Arcangelo Corelli
1653-1713

HINRICHSEN

No. 1687

Francesco Geminiani
1687-1762

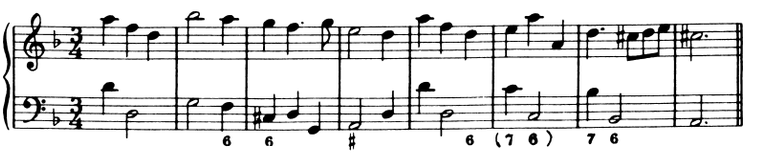
GEMINIANI

CHACONNE UPON THE SARABANDA THEME
from Corelli's Violin Sonata Opus 5, No. 7

discovered and edited, with a realisation of the Figured Bass by
Layton Ring

Violin and Harpsichord/Piano obbligato
Viola da gamba (or Violoncello) ad lib.

Duration : approx. 9 minutes



FRANCESCO GEMINIANI

(1687–1762)

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The Music Collection in the Library of Durham Cathedral is most celebrated for its rich store of vocal music of the 16th and 17th centuries, though a treasure of equal value in instrumental music is also to be found therein. The work here published for the first time by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter, comes from a most interesting and unexpected manuscript (listed under Durham MSS. Mus. E25) recently discovered in the collection—actually two MSS., one a fragment of two leaves only, and the other an exact copy in a different hand, continuing, however, for several more pages until the work is completed. From internal evidence, at least one of the MSS. does not appear to be later than 1750.

The score itself starts innocently with the first eight bars from the Sarabanda of Corelli's D minor Violin Sonata, Op. 5 No. 7, set out with figured bass and dutifully bearing the legend *V. Solo.* The bass is then treated as a Chaconne over which the violin continues with a set of eighteen fine variations in the Italian manner. At the nineteenth variation, however, *an unprecedented thing in any work of this kind and period occurs:* the ground suddenly blossoms into an obbligato part marked " Cem^{lo}: " over the same bass, the latter descending to a fourth stave to become an explicit stringed bass part (unfigured), before only implied by convention. The harpsichord in its turn, after a quiet beginning and a long smooth canon with the violin, is given some extremely florid passage-work, and continues to the end on equal terms with its partner.

There seems to be but one person, other than Handel himself, able to compose such music both for violin and harpsichord, and that is his contemporary Francesco Geminiani, whose style of writing for both instruments exactly matches that shown in this piece. There even exists a similar *Ciacona*, albeit on a much smaller scale, in one of his early Violin Sonatas. His connection with, and high opinion of, Corelli are too well-known to need further elaboration here.

It is interesting to reflect that the work may have made its way to Durham through Newcastle, where Charles Avison (*c.*1710–1770), the pupil and fervent admirer of Geminiani, was organist, and whither his illustrious friend paid a visit in 1760. That it is not by Avison himself, is amusingly obvious from the "Advertisement" to his *Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord with Accompaniments for two Violins and a Violoncello—Opera Ottava*, where he says:

" When different Instruments repeat the same Air, the Ear is disgusted with the very thought which at first gave it pleasure (Handels' Concertos for the Harpsichord). To pursue the same Strain through different Divisions hath also the same Effect; as the same Modulation is perpetually recurring (the Follia is the last Solo of Corelli) than which nothing can be more tiresome."

But then, Avison was a " Modern," at least in his later chamber works, tending to write in the *style galant;* even so, he manages to belie his own opinions by including a *Ciacone* (sic) in his Op. 7 No. 6 published in 1760.

It cannot be asserted beyond doubt, of course, that Geminiani is the composer of this Chaconne but from the evidence so far available to us it would seem that no other can be preferred to him. It is perhaps significant that the same pile of MSS. contains a set of his harpsichord lessons, and that the library also possesses a fine contemporary MS. score of his Concerti Grossi.

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NEW YORK LONDON FRANKFURT

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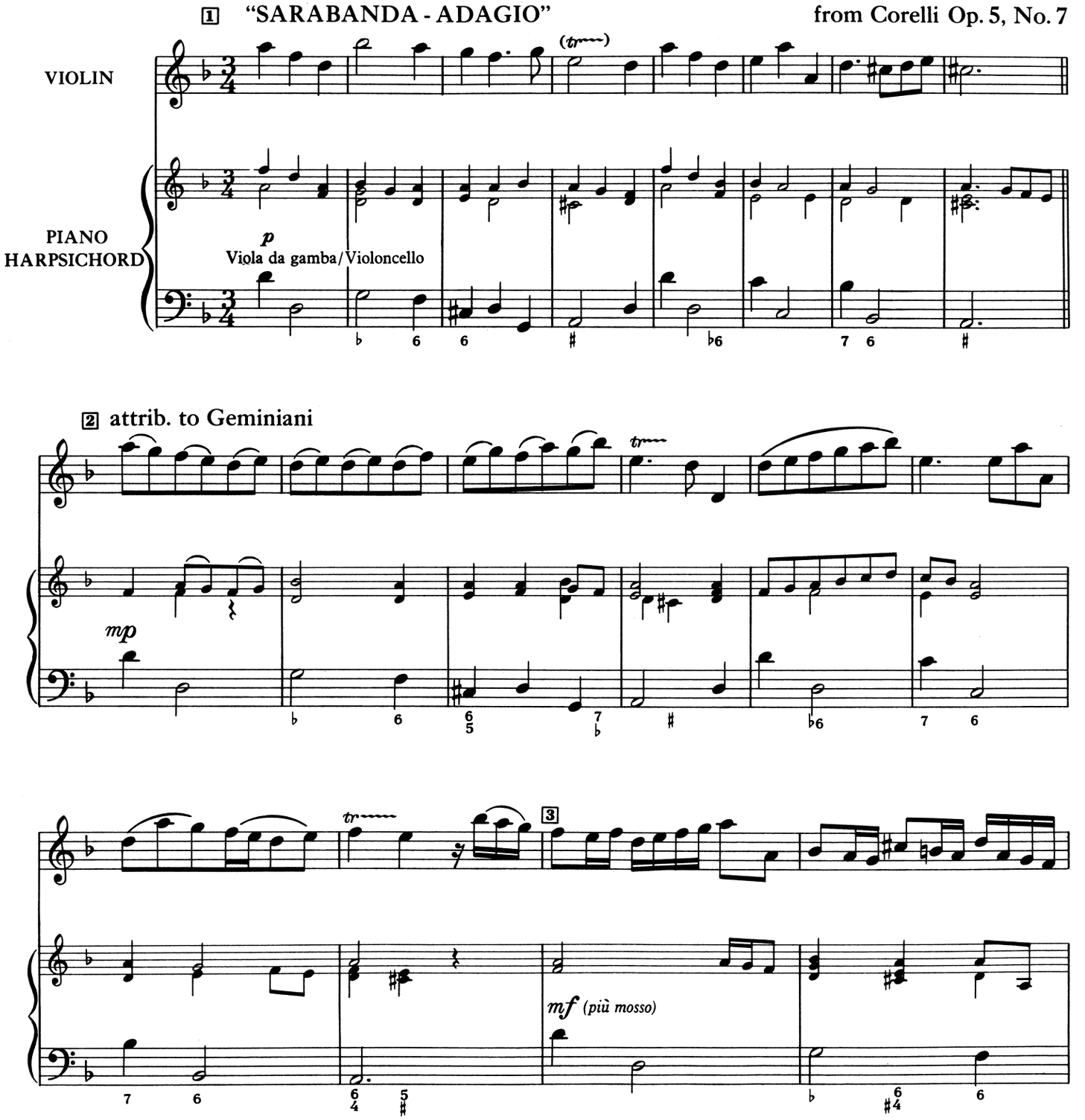

