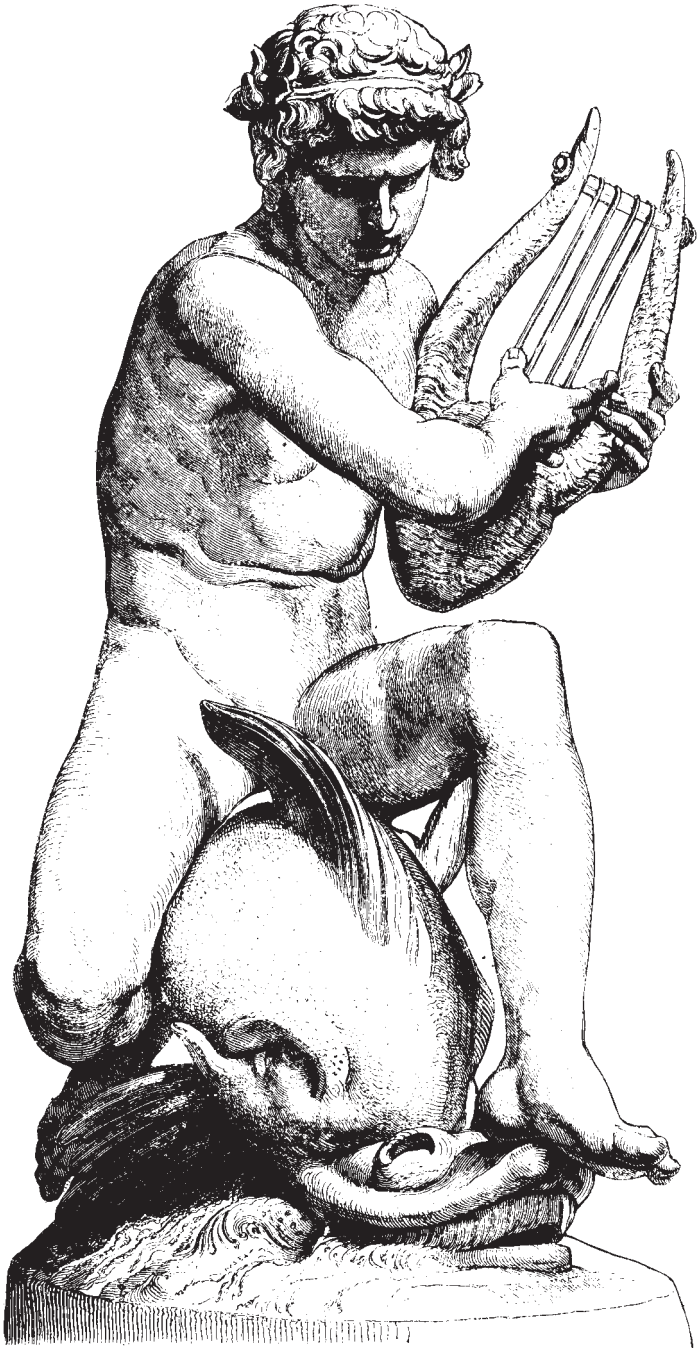
Johann Sebastian Bach



Trio Sonata BWV 525 for Organ
arranged for String Trio
(2 Violins & Cello/Bass or Violin, Viola & Cello/Bass)

Transcribed & edited by Alan Bonds

ABOUT THE WORKS

Six Trio Sonatas BWV 525-530 by Johann Sebastian Bach
arranged for String Trio

The six organ sonatas are widely regarded as masterpieces for the instrument. There is an excellent and exhaustive essay on the collection in Wikipedia [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organ_Sonatas_(Bach)] which I highly recommend.
It begins:
"The organ sonatas, BWV 525–530 by Johann Sebastian Bach are a collection of six sonatas in trio sonata form. Each of the sonatas has three movements, with three independent parts in the two manuals and obbligato pedal. The collection was put together in Leipzig in the late 1720s and contained reworkings of prior compositions by Bach from earlier cantatas, organ works and chamber music as well as some newly composed movements. The sixth sonata, BWV 530, is the only one for which all three movements were specially composed for the collection. When played on an organ, the second manual part is often played an octave lower on the keyboard with appropriate registration. Commentators have suggested that the collection might partly have been intended for private study to perfect organ technique, some pointing out that its compass allows it to be played on a pedal clavichord. The collection of sonatas is generally regarded as one of Bach's masterpieces for organ. The sonatas are also considered to be amongst his most difficult compositions for the instrument.
The Wikipedia article goes on to say:
"The sonatas were described by Bach's biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel as follows: Six sonatas or trios for two keyboards with obbligato pedal. Bach composed them for his eldest son, Willhelm Friedemann, who, by practising them, prepared himself to be the great organist he later became. It is impossible to say enough about their beauty. They were written when the composer was in his full maturity and can be considered his principal work of this kind."

