Suite I in D minor

from *Pièces de clavecin*

Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre

Arranged for carillon by Julia Littleton

Notes on the composition

Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre (1665-1729), highly esteemed during her own lifetime as a performer and composer for the French royal court, published two volumes of her *Pièces de clavecin*, or harpsichord pieces. Suite I in D minor comes from the first of these, published in 1687, when she was 22. By that time, she was already an experienced performer, recognized at age 5 for her keyboard prowess on the harpsichord and organ by none other than the Sun King himself, Louis XIV. In the decades that followed, she composed operas, cantatas, a ballet, and sonatas, among other works.

The Prelude of this harpsichord suite was written partially in an unmeasured style characteristic of Jacquet and several other French Baroque composers. An unmeasured passage has no bar lines dividing the notes and no time signature. The interpreter has to determine the note values according to chord groupings and the harmonic progression. Some notes serve as appoggiaturas. The performer should be guided by a sense of the prevailing style, while at the same time taking advantage of the freedom this form offers.

Bringing Baroque harpsichord music to the carillon presents another set of technical and stylistic challenges. The bells' lengthy resonance and their prominent minor overtones make playing a large number of ornaments cumbersome for the ear, even when they are technically possible to perform on a carillon keyboard. In arranging this suite for the carillon, I have opted to provide here as many of the original harpsichord ornamentation markings as possible, leaving it to the performer to select which ones will suit the tempo and feeling of the pieces.

Another feature of French Baroque music for the harpsichord is inégalité, implied dotted rhythms that can be expressed in some passages. Like other performance choices, the application of inégalité depends on the musician's acquaintance with the genre and ideas about what will best enhance the musical line. A reference such as Jean Saint-Arroman's *L'Interprétation de la musique française* will impart a much deeper understanding of inégalité than a brief preface could provide.

Two sections of this suite have mixed time signatures in the original score: The first Courante is marked 3/2 : 6/4, while the second Courante has 6/4 : 3/2, meaning the feeling of the beats alternates between three half notes and six quarter notes to the measure, something to take into consideration when determining where the emphasis falls.

With its representation of a varied collection of dance styles in addition to its remarkable prelude, this suite offers ample room for creative interpretation by musicians on the carillon. I hope it will serve to expand the scope of Baroque music arranged for carillon performance and be enjoyed by those who take up the challenge.

