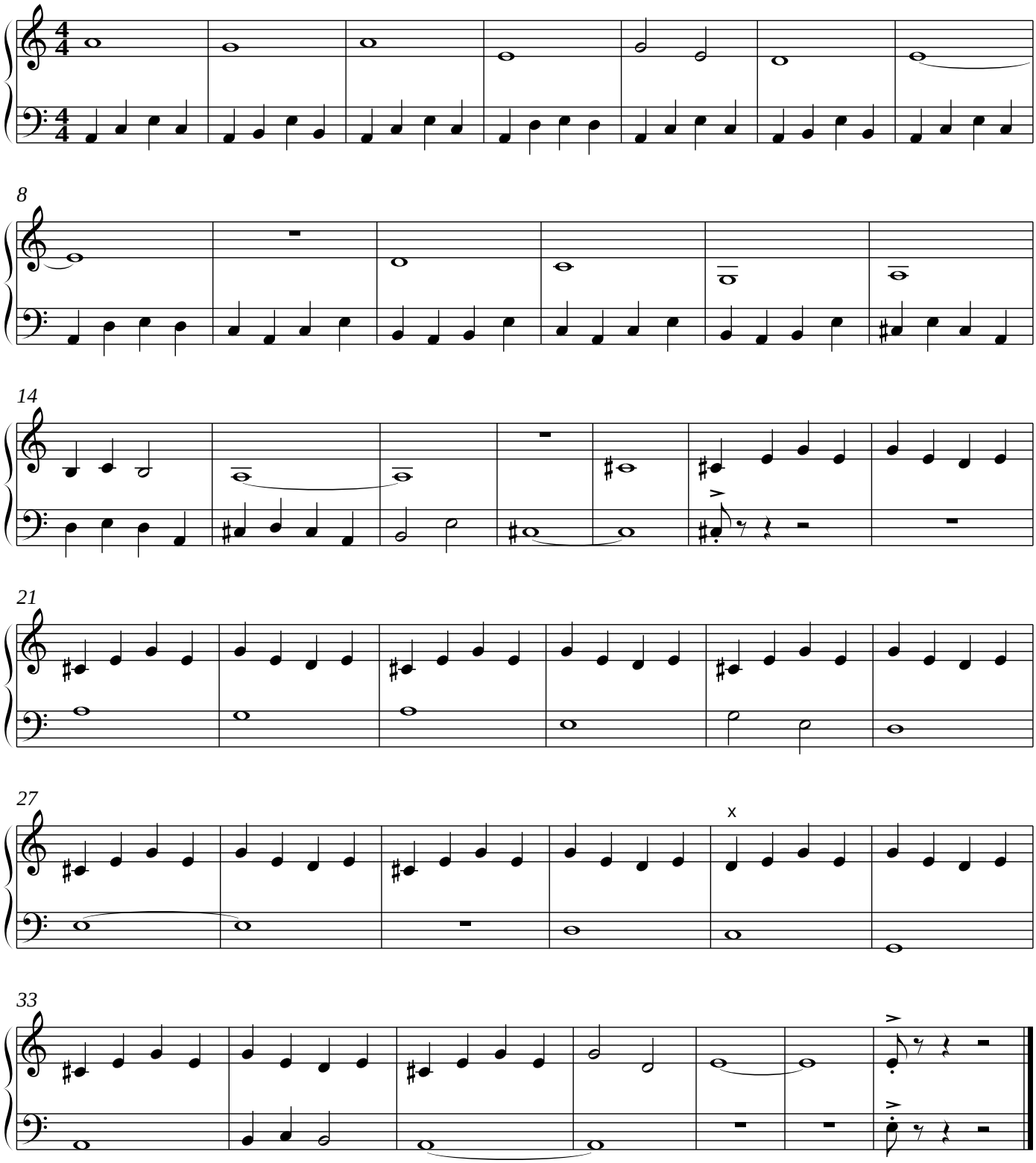
Comment: again a 2−bar repetition in the accompaniment (upper voice), now without repetition of the tones from the first bar C#−G (as in phrase A1), but with an inverted movement of the tones G−D in the second bar.

