Prelude and Fugue No. 5 in D Major

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

Arranged for Handbell Quintet
by Larry Sue

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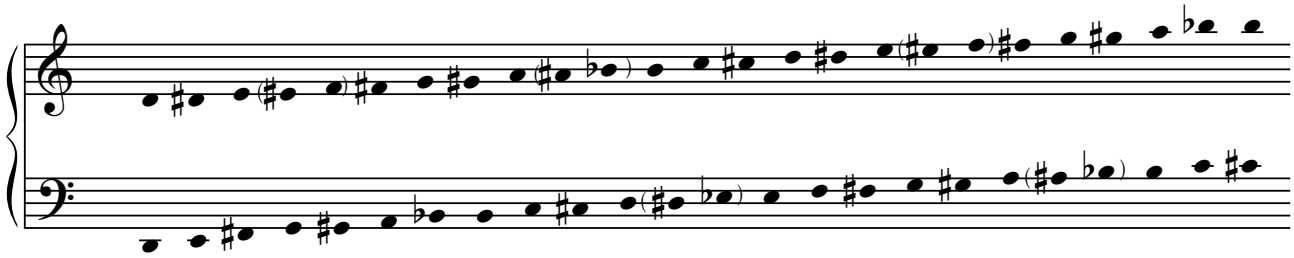
Performance Notes

5 Octaves
Handbells Used: 44



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. 5 is a lighthearted reminder of sunny spring days spent skipping across green meadows with wildflowers. It's written to be plucked almost all the way through, but the thirty-second notes in the cadenza measure will determine your performance tempo! Watch the dance between the bottom ringer and those playing the top four parts!

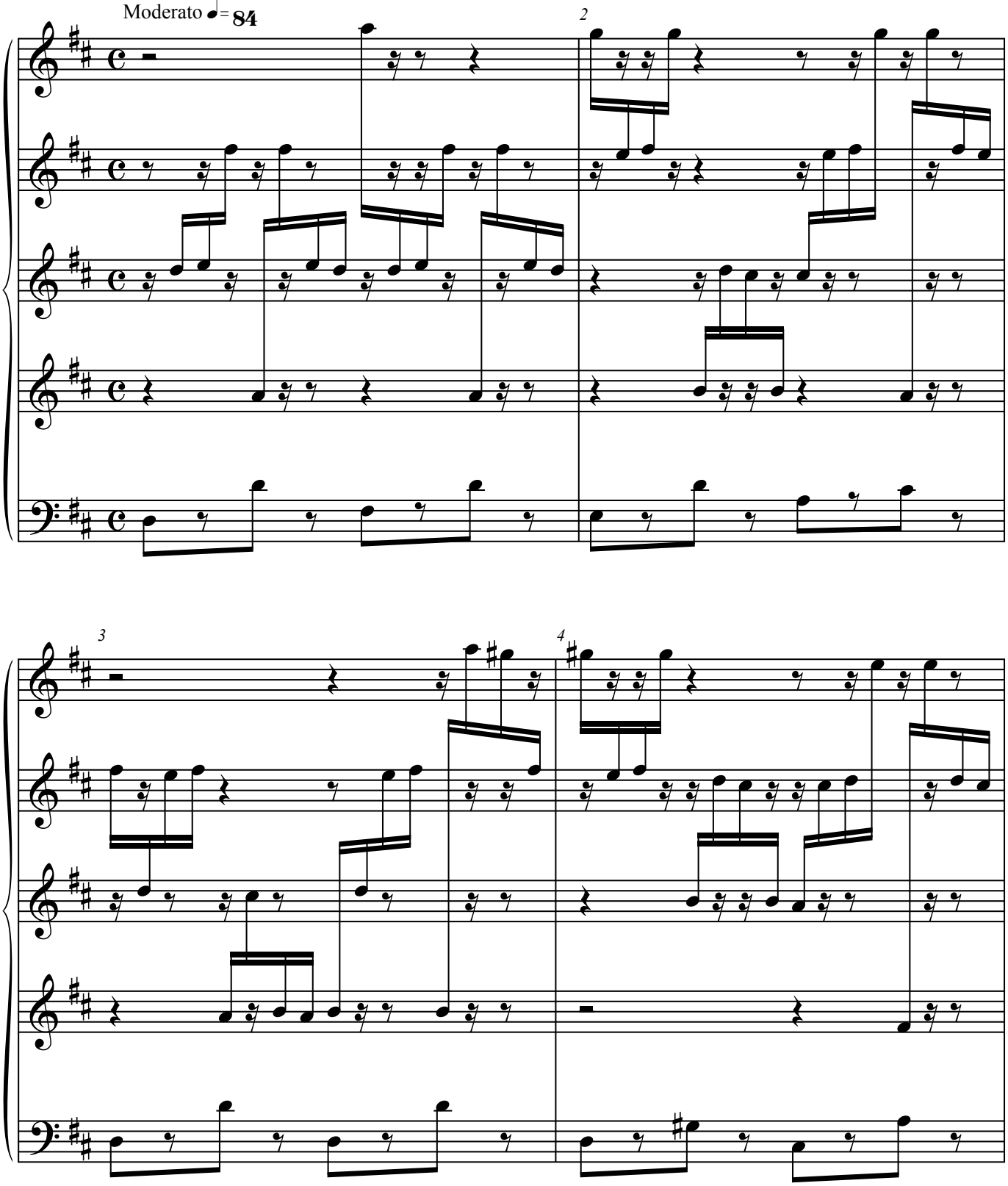
Fugue No. 5 has a serene motif with thirty-second note runs that generally are malletd. To achieve proper balance, experiment with mallets for the next range of bells down from written so that these runs are softened.

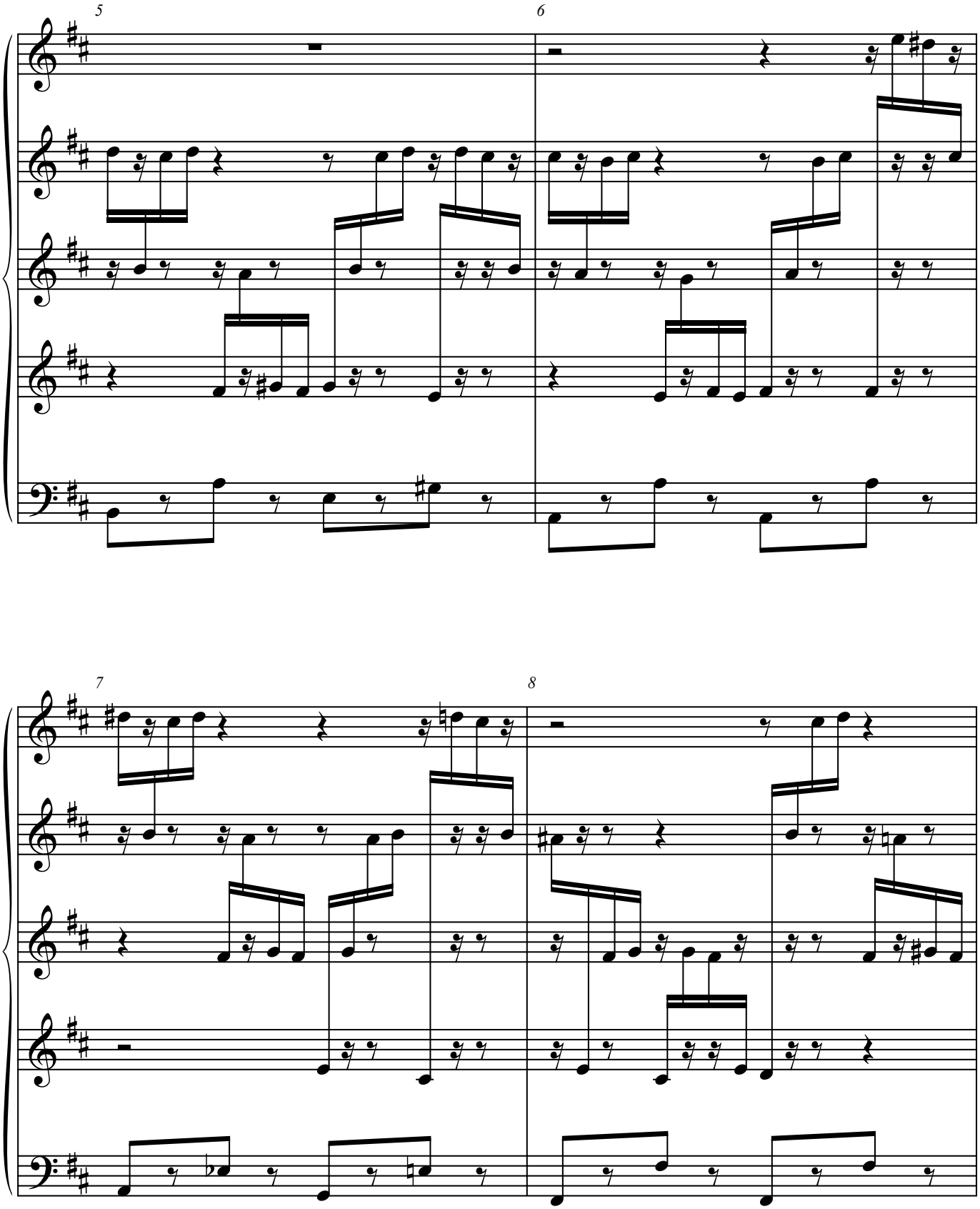
Have patience and persevere - at the end of the path lies a gorgeous performance!

Larry Sue

Prelude No. 5

Pluck all notes unless otherwise marked.

