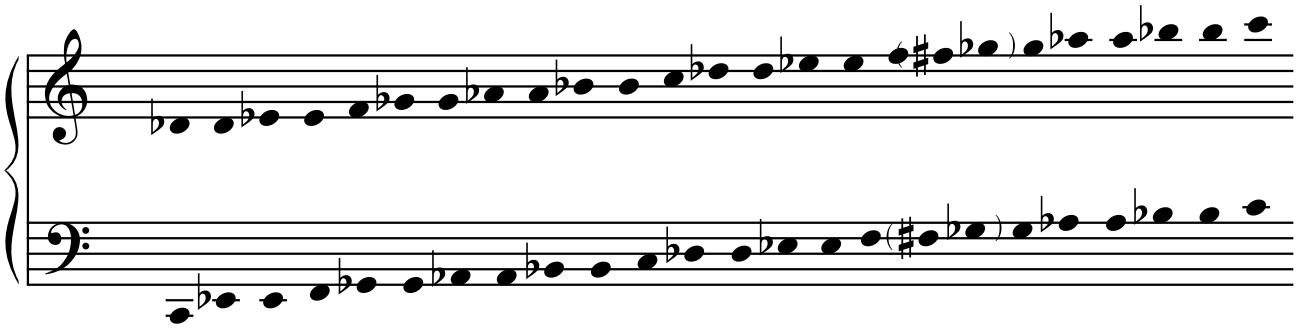
Prelude and Fugue No. 12 in F Minor

from "The Well-Tempered Klavier"
by Johann Sebastian Bach

Arranged for Handbell Sextet
by Larry Sue

Performance Notes

5 Octaves
Handbells Used: 47



Sometime around 1720, "well-tempering", the tuning of a keyboard instrument was discovered. Without going into excruciating detail, this meant that it was now possible to play harpsichords and clavichords - and shortly thereafter, pianos - in every key.

In 1722, J.S. Bach combined this new technology with his inimitable compositional genius by writing preludes-and-fugue pairs in each major and each minor key. And as if that wasn't enough, in 1744 he did it again! The two sets of pieces are now known as Book I and Book 2 of "The Well-Tempered Klavier".

For nearly three centuries, they've been an indispensable part of the classical repertoire. As instructional works, they provide opportunity to learn the "sense of line" that's essential to great performance; as performance pieces, they charm and amaze ever after multiple hearings.

The two pieces for a particular key are intended to be played prelude first, fugue second. Invariably, this results in a beautiful contrast between the impressions created by each piece. Each prelude-fugue pair is arranged so they can be played back-to-back by the same (two to six) players.

Because of the nature of Baroque music, and the additional complexity injected by transferring it to handbells, these arrangements have been notated in "open score" format with use of cross-staffing to show where the musical lines are going; this is particularly true in the fugues.

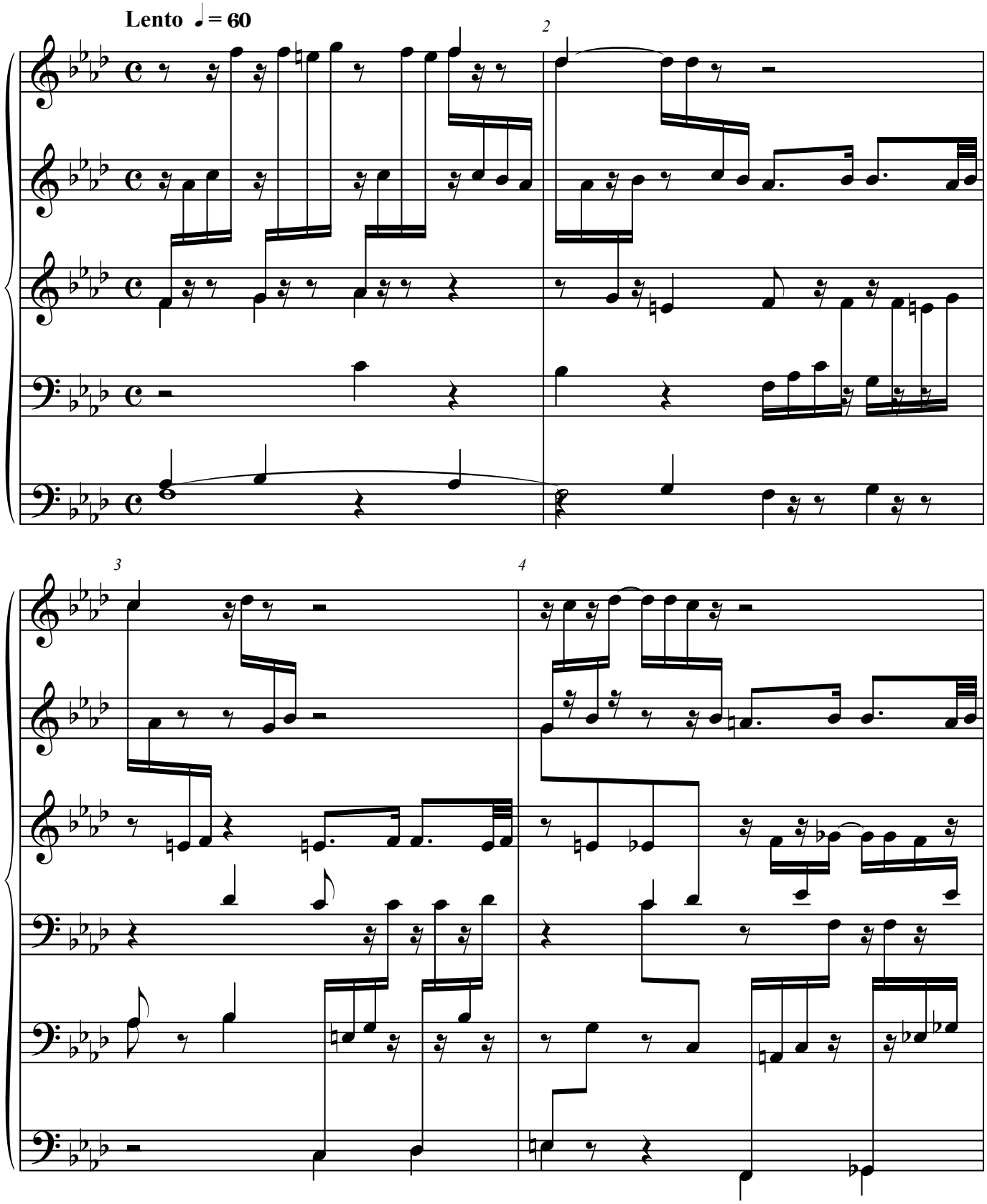
Prelude No. 12 has a rather curious liveliness in even though it's in minor key. Keep the lines steady, progressing contiuously from start to end.

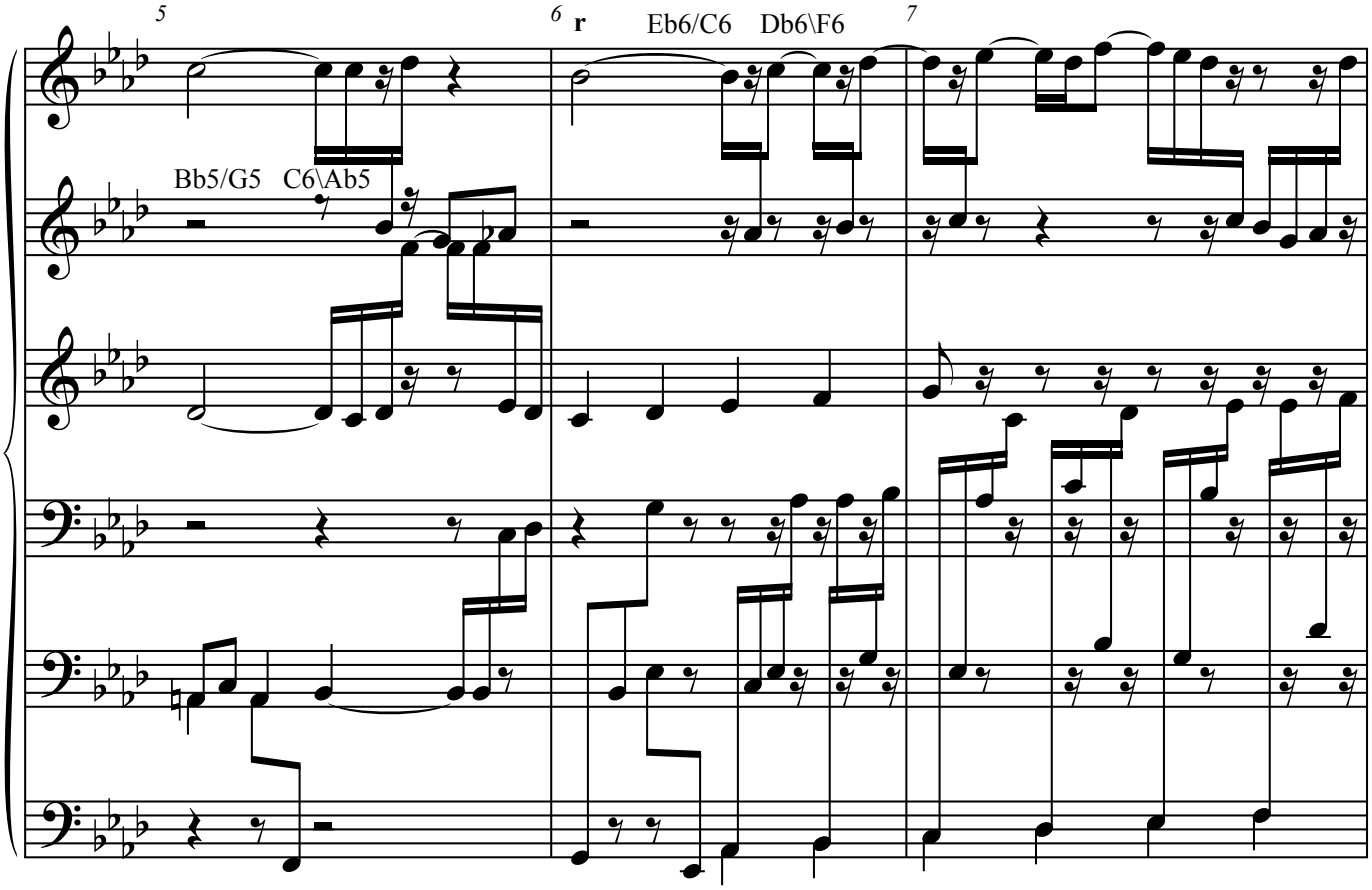
Fugue No. 12 should be played deliberately, as if emphasizing the saying "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Chimes may be substituted for the quarter notes in the piece to distinguish the fugue's voices from each other.

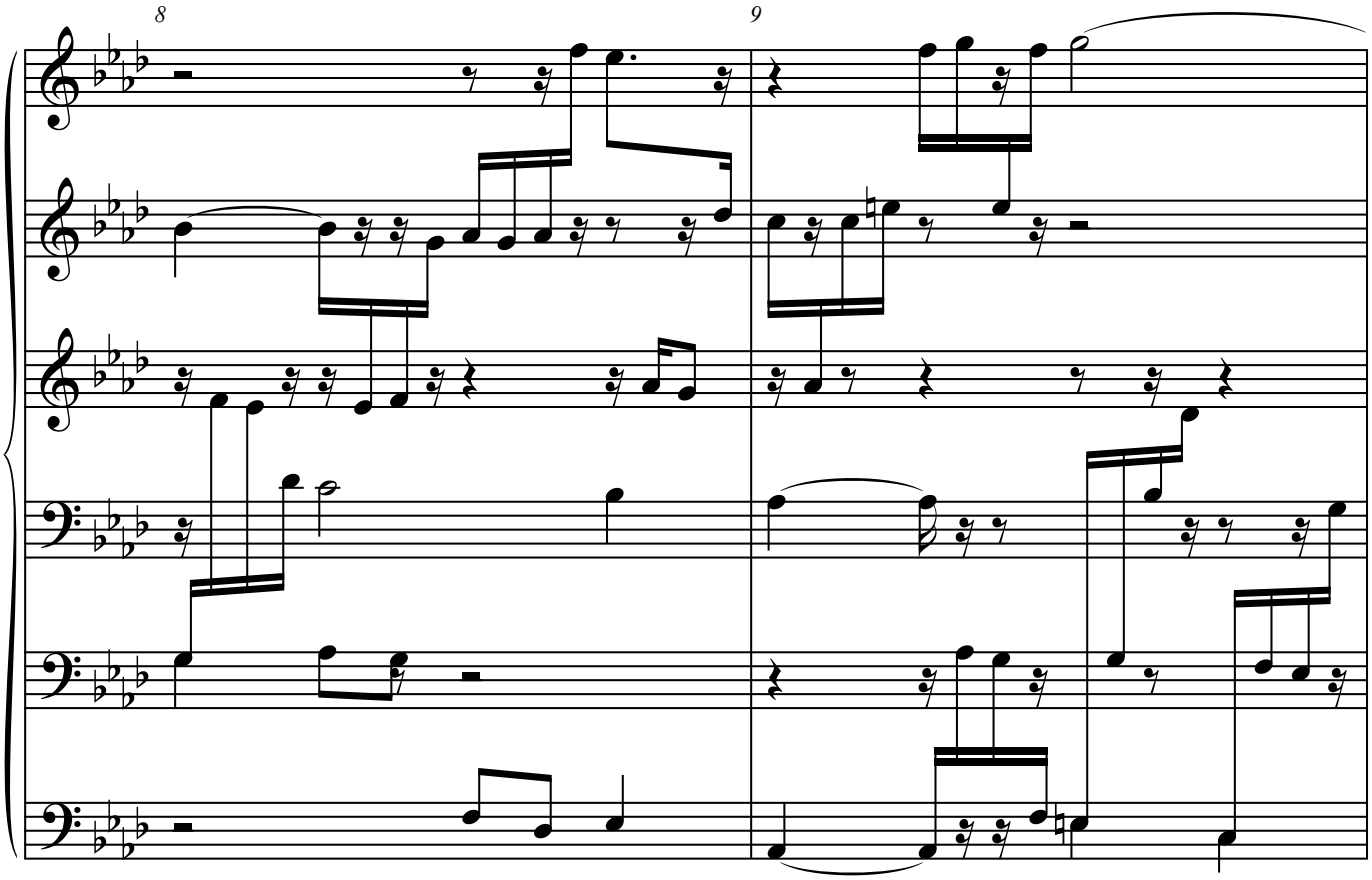
Have patience and persevere - at the end of the path lies a gorgeous performance!

