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Old English Composers
for the
Virginals & Harpsichord

A Collection of Preludes, Galliards, Pavanes, Grounds, Chaconnes, Suites, Overtures, Sonatas, etc. etc.

Selected from the Works
of
WILLIAM BYRDE, Dr. JOHN BULL,
ORLANDO GIBBONS, Dr. JOHN BLOW, HENRY PURCELL
and Dr. THOMAS AUGUSTINE ARNE

Revised & Edited
by
E. PAUER.

With Biographical Notices by W. A. Barrett Mus. B. Oxon F.R.S.L.

Ent. Sta. Hall.

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John Blow.

If nothing else remained to perpetuate the name of John Blow as a remarkable man of his time, there are two facts concerning him which deserve to be especially recorded. First, that he was one among the earliest set of children selected to take part in the revived service of the Chapel Royal after the restoration of King Charles the Second; and next, that he was the master and friend of Henry Purcell. There are, however, many of his works still existing and even popular—a circumstance which tends to prove that his ideas were so far in advance of his own time as to be equal with the much-vaunted discoveries or usages of modern days. His contemporaries did not, and the generation immediately succeeding him would not, understand his peculiar combinations of harmonies. They were to them "crude, harsh, and forced." Regarded by the light of existing science, they are polished, easy, and natural, and excite surprise when the date of their origin is known. John Blow was born at North Collingham, Nottinghamshire, in 1648, on the very edge of a troublous time for all art. How he acquired his early knowledge of music it matters not now to inquire; it is enough for the present purpose to say that he was admitted to the Chapel Royal in 1660, and when his voice broke, he studied assiduously so as to qualify himself for the post of organist to the Abbey at Westminster, to which place he was appointed in 1669, while in his twenty-first year. In 1674 he was nominated by the King to a place in the Chapel Royal, and, upon the death of Pelham Humphries, became master of the children, having in that capacity the care of the musical and other training of Henry Purcell, to whom in 1680 he resigned his office as organist at Westminster Abbey.

In 1685 he was appointed "Master of the Private Musick" to King James II, in which situation he was called upon to produce "pieces for viols" and other music, all of which he did in a clever and original style. In those days musical ability was duly appreciated, and the possessor was permitted to enjoy the privilege of a plurality of appointments. Thus we find John Blow (whom Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, by virtue of the privilege he possessed, had made a Doctor of Music) accepting the office of vicar choral and almoner at St. Paul's Cathedral; the first office requiring him to take part in the daily service, and the second to take charge of the training of the children of the choir. These offices he held from 1687 to 1693, when he, in a similar spirit which had prompted him years before to make way for one pupil, resigned them in favour of Jeremiah Clark, who had also been instructed by him. Dr. Blow contented himself with the lesser dignity of organist at St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, keeping of course his Chapel Royal appointment, until the death of Purcell, in 1695, enabled him once more to accept Westminster Abbey.

To all these honours he added yet another—that of composer to the Chapel Royal in 1699—an honour to him, and he an honour to it.

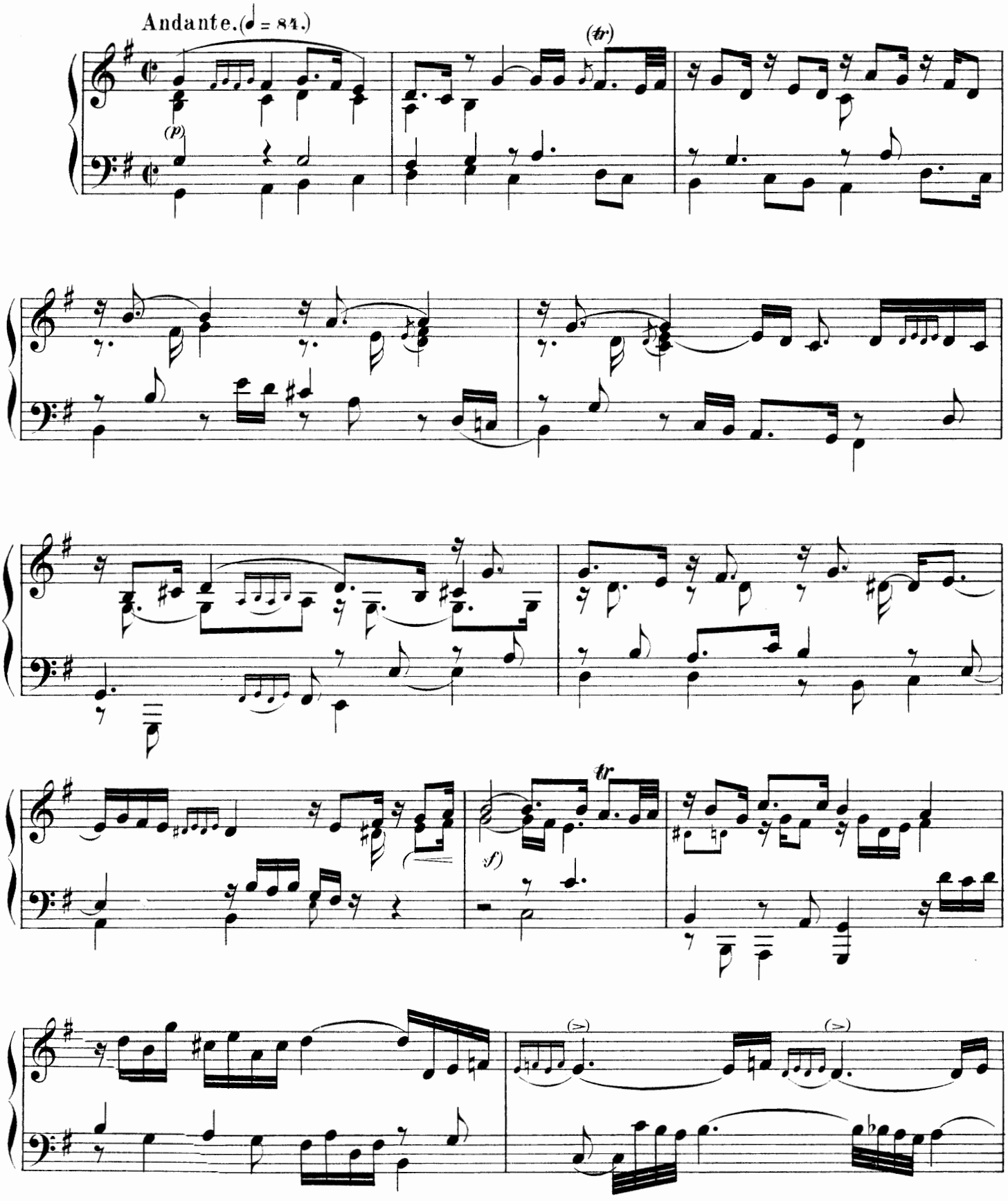
He died on October 1st, 1708, deeply regretted, for his amiability and unselfishness of character had made him many friends. He was buried under the organ at Westminster Abbey.

Besides a vast number of songs, duets, and catches, he composed fourteen complete services for the church, and above a hundred anthems, many of which have been printed and are in constant use. His instrumental works are very numerous and "of pleasing grace and variety;" his harpsichord "lessons," as the pieces for that instrument were generally called, still having power "to delight the ear and charm the sense."

Dr John Blow.

(1648–1708.)

Preludium.



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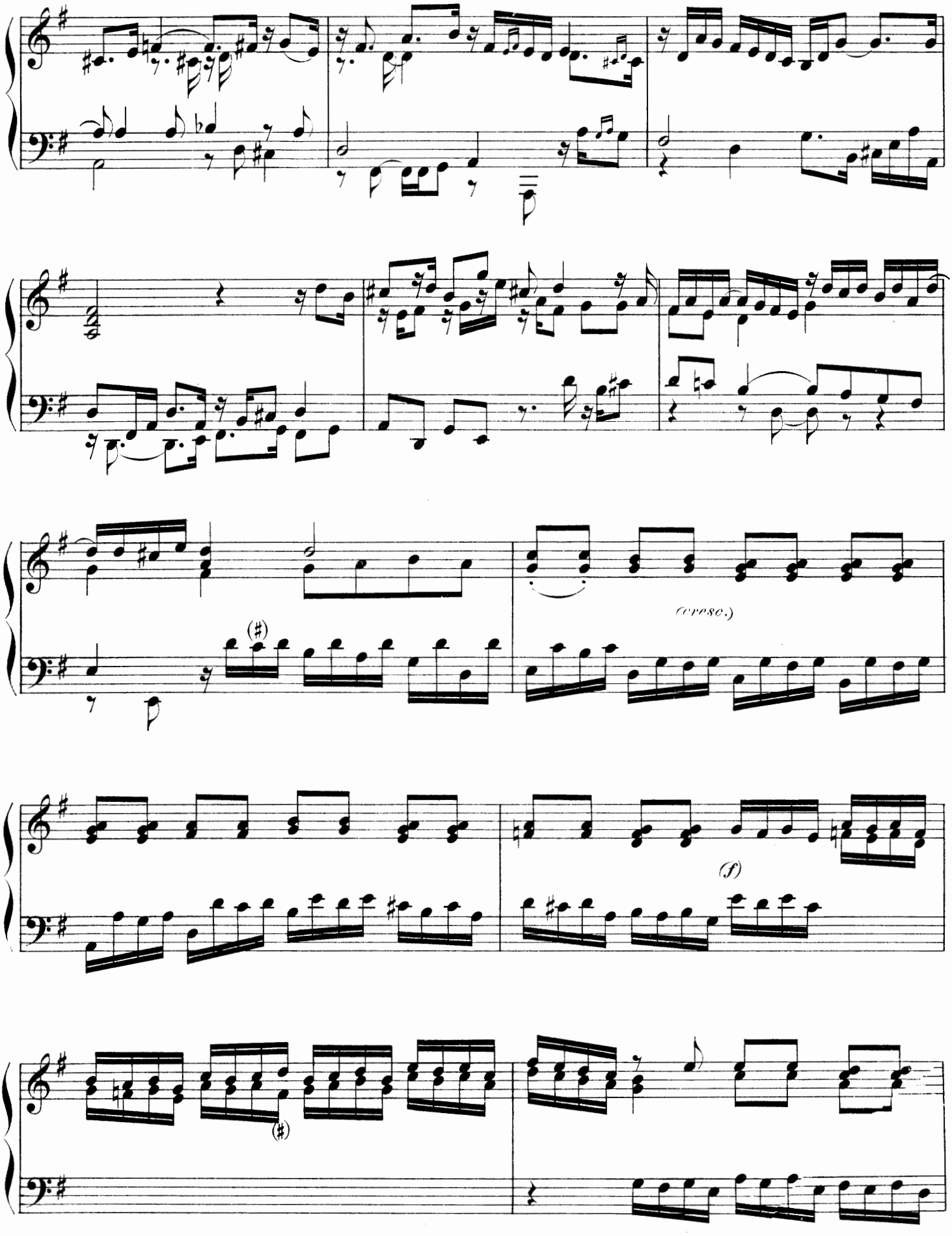
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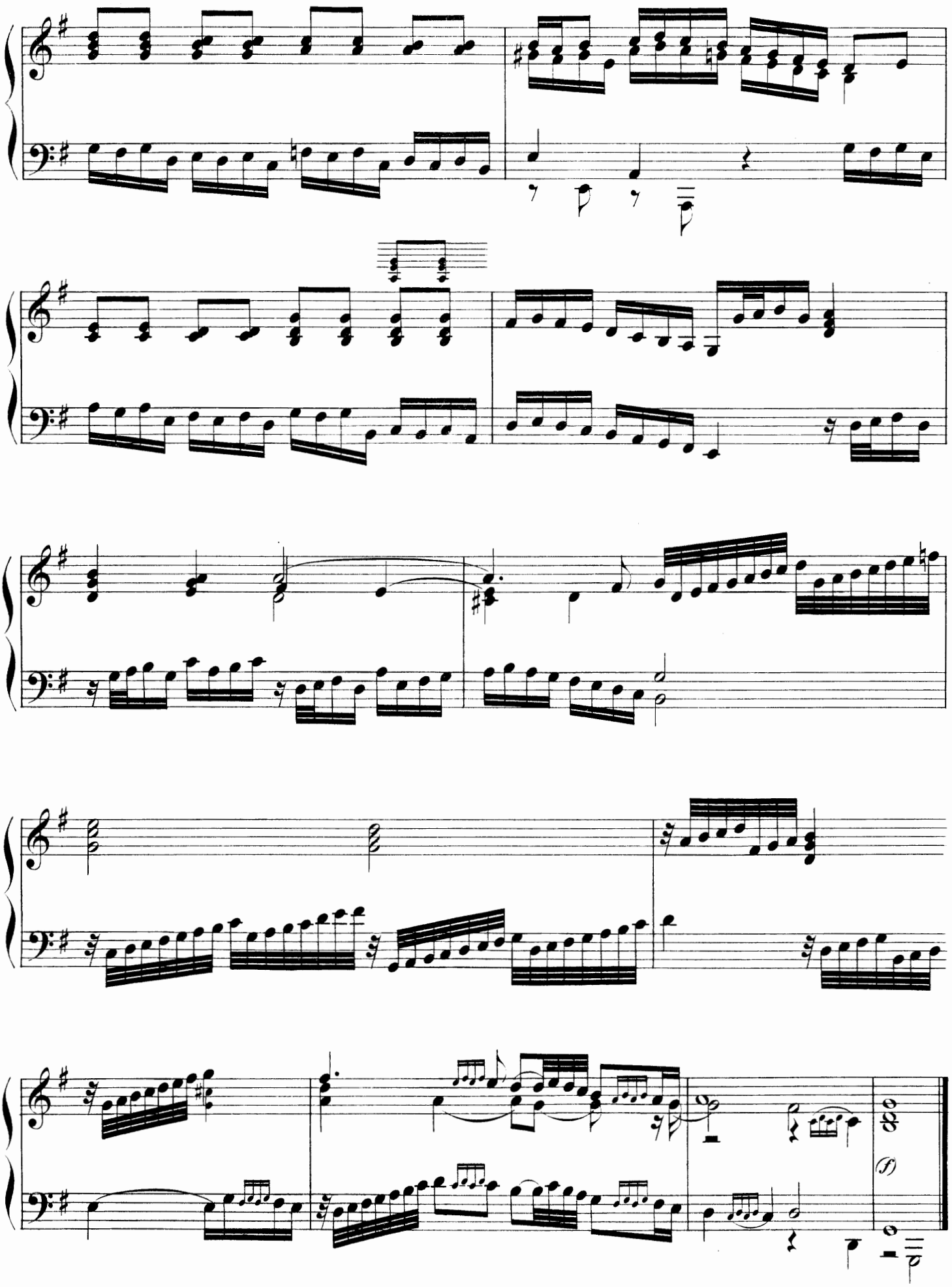
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Chacone.

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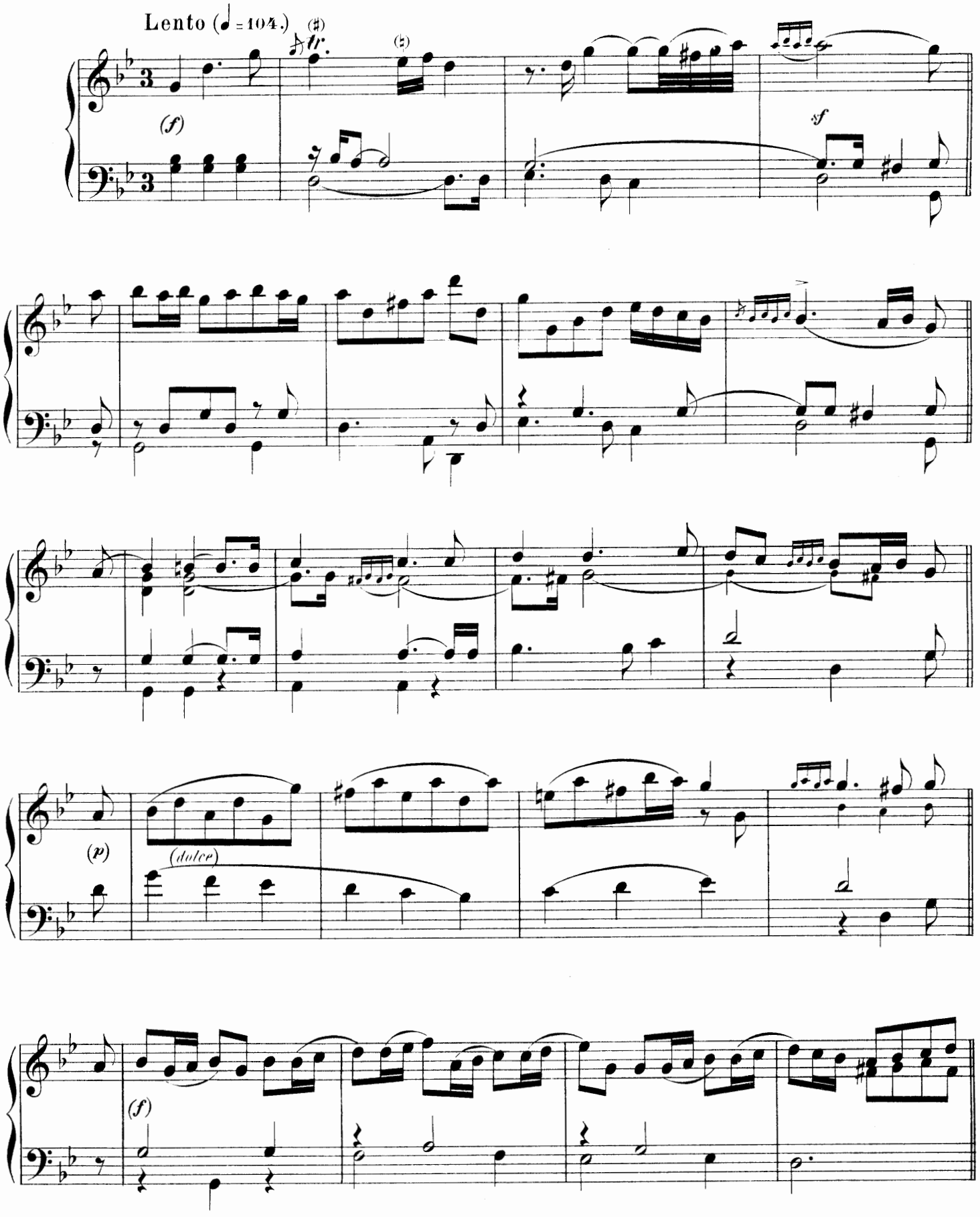

