Gustave Vogt's

Musical Album of Autographs

15 Pieces for Oboe and English Horn

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CARL FISCHER®

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* Instrumental parts are included in the Piano/Score book

Introduction

Gustave Vogt's Musical Paris

Gustave Vogt (1781–1870) was born into the "Age of Enlightenment," at the apex of the Enlightenment's outreach. During his lifetime he would observe its effect on the world. Over the course of his life he lived through many changes in musical style. When he was born, composers such as Mozart and Haydn were still writing masterworks revered today, and eighty-nine years later, as he departed the world, the new realm of Romanticism was beginning to emerge with Mahler, Richard Strauss and Debussy, who were soon to make their respective marks on the musical world. Vogt himself left a huge mark on the musical world, with critics referring to him as the "grandfather of the modern oboe" and the "premier oboist of Europe."[1]

Through his eighty-nine years, Vogt would live through what was perhaps the most turbulent period of French history. He witnessed the French Revolution of 1789, followed by the many newly established governments, only to die just months before the establishment of the Third Republic in 1870, which would be the longest lasting government since the beginning of the revolution. He also witnessed the transformation of the French musical world from one in which opera reigned supreme, to one in which virtuosi, chamber music, and symphonic music ruled. Additionally, he experienced the development of the oboe right before his eyes. When he began playing in the late eighteenth century, the standard oboe had two keys (E and Eb) and at the time of his death in 1870, the "System Six" Triébert oboe (the instrument adopted by *Conservatoire* professor, Georges Gillet, in 1882) was only five years from being developed.

Vogt was born March 18, 1781 in the ancient town of Strasbourg, part of the Alsace region along the German border. At the time of his birth, Strasbourg had been annexed by Louis XIV, and while heavily influenced by Germanic culture, had been loosely governed by the French for a hundred years. Although it is unclear when Vogt began studying the oboe and when his family made its move to the French capital, the Vogts may have fled Strasbourg in 1792 after much of the city was destroyed during the French Revolution. He was without question living in Paris by 1798, as he enrolled on June 8 at the newly established *Conservatoire national de Musique* to study oboe with the school's first oboe professor, Alexandre-Antoine Sallantin (1775–1830).

Vogt's relationship with the *Conservatoire* would span over half a century, moving seamlessly from the role of student to professor. In 1799, just a year after enrolling, he was awarded the *premier prix*, becoming the fourth oboist to achieve this award.[2] By 1802 he had been appointed *répétiteur*, which involved teaching the younger students and filling in for Sallantin in exchange for a free education. He maintained this rank until 1809, when he was promoted to *professor adjoint* and finally to *professor titulaire* in 1816 when Sallantin retired. This was a position he held for thirty-seven years, retiring in 1853, making him the longest serving oboe professor in the school's history. During his tenure, he became the most influential oboist in France, teaching eighty-nine students, plus sixteen he taught while he was *professor adjoint* and *professor titulaire*. Many of these students went on to be famous in their own right, such as Henri Brod (1799–1839), Apollon Marie-Rose Barret (1804–1879), Charles Triebert (1810–1867), Stanislas Verroust (1814–1863), and Charles Colin (1832–1881). His influence stretches from French to American oboe playing in a direct line from Charles Colin to Georges Gillet (1854–1920), and then to Marcel Tabuteau (1887–1966), the oboist Americans lovingly describe as the "father of American oboe playing."

Opera was an important part of Vogt's life. His first performing position was with the Théâtre-Montansier while he was still studying at the *Conservatoire*. Shortly after, he moved to the Ambigu-Comique and, in 1801 was appointed as first oboist with the Théâtre-Italien in Paris. He had been in this position for only a year, when he began playing first oboe at the Opéra-Comique. He remained there until 1814, when he succeeded his teacher, Alexandre-Antoine Sallantin, as soloist with the Paris Opéra, the top orchestra in Paris at the time. He played with the Paris Opéra until 1834, all the while bringing in his current and past students to fill out the section. In this position, he began to make a name for himself; so much so that specific performances were immortalized in memoirs and letters. One comes from a young Hector Berlioz (1803–1865) after having just arrived in Paris in 1822 and attended the Paris Opéra's performance of Mehul's *Stratonice* and Persuis' ballet *Nina*. It was in response to the song *Quand le bien-amié reviendra* that Berlioz wrote: "I find it difficult to believe that that song as sung by her could ever have made as true and touching an effect as the combination of Vogt's instrument… "[3] Shortly after this, Berlioz gave up studying medicine and focused on music.