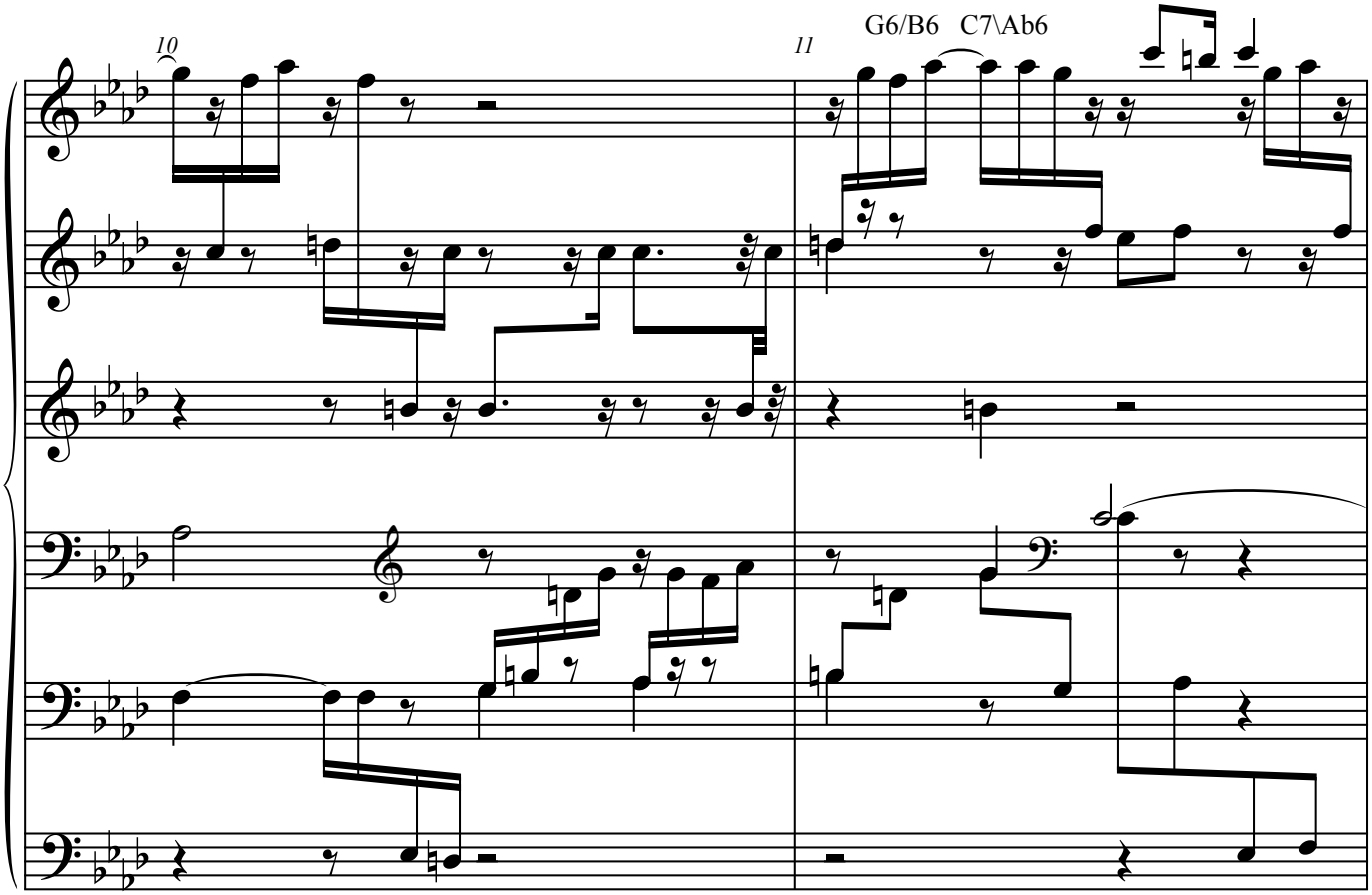
Larry Sue

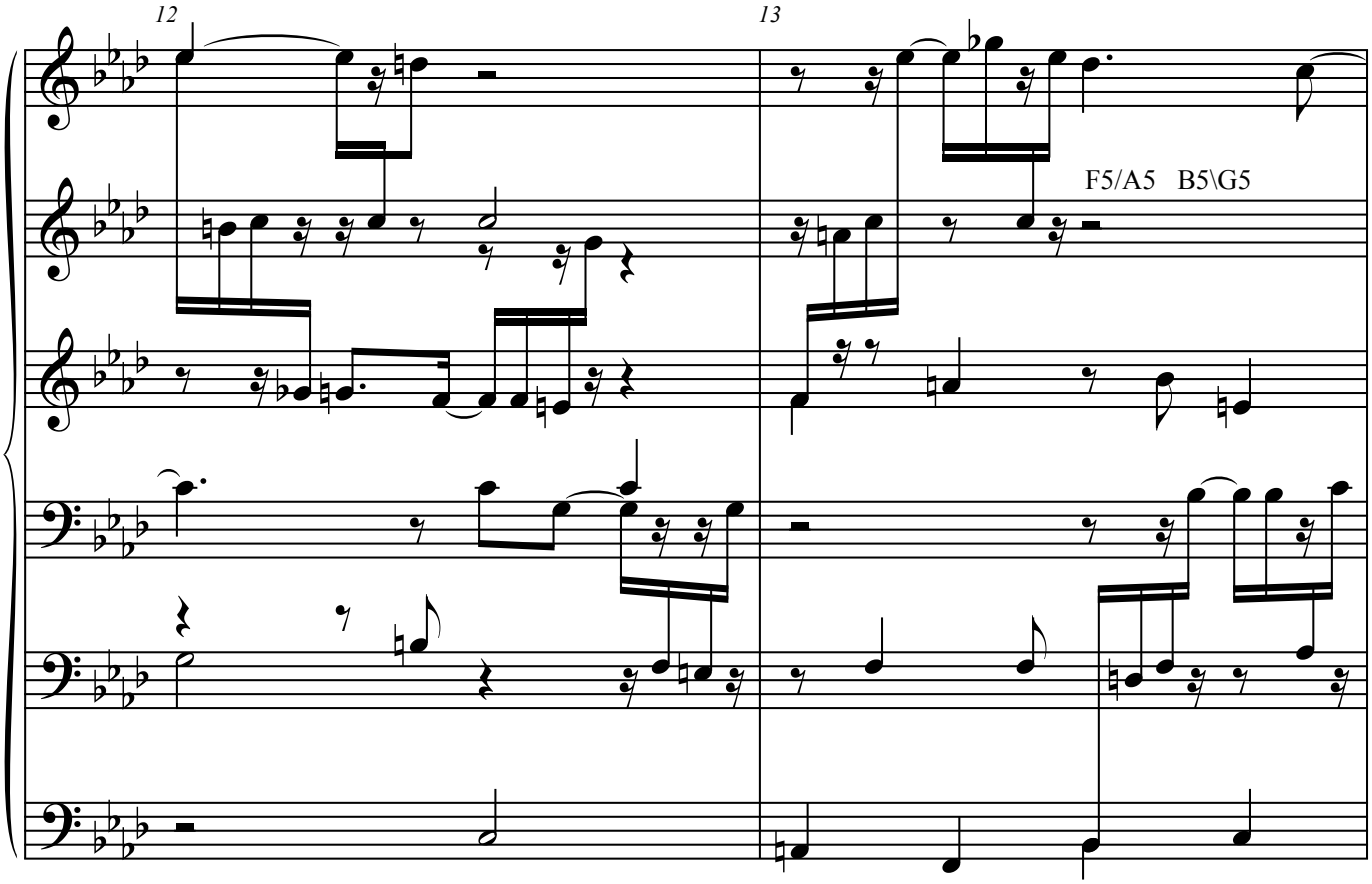
Prelude No. 12

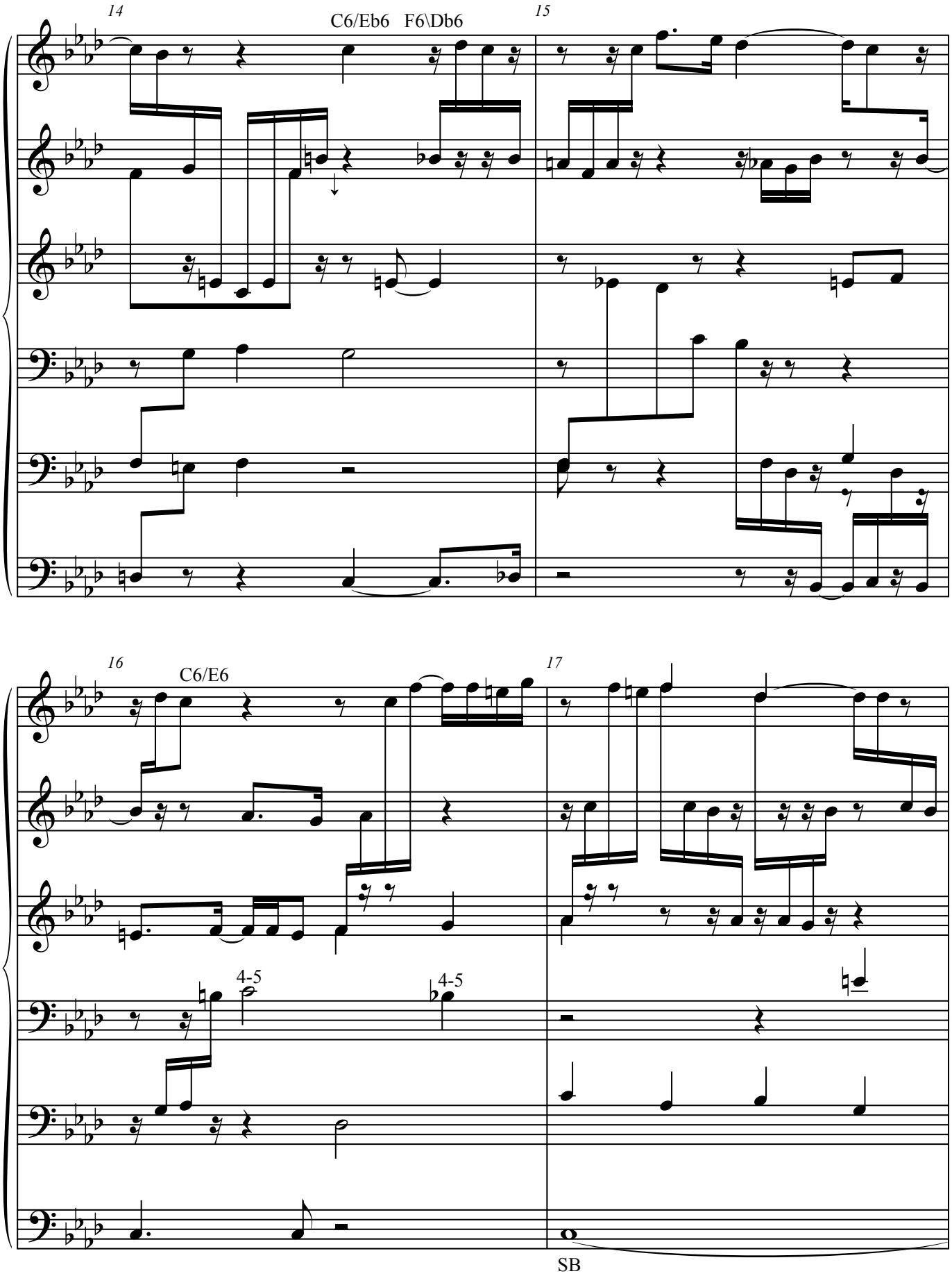


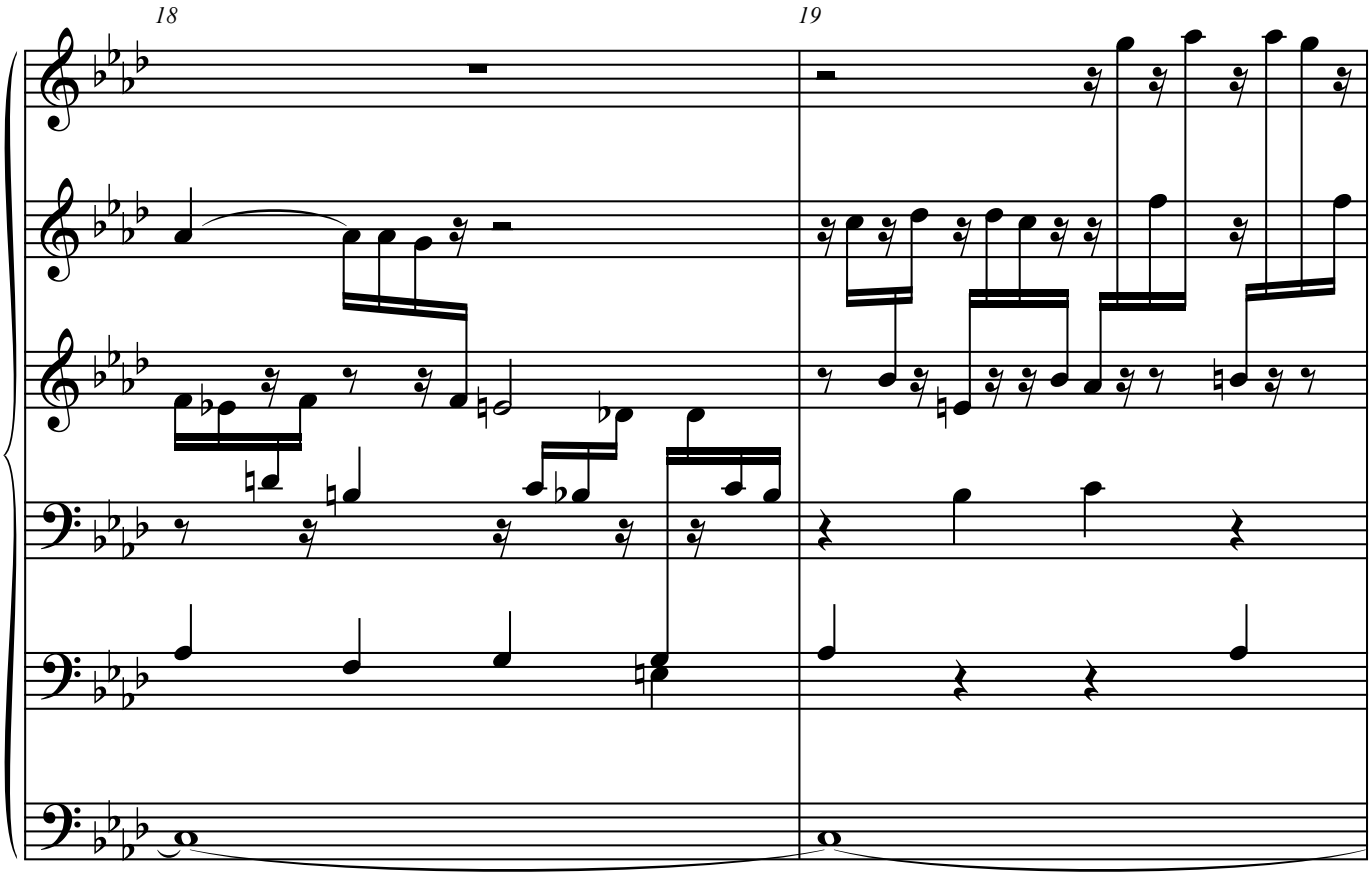

5
6
r
Eb6/C6
Db6\F6
7
Bb5/G5
C6\Ab5

