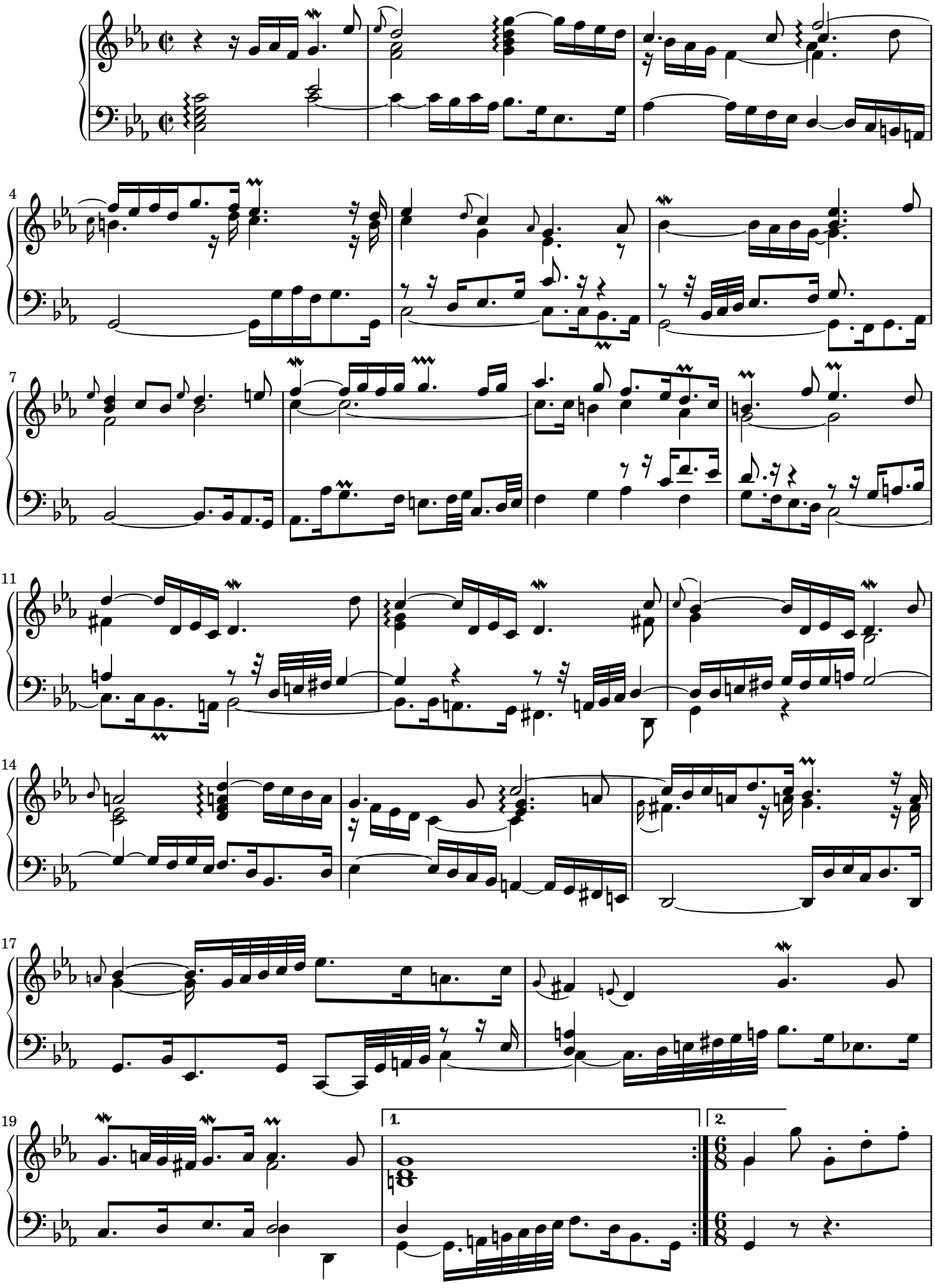
Ouverture
pour le Claveçin
a 2 Clav.

composée
par
J.S. Bach.

(Für ein Claveçin mit 2 Manualen)

Edited from Anna Magdalena Bach's manuscript by Ole Villumsen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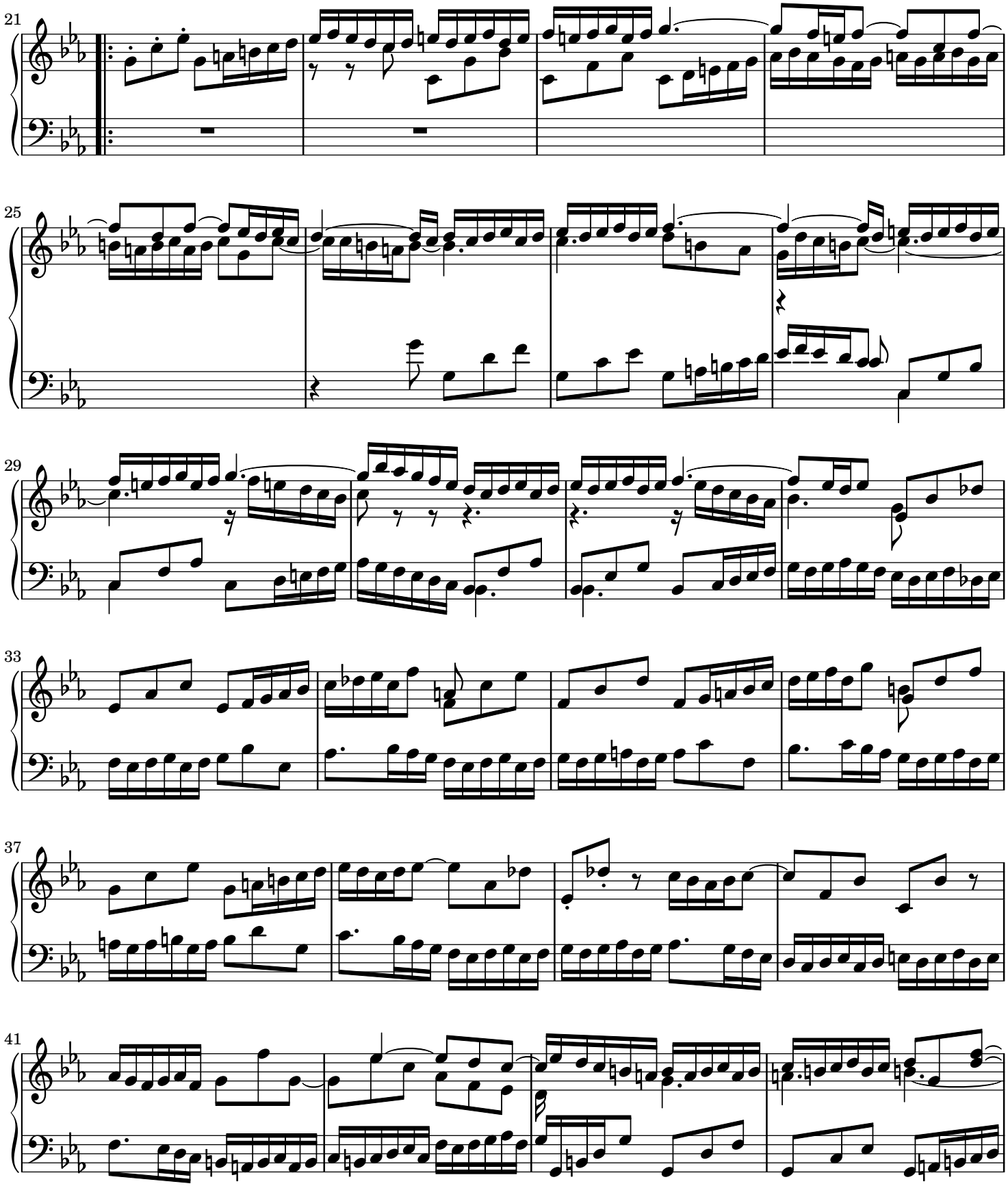
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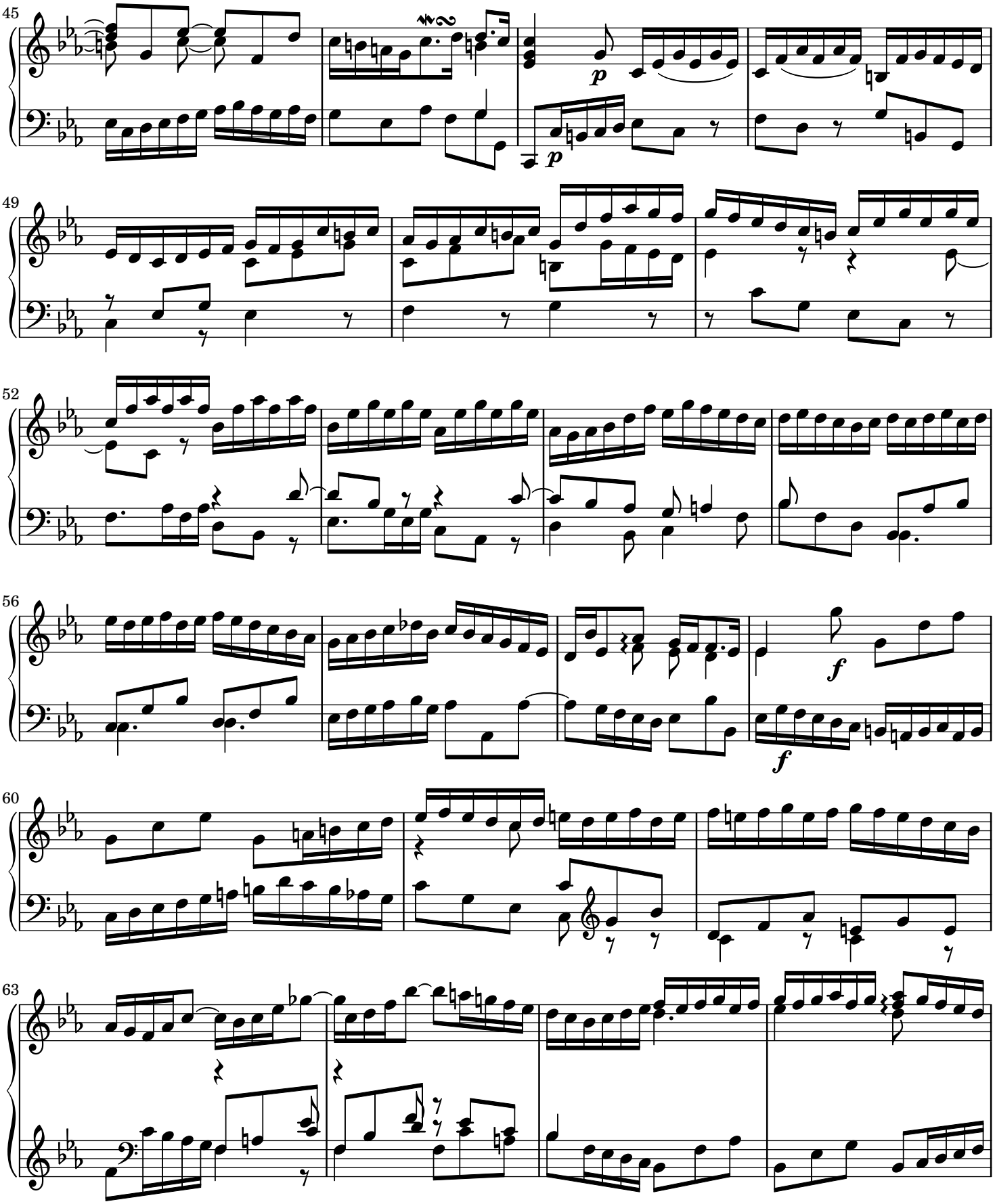
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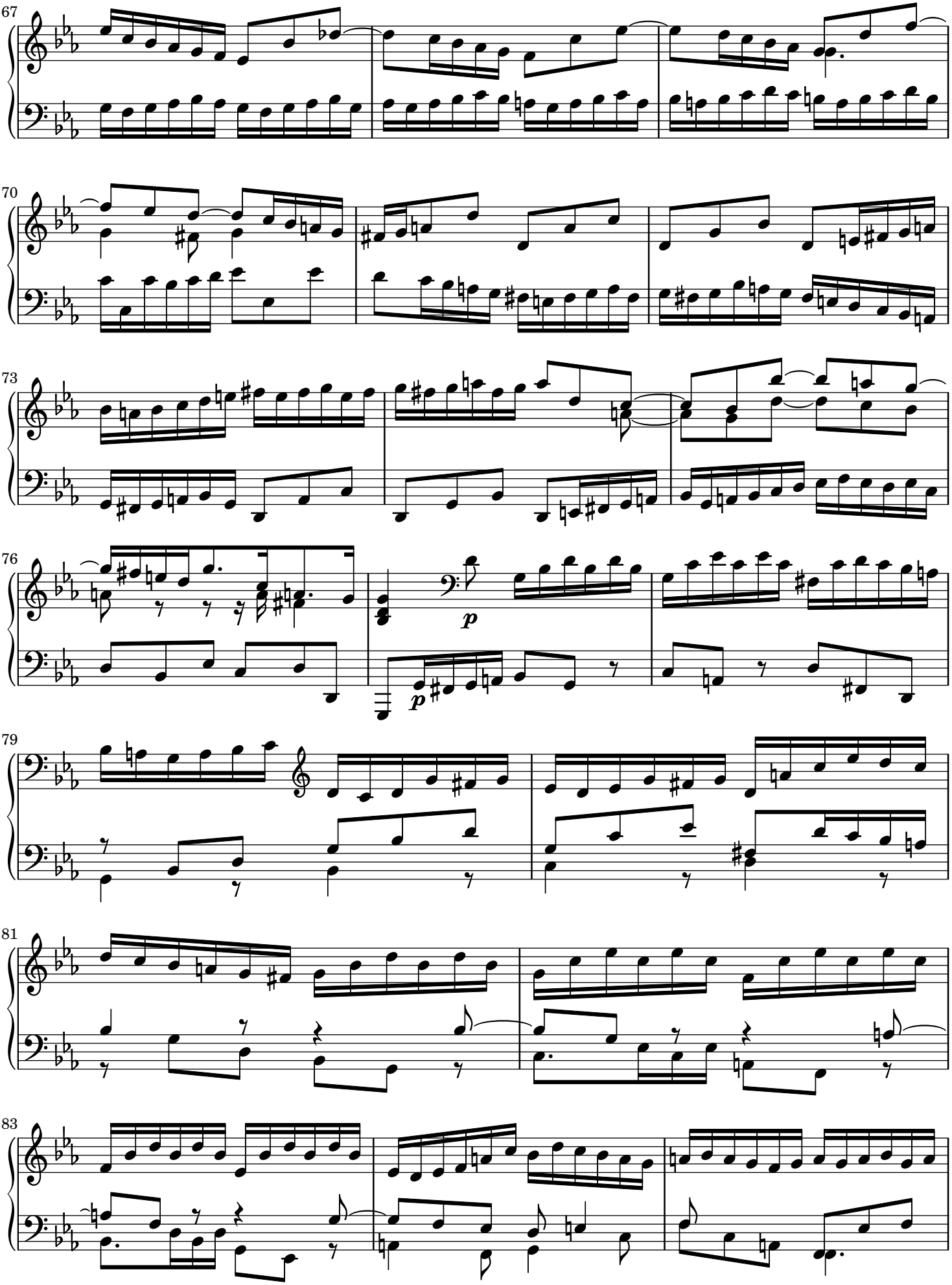
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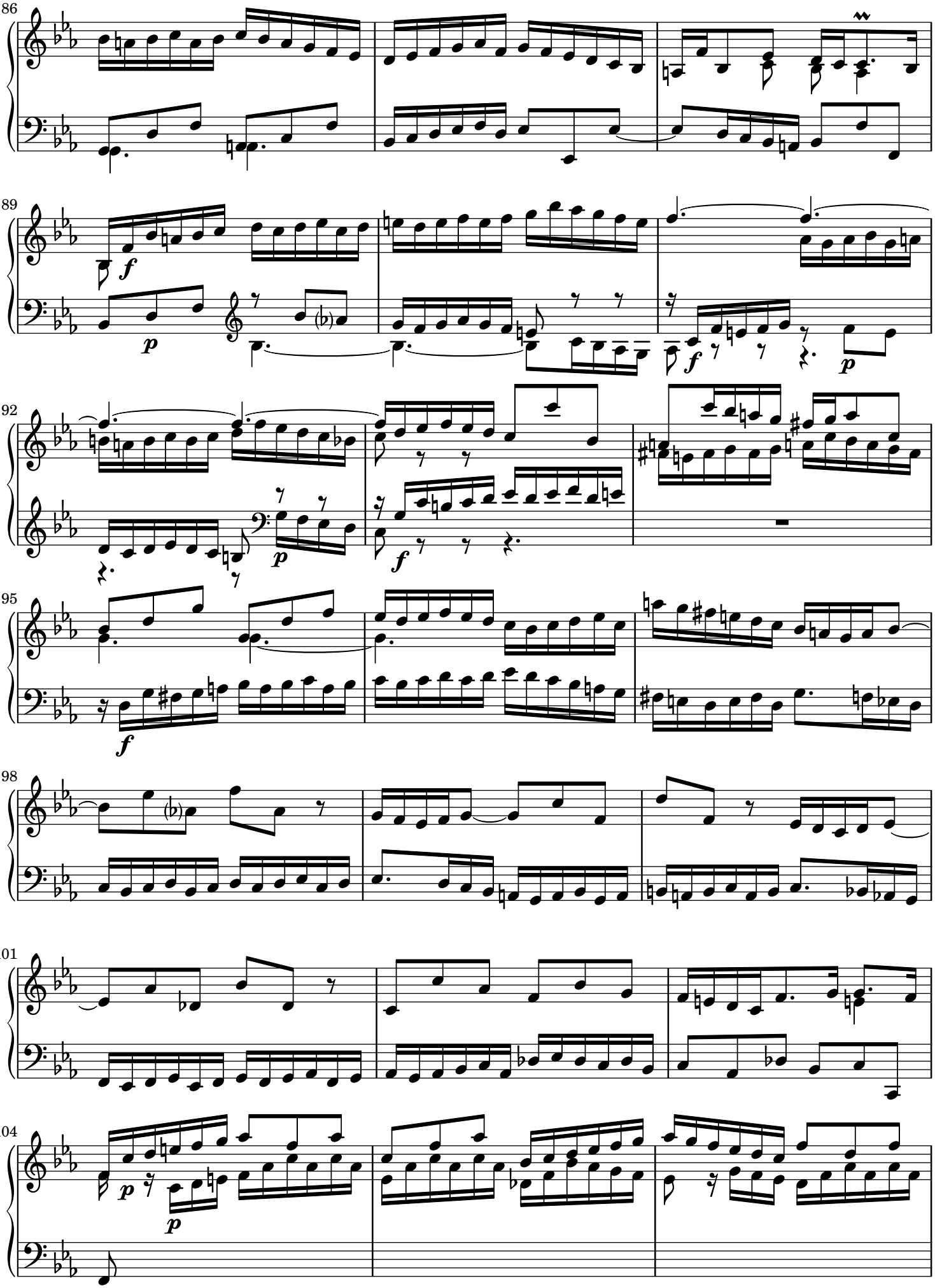
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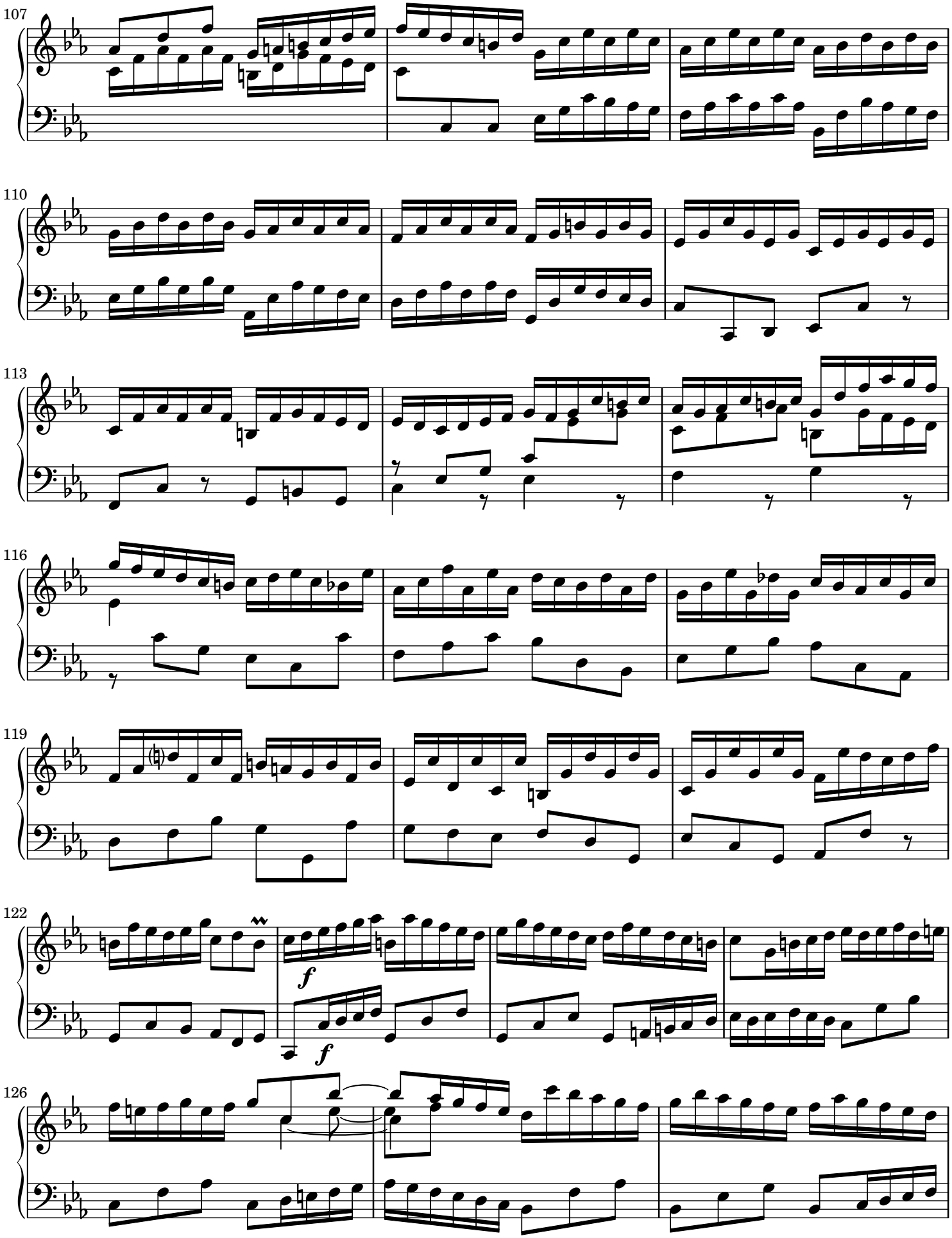
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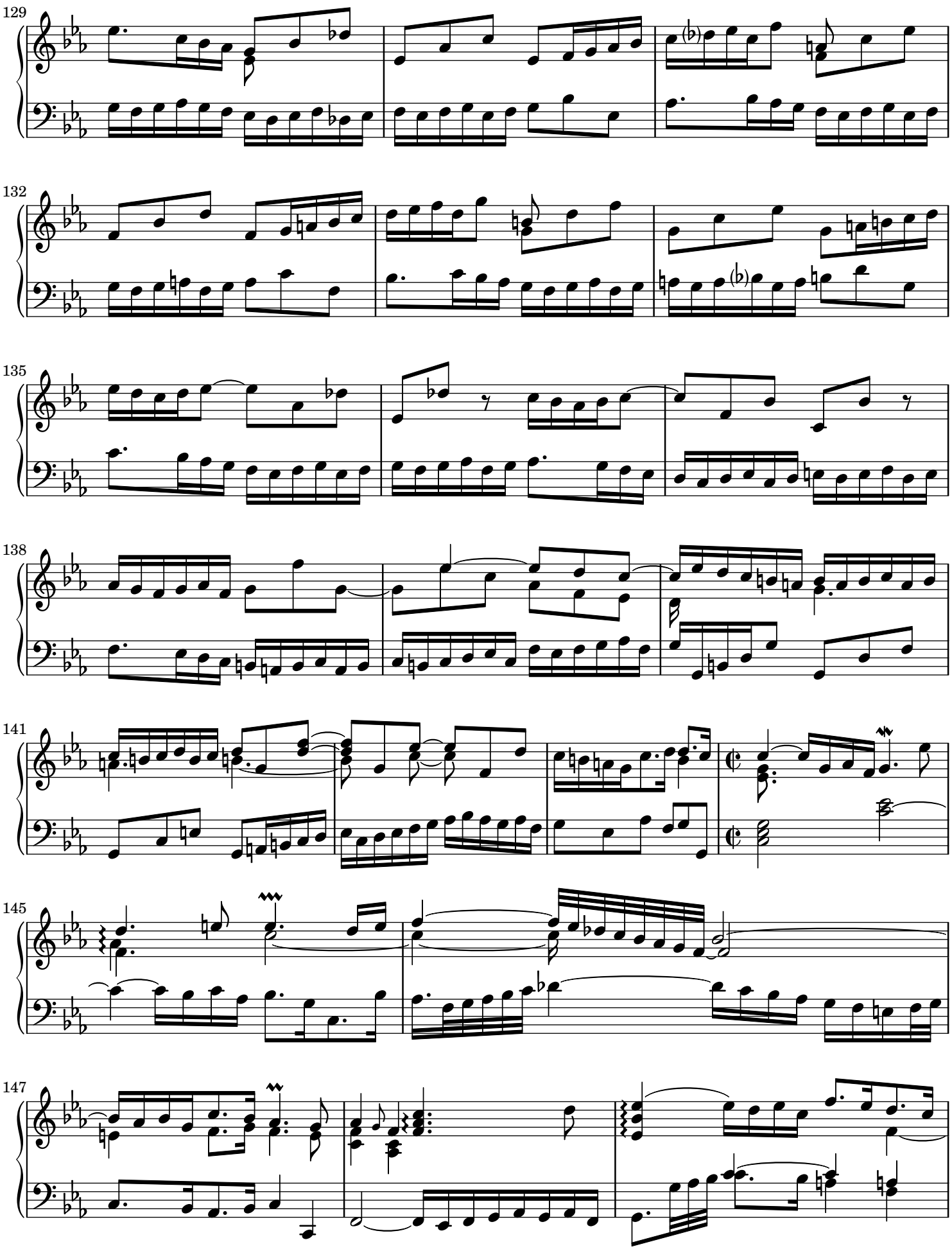
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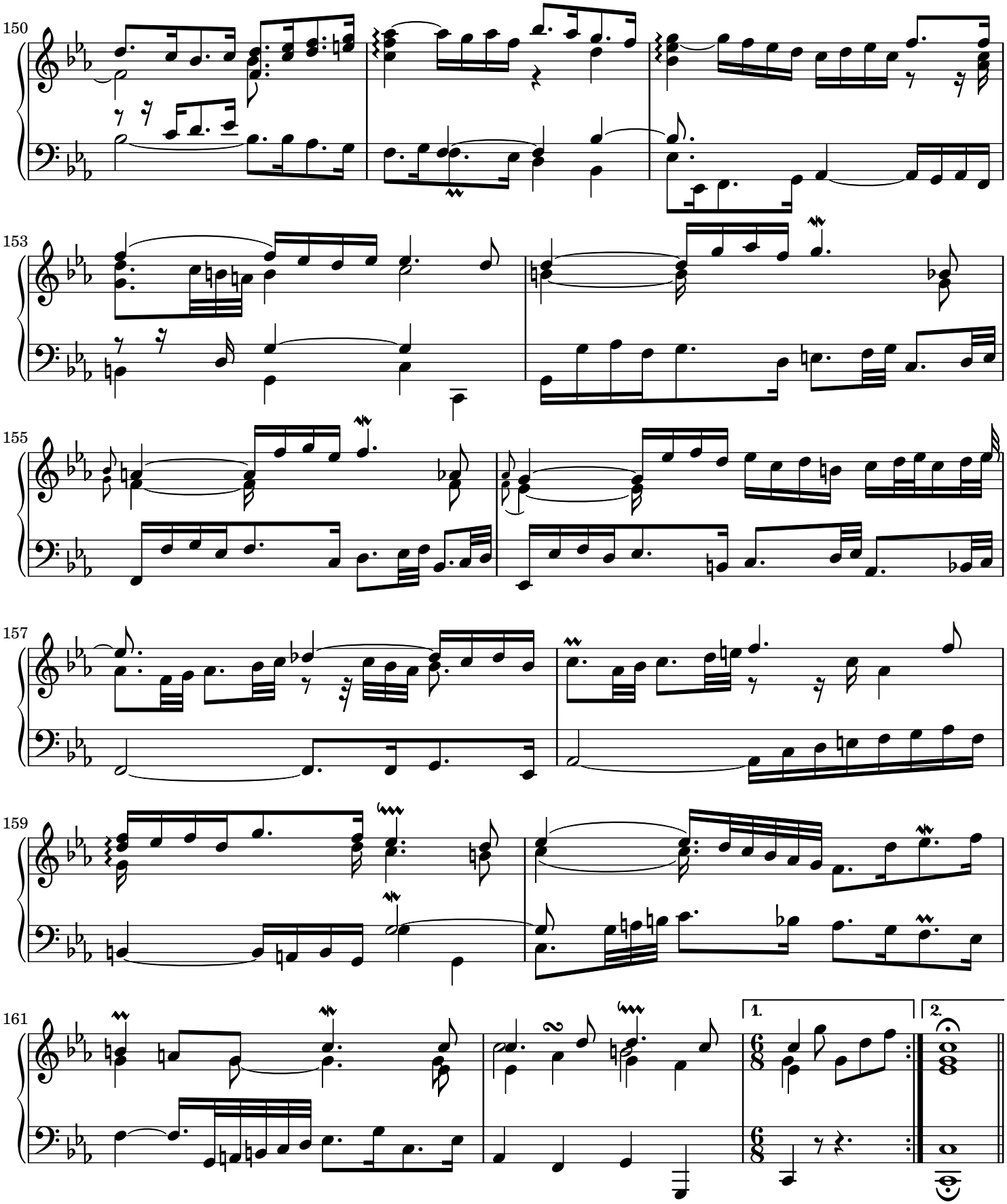
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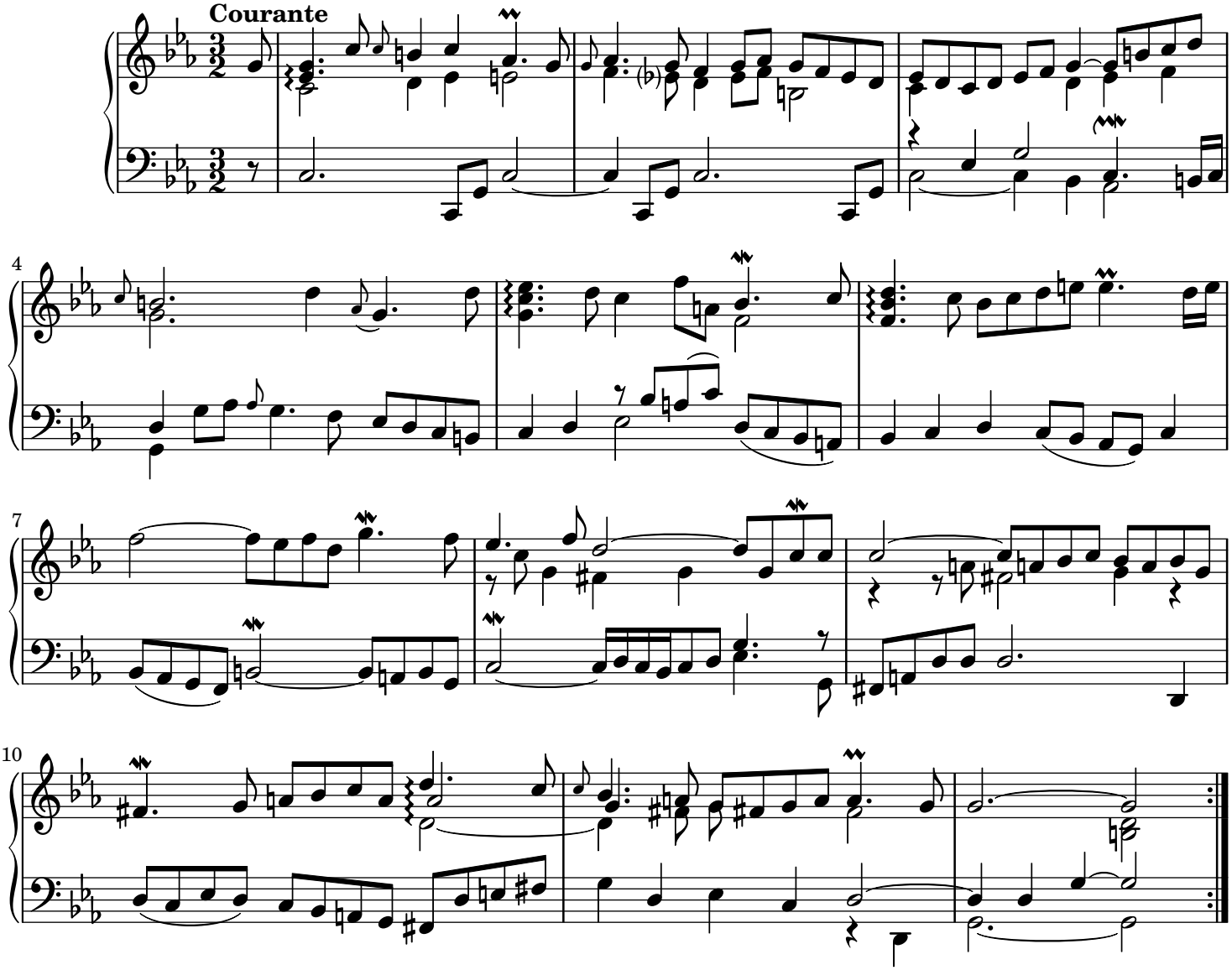
Courante
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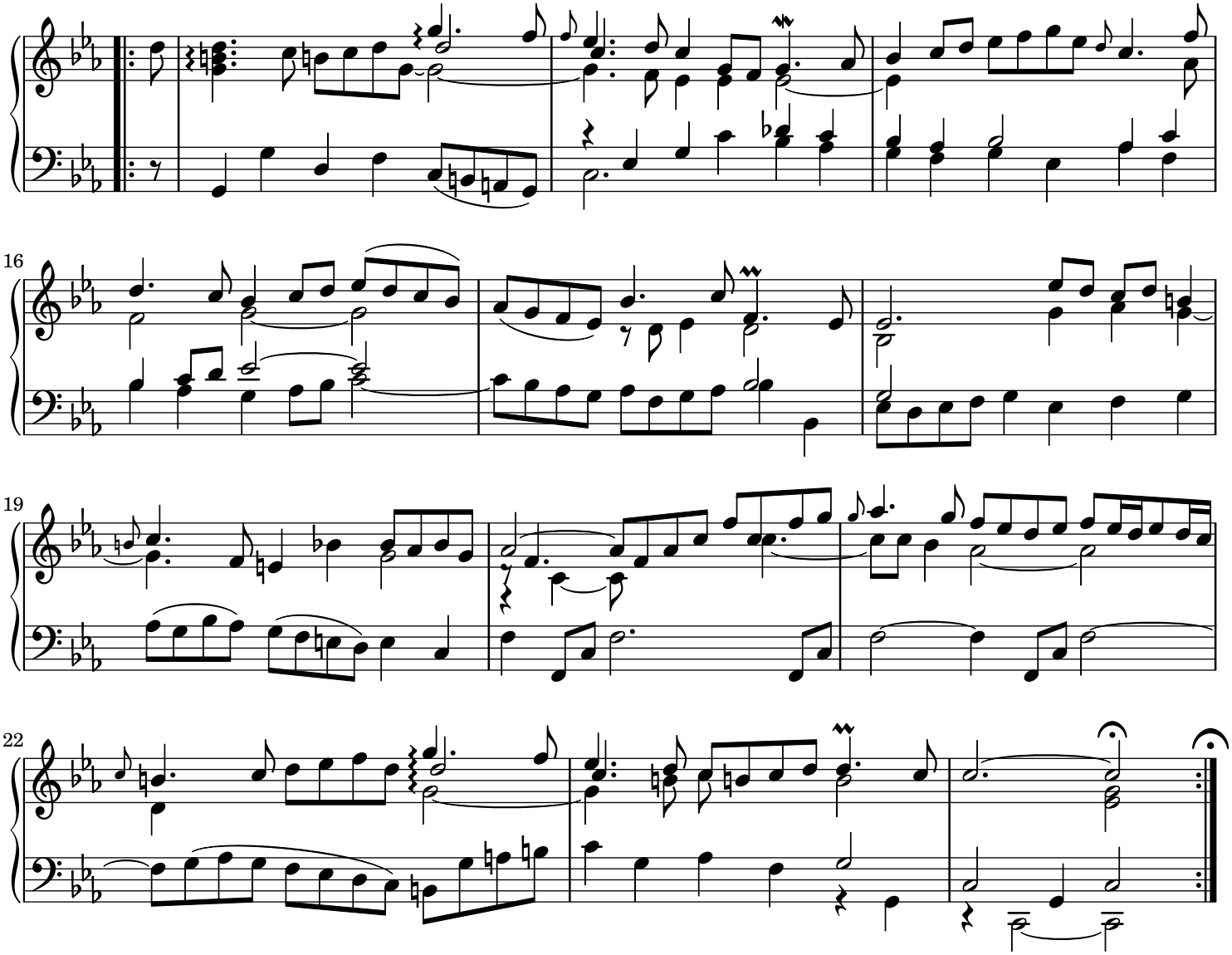
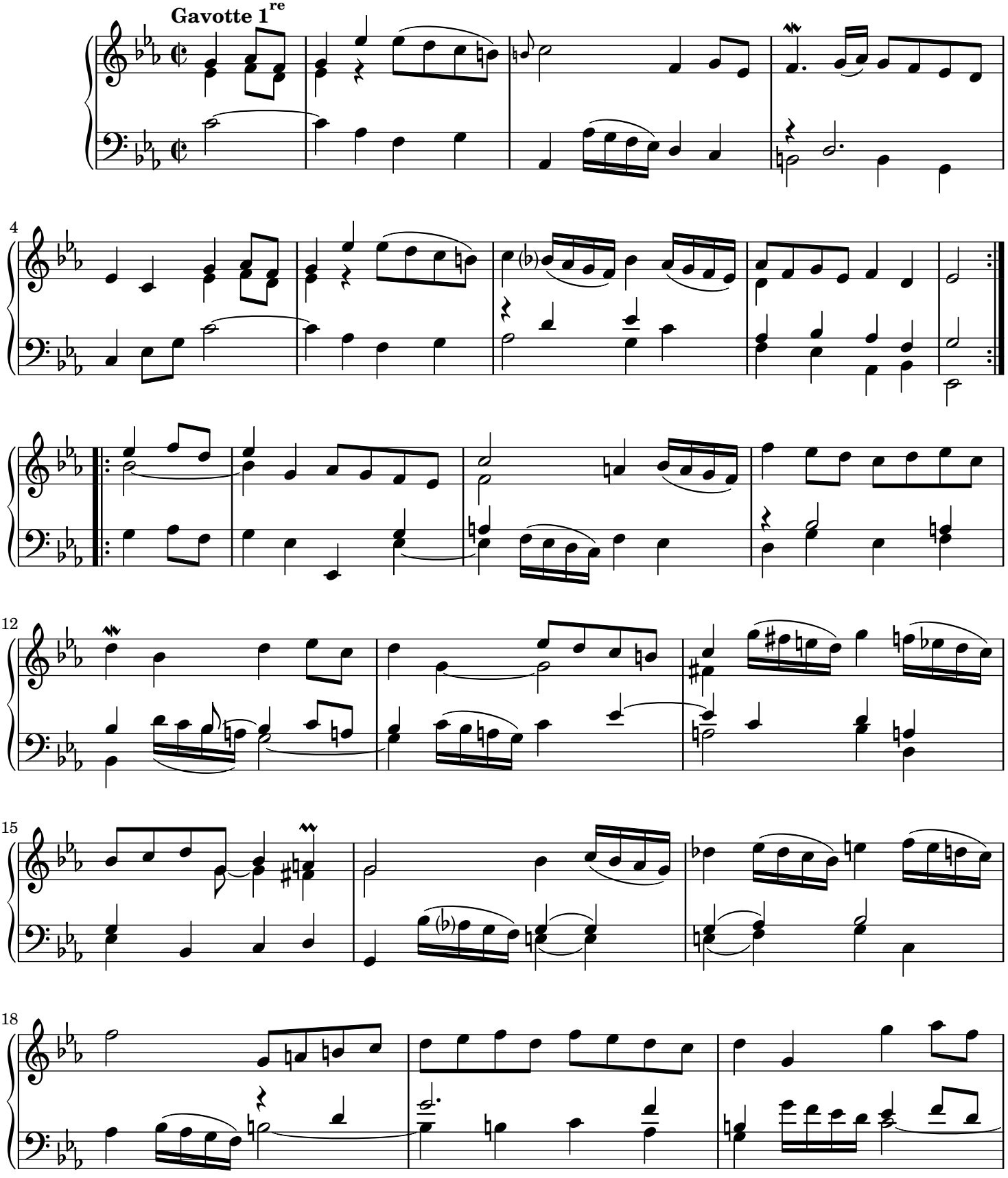
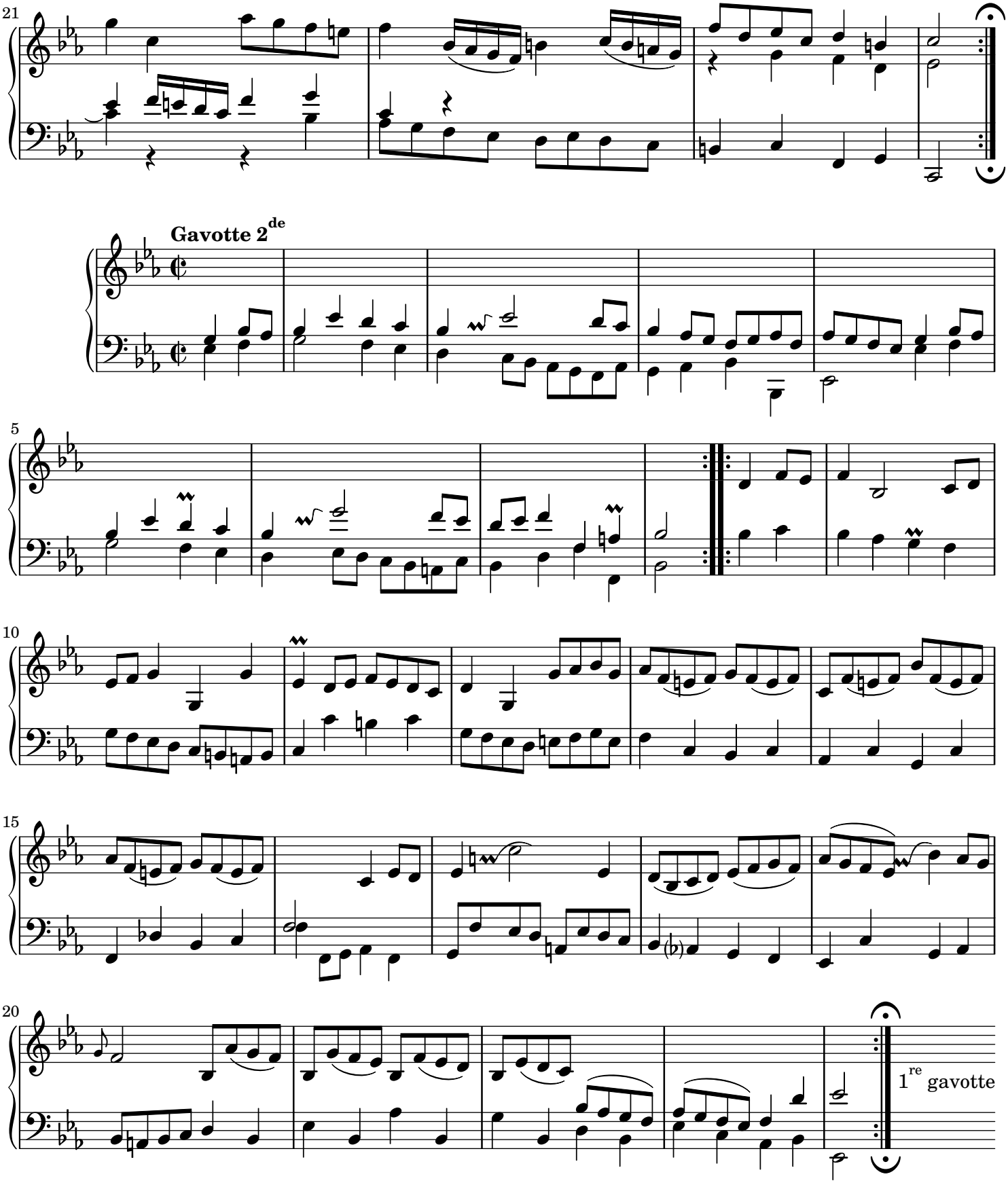


Gavotte 1re




21
Gavotte 2de
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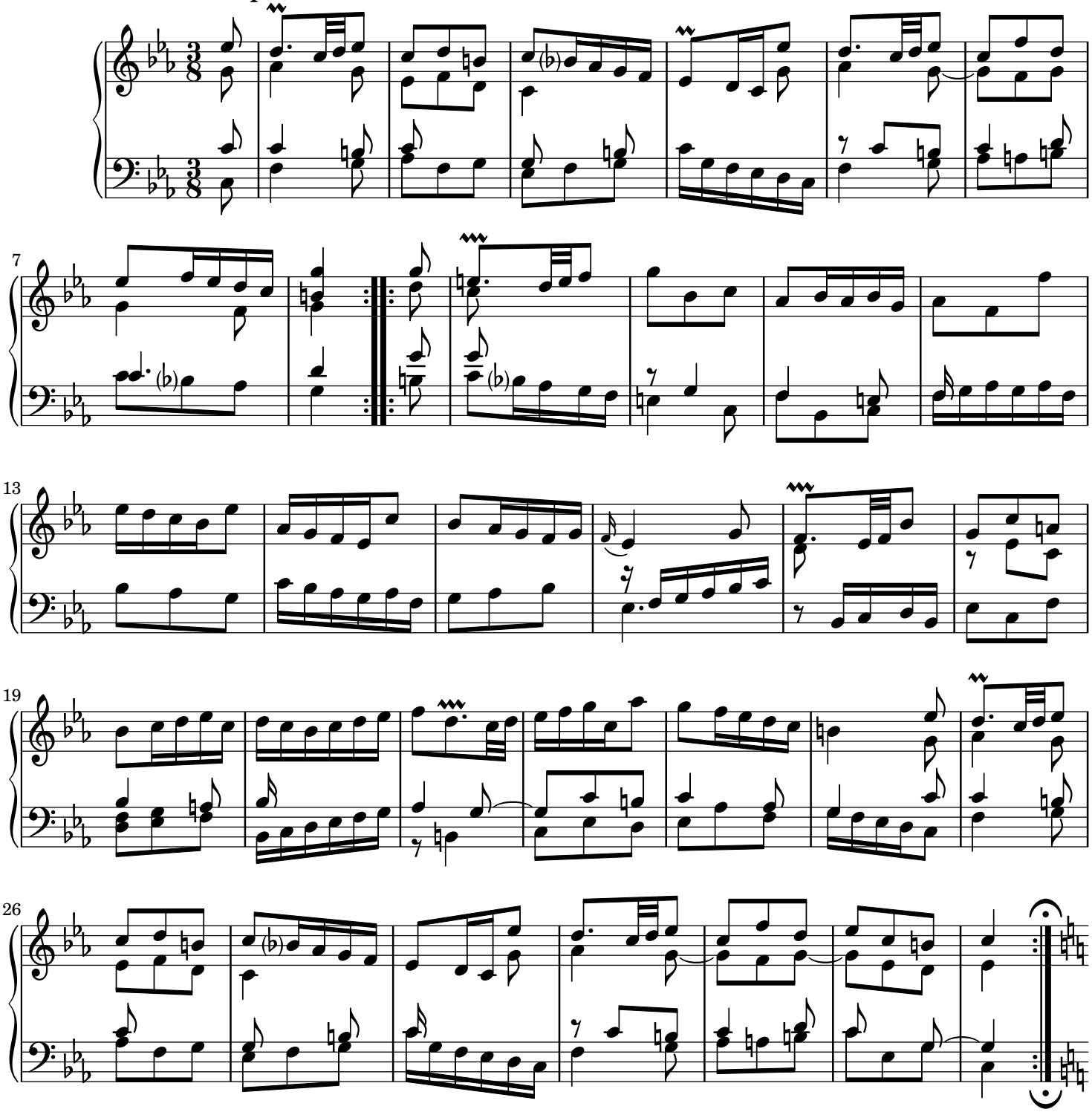
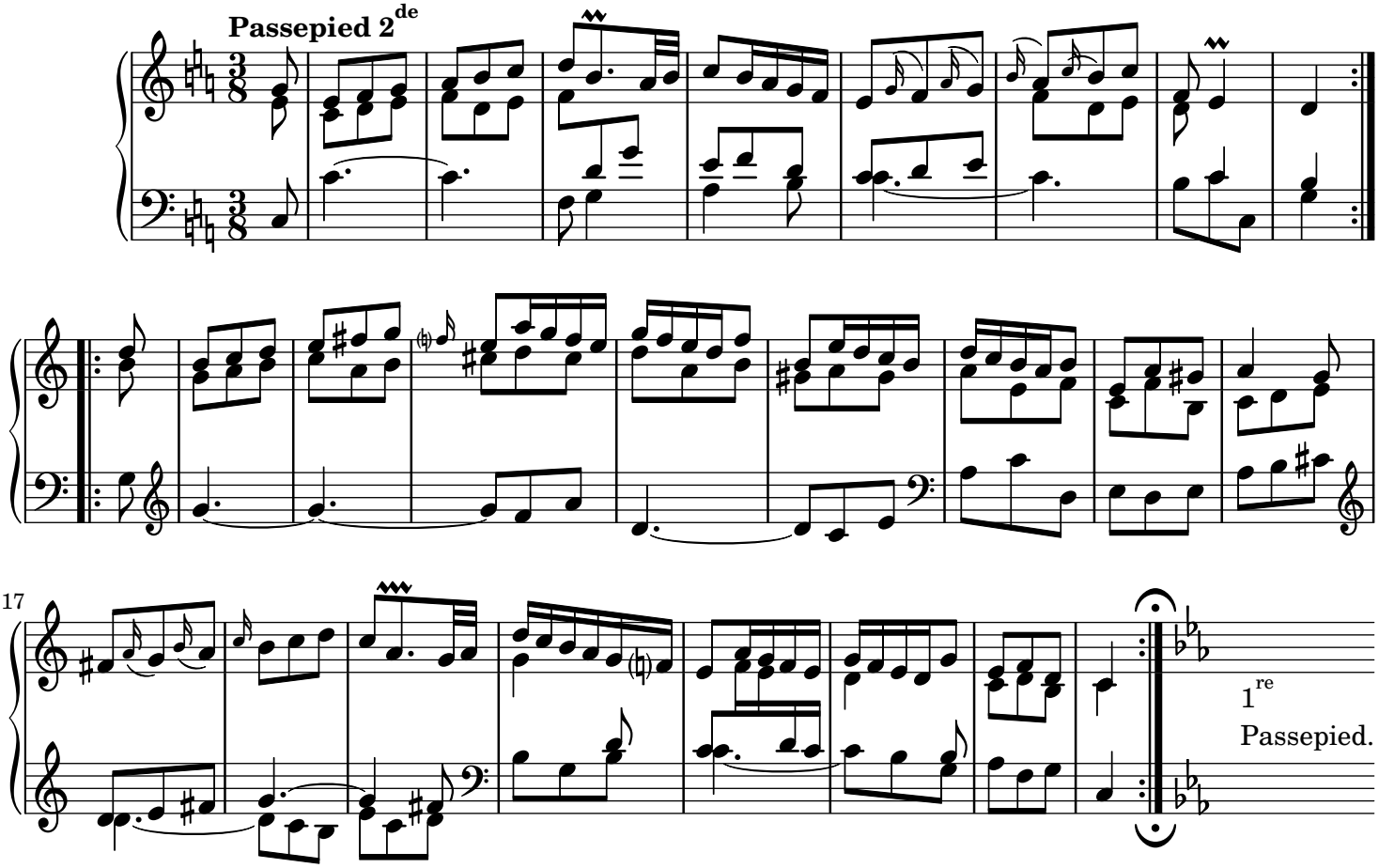
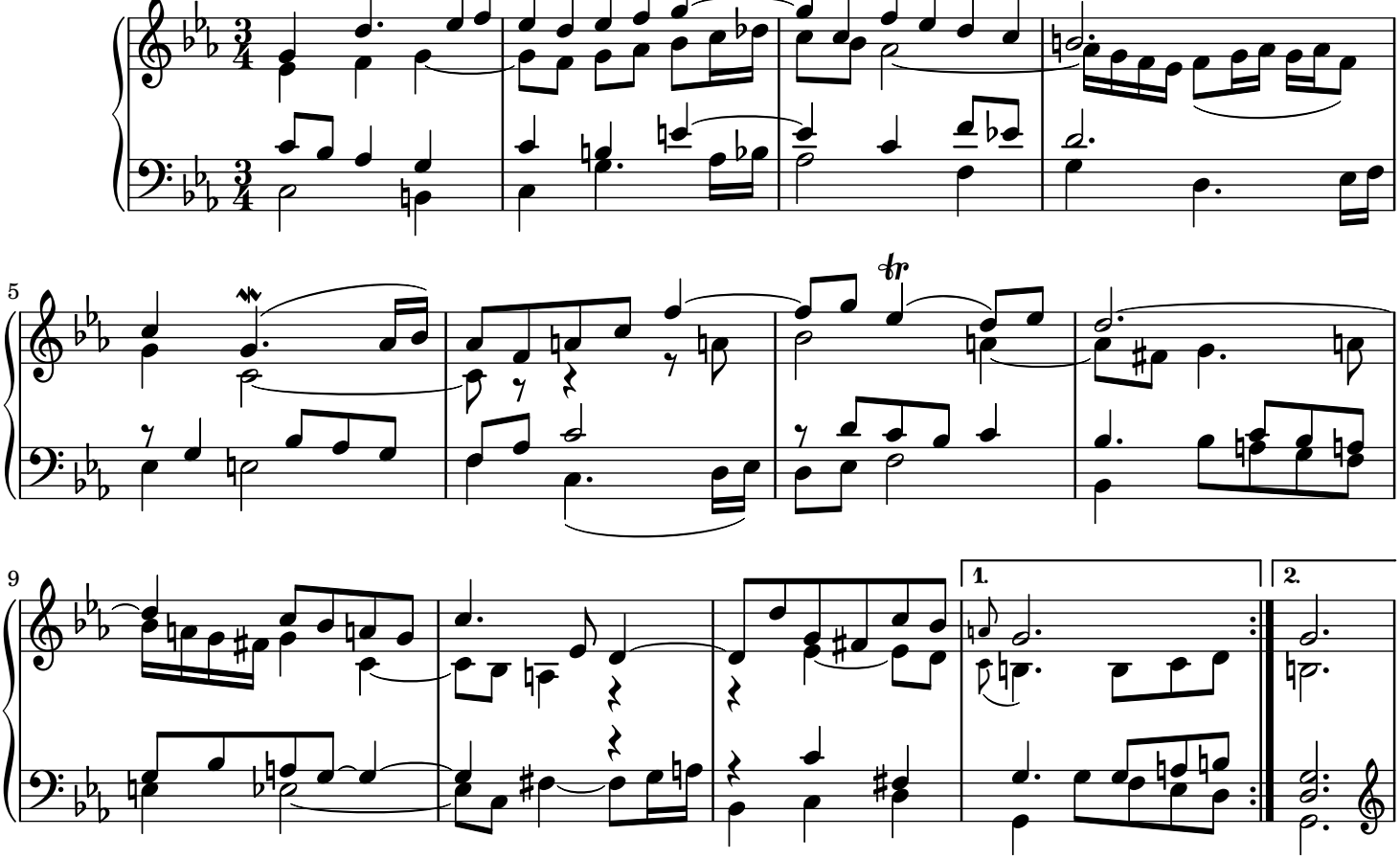
1re gavotte

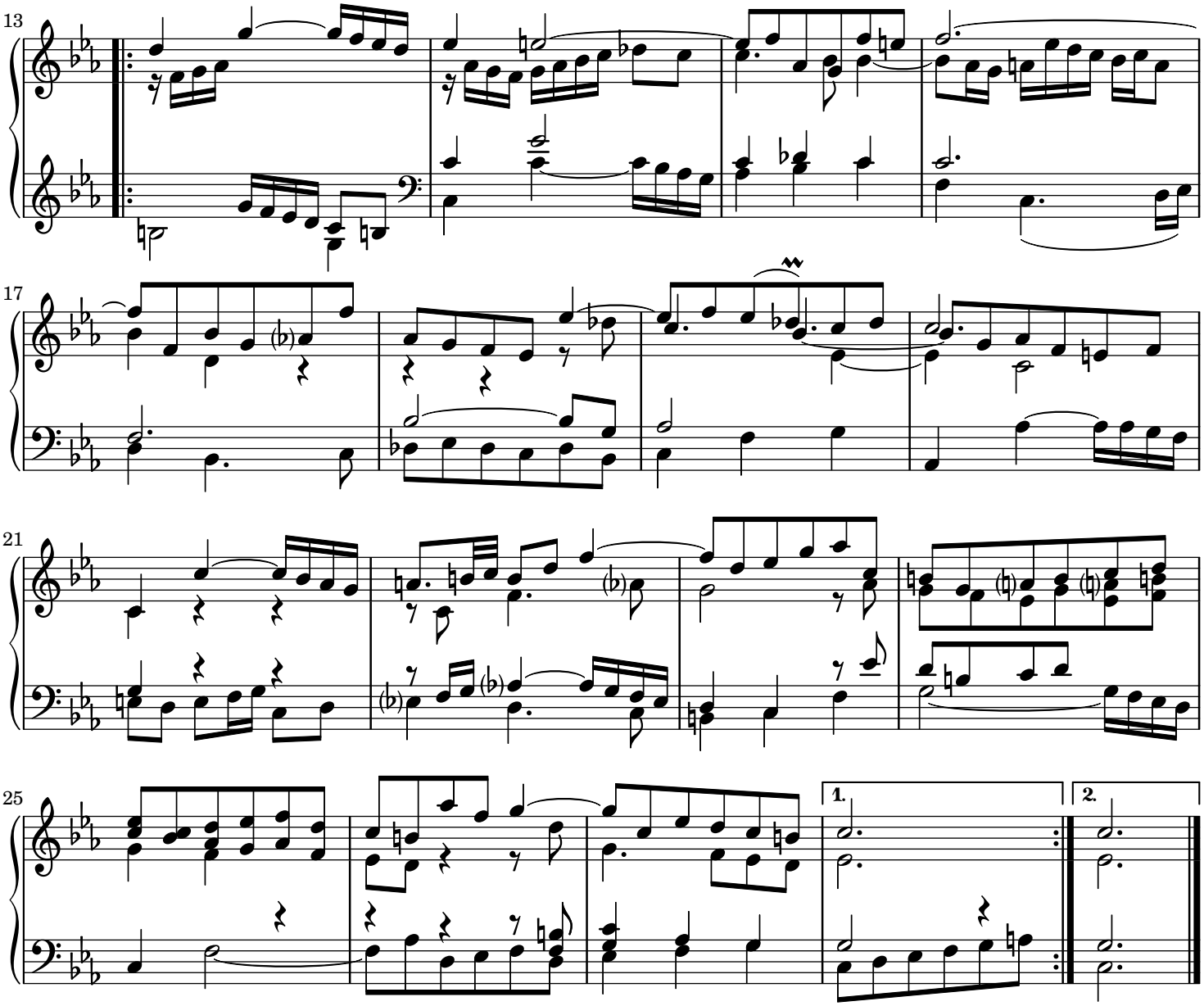
Passepied 1re




Passepied 2de
17
1re
Passepied.

Sarabande

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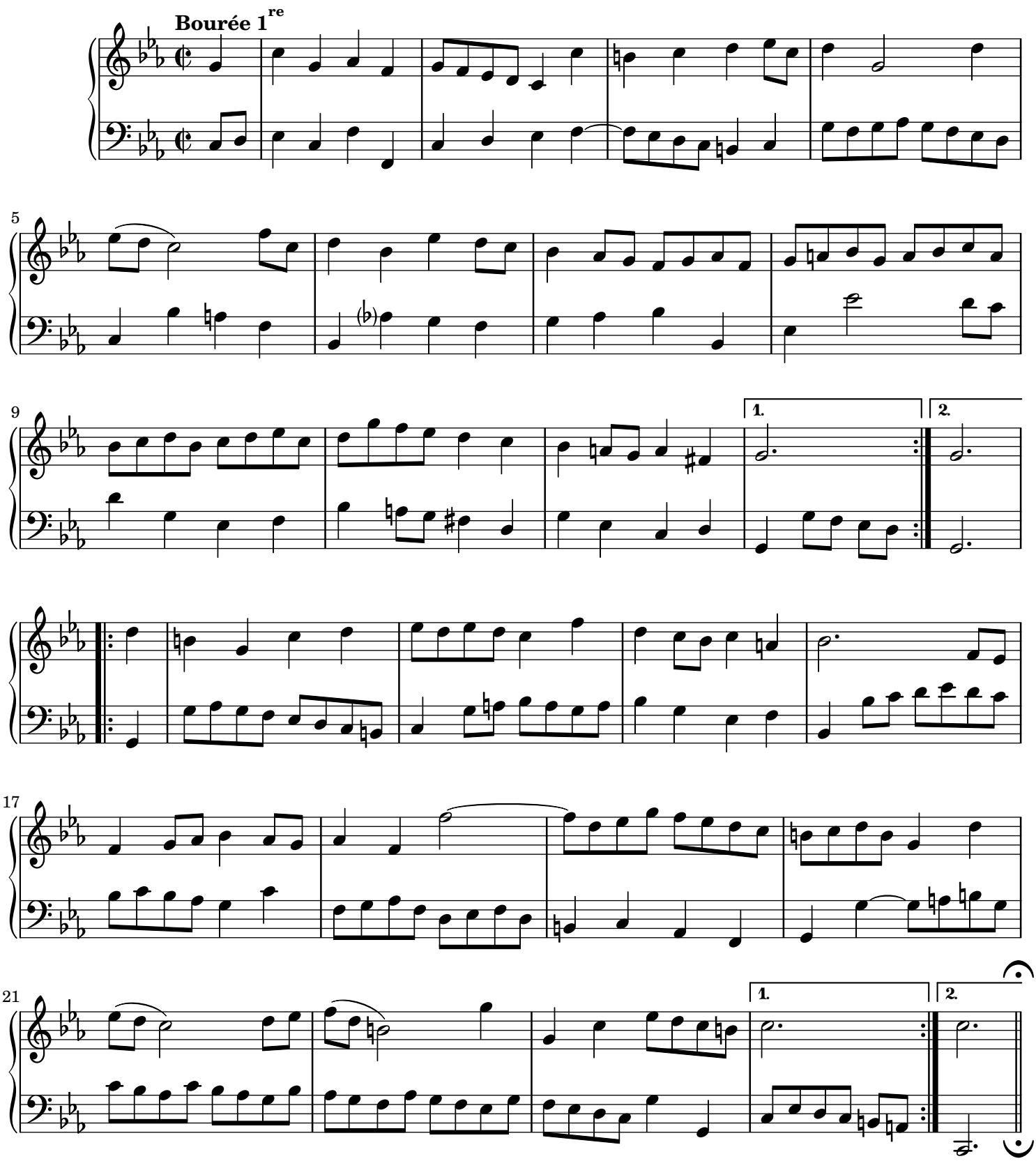
Bourée 1re
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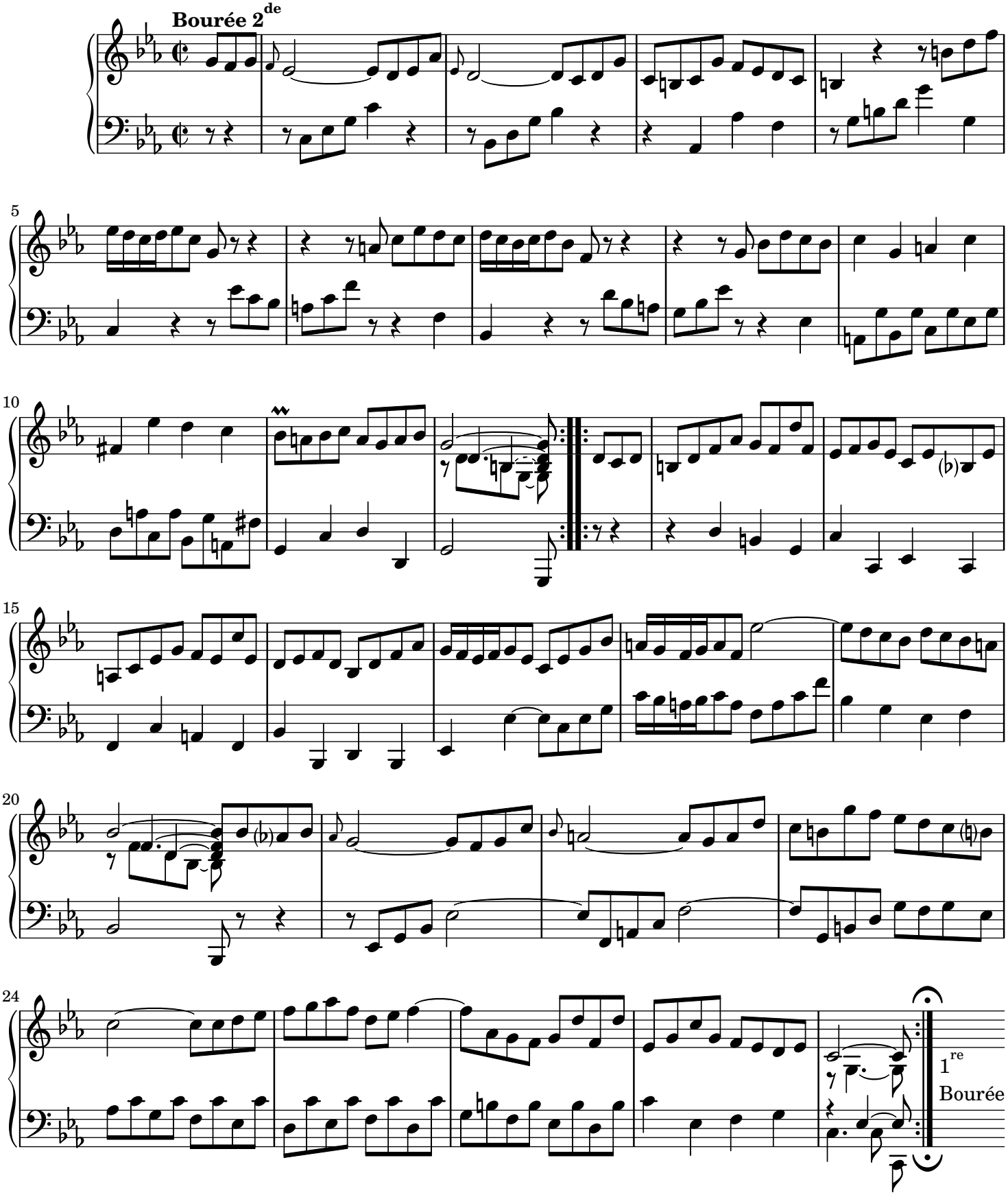
Bourée 2de
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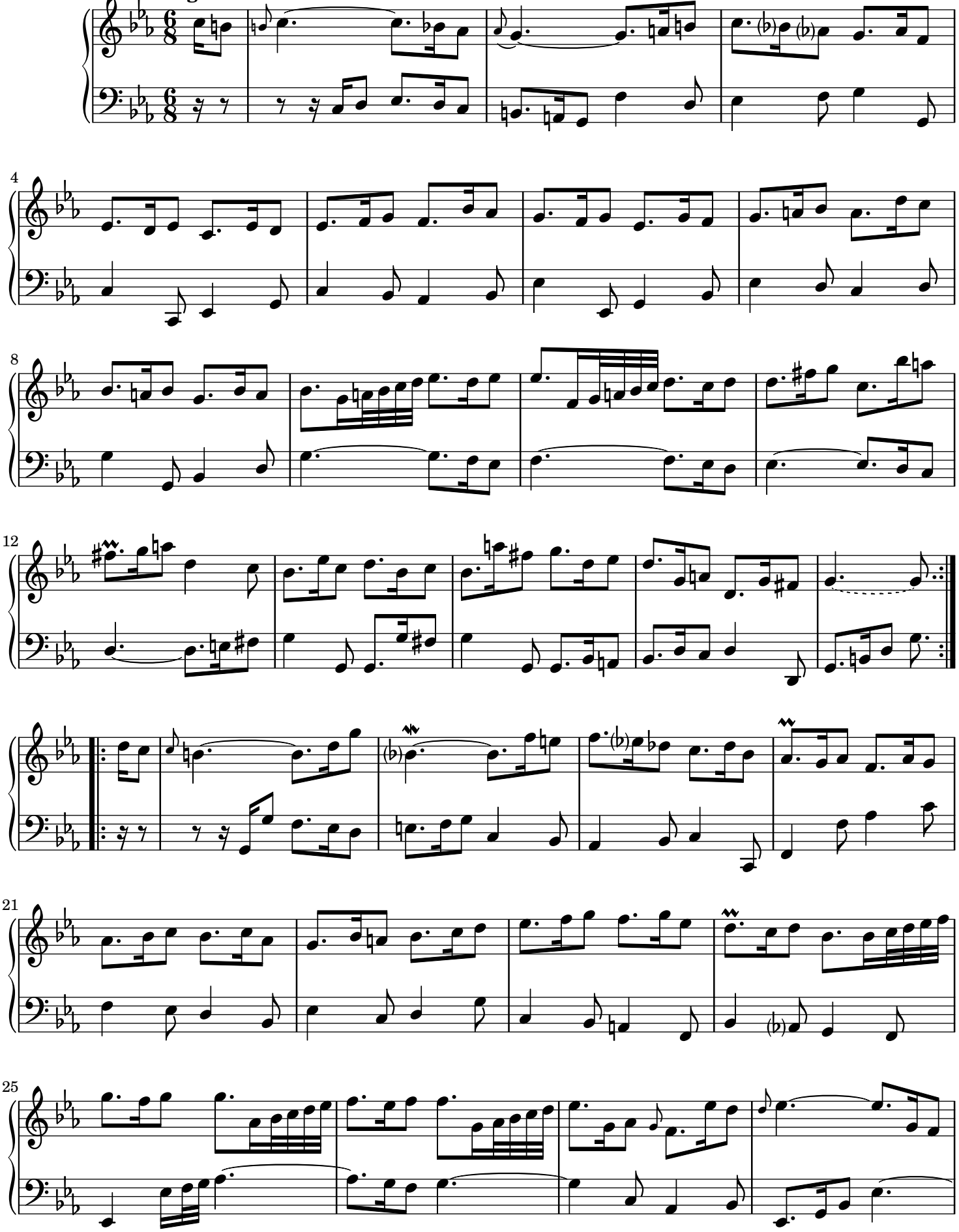
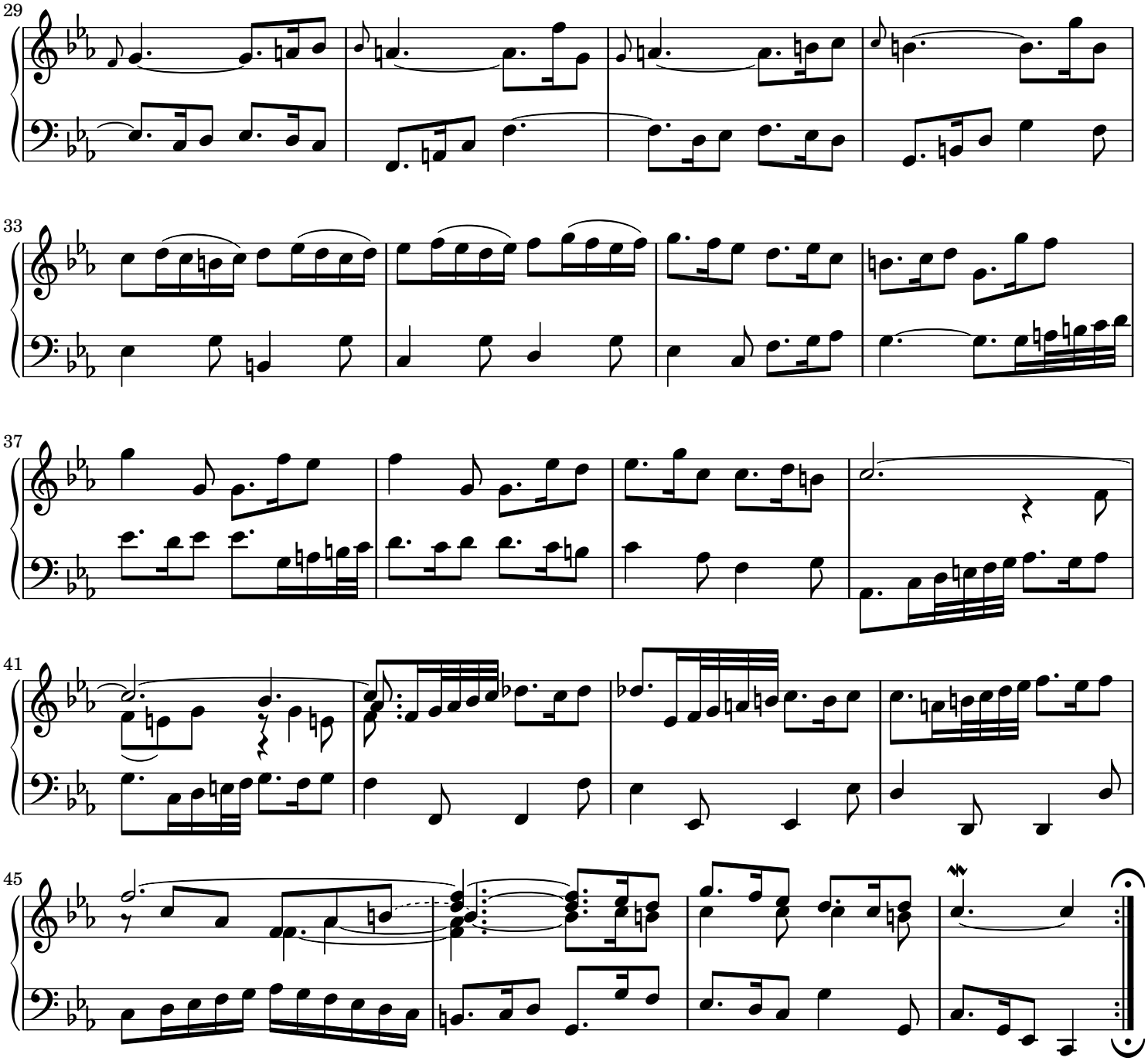
24
1re
Bourée

Gigue

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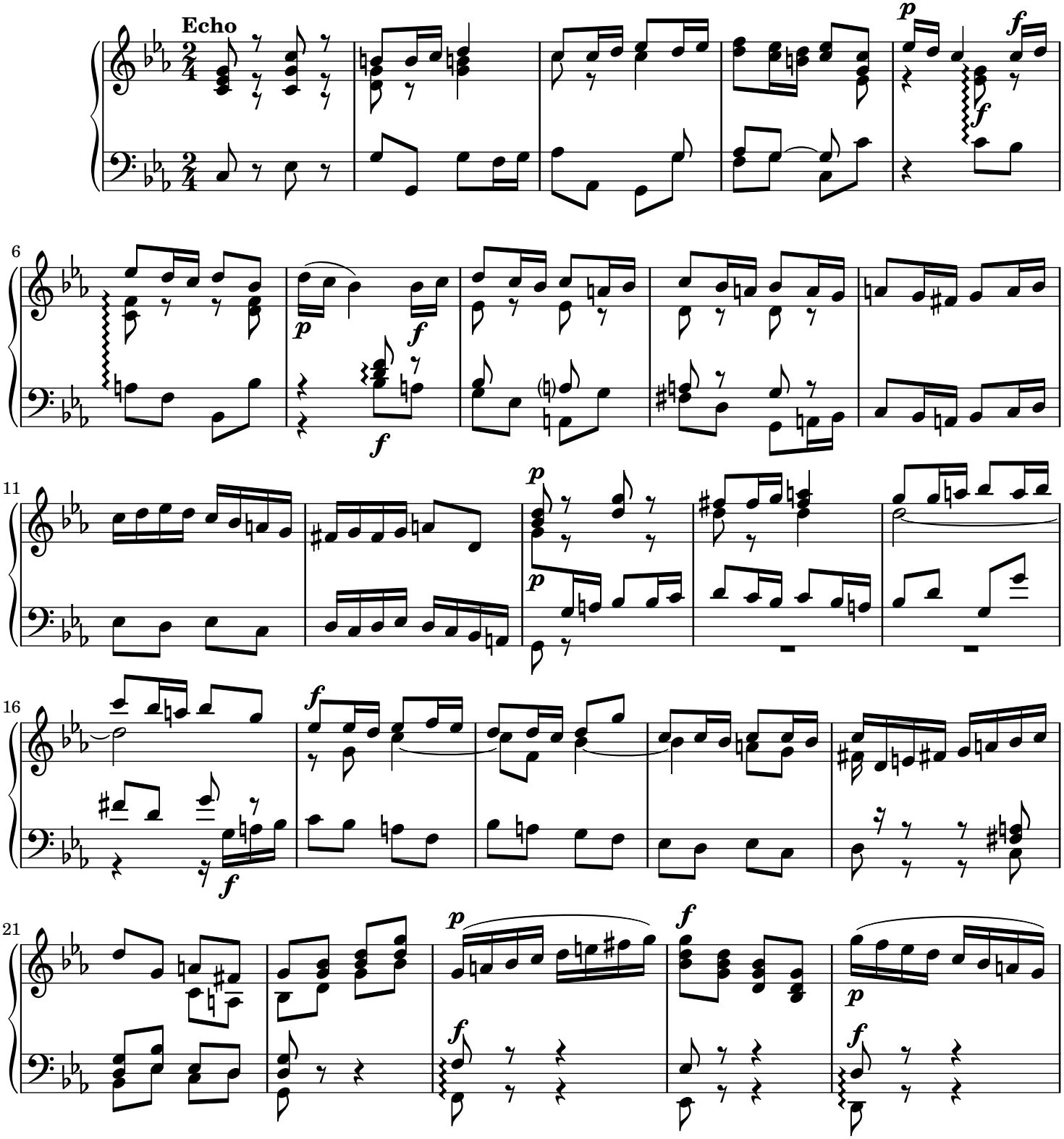
Echo
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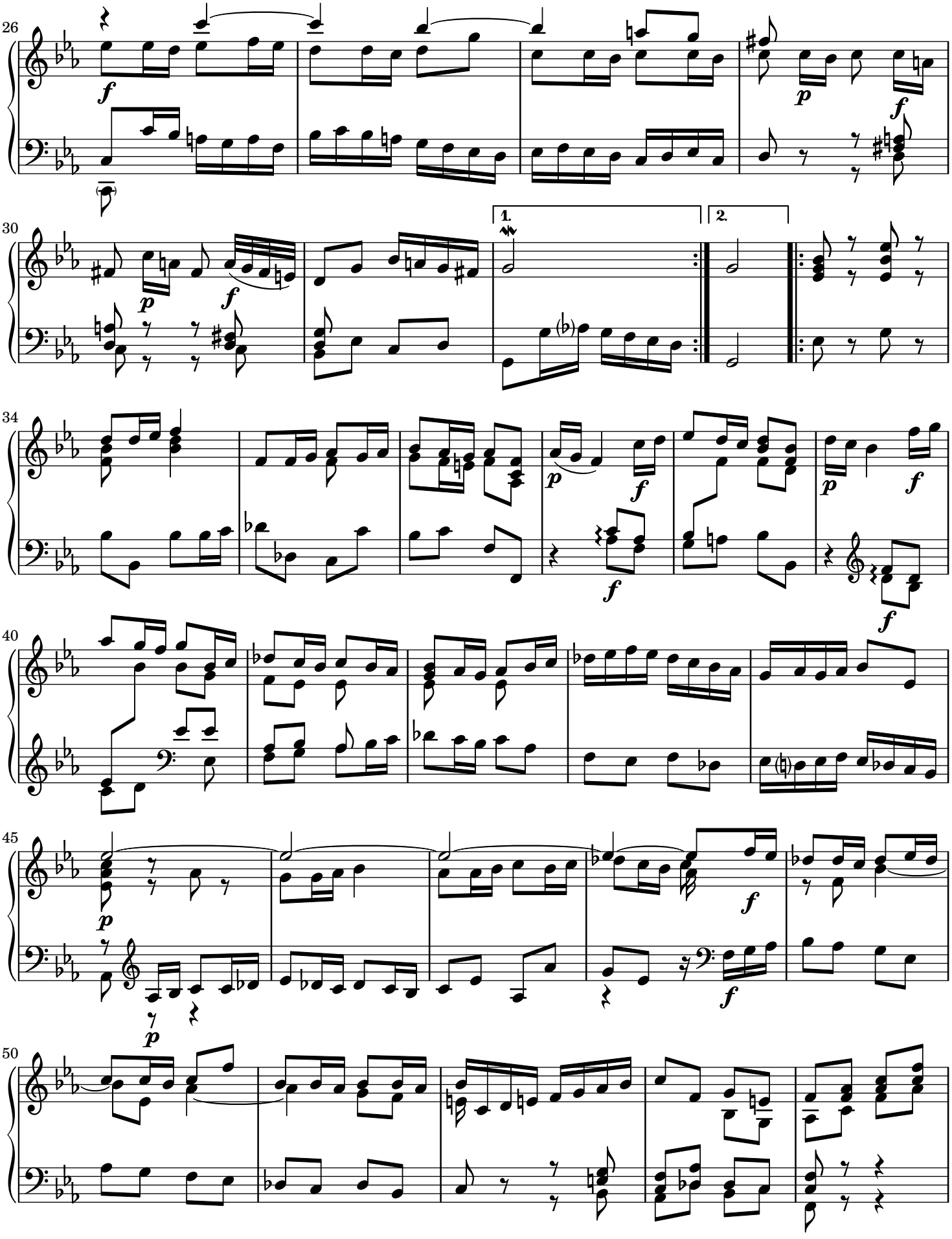
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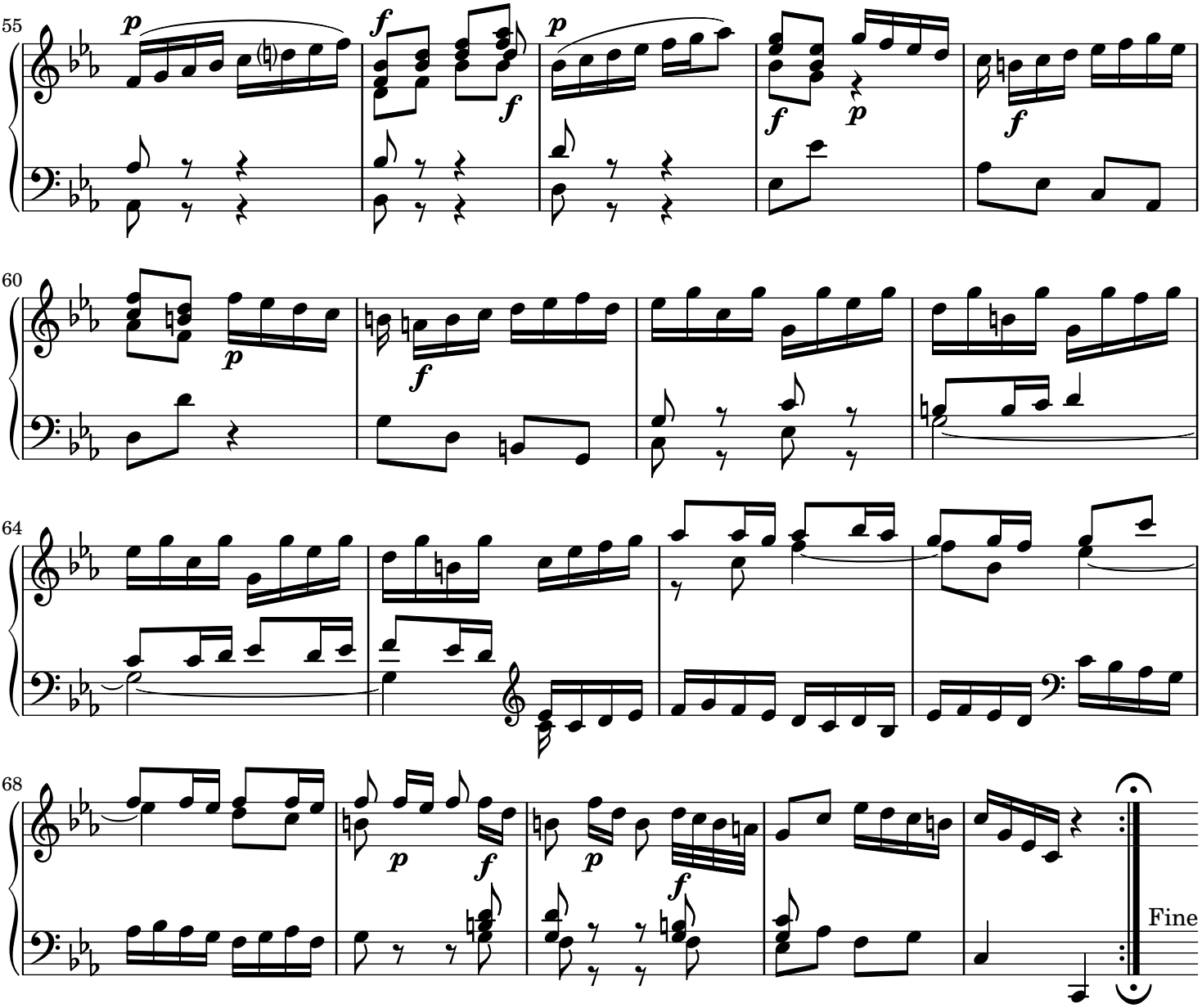
55
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64
68
Fine

