BENEDETTO MARCELLO

The Sonata Series

Edited and Ornamented by Jennifer I. Paull

# SONATA

Opus 2, Nº 11

Oboe e basso continuo

AMORIS INTERNATIONAL
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A SS 001

# Benedetto Marcello

(1686-1739)

It is impossible to write about one of the Marcello brothers and omit the other. Benedetto Giacomo Marcello was Alessandro's (1684 -1750) younger brother by two years and by far the more prolific composer. Both brothers were described as *nobili dilettanti*. These were aristocrats who dabbled in artistically creative endeavours: musical composition, performance, poetry, painting, philosophy: the Arts in general and even mathematics (specifically poetry in the case of Alessandro) as a secondary undertaking in their lives. This said, before the early years of the XX century, no list of important composers of the Western tradition would have been considered complete without the name of Benedetto Marcello. Sadly, controversy and confusion surrounding the authenticity of his works has caused his name to become somewhat diminished in stature.

Most of Alessandro Marcello's works were published under the pseudonym of *Eterio Stinfalico*. It was only during the 1950s that authenticity was finally confirmed by the discovery of his Oboe Concerto in a collection of prints entitled *'Concerti a cinque'* published by Jeanne Roger, Amsterdam (*circa* 1716). Until then, it was not known that Bach's Keyboard Concerto in D minor, BWV 974, was a transcription of Alessandro Marcello's Oboe Concerto (manuscripts show both C and D minor, so the original key is still a matter of dispute). Both Bach's source and the Oboe Concerto are still often misattributed to Benedetto Marcello. This work, according to Manfred Fechner's notes accompanying Alessandro's concerto (Edition Peter's No. 9484), *'was probably the first classical example'* of its kind.

Benedetto Marcello's *oeuvre* is imaginative and displays excellent technique including the more usual counterpoint, but also the progressive, *galant* features that helped pave the way for the Classical era in Western music. This soon overtook the Baroque æsthetic in which the Marcello brothers had lived and created.

Benedetto Marcello did compose one opera, *La Fede riconosciuta,* but had little empathy with this musical expression as evidenced by his writings. He let his feelings be known for the state of musical drama in a celebrated satirical pamphlet: *Il teatro alla moda* (*circa* 1720), which was originally published anonymously in Venice. This short work has been reprinted many times and remains a most constructive as well as highly amusing contribution to the history of opera.

Benedetto Marcello composed a rich diversity of music, which includes much written for the church: over 400 solo Cantatas, Oratorios, published collections of chamber and orchestral music, concertos, sinfonias, and large-scale scenic *Serenate* etc. During his life he was most well-known for *Estro poetico-armonico* (Venice, 1724-1727), a musical setting for voices, figured bass (with occasional solo instruments) of the first fifty Psalms. These had been paraphrased into Italian by his friend Girolamo Ascanio

Giustiniani and were published in eight volumes between 1724 and 1726. Here was the ultimate pinnacle at the conclusion of his musical career. The series knew a success that was unsurpassed. They were reprinted countless times throughout Europe where they continued to be frequently programmed well into the mid XIX century.

The Marcello family belonged to the highly respected and influential Venetian nobility. Both brothers studied law and were members of the *Maggior Consiglio della Repubblica di Venezia* (The Venetian Republic's High Council), diplomats, holders of judiciary positions of importance in public service, advocates and magistrates in their primary careers.

Had the exalted rank of their family tradition not obliged them to follow such legal careers, their love of music would undoubtedly have triumphed. They both benefitted from the rich eclectic education bestowed upon them by their aristocratic inheritance and suffered from the narrowness of lifestyle it allowed them to pursue. Benedetto was once sent to the country to be made to forget about music, his love for it being his shining beacon: an unthinkable state of affairs. Needless to say, though obligated to do other things, his prolific writings clearly show a love that could not be vanquished by family discipline.

Being independent of the public success of his music, as he was wealthy, he was at liberty to develop his own, sometimes somewhat unconventional musical style, which did not have to bow before or follow fashionable trends.

His home city of Venice named its conservatory, *The Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello di Venezia*, in his honour.

# Sonata

## Opus 2, Nº 11

### A SS 001

According to *'Musik in Geschichte un Gegenwart'* (first edition) the sonatas by Benedetto Marcello, Opus two, were originally entitled '*Suonate a Flauto solo con il suo basso continuo*'. Originally printed in Venice by G. Sala in 1712, they were re-engraved in Amsterdam (Estienne Roger, also most probably in 1712). There was a further recopying in London twenty years later (J. Walsh 1732), undoubtedly because these beautiful works had proven so very popular throughout Europe. However, slight variations in copying are often at risk of occurring in such cases.

The oboe developed from the shawm into an instrument that was first used and loved by Jean-Baptiste de Lully (1632 –1687), born fifty-five years before Benedetto Marcello. It was, however, considered to be a type of pipe into which one blew – hence a sort of flute played with a double reed, often by a flautist. The term 'flute' covered recorder, transverse flute, and often the oboe itself. Musicians played several instruments and could read all clefs at sight making transposition much easier. Exclusivity to one instrument was unheard of: particularly if we recall Bach's free transcription of Alessandro Marcello's Concerto for Oboe and String Orchestra for harpsichord.

The pitch at the time was indeterminate, as was the actual pitch of instruments themselves. Various lengths of oboes were known in Italy, as was the case in France, whence they had emigrated with the many musicians travelling to study or work in Italy. Here, the various double reed instruments that eventually became known in France as *hautbois* and *taille de hautbois* (before the apparition of such names as *musette*, *hautbois d'amour*, *cor anglais*, *hautbois baryton* etc.) were known as *oboe*, *oboe luongo* and *oboe grosso*, amongst a variety of others local names

Naturally, performers are totally at liberty to create their own improvisations. Our interpretation is written out for those who are not specialists in this domain. Those who are will be able to improvise their own versions from the bass line and figures. The realisation by Read Gainsford is based upon the original figured bass (Amsterdam copy), which we have slightly redefined. In the fourth movement I have used hemiolas in my ornamentation of the solo line, a rhythmical tease much employed at the time for embellishment.

Jennifer Paull
2011

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# Les Tableaux galants

## *La Gracieuse*

Caix d'Hervelois, *A* TG 001 Oboe & b.c.
Caix d'Hervelois, *A* TG 002 Oboe d'amore & b.c.
Caix d'Hervelois, *A* TG 003 Cor anglais & b.c.
Caix d'Hervelois, *A* TG 004 Bassoon & b.c

## *Les Vendengeuses*

Caix d'Hervelois, AMATG 005 Oboe & b.c.
Caix d'Hervelois, AMATG 006 Oboe d'amore & b.c.
Caix d'Hervelois, AMATG 007 Cor anglais & b.c.
Caix d'Hervelois, AMATG 008 Bassoon & b.c.

## *Les Folies d'Espagne*

Marin Marais, AMATG 009 Oboe & b.c.
Marin Marais, AMATG 010 Oboe d'amore & b.c.
Marin Marais, AMATG 011 Cor anglais & b.c.
Marin Marais, AMATG 012 Bassoon & b.c.

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## *Les Tableaux galants*

Recorded by Jennifer Paull, Oboe d'amore
Christine Sartoretti, Harpsichord
Stefano Canuti, Bassoon

The Oboe d'amore Collection Volume I: AMATG V I

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*in loving memory of Edna Paull*

