Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae

by Josquin des Préz

arranged for

guitar

duet

by

Jeffry

Hamilton

Steele

PrismMusic
4 Spring St.
Gloucester MA 01930
978-282-3106
www.jeffrysteele.com

As heard on the CD album *Guitara Illuminata*
(Centaur Records *CRC 2384*)

artwork by Carla Mattioli, Awakening Arts

Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae

by Josquin des Préz

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From the liner notes to the Centaur Records CD:

Of what little is known of the life of Josquin des Préz, a few details stand out that help form a picture of his nature. He was born in Picardy (in France, close to the border with Belgium) and distinguished himself as a singer in boyhood. That he grew to be considered one of the most valued composers of the day is evidenced by the higher fees paid him compared with his contemporaries. That he valued the spiritual over the material is implicit in his choice to spend his last period at the college of Condé, near his birthplace, when he might easily have held a court position in any of a number of countries.

While the *Missa Pange Lingua* may be the most profound work of the Renaissance, the *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae* certainly ranks among the most vibrant and fiery of the period. Josquin wrote it fifteen years earlier for his employer, the Duke of Ferrara. An eight-note motif (D C D C D F E D, circuitously derived from the latter's name) forms the melodic and harmonic basis for nearly every section of the Mass. The natural rise and fall of this phrase is reflected in the ecstatic polyphony of the surrounding voices. In the last three movements, we hear the motif in quicker note values in some instances and backwards in others. For this transcription, I have preserved the original key – one guitar in standard tuning while the other is "capoed" at the fifth fret in lute tuning (resulting in a scordatura of A-D-G-B-E-A). For an extensive discussion of Josquin's setting of the Mass text, see the notes to my arrangement of his *Missa Pange Lingua* – which bears some similarities to this earlier work.

While this arrangement was recorded on two classical guitars, to help distinguish the lines of polyphony one was strung with Thomastik rope-core steel strings (which are optimized for nylon-string guitars). Fingering has been left to the players. While straightforward in most cases, a few large stretches will be required to maintain the independence of voices when they come to a unison.

Jeffry Hamilton Steele

Josquin des Préz

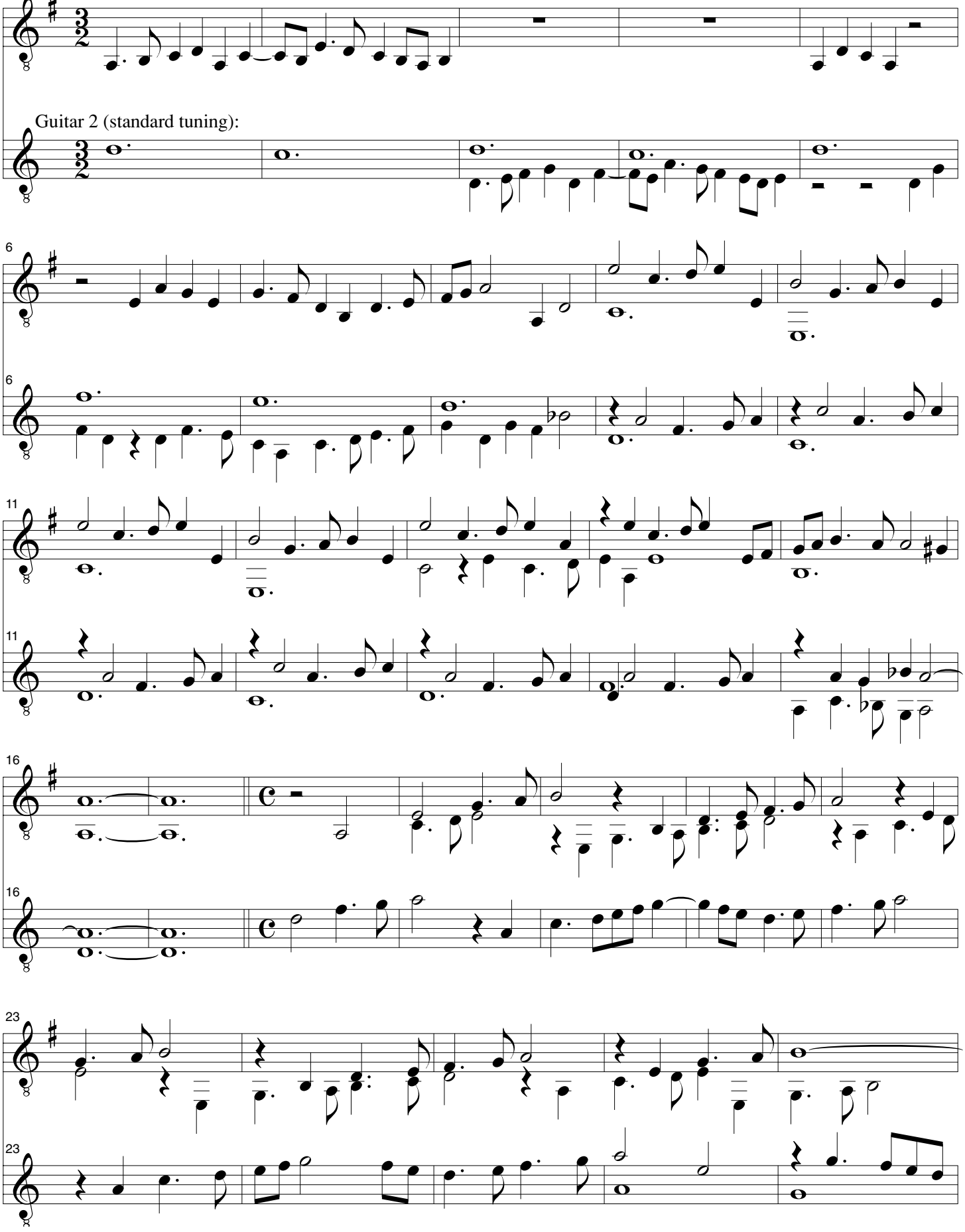
Missa Hercules dux Ferrariae

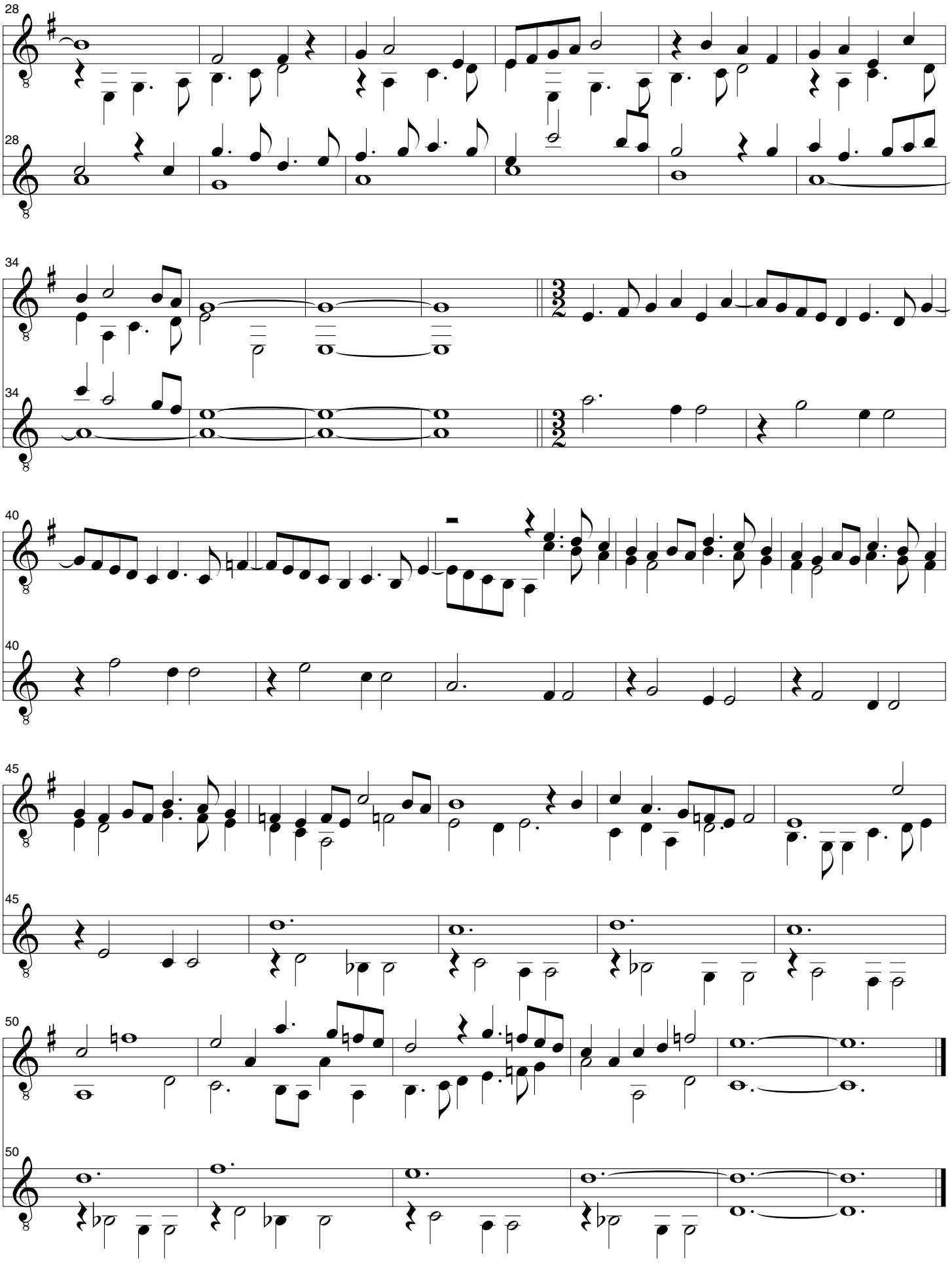
I. Kyrie

arrangement for two guitars by
JEFFRY HAMILTON STEELE

Guitar 1 (Capo V ③-F#, *Sounds P4th lower than written*):

Guitar 2 (standard tuning):