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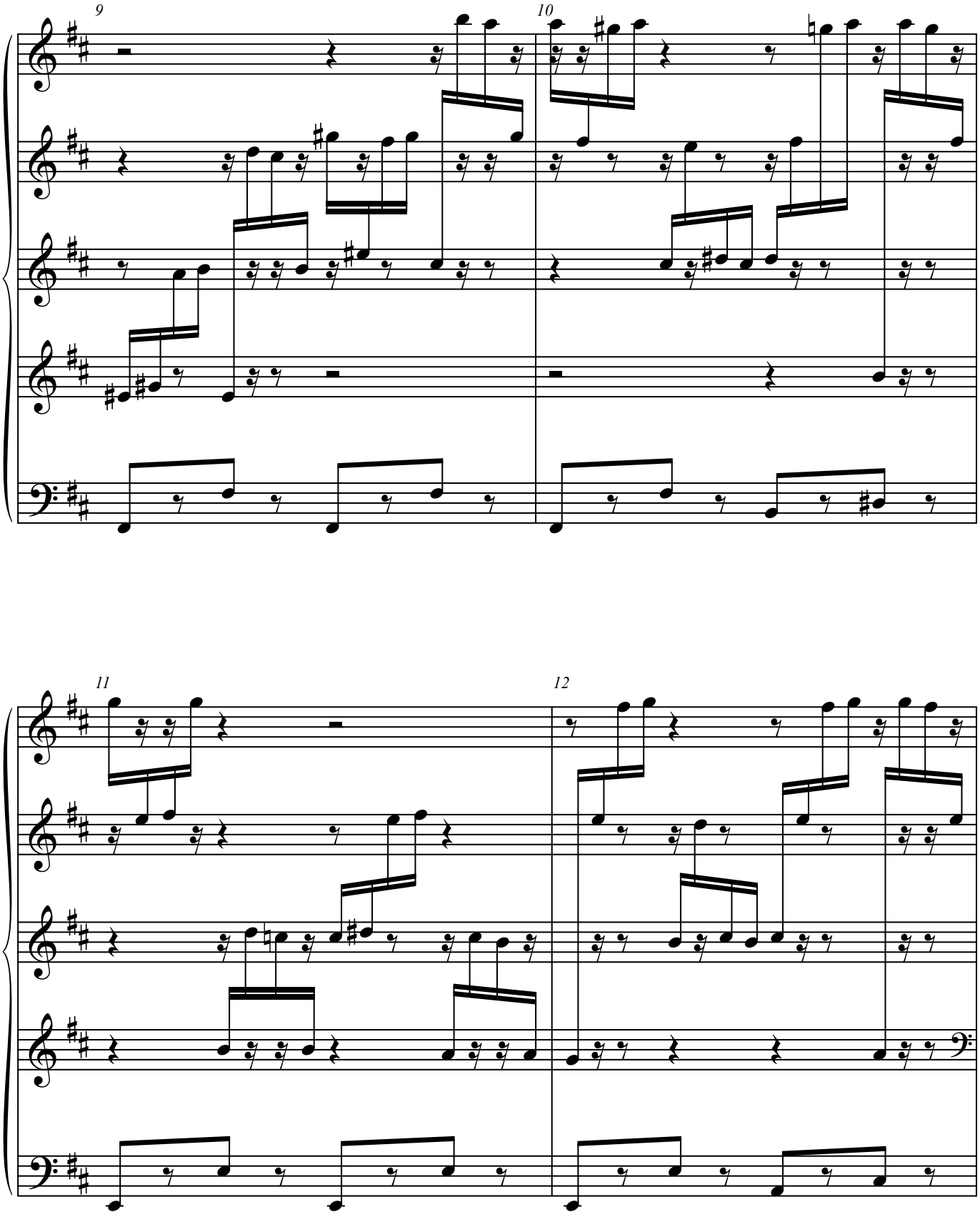
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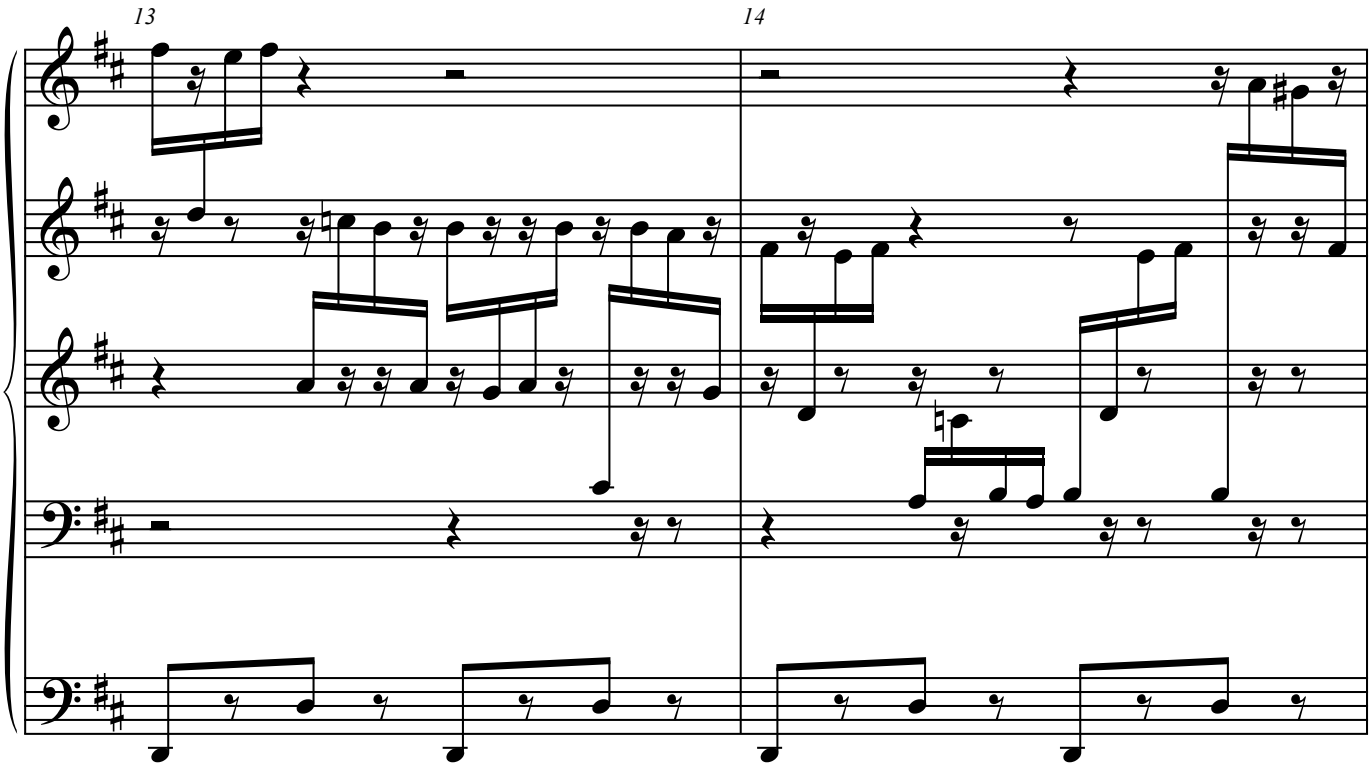
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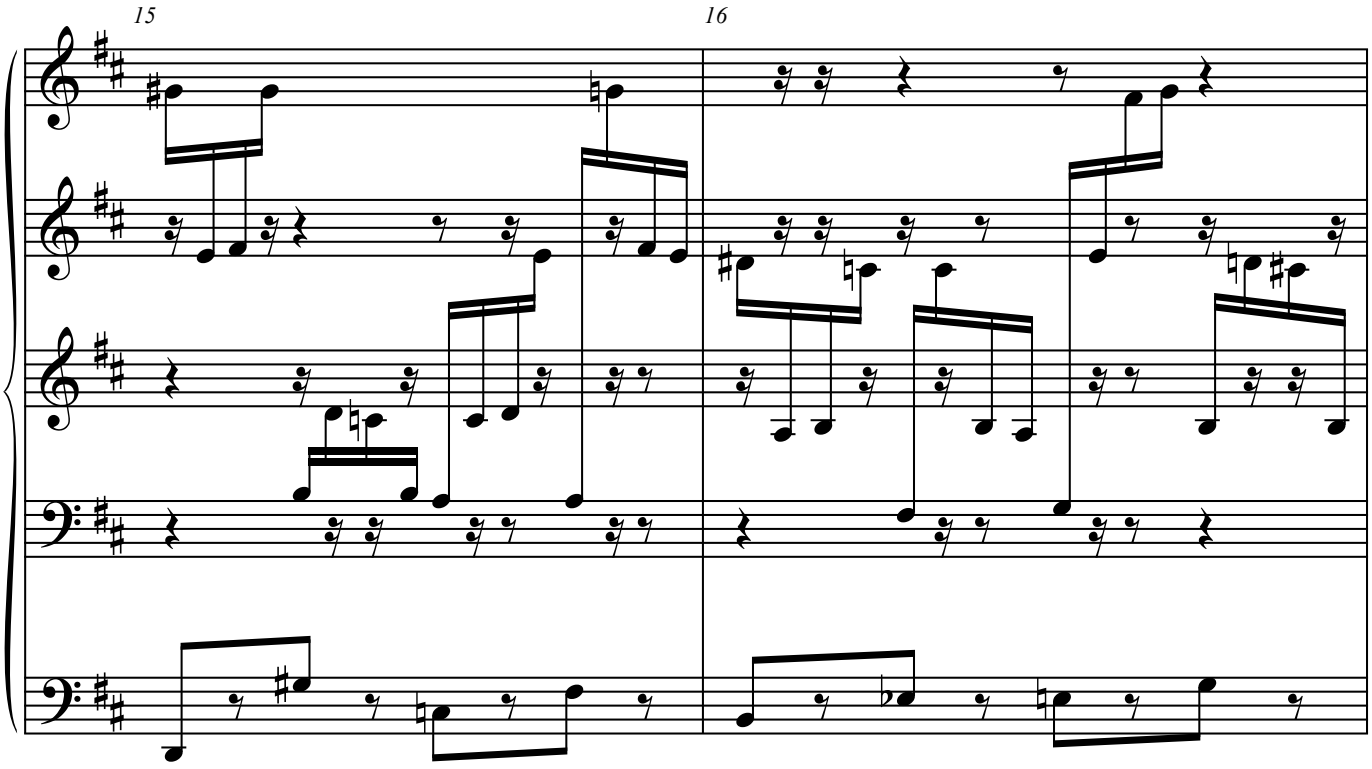
