Carlo Cotumacci (1709–1785)

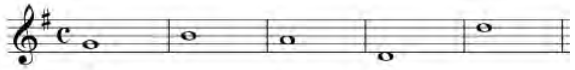
Principij e Solfeggi
A Solo di Soprano
del
Signore Don Carlo Cotumacci

Edited by Job IJzerman

From a Copy in the British Library

circa 1755

Prepared for The Juilliard School by R. O. Gjerdingen

No. 1 

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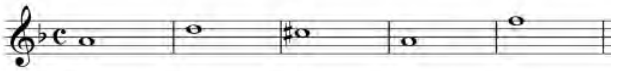
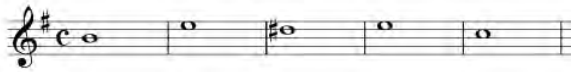
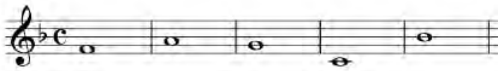
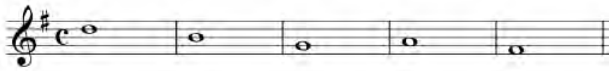
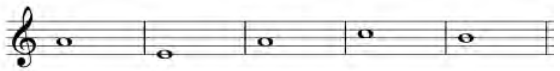
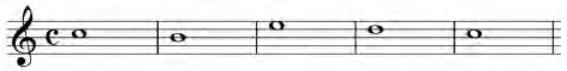
No. 4 

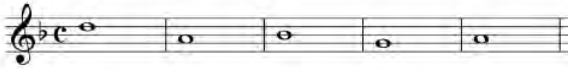
No. 5 

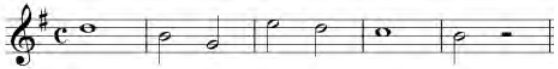
No. 6 

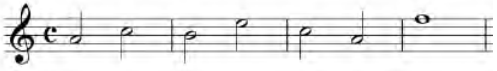
No. 7 

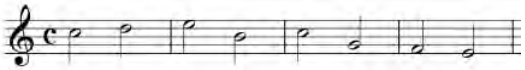
No. 8 

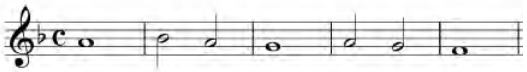
No. 9 

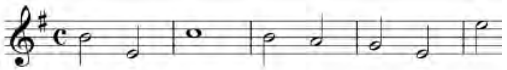
No. 10 

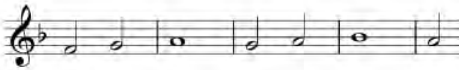
No. 11 

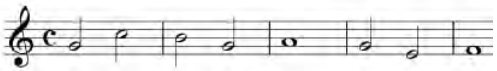
No. 12 

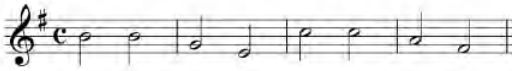
No. 13 

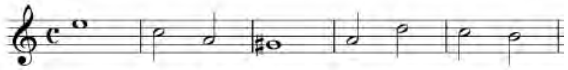
No. 14 

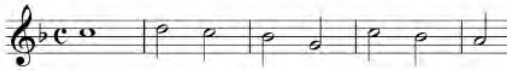
No. 15 

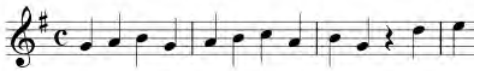
No. 16 

No. 17, 

No. 18 

No. 19 

No. 20 

No. 21 

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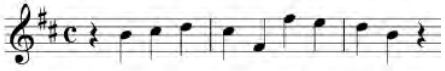
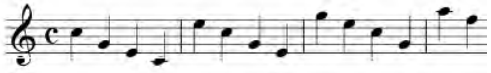
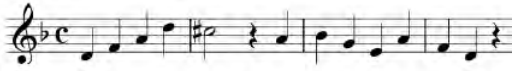
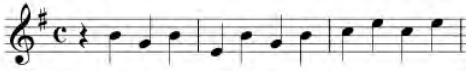
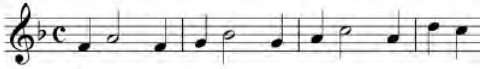
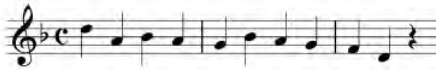
No. 23 

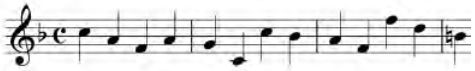
No. 24 

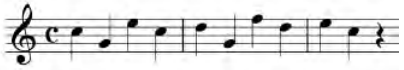
No. 25 

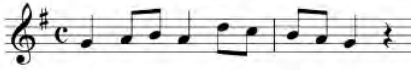
No. 26 

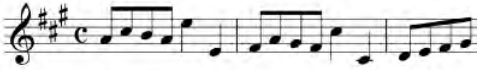
No. 27 

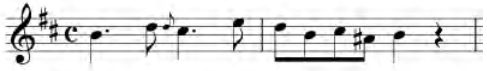
No. 28 

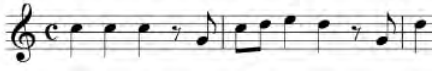
No. 29 

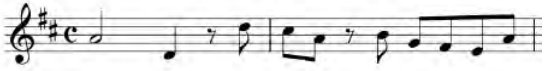
No. 30 

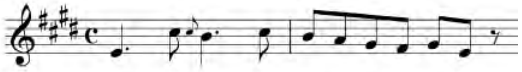
No. 31 

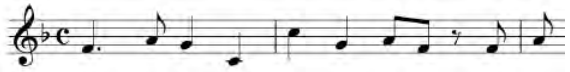
No. 32 

No. 33 

No. 34 

No. 35 

No. 36 

No. 37 

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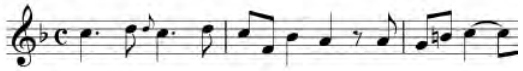
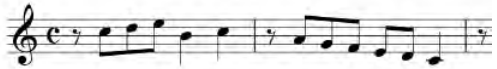
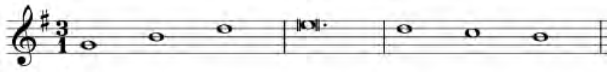
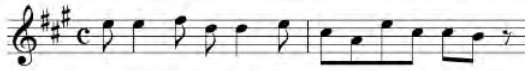
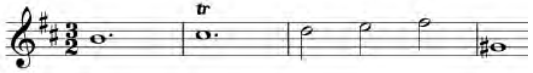
No. 39 

No. 40 

No. 41 

No. 42 

No. 43 

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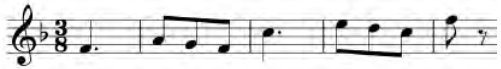
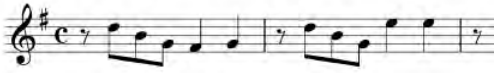
No. 47 

No. 48 

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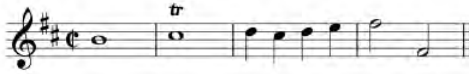
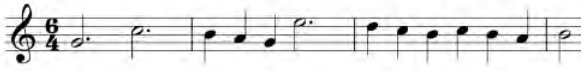
No. 50 

No. 51 

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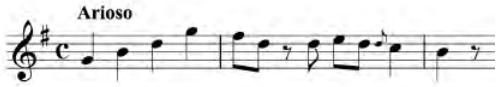

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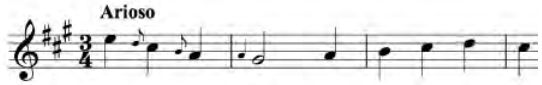

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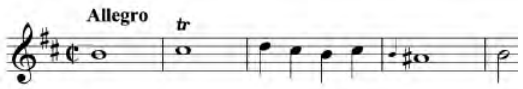

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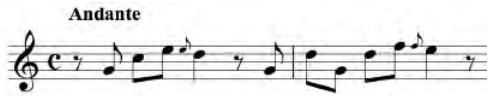

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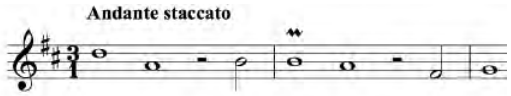

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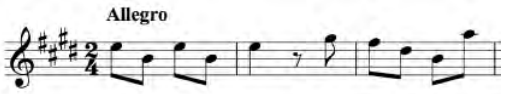

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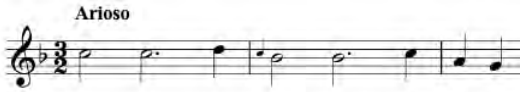

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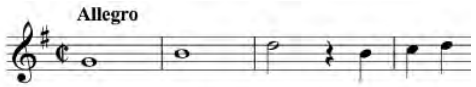

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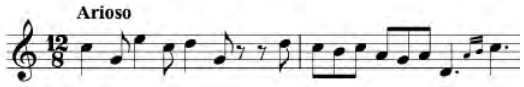

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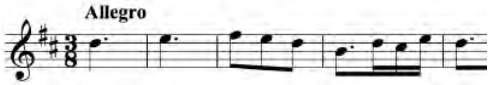

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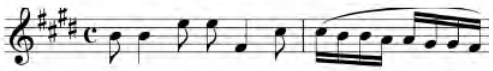

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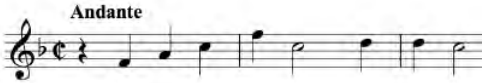

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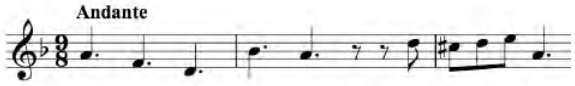
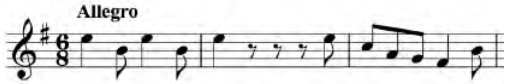
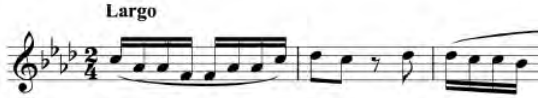
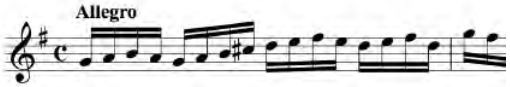
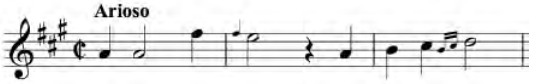
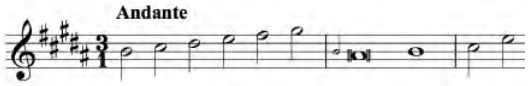
No. 73 

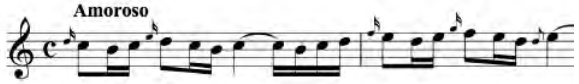
No. 74 

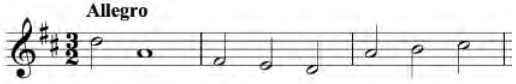
No. 75 

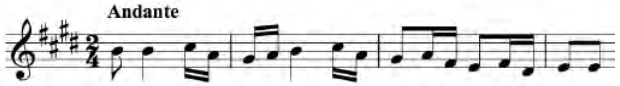
No. 76 

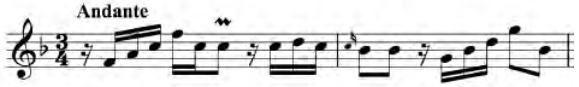
No. 77 

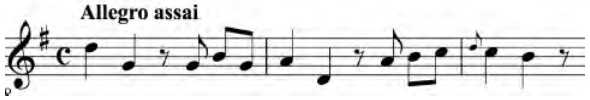
No. 78 

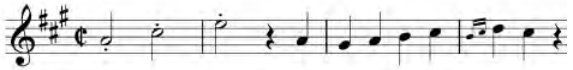
No. 79 

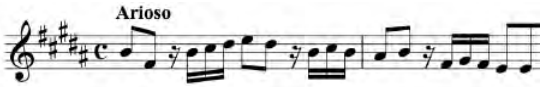
No. 80 

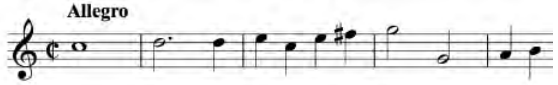
No. 81 

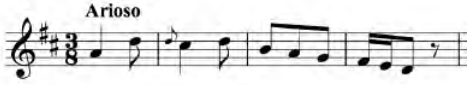
No. 82 

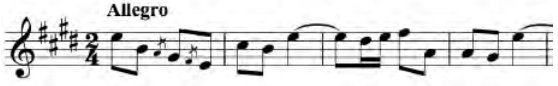
No. 83 

No. 84 

No. 85 

No. 86 

No. 87 

No. 88 

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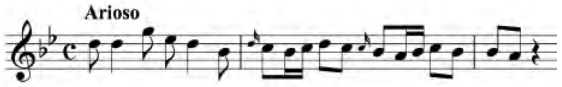
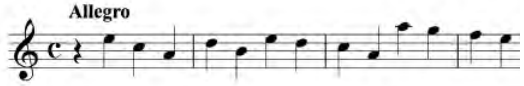
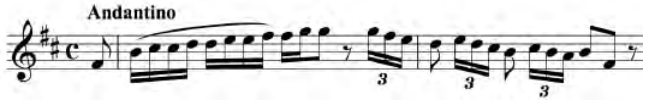
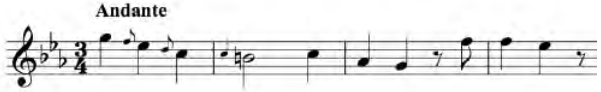
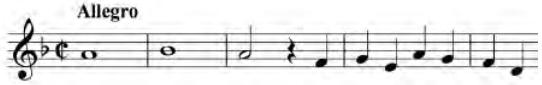
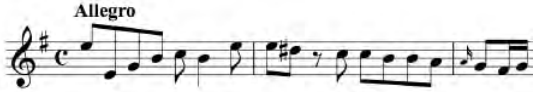
No. 90 

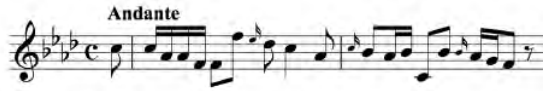
No. 91 

No. 92 

No. 93 

No. 94 

No. 95 

No. 96 

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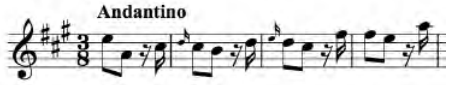
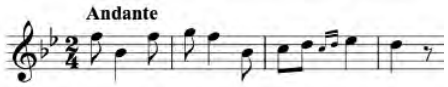
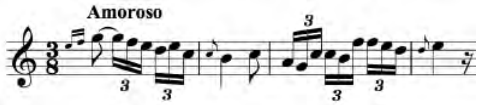
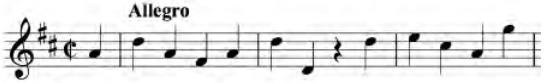
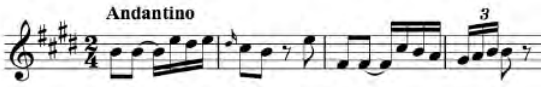
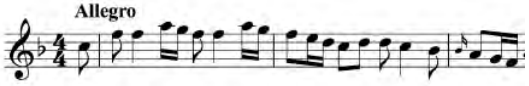
No. 98 

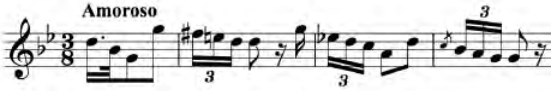
No. 99 

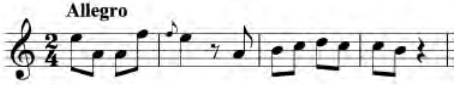
No. 100 

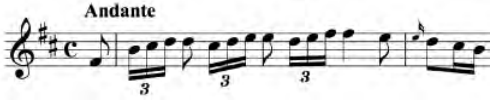
No. 101 

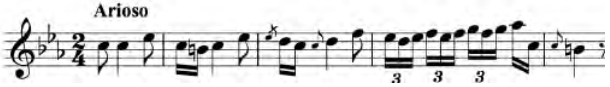
No. 102 

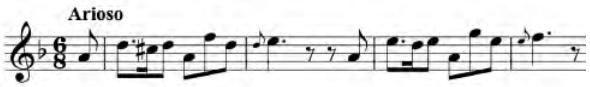
No. 103 

No. 104 

No. 105 

No. 106 

No. 107, 

No. 108 

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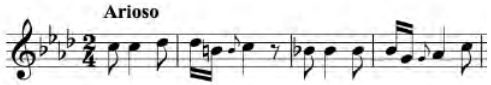
No. 110



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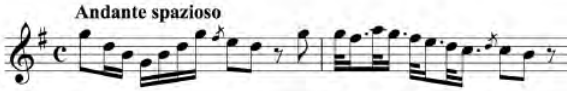

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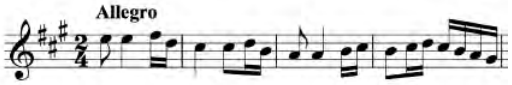

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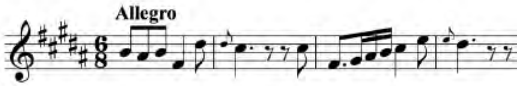

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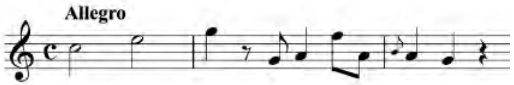

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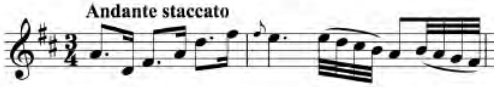


In this section of the website (partimenti.org>solfeggi>collections) you can find some of the same solfeggi from this manuscript but in a different manuscript and with authentic accompaniments by Cotumacci. The number pairs below (e.g., 31=1) mean "unaccompanied no. X = accompanied no. Y."

nos. 31=1, 32=2, 33=3, 34=4, 35=5, etc.

In other words, subtract 30 from the numbers given here. Only 22 accompanied solfeggi are given in the other manuscript.

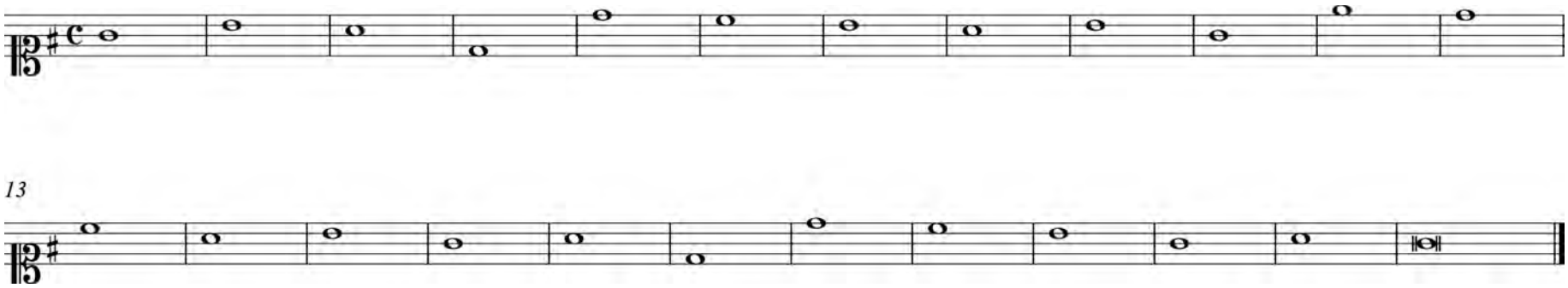
Those accompanied solfeggi can serve as answers to the question "How would Cotumacci harmonize these solfeggi?" or more generally "How would an eighteenth-century composer place a bass and implied harmonies under these types of melodies?"

Carlo Cotumacci (1709–1785) was a distinguished music master at the Neapolitan conservatory of Sant' Onofrio. In 1755 he composed his Principij e Solfeggi a Solo di Soprano, an extensive set of 115 solfeggios. Most likely the solfeggios would have been accompanied by the teacher at the keyboard. A few of Cotumacci's accompaniments can be found elsewhere on this site (see above).

This collection shows a methodical progression from easy to extremely difficult. The first group of ten solfeggios only contain whole notes and do not go beyond the elementary "scales, leaps, and cadences." Step by step more complex rhythms and various time signatures are introduced; meanwhile, the melodies become more and more decorated with all kinds of galant figurations. Many of these advanced solfeggi equaled contemporary opera arias in style and quality.

At that time, apprentices usually sang the solfeggios with the help of hexachordal solmization. In the Italian system of the 18th century each key contained two hexachords. In major keys one hexachord started on the first scale degree (the "natural" hexachord; in C major: C,D,E,F,G,A = *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol la*) and the other on the fifth scale degree (the "hard" hexachord; in C major: G,A,B,C,D,E = *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol la*). Minor keys adopted the hexachords of their major relatives. Often one single solmization syllable might cover a group of notes. In a number of solfeggi this was indicated by means of a "trait": a flat slur, which does not imply legato but indicates the way of solmizing. Solfeggio no. 48 is the first exercise in which a trait occurs. Of course today's students may choose their own way of singing, whether solmizing (fixed or movable *do*) or vocalizing (e.g., *la*, *la*, *la*, . . .).

No. 1



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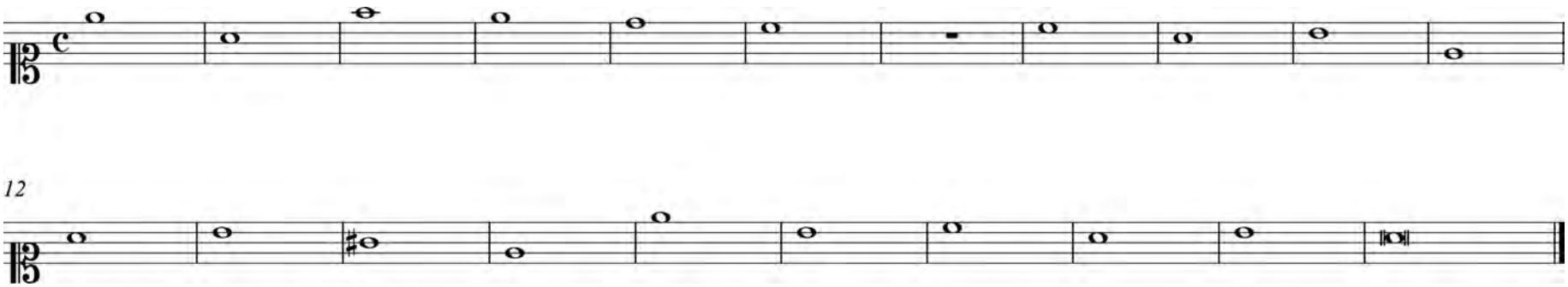

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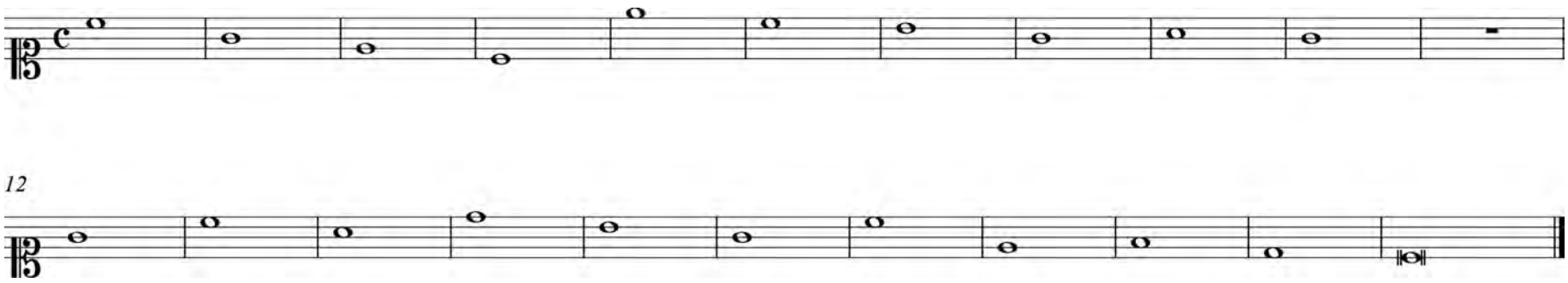

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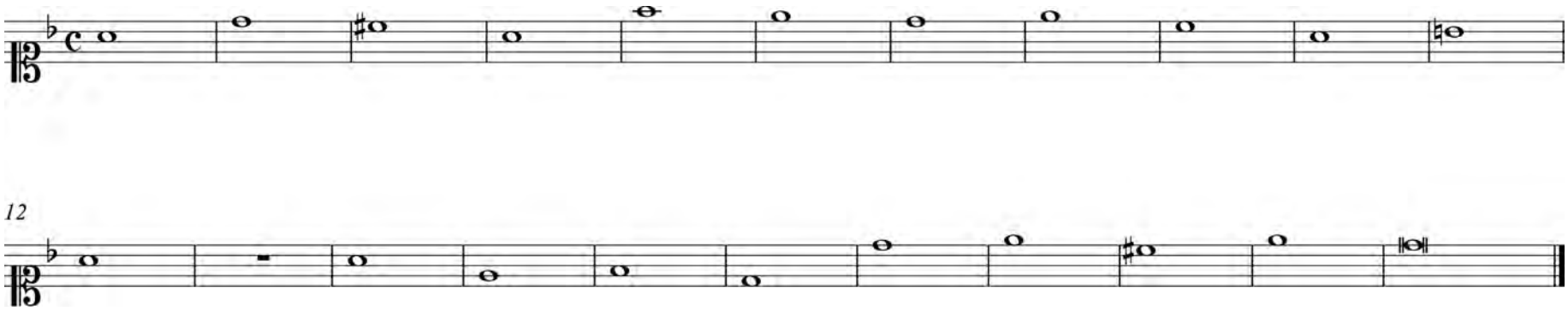

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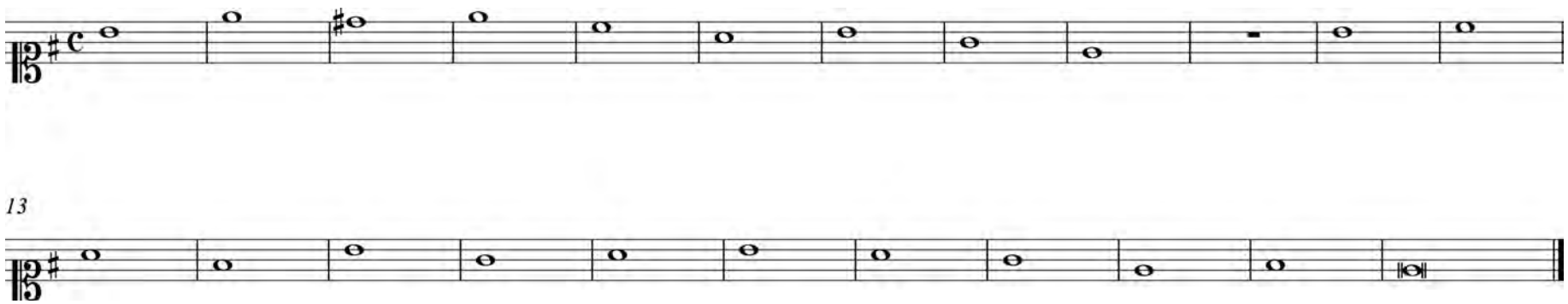

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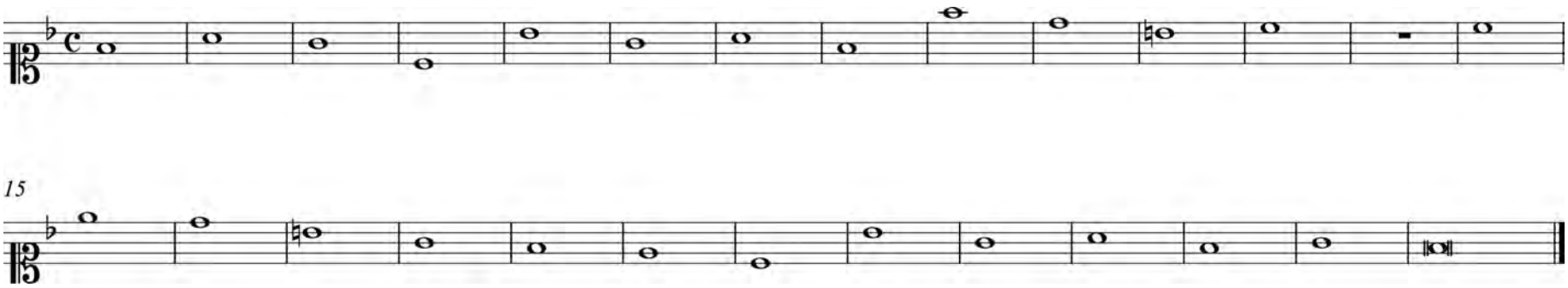

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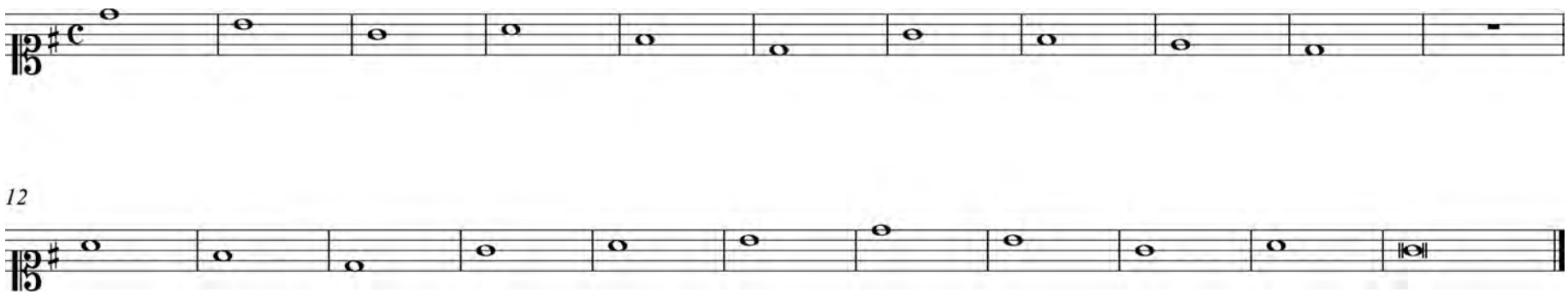
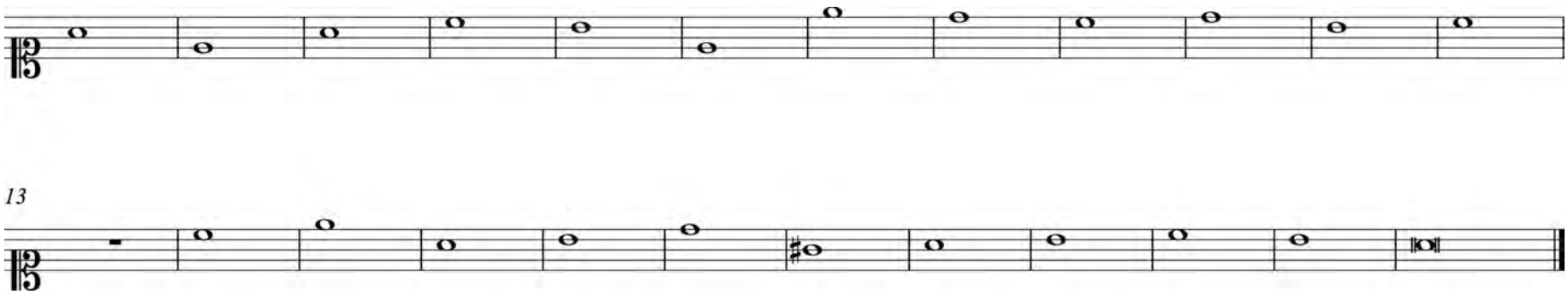


No. 8



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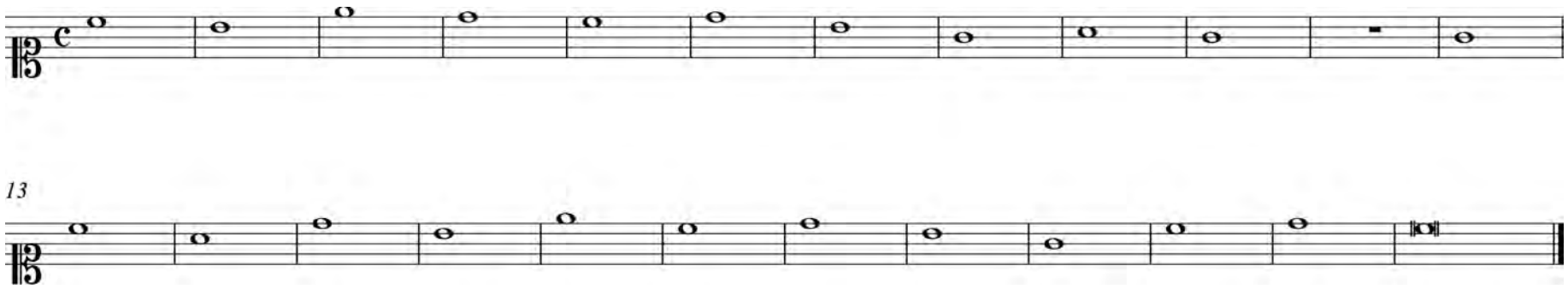

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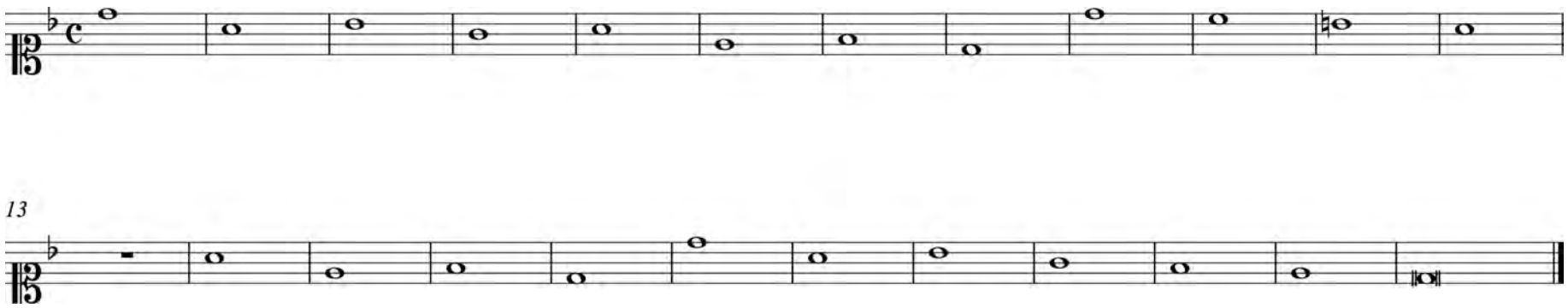

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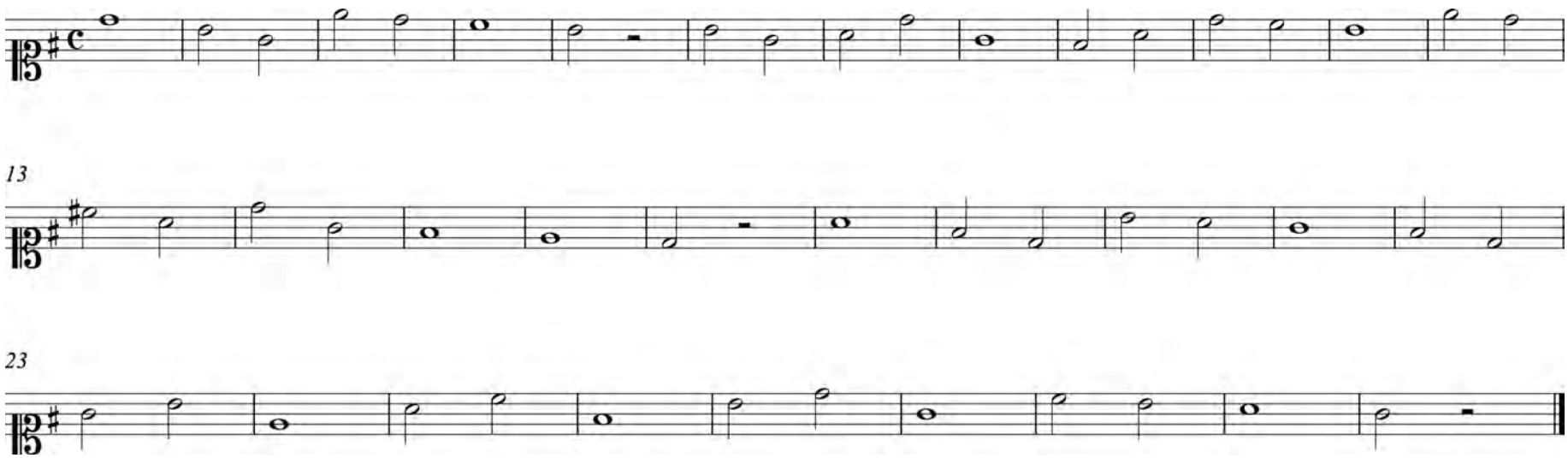

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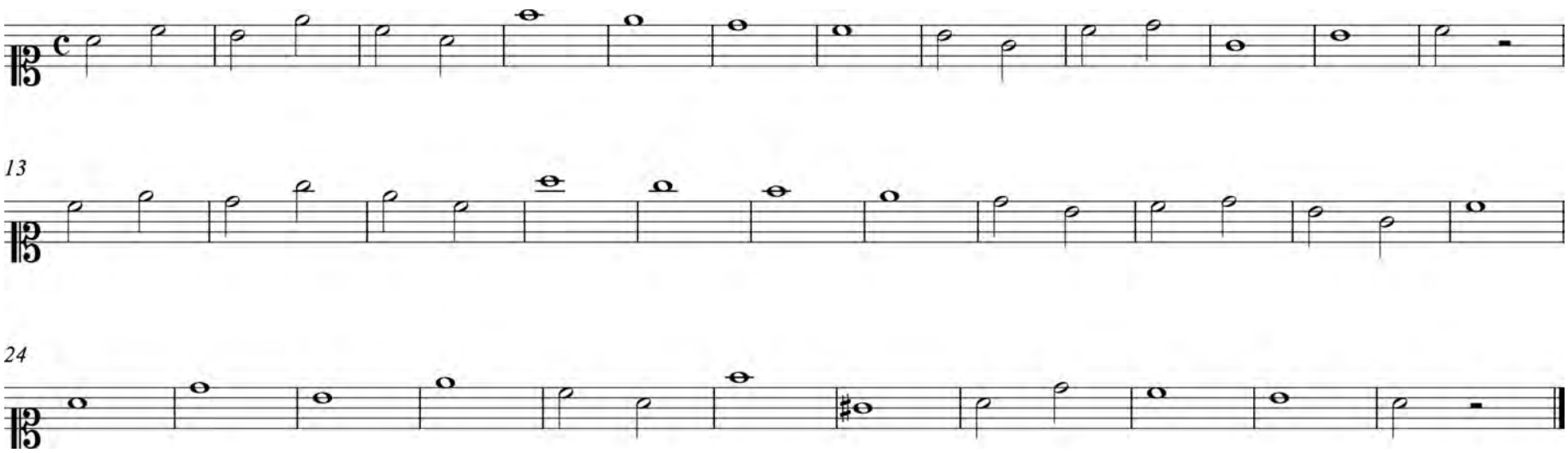

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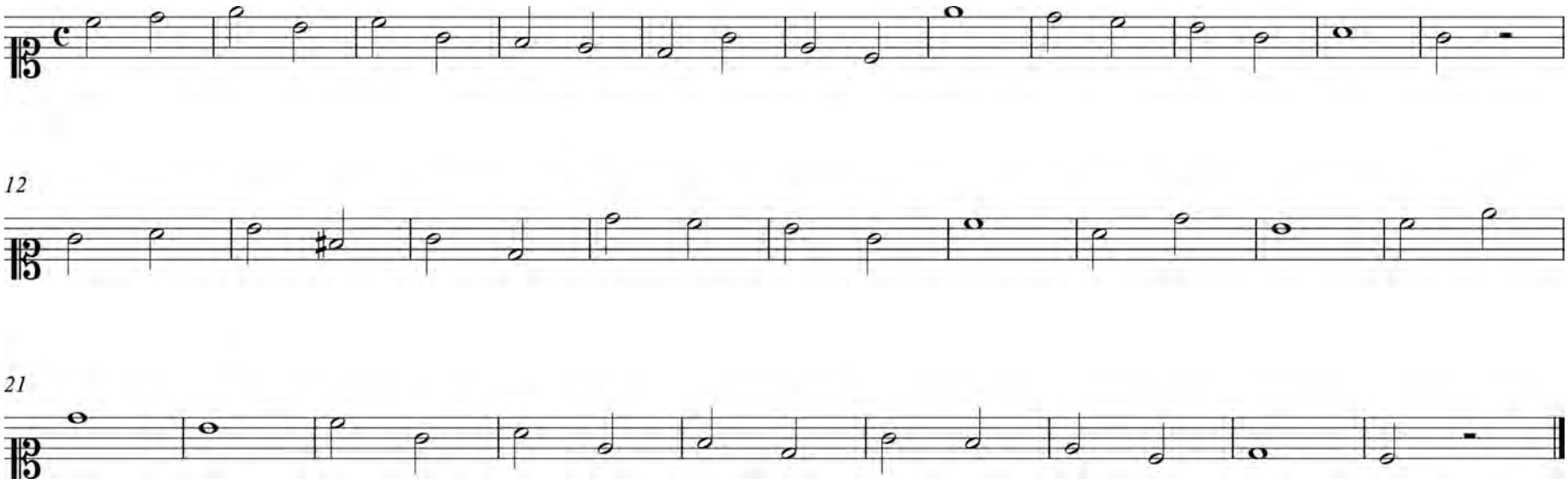

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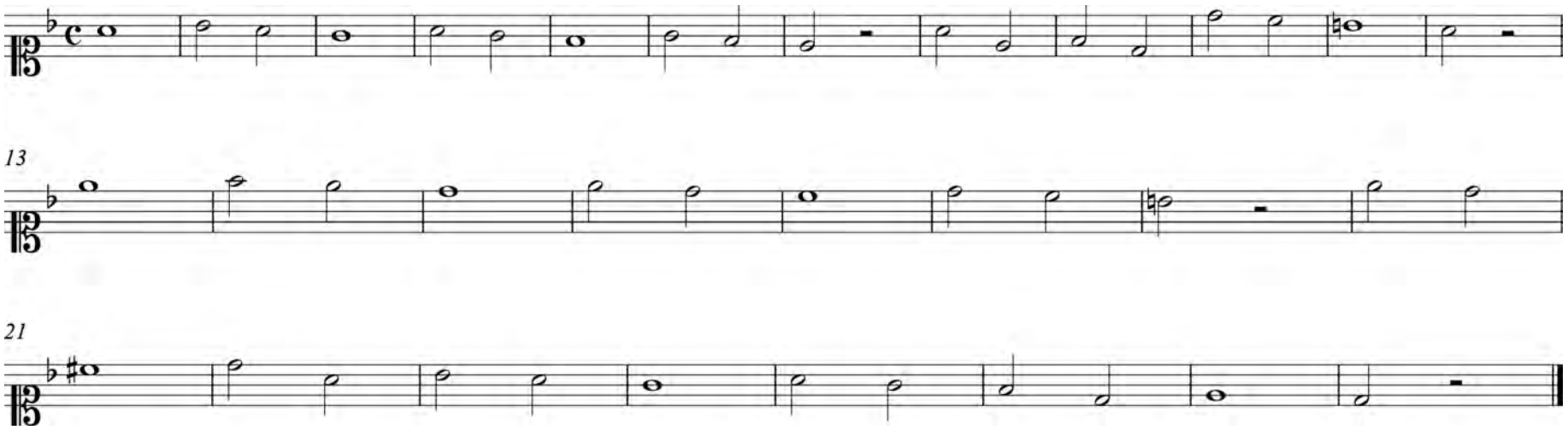

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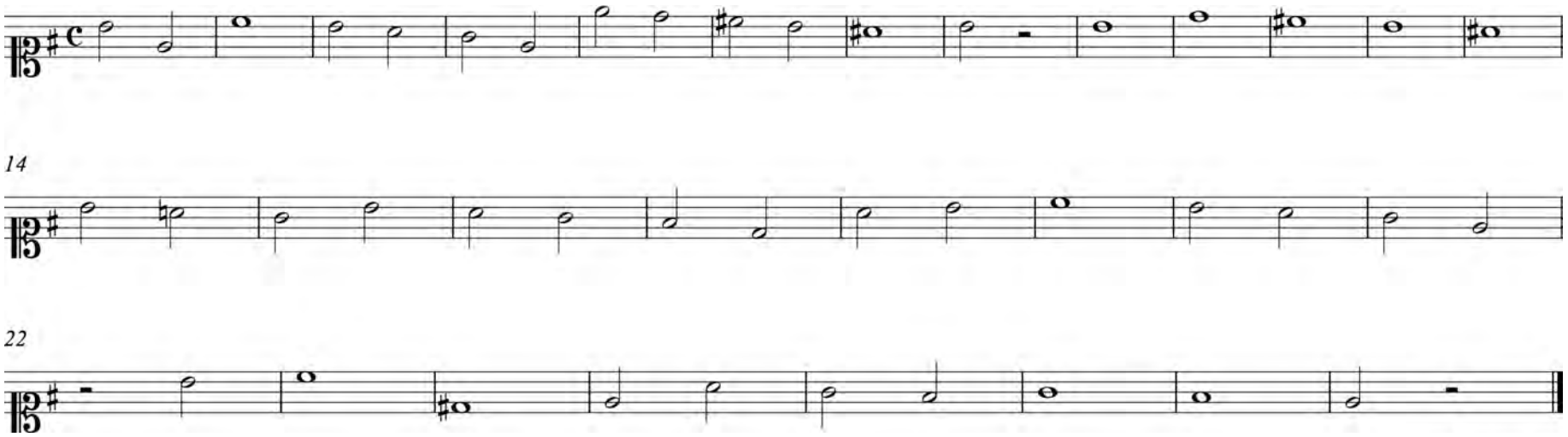

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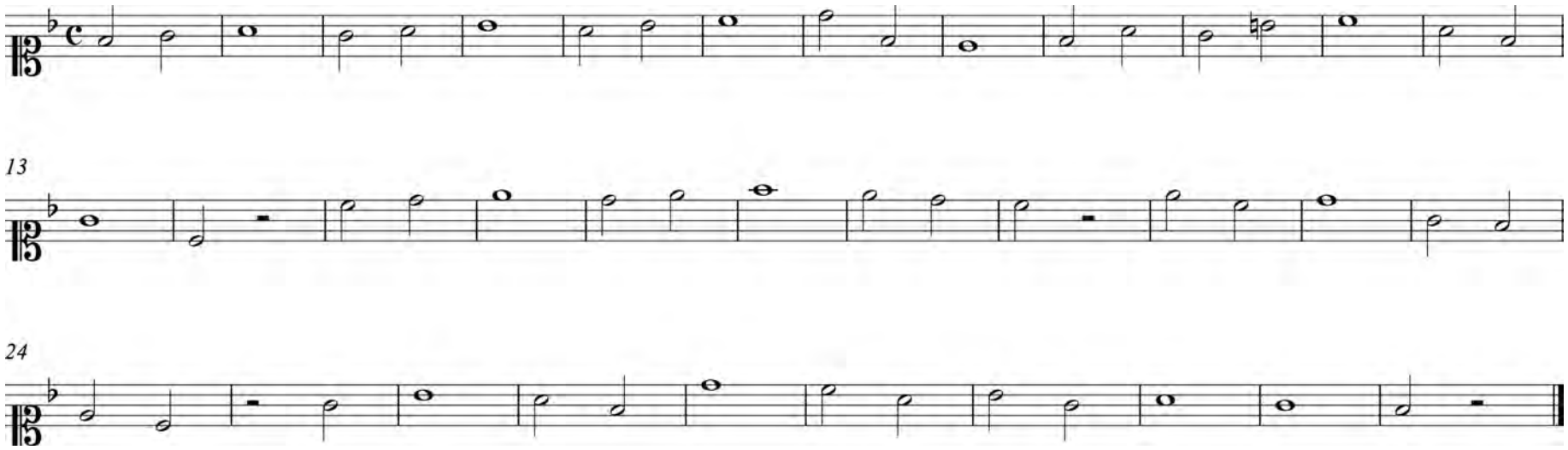

