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A COMPLETE METHOD

for

THE MODERN ORGAN

Affording a thorough course of systematic training in the manual and pedal technique of the organ, in a series of specialized studies, partly composed for this work, and partly selected from the best organ literature extant

BY

H. E. PARKHURST

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Contents.

Page

INTRODUCTION . . . . . .

FIRST SECTION:

Pedal Studies 1

SECOND SECTION:

Manual Exercises 18

Sixteen Etudes in two, three, and four part harmony . . 24

THIRD SECTION:

Ten Bagatelles for one hand and pedals. 39

FOURTH SECTION:

Fifteen Trios for two manuals and pedals:

1. Prelude . . . . . *H. E. P.* 51
2. Meditation . . . . . *H. E. P.* 53
3. Impromptu . . . . . *H. E. P.* 56
4. Pastorale . . . . . *Bach.* 58
5. Grazioso . . . . . *H. E. P.* 61
6. Vorspiel . . . . . *H. E. P.* 63
7. Menuet . . . . . *H. E. P.* 66
8. Gavotte . . . . . *H. E. P.* 68
9. Abschied . . . . . *H. E. P.* 72
10. Remembrance . . . . . *H. E. P.* 76
11. Regret . . . . . *Rheinberger.* 80
12. Cantilène. . . . . *H. E. P.* 83
13. Andantino . . . . . *Mendelssohn.* 86
14. Idyl . . . . . *H. E. P.* 90
15. Intermezzo . . . . . *H. E. P.* 94

FIFTH SECTION: Page

Thirty short studies in all the major and minor keys . . 97

SIXTH SECTION:

Eighteen advanced studies selected from the works of representative composers:

Prelude . . . . . *Rinck.* 160

"Grave" and "Adagio" from Second Organ Sonata *Mendelssohn.* 166

Gavotte . . . . . *arr. from Gluck.* 170

Swedish Wedding March . . . . . *Söderman.* 172

Andante. . . . . *Silas.* 176

Grand Choeur . . . . . *Salomé.* 182

Nocturne . . . . . *Chopin.* 186

Prelude . . . . . *Rinck.* 190

Prelude . . . . . *J. Lemmens.* 195

Gavotte . . . . . *arr. from Gluck.* 198

Aria from Orchestral Suite in D. . . . . *Bach.* 202

Postlude. . . . . *Rinck.* 204

Finale from Fourth Organ Sonata . . *Mendelssohn.* 208

Fanfare. . . . . *J. Lemmens.* 214

Fantasia (first two movements) . . . . *Merkel.* 220

Praeludium. . . . . *Bach.* 225

Triumphal March. . . . . *J. Lemmens.* 232

Andante and Allegro from Second Organ Sonata. *Händel.* 238

DEFINITION OF MUSICAL TERMS 252

Introduction.

A work, of the dimensions indicated in the title of this volume, naturally falls into three parts. The first requirement in an organist's career, in whatever direction, is an adequate technique in manual and pedal. Manual technique is far less exacting in the organ than in the piano; but is largely off-set by the difficulties presented by the organ's two distinctive features – the pedals and the stops – of which, from a mechanical point of view, the former are the more difficult.

The chief aim of this first part of the entire work is to afford such a mastery of the instrument, on its more mechanical side, as will be an ample preparation for success on the higher and more artistic plane of organ interpretation, wherein the *sentiment* of the art can find full expression in the countless effects of which the instrument is capable. Mere skill in execution involves no sentiment; it is but a means to an end, the channel through which sentiment is to flow; and an organist is as complete a failure who is full of sentiment but devoid of technique, as is one with perfect technique and lacking sentiment.

Executive skill is therefore of prime importance, in the same sense that the substructure of any material edifice is of prime importance. The matter of last and crowning significance, for which all foundation work is preparatory, is never to be reached except by following the logical and unalterable order in all permanent constructive work in whatsoever art.

The consideration of the more artistic features of interpretation is therefore confessedly a secondary matter in the present volume, the main thought being that of correct manual and pedal execution. But it is not necessary to ignore completely some of the effects that will not divert attention from our main thought. A small amount of registration, and the alternate and simultaneous use of different keyboards, will initiate the pupil into the elementary art of expression, cultivate his taste, and afford pleasing variety in his daily practice.

The directions here given for registration are of the most general sort, and chiefly confined to the indication of the keyboard -- Great *(Gt.)*, Choir *(Ch.)* and Swell *(Sw.)* – and to the use of ***f*** and ***p***, as suggestive of loud and soft effects, leaving the specification of stops to the teacher, according to the equipment of the organ in use.

For the benefit of such as may be obliged to dispense with the guidance of an instructor, a few explanations regarding the nature of the stops will aid them in selecting such as are suitable for soft effects, and for solo passages.

Organ stops differ from each other in three ways – in pitch, in quality of tone or *timbre*, and in power. A majority of them have a pitch that conforms to that of the piano. These are called "8-foot" stops, because the lowest pipe in the stop – the lowest C on the key-board – is eight feet long. On each bank there are also one or two stops sounding an octave higher; these are the **4**-foot stops. There may also be found on each bank a stop two octaves higher – a **2**-foot stop. A "Mixture" stop, usually found on Great and Swell, is a combination of from two to five sets of small and high-pitched pipes, the pipes of each key being tuned to the intervals of a common chord, as will be discovered by playing the lowest C. The effect of this stop by itself is extremely shrill, but it adds to the full organ a brilliancy attainable in no other way, and is usually to be held in reserve until all the other stops are drawn. Every organ of moderate size has also one or more **16**-foot stops, an octave lower than the **8**-foot; probably one in the Great and one in the Swell, with one or two for the pedals.

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The 8-foot stops, having the normal pitch, can be used singly or combined, according to one's taste. The 4-foot stops give brilliancy to the undertone of 8-foot stops, but in the combination the 8-foot tone must preponderate. Never combine a loud 4-foot with a soft 8-foot stop. The 2-foot stops, having a piercing tone, must be only used with a sufficient volume of 8-and 4-foot stops to prevent its undue assertion. The 16-foot, in the manual, is commonly used with a considerable volume of the higher toned stops; otherwise, the effect is "thick." The pedal is commonly coupled to the manual that is being played, with the addition of a softer or louder 16-foot pedal stop, according to the volume of tone in the manual.

As a help to registration, the following are approximately correct:

pp = one very soft stop.
p = 2-5 soft stops.
mf = a few soft stops with 2-4 louder ones.
f = two-thirds to three-quarters of the full power of organ.
ff = full organ.

To become familiar with the quality of the various 8-foot stops, it is well to practice an exercise on one, then on another, and on their various combinations, sometimes also combining the different banks by means of the "couplers" – as Sw. to Gt., Ch. to Gt., or Sw. to Ch. The reed stops – Oboe, Clarinet and Trumpet – must be used with discretion, their peculiar quality making them, as a rule, unfit for playing the full harmony, so that they are used rather to reinforce other stops; and even when used in solo, it is often well to add another stop; as, for example, reinforcing the Trumpet with the Diapason. Organs vary, however, so much, that absolute rules in regard to this cannot be given. When two banks are used simultaneously, as in rendering a solo and accompaniment, the solo must properly assert itself, and at the same time have sufficient support from the accompaniment. The solo stops are mostly on the Great and Choir organs, almost the only one in the Swell, in the smaller organs, being the Oboe. In the case of solo and accompaniment, the pedal is to be coupled to the accompanying bank, and it is usually safe to keep it coupled to the Swell organ, as it simplifies the registration in passing from Great to Swell, in the manual.

In all the earlier studies of this book, the arrangement of stops can be made at the outset, so that in general only a change of key-board and a coupling and uncoupling of pedal to Great are necessary.

As already remarked, the chief aim of this volume is to afford mechanical mastery of manual and pedal; and it must be ever kept in mind that the three most fundamental elements of correct execution are correct fingering, correct pedaling and a *perfect legato.*

The contents of this volume will be found not only more interesting to the pupil, but more educating to his taste, by being partially compiled from a variety of sources – excerpts from standard composers, either original organ compositions, or transcriptions that fully befit the genius of the instrument.

On the foundation gained in the mastery of this volume (Part I) the pupil can carry on his study to definite ends. The full scope of the organ is comprised in its more limited use in church service, which gives occasion for Part II, – "The Organ in Church;" and in the fuller exploitation of all its marvelous resources in the interpretation of the highest and most elaborate compositions for the "King of Instruments," which calls for Part III, – "The Organ in Concert," as the conclusion of this entire work.

The contents of the present volume are divided into several very distinct sections, according to the special feature of technique that is involved in each; and it is advised to practice more or less of these sections simultaneously, postponing the more difficult portion of each section for later practice.

This work is designed for those who have had a preliminary course in piano playing; this is essential for successful organ study; without it, one's efforts will be clumsy and laborious; and, unless one be quite advanced as a pianist, it is well to continue his piano study, at least on its technical side, in connection with the organ. For those who have had no piano instruction, and cannot conveniently make a study of that instrument, an elementary course upon the reed organ is recommended.

FIRST SECTION.

PEDAL STUDIES.

H. E. PARKHURST.

The success of one's career as an organist depends largely upon his skill in pedal technique, not only for the more difficult work of concert performance, but for the less exacting requirements of church worck. Any amount of manual dexterity cannot compensate for defective pedalling. It is to the pedals that the fundamental tones of the harmony are entrusted, and their prominence demands the utmost exactness and clearness.

The following exercises, grouped according to the distinctive muscular muvement involved, should be thoroughly mastered, but not practised too long at a time, some of them requiring a motion of the feet that would easily overtax the muscles.

It is advised to practise exercises in different sections at the same time, in order to avoid unnecessary monotony. They should be playe slowly at first, and the tempo increased gradually, so as to develop a rapid and accurate execution. At the beginning it will be necessary to look at the pedals while playing; but as soon as possible one must find the notes without this assistance, except at the more difficult points.

The most important feature of good pedalling is that it should be *legato*_ the tones closely connected, the lack of this quality being more detrimental in organ playing than in piano performance, and more conspicuous in the pedal part than elsewhere, except in the melody. *Legato* may be defined by saying that it means that the successive tones exactly touch, neither overlapping nor with an interval of time between them. It can be illustrated thus

Perfect Legato.

Defective Legato.

It is best to practise the exercises with the pedal coupled to the Octave stop of the Great Organ manual, which gives a pitch sufficiently high to make all inaccuracies evident, and more agreeable to the ear.

The player should sit over the middle of the pedal board, which will also be the middle of the manual, and should be near enough to the pedals to reach the lowest and the highest note without shifting his position.

The markings, to show the proper use of the feet, are as follows:

∧ signifies the toe, or front part of the foot.

∪ signifies the heel

These marks, placed *above* the notes, indicate the right foot; placed *below* they are for the left foot.

In some of the later exercises and in the Studies, a dash(‾)is sometimes used, either above or below a series of notes, indicating that all the notes included under the dash are to be played by one foot, either left or right, the pupil determining for himself the use of heel or toe.

It is advisable not to practice pedal exercises longer than fifteen minutes at a time, as the muscles become very weary and the labor monotonous and less profitable. By interspersing them, ten minutes at a time, with other practice, the best results will be gained.

It is first necessary to acquire the proper "touch," which should be light, yet firm, and this will be gained in the first set, 1-16. The motion here is principally at the ankle, making a slight depression of the front part of the foot, and sitting close enough to the pedals to press them with the ball of the foot, and not with the extreme point.

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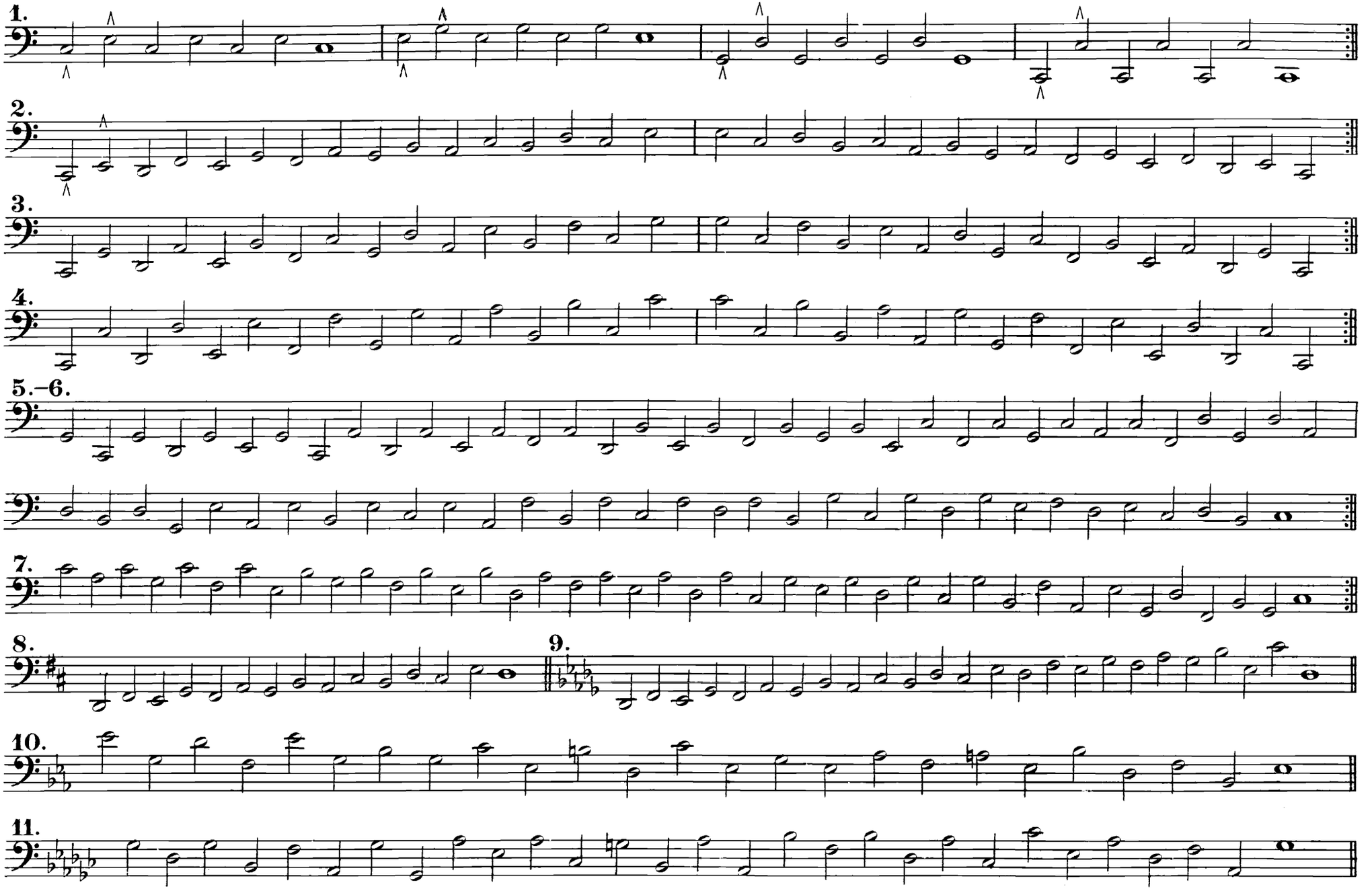
EXERCISES (1-16) for toe of alternate feet.



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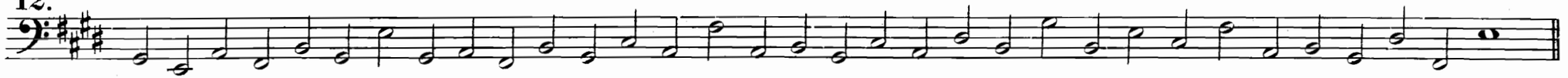

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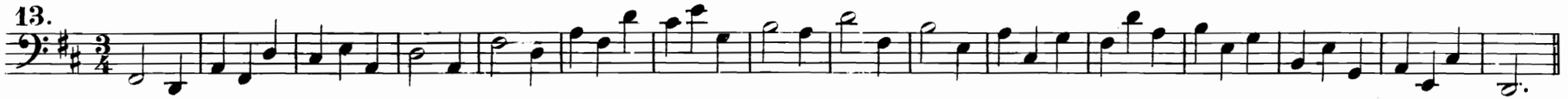

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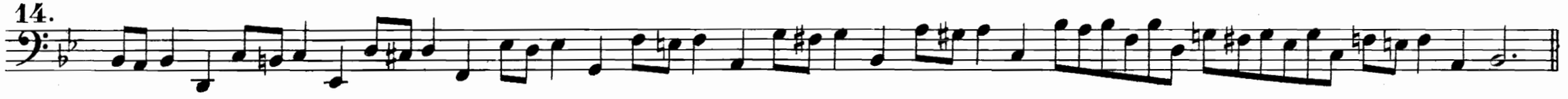

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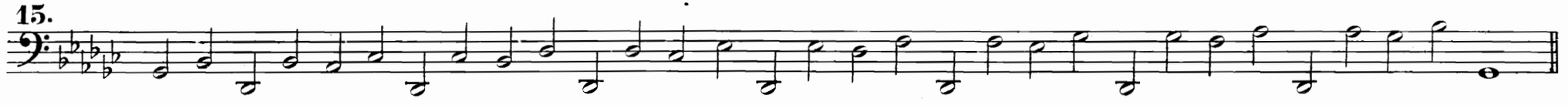

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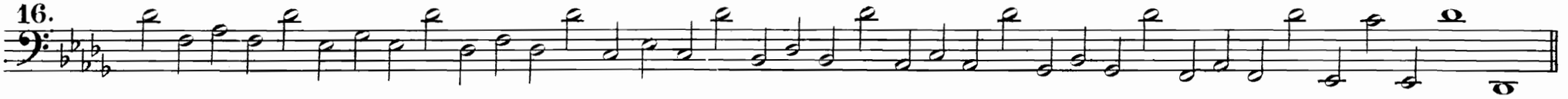
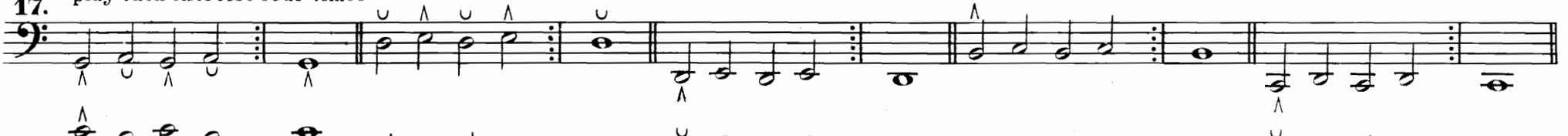


EXERCISES (17- 34) for toe and heel of each foot

In this use of the feet there is greater difficulty in securing a perfect legato. At first the tones are apt to overlap, or to be disconnected. In beginning these exercises let the alternate raising and lowering of heel and toe be as slight as possible; and after a perfect connection of the tones has been secured, raise toe and heel much higher, which will give strength and elasticity to the muscles.

17. play each exercise four times



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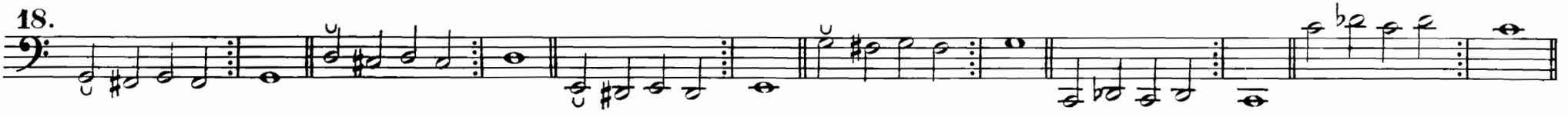

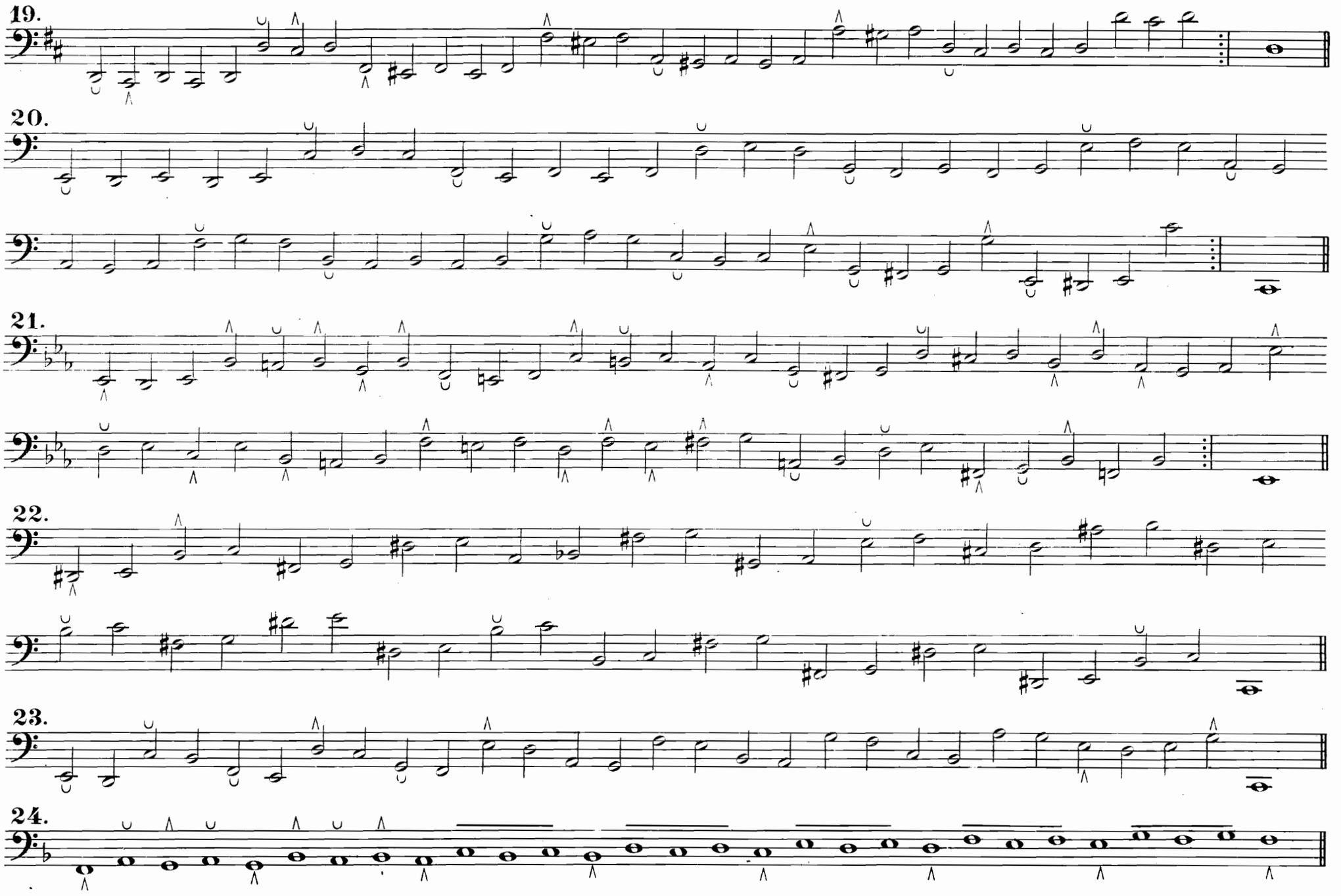
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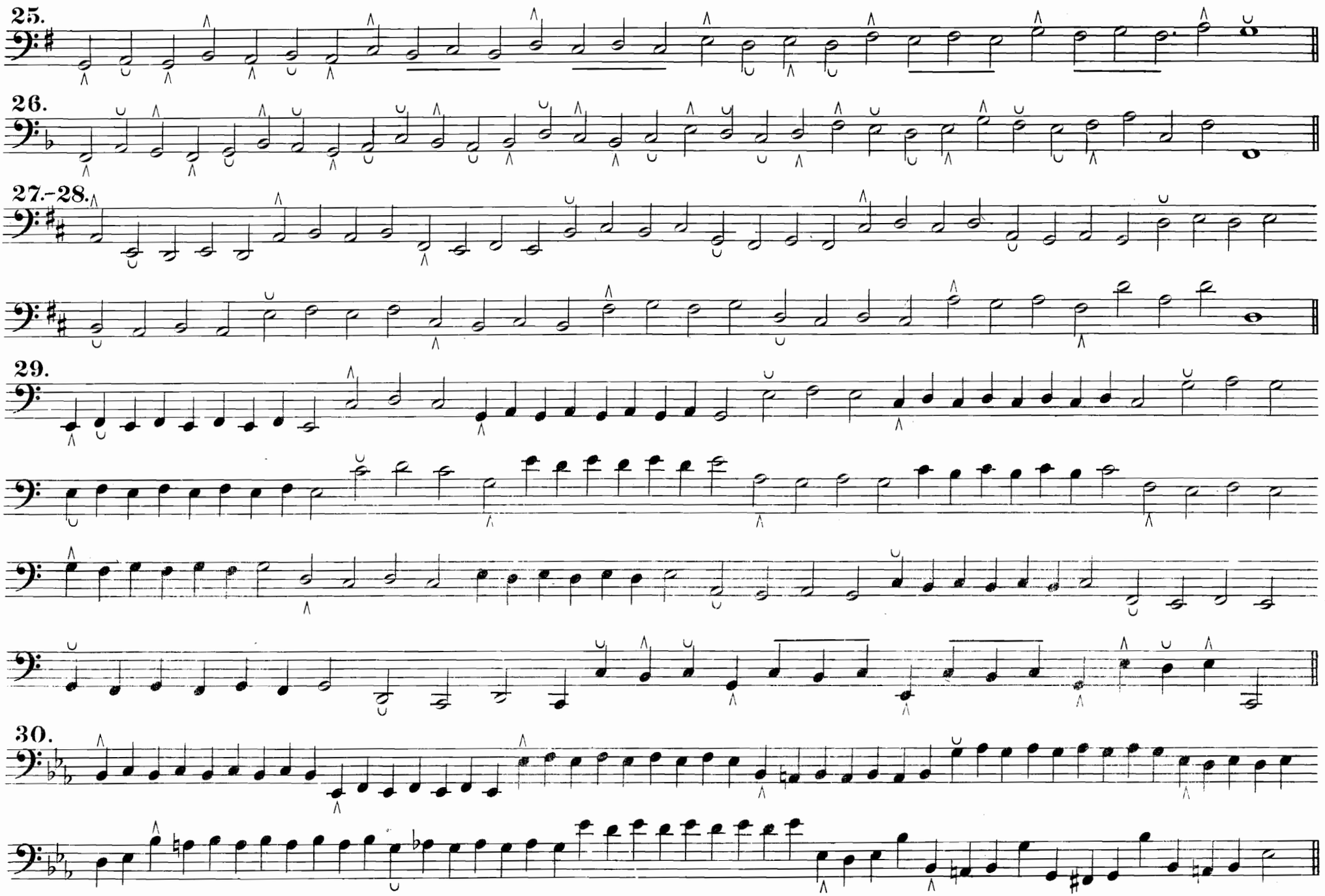
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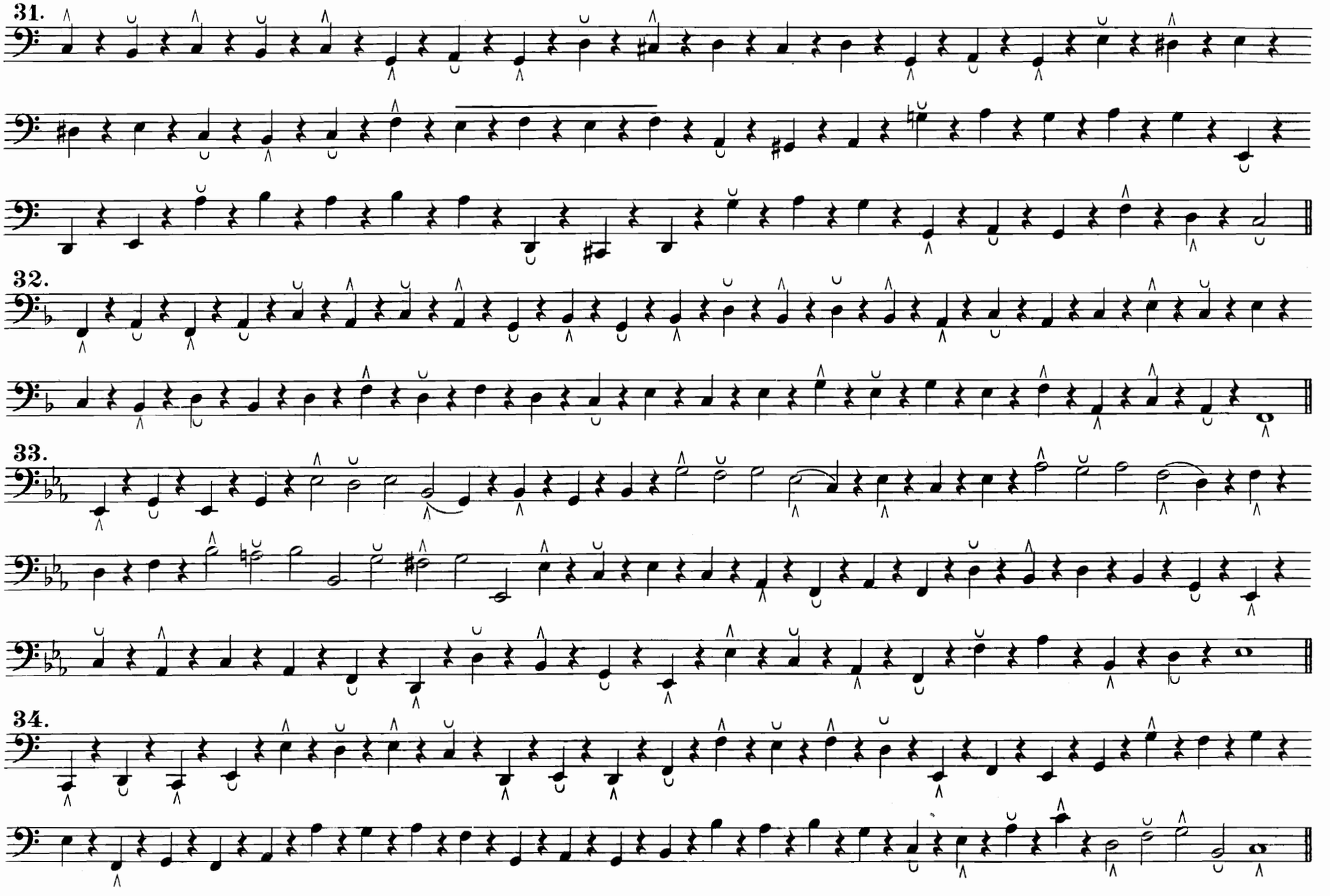
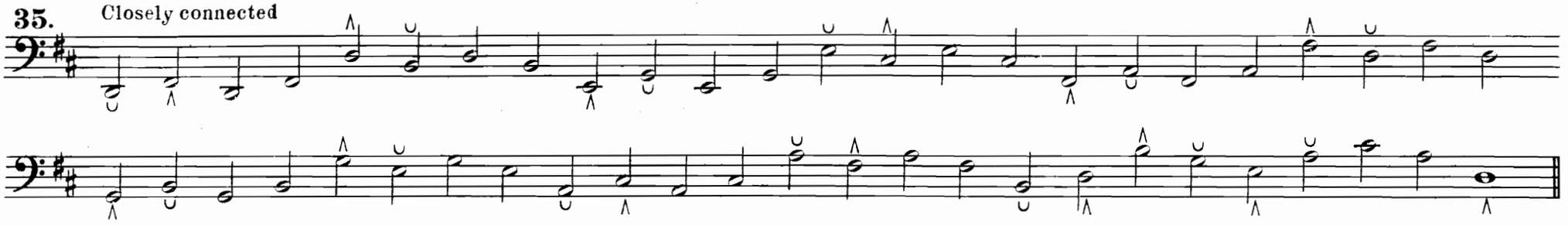

31.
32.
33.
34.

EXERCISES (35-42) for taking a larger interval with one foot

It sometimes greatly simplifies the pedalling to take two notes, at an interval of a third, with one foot. With a little practice this can be done with close connection of the tone.

35. Closely connected



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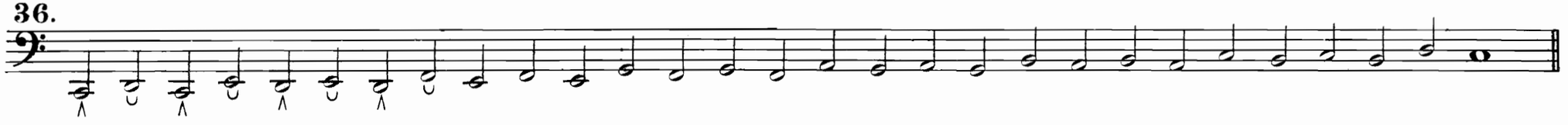

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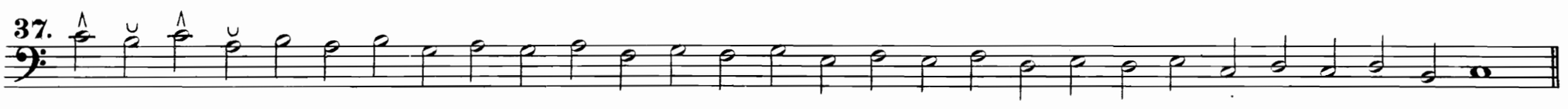

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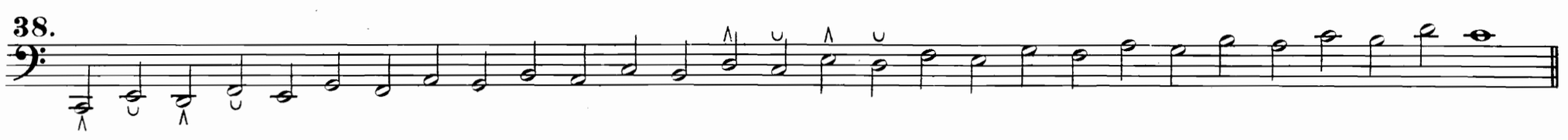

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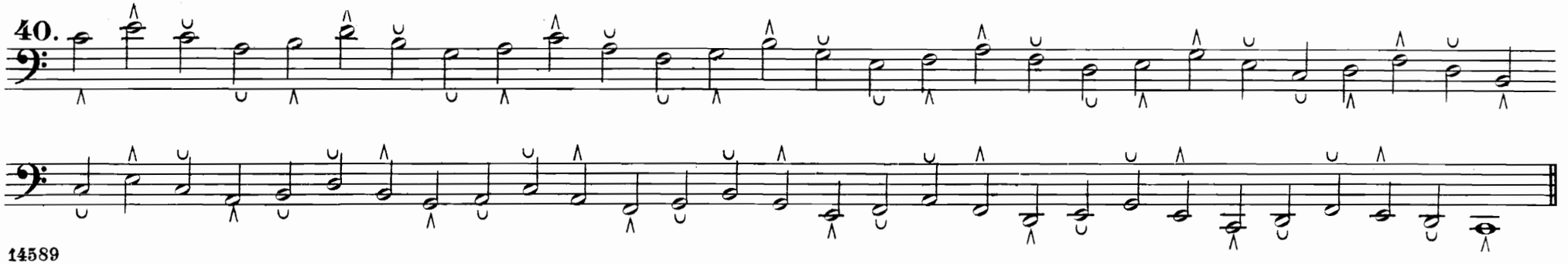


41.

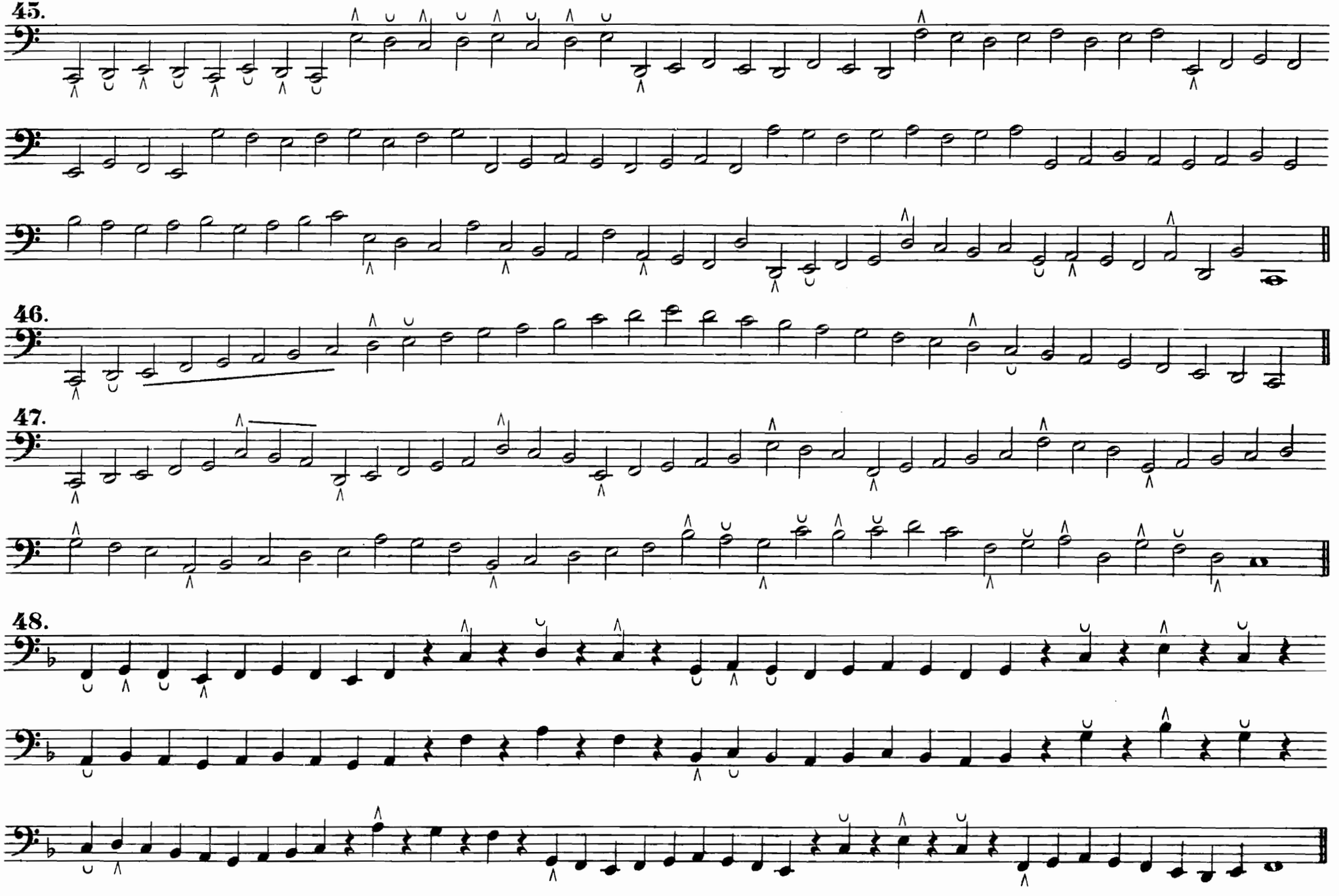
42.

EXERCISES (43-48) for twisting the feet.

The muscular movement involved in these exercises is a very unusual one, and the pupil is cautioned not to practise it long at a time, otherwise he will find his muscles are lame, compelling him to desist from pedal work until they have recovered. The twisting of the feet here required, is not called for in any ordinary use of them, so that the muscles are weak. At first play slowly, and increase the speed gradually.

43. play four times

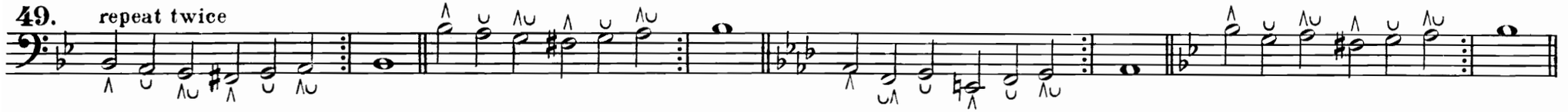
44.


45.
46.
47.
48.

EXERCISES (49-52) for changing from toe to heel.

To get the foot into the right position it is sometimes necessary to change from toe to heel, or from heel to toe, on the same note. The note is to be held down firmly, and the change to be made quickly.

49. repeat twice



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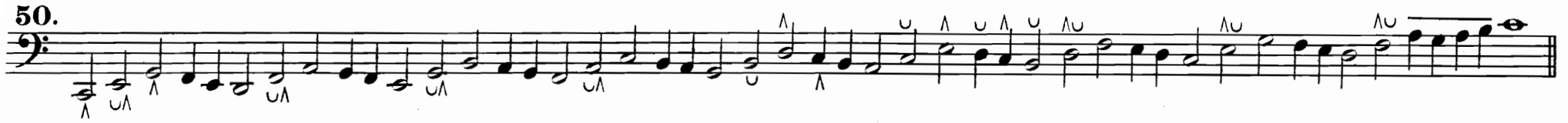

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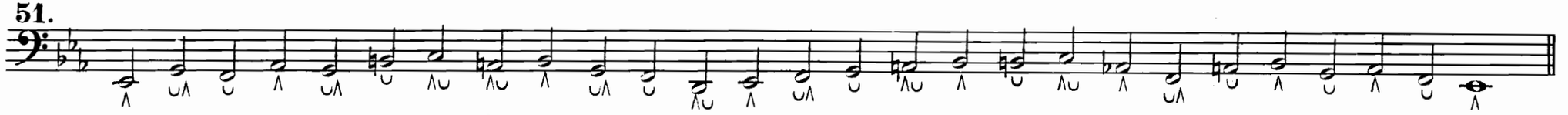

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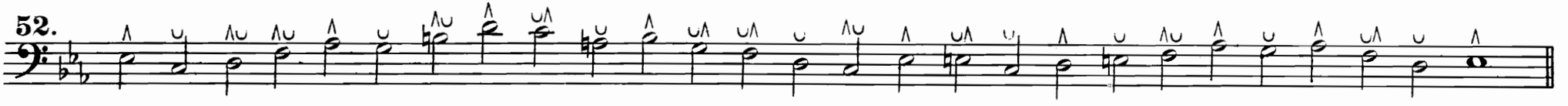
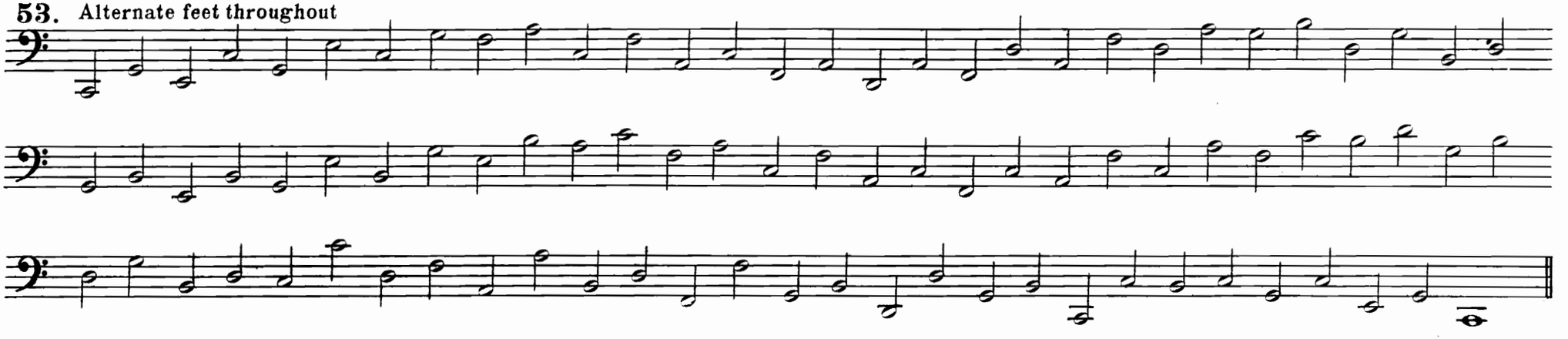
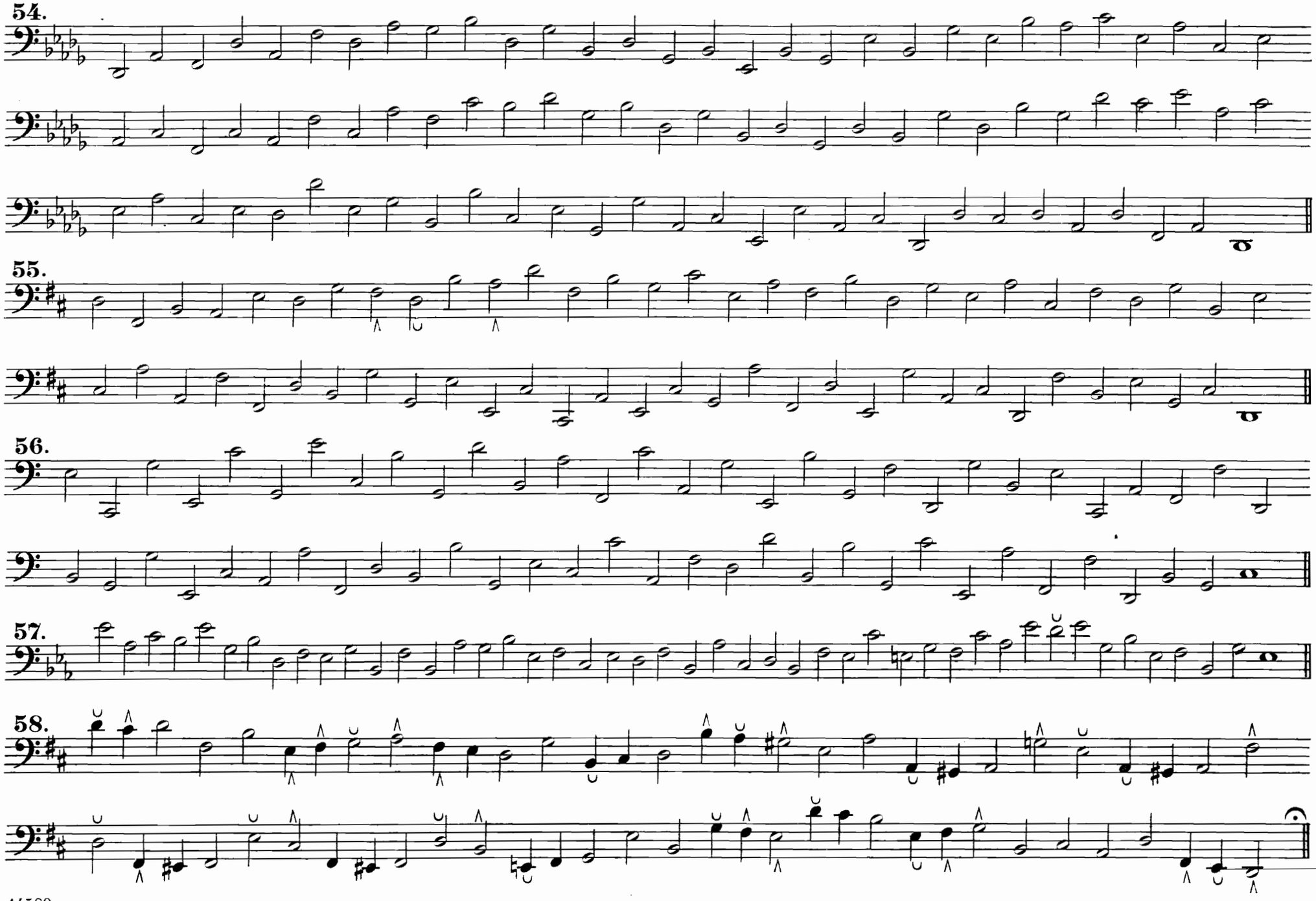


EXERCISES (53-59) for greater movement of the feet.