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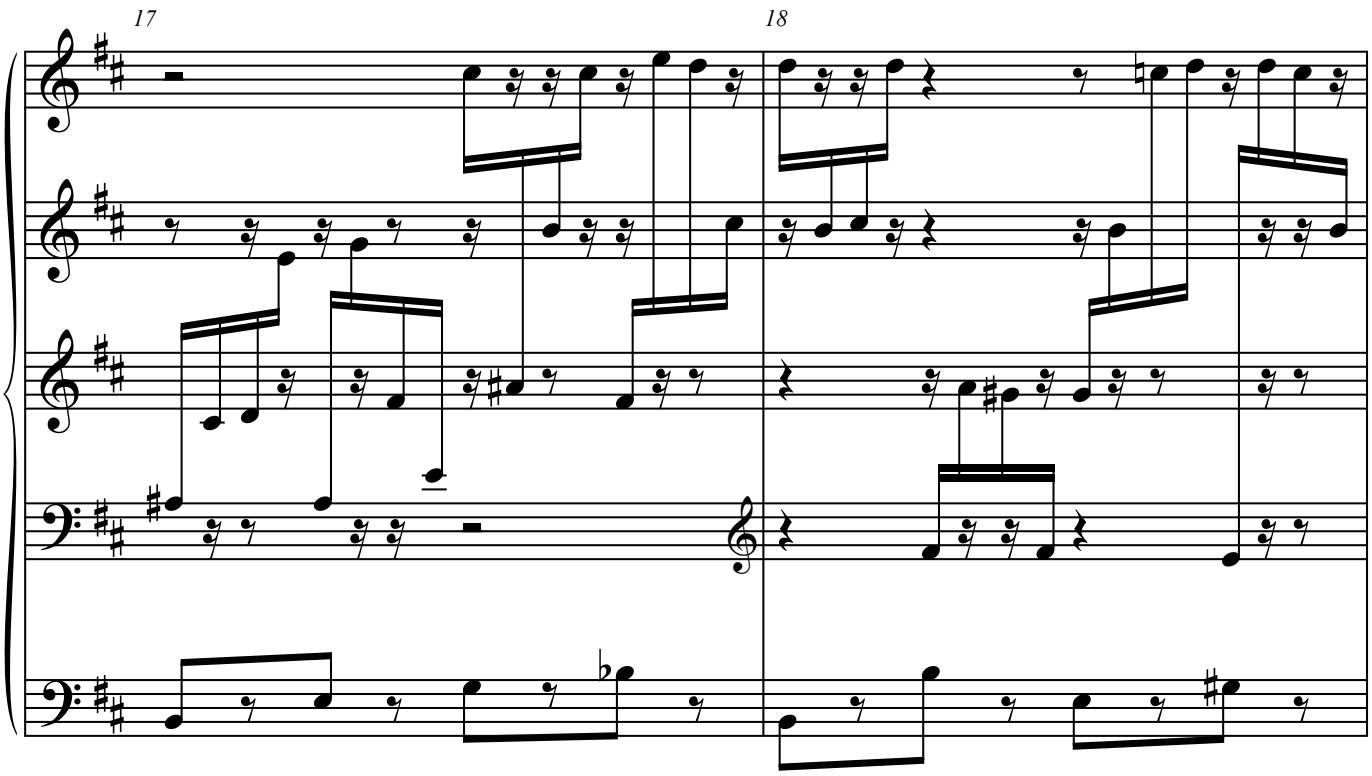
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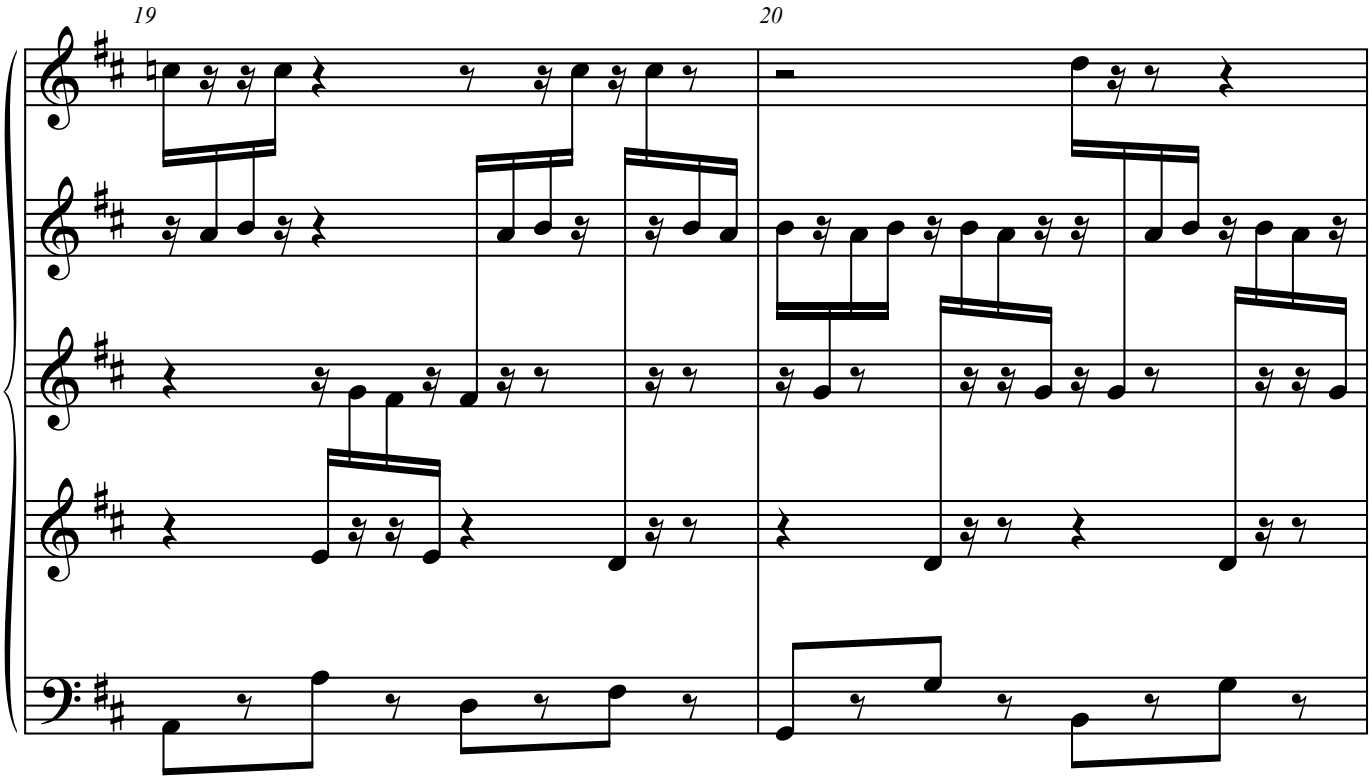
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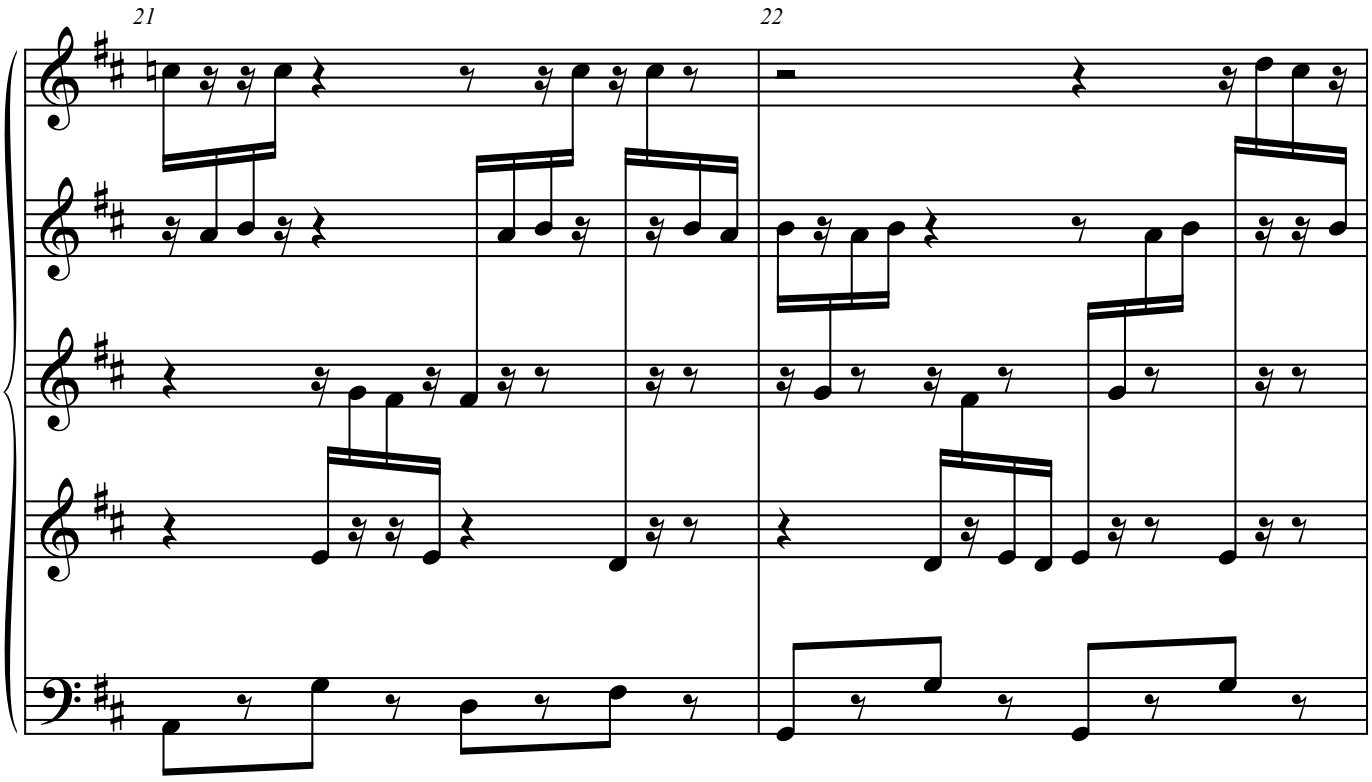