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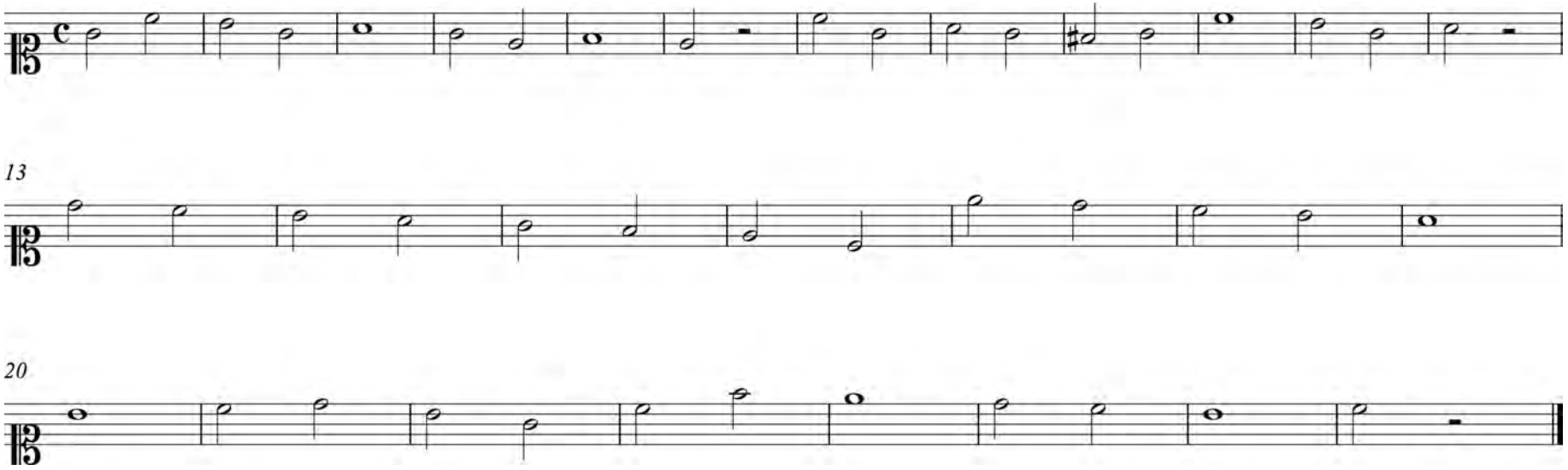

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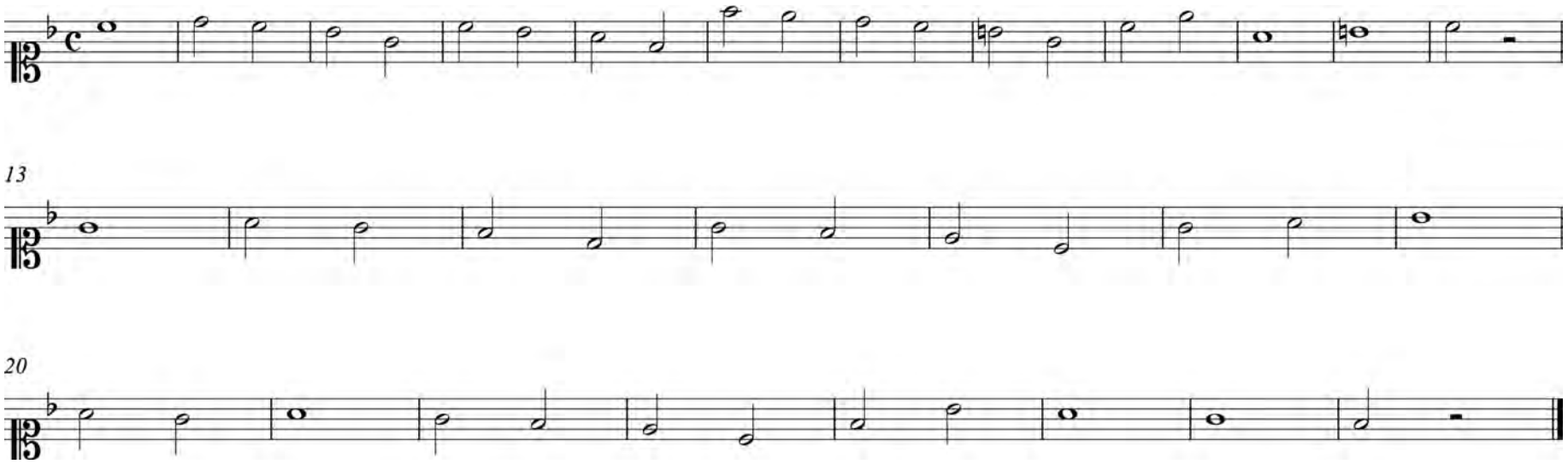

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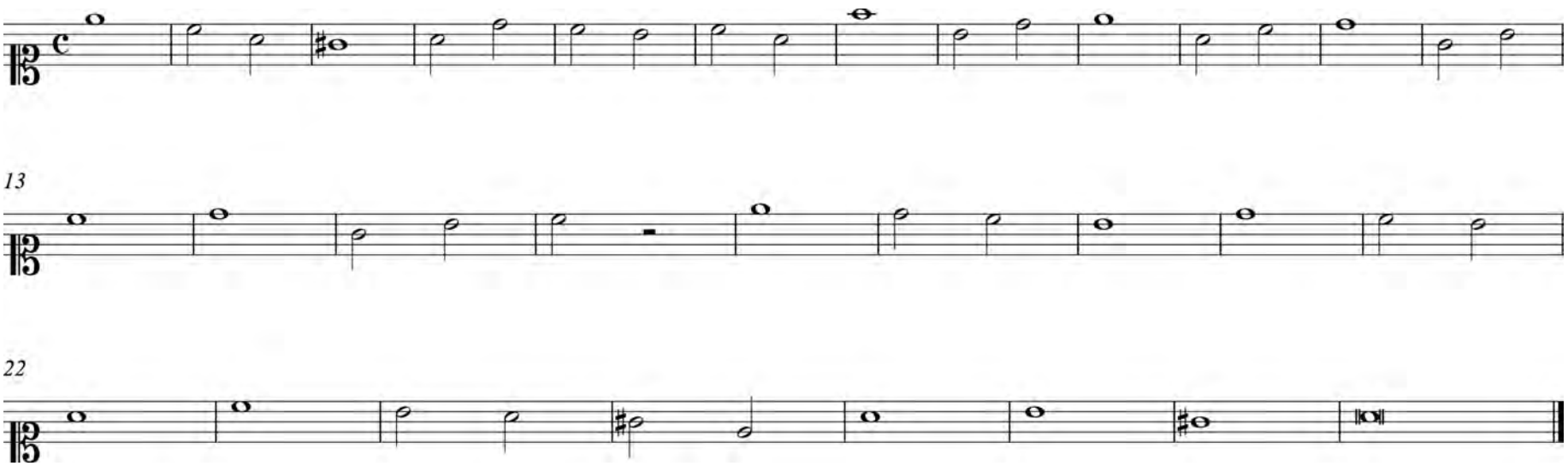

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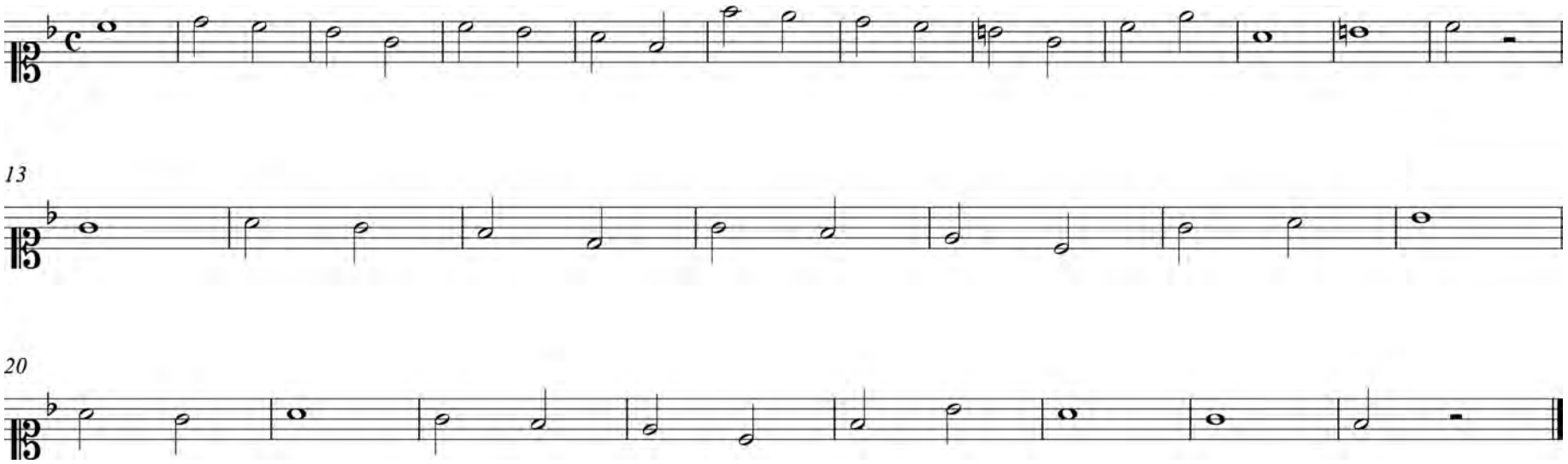

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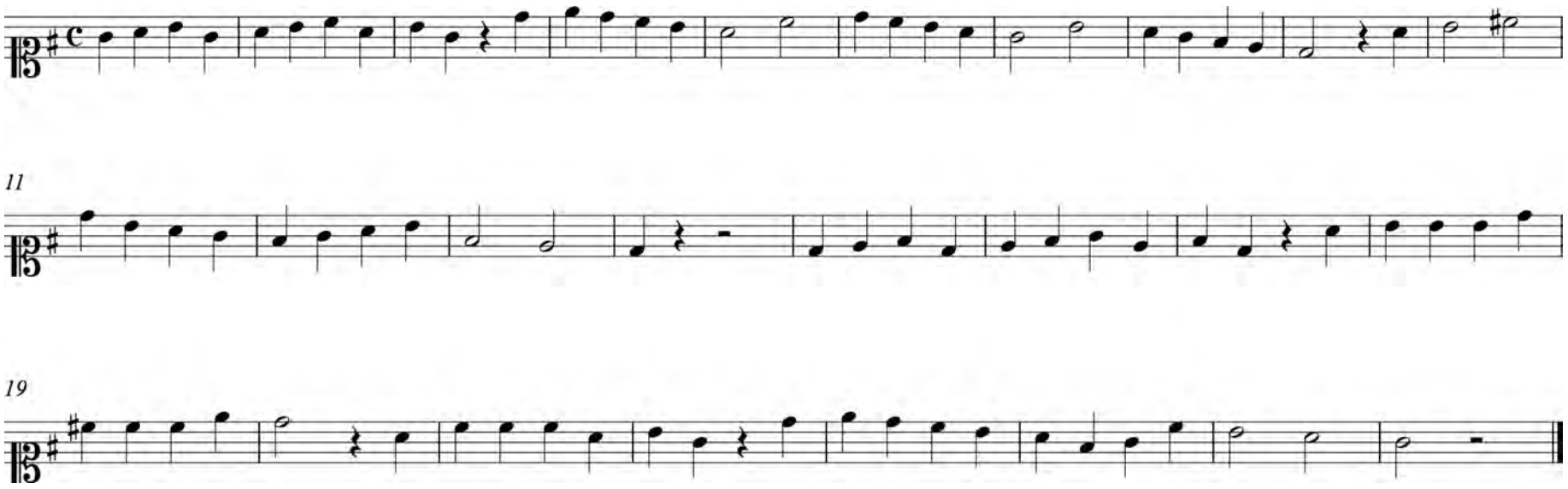

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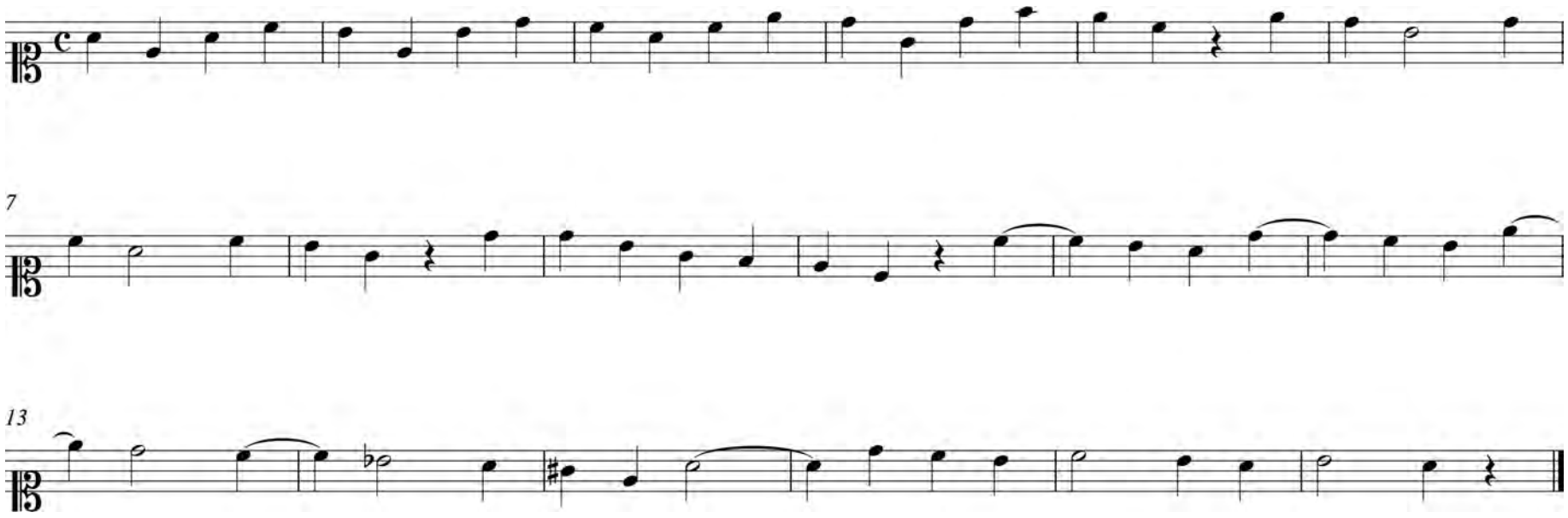

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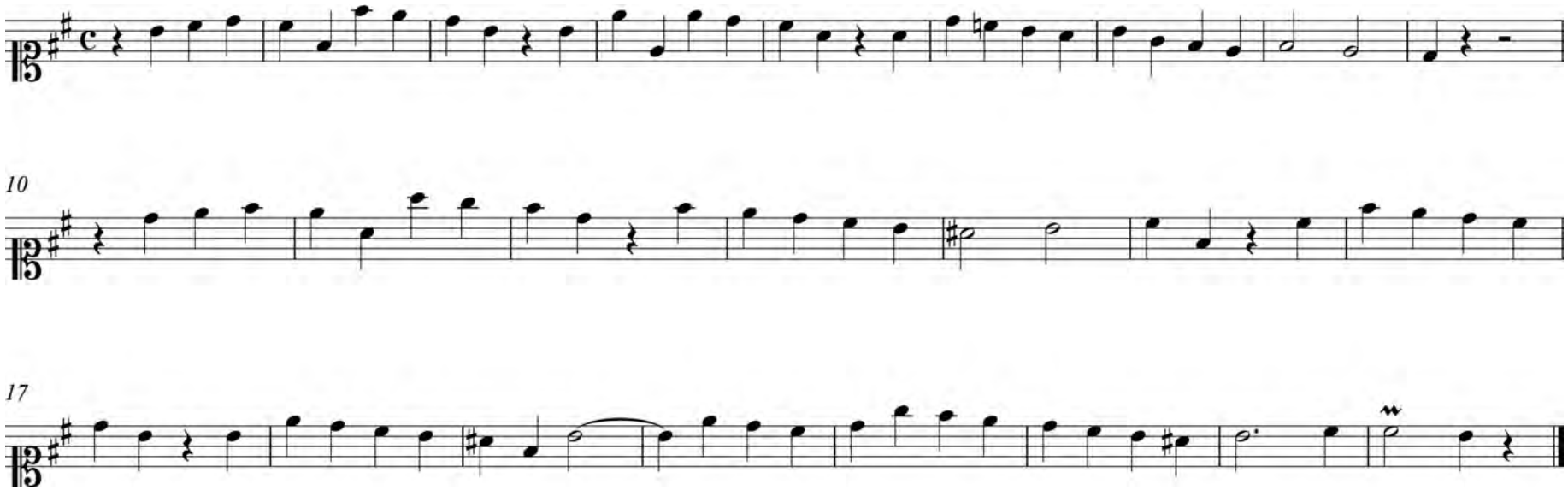

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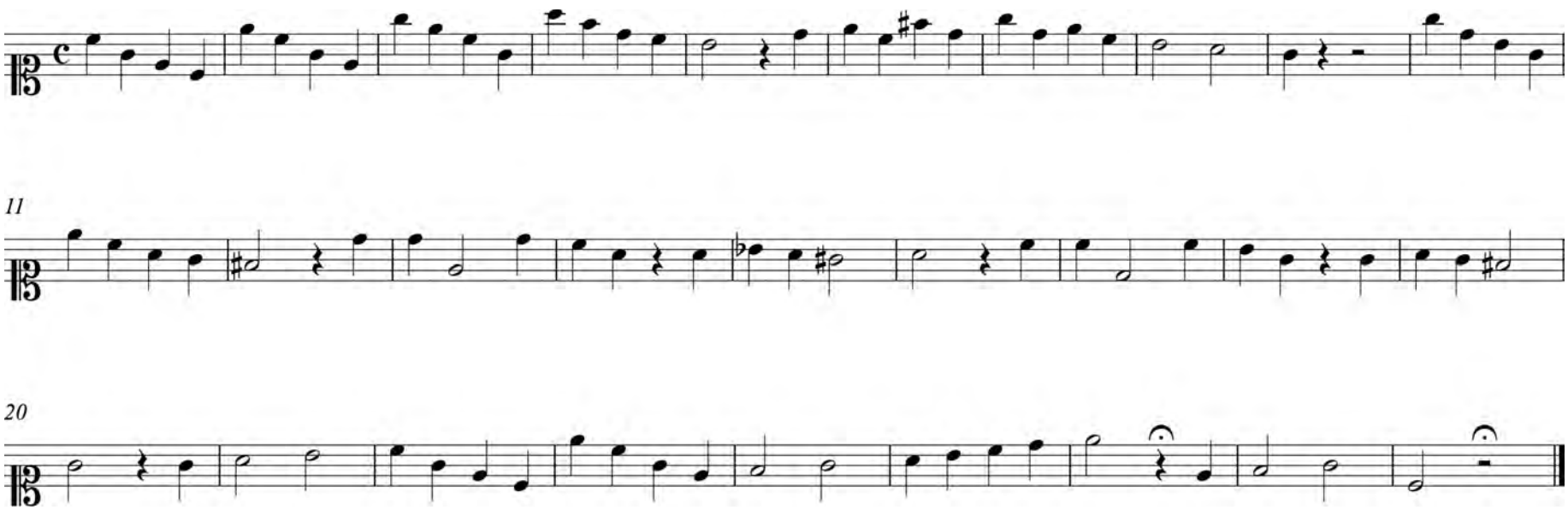

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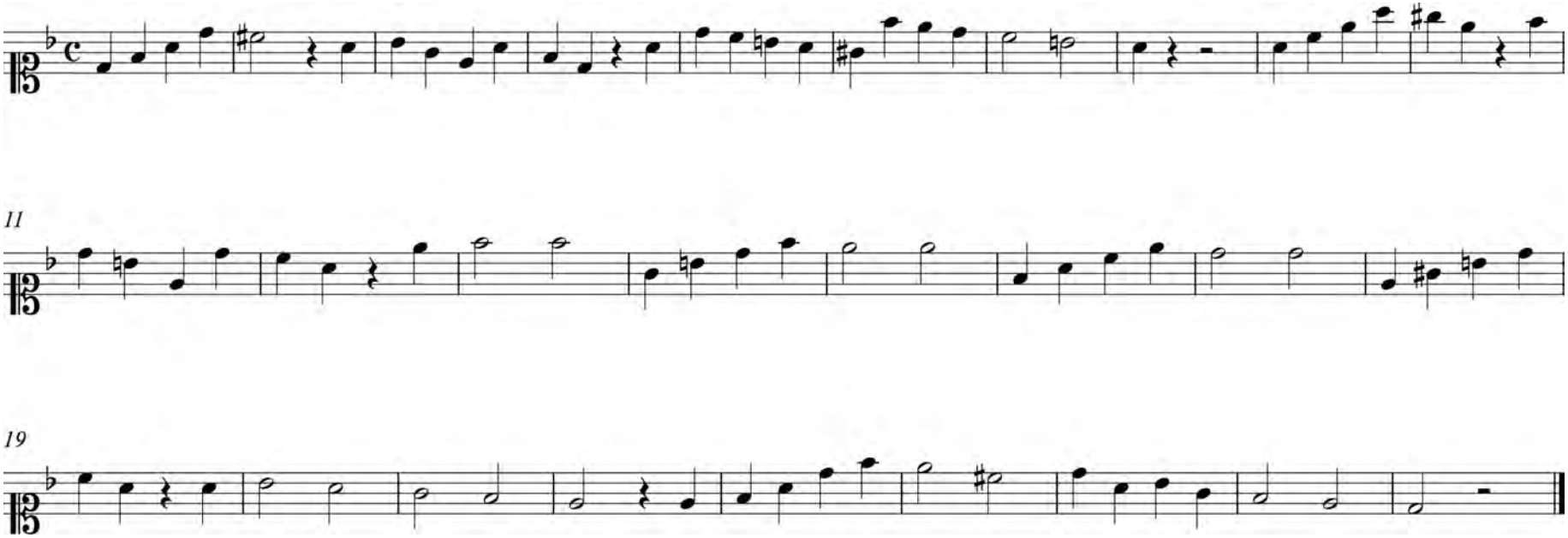

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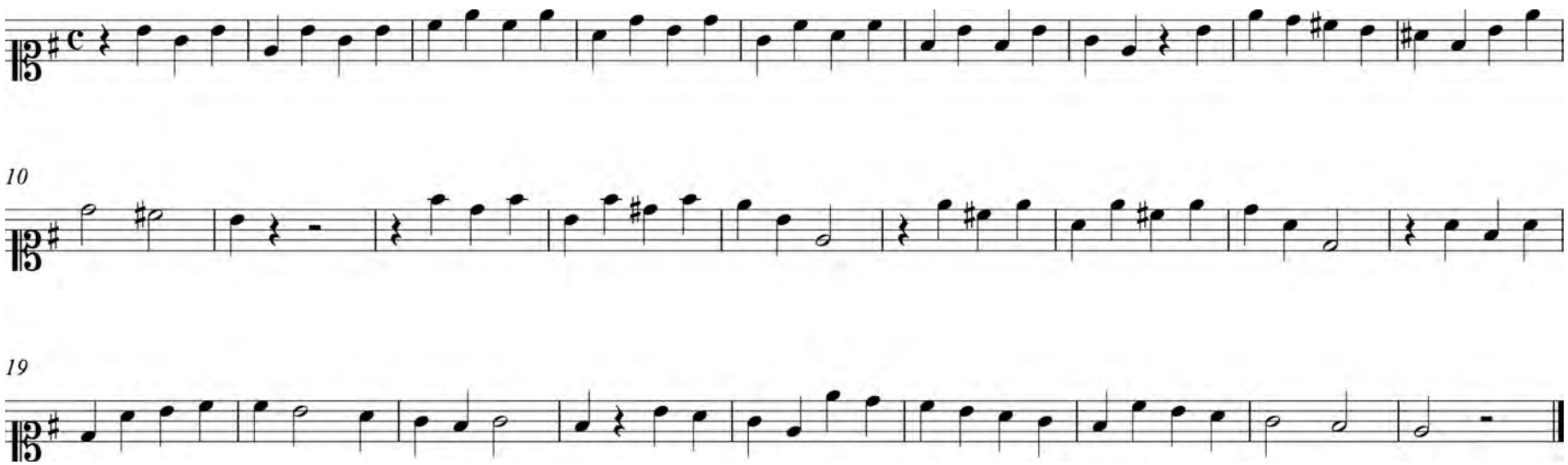

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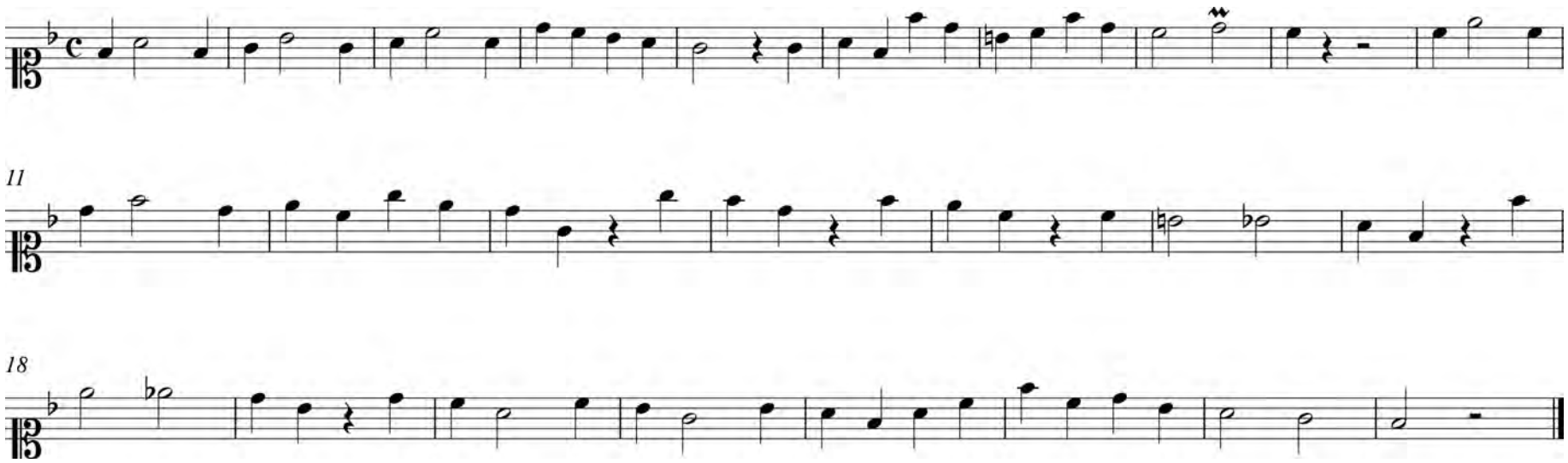

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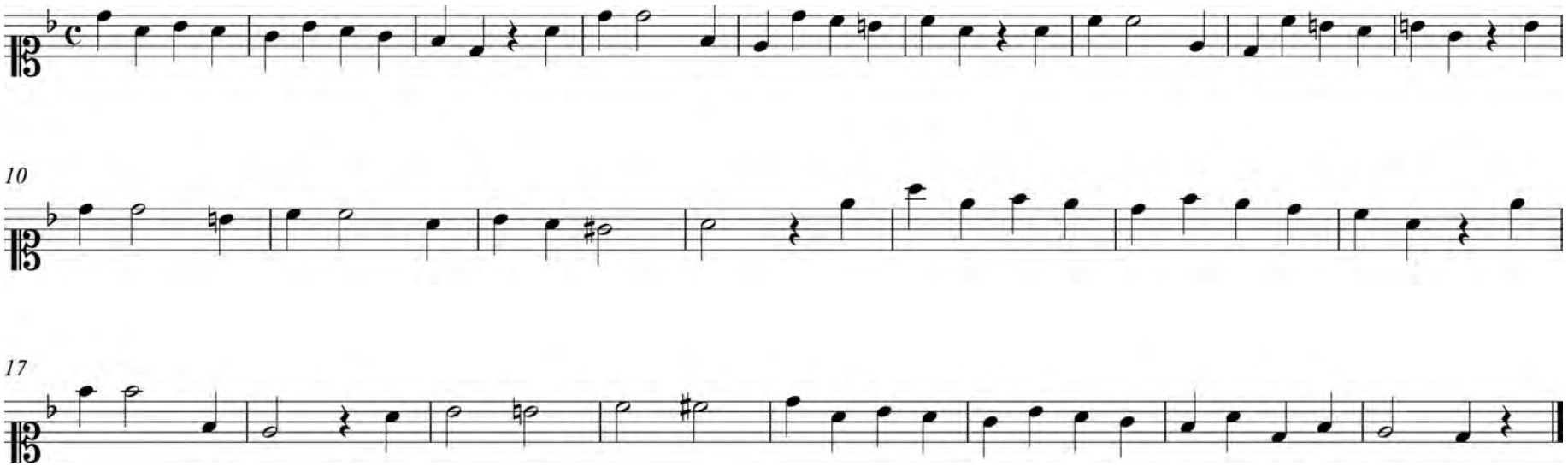

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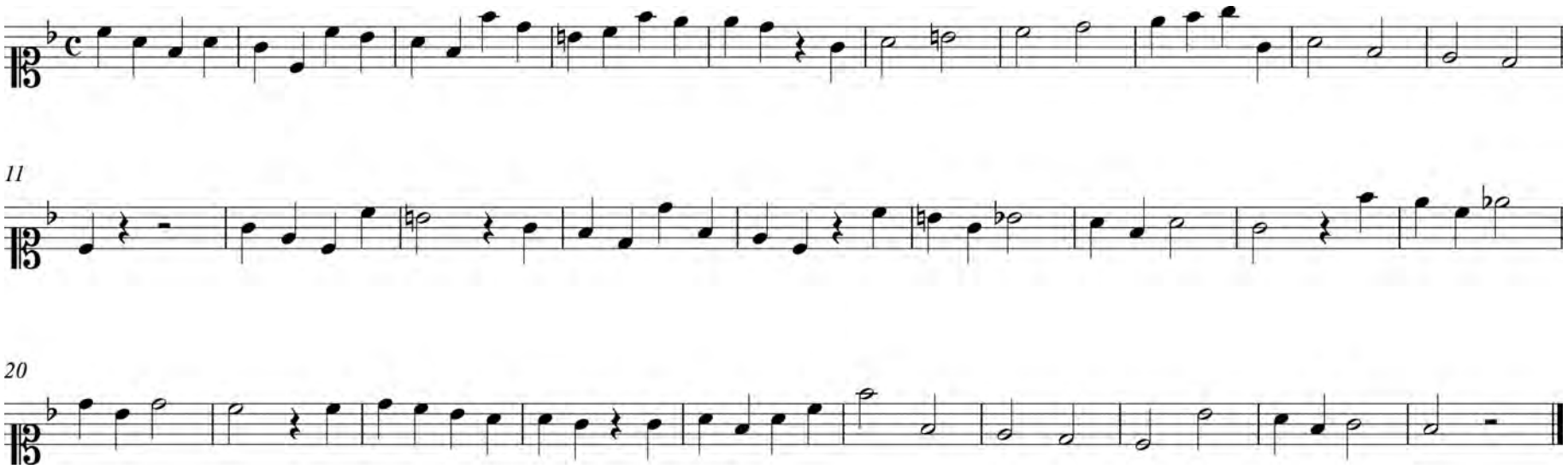

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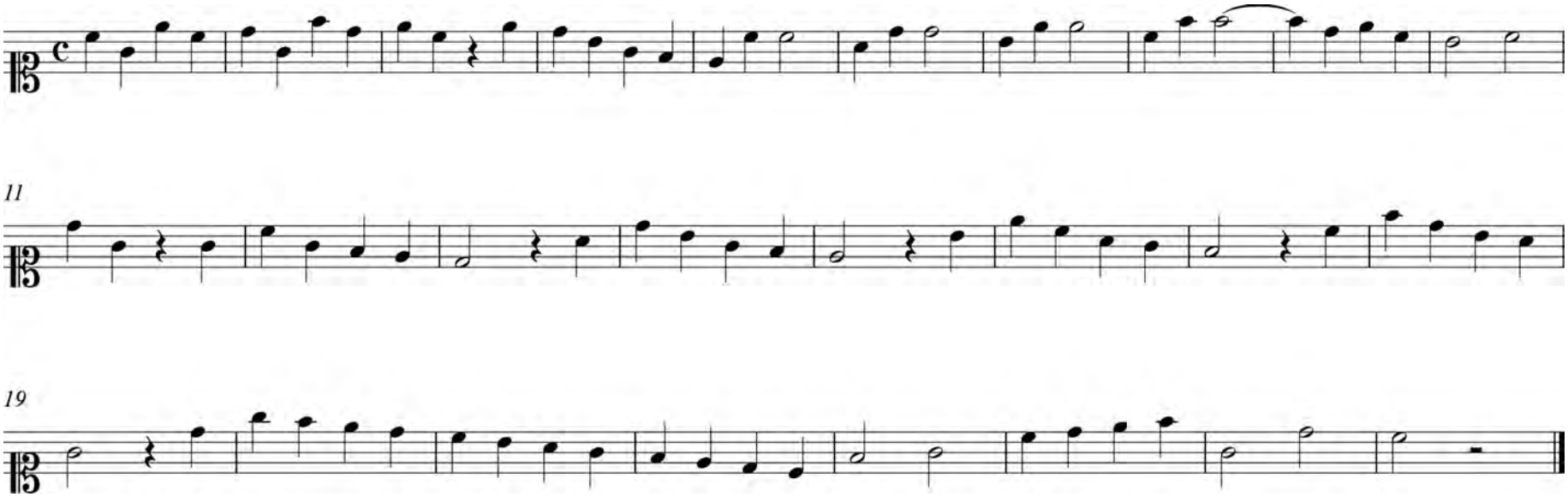

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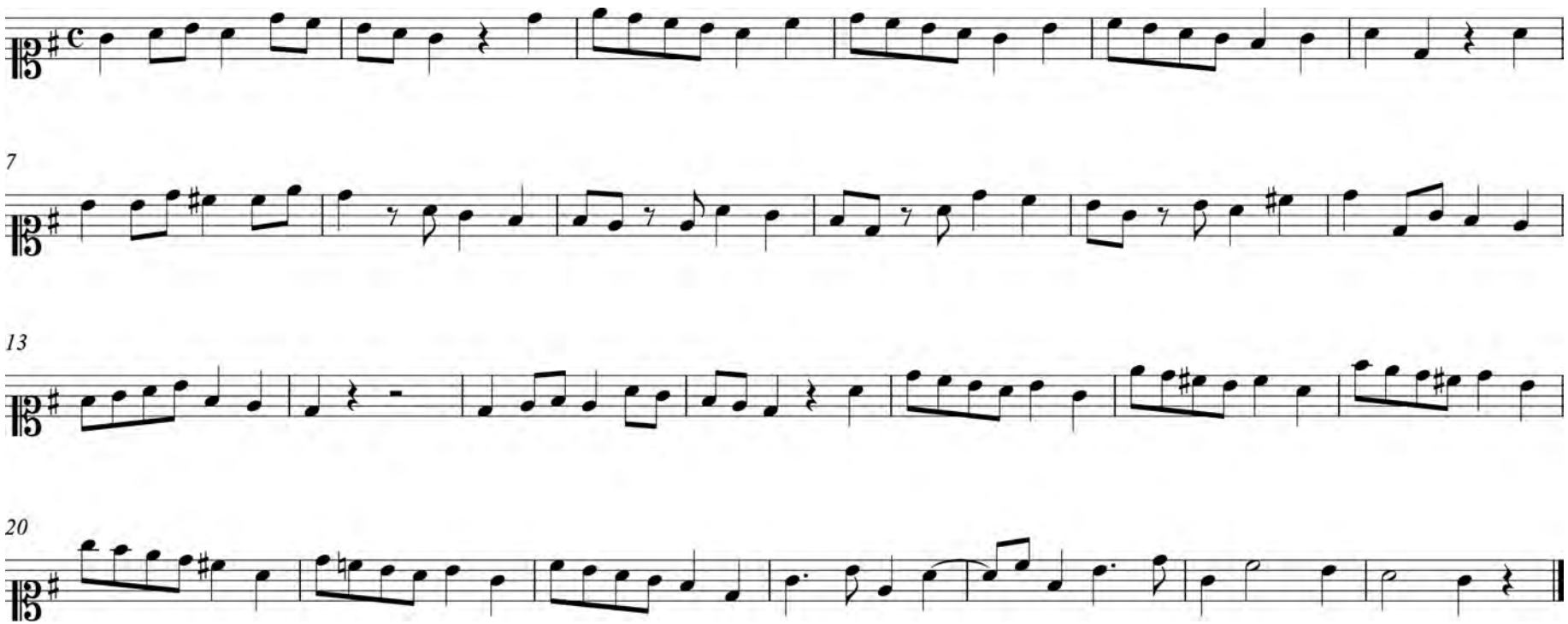

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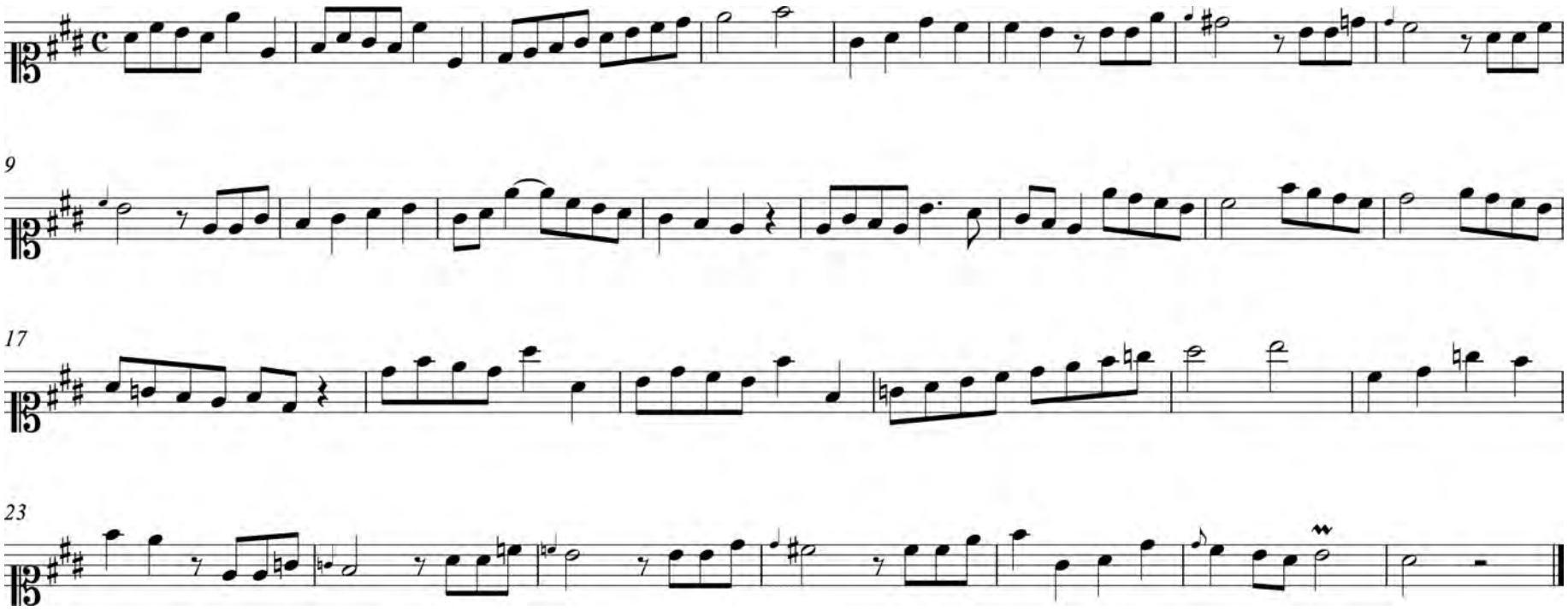

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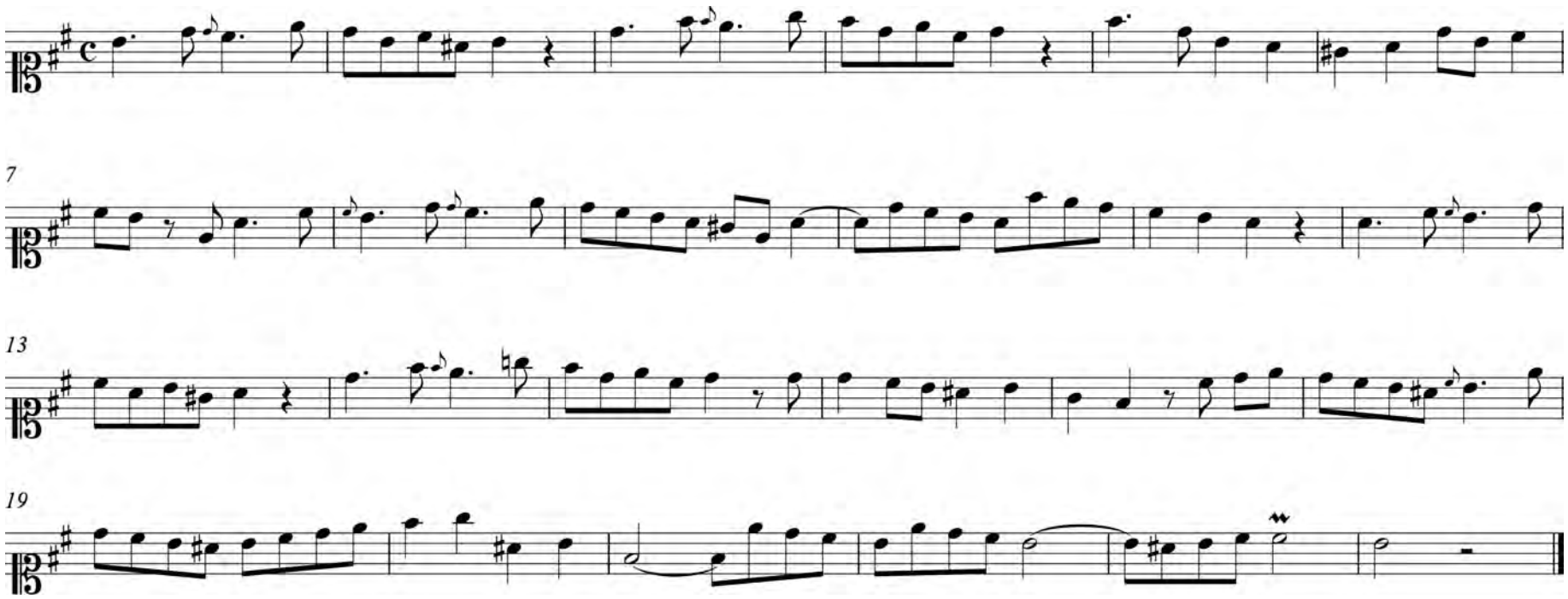

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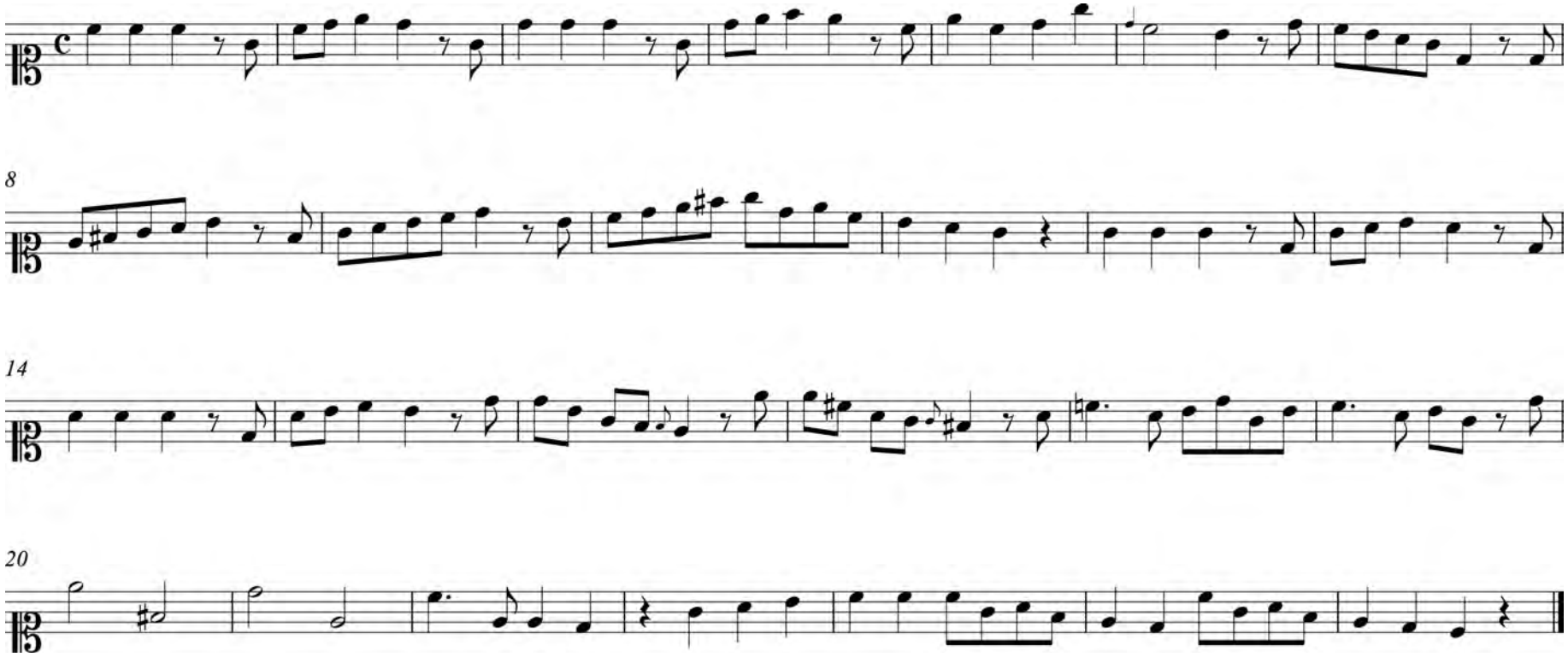

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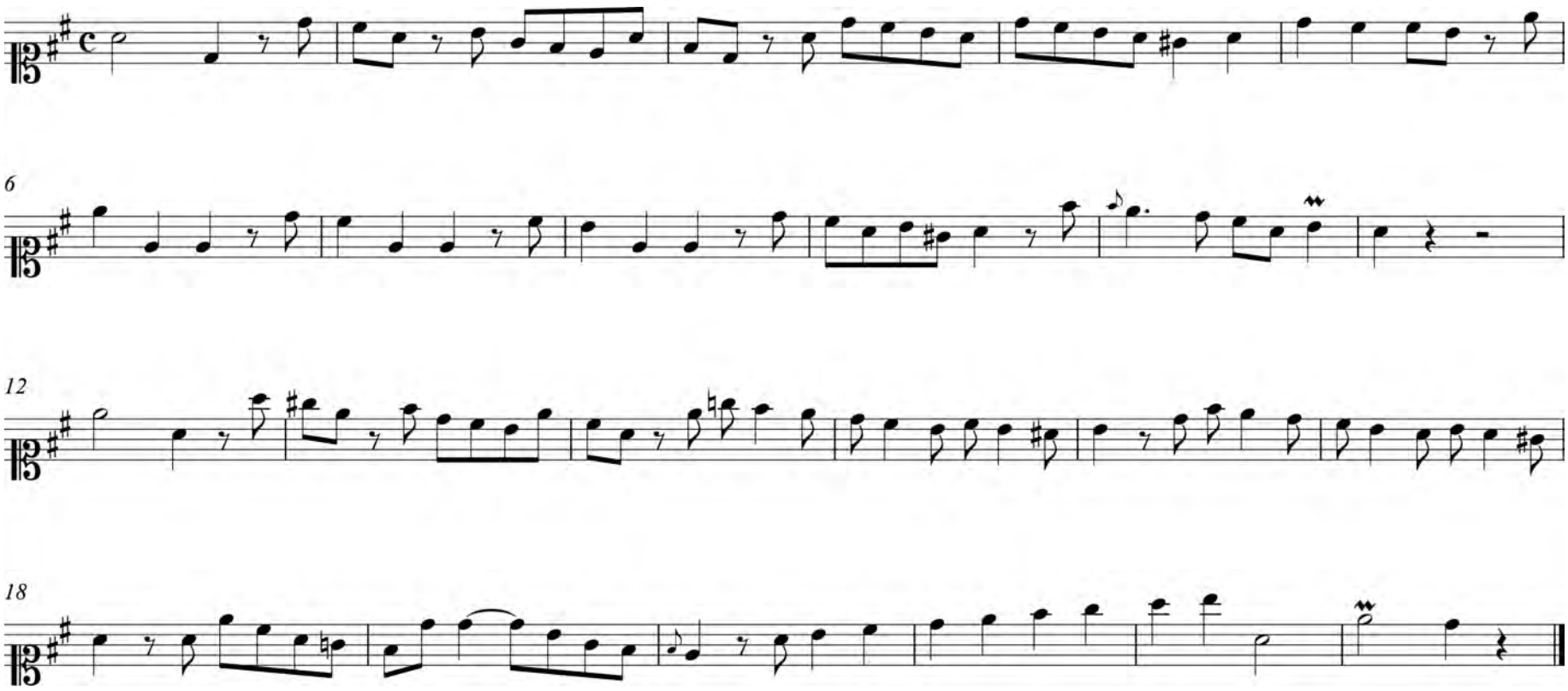