Vogt frequently made solo and chamber appearances throughout Europe. His busiest period of solo work was during the 1820s. In 1825 and 1828 he went to London to perform as a soloist with the London Philharmonic Society. Vogt also traveled to Northern France in 1826 for concerts, and then in 1830 traveled to Munich and Stuttgart, visiting his hometown of Strasbourg on the way. While on tour, Vogt performed Luigi Cherubini's (1760–1842) *Ave Maria,* with soprano Anna (Nanette) Schechner (1806–1860), and a *Concertino*, presumably written by himself. As a virtuoso performer in pursuit of repertoire to play, Vogt found himself writing much of his own music. His catalog includes chamber music, variation sets, vocal music, concerted works, religious music, wind band arrangements, and pedagogical material. He most frequently performed his variation sets, which were largely based on themes from popular operas he had, presumably played while he was at the Opéra.[4]

He made his final tour in 1839, traveling to Tours and Bordeaux. During this tour he appeared with the singer Caroline Naldi, Countess de Sparre, and the violinist Joseph Artôt (1815–1845). This ended his active career as a soloist. His performance was described in the *Revue et gazette musicale de*

1 Geoffrey Burgess, *The Premier Oboist of Europe: A Portrait of Gustave Vogt* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 1.

2 The *premier prix* (first prize) was the price awarded to the *Conservatoire* students at the yearly competition (*concours*), which meant that the committee believed the student to have achieved the highest level of playing.

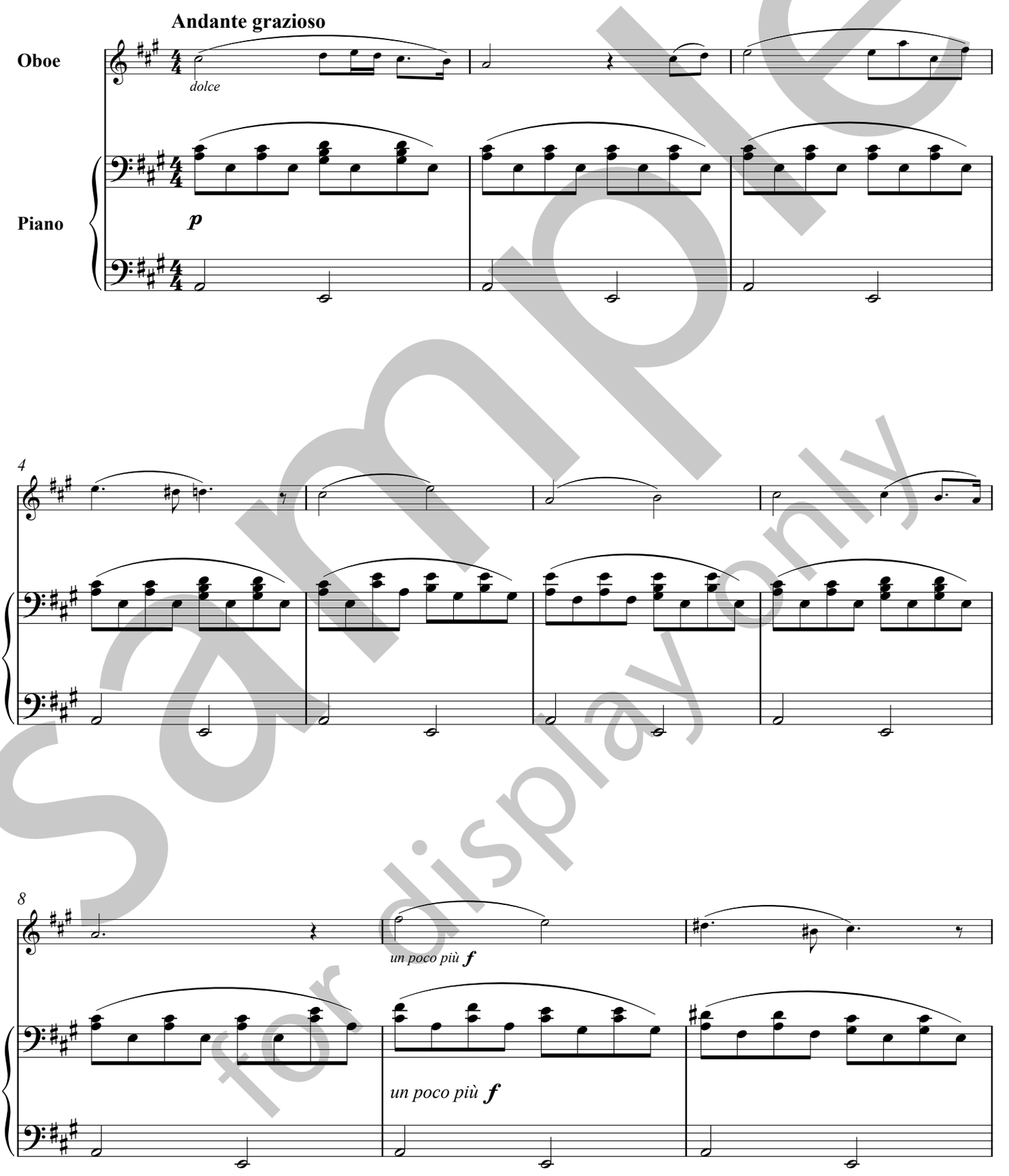
3 Hector Berlioz, Rachel Scott Russell Holmes, Eleanor Holmes, and Ernest Newman, *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz from 1803 to 1865, Comprising His Travels in Germany, Italy, Russia, and England* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 21–22.

