J.S. Bach: Orchestral Suite No. 4, BWV 1069

Arranged for Piano Duet by Eleonor Bindman

J. S. Bach

Orchestral Suite No. 4

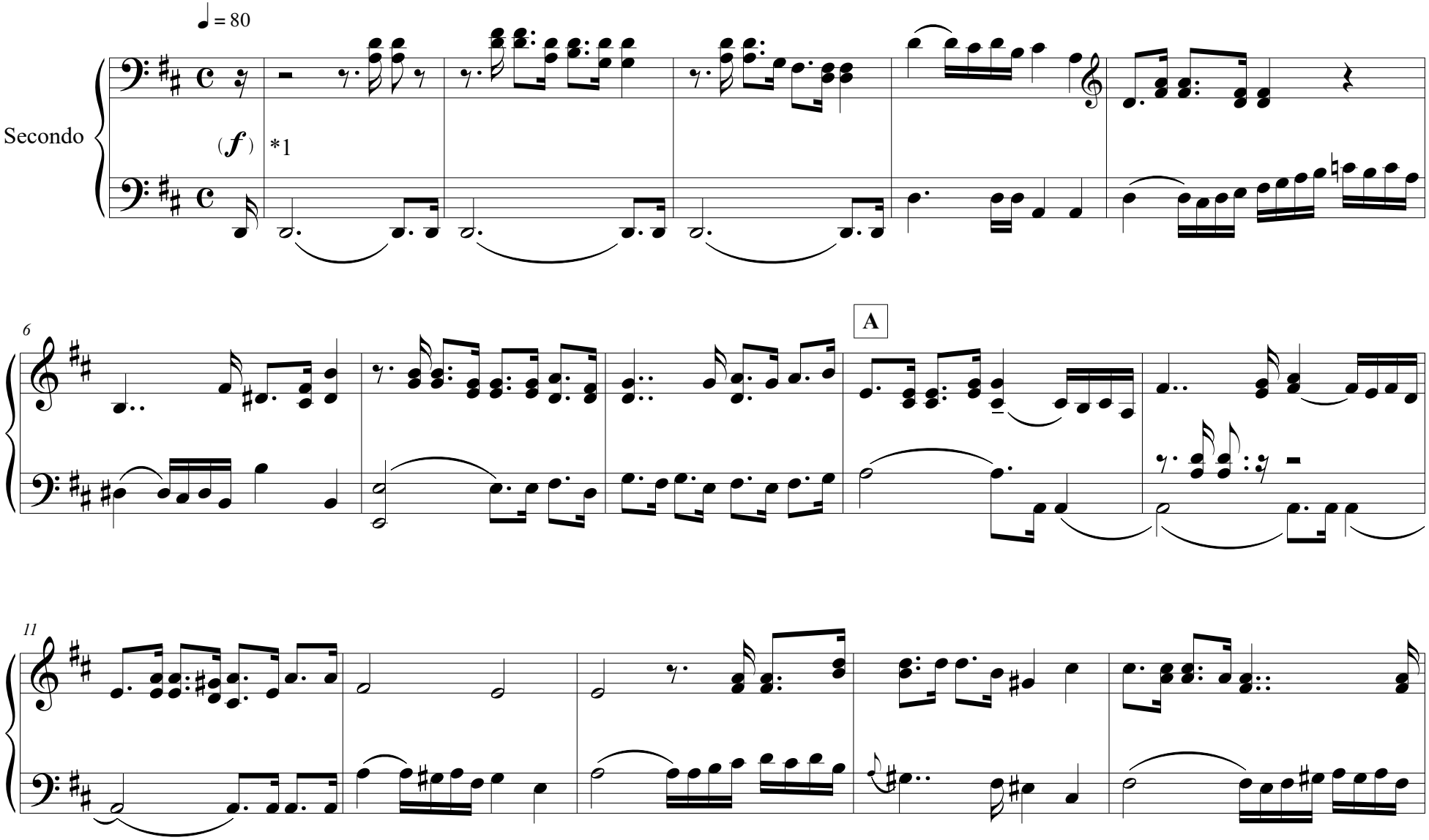
Transcribed for Piano Duet by Eleonor Bindman

Cover Illustration: “All The Flowers Are For Me”
by Anila Quayyum Agha (detail photo)

Orchestral Suite No. 4 in D Major

Overture

J.S. Bach
Arr. E. Bindman



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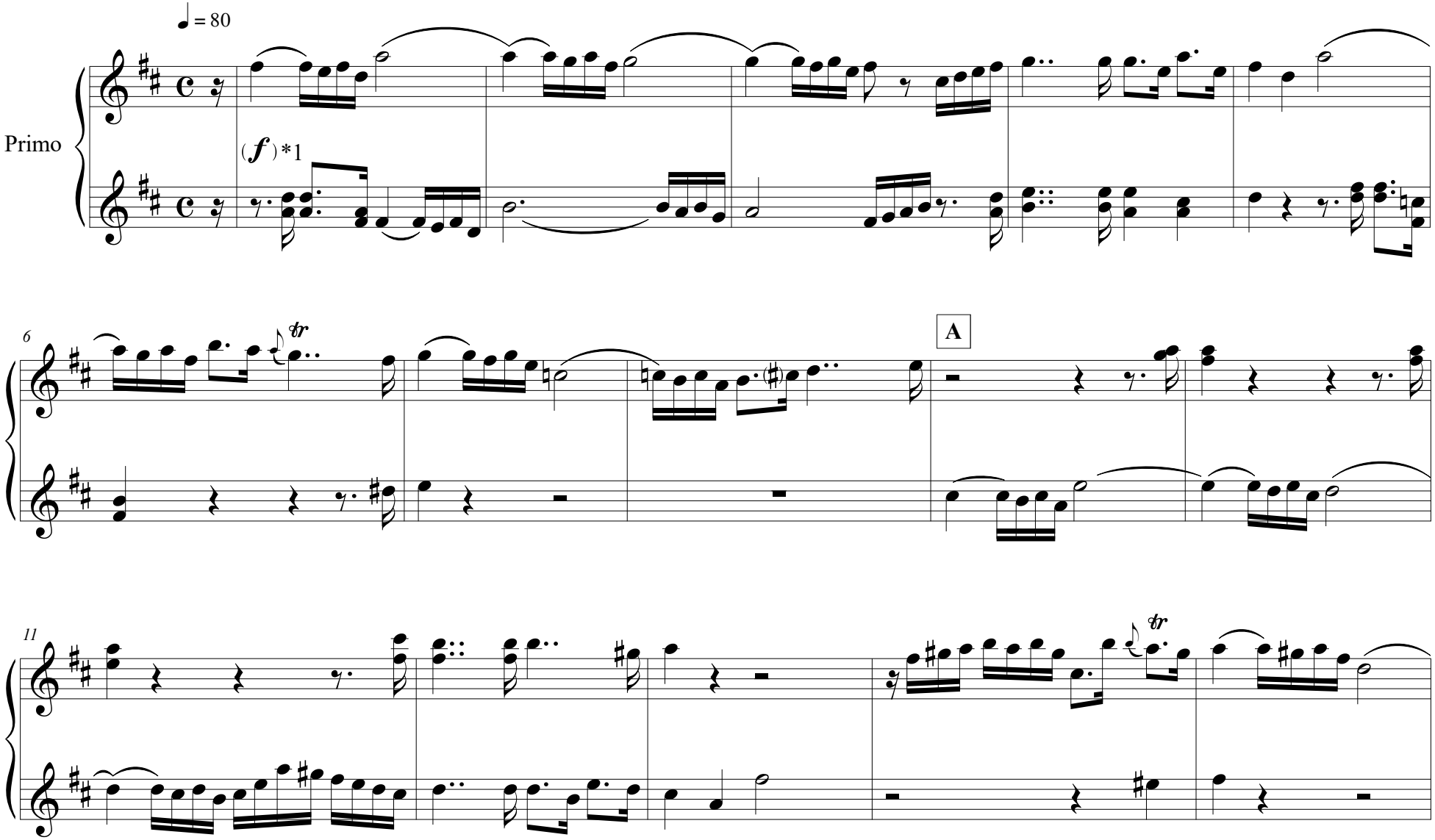
Orchestral Suite No. 4 in D Major