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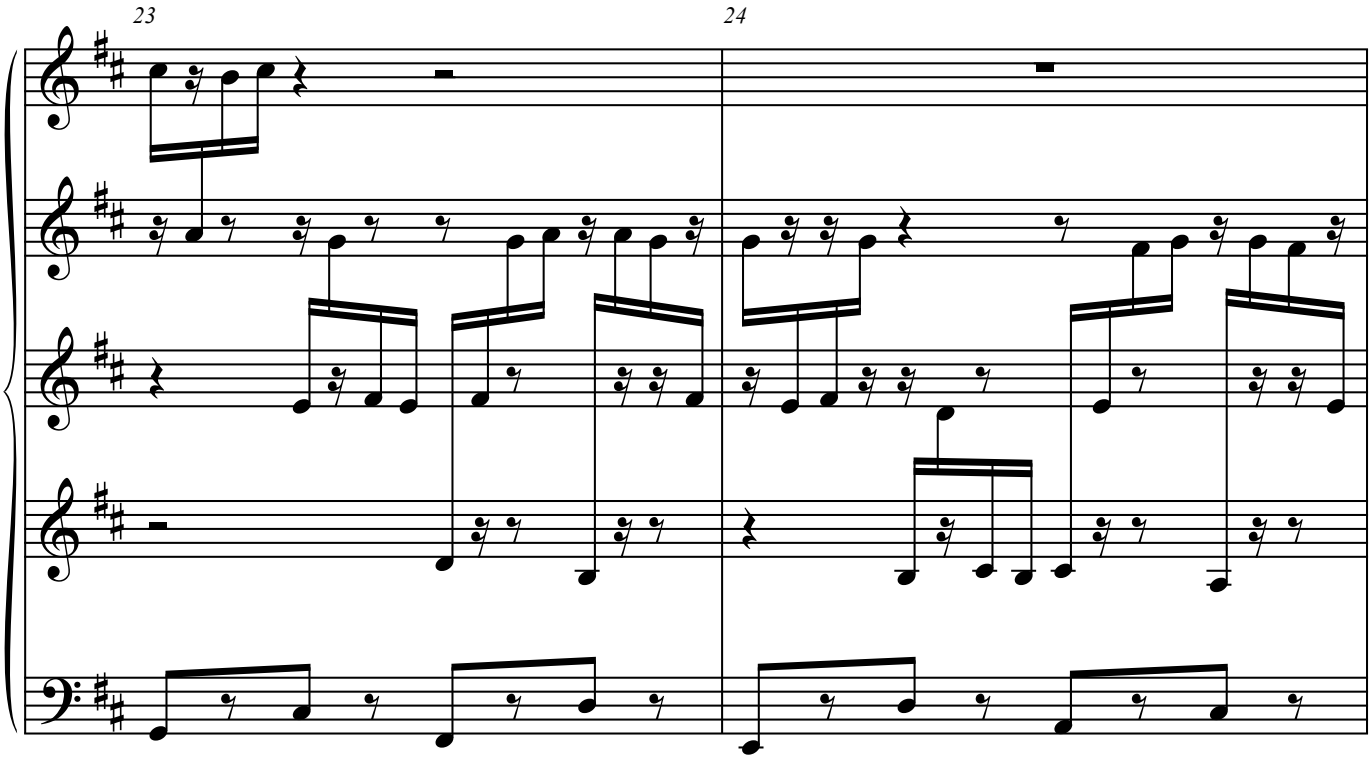
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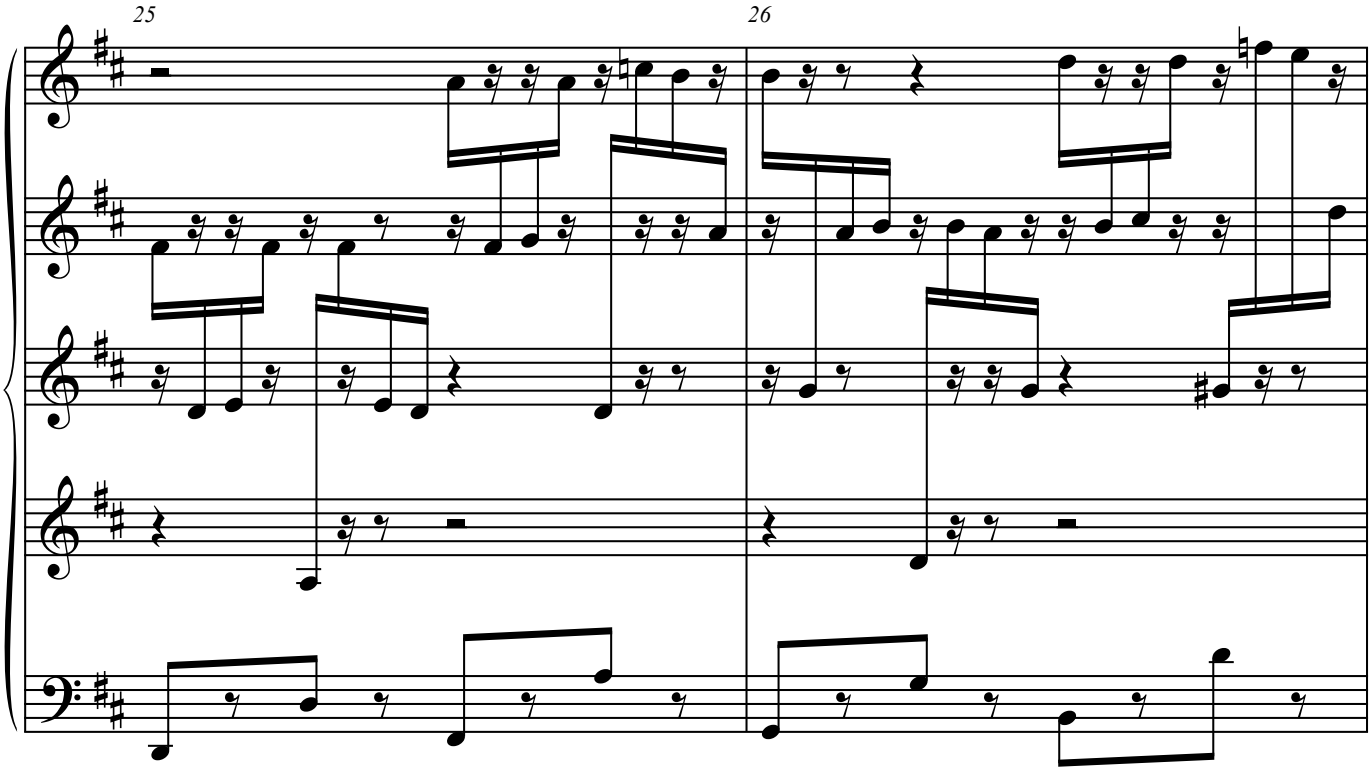
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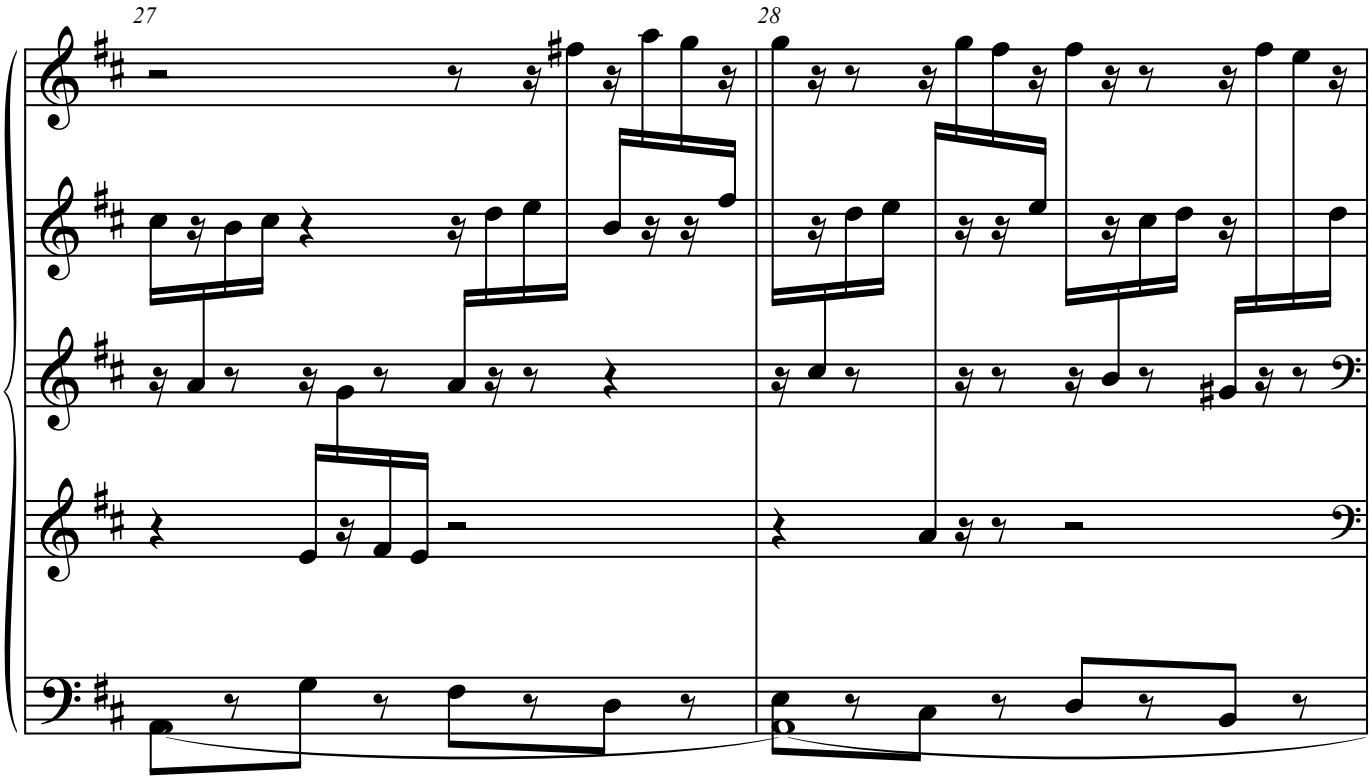
