Johann Adolph Scheibe, Keyboard Partitas

Johann Adolph
Scheibe
(1708 - 1776)

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Partitura Organum

Mus ms autogr. Steibelt 6

Pieces
au
Clavessin
composée
par
Chrr. Jean Adolph. S.
1727.

PREUSSISCHER STAATS-BIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN KULTURBESITZ

Johann Adolph Scheibe, Keyboard Partitas

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Introduction

Johann Adolph Scheibe (1708 – 1776) was a German-Danish composer and critic and theorist of music. He was born in Leipzig as the son of Johann Scheibe, an organ builder. At 11 he entered the school at the Nikolaikirche in Leipzig. In 1725 he entered Leipzig University to continue study in jurisprudence. However, his university education was abandoned when a family financial crisis forced him to remain at home. Although he later wrote that he had begun to study keyboard at the age of six, it was only at this time that he gave serious thought to music as a career. He read everything he could find about music, and began to practise the organ. Scheibe was therefore largely self-taught as a musician.

In 1729 Scheibe applied for the organ position at the Nicolaikirche, where J.S. Bach was one of the examiniers, but Johann Schneider got the post. In 1736, he moved to Hamburg where he made influential friends including Johann Mattheson and Georg Philipp Telemann. Encouraged by both, Scheibe published the magazine "Der Critische Musikus" between 1737 and 1740. The magazine received widespread attention and remains significant today for its discussion of significant contemporary composers. In 1740 Scheibe became kapellmeister at the court of King Christian VI of Denmark. Scheibe rapidly became the most significant musical figure in Copenhagen. He led the royal orchestra, composed vocal and instrumental music, and was a driving force in the foundation of the first musical society, "Det Musikalske Societet", which held public concerts between 1744 and 1749. After the king's death in 1746, his successor Frederick V affected a move away from the pietism of the previous monarchs. Theatre and opera were once again allowed, and the Royal Danish Theatre opened in 1749. Musical taste turned to Italian opera and French comic opera. Scheibe was strongly opposed to this new style, and his employment was terminated in 1748. Scheibe moved to Sønderborg where he opened a music school for children while continuing to write, compose, and translate Danish texts into German.In 1762, Scheibe returned to Copenhagen, where he remained until his death 14 years later.

As a composer Scheibe is nowadays largely unknown. Though most of his music is now lost, he composed over 150 church pieces and oratorios, some 200 concertos, two operas, and numerous sinfonias, chamber pieces, and secular cantatas. He is largely remembered because of his criticism of J.S. Bach's musical style. In "Der Critische Musicus" (no.6) he criticised Bach for taking das Künstliche (technical or artificial) to excess, at the expense of das Natürliche (the natural). History judged harshly: Scheibe was wrong and his music and writings were neglected.

Scheibe's music deserves a reevaluation. The seven partitas presented in this Edition are proof of that. The source for this Edition is formed by two manuscripts, both owned by the Staatsbibliothek Berlin. The two

manuscripts contain 7 partitas in total, 6 in one manuscript[1], one in the other[2]. The last one is clearly the more ambitious one, both in scope and musical content. The other six are more modest, somewhat shorter, but of no less value. The partitas vary in length, the number of dances, their type and order seem somewhat arbitrary. But they all have one thing in common: they stick to the mind. Originally meant for harpsichord, they work very well on organ too. The seven partitas form a collection of 51 pieces, each of which can be of great value in musical education, or as a quick to learn intermezzo during service. They are relatively easy, but written with great ingenuity and craftmanship. Practise one of them for half an hour, and you'll find yourself humming the piece for the rest of the day.

[1] http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN821787373
[2] http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN873052900

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Partita I

Johann Adolph Scheibe
(1708 - 1776)

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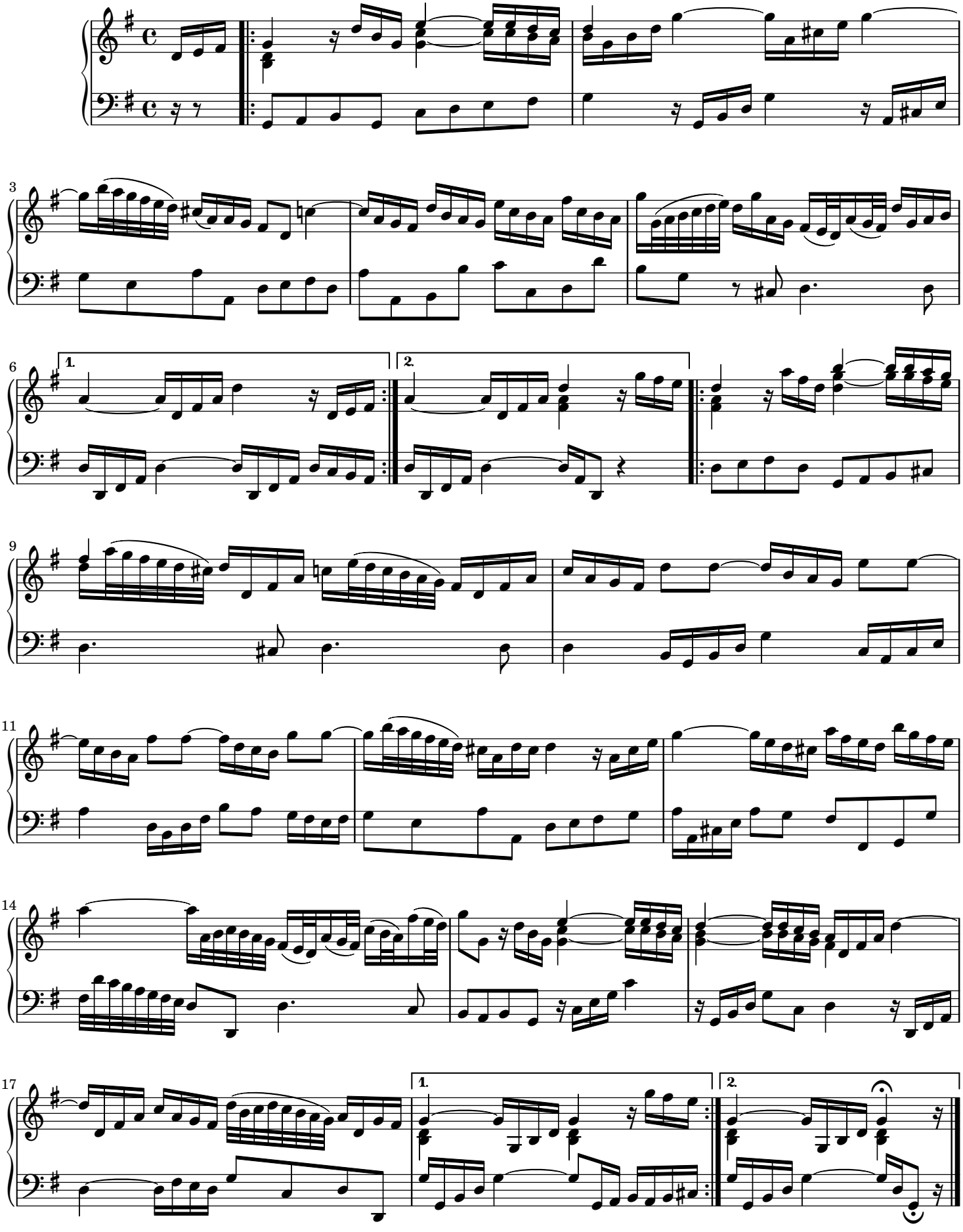

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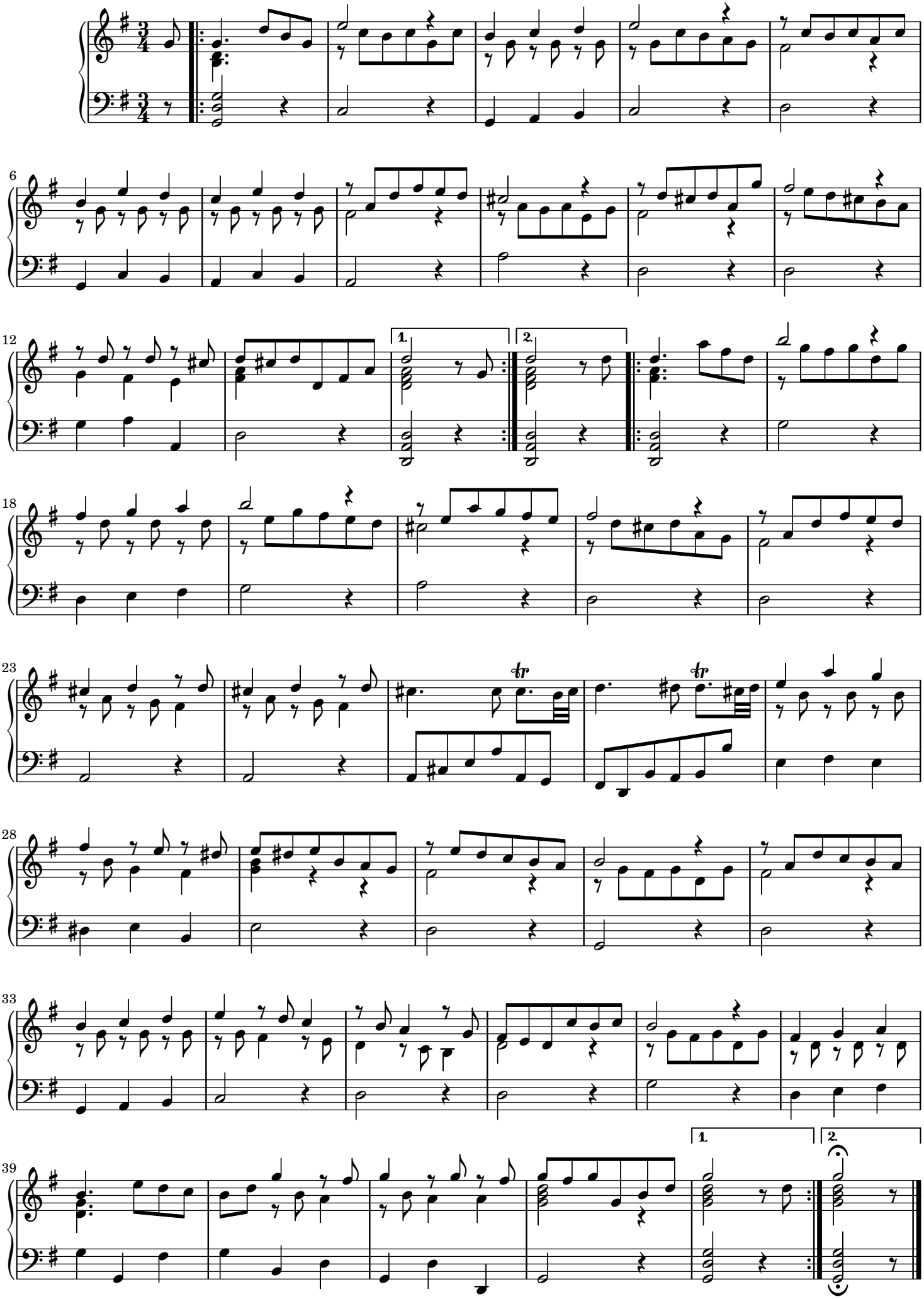

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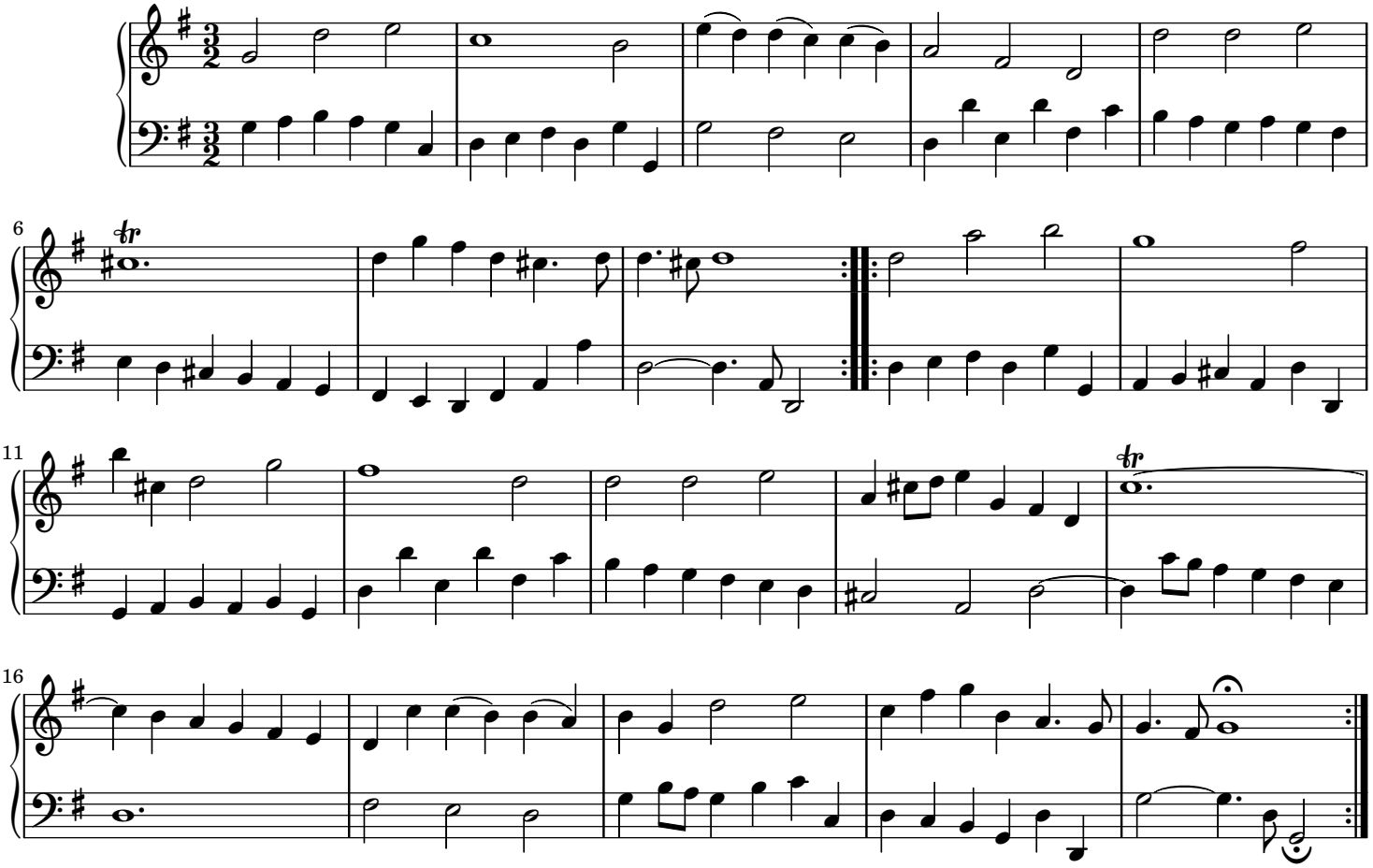

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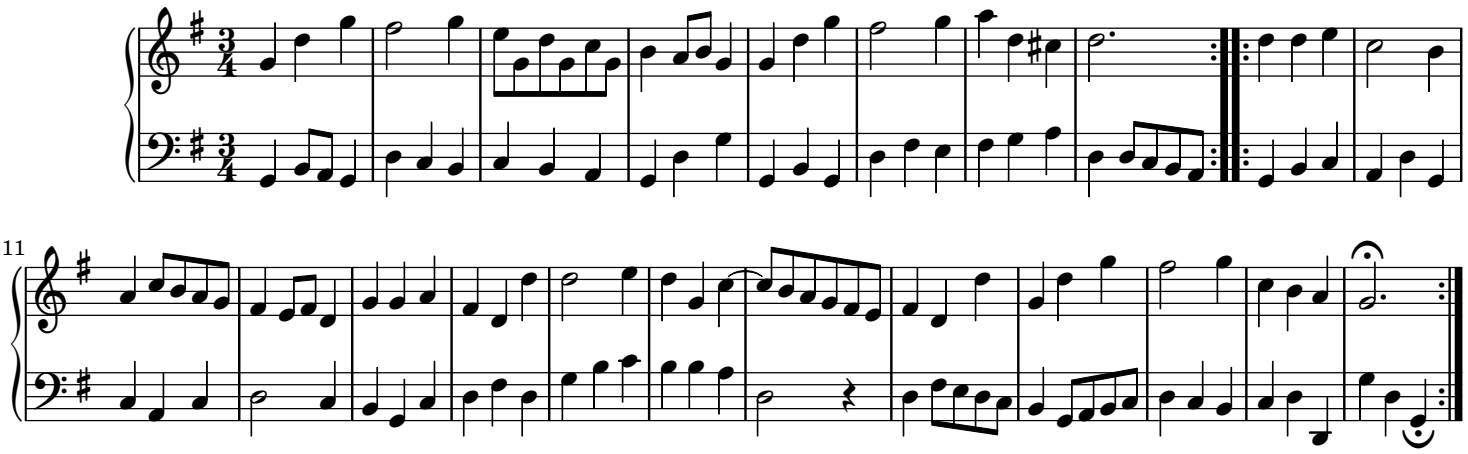

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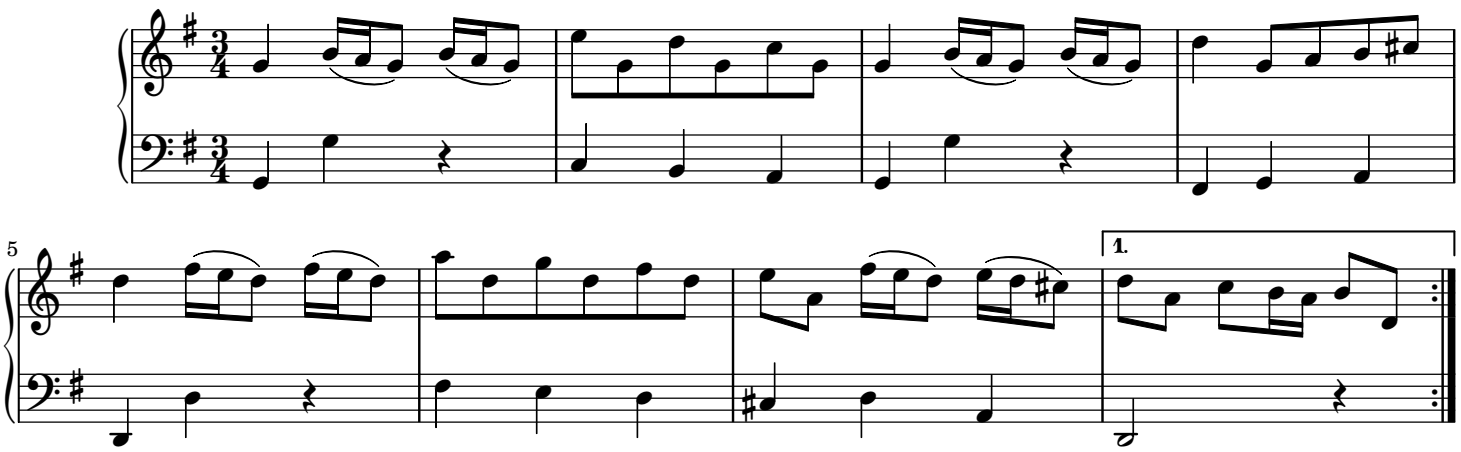

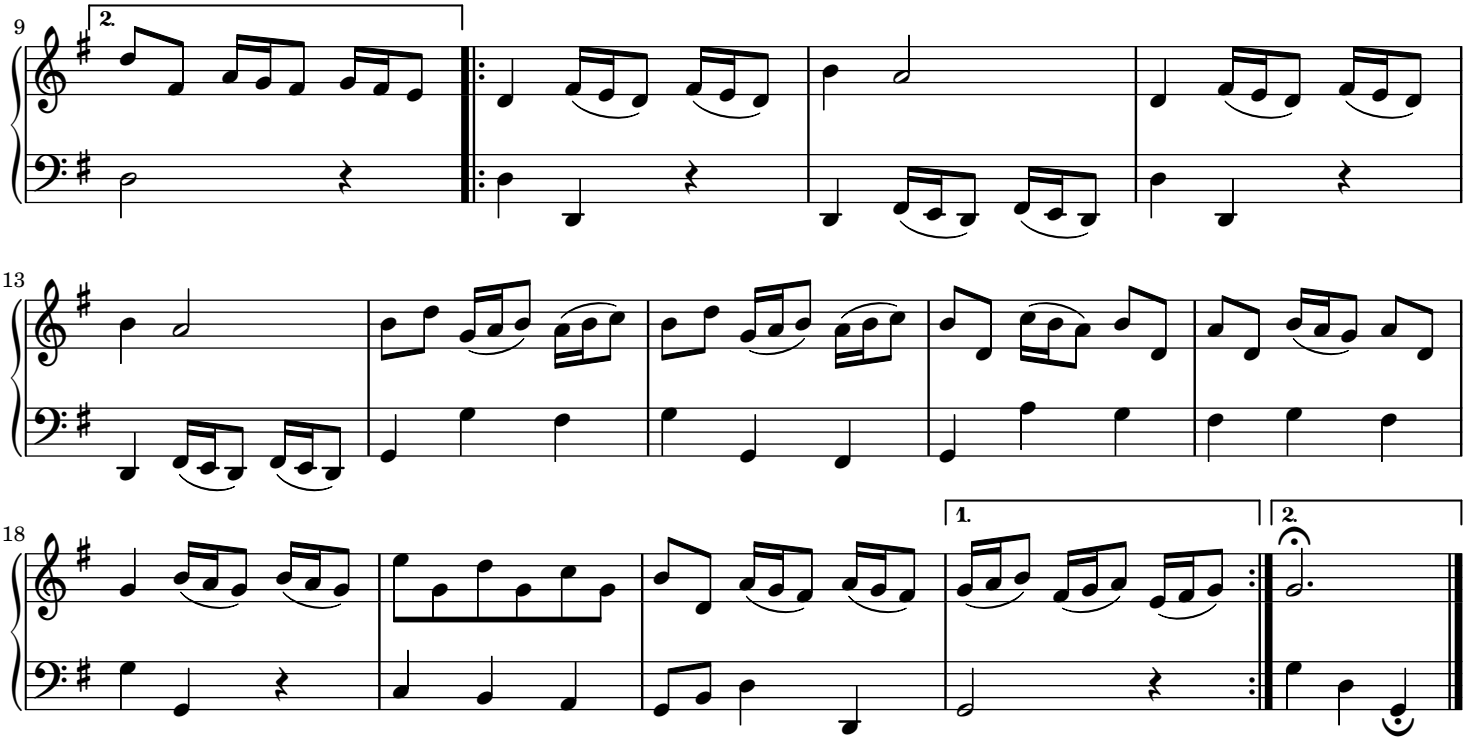

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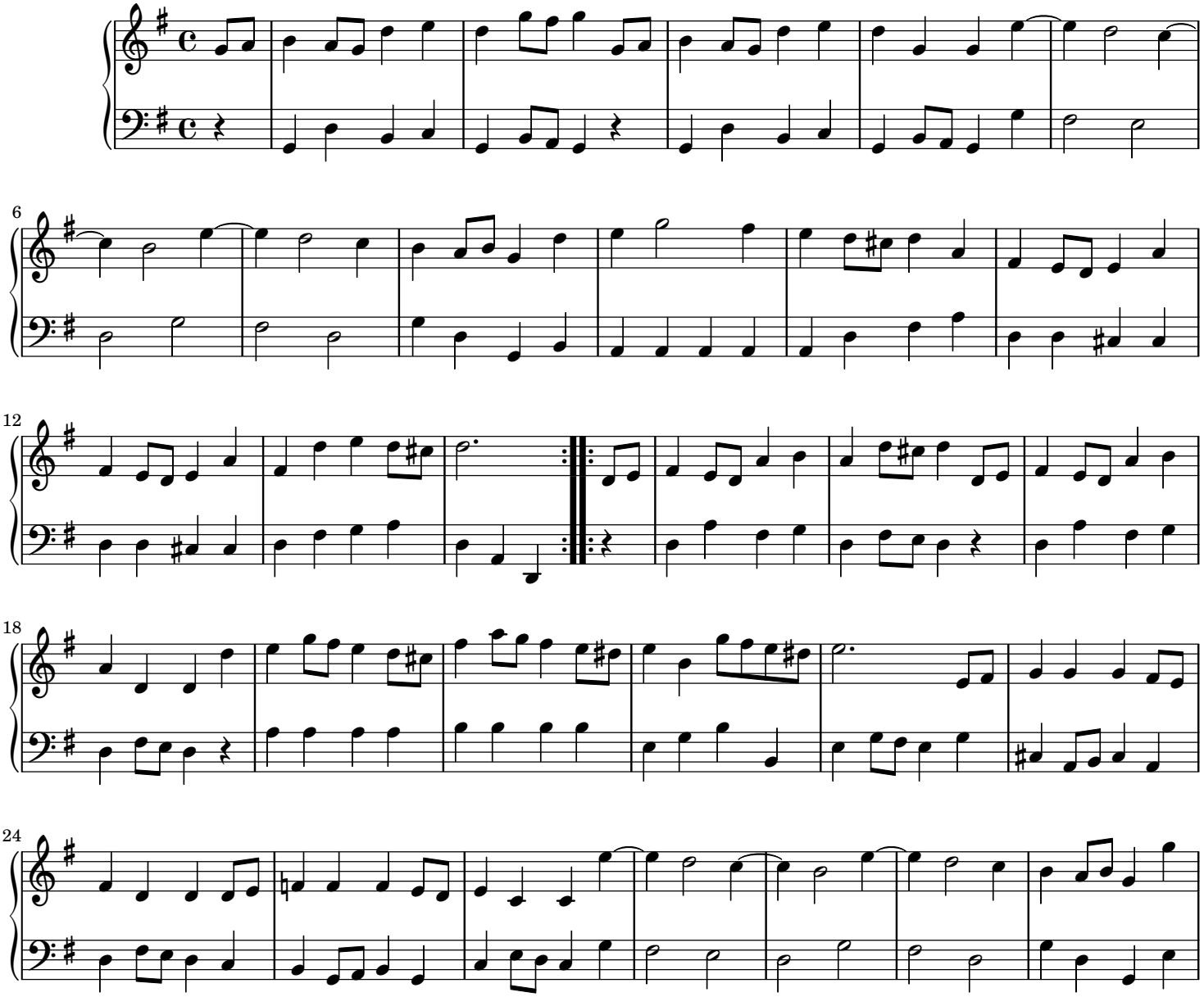

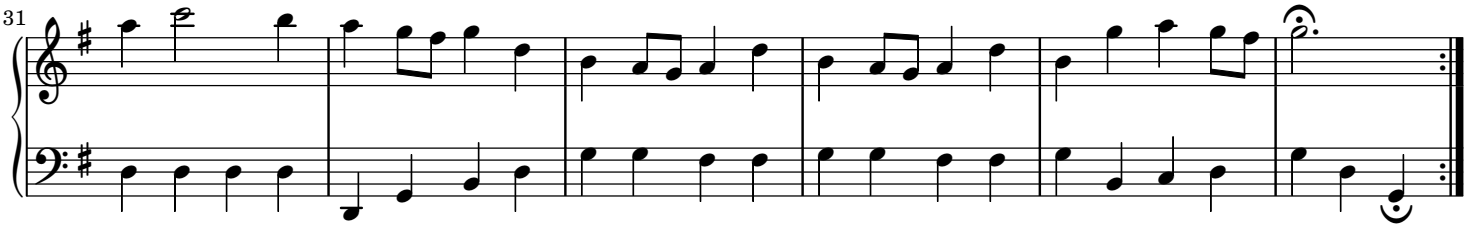

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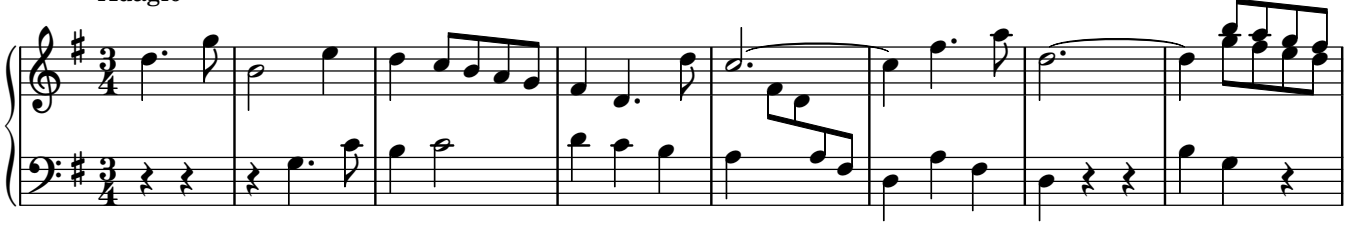

