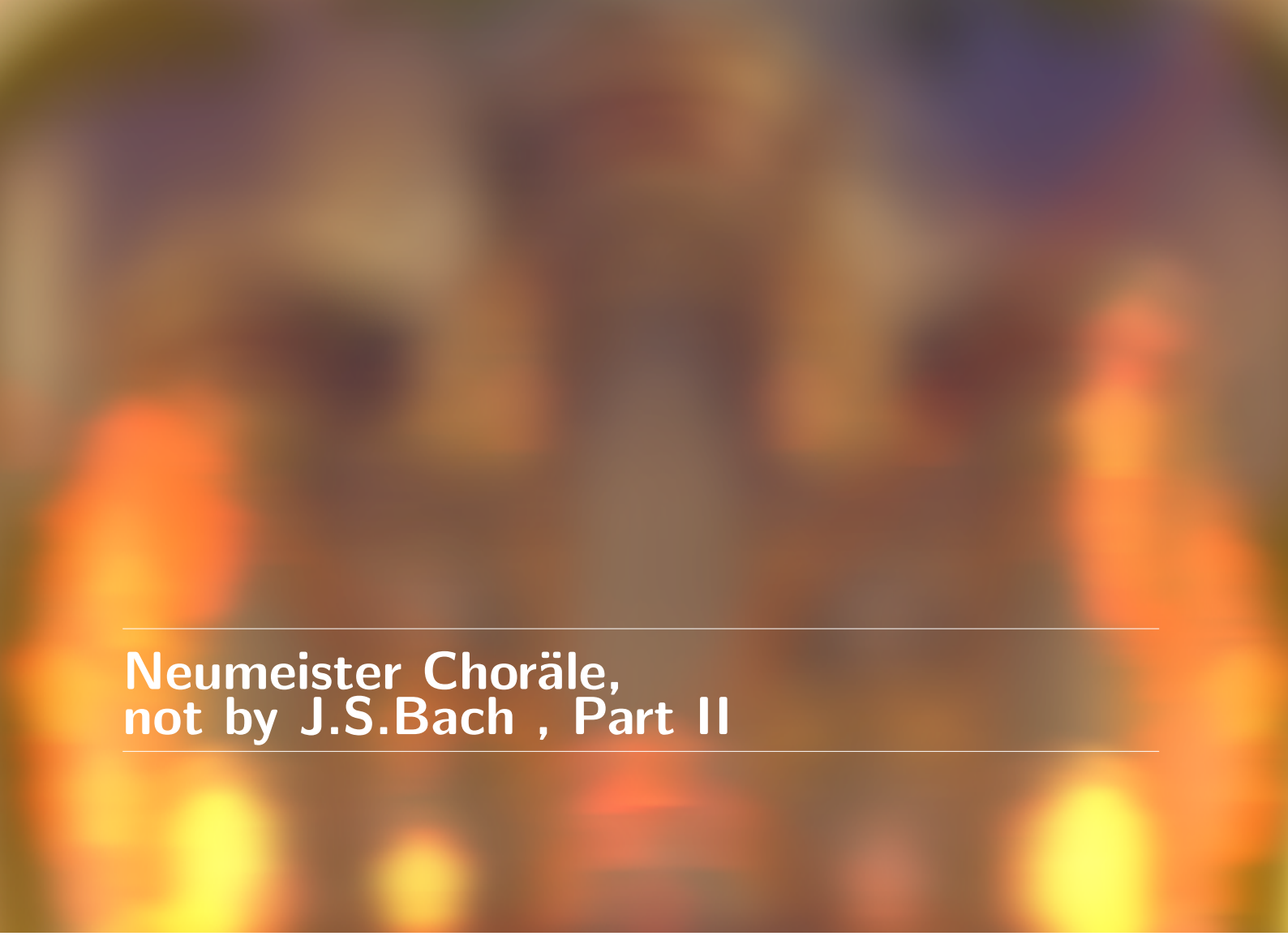

Neumeister Choräle, not by J.S.Bach , Part II

Johann Michael Bach
Johann Christoph Bach
Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau
Johann Heinrich Buttstett
Georg Andreas Sorge

US-NH LM 4708
Yale University

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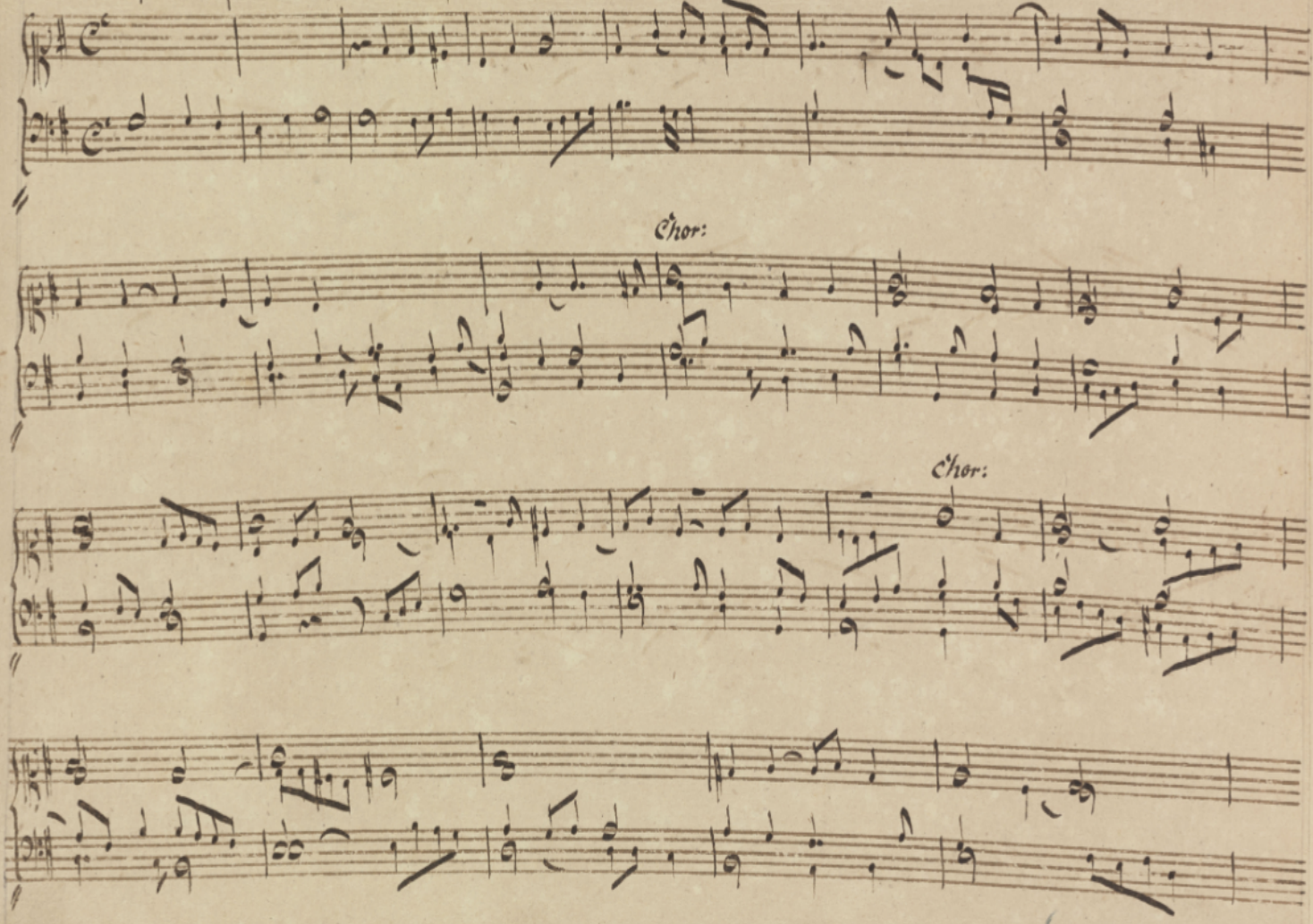
Partitura Organum

Nun lasst uns Gott dem Herren ... Wach auf mein Herz und singe

J. M. Bach



Neumeister Choräle,
not by J.S.Bach , Part II

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Introduction

Johann Gottfried Neumeister (1757 - 1840) was born in Ebersdorf, in Turingia. He studied organ, composition and theory with Georg Andreas Sorge in Lobenstein. In 1790 he moved to Friedberg where he became German teacher at the latin school. Besides teacher he was second organist in the Stadtkirche. In 1807 he became conrector of the school of Homburg von der Höhe and organist in the Stadtkirche of the same city. He performed these duties untill 1831. He died in Homburg in 1840.

Nowadays Neumeister would have been forgotten if it wasn't for the collection of chorale preludes he compiled in the years shortly after 1790. This collection, called the 'Neumeister Collection' or the 'Neumeister Sammlung', is a compilation of 82 chorale preludes and was rediscovered in 1985. It attracted a lot of attention because it contained 39 chorale preludes attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach, 32 of which were previously unknown. One of the attributions to J.S. Bach in the manuscript has been questioned since the discovery of the manuscript, but that still leaves 31 previously unknown works. These works are undoubtedly from Bach's early years and are therefore of rather more historic than of musical interest. Besides the works by J.S. Bach the manuscript containes 43 works by other composers. The largest number (26) of these are attributed to Johann Michael Bach, the son of the brother of the grandfather of Johann Sebastian. Johann Michael was the first father-in-law of Johann Sebastian as well, though he was long dead when Johann Sebastian married Maria Barbara, daughter of Johann Michael. The rediscovery of the Neumeister Collection quadrupled the number of keyboard works indisputably written by Johann Michael Bach, from eight to thirty-two. Five of the preludes in the manuscript are unattributed to a composer, and they are possibly written by Johann Michael Bach as well. It has been suggested that the 77 earliest works in the collection may have been copied from a single source, possibly a Bach family album put together in J.S. Bach's early years. The five works by Neumeister's own music teacher, Georg Andreas Sorge, were a later addition.

Neumeister was probably not a very able musician. Not only does the content of the Neumeister Collection indicate he was not a very technically gifted organist (most of the pieces are playable with hands alone), the manuscript contains lots of transcription errors as well. Notes of the chorale melody are somtimes missing, voice are disappearing and appearing seemingly at random, sometimes unlikely harmonies are written, or notes are just plainly wrong. These all indicate a less then proficient grasp of music and it's theory. Or else Neumeister was just very sloppy and careless in his transcription work. We should nevertheless be gratefull to him. Thanks to his collection we can now enjoy 26 pieces by Johann Michael Bach that were previously unknown.

Most of the attention went to the works in the Neumeister by J.S. Bach. The works by Johann Michael Bach are nevertheless equally interesting, and perhaps more so. Where the works by J.S. Bach are from his early years, the work by J.M. Bach show a much more mature craft. They show

us how deep the musical talent ran in the Bach family. The works by the other composers in the Neumeister Collection are of equally high quality, with the possible exception of the five works by Georg Andreas Sorge.

Johann Michael Bach (1648 - 1694) was the brother of Johann Christoph Bach and, more notably, the father of Maria Barbara, the first wife of her distant cousin Johann Sebastian Bach. Johann Michael was educated first by his father, Heinrich Bach, and then by the cantor of Arnstadt, Jonas de Fletin, who seems to have groomed in the boy a strong interest in vocal music. In 1665 Johann Michael took over from his brother as organist at the Arnstadt castle chapel, and in 1673 he became the town organist in Gehren, where he lived until his death. As well as composing music, he made musical instruments, including organs and harpsichords. He was said to be quiet and reserved, and was regarded as a highly skilled composer at the time. Another composer in the Neumeister Collection is Johann Christoph Bach (1642 - 1703), the eldest son of Heinrich Bach and (thus) older brother of Johann Michael Bach. In 1685 he was appointed town organist at St George's in Eisenach and also to the post of organist and harpsichordist in the court Kapelle of the Duke of Eisenach. He retained both positions until his death. Johann Christoph Bach is considered to be the most important composer of the Bach-family, after Johann Sebastian Bach. Though he was primarily an organist and a harpsichordist there remain few keyboard works of his hand. Besides Johann Michael Bach, Johann Christoph Bach and Johann Sebastian Bach, the Neumeister manuscript features some works by Zachow. These were already known from other manuscripts, so they were not as much a surprise as the works by the two Bach family members. The Neumeister manuscript also contains several works by Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow (1663 - 1712). Zachow was born in Leipzig. He probably received his first musical training from his father, the piper Heinrich Zachow, one of Leipzig's town musicians in the Alta capella. In 1676 the family moved to Eilenburg. Here Zachow probably studied with town organist Johann Hildebrand. In 1684 Zachow became organist of the St. Marienkirche in Halle, a post he held until his death. Finally, Neumeister included five composition by his teacher, Georg Andreas Sorge (1703 - 1778). Sorge was a German organist, composer, and, most notably, theorist. Sorge's first professional appointment was at the age of 19 as court and town organist at Lobenstein, a position that he maintained until his death. Though Sorge is mostly remembered as theorist, he was also a prolific composer. His 11 Trios for organ are sitll used in organ playing education. The five compositions by Sroge Neumeister included in his compilation were certainly copied from a different source than the other compositions in the Neumeister collection, since Sorge's preludes are not only much more recent, they are also the pieces of which a contemporary (to Neumeister) source still exists. They were taken from Sorge's published collection of eight chorale preludes, published in 1750.

Some of the works are worth mentioning in this introduction. First there is the prelude to "Nun lasst uns Gott dem Herren", by Johann

Michael Bach. Other manuscript sources attribute this piece to Johann Pachelbel. Johann Gottfried Neumeister however attributes it to Johann Michael Bach. This piece can also be found in manuscript Mus Ms 30439, where it differs in little details from the version in Neumeister's manuscript. The version from manuscript Mus Ms 30439 can be found on Partitura Organum in the Edition containin the chorale preludes from this manuscript[1]. Since Neumeister was not the best scribe, it's possible that the differences in his manuscript with the version in manuscript Mus Ms 30439 are actually transcription error's from Neumeister.

Five of the pieces in the Neumeister manuscript are without a named composer. Based on stylistical grounds and on references to other sources two of these pieces can be attributed to Johan Pachelbel, two to Johann Michael Bach and one to Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow. The two preludes to "Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ" are thought to be composed by Johann Michael Bach. Since there is no way to know for certain, I designate it as 'anonymous' in the score, with the possibility of Bach's authorship added in parentheses. The first of these two preludes alternates the chorale melody between the soprano voice and the bass voice. Neumeister only indicates the first entry of the chorale melody in the bass voice with "Ped.". For the rest it is a bit of a puzzle which notes are meant for the pedals and which not. The notion that soprano and bass voice play the chorale alternately helps a lot with solving this puzzle.

Johann Michael Bach's chorale prelude to "Kommt her zu mir spricht Gottes Sohn" is not only present in the Neumeister Sammlung, but is present in Mus. Ms. 30439 as well. As such it is contained in the Edition on Partitura Organum based on that manuscript. The version in Neumeister's manuscript differs is several little details from the version in Mus Ms 30439. Enough to make a seperate score from it. The differences between the two version can be an inspiration for the performance of all these chorale preludes from Baroque Germany: the notes are probably more an invitation to add one's own variations while playing them than an instruction to play the notes exactly as written.

Bach's prelude to "Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt" is a small fugue on the first phrase of the melody. This phrase appears at least 7 times, though I think that Neumeister forgot two crucial notes in bar 17. As is so often the case in Neumeister's transcriptions a voice (in this case the alto voice) disappears for a halve measure, and reappears in the next bar. With a g and a d filled in, the alto voice suddenly becomes the eighth entry of the fugato theme. The piece can be played both pedaliter and manualiter, so I created two scores.

Neumeister's transcription of Bach's prelude to "Warum betrübst du dich mein Herz" gives again many reasons to doubt the correctness of his transcriptions. Some of the notes seem wrong and though the pieces starts of as a four part piece, from bar 9 onwards one of the voices disappears. Did Neumeister omit one of the voices to make the piece more easily playable, or did Bach write it this way? Most of the time Bach writes his parts

[1] http://partitura.org/index.php/choral-preludes-from-mus-ms-30439/

very stricly, and a four part piece stays a four part piece. We'll probably never now. I did take the liberty to correct the notes that are wrong in my opinion, I did not however try to restore a missing voice. As usual, all editorial decisions are indicated in the score.

Neumeister ascribes the choral prelude to "Ach Gott vom Himmel, sieh darein" to Johann Michael Bach. In two other manuscript sources (both the Plauener Orgelbuch and the Königsberger manuscript) however the piece is ascribed to Johann Heinrich Buttstett. Neumeister's error was probably caused by the fact that in most manuscripts of the time the composer was indicated with intials only, often written with ligatures. That way the letter combination JHB is easily read as JMB (or the other way around).

The last of the pieces by Johann Michael Bach from Neumeister's collection is the prelude to "Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist". It develops as a dialog between soprano and bass voice, with each in turn stating a phrase of the chorale melody. It's a bit odd therefore that the seventh phrase of the chorale melody is not played with the bass voice, but wit the tenor voice. Almost as if Neumeister wanted to make the piece a bit more easy to play for himself, by transferring a fragment of the pedal part to the left hand.

In Neumeister's manuscript the prelude to "Heut triumphiret Gottes Sohn" follows immediately after the prelude to "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern" by Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow. Although Neumeister does not write a composer's name above the piece, it is sometimes attributed to Zachow. Fact is that texture and feel it is not unlike Zachow's prelude to "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern" so the attribution to Zachow is not unlikely. Neumeister omits some notes and many notes that are there are highly unlikely. I tried to correct them as best as I could. All editorial decisions are marked in the score. I've never had to use so many footnotes in just 59 bars of music.

Three pieces in Neumeister's manuscript bear the ascription "J. C. Bach". Since so many of the pieces in this manuscript were composed by Johann Michael Bach, it is an obvious supposition that Johann Michael's older brother, Johann Christoph Bach is meant. However, it is not certain and a fair number of the Bach family, all bearing the initials "J. C." could be meant by Neumeister's ascription. The pieces themselfs are more a chorale harmonisation than a chorale prelude. The chorale melody is set in easy yet effective four part harmony.

The Neumeister Sammlung contains 5 chorale preludes written by Georg Andreas Sorge, Neumeister's teacher at the organ. The fourth of them, a prelude to "Herr Jesu Christ du höchstes Gut" deserves special mention. Allthough Sorge uses simple means in composing this piece, the result is quite impressive. The chorale melody stands out clearly, and the flowing triplets give it an almost sweet surrounding. The a minor tonality enhances the bittersweet mood of this piece.

The source for this Edition is the Neumeister Collection, owned by the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University, available as a digital copy at Bach Digital[2]. This Edition contains the second half of the chorale preludes not by J.S Bach from the Neumeister Collection. The works appear in the order in which they appear in the Neumeister Collection, with the exception of Sorge's "Vater unser im Himmelreich": that work appears on page 47 of the manuscript, a page presumably left open and later filled with this prelude by Sorge. All five chorale preludes by Sorge are grouped together at the end of this part of present Edition.

[2]https://www.bach-digital.de/receive/BachDigitalSource_source_00004260

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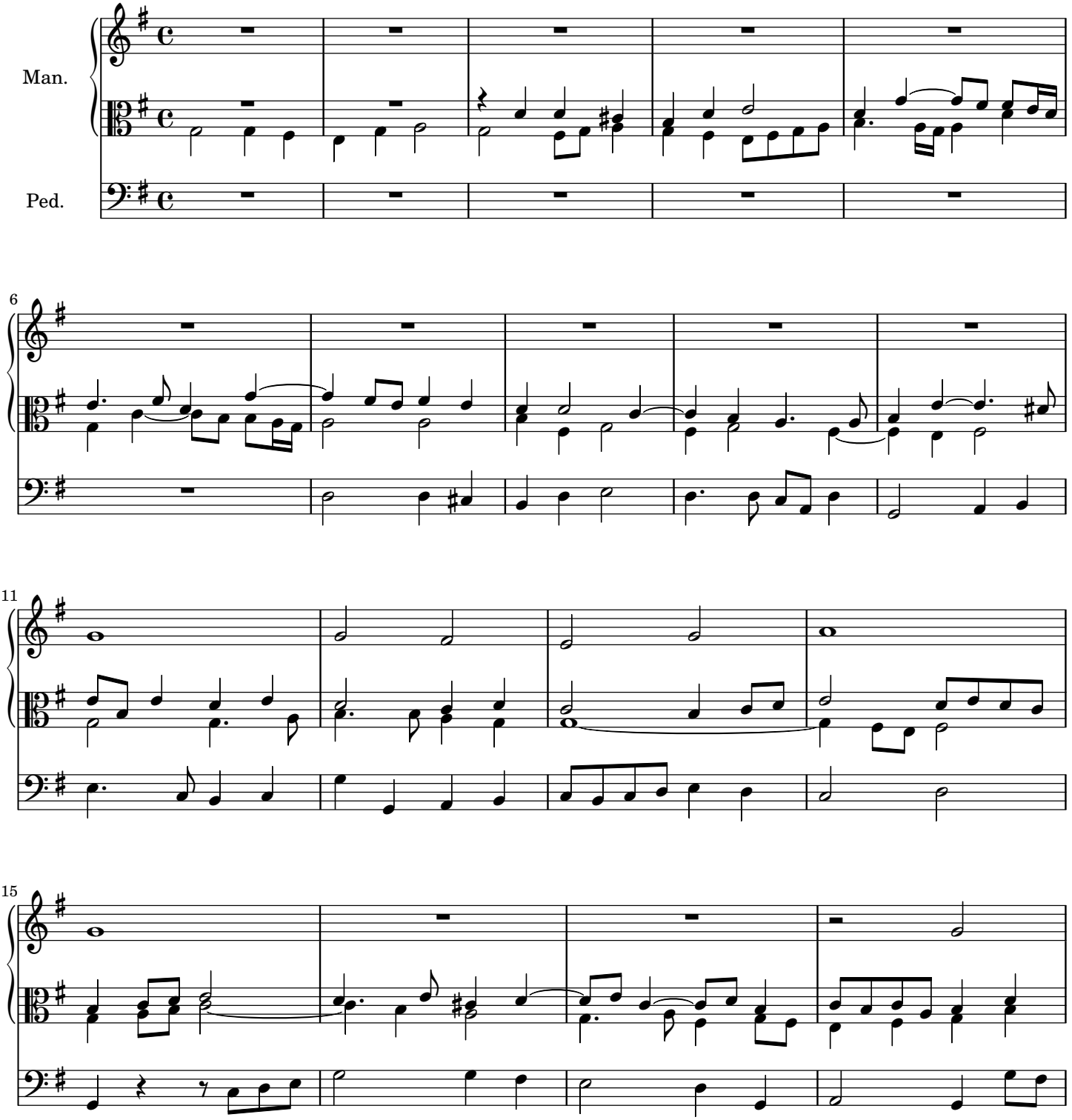
Nun lasst uns Gott den Herren

