ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE ART OF TRANSCRIBING FOR HARPSICHORD

Joseph A. Gascho, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2010

Dissertation directed by: Professor Rita Sloan

University of Maryland School of Music

A relatively unexplored area of the harpsichord repertoire is the group of transcriptions made by J.S. Bach (1685-1750), Jean Henry d'Anglebert (1629-1691), and Jean-Baptiste Forqueray (1699-1782). These transcriptions are valuable and worth exploring and performing. Studying them provides unique insights into their composer's musical thinking. By comparing transcriptions with their original sources, the transcriber's decisions and priorities can be observed.

The performance component of this dissertation comprises three recitals. The first features works of Johann Sebastian Bach: two transcriptions of violin concerti by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741), and two transcriptions of trio sonatas by Johann Adam Reinken (1643-1722). The most salient feature of Bach's transcriptions is his addition of musical material: ornamenting slow movements, adding diminutions and idiomatic keyboard figurations throughout, and recomposing and expanding fugal movements.

The second recital features works of Jean Henry d'Anglebert and Jean-Baptiste Forqueray, two French composer/performers. From d'Anglebert's many transcriptions, I assembled two key-related suites: the first comprised of lute pieces by Ennemond Gaultier (c. 1575-1651), and the second comprised of movements from operas by Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687). Forqueray's transcriptions are of suites for viola da gamba and continuo, composed by his father, Antoine Forqueray (1671-1745). Creative and varied ornamentation, along with the *style brisé* of arpeggiated chords, are the most important features of d'Anglebert's transcriptions. Forqueray's transcriptions are highly virtuosic and often feature the tenor and bass range of the harpsichord.

The third recital features my own transcriptions: the first suite for solo cello by J.S. Bach, excerpts from the opera *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704), and two violin pieces by Nicola Matteis (fl. c. 1670-c. 1698). In these transcriptions, I demonstrate what I have learned from studying and performing the works in the first two recitals.

These recitals were performed in the Leah Smith Hall at the University of Maryland on May 4, 2010; May 11, 2010; and October 7, 2010. They were recorded on compact discs and are archived within the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

THE ART OF TRANSCRIBING FOR HARPSICHORD

by

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Introduction

This dissertation project is the culmination of several years of work, combining musicology, analysis, composition and performance. The idea to study transcriptions came from a recital several years ago, when I was asked to play J.S. Bach's transcription (BWV 972) of Antonio Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in D (RV 230). In the second movement, there were a few measures that I really loved, and I was curious to know who had written them – Bach or Vivaldi? I looked at Vivaldi's orchestral score, and I was excited to see that my favorite part was an addition by Bach, shown in example 4 on page 10. This led me to think there must be other great additions by Bach in his transcriptions, and by extension, in the works of other composers who transcribed music for harpsichord.

By studying and performing these transcriptions, I hoped to learn to write well-crafted and idiomatic music for the harpsichord, and to become a more intelligent performer. More than original compositions, transcriptions provide extra insight into a composer's mind: in original compositions we see only what composers decided to write, but by comparing transcriptions with their sources, we can also see what composers decided not to write, and what they decided to change.

In writing my own transcriptions, the importance of balance became a recurring theme. Musical additions (thicker chords, diminutions, ornaments) needed to be balanced by musical subtractions (thinner chords, ties, removing accompanying voices). Fidelity to the original needed to be balanced, and even superseded, by the requirements of writing a

beautiful and idiomatic harpsichord piece. Creative additions on a small scale needed to be balanced by an organic sense of the piece or the suite on a large scale.

The limitations of musical notation became clearer to me in studying and writing transcriptions. For example, most harpsichord players prefer to play one hand slightly before or slightly after the other, but this is difficult to notate precisely. The differences between expecting a performer to simply play the hands apart or slightly apart, notating an arpeggiation in one hand as an ornament, and notating an arpeggiation in one hand as sixteenth notes or eighth notes indicate a continuum of rhythmic possibilities that can only be suggested by notation. Many other aspects of performance were not traditionally notated by Baroque composers, and I likewise chose not to be overly prescriptive in my notation. I have not indicated tempi, slurs, registration, articulation or dynamics.

Learning to play my own transcriptions was a challenge, because I rarely felt I had completely finished the transcription, and I continued to search for new possibilities even in performances. This was especially true in the ornamentation of the Charpentier pieces and in the left hand part of the Matteis Chaconne. I suspect this was also true of many Baroque musicians who composed and performed their own music.

In conclusion, I would like to thank a few people for their advice and encouragement in this project: my advisor Rita Sloan and my dissertation committee, musicologist Dr. Thomas MacCracken, harpsichordist Jacques Ogg, composer Thomas Benjamin, and especially harpsichordist Arthur Haas.

Part One: Transcriptions by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Recital Program

Concerto in D Major, BWV 972
- After Concerto in D Major, RV 230, by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)
  - Allegro
  - Larghetto
  - Allegro

Sonata in A Minor, BWV 965
- After *Hortus Musicus*: Sonata Prima, by Johann Adam Reinken (1643-1722)
  - Adagio
  - Fuga
  - Adagio
  - Allemande
  - Courante
  - Sarabande
  - Gigue

Sonata in C Major, BWV 966
- After *Hortus Musicus*: Sonata Undecima, by Reinken
  - Praeludium
  - Fuga
  - Adagio
  - Allemande

Concerto in G Minor, BWV 975
- After Concerto in G Minor, RV 316, by Vivaldi
  - Allegro
  - Largo
  - Giga - Presto

Program Notes

Two of the most important musical influences on the young Johann Sebastian Bach are represented in this recital: Johann Adam Reinken from northern Germany and Antonio Vivaldi from Italy. The two are a study in contrast—of different generations, from different countries, virtuosi on different instruments, and focused on different aspects of musical composition. It is typical of Bach's eclectic and encyclopedic nature as a musician and composer that he was fascinated by two such different composers. He found sufficient value in their works to not only copy them, as students would often do as a part of their musical training, but to transcribe them as solo keyboard works, idiomatically recasting them in the process.

Reinken was primarily an organist and church musician, though his *Hortus Musicus* is a chamber work of six partitas scored for two violins, viola da gamba, and continuo. He was a master of invertible counterpoint and permutation fugues, both of which would become characteristic of Bach's compositional style. He was a generation older than Bach, but they met on several occasions, including a famous encounter in 1720 when Reinken praised Bach's improvising on the organ. In contrast, Vivaldi was primarily a violinist and opera composer, whose great skill was in virtuosic, idiomatic writing for the violin, and even more in the architecture of his concerto writing. He was Bach's contemporary, but they never met.

Bach's transcriptions of Reinken's *Hortus Musicus* (1687) were probably composed around 1705, when Bach was working at Arnstadt and when he made his famous pilgrimage to hear Buxtehude in Lübeck. The Vivaldi concerti (published in 1711

and 1716) were transcribed approximately ten years later, during Bach's employment at Weimar. This gap in the timing of these works strengthens their import—they were not just works of a young student, but part of an ongoing learning process by an established musician.

In his transcriptions, Bach was much more likely to add musical material than to subtract. These additions take primarily two forms: diminution – taking longer notes and breaking them into more numerous shorter notes (see examples 2, 5, 6, 7, etc.); and expansion – simply adding more measures of music (see the notes of examples 8, 14 and 16). Interestingly, these latter examples also show Bach's rare removal of notes: he erases the accompanying continuo line from the opening entrances of the upper voices in the fugues. He also chose not to transcribe slow movements for solo viola da gamba in each of the Reinken sonatas which were simply musical repetitions of earlier movements for solo violin, transposed down an octave.

Bach was also confident enough to change notes where he felt they could be more idiomatic for the harpsichord, or simply sounded better (See examples 4, 16, 19, and the left hand part of 21). Many of these last examples show how Bach preferred to change groups of repeated notes for the violins into stepwise or arpeggiated figures for the harpsichord. Example 16 also shows his willingness to change Reinken's chromatic inflections to his own liking. Bach's first biographer, Johann Nikolaus Forkel, includes interesting observations about Bach's transcriptions in the fifth chapter of his biography:

> "[Bach] so often heard [Vivaldi's concerti] praised as admirable compositions that he conceived the happy idea of arranging them all for his clavier. He studied the chain of the ideas, their relation to each other, the variations of the modulations, and many other particulars. The change necessary to be made in the ideas and passages composed for the violin, but not suitable to the clavier, taught him to think musically; so that after his labor was completed, he no longer needed to expect ideas from his fingers, but could derive them from his own fancy."
>
> [Trans. Augustus Frederic Christopher Kollman.]

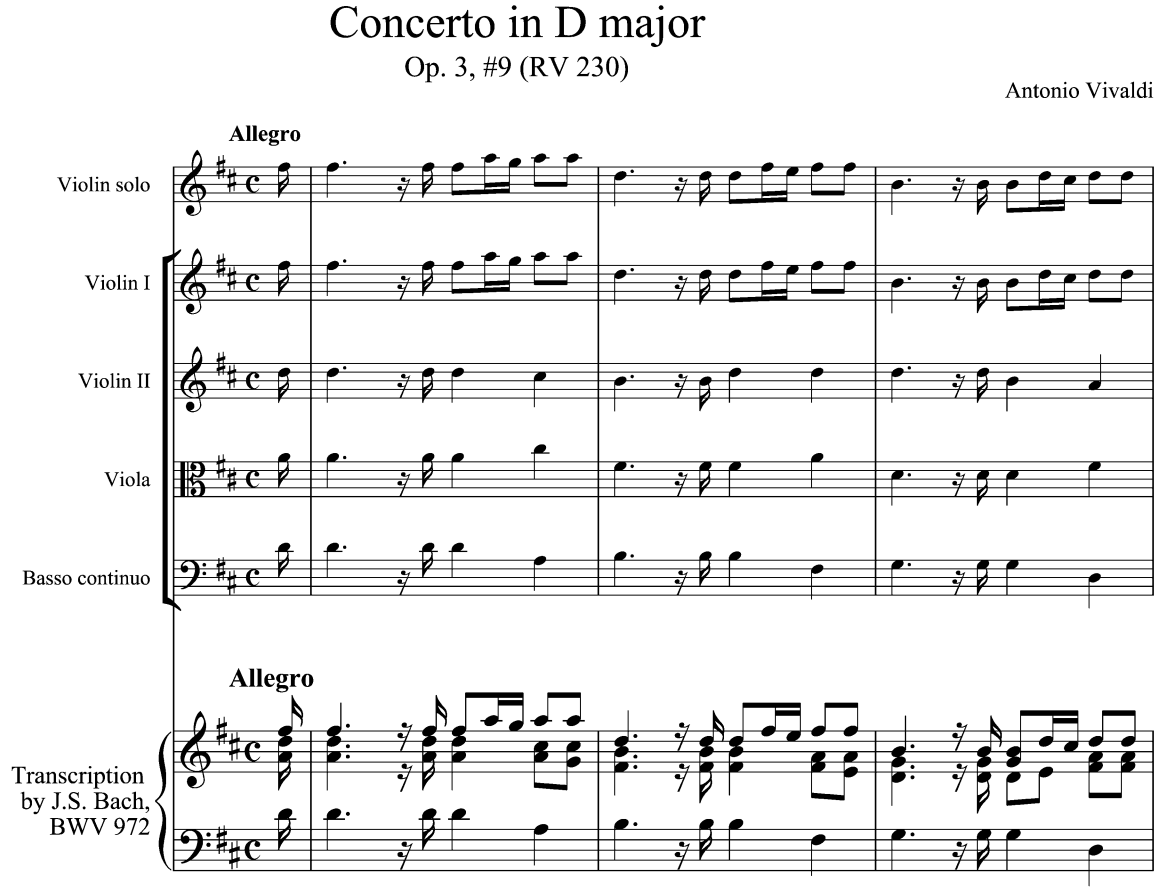
The transcription of RV 316 deserves some special consideration. The original manuscript of Vivaldi's concerto was destroyed during World War II, and no published version exists. Vivaldi did compose another surviving version of this concerto, RV316a, but Bach based his transcription on the destroyed version. Fortunately, in 1885, musicologist Paul Waldersee compared the two versions of this concerto, noting which version Bach had used, and observing that their first movements were the same, the second movements were slightly different, and the third movements were completely different.

Despite this complication, I still found this concerto especially worthwhile for this doctoral project for two reasons. First, the second movement is originally quite spare in the solo violin line and Bach's transcription is very florid. The substantive difference between Vivaldi's movement and Bach's transcription is not in the contour of the melody, but in the addition of several homophonic passages in Bach's version—similar to the opening bars of the second movement of the D Major Concerto. Also, as shown in example 21, the left hand part in Bach's transcription shows his way of sustaining the pitches and elaborating the harmony in the absence of a bowed bass. Second, the third movement of Bach's transcription is fascinating without any comparison. It is the only

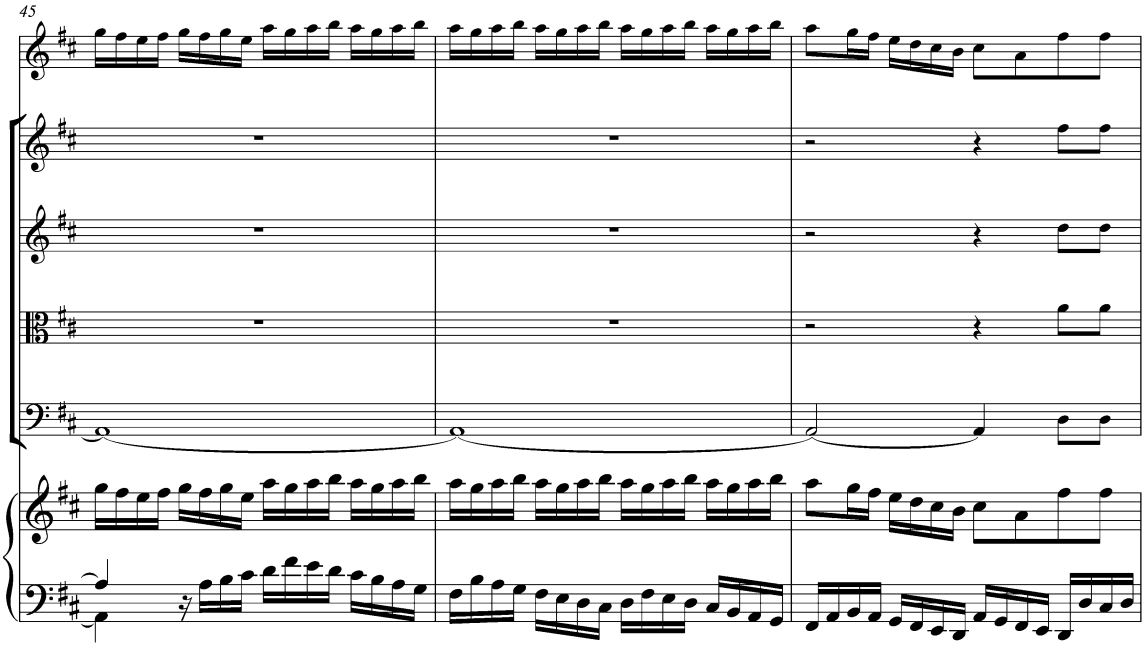
example I know of in Bach's keyboard output where the bass part, rather than the treble part, is ornamented when the two sections of the piece are repeated.

Finally, the choice of harpsichord registration in these works is my own. Some editions of the Vivaldi/Bach concerti indicate "tutti" and "solo" sections, but these were not in Bach's manuscripts. I've chosen to make registration changes within movements, often at places where solo and tutti sections alternated, but with the primary purpose of having a variety of sound and texture rather than of carefully pointing out the original orchestration.

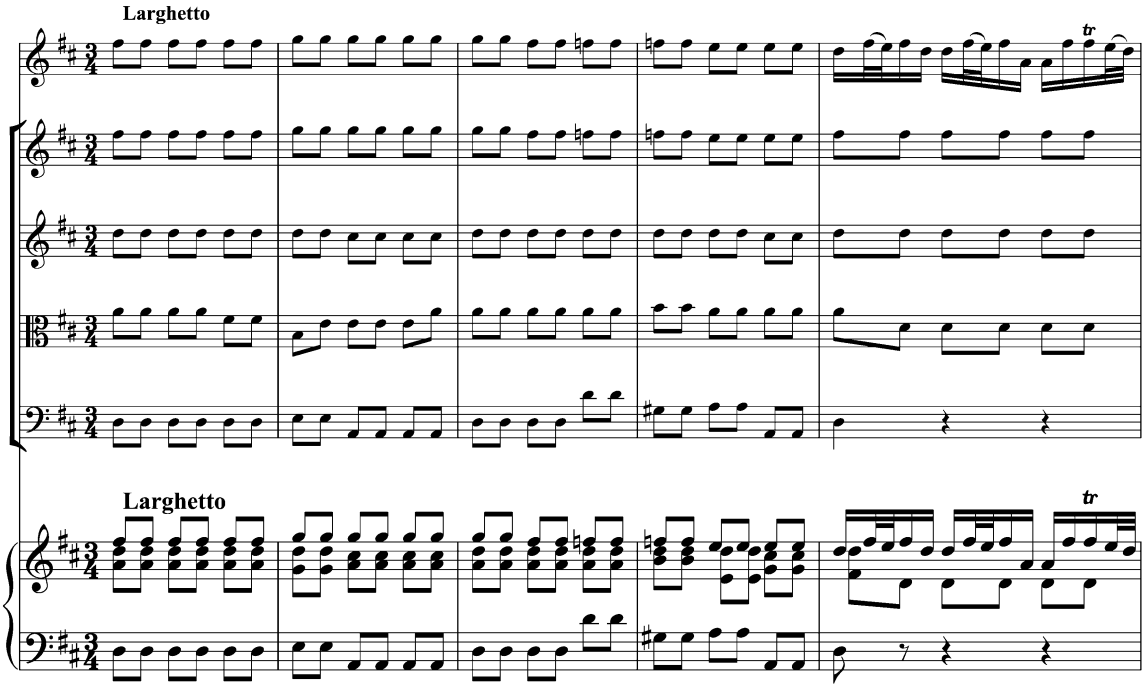
Musical Examples



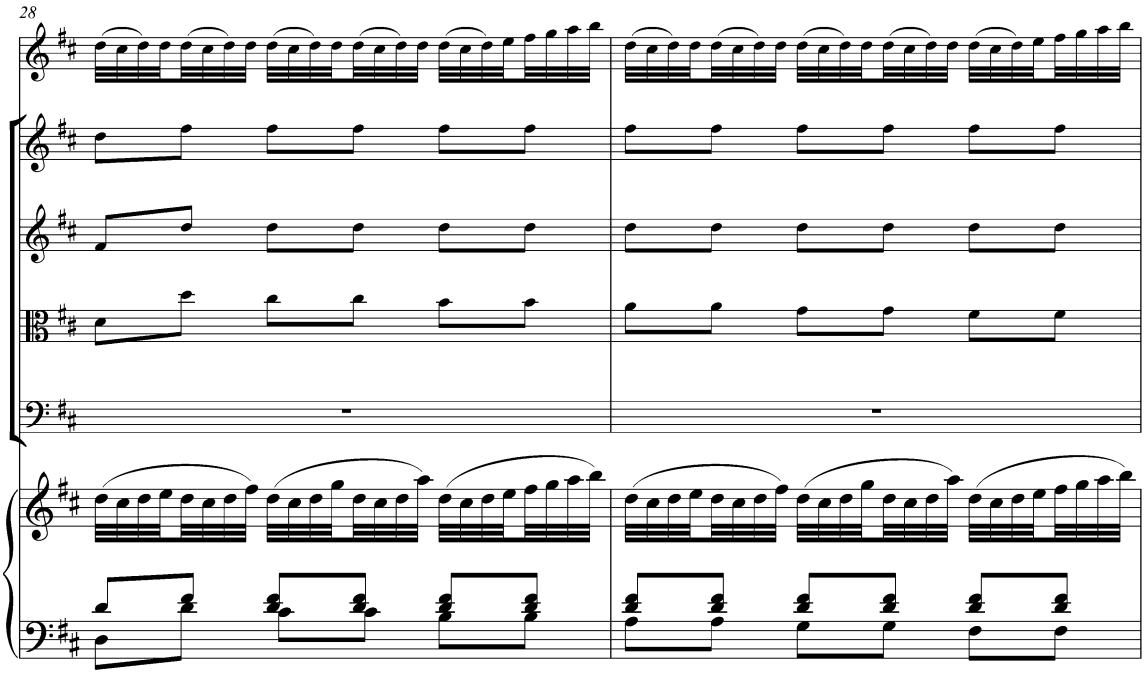
EXAMPLE 1: Opening measures of the first movement from the Concerto in D Major.



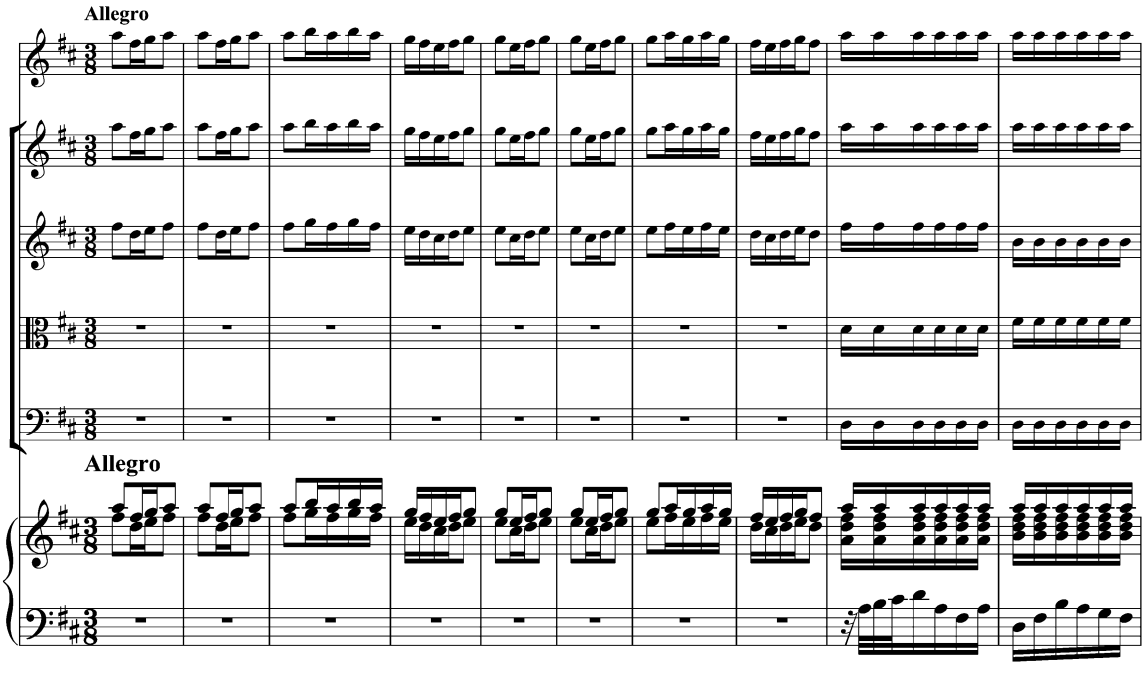
EXAMPLE 2: Measures 45-47 of the first movement from the Concerto in D Major, showing Bach's added bass line.



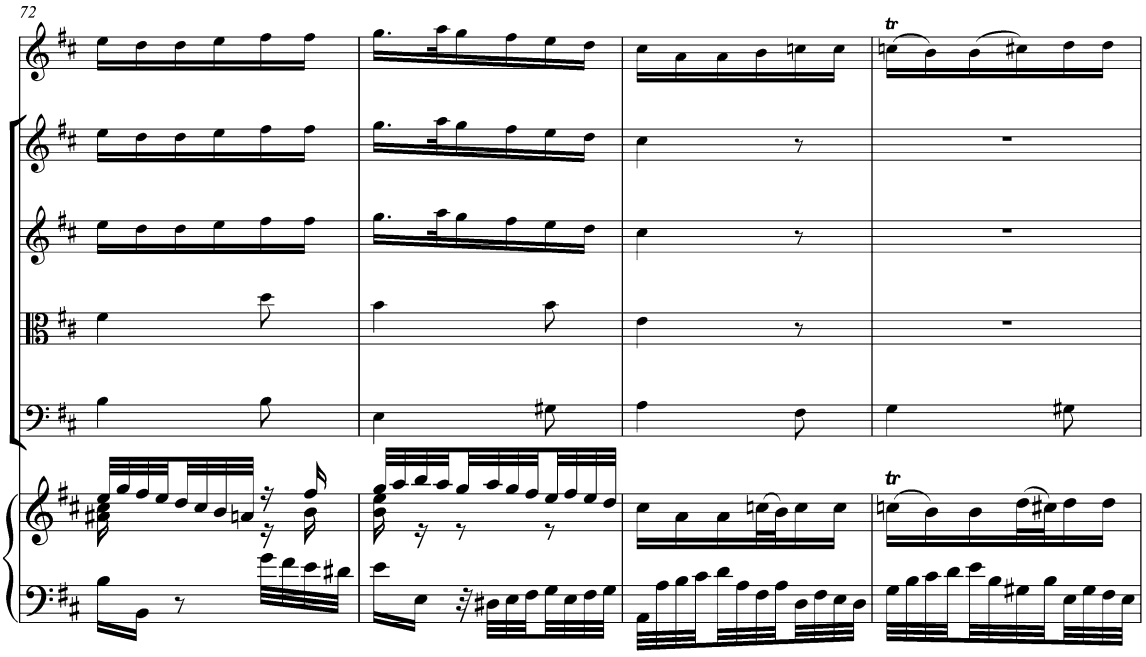
EXAMPLE 3: Opening measures of the second movement from the Concerto in D Major.



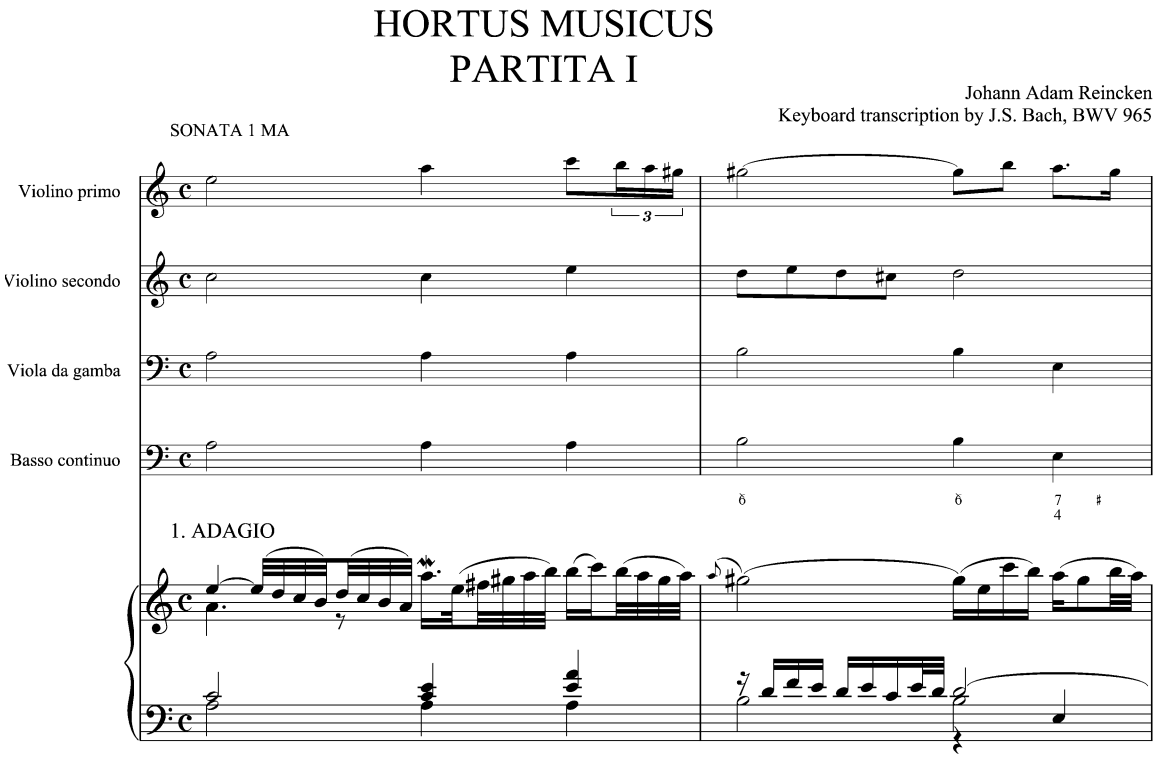
EXAMPLE 4: Measures 28-29 of the second movement from the Concerto in D Major, with Bach's modified melody.



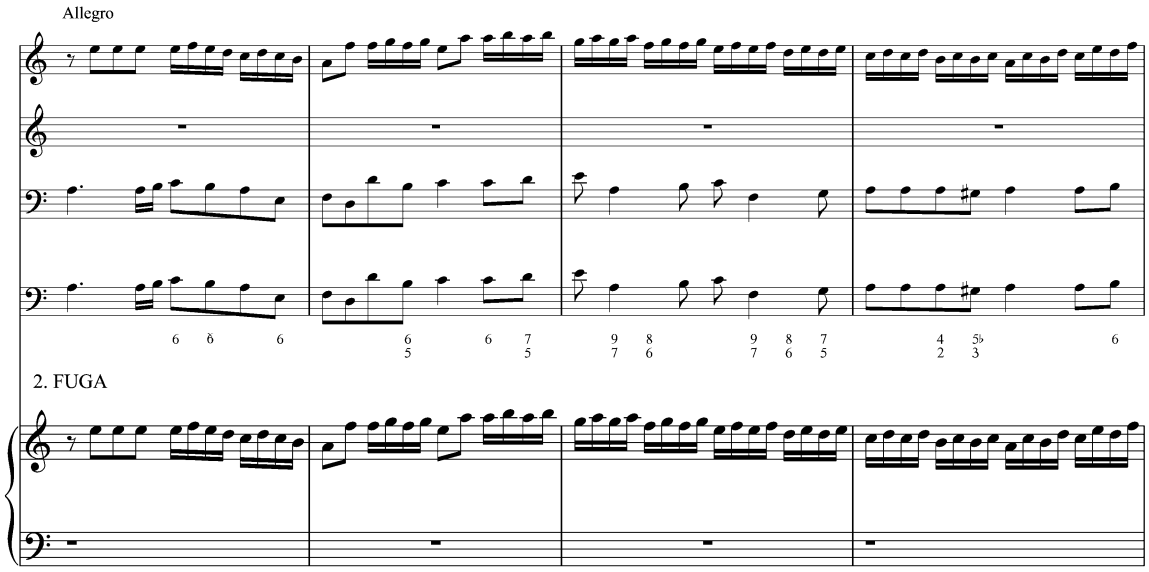
EXAMPLE 5: Opening measures of the third movement from the Concerto in D Major, with Bach's added bass line beginning in m. 9.



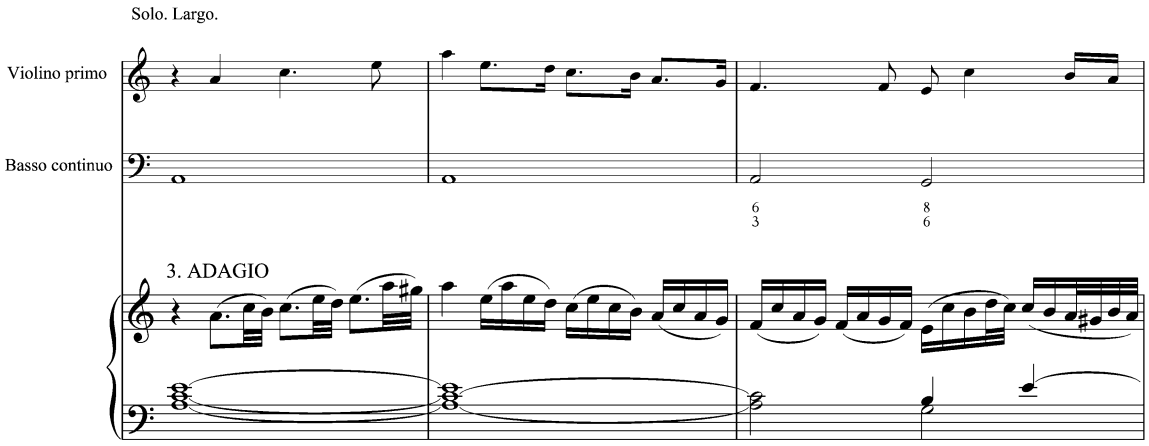
EXAMPLE 6: Measures 72-75 of the third movement from the Concerto in D Major, showing significant changes in both treble and bass parts.



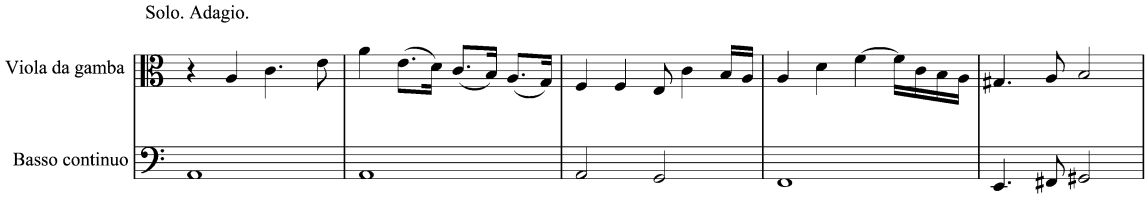
EXAMPLE 7: Opening measures of the first Adagio from the Sonata in A Minor, showing Bach's ornamented melodic lines.



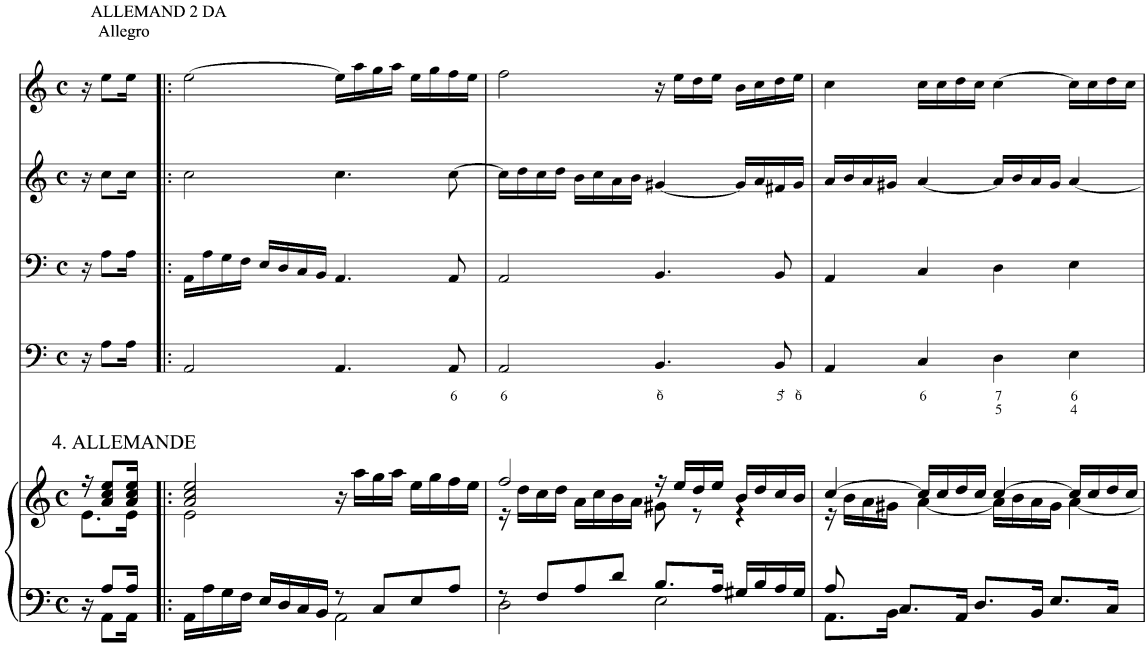
EXAMPLE 8: Opening measures of the Fugue from the Sonata in A Minor, showing Bach's omission of the initial accompanying bass entrance. (Reinken's Fugue totals 51 measures, Bach's totals 86 measures.)



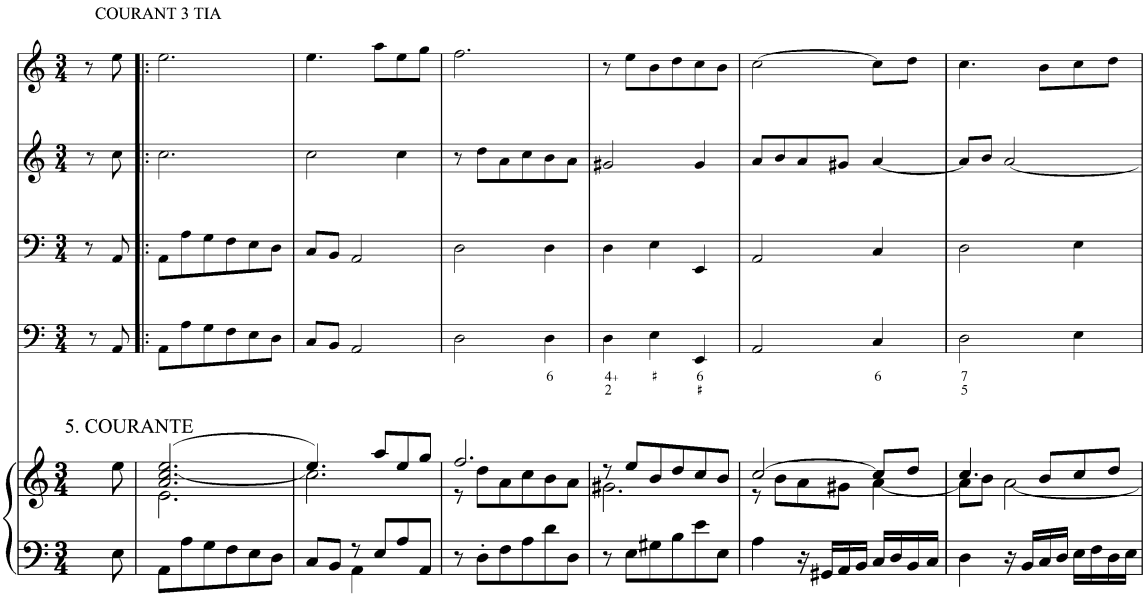
EXAMPLE 9: Opening measures of the second Adagio from the Sonata in A Minor, showing Bach's ornamented melodic line.



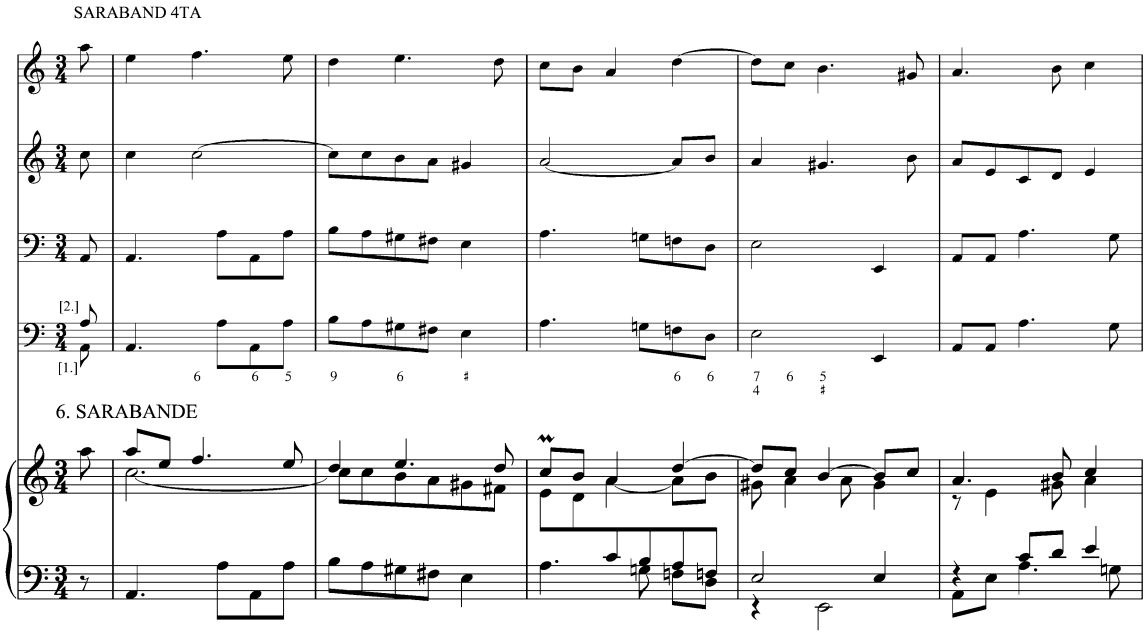
EXAMPLE 10: Opening measures of the third Adagio from the Sonata in A Minor, which Bach omitted in his transcription.