# SONATA

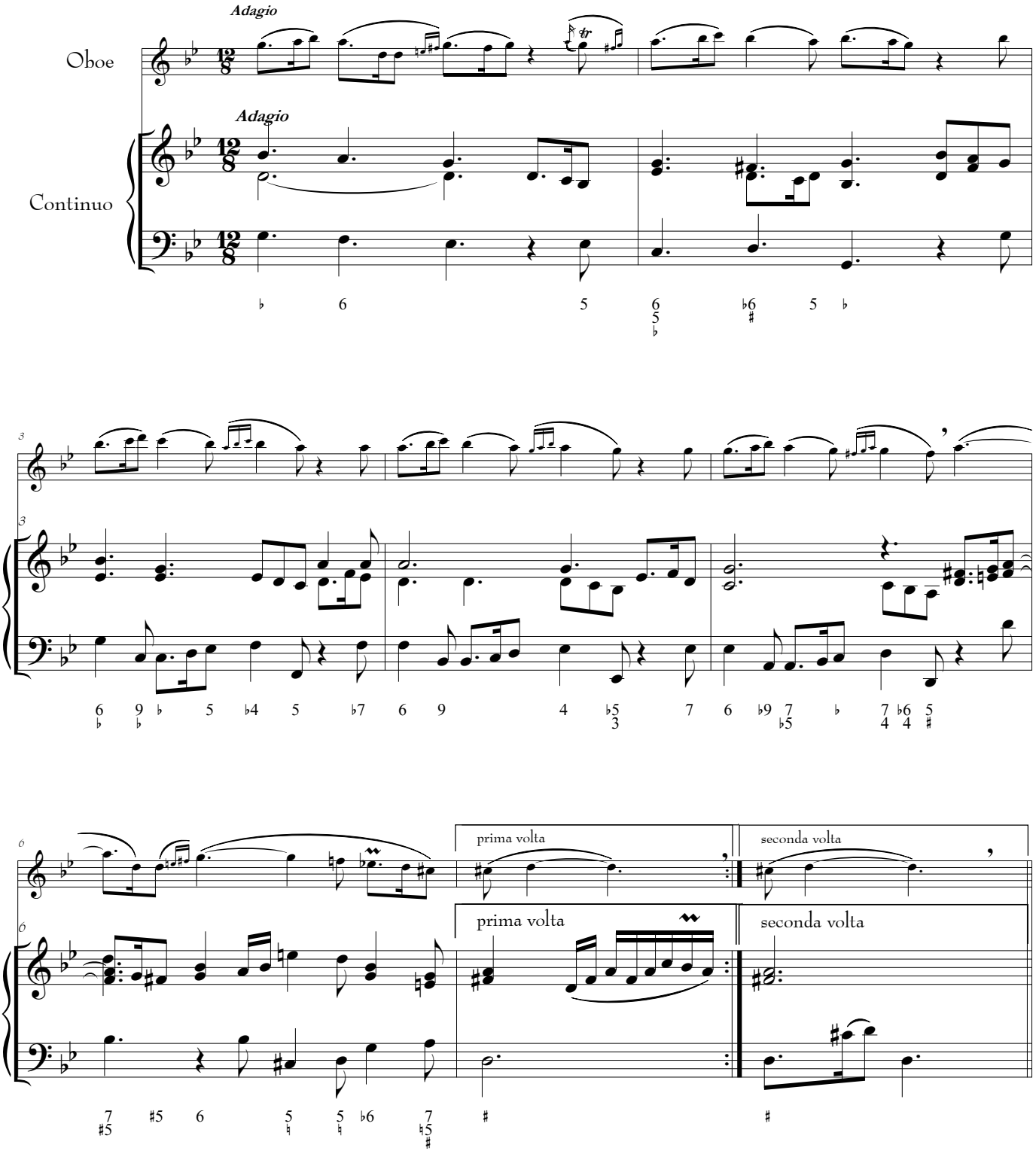
Opus 2, N°11

**Benedetto Marcello**
( 1686 - 1739 )

Realisation: **Read Gainsford**

Edited: **Jennifer I Paull**

## I



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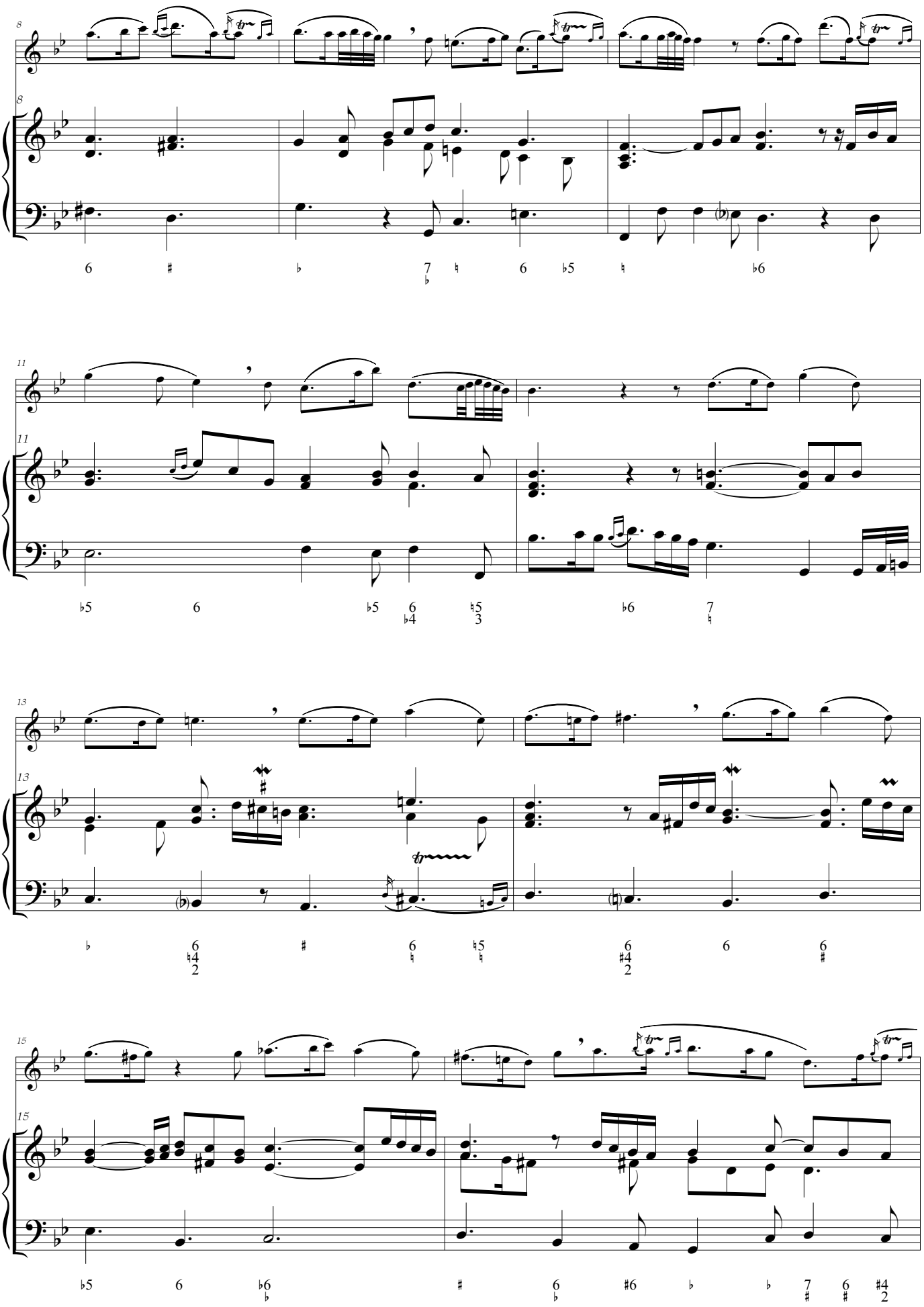