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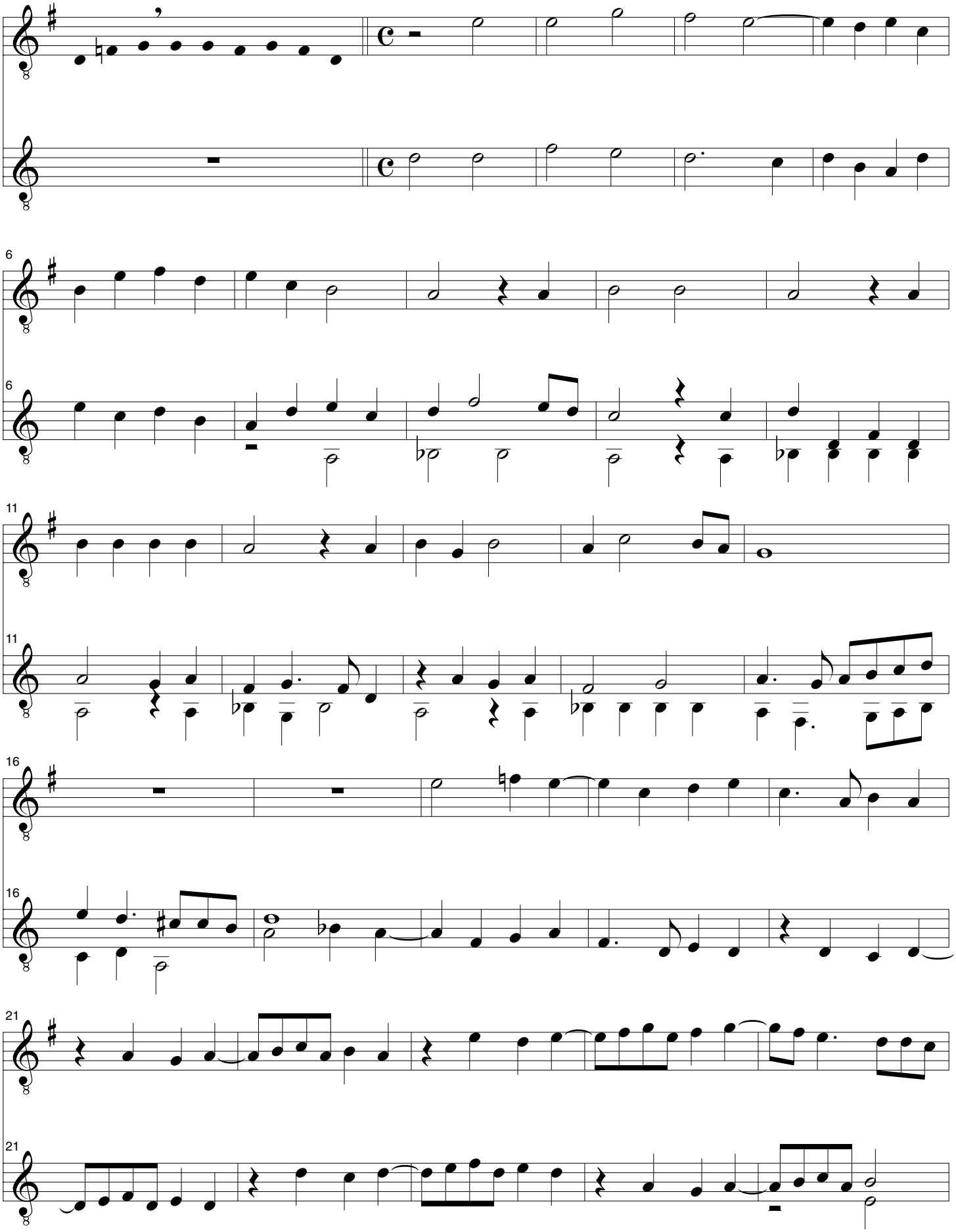
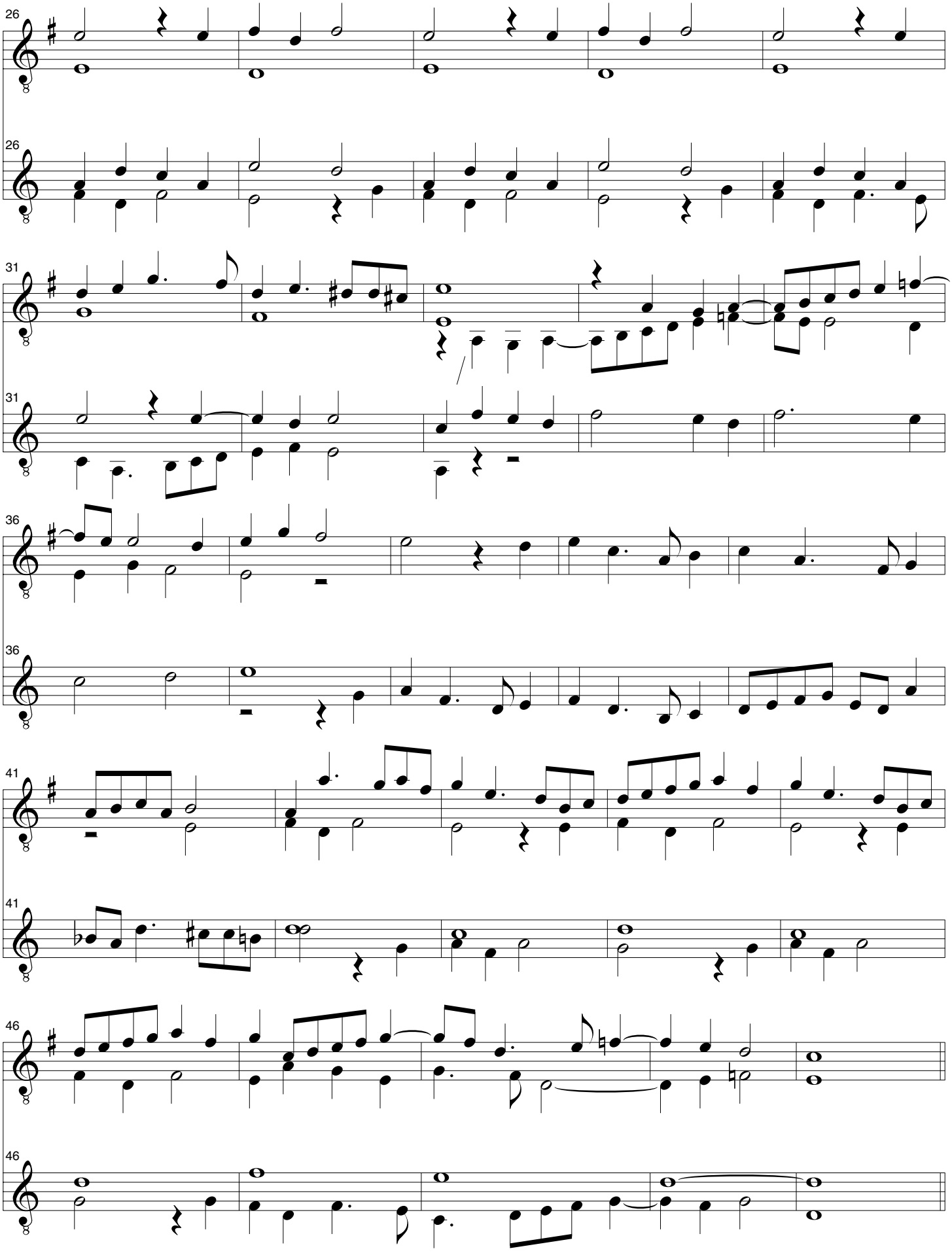
II. Gloria

