VIII SONATAS

for

HARPSICHORD

by

DOMENICO ALBERTI

Guide to this electronic edition

The Table of Contents & Thematic Index contain embedded links pointing to the pertinent pages of this document. Click on the link to navigate directly to the page of interest.

Each sonata may be auditioned by playing an embedded MIDI file. Click on the first measure of any movement to start its MIDI file. (Repeats are usually not observed.)

VIII SONATE

per

Cembalo

Opera Prima

da

Domenico Alberti

London, *Printed for* I. Walsh, *in Catherine Street, in the Strand*

Edited by Stephen Henry

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Introduction

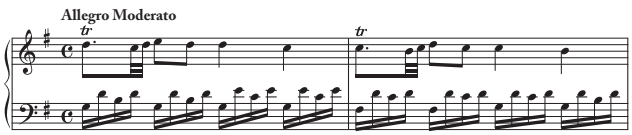
DOMENICO ALBERTI was born in Venice around the year 1710. He was a student of Antonio Biffi (1666/67-1733), who was *maestro di cappella* of the San Marco Basilica in Venice, and of Antonio Lotti (1666-1740), who succeeded Biffi in that position.

Sometimes dismissed as an amateur, Alberti received a thorough grounding in music. His teacher Lotti also instructed Baldassare Galuppi, Michelange Gasparini and Benedetto Marcello. Alberti seems never have occupied an "official" musical post, but nonetheless established a reputation as a composer, singer and harpsichordist, often accompanying himself at the keyboard. While serving as a page in the entourage of the Venetian ambassador to the Spanish court in 1736, his singing elicited the favorable opinion of none other than Carlo Maria Broschi (1705-1782), famous in history by his stage name Farinelli.

Subsequently, he joined the household of the *Marchese* Giovanni Carlo Molinari in Rome where he was to die on the 14th of October, 1740. He was laid to rest in the church of San Marco, Formio.

His surviving works are comprised of 14 complete keyboard sonatas and 10 separate sonata movements, all considered late works written during his last years in Rome. These are all that remain of the more than 40 that are thought to have once existed. Additionally, there are two serenatas: *Endimione* (Venice, 1737) and *La Galatea* (Venice, 1737), a *Salve Regina,* and various miscellaneous arias.

Today he is primarily known for his "Alberti" bass. In keyboard music, this is a figuration of the left hand that serves as an accompaniment to a theme in the right hand. At its most formulaic, the left hand describes a triad beginning with the root of the chord, ascending to the fifth, descending to the third and returning to the fifth:



While contemporaneous opinion ascribed the technique to him, modern scholarship, although finding little evidence for its use prior to Alberti, prefers to regard him as one its earliest proponents but not necessarily its inventor.

This present edition is concerned with eight keyboard sonatas published posthumously as his Opus 1 in London, 1748, by John Walsh. That publication was issued to repudiate a scandalous act of plagiarism by one Giuseppe Jozzi (ca. 1710-1770) who had these same sonatas printed under his own name in London in 1745.

Each sonata is in two movements, generally a slower movement followed by a somewhat faster one. The sonata movements often employ a rounded binary form, A 𝄆 BA 𝄇, where the theme of the first half is repeated at the conclusion of the second half. Thus, in Alberti's sonatas one may discern, in a rudimentary form, the lineaments of the classical sonata as eventually expounded by Haydn and Mozart.

The collection seems very much a random compliation with no overall plan. All the sonatas except the fourth are in major keys. Sonata IV is in g minor and concludes with a Giga. Sonata VII in F major is distinguished by a minuet with four variations.

Perhaps no greater claim may be laid for him than that of *petit maître*, but placed within the context of his time, Alberti's was a voice of the future and his influence was to extend right through to the end of the 18th century. Even today, "his" bass may be employed, if only in caricature, to suggest a sort of antique preciosity.

A Note on Performance

Though intended for the harpsichord or spinet, these sonatas are eminently suitable for the modern piano. Ornaments are confined to trills and appogiaturas. Historically, trills were understood to begin on the upper note except in stepwise descending passages where they may begin on the primary note. Appogiaturas were performed on the beat and could be held for as long as half the length of the main note.

Acknowledgements

VIII Sonate per Cembalo, Opera Prima, da Domenico Alberti
facsimile edition, Peacock Press, Hebden Bridge, 2006

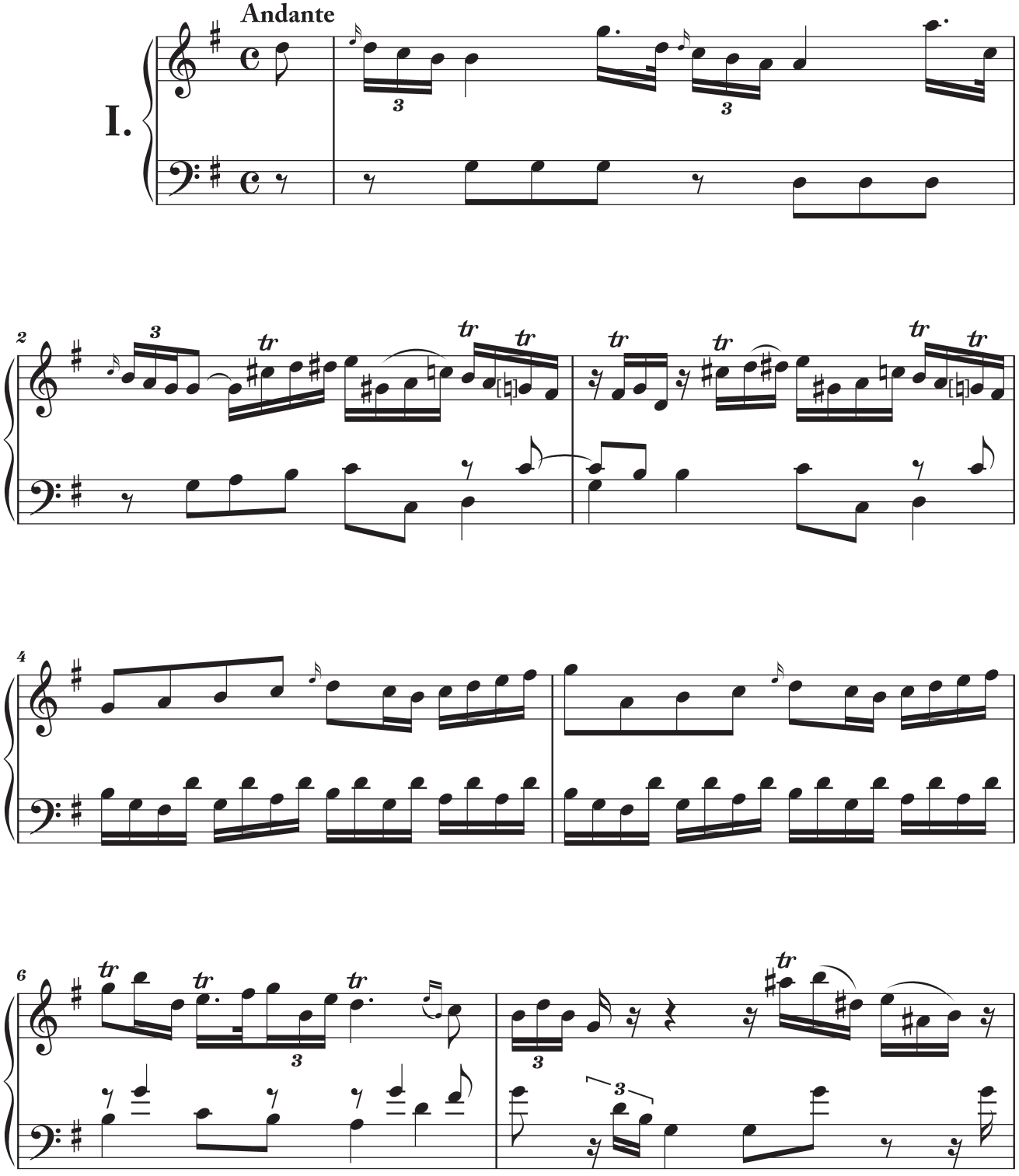
Domenic Alberti
Michael Talbot in the *Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians, 2nd ed.,* ed. Stanley Sadie, MacMillan Publishers, Ltd., 2001

Johann Christian Bach and the Early Italian Classical Masters
Daniel E. Freeman in *18th Century Keyboard Music,*
ed. Robert L. Marshall, Schirmer Books, 1994

VIII SONATE per CEMBALO

Sonata I

Domenico Alberti



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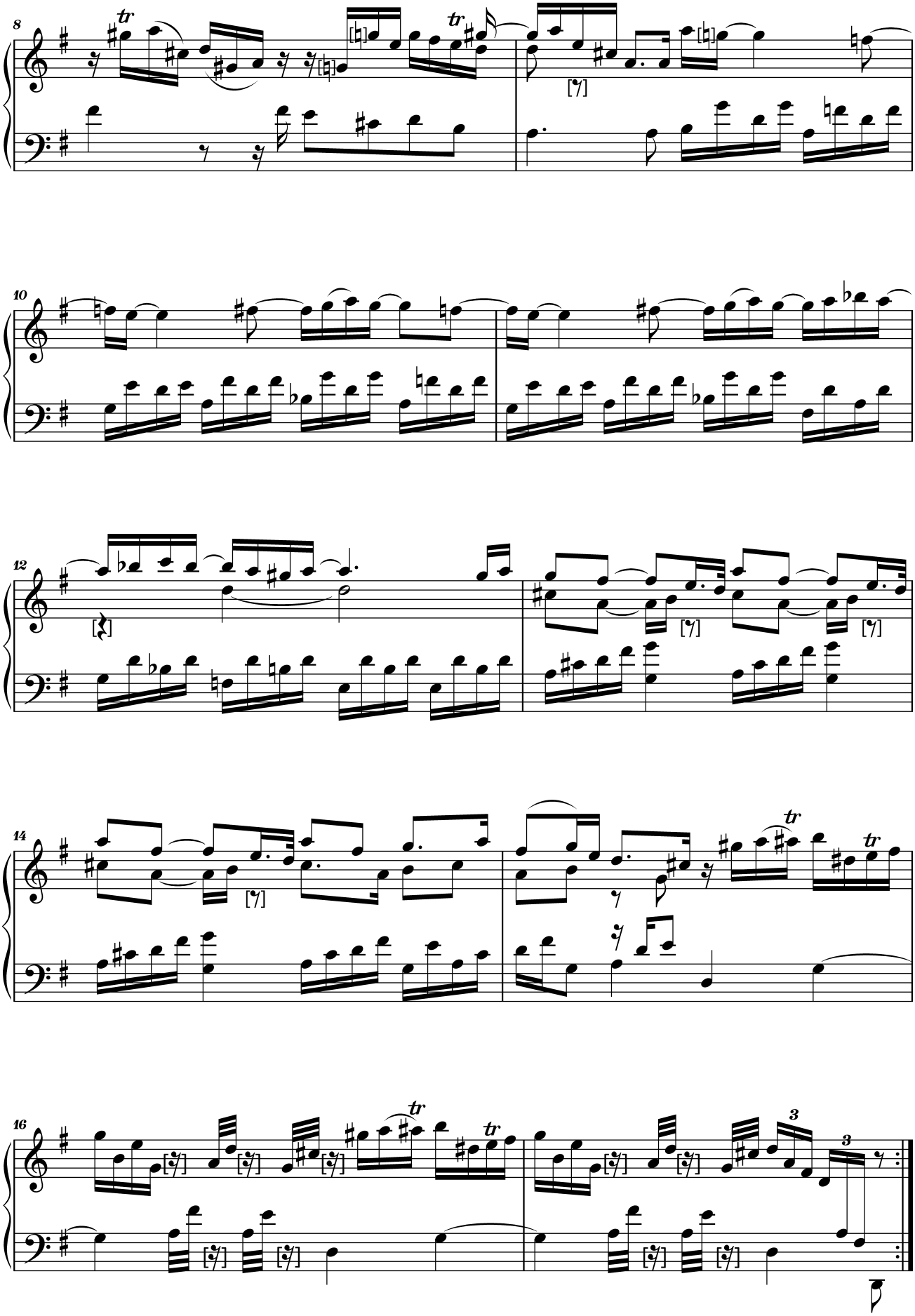
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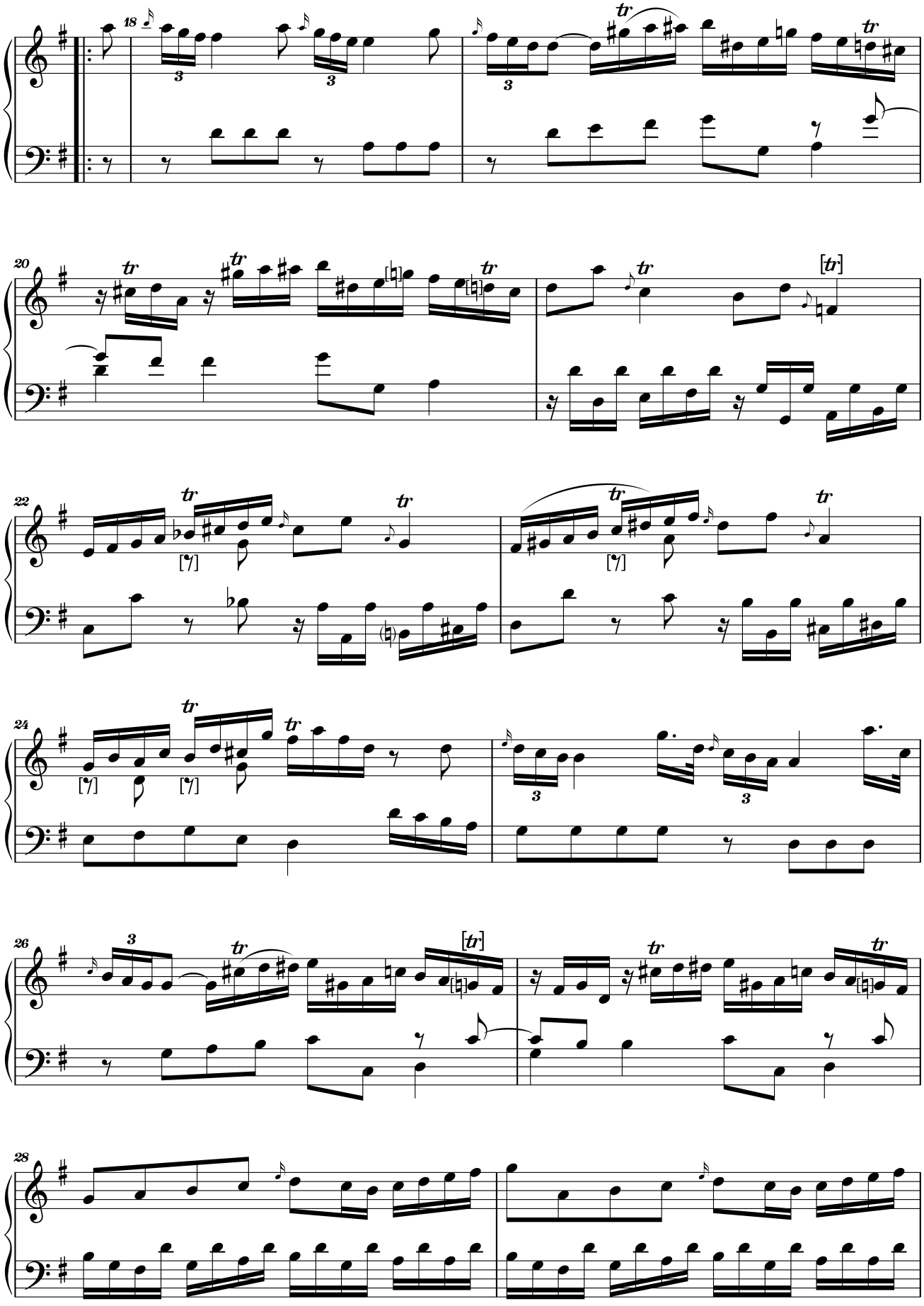
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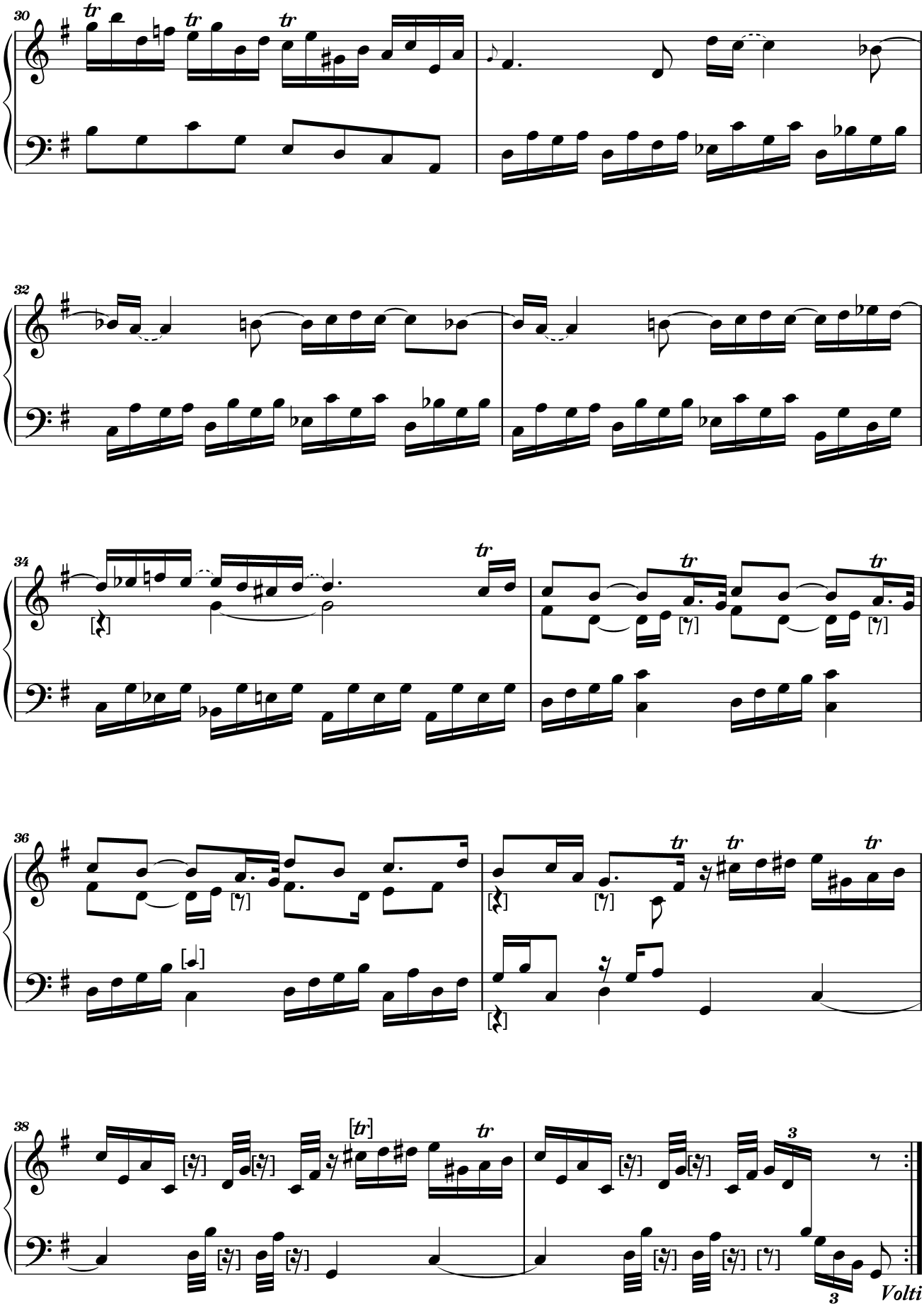
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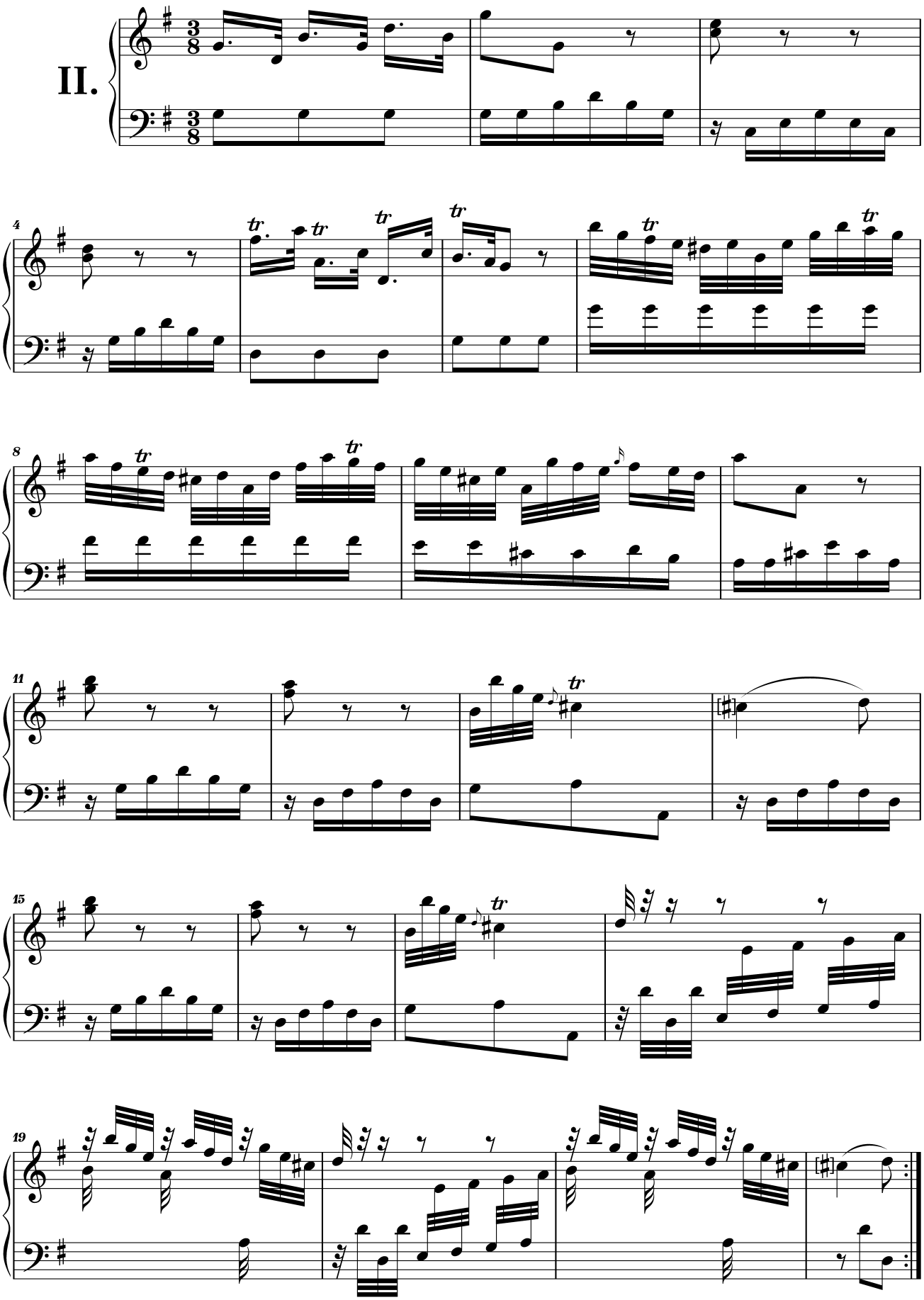

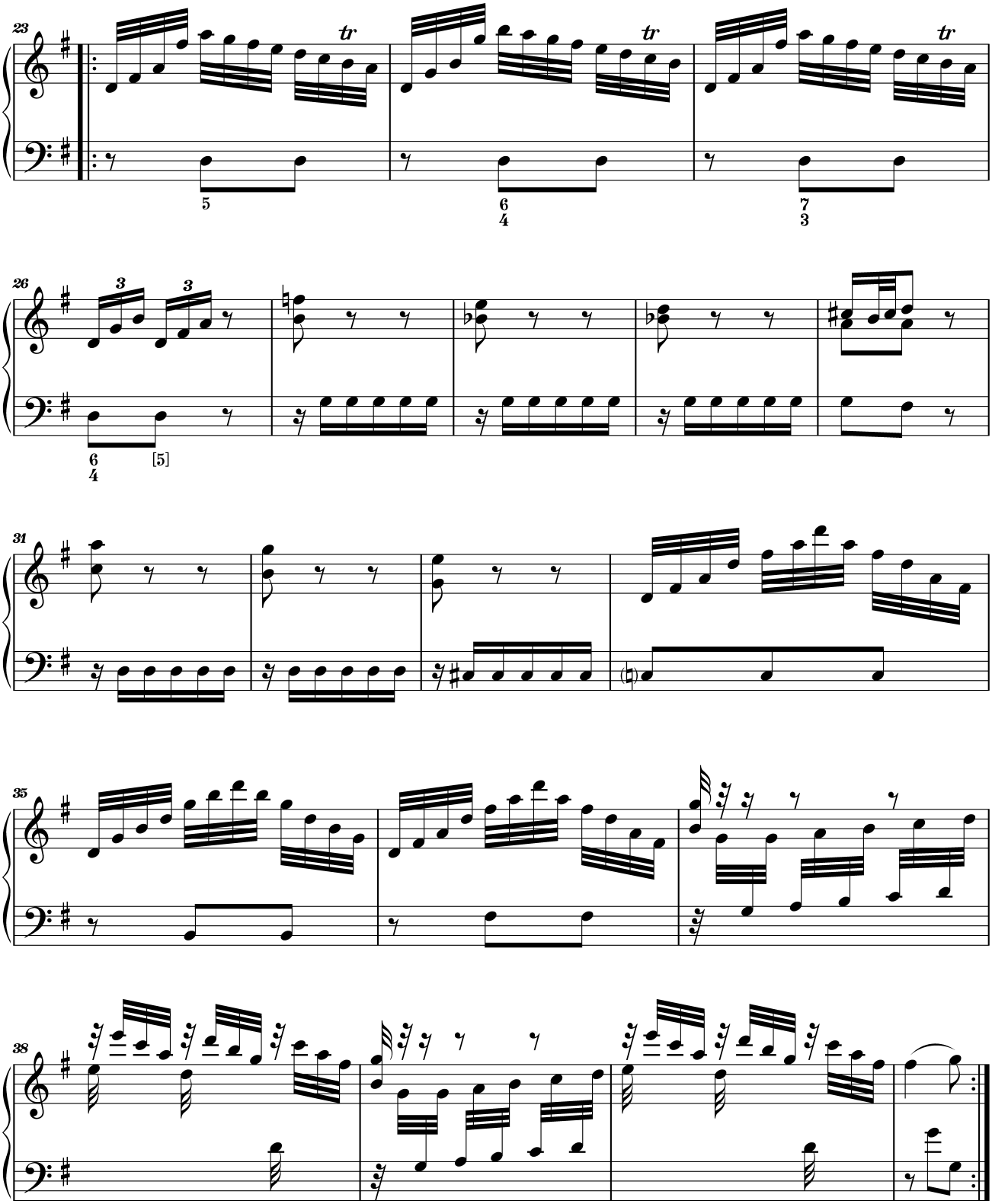

A suggested realization
of the figured bass
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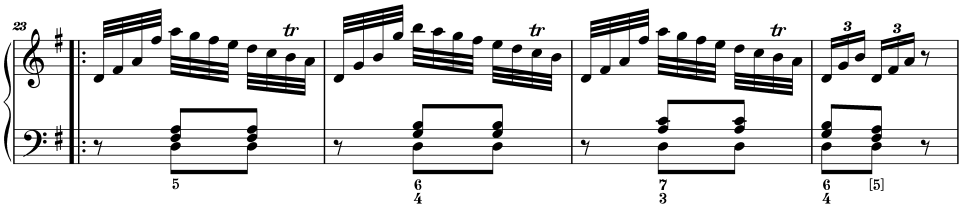

