First Book of Pieces for the HARPSICHORD

Composed by

MICHEL CORRETTE

Opus XII

Edited from a facsimile of the first printing by

DAVID J. PERRY

Michel Corrette

First Book of Pieces for the Harpsichord Op. 12

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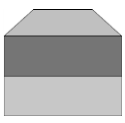
GREENTOP PUBLISHING



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Portrait of Michel Corrette from his book
L'École d'Orphée (1738), a treatise on violin playing.

Introduction

About the Composer

Michel Corrette (1707–1795) was born in Rouen, son of the organist and composer Gaspard Corrette. As a young man he moved to Paris where he had a long and very active musical career. He was organist at the Jesuit College in Paris for over 40 years and later became organist to the Duke of Angoulême. A prolific composer, he wrote many works for the stage, concertos, chamber music, and organ pieces, along with cantatas and other sacred vocal works. Corrette also organized concerts and published his own music and that of others, particularly Italian composers. He also wrote almost twenty method books for various instruments, including a detailed treatise on the art of accompanying from a figured bass. Corrette's pedagogical works are an important source of information about 18th century instrumental techniques.

Corrette's Keyboard Works

Corrette published the pieces in this volume under the title *Premier Livre de Pièces pour le Clavecin* (First Book of Pieces for the Harpsichord) in 1734. There are four suites that include the traditional dances (allemande, gigue, etc.) as well as pieces with evocative titles in the fashion popularized by François Couperin's harpsichord works, along with some that show Italian influence. Although Corrette is not as well known as some other French Baroque composers, the music in this collection deserves attention from players today. It is generally not difficult, making it accessible to most keyboardists.

Although Corrette never brought out a second book of pieces in the tradition of the French *clavecinistes*, throughout his long life he never stopped composing works for solo keyboard. His *Livre de sonates pour le clavecin avec accompagnement de violon*, Op. 25 (1742) can, according to its title page, be performed on the harpsichord alone. In 1749 he published *Les Amusemens du Parnasse*, a short harpsichord tutorial supplemented by several pieces. Seven more volumes of *Les Amusemens du Parnasse* appeared at intervals, with the last in 1772; these contain some of Corrette's own compositions along with many arrangements of popular songs, airs from the opera, dances, marches, etc. In 1779 appeared *Divertissements pour le clavecin ou le forte piano, avec le Combat naval* (in the latter of which the player is instructed to strike groups of bass notes to imitate cannon shots). Some of Corrette's organ concertos can also be played on the harpsichord.

Jean-Patrice Brosse has recorded the *Premier Livre* and the two divertimenti (2001) and Books II and III of *Les Amusemens du Parnasse* (2006; both Disques Pierre Verany/Arion).

Editorial Issues

This book is meant to provide a version as close as possible to the original while being accessible to modern keyboardists. The music has been laid out with more generous spacing than the original, making it easy to read and providing plenty of room for fingering and other notations, and page turns have been placed at convenient locations.

It is an 'urtext' in that no dynamics, articulations, fingerings or other performance indications have been added by the editor; slurs, dots, and wedges are as shown in the first printing. Eighteenth-century French spellings are retained, as are the original ornament signs and navigation markers (see "Performance Issues" below for more about these). Spelling, capitalization, etc. in the table of contents often differs from what is printed in the body of the book; these have been made consistent.

As is typical in Baroque sources, minor keys have one less flat in the key signature than is used today. So, e.g., "Les Idées Heureuses" in D minor has no flat in the signature, with flats added on the note B as needed. This system is retained since it presents no real difficulties once you realize that the piece is really in D minor; play B-flats when marked and not otherwise. However, we follow the modern convention that accidentals, once introduced, remain in effect for the rest of the measure.

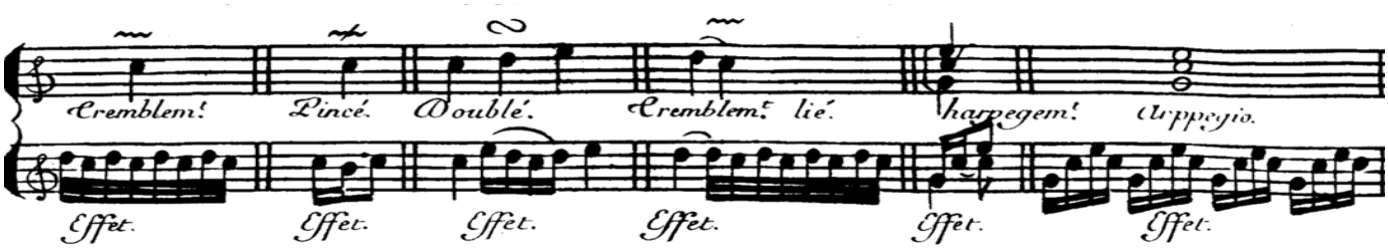
Square brackets mark editorial changes in the musical text. Any other changes are documented on page xi. The text is taken from a facsimile of the original printing, available at IMSLP.org. Despite multiple proofreadings, some errors may remain. These will be corrected if the editor is notified.

A glossary is provided on page xii for those who do not read French.

Performance Issues

General comment: in recent years, it has become common among those with a serious interest in early music to play from facsimiles of original scores. Doing so provides closer contact with the original and can reveal the extent to which modern editions, even good ones, make decisions that were left to the player in the eighteenth century. Some Baroque publications were beautifully engraved and can easily be used by those who are fluent at reading C clefs, while others are difficult to read due to cramped spacing and other issues. This book presents a text as close as possible to Corrette's original, including a few features that may require explanation to those who are not experienced in playing from facsimiles. It may be useful as a transitional aide for players who want to become more comfortable with the conventions of Baroque music printing but do not yet feel ready to tackle facsimiles.

Placement of notes on staves is the same as in the original, which reflects the Baroque tendency to avoid leger lines whenever possible. This does not necessarily show which hand must play what notes. E.g., in the opening measures of the Prelude in the first suite, the right hand must take more notes than those printed in the upper staff. It is better for players to deal with such issues for themselves than rely on an editor's suggestion.



Ornaments

Page 26 of the first edition is headed "Explication des Marques et des Passages difficiles a doigter" (Explanation of Signs and of Passages that are difficult to finger). The top section of this page contains a table of ornaments, reproduced in facsimile above (also printed in context on page 40). Note that Corrette distinguishes *harpègement*, breaking a chord and holding the component notes, from breaking a chord without holding, an effect that he refers to with the Italian word *Arppegio* (sic). In his table, Corrette uses a bracket shape ⟦ to designate *harpègement*, but in the first Prelude he employs a squiggly line similar to the modern arpeggio sign; we have used the latter.

The table shows the sign 𝆔 to mark a typical mordent (*pincé*). A variant of this sign, 𝆕 with the stroke pointing in the opposite direction, is found to mark about a third of the mordents. Most pieces use one sign or the other. Most likely, this is simply an inconsistency on the part of the engraver and not of musical significance. However, a few pieces contain both symbols. This edition reproduces the shapes as found in the original printing, on the chance that the different shapes might have a musical meaning. Performers probably should interpret both symbols as standard mordents (main note – lower auxiliary – main note) unless they see a reason to do otherwise in a specific passage.

Additional Signs

In addition to ornaments, the following signs are employed in these pieces:

- 𝄋 and 𝄌 are versions of the familiar segno 𝄋 and are used the same way.
- 𝄎 marks a return to the rondeau ("Les Jumelles," 2^{e} Partie).
- Decreasing bars 𝄆 mark the end of a piece, like the modern 𝄂.
- About repeat signs, see below.

Original Fingerings

The remainder of page 26 was devoted to providing fingerings, which are found on page 40 of this edition. Some performers may wish to follow Corretee's suggestions while others may not, so we have chosen to print the fingerings on a separate page rather than place them in the passages to which they apply. Fingering was also printed above two notes in m. 54 of "Les Fanatiques", and this is reproduced in the appropriate spot on page 37.

Repeats

This edition reproduces repeat signs and other performance indications in the first printing as closely as possible. Users should be aware of the following.

Repeat signs appear between the A and B sections of binary-form pieces, but there is usually no repeat sign at the end of the second half, just a double bar. The B sections should normally be repeated, as was customary.[1] (This pattern of repeat sign between the halves and double bar at the end of the B section is found in other 18th century French publications.) In some cases Corrette provided first and second endings for the B sections, while in others he relied on the player's common sense. For example, the run of grace notes at the end of the B section of "La Degourdie" should be omitted the second time around, and the final measure of the second *double* should be adjusted, perhaps changing the final two 8th notes to a quarter on low F.

Repeat signs appear after the B sections of the three menuets in "Bal." These dances are very short, and Corrette probably included the repeat signs to make sure that both halves got repeated, although this would not have been strictly necessary if performers were normally repeating the B sections.[2]

In four of the six rondeau pieces in this volume, repeat signs appear at the end of the rondeau. This makes sense since the rondeaus were typically repeated after the initial statement.[3] In the second part of "Les Jumelles" and in "Les Etoiles" repeat signs are lacking.[4] Should the rondeaus not be repeated here? This seems to be Corrette's intention, although performers have the final say. At the end of couplets, Corrette normally guides the player to repeat the rondeau with a segno or the phrase *Au Rondeau* ([Back] to the Rondeau). Occasionally these directions are lacking (e.g., "Les Jumelles", first part); but the rondeau should be repeated as usual.

The large, thick slurs spanning two measures that indicate first and second endings have been replaced by modern volta brackets.

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[1] One might choose not to repeat if there is a noticeable difference in length between the parts. For instance, the B section of "Les Botes de Sept Lieues" is more than twice as long as the A section, so one should probably repeat only the A.

[2] Here and elsewhere 𝄆 has been changed to 𝄇, since the original would be meaningless (and confusing) to modern players.

[3] Cf. F. W. Marpourg, *Principes du Clavecin*, Ch. 9:

> On commence par jouer deux fois la première partie, nommée proprement *Rondeau*, avantque d'aller au premier couplet. Ce premier couplet joué une fois, on répète aussi une fois la première partie, ensuite de quoi on joue le second couplet, pour finir enfin par le Rondeau. (One begins by playing twice the first part, called the Rondeau proper, before going to the first couplet. This first couplet having been played once, one repeats once also the first part [Rondeau], after which one plays the second couplet, to finish finally by the Rondeau. [trans. DJP])

[4] Note that "La Babillarde" is also a rondeau, but here Corrette writes out the piece straight through, with the couplets and repeats of the refrain; he does not repeat the initial rondeau.

Multi-Part Pieces

Corrette, like other French composers, wrote a number of pieces in two parts, usually a major/minor pair; sometimes the player is directed to repeat the first part, while in other cases there is no such indication. In "Feste Milannoise", there is no direction after the second part, but the presence of 'Fin' at the end of the first part is a clear indication that one should replay it (probably straight through, i.e., without repeating the A and B sections). In the case of the two tambourins that make up "Feste Sauvage", there is no direction to repeat the first one, but some players will choose to do so.

"Bal" contains three menuets; the phrase 'Au Premier' after the second (minor) one is a clear indication to repeat the first. There is no direction after the third. It is written in the lower register of the harpsichord, and repeating the first menuet may provide a more balanced conclusion, but the choice lies ultimately with the performer. The segno at the end of the first menuet combined with 'Fin' at the end of the A section shows that Corrette intended the A section to be played once after the B section. Should one do this only the first time, or every time the B section of the first menuet is repeated? Perhaps the former, but the performer must form his or her own conclusion.

Other Issues

Corrette usually marked triplets as such, but sometimes not; common sense and spacing of triplets relative to other notes show when triplets are meant. On the other hand, sometimes the numeral '3' is printed above long strings of triplets. We have left these as in the original printing rather than standardize them according to modern practice.

In a few pieces that begin with pickup measures, the last measure of the A and/or B sections do not match mathematically with the pickup (see, e.g., "Les Giboulées de Mars", m. 30 left hand). Such passages have not been corrected since it is easy for performers to make adjustments as necessary.

Corrette (or his engraver) was not always precise about voice leading and rests. E.g., in the last measure of "Badine", a bass D appears in the second half of the measure, with no rest preceding it. This is not a problem in performance—Corrette's intentions are clear, so just play what you see. Editorial rests have usually not been added in such situations.

Notes on Individual Pieces

First Suite

In "2^{e} Tambourin", the first couplet is marked '2^{e} fois.' This is puzzling, since even if one repeats the first couplet, there is no need to make any changes to the notes the second time around. It is probably best to regard this as a mistake for '2 fois', an indication to repeat the first couplet.

Second Suite

M. 8 of "Le Grondeur" reproduces the original printing. Instead of an 8th rest in the right hand, one might play a 16th rest followed by d″ when repeating the A section, and a 16th rest followed by a′ when moving into the B section.

The drone bass of the first and second menuets in 'Bal' show that they belong to the genre of the *musette*, a piece imitating the sound of a bagpipe. (The musette was a small bellows-blown bagpipe that became popular at the French court in the 18th century.) Compare, e.g., the four "Menuets en musette" from the second suite of Louis-Antoine Dornel's *Pièces de Clavecin.*

THIRD SUITE

The Prelude has a segno at the beginning of measure 17, indicating that a player would return here from some other point in the piece; but there is no corresponding sign anywhere else. One option would be to play the Prelude through, then repeat the last six measures from the segno — that is, as though a segno was dropped out after the final chord. A parallel to this may be found in the Prelude to the first suite. There m. 24 provides a strong cadential pause on the dominant D major. Rather than immediately concluding the Prelude by returning to the tonic G minor, Corrette provides five additional measures in D major (labelled as a *petite reprise*), returning in m. 29 to the same chord as in m. 23; then he finally establishes the tonic through arpeggiated chords. In the third suite, repeating the Prelude from m. 17 would provide a similar *petite reprise* effect and also lengthen a rather short piece (22 bars versus 33 in the first Prelude).

The direction 'Fin' at the end of "La Degourdie" is a bit mysterious. It comes after the shrinking bars and calligraphic slurs that mark the end of the piece, so it is probably not connected specifically with the B section of the 5th *double* (i.e., an indication not to repeat that portion). Perhaps it is meant to tell the player not to repeat the original, unornamented version of this piece.

FOURTH SUITE

"La Prise de Jericho": The a in the top voice at the beginning of m. 36 obviously cannot be held its full value. Let it go and continue with the r.h. part.

'Fin' appears after the B section. Since the two halves of this piece are of equal length, omitting the repeat for the second does not seem sensible. More likely, 'Fin' marks the end of the book; the word is often used this way at the end of 18th French century publications. The page is very full and there was no room to place this word separately from the final staff, on a line of its own.

Textual Notes

In general, the text as engraved for the first printing is quite accurate.

Dots are missing from a large number of notes with which they should appear. Most of these have been silently corrected, but in some cases a rest might be observed instead of prolonging the note; such cases are identified below or by the presence of bracketed rests in the text.

Most Baroque sources follow the convention that an accidental applies to the note with which it appears and to another note of the same pitch that immediately follows it; if the same pitch reappears later in the measure, separated by intervening notes, the accidental is given again. Corrette (or his engraver) was less strict about this. Occasionally an accidental must apply to a note later in the measure where it is not written. Usually these are obvious from the musical context; any that are not are discussed below.

PREMIERE SUITE	
Prélude	m. 29, l.h, first beat, lower voice: appoggiatura changed from b to a.
Les Giboulées	m. 67, r.h.: dots and triplet 3 added to be parallel with m. 69.
Les Jumelles	1re Partie, m. II l.h.: sharps added on d′ and c′.
	2e Partie, m. 68 r.h.: slurs added
La Babillarde	m. 30, r.h.: first beat d-d-c-b changed to c-d-c-b.
Le Courier	m. 16, r.h.: ♩.♩ changed to ♩.♪
DEUXIEME SUITE	
Le Grondeur	m. 1, r.h., has mordents while the parallel passage in m. 8 has trills; one might play mordents in both.
Badine	m. 3, r.h. f, and m. 4, r.h. g: there seem to be trills above these notes, but the original printing is unclear here.
TROISIEME SUITE	
La Degourdie	5e Double, m. 8: e′ on second beat changed from 8th to 16th note.
Les Etoiles	m. 10, r.h.: g″ changed to a″.
QUATRIEME SUITE	
La Prise de Jericho	m. 1, both hands, the b′ and m. 2, the a′ have what might be trill signs, but the original is unclear. The trills were omitted because the same notes, repeated in mm. 7–8, lack them.
	m. 51: the trill could apply to either the g♯ or the b below it.

Glossary

ORNAMENTS, PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS, ETC.[5]

1re partie / 2e partie	First part / Second part
Au Rondeau	(Back) to the rondeau
Doublé	Turn
Effet	Effect, realization
Fin	End
Gayement	Gaily
Gracieusement	Graciously
Harpegement	Chord broken with notes held
Luthé	In lute style (notes of arpeggiated chords held)
Legerement	Lightly
M. D. (Main droite)	Right hand
Moderement	In moderate tempo
Pincé	Mordent
Petite reprise	Repeat of a few bars at the end of a section
Pr (Premier)	First
Sans lenteur	Without slowness
Tendrement	Tenderly
Tremblement	Trill
Tremblement lié	Trill tied to previous note
Vivement	Lively
Voyés	See

TITLES OF PIECES[6]

Les Amants Enchantés	Enchanted lovers
La Babillarde	Babbling, talkative, chatty
Badine	Lighthearted, playful
Bal	Dancing
Les Botes de Sept Lieues	Seven-league boots
Le Courier	Letter, mail
La Degourdie	Bright, smart
Double	Variant, varied repeat
Les Etoiles	Stars
Les Fanatiques	Fanatics
Feste Milannoise	Festival in Milan
Feste Sauvage	Festival of savages
Les Giboulées de Mars	Sudden rain showers in March
Le Grondeur	Growler, scolder
L'Heroïne	Heroine
Les Idées Heureuses	Happy thoughts

(continued)

[5] The 2016 Bärenreiter edition of F. Couperin's *Premier Livre* provides (pages xxvii–xxviii) a useful discussion of tempo indications such as 'Gayement', based on 18th-century sources.

[6] Many of the titles appear with the article *La* and feminine endings because the word *pièce* is understood. The feminine ending does not necessarily mean that, e.g., "La Degourdie" is meant to describe a woman.

Les Jumelles	Twins
La Prise de Jericho	Capture of Jericho
La Triomphante	Triumphant, celebratory

Further Information

The English Wikipedia page on Corette, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Corrette, is minimal; for those who read French, the one in the French Wikipedia, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Corrette, is much more detailed and provides a good sense of how Corrette fits into musical developments in 18th century France.

Many of Michel Corrette's compositions are available for free at IMSLP.org: https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:Corrette,_Michel

Credits

cover The Baroque-style printer's ornament (in public domain) is from https://thegraphicsfairy.com/.

p. iv The portrait of Michel Corrette (in public domain) is taken from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e4/Michel_Corrette_portrait.jpg .

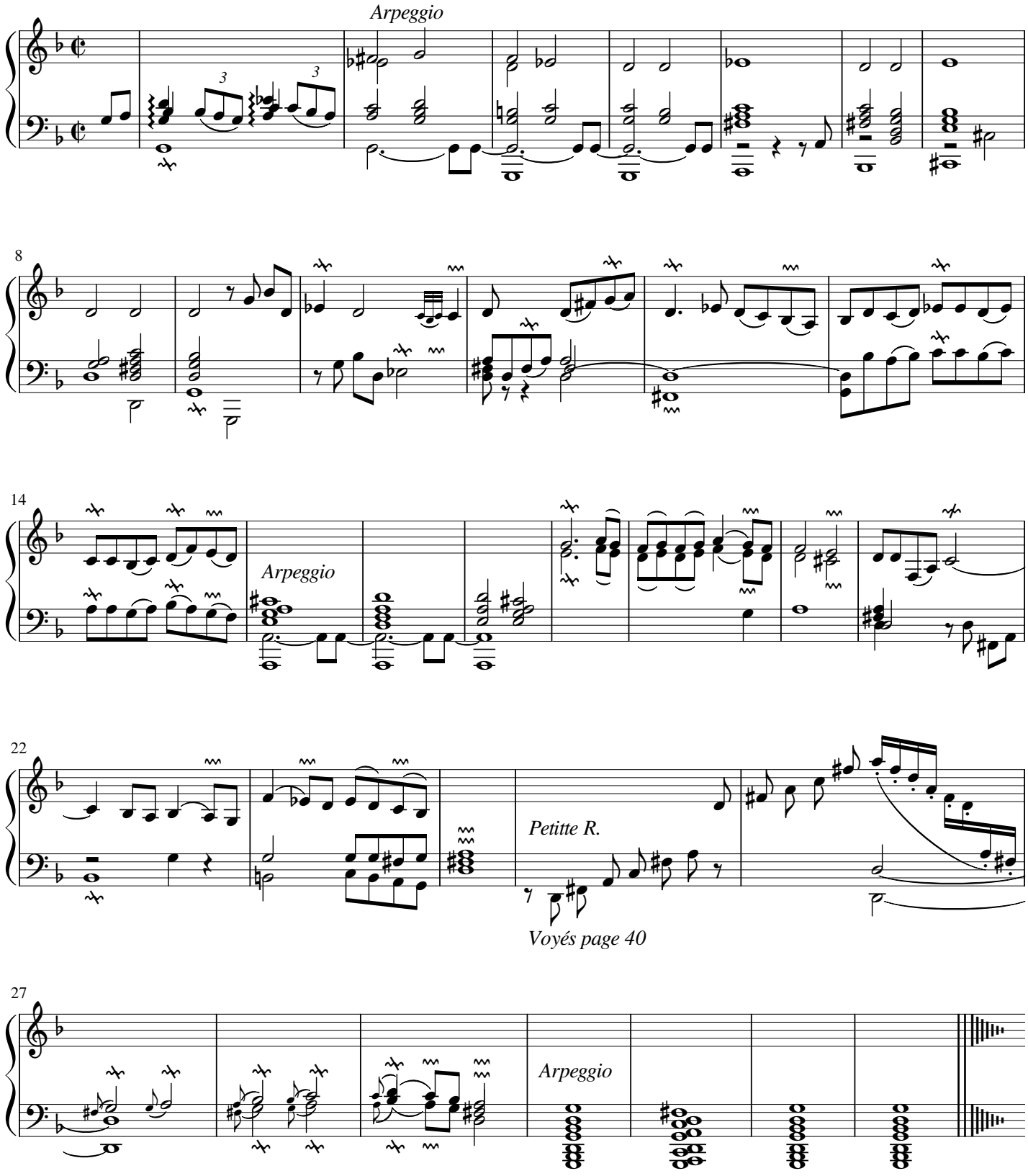
p. vii The table of ornaments is from https://imslp.org/wiki/Premier_Livre_de_Pi%C3%A8ces_pour_le_Clavecin%2C_Op.12_(Corrette%2C_Michel), which is also the source of the musical text.