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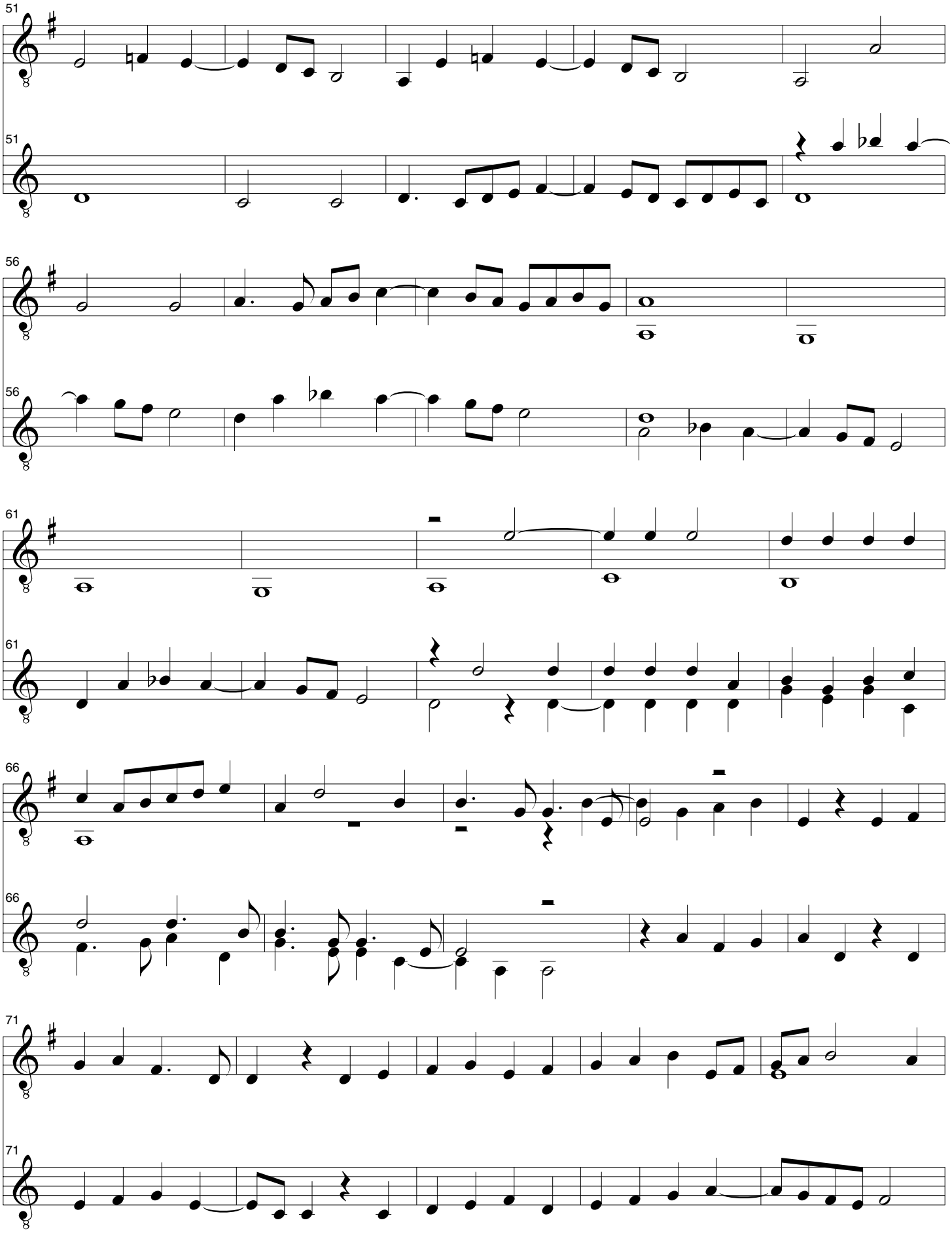
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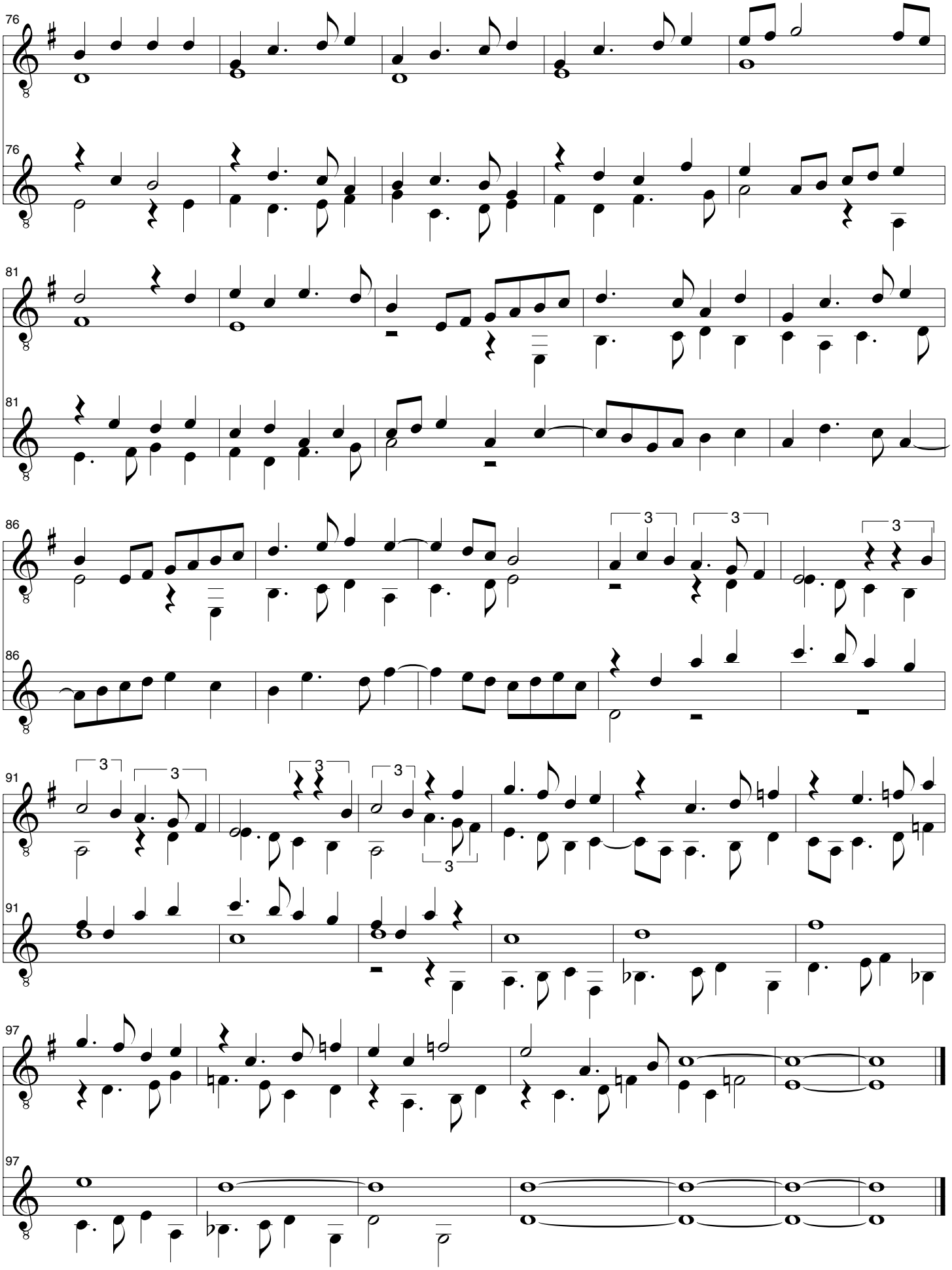