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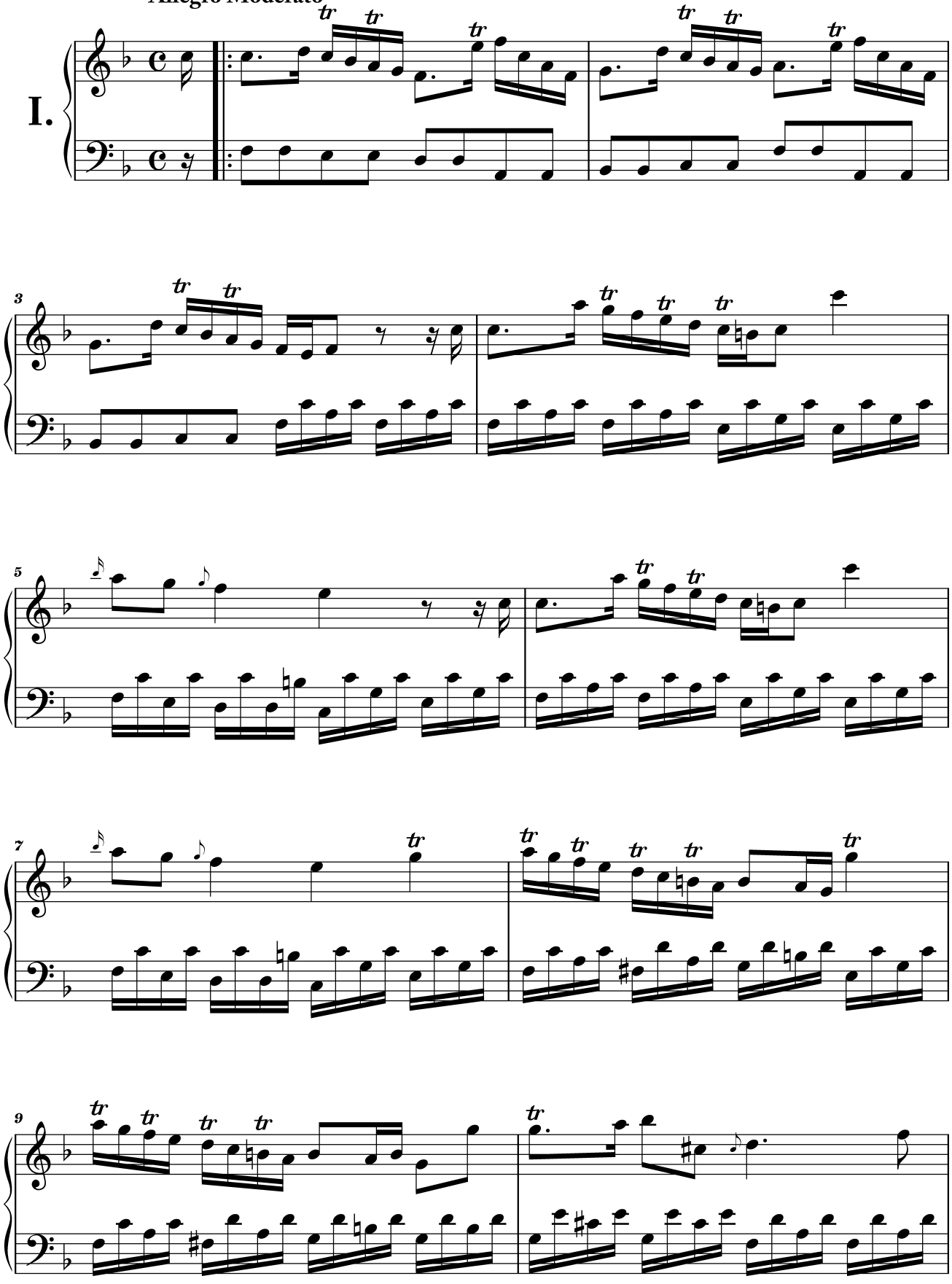

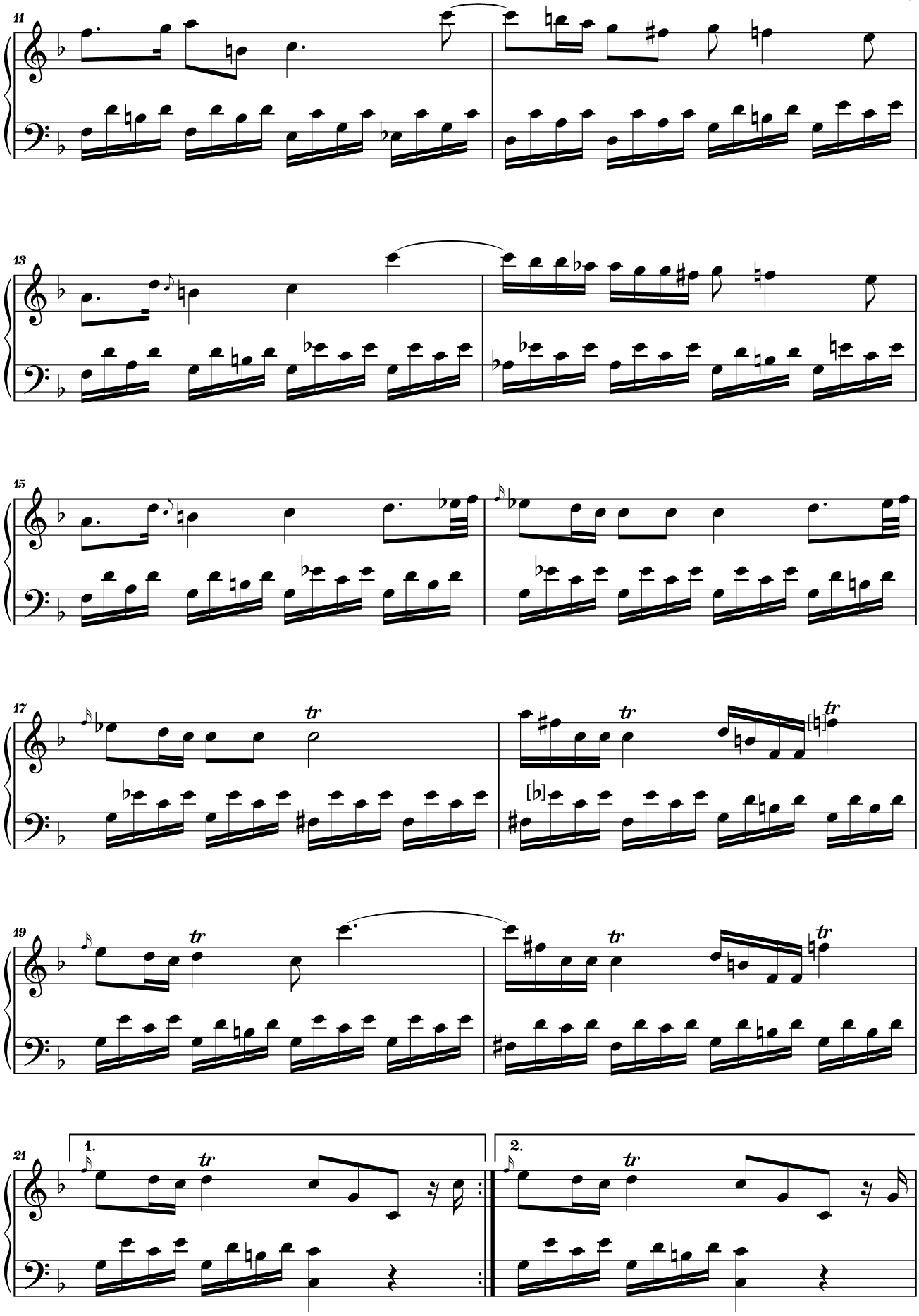
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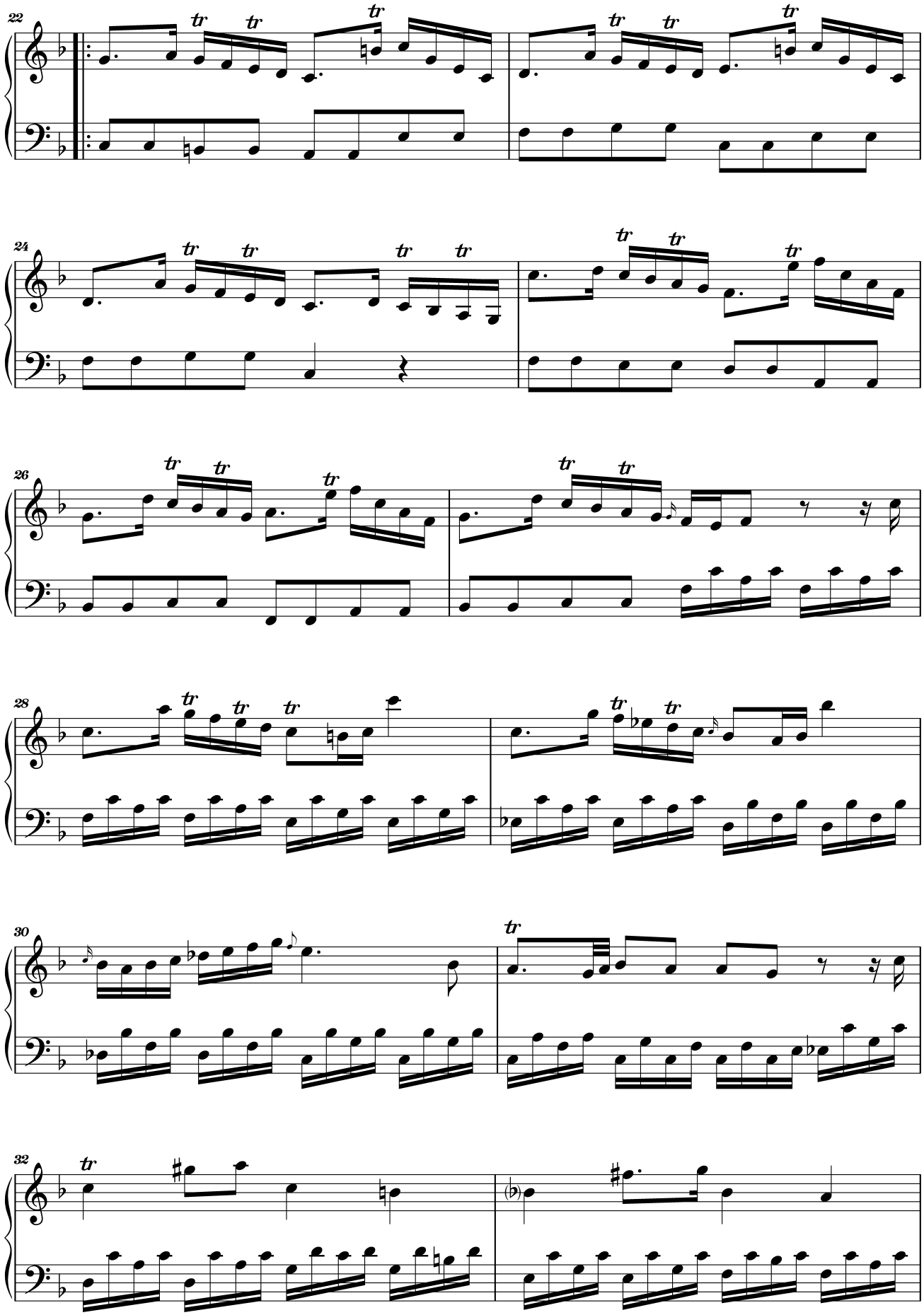
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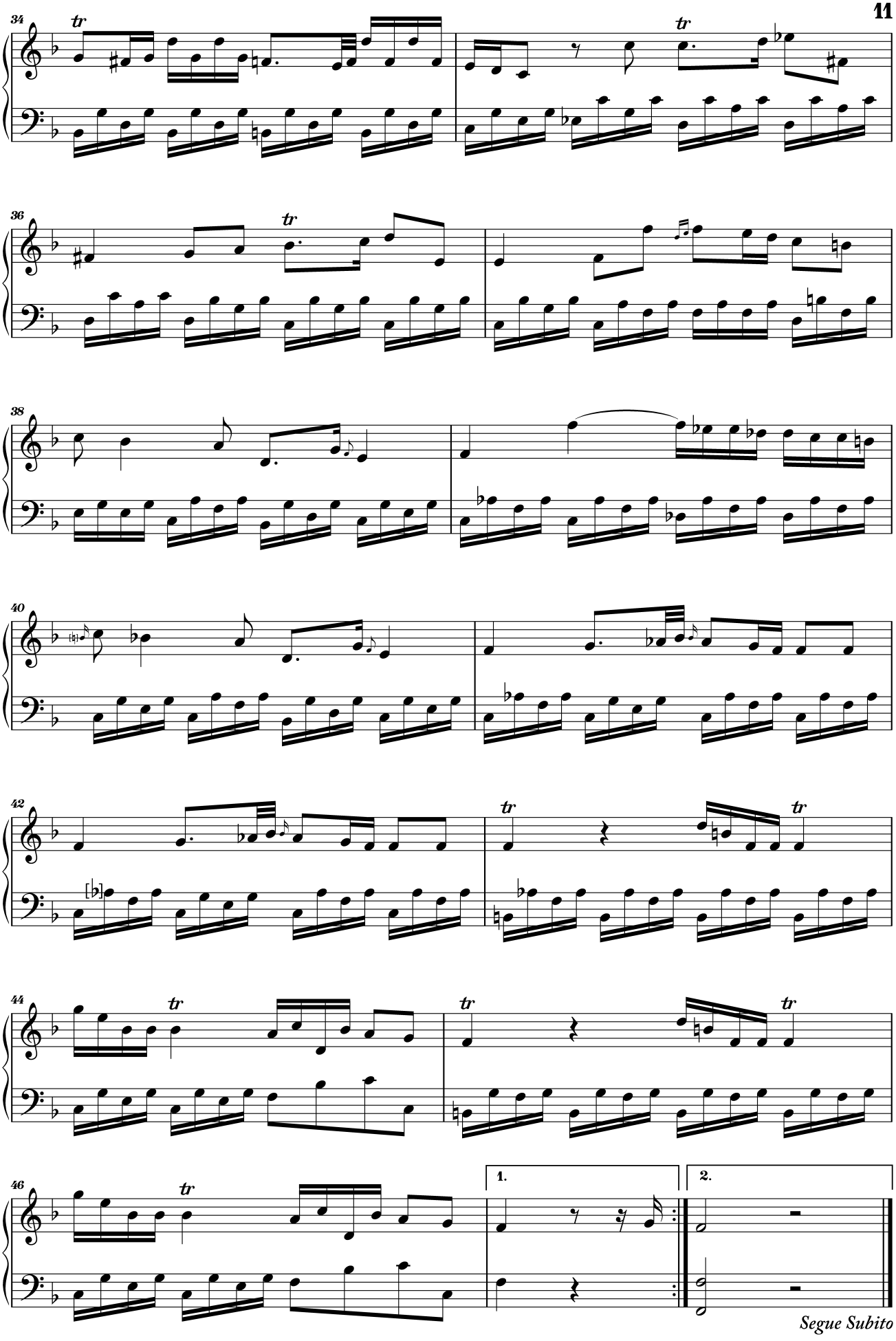
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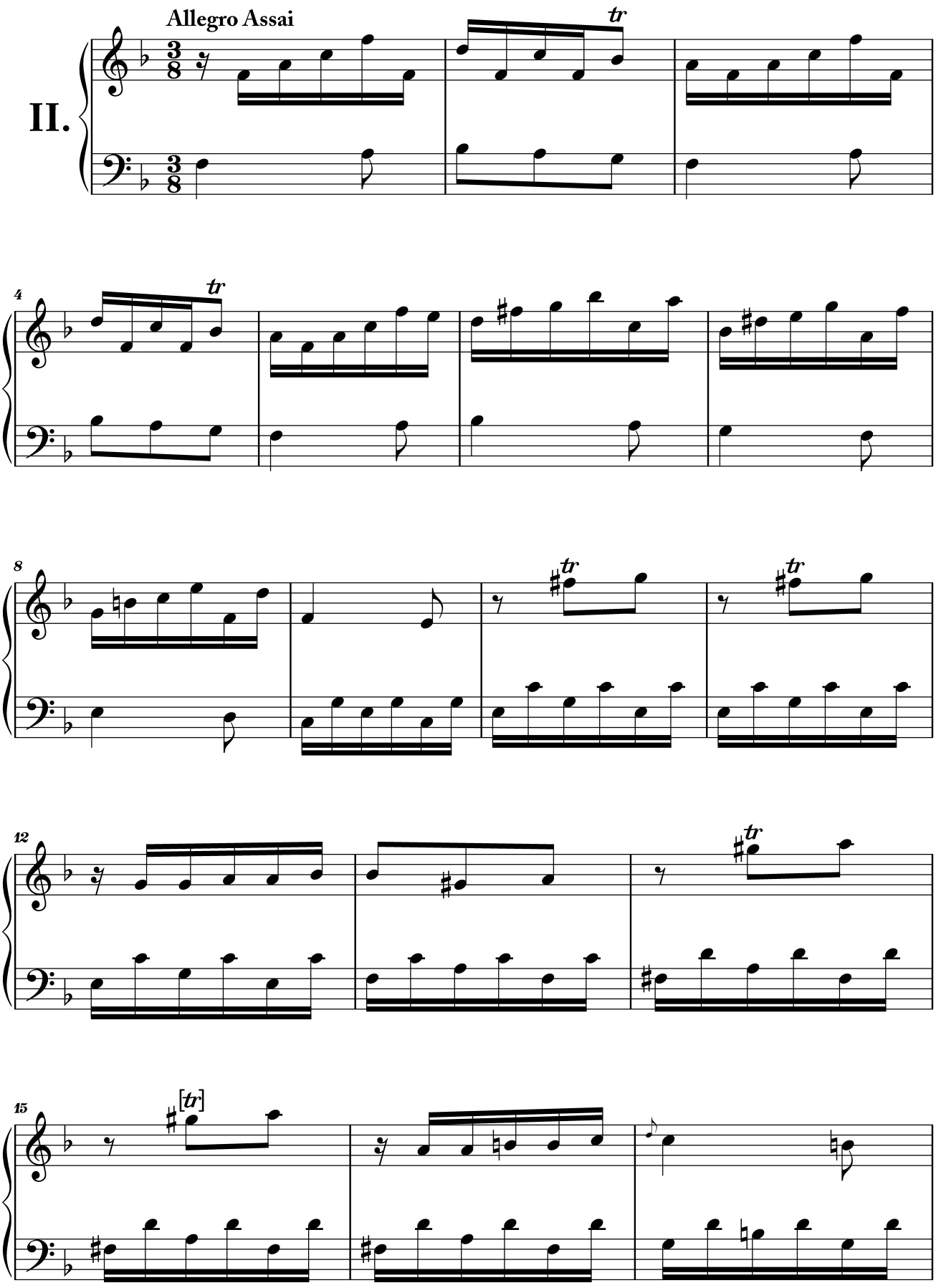
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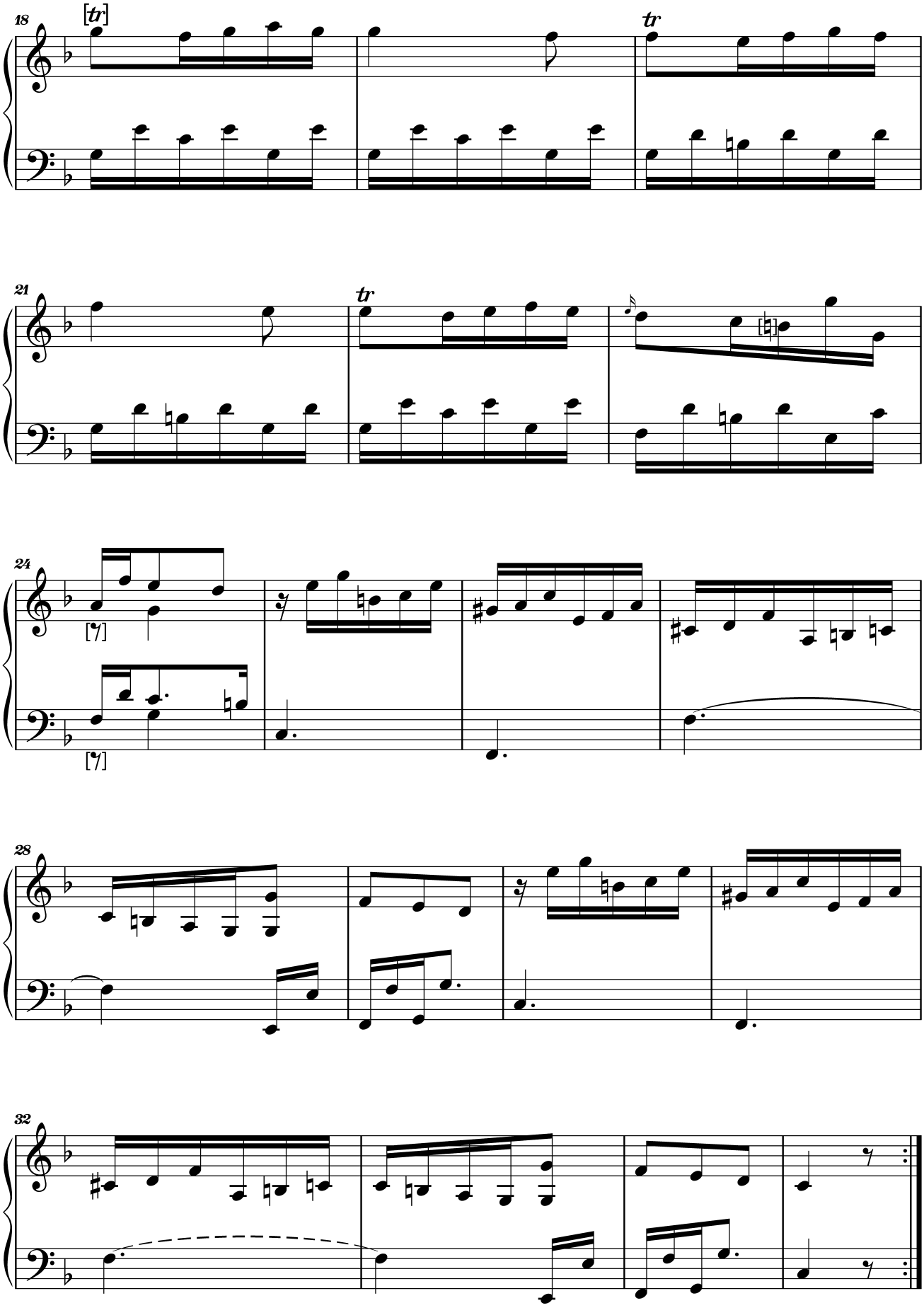
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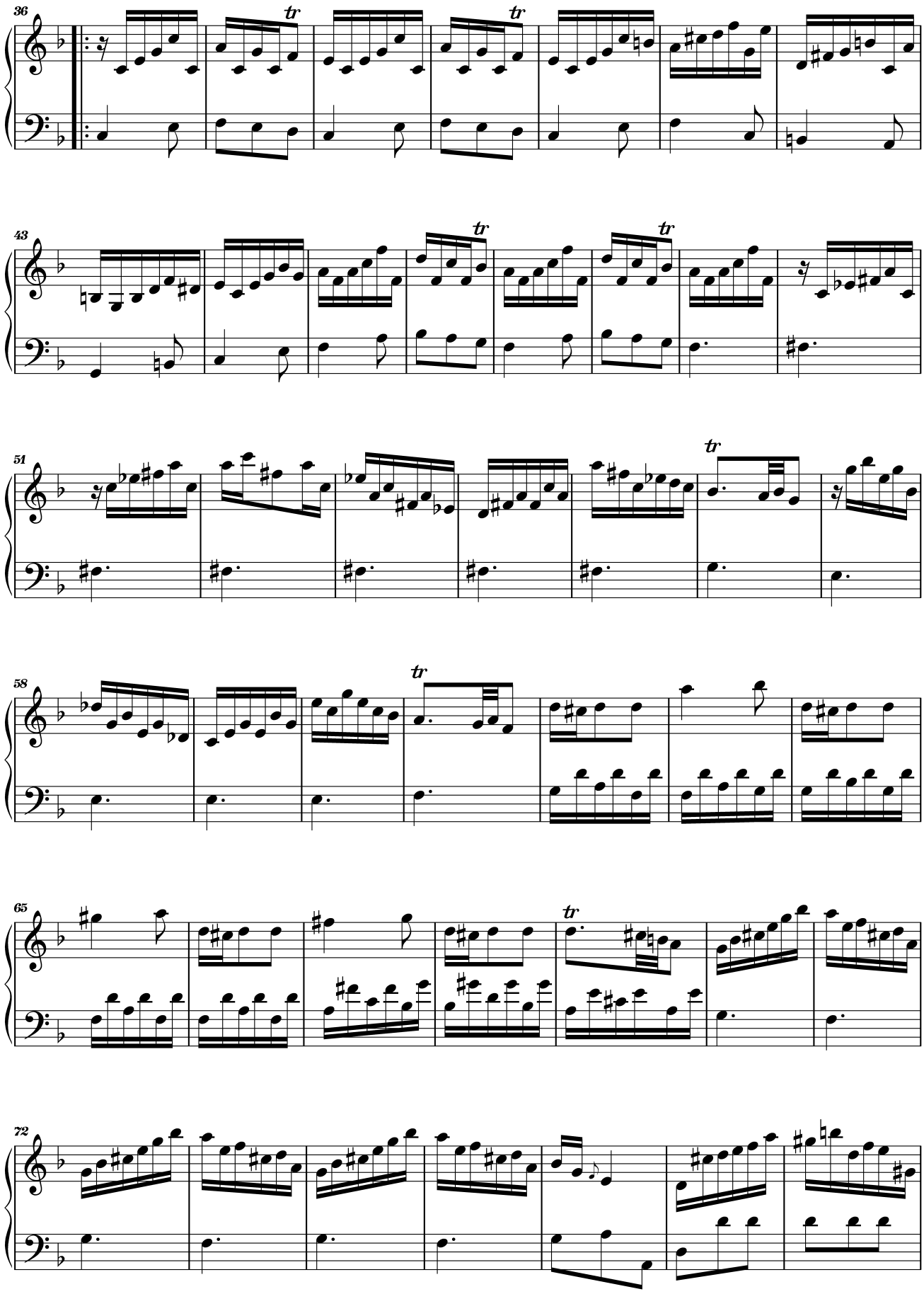
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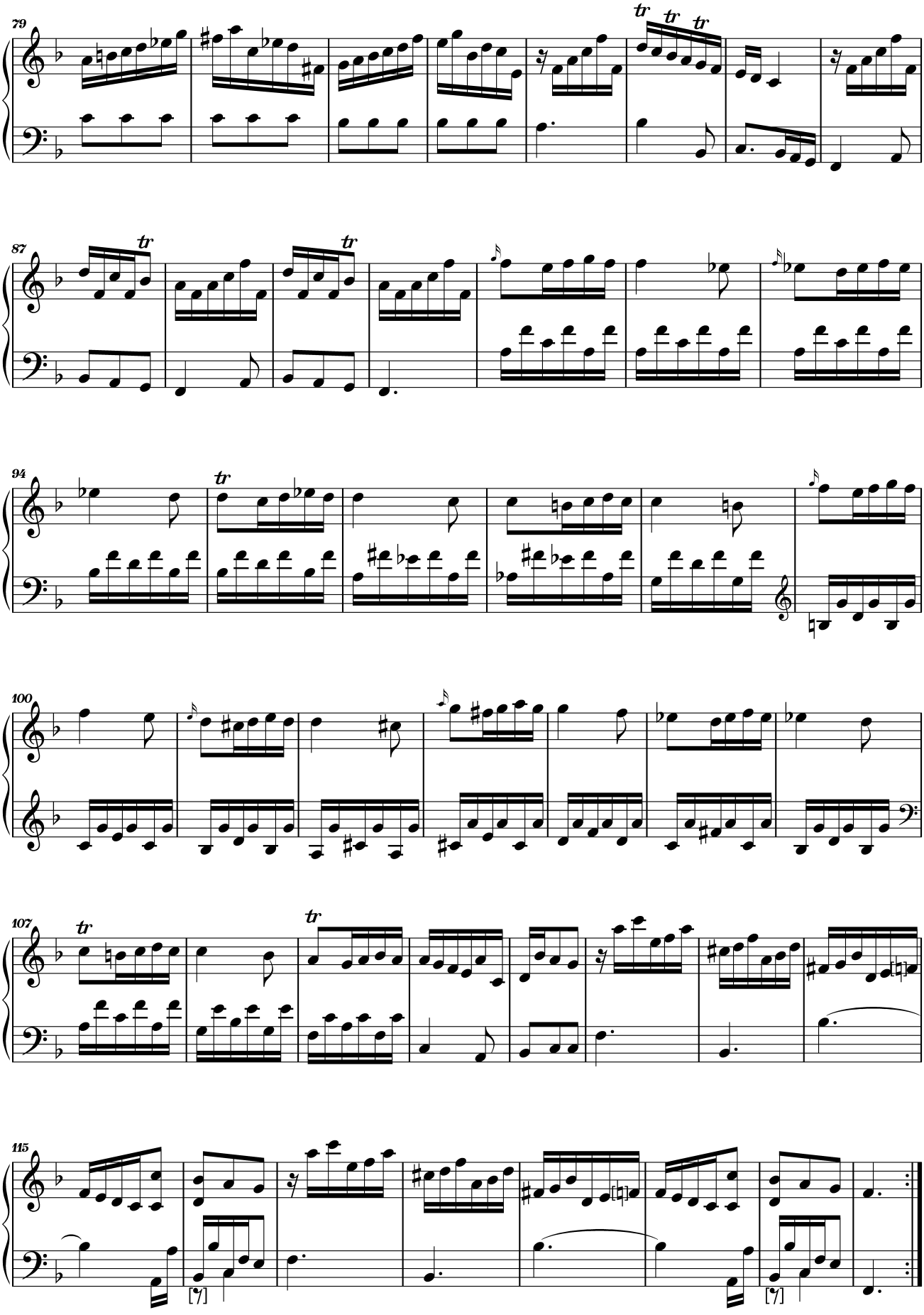
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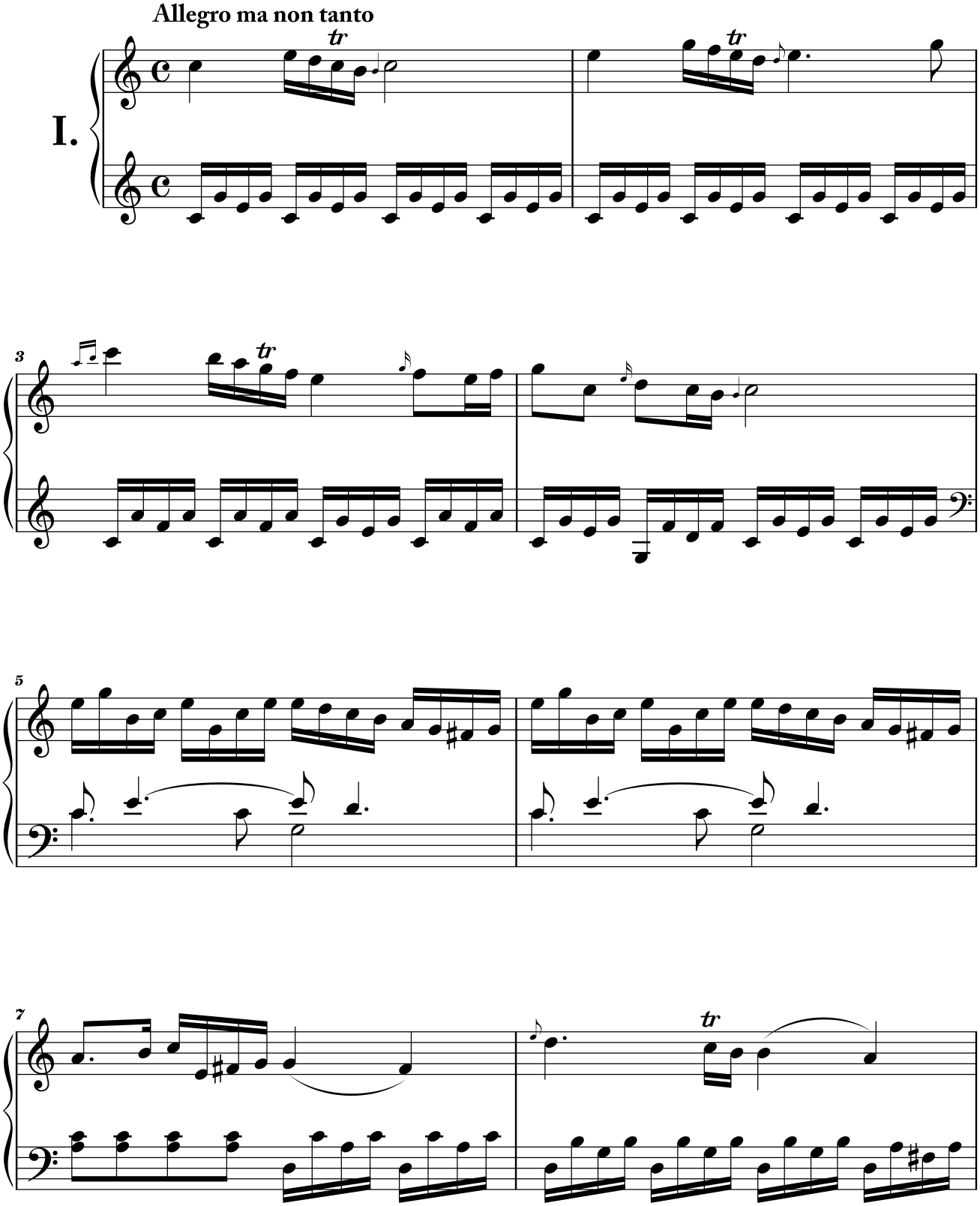

