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THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MUSIC

OF THE

XVIITH AND XVIIITH CENTURIES

REVEALED BY CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE.

BY

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH.

APPENDIX

CONTAINING TWENTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIVE PIECES.

PRICE THREE SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE.

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APPENDIX.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

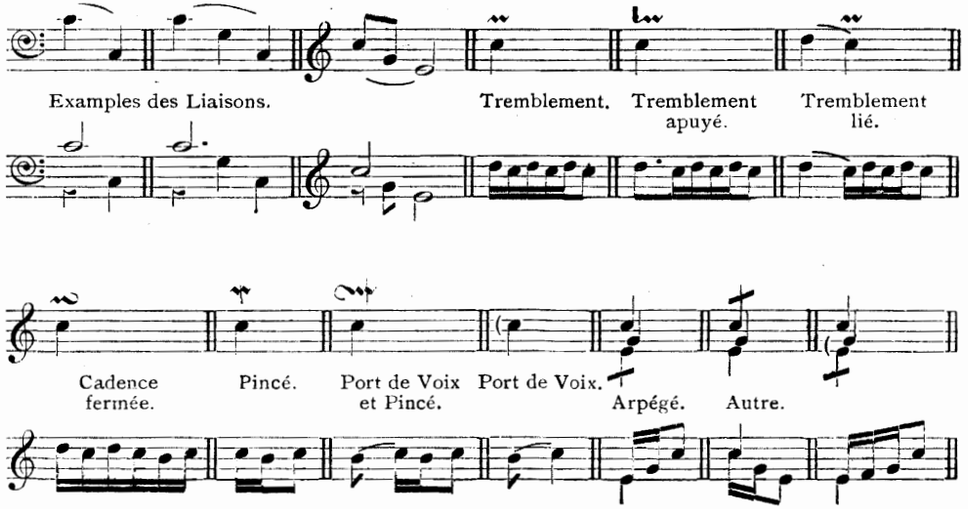
No. 1. PRELUDE by *Orlando Gibbons*, MENTIONED IN THE TEXT, page 389.

The sign (𝆔) indicates a mordent in bar 34, sudden shakes in bars 36 and 37, and on the note preceding the final chord, a turned shake, slurred with the D before it.

Nos. 2 to 8 contain the last SUITE from *Dandrieu's* "PIÈCES DE CLAVECIN," MENTIONED IN THE TEXT, page 392.

The following additional explanations may prove useful. The slurs employed by Dandrieu have two distinct meanings; firstly, they indicate the holding of the note from which they start until the end of the slur, although the intermediate notes may be detached; secondly, they indicate phrasing, and imply smooth connection between the notes they cover. Many examples of the first kind occur in the Prelude, whilst the second kind is found all through the Suite, but more especially in the Rondeau and the Gavotte.

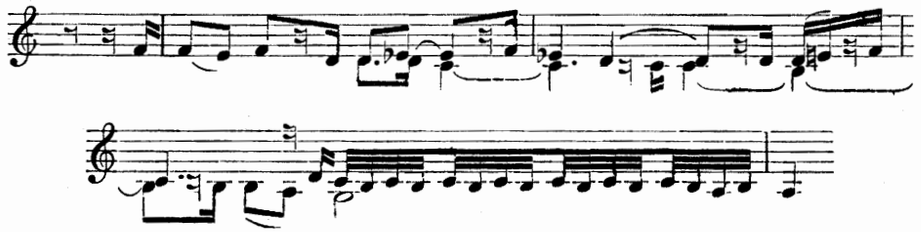
The Table of graces preceding the pieces is as follows:—



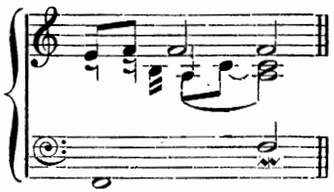
Nos. 9, 10, 11, THREE PRELUDES by *François Couperin*, from "L'ART DE TOUCHER LE CLAVECIN." 1717.

These Preludes are not intended to be measured. Explanations concerning their style will be found in the text, page 21. Nothing further need be said about the first. In the second, the appoggiature on C, bar 4; C, bar 5; B flat, bar 6, and A, bar 7, should be crotchets. On D, bar 8; F, bar 9; and D, last bar, the appoggiature are quavers.

The third Prelude is the most difficult to interpret. The right-hand part of the opening bars should be played approximately as follows:—



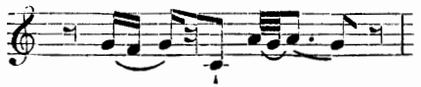
and the last bar thus:—



Nos. 12, 13. PRELUDE AND FUGUE by *J. S. Bach.*

The Prelude should be played in time; but its interpretation affords ample scope for thinking. Its meaning will assuredly not be brought out by mere mechanical playing. Remarks about its fingering will be found in the text, page 418.

The Theme of the Fugue should be phrased thus:—



No. 14. MARCHE by *J. S. Bach.*

This is one of the fascinating little pieces which Bach wrote for Anna Magdalena, his second wife. The original text played literally is not exhilarating; but properly interpreted it makes you wish to hear it played by one of the admirable brass bands of the British Army, and to see the regiment walk to its compelling strains.

No. 15. SONATA IN F MINOR. *C. Ph. E. Bach.*

This Allegro should be played very fast and brilliantly, giving well contrasted expression to those delicate passages marked *p*. Needless to say, the marks for *p* and *f* are original.

The third bar of the second part is written an octave too low, presumably to keep within the four octaves compass of the practice instruments of the period. There is every reason for its being played an octave above, if the instrument allows it.

Nos. 16, 17, 18, are three pieces given, ready for pricking upon the cylinder of a mechanical bird organ, in "LA TONOTECHNIE" by "*Le Père Engramelle.*" Paris, 1775. (*See* text, page 43.)

Had it been possible, the interpretation of these pieces would have been given in ordinary notation; but this would have involved very great complications on account of the following circumstances:—

1. In the first piece the crotchets are divided on the cylinder in five parts.
2. In the second and third pieces the crotchets are divided in six parts.
3. Ornaments which apparently fill the time of the principal note are crowded up to give more importance to the last note, and separate it by a rest from the sequence. It was better, therefore, to reproduce the original tonotechnical notation, which is simple and accurate.

The explanation of the tonotechnical signs is as follows:—

A horizontal line (—), more or less long, shows that the note under it should be held until the next note.

A dot over such a line (—·) indicates a shortening of the note under it of the value of one semiquaver. Two dots would mean two semiquavers (—··), three dots three semiquavers (—···), &c.

A short vertical line or dash (ı) means that the note under it should be only "touched"—that is, held no longer than one of the divisions of the cylinder.

The ornaments are expressed by indented lines, the upper and lower points of which correspond respectively to the higher and lower notes of the ornament. Thus the sign (WW) above a note C indicates the shake D C D C D C. The duration of each note of the shake corresponds to one division of the cylinder, $\frac{1}{5}$ or $\frac{1}{8}$ of a crotchet, as the case may be.

The sign V over a note C indicates the mordent C B C.

The combinations of these signs are very easy to understand. For example, the sign (V·) over a crotchet C means a mordent C B C, the last note of which, C, is held for the rest of the value of that crotchet, less a "*silence d'articulation*" equal to a semiquaver. This silence is indicated by the dot.

The sign (W·:) over a minim C means a shake with its termination; D C D C D C B C, the last note of which, C, is held for the rest of the value of that minim, less a *silence d'articulation* equal to two semiquavers, which is indicated by the two dots.

The quavers in the first piece should be unequal, in the proportion of 3 to 2, being three divisions of the cylinder for the first and two for the second.

In the second piece the unevenness is more marked, being in the proportion of 2 to 1, which corresponds to four divisions to the first and two to the second.

In the Menuet, the quavers are even. The tempo of these pieces, calculated from the duration of the revolution of the cylinder, deducting the silence at the end of each piece, is:—

1. Marche du Roy: ♩=100.
2. The same Marche, more varied: ♩=96.
3.—Menuet de Zélindor: ♩.=52.

The speed of the Menuet agrees well with Quantz's indications (*see* text, page 51); but the two marches seem too fast. Allowance for this may have been made by turning the handle somewhat slower, let us say at the rate of thirty-five revolutions instead of forty in twenty seconds, which is the regulation speed.

As the original book gives only the tunes of these pieces, an accompaniment has been added by Arnold Dolmetsch.

No. 19. "ROMANCE DE MR. BALBASTRE" from "L'ART DU FACTEUR D'ORGUES" by *Dom Bedos de Celles.* Paris, 1775.

The complete musical text, marked for pricking in the tonotechnical notation, is given in the book, and besides a full-size diagram representing the actual pricking upon the cylinder of a large automatic organ.

Each crotchet being divided on the cylinder in eight parts, equal to demisemiquavers, it is possible to give a translation of the diagram in ordinary notation, but the result in many cases is, and can only be, approximate for the following reasons:—

1. The frequent crowding of the ornaments to allow more time to their last note and a short rest after it. (These last notes are marked with a dot (.), and can be seen at bars 9, 27, 30, 31, &c.)
2. The unevenness of nearly all the quavers and some of the crotchets in the proportion of 2 to 1. (In the original text the lengthened and shortened notes are indicated respectively by 2 and 1.)
3. The Tempo Rubato, which can be seen approximately in bars 2, 11, &c.

It is necessary to insist upon these deviations from strict time, which, although they are expressed very exactly on the cylinder, and could easily be reproduced on the roll of modern instruments of the Pianola type, absolutely defy musical notation. The same difficulty would exist with the conventional rendering of some of Chopin's stock virtuoso pieces, or Paderewski's Menuet, as played by himself; but these pieces can easily be heard, which is not the case with the old music. The student must therefore supply with his own intelligence what is lacking in all the texts, even in this apparently complete and complicated translation.

In order to reduce the number of rests in the translation, a short line (—) is used to mark such notes as should only be held about three-quarters of their value, and a dash (ı) to indicate very short notes.

The shake in sixths in the last bar is all right on a mechanical instrument, but impossible by hand. The lower shake should be replaced by a plain note, F.

The whole piece is understood to last just three minutes in performance; its tempo therefore is ♩=88.

Nos. 20 and 21 are the two slow movements from *Corelli's* SONATA No. VI. FOR THE VIOLIN, with "The graces to all the Adagios, and other places where the author thought proper" mentioned in the text at page 341.

The top line gives the ornamented text, the second line shows the plain text of the ordinary old editions; the two bracketed lines under this contain a realisation of the figured bass embodying the precepts of contemporary masters as disclosed in chapter V. in the text.

The ornamented text requires much interpretation: uneven playing, lengthening of dots, additional shakes and other ornaments, and careful apportionment of the *tempo rubato* in the florid passages. Such music cannot be played at sight; it must be mastered and assimilated. This remark applies with more or less force to all the pieces in this book.

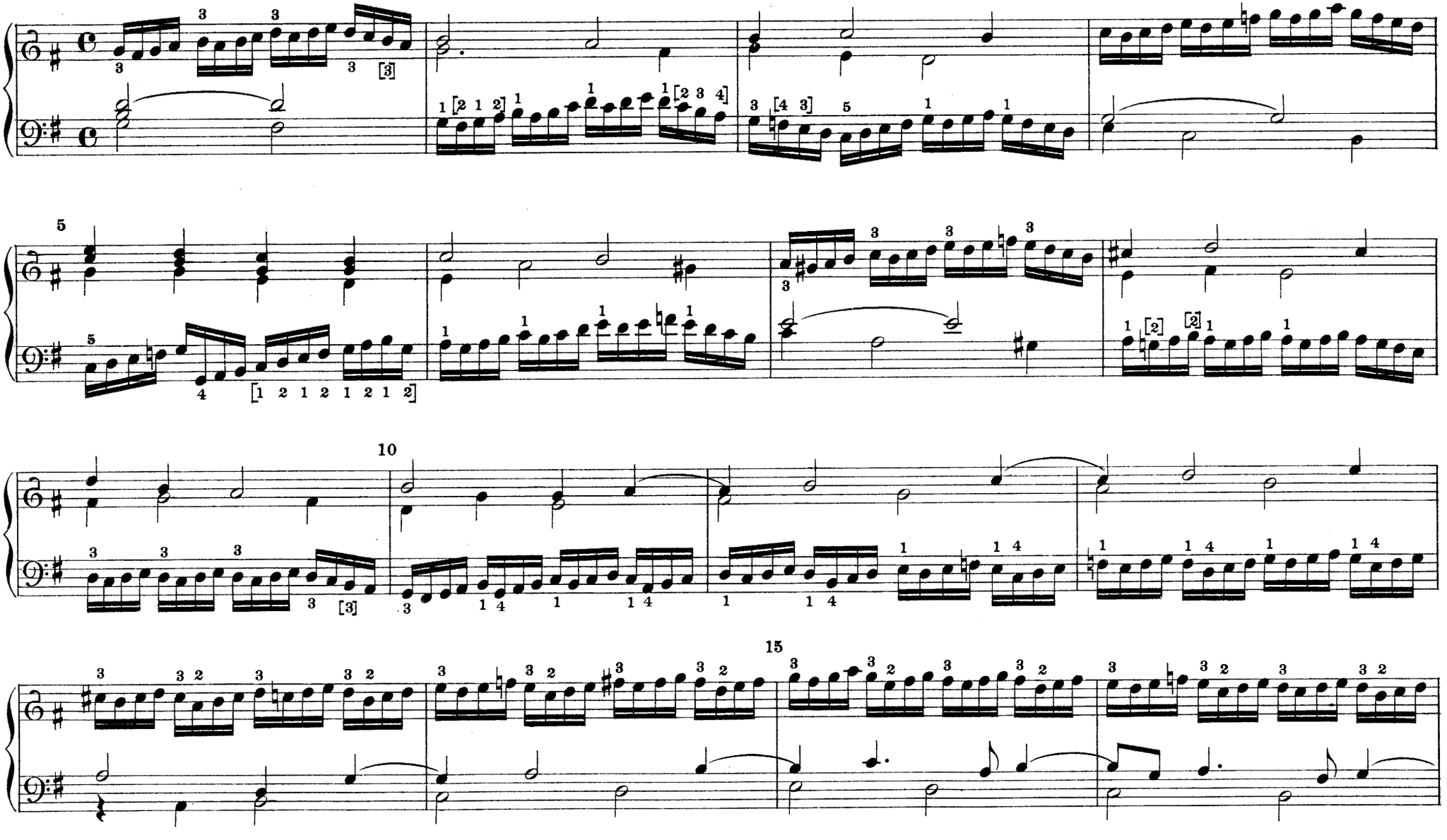
No. 22, the last piece in this book, is the ADAGIO IN THE ITALIAN STYLE, with divisions fully written out, by *J. Quantz*, mentioned in the text at page 341.

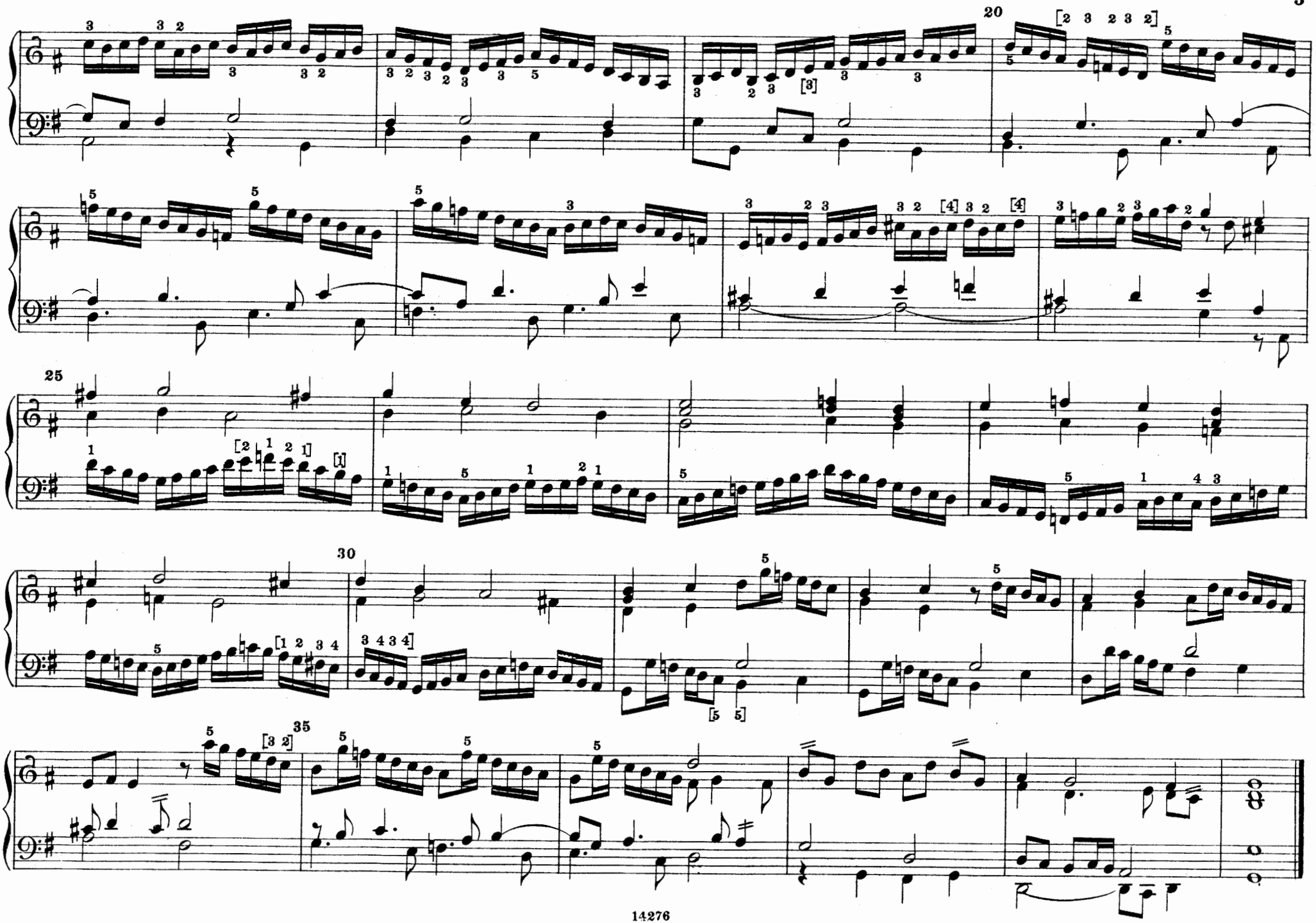
Concerning the shake on the note preceding the pause on B, in the 20th bar of the movement, Quantz tells us that it should last four quavers, and moreover that the concluding grace notes should be retarded and diminished. He also fills three pages with explanations, note by note, of the shades of *piano* and *forte* required by the expression; they have been added to the text, translated into the usual modern signs.

As in the case of the Corelli Adagios, an accompaniment has been written out, from the figured bass, by Arnold Dolmetsch.

A PRELUDE.

Orlando Gibbons. (c. 1605)

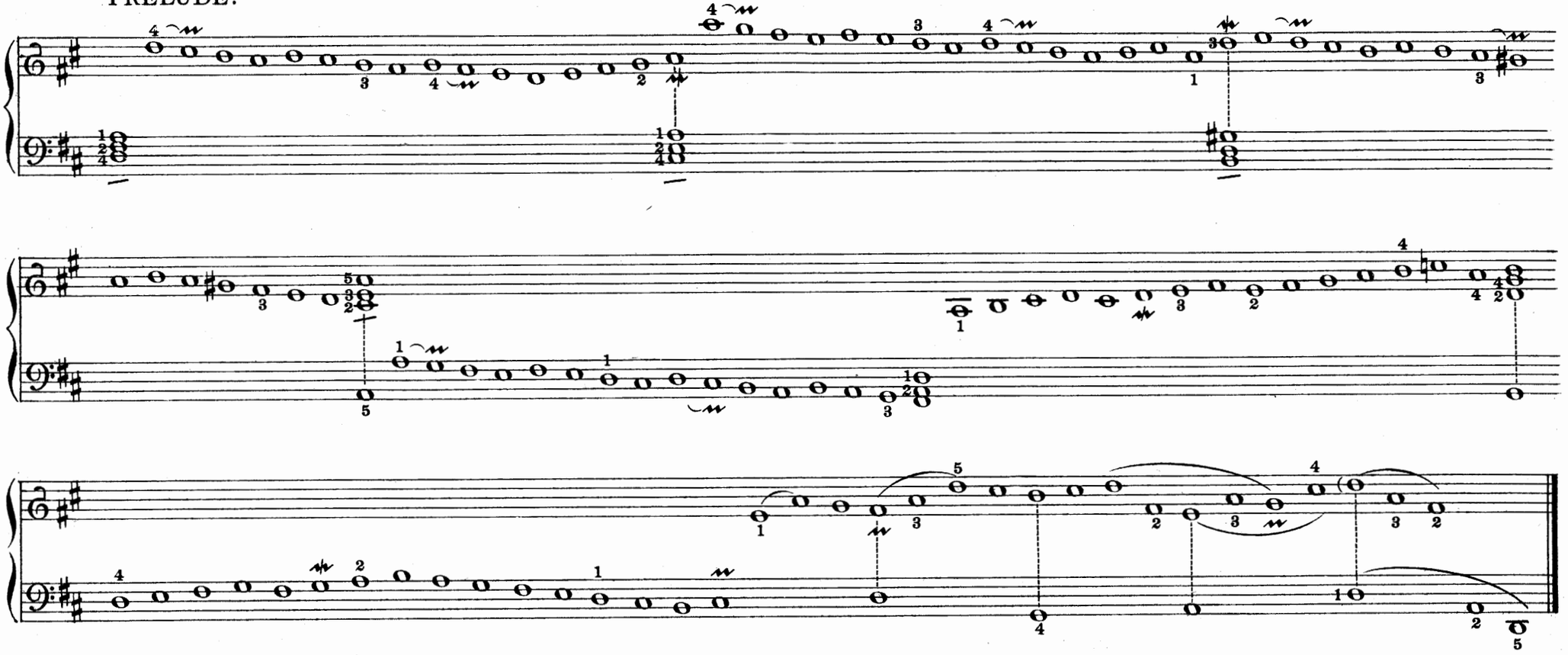




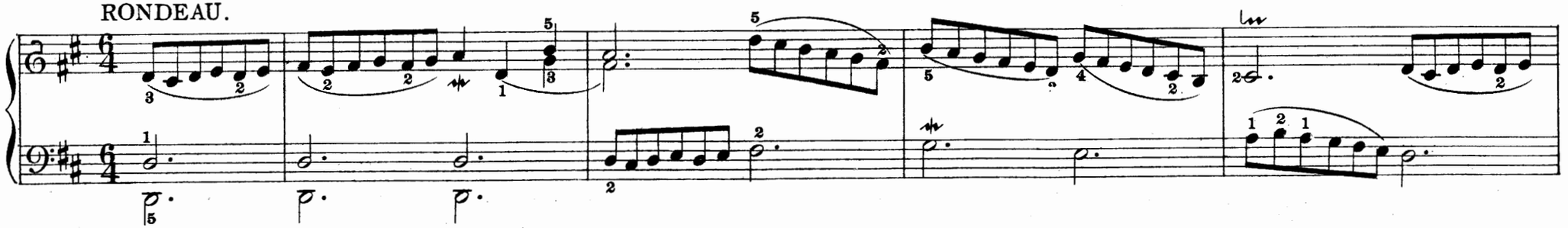
QUATRIÈME SUITE.