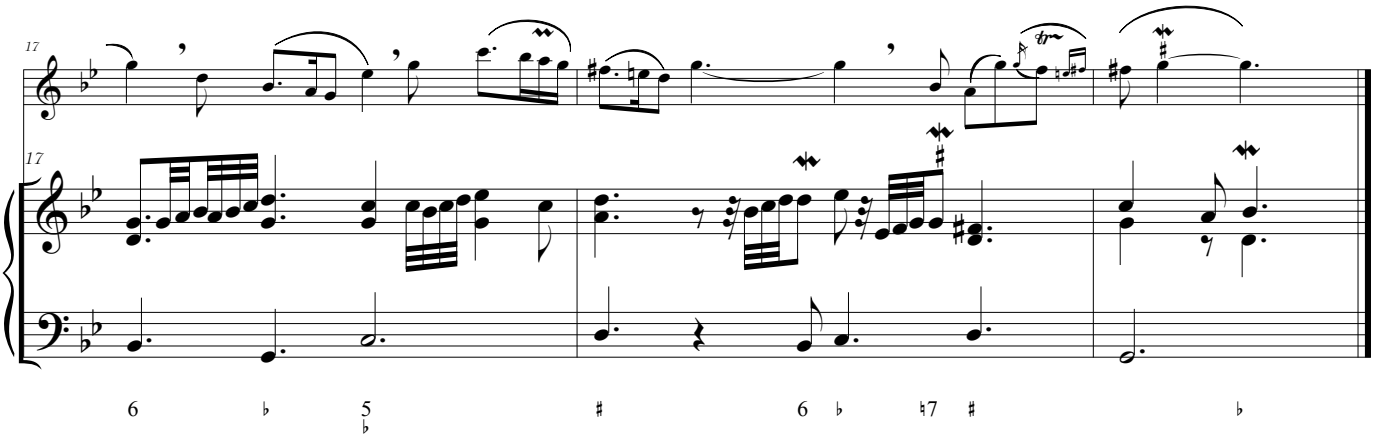

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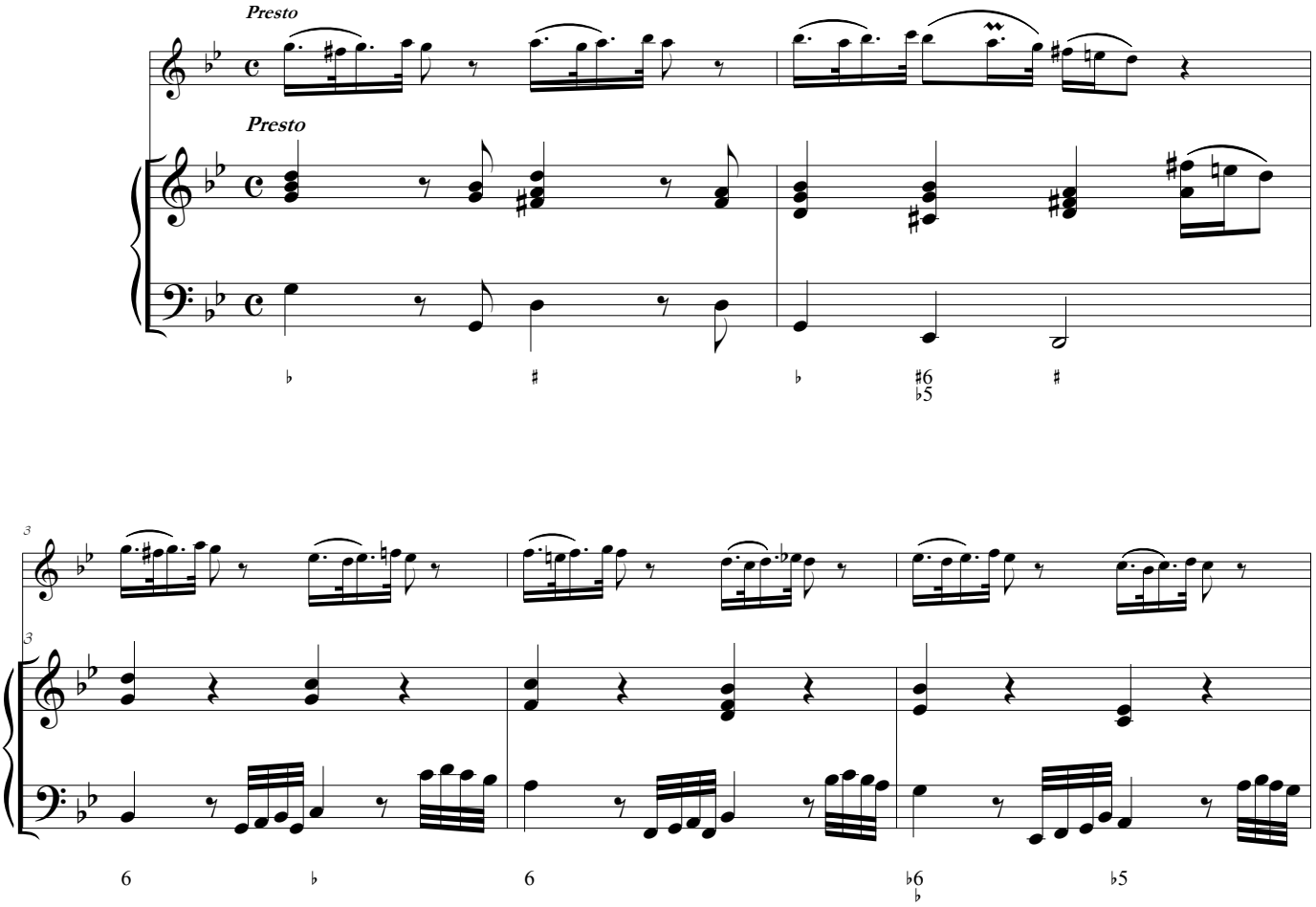
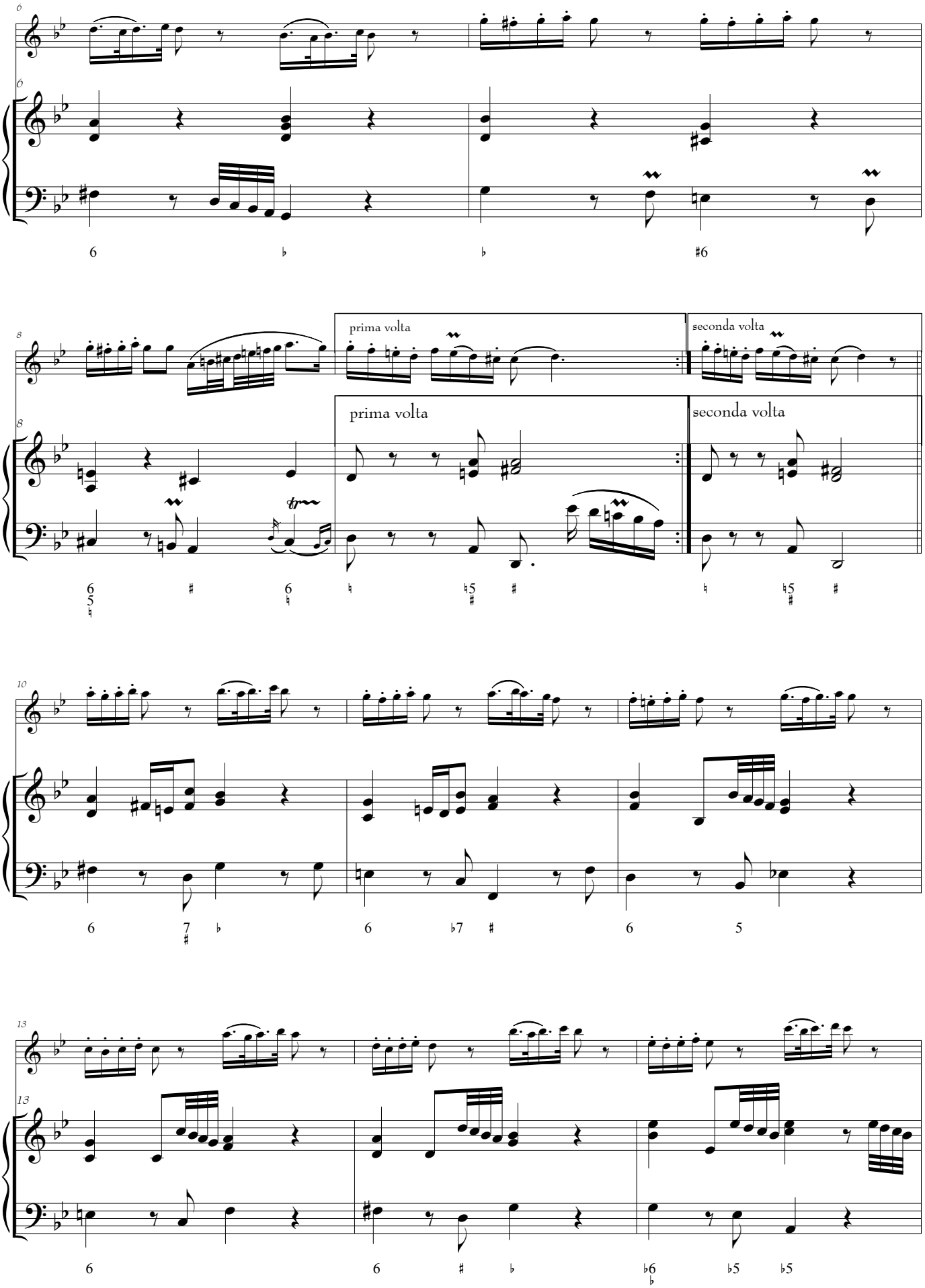
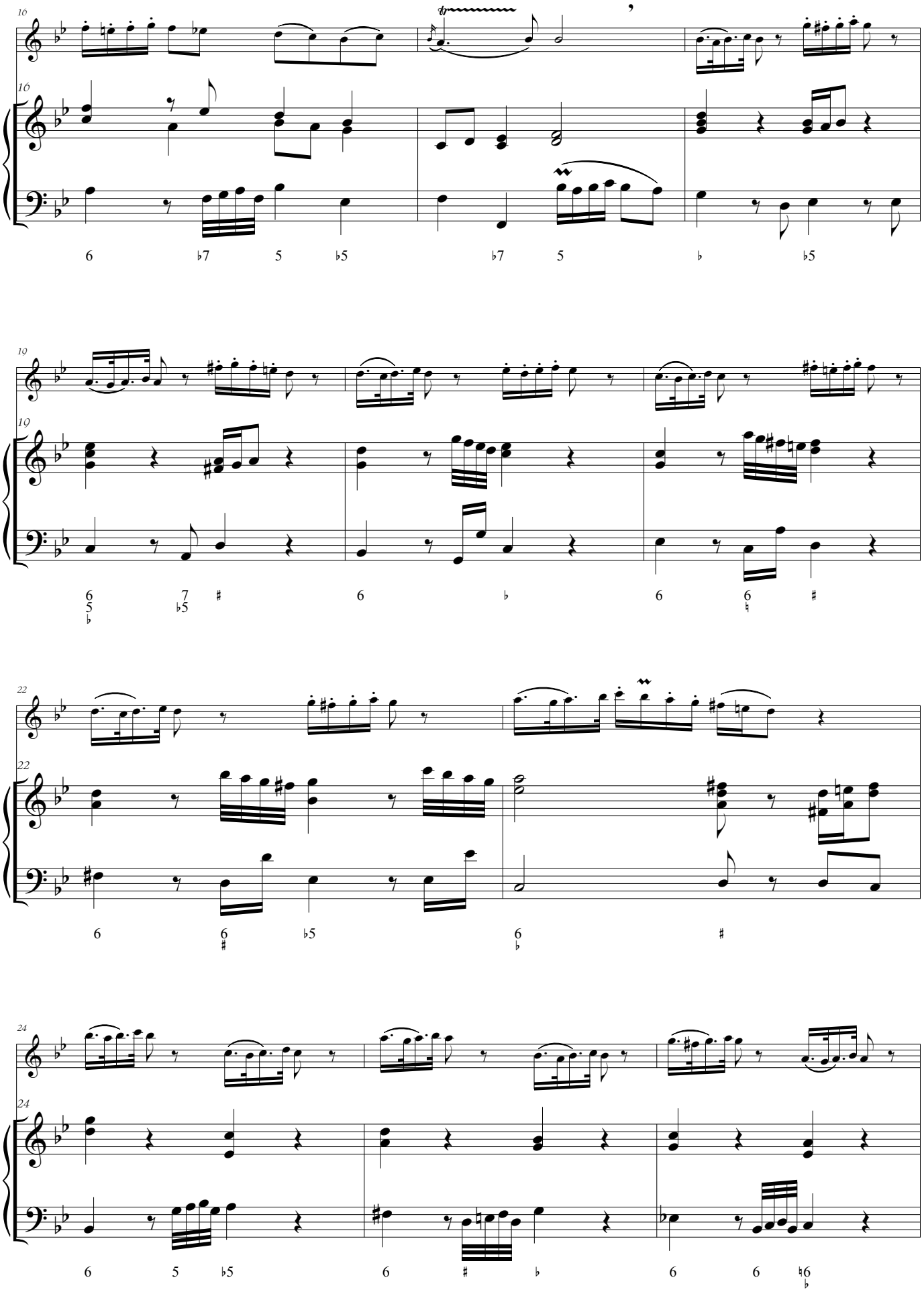
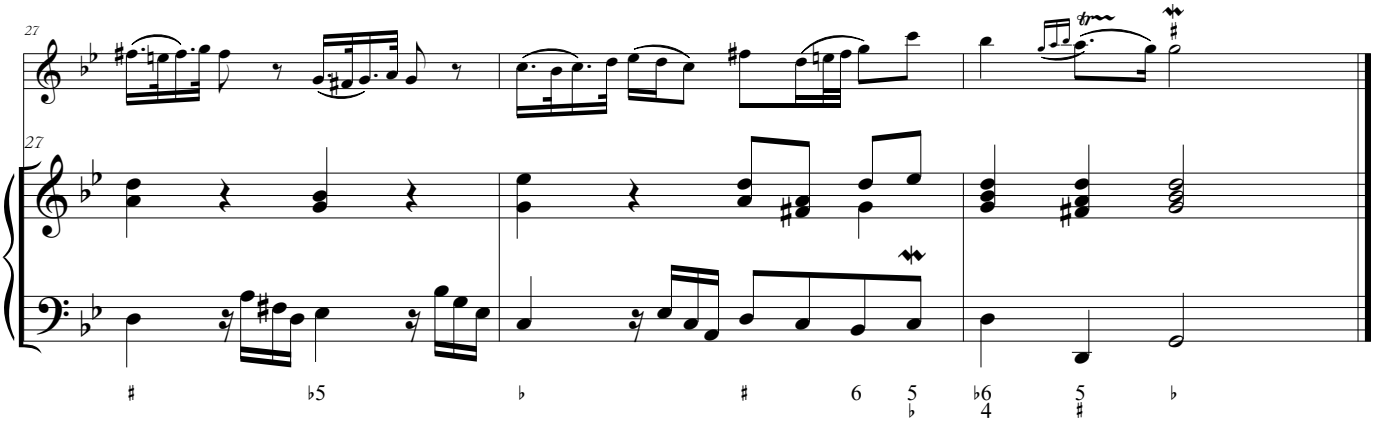



prima volta
seconda volta
prima volta
seconda volta





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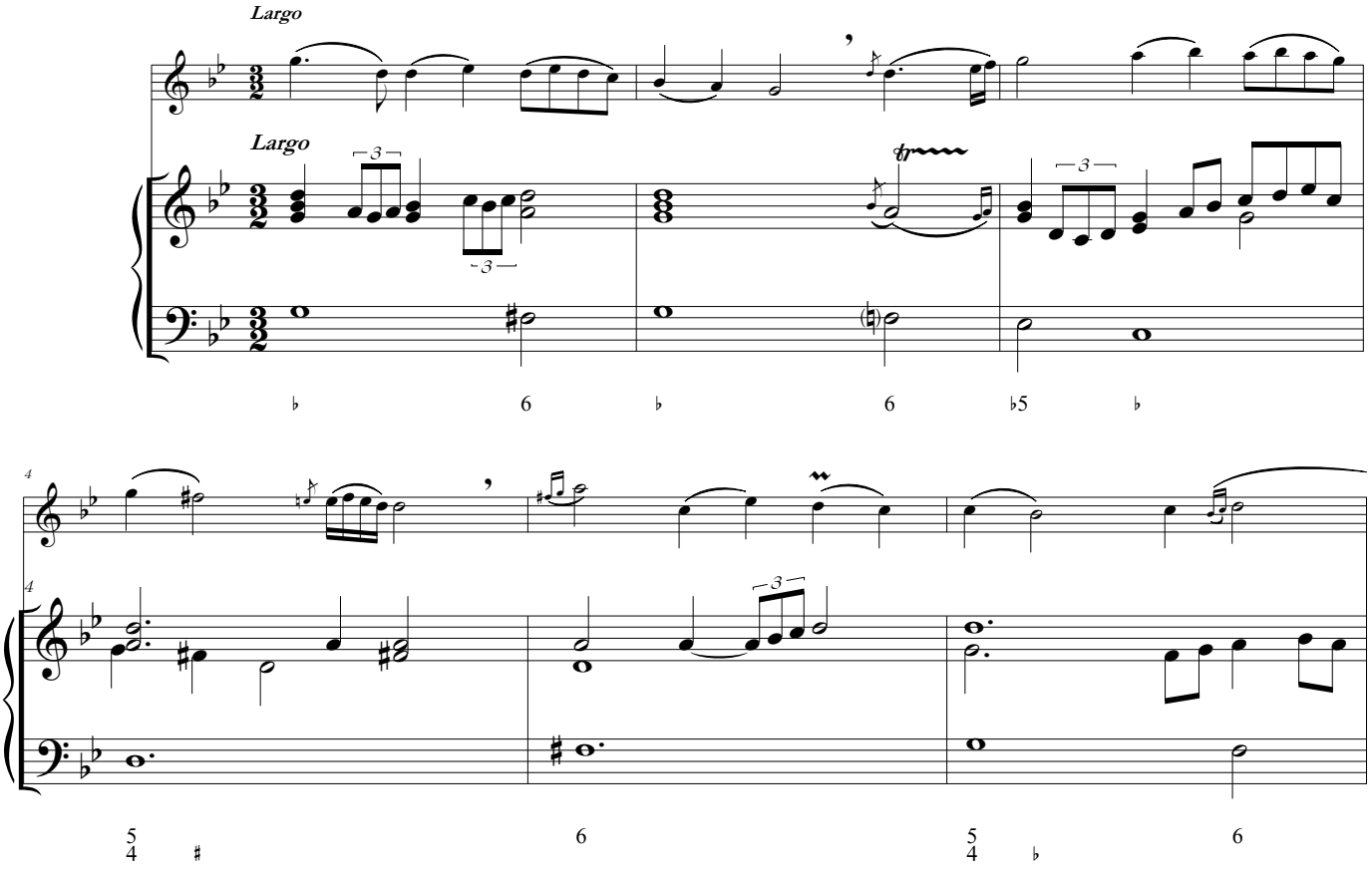