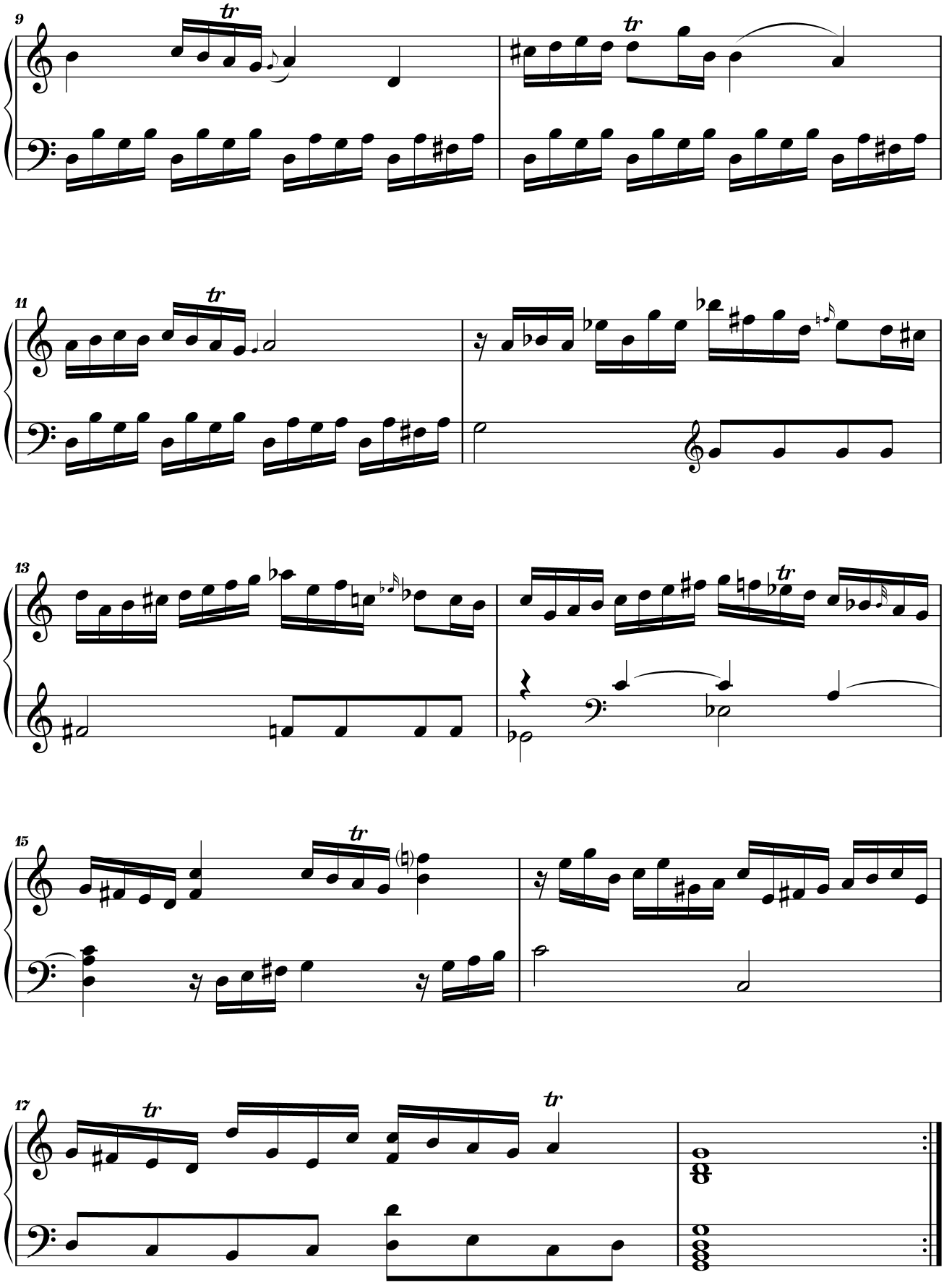
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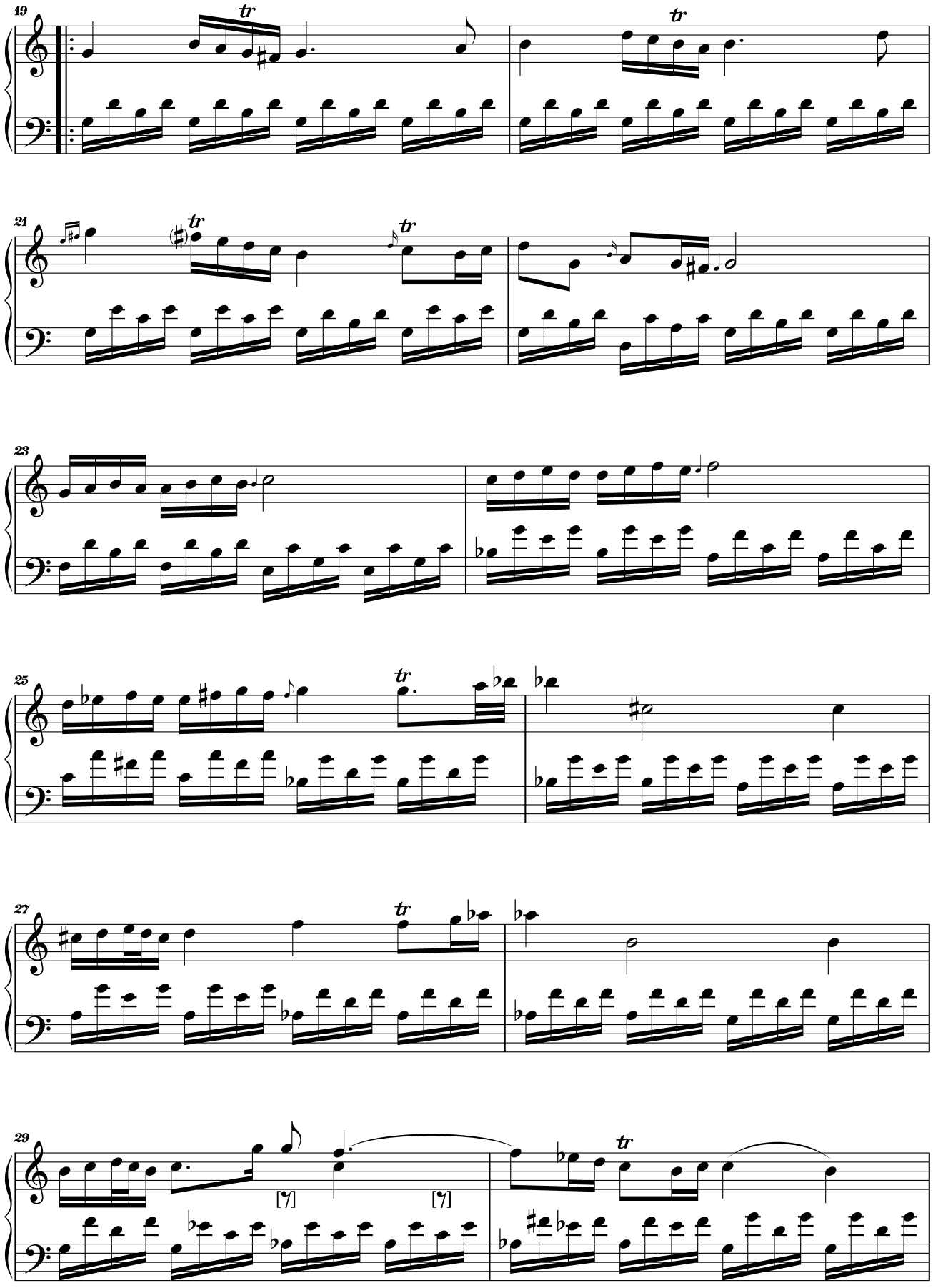
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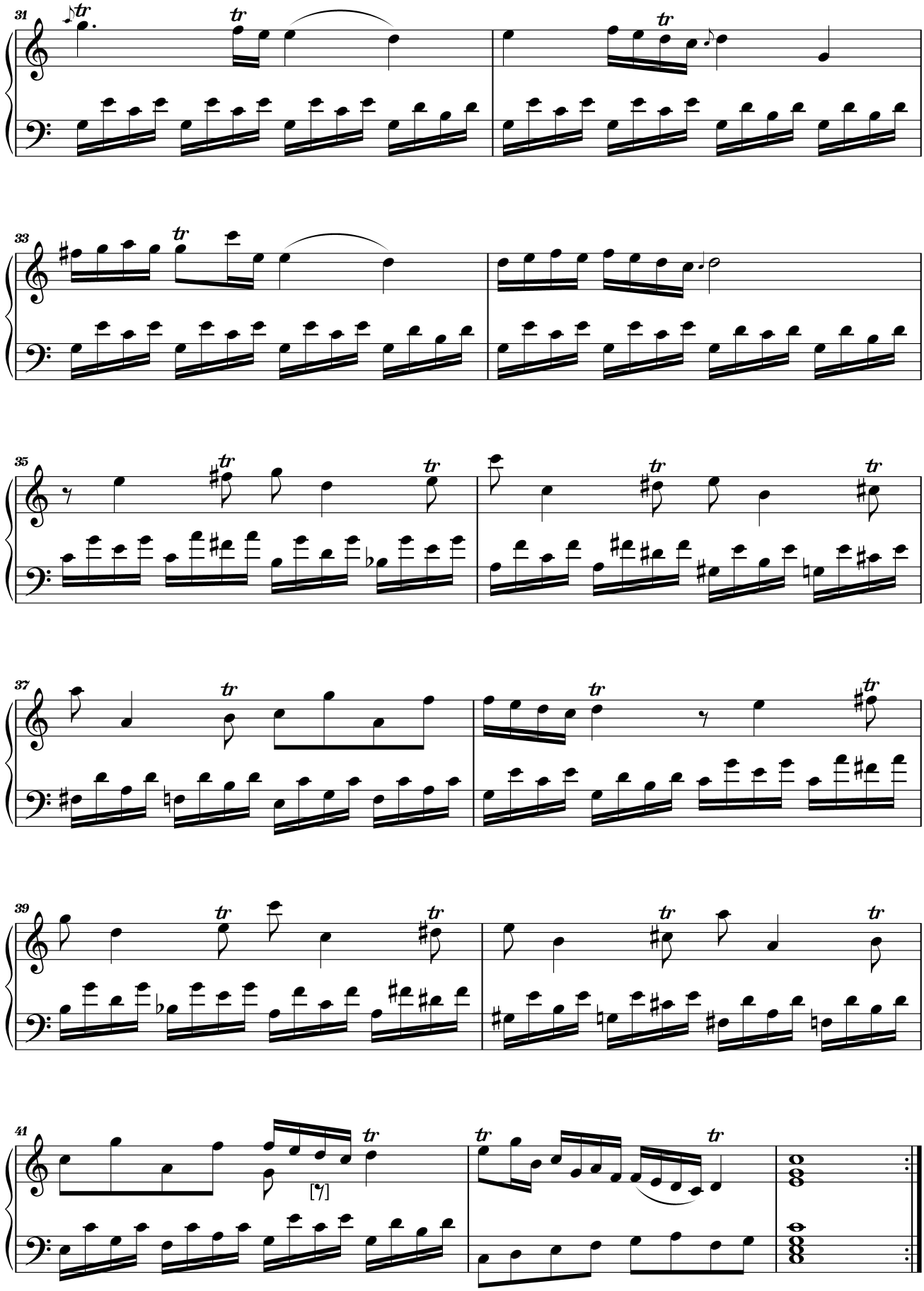
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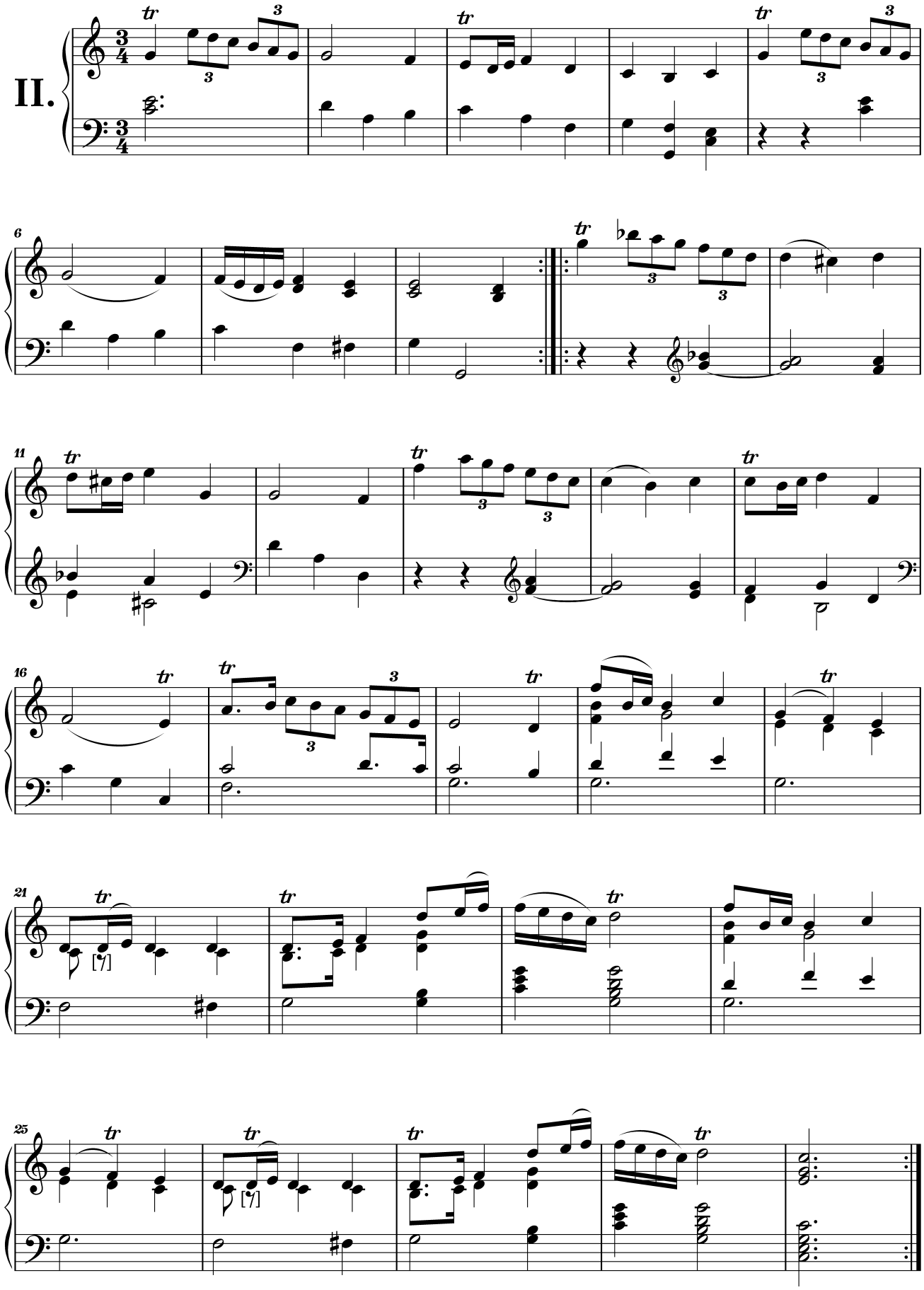

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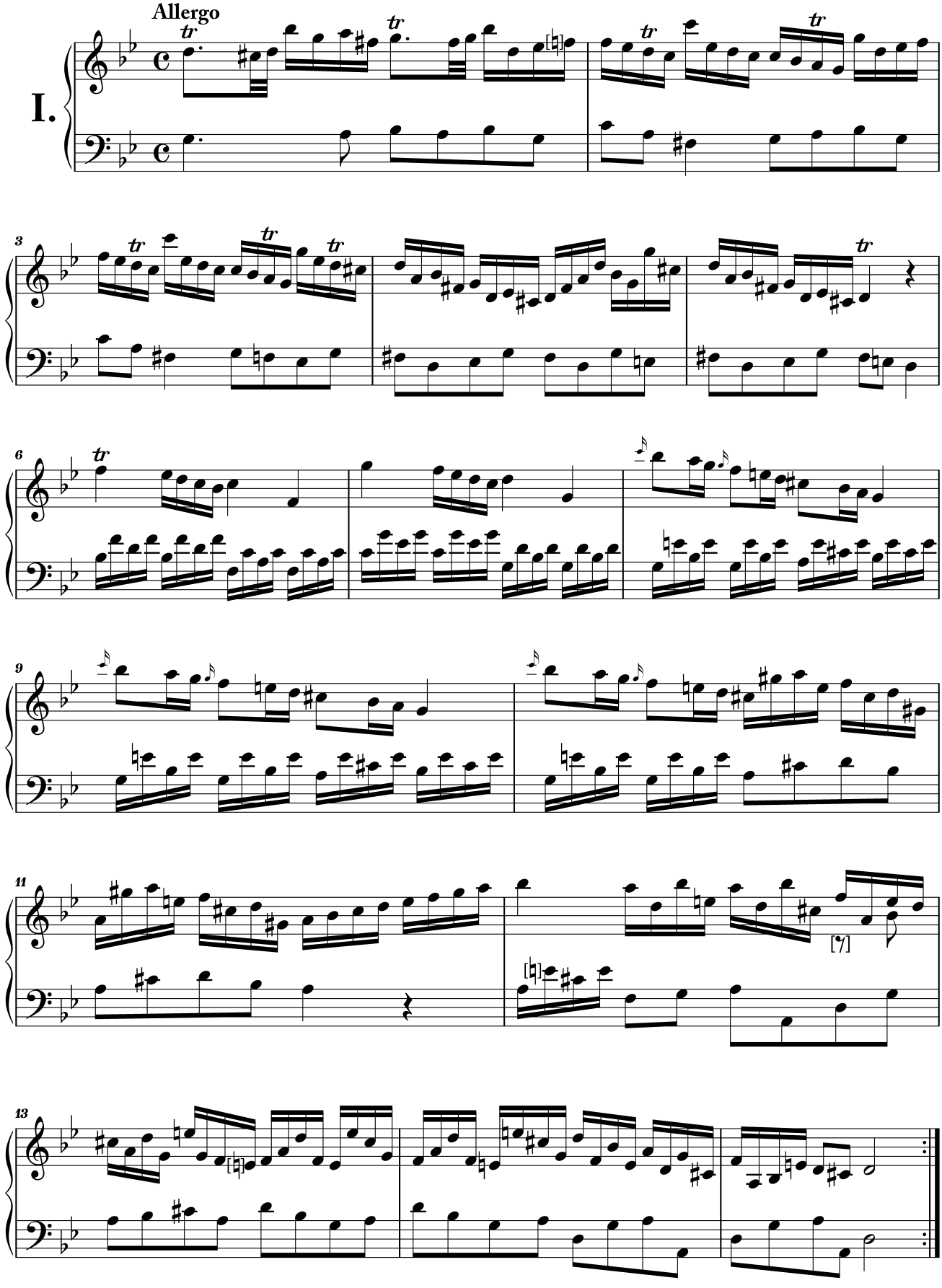

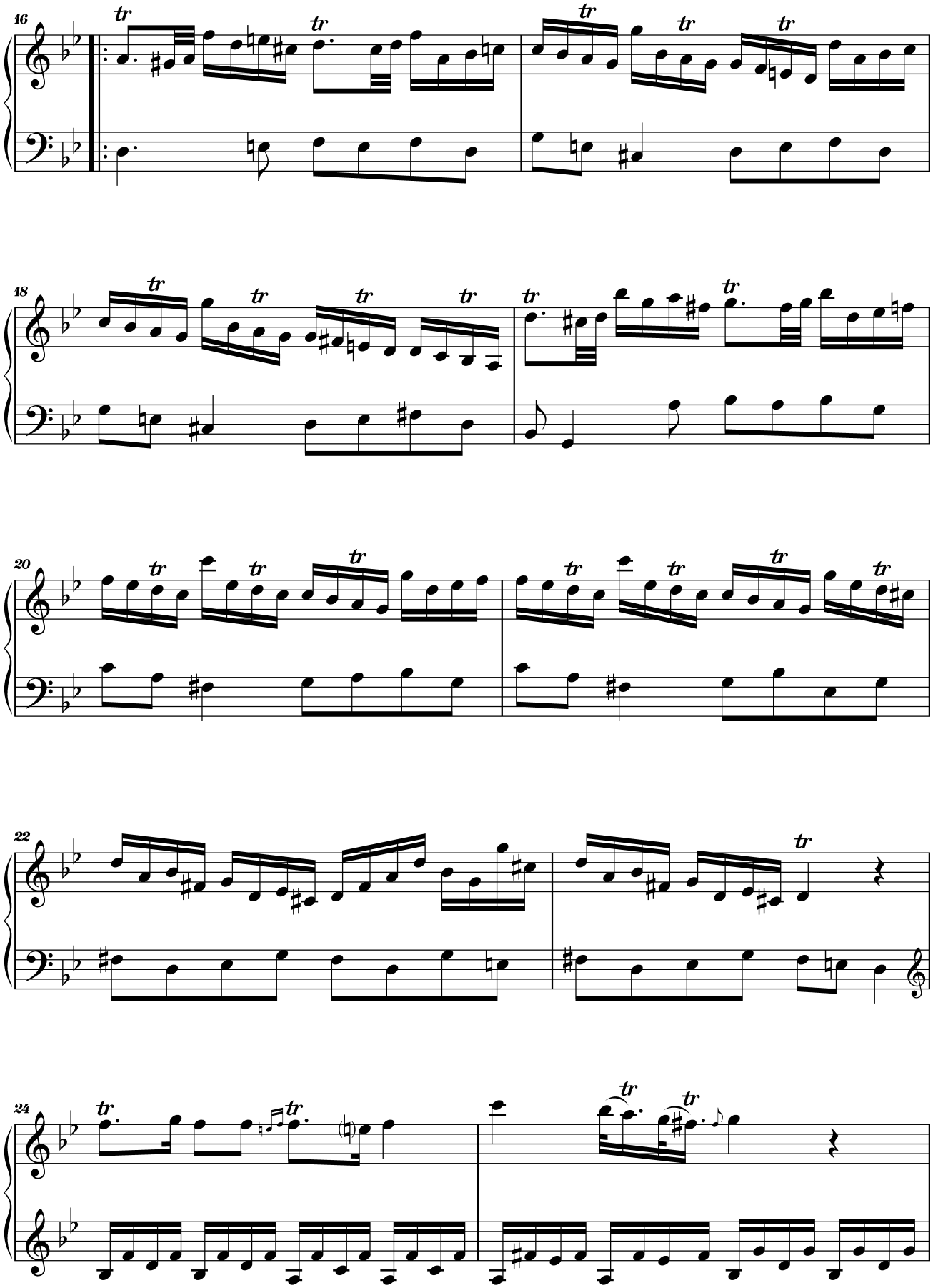
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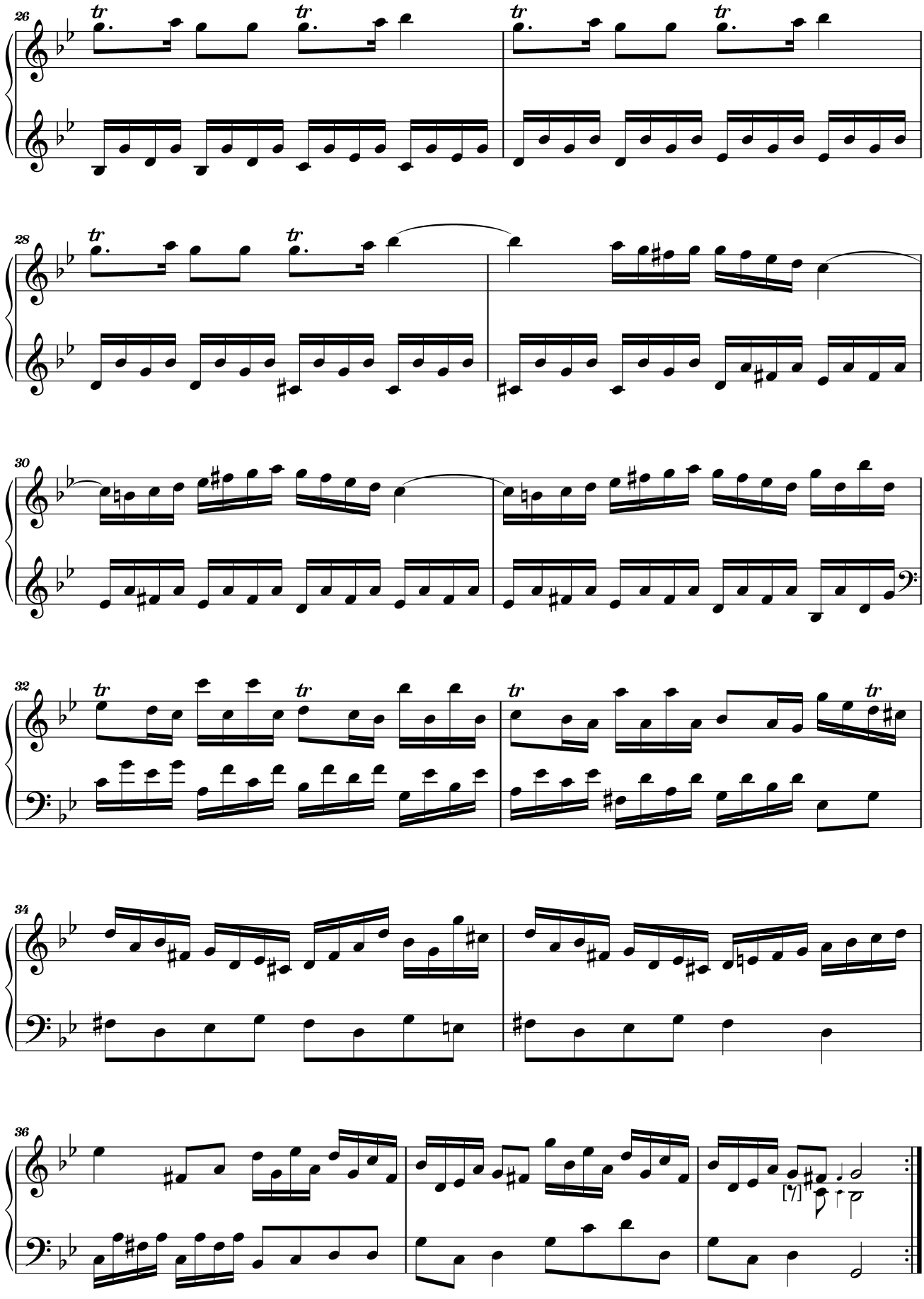
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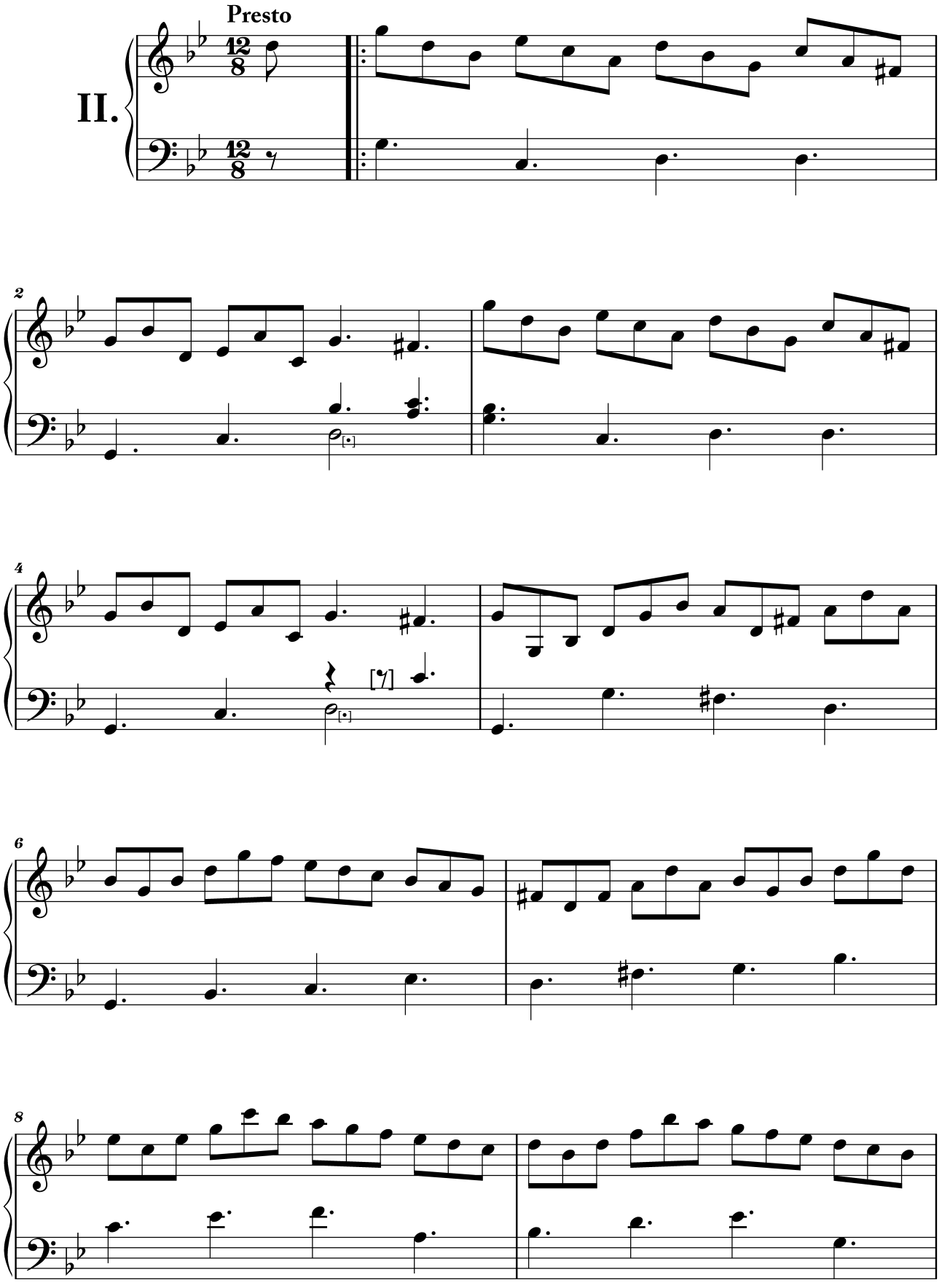

