Frescobaldi (?): Three Toccatas

Since 1968, when Richard Shindle published three volumes of keyboard music preserved in manuscripts from the circle of Frescobaldi, three pieces from that repertory have been noted for their distinctive musical features.[1] Longer and more sophisticated than the other pieces preserved in the same manuscripts, the three toccatas were thought by some to be early works of Froberger, by others to be compositions of Michelangelo Rossi.[2] That Frescobaldi himself might be the composer seemed impossible, given the remoteness of the style from that of his better-known works, especially the twenty-three toccatas in his two published books of toccatas and partitas. But with the identification of the hands found in the manuscripts—among which is that of Frescobaldi himself—the likelihood of Frescobaldi's authorship has grown stronger, and the three pieces are now tentatively included as his in the online Frescobaldi thematic catalog, where they are listed as F. 14.12–14.

The strongest argument for regarding the three pieces as Frescobaldi's has been made by Christine Jeanneret, who has also provided the most thorough description of their unique source, Vatican Library, Chigi Q.IV.25 (henceforth Chigi 25).[3] Given her detailed account, there is no need for a physical description of the source here. Yet despite their appearance in Shindle's edition (vol. 1, pp. 21–33), and also in a facsimile of the manuscript,[4] the three toccatas have yet to appear in a score that accurately translates their original notation into something that a modern keyboard player can easily read. The present edition attempts to do that, following these principles:

The original notation, on staves of six (upper) and seven (lower) lines, respectively, has been converted to modern five-line staves. The edition follows the original division of notes between the staves (reflecting assignment to the two hands). The edition also follows the original beaming of small note values as well as the frequent use of tied quarters in place of halves and tied halves in place of whole notes. Bar lines are regularized to follow every semibreve, but bar lines absent from the source are dotted, except for those which fall at the ends of systems in the manuscript, where bar lines were always omitted. Accidentals in the edition follow modern conventions and are not repeated within a bar, but all accidentals *added* to the score appear above or below the notes to which the editor believes they should apply.

The manuscript, in the hand of Frescobaldi's pupil and engraver Nicolò Borbone, is clear and contains few obvious errors. Occasionally there appear to be missing notes or ties, which have been added sparingly in the edition. More serious questions are raised by accidentals, or their omission, especially in the last two toccatas. Both pieces, especially the last, are clearly intended to be tonally adventurous, but some passages, such as mm. 62–63 in the second toccata and m. 8 of the third (with d-flat′ on the downbeat) seem not entirely cogent and raise the possibility of either a copying error or a miscalculation by the composer.

That some necessary accidentals were omitted and must be inserted editorially is clear in the third toccata, and this raises the possibility of further errors elsewhere involving accidentals. Among these are a number of flats on the note E in Toccata 2 that appear to be extraneous and could have arisen through some sort of error. These include the flat in the very first chord, although this has has been left to stand (but see the list of variants below for other instances). Toccata 3 opens in what we would call F minor and includes many instances of the rarely used notes A-flat, D-flat, and even G-flat. There is, however, but a single flat in the signature, and in many

1 *Girolamo Frescobaldi: Keyboard Compositions Preserved in Manuscripts*, 3 vols., Corpus of Early Keyboard Music, 30, ed. W. Richard Shindle ([Dallas]: American Institute of Musicology, 1968).

2 The suggestion that they are by Froberger goes back to the harpsichordist Gustav Leonhardt; see Alexander Silbiger, *Italian Manuscript Sources of Seventeenth-Century Keyboard Music*, Studies in Musicology (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), 162–64.

3 *L'œuvre en filigrane: Une étude philologique des manuscrits de musique pour clavier à Rome au XVII^e siècle*, Historiae musicae cultores, 116 (Florence: Olschki, 2009).

4 *Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi Q.IV.25 (Attributed to Frescobaldi)*, ed. with introduction by Alexander Silbiger (New York: Garland, 1988).

passages Borbone (or the composer, in a lost exemplar) seems to have overlooked the need for additional flats, especially on E. Given the fluid nature of tonality in this style, the intended reading remains uncertain in some passages.

The editor has been persuaded after many years of skepticism to accept Jeanneret's attribution of all three toccatas to Frescobaldi. This is partly the result of having prepared scores and performances of several other pieces with disputed or proposed attributions to Frescobaldi, in particular a "Toccata di Roma sexti toni."[5] Jeanneret has argued convincingly that pieces which Frescobaldi left unpublished should be expected to differ stylistically from those which he issued in printed editions. The argument is particularly convincing in the case of the present pieces, which, although they must have been composed before the death of the copyist in 1641, represent a style that has been seen as standing "between Frescobaldi's last published toccatas and the earlier toccatas of Froberger." But this style may well "represent the direction into which Frescobaldi steered his toccatas during his final years"[6]—as might also other works, such as the canzoni in the collection known as the *Fioretti di Frescobaldi*, as well as the "Toccata di Roma." These all share a certain thinness of texture in contrapuntal passages, avoiding the dense polyphony of the capricci and other such compositions and suggesting that the composer was now content to suggest rather than to spell out certain aspects of his musical argument.

Although it is now possible to deny categorically Froberger's authorship of these pieces, that does not make them irrelevant for understanding his stylistic development. Rather it demonstrates that certain features of Froberger's style once thought to distinguish his music from Frescobaldi's—the clearer division into sections, the composing out of certain sections from a relatively limited number of motives, and the experimentation with remote tonalities—in fact go back to his teacher, notably in the third and most impressive of the three toccatas edited here.

Because the pieces survive in a single source, the following list of variants merely indicates points at which the edition differs from the manuscript.

Toccata prima

Title: Toccata P.

m.	comment
6	c″: 32d
48	r.h.: semibreve rest

Toccata seconda

Title: Toccata 2[a.]

m.	comment
15	flat on e′ (downbeat)
18	r.h.: an additional d″ atop second chord (forms parallel octaves with bass)
50	flat on e′ (beat 3); small "t" on a, g

5 Preserved in London, British Library, Additional MS 23623, with an unlikely attribution to "Hieromino Ferrabosco"; further discussion, arguing in support of Silbiger's attribution to Frescobaldi, in the editor's "What Is a Composer? Problems of Attribution in Keyboard Music from the Circle of Philips and Sweelinck," in *Networks of Music and Culture: A Collection of Essays in Celebration of Peter Philips's 450th Anniversary*, ed. David J. Smith and Rachelle Taylor (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 113–55 (cited: 120–22). The editor's performance is online here.