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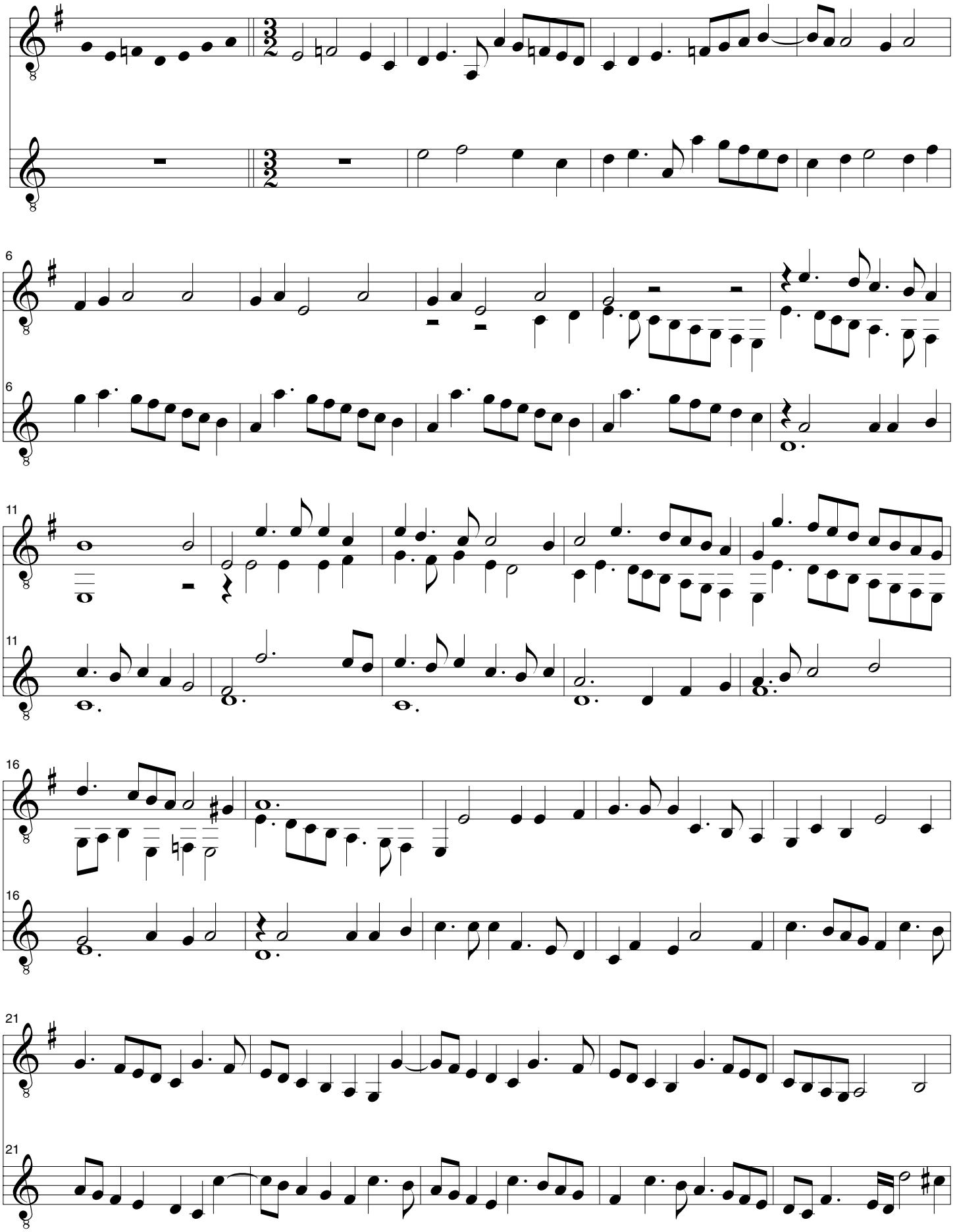
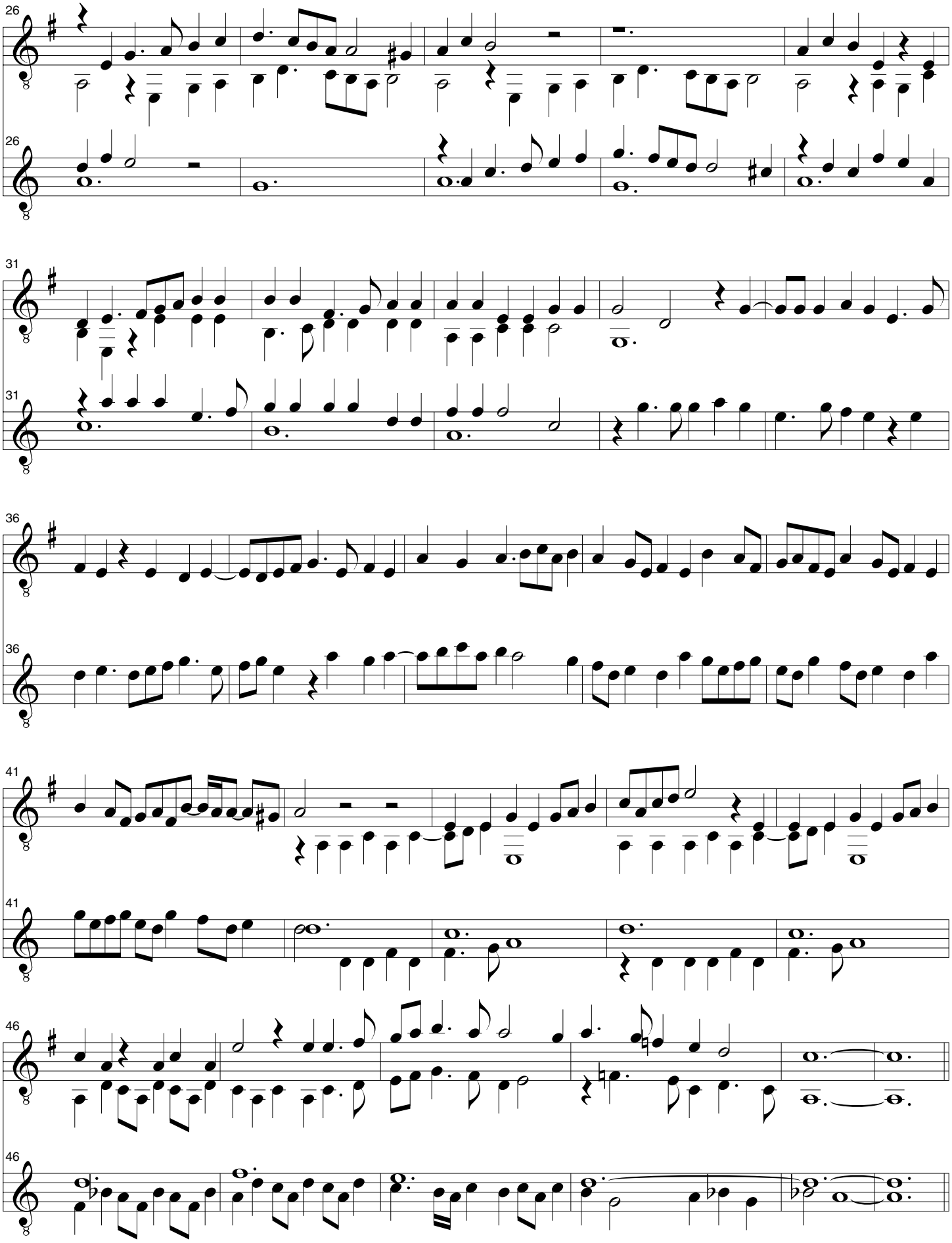
III. Credo

