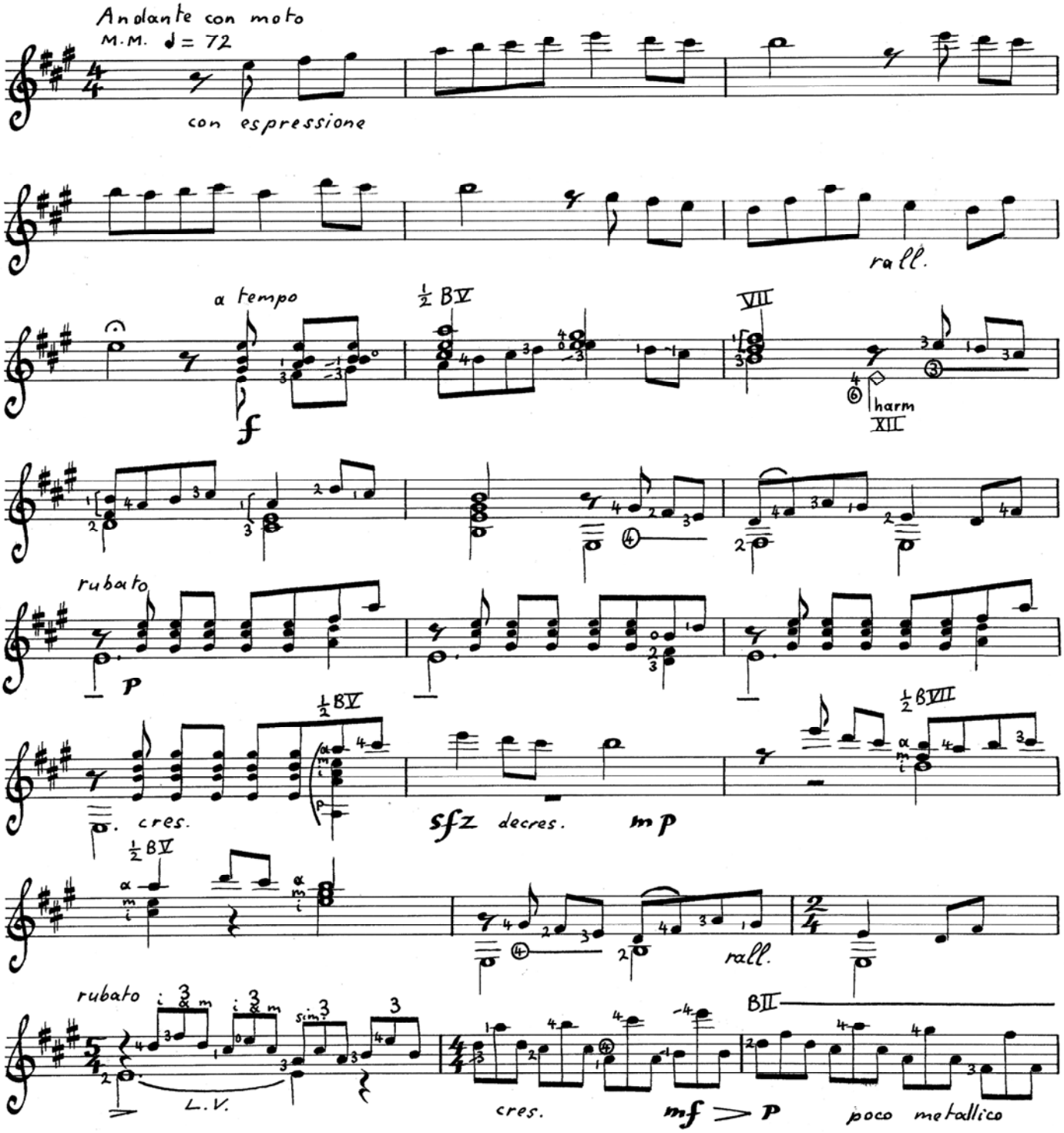
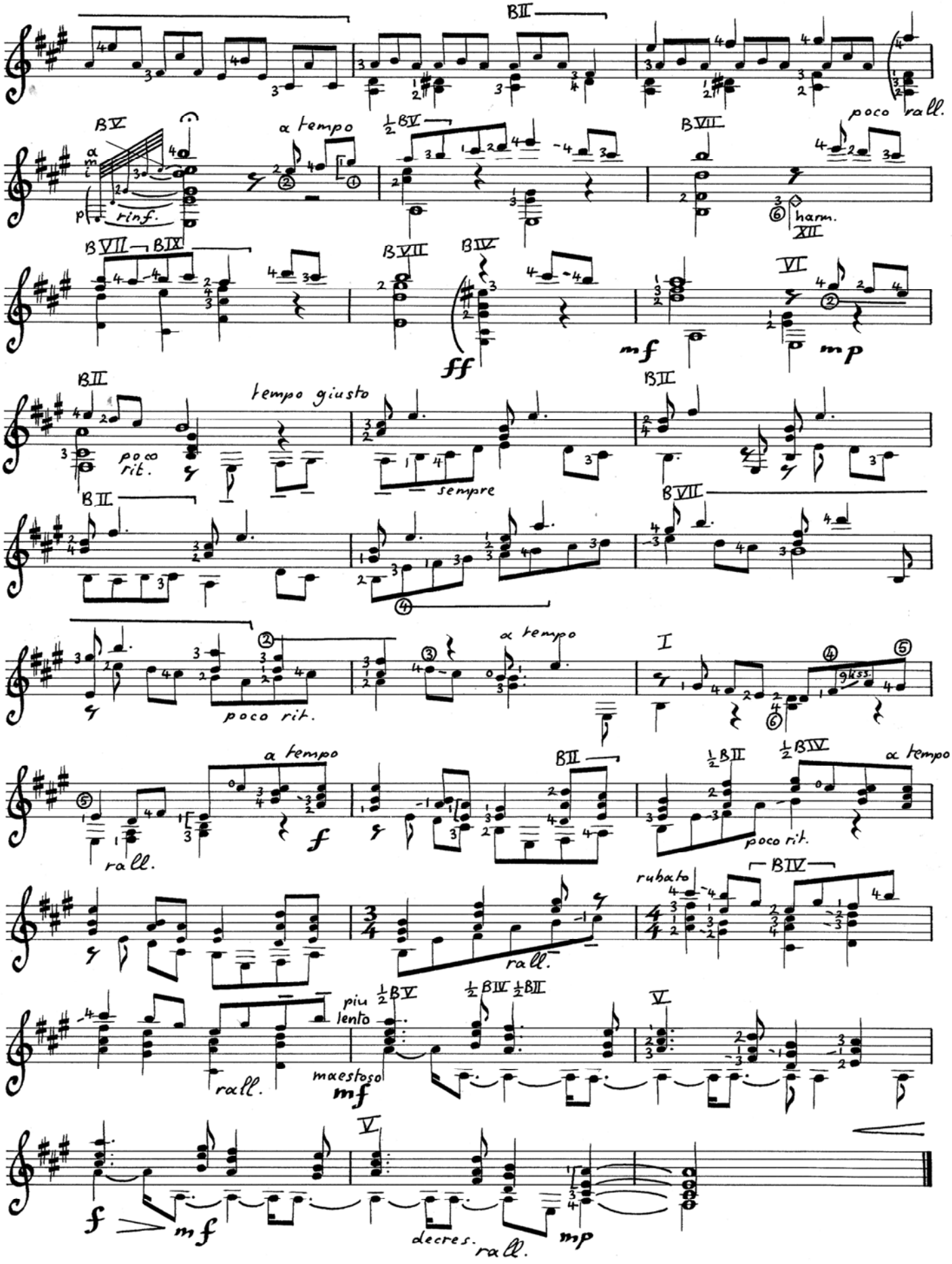
STAFFA ISLAND