6 Silbiger, introduction to the facsimile edition cited previously, p. xii.

61 flat on e (downbeat)
64 r.h., upper voice, first four notes: 8ths
73 flat on e′ (downbeat)

Toccata terza

Title: Toccata 3[a.]

m.	comment
4	r.h., last two notes: 16ths
8	flat on d′ (downbeat)
66	r.h.: 8th rest misplaced, between c″ and b′
69	l.h.: flat on first c′
92	r.h., lowest note in final chord: c′ not e′

David Schulenberg
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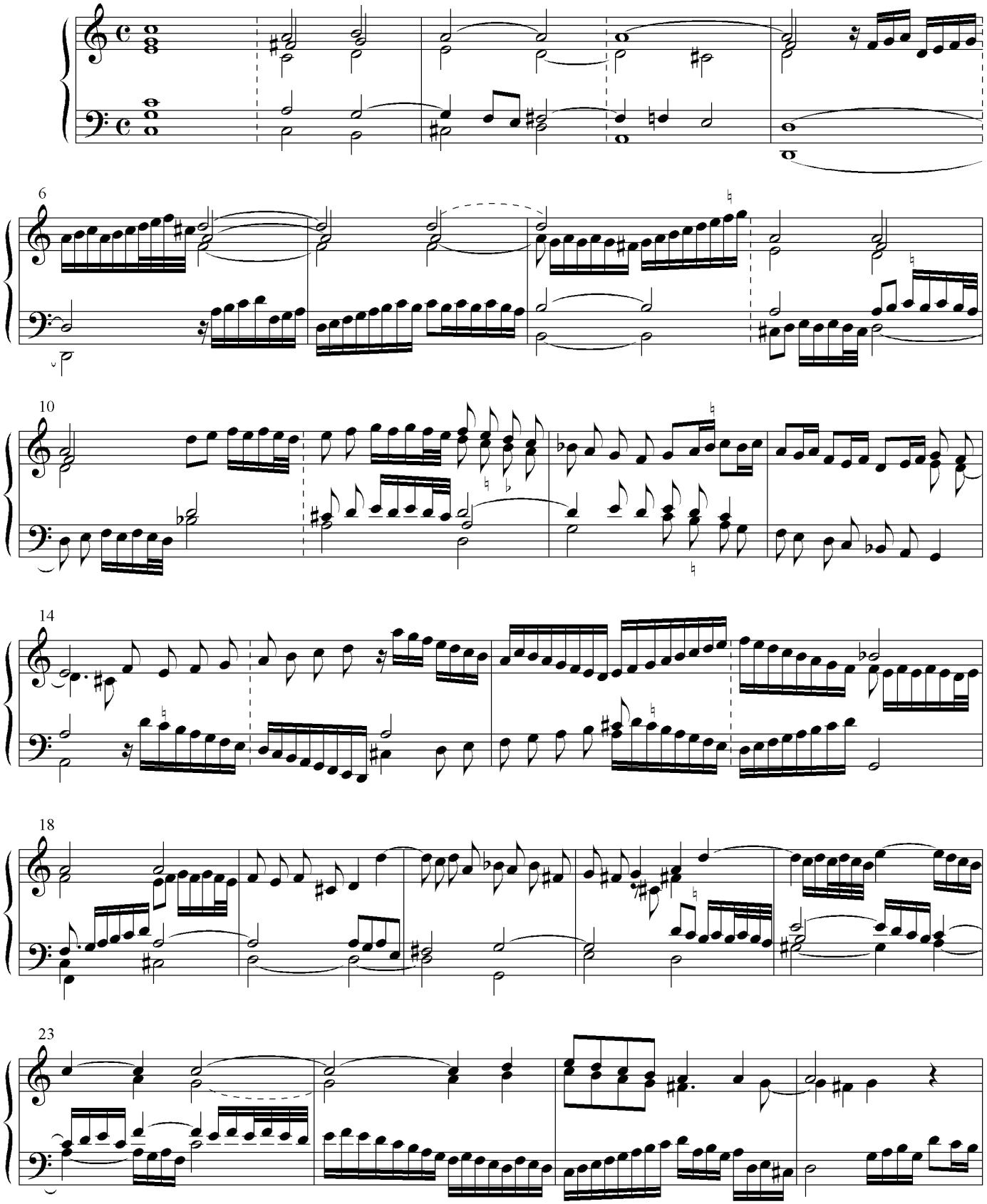
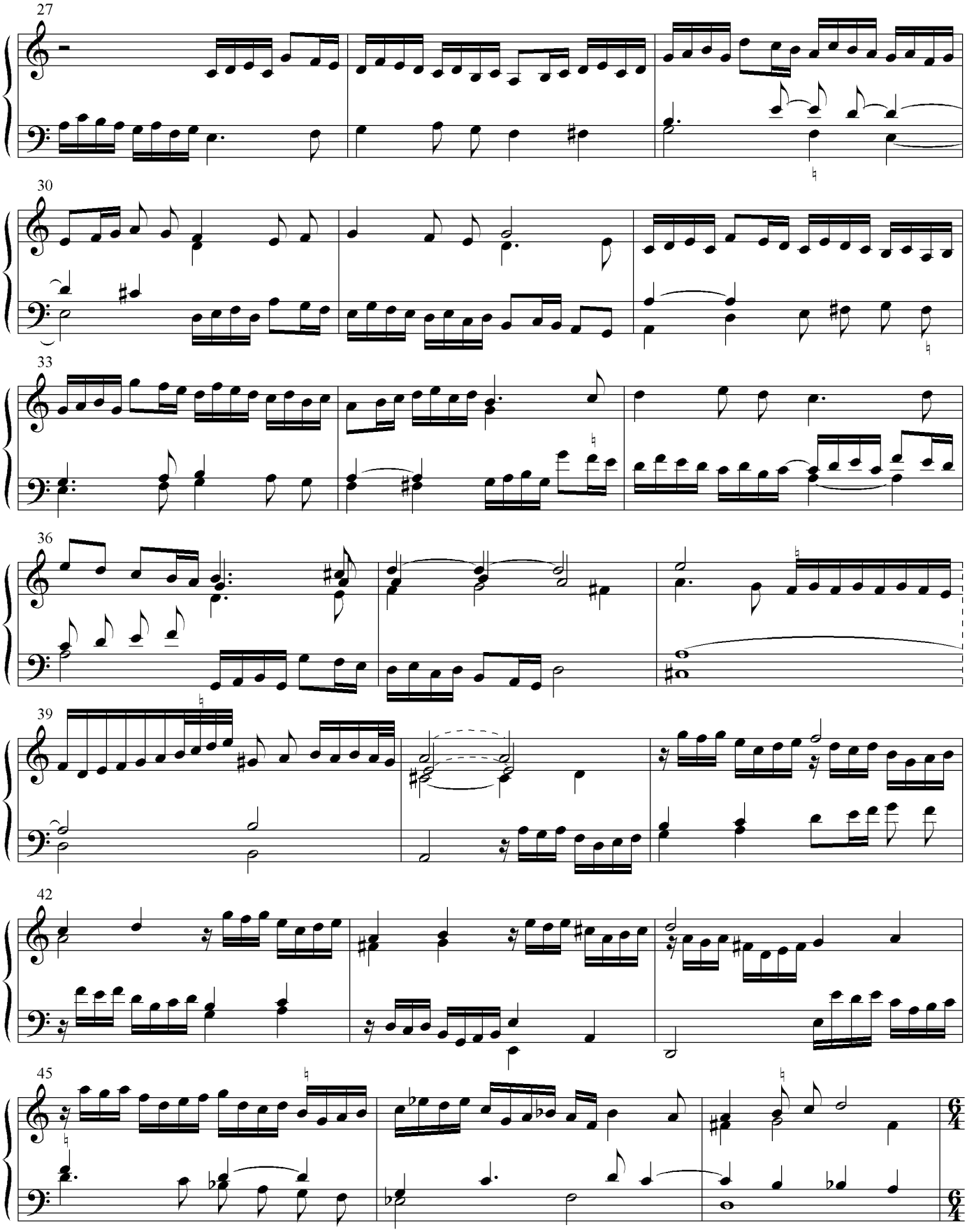
Toccata prima