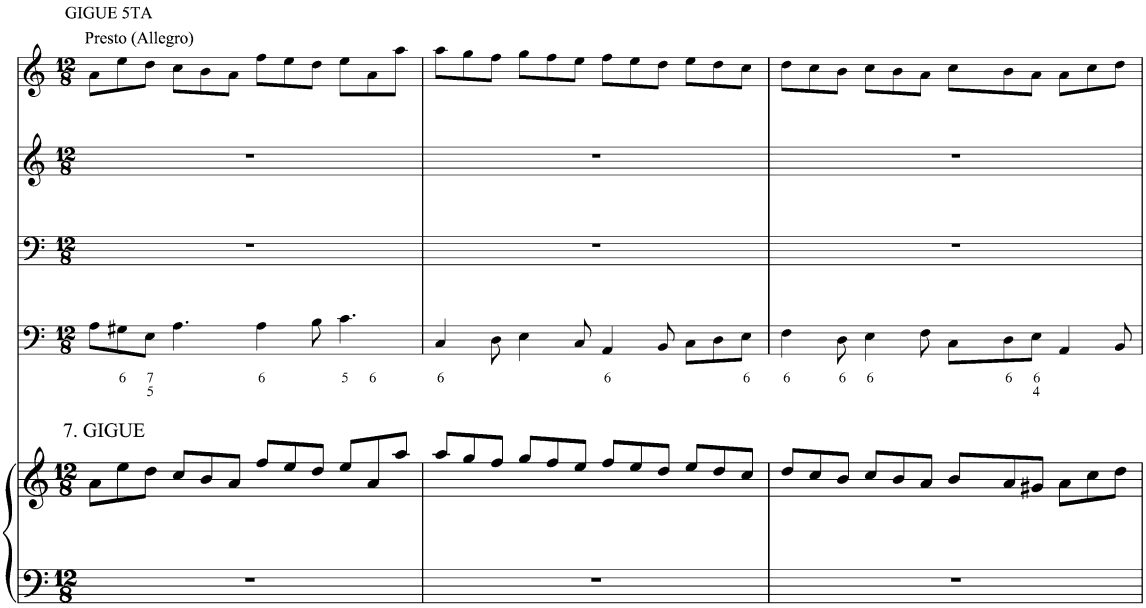
EXAMPLE 11: Opening measures of the Allemande from the Sonata in A Minor, showing Bach's more active bass line, esp. in mm. 2-3.



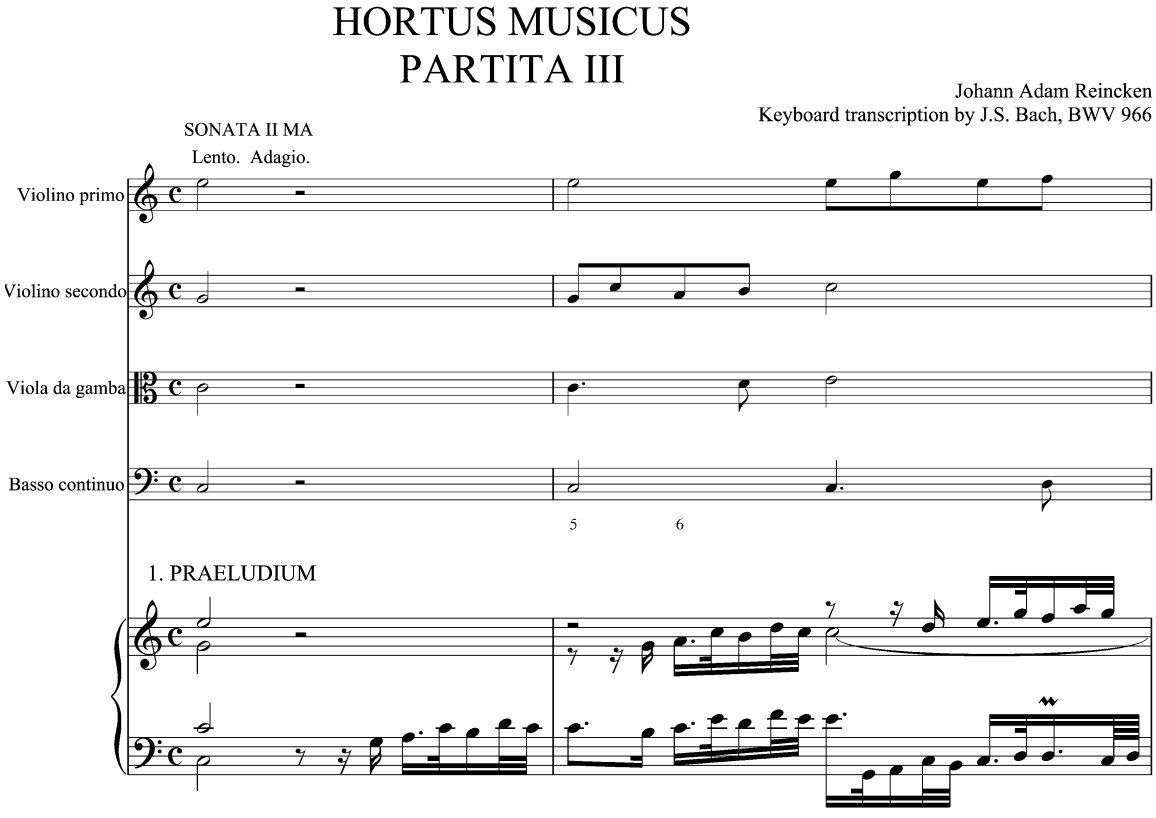
EXAMPLE 12: Opening measures of the Courante from the Sonata in A Minor, again with an ornamented bass line.



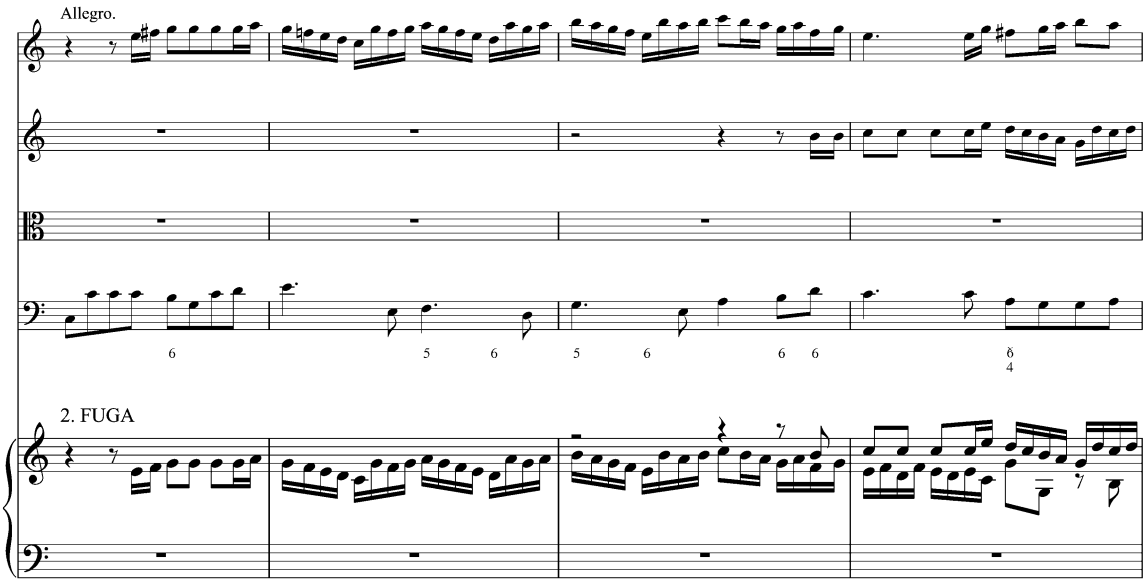
EXAMPLE 13: Opening measures of the Sarabande from the Sonata in A Minor.



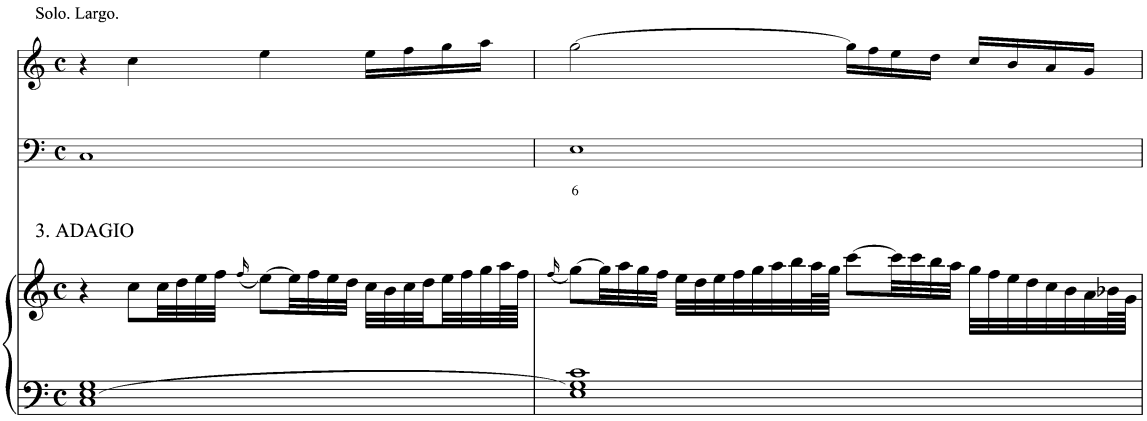
EXAMPLE 14: Opening measures of the Gigue from the Sonata in A Minor, showing Bach's omission of the initial accompanying bass entrance. (Reinken's Gigue totals 38 measures, Bach's totals 60 measures.)



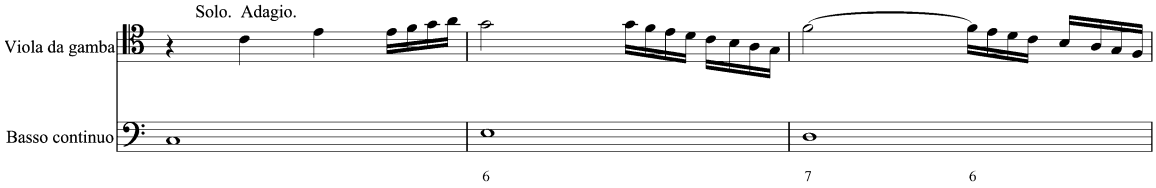
EXAMPLE 15: Opening measures of the first Adagio from the Sonata in C Major; here Bach turns simple diminutions into imitative figures.



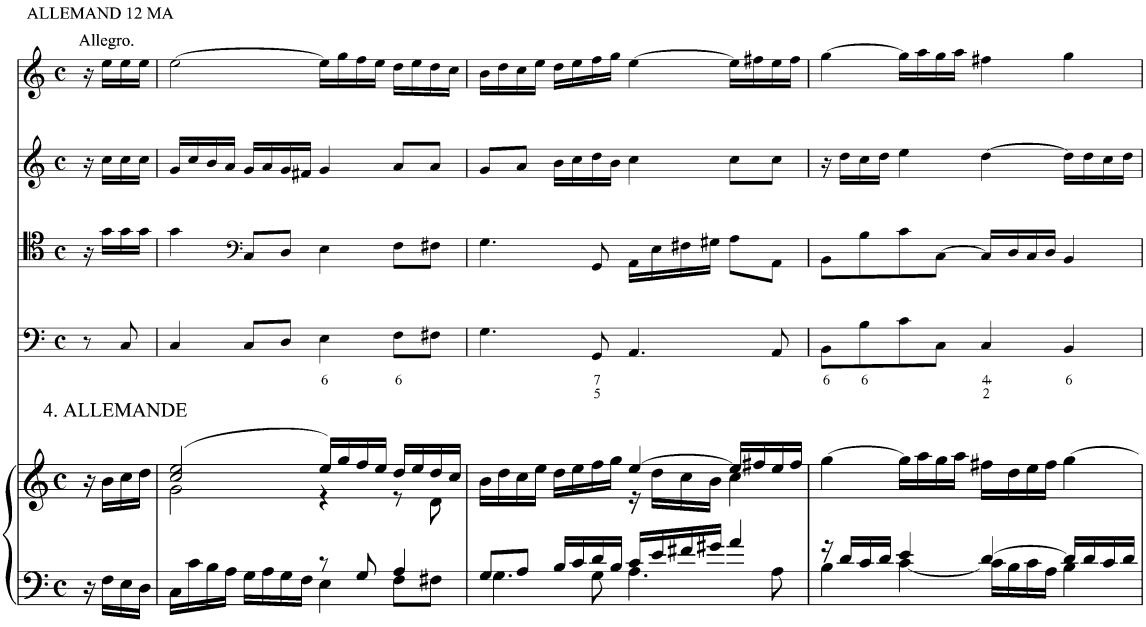
EXAMPLE 16: Opening measures of the Fugue from the Sonata in C Major, showing Bach's omission of the initial accompanying bass entrance. (Reinken's Fugue totals 47 measures,Bach's totals 97 measures.)



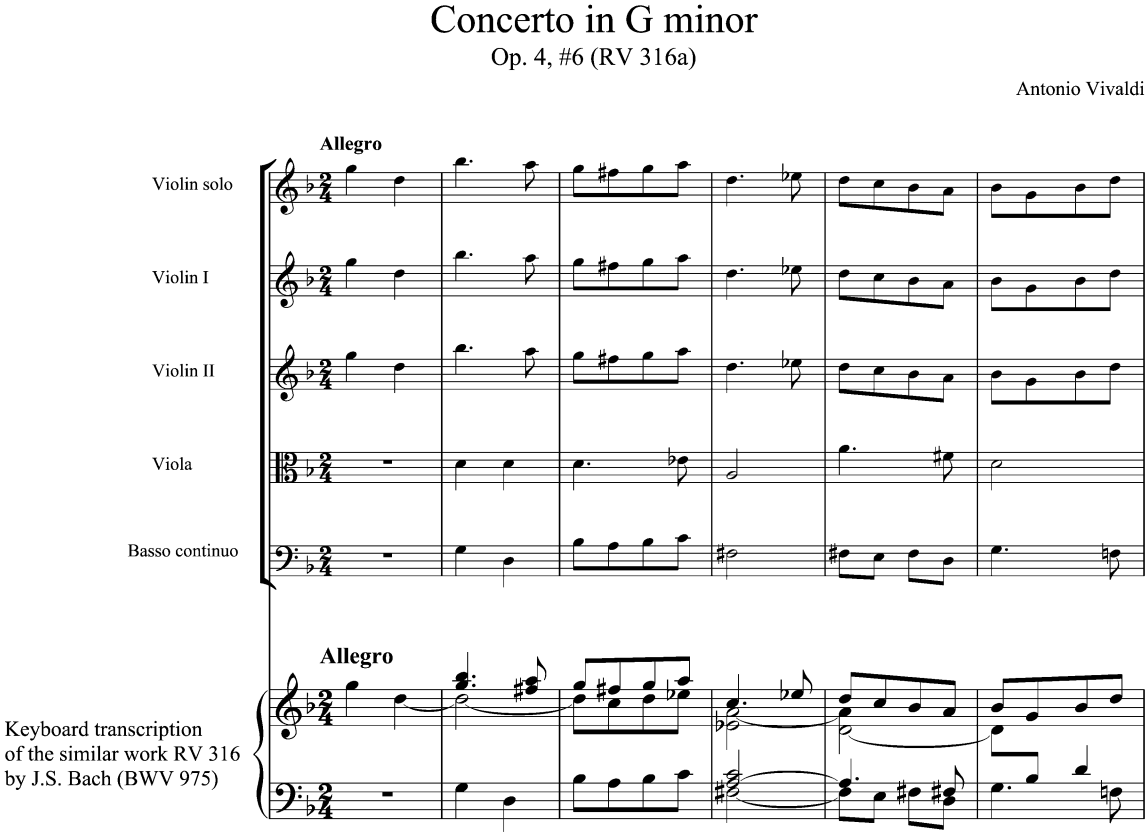
EXAMPLE 17: Opening measures of the Largo from the Sonata in C Major, showing considerable ornamentation.



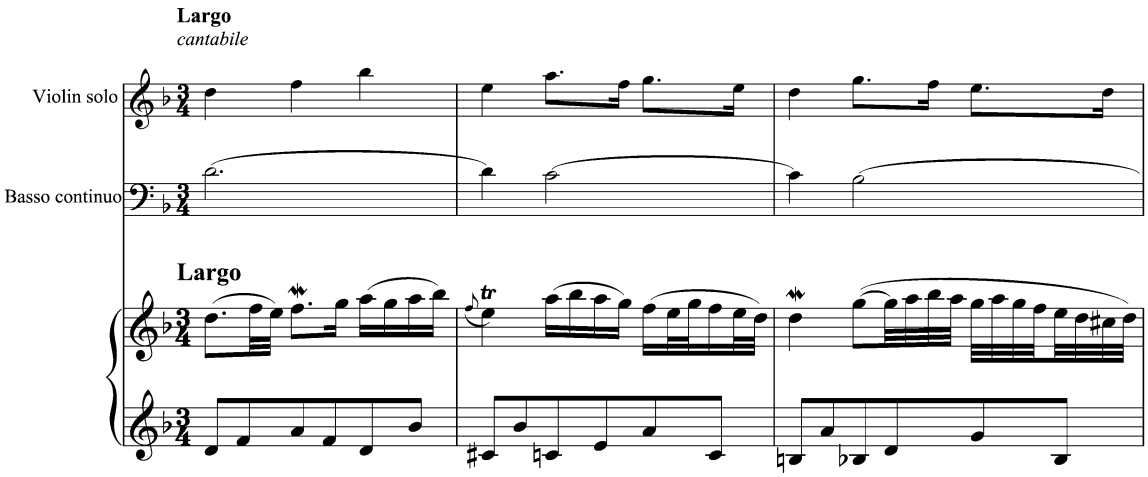
EXAMPLE 18: Opening measures of the second Adagio from the Sonata in C Major, which Bach omitted in his transcription.



EXAMPLE 19: Opening measures of the Allemande from the Sonata in C Major, showing transposed second violin and bass parts.



EXAMPLE 20: Opening measures of the first movement from the Concerto in G Minor.



EXAMPLE 21: Opening measures of the second movement from the Concerto in G Minor, showing an ornamented melodic line, and increased rhythmic and chromatic activity in the bass line.

Part Two: Transcriptions by Jean Henry d'Anglebert (1629-1691) and Jean-Baptiste Forqueray (1699-1782)

Recital Program

Suite in C — anonymous, from an autograph manuscript of d'Anglebert

After Enemond Gaultier (c. 1575-1651)

- Prélude. D'Anglebert
- Allemande du Vieux Gaultier
- Courante du Vieux Gaultier
- Sarabande du Vieux Gaultier
- Gigue du Vieux Gaultier
- Chaconne du Vieux Gaultier

Suite in G — d'Anglebert

After Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687)

- Ouverture de la Mascarade
- Menuet. Le Jeune Iris *Lentement*
- Menuet. Dans nos bois *Lentement*
- Air d'Apollon du Triomphe de l'Amour *Lentement*
- Passacaille d'Armide

Cinquième Suite — Jean-Baptiste Forqueray

After Antoine Forqueray (1671-1745)

- La Rameau *Majestueusement*
- La Guignon *Vivement et détaché*
- La Silva *Tres tendrement*
- Jupiter *Modérément*

Program Notes

Transcribing was an especially important part of the early French harpsichord tradition, but the process continued through the end of the 18th century. Jean-Henry d'Anglebert lived in the middle of the French Baroque era, and Jean-Baptiste Forqueray lived closer to the end. Their transcriptions clearly demonstrate the changes in French style during the that time. D'Anglebert continued the groundbreaking work of his teacher, Jacques Champion de Chambonnières, in laying the foundation of French harpsichord playing based on the arpeggiated, broken style of French lute music (now known as *style brisé*). Forqueray's transcriptions demonstrate the increasing influence of the Italian style in France, the expanding compass of the harpsichord itself, and a rising level of virtuosity.

Except for its prelude, the first set of pieces cannot be authoritatively attributed to d'Anglebert. However, their only source is an autograph manuscript in d'Anglebert's hand (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rés. 89ter). That autograph contains 48 pieces in total – twenty of them definitely by d'Anglebert, at least seven by Chambonnières including several *doubles* probably by d'Angelbert, and then many transcriptions of the music of French lutenists, primarily Enemond Gaultier, "Le Vieux Gaultier." None of Gaultier's works were published in his lifetime, and several of these keyboard transcriptions are the only surviving traces of the original pieces for lute.

The transcription of lute pieces, with the adoption of *style brisé,* helped form the idiomatic style of early French harpsichord music. It is therefore not surprising that, of the three sets of transcriptions in this recital, the lute transcriptions are the most similar to their originals. In general, the transcriptions tend to be slightly thicker in texture; they

often fill in quarter notes with arpeggiated eighth notes in the same harmony; they contain more ornaments and a greater variety of ornaments. Sometimes, however, the transcription is simpler than the original – see example 2, mm. 5-7. The transcriber often fills in the interval of the third – see example 2, mm. 2, 3, 6-7; and the entire example 3. Generally, the transcriber was very careful about voicing and texture – see especially example 2.

To unify the suite, I have transposed the Sarabande and Gigue. The notes accompanying each example describe the transpositions, and though the Sarabande and Gigue are notated in D minor in the musical examples, they will be performed in C Minor. Except for the Chaconne, which was transcribed by my friend and colleague Lucas Harris, the transcriptions from tablature were made by composer and musicologist André Souris (1899-1970).

D'Anglebert's transcriptions of pieces from Lully's operas are found in his only published work, *Pièces de clavecin* (Paris, 1689). As Ordinaire de la Musique de la Chambre du Roi (a post he held from 1662 to 1674, when he passed it on to his son Jean-Baptiste Henry), he would have been familiar with and probably involved in productions of Lully's works. In January 1668, he, and other musicians, appeared onstage in a production of the Lully's *Mascarade de Versailles*, the *ouverture* of which begins the second suite.

Compared to the lute transcriptions, these works inspired significantly more changes to be made. Normally, Lully's orchestration was in five parts, though the *menuets* from *Trios pour le coucher du Roi* were in three parts. D'Anglebert was always careful in the voicing and texture of his pieces, and often employed a much thinner

texture than might seem implied by Lully's orchestration. Examples 5 and 8 show this very clearly, both beginning with one note in each hand, rather than a full voicing of the tonic triad. Example 5 also shows d'Anglebert leaving out notes that would have been easy to play – the eighth notes in the middle part and second violin part that might have interfered with the clarity of the top voice. Also, in measure 5 of example 5, he leaves out the second bass note in the measure, preferring to continue the descent in eighth notes that he created in continuation from the first violin part in measure 4. Even stronger, and supporting the predilection for conjunct motion observed in the lute transcriptions, is his changing of the bass line of the "Menuet. Dans nos bois" in measures 3 and 7 of example 7. Throughout, he continues to employ the idiomatic *style brisé*, replacing fairly homophonic orchestral passages: see example 8, especially measures 1 and 4.

More striking than any of these changes, however, is d'Anglebert's rich ornamentation, which fills almost every measure of his works. The first four measures alone of example 9, the Passacaille from *Armide*, contain eight different kinds of ornaments, and some of them more than once, for a total of thirteen. The table of ornaments included in his *Pièces de clavecin* contains 29 different examples. His fugues for organ are ornamented similarly, so his goal was not so much one of increasing the sustain of the harpsichord, but of creating a broader spectrum of sounds.

In contrast, ornaments had become less important and varied by 1747, the year of the publication of Jean-Baptiste Forqueray's *Pieces de Viole composées, par Mr Forqueray Le Pere. Mises en Pieces de Clavecin*. All but three of these pieces were transcriptions of his father Antoine's *Pieces de Viole avec la Basse Continuë*, which were also published by Jean-Baptiste in 1747, two years after Antoine's death. In his preface,

Jean-Baptiste acknowledges using the signs from Jean-Philippe Rameau's table of ornaments (published with his *Pièces de Clavecin* in 1724), which describes sixteen different ornaments.

The authorship of Antoine Forqueray's *Pieces de Viole* and theoretically subsequent transcriptions by Jean-Baptiste is the subject of some debate. Both men were famous virtuosi of the viola da gamba, but apart from these two volumes, very few of their works survive. At the least, Jean-Baptiste had considerable input into the viol pieces, having published them himself. He wrote the following sentences in his preface to those works:

> "I thought it best to make the bass line very simple, so as to avoid any confusion with the bass of the pieces de clavecin, which I have made as ornate as possible."
>
> "I have endeavored to finger the pieces carefully to make their performance easier."
>
> "The third suite not being found complete regarding the number of pieces, I was obliged to add three of mine; these are marked with a star."

Jean-Baptiste was married to a well known and brilliant harpsichordist, Marie-Rose Dubois, so it is also quite possible that she was more responsible for the transcriptions than he. In general, the musical style of these pieces is progressive for their time, and would point more towards the son than the father. Lucy Robinson has made a detailed study of the authorship of these pieces; see her article in *Early Music*, vol. xxxiv, no. 2 (May 2006).

The primary focus of the transcription process is on the bass part. In examples 10 and 14, the process of moving chords from the gamba part to primarily the left hand of the harpsichord part can be observed. Example 12 shows the addition of bass octaves in

the first two measures, the addition of a new imitative bass line in the next two measures, and the addition of a passage in parallel thirds in the concluding four measures. Example 15 takes the complexity of left hand additions to an even higher level.

In the slow movement, "La Sylva," several bass octaves are added as well as occasional ornaments. More interesting is Forqueray's advice written in a footnote: "To play this in the way I should like it played, the performer should note how it is written, the right hand being hardly ever quite together with the left." This is consistent with a footnote accompanying "La D'Aubonne" in the fourth suite:

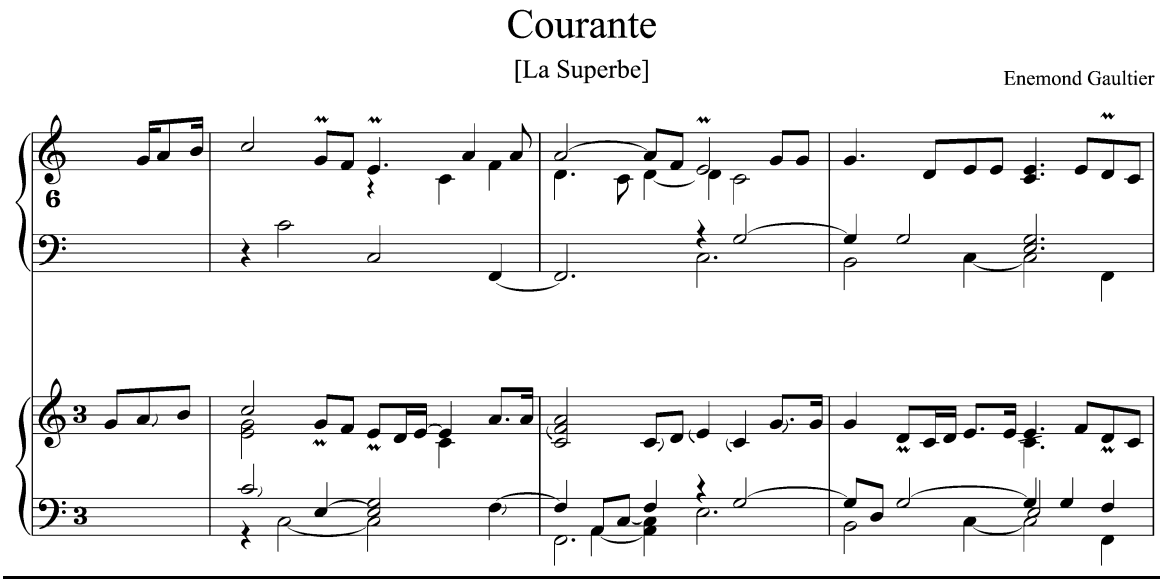
> "This piece must be played sensitively and with great taste; to show the proper interpretation I have added little crosses, which mean that the chords in the left hand should be played before those in the right. In all other places the right hand should play first."

In consideration of the time requirements of this degree recital, three of the middle movements of this suite are being omitted ("La Léon: Sarabande," "La Boisson," and "La Montigni"). "La Rameau" is a tribute to Jean-Philippe Rameau, and "La Guignon" is for Jean-Pierre Guignon, the Italian violinist who often played with Jean-Baptiste Forqueray. The reference of "La Sylva" is unknown, as is any reference for "Jupiter" beyond mythological stories. The concluding couplet vividly portrays the lightning bolts and thunder associated with Jupiter.

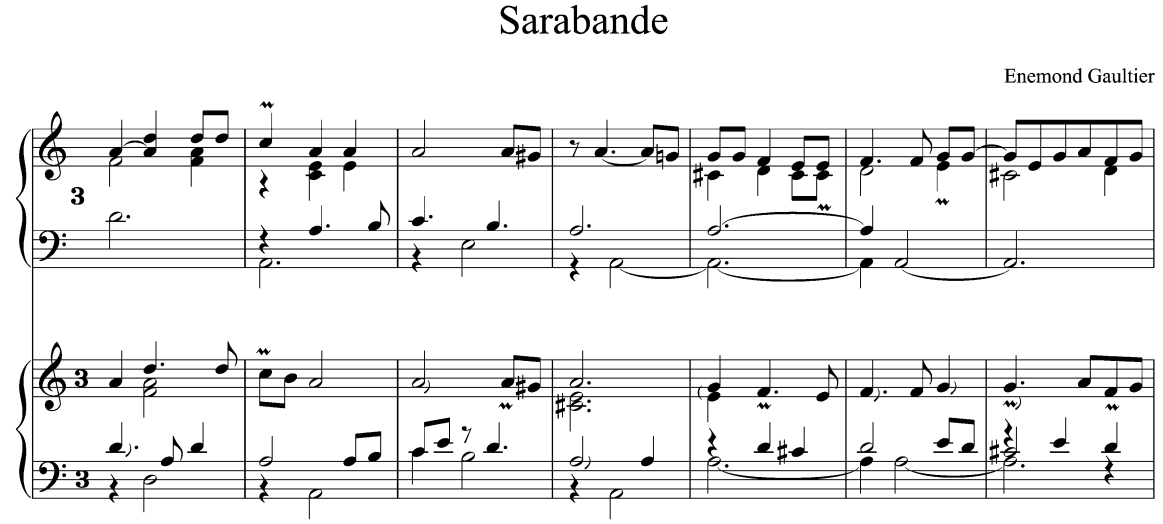
It is possible that "Jupiter" refers to Jean-Baptiste himself. His relationship with his father Antoine was difficult at best – Antoine beat him, had him jailed, and even attempted to have him banished from France. Antoine might have feared that his son's talents would eclipse his own. This relationship is similar to the relationship of the mythological Jupiter to his father Saturn, who was worried that one of his offspring would overthrow him, so he swallowed each one when it was born. Jupiter alone survived

because his mother handed Saturn a large rock wrapped in a blanket in the place of the infant. Jupiter would eventually grow up to defeat his father and the titans, and to become king of the gods himself.

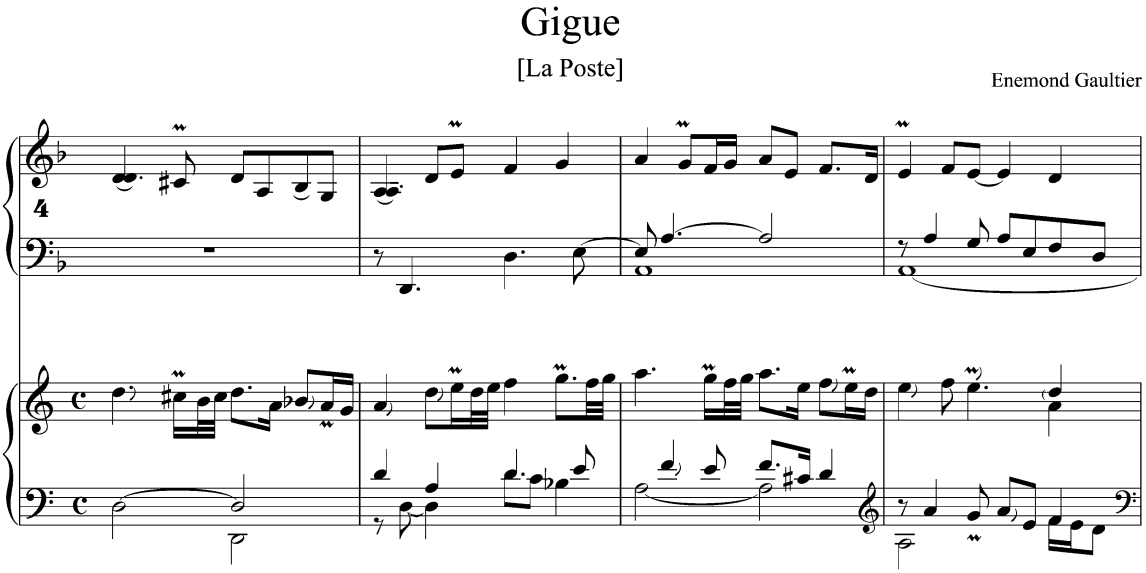
Musical Examples



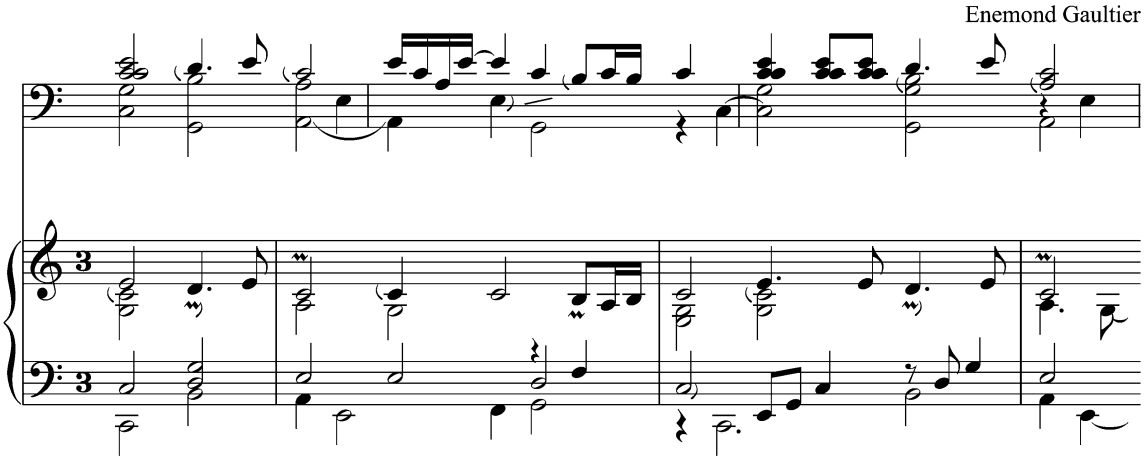
EXAMPLE 1: Opening measures of the Courante, "La Superbe," showing d'Anglebert's increased rhythmic activity and ornamentation. (Upper system: version for lute, transcribed by André Souris and transposed up from Bb; lower system: harpsichord transcription from the d'Anglebert autograph manuscript.)



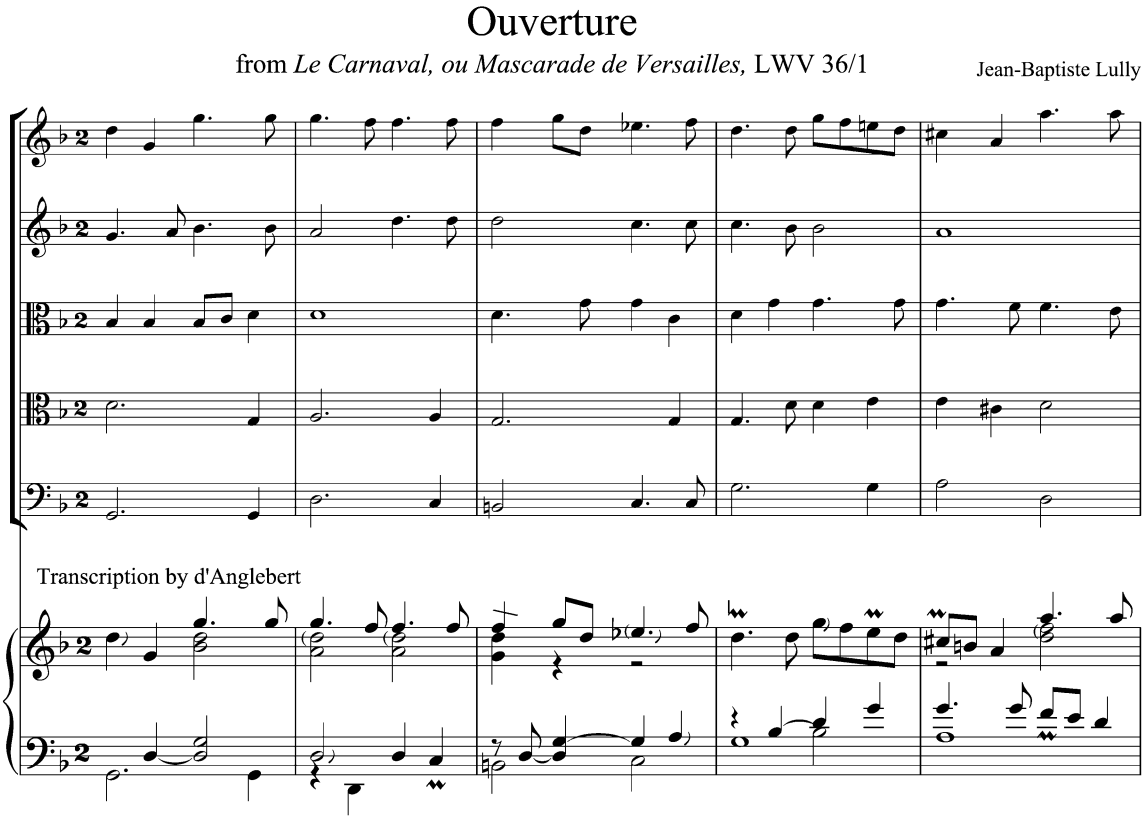
EXAMPLE 2: Opening measures of the Sarabande, showing differing choices about thickness and voicing of chords. (Upper system: version for lute, transcribed by André Souris from tablature and transposed up from A; lower system: harpsichord transcription from the d'Anglebert autograph manuscript.)



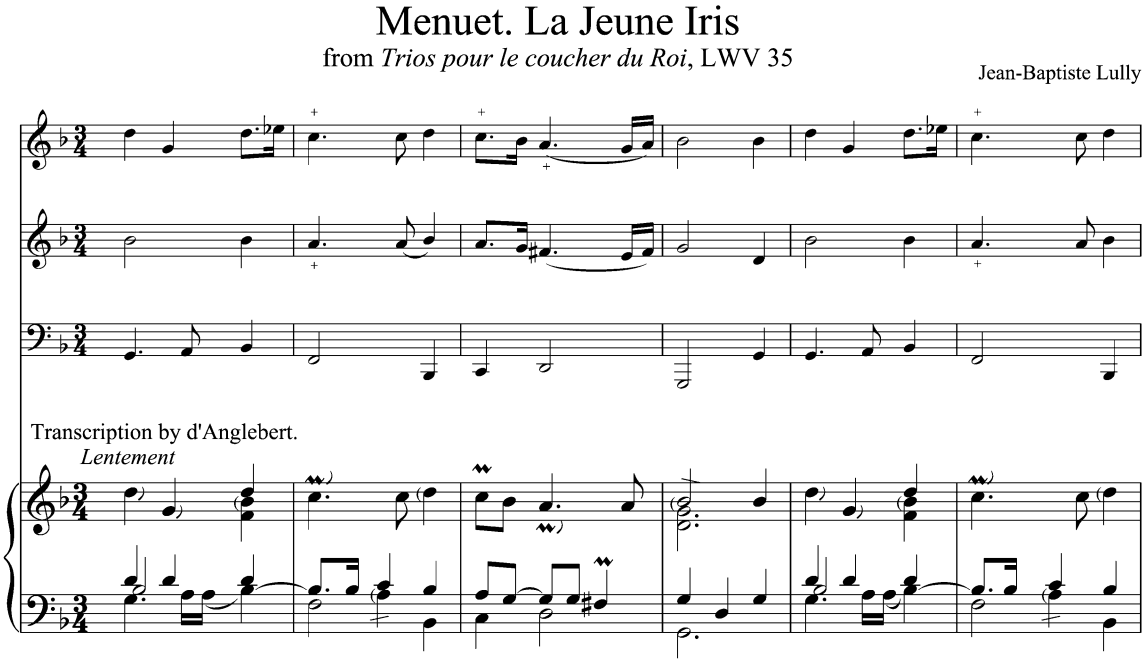
EXAMPLE 3: Opening measure of the Gigue, “La Poste,” showing increased rhythmic activity and ornamentation. (Upper system: version for lute, transcribed by André Souris from tablature; lower system: harpsichord transcription from the d'Anglebert autograph manuscript).



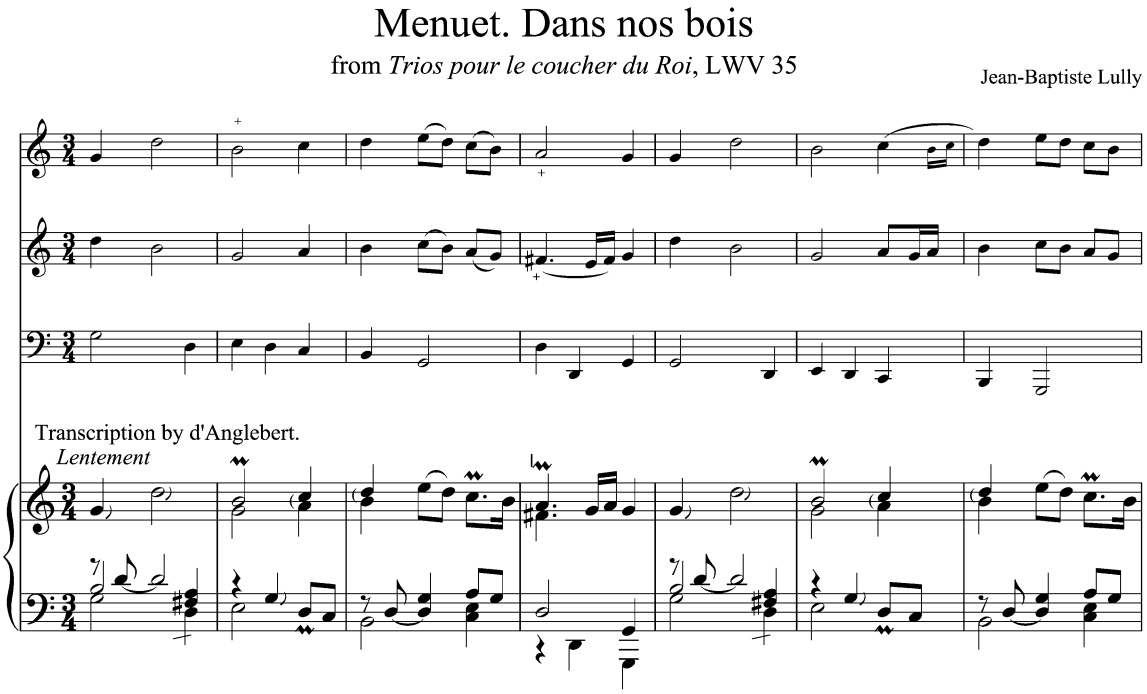
EXAMPLE 4: Opening measure of the Chaconne. (Upper system: version for lute, transcribed by Lucas Harris from tablature; lower system: harpsichord transcription from the d'Anglebert autograph manuscript).