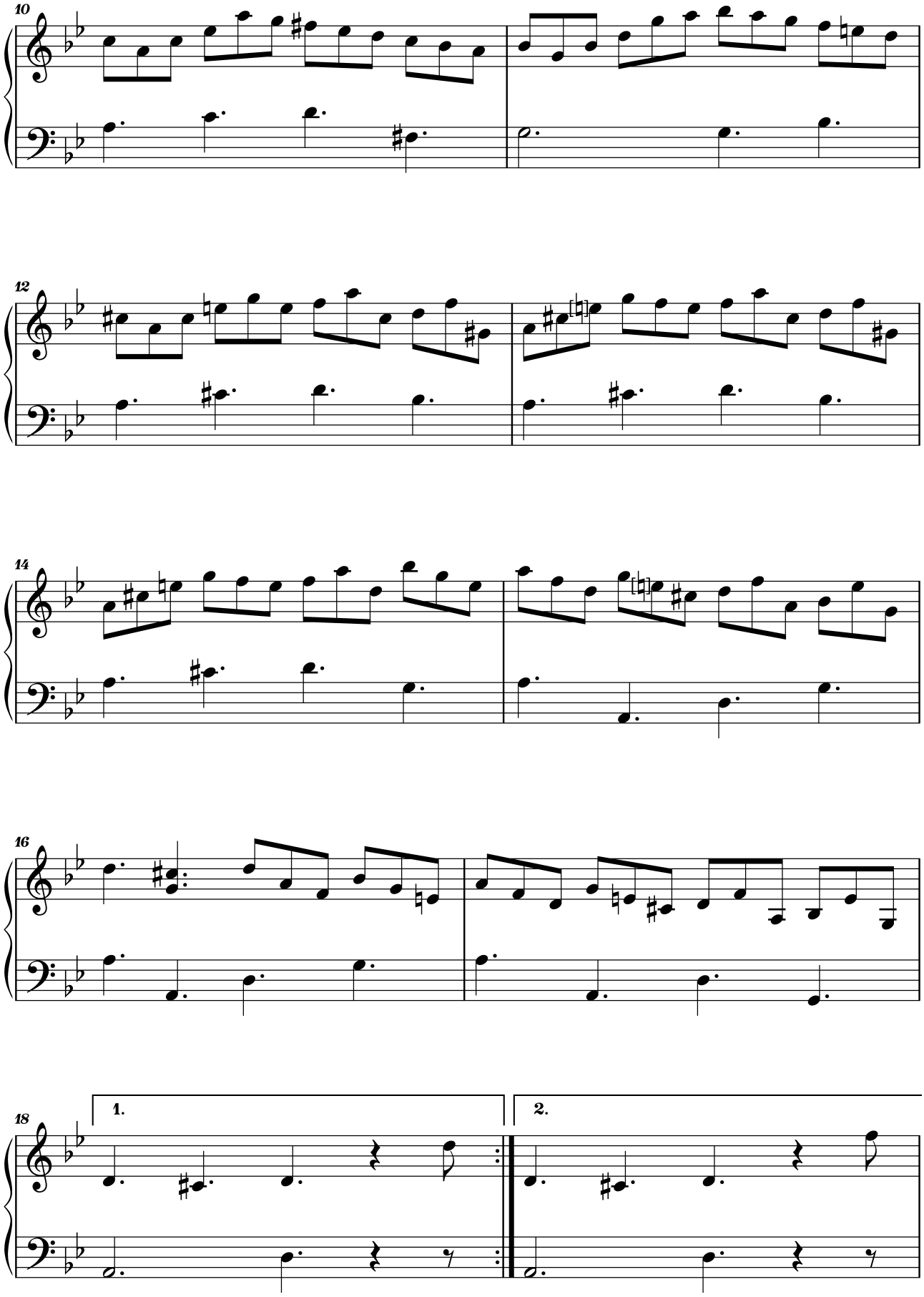
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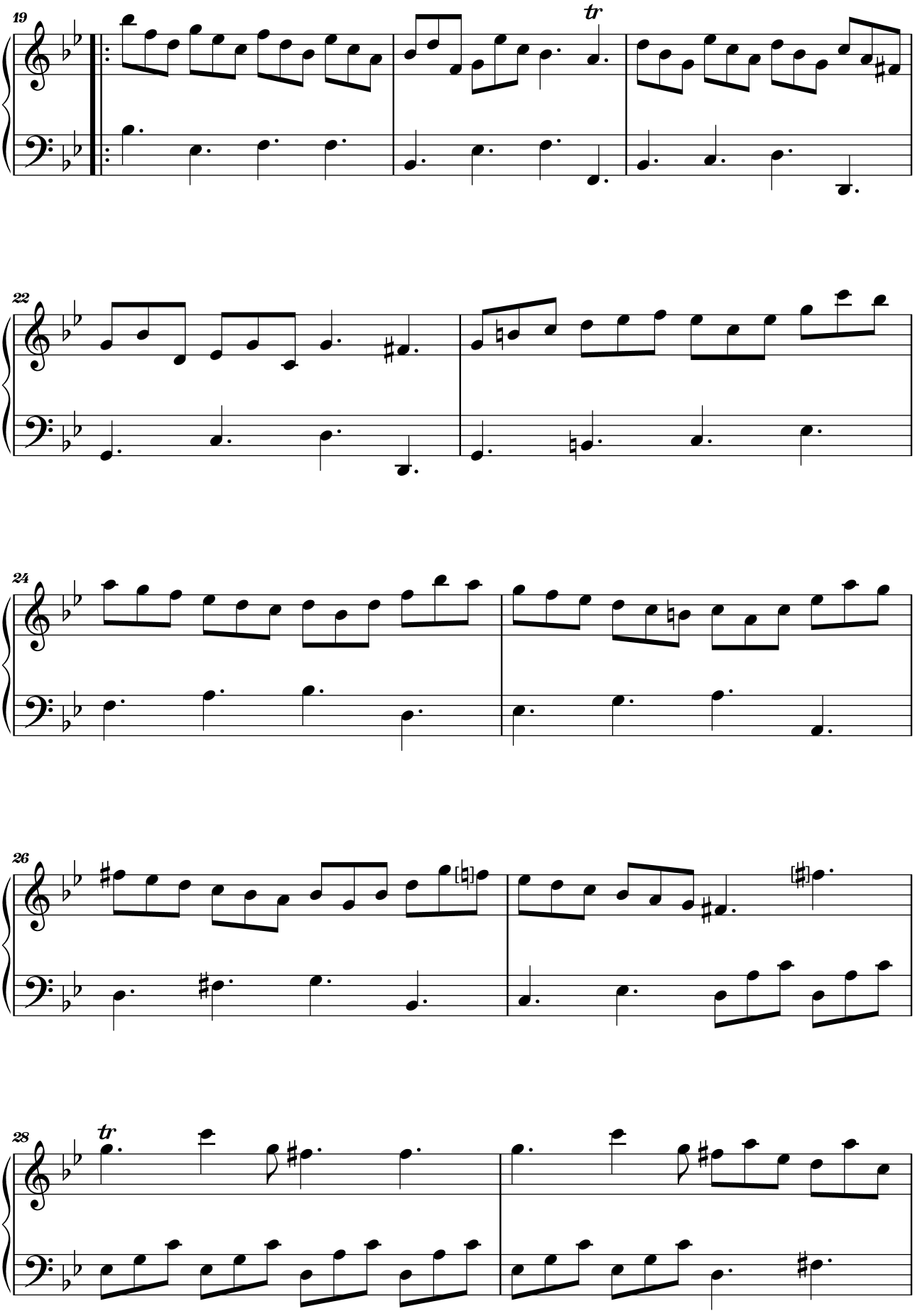
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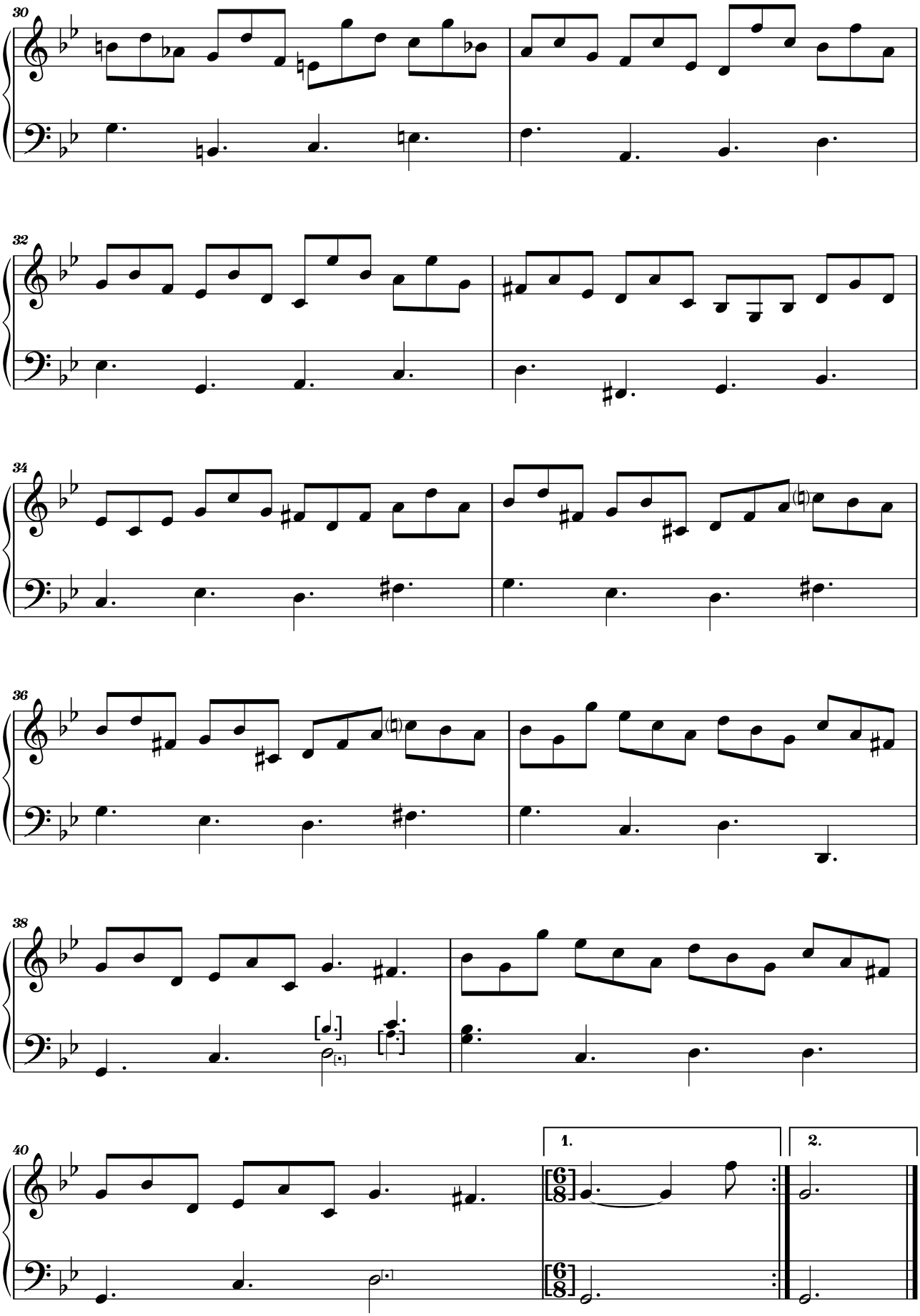
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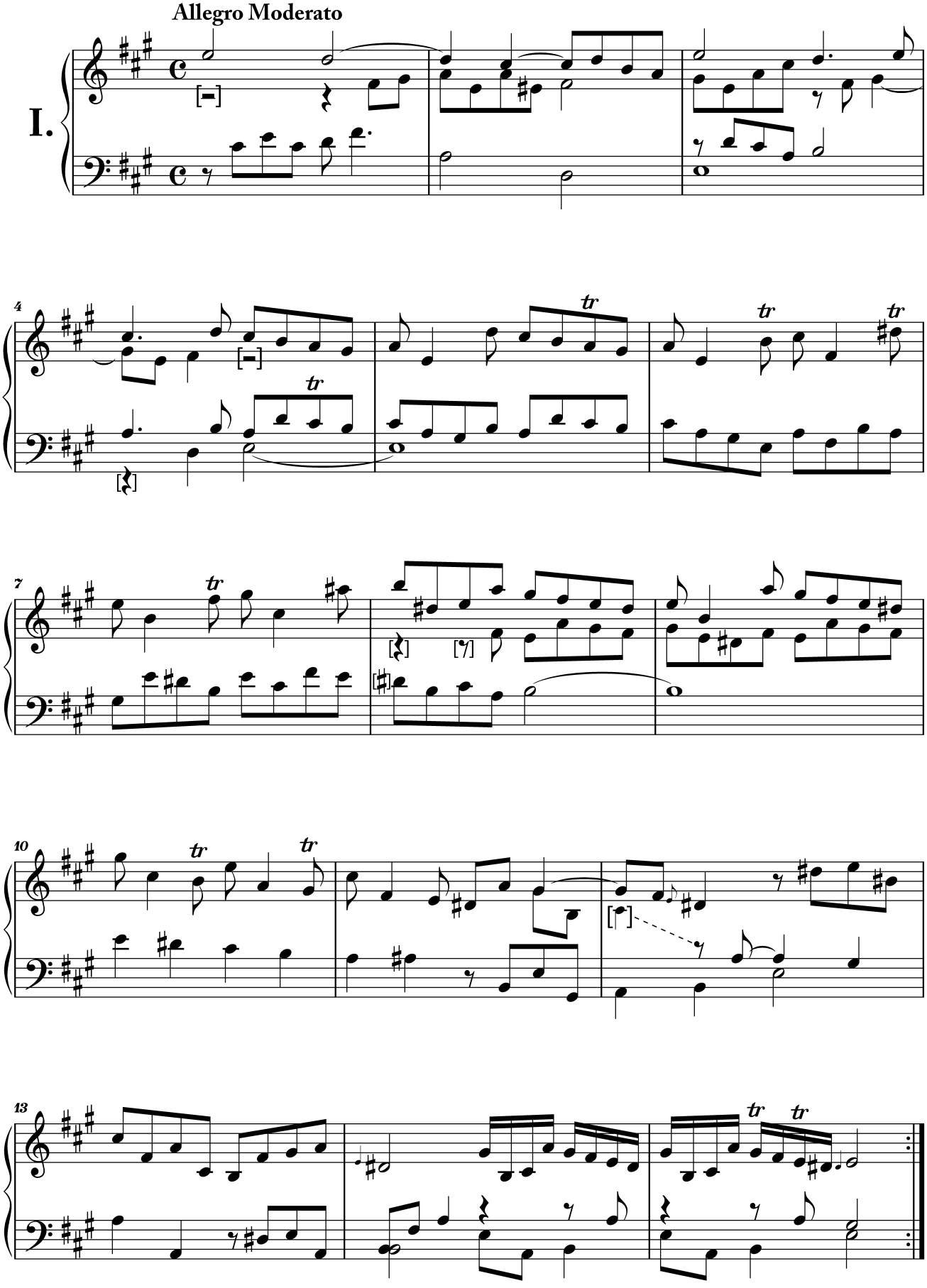