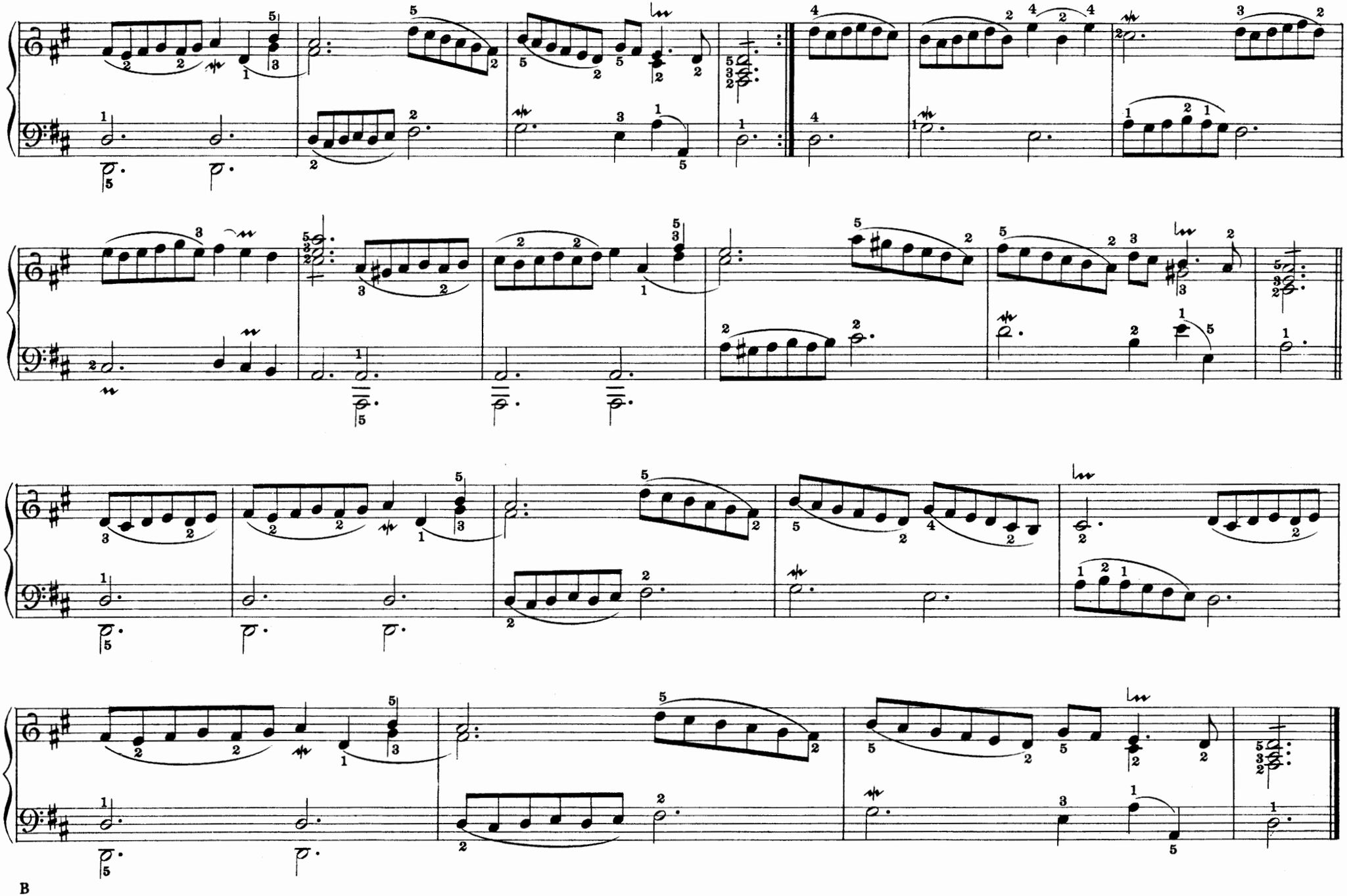
Jean François d'Andrieu. (c. 1705)

PRÉLUDE.

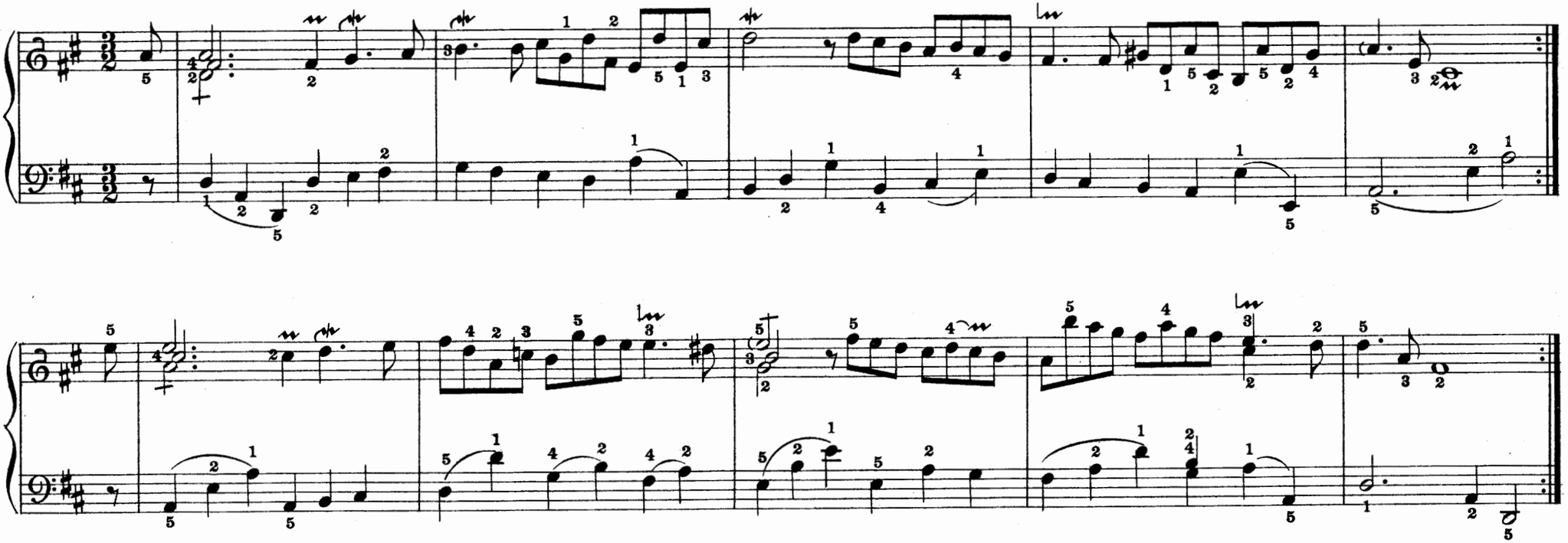


RONDEAU.

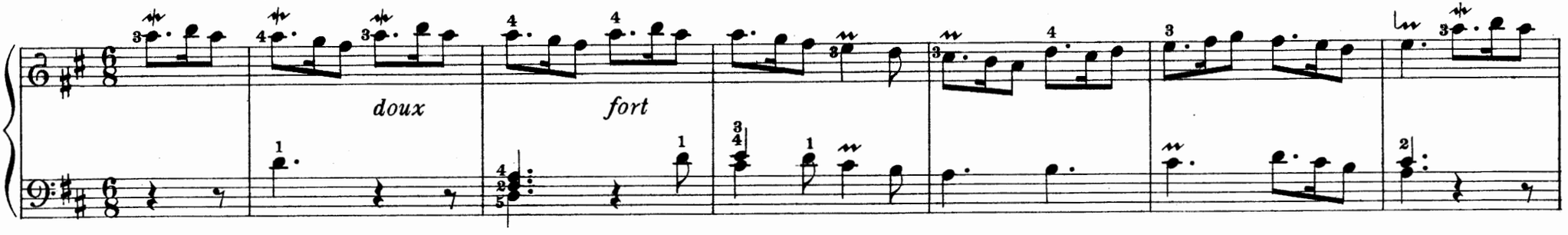


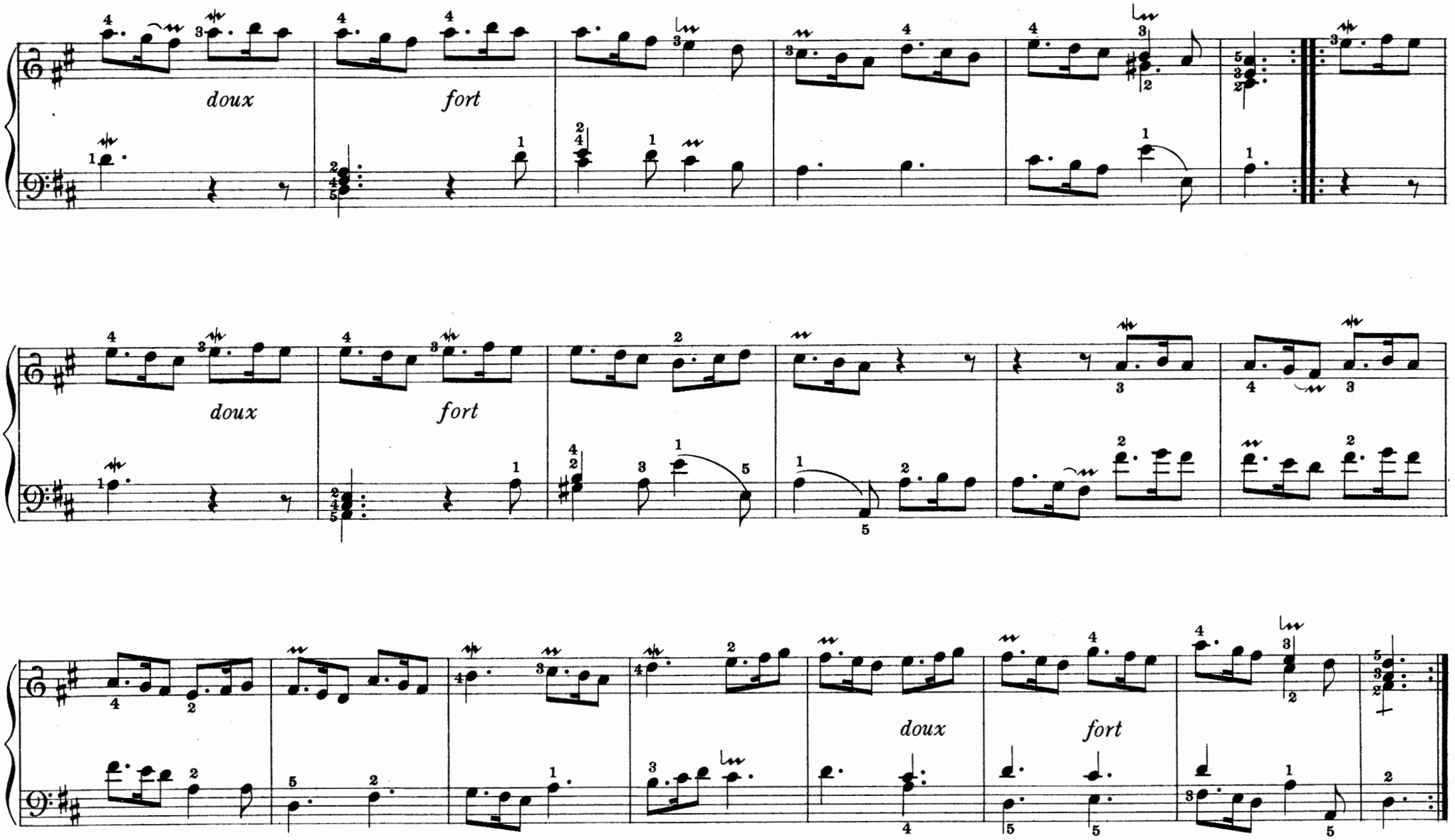


COURANTE.



GIGUE.

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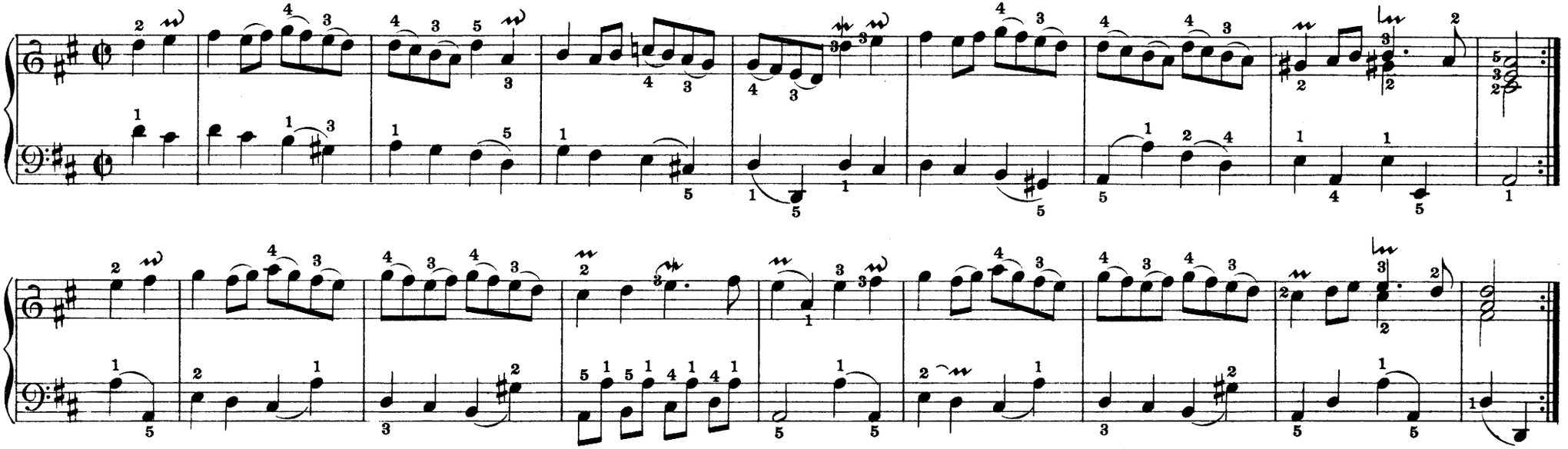
GAVOTTE.



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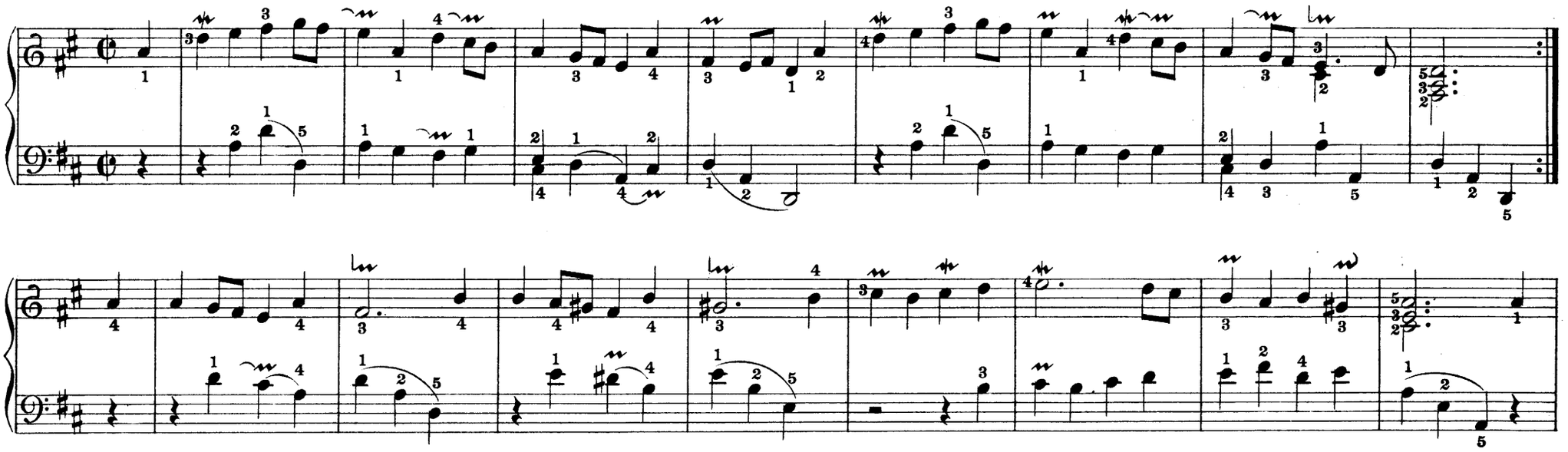
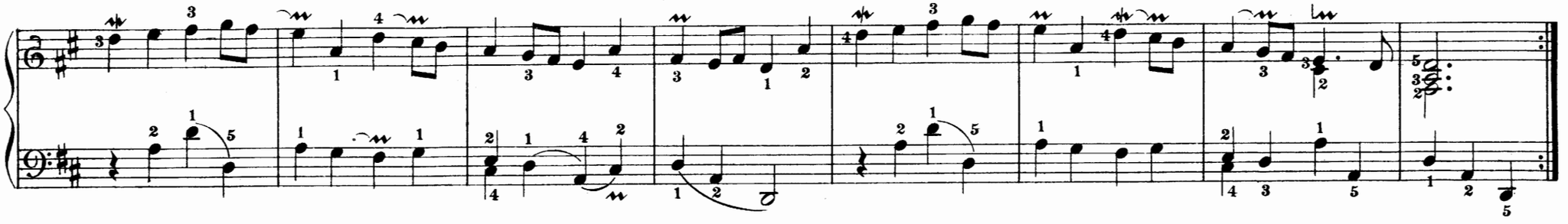
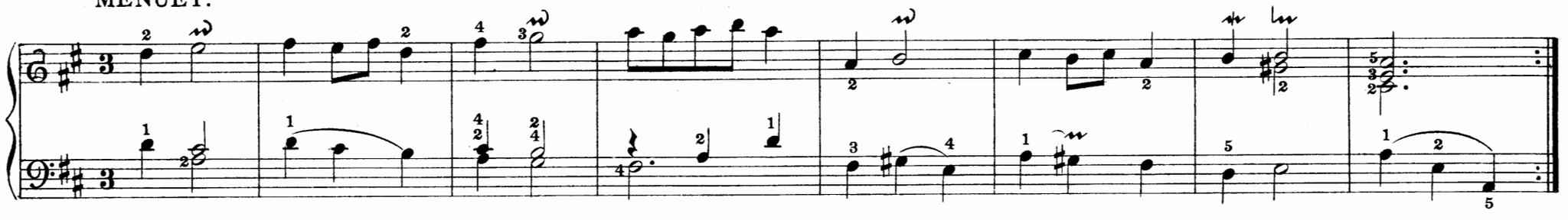
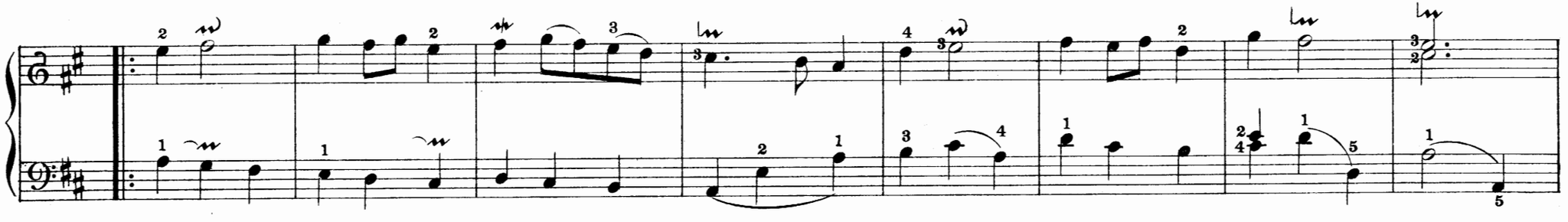
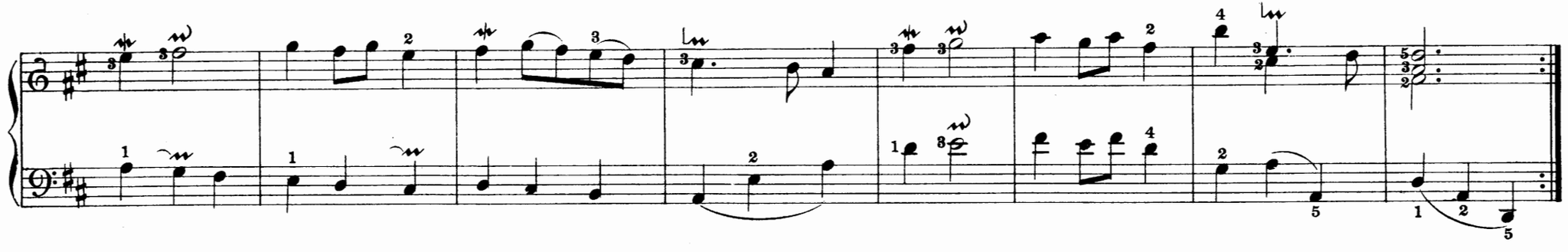




MENUET.