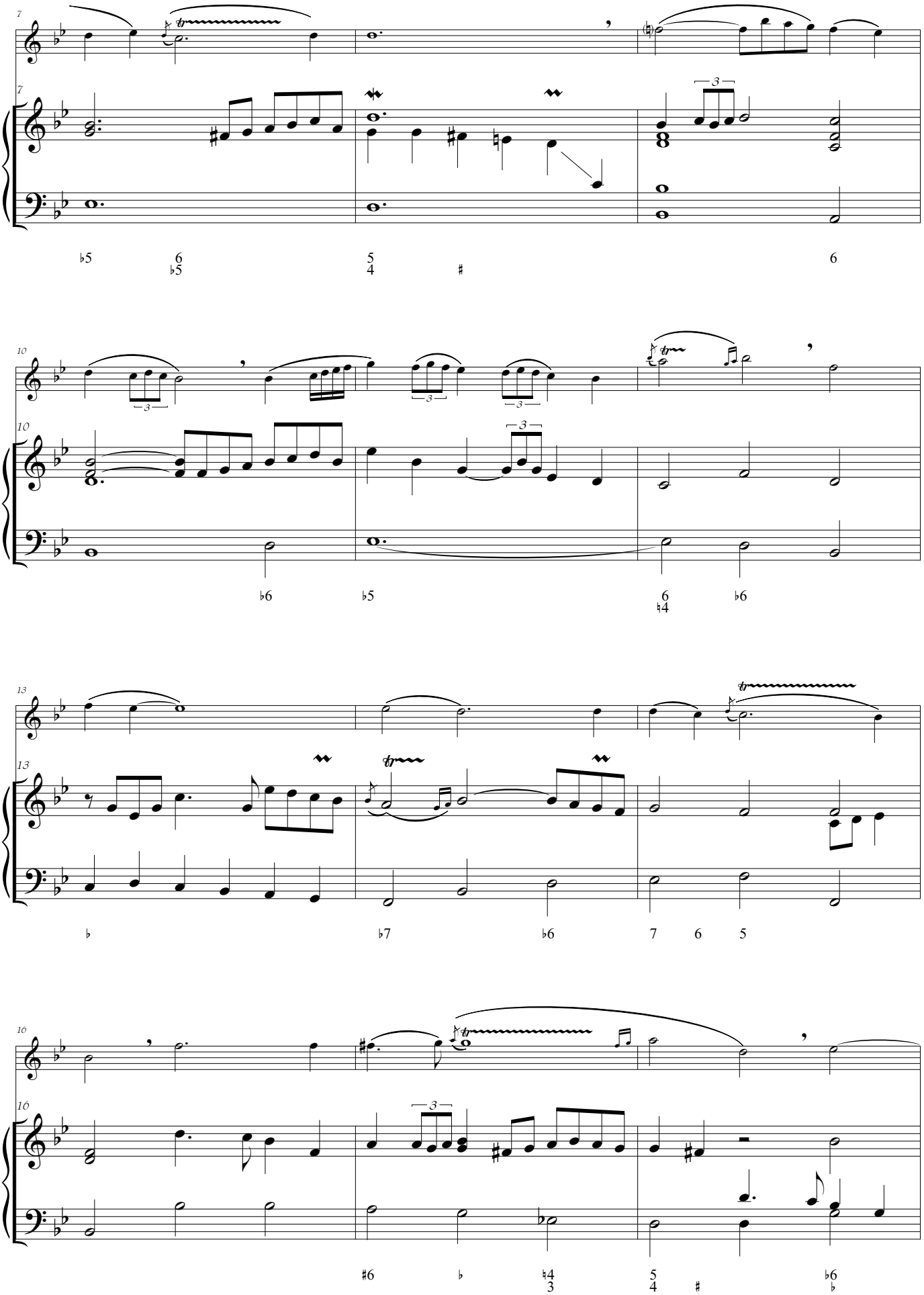

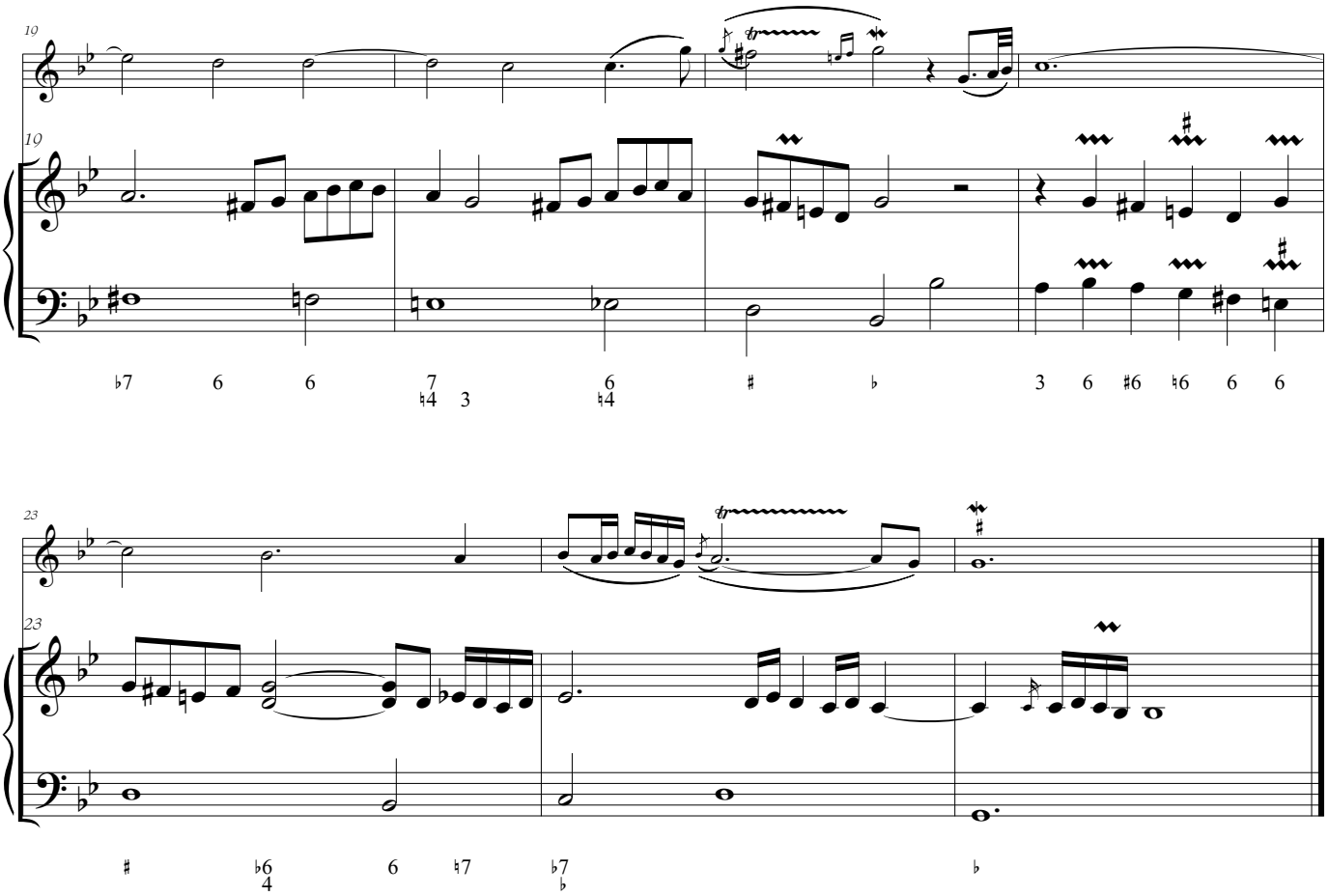

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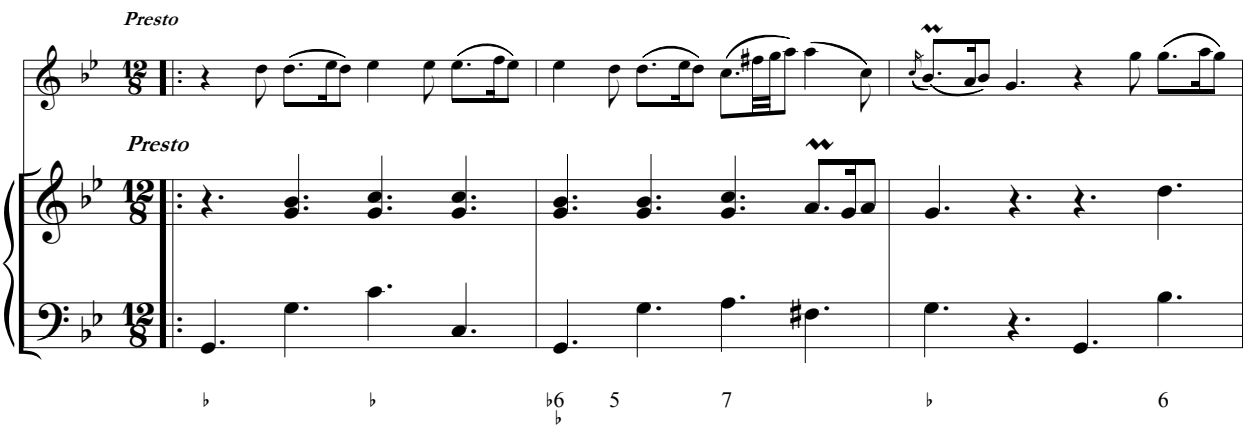
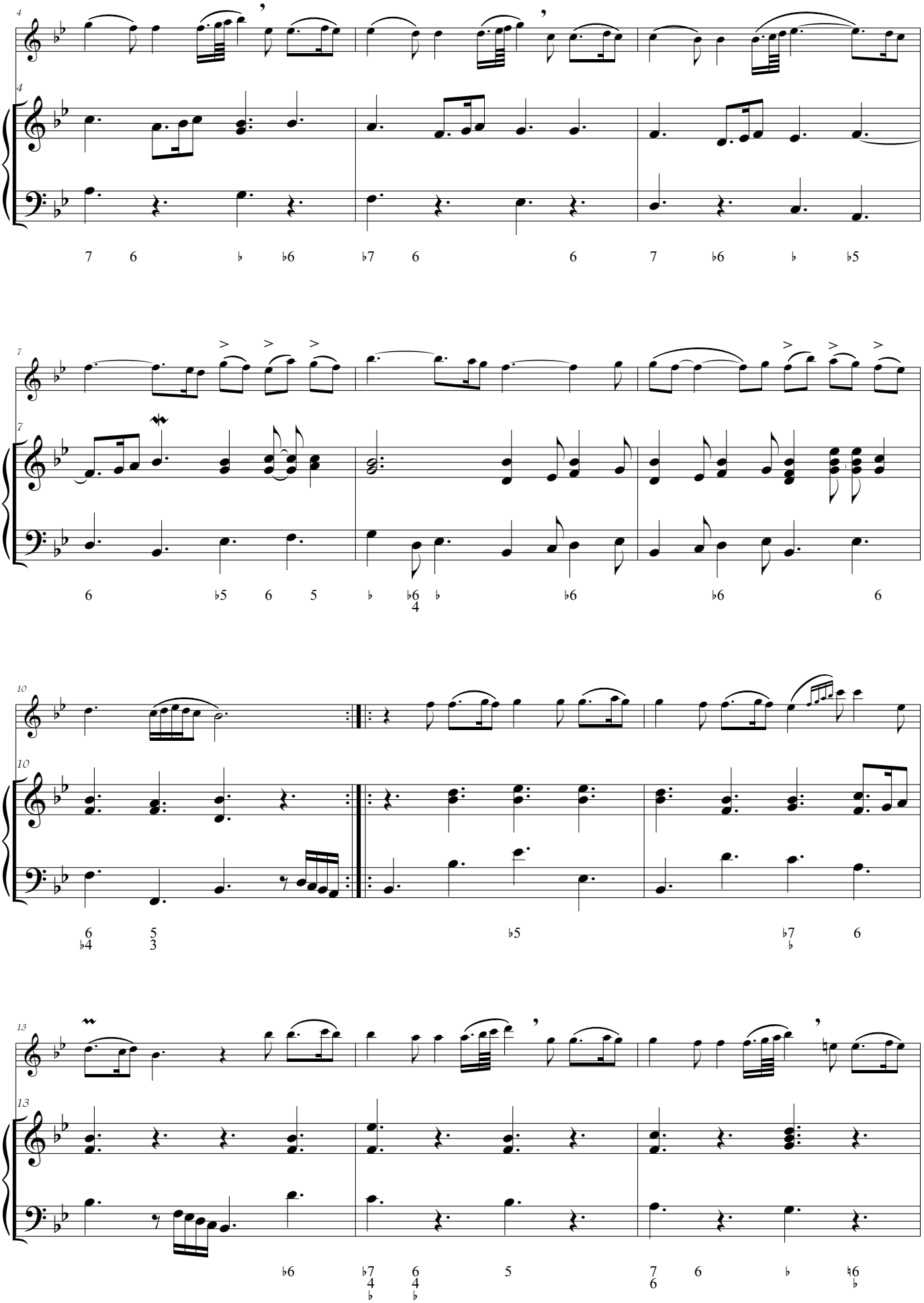
