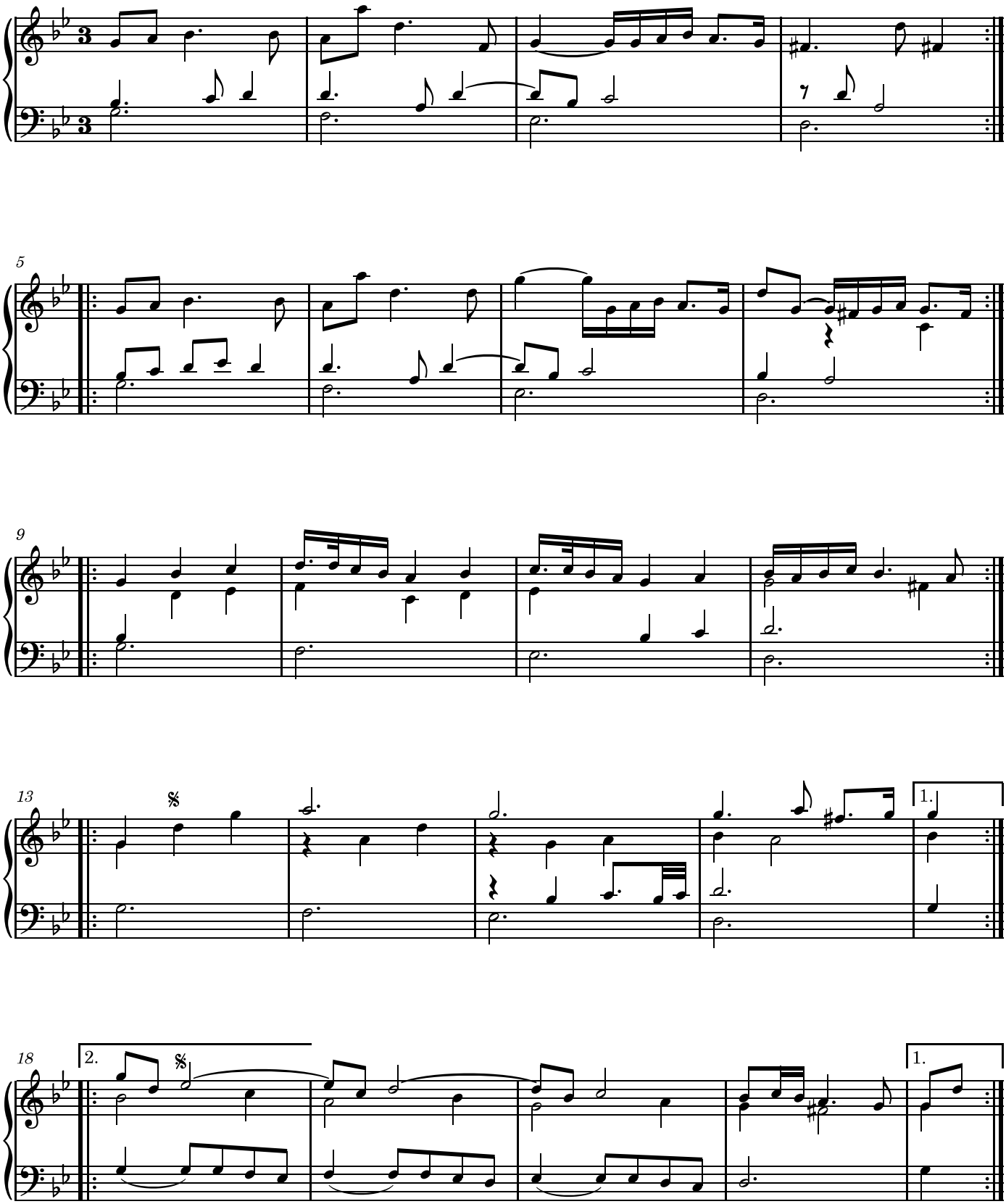
Ciacona

transposed to g minor in order to suit baroque temperaments

Johann Pachelbel (1653 – 1706)



Edited by Basil Herold 2023
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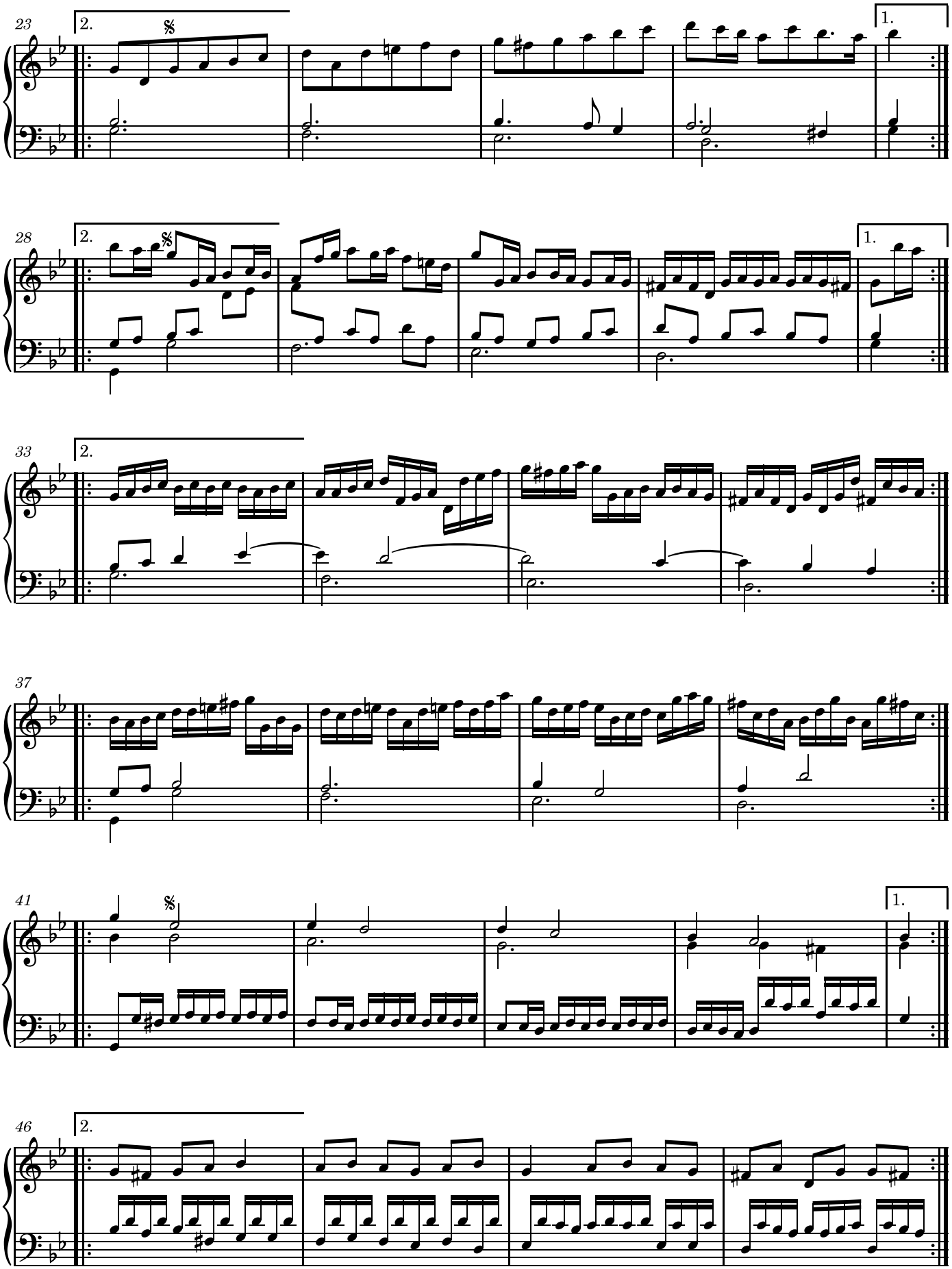
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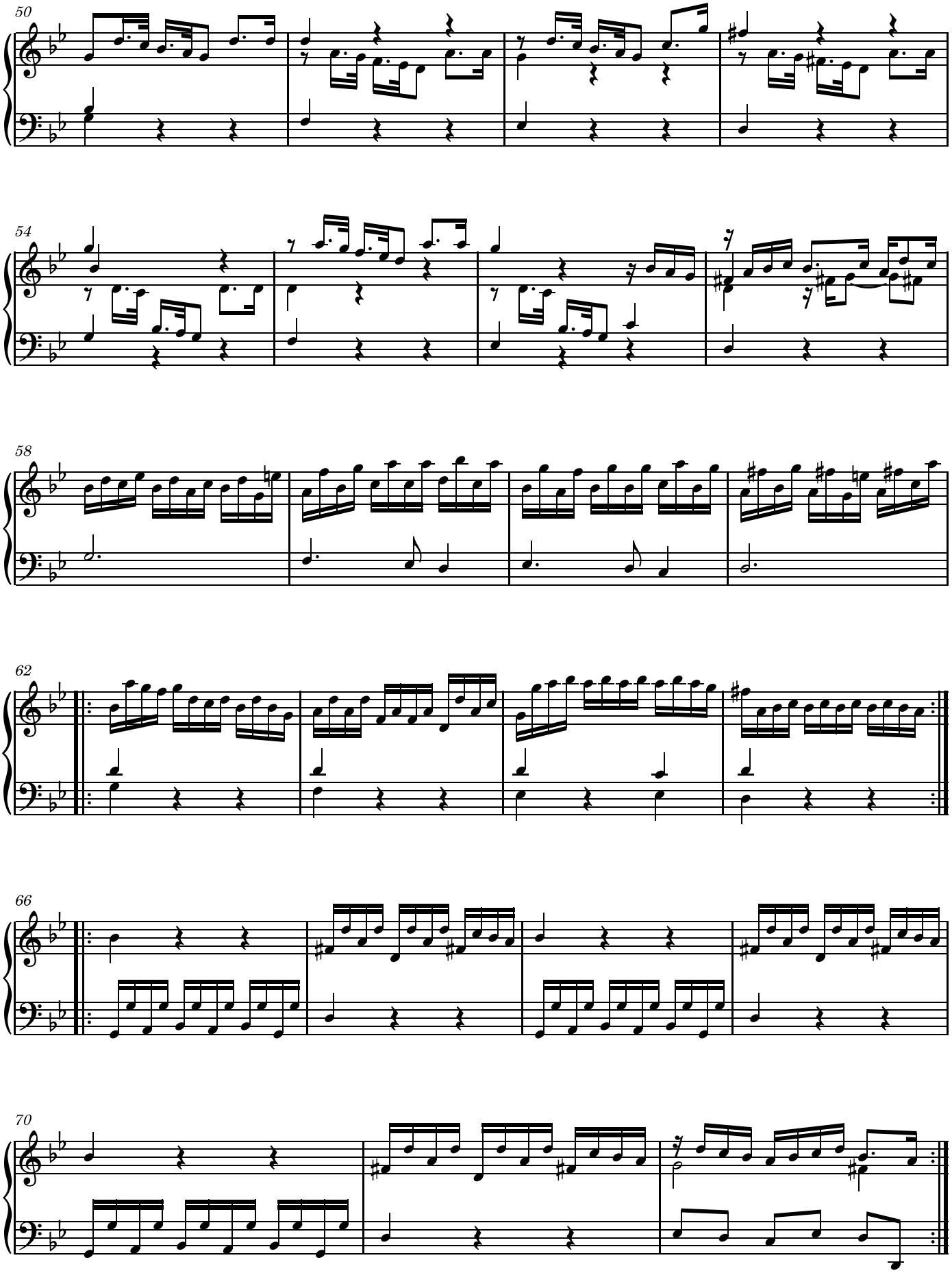