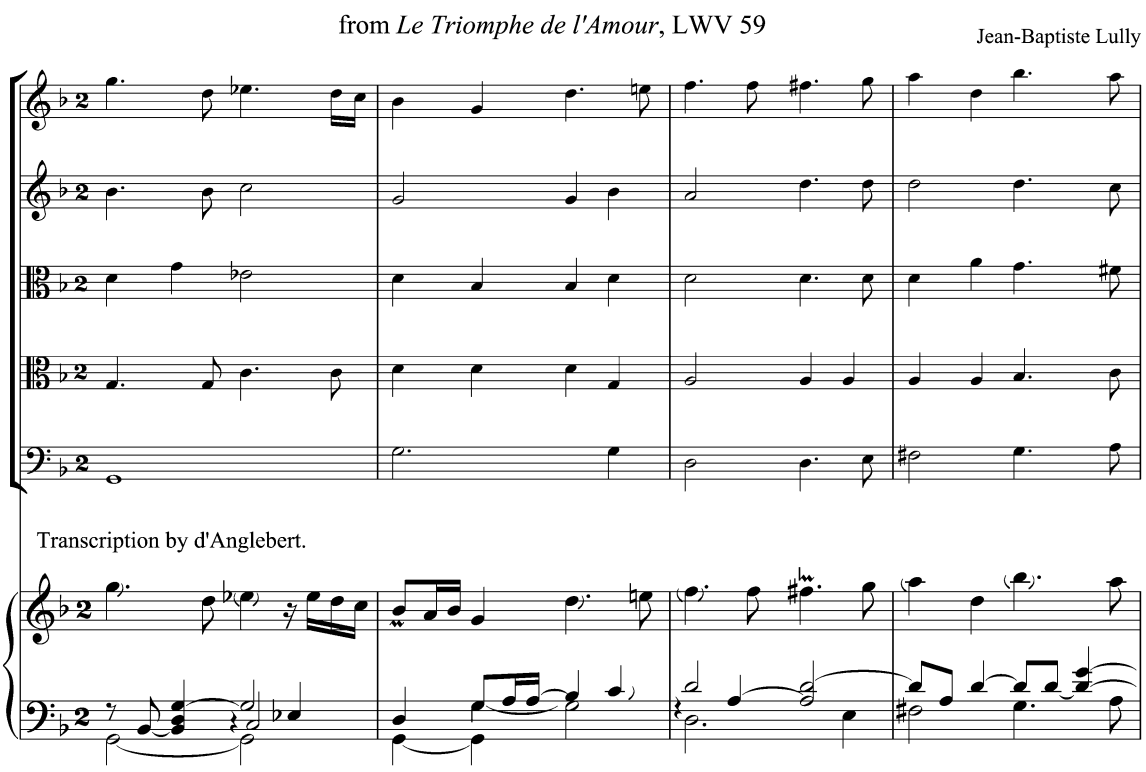
EXAMPLE 5: Opening measures of the Ouverture to *La Mascarade*, showing considerable ornamentation, and interesting choices of voicing, esp. in the first chord.



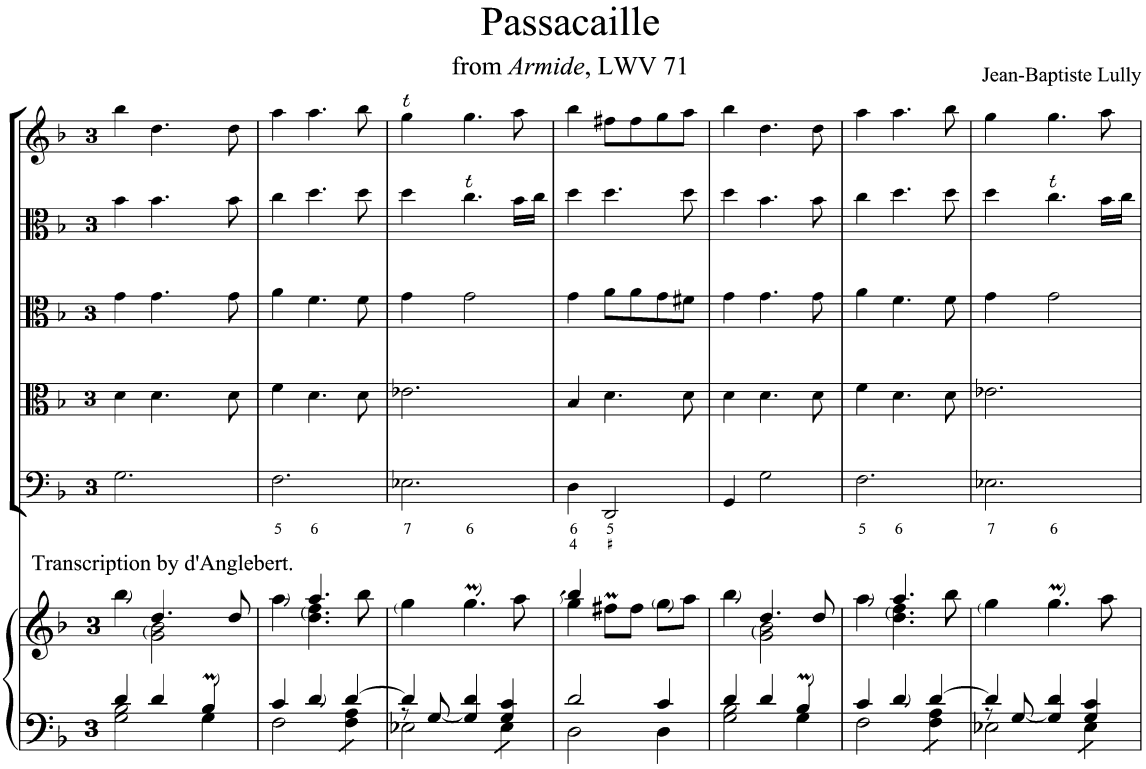
EXAMPLE 6: Opening measures of the "Menuet. La Jeune Iris." Lully's original instrumental score is transposed down a fourth to facilitate comparison.



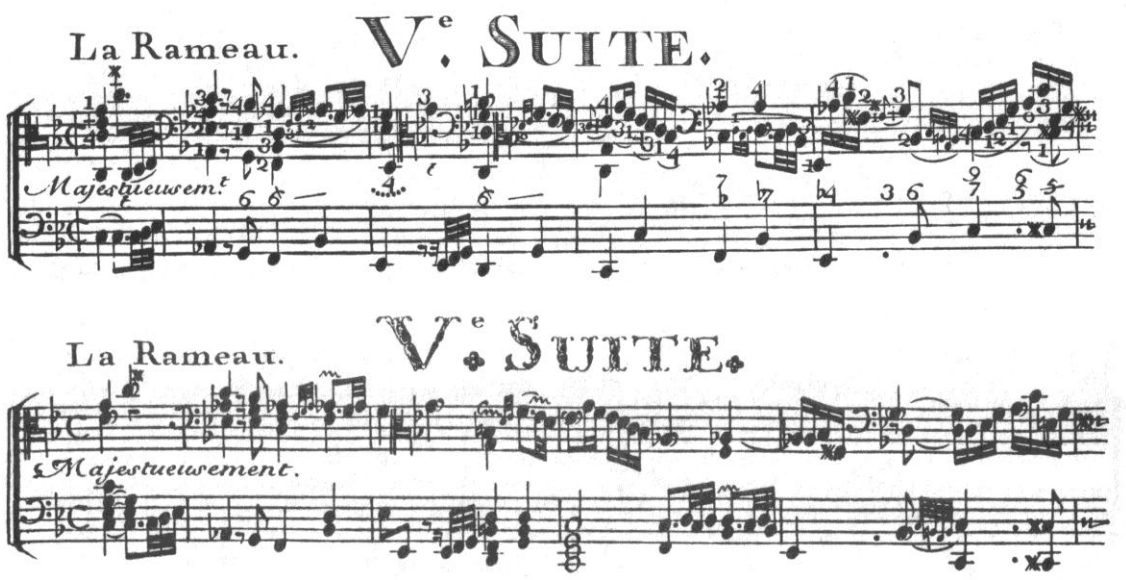
EXAMPLE 7: Opening measures of the “Menuet. Dans nos bois.” Lully's original instrumental score is transposed down a fourth to facilitate comparison.



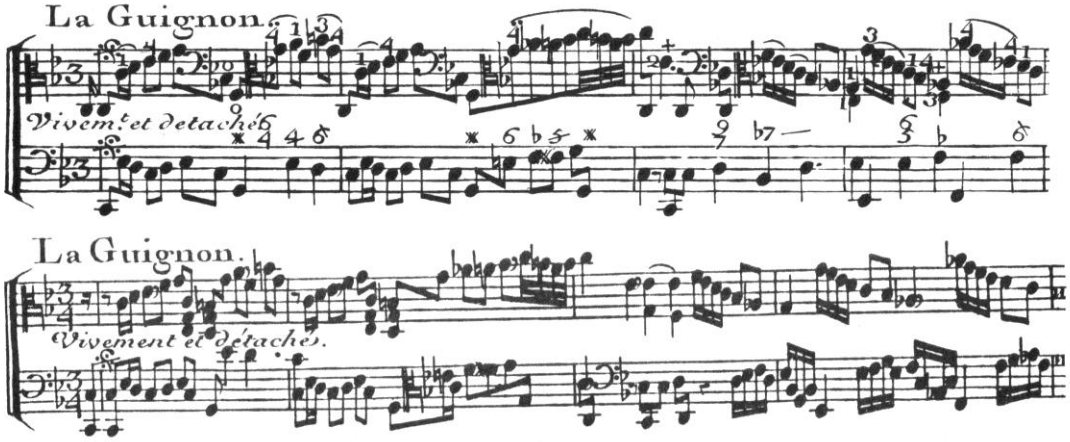
EXAMPLE 8: Opening measures of the “Entree d'Apollon,” again with considerable ornamentation and thin voicing of the first chord.



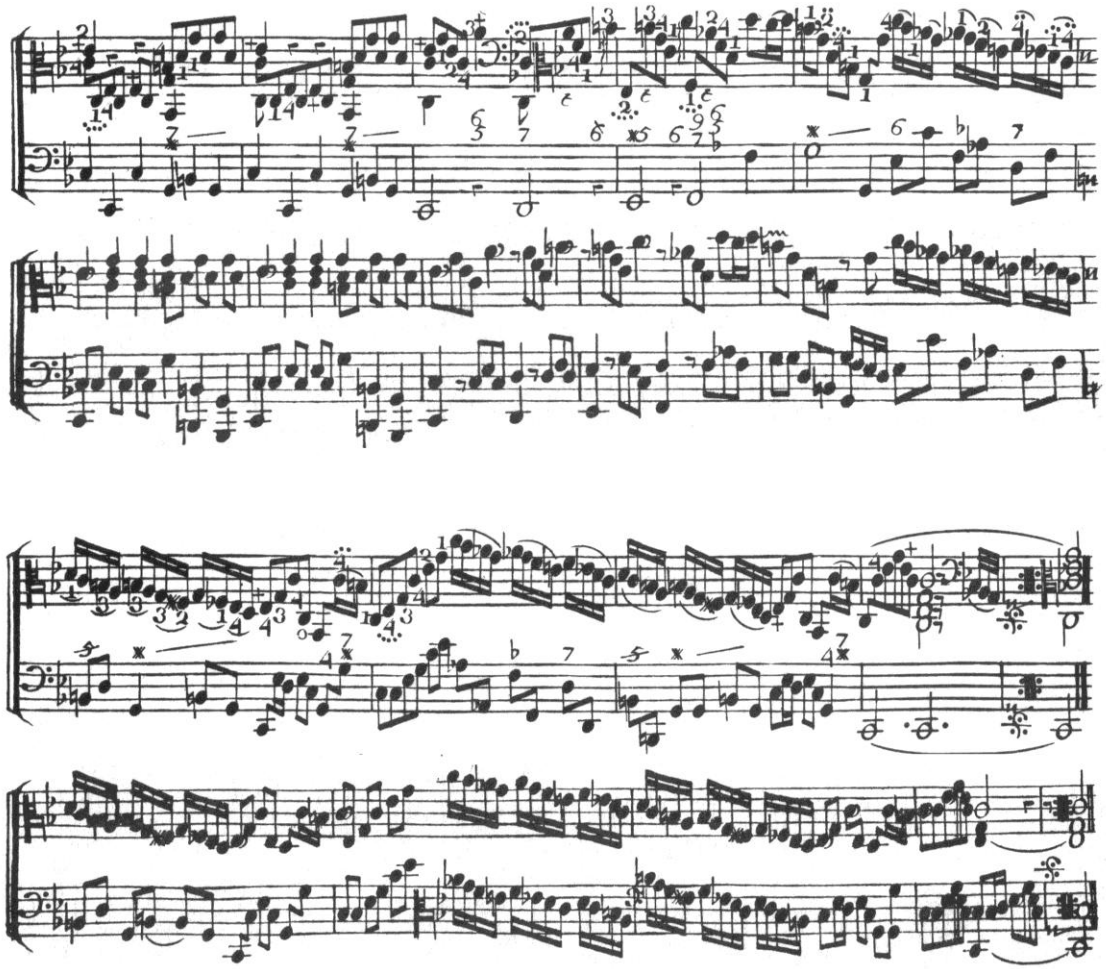
EXAMPLE 9: Opening measures of the Passacaille from *Armide*, showing rich ornamentation.



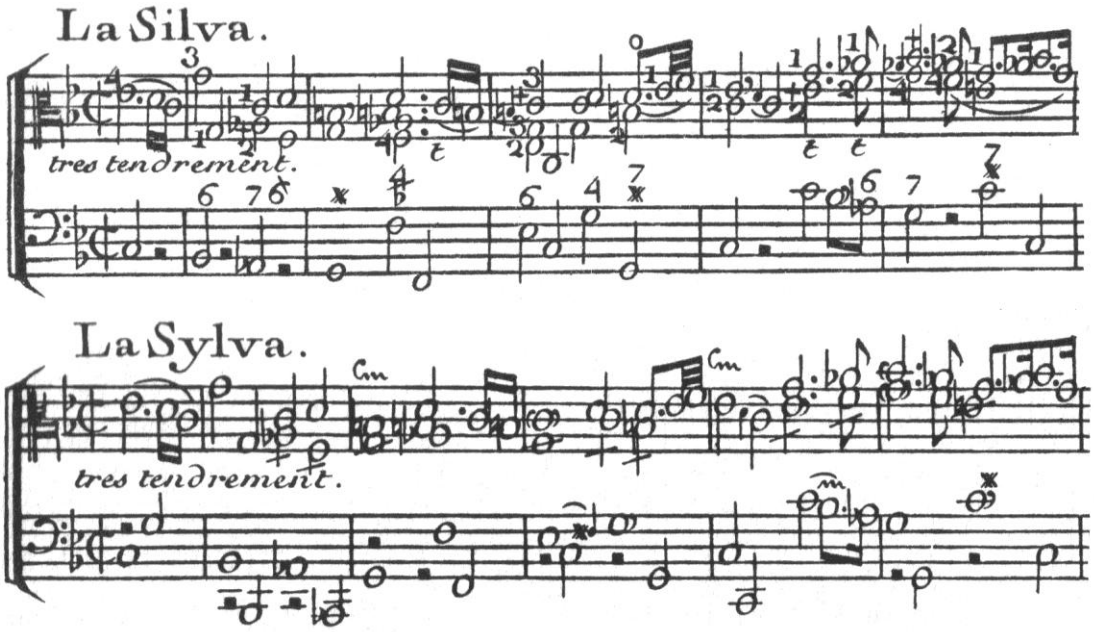
EXAMPLE 10: Opening measures of "La Rameau," showing thickened bass chords. (Upper system: version for gamba and continuo; lower system: transcription for harpsichord.)



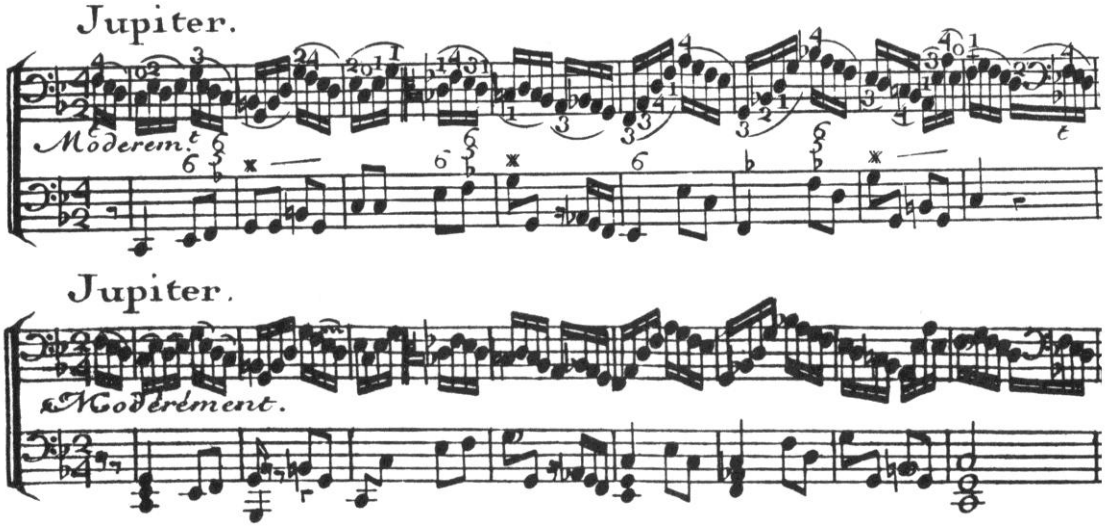
EXAMPLE 11: Opening measures of "La Guignon," showing arpeggiations in the bass part. (Upper system: version for gamba and continuo; lower system: transcription for harpsichord.)



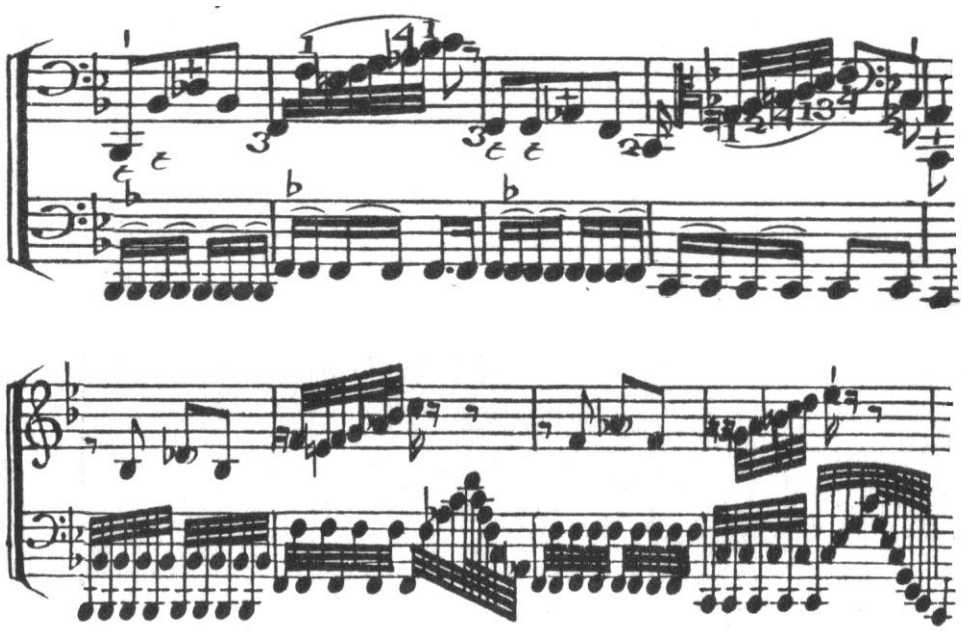
EXAMPLE 12: Concluding measures of "La Guignon." (Upper systems: version for gamba and continuo; lower systems: transcription for harpsichord.)



EXAMPLE 13: Opening measures of "La Silva," showing extra octaves and ornamentation. (Upper system: version for gamba and continuo; lower system: transcription for harpsichord.)



EXAMPLE 14: Opening measures of "Jupiter," showing thickened bass chords. (Upper system: version for gamba and continuo; lower system: transcription for harpsichord.)



EXAMPLE 15: Excerpt from the fourth couplet of "Jupiter," showing increased rhythmic activity and virtuosity in the bass part. (Upper system: version for gamba and continuo; lower system: transcription for harpsichord.)

Part Three: Transcription by Joseph Gascho (1973–)

Recital Program

La Descente d'Orphée
After *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*, H. 488
by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)
Ouverture
Entrée de nimphes et de bergers désespérés
Air d'Orphée
Sarabande
Les Fantômes

Suite in G Major
After *Suite in G Major for Violoncello Solo*, BWV 1007
by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Prelude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Menuets I and II
Gigue

Prelude and Chaconne
after "Sonata" and "Diverse Bizarrie sopra La Vecchia"
by Nicola Matteis (fl. c. 1670-c. 1698)

Program Notes

Having explored transcriptions by other composers in my first two doctoral recitals, this third and final recital features my own transcriptions. An important goal of this dissertation project has been to learn how to make music well-suited to the harpsichord, not only by studying examples from the old masters, but by actually putting notes on paper myself. The varied instrumentation and musical styles of the original works has demanded a unique transcription process for each one.

When I considered transcribing an early French opera, I thought first of the works of Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704). As a continuo harpsichordist, I'd enjoyed performing his works. Also, since he was a contemporary of Lully, it would be a good chance for me to compare my transcriptions with d'Anglebert's transcriptions of Lully, which were featured in my second recital. In Charpentier's opera *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* (The Descent of Orpheus to the Underworld), I found a number of pieces that appealed to me. Most of the vocal writing was too similar to recitative to suit transcription, but the instrumental pieces and one of the longer arias seemed perfect to transcribe.

The story of Orpheus is well known, but Charpentier's setting (perhaps incomplete) concludes at the point where Pluto allows Orpheus and Eurydice to return to the land of the living. To create a suite that made sense of these five extracted movements, I changed their order from the opera slightly, making the interlude "Les Fantômes" the concluding piece. (Originally, the opera concluded with the sarabande, performed lightly and probably rather quickly, but it never felt like the right ending to

this suite.) I have taken the liberty of transposing the sarabande from the key of D to the key of F, and of performing it more slowly than it was probably intended. Sometimes I perform this piece two octaves lower than I've written it, and with buff stop engaged. The transposition helps to create a key structure for the suite with the pieces in A portraying above-ground events and the pieces in F portraying the underworld events.

The ouverture opens with the wedding of Orpheus and Eurydice. The following movement portrays the despair of the nymphs and shepherds after the death of Eurydice, bitten by a snake. Filled with despair, Orpheus is prevented from suicide by his father Apollo, who also urges him to descend to Hades to plead with Pluto for Eurydice's life. The third movement is the air that Orpheus sings to charm Ixion, Tantalus, Tityus and other shades in Hades: "Cease, cease, you infamous culprits; no more fill this dread place with your cries. The torments you endure cannot compare to my fate." In my suite, the sarabande represents the peace and relief that the shades receive from his singing. The final movement is the dance of Pluto and Proserpina before they grant Orpheus's wish and return Eurydice to him.

Except for the "Air d'Orphée," which was originally in four parts (two gambas, Orpheus, and continuo), the other pieces were written in three parts (two trebles and continuo). This texture is not difficult to transcribe; most of it could have been played almost exactly as written. To my ear, however, that kind of texture – with two high treble parts and a much lower continuo part – did not work on the harpsichord. The upper voices competed instead of blending. What I found most effective, and following what d'Anglebert often did, was to try to isolate the upper voice by moving the lower treble part down an octave (examples 1-3) or by reducing the lower part's rhythmic activity

(examples 1, 5 and 6). By that, I mean tying notes together or simplifying the rhythms so that the upper voice would be more independent. In several cases, following the example of Reinken/Bach in the expositions of fugal sections, I've left out the bass line entirely, or delayed its entrance, to highlight the upper part and to create stronger contrast of texture (examples 2 and 7).

Again following d'Anglebert's example, not just in his operatic transcriptions but also in his lute transcriptions, I often added extra notes in the secondary voices to keep the sound of the harpsichord blooming and to support the harmony as a continuo player might have done (examples 4 and 6). Example 8 shows another way of adding material by the addition of a new bass line in eighth note diminutions. Finally, Charpentier wrote almost no ornaments into his score, so I added considerable ornamentation, again trying to follow the example of d'Anglebert (example 1). All of the ornaments I've used come from d'Anglebert's table of ornaments, approximated as closely as possible by the Sibelius music notation software I used.

In contrast, transcribing Bach's first cello suite presented a completely different set of challenges. The first one was to get up enough courage to rework a masterpiece by a great composer. When I told people about this project, the most common response was, "Why would you want to do that?" The answer is that I could learn a lot from working closely with this great piece, and since I do not play cello very well, I wanted to find a way to play this piece on harpsichord. (During a serious bout with tendinitis, I did try to play some of the cello suites on the organ pedals.) Another part of the answer is that Bach made many transcriptions of his own works. Many of his harpsichord concerti (BWV 1052-1059) are transcriptions of concerti for other instruments, and the first two

movements of the Concerto in D minor (BWV 1052) were further transcribed to become movements of the cantata *Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen* (BWV 146). I think this is the kind of project he would have encouraged.

Instead of simply reworking the musical framework as I did in the Charpentier, here I had to take a single line and expand it into two or more parts. As with many of Bach's "lines," this one for solo cello is complex and often implies two or more different parts within a single line. One of the greatest characteristics of Bach's cello suites is how he combines melody and harmony and even counterpoint within a single line, often leading listeners to hear what is not really there. I felt the danger in this transcription of making things too heavy or too obvious, and ruining the subtlety of the original.

I took the keyboard suites of Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707), whom Bach admired, as my stylistic model. Using an earlier musical style than the original piece as the basis of my transcription almost makes it seem like a predecessor or prequel. Buxtehude's suites exemplify good harpsichord writing, especially in terms of a kind of loose and easy-going polyphony which well suited my goal of teasing out the various lines and implications of Bach's single cello part.

In transcribing this cello suite, I usually moved the original cello line an octave higher, and then added a bass part. Sometimes I would divide the original line between the bass and treble parts, and occasionally I kept the cello part in the bass line and compose a new treble part (example 14). Composing a new treble part proved difficult, and I had to give up several attempts at this. I also tried to divide the lines freely into multiple voices, not only to give a sense of polyphony, but also to create a richer sound through overholding certain notes (examples 13, 15, 16 and 18). This overholding of

notes is amplified even more in the prelude, where the crossing of hands on two separate manuals creates an even richer sound (examples 9 and 10).

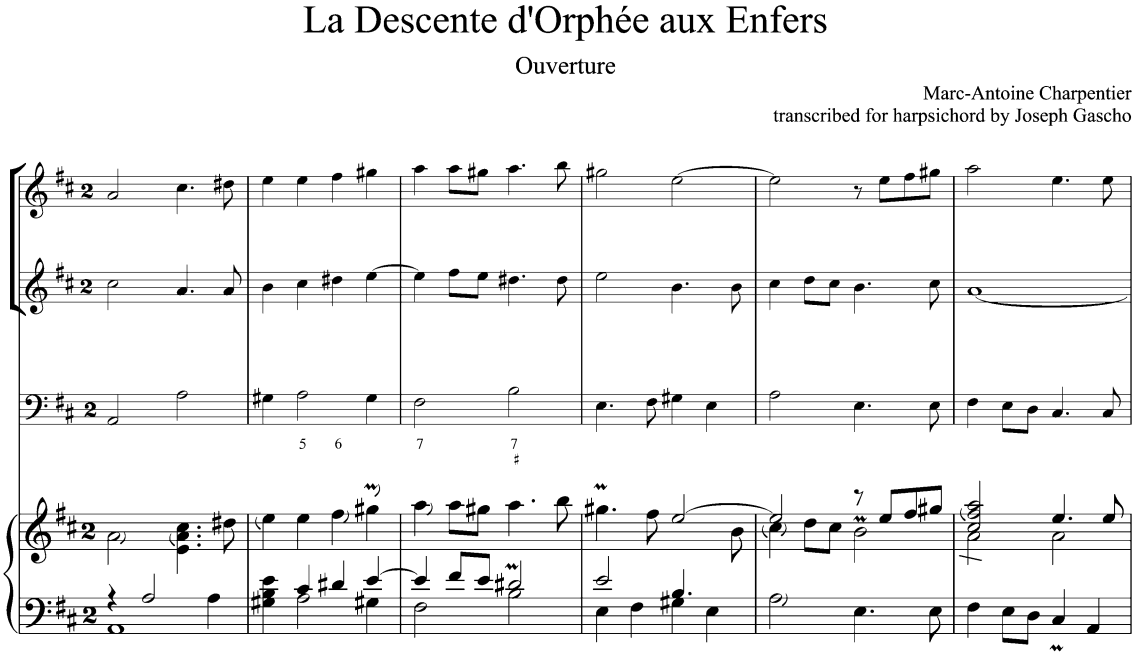
I removed all the slurs that were in the original cello part, as I did in in the Matteis transcription as well. I sometimes tried to preserve the effect of slurs in my transcribing, and I think there is much value in seeing where slurs were added by Bach. More importantly, though, notated slurs are rare and generally not idiomatic in baroque keyboard music — though interestingly Bach did write some slurs in his Reinken and Vivaldi transcriptions. I am sure players still slurred notes together in the past, and have therefore decided to leave those choices up to the performer today.

The concluding two pieces by Nicola Matteis brought yet different challenges: in the first movement to enrich the relatively spare texture, and in the second movement to write a varied and creative left hand realization of a chaconne bass line, four measures long, that is repeated 38 times. In transcribing the Sonata, one model for me was the first movement of Bach's transcription of Reinken's Sonata in A Minor. I used two other techniques that I have rarely seen in the harpsichord repertoire, but which I felt it worked quite well here. The first is the use of extended passages in parallel thirds (example 21), seen sometimes in works of Domenico Scarlatti, but not often in this kind of more lyrical piece. The second is the very wide spacing of the closing bars, requiring that the tenor voice be played alternatively by the left and right thumbs (example 22). In these cases, I was looking to create new sonorities rather than to just emulate baroque models.

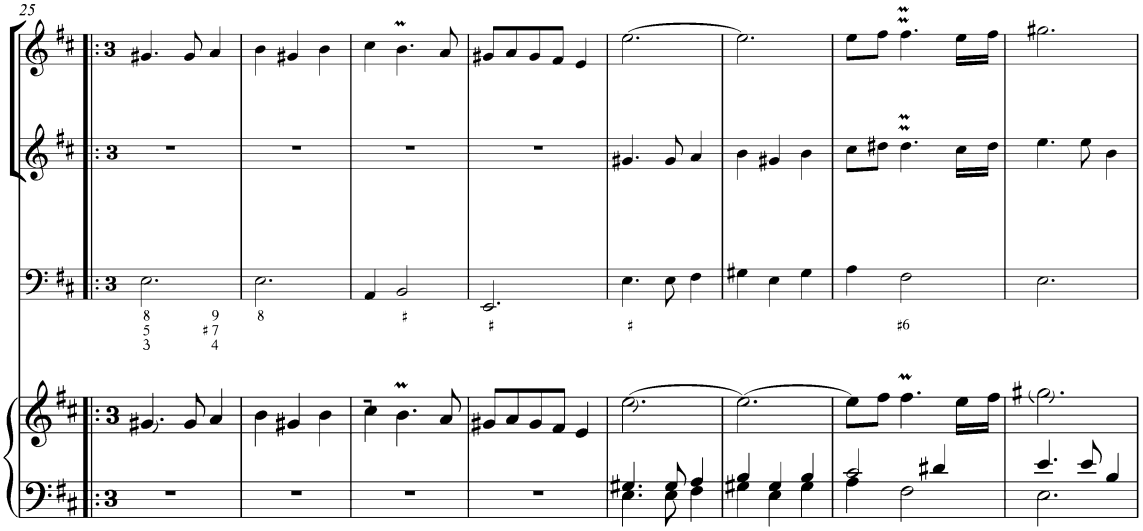
In transcribing the "Diverse bizzarie sopra la Vecchia" (Diverse eccentricities on 'La Vecchia'), I rarely changed any notes in the melody, focusing instead on the left hand accompaniment. I tried to create a wide range of accompanying figures, changing the

range, rhythm and thickness to suit the affect of the tune. The accompaniment is in a fairly rustic and guitar-like style, so I haven't tried to avoid parallel octaves and fifths (example 24) – similar examples can again be seen in numerous Scarlatti sonatas. As in my Bach transcription, I also added some polyphony in the accompaniment to create richer sounds and imply multiple voices. In a few variations, I moved the tune to the bass and inner parts (Examples 25 and 26). While I tried to create a great deal of variety in the accompaniment, several times in the course of the piece I intentionally returned to the simple chaconne rhythm first heard at the beginning, in order to give several strong structural points among the many repetitions of the bass line.

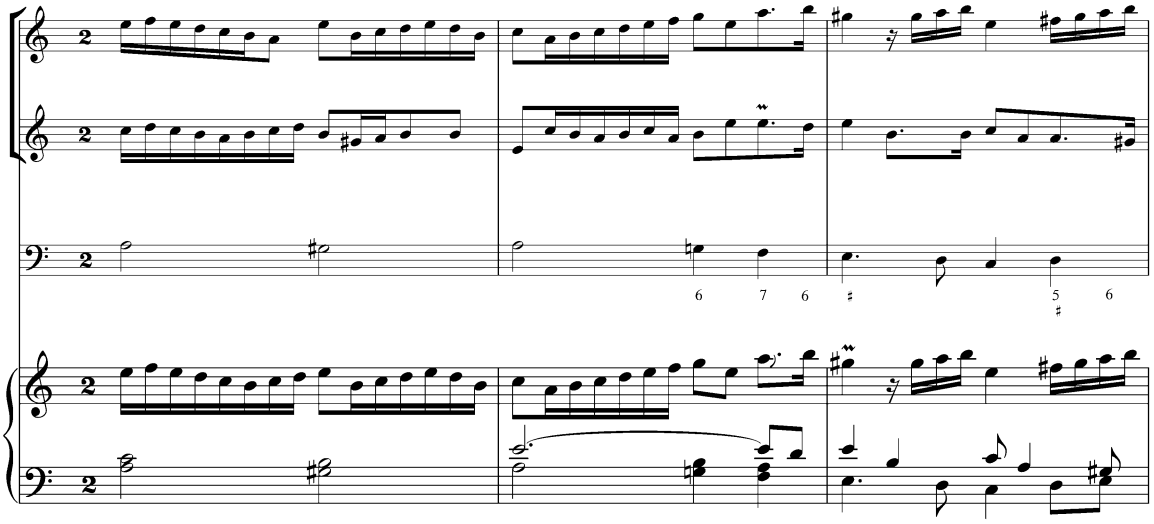
Musical Examples



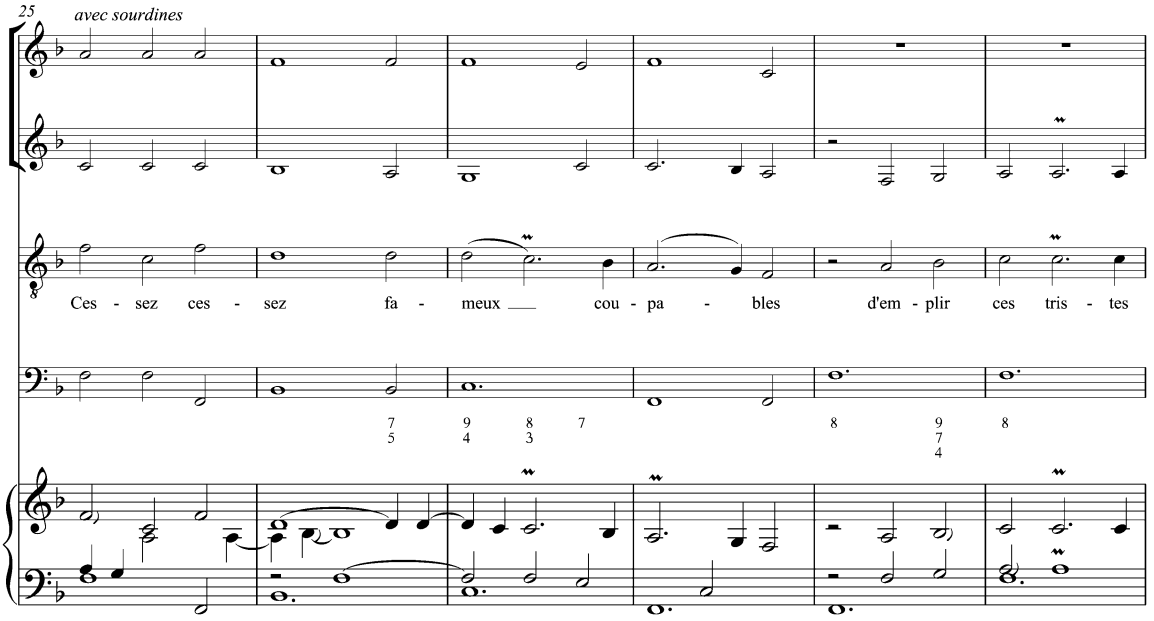
EXAMPLE 1: The opening measures of the Ouverture to *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*, with transcription below, showing ornamentation, octave transfer of the alto voice in mm.1-3, and rhythmic simplification of accompanying voices in mm. 1, 3, and 6.



EXAMPLE 2: Measures 25-32 of the Overture, showing a delayed bass entrance (like the Reinken/Bach fugues) and a rhythmically simplified alto line in m. 31.



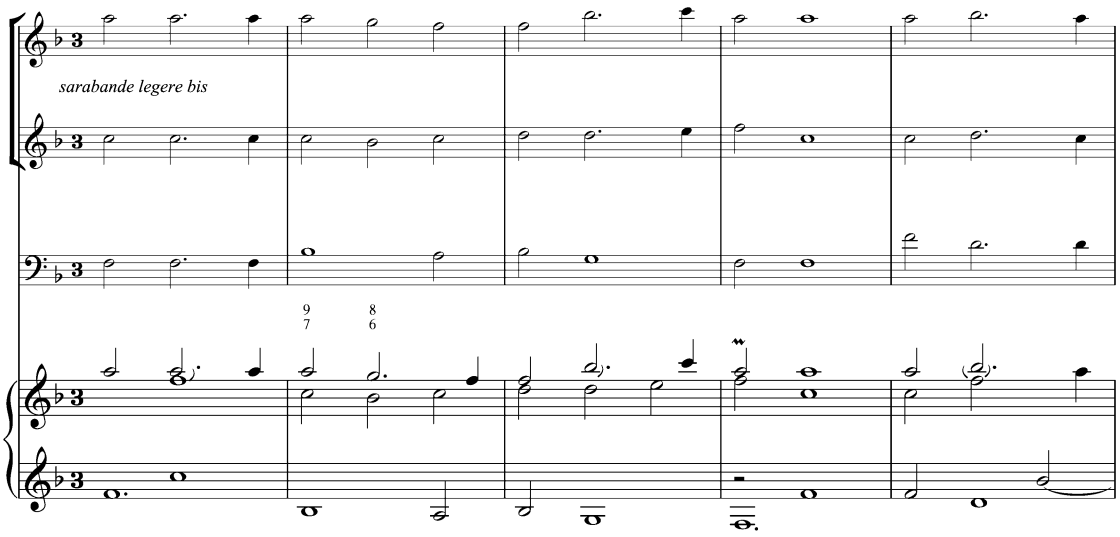
EXAMPLE 3: Opening measures of the “Entrée de Nimphes et de Bergers désespérés,” showing a much thinner texture and octave transfer of the alto voice.



EXAMPLE 4: Vocal entrance in the “Air d'Orphée,” showing *style brisé* writing and ornamentation.