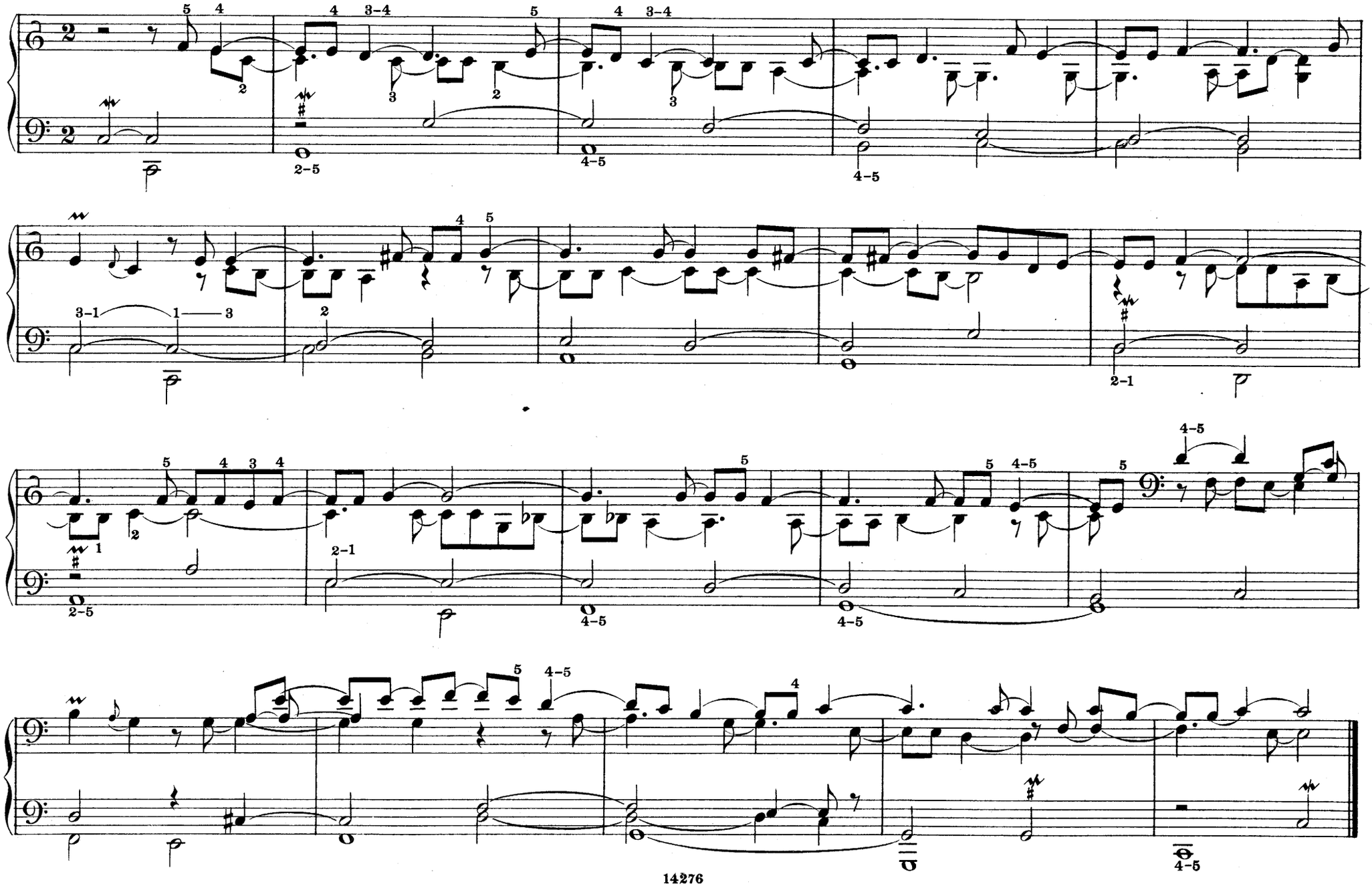






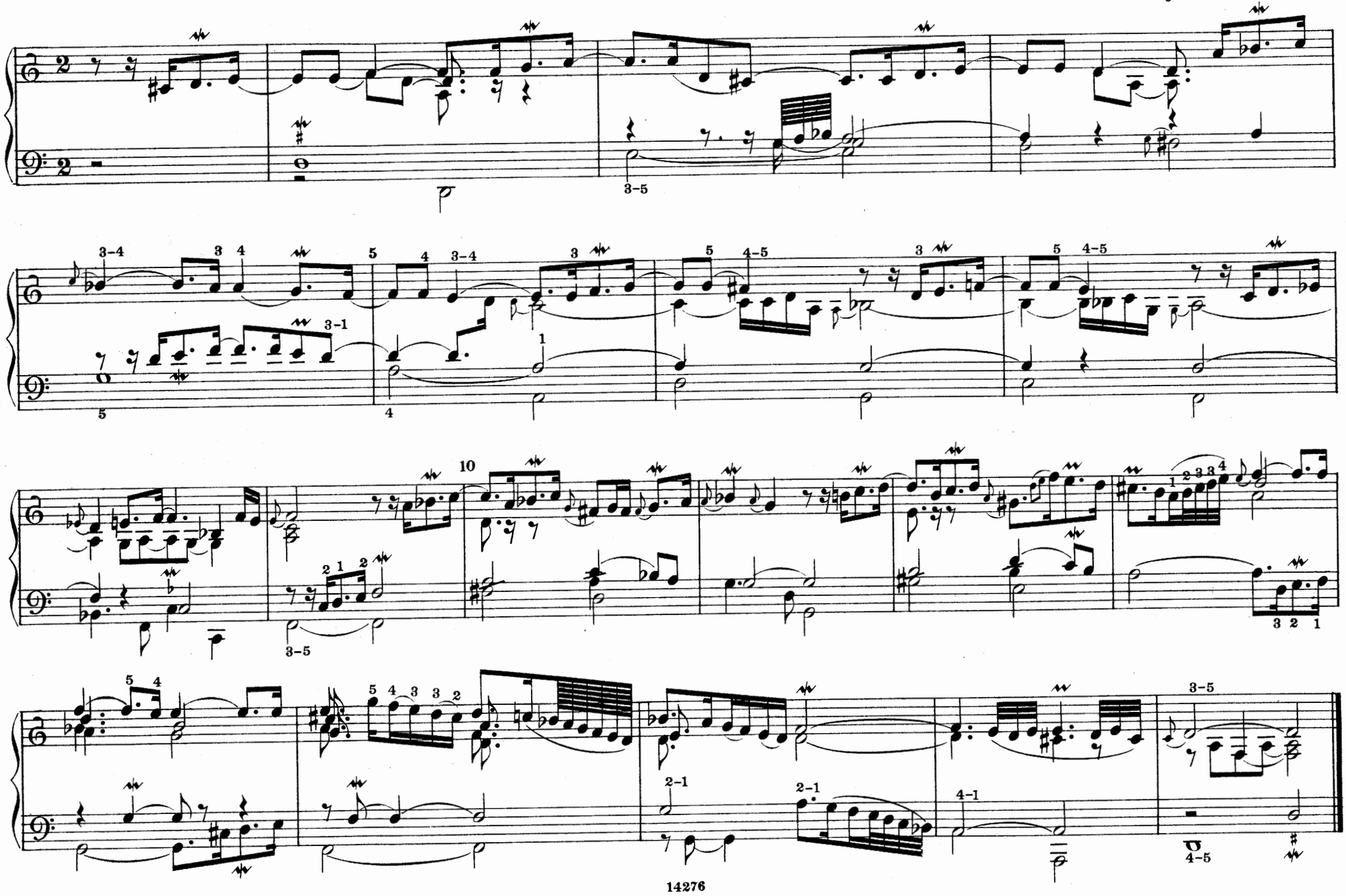
PREMIER PRÉLUDE.

François Couperin. 1717.



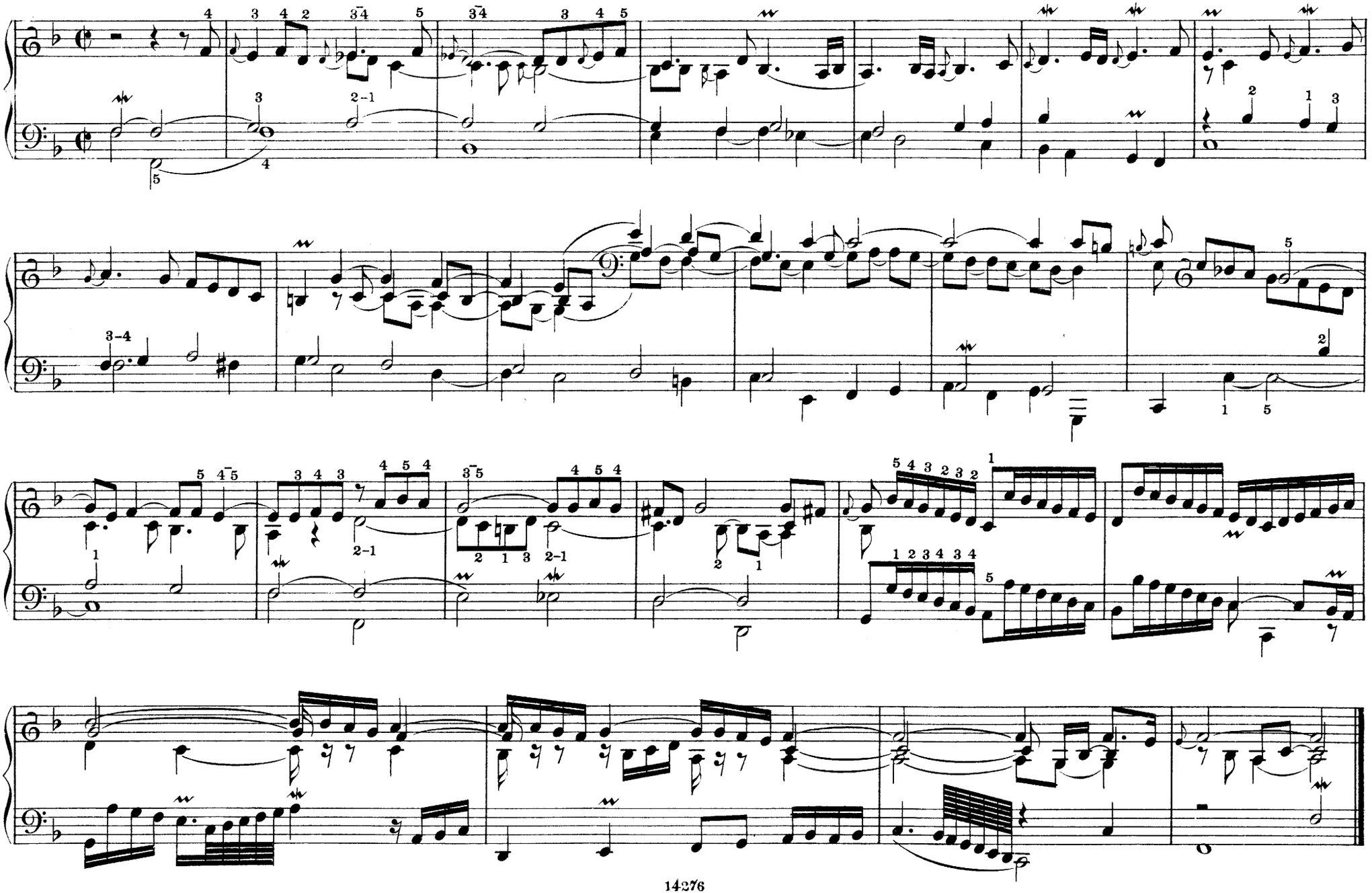
SECOND PRÉLUDE.

François Couperin. 1717.



QUATRIÈME PRÉLUDE.

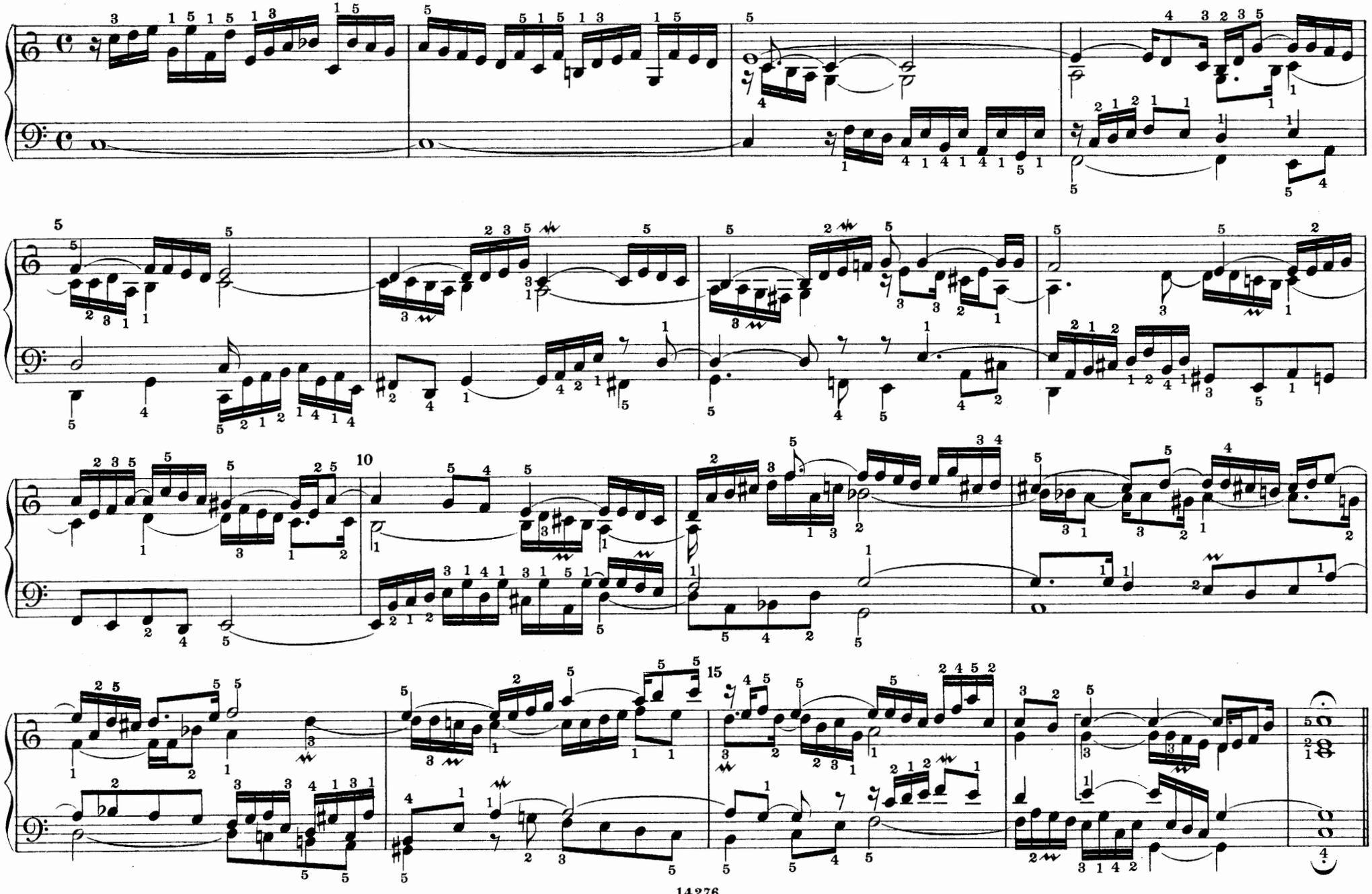
François Couperin. 1717.



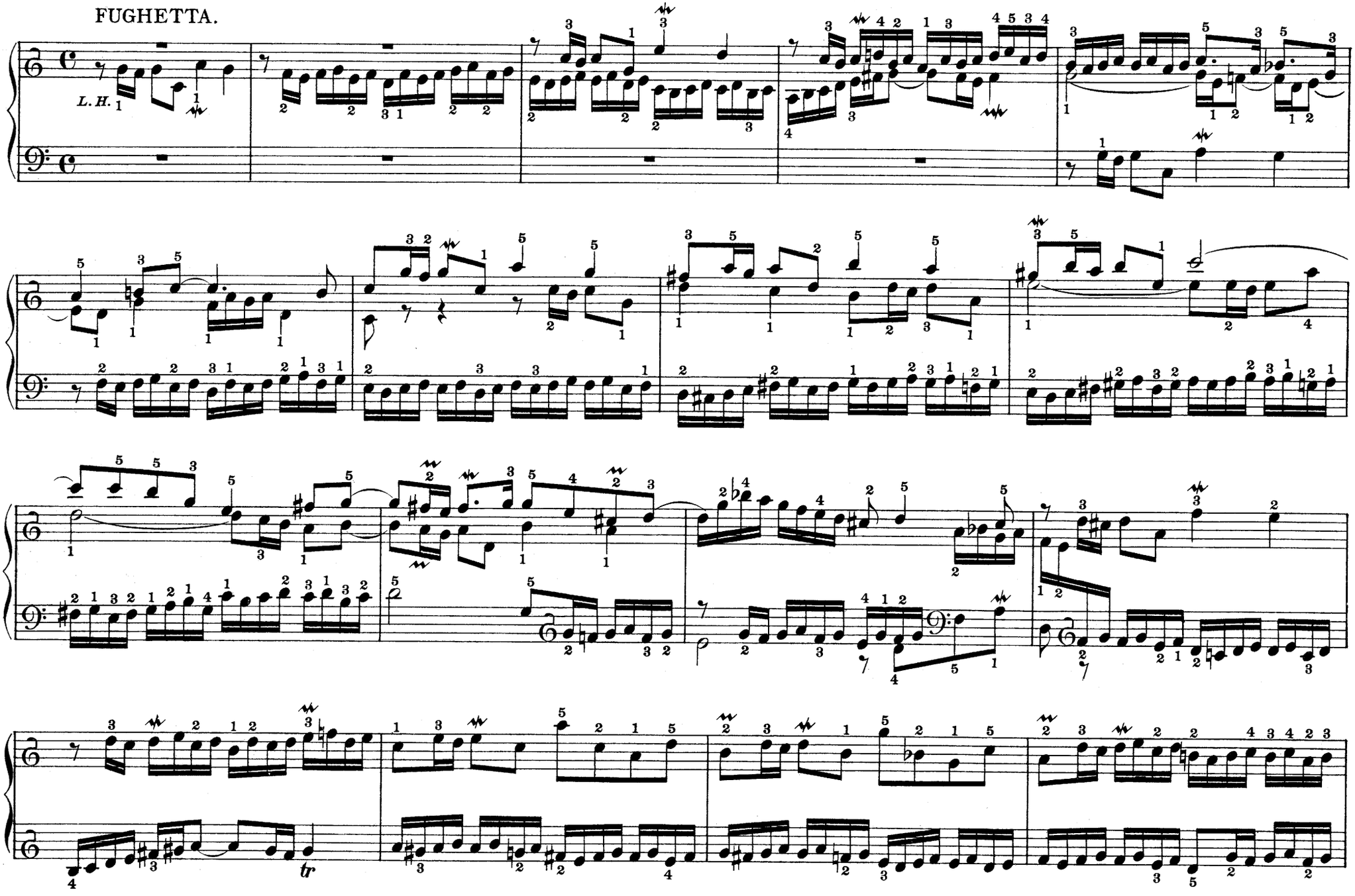
PRAELUDIUM and FUGHETTA.

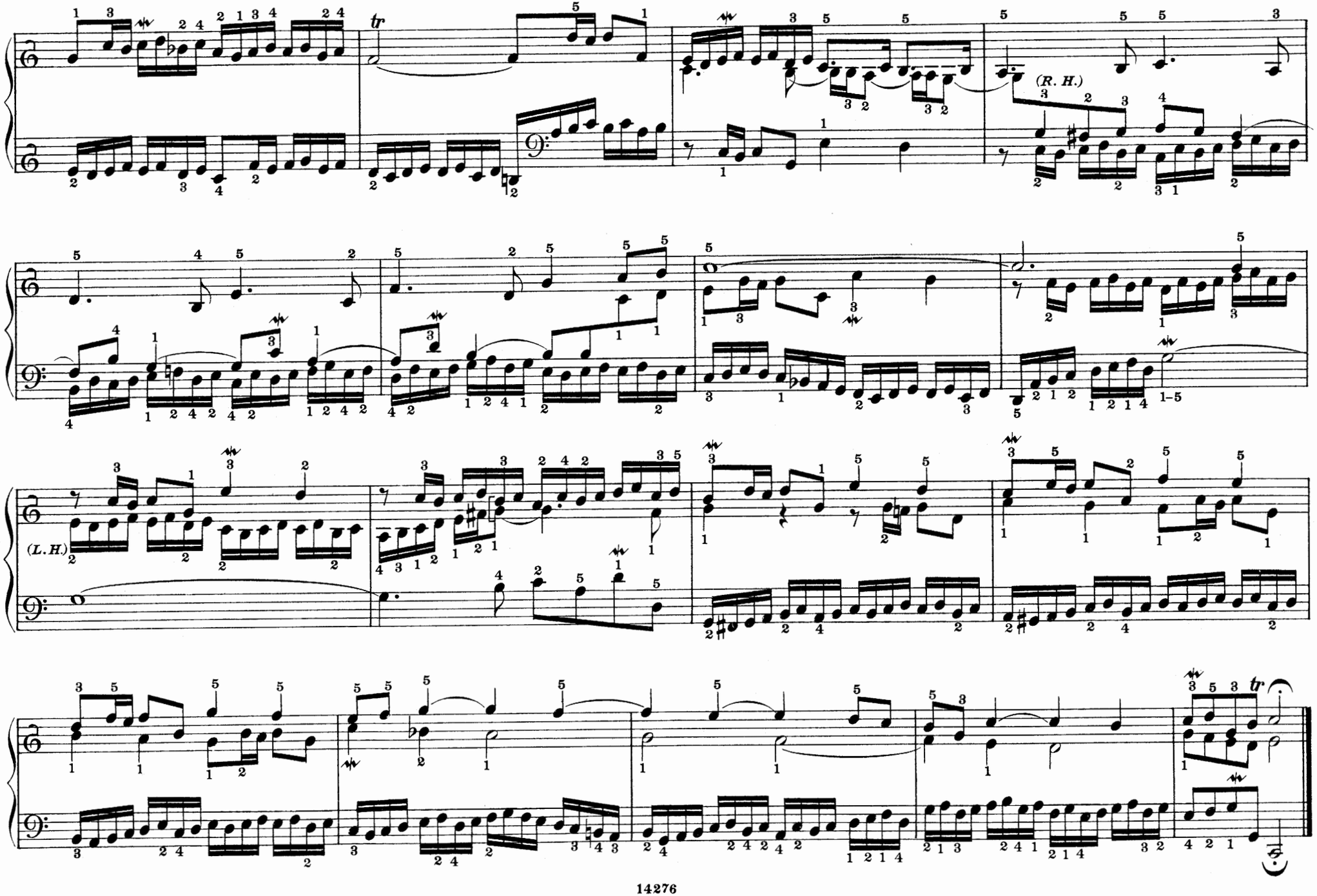
PRAELUDIUM.