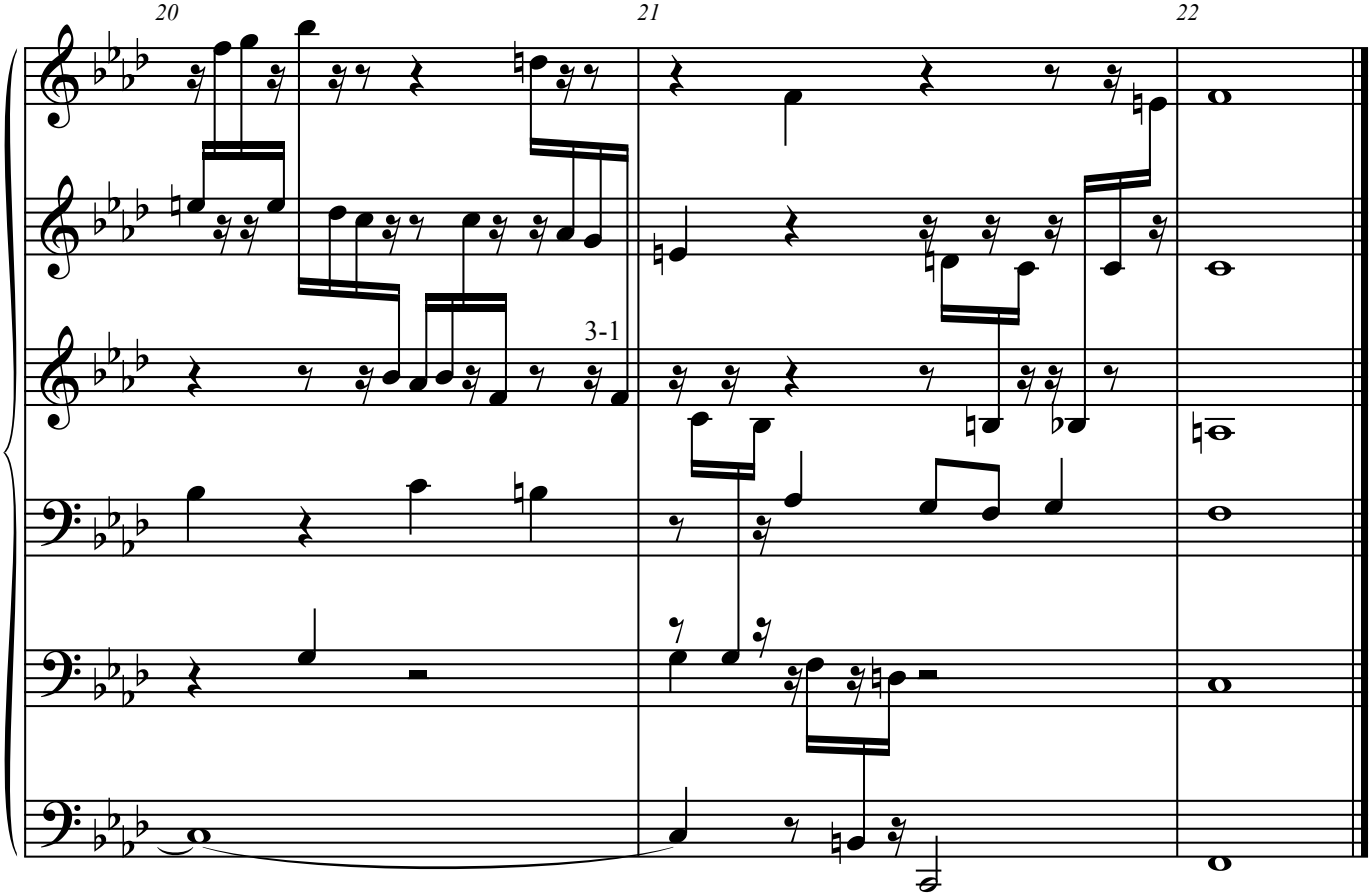

8
9


10
11
G6/B6 C7\Ab6

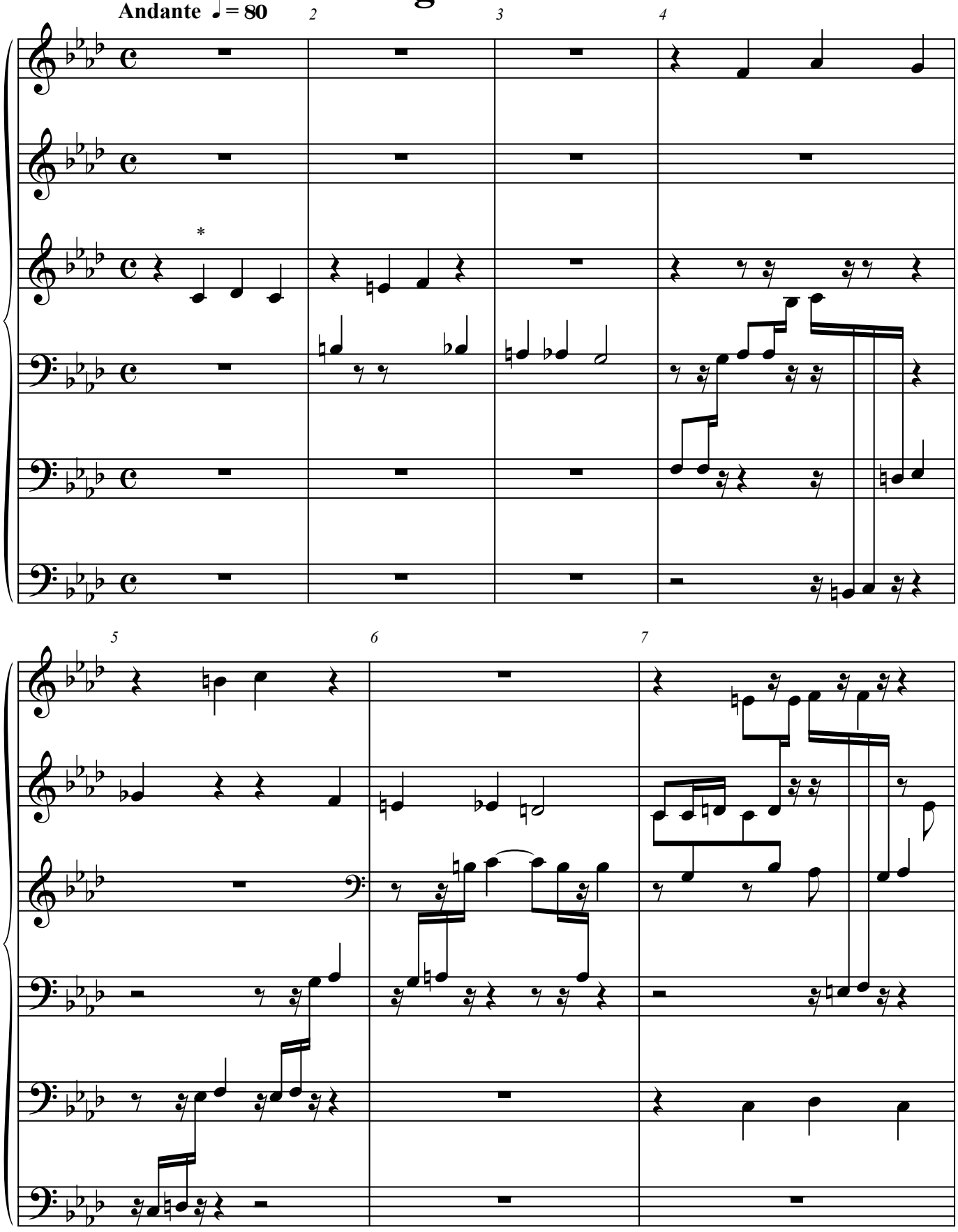

12
13
F5/A5 B5\G5


14
C6/Eb6 F6\Db6
15
16
C6/E6
17
4-5
4-5
SB

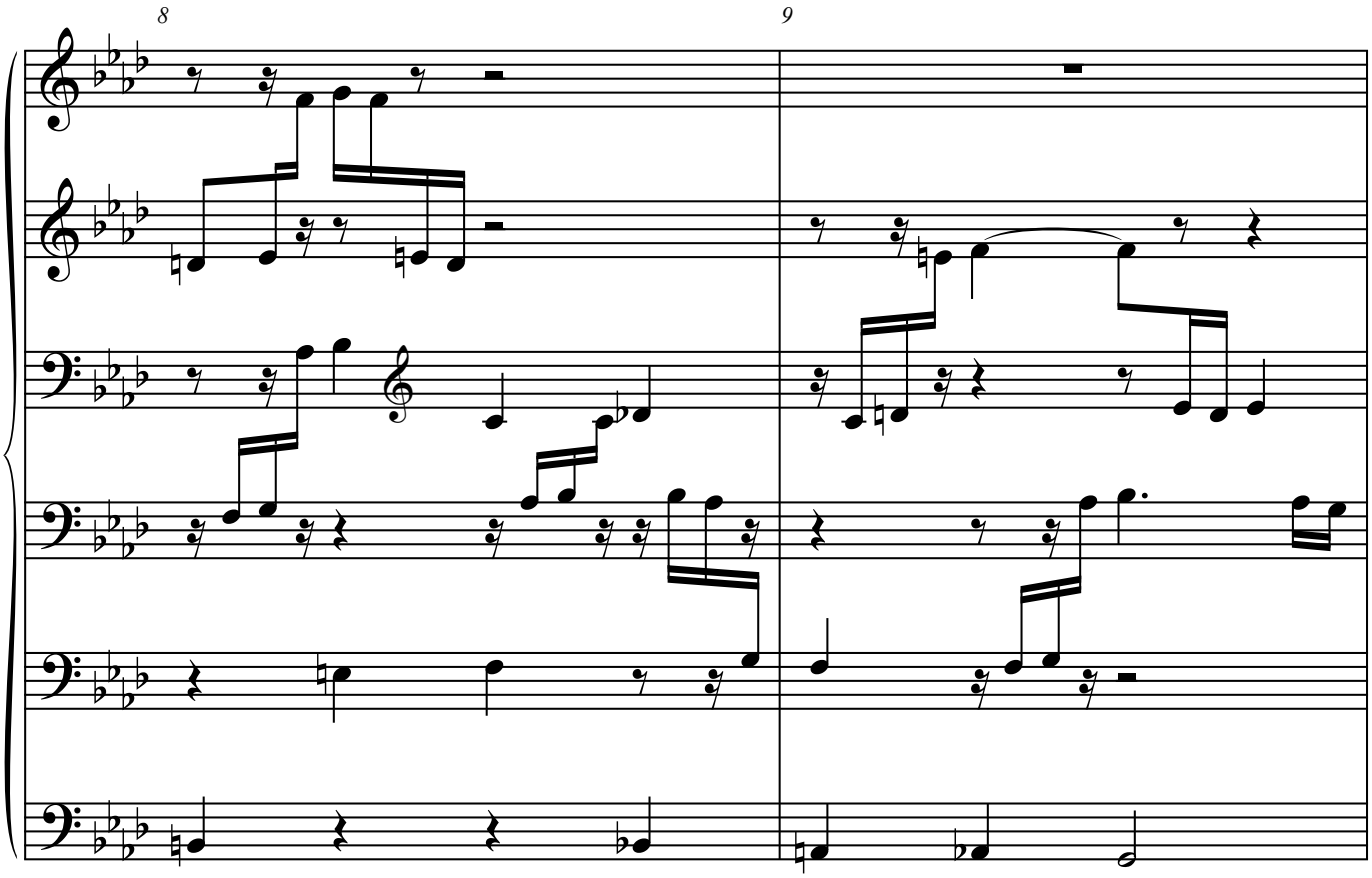

18
19