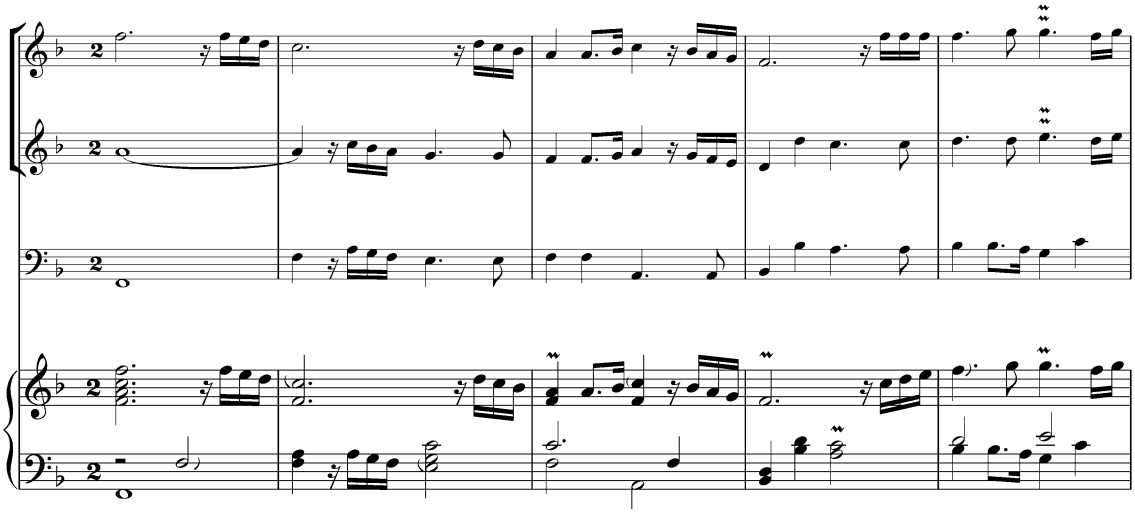
Sarabande

(Transposed up from D; originally in white notation.)

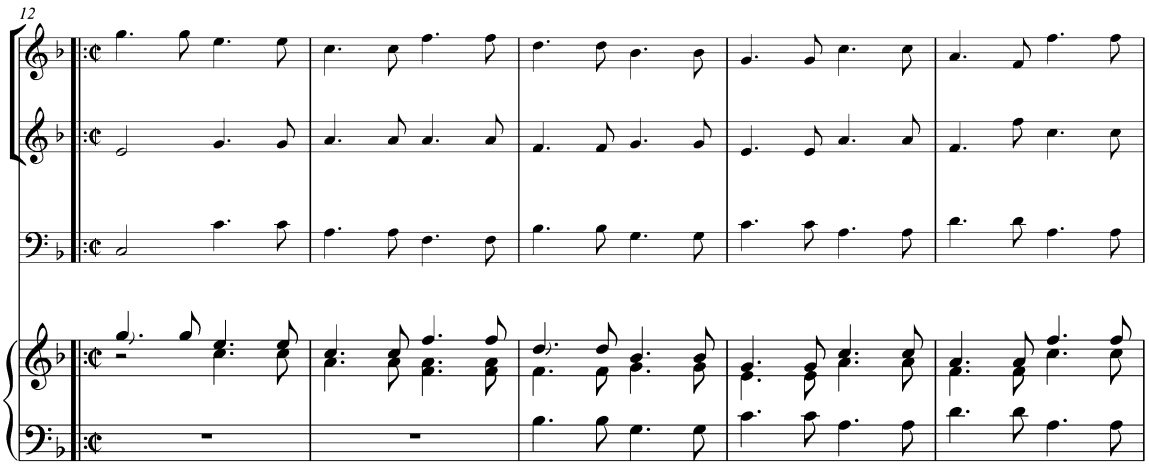


EXAMPLE 5: Opening measures of the Sarabande, showing octave transfer of the bass line, creating contrast to the lower range of the previous air.

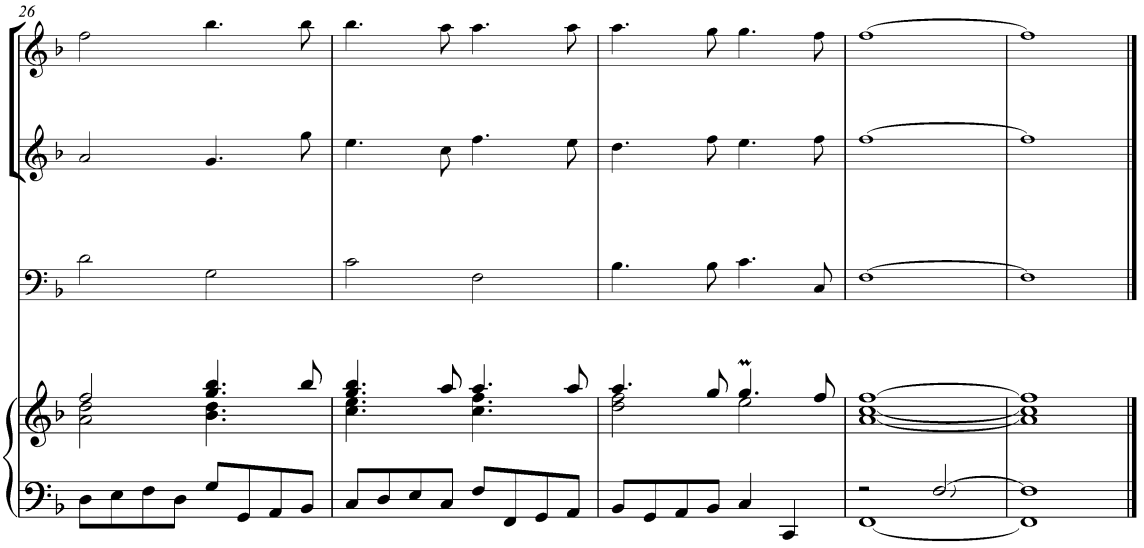
Les Fantômes



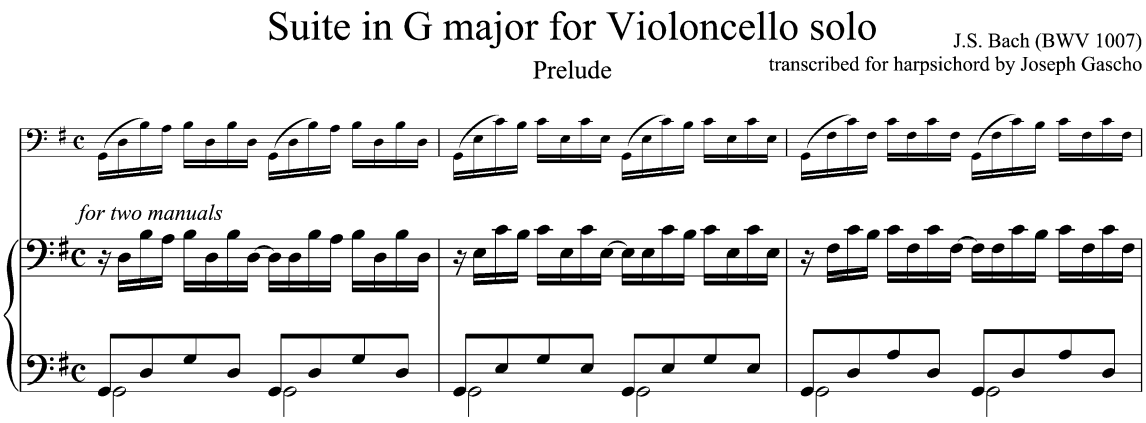
EXAMPLE 6: Opening measures of "Les Fantômes," showing a thicker opening chord and simplification of the alto voice.



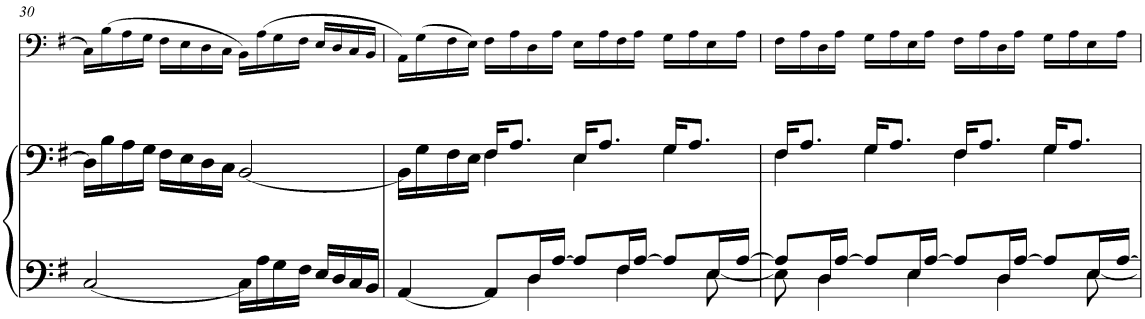
EXAMPLE 7: Measures 12-16 of "Les Fantômes," like example 2, showing delayed entrances of the lower parts.



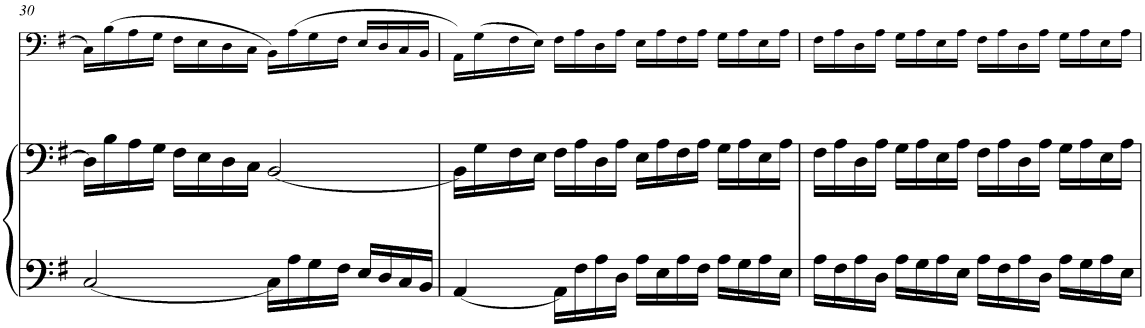
EXAMPLE 8: Measures 26-30 of "Les Fantômes," showing a diminished bass line and thicker treble chords.



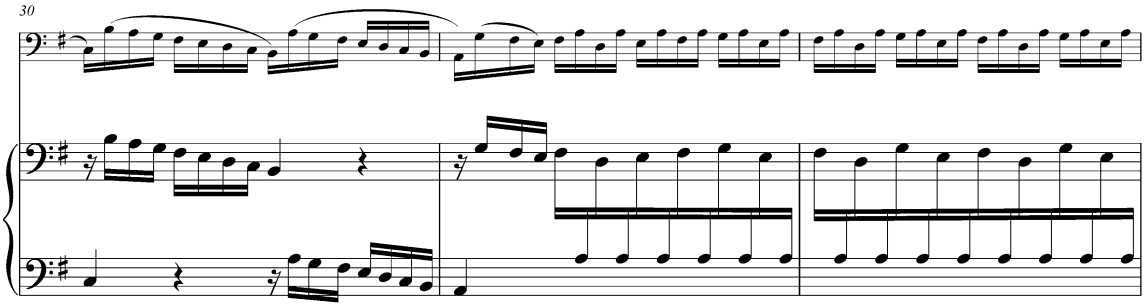
EXAMPLE 9: Opening measures of the Prelude from the Suite in G Major for Violoncello Solo, with transcription below. I tried to create a pattern that could work well on harpsichord, and would take advantage of the sonic possibilities of a two manual instrument.



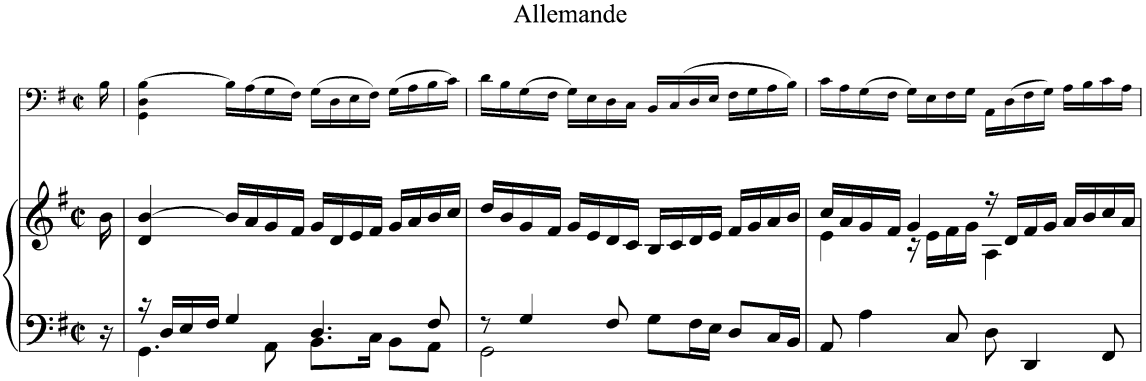
EXAMPLE 10: Measures 30-32 of the Prelude, again exploiting the possibilities of a two manual harpsichord.



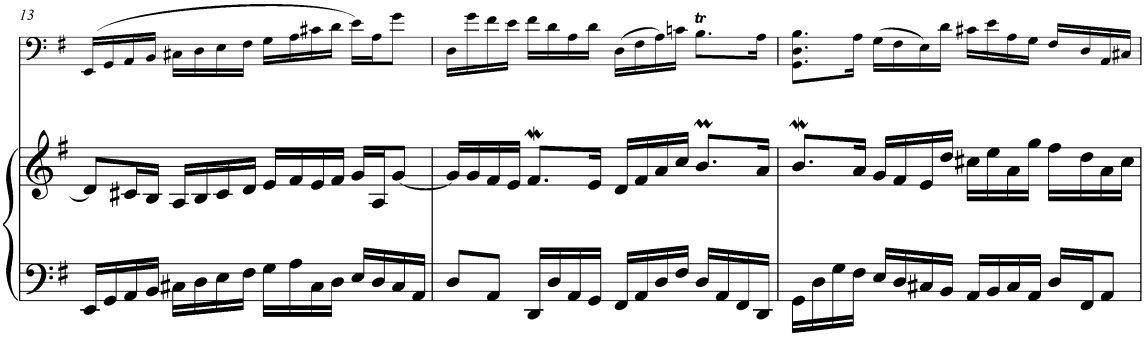
EXAMPLE 11: An earlier version of example 10.



EXAMPLE 12: An even earlier version of example 10.

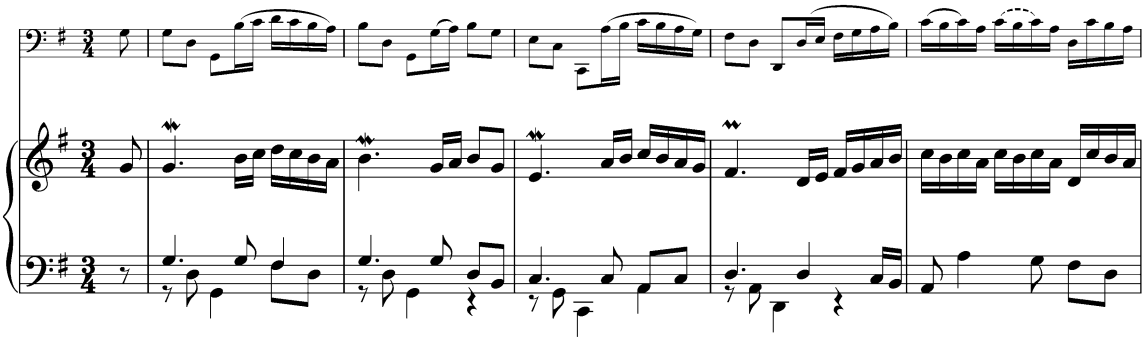


EXAMPLE 13: The opening measures of the Allemande, showing a new bass line, and a freely voiced three-part polyphony.



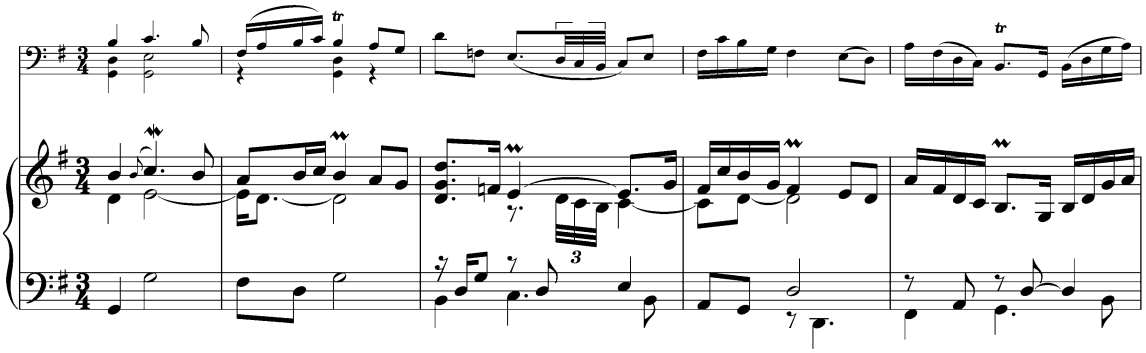
EXAMPLE 14: Measures 13-15 of the Allemande – measure 13 shows one of the few times I moved the entire cello part to the left hand of the harpsichord part.

Courante



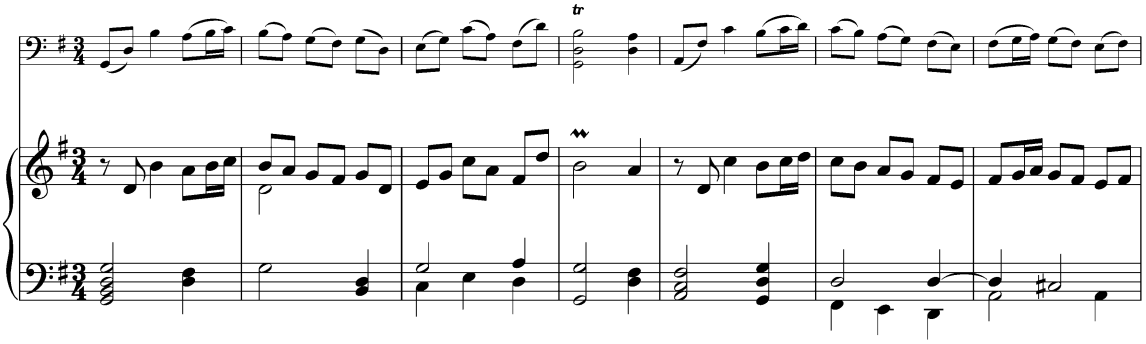
EXAMPLE 15: Opening measures of the Courante, showing a primarily three-part polyphony.

Sarabande



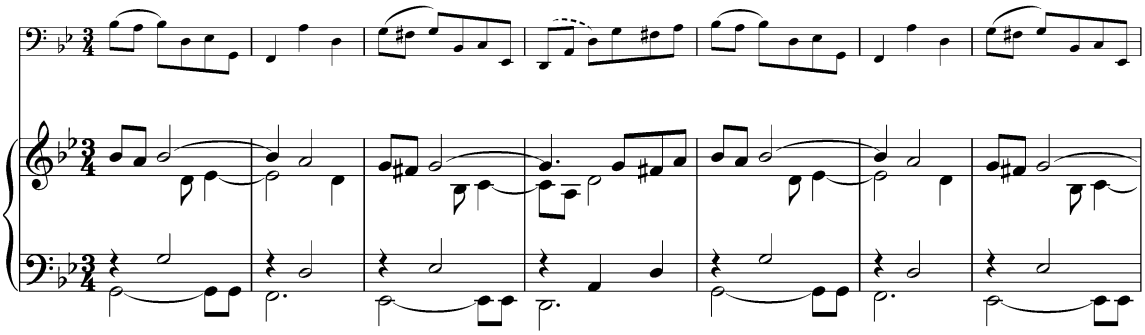
EXAMPLE 16: Opening measures of the Sarabande.

Menuet I



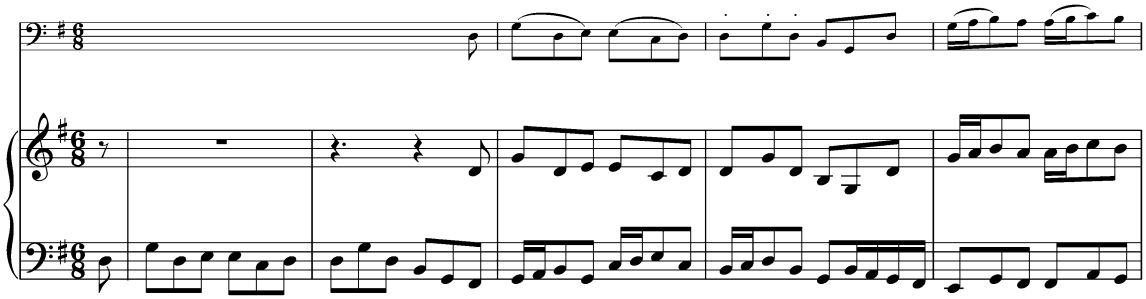
EXAMPLE 17: Opening measures of the first Menuet.

Menuet II

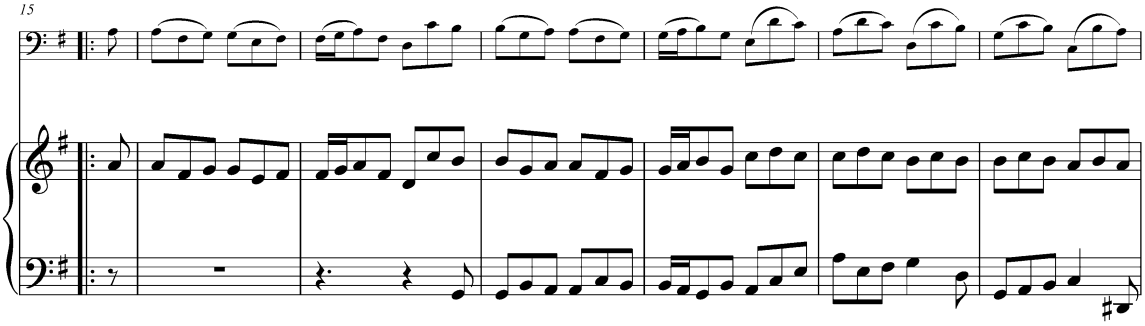


EXAMPLE 18: Opening measures of the second Menuet, showing a four-part texture.

Gigue



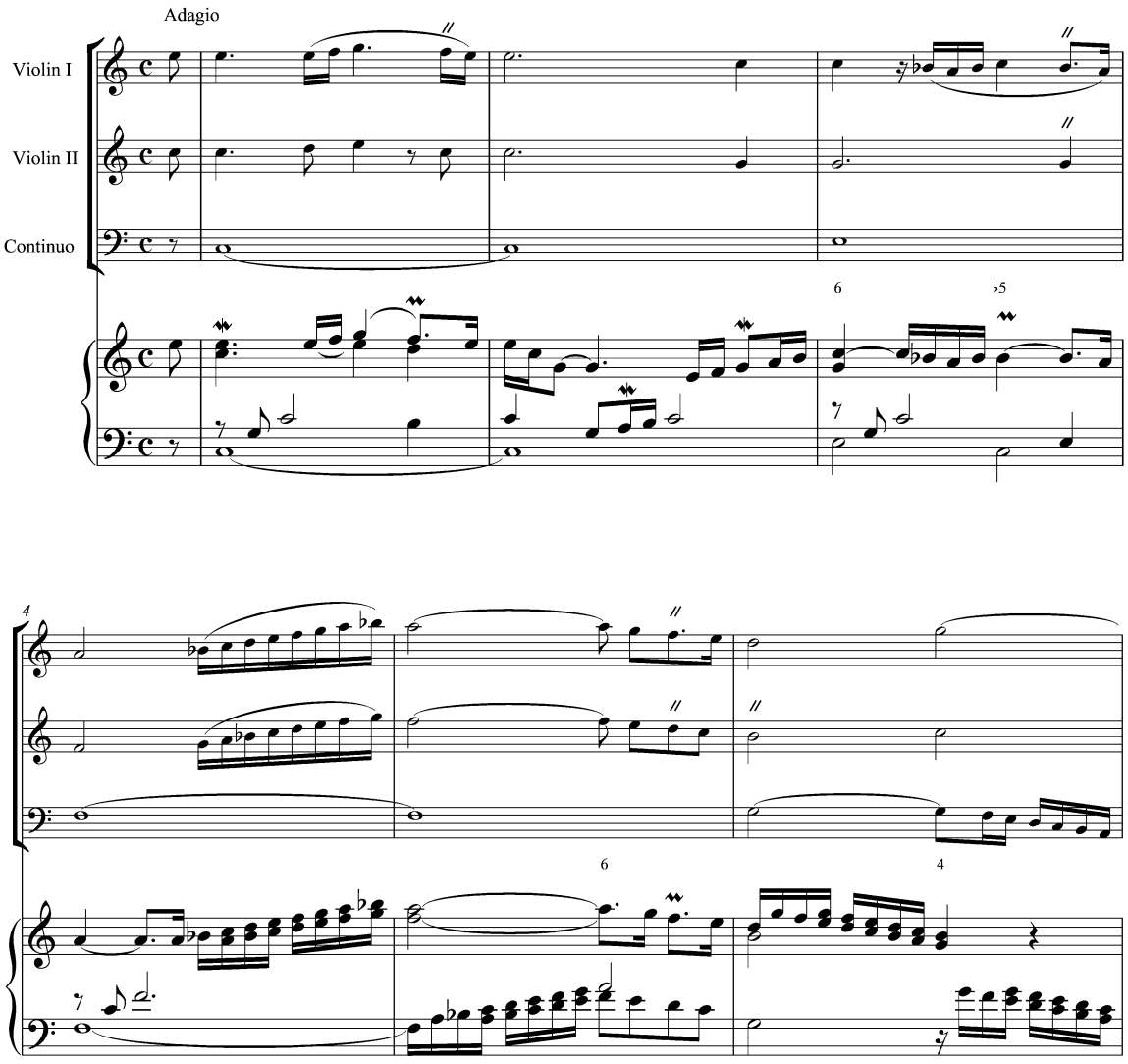
EXAMPLE 19: Opening measures of the Gigue, showing an added thematic entry in the bass part, meant to contrast the beginning of the second half, which begins with the top voice alone.



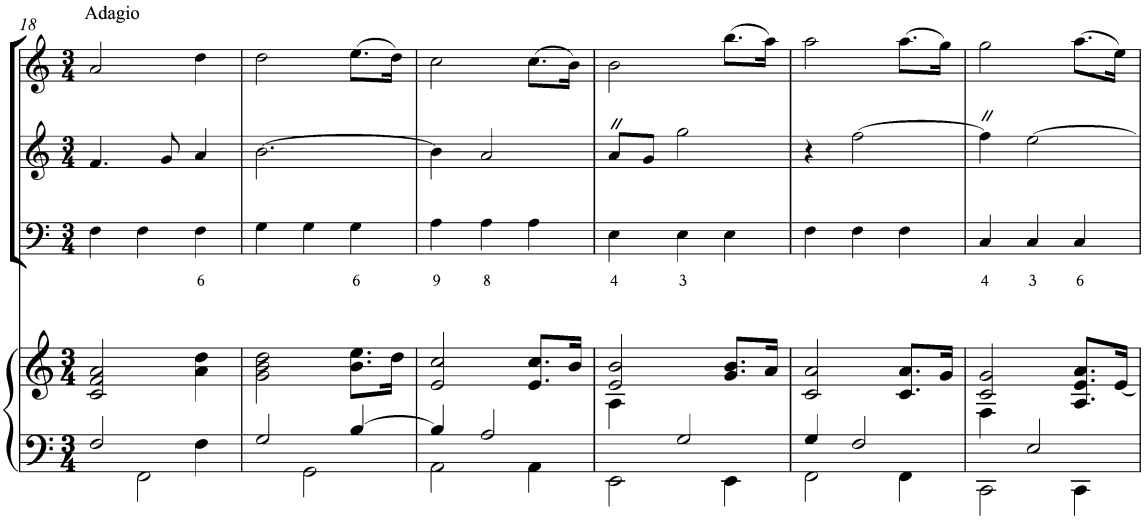
EXAMPLE 20: Measures 18-23 of the Gigue, the beginning of the second half.

Sonata

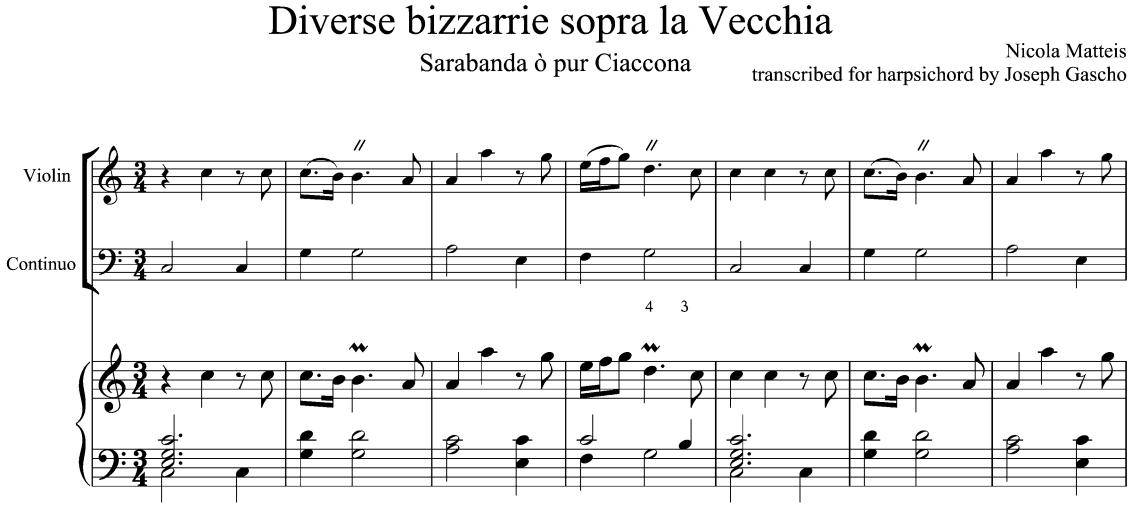
Nicola Matteis
transcribed for harpsichord by Joseph Gascho



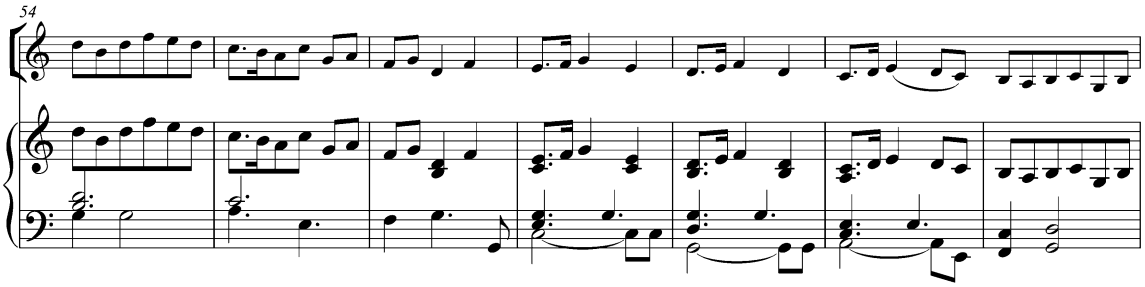
EXAMPLE 21: Opening measures of the Sonata (for two violins and continuo), with transcription below, showing additional scales, arpeggiated figures and a transformation into a loose four-part texture.



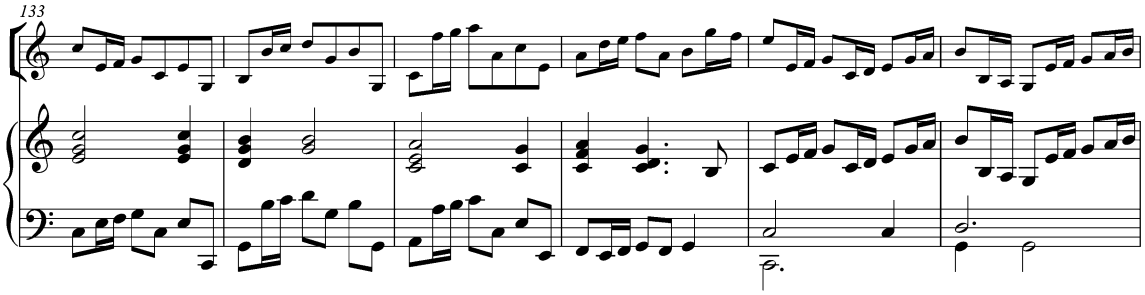
EXAMPLE 22: Measures 18-23 of the Sonata, showing a kind of "three-hand" technique, where the right and left thumbs must alternate to play the tenor voice.



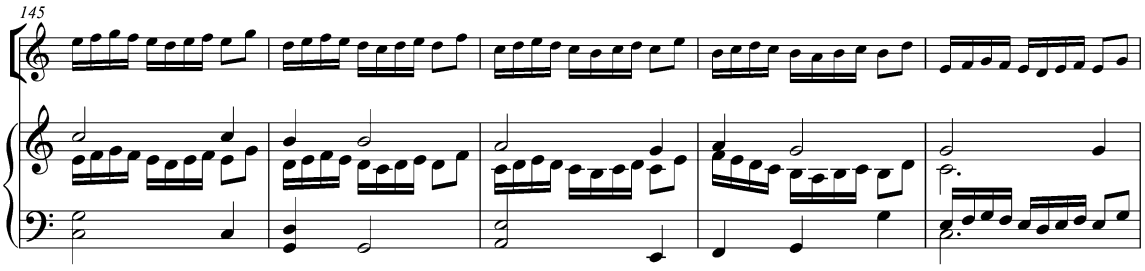
EXAMPLE 23: Opening measures of "Diverse bizzarrie sopra la Vecchia."



EXAMPLE 24: Measures 54-60 of "Diverse bizzarrie sopra la Vecchia," showing rhythmic variety in the left hand part, and blatant parallel fifths in the final measure.



EXAMPLE 25: Measures 133-138 of "Diverse bizzarrie sopra la Vecchia," showing the tune in the left hand, and the accompanying part in the right hand.



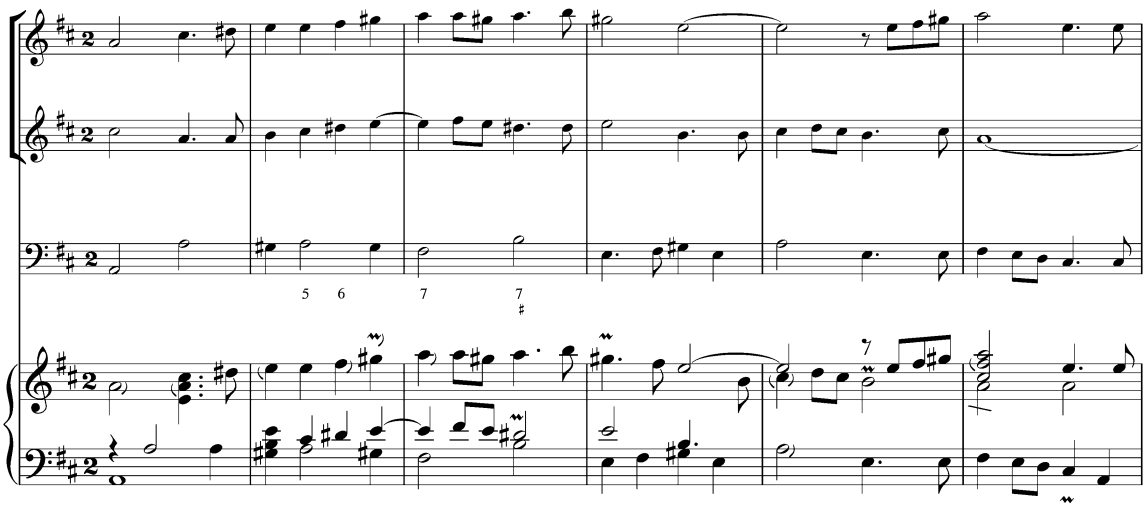
EXAMPLE 26: Measures 143-147 of "Diverse bizzarrie sopra la Vecchia," showing the tune first in the alto, and then the beginning of the tune in the tenor voice.