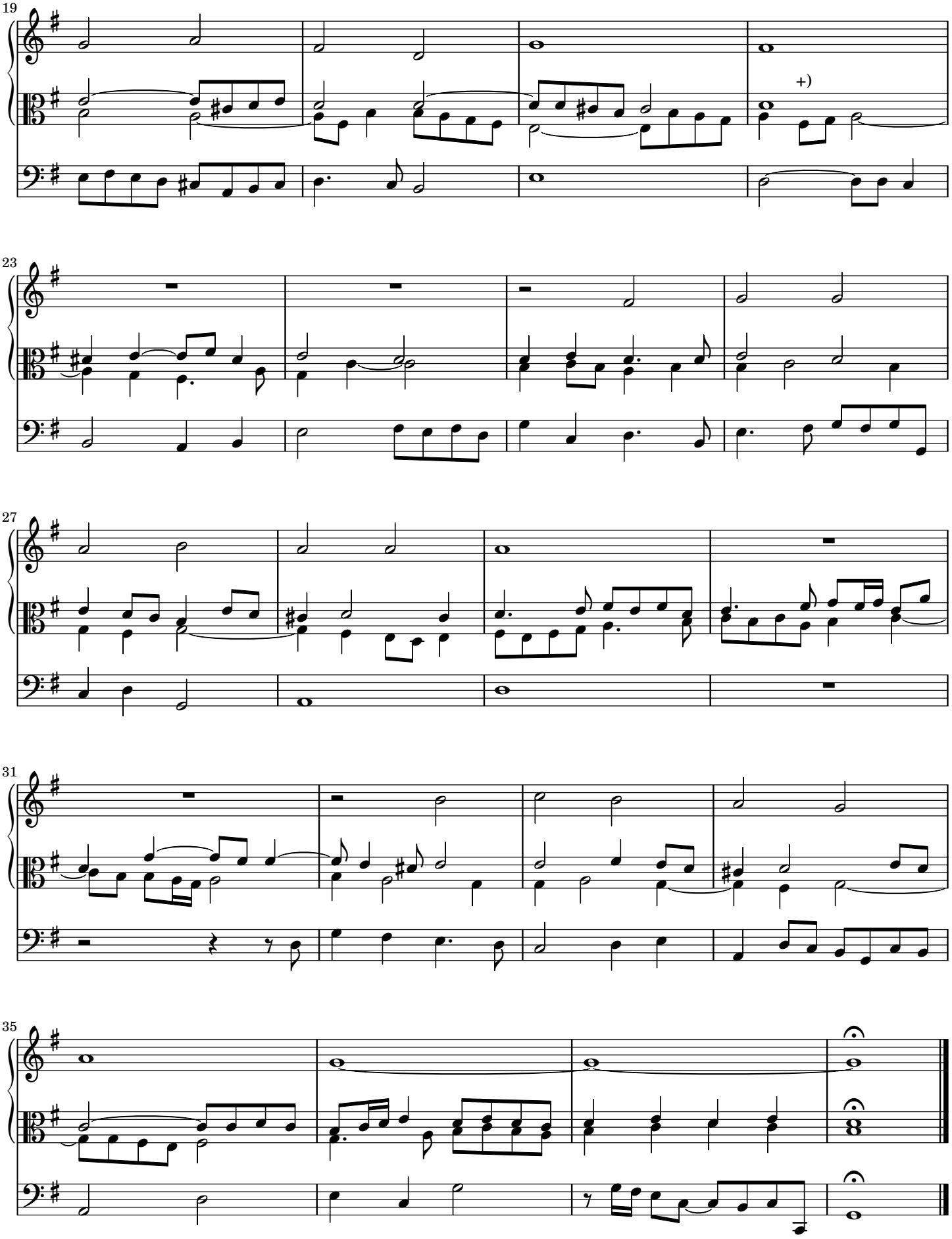
oder

Wach auf mein Herz und singe

Johann Michael Bach

(1648 – 1694)





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Nun lasst uns Gott den Herren

oder

Wach auf mein Herz und singe

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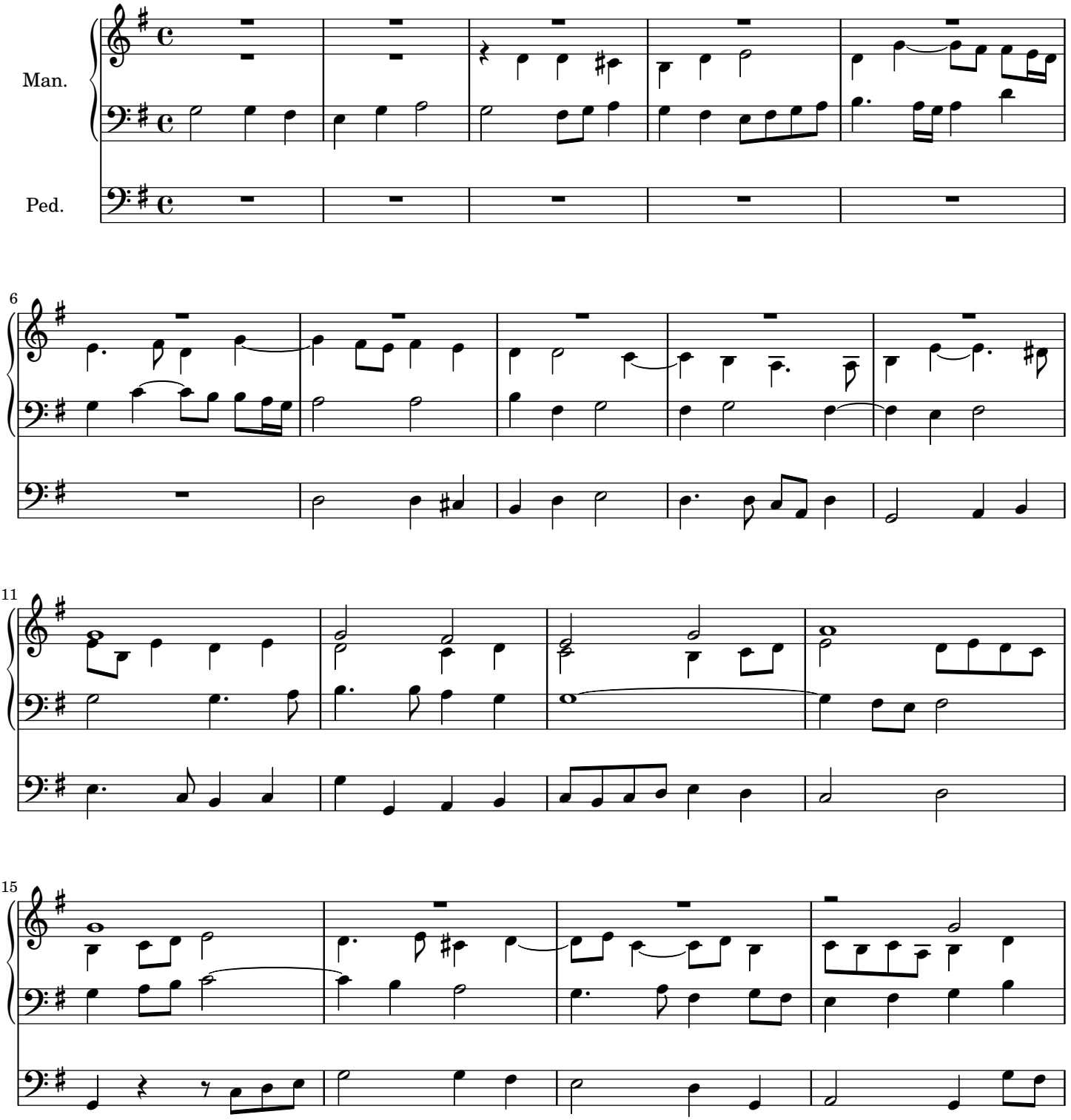

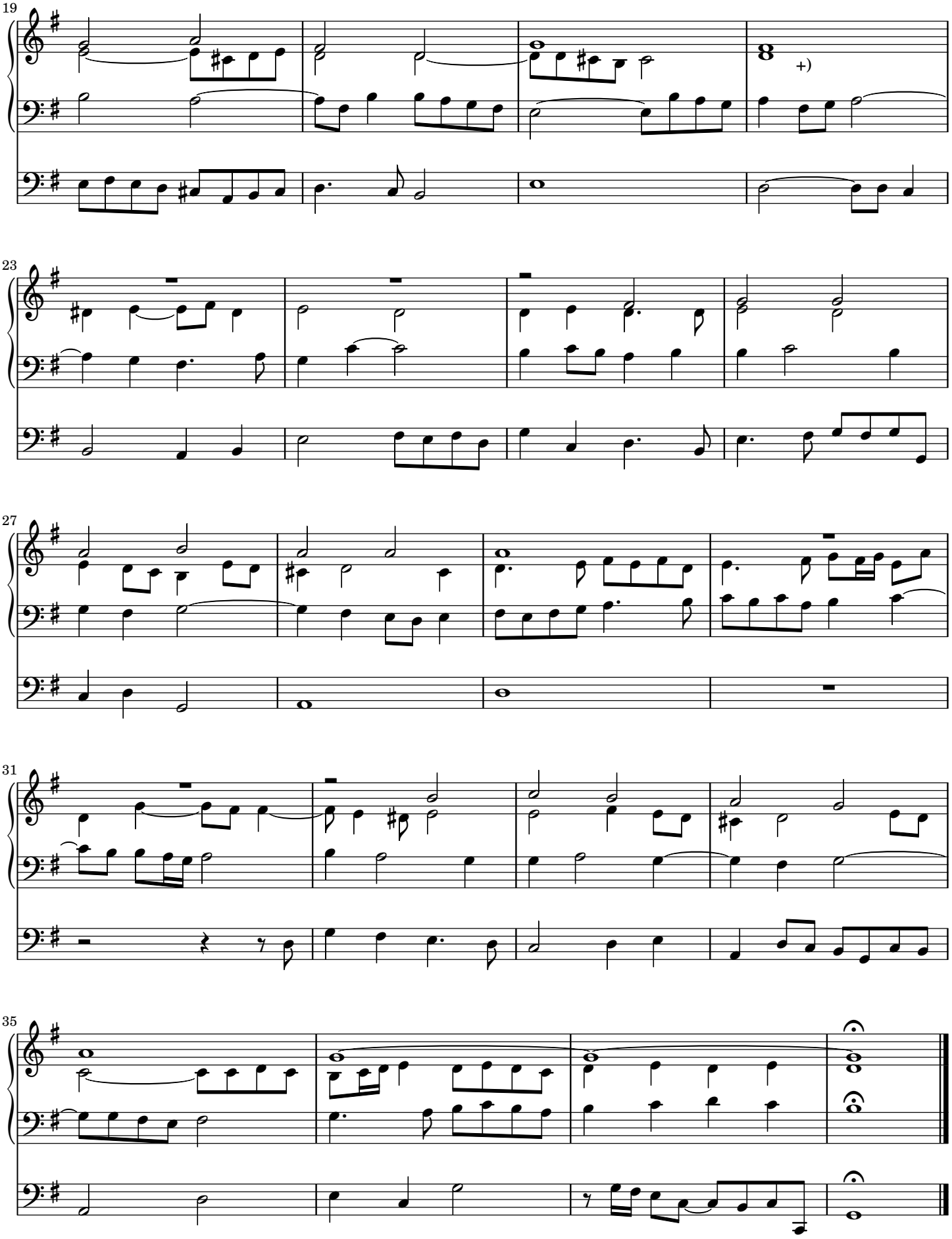

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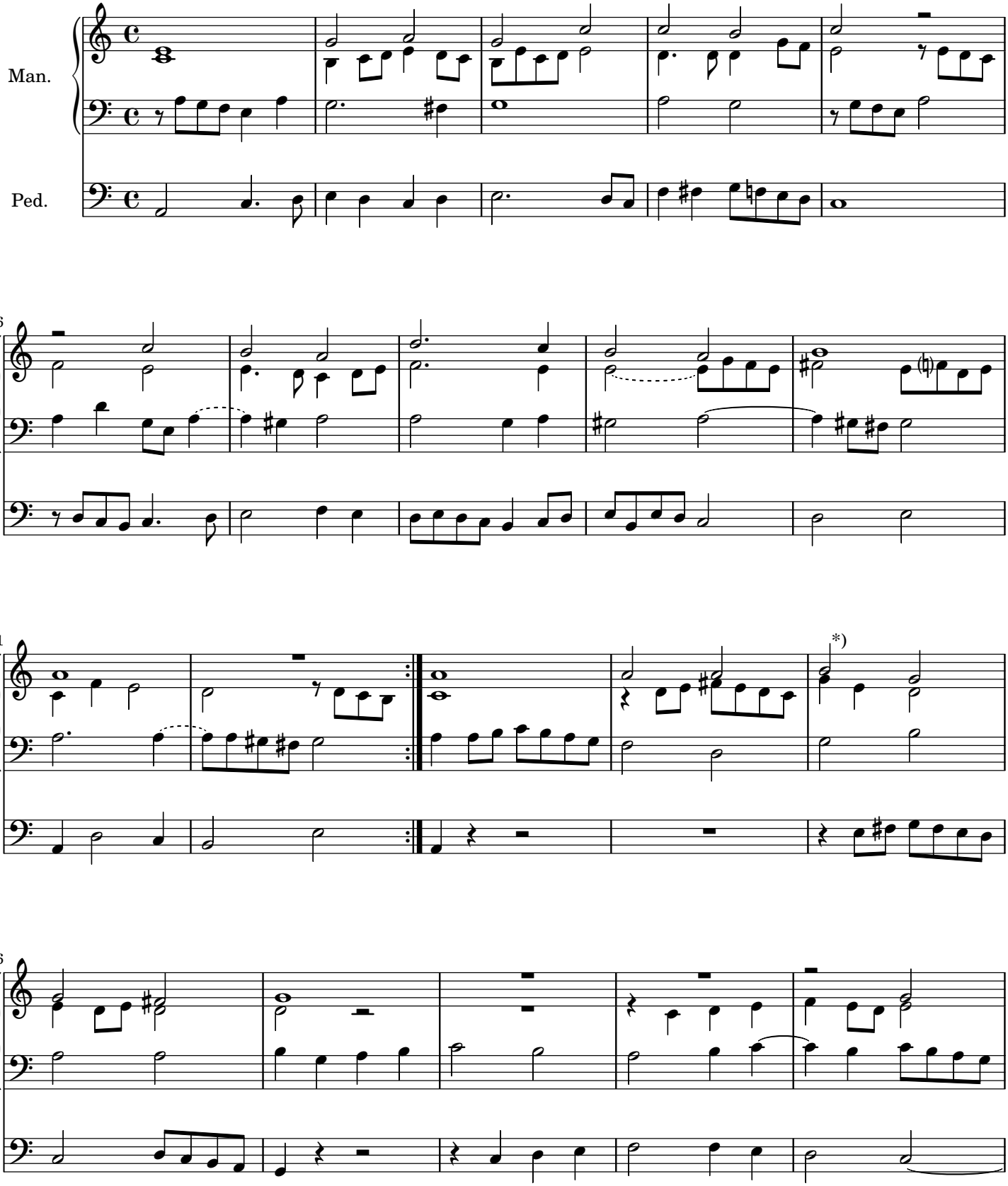
Was mein Gott will, das gescheh allzeit

Anonymus

(Johann Pachelbel?)



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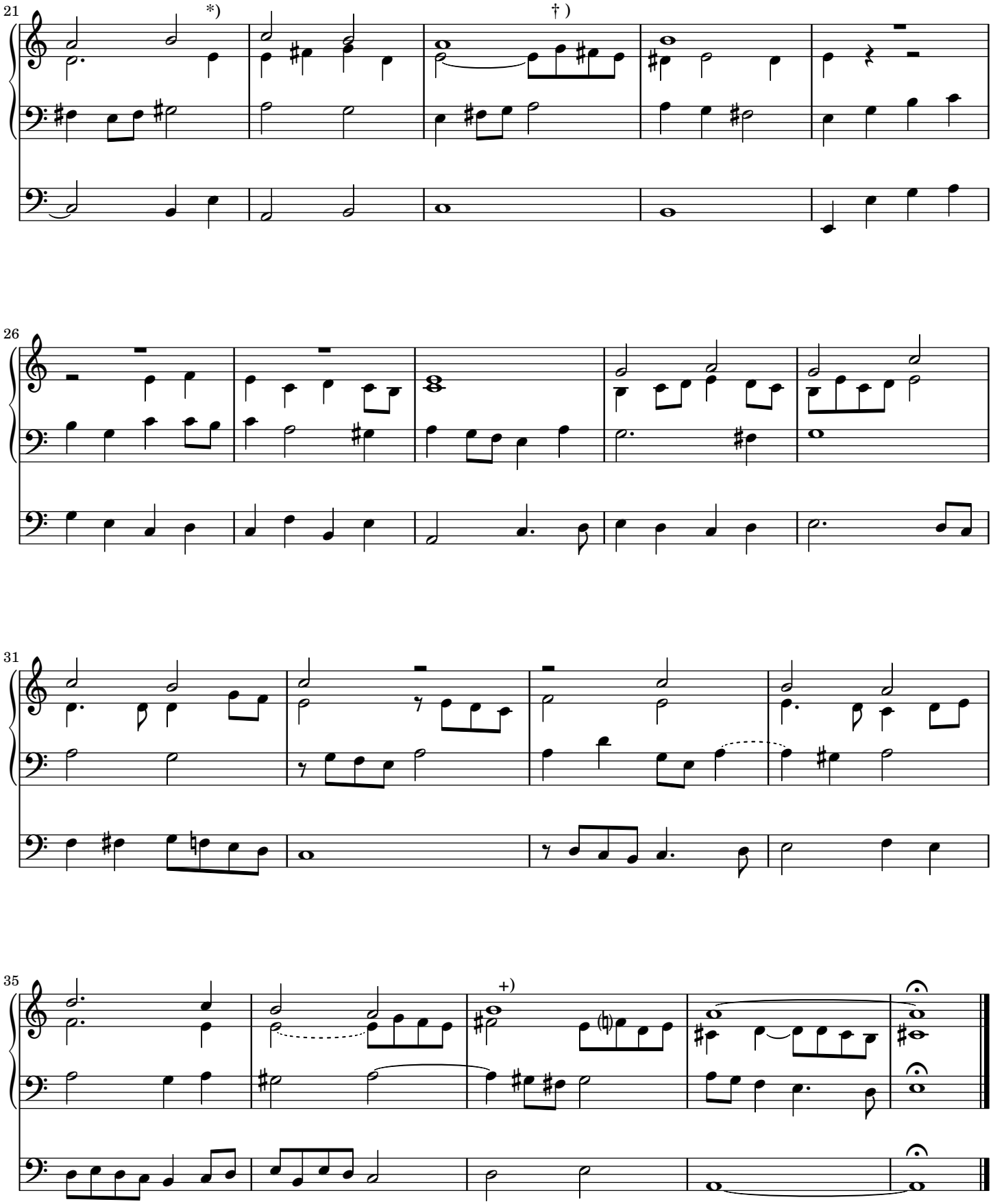

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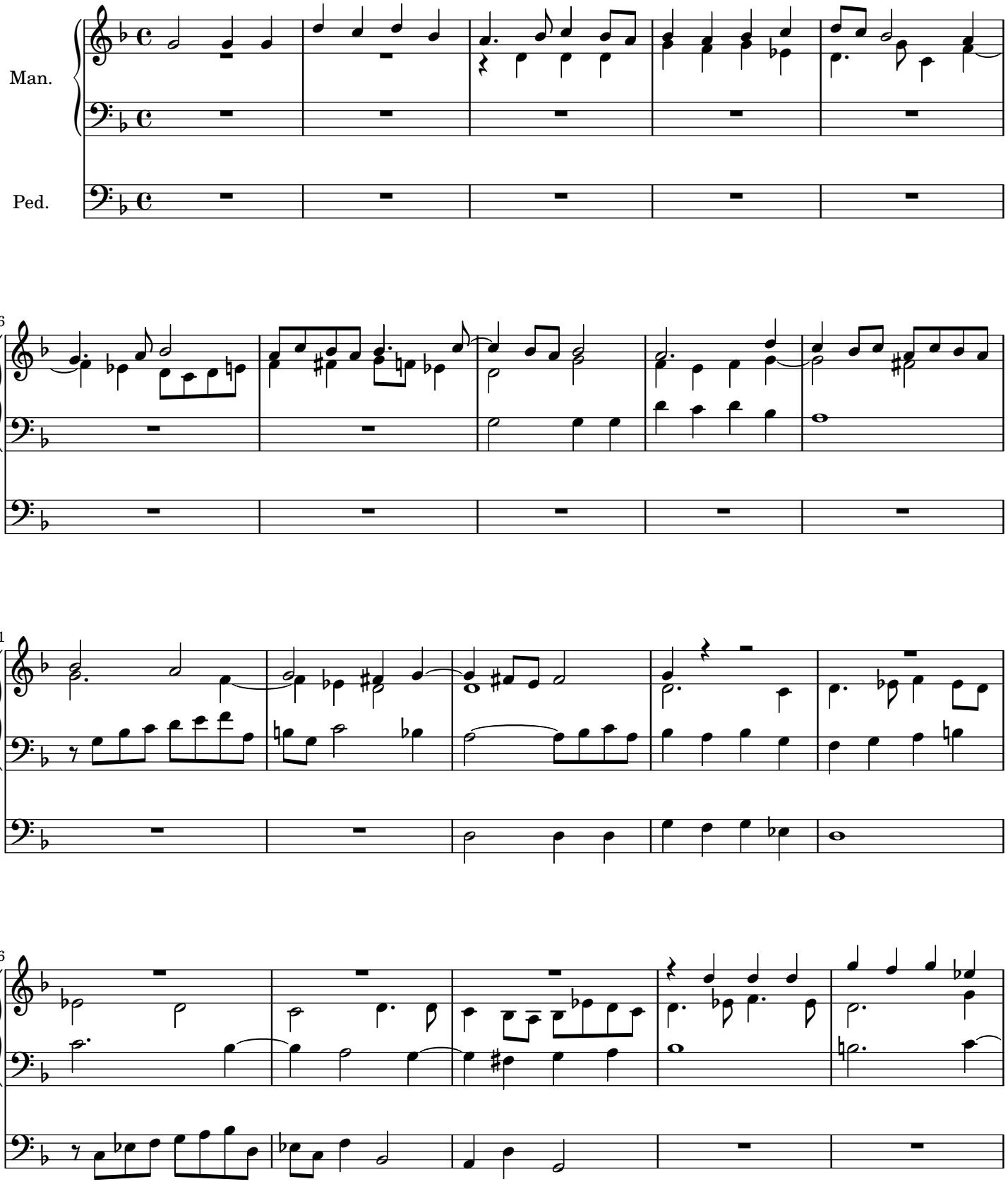
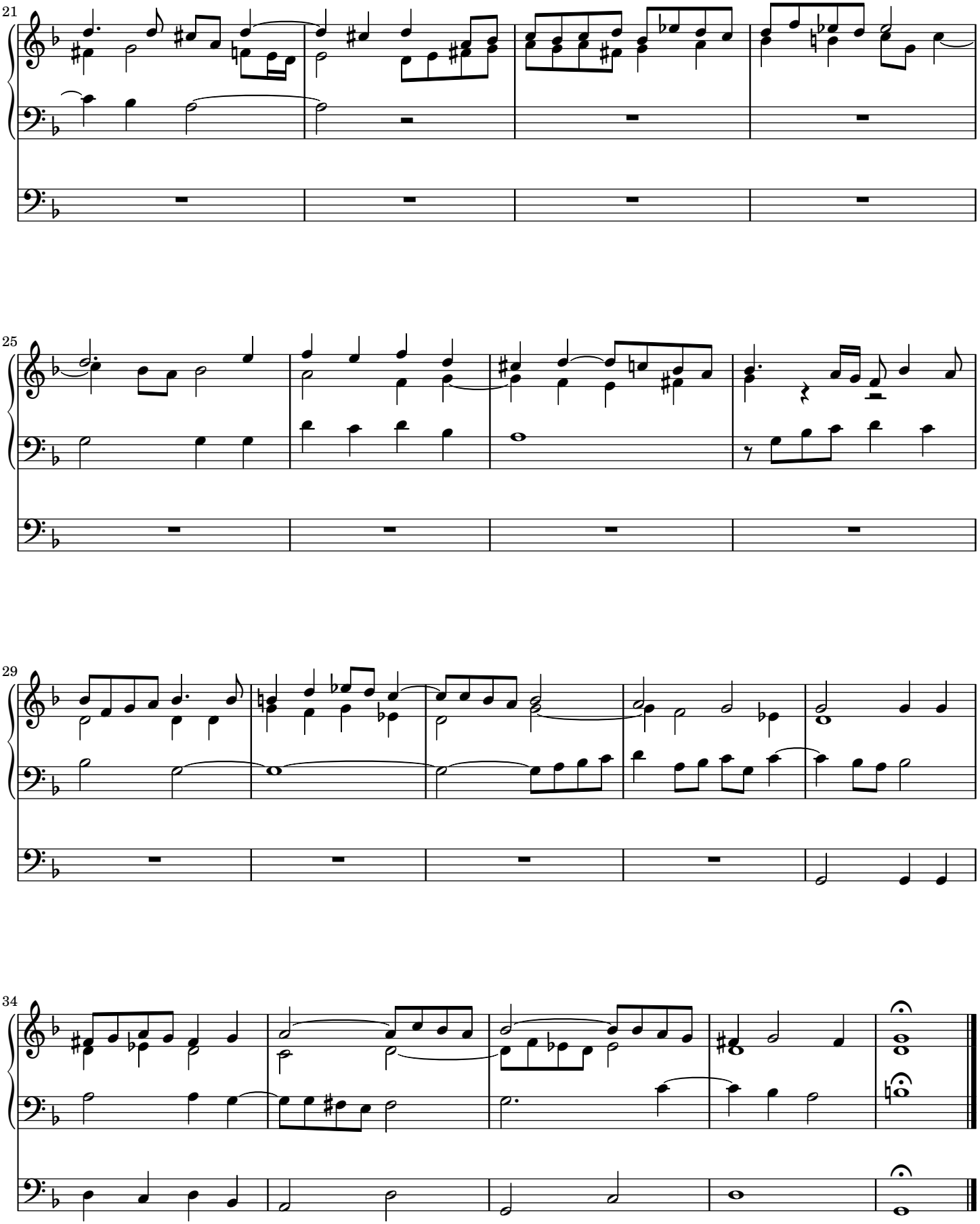
Kommt her zu mir, spricht Gottes Sohn

Johann Michael Bach
(1648 – 1694)





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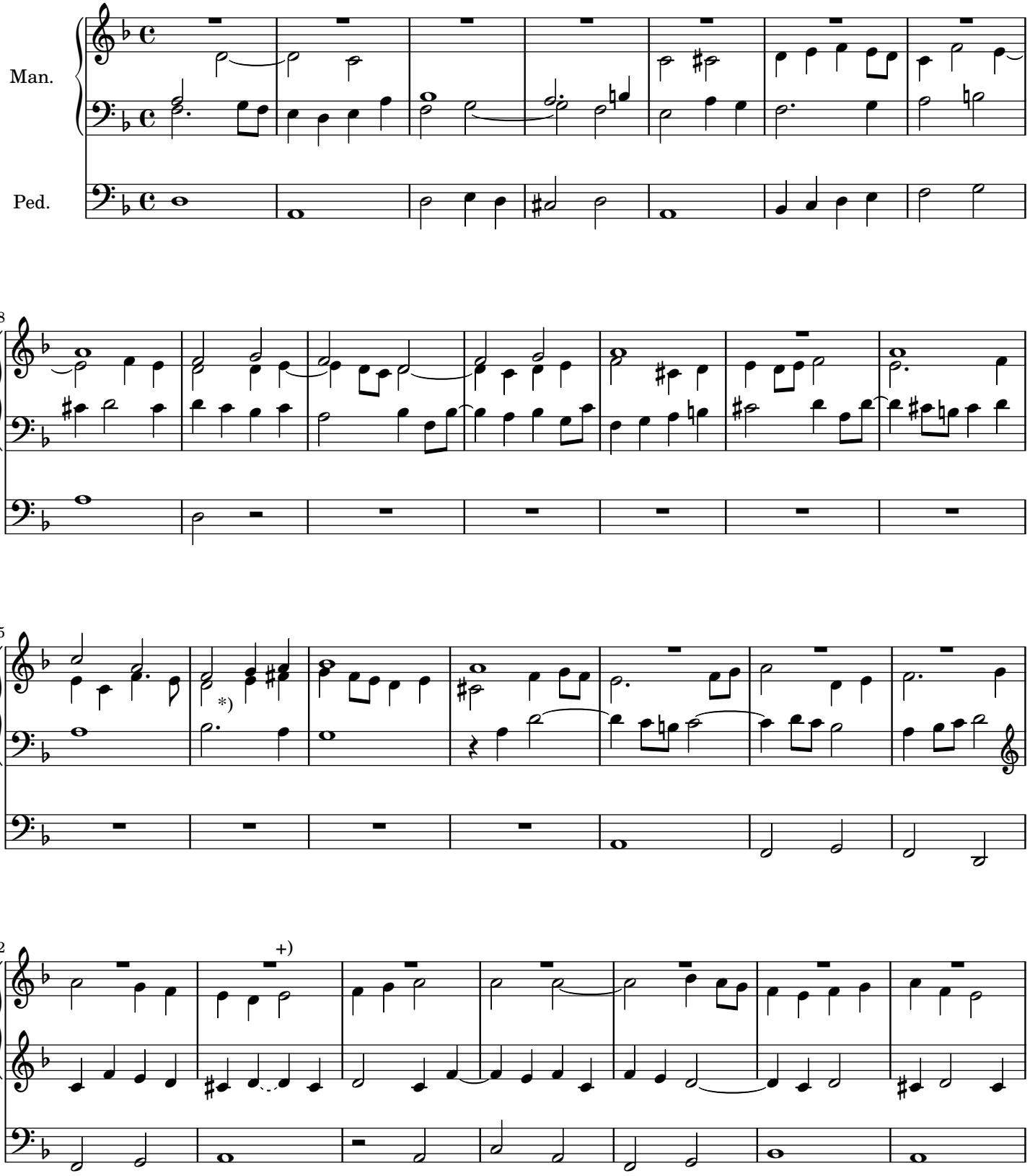
Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ

Anonymus
(Johann Michael Bach?)



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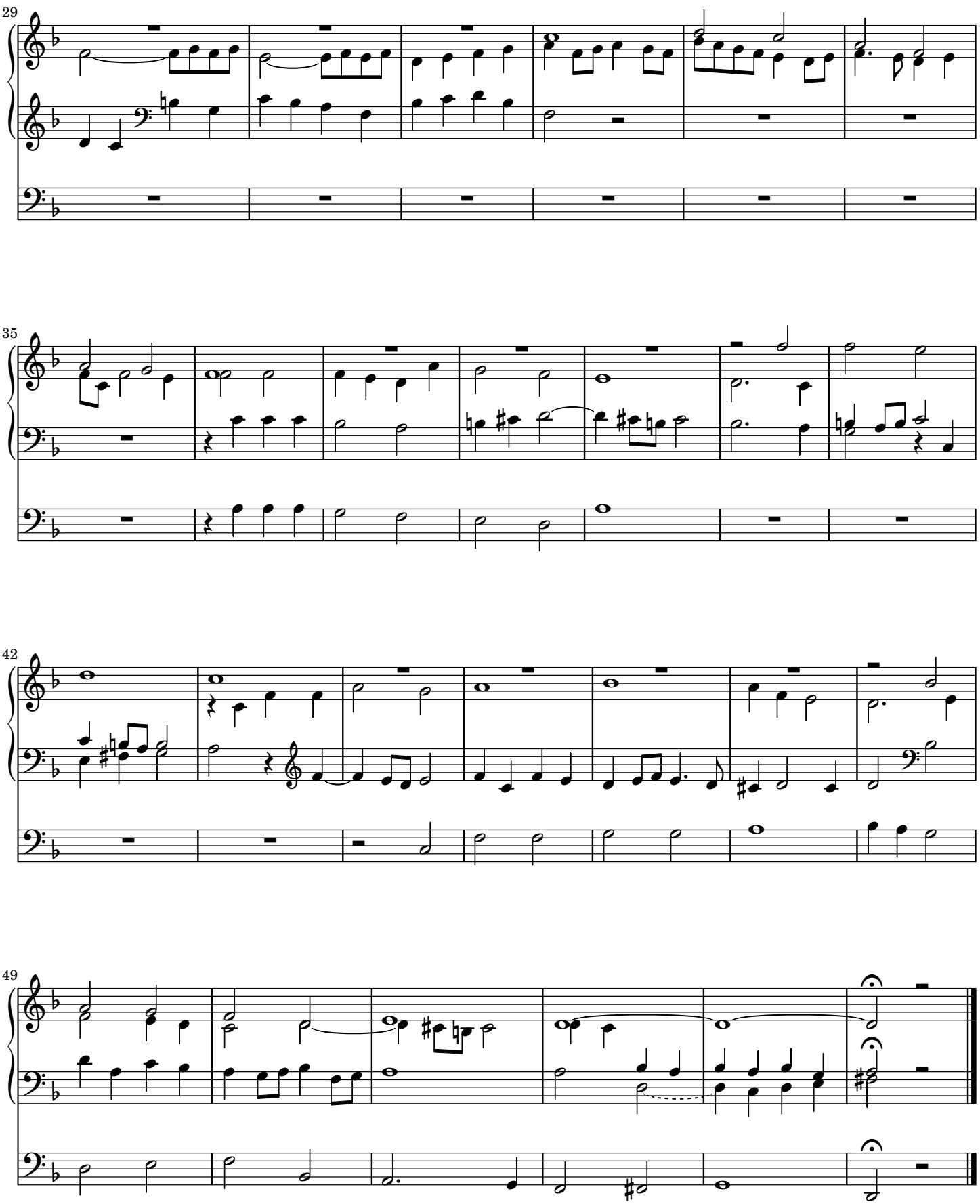

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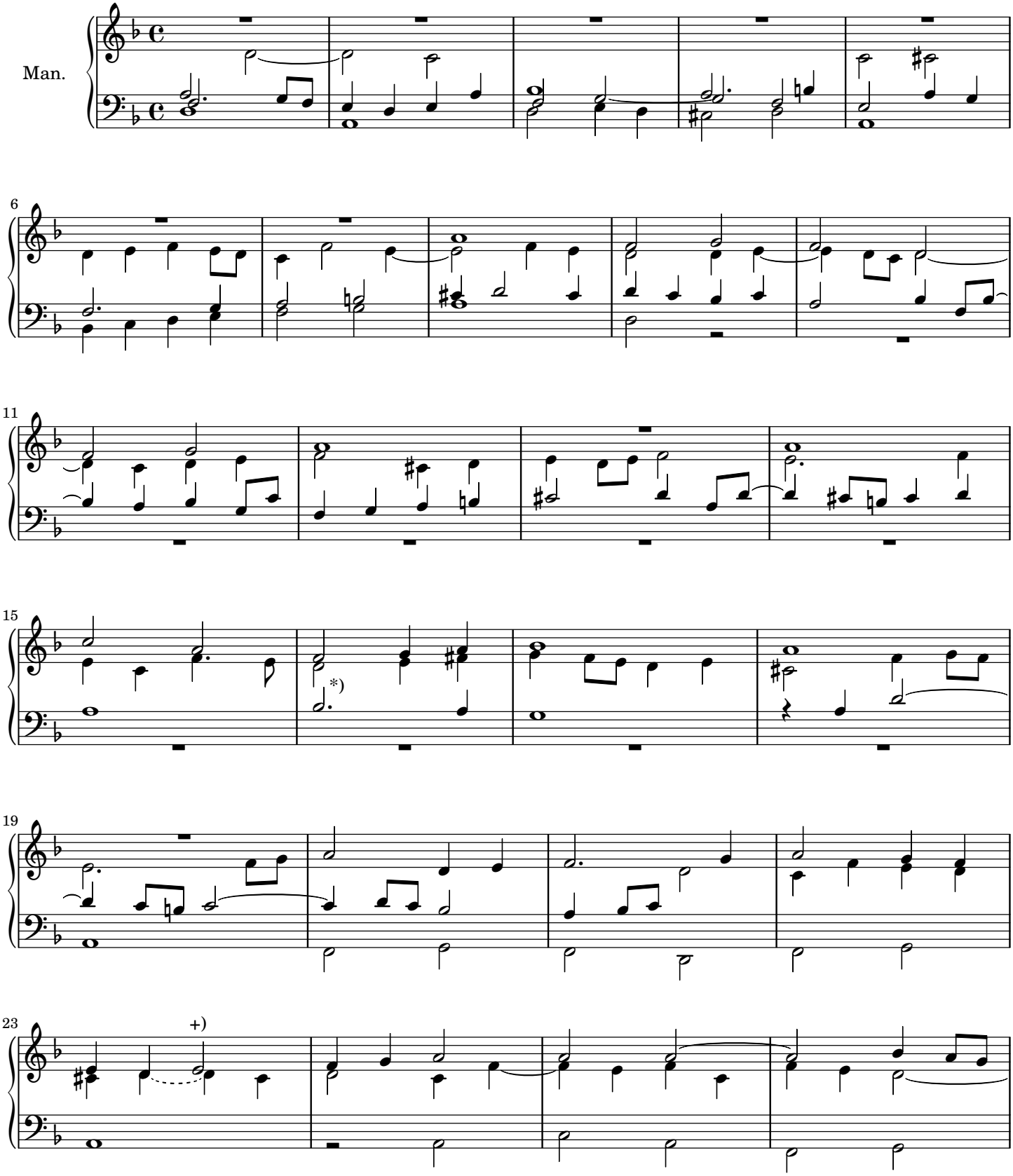

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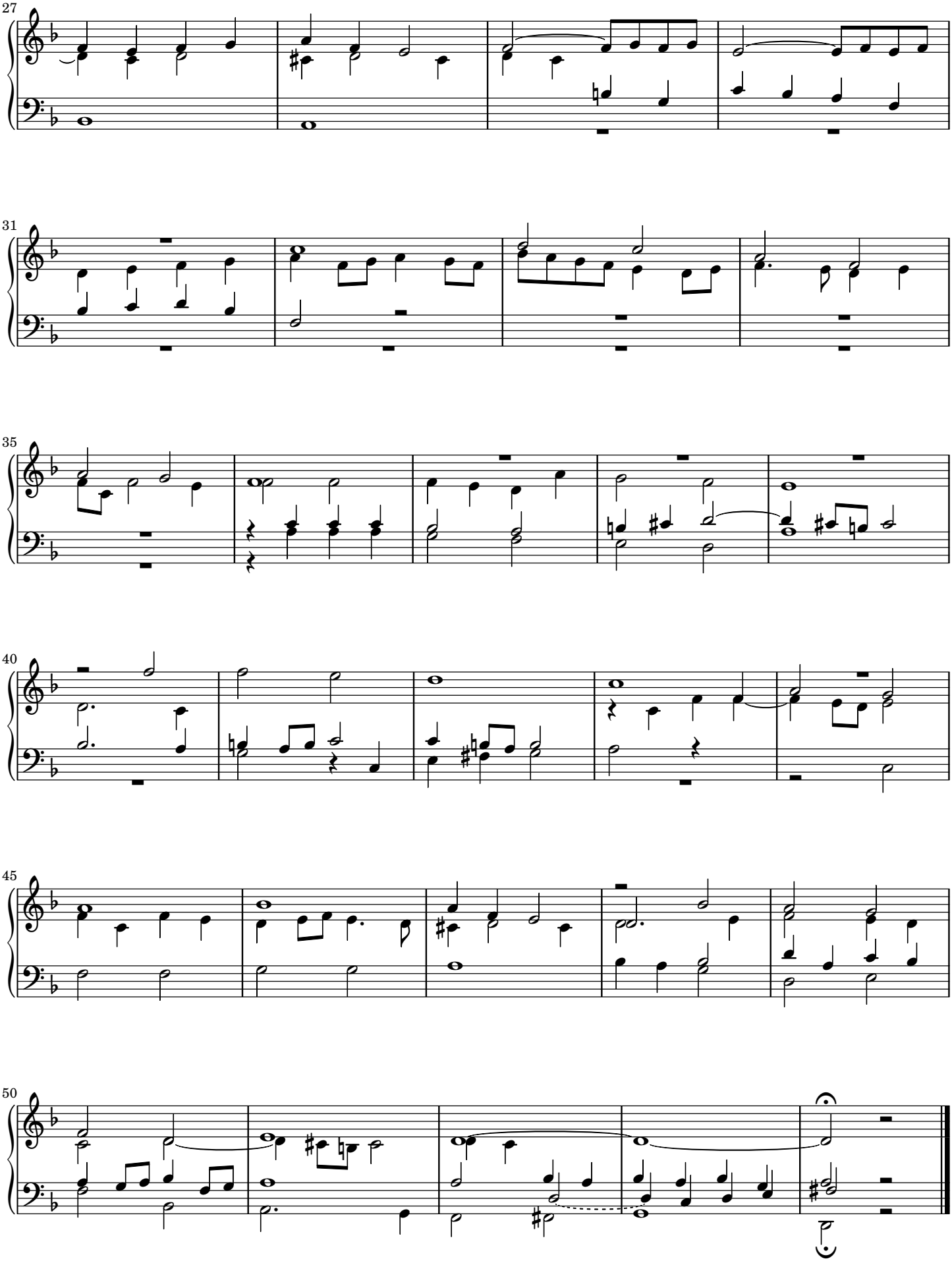

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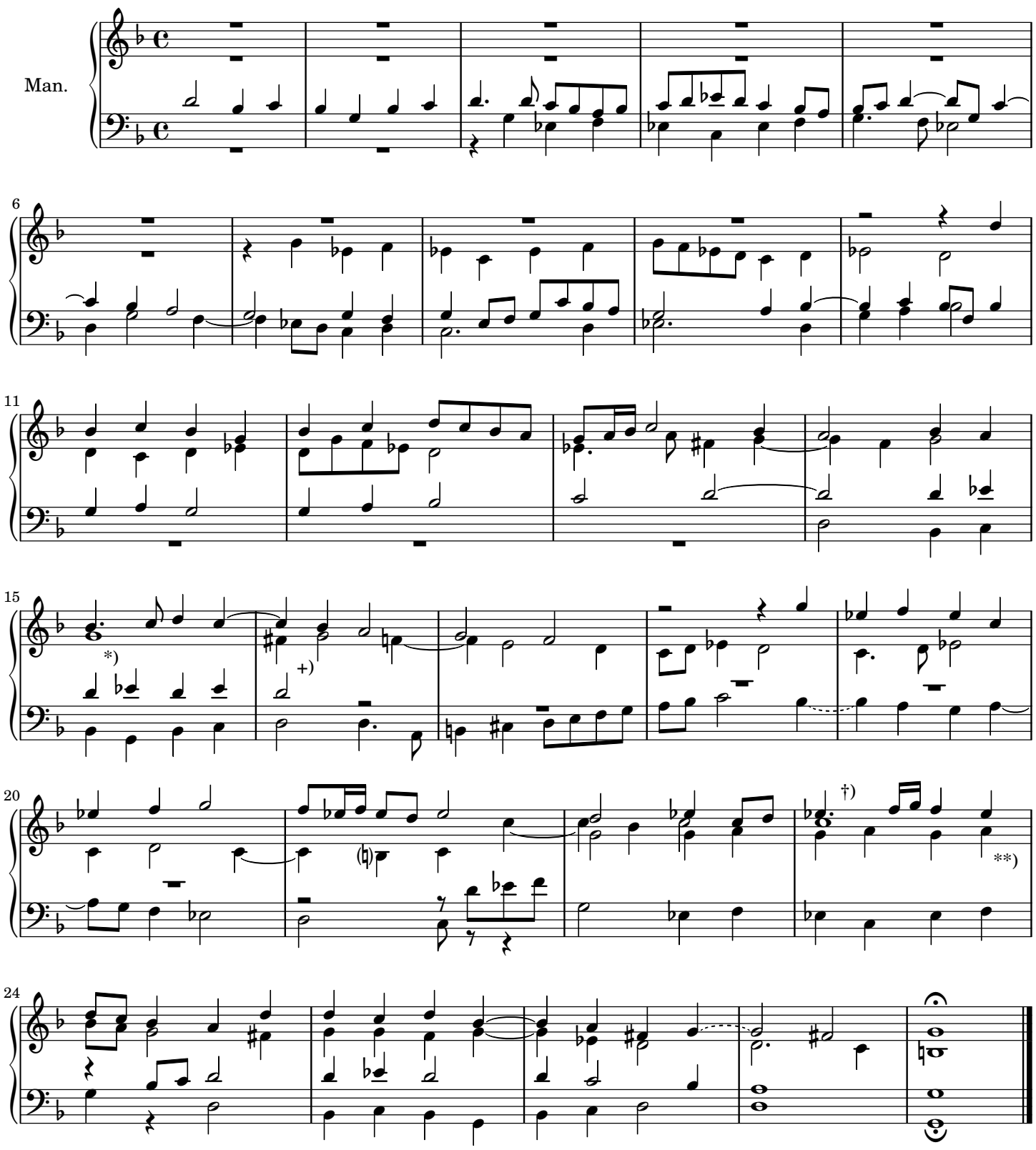

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+) d: manuscript leaves tenor-voice empty at this spot
†) c: manuscript leaves alto-voice empty at this spot
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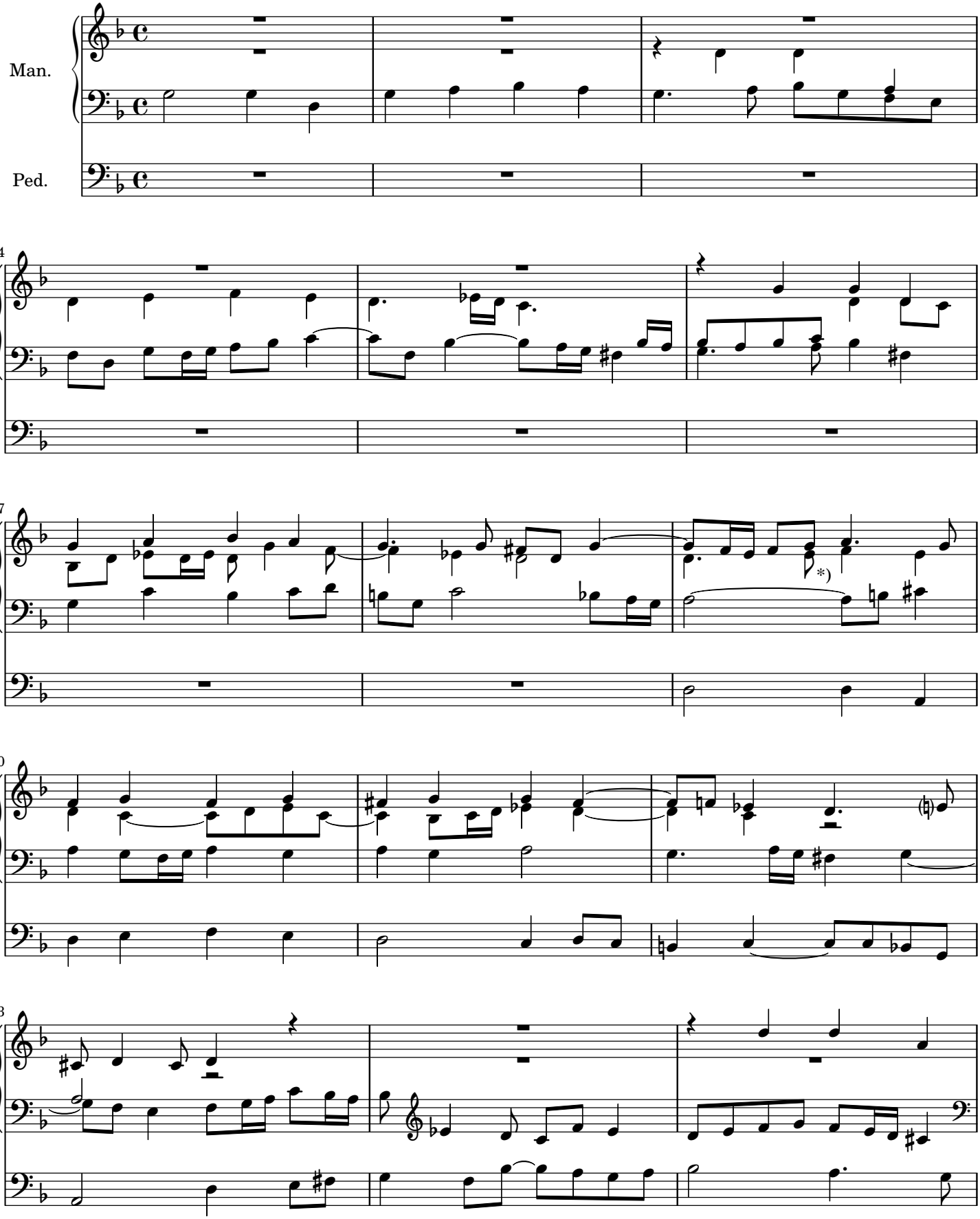
Edition Partitura Organum - 2019 (www.partitura.org)

Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt

Johann Michael Bach
(1648 – 1694)



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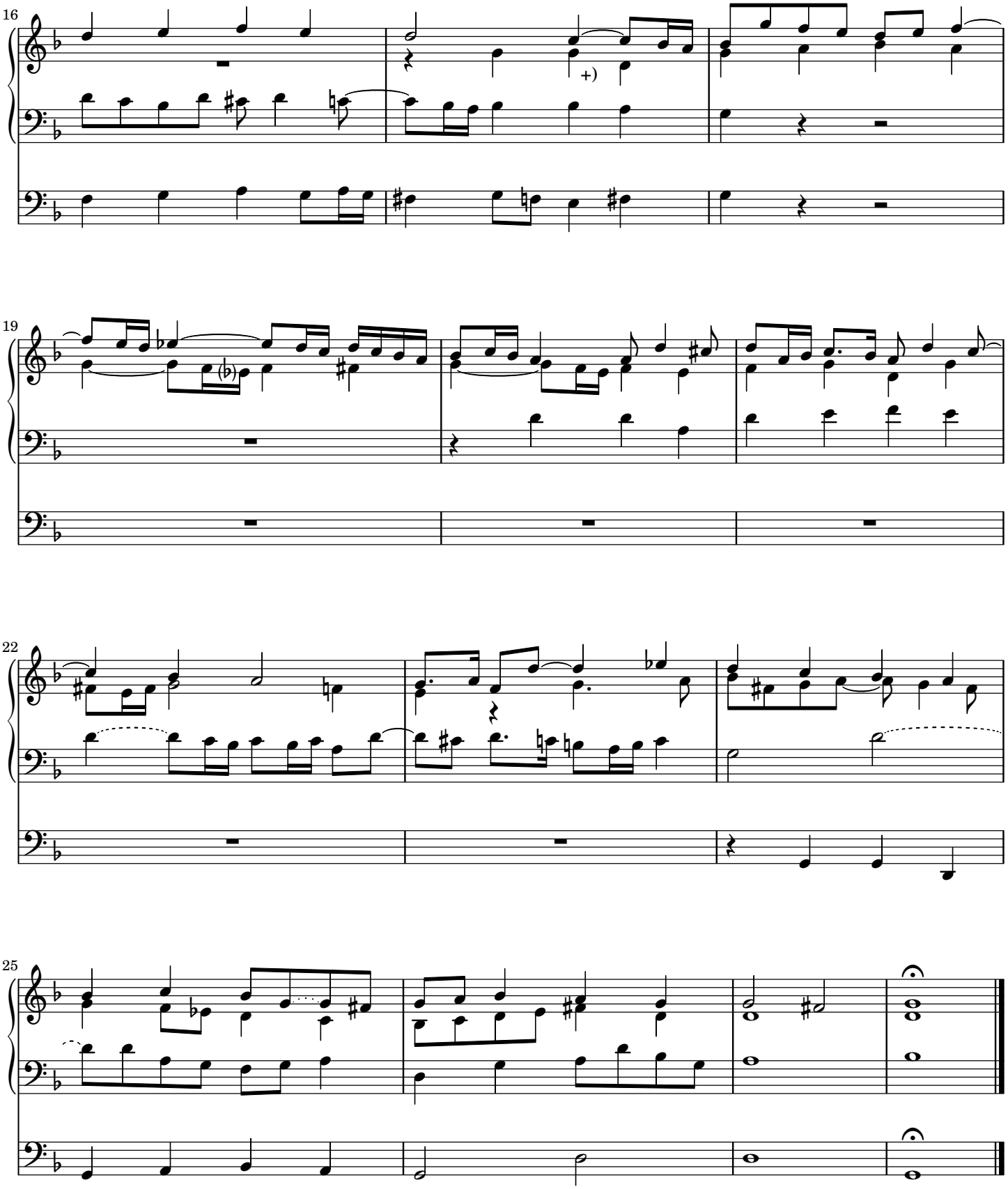

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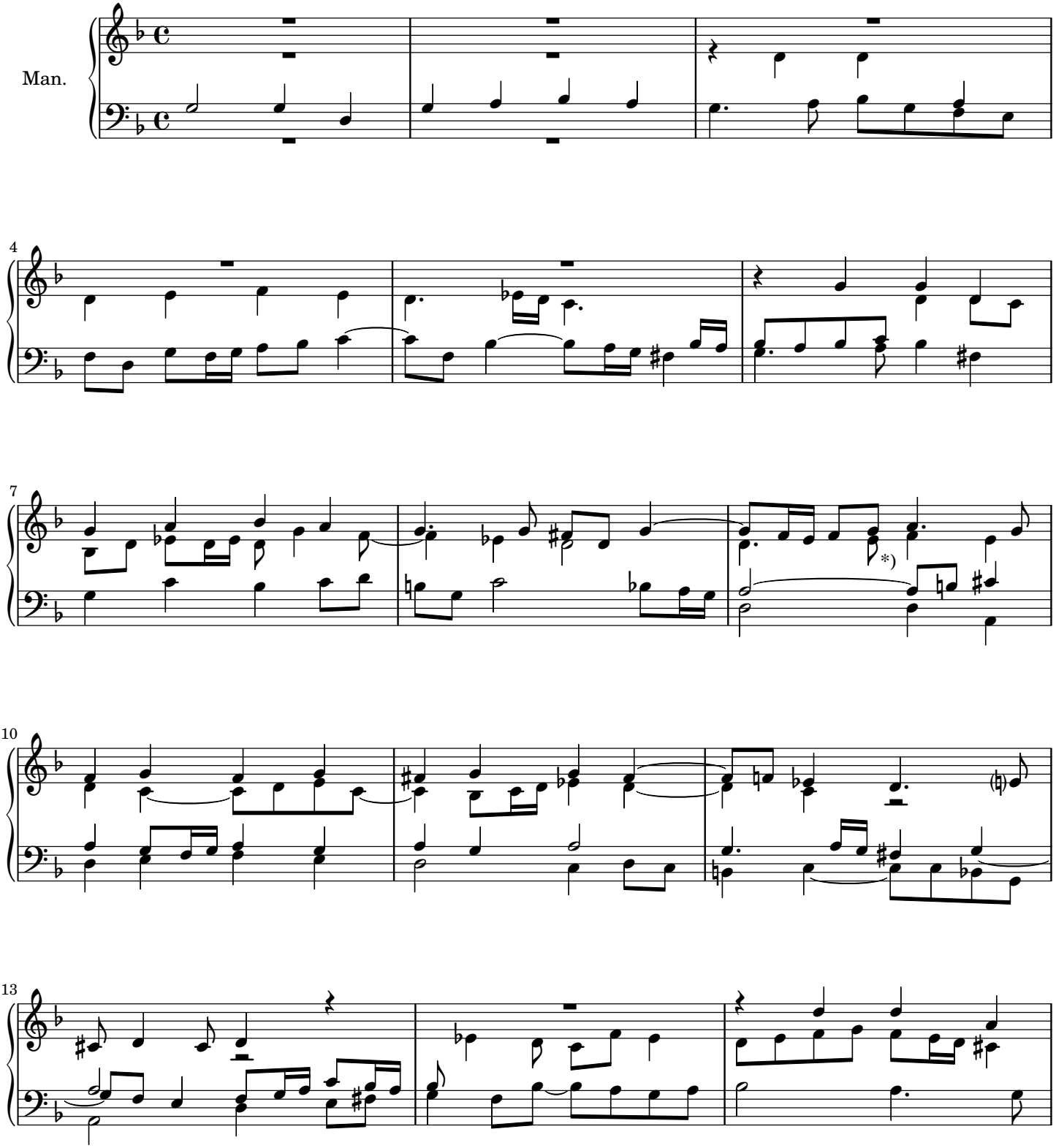

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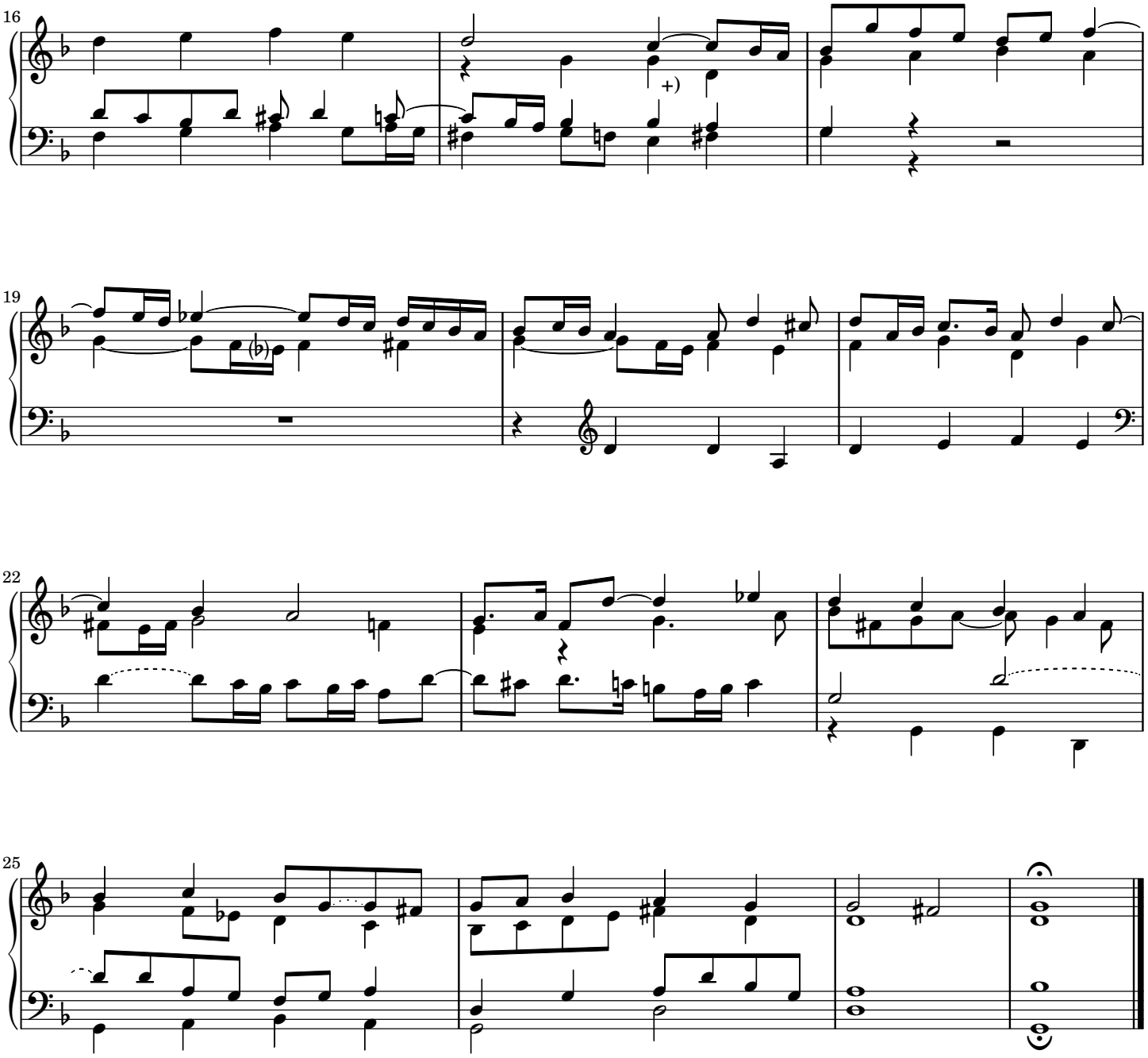

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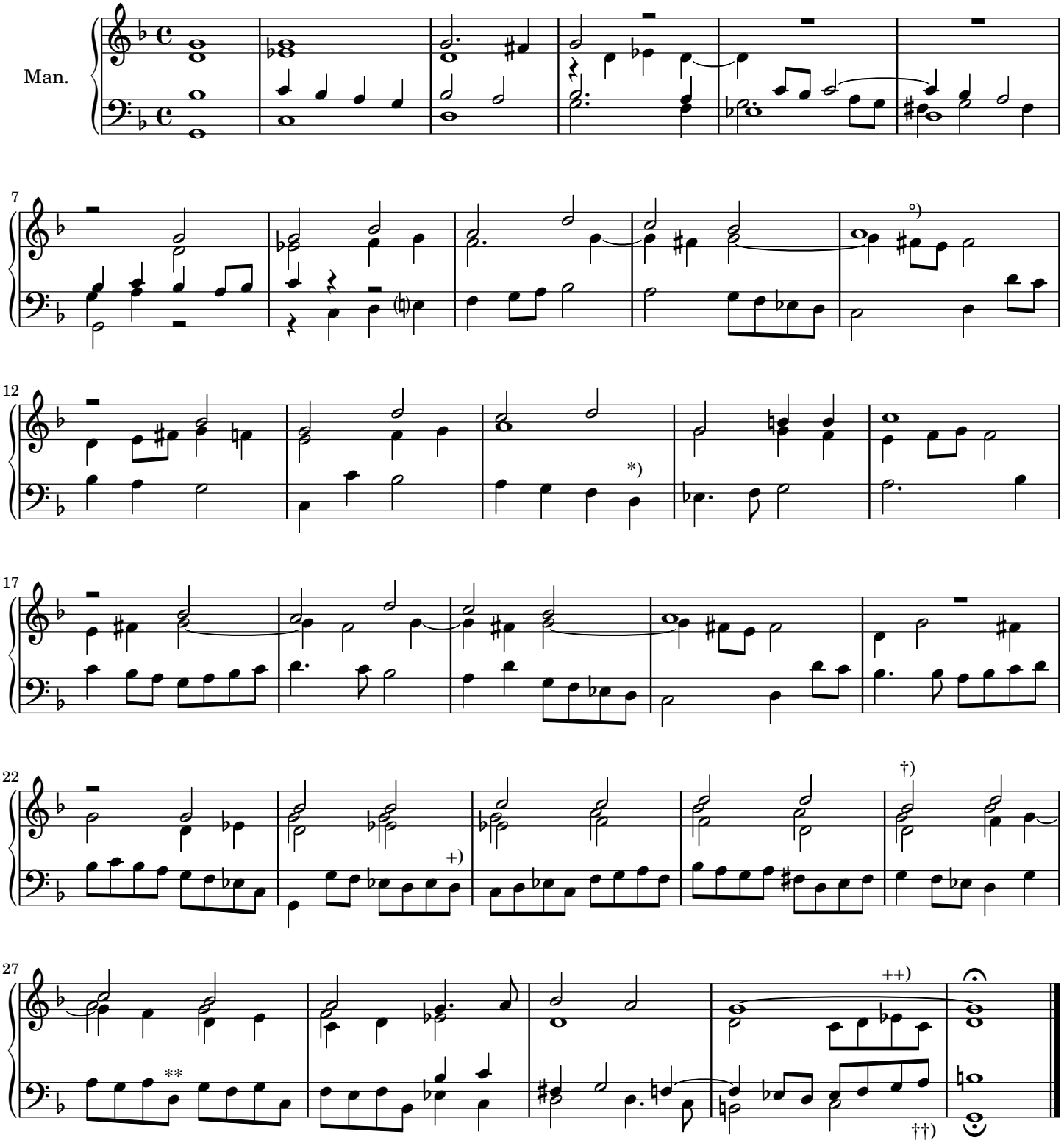
Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz

Johann Michael Bach
(1648 – 1694)



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†) b flat: c in manuscript
***) d: a in manuscript*
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††) a: e flat in manuscript