?Frescobaldi, from Chigi 25, f. 51-55'

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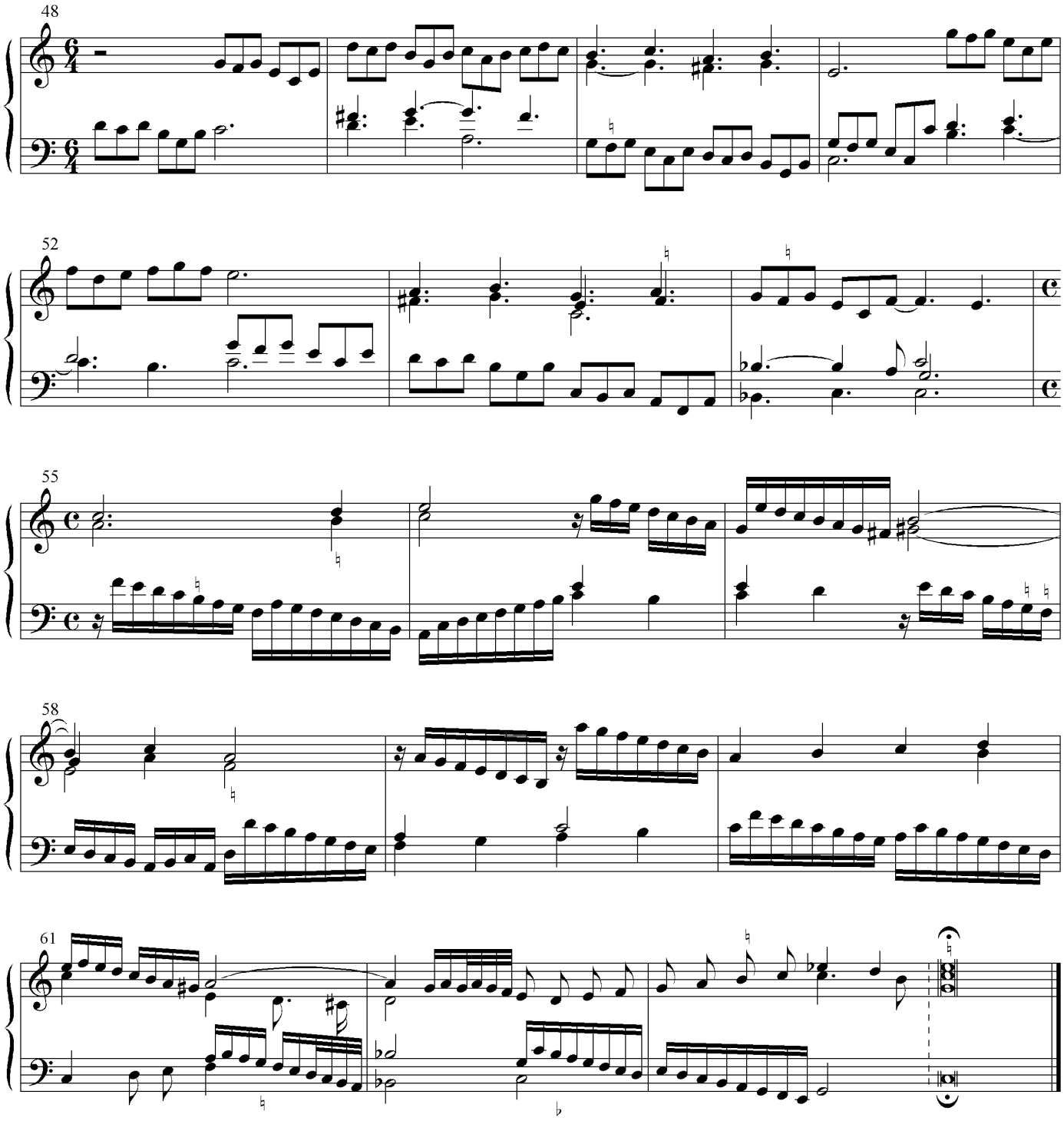