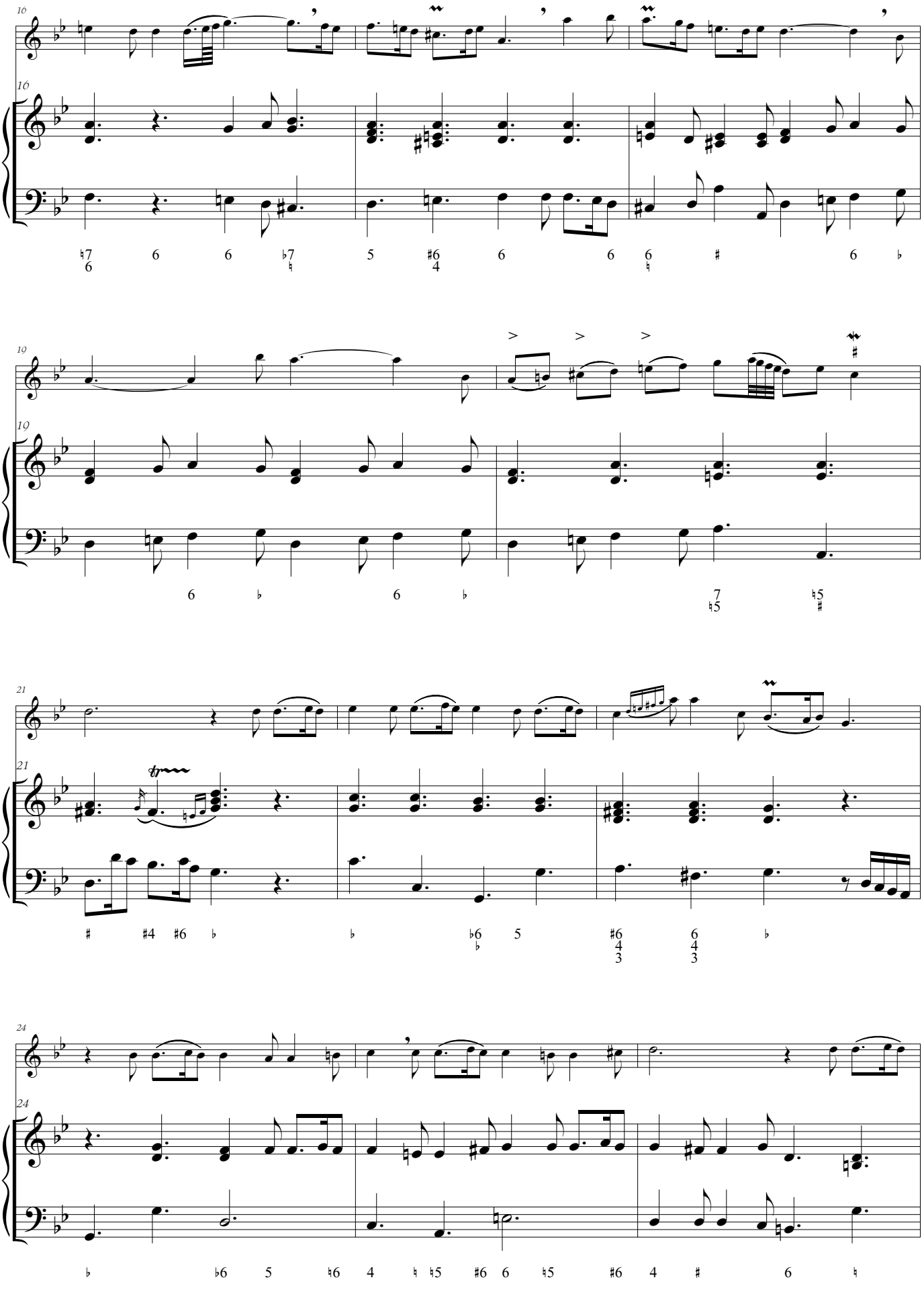
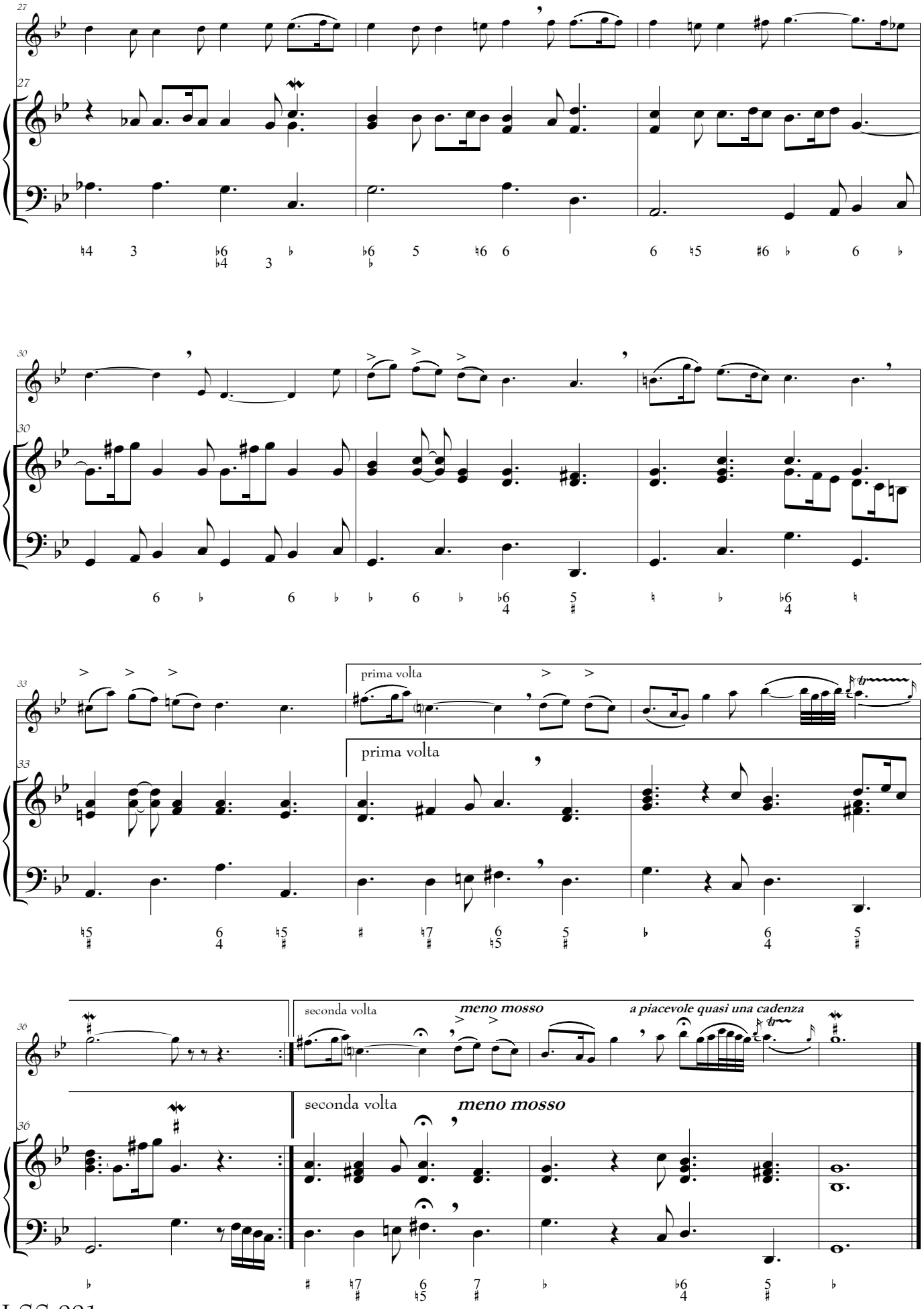







prima volta
prima volta
seconda volta
meno mosso
a piacevole quasi una cadenza
seconda volta
meno mosso