J. S. Bach.



FUGHETTA.

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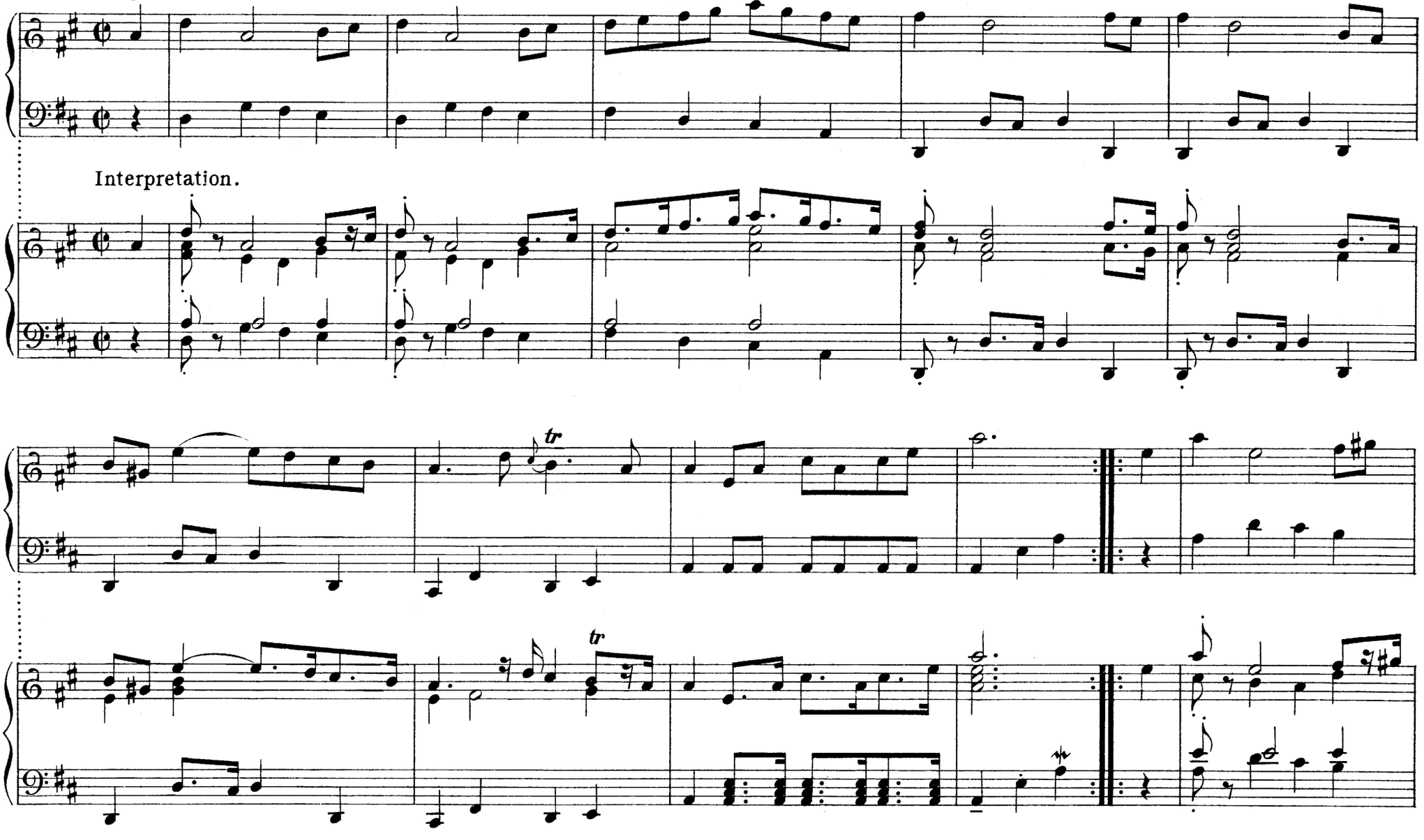
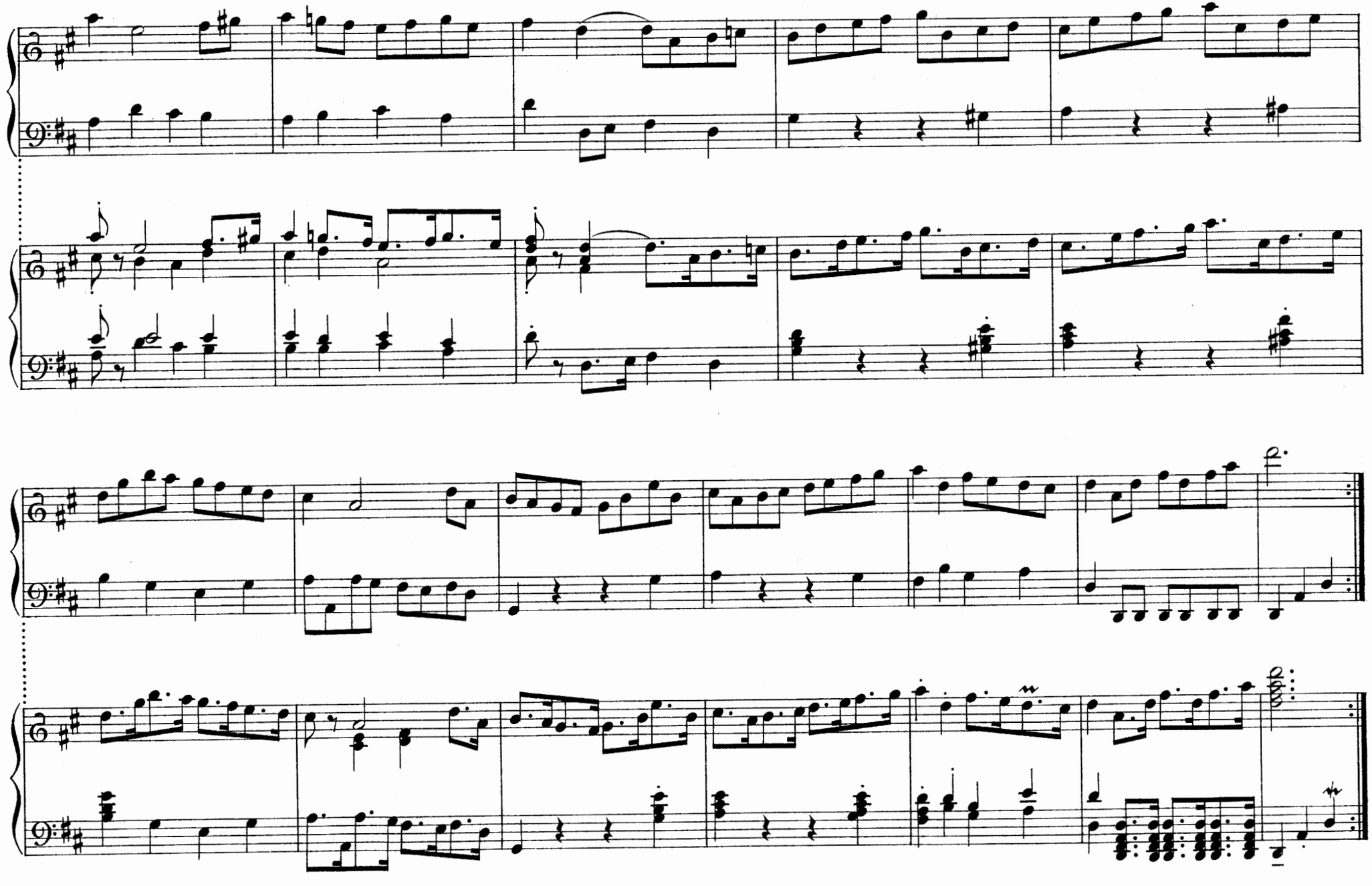
MARCHE.

J. S. Bach. 1725.

Original text.

Interpretation.

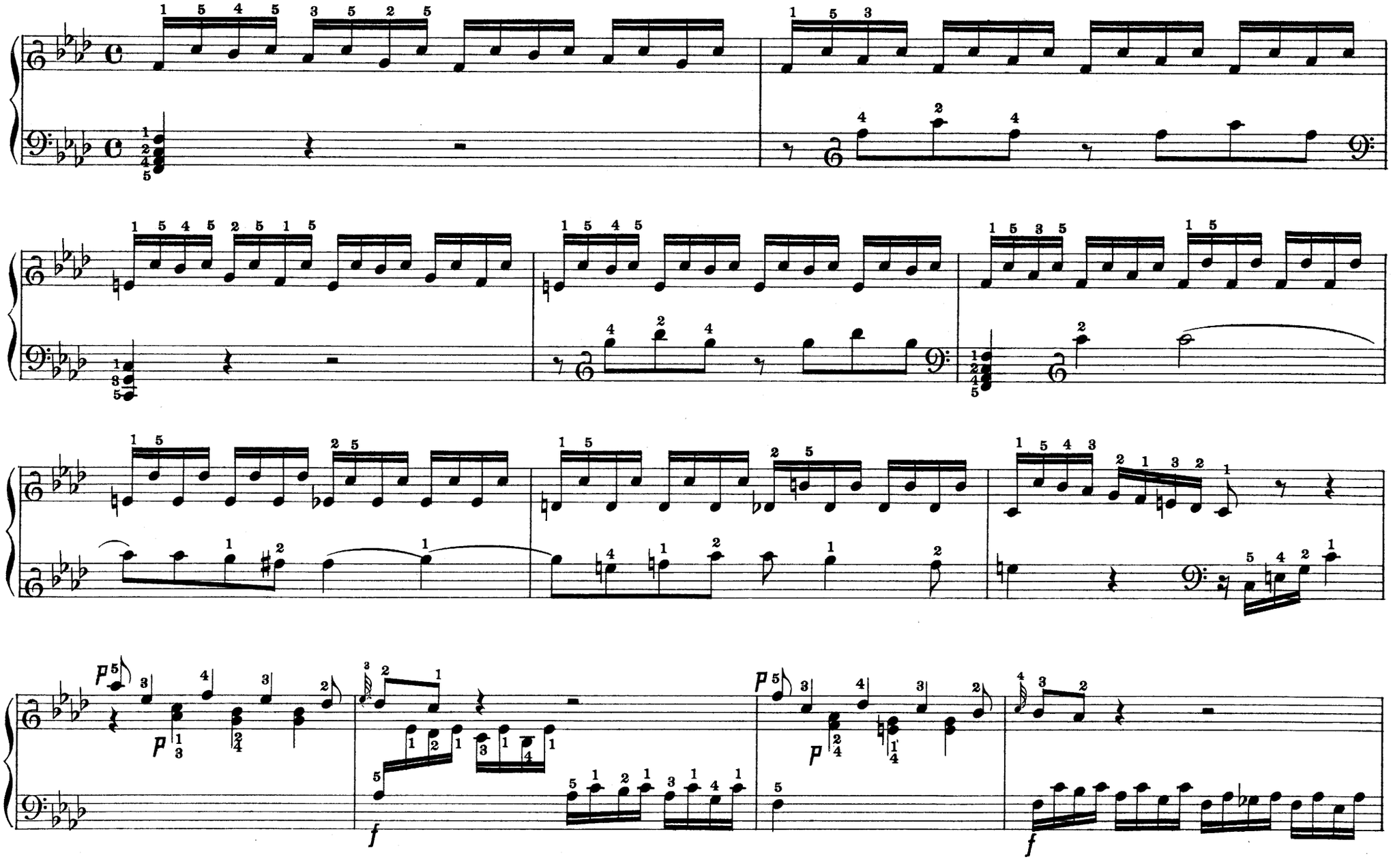


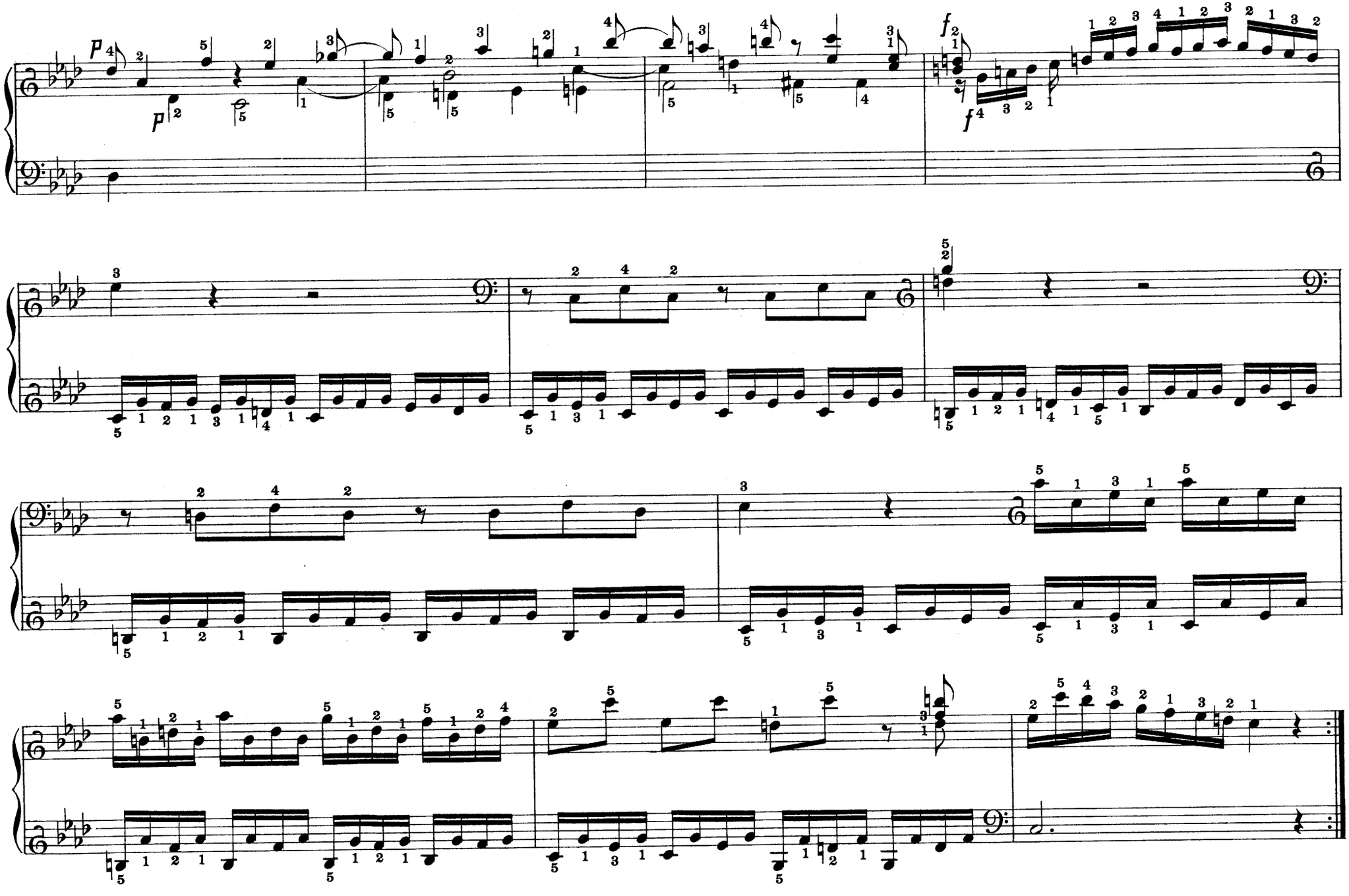


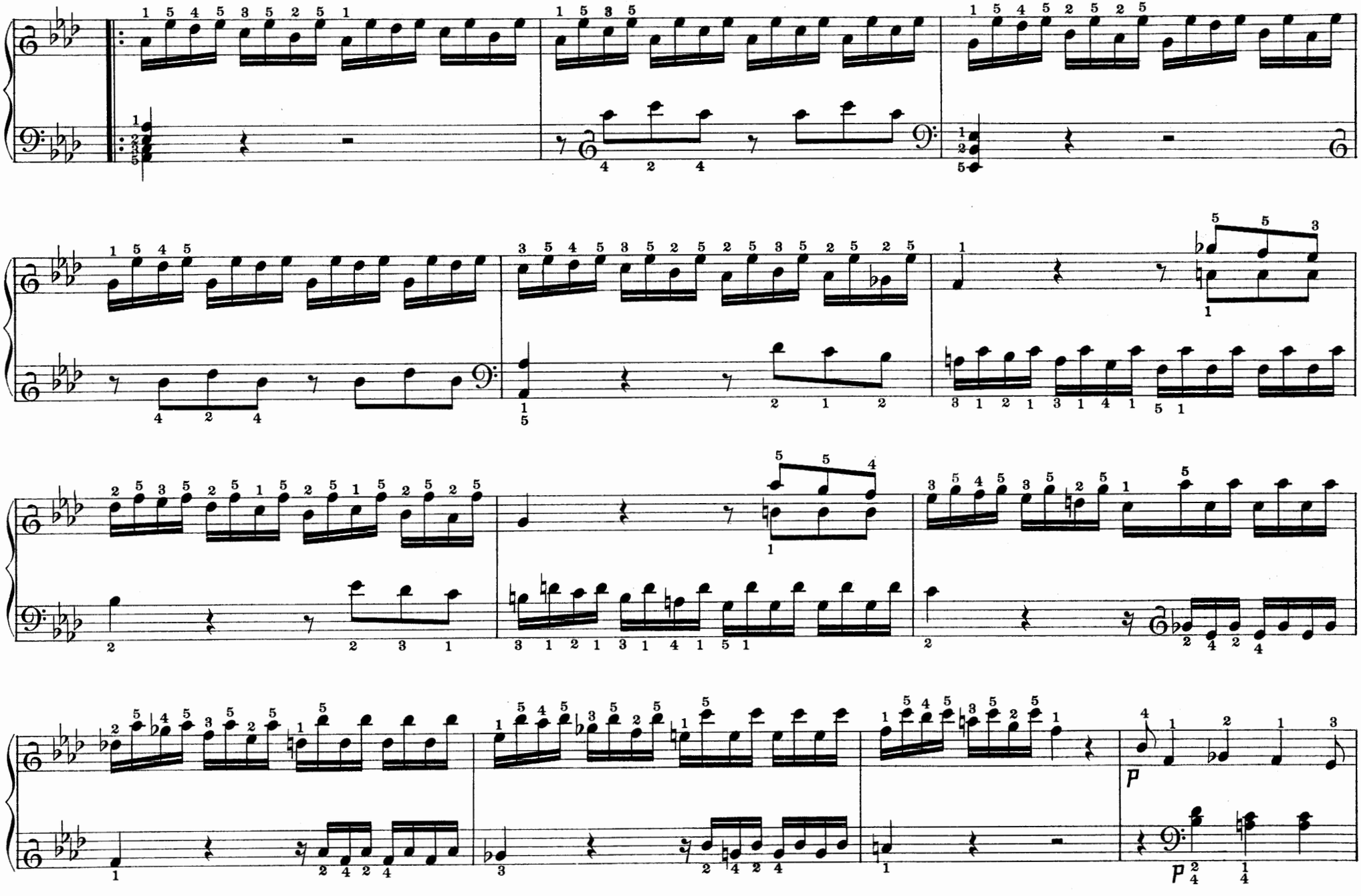
SONATA VI.