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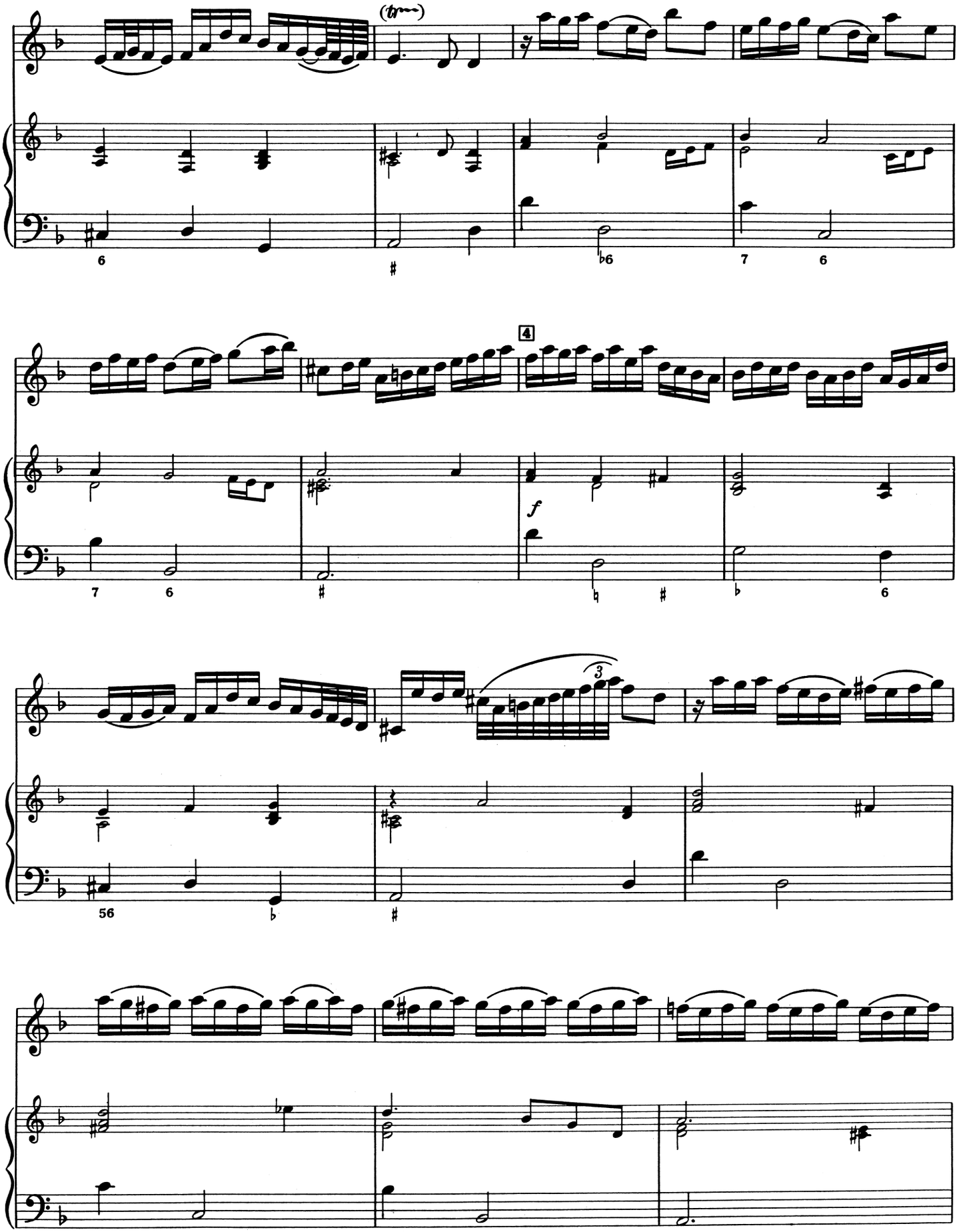