Colophon

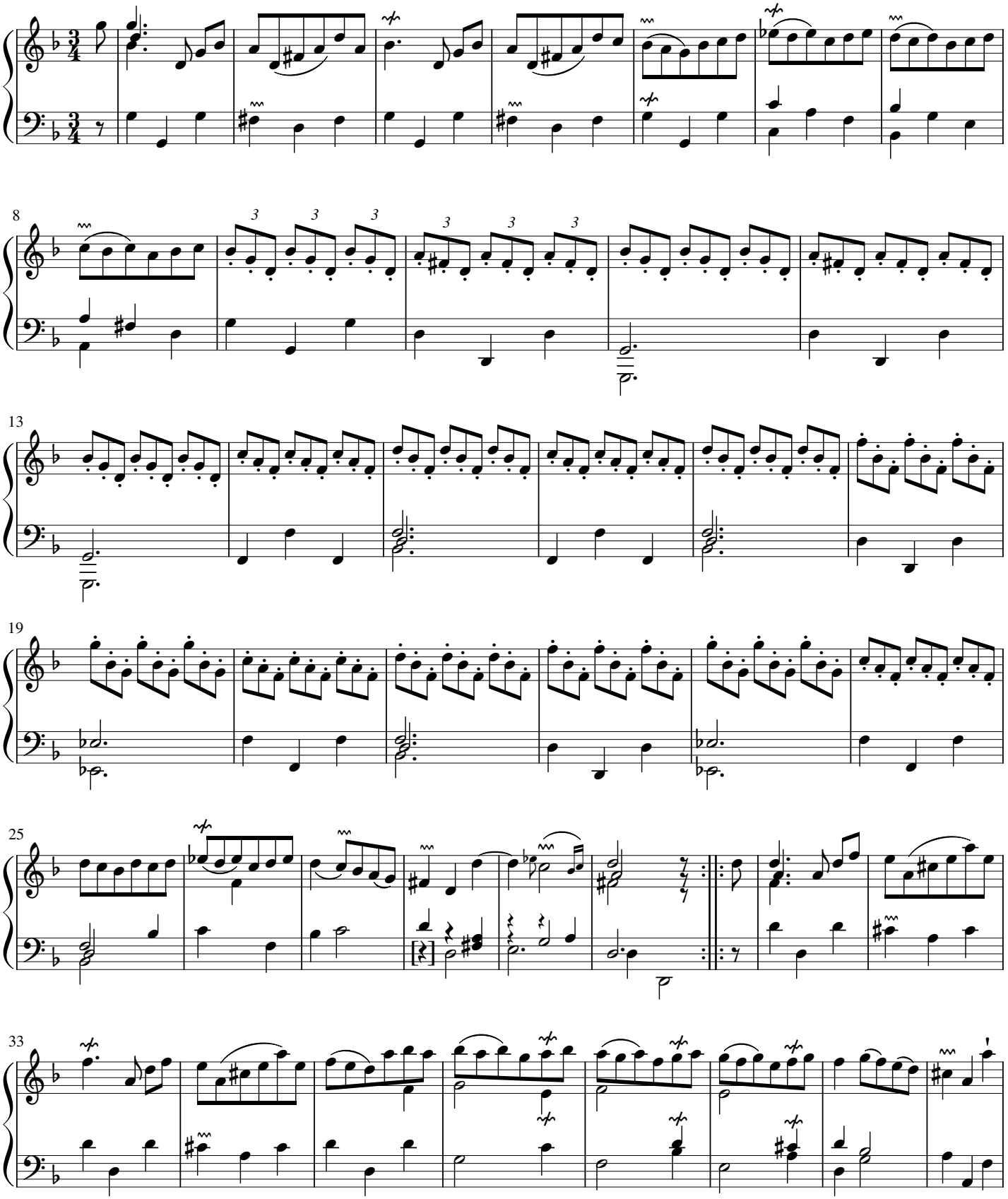
- Front and back covers are typeset in Cormorant Garamond, a freely available font derived from Claude Garamond's Renaissance typefaces, specifically designed for use at large sizes.
- Front matter is typeset in Sabon Pro LT (Linotype GmbH). Sabon, also based on Garamond's faces, was designed by Jan Tschichold in the 1960s and is considered one of best Garamond versions.
- Musical text was prepared using MuseScore 3.0, an excellent score-writer freely available from musescore.org.
- Ornaments and other specialized music signs come from the Baroque Symbols font by David J. Perry.
- Design, typesetting / engraving, and layout by David J. Perry.

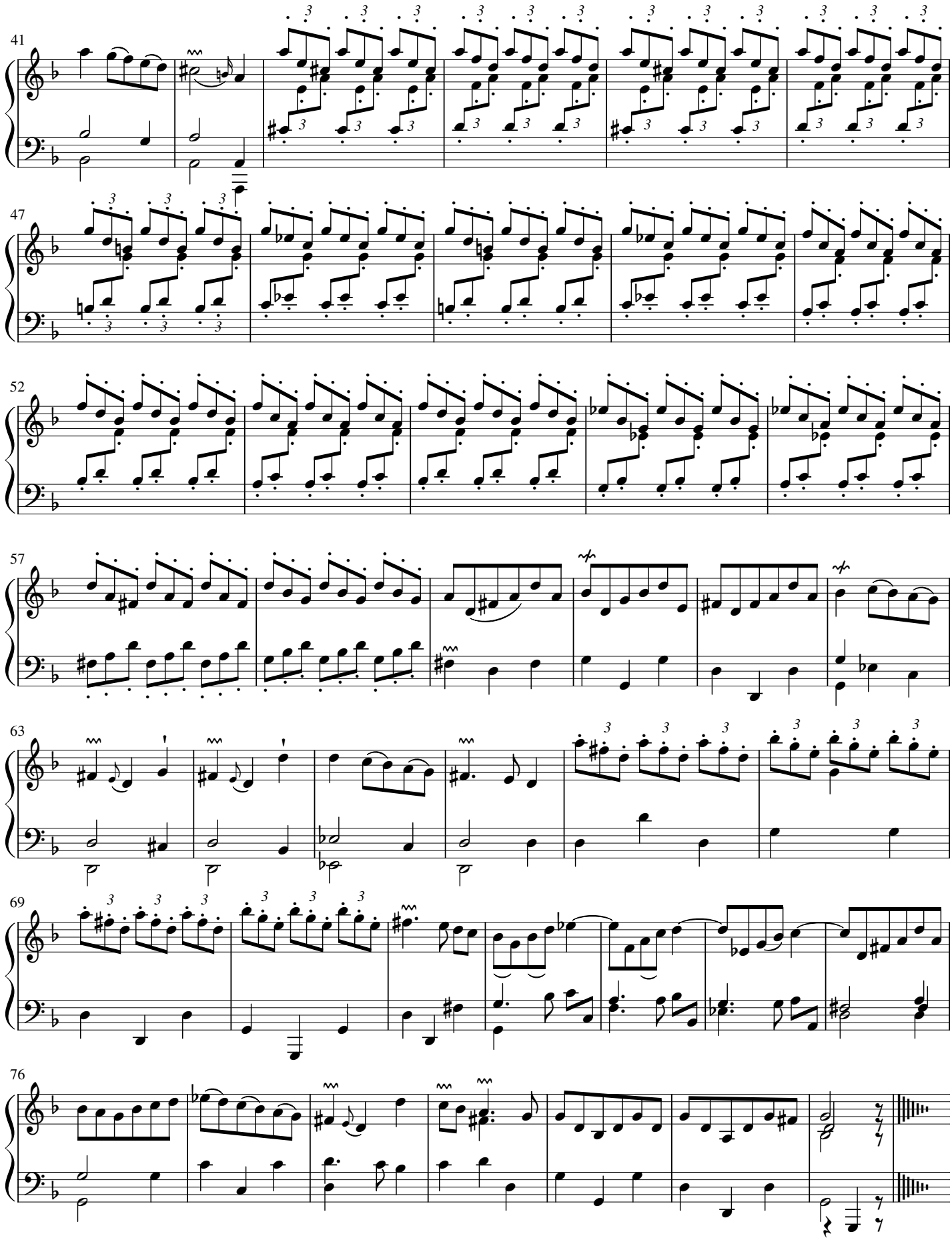
PREMIERE SUITE

Prélude



Les Giboulées de Mars

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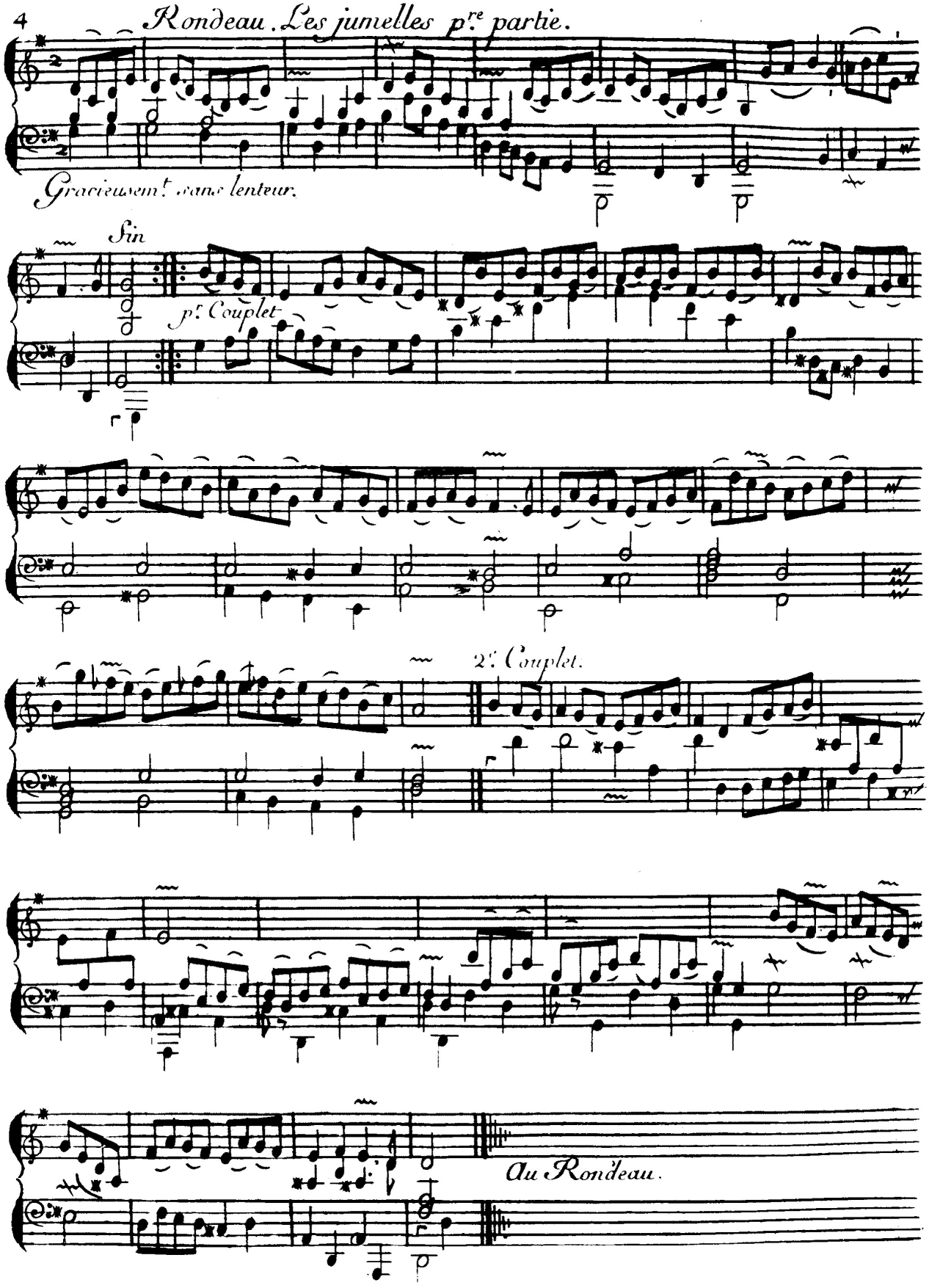
Rondeau. Les jumelles p.re partie.
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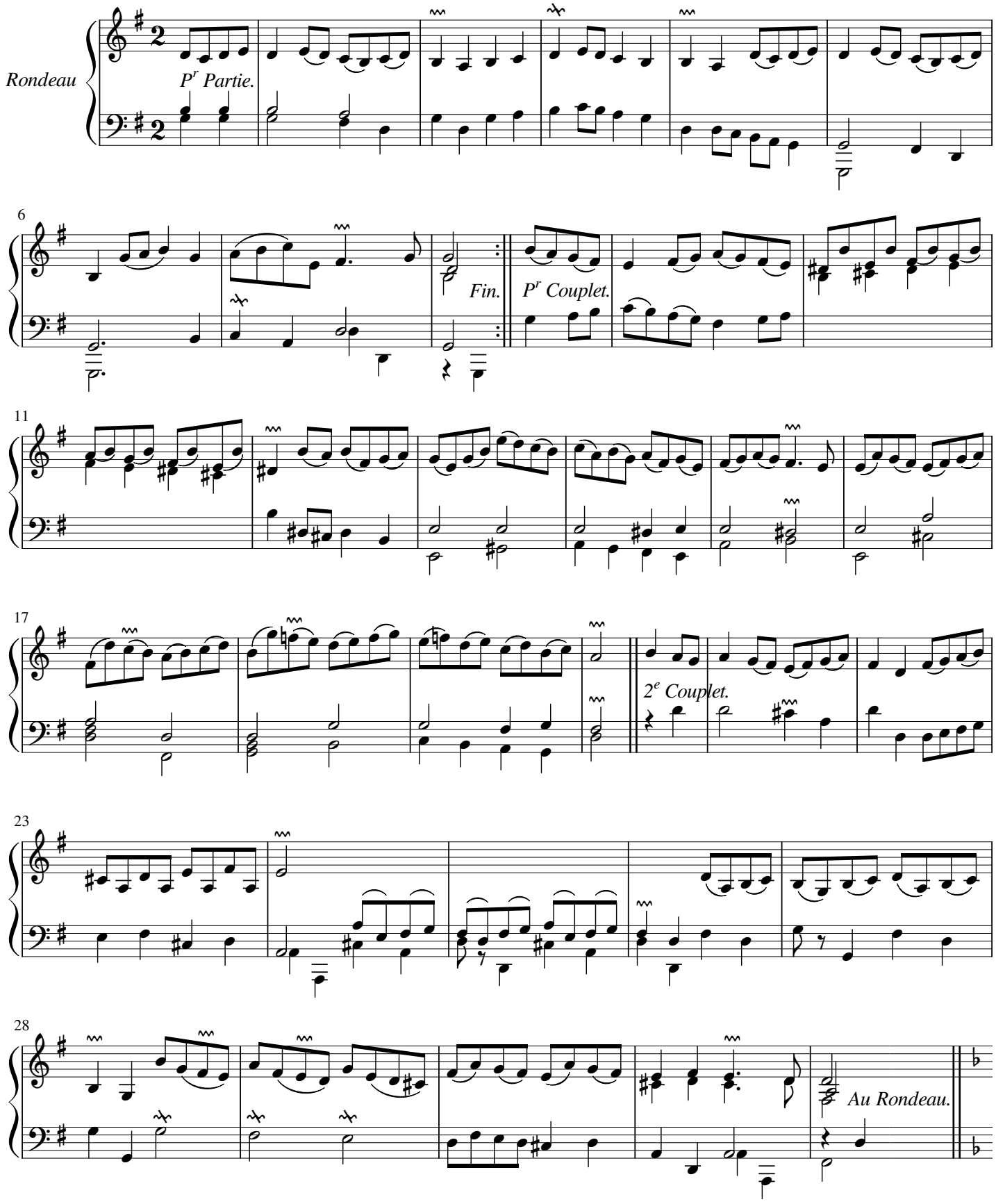
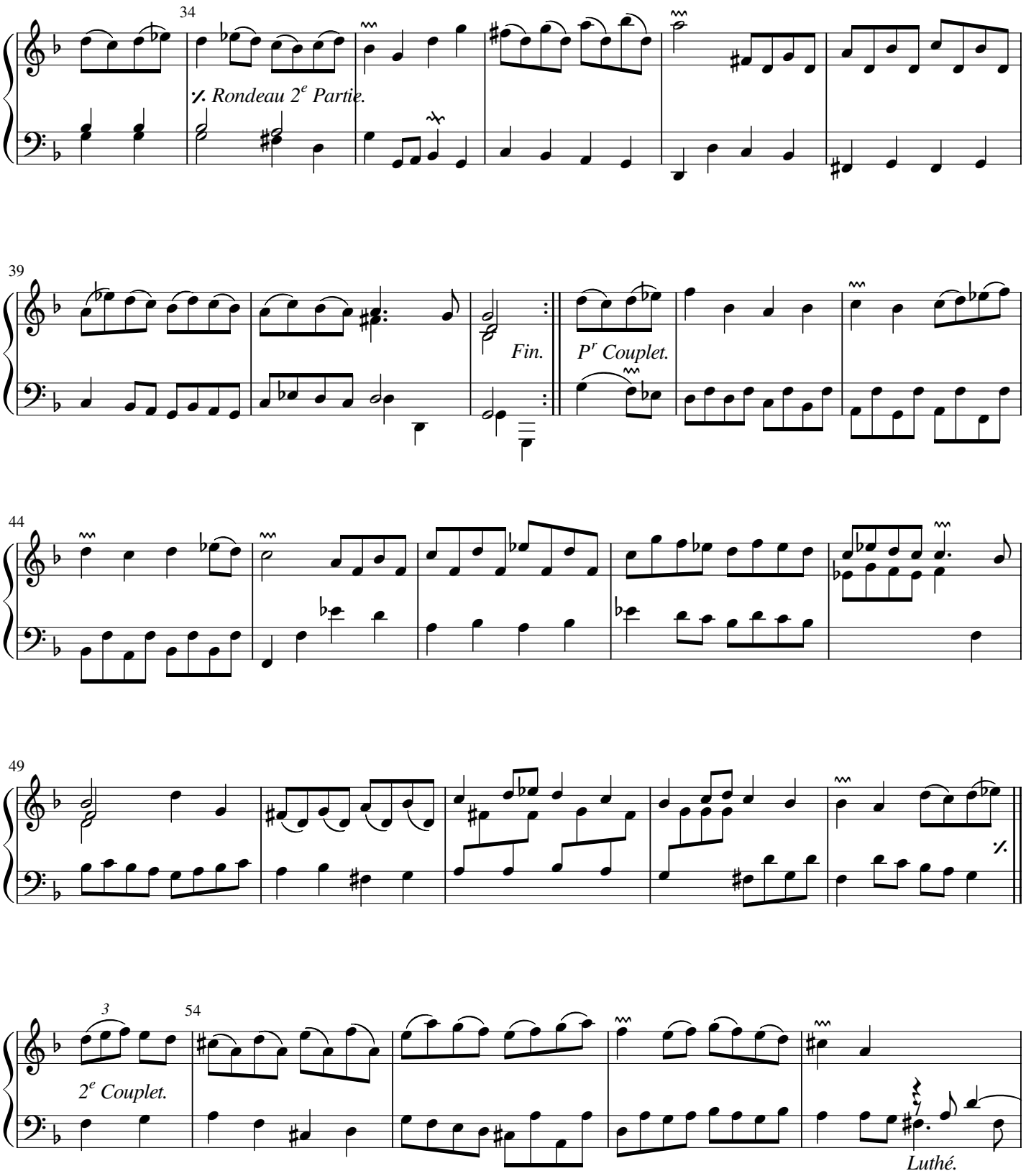
Sin
p.r Couplet
2.e Couplet.
Au Rondeau.

Les Jumelles

Gracieusement sans lenteur.




34
𝄋. Rondeau 2e Partie.
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3
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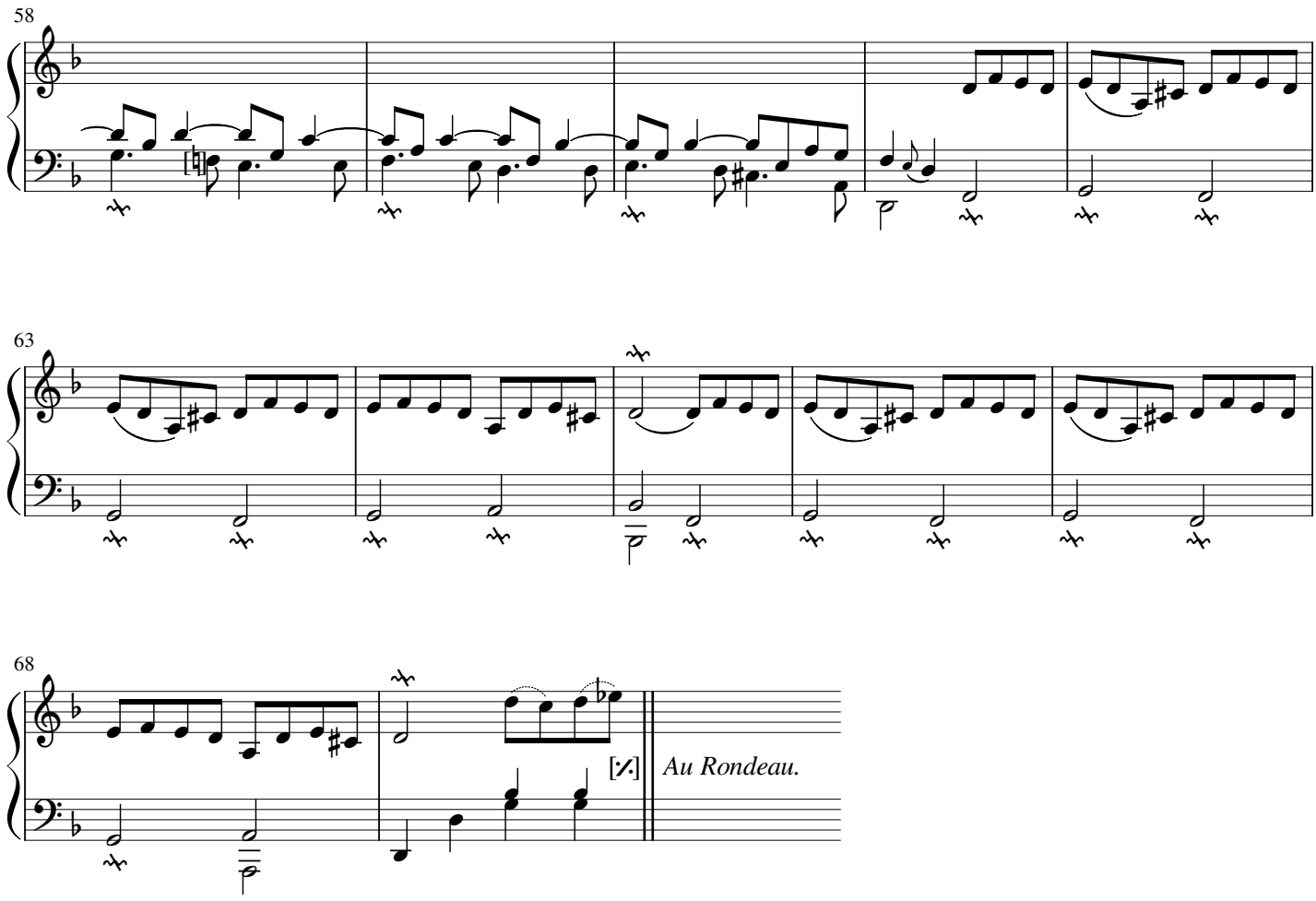
2e Couplet.
Luthé.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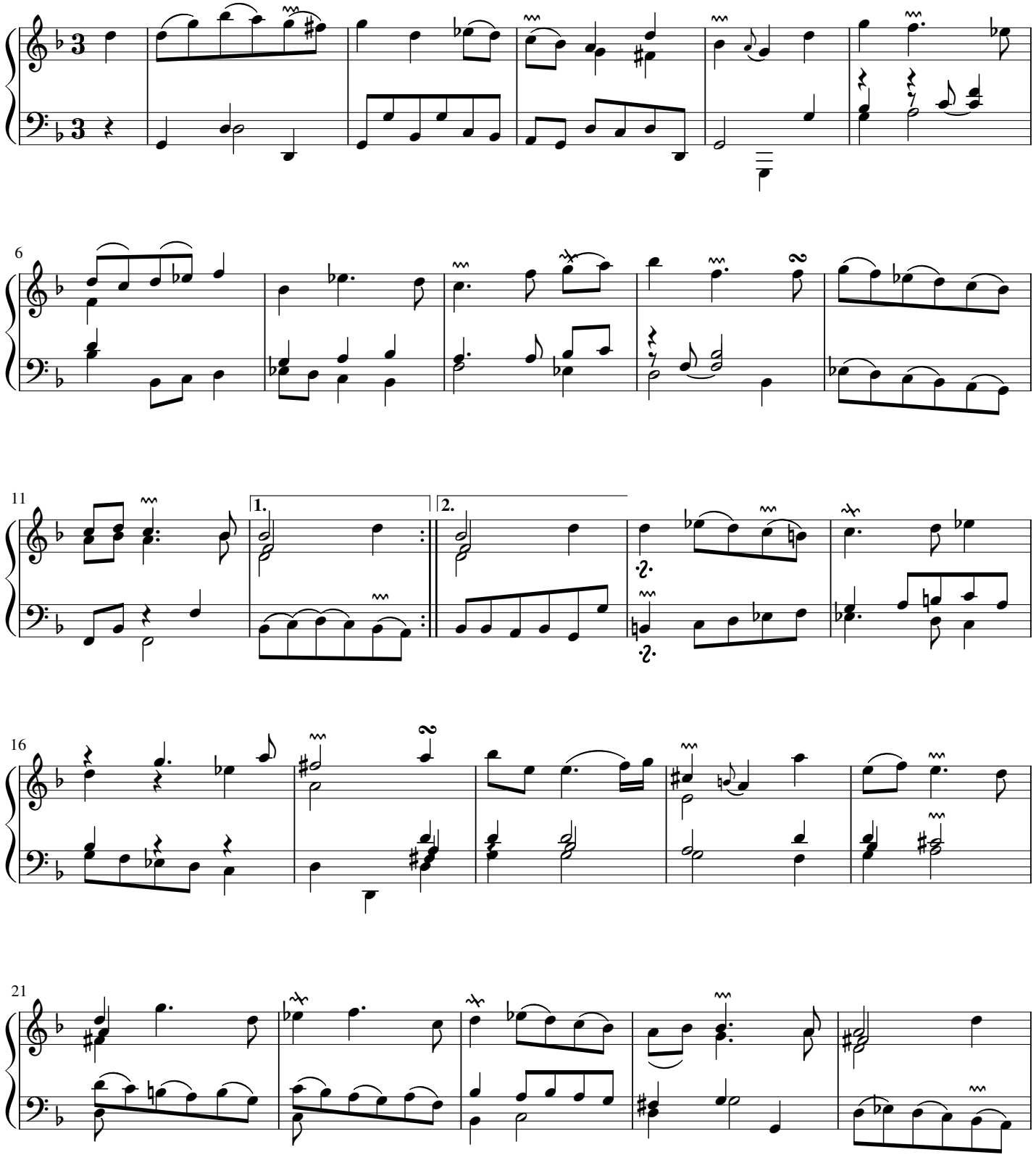
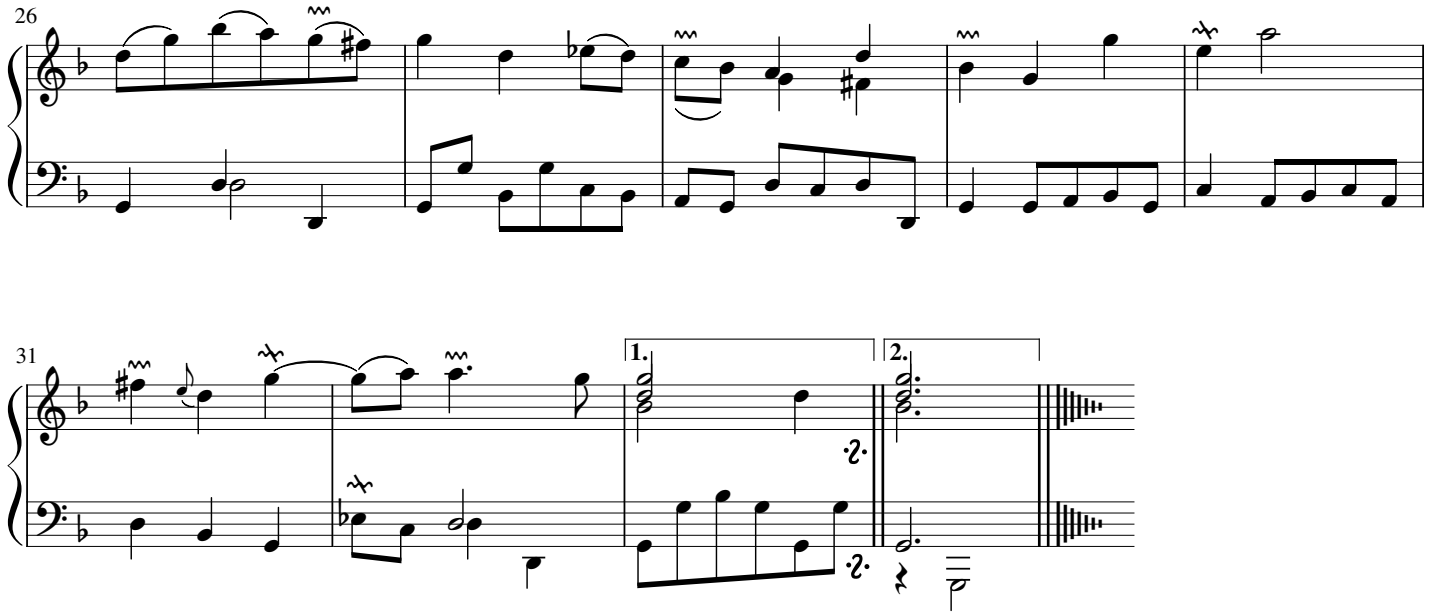
Au Rondeau.