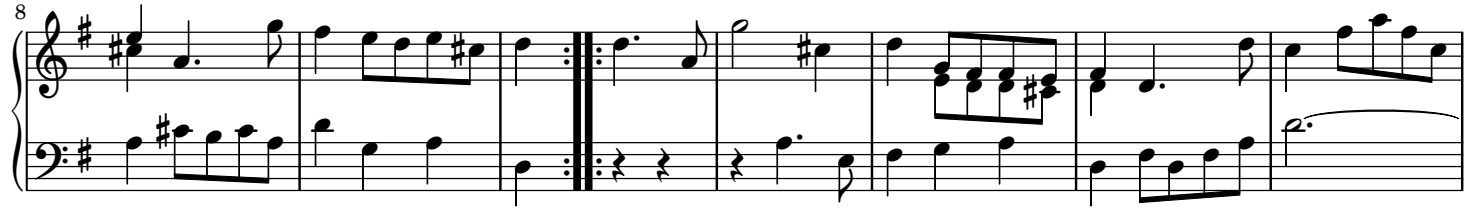

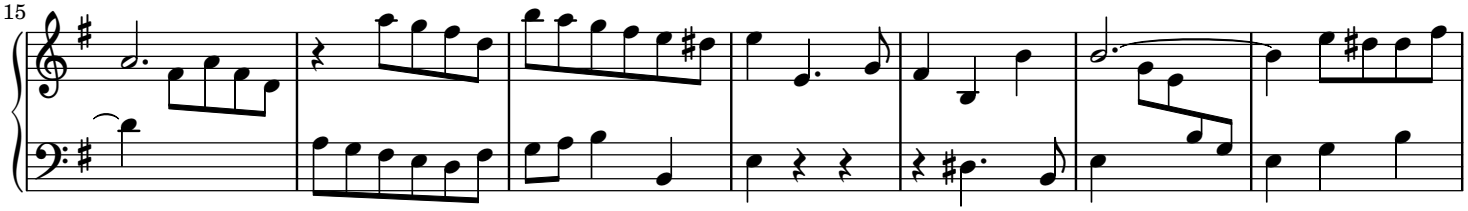

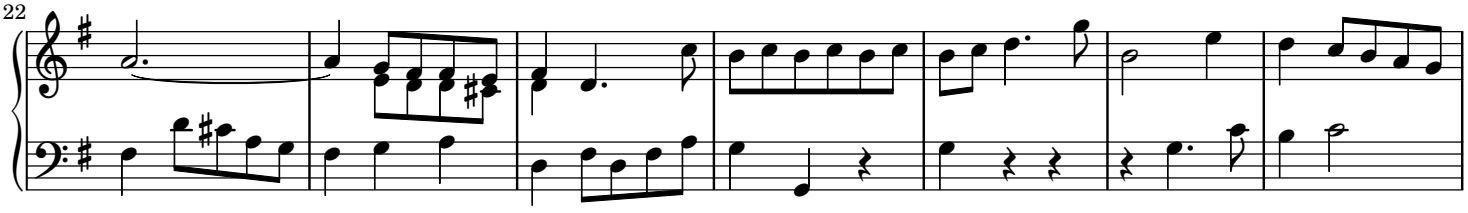

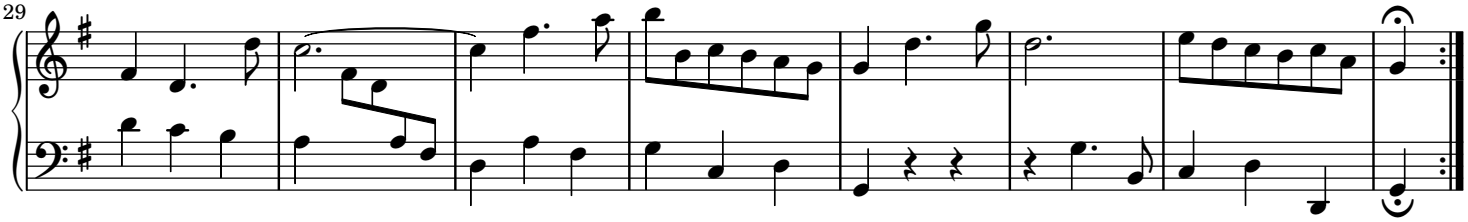

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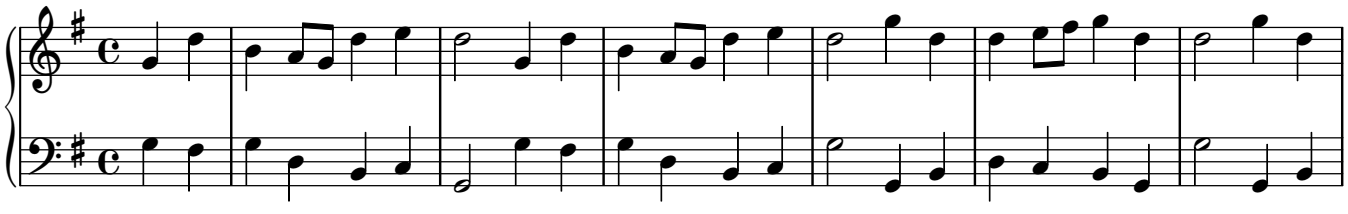

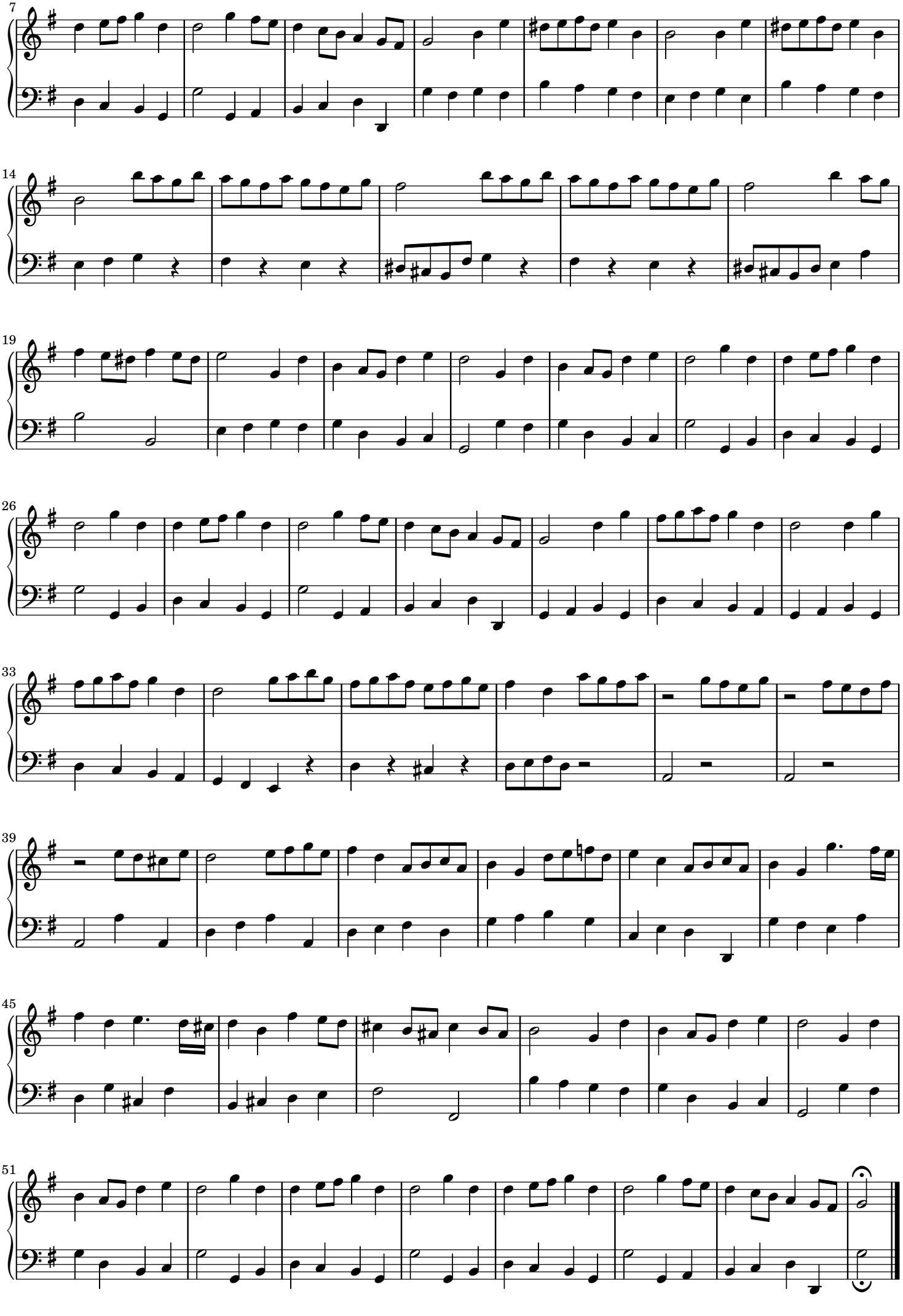

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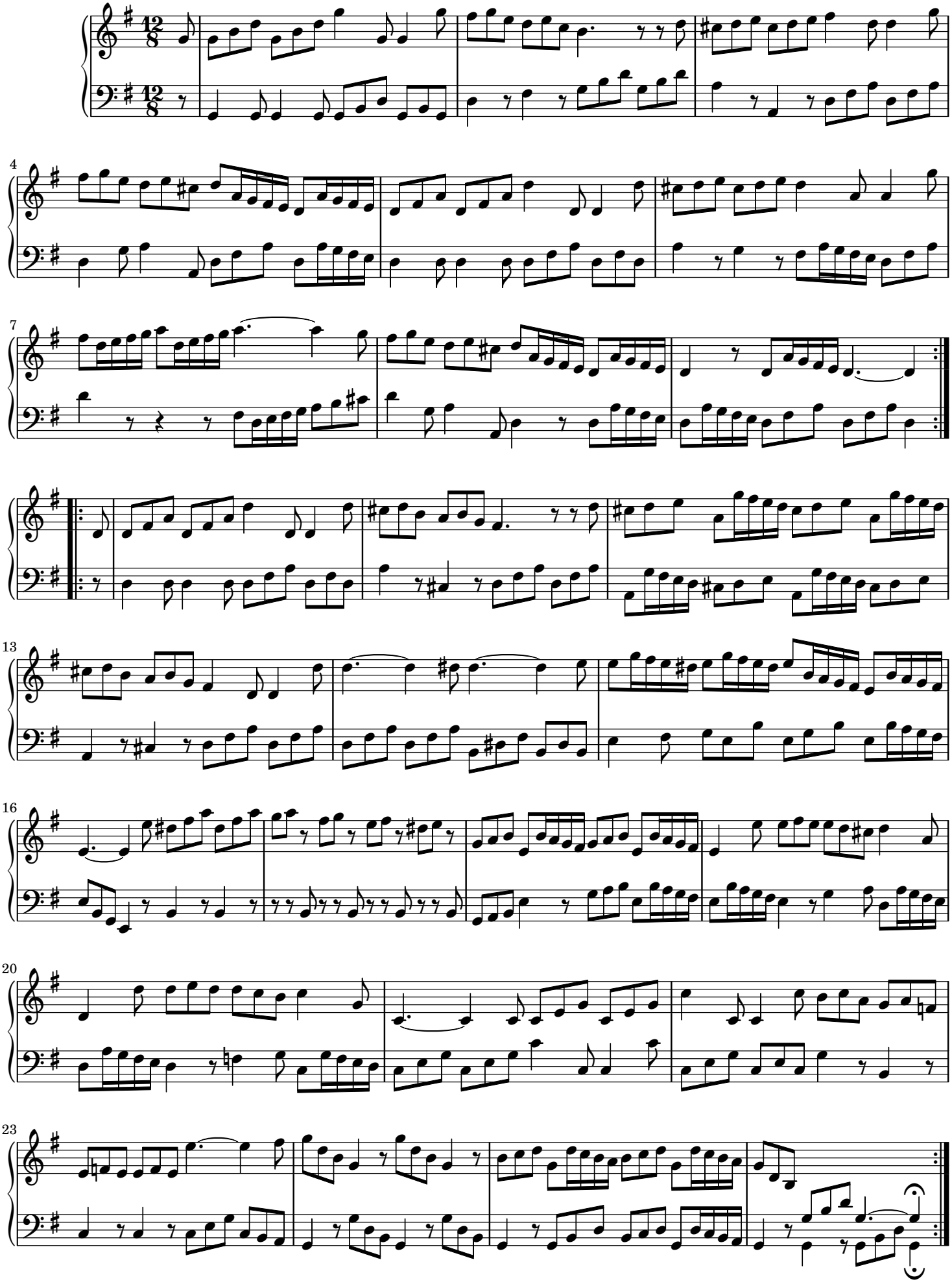

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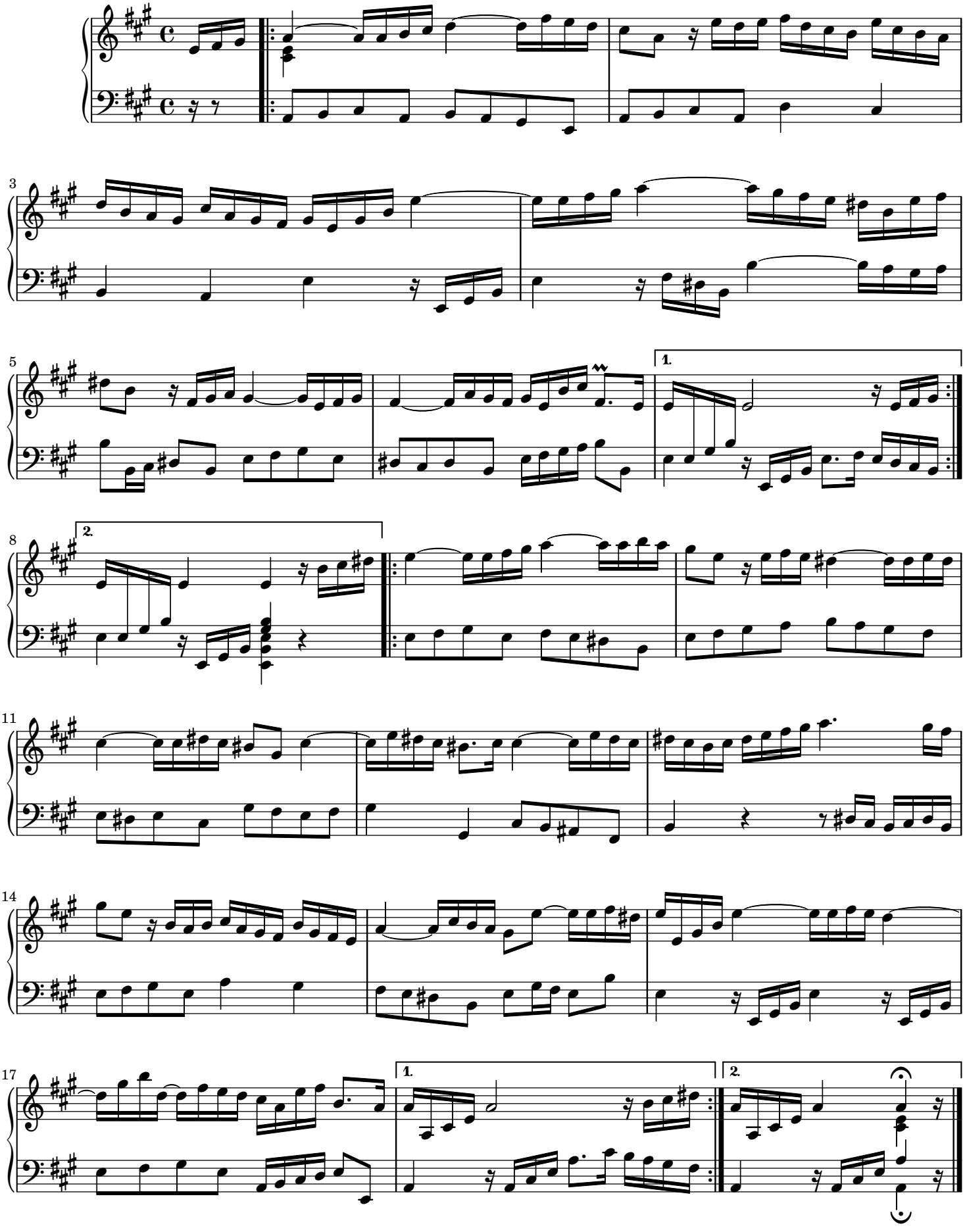
Partita II

Johann Adolph Scheibe
(1708 - 1776)

Allemande



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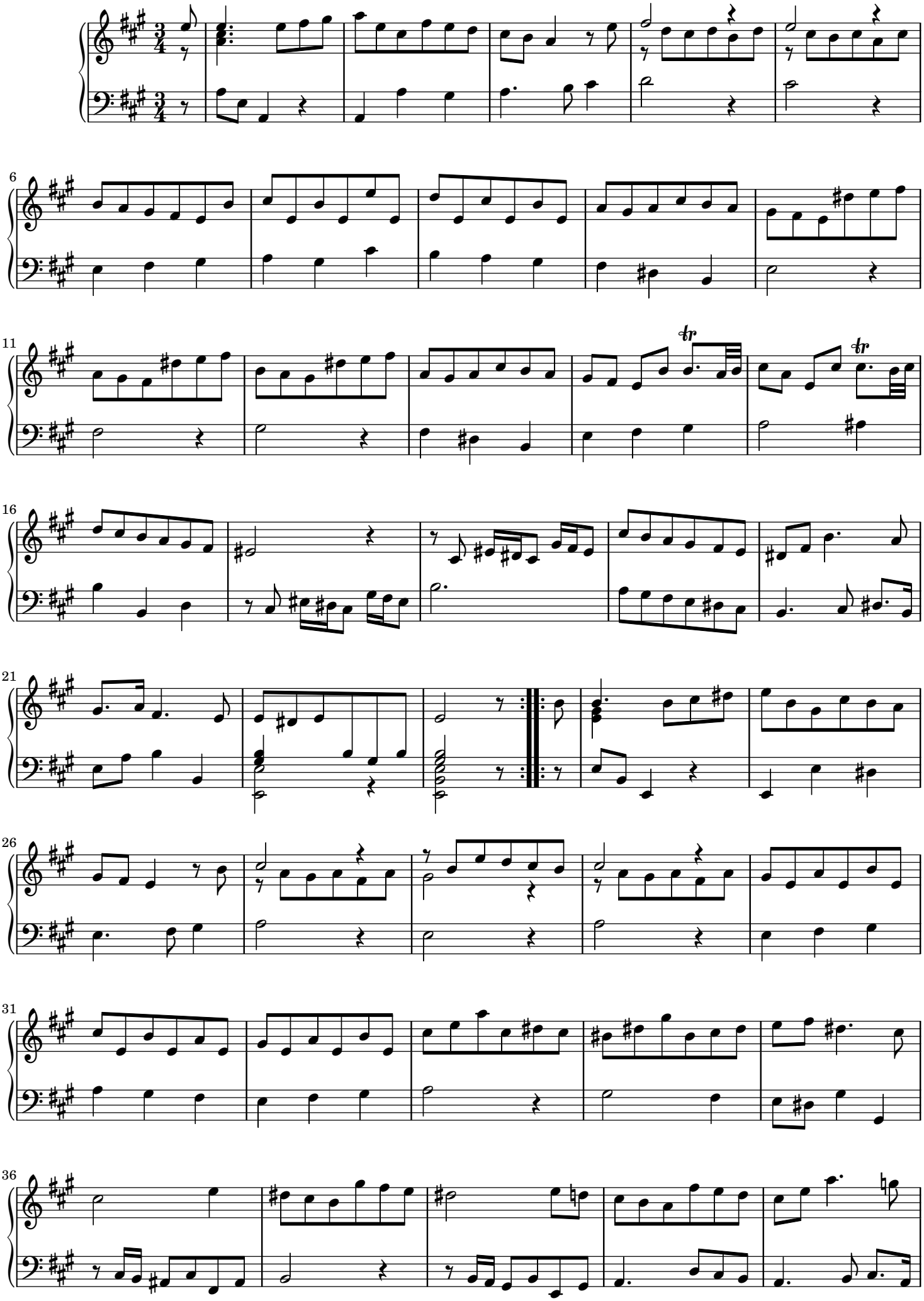

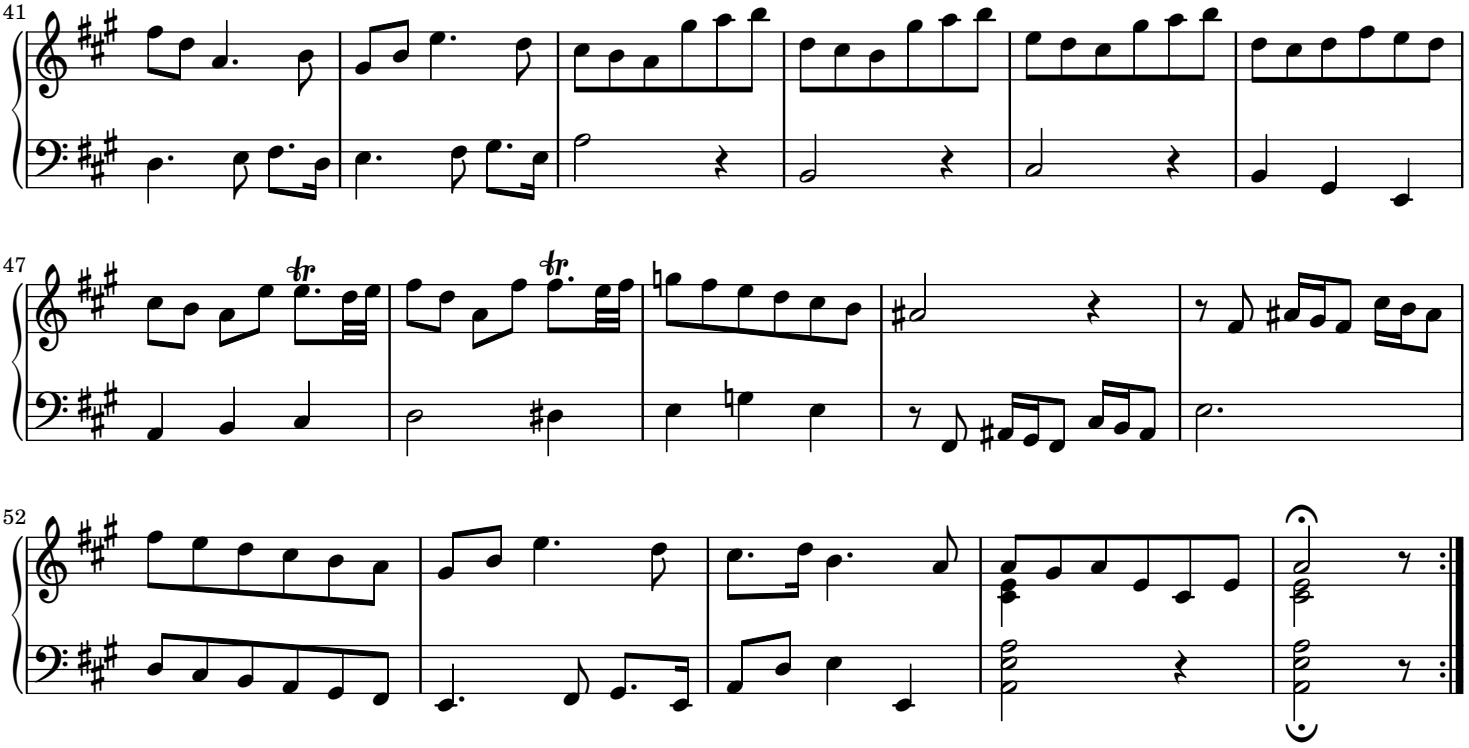

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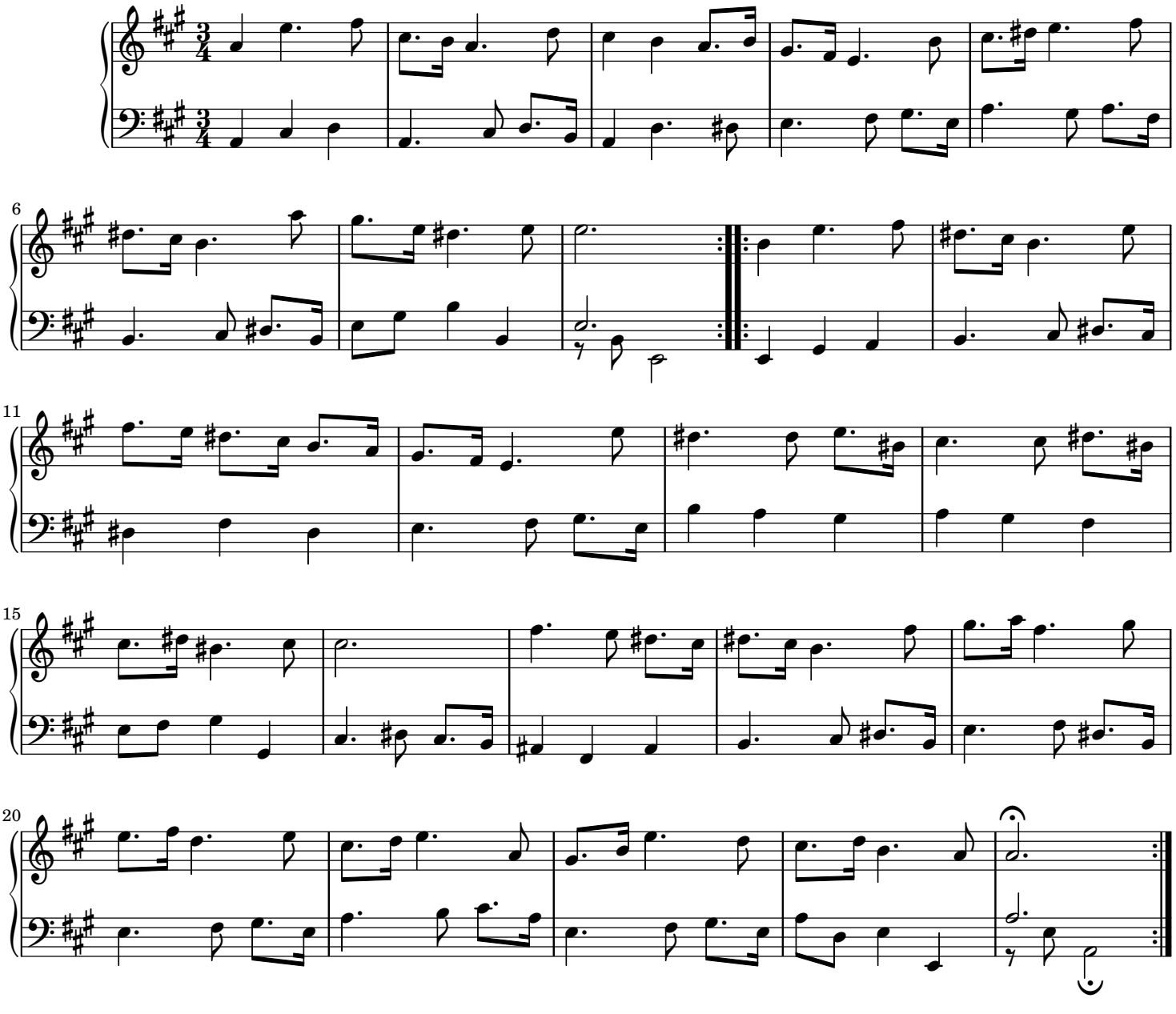

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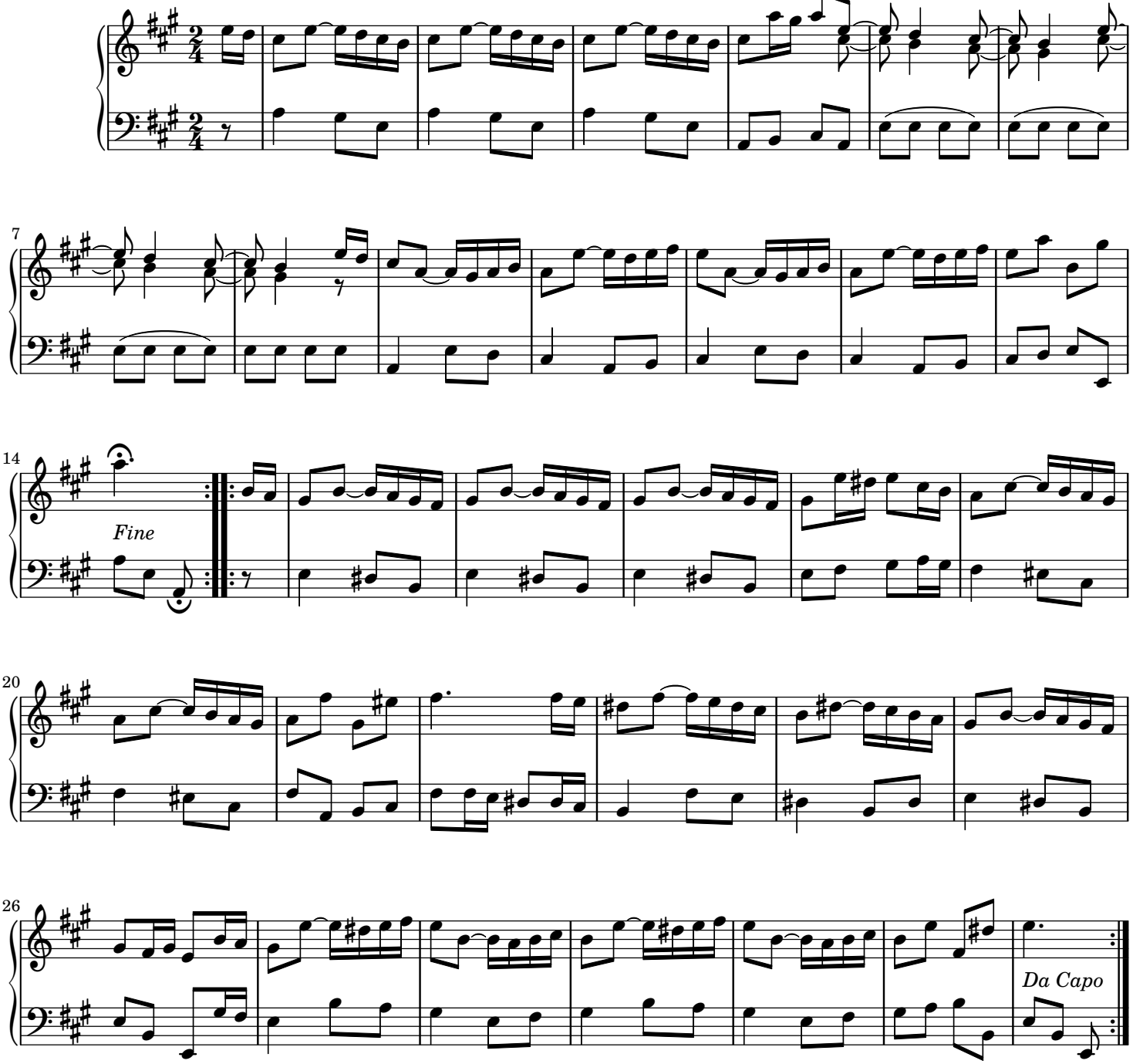