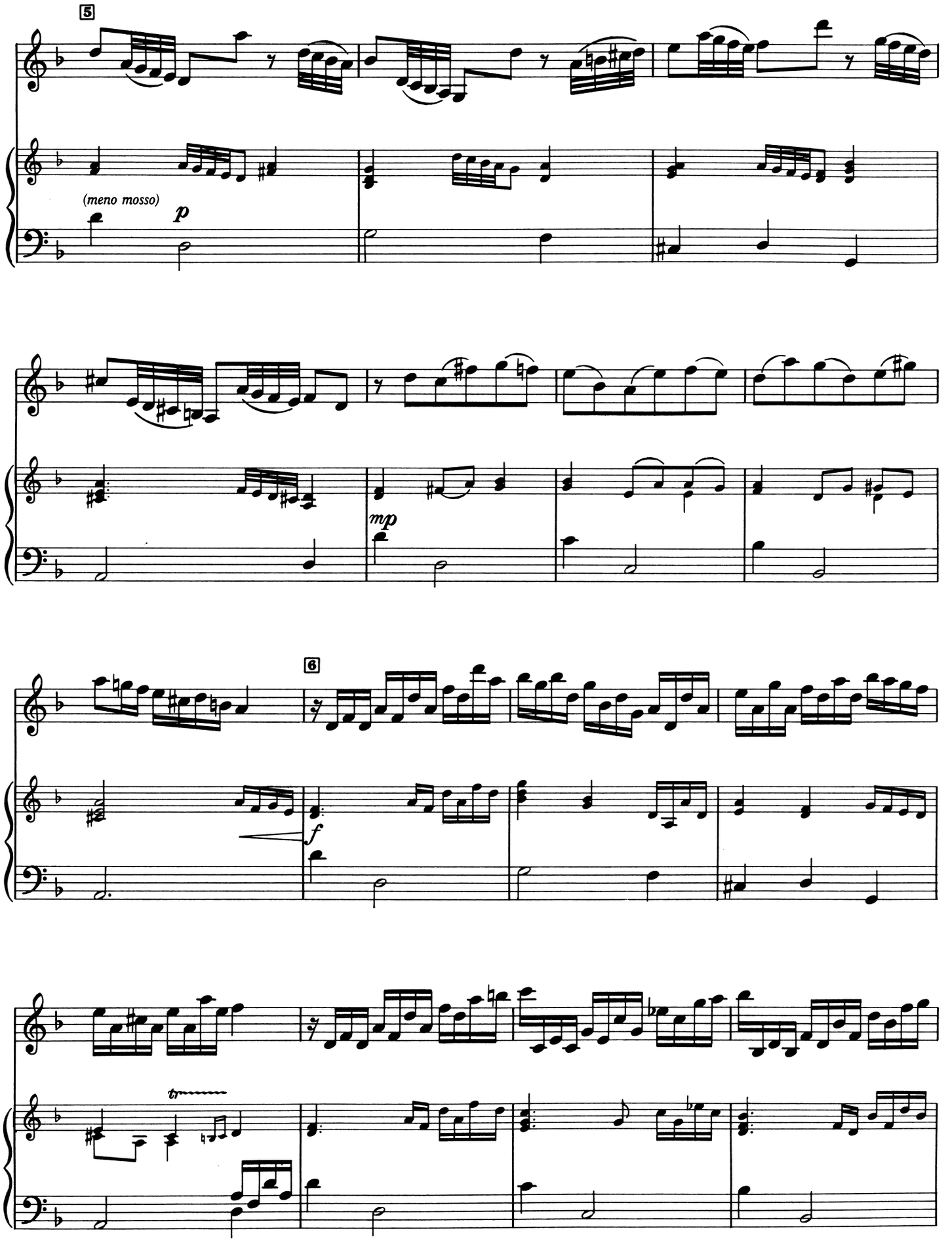
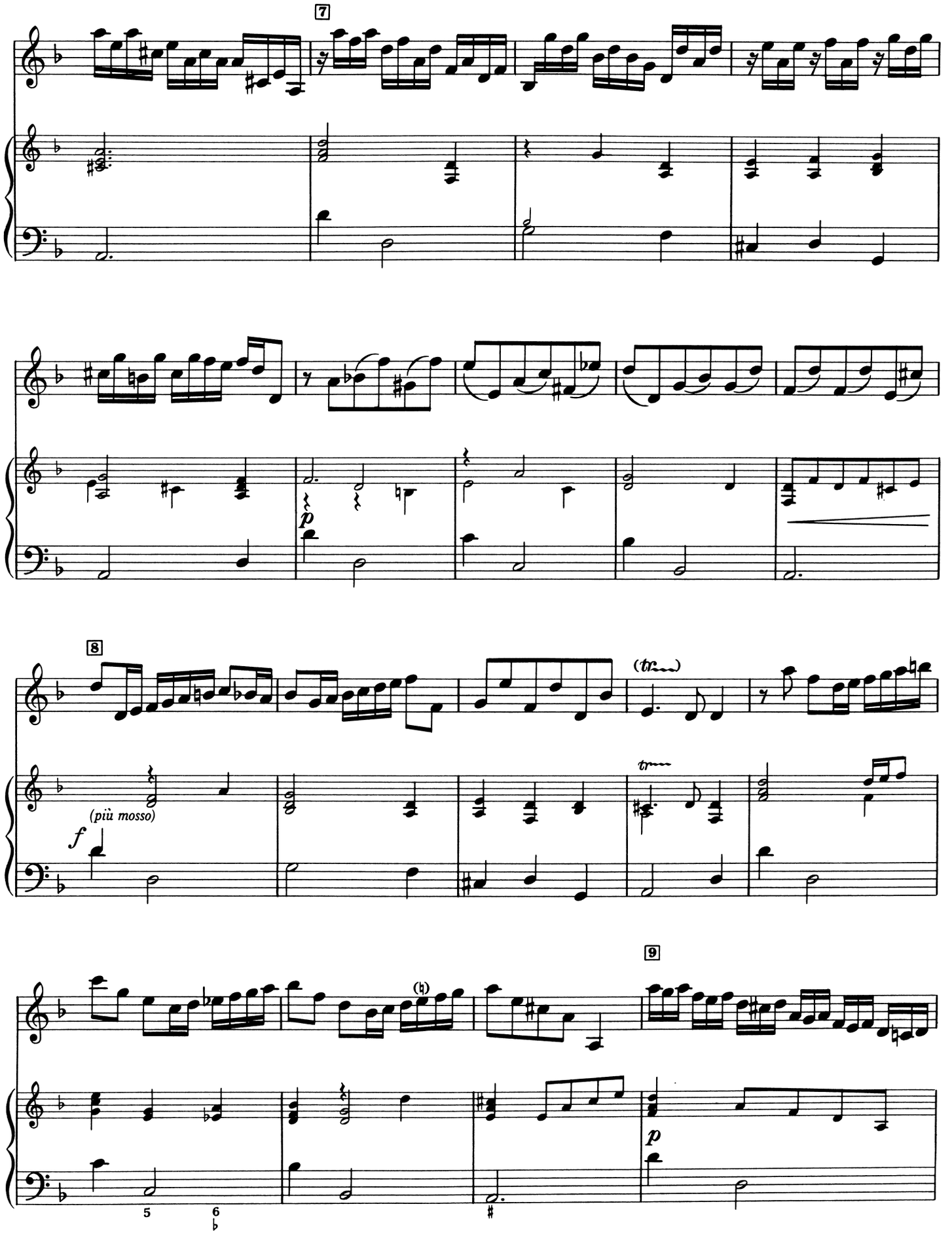
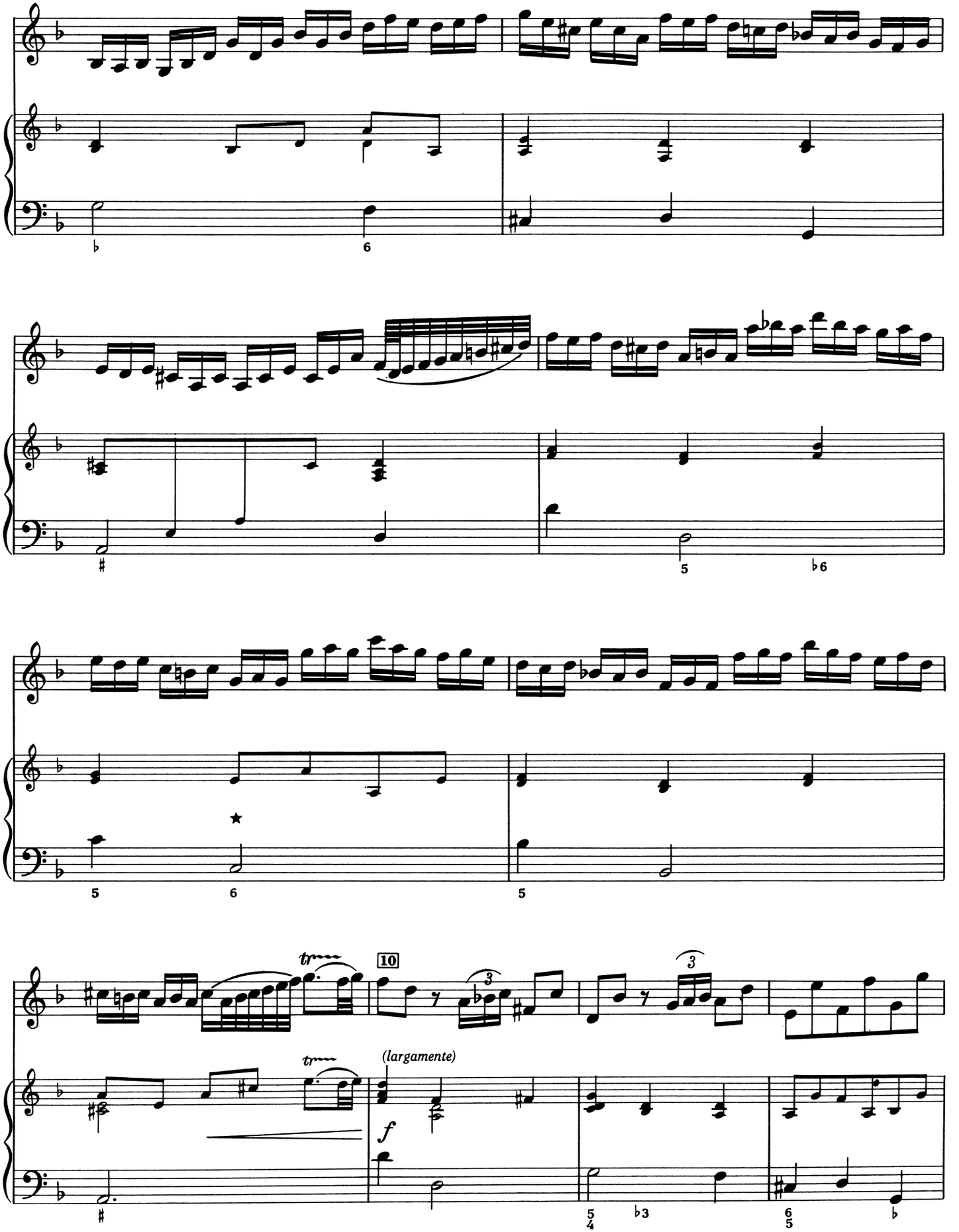