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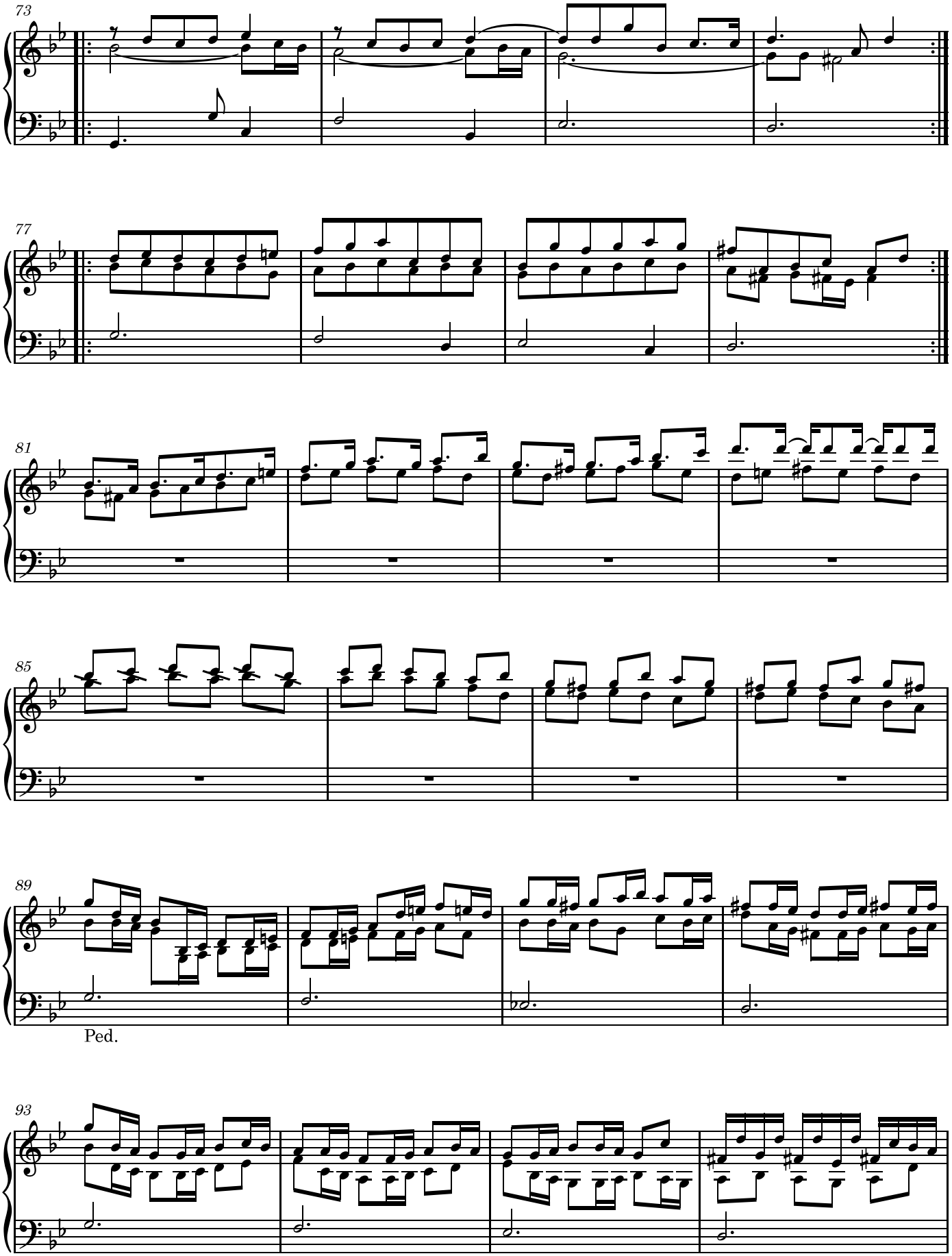
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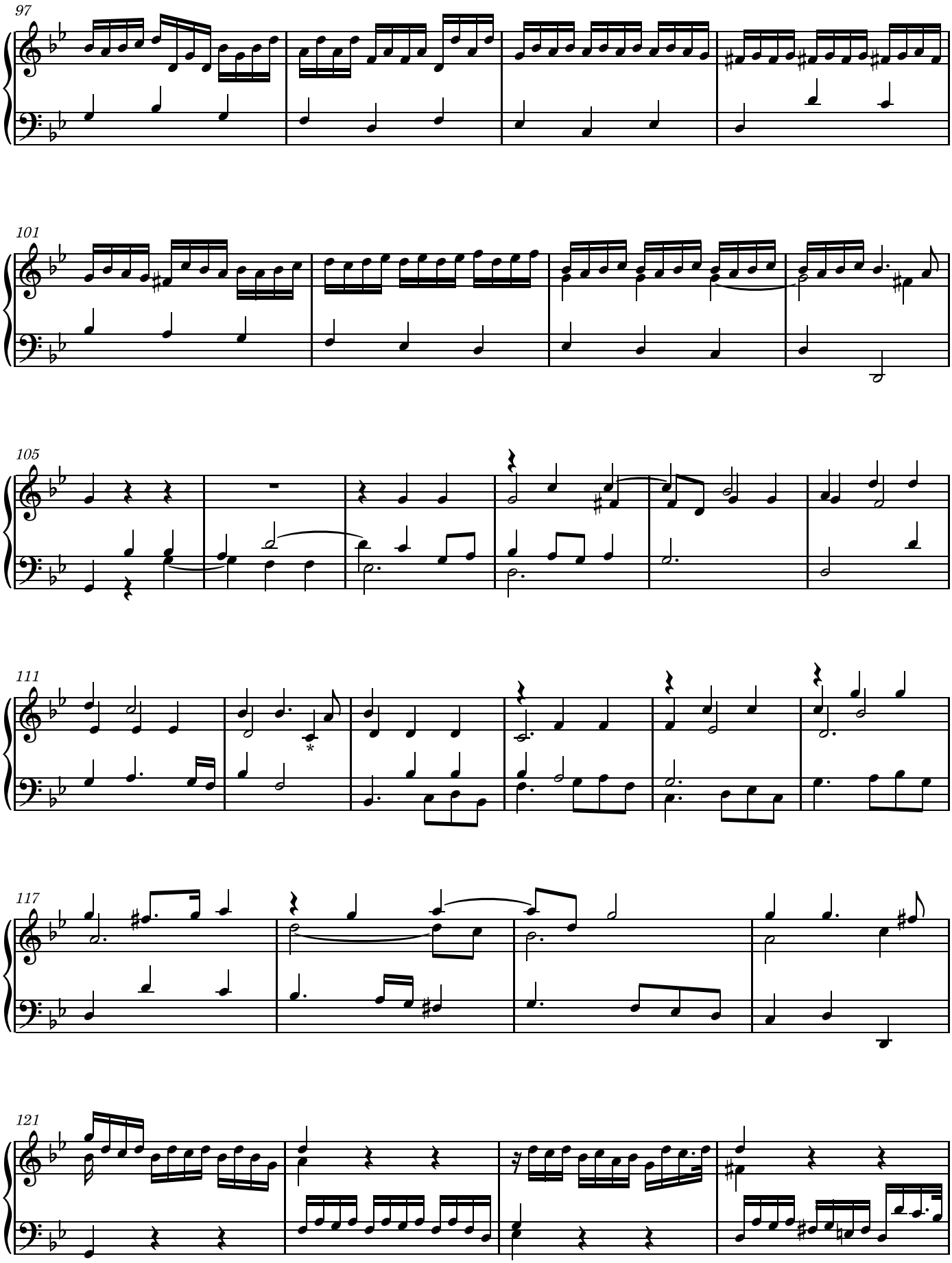
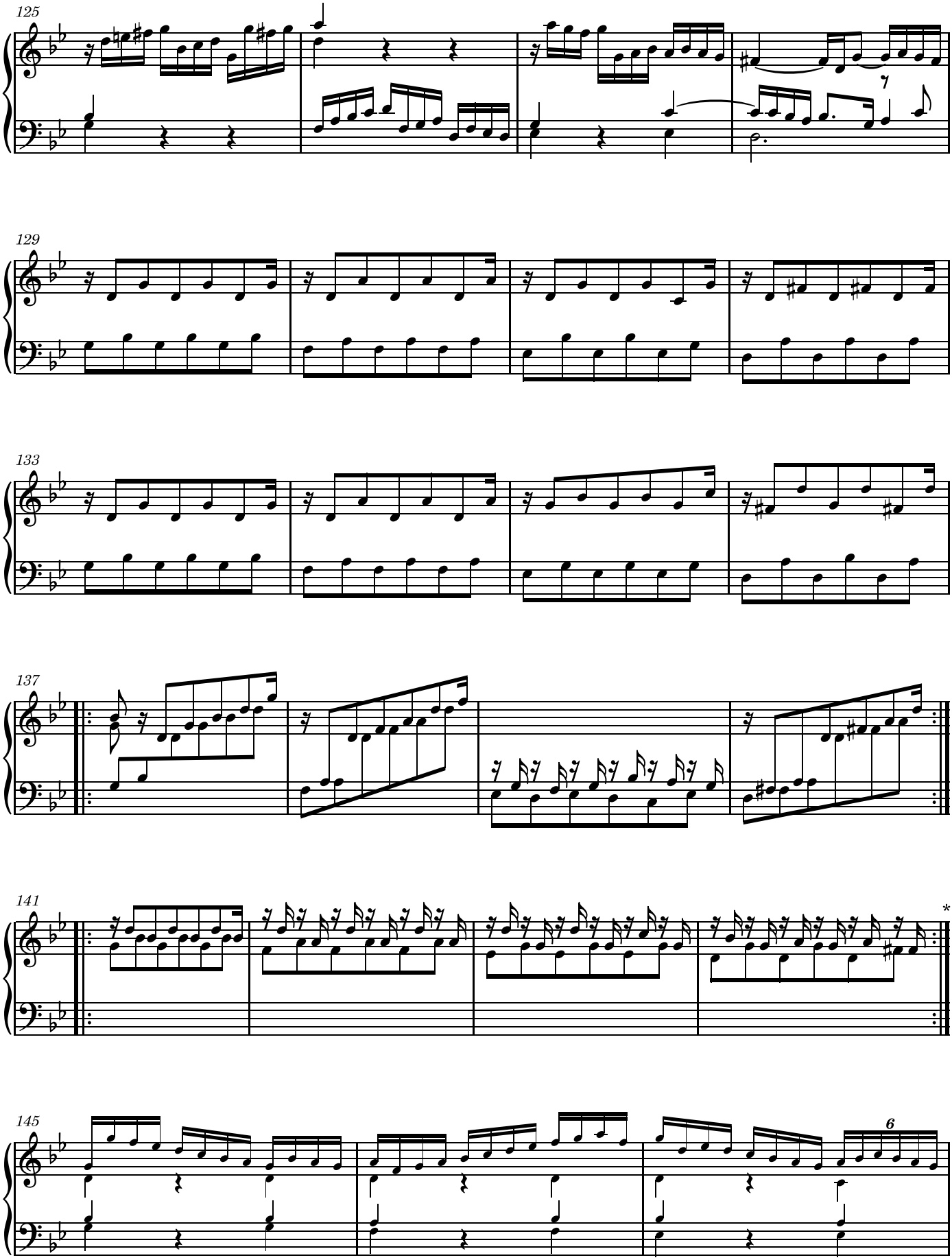
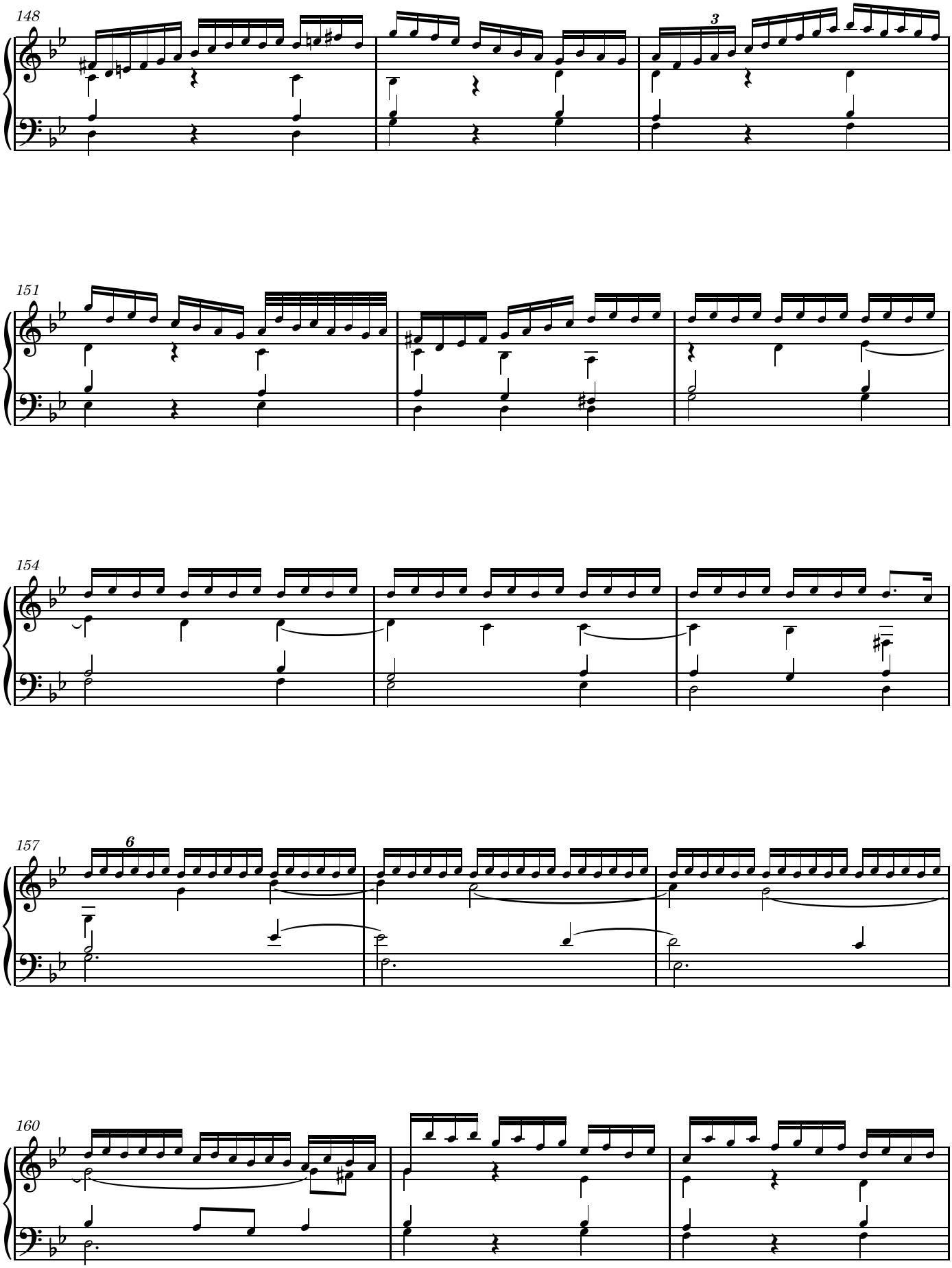