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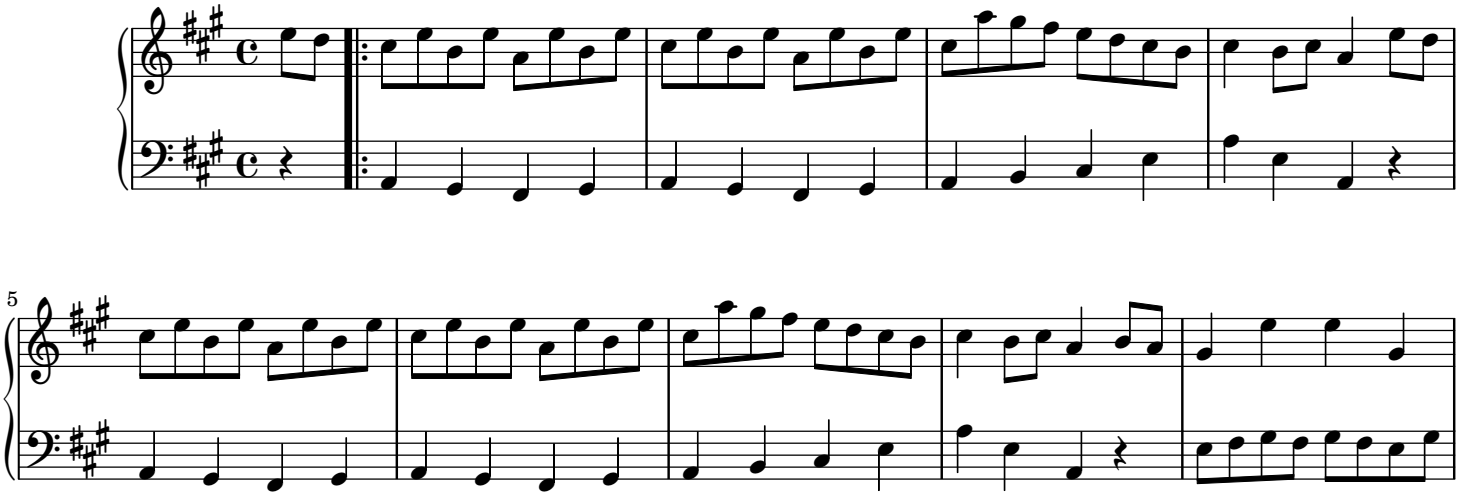

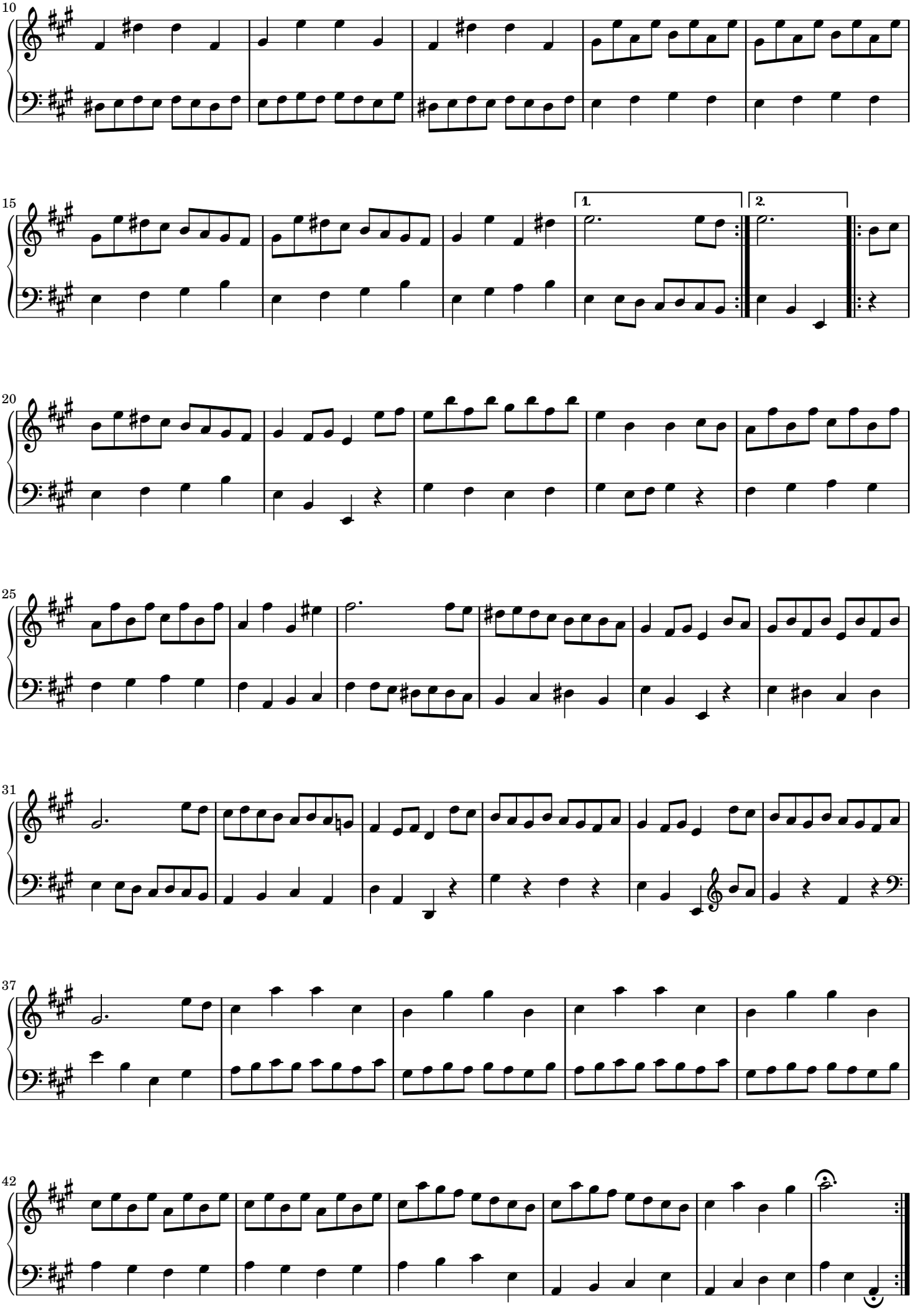
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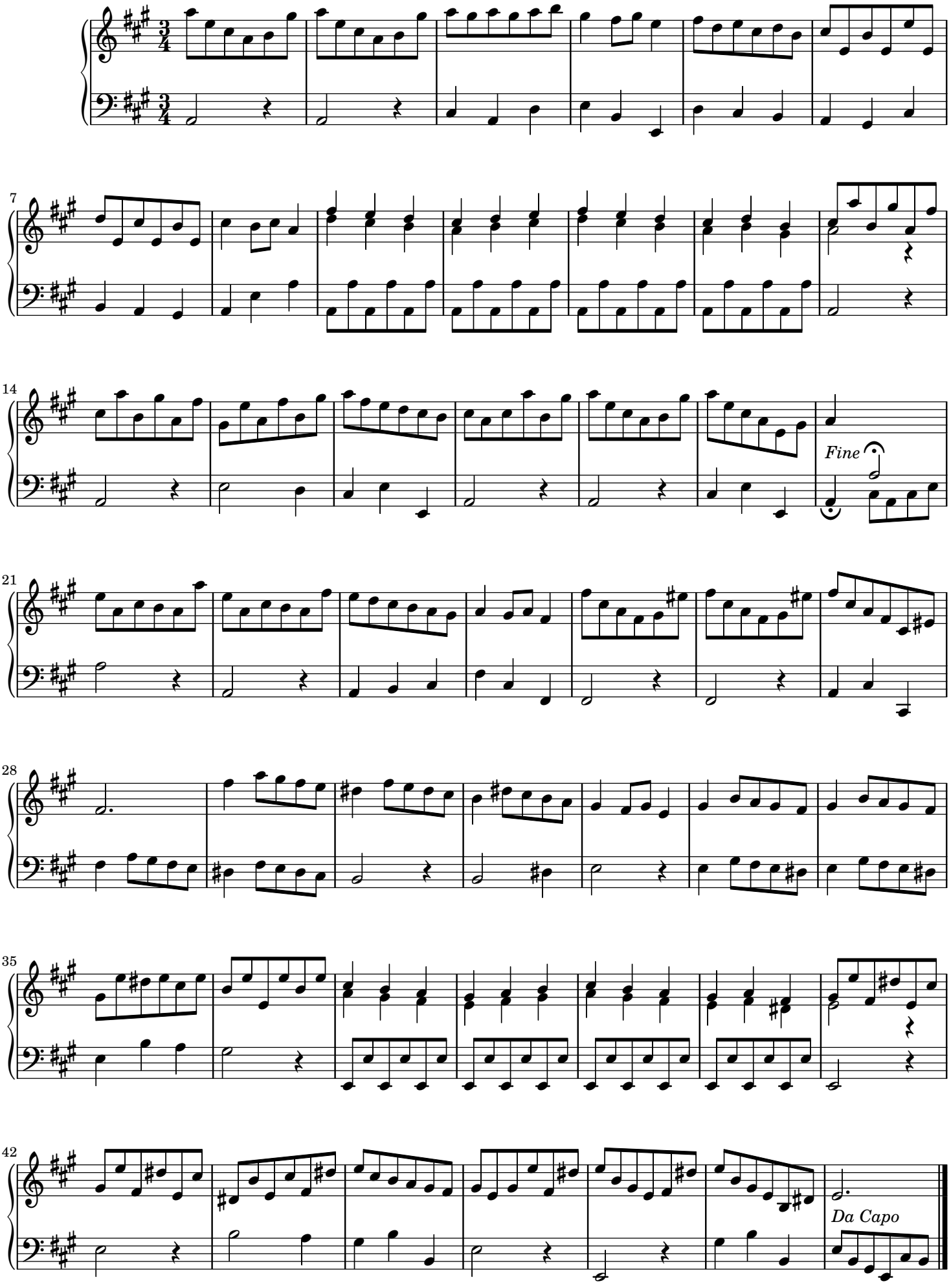

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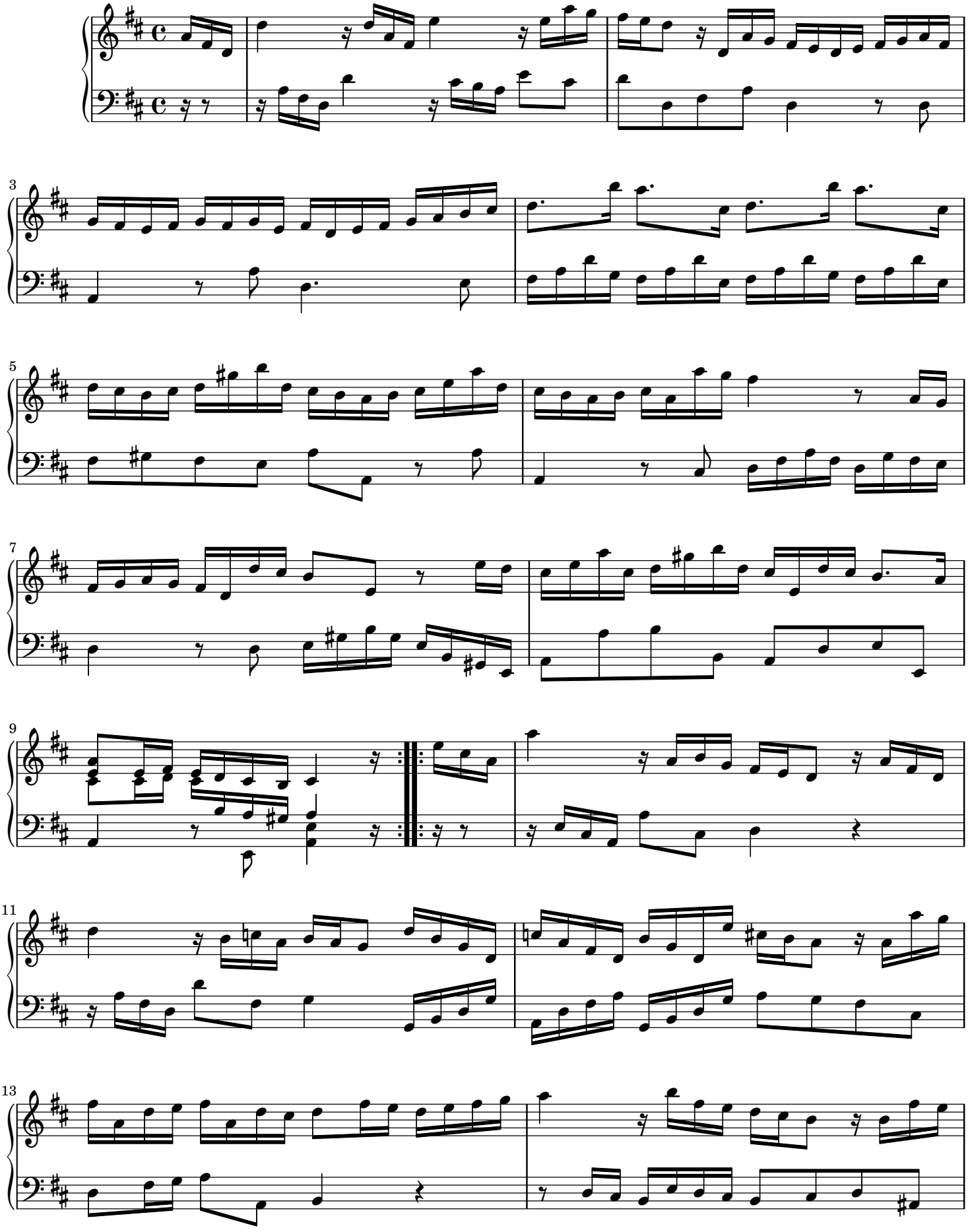
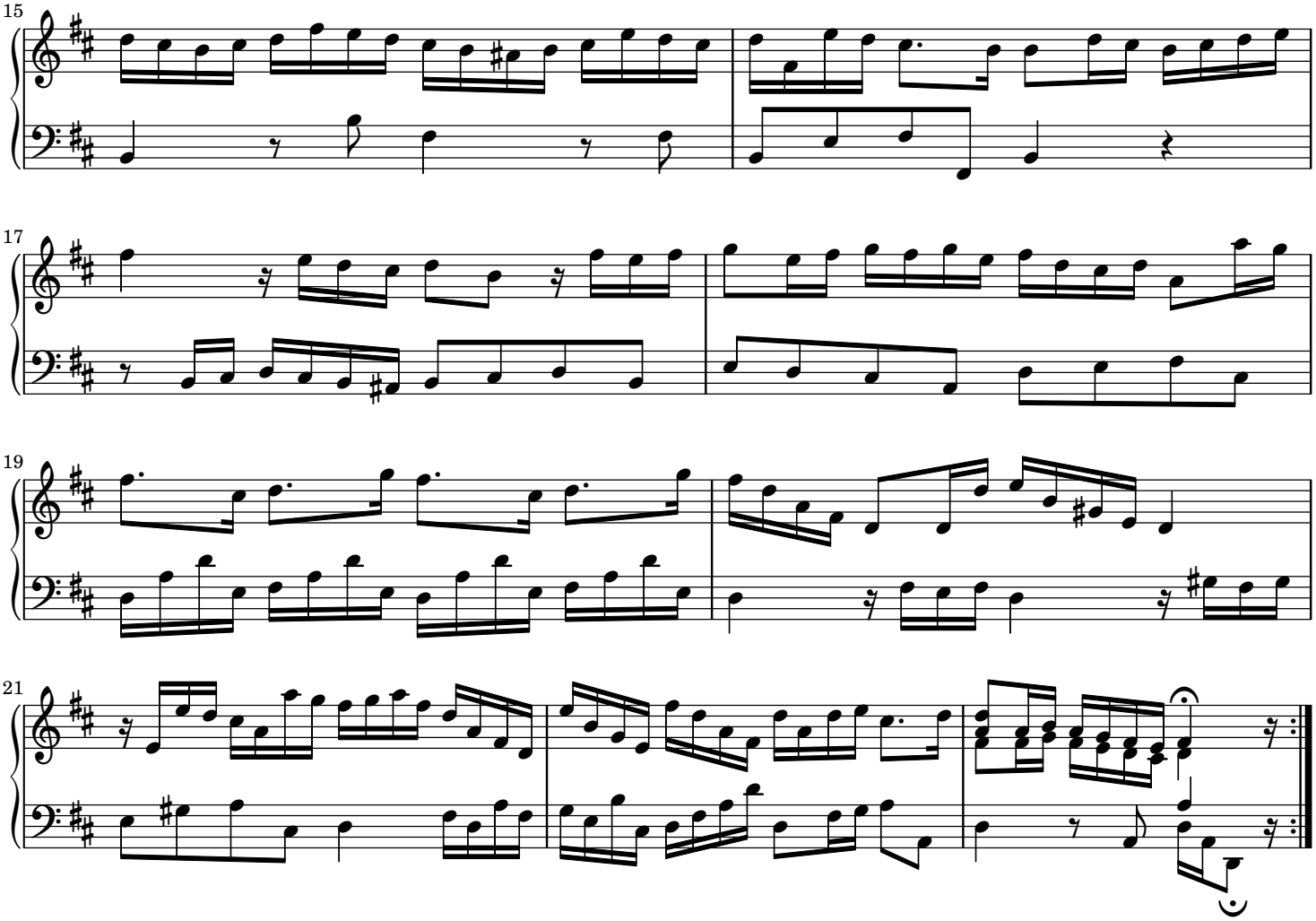
Partita III

Johann Adolph Scheibe
(1708 - 1776)

Allemande





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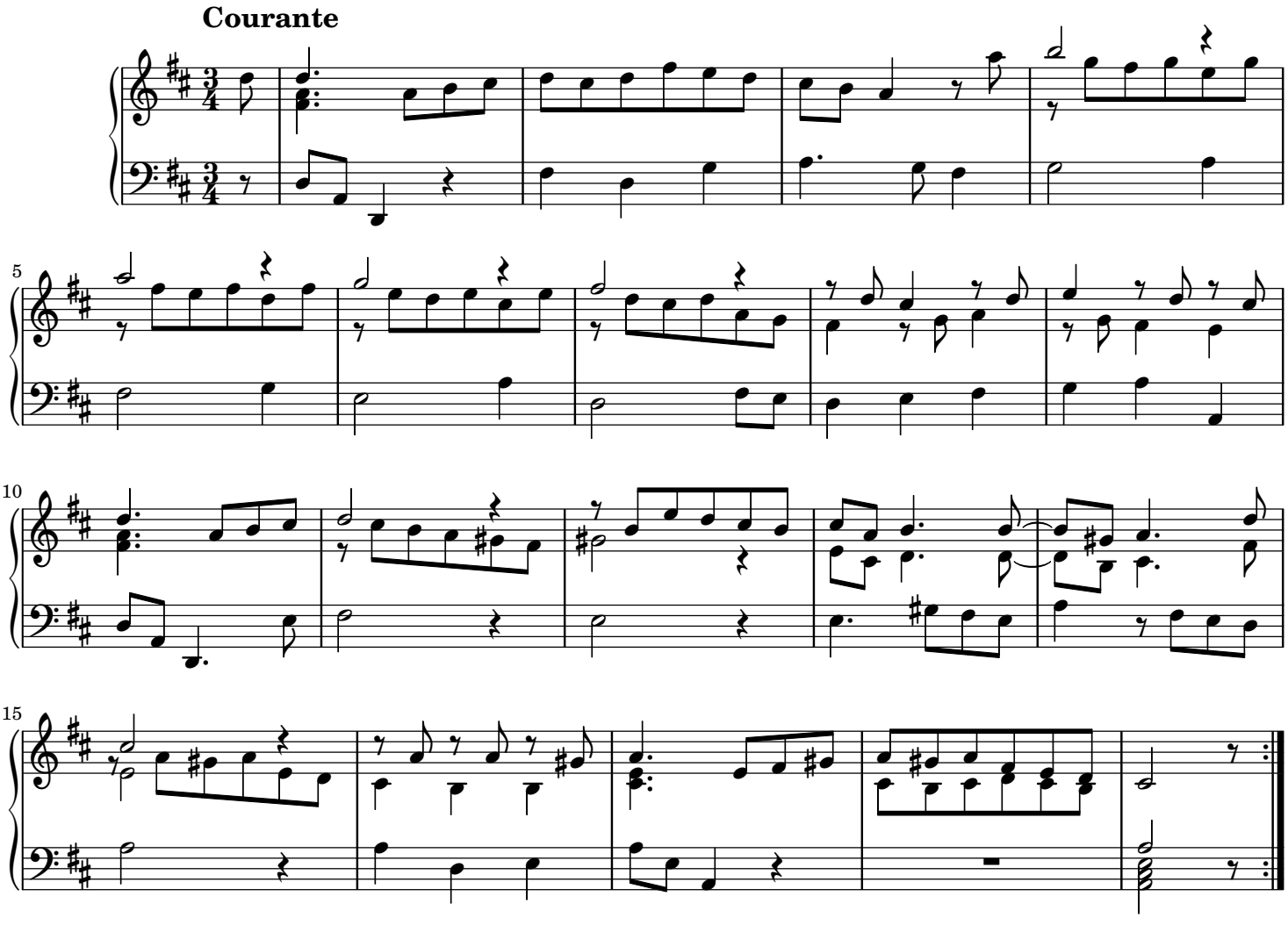
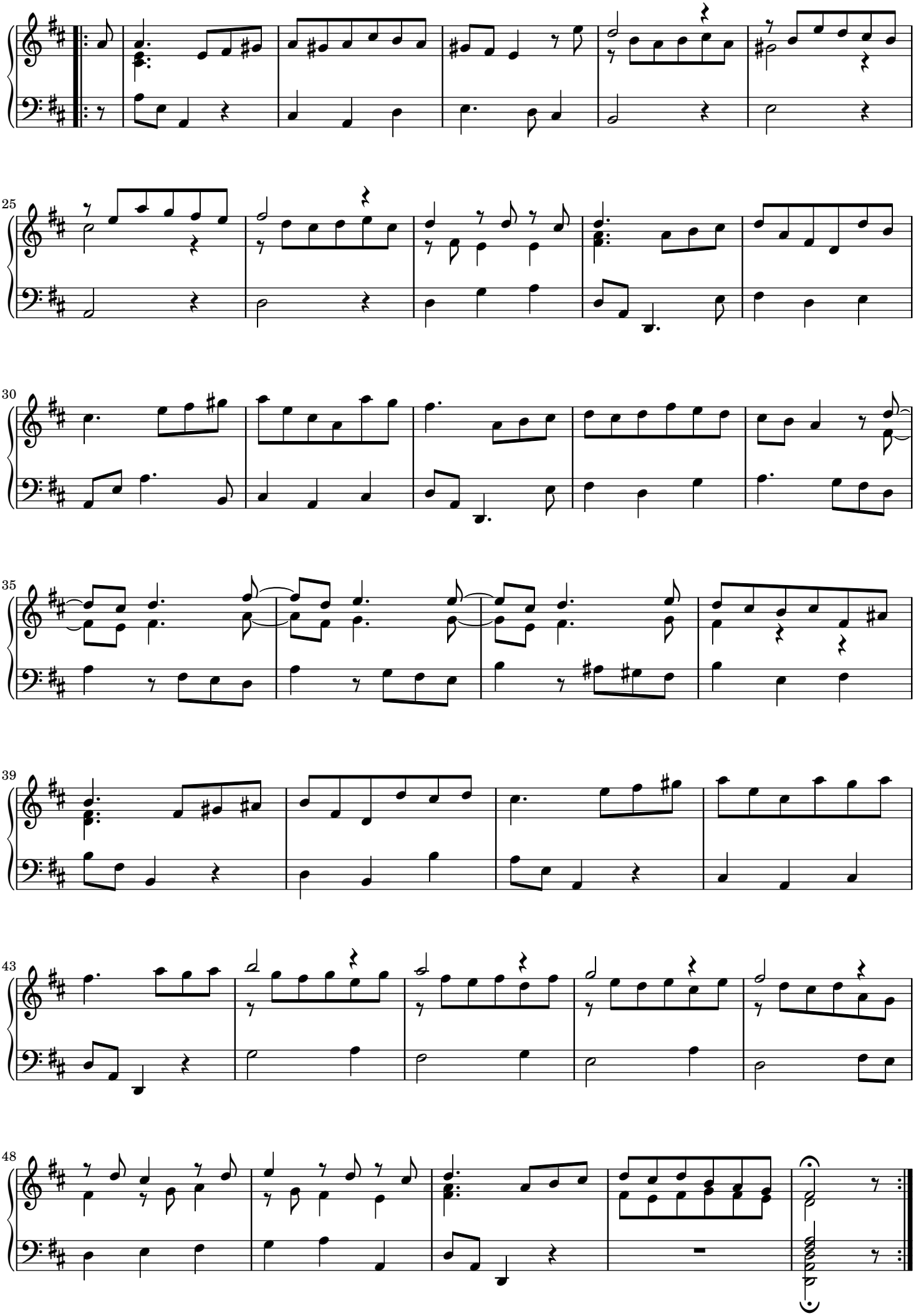
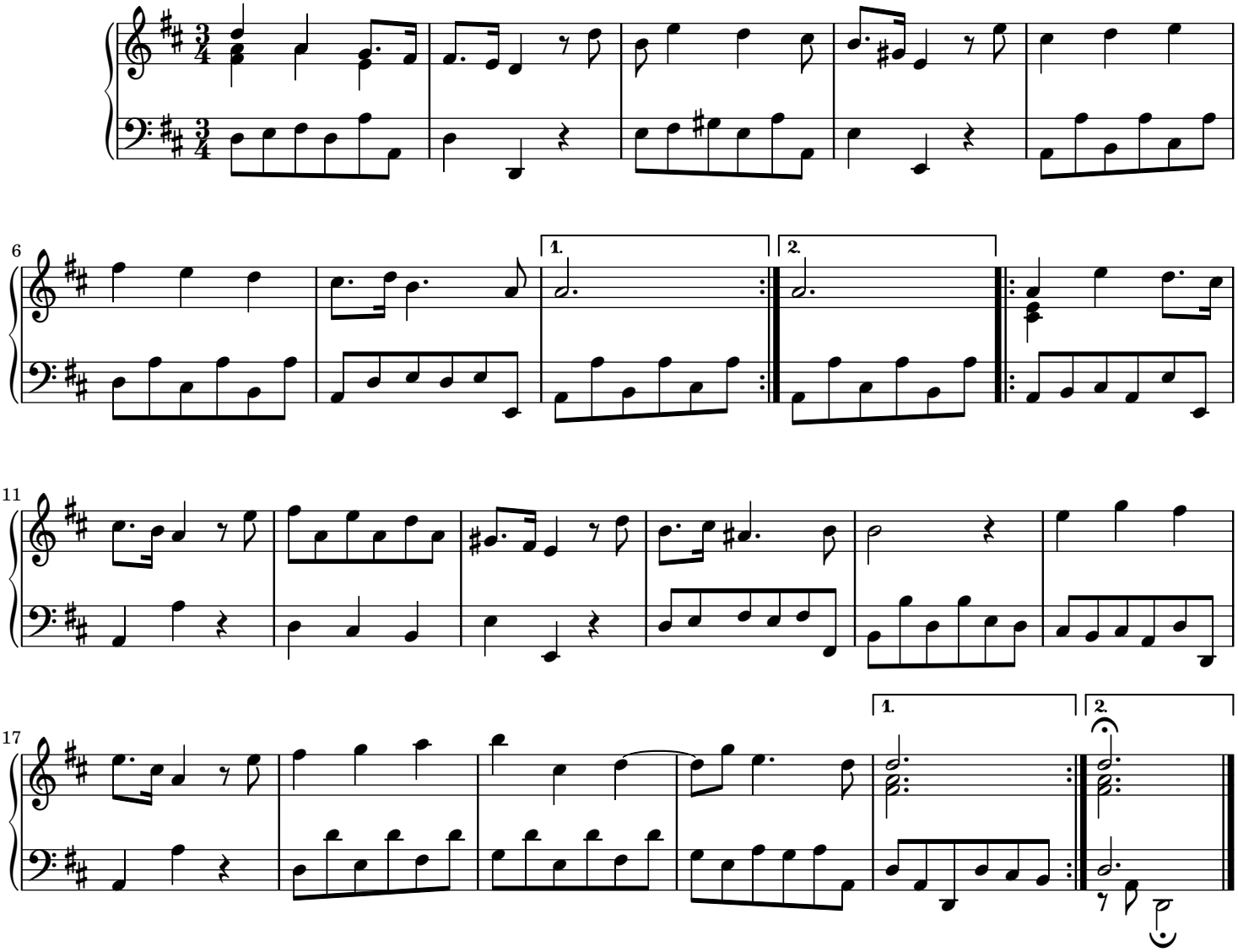




Sarabande



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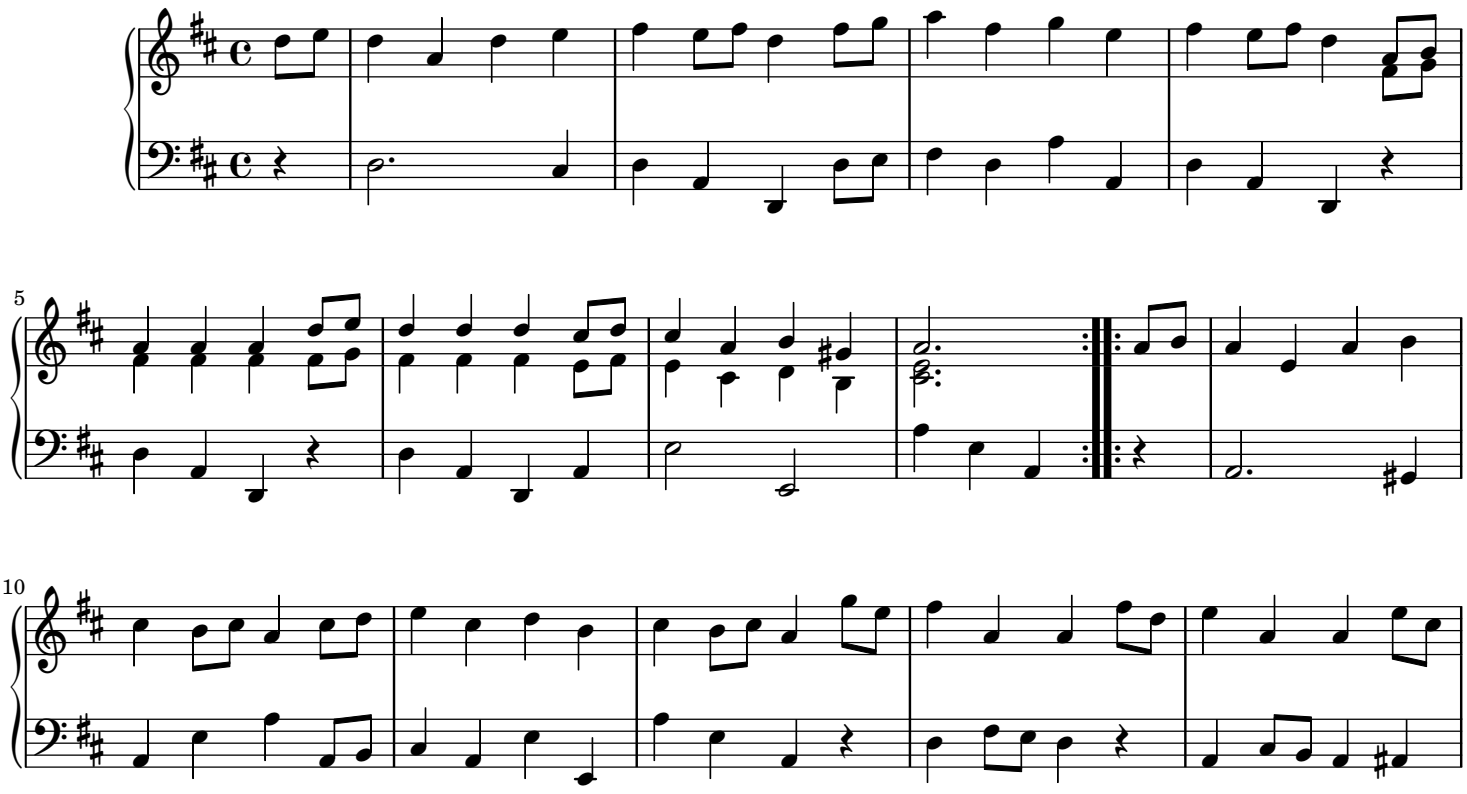