(tr)
6
#
♭6
7
6
4
f
7
6
#
♮
#
♭
6
56
♭
#
3
♭


5
(meno mosso)
p
mp
6
f
tr


7
8
(più mosso)
9



★Here both mss. are plainly figured 6

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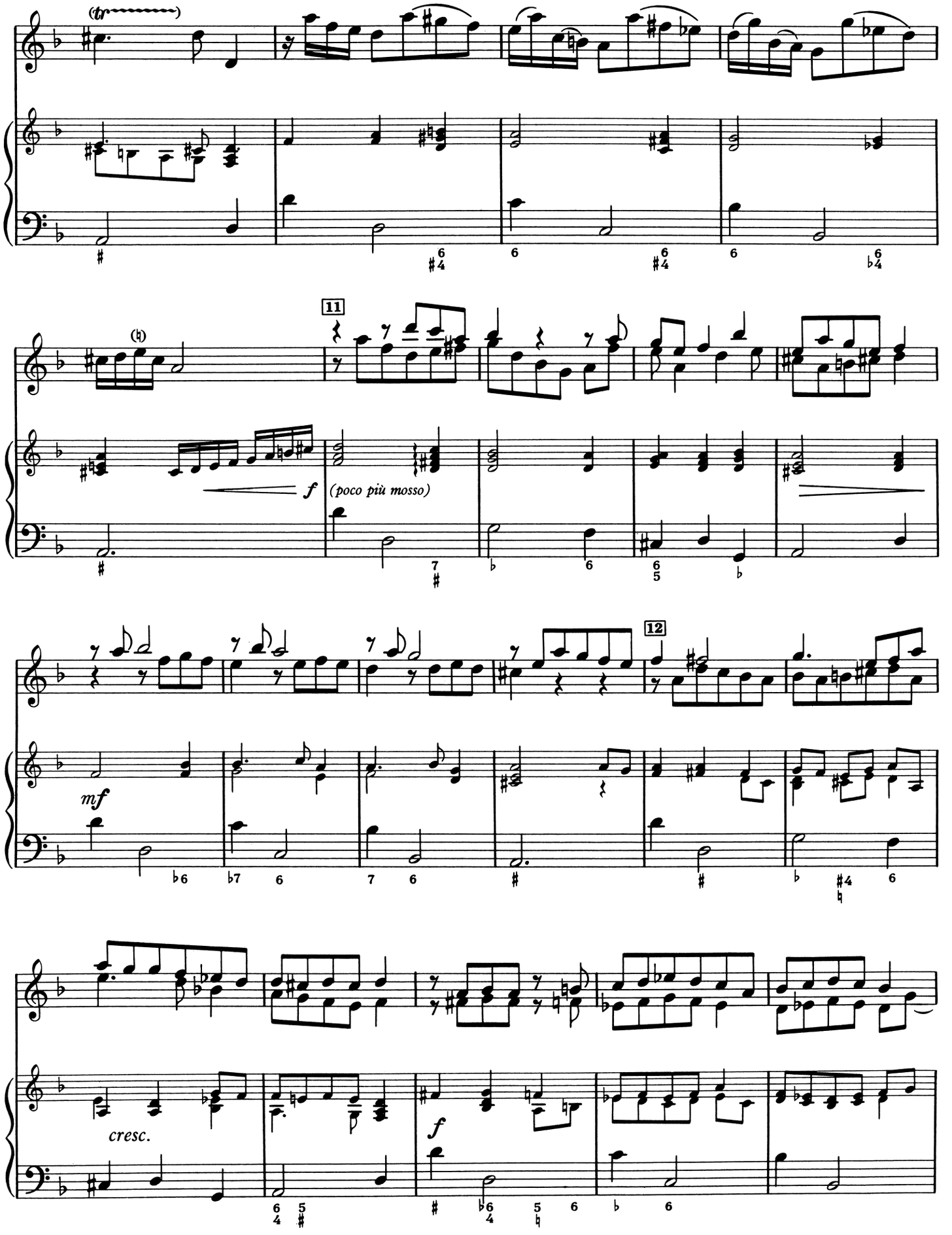
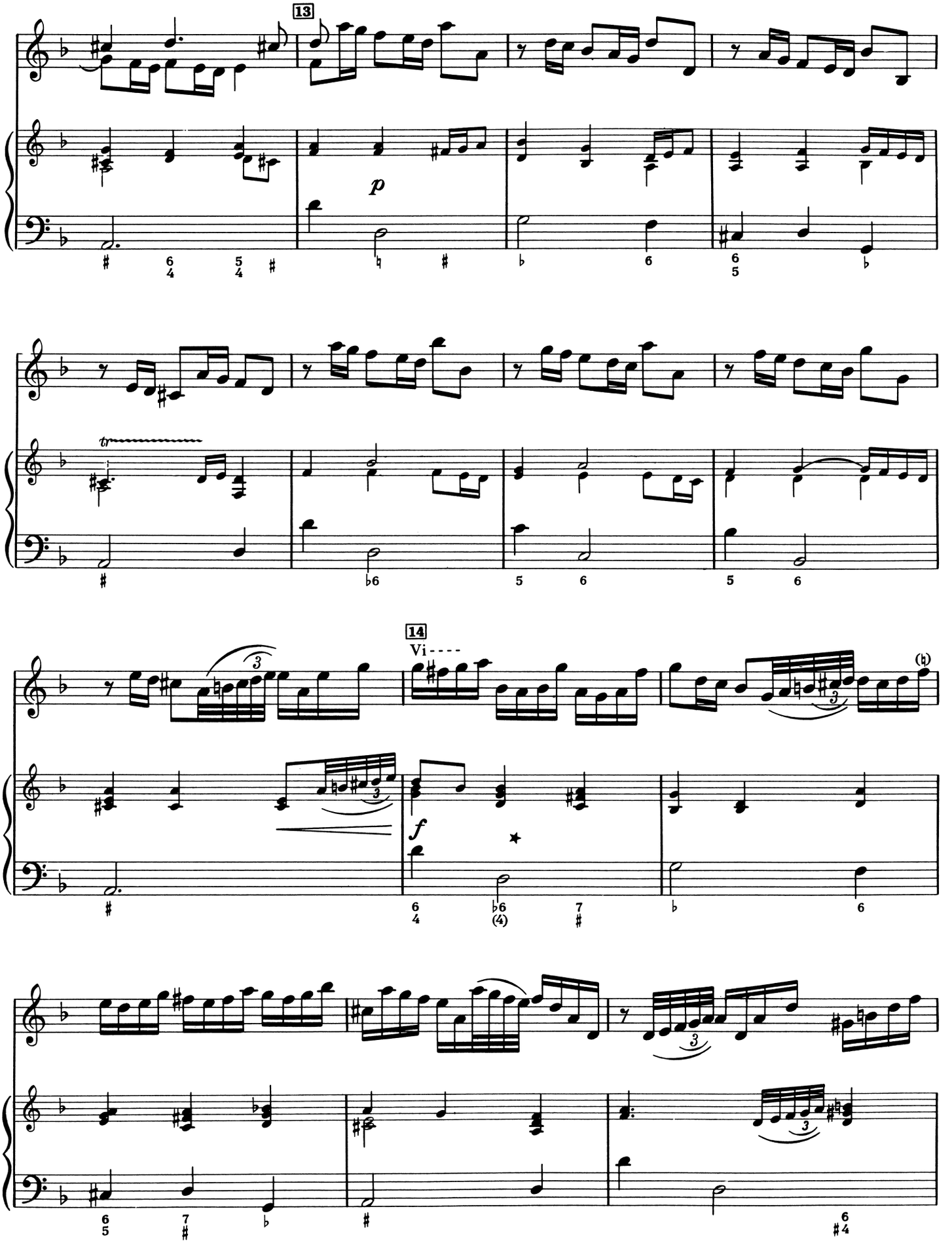
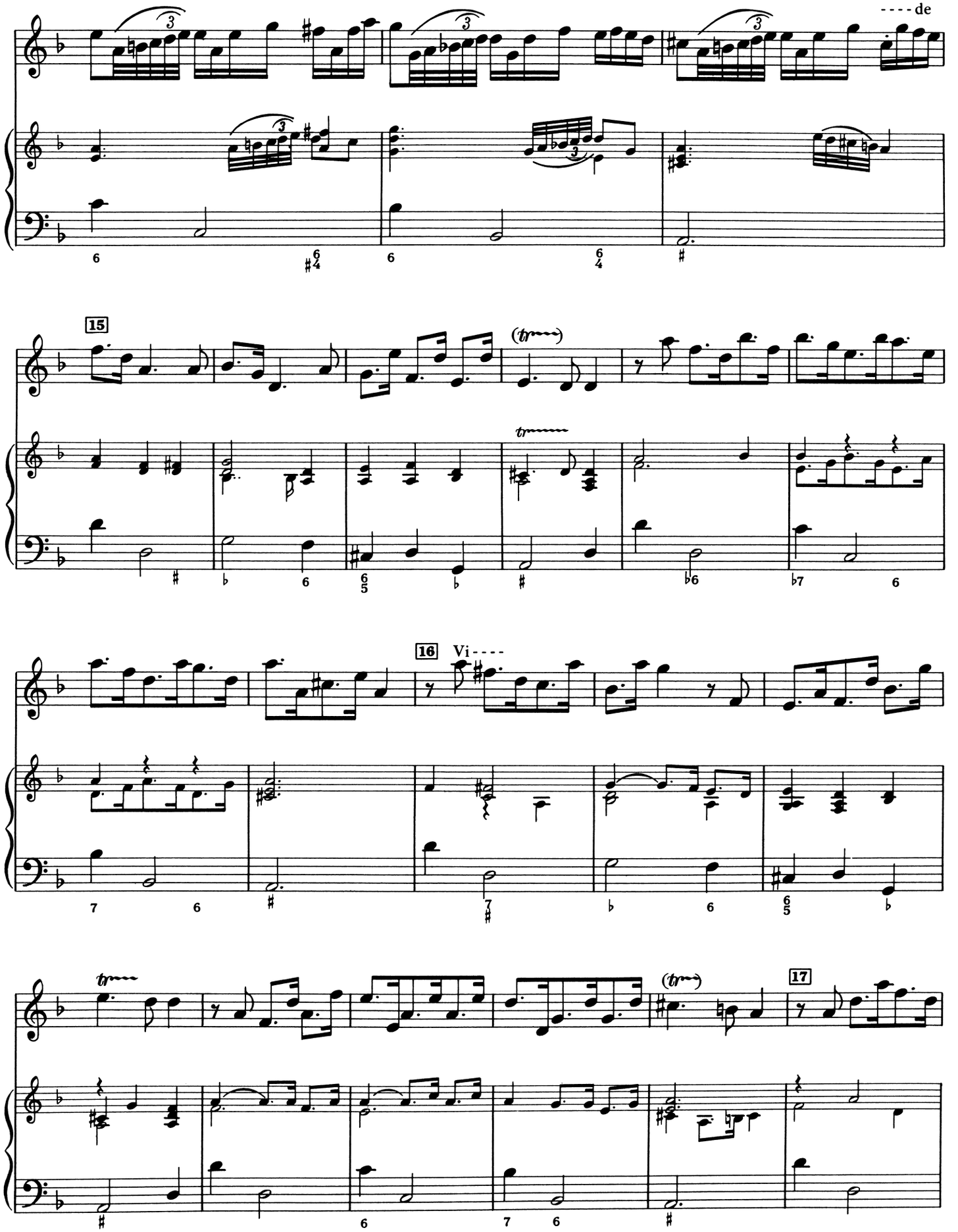
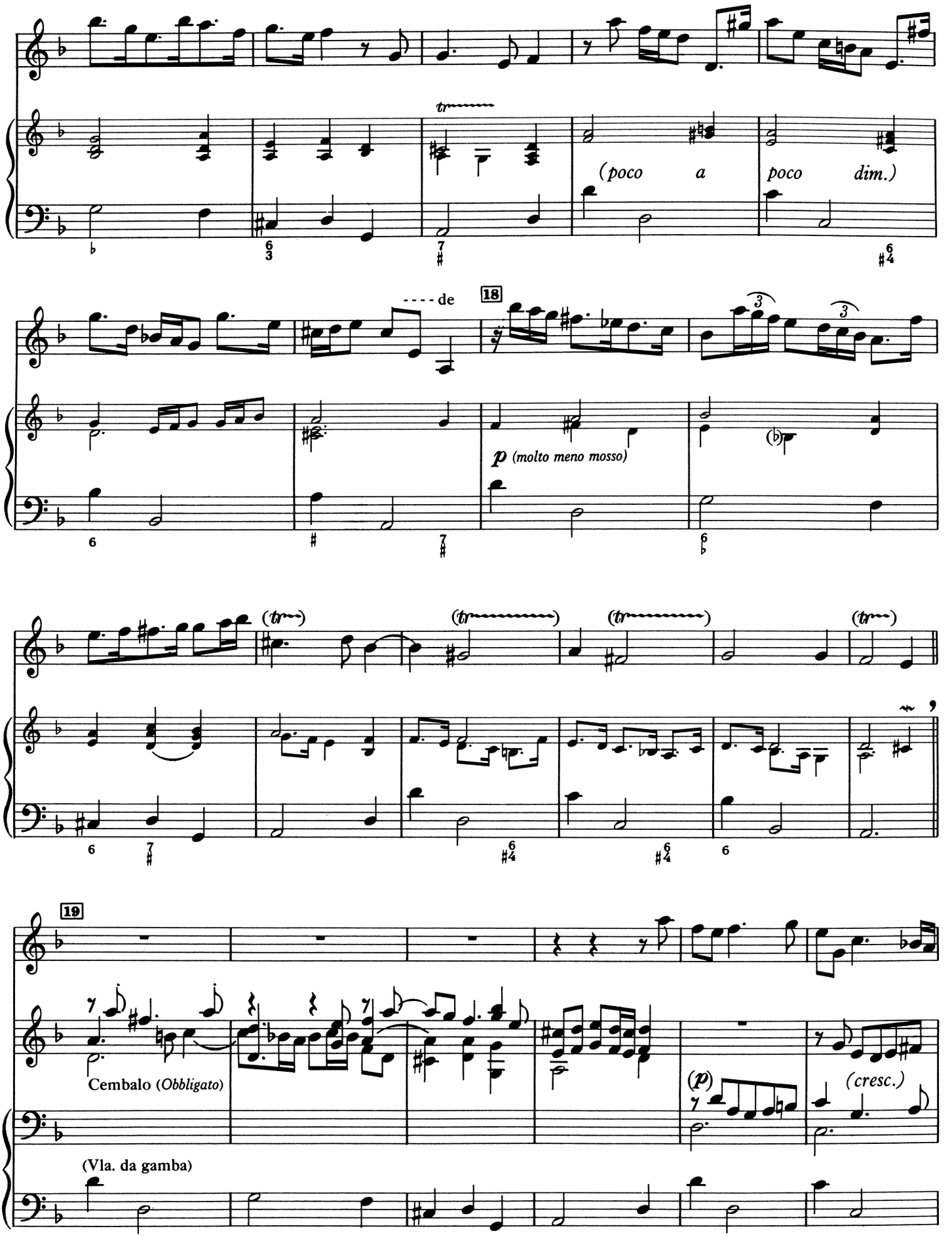
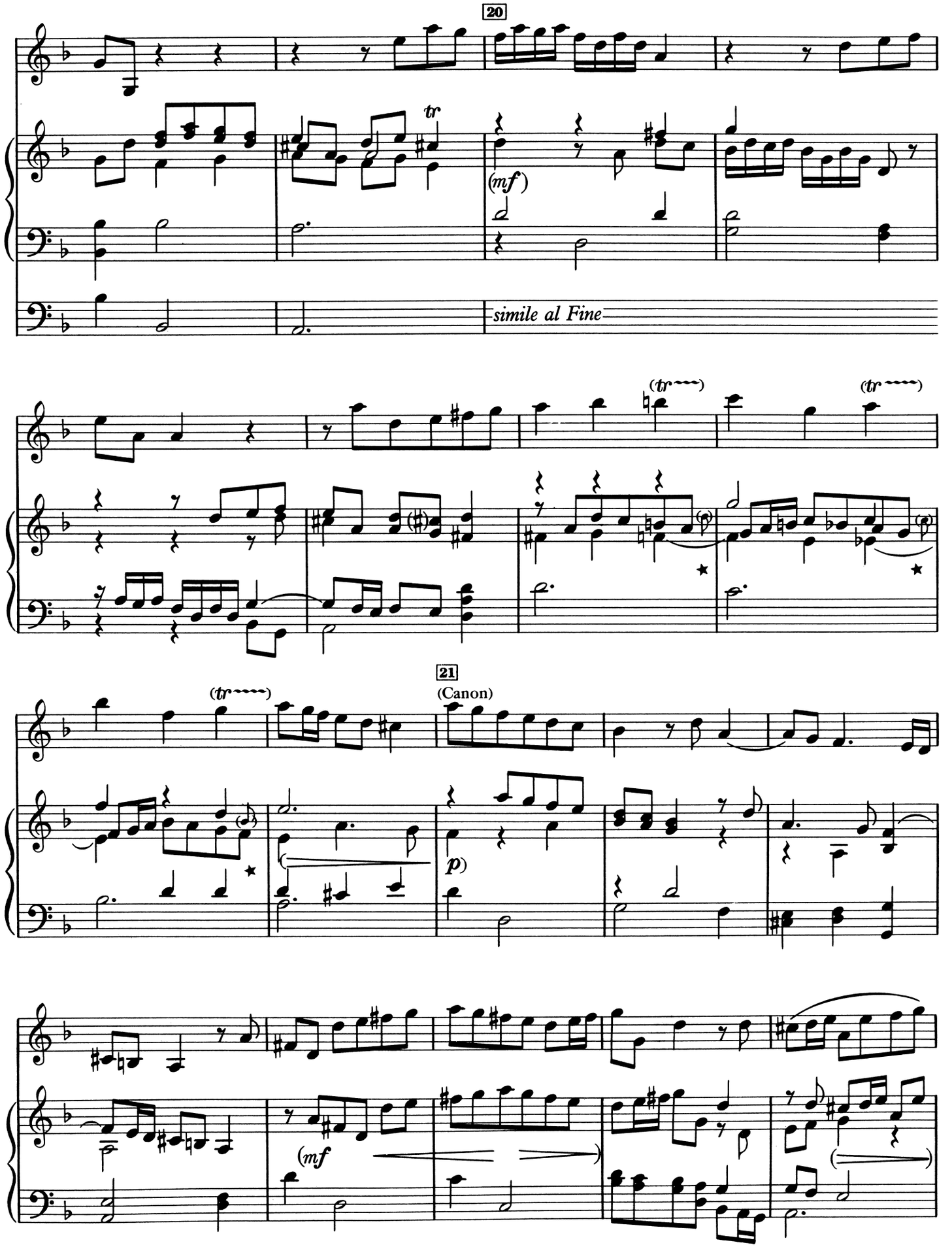