Julia Littleton
June 2026

Suite I

from *Pièces de clavecin*

Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre (1665-1729)
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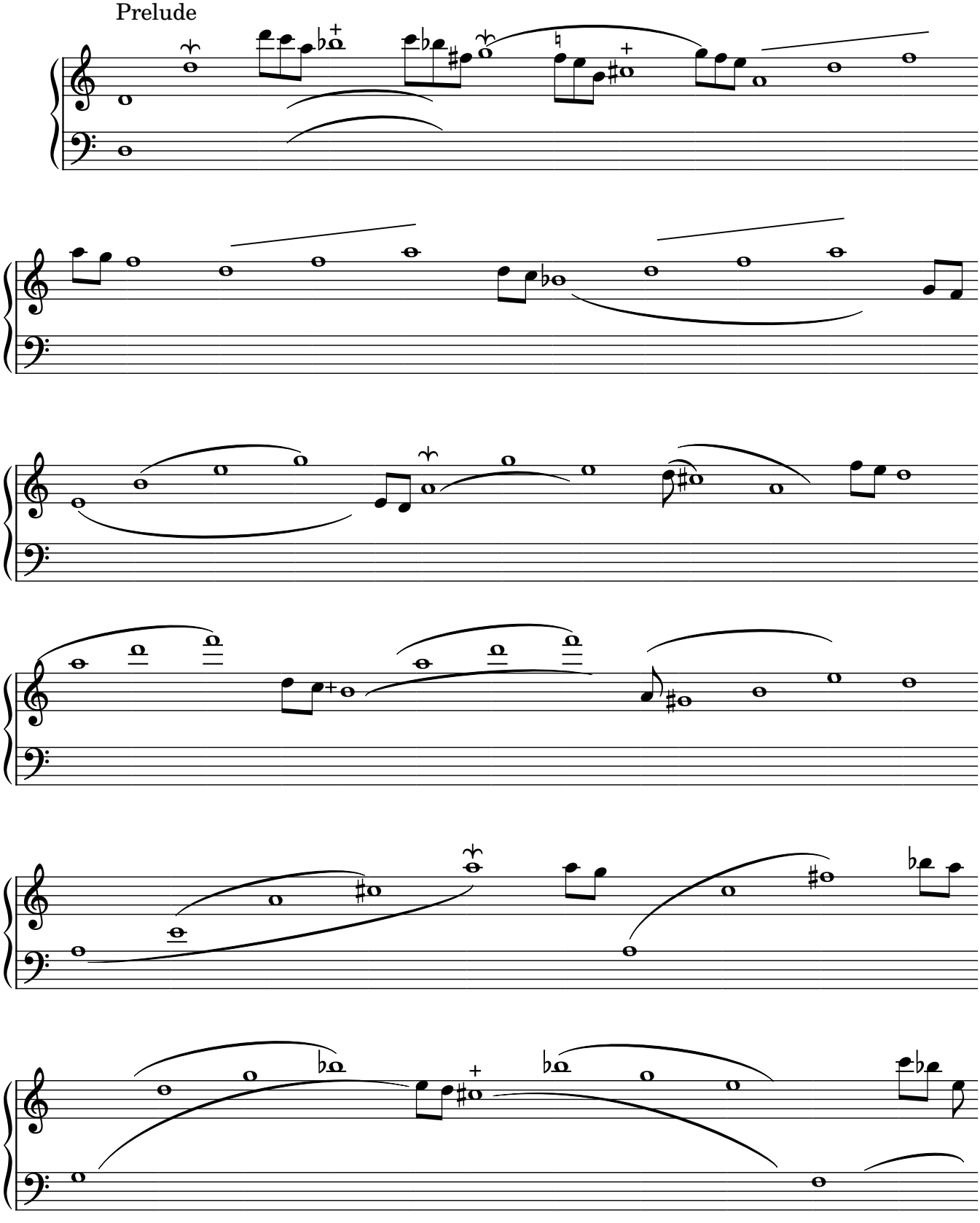
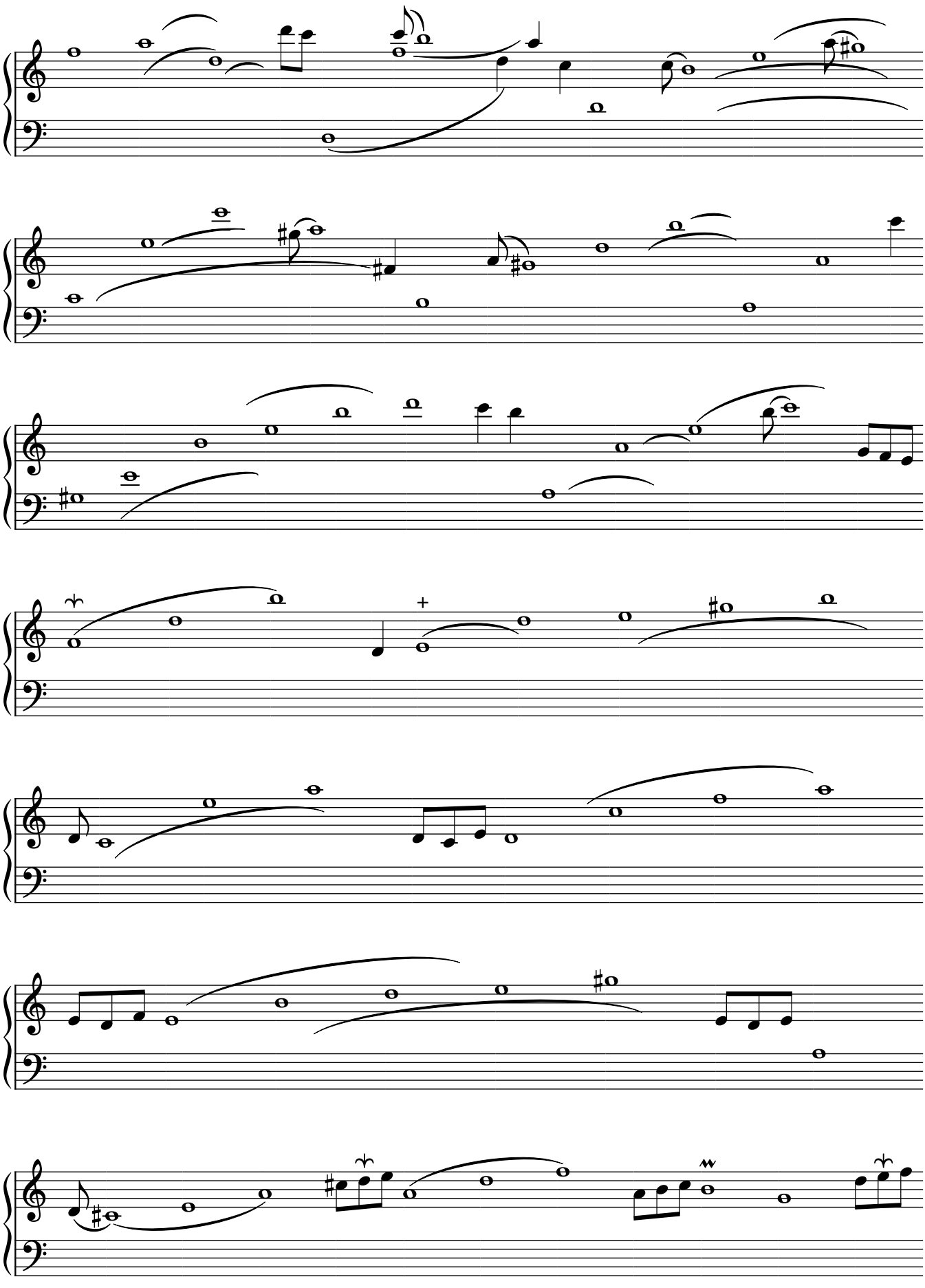
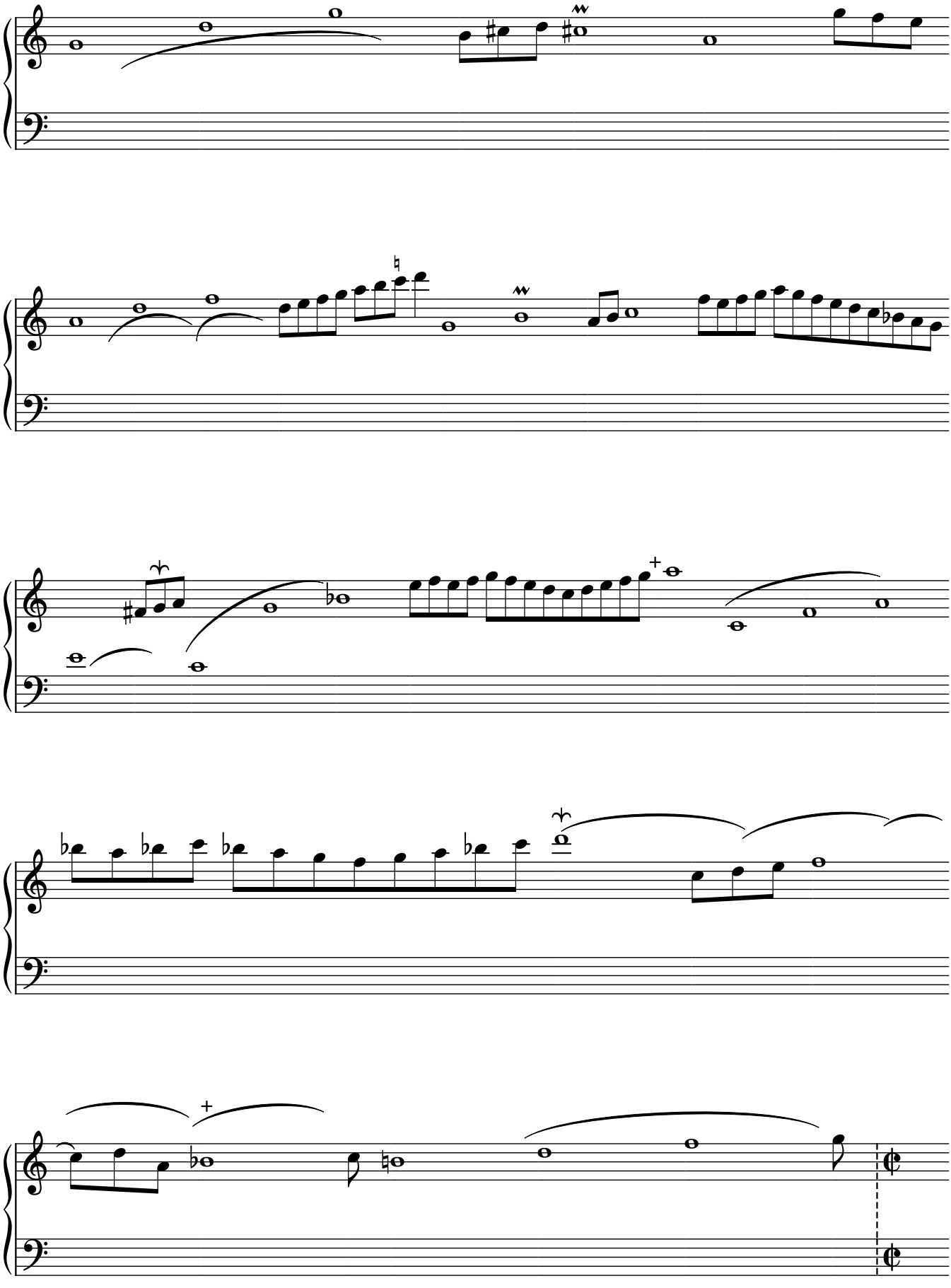
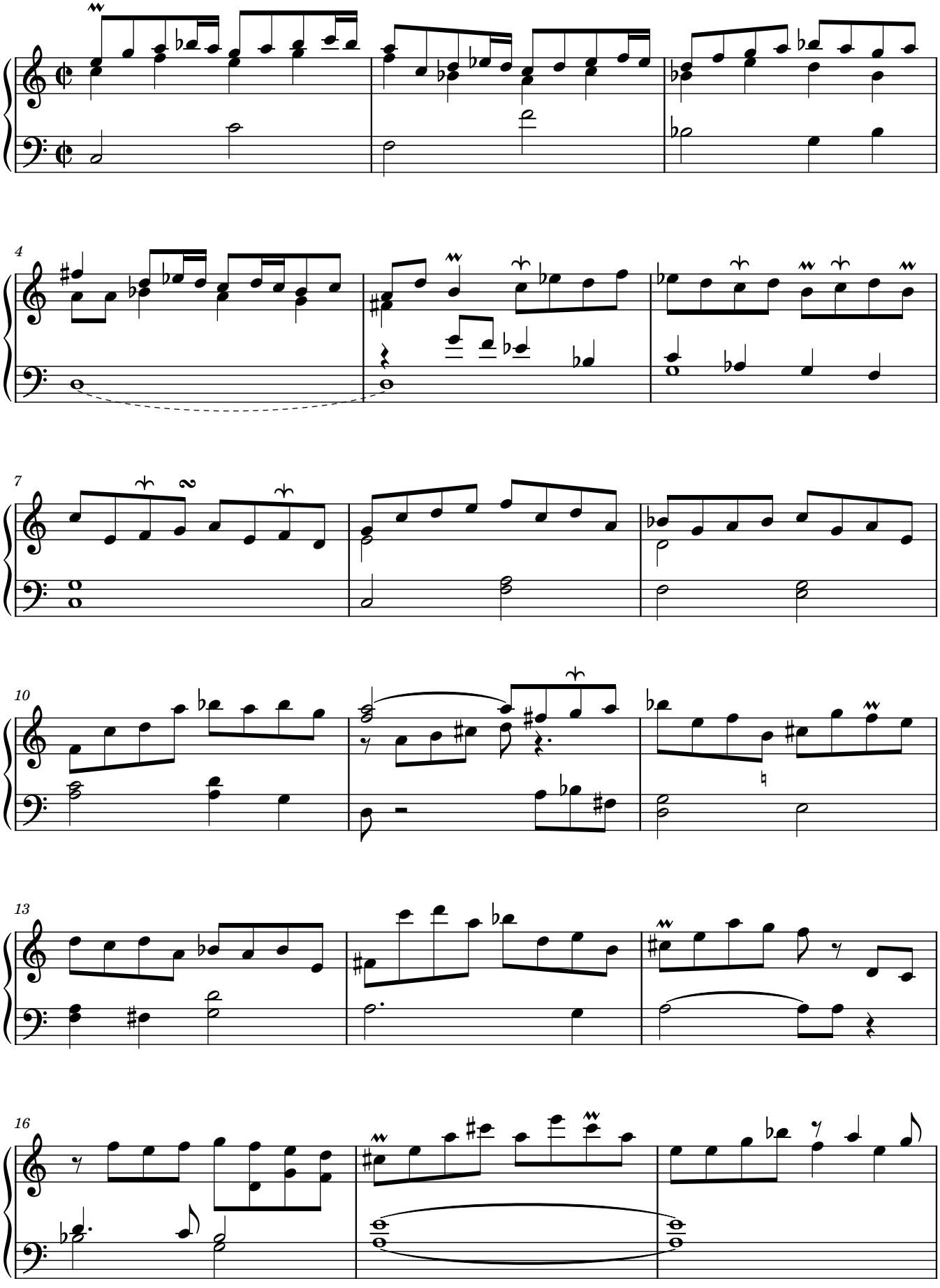
Prelude