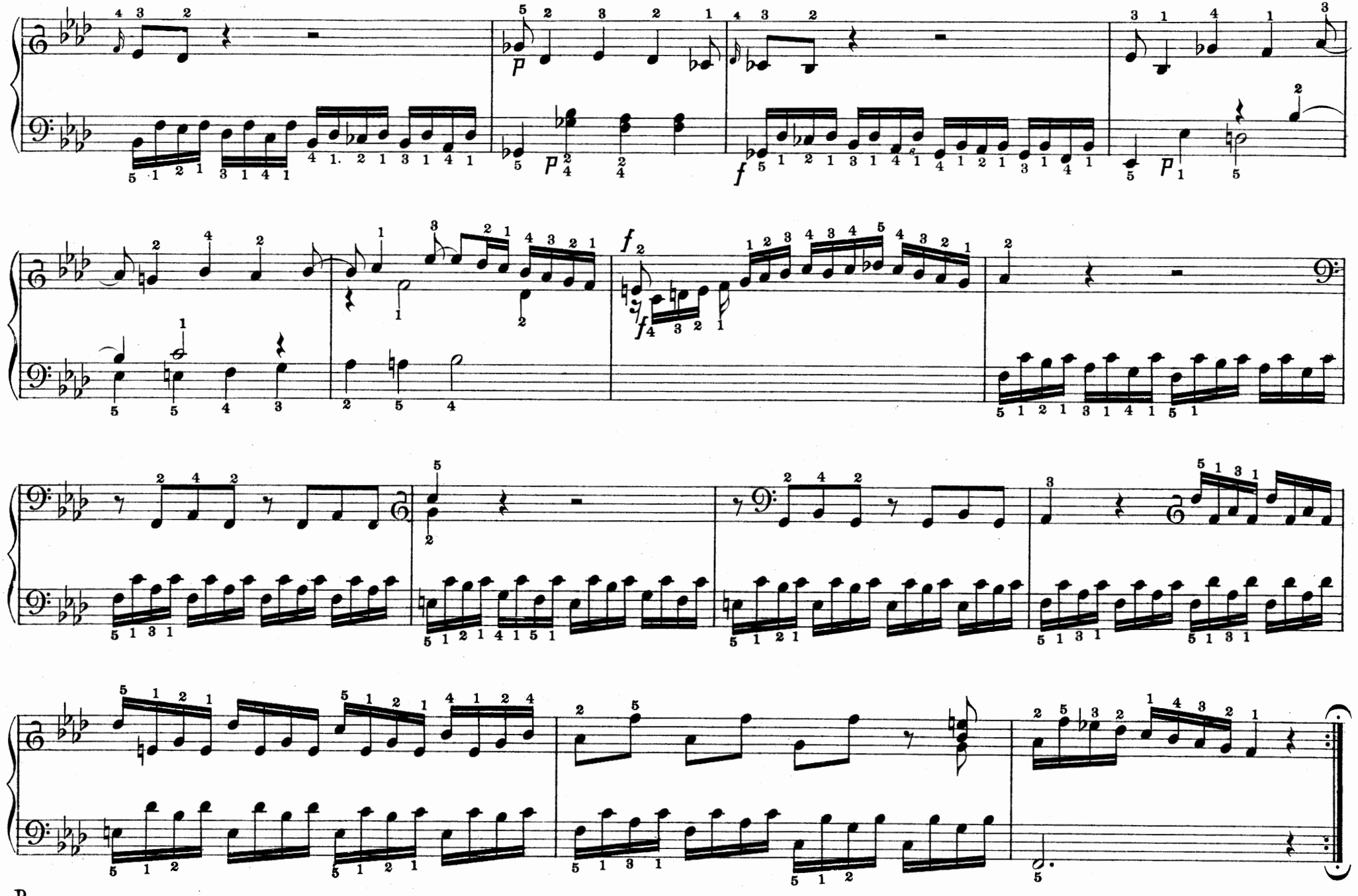
Allegro di molto.

Ch. Ph. E. Bach. 1752.





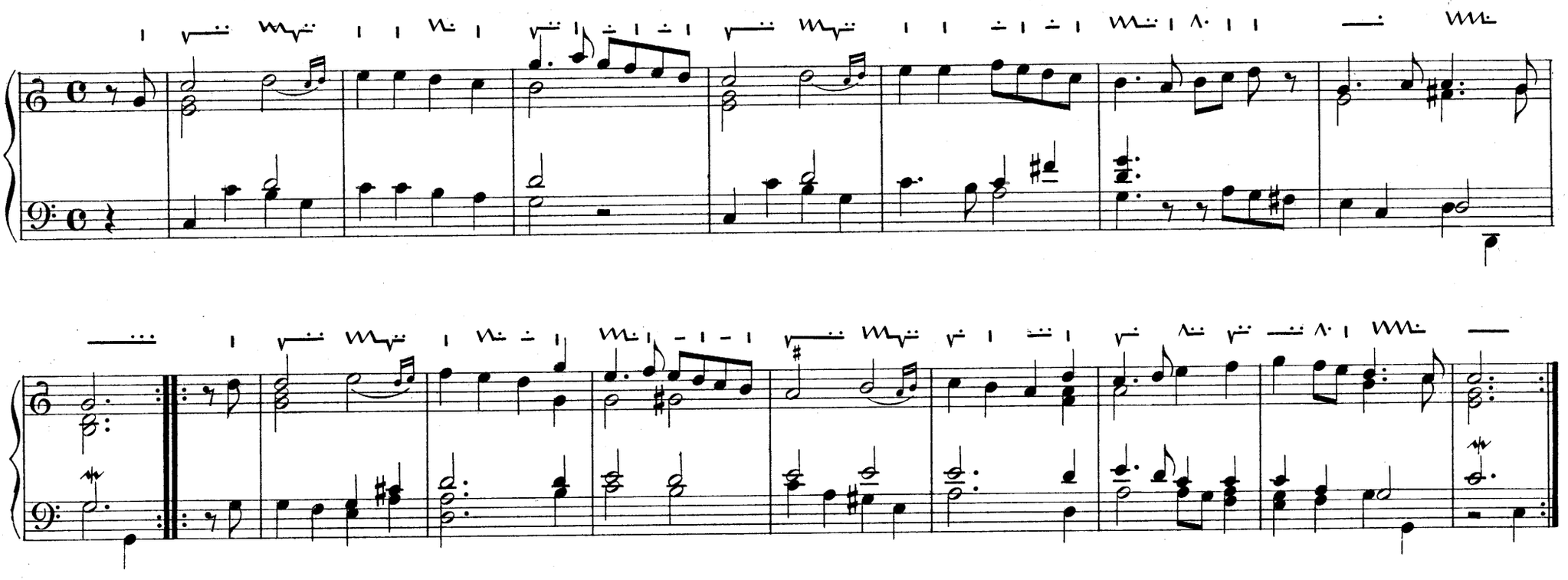




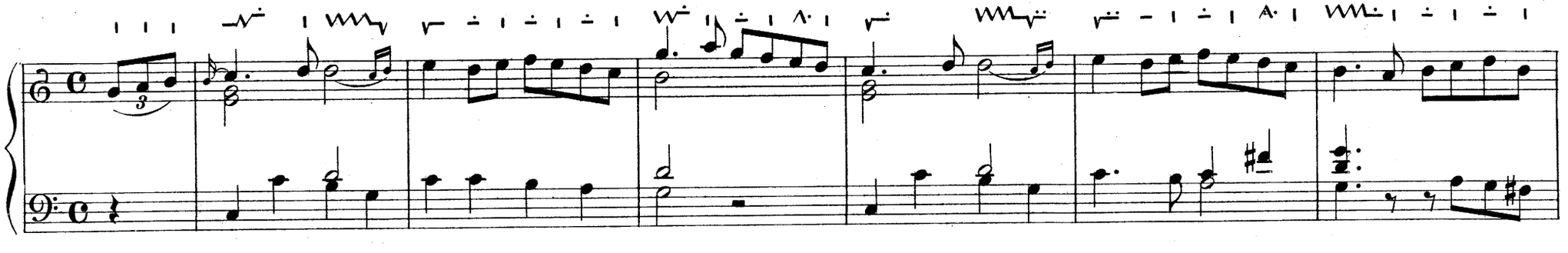
LA MARCHE DU ROY

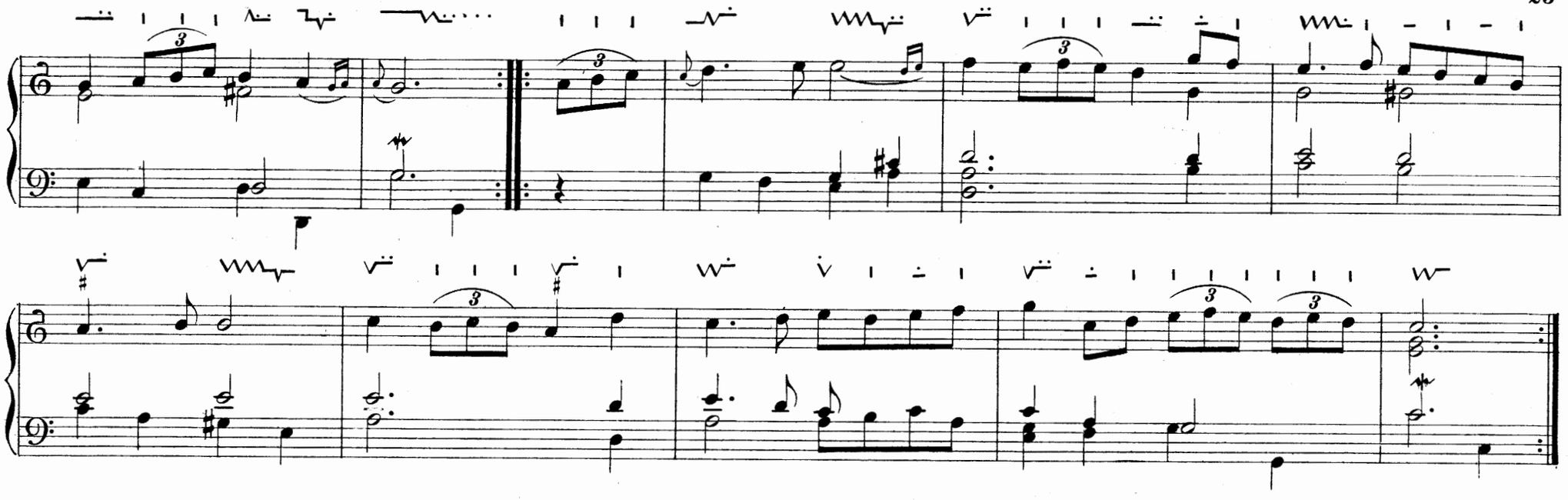
from "LA TONOTECHNIE."

(1775)

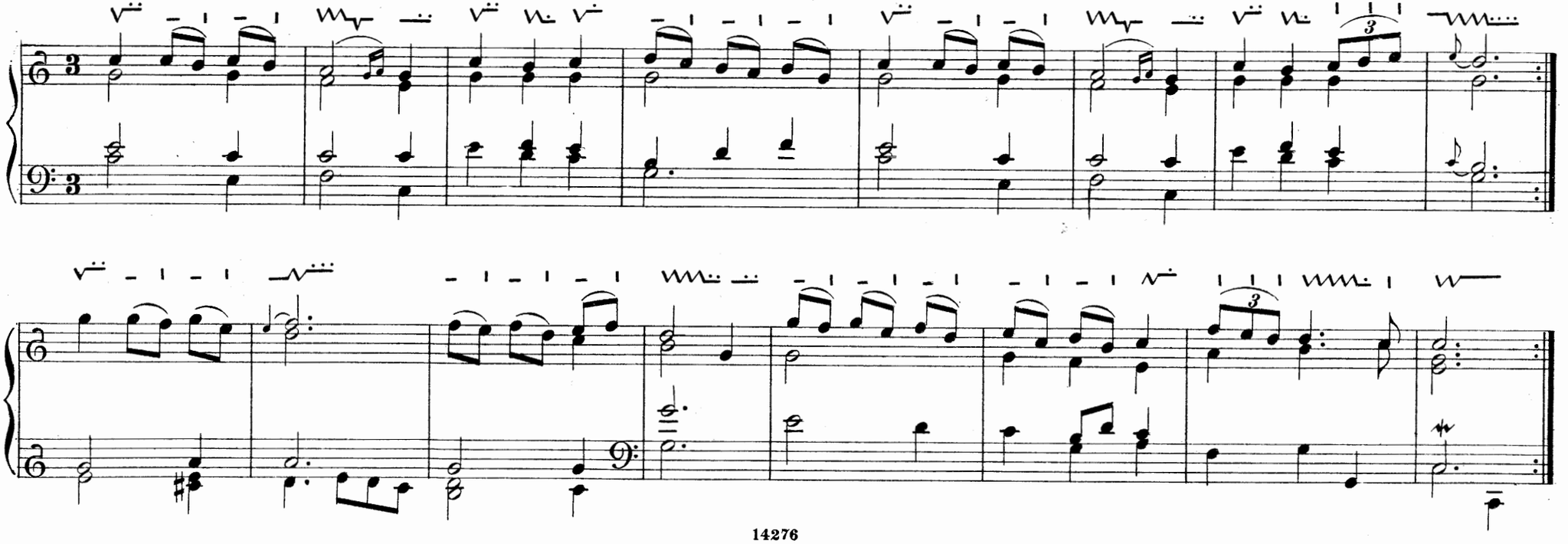


The same "MARCHE" more varied.



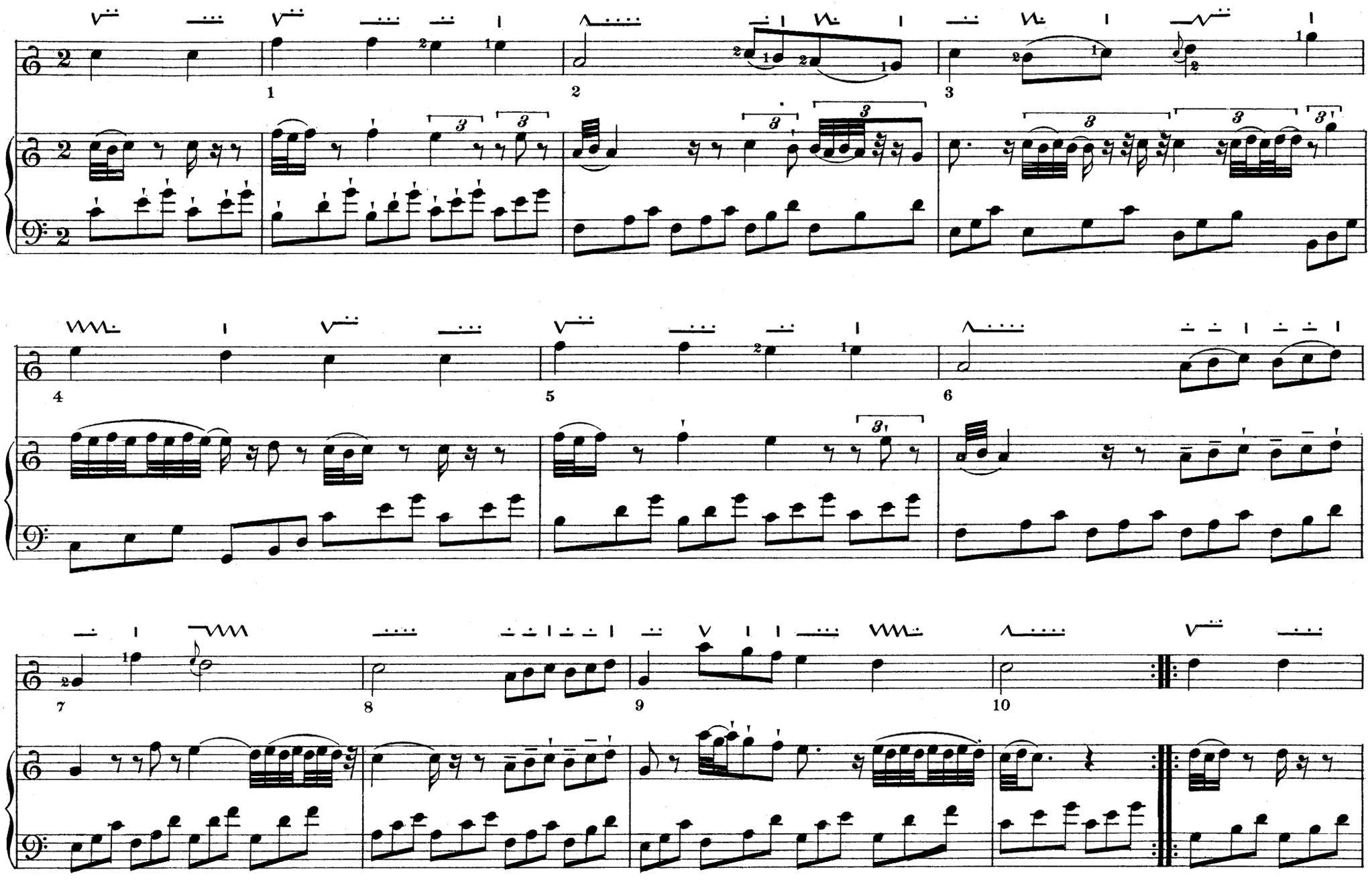


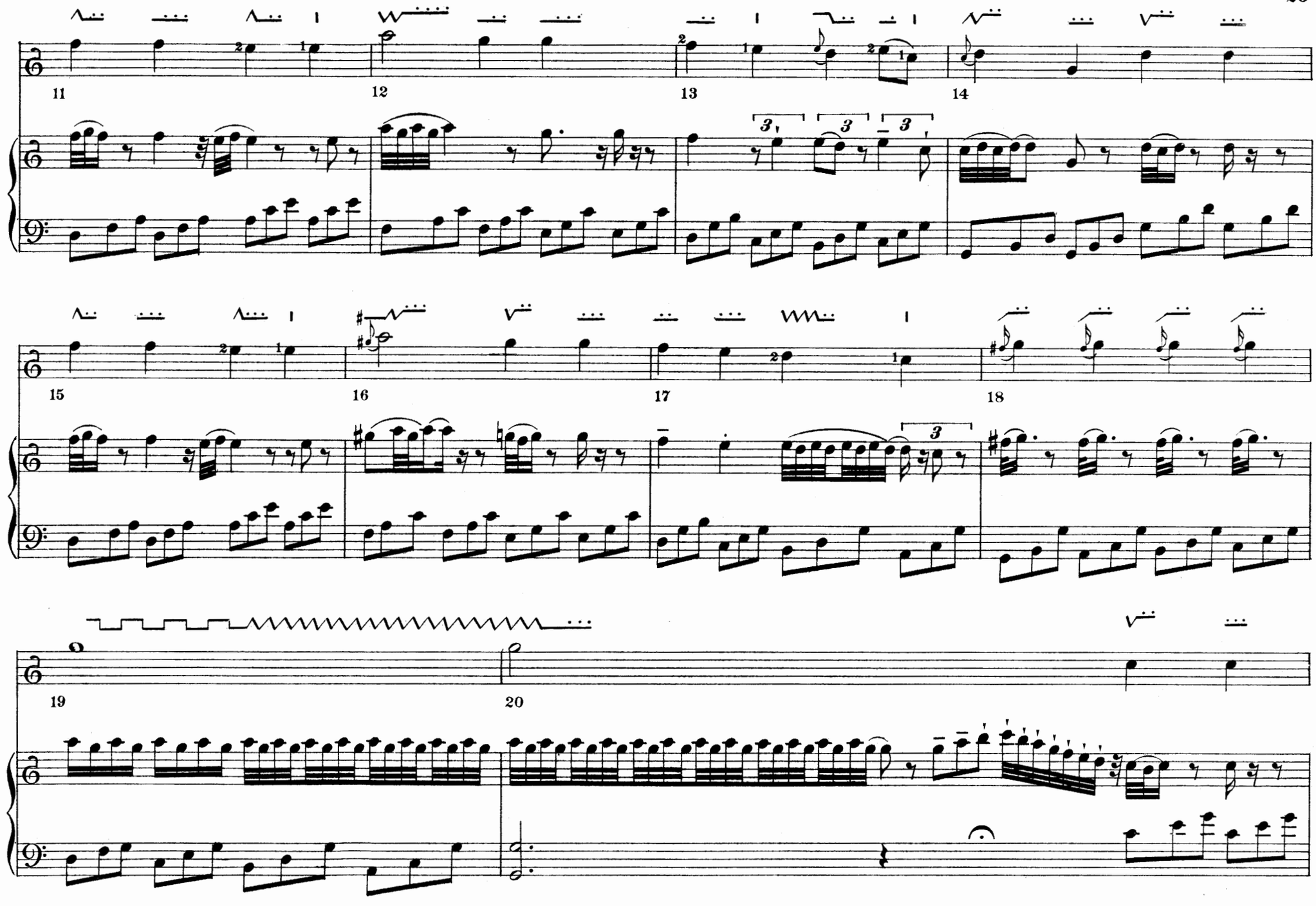
MENUET DE ZÉLINDOR.



ROMANCE.

Claude Balbastre. c. 1760.