*in loving memory of Edna Paull*

# SONATA

Opus 2, N°11

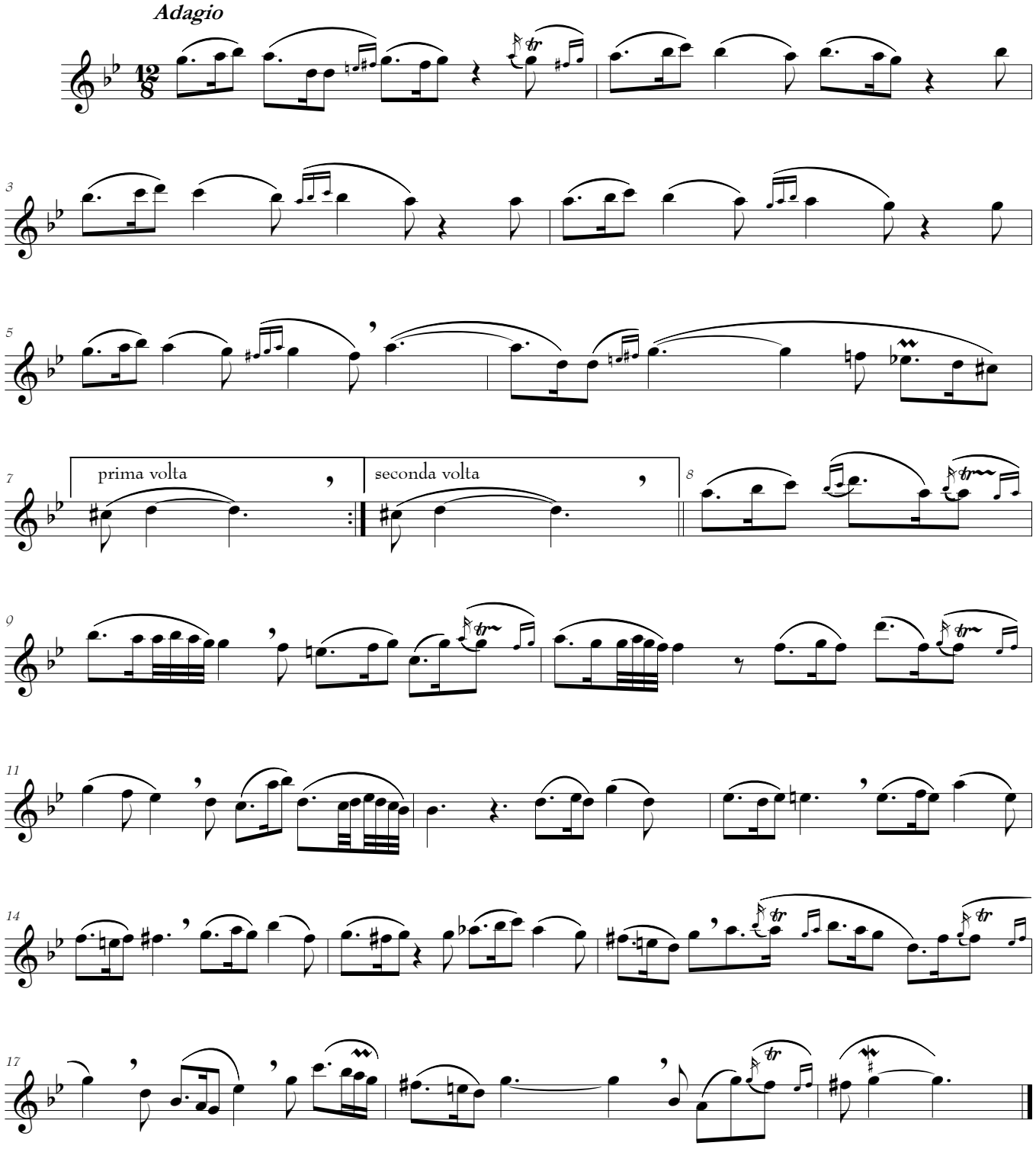
**Oboe**

**Benedetto Marcello**
( 1686 - 1739 )

Realisation: **Read Gainsford**

Edited: **Jennifer I Paull**

## I



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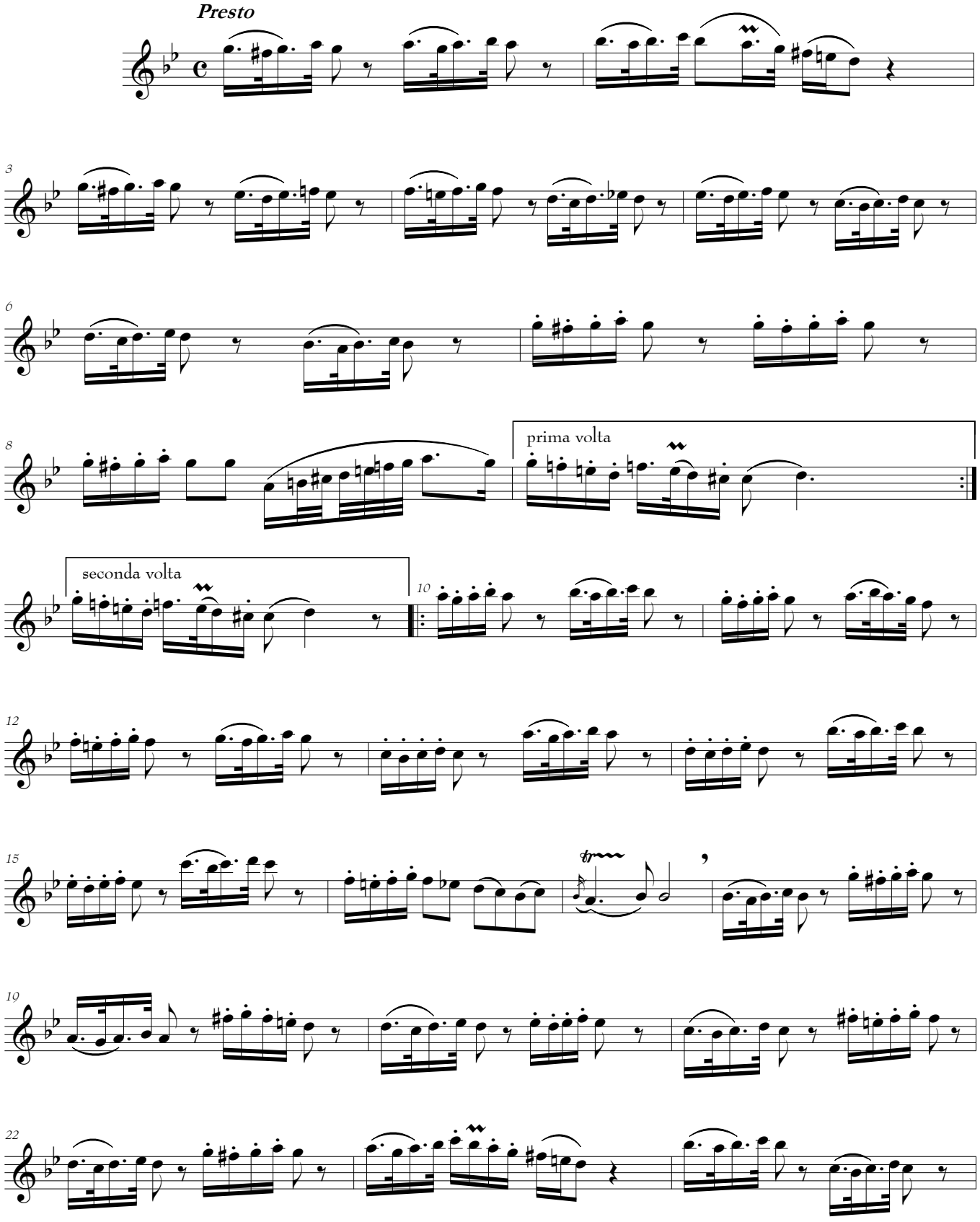

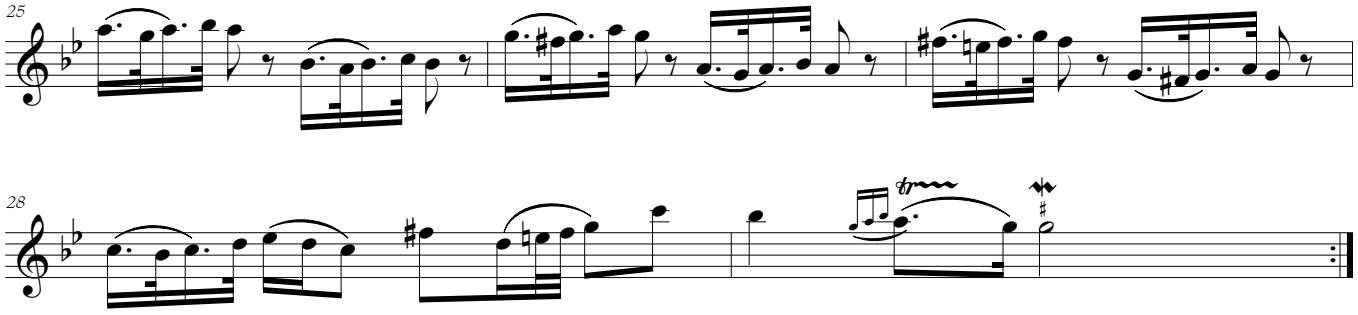


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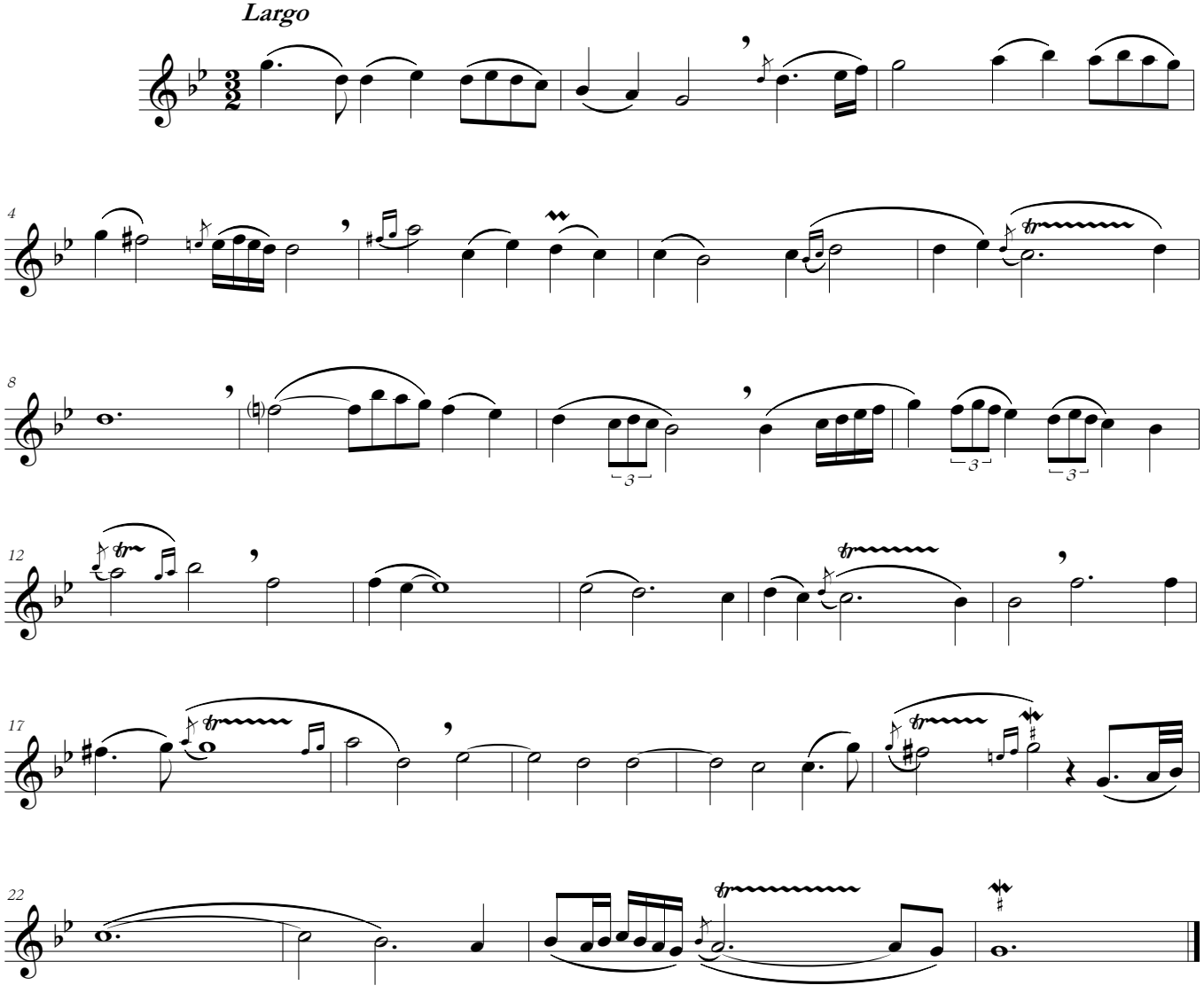