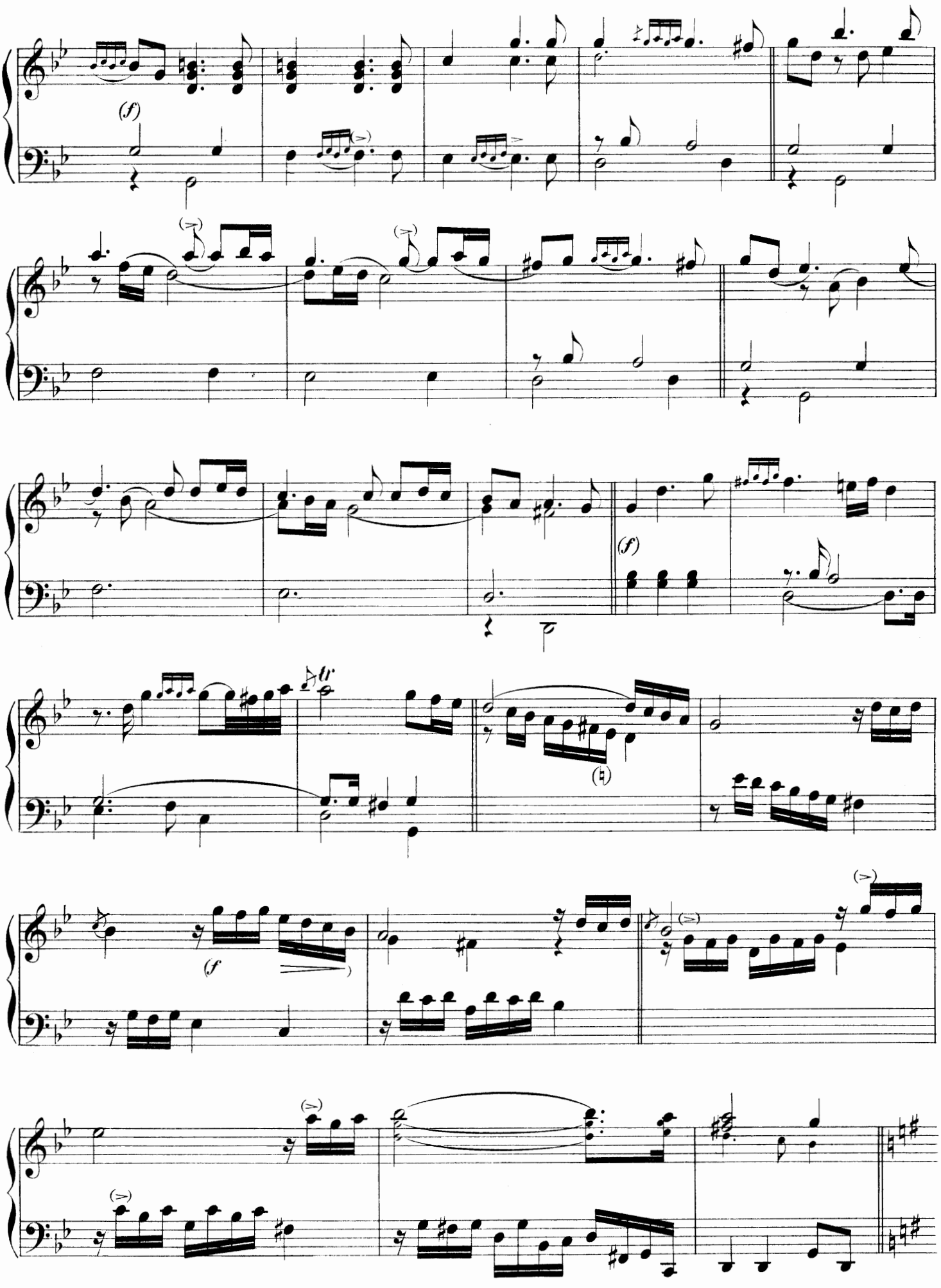

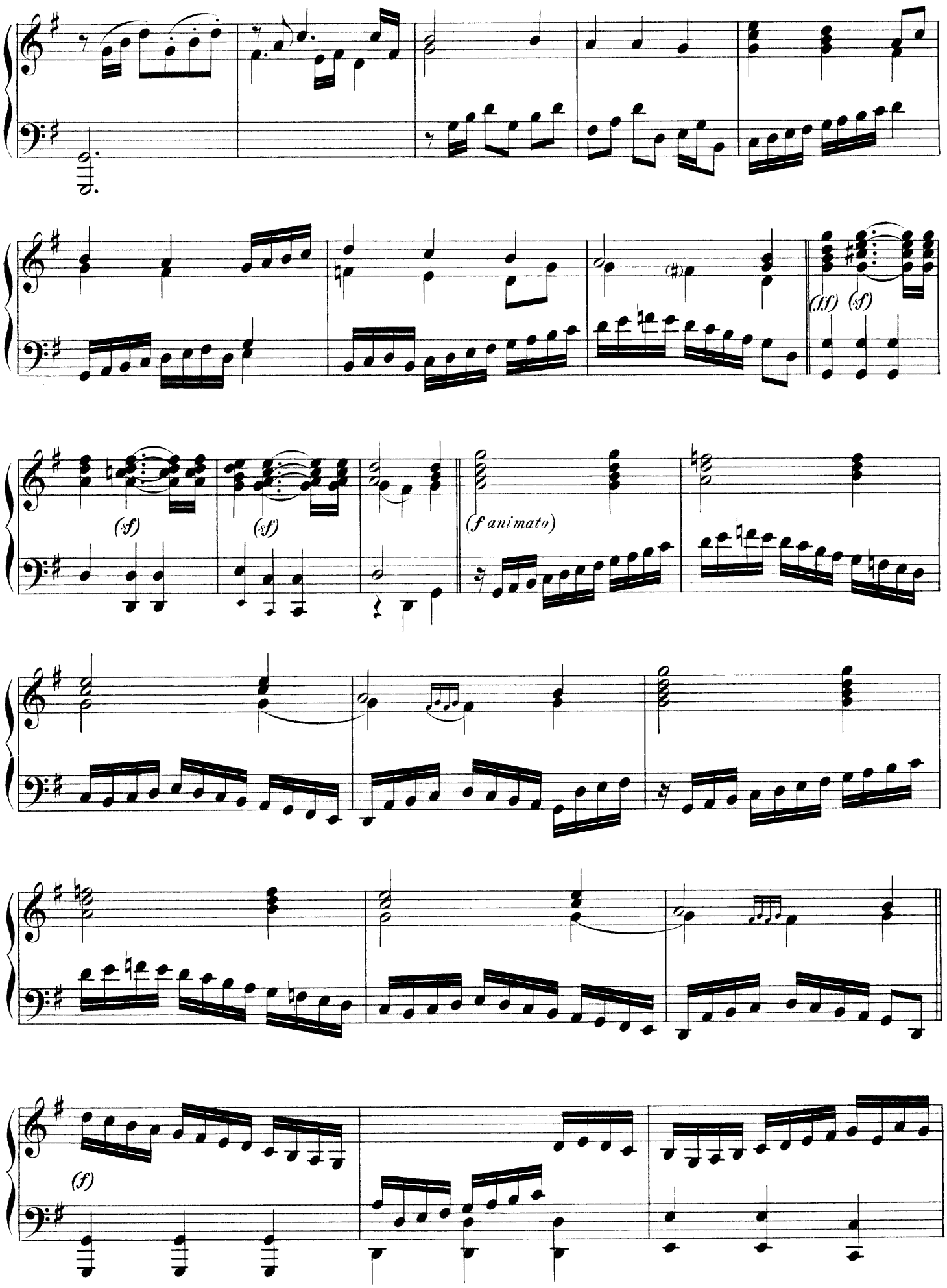
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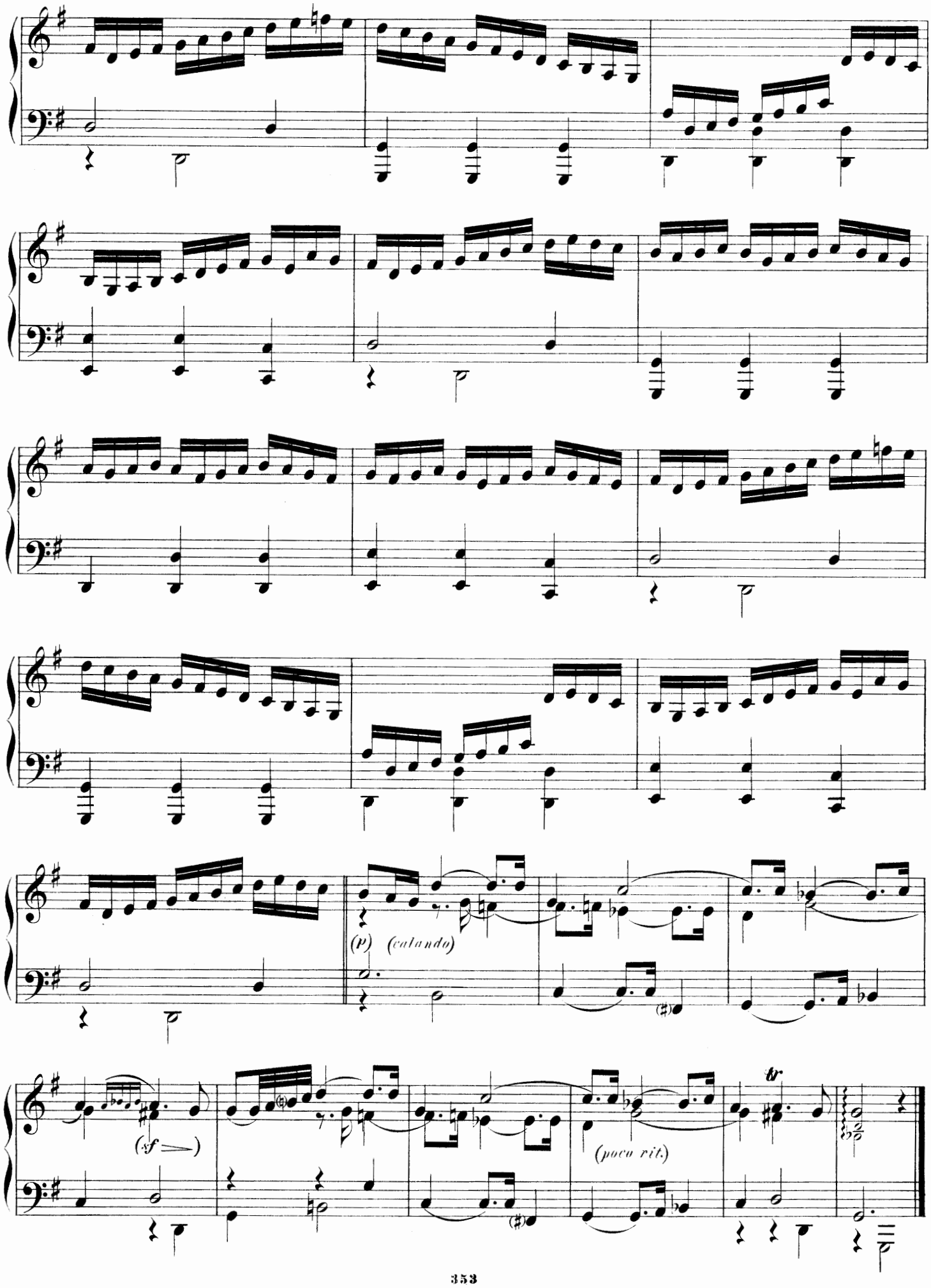
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tr

Chacone.

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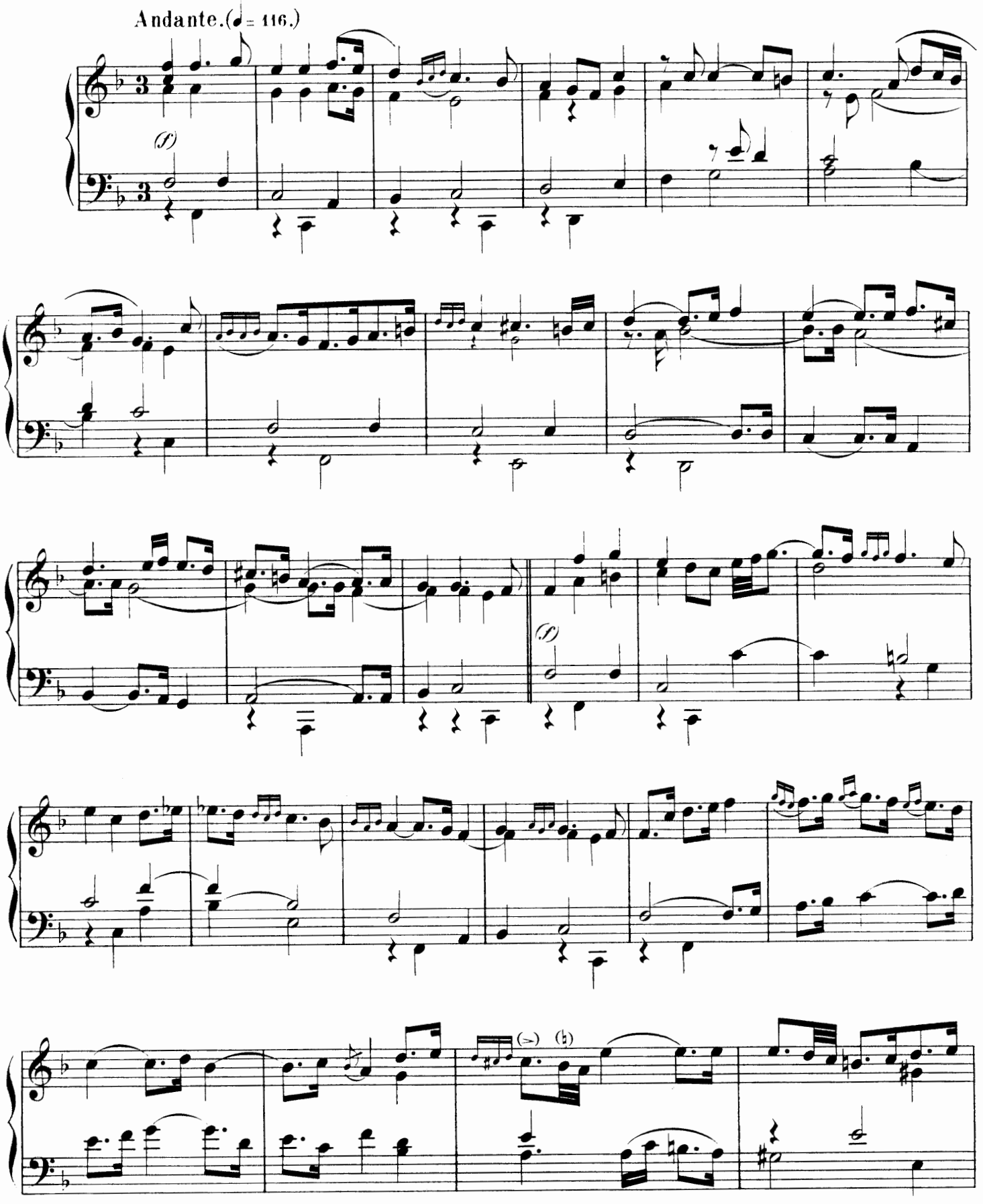

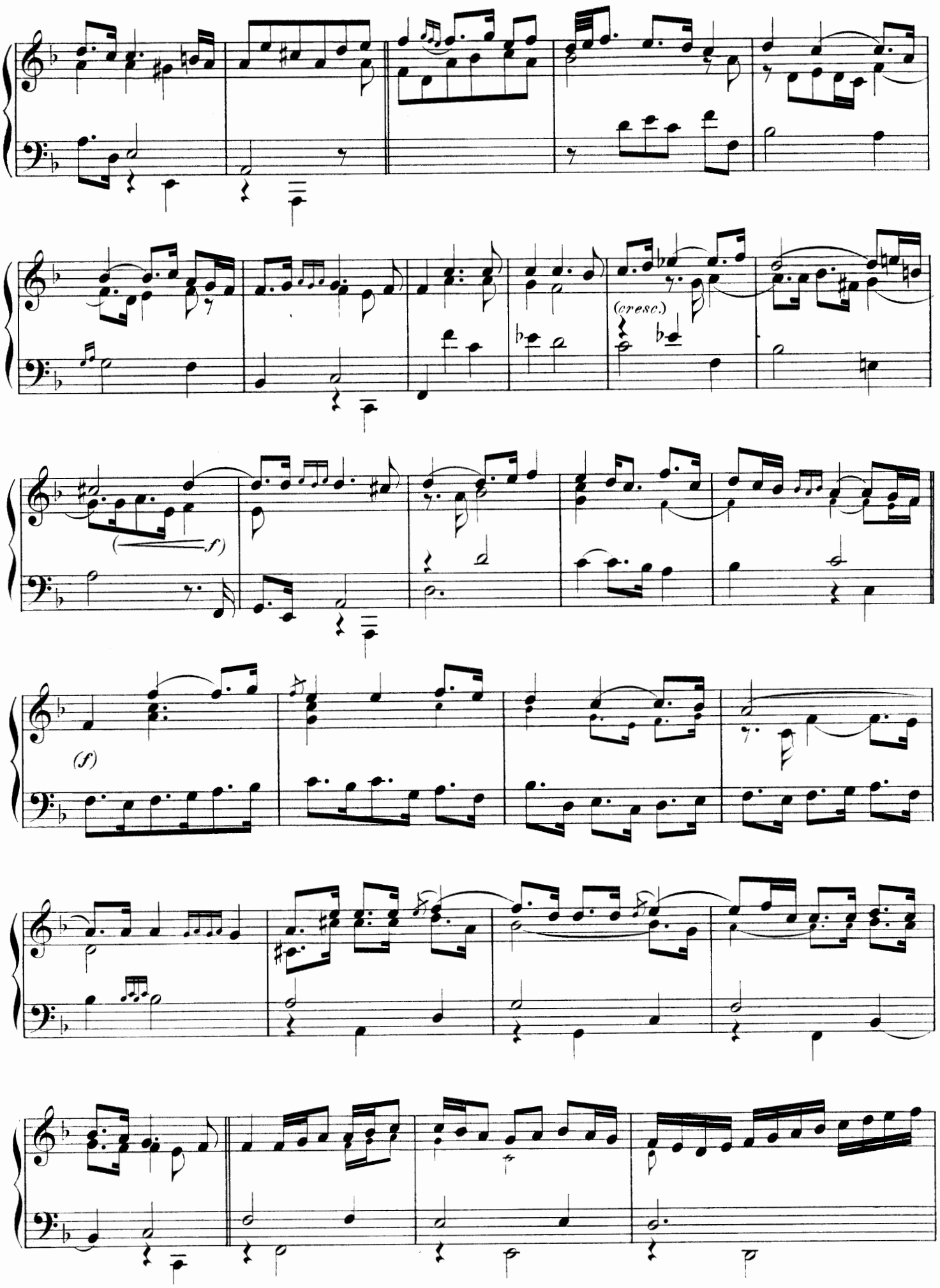
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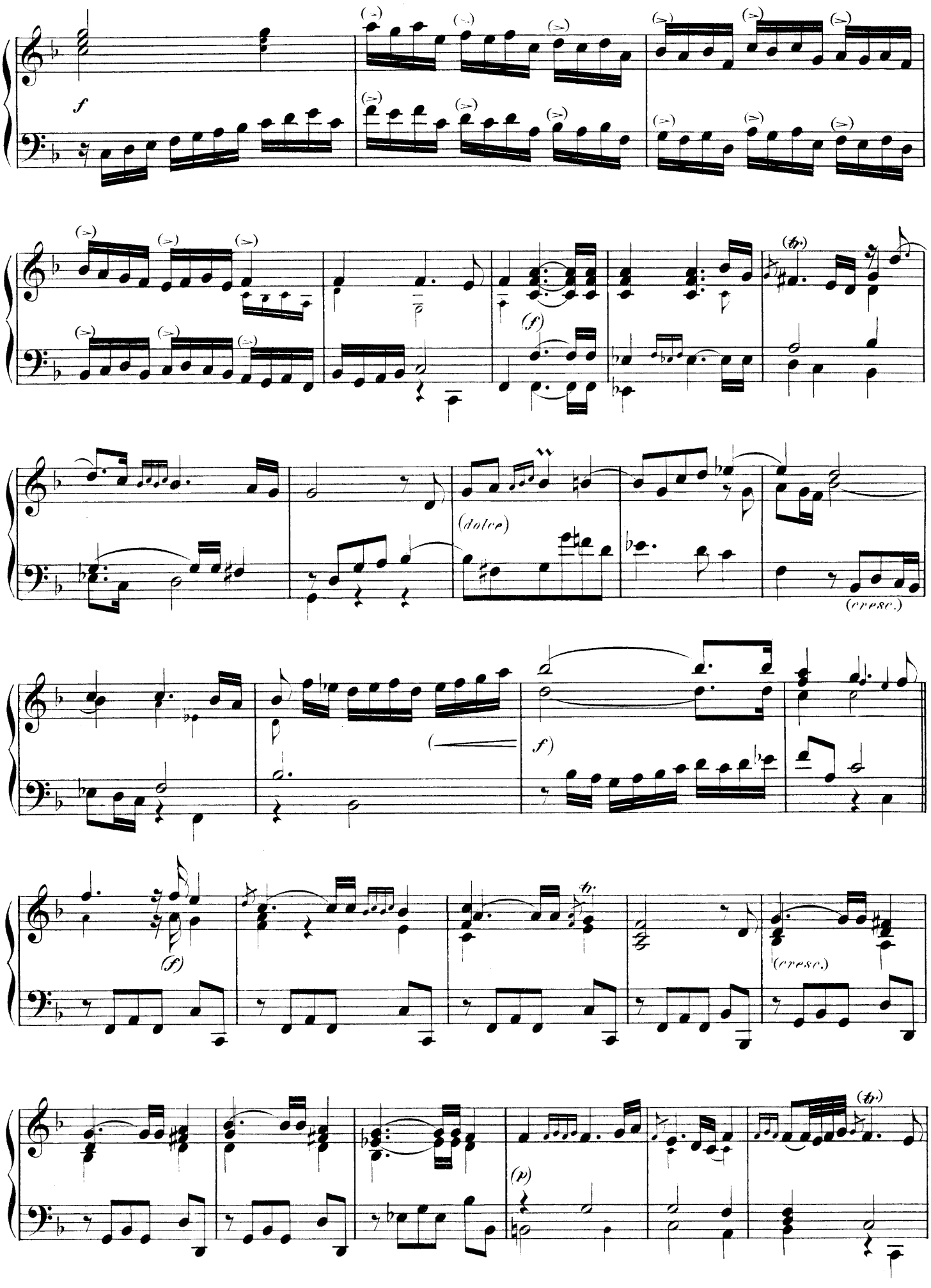
f
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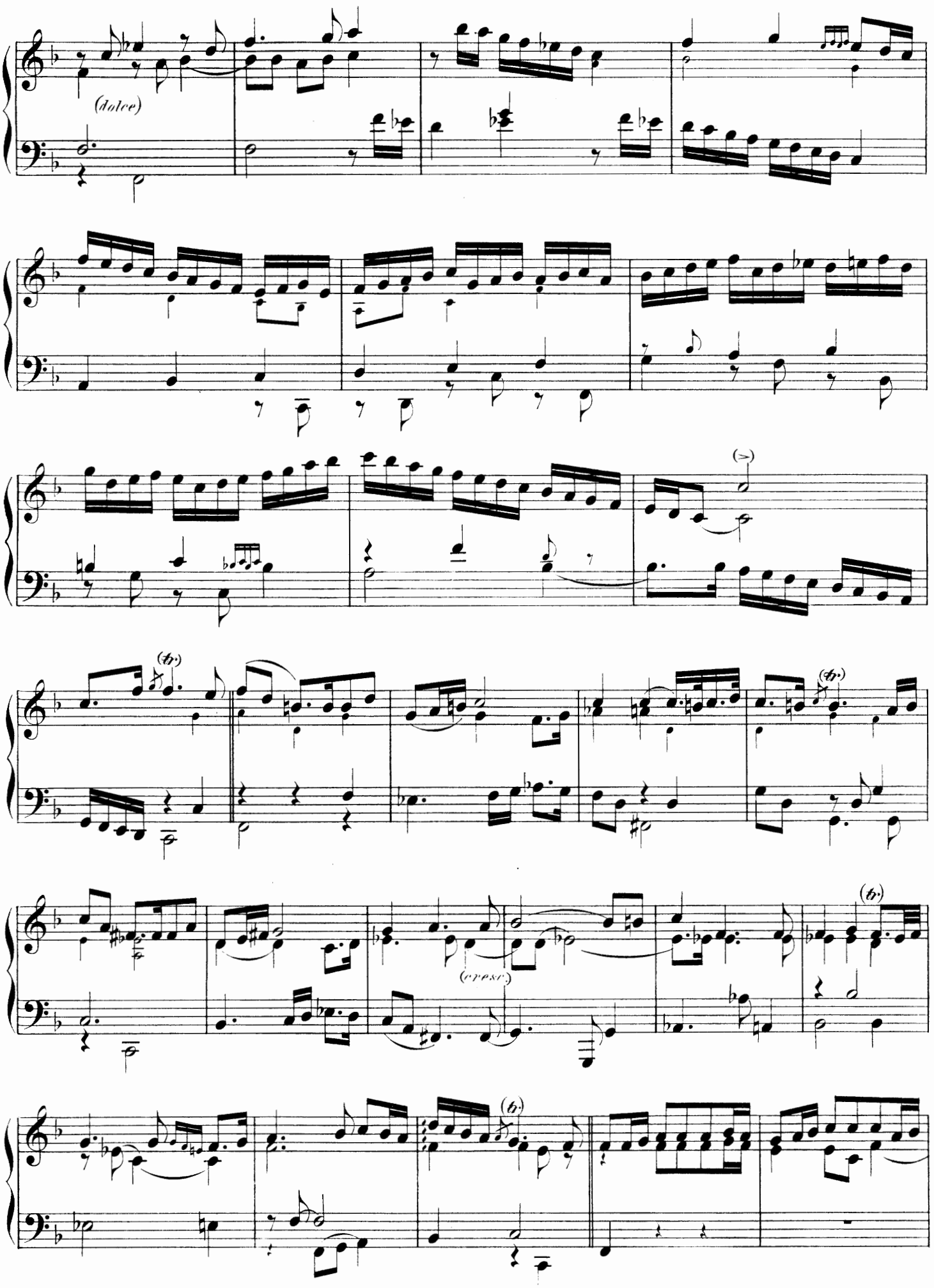
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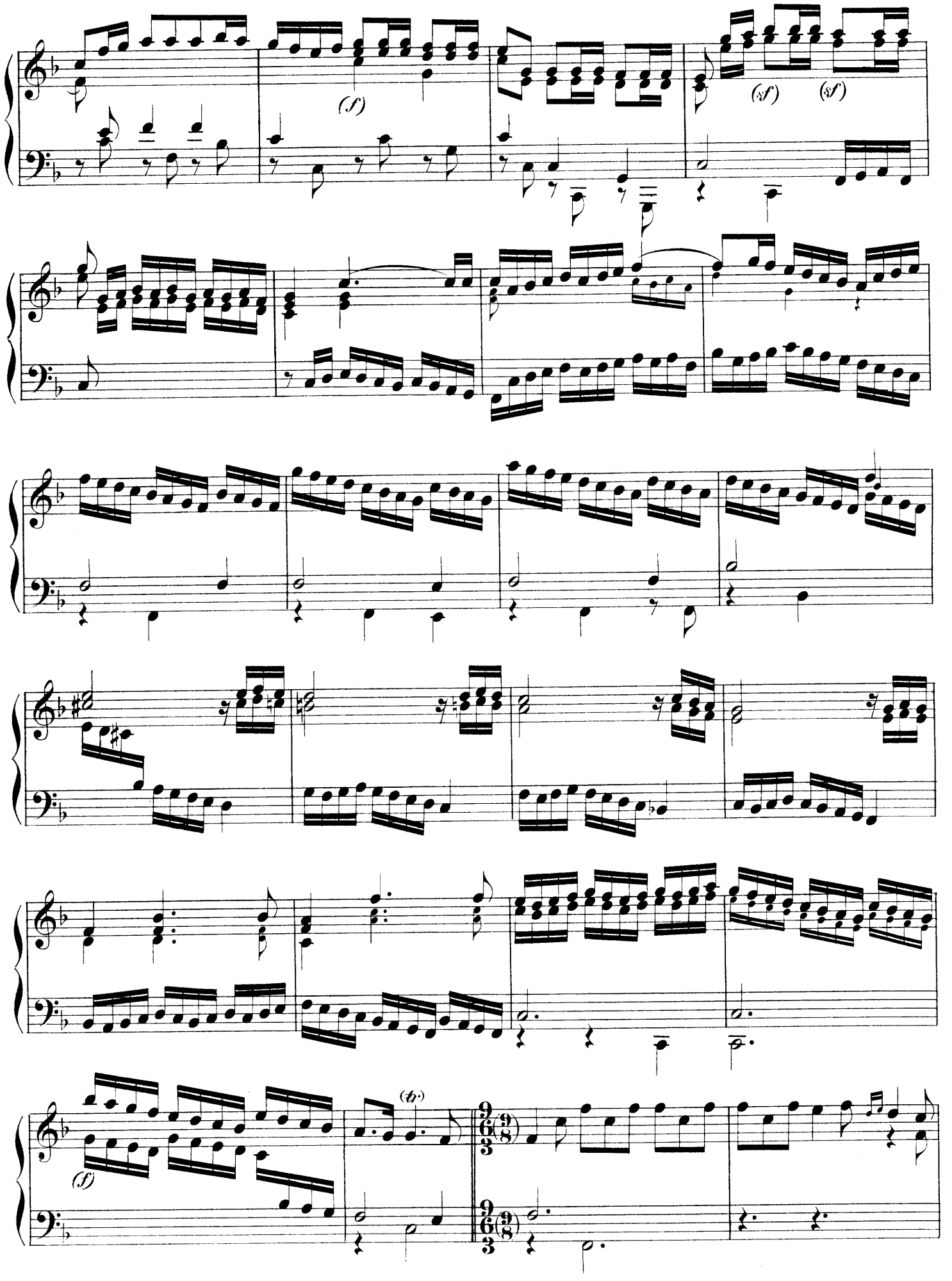
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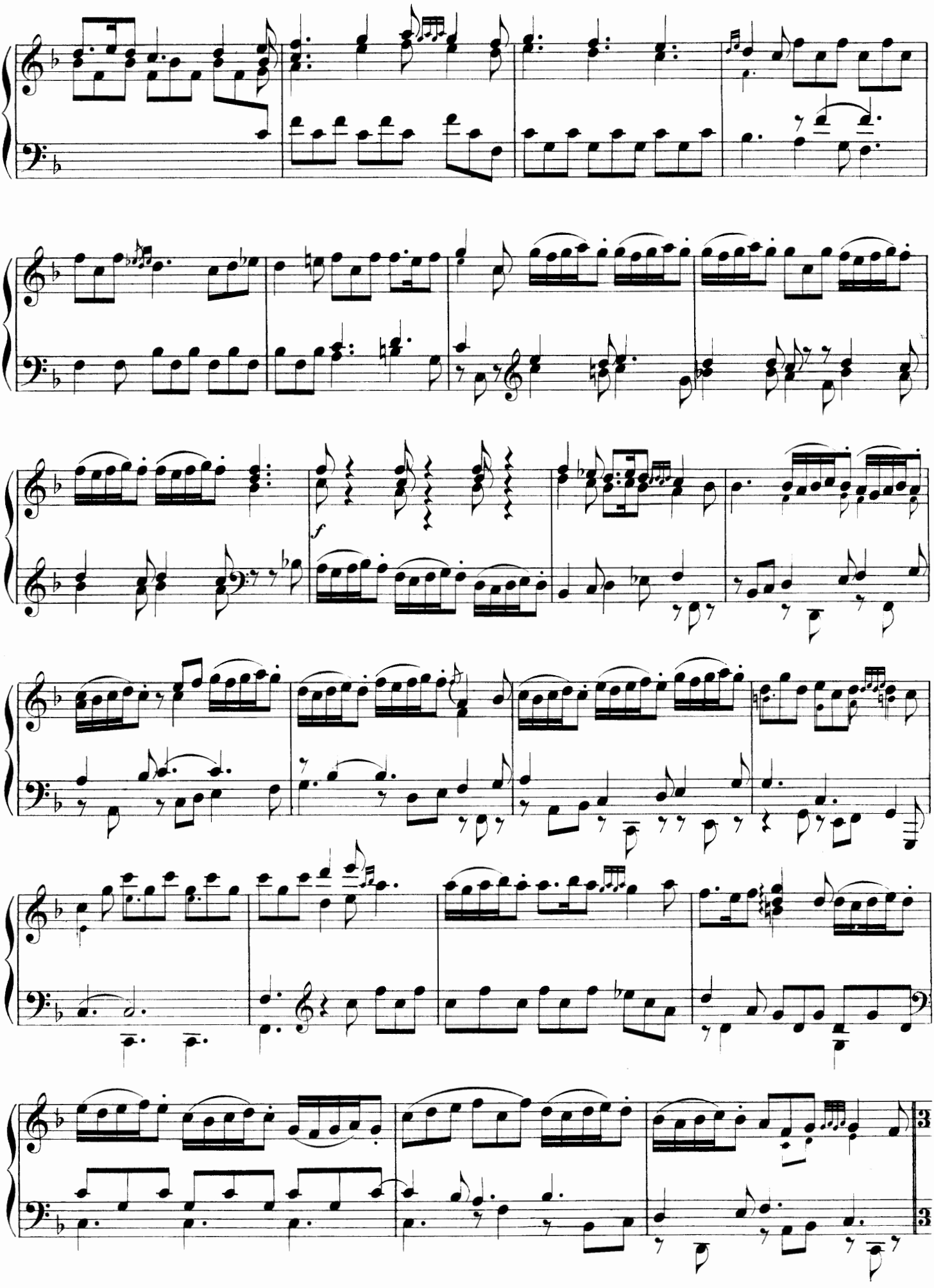
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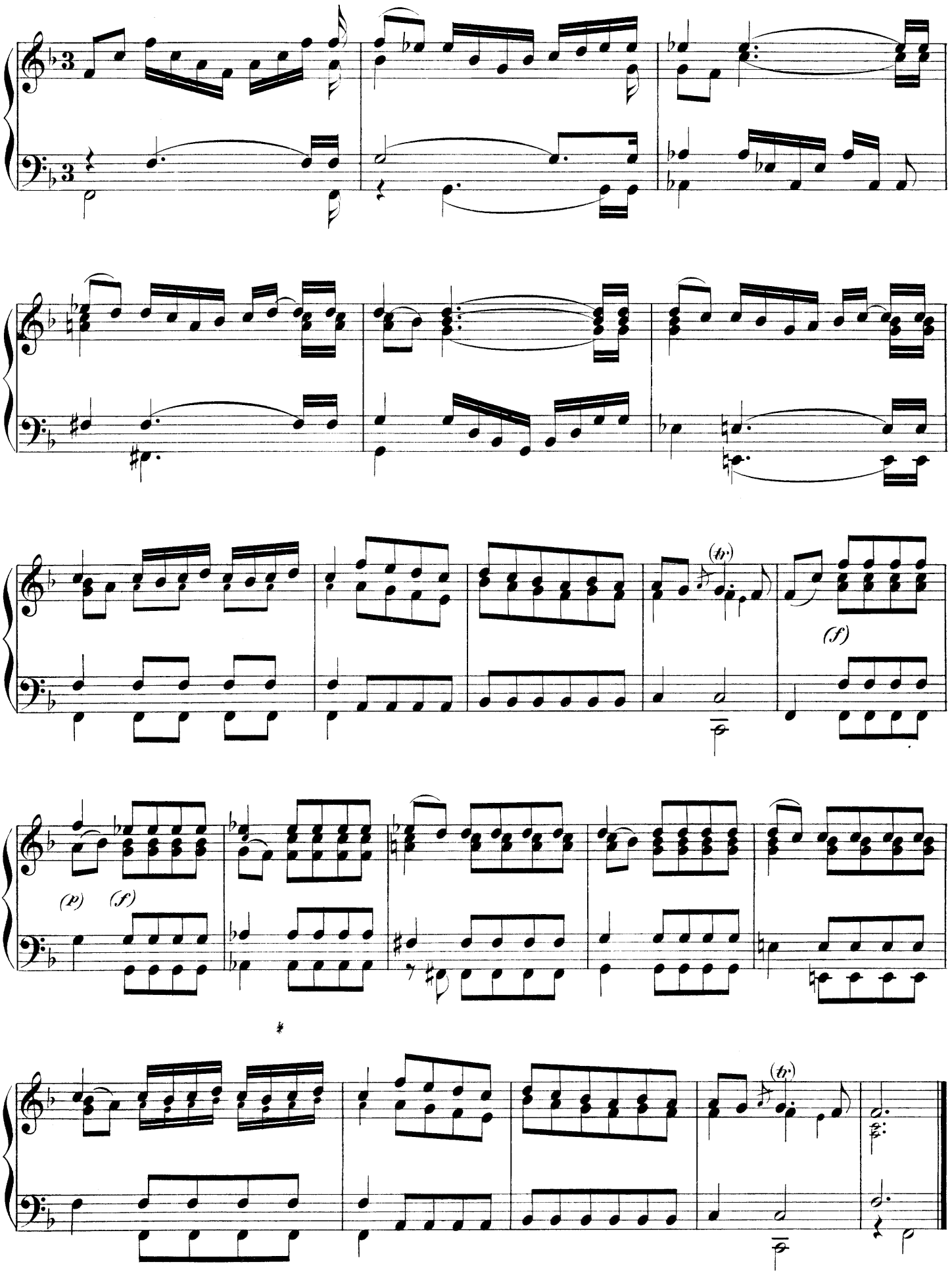
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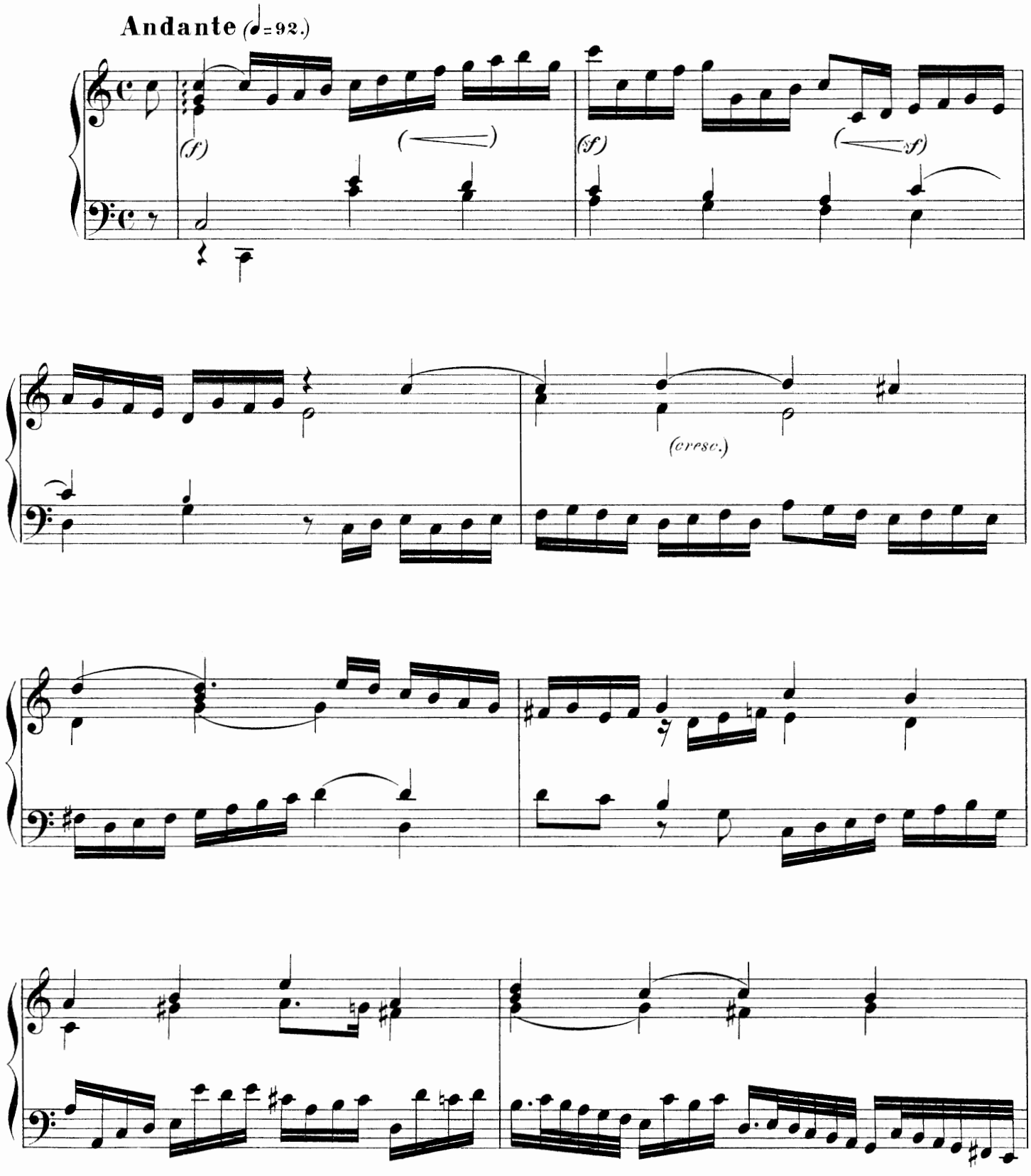
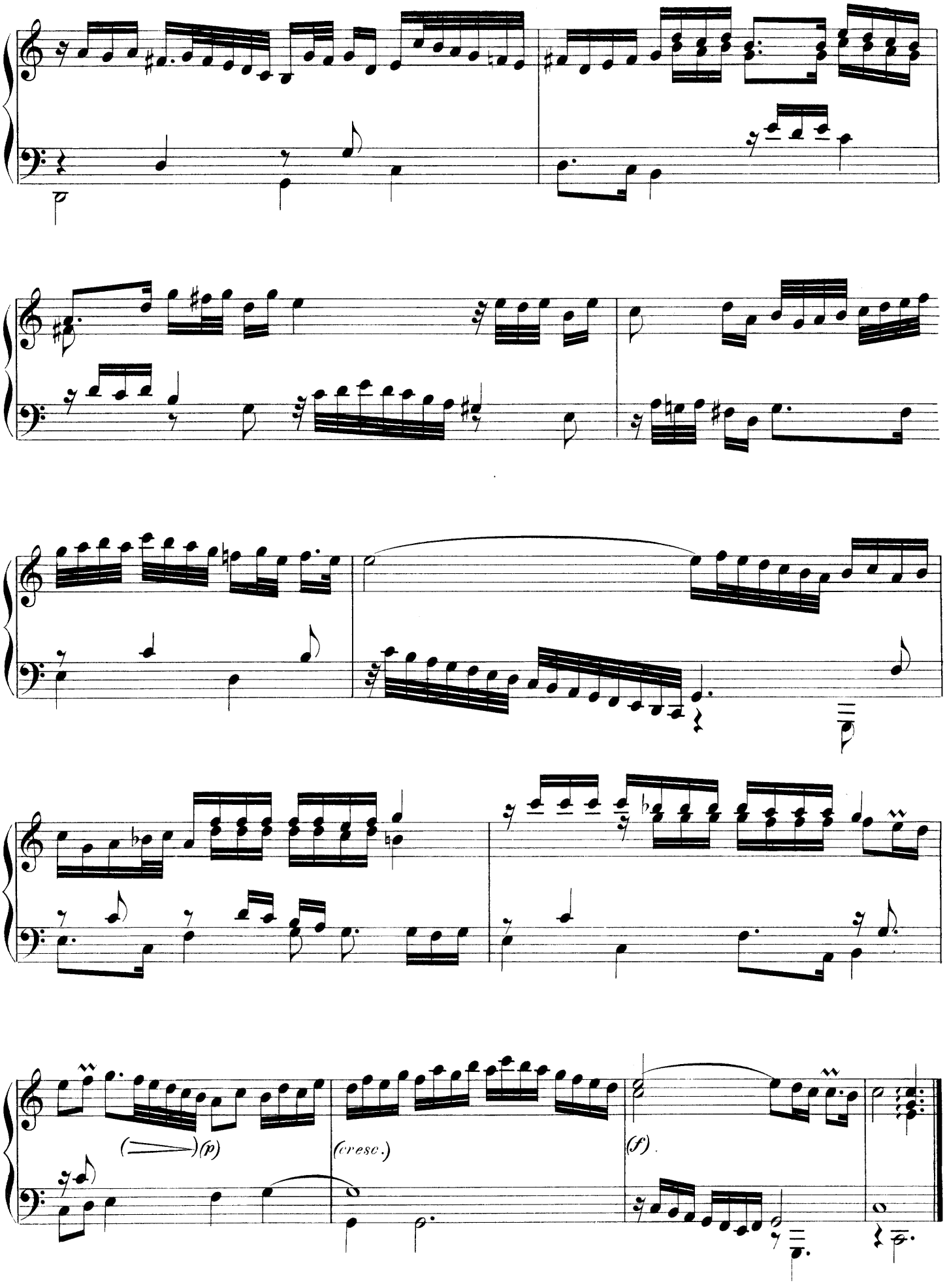
Preludium.