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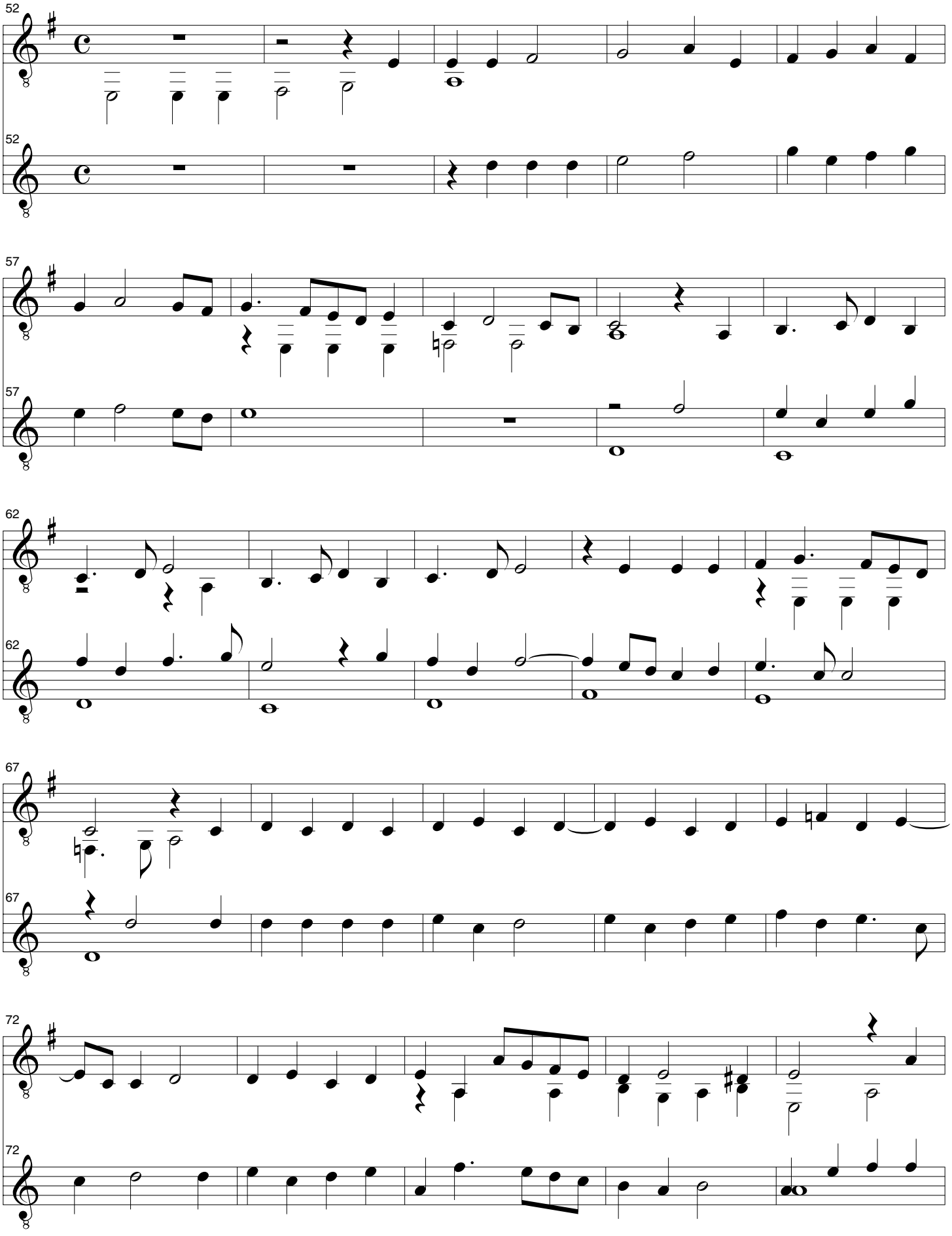
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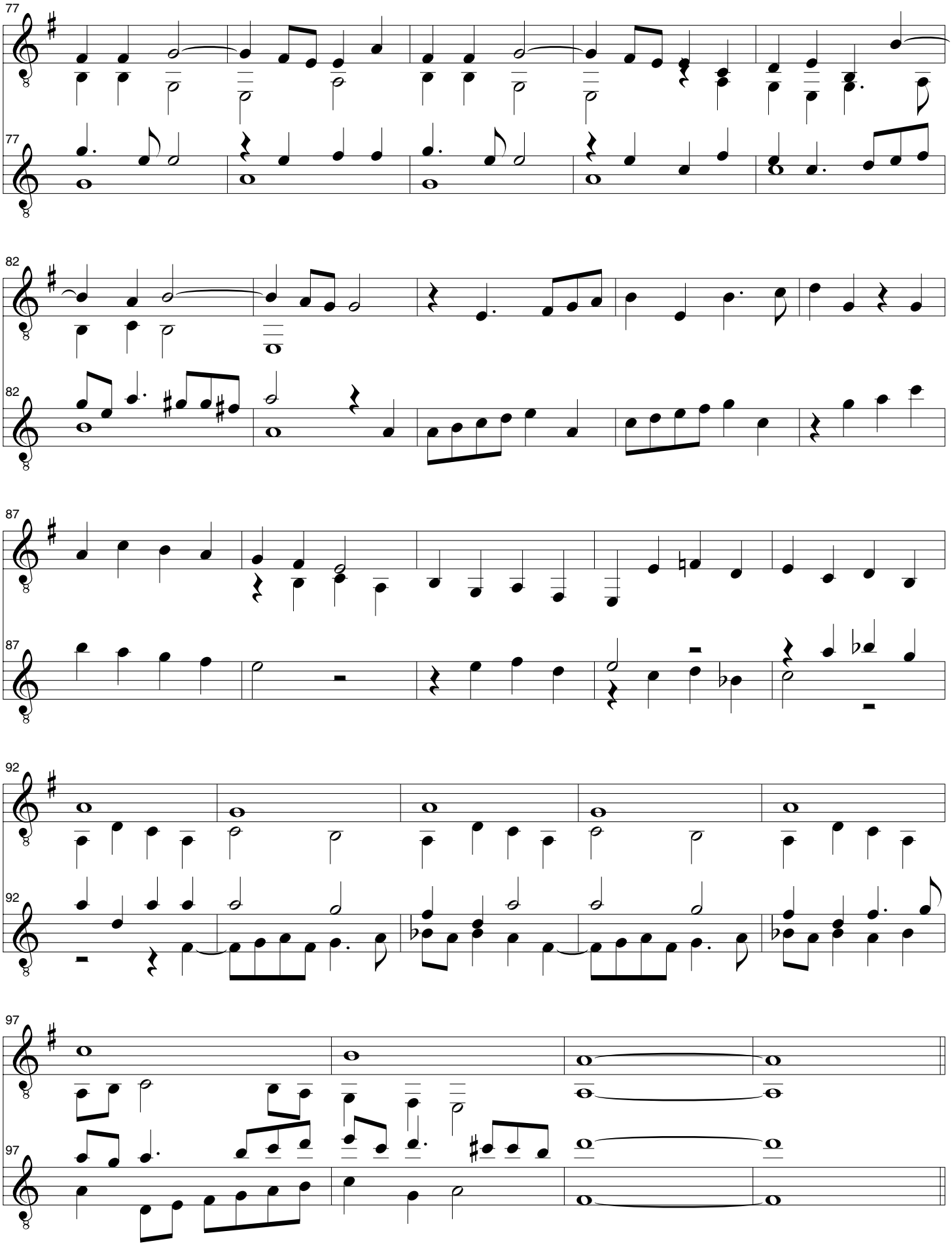
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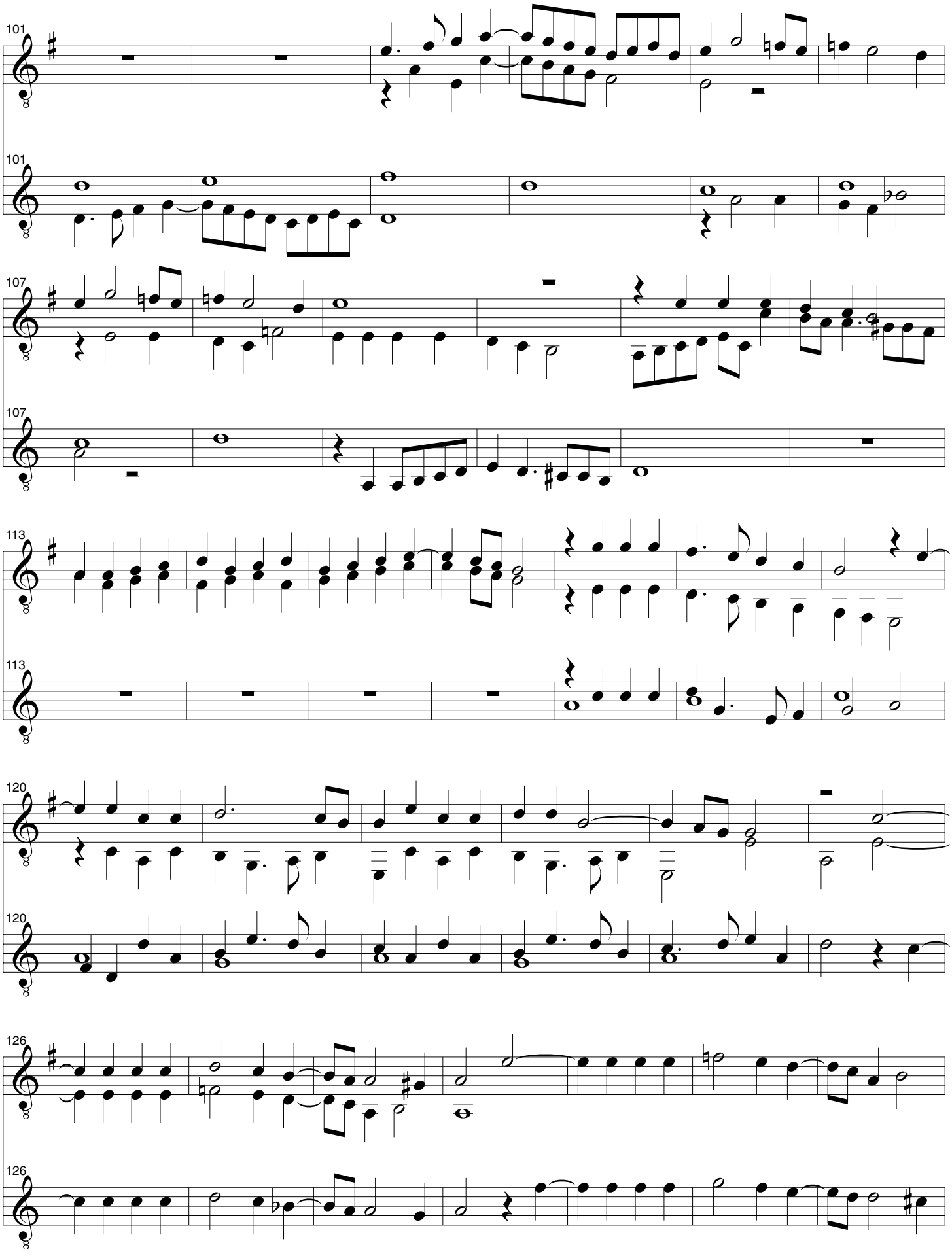