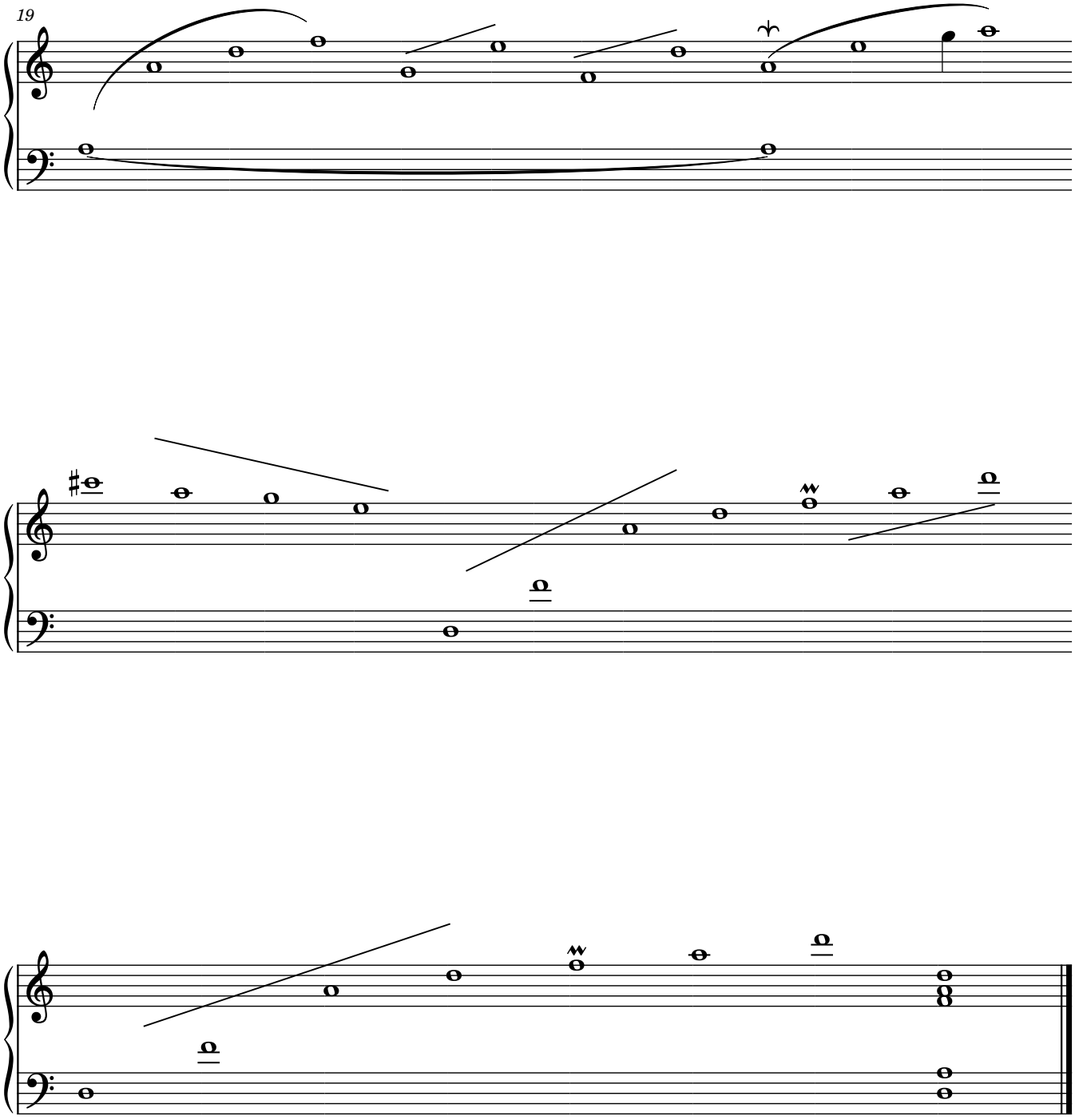






Mouvement

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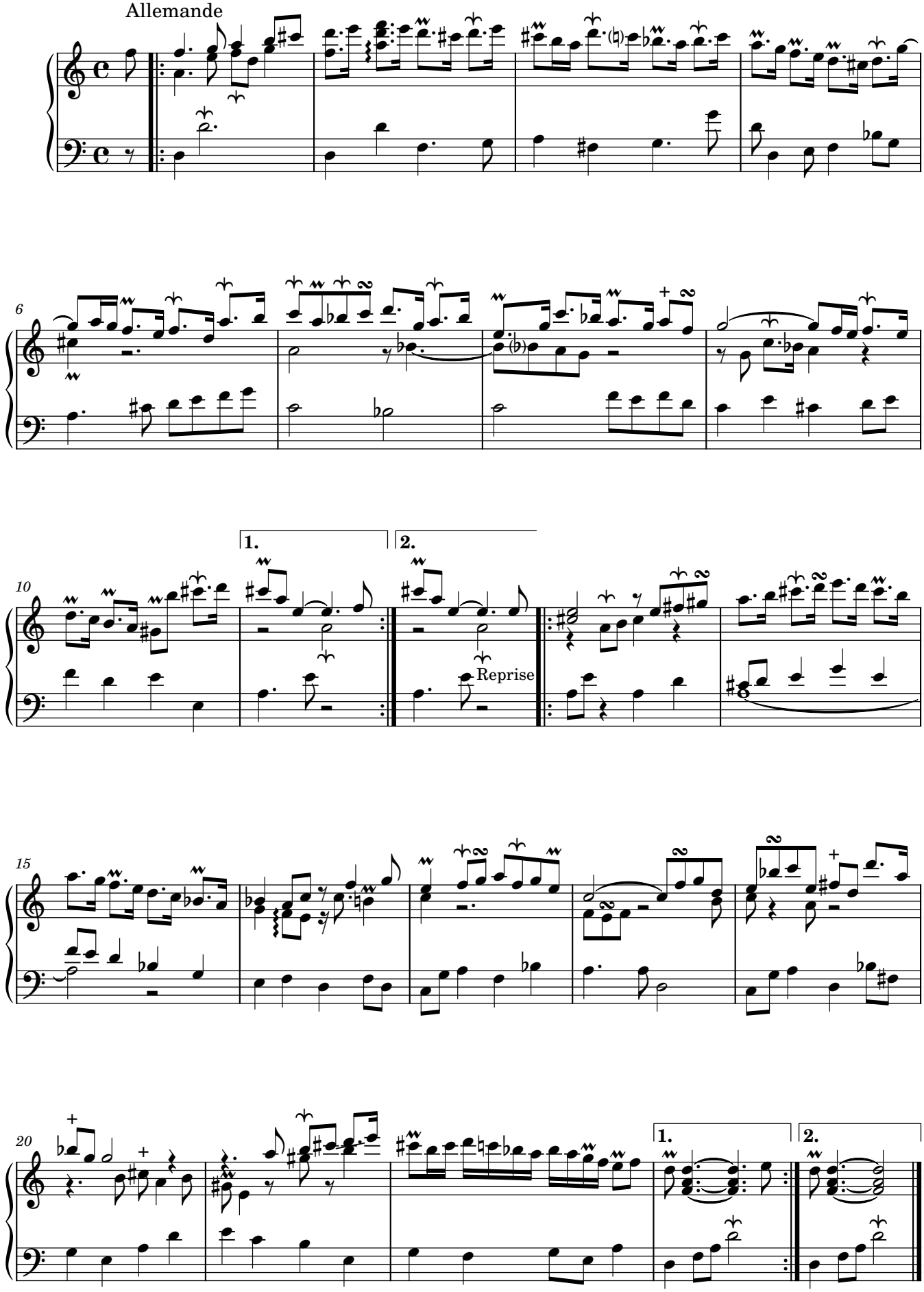