* c' in original manuscript (in f minor)



* The original manuscript stops here. Completed by Basil Herold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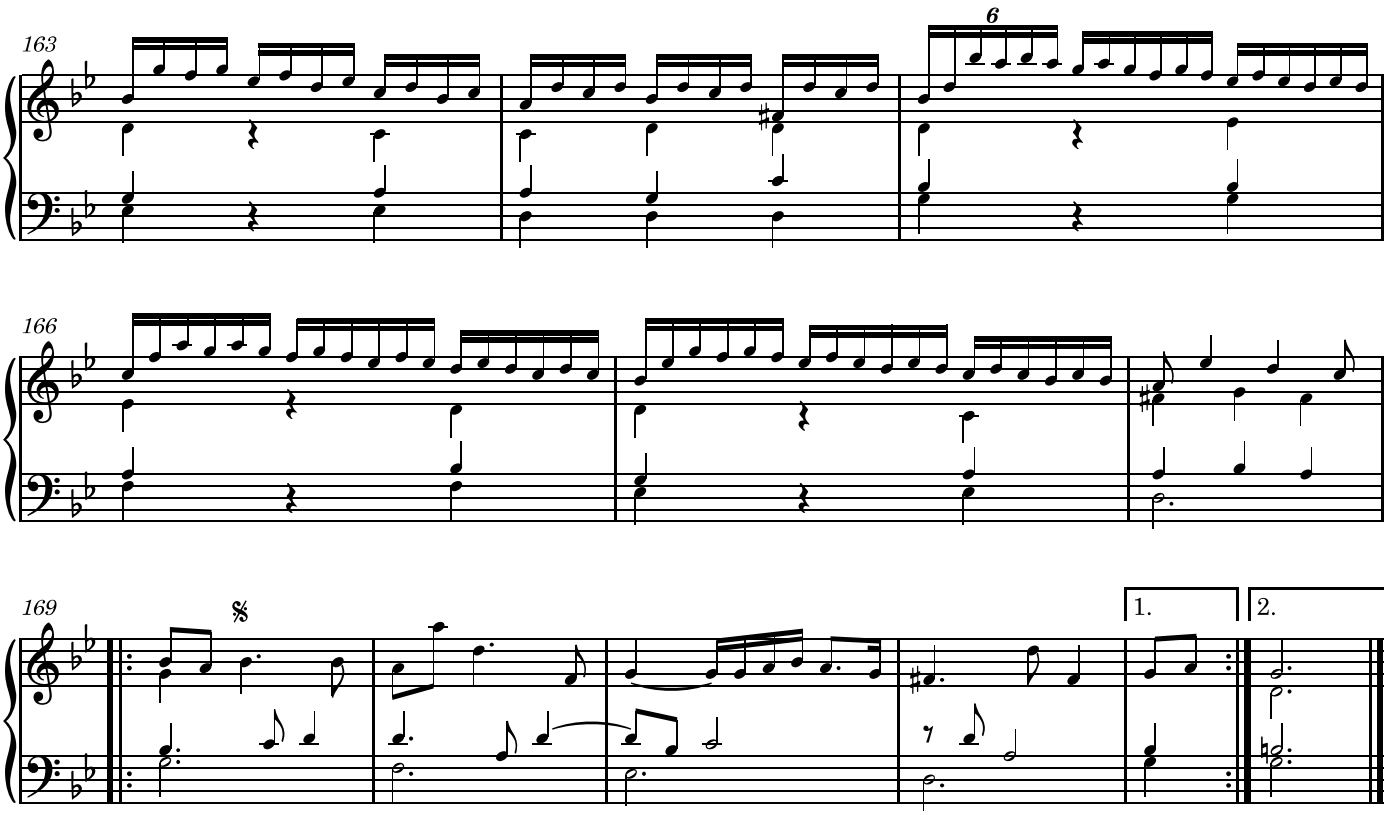

The Ciacona in f minor, composed by Johann Pachelbel, is widely known as one of his most famous works for the organ. Despite its popularity, only