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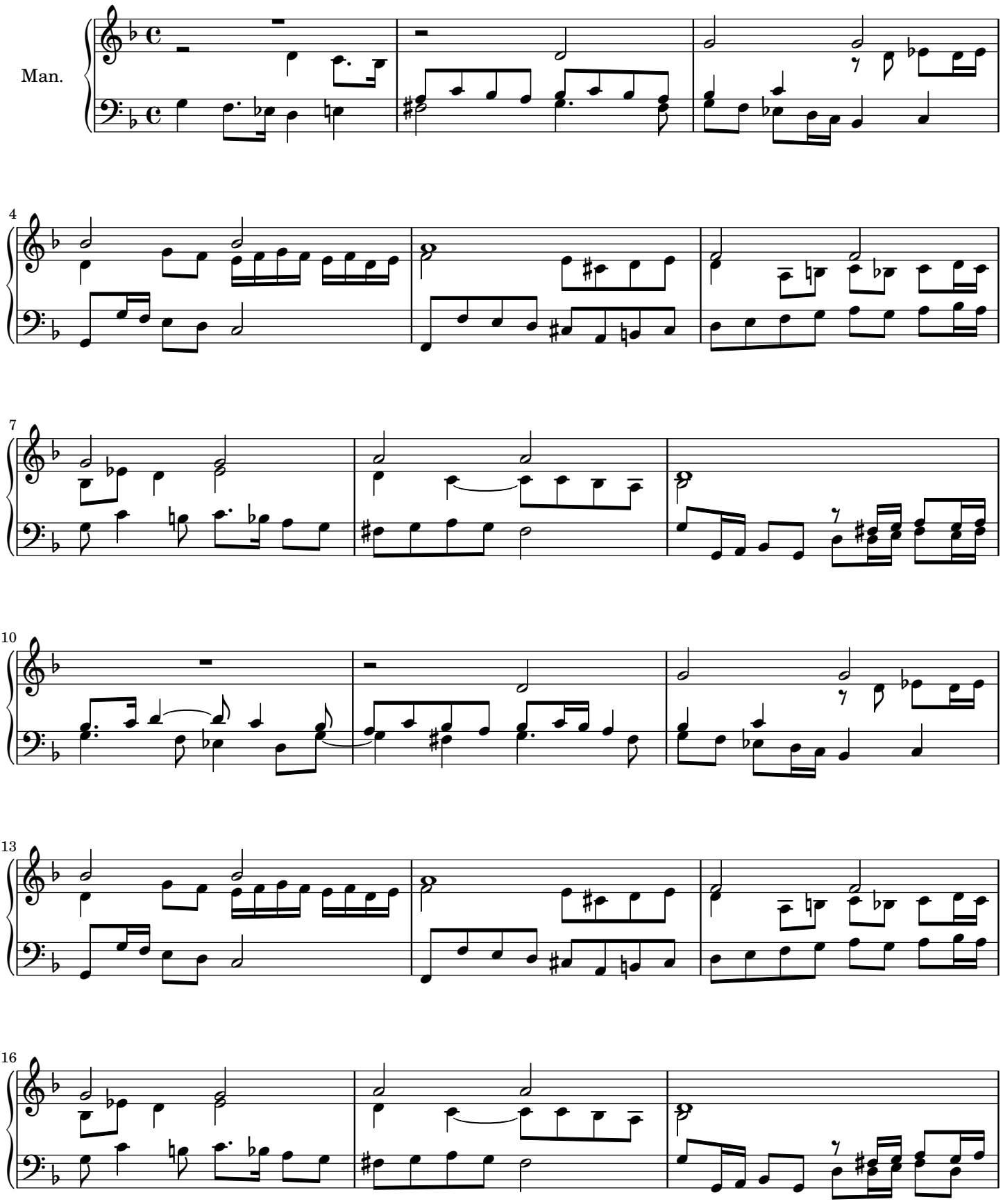
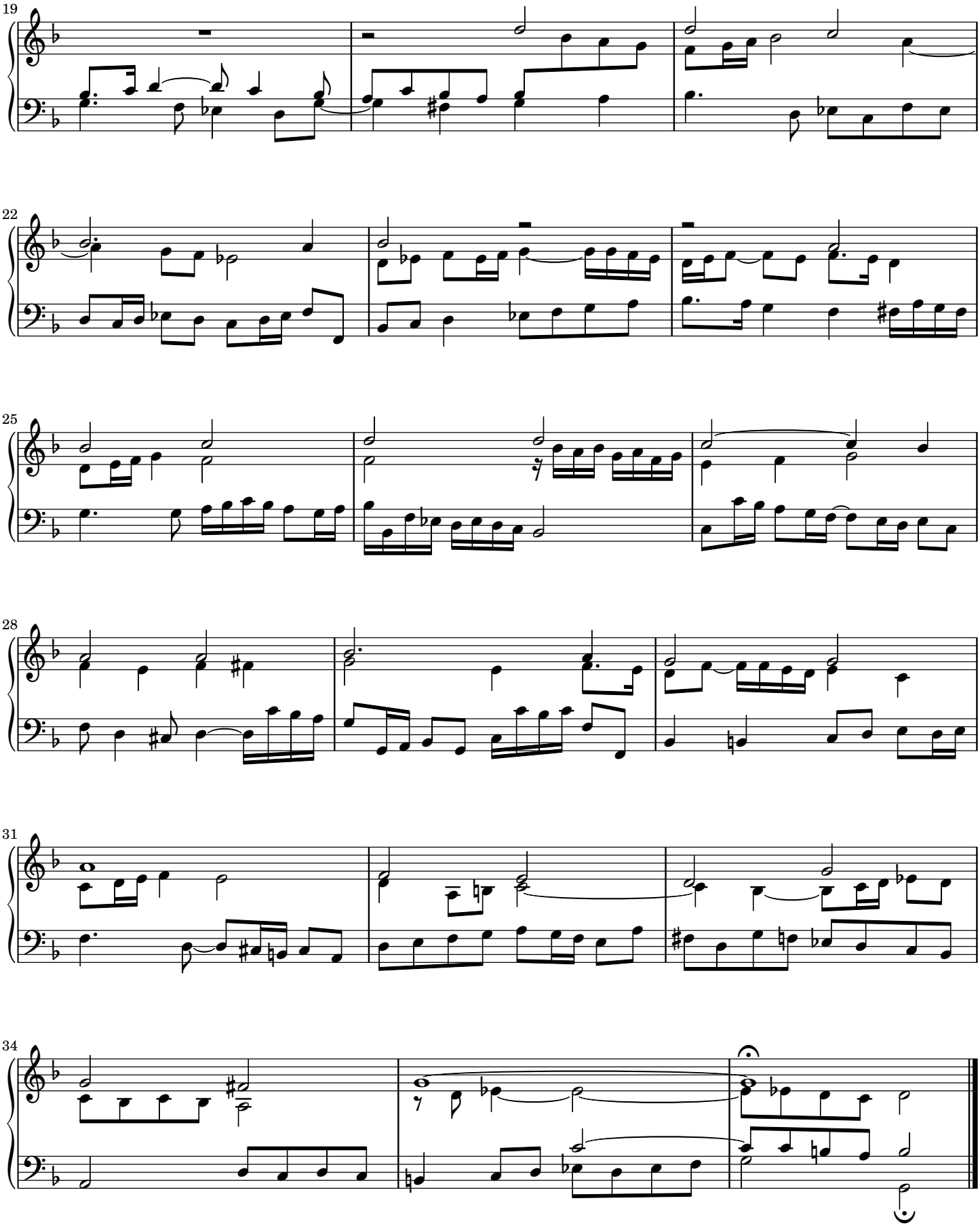
Von Gott wil ich nicht lassen

Johann Michael Bach
(1648 - 1694)





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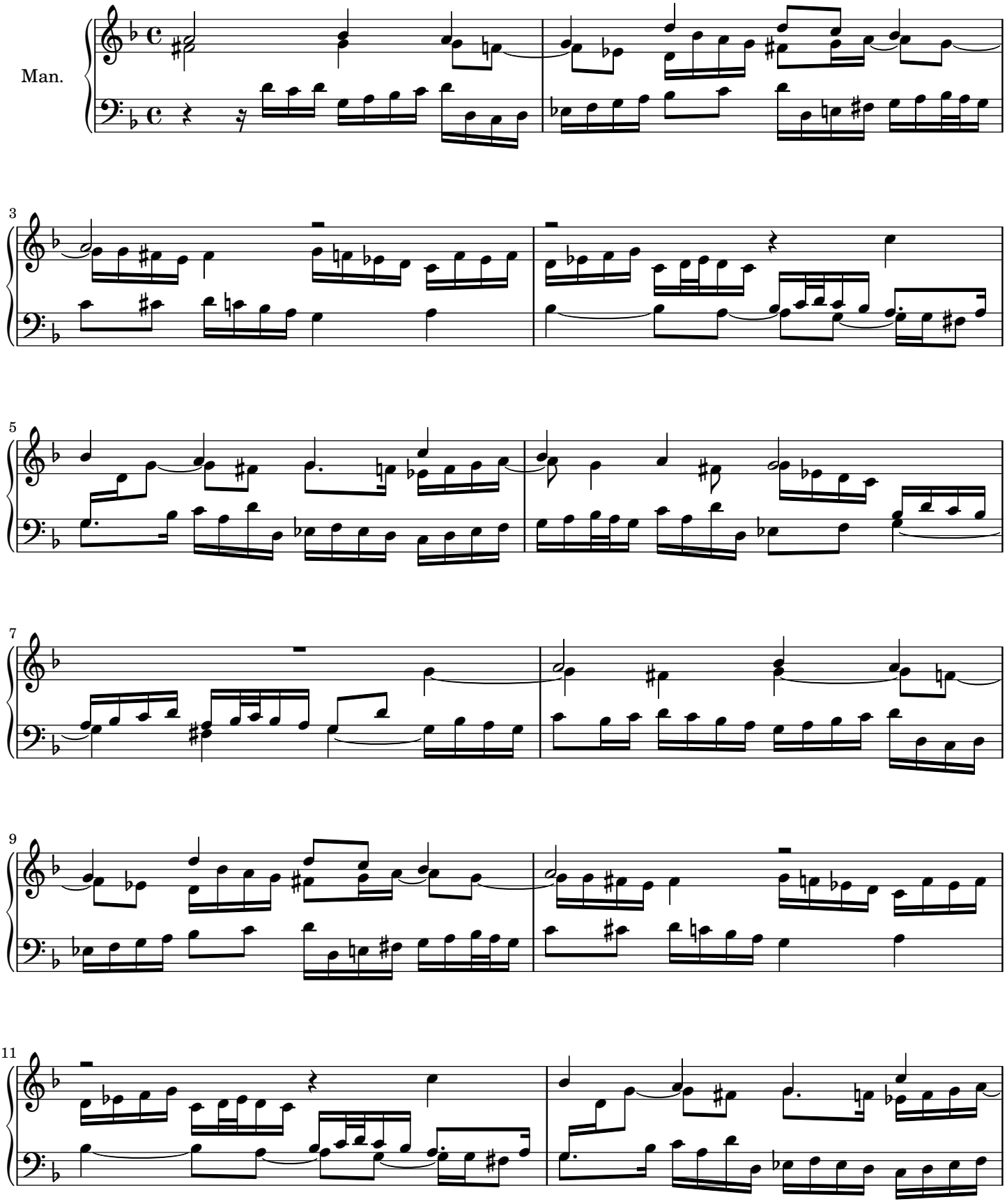
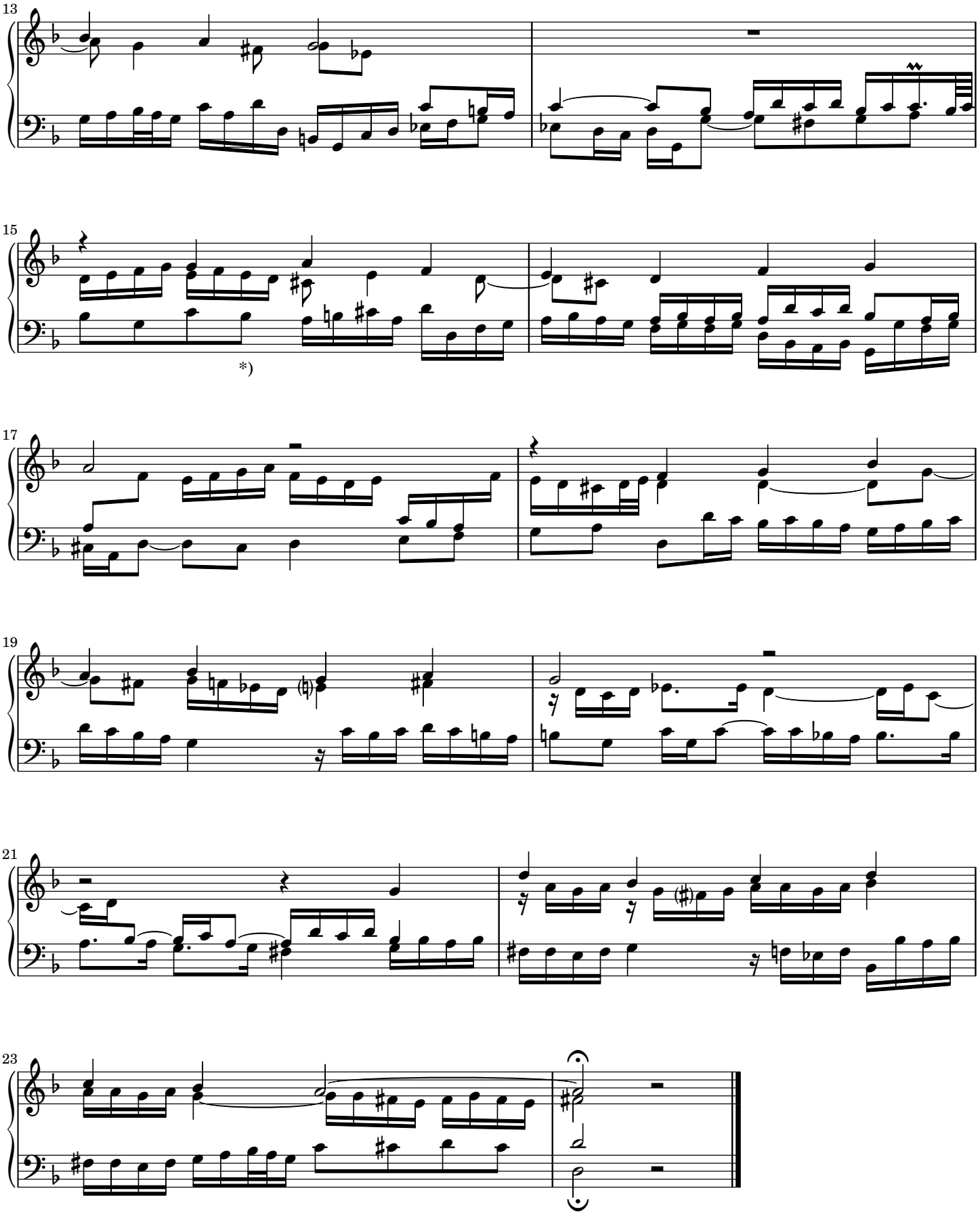
Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein

Johann Heinrich Buttstett
(1666 - 1727)





**) b flat : b in manuscript*

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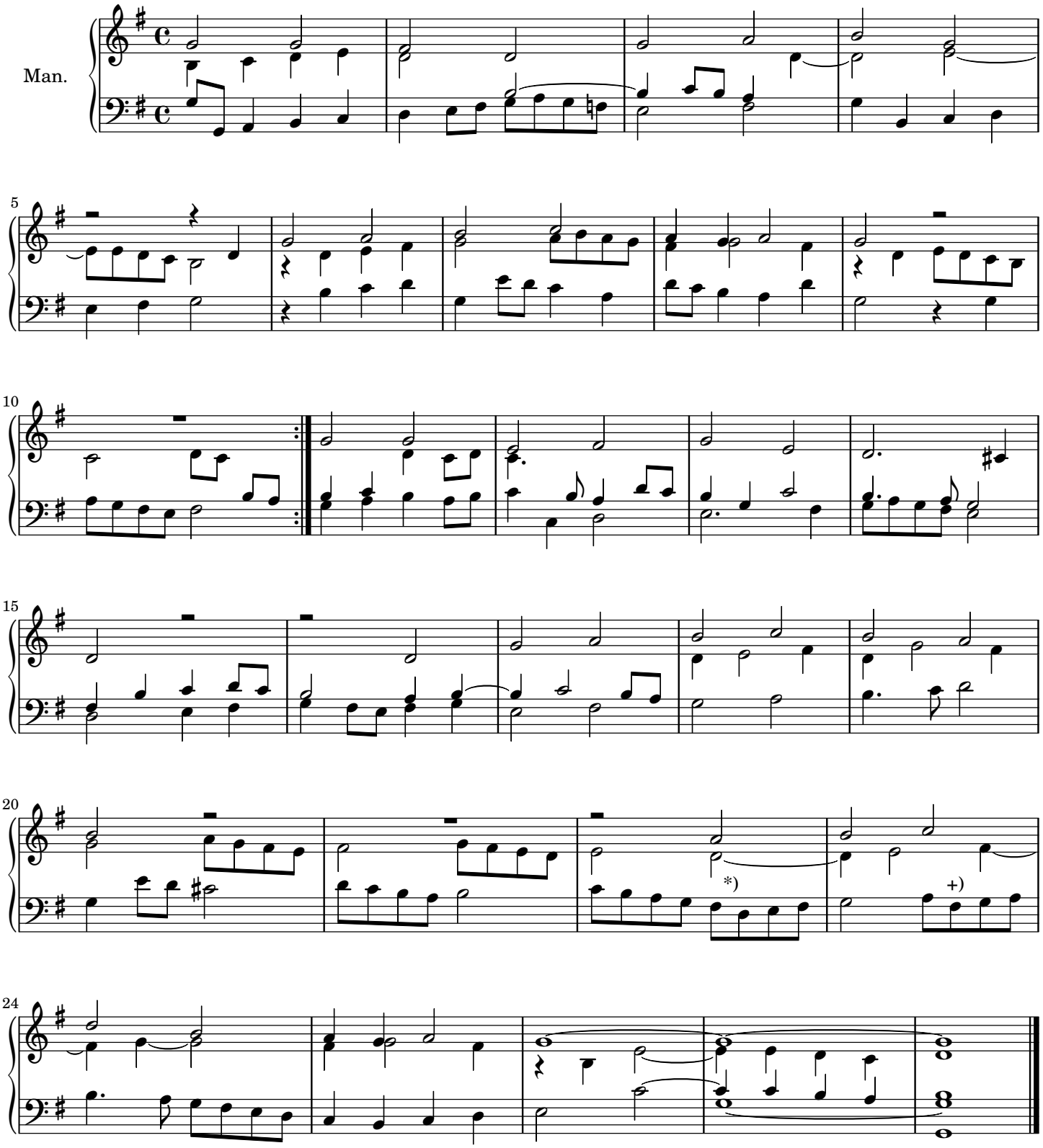
Es spricht der unweise Mund wohl gar

Johann Michael Bach
(1648 – 1694)



*) f sharp: f in manuscript
+) f sharp: f in manuscript

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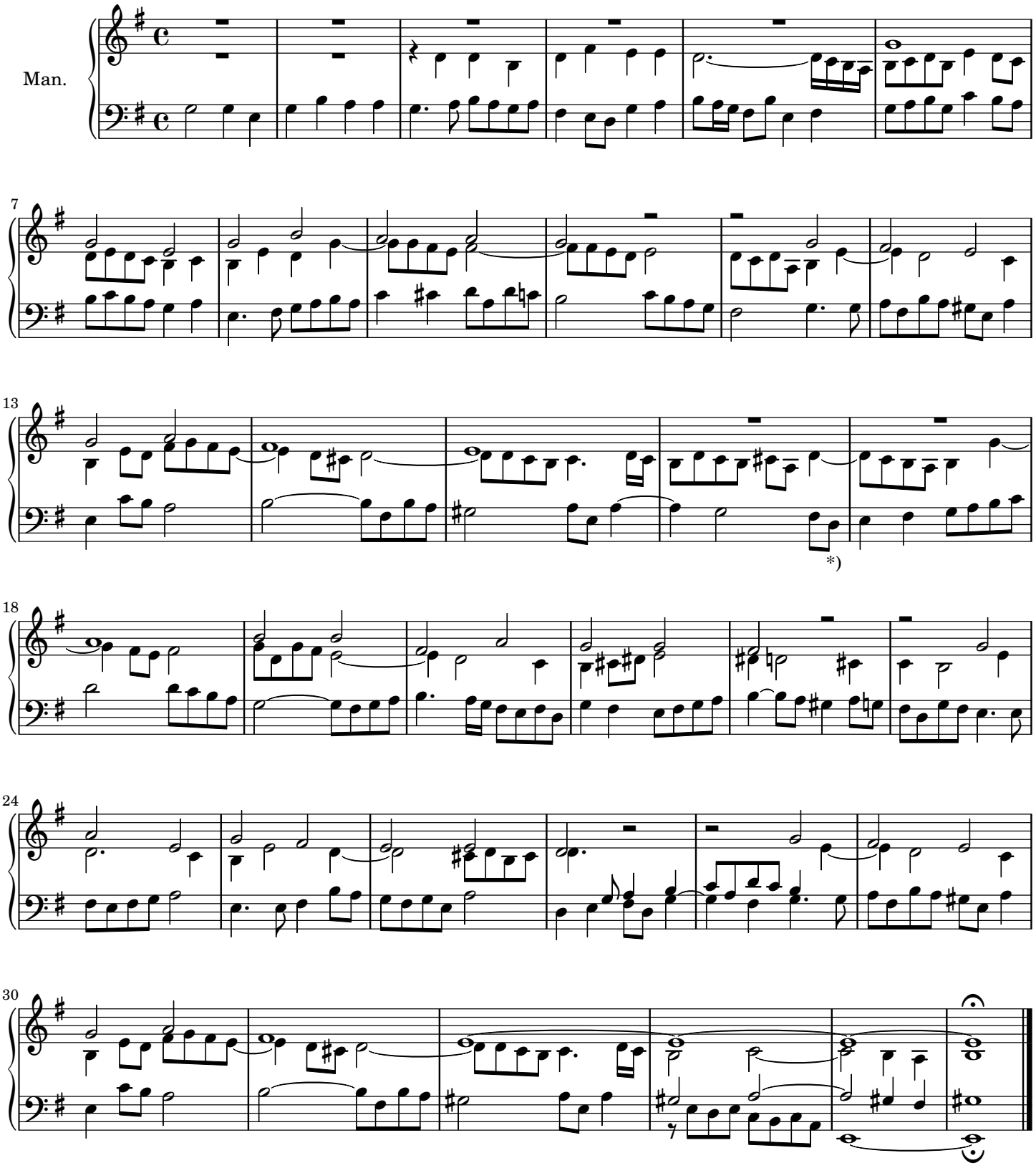
Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält

oder: Ach lieben Christen, seid getrost

Johann Michael Bach
(1648 – 1694)



**) d: e in manuscript*

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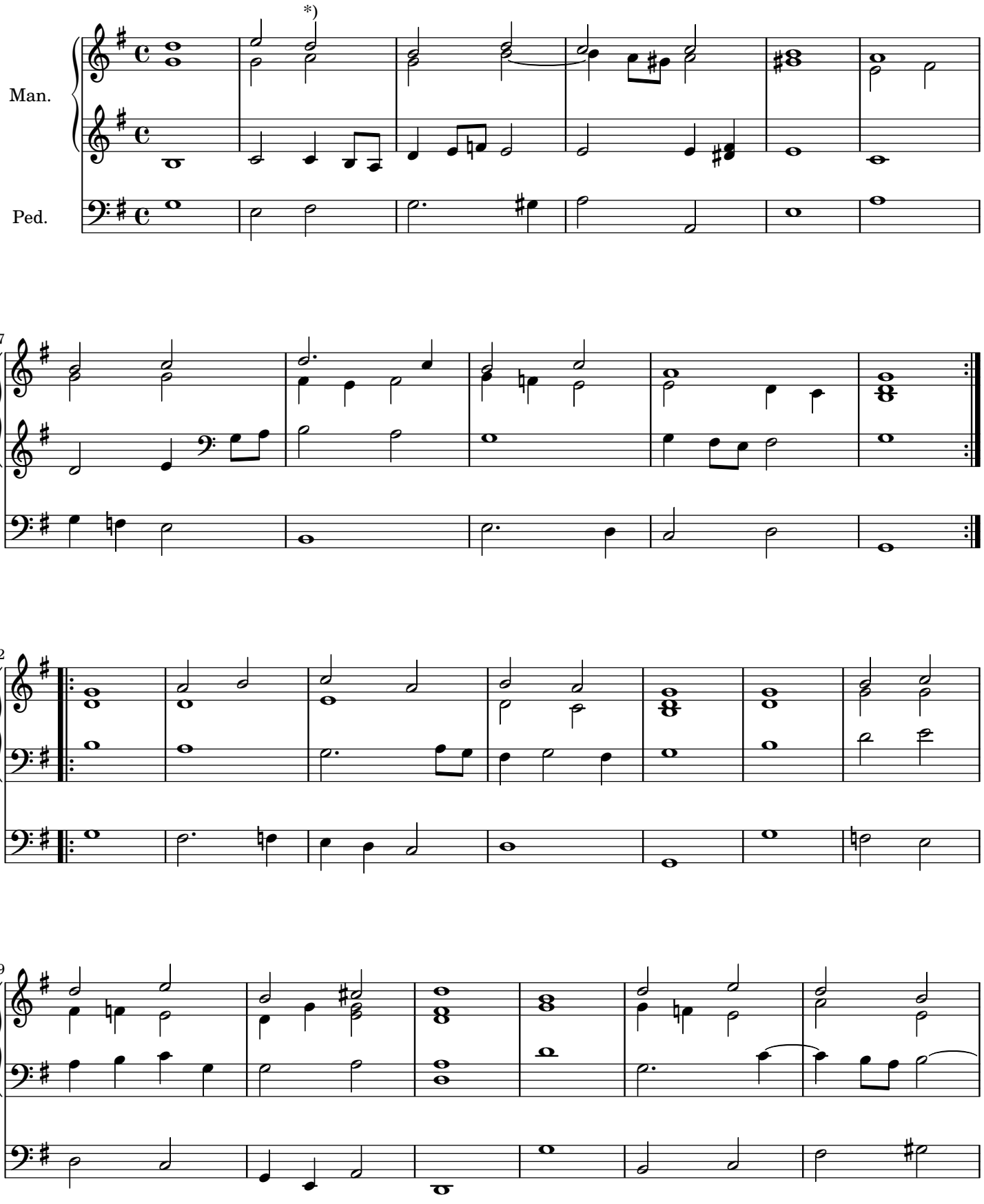
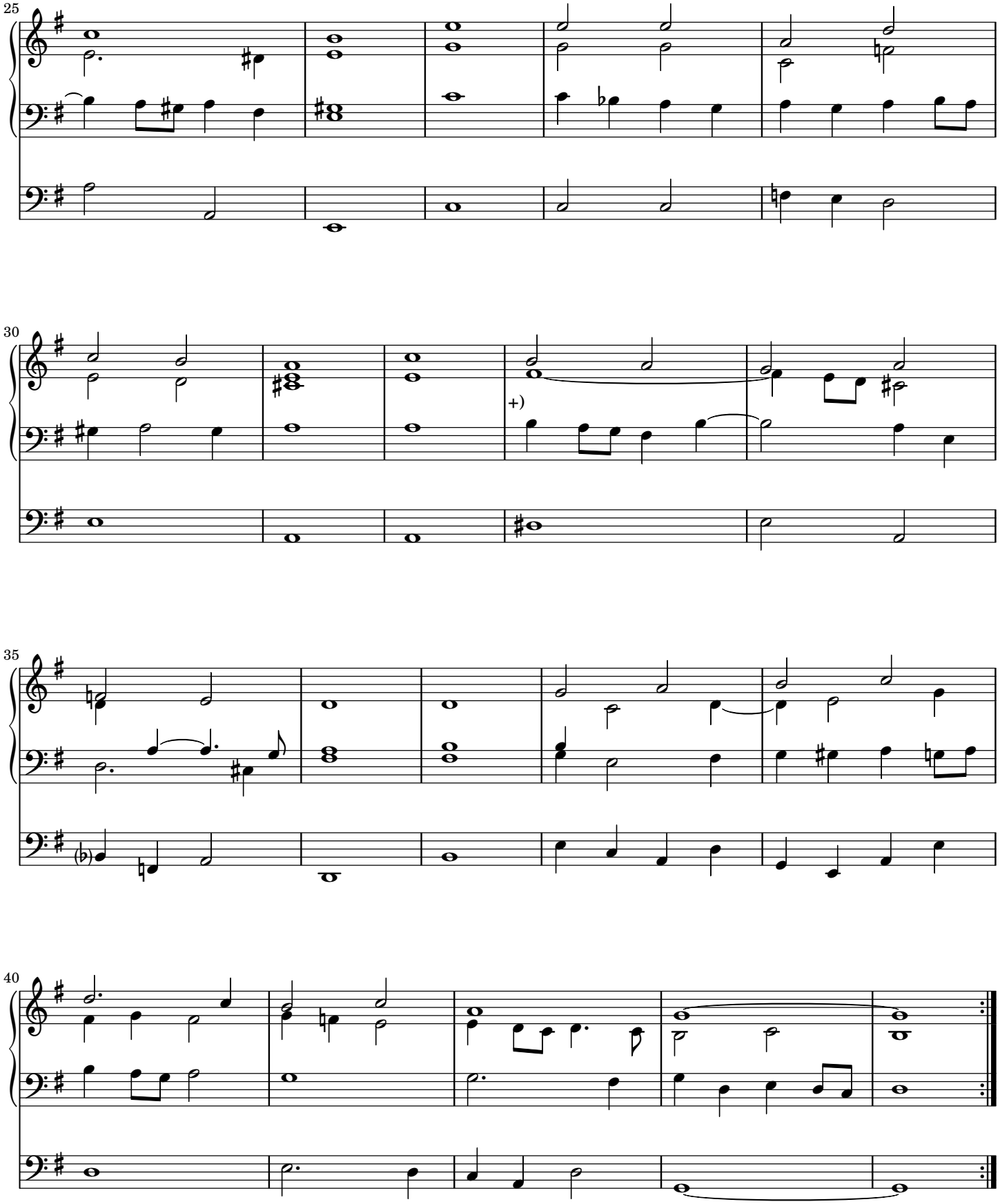
An Wasserflüssen Babylon

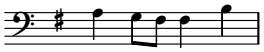
Johann Christoph Bach
(1642 – 1703)



*) a: b in manuscript



+) Manuscript reads:



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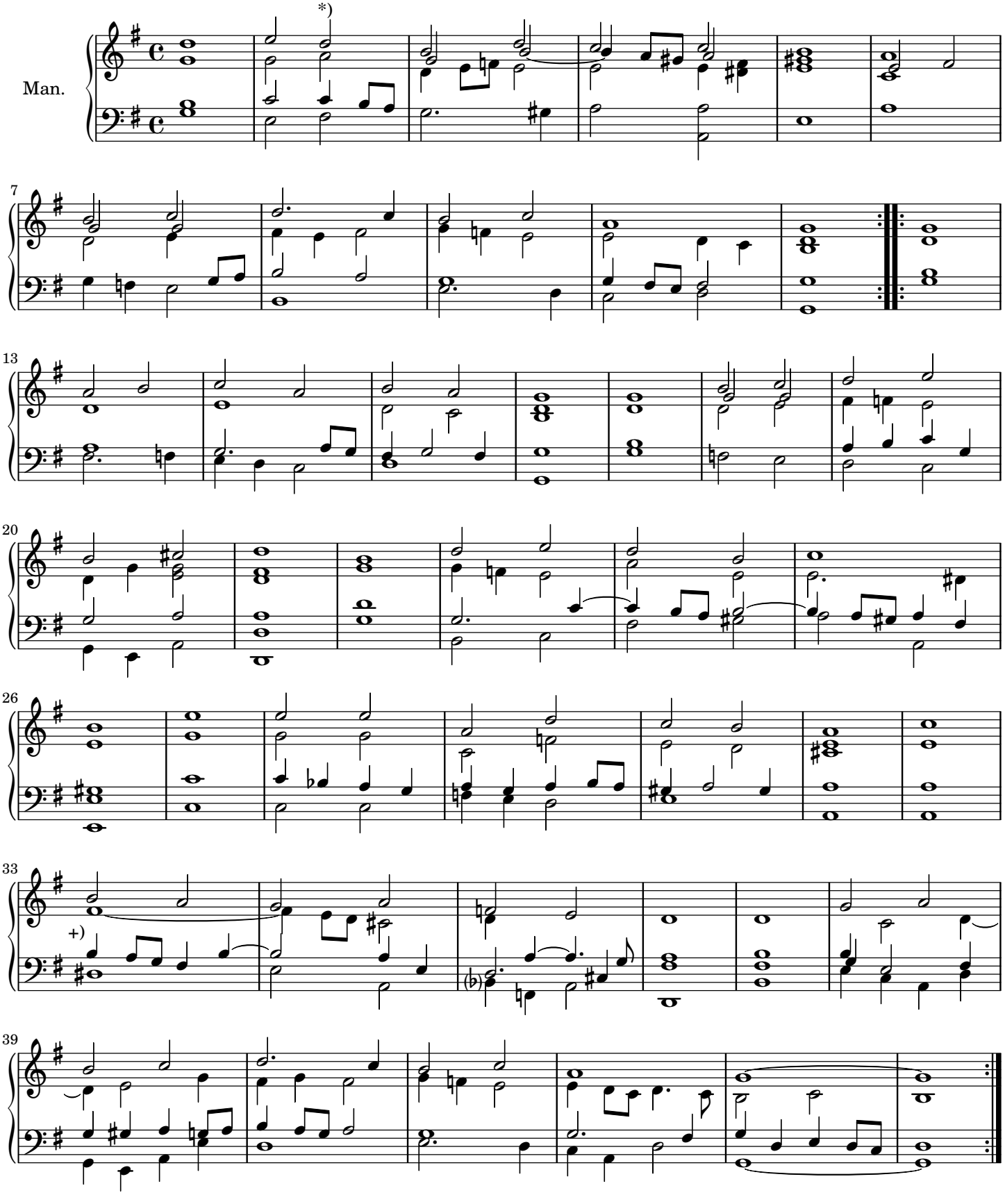
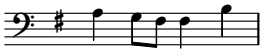
An Wasserflüssen Babylon

Johann Christoph Bach
(1642 – 1703)



**) a: b in manuscript*

+) Manuscript reads: 

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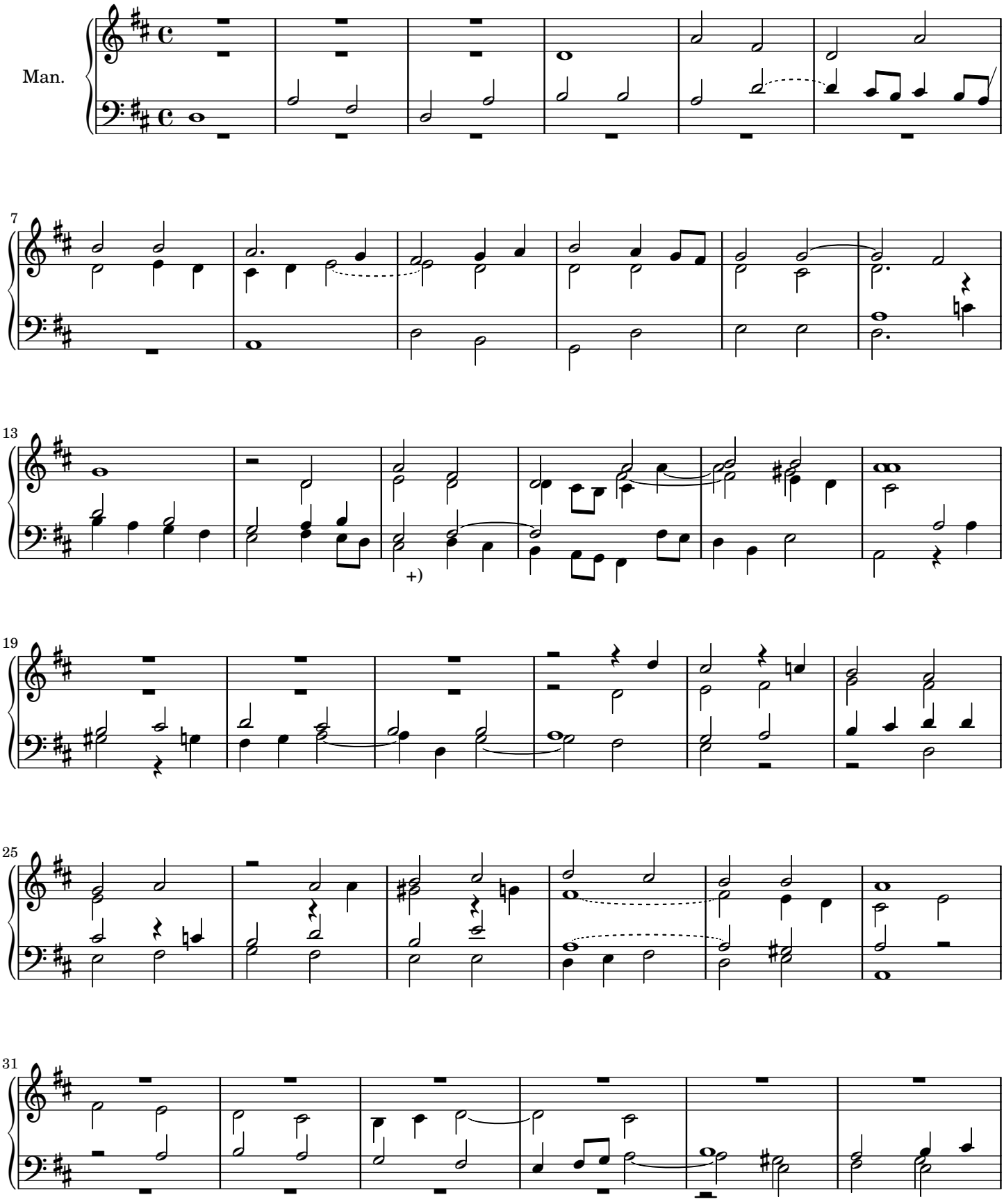
Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow
(1663 – 1712)



+) c sharp: a in manuscript

37

44

*)

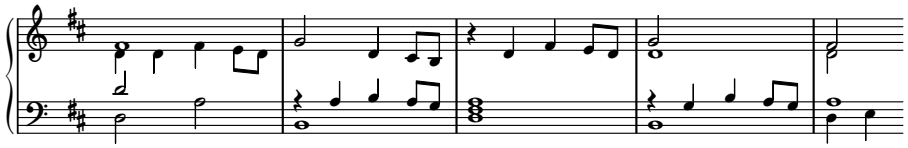
50

56

62

+)

*) Manuscript reads:



+) c sharp: not in manuscript

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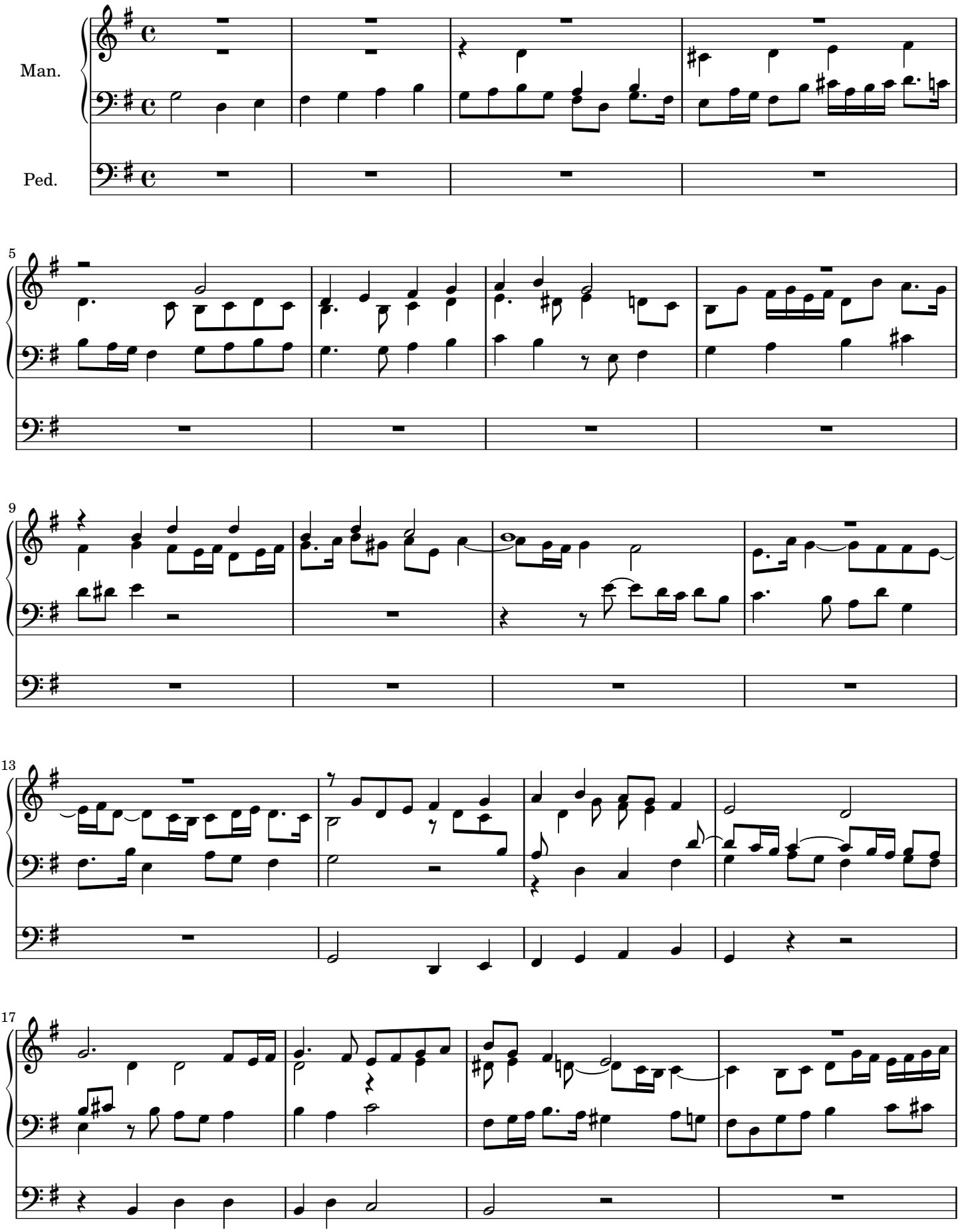
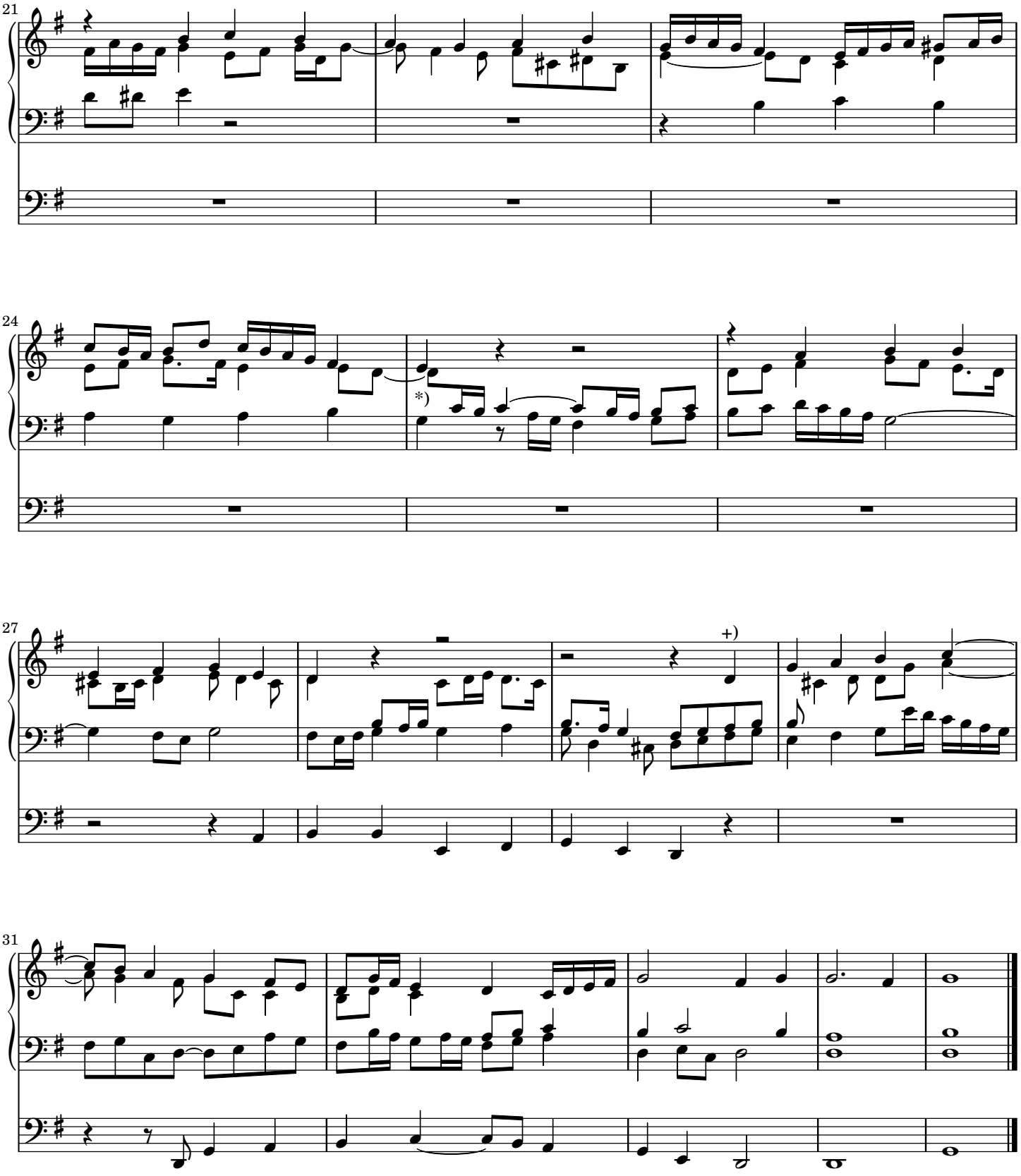
Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist

Johann Michael Bach
(1648 – 1694)





**) g: a in manuscript*
+) d: not in manuscript

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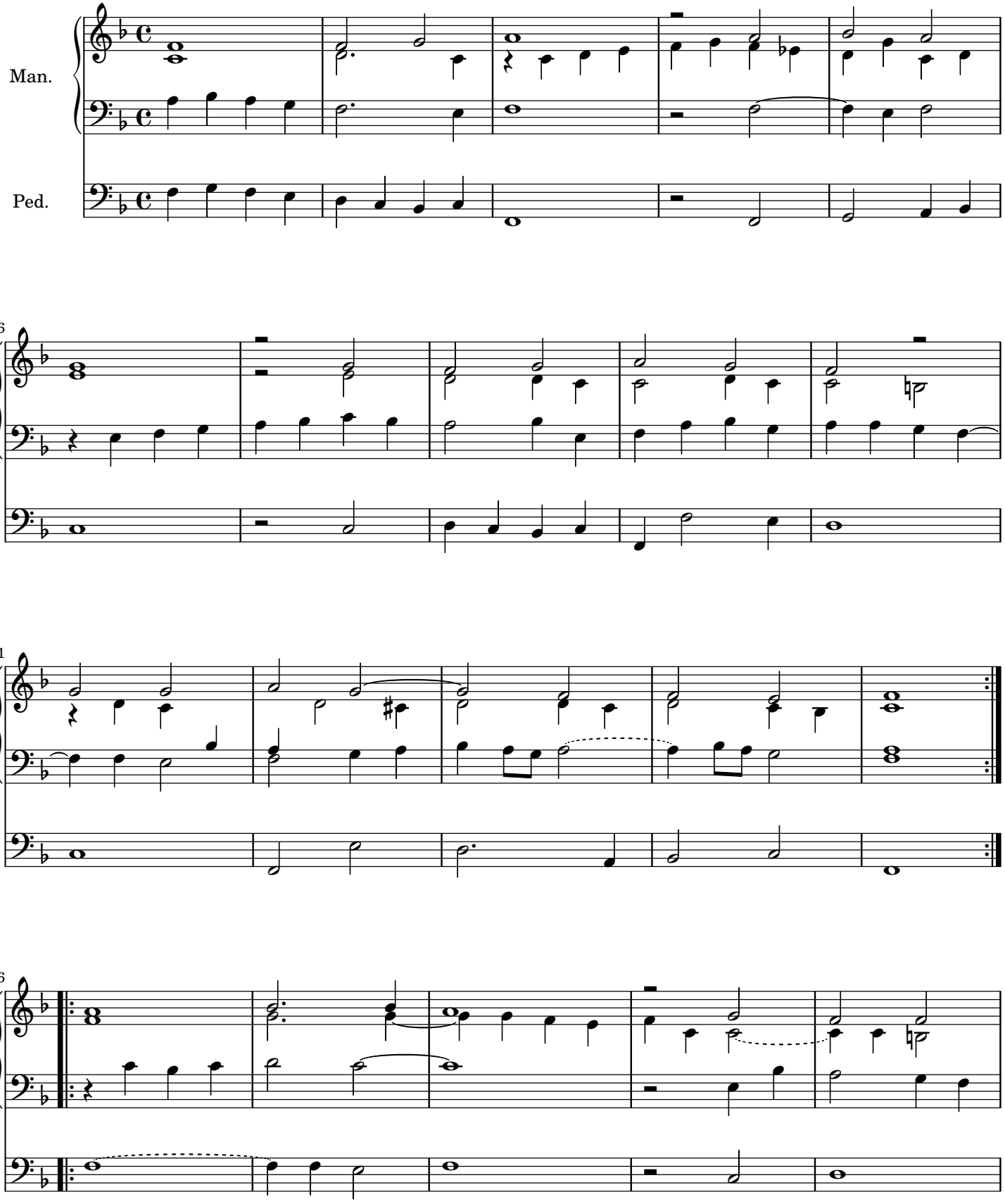
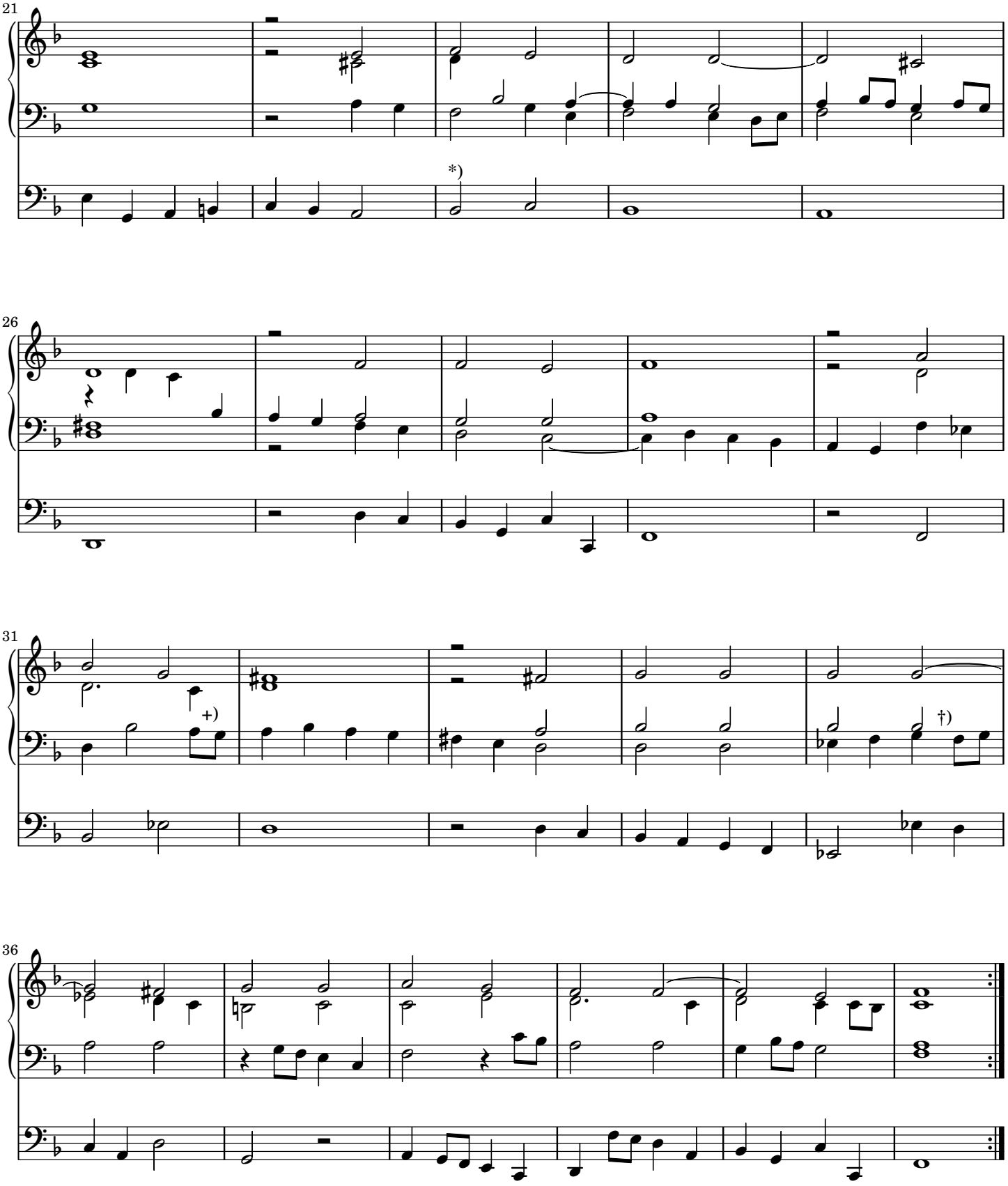
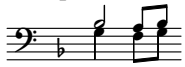
Wer Gott vertraut

Johann Christoph Bach
(1642 – 1703)





**) b flat: c in manuscript*
+) a g: b flat a in manuscript

†) Manuscript reads: 

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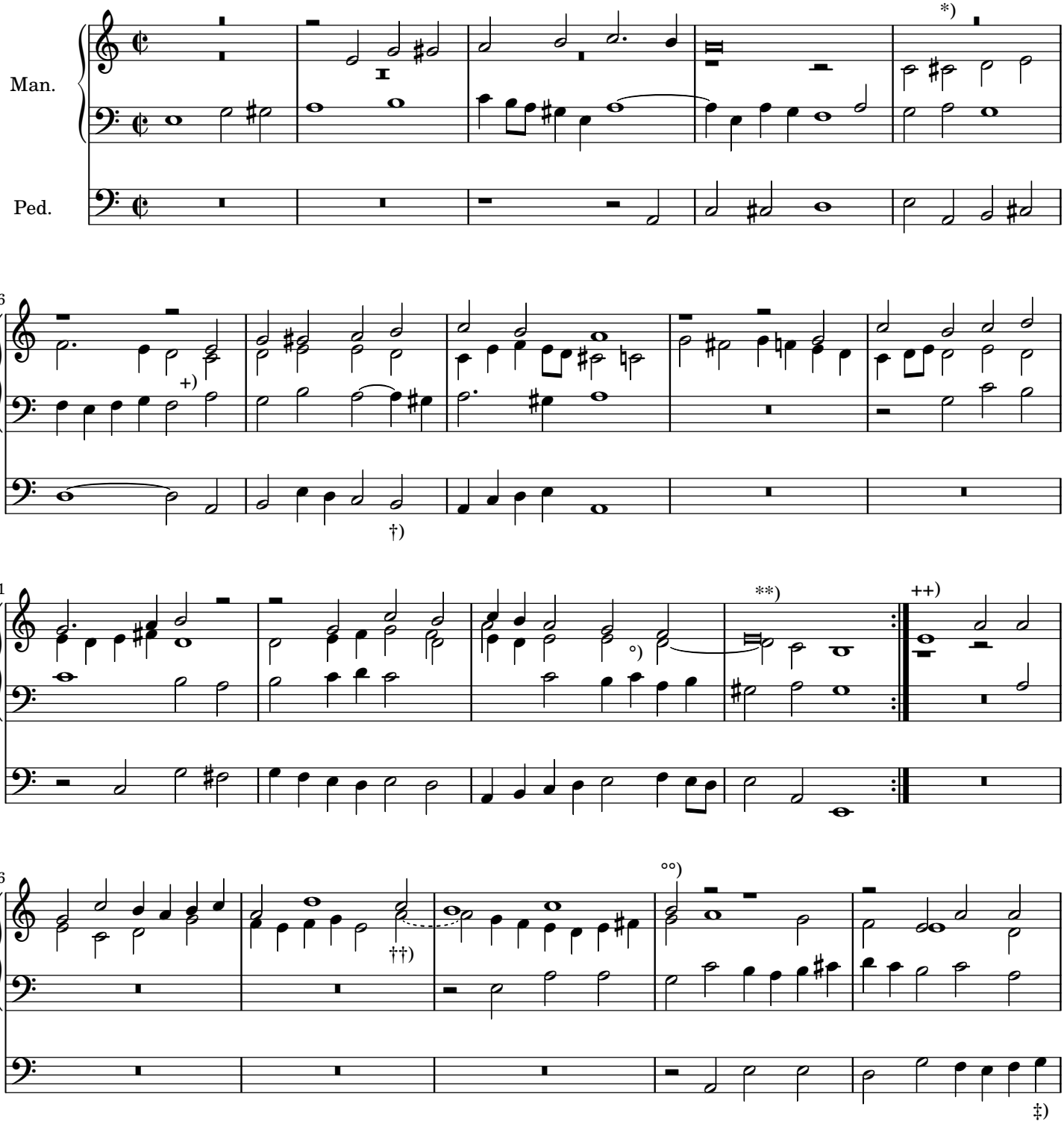
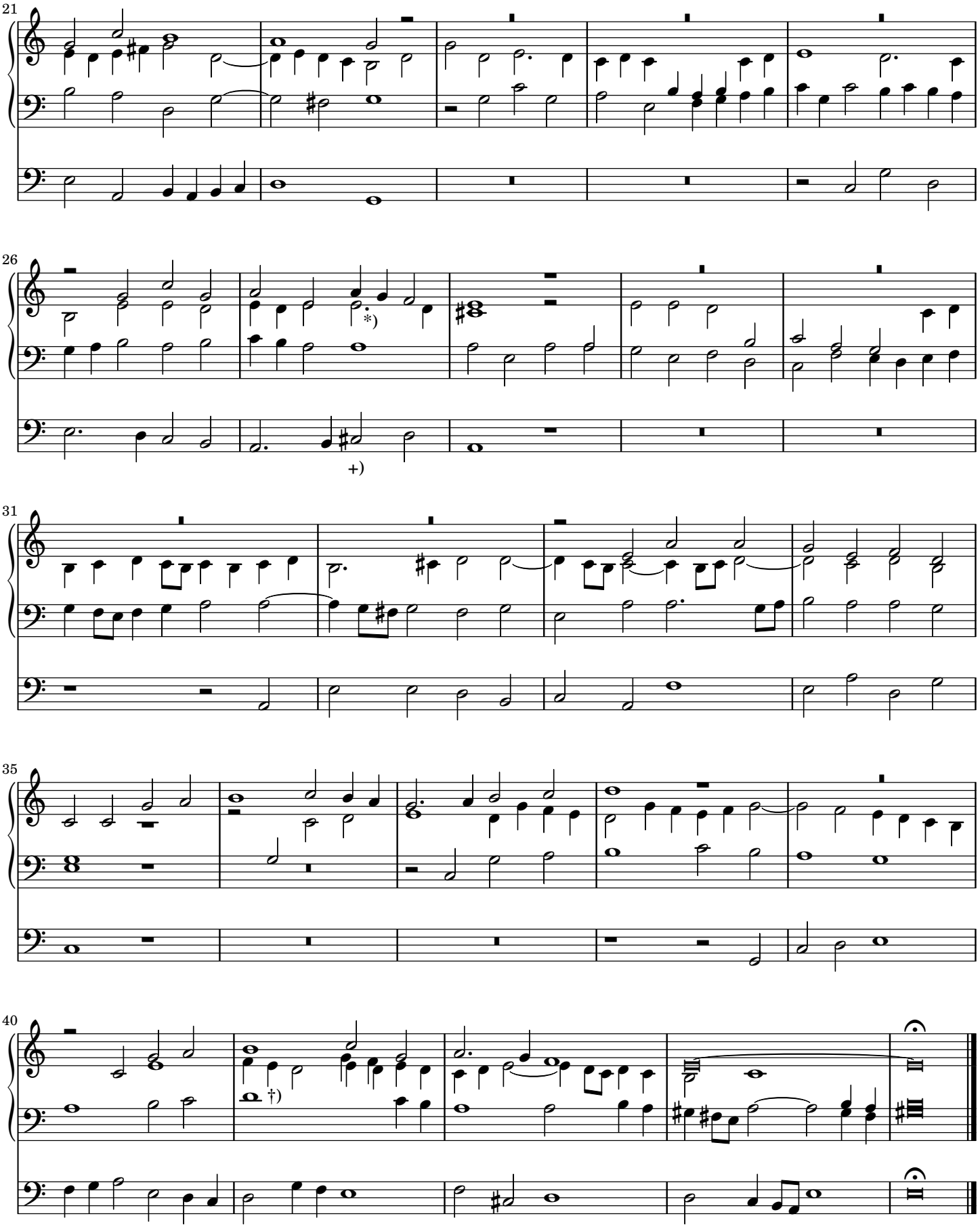
Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott

Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow
(1663 – 1712)

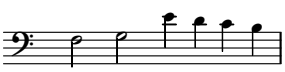


**) c sharp: c in manuscript*
+) f: g in manuscript
†) b: not in manuscript; basso voice is empty at this spot
°) c: not in manuscript; tenor voice empty at this spot
***) d c b: not in manuscript; alto voice is empty at his spot*
++) e: f in manuscrip
††) a: g in manuscript
°°) b: c in manuscript
‡) g: not in manuscript; basso voice is empty at this spot



*) e: f in manuscript
+) c sharp: d sharp in manuscript

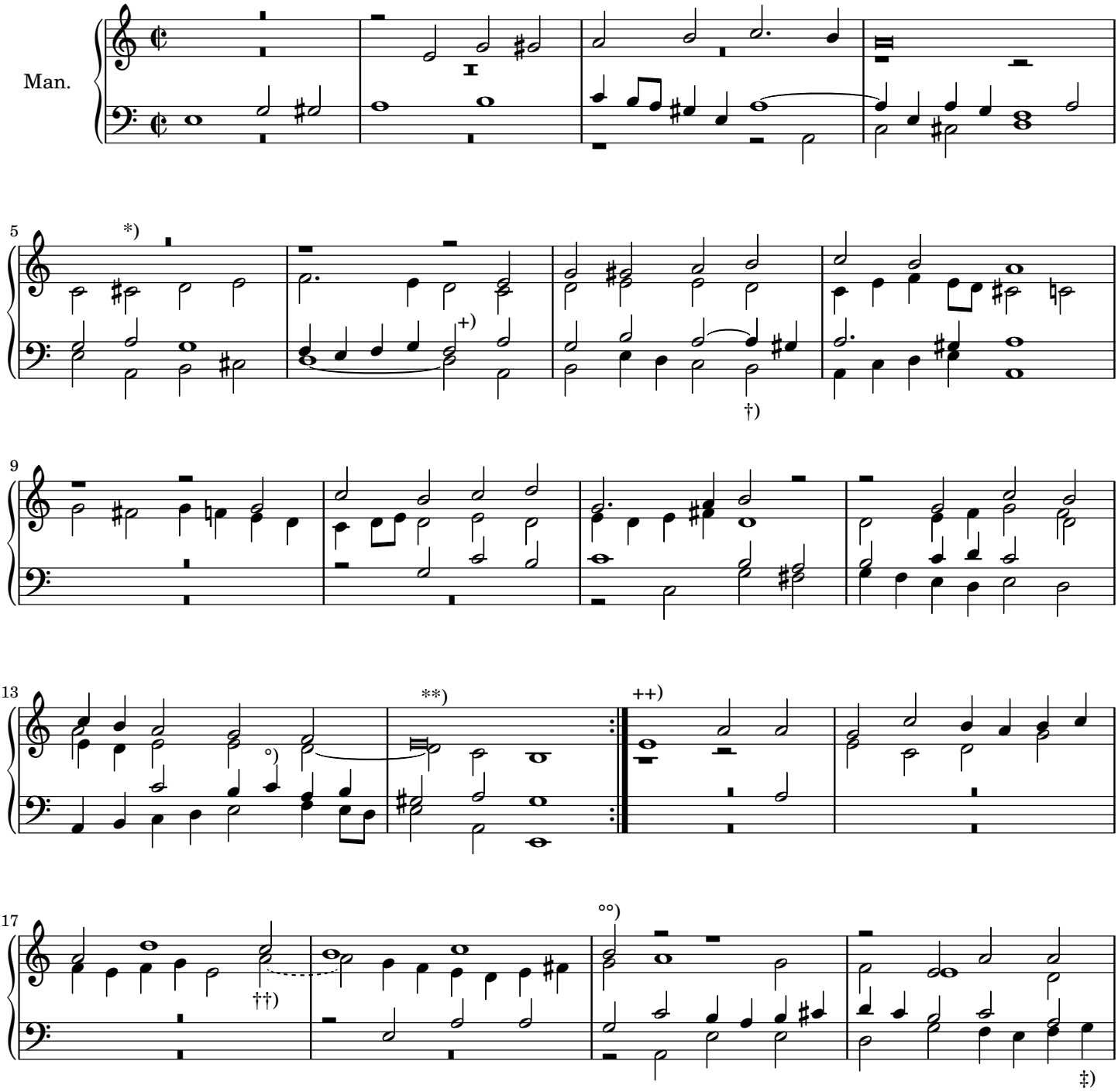
†) d: is an error as it creates a paralel octave with the bass voice. Perhaps it should be:



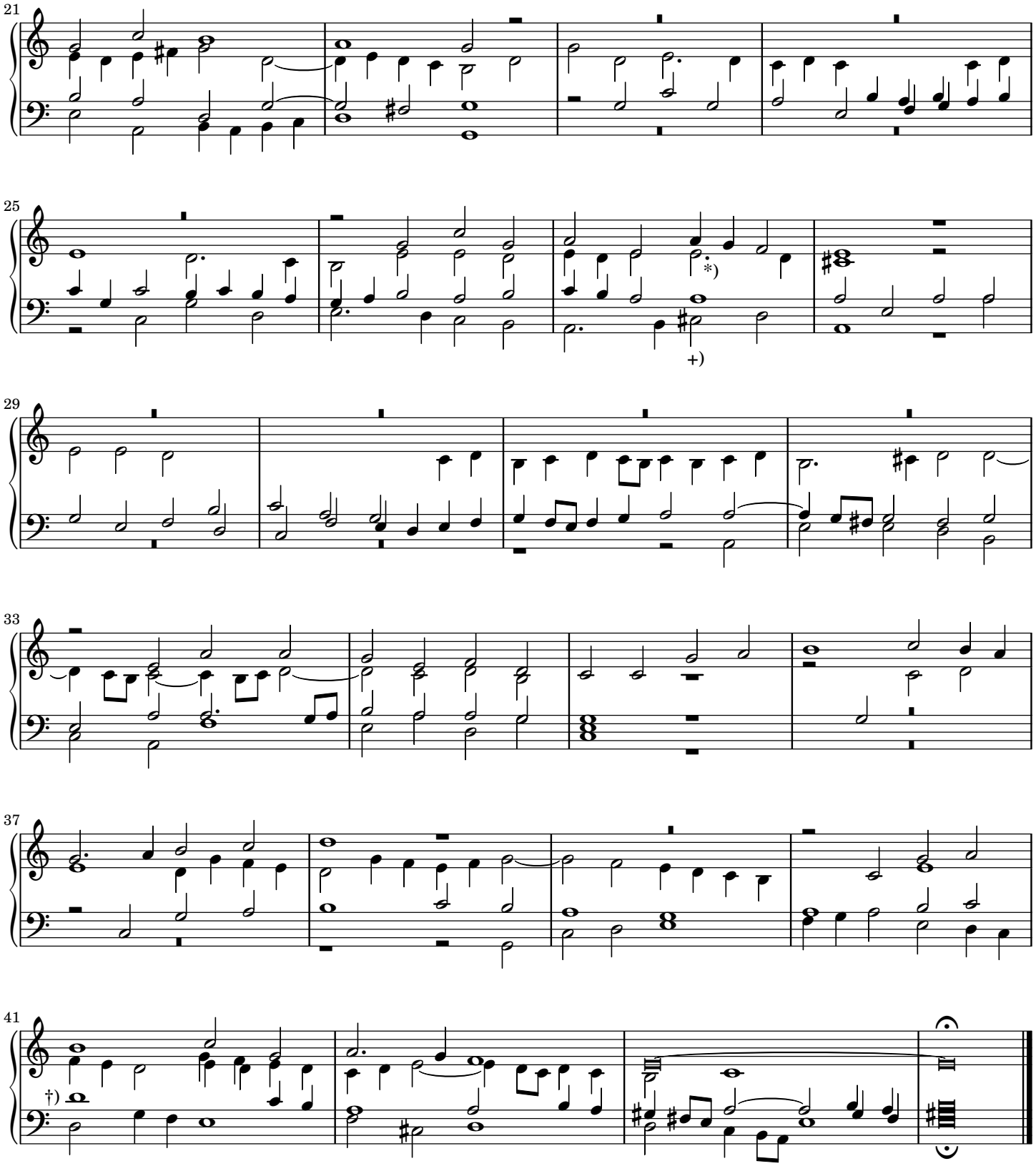
Edition Partitura Organum - 2019 (www.partitura.org)

Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott

Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow
(1663 – 1712)

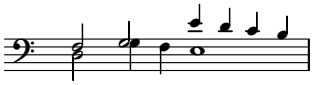


**) c sharp: c in manuscript*
+) f: g in manuscript
†) b: not in manuscript; basso voice is empty at this spot
°) c: not in manuscript; tenor voice empty at this spot
***) d c b: not in manuscript; alto voice is empty at his spot*
++) e: f in manuscrip
††) a: g in manuscript
°°) b: c in manuscript
‡) g: not in manuscript; basso voice is empty at this spot



**) e: f in manuscript*
+) c sharp: d sharp in manuscript

†) d: is an error as it creates a paralel octave with the bass voice. Perhaps it should be:



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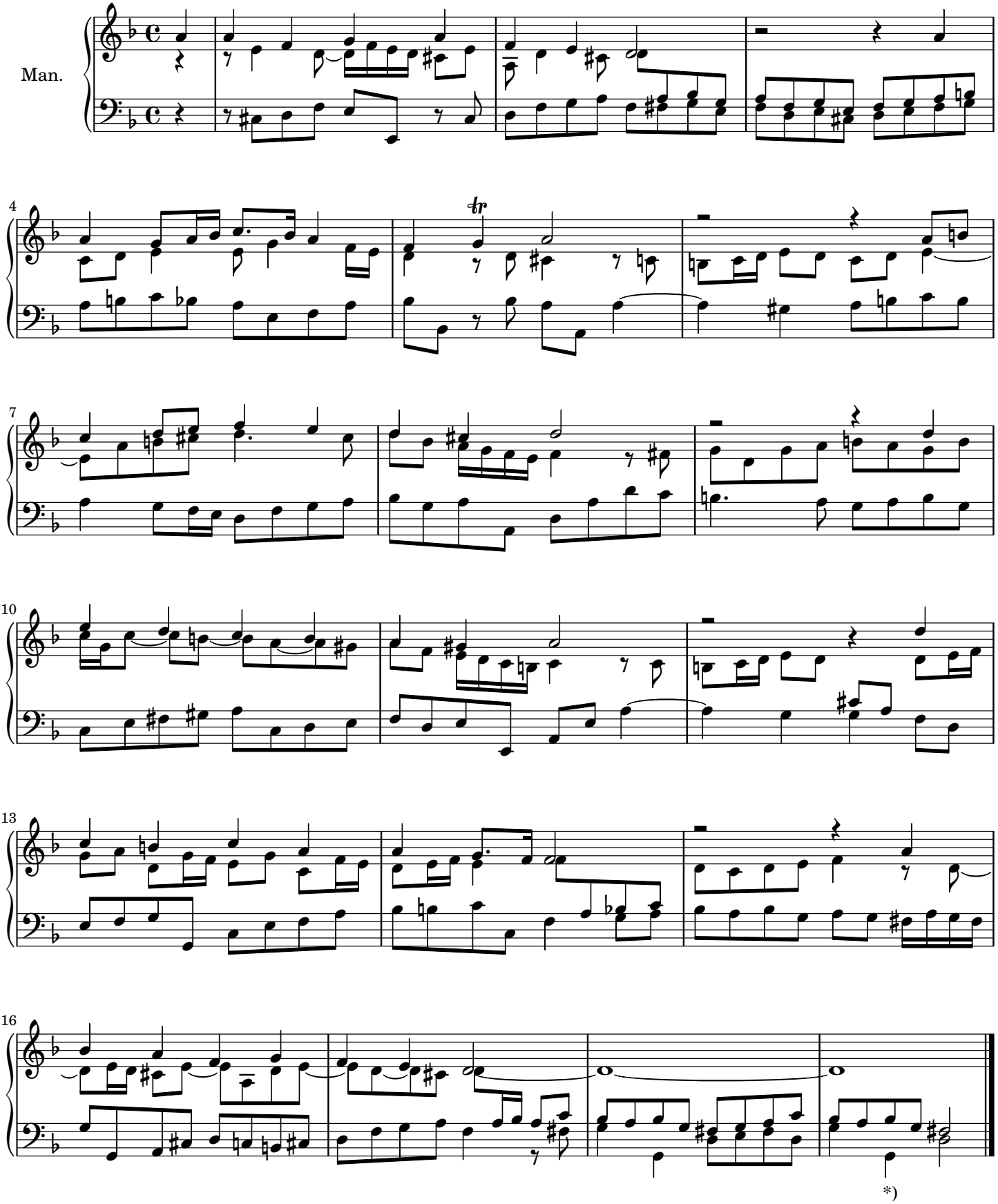
Vater unser im Himmelreich

Georg Andreas Sorge
(1703 - 1778)



**) g: not in manuscript. Manuscript leaves bass voice empty*

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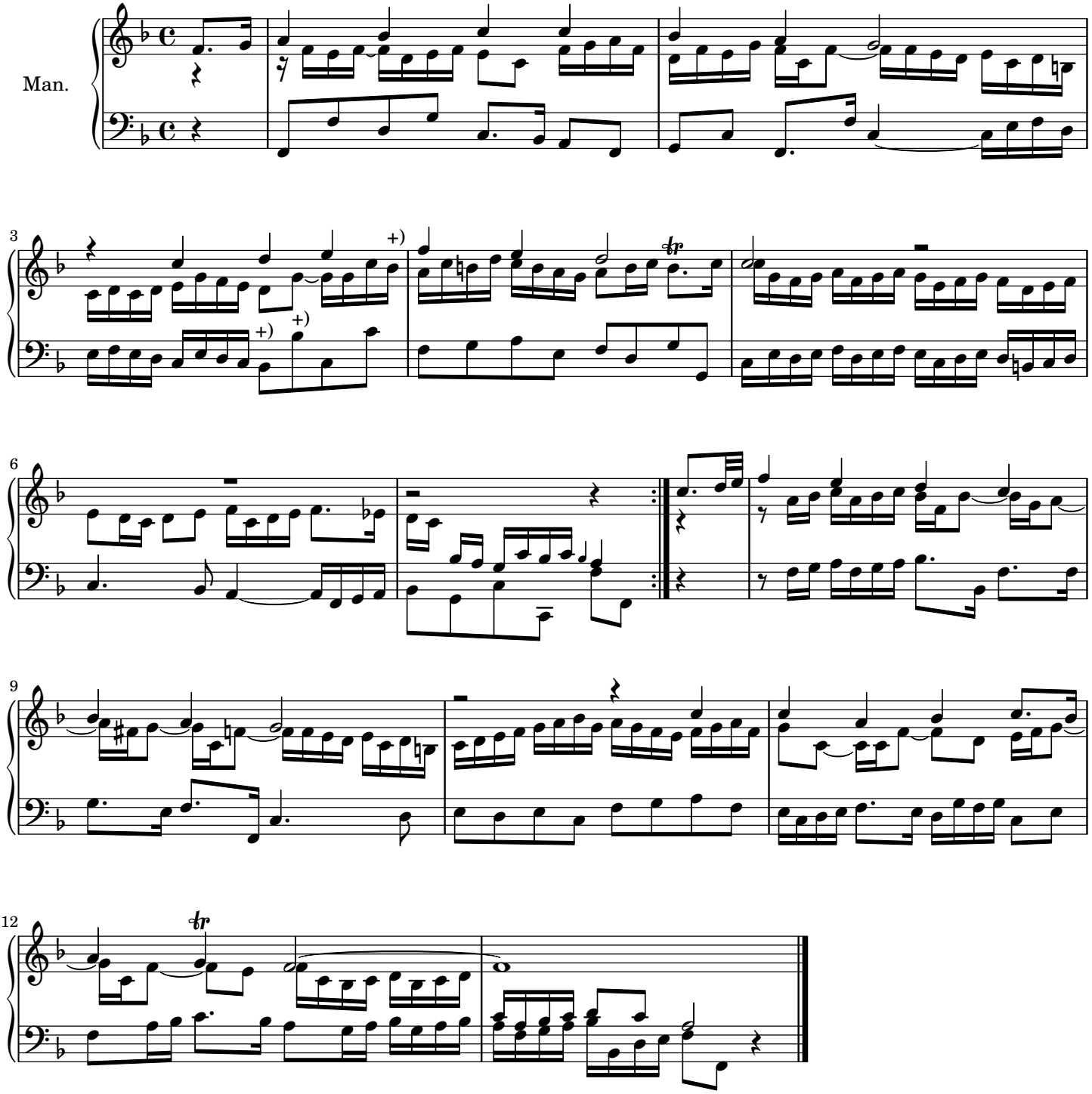
Auf Christenmensch

Georg Andreas Sorge
(1703 - 1778)



+) b flat: b in manuscript

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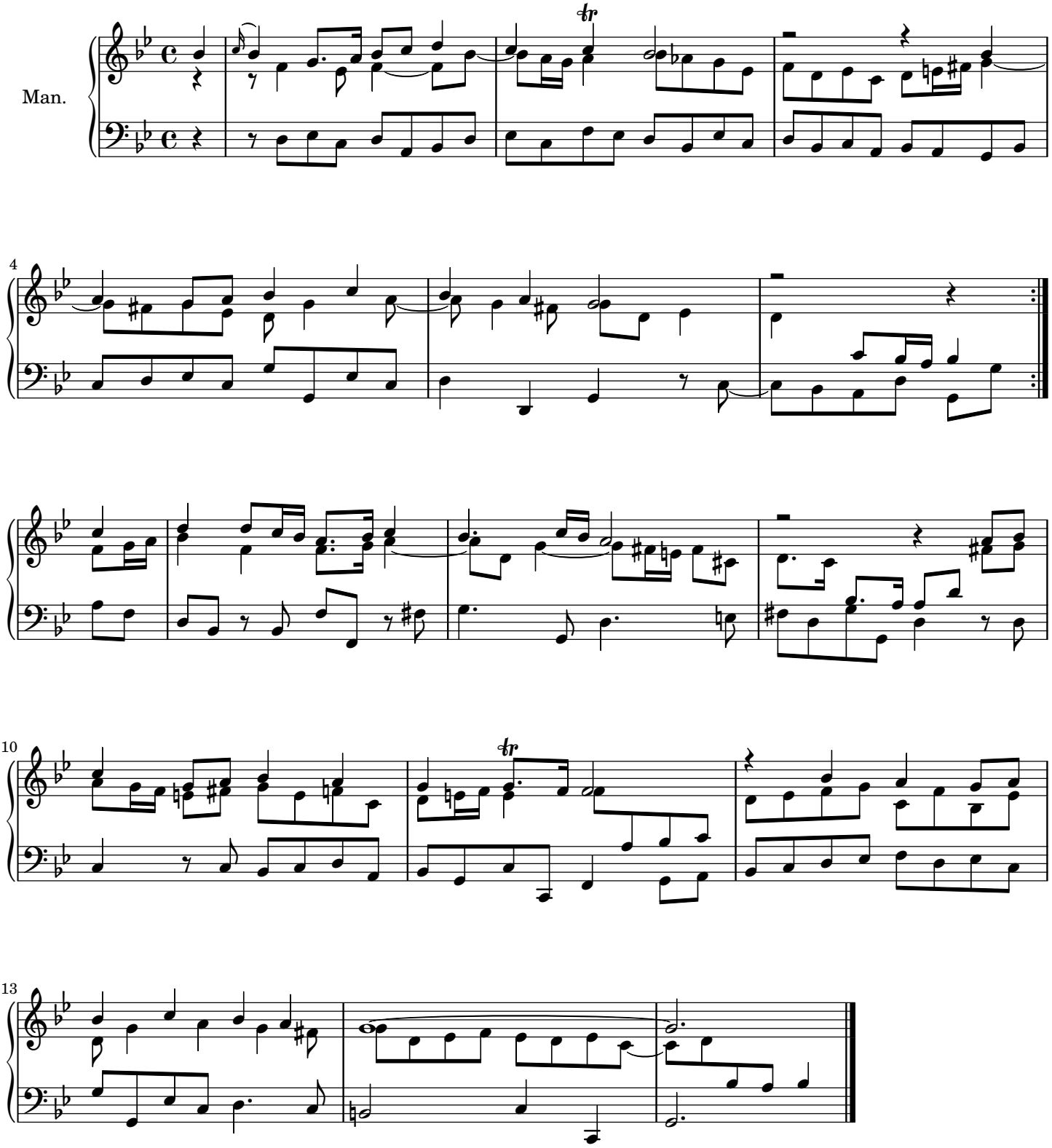
Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält

Georg Andreas Sorge
(1703 - 1778)



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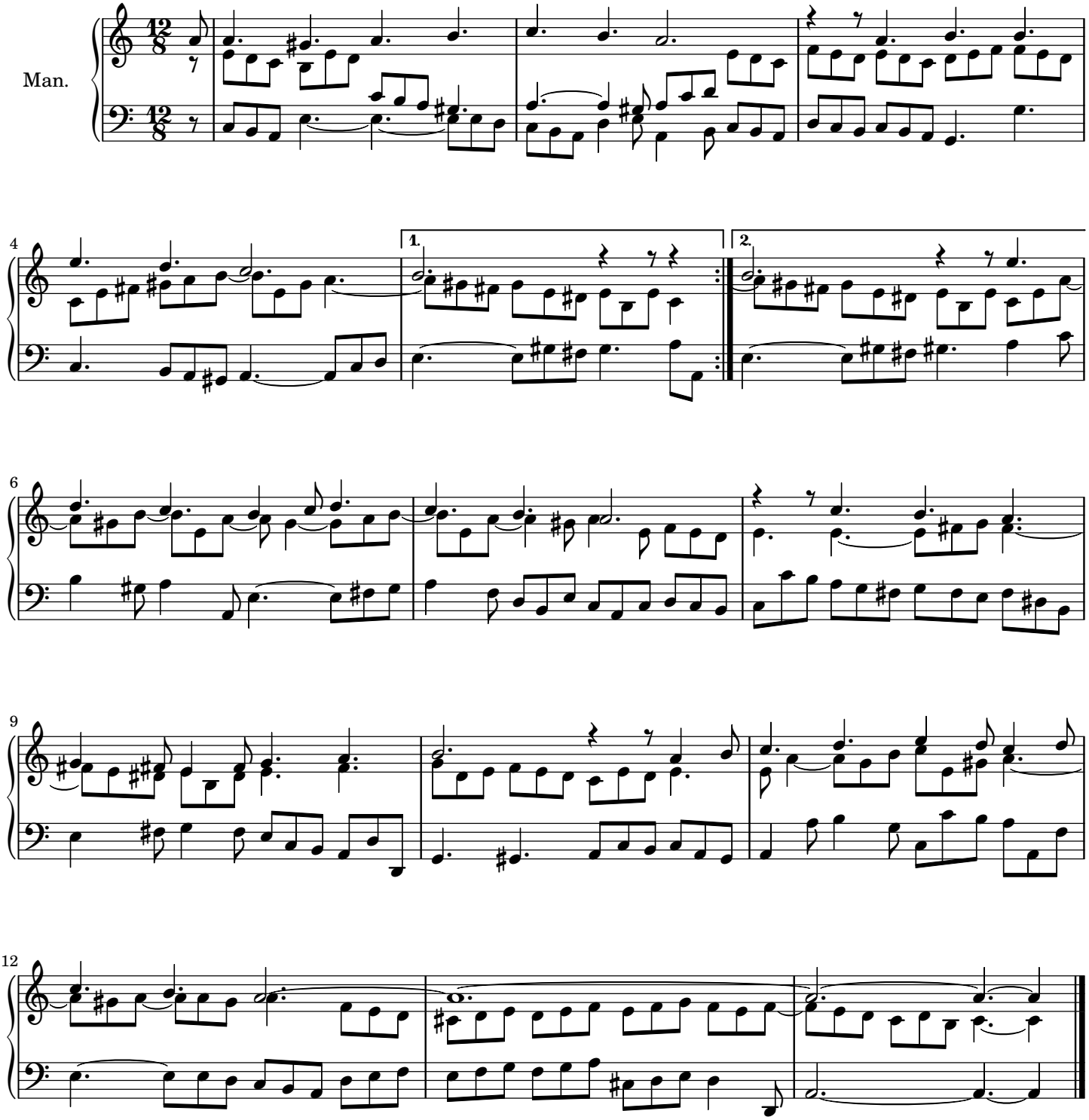
Herr Jesu Christ du höchstes Gut

Georg Andreas Sorge
(1703 - 1778)



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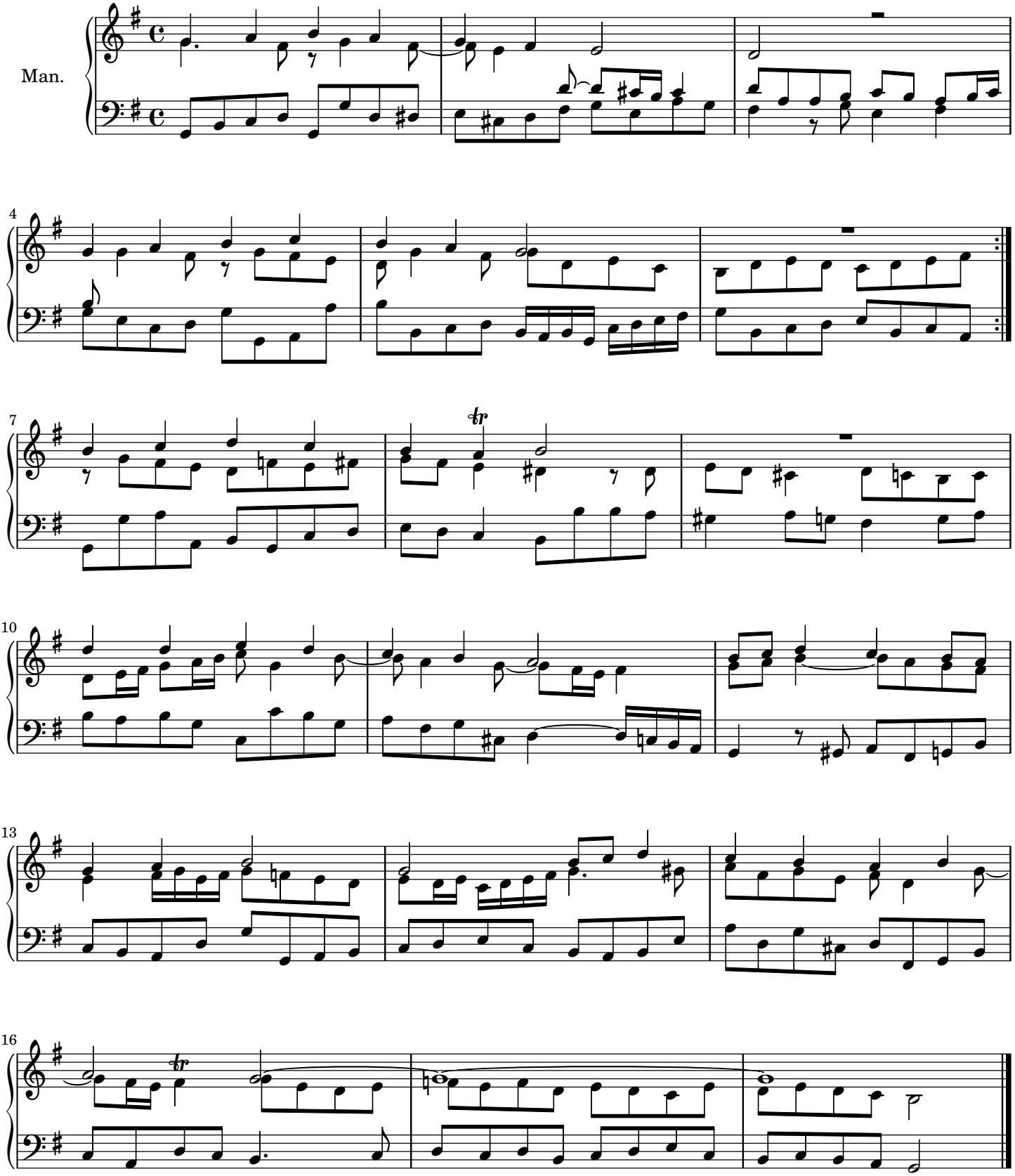
Freu dich sehr o meine Seele

Georg Andreas Sorge
(1703 - 1778)



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