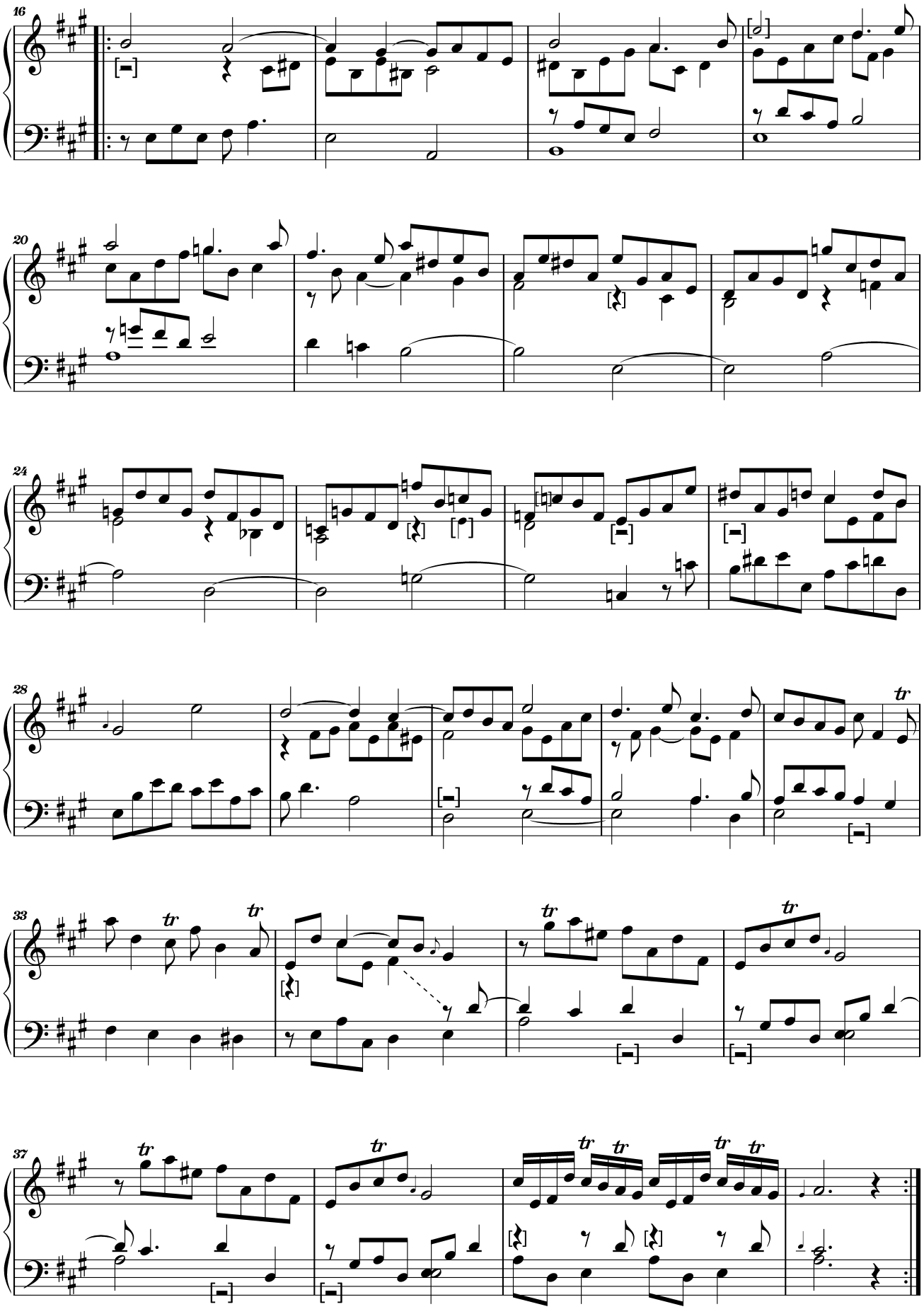
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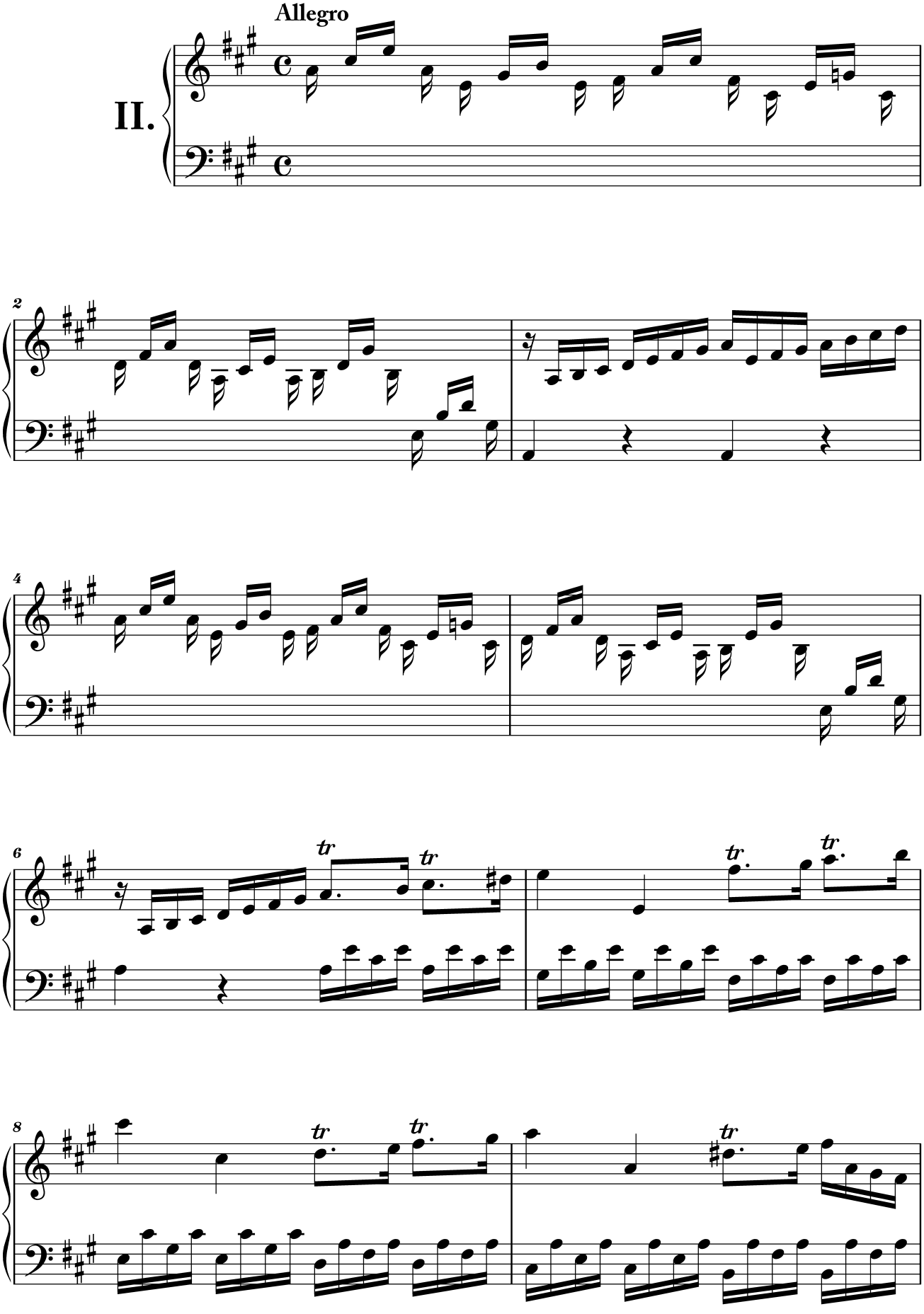
Allegro
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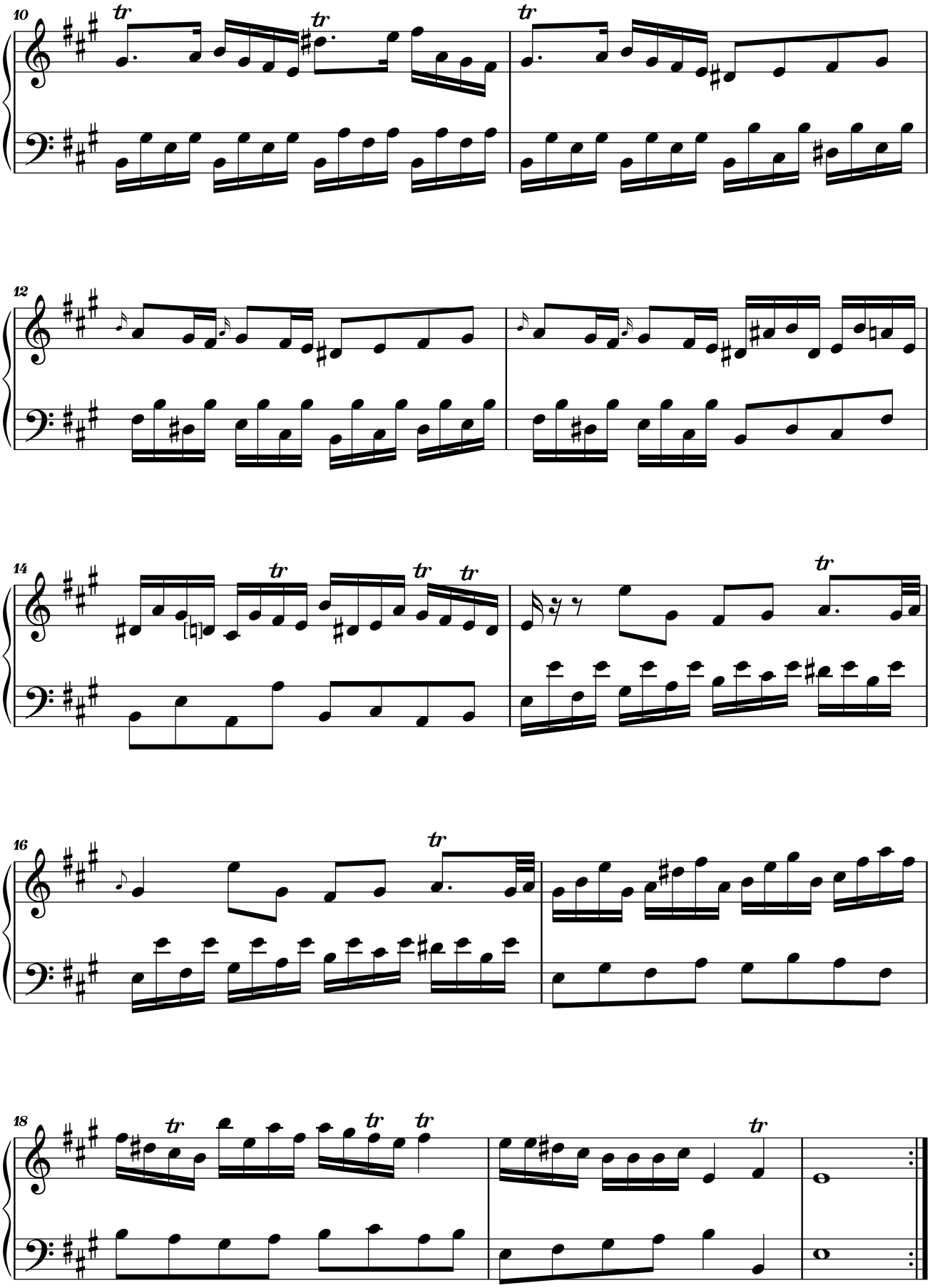
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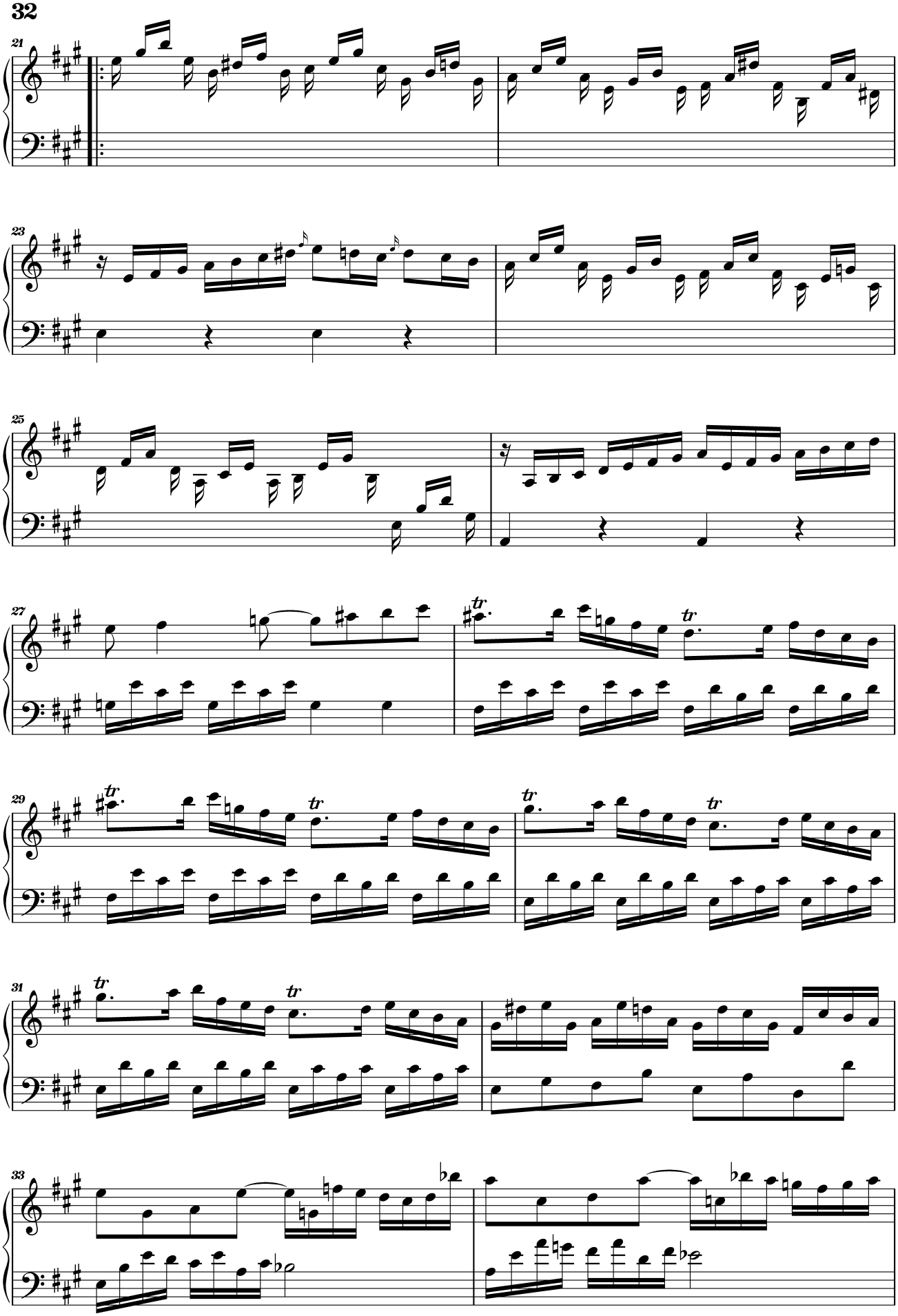
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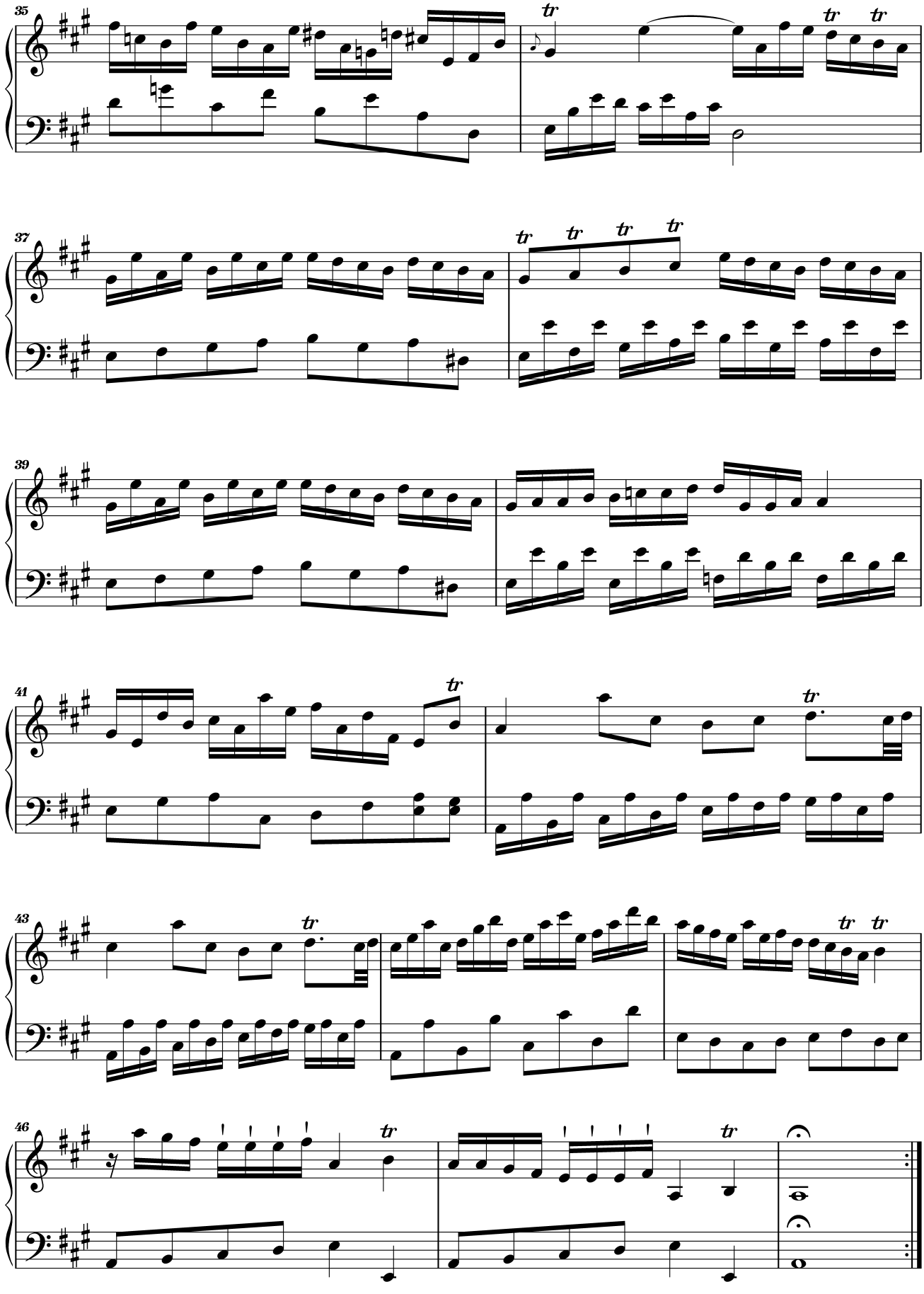
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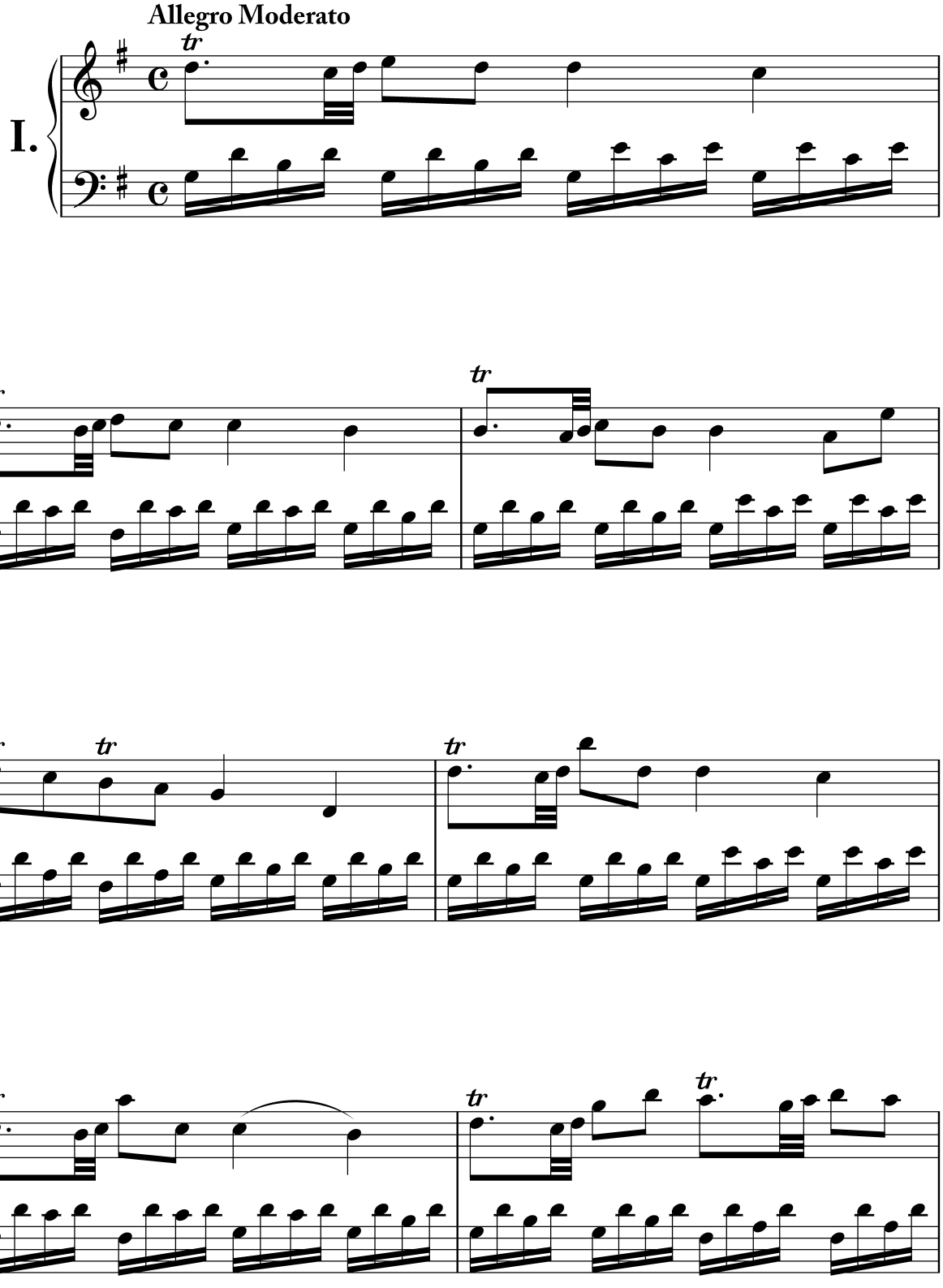

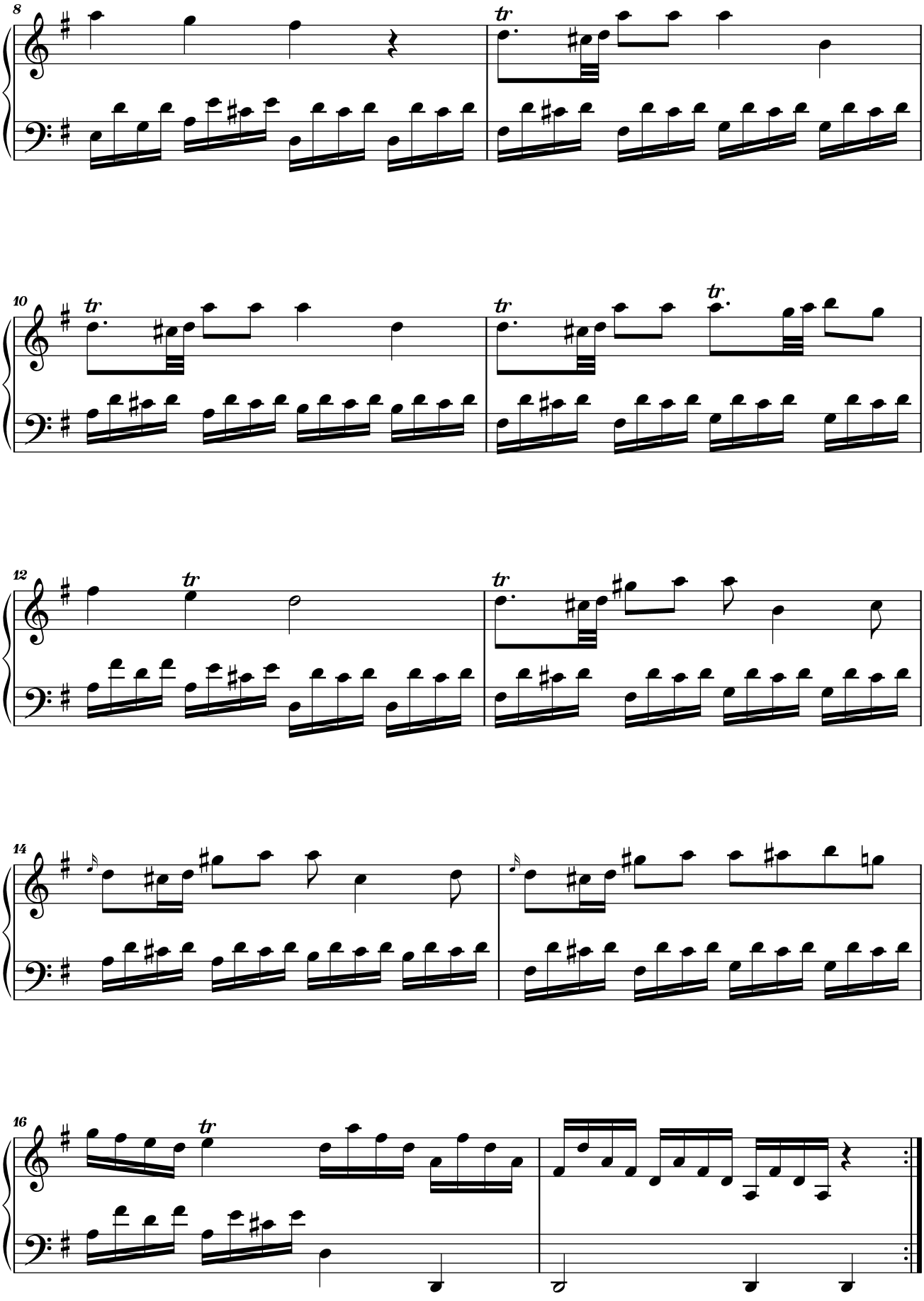
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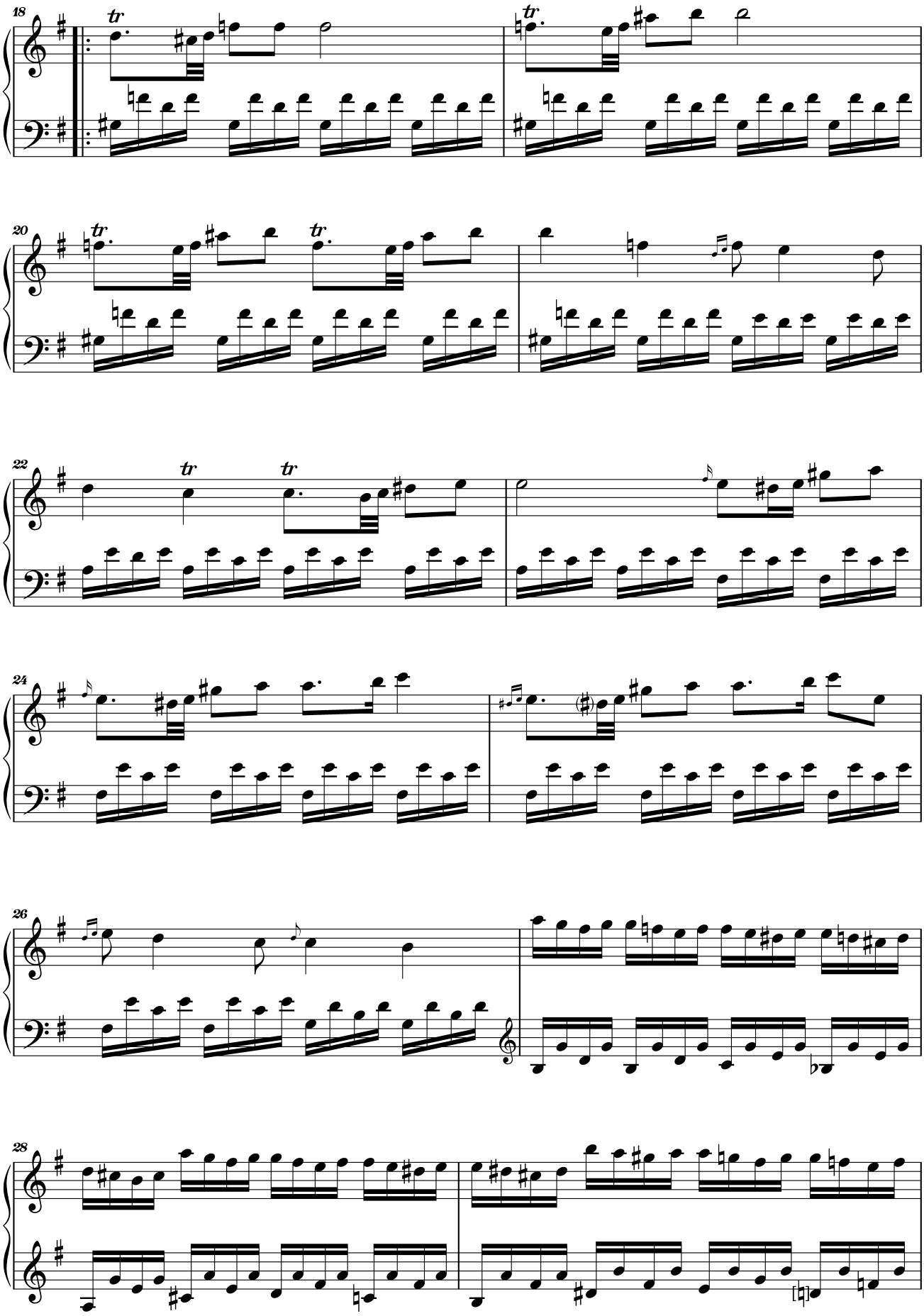
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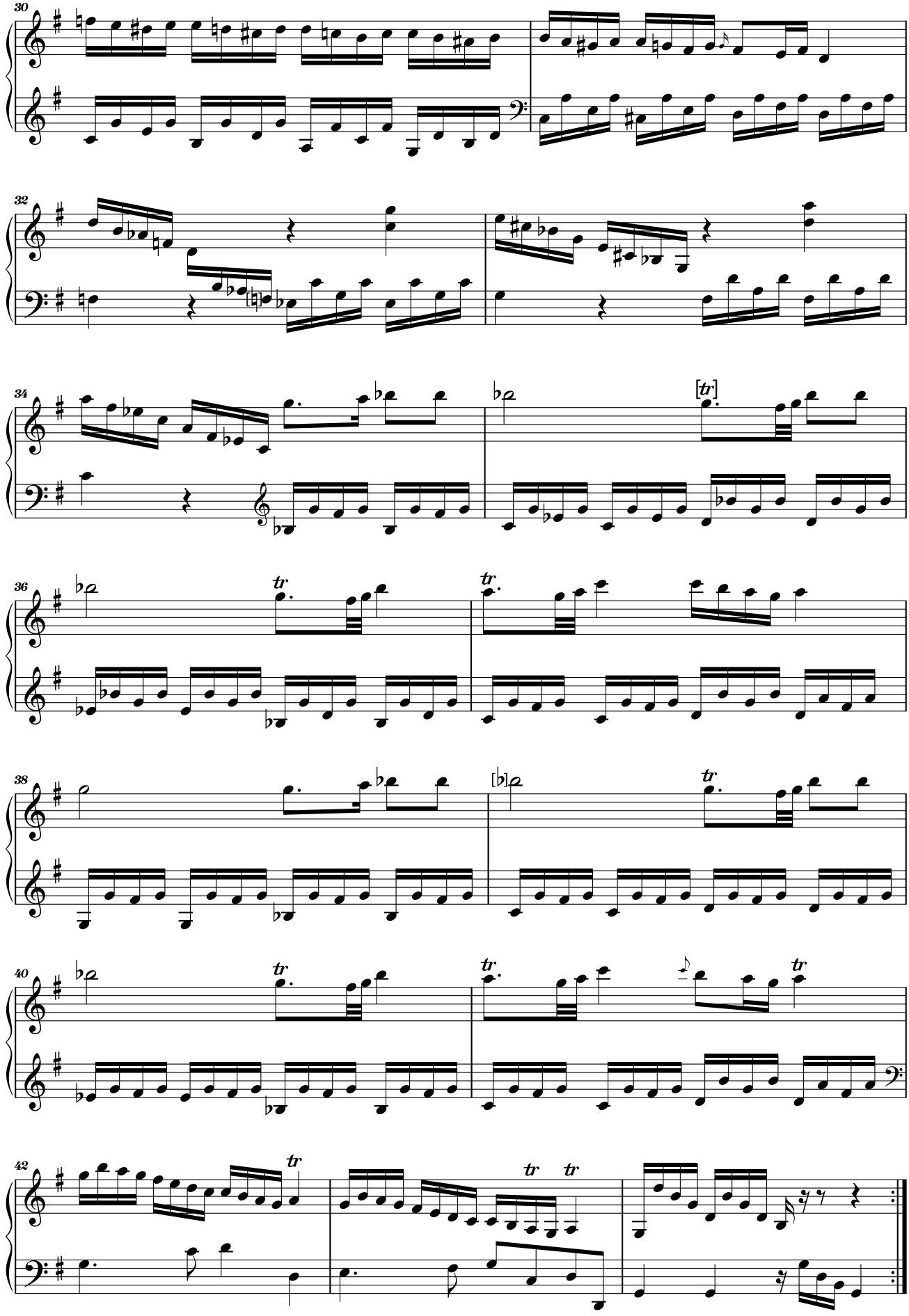
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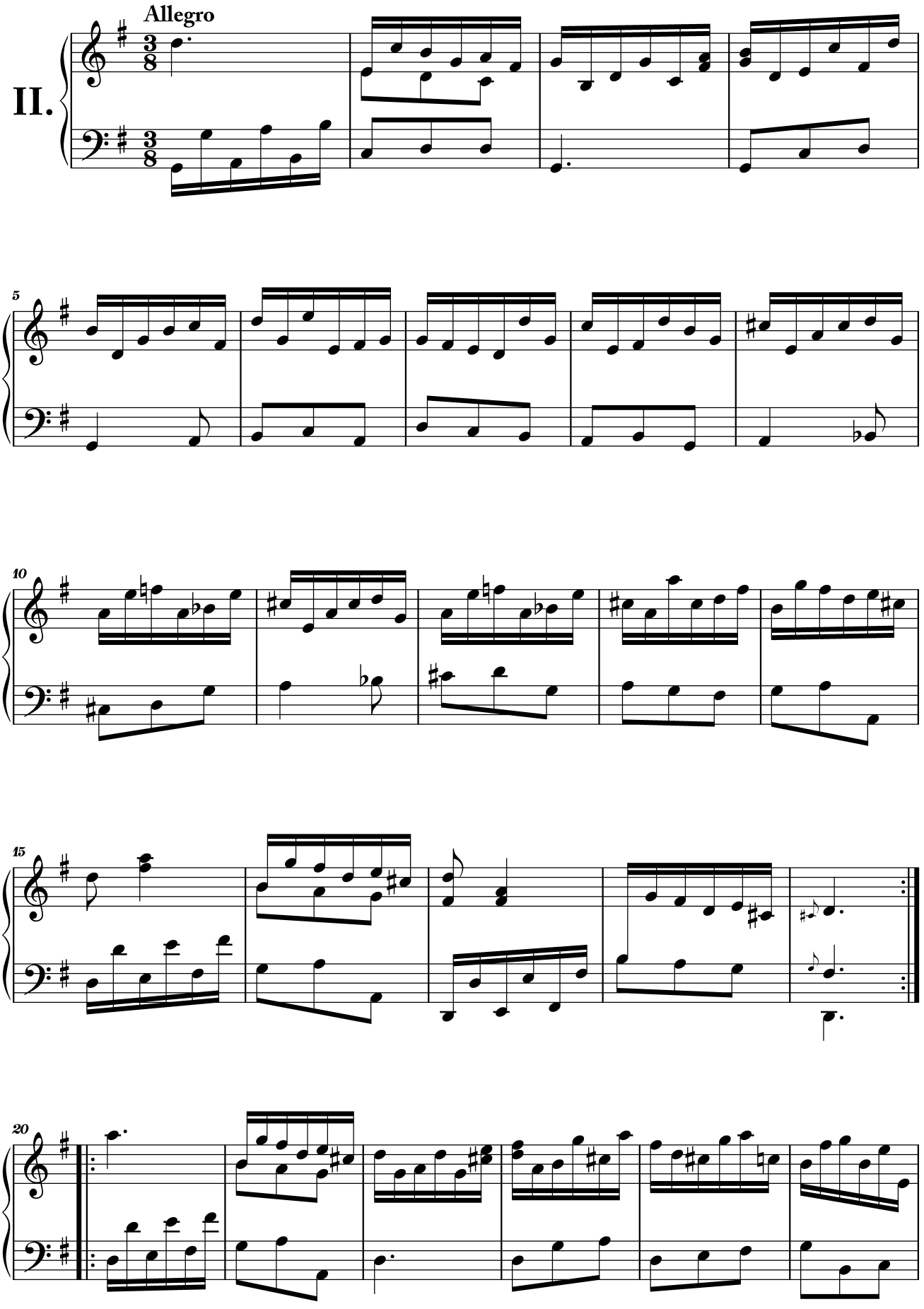
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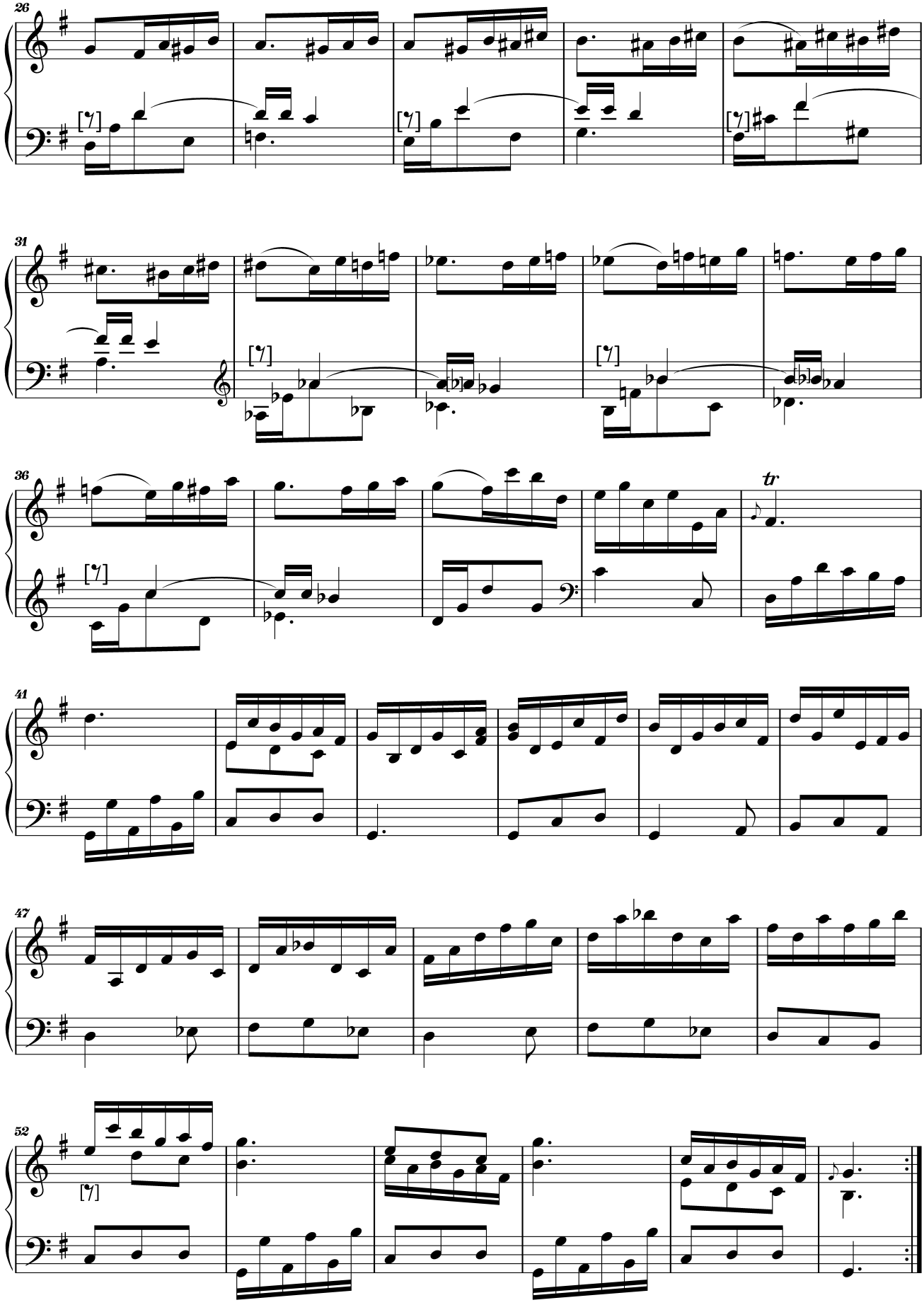
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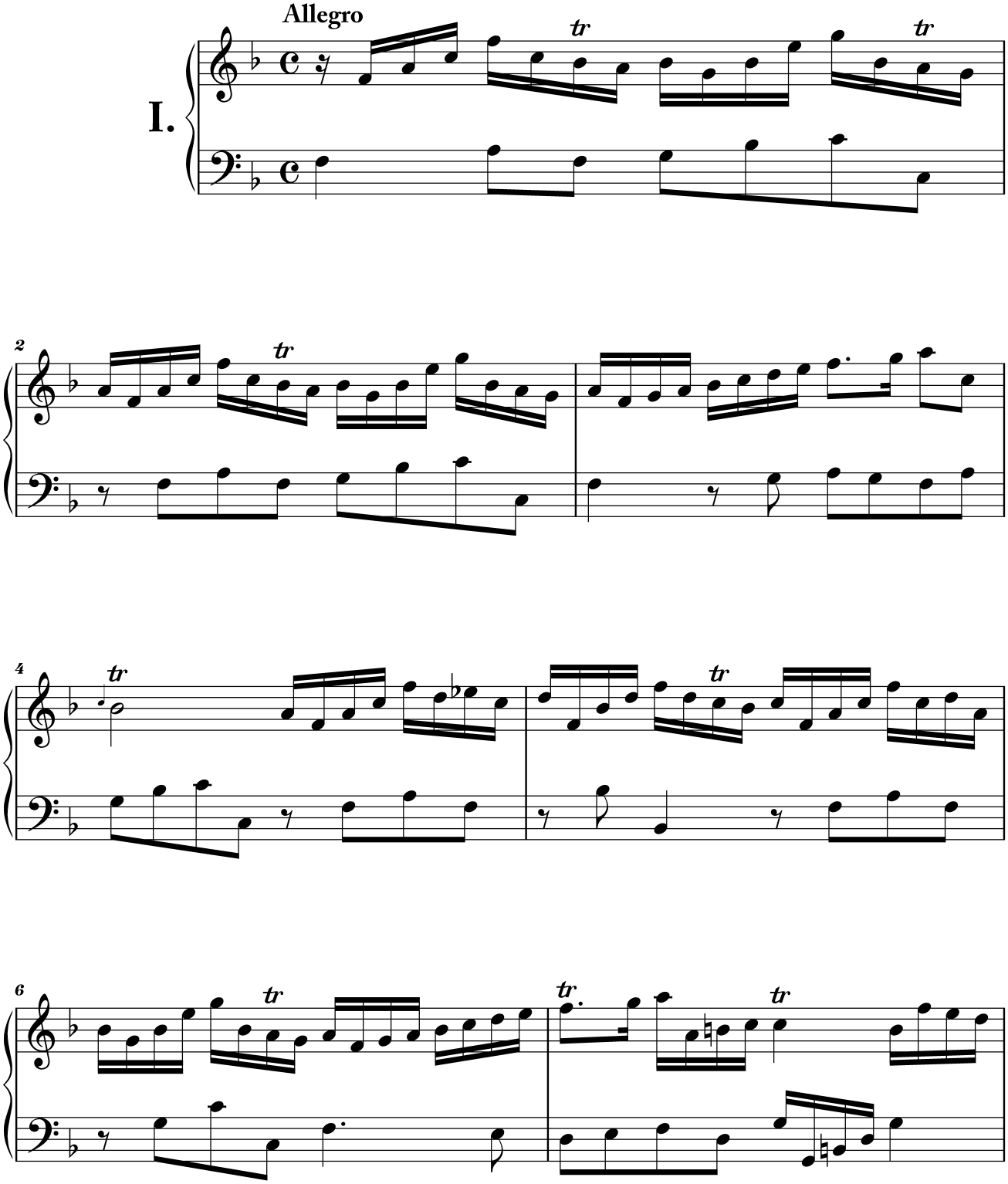
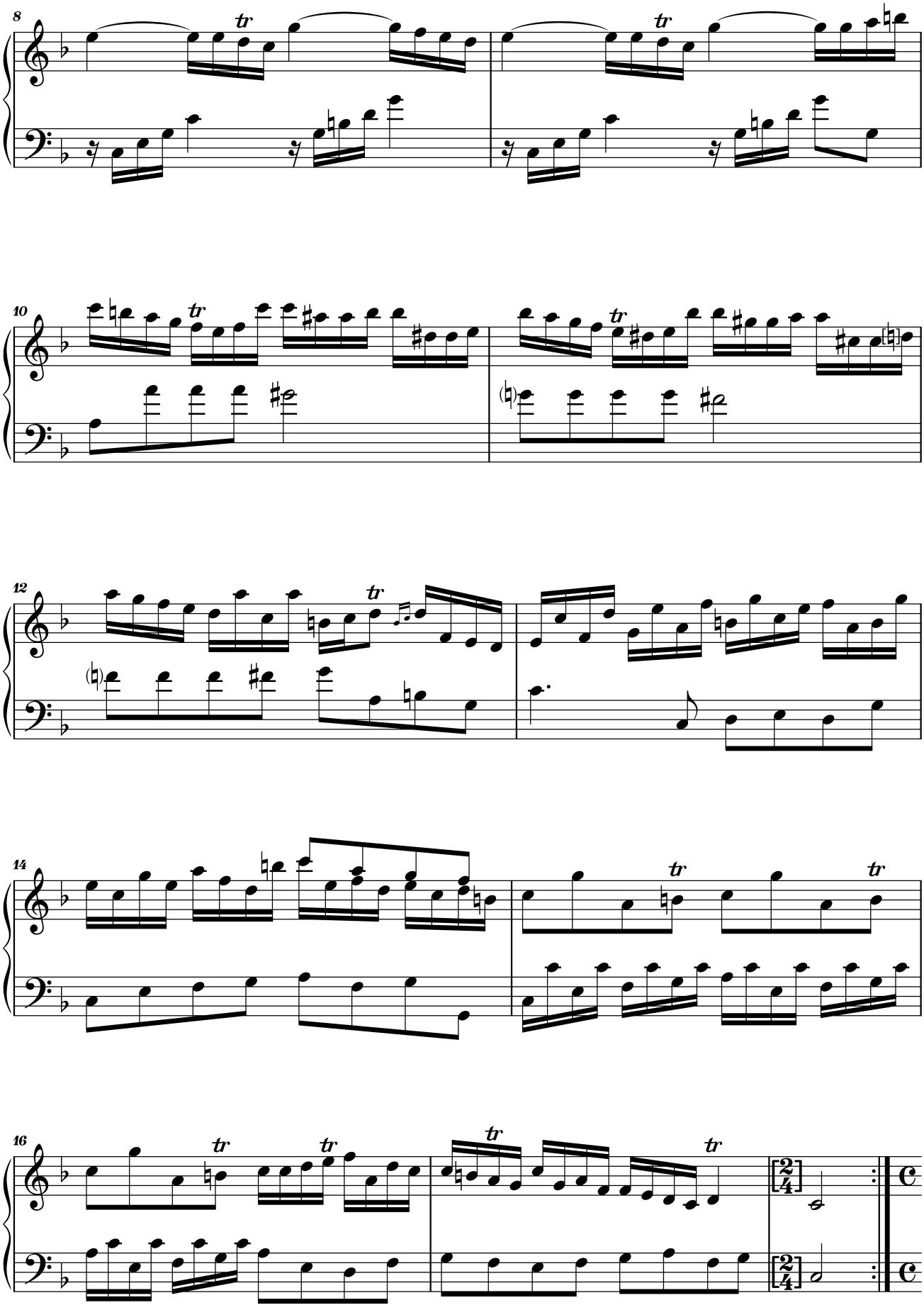
Sonata VII