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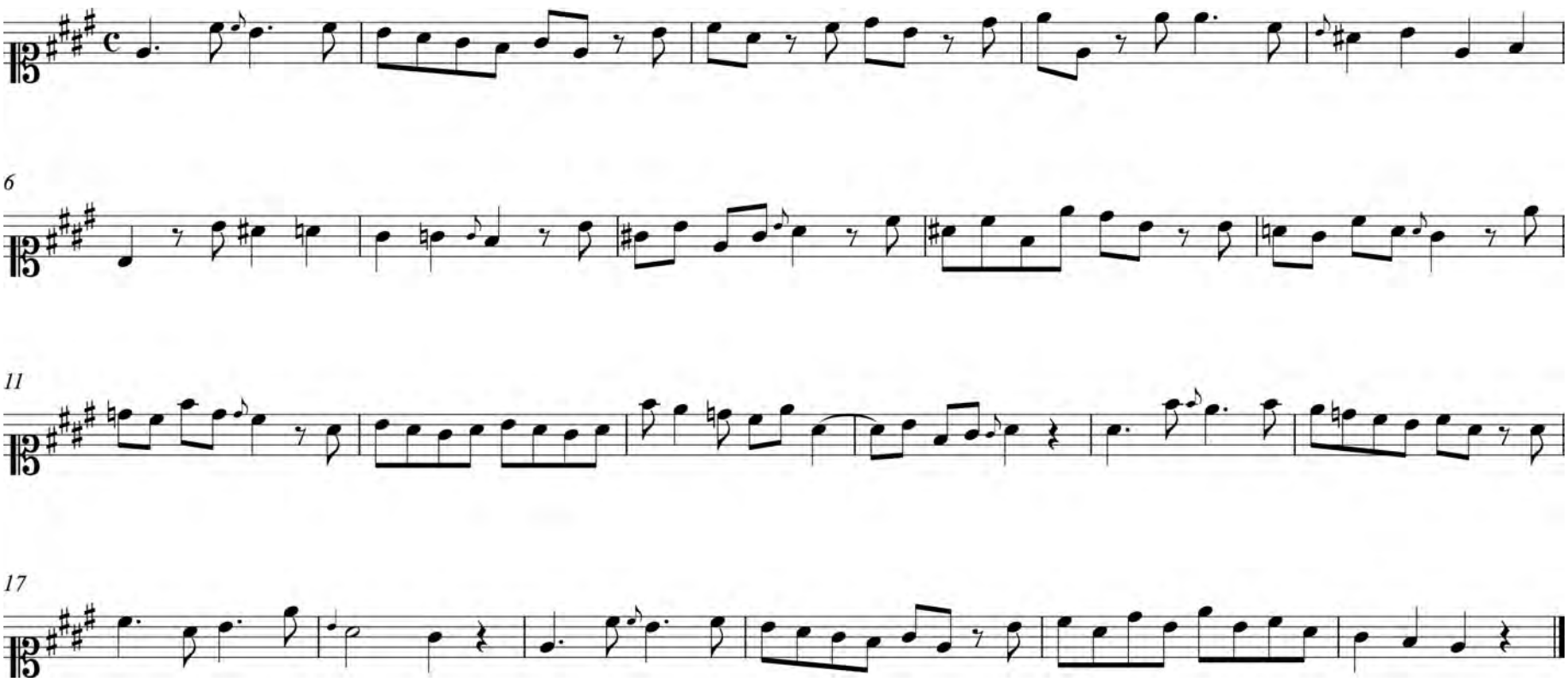

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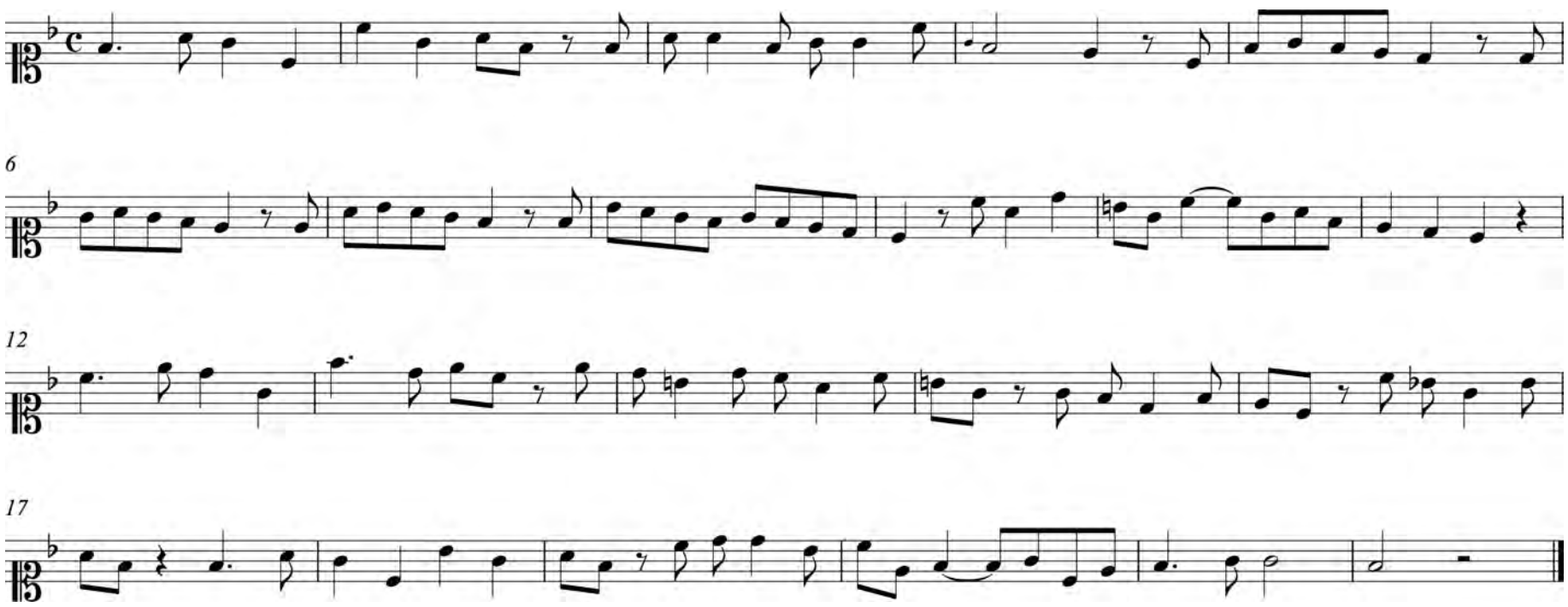

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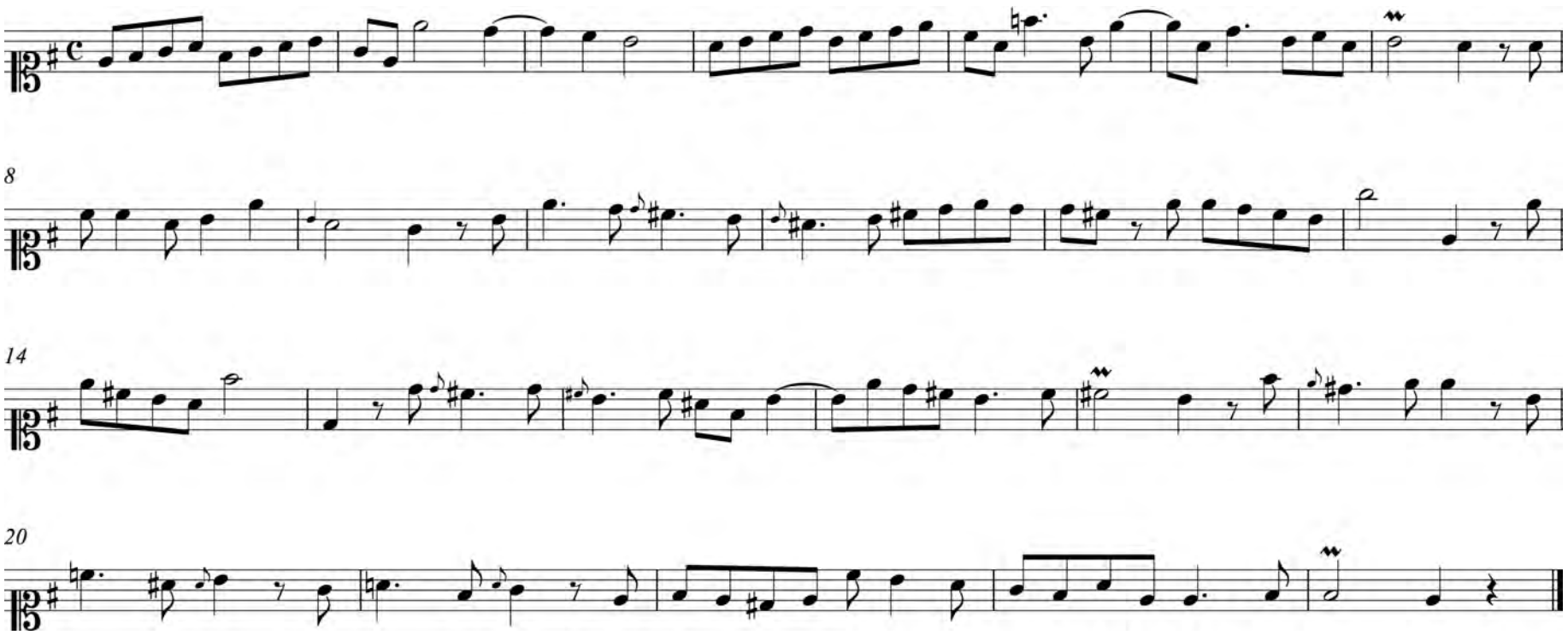

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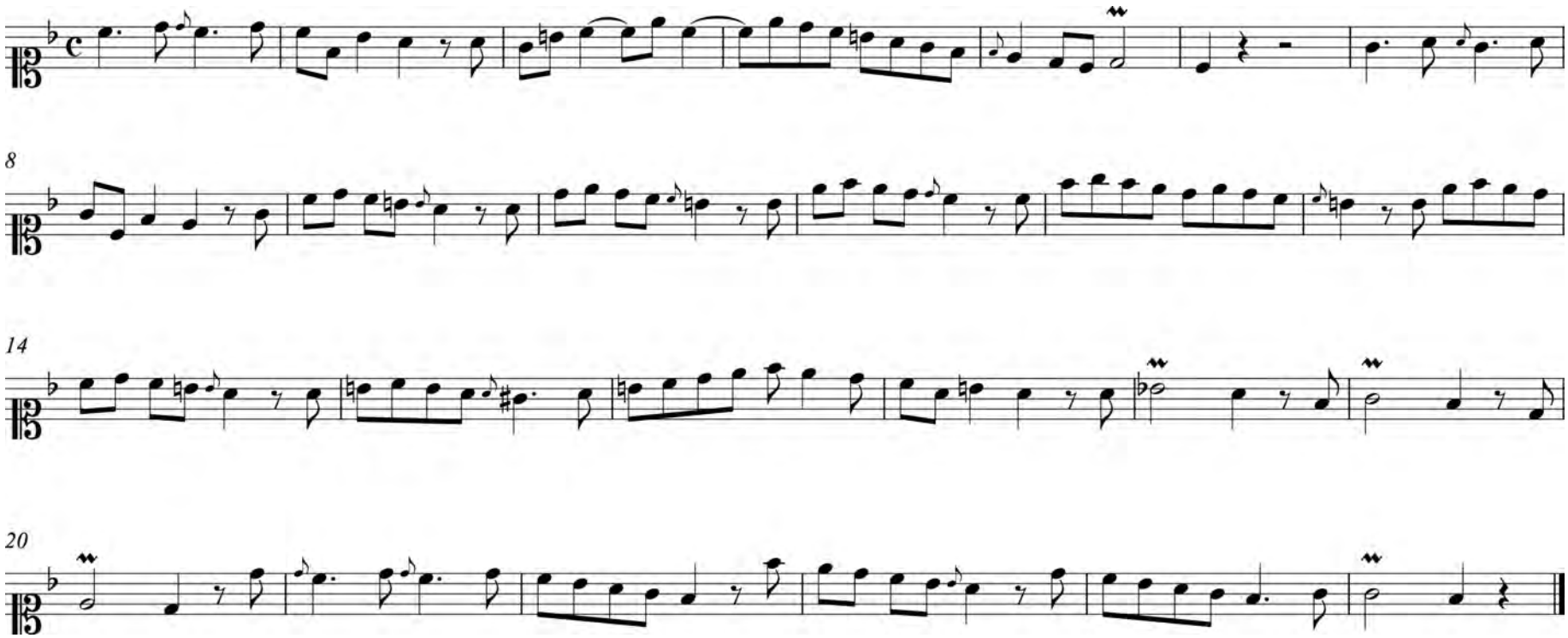

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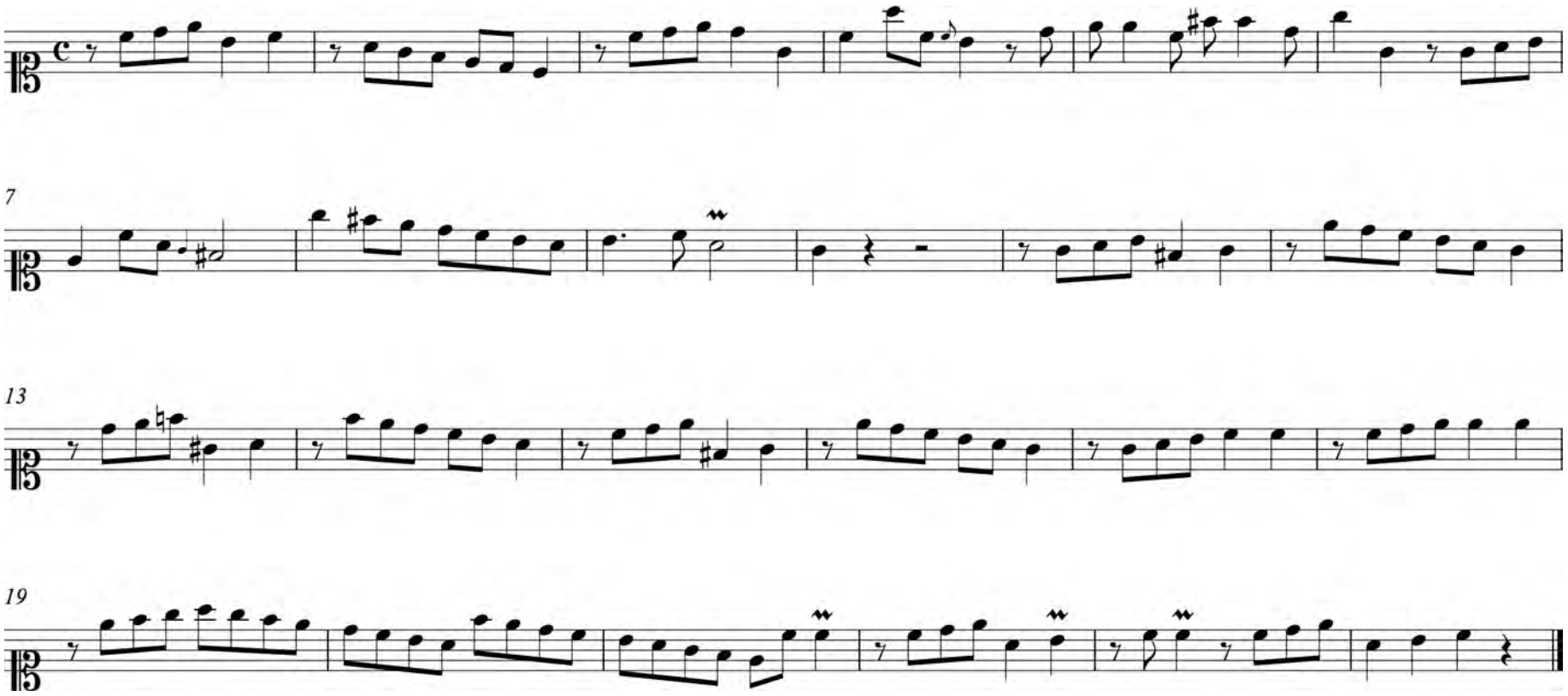

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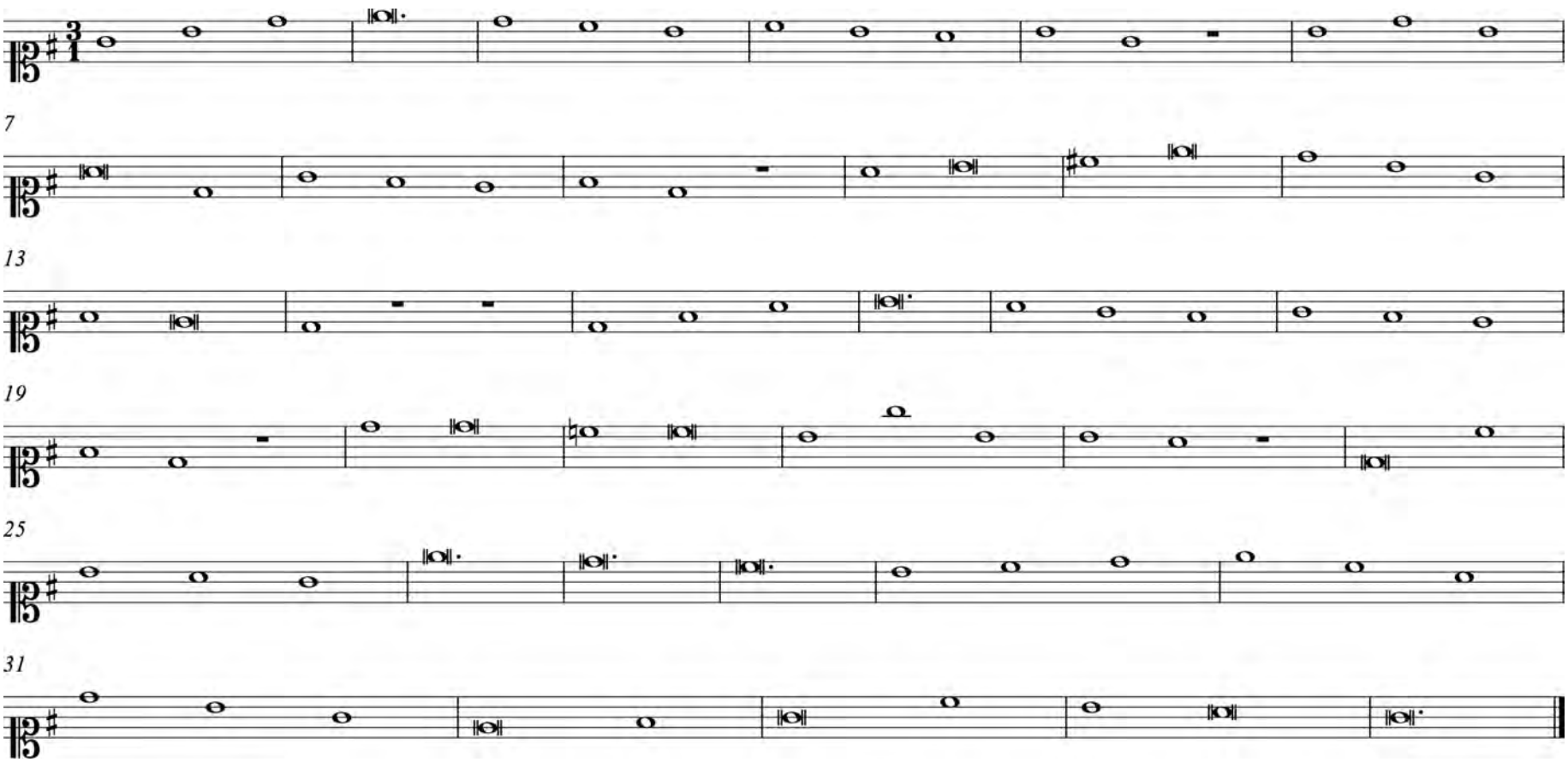

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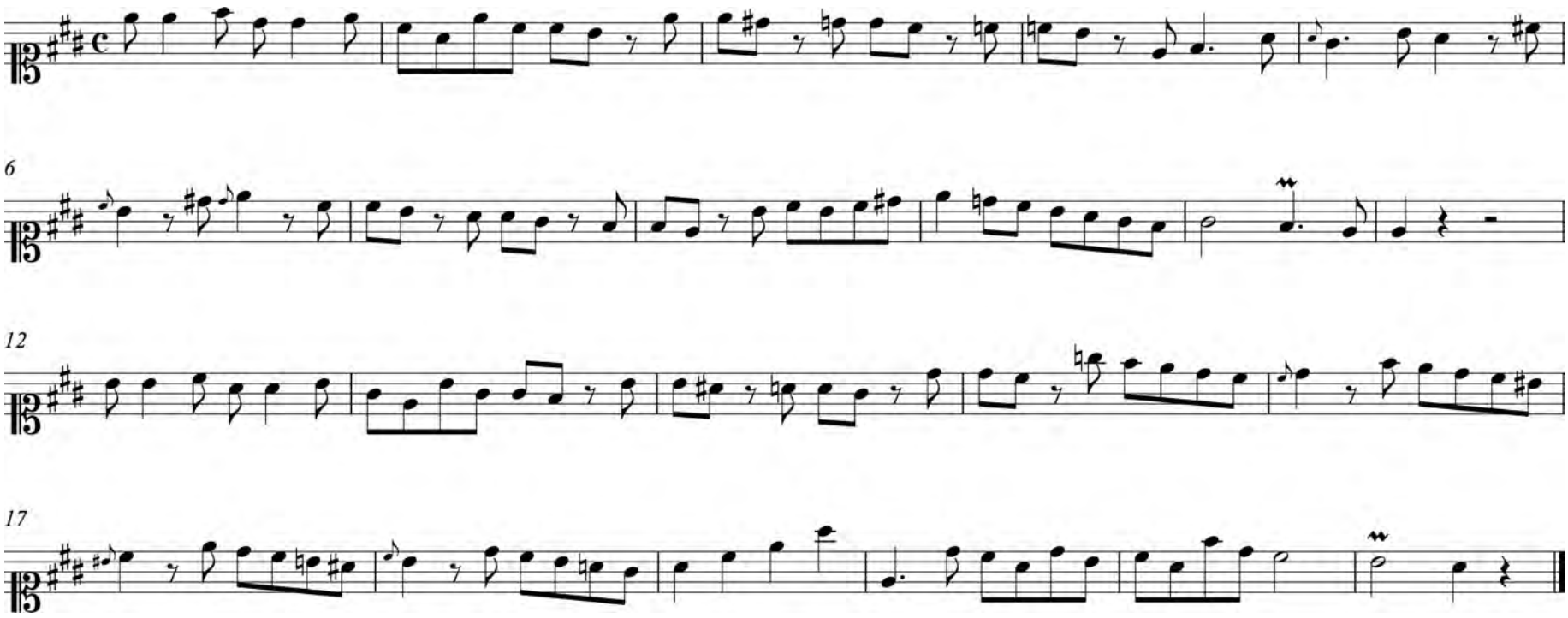

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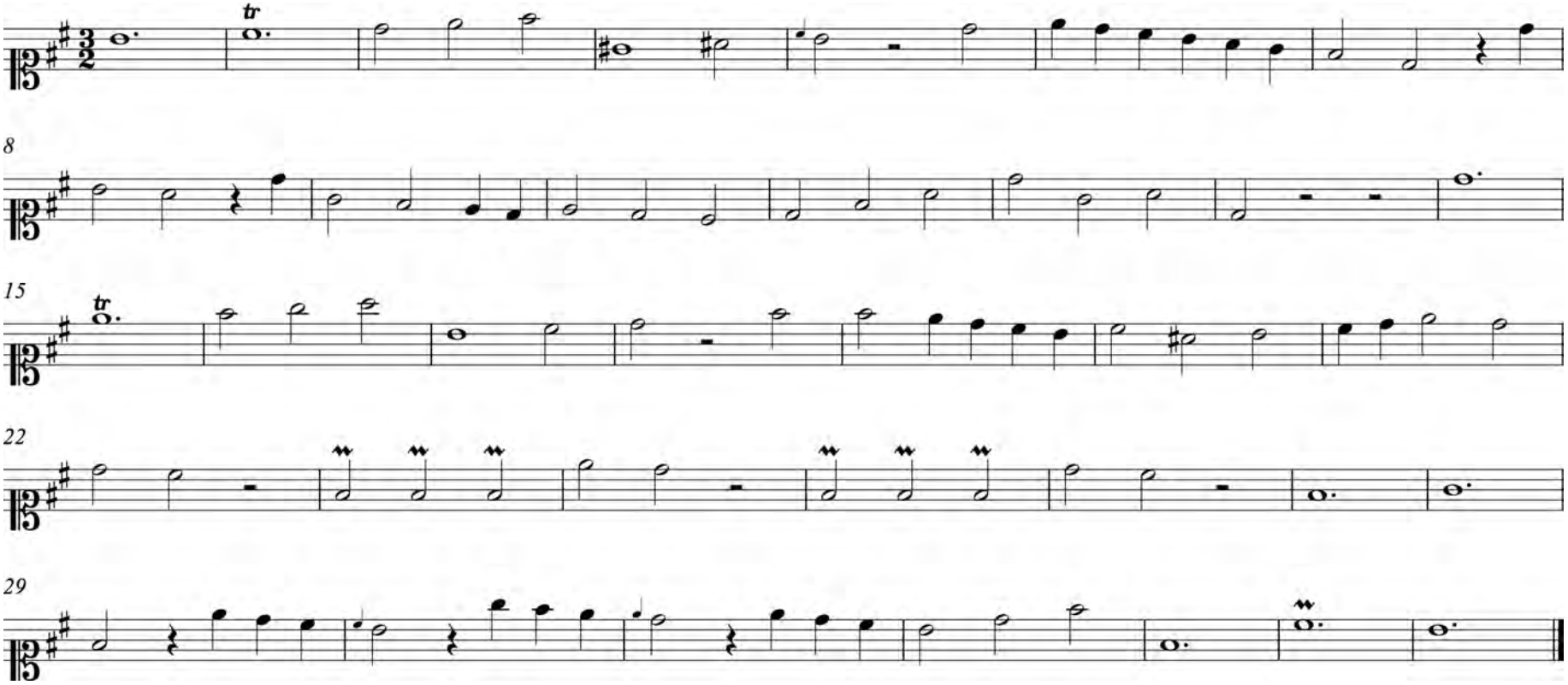

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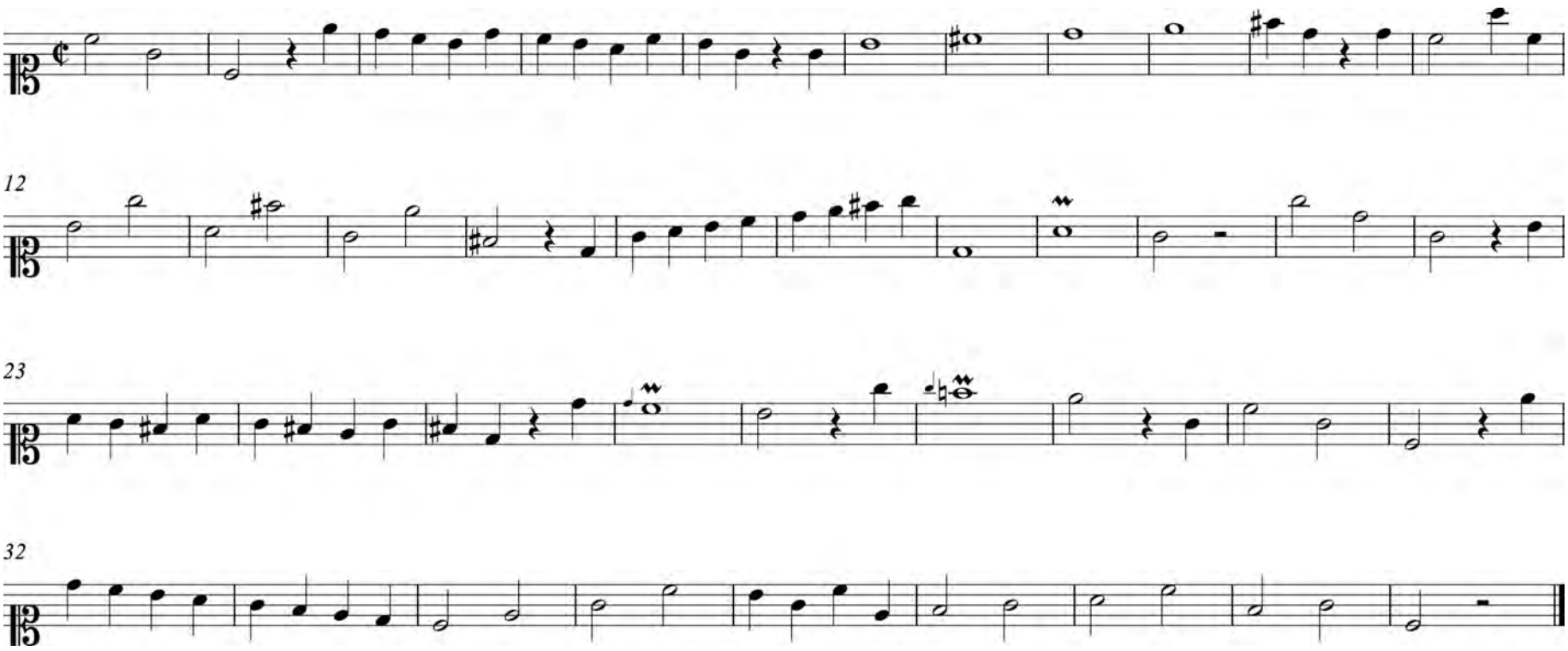

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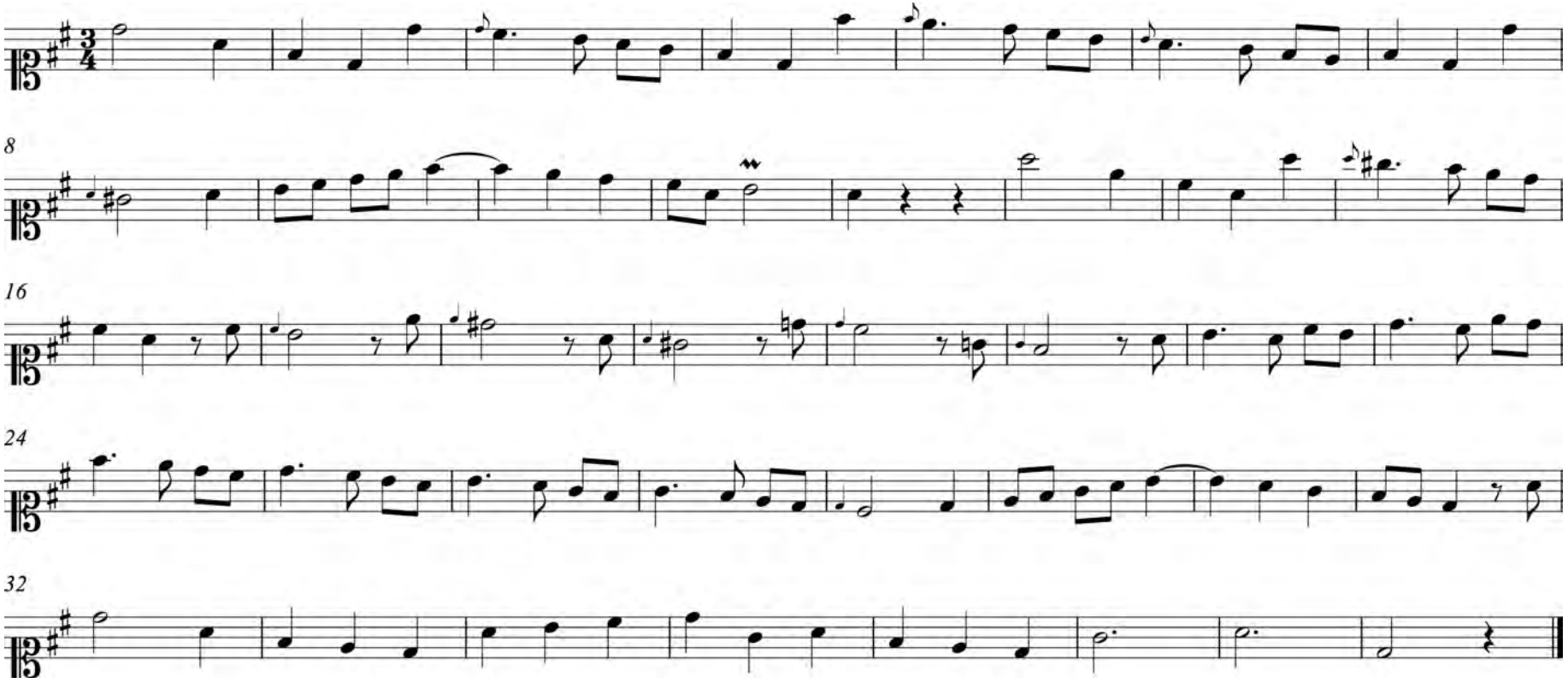

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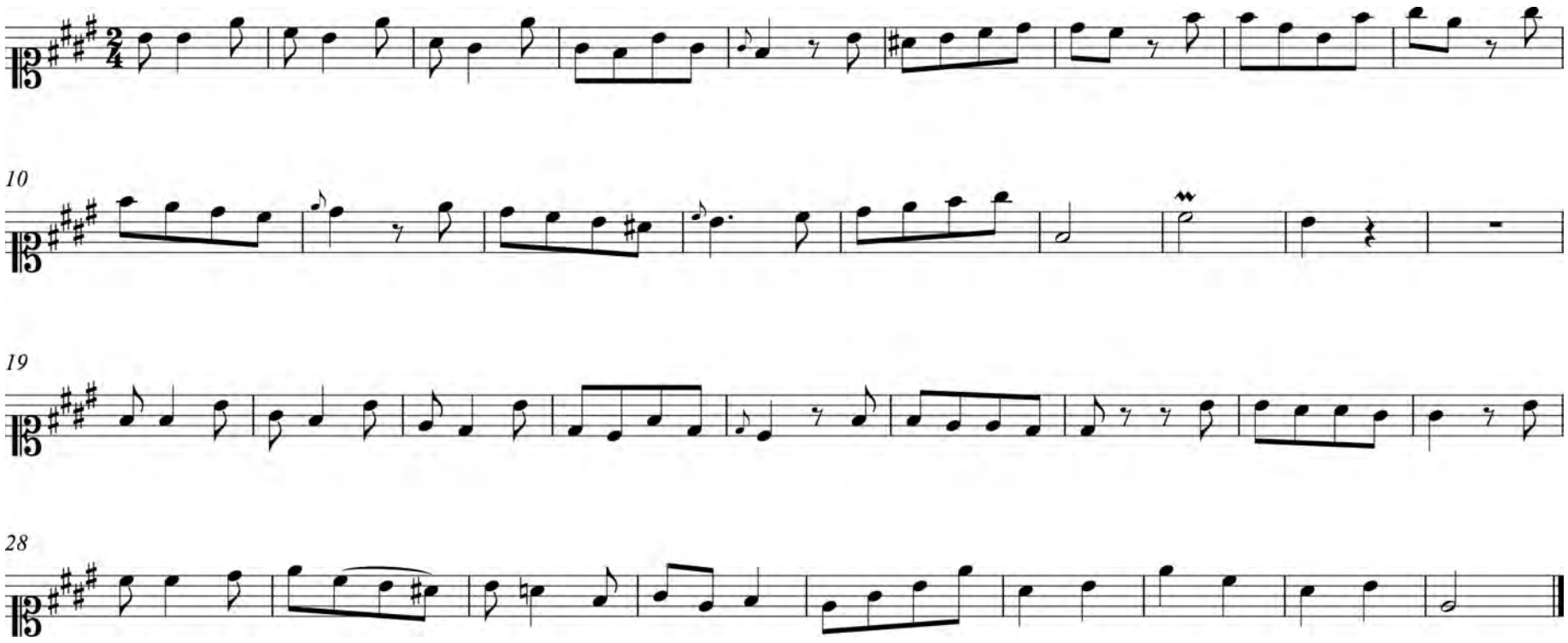

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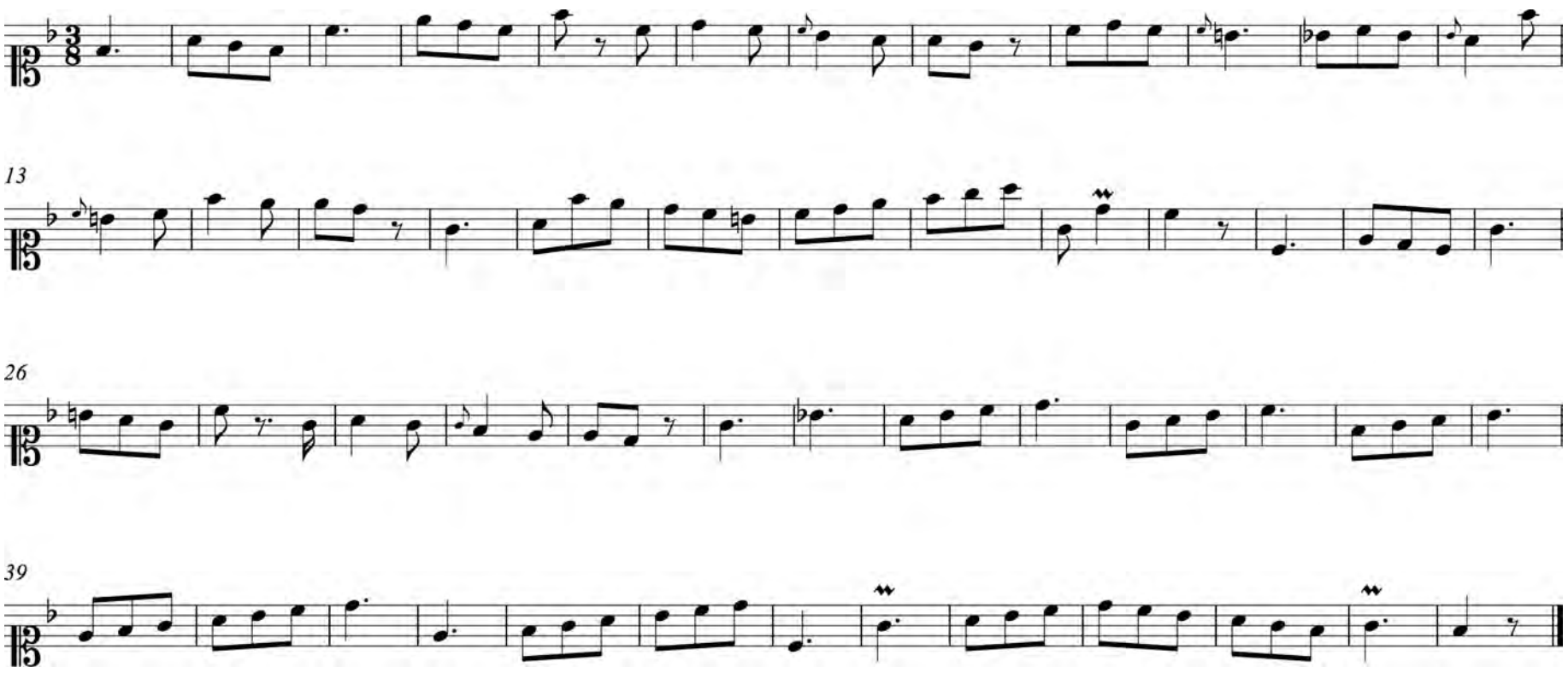

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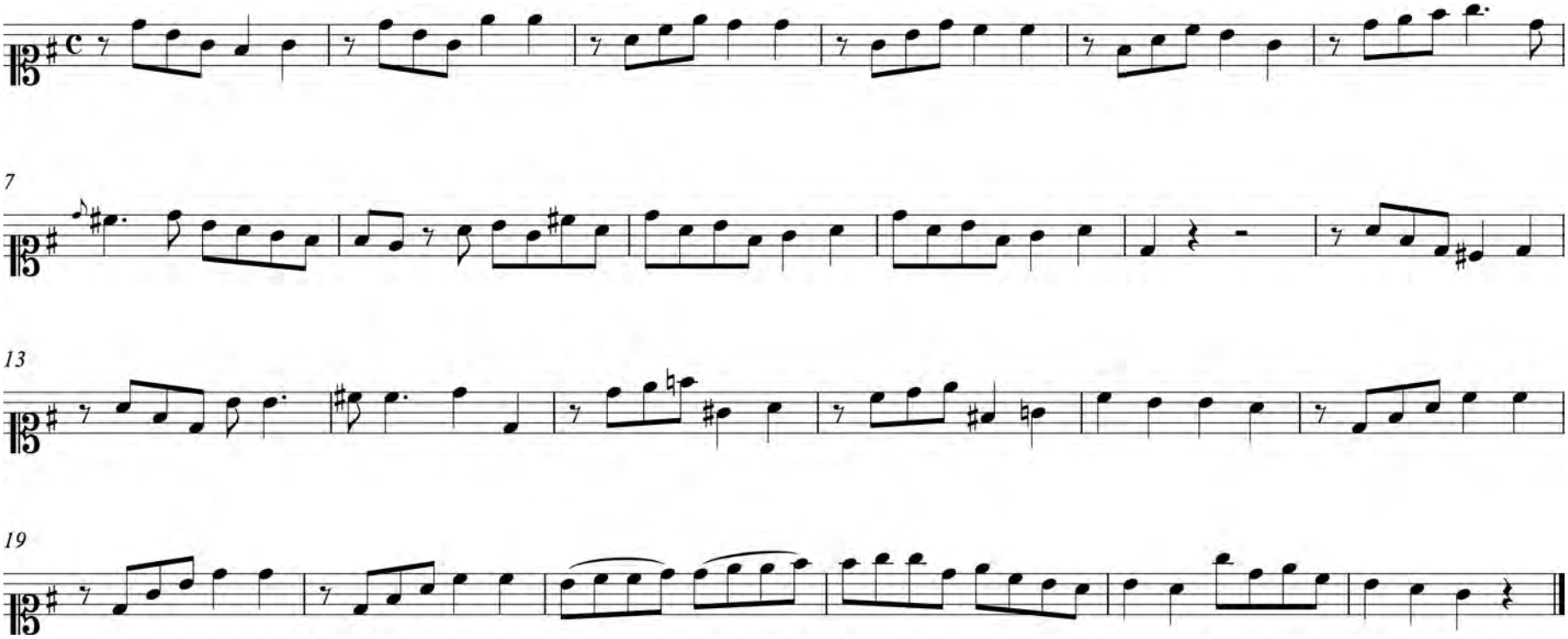

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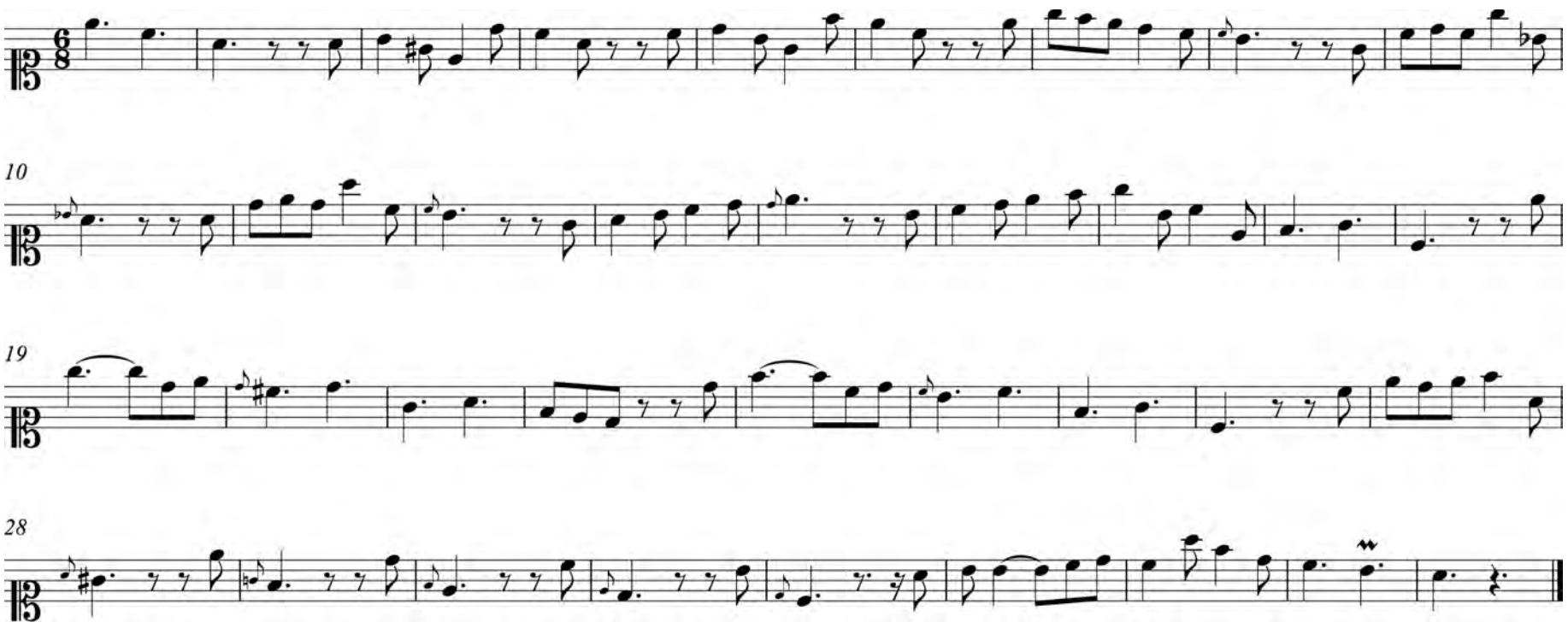

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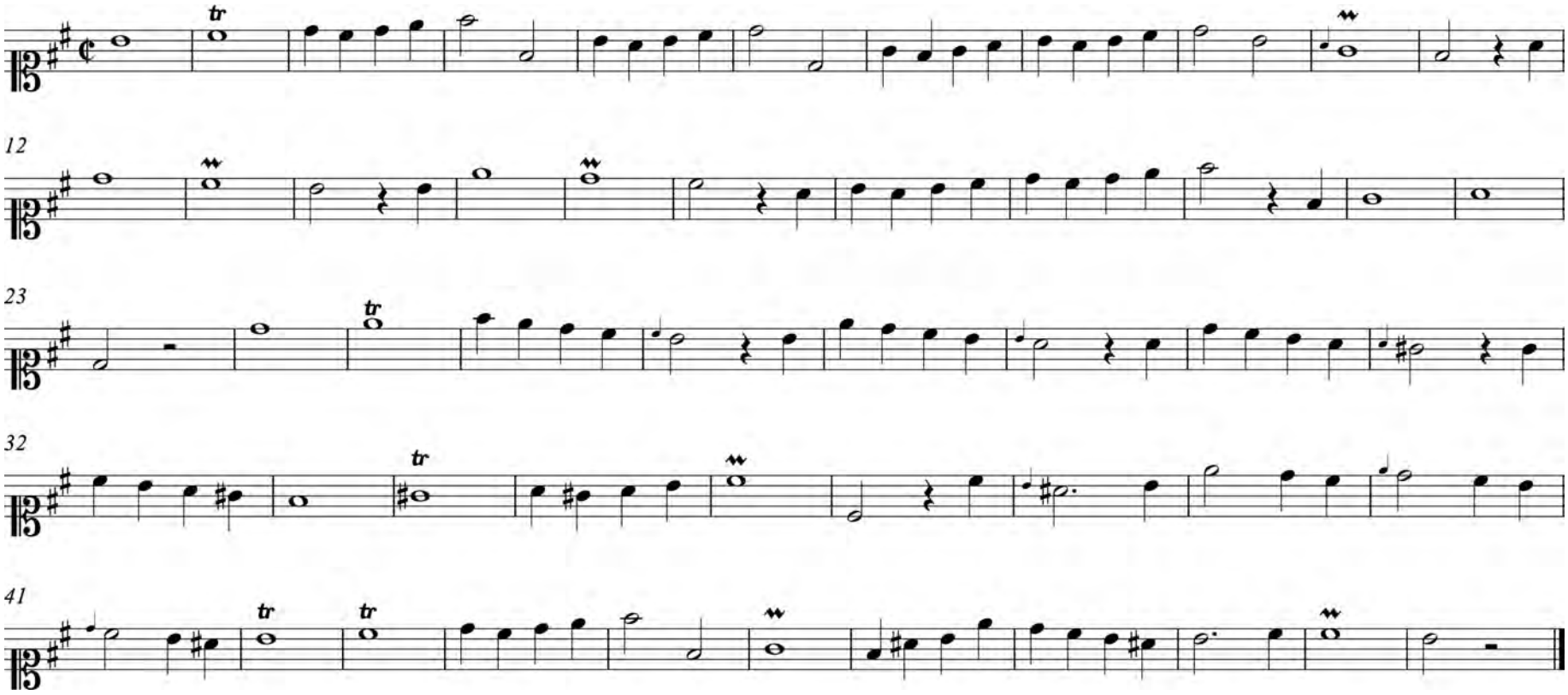