4 Burgess, 61–62.

Pensée

for Oboe and Piano

MARIE-DÉSIRÉ BEAULIEU
(1791–1863)

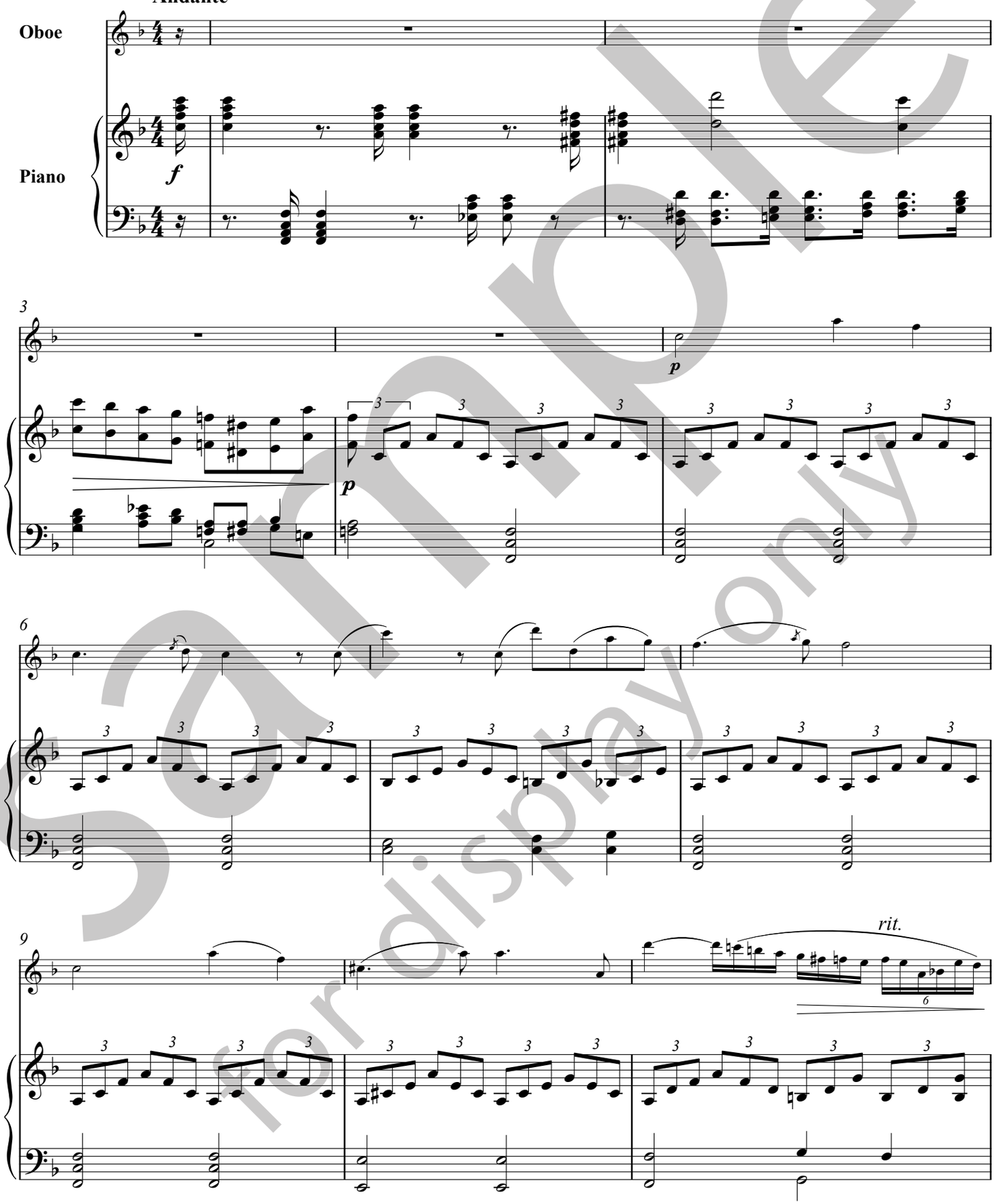


Nocturne

for Oboe and Piano

ANTON BOHRER
(1783–1852)