Les Amants Enchantés

Tendrement

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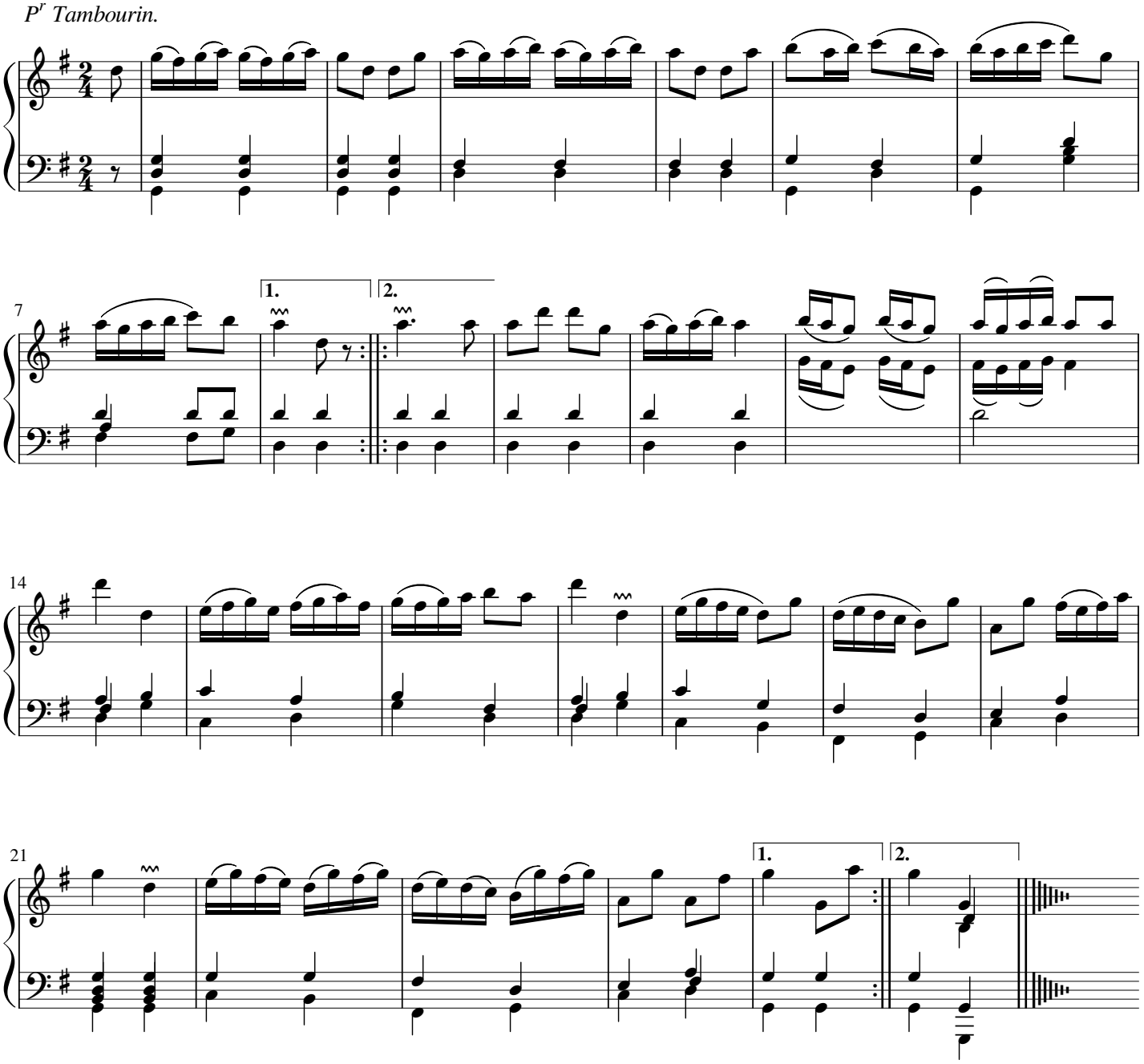
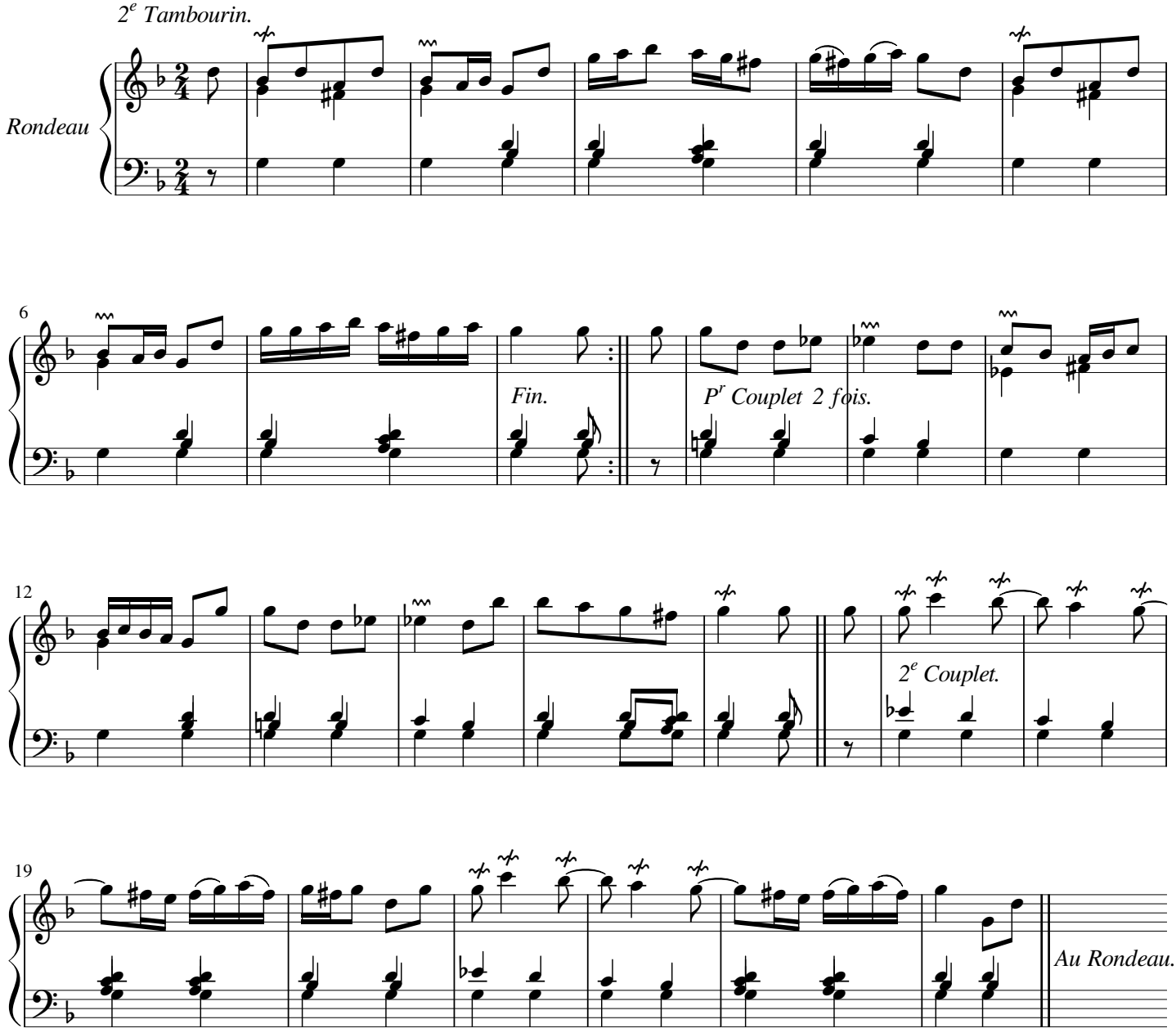
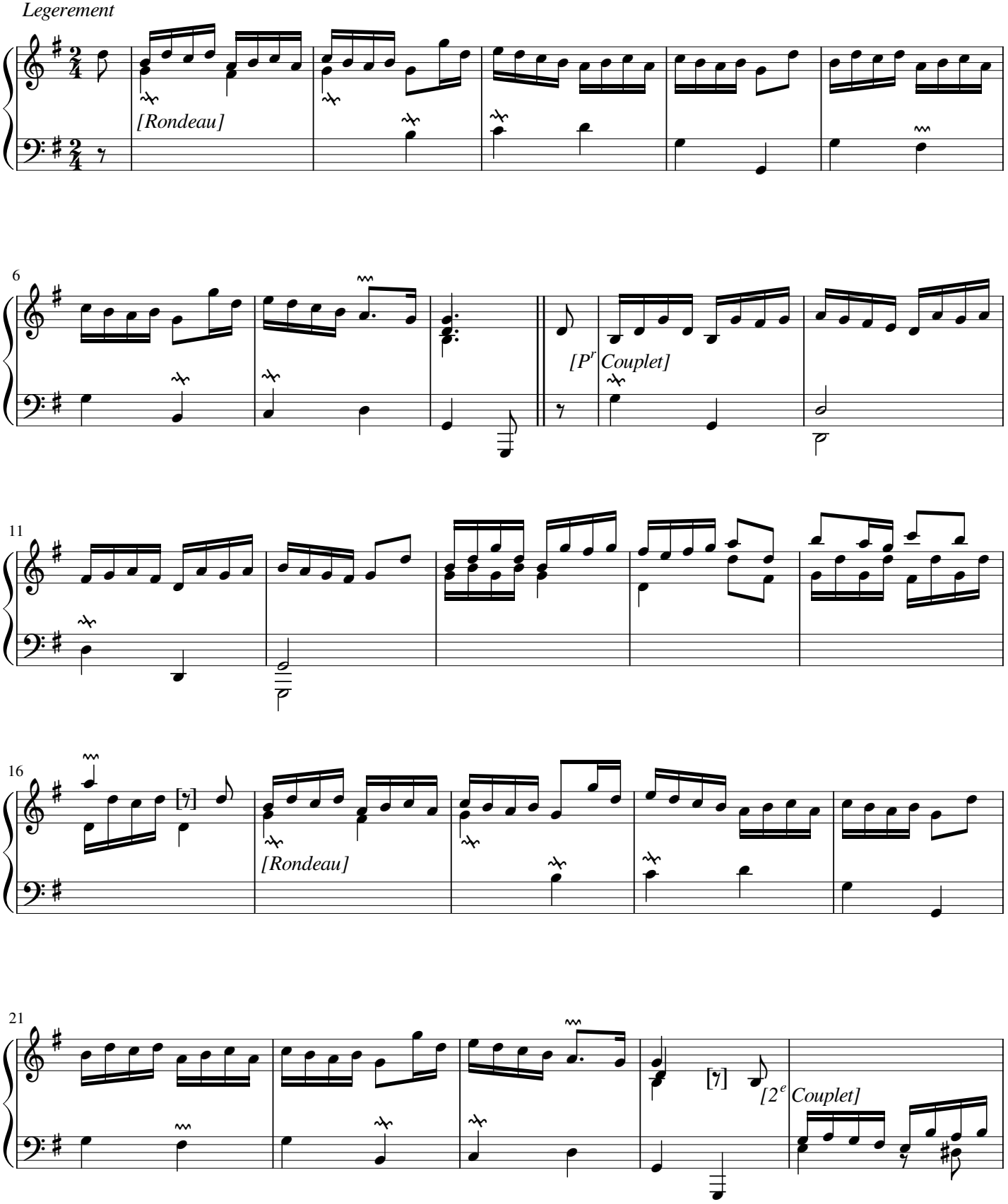
Feste Sauvage

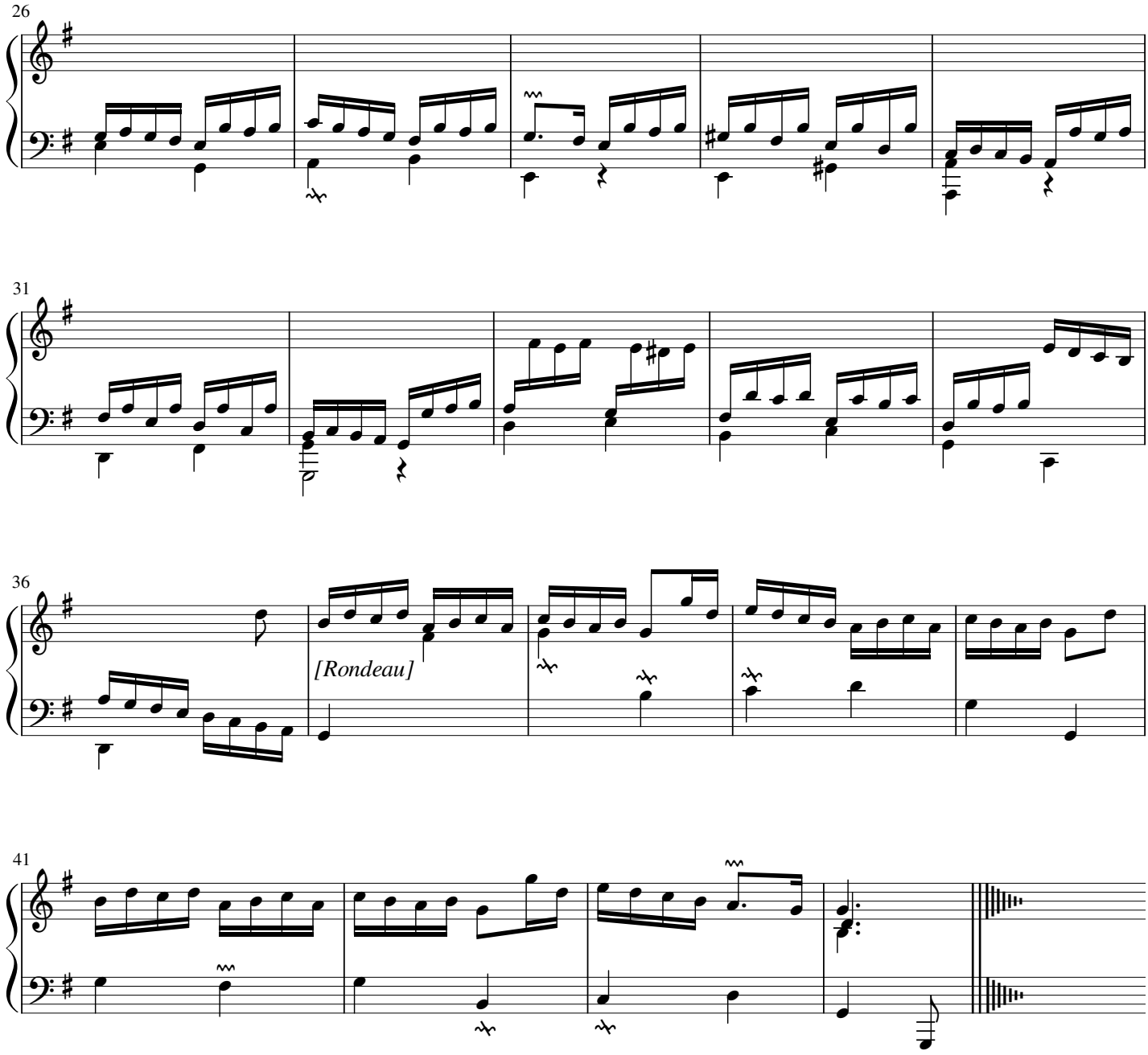
P^r Tambourin.




2e Tambourin.
Rondeau
6
Fin.
Pr Couplet 2 fois.
12
2e Couplet.
19
Au Rondeau.

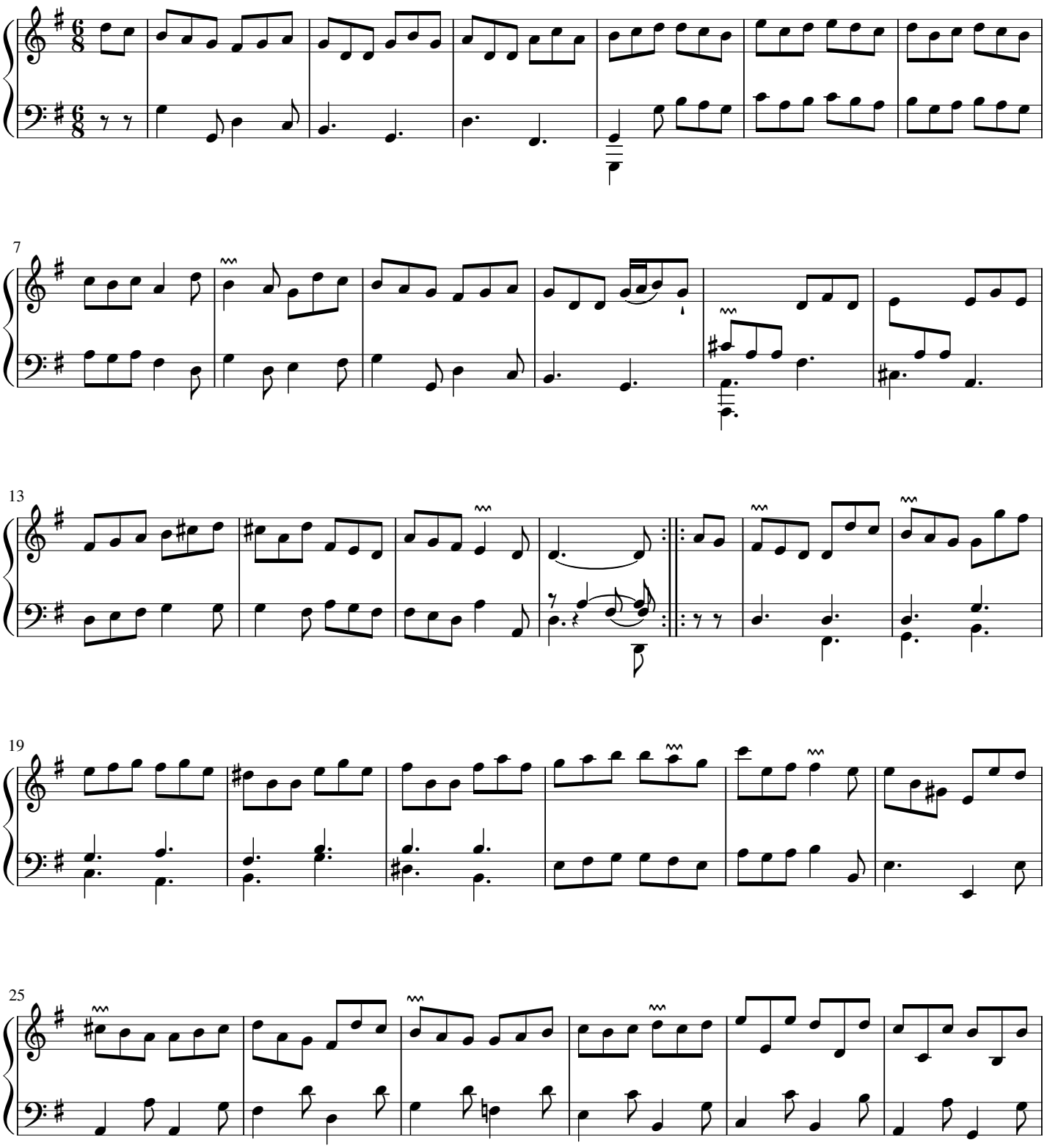
La Babillarde

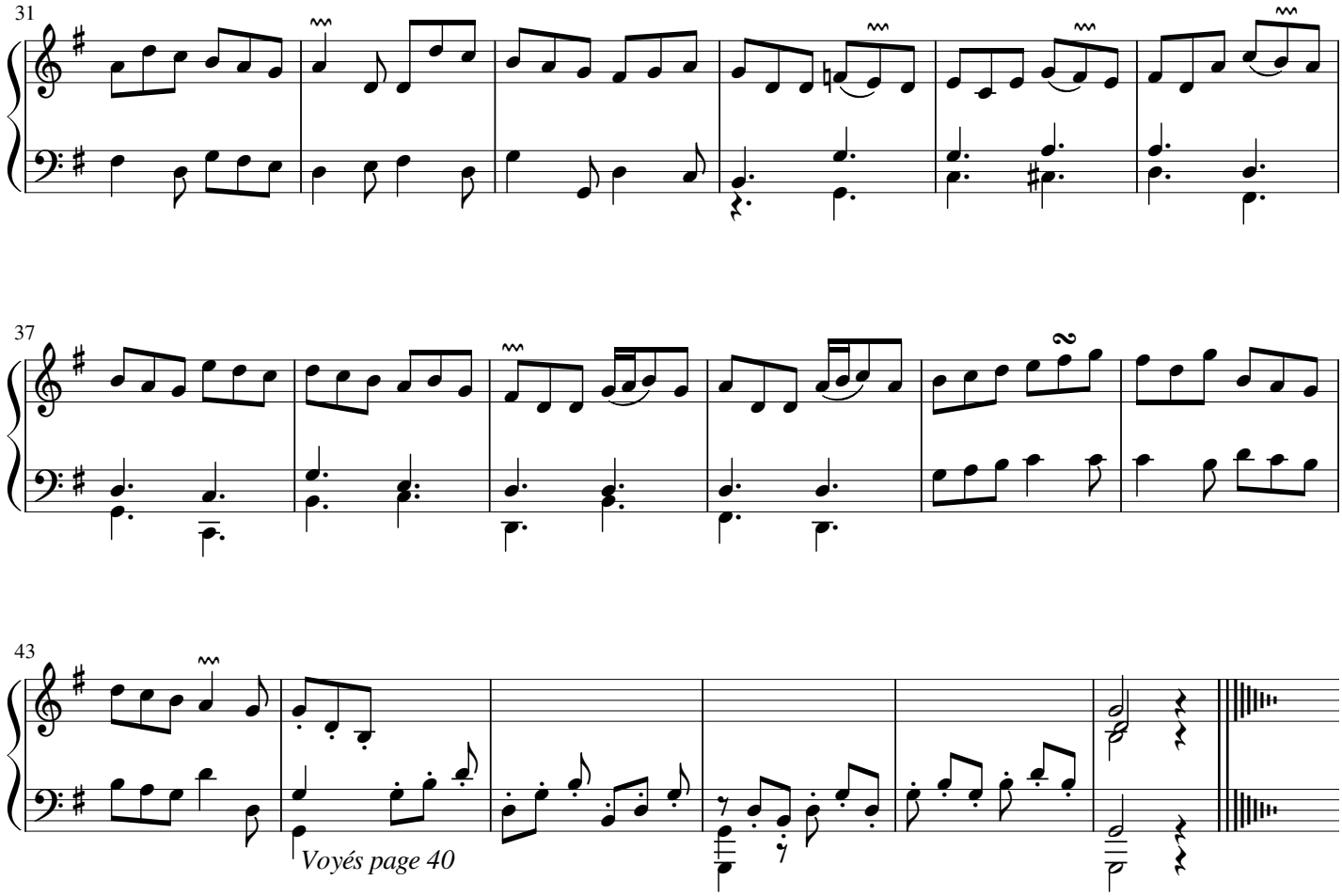



26
31
36
[Rondeau]
41

Le Courier

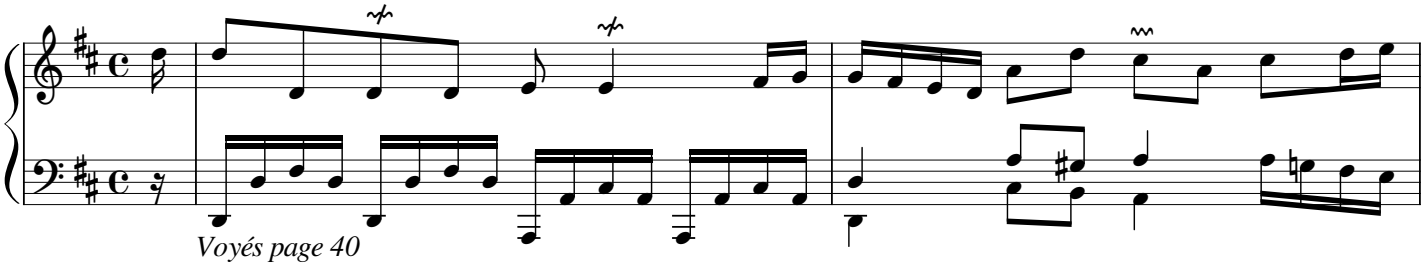
Legerement.