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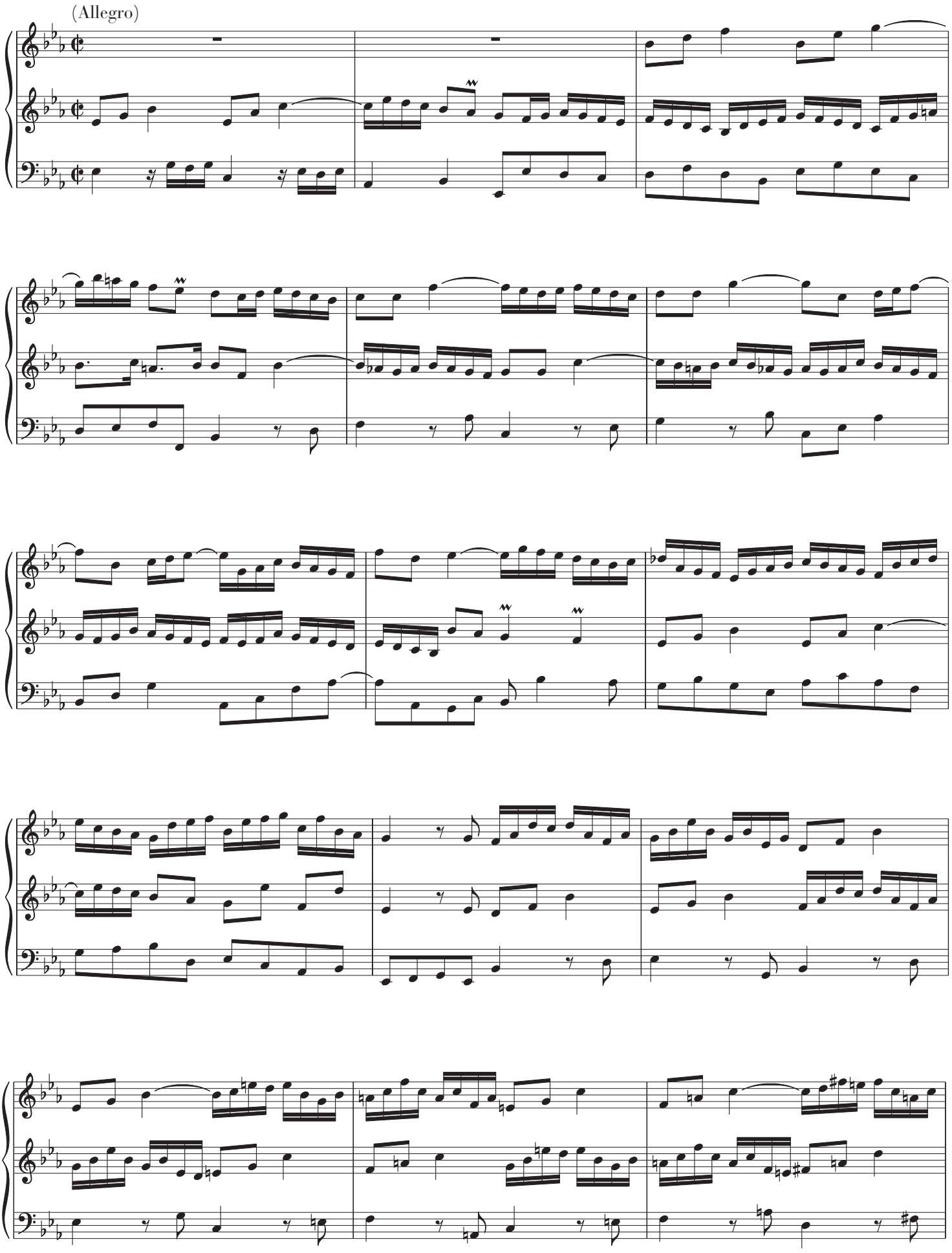
ABOUT THE TRANSCRIPTIONS

This version is not strictly speaking an 'arrangement' but rather an almost exact 'transcription'.