11
f
(poco più mosso)
12
mf
cresc.
f



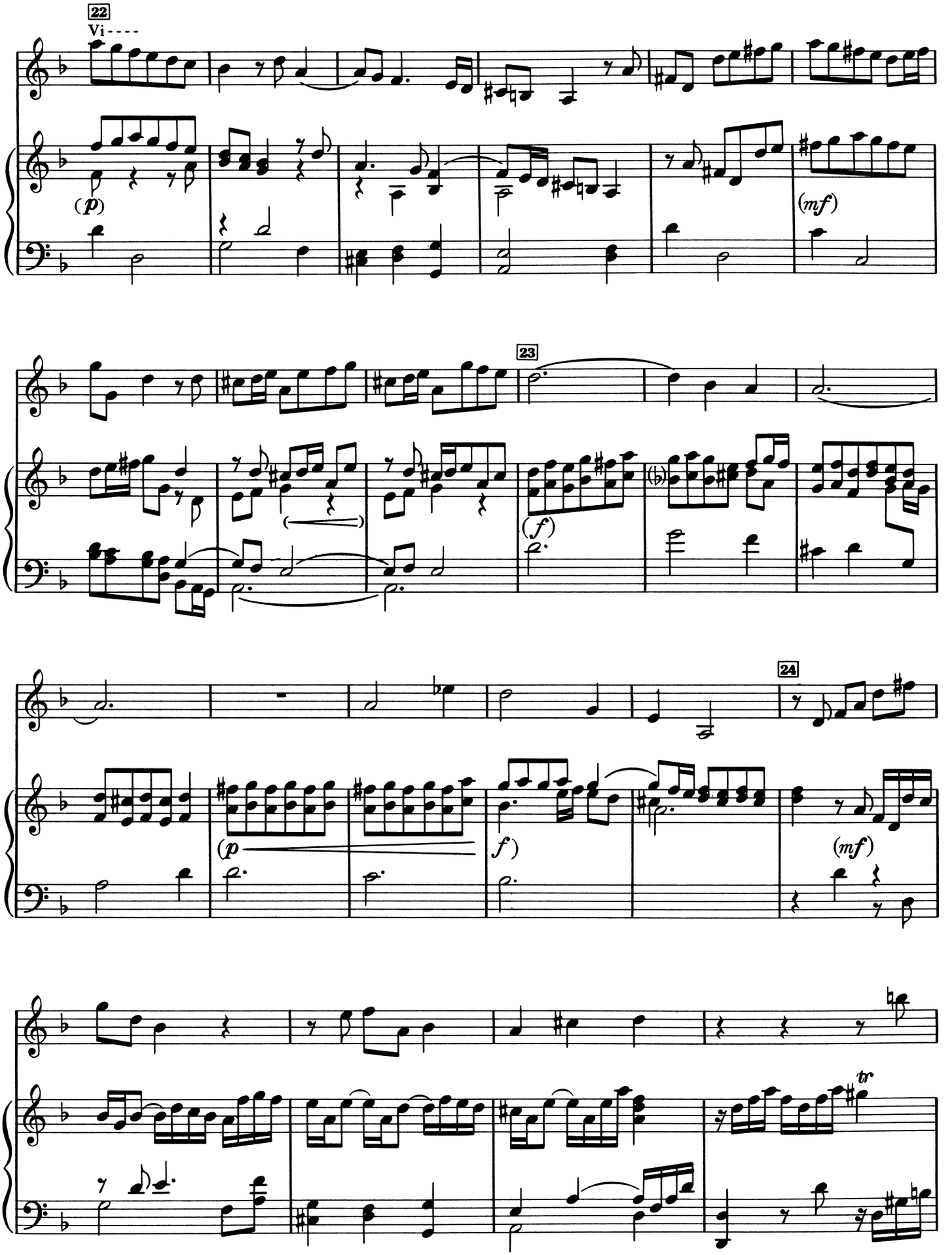
★Figured ♭6 only in one ms.