The following exercise accustom one to larger intervals, and to greater displacement of the feet. As much as possible avoid looking at the pedals.

53. Alternate feet throughout

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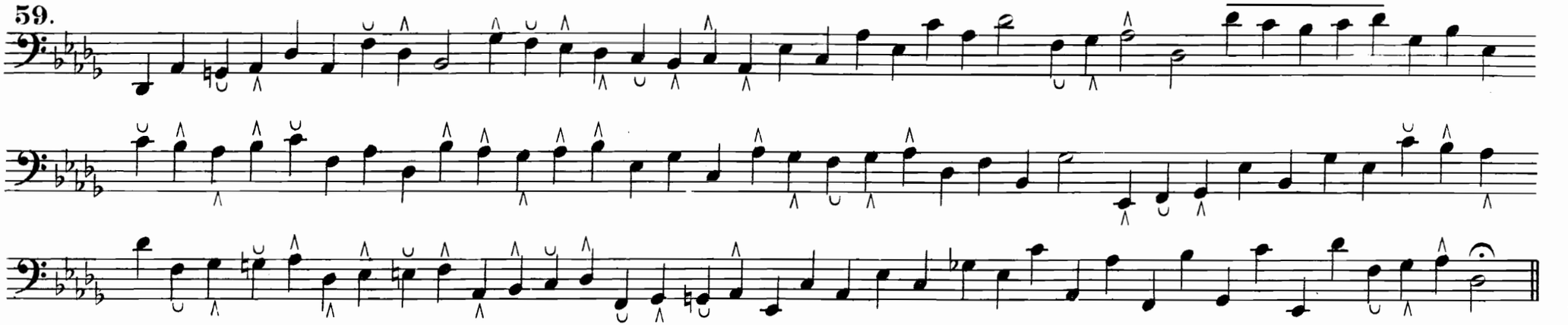
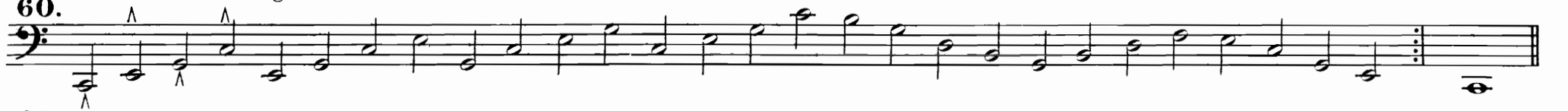


EXERCISES (60-62) for crossing the feet.

One foot will occasionally be passed in front of the other, sometimes | behind, according to convenience

Alternate feet throughout.

60.



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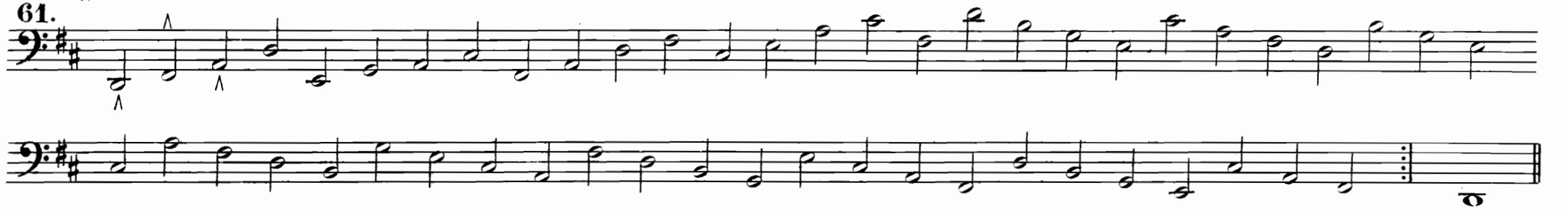

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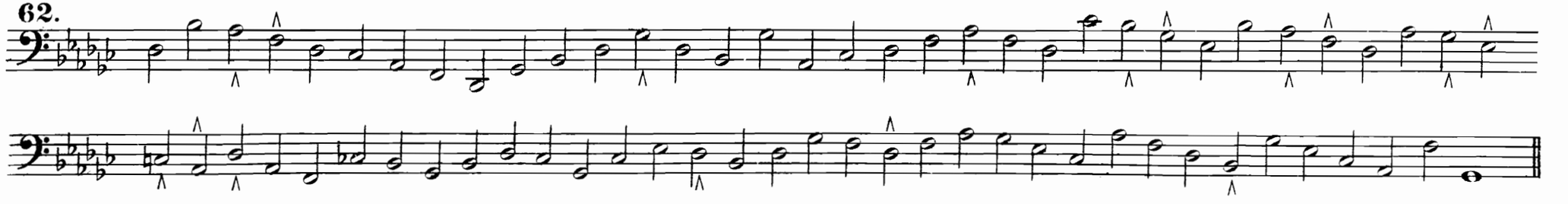
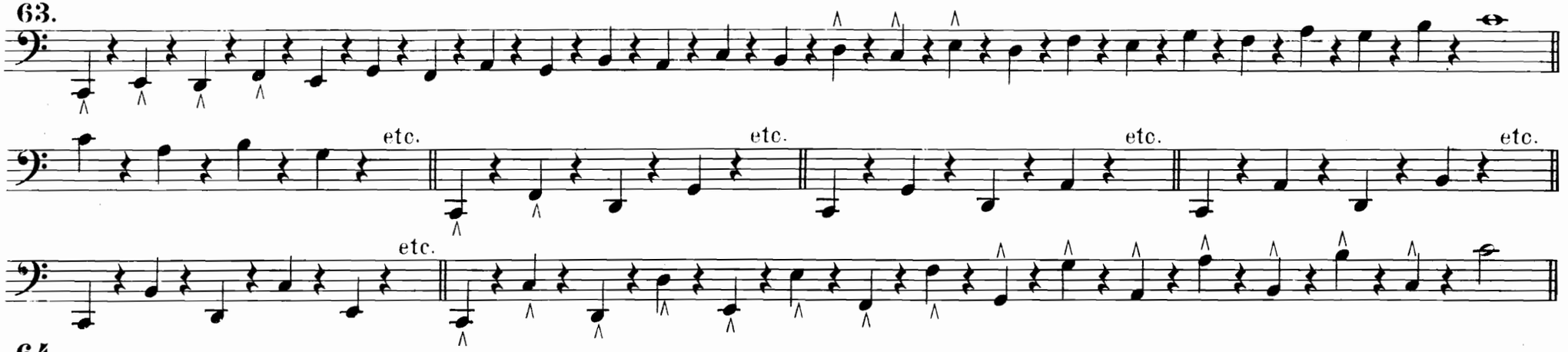


EXERCISES (63-66) for long distances with each foot.

These are among the most fatiguing of all pedal exercises, involving considerable leg-motion. They are of great assistance in fixing the position of all the pedals in one's mind.

63.



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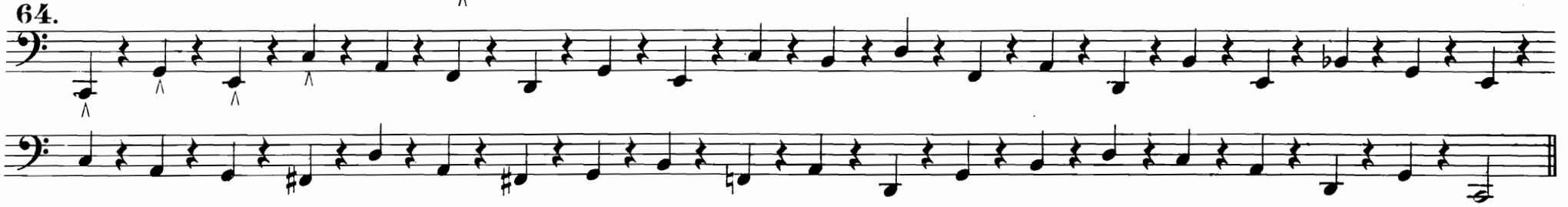

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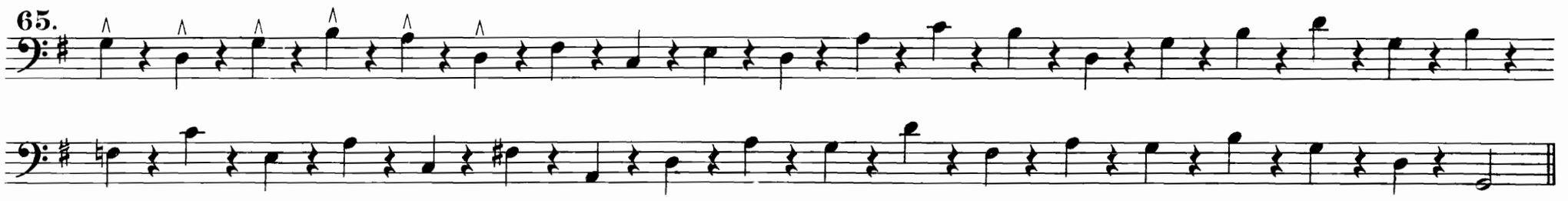

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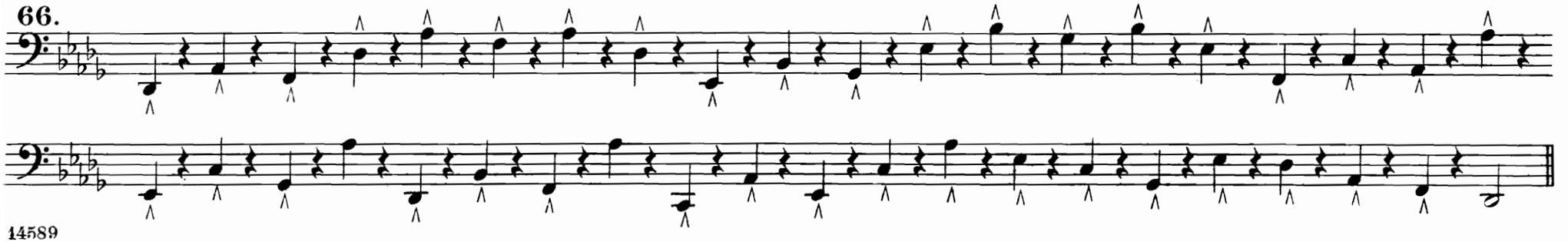
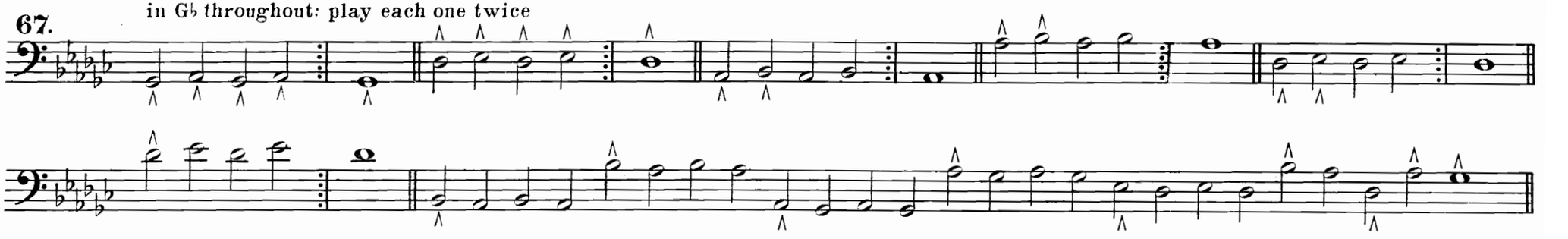


EXERCISES (67-69) for taking adjacent notes with the toe of one foot.

In high signatures it is often necessary to take two adjacent black keys with one foot, which is done by sliding the foot along and slightly rolling it over. Care must be taken not to have both notes sound at once.

67. in G♭ throughout: play each one twice



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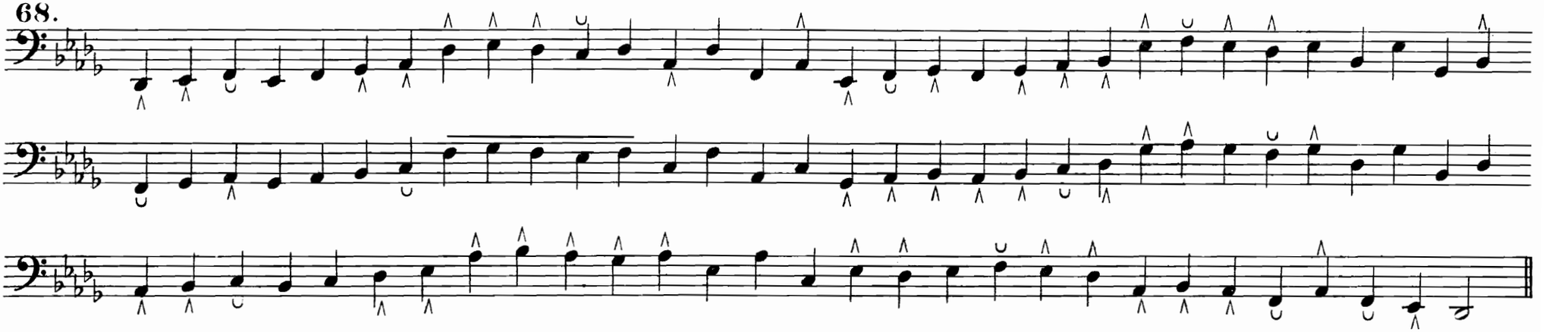
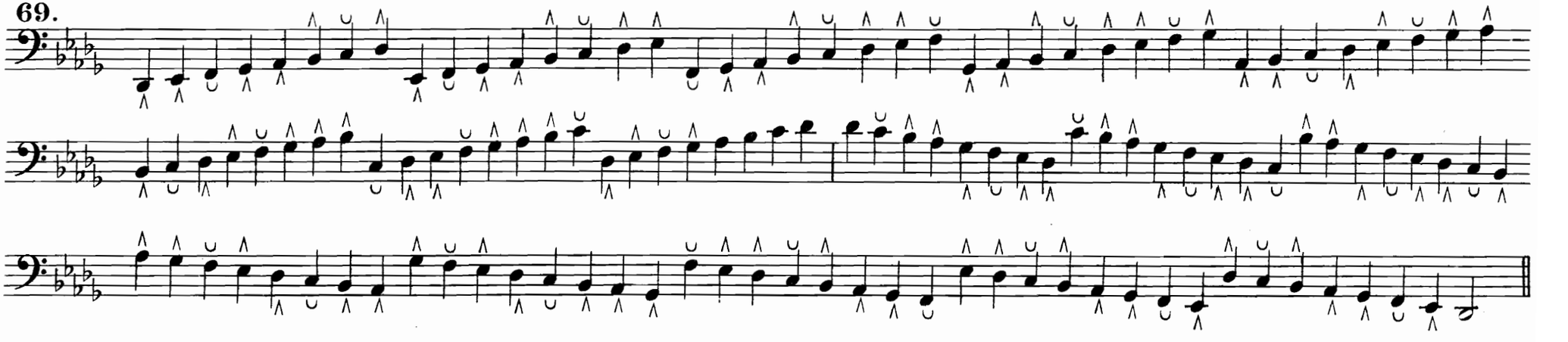
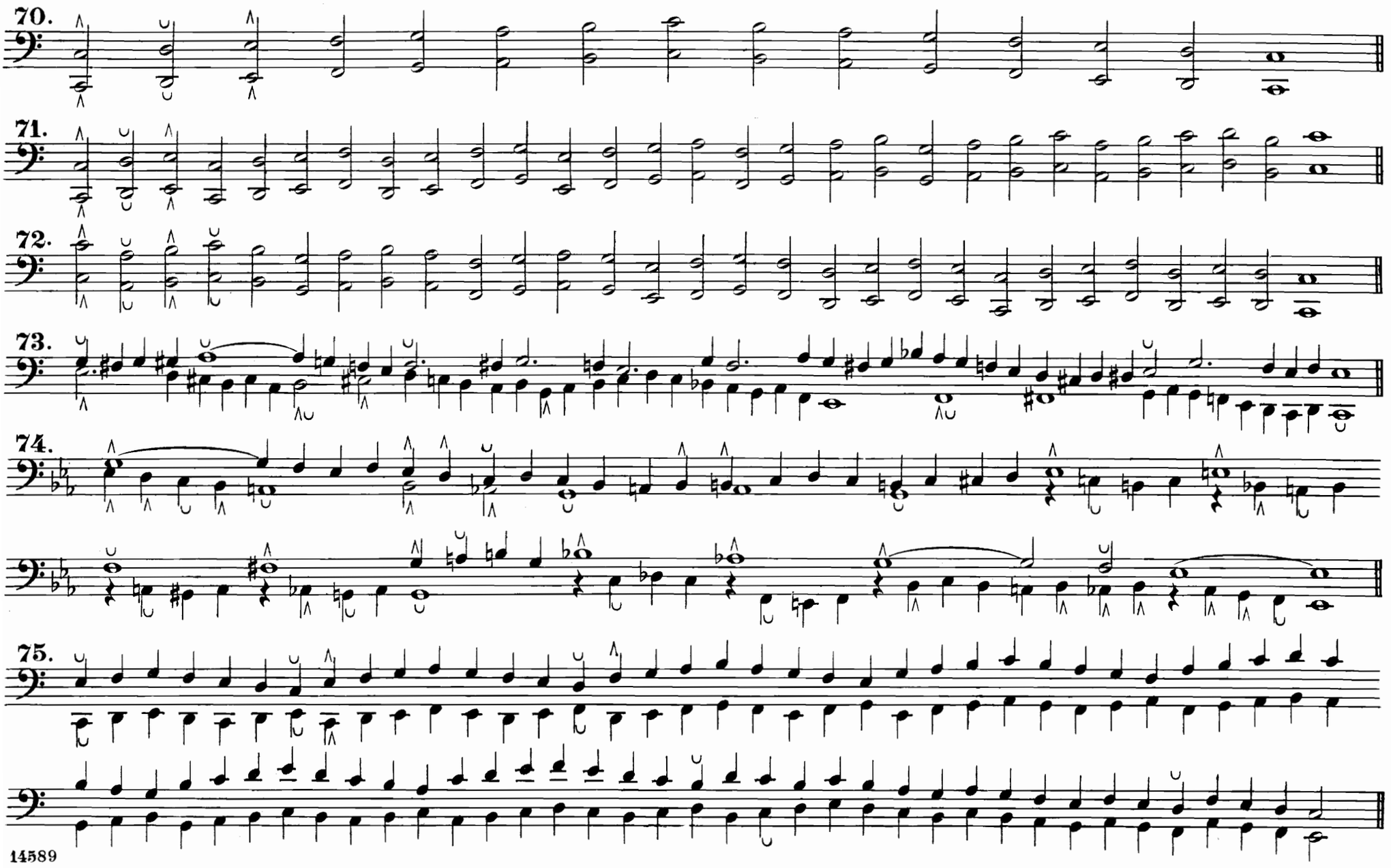


69.



EXERCISES (70-75) for double pedals.

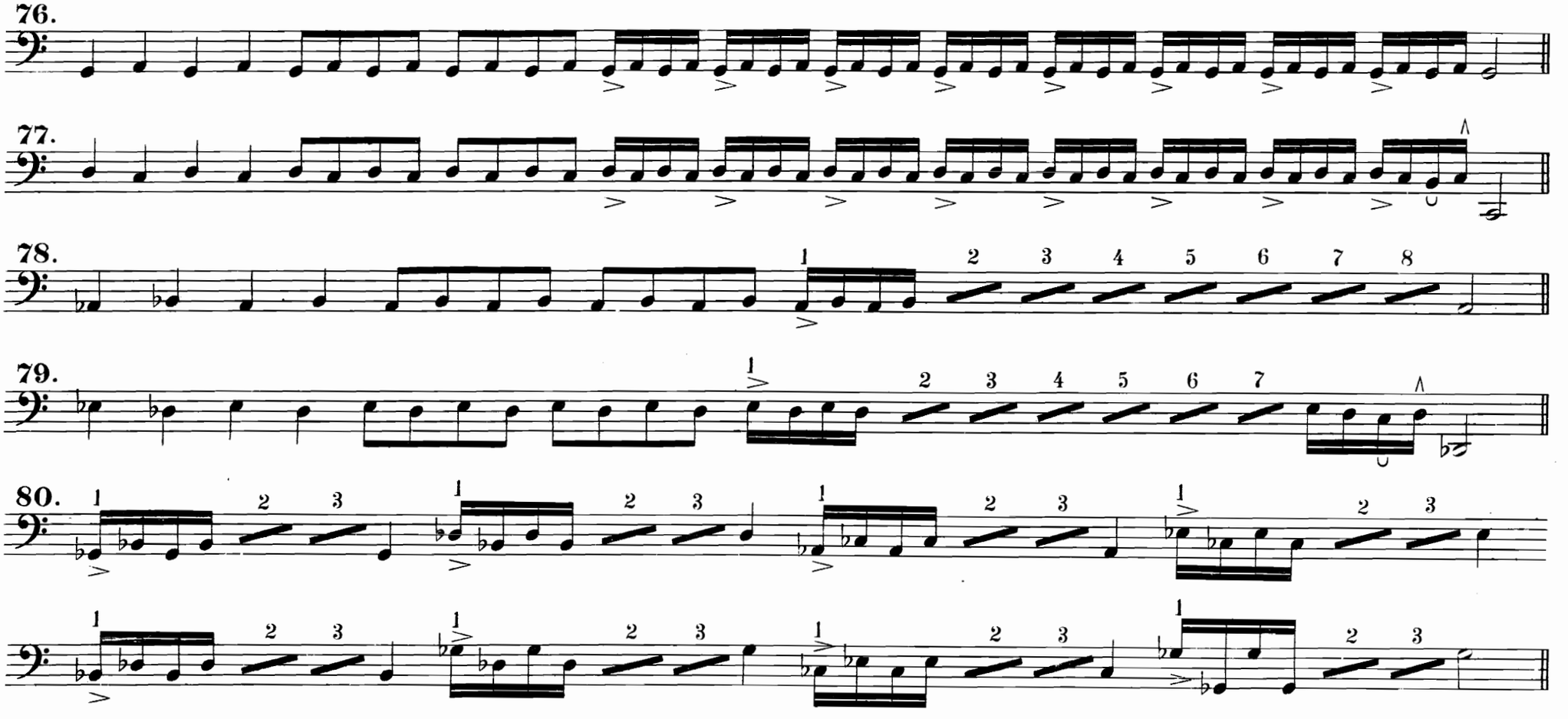
Double pedals are of very infrequent use, but are sometimes necessary, either for increasing the volume of tone, in very full organ, or for performing a melody with the right foot, while the left foot gives the fundamental bass of the composition, the sustained harmony being played on the manual.

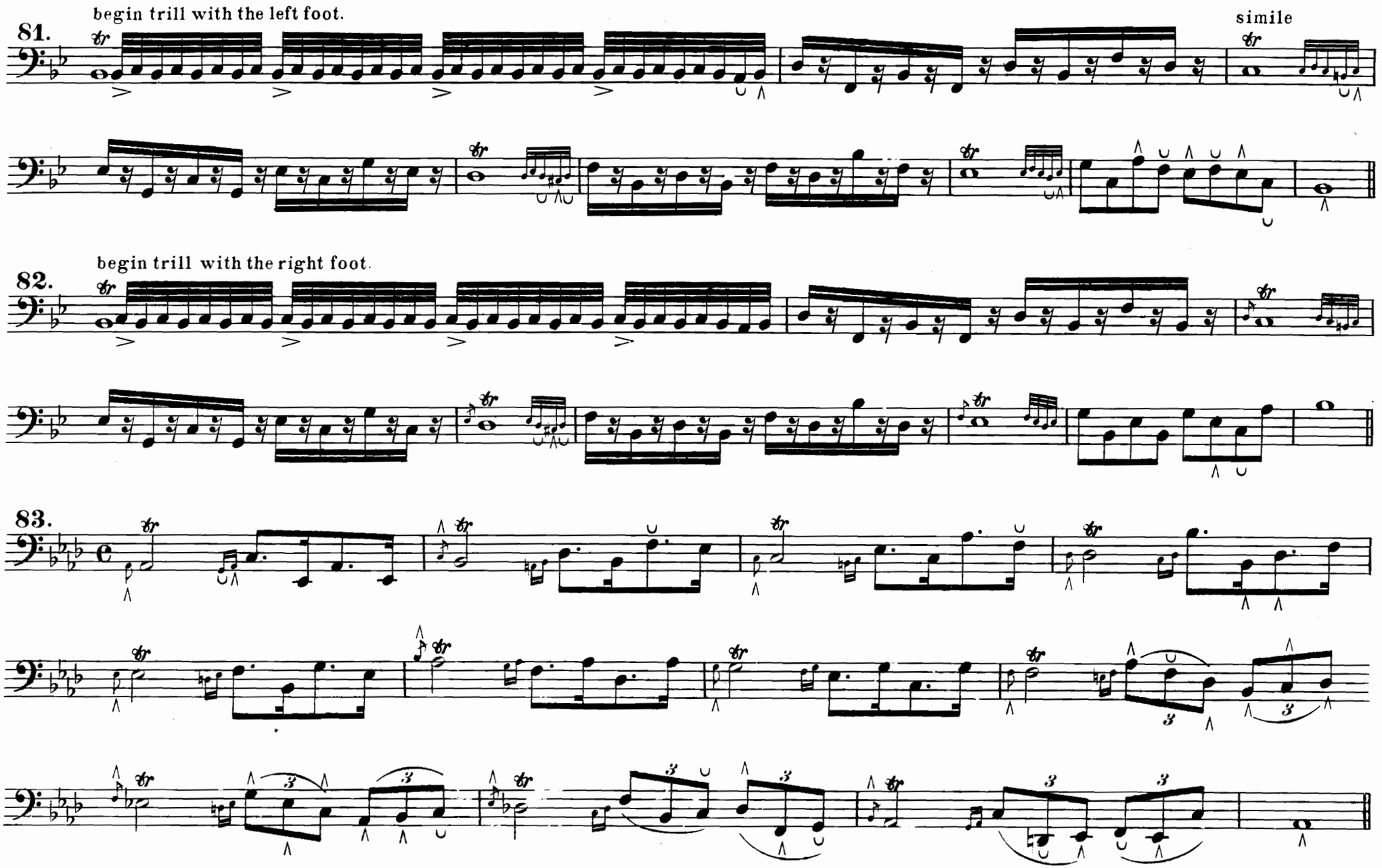


EXERCISES (76 - 85) in pedal trills

Pedal trills are the rarest requirement in technique: but, although, in themselves considered, they are almost useless, their mastery ensures strength, agility, delicacy of touch and the ability for sustained effort, such as can be gained from no other form of exercise. The first of the following exercises are preliminary, and are to be played slowly, with the most perfect evenness, and with the accent placed on the left or right foot, as indicated.

The accent of an organ tone may sometimes be gained by a slight break between it and the following tone; but in the case of trills, either on the manual or on the pedals, it must be secured by the slightest possible *prolongation* of the tone. With practice one will be able thus to throw the accent on either the lower or the upper tone. In performing the trill, the feet are to be held motionless at the ankle and the action is entirely that of the limbs, with the front part of the feet constantly in contact with the pedals. To become accustomed to this action, the preliminary exercises should be practised in the same way.




begin trill with the left foot.
81.
simile
begin trill with the right foot.
82.
83.

SECOND SECTION.

MANUAL EXERCISES AND ETUDES IN TWO, THREE AND FOUR PART HARMONY.

H. E. PARKHURST.

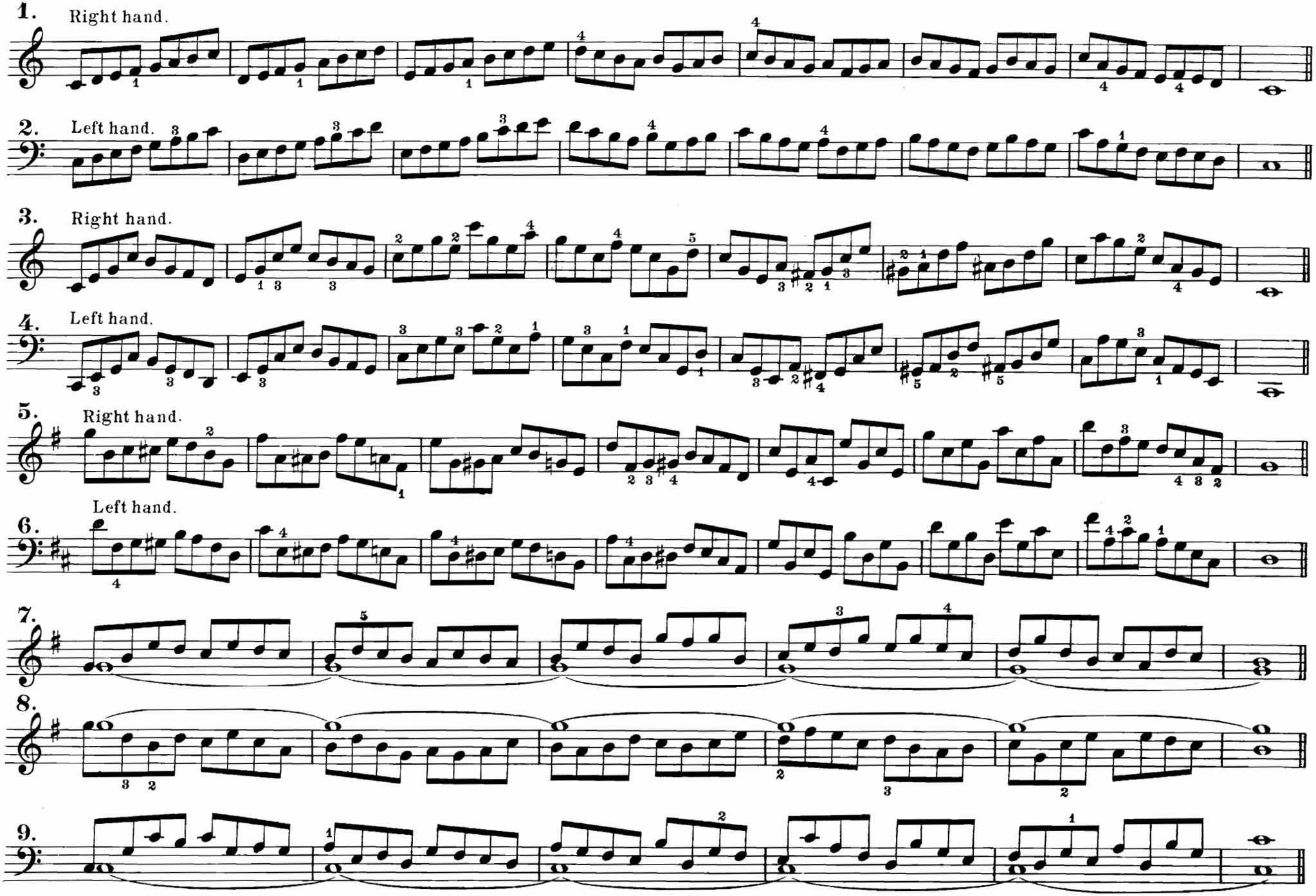
The organ and the piano, in manual technique, are very much alike, yet with important points of difference. Not only is the "touch" dissimilar, but the manner of tone production in the organ is such, that the player is obliged to be more scrupulous in regard to *legato* than is the pianist; for in the piano the much misused "loud pedal" covers a multitude of non-legato sins. By the manner of tone production in the piano, the sound, a soon as the key is struck, begins to diminish in volume, whereas in the organ it retains its full force as long as the key is pressed; thus the silence between successive tones that should be connected is more marked in the organ than in the piano. Hence, in organ playing there must be a precision of legato to which only the most thoroughly trained pianists are accustomed. It results that the great majority of piano players, on taking up the organ, are obliged to correct a serious deficiency which had hitherto escaped their notice.

This being the case, it is well to begin on the organ with the very simplest exercises, irrespective of the student's piano proficiency. If he finds that he has not mastered this most important requisite, it will be best for him to do so at the very beginning of his organ work.

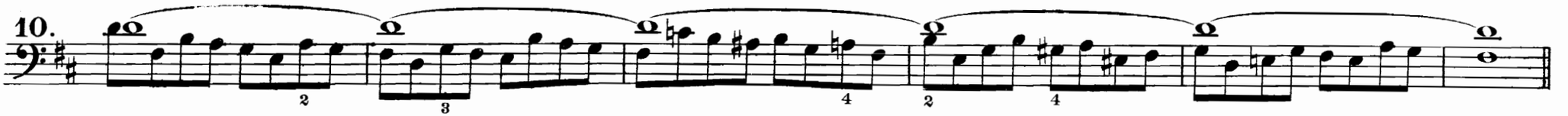
The criticism sometimes passed upon an organist, that his playing sounds like that of a pianist, is almost entirly due to his deficiency in *legato*. He will also find far more necessity of changing the fingers upon the keys while pressing them, than he ever experienced in piano playing, and most careful attention should be given to the exercises on that point.

Nothing need be said about the position of the hand, as it is assumed that the pupil has already mastered the first elements of technique.

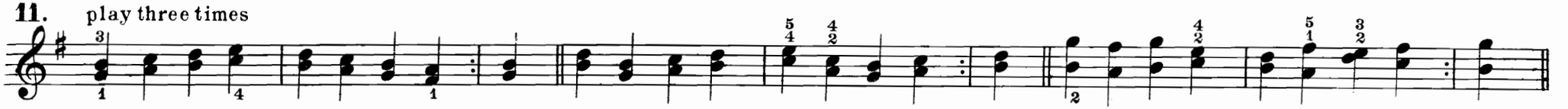
The first exercises have reference to the most fundamental requirement of organ-playing — the legato style — and the pupil will at the same time become accustomed to the peculiarity of organ "touch."


1. Right hand.
2. Left hand.
3. Right hand.
4. Left hand.
5. Right hand.
Left hand.
6.
7.
8.
9.

10.



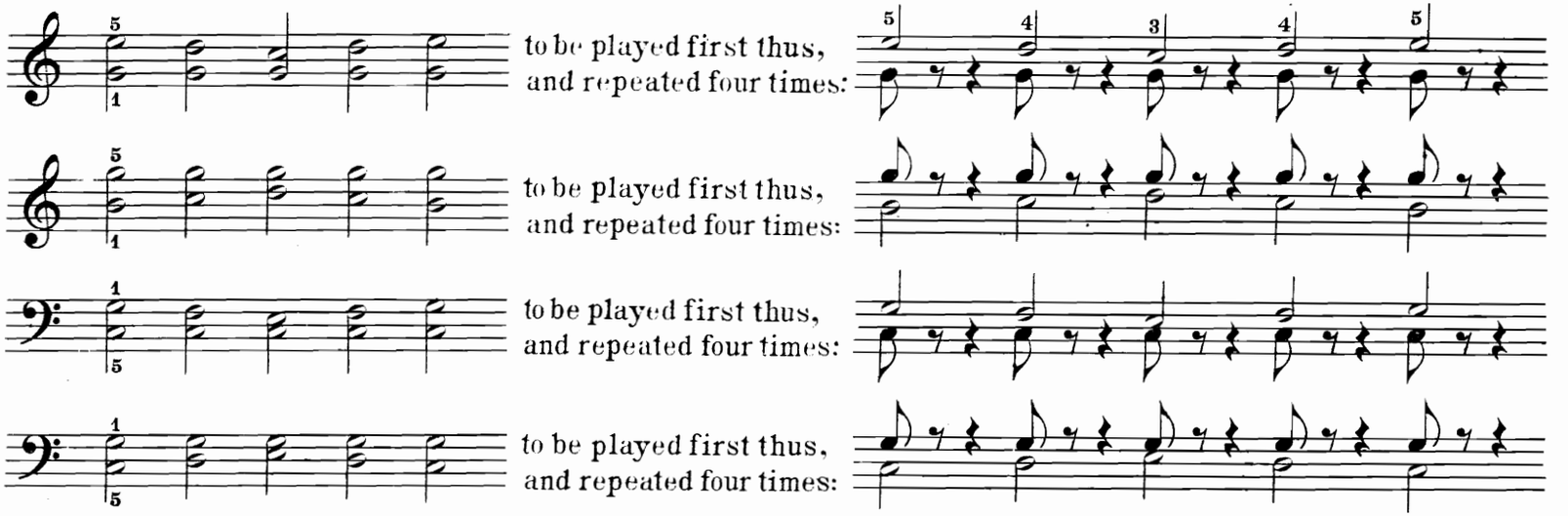
11. play three times



It is often necessary to play a series of double notes with one hand as in the last exercise, wherein two or more notes in succession must be struck by the same finger. It is impossible to play such notes *legato*, as the finger must first drop one note before taking th next. But, the other notes, struck by different fingers, can and must be, closely *legato*. This involves a very different action of the fingers of the same hand, which at first is quite difficult, but needs to be mastered. The fingers should be practised in such exercises as follow, until the correct motions become instinotive and easy.

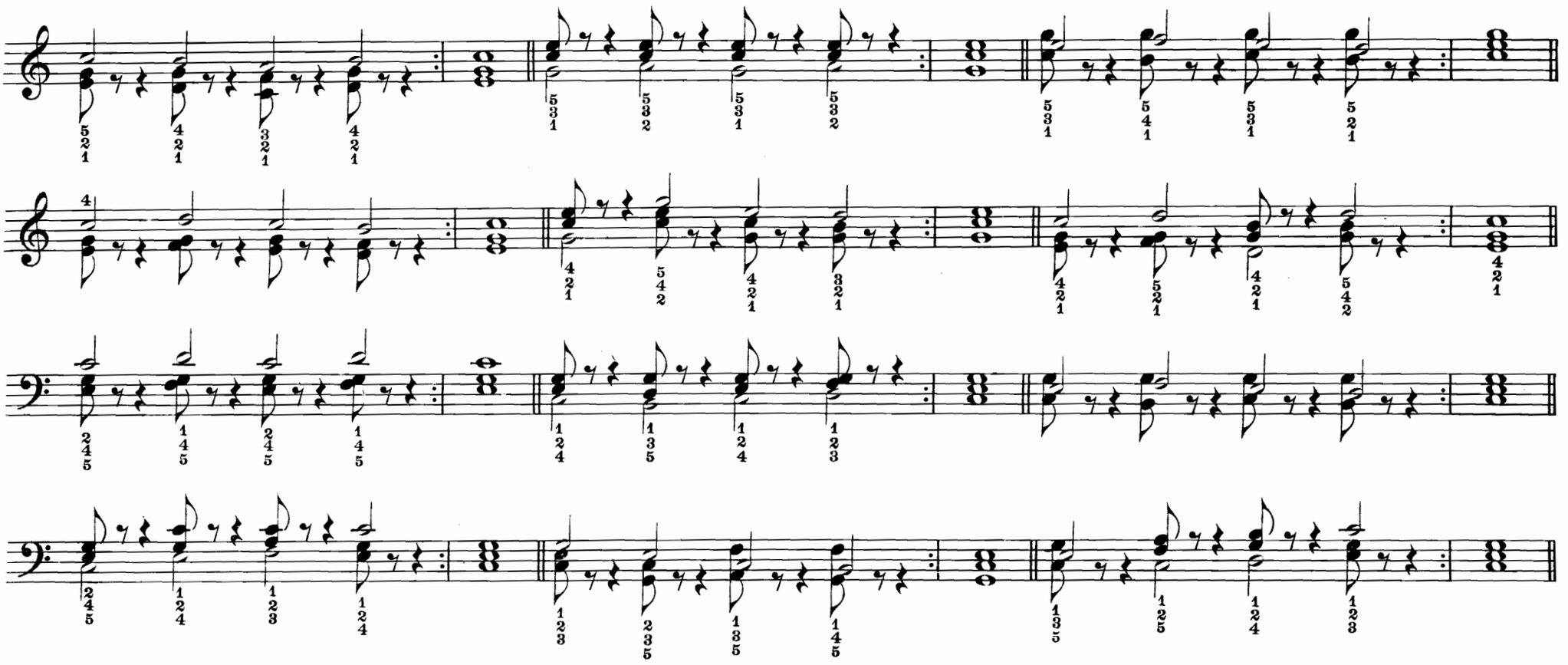
To secure *complete* independence of the fingers for such passages, let that one finger that strikes successive notes *drop the first note as soon as struck*, and be raised well above the key, before striking the next, while the other fingers hold the keys down firmly and produce a perfect *legato*. It is very difficult for some players to acquire this double action, and it may be necessary to play the exercises at first as slowly as if they were in whole notes, but when the movement has been mastered, they can be played more and more rapidly.

The following illustrates the process; and after becoming accustomed to the movement, let the finger playing successive notes be kept longer and longer on each key, until the pupil is able to hold it to the very instant that it must strike the next key. This secures the nearest approach possible to legato in striking successive notes with the same finger, and needs to be mastered in both hands.

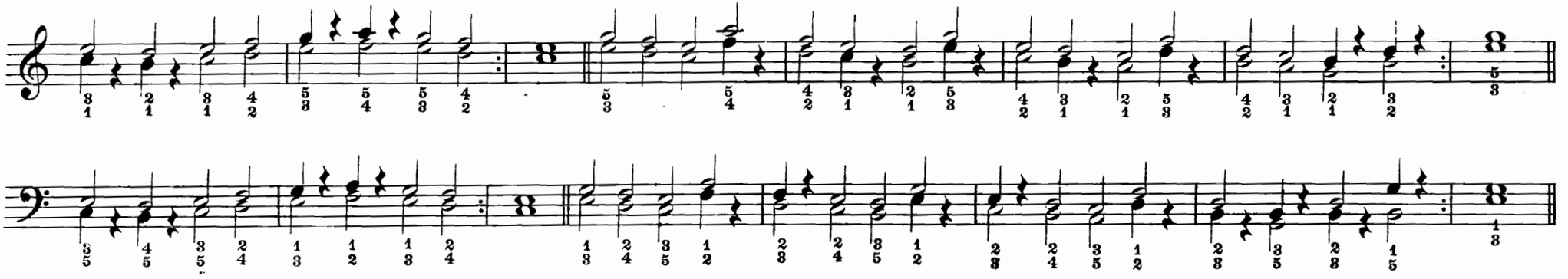


Play the above *very slowly* at first, and gradually increase the value of the repeated note, until it reaches as nearly to its full value as possible before it is dropped.