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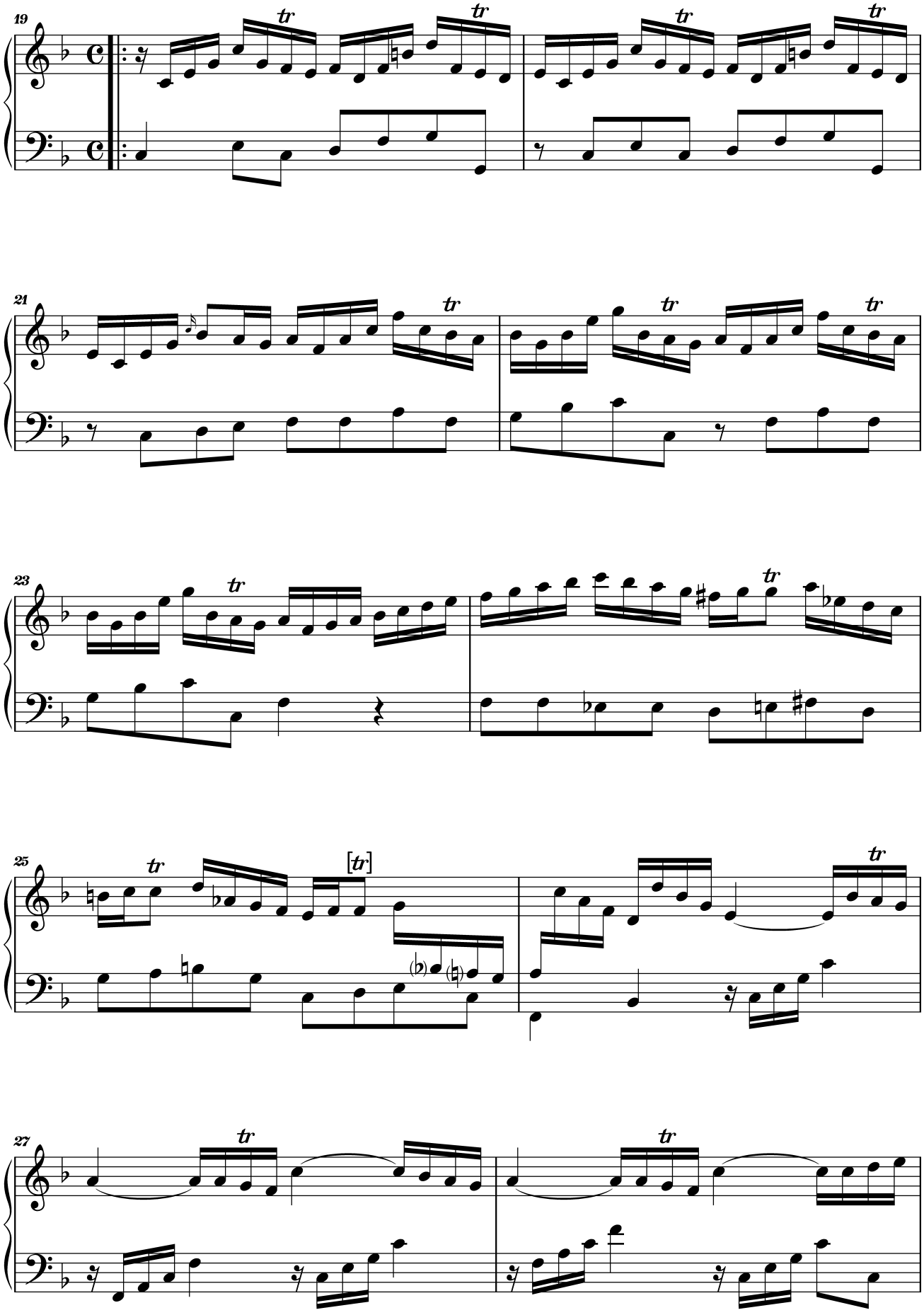
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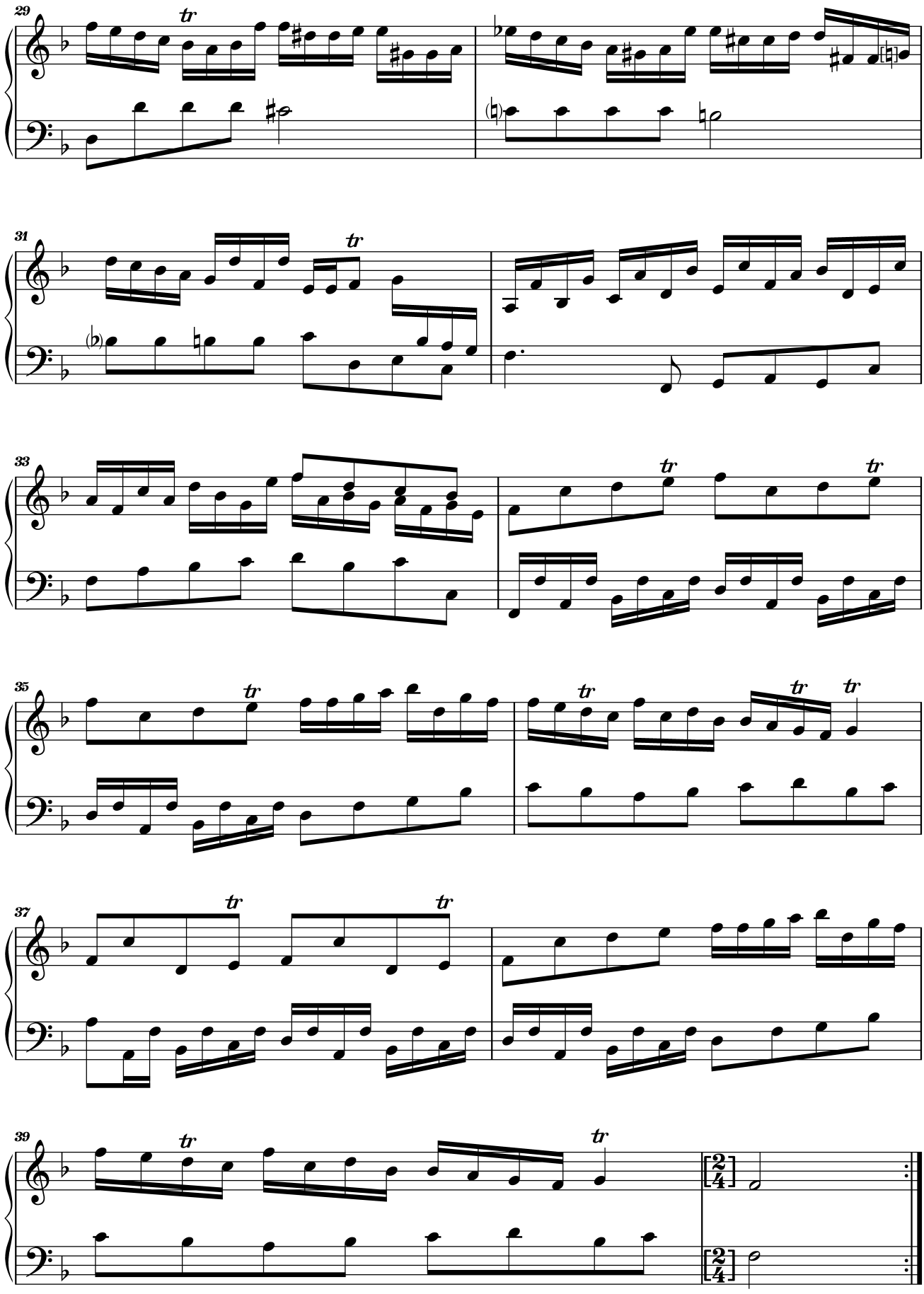
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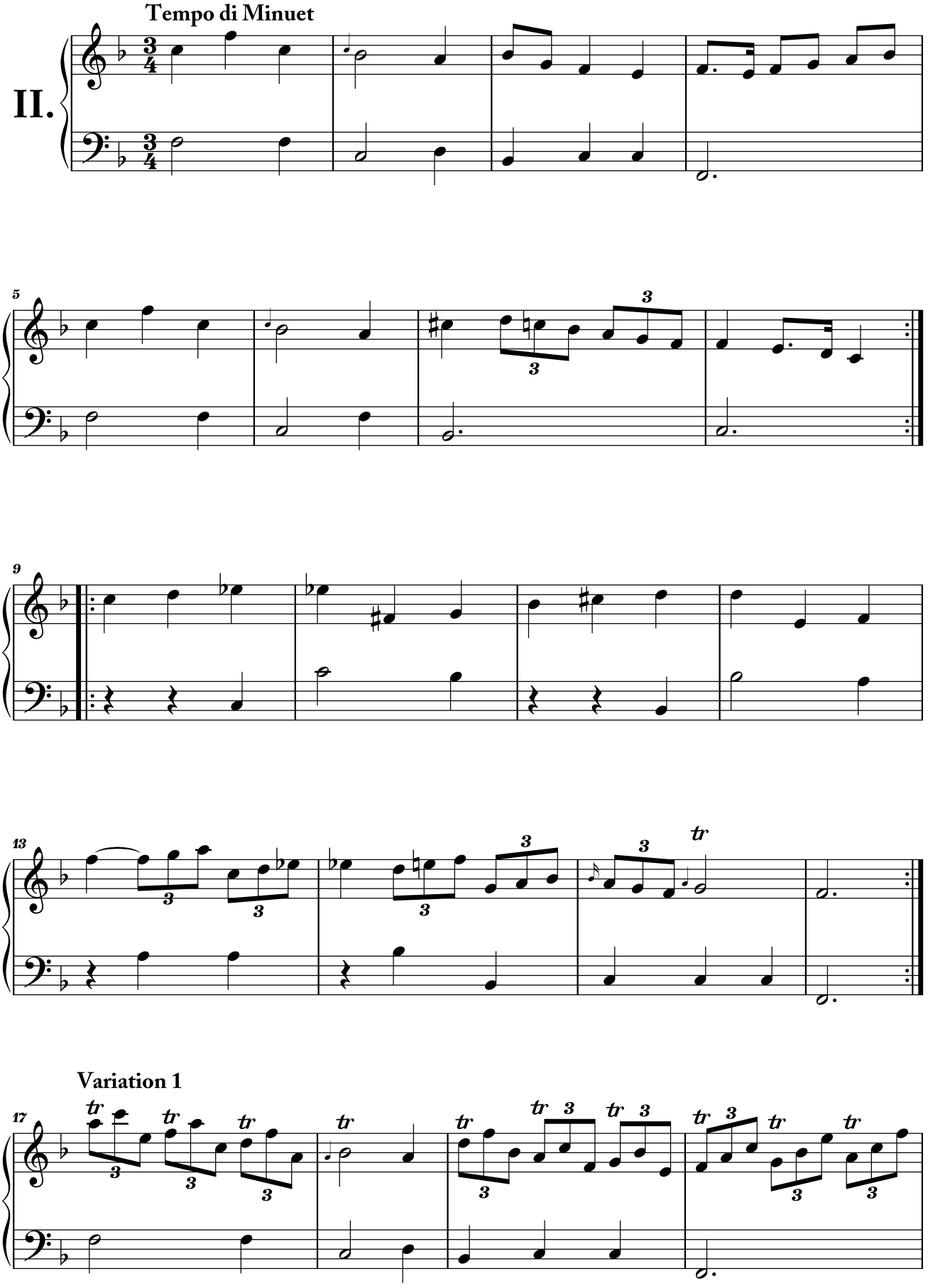
Tempo di Minuet
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Variation 1
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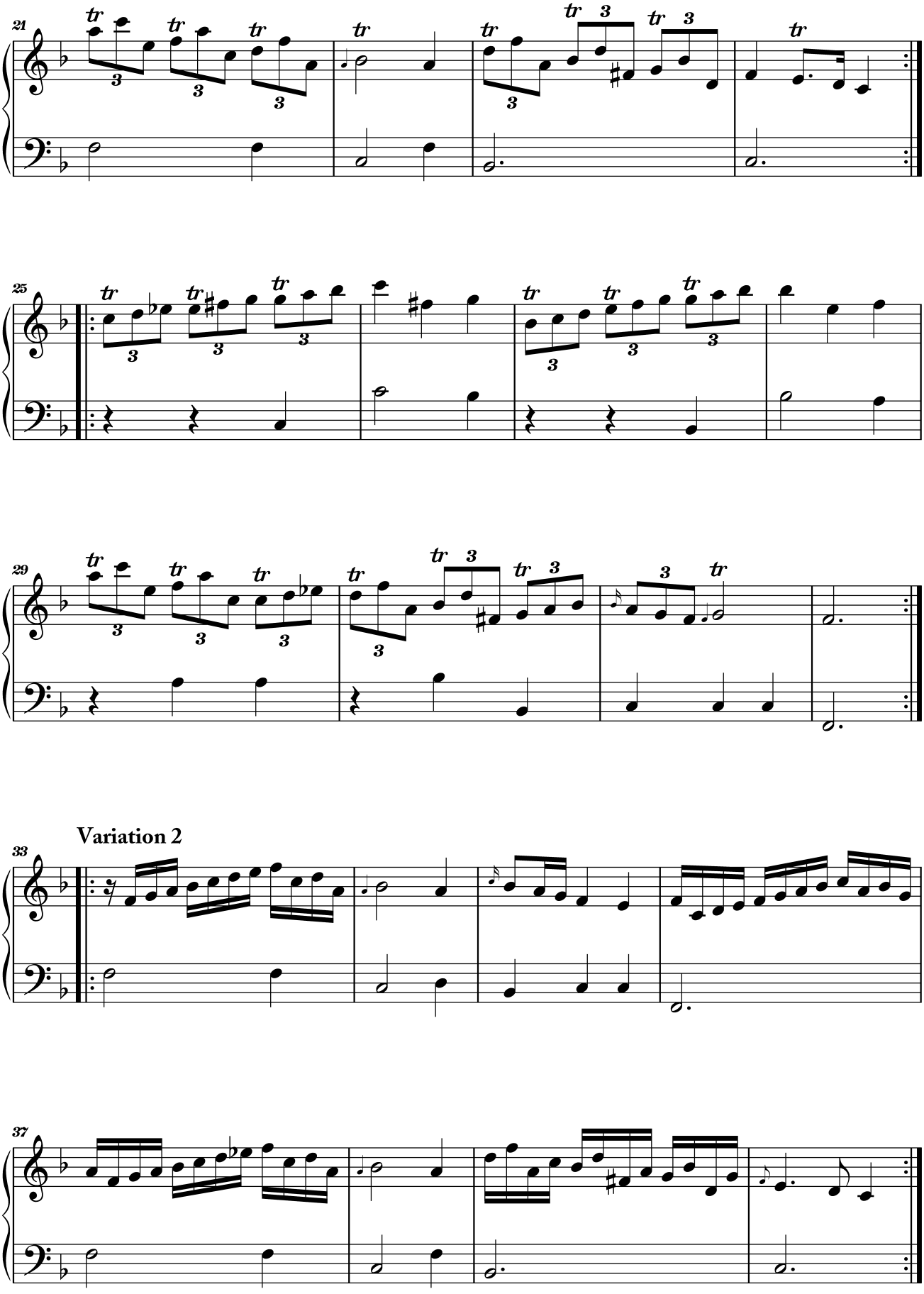
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Variation 2
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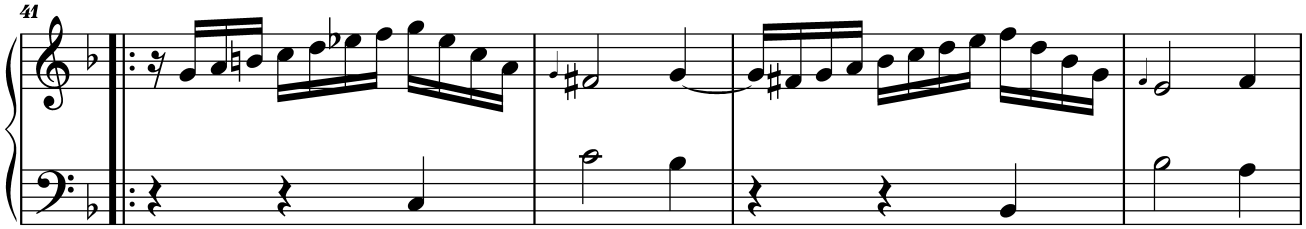
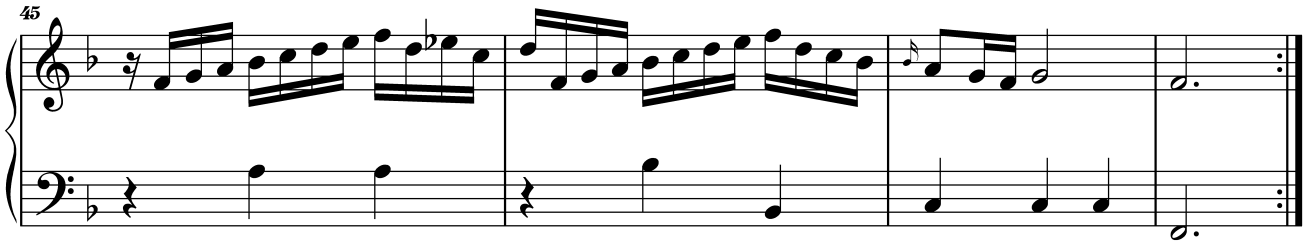
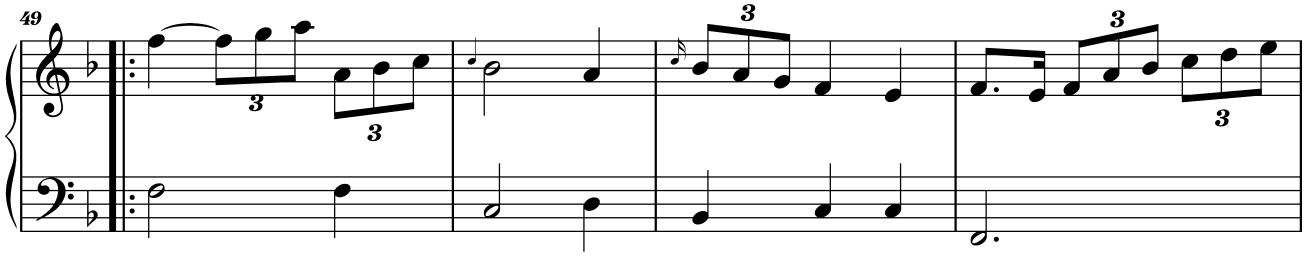
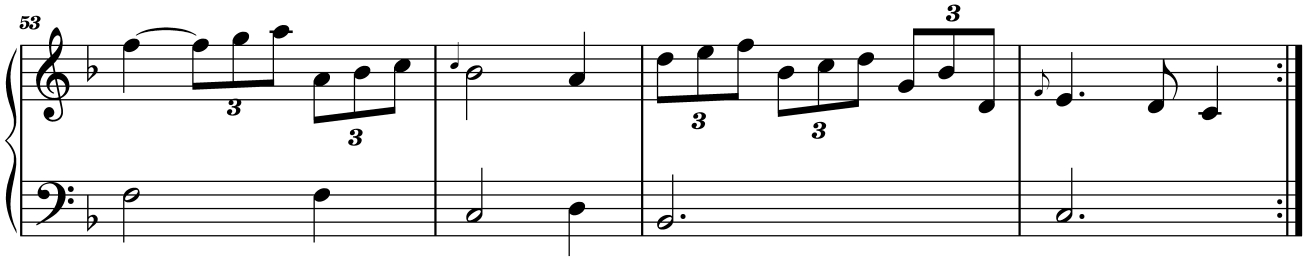
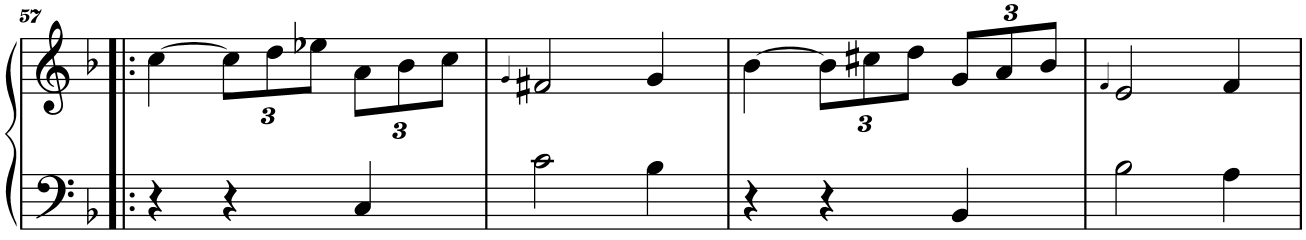