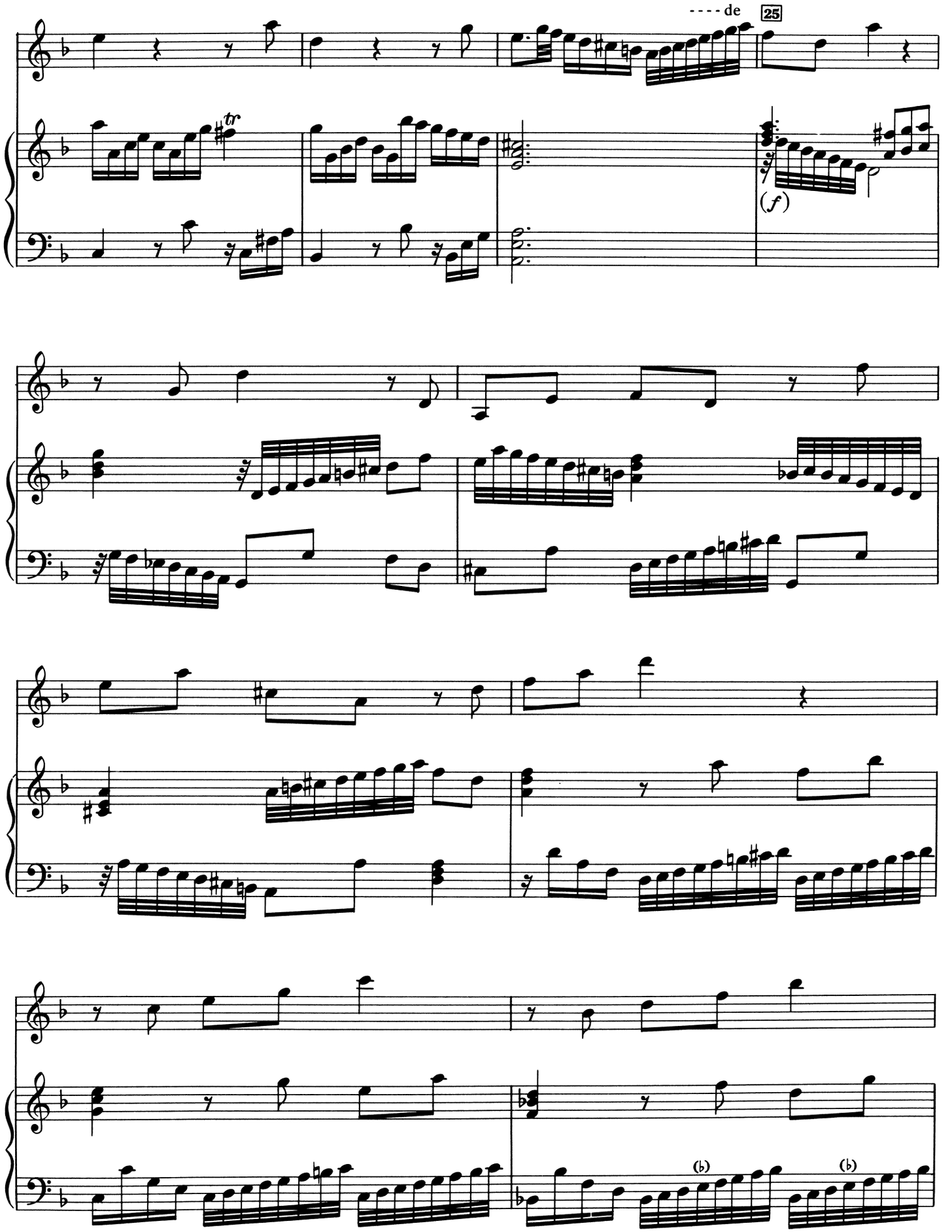

de
15
(tr)
16
Vi
17

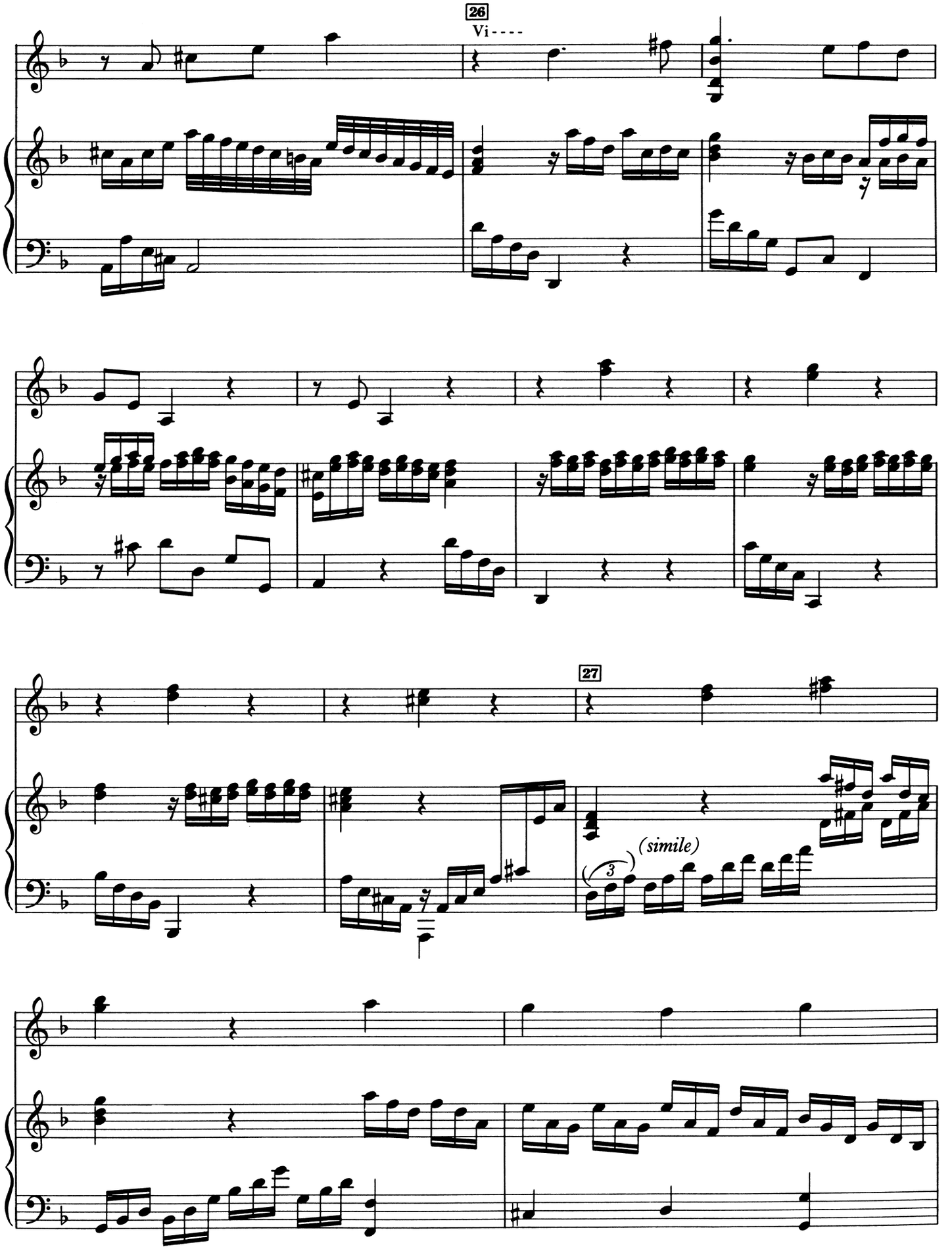

(poco a poco dim.)
de
18
p (molto meno mosso)
(tr)
19
Cembalo (Obbligato)
(Vla. da gamba)
(p)
(cresc.)