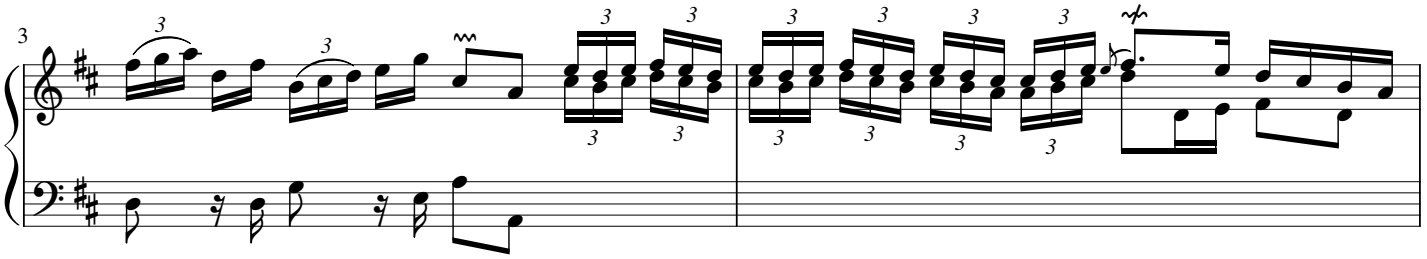

31
37
43
Voyés page 40

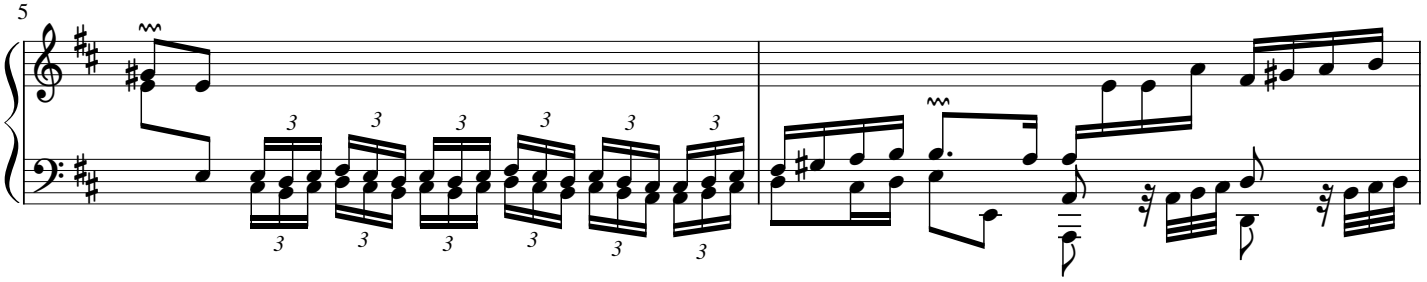
DEUXIEME SUITE

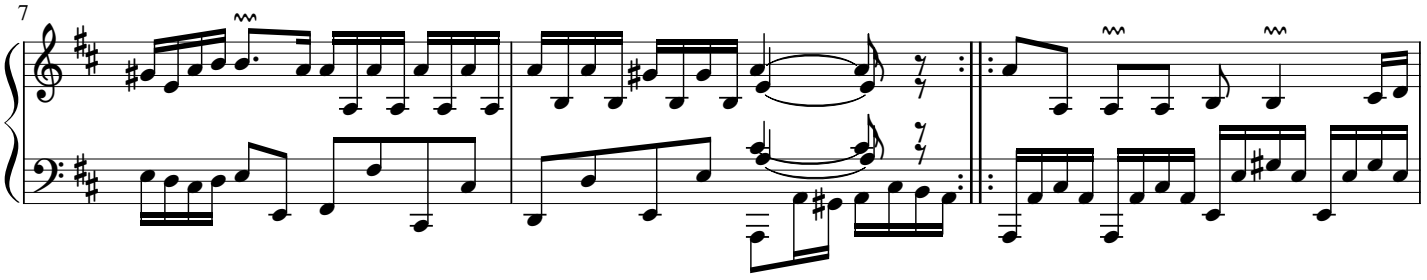
Le Grondeur Allemande

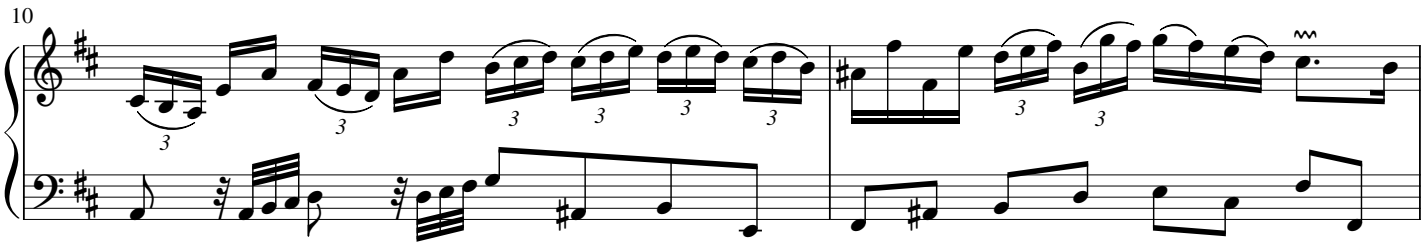


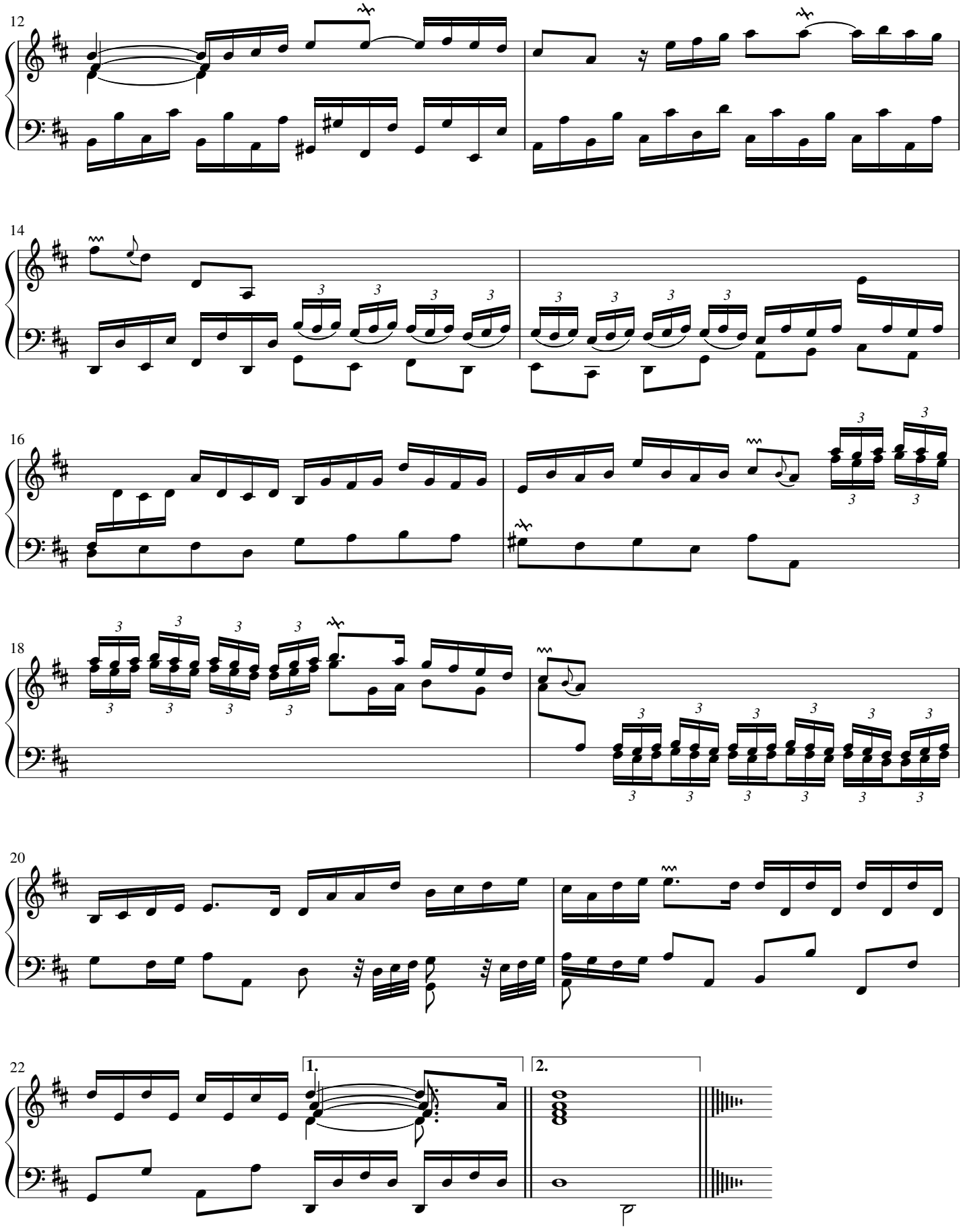
Voyés page 40







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14
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18
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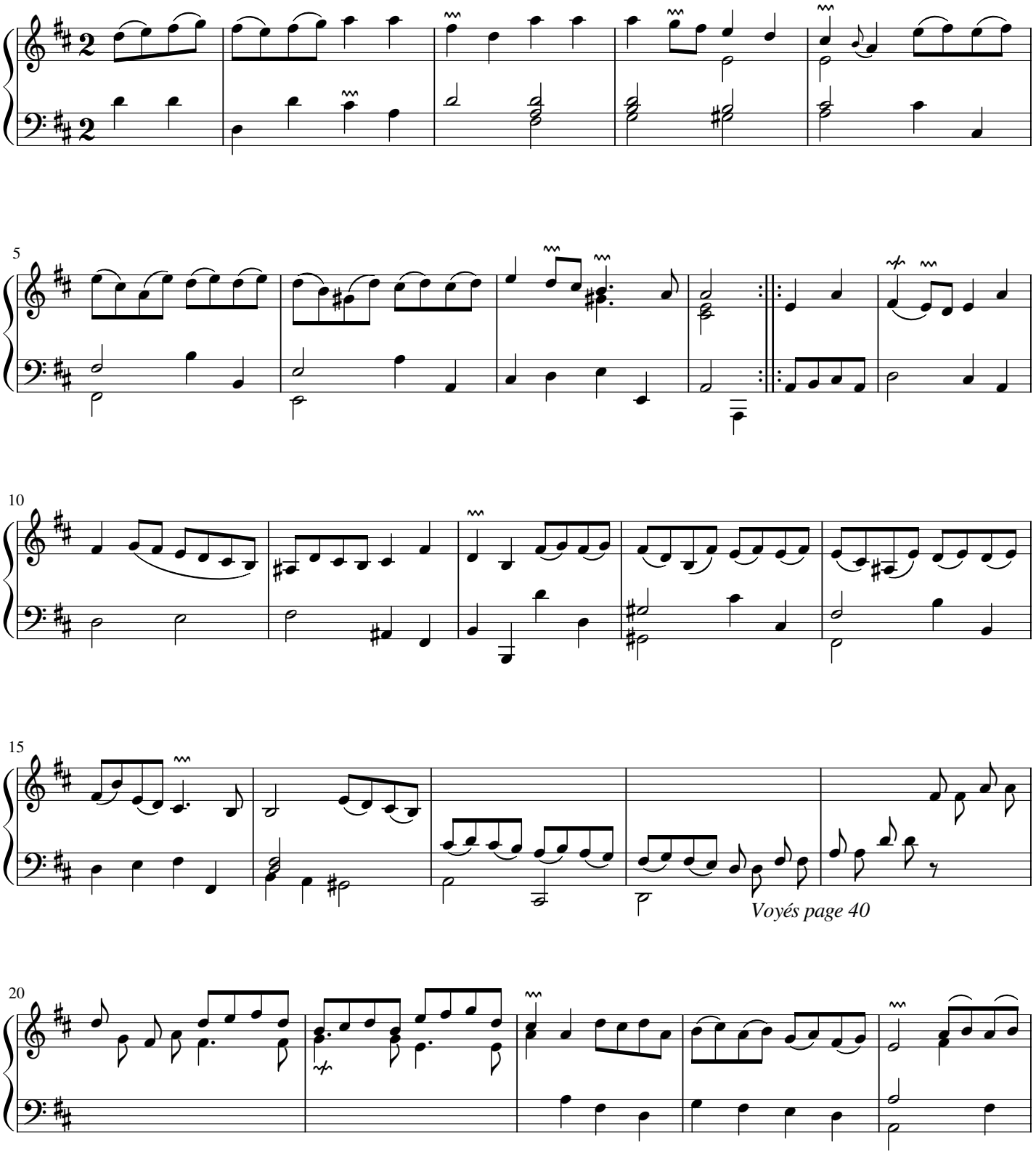
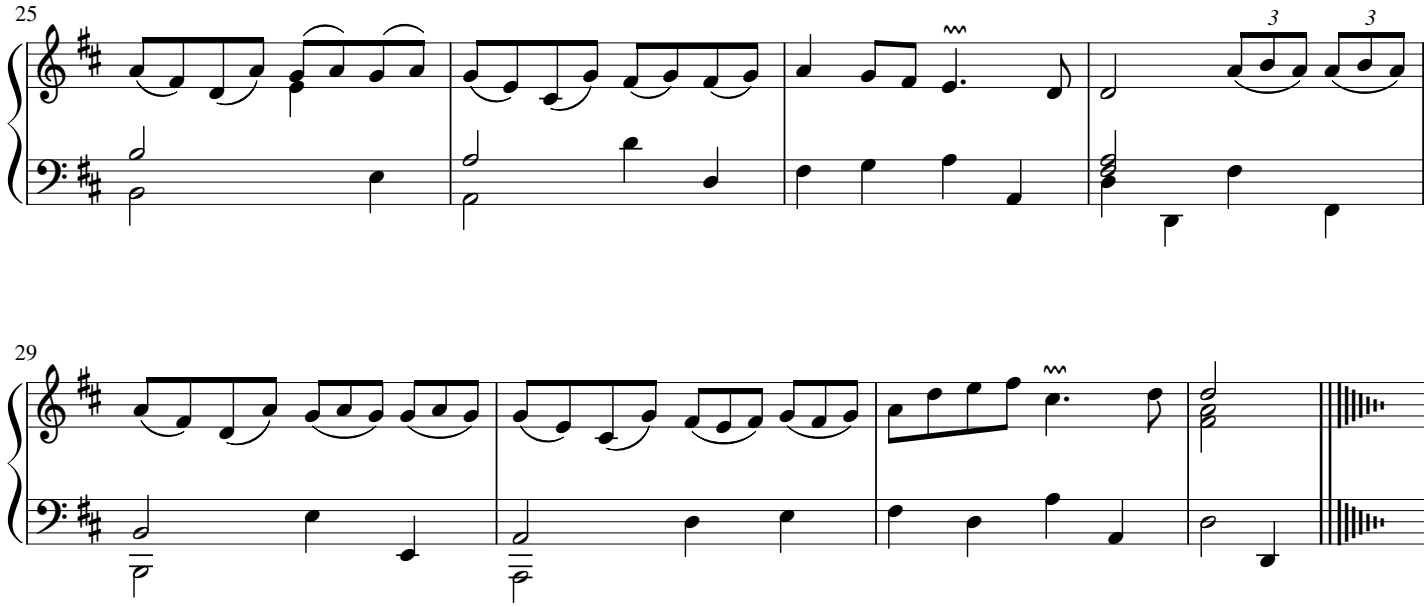
22
1.
2.

Badine



Voyés page 40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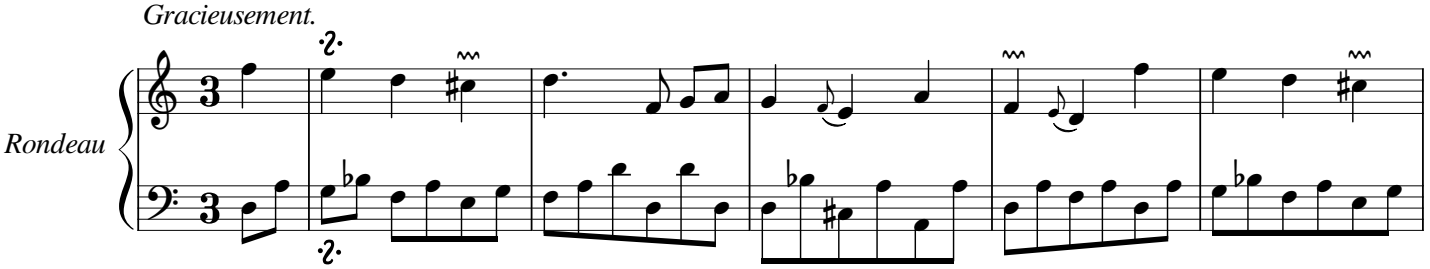
3
3

29

Les Idées Heureuses

Gracieusement.

Rondeau



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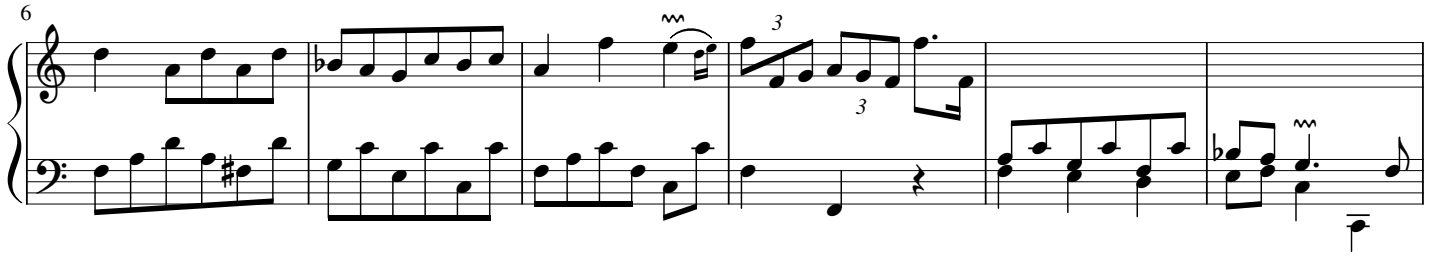

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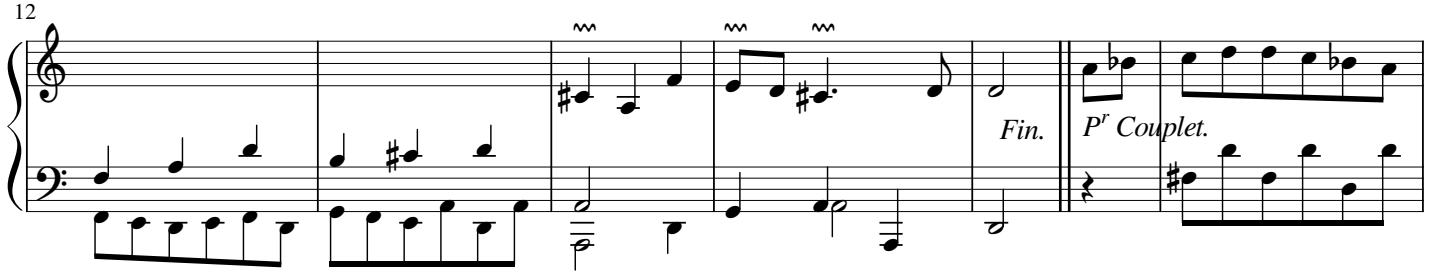