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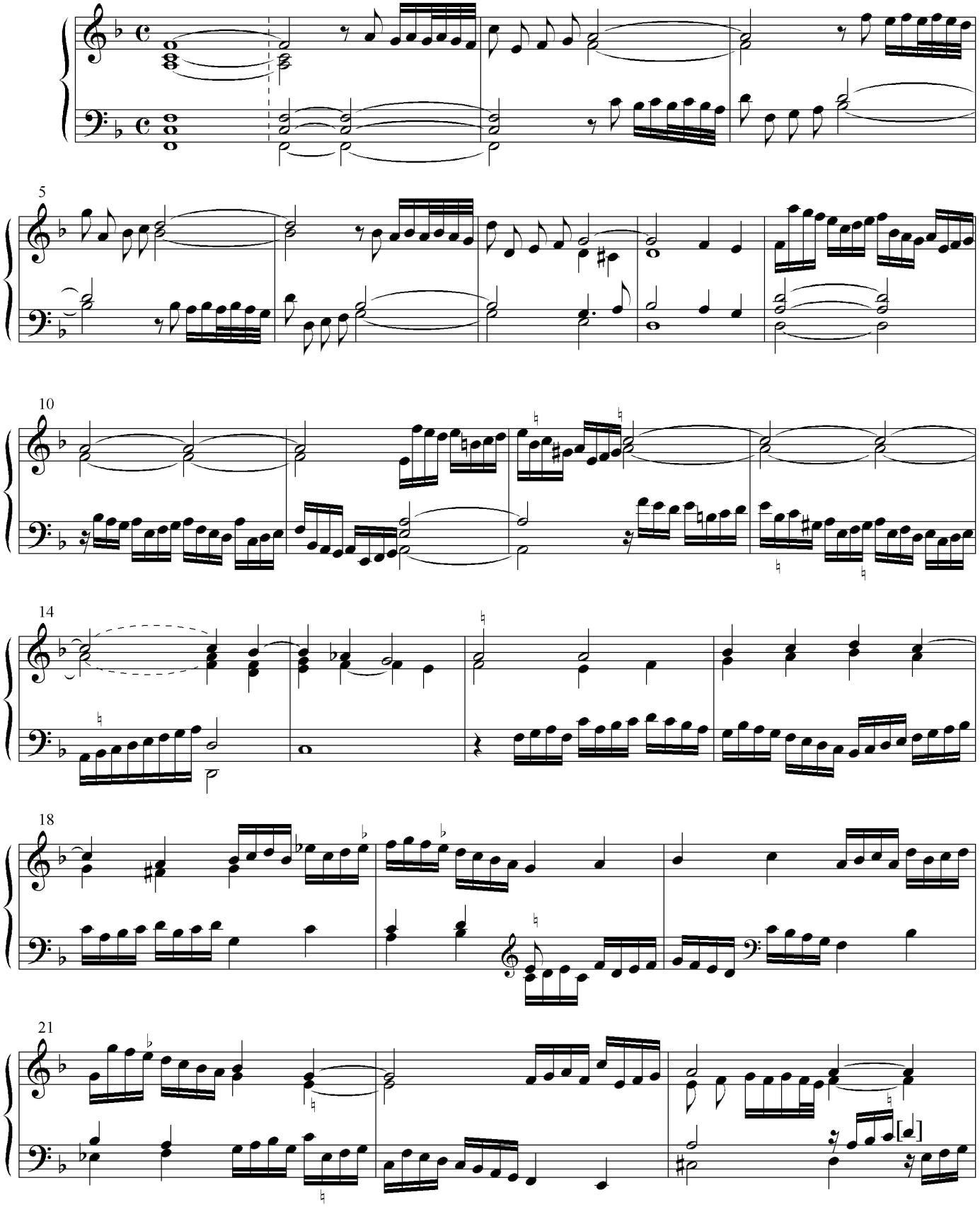
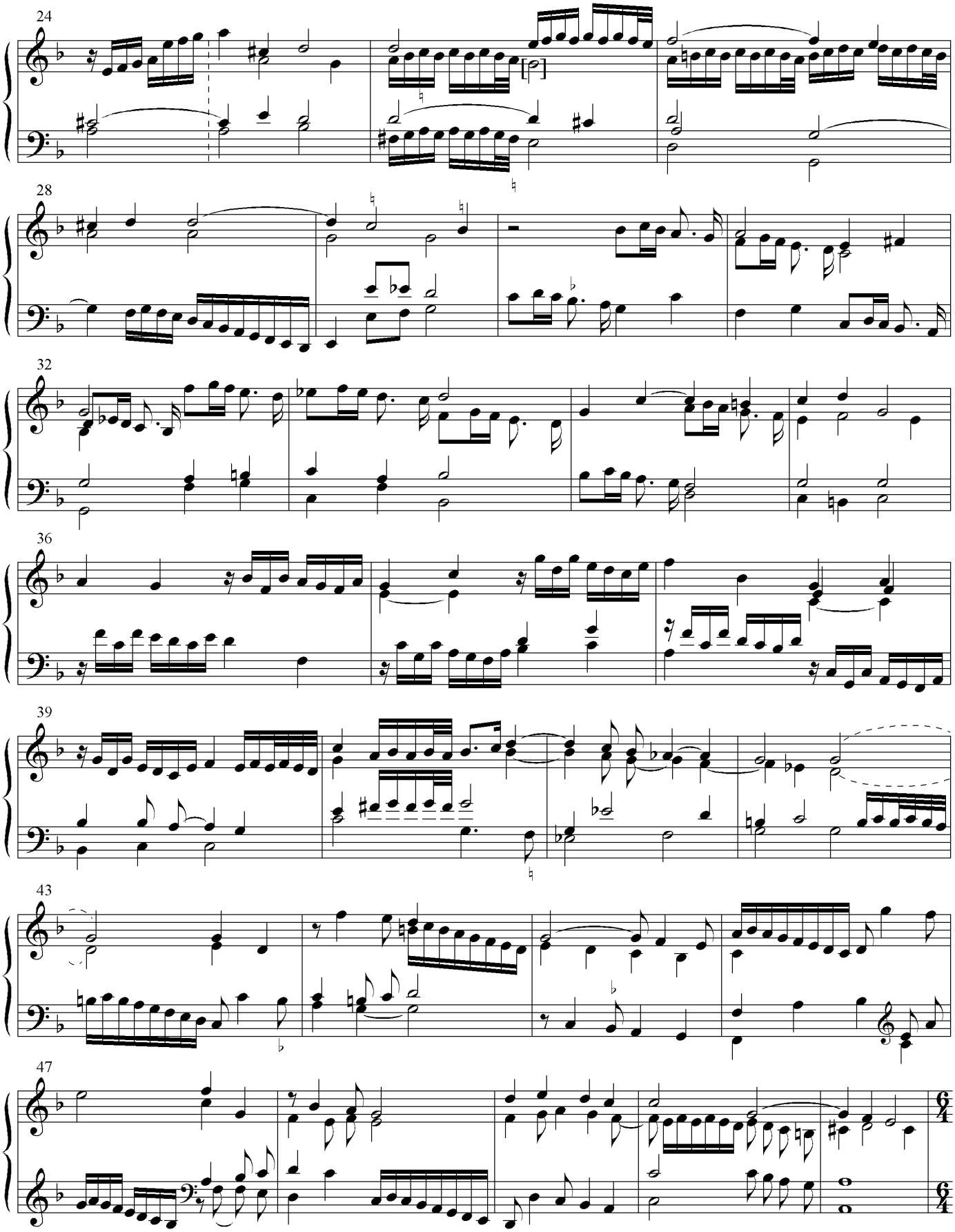
Toccata seconda