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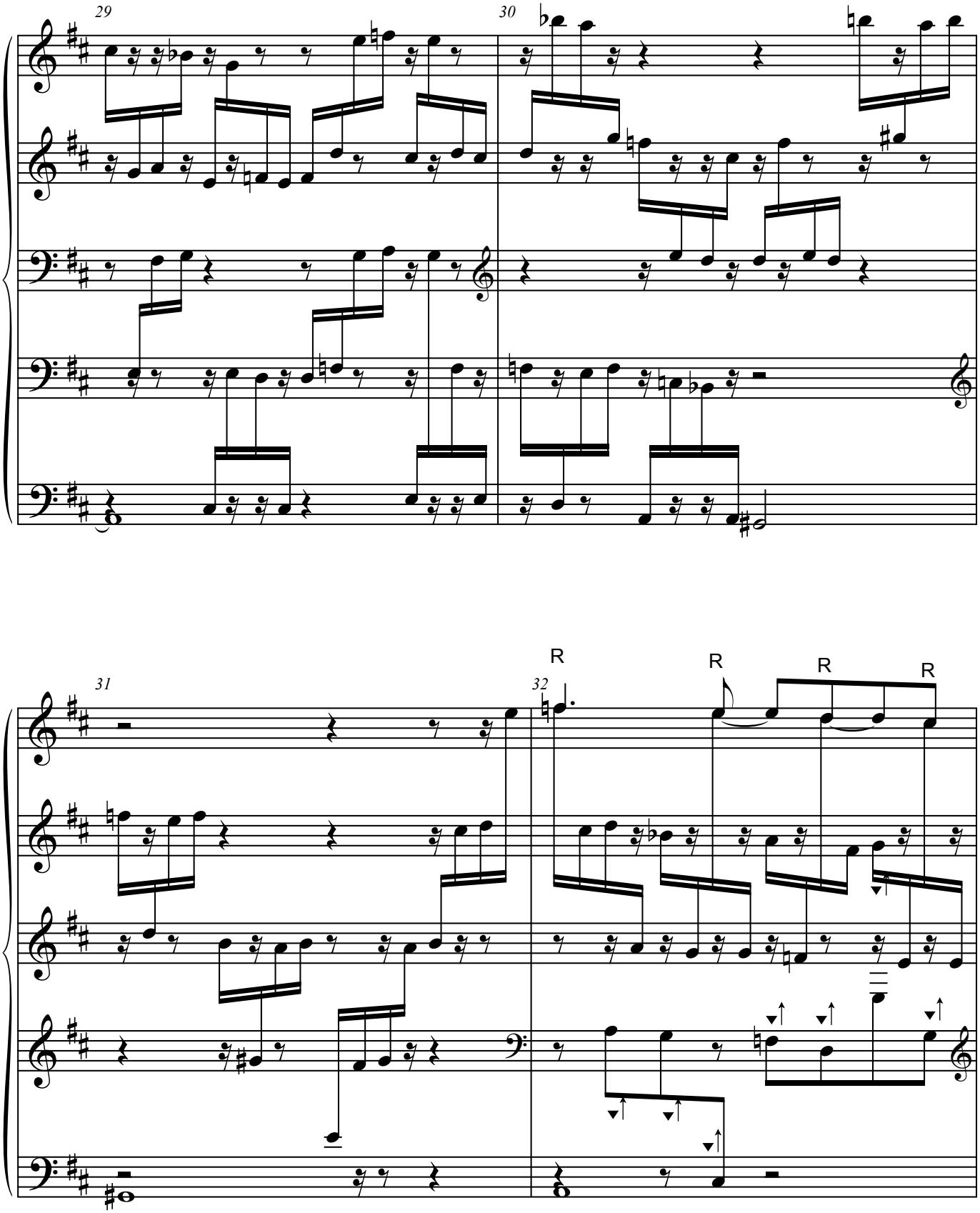
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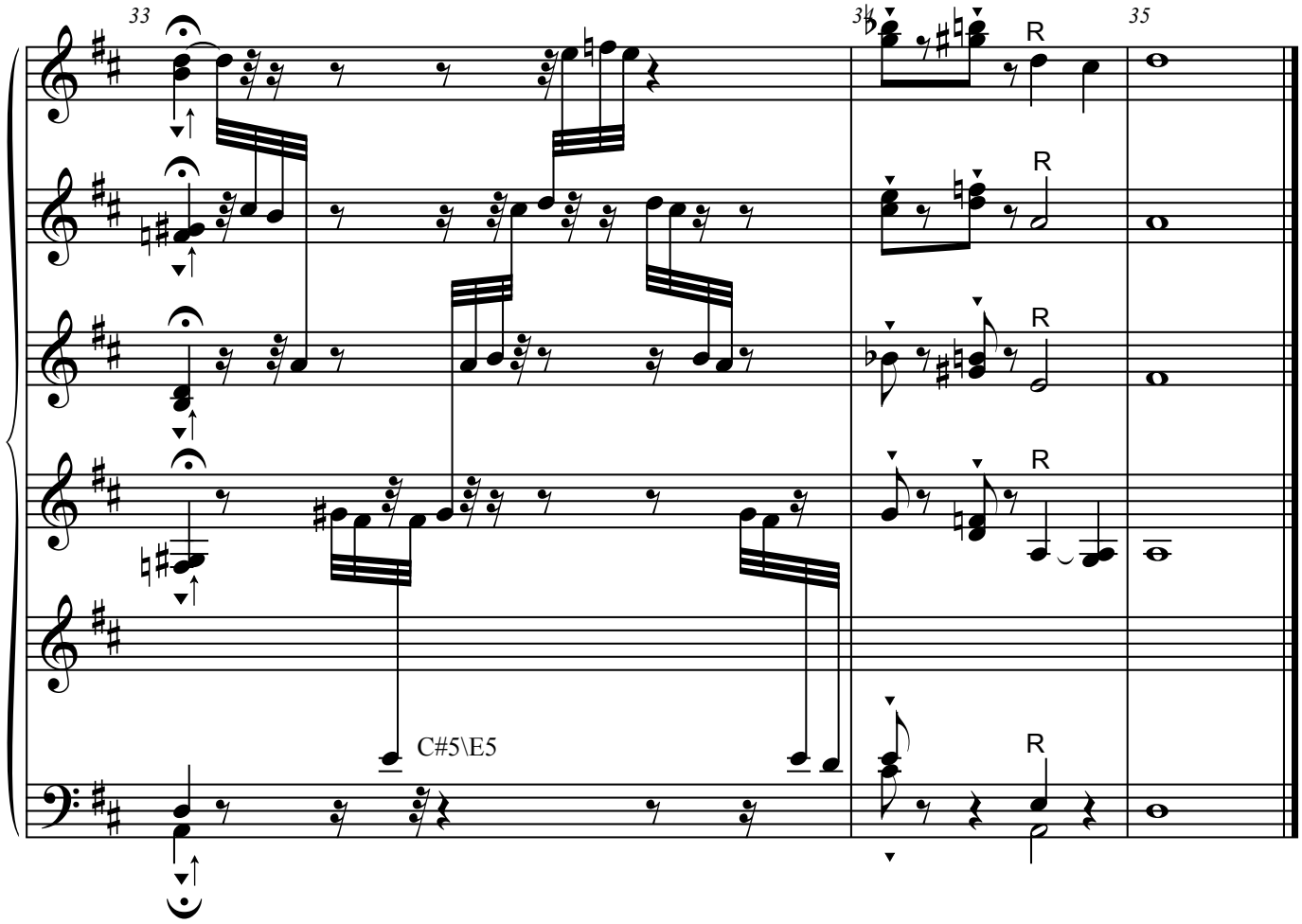
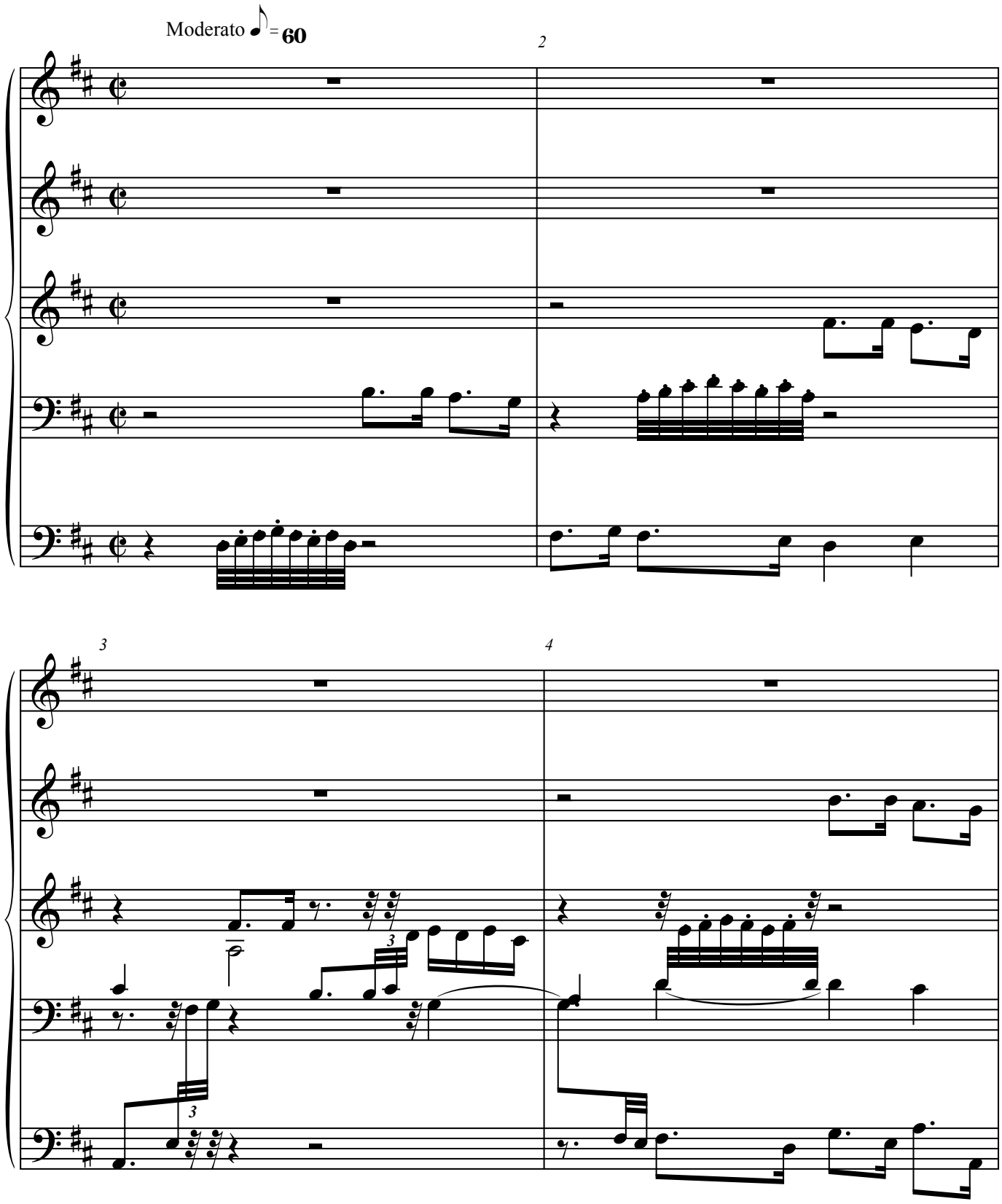
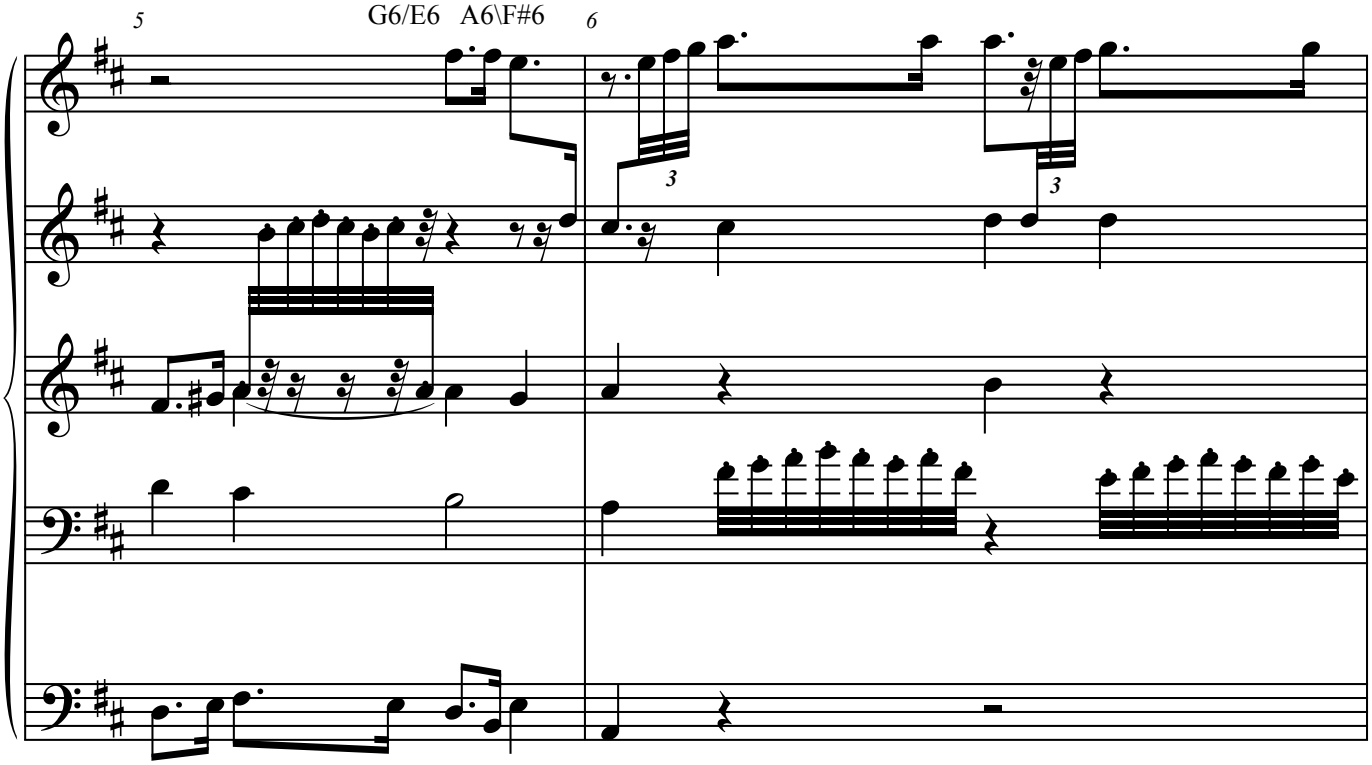
R
R
R
R


Ring m. 33
33
35
R
R
R
R
R
C#5\E5

Fugue No. 5

All staccato-marked notes are malleted, preferably with mallets for the next lower range;
all other notes are rung.

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G6/E6 A6\F#6
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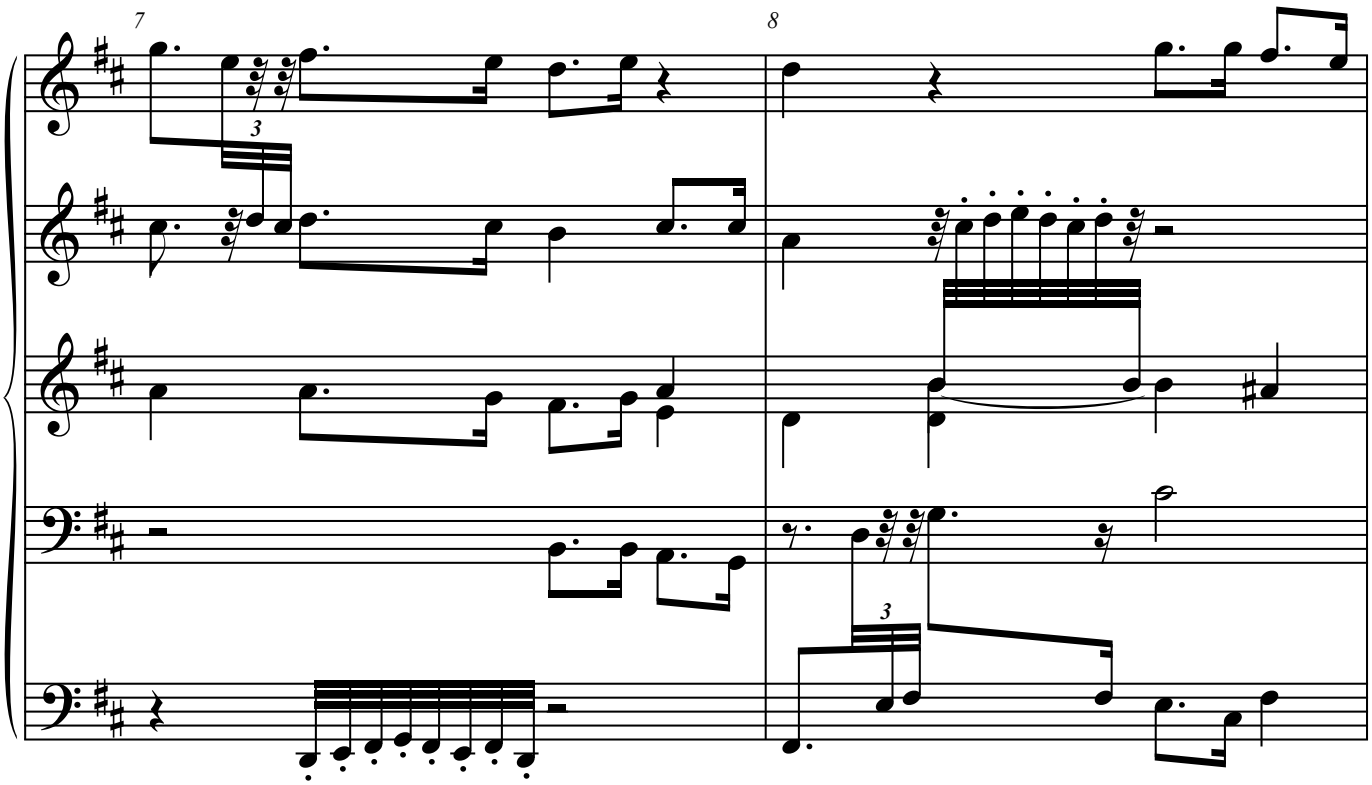
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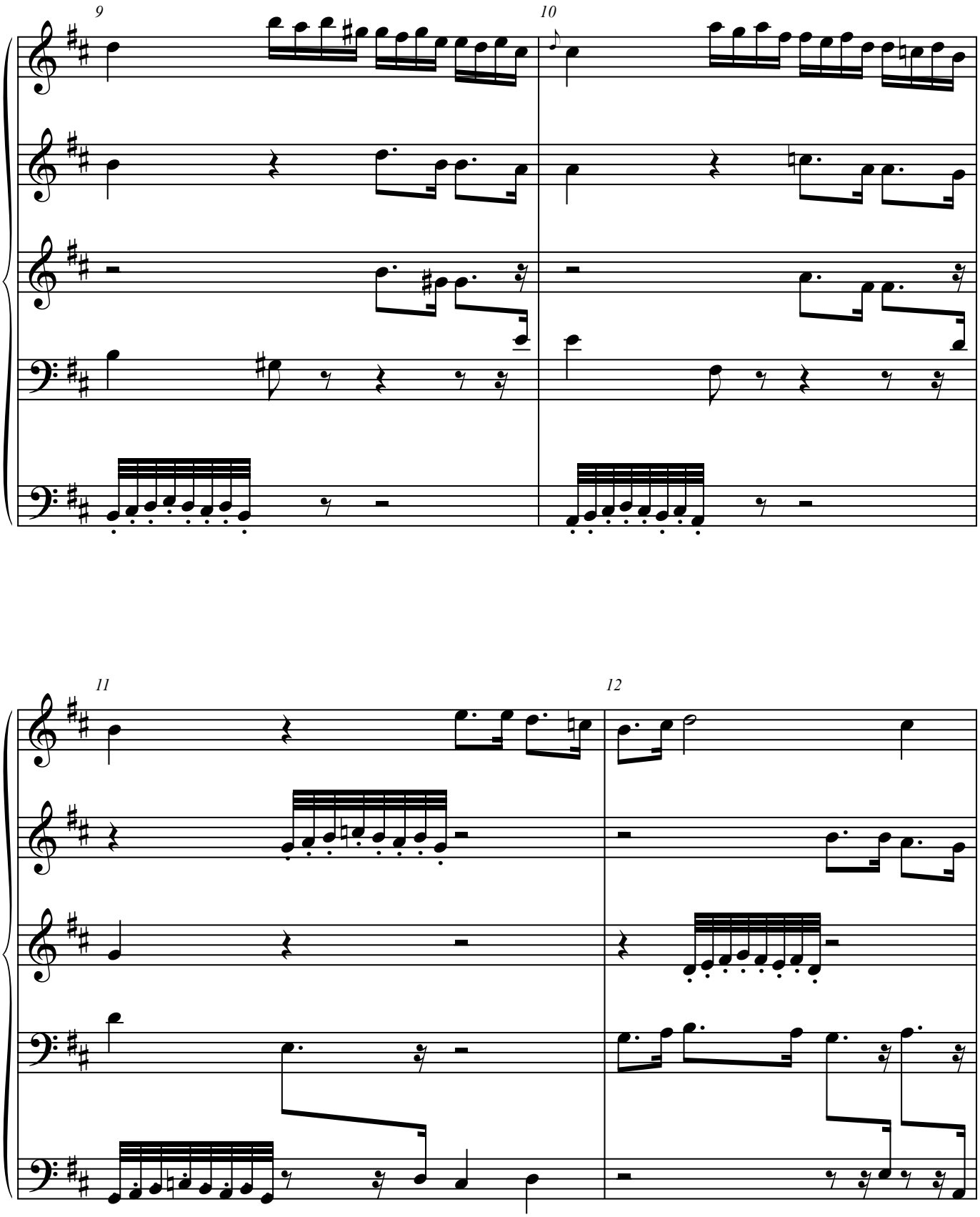