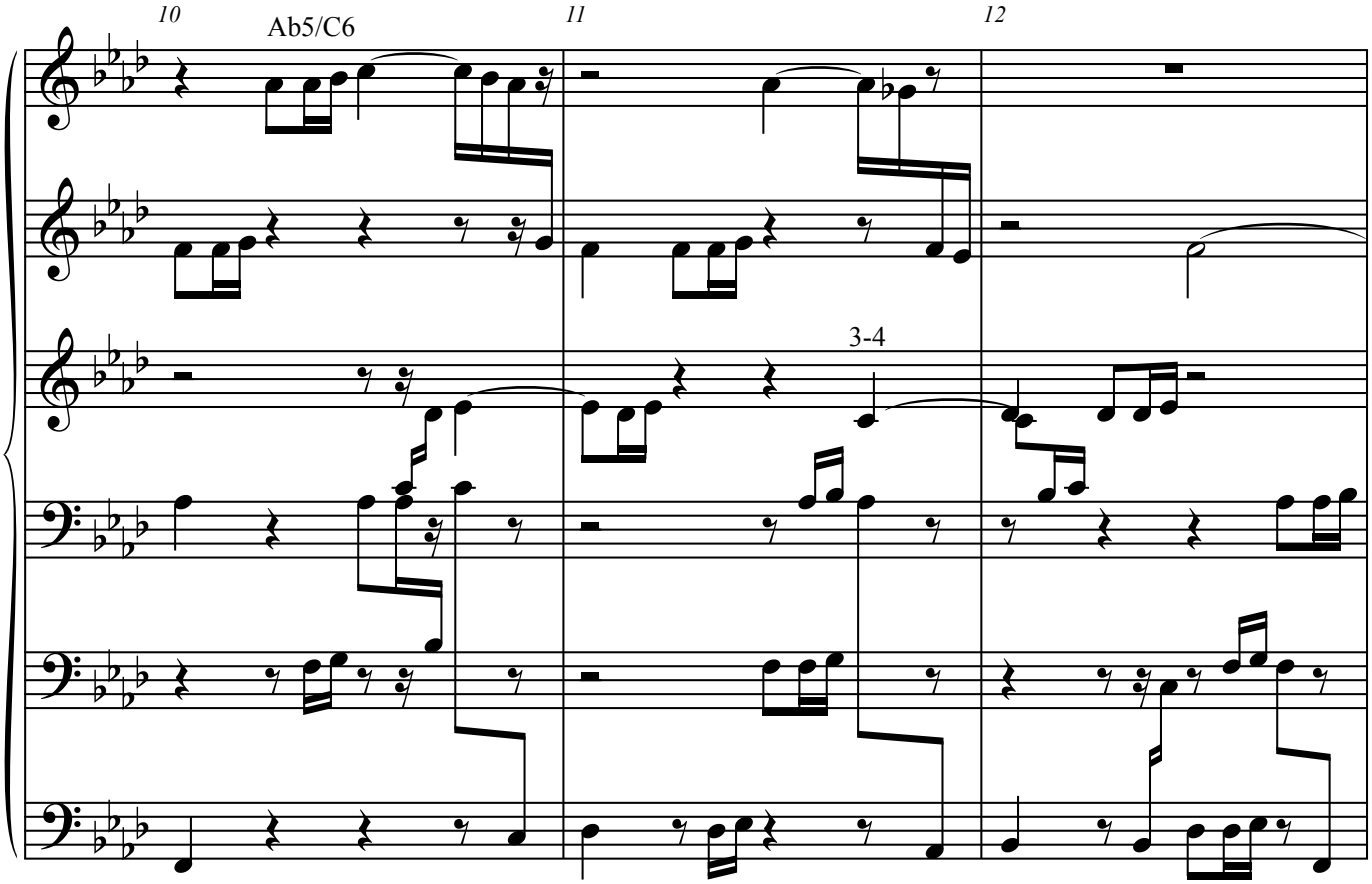

20
21
22
3-1

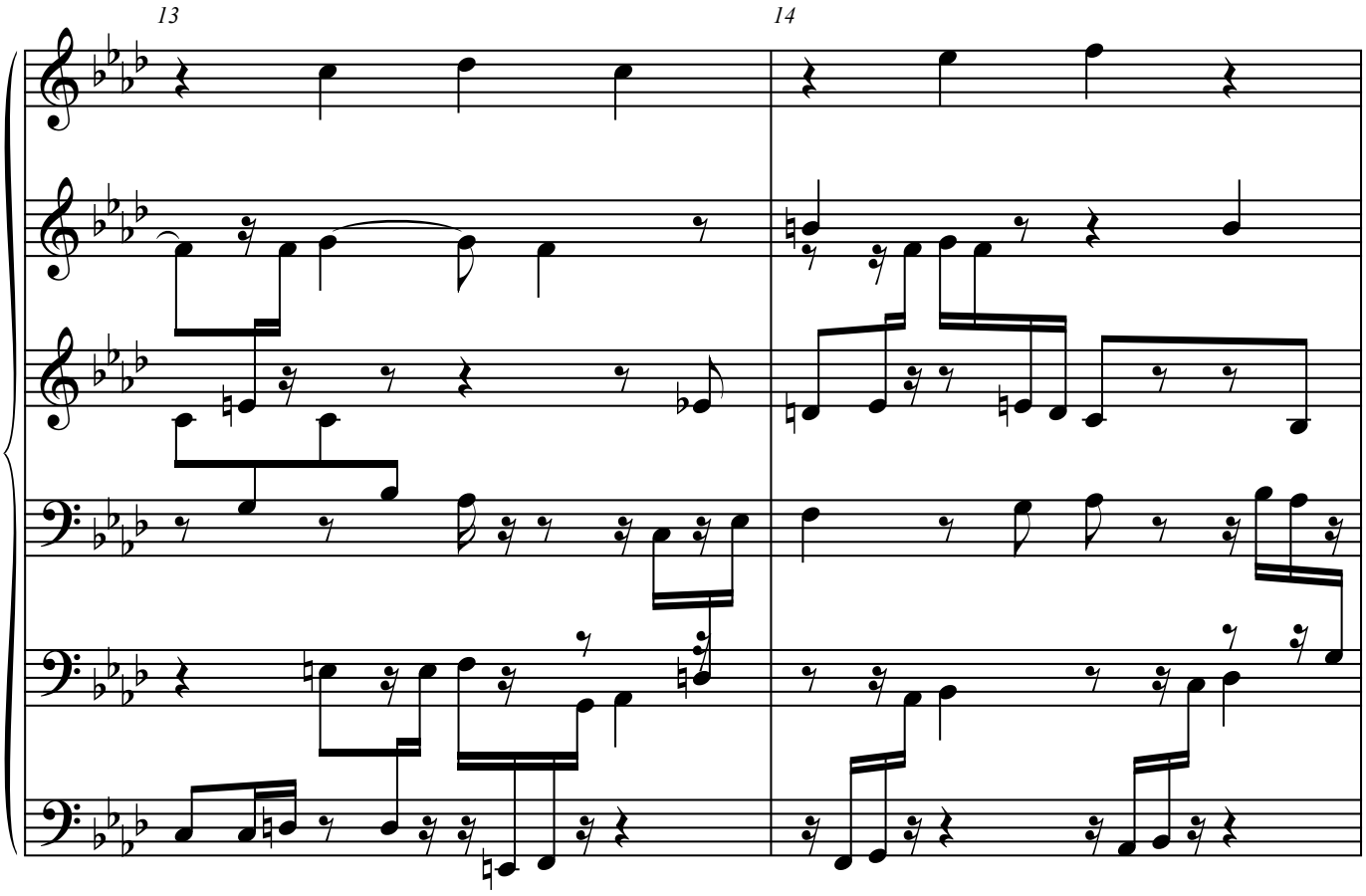
Fugue No. 12

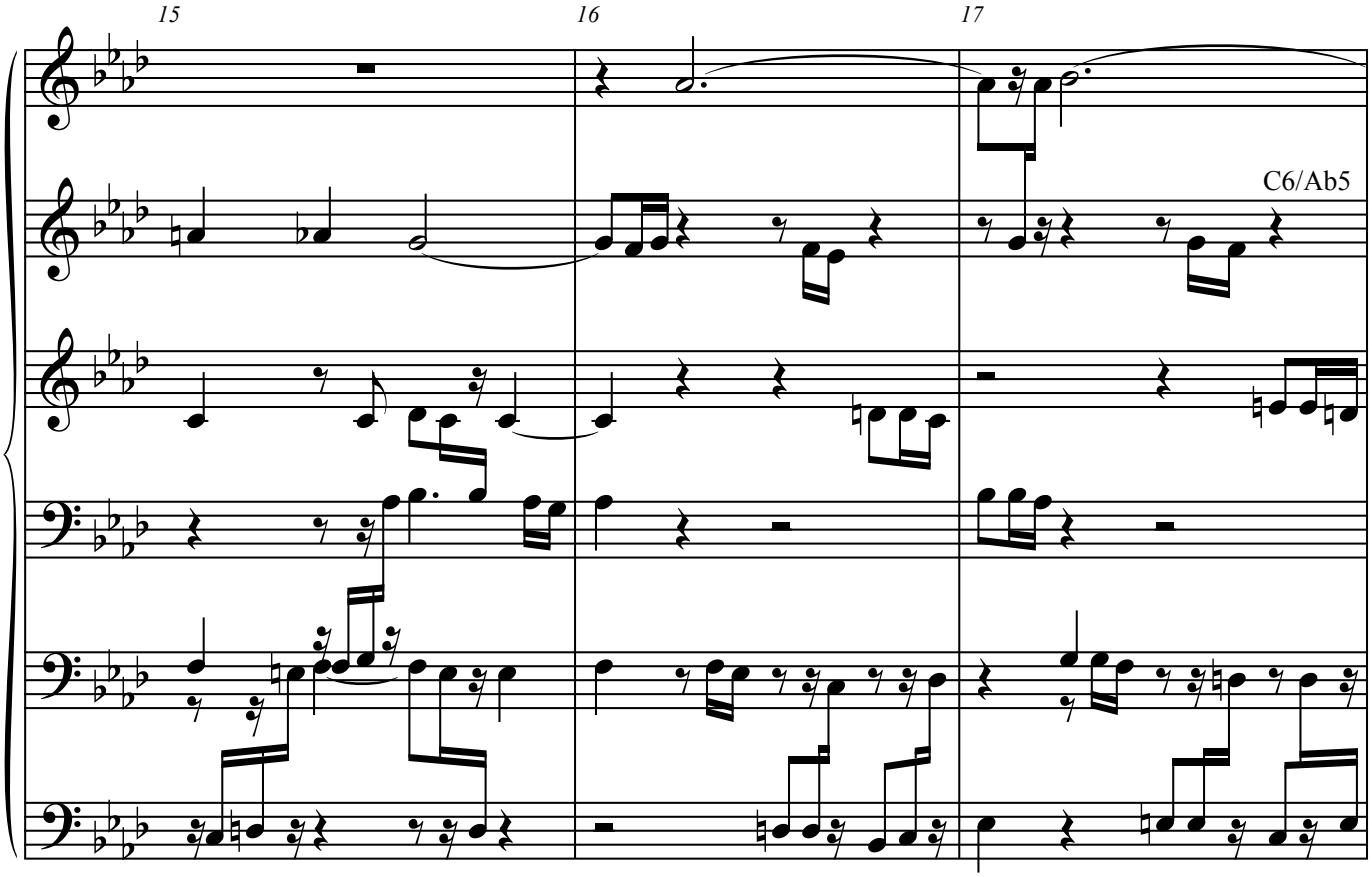


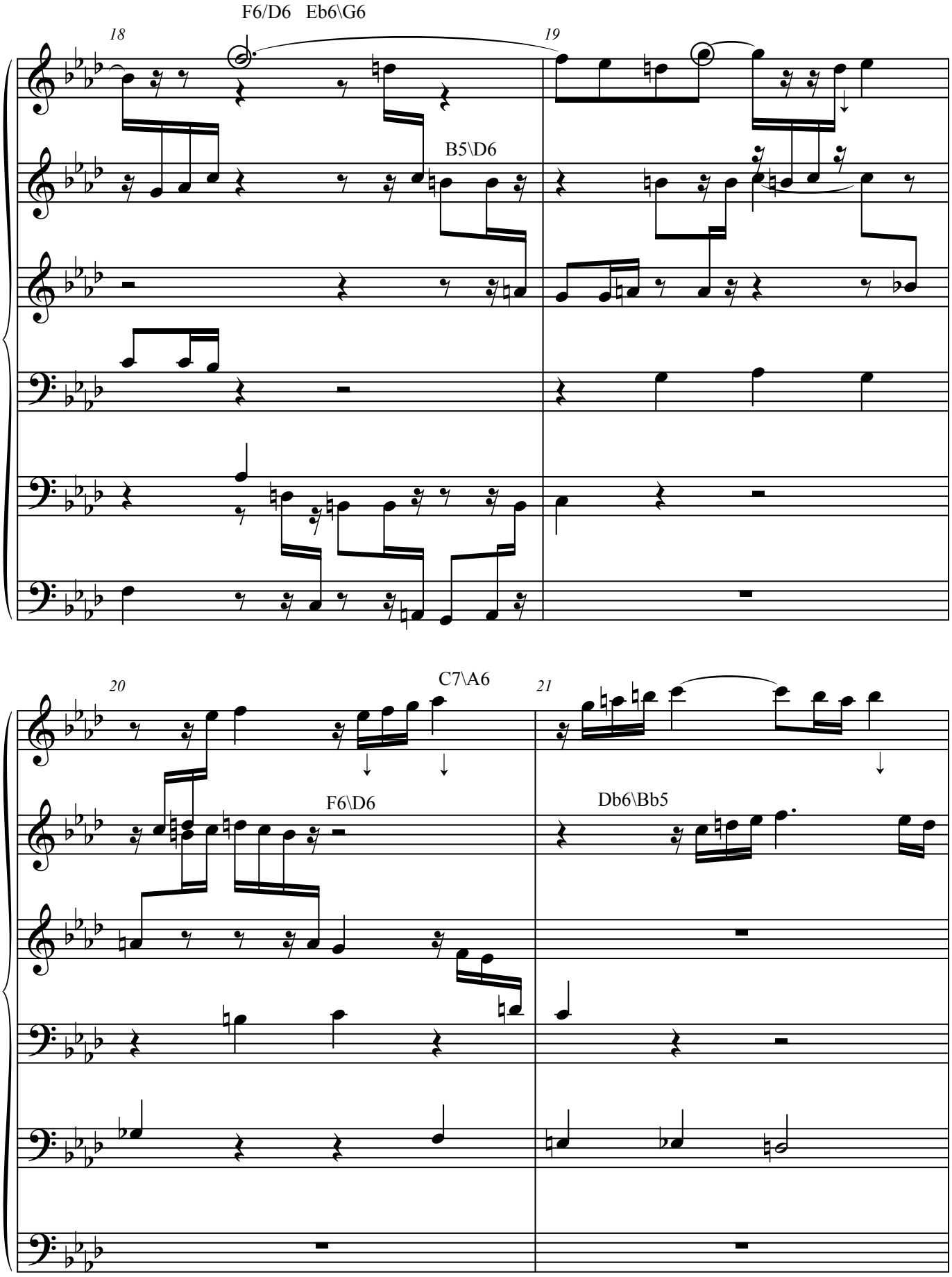
* Optional chimes on all quarter notes in the fugue.