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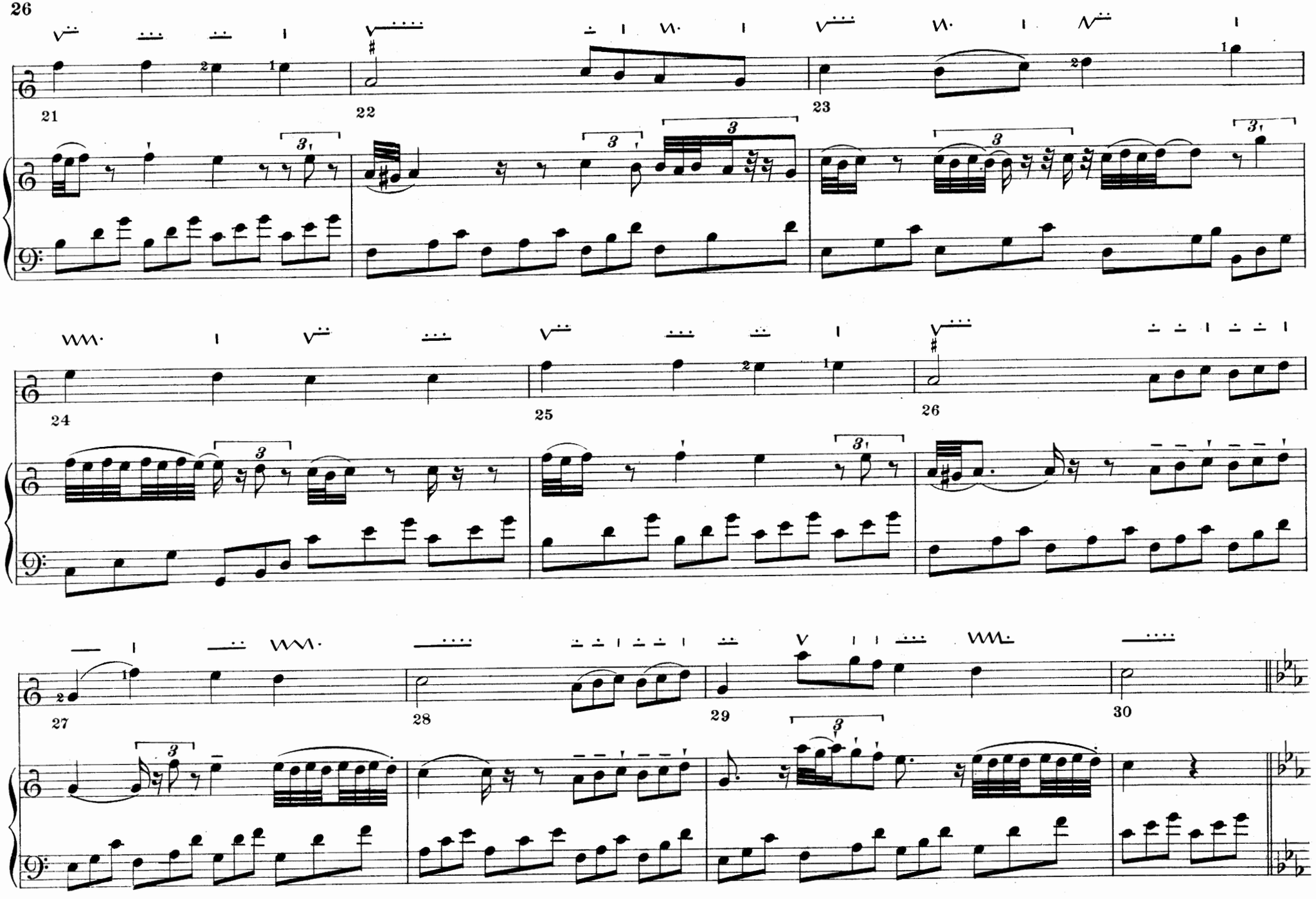
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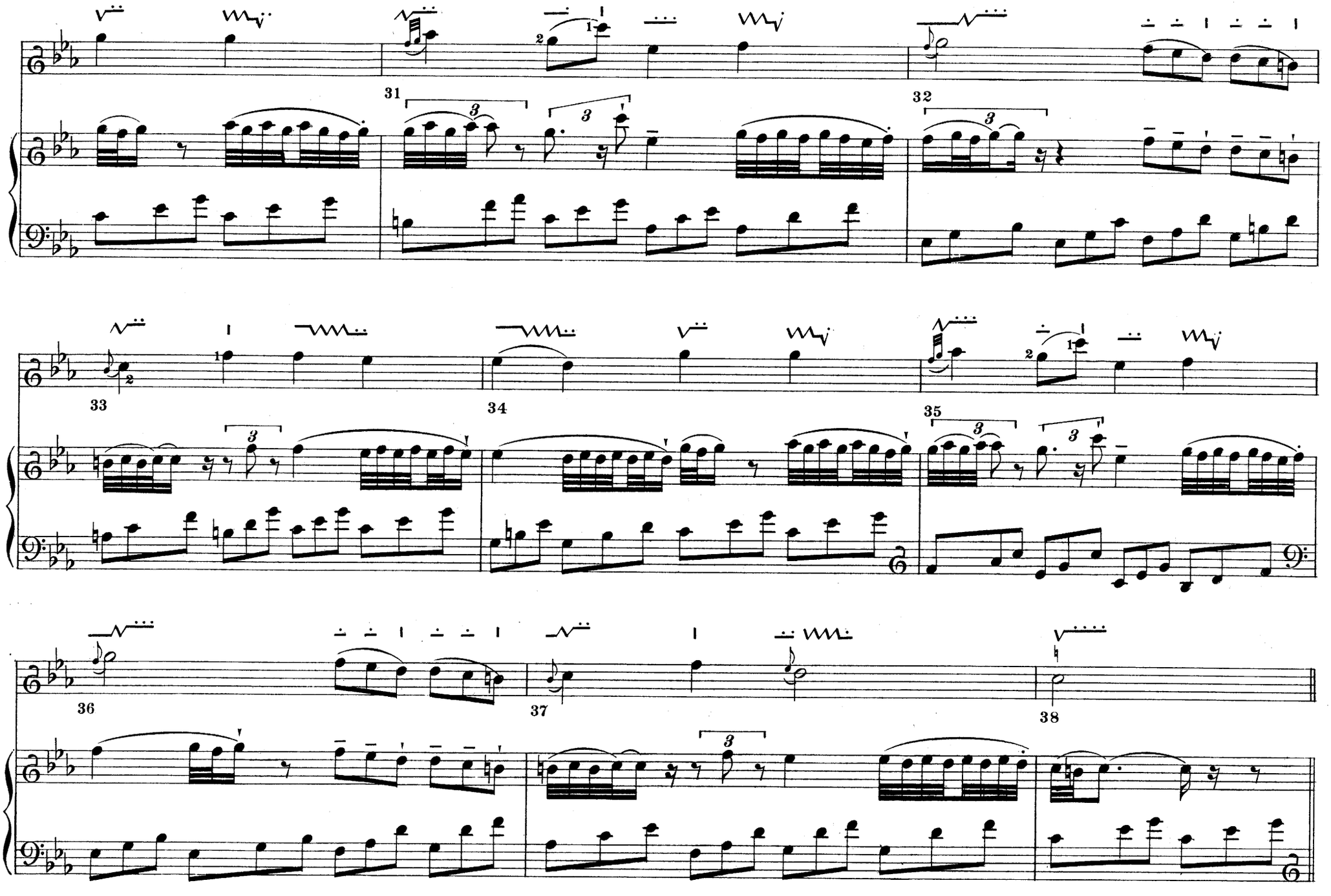
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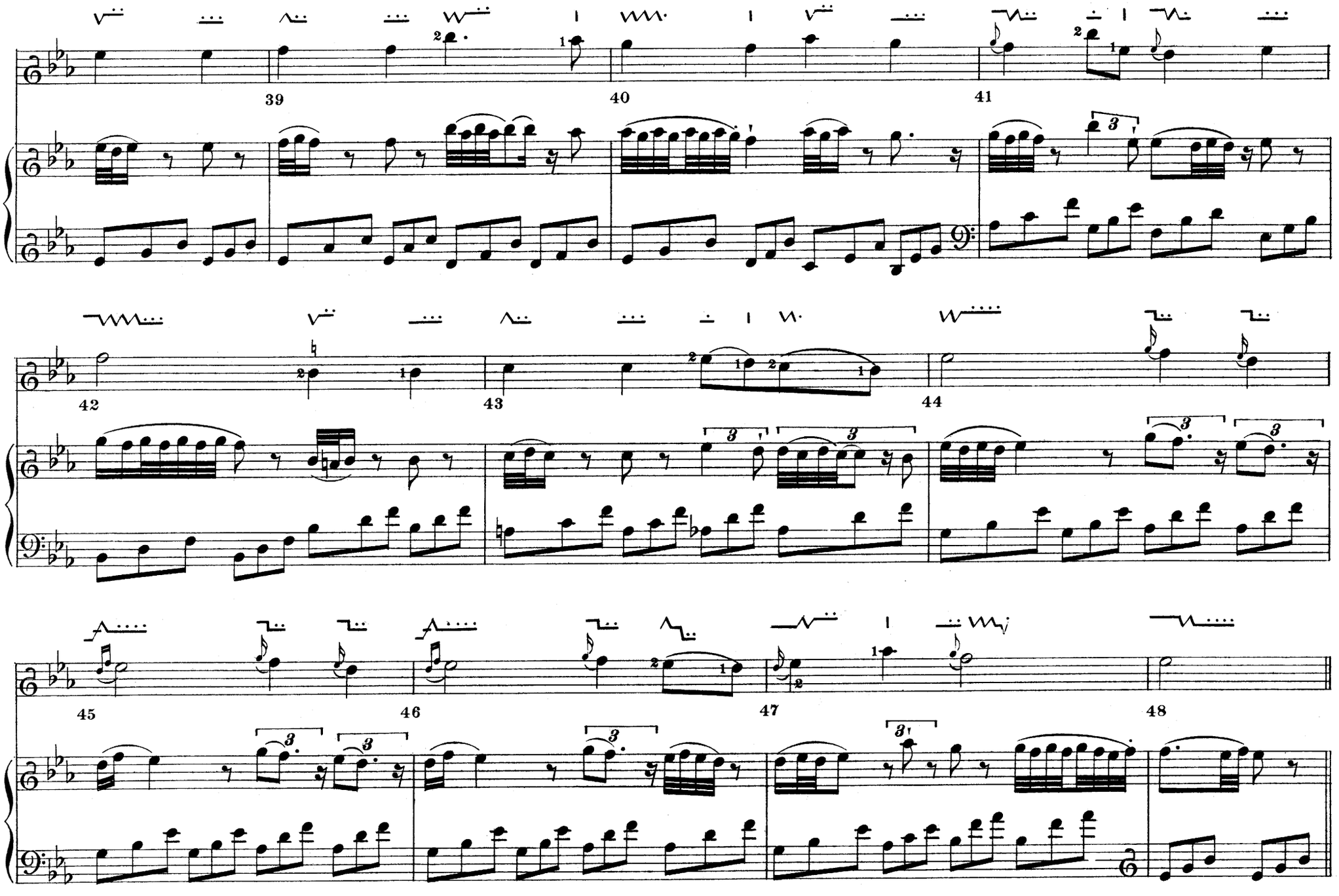
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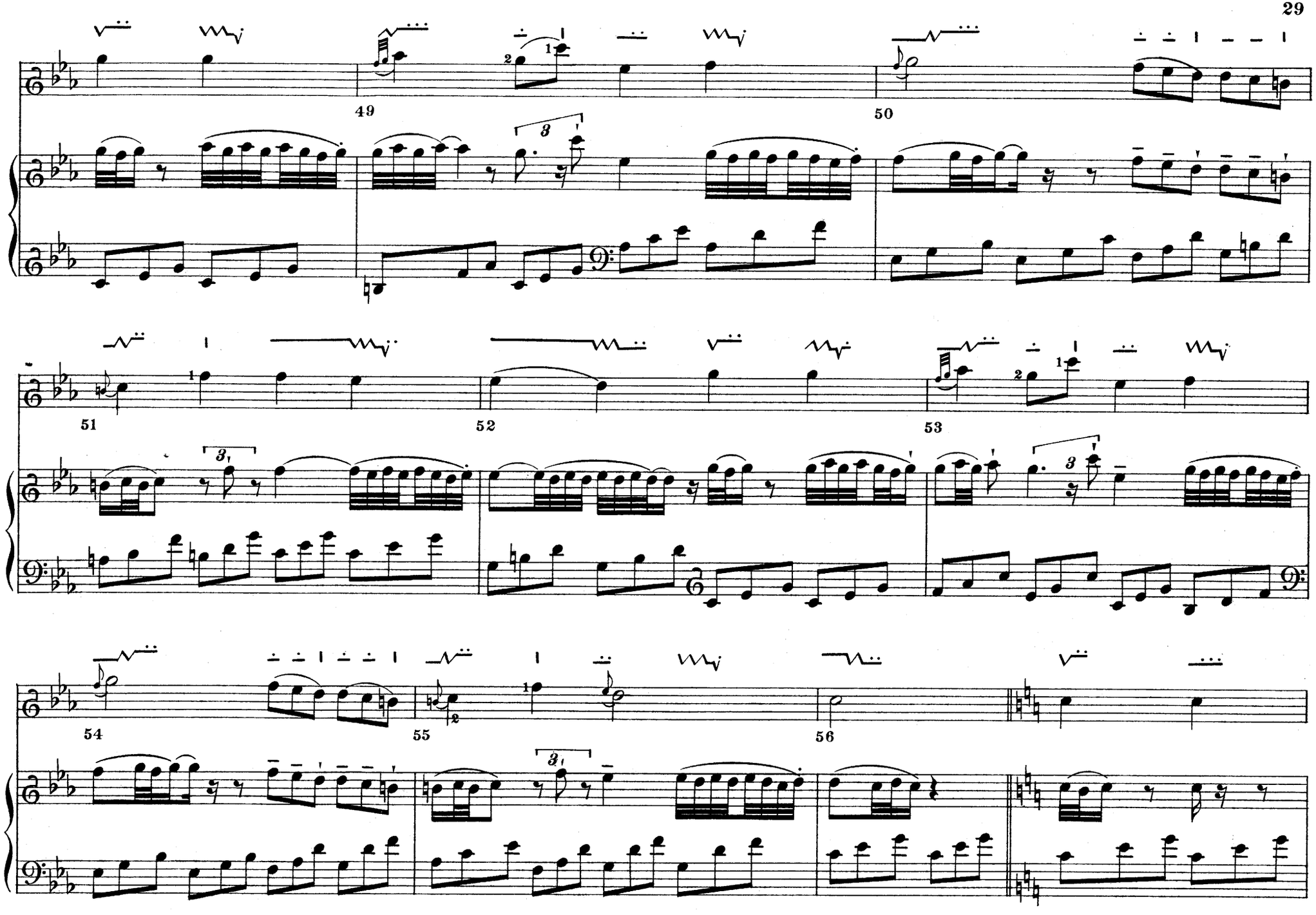
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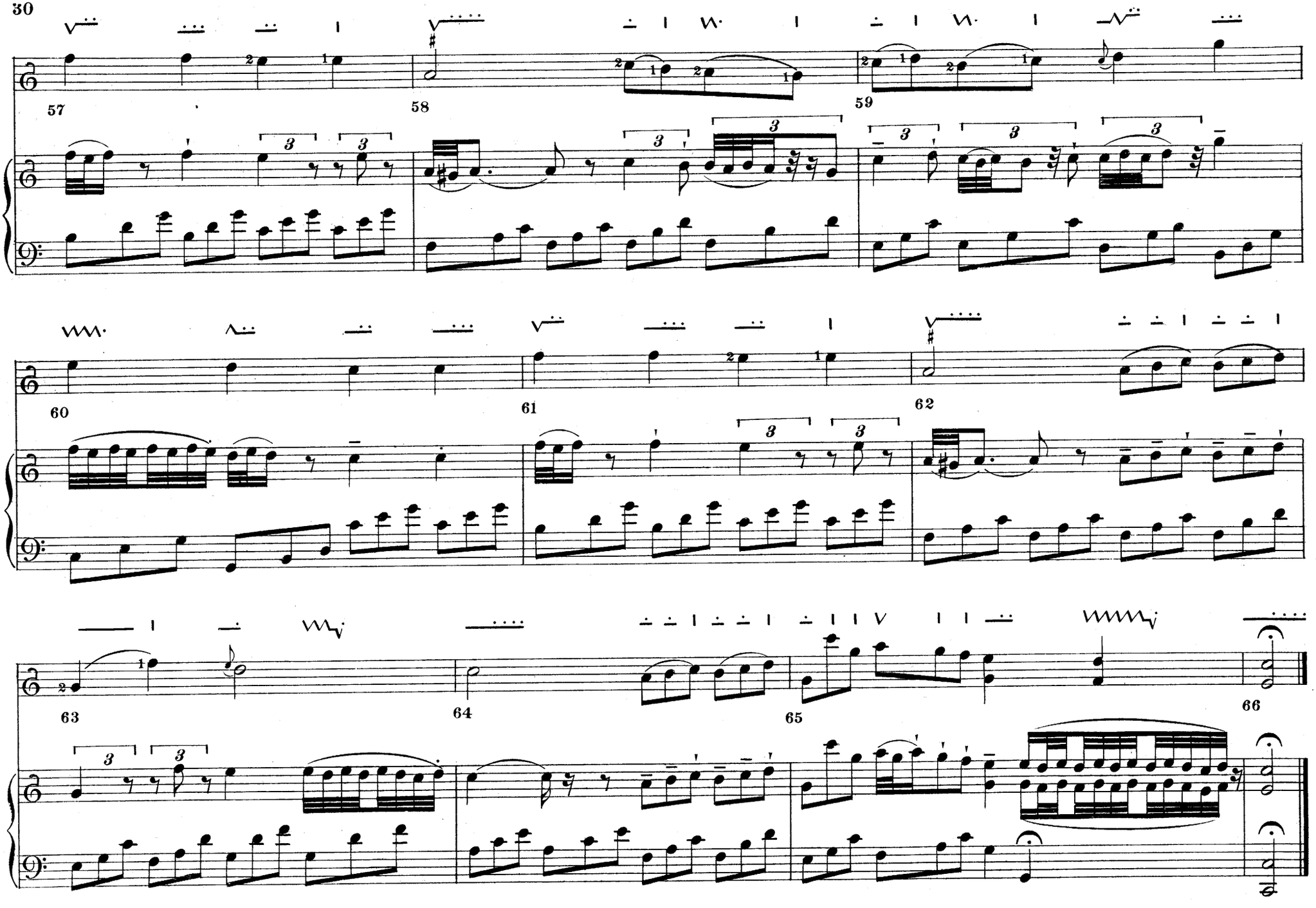
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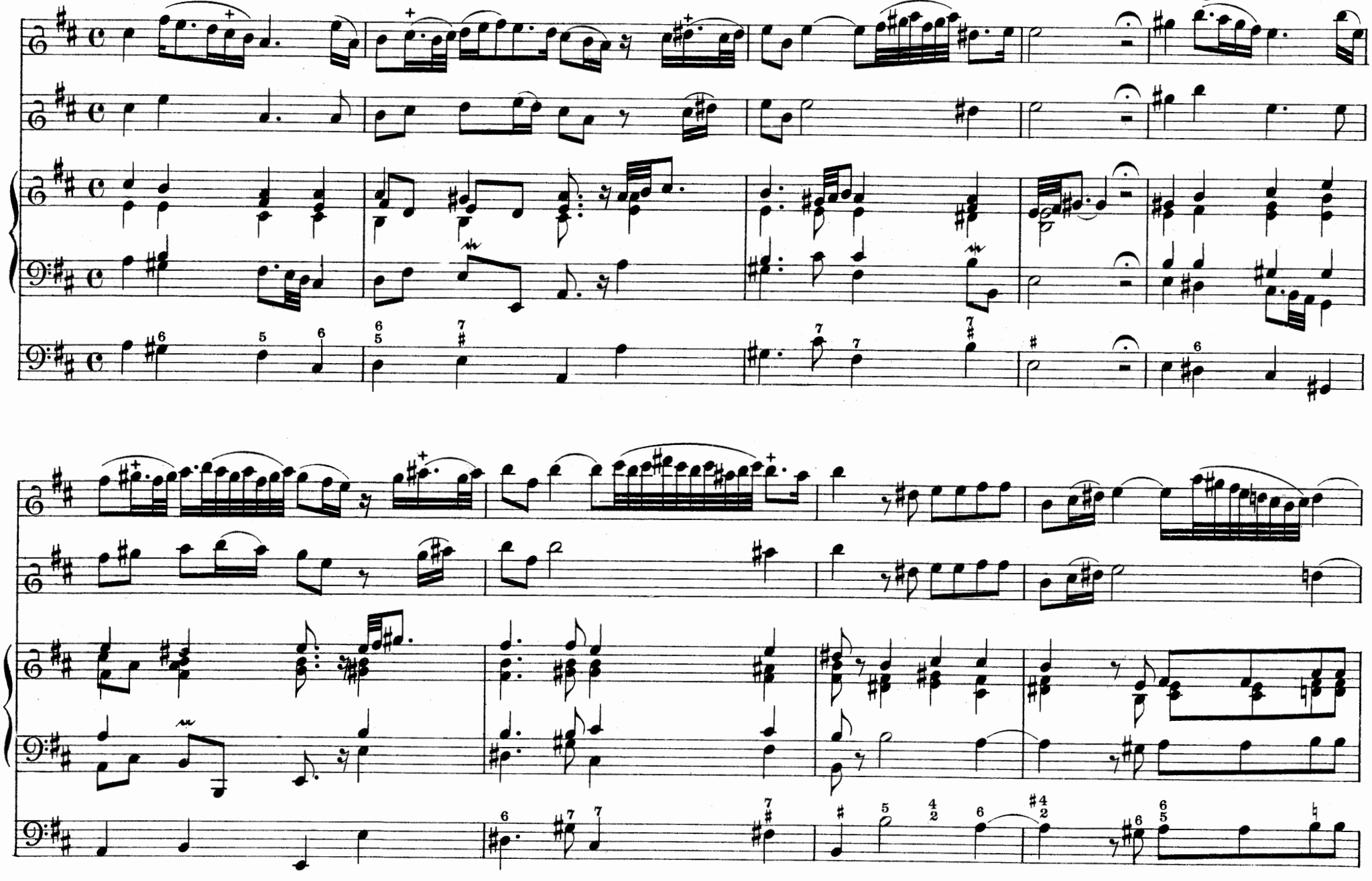
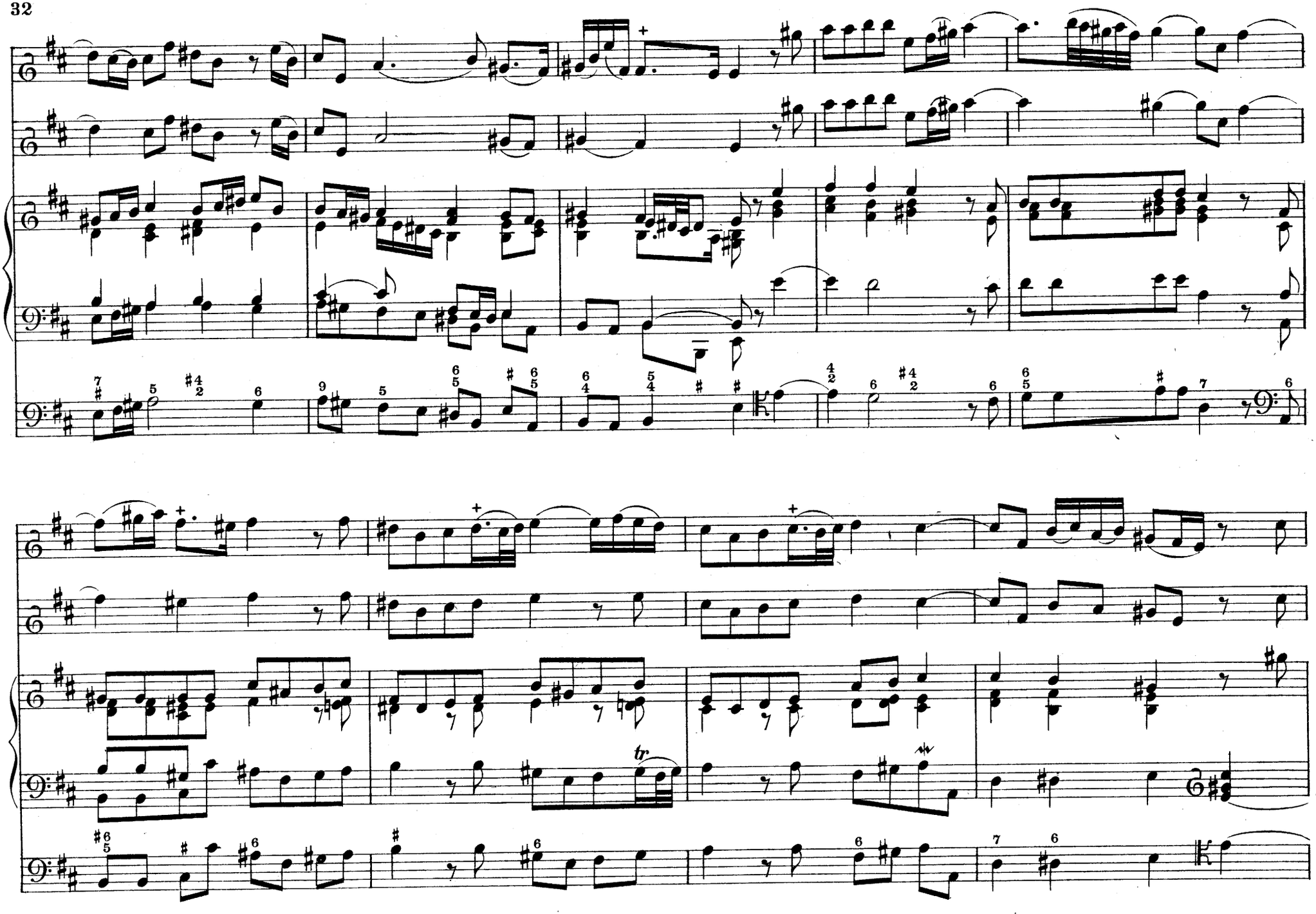
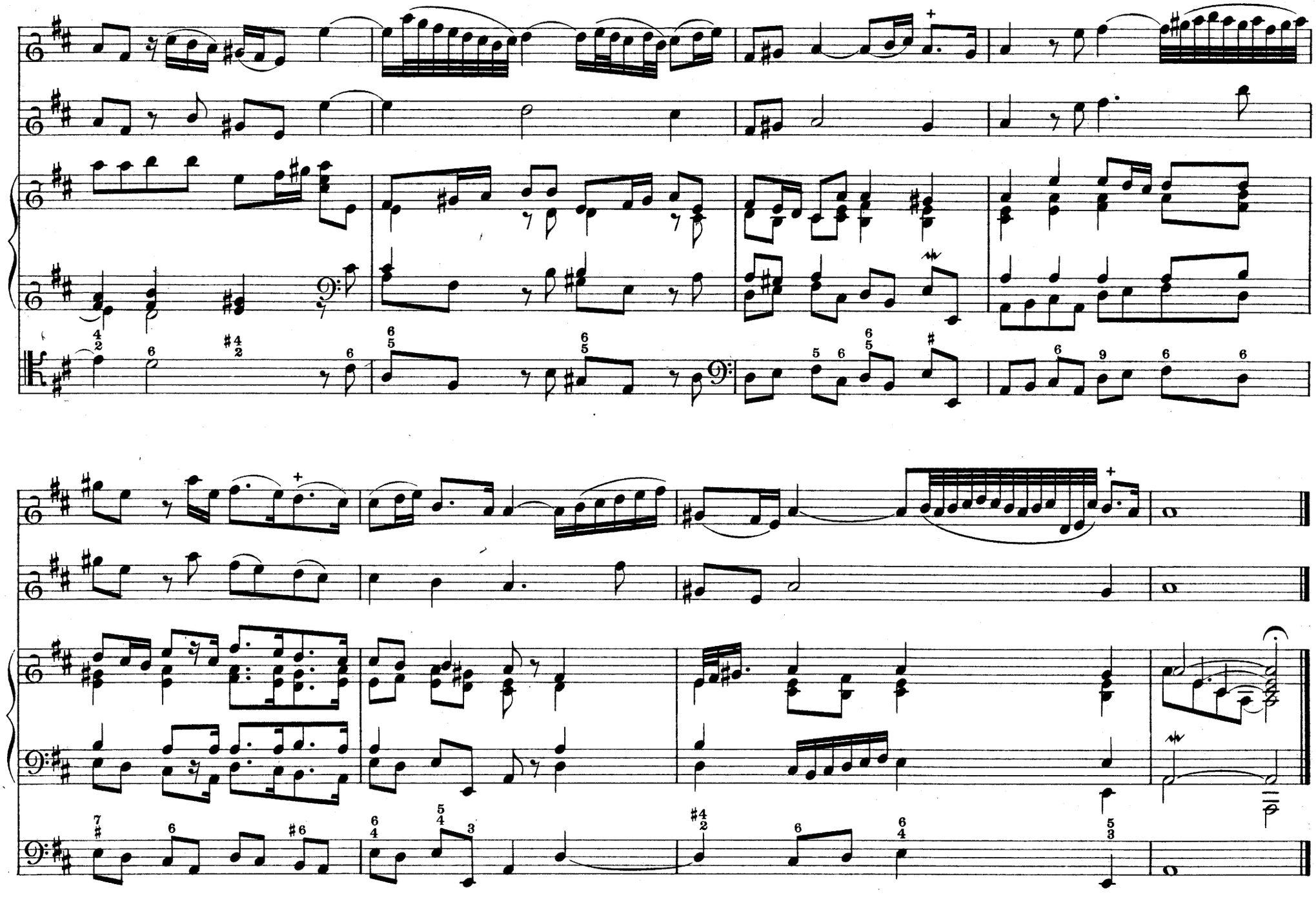
FIRST MOVEMENT from SONATA Nº VI, Op.5.