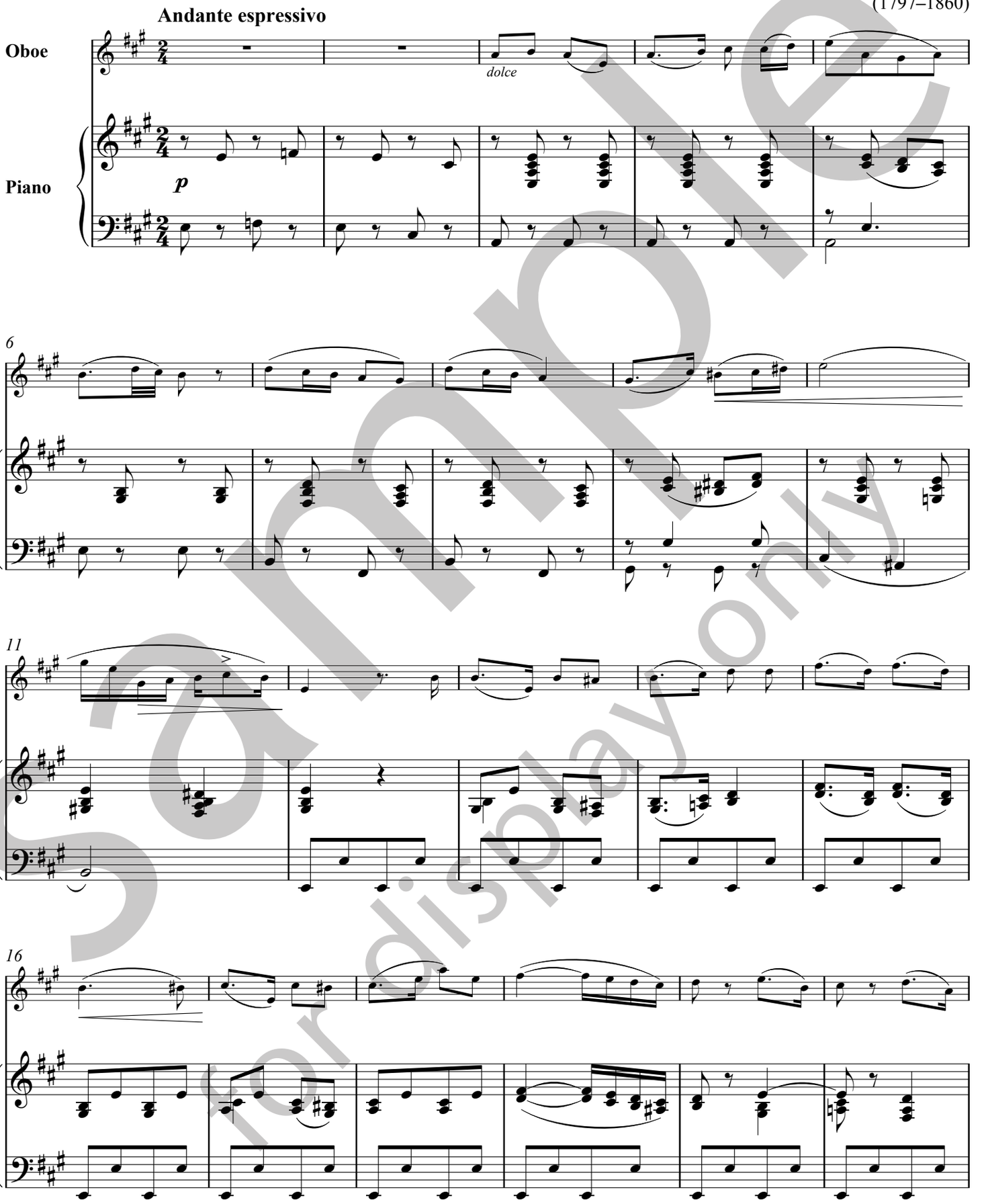
Andante



Andante espressivo