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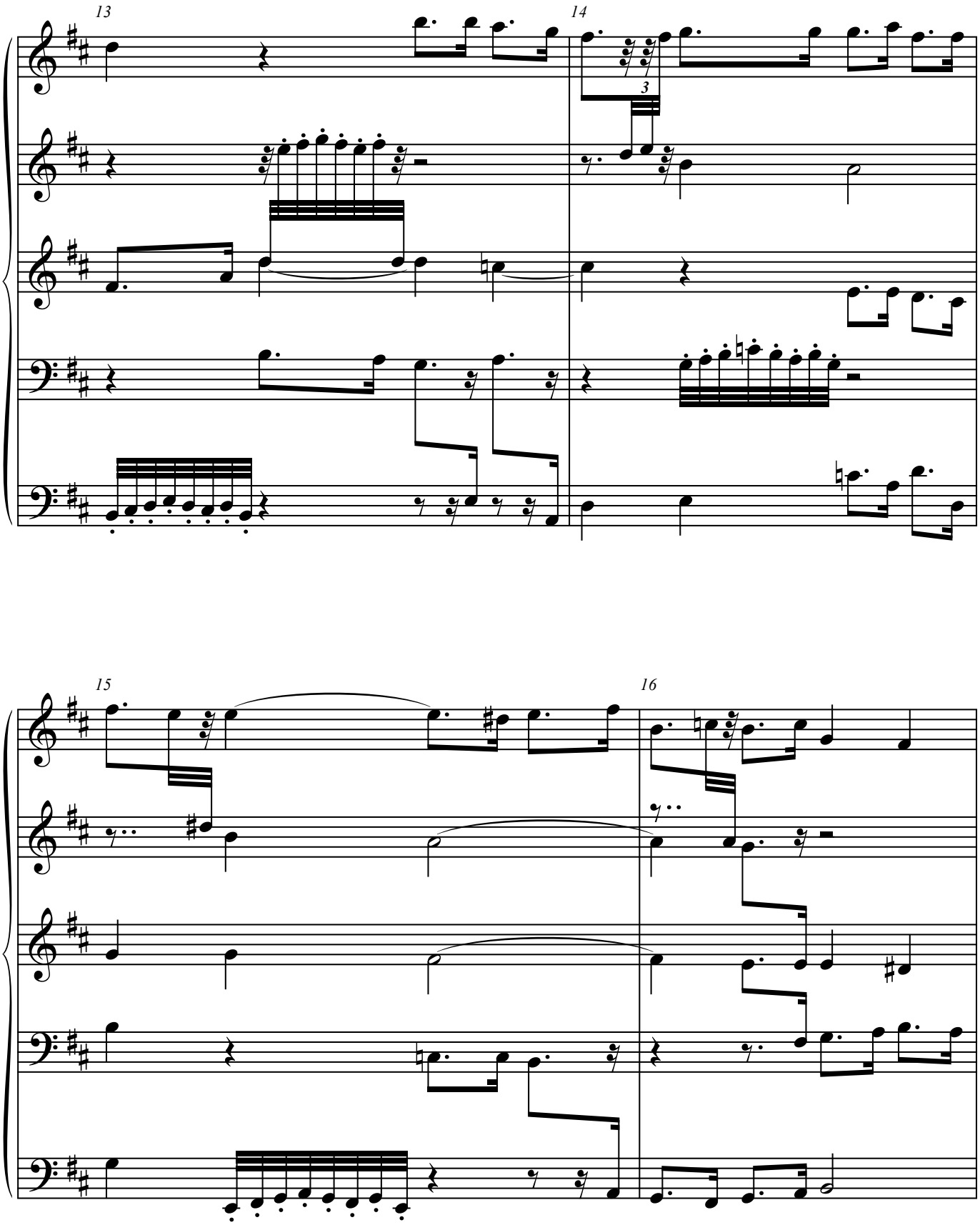
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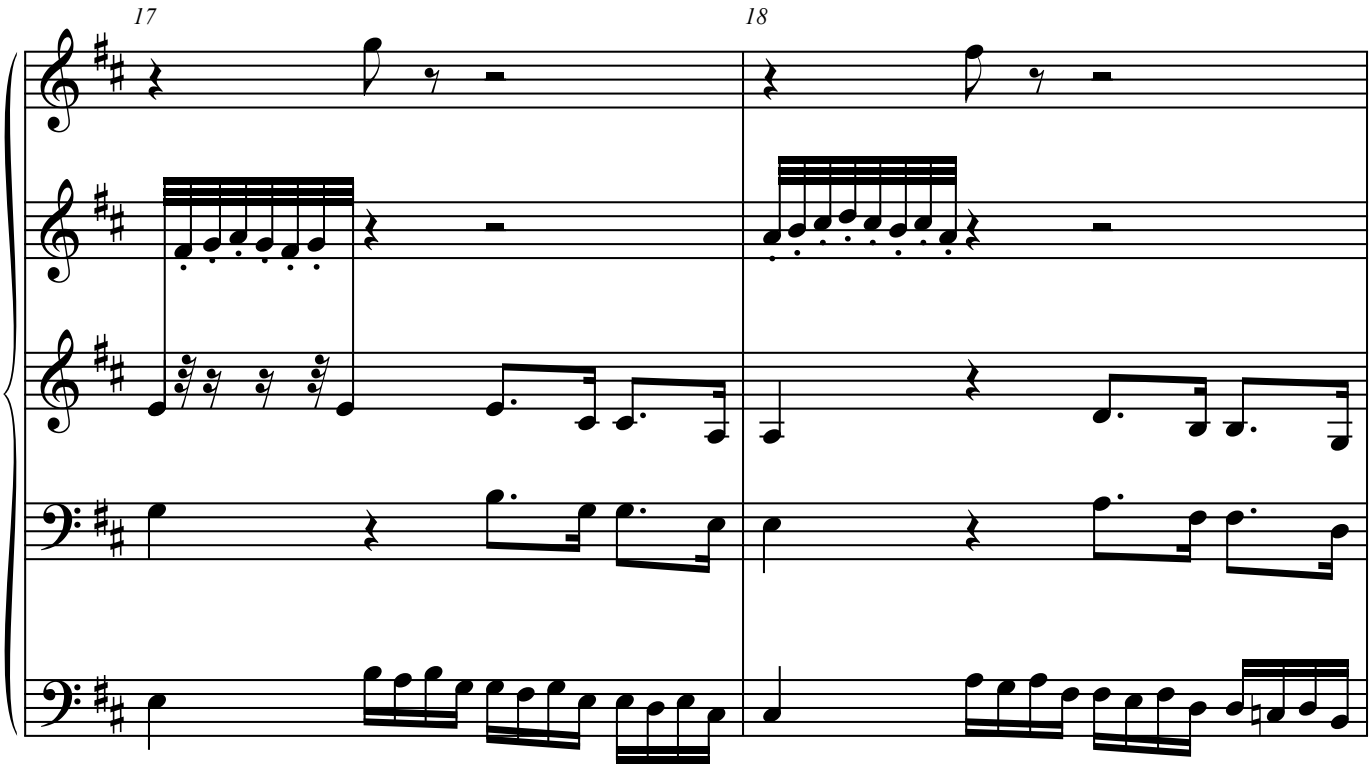
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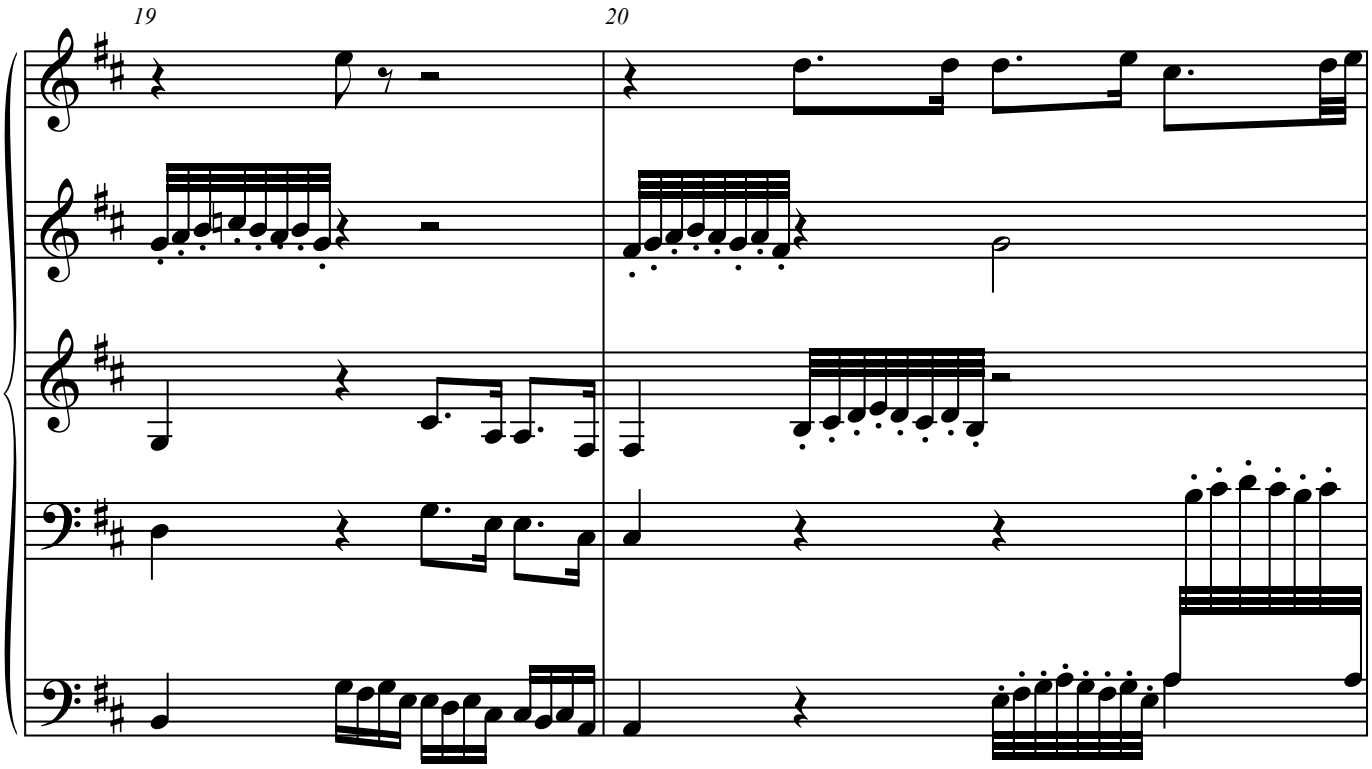
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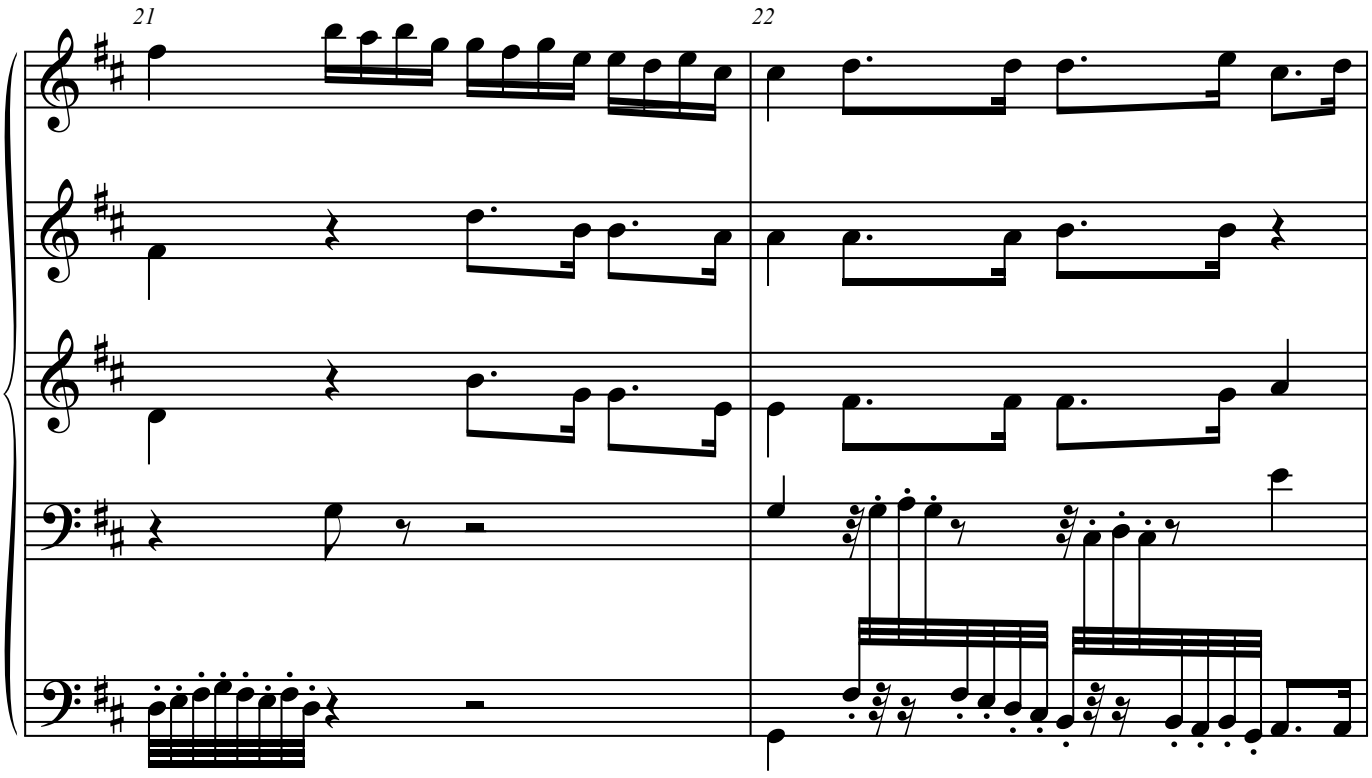