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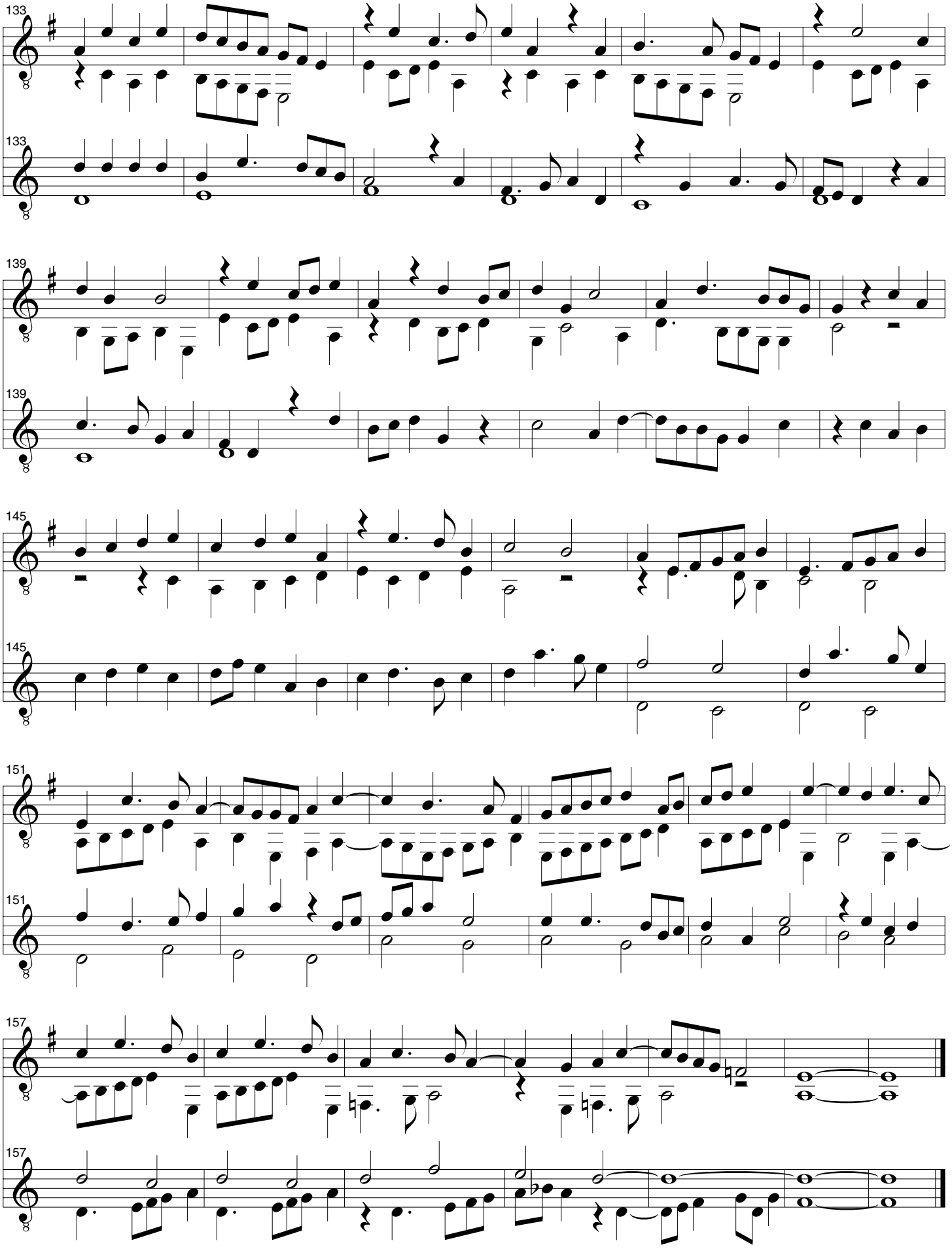
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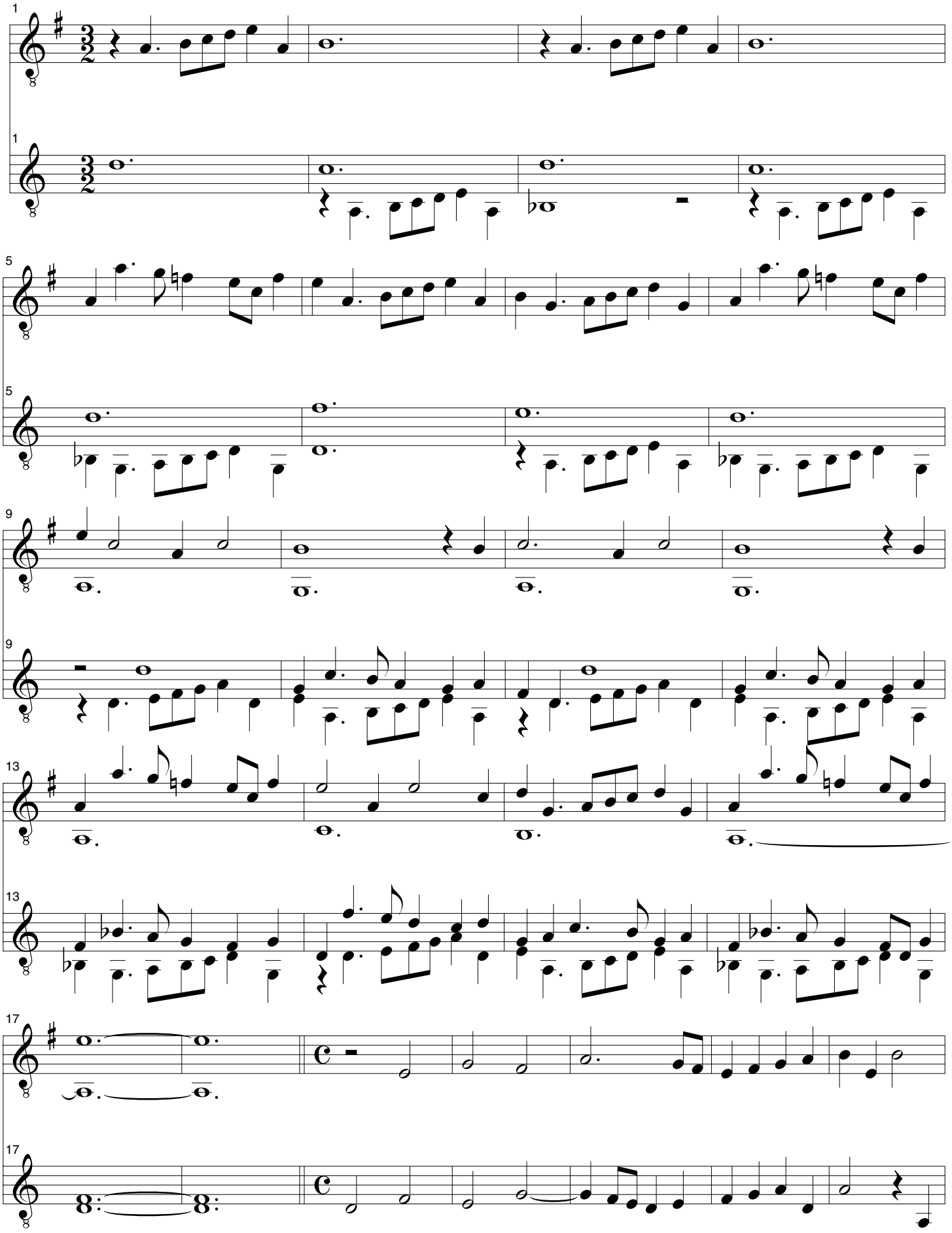
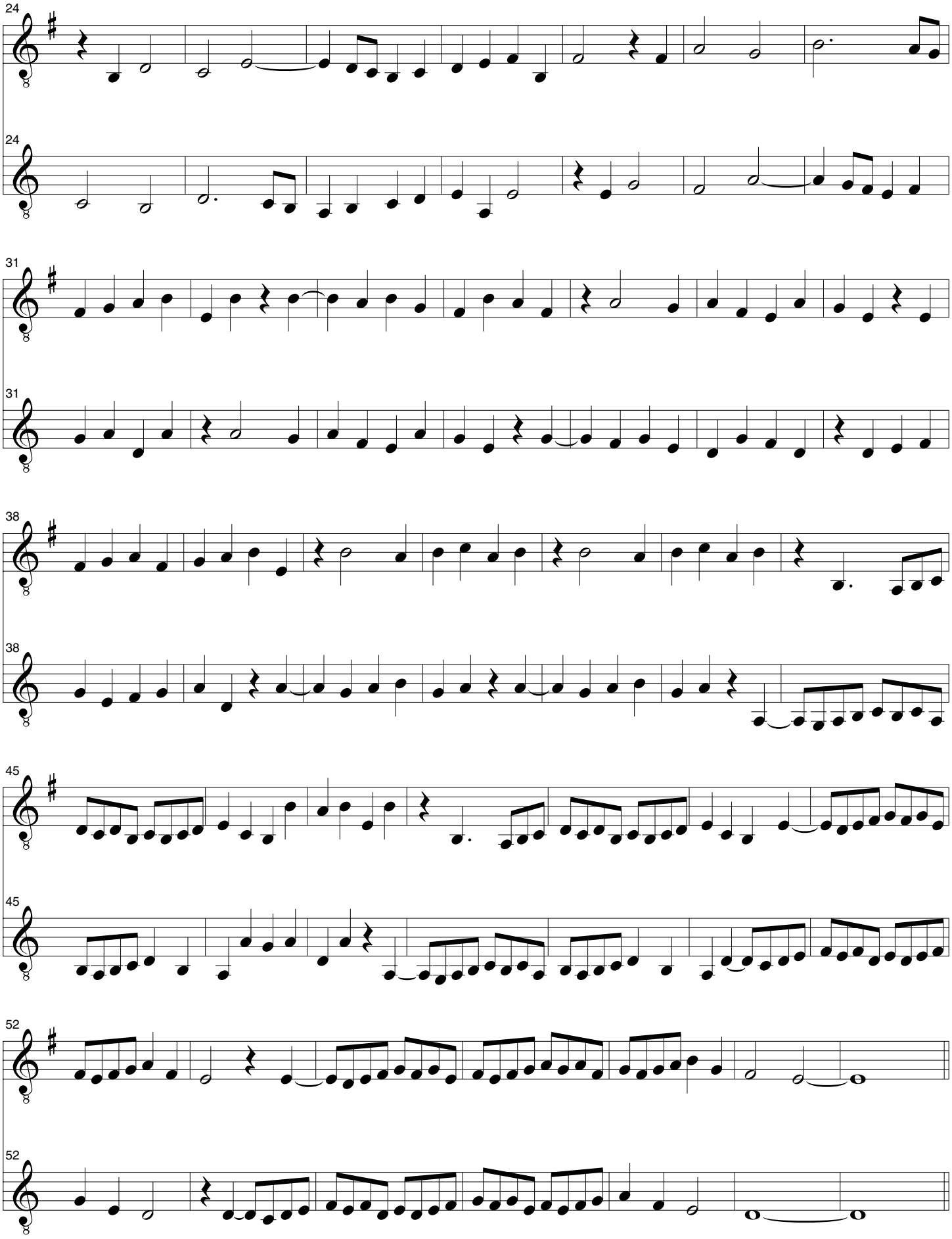
IV. Sanctus