?Frescobaldi, from Chigi 25, f. 56-62'

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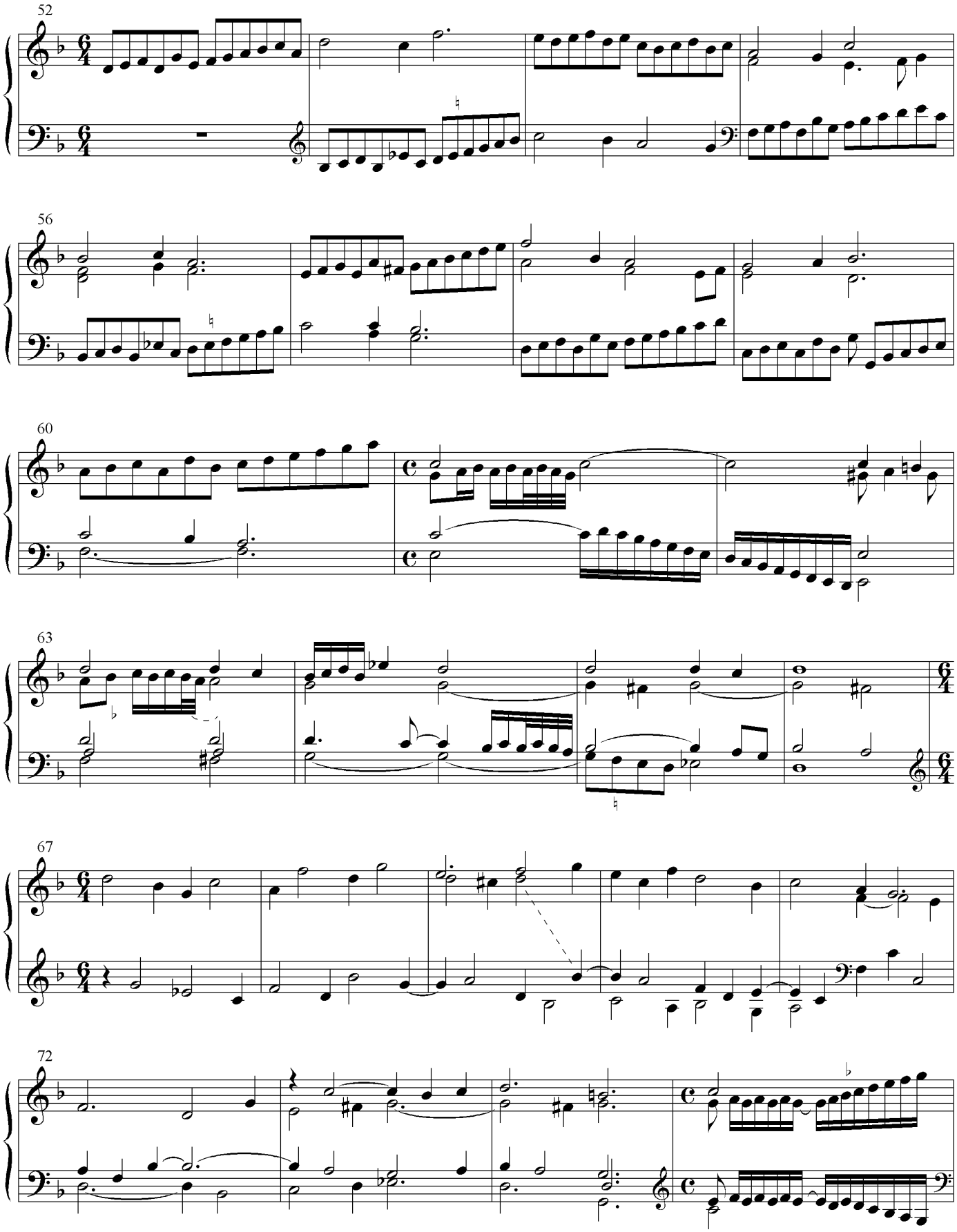