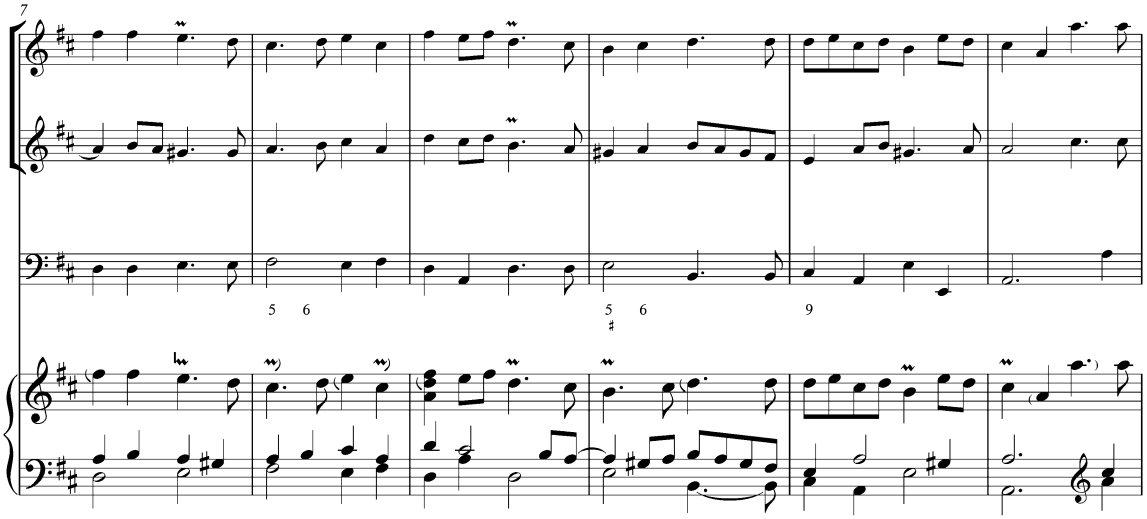
Part Four: Transcriptions in Comparative Score

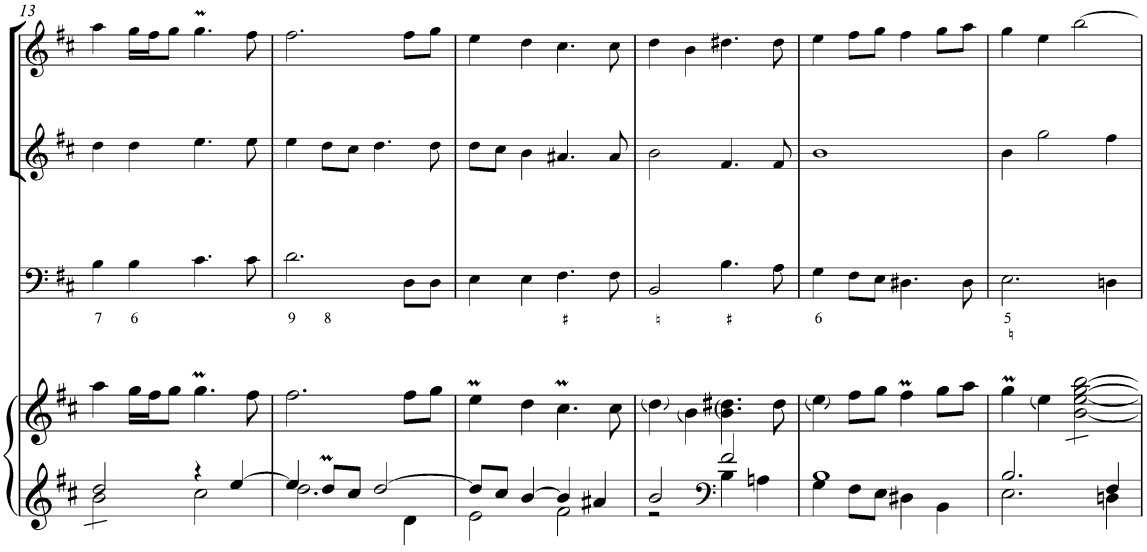
La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers

Ouverture

Marc-Antoine Charpentier
transcribed for harpsichord by Joseph Gascho



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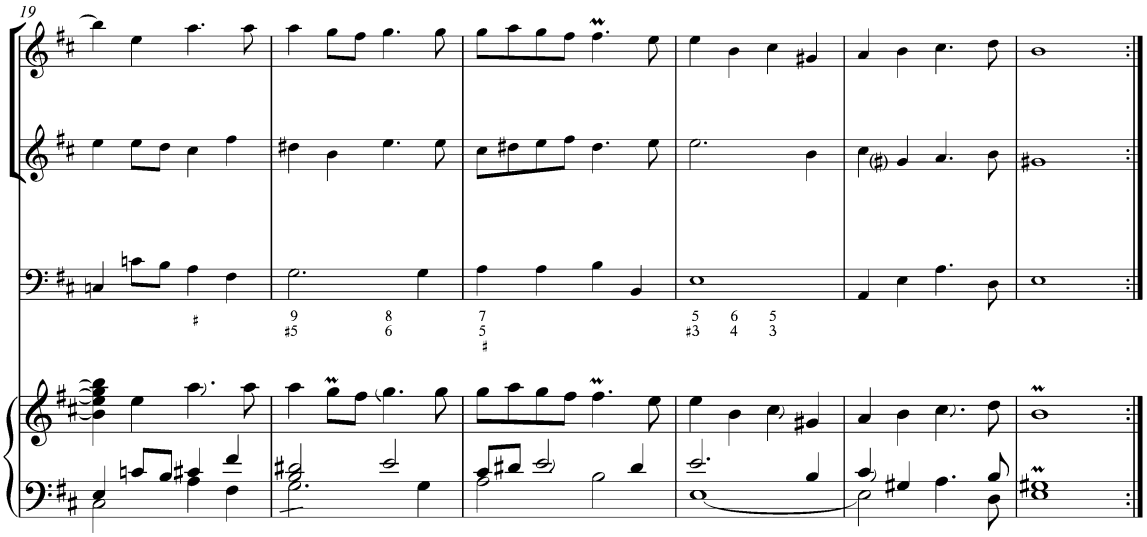
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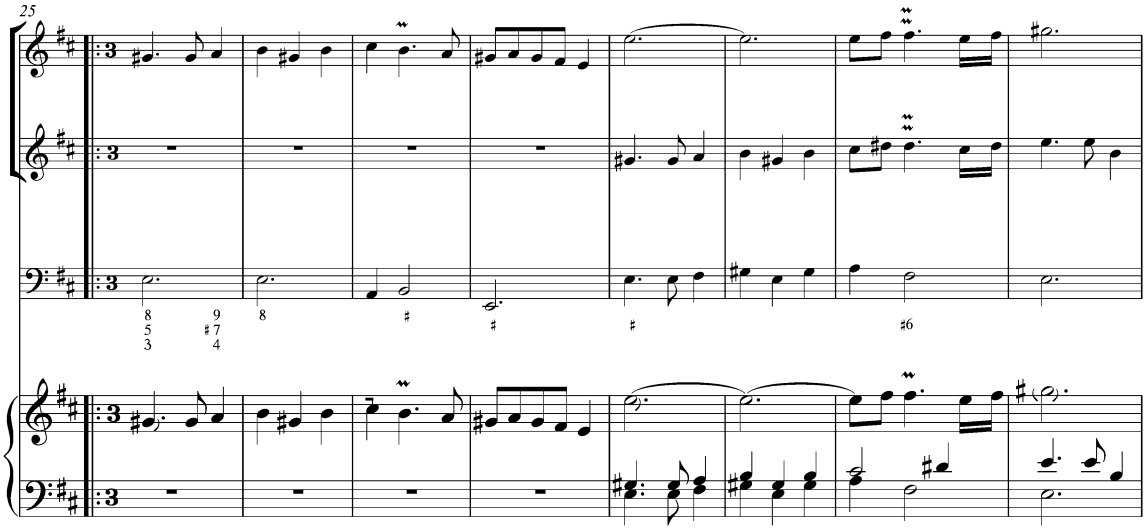
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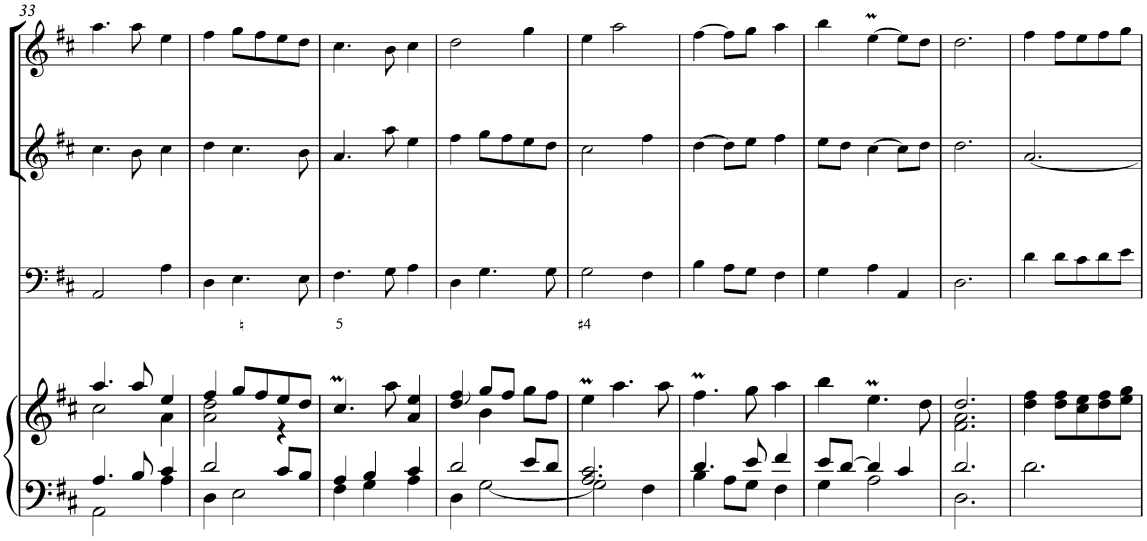
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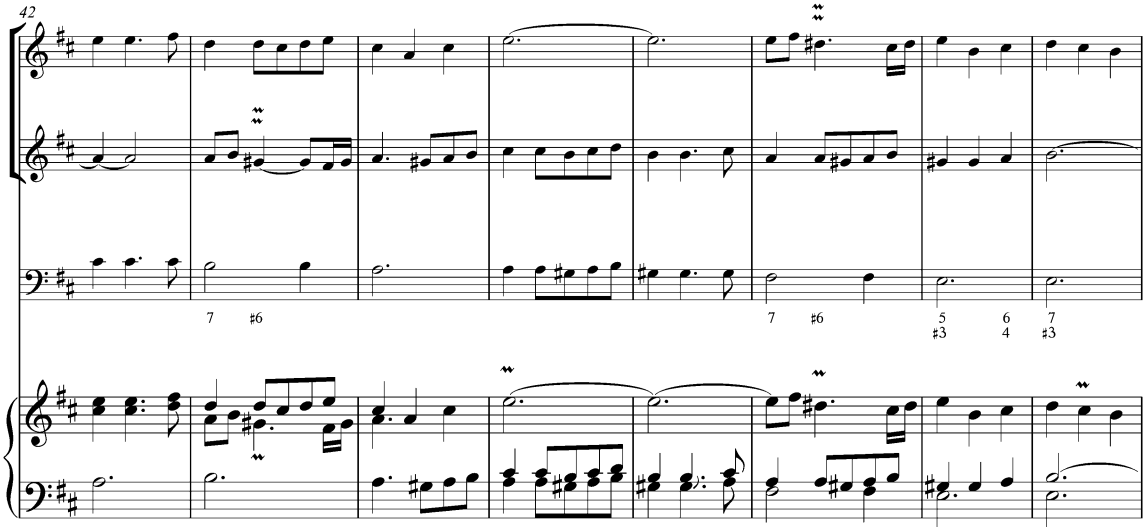
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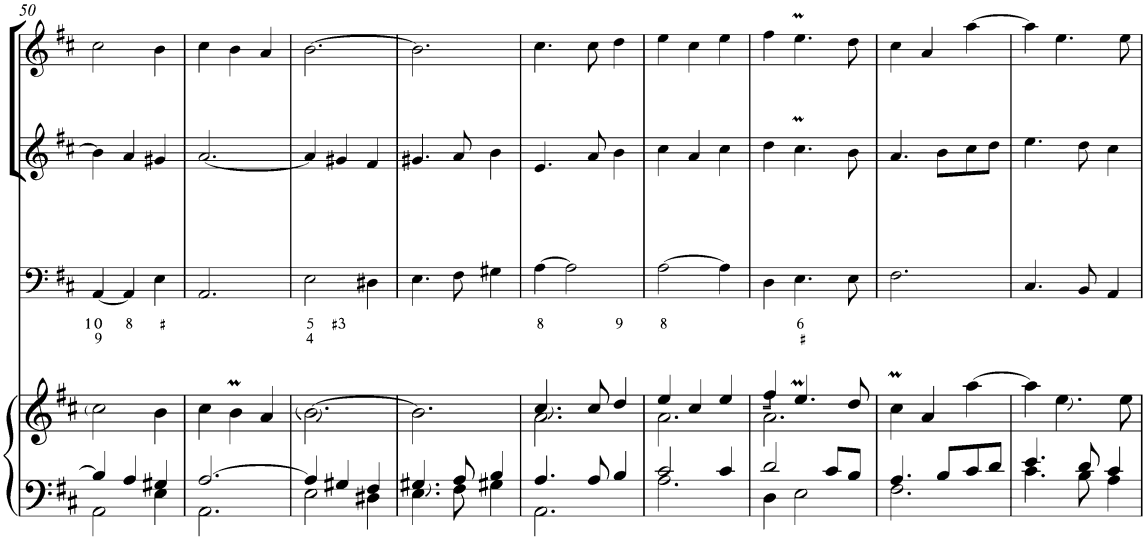
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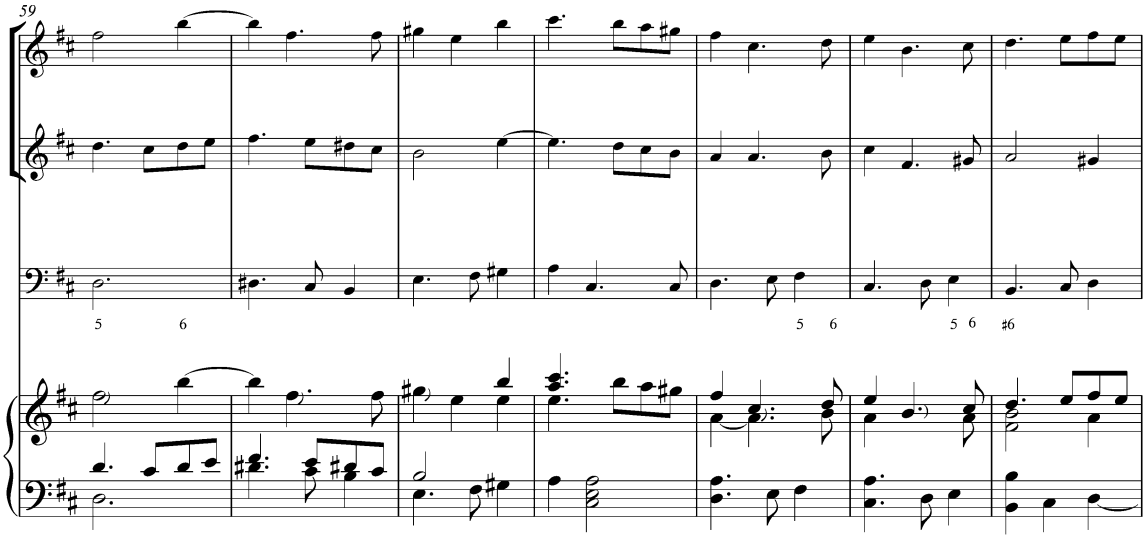
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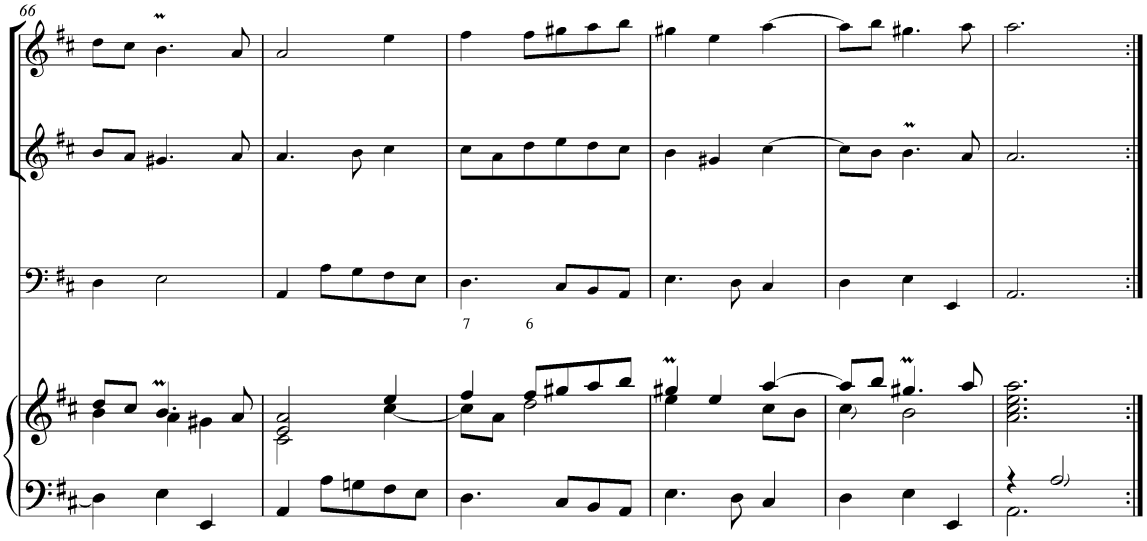
5 6
5 6
5 6 #6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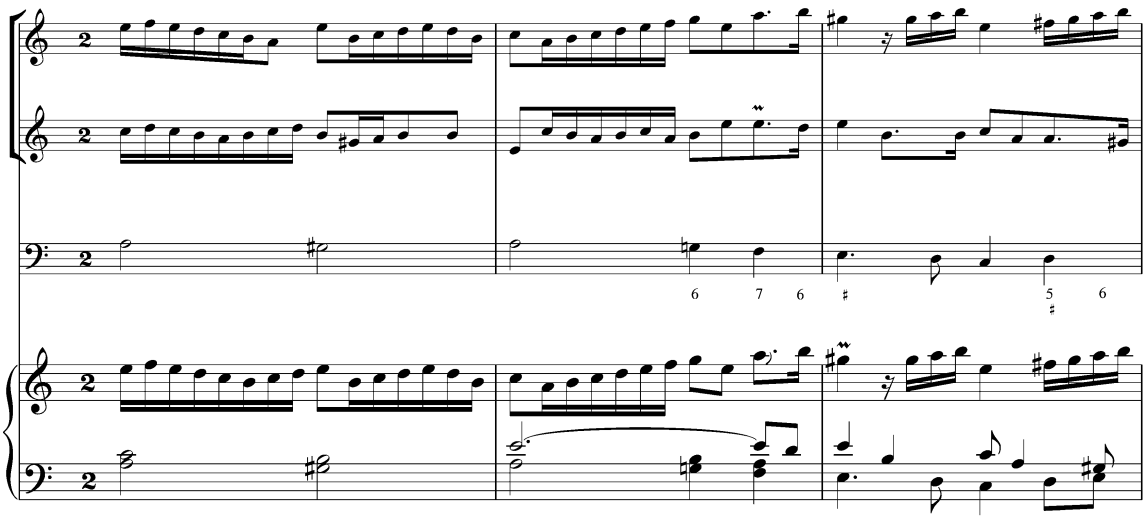
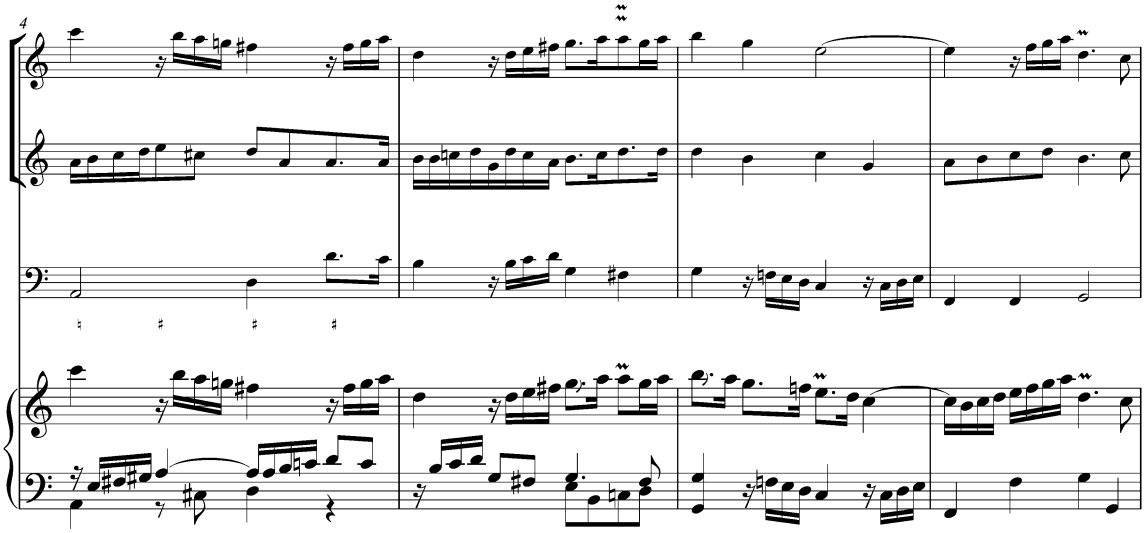
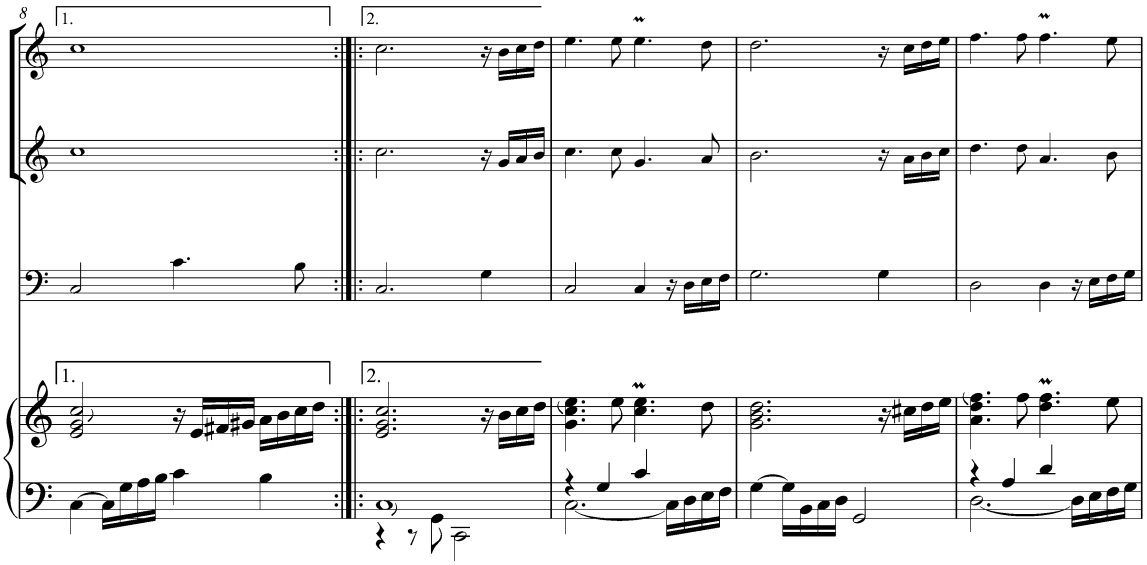
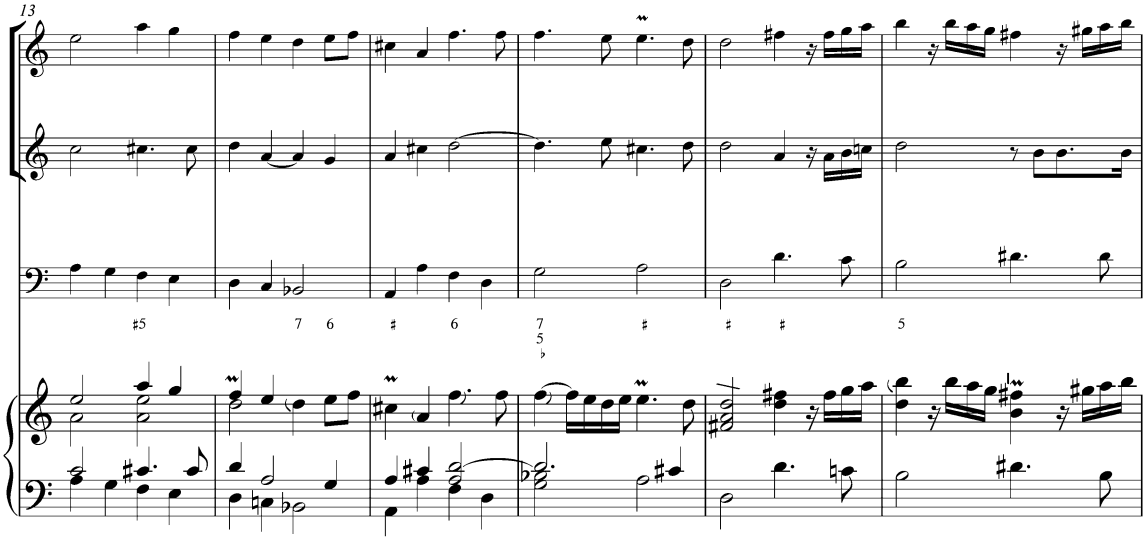
7 6






8
1.
2.
1.
2.


13
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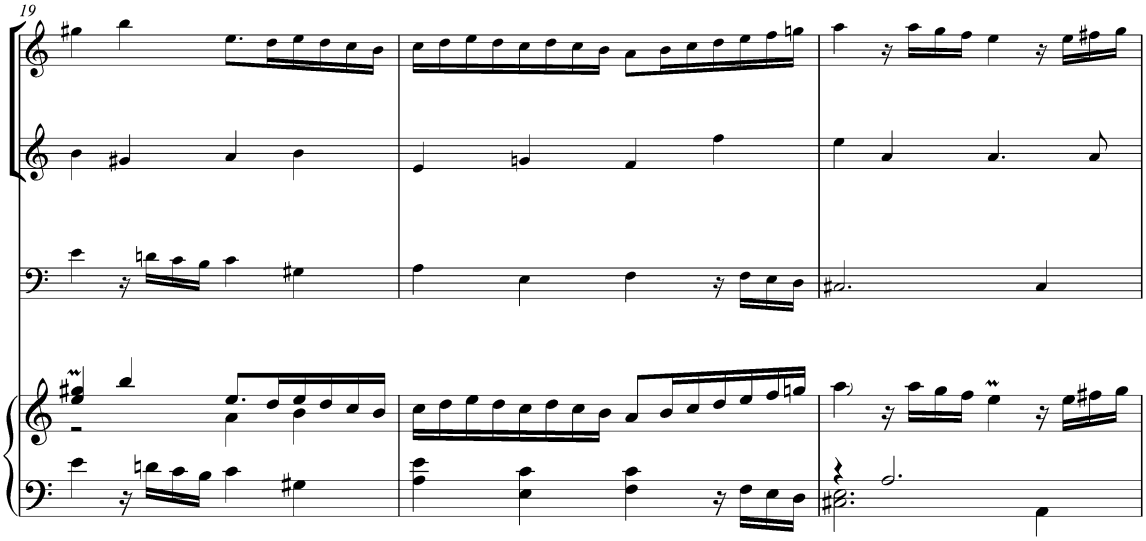
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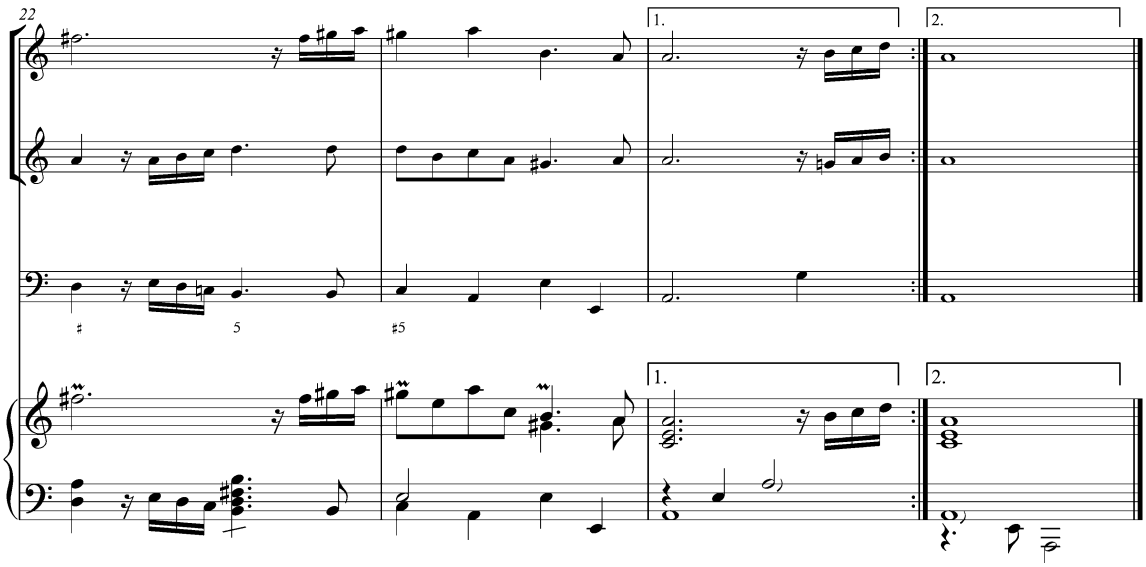
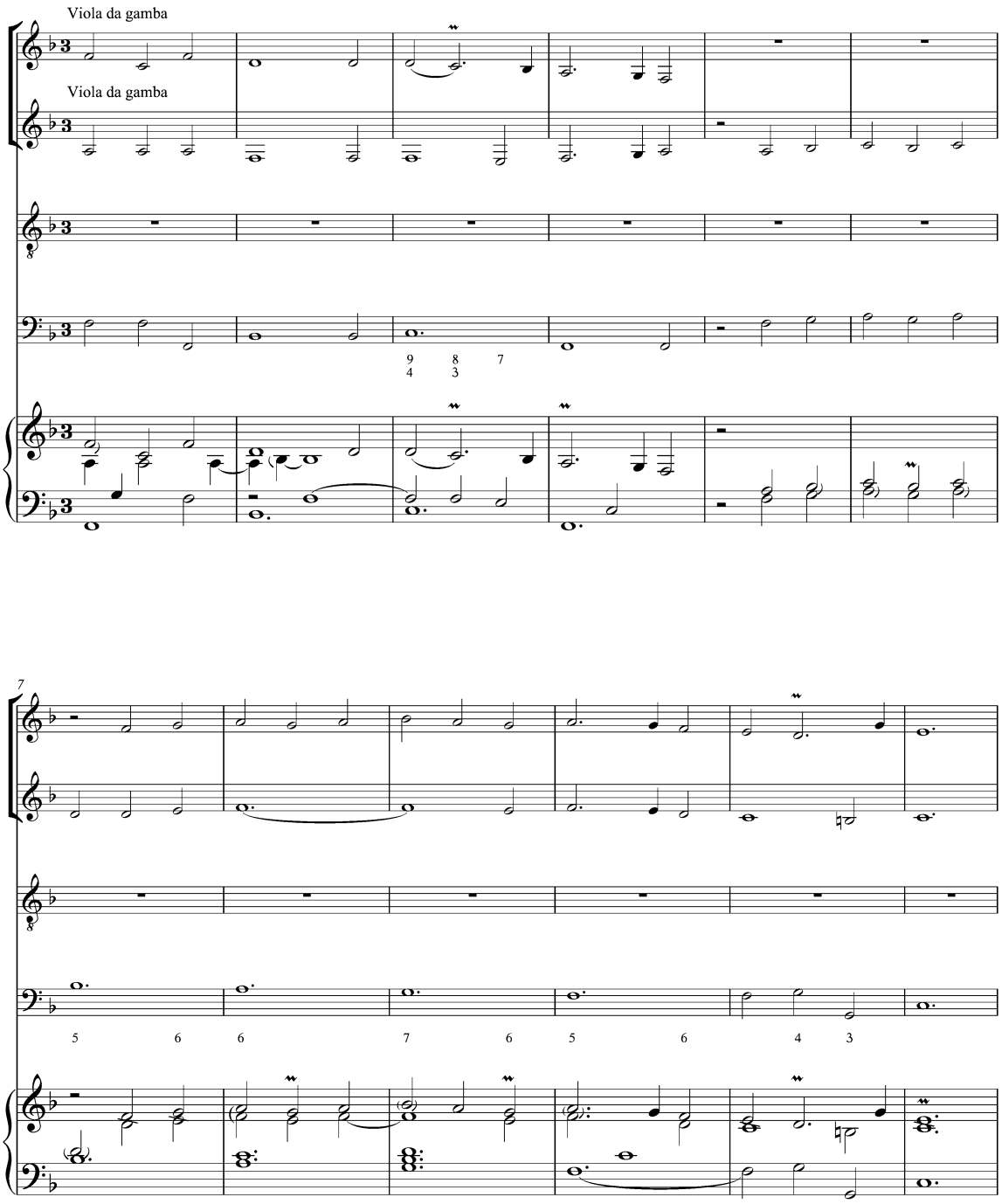
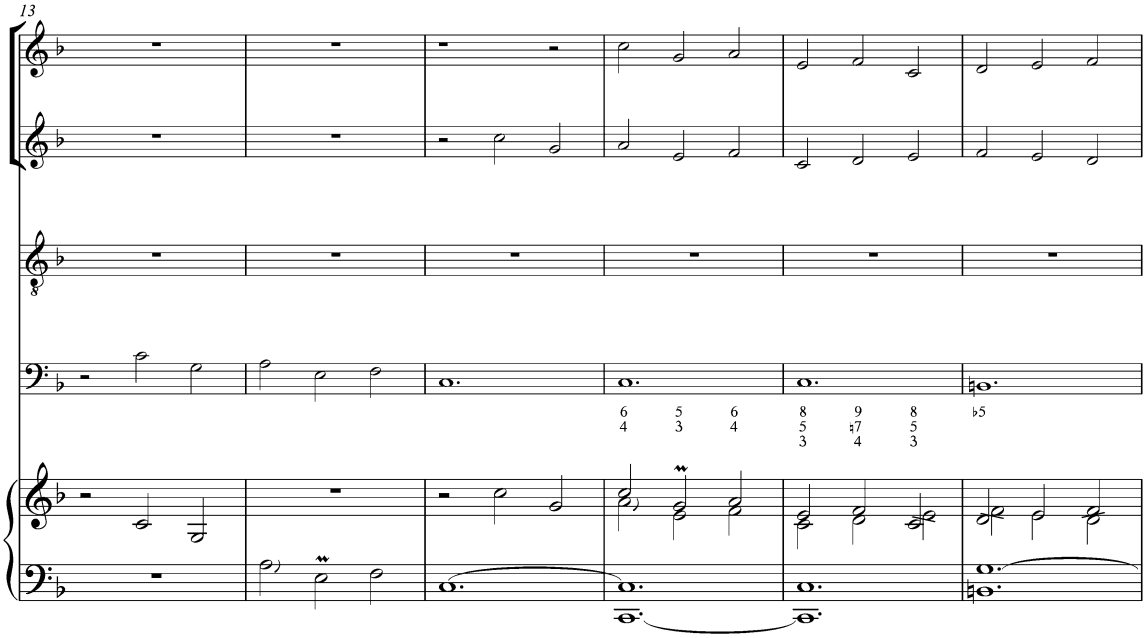
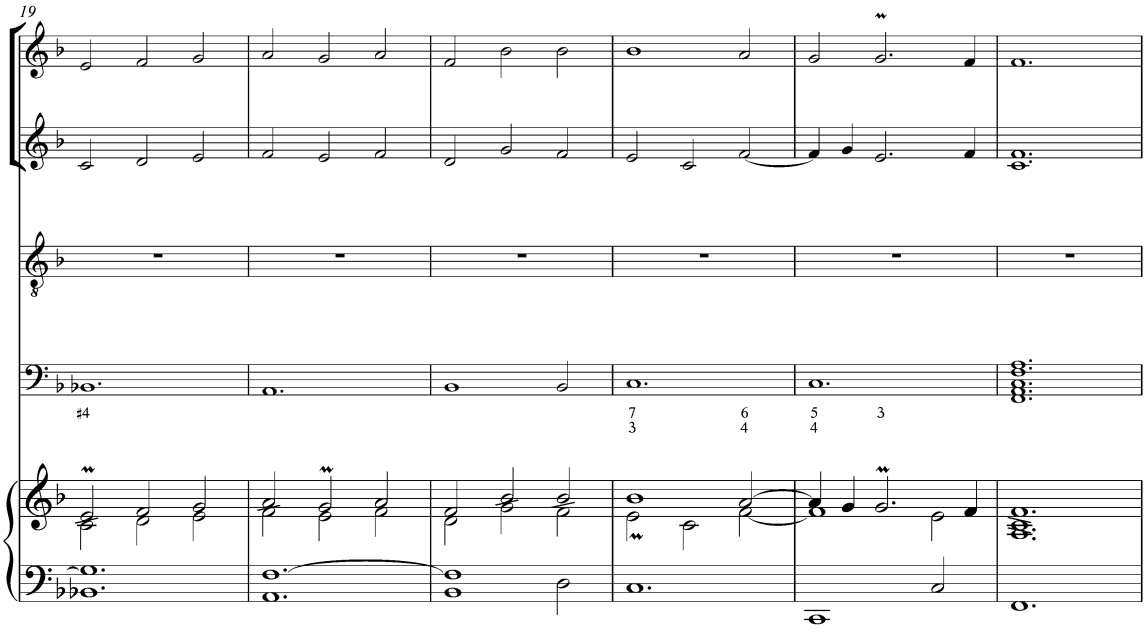

22
1.
2.
1.
2.

Air d'Orphee

(This air originally in white notation.)




13
6 5 6 8 9 8 ♭5
4 3 4 5 ♯7 5
3 4 3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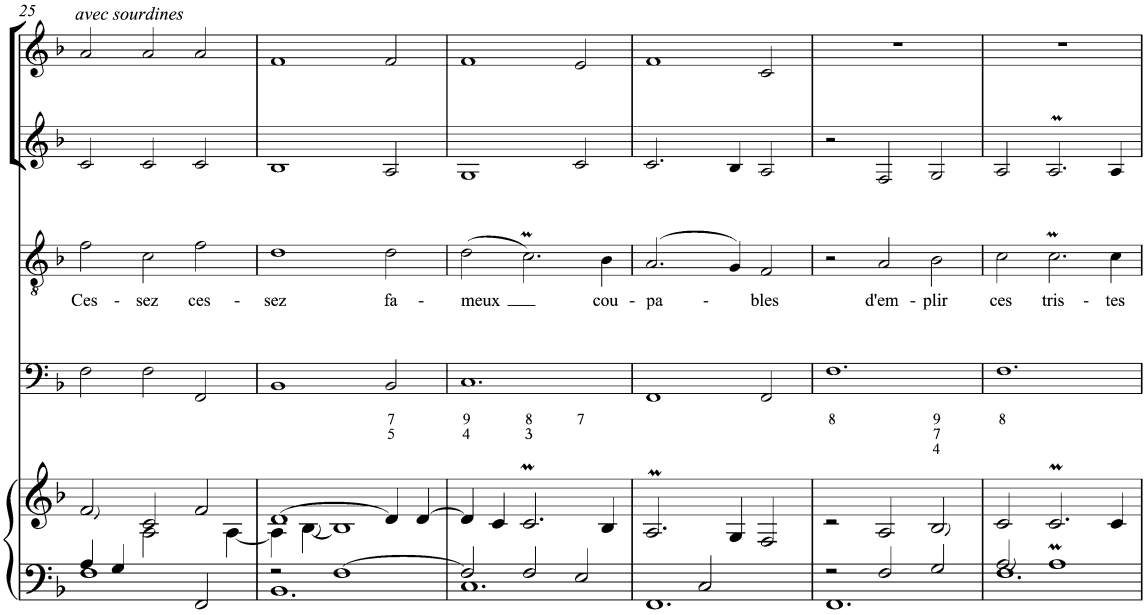
♯4
7 6 5 3
3 4 4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avec sourdines
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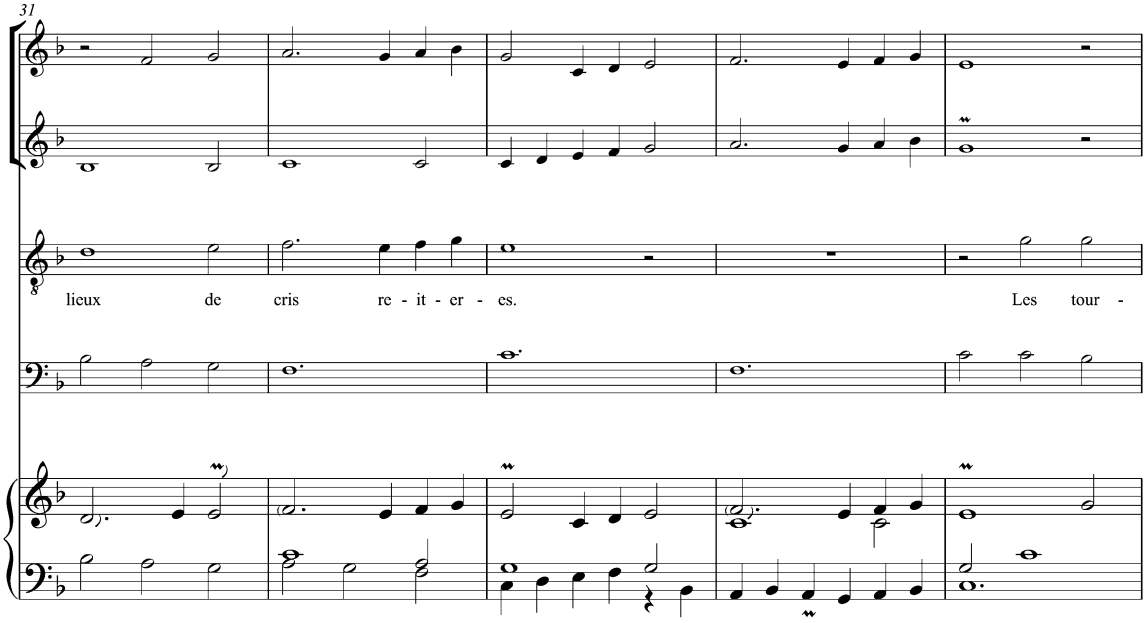
31
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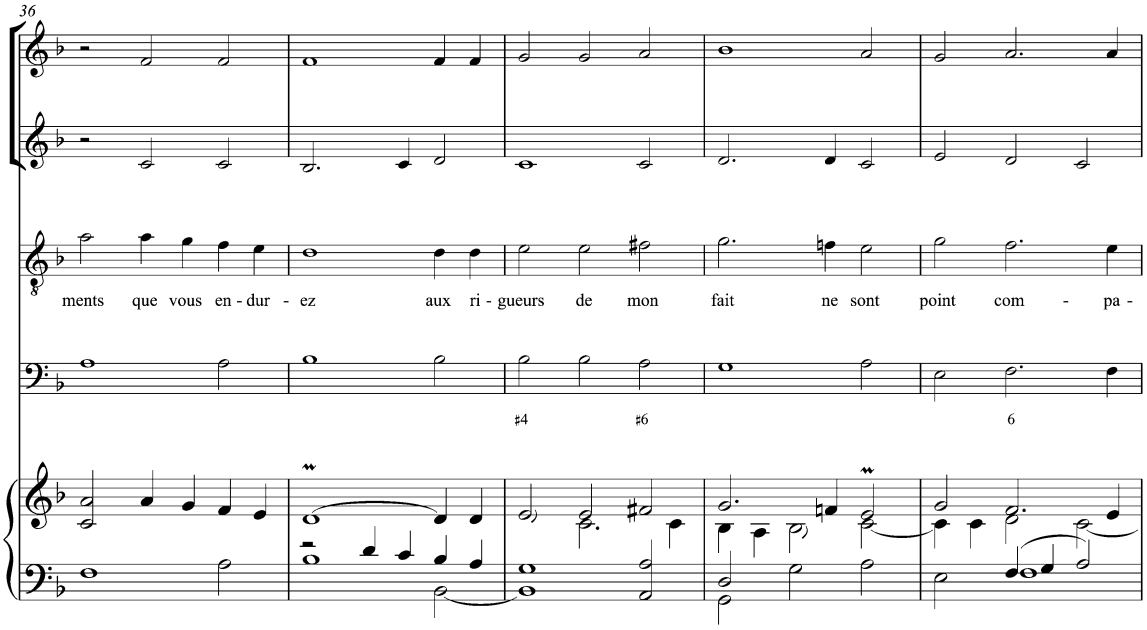
36
ments que vous en - dur - ez aux ri - gueurs de mon fait ne sont point com - pa -
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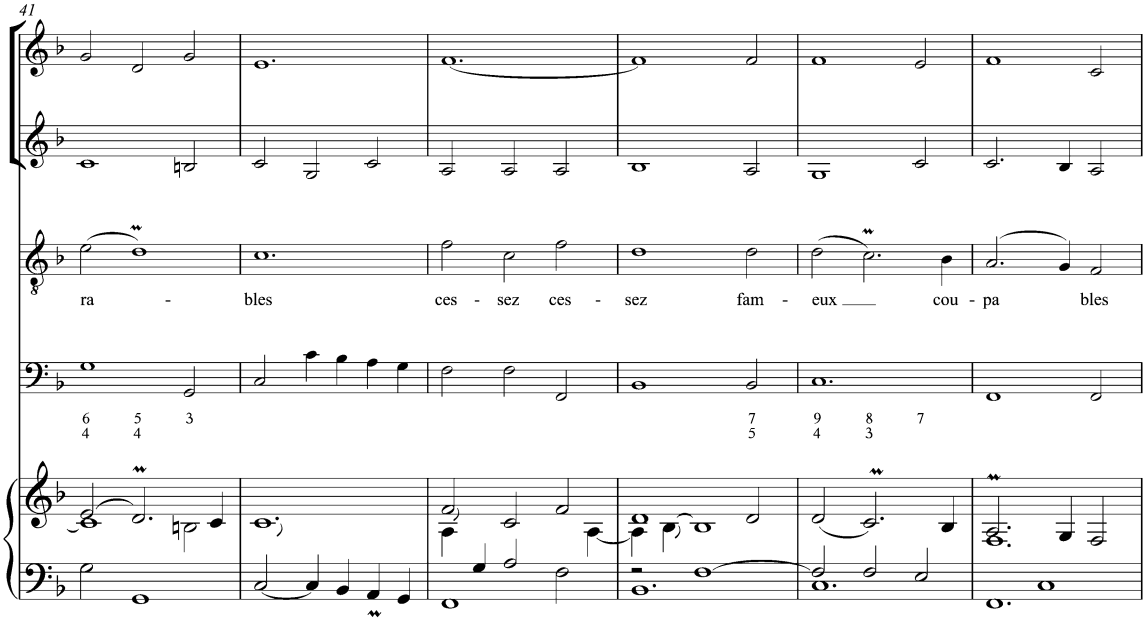
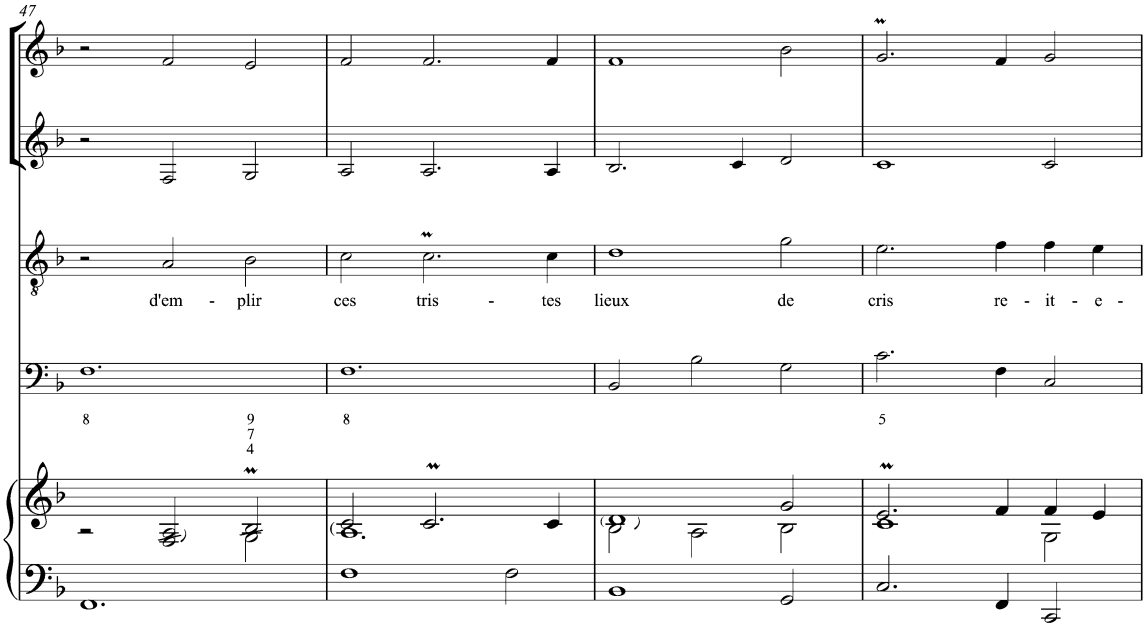
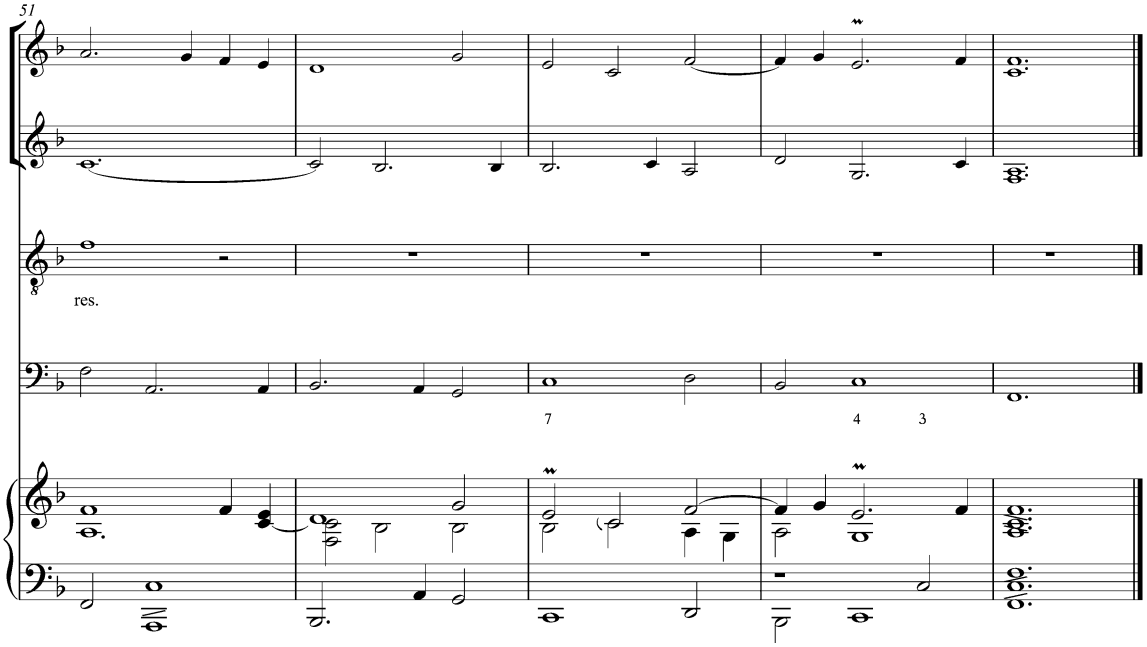
♯6
6