one surviving manuscript exists, which is currently housed by the Royal Library of Belgium (Koninklijke Bibliotheek / Bibliothèque royale). The manuscript, written by an unknown author, includes several other organ pieces starting by the Ciacona, which is credited to Pachelbel without any further details regarding its creation. However, the manuscript ends abruptly after five and a half pages, marked by a repeat sign, with the final notes being a broken dominant chord. One may argue that the author simply did not write the *Da Capo* and intended for the player to end by repeating the first variation, as Pachelbel's Ciaconas typically conclude with the last variation being nearly or entirely identical to the first one.

Nevertheless, apart from a Trio that abruptly ends in the middle of a measure and another Ciacona that stops at the end of a page with custodes indicating the subsequent chord (therefore missing the next page), the remainder of the pieces within the same manuscript, including multiple ciaconas, all conclude appropriately with a fermata or a comparable sign, followed by a *Da Capo* when necessary. With only these three exceptions, it is reasonable to infer that this Ciacona, which ends with a dominant chord, is also incomplete, just like the other two pieces.

Therefore, to offer a possible ending, three new variations are added along with a repetition of the first one, although the player may choose to accept or reject this proposal and find another way to end the piece.

Apart from this, the current edition strives to replicate the original manuscript as precisely as possible by reproