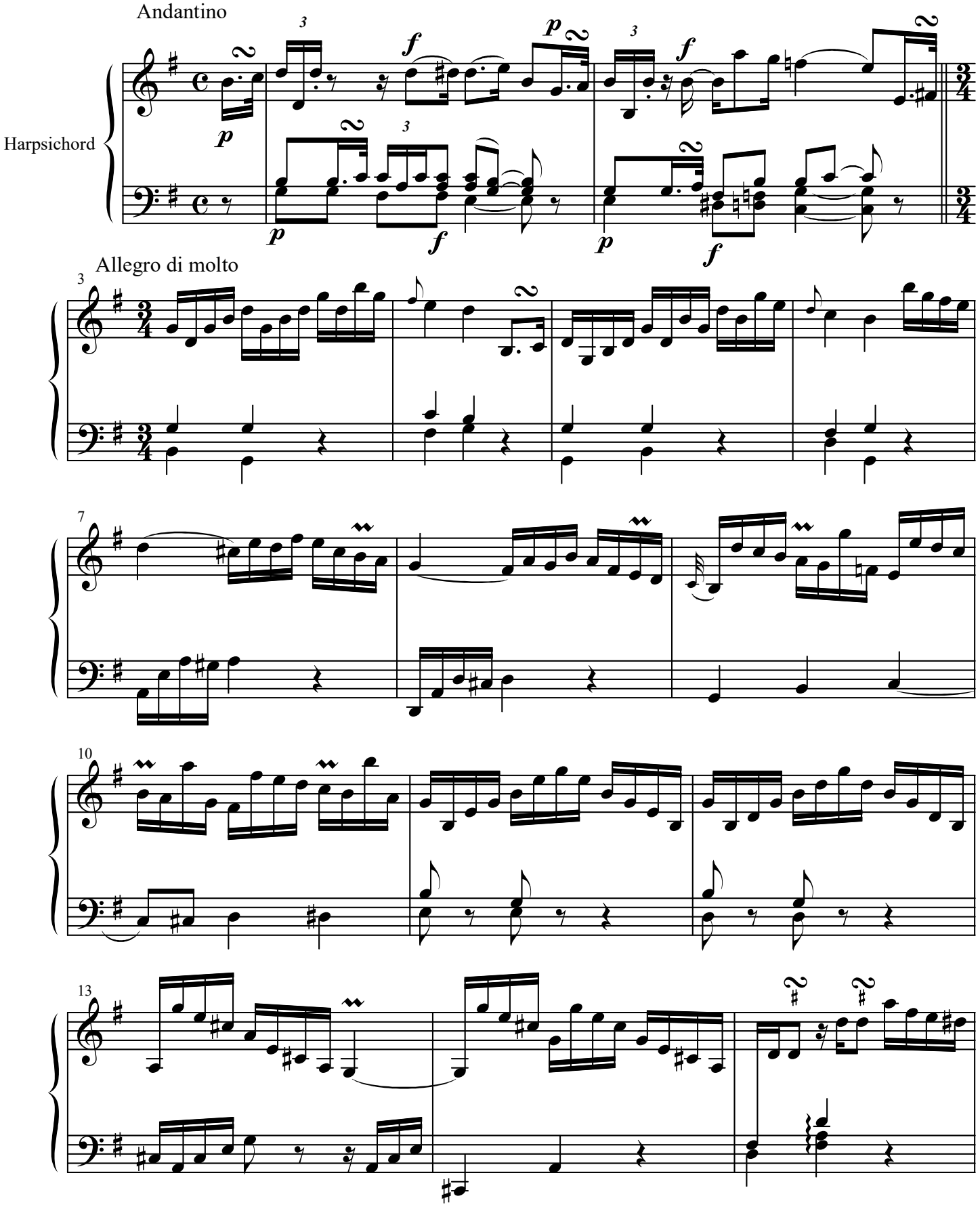
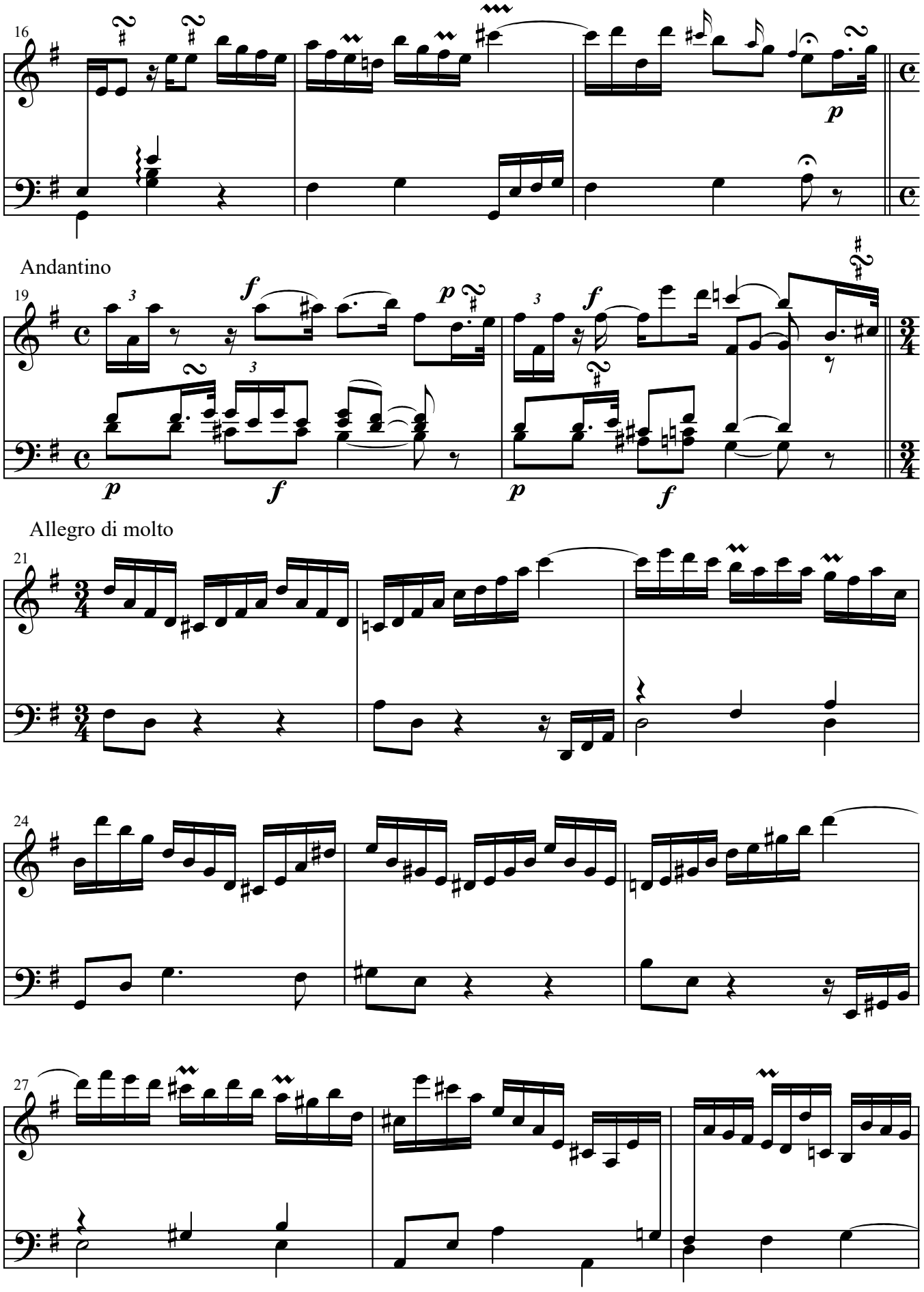
Sonata G-Dur

BR A 14 / Fk 7

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach
(1710-1784)

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Andantino
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Allegro di molto
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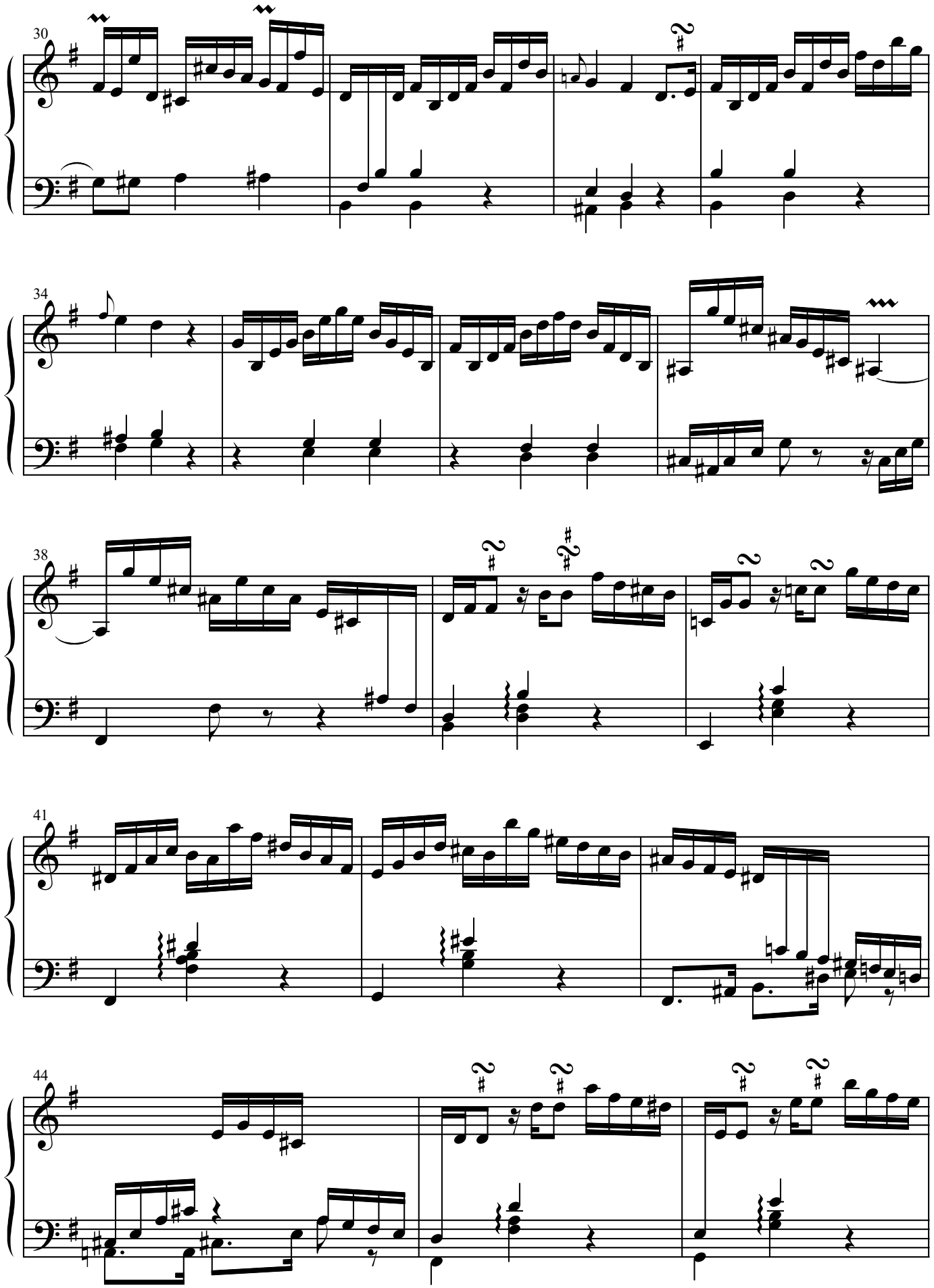