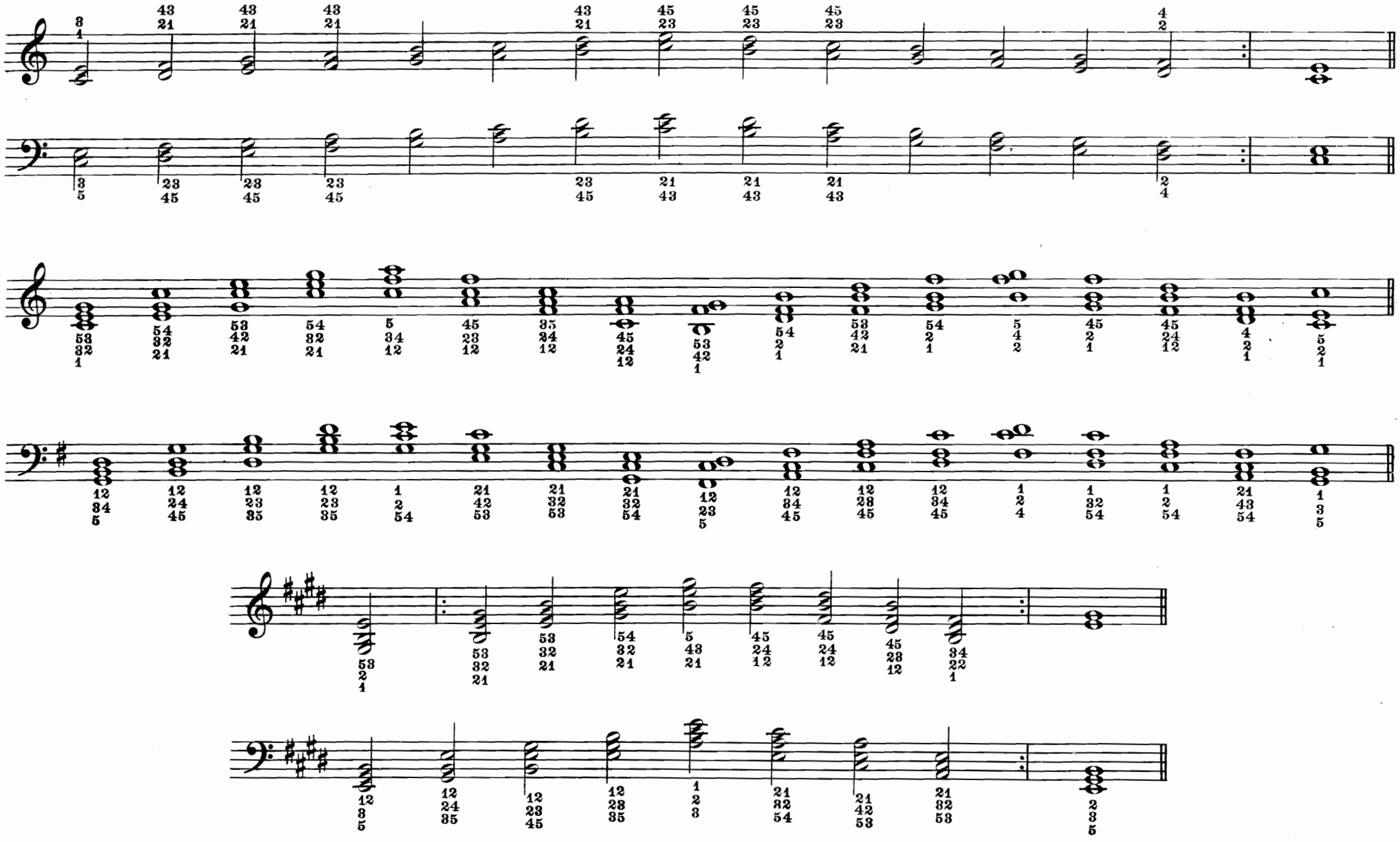
In the following, the true legato is possible in only one part. The two other parts are to be played as in the foregoing exercises. Let each one be played four times.



In the following make a perfect legato in both parts wherever possible.

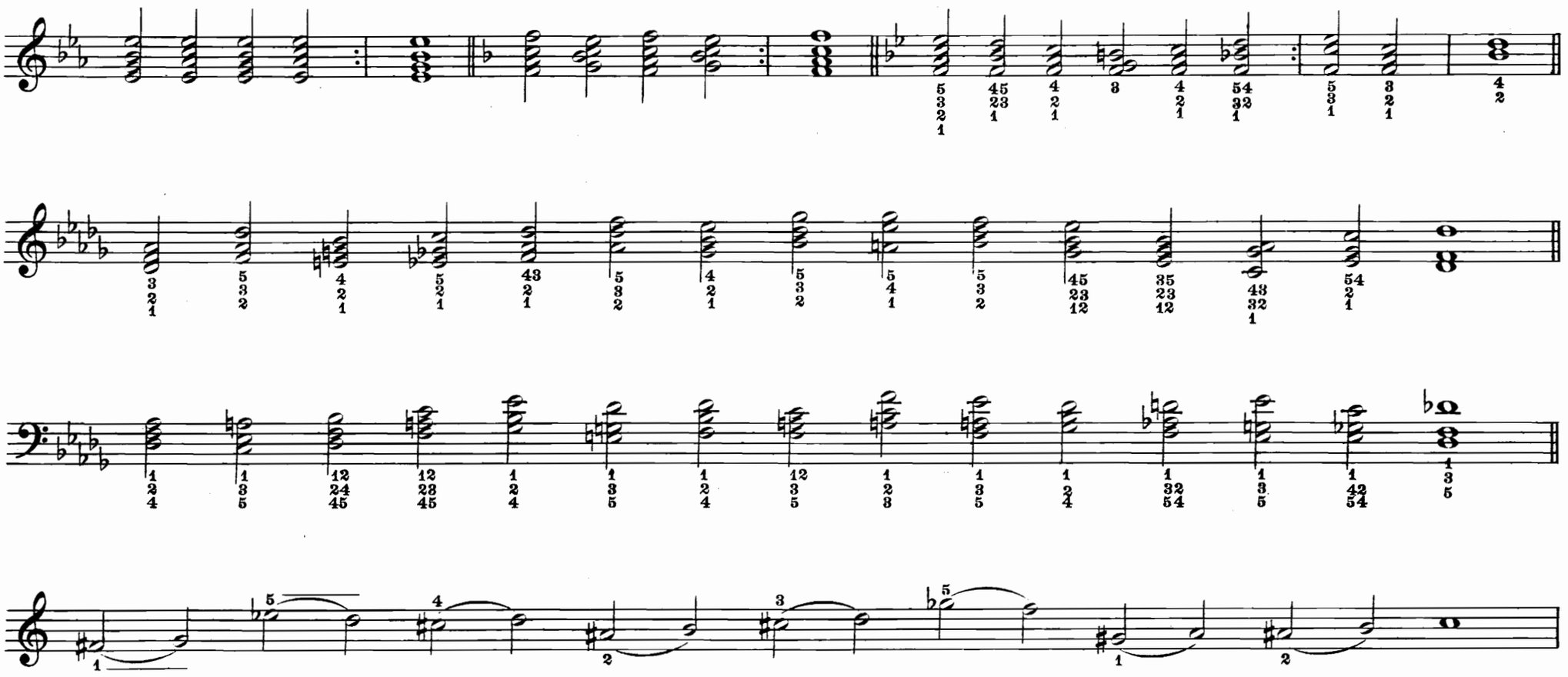


A method of obtaining perfect legato in a slow movement is to change the fingers on the keys while still pressing them. This should be practised in each hand separately and afterward in both together.



In such a succession of chords, when the series is ascending the lowest key is held, while the others are dropped. In a descending series, the highest is held, and the others dropped.

In playing the following exercises, let the pupil determine for himself which notes can be played legato, remembering that the connection can be perfect when a finger can be drawn from a black key to an adjoining white one.



All the foregoing exercises should be practised until the corect movement of the fingers becomes instinctive and easy, and the principles of fingering here illustrated should be applied in all subsequent studies. Such technical exercises as are here given, with others of the same sort if necessary, can be as well practised on the piano: and the pupil is again reminded that his ultimate success as an organist largely depends upon his careful attention to the fingering.

SIXTEEN ETUDES.

IN TWO, THREE AND FOUR PART HARMONY.

H. E. PARKHURST.

The duets can be played on either one or two banks; in the latter case, contrasting stops, such as Flute (8 ft) and Oboe, should be used. The other Etudes are to be played on one bank, with a variety of registration.

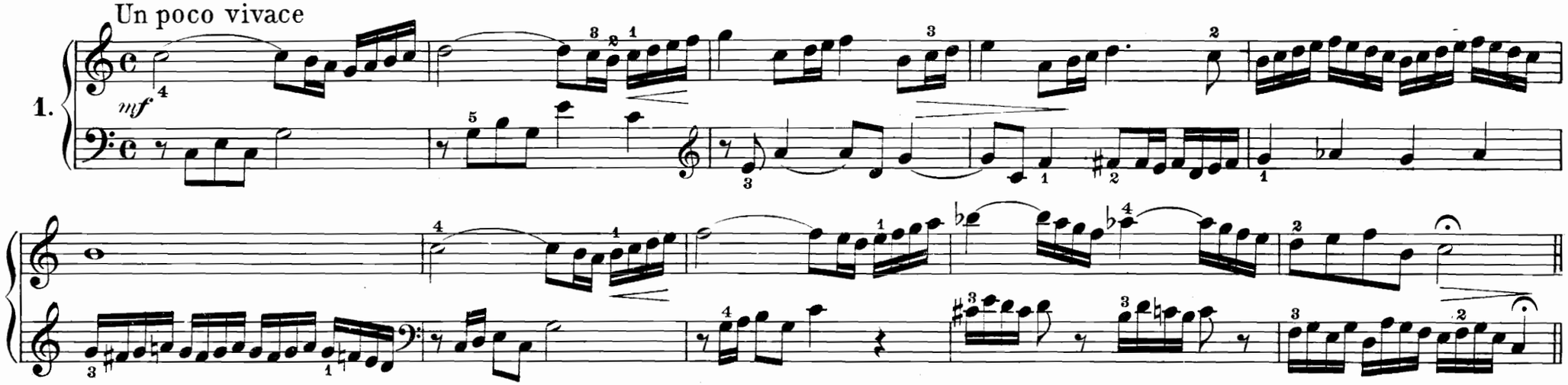
A very important adjunct of every organ is the "swell pedal," by which the tone from the stops in the Swell organ—and in the more modern instruments, from those in the Choir and Great organs—can be made louder or softer. Being operated by the right foot, it must sometimes be dispensed with, even though it could be effectively used, if both feet are essential for the pedal part of the music; and sometimes the pedal part can be simplified, so as to be played, in a given passage, by the left foot alone.

In the following Studies, however, with no pedal part, there is no such difficulty, and the pupil should here accūstom himself to its correct use. It is often misused by being fully opened or closed abruptly, whereas its best effects are in the more gradual *crescendos* and *diminuendos*, and in the occasional slight touch of emphasis. No small part of the skillful interpretation of organ music depends upon the delicate effects of shading produced by the swell pedal.

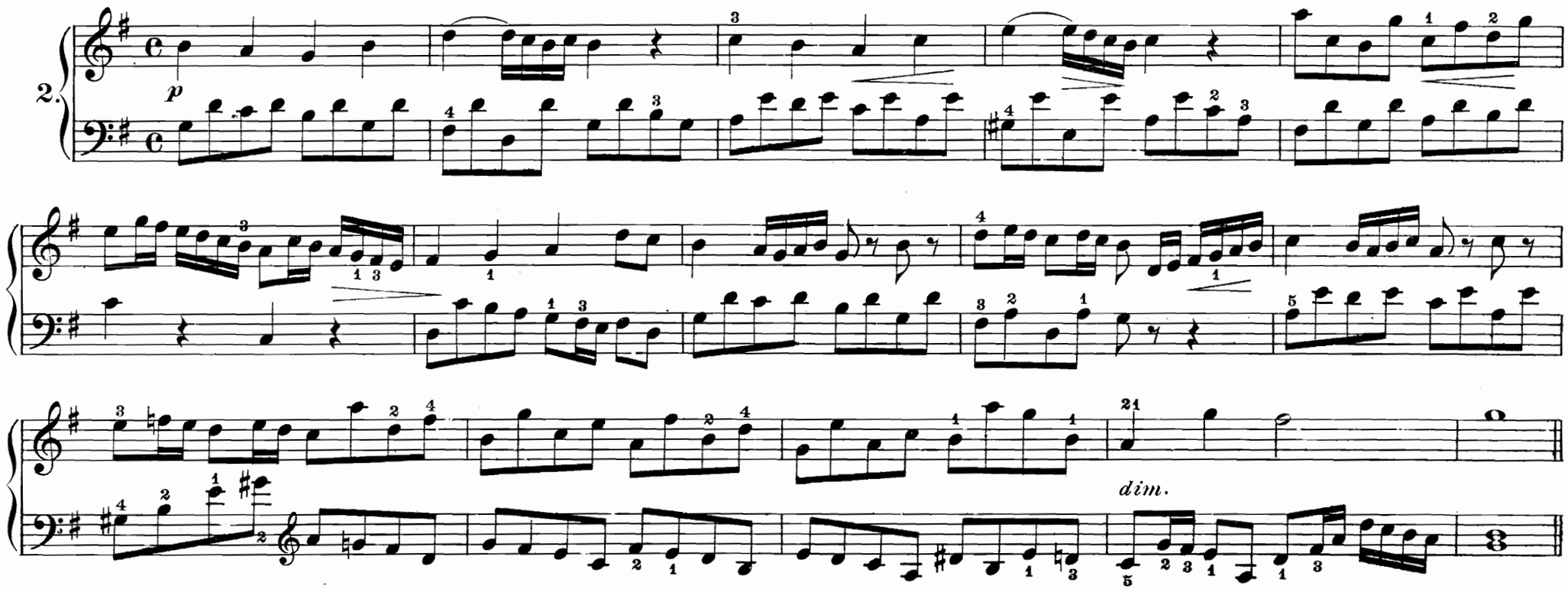
The use of staccato is comparatively infrequent in organ music, but wherever it properly occurs it should never be slighted, as its effect of accentuation is at times very necessary.

While perfect legato in all the parts is desirable, it is often impossible: but if the melody and the bass are smoothly connected, the lack of connection in the middle parts is less felt and often unobserved. It is a common mistake of pupils to suppose, that what is written on the upper staff must be played by the right hand, and what is on the lower staff by the left hand. The location of the notes must not be regarded as determining which hand is to play them. The teacher should also instruct the pupil in the art of phrasing, which often requires such a separation of the tones as to make the fingering very much easier.

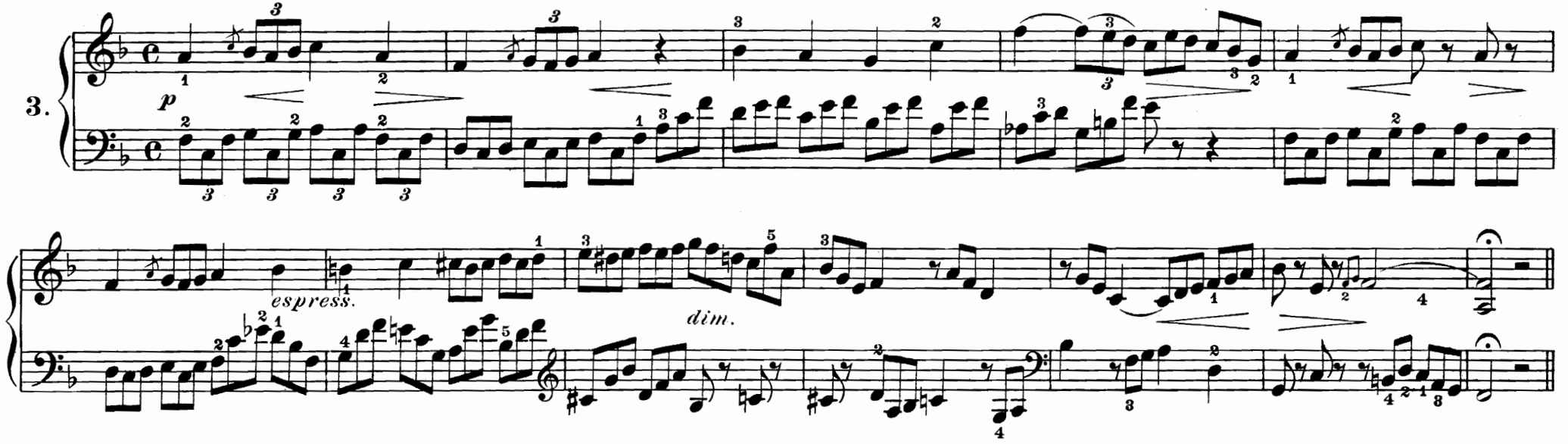
Prelude.



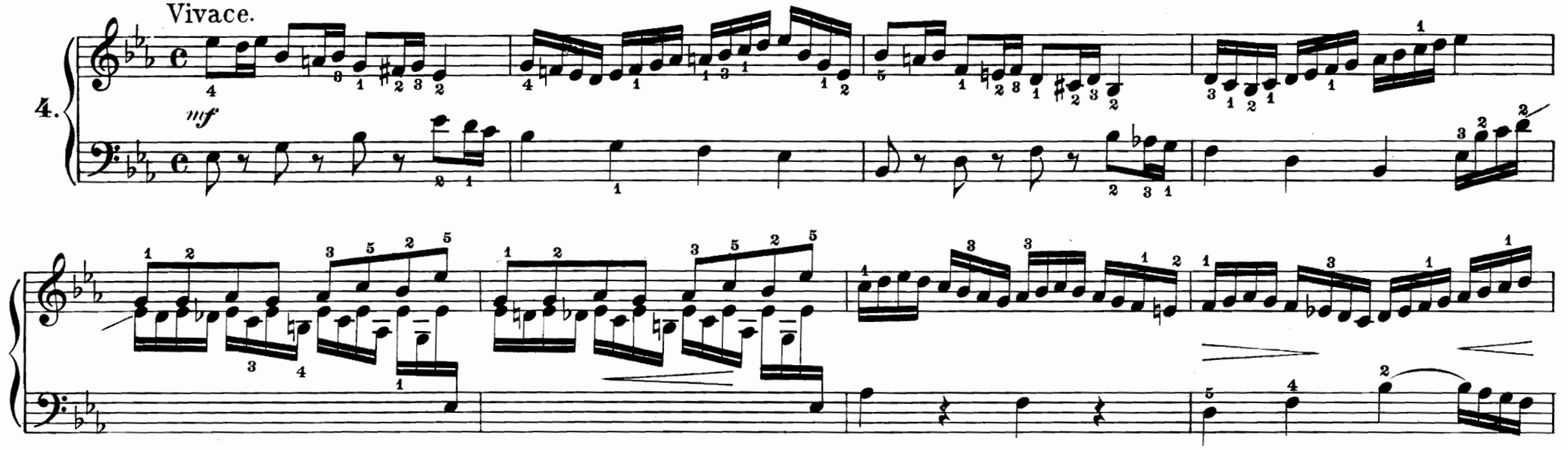
Andante.

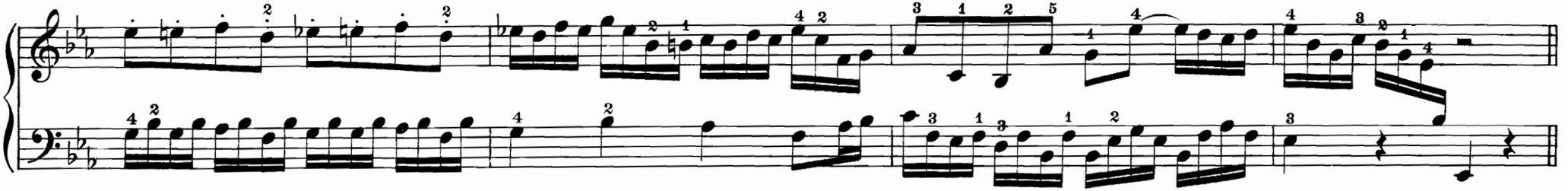


Allegretto.

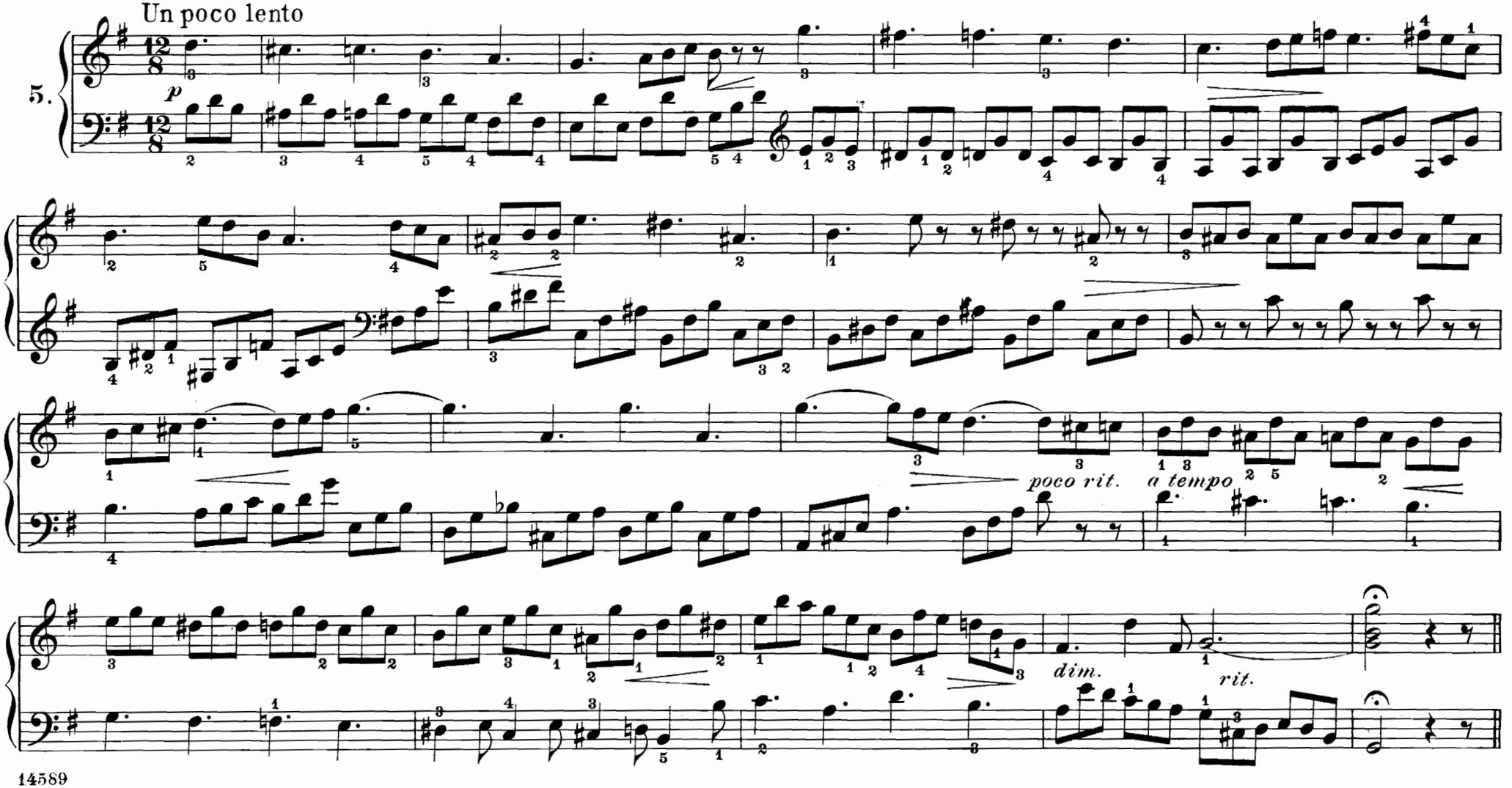


Impromtu.

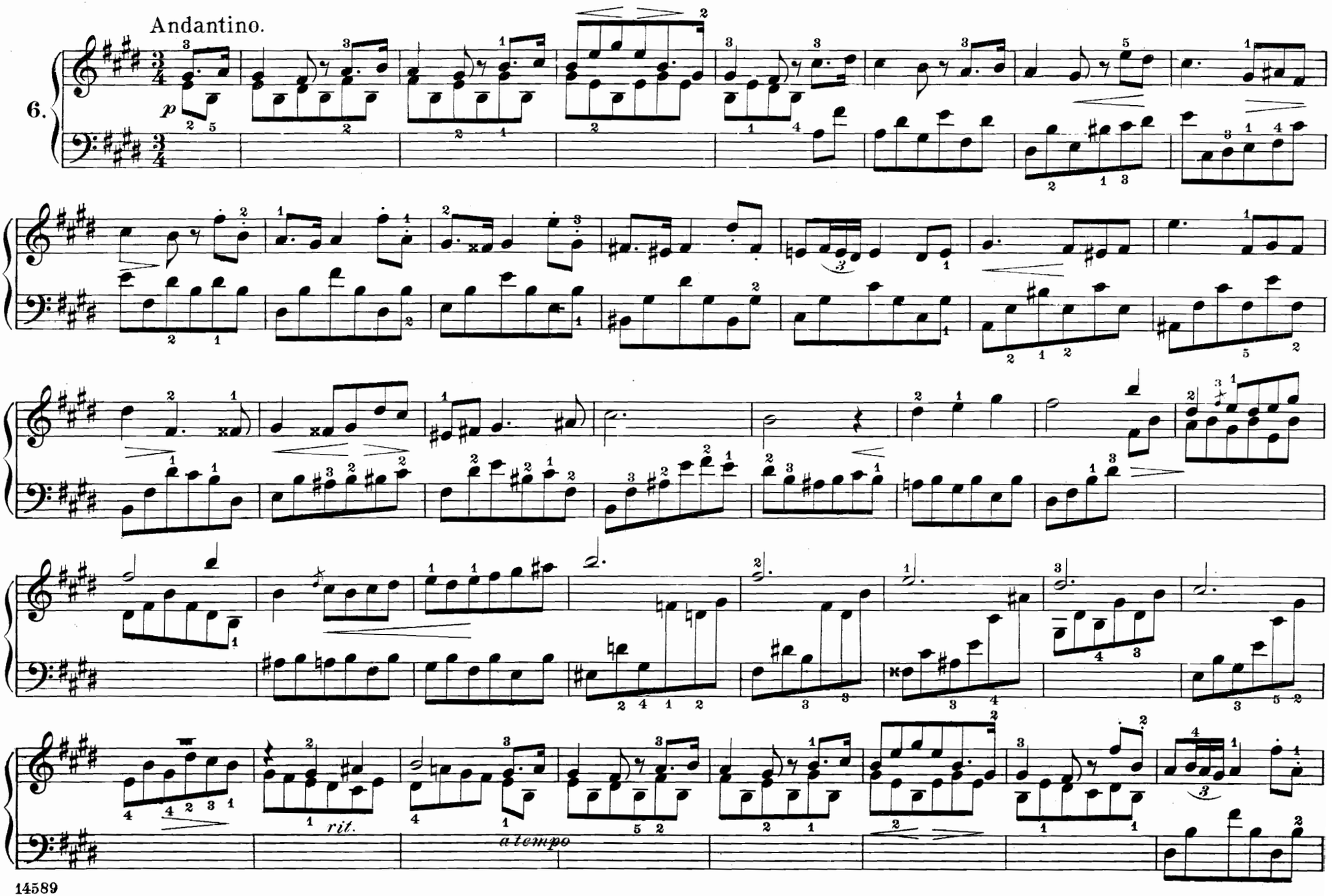


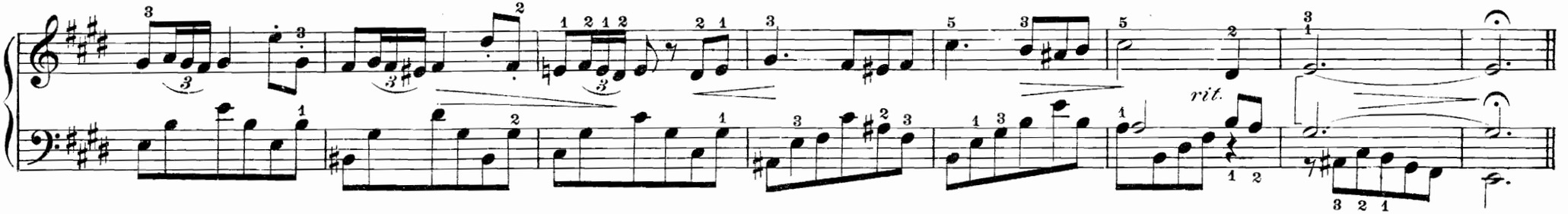


Meditation.



Menuet.





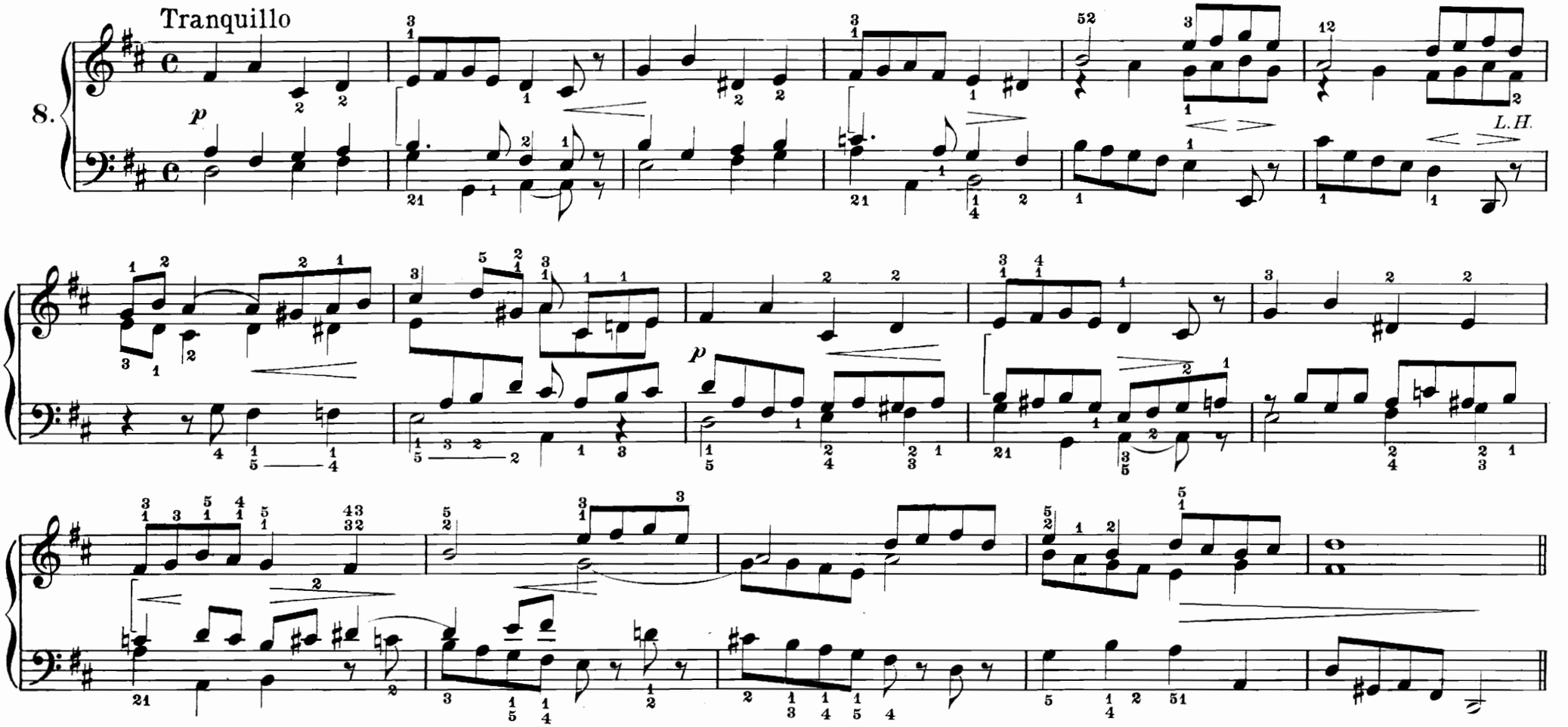
Tranquillo.

Andante

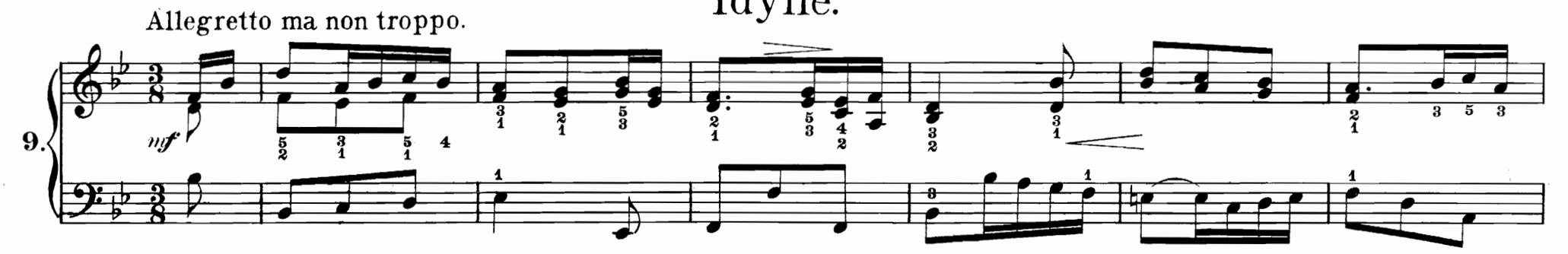
7.

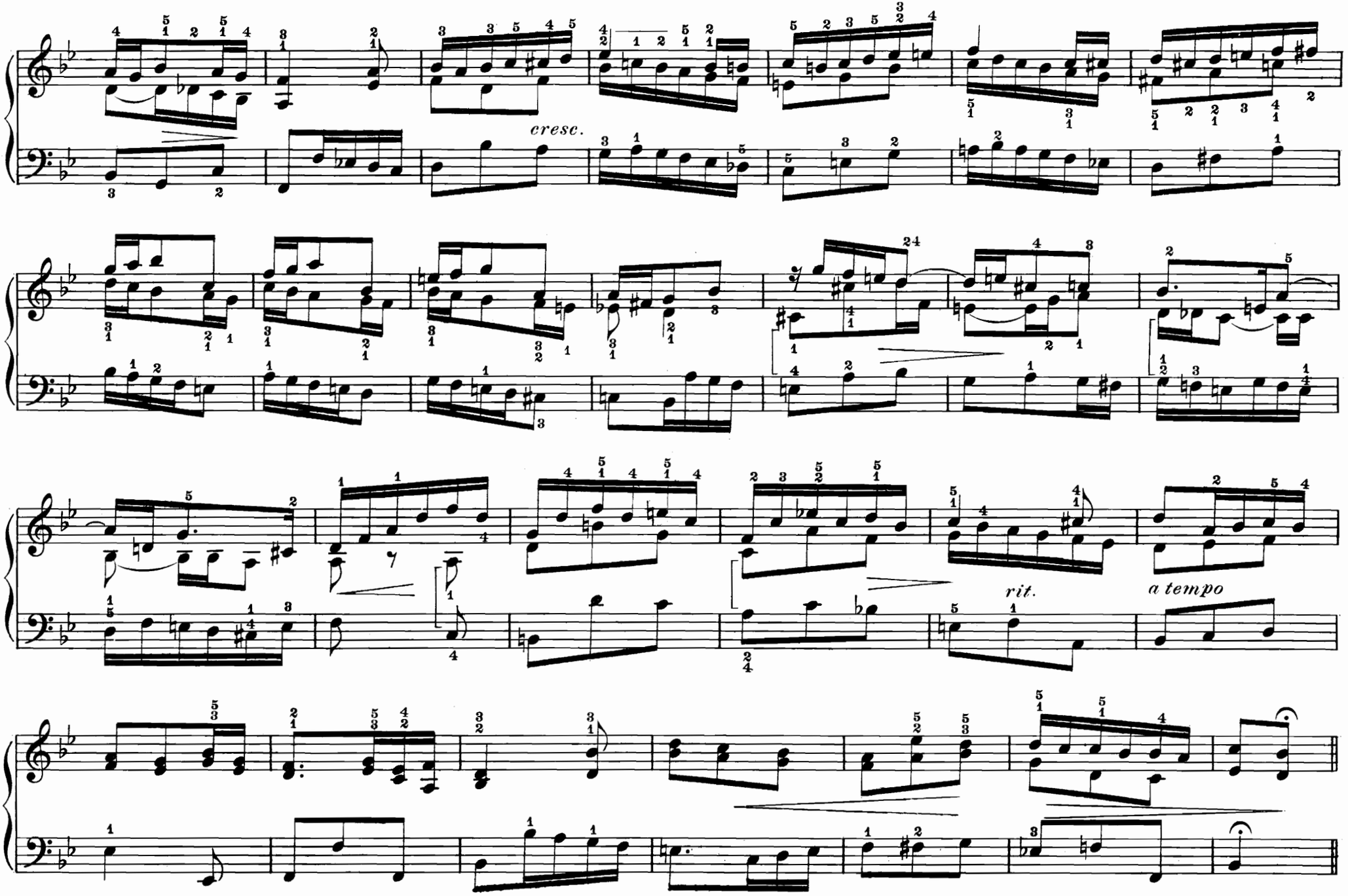
p

Albumblatt.



Idylle.





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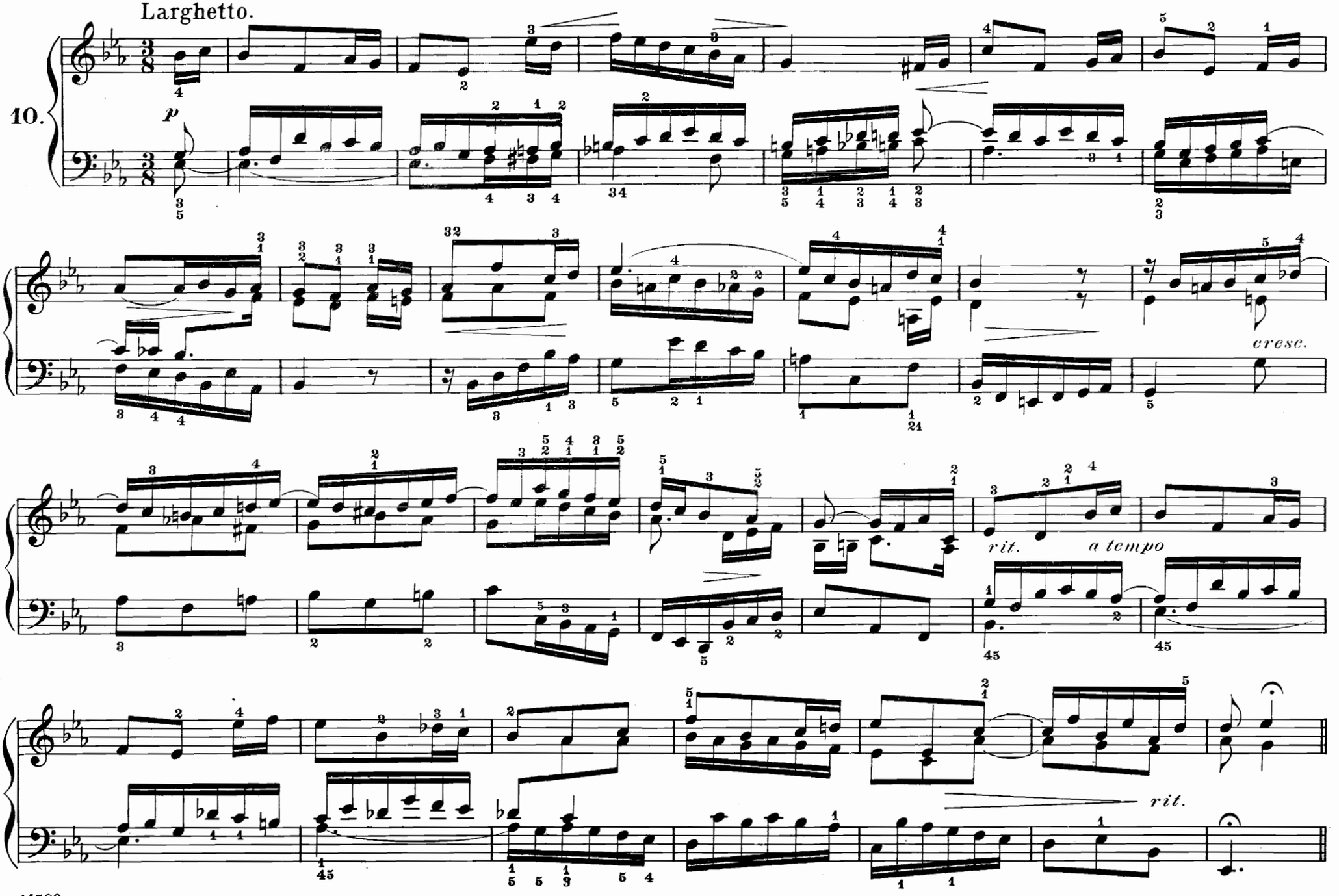
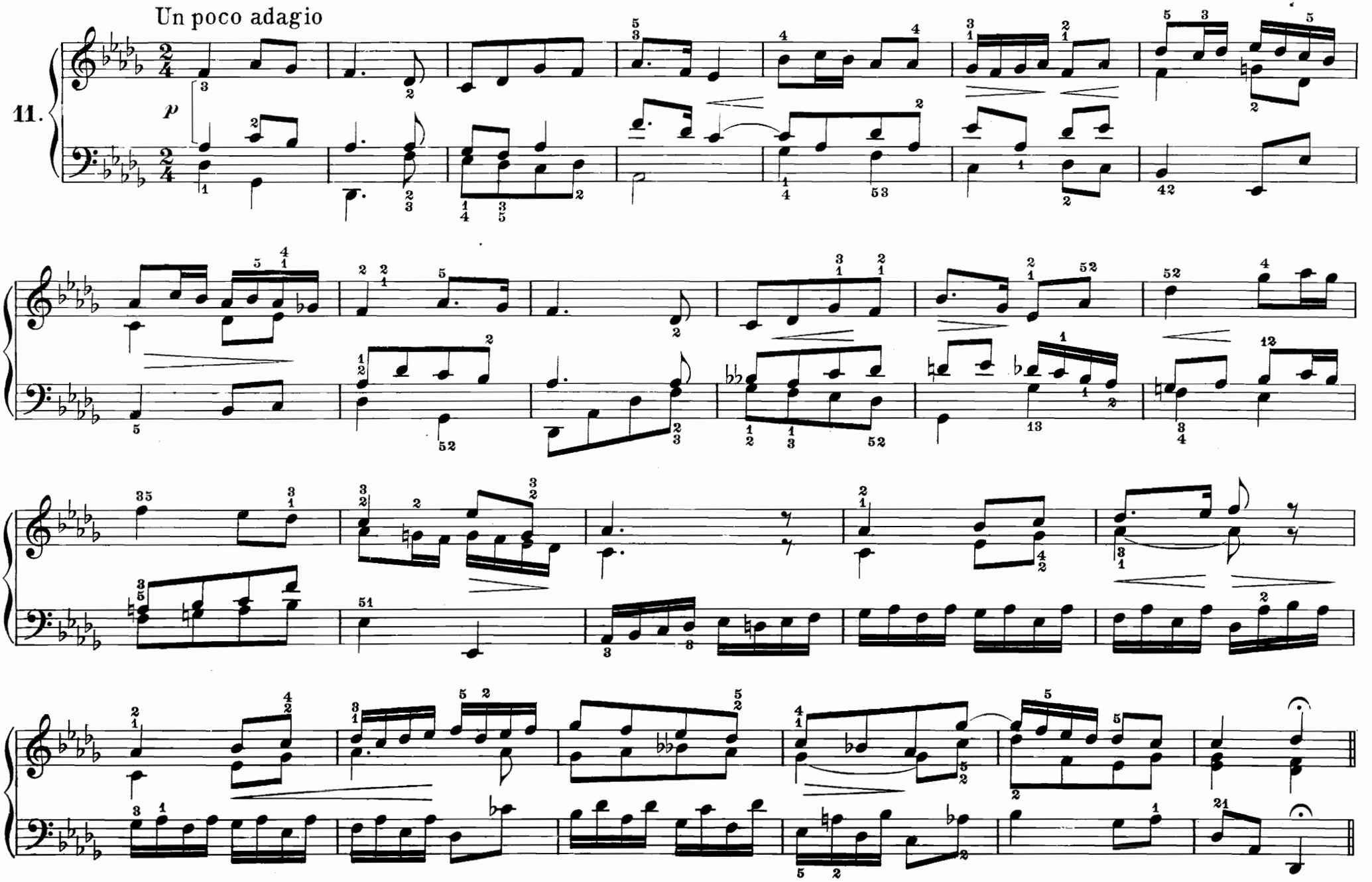
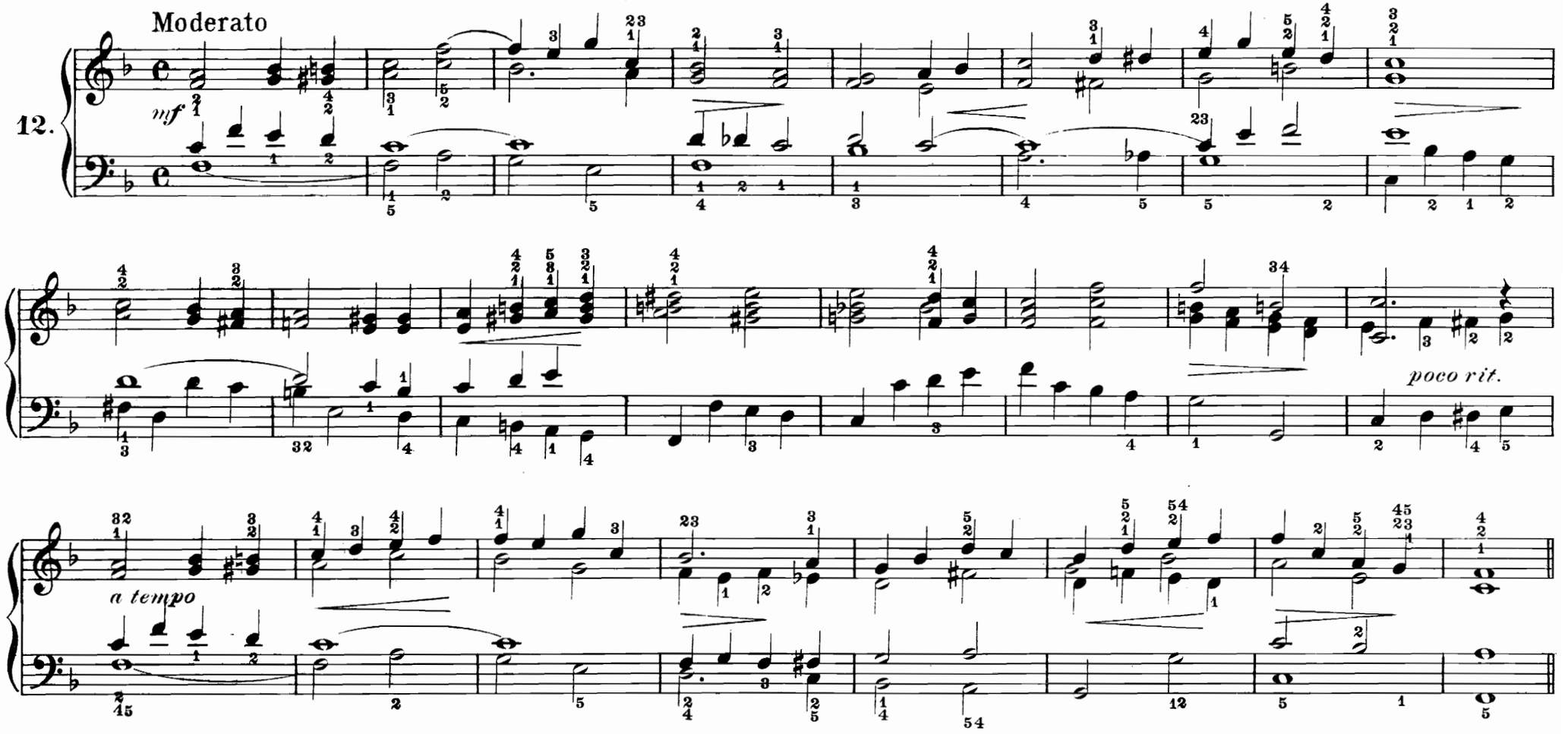
Night Song.



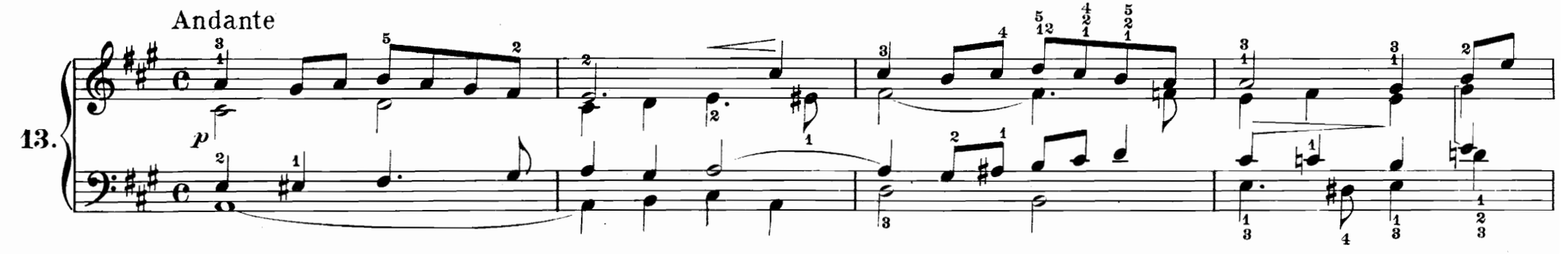
Reverie.

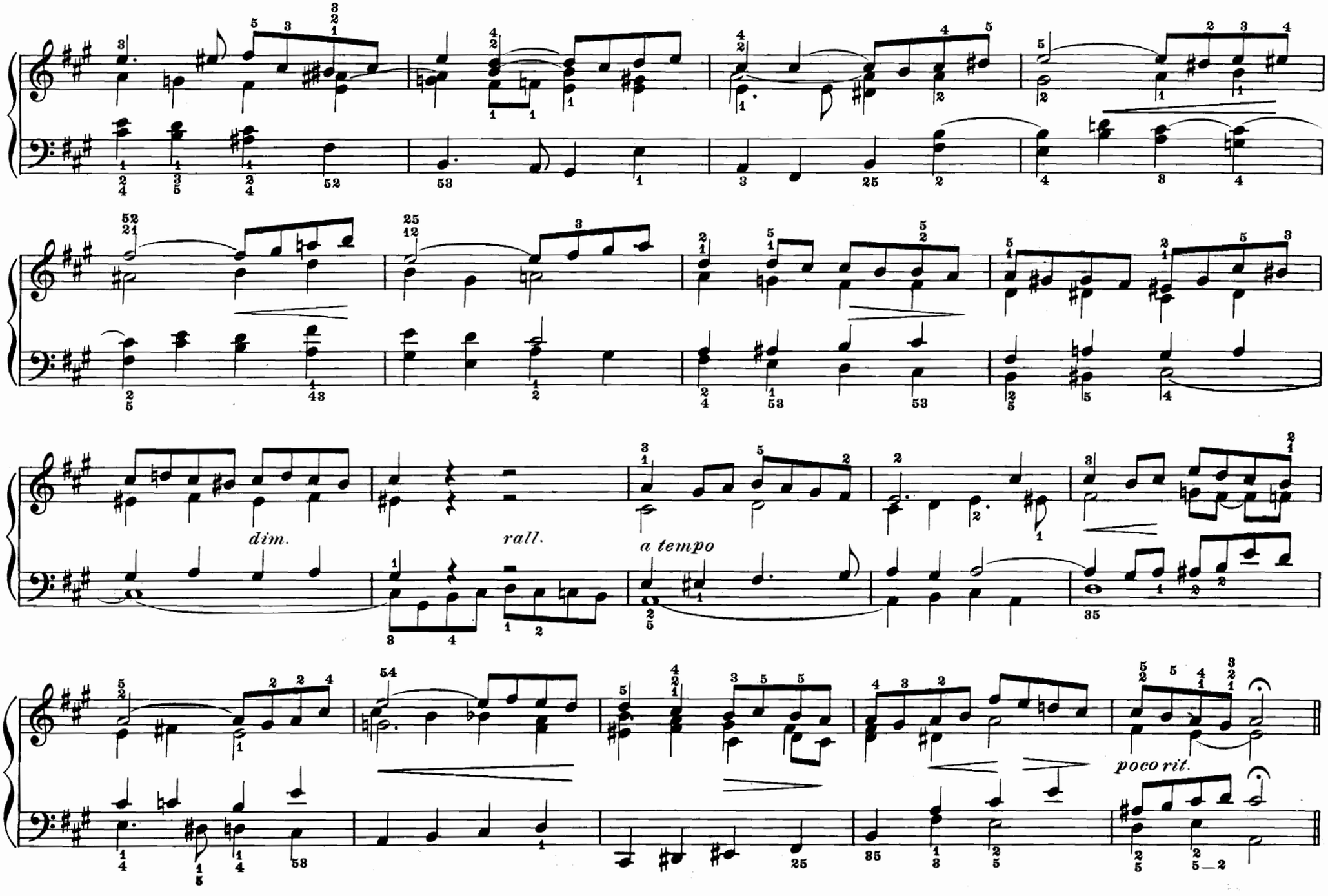


Bagatelle



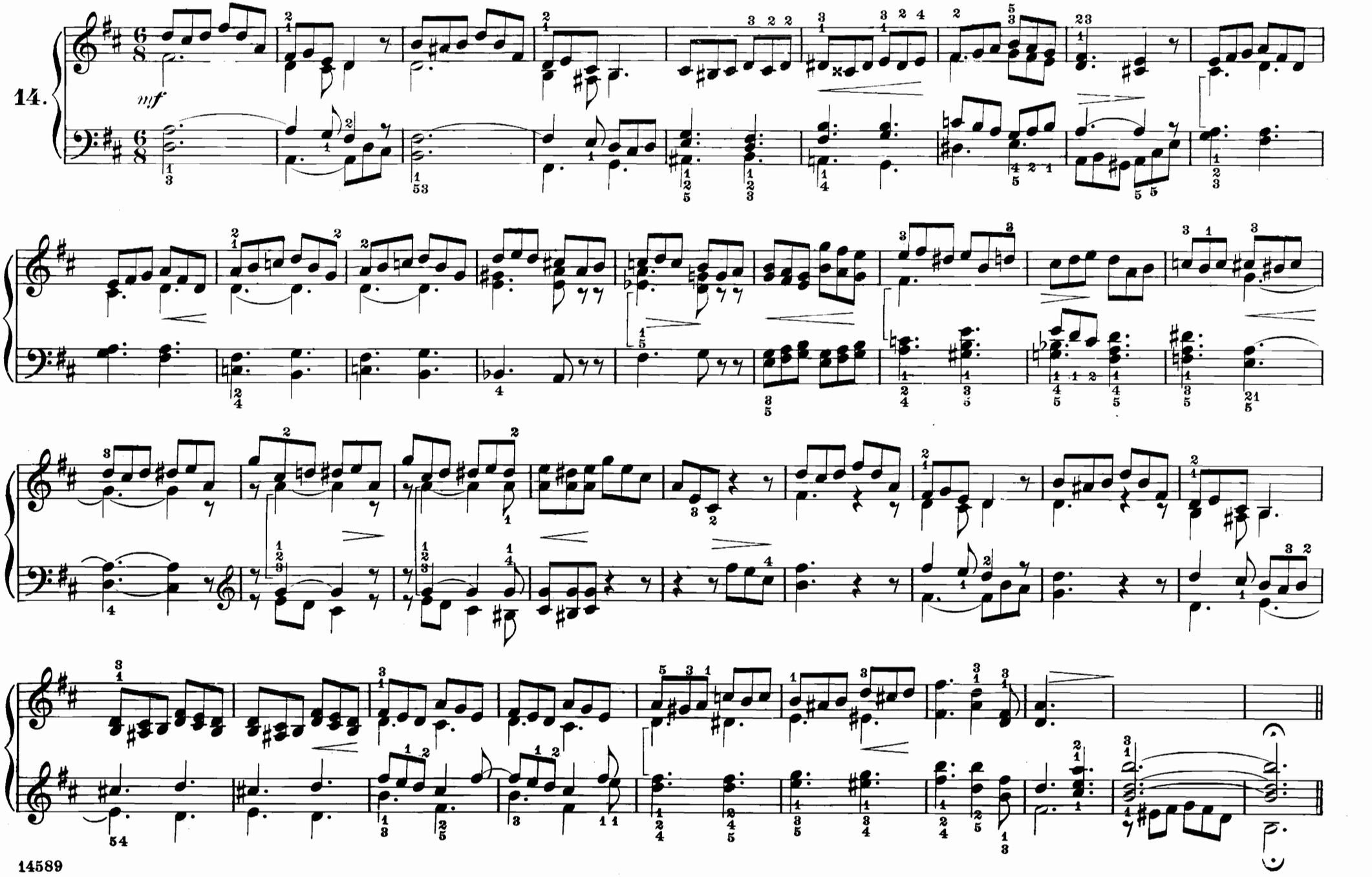
Nocturne.




dim.
rall.
a tempo
poco rit.

Scherzo.

Allegretto.



Serenata

Andante.

15.

p

dim - in - u - en - do

rit.

Cantilène.

Grazioso.

16.

p L. H.

ritenuto

THIRD SECTION.

TEN BAGATELLES FOR ONE HAND AND PEDALS.

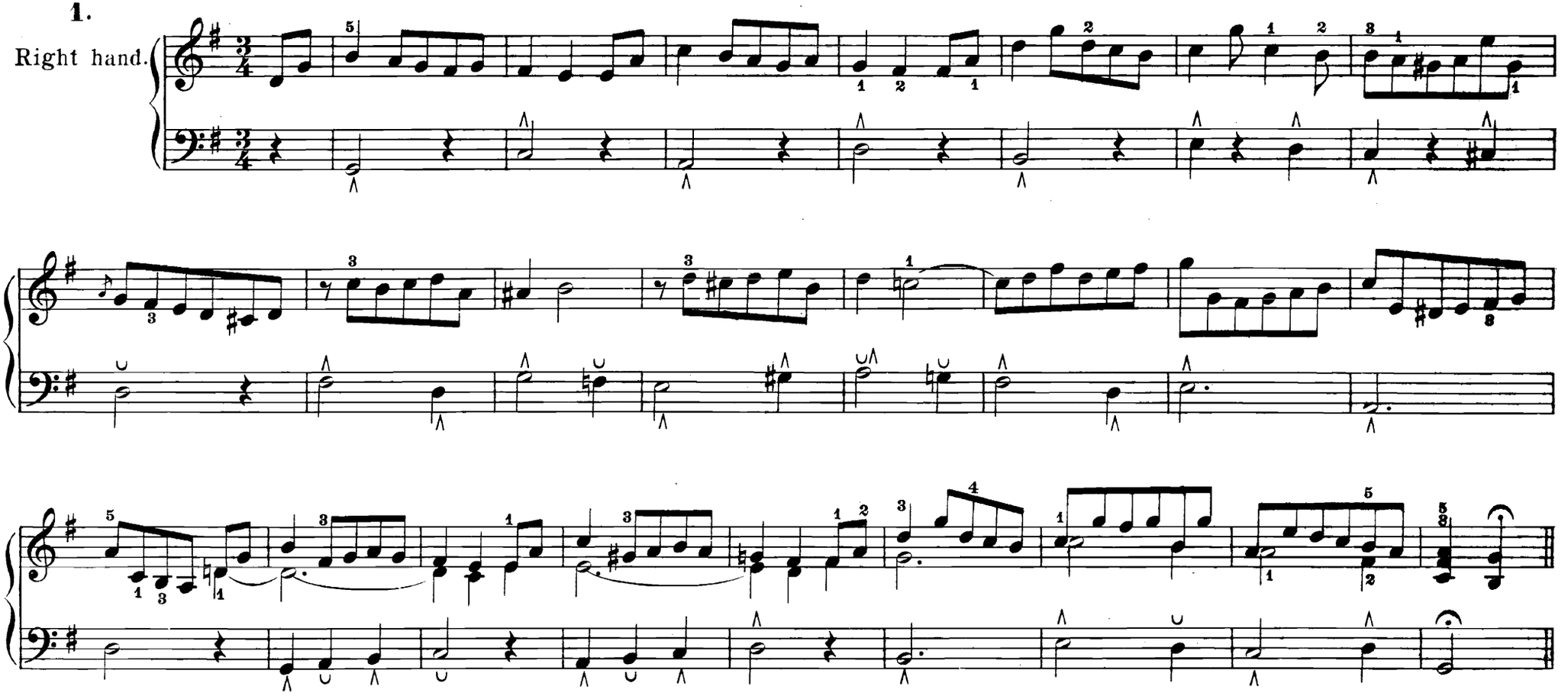
H. E. PARKHURST.

These pieces will promote the independent action of hands and feet — a difficulty that is considerably greater in the case of the left hand than of the right. The pedals can be coupled either to the manual used by the hand, or to any other, but there must be an equal balance of tone. The registration can be varied in the different pieces, with the use of only the softer stops throughout, and with no 16 ft. pedal stop.

Andantino.

1.

Right hand.



Reverie.

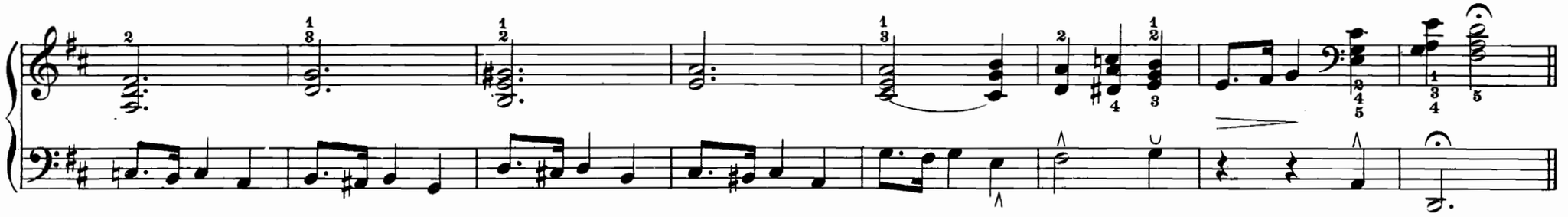
2.

Left hand.

Un poco lento.

cresc.

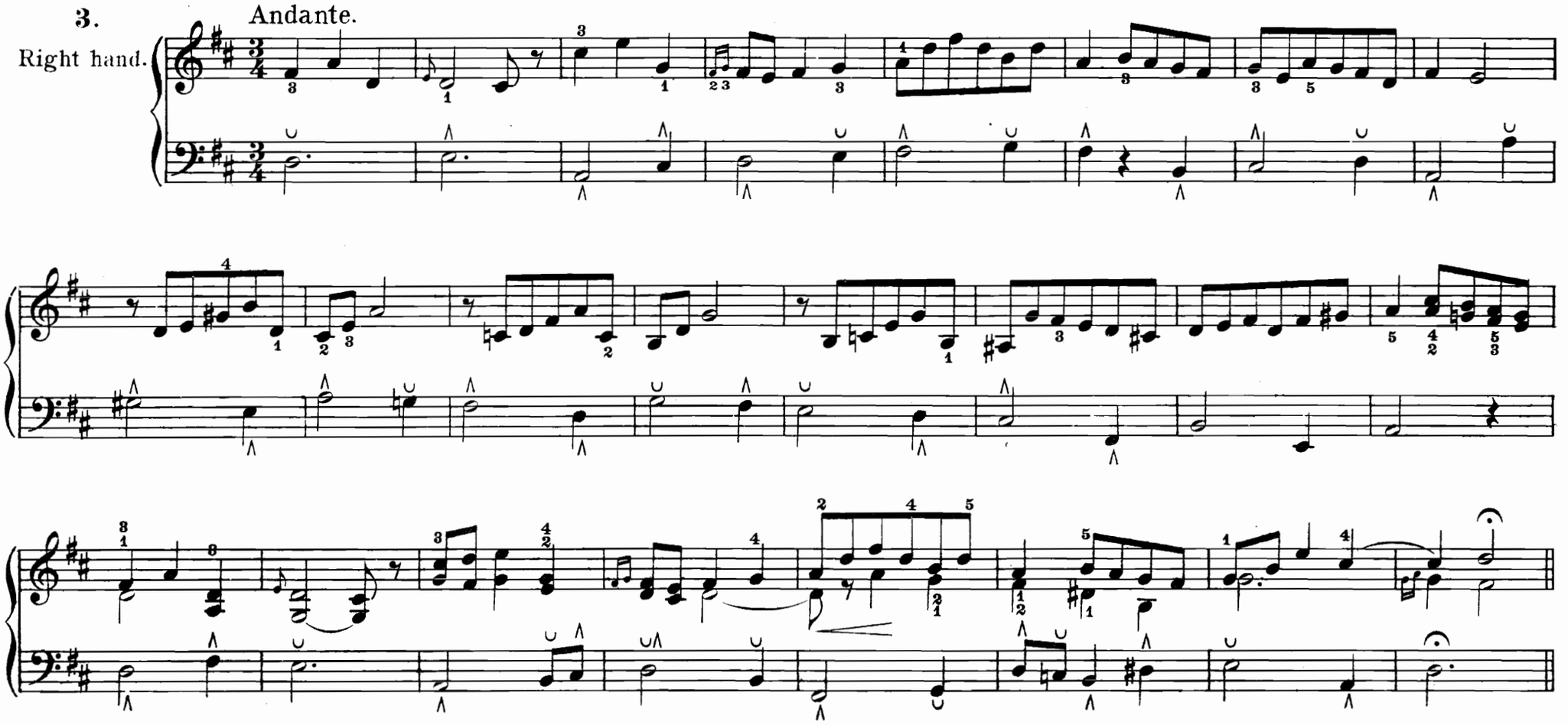
dim.



Impromptu.

3. Andante.

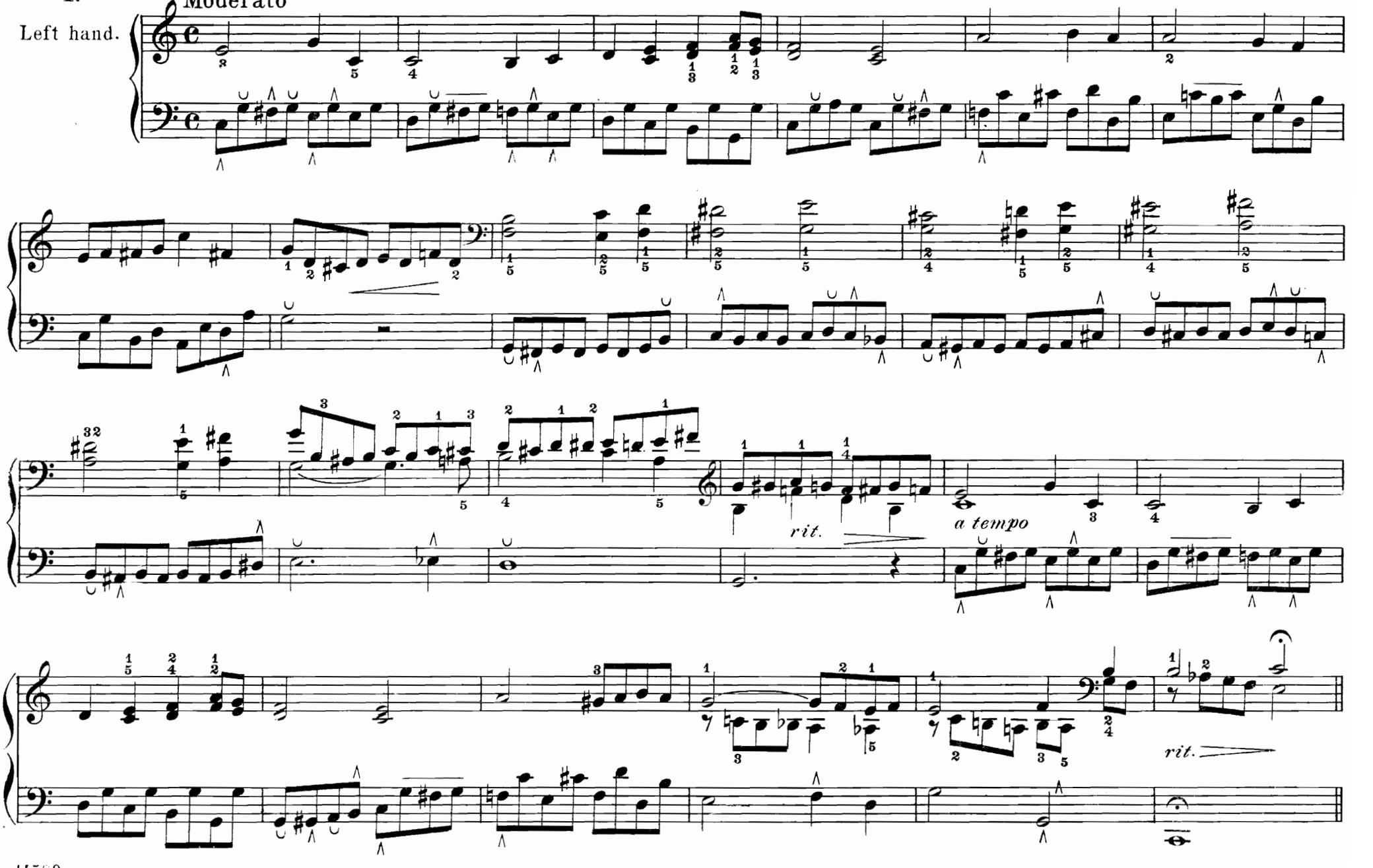
Right hand.



Melodie.

4.

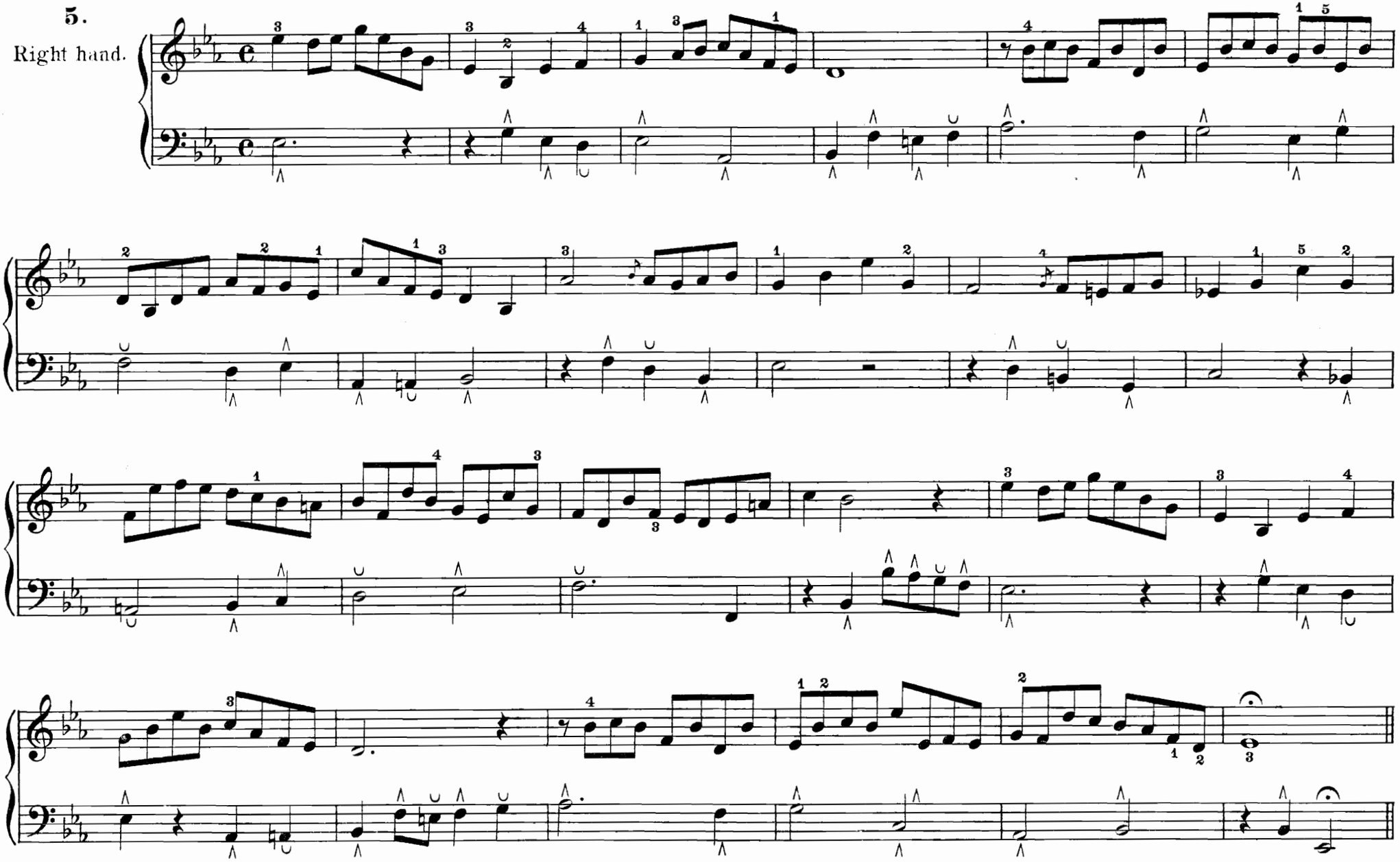
Left hand.



Allegretto.

5.

Right hand.

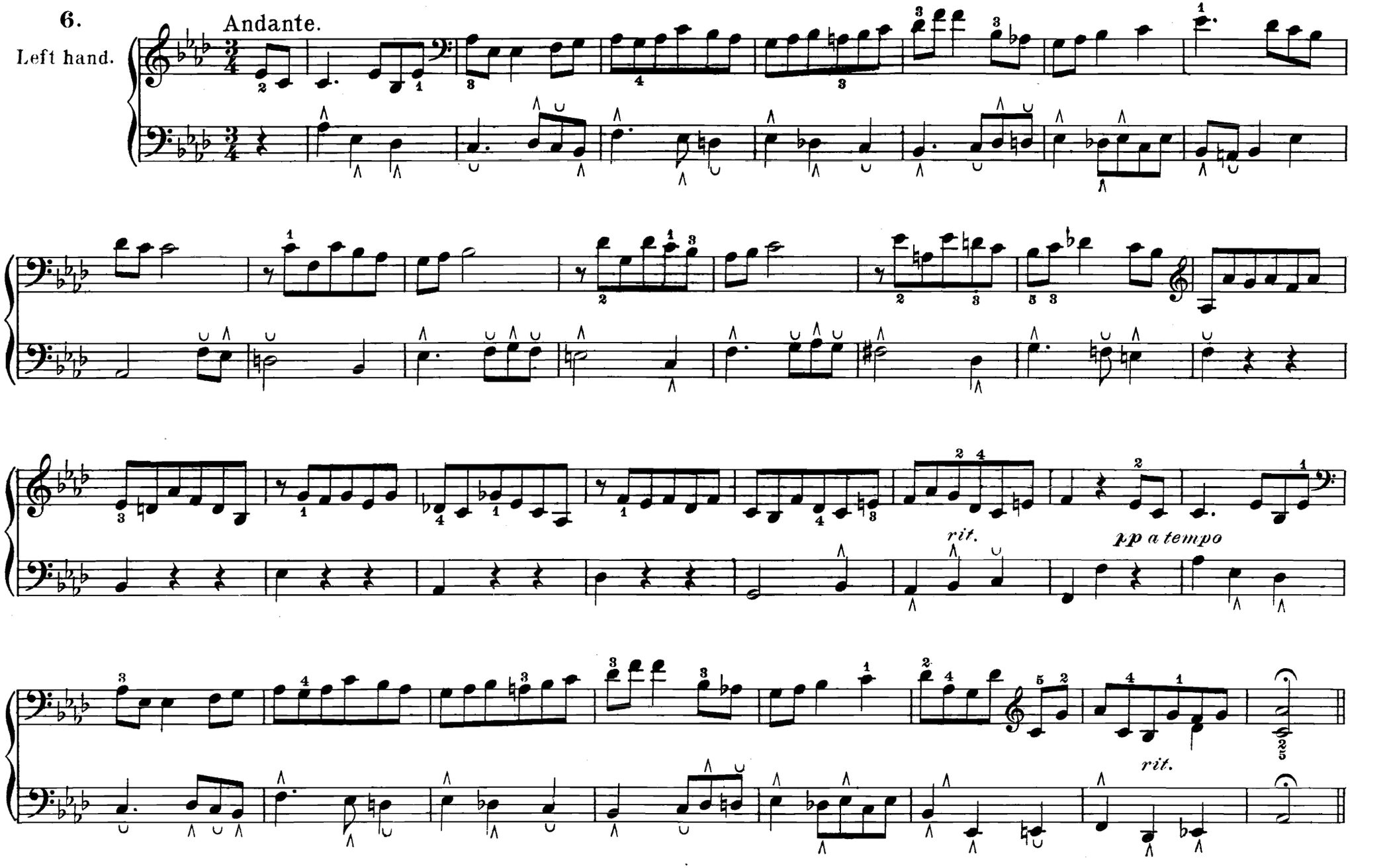


Meditation.

6.

Left hand.

Andante.

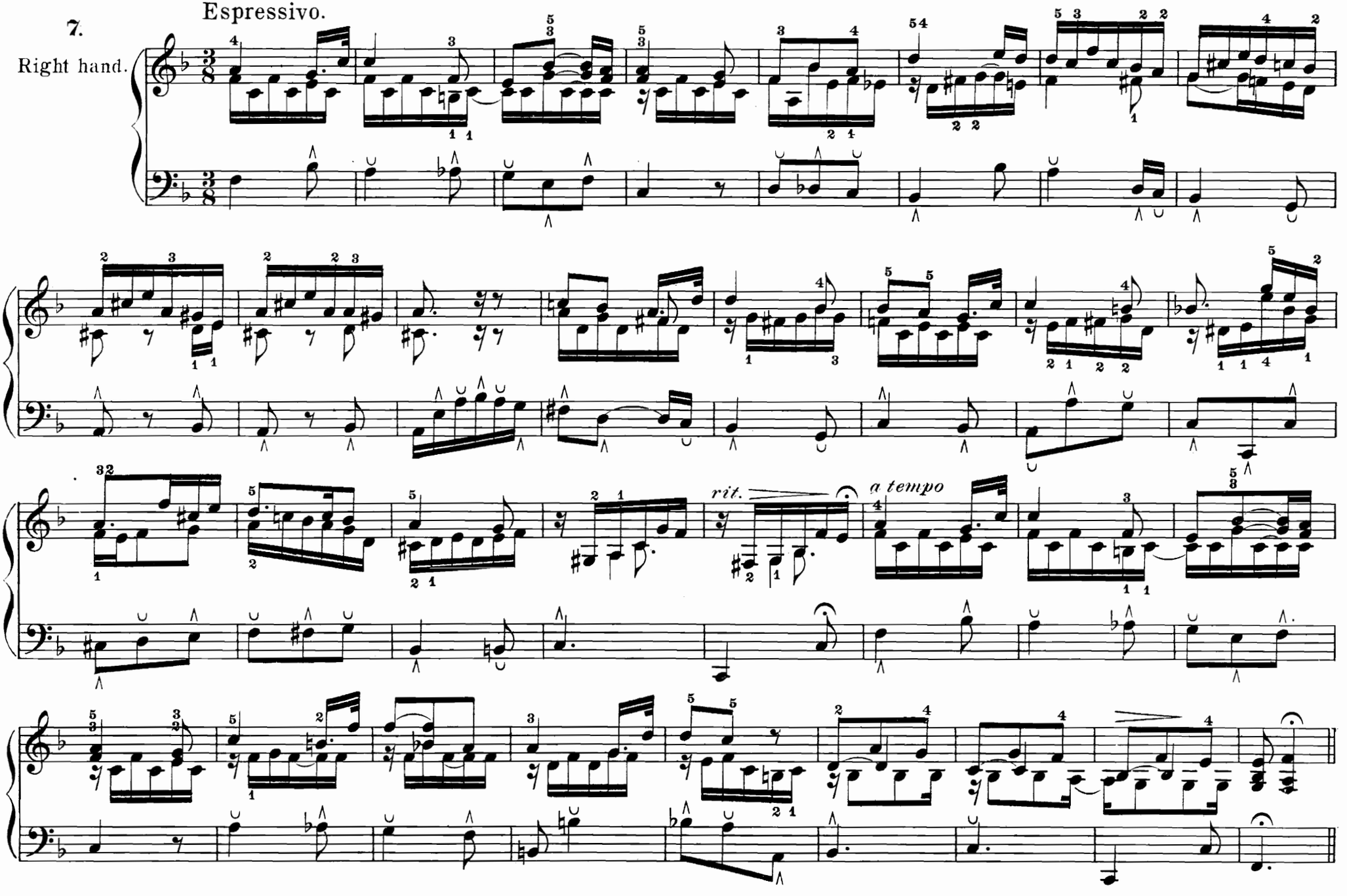


Remembrance.

7.

Espressivo.

Right hand.

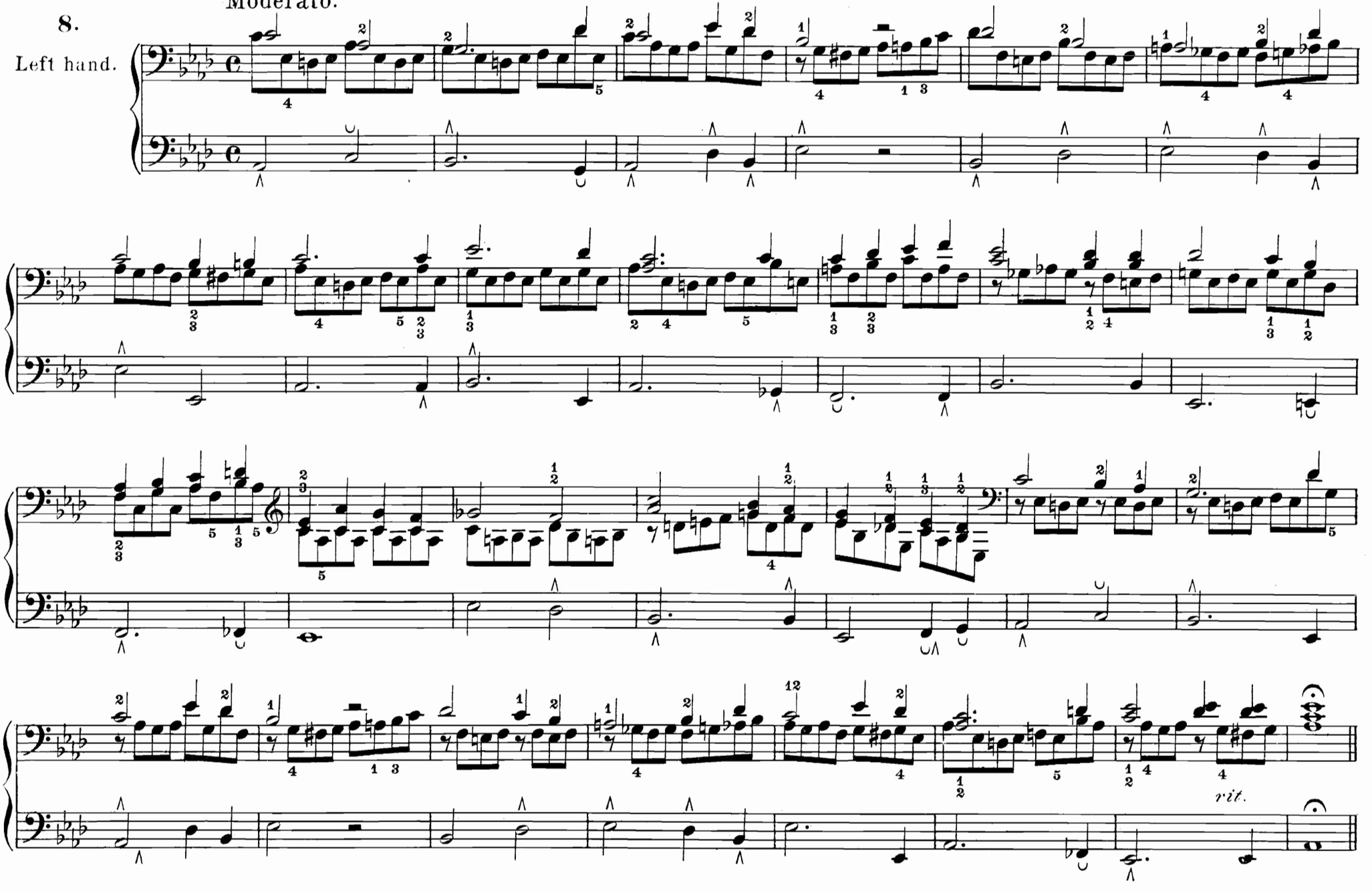


Etude

Moderato.

8.

Left hand.

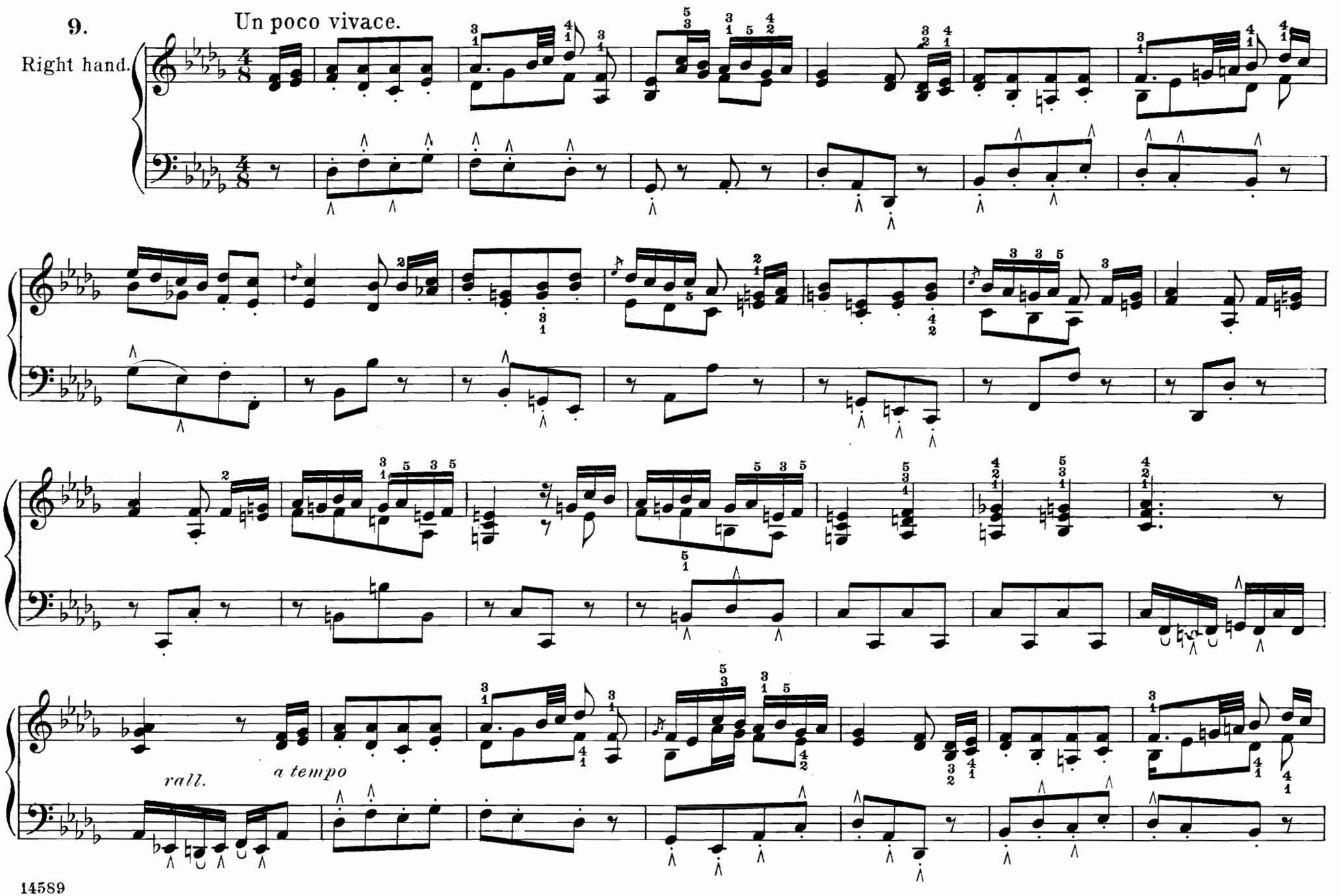


Gavotte.

9.

Un poco vivace.

Right hand.