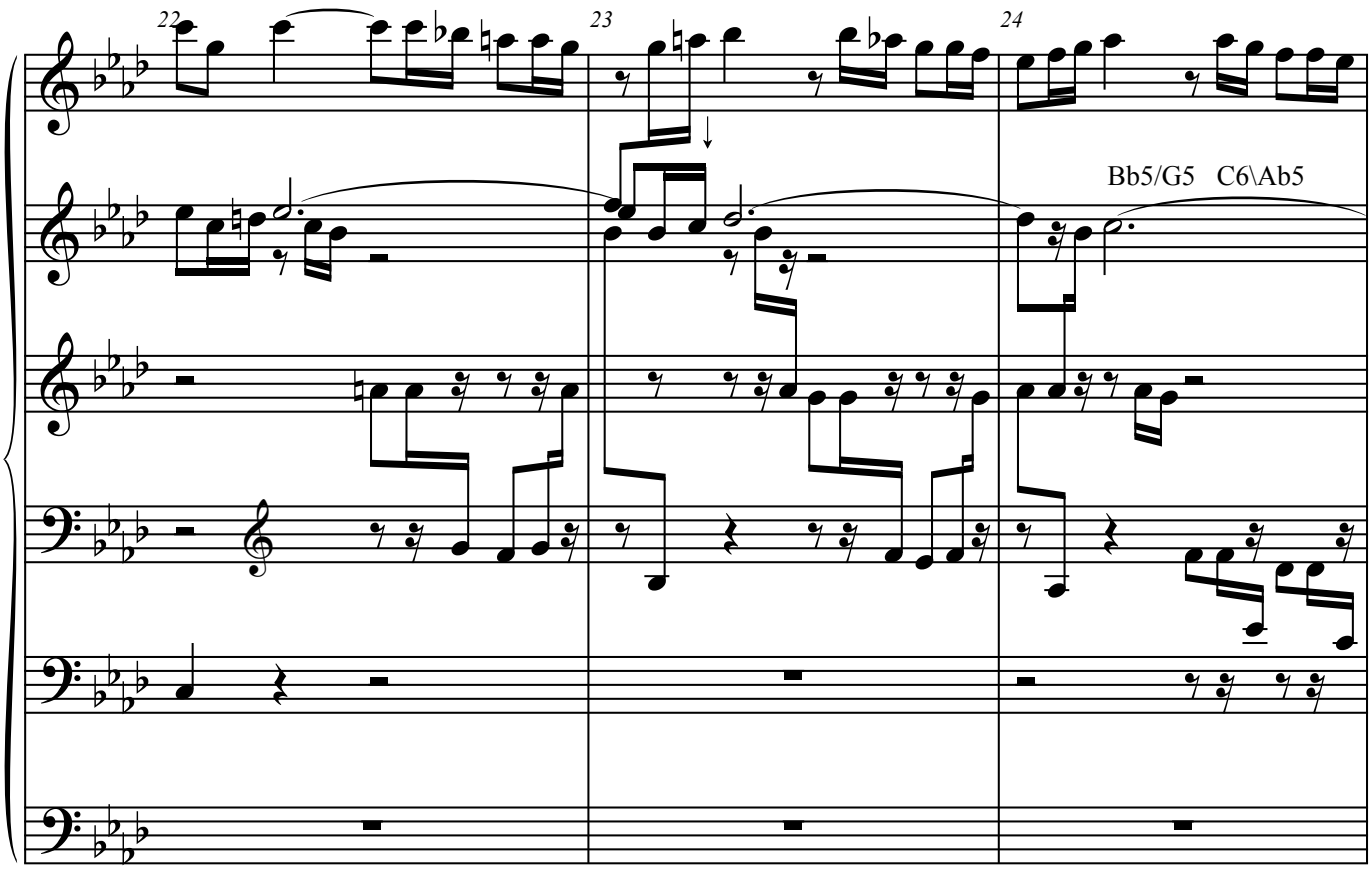

8
9

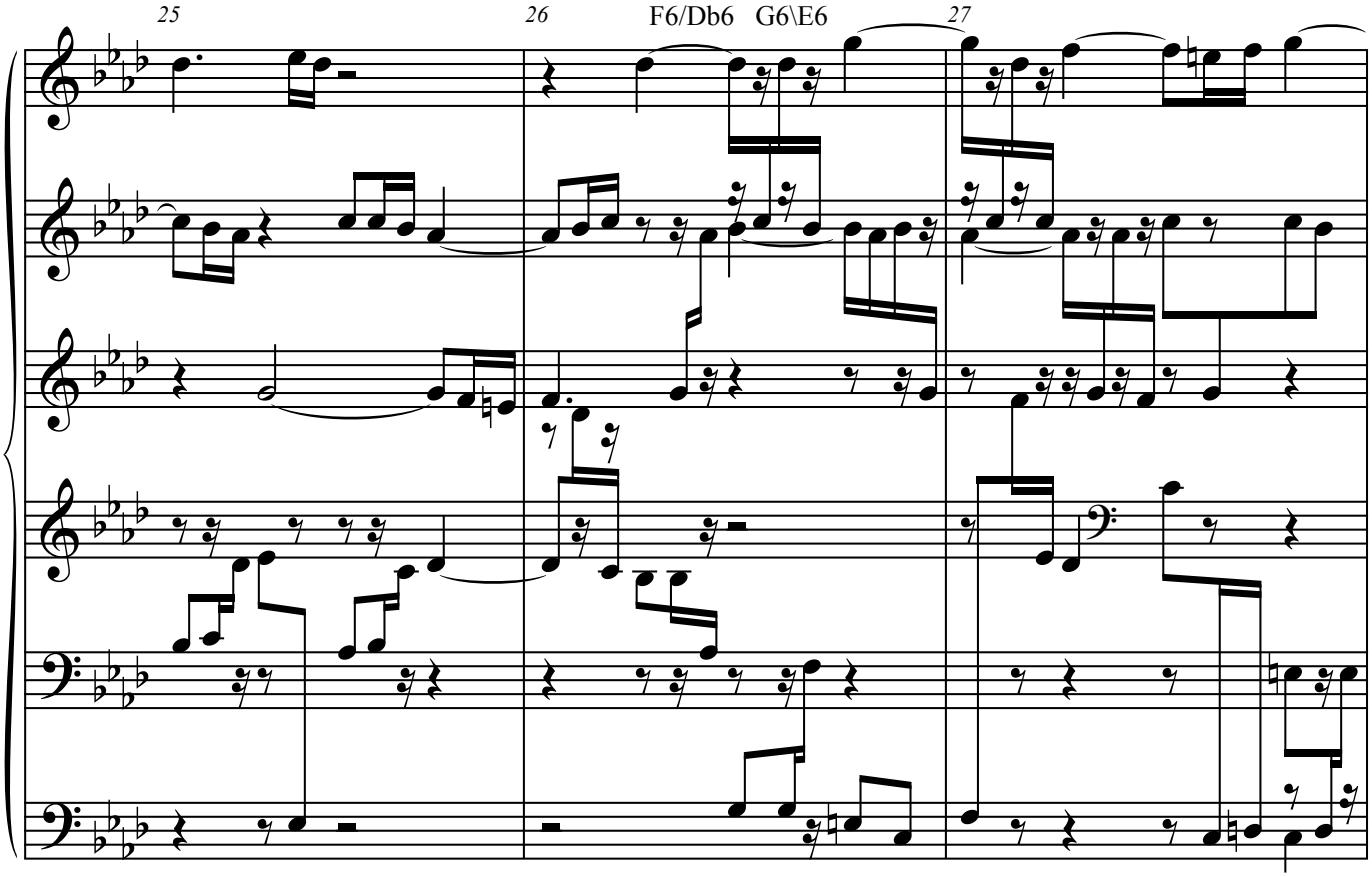

10
Ab5/C6
11
12
3-4

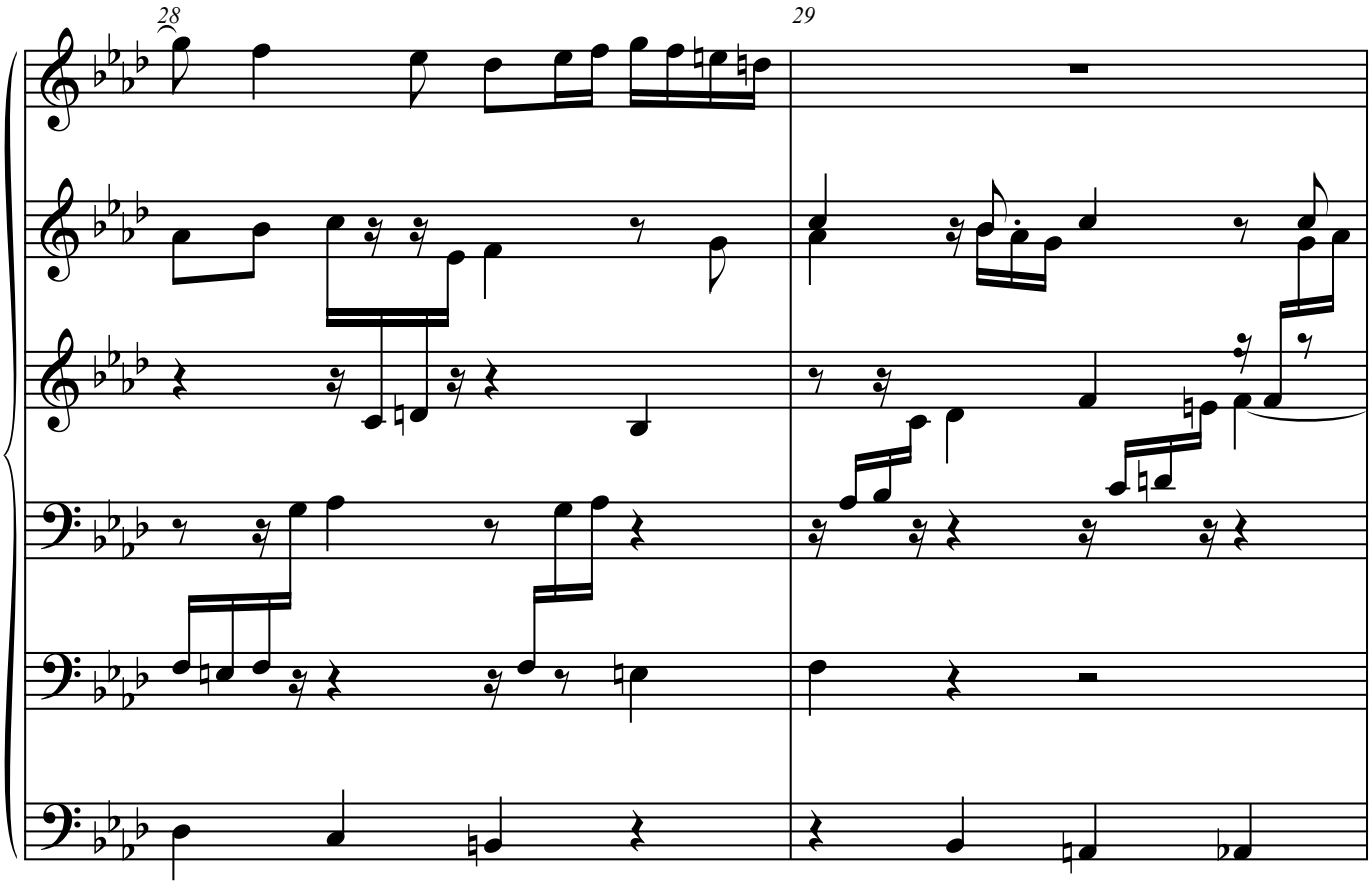

13
14

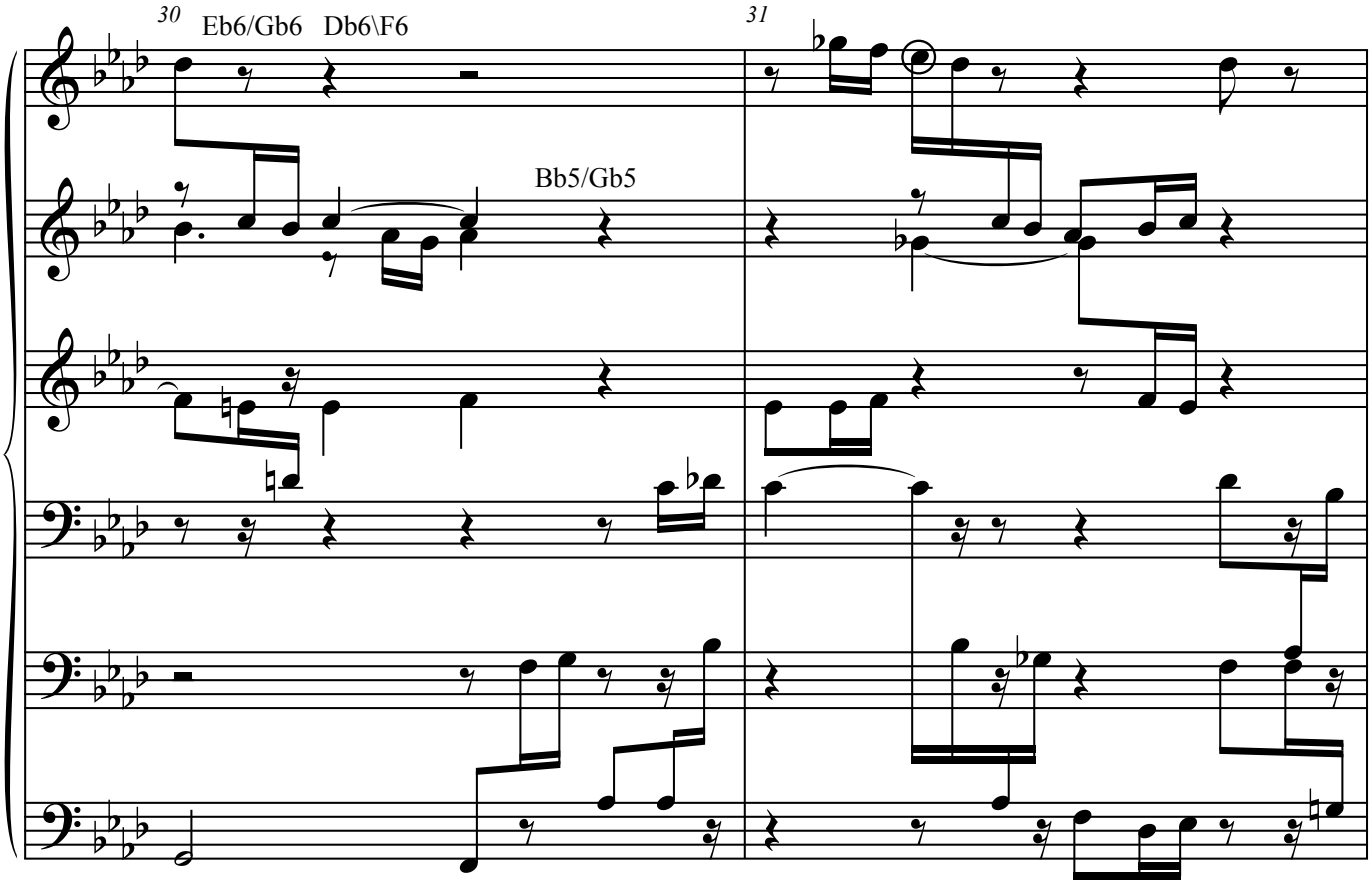

15
16
17
C6/Ab5

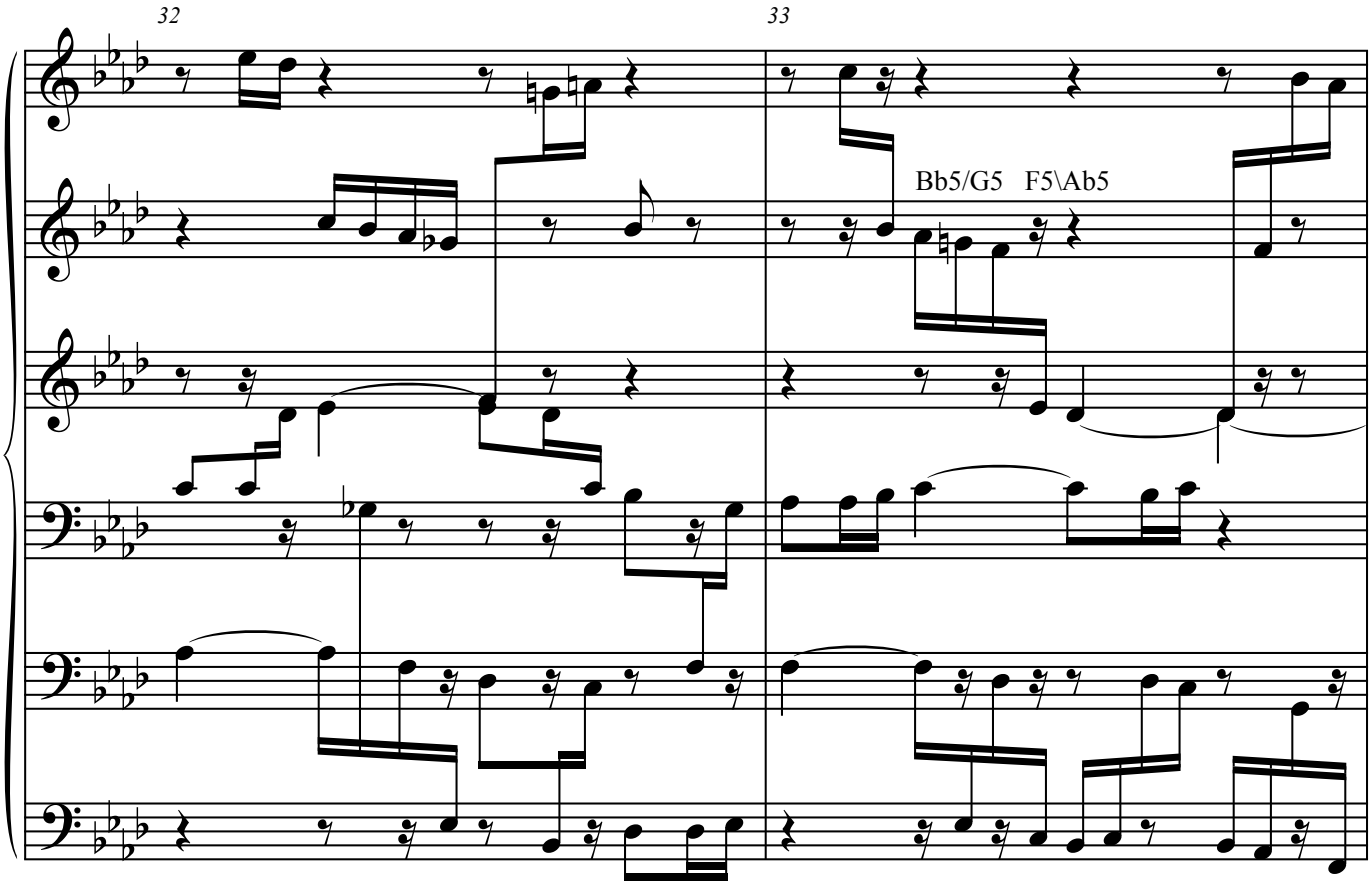

F6/D6 Eb6\G6