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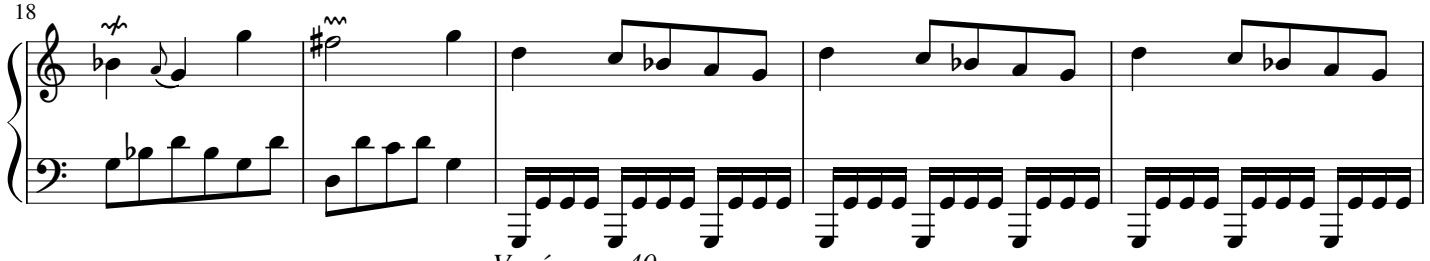
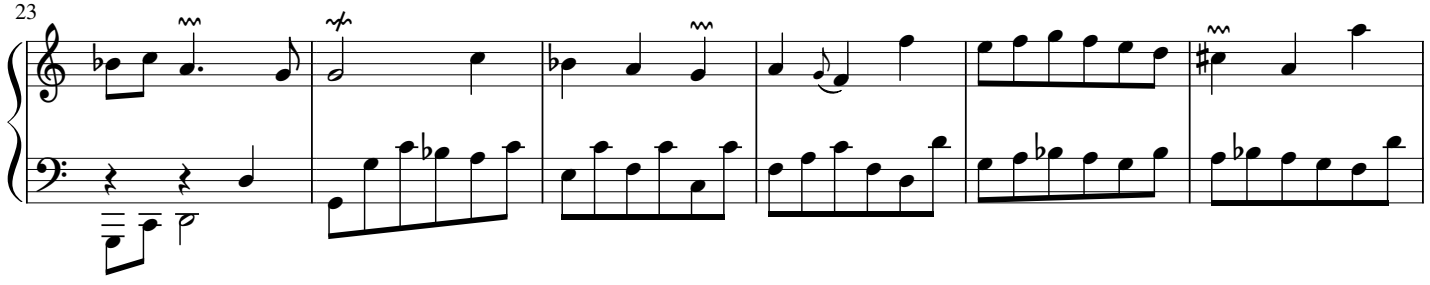
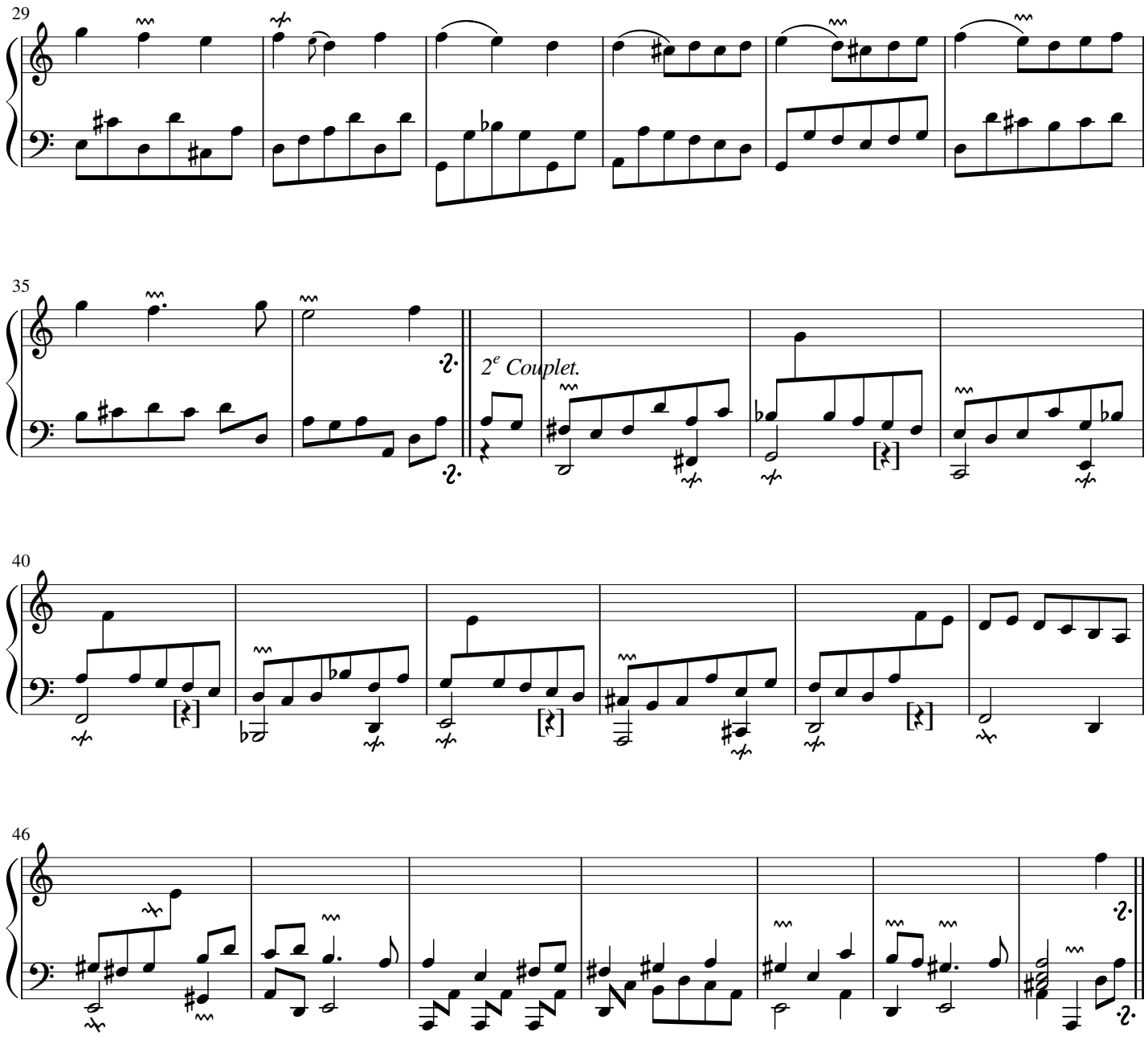


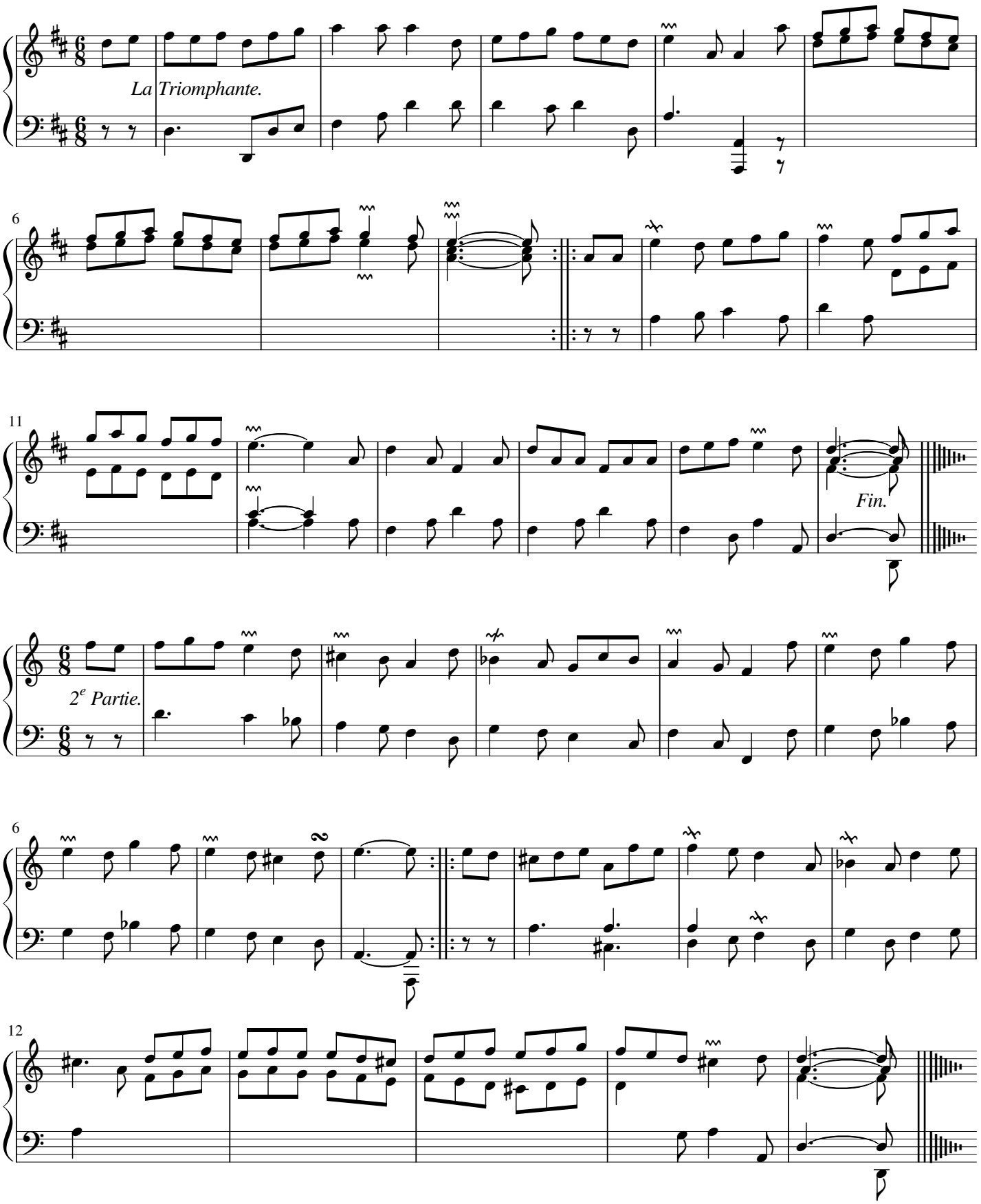
Voyés page 40

23

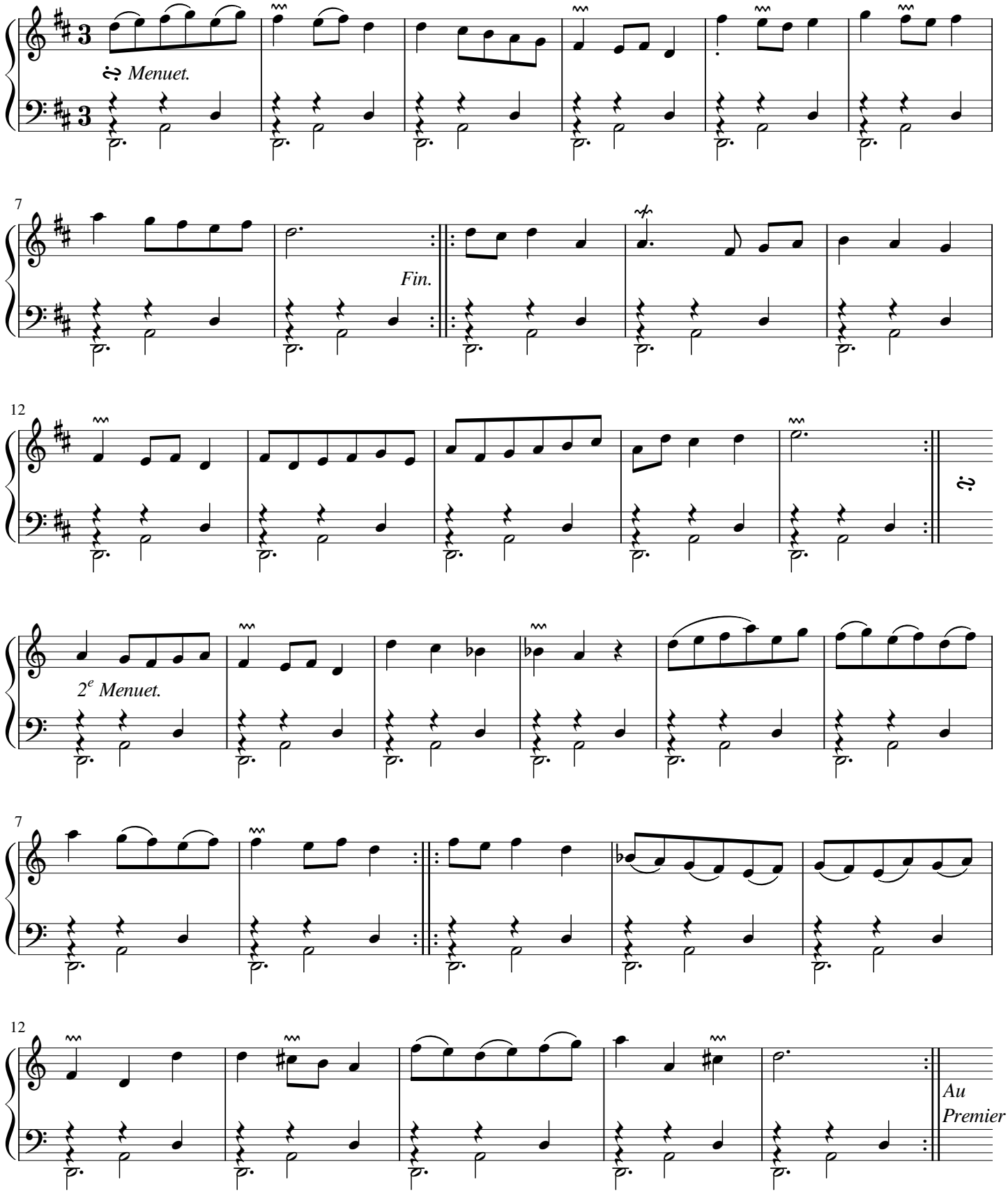


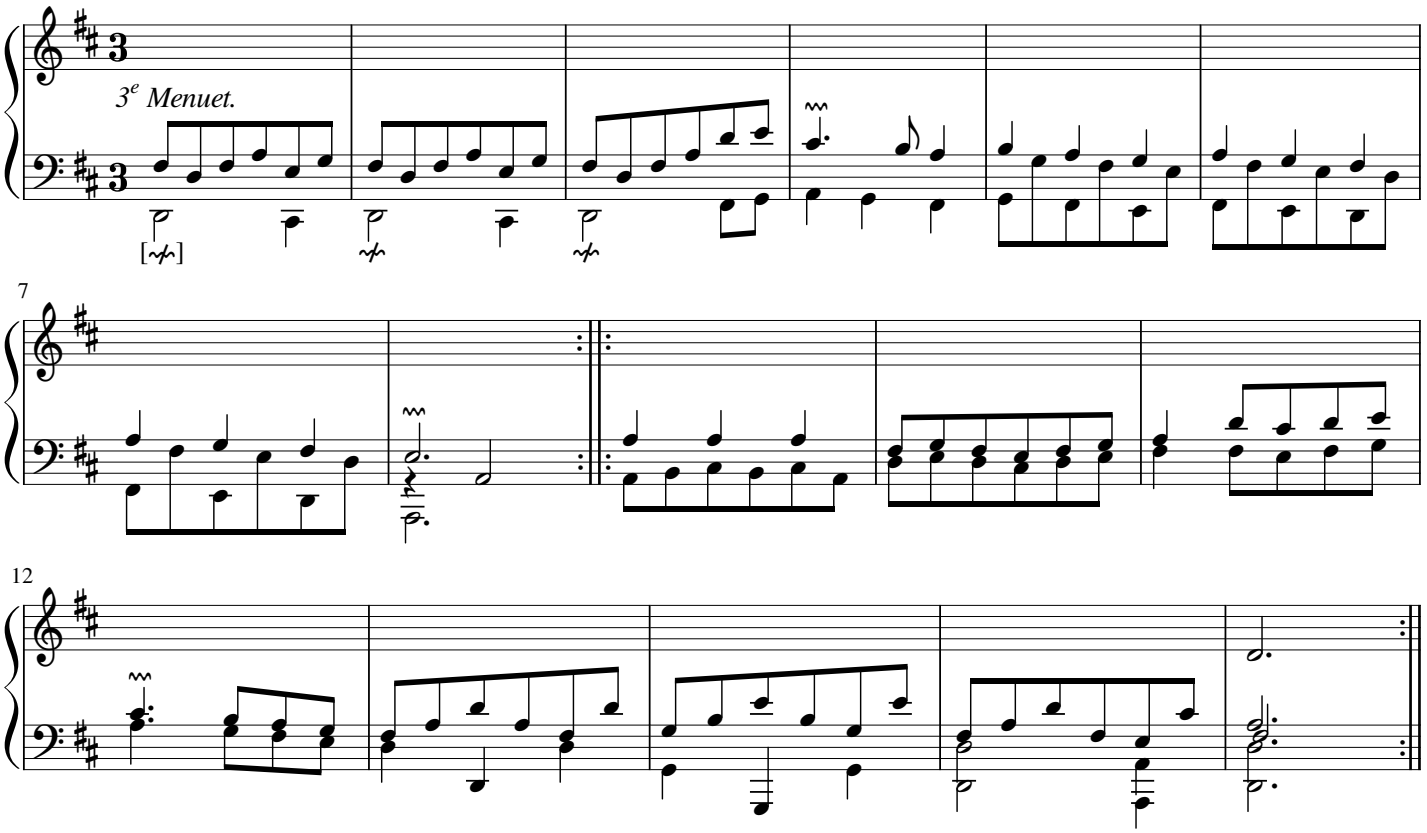

29
35
2e Couplet.
40
46

Feste Milannoise

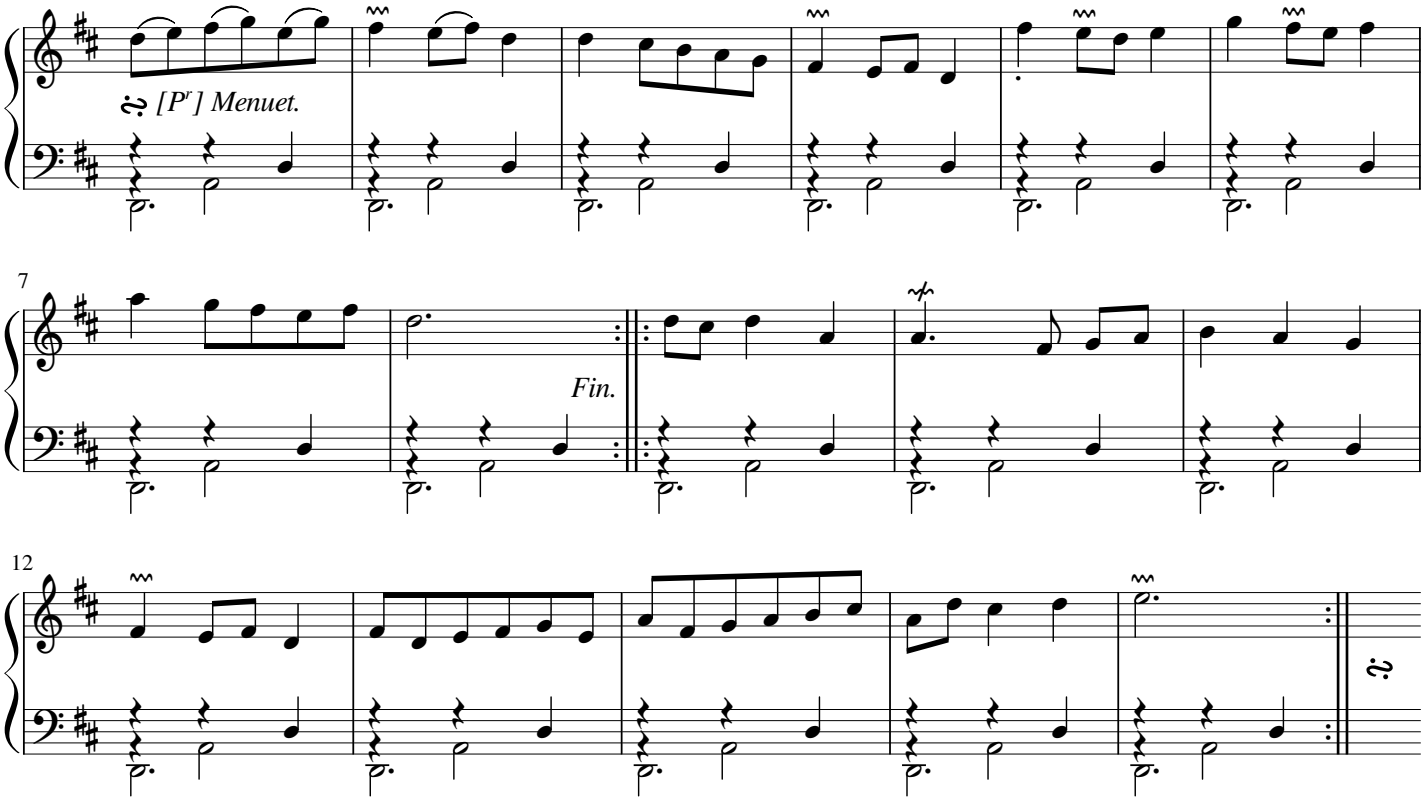


Bal



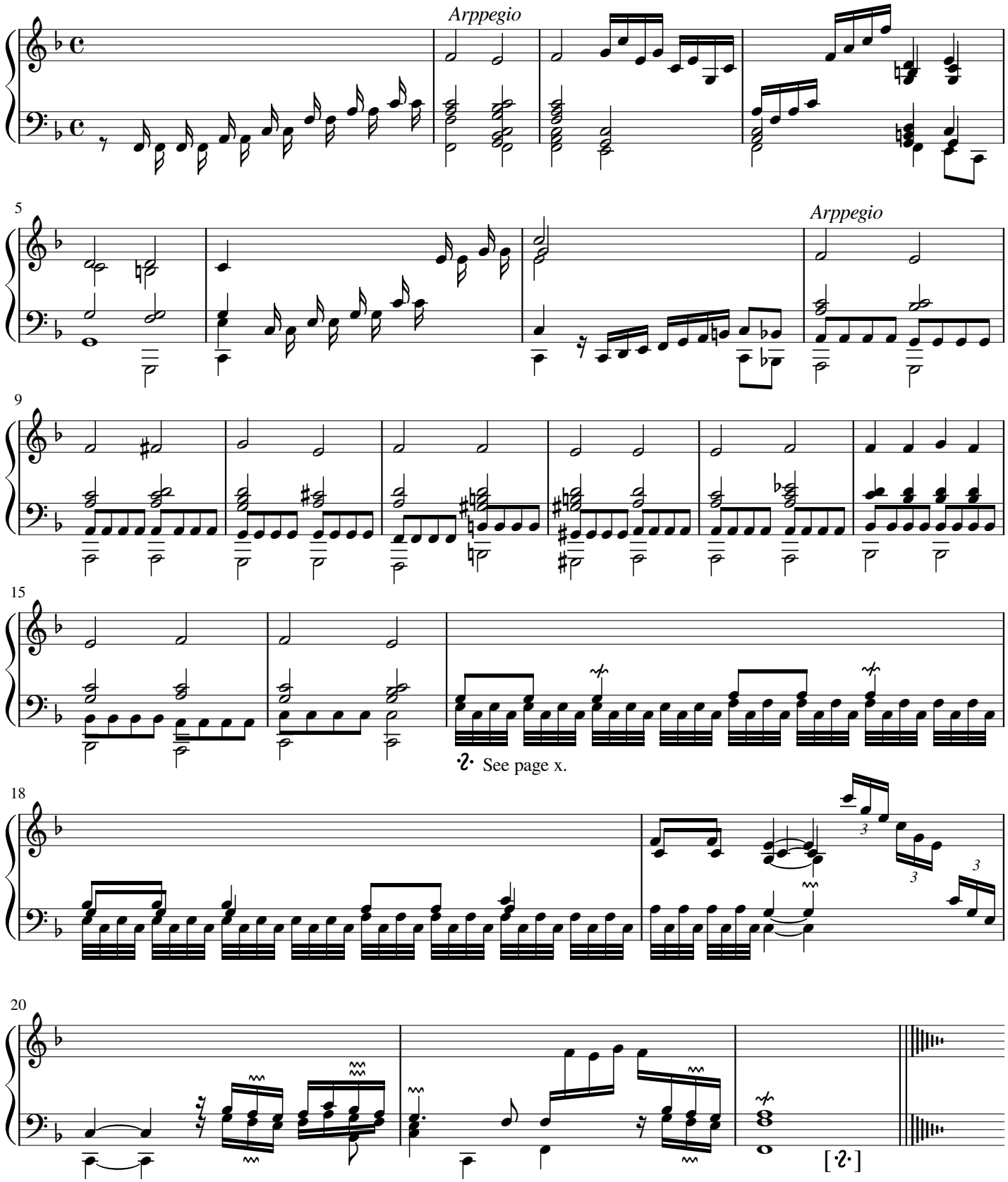


See discussion of this piece on page ix under 'Multi-Part Pieces.' The first menuet is reprinted below to avoid a page turn if performers choose to repeat some or all of it after the third menuet.