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Almand.

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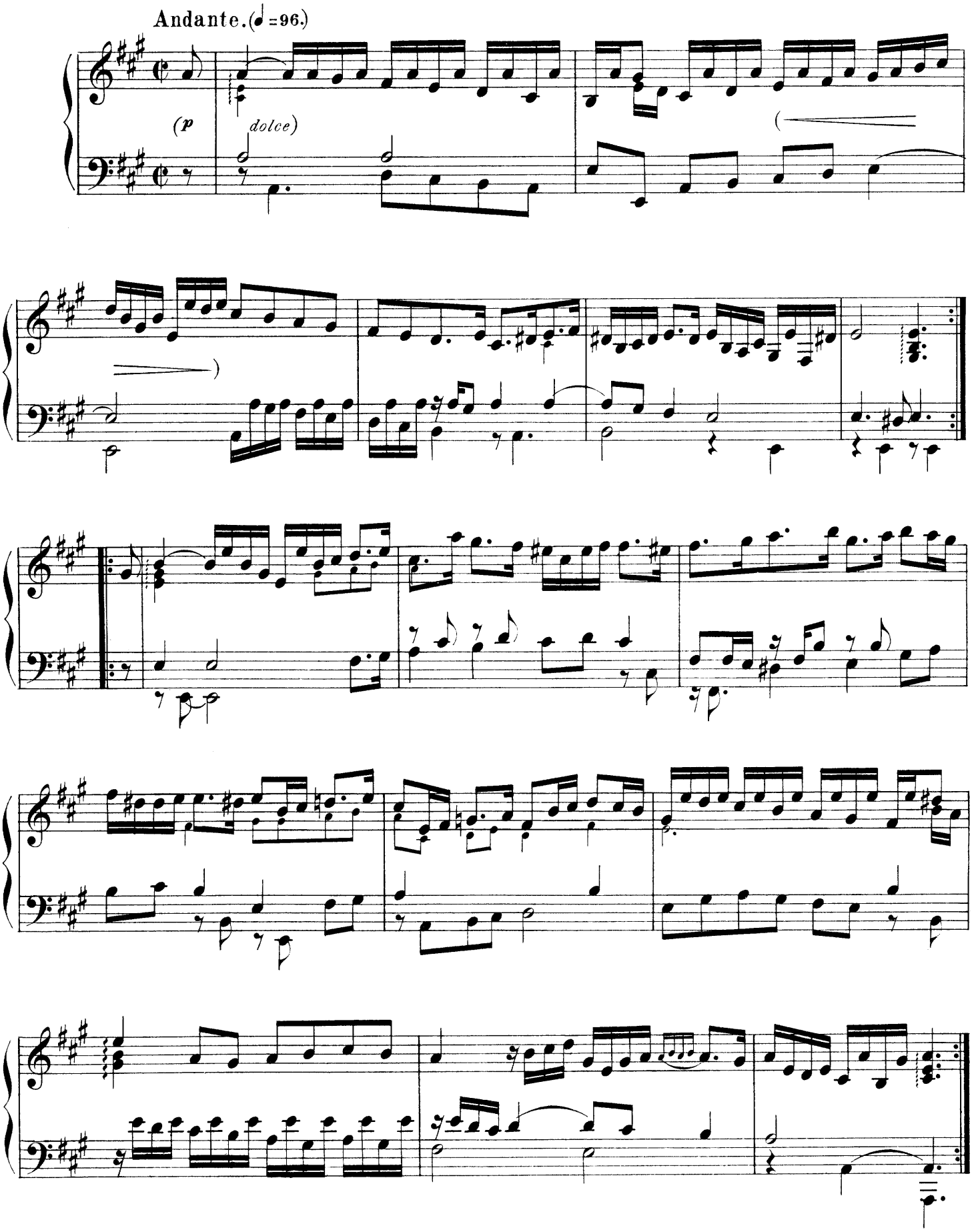

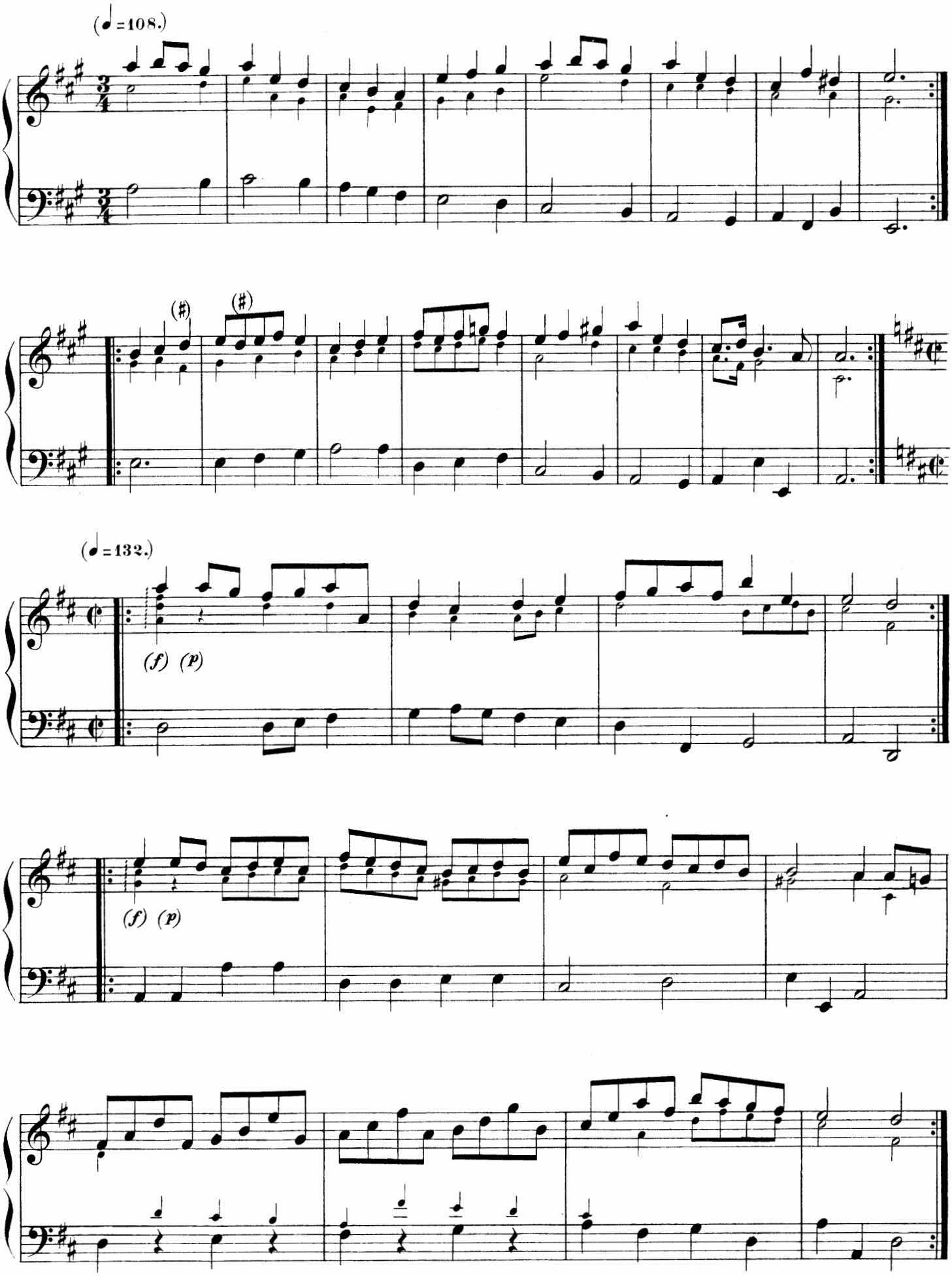
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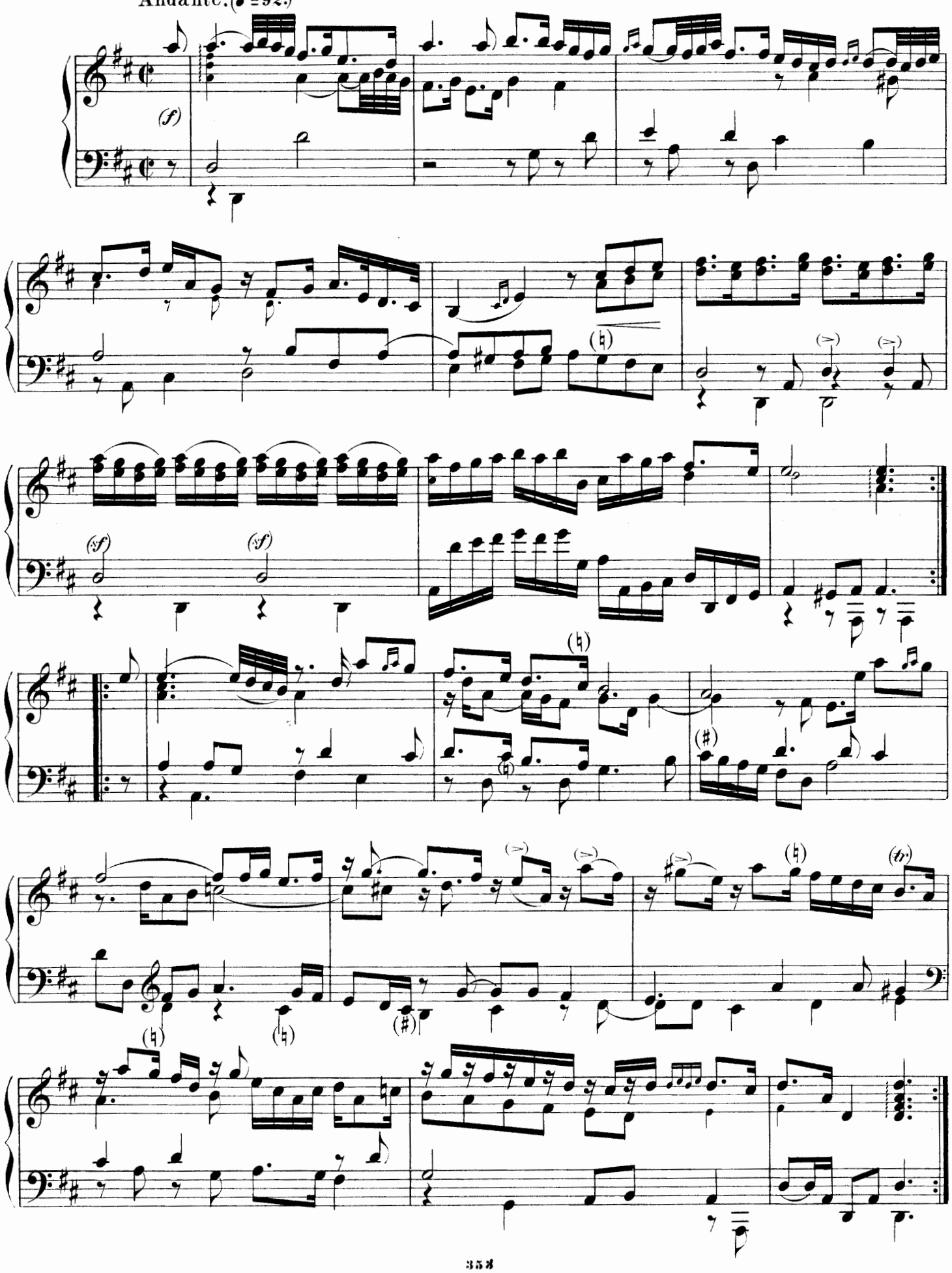
Almand.
II.

Andante. (♩ = 92.)



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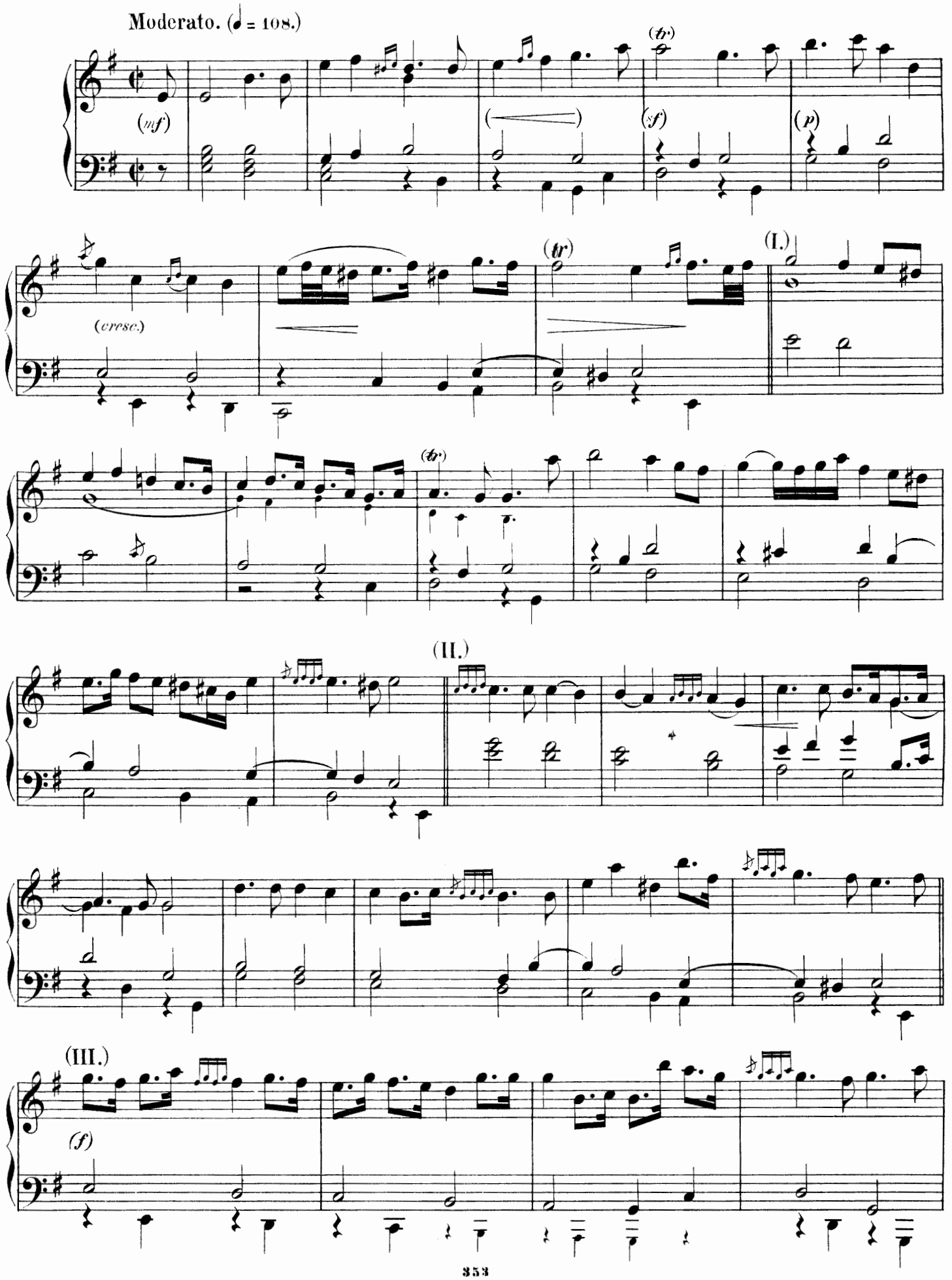
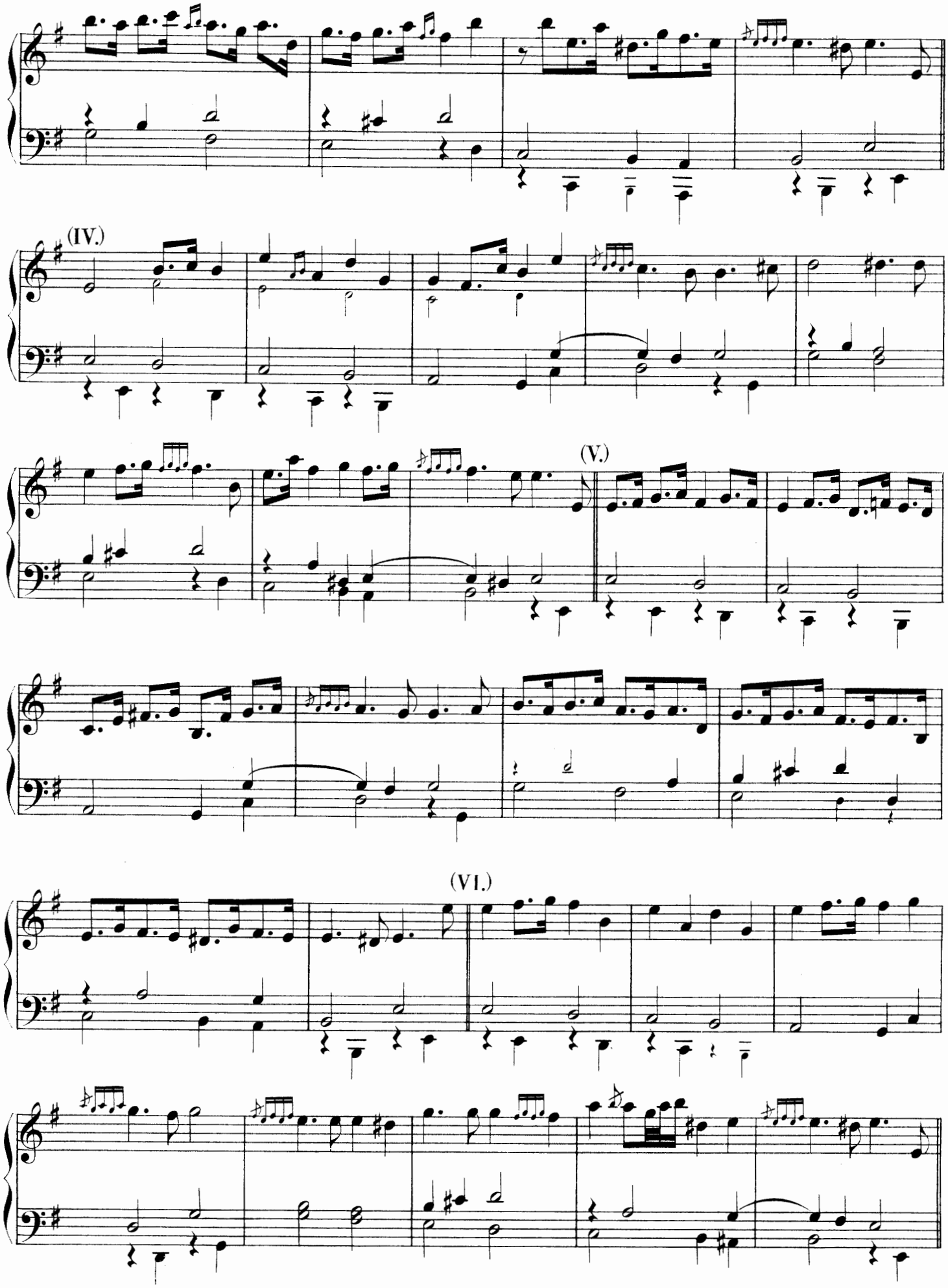
I.

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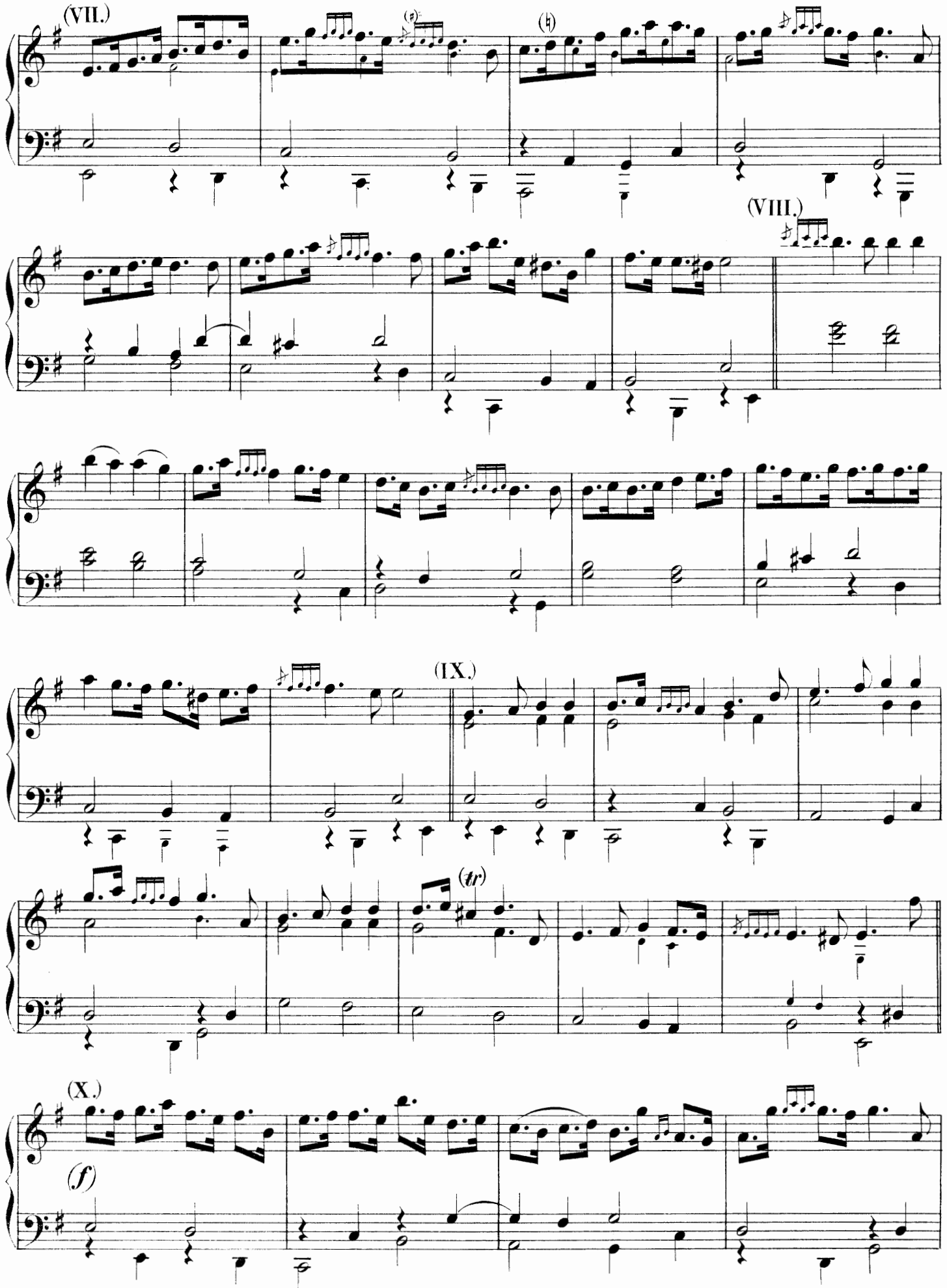
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(X.)
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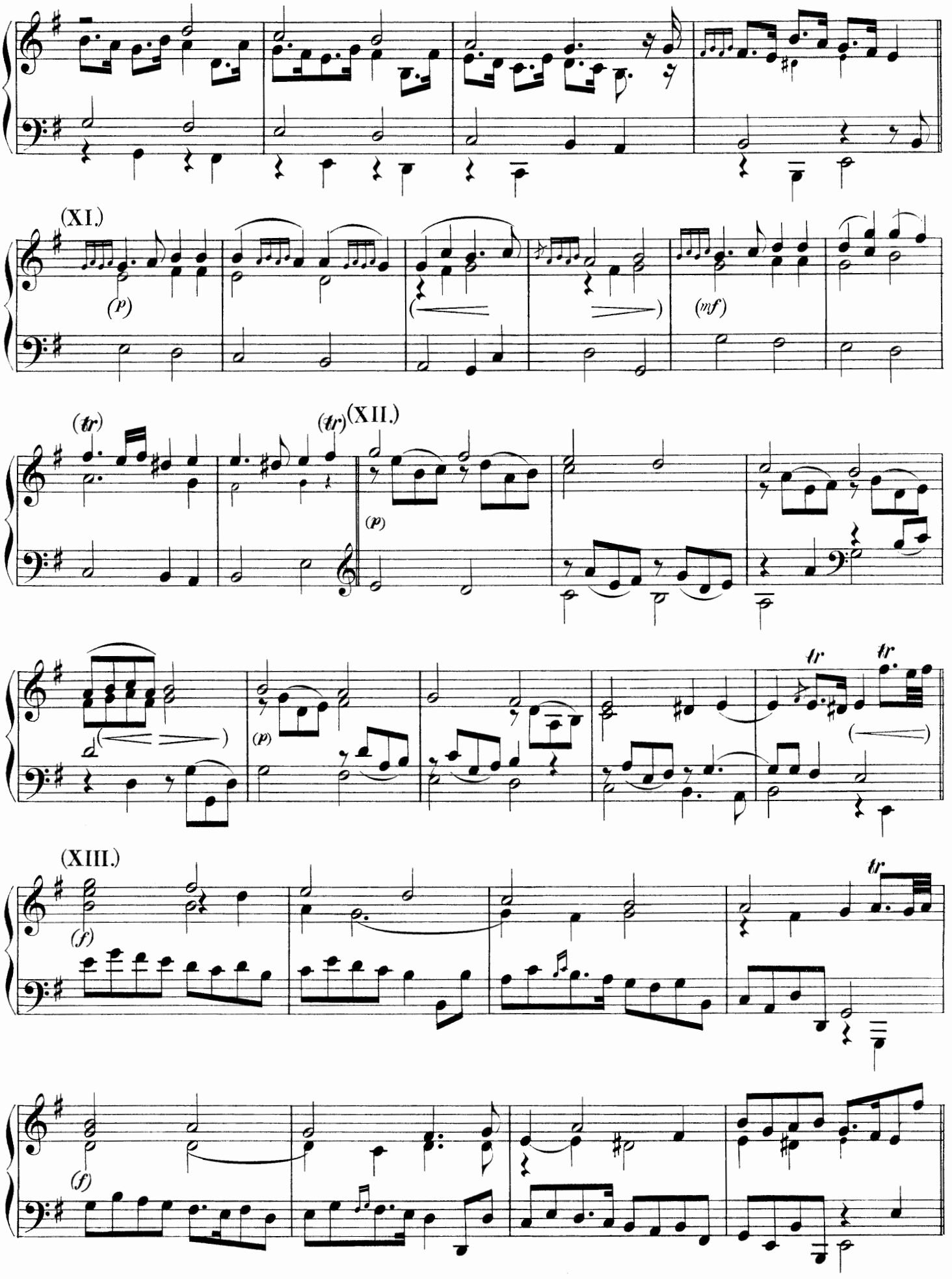
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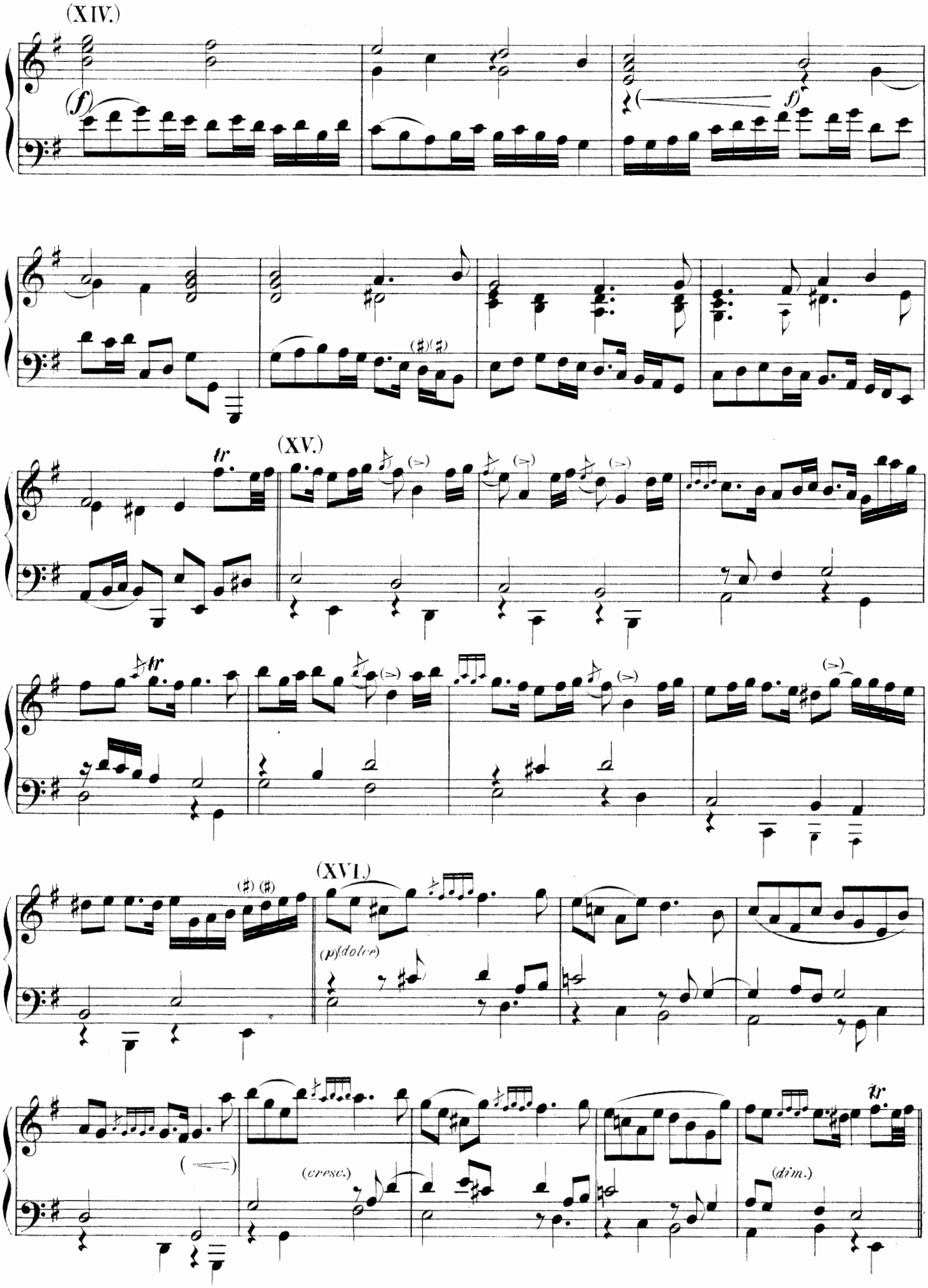
(f)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(p) (dolce)
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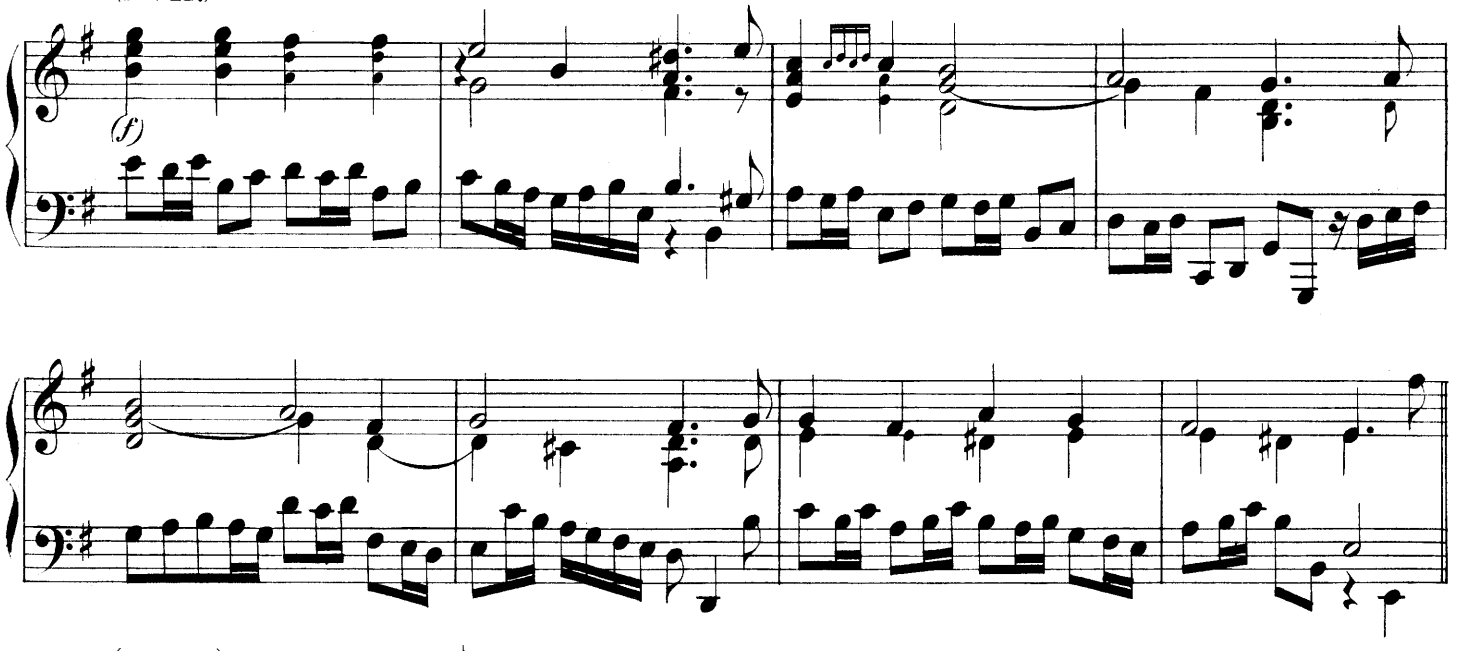
(dim.)

(XVII.)