18
19
B5\D6
20
C7\A6
21
F6\D6
Db6\Bb5

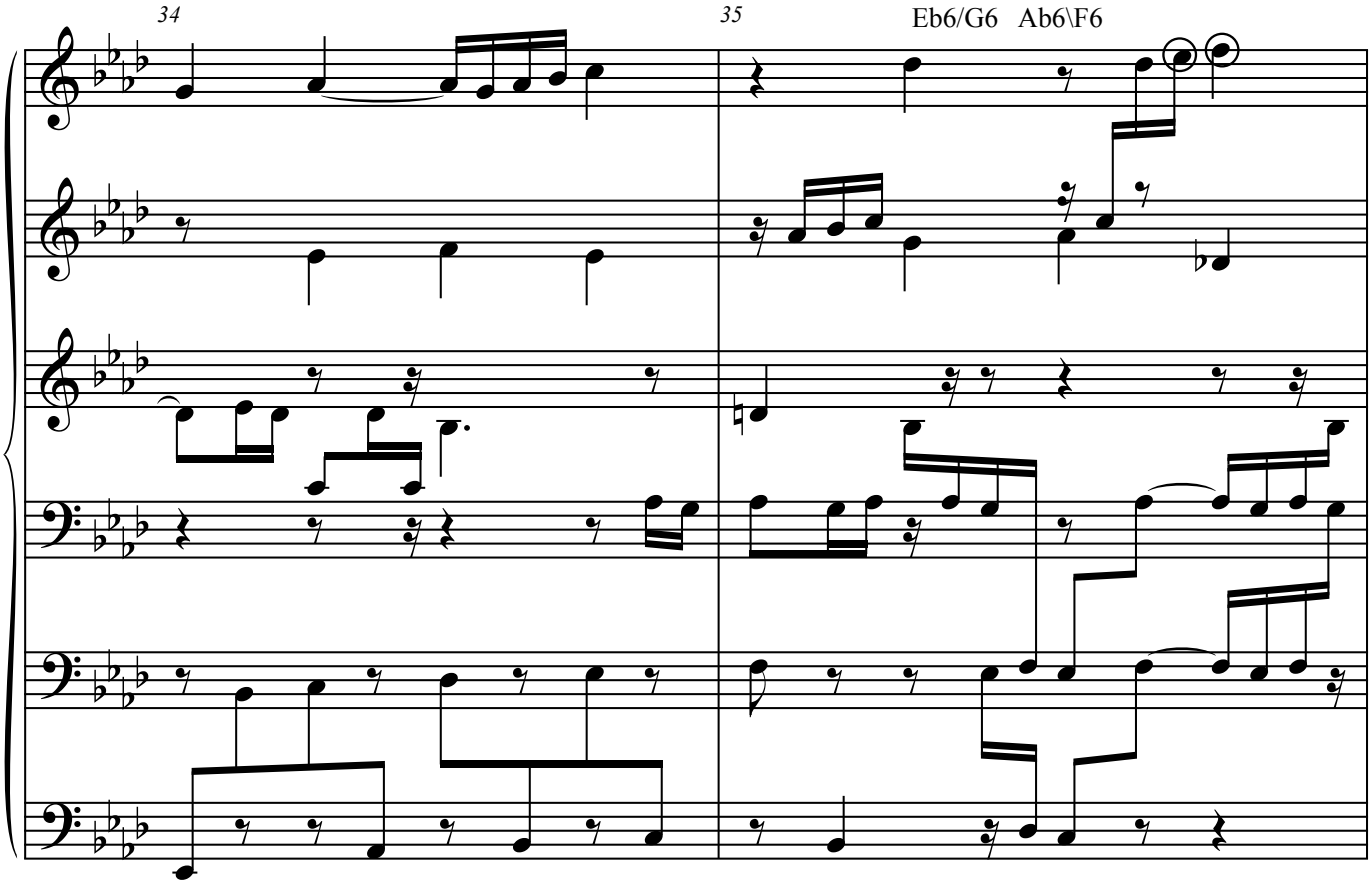

22
23
24
Bb5/G5 C6\Ab5

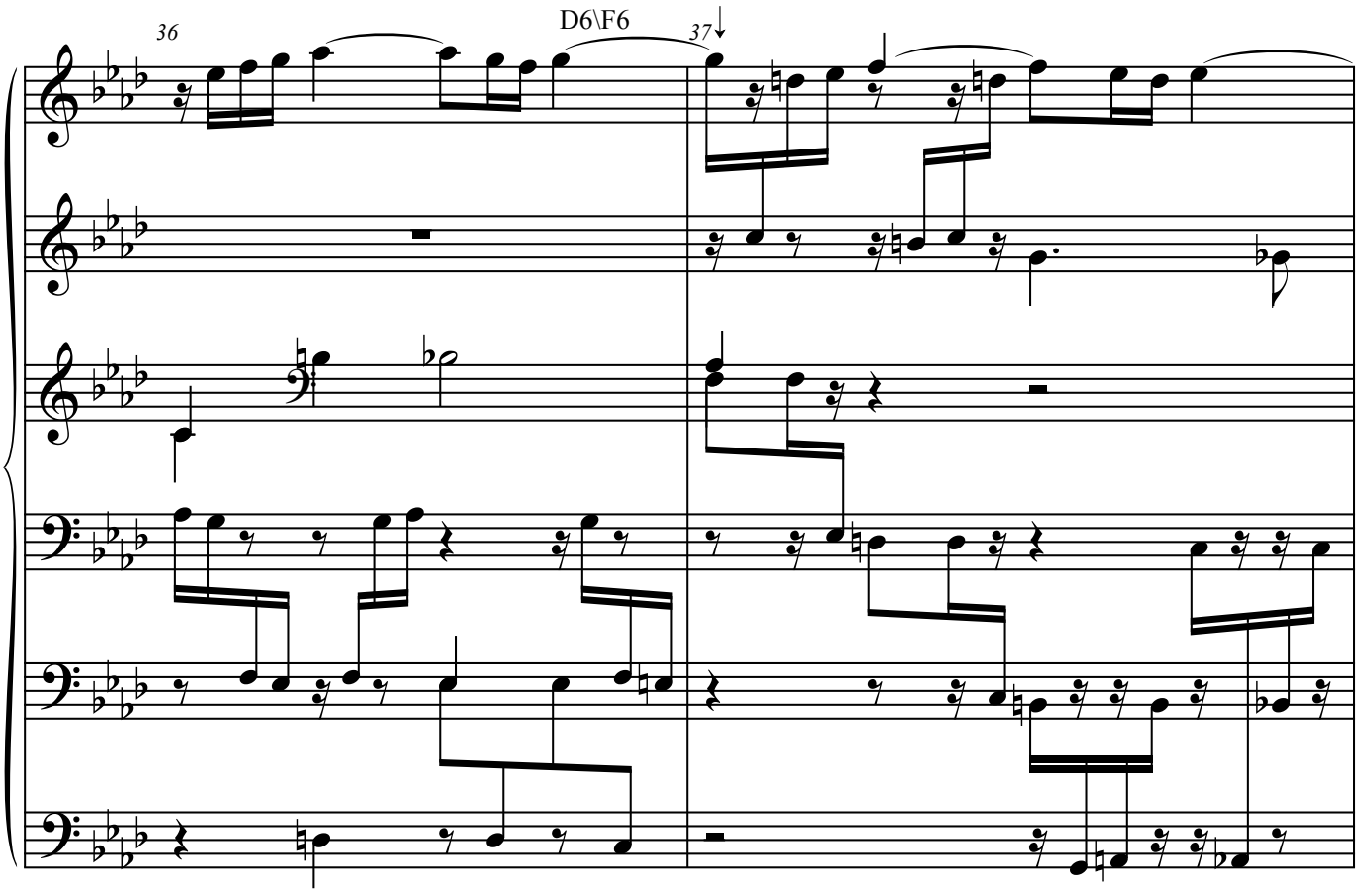

25
26
F6/Db6 G6\E6
27

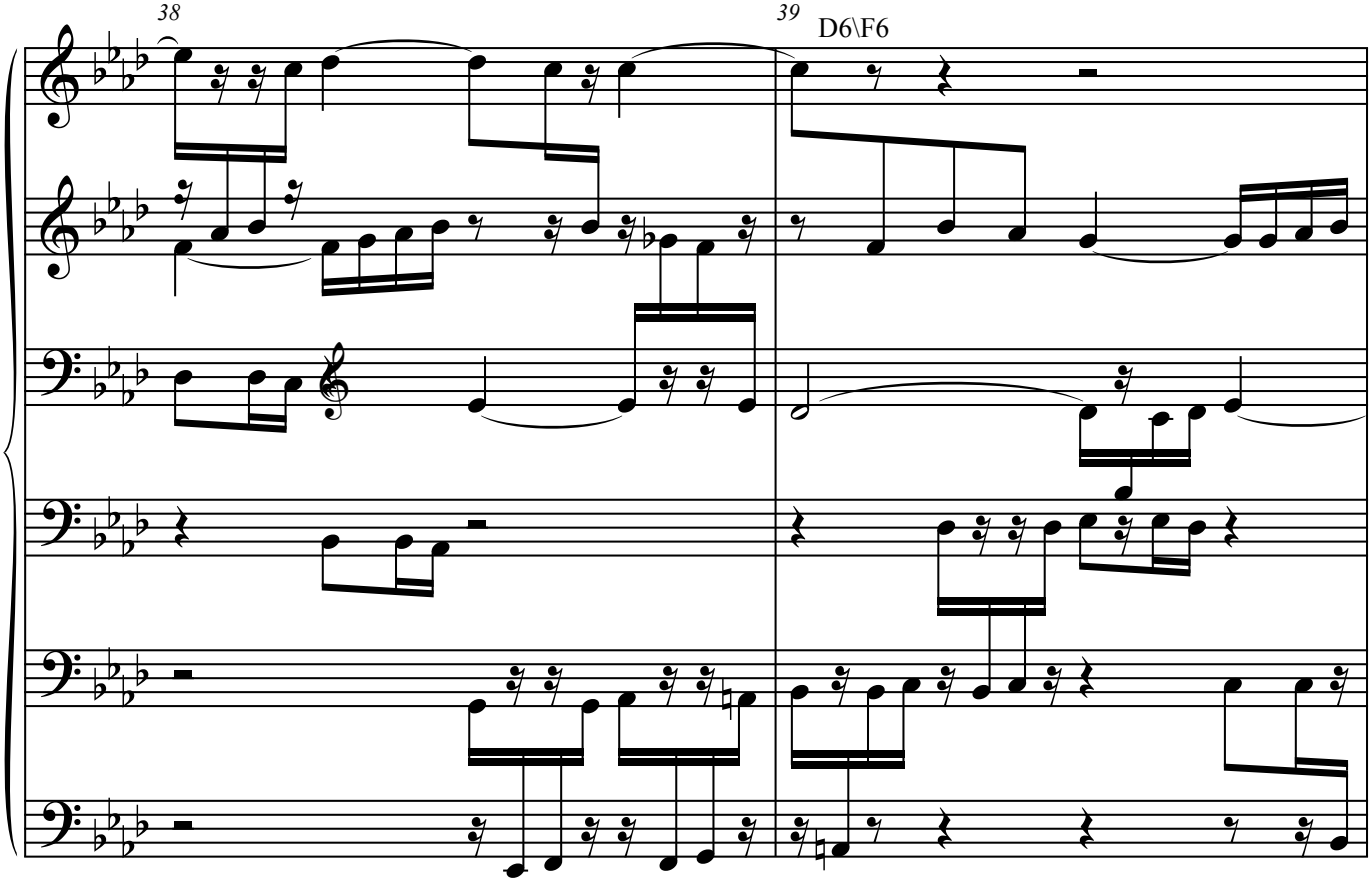

28
29

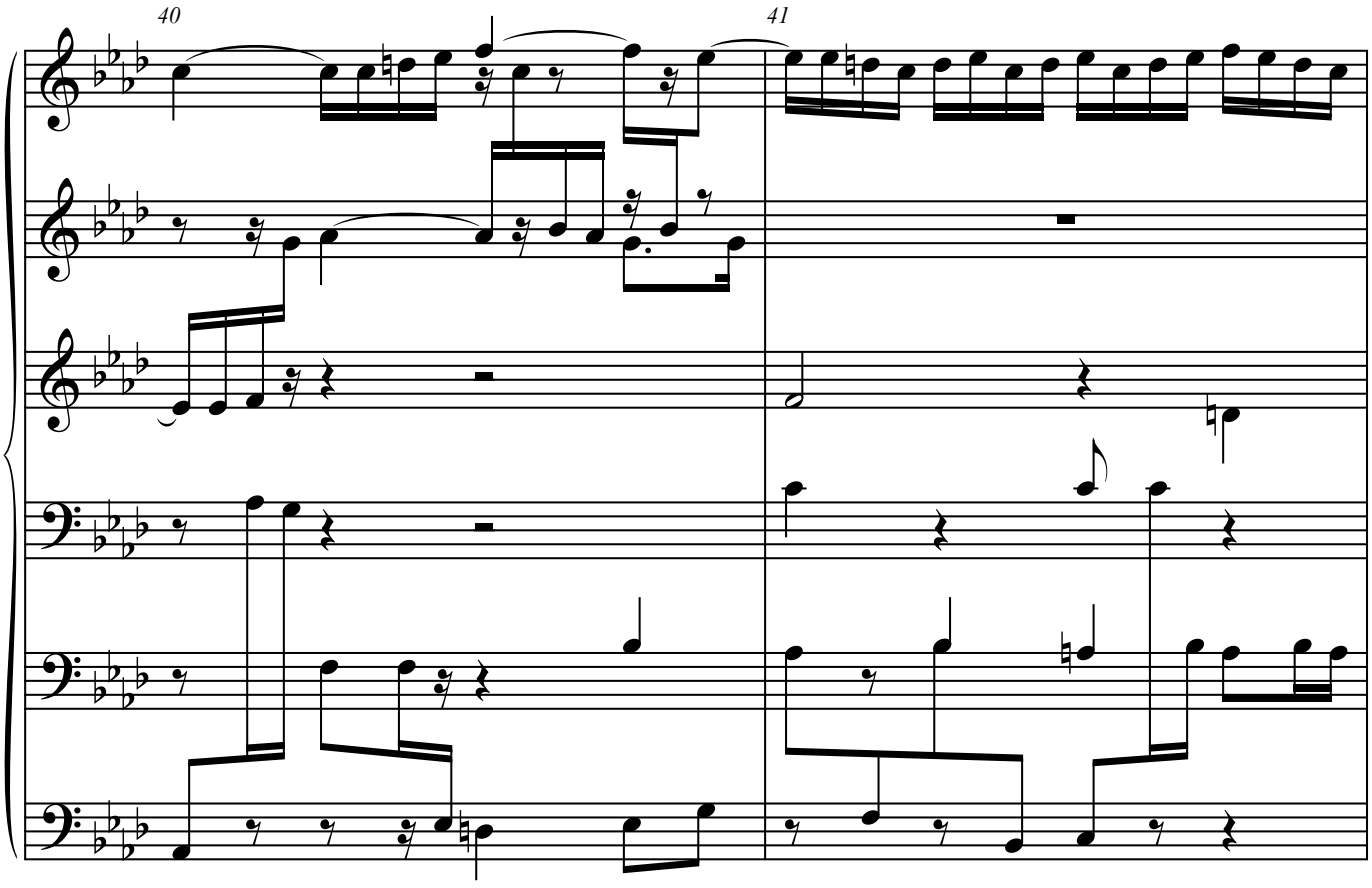

30