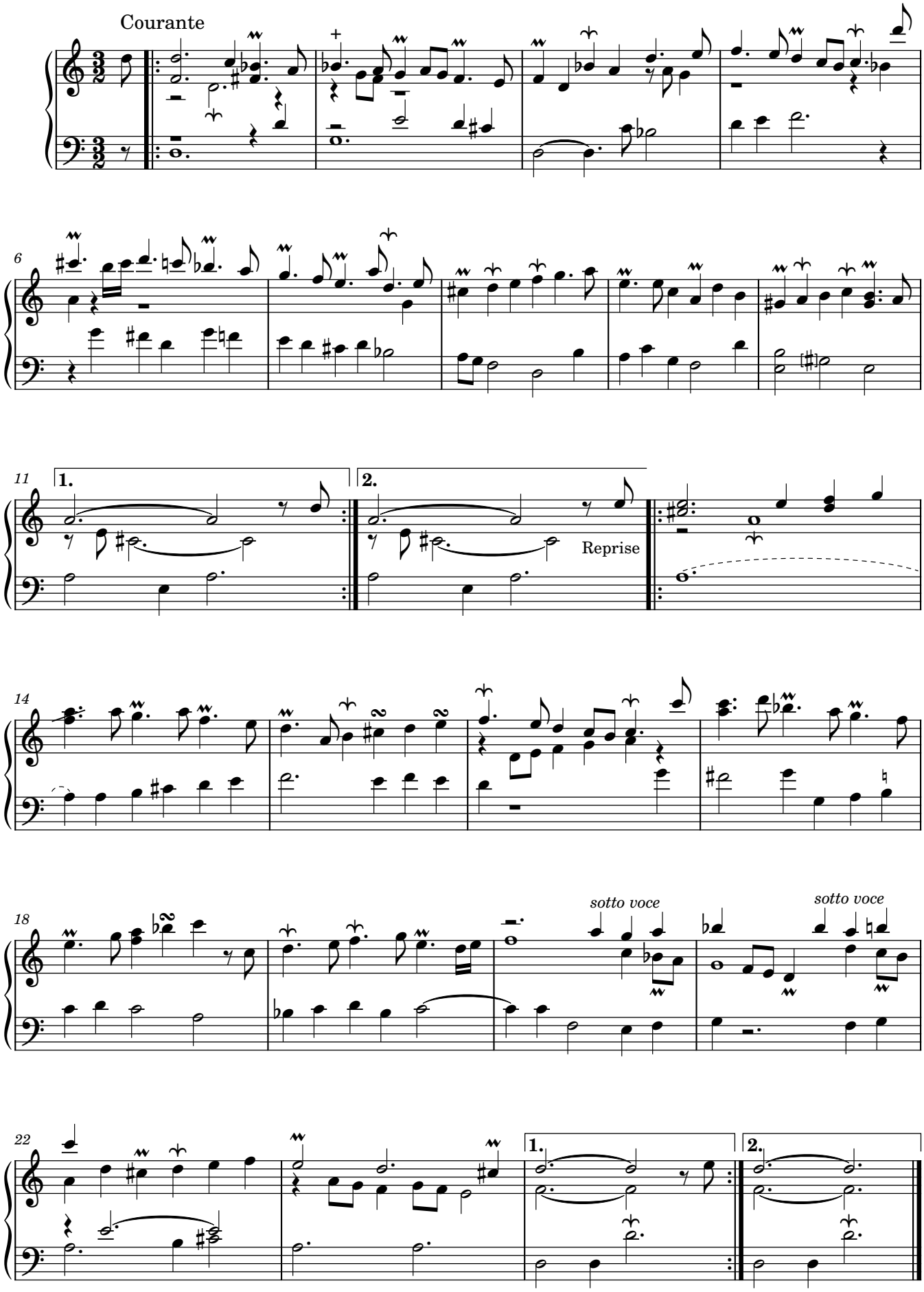
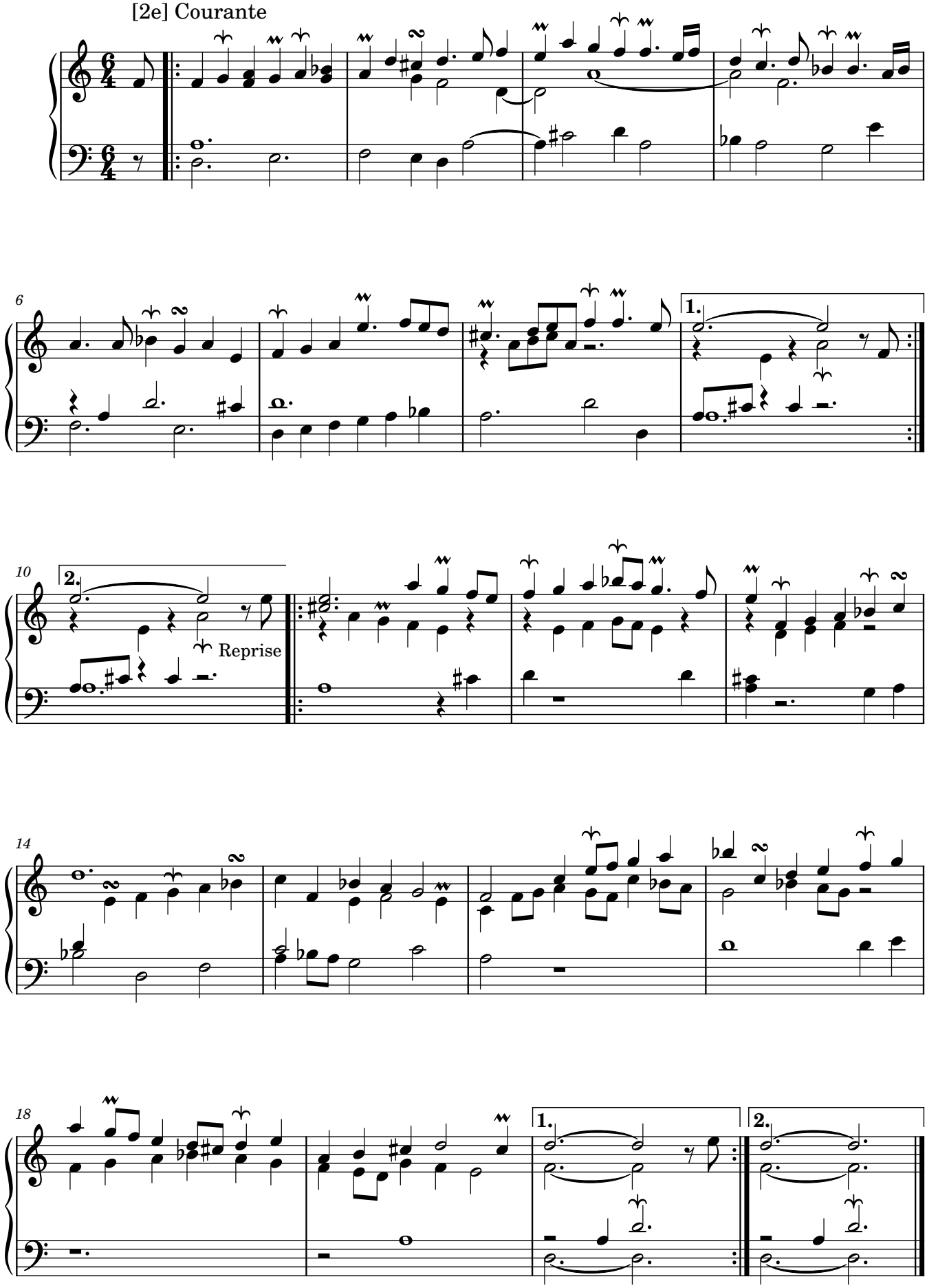
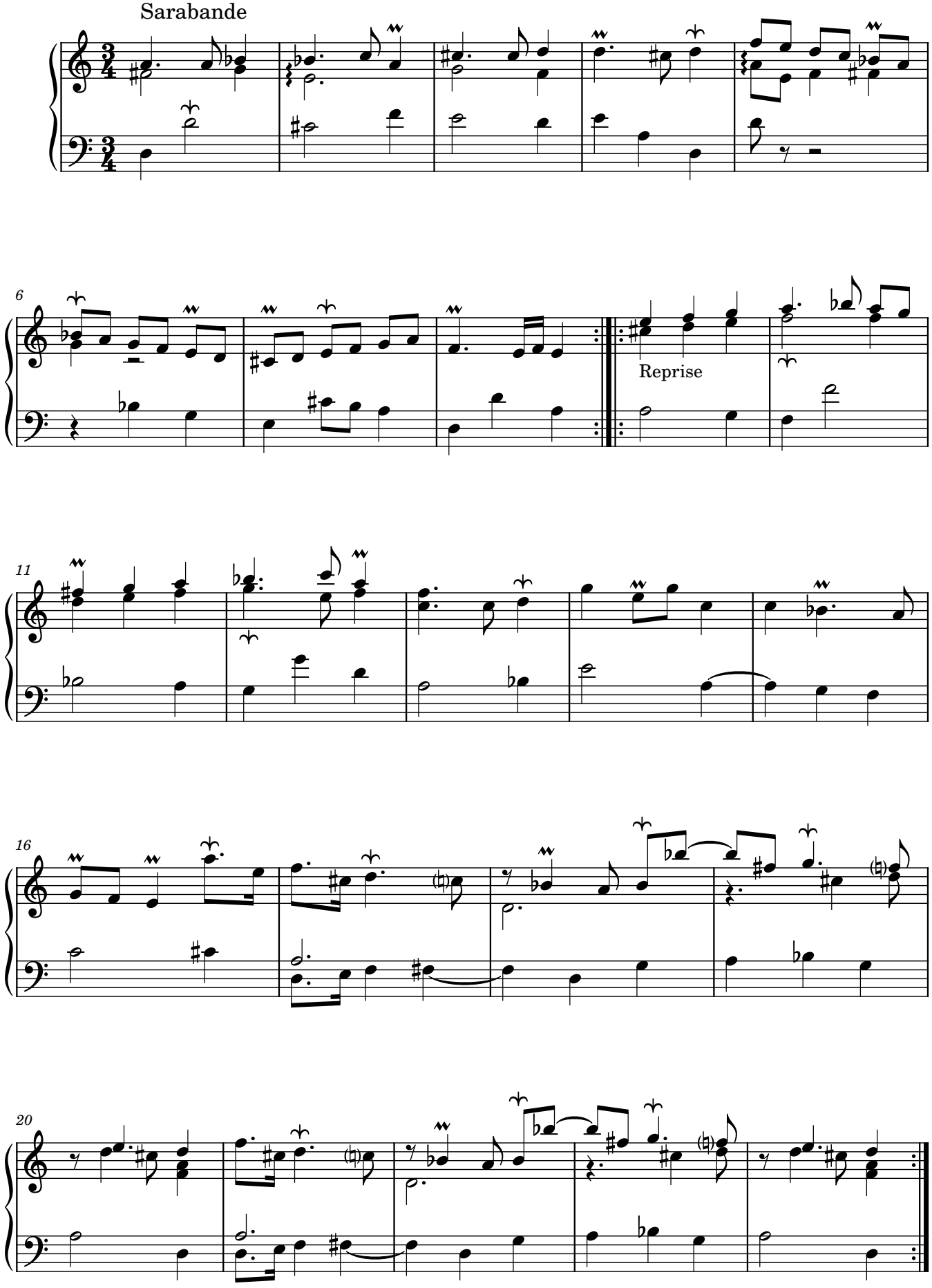