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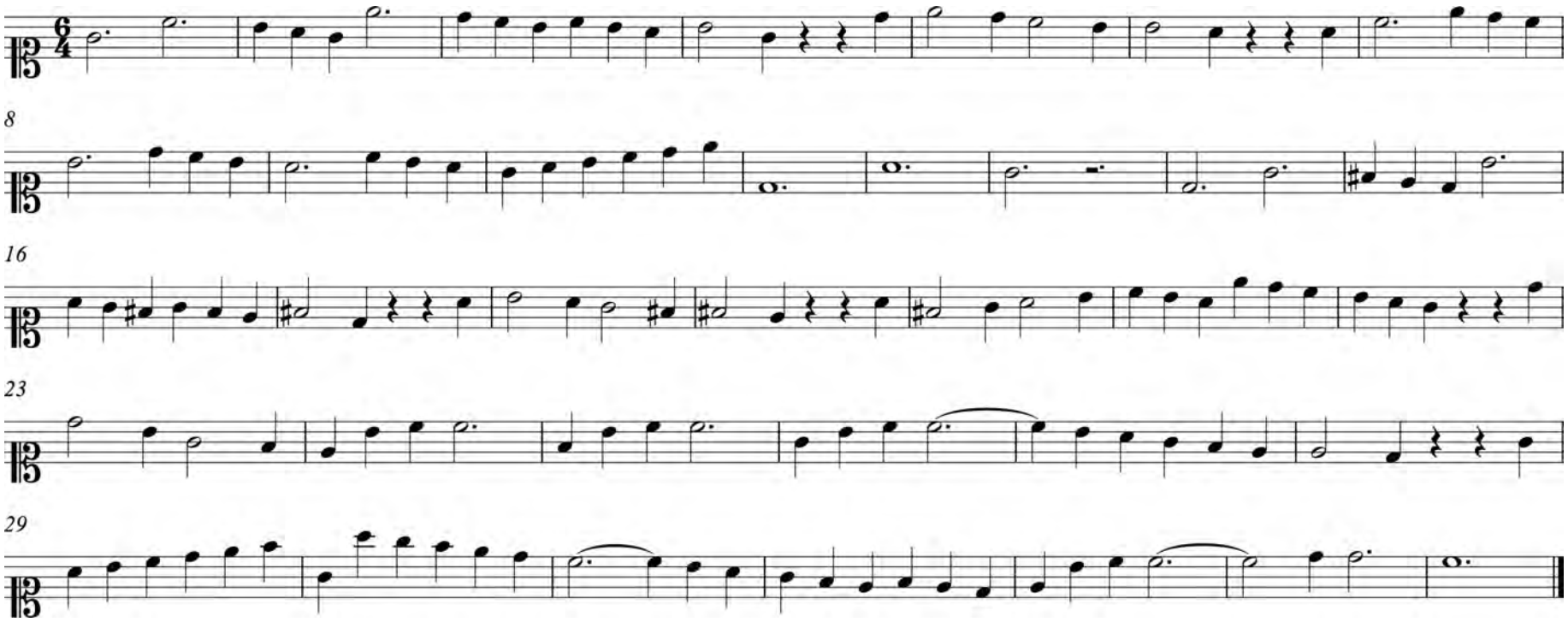

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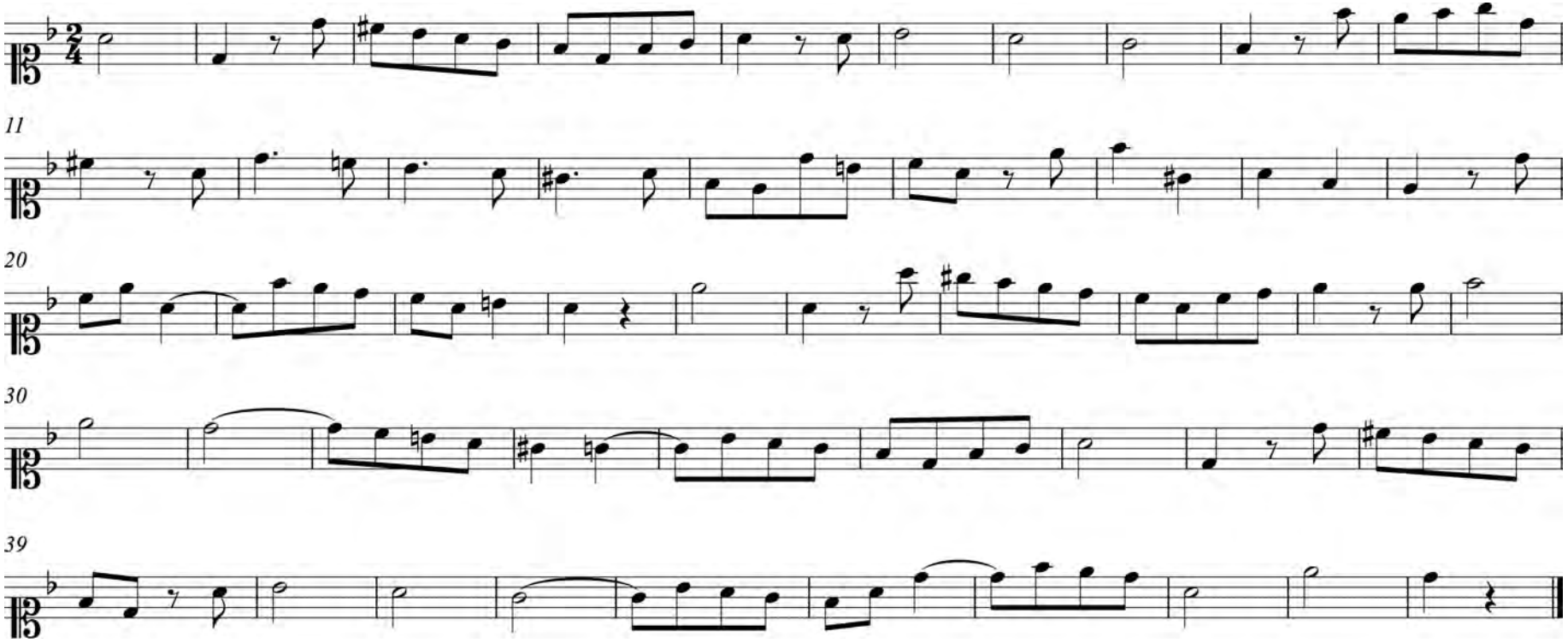

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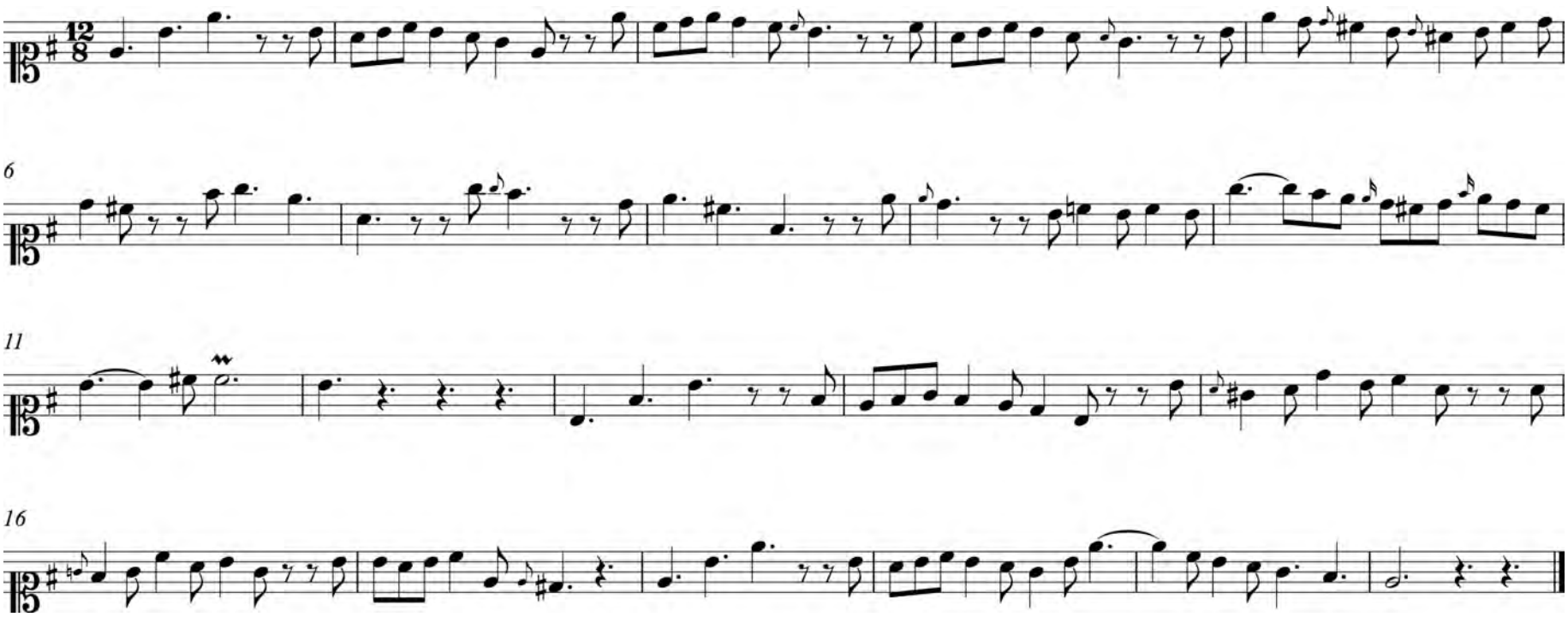

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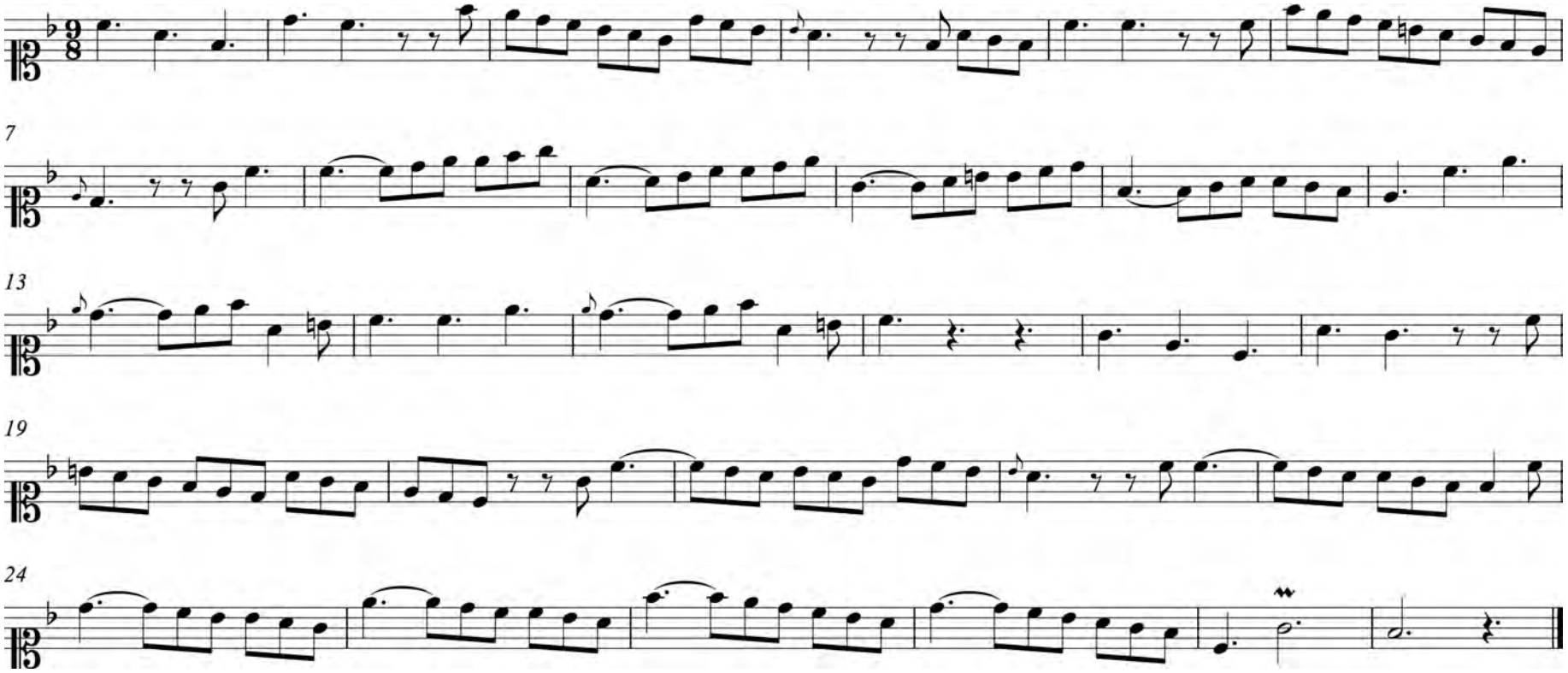

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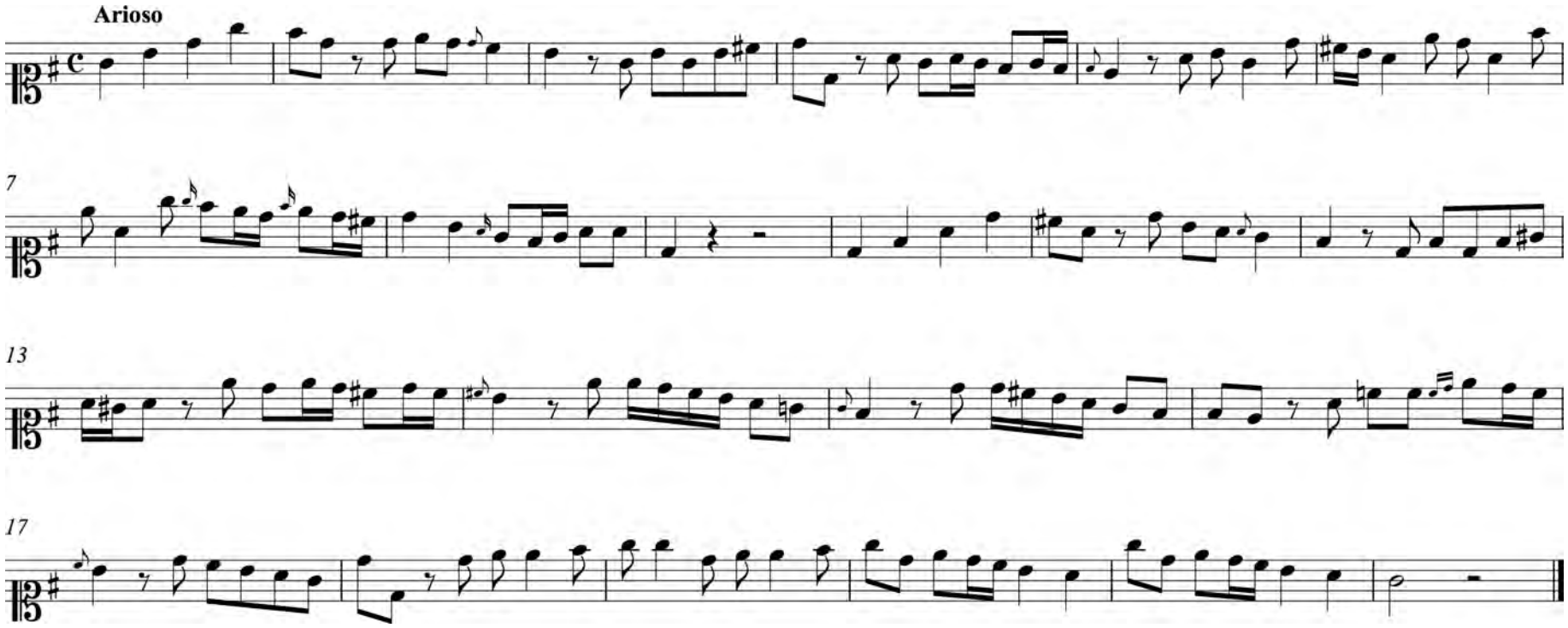

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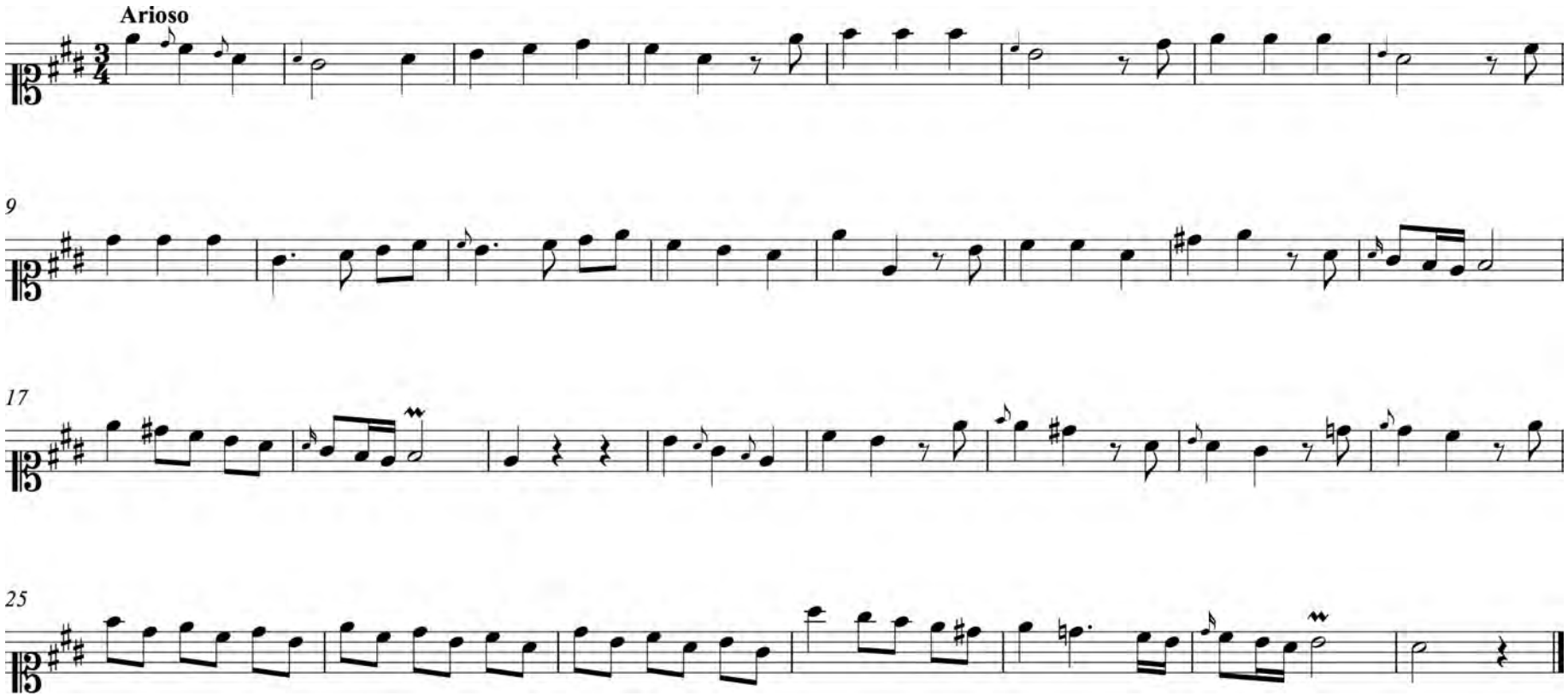

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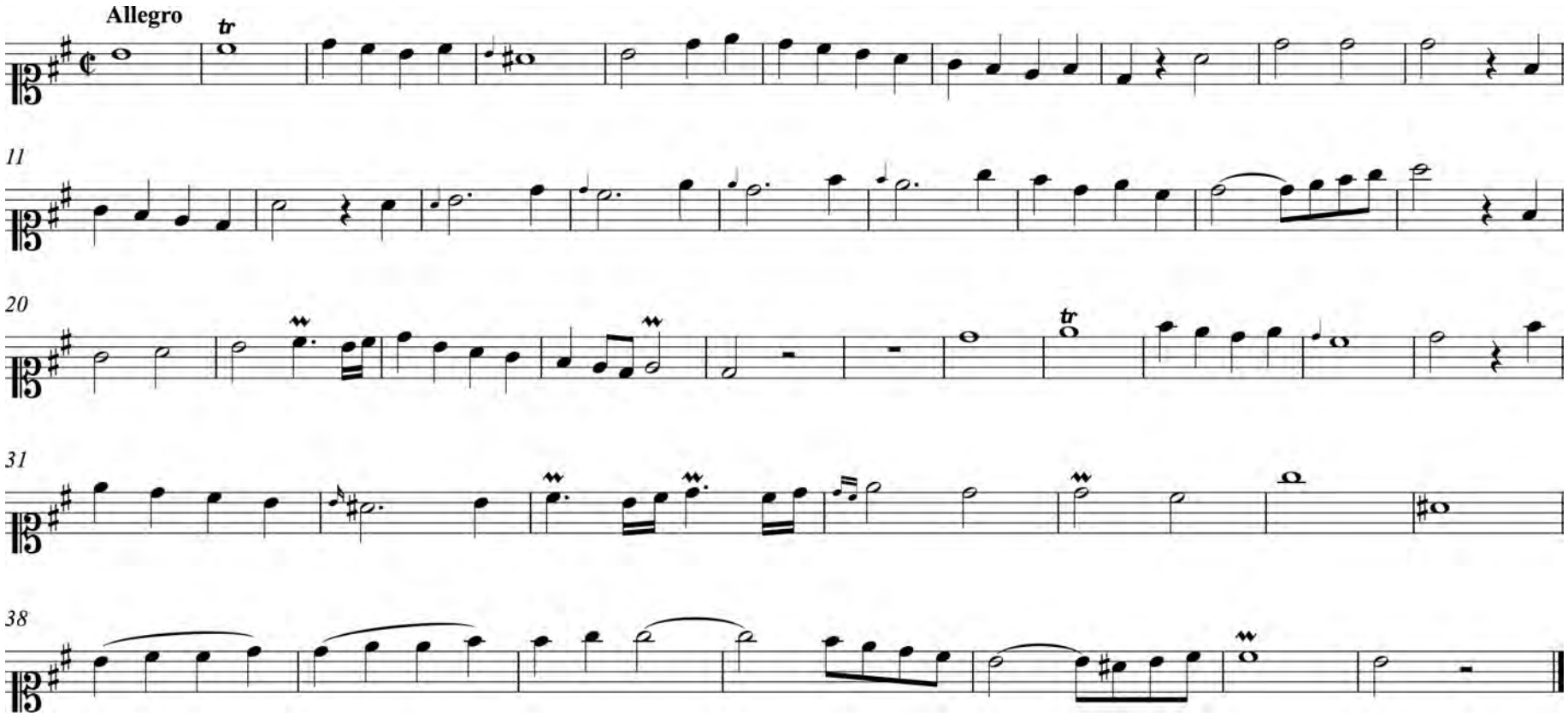

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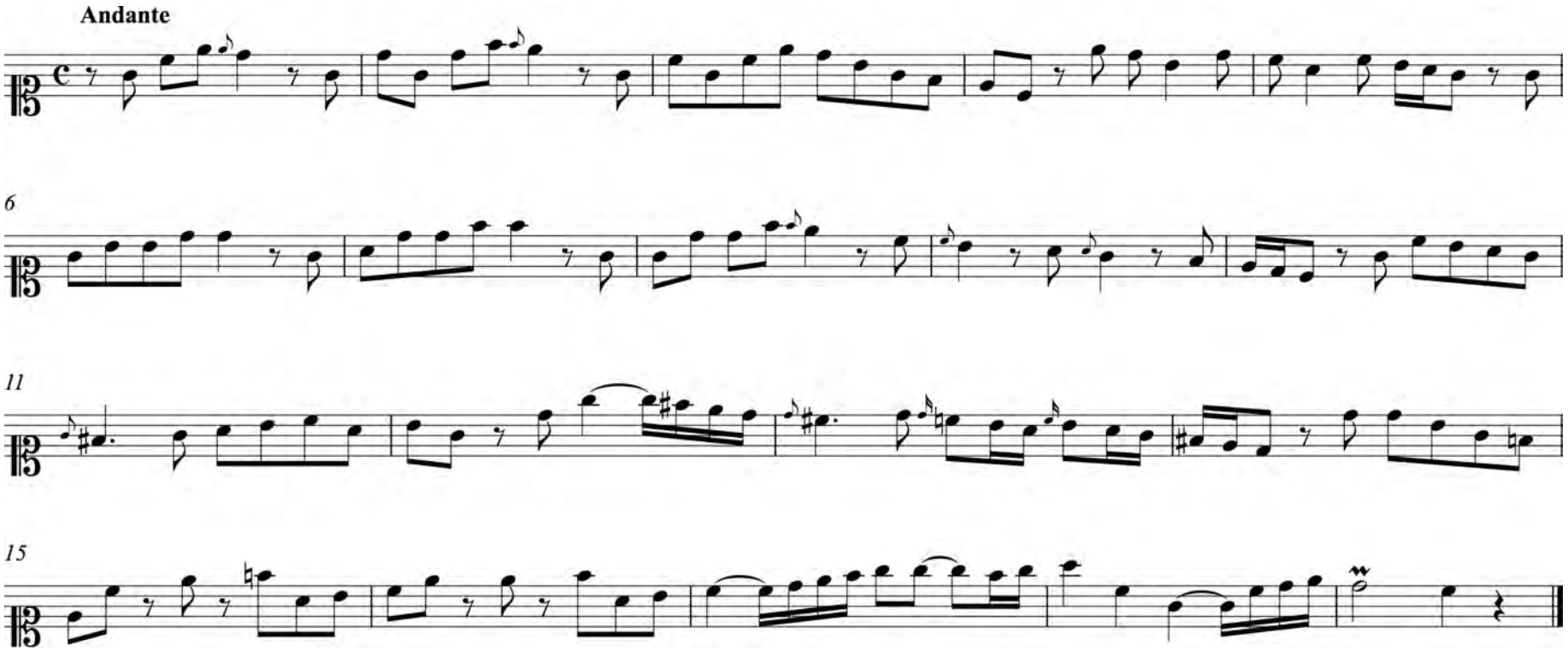

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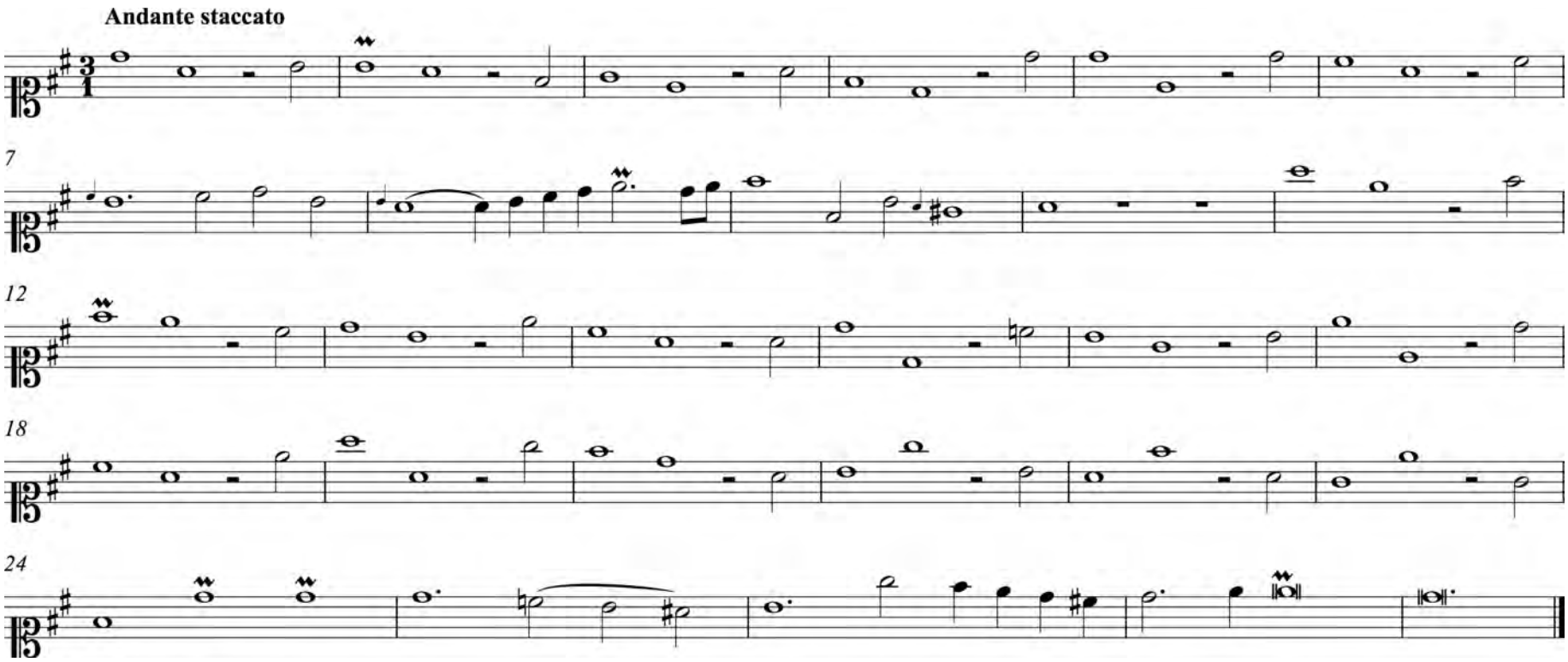

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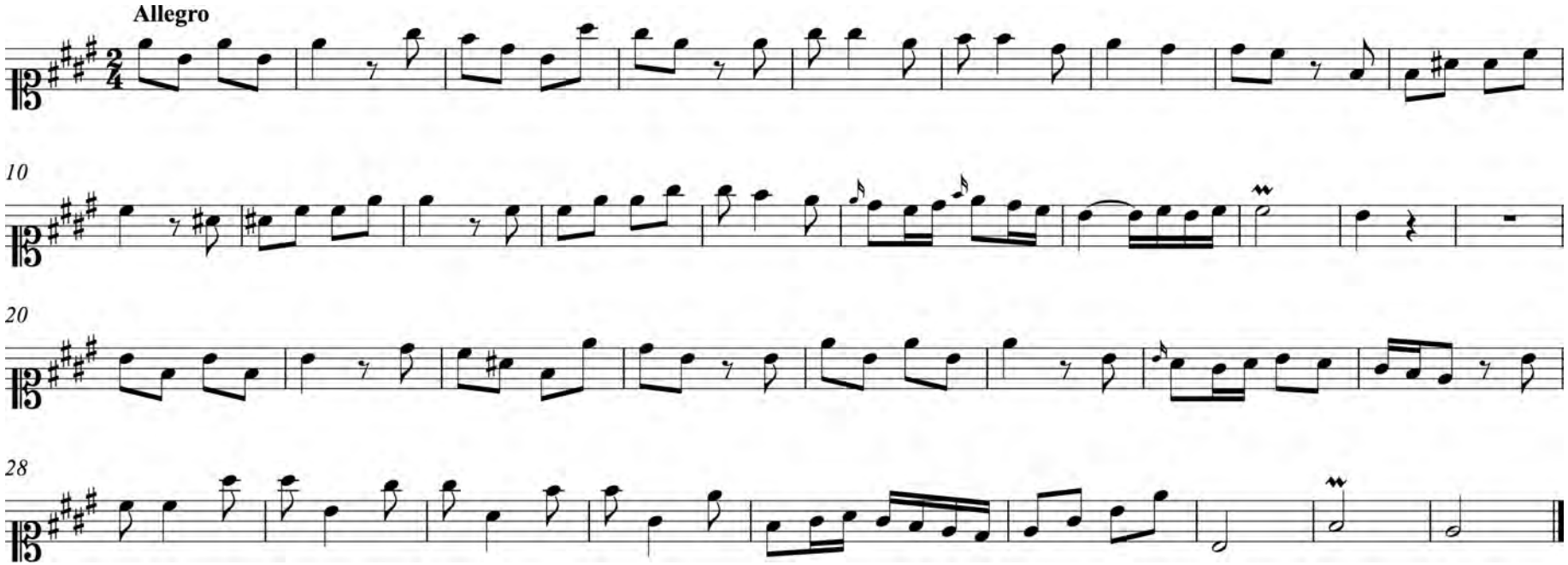

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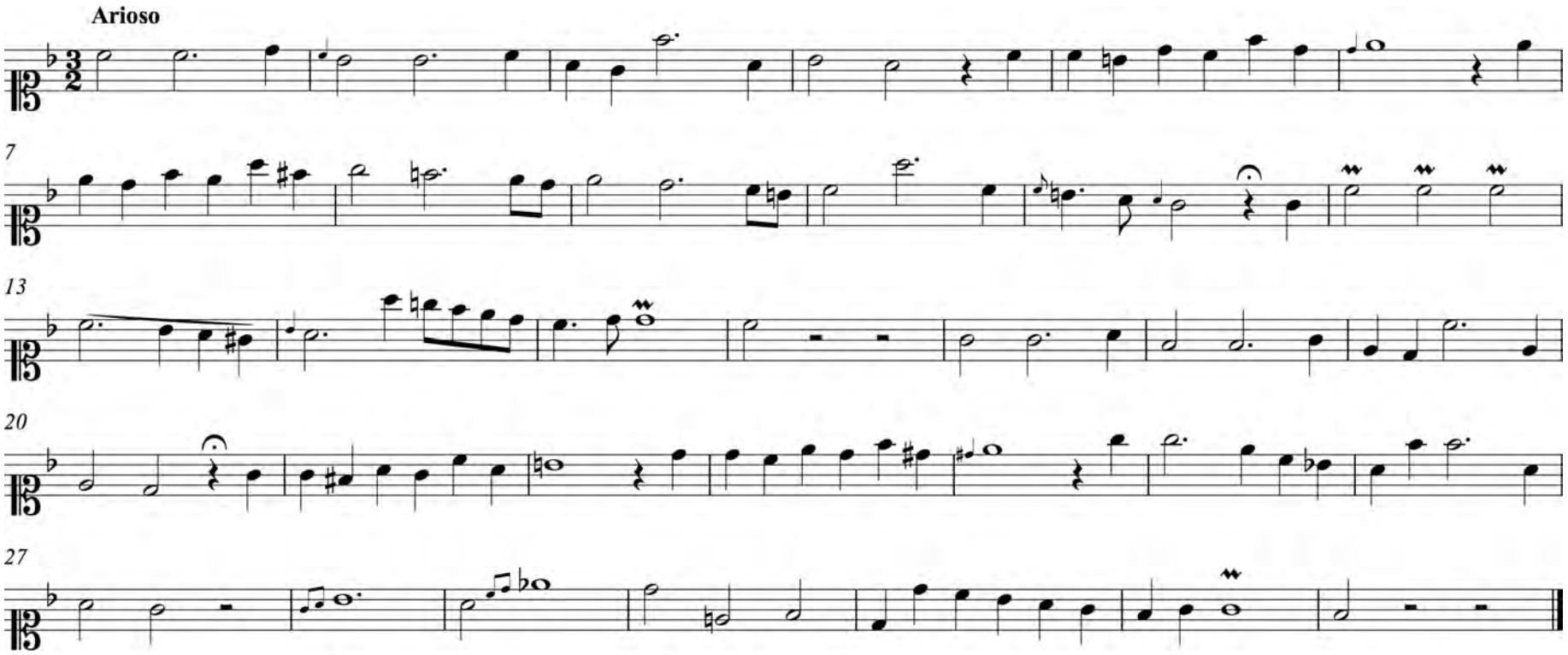

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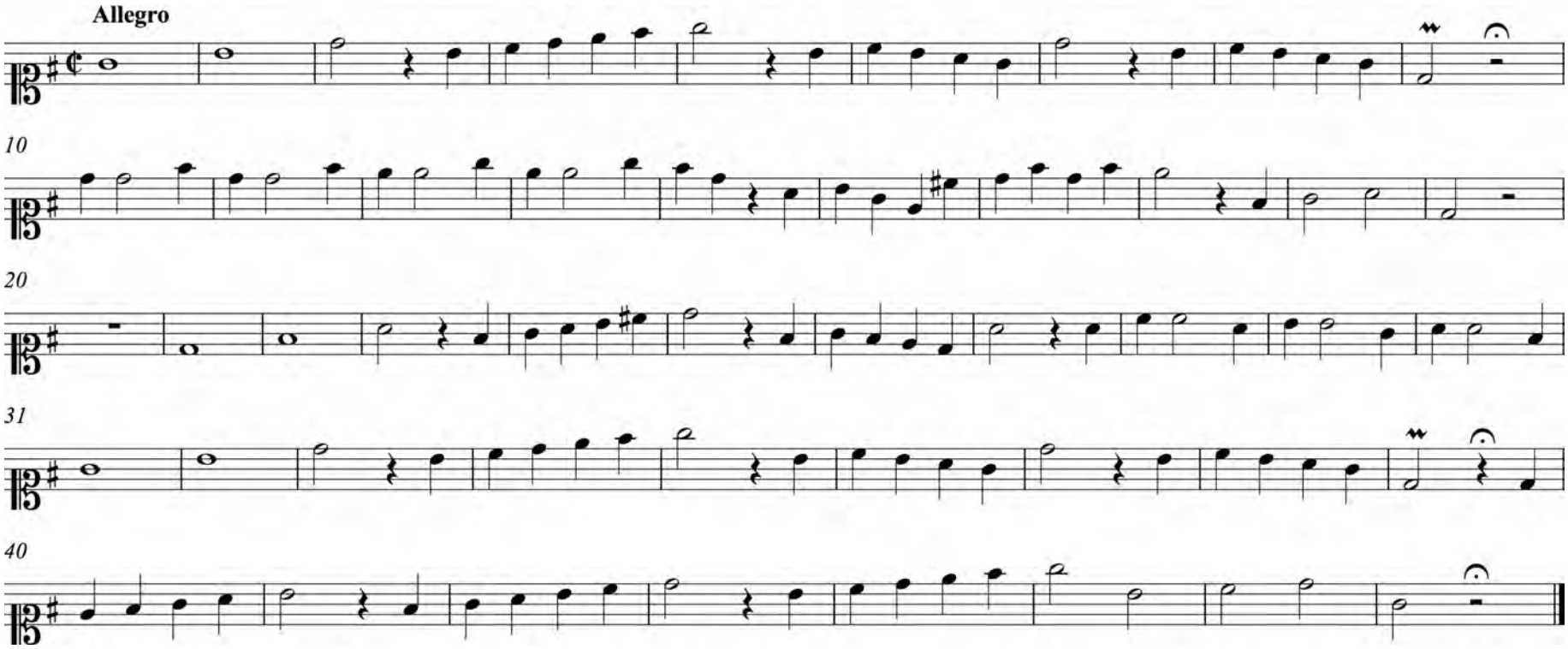

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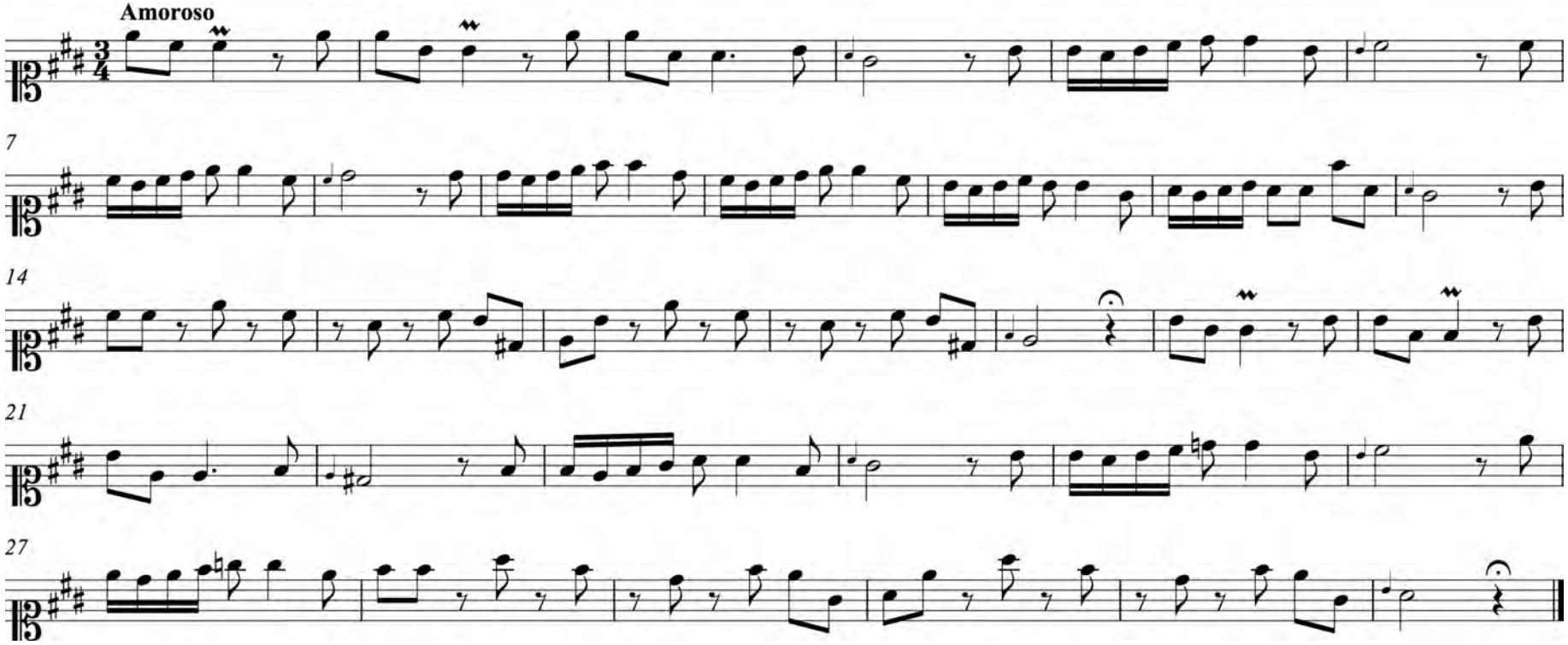

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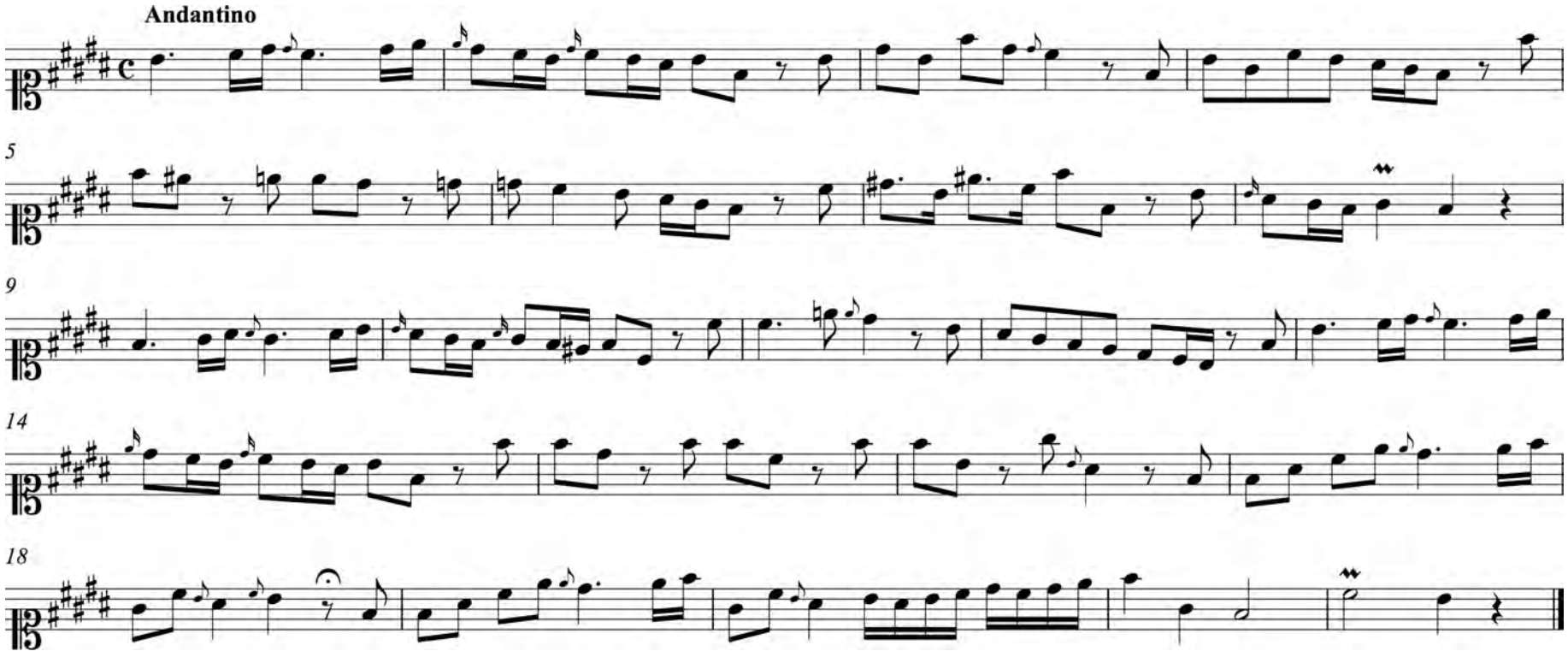

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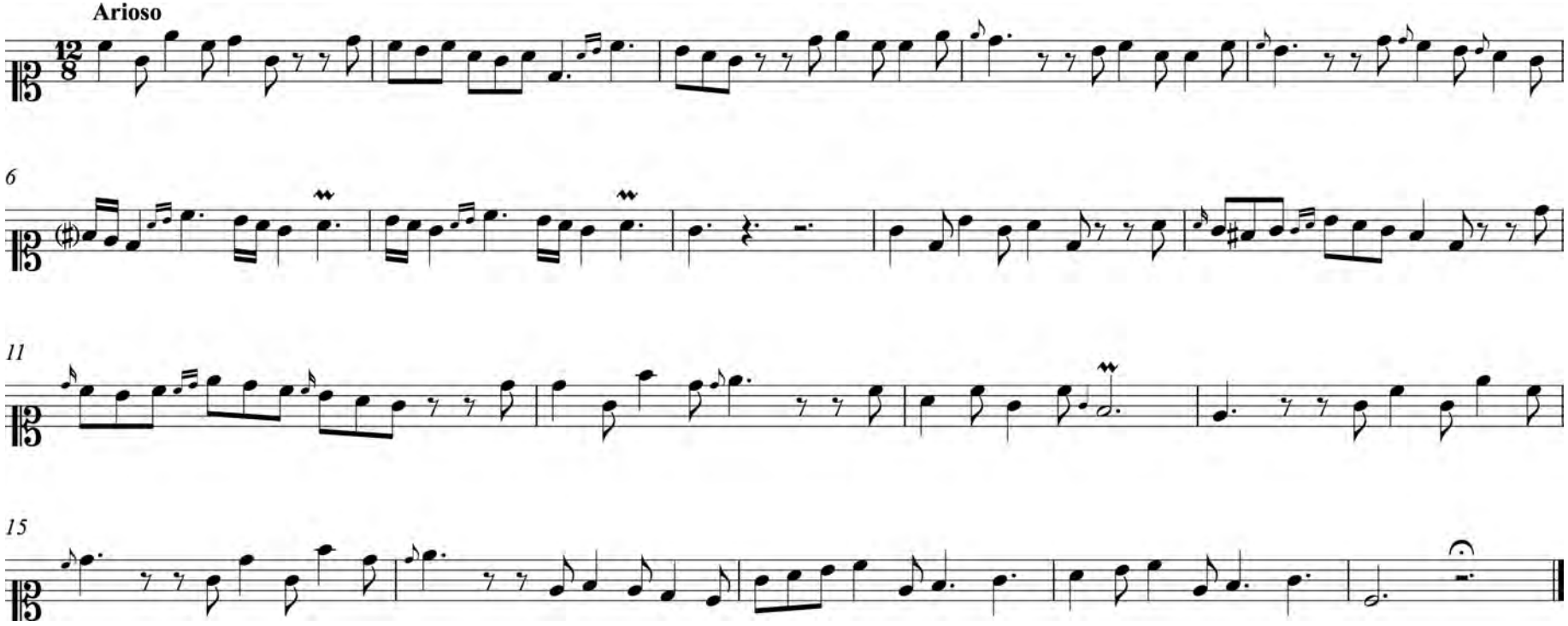

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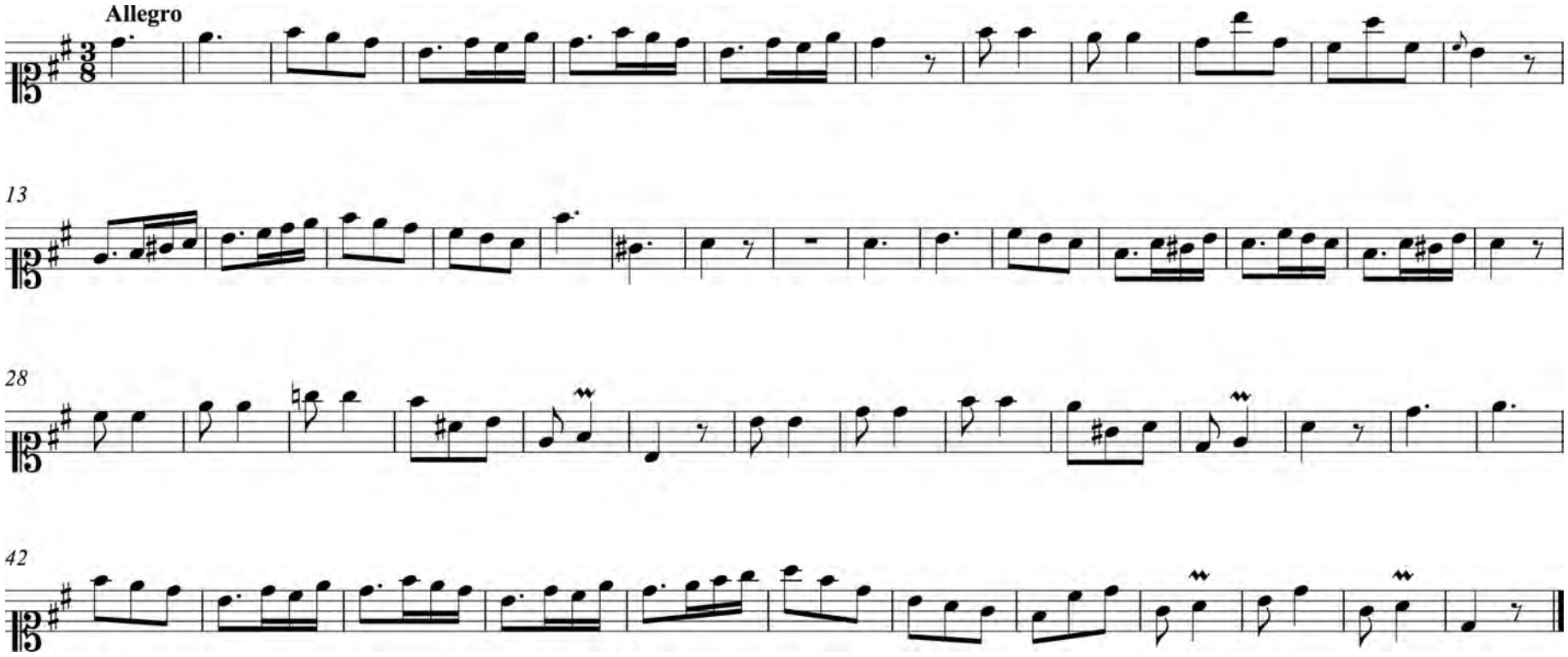

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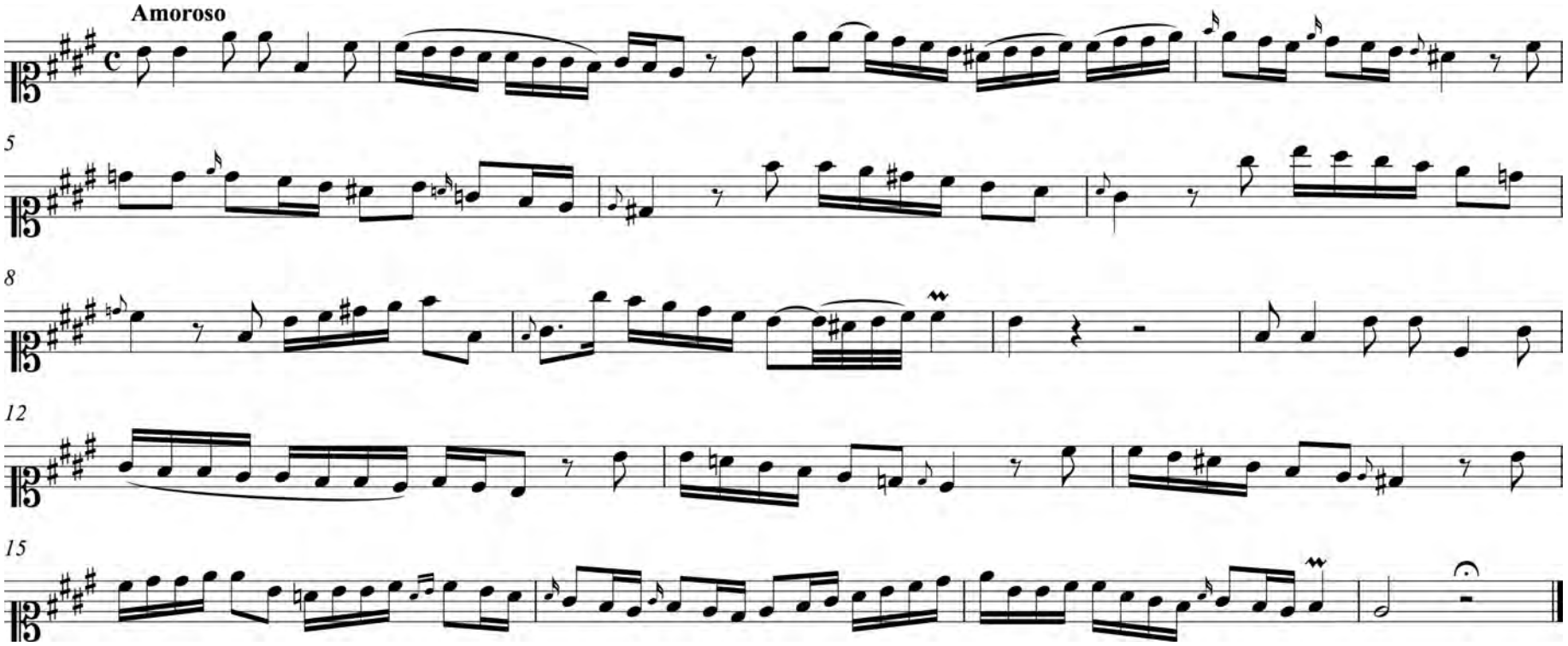

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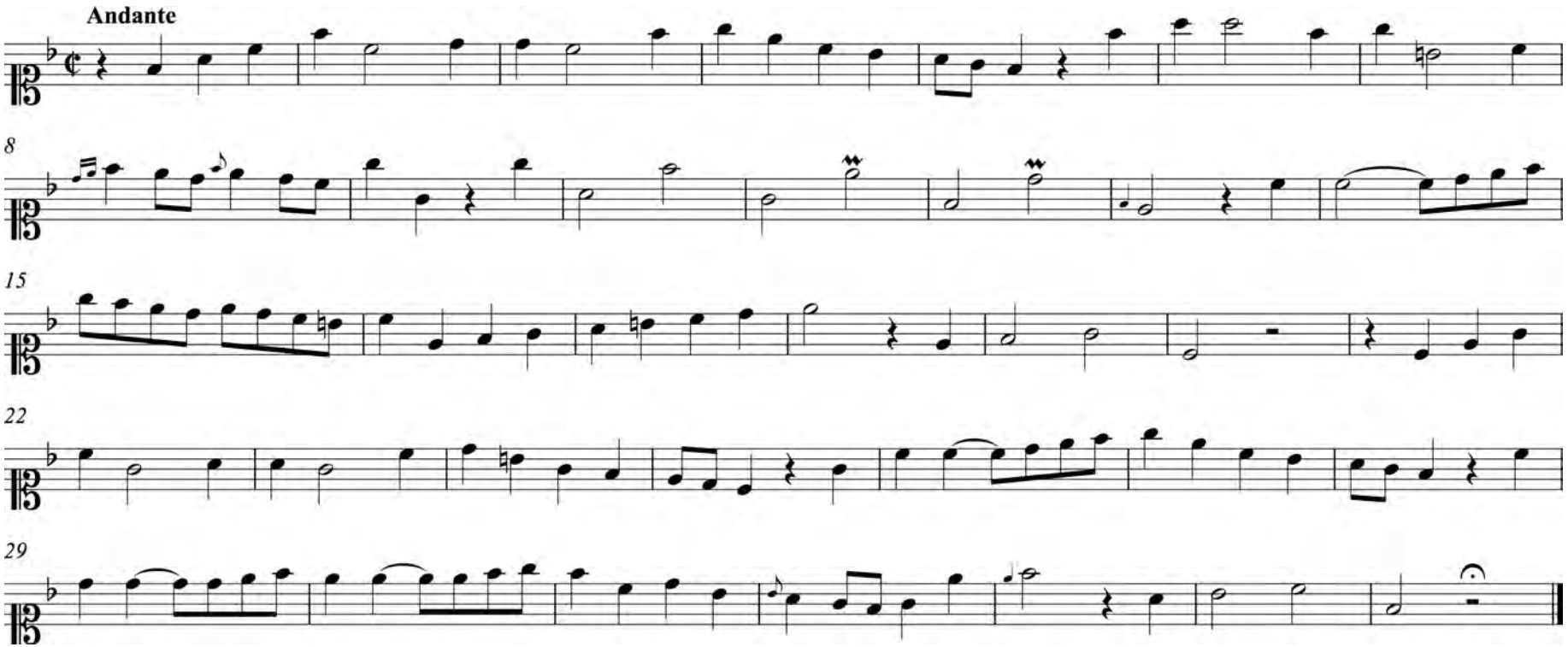

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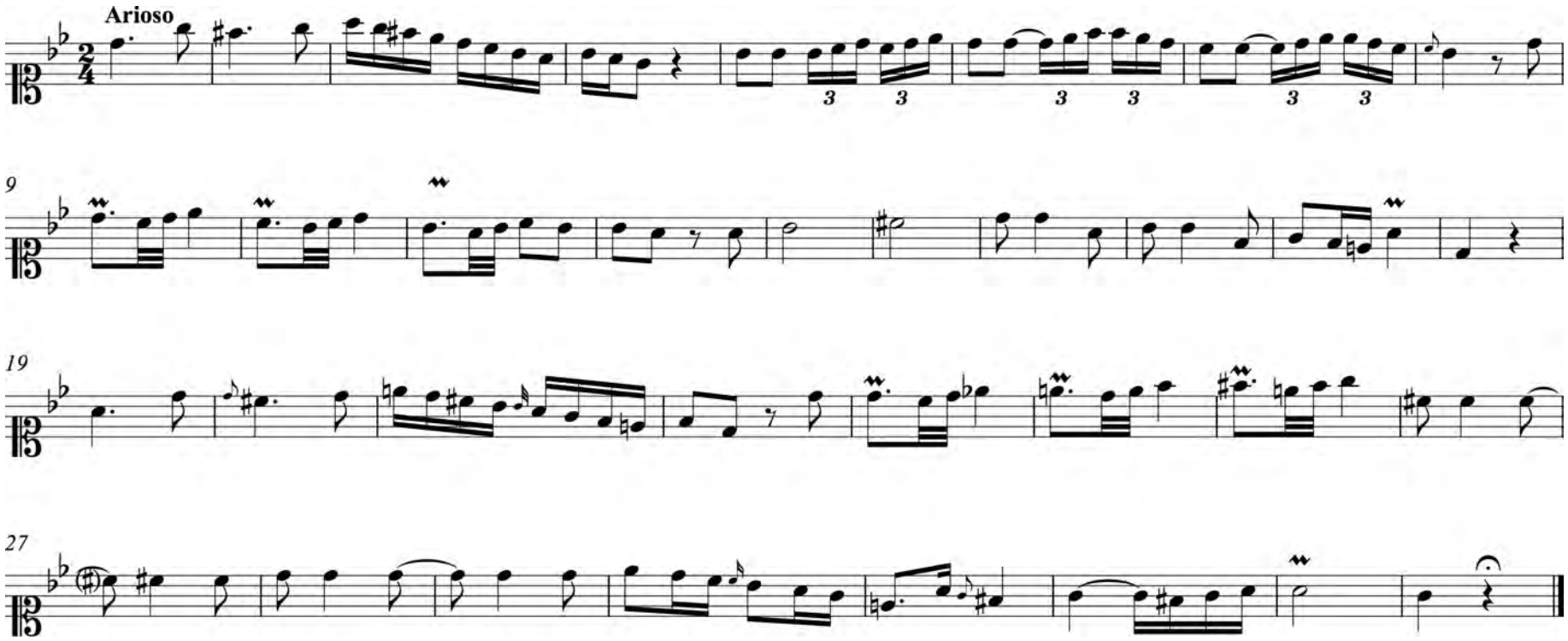

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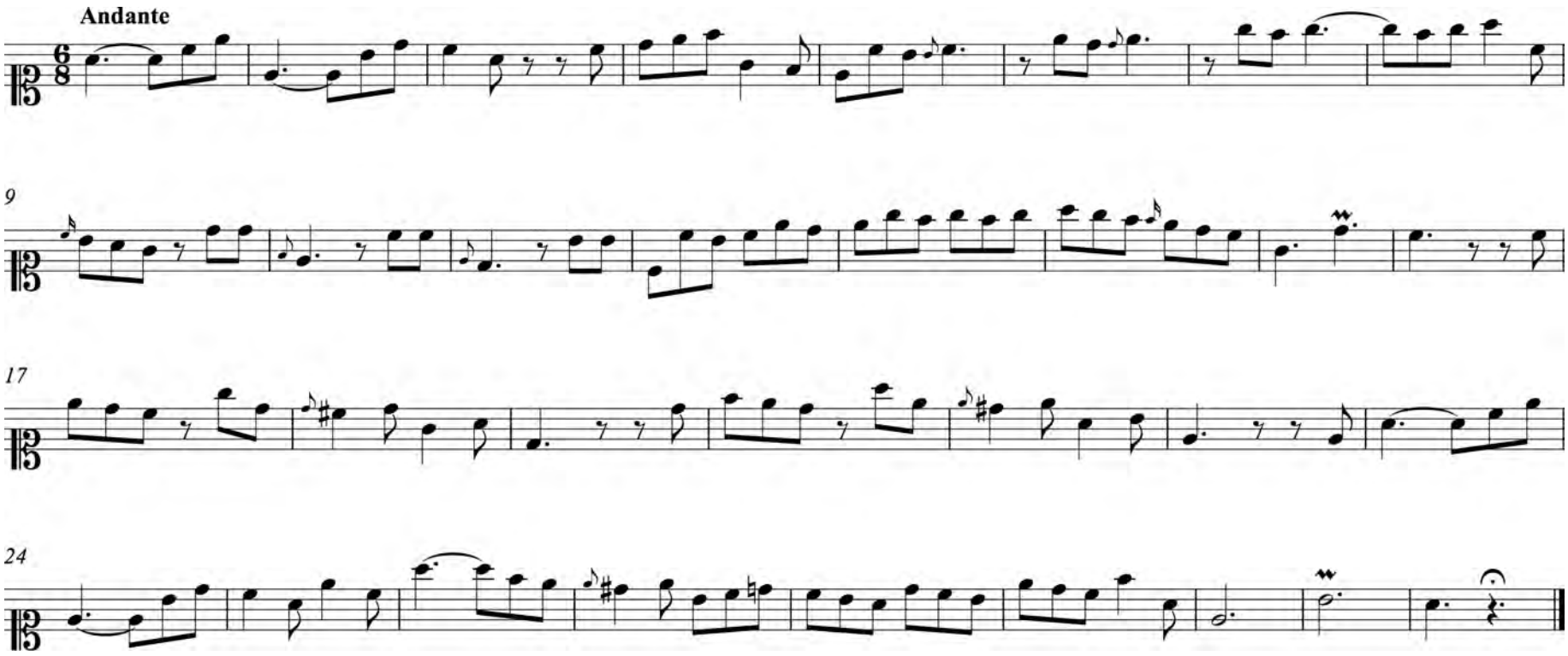

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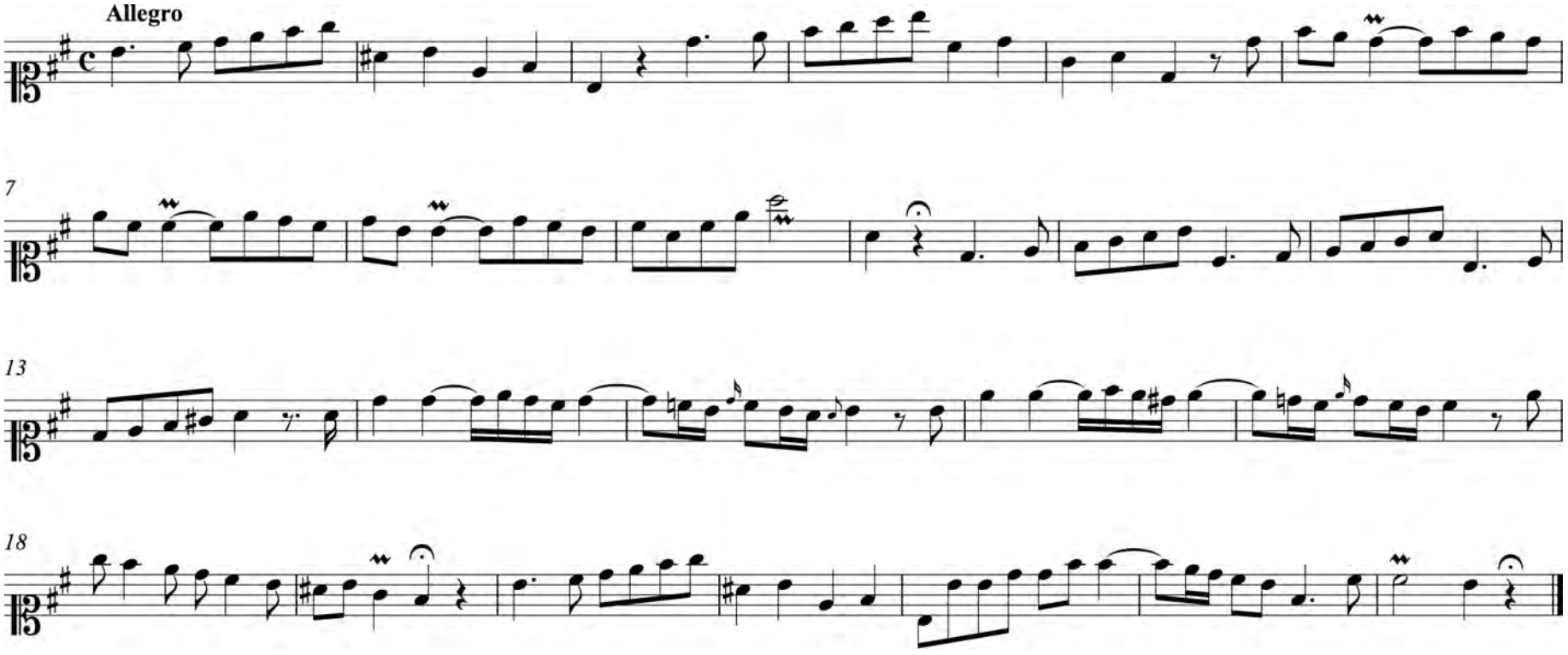

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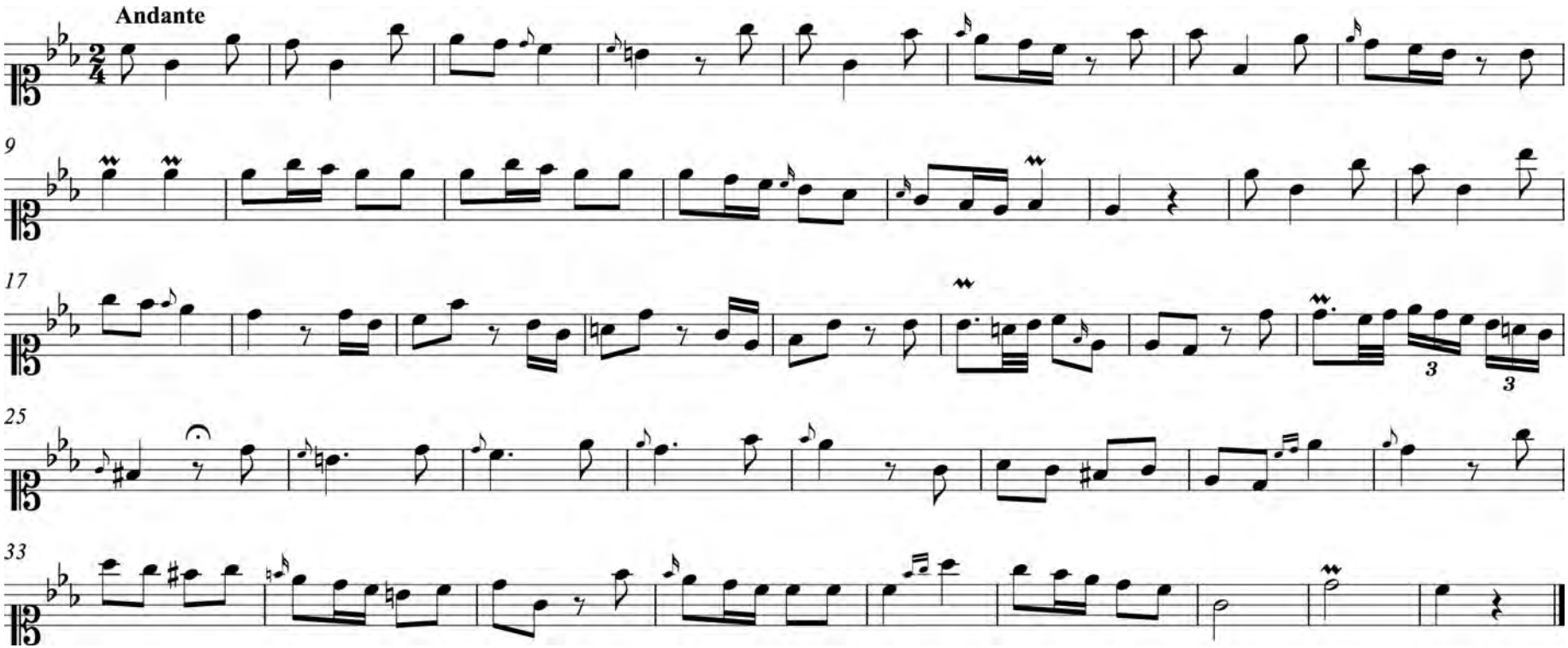

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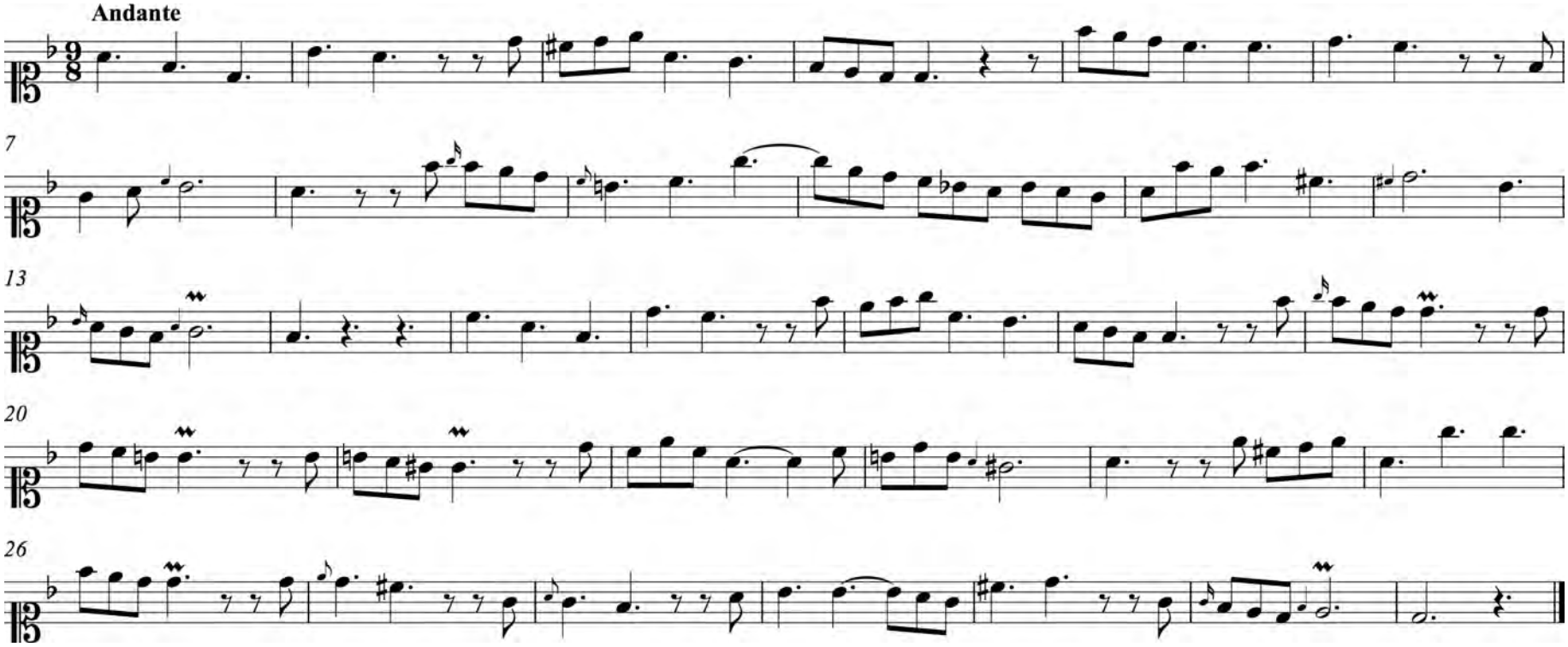

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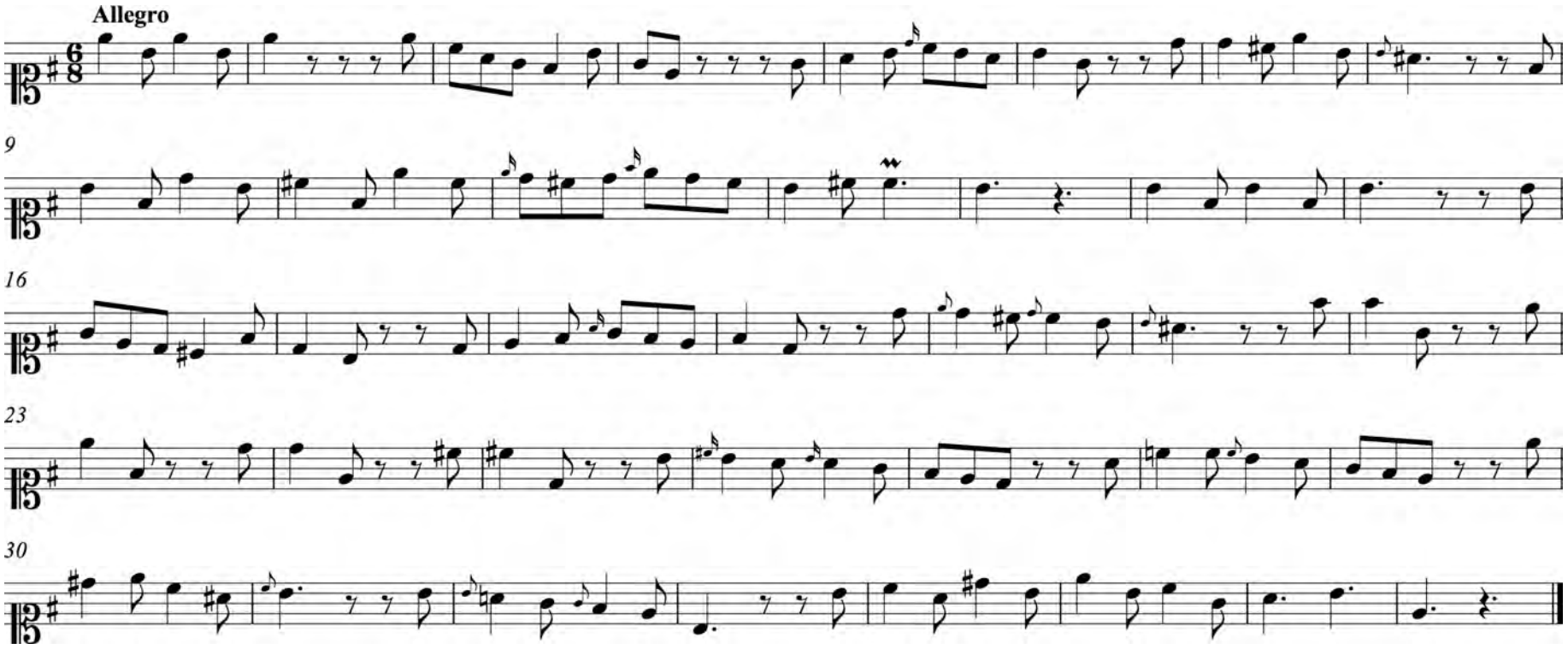

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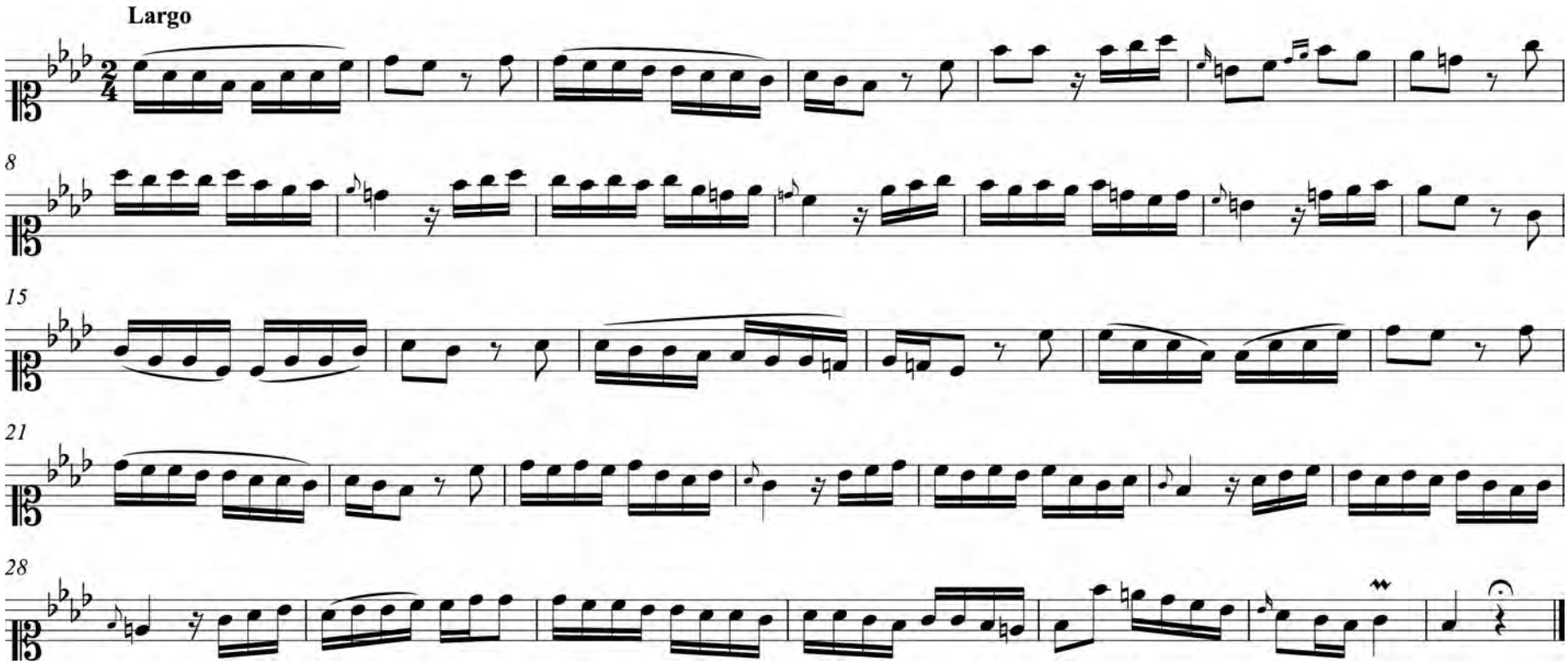

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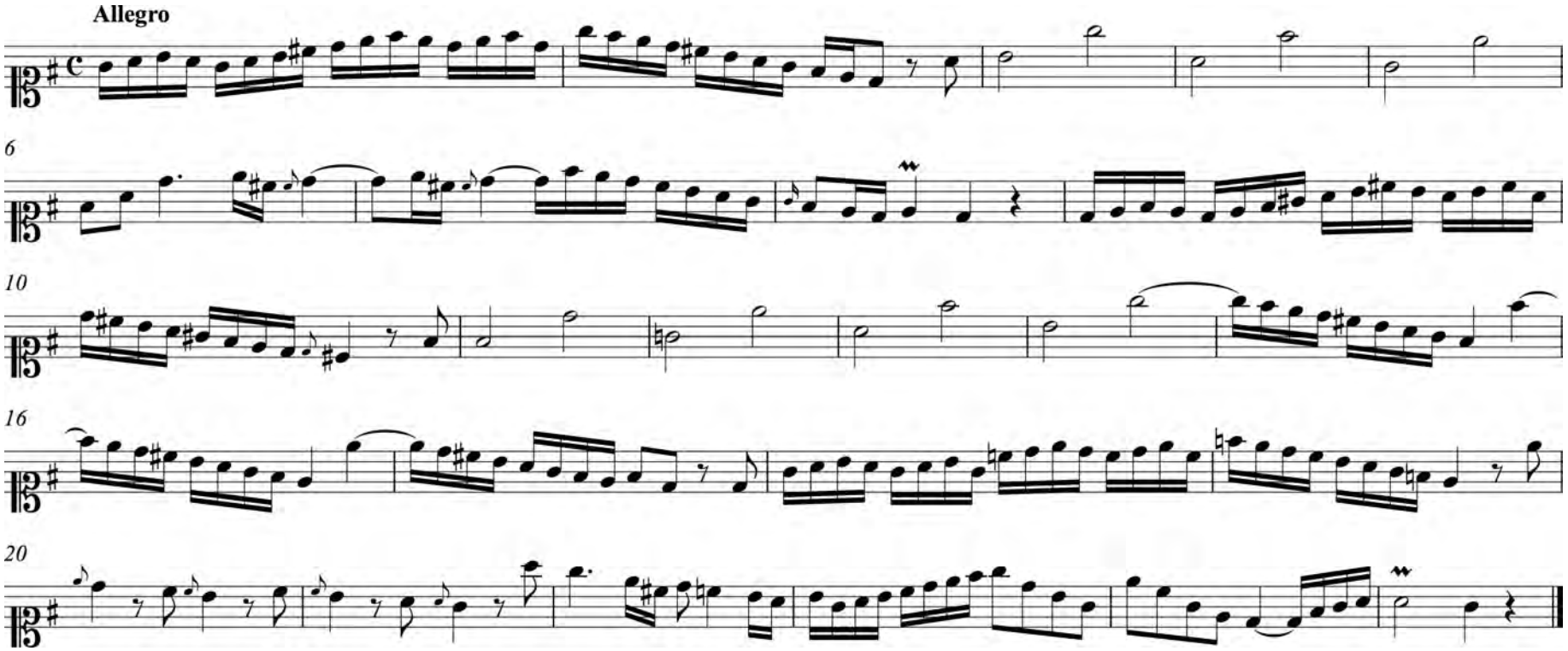

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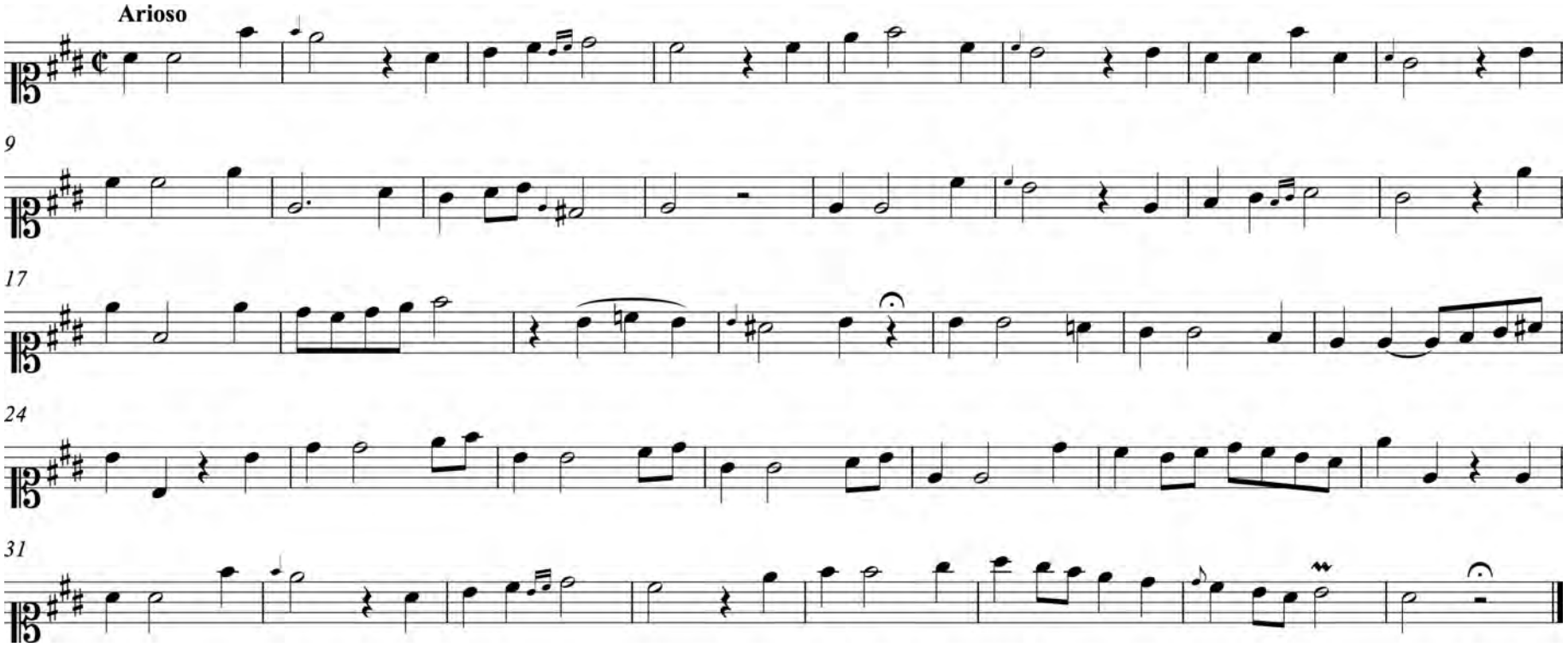

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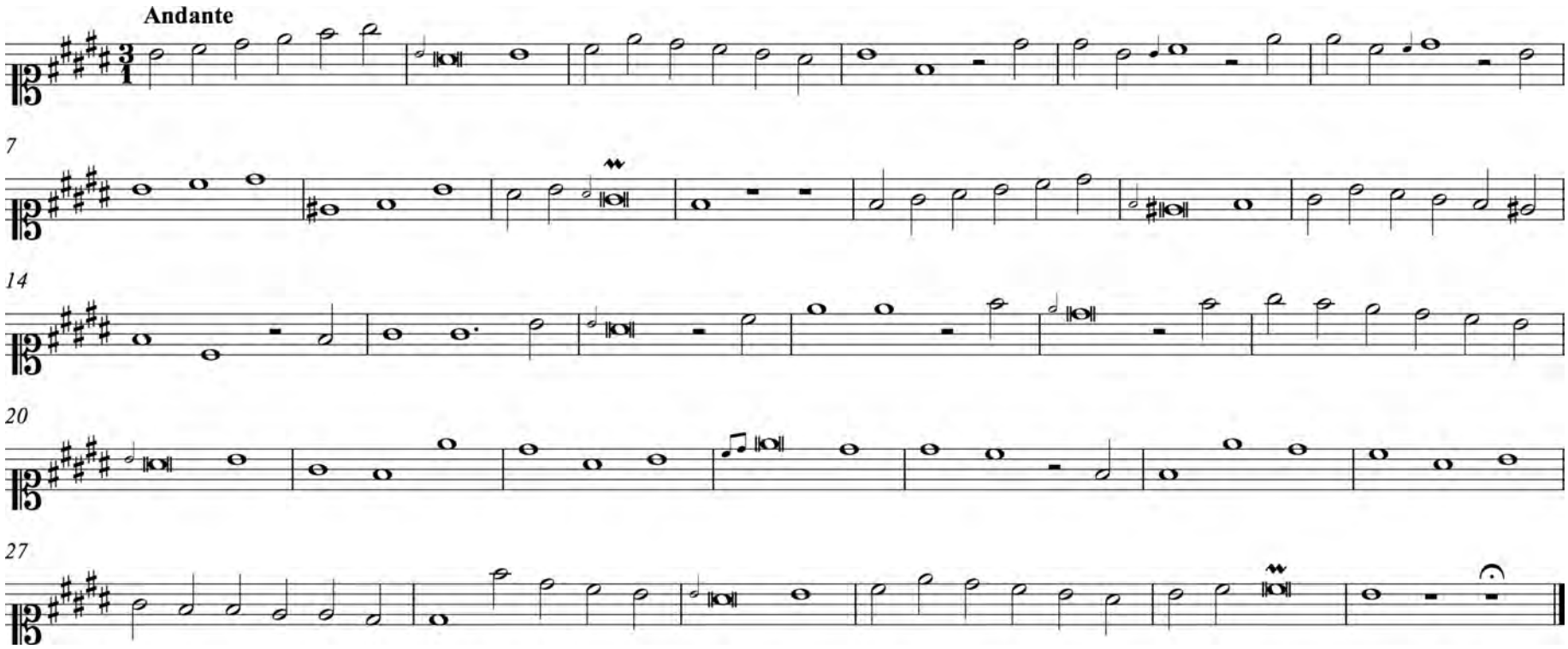

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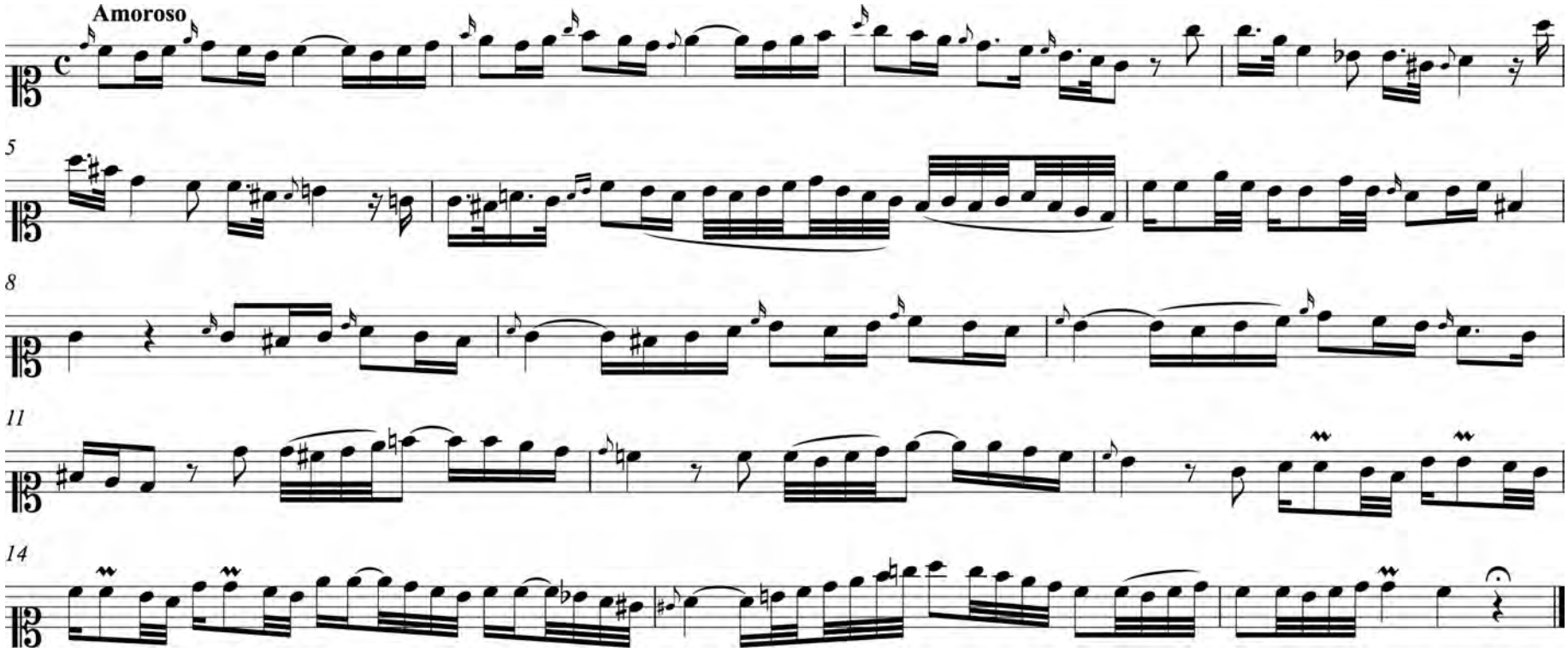

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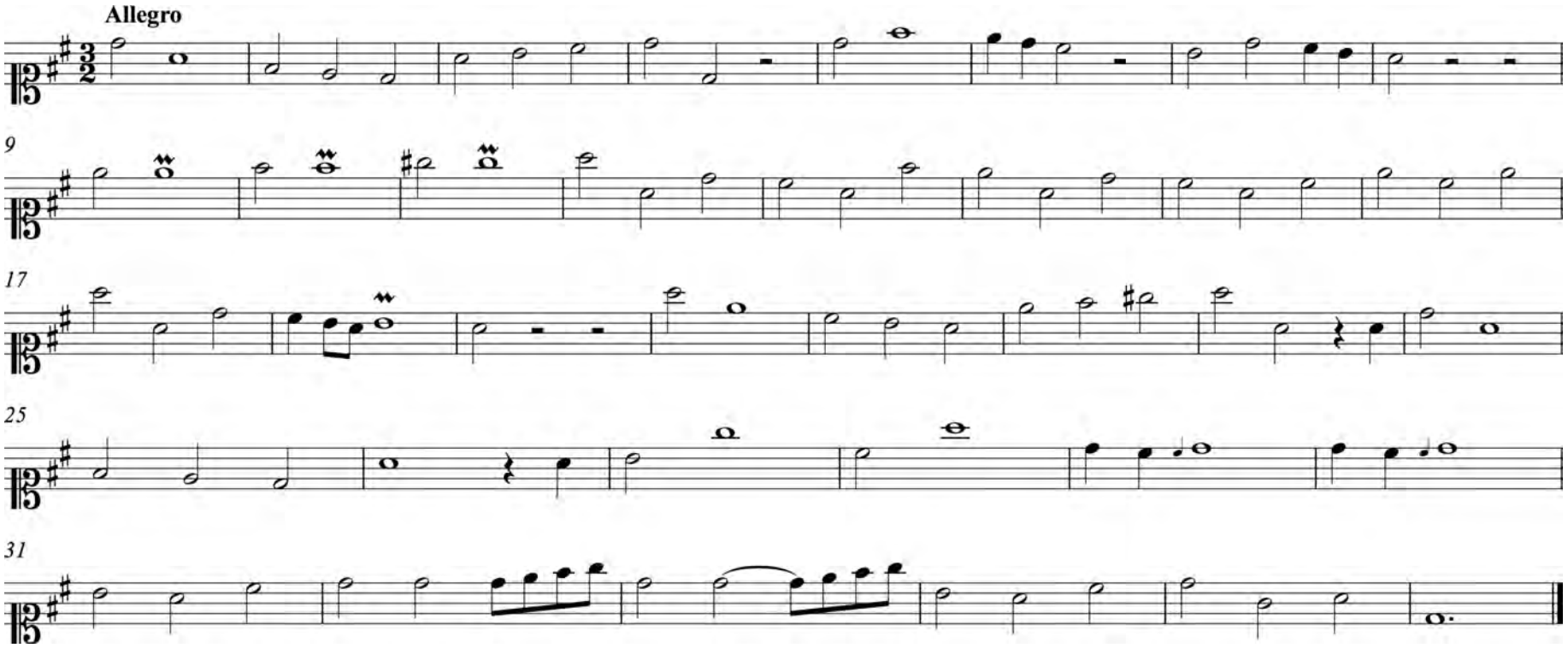

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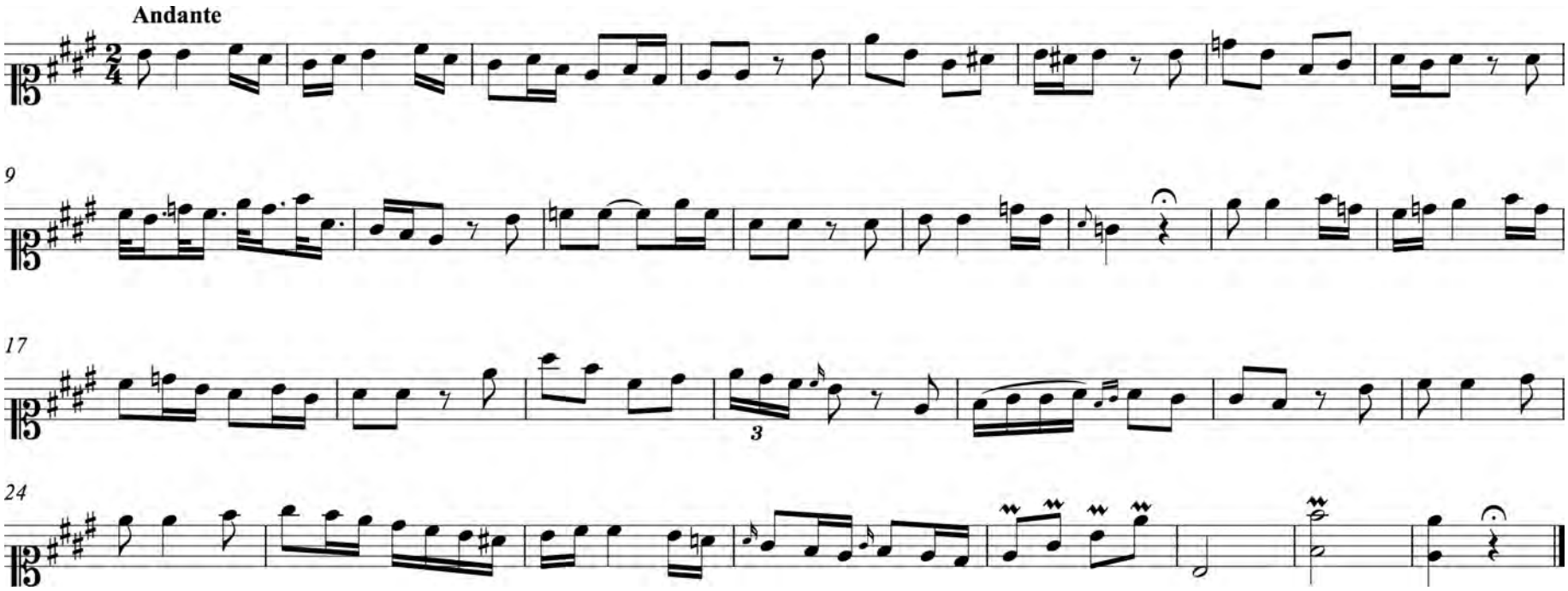

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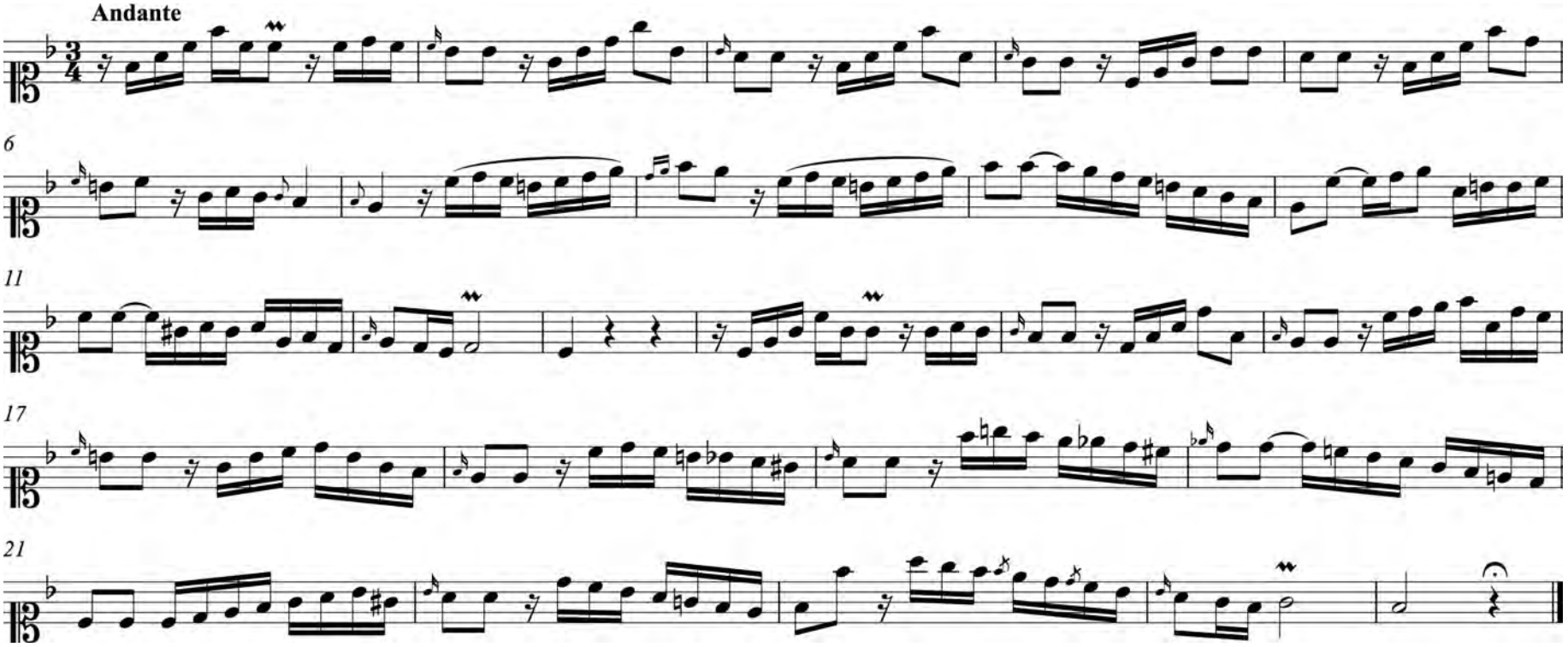

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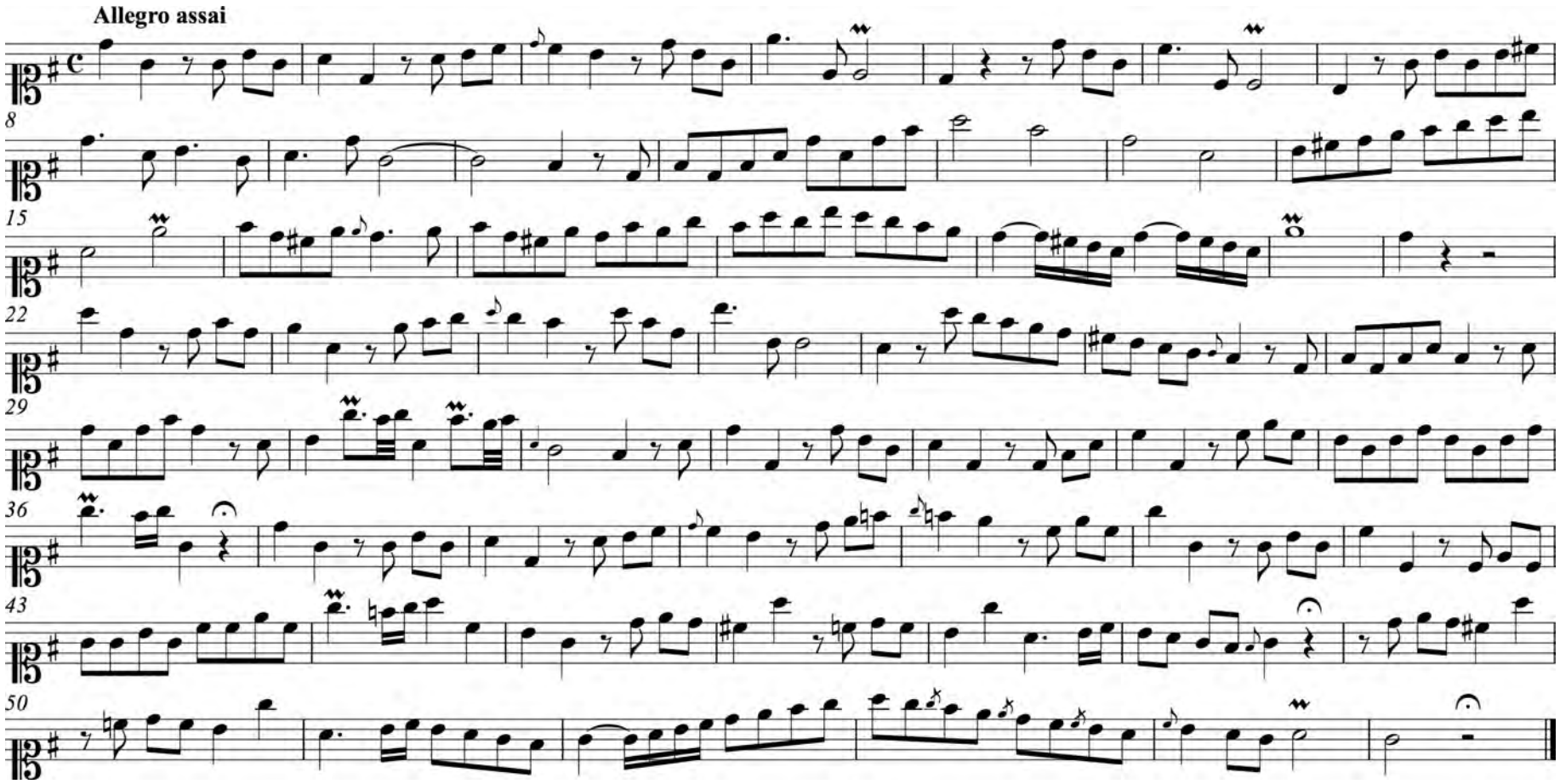

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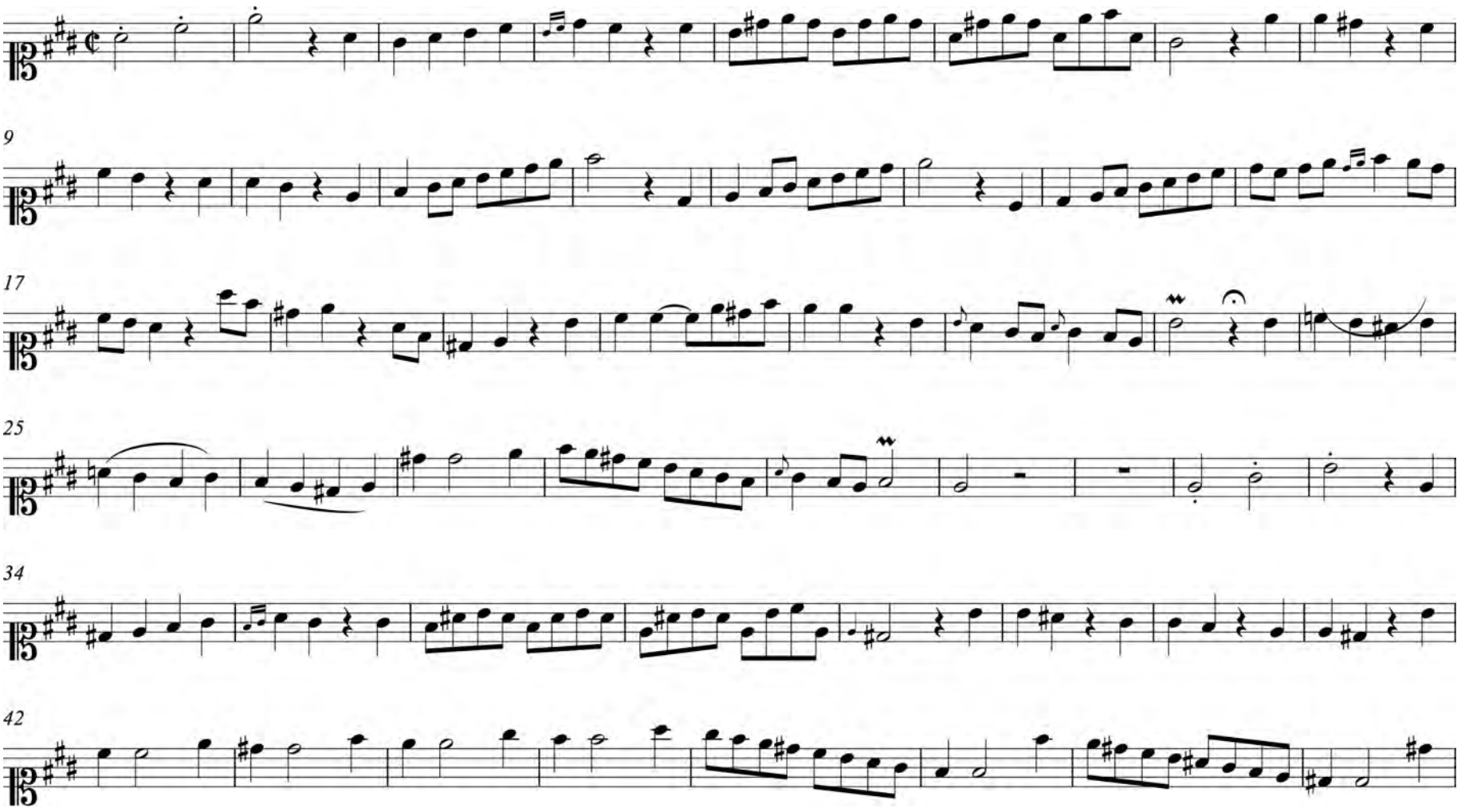

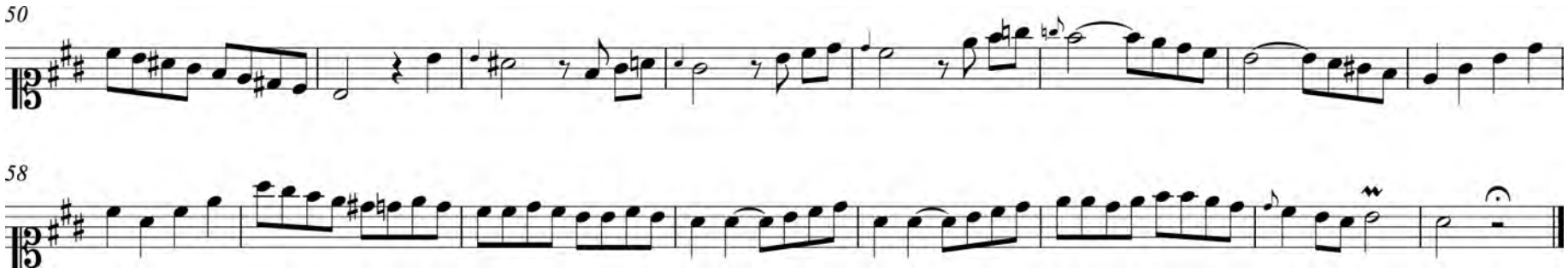
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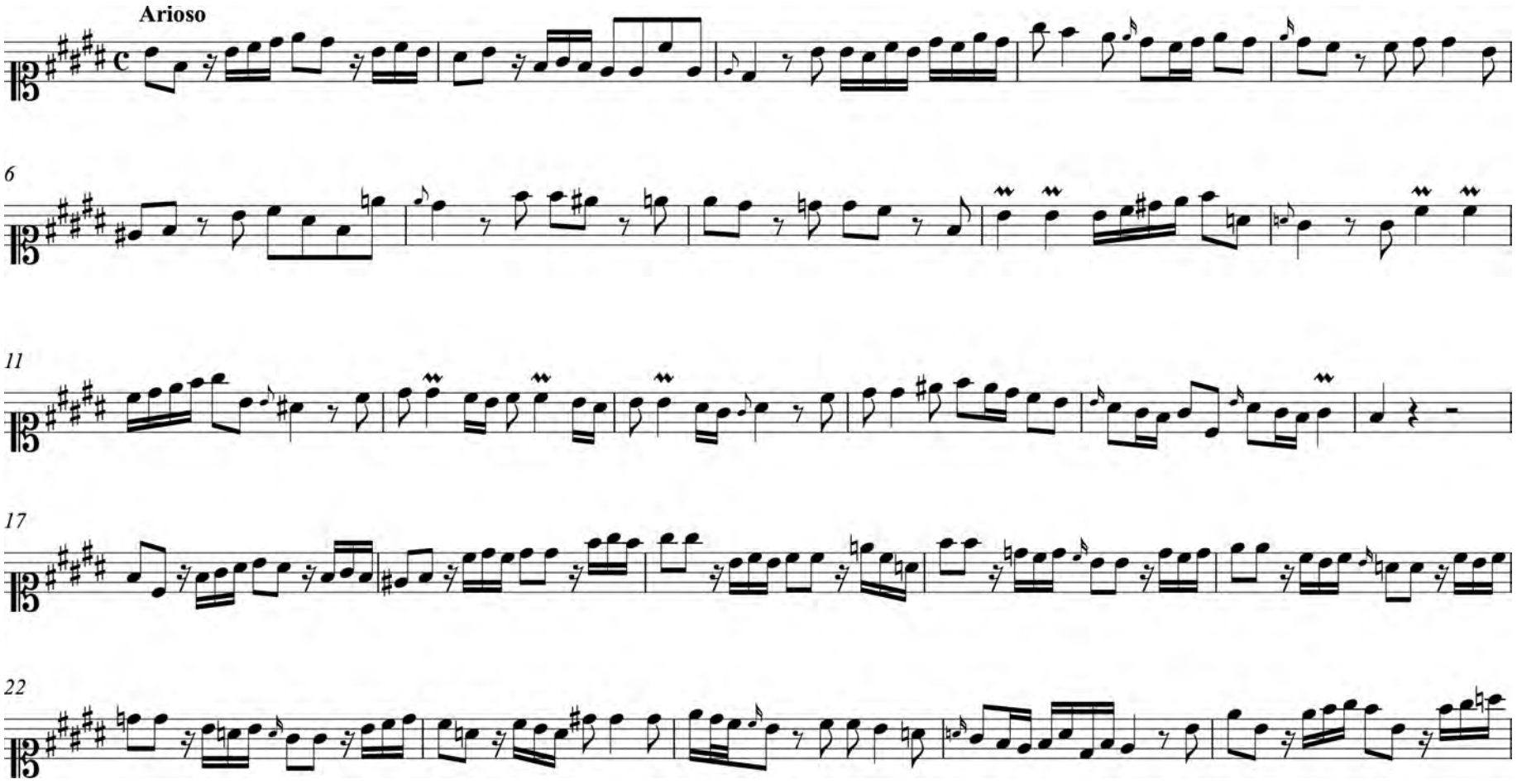

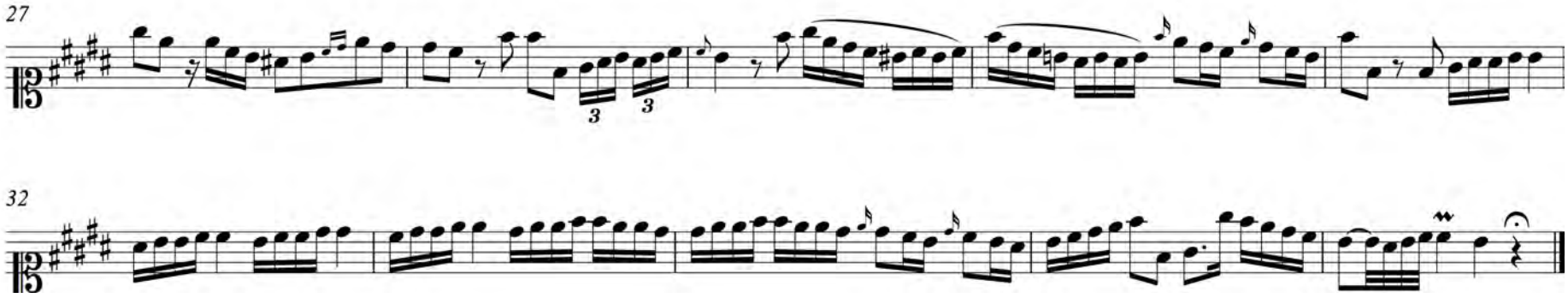
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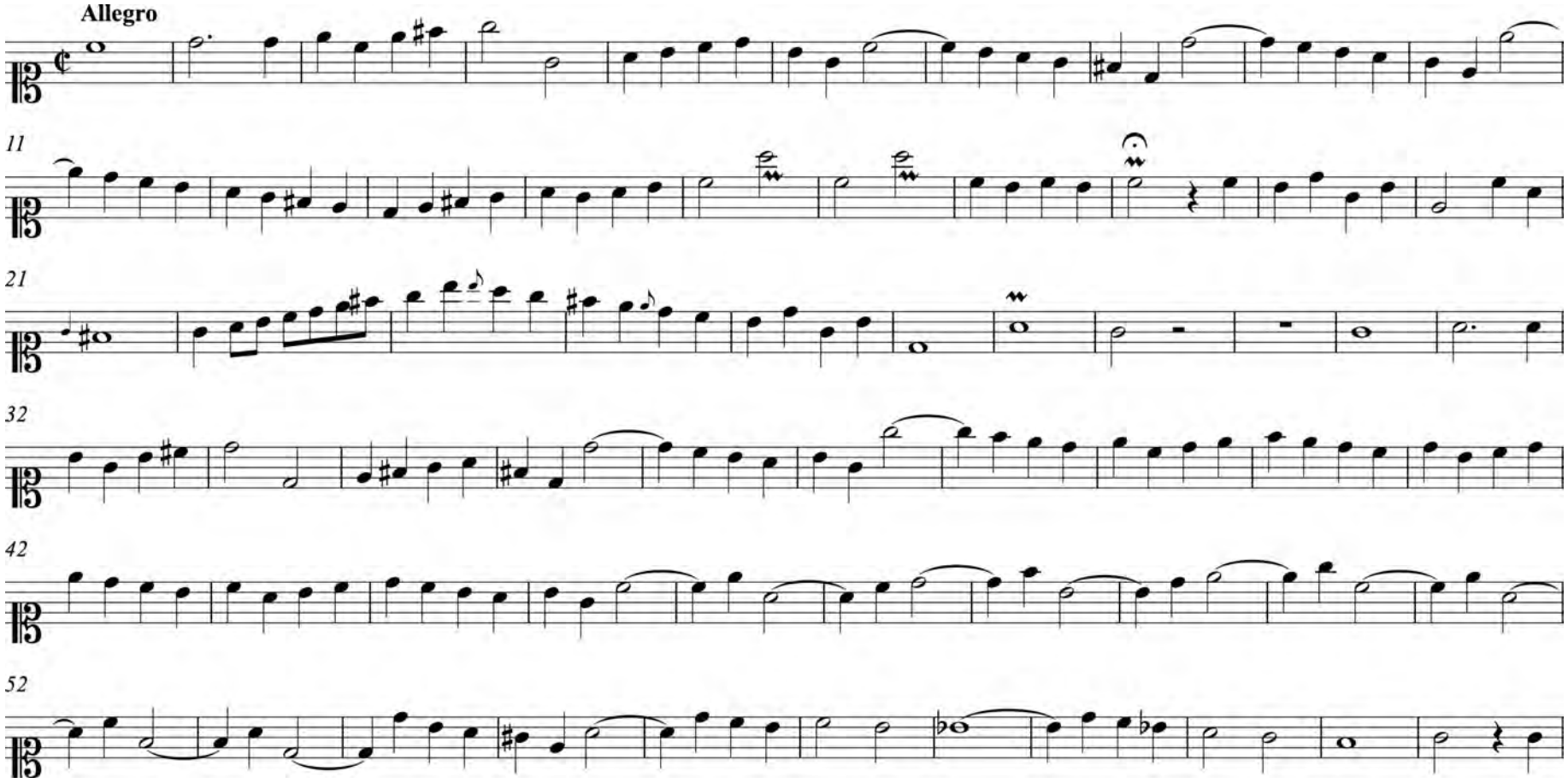

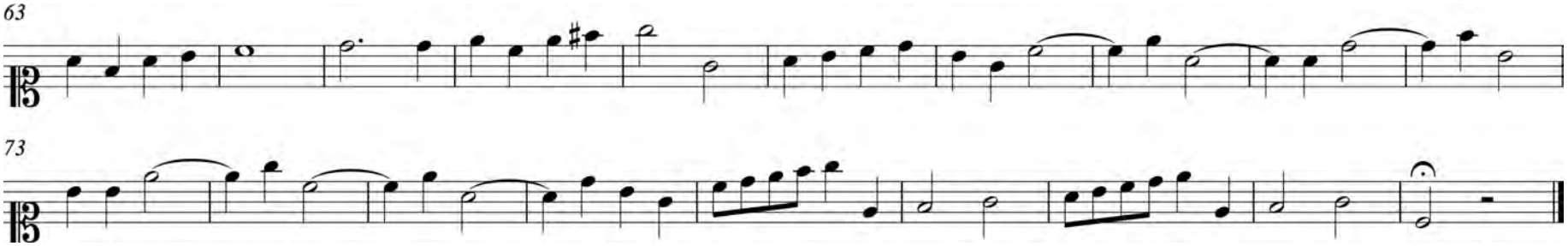
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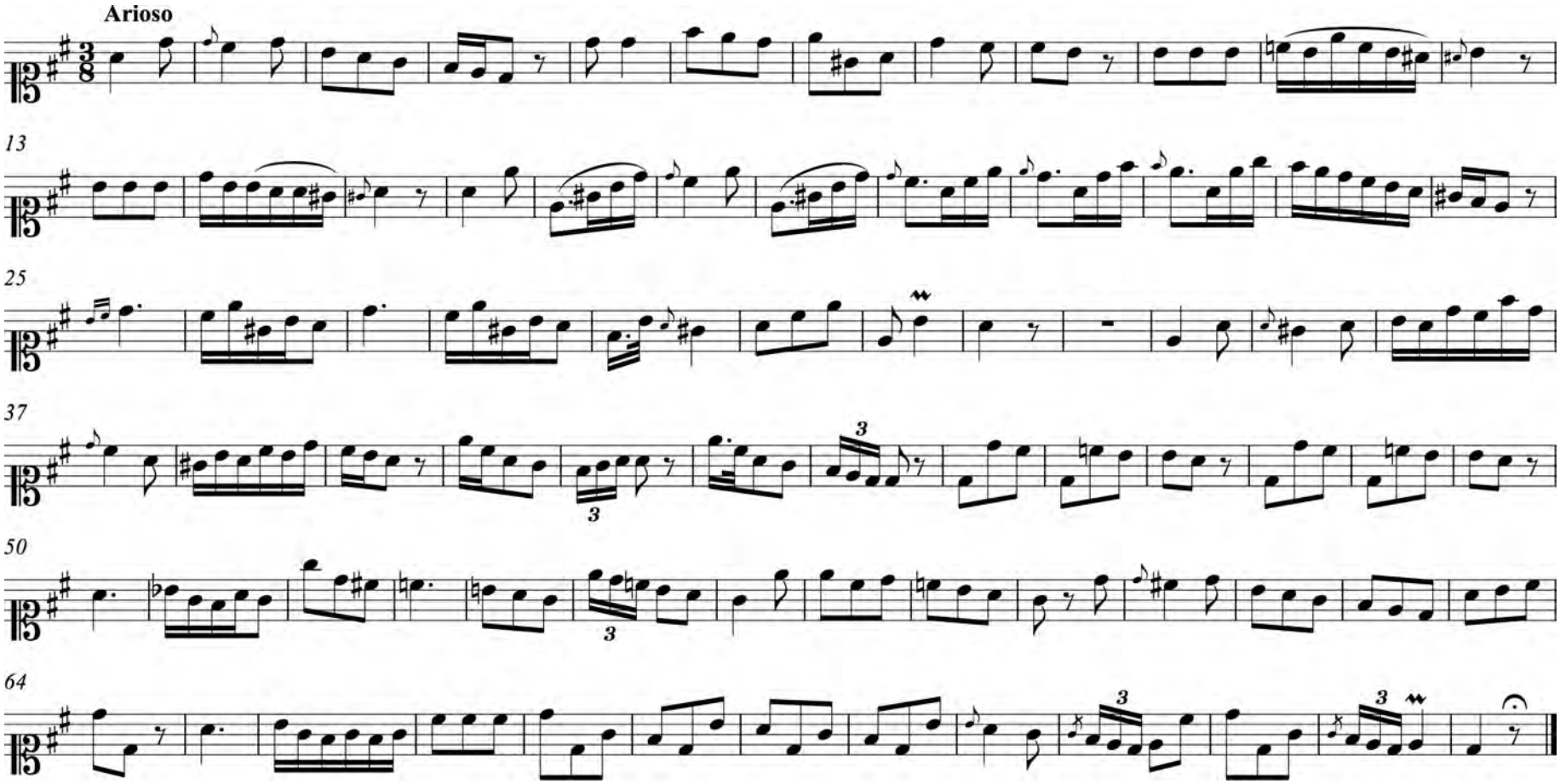

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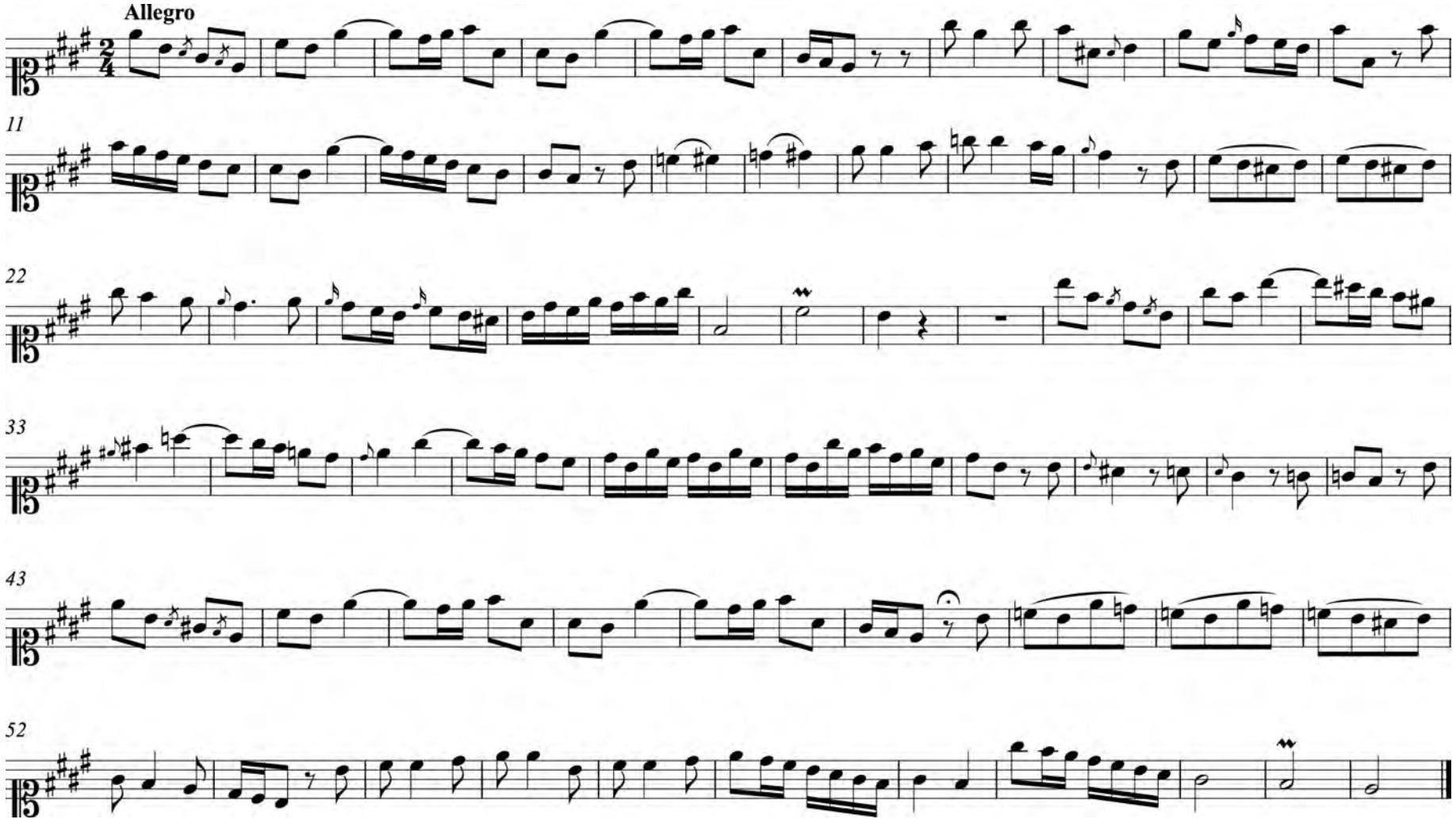

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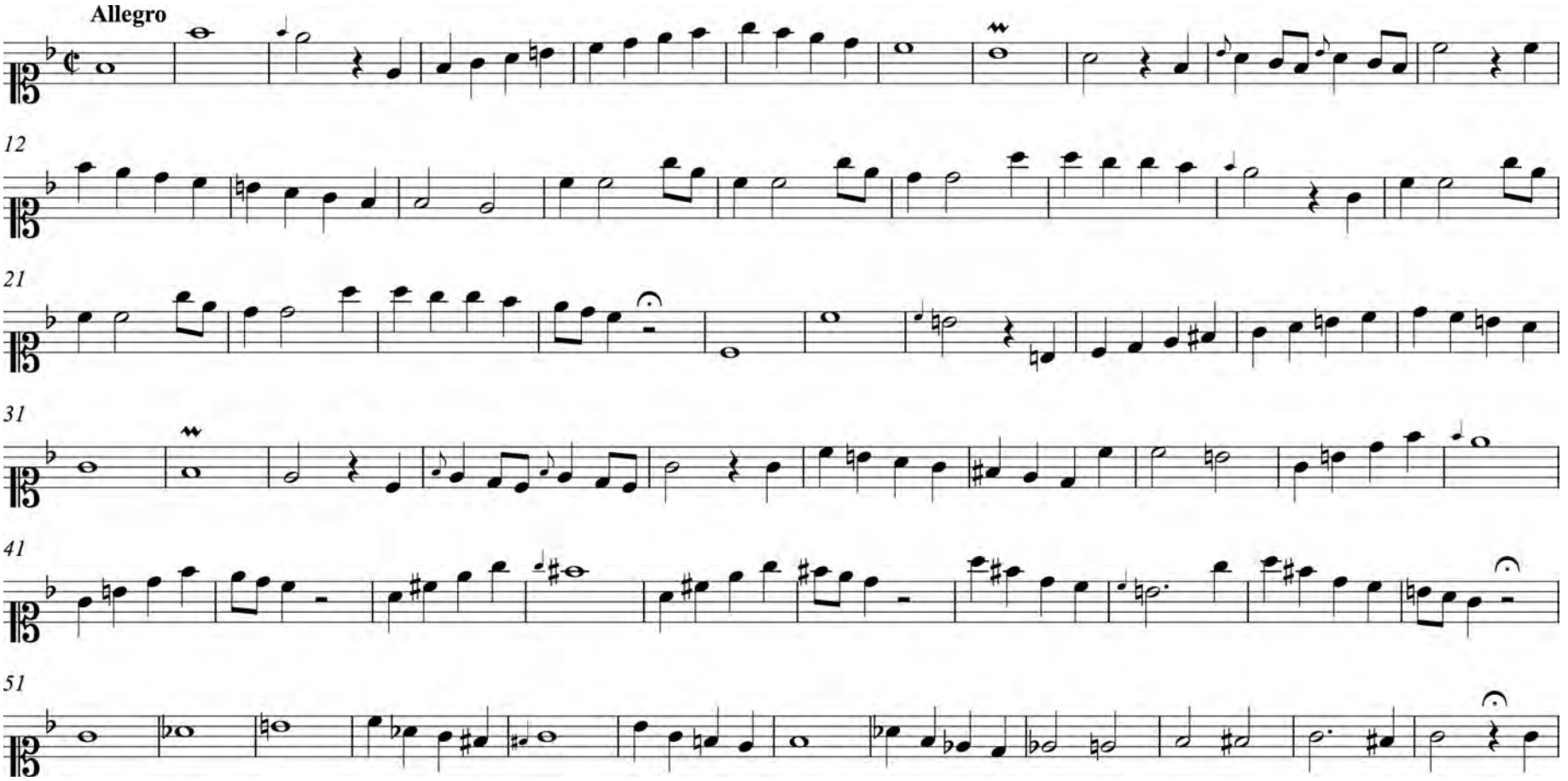

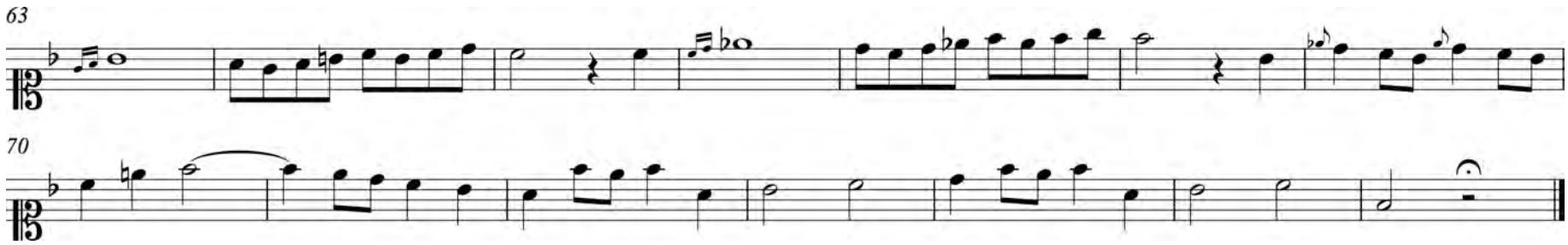
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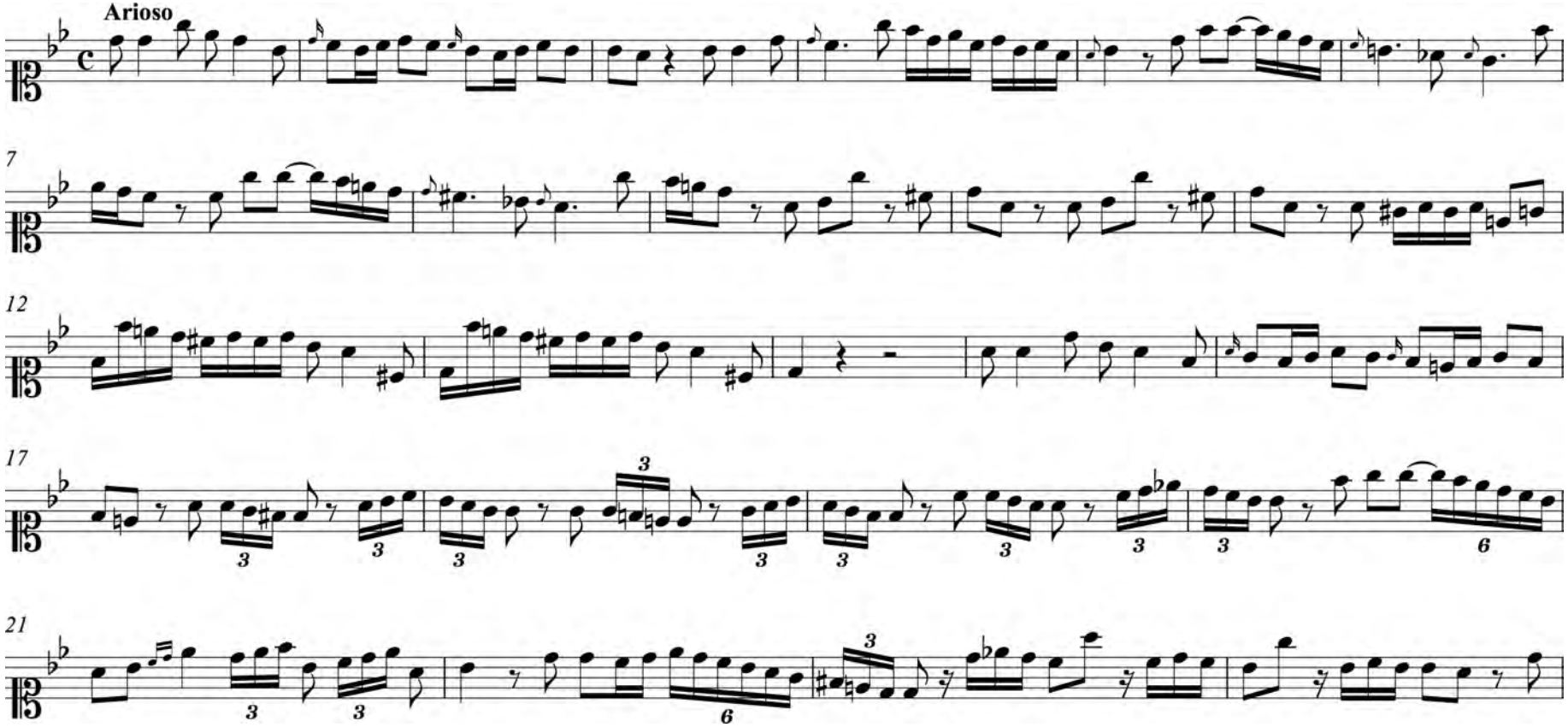

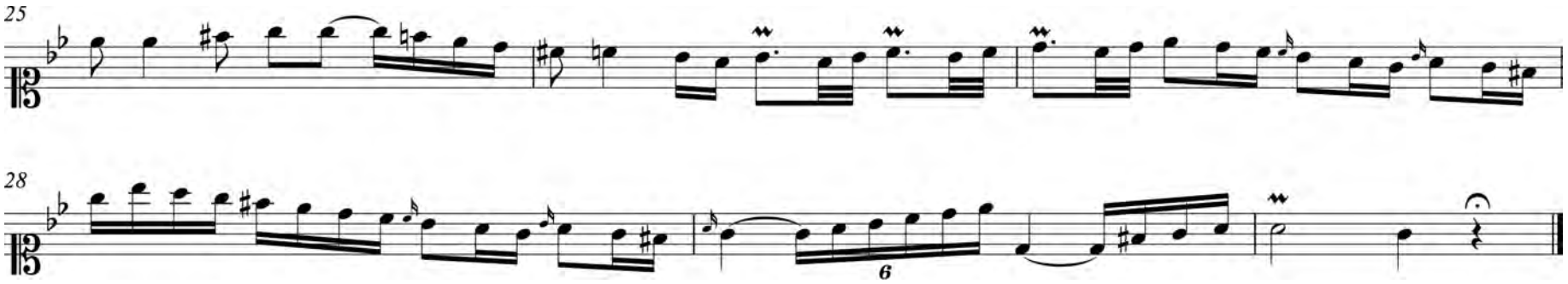
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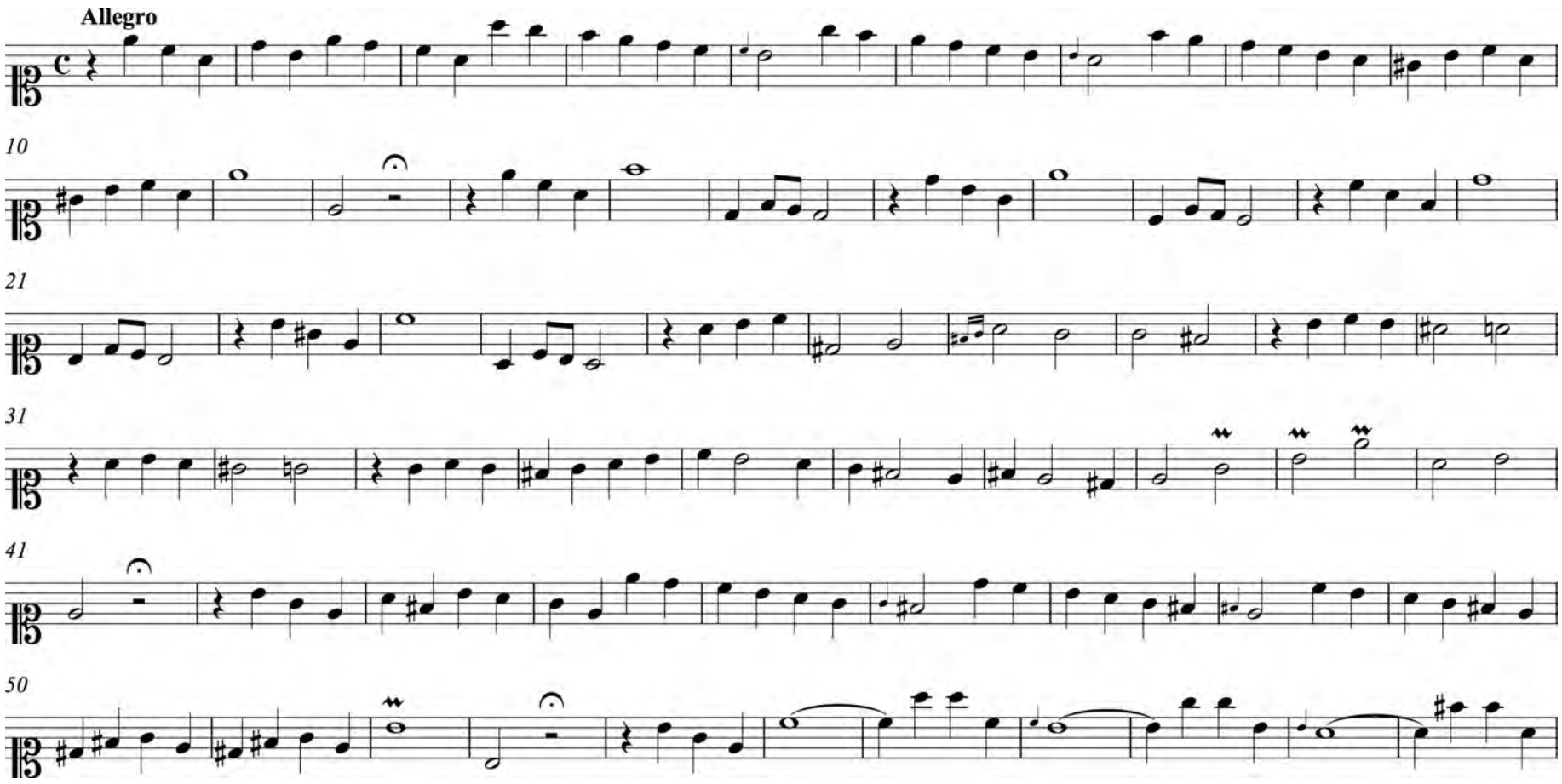

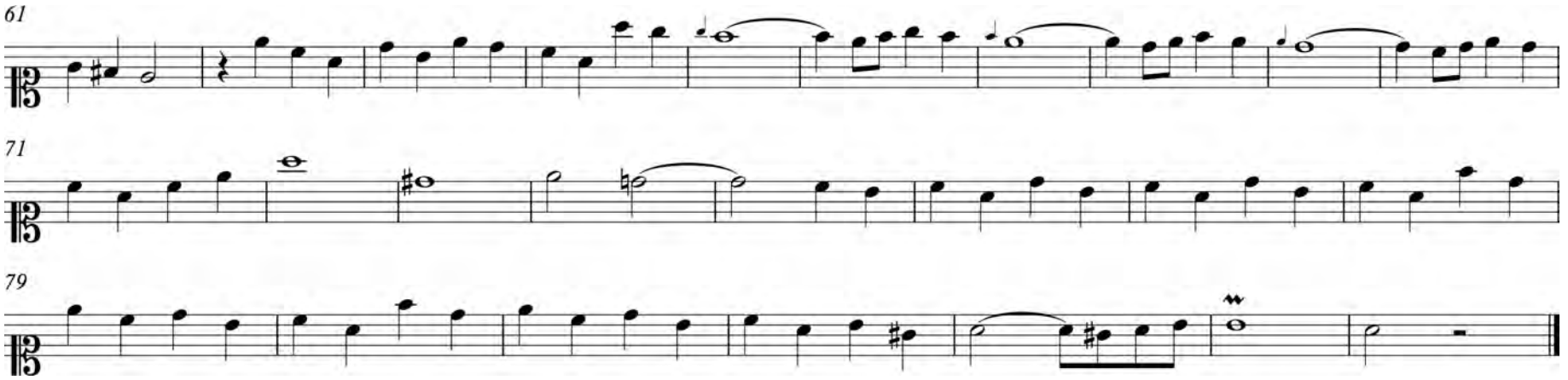
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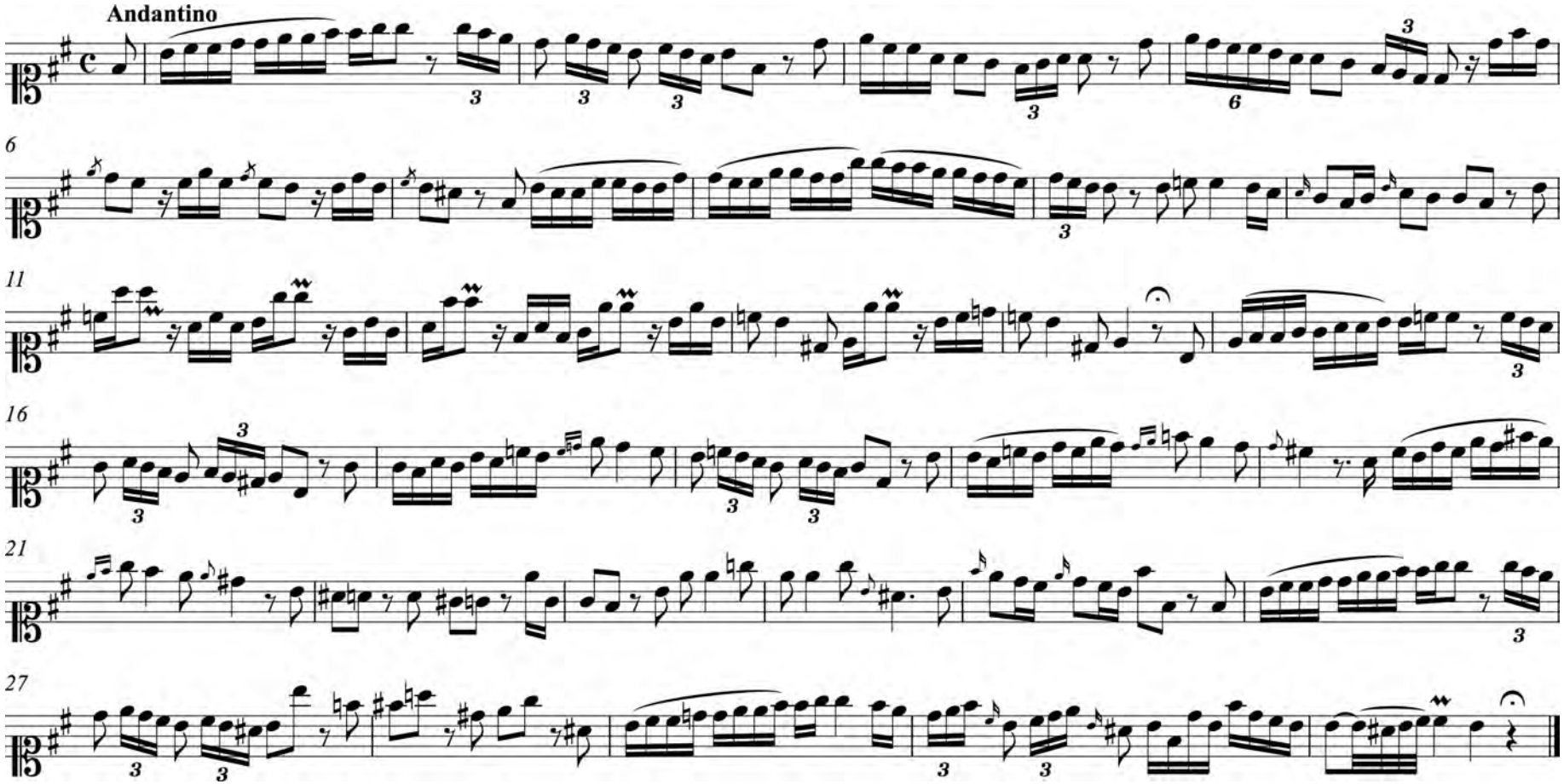
(for No. 92, see next page)