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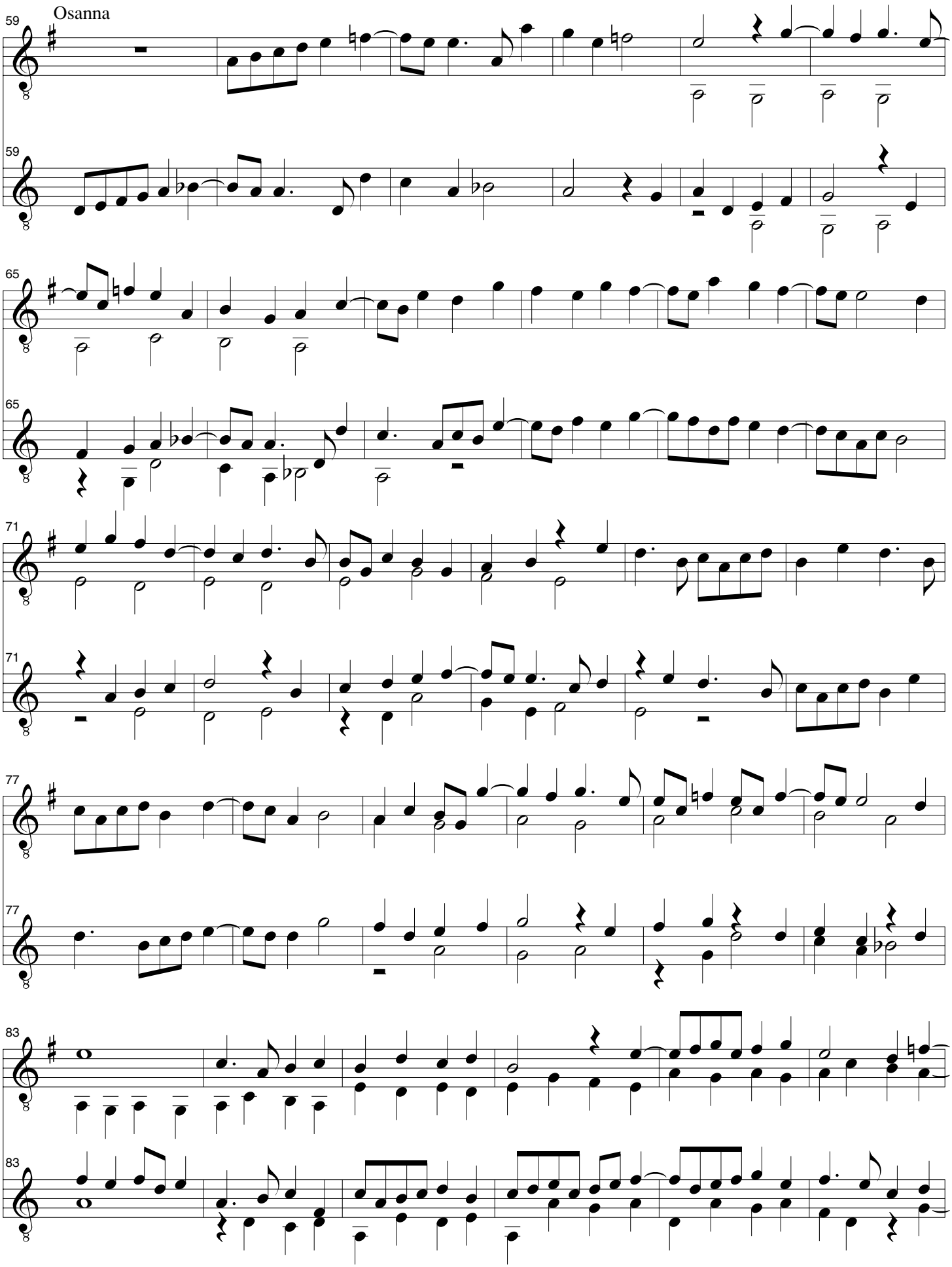
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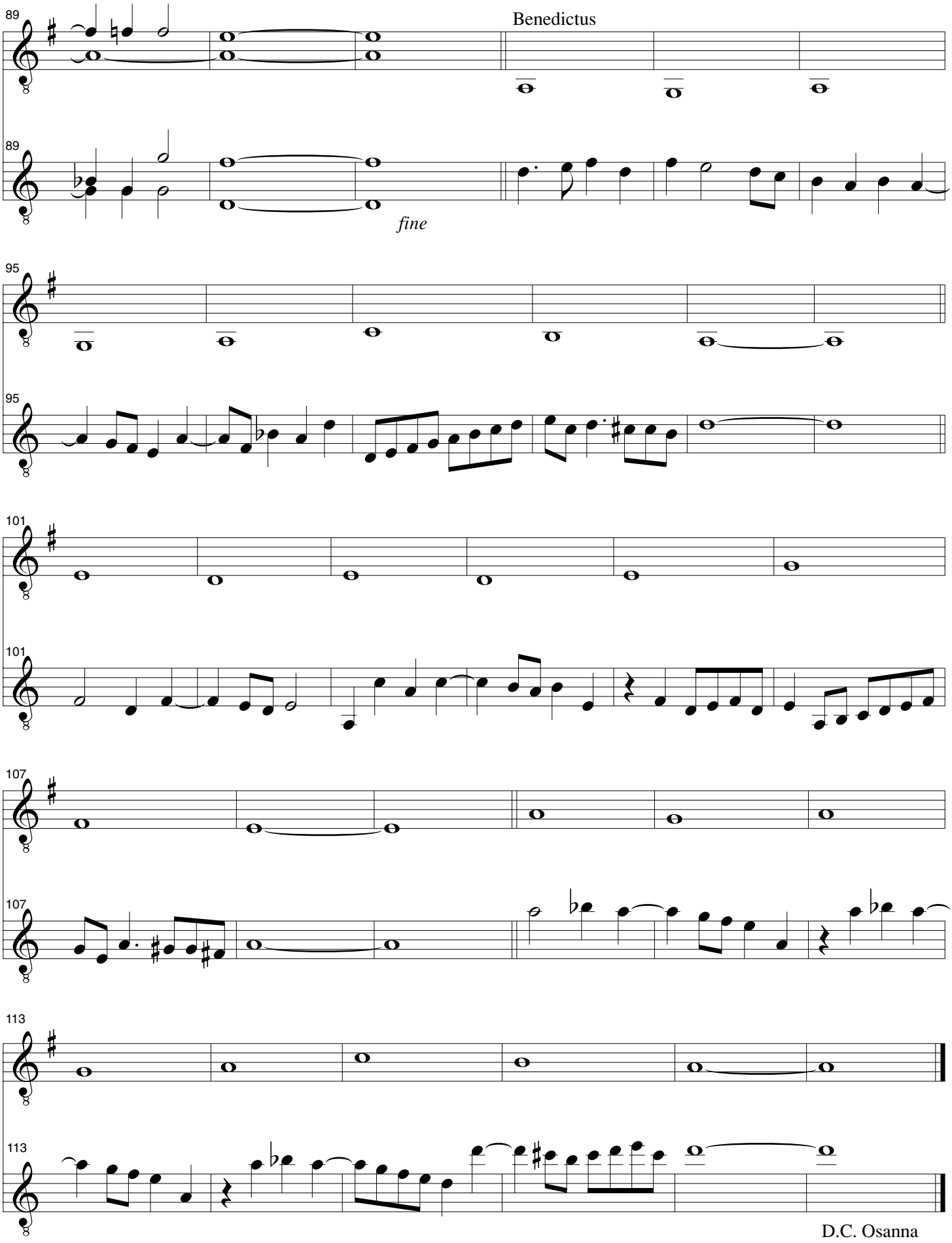
Benedictus
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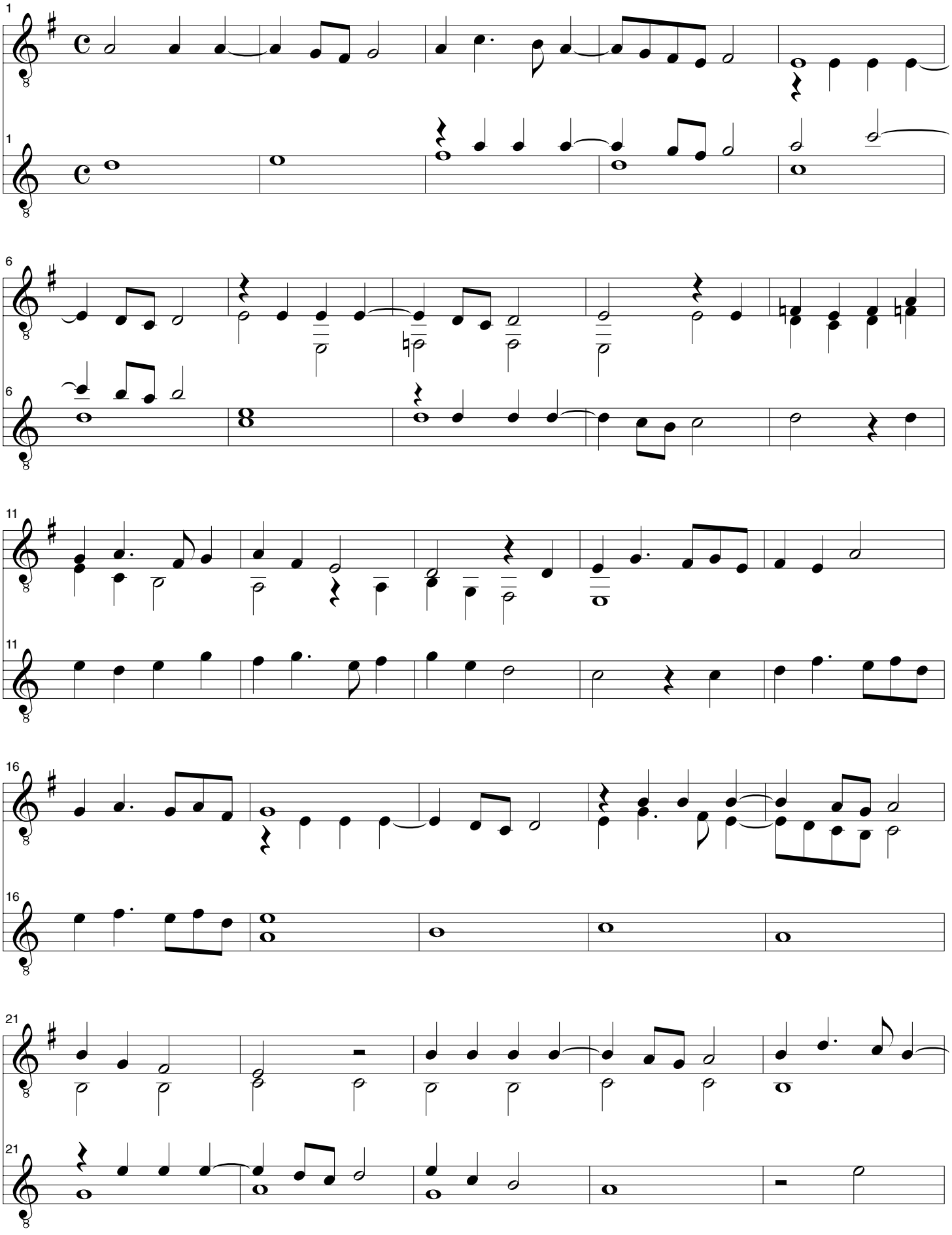
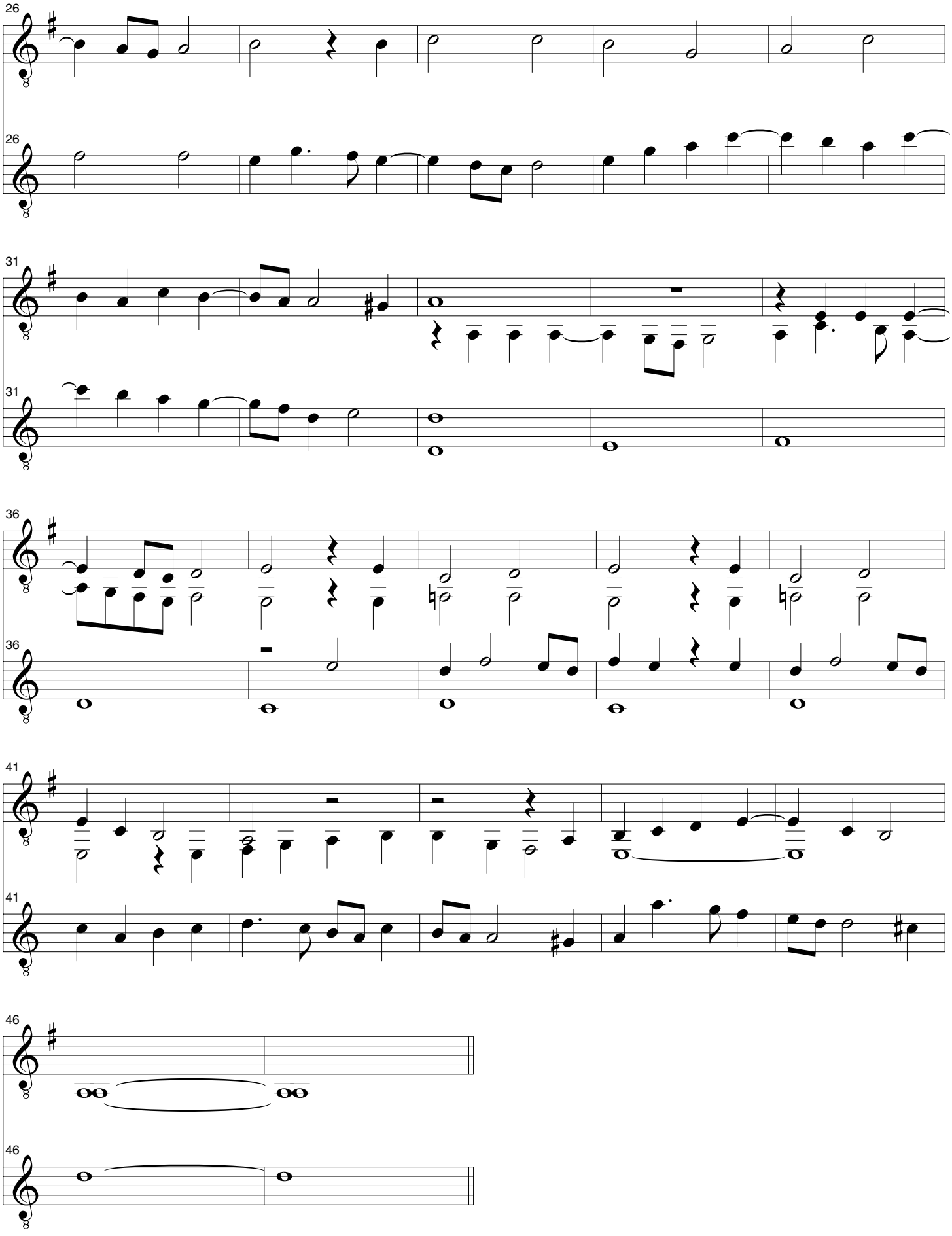
D.C. Osanna