Overture

J.S. Bach
Arr. E. Bindman



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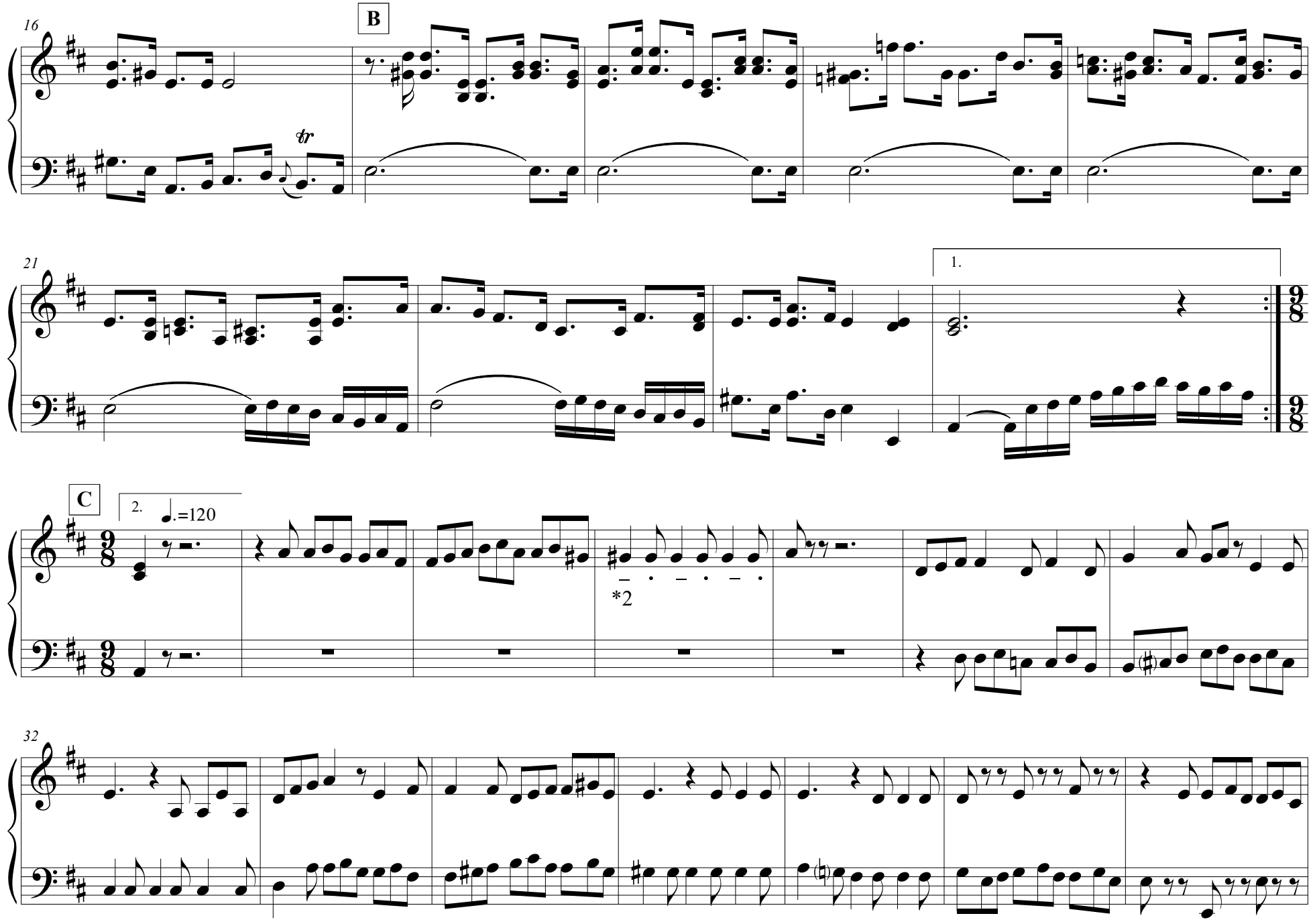
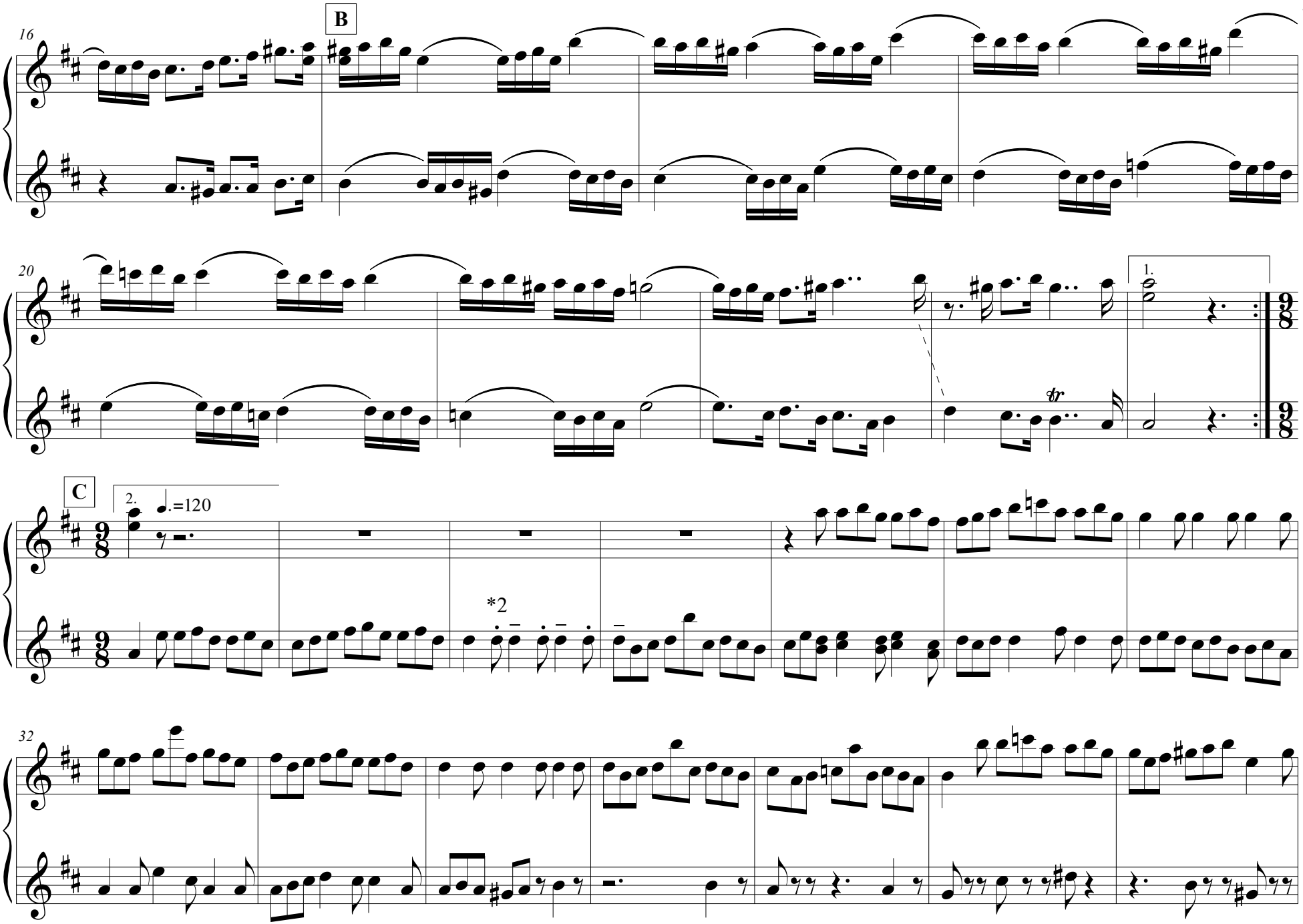
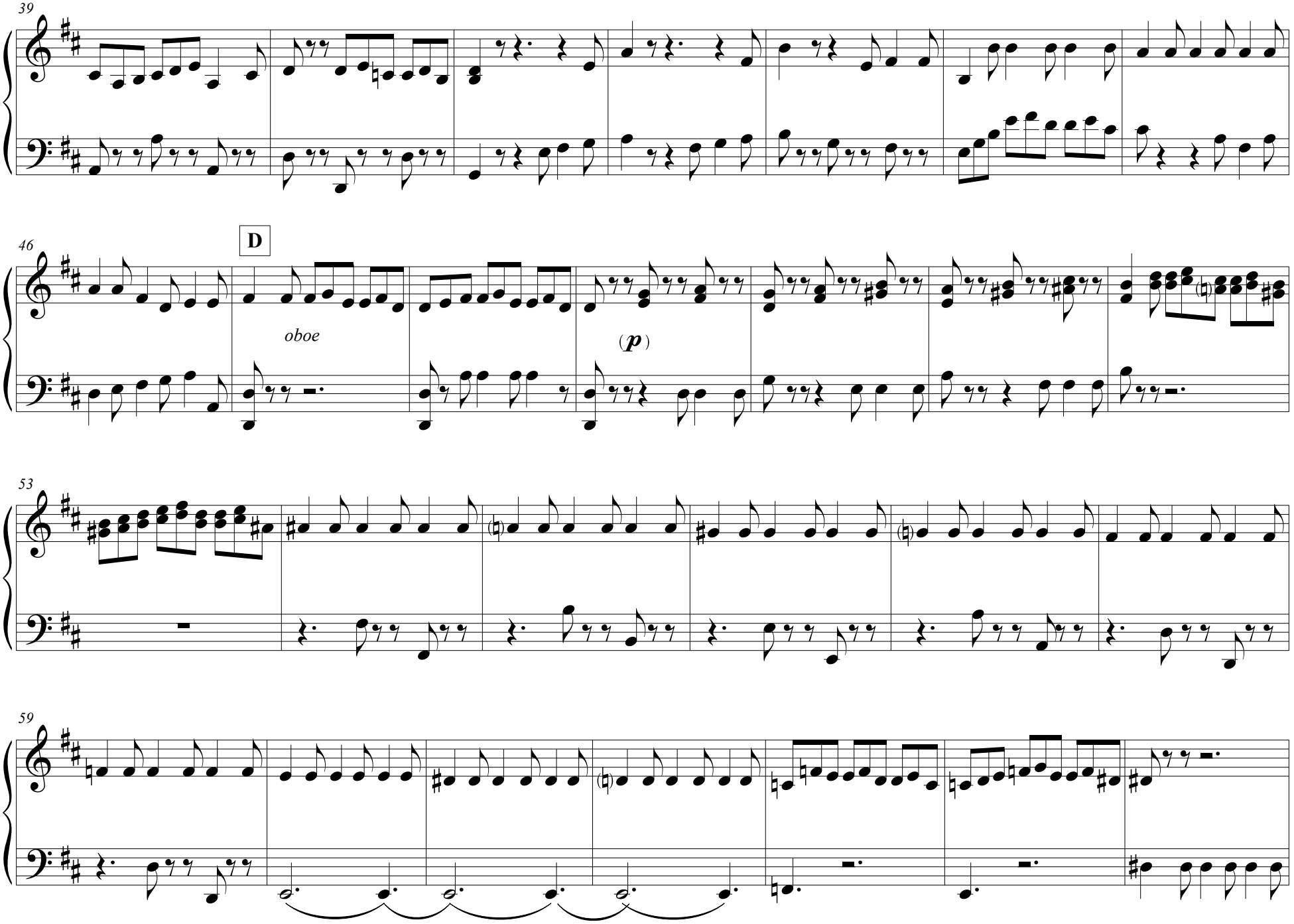
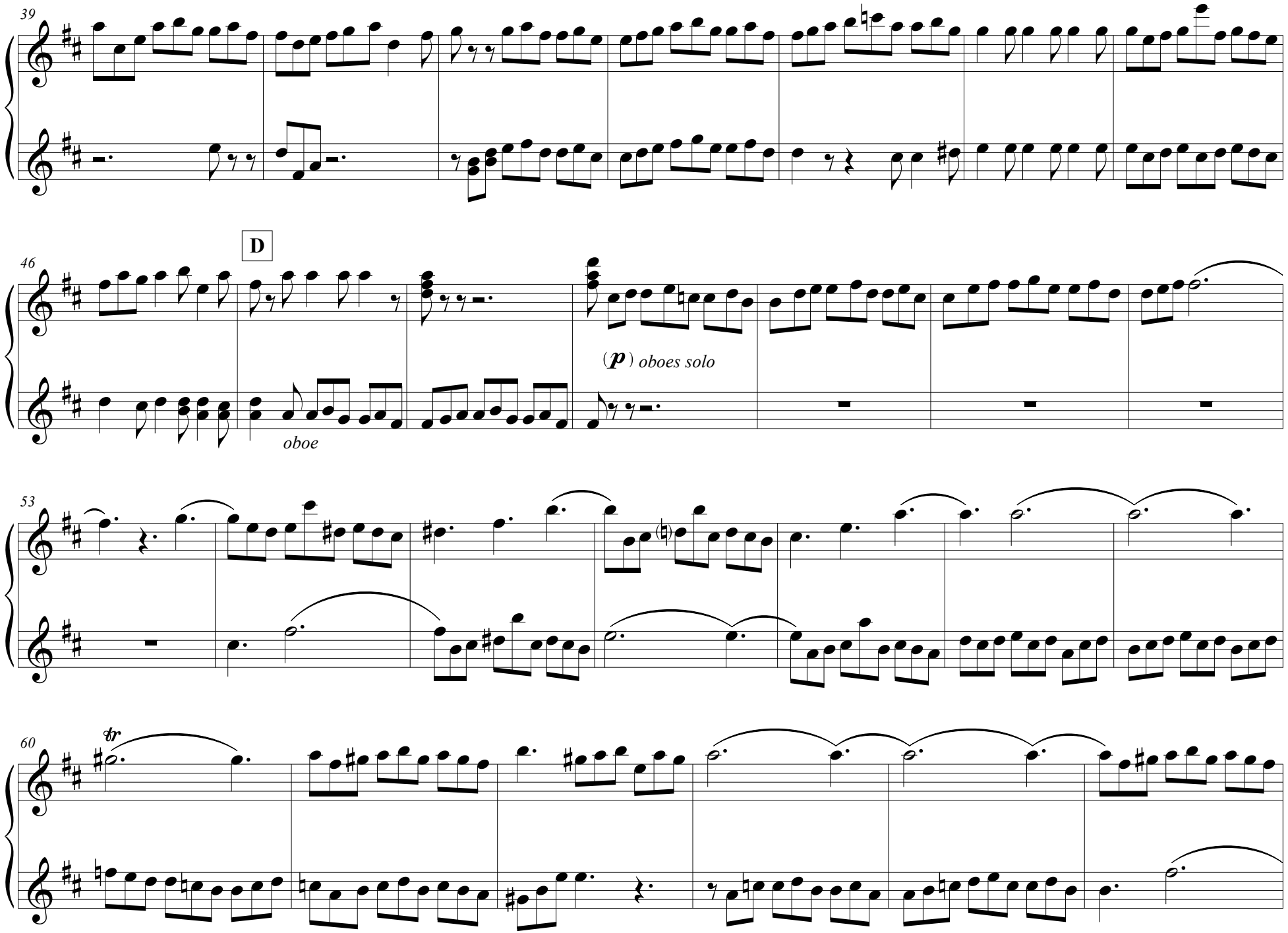
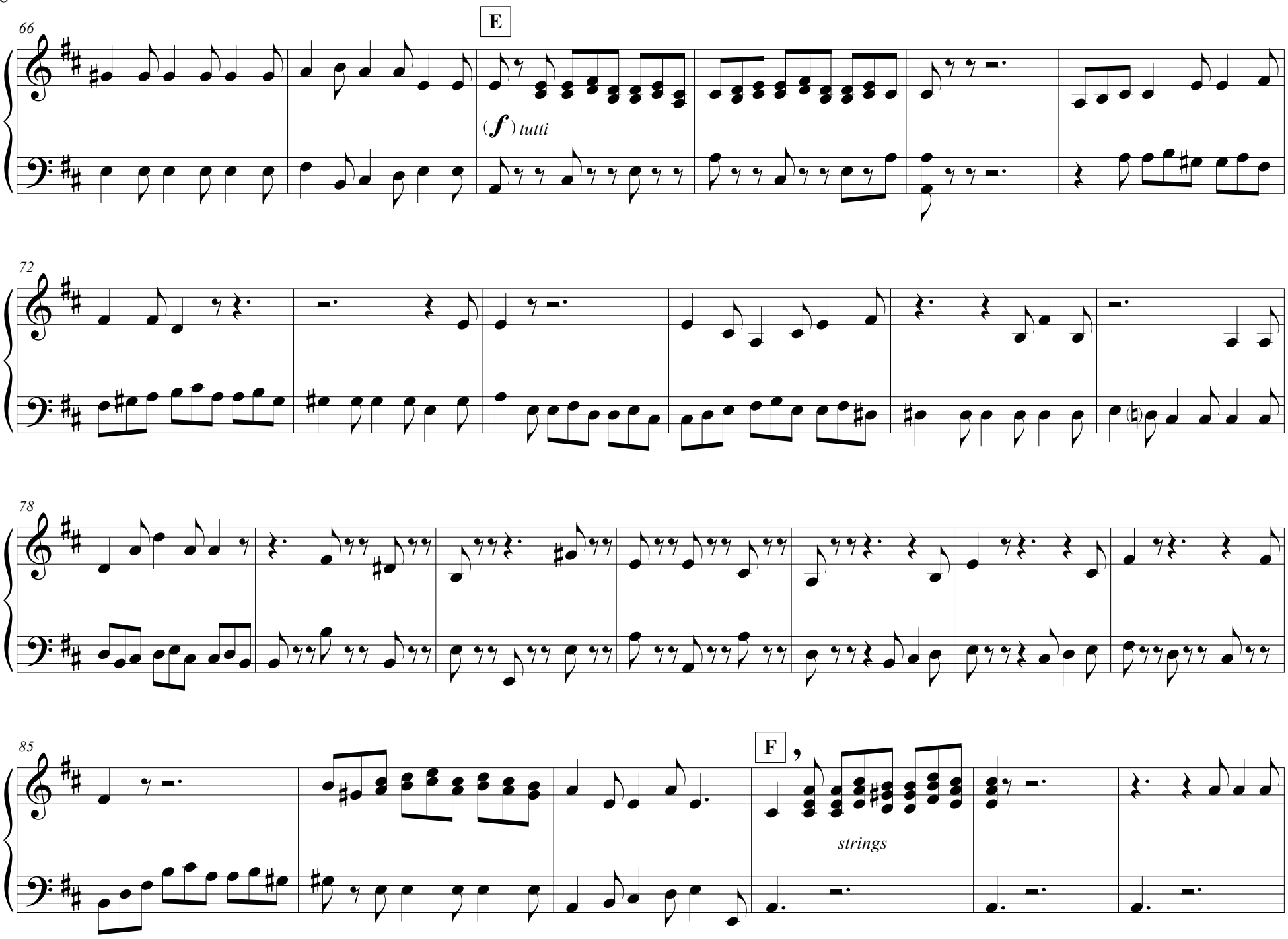
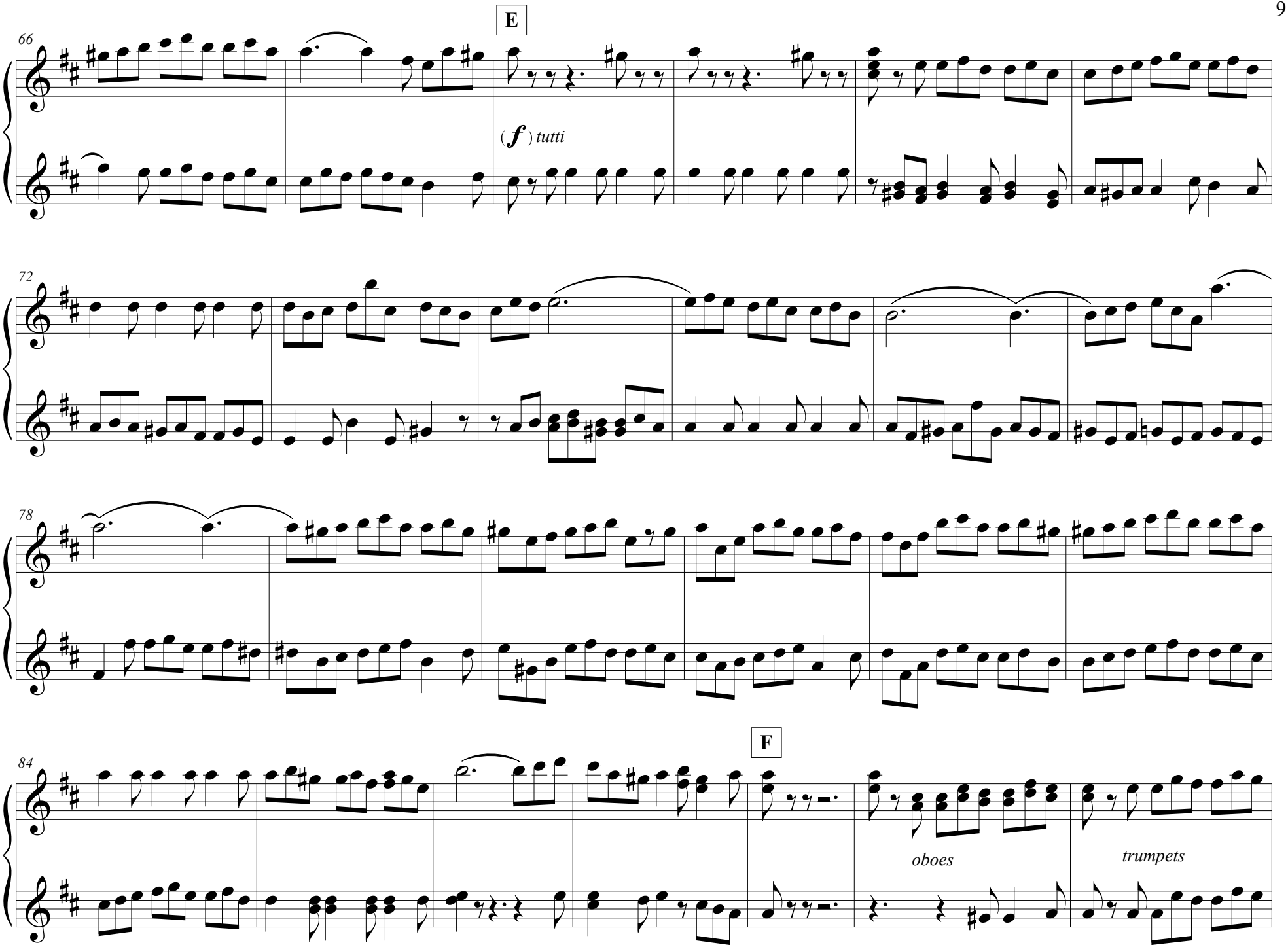