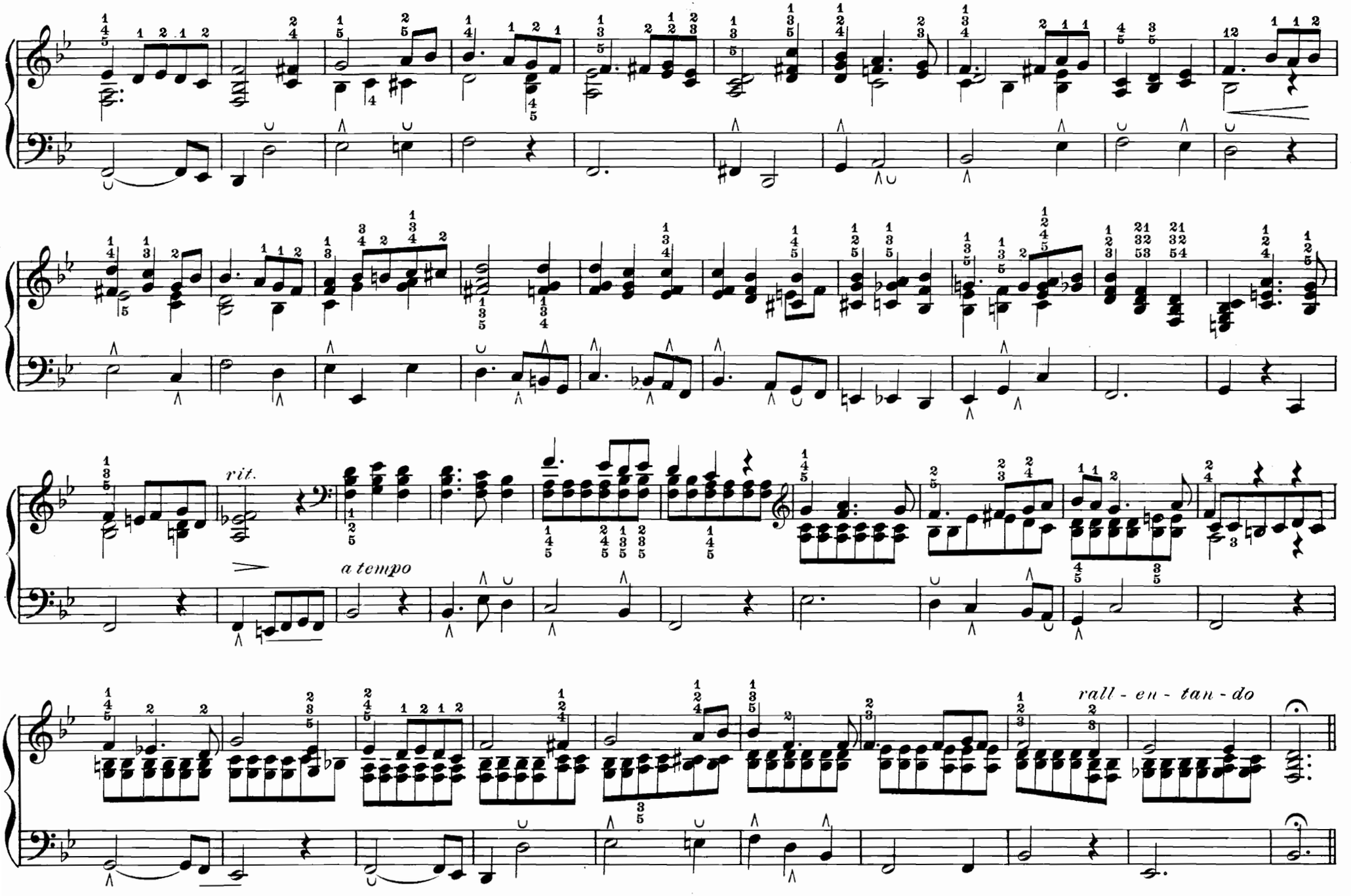
rall.

Serenade.

10.

Andante e serioso.

Left hand.


rit.
a tempo
rall - en - tan - do

FOURTH SECTION.

FIFTEEN TRIOS FOR TWO MANUALS AND PEDAL.

H. E. PARKHURST.

In the performance of these Trios, every combination of the different key boards can be used — Great and Choir, Great and Swell, Choir and Swell — with such selections of stops as will give proper balance of tone and contrast of color.

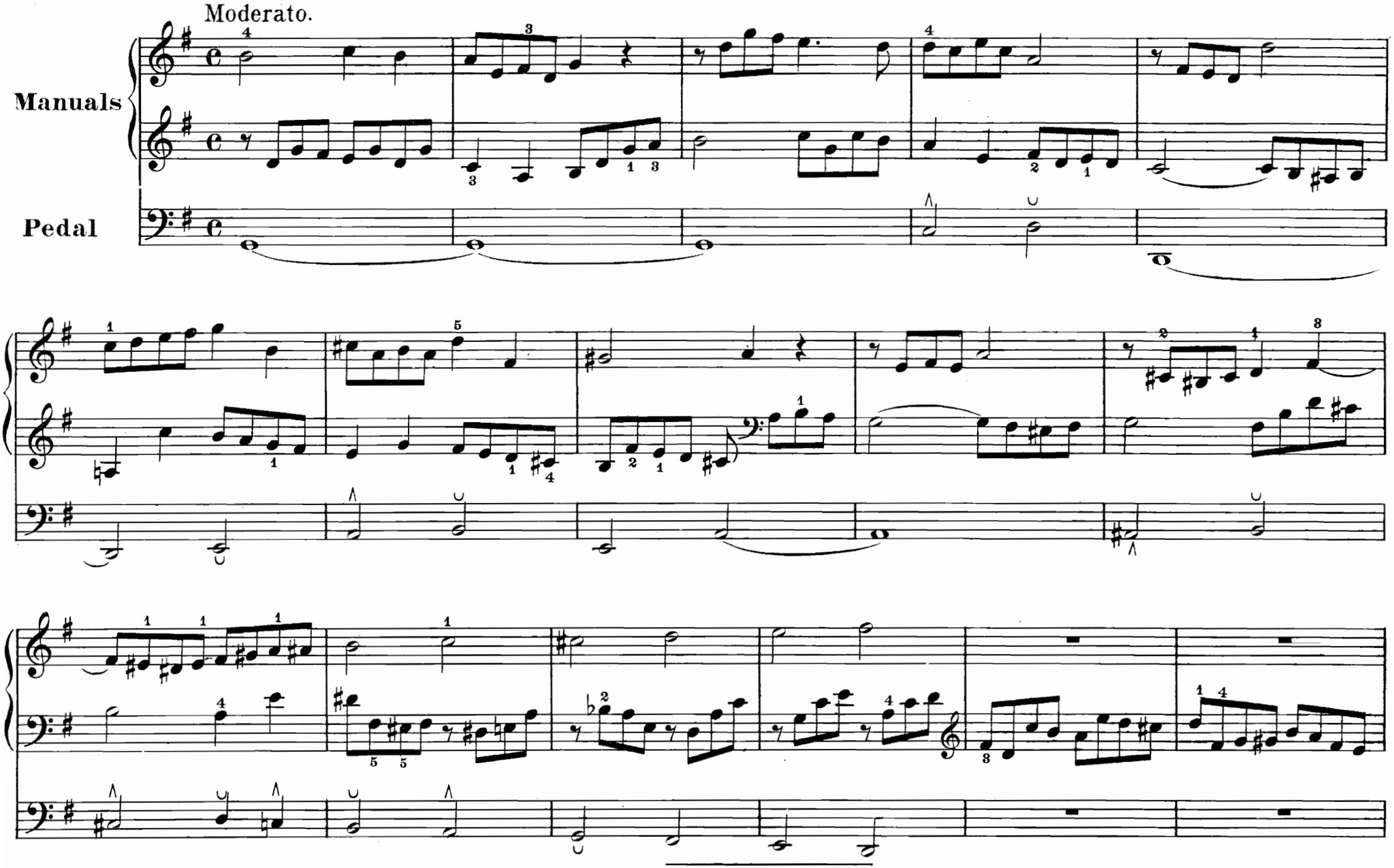
At the point marked * near the close of most of the Trios, a change of key board can be introduced, either by reversing the hands on the manuals used up to that point, or by using the third manual for the right hand. The pedal should be coupled to the manual used by the left hand, with the addition of a soft 16 ft. pedal stop. Careful attention should be given to the fingering and to the pedal marks, to ensure the most perfect legato in all parts.

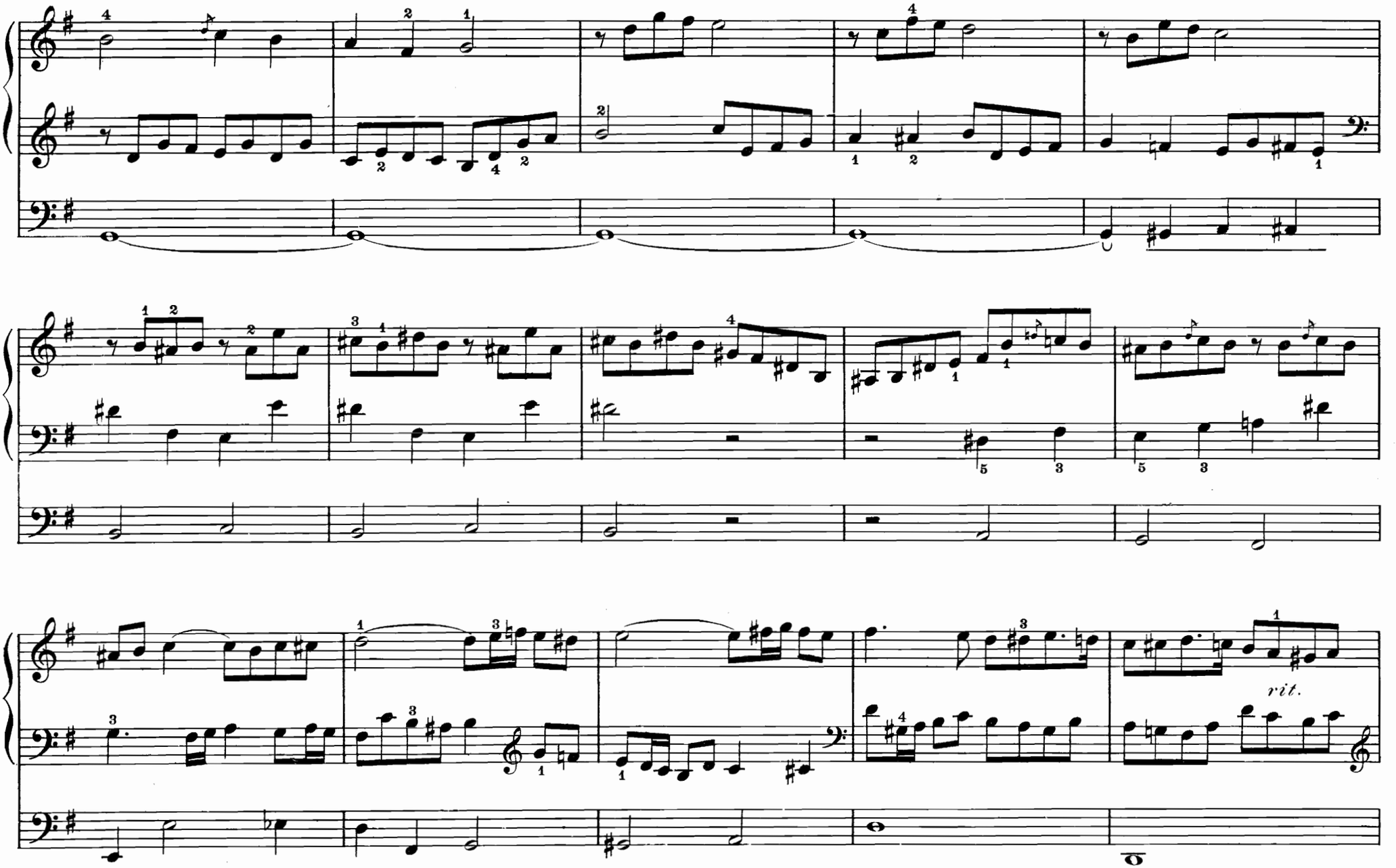
The terms "Andante," "Allegro," etc., at the beginning of these Trios and of all subsequent Studies, suggest the proper tempo for their most effective performance after they have been fully learned. But at first everything should be practised *very slowly*, and the tempo gradually increased only as one can maintain the same accuracy. It is the worst and commonest fault of pupils to practice their lesson too fast.

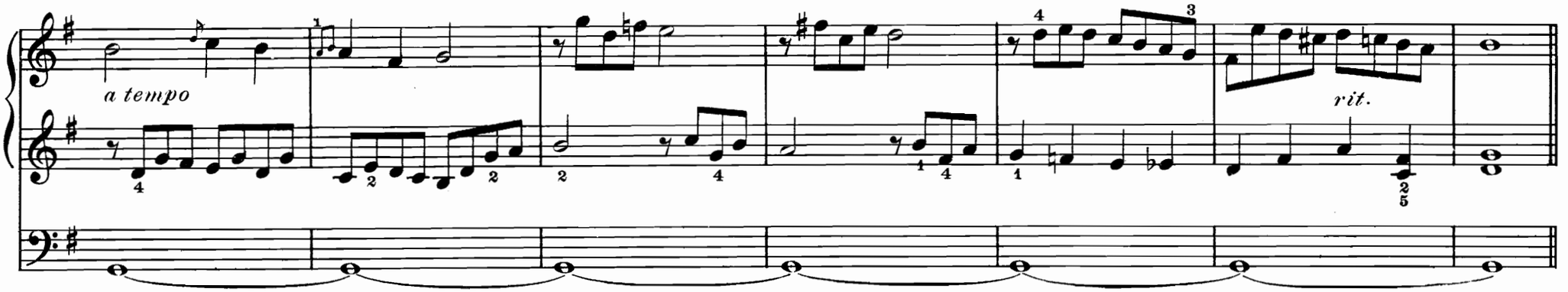
It is advised to postpone the most difficult of these Trios for later practice.

1. Prelude.

H. E. P.

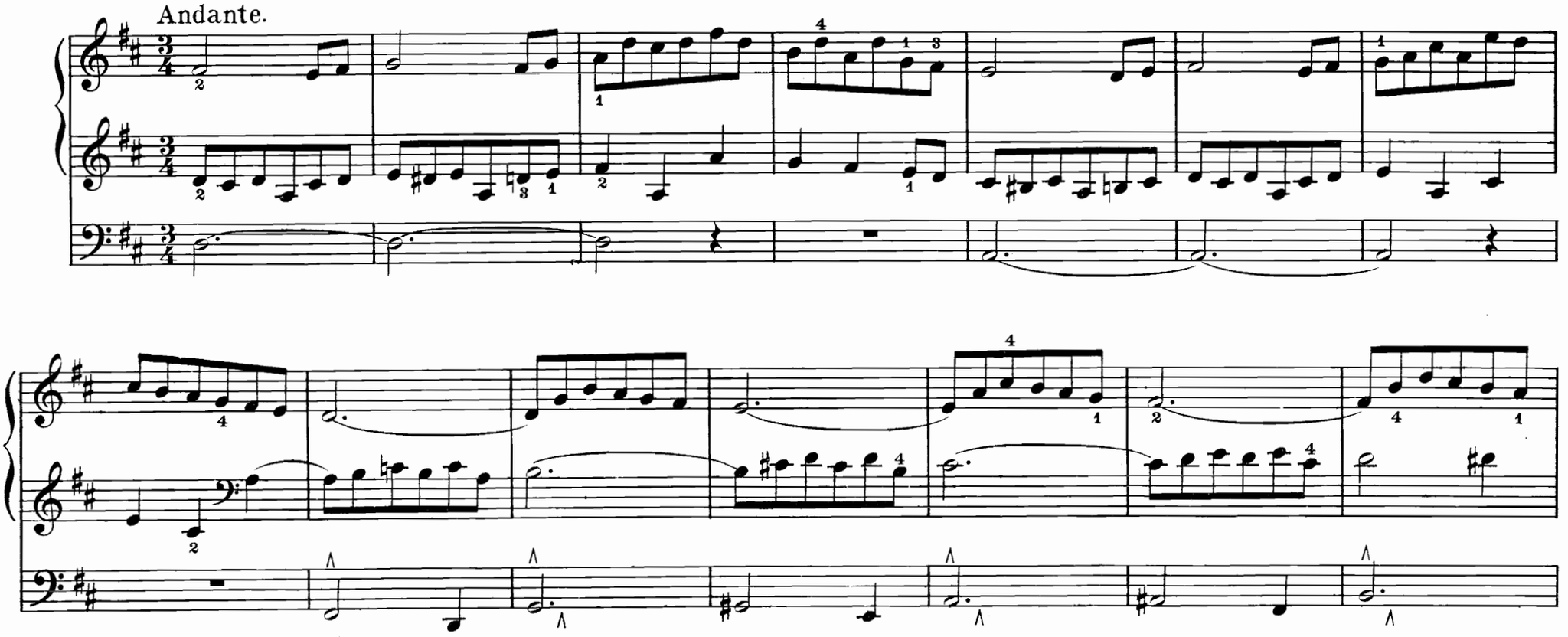


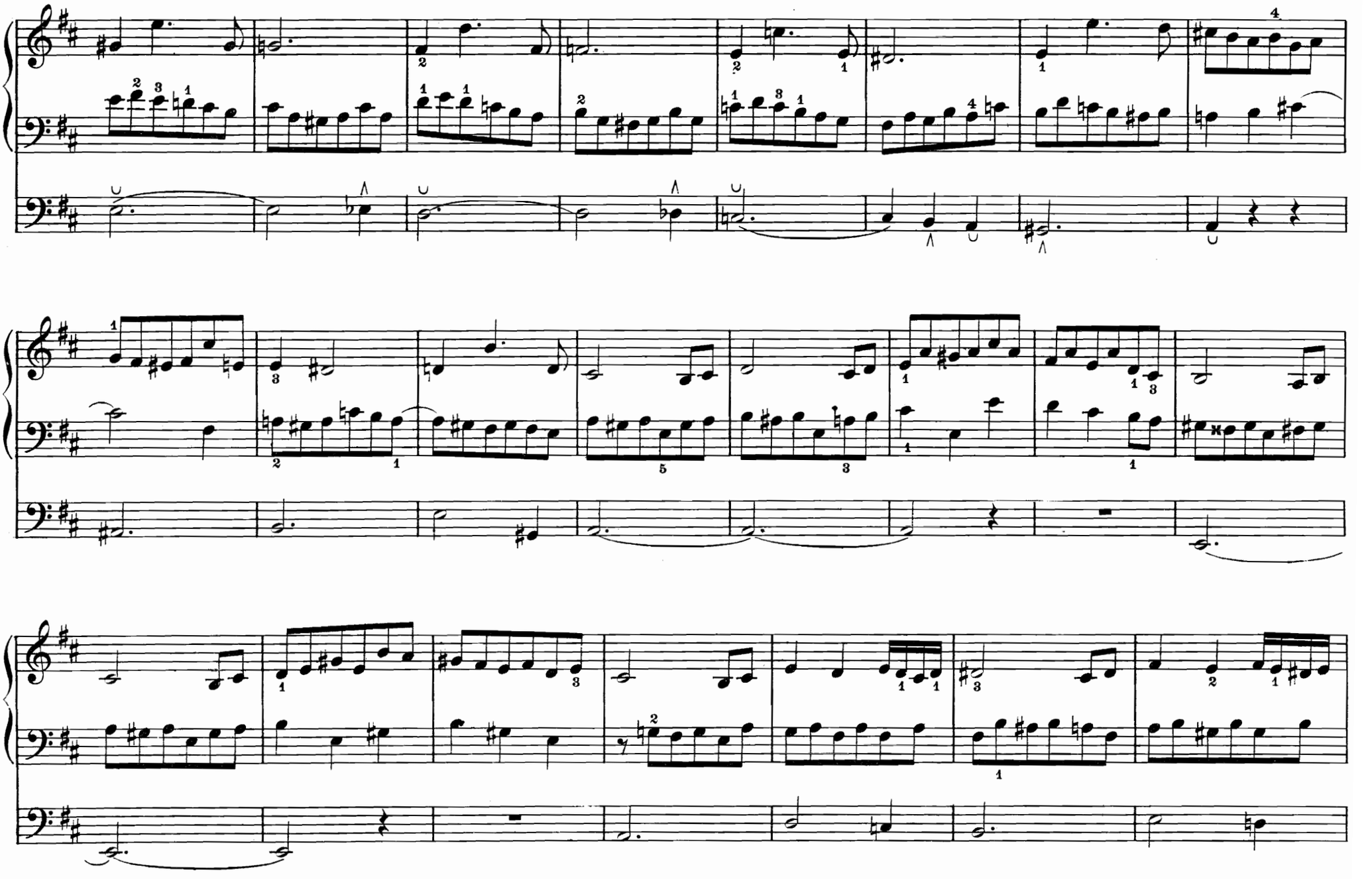

rit.

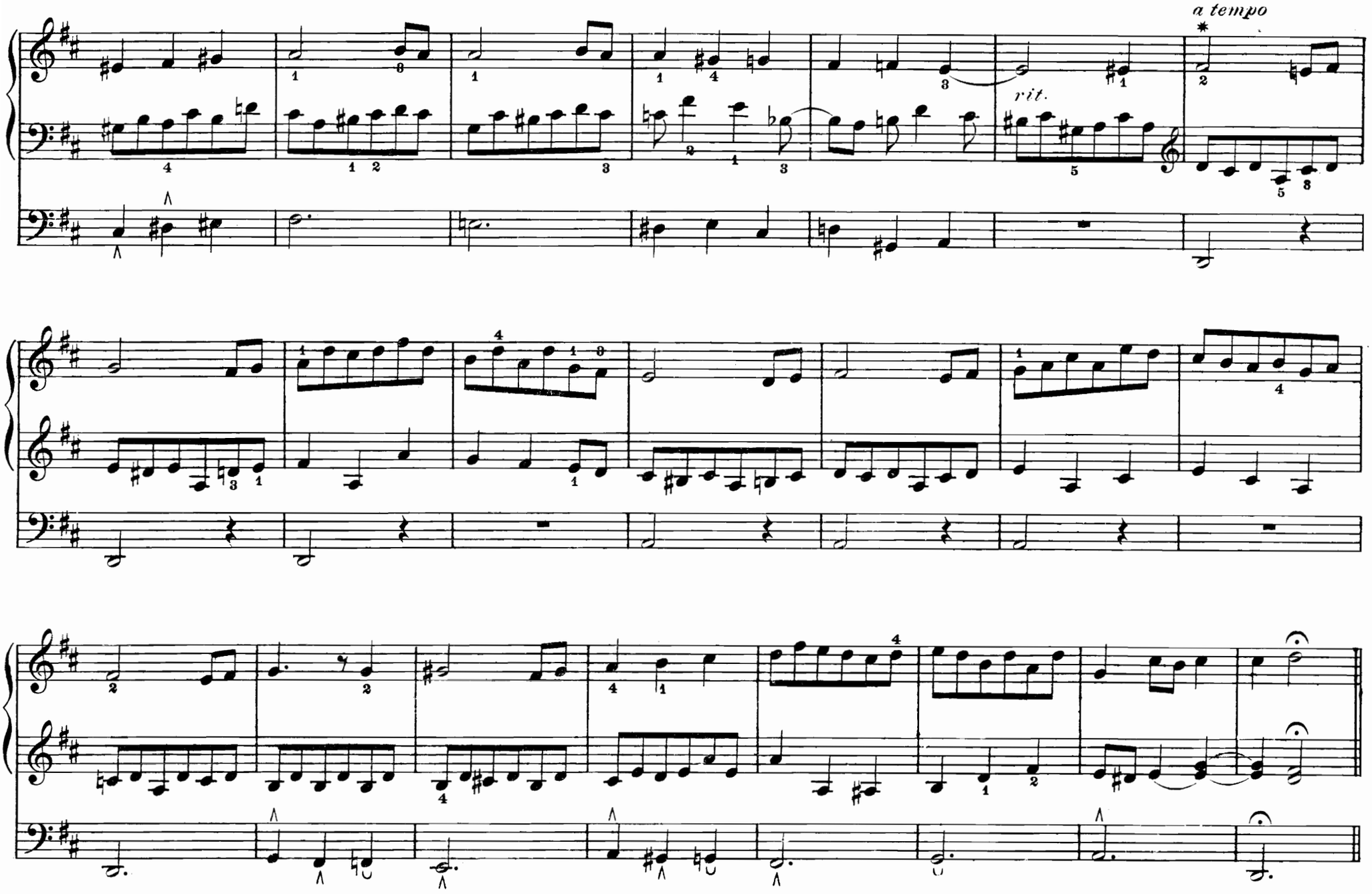


2. Meditation.

H. E. P.

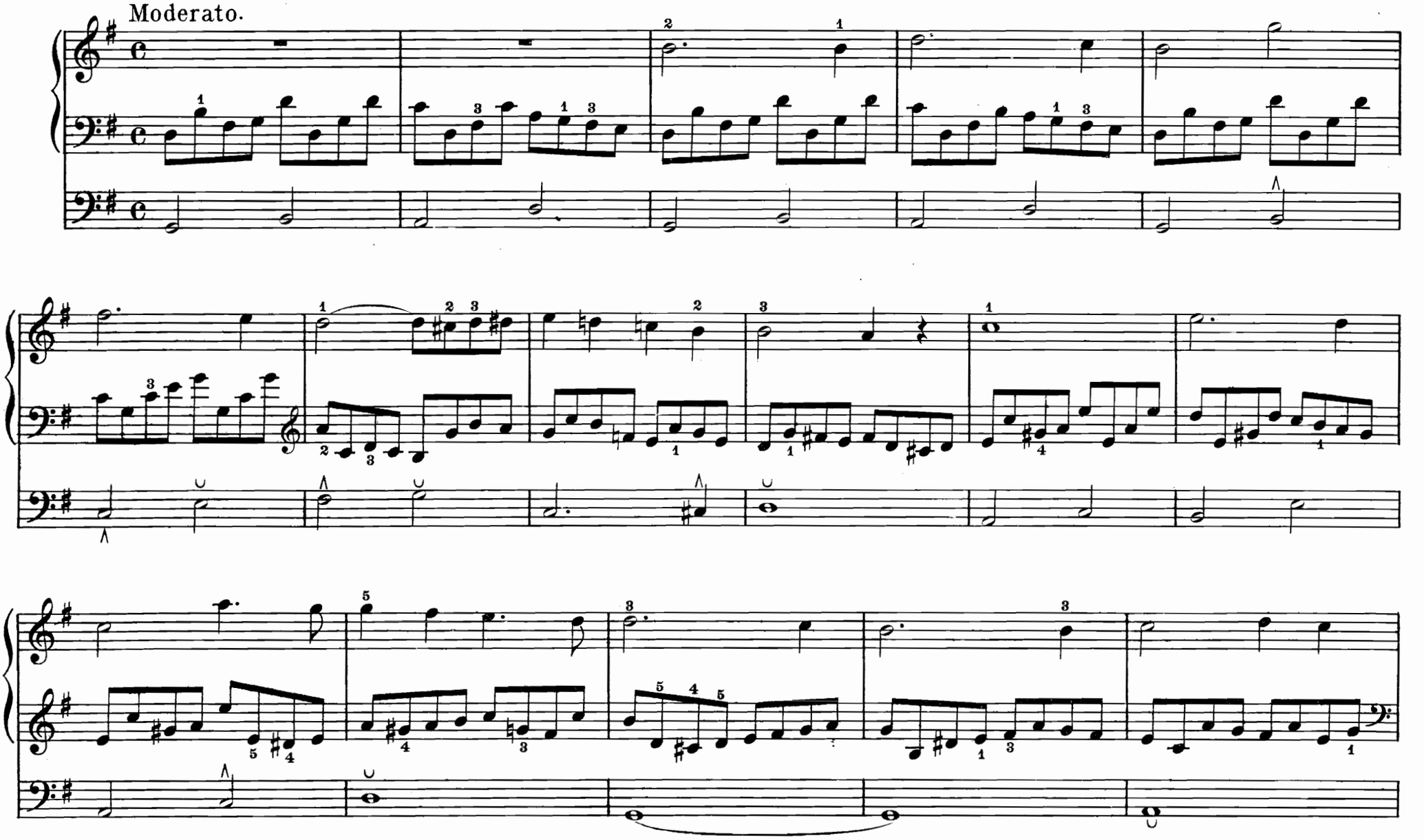


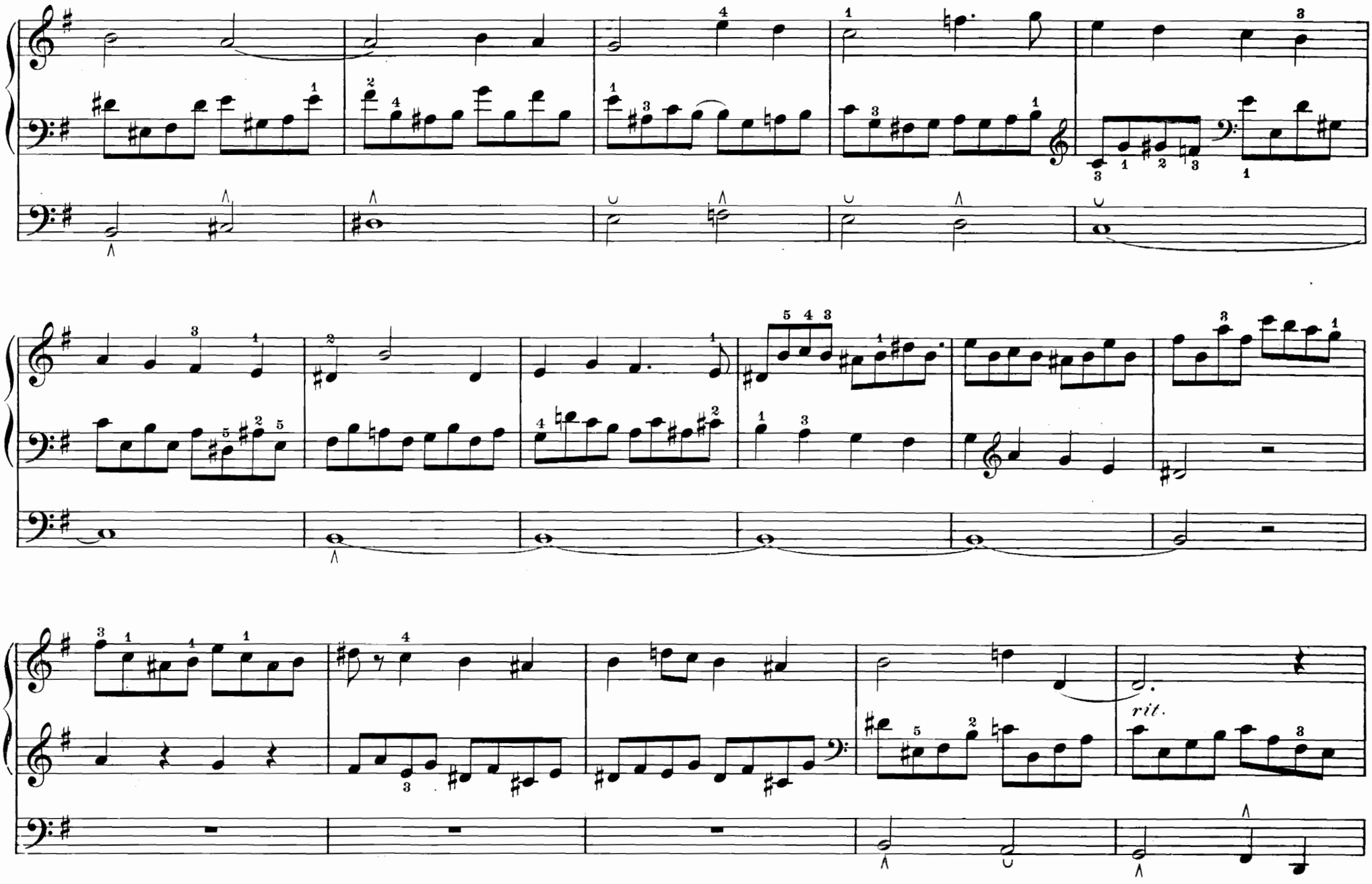


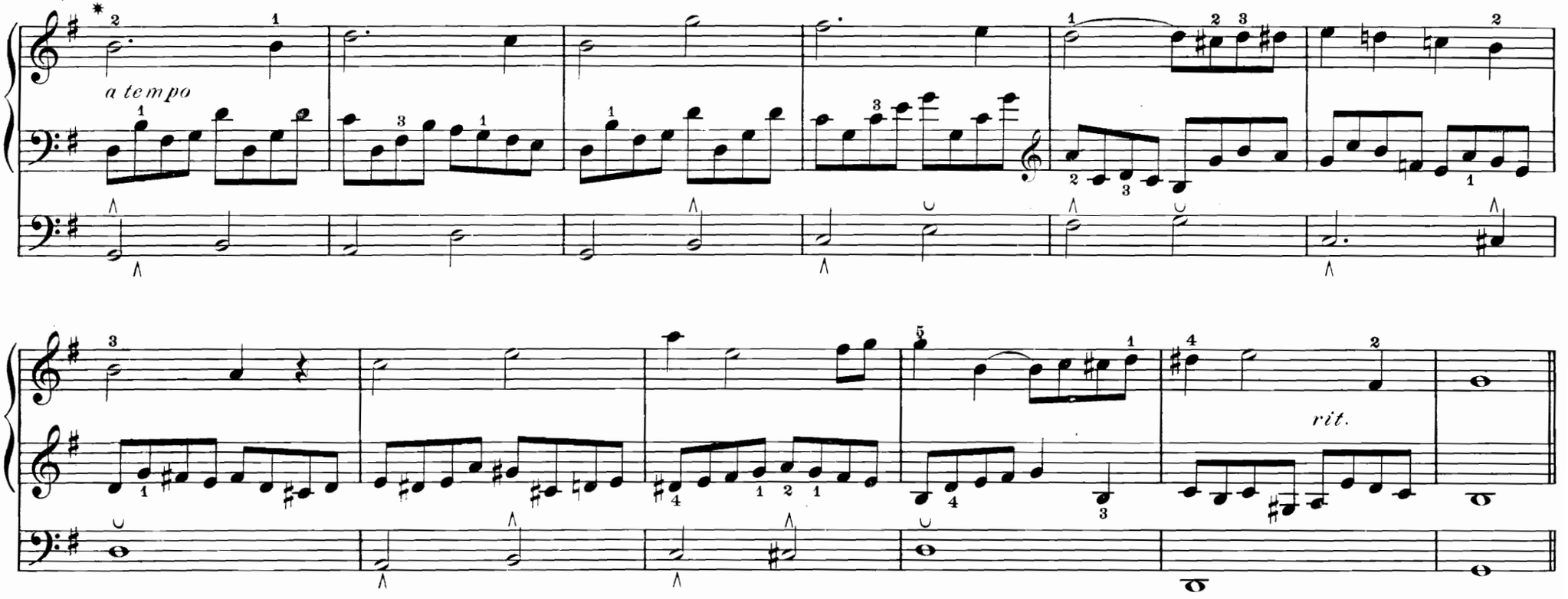

a tempo
rit.

3. Impromptu.

H. E. P.



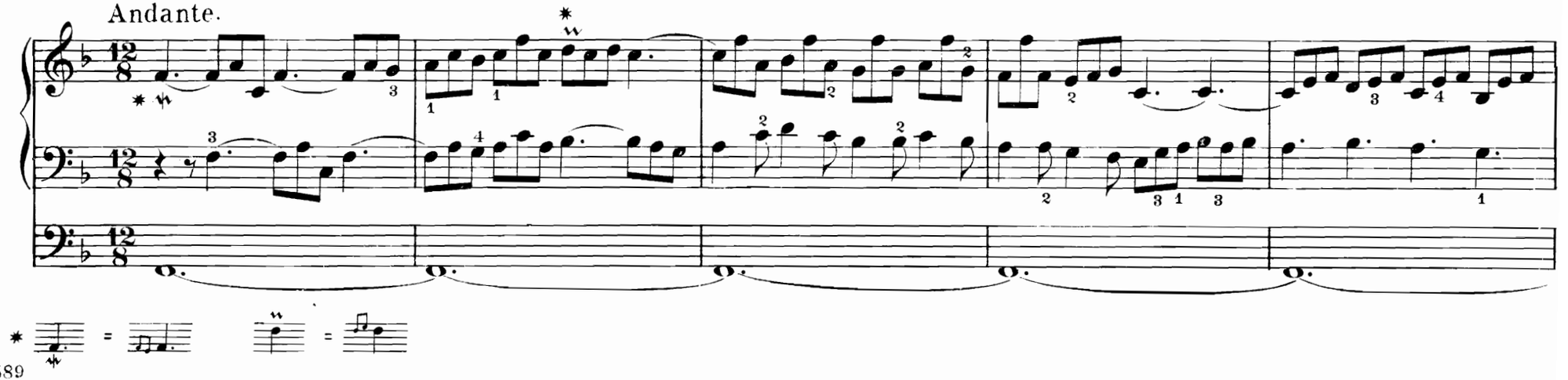

rit.

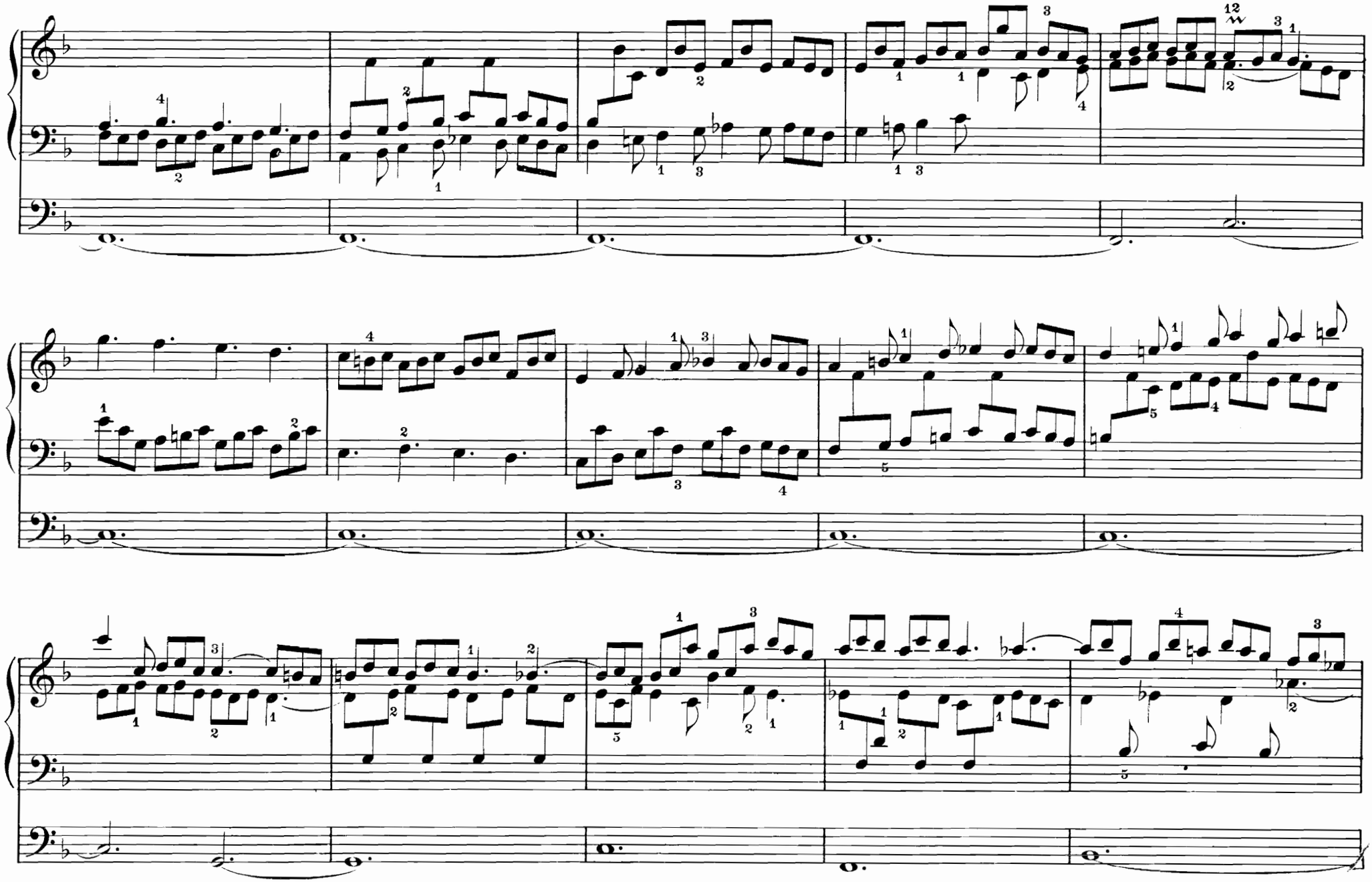


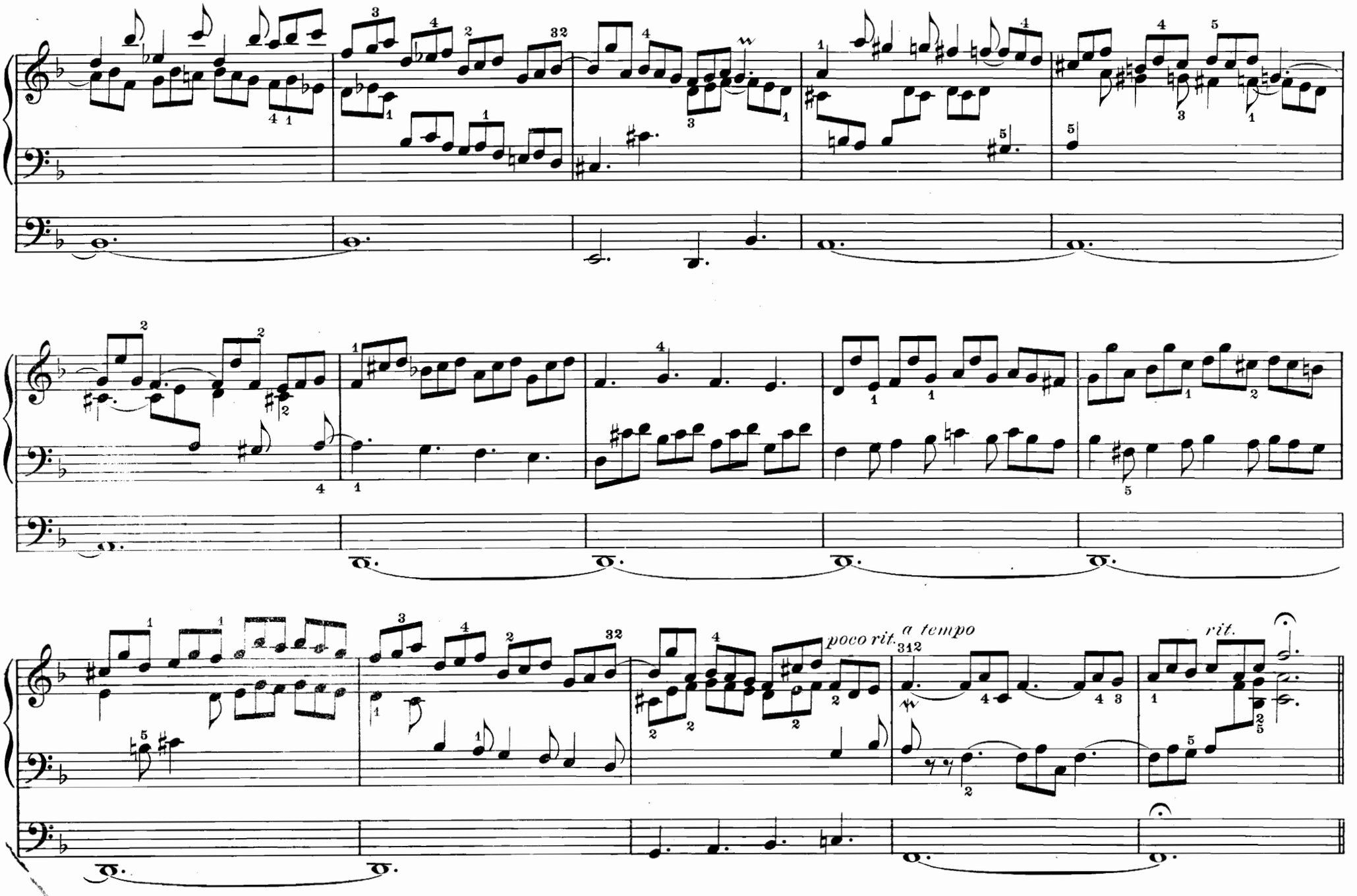
4. Pastorale.

BACH.

Andante.