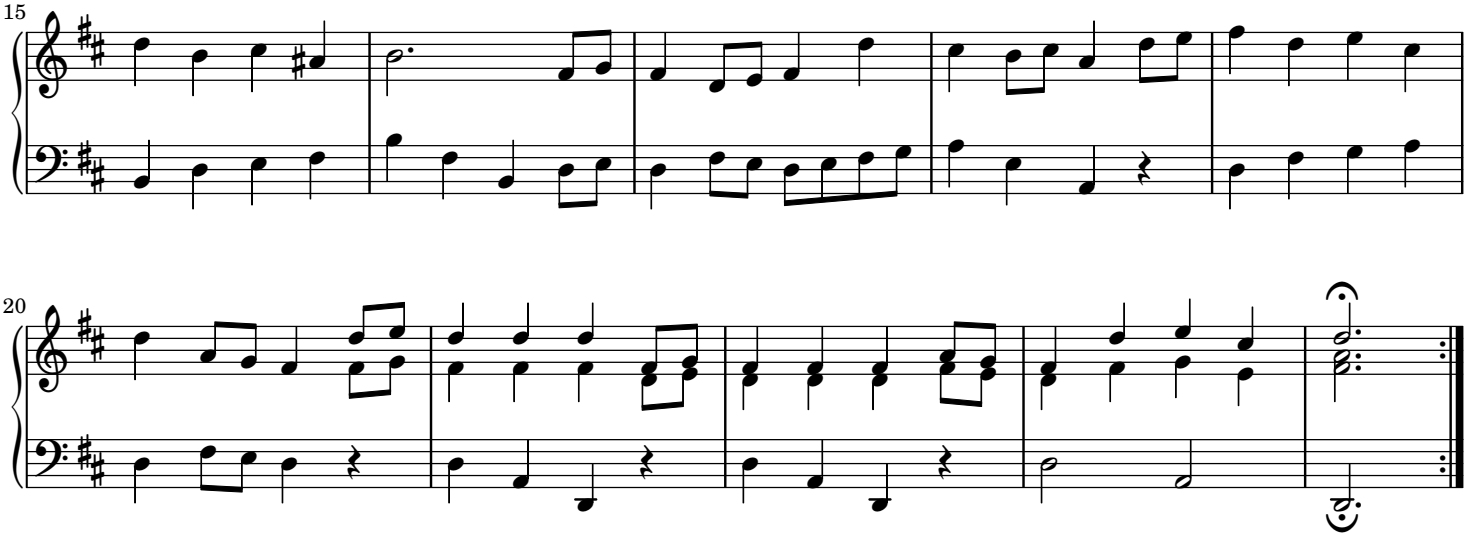

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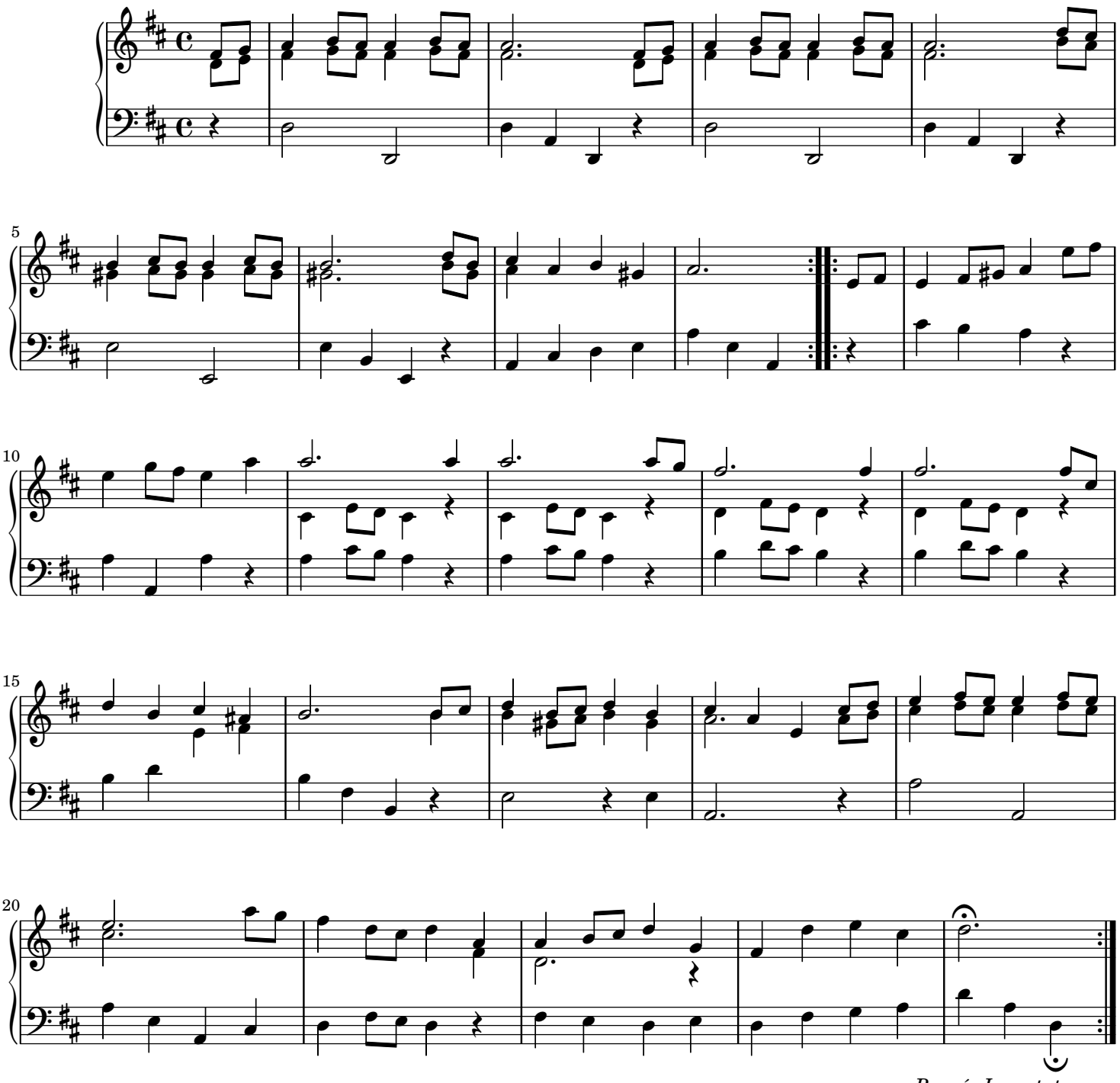

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Aria

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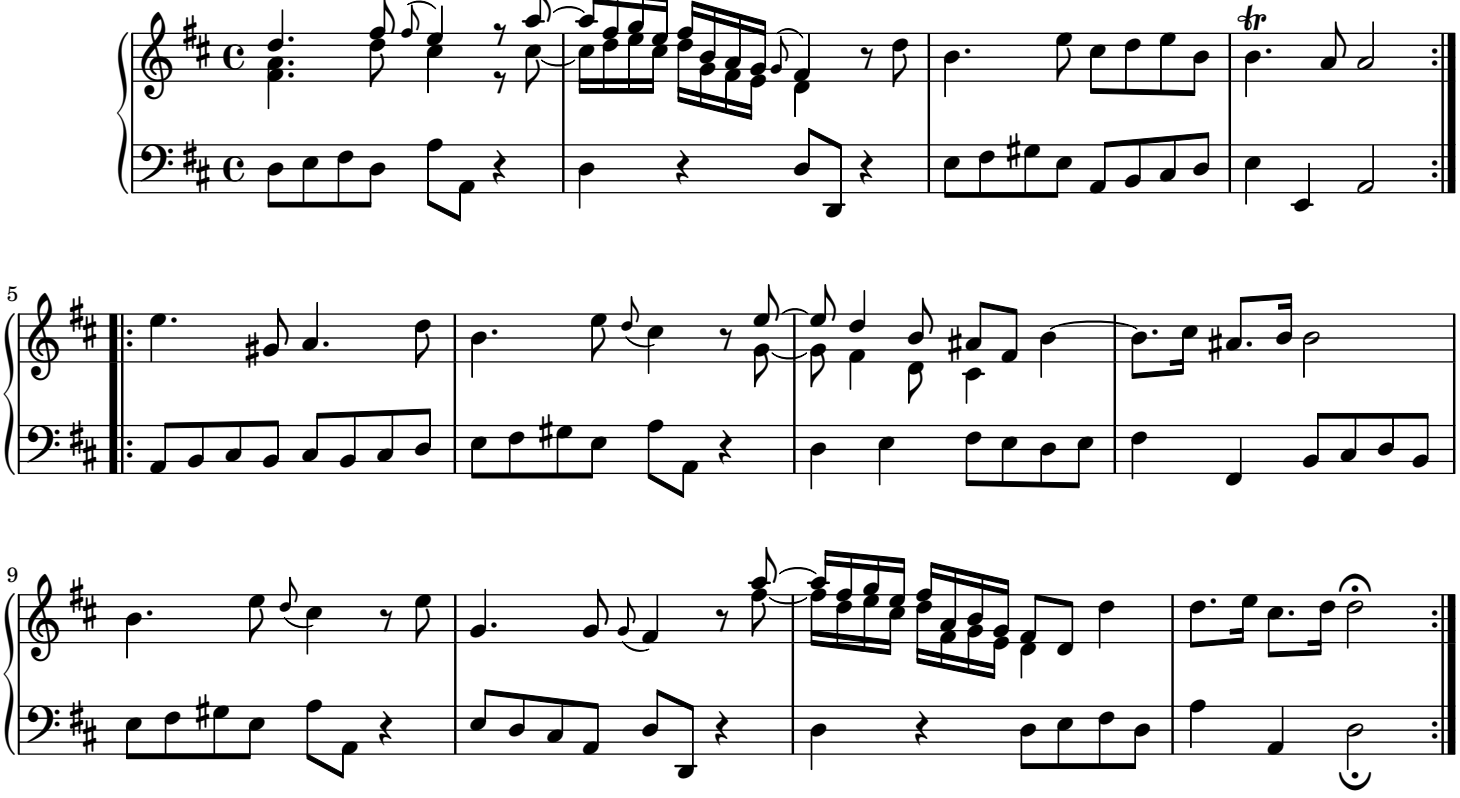

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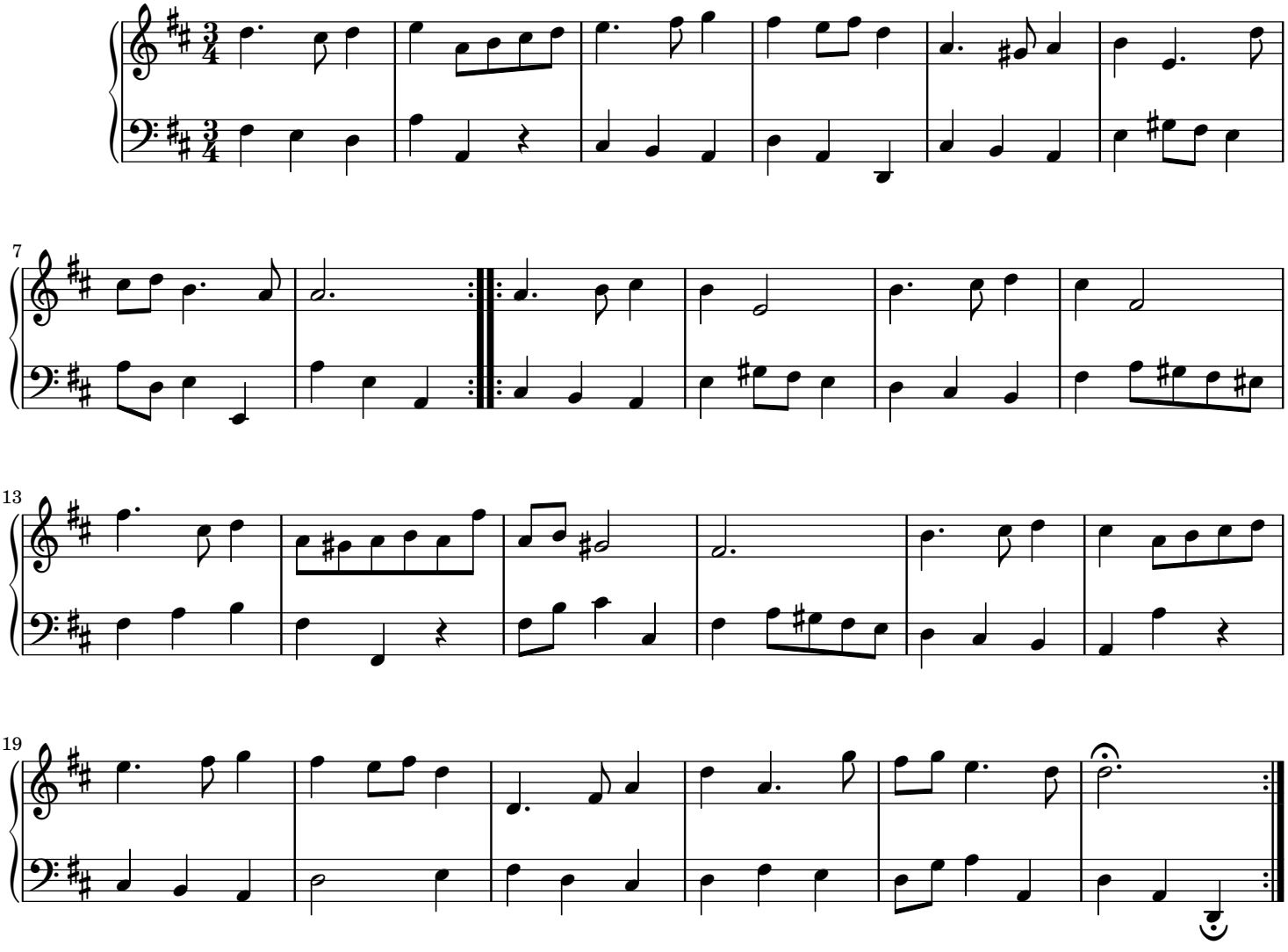

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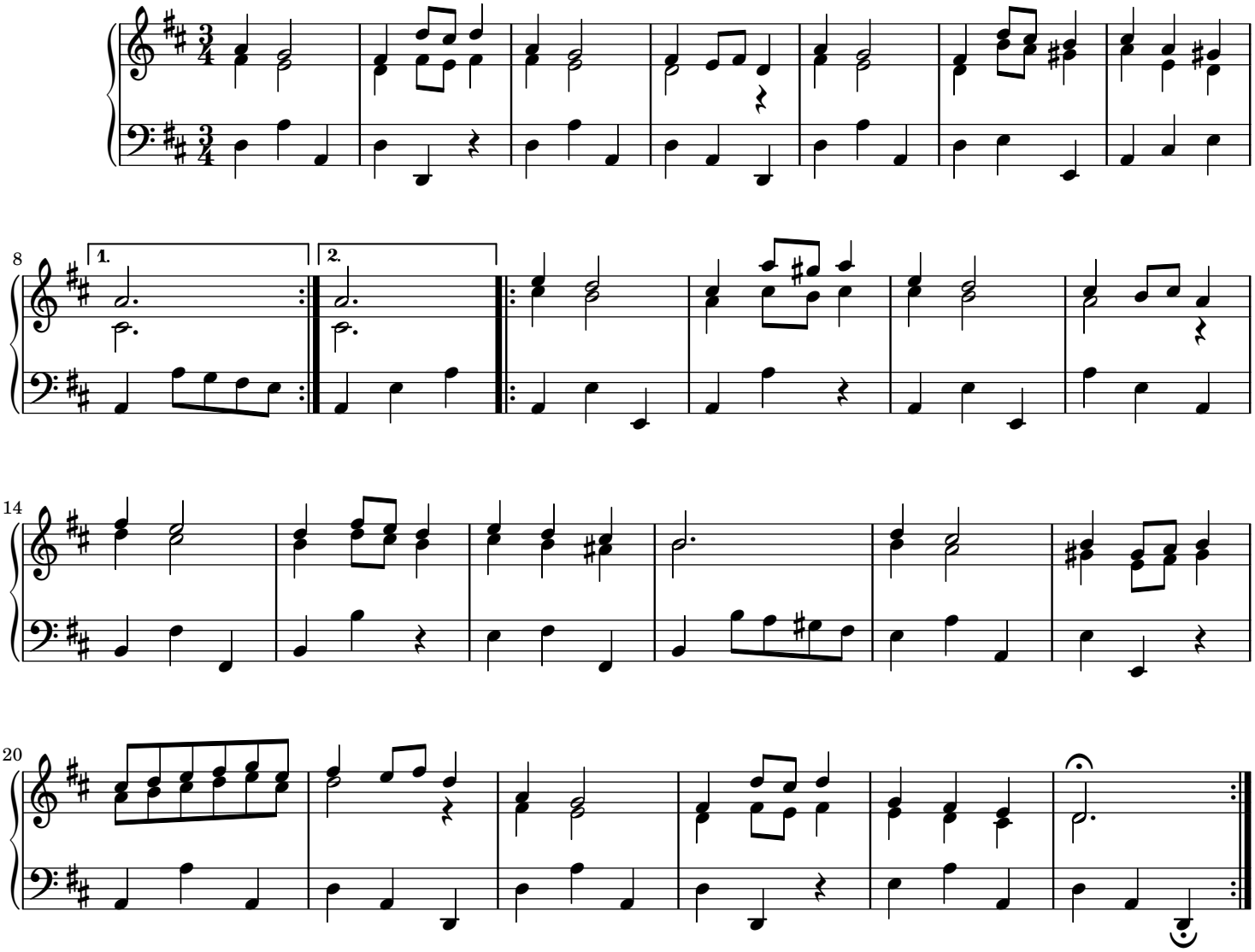

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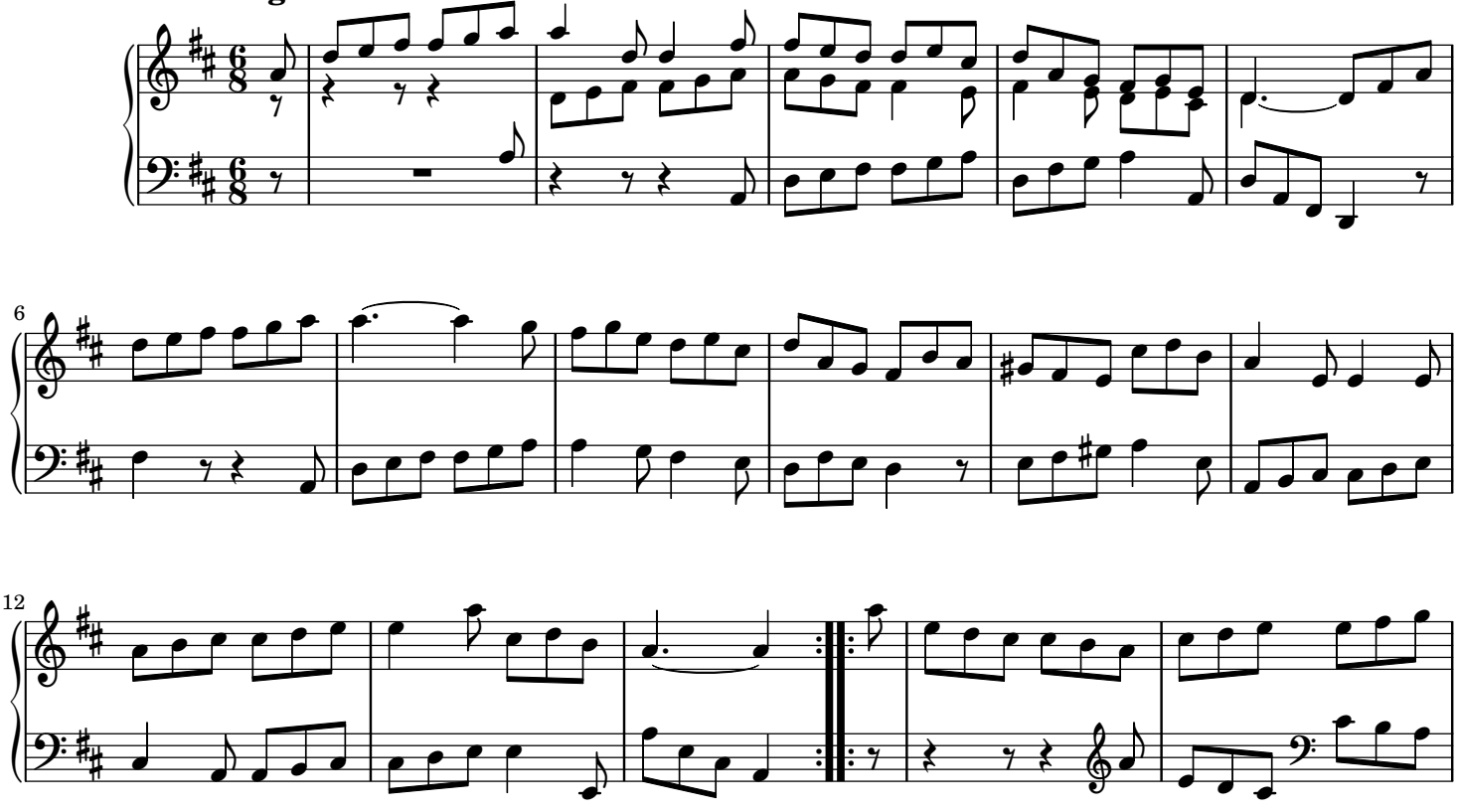
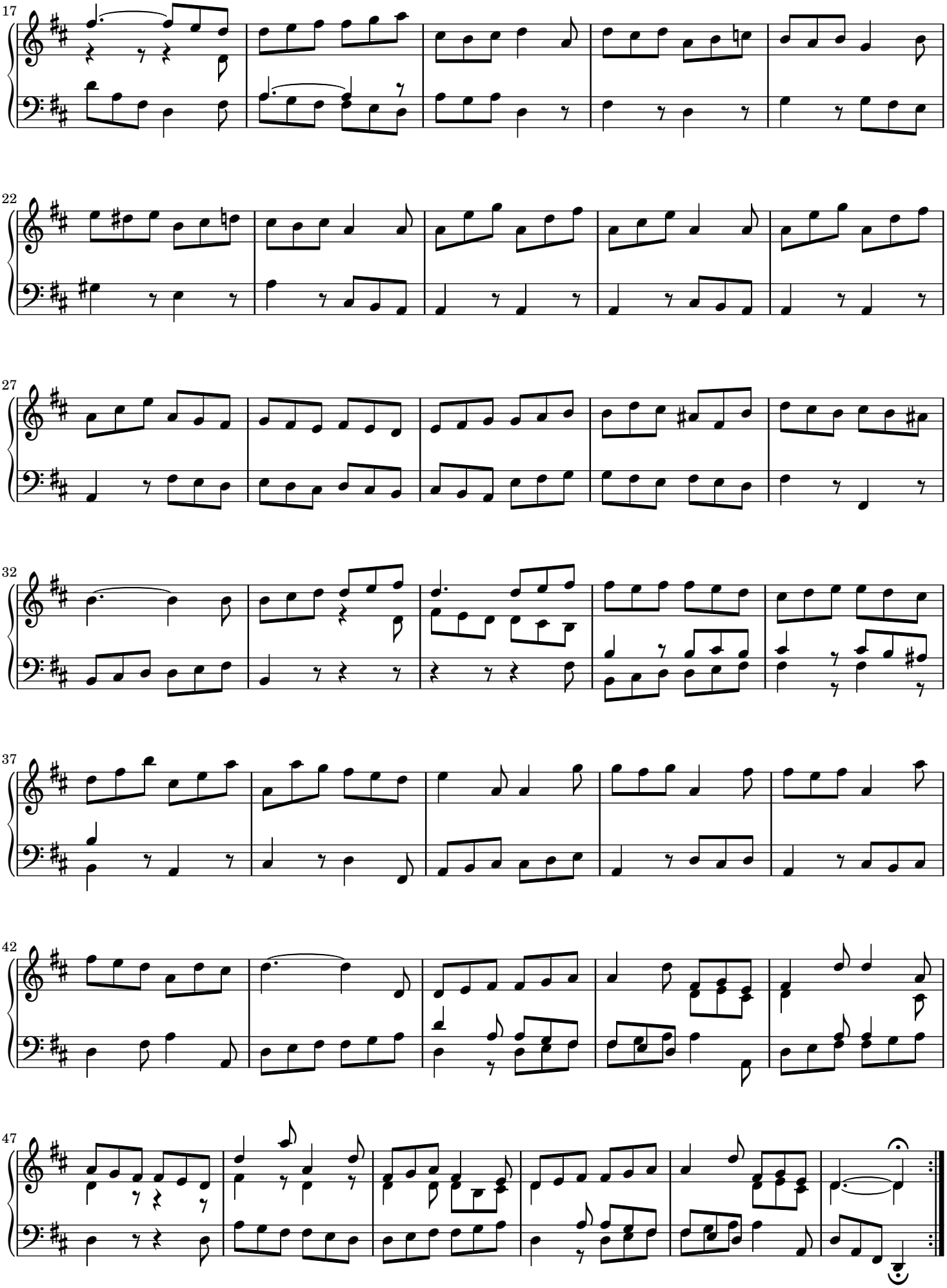
Gigue





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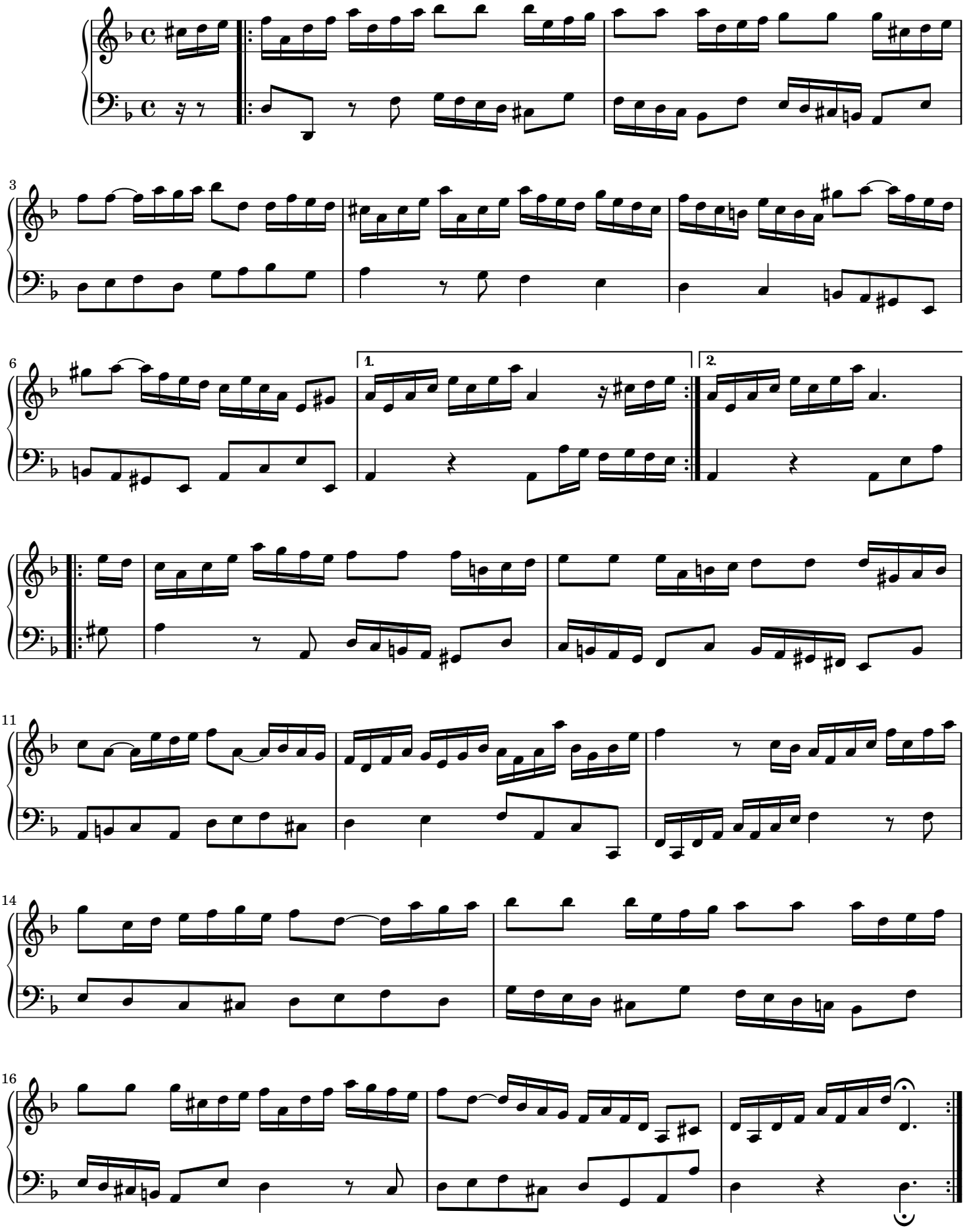
Partita IV

Johann Adolph Scheibe
(1708 - 1776)

Allemande



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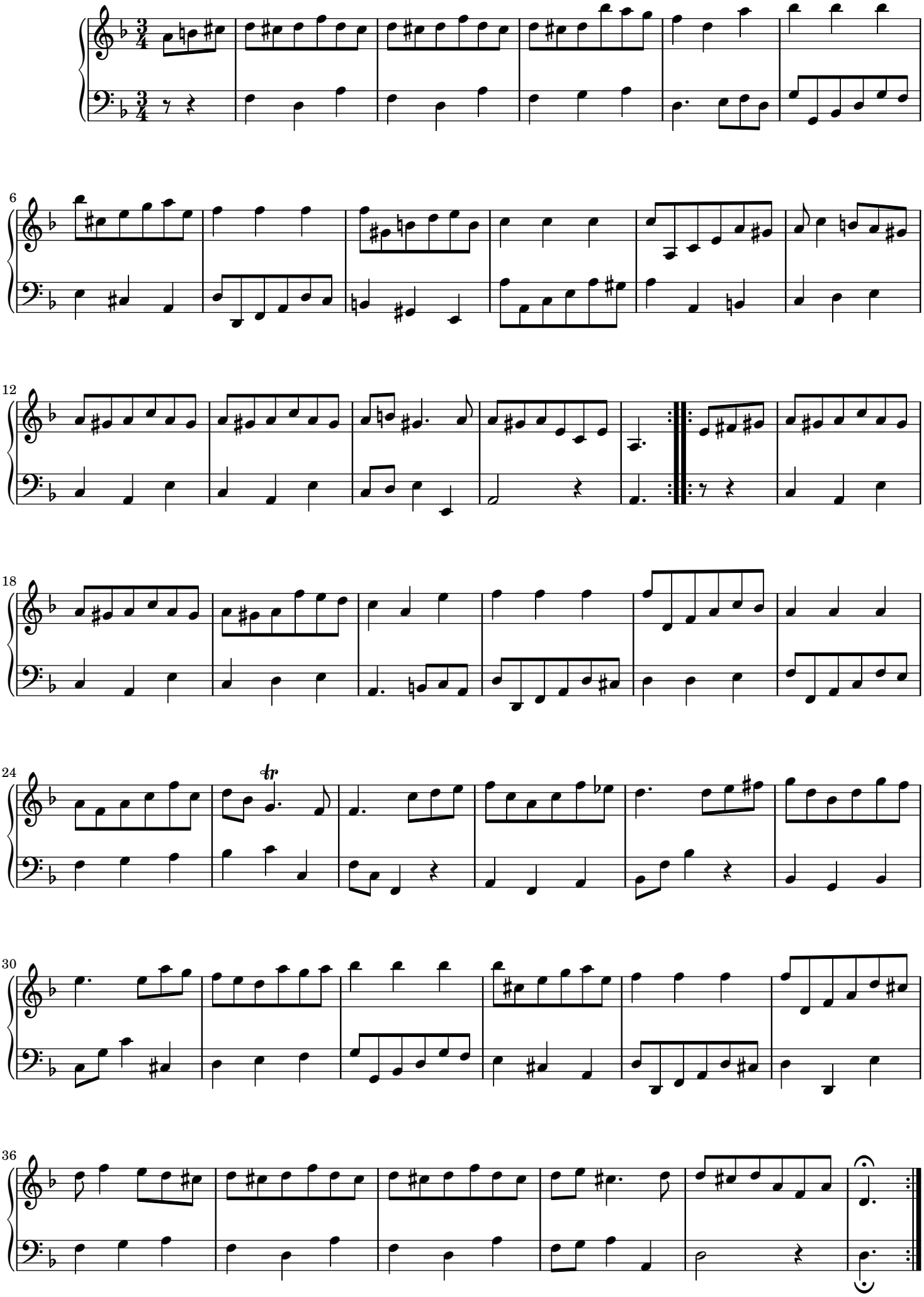
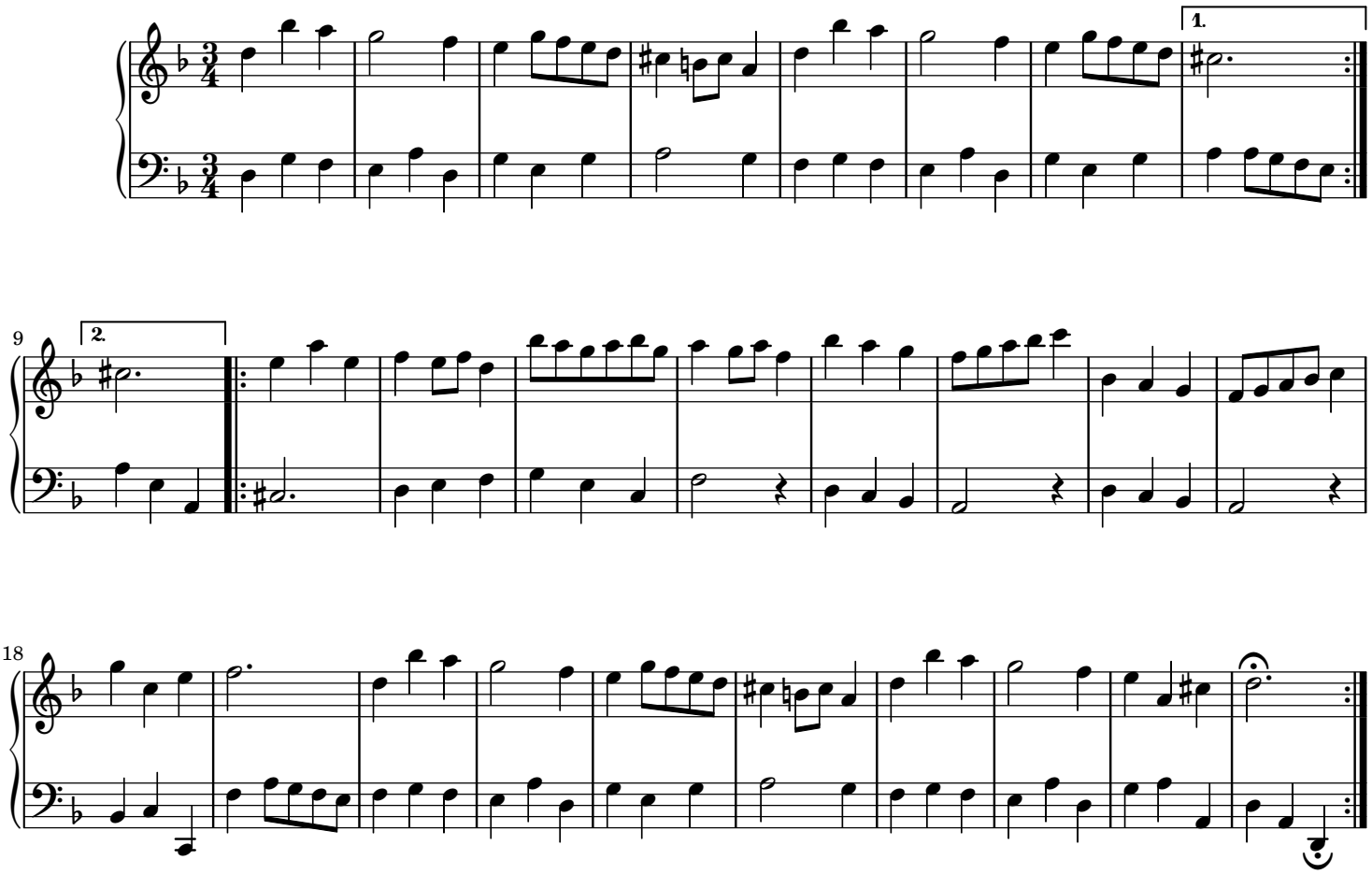


Menuet alternativement



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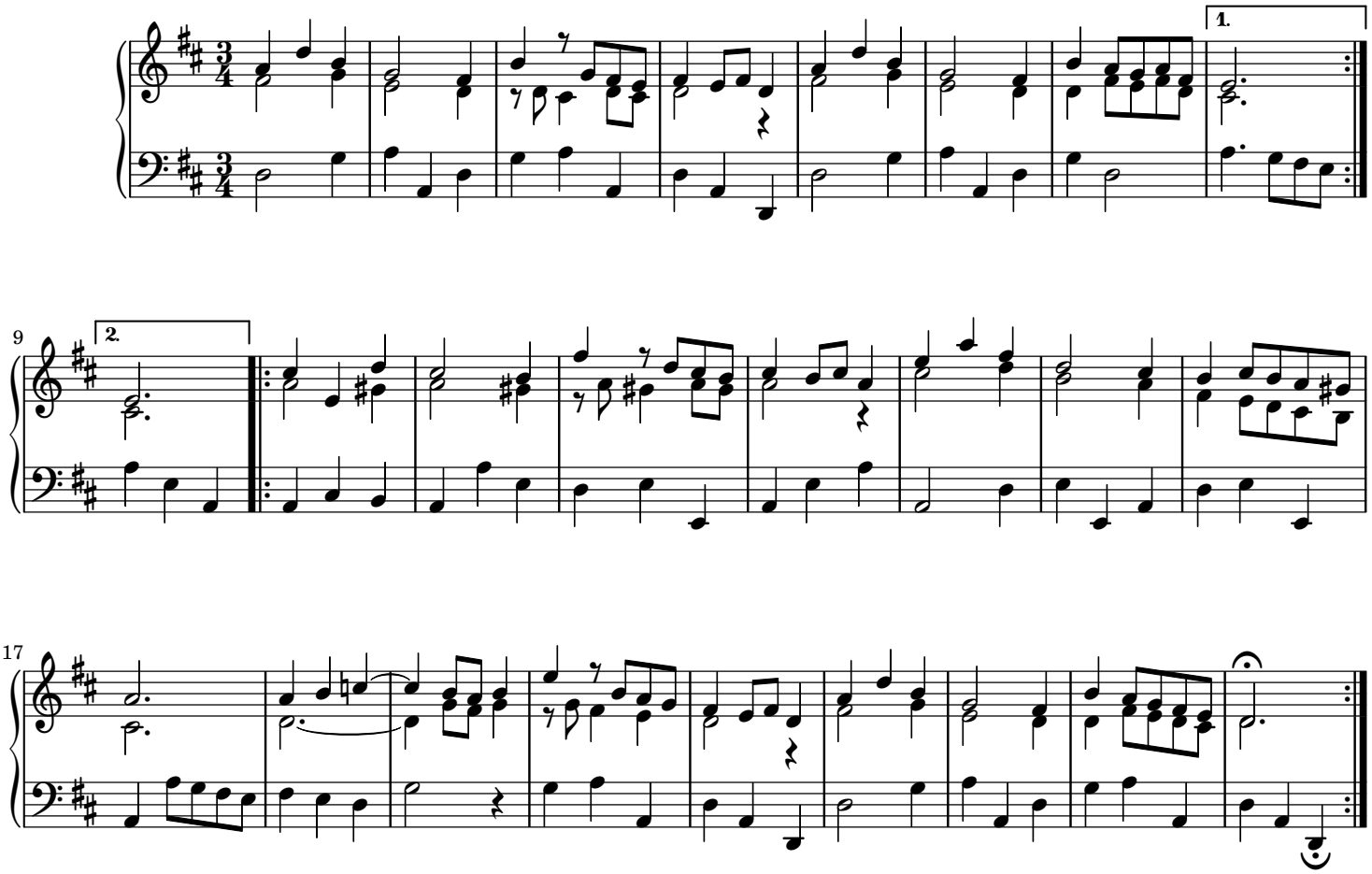
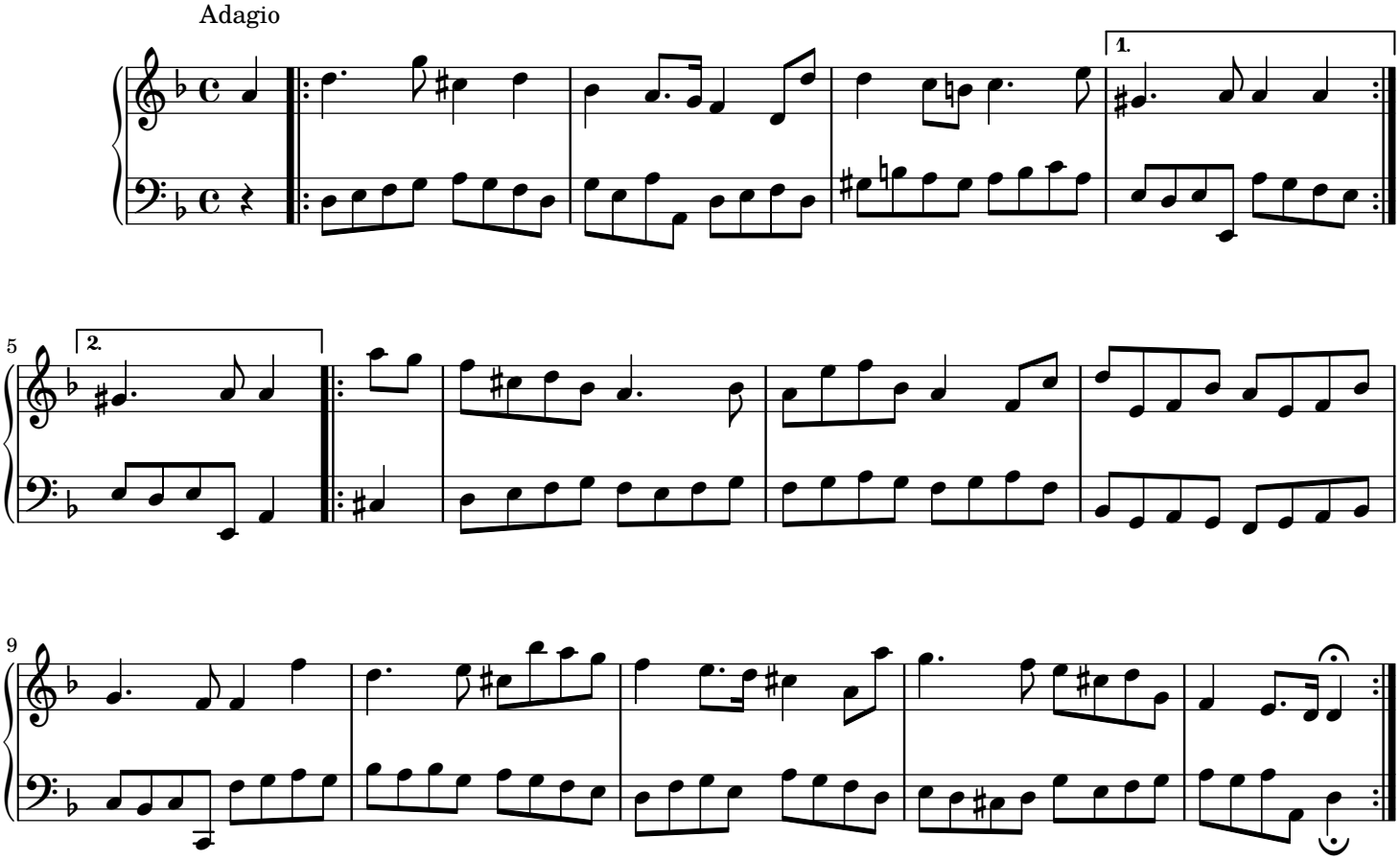


Menuet repetatur

Aria

Adagio



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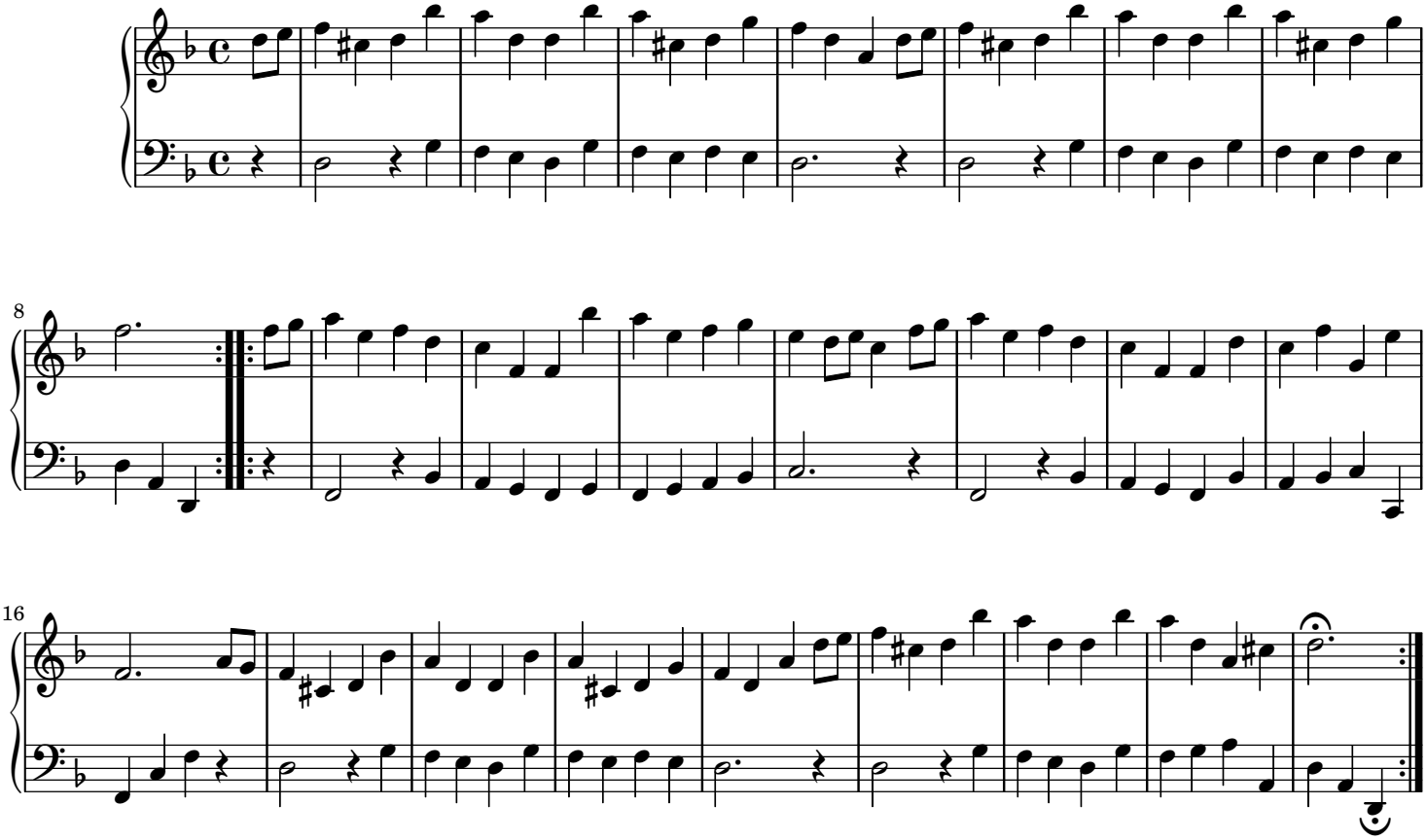

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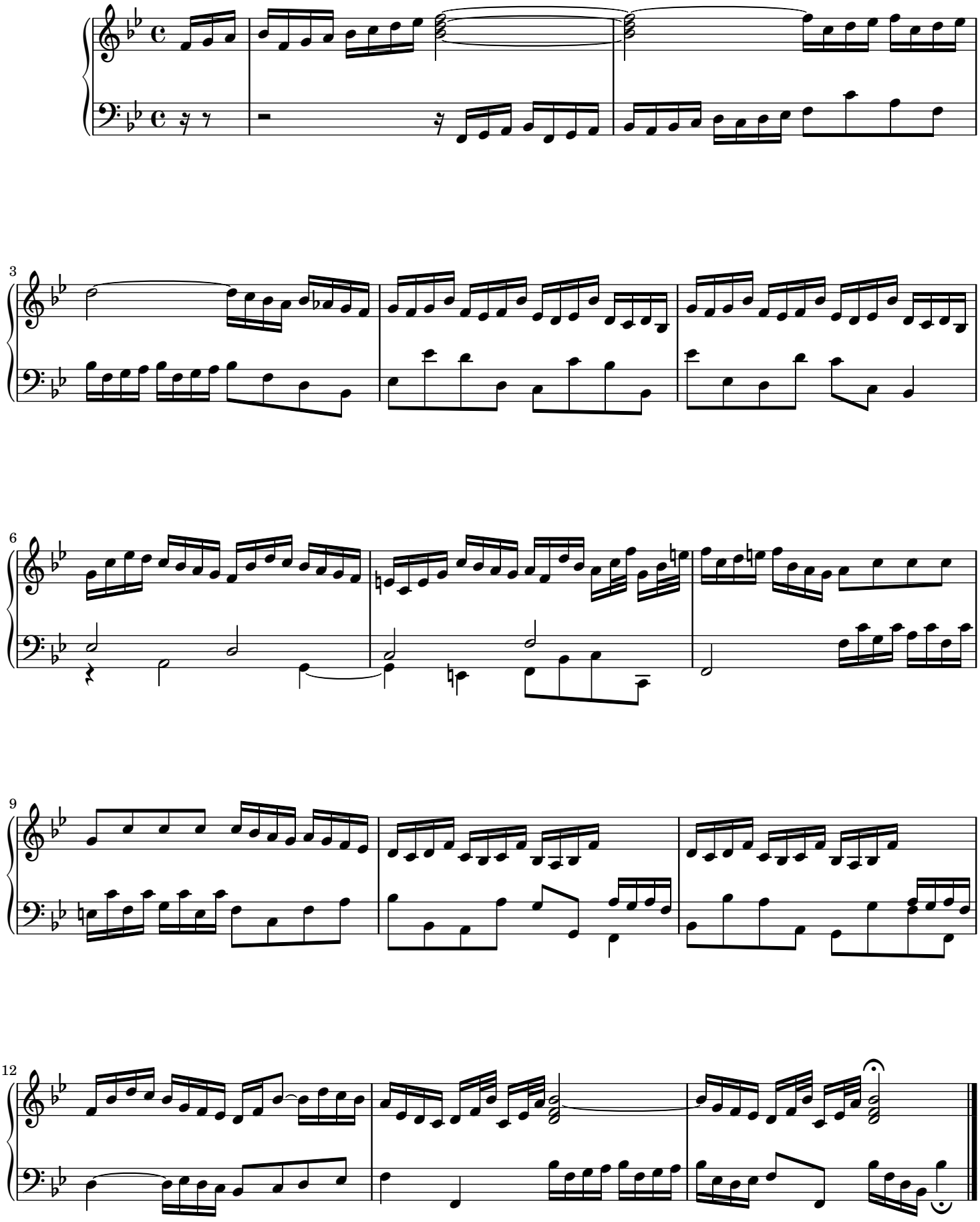
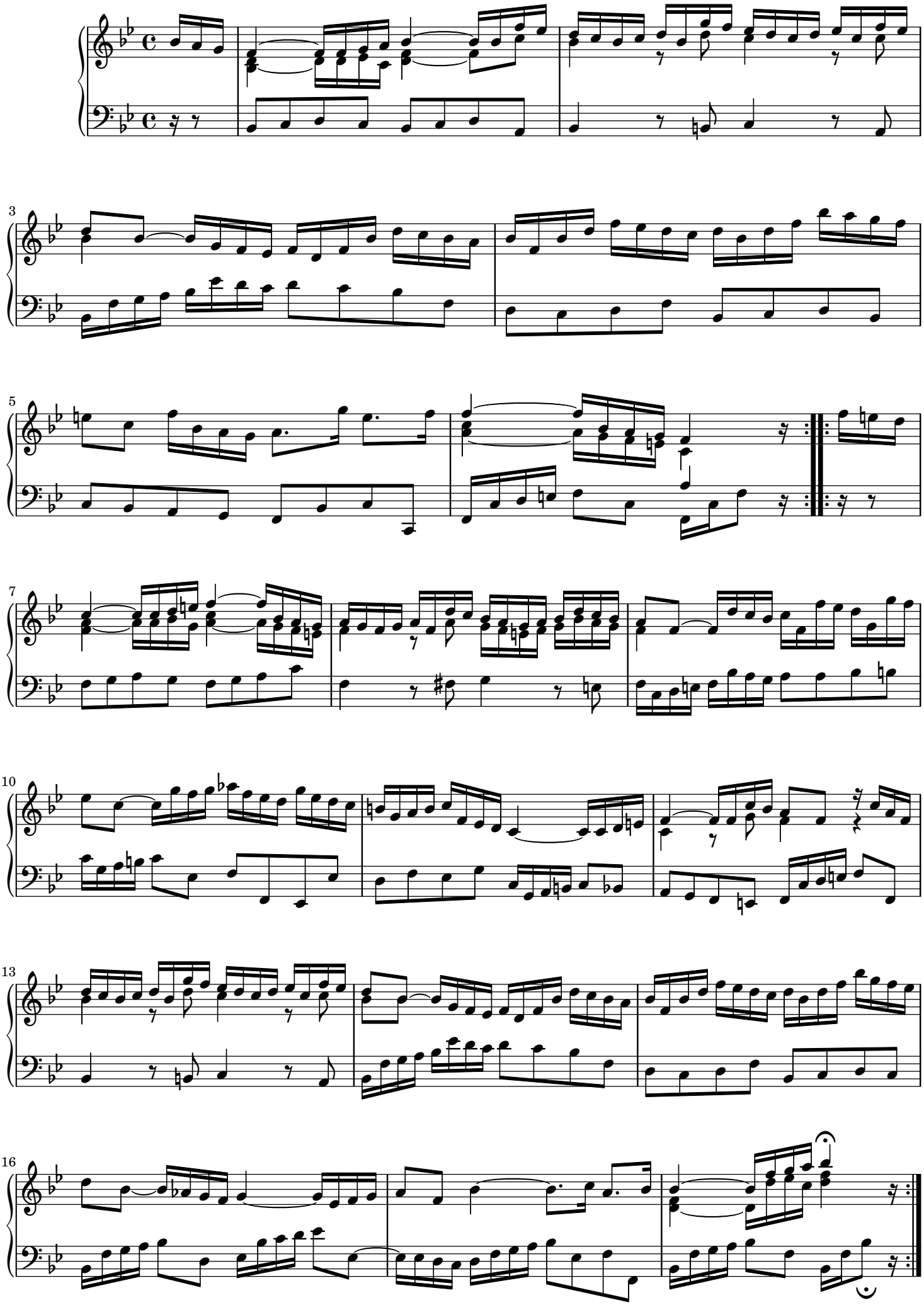
Partita V

Johann Adolph Scheibe
(1708 - 1776)