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) composed his French ouverture in c minor. Only later, in 1735, it was transposed to b minor and included with minor changes as *Overture nach Französischer Art* in *Zweyter Theil der Clavier Ubung.* In Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis (BWV), the b minor version is no. 831 while the c minor version presented in this edition has got no. 831a.

Primary source for my edition: Manuscript copy kept in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin [D-B Mus. ms. Bach P 226, Faszikel 9]. Notes are in the hand of Anna Magdalena Bach, titles and corrections are in the hand of J.S. Bach. Scan from imslp.org.

Sources used for proofreading:

J.S. Bach: *Ouverture nach französischer Art.* B minor version BWV 831 (various editions).

J.S. Bach: *Französische Ouverture.* Ulrich Leisinger. Wiener Urtext Edition. Schott/Universal Edition 2000.

The manuscript consistently notates voices, i.e., never two notes on the same stem. In my edition I have sometimes allowed voices to share stems.

Accidental usage: An accidental in the manuscript is valid for any number of repeated notes, even across bar lines, but not for notes later in the same bar. In this edition I have followed modern usage, except that accidentals are still set for each individual voice.

Piano is written interchangeably as piano, p. and pia in the manuscript; forte similarly as f., forte and fort. I have used ***p*** and ***f*** throughout.

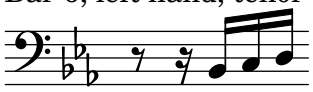
Many arpeggio signs in the manuscript may look more like square brackets [or curly braces {. I have interpreted all as arpeggios; see, however, my notes for the Echo movement on page 27.

At the bottom of most (not all) of the right-hand pages of the manuscript is written *Volti oito.* This appears both within movements and between movements. I do not understand *oito*, but the intention is clear: turn the page.

Front page: The text in German in parentheses, “Für ein Claveçin mit 2 Manualen”, doesn’t look original.

Ouverture

Bar 4, right hand, alto voice, first note: The dot after the b is missing from the manuscript.

Bar 6, left hand, tenor voice: In the manuscript the first crotchet (quarter note) duration of the bar reads:  . I have changed it to the rhythm used in the tenor in bars 11 and 12.

Bar 21: The begin-repeat sign is missing from the manuscript.

Bars 47 and 48, right hand: It is unclear from the manuscript exactly where the slurs begin (it may look like a slur over the last three notes of bar 47 and one over four notes in bar 48). The 1st printing of the b minor version has no slur in bar 47, but clearly a slur over five notes in bar 48, so I have opted for the same in both bars. Other editions of the b minor version have opted for a slur over each entire group of six notes.

Bar 81, left hand, bass voice: The final quaver rest (eighth rest) in the bar is missing from the manuscript.

Bar 83, left hand, tenor voice: In the manuscript a quaver rest (eighth rest) is missing for the fifth quaver in the bar (in the 6/8 part the manuscript consistently uses two quaver rests where I have put one crotchet rest).

Bar 87, left hand, 6th note: The manuscript reads b♭ yielding a direct fifth. According to Ulrich Leisinger another manuscript, the Preller copy, has d instead, which also agrees with the b minor version, so I have changed it accordingly.

Bar 102, right hand: The b♭ is unclear or missing in the manuscript.

Bar 106, right hand: In the group of three quavers (eighth notes), it is not clear whether the first is f or g. One solution is to regard the passage as a repetition of the music from two bars earlier a third lower; this calls for an f.

Bar 131, right hand: I have changed d to d♭ as in bar 34 (the editions of the b minor version show both readings).

More to bar 131, right hand: The manuscript contains a funny sign over the final e♭ of the bar, possibly to point out a correction from f.

Bar 151, left hand, tenor voice: I have added the first crotchet (quarter note) f in agreement with the b minor version (the tie or slur to the following crotchet is in the manuscript).

Bar 156, right hand, alto voice: The crotchet (quarter note) is an f in the manuscript. I have changed to e♭ in agreement with b minor version.

Bar 158, left hand: the manuscript has two tied crotchets over a line break rather than the minim a♭.

Bar 162, right hand, soprano voice: The sign between the first c and the first d is indistinct. I have opted for a turn as in bar 46.

Courante

Bar 5, left hand, middle voice: It may have been intended that the slur should span all three quavers (eighth notes).

Bar 6, left hand: It is unclear whether the slur begins on the c or the b♭. C seems more consistent with the following bar.

Bar 6, right hand: In the manuscript the trill is written over the two final semiquavers of the bar.

Bar 10, left hand: It is unclear whether the slur begins on d or c.

Bars 12 and 24: A quaver (eighth note) value is missing in order for the bar in conjunction with the upbeat to make a full bar. However, I expect that most players will insert one without thinking about it.

Bar 22, left hand: It is unclear in the manuscript whether the slur begins on f, g or a♭.

Gavotte 1re

Bar 12, left hand, tenor voice: I have added the quaver (eighth note) b♭ in agreement with the b minor version (the tie to the crotchet is in the manuscript).

Gavotte 2de

According to the b minor version the Gavotte 2de should be played piano.

Passepied 1re

Bar 25, left hand, bass voice: Manuscript has two g's (a crotchet and a quaver). I have corrected the first one into an f as in bars 1, 5 and 29.

Sarabande

Bar 4, right hand: It is not clear from the manuscript whether the slur begins on f or g, nor whether it ends on a♭ or f.

Bar 5–6: It is not clear from the manuscript that the tie between bars 5 and 6 goes from c to c; but it's the only reading that makes sense.

Bar 9, right hand, alto voice, second note: Manuscript has a♭ with no accidental; I considered the ♮ forgotten and added it.

Bar 19, right hand, soprano voice: It is unclear whether the trill is on the fourth or the fifth note; a tiny line seems to point down to the fourth note.

Bar 24, right hand, soprano voice, third note, and alto voice, fifth note: Manuscript has a♭, probably forgot a ♮.

Bourée 1re

In the manuscript "Bourée" is spelled with one r (all three times). Original time signature of both bourrées: 𝟐.

Bar 12, right hand, first volta: I have added a missing dot after the note.

In order for the partial measures to match up and be complete the rhythmically assured player may subtract a quaver (eighth note)'s value from the final chord of Bourrée 1re before proceeding into Bourée 2de and add one again before repeating Bourée 1re — possibly without thinking about it.

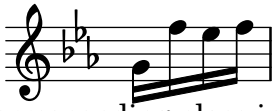
Bourée 2de

Bar 3, left hand, last note: The manuscript reads g, which yields a parallel fifth with the right hand. I have corrected to f in agreement with the b minor version.
Bar 11, right hand: In the manuscript, the trill is on the second note. Would J.S. Bach put a trill on a neighbouring tone? I doubted it, looked into the b minor version and set the trill on the first note as there (according to Leisinger the trill is not in the Preller copy).
Bar 12, right hand, third voice: I have added the tie from b to b.
Bar 20, right hand, second voice: I have added a missing dot after the first f.
Bar 28, lower staff, upper voice: I added the crotchet rest (quarter rest) for clarity.

Gigue

Bar 15, left hand, second note: e♭ would agree with b minor version and may sound nicer or more conventional, but there's nothing really wrong with d. Not having a parallel place to refer to in rest of movement, I have followed the two manuscripts, they both have d (Preller has according to Leisinger).
Bar 16, right hand: I have added a tie in conformance with bar 48.
Bar 36, left hand: Last note is e♭ in manuscript; I have changed it to d.
Bar 45–46, right hand: I have added the tie from b to b over the bar line.
Bar 48: The last measure is a semiquaver (16th) value too long for it to sum up to one full measure in conjunction with the upbeat. I have let it stand as written.

Echo

Bars 5–7: The manuscript contains a line or bracket in front of the chord of three notes on the second beat of bar 5, the first beat of bar 6 and the second beat of bar 7 (in bars 5 and 7 the dynamic indication f. is given in front of the line). In bar 5 it looks more like the squiggly vertical line used for an arpeggiated chord; in bar 6 more like a bracket, [; and in bar 7 like a cross between the two or a curly brace, {. In each case it may signify either arpeggio, that the notes should all be played with the left hand or (in bars 5 and 7) simply that they are all *f.* A similar comment goes for the “two-note chords” in the left hand of bars 23, 25, 38 and 40.
Bar 8, left hand, second beat: It seems that the natural before the a in the tenor had been forgotten.
Bar 24, right hand, third chord: The note in the lowest voice looks more like e♭ than d in the manuscript.
Bar 26, left hand, first note: The lower c is not in the manuscript. According to Leisinger it is in the Preller copy. It is in the b minor version too.
Bar 64, right hand, second half: Manuscript has  . I considered it a bit odd and have changed the two f's to g in agreement with the corresponding place in the b minor version.

Feedback appreciated

Feel free to email your comments to my edition to sheets(at sign)ole(dot)villumsen(dot)name (granted that you do not spam me, please substitute @ and . for (at sign) and (dot) to make up the correct email address).

Ole Villumsen