Etienne de Lavaulx




BII
BV
a tempo
½BV
BVII
poco rall.
rinf.
harm.
XII
BVII
BIX
BVII
BIV
VI
mf
mp
ff
BII
tempo giusto
poco rit.
sempre
BII
BII
BVII
poco rit.
a tempo
I
9455
a tempo
rall.
f
BII
½BII
½BIV
a tempo
poco rit.
rall.
rubato
BIV
piu lento
½BV
½BIV ½BII
V
rall.
maestoso
mf
V
f
mf
decres.
rall.
mp

Staffa Island

The theme of this musical poem came to my mind during a boat tour of this well known volcanic island situated amongst the western isles of Scotland. Its simple melody blended well with the breath-taking panorama : Looking north, the towering peaks of Skye, Rum and Egg, could be seen, slightly misted over by the distance, while in the foreground, the Treshnish Isles displayed their weird angular shapes, slowly changing as our boat progressed. More towards the ocean, Coll and Tiree lay flat and elongated. To the south and to the east, Mull and Iona surrounded us like a giant Roman amphitheatre. As we circled Staffa and viewed its awe inspiring "Fingal's cave", my eyes were times and again drawn back towards the immensity of the ocean, the unknown beyond the horizon, in the middle of which these distant islands formed but a half-way step. This feeling of unatainable distances and depth is expressed in the harmony of the first episode (4 bars starting line 5). The water element, the waves themselves made of smaller wavelets reflecting sparkles of sunlight is described in the second episode (line 9 & 10). After three more variations, we round up with a coda (from end of 1st bar, line 15) which counteracts the rising and falling shape of the main theme with falling, then rising phrases, and finally, a descending phrase, at a slower tempo, which concludes the entire piece with the key word : "Serenity."