Allemande
6
10
1.
2.
Reprise
15
20
1.
2.


Courante
6
11
1.
2.
Reprise
14
18
sotto voce
sotto voce
22
1.
2.

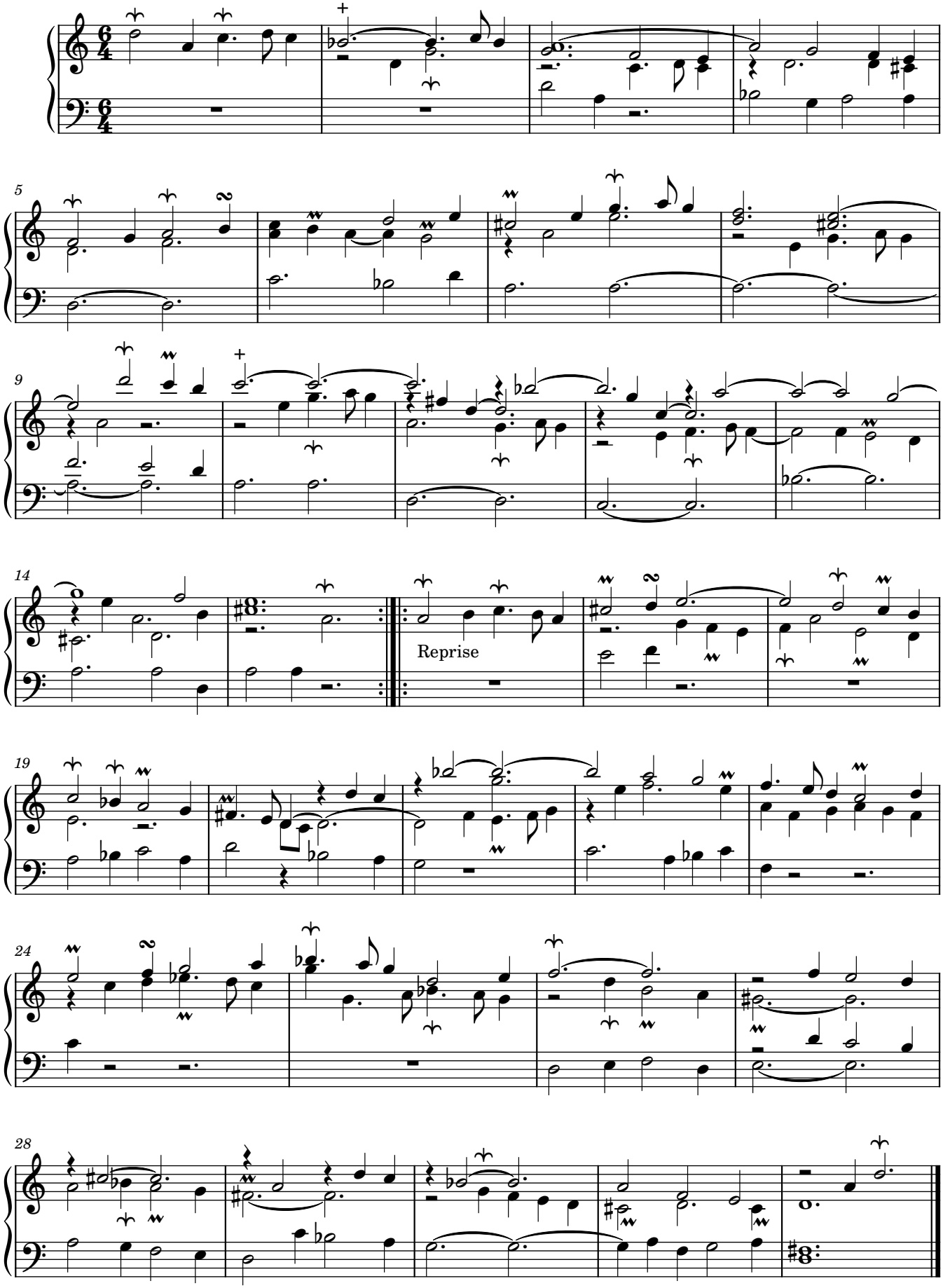
[2e] Courante



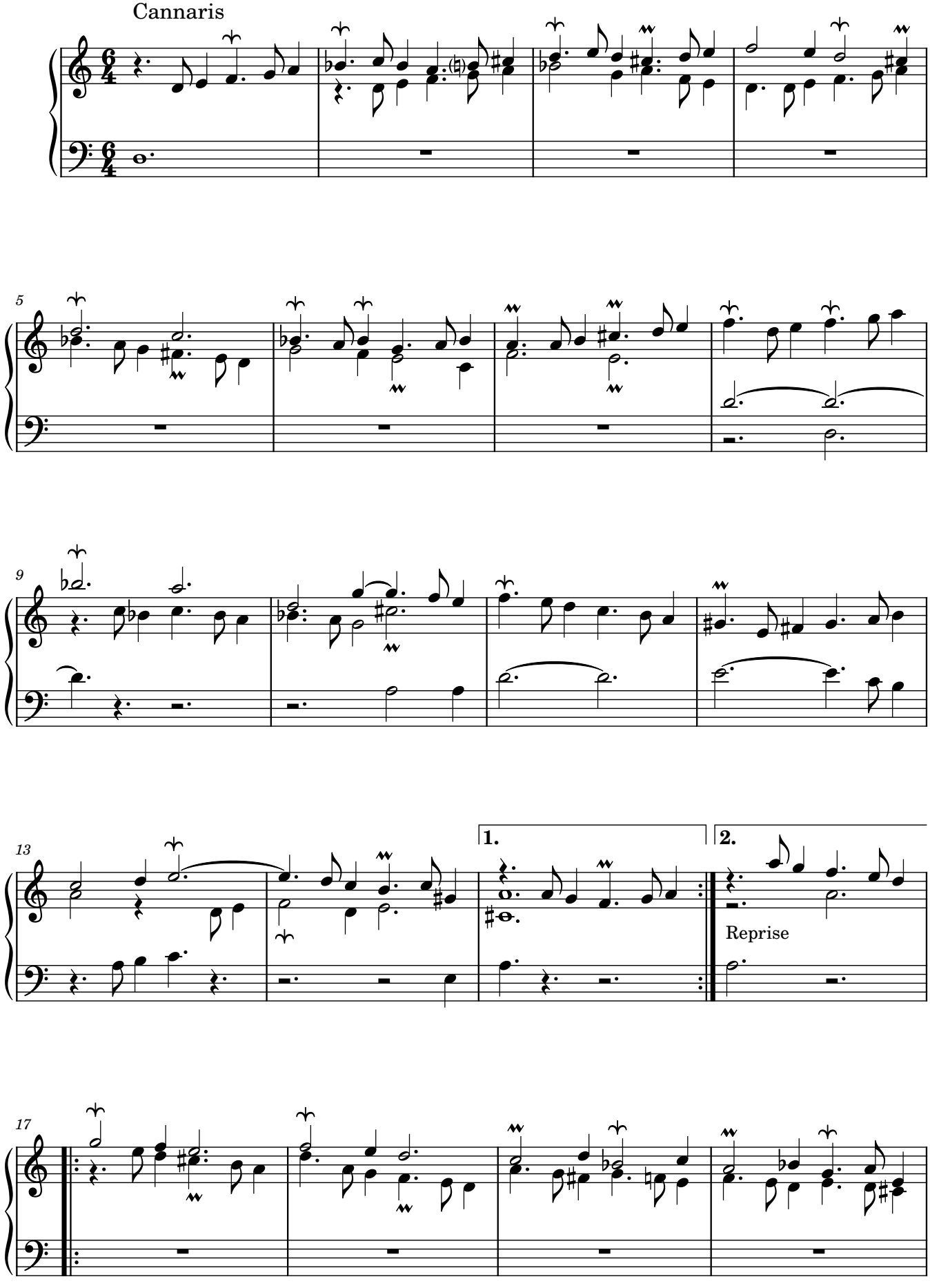
Sarabande

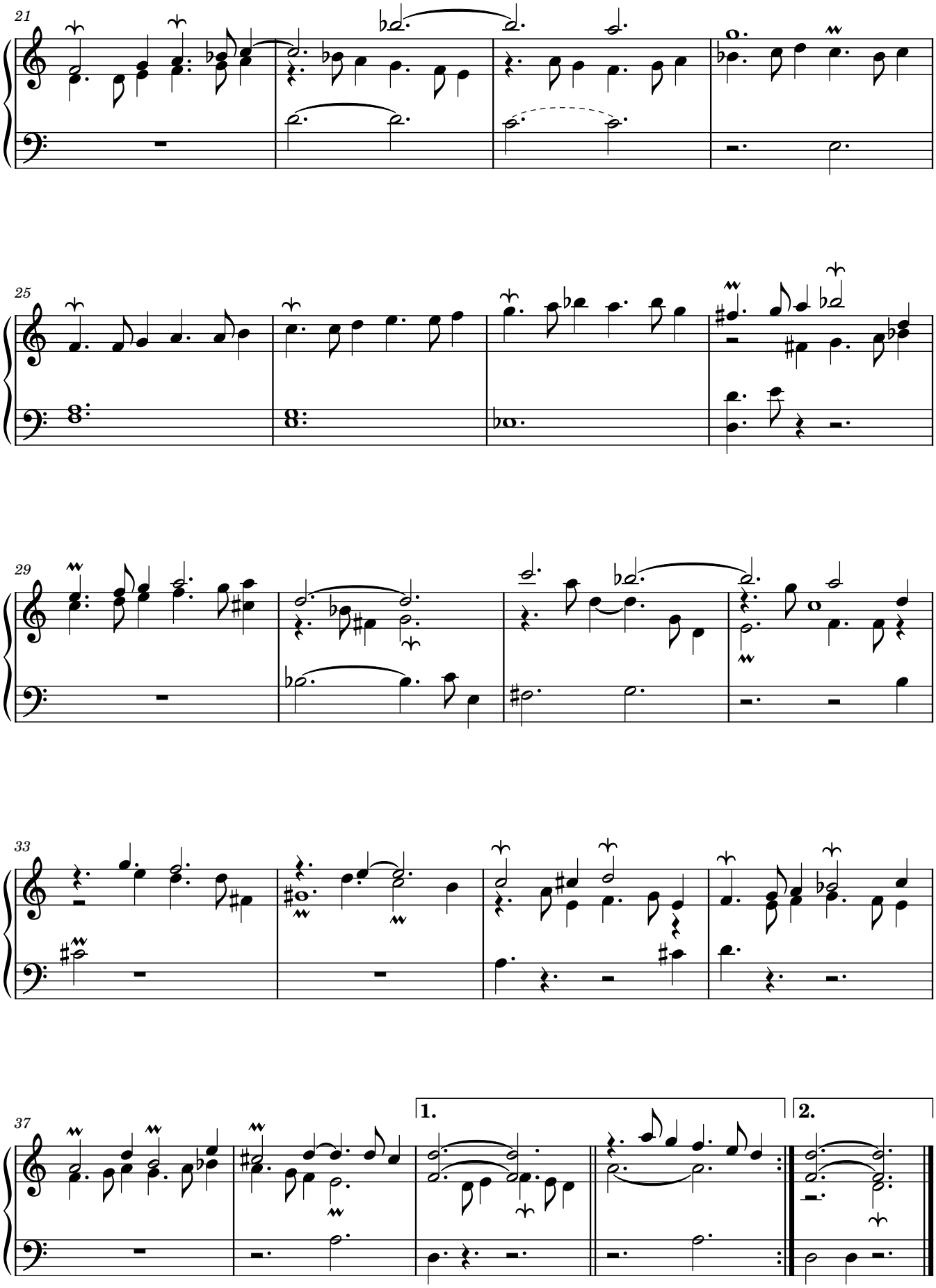