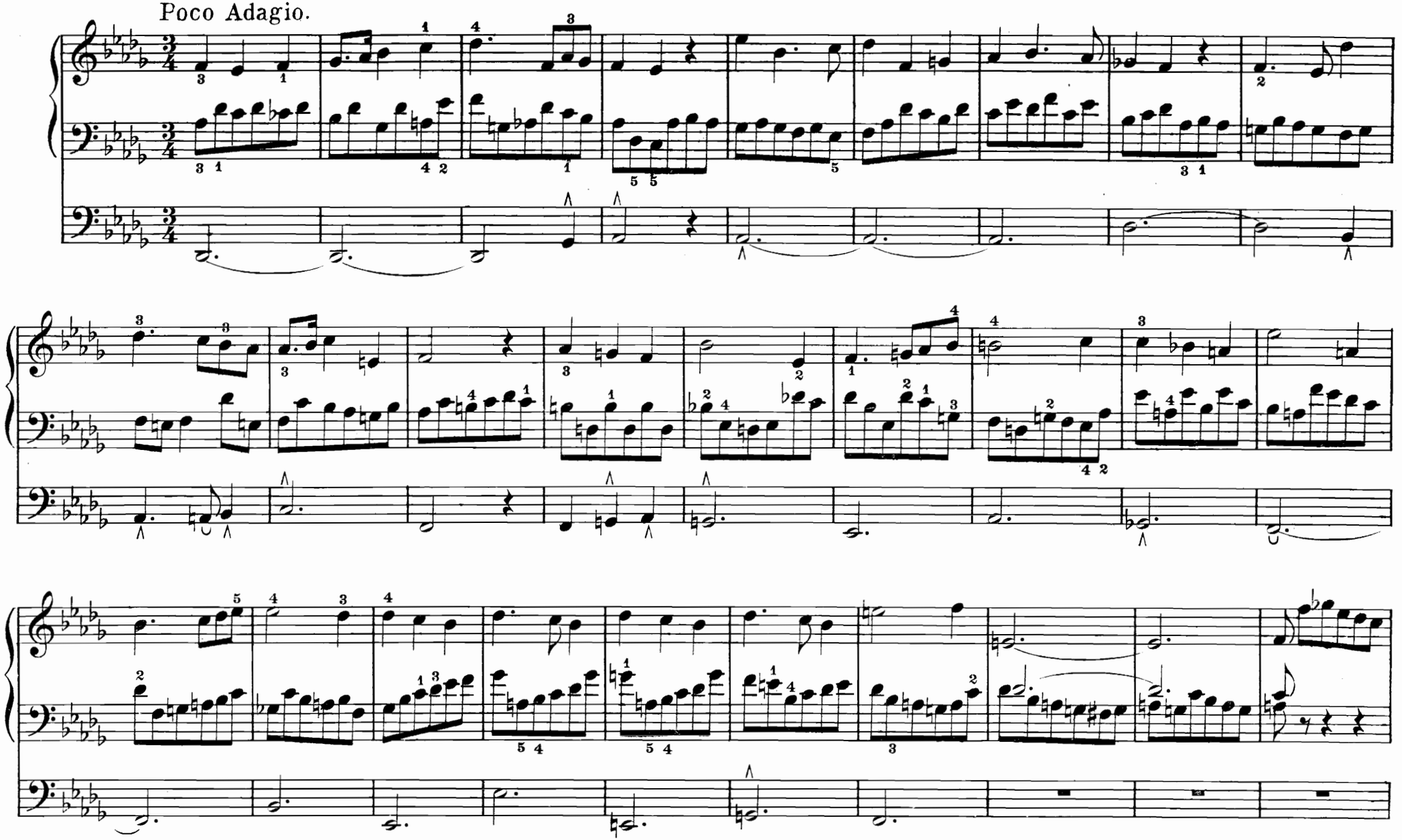


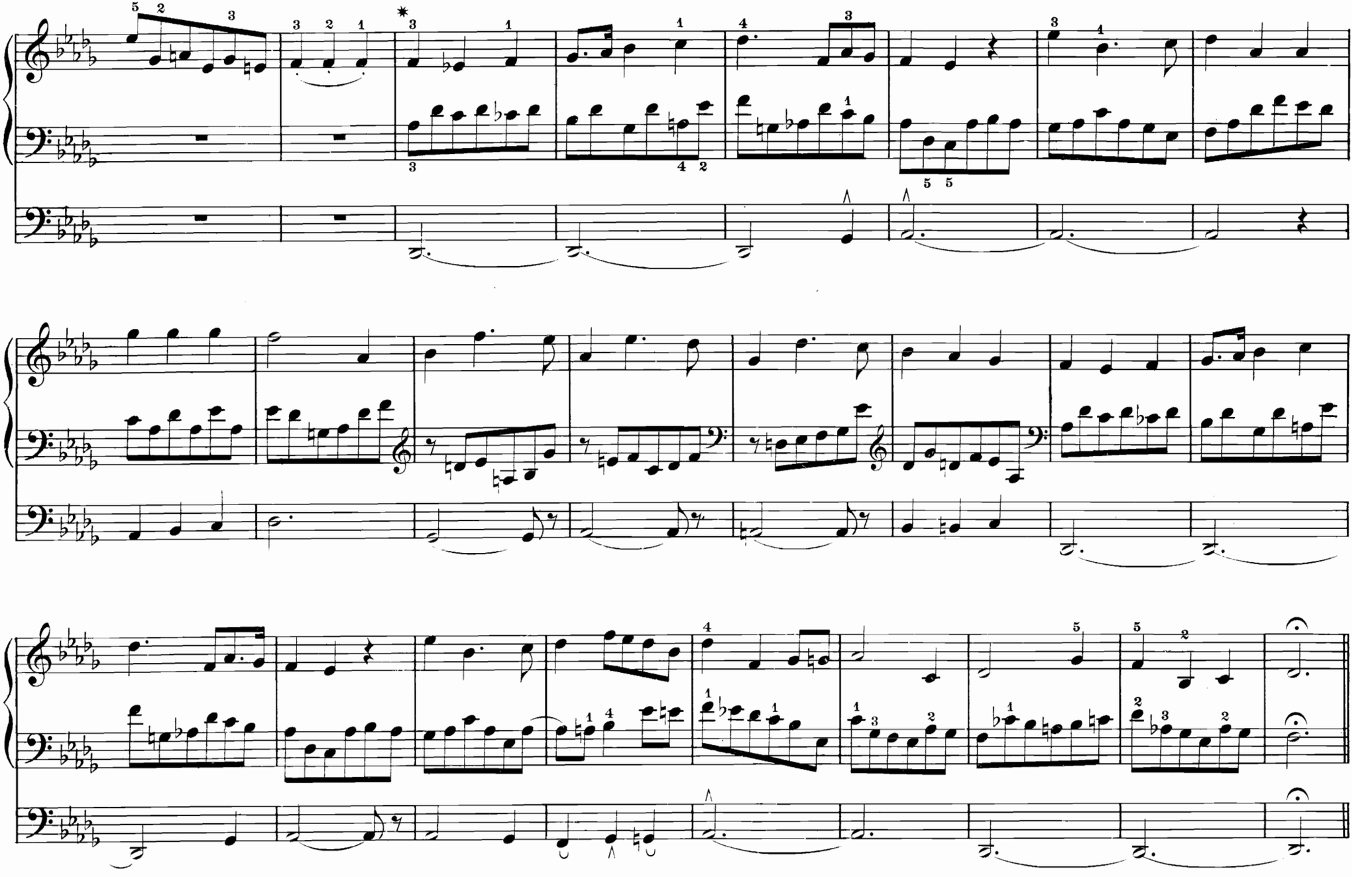

poco rit.
a tempo
rit.

5. Grazioso.

H. E. P.

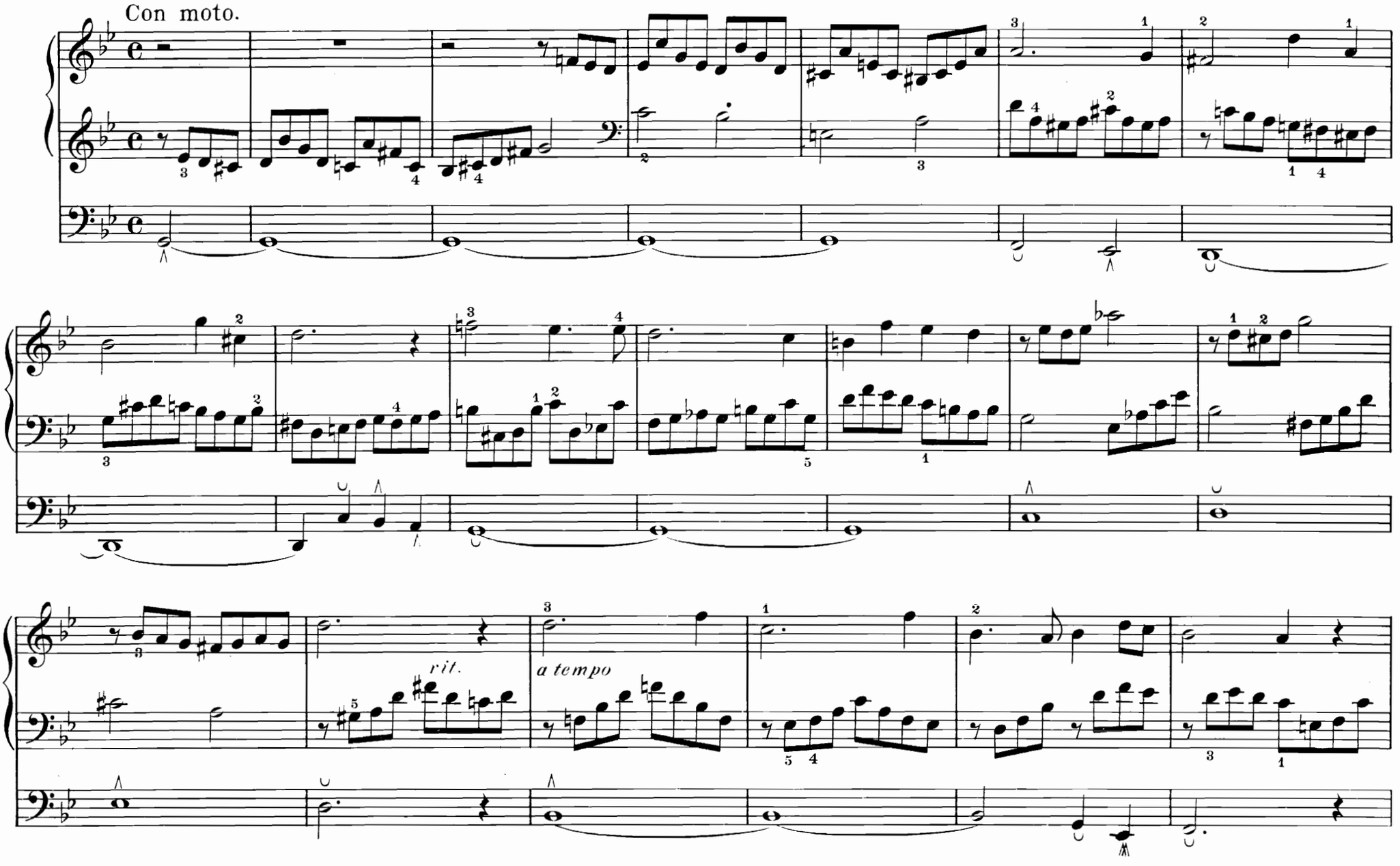
Poco Adagio.

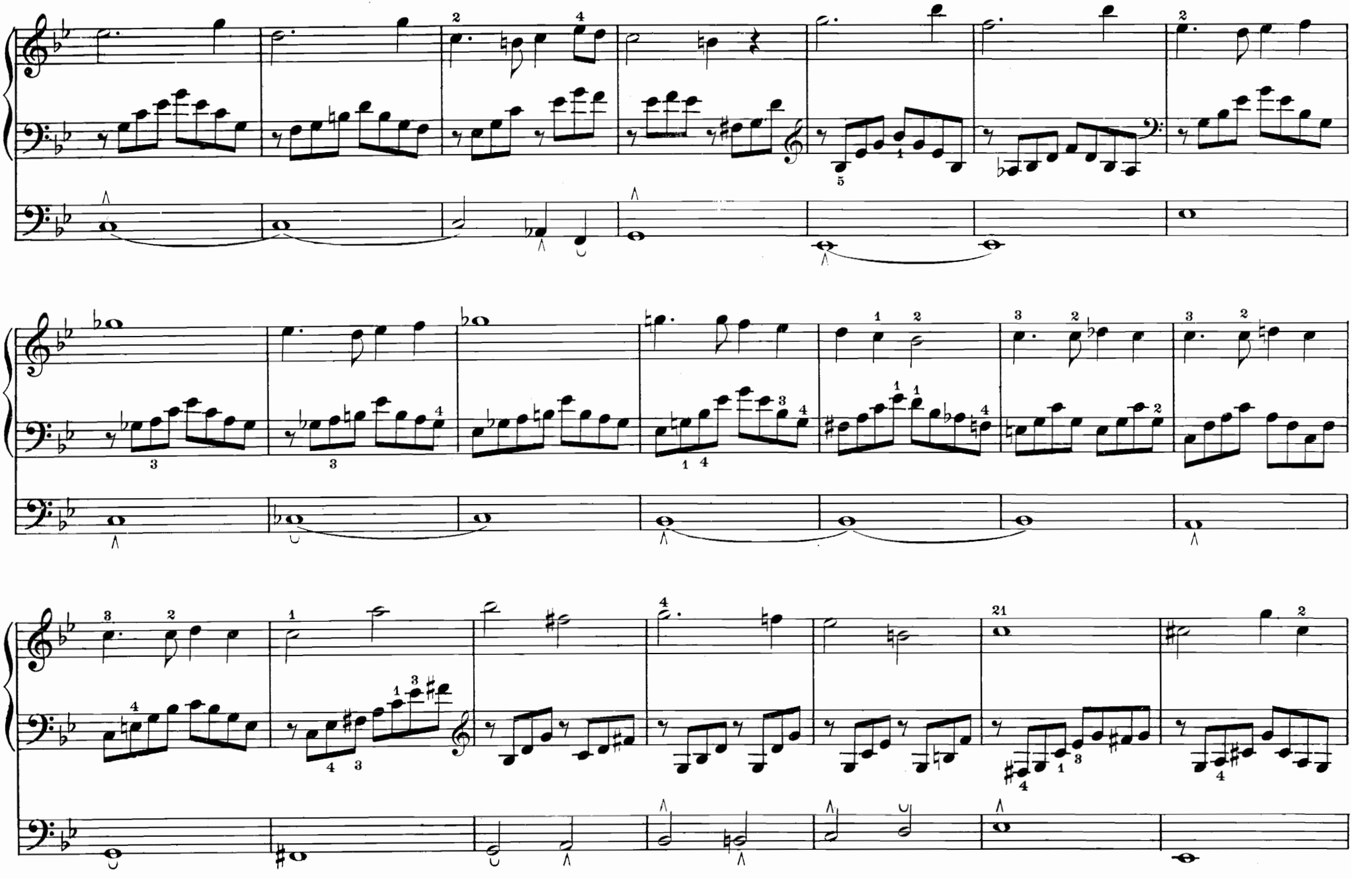


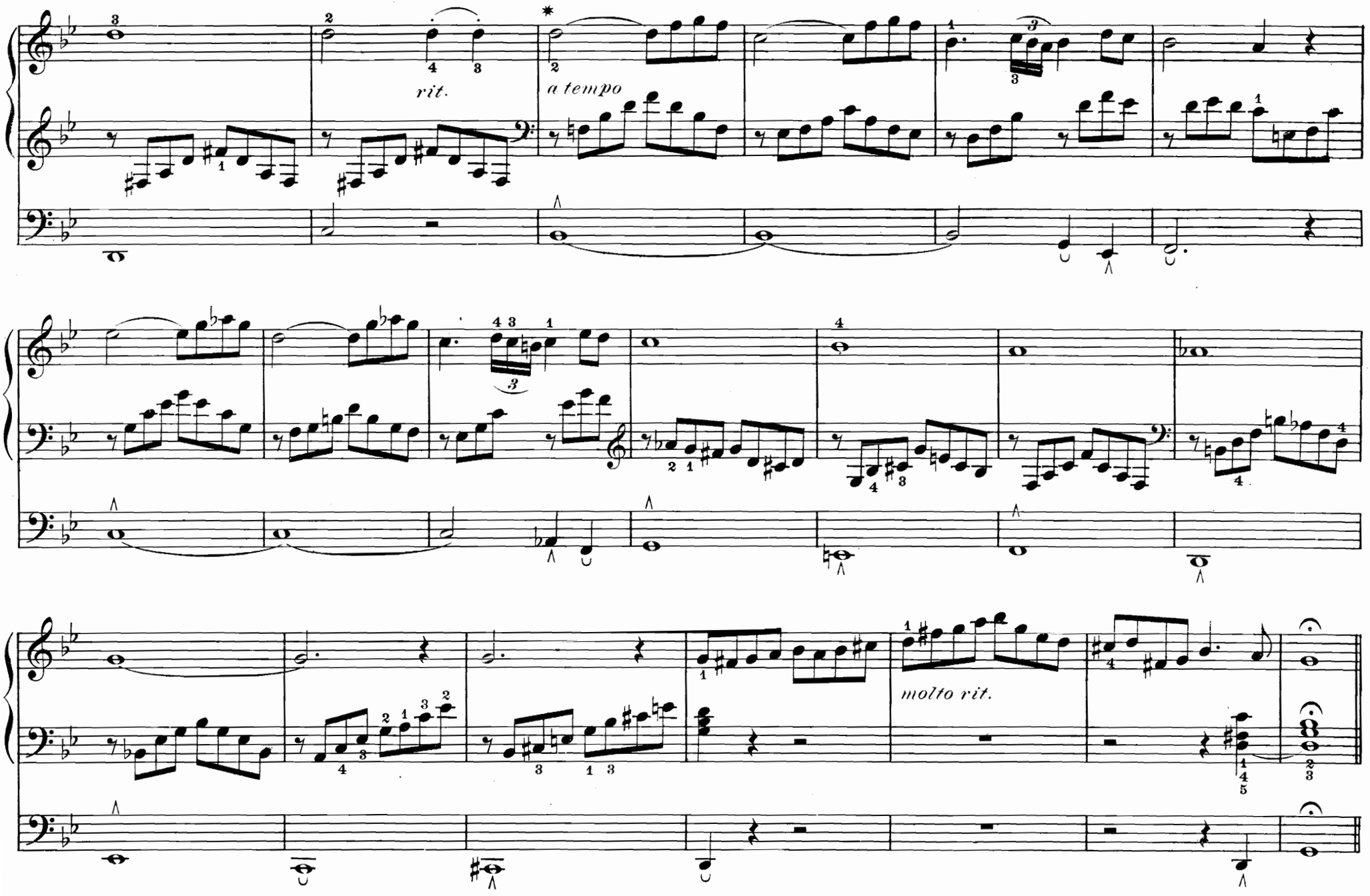


6. Vorspiel.

H. E. P.



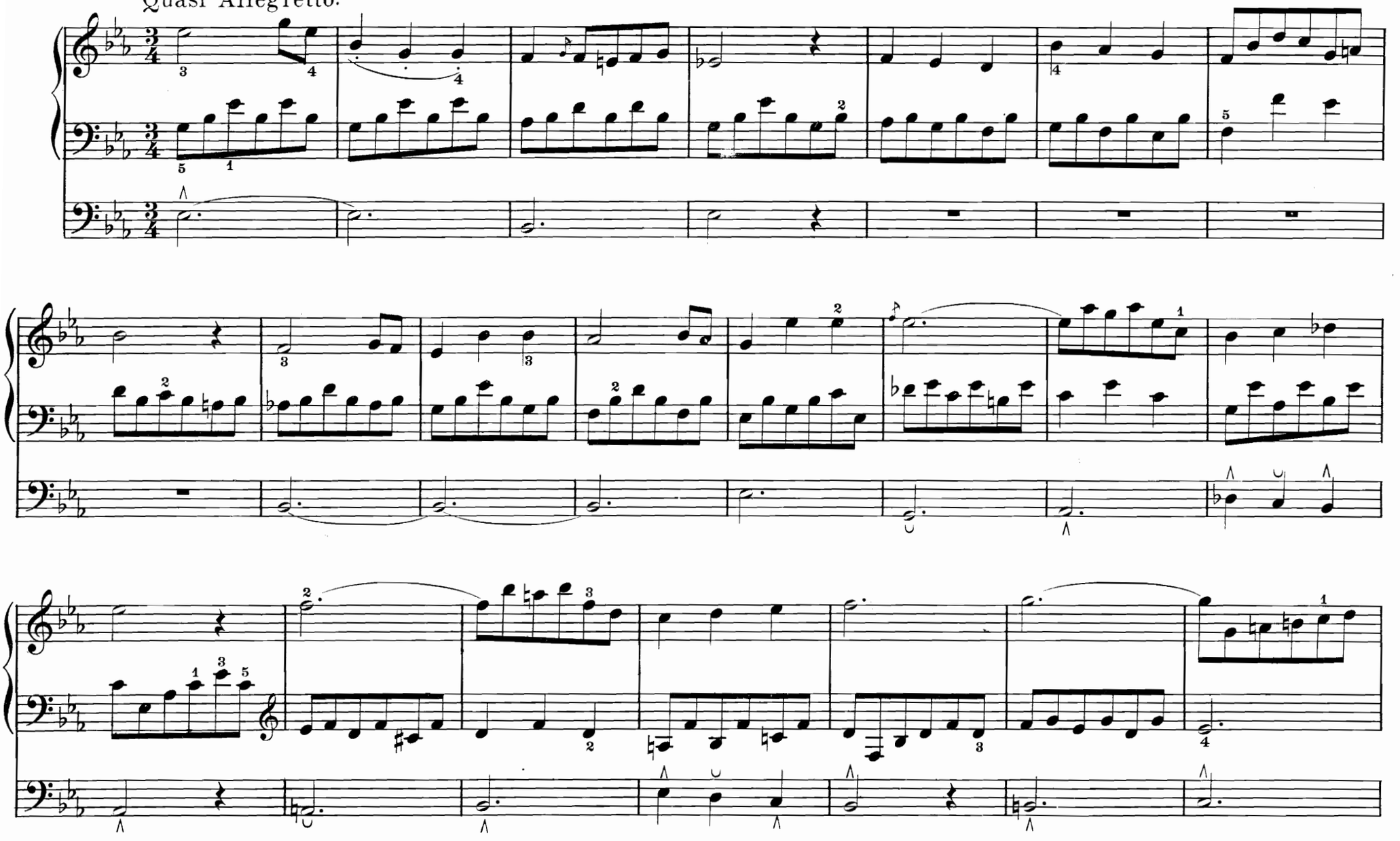


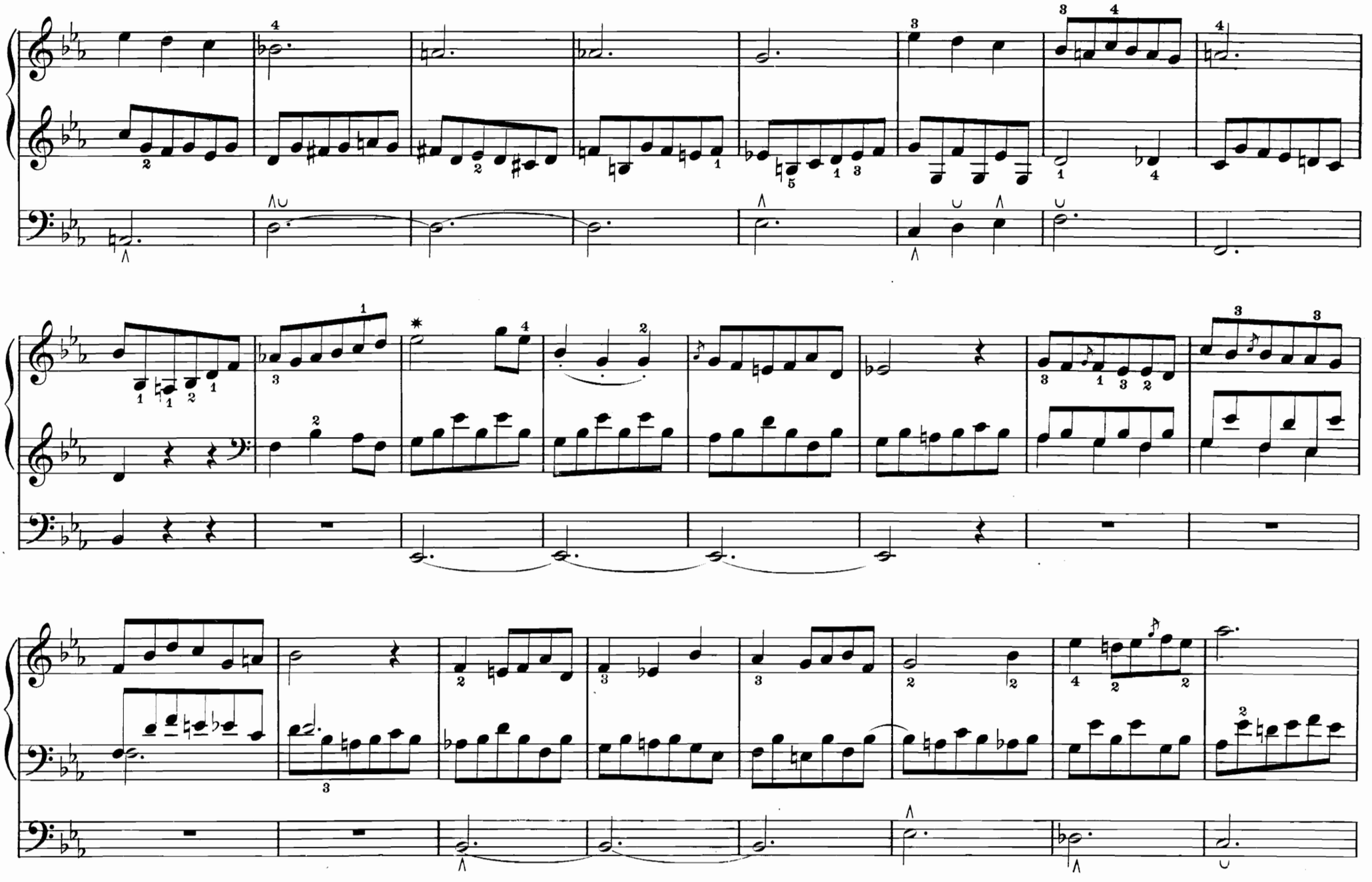

rit.
a tempo
molto rit.

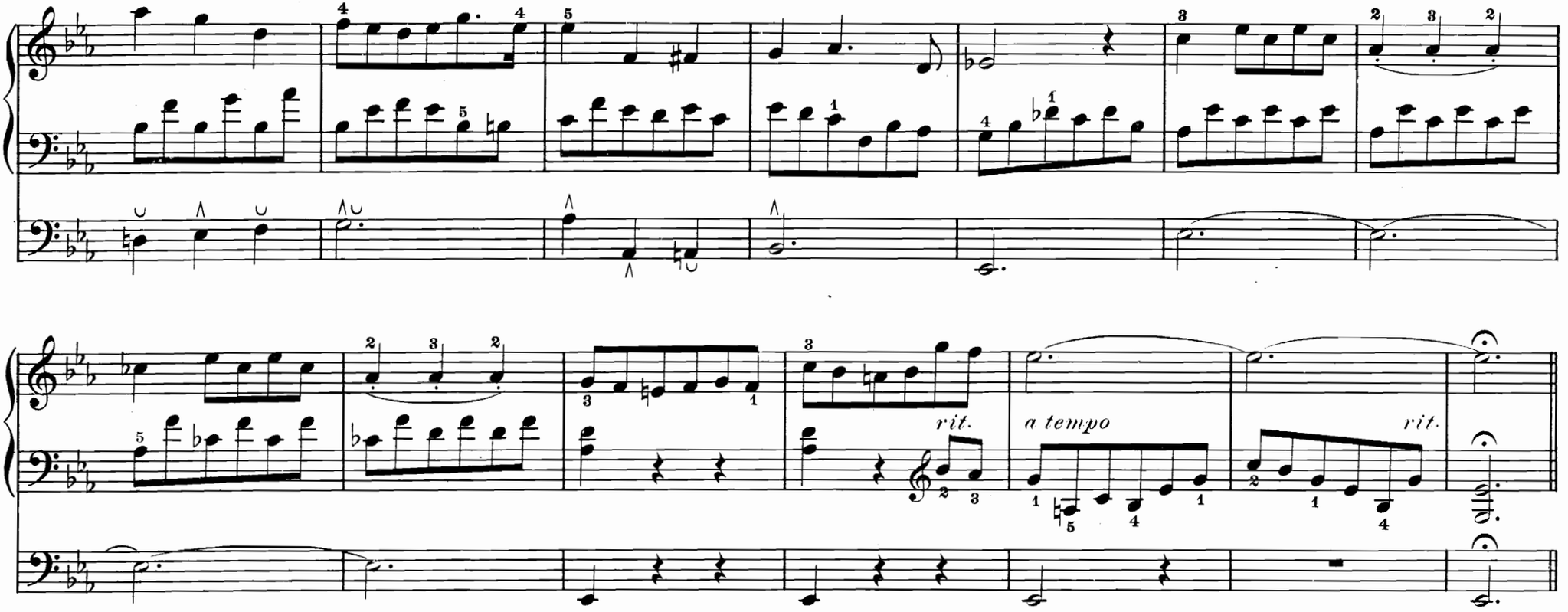
7. Menuet.

H. E. P.

Quasi Allegretto.



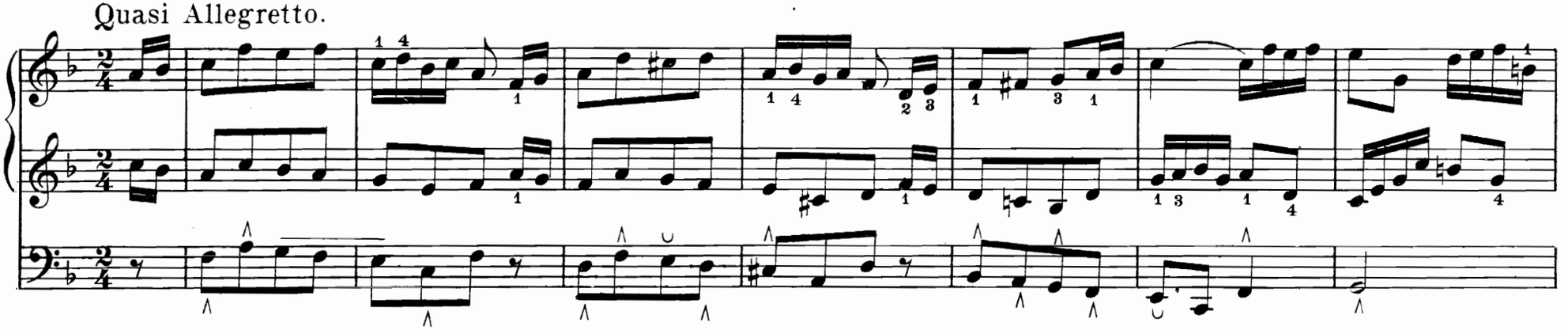


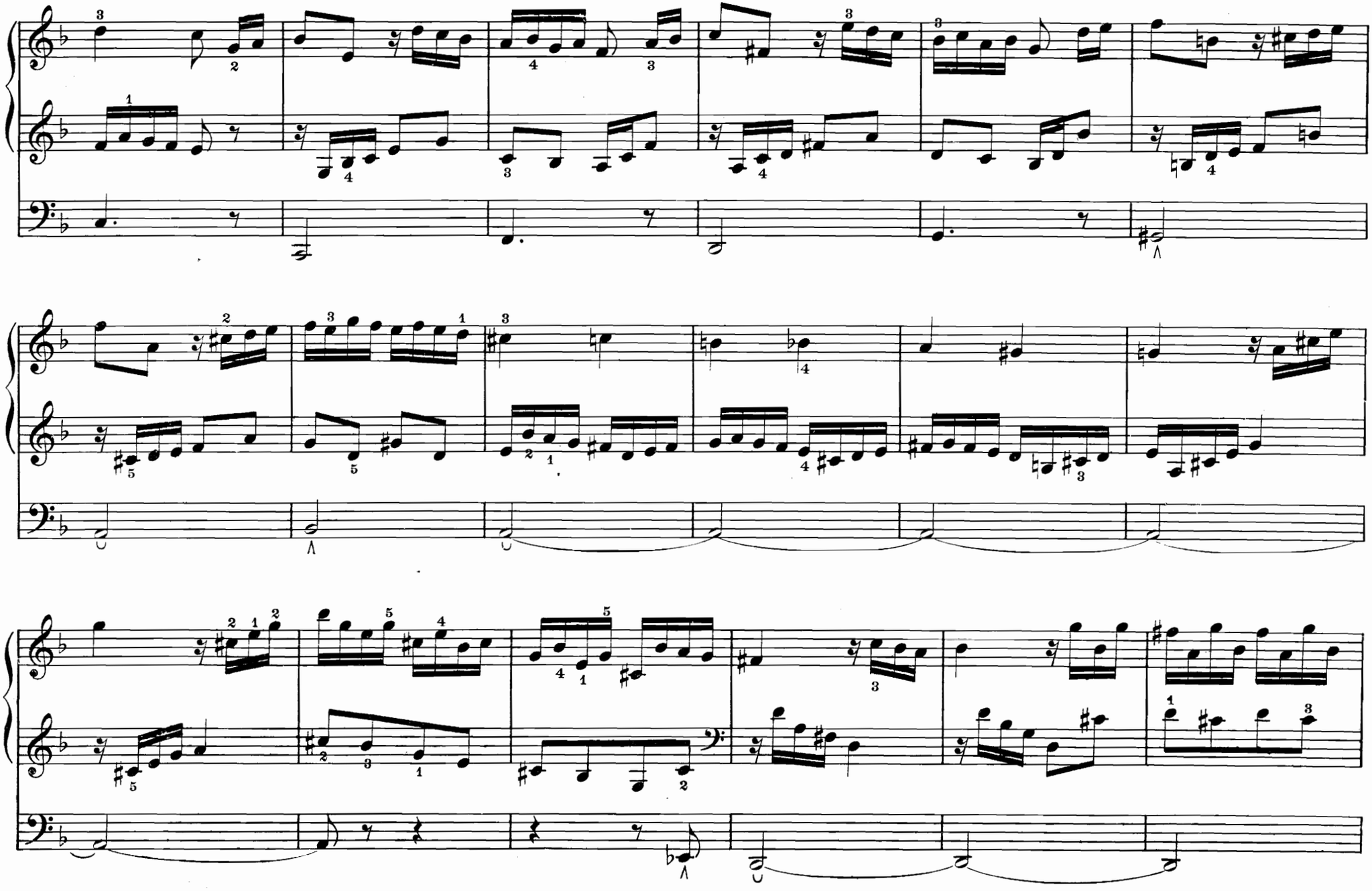


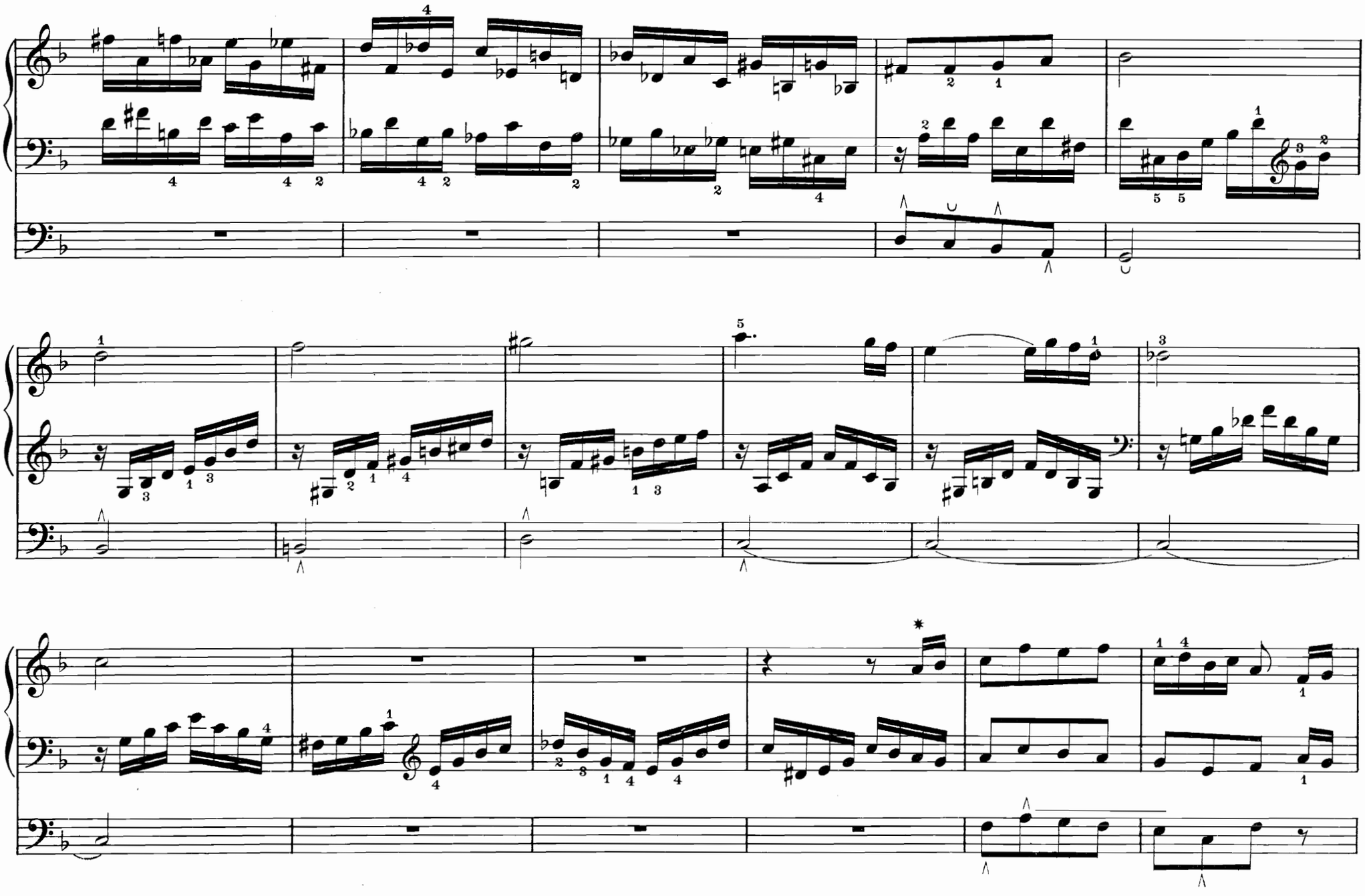
8. Gavotte.

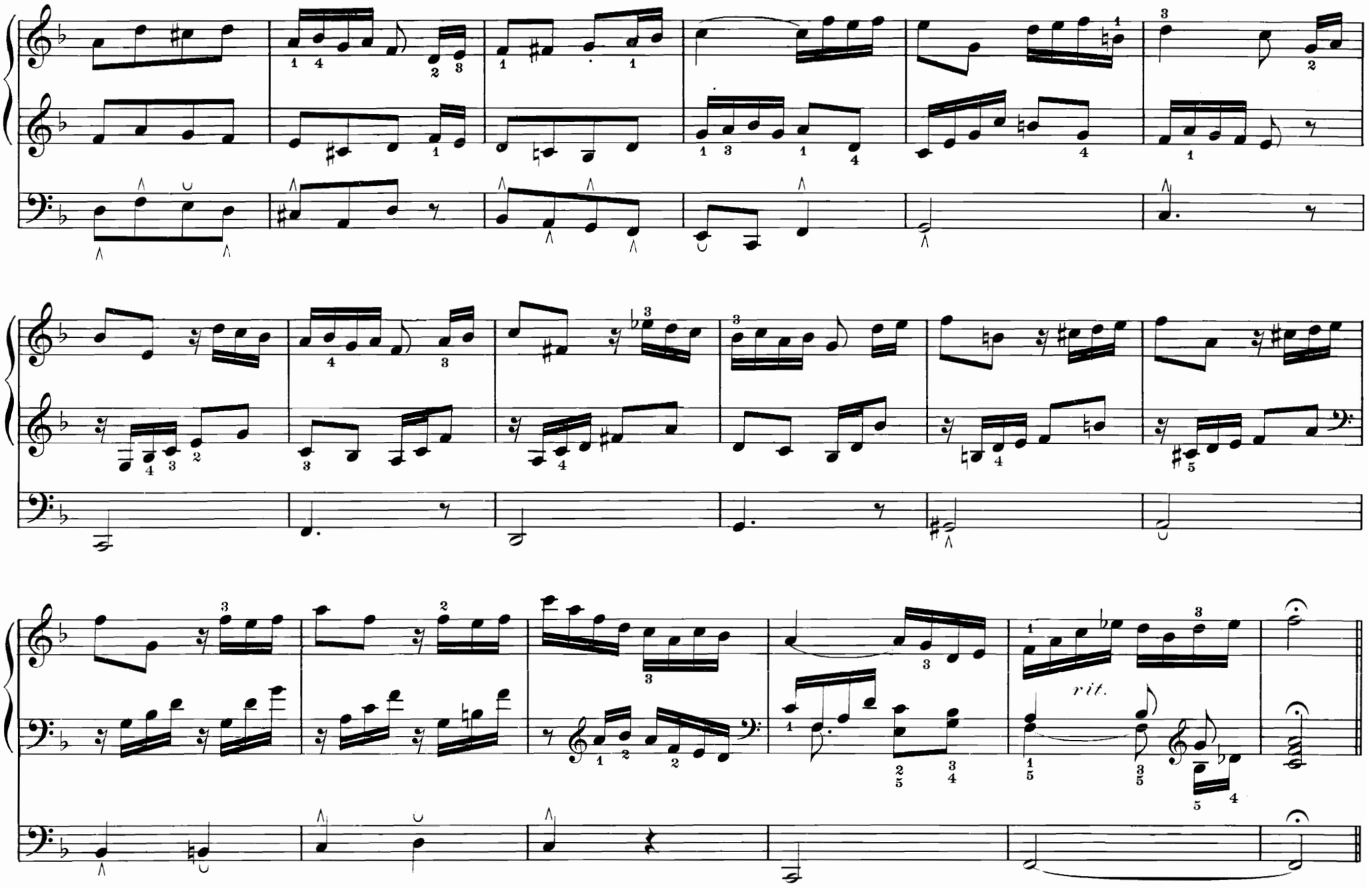
H. E. P.

Quasi Allegretto.





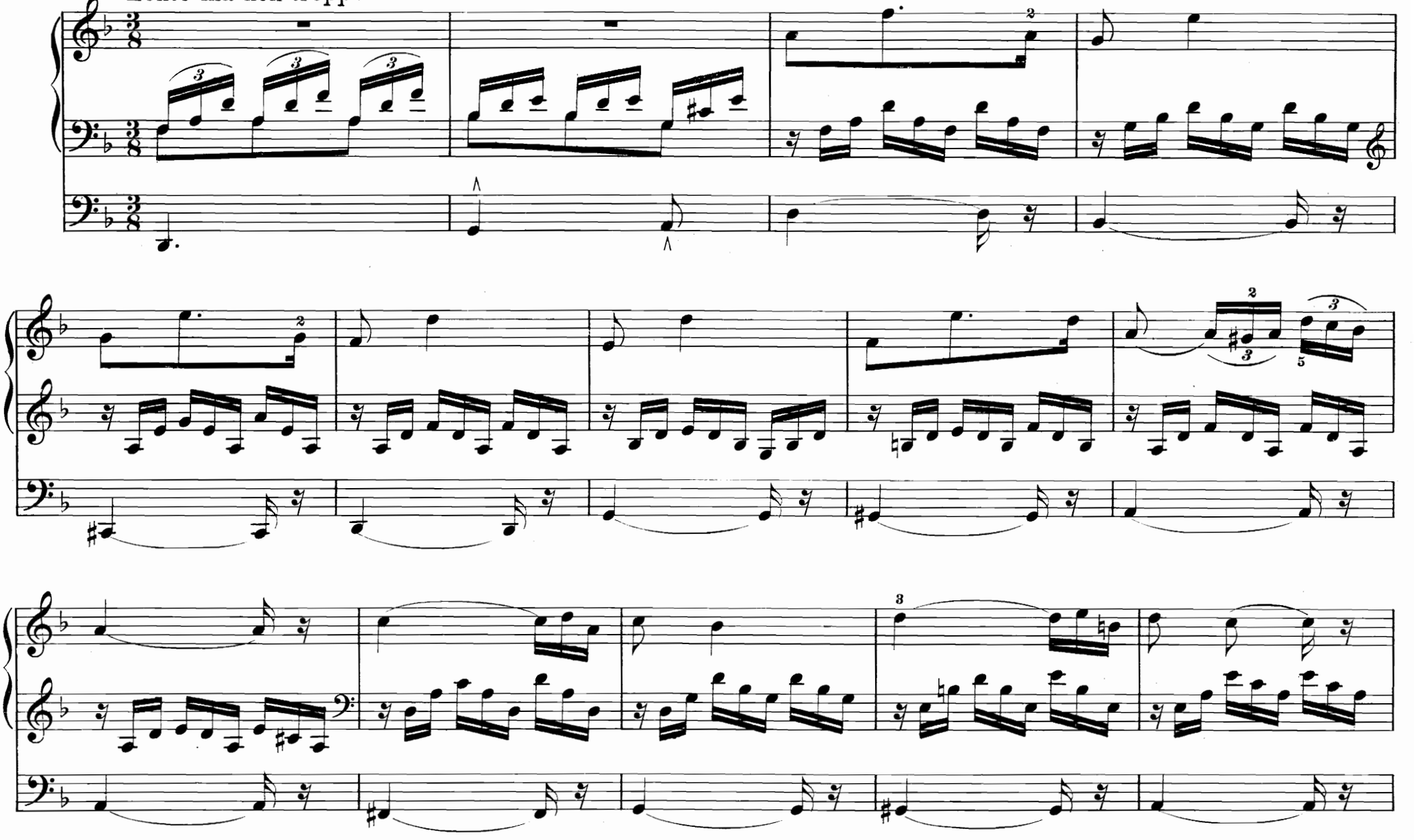


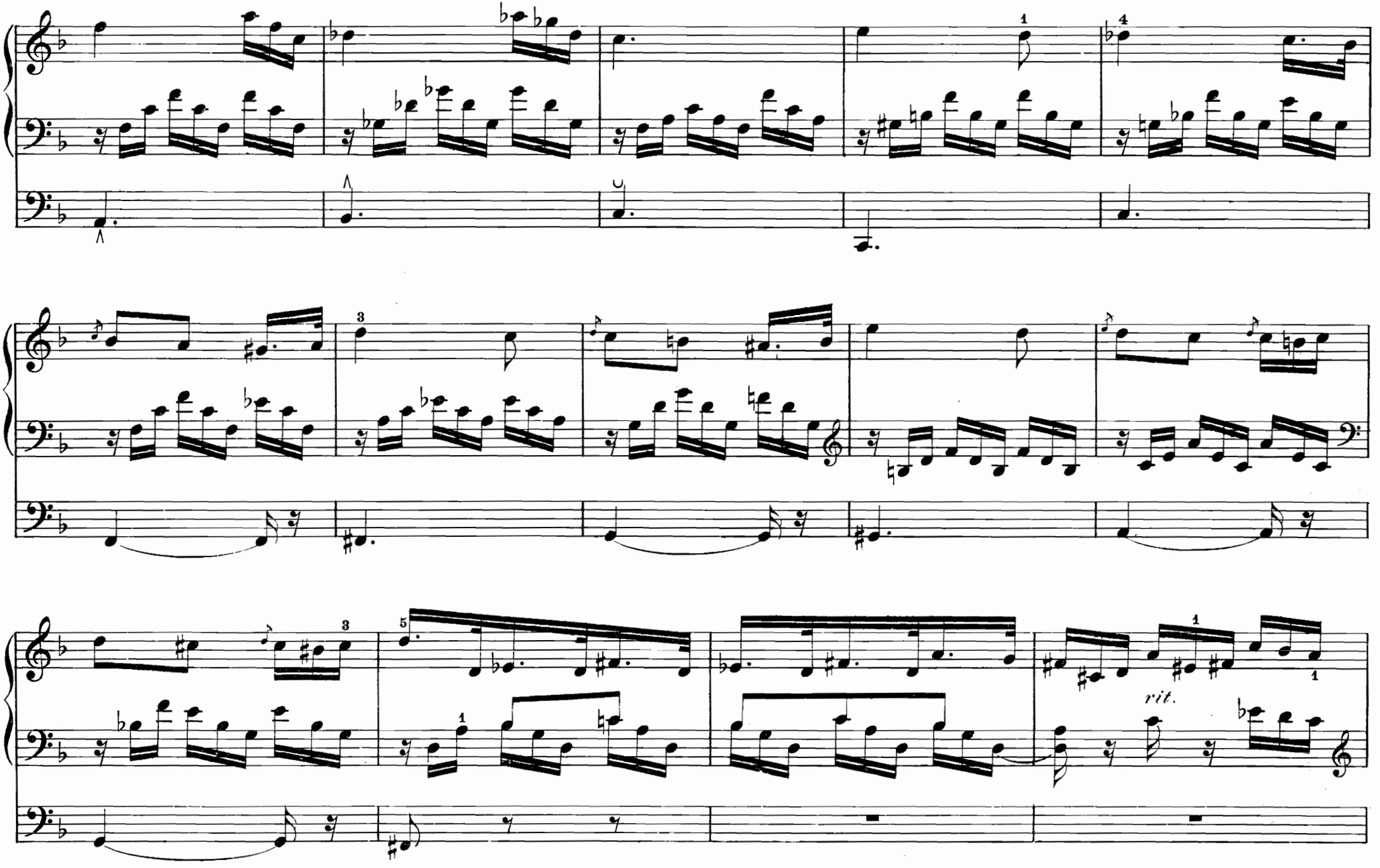

rit.