Eb6/Gb6
Db6\F6
Bb5/Gb5
31

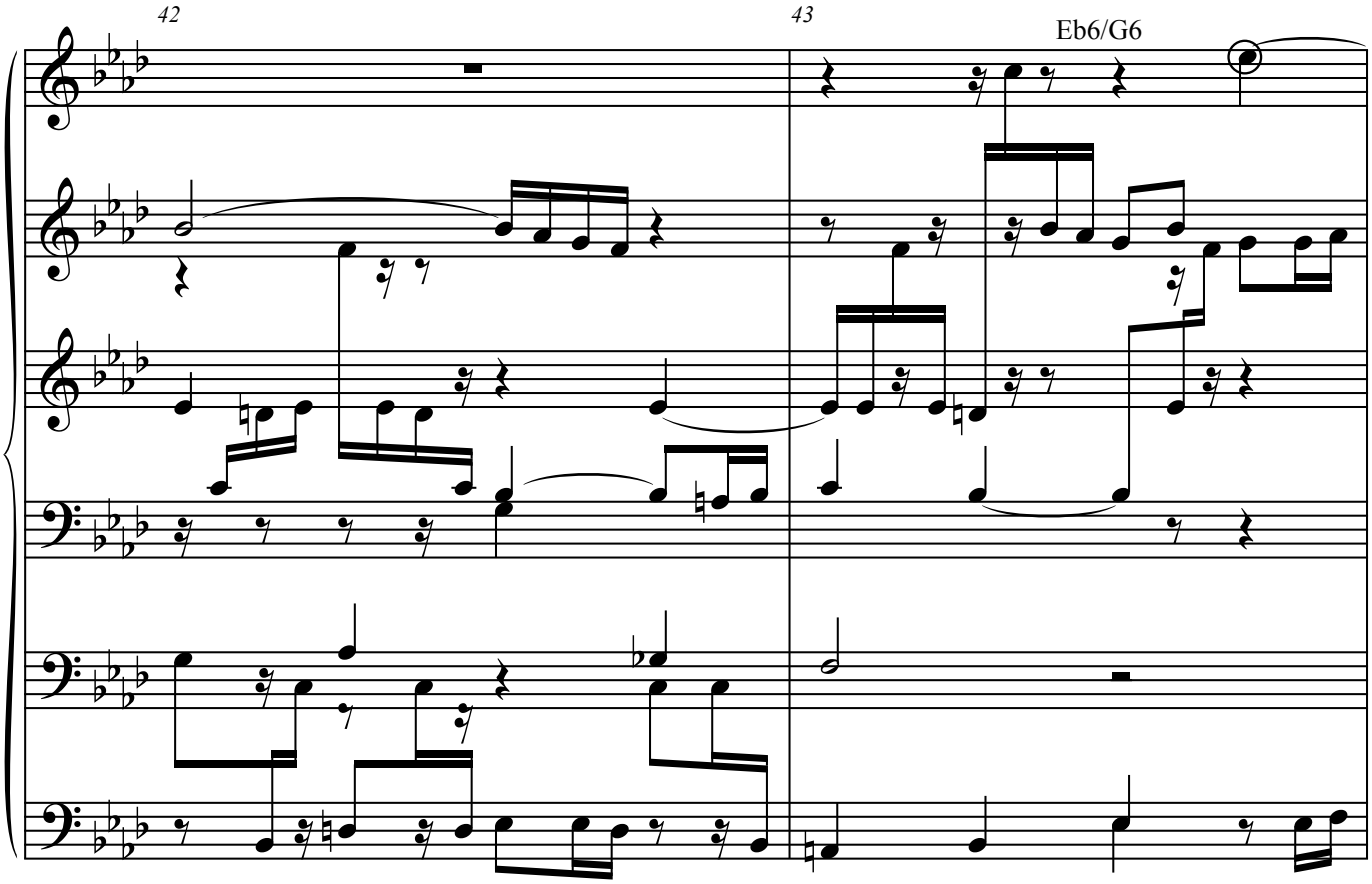

32
33
Bb5/G5 F5\Ab5

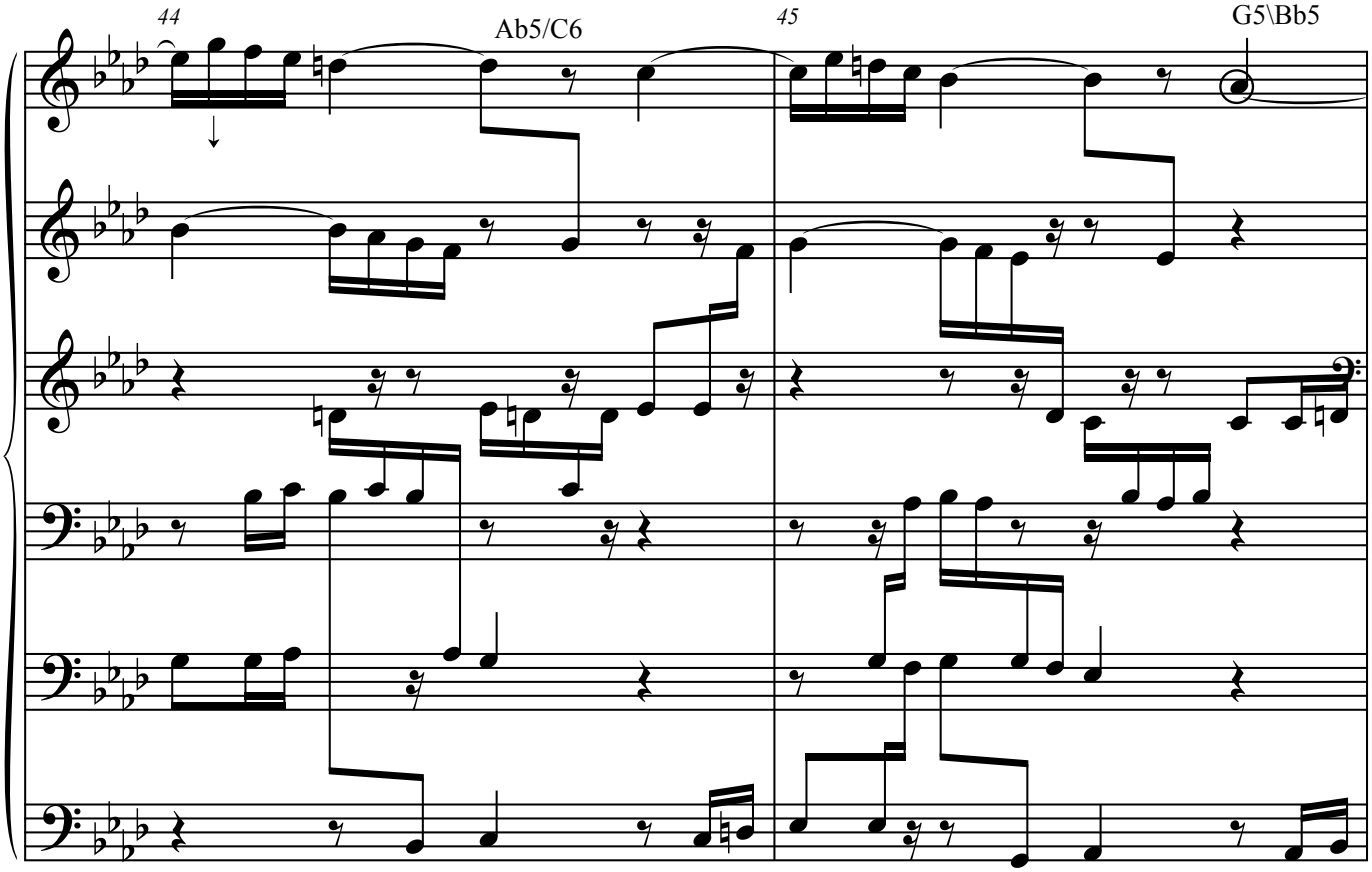

34
35
Eb6/G6 Ab6\F6

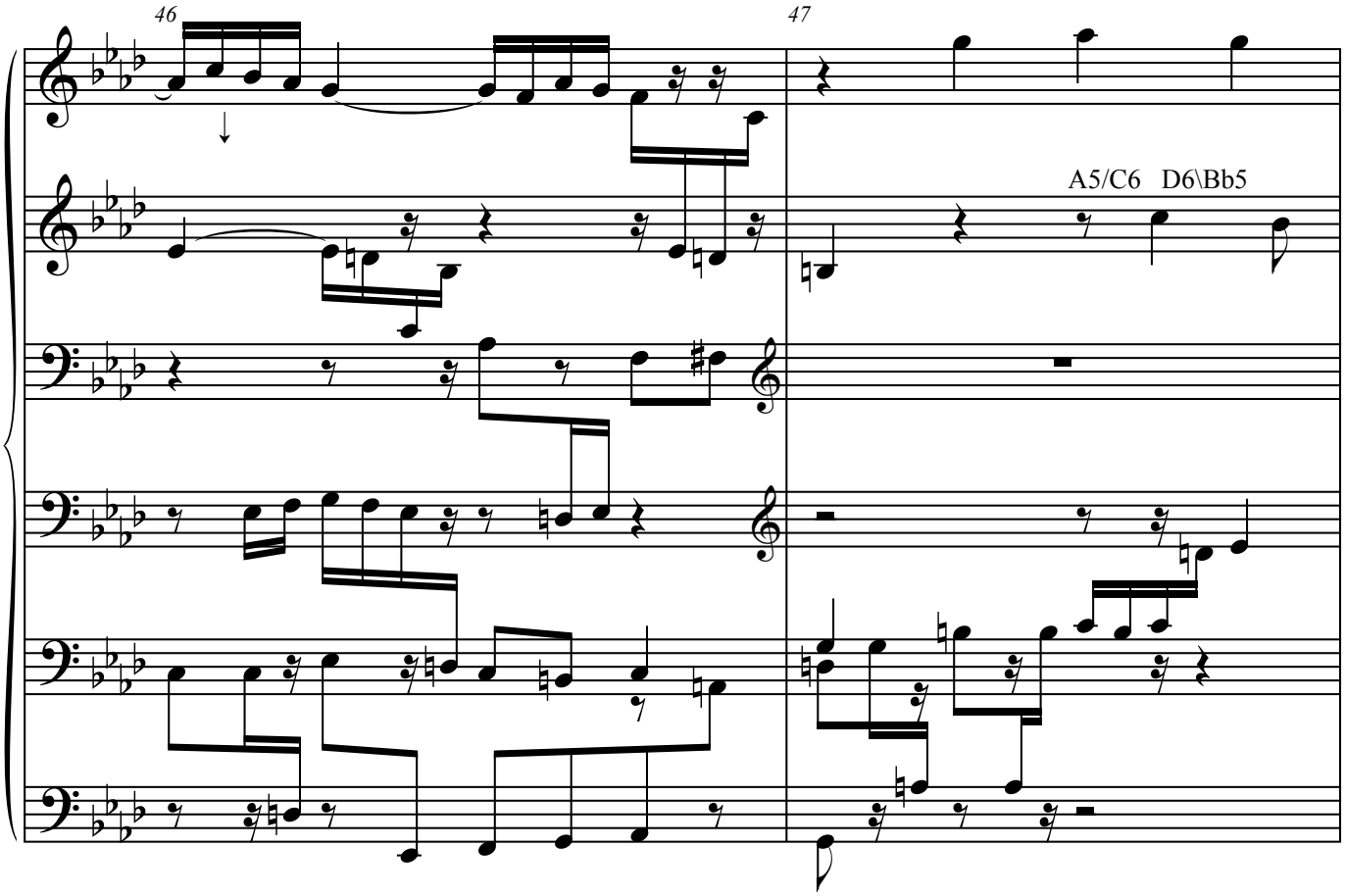

36
D6\F6
37

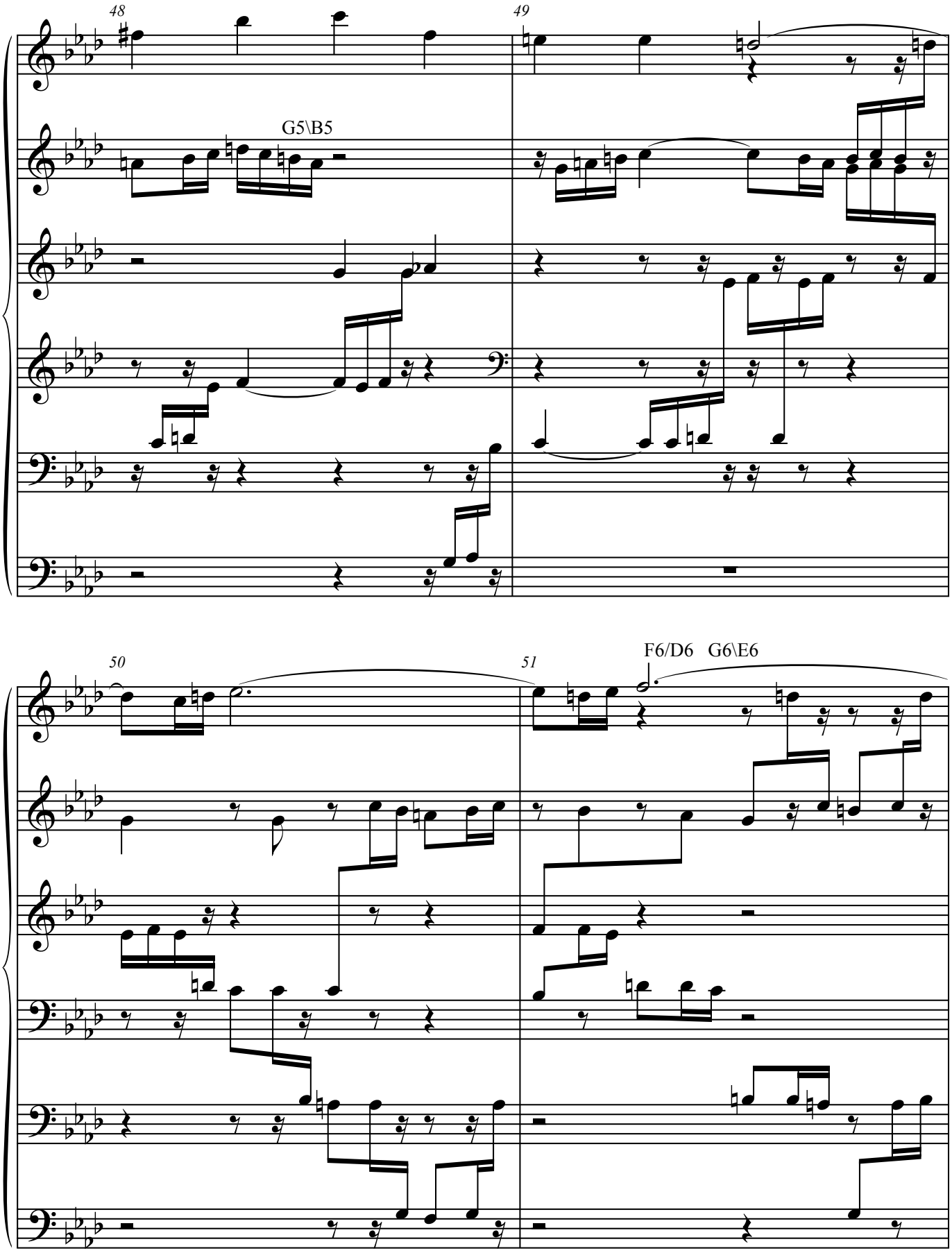

38
39
D6\F6