Step 5: Embellishing the accompaniment (upper voice) is easily done. Bartók's working−out is:



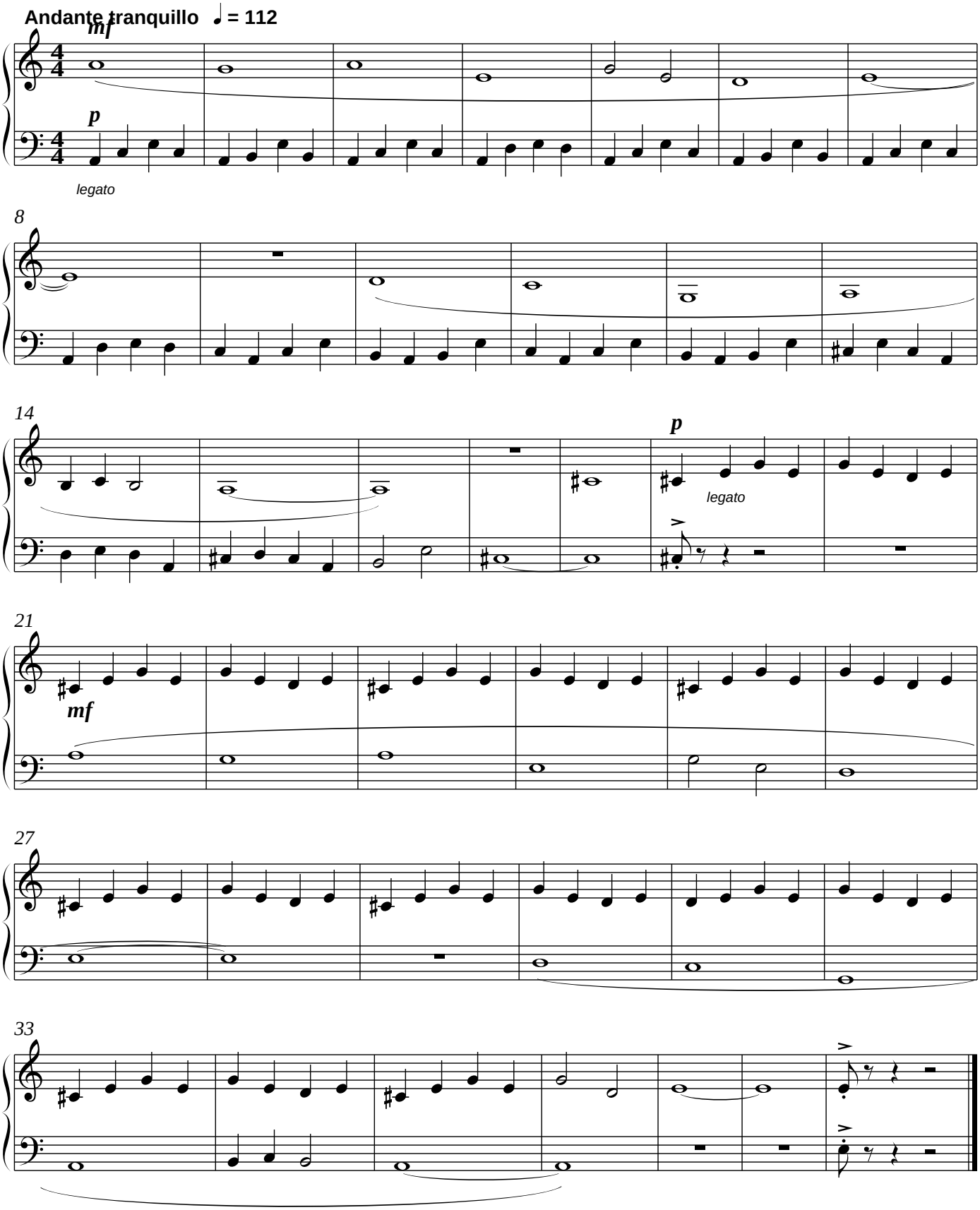
Comment: note that Bartók does not change the 2−bar repetition as in phrase A1.

Step 6: the connection between phrase A1 and A2 can be done via tone C# (which concluded phrase A1) and the repetition figure. The final tone E is self−evident.



Comment: note Bartók's modification of the repetition figure at bar 31 and the 'accent'−motive in bar 19 and 39.

Step 7: finishing touch (adding dynamics, tempo, phrasing and notes on performance)



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