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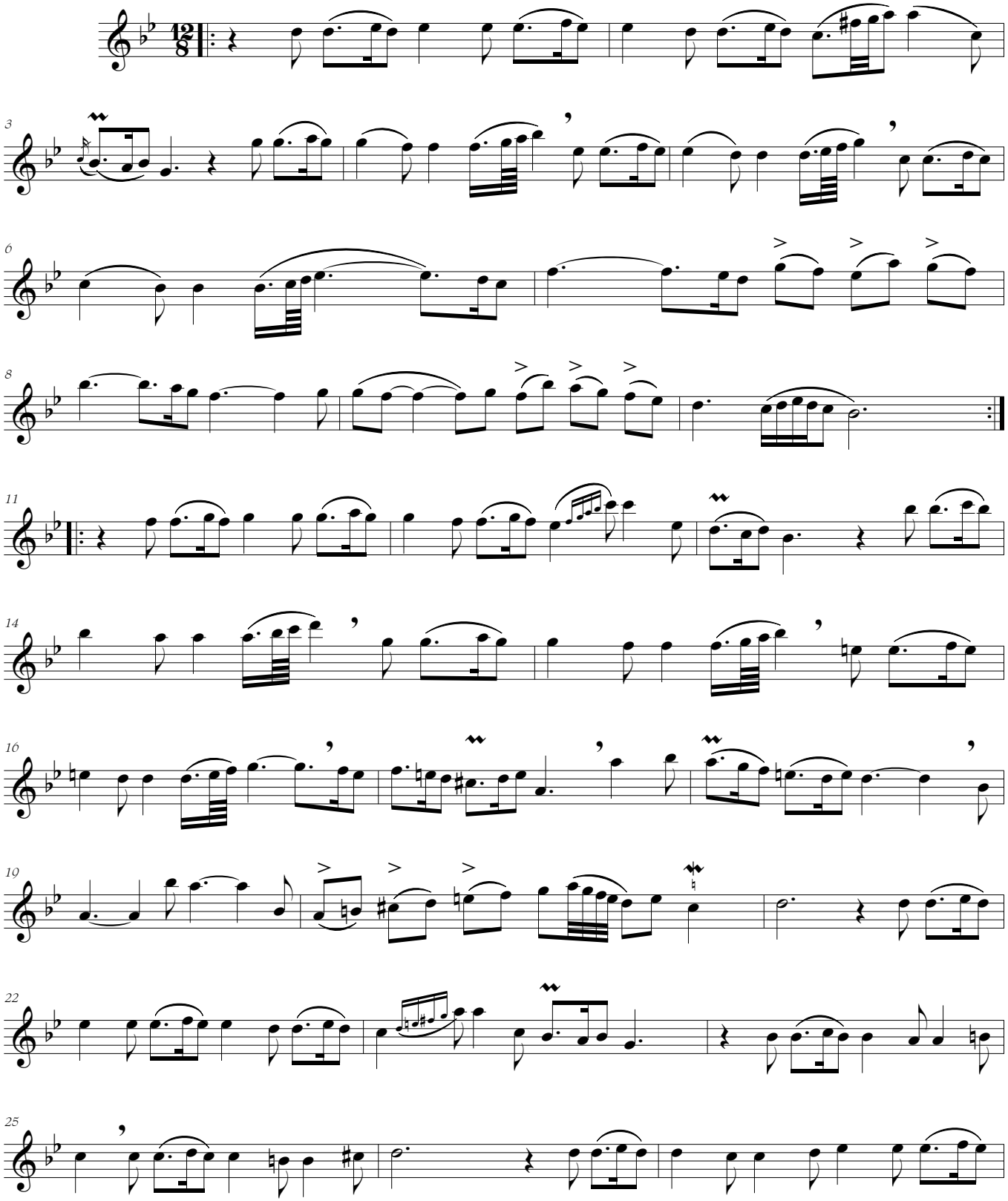
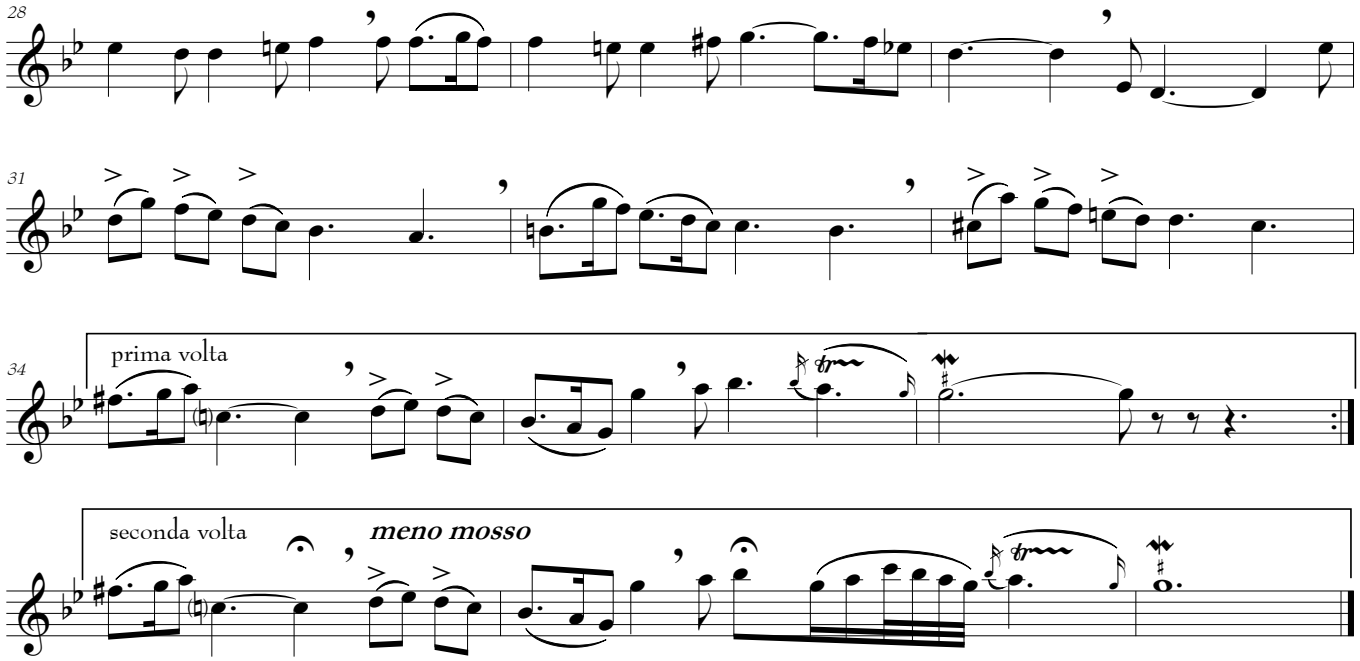
*Presto*






*a piacevole quasi una cadenza*

*in loving memory of Edna Paull*

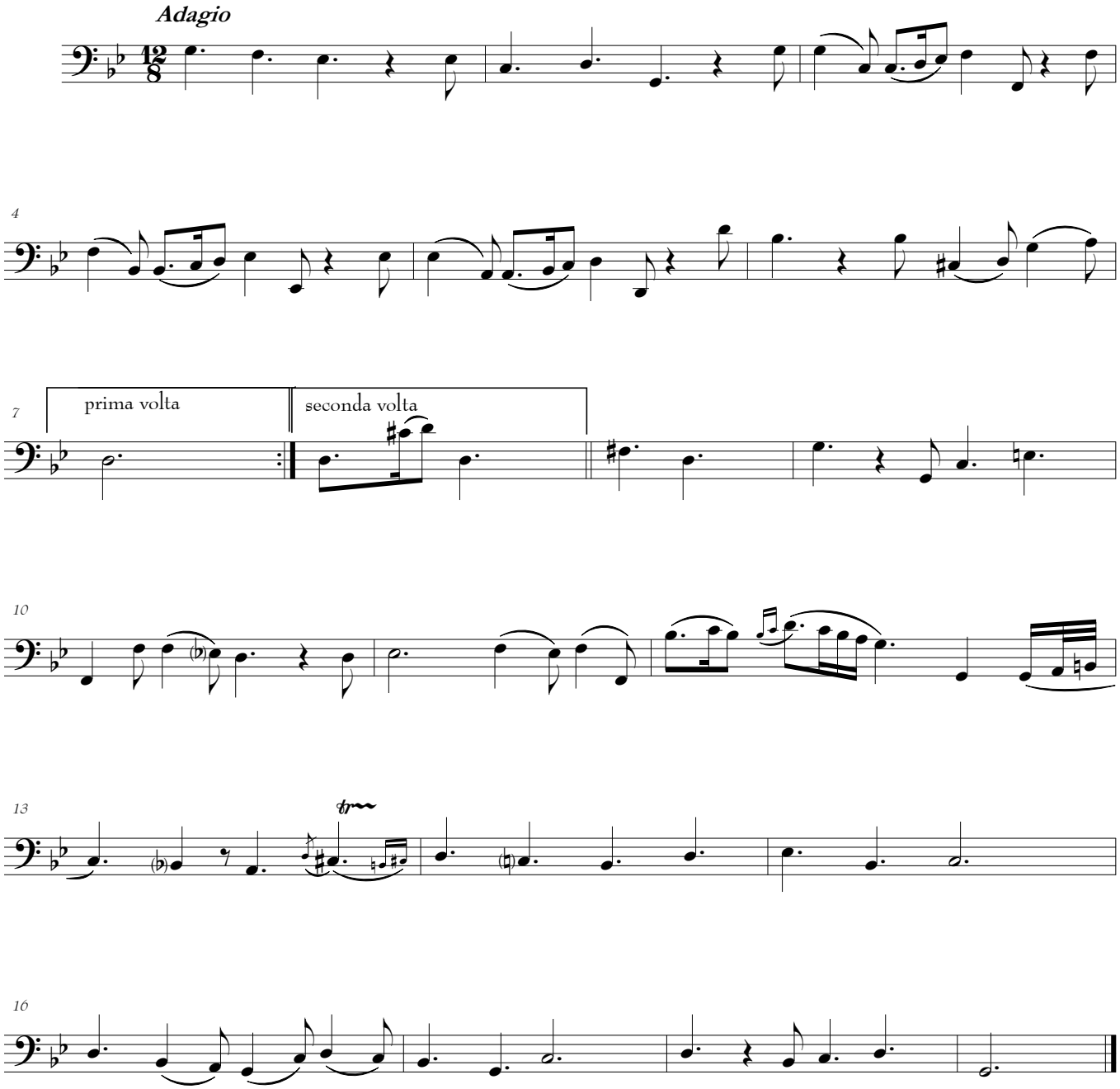
# SONATA

Opus 2, N°11

**Basso**

**Benedetto Marcello**
( 1686 - 1739 )
Realisation: **Read Gainsford**
Edited: **Jennifer I Paull**

## I



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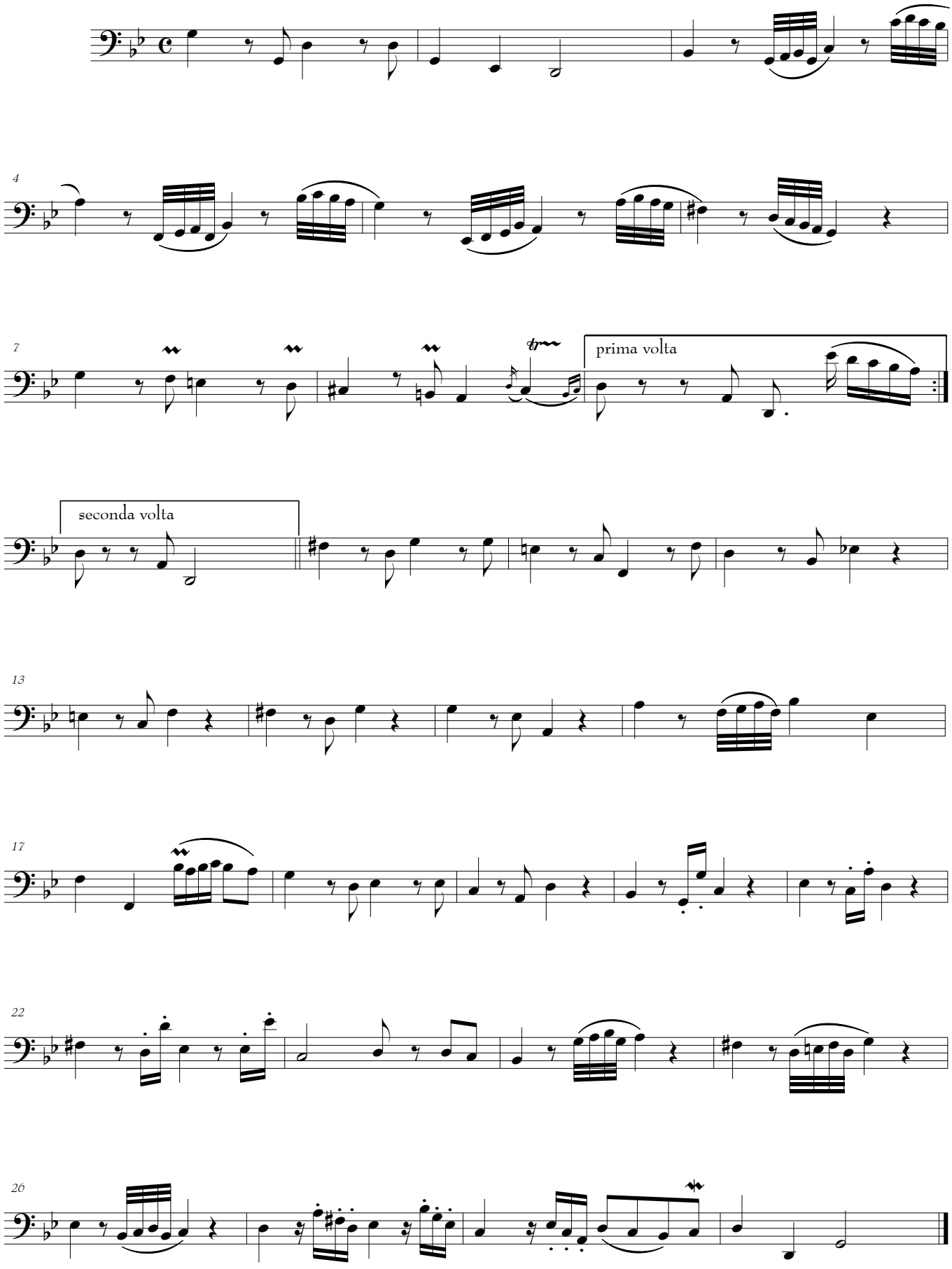