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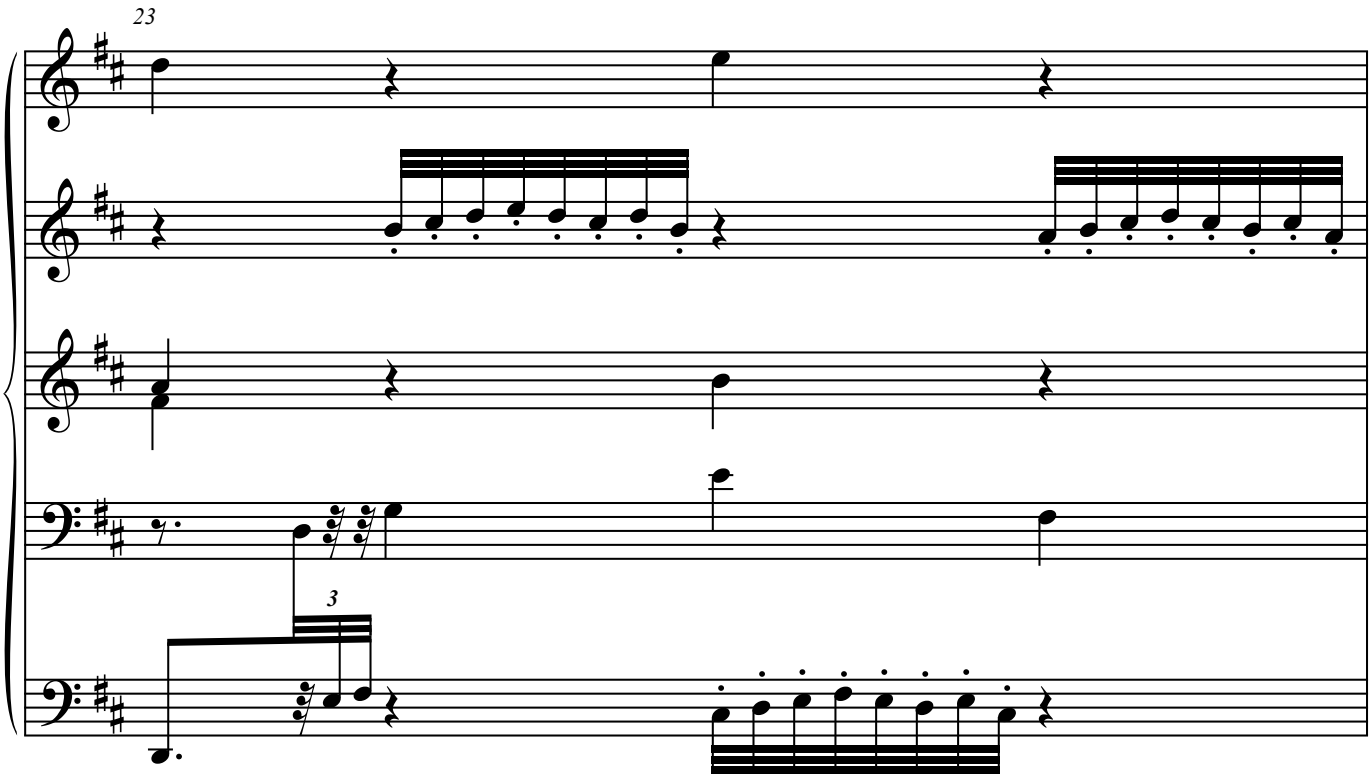
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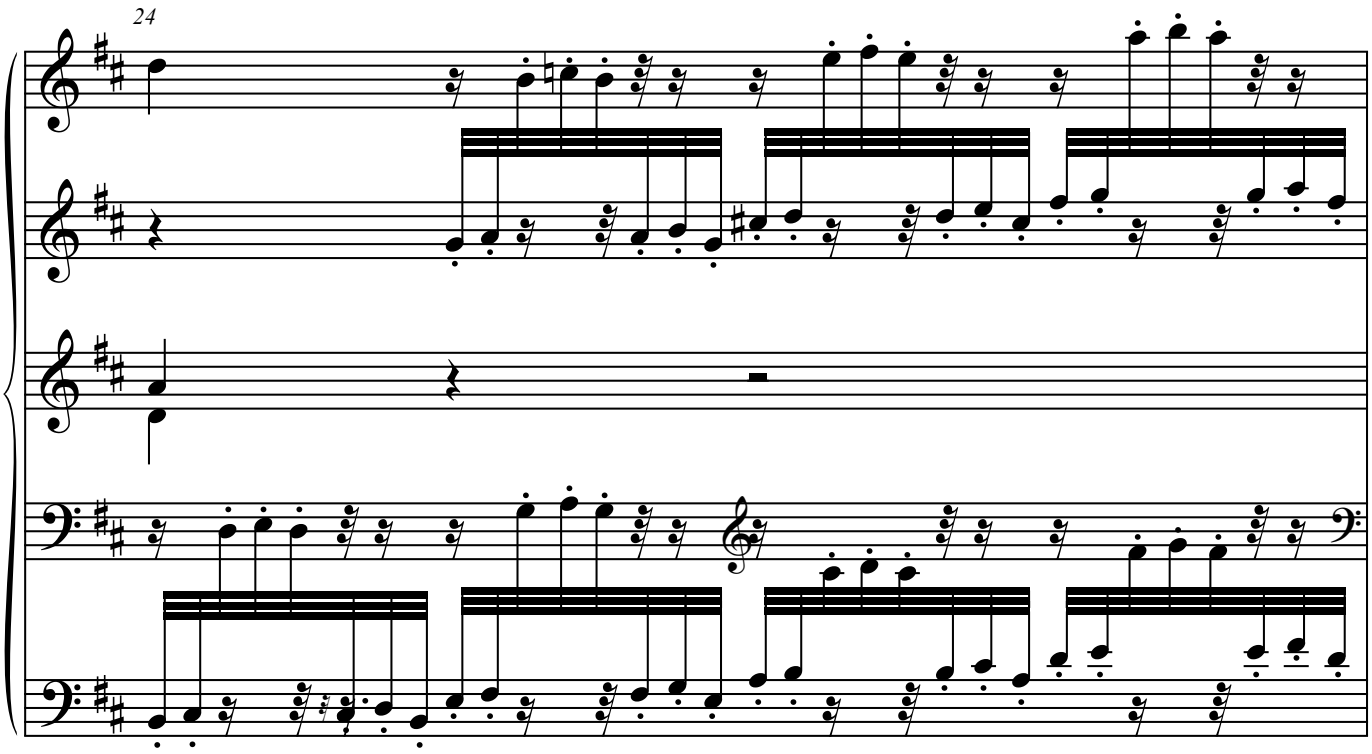
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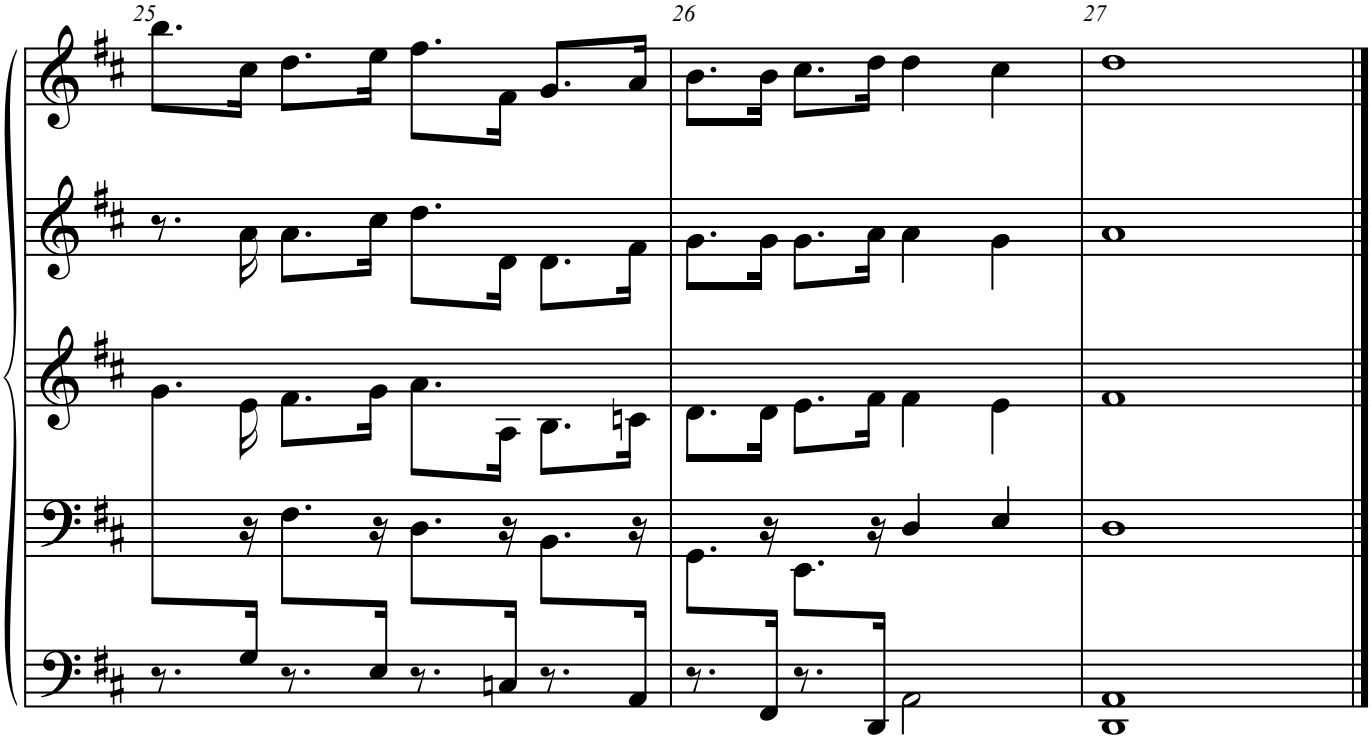
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