No. 92



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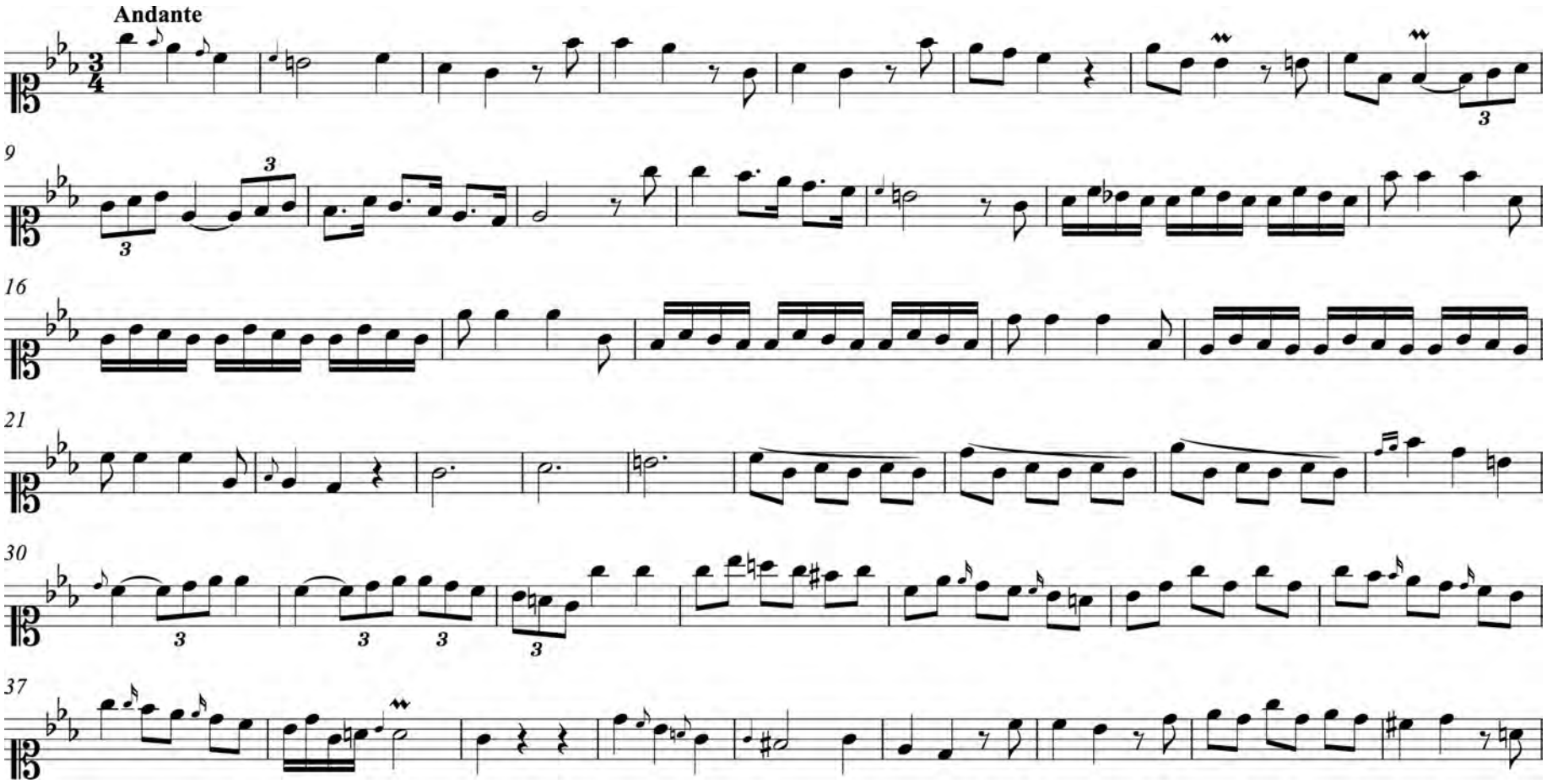

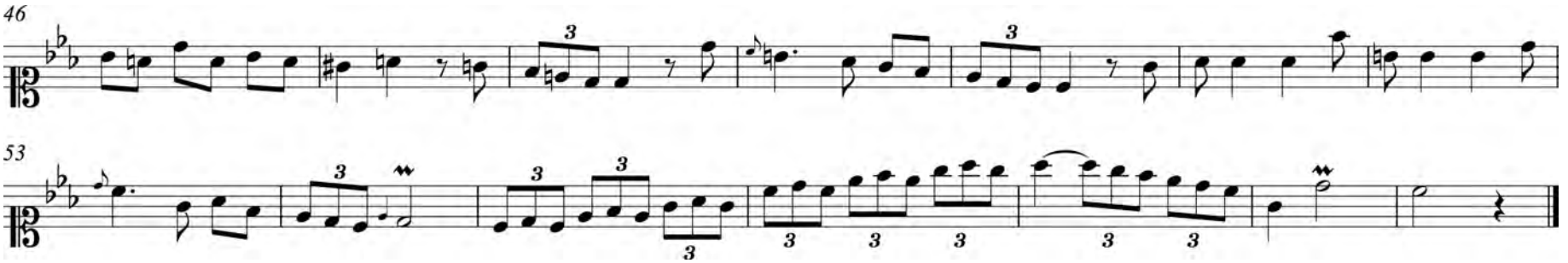
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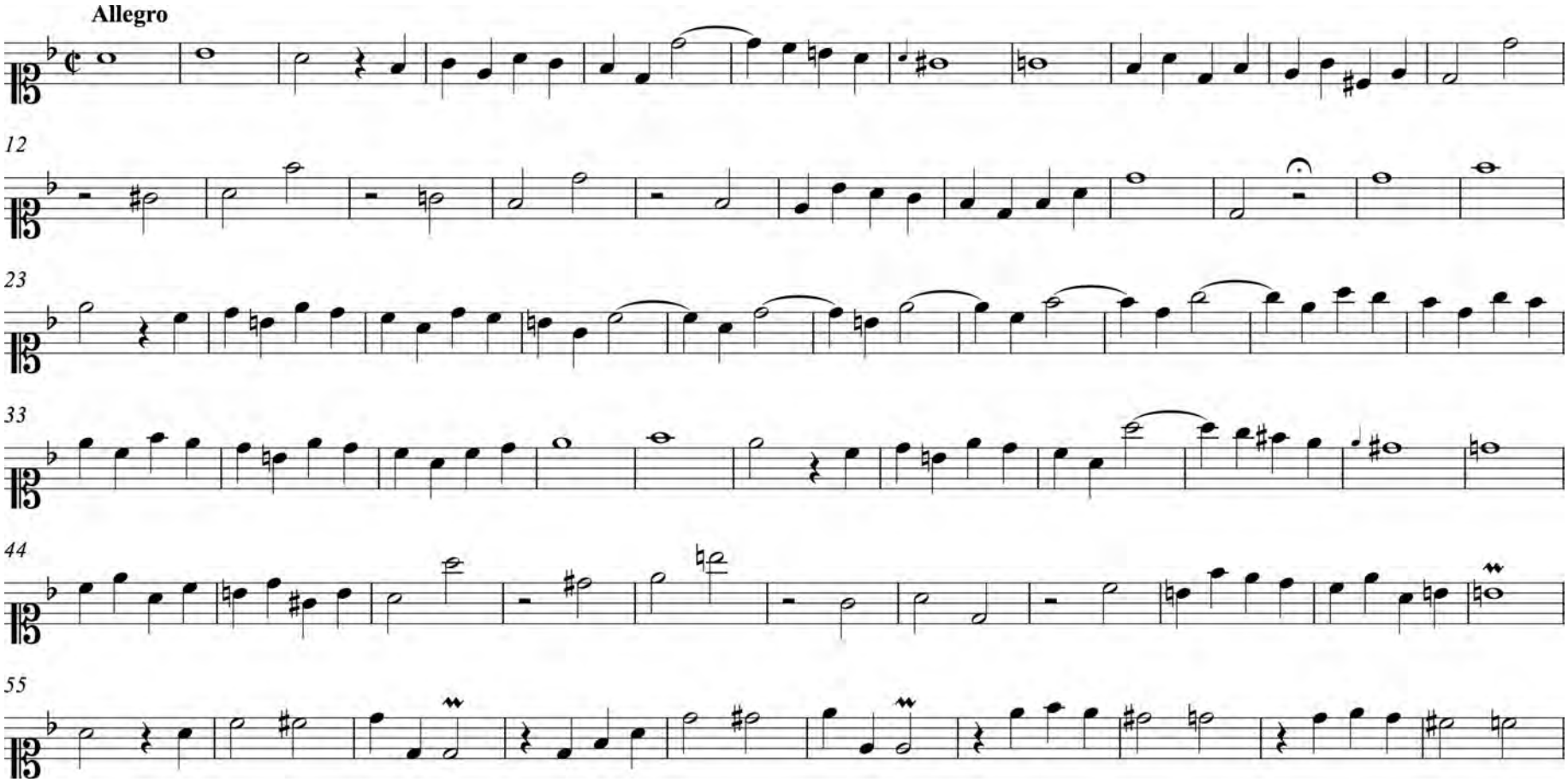

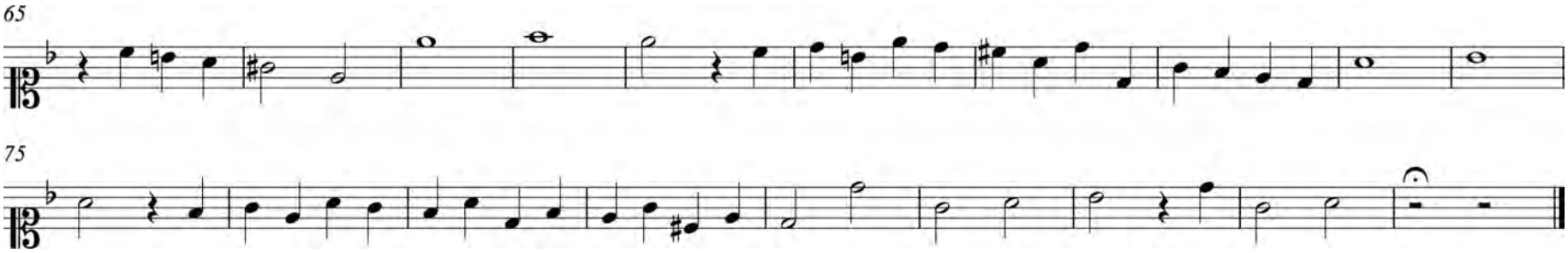
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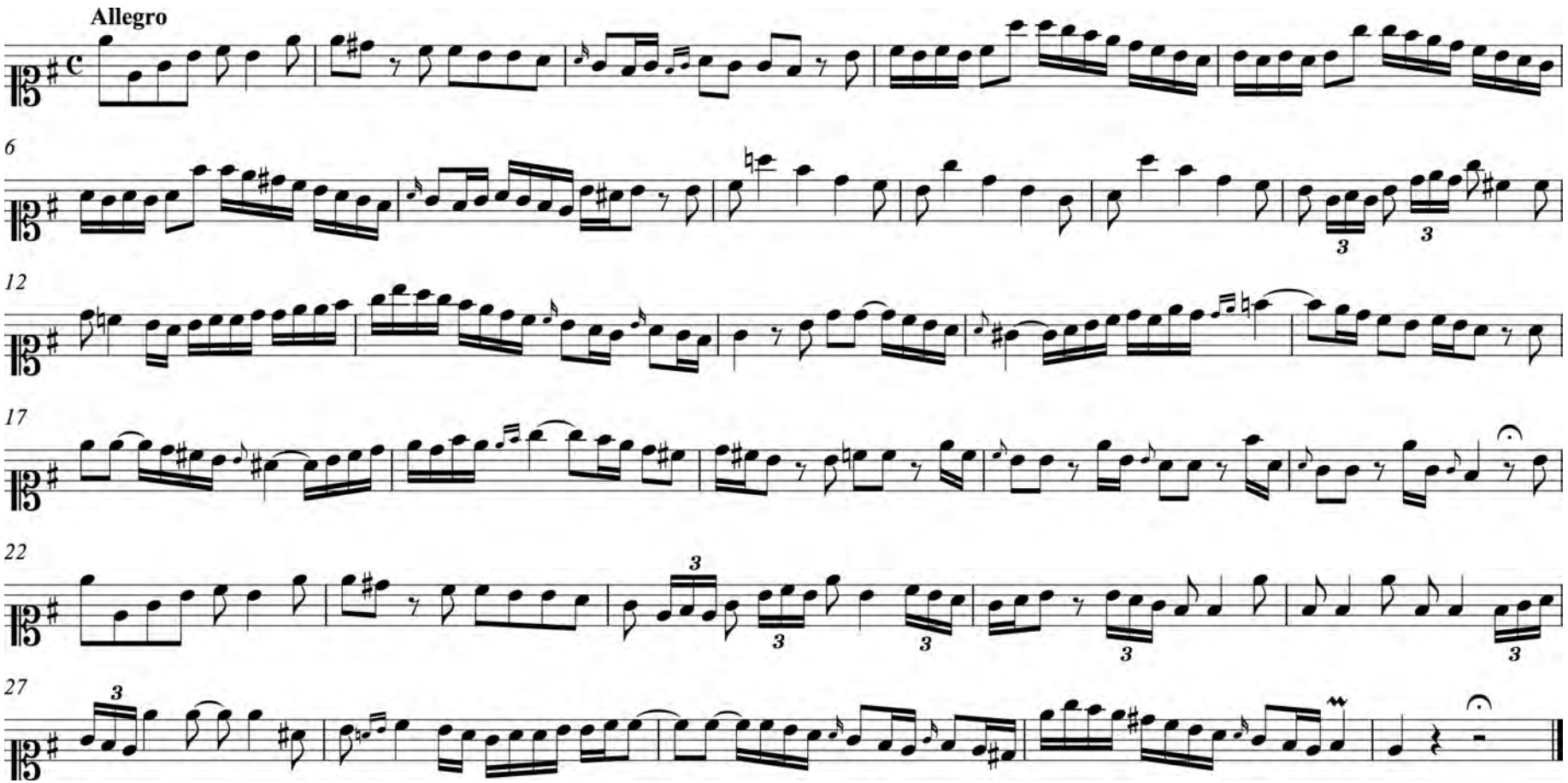

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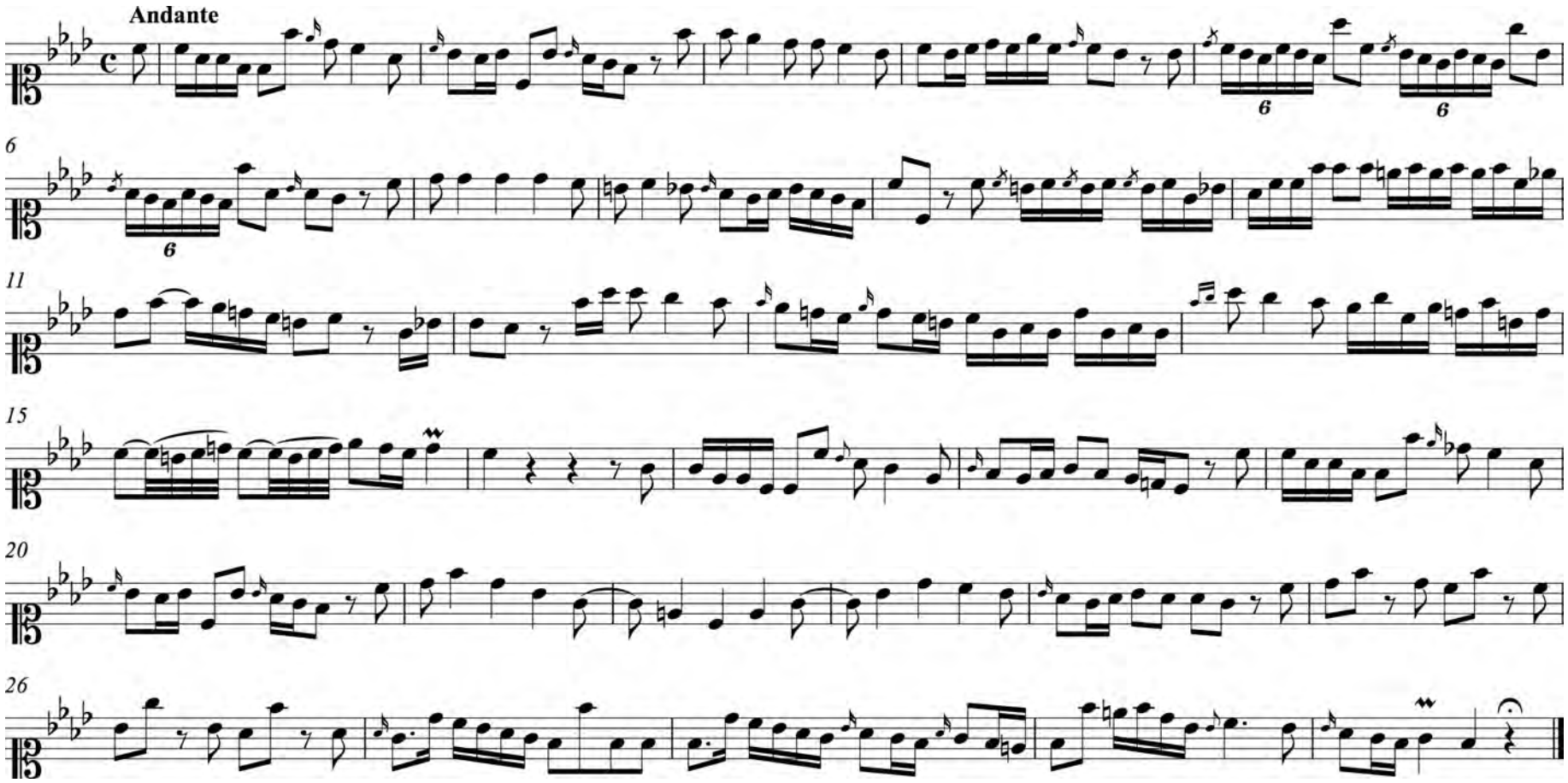

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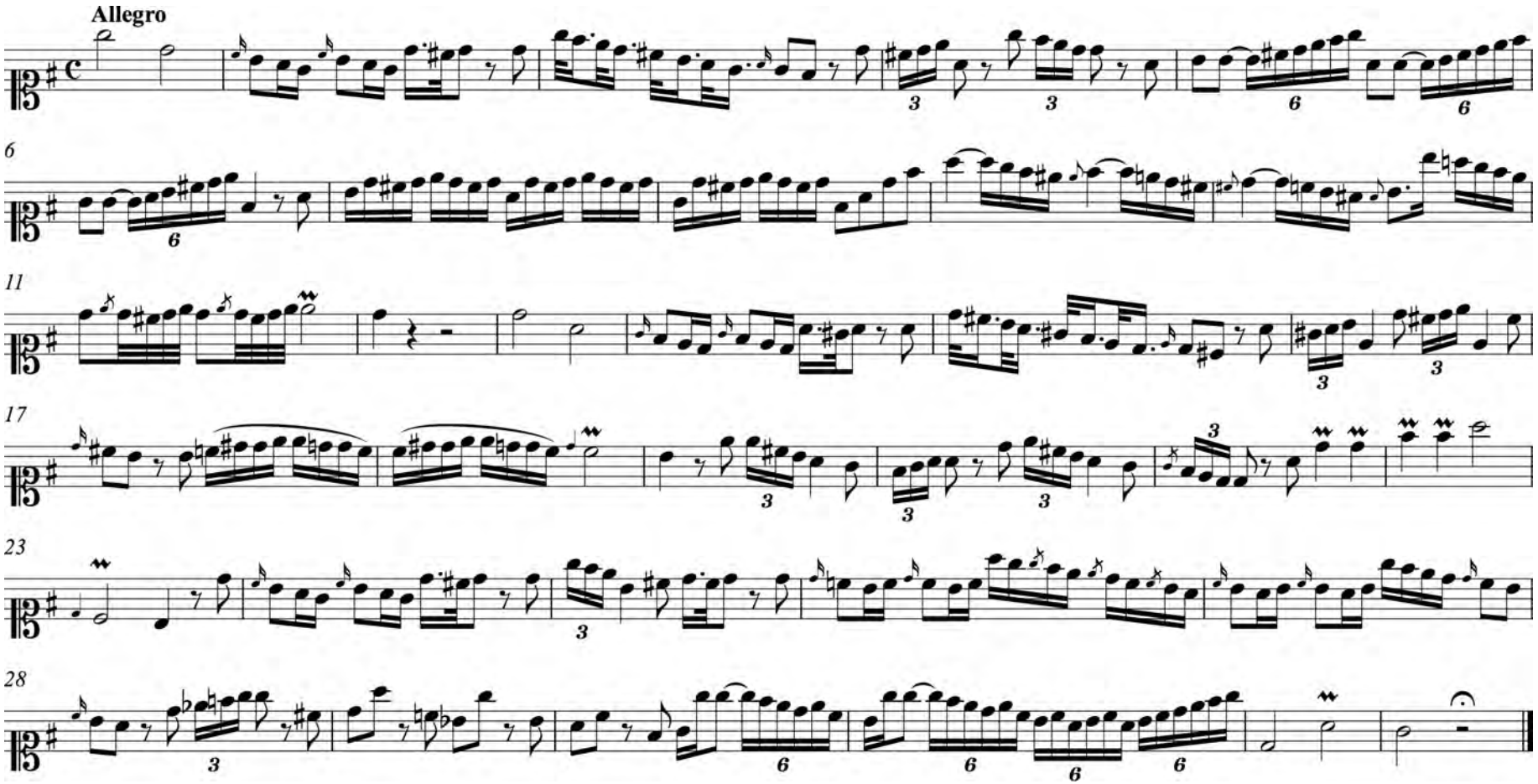

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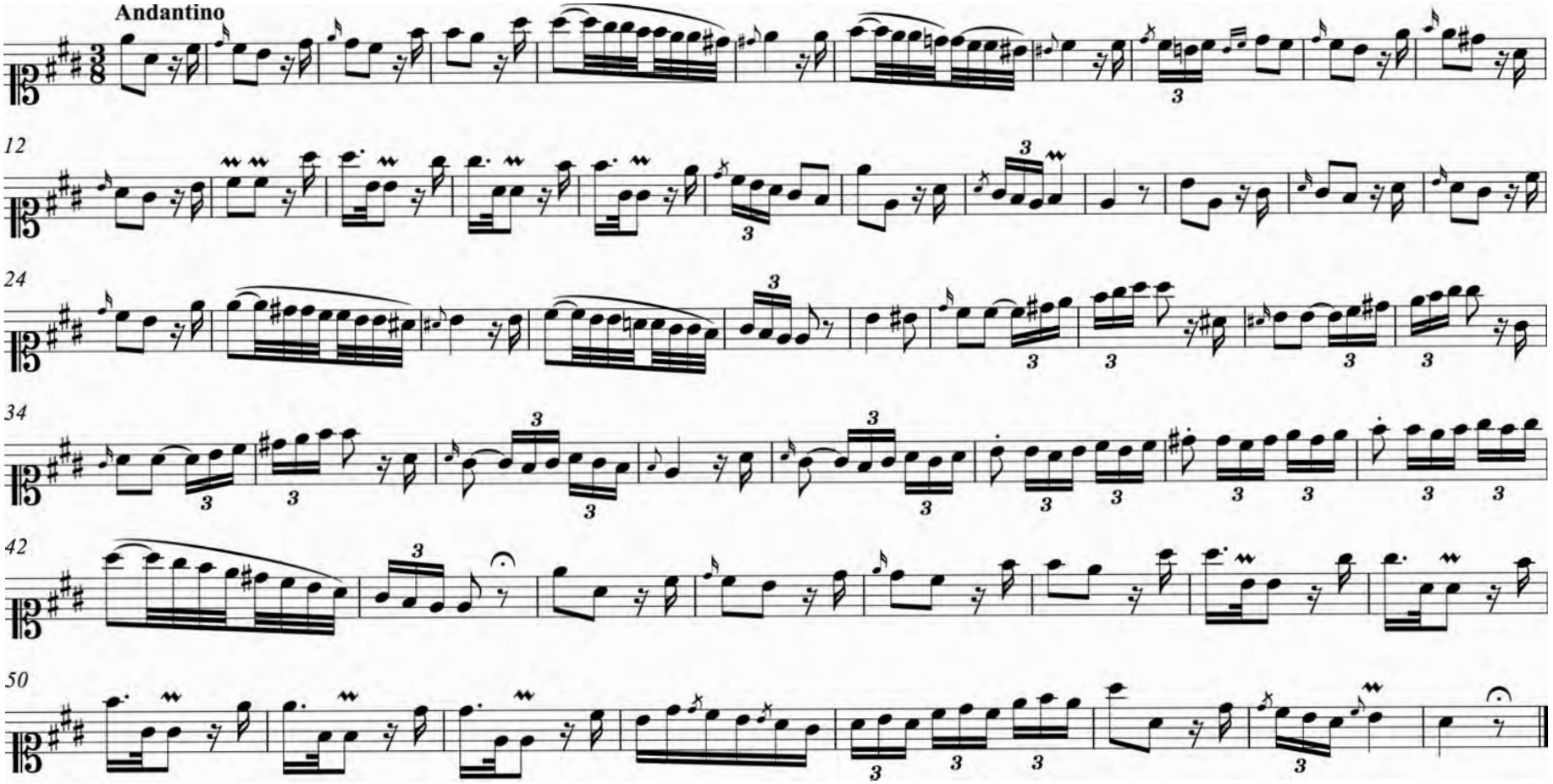

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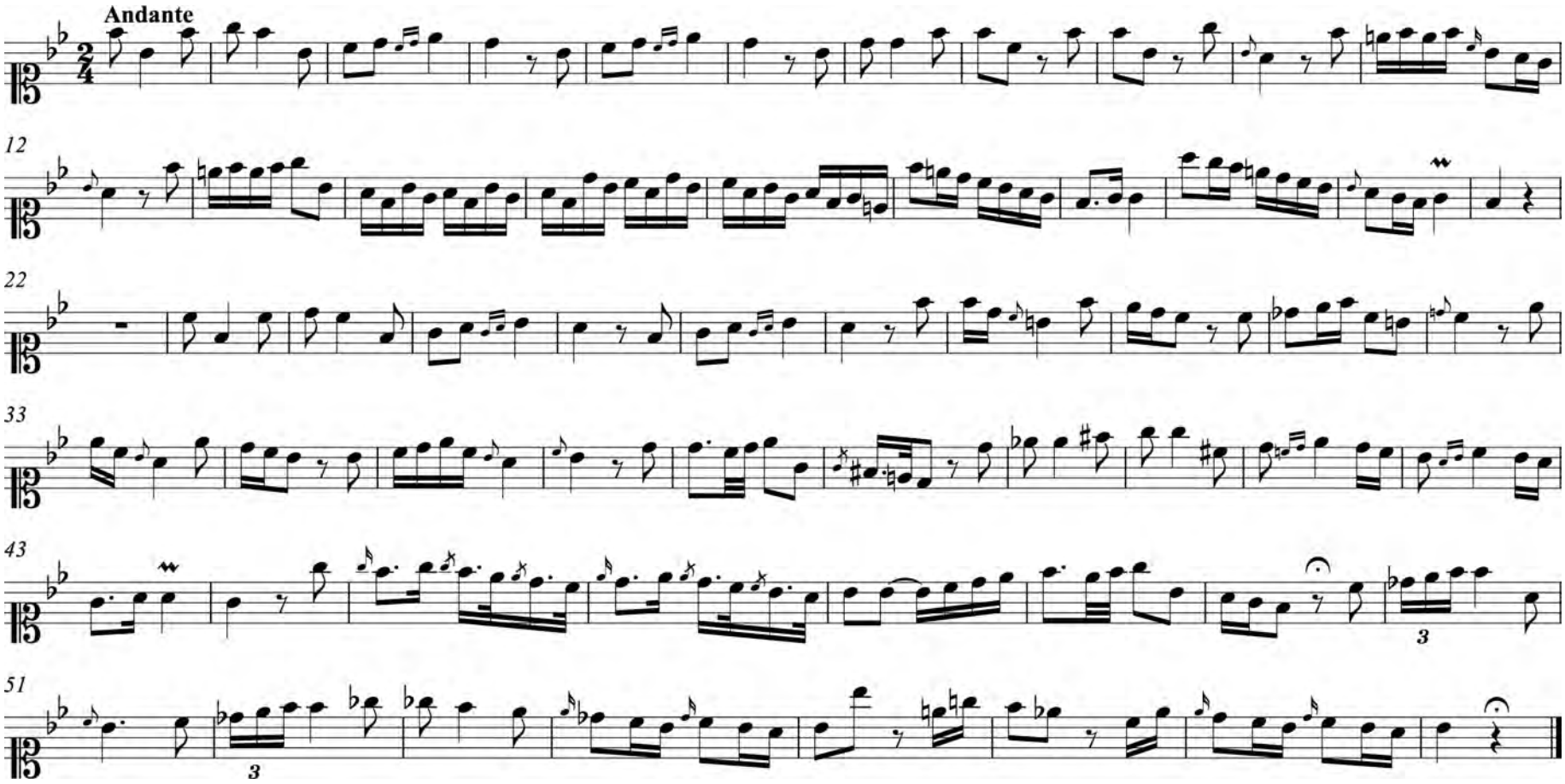

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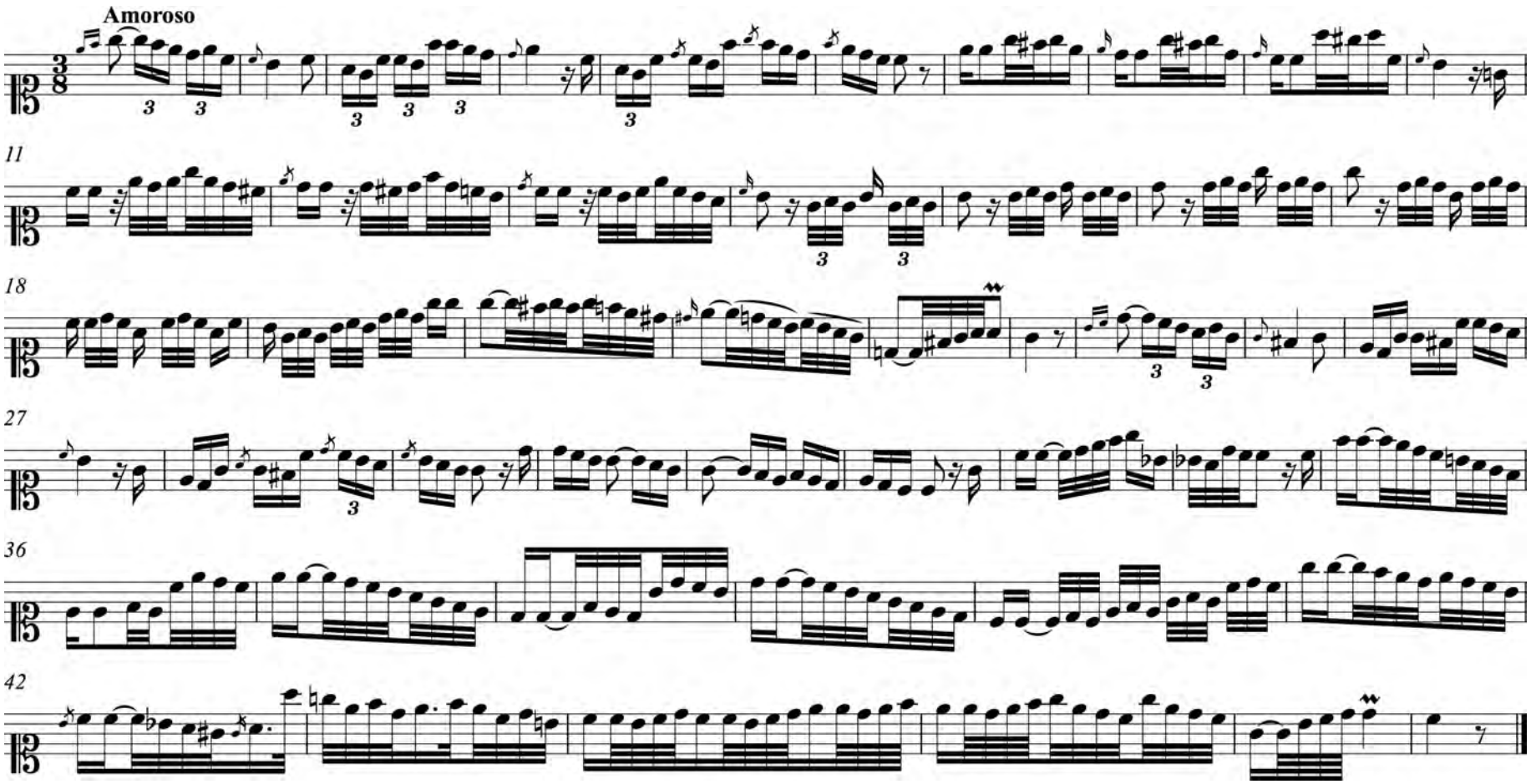

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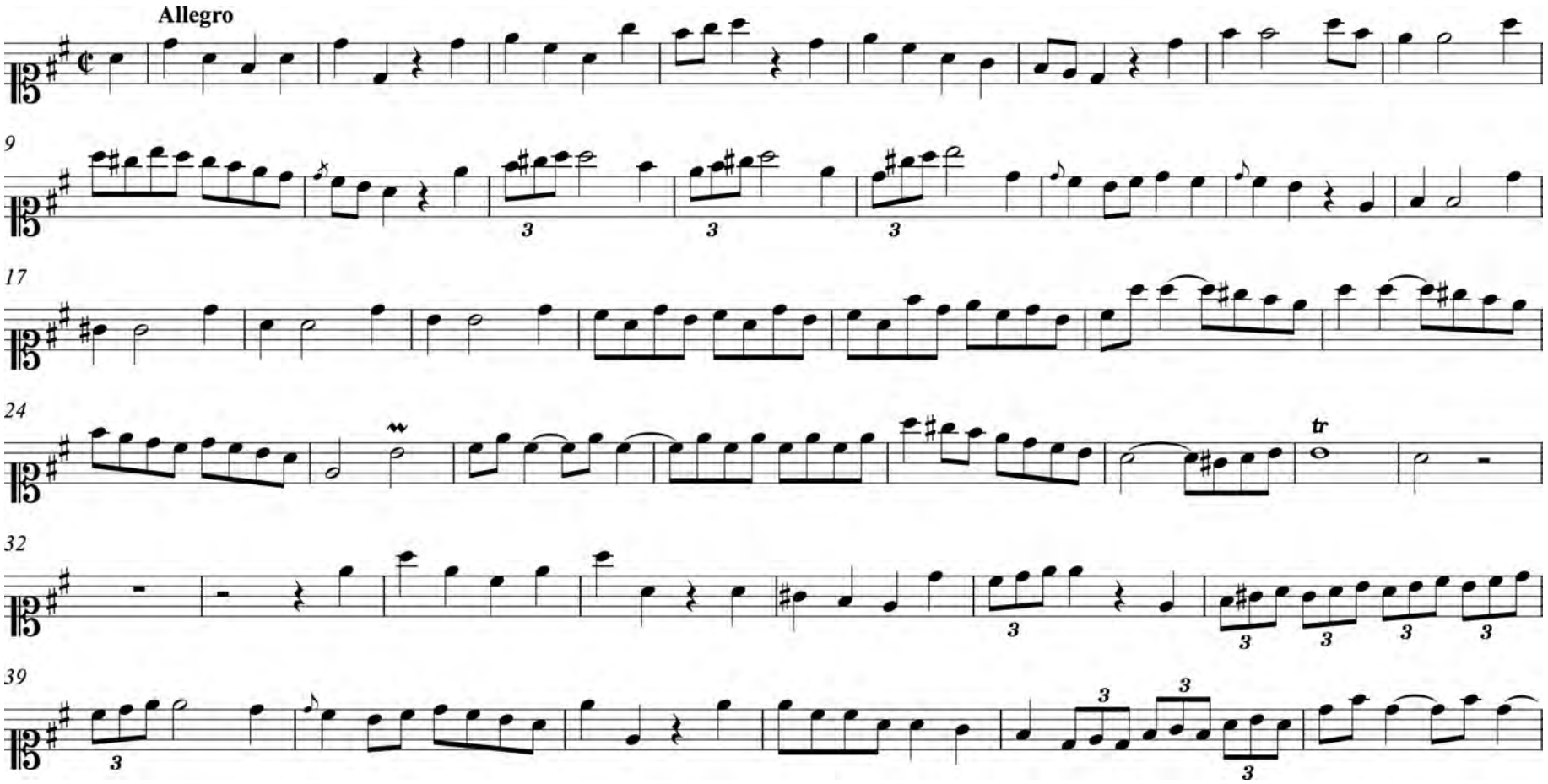

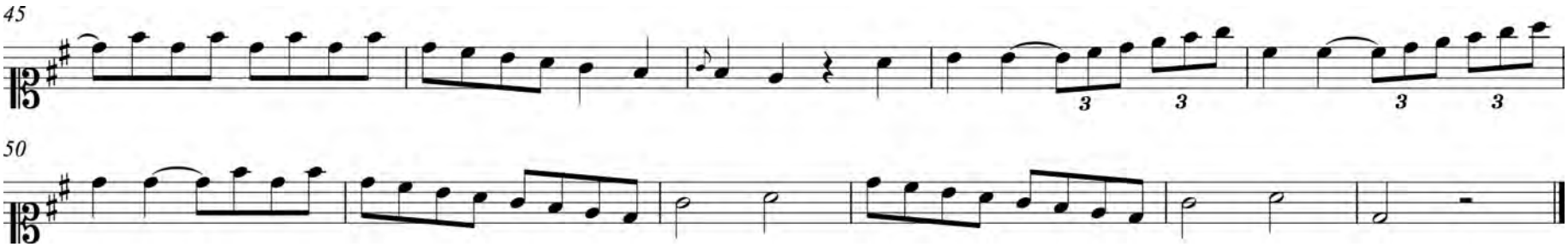
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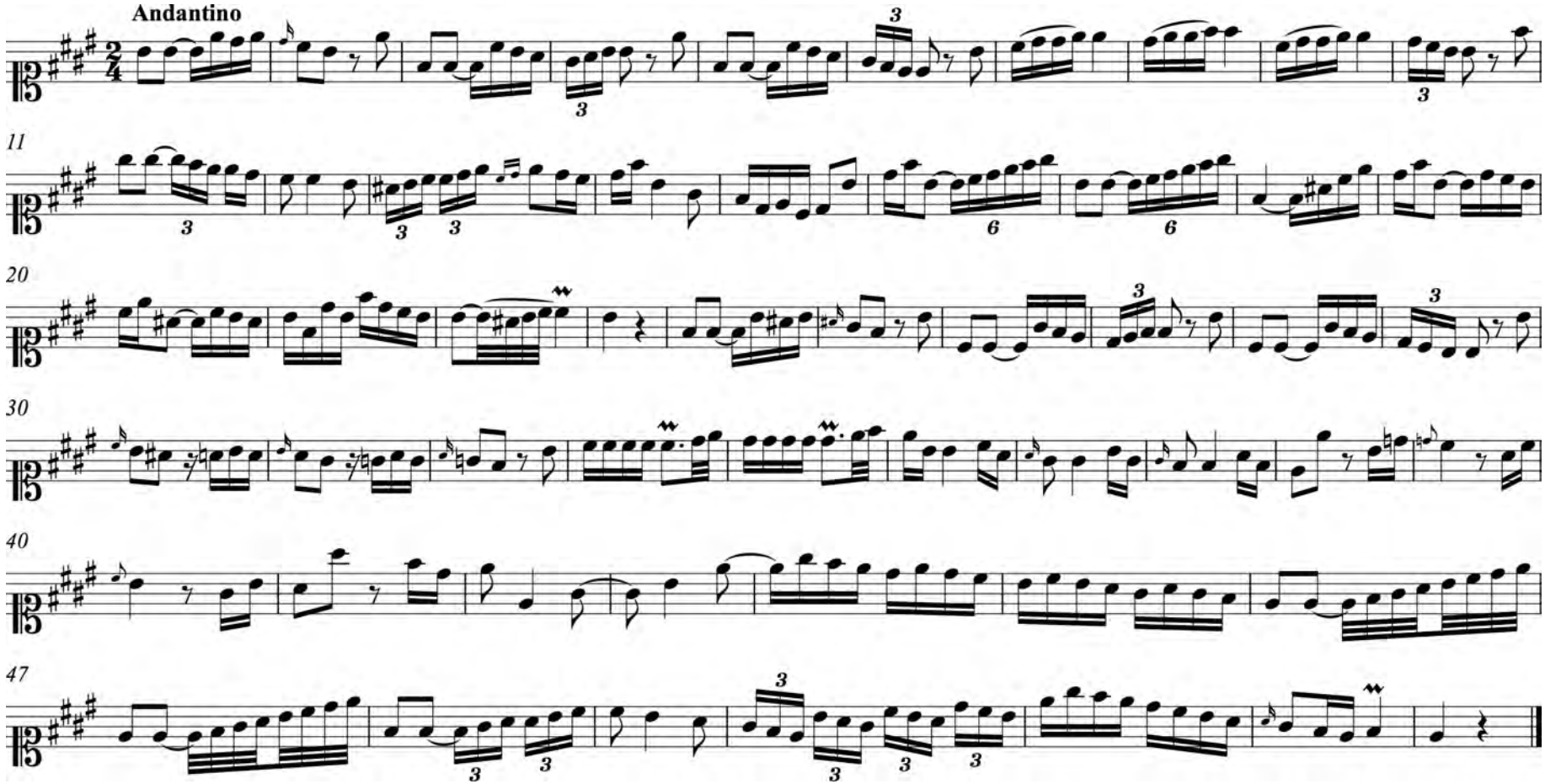

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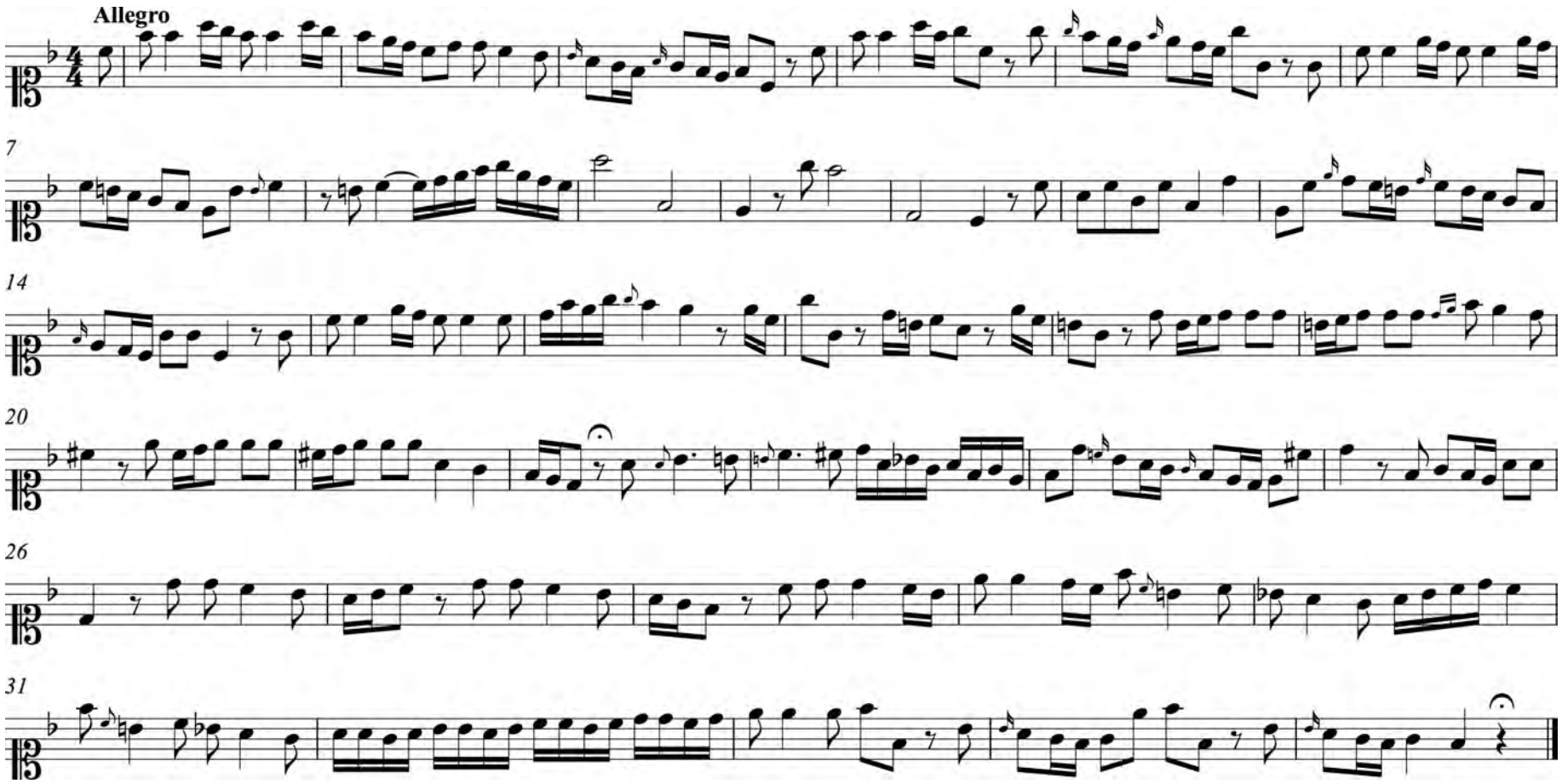

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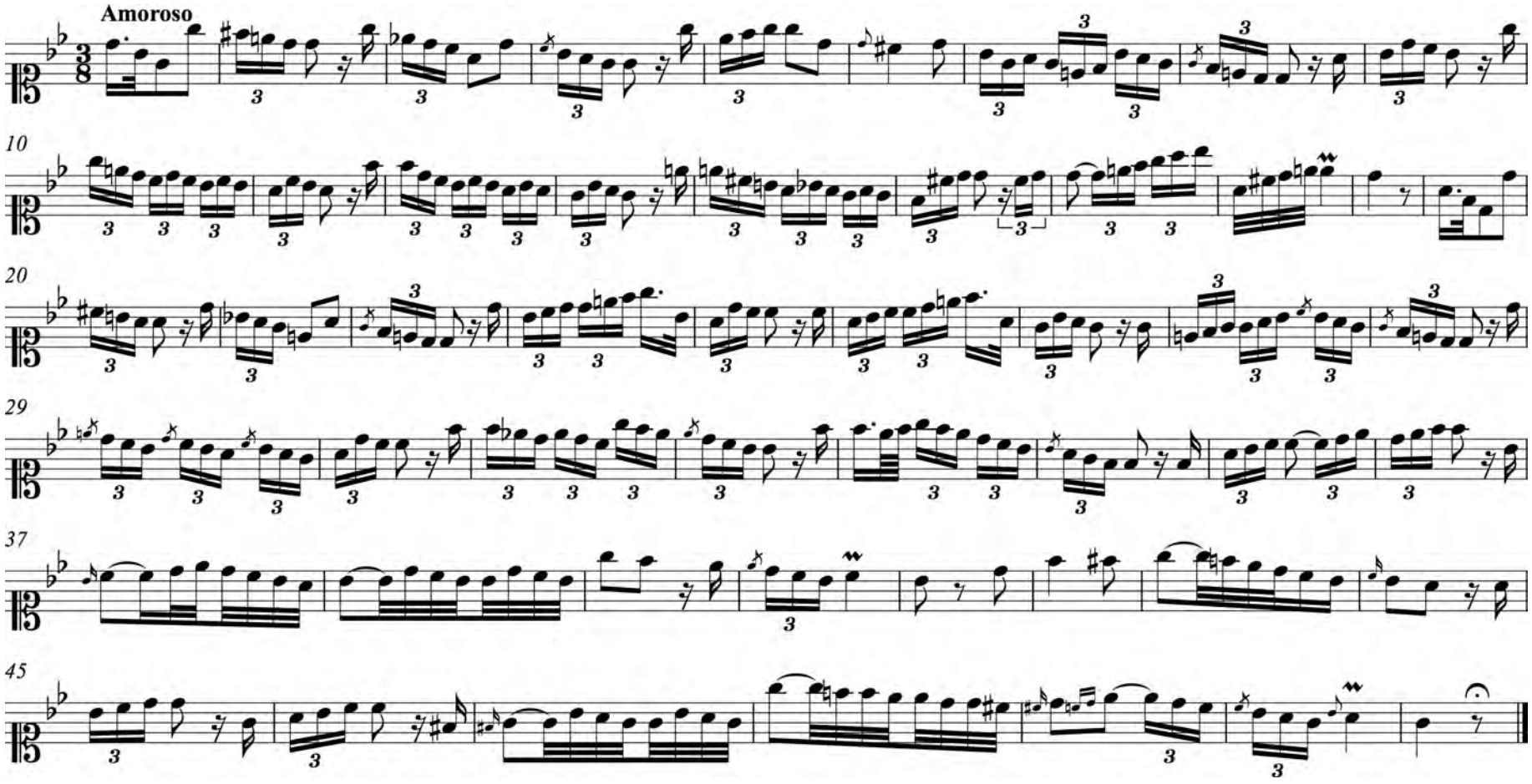

