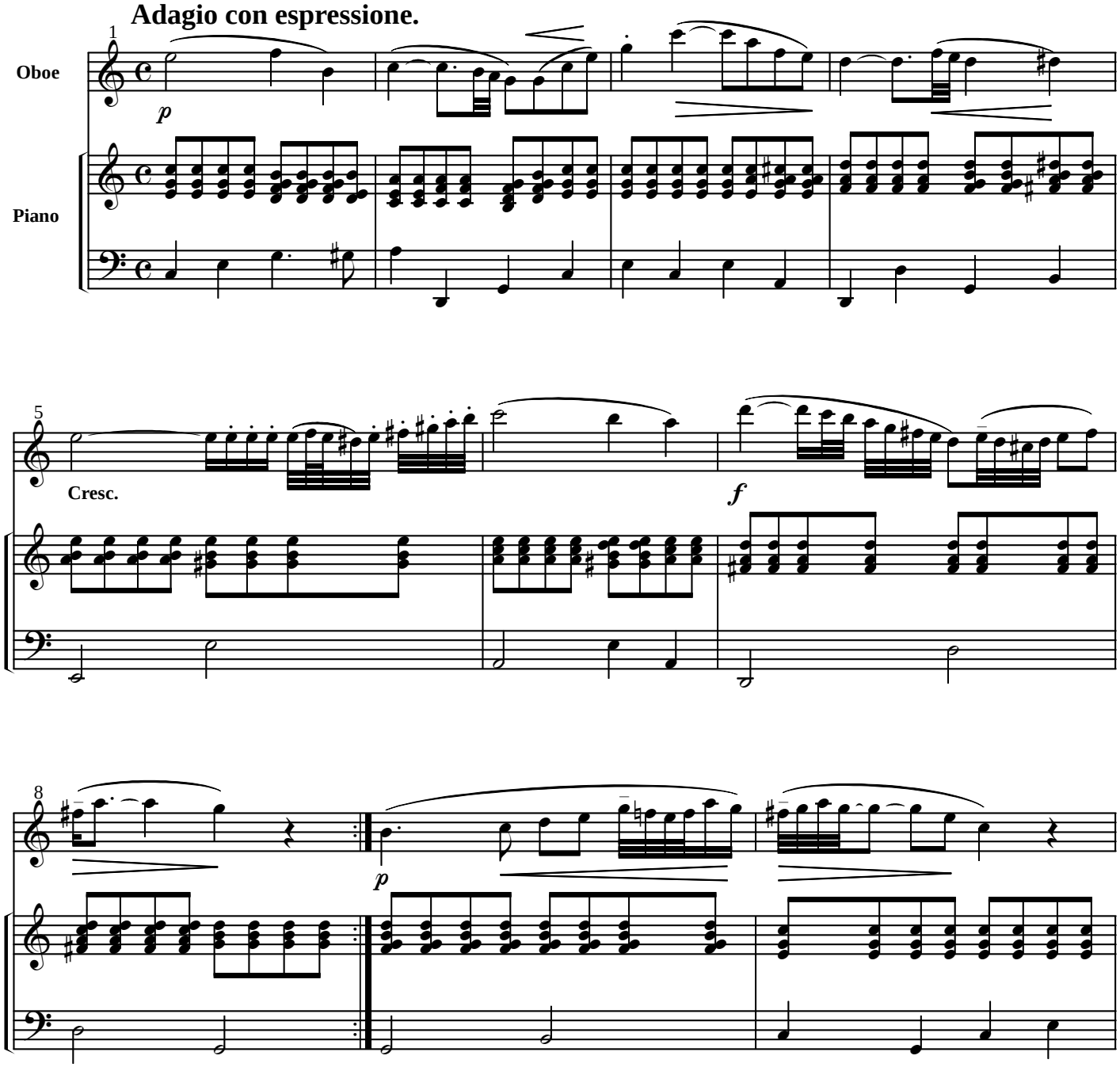
Franz Wilhelm Ferling (1796-1874)