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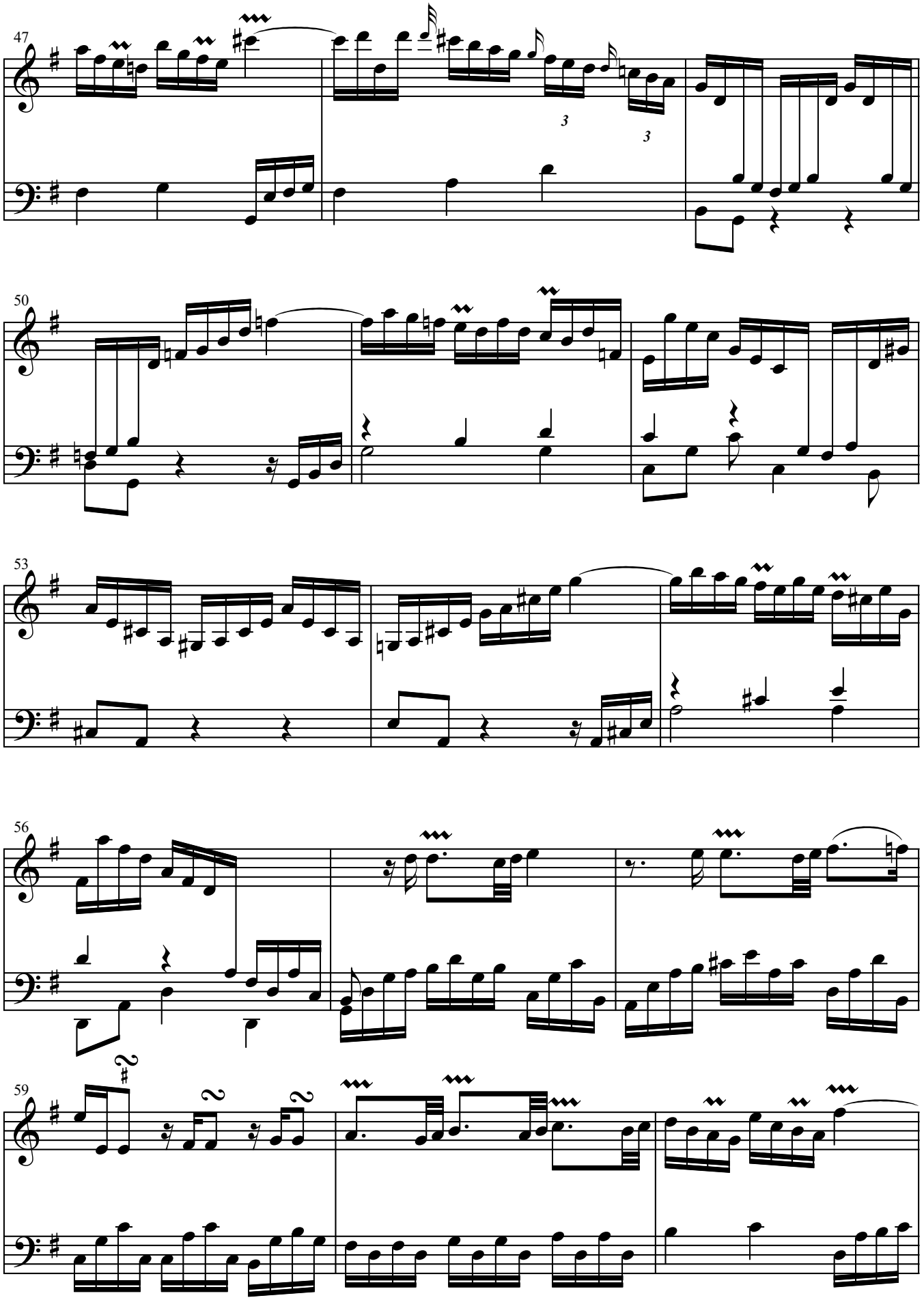
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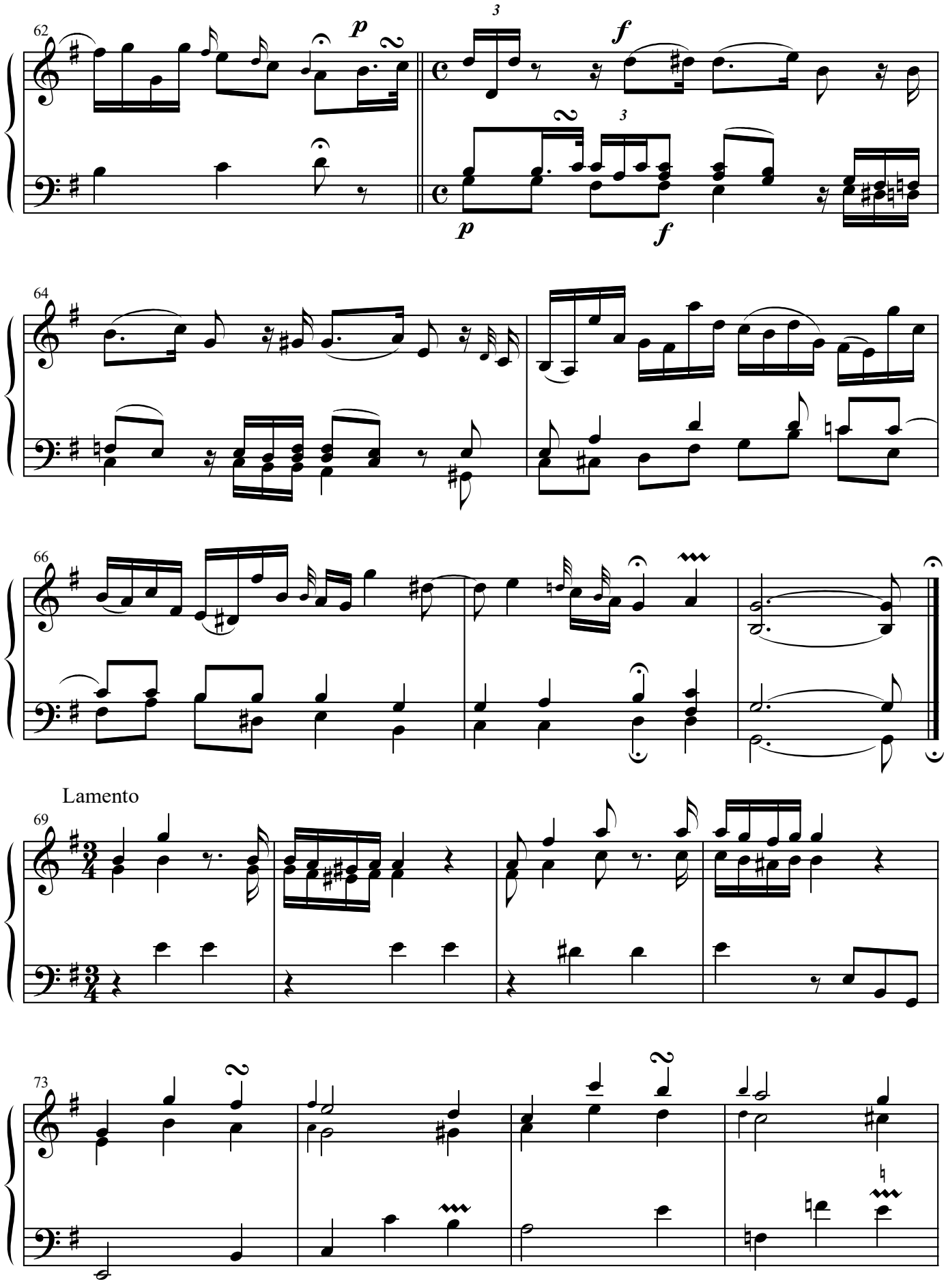
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Lamento
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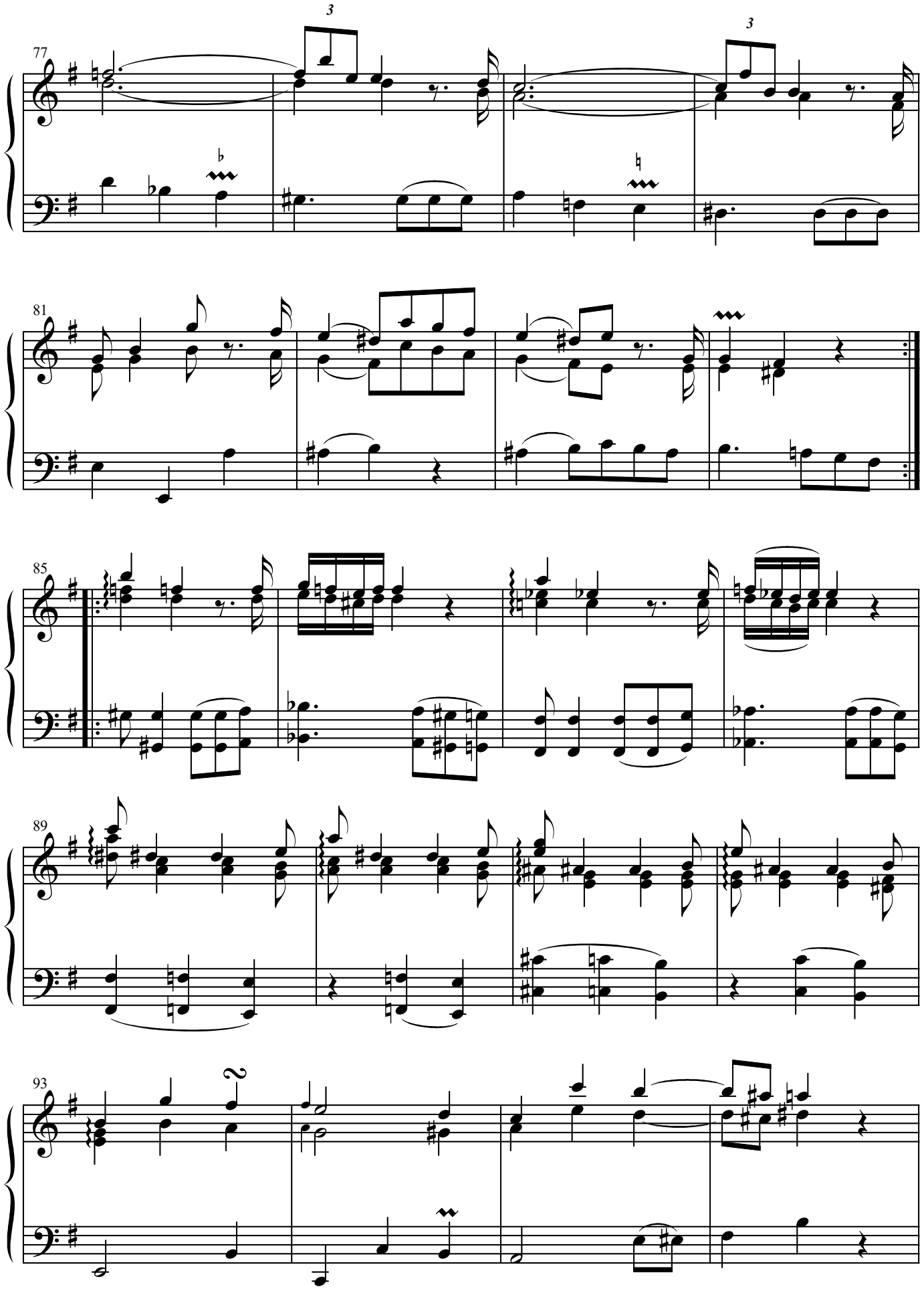
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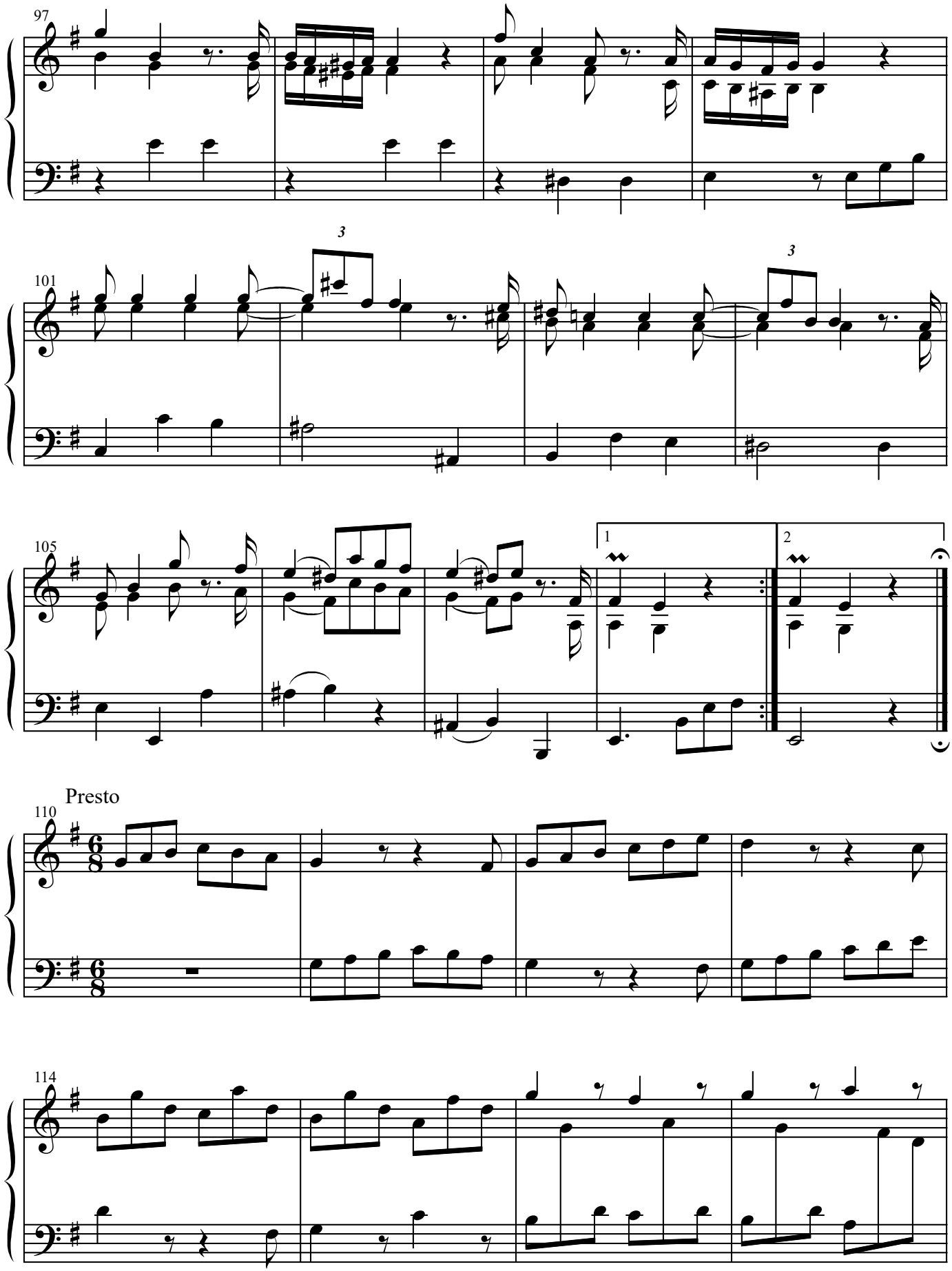
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101