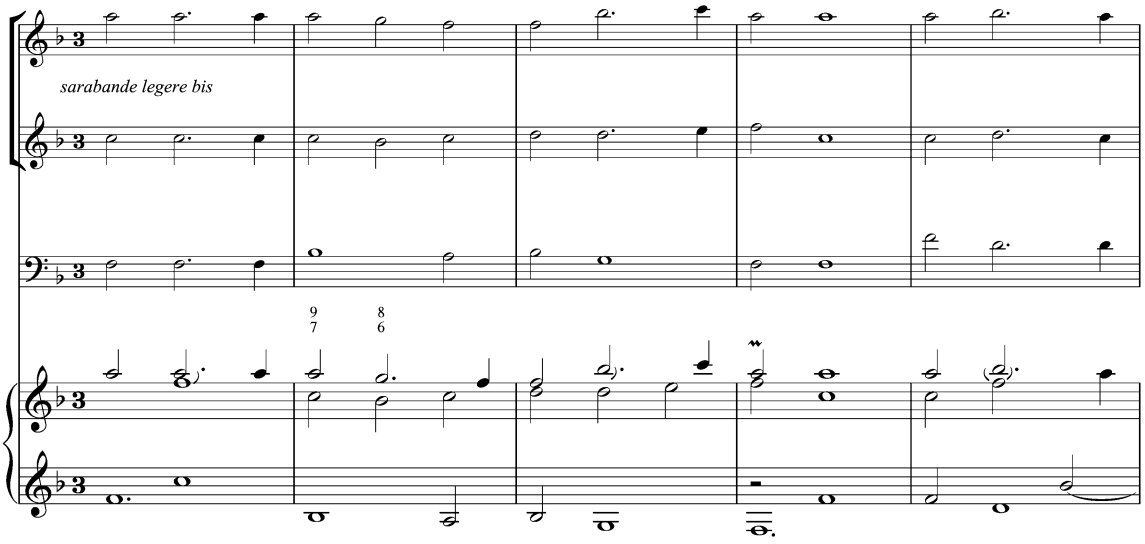

41
ra - bles ces - sez ces - sez fam - eux cou - pa bles
6 5 3
4 4
7 9 8 7
5 4 3

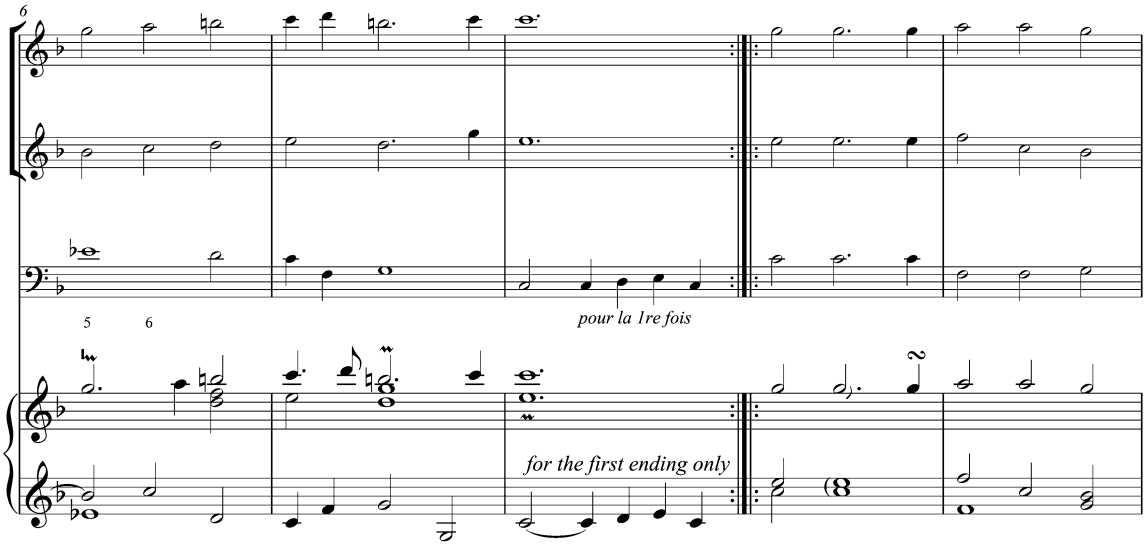

47
d'em - plir ces tris - tes lieux de cris re - it - e -

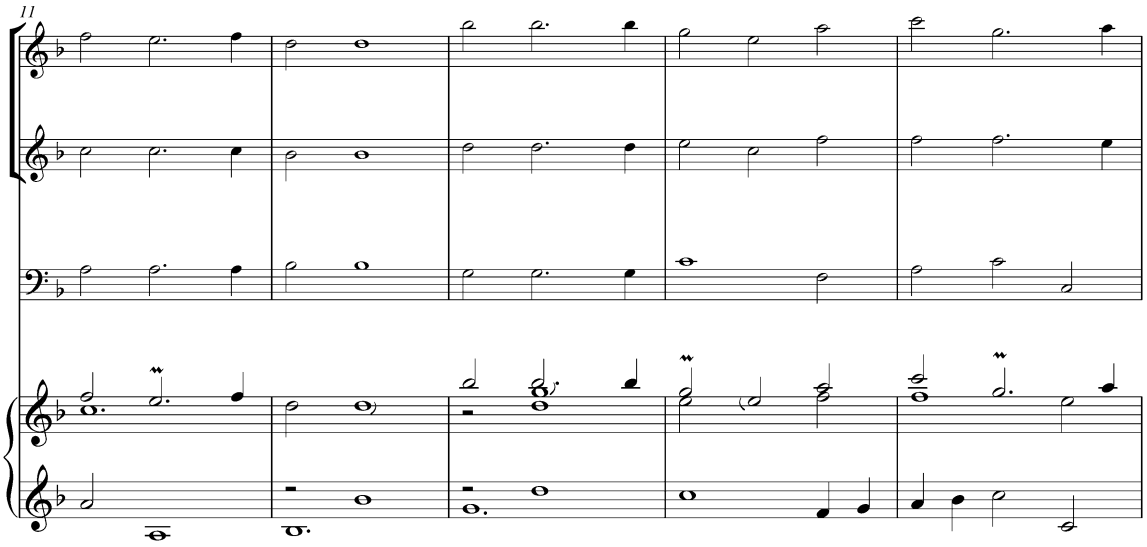

51
res.

Sarabande

(Transposed up from D; originally in white notation.)



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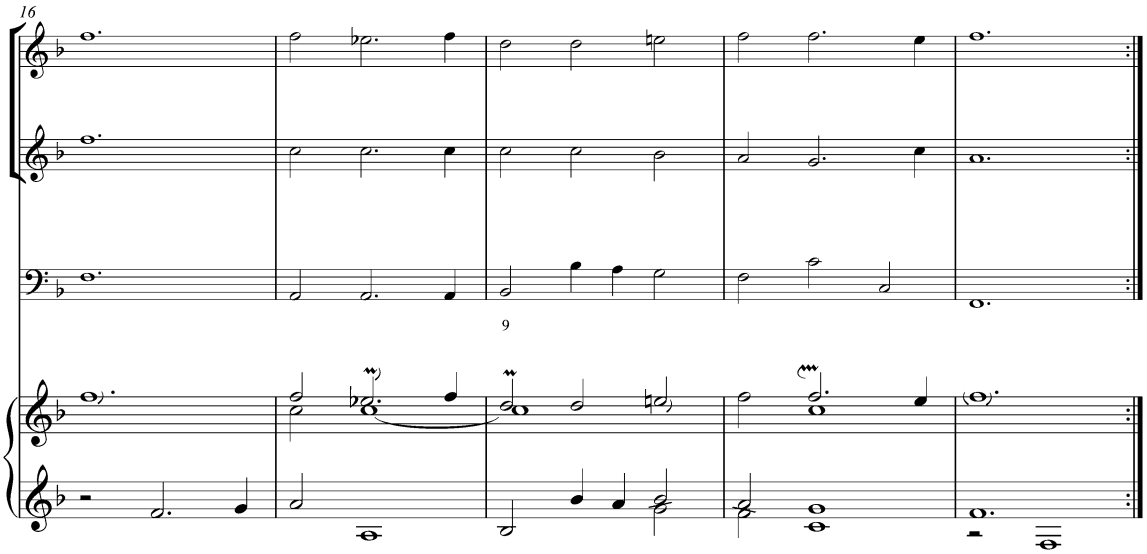
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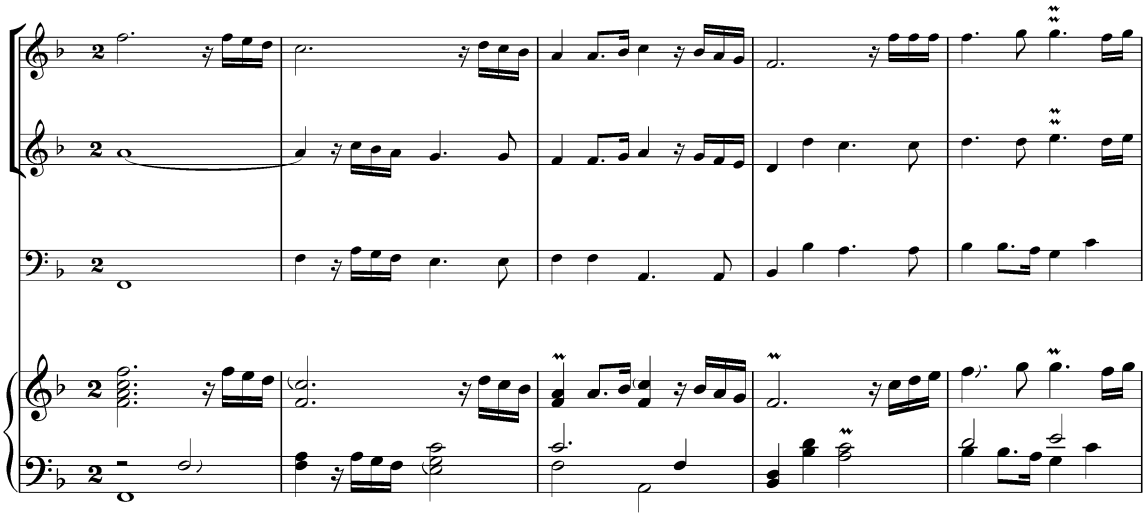

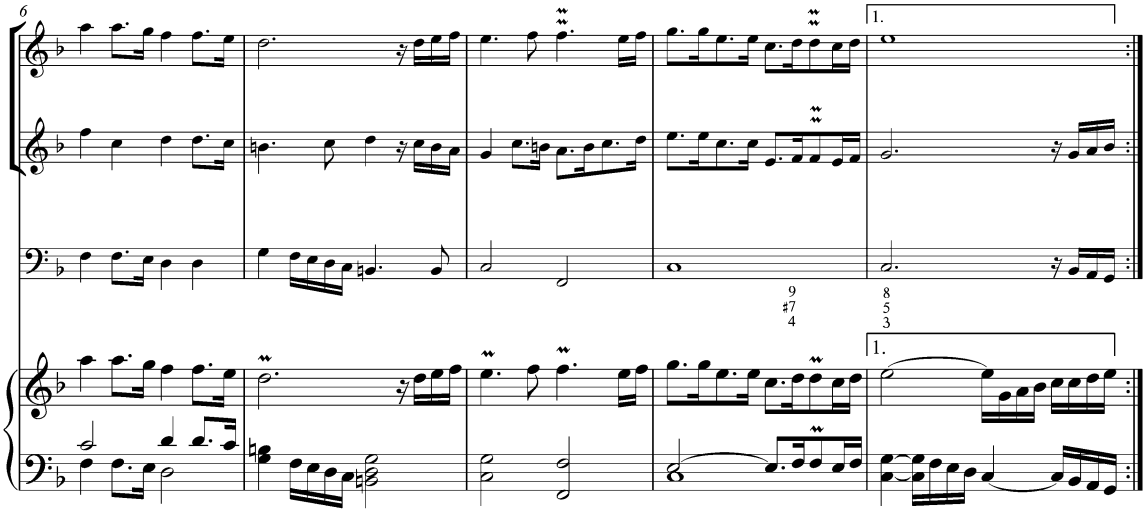

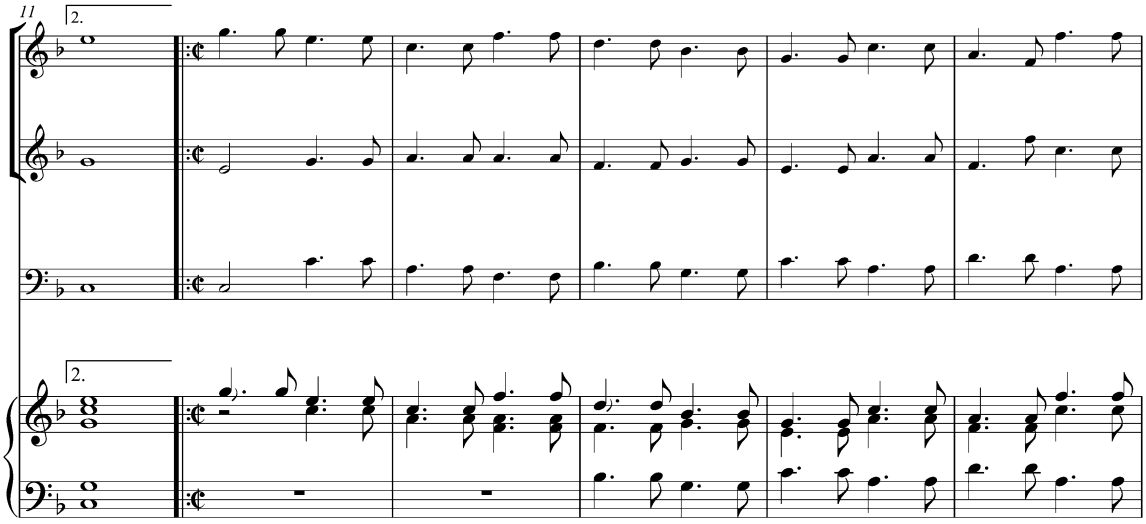
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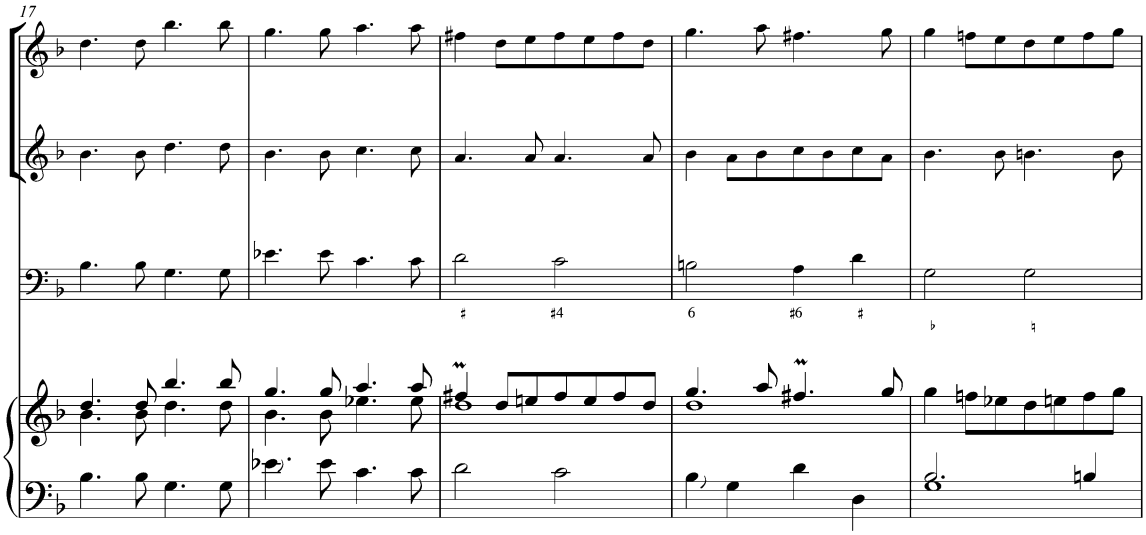
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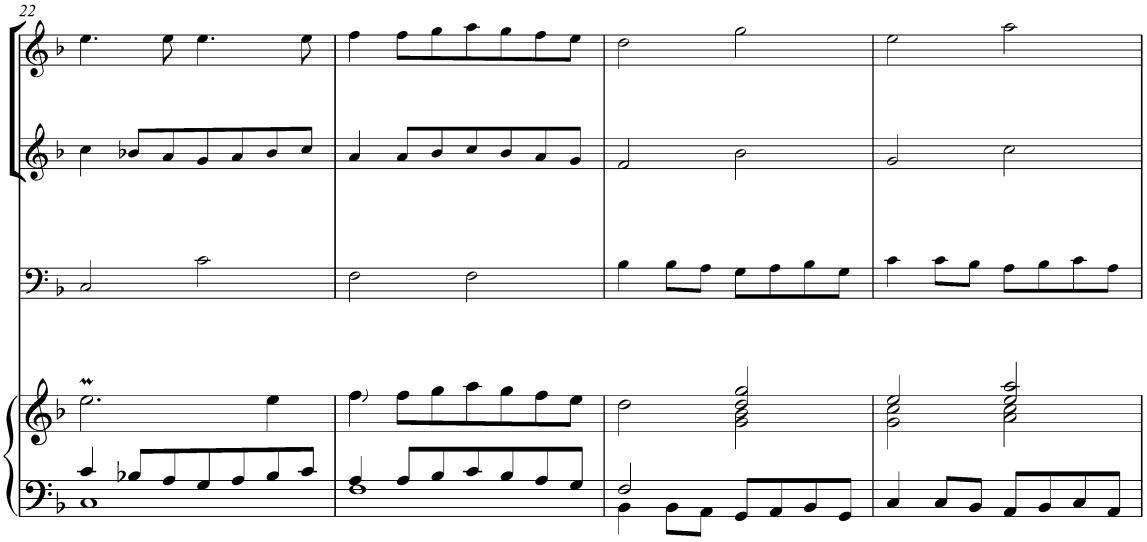
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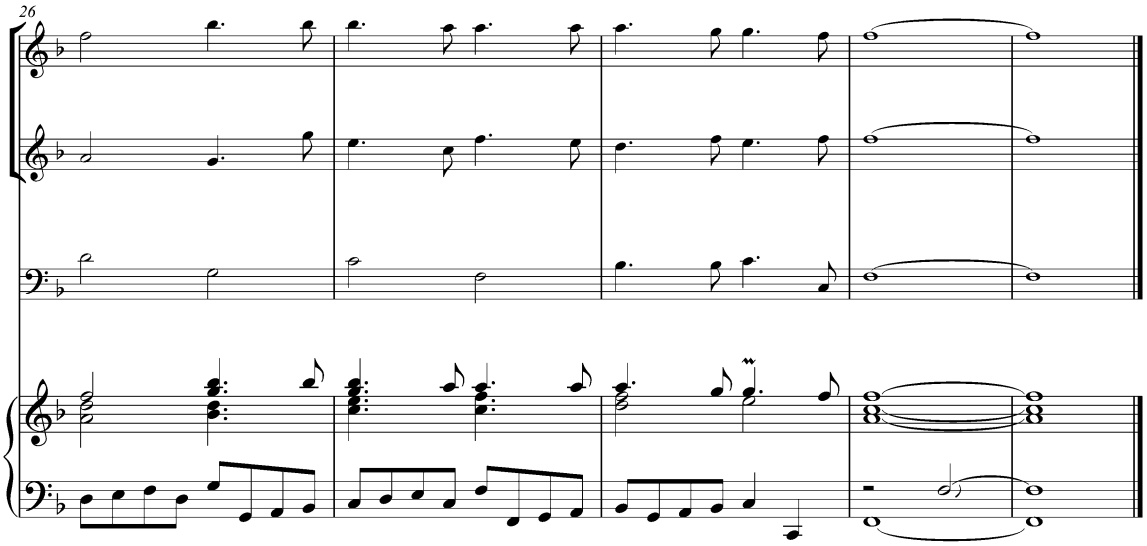
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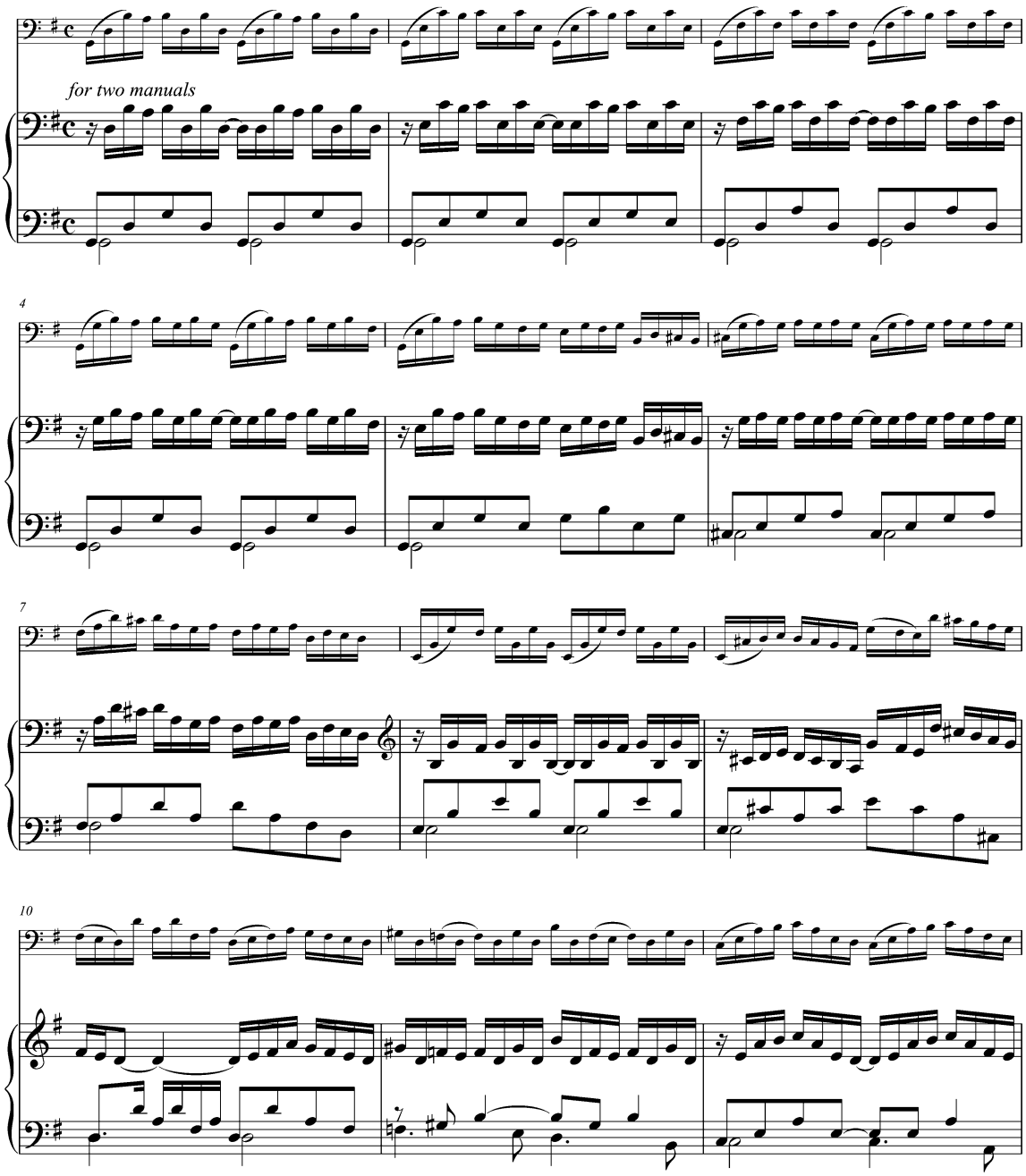
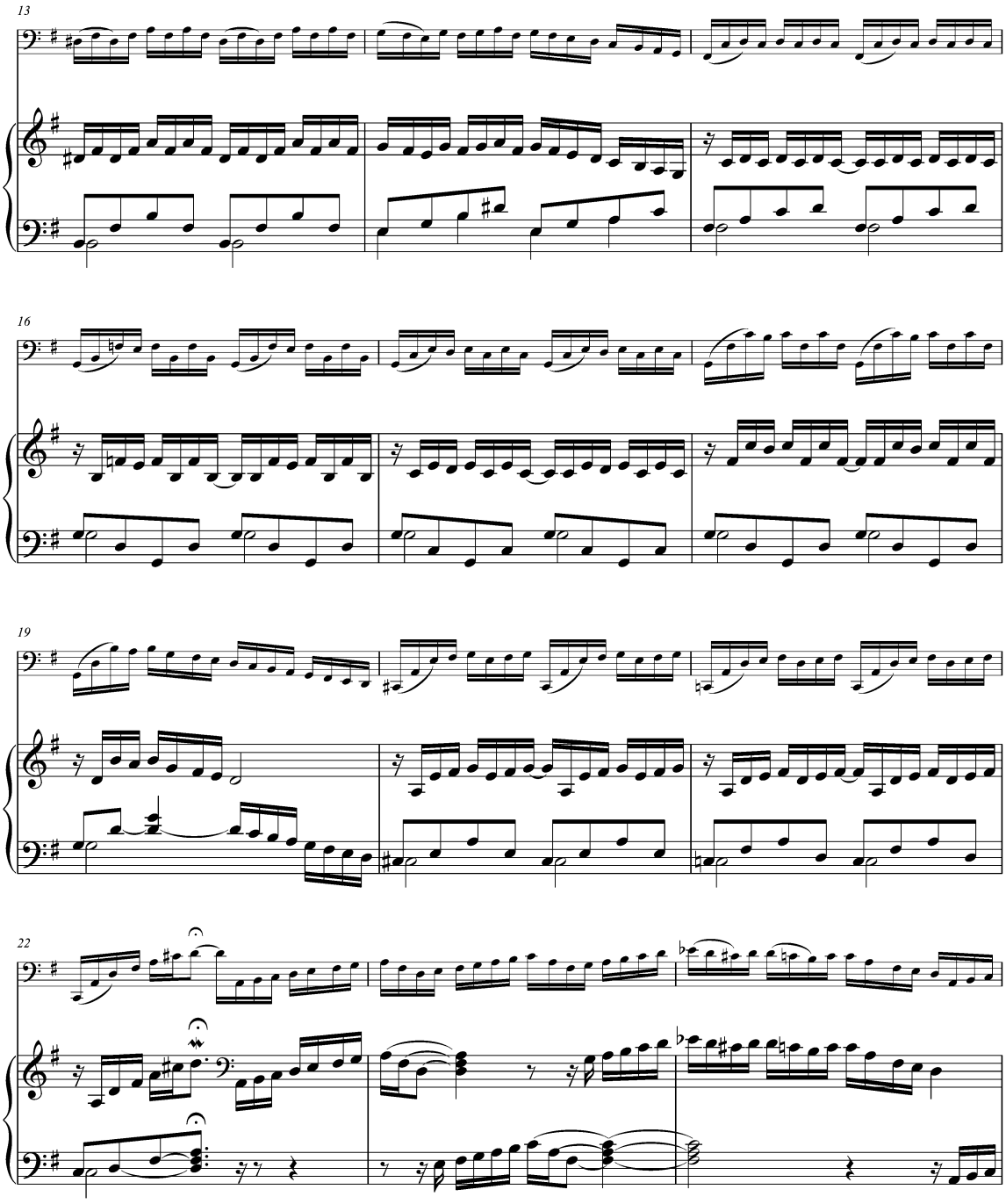
Suite in G major for Violoncello solo

J.S. Bach (BWV 1007)

transcribed for harpsichord by Joseph Gascho

Prelude

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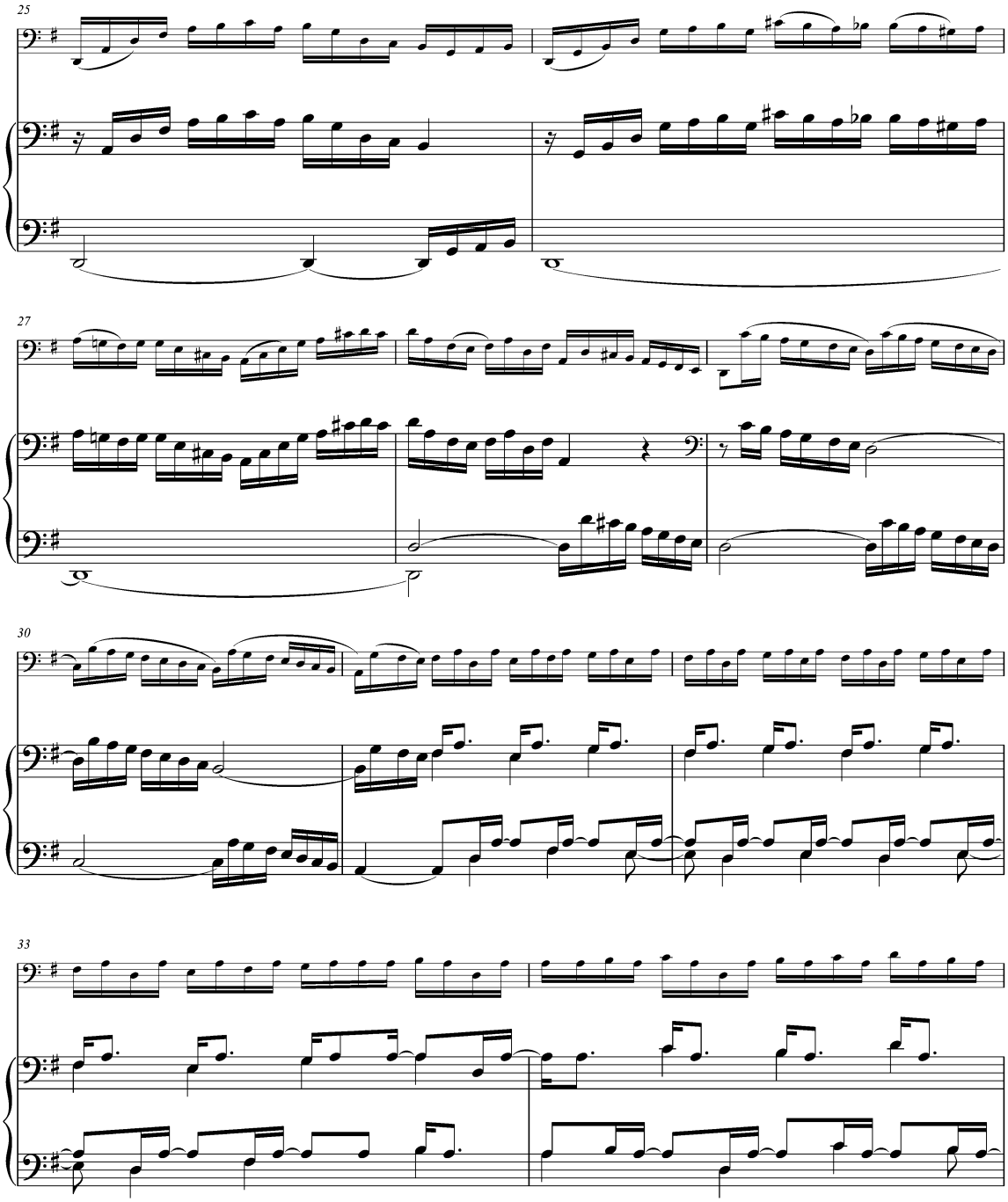
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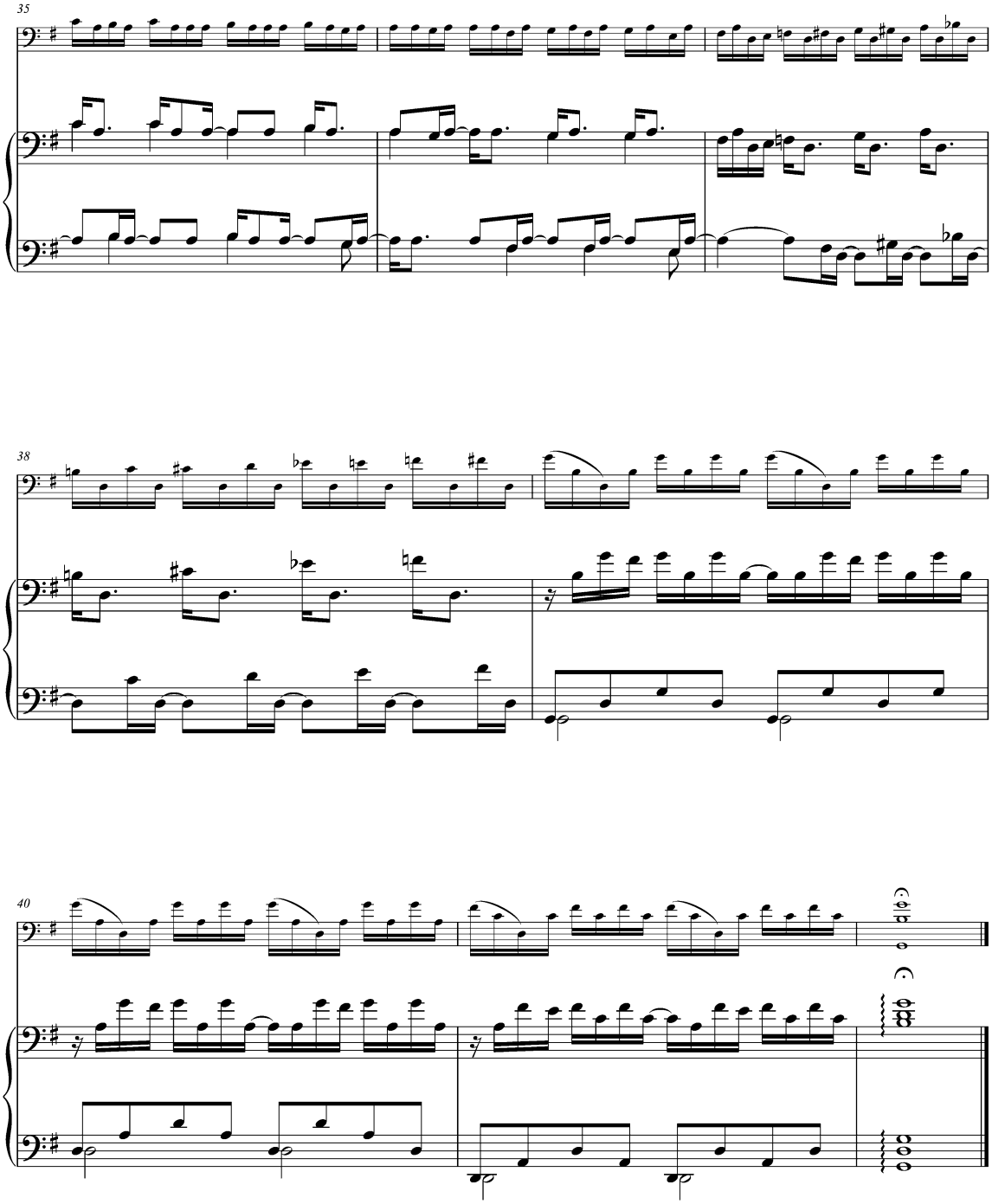
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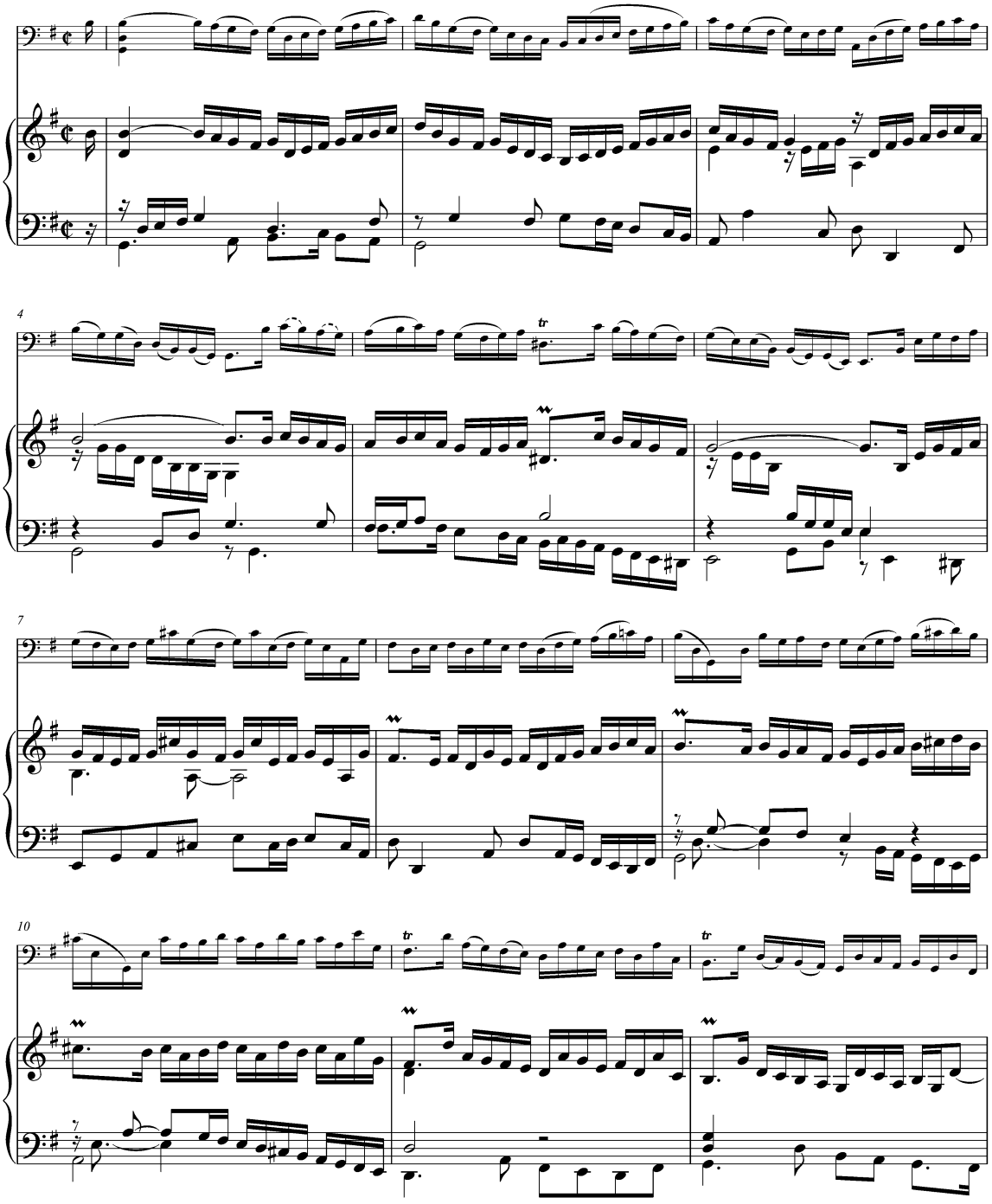
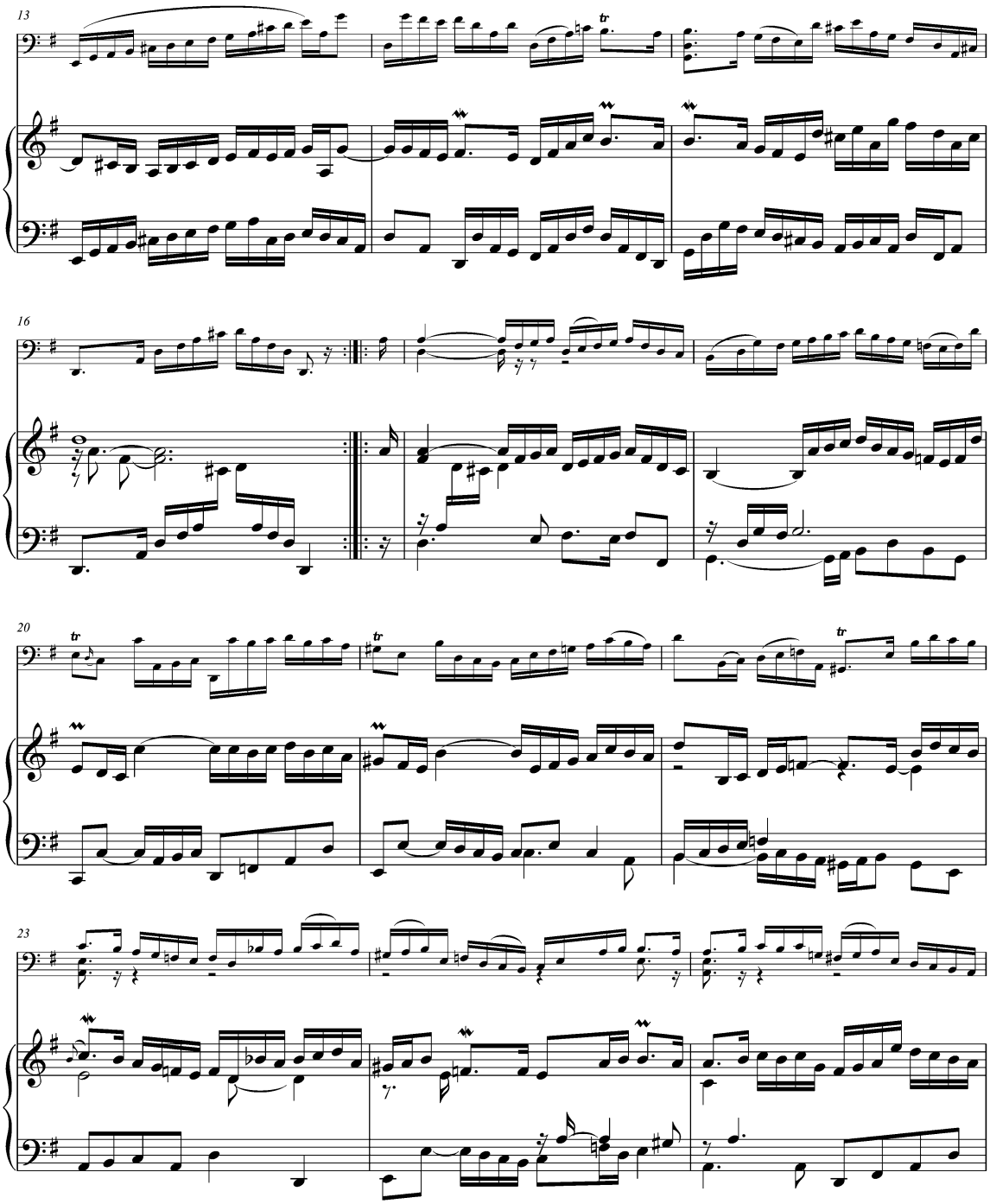
Allemande