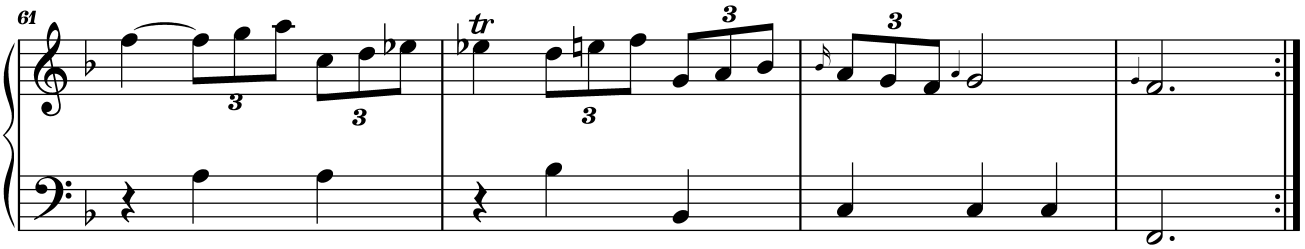


Variation 3

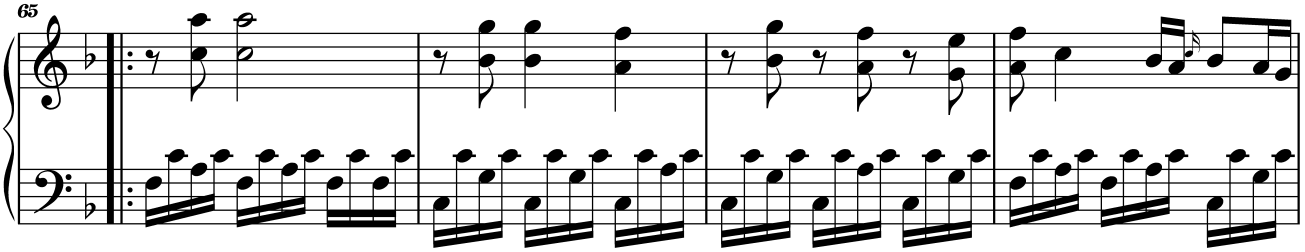


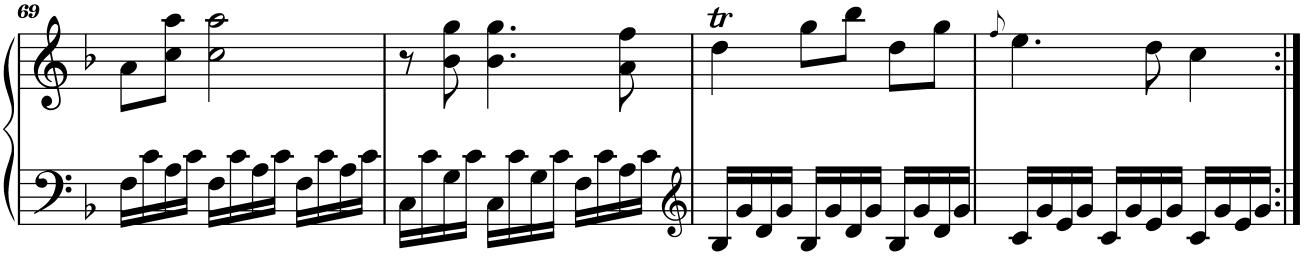


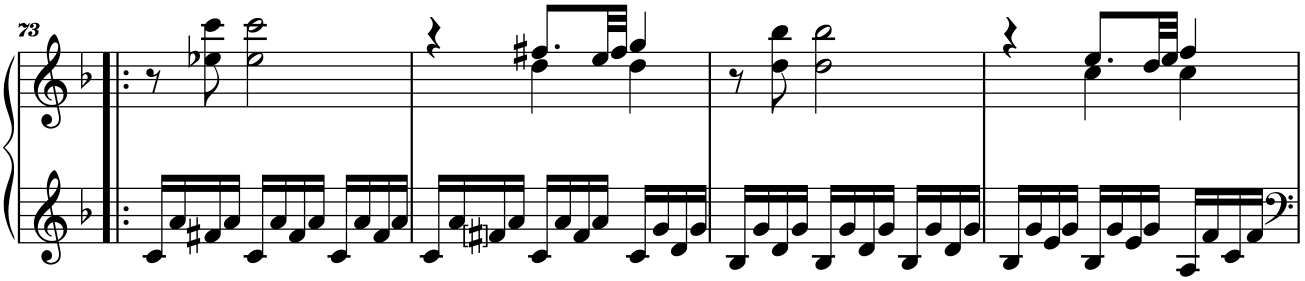


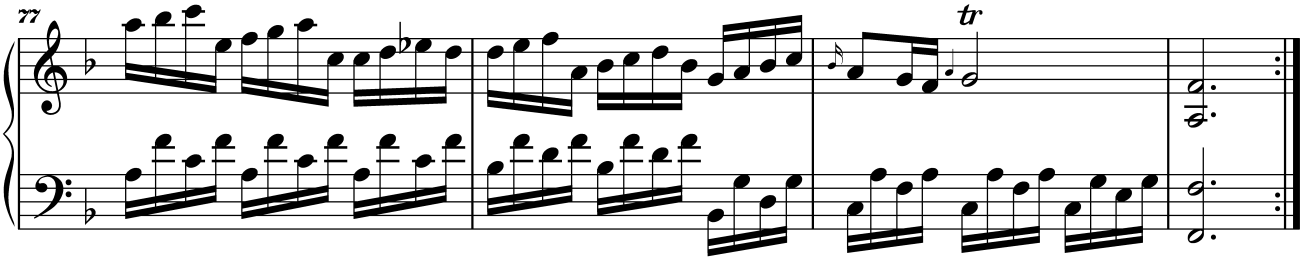


Variation 4

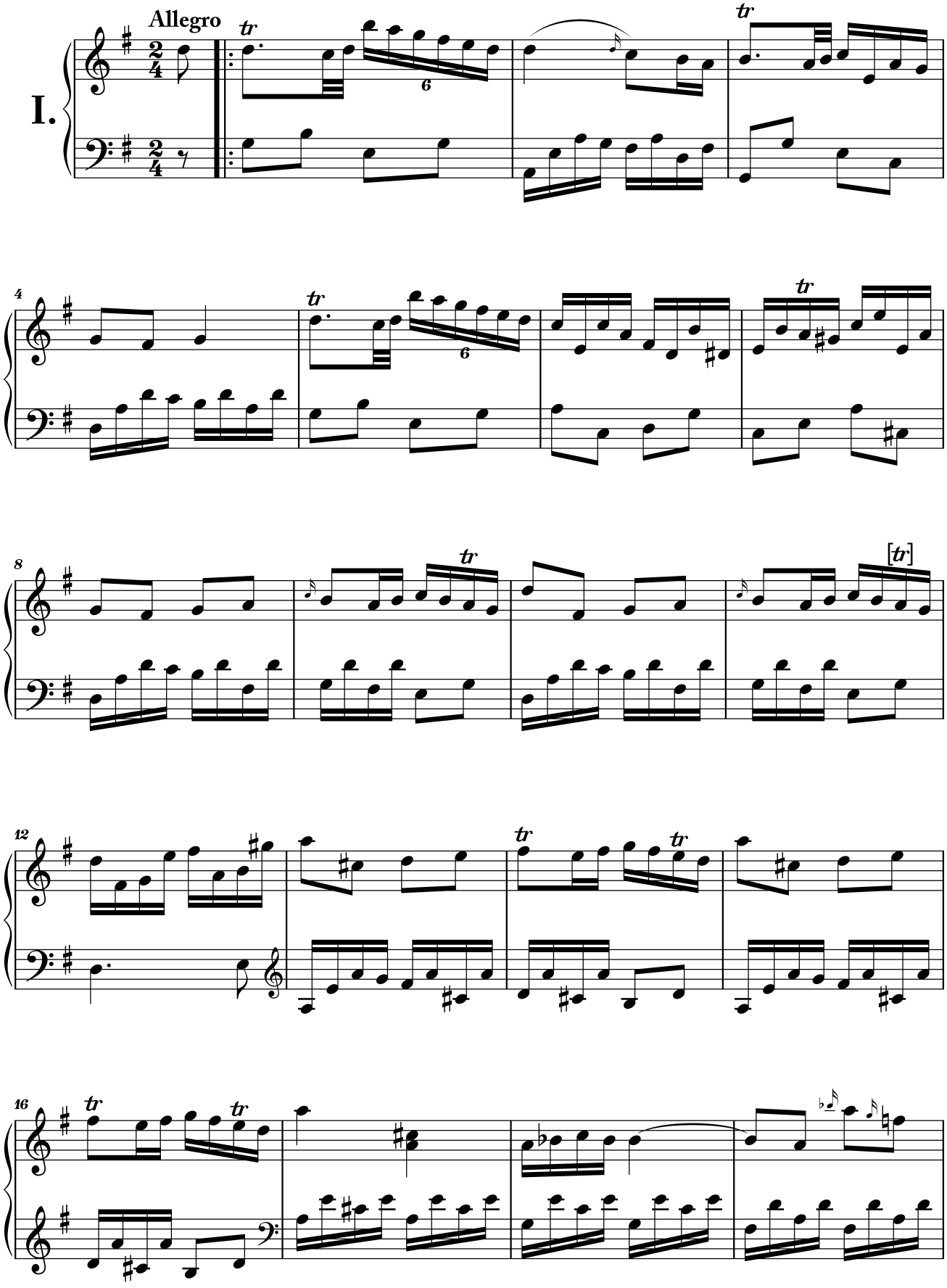


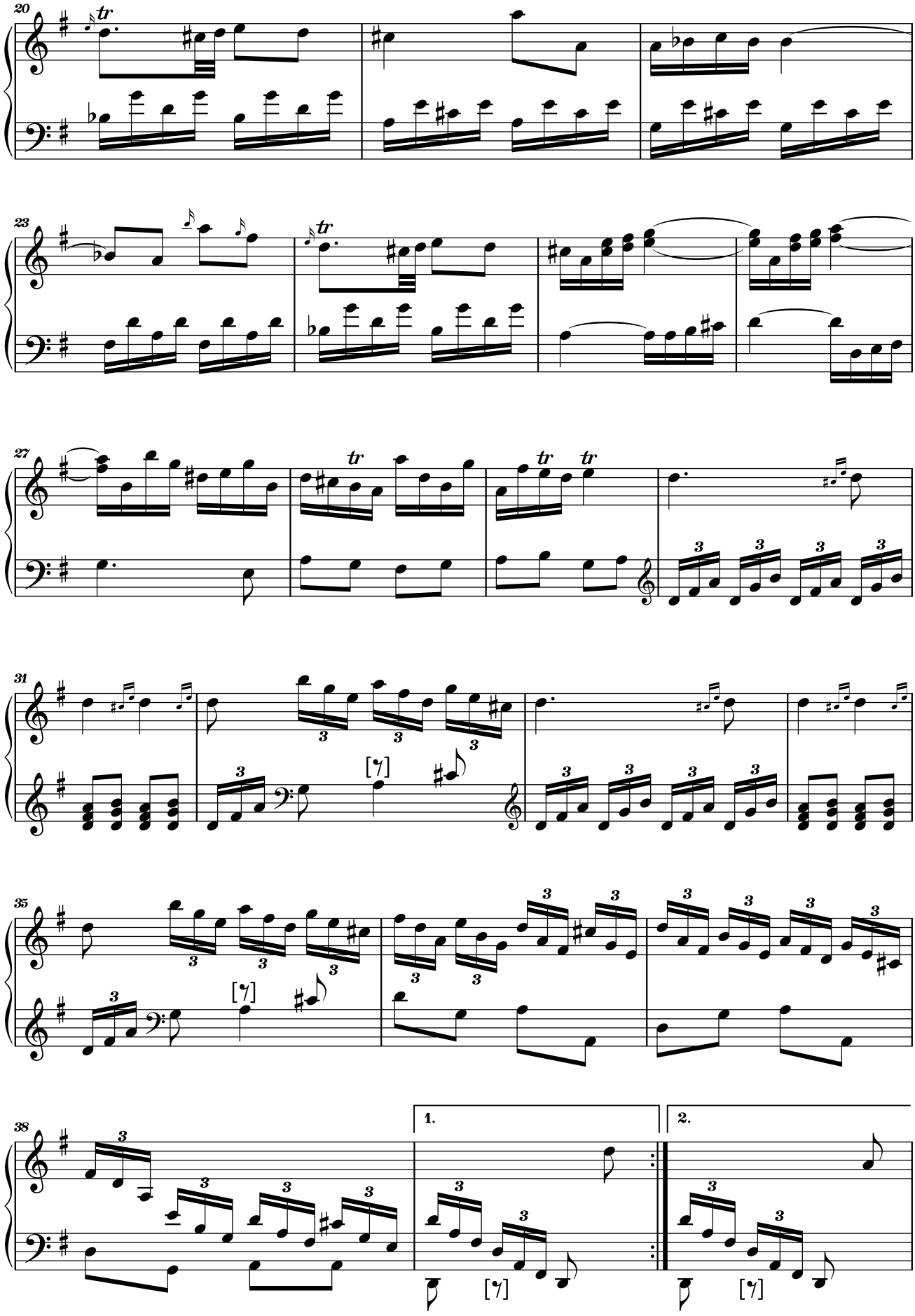






Sonata VIII

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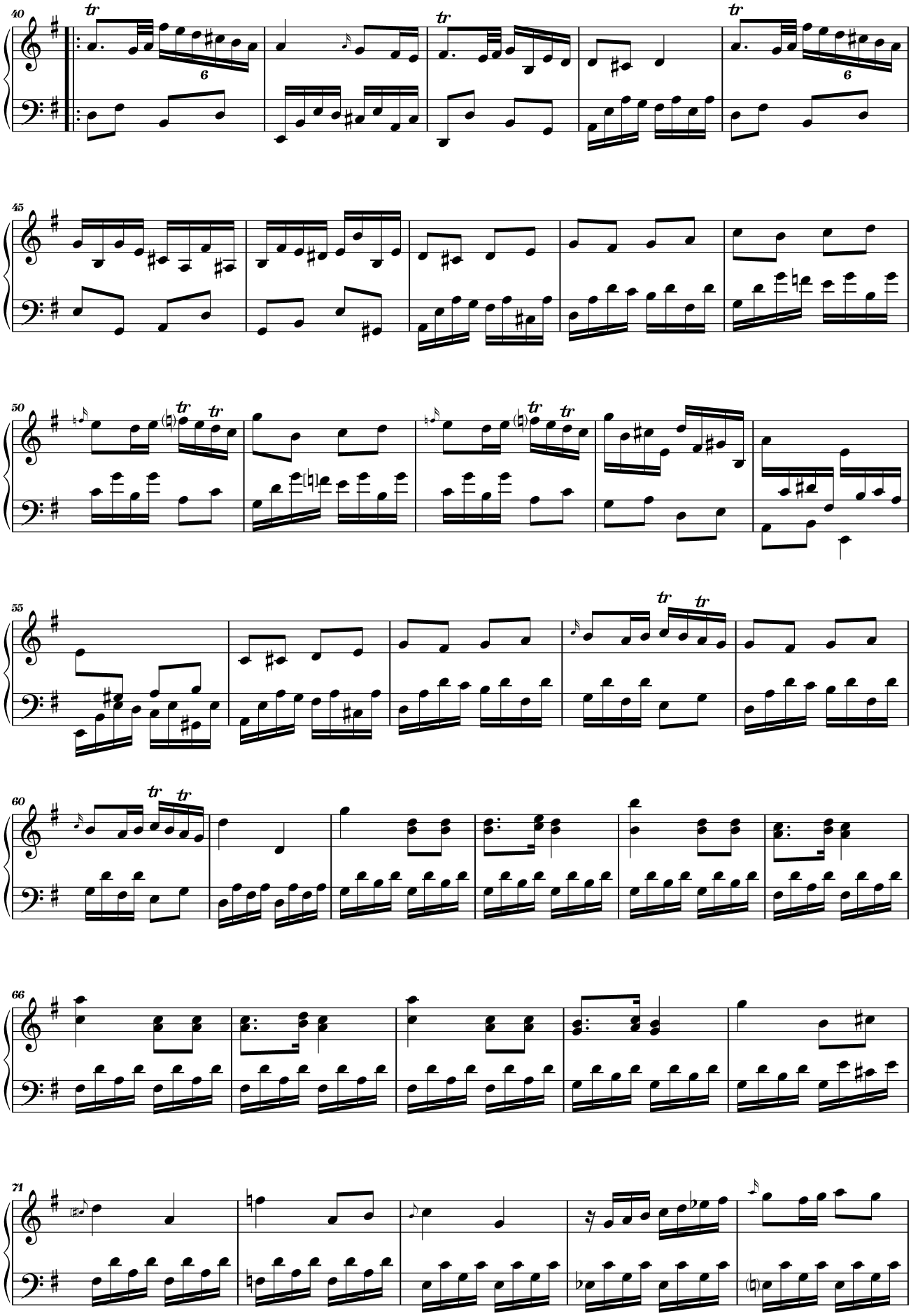
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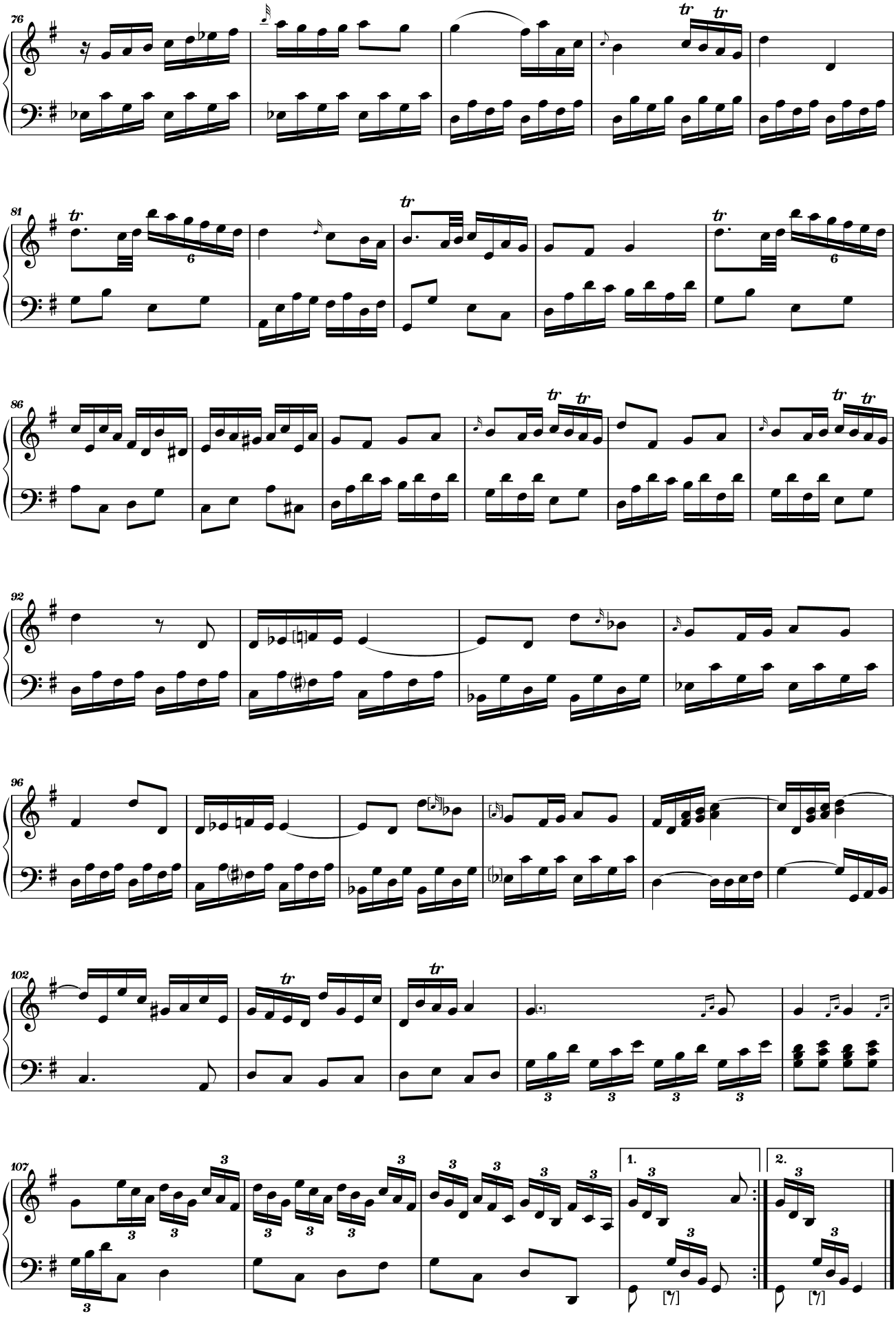
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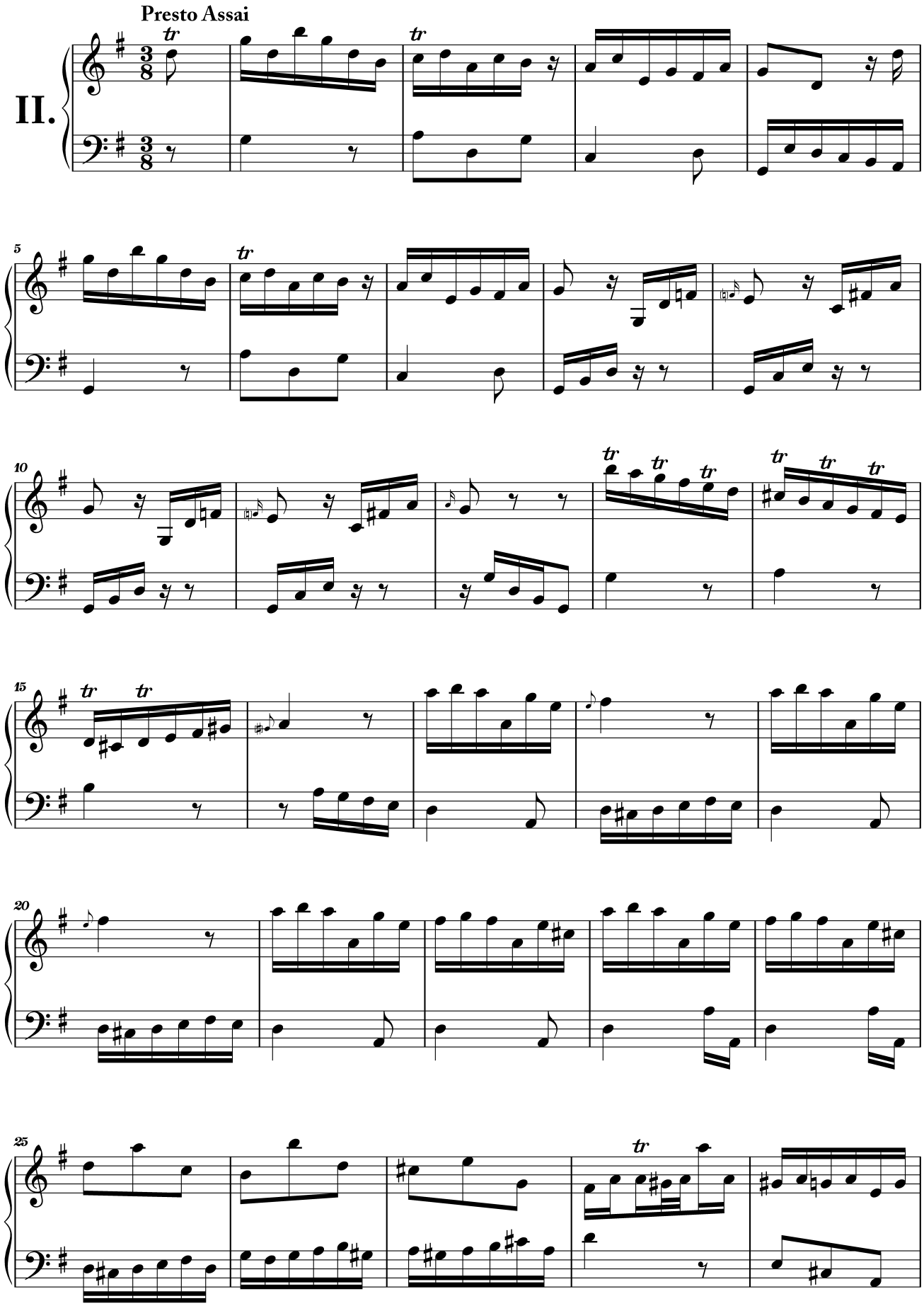
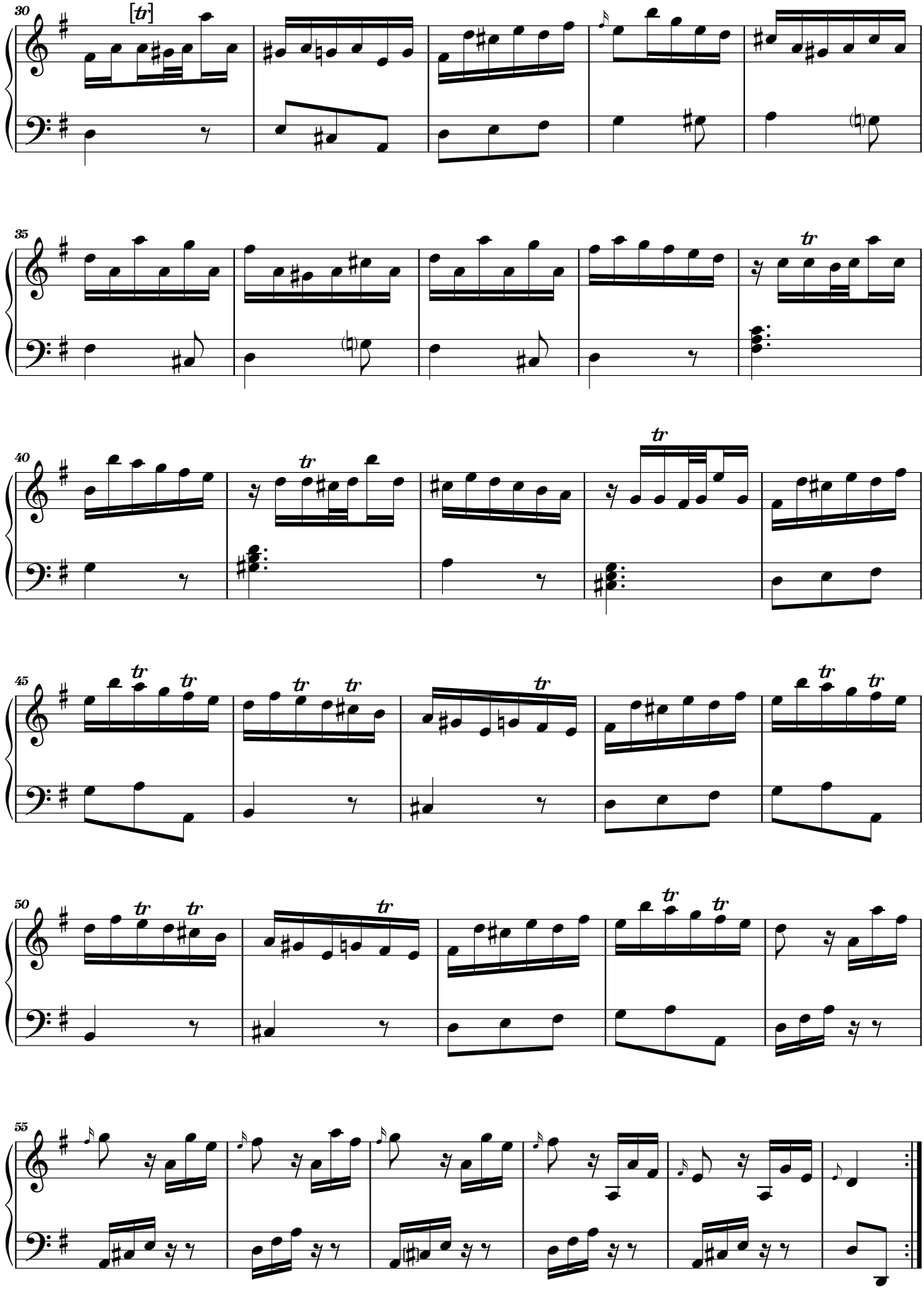