I have retained Bach's treble clef notation of the second part even though it goes beyond the violin range. But I have also given a viola.

There have been a huge number of transcriptions and arrangements for a variety of ensembles, including some by Bach himself, and later by Mozart (K. 404a), and through to Bartok and Kurtag. This edition transposes some to more string-friendly keys (including the range).
Most are suitable for 2 violins and cello, but the second treble part could also suit the viola (especially if it is taken an octave lower as described above). Some top voices are also suitable for flute. Double-bass would also be possible. for the bass voice
I have not attempted to provide bowings rather leaving them to the discretion of the players.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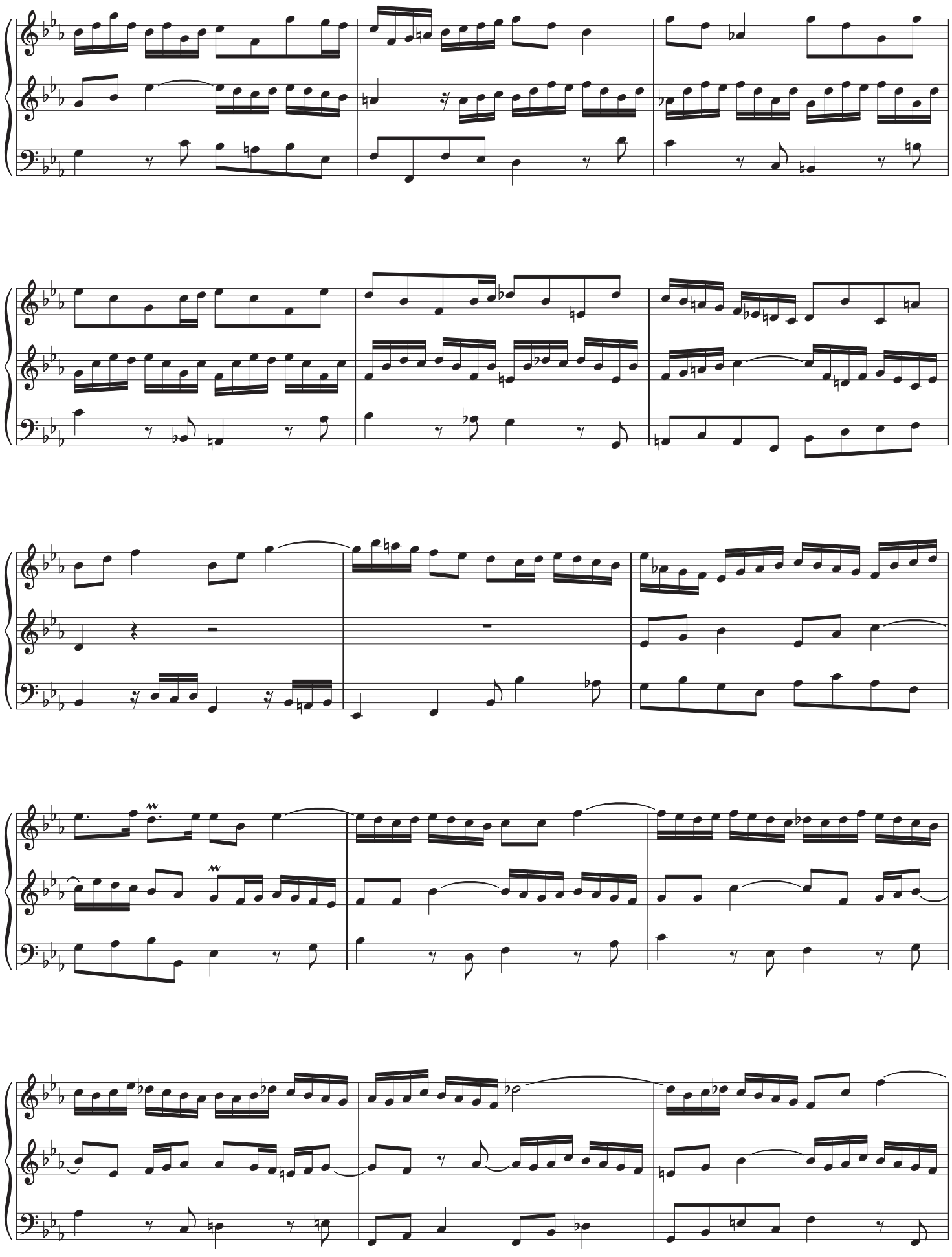
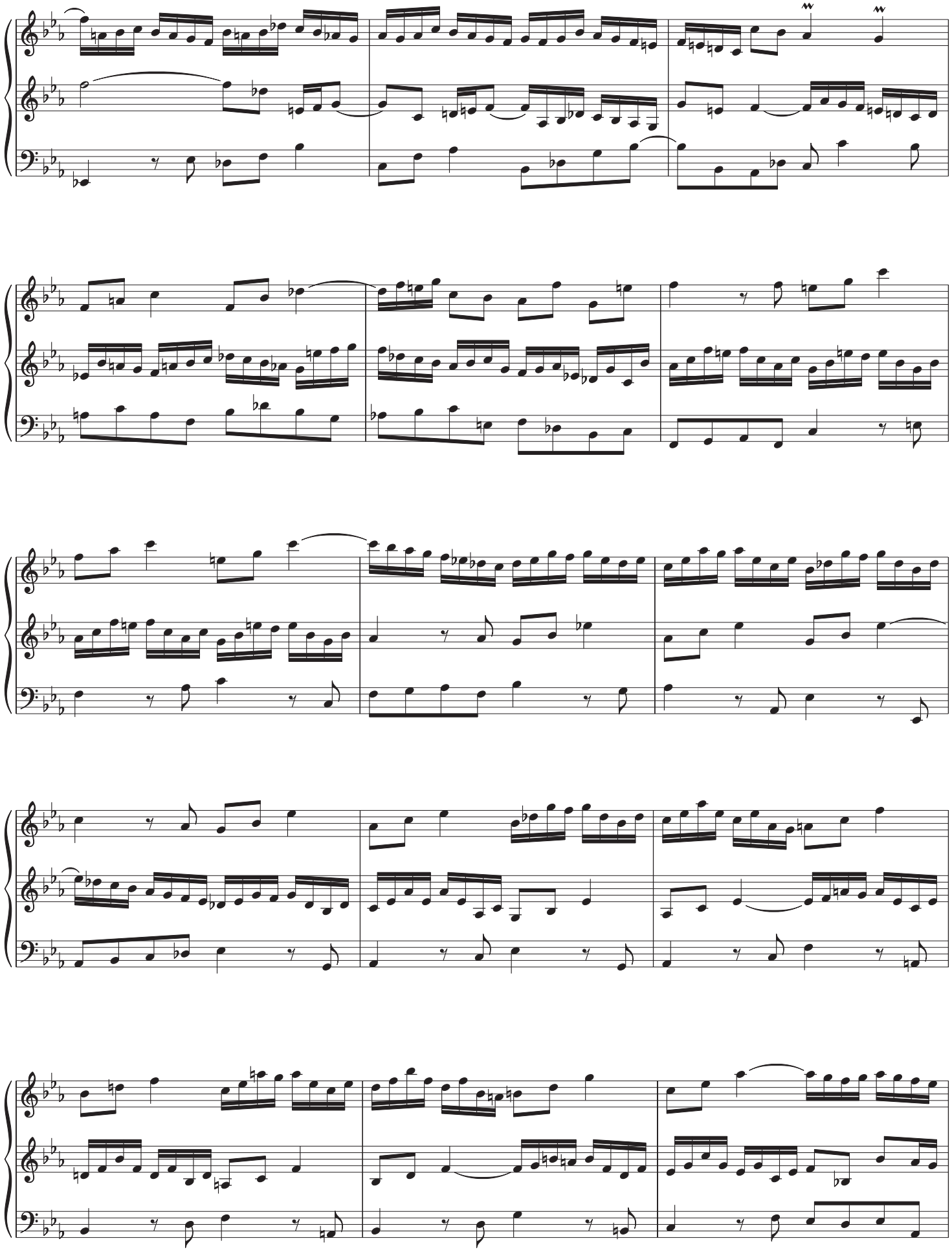
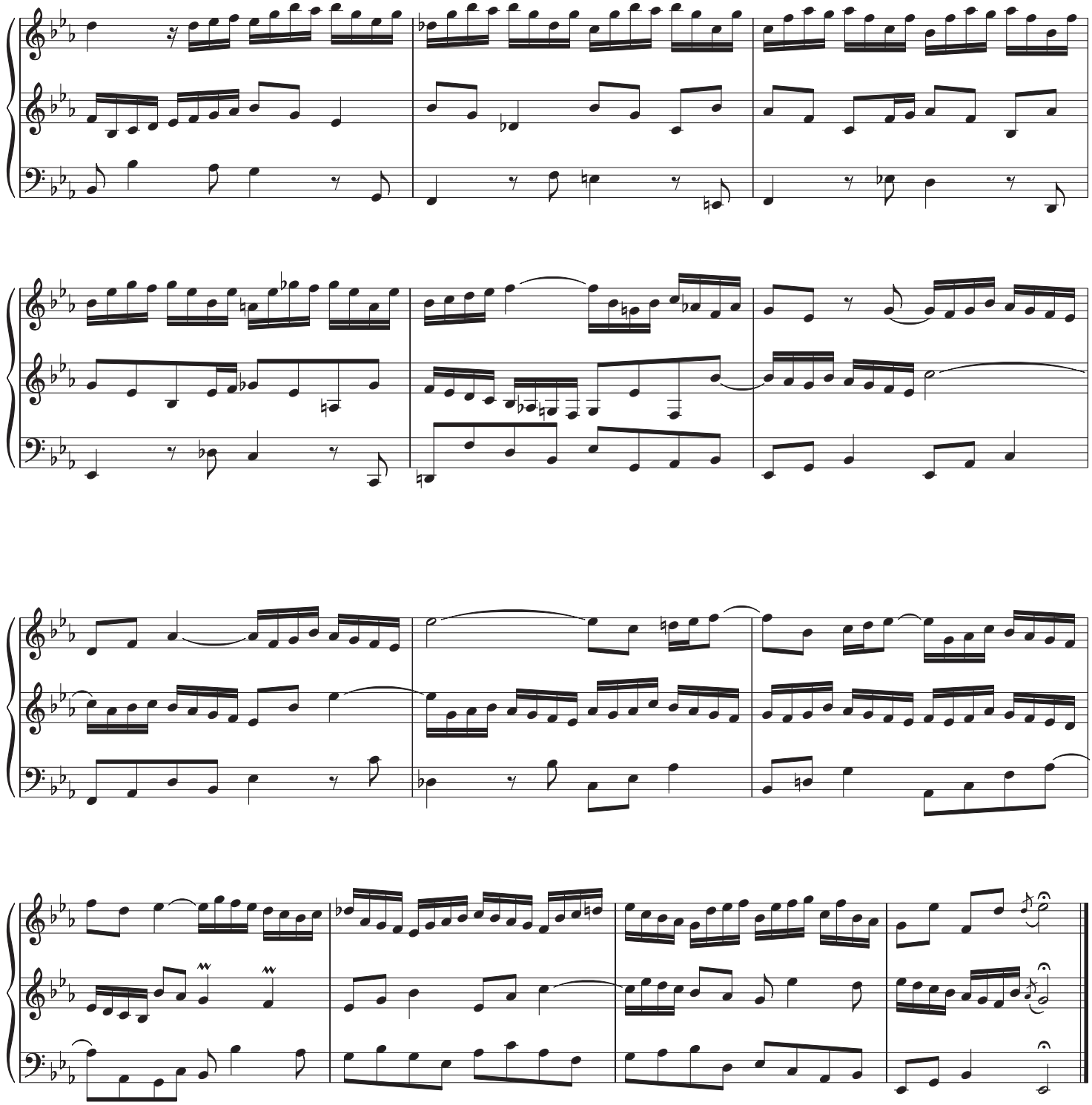
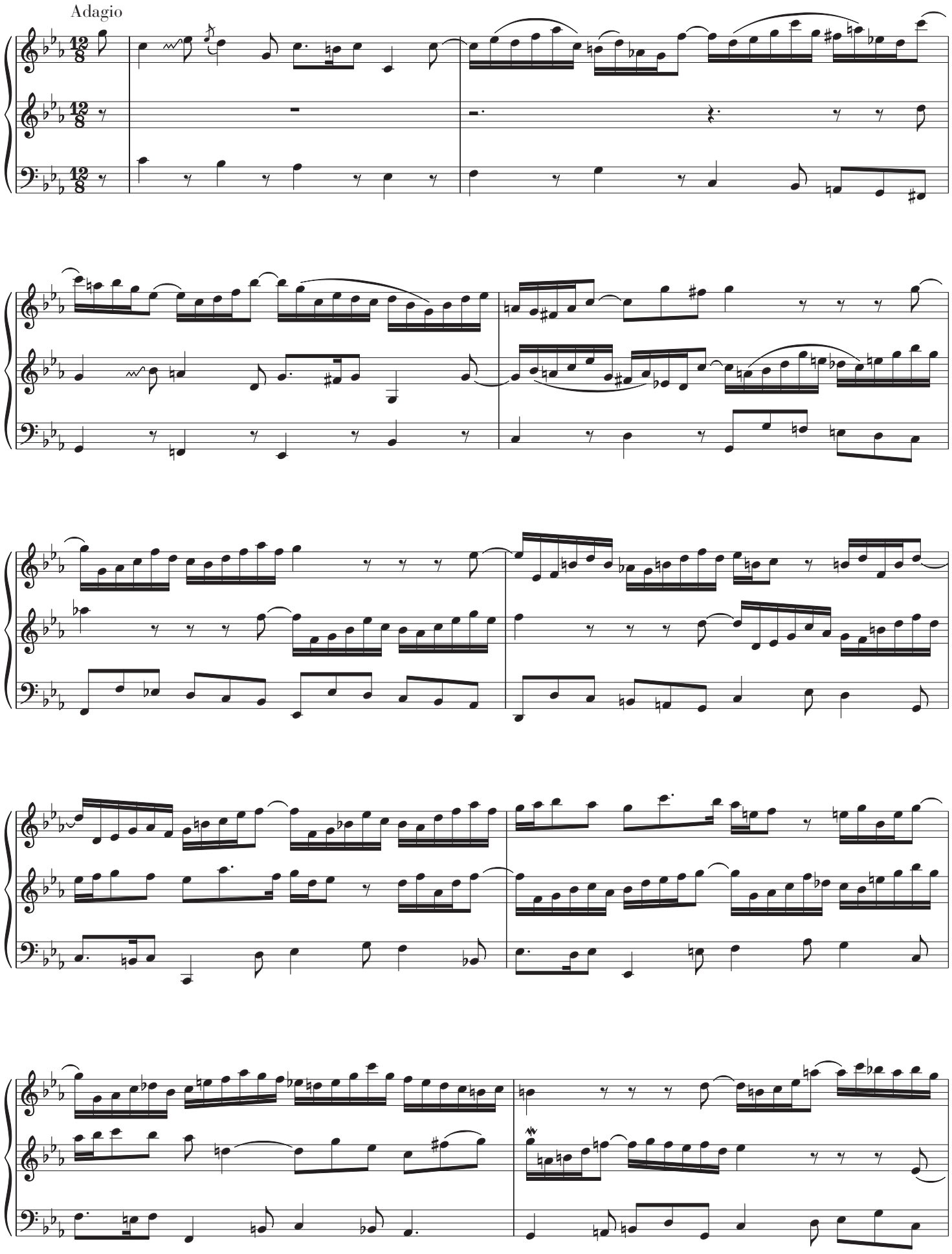
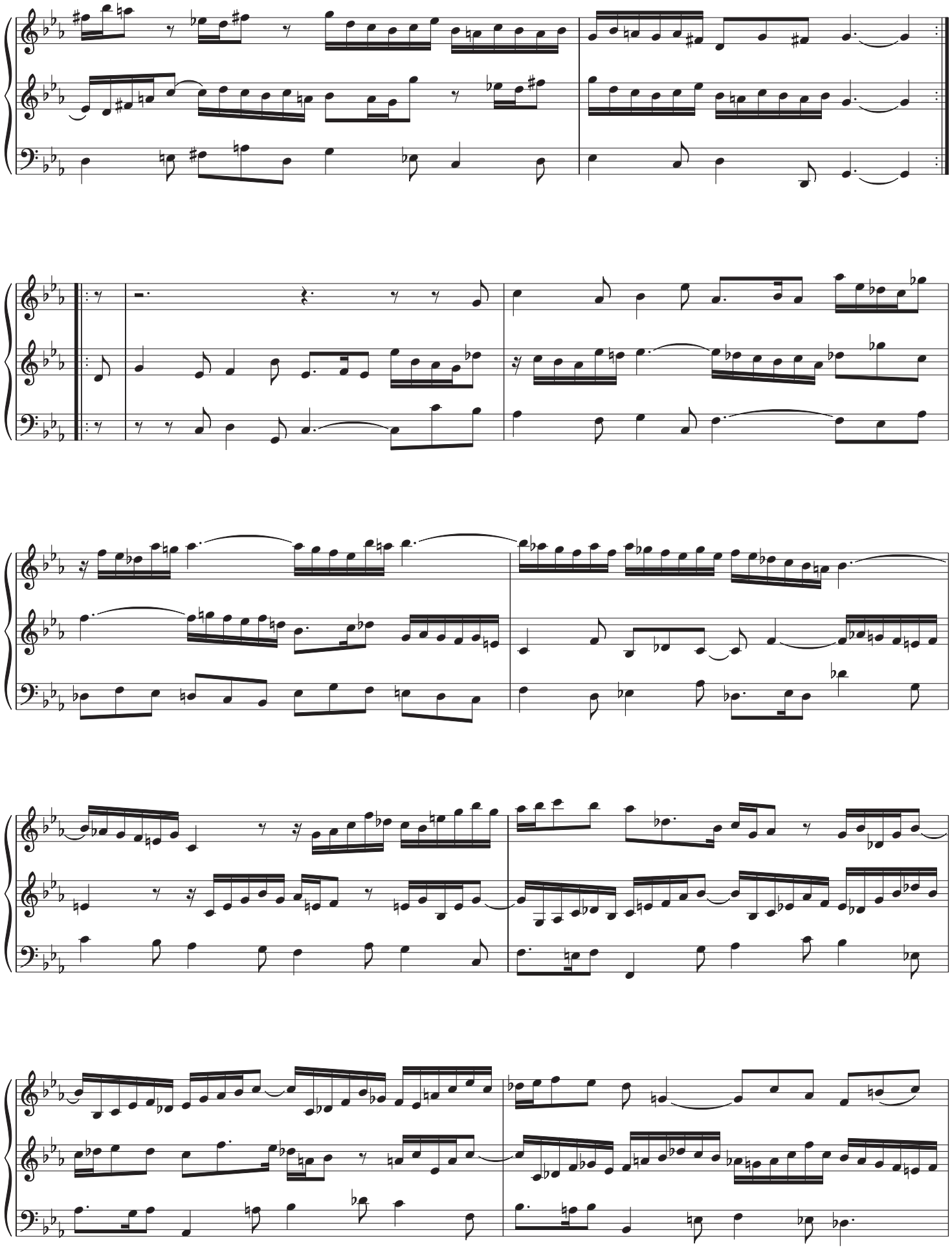