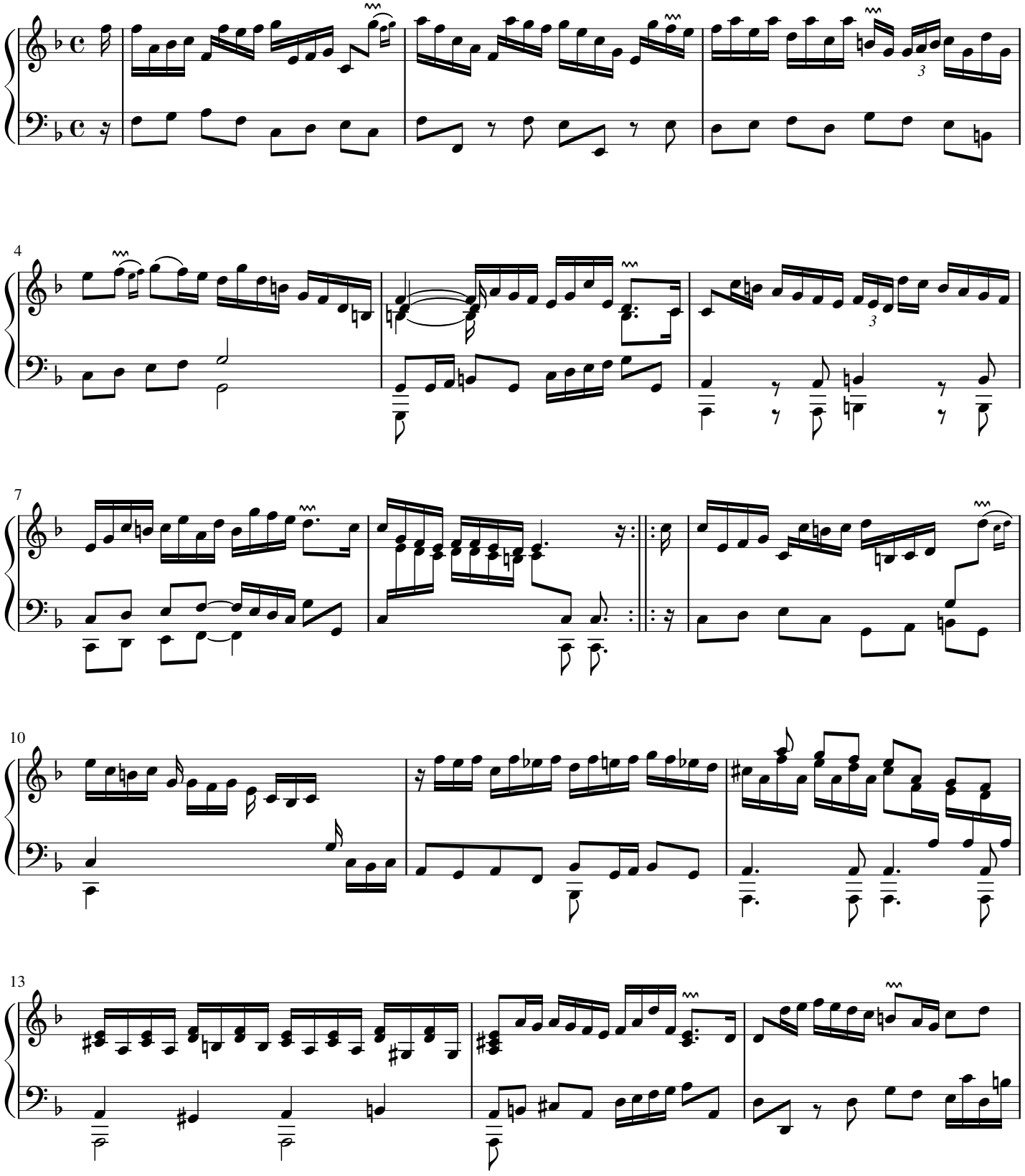


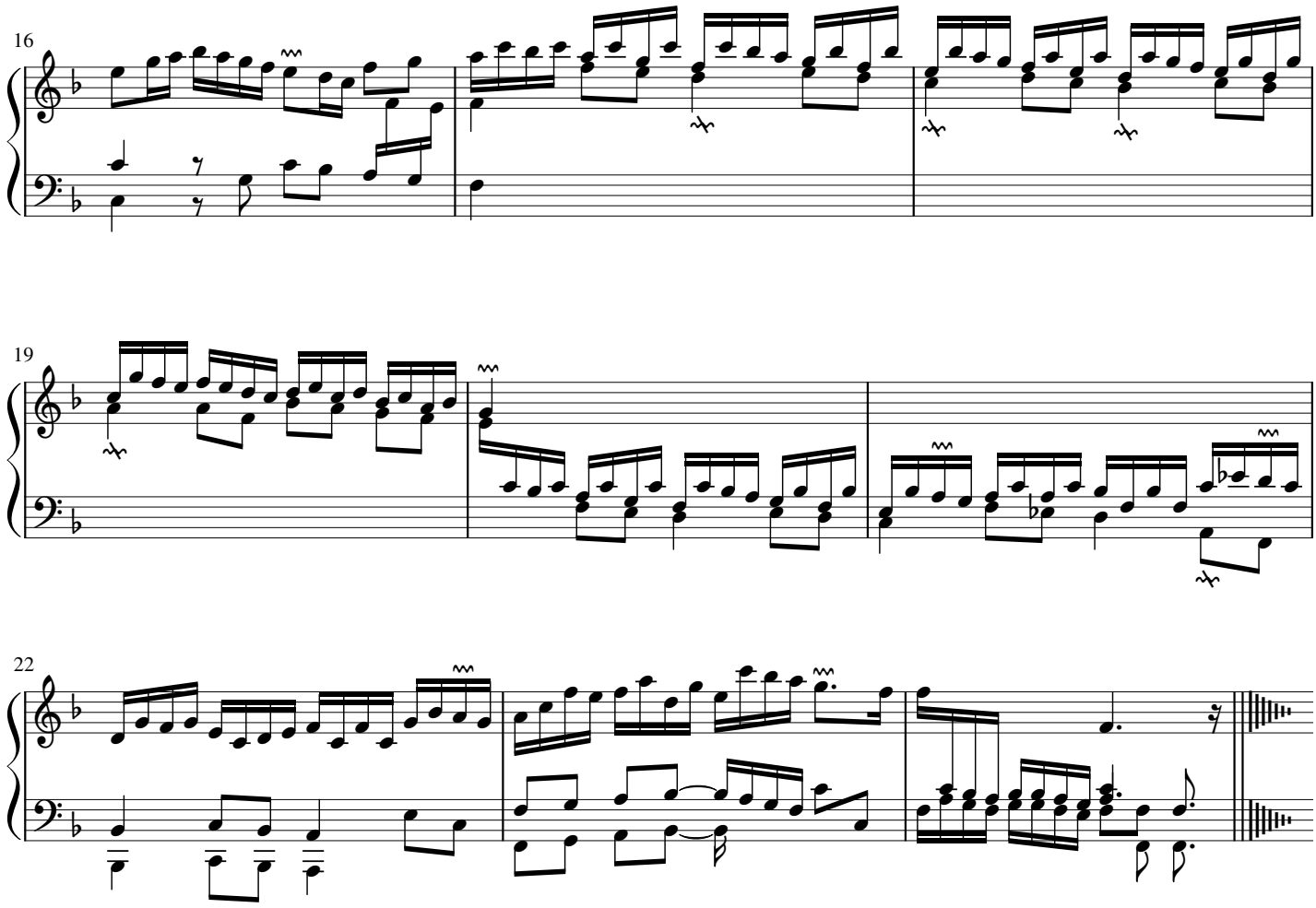
TROISIEME SUITE

Prélude

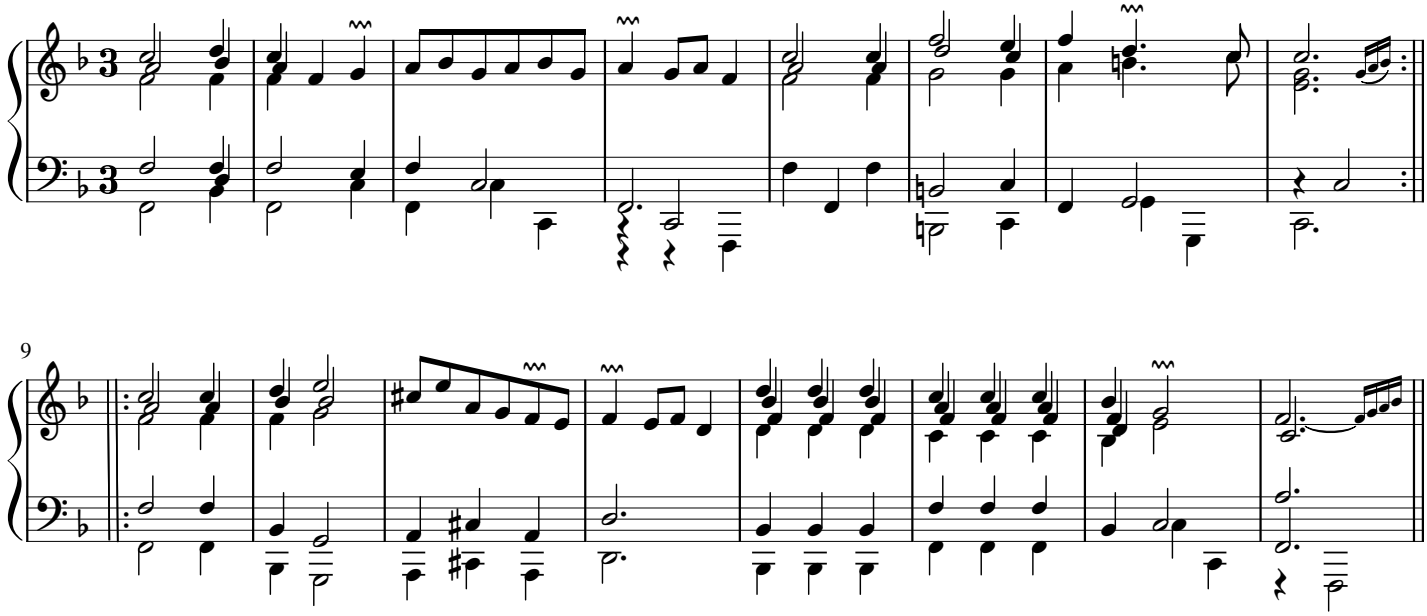


L'Heroïne Allemande





La Degourdie



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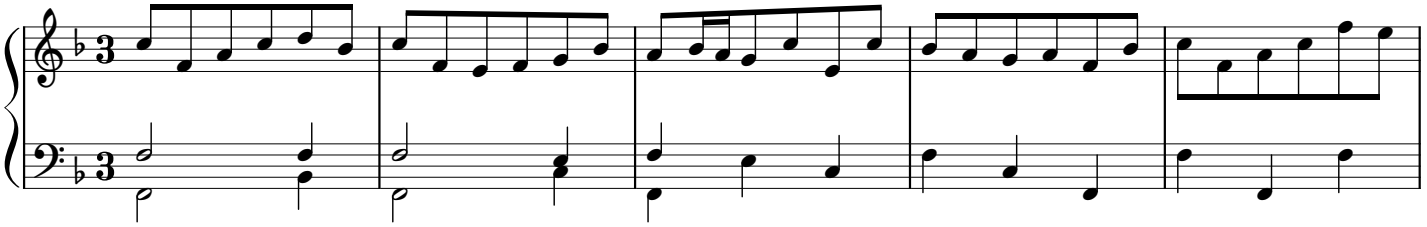
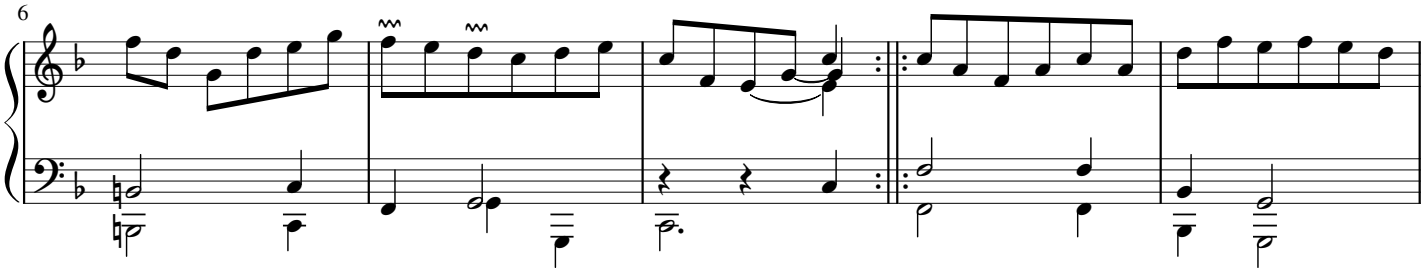
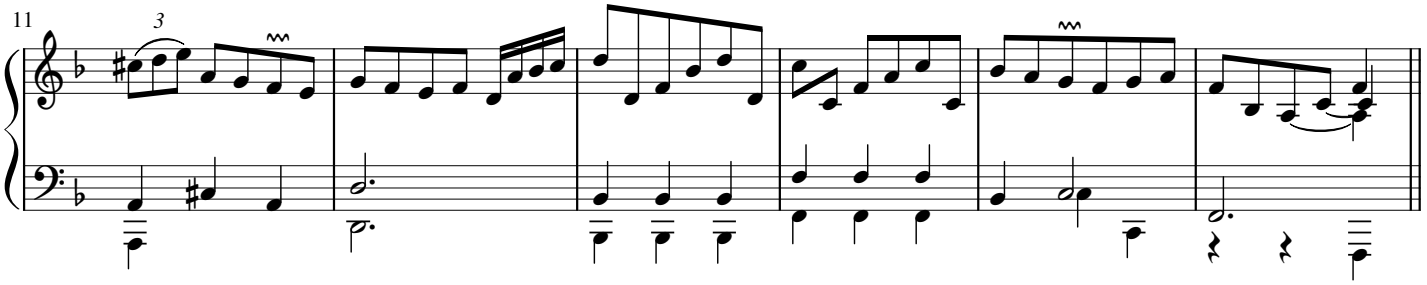
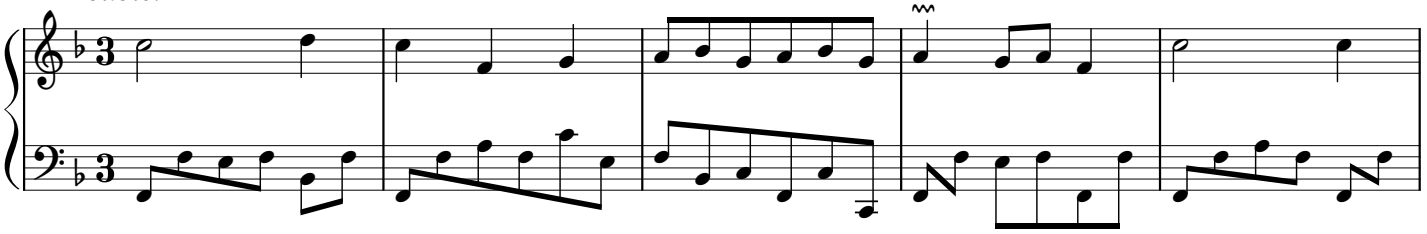
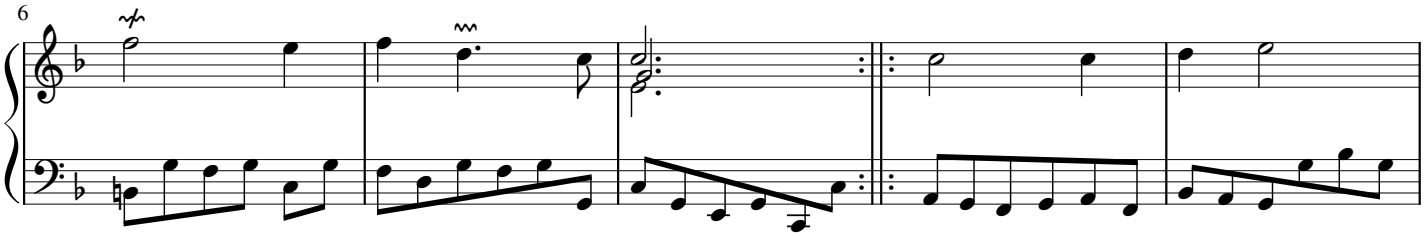


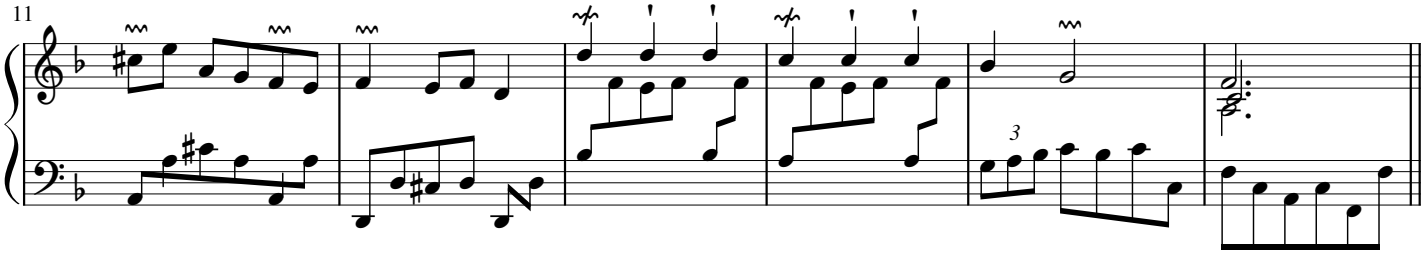




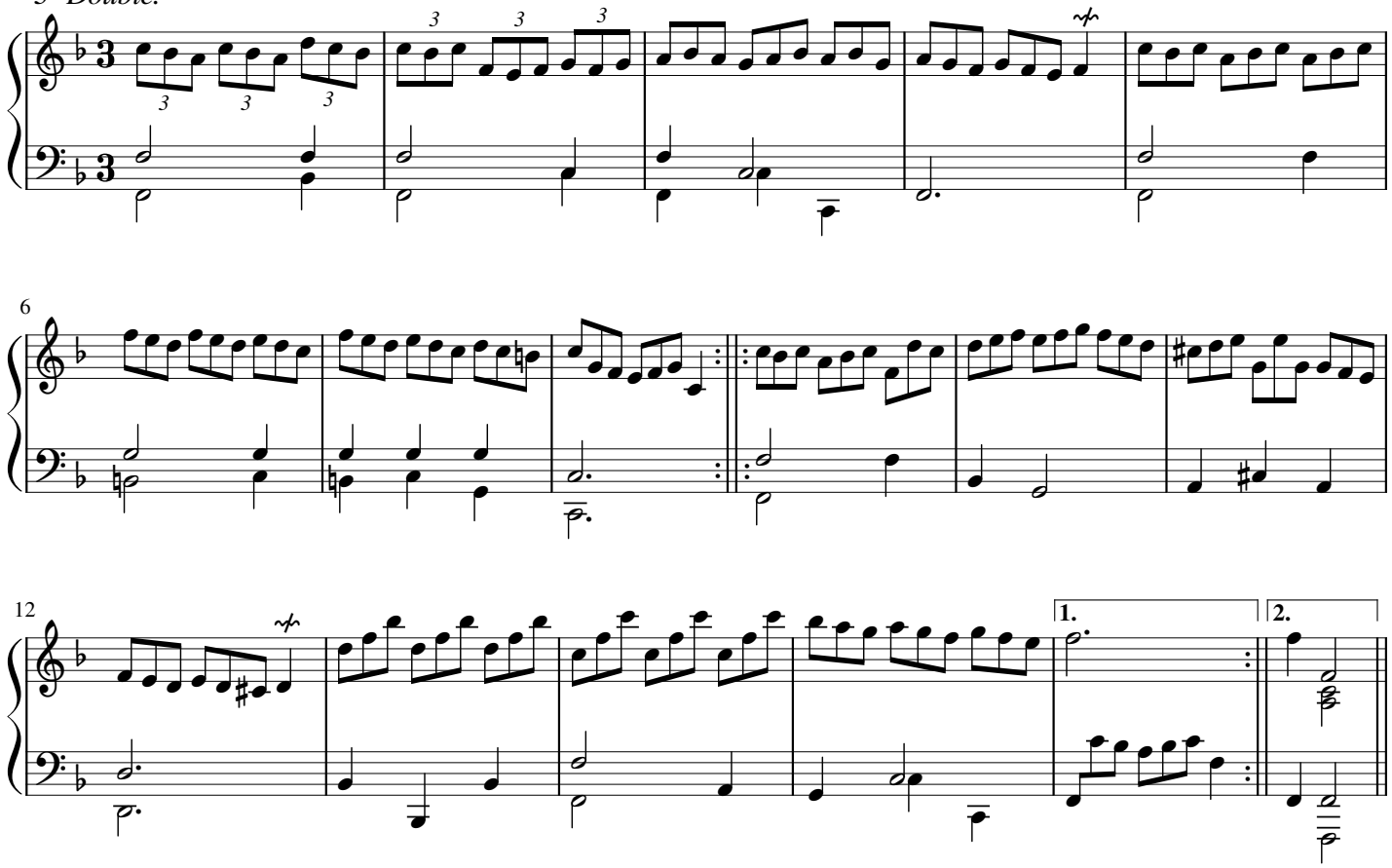
2^e Double.



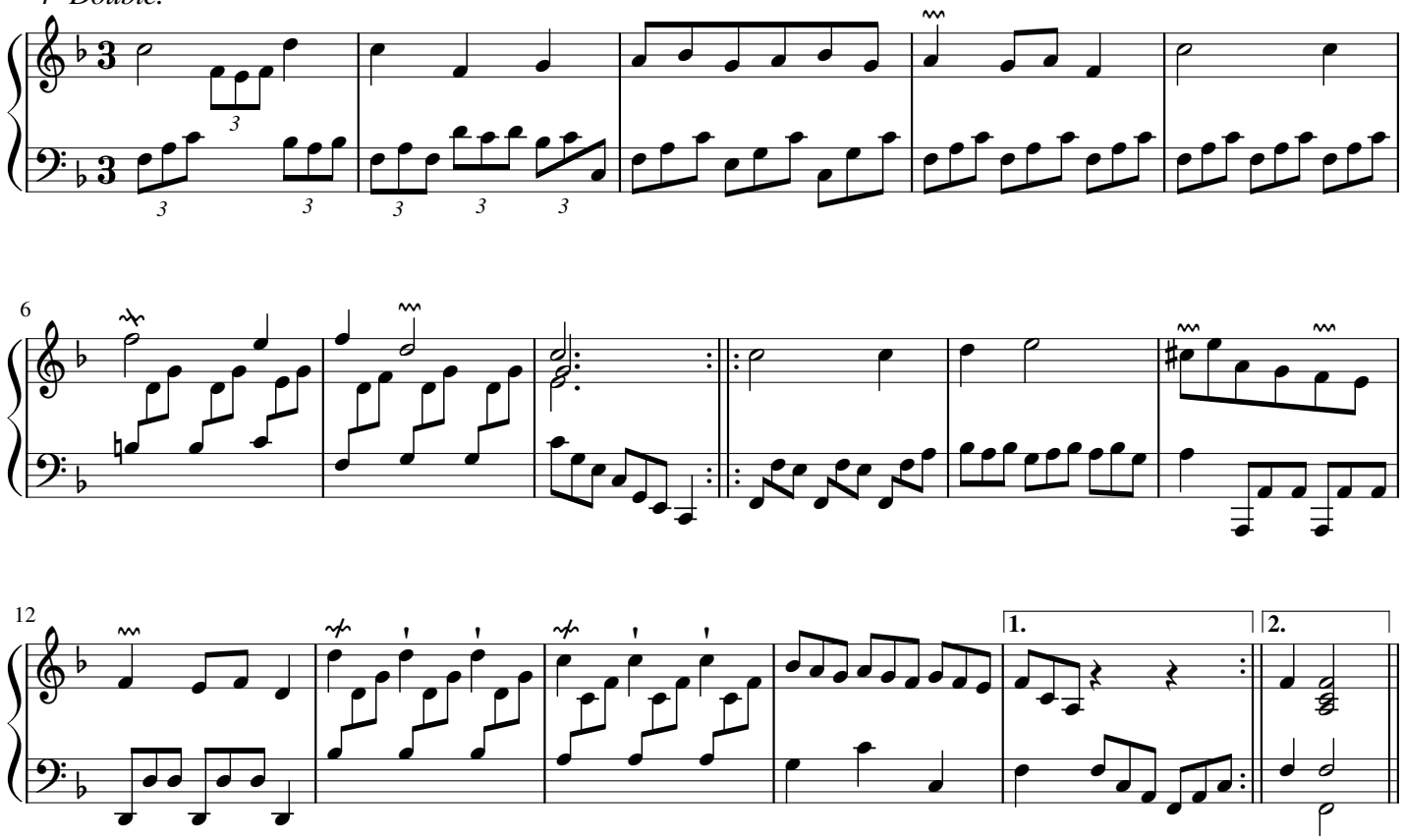


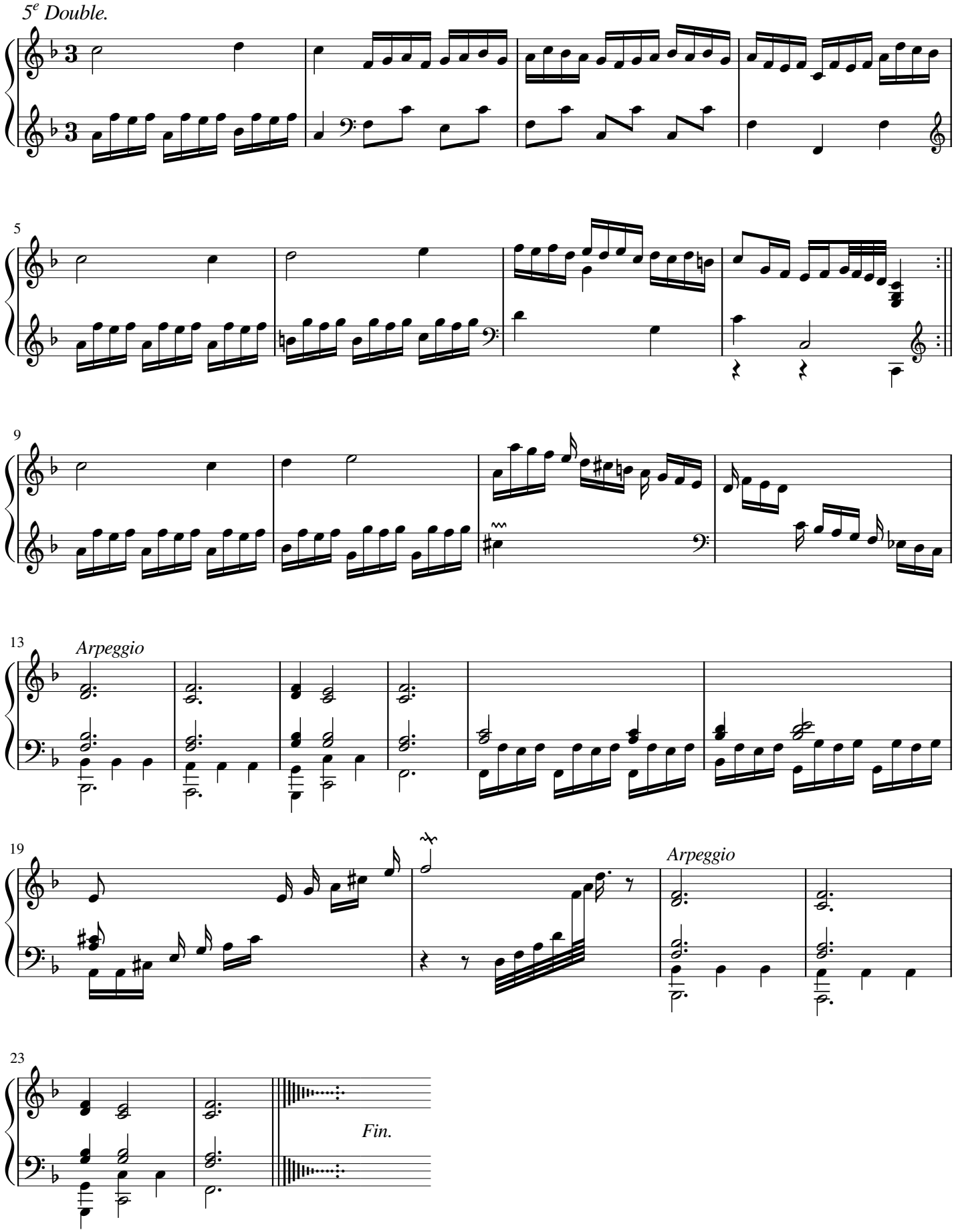


3e Double.