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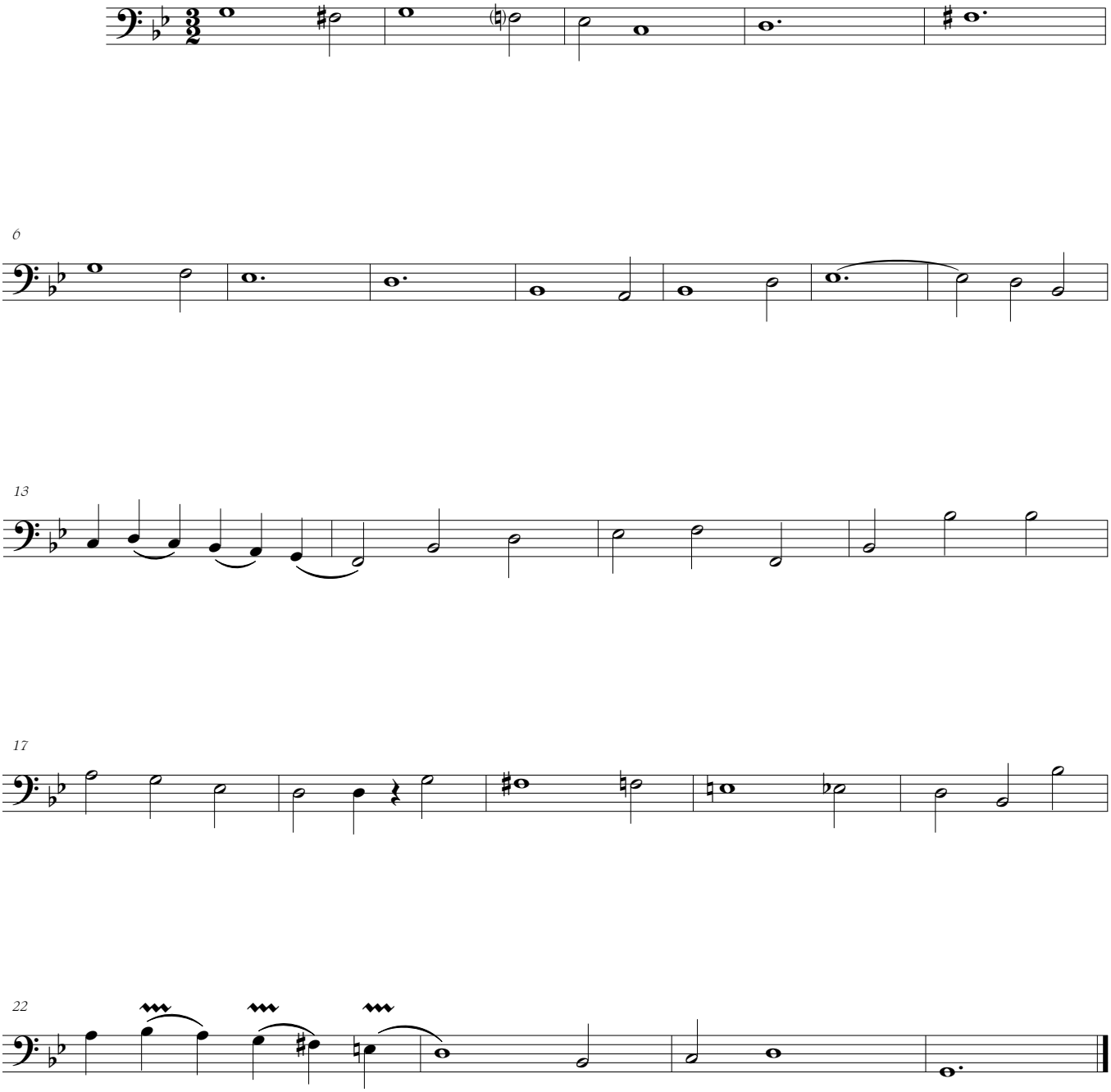
*Largo*



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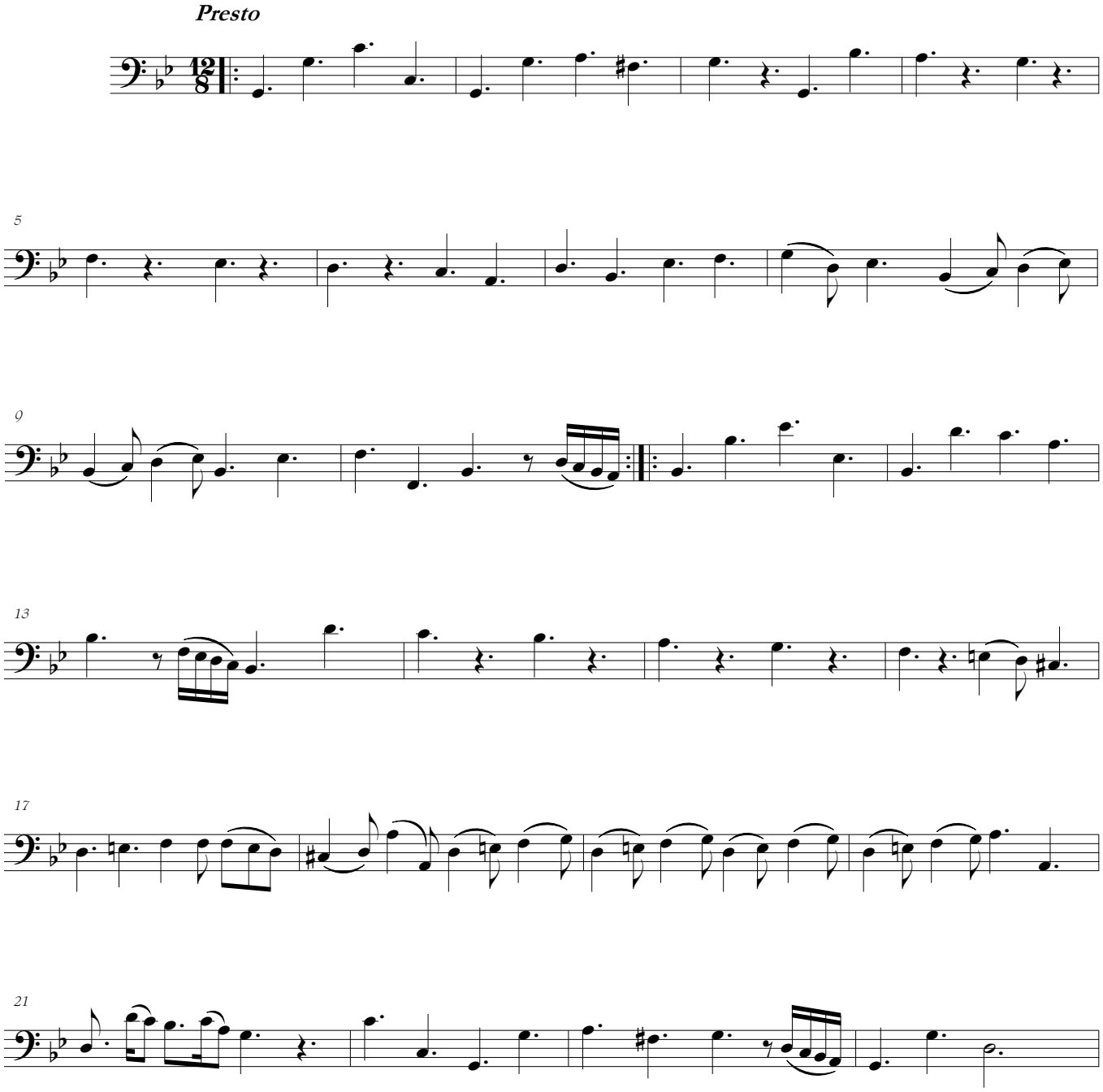

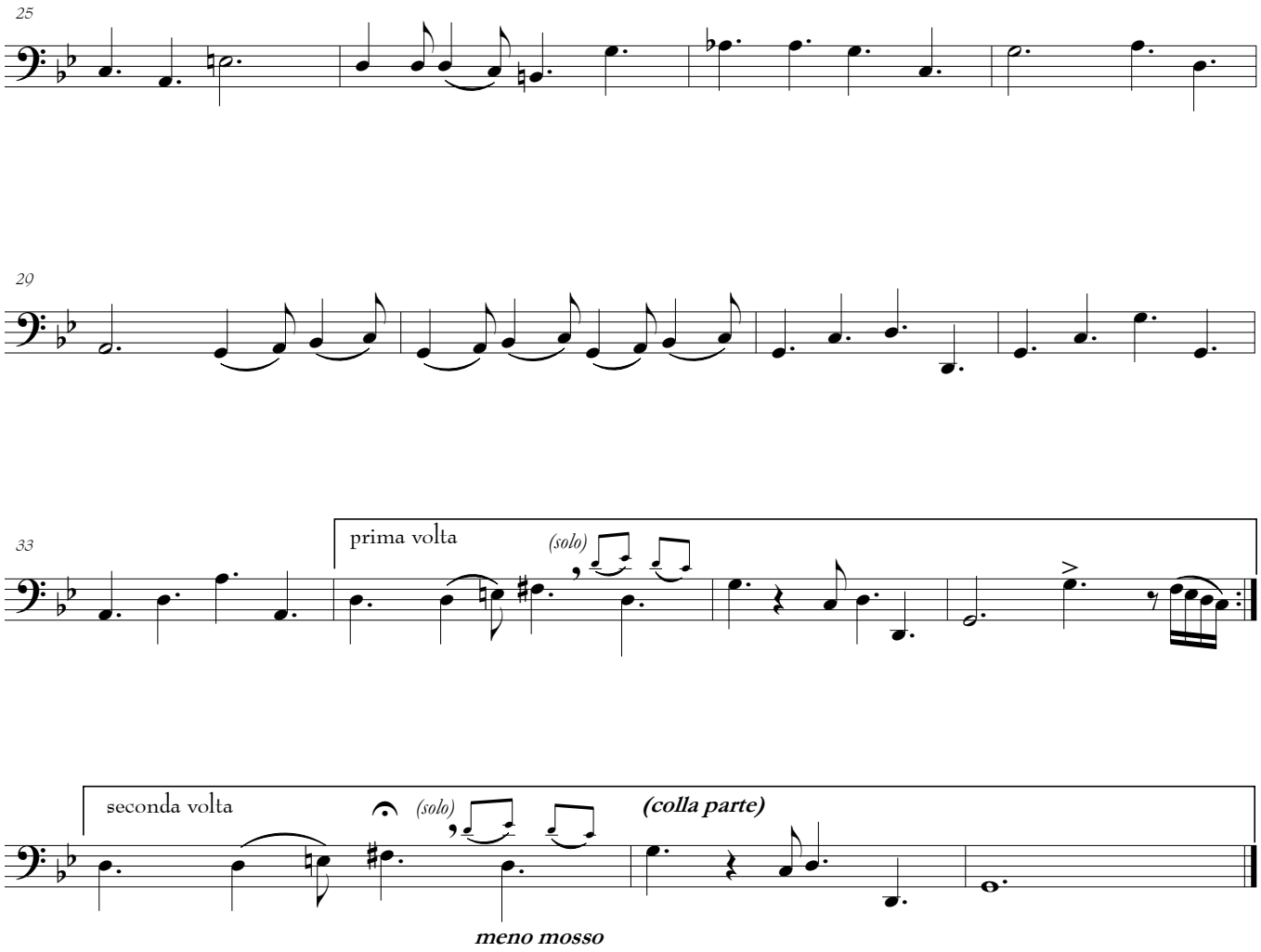
25
29
33
prima volta
(solo)
seconda volta
(solo)
(colla parte)
meno mosso