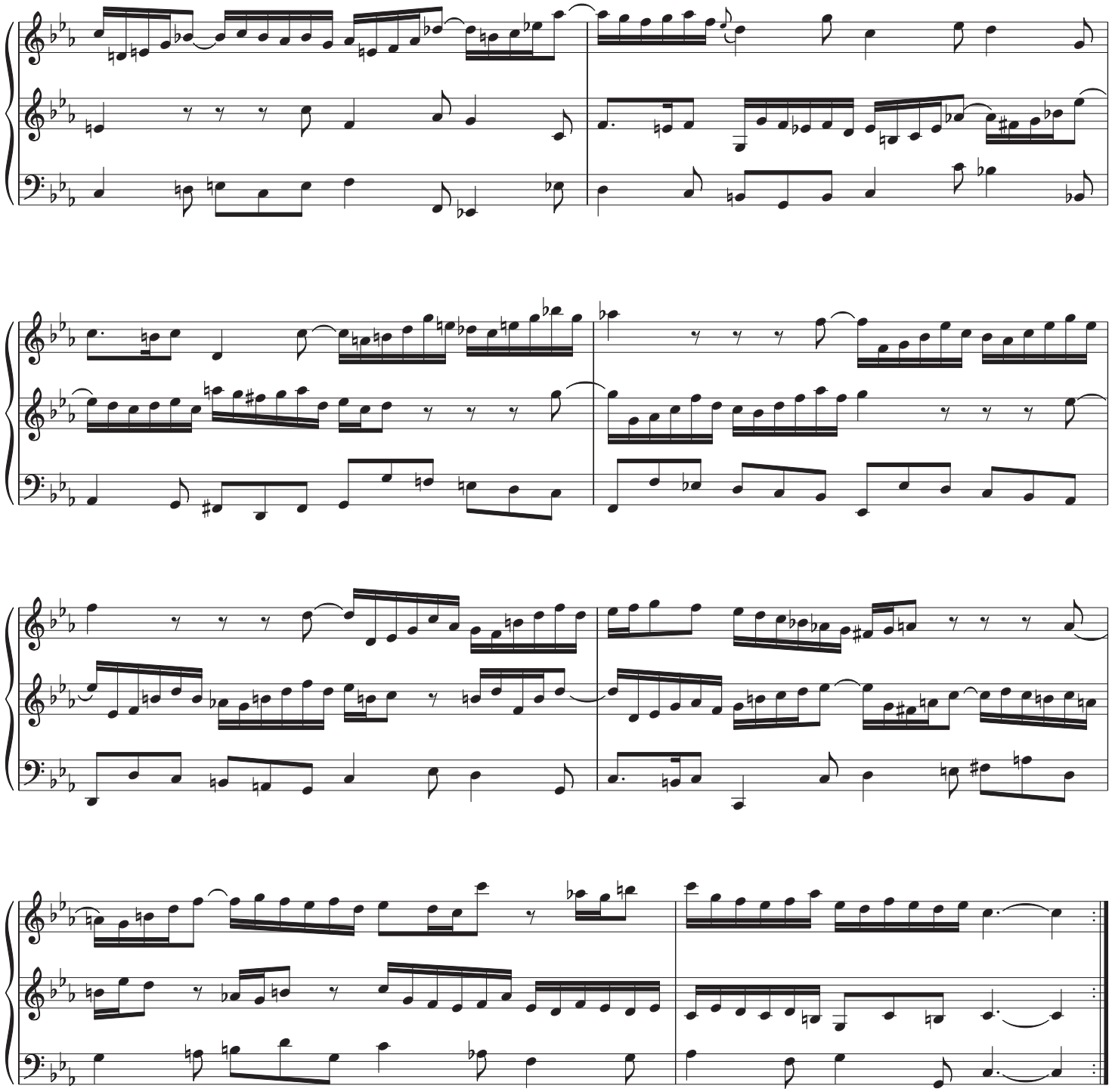


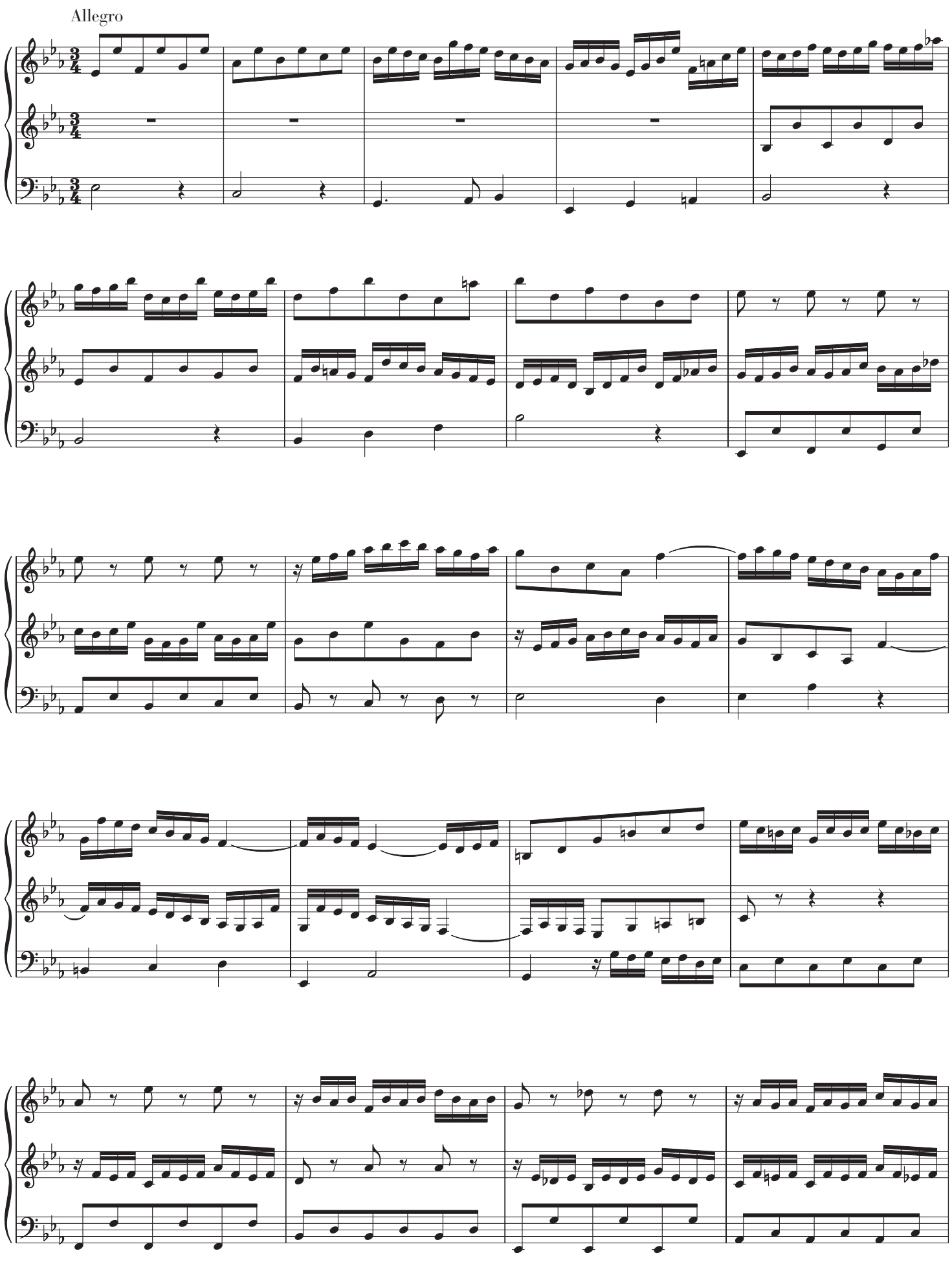
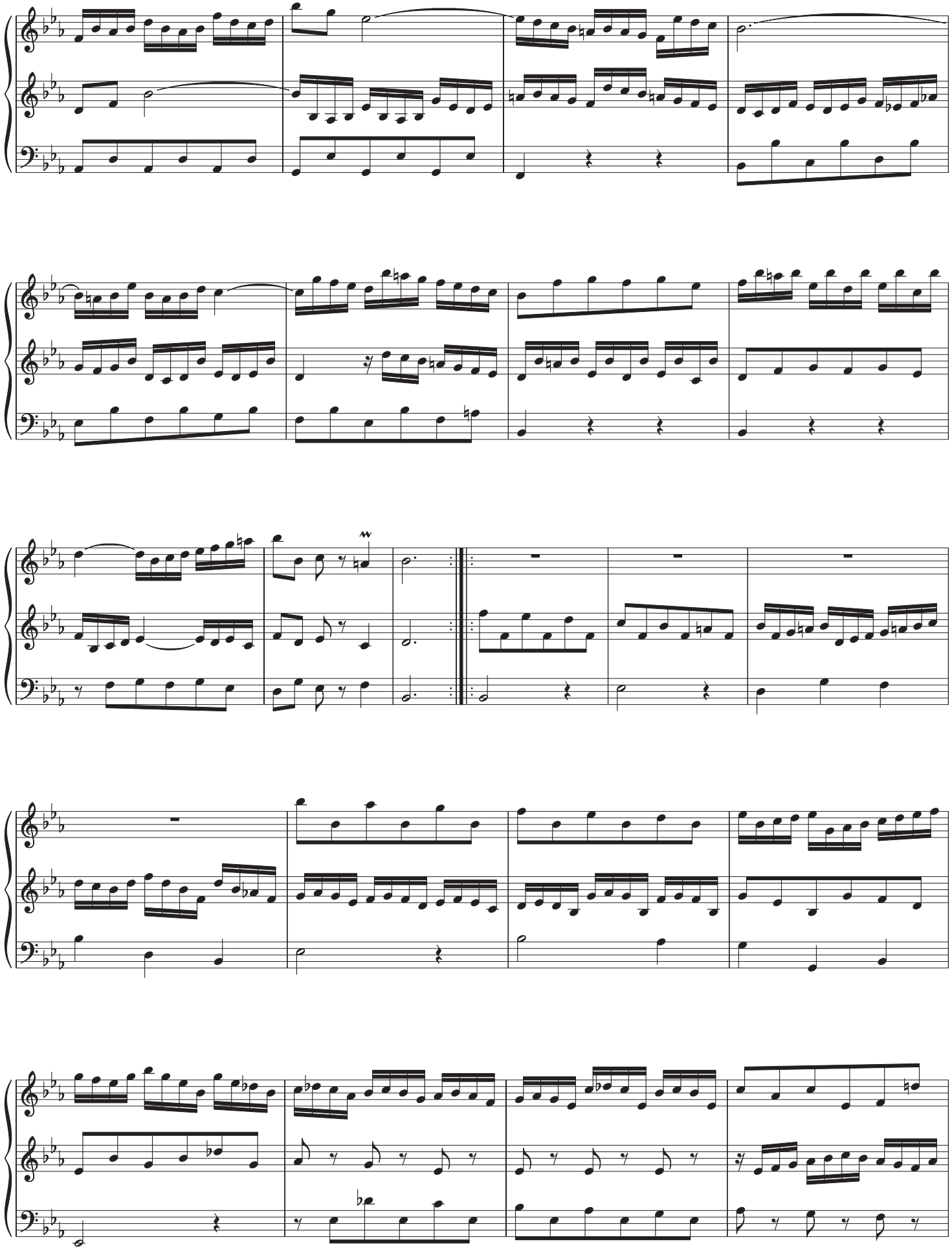
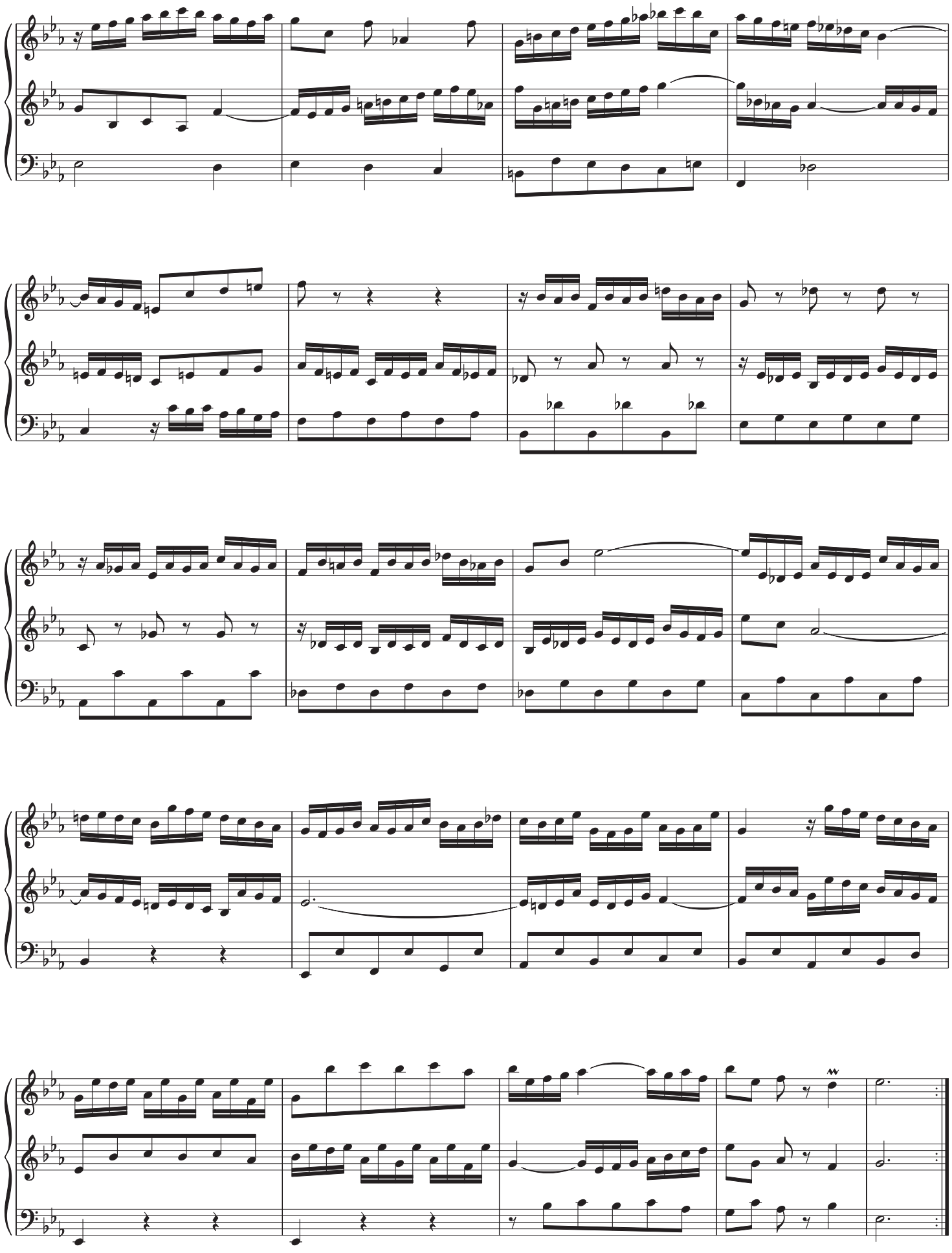





Adagio






Allegro