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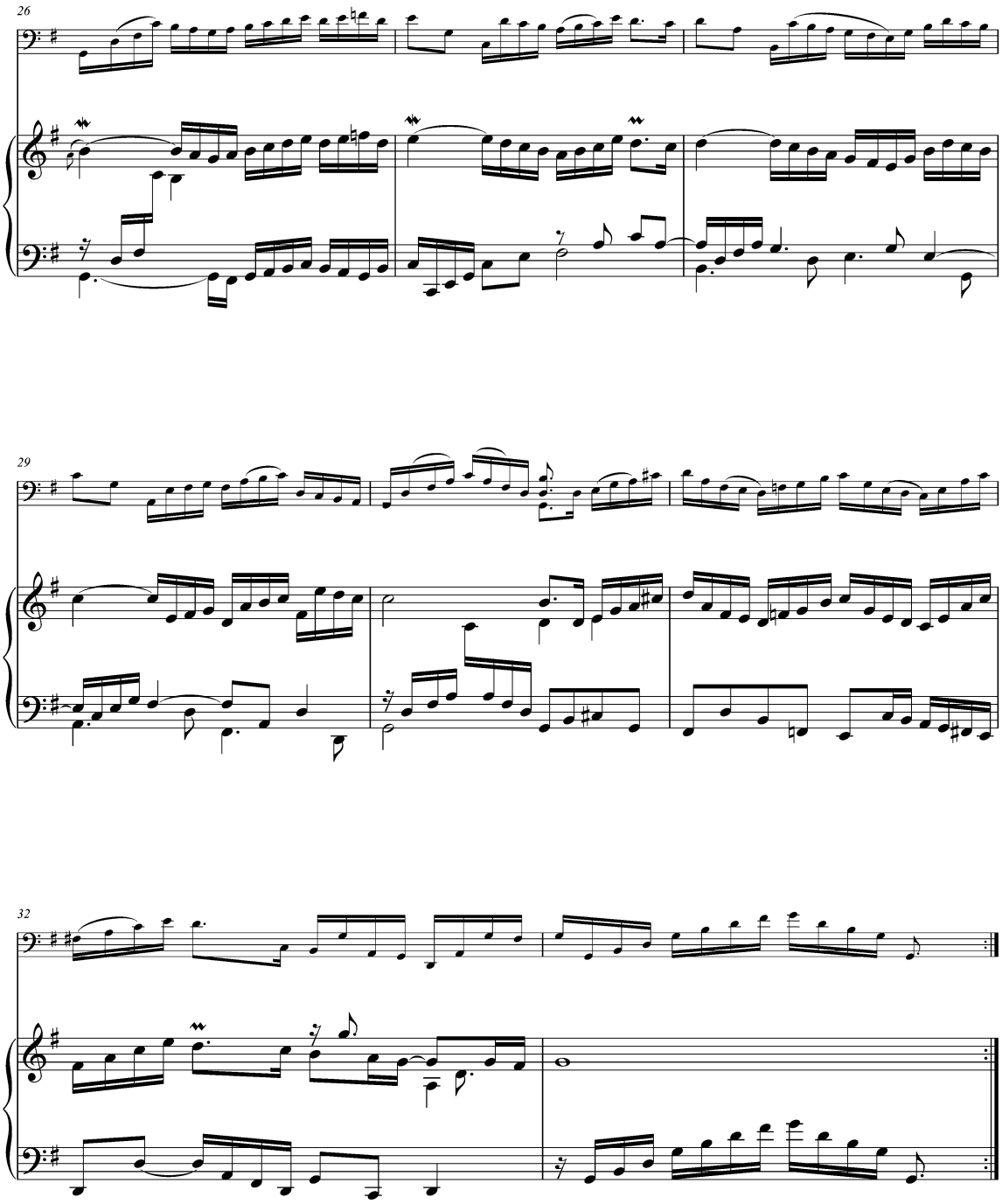
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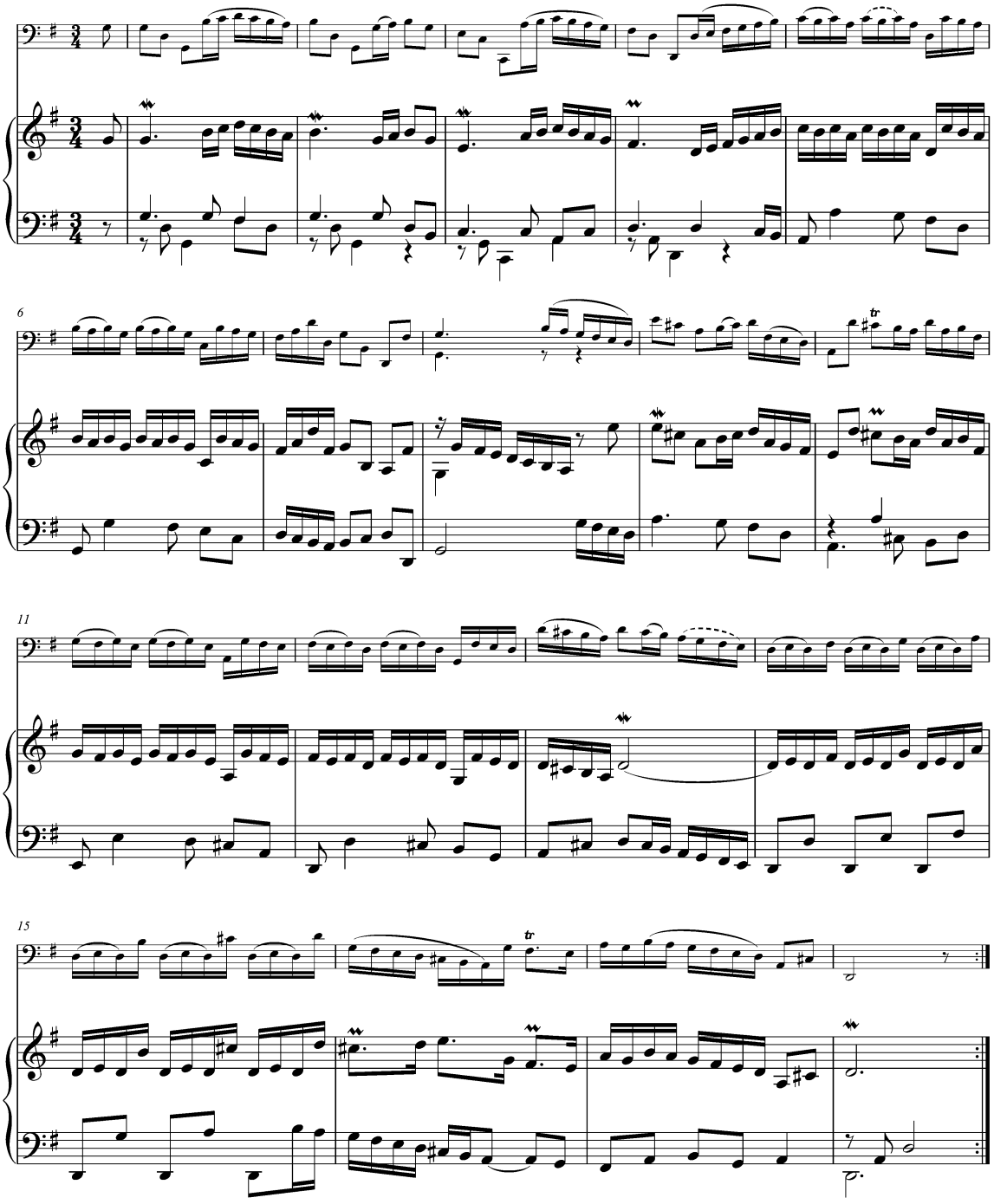
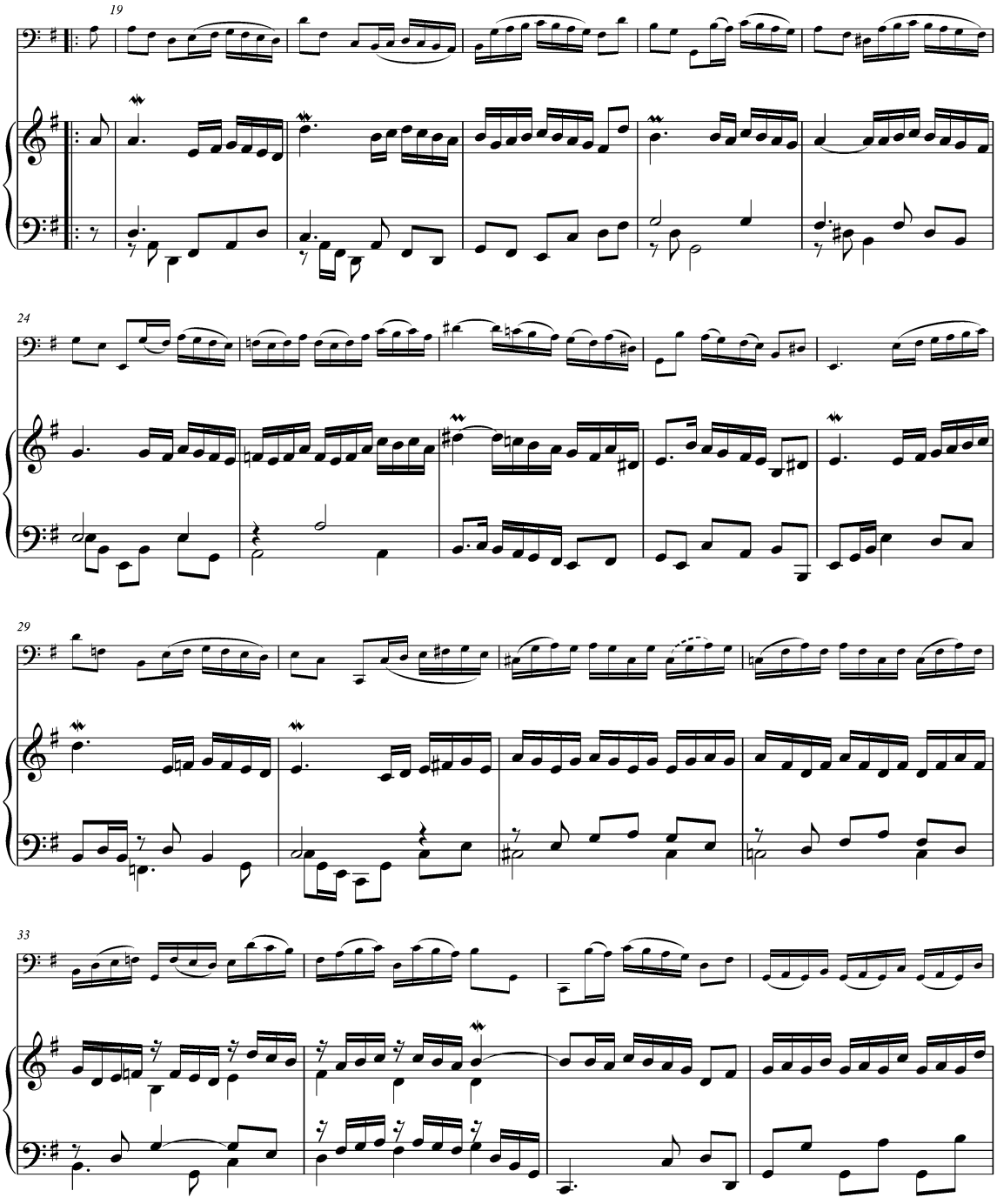
Courante

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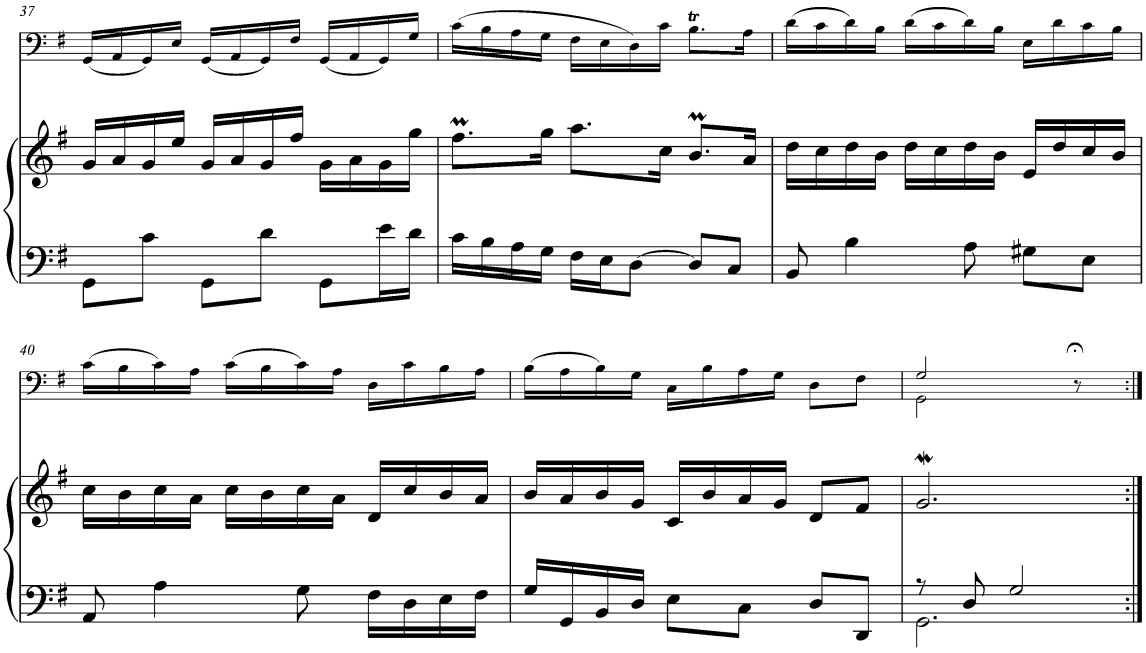
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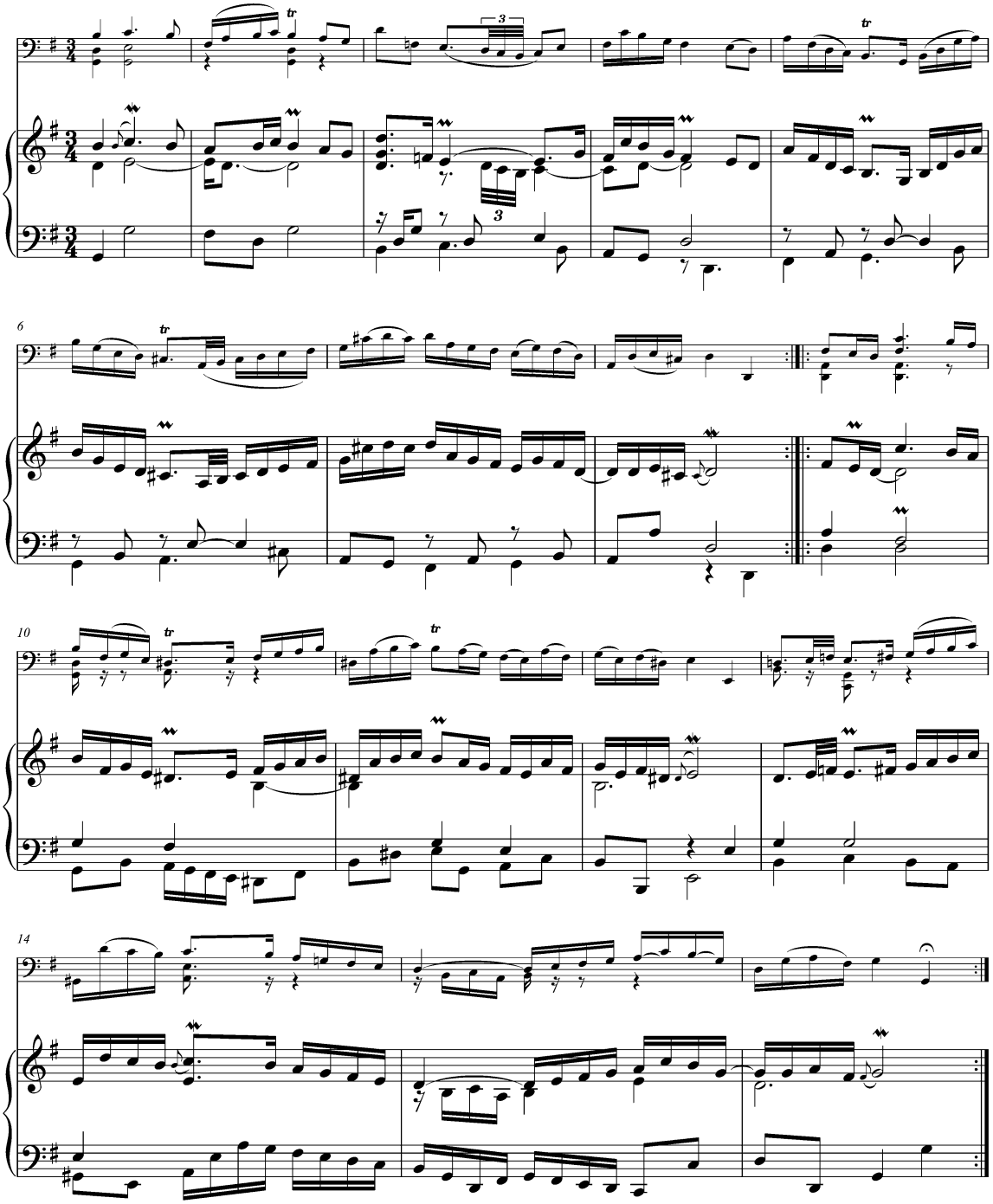
Sarabande



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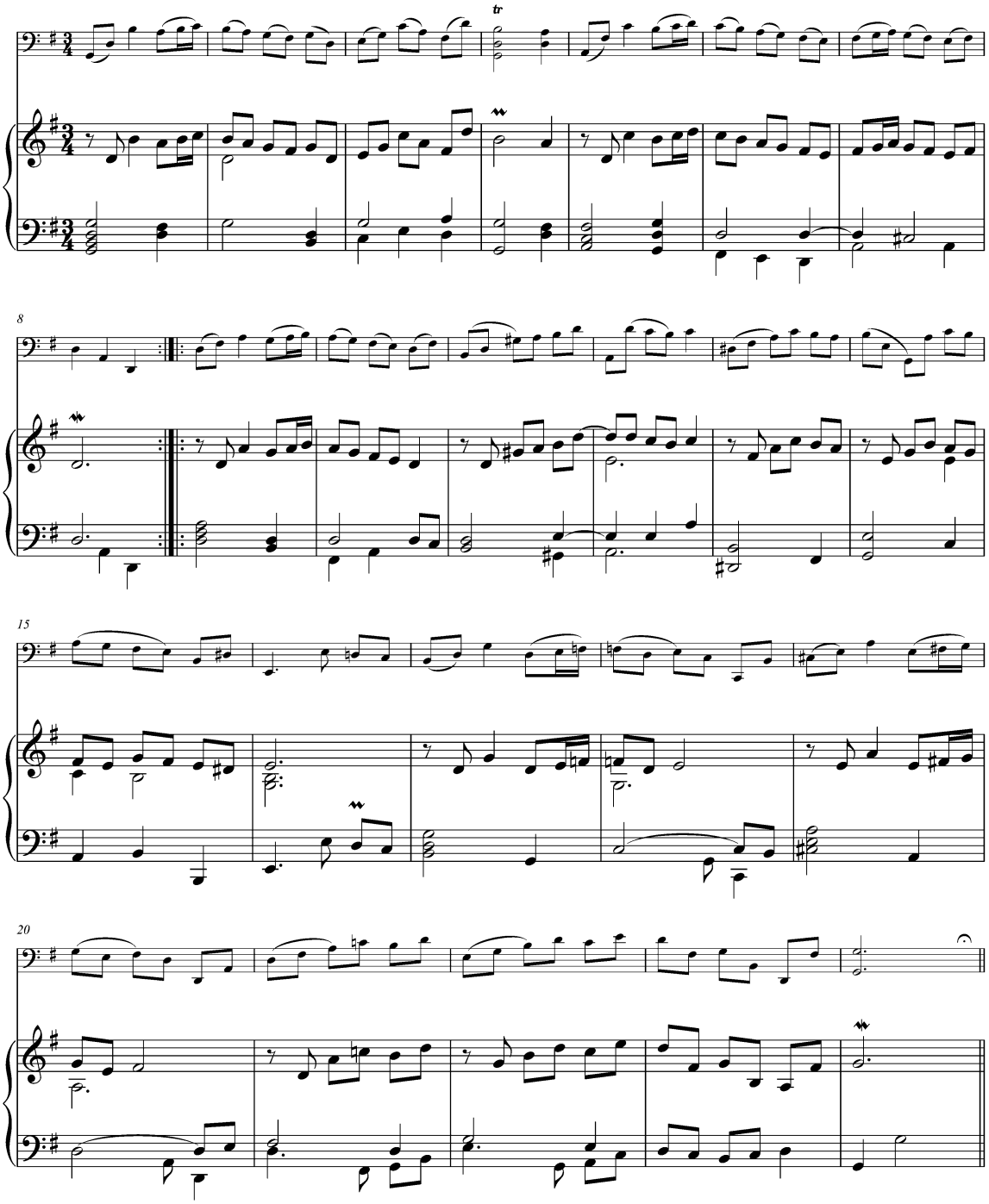

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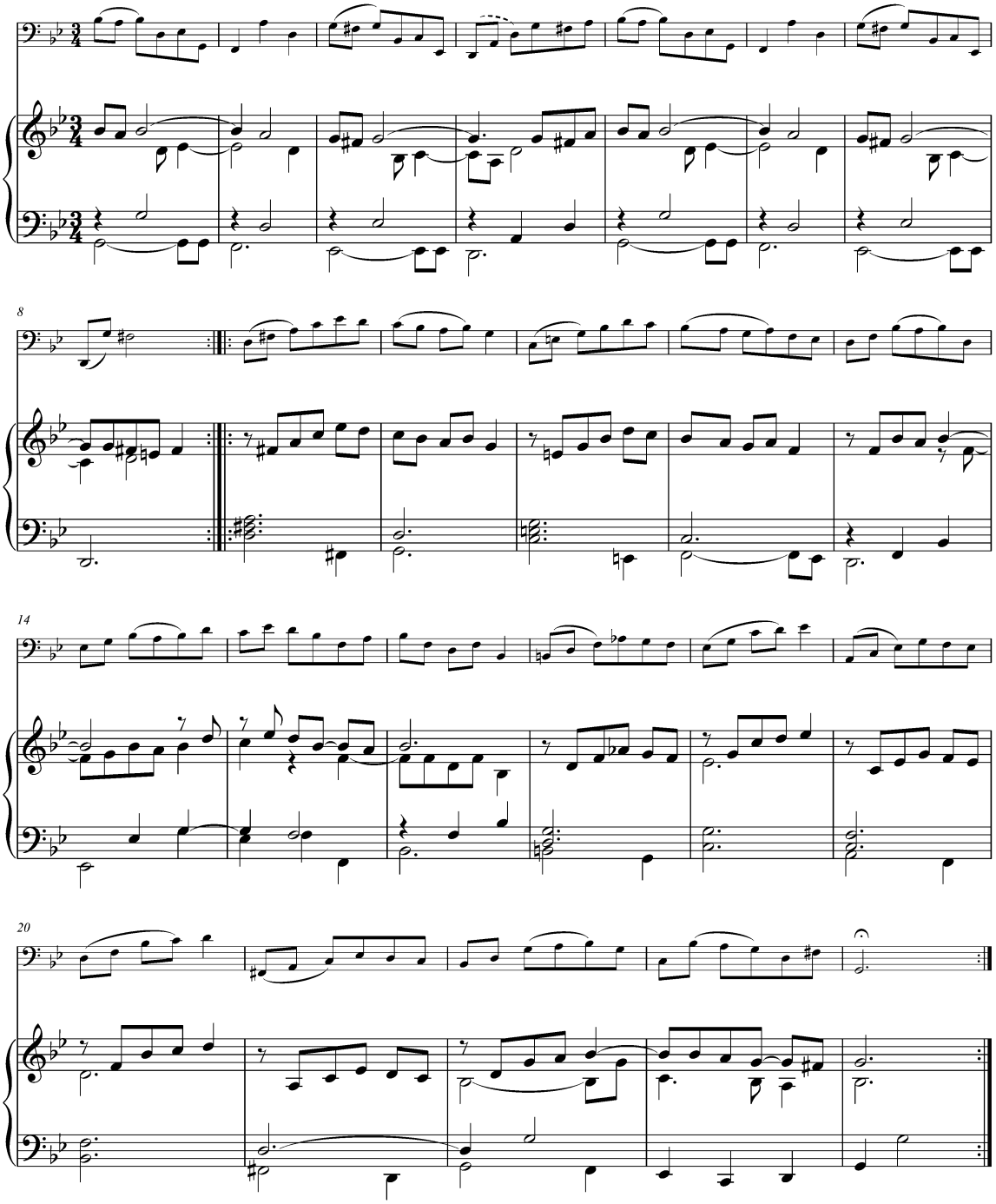
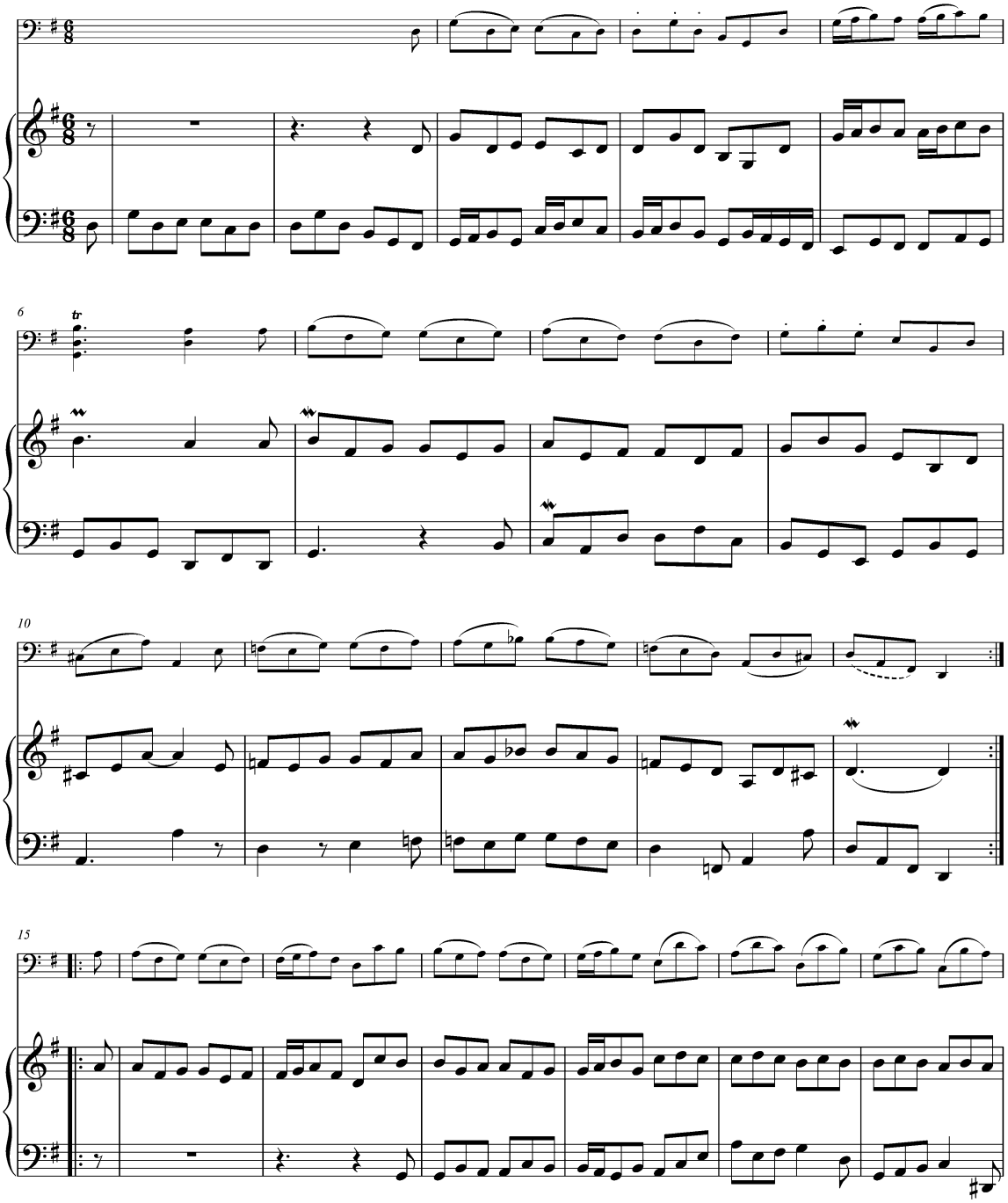
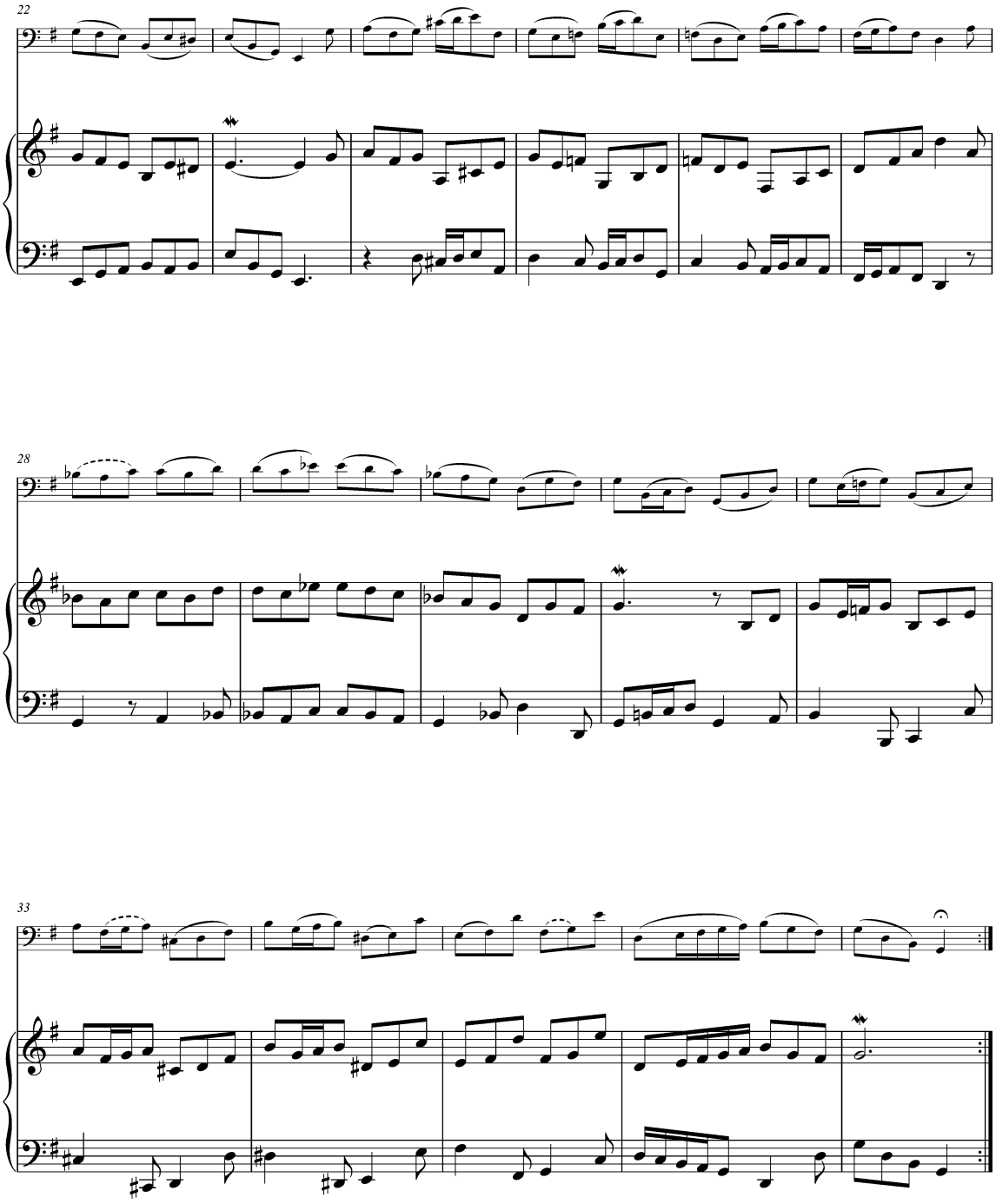


Gigue

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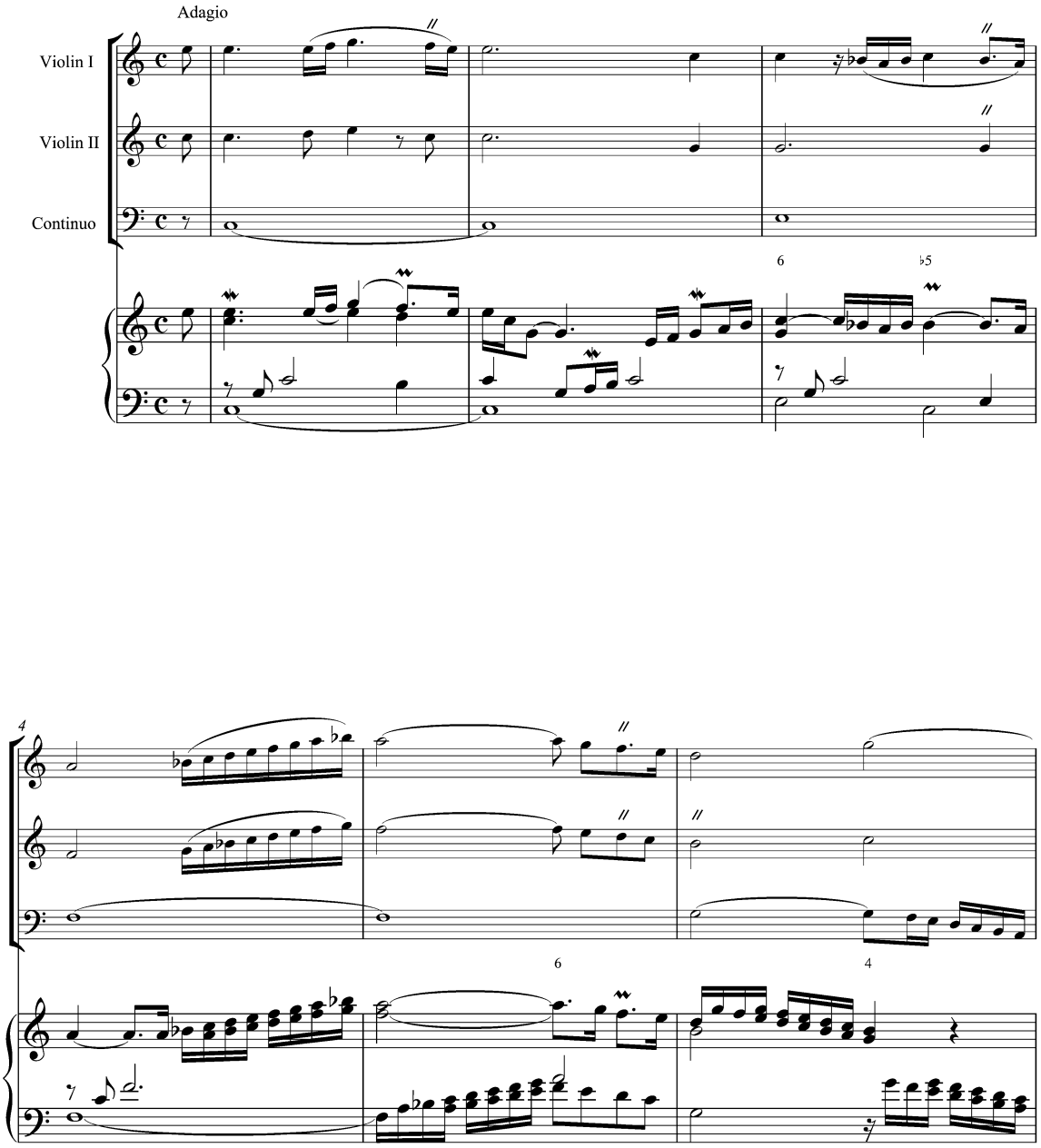
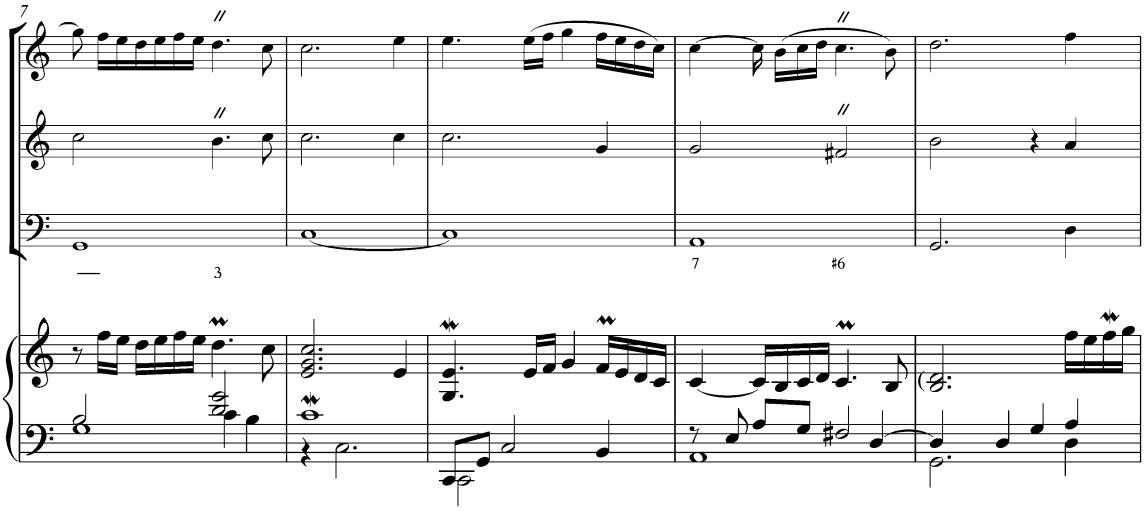
Sonata