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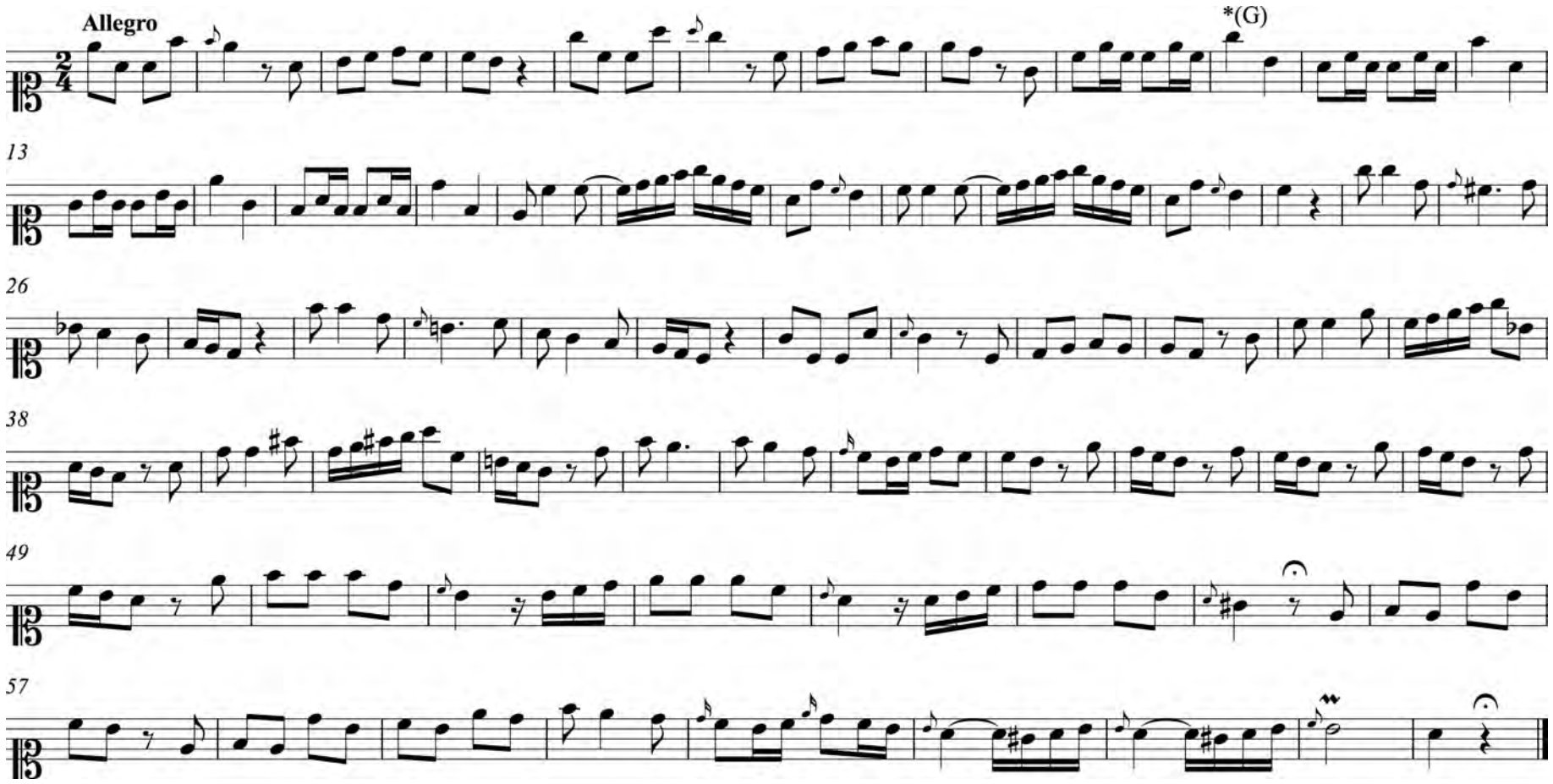

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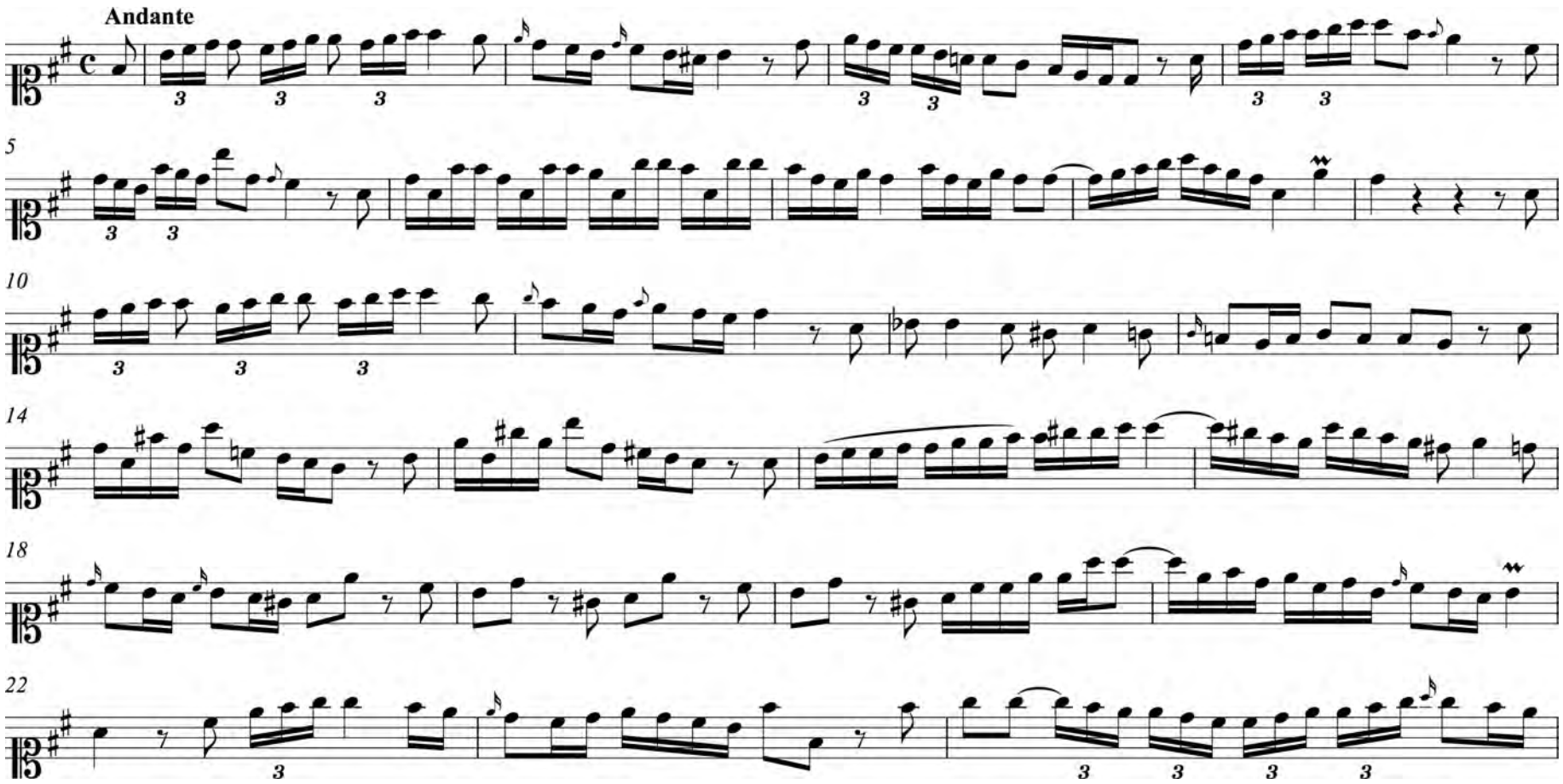

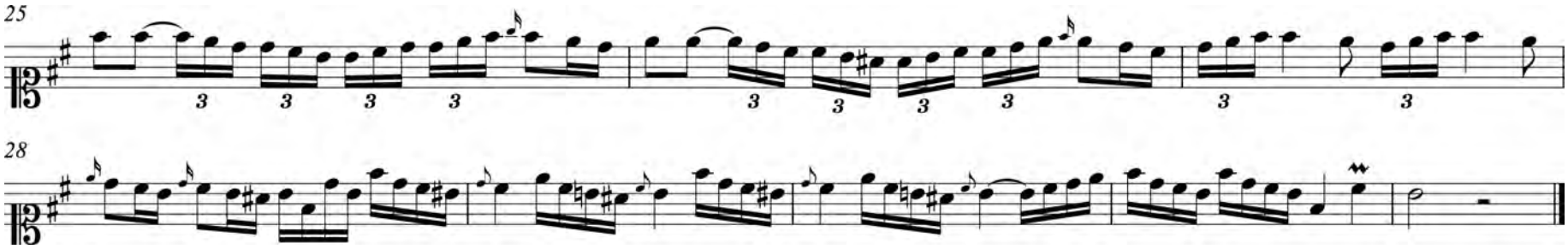
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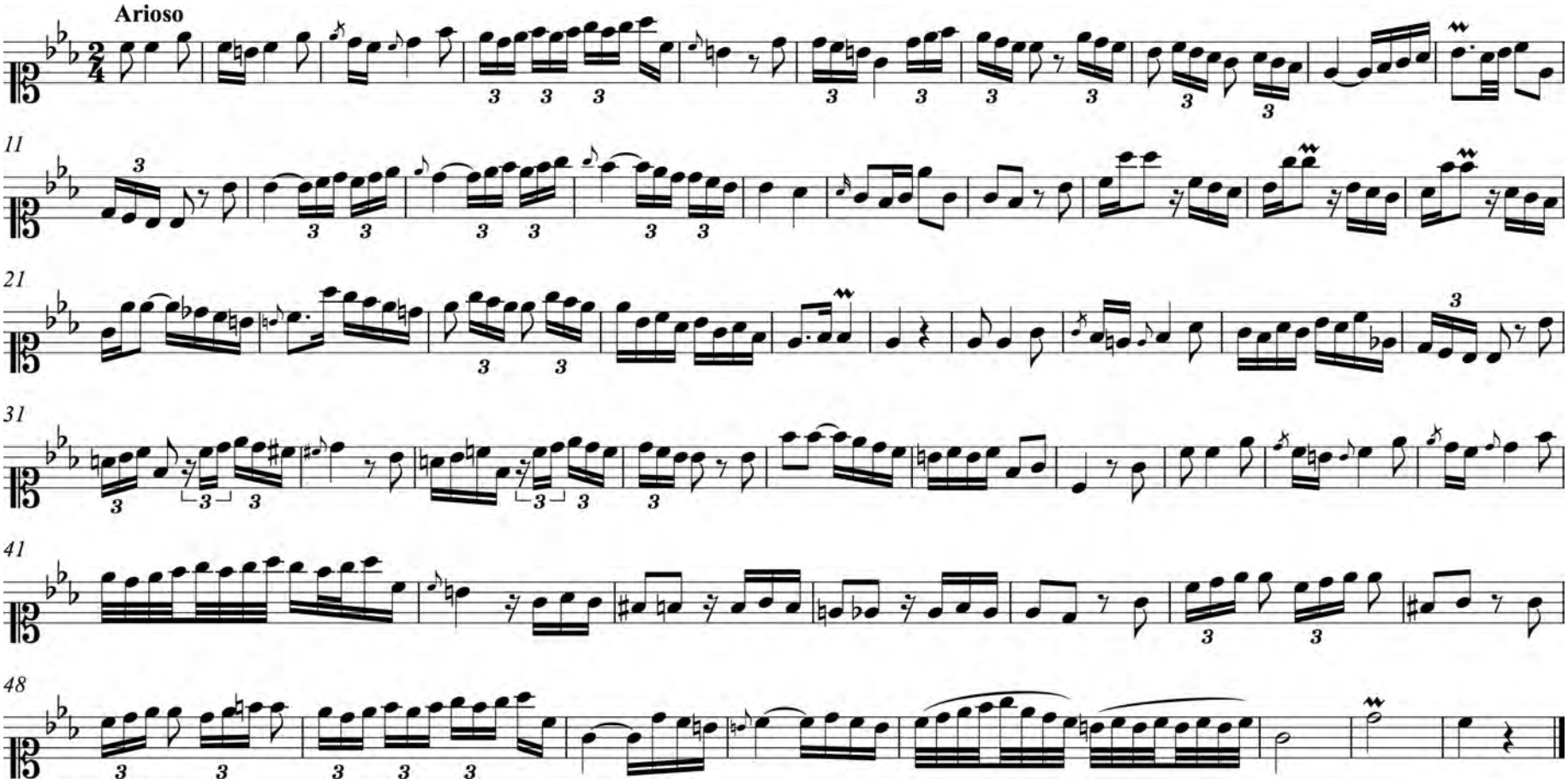

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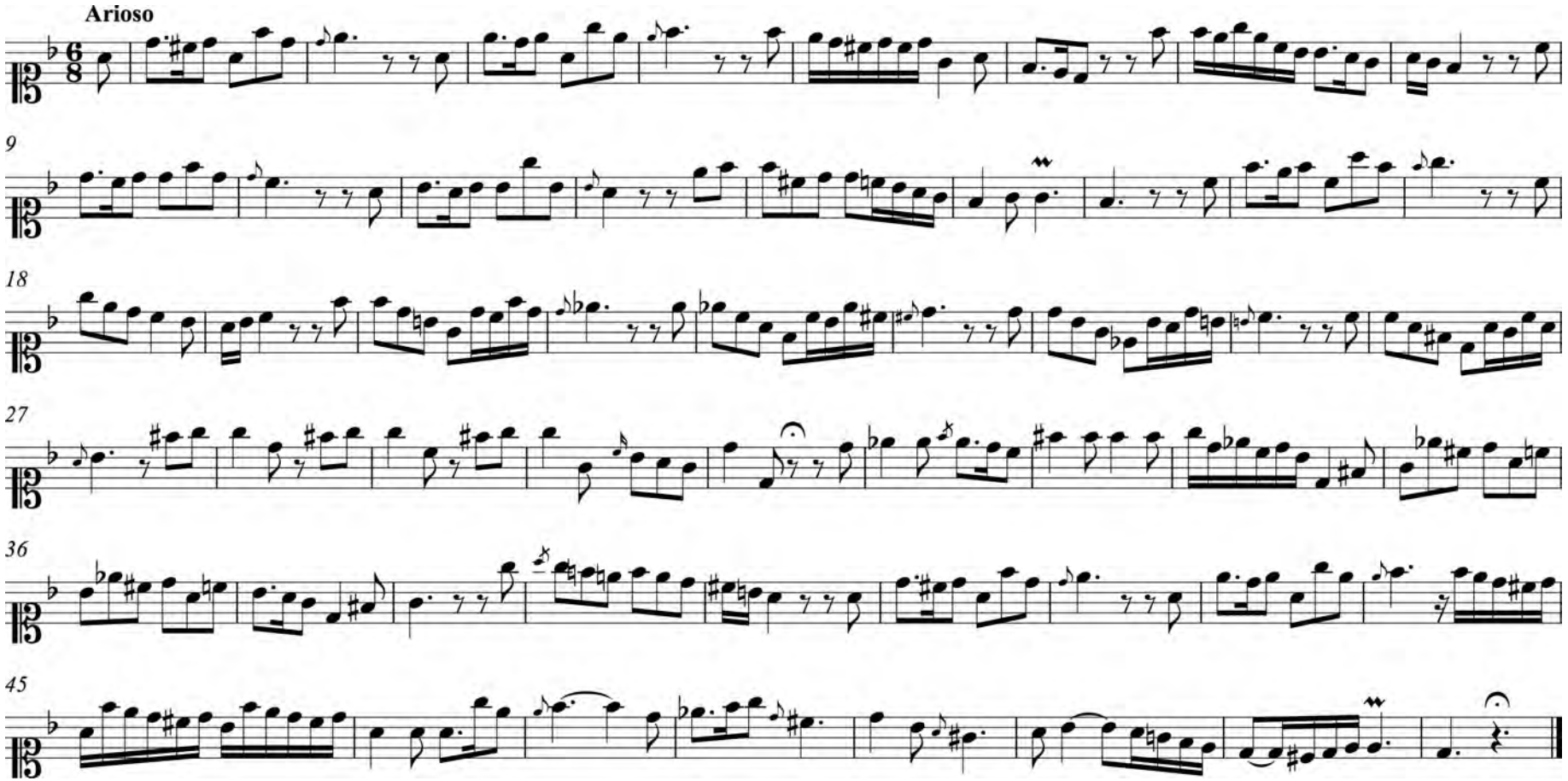

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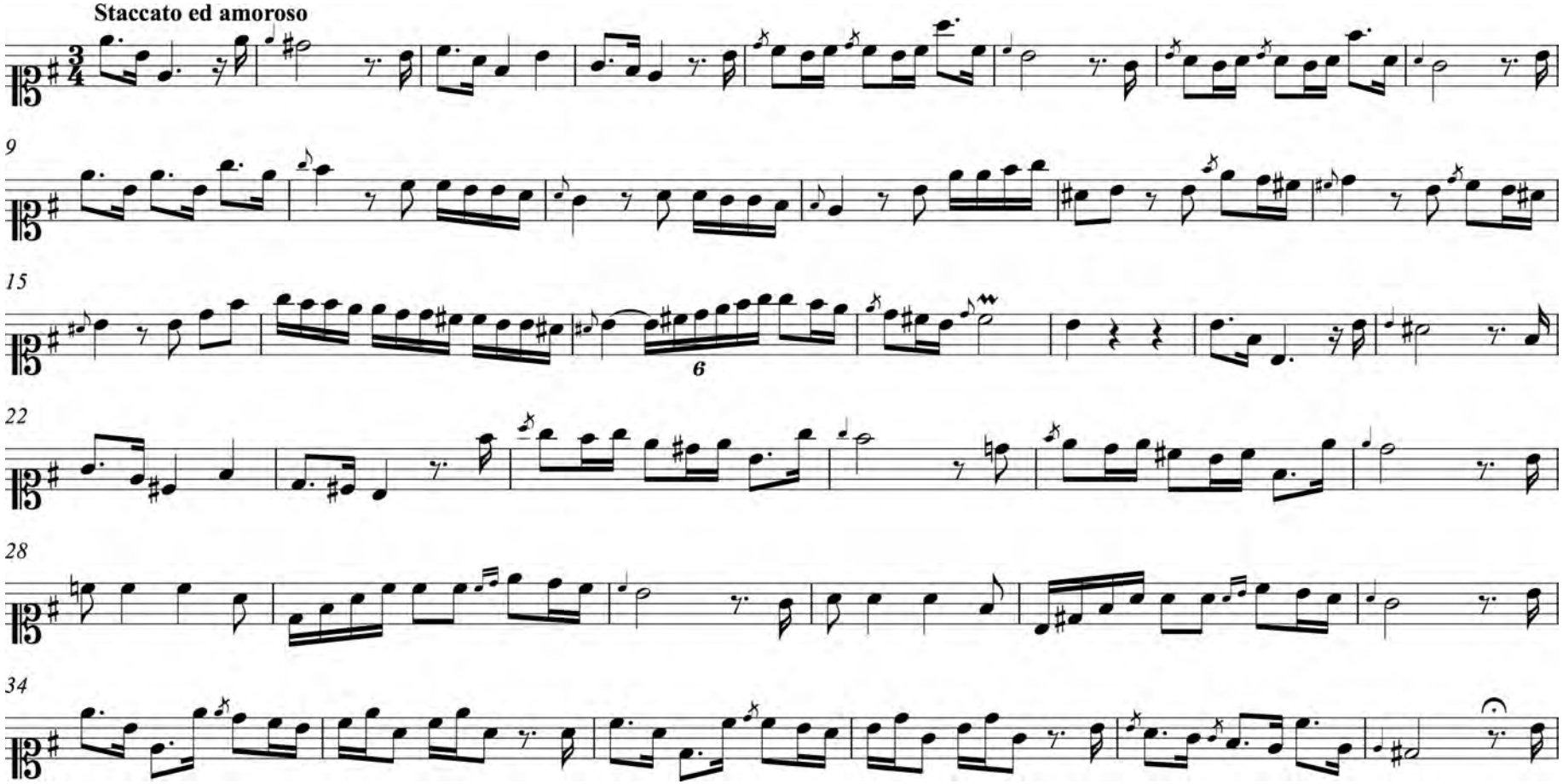

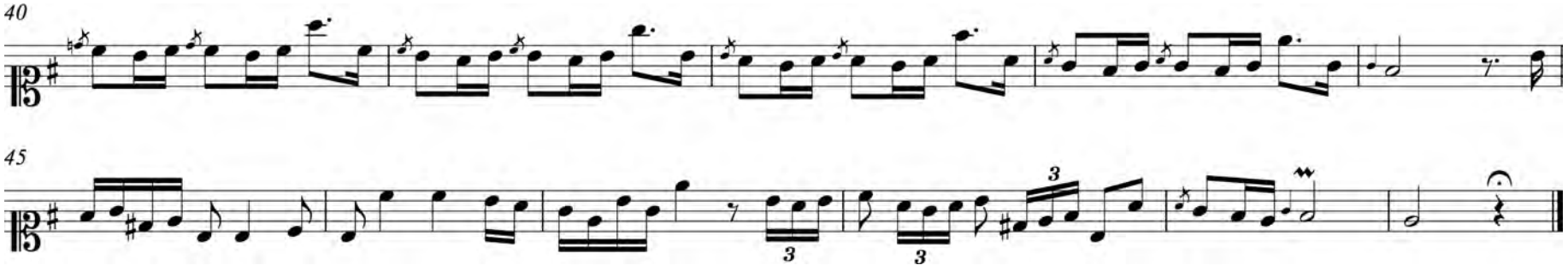
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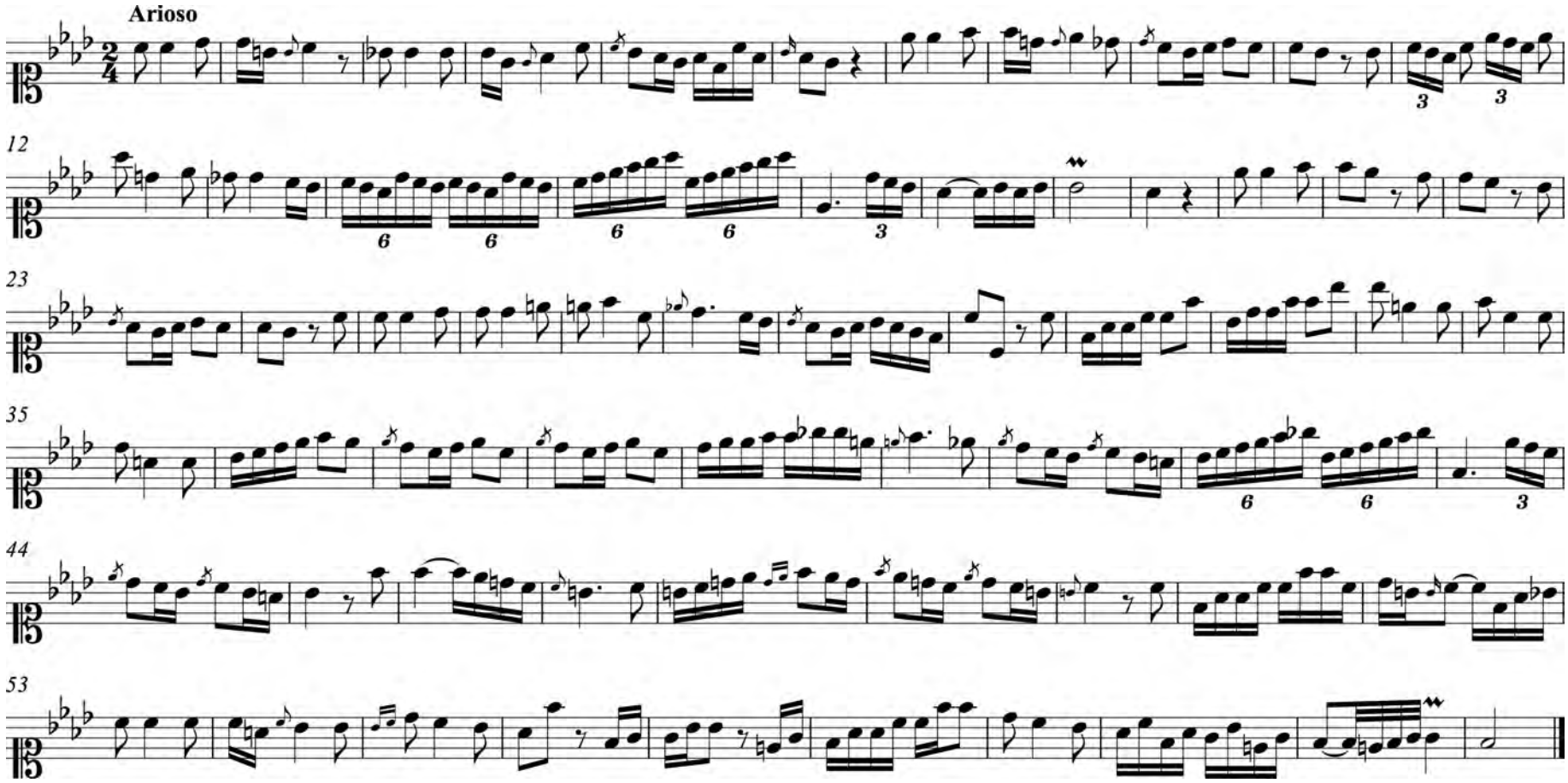
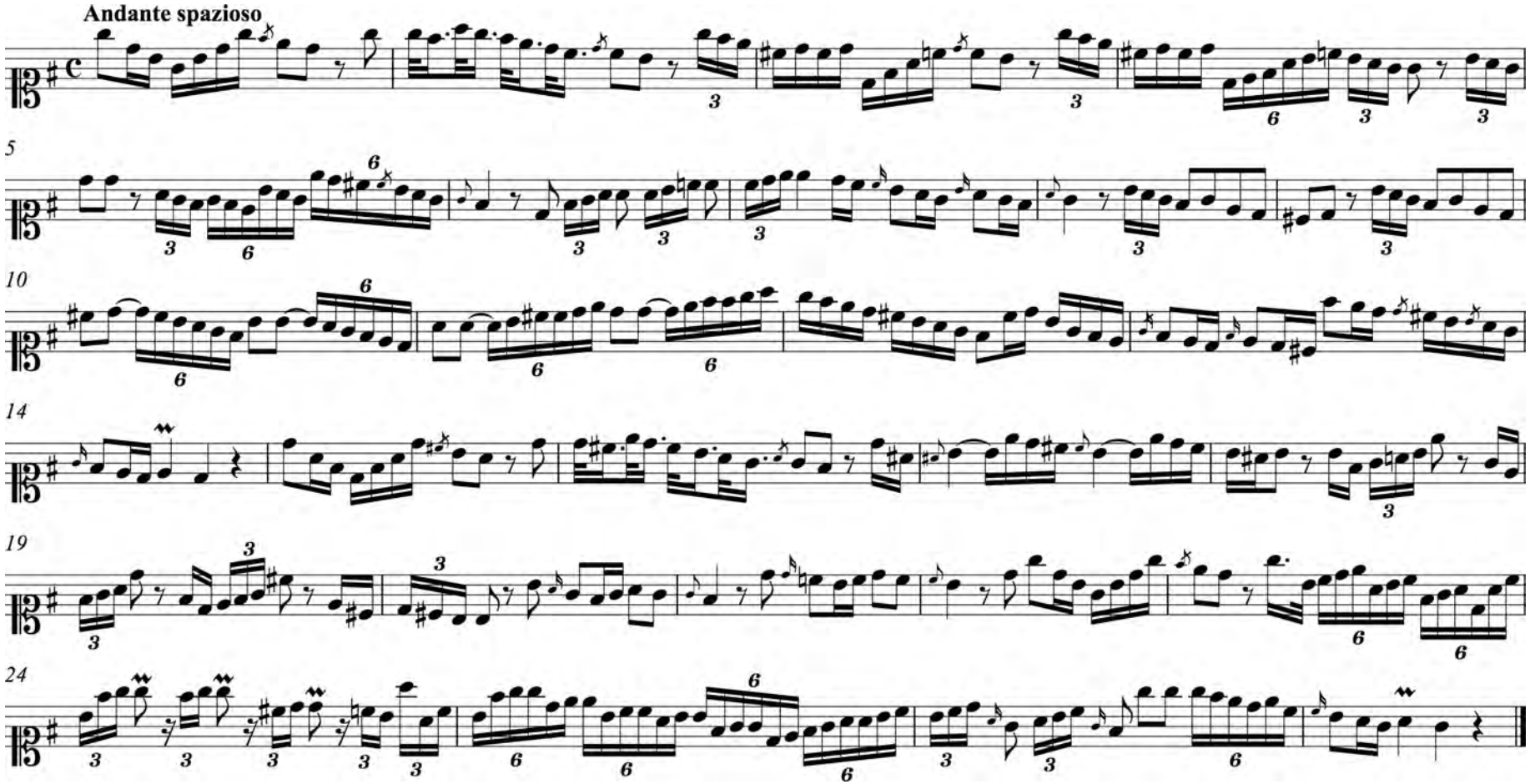
No. 110



No. 111



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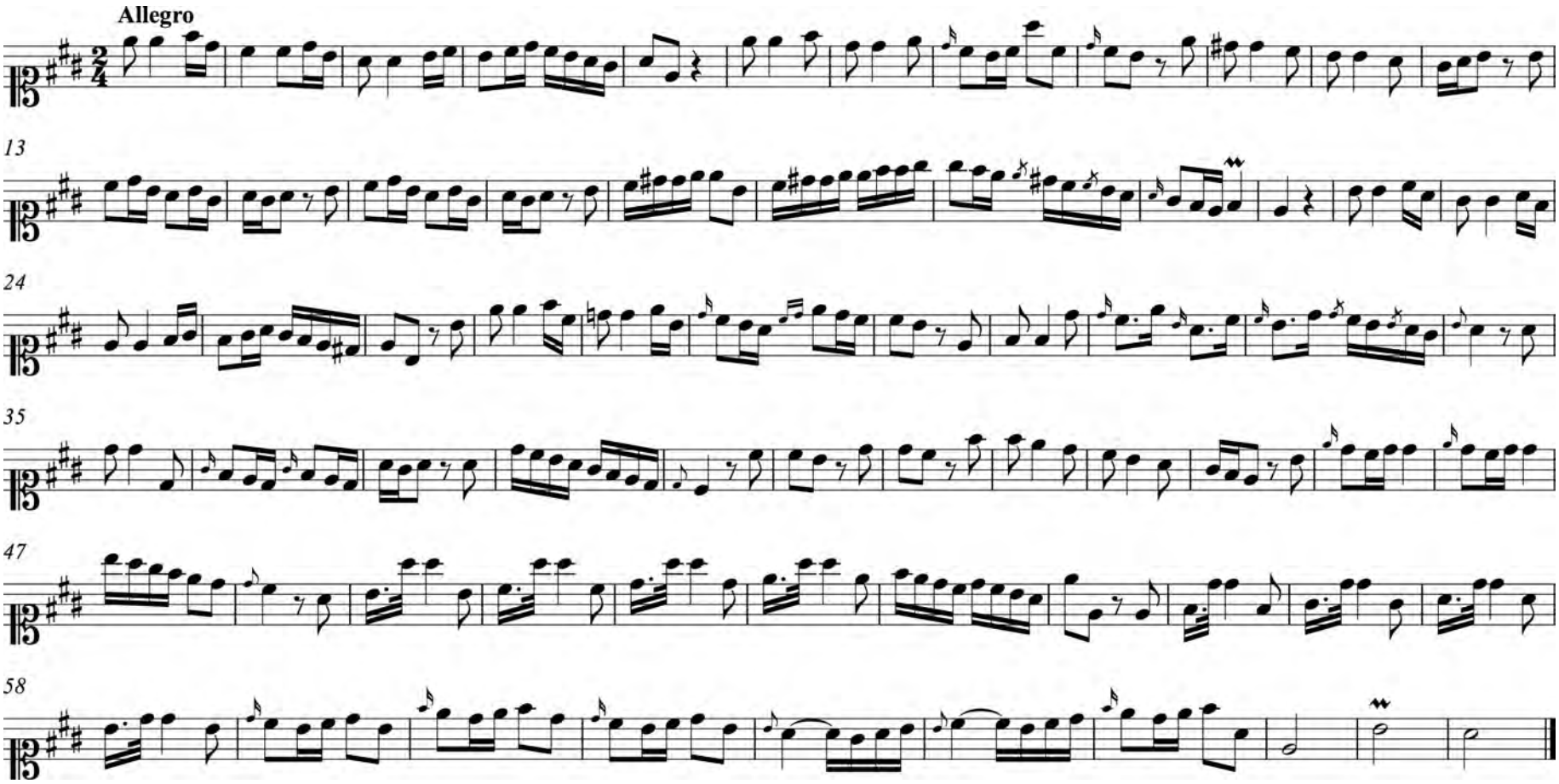

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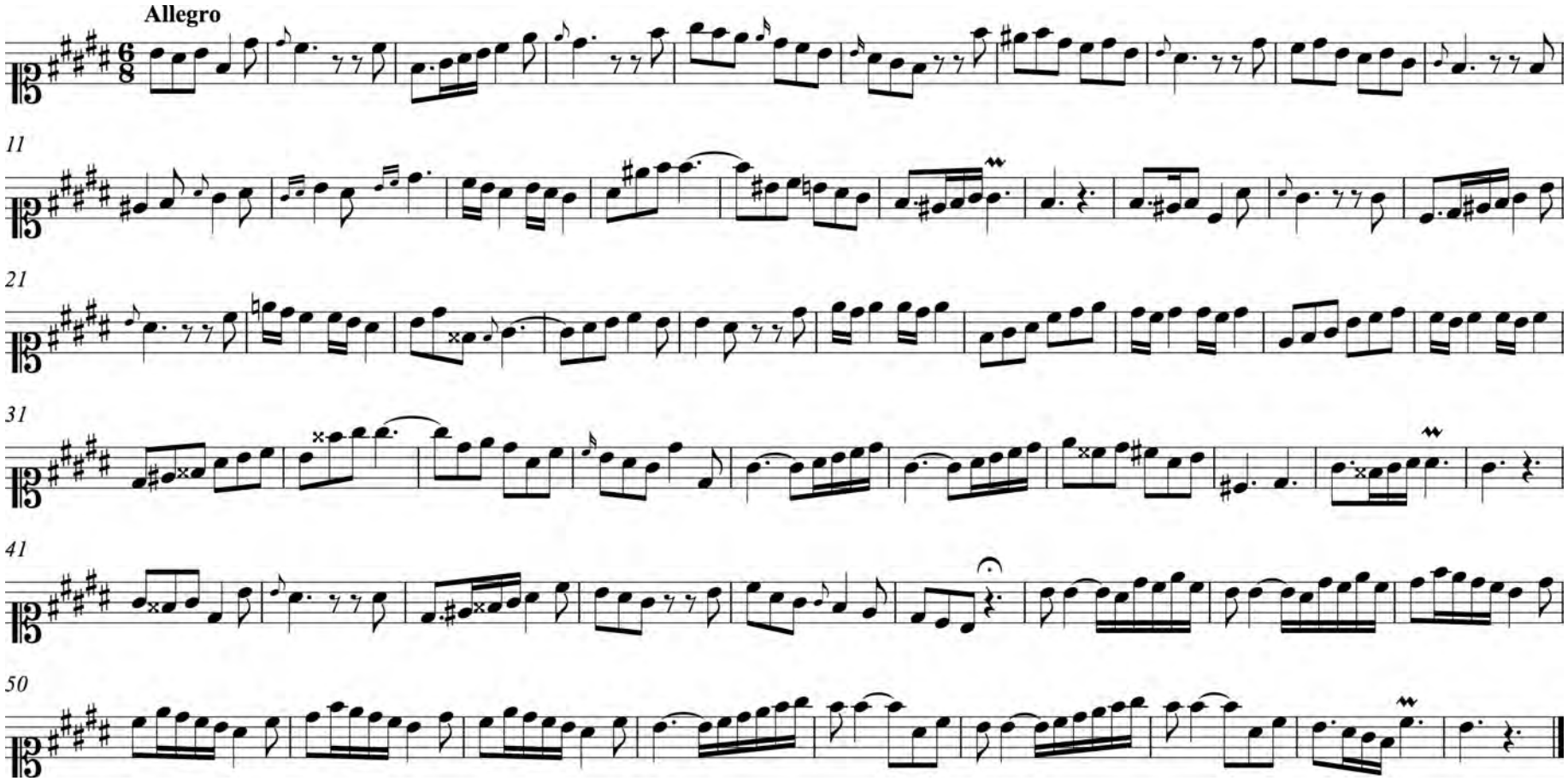

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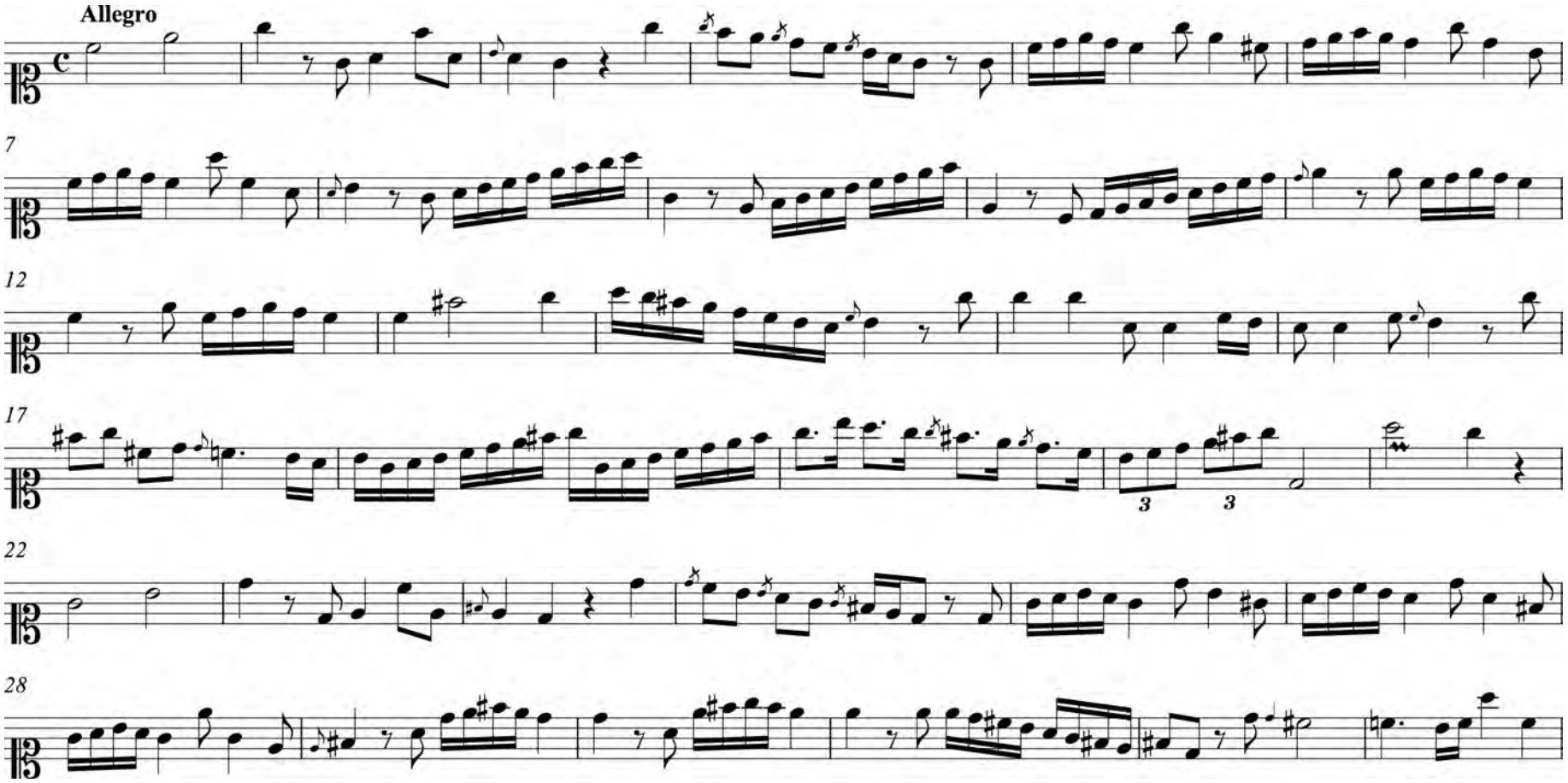

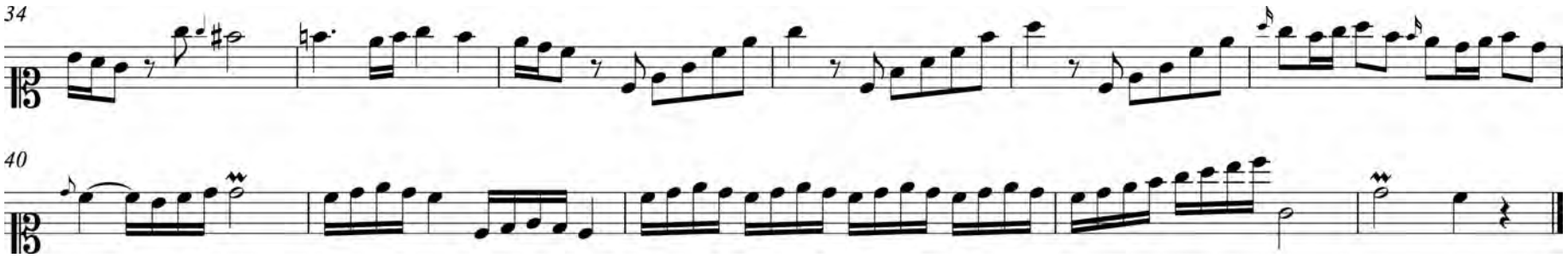
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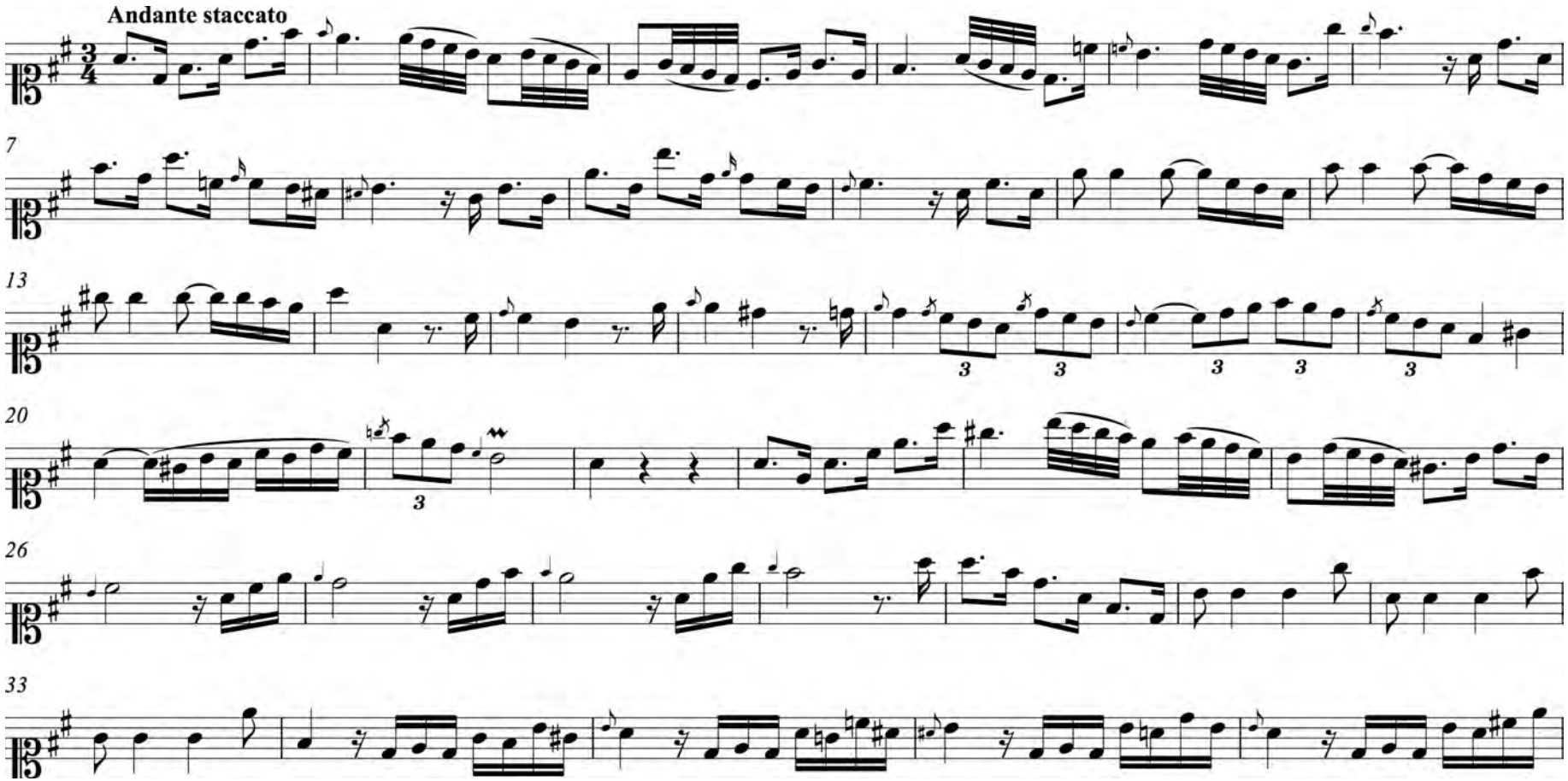

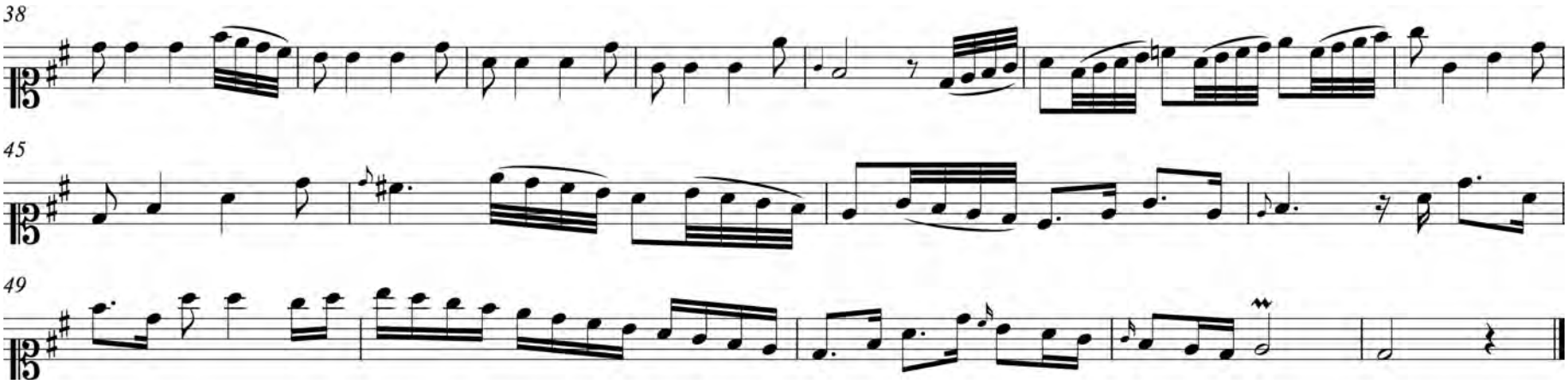
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49

(Fine)