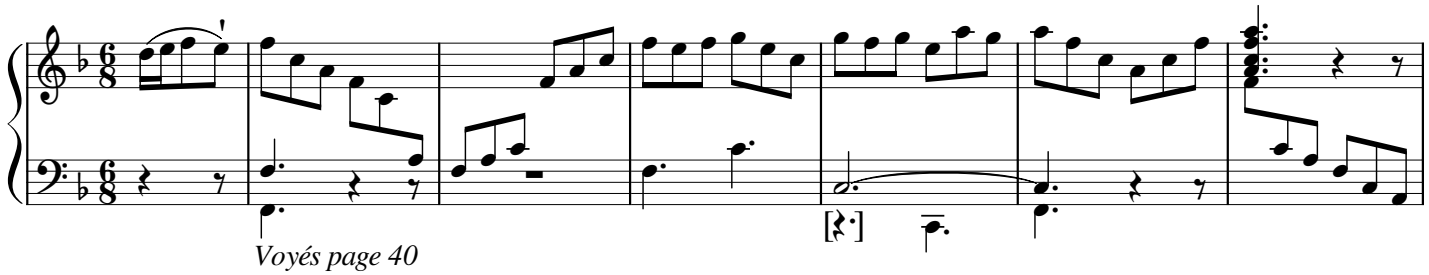
4e Double.



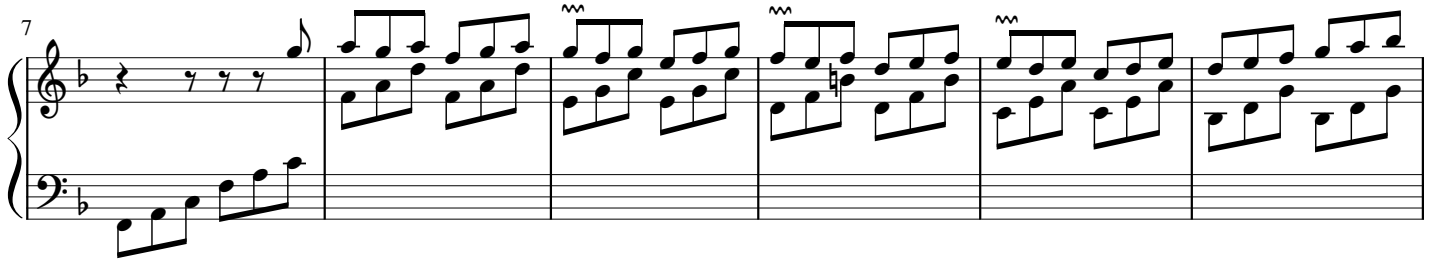

5e Double.
5
9
13
Arpeggio
19
Arpeggio
23
Fin.

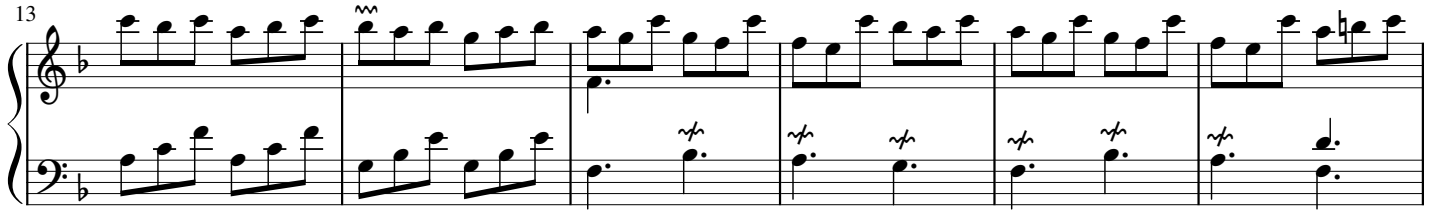
Les Botes de Sept Lieues

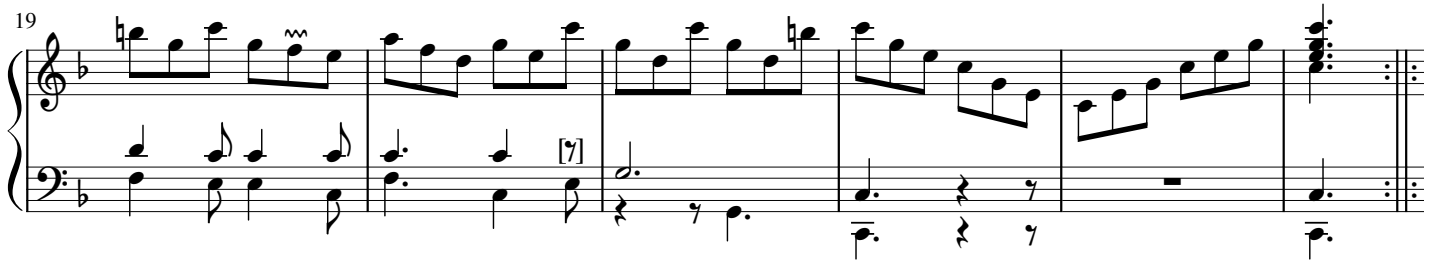
Vivement

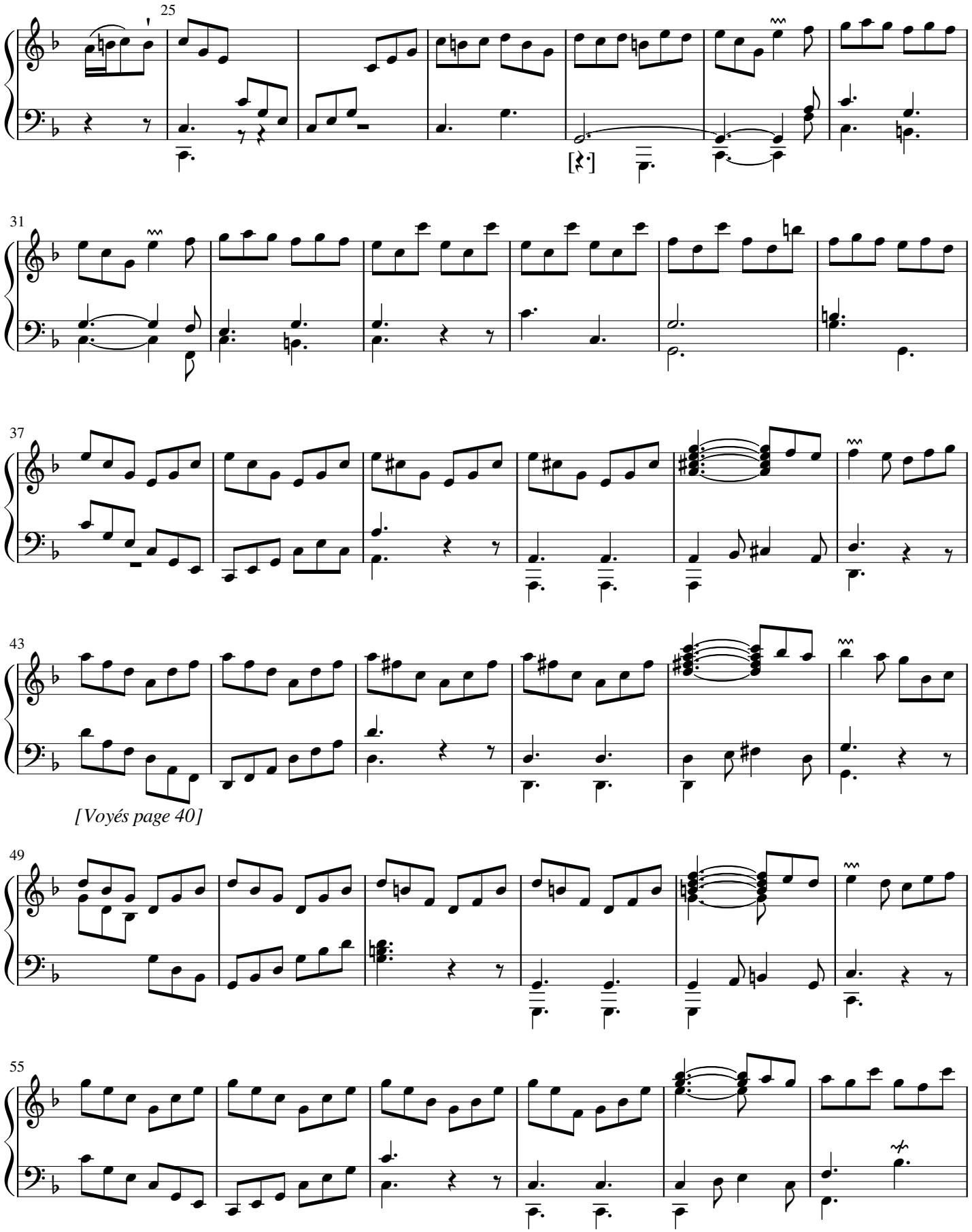


Voyés page 40





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43
[Voyés page 40]
49
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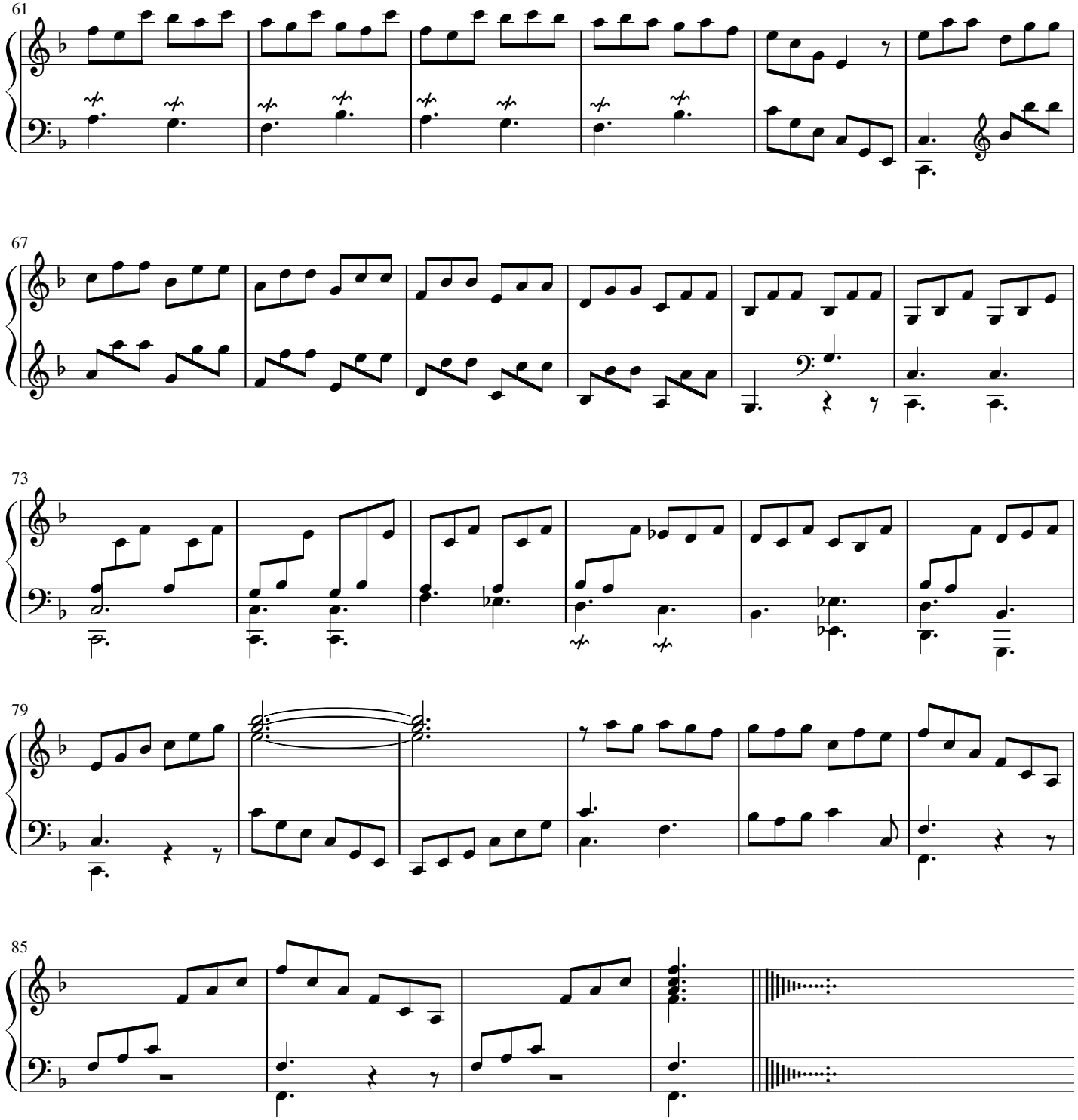
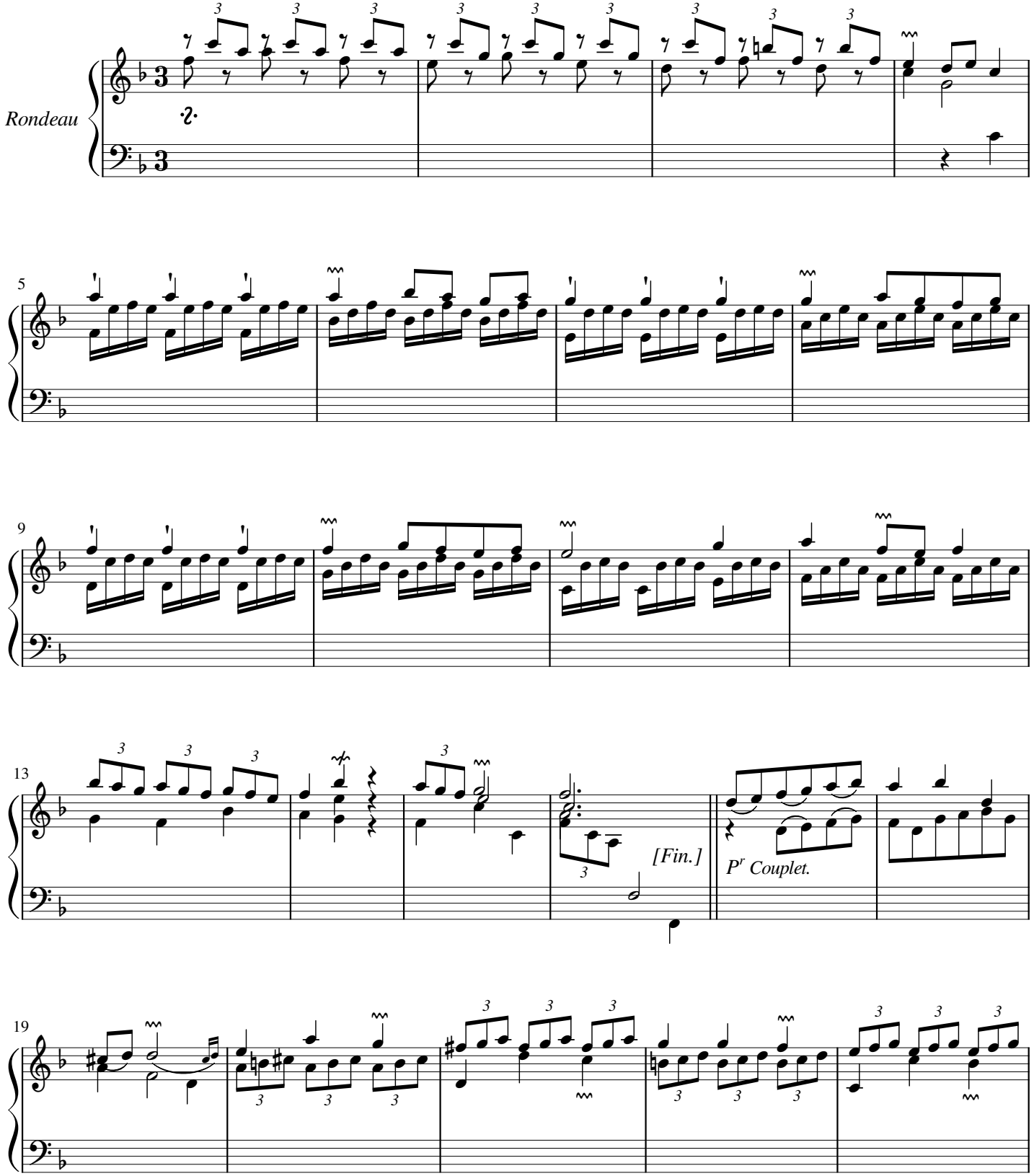
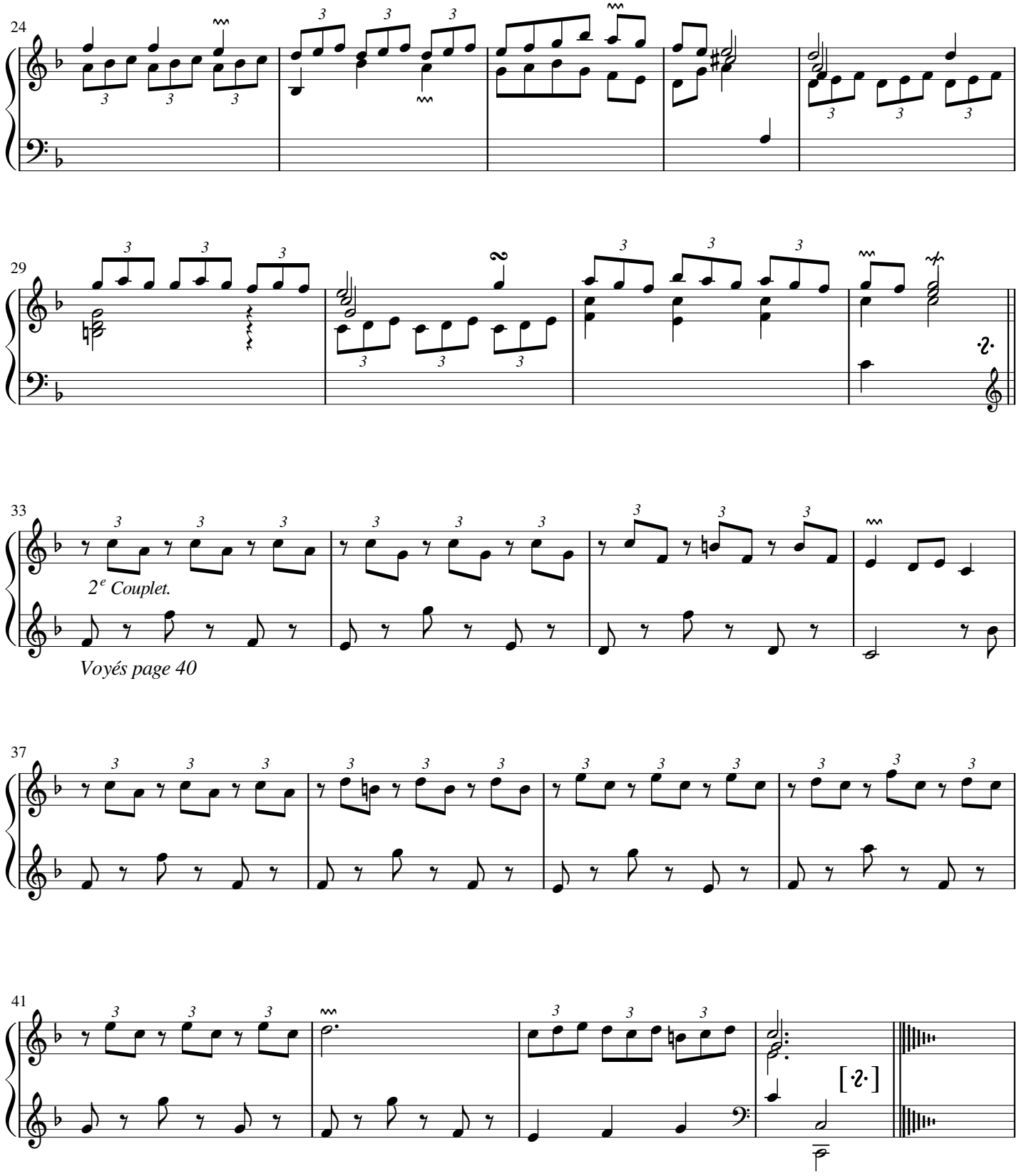