Nicola Matteis
transcribed for harpsichord by Joseph Gascho

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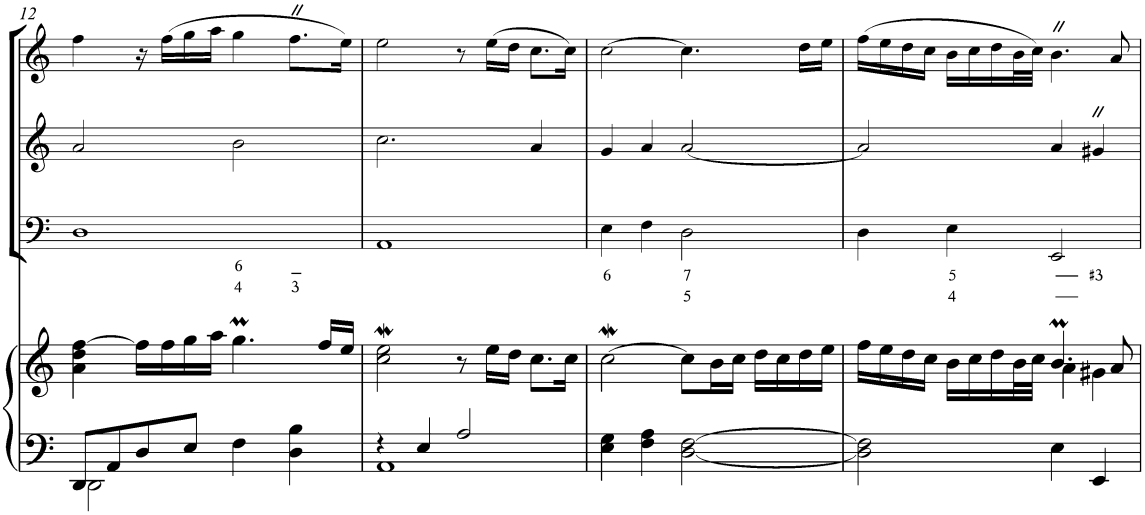
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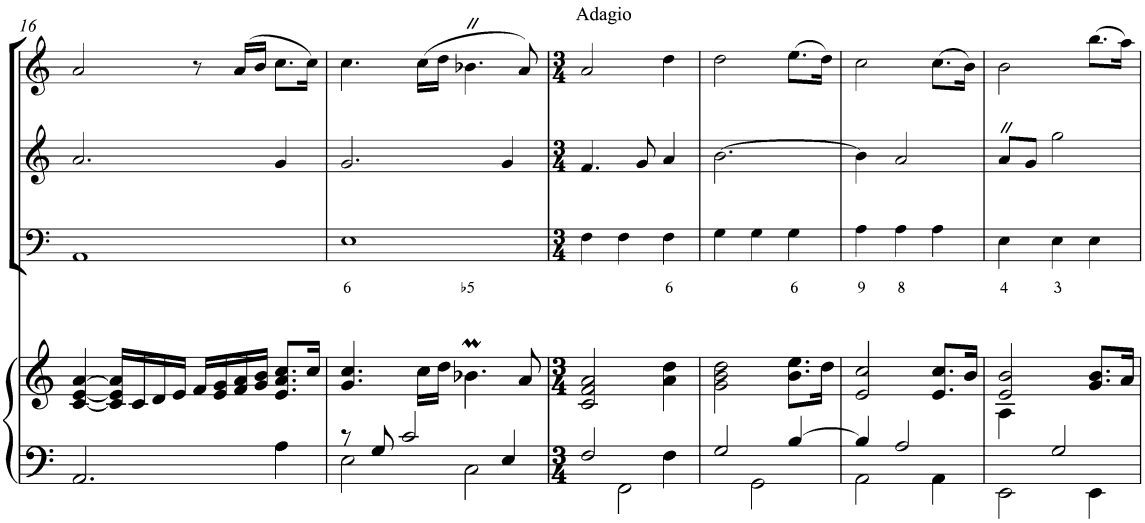
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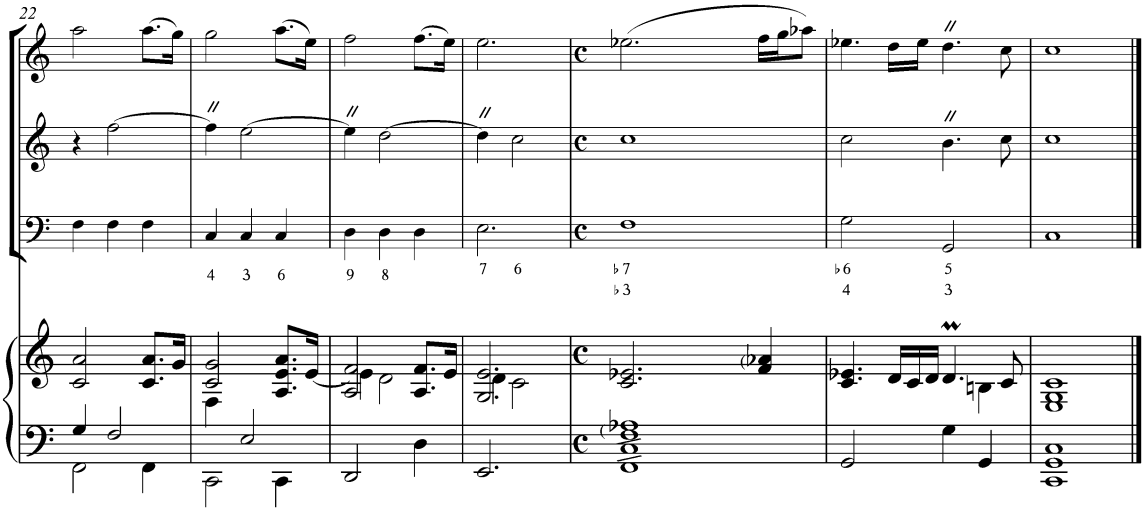
Adagio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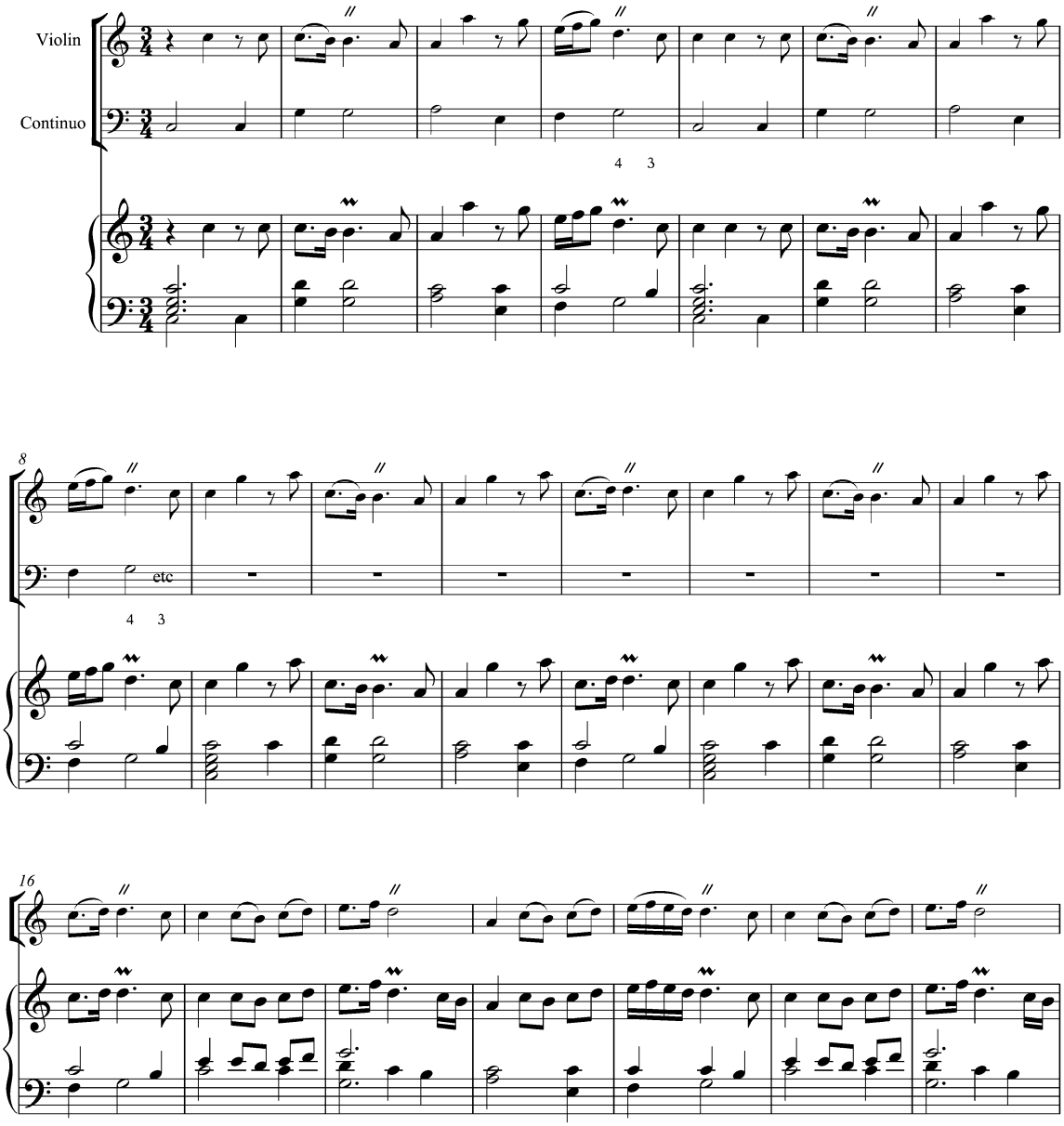
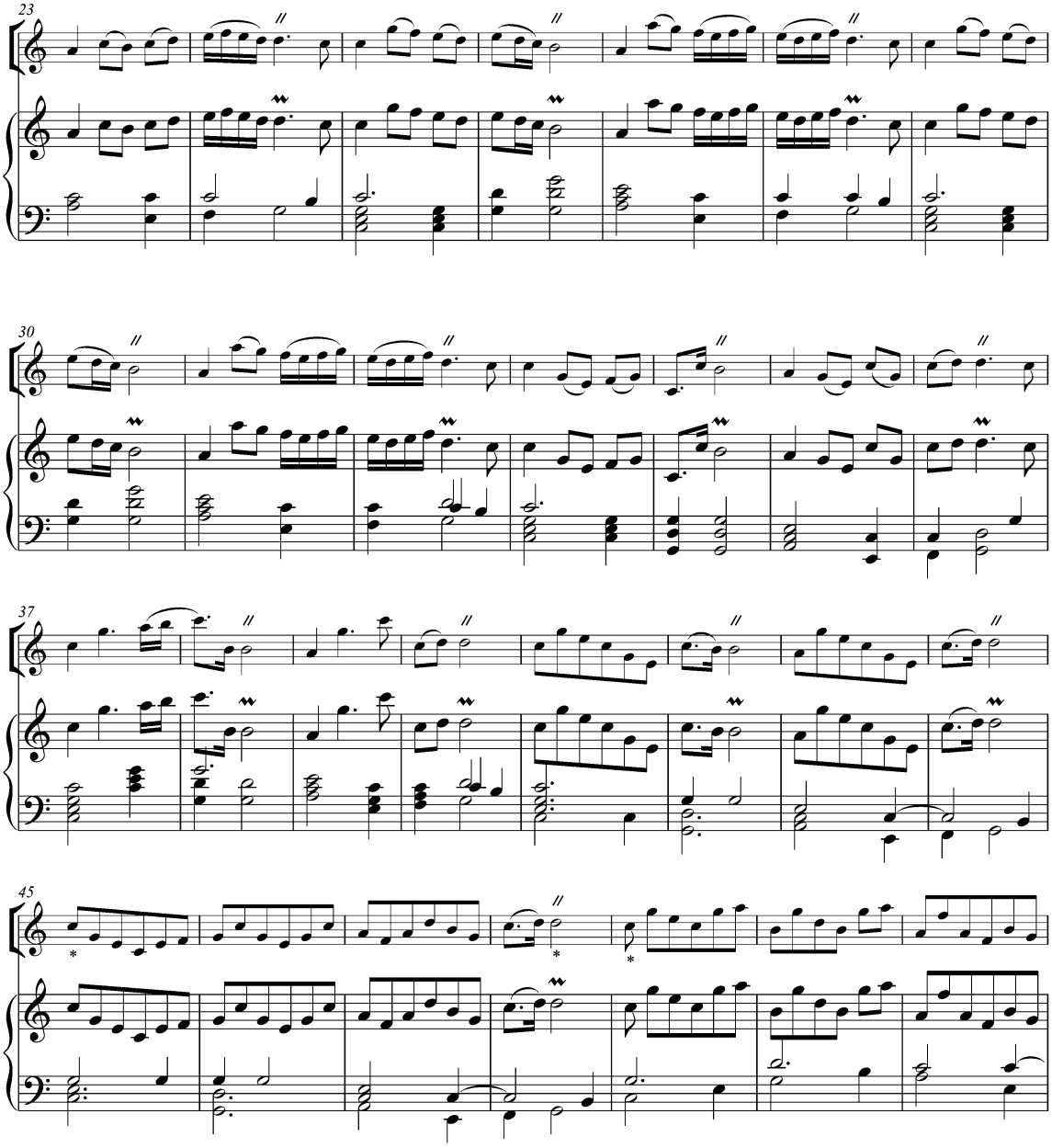
Diverse bizzarrie sopra la Vecchia

Sarabanda ò pur Ciaccona

Nicola Matteis
transcribed for harpsichord by Joseph Gascho

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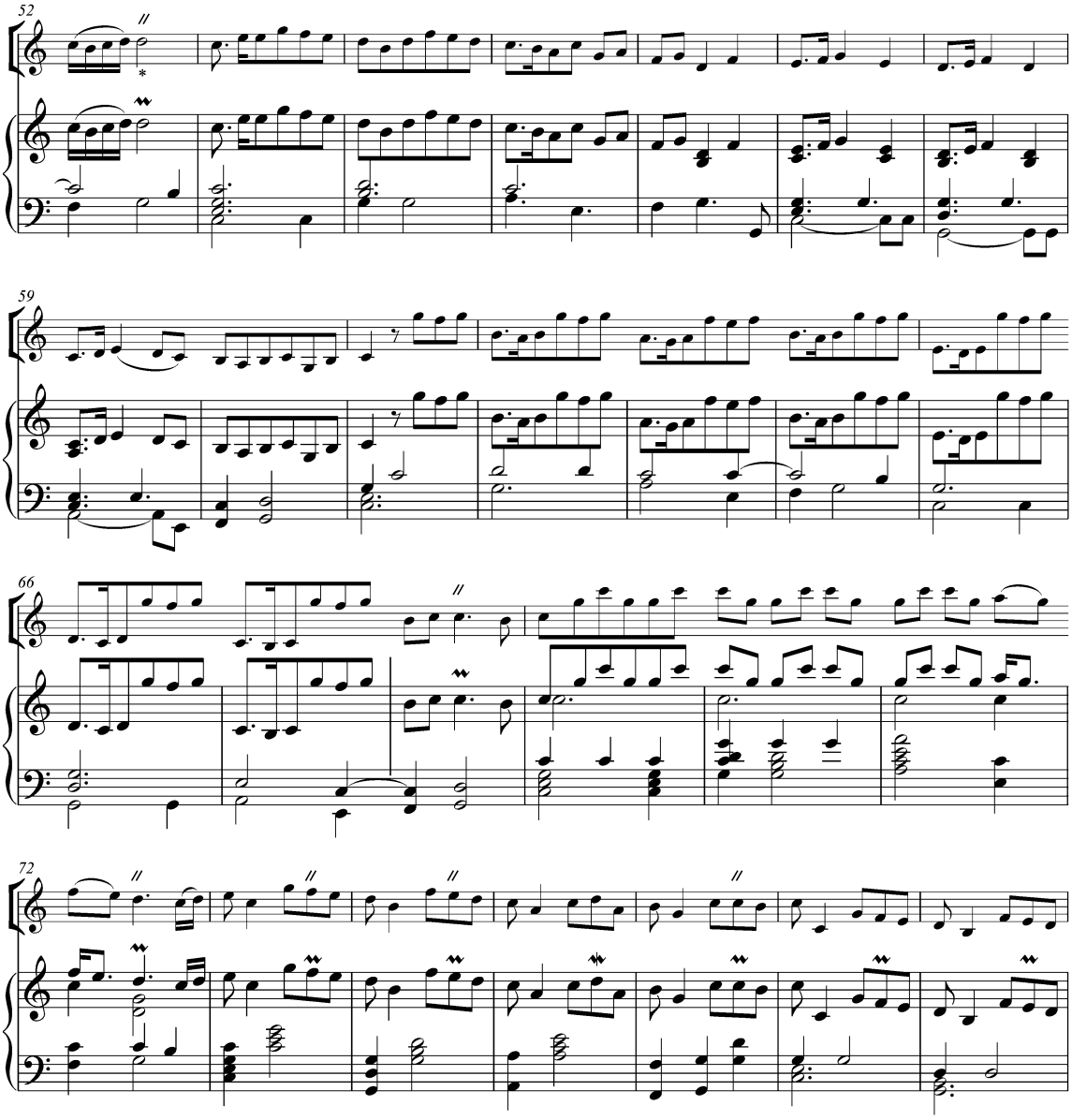
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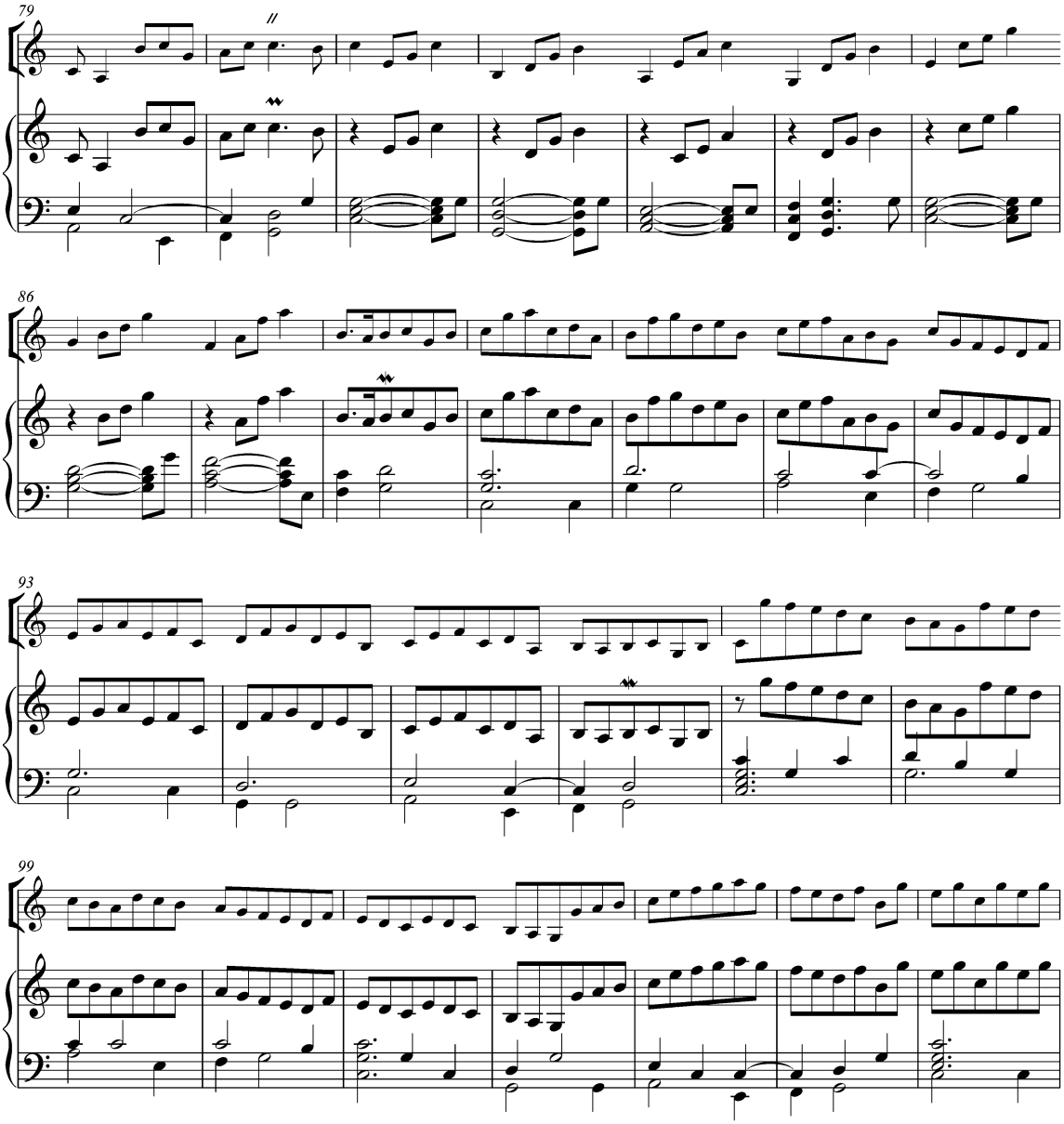
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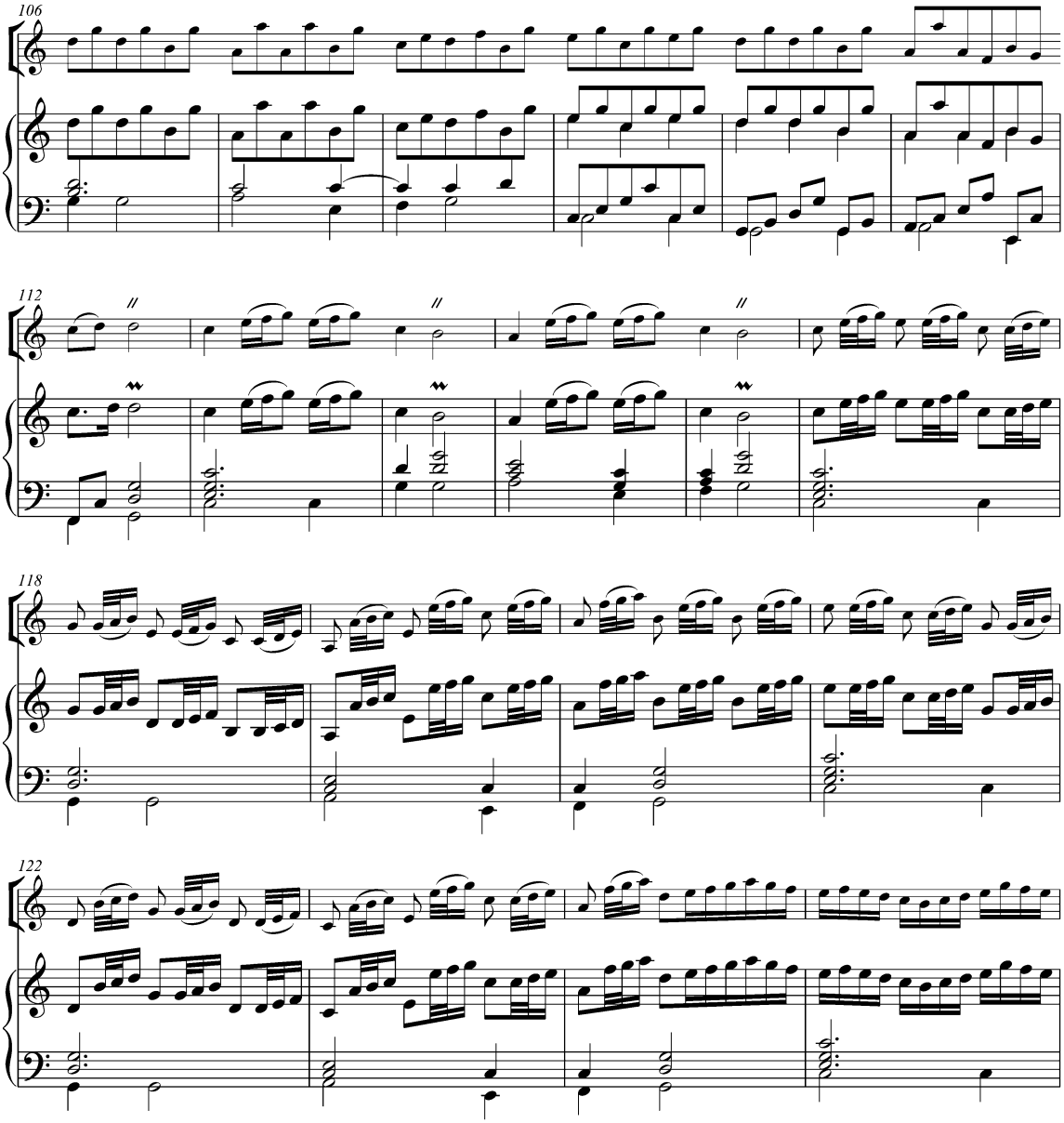
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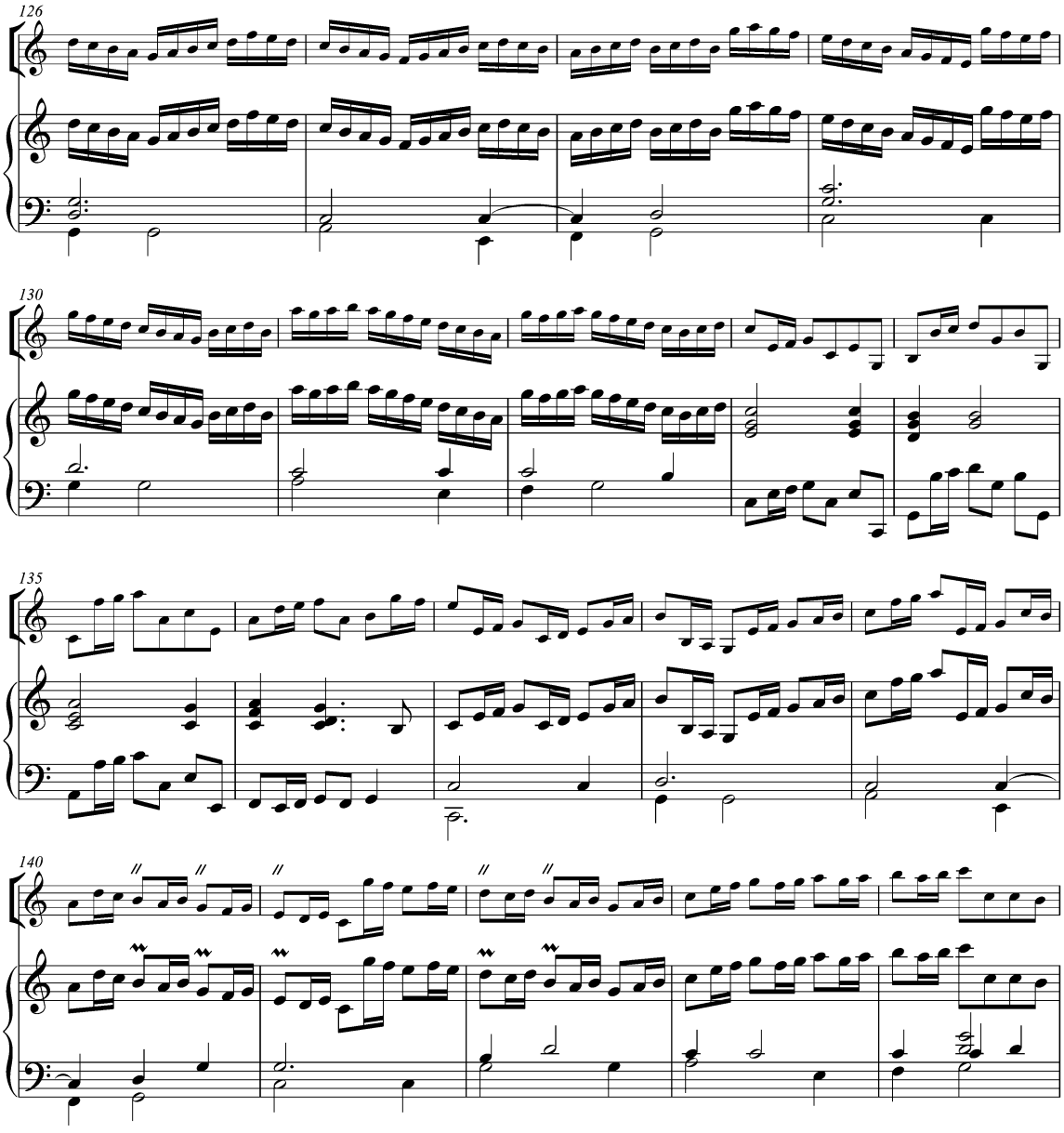
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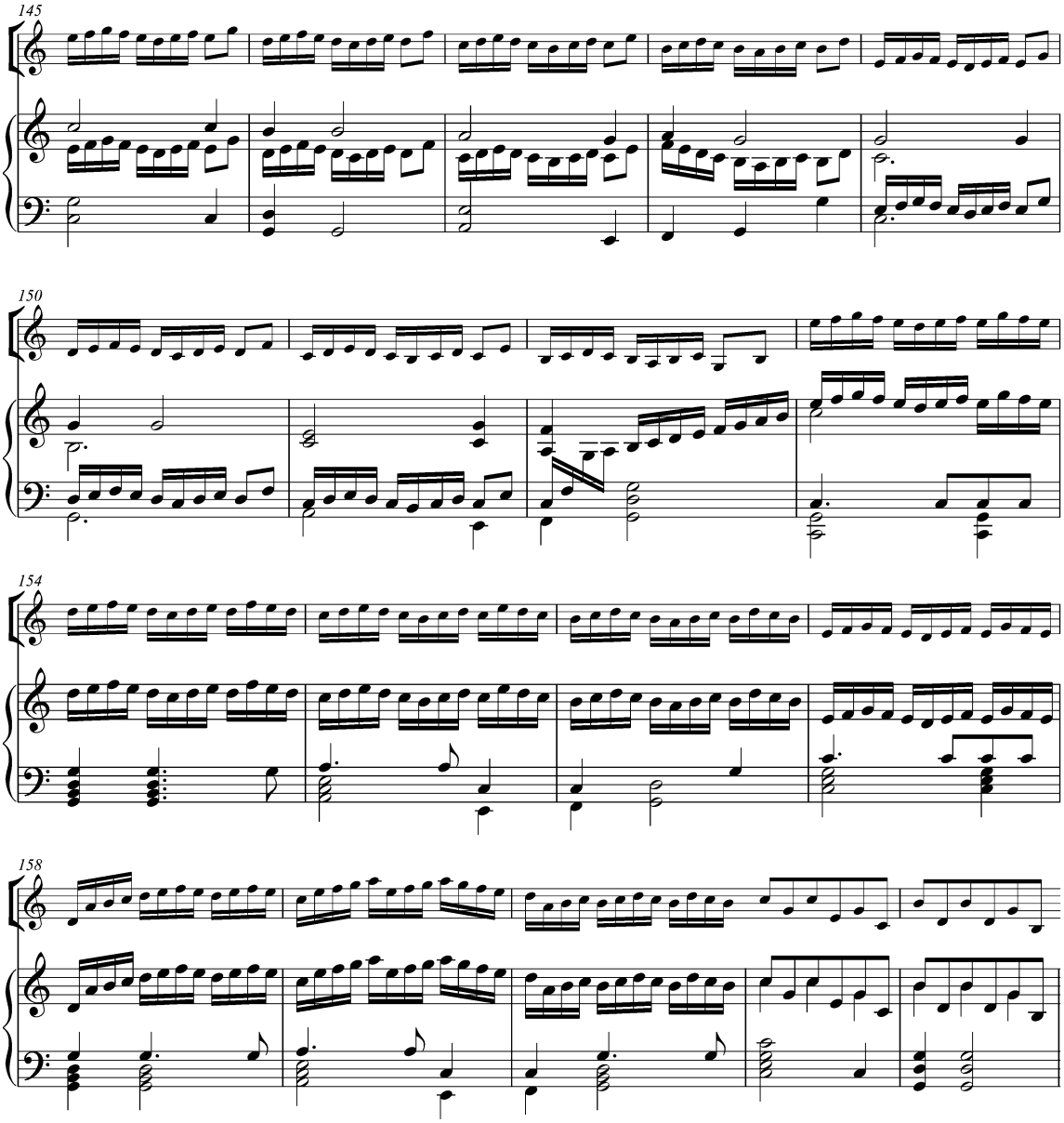
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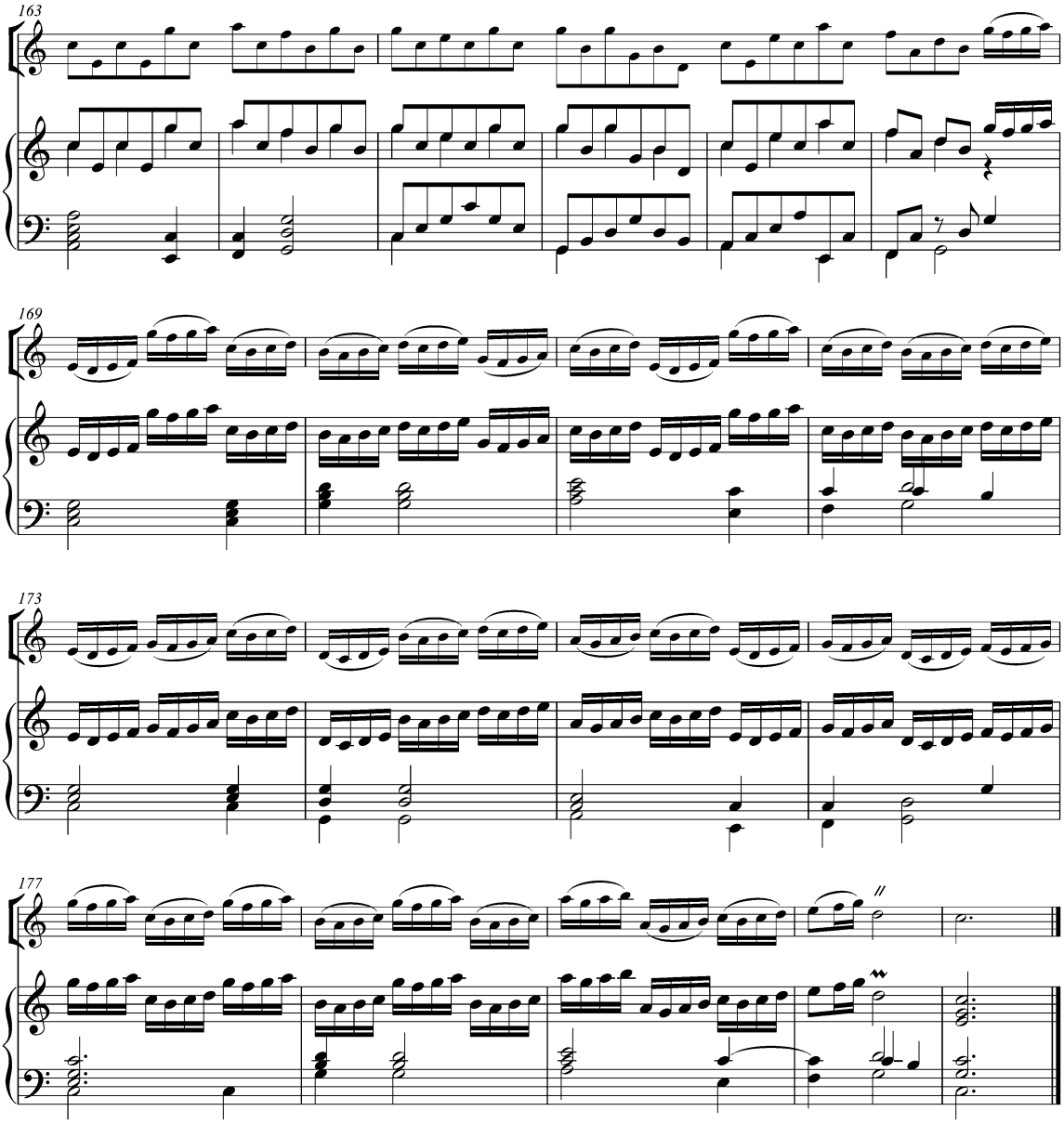
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Appendix: Recorded Material

CD 1: Harpsichord transcriptions by J.S. Bach

Recorded in the Leah Smith Hall; May 4, 2010

Total time: 1:03:04

Concerto in D Major, BWV 972
After Concerto in D Major, RV 230, by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

1.	Allegro	2:20
2.	Larghetto	3:08
3.	Allegro	2:45
4.	Lecture	6:23

Sonata in A Minor, BWV 965
After *Hortus Musicus*: Sonata Prima, by Johann Adam Reinken (1643-1722)

5.	Adagio	2:06
6.	Fuga	4:20
7.	Adagio	1:20
8.	Allemande	4:22
9.	Courante	2:44
10.	Sarabande	1:39
11.	Gigue	6:32
12.	Lecture	1:03

Sonata in C Major, BWV 966
After *Hortus Musicus*: Sonata Undecima, by Reinken

13.	Praeludium	1:53
14.	Fuga	5:07
15.	Adagio	1:26
16.	Allemande	3:07
17.	Lecture	3:27

Concerto in G Minor, BWV 975
After Concerto in G Minor, RV 316, by Vivaldi

18.	Allegro	3:55
19.	Largo	3:41
20.	Giga – Presto	1:56

CD 2: Harpsichord Transcriptions by Jean-Henry d'Anglebert and Jean-Baptiste Forqueray

Recorded in the Leah Smith Hall; May 11, 2010

Total time: 58:16

	Suite in C After Enemond Gaultier (c. 1575-1651)	anonymous, from an autograph manuscript of d'Anglebert	
1.	Prélude. D'Anglebert		0:53
2.	Allemande du Vieux Gaultier		2:11
3.	Courante du Vieux Gaultier		1:47
4.	Sarabande du Vieux Gaultier		2:11
5.	Gigue du Vieux Gaultier		2:05
6.	Chaconne du Vieux Gaultier		4:30
7.	Lecture		6:11
	Suite in G After Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687)	d'Anglebert	
8.	Overture de la Mascarade		3:20
9.	Menuet. Le Jeune Iris *Lentement*		1:48
10.	Menuet. Dans nos bois *Lentement*		1:53
11.	Air d'Apollon du Triomphe de l'Amour *Lentement*		3:21
12.	Passacaille d'Armide		6:31
13.	Lecture		4:13
	Cinquième Suite After Antoine Forqueray (1671-1745)	Jean-Baptiste Forqueray	
14.	La Rameau *Majestueusement*		4:25
15.	La Guignon *Vivement et détaché*		5:28
16.	La Silva *Tres tendrement*		2:55
17.	Jupiter *Modérément*		4:43

CD 3: Harpsichord Transcriptions by Joseph Gascho

Recorded in the Leah Smith Hall; October 7, 2010

Total time: 1:05:26

1.	Lecture	16:33
	La Descente d'Orphée After *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*, H. 488 by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)	
2.	Ouverture	3:39
3.	Entrée de nimphes et de bergers désespérés	2:03
4.	Air d'Orphée	2:36
5.	Sarabande	1:59
6.	Les Fantômes	1:46
7.	Lecture	6:51
	Suite in G Major After Suite in G Major for Violoncello Solo, BWV 1007 by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)	
8.	Prelude	2:38
9.	Allemande	4:31
10.	Courante	2:42
11.	Sarabande	2:23
12.	Menuets	3:24
13.	Gigue	2:03
14.	Lecture	4:50
	Prelude and Chaconne After "Sonata" and "Diverse Bizarrie sopra La Vecchia" by Nicola Matteis (fl. c. 1670-c. 1698)	
15.	Prelude	2:17
16.	Chaconne	5:20

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