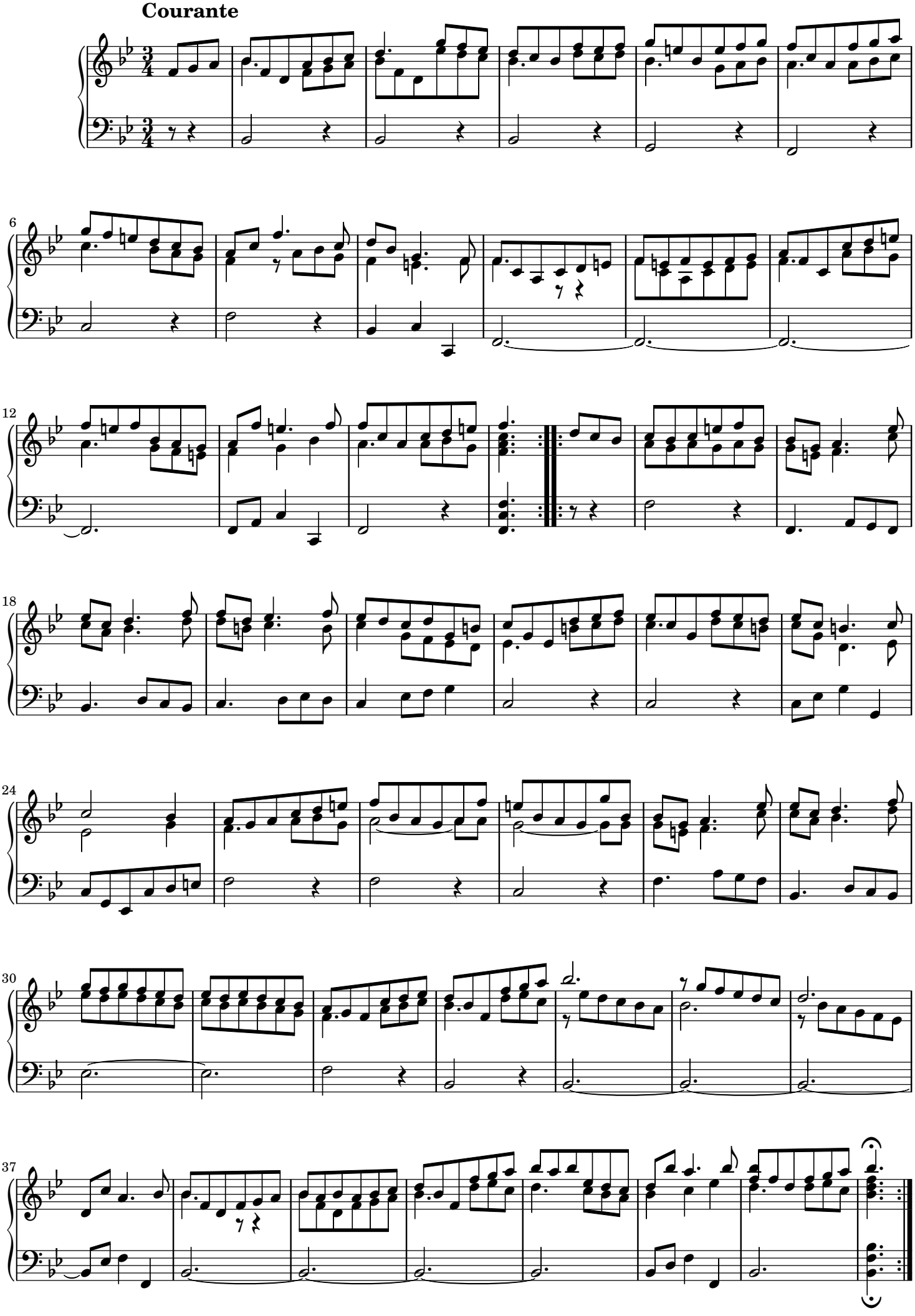
Prelude



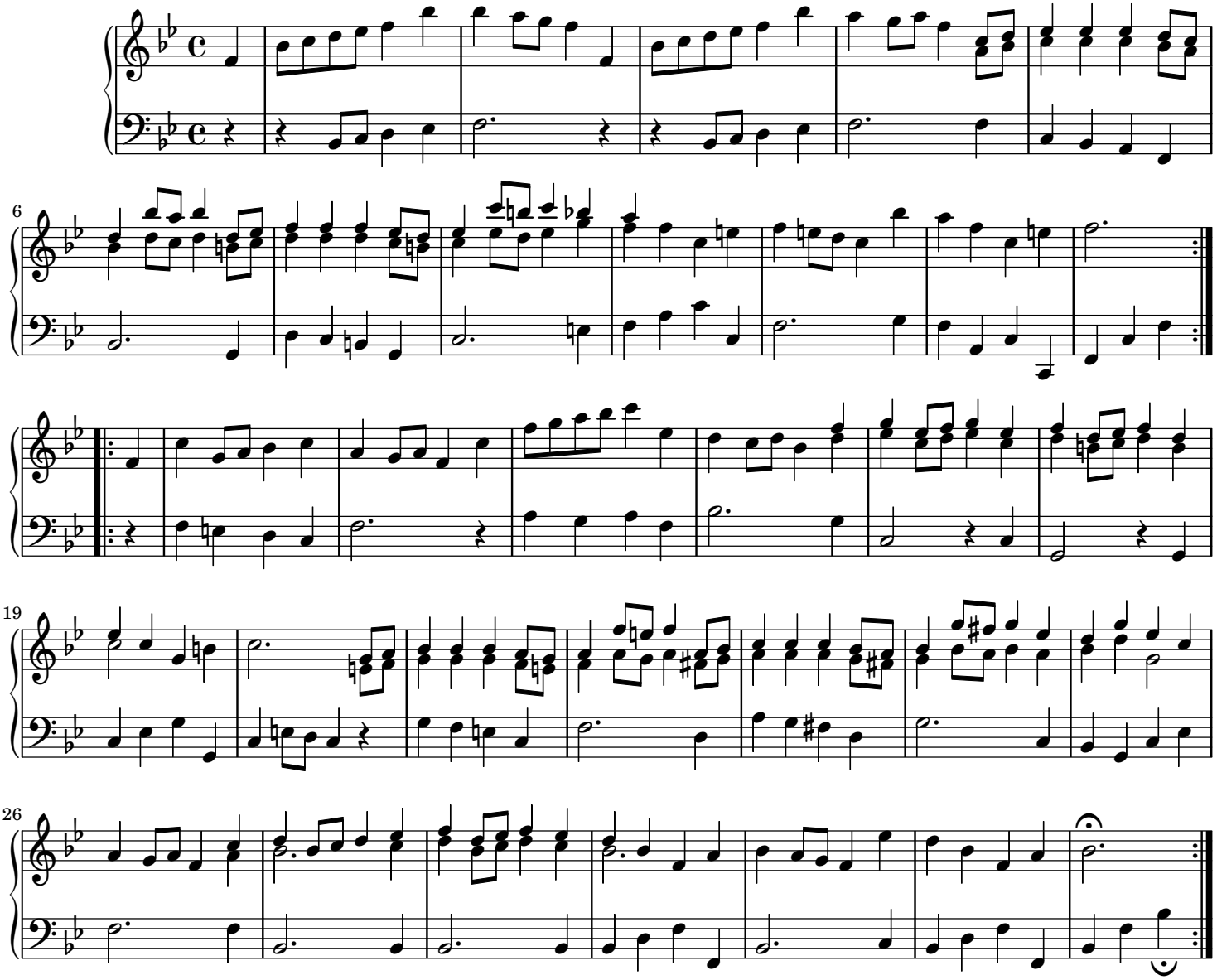
Allemande



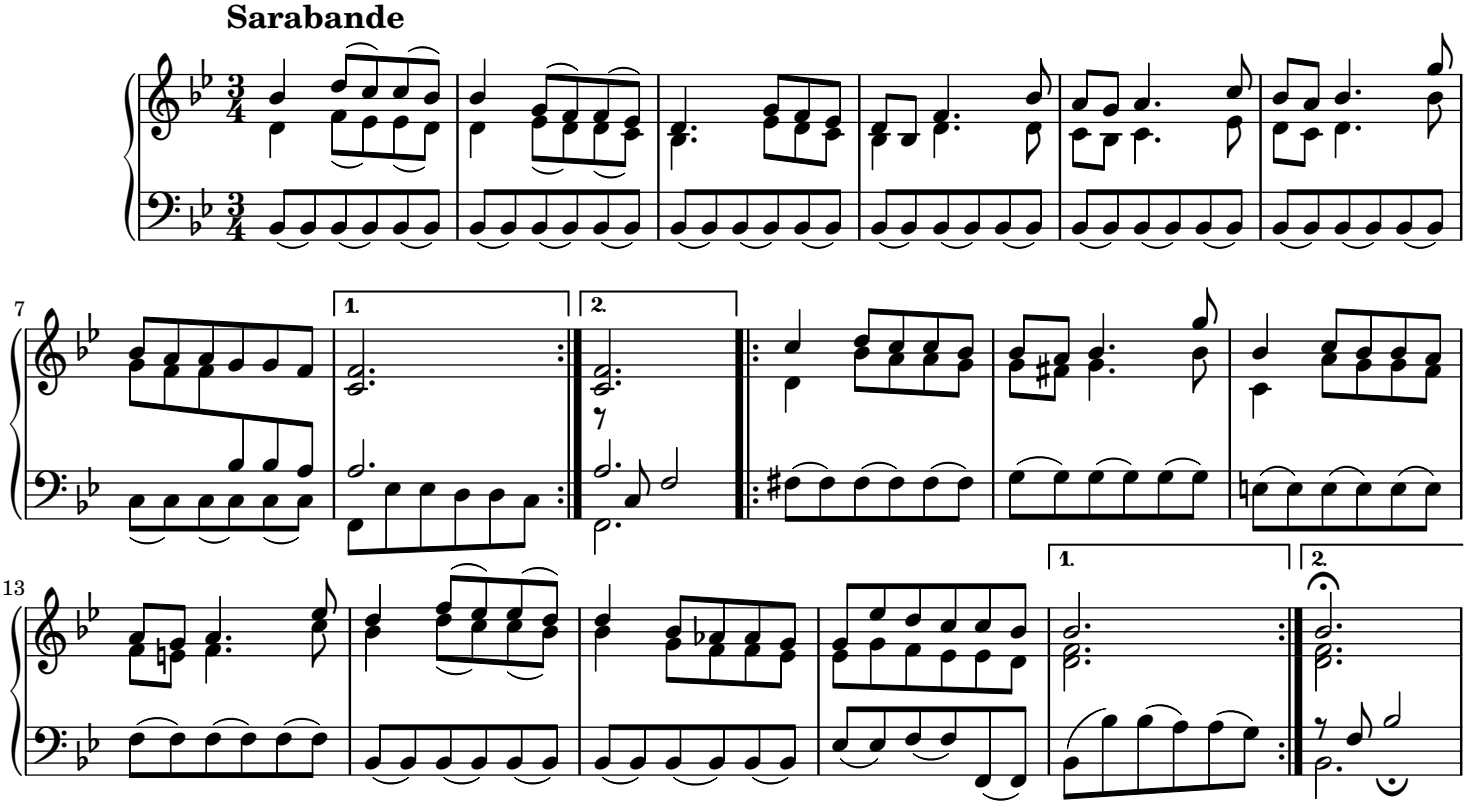
Courante



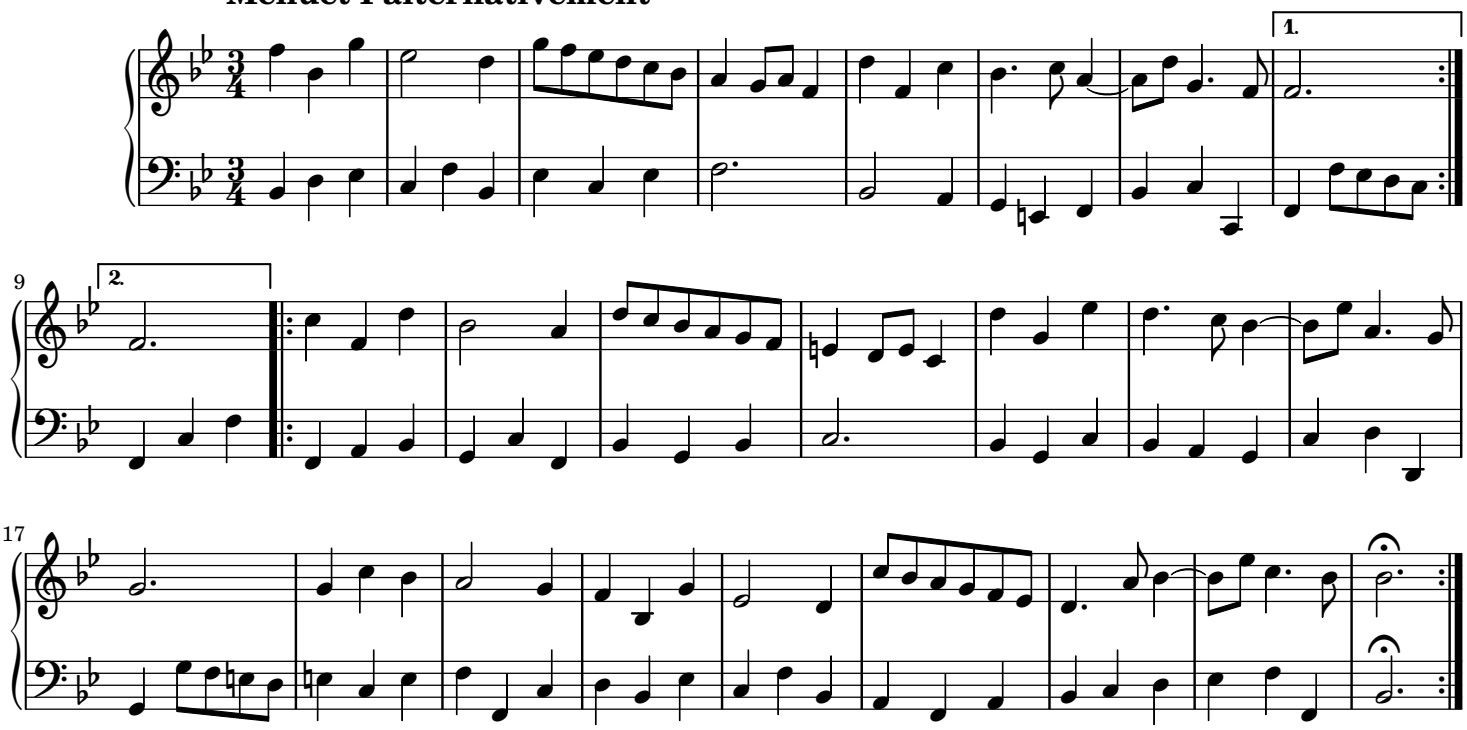
Bourée



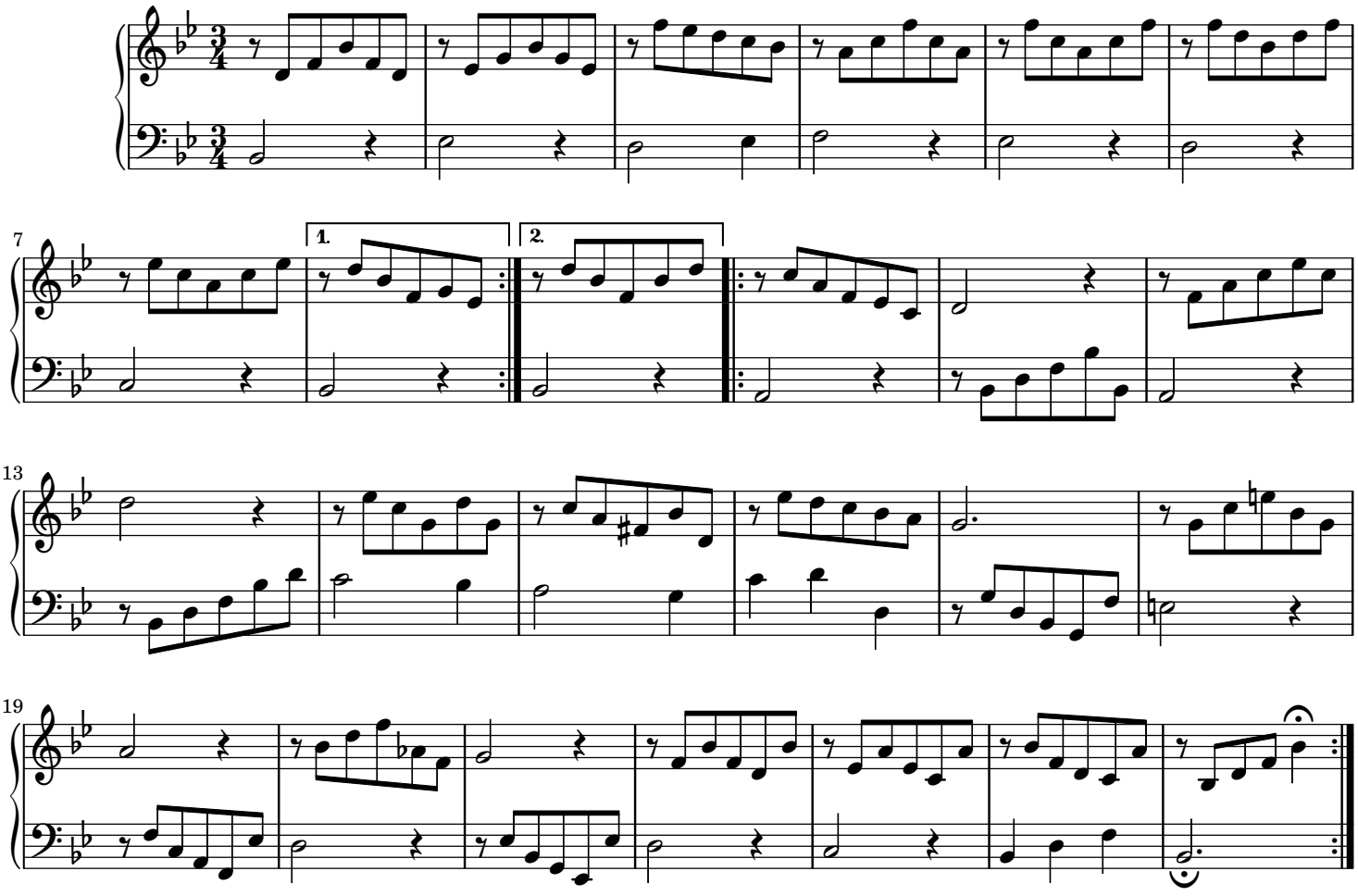
Sarabande



Menuet I alternativement



Menuet II



Menuet I repetatur

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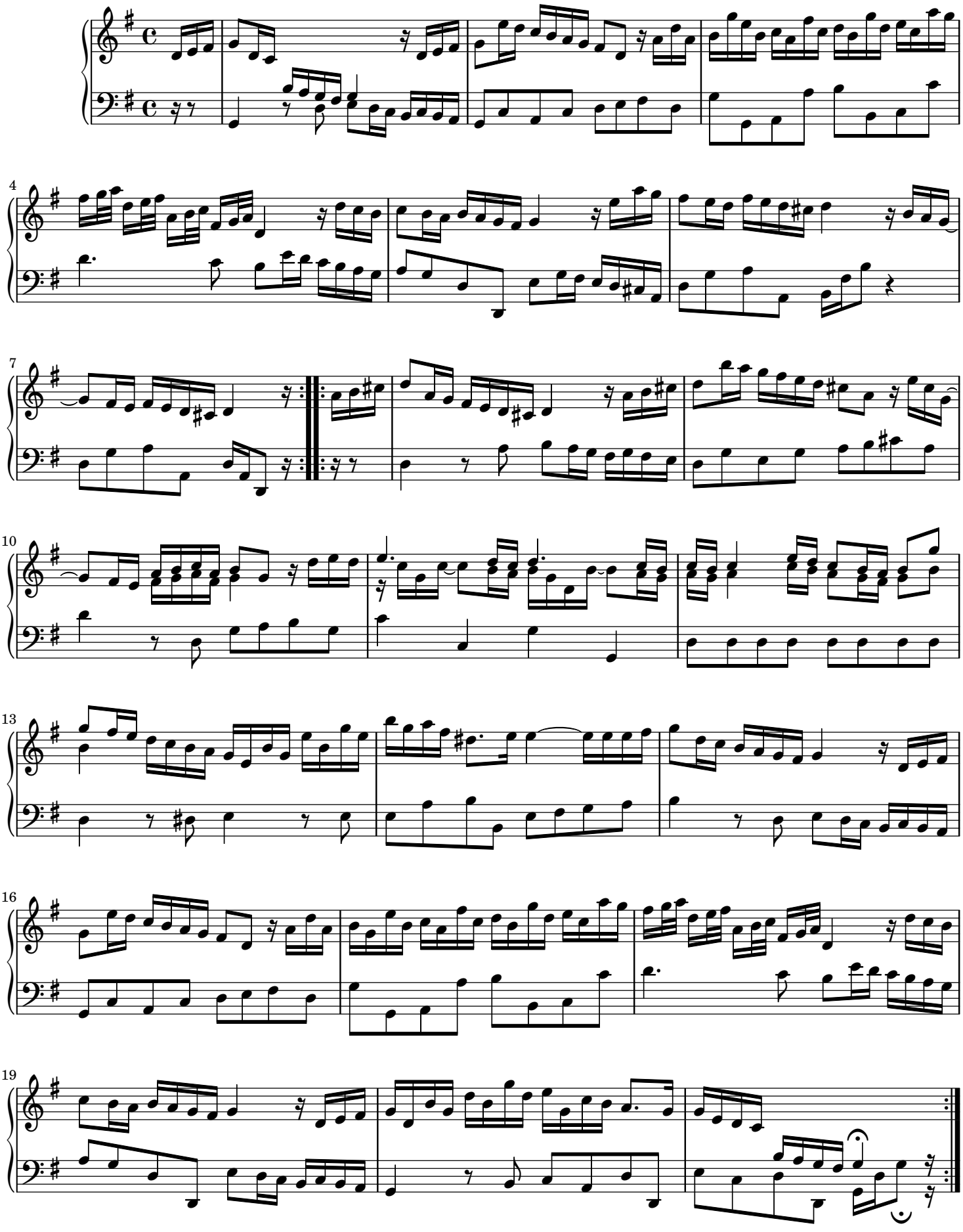
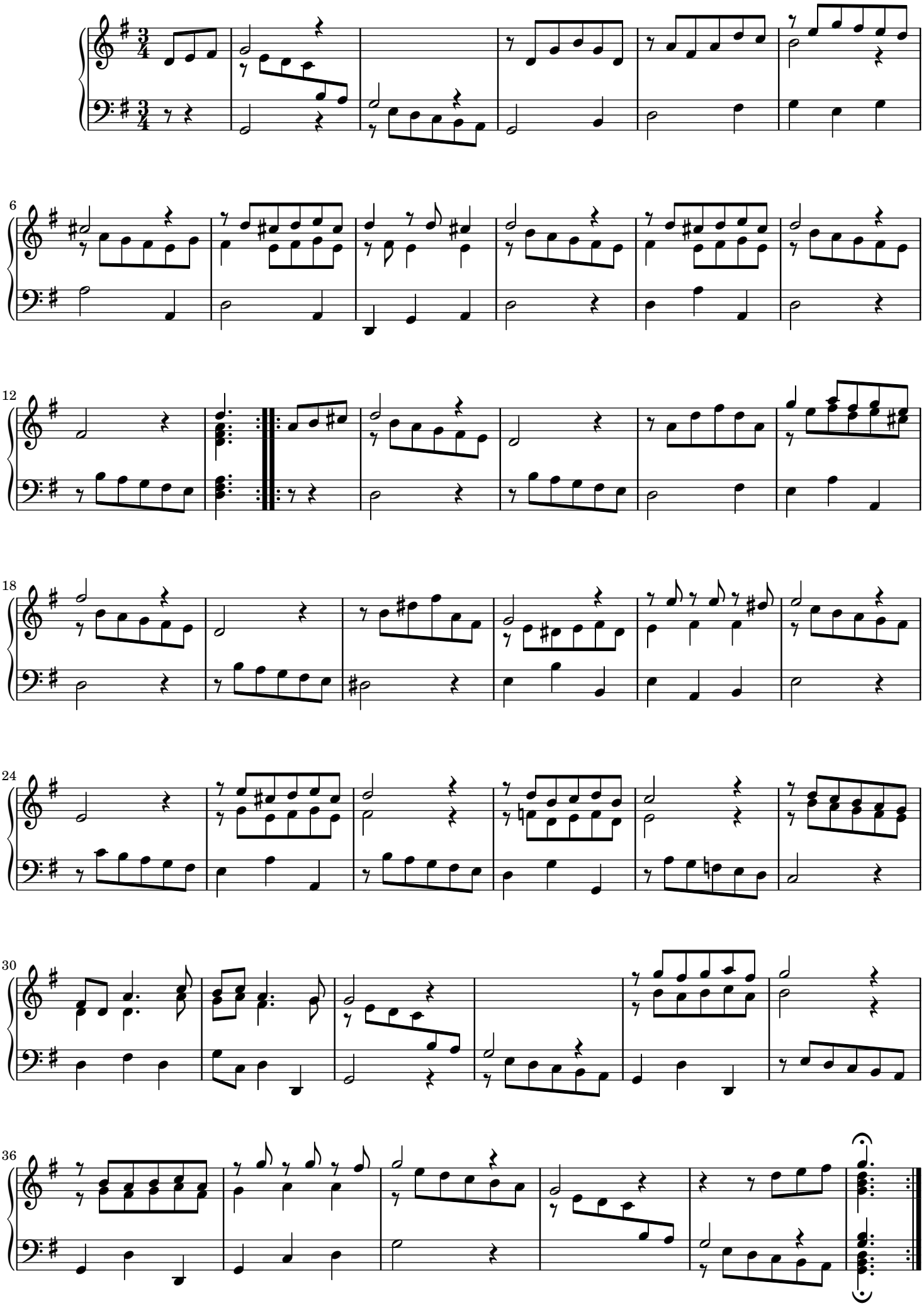
Partita VI

Johann Adolph Scheibe
(1708 - 1776)