Gigue

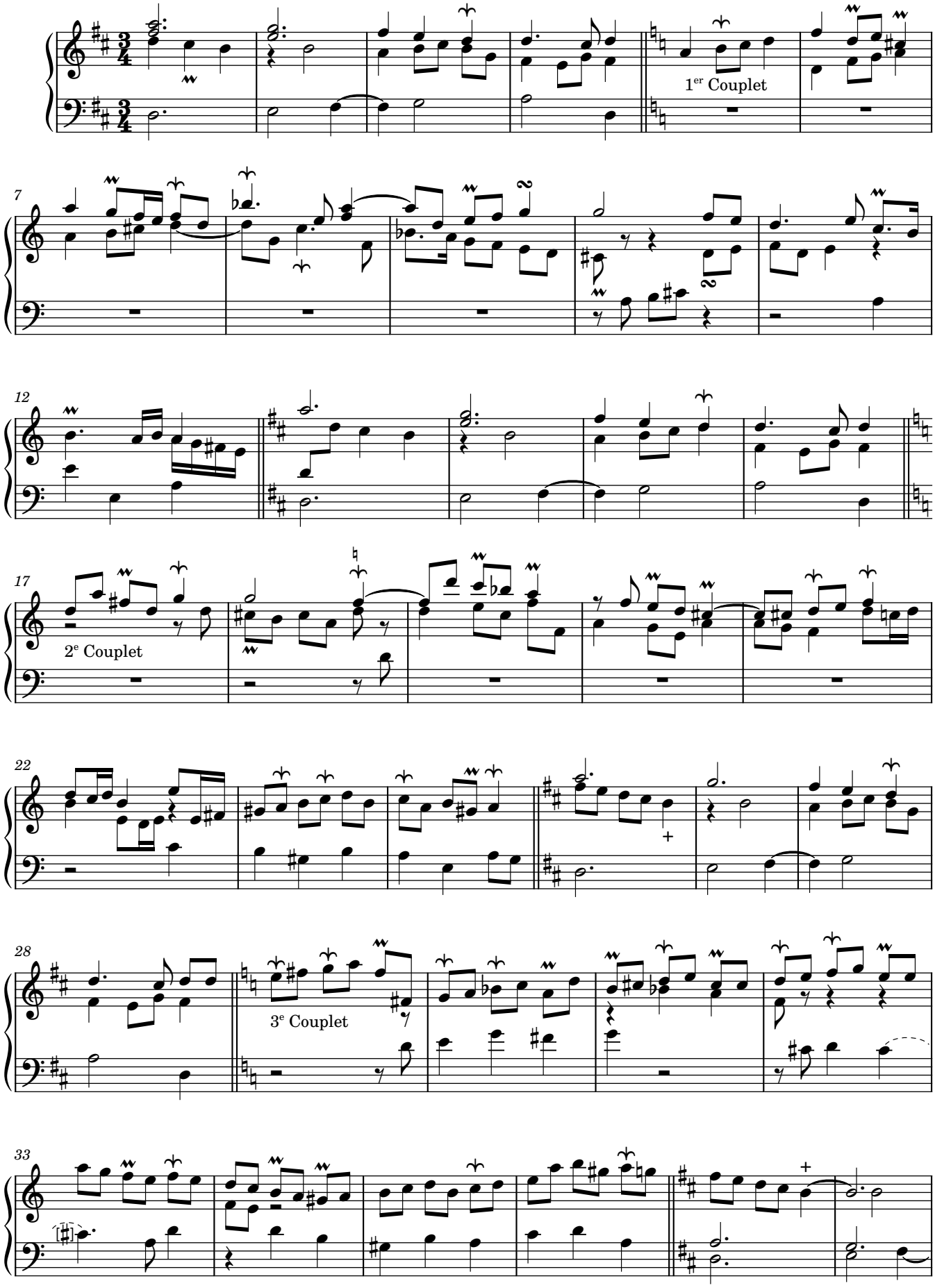


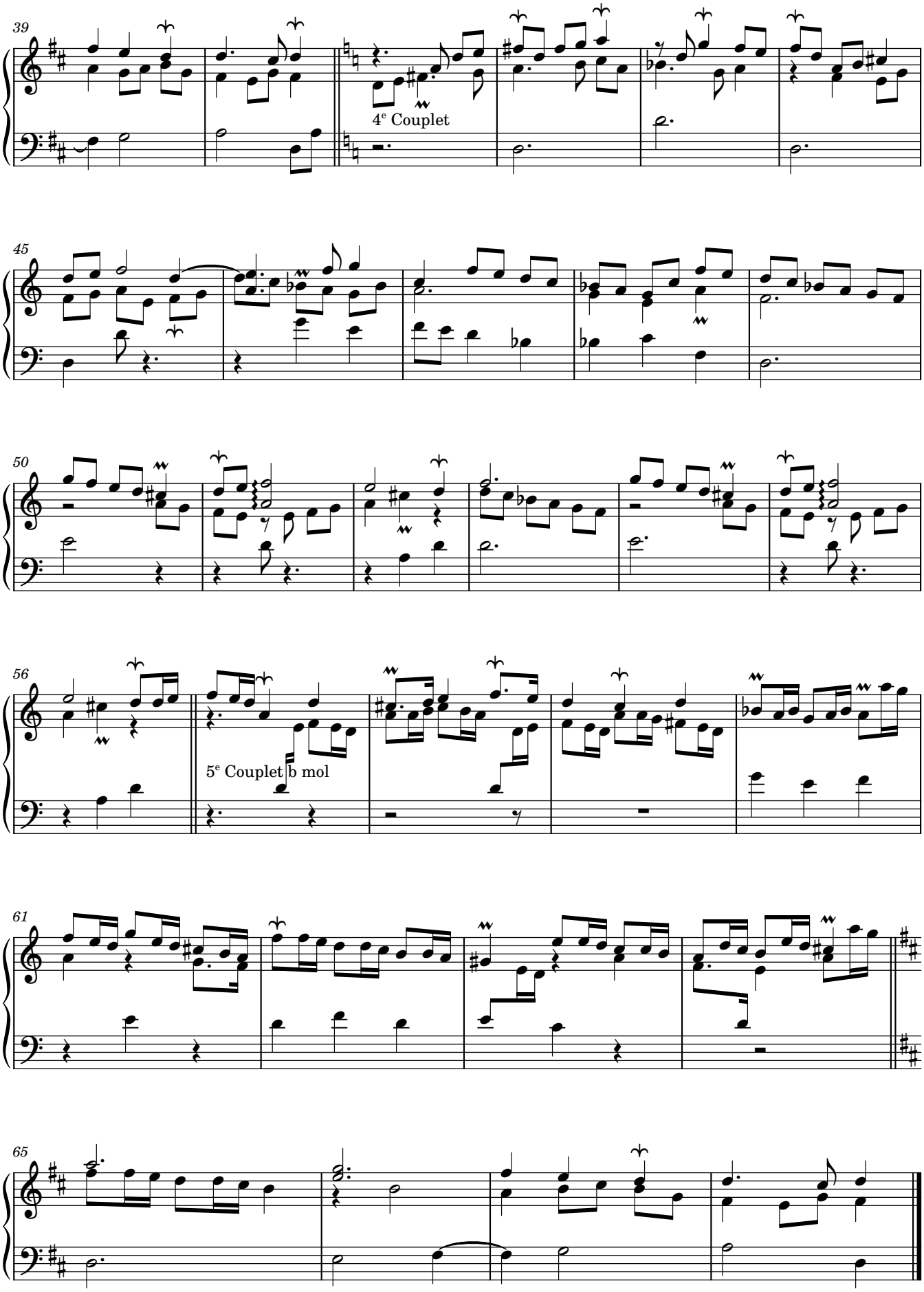
Cannaris




21
25
29
33
37
1.
2.

Chaconne L'Inconstante

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5e Couplet b mol