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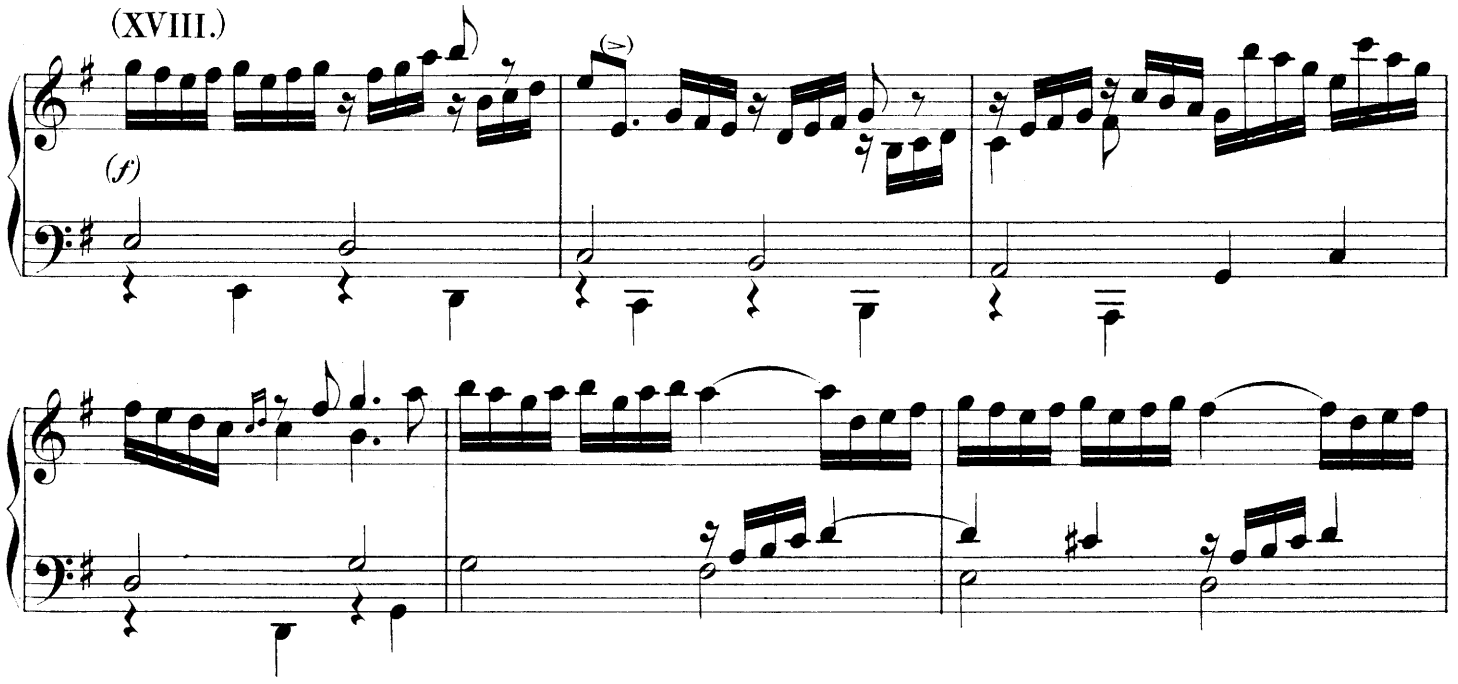

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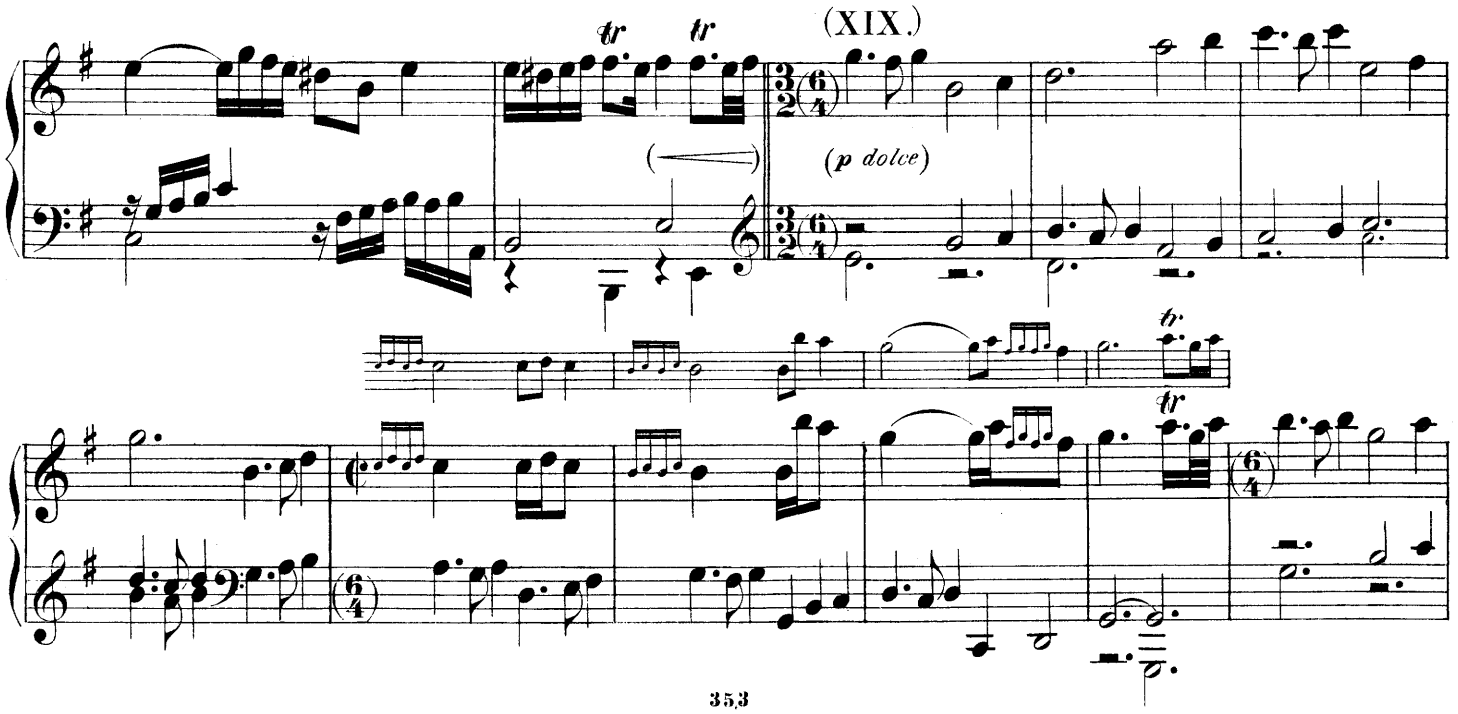

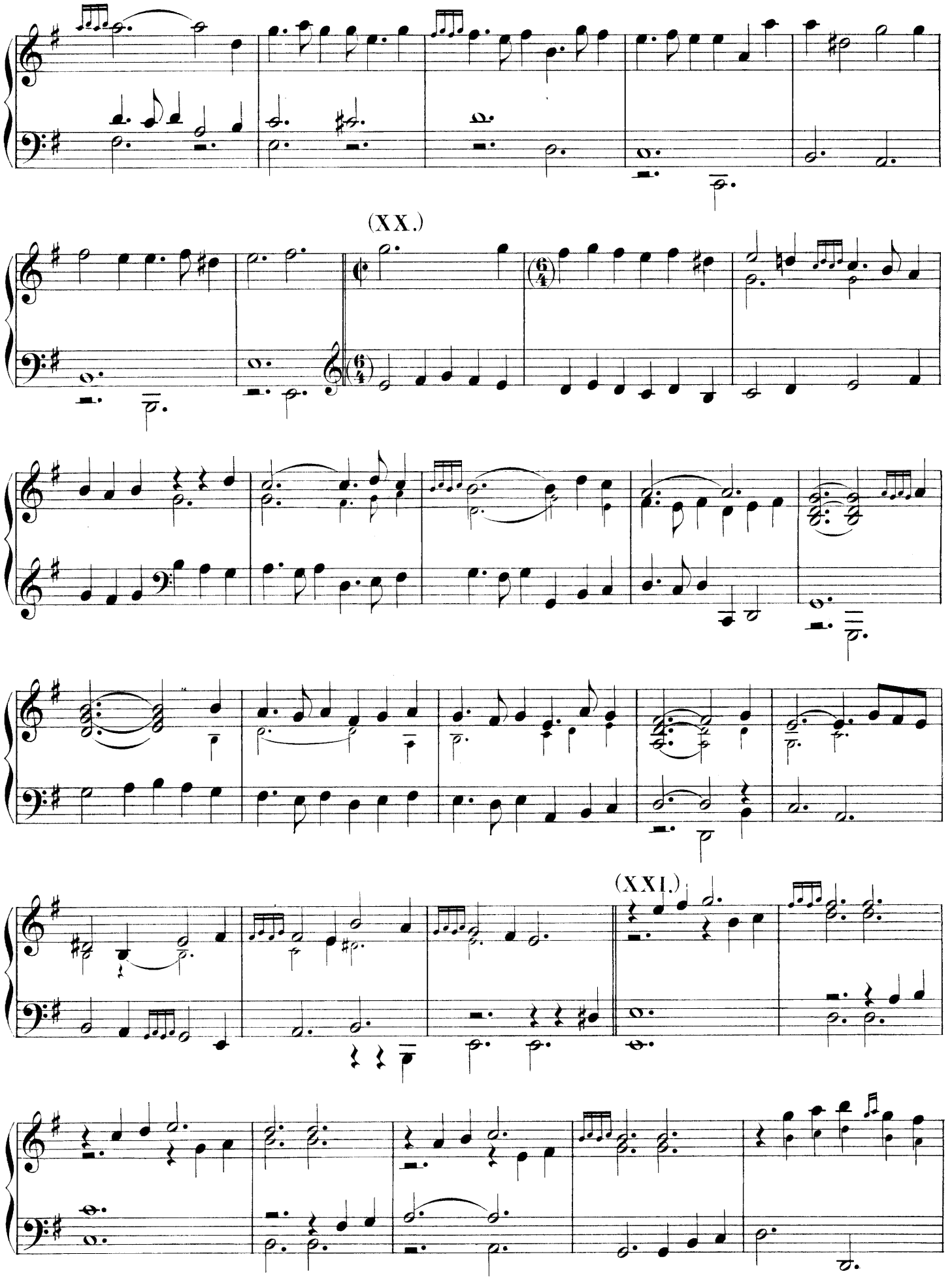
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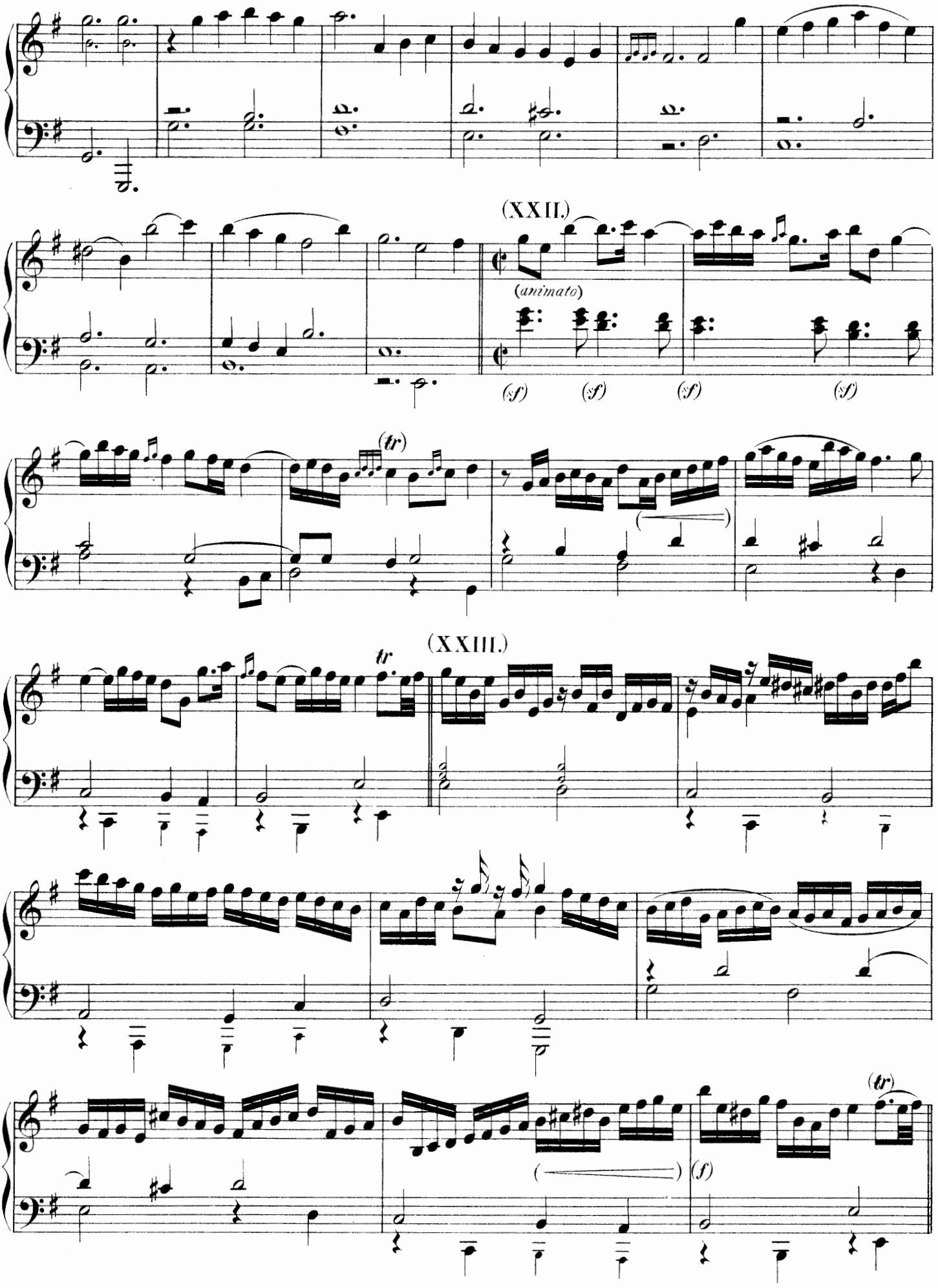
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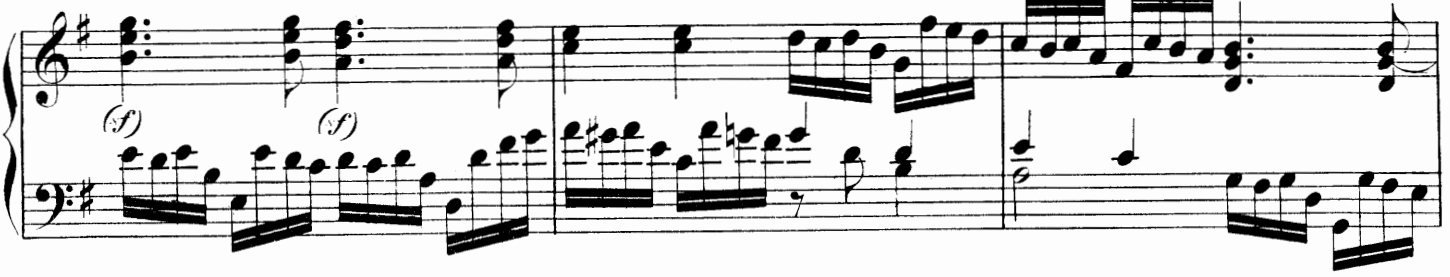
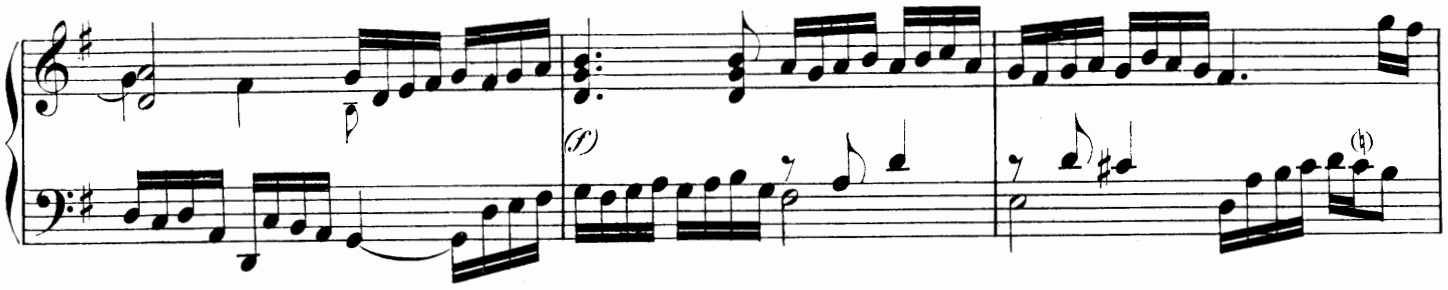
(XXIV.)





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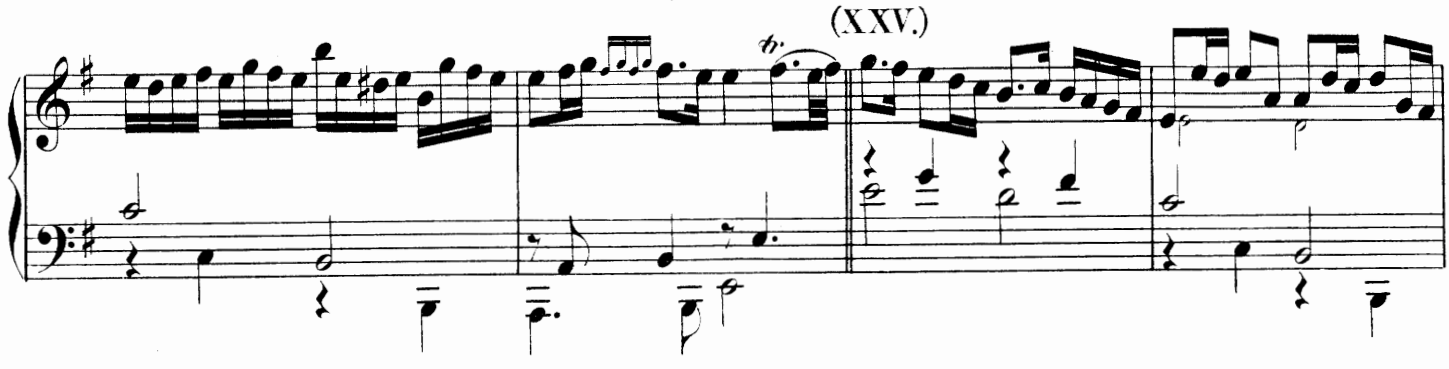

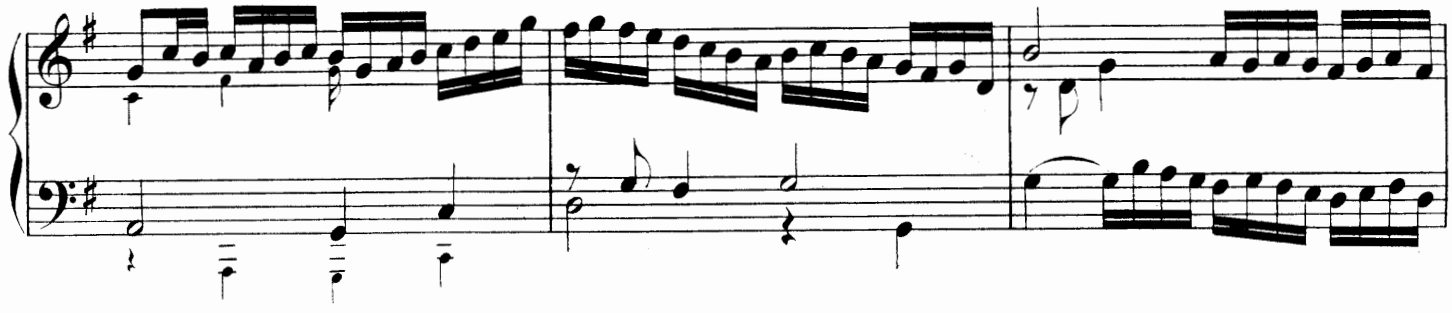

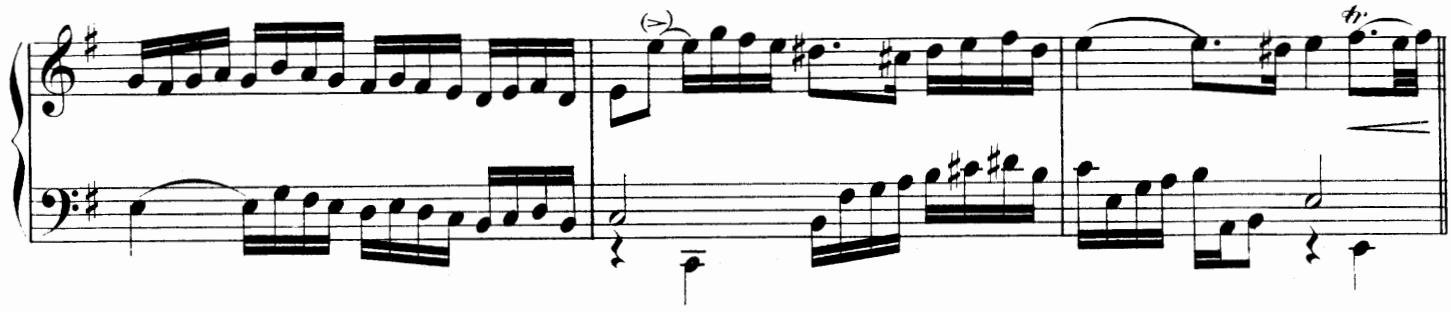

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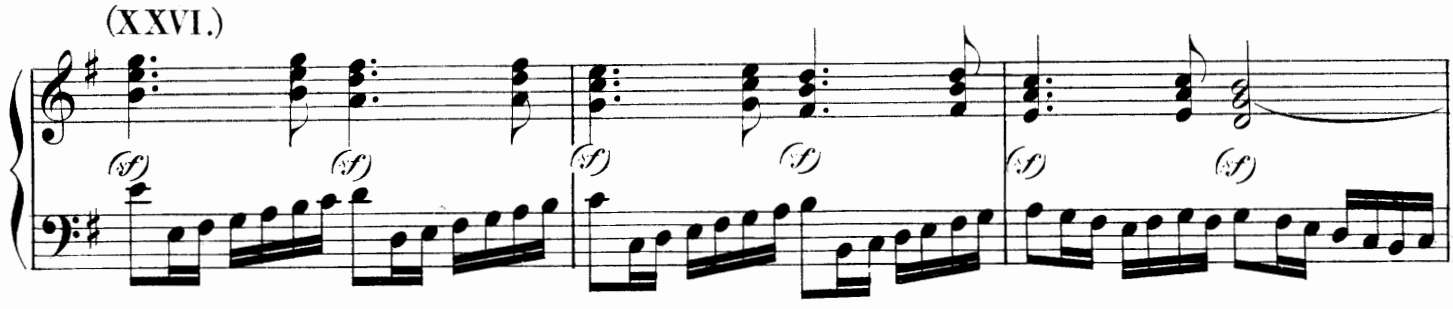