16
B
tr
21
1.
C
2.
♩.=120
*2
32

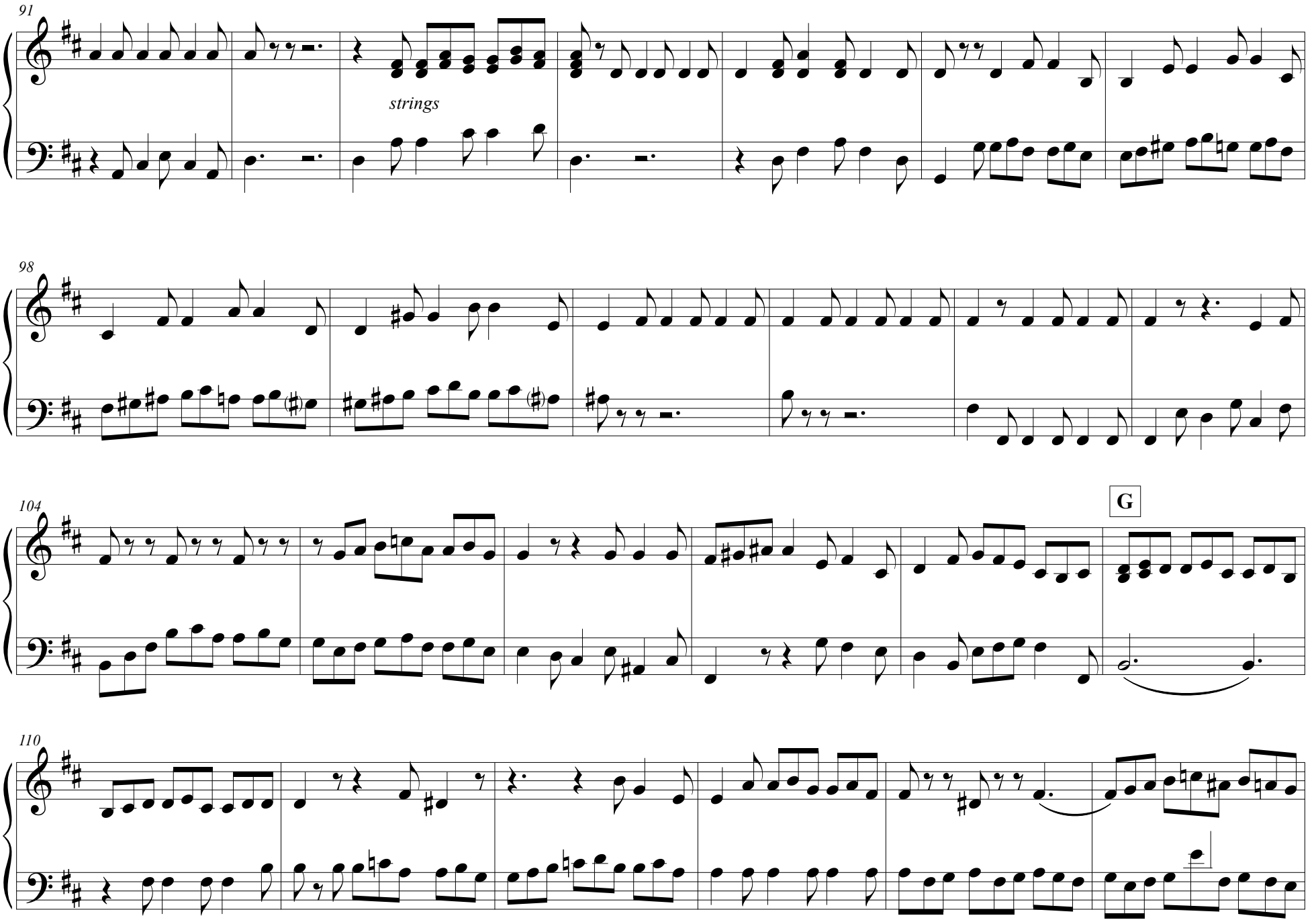

16
B
20
1.
C
2.
♩.=120
*2
32

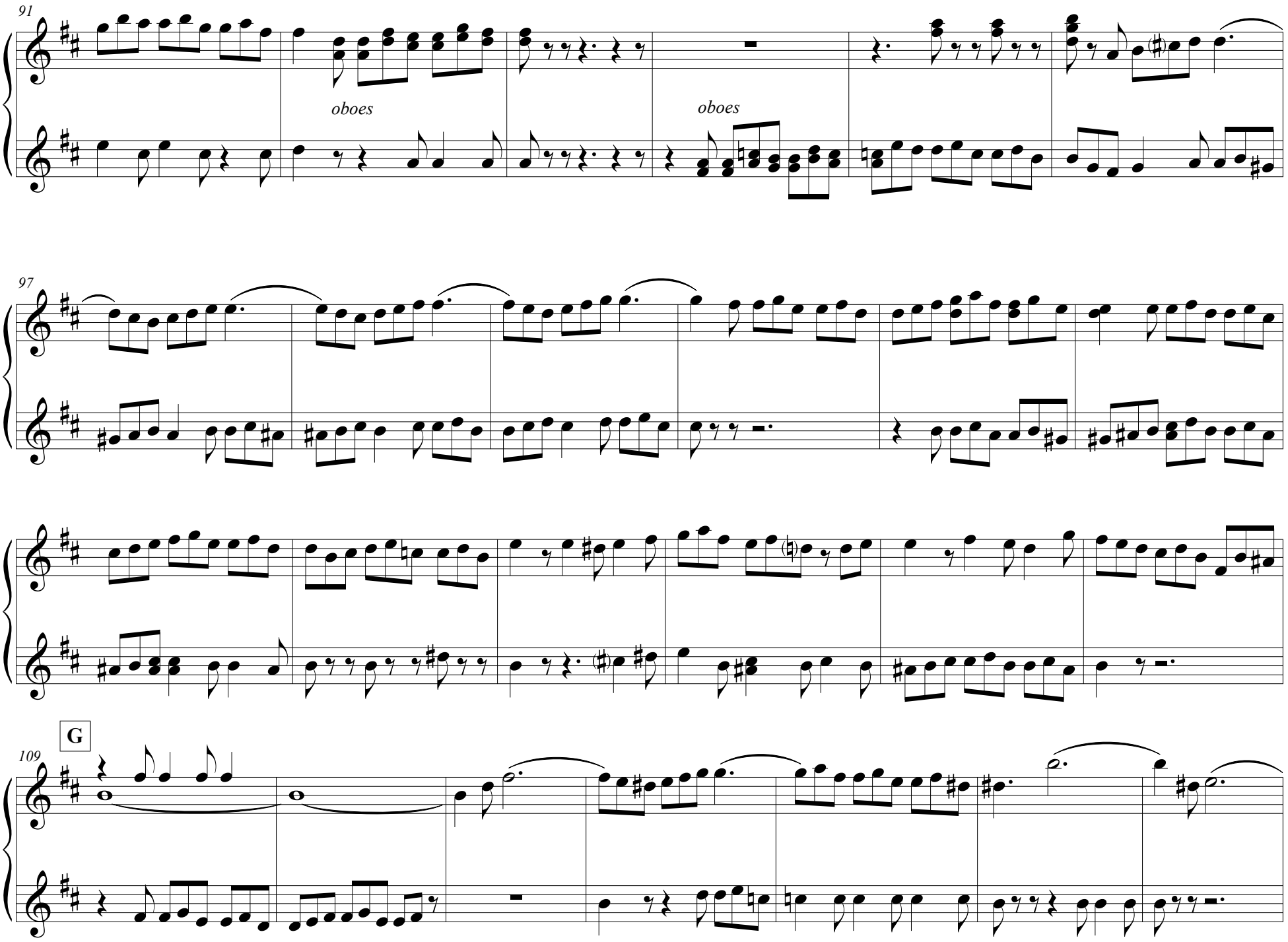

39
46
D
oboe
(p)
53
59

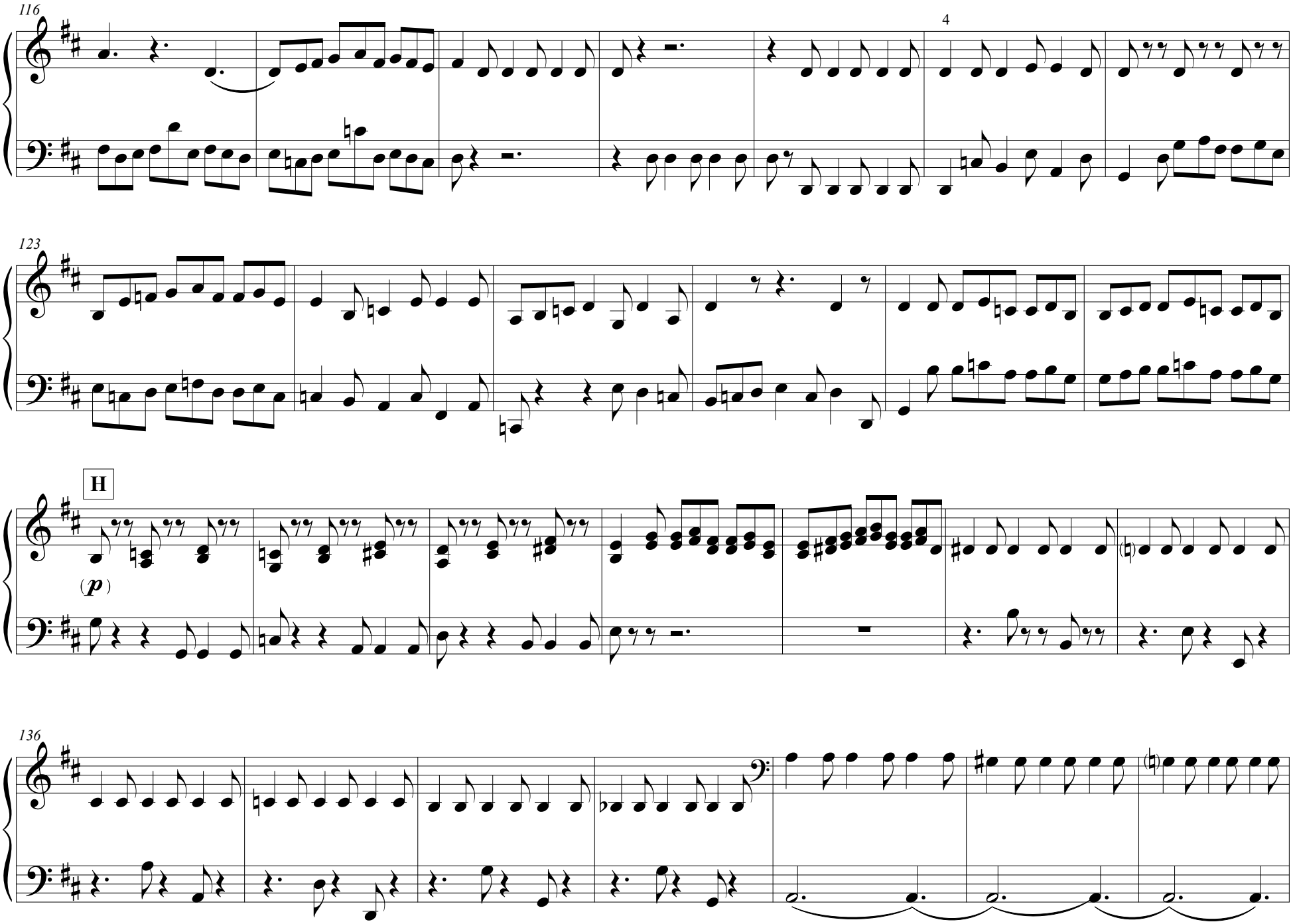

39
46
D
(p) oboes solo
oboe
53
60
tr

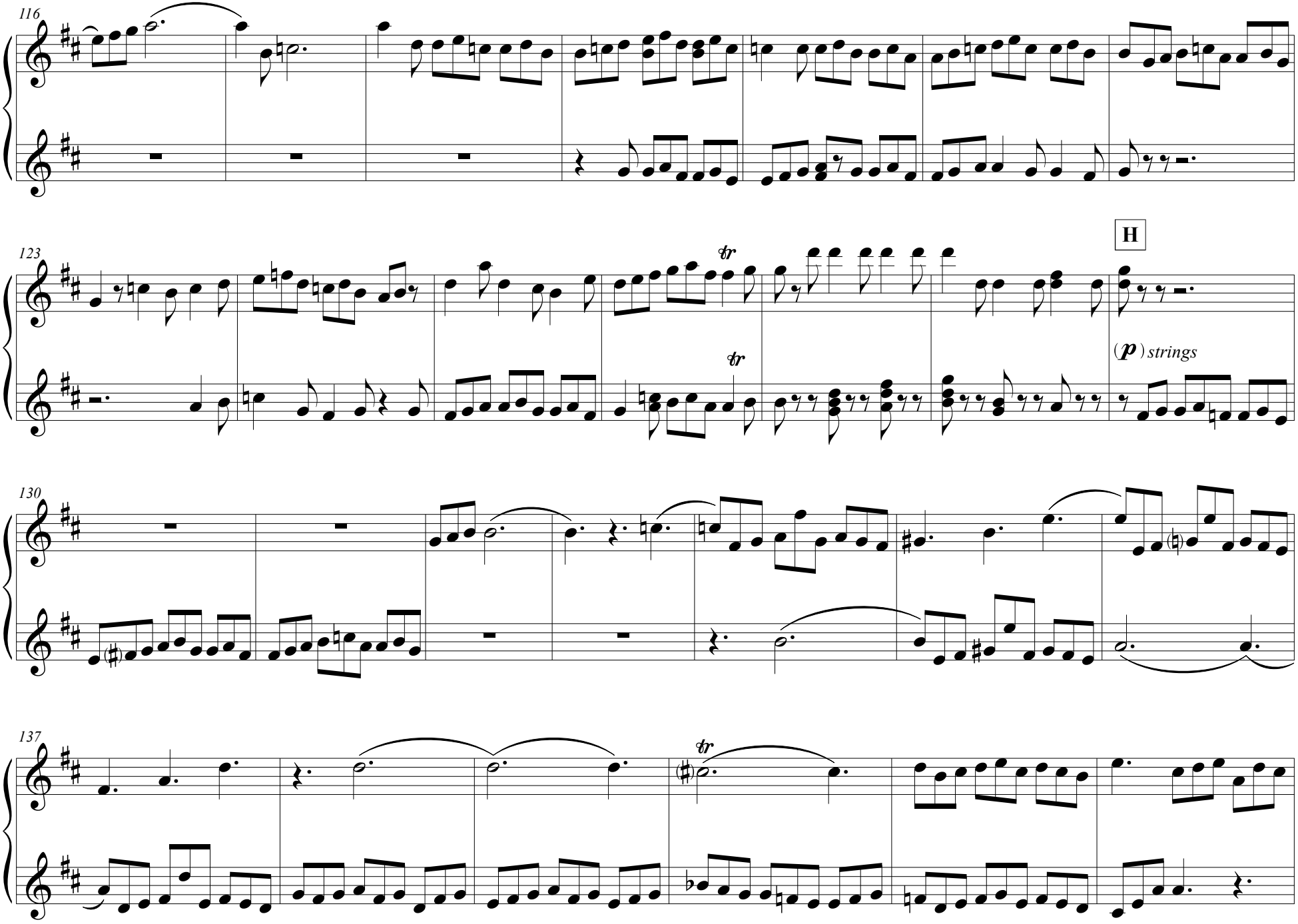

66
E
(f) tutti
72
78
85
F
strings

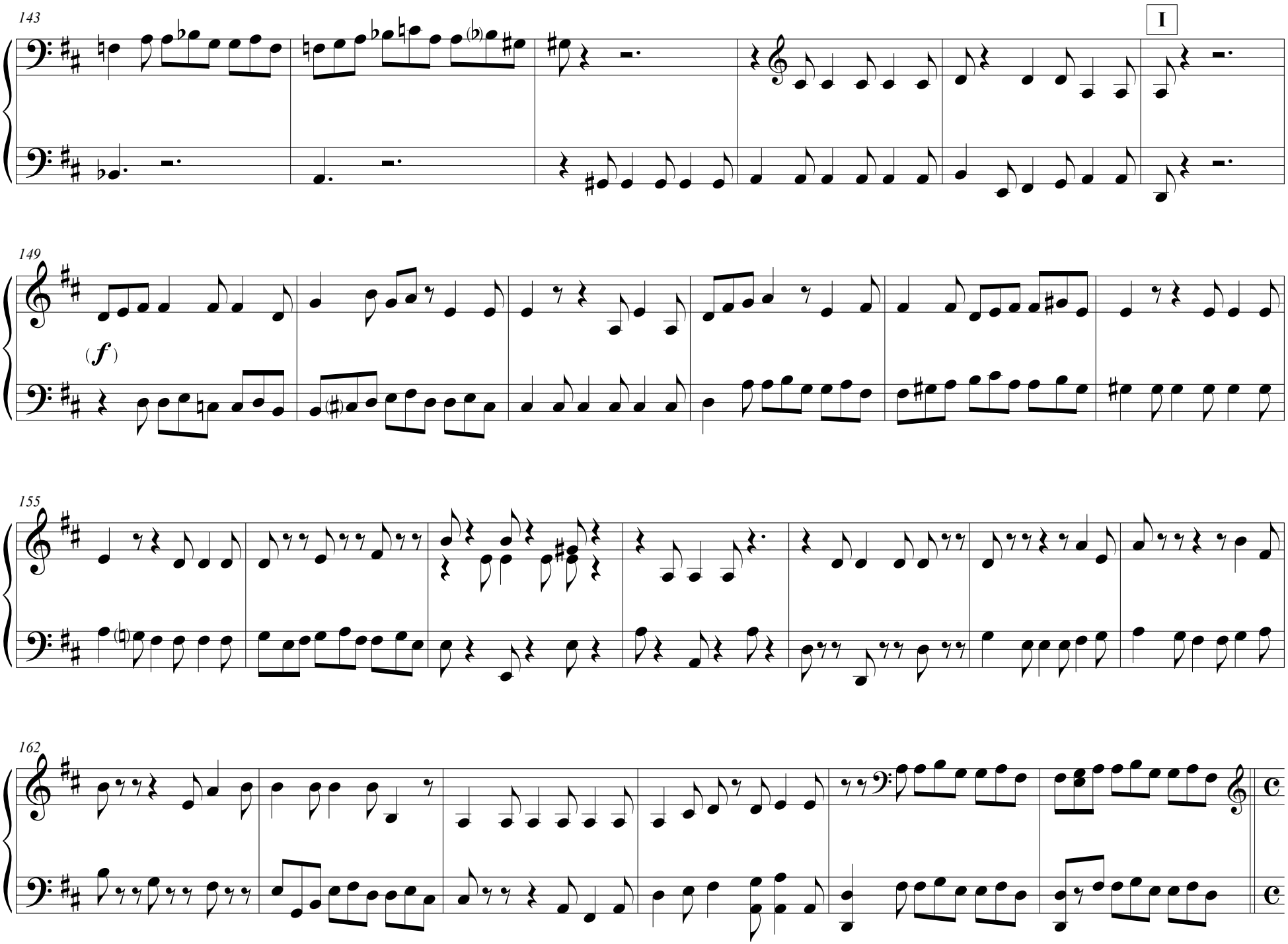

E
66
(f) tutti
72
78
F
84
oboes
trumpets

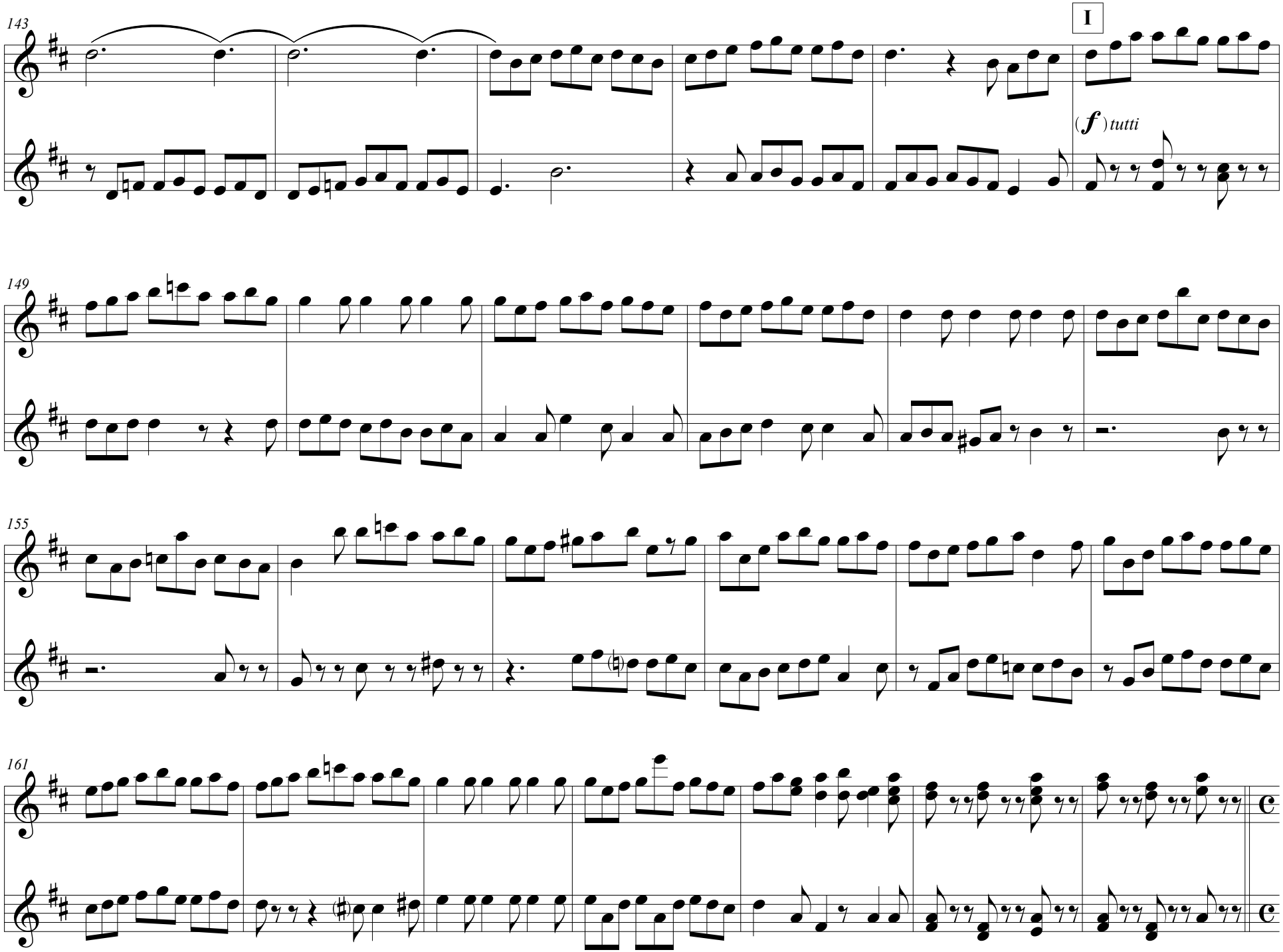