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Presto
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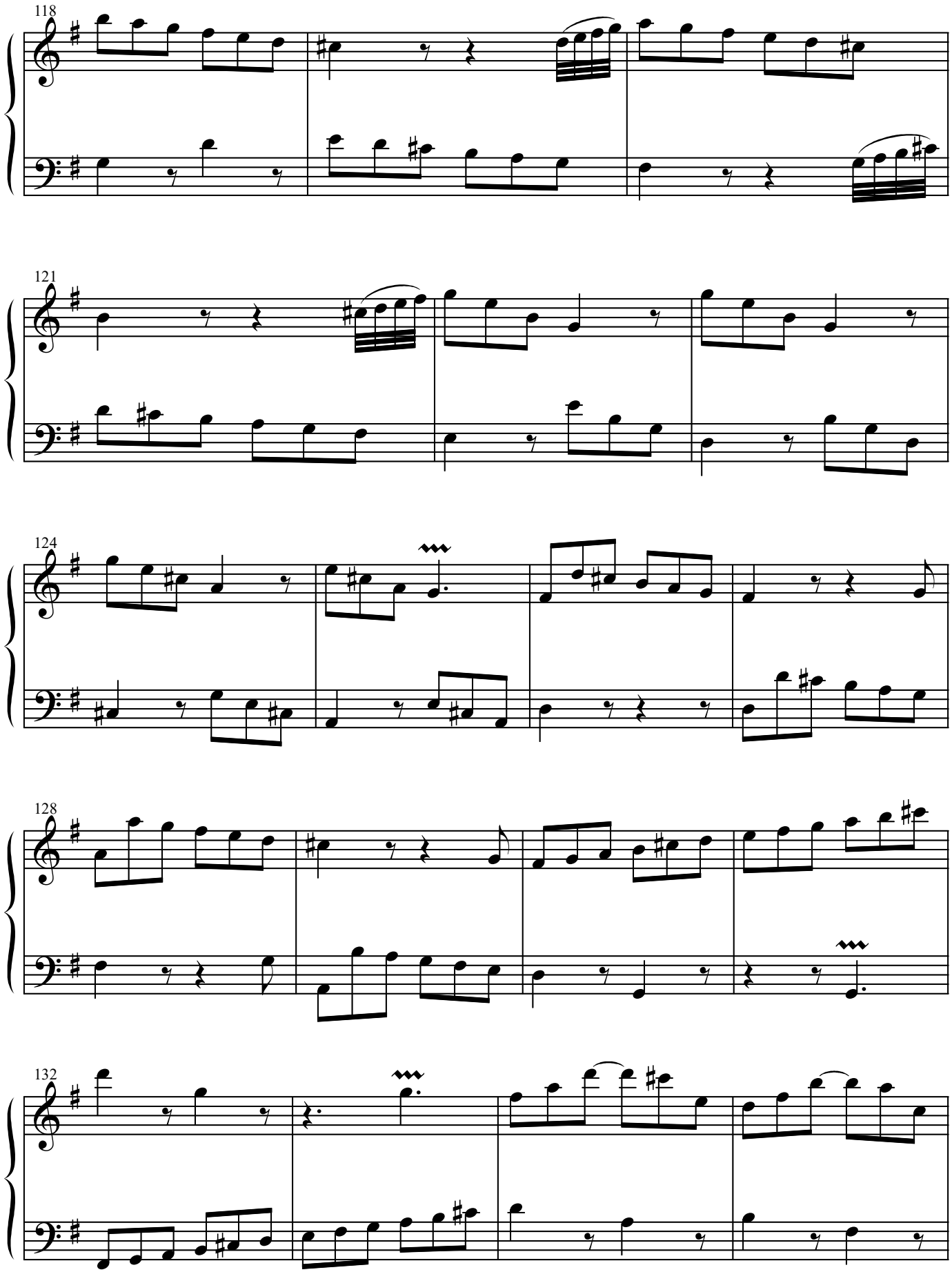
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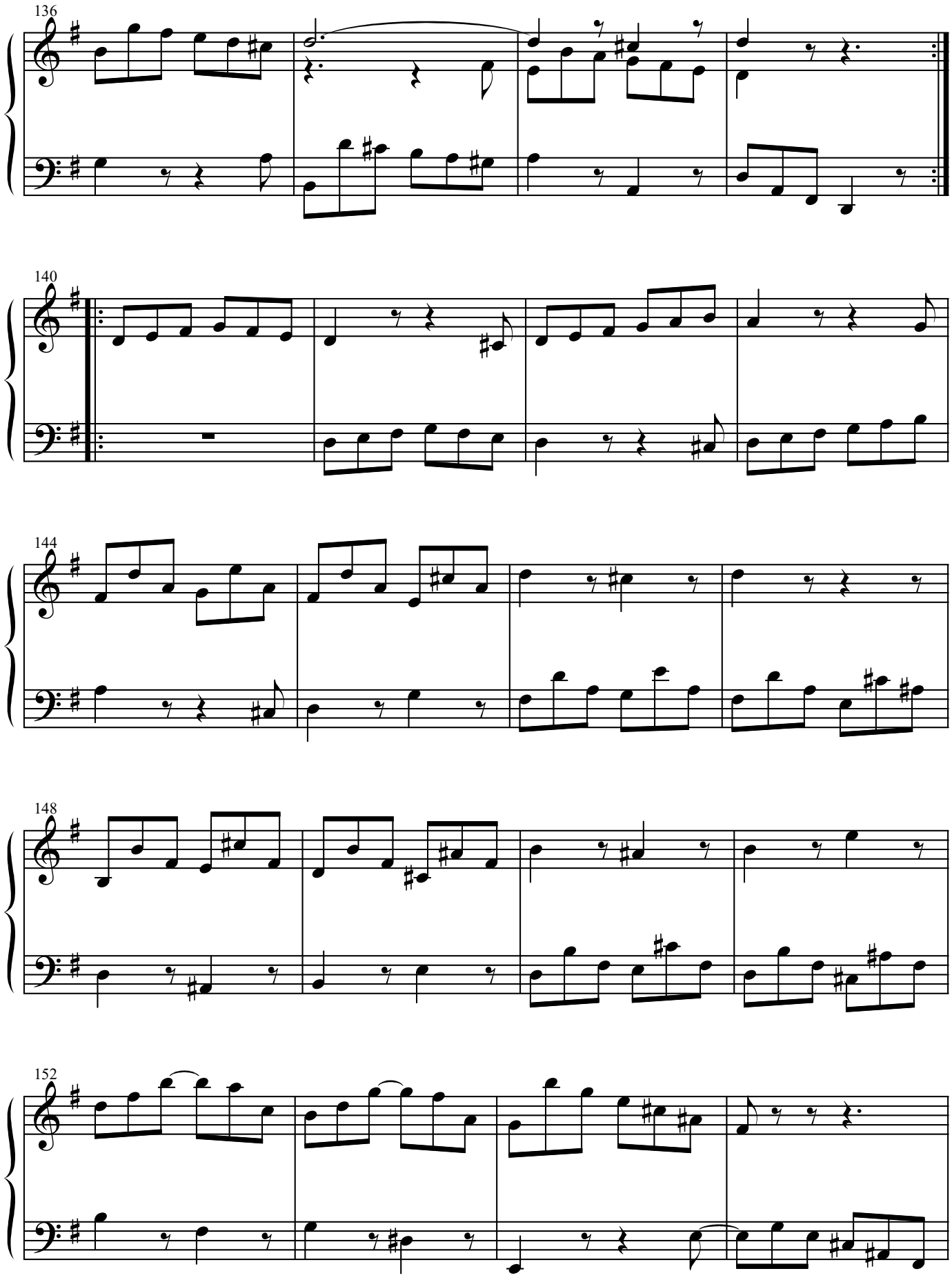
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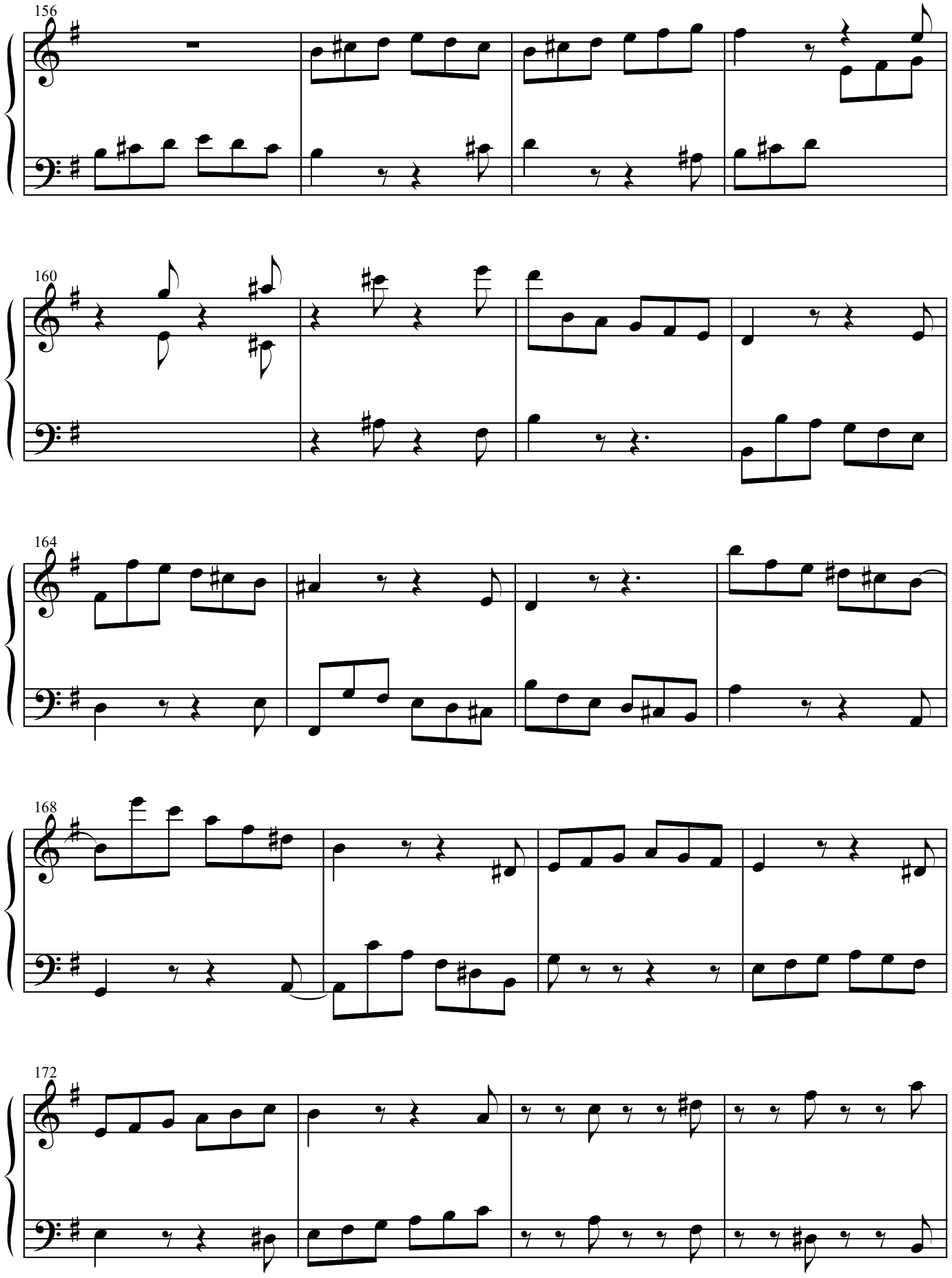
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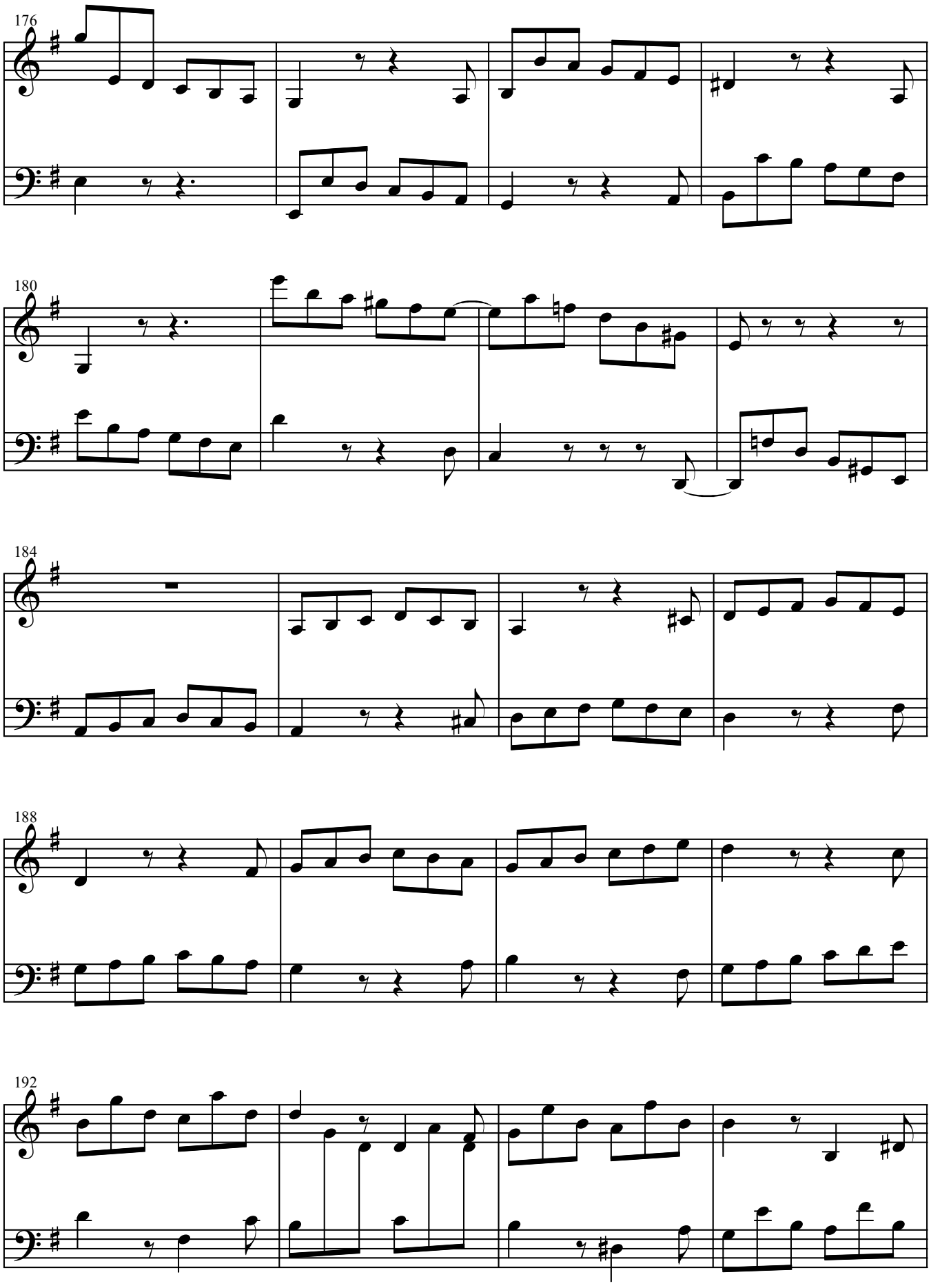
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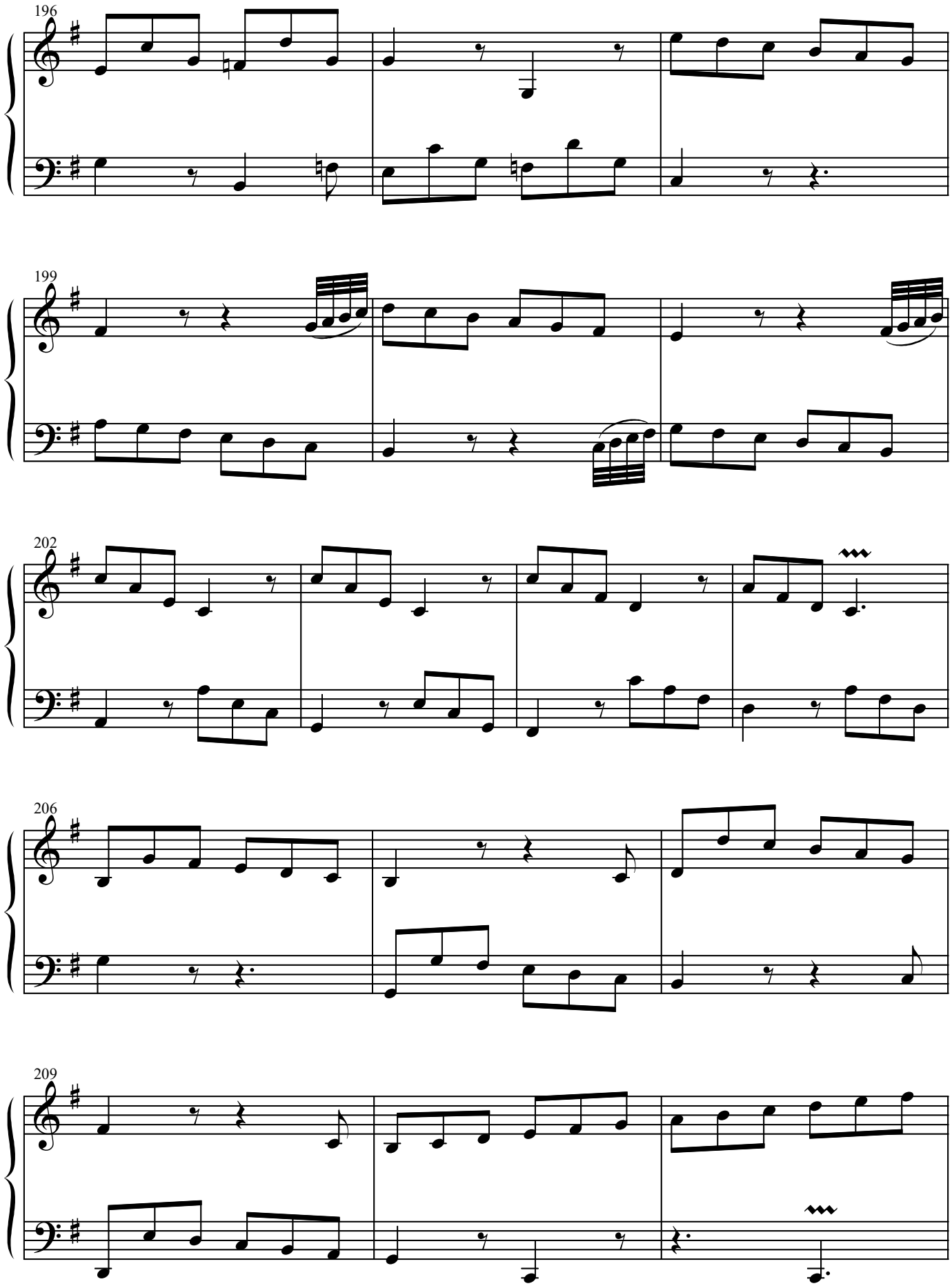
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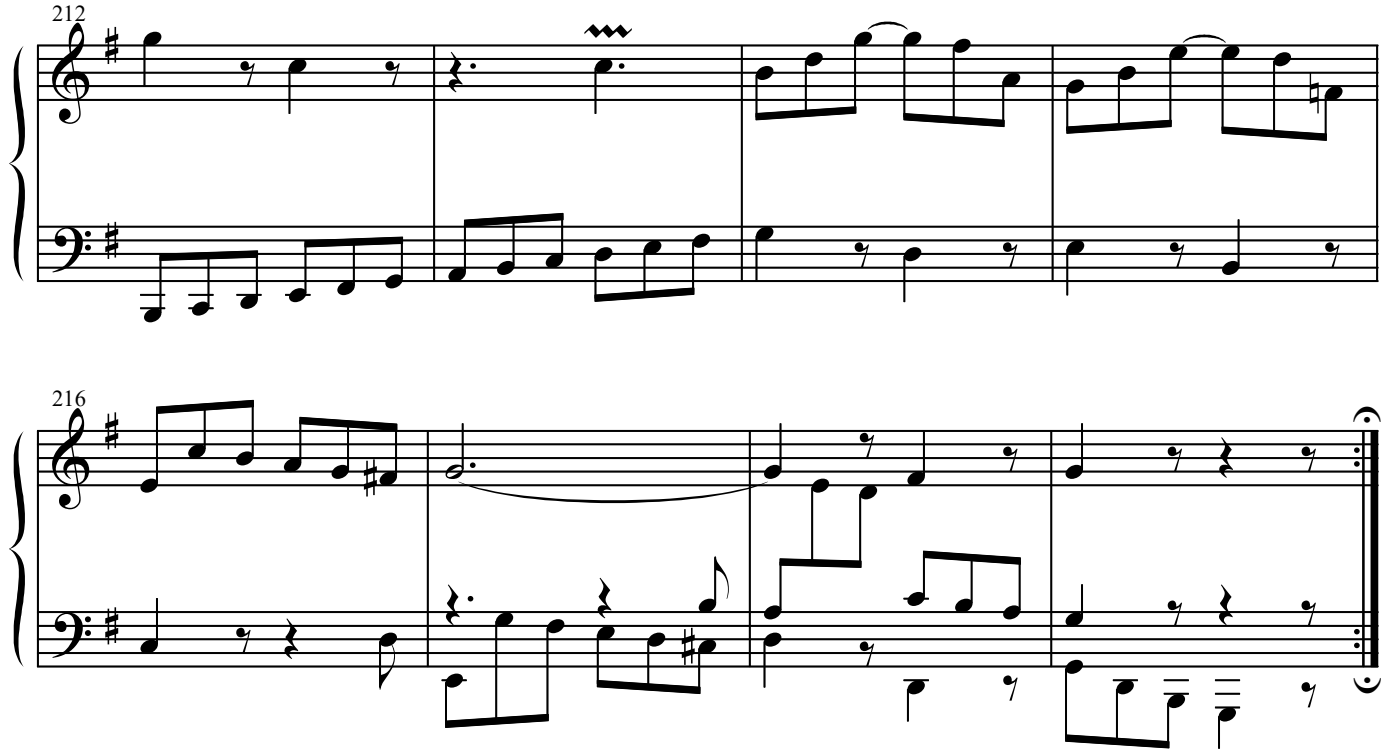

Johann Sebastian Bach's eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, is called "the Halle Bach", since he worked in that town for a long time. He is considered as the pioneer of the keyboard sonata form. His musical instruction was essentially given by his father who wrote several pieces for him, notably, a large part of *The Well-Tempered Clavier.* After spending many years in Dresden, where he essentially composed instrumental music (symphonies, concertos, keyboard pieces), his years spent in Halle permitted him to devote himself to sacred music (cantatas). He refused a position in Darmstadt, and chose to live as a freelance musician by selling his works, an exceptional practice at that time. He then made a living thanks to giving private lessons and organ recitals. His first organ recitals were a success. However, he quickly disappeared from the musical scene, and died forgotten and in poverty.

A talented composer, his music reflects Baroque and Rococo influences. His originality can be explained by the strikingly new character of music made up of contrapuntal science and harmonic intuitions that announce Beethoven and even Debussy. Certain vocal polyphonies seem to suggest Schoenberg. It is to Wilhelm that credit must be given for the first development of the sonata form and the piano concerto. Most of his works remain unpublished and even unknown, and are largely in manuscript form.

His Sonata in G Major is certainly the most beautiful of the seven sonatas. As for the central *Lamento,* in E minor, of this sonata, it plunges into an atmosphere of unexpected pathos, lifting the veil on fathomless depths; however, the sprightly jig in the lively final *Presto* returns within the bounds of orthodox writing. Some passages, moreover, call to mind episodes in the eleventh variation of the *Goldberg Variations,* in the same key of G Major: hardly surprising, given that Johann Sebastian's son was a friend of Count Keyserlingk and the young Goldberg's teacher.

Required piece for the International Competition for Early Music YAMANASHI.