V. Agnus Dei

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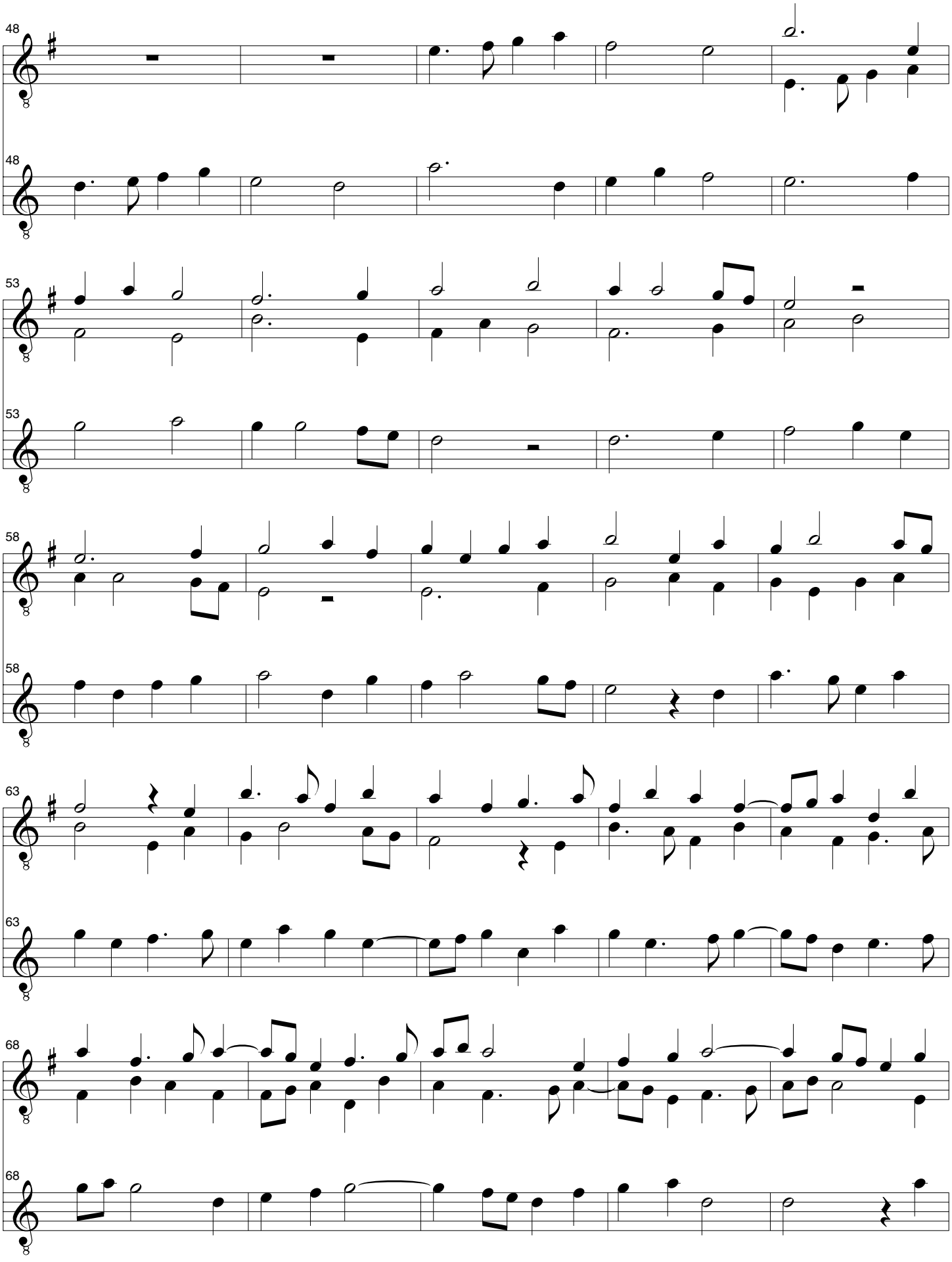
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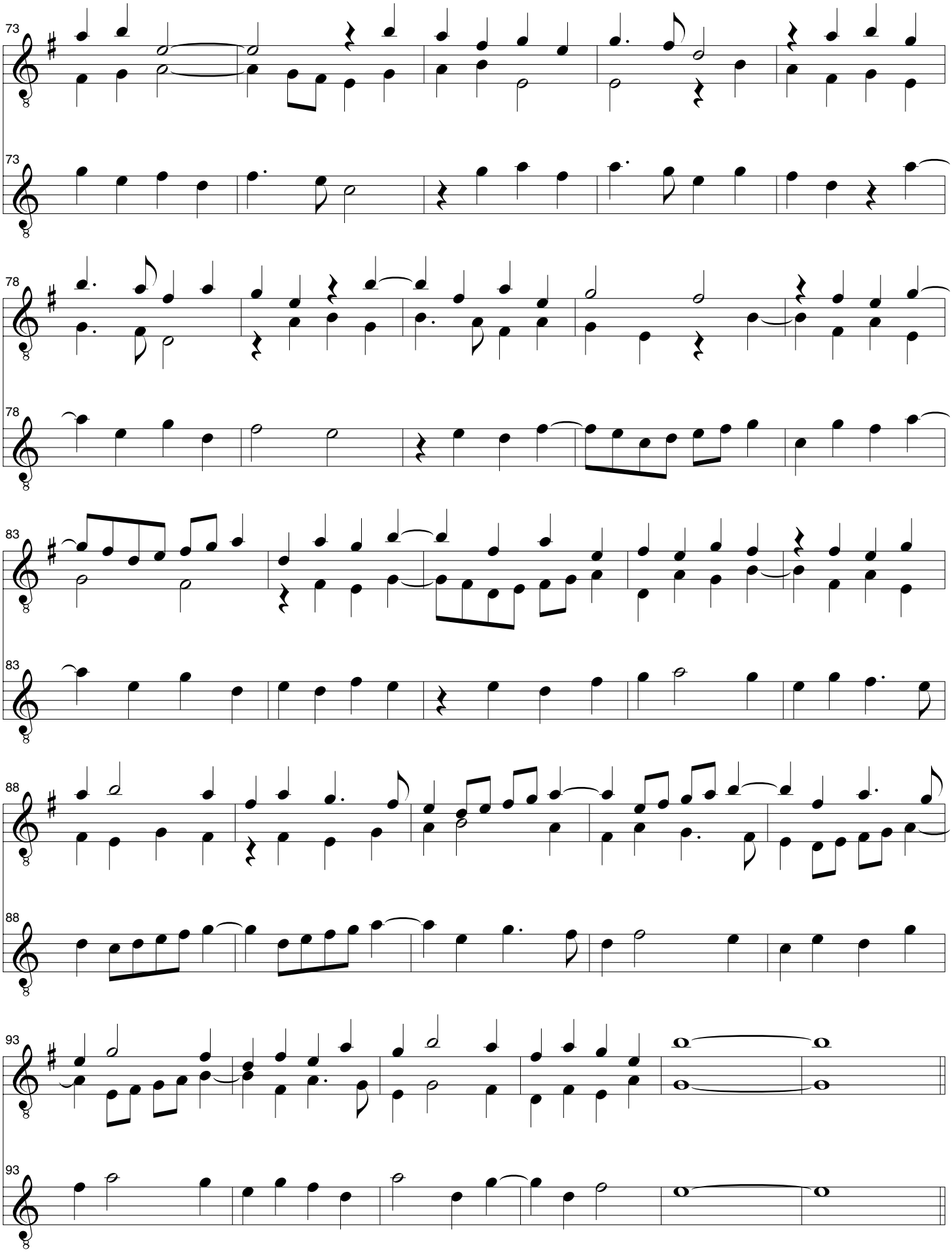
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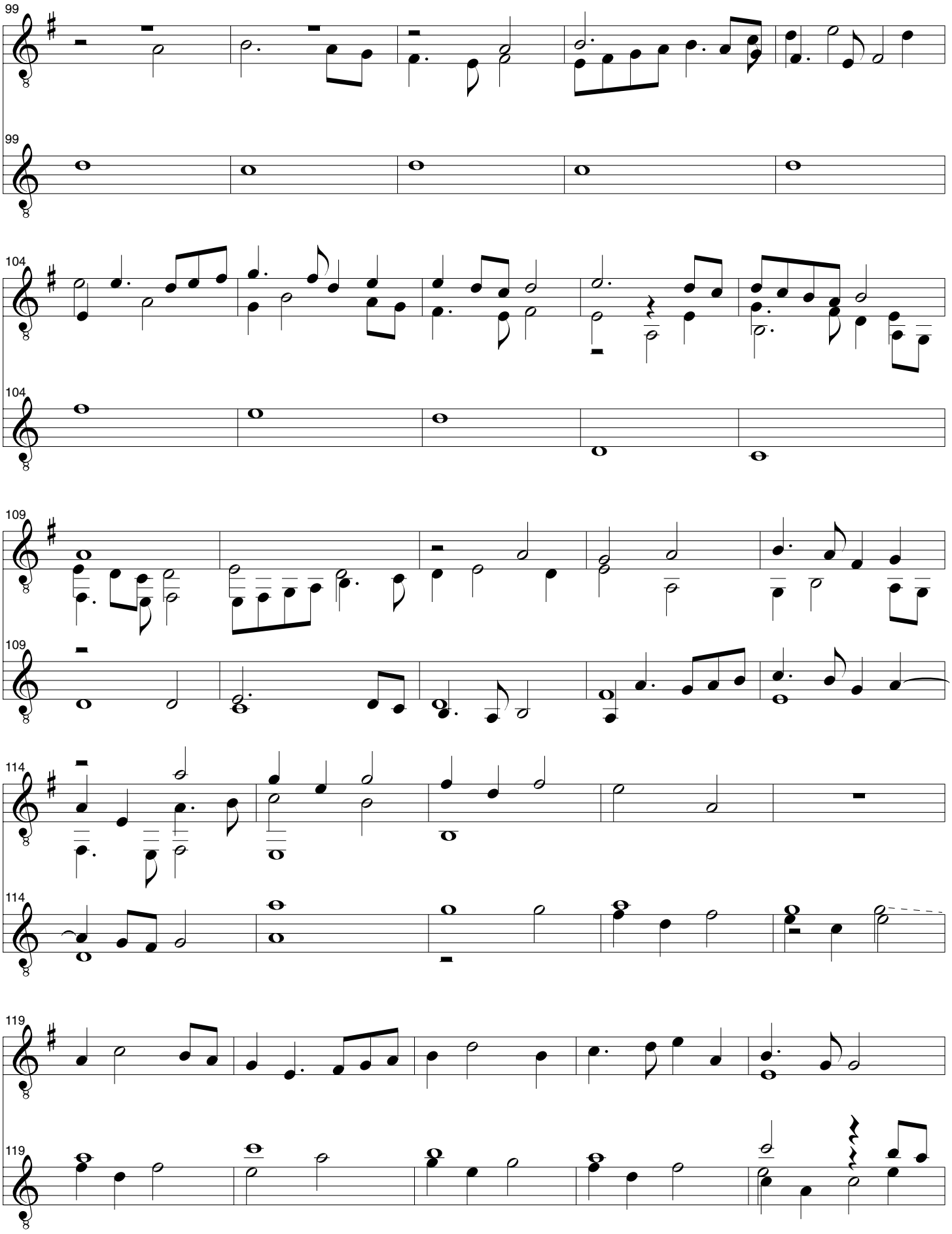
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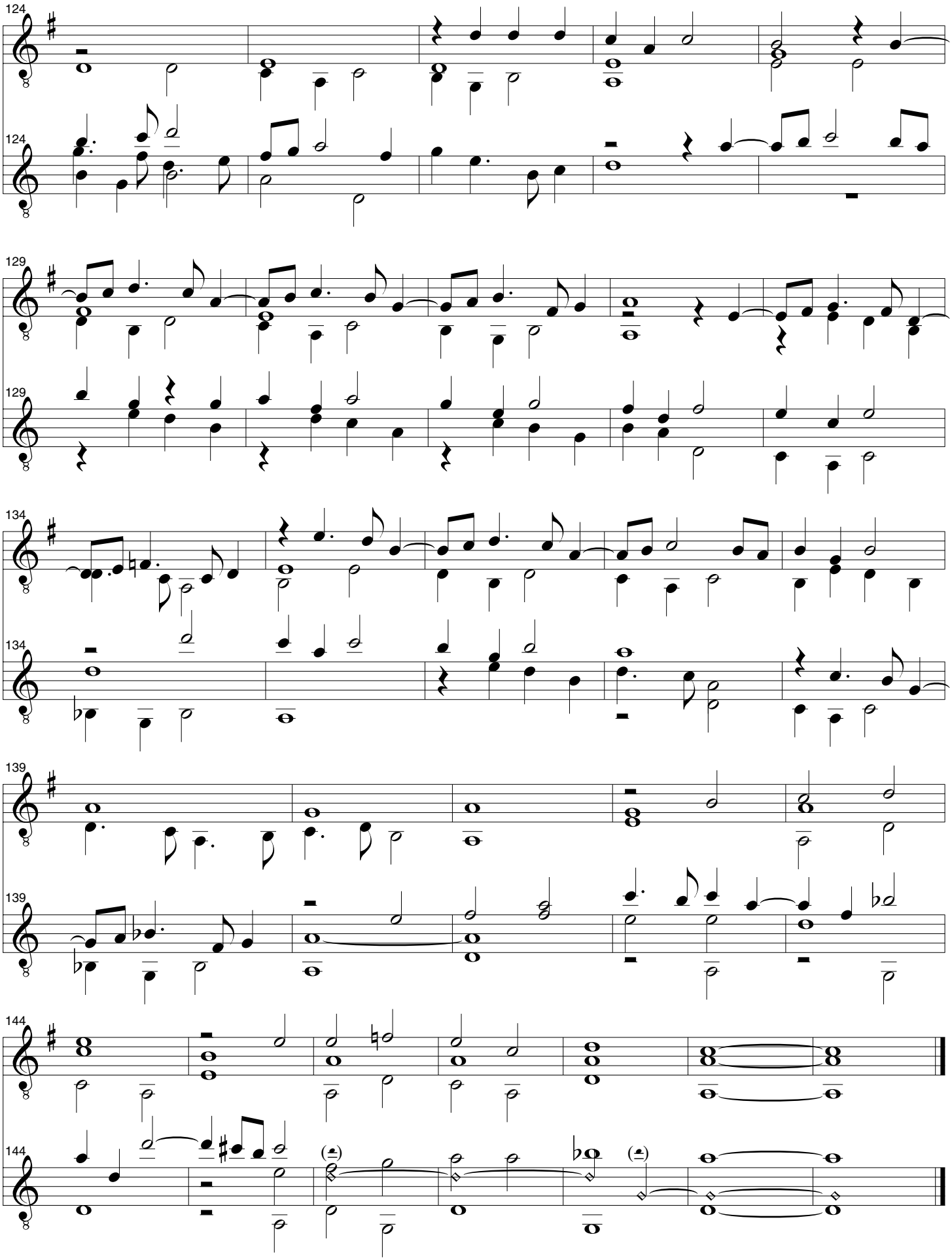
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