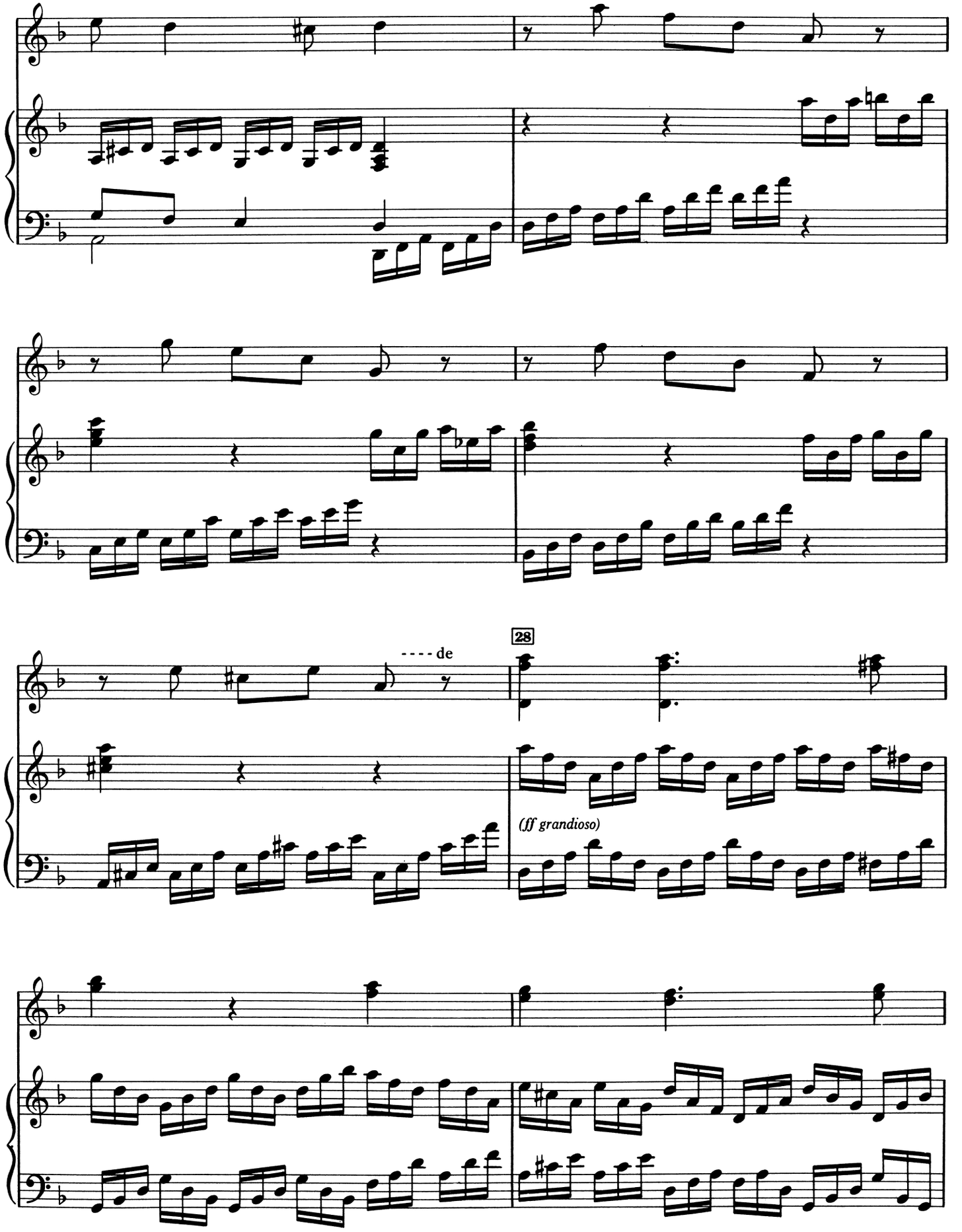


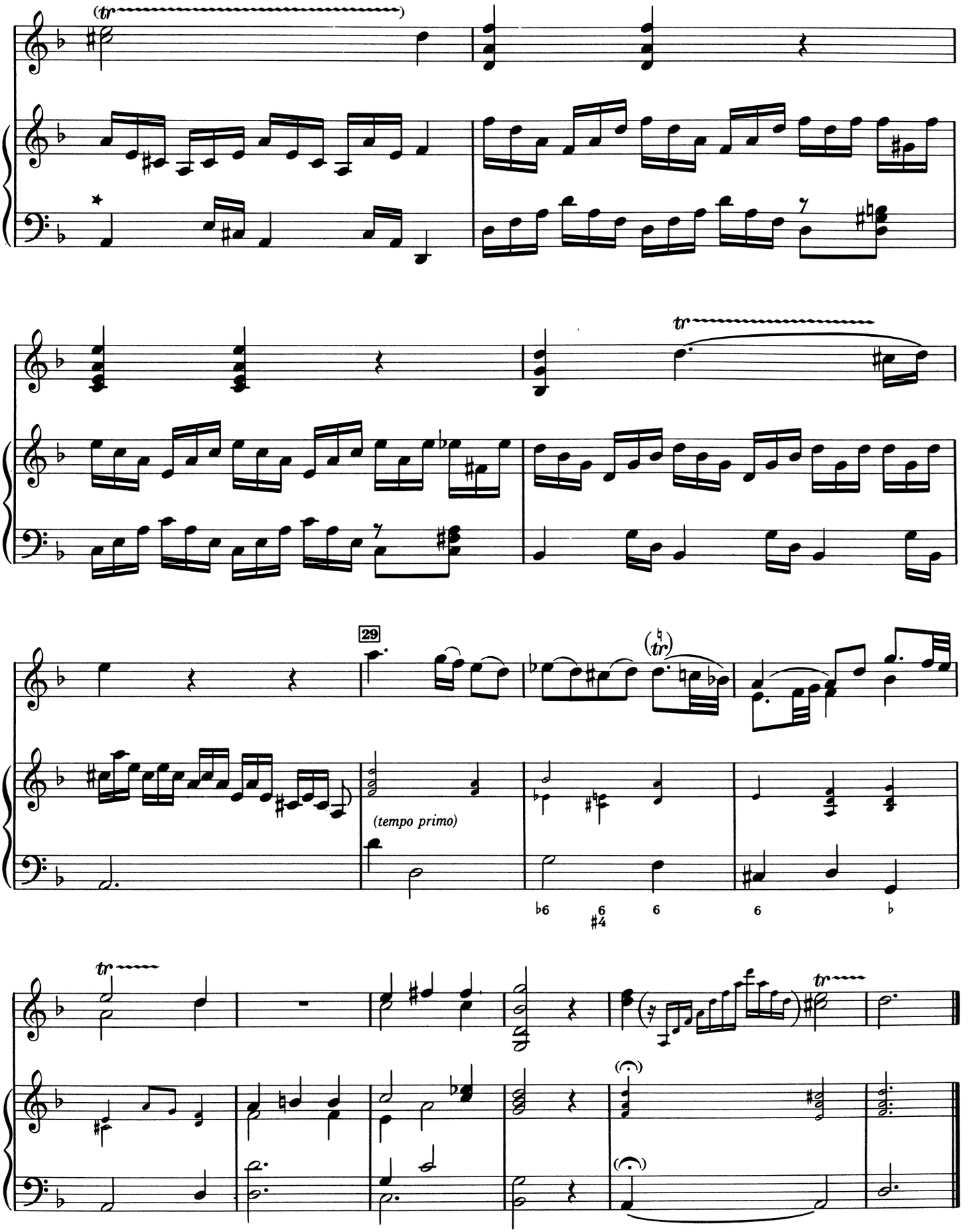
★The consecutive fifths occuring in the original text can be "corrected" if desired by playing the notes printed in smaller type.


22
Vi----
(p)
(mf)
23
(f)
24
(p
f)
(mf)
tr


---- de
25
tr
(f)
(♭)
(♭)


26
Vi- - - -
27
(simile)
3


---- de
28
(ff grandioso)



★To be played ♩ ♪♪♪ here and in similar places

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