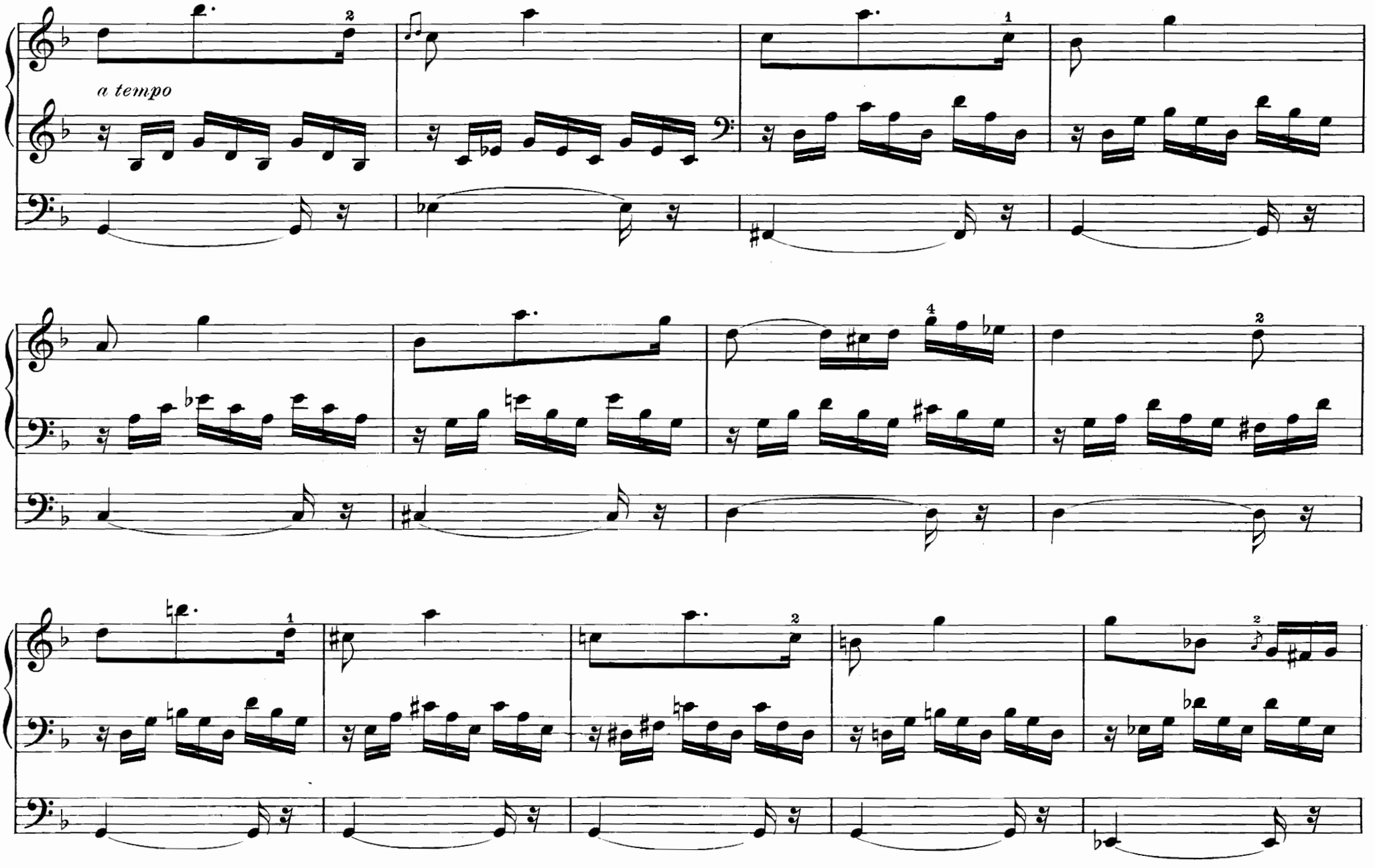
9. Abschied.

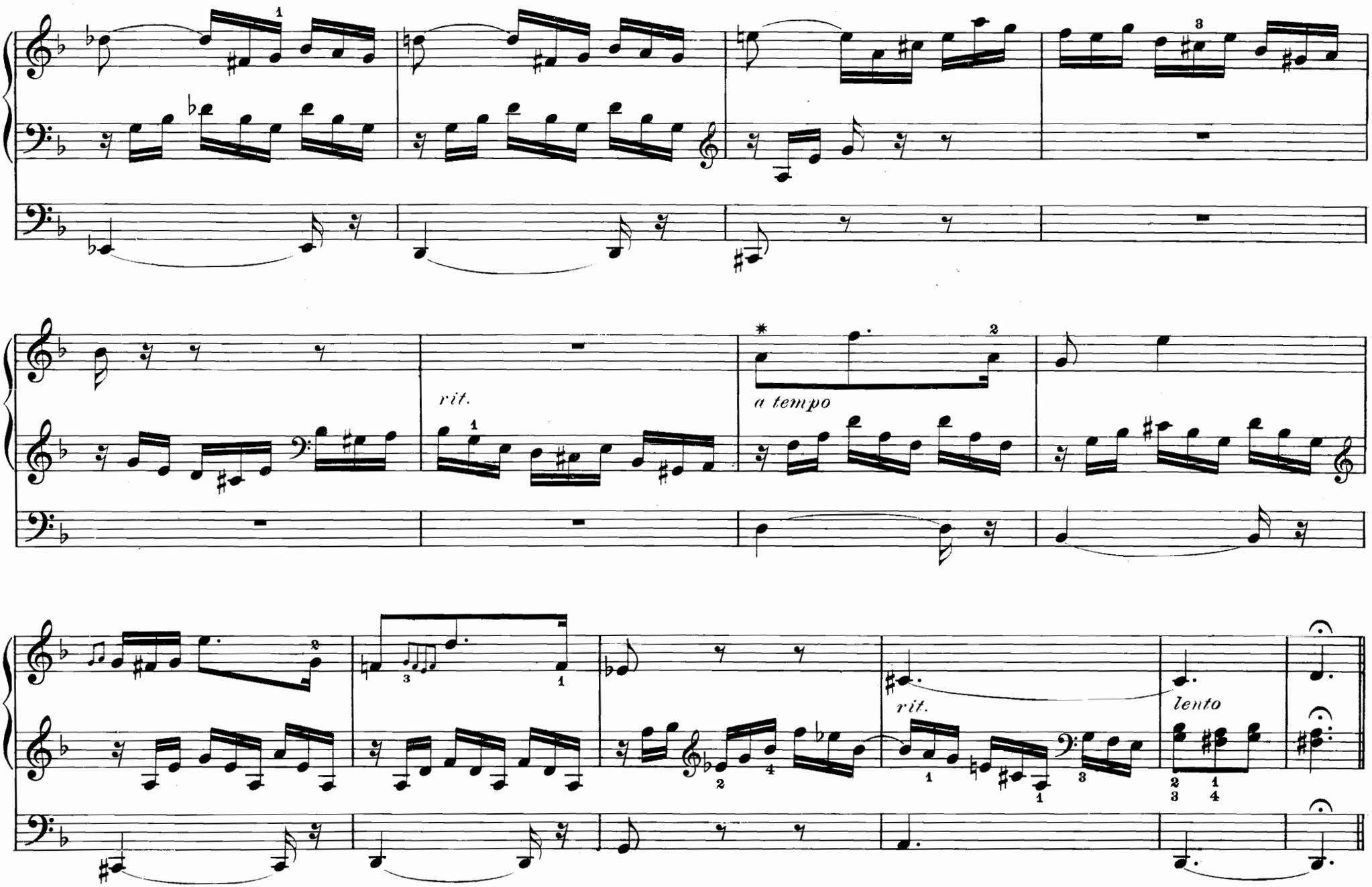
H. E. P.

Lento ma non troppo.




rit.

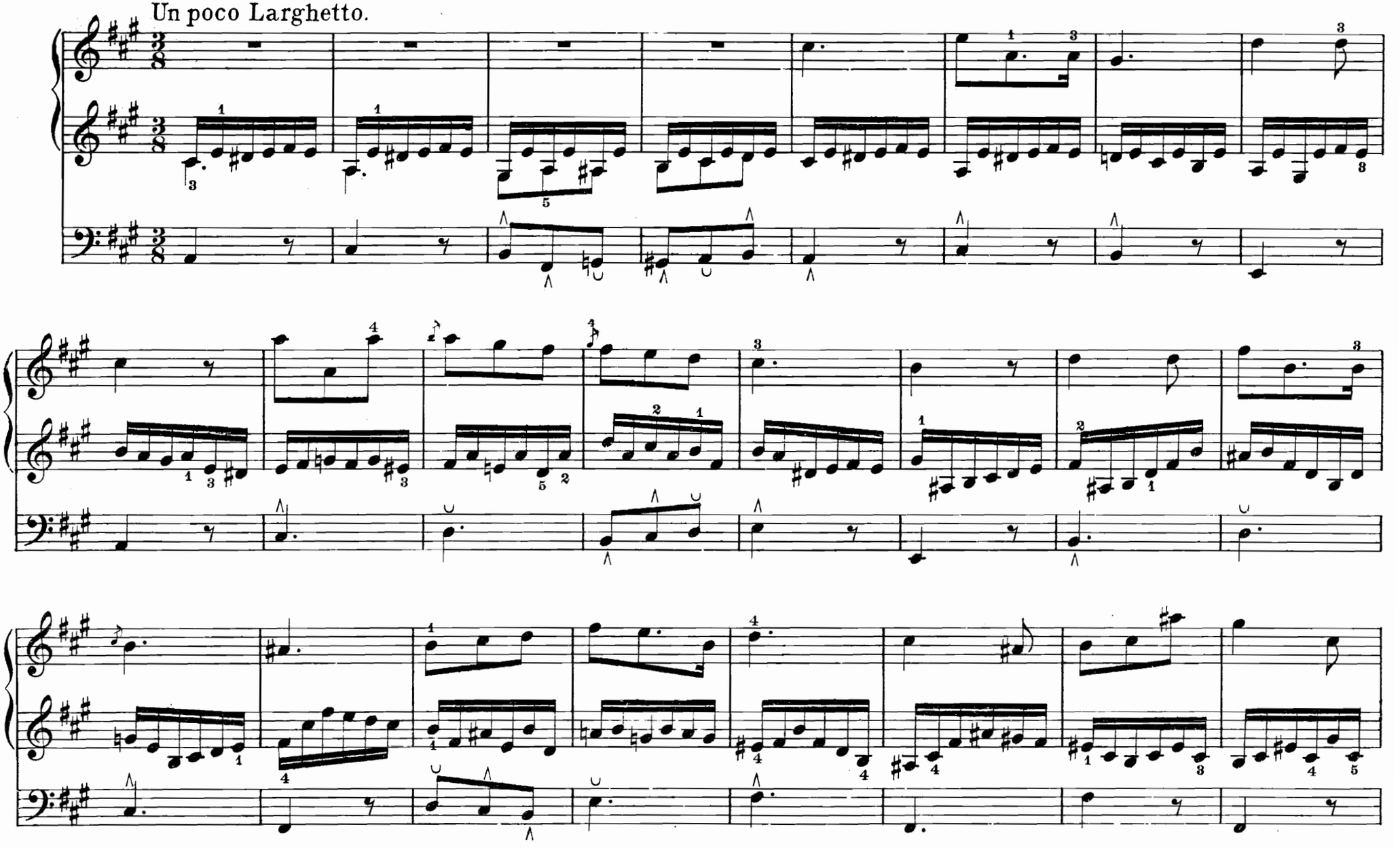

a tempo

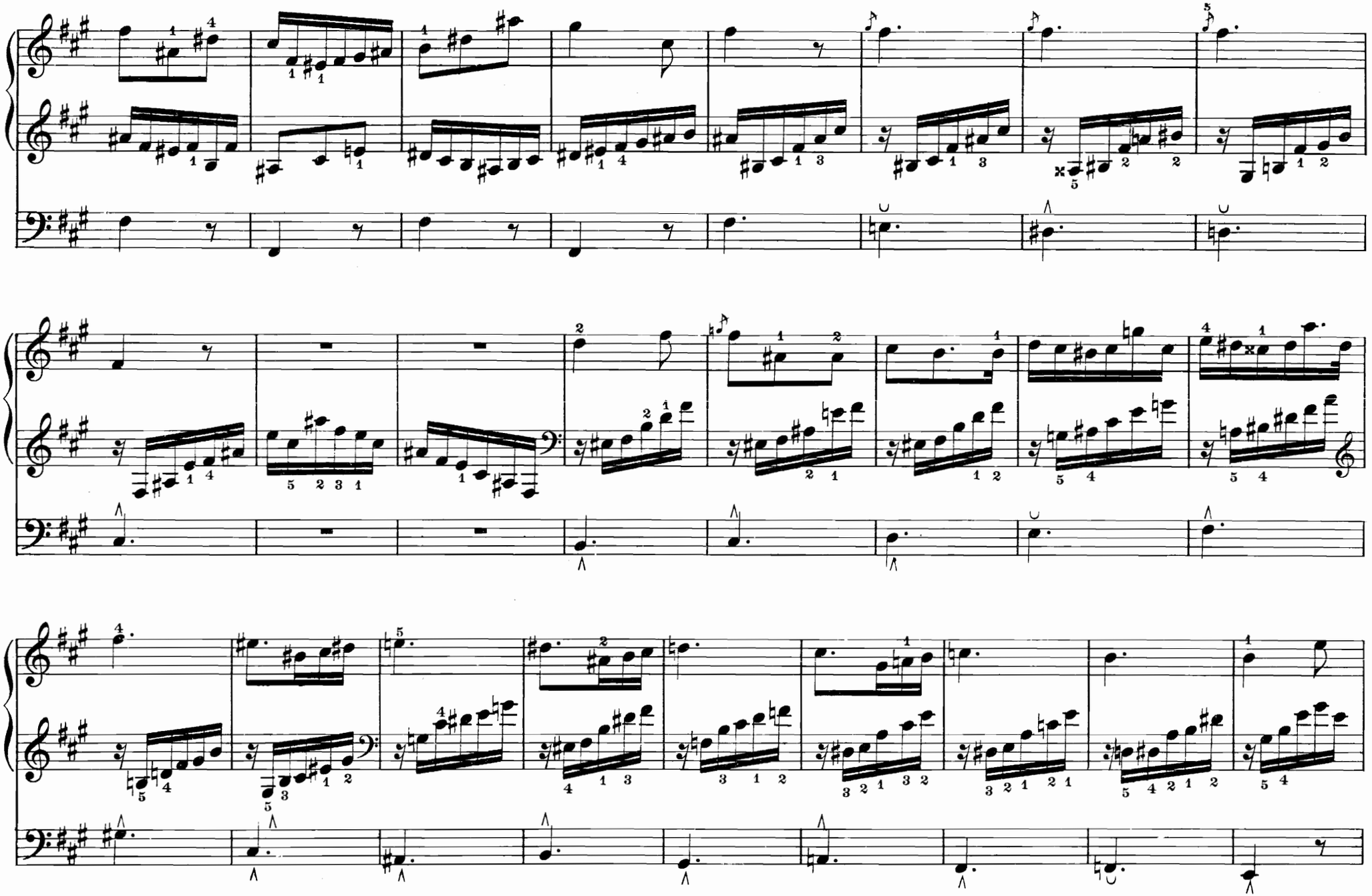

rit.
a tempo
rit.
lento

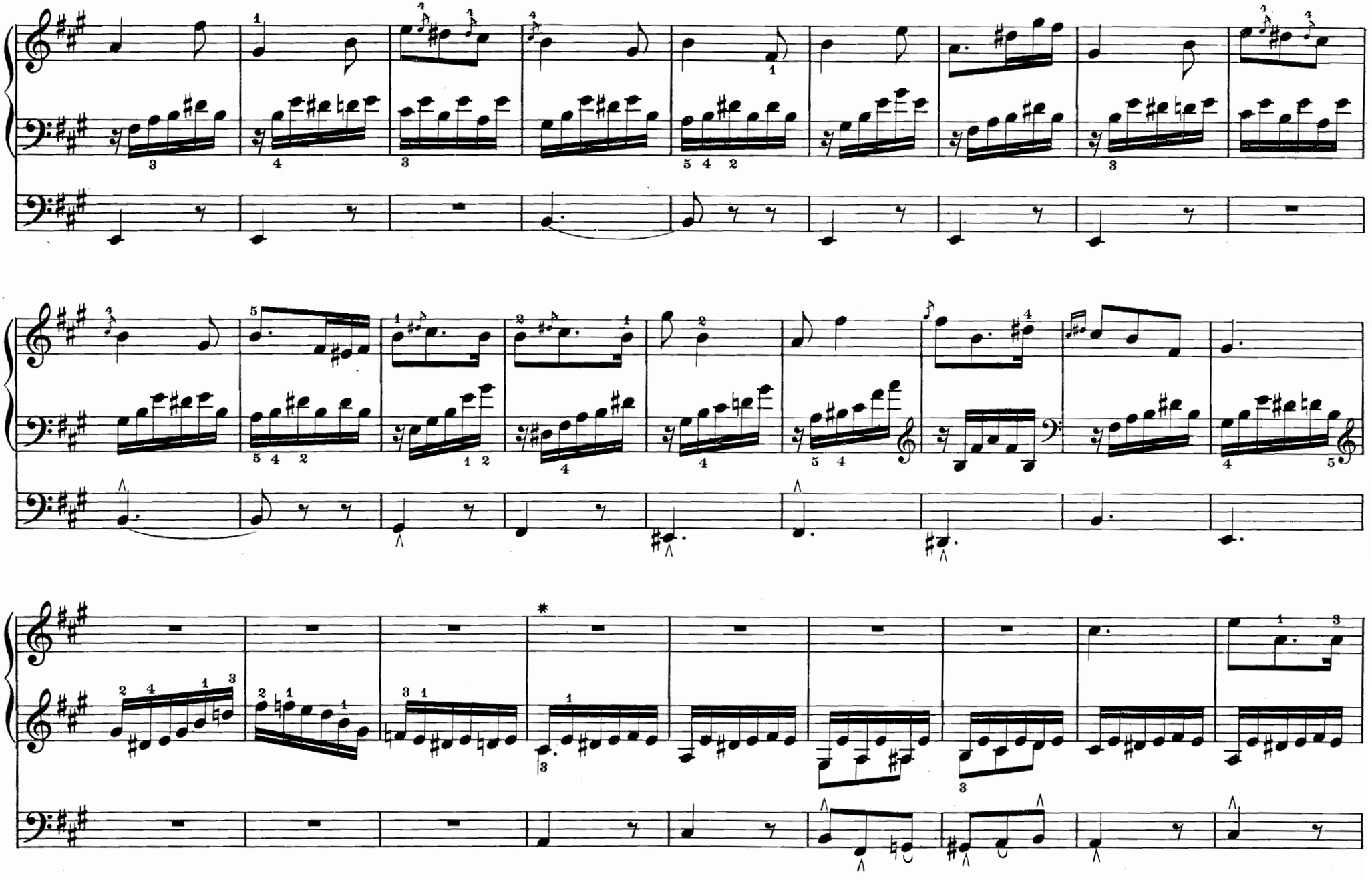
10. Remembrance.

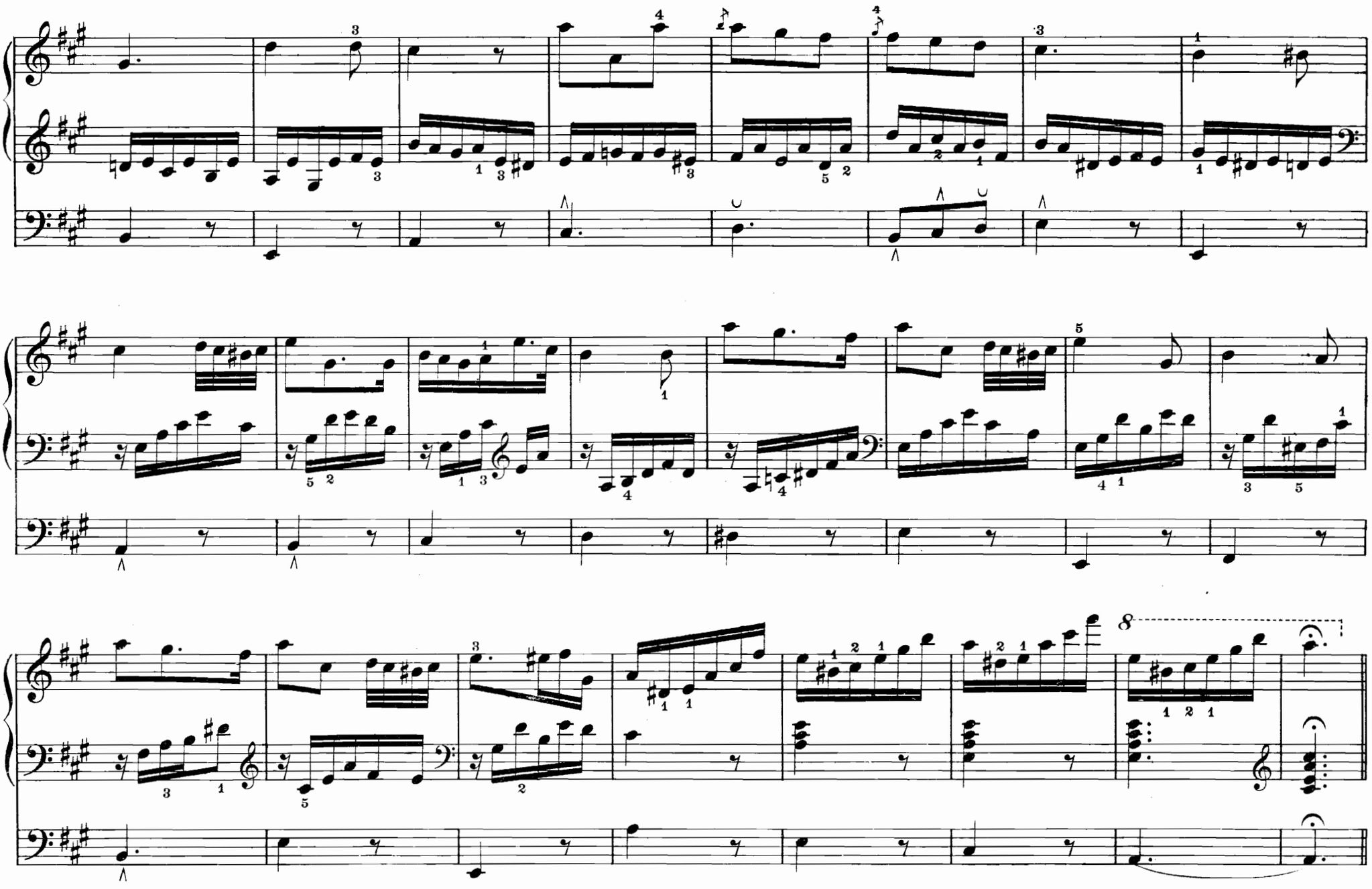
H. E. P.

Un poco Larghetto.





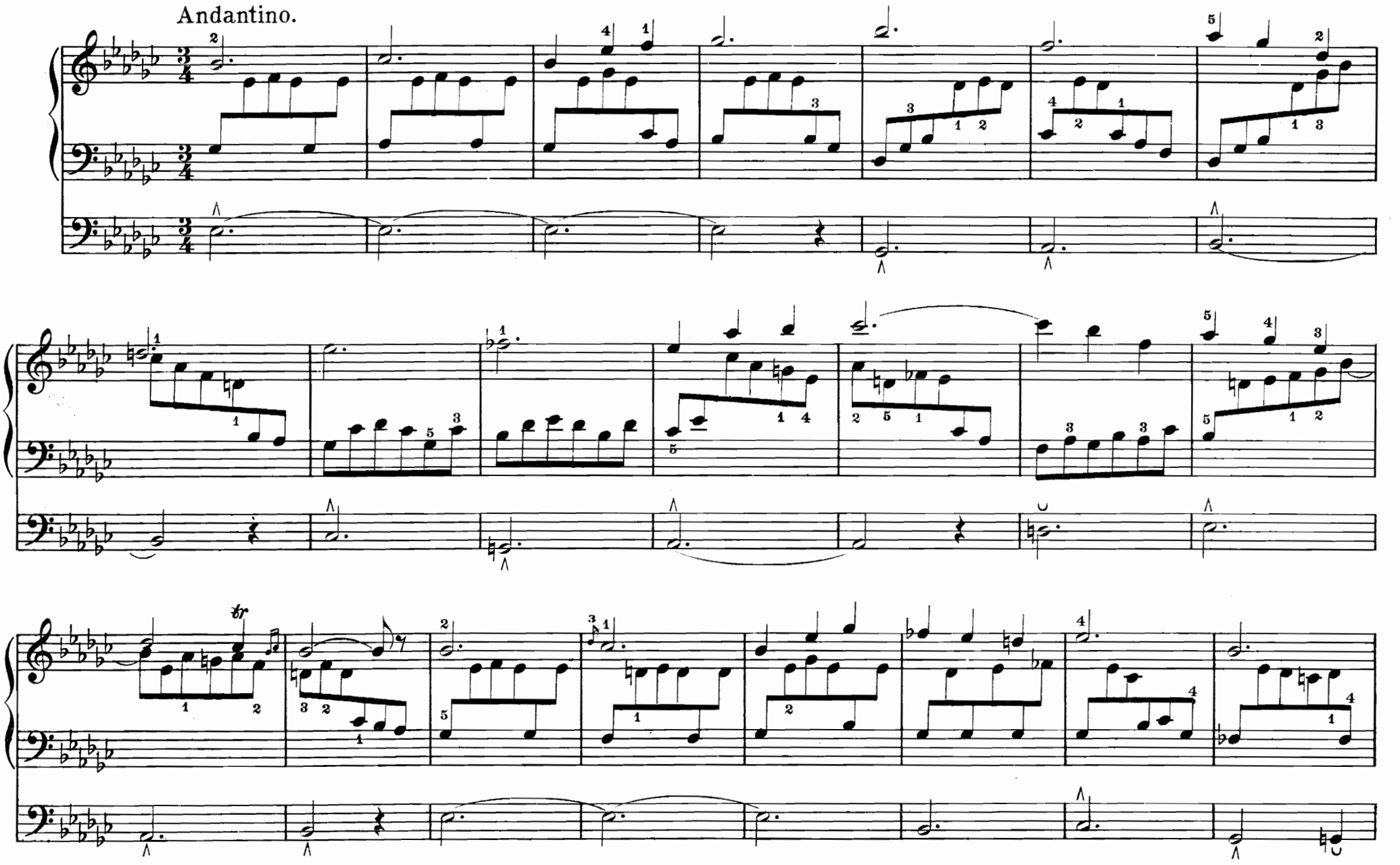


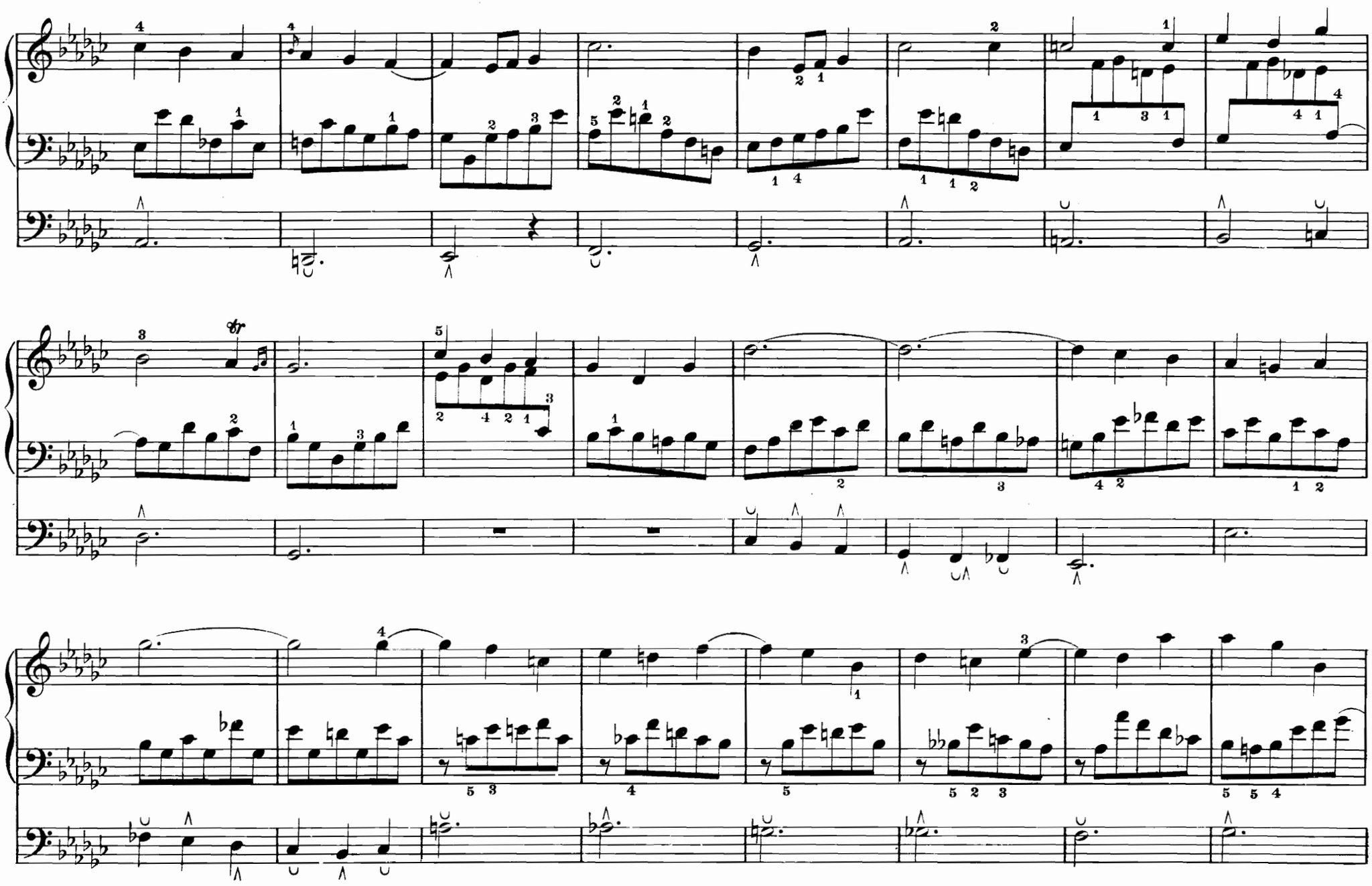


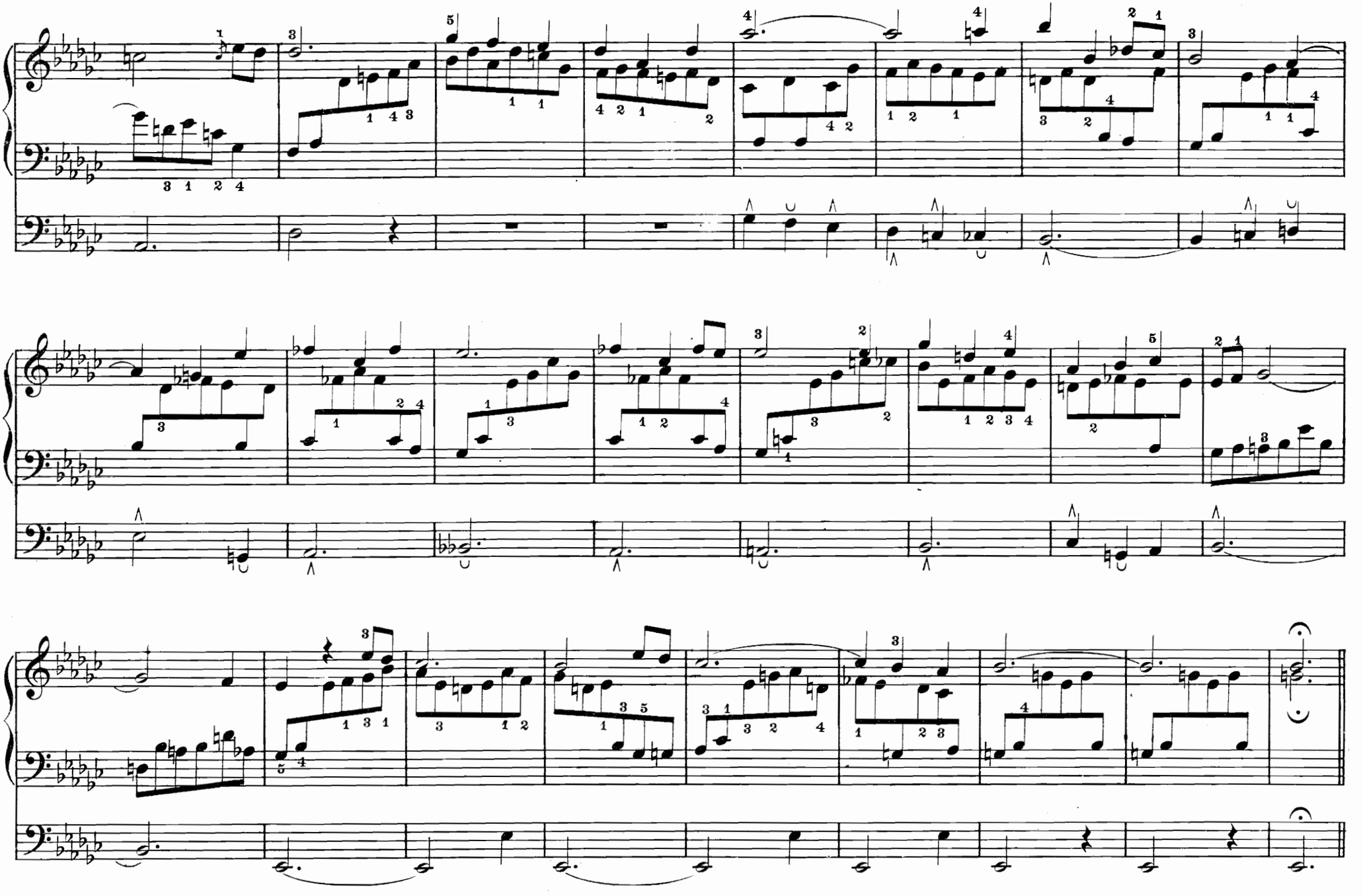
11. Regret.

RHEINBERGER.

Andantino.



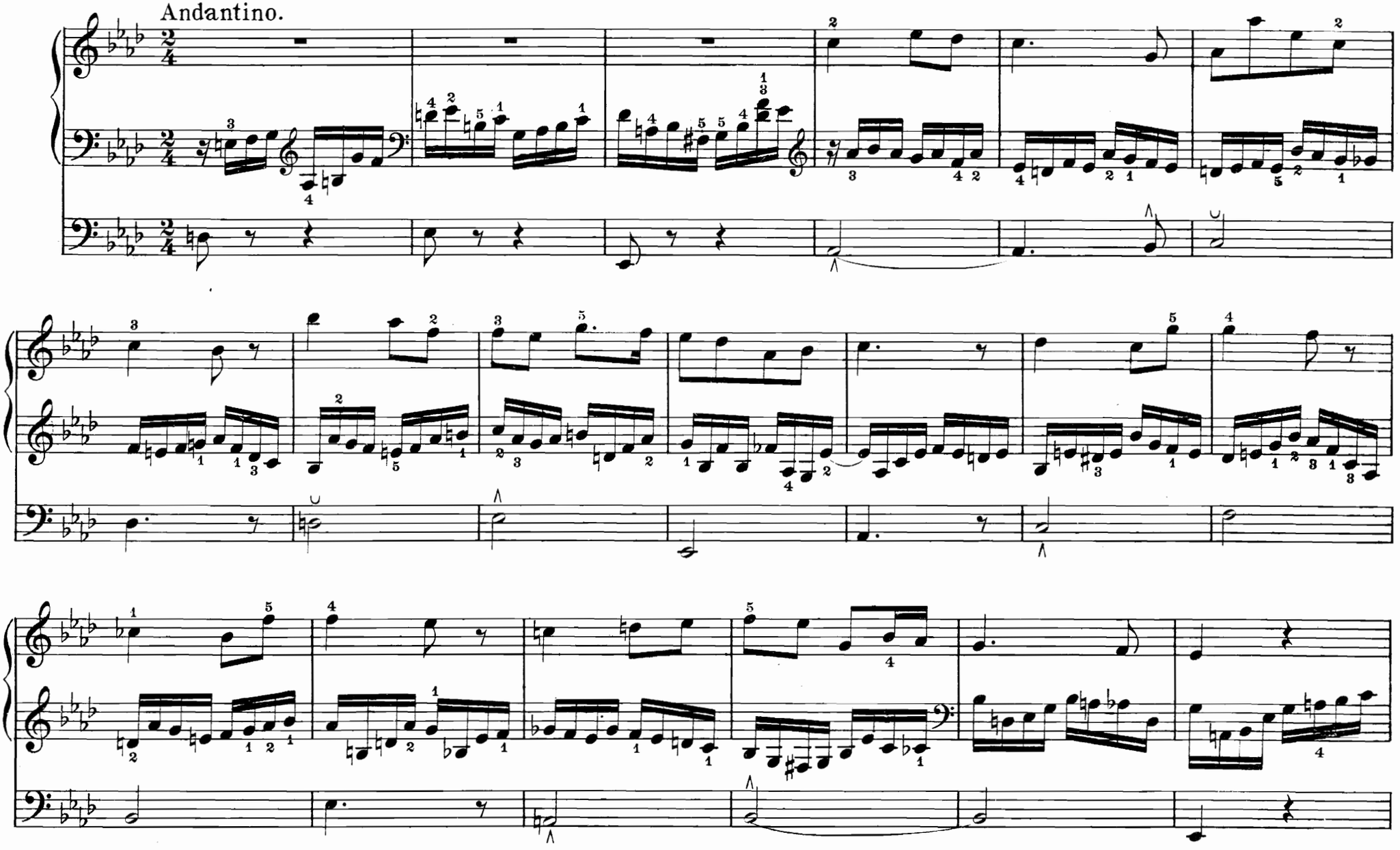


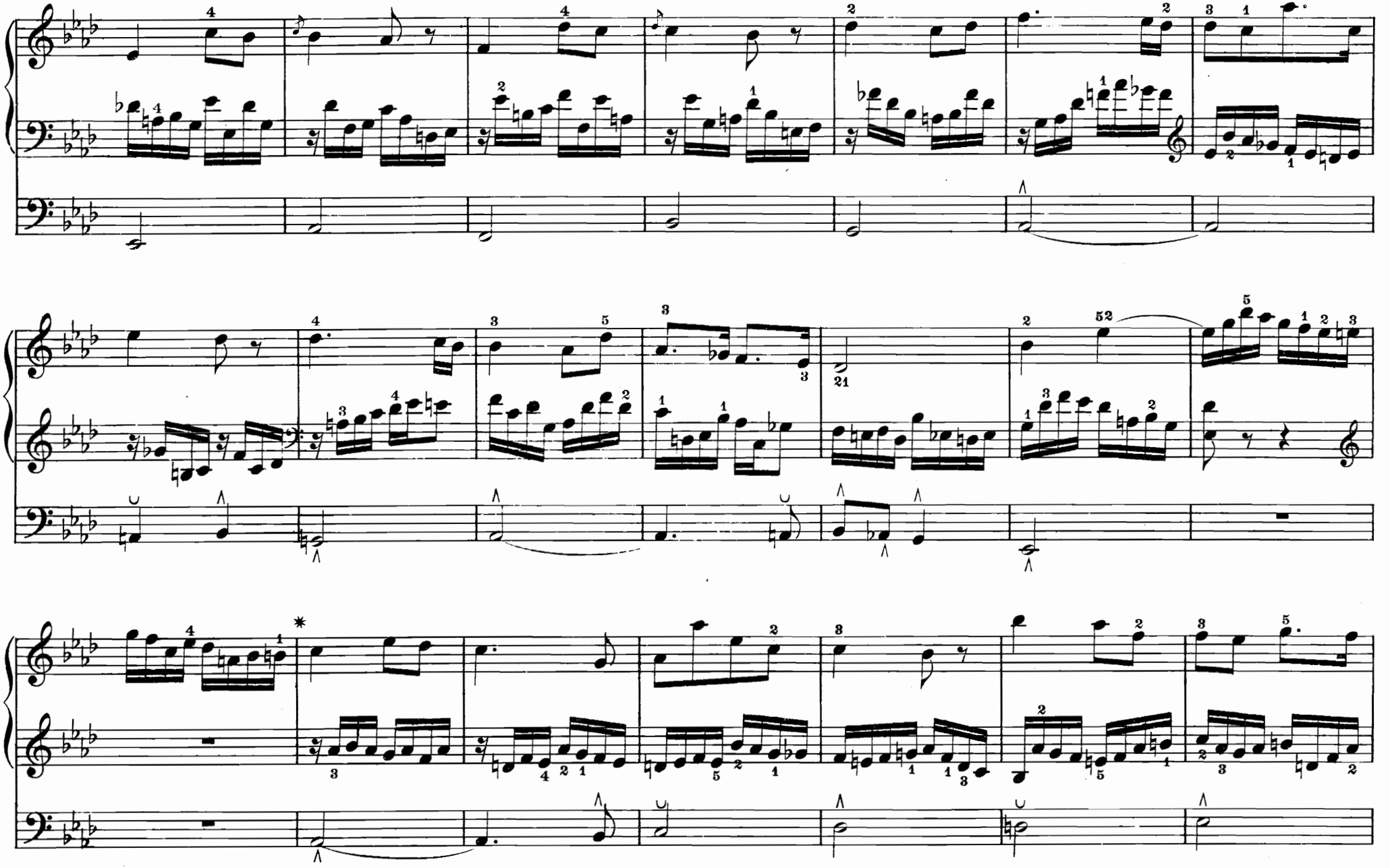


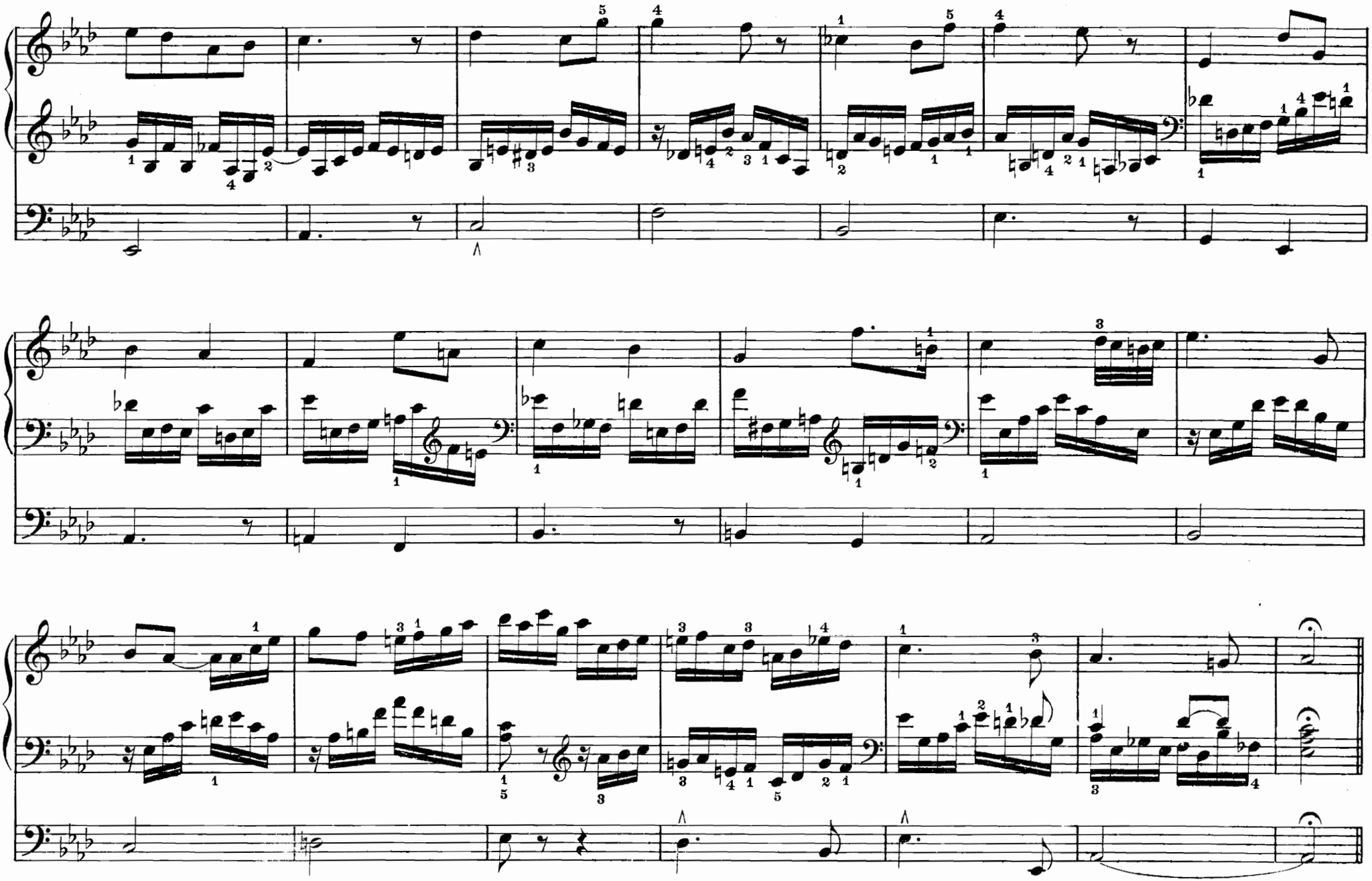
12. Cantilène.