Grave.

Arcangelo Corelli. 1700.



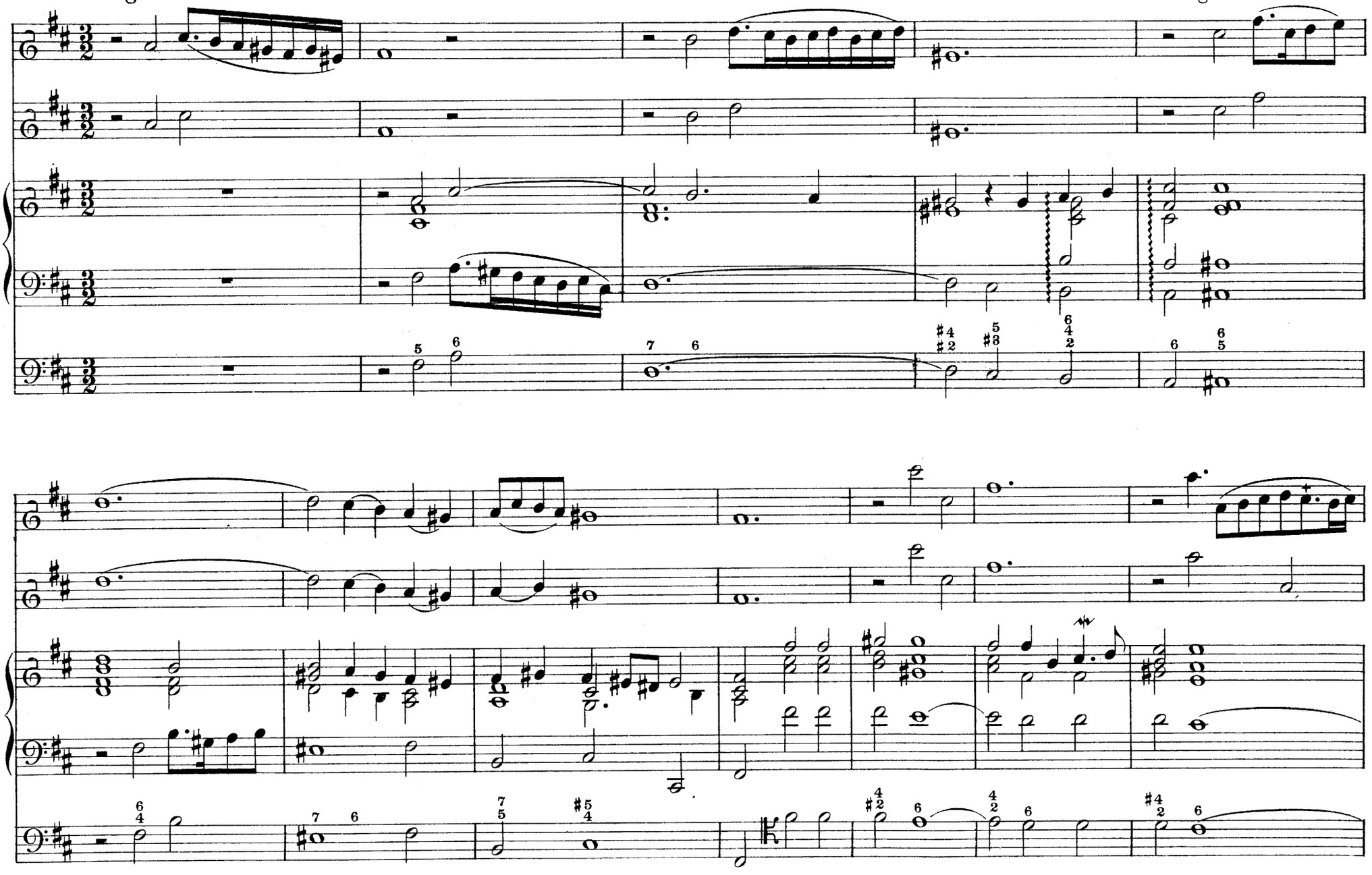


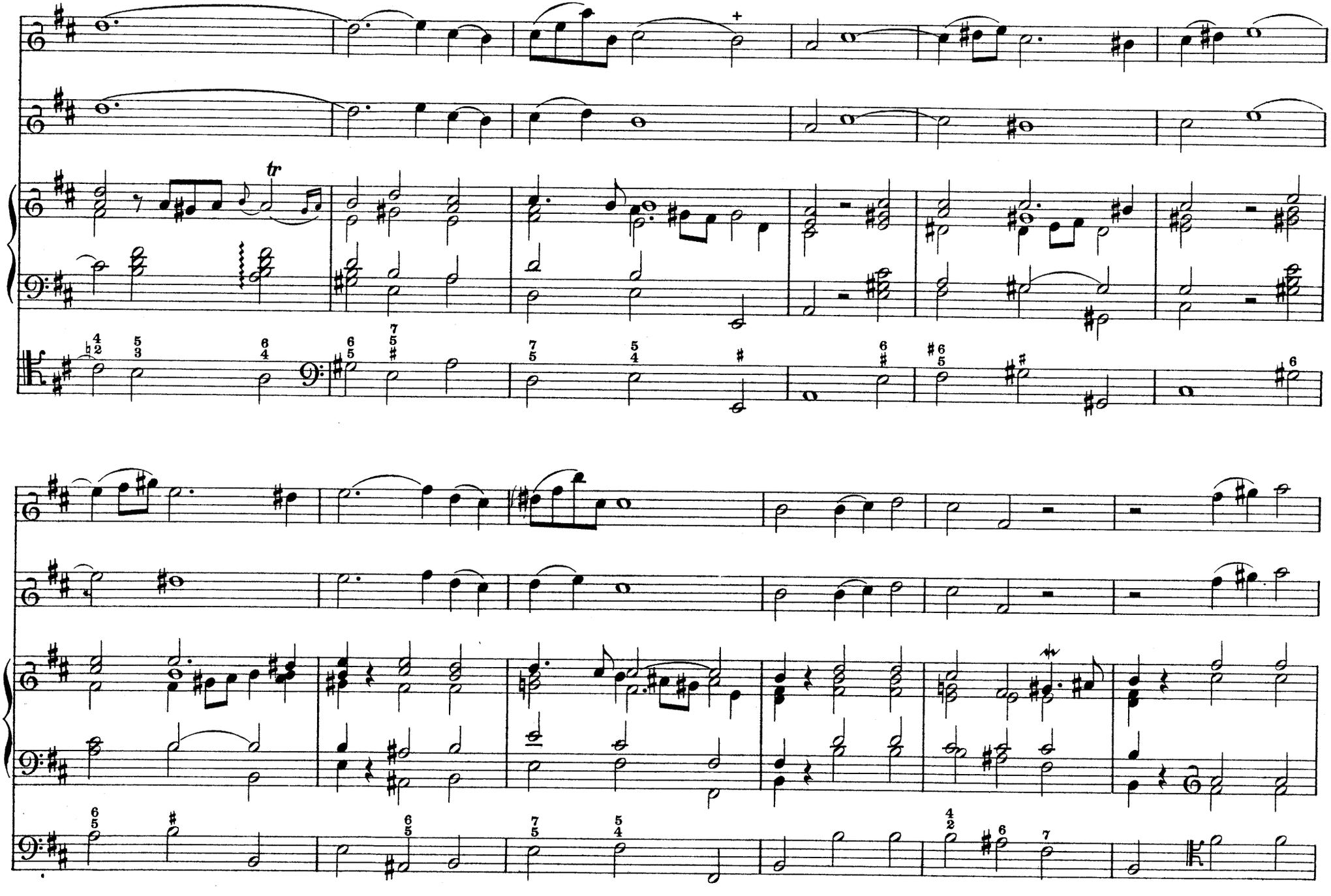


FOURTH MOVEMENT from SONATA Nº VI.

Adagio.

Arcangelo Corelli. 1700.

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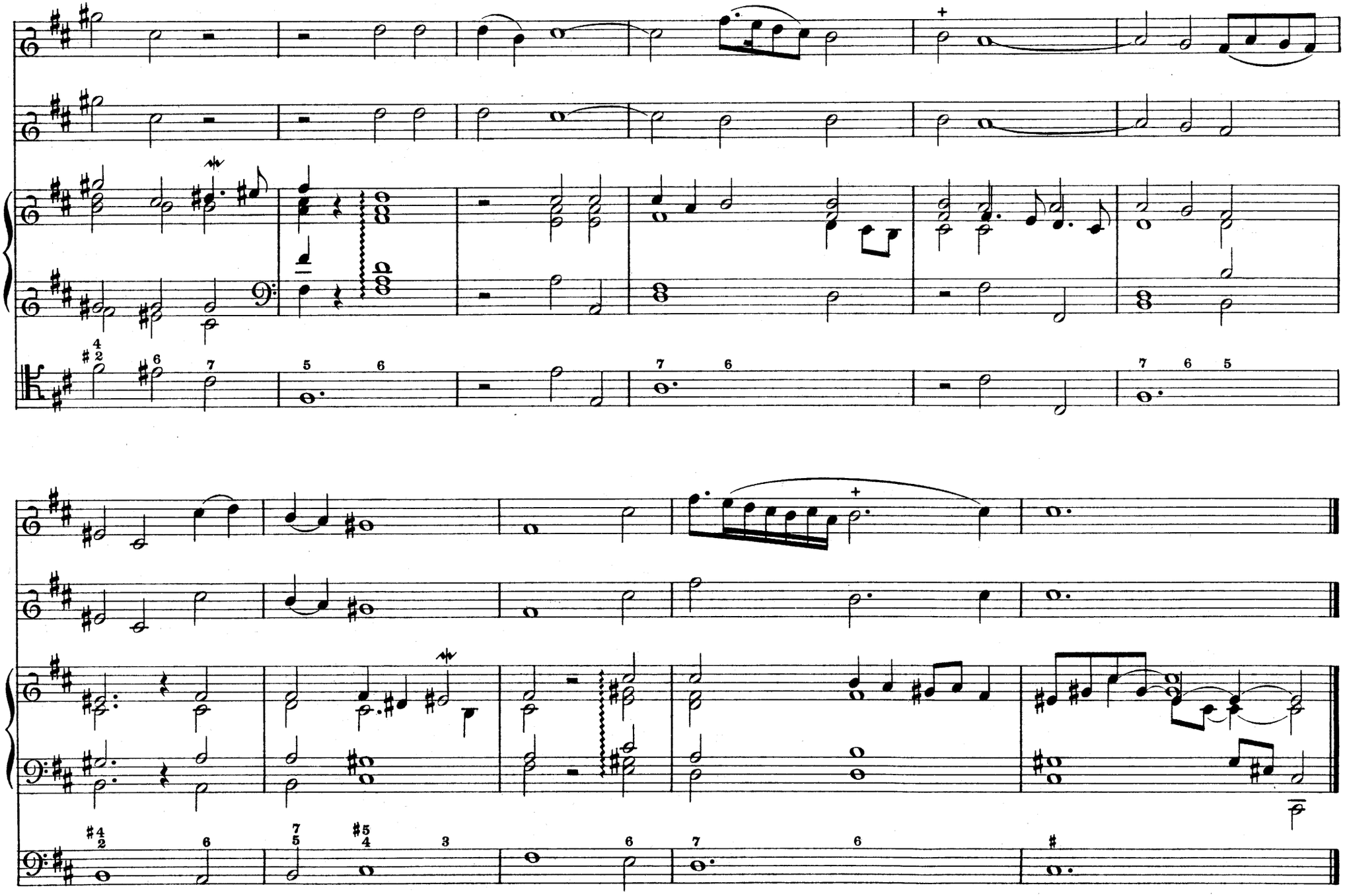
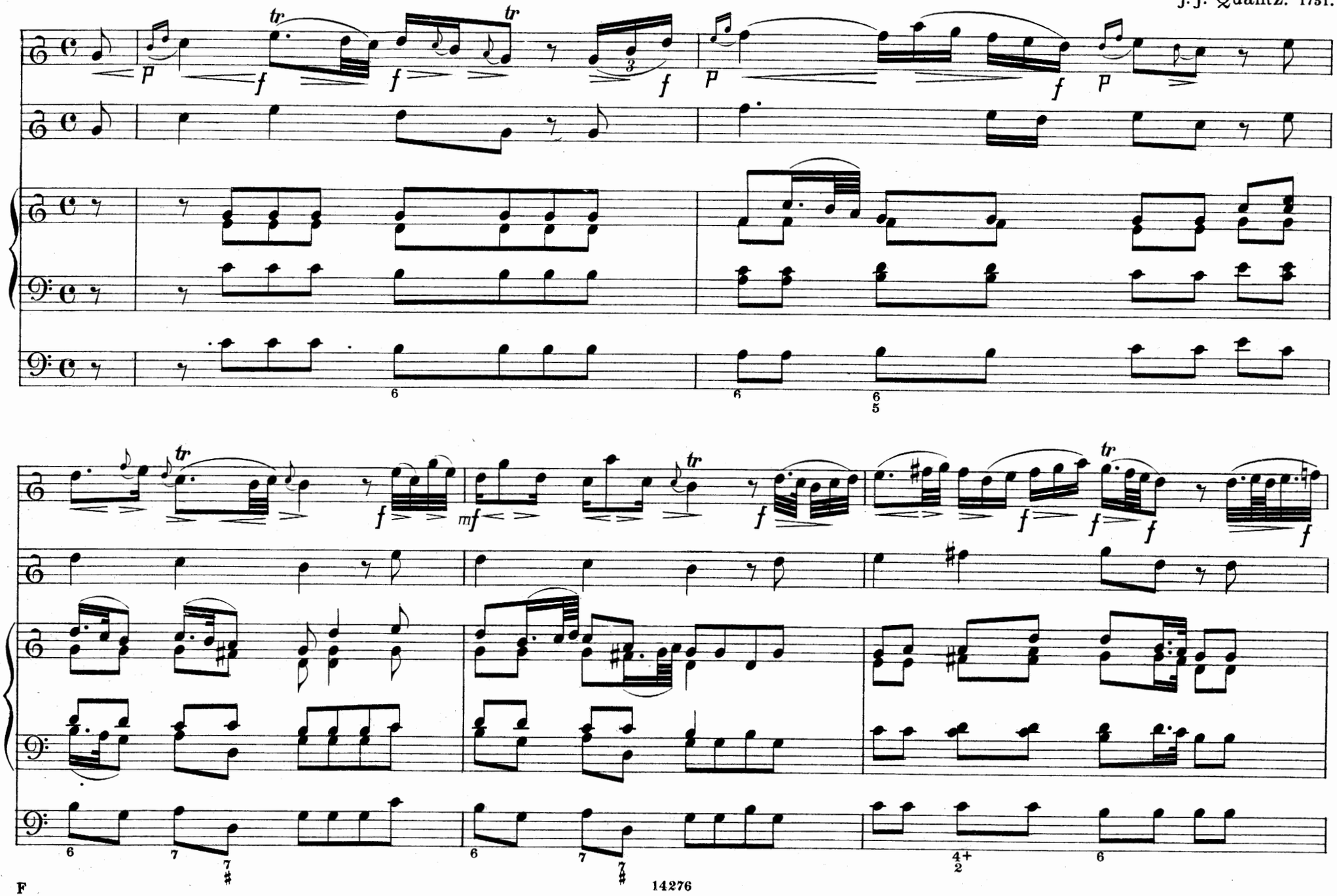
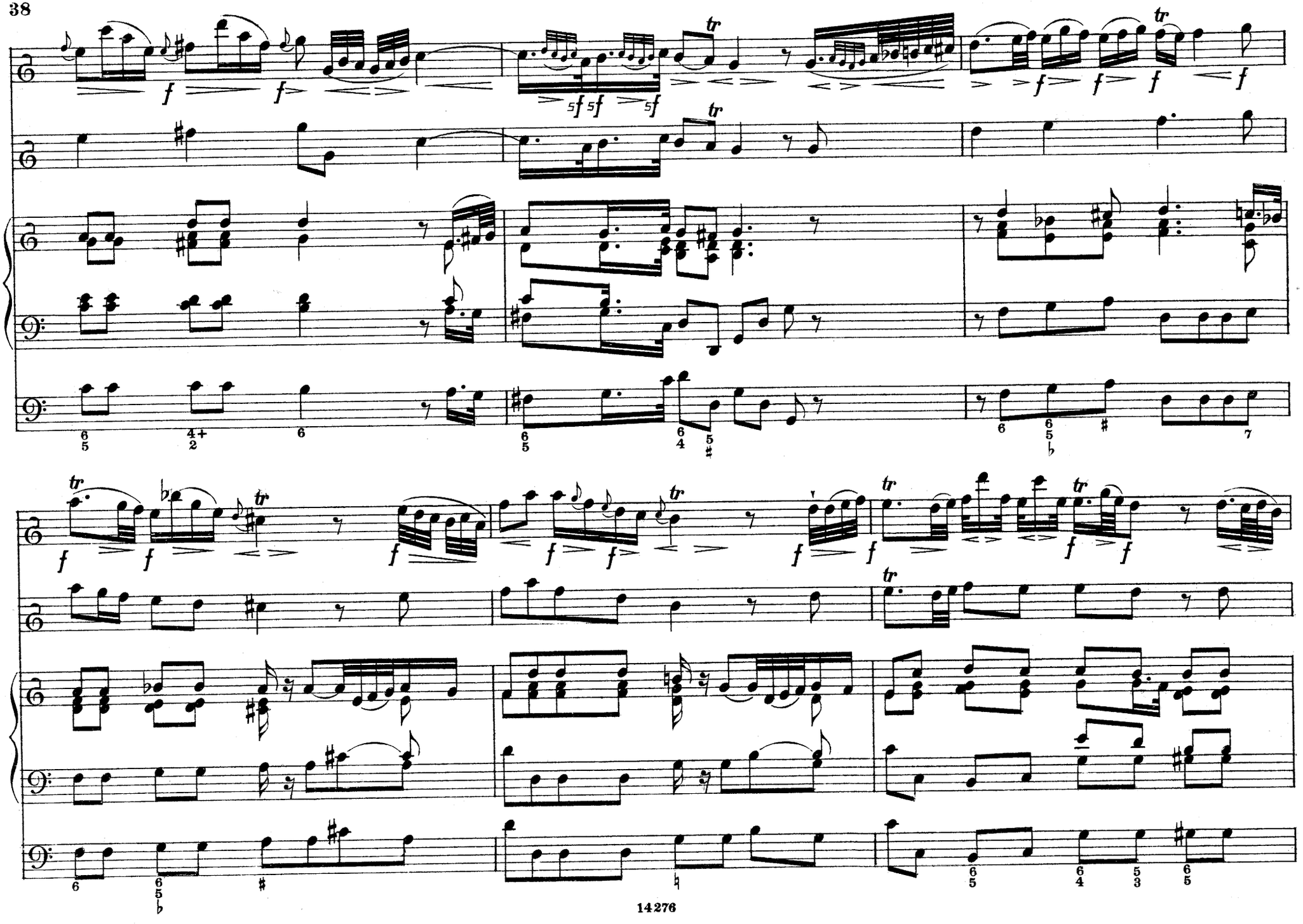
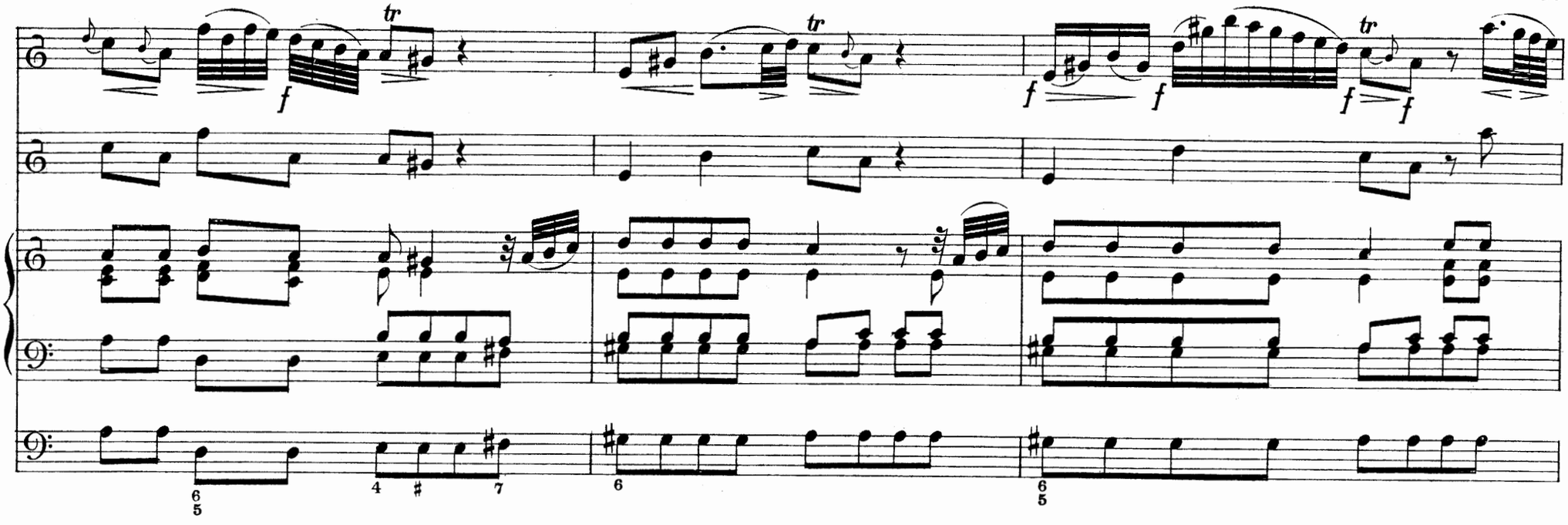