II.
Presto Assai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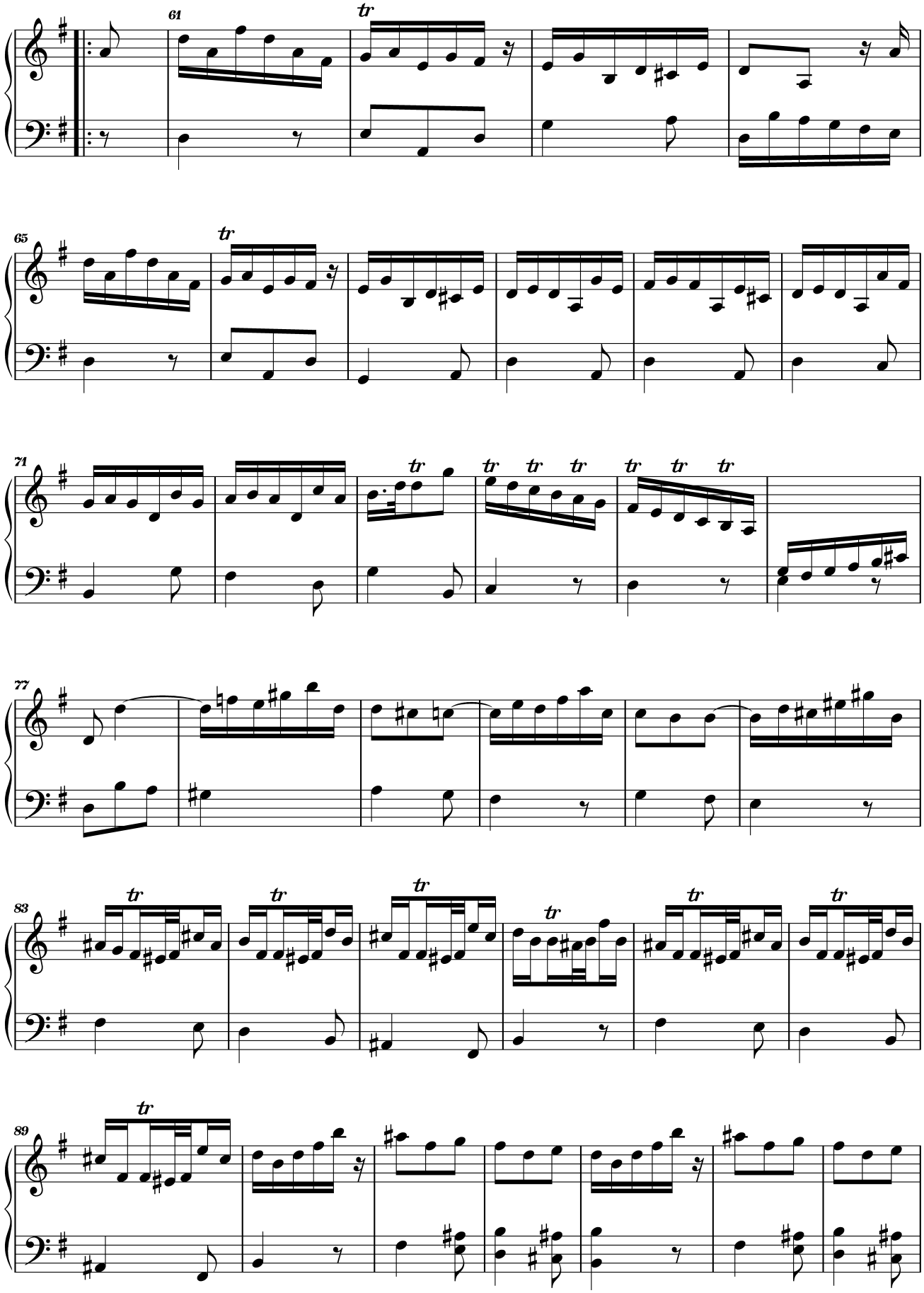
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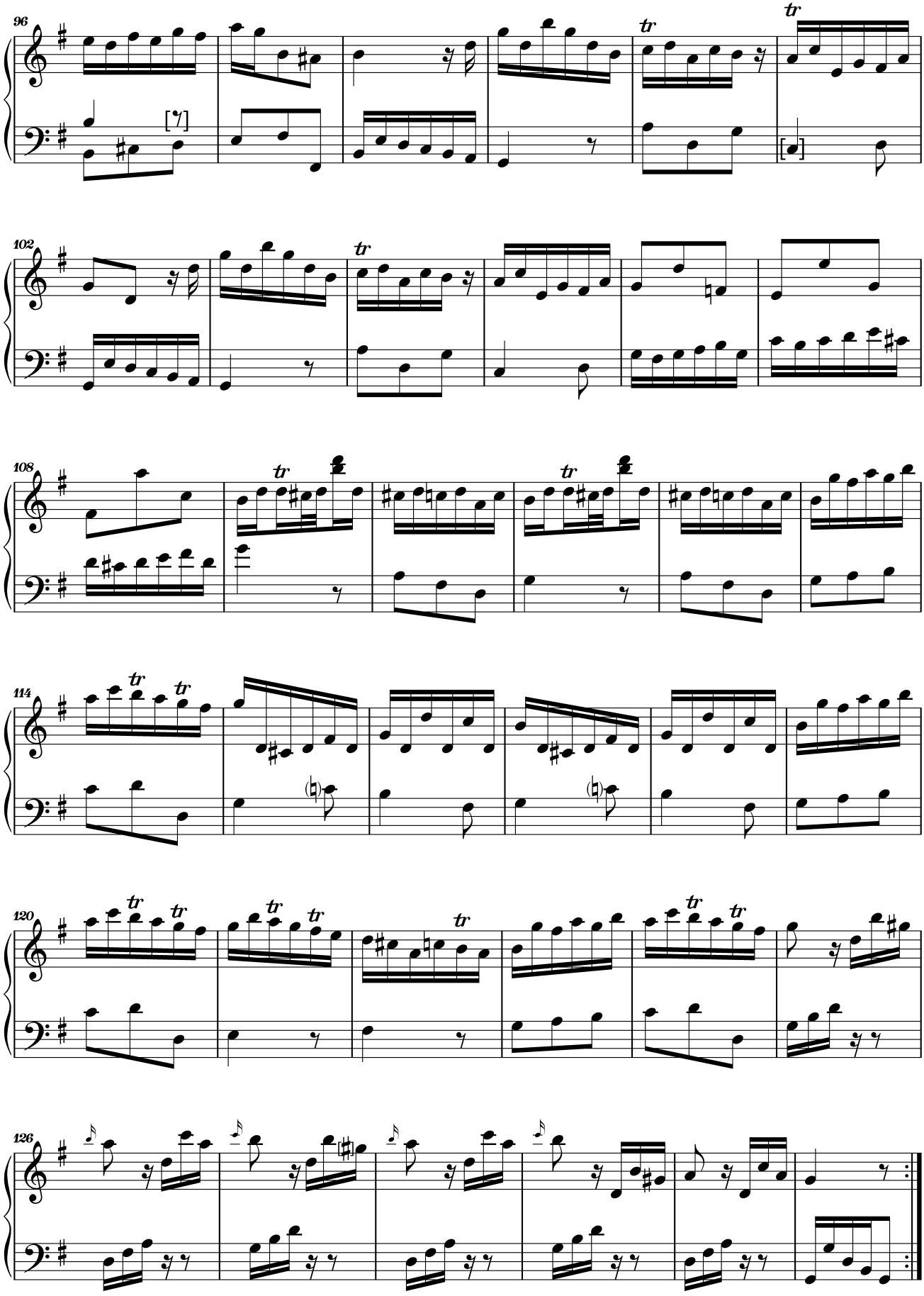
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CRITICAL NOTES

Editorial Method

The original engraver follows the 18th century convention where an accidental applies only to the note it immediately precedes- excepting, of course, the many instances where he doesn't. All accidentals have been modernized to be in force for the full measure. Editorial accidentals are denoted by brackets [ ]. *Courtesy accidentals are designated by parentheses* ( ).

All Alto & Tenor clefs have been suppressed and replaced by Treble & Bass clefs as the context demands.

Articulations and ornaments have generally been left in their original, if haphazard, state. Apparent discrepancies in their application are at the performer's discretion to resolve.

Sonata I

Andante

Pg. 3 **m. 15, lh, 2nd beat-** changed *d´* from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note

Pg. 5 **m. 31, rh, 3rd beat-** changed tie to extend from $\frac{1}{16}$th note *c´´* to $\frac{1}{4}$ note *c´´*. Originally, tie extended from preceding $\frac{1}{16}$th note *d´´* to $\frac{1}{4}$ note *c´´*
m. 32, rh, 1st beat- supplied tie between $\frac{1}{16}$th note *a´* & $\frac{1}{4}$ note *a´*
m. 33, rh, 1st beat- supplied tie between $\frac{1}{16}$th note *a´* & $\frac{1}{4}$ note *a´*
m. 34, rh, 1st beat- supplied tie between $\frac{1}{16}$th note *e´´* & $\frac{1}{16}$th note *e´´* on 2nd beat
m. 34, rh, 2nd beat- supplied tie between $\frac{1}{16}$th note *d´´* & dotted $\frac{1}{4}$ note *d´´* on 3rd beat
m. 36, lh, 2nd beat- added $\frac{1}{4}$ note *c*
m. 37, rh, 2nd beat- removed trill from $\frac{1}{16}$th note *f´*
m. 38, rh, 4th beat- moved trill from *b´* to *a´*
m. 38, lh, 1st beat- removed an extra downward stem from *c*

Andante

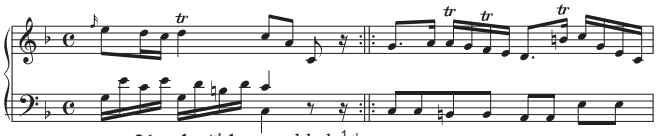
Pg.7 **m. 38, lh-** removed extra upward stems from $\frac{1}{32}$th notes *e´´* & *d´´*
m. 40, lh- removed extra upward stems from $\frac{1}{32}$th notes *e´´* & *d´´*

Sonata II

Allegro Moderato

Pg. 8 **m. 2, rh, 1st beat-** removed trill from *g´*

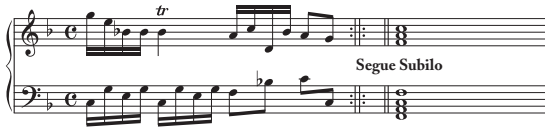
Pg. 9 **m. 21-** recast as 1st and 2nd ending repeats from the original:



m. 21a, rh, 4th beat- added $\frac{1}{16}$th note *g´*
m. 21b, rh, 4th beat- added $\frac{1}{16}$th note *c´*

Pg. 10 **m. 27, rh, 3rd beat-** changed appoggiatura *g´* from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note
m. 29, rh, 3rd beat- changed appoggiatura *c´´* from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note

Pg. 11 **m. 40, rh, 1st beat-** appoggiatura *b♮´* changed from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note
m. 41, rh, 3rd beat- appoggiatura *b´* changed from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note
m. 42, rh, 3rd beat- appoggiatura *b´* changed from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note
m. 44, rh, 4th beat- removed trill from *g*
m. 48- recast as 1st and 2nd ending repeats from the original:



m. 48b- changed to *segue subito* from original *segue subilo*

Allegro Assai

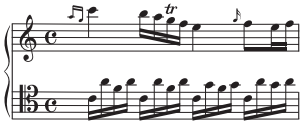
Pg.13 **m. 23, rh, 1st beat-** changed appoggiatura *e´´* from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note
m. 33, rh, 1st beat- changed *c´* from $\frac{1}{16}$th note appoggiatura to a regular $\frac{1}{16}$th note; changed *b♮* from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note

Pg.15 **m. 116, lh, 3rd beat-** combined *d´* with *b´* into one voice
m. 121, rh, 3rd beat- combined *d´* with *b´* into one voice

Sonata III

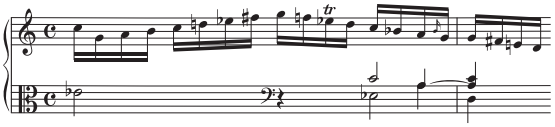
Allegro ma non tanto

Pg. 16 **m. 1, rh, 3rd beat-** changed appoggiatura *b´* from an $\frac{1}{8}$th note to a $\frac{1}{4}$ note
m. 3, rh, 1st beat- changed sequence of grace notes from *a´´ - g´´* to *a´´ - b´´* in emulation of m. 24. Originally:



m. 5 & 6, lh, 2nd beat, 2nd voice- moved *g* from under *d´* to under *e´*
m. 7, rh, 1st beat- changed *a´* $\frac{1}{8}$th note tied to *a´* $\frac{1}{16}$th note to a dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note *a´*

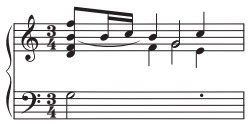
Pg. 17 **m. 11, rh, 3rd beat-** *g´* appoggiatura changed from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{4}$ note
m. 14, rh, 4th beat- changed *b♭´* appoggiatura from $\frac{1}{16}$th note to $\frac{1}{32}$th note
m. 14, lh, 4th note- removed down stem from *a* and recast left hand from original:



Pg. 18 **m. 25, rh, 3rd beat-** removed tie from $\frac{1}{4}$ note *g´´* to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note *g´´*
m. 27, rh, 3rd beat- removed tie from $\frac{1}{4}$ note *f´´* to $\frac{1}{8}$th note *f´´*
m. 28, rh, 2nd & 3rd beat- changed from two tied $\frac{1}{4}$ notes to one $\frac{1}{2}$ note, removed *♮* from *b´*

Menuet

Pg. 20 **m. 10, rh, 3rd beat-** removed tie from *d˝*
m. 13, lh 3rd beat- added tie between *f´* and *f´* in m.14
m. 14, rh, 1st beat- removed trill from *c˝*
m. 14, rh, 3rd beat- removed tie from *c˝*
m. 16, rh, 3rd beat- removed trill from *e´*
m. 19, rh- recast measure from original:



m. 22, rh, 3rd beat, 2nd voice- changed up stem to down stem
m. 24, rh- recast measure in similar fashion to m. 19

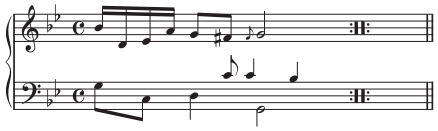
Sonata IV

Allegro

Pg. 21 **m. 1, rh, 1st beat-** changed *d˝* from $\frac{1}{4}$ note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note and beamed with following $\frac{1}{32}$nd notes
m. 1, rh, 3rd beat- changed *g˝* from $\frac{1}{4}$ note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note

Pg. 22 **m. 16, rh, 1st beat-** changed *a´* from $\frac{1}{4}$ note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 16, rh, 3rd beat- changed *c˝* from $\frac{1}{4}$ note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note, removed extraneous ♯ from *c♯˝*
m. 19, rh, 1st beat- changed *d˝* from $\frac{1}{4}$ note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 19, rh, 3rd beat- changed *g˝* from $\frac{1}{4}$ note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note

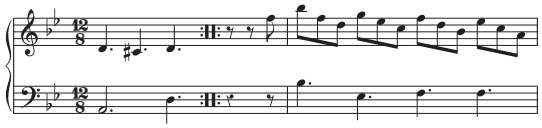
Pg. 23 **m. 38, rh, 3rd beat-** changed appoggiatura *f♯´* from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{4}$ note & added 2nd voice. Originally:



Giga – Presto

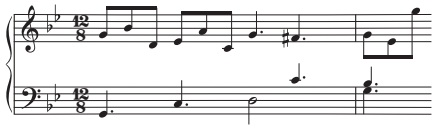
Pg. 24 **m. 1, 1st beat-** added forward repeat sign

Pg. 25 **m. 18a & m. 18b-** recast as 1st and 2nd ending repeat from the original:

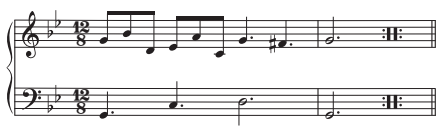


Pg. 26 **m. 19, 1st beat-** added forward repeat sign

Pg. 27 **m. 38, lh, 3rd beat, 1st voice-** added *b♭*
m. 38, lh, 4th beat, 1st voice- added *a* in emulation of m. 3.
Originally:



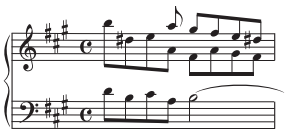
m. 41a & m. 41b- recast as 1st and 2nd ending repeats, changed meter in m.41b to $\frac{6}{8}$. Originally:



Sonata V

Andante Moderato

Pg. 28 **m. 3, lh, 1st beat, 2nd voice-** changed two tied $\frac{1}{2}$ note *e*s to one whole note *e* (in emulation of m. 18)
m. 5, lh, 1st beat, 2nd voice- changed two tied $\frac{1}{2}$ note *e*s to one whole note *e*
m. 8, rh, 1st beat- assigned *b˝*, *d♯´* & *e˝* to 1st voice and beamed with *a˝* . Originally:



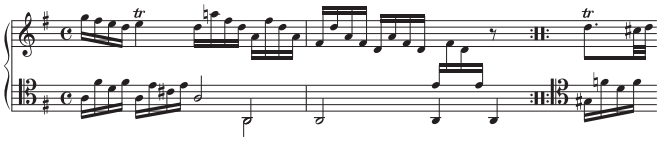
m. 9, lh, 1st beat- changed two tied $\frac{1}{2}$ note *b*s to one whole note *b*
m. 12, rh, 1st beat, 2nd voice- added $\frac{1}{4}$ note *c´*

Pg. 29 **m. 18, lh, 1st beat, 2nd voice-** removed ♮ from *b* and changed from two tied $\frac{1}{2}$ notes to one whole note
m. 19, rh, 1st beat, 1st voice- supplied $\frac{1}{2}$ note *e˝*
m. 34, lh, 3rd beat, 1st voice- removed $\frac{1}{4}$ note rest as voice leading suggests beat belongs to $\frac{1}{4}$ note *e´* on treble staff

Sonata VI

Allegro Moderato

Pg. 35 **m. 16, lh, 3rd beat-** $\frac{1}{2}$ note *a´* changed to *d* under the assumption the bass clef resumes here and changed to $\frac{1}{4}$ note
m. 16, lh, 4th beat- changed $\frac{1}{2}$ note *D* bearing both up stem & down stem to $\frac{1}{4}$ note. Originally:



Pg. 37 **m. 34, rh, 3rd beat-** removed trill to *g˝* in emulation of m. 38

Pg. 37 **m. 35, rh, 3rd beat-** added trill to *g˝* in emulation of m. 39

Allegro

Pg. 39 **m. 27, rh, 1st beat-** changed $\frac{1}{8}$th note *a´* tied to $\frac{1}{16}$th note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 29, rh, 1st beat- changed $\frac{1}{8}$th note *b´* tied to $\frac{1}{16}$th note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 31, rh, 1st beat- changed $\frac{1}{8}$th note *c♯˝* tied to $\frac{1}{16}$th note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 31, rh, 3rd beat- removed ♯ from *c♮˝*
m. 33, rh, 1st beat- changed $\frac{1}{8}$th note *e♭˝* tied to $\frac{1}{16}$th note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 35, rh, 1st beat- changed $\frac{1}{8}$th note *f♮˝* tied to $\frac{1}{16}$th note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 37, rh, 1st beat- changed $\frac{1}{8}$th note *g˝* tied to $\frac{1}{16}$th note to dotted $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 57, rh, 1st beat- changed appoggiatura *f´* from $\frac{1}{4}$ note to $\frac{1}{8}$th note
m. 57, rh- changed dotted $\frac{1}{2}$ notes to dotted $\frac{1}{4}$ notes
m. 57, lh- changed dotted $\frac{1}{2}$ note to a dotted $\frac{1}{4}$ note

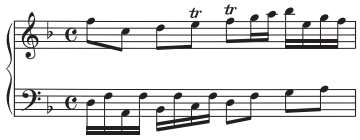
In the original, the facing page is blank

Sonata VII

Allegro

Pg. 41 m. 18- added $\frac{2}{4}$ meter in brackets

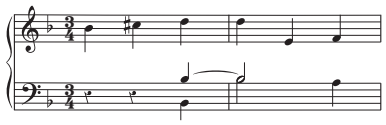
Pg. 43 m. 35, rh, 3rd beat- changed $\frac{1}{8}$th note *f˝* with trill to two $\frac{1}{16}$th notes in emulation of m. 16. Originally:



m. 40- added $\frac{2}{4}$ meter in brackets

Tempo di Menuet

Pg. 44 **m. 11, lh, 3rd beat**- removed *b* tied to $\frac{1}{2}$ note *b* in m. 12 in emulation of m. 9 and other similar passages. Originally:



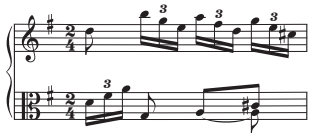
m. 12, lh, 1st beat- removed tie & up stem from *b*

Sonata VIII

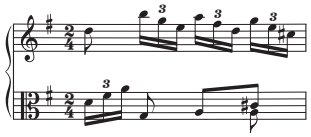
Allegro

Pg. 48 **m. 1**- added forward repeat sign
m. 2, rh, 2nd beat- changed appoggiatura *d˝* from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note

Pg. 49 **m. 26, rh, 1st beat**- changed *g˝* from $\frac{1}{8}$th note to $\frac{1}{16}$th note
m. 32, lh, 2nd beat- changed *a* from two tied $\frac{1}{8}$th notes to one $\frac{1}{4}$ note. Originally:



m. 35, lh, 2nd beat- changed *a* from two $\frac{1}{8}$th notes, untied this time, to one $\frac{1}{4}$ note. Originally:

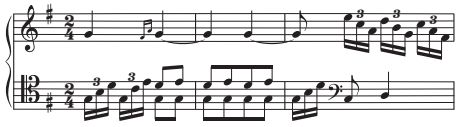


m. 39a & m. 39b- recast as 1st & 2nd ending repeat

Pg. 50 **m. 50, lh, 1st beat**- changed original ♭ to ♮ on *f´*

Pg. 51 **m. 77, rh, 1st beat**- changed appoggiatura *b˝* from $\frac{1}{16}$th note to $\frac{1}{32}$nd note
m. 98, rh, 2nd beat- added appoggiatura *c˝* in emulation of m. 94
m. 99, rh, 1st beat- added appoggiatura *a´*
m. 105, rh, 2nd beat- changed *g´* from $\frac{1}{4}$ note to $\frac{1}{8}$th note in emulation of m. 33, removed tie to *g´* in m. 106
m. 105, lh, 1st beat- original changes to triplets in emulation of mm. 33 & 34
m. 106, rh, 1st & 2nd beats- added $\frac{1}{16}$th note grace note after $\frac{1}{4}$ note *g´*s in emulation of m.34, removed tie between notes
m. 106, lh, 1st & 2nd beats- added inner voice *b* & *c´* notes in emulation of m. 34.

Mm. 105 & 106 originally:



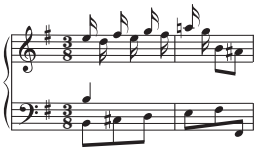
m. 110a & 110b- recast as 1st and 2nd ending repeats

Presto Assai

Pg. 53 **m. 55 through m. 57, rh, 1st beat**- appoggiaturas changed from $\frac{1}{8}$th notes to $\frac{1}{16}$th notes
m. 58 & m. 59, rh, 1st beat- appoggiaturas changed from $\frac{1}{8}$th notes to $\frac{1}{16}$th notes

Pg. 54 **m. 91, lh**- combined voices
m. 92 through 95- combined voices

Pg. 55 **mm. 96 & 97, rh**- beamed $\frac{1}{16}$th notes together. Originally:



m. 101, lh, 1st beat- added $\frac{1}{4}$ note *c* in emulation of m. 3
m. 109, rh, 3rd beat- changed *f♯˝* to *d˝*
m. 111, rh, 3rd beat- changed *f♯˝* to *d˝*

Thematic Index

Sonata I

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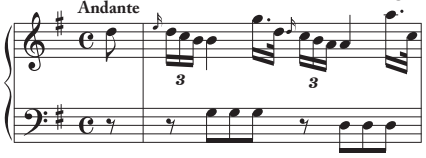
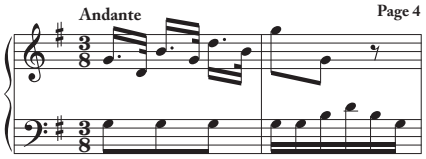


Andante — Page 4



Sonata II

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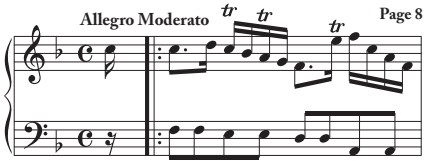

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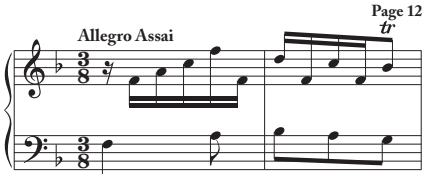

Sonata III

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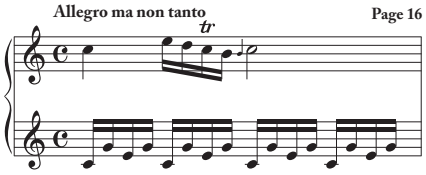

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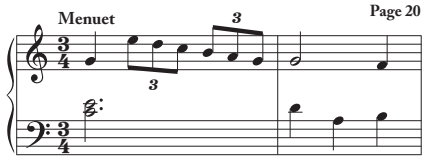

Sonata IV

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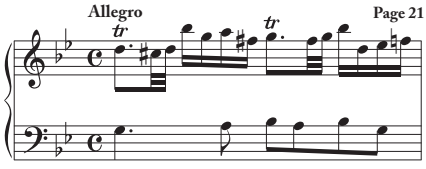

Giga

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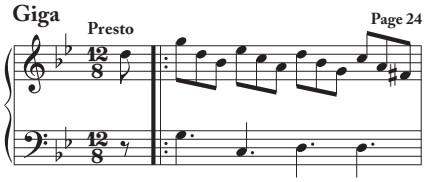
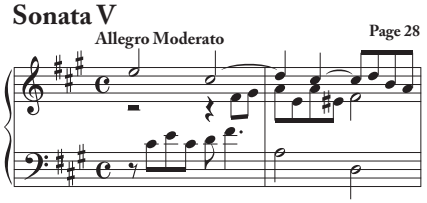


Sonata V

Allegro Moderato — Page 28



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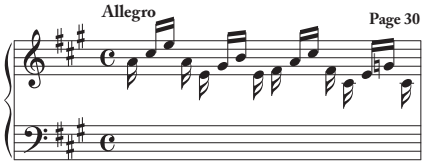
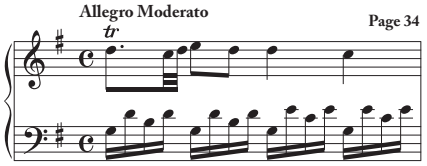


Sonata VI

Allegro Moderato — Page 34



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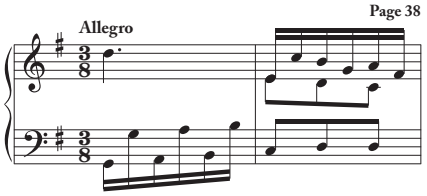

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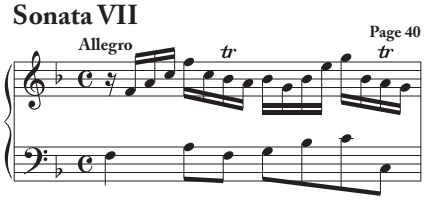

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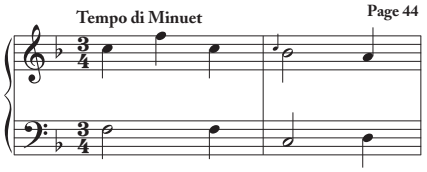

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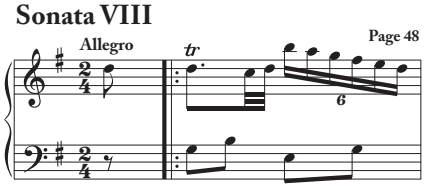
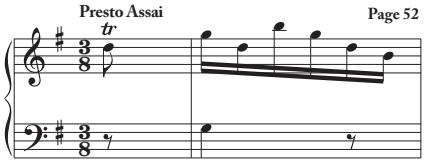
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