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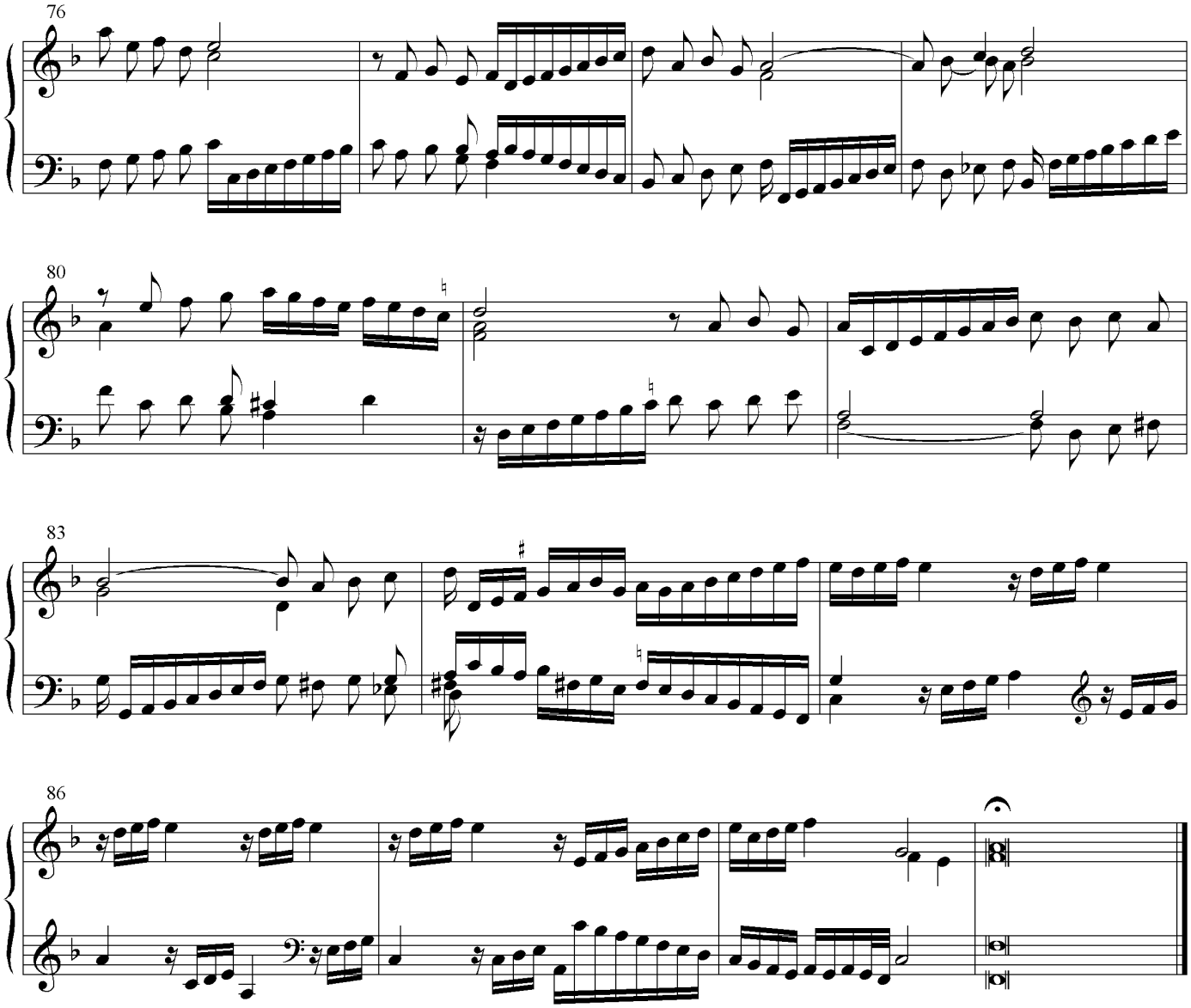