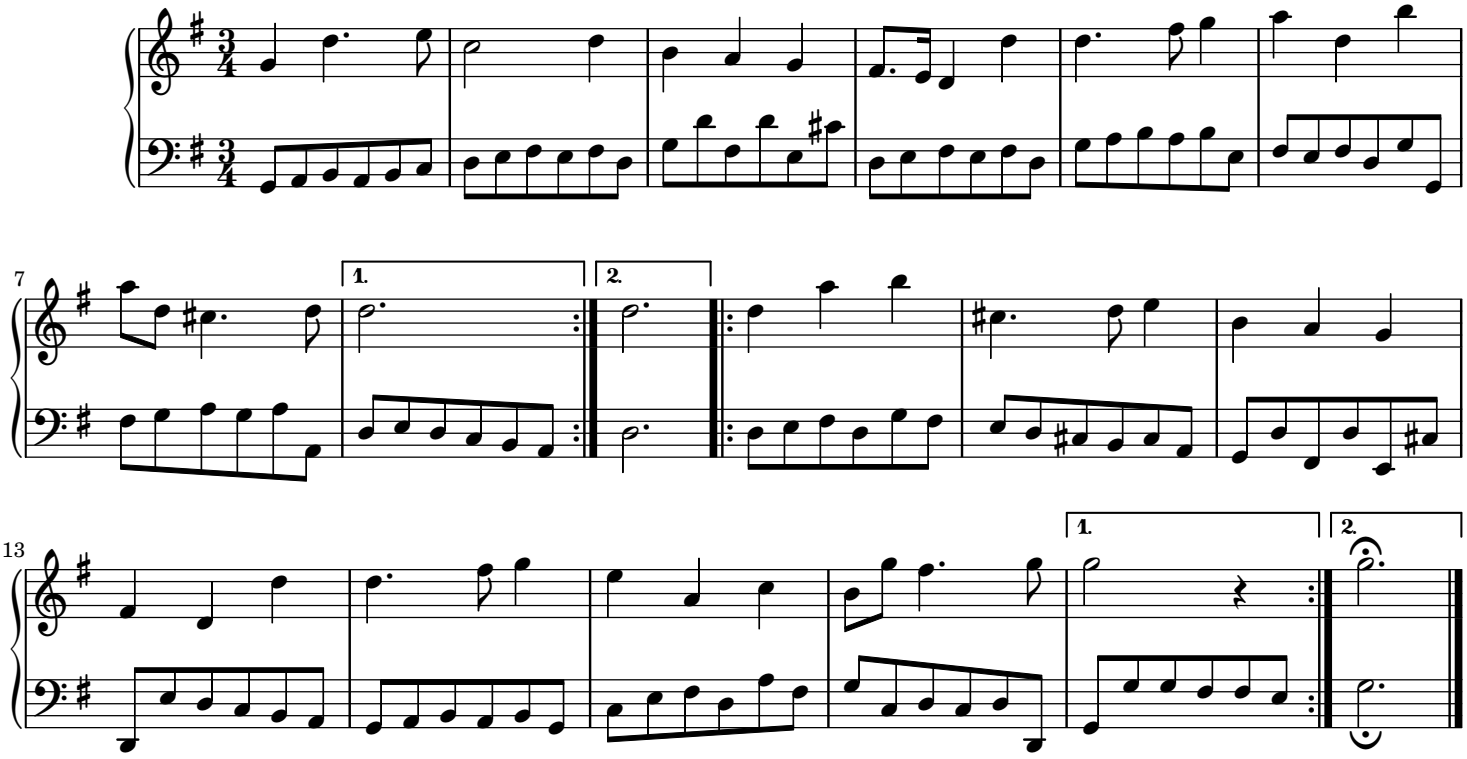
Allemande



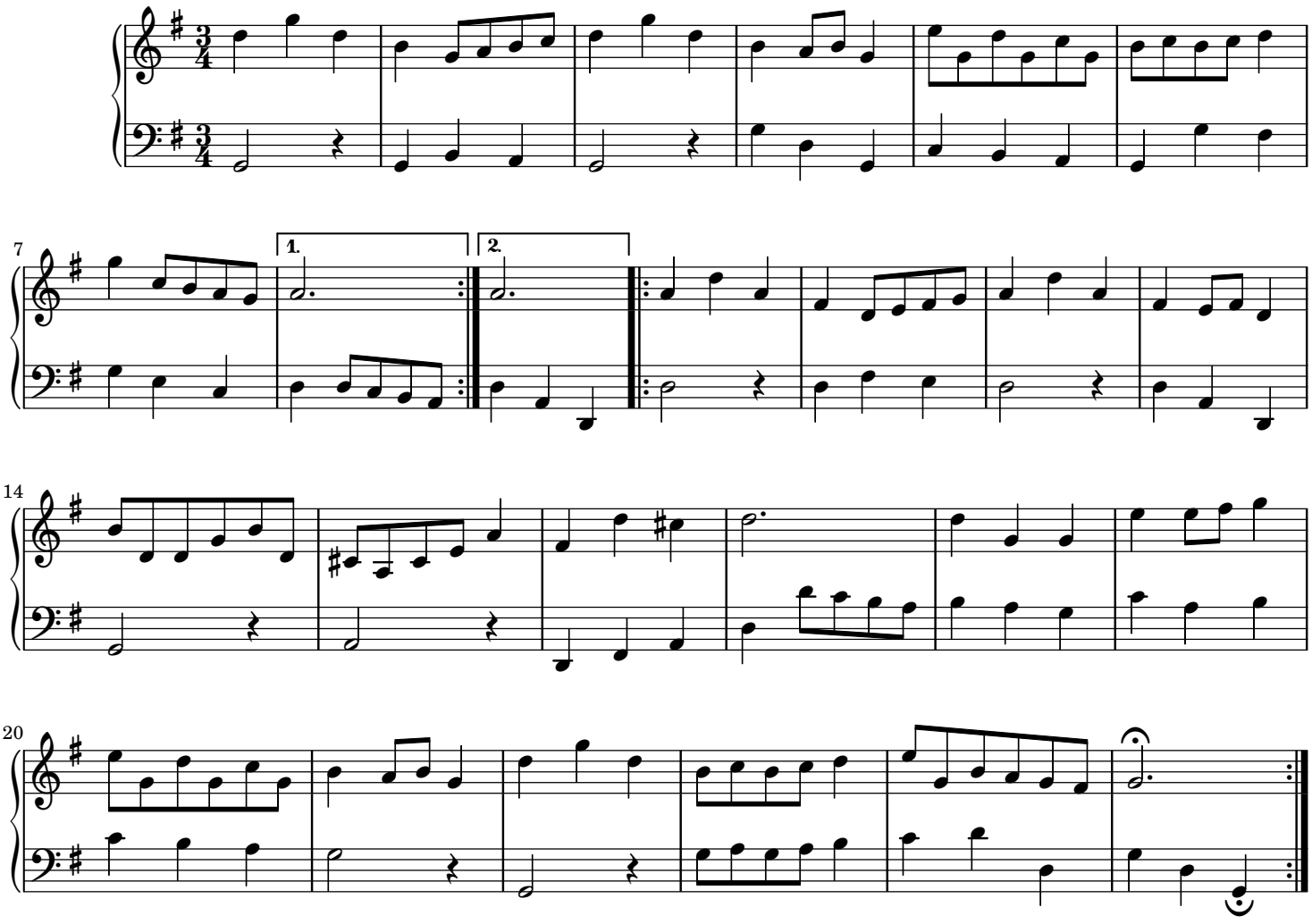
Courante



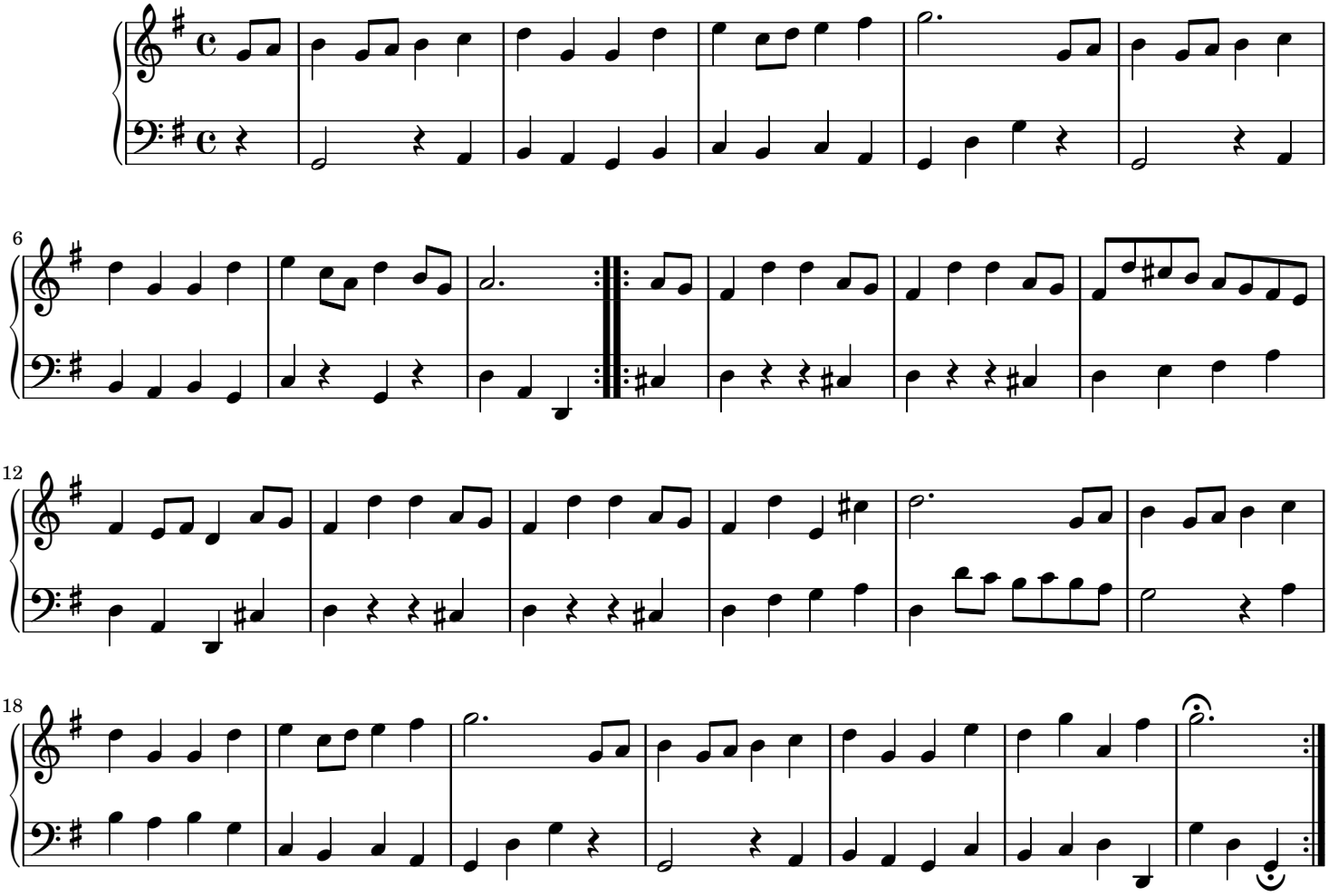
Sarabande



Menuet

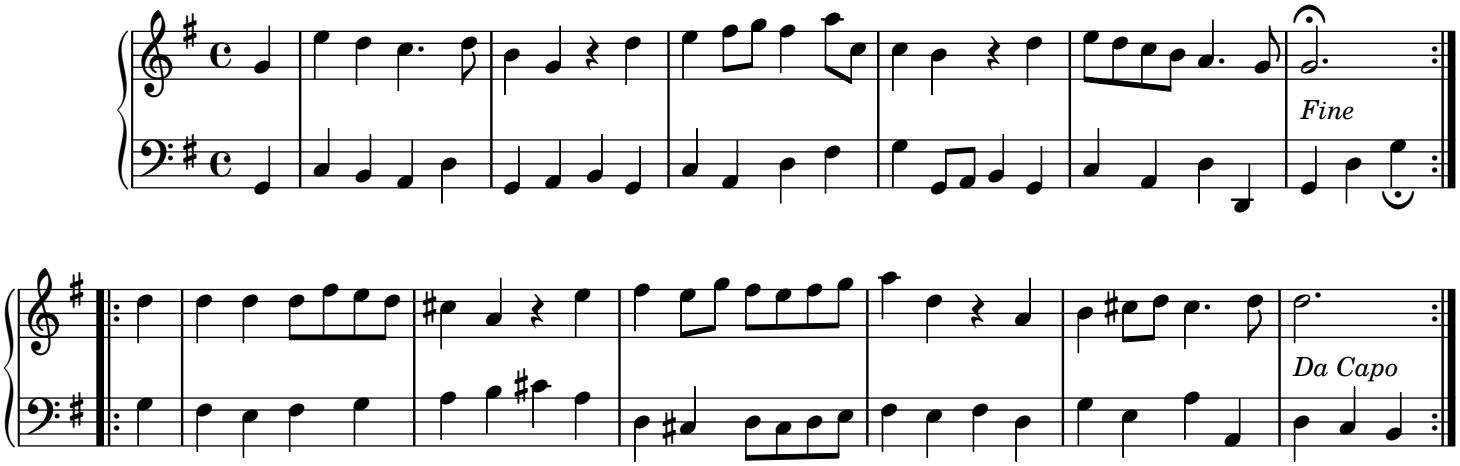


Bourée



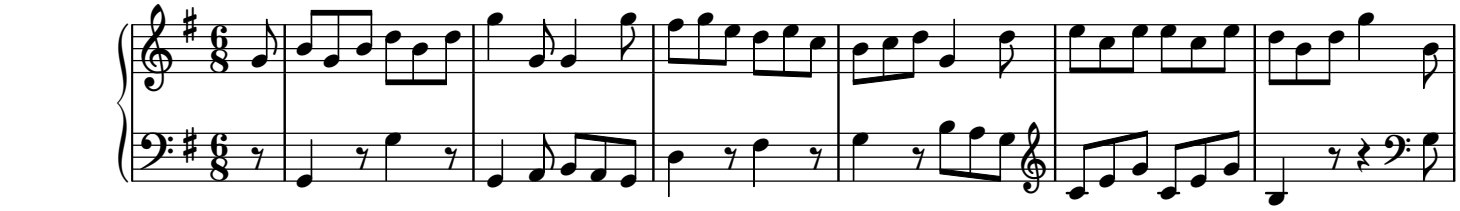
Aria

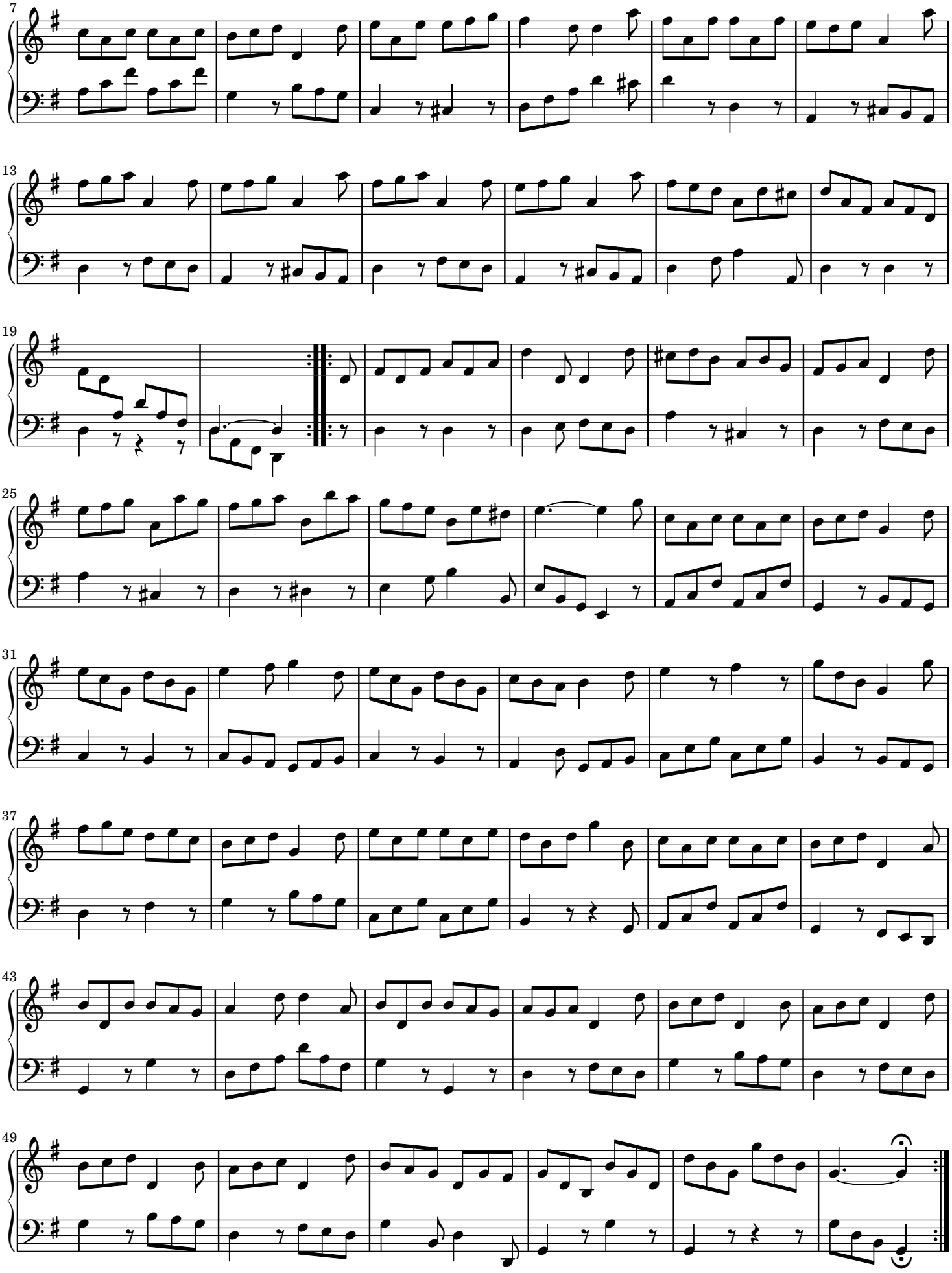
Adagio



Gigue

Prestissimo





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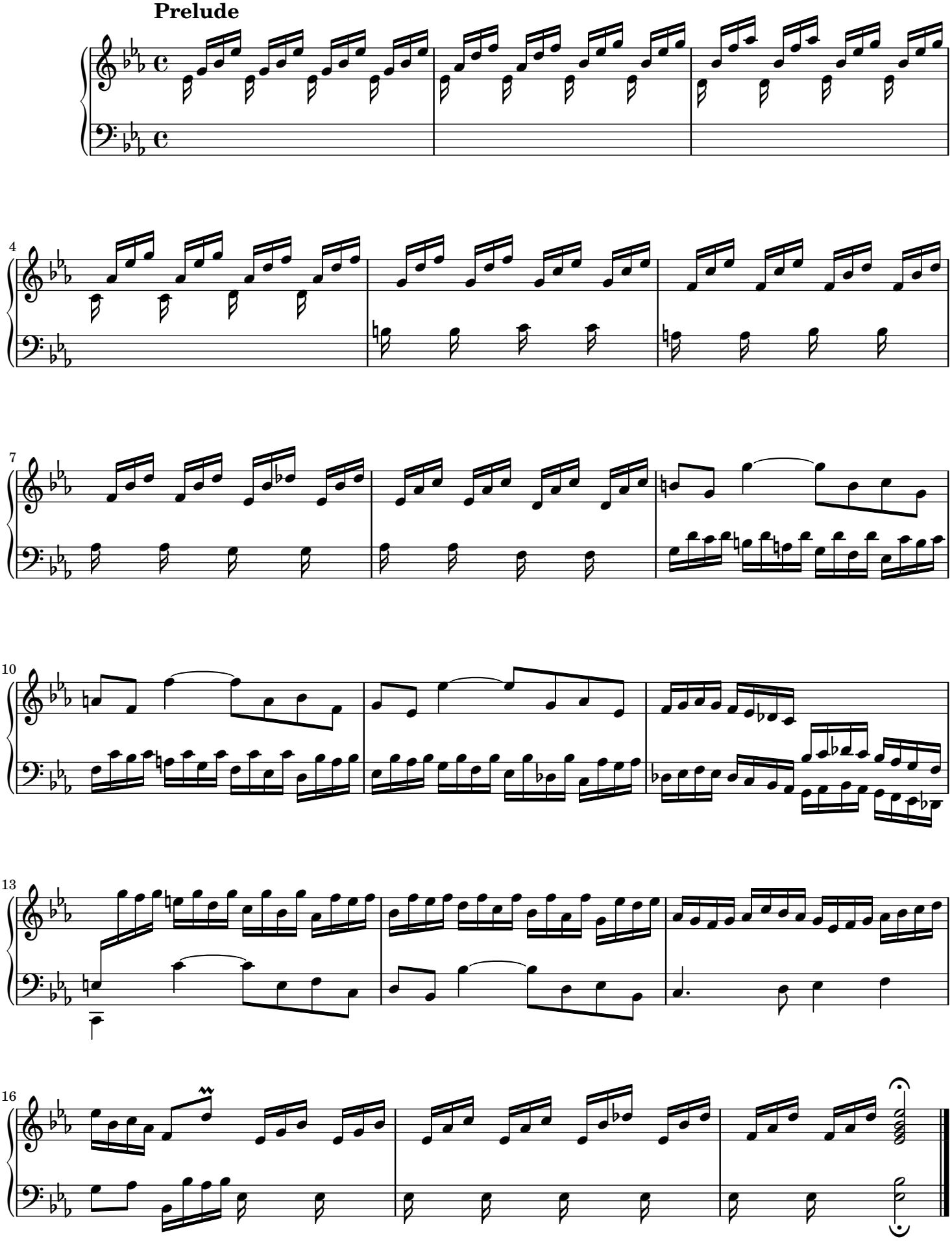
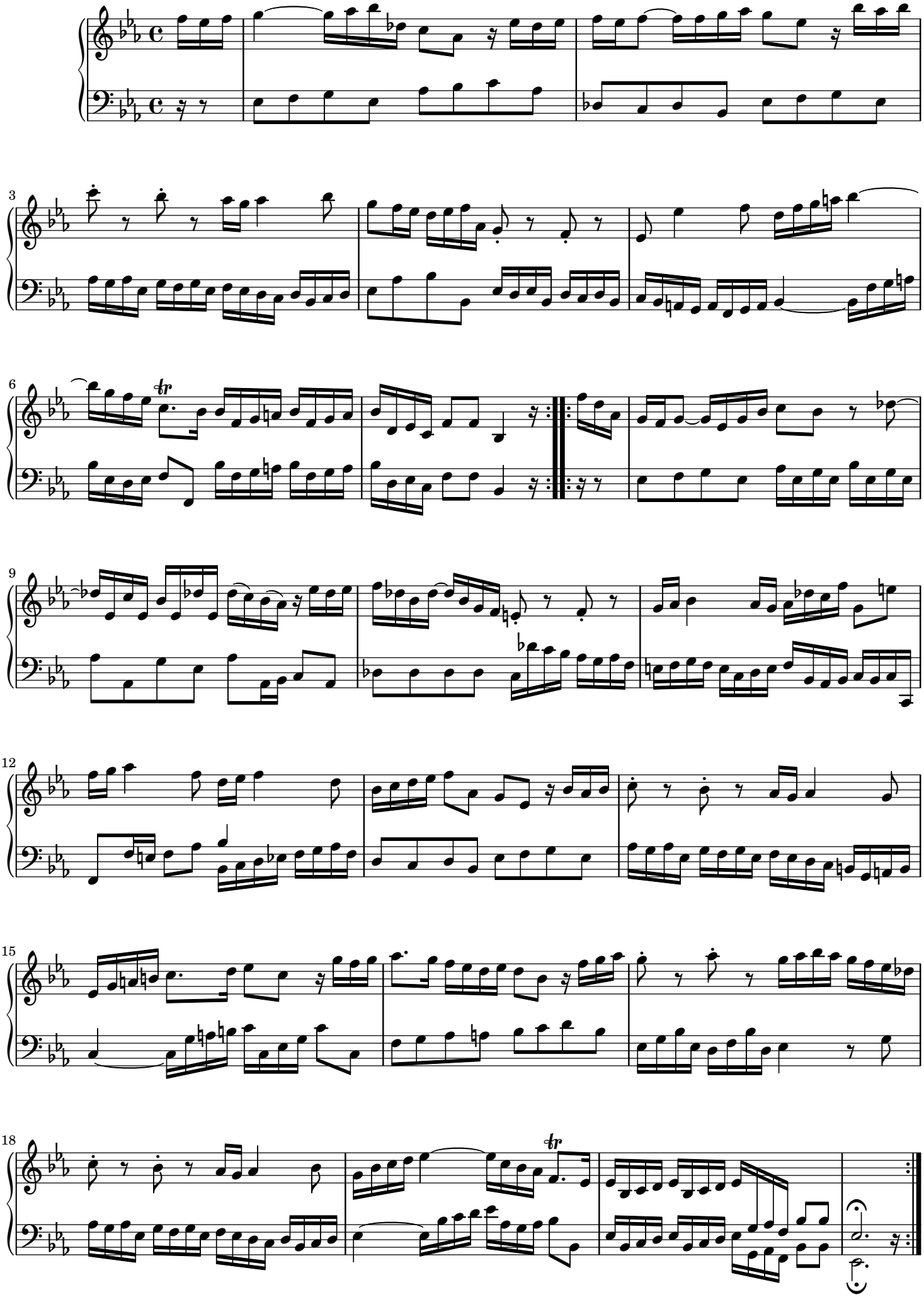
Partita VII

Johann Adolph Scheibe
(1708 - 1776)