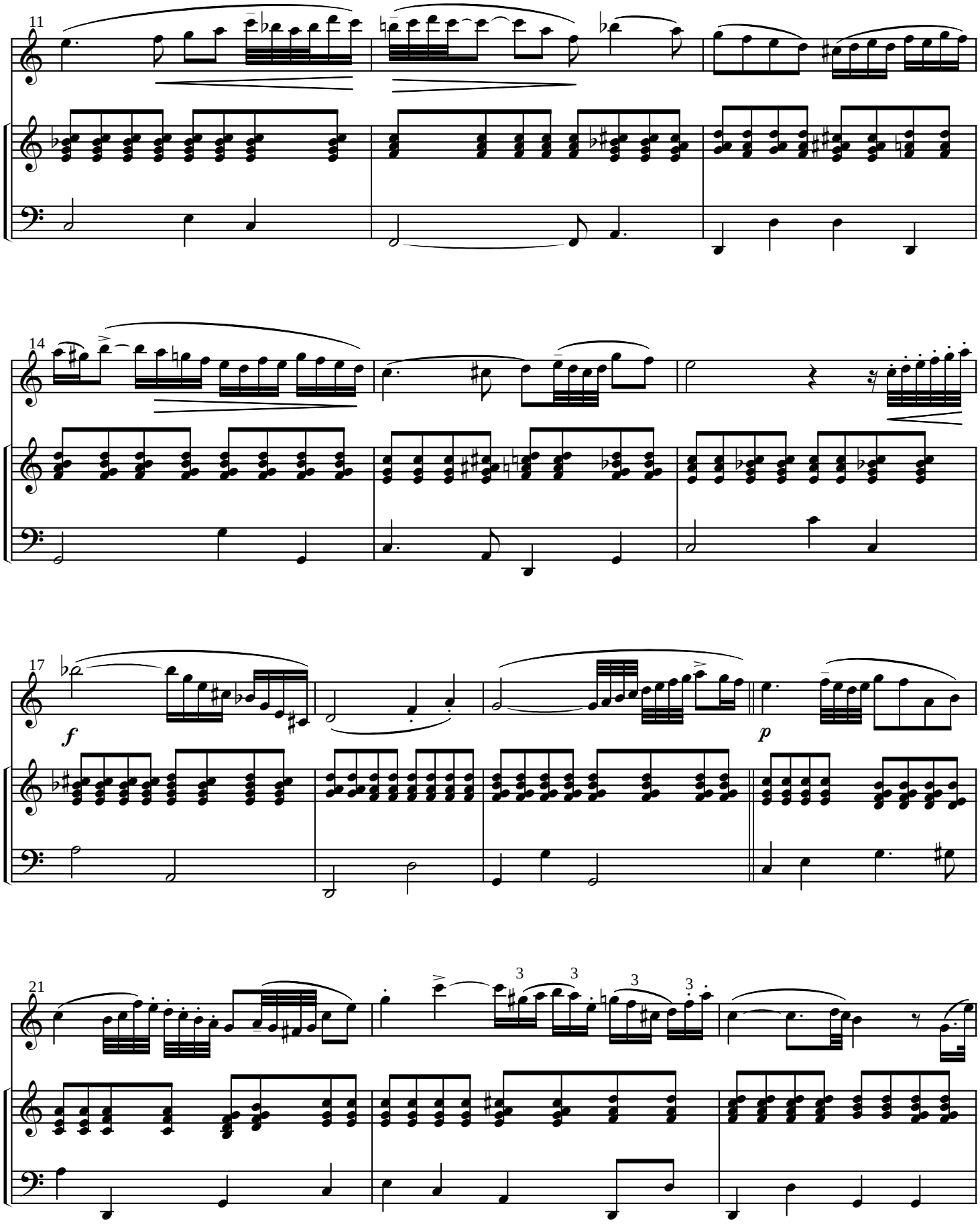
48 Übungen für Oboe, Op. 31 (c. 1840)