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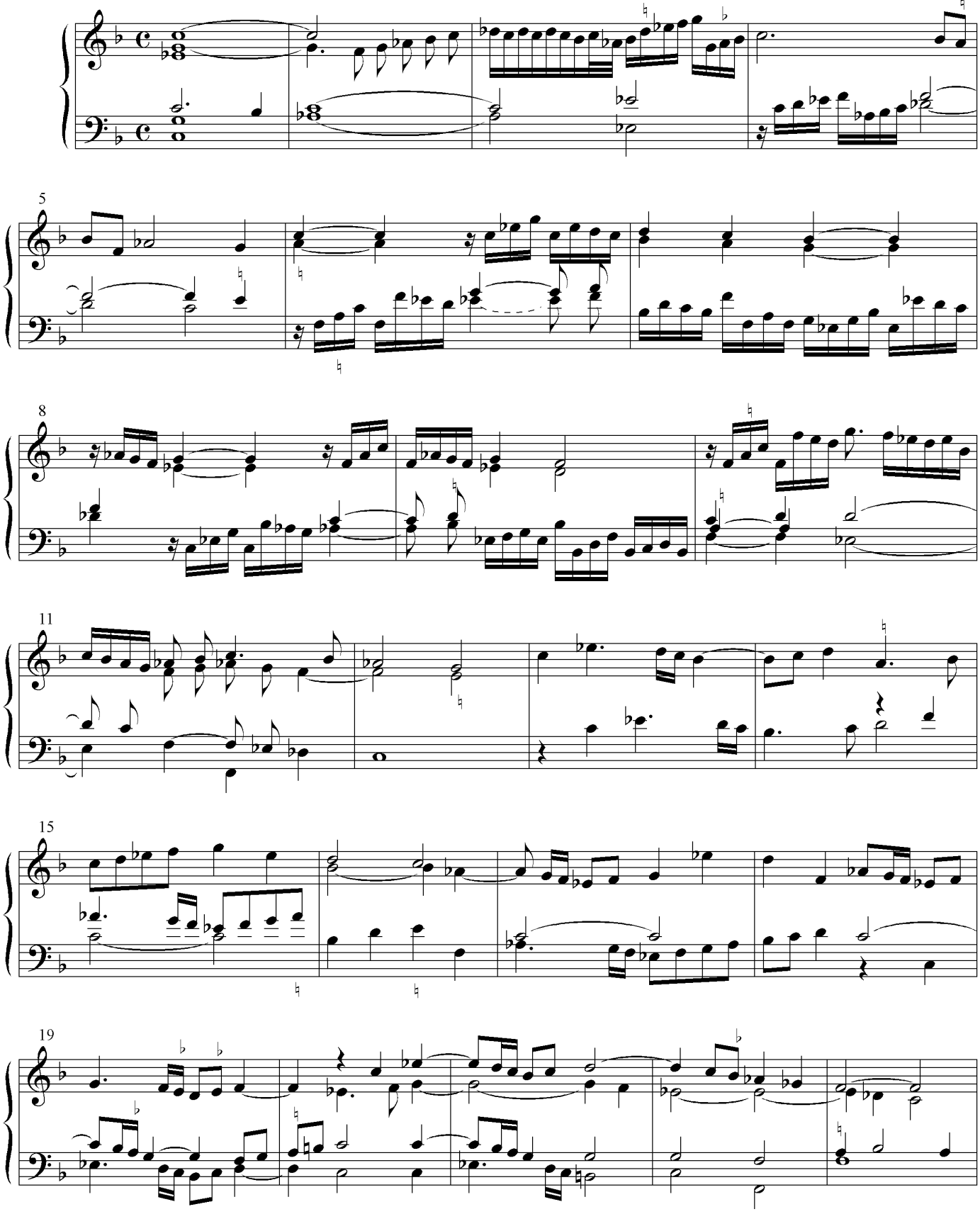
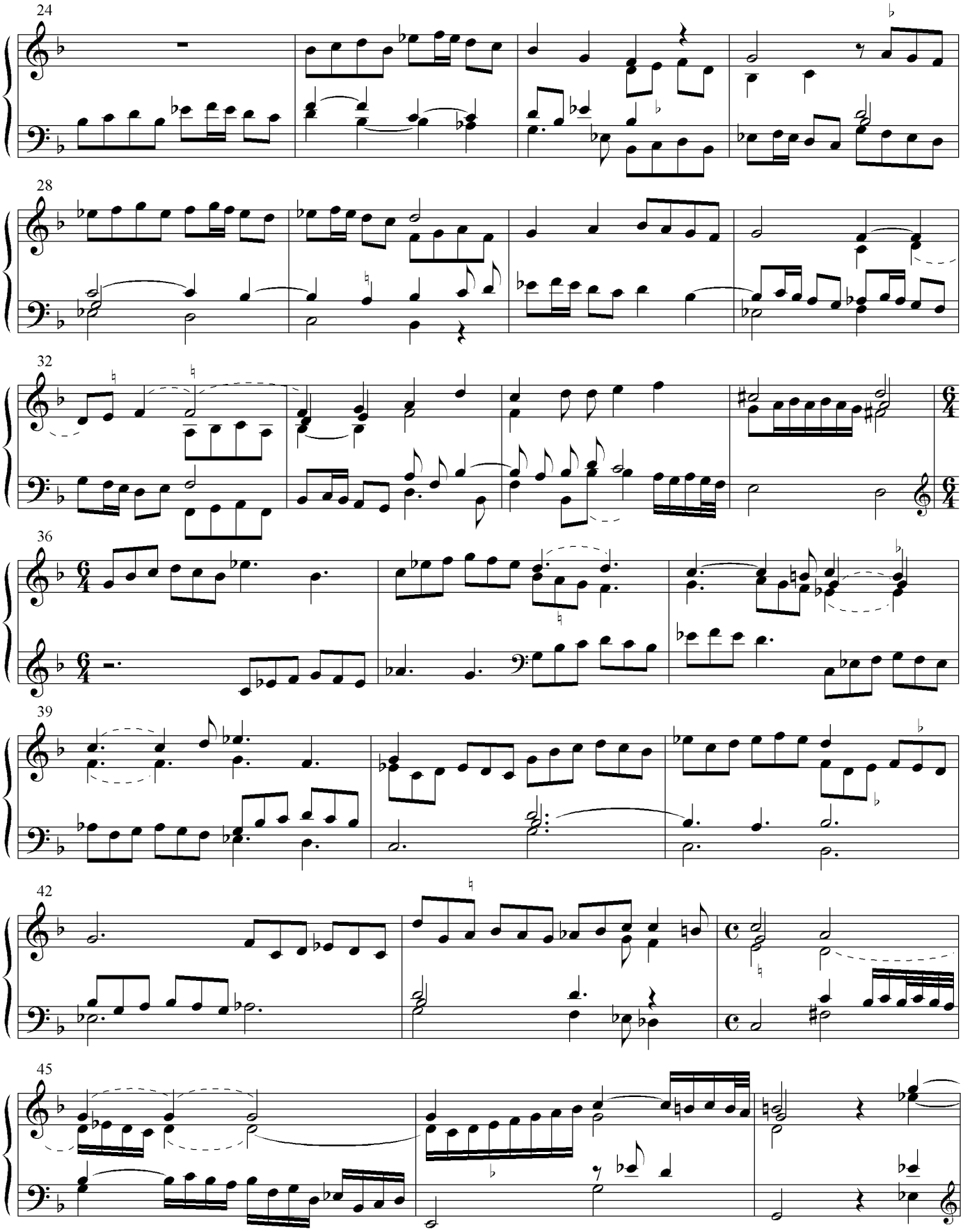
Toccata terza