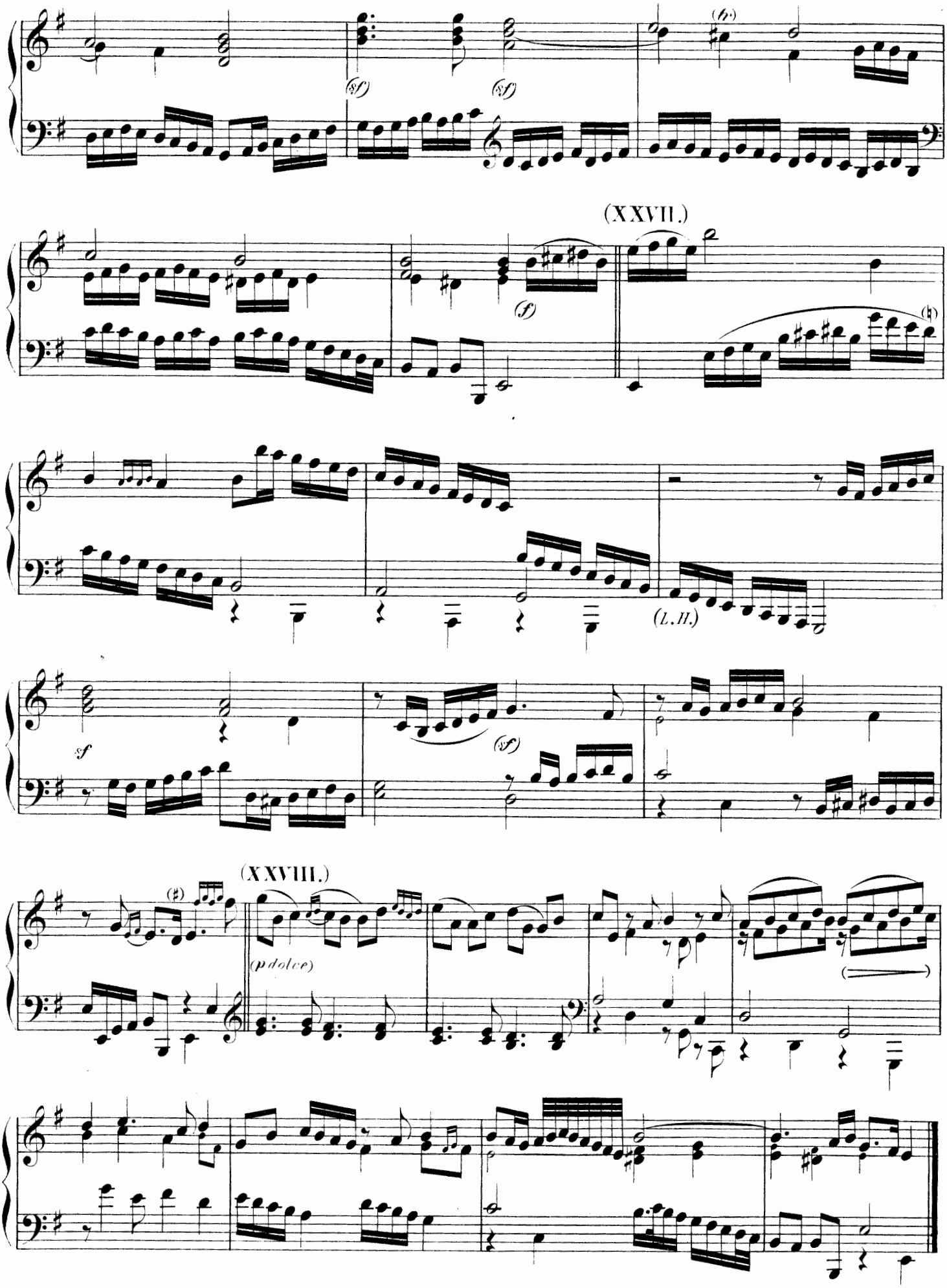
(sf)
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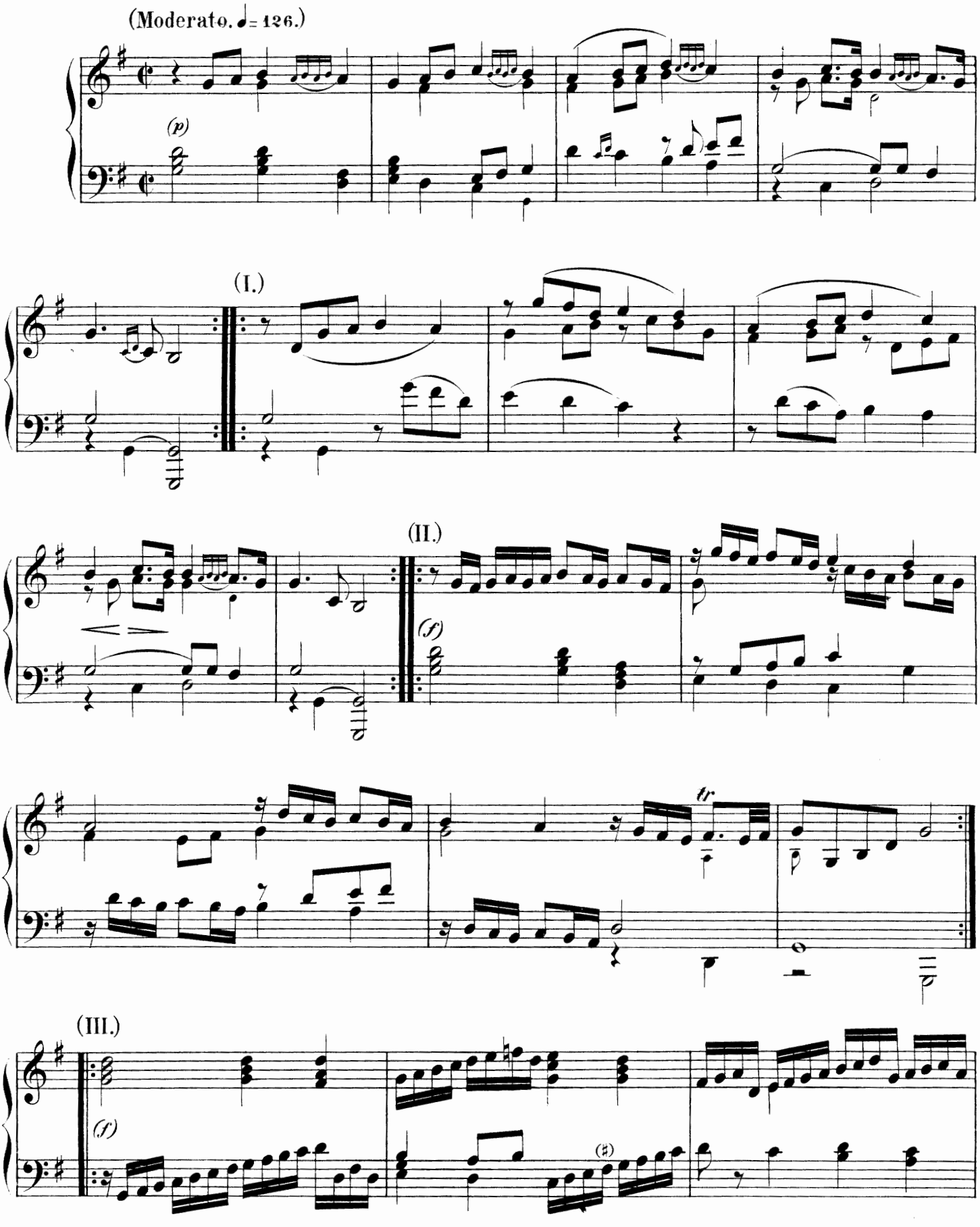
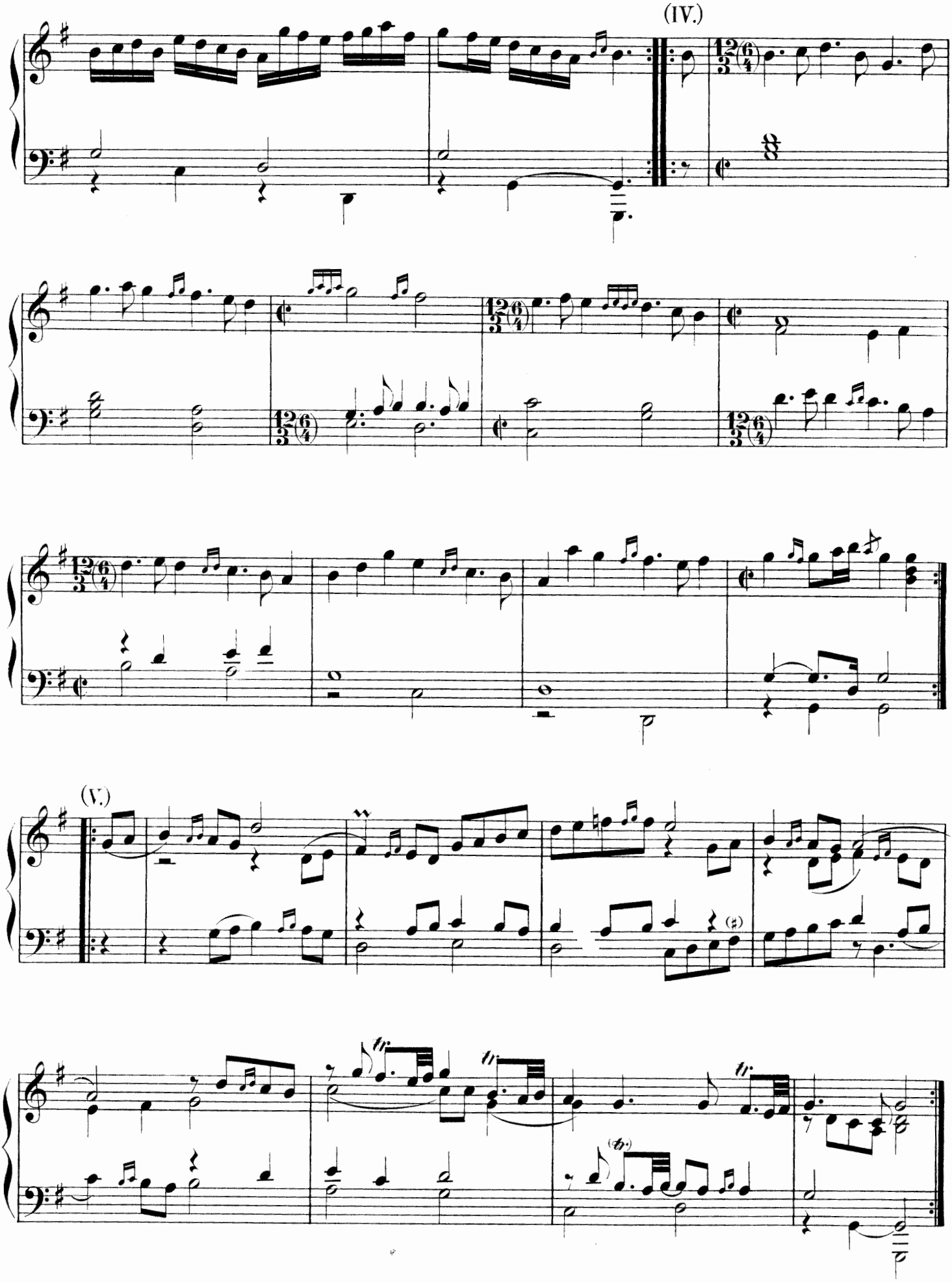
Ground.

II.

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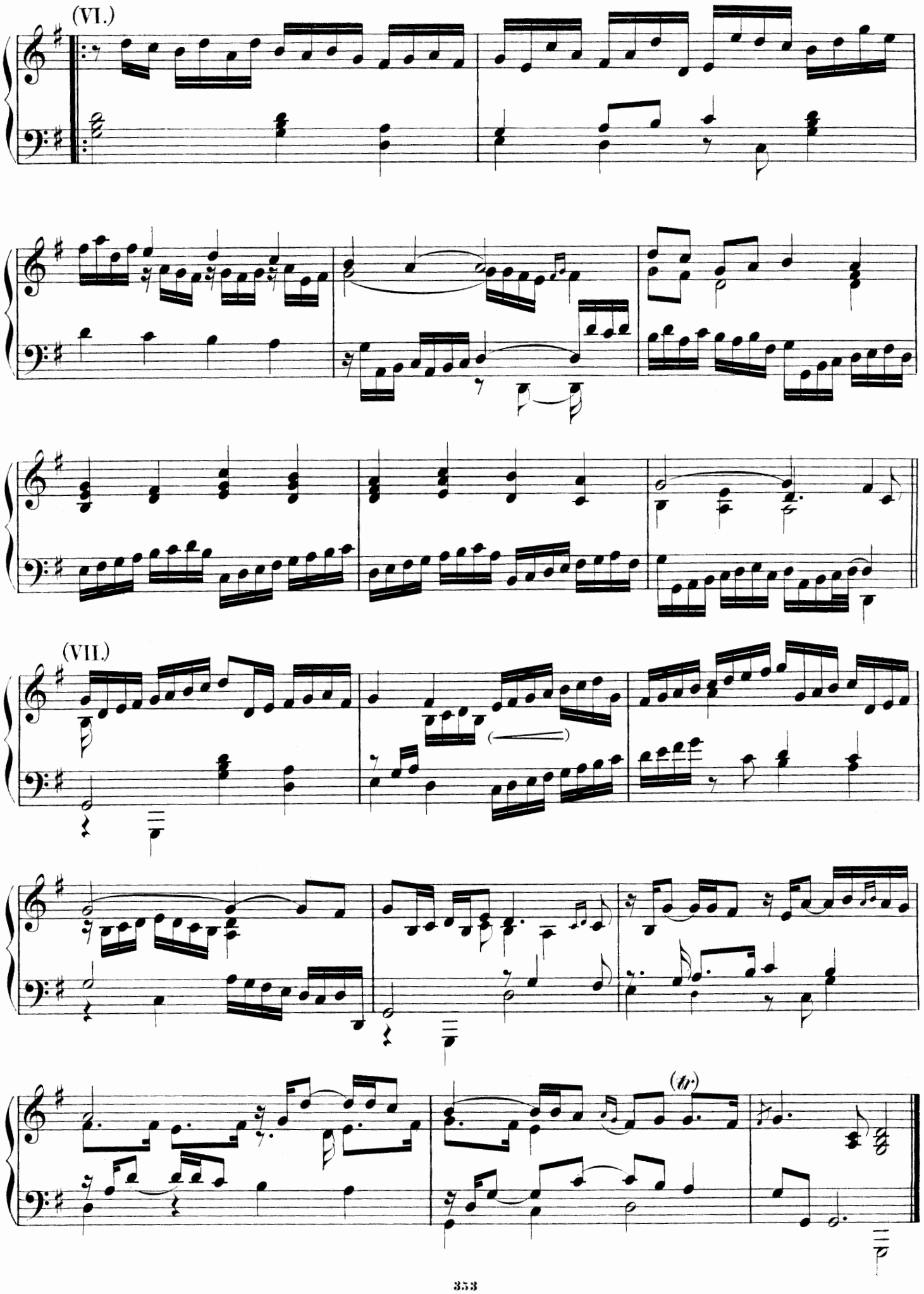
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Ground.
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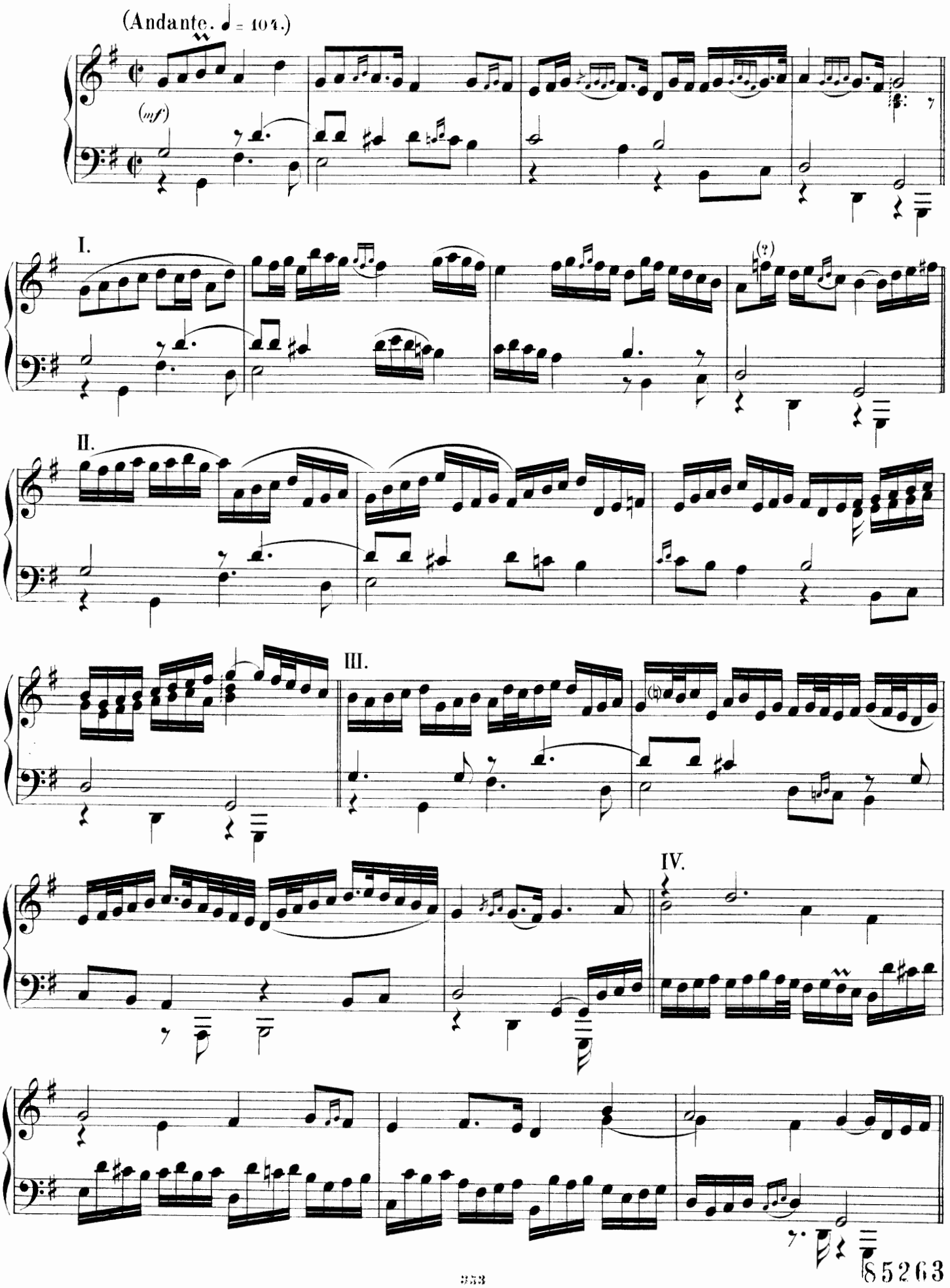