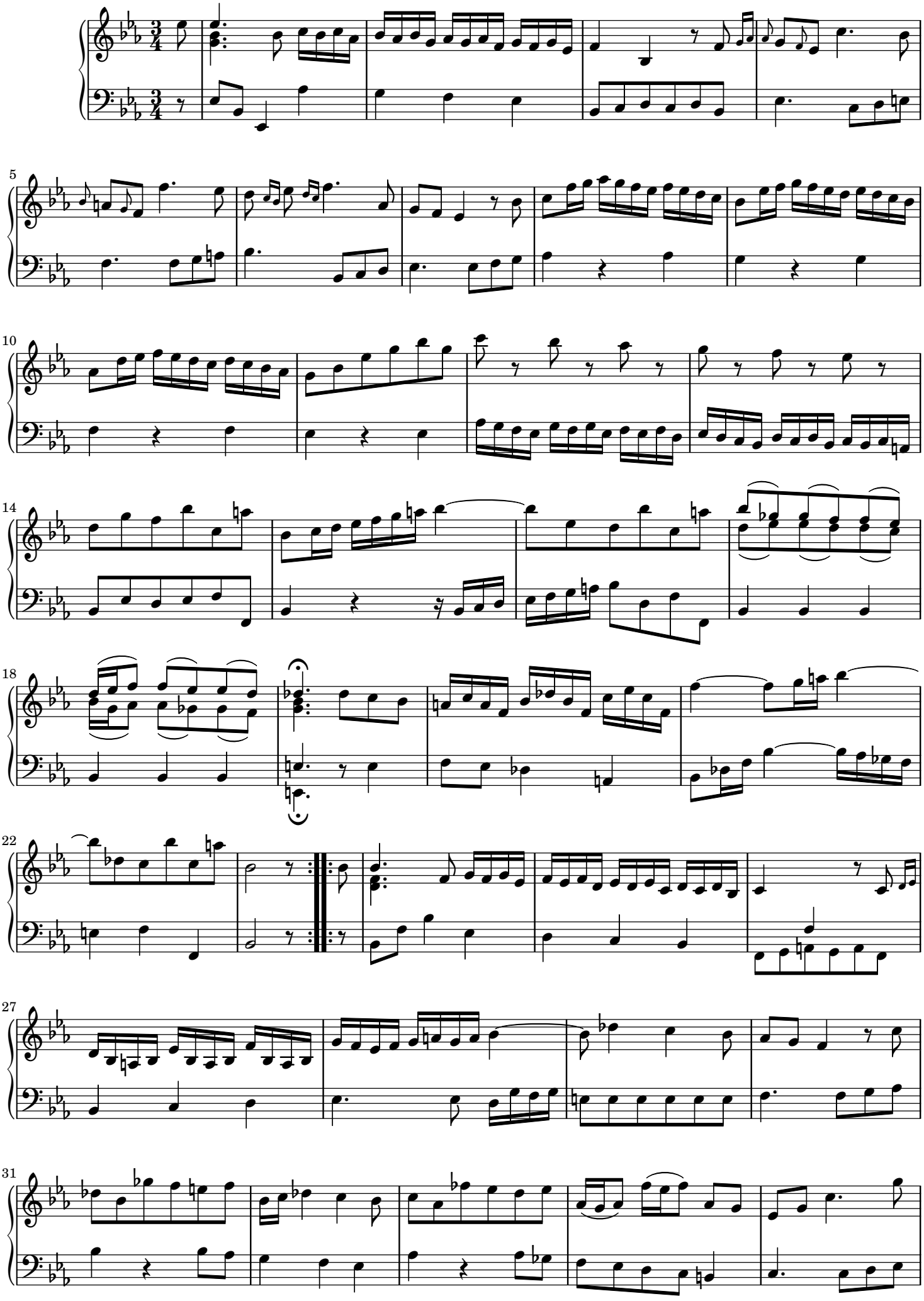
Prelude

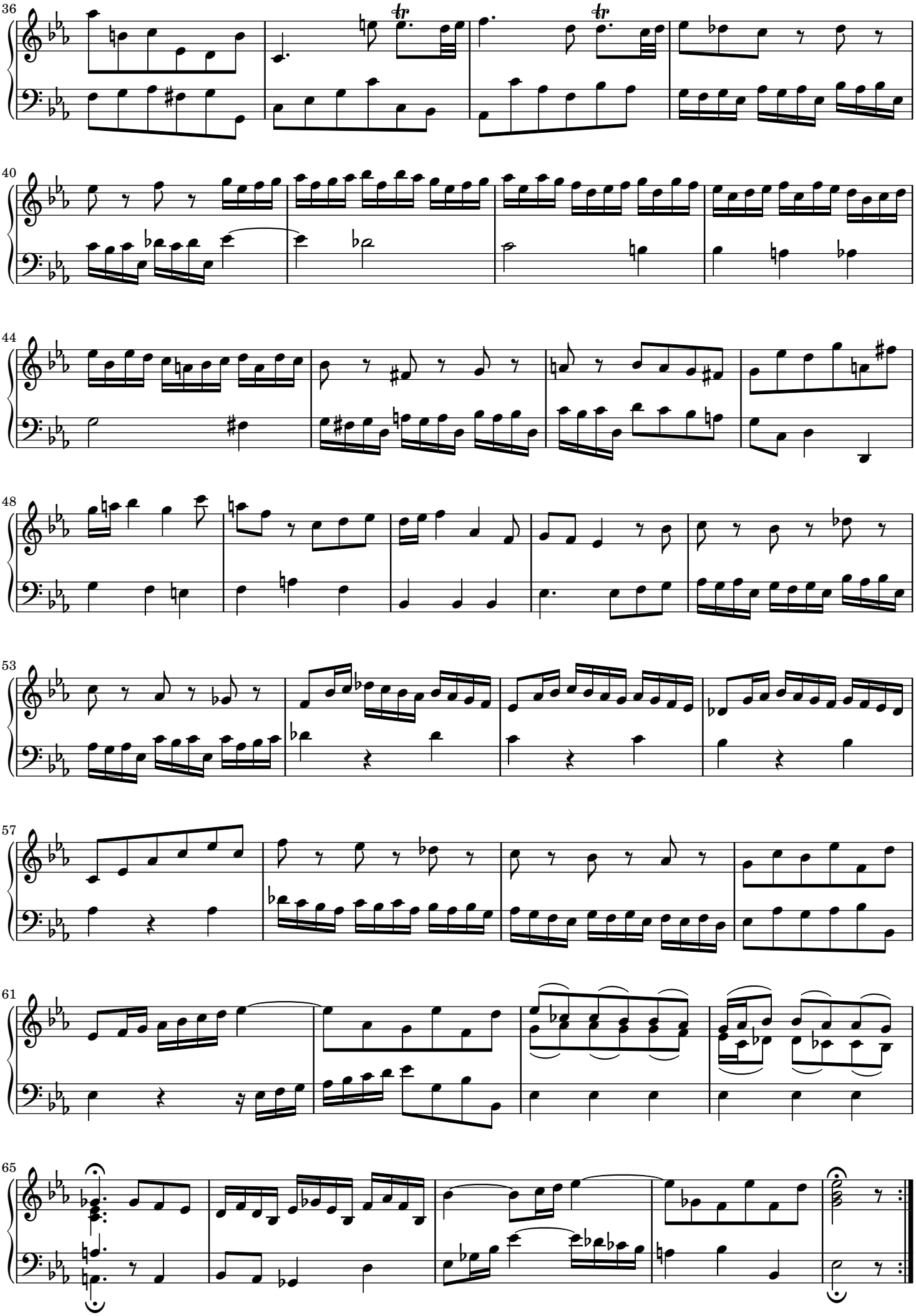


Allemande

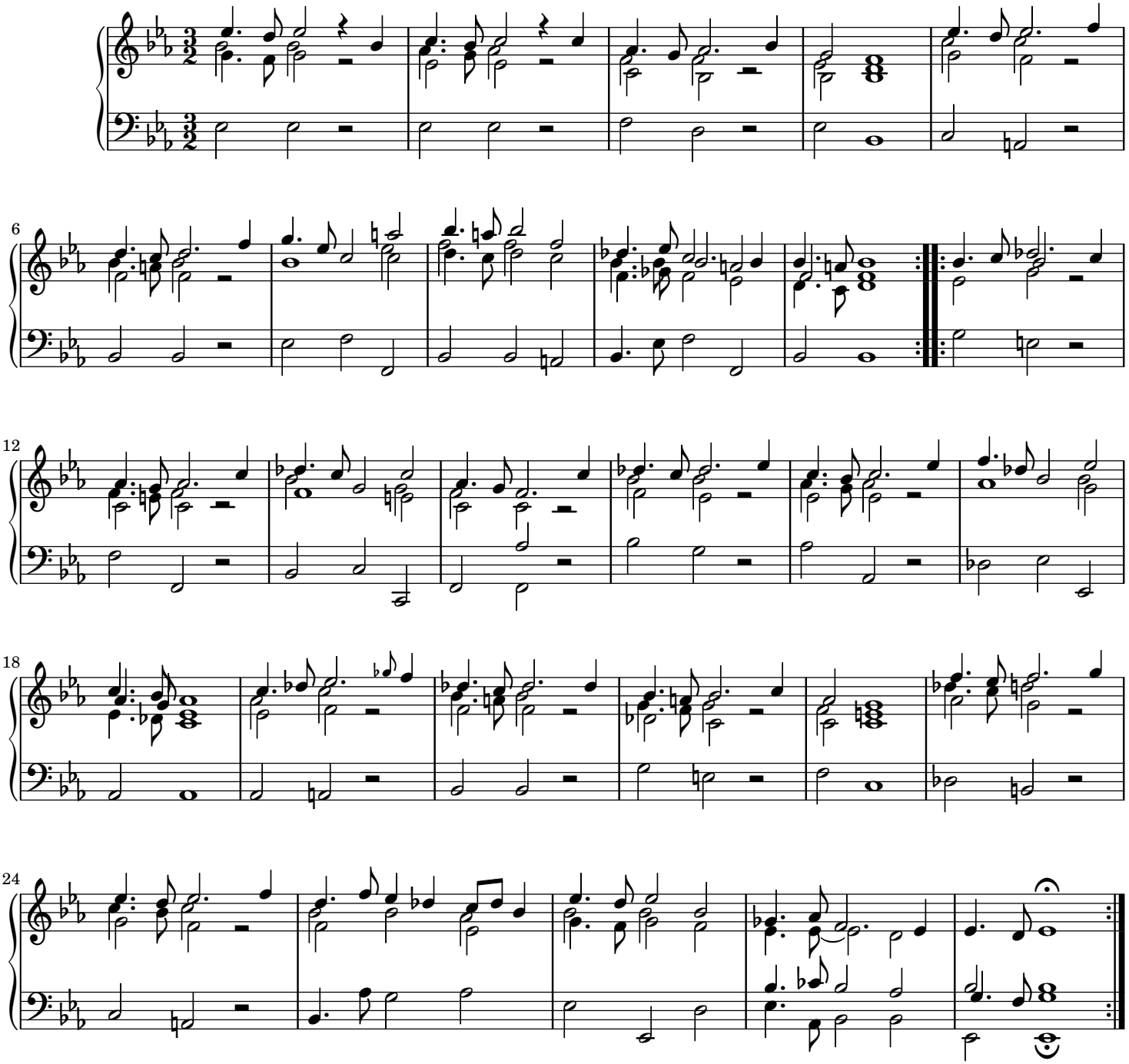


Courante



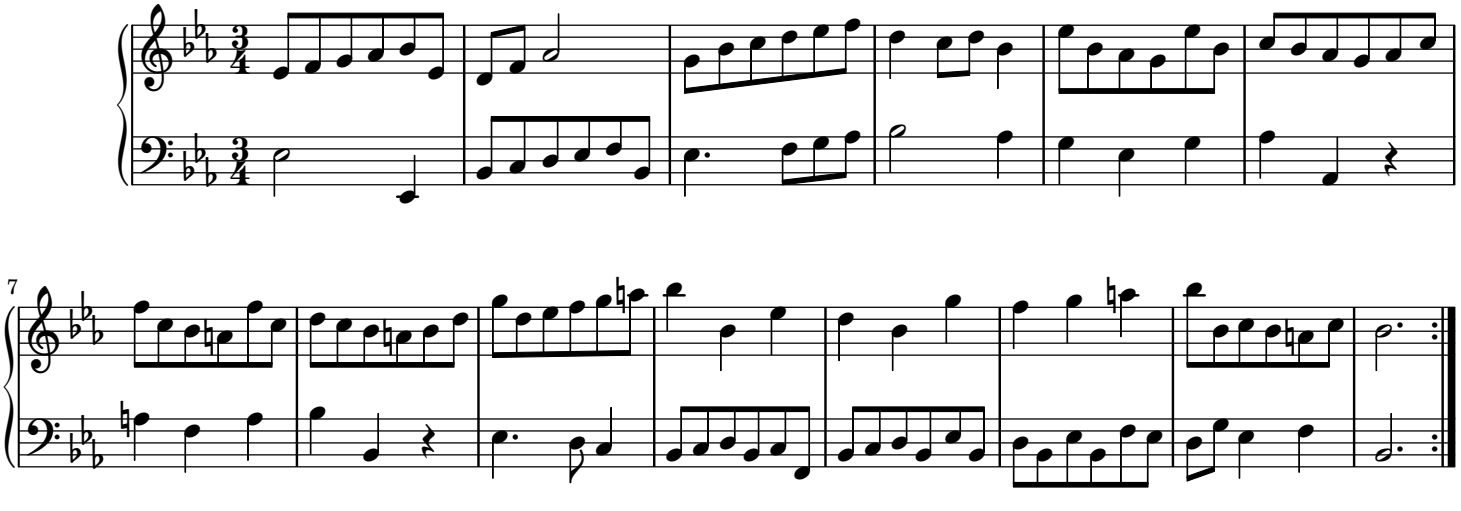


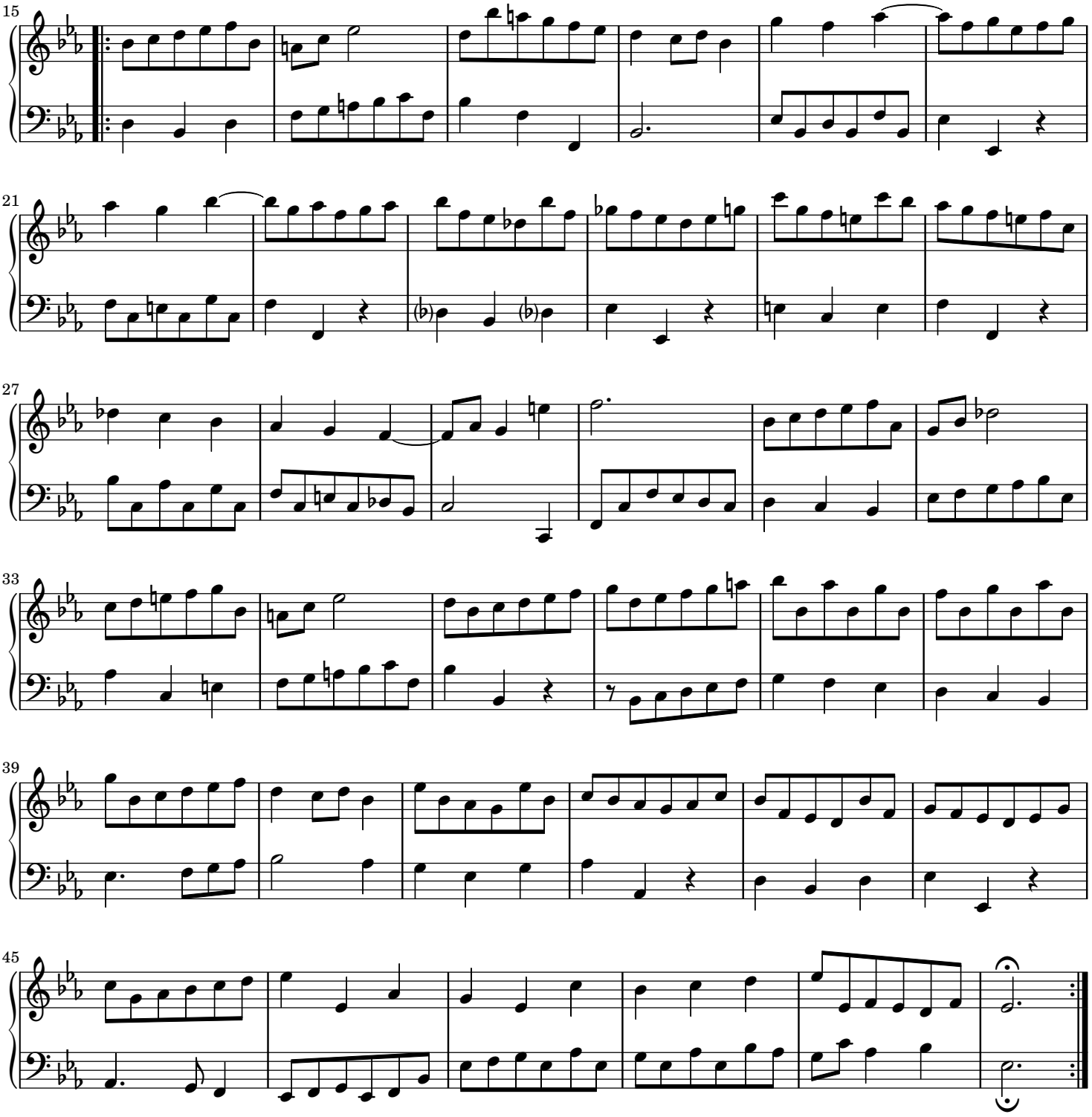
Sarabande



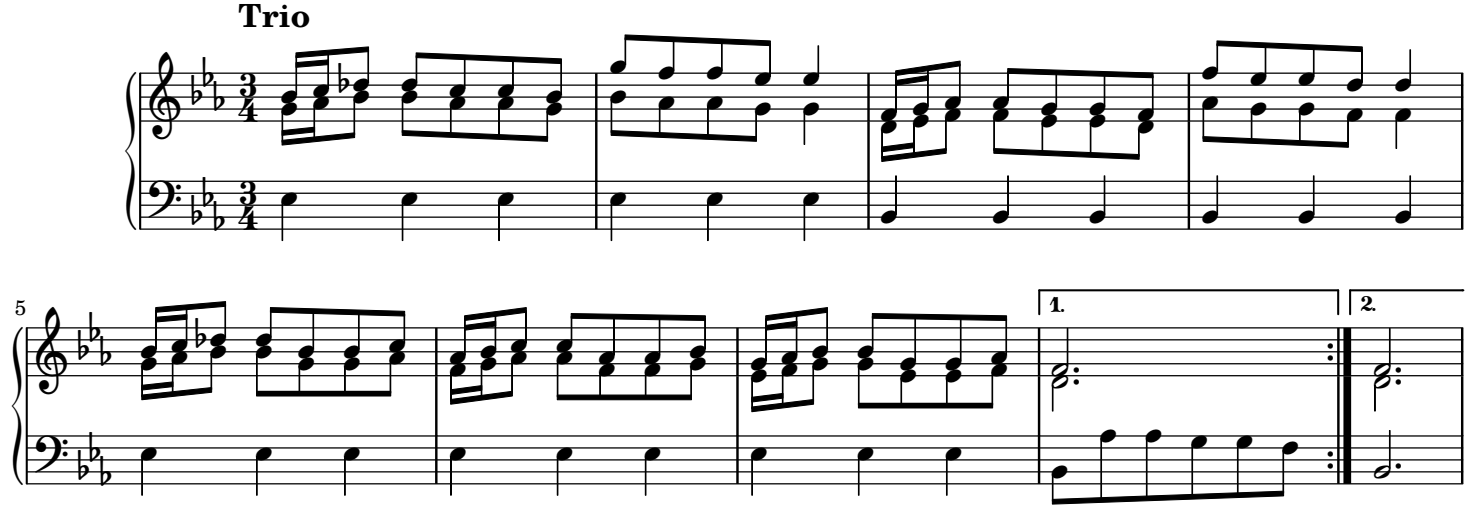
Menuet alternativement

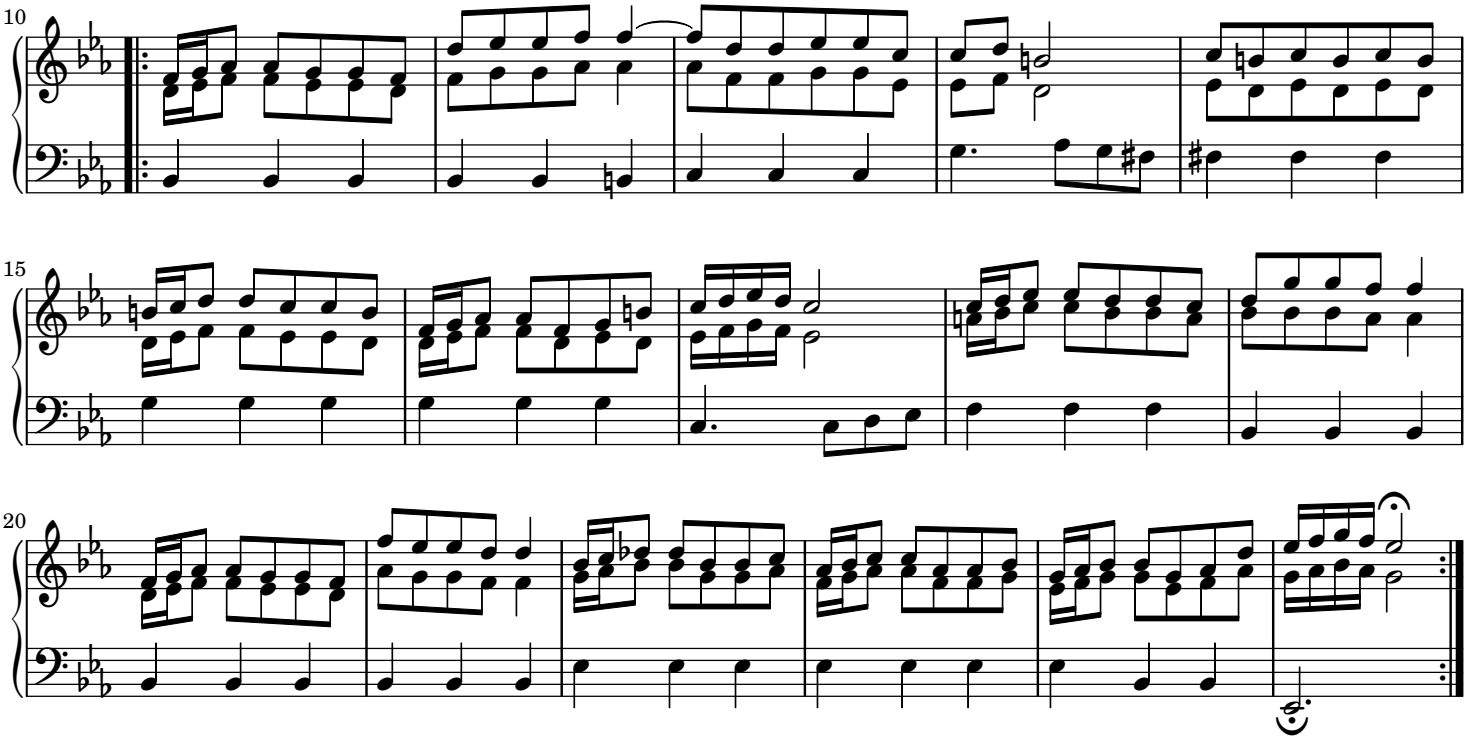
avec le Trio





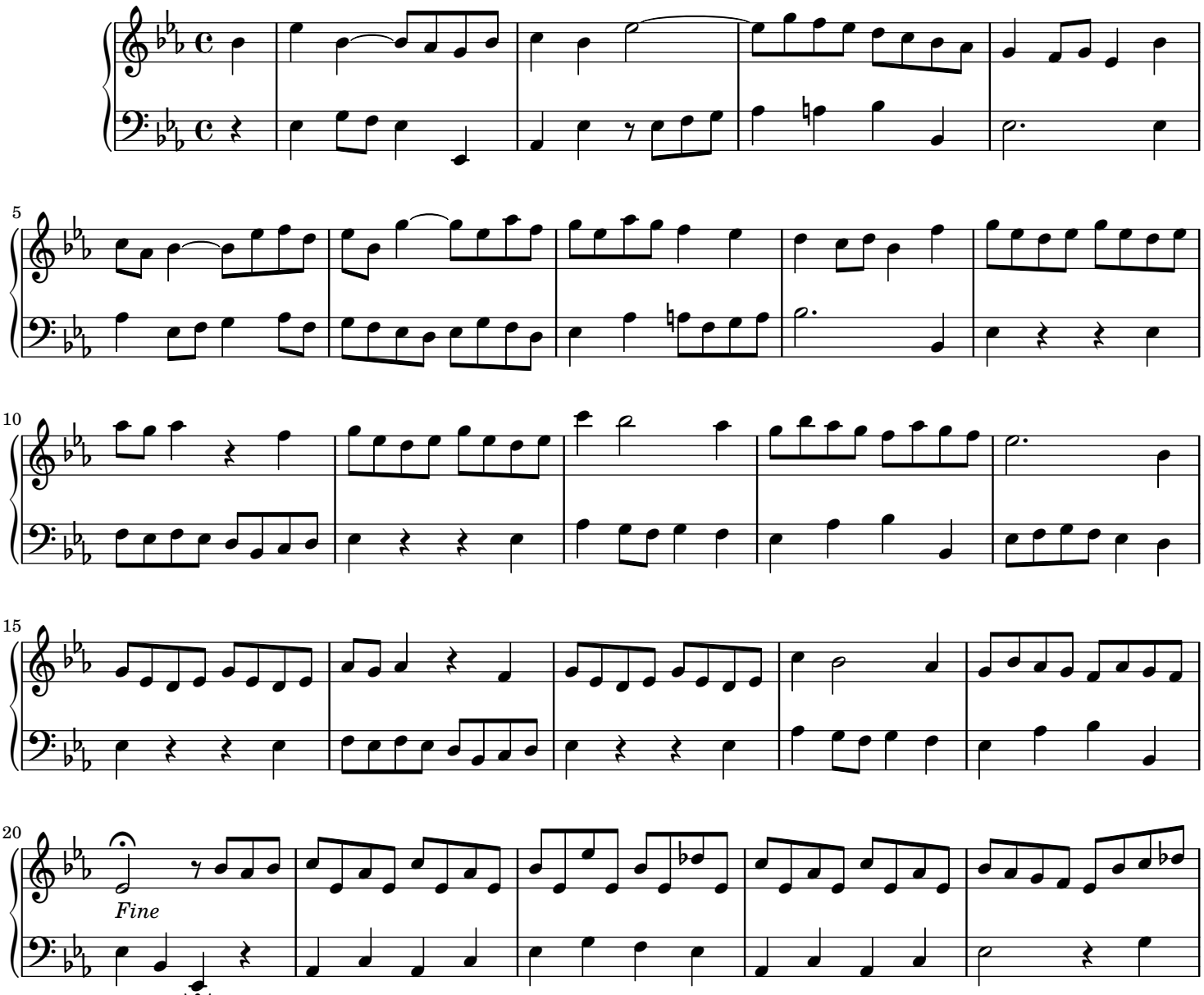
Trio



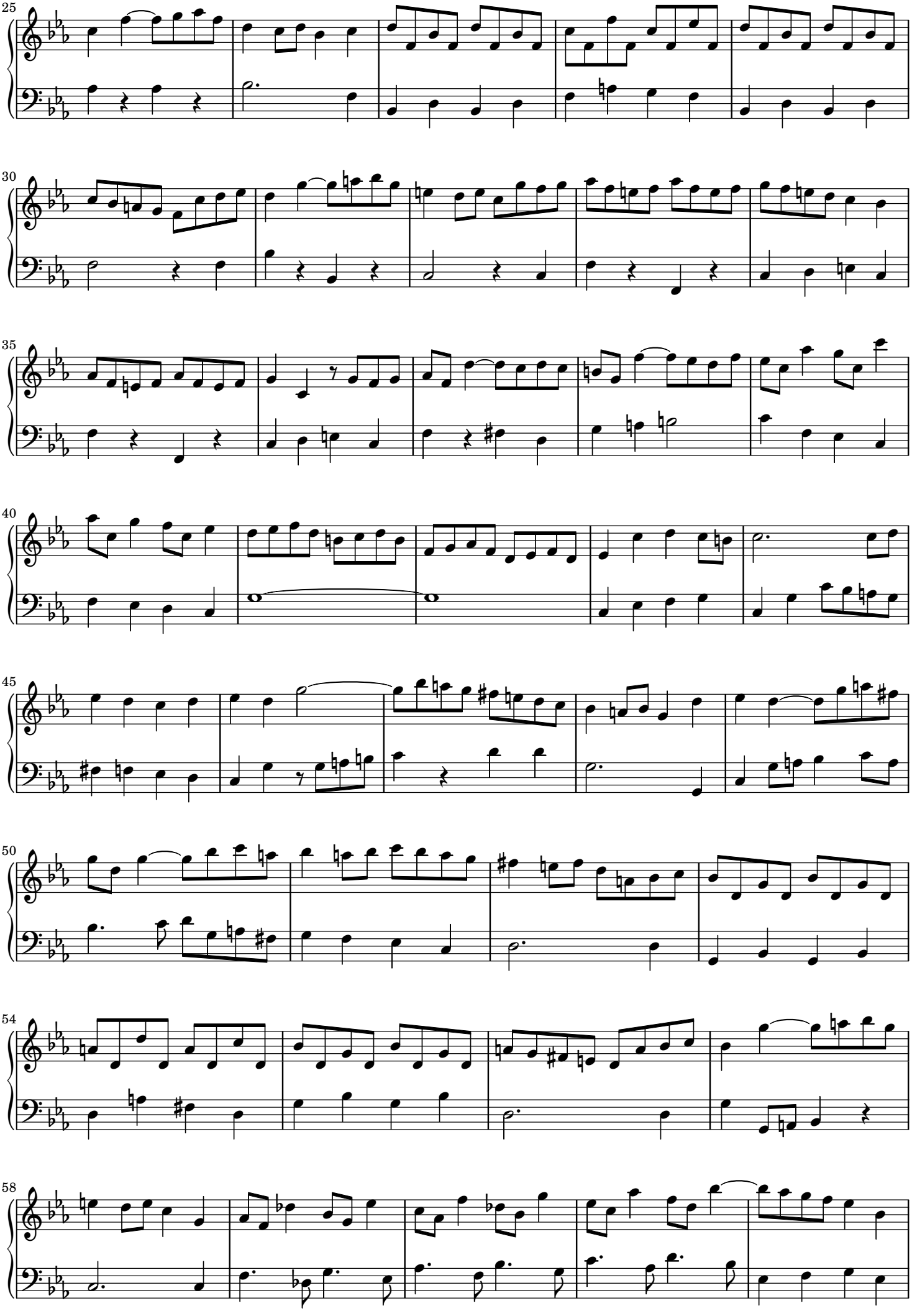


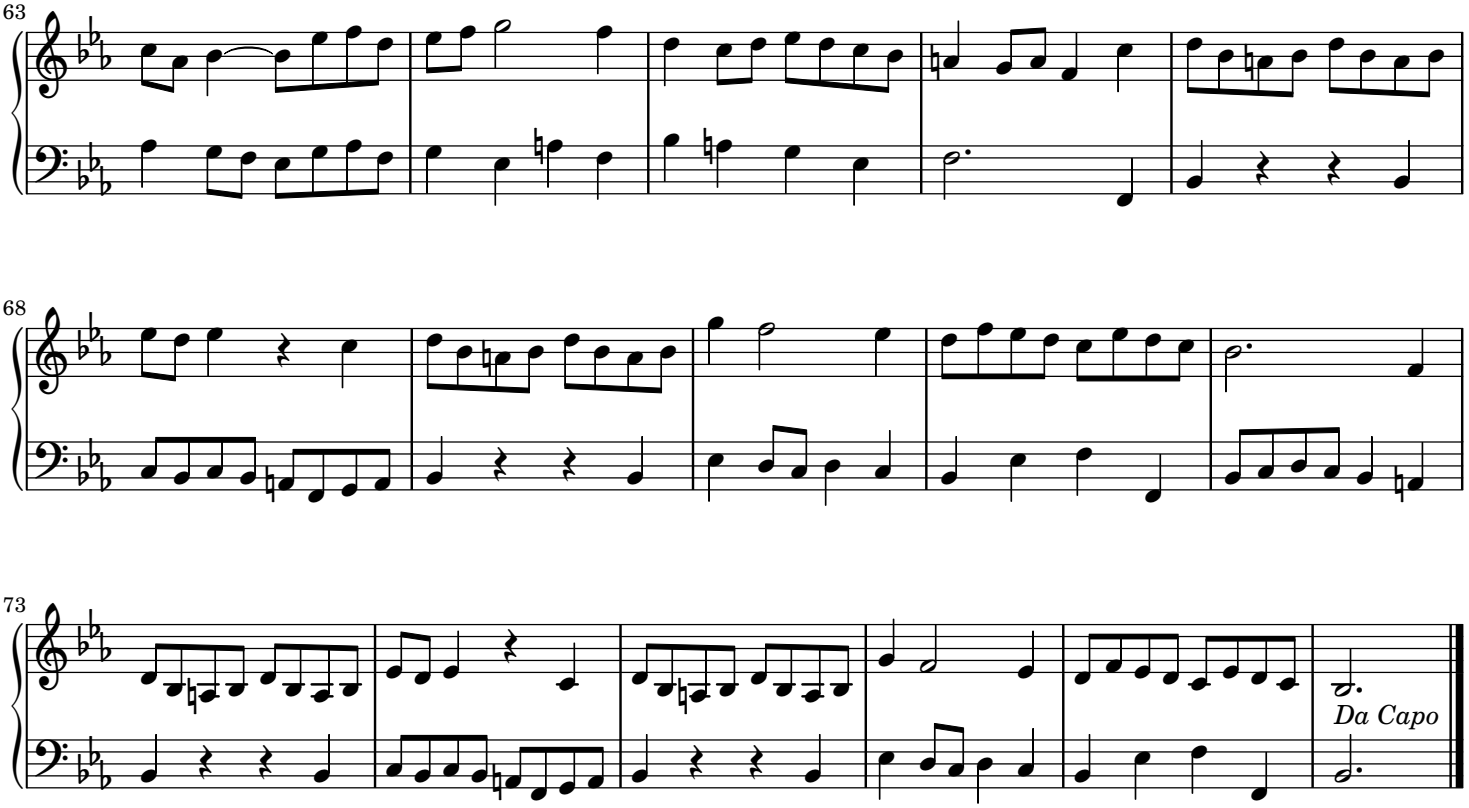
Menuet repetatur

Bourée

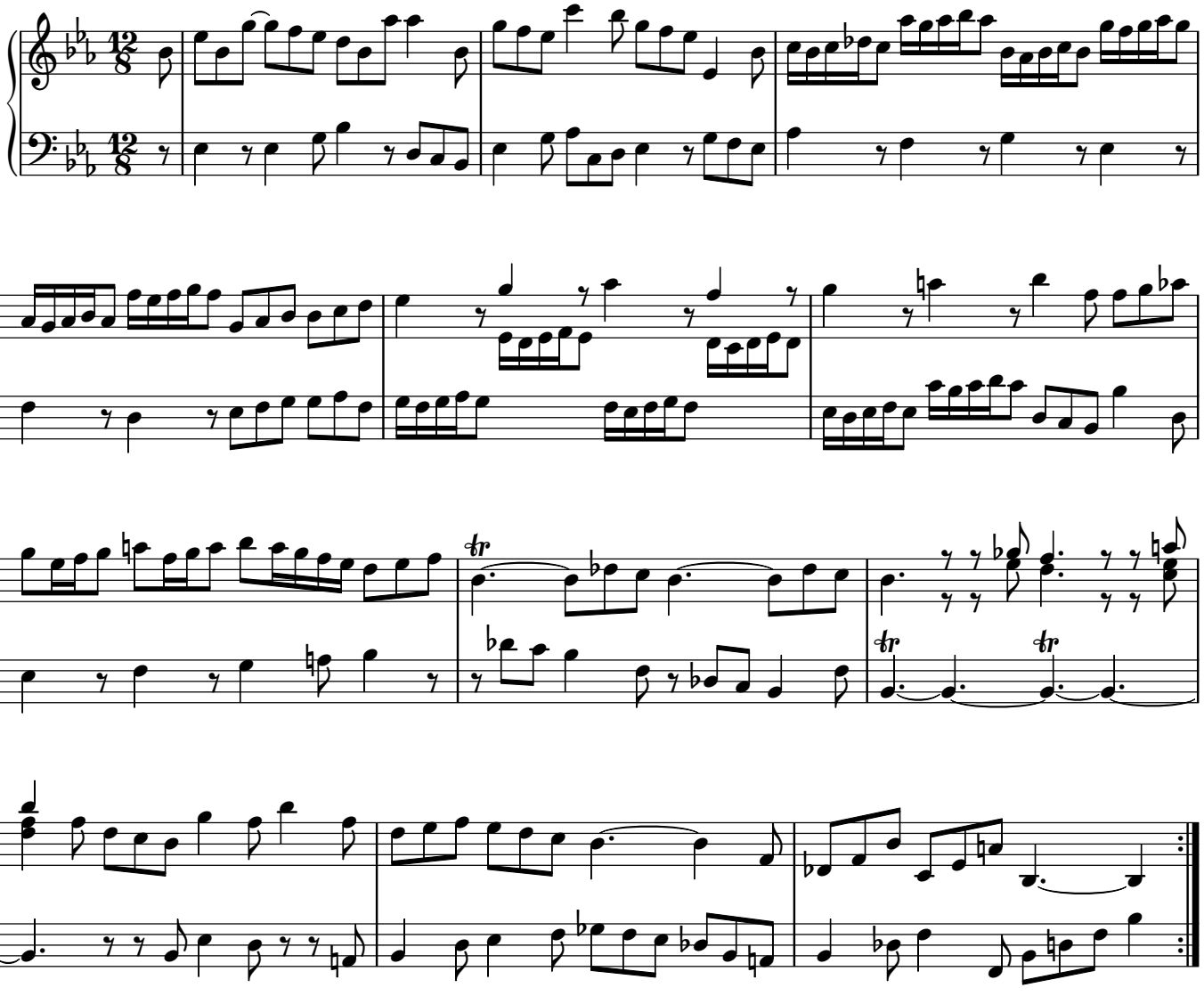


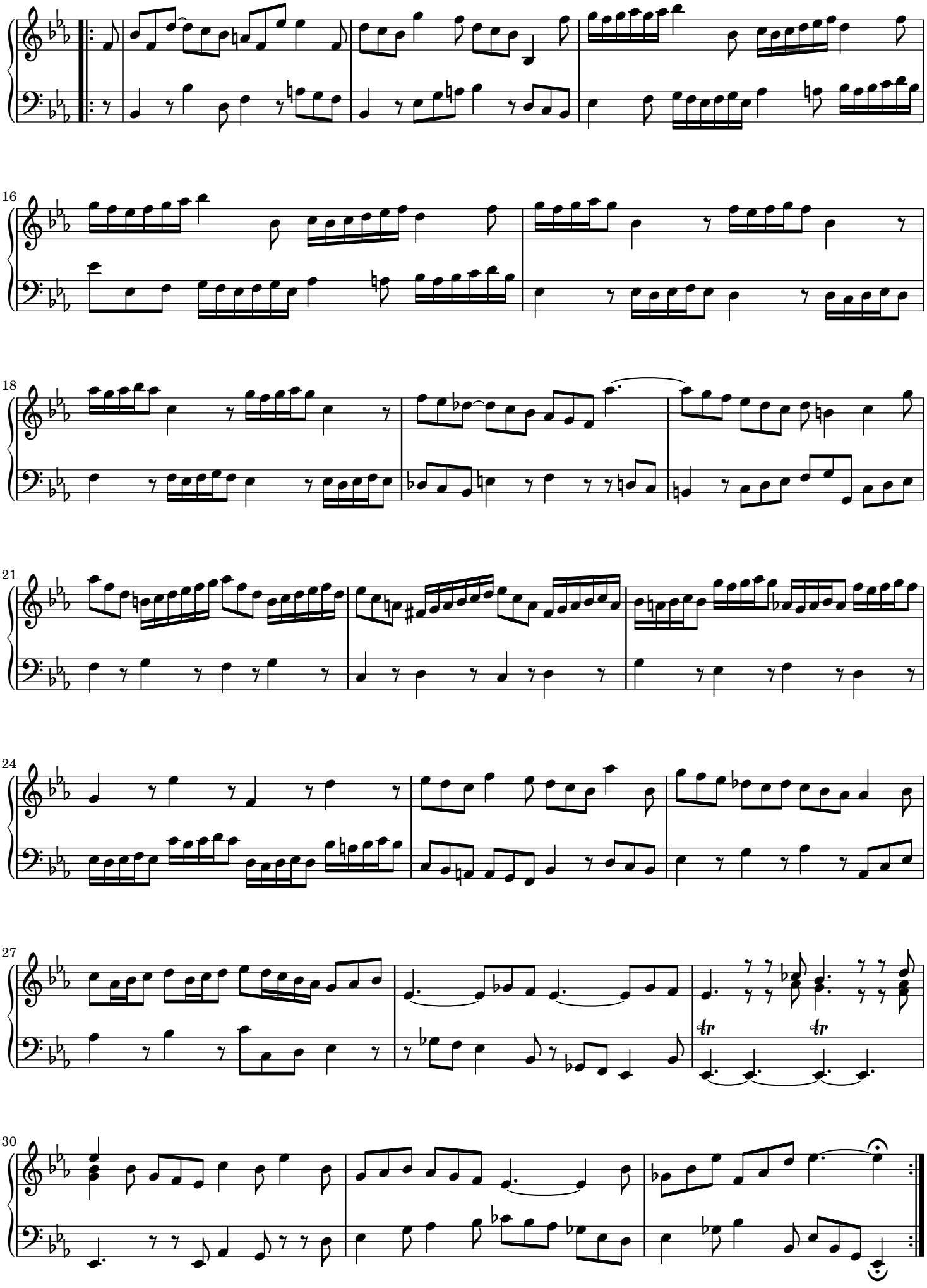
Fine





Gigue





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