for Oboe and Piano

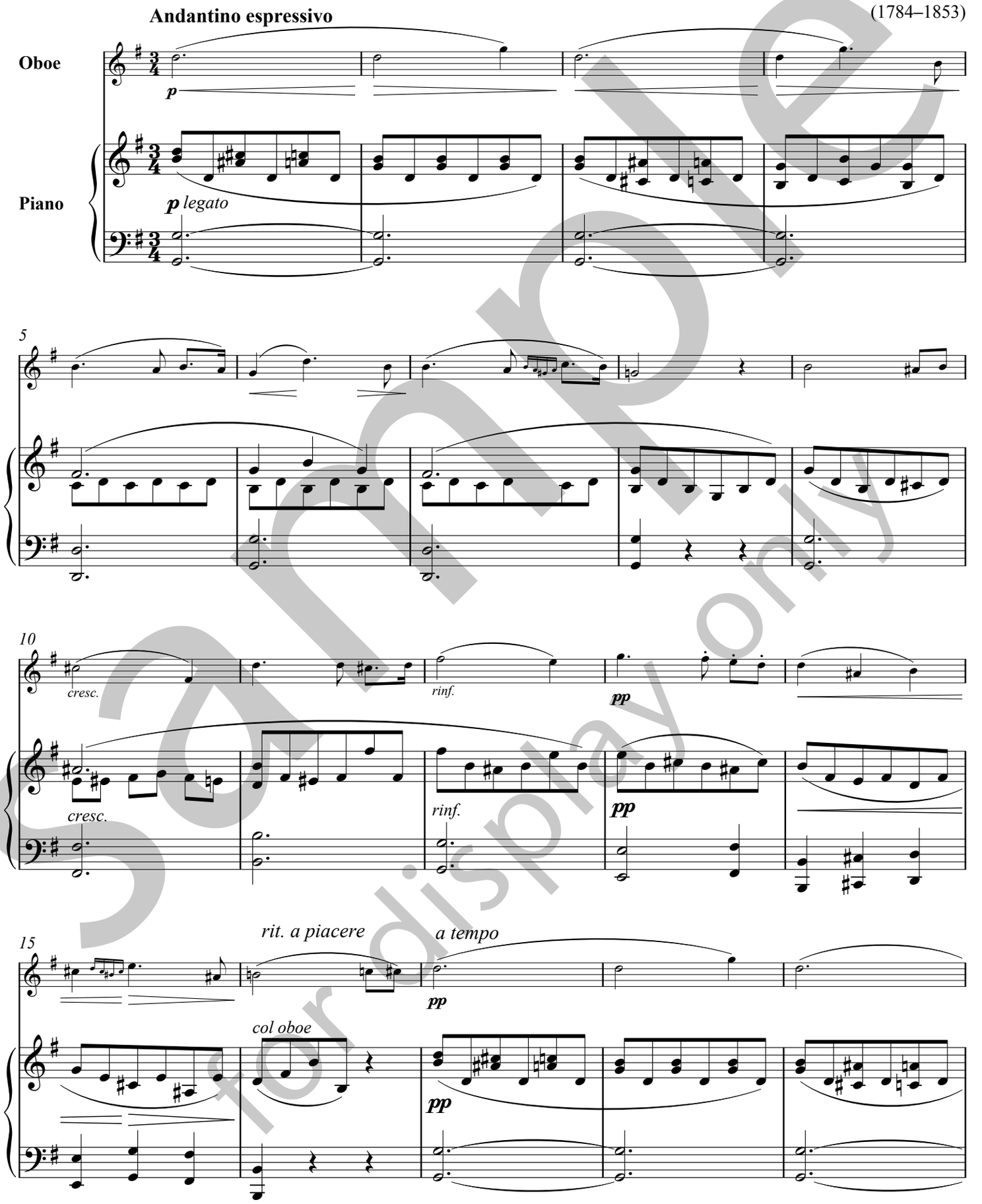
NARCISSE GIRARD
(1797–1860)