91
strings
98
104
G
110

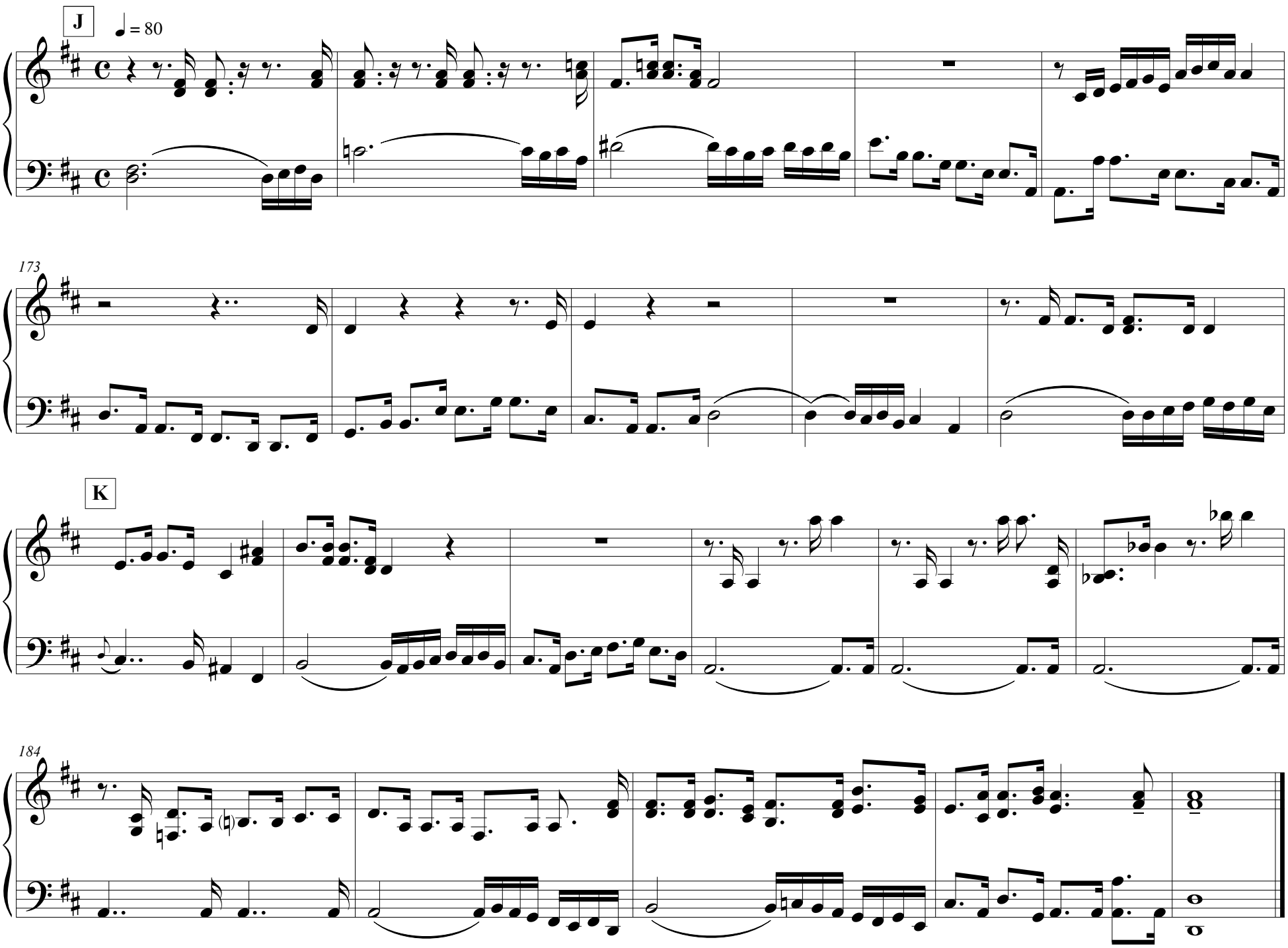

91
oboes
oboes
97
G
109

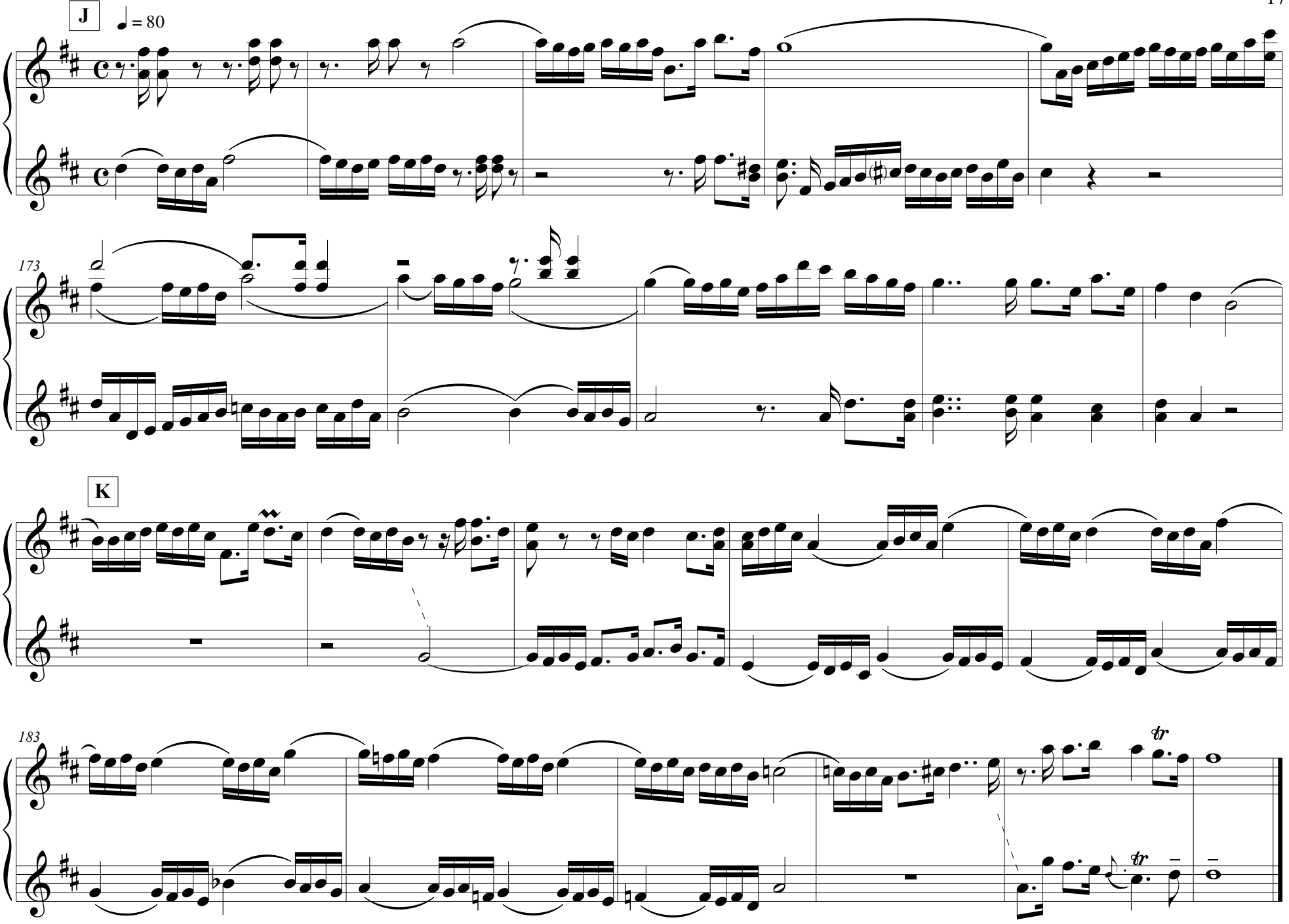

116
4
123
H
(p)
136


116
123
H
(p) strings
130
137


143
I
149
(f)
155
162

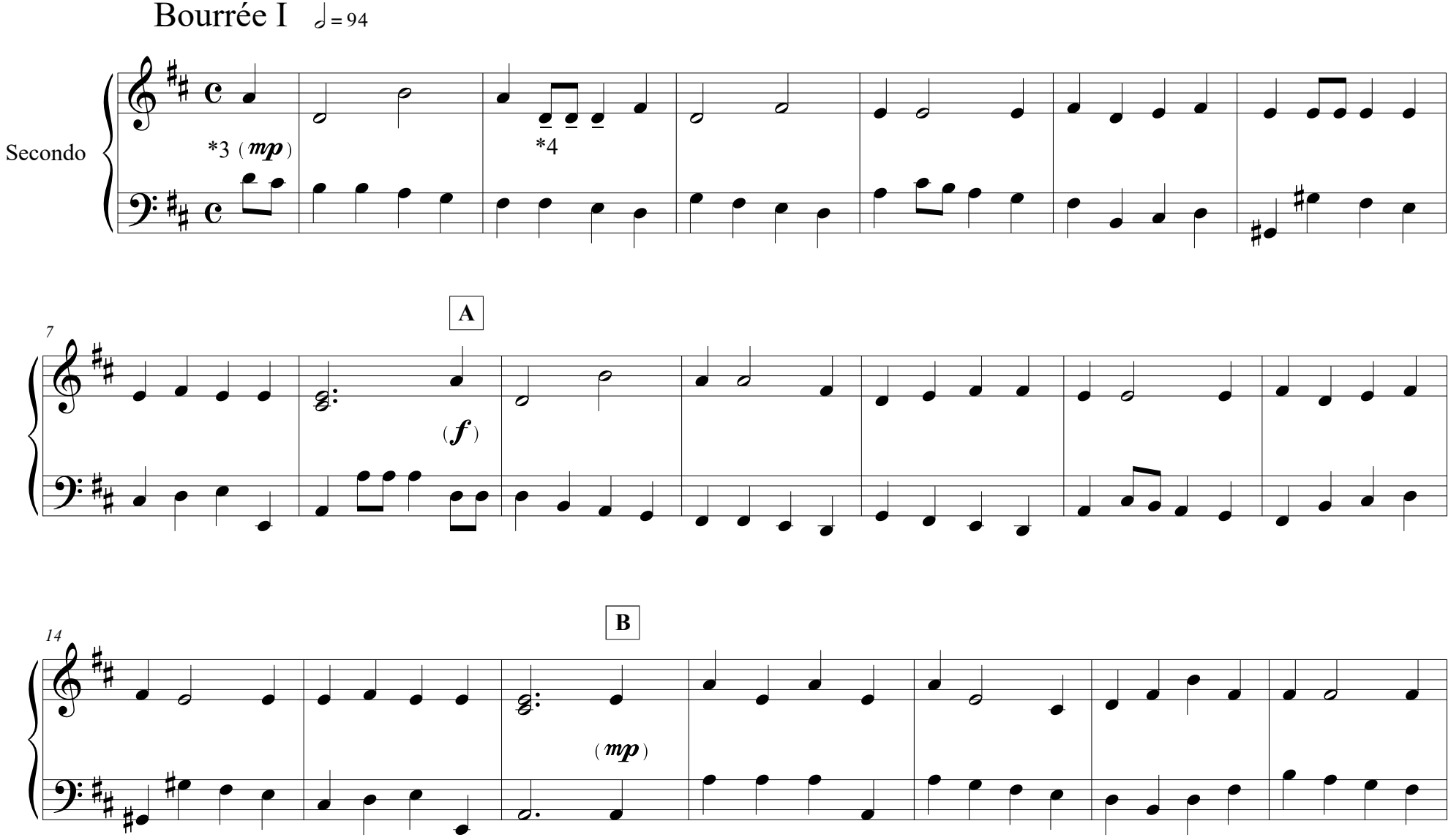

143
I
(f) tutti
149
155
161


J
= 80
173
K
184


J
♩ = 80
173
K
183

Bourrées

Bourrée I



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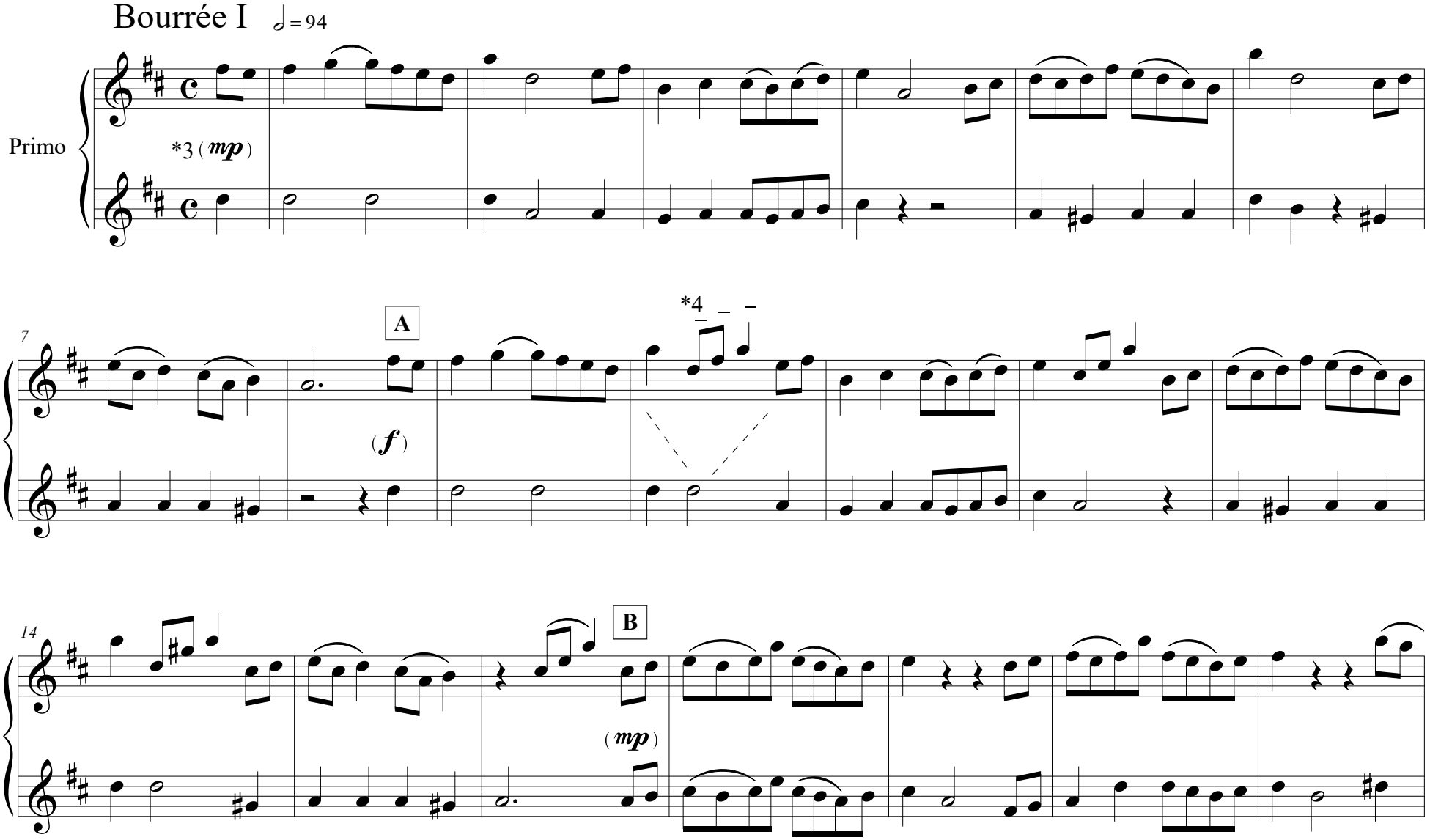
Bourrées

Bourrée I



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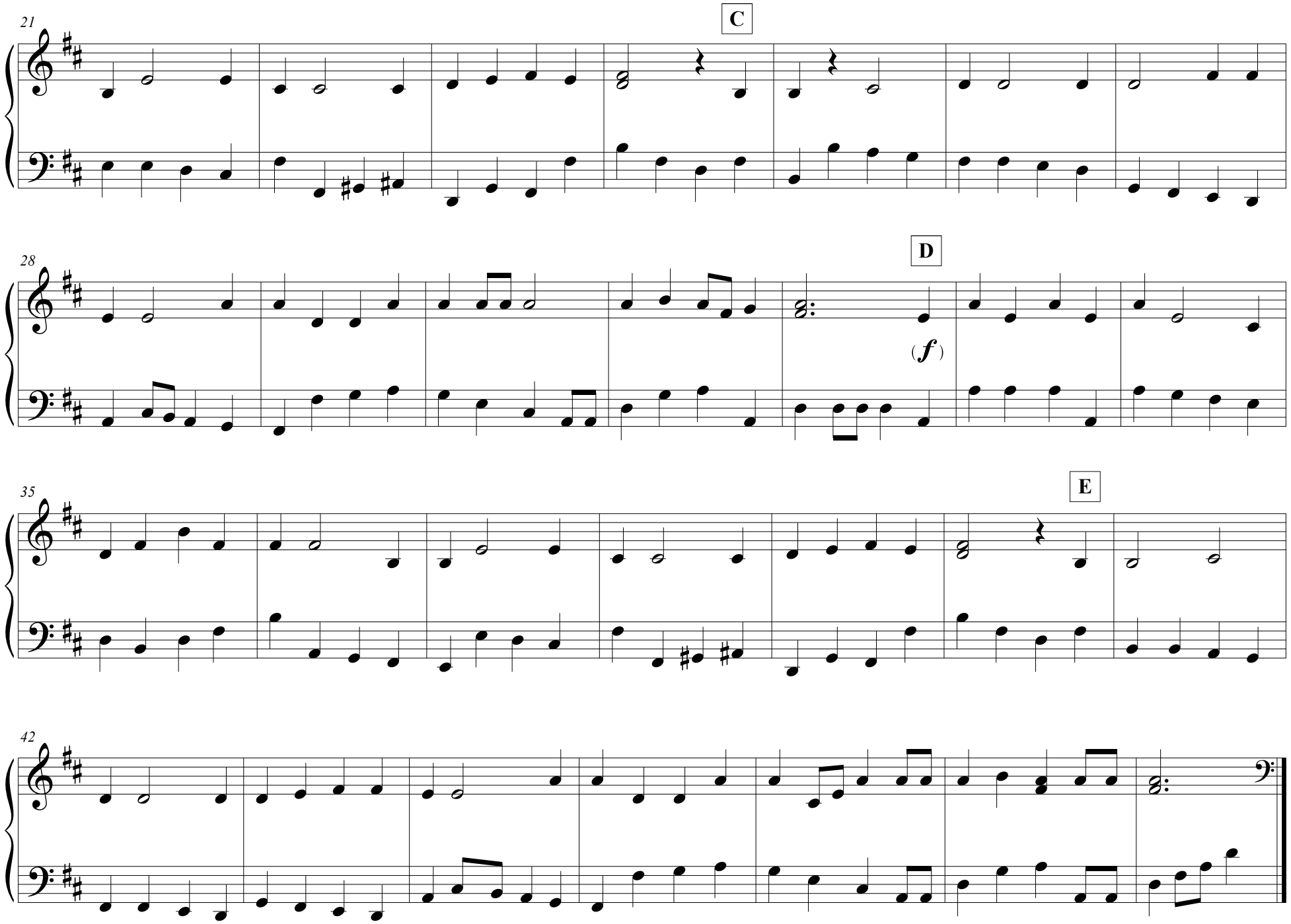
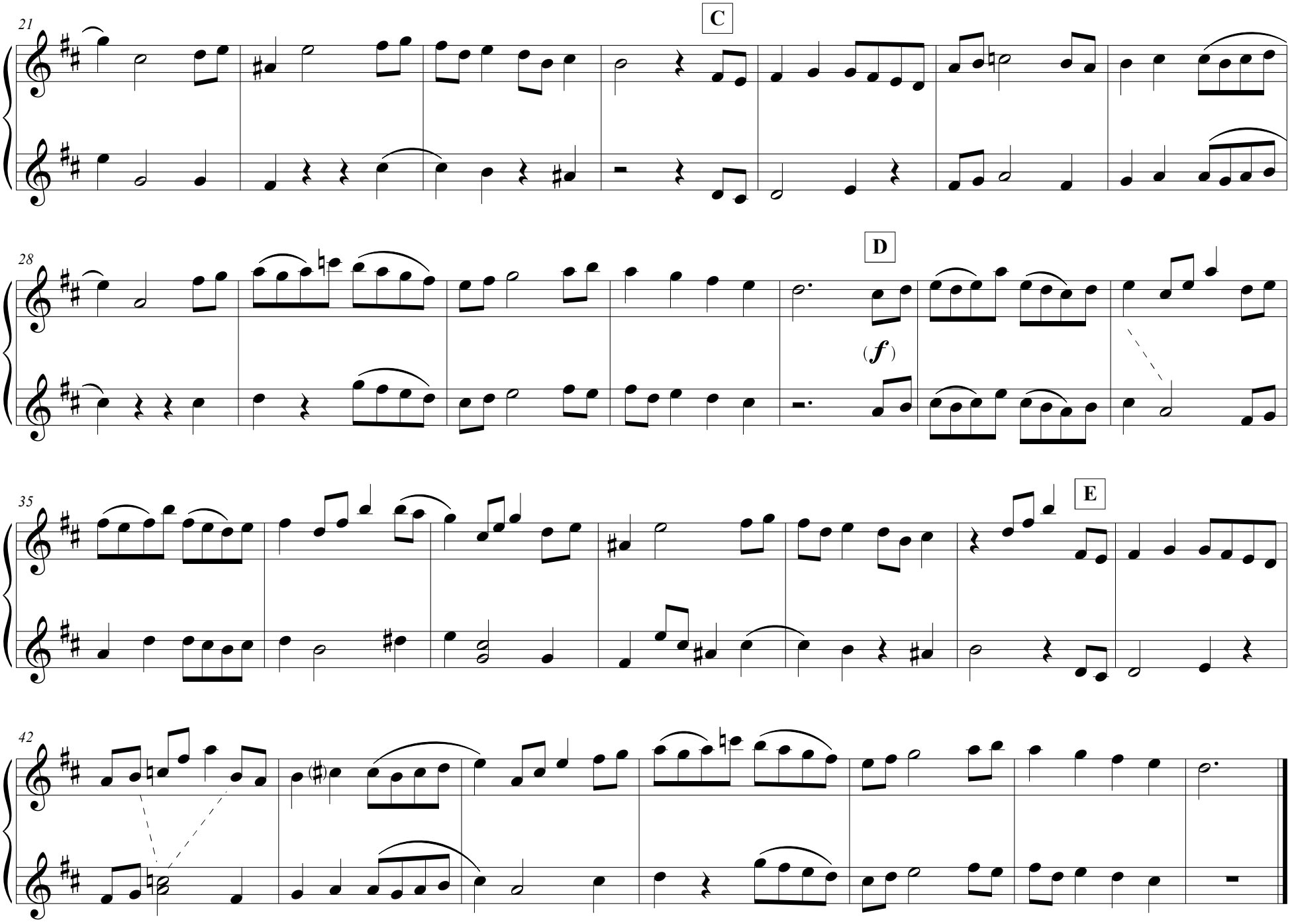

21
C
28
D
(f)
35
E
42


21
C
28
D
(f)
35
E
42

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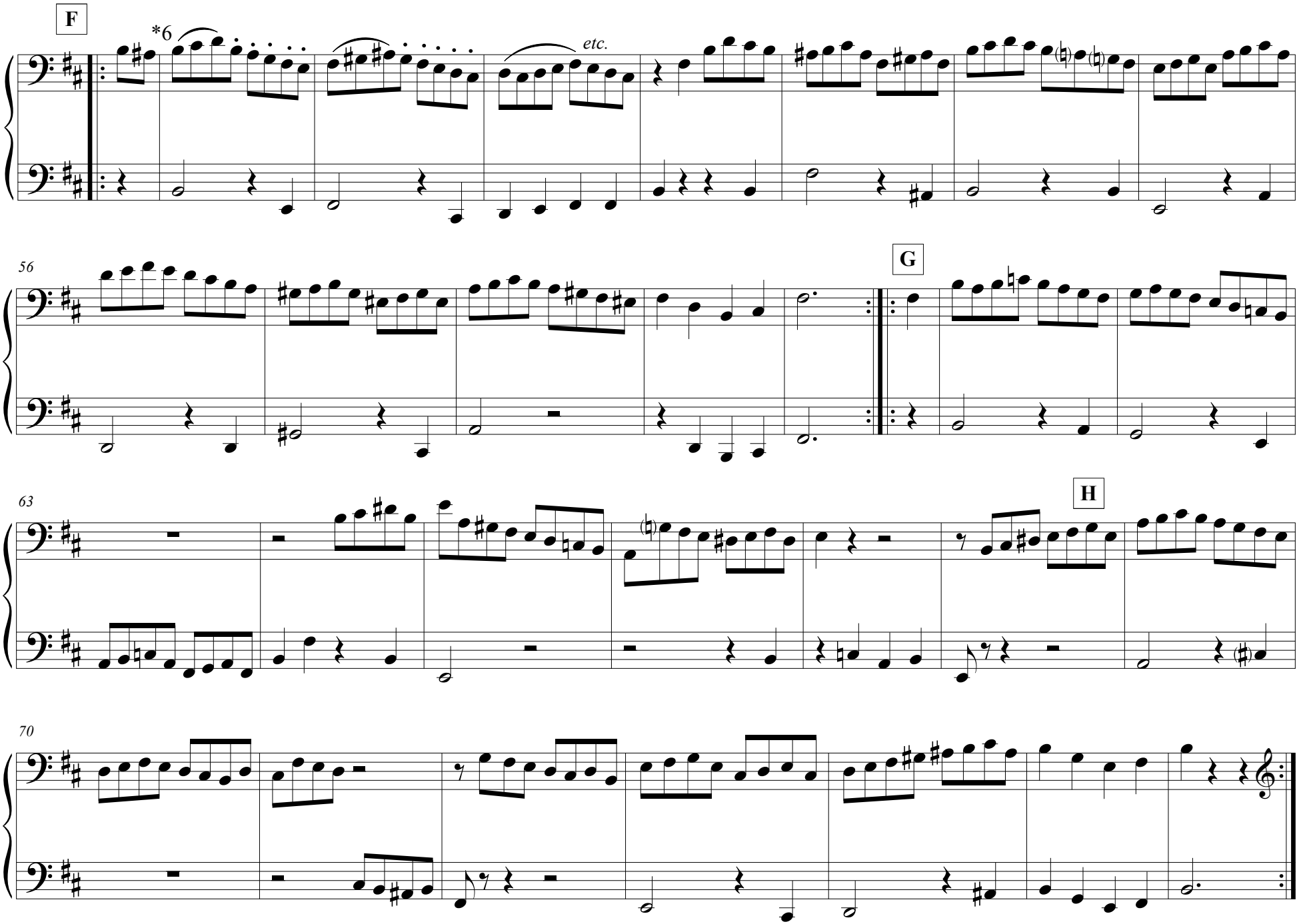
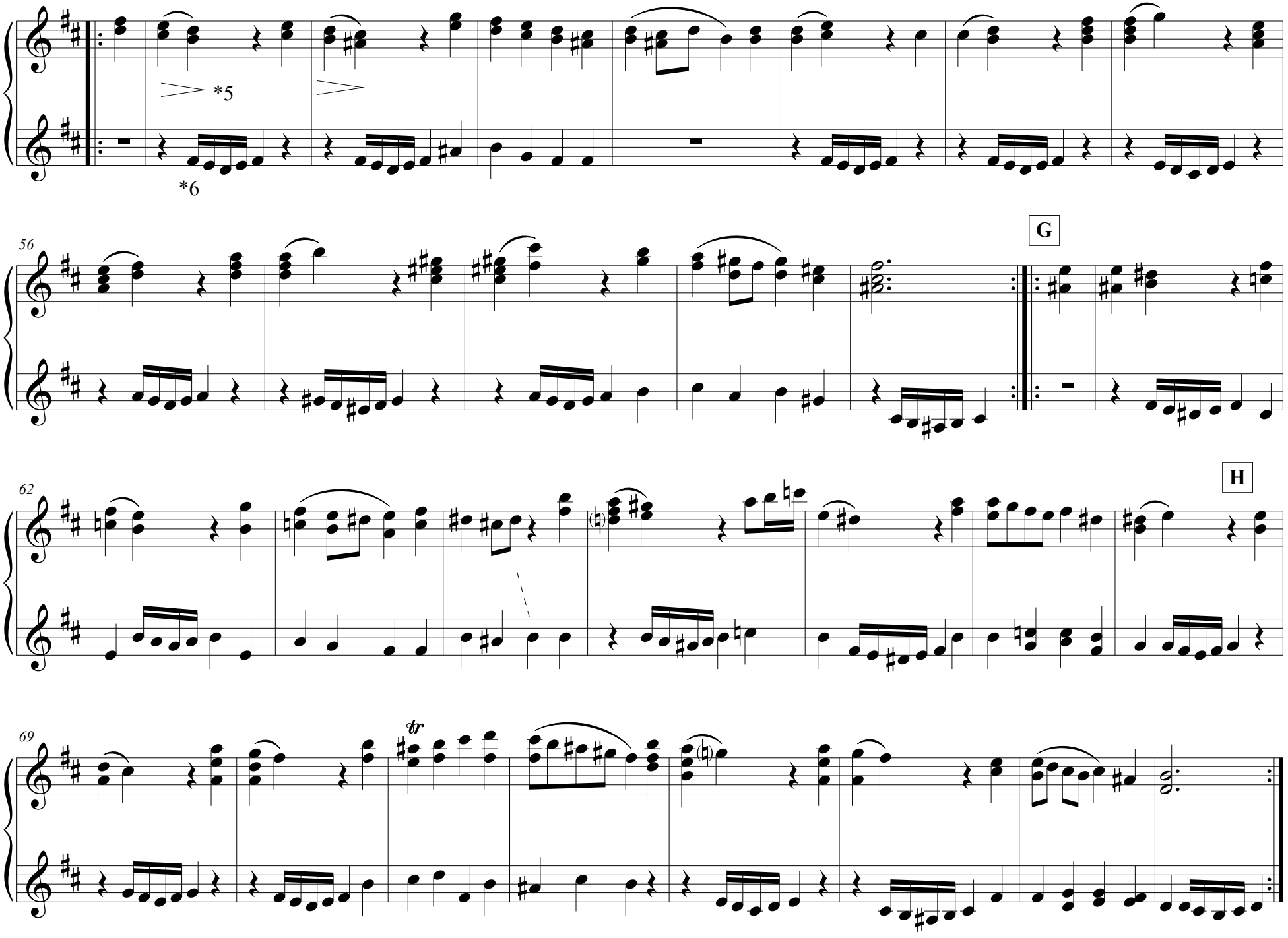
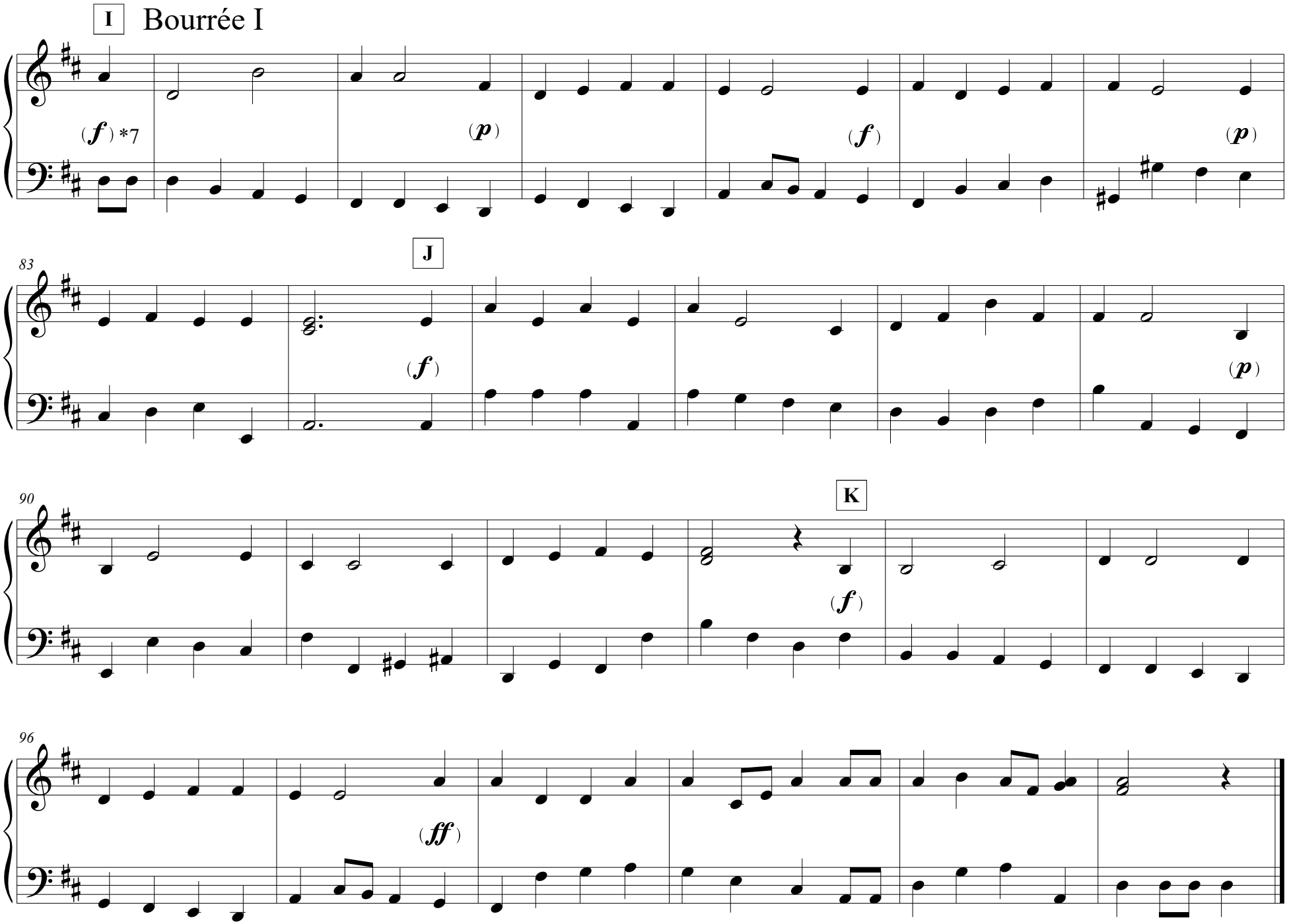
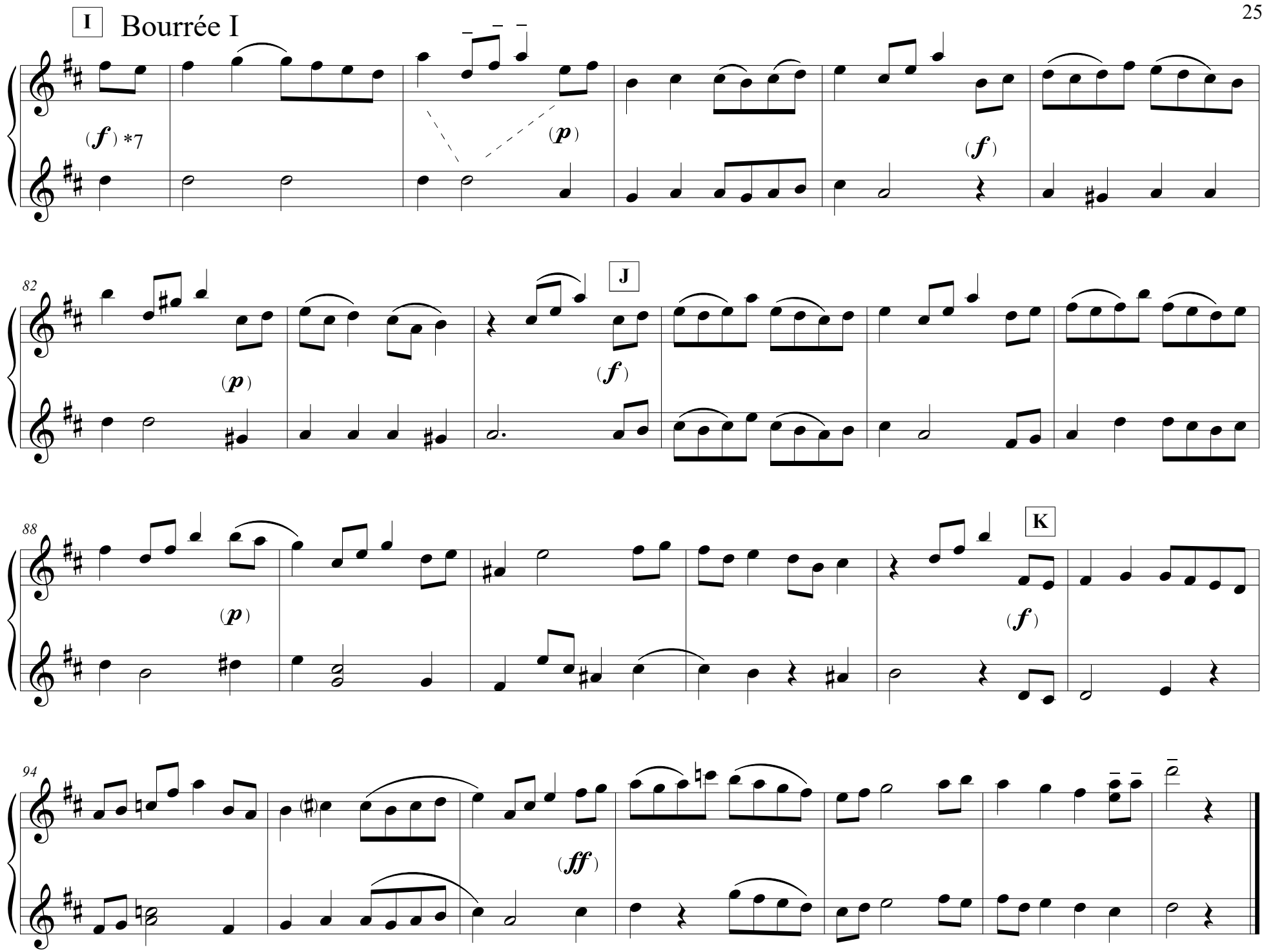


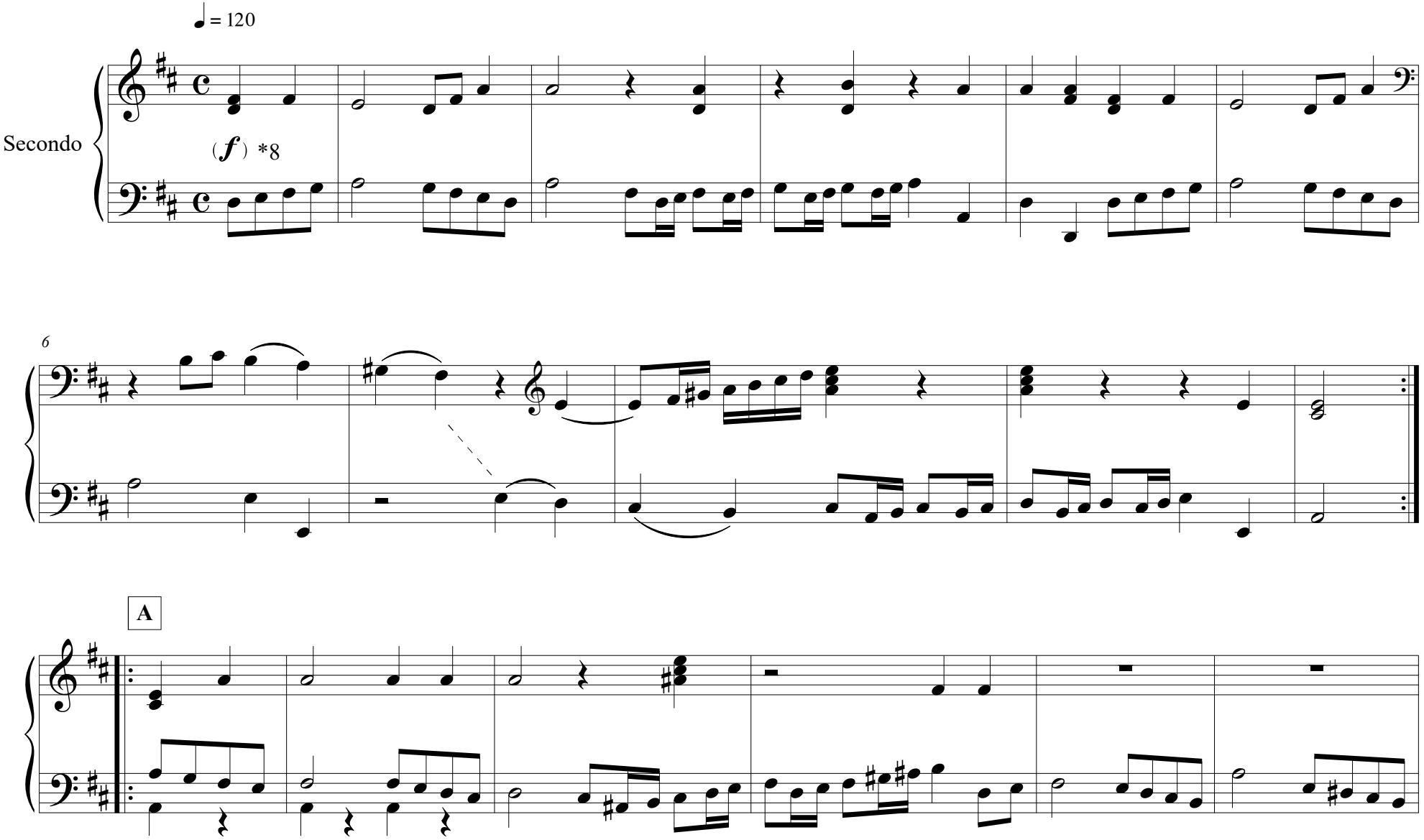
F Bourrée II




I
Bourrée I
(f) *7
(p)
(f)
(p)
83
J
(f)
(p)
90
K
(f)
96
(ff)


I
Bourrée I
(f) *7
(p)
(f)
82
J
(p)
(f)
88
K
(p)
(f)
94
(ff)

Gavotte



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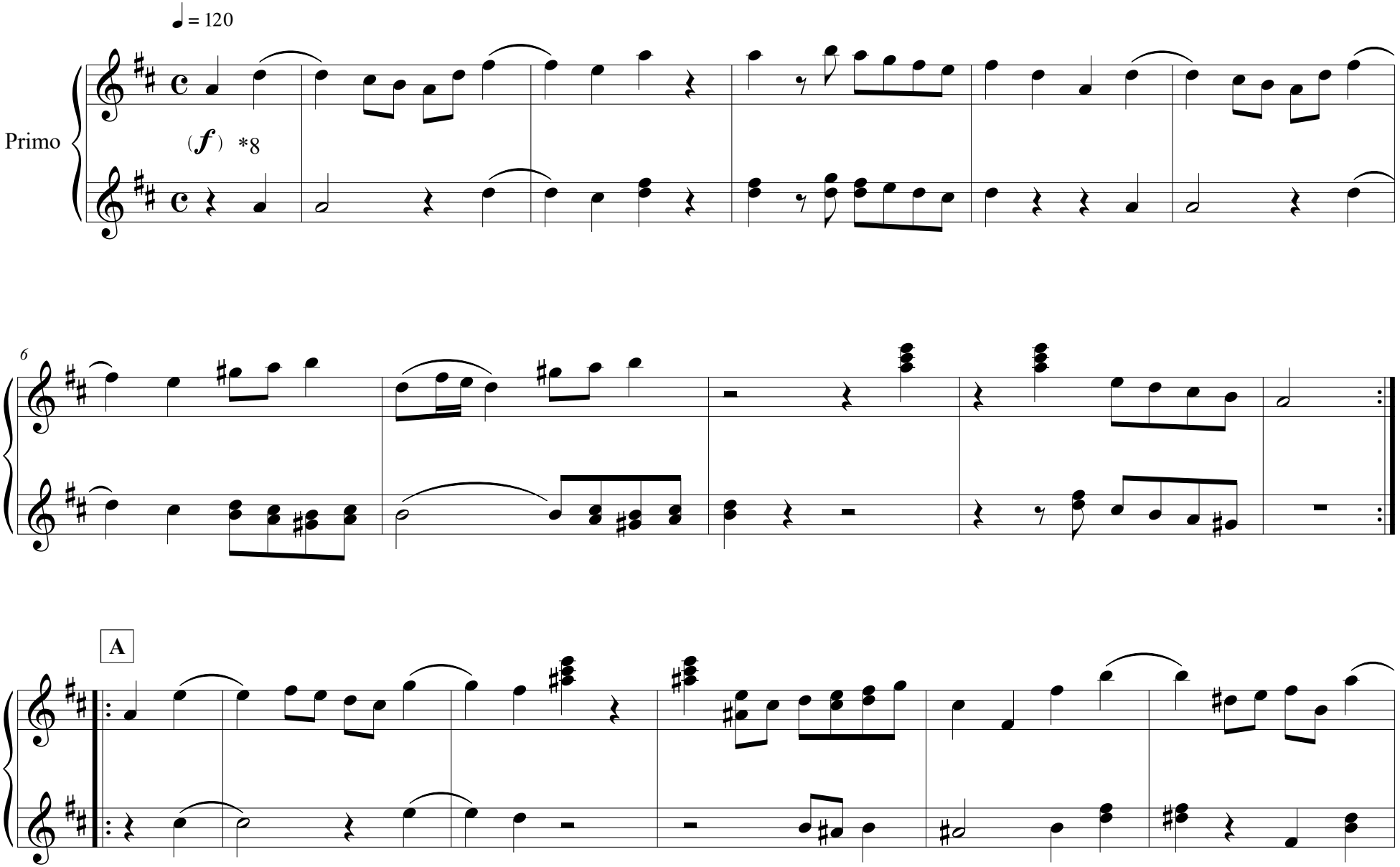
Gavotte



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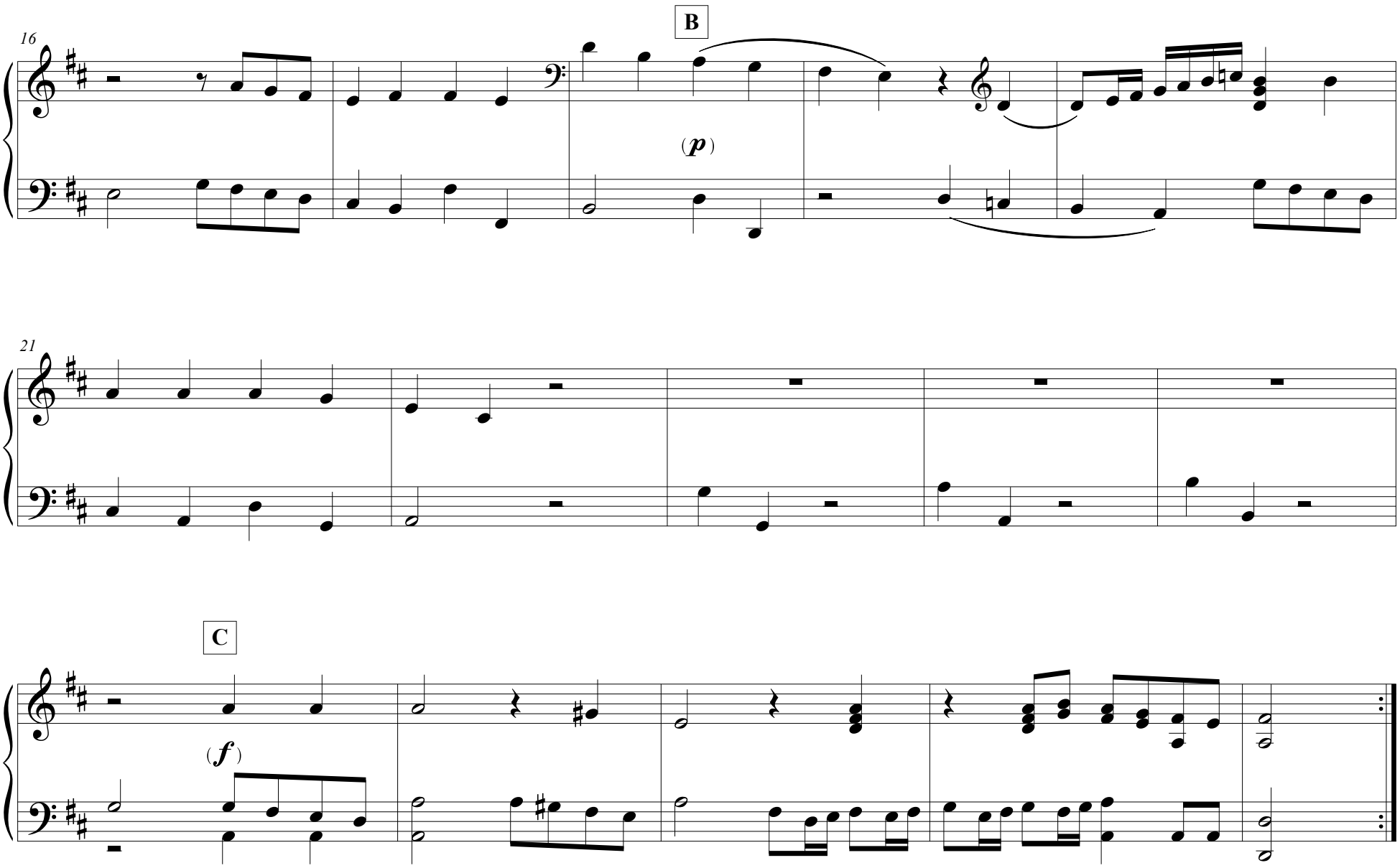
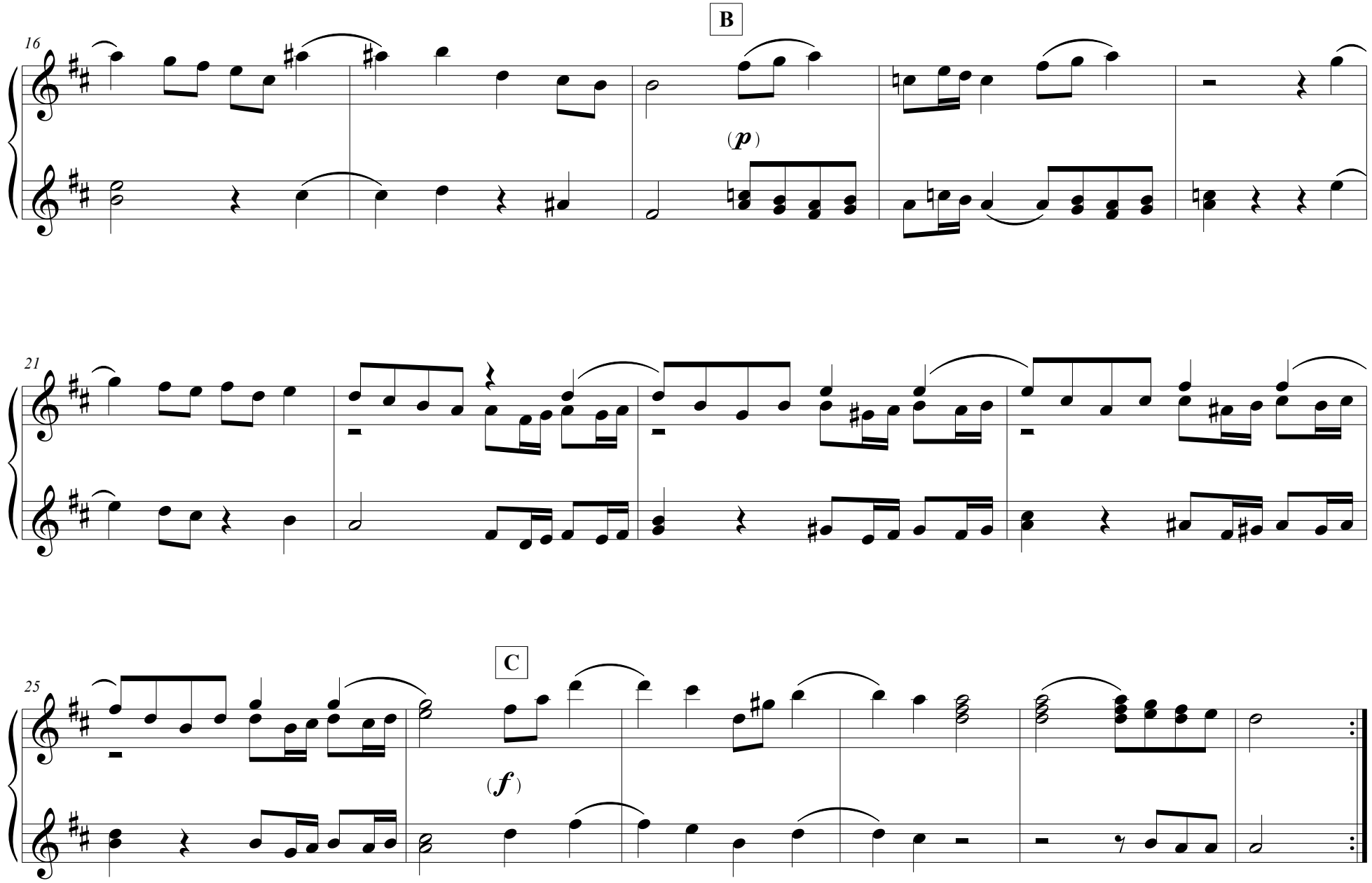
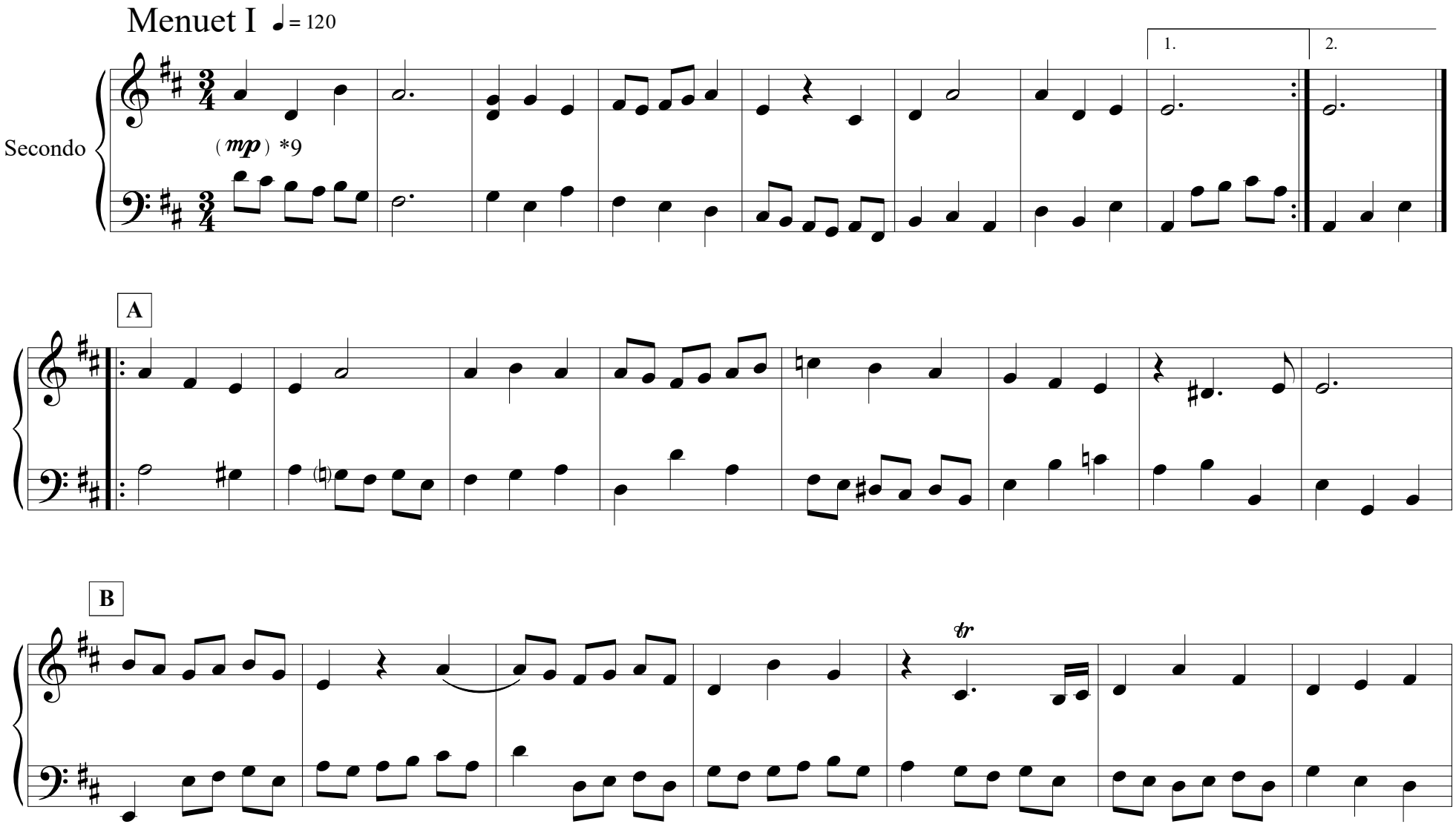

16
B
(p)
21
C
(f)


B
16
(p)
21
C
25
(f)

Menuets



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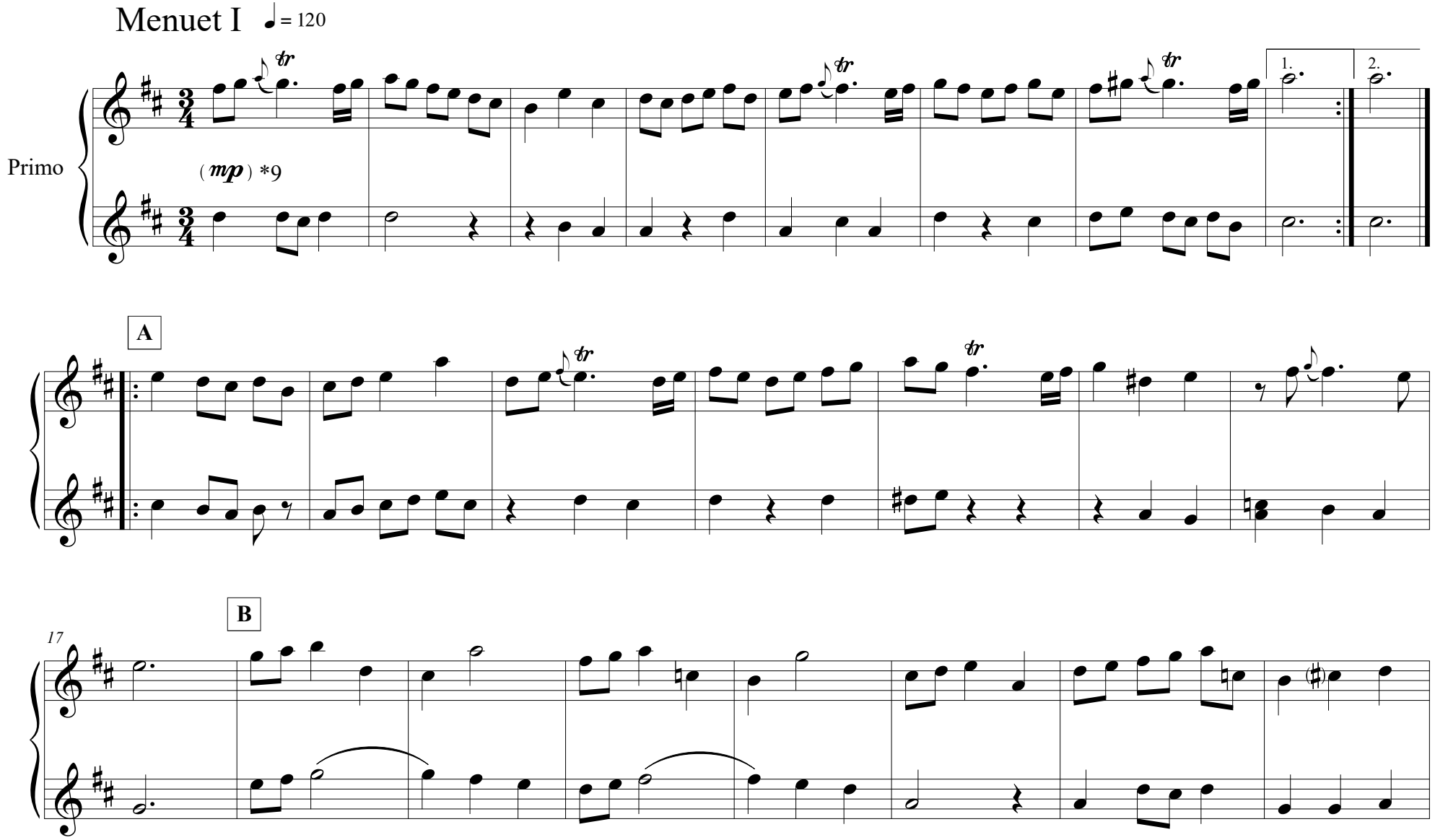
Menuets



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C

25

D Menuet II

(p) *10

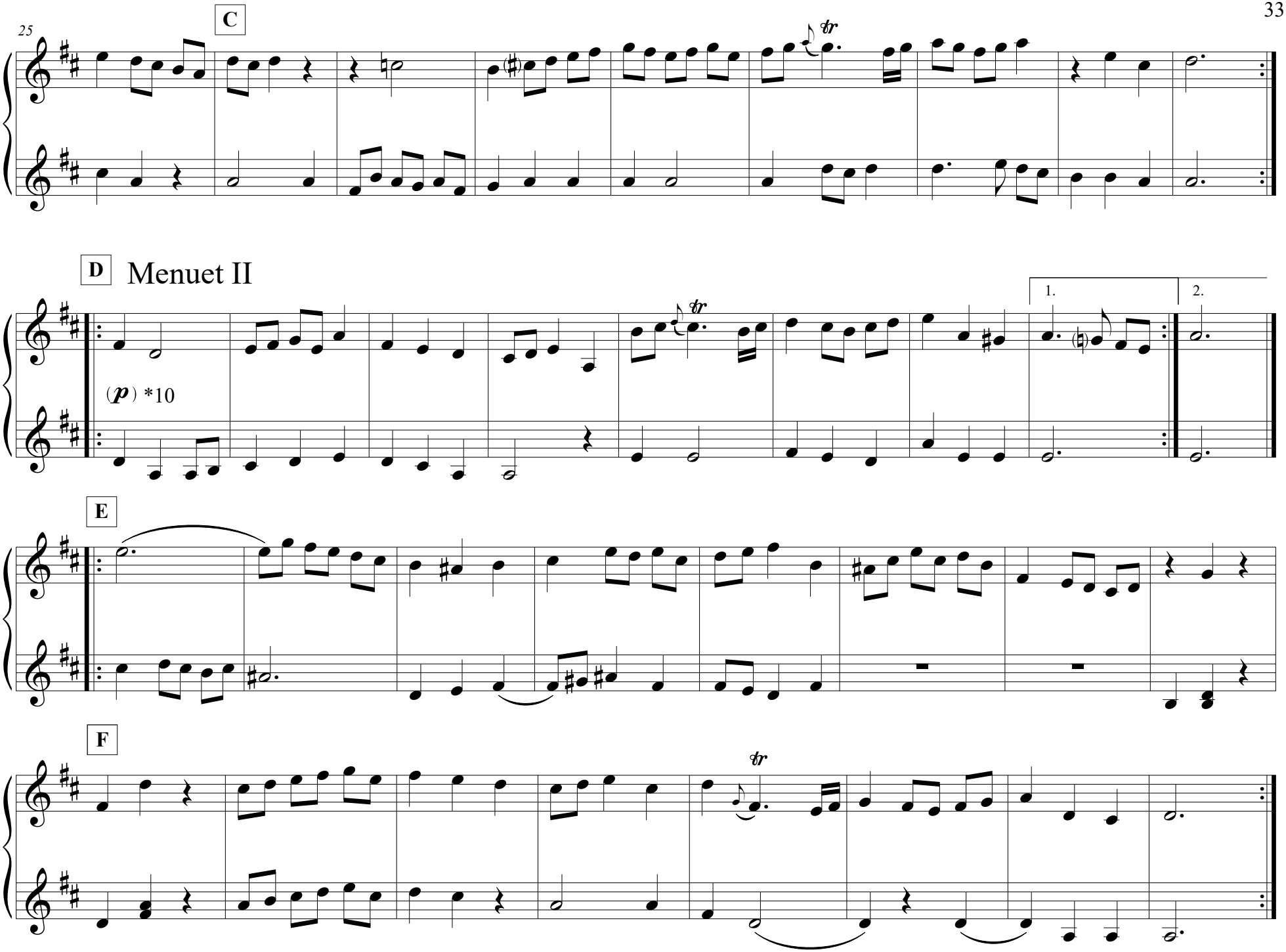
1. 2.

E

F

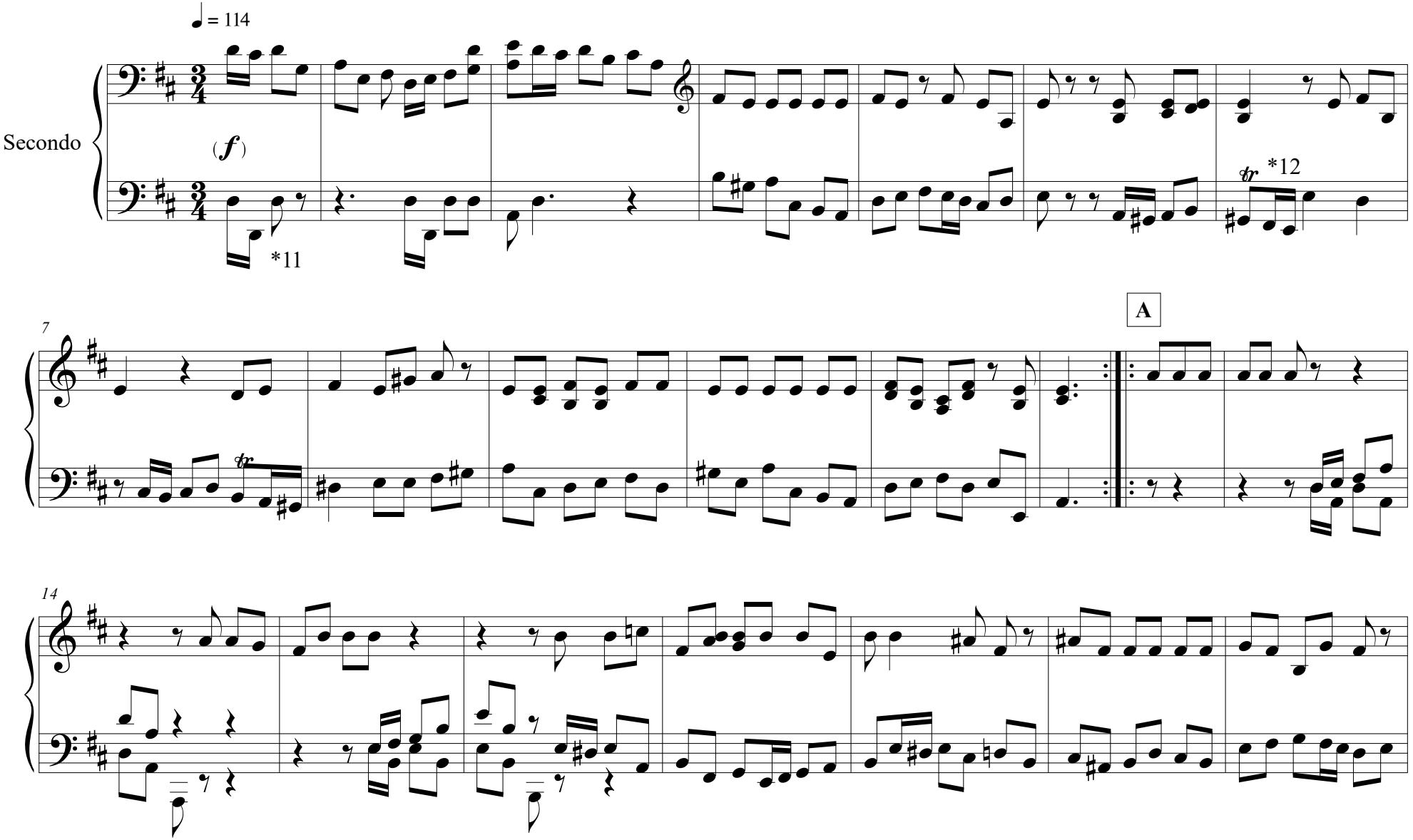
tr

Menuet I da Capo senza repetizione



Menuet I da Capo senza repetizione

Réjouissance



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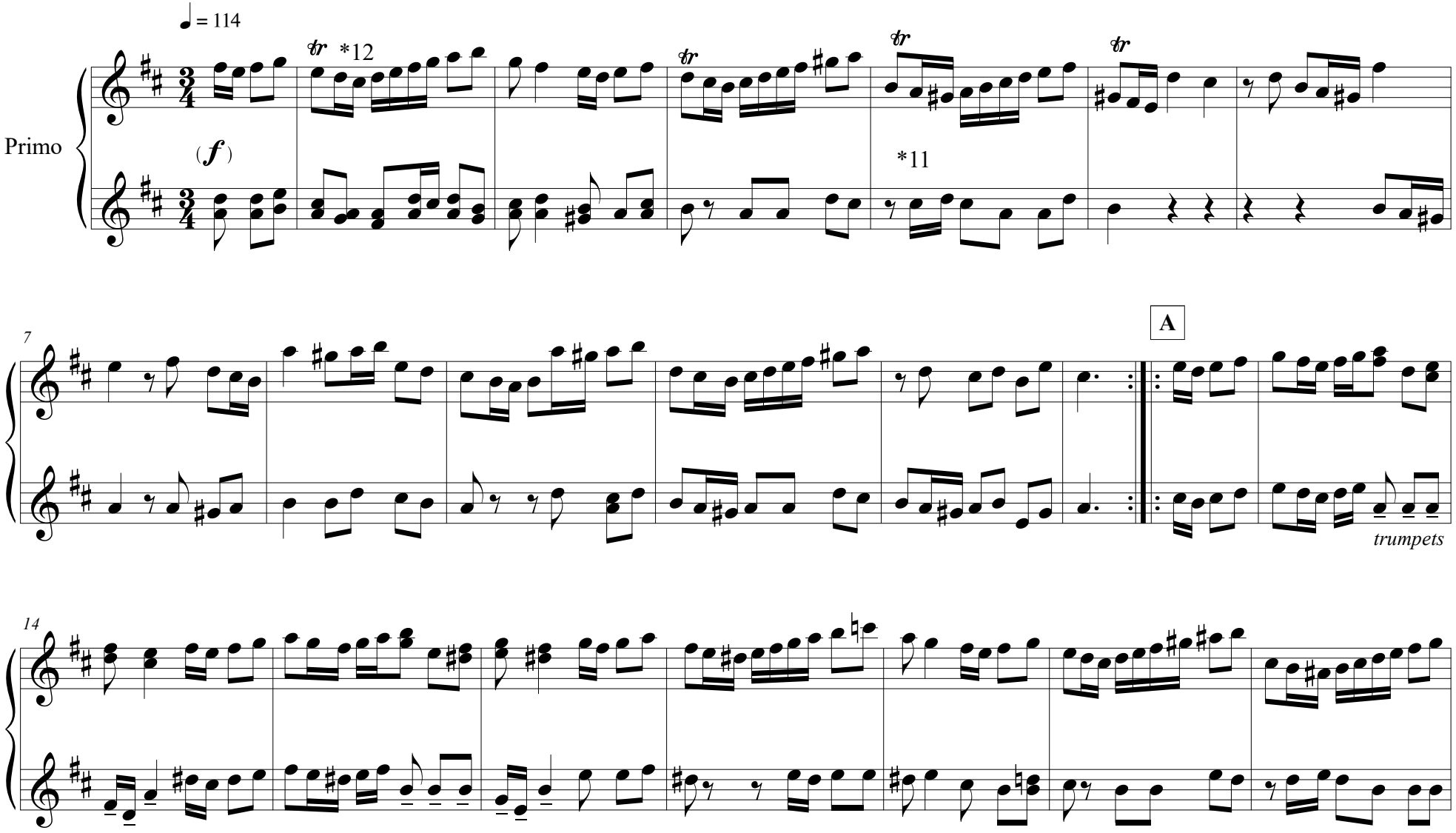

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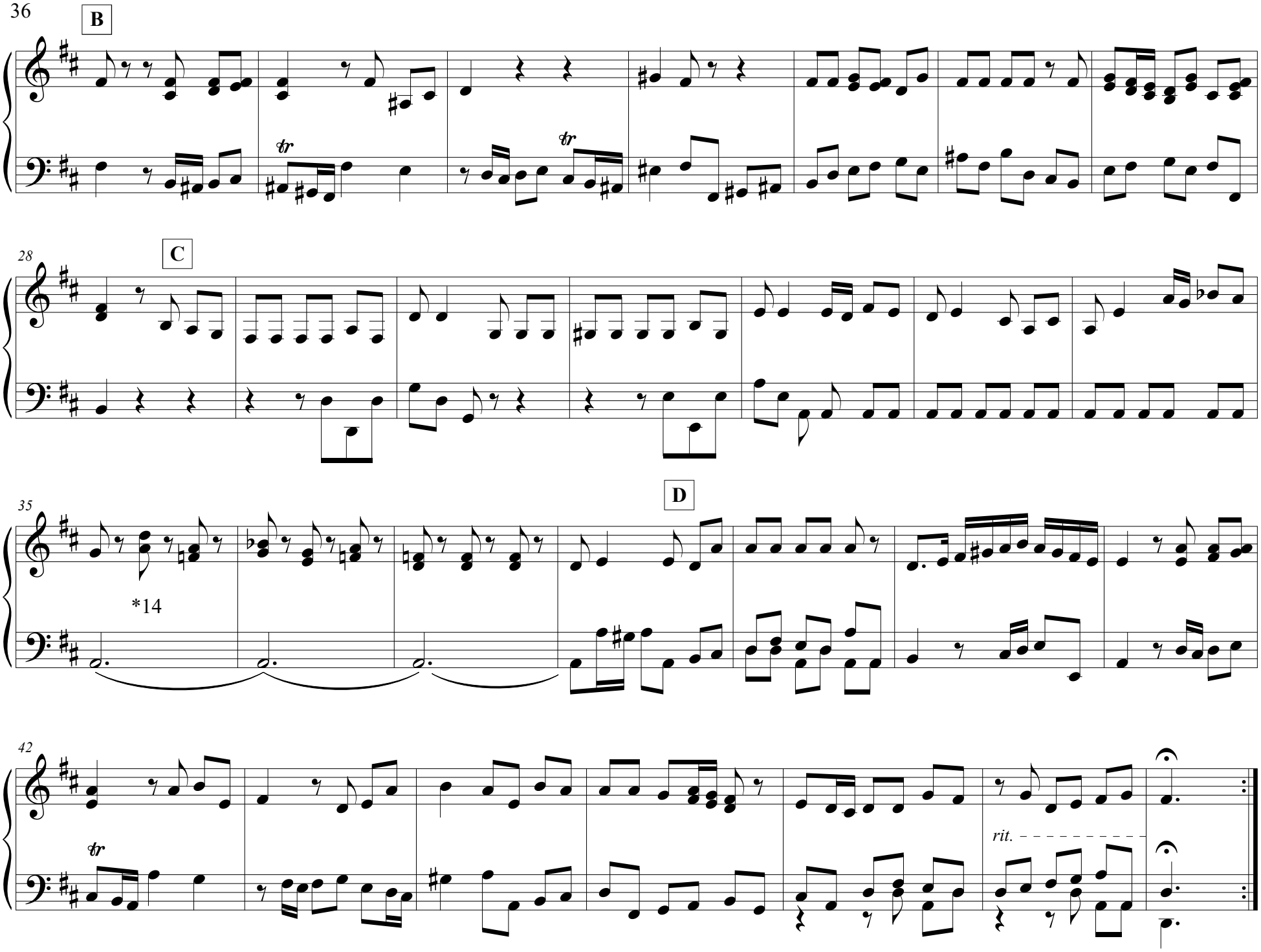
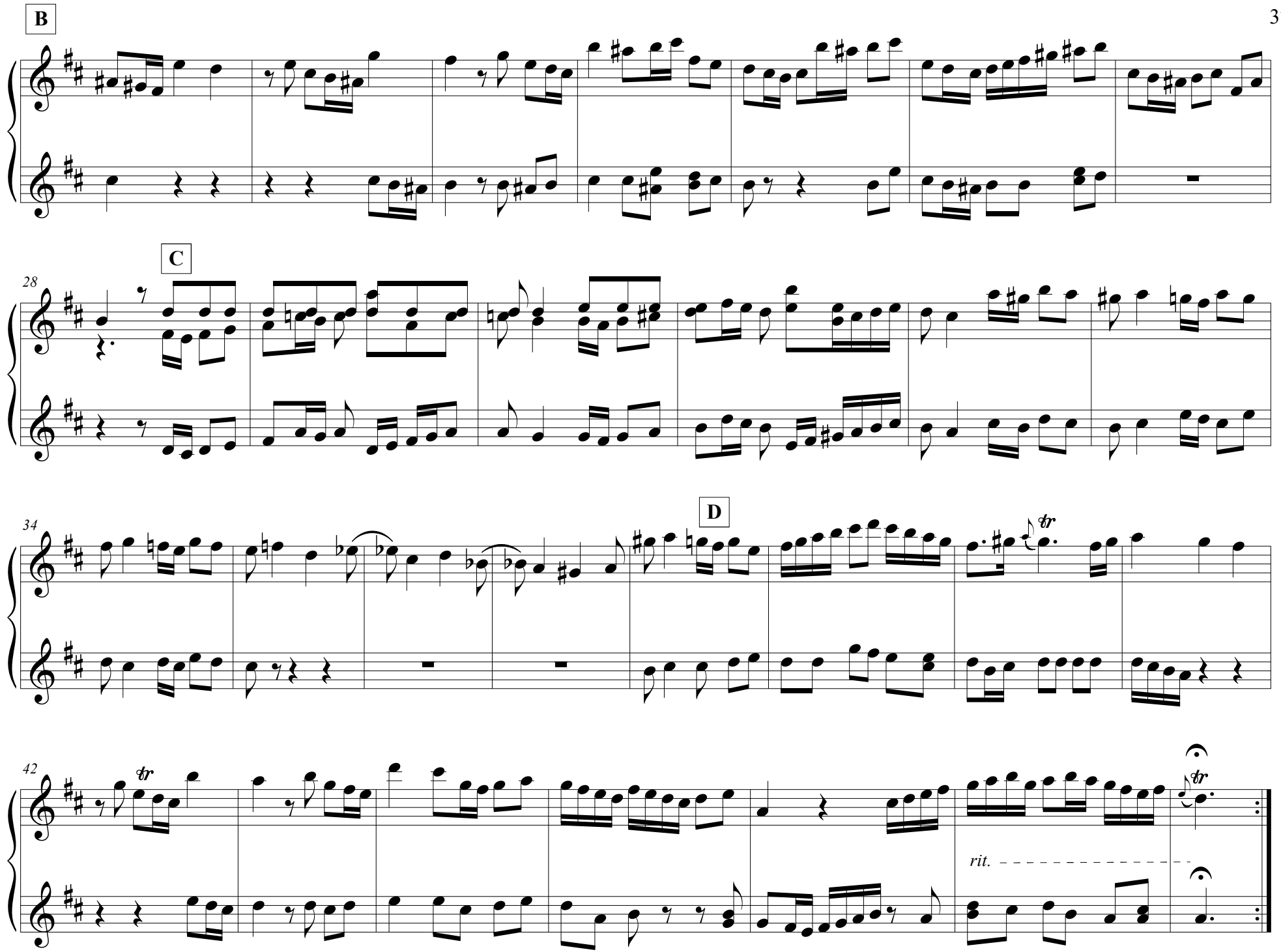

B
C
28
D
35
*14
42
rit.


B
C
28
D
34
42
rit.

Notes to Orchestral Suite No. 4

*1: Bach didn't leave any dynamic markings in the orchestral score of Suite 4. Suggested dynamics are in parentheses. Feel free to decide how loudly or softly you want to play any of this, experimentation is key.

*2: This "hunting horn signal" of eighth and quarter notes on the same pitch happens throughout the movement (mm. 27, 28, 31, 32, 34, 44 etc.) The quarter note has to be uniformly sustained to keep the rhythm balanced and the tempo steady.

*3: We started Bourrée I softly and repeated it louder for reasons explained in the next comment. That is a good alternative to consider in general, regardless of texture changes, instead of playing the repeats softer as a default.

*4: Since Suites 3 and 4 are scored with trumpets and timpani, it makes sense to use those parts for variety in repeats. In Bourrée I, Secondo has a recurring trumpet flourish of 2 eight notes and a quarter in mm. 2, 6, 8, 30 and at the end. Primo has them in mm. 10, 12, 14 etc., where the LH takes over the long melody notes and the trumpet part is shown with upward stems in the RH.

*5: This movement is great practice for what is known as the "Mannheim Sigh:" putting more weight on the first note of a 2-note slur.

*6: In Bourrée II, I suggest skipping the LH of Primo the first time around. That lets the Secondo RH have an expressive solo, especially if phrased with some legato. For the repeat, the Secondo RH can switch to all staccato to help Primo handle the quick turns in the LH. You can stream the 2022 Grand Piano recording to hear the suggested interpretation.

*7: For variety on the recording, we chose to play the da Capo of Bourrée I with frequently contrasting dynamics. If you like this approach, it can be used in repeats of other movements as well.

*8: This Gavotte has an almost exaggerated "pesante" character with the repeated heavy chords alternated between Primo and Secondo. Don't be shy to "stomp" a little here: it will contrast nicely with the lightly-footed Menuets.

*9: I like to designate one movement in each Suite as a generally "soft" one, where sustaining a soft dynamic provides for contrast with the rest of the Suite. In this case, the Menuets fit that purpose well.

*10: Menuet II is scored as a “Trio” of 2 violins, viols and continuo and sounds very soft, almost muted in an orchestral recording. This is a good opportunity to use the una corda (soft pedal) – I am sure Bach would have approved using all possibilities of the modern piano.

*11: As in comment 4, it makes sense to use the timpani “effects” for the repeats in the Réjouissance. Secondo should skip the LH notes with downward stems (in the beginning as well as in mm. 13-16, 29-32, 39 and 46-48) the first time around.

*12: Playing this movement with trills sounds more authentic but skipping them allows for a faster tempo and a more defined rhythm. It’s good to listen to recordings and try both ways.

*13: The voices are written out in each hand for counterpoint clarity. As always in piano music, you may switch hands or combine notes in one hand, whatever is comfortable.

*14: It’s important to keep these 8^{th} notes long in order to maintain tension against Primo’s syncopated quarter notes.

As with any arrangement, it’s important to get to know the original source. Please listen to orchestral recordings of the Suites for overall sound, timbres, tempi and character. Then listen to the recording of this transcription (Grand Piano label, 2022) for repeat strategies like embellishments, register changes and contrasting dynamics.

When the partners’ hands have to cross or get “too close for comfort,” the primo LH usually assumes a higher-wrist position, into the black keys while the Secondo RH goes toward the lower edge of the white keys. Or Secondo can go higher and Primo lower if that seems better: whoever plays more black keys will be more comfortable in a high position. Decide on high/low hand positions and mark them in your scores.

Page turns: Primo is closer to the page on the right and usually turns the page but it may be more convenient for Secondo to turn if the lower part is less busy. It helps to mark the lower right corner of each page in the score, to avoid confusion.

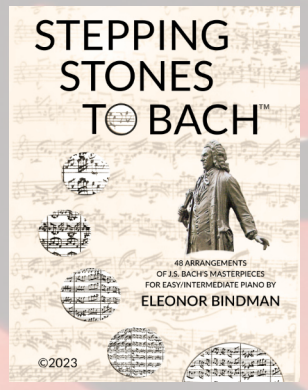
Enjoyment: this is the most important part of it all. Remember to smile!

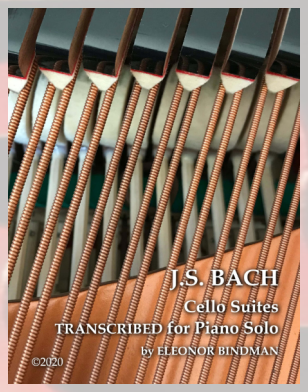
Eleonor Bindman
January 2023

Illustration: details of “All The Flowers Are For Me” by Anila Quayyum Agha

“Bindman draws upon the suite’s dance movements…and succeeds in conveying the music’s vitality and beauty in a new medium.”

Also Available at EleonorBindman.com





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