61
67
73
79
85

Les Etoiles

Legerement et Moderement

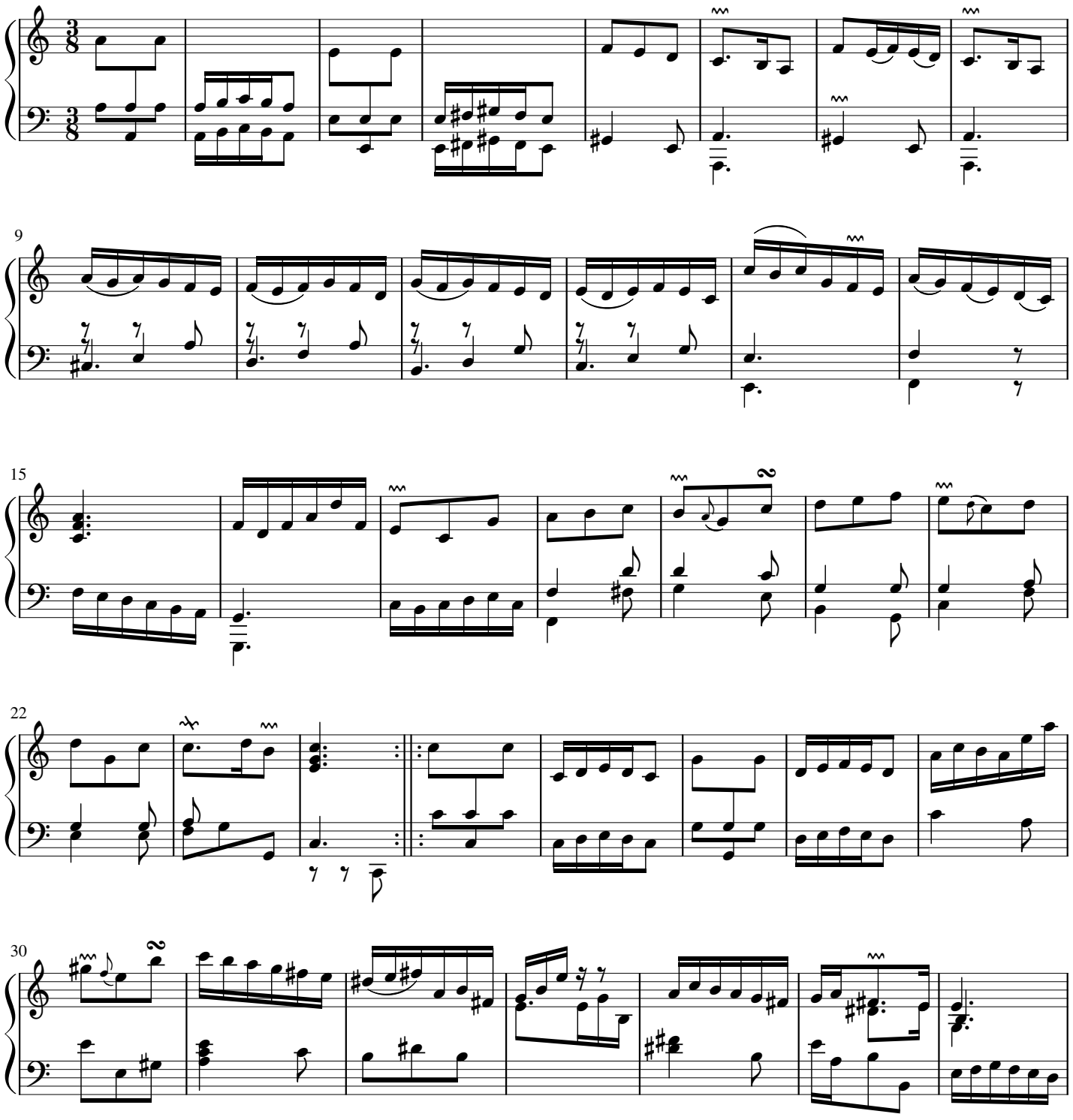
Rondeau

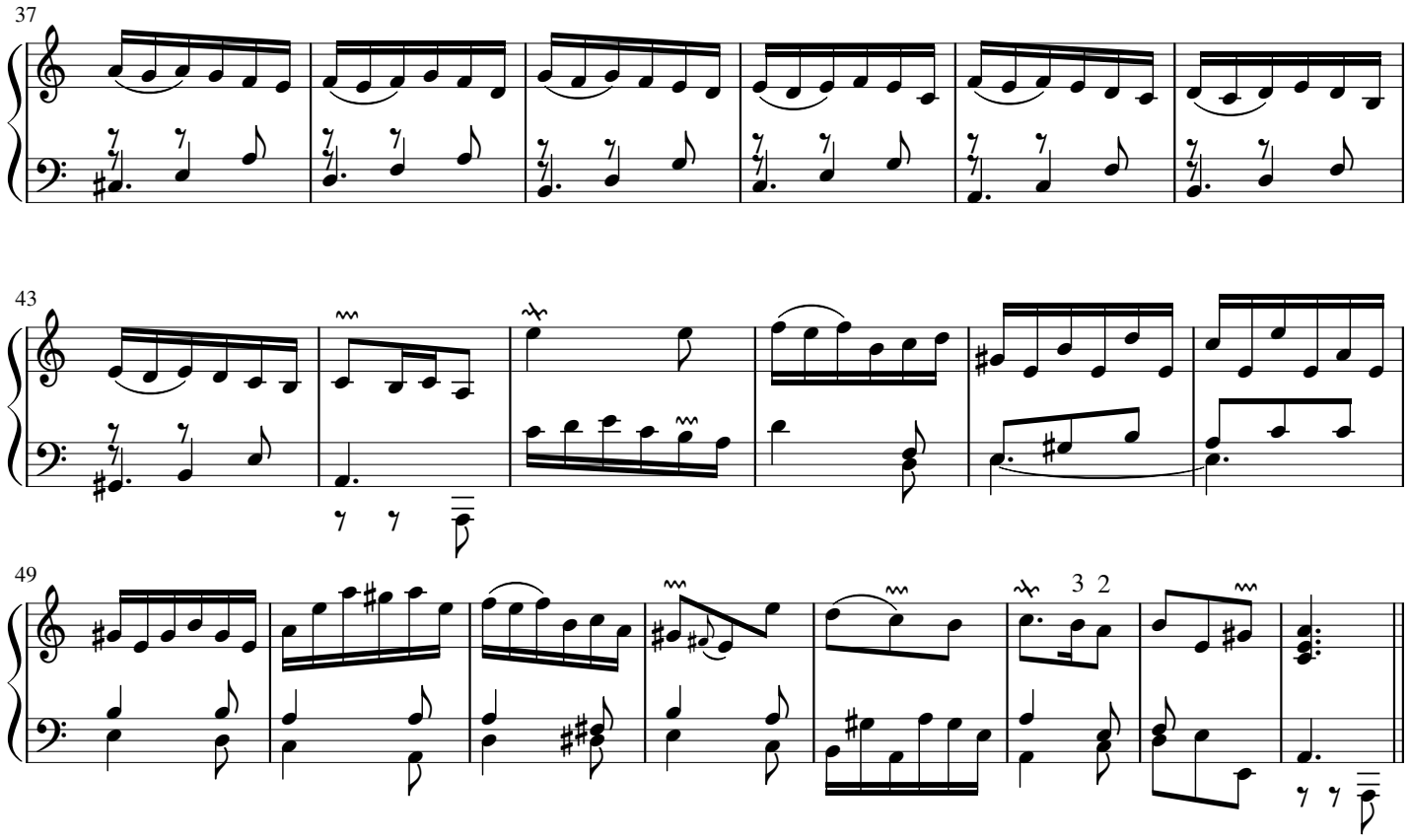



24
29
33
2e Couplet.
Voyés page 40
37
41

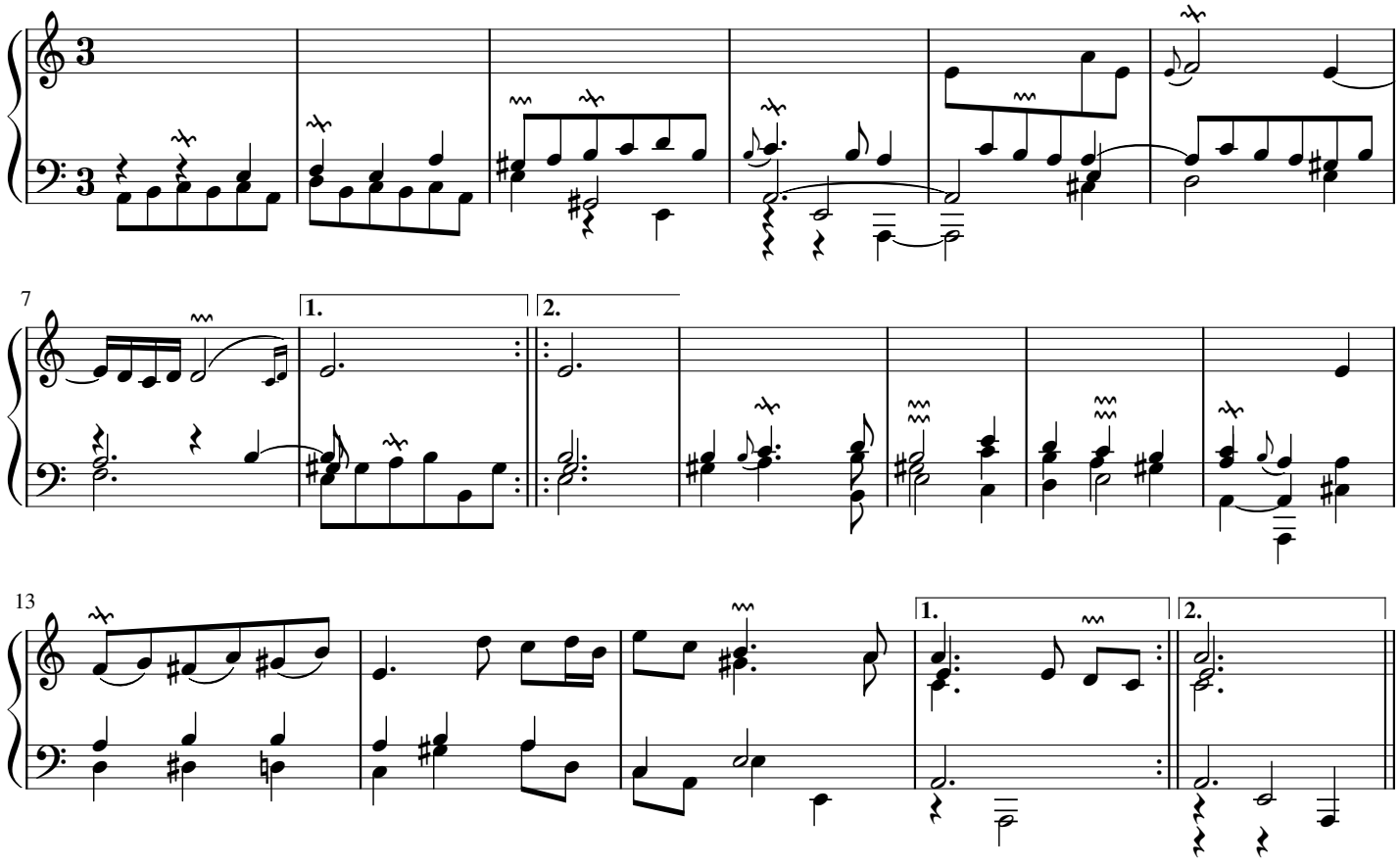
QUATRIEME SUITE

Les Fanatiques

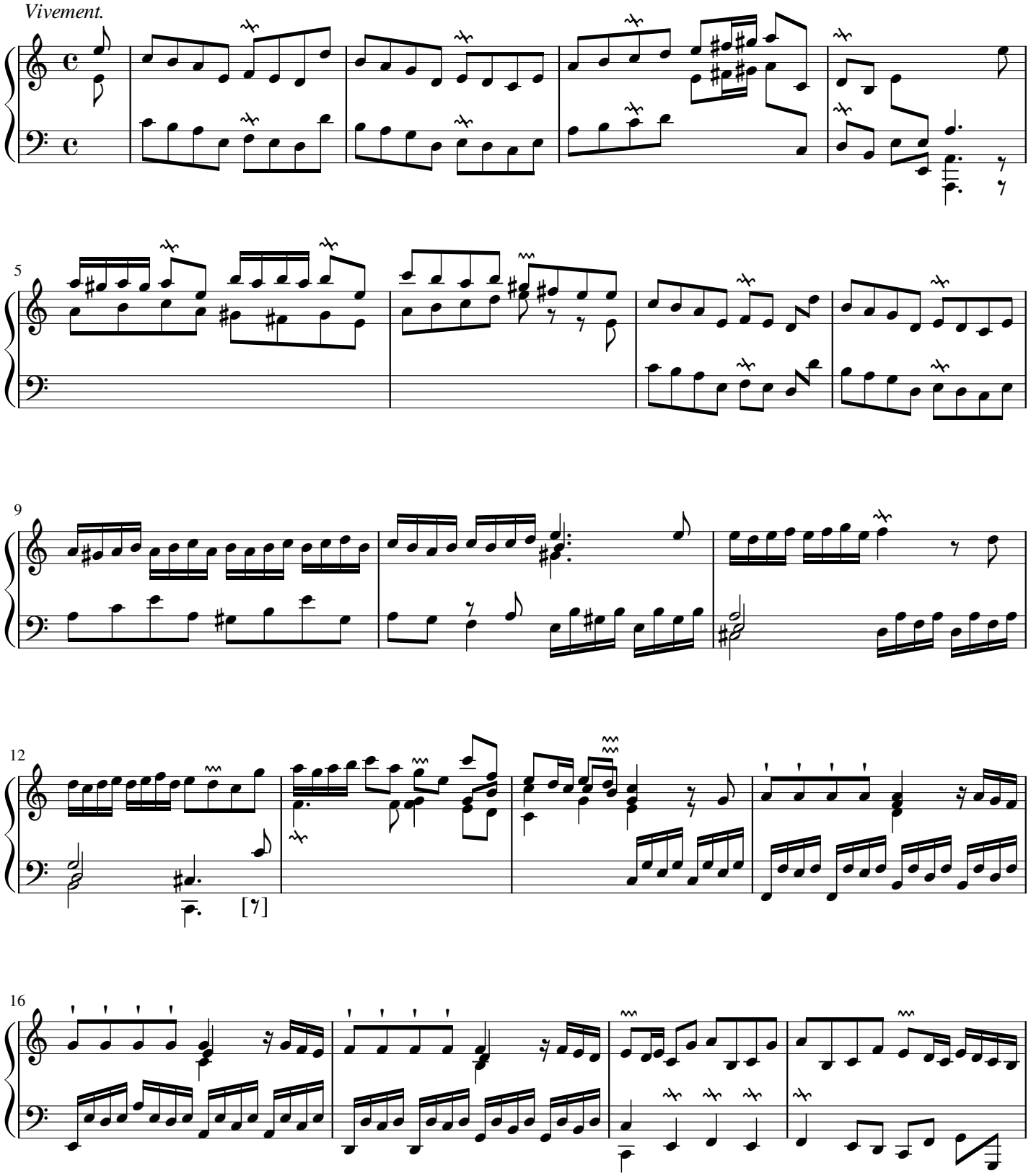


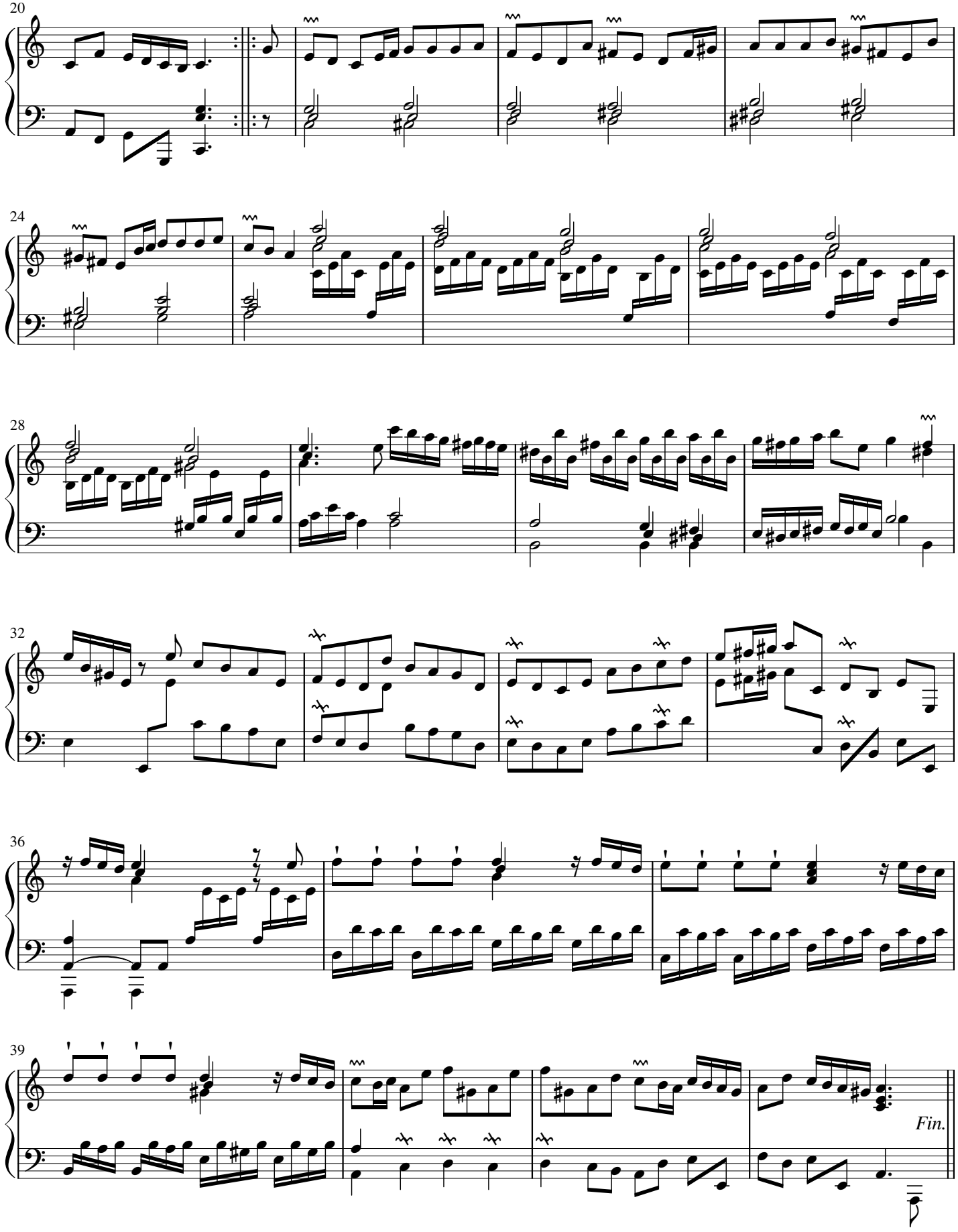


Sarabande



La Prise de Jericho




20
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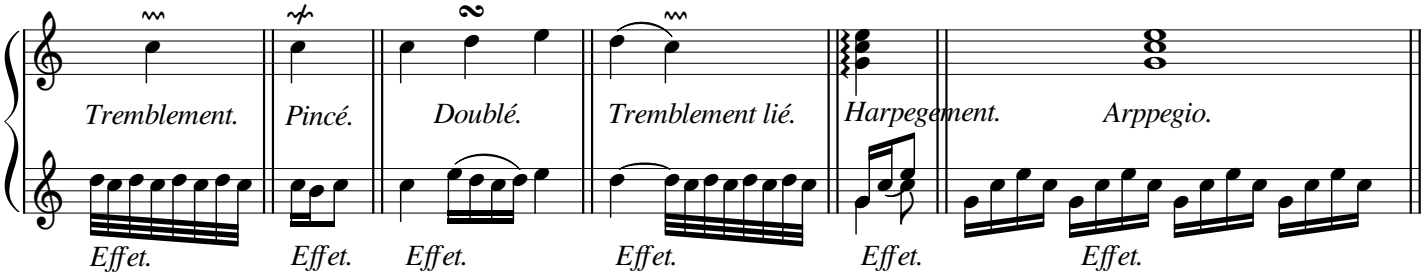
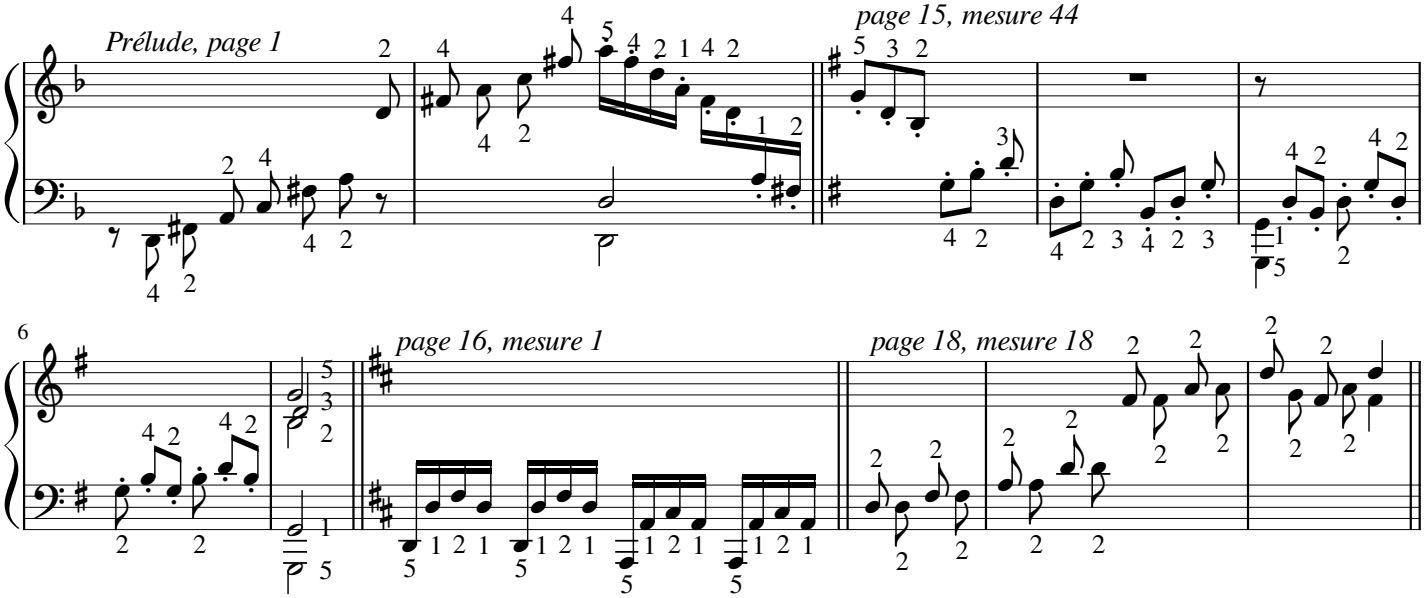
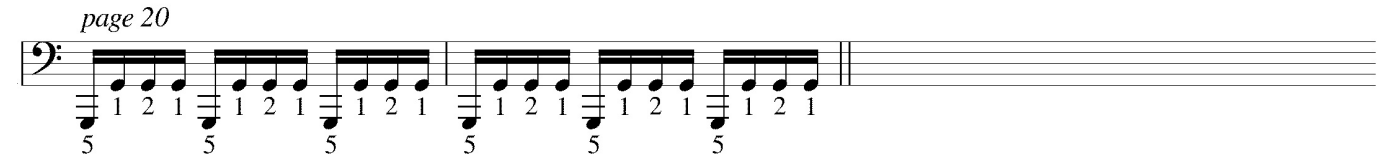
Fin.

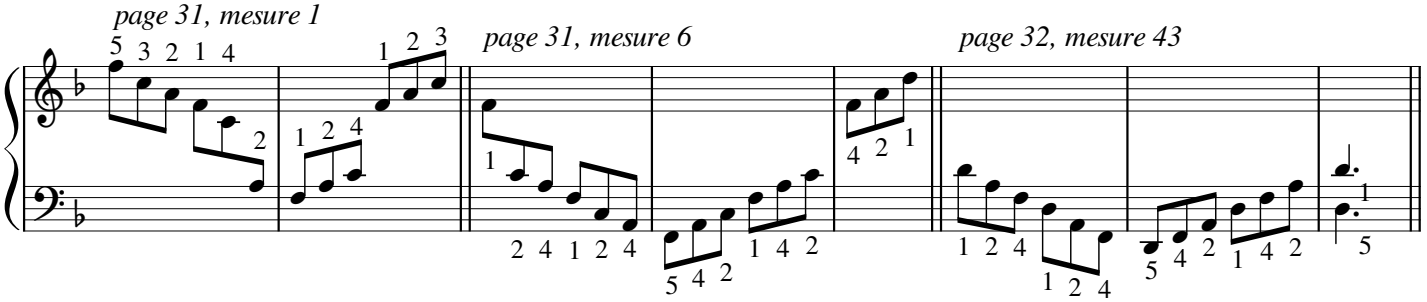
Explication des Marques et des Passages difficiles a doigter.
Explanation of Signs and of Passages that are difficult to finger.



Editor's note: fingerings above notes are to be taken by the right hand, and those below notes by the left hand.







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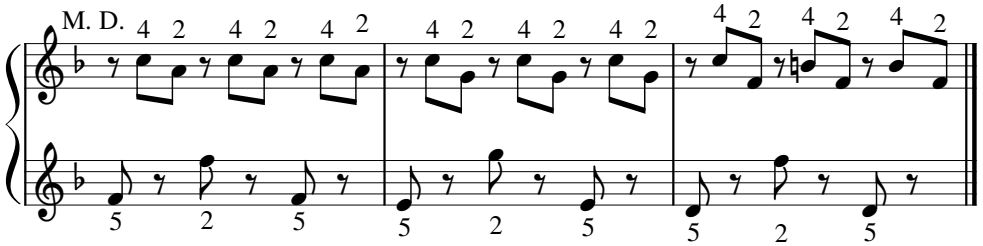
La Main gauche dessus la Main droite.
The left hand above the right hand.



First Book of Harpsichord Pieces, Op. 12, by Michel Corrette

Michel Corrette (1707–1795) was born in Rouen, son of the organist and composer Gaspard Corrette. As a young man he moved to Paris where he had a long and very active musical career. He was organist at the Jesuit College in Paris for over 40 years and later became organist to the Duke of Angoulême. A prolific composer, he wrote many works for the stage, concertos, chamber music, and organ pieces, along with cantatas and other sacred vocal works. Corrette also organized concerts and published his own music and that of others, particularly Italian composers. In addition, he wrote almost twenty method books for various instruments, including a detailed treatise on the art of accompanying from a figured bass.

Corrette published the pieces in this volume under the title *Premier Livre de Pièces pour le Clavecin* (First Book of Pieces for the Harpsichord) in 1734. It contains four suites that include the traditional dances (allemande, gigue, etc.) as well as pieces with evocative titles in the fashion popularized by François Couperin's harpsichord works. Although Corrette is not as well known as some other French Baroque composers, the music in this collection deserves attention from players today. It is generally not difficult, which makes it accessible to most keyboardists.

This edition aims to present a text as close to the original printing as possible while still being useful to contemporary keyboardists. It includes an Introduction with discussion of ornamentation and other performance issues, a glossary of French terms, and critical notes on the text.

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