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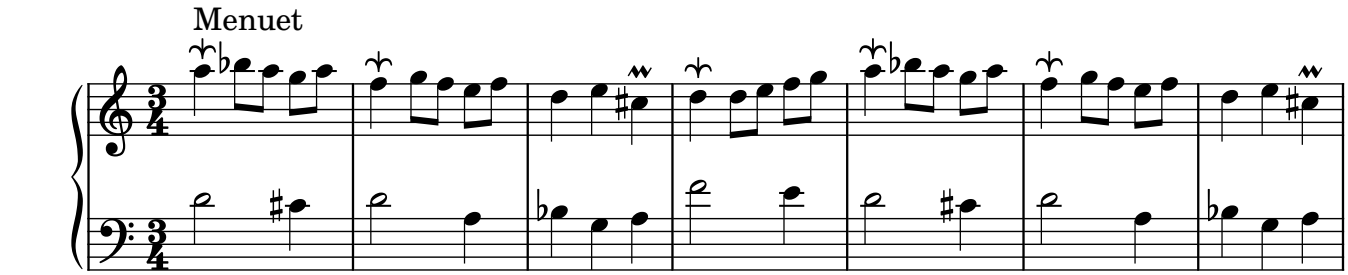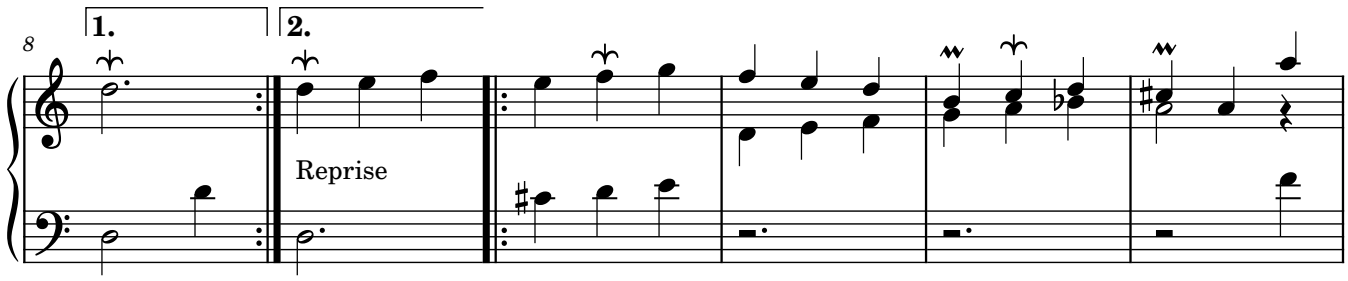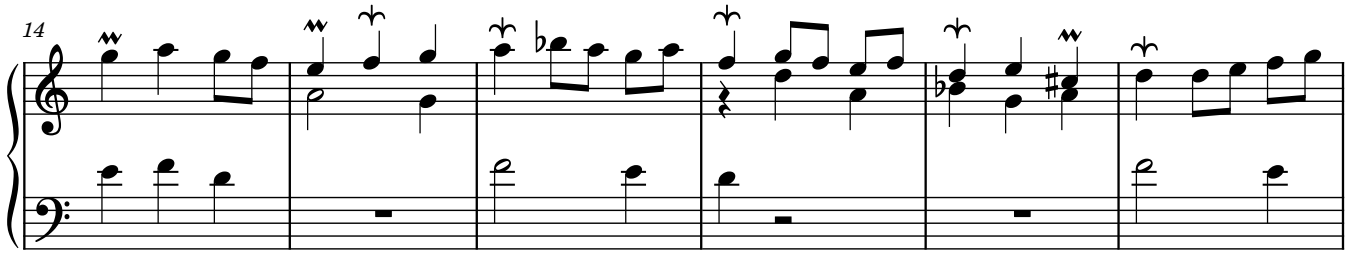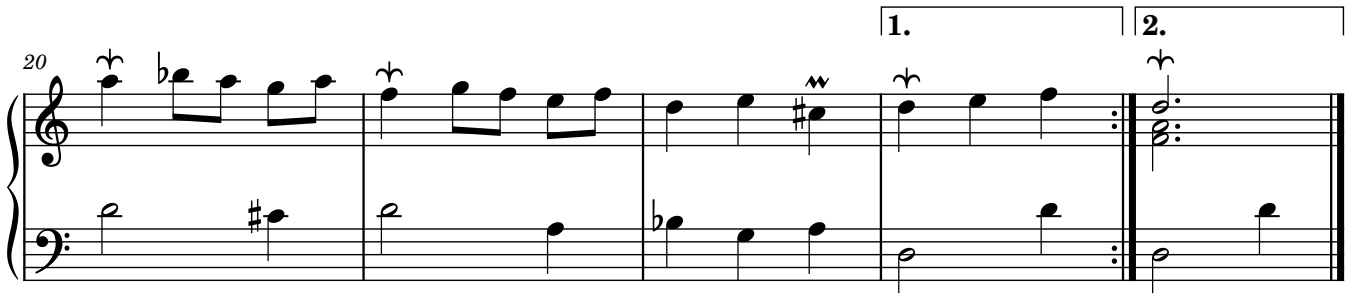
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