Edition for Oboe and Piano by Charles-David Lehrer

Oboe part from the original Bachmann publication, Plate 959

No. 1 in C Major




11
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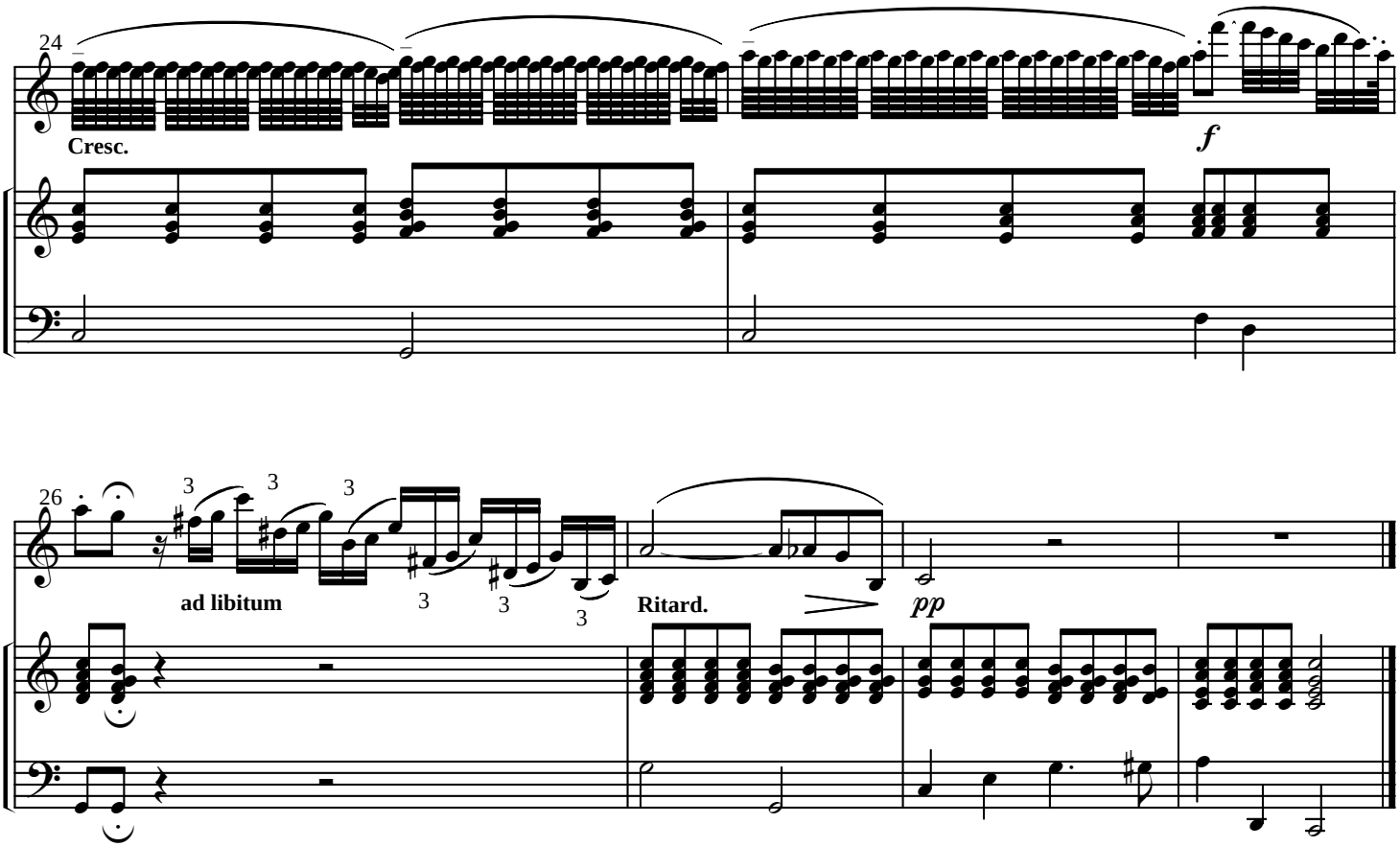

No. 1: The first of Ferling's famous Op. 31 informs us that the master of Braunschweig was well acquainted with the Italian Bel canto composers Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. The etude's rounded binary form structure is generously supplied with both florid and stenographic ornamentation, the latter having been realized in modern notational values. Although the eighth note is prominent, Ferling taking every chance he can to subdivide it into duplets, triplets, quadruplets, and octuplets (trills), the actual tactus is the quarter note. In addition, the range is very wide, reaching from B to F3. The passage involving the high F, E, and D must have been quite a challenge on the early mechanized German oboes of the day. In fact, this same spot still makes for considerable angst among players utilizing fully mechanized modern instruments. Certainly a word is in order concerning the wide intervals liberally utilized by Ferling: at the outset, the dominant 7th on G is spelled out in the tritone descent from F2 to B1, perhaps as a portend of what is to follow. The perfect 4th in measure 3 reappears in the rounding of the binary form, followed by florid ornamentation. But, needless to say, the minor 6th up to the high F3 causes the most anxiety, preceded as it is by the trill A2-G2 which is difficult to execute until the muscles of the third finger have been strengthened. This is not an etude for the faint-hearted!