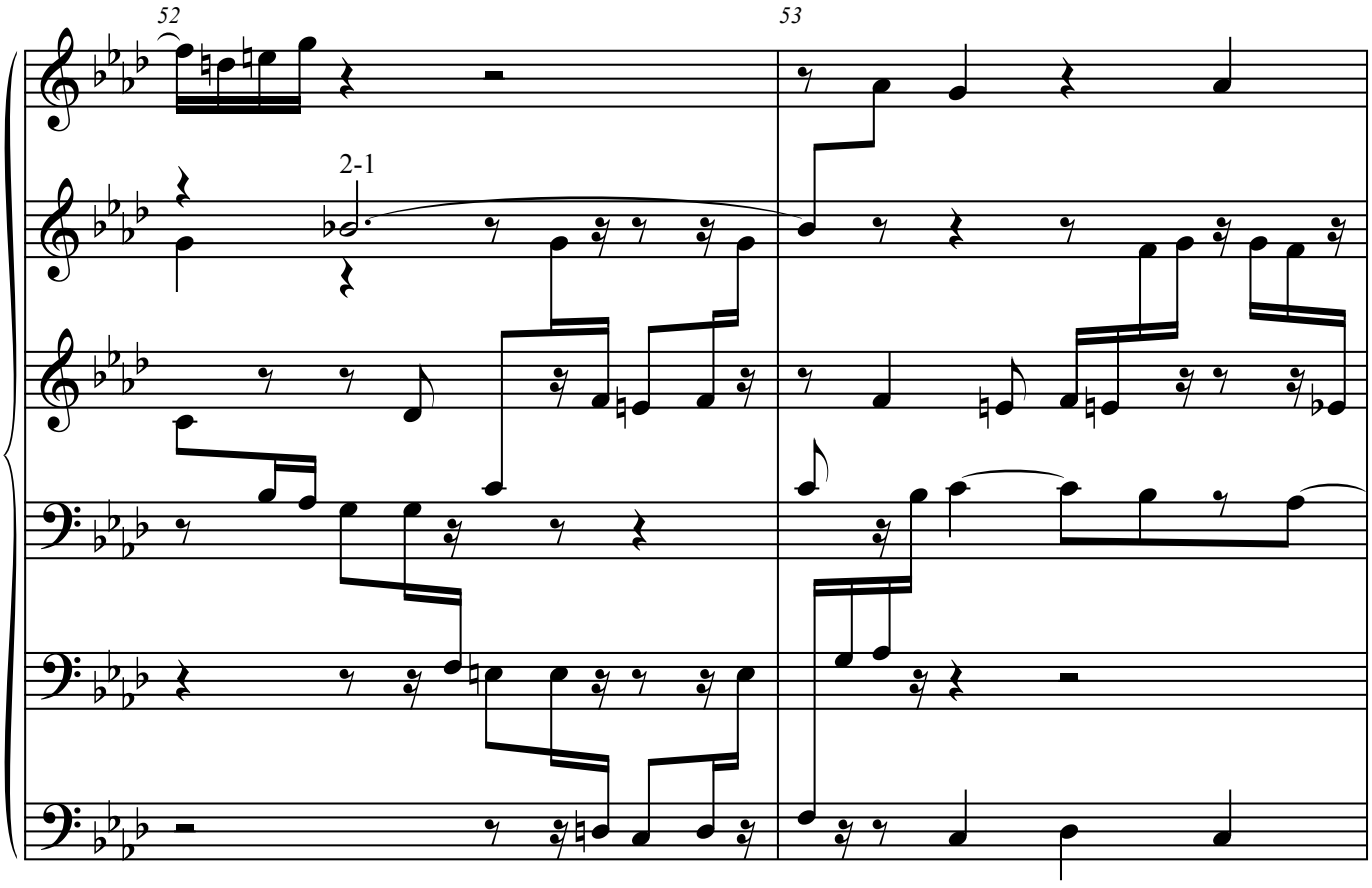

40
41

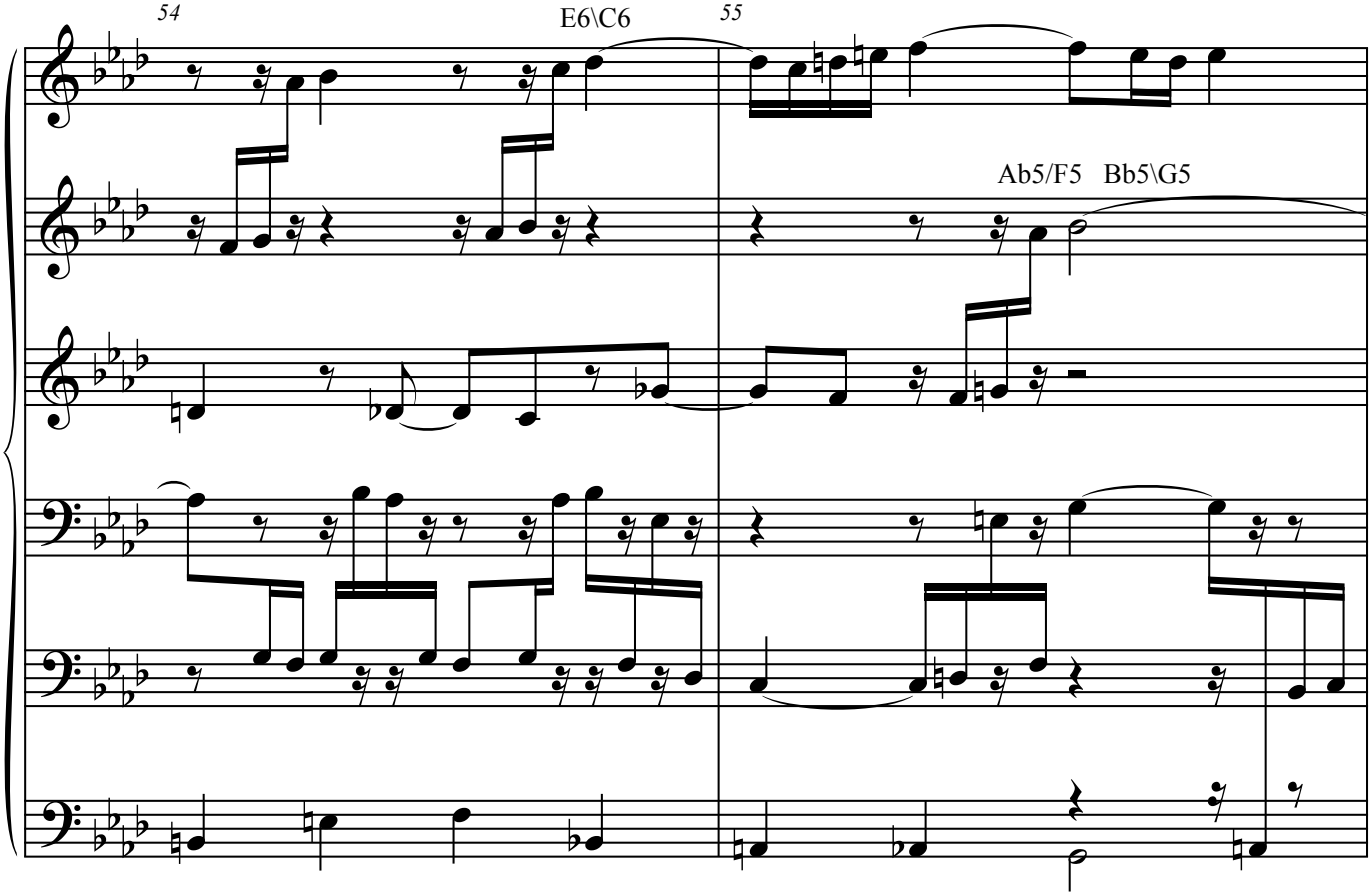

42
43
Eb6/G6

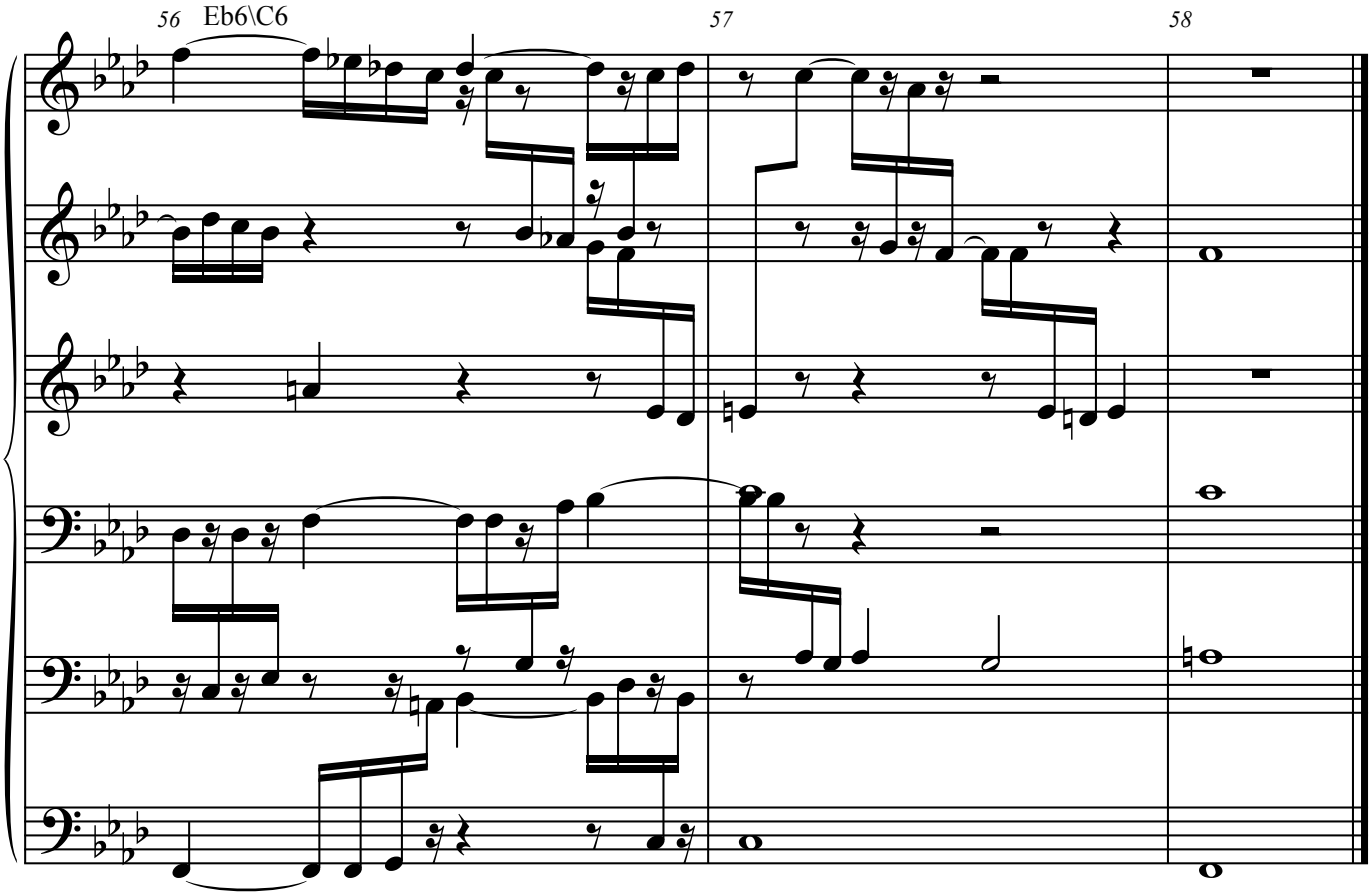

44
Ab5/C6
45
G5\Bb5


46
47
A5/C6
D6\Bb5


48
49
G5\B5
50
51
F6/D6 G6\E6


52
53
2-1


54
E6\C6
55
Ab5/F5
Bb5\G5


56
Eb6\C6
57
58