H. E. P.

Andantino.

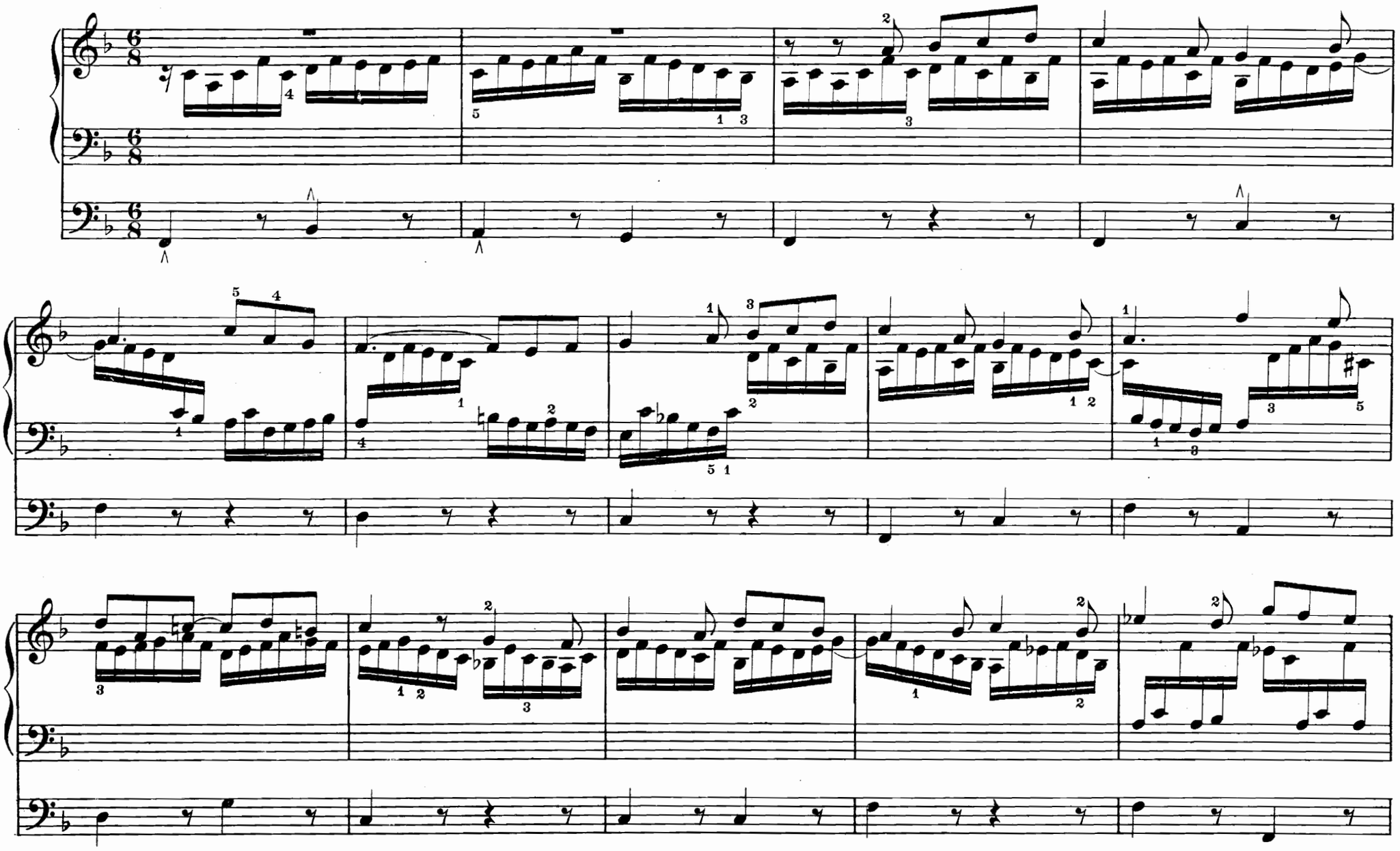


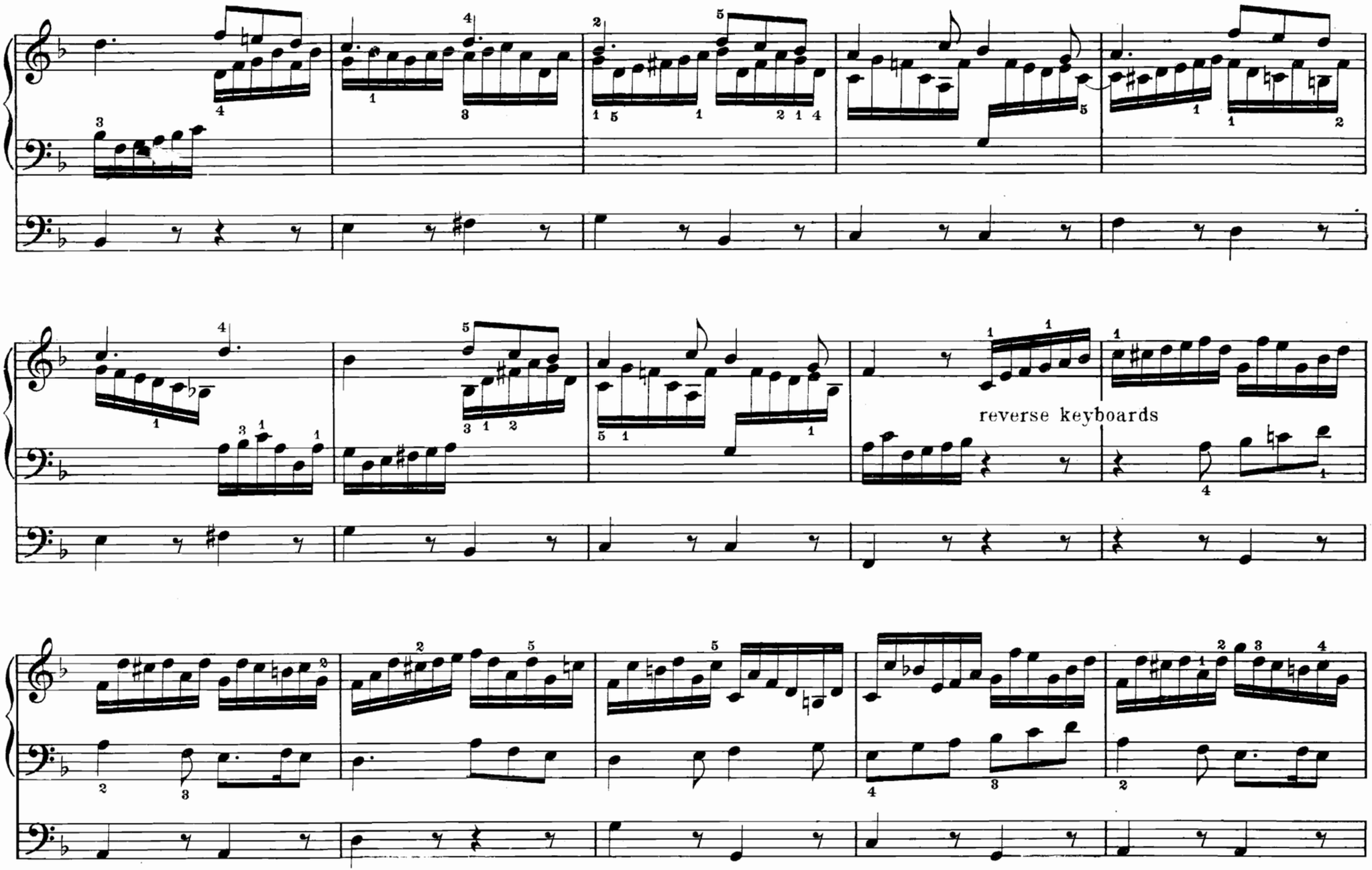


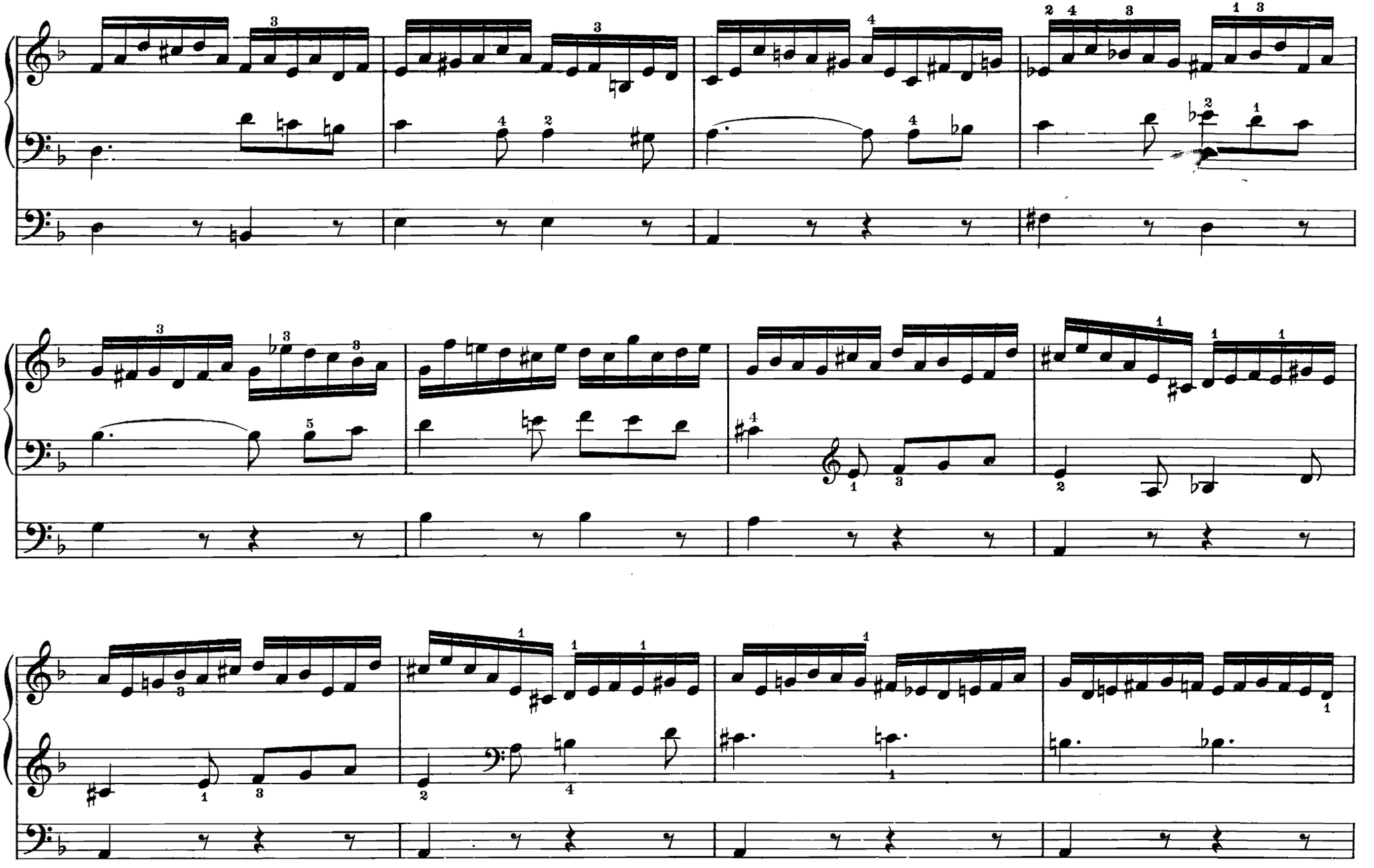


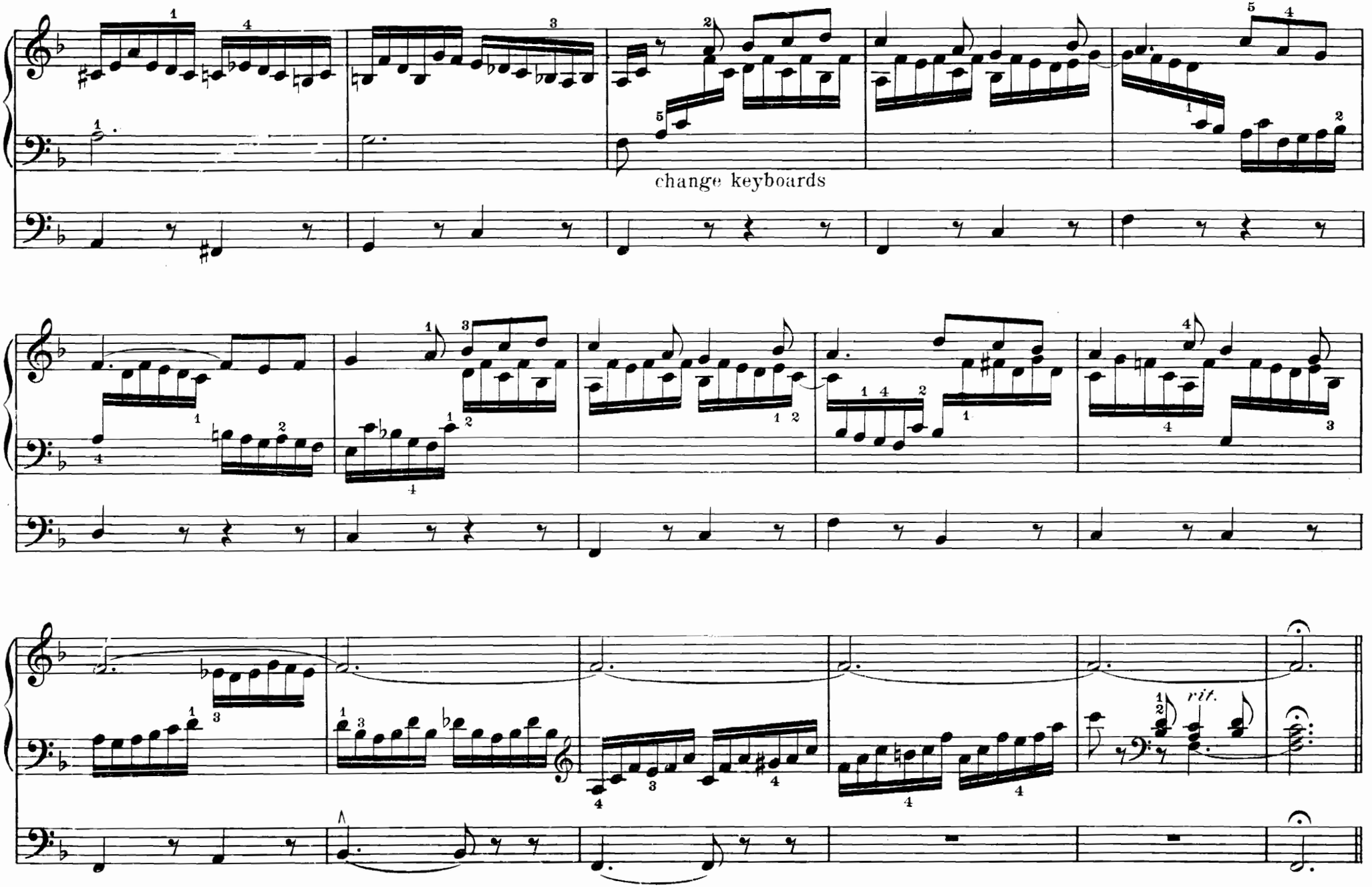
13. Andantino.

Adapted from fourth Organ Sonata
MENDELSSOHN.



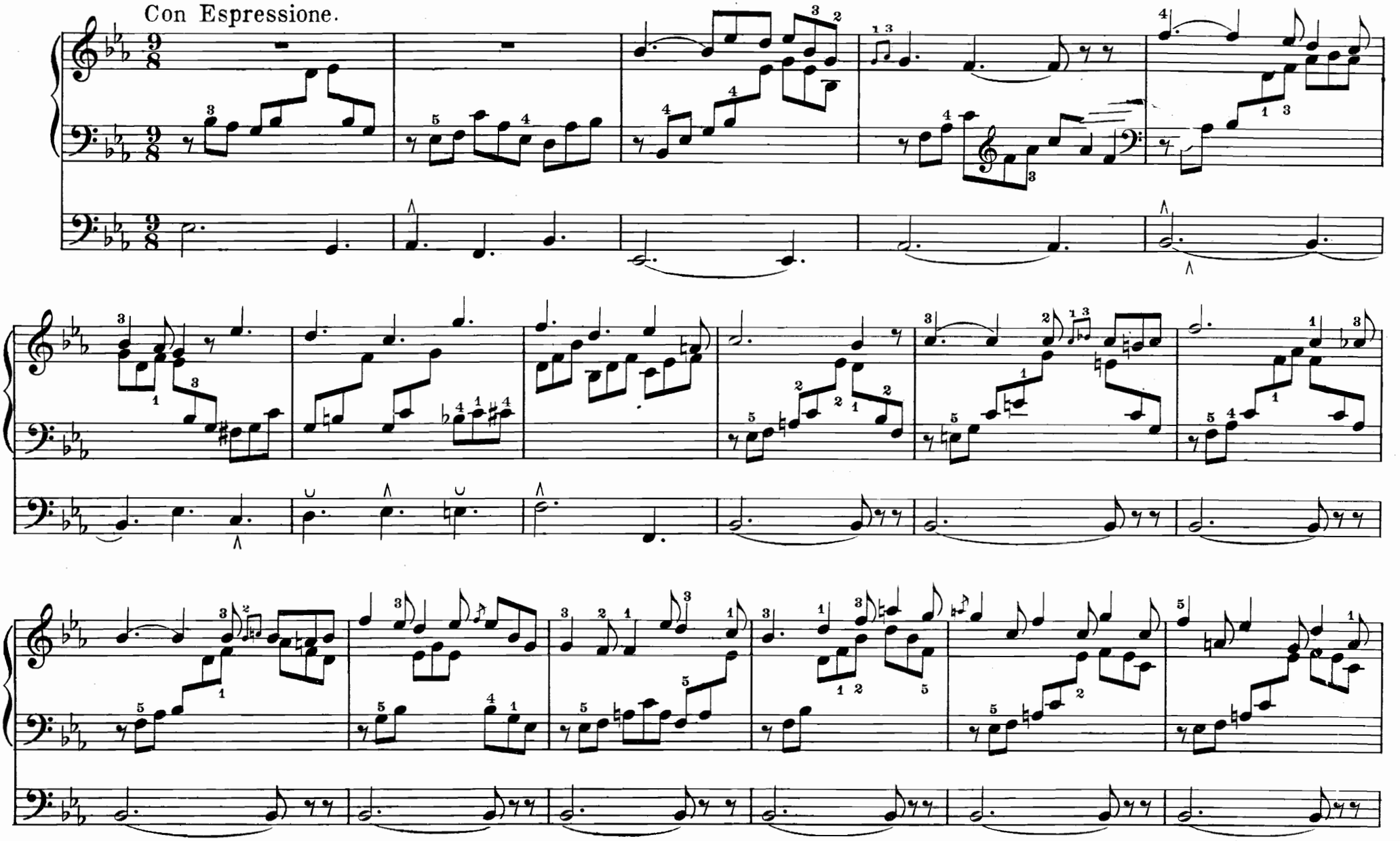

reverse keyboards

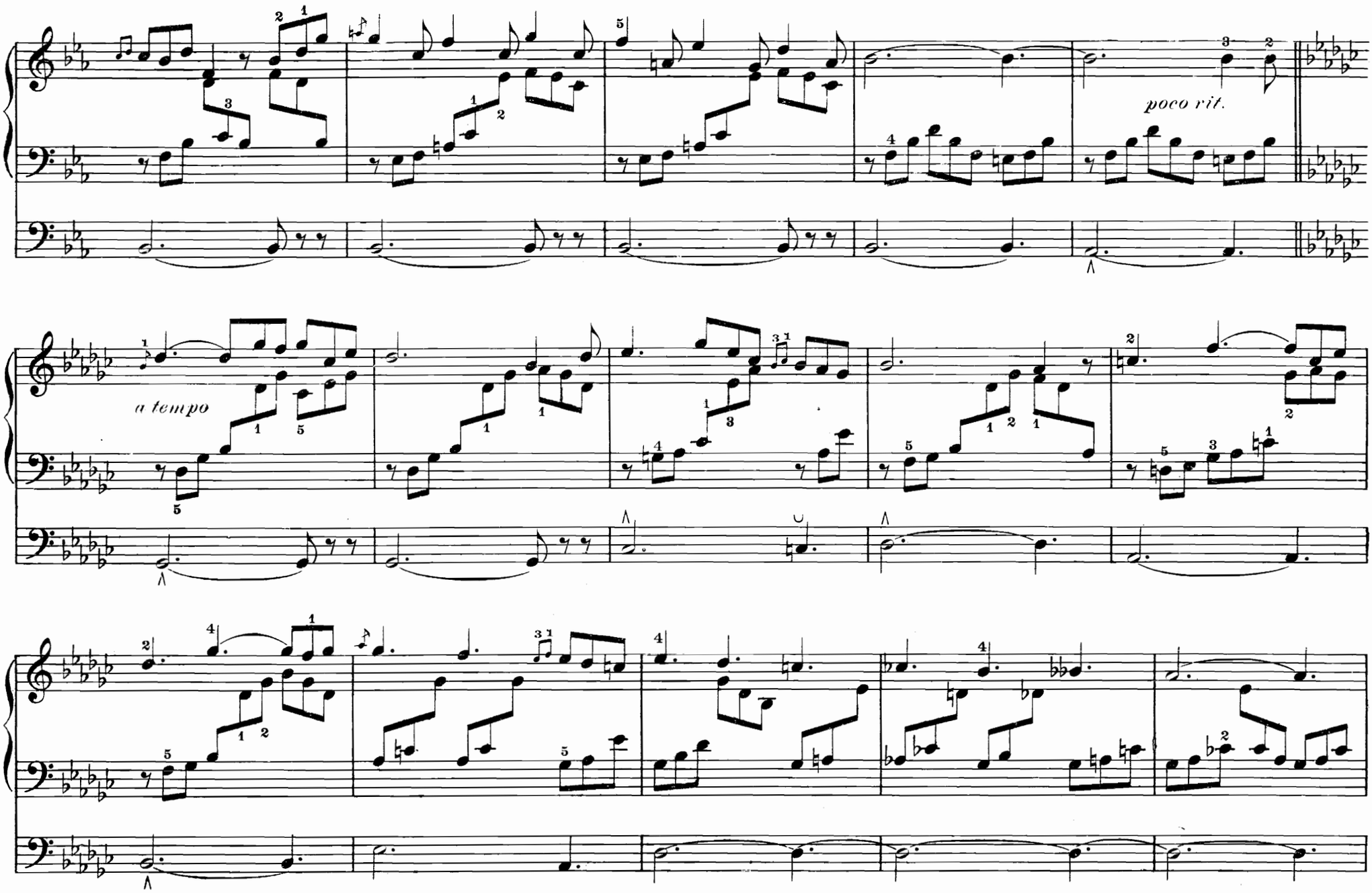


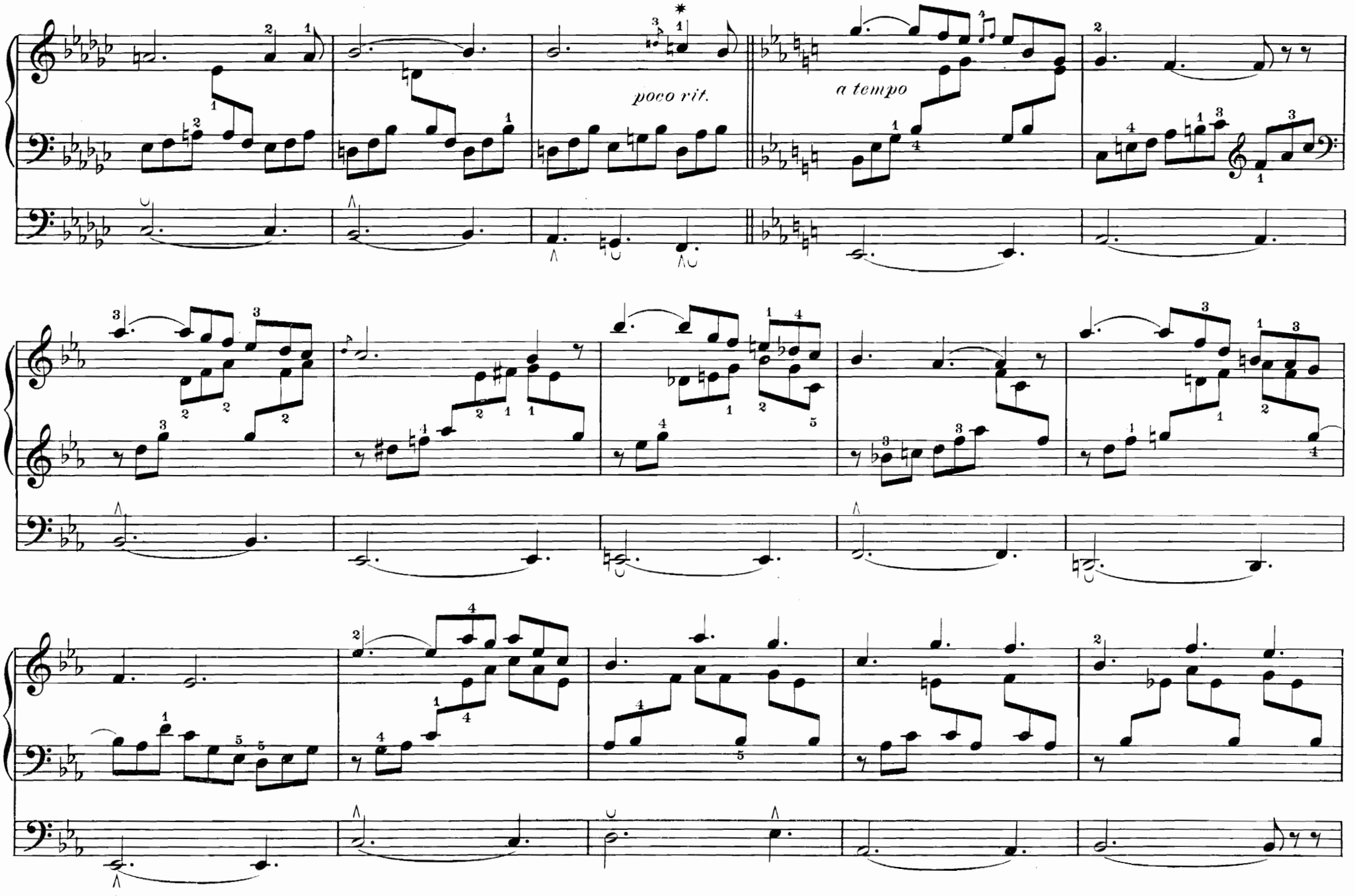

change keyboards
rit.

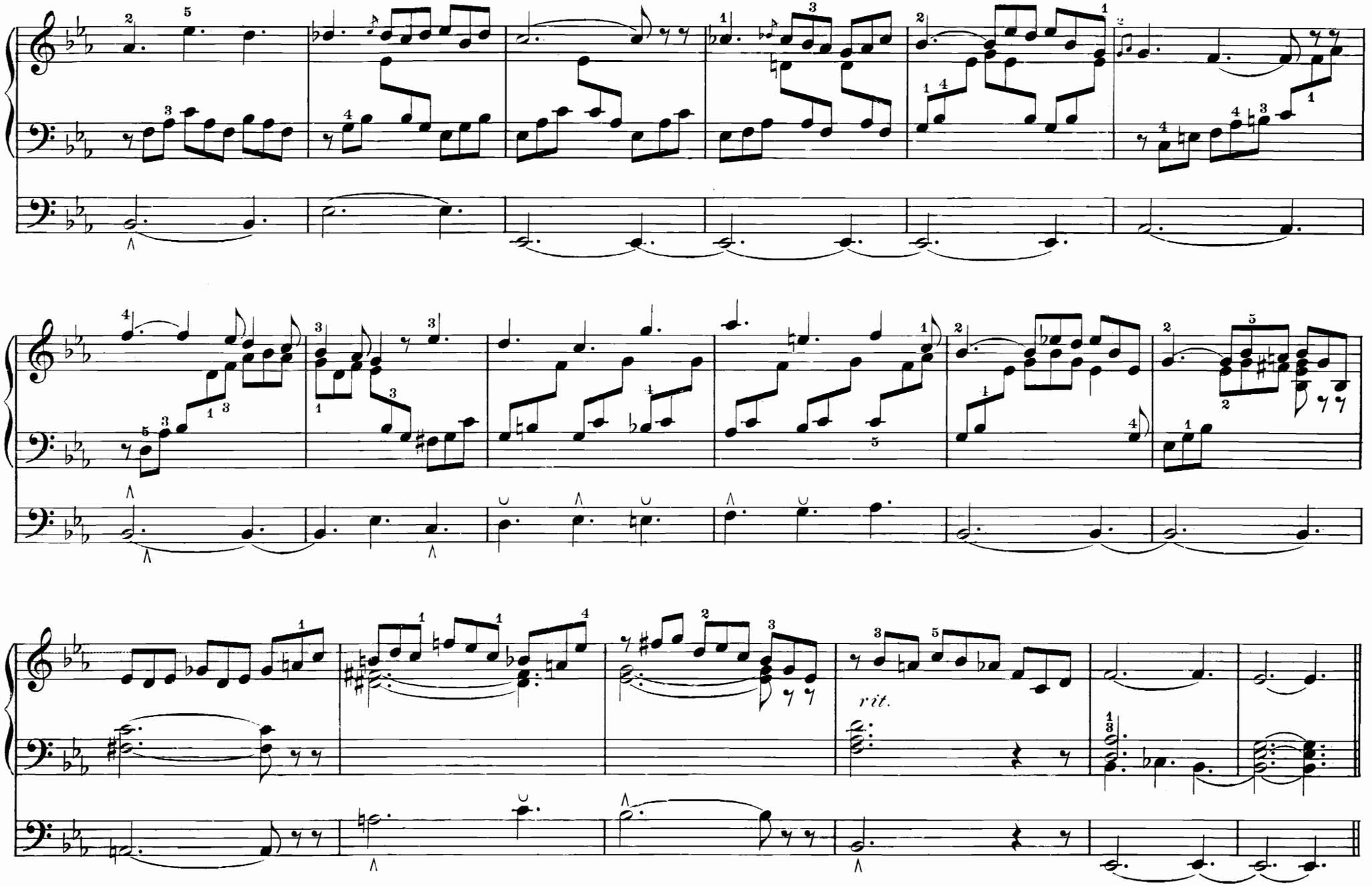
14. Idyl.

H. E. P.



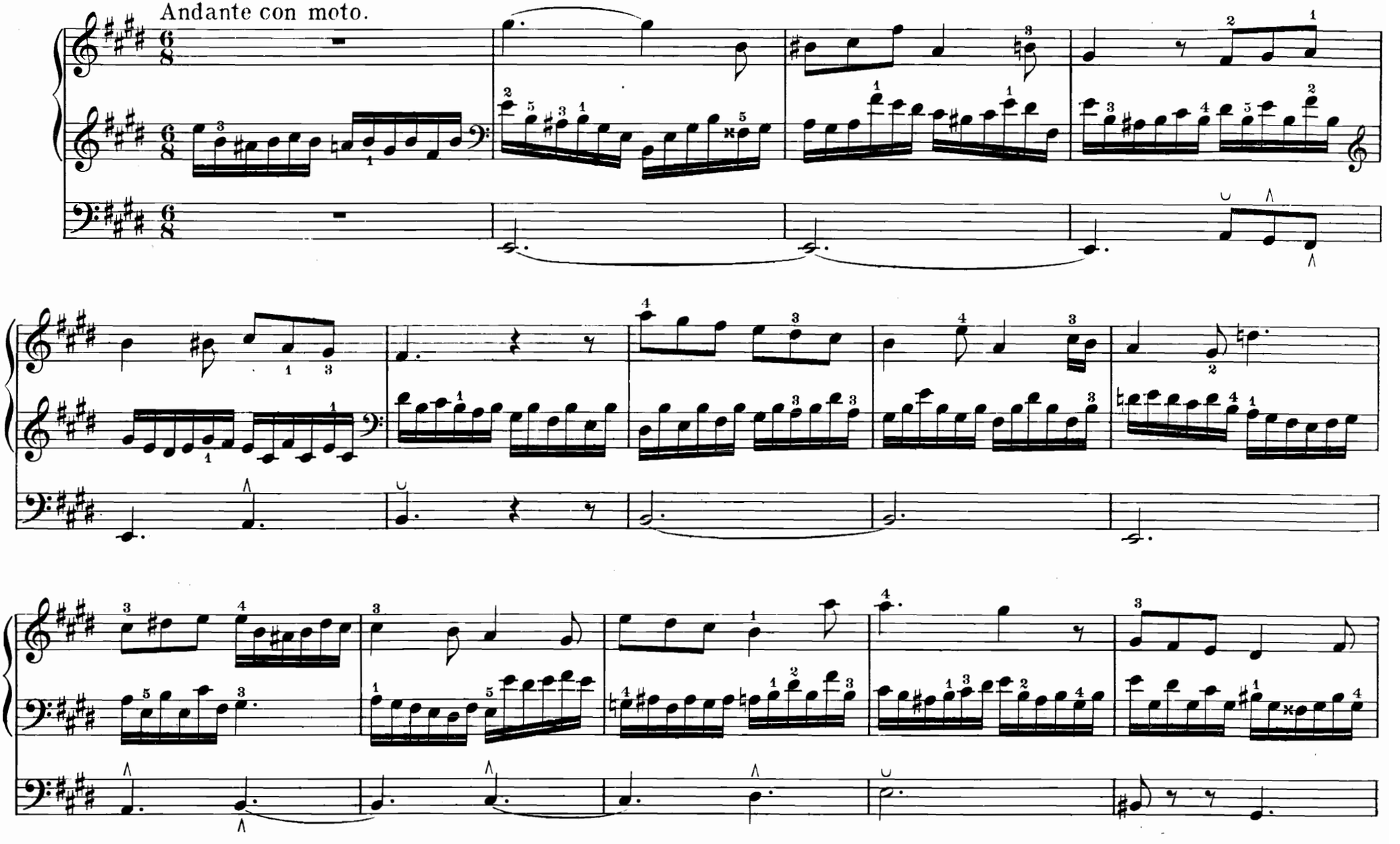

poco rit.
a tempo

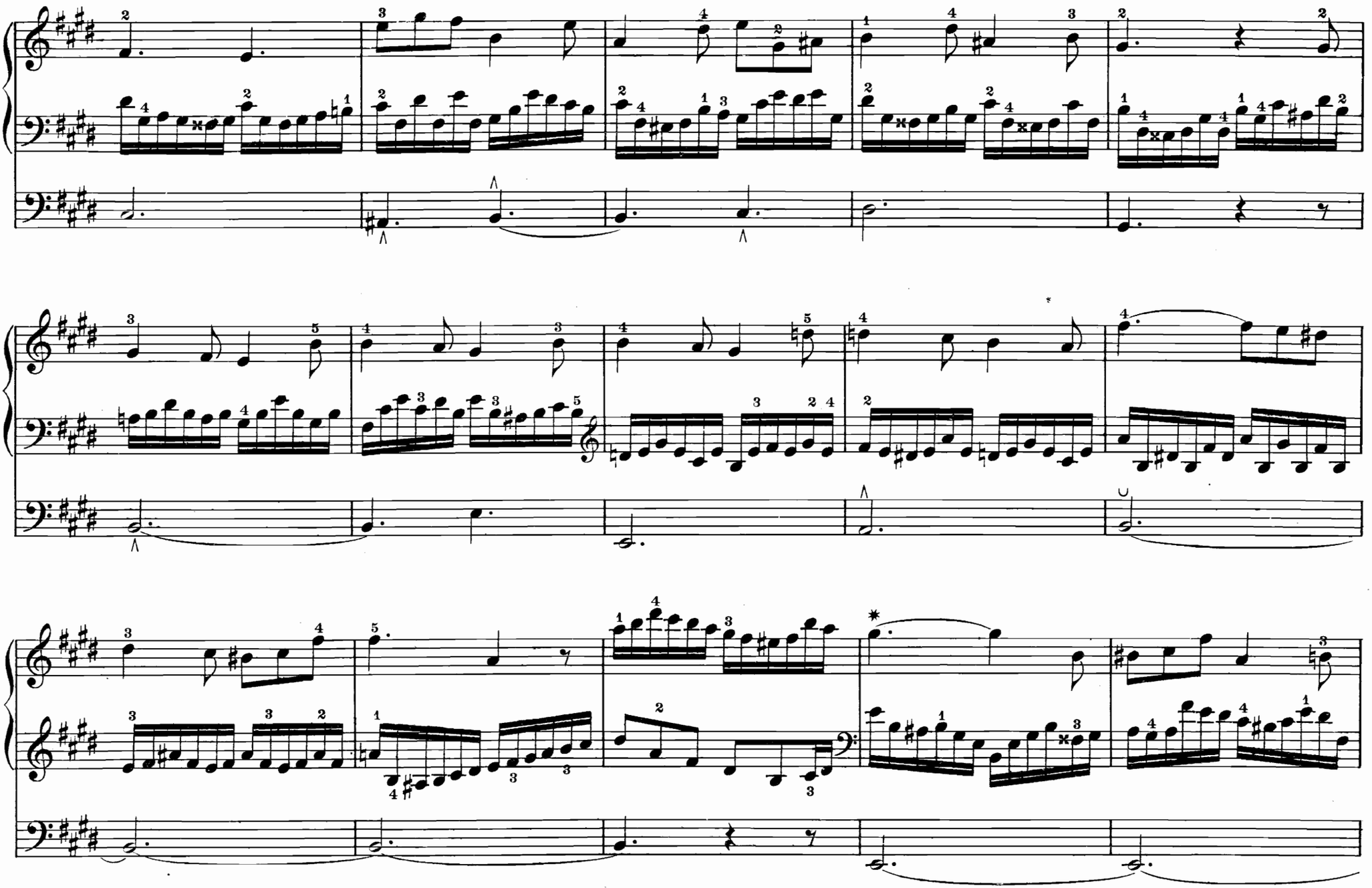

poco rit.
a tempo

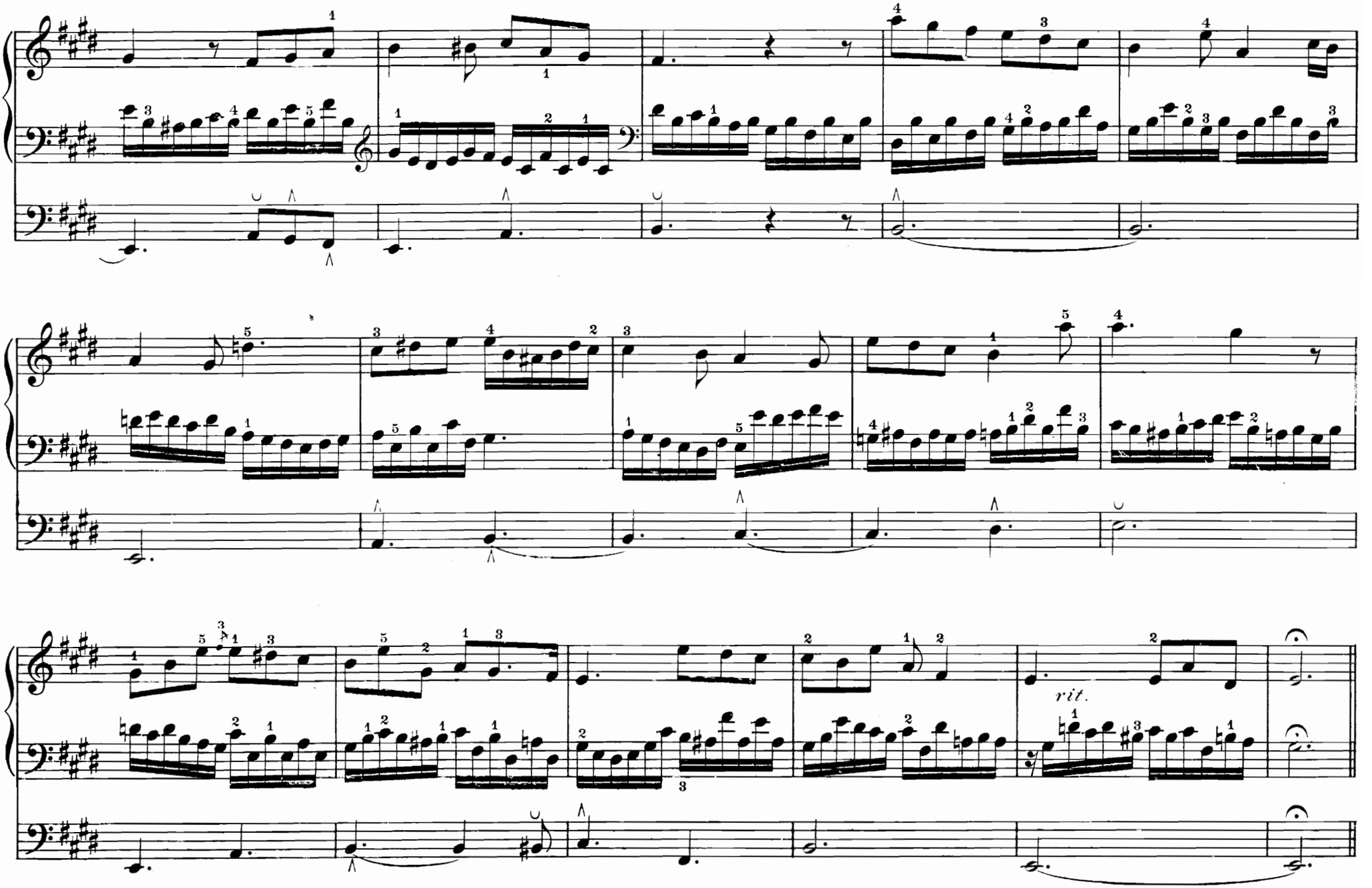

rit.

15. Intermezzo.

H. E. P.



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