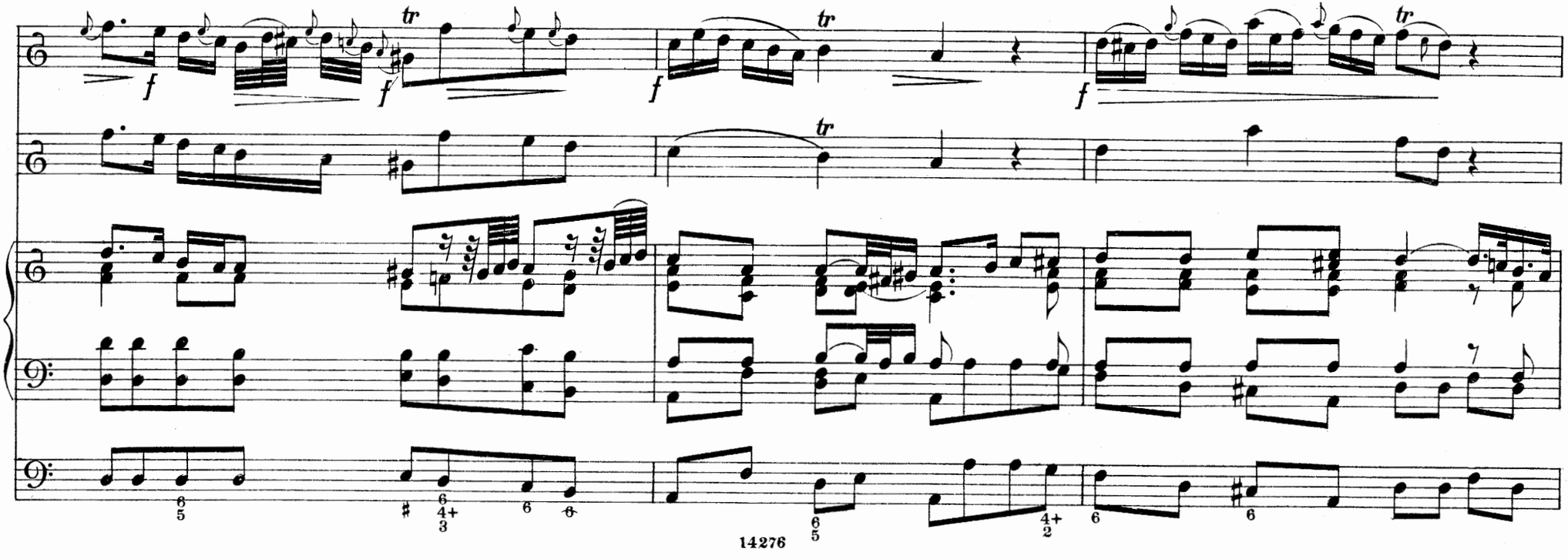
ADAGIO in the ITALIAN STYLE.

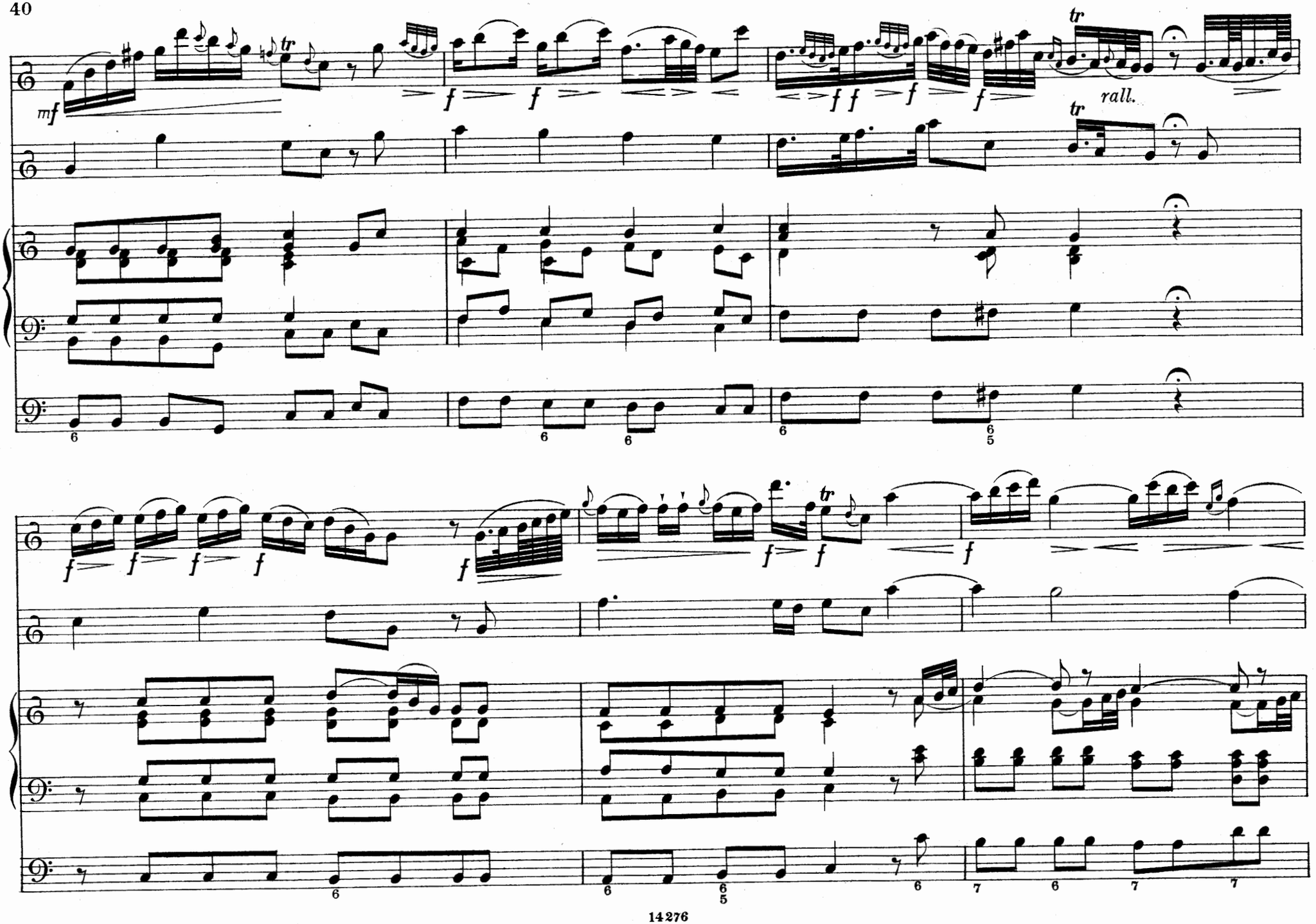
J. J. Quantz. 1751.







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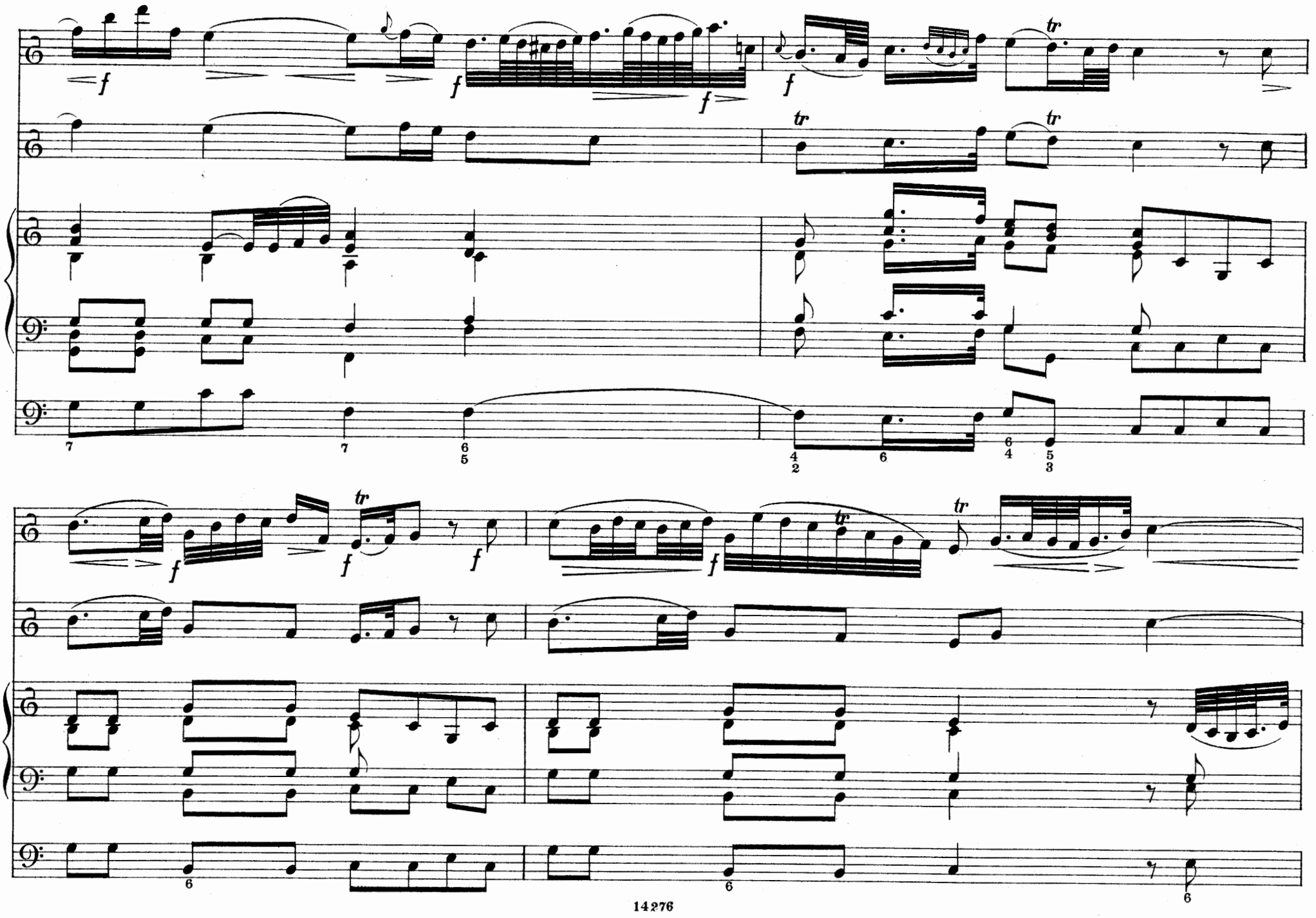
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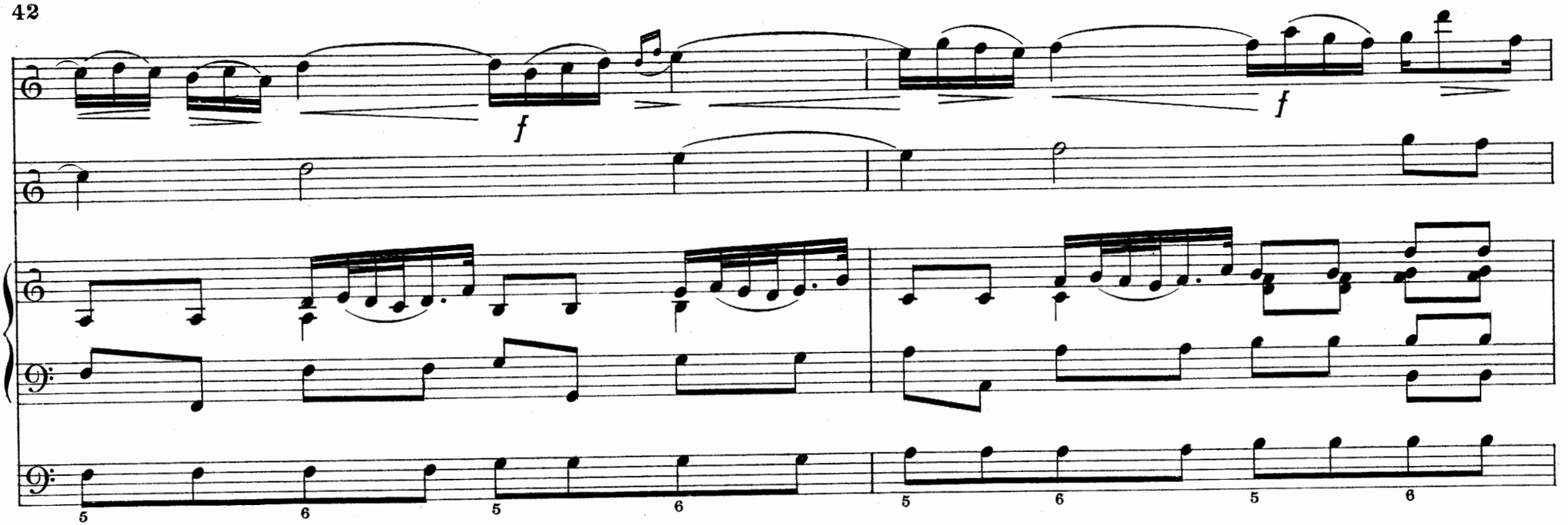

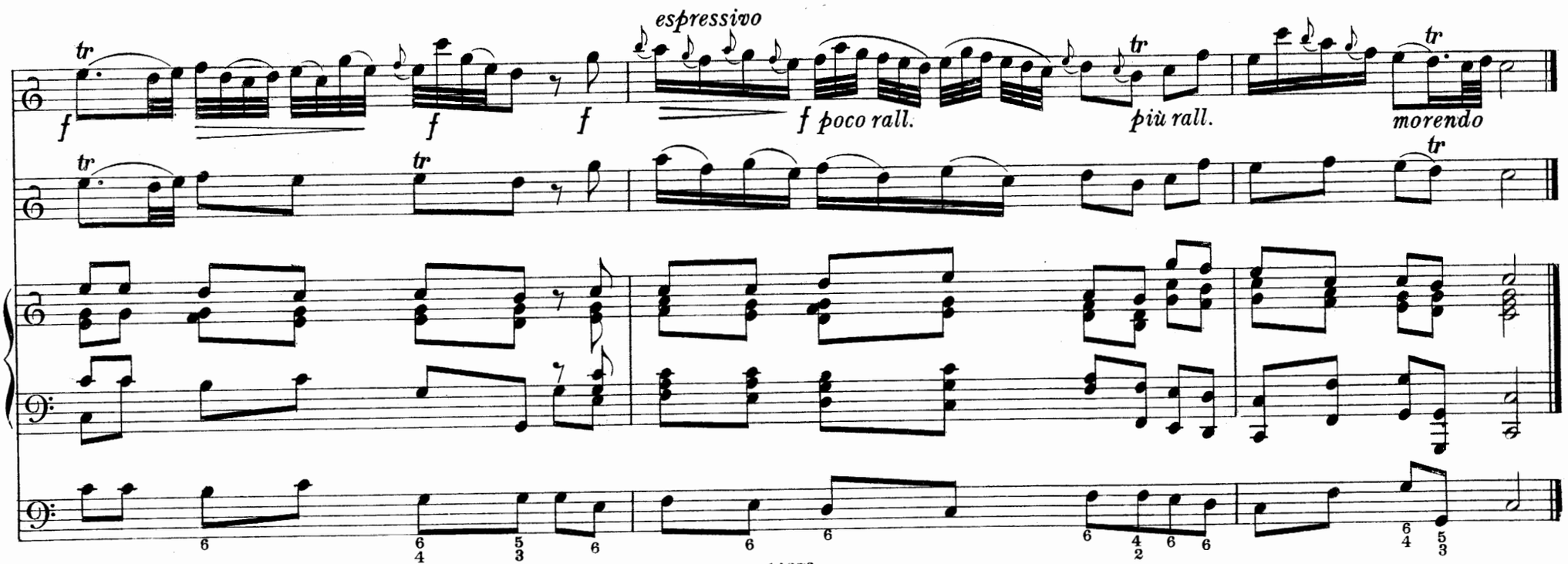

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