Andantino espressivo

for Oboe and Piano

GEORGES ONSLOW
(1784–1853)

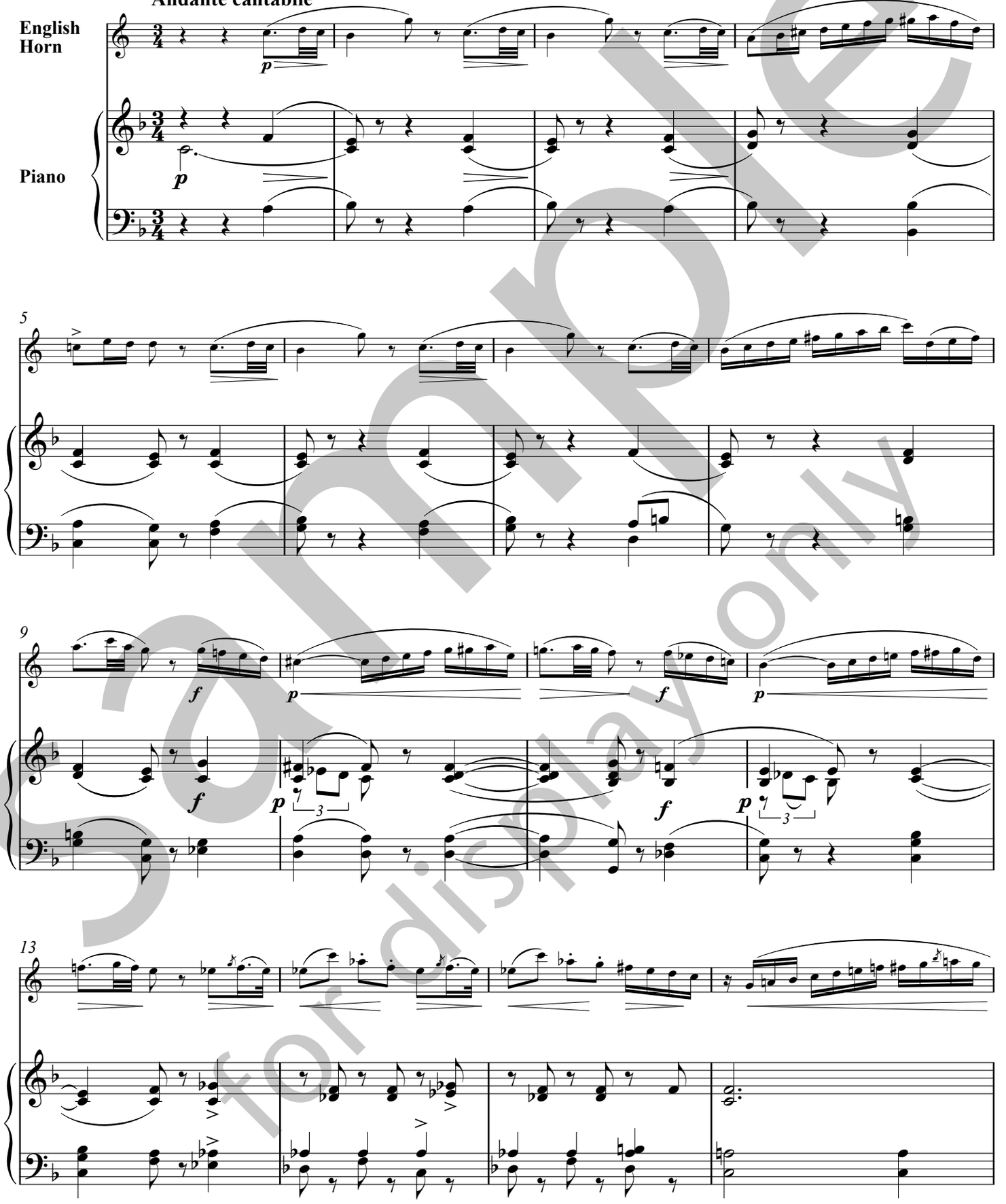


Andantino

for English Horn and Piano

MICHELE CARAFA
(1787–1872)