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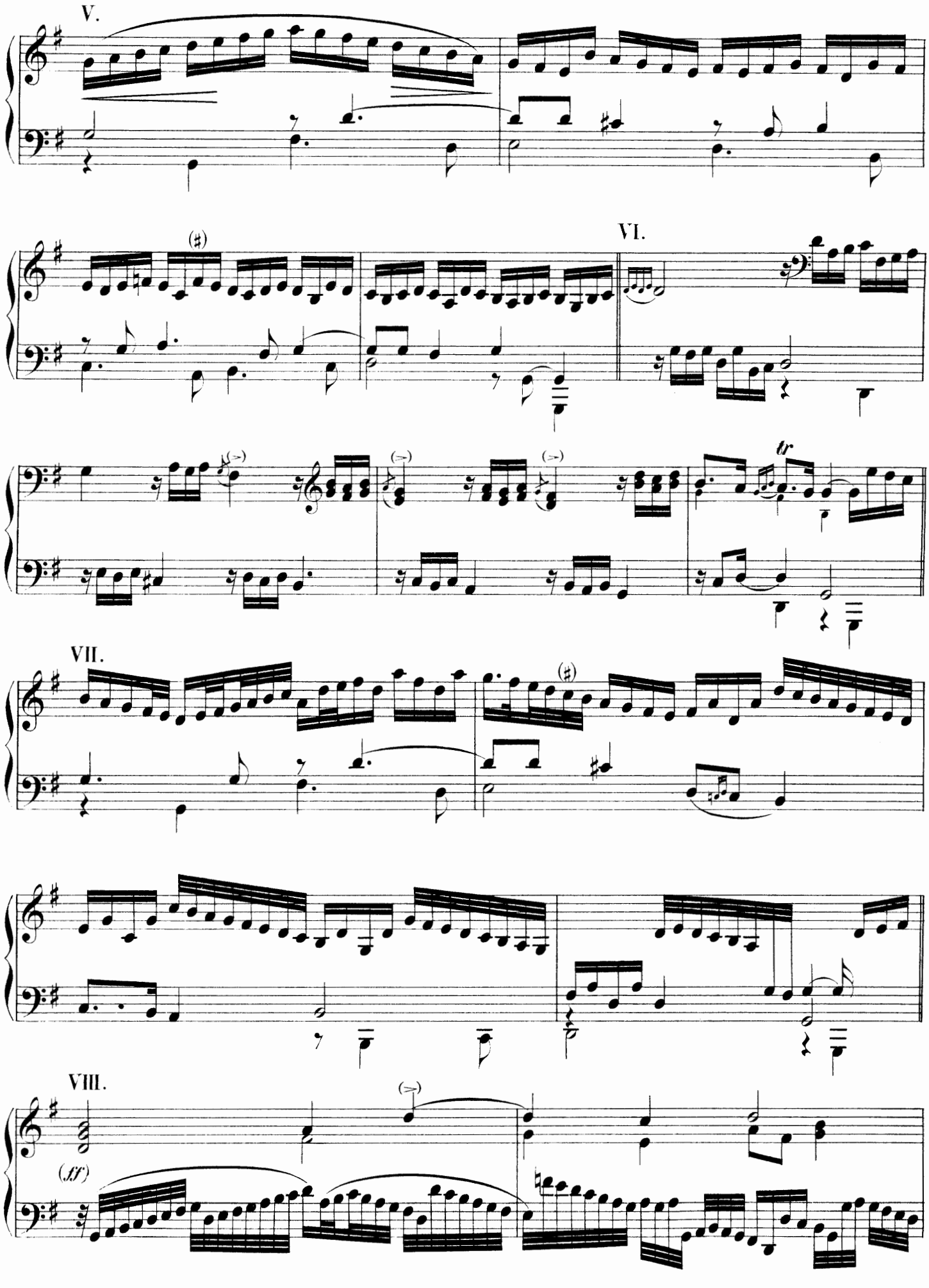
V.
VI.
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VII.
VIII.
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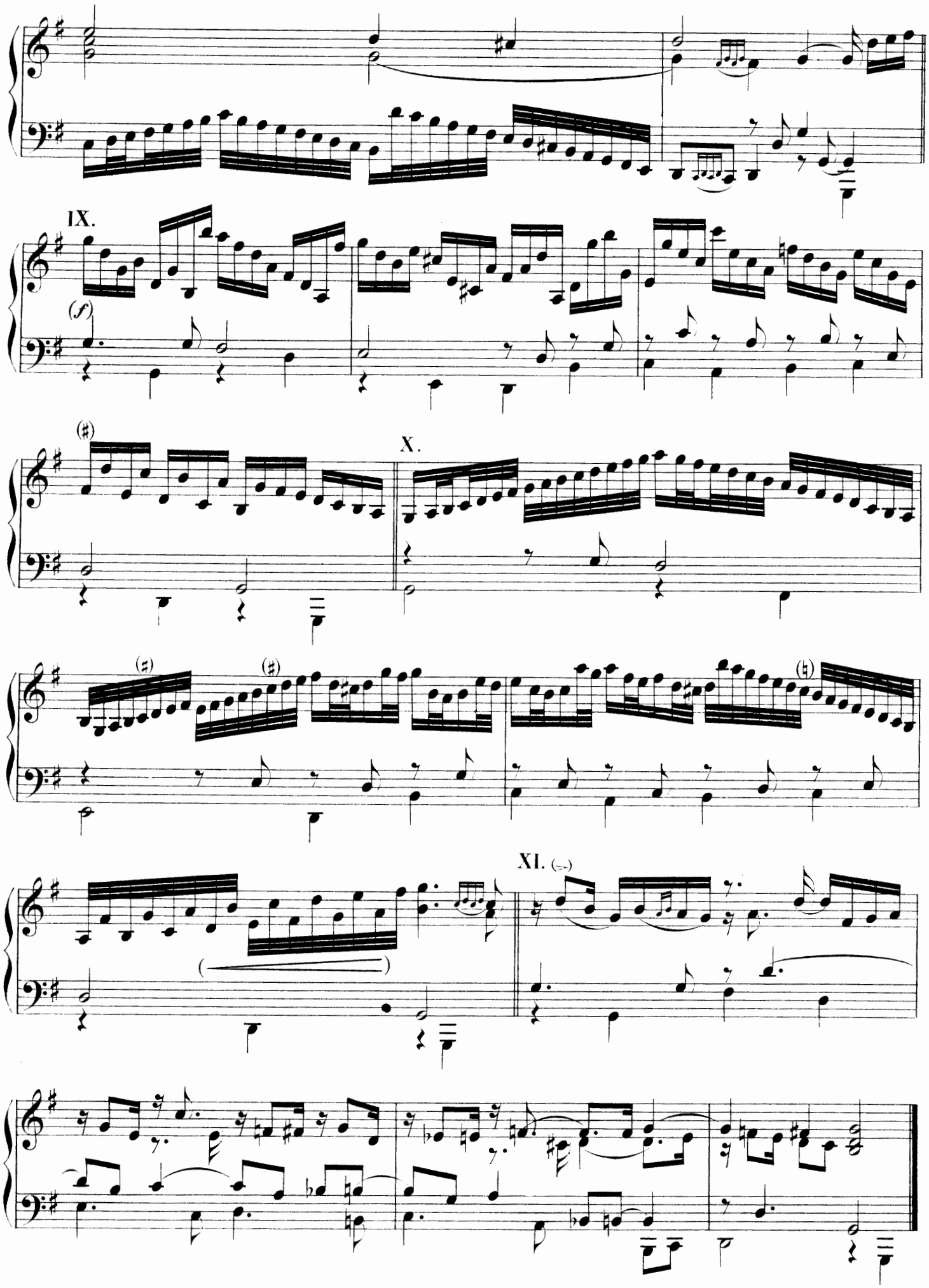
IX.
(f)
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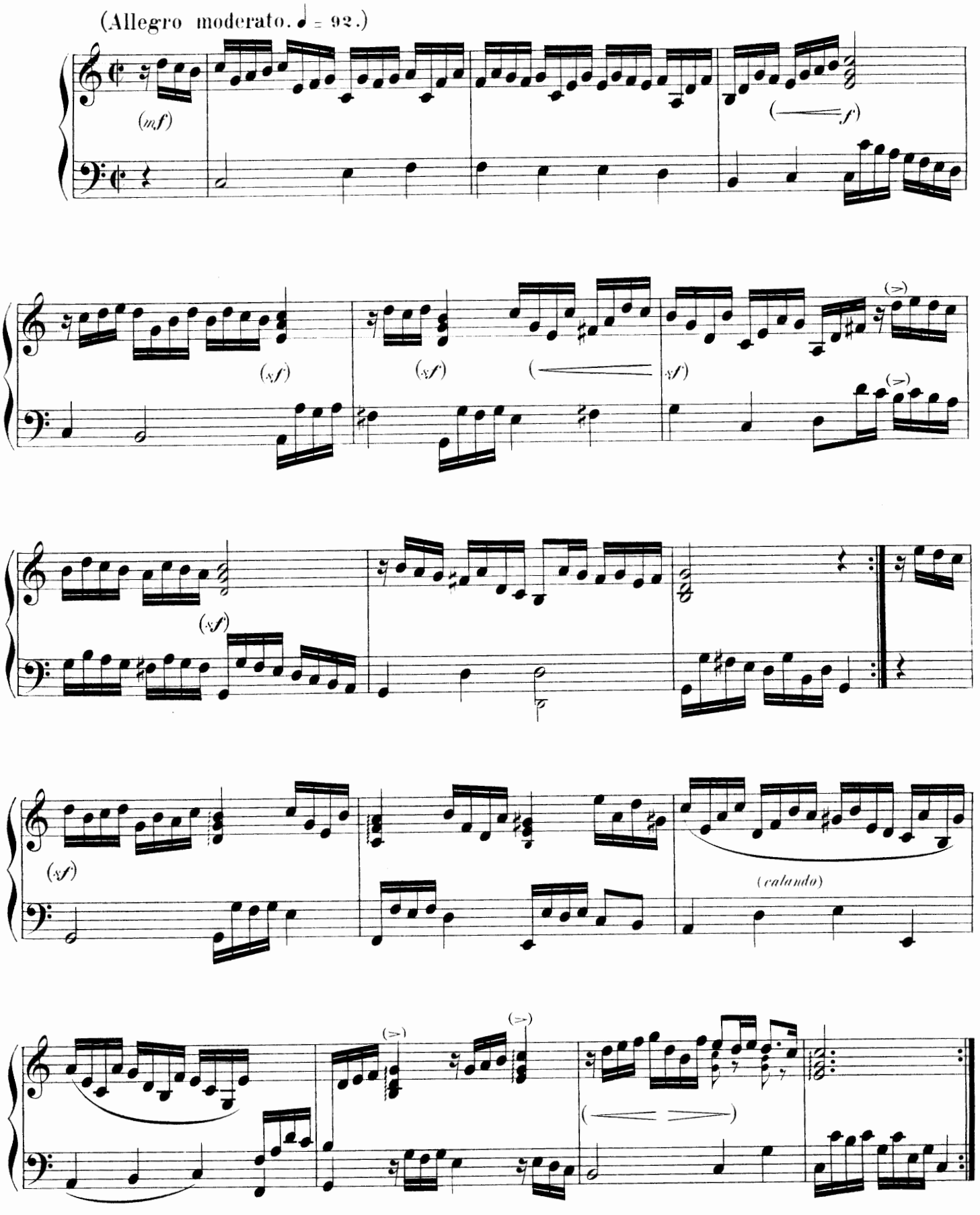
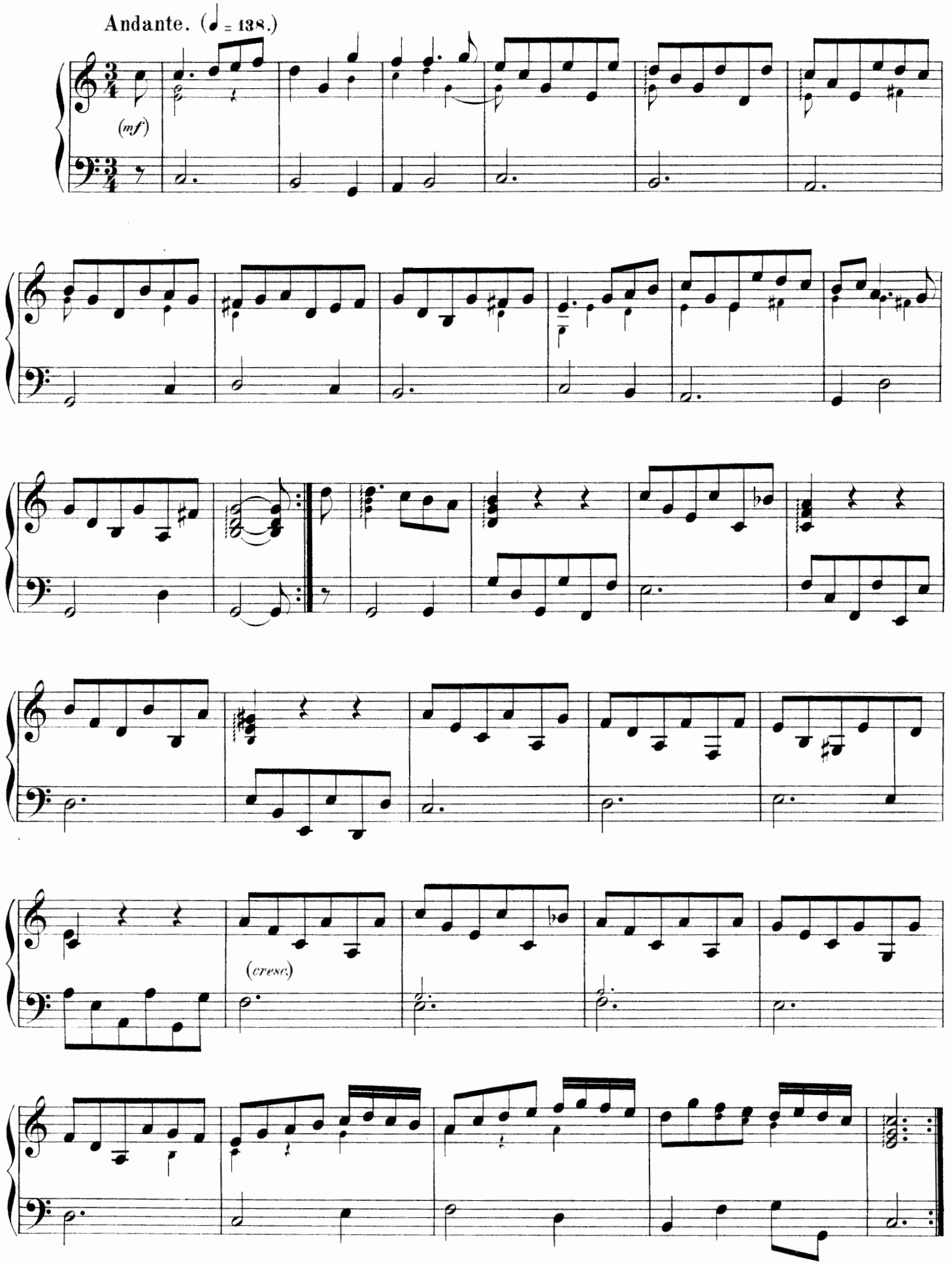
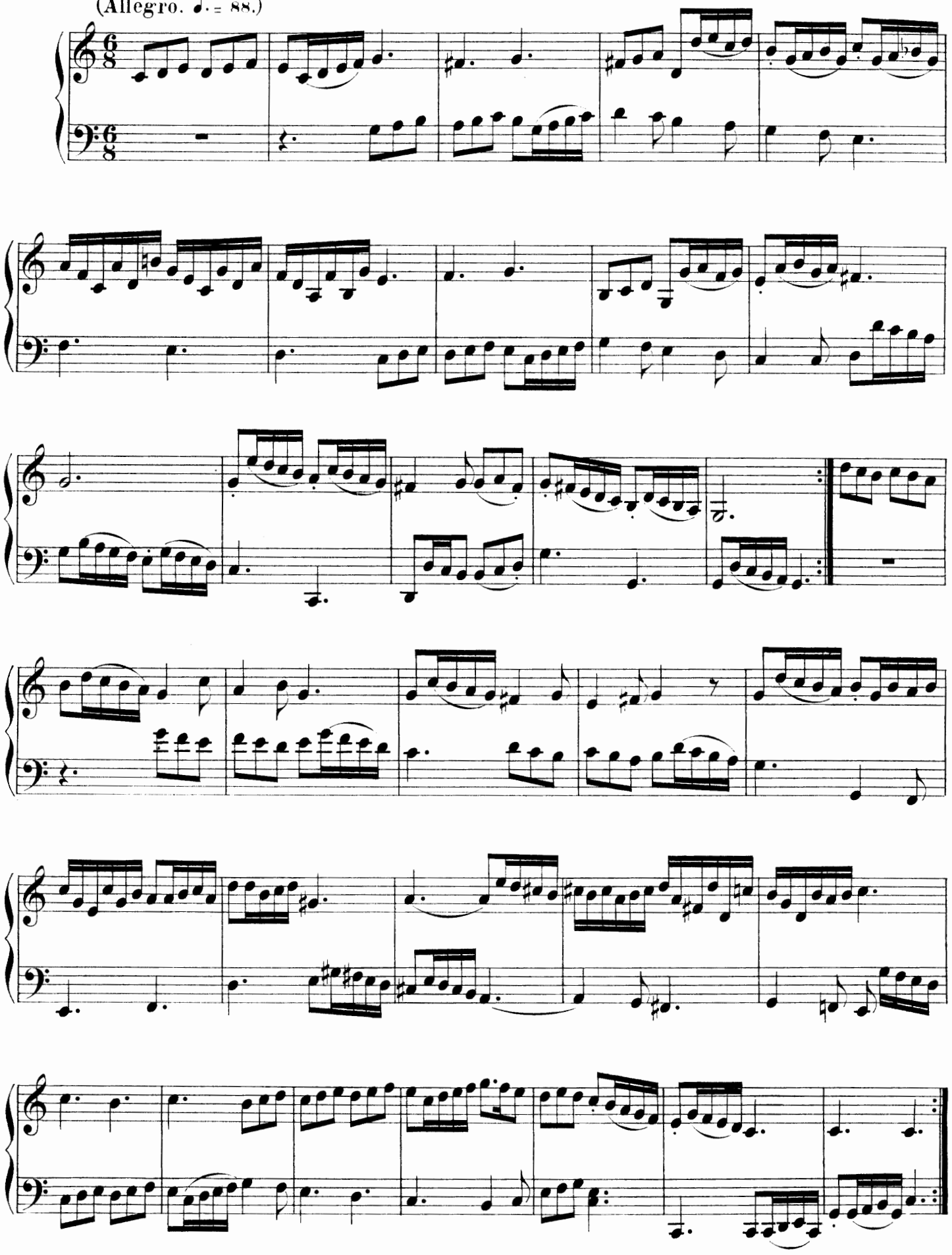
X.
(♯)
(♯)
(♮)
XI. (=)

Prelude.



Courante.



Fugue.

(Allegro. ♩. = 88.)