?Frescobaldi, from Chigi 25, f. 63-69'

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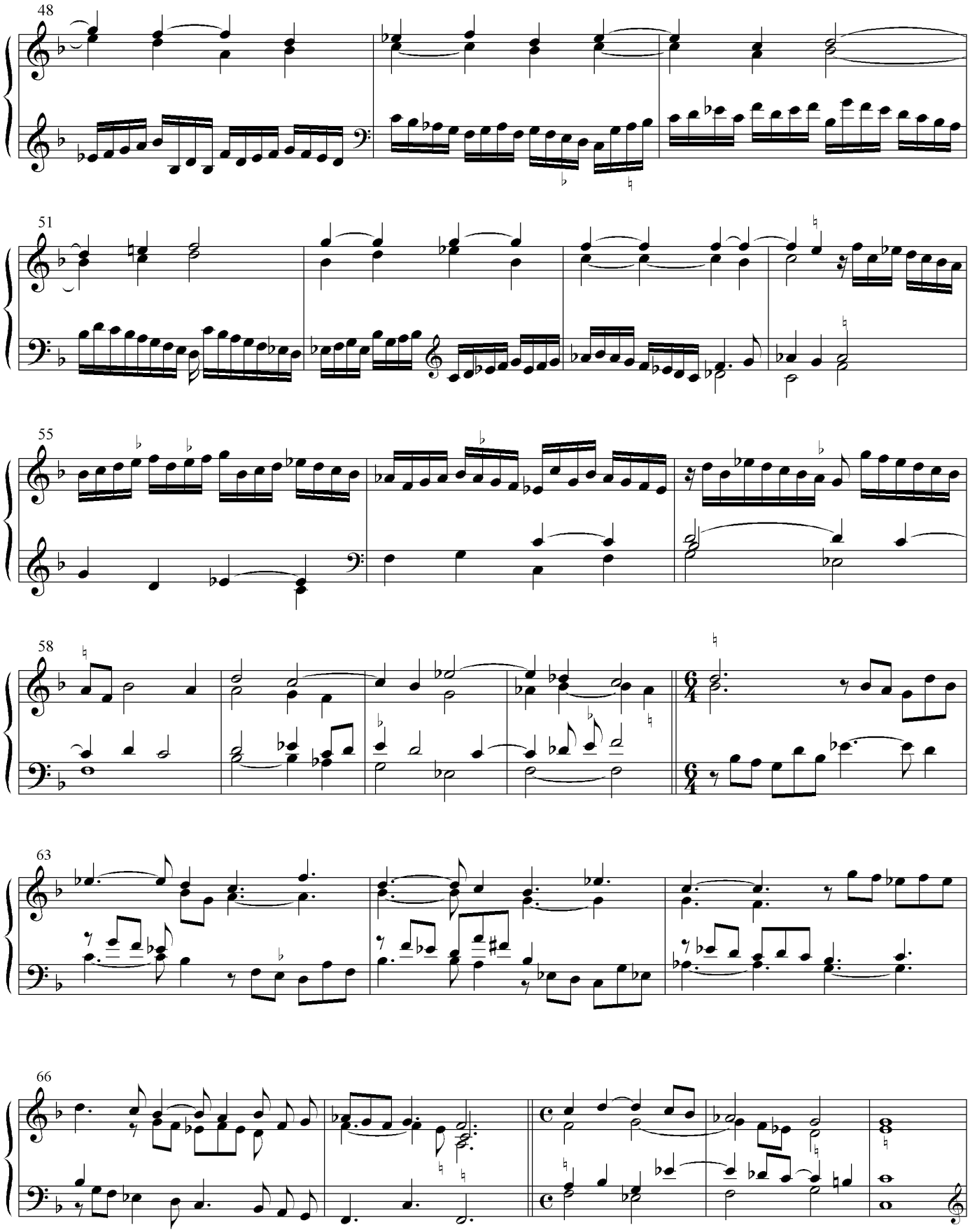
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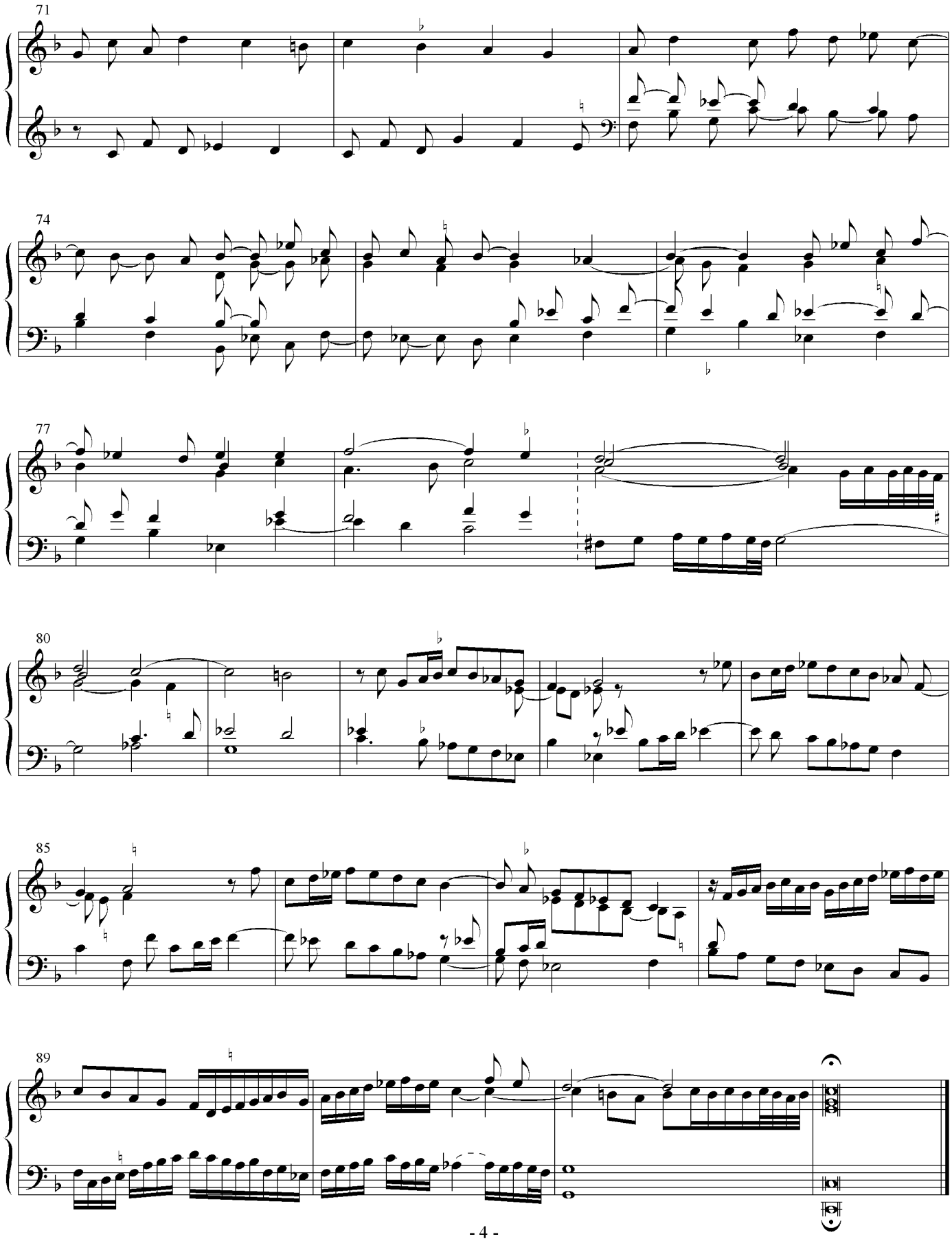
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