Andante cantabile

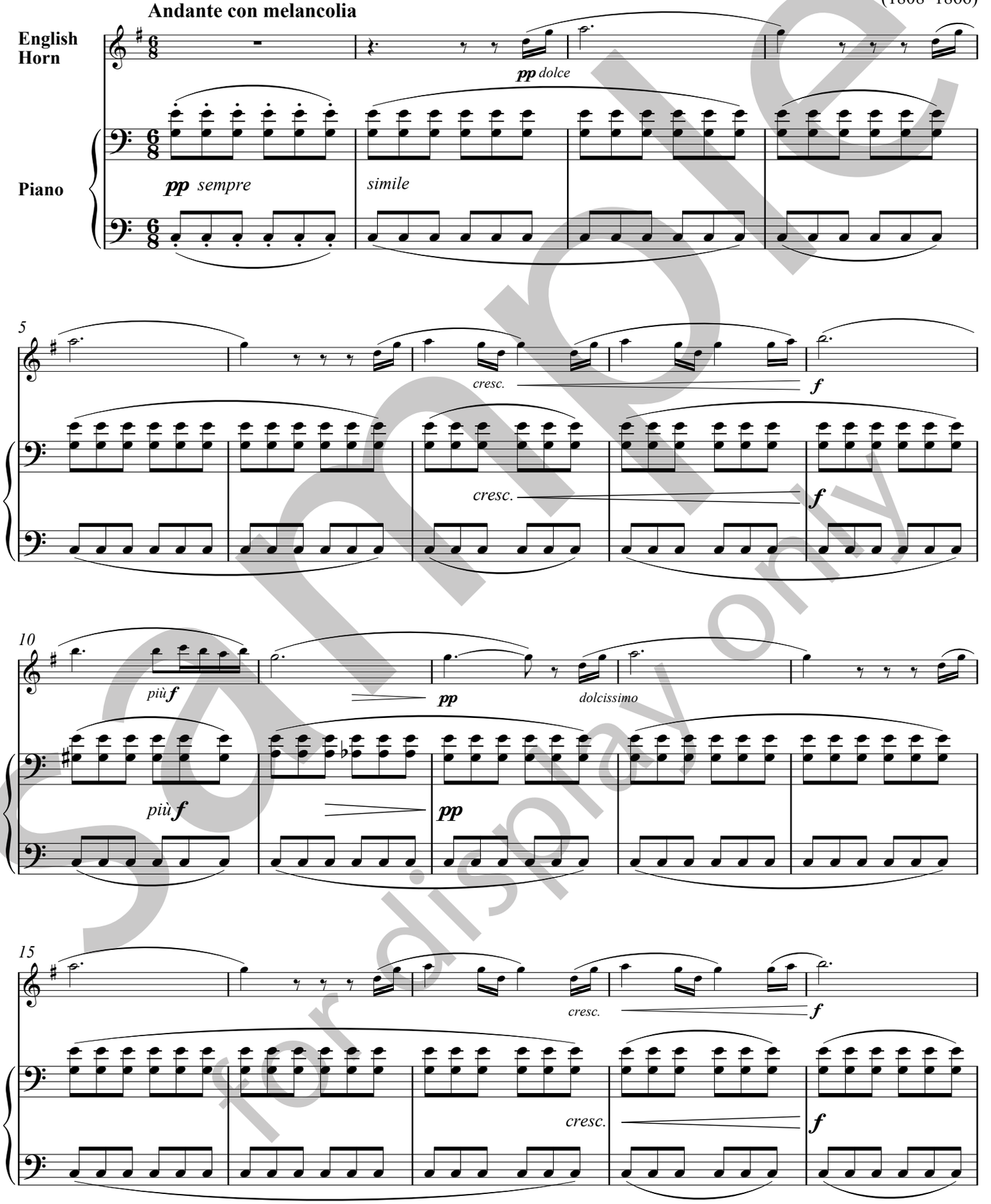


Pastorale

for English Horn and Piano

LOUIS CLAPISSON
(1808–1866)

Andante con melancolia

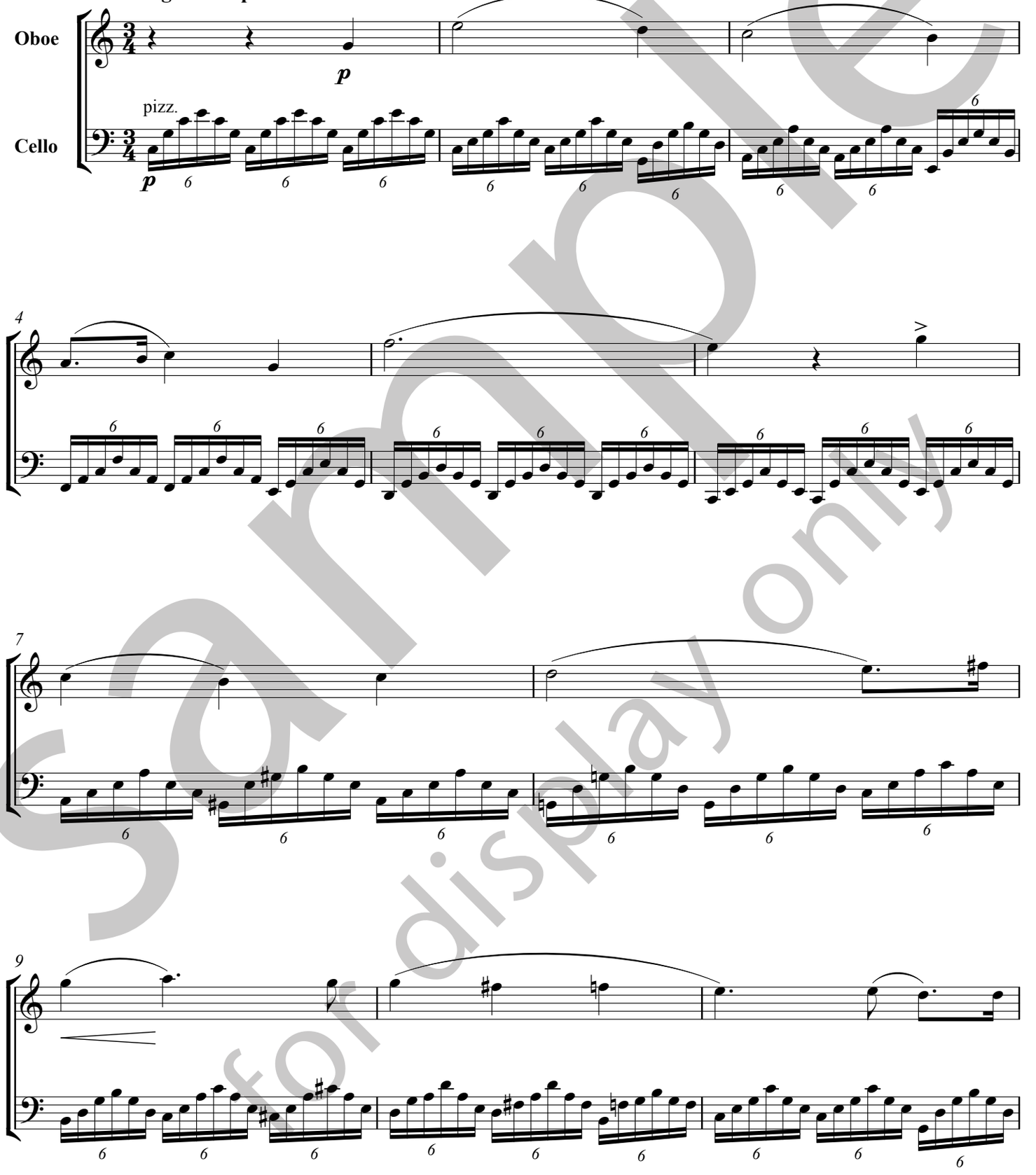


Excerpt from Roméo et Juliette

for Oboe and Cello

HECTOR BERLIOZ
(1803–1869)

Larghetto espressivo



Petit caprice, fugué

for Three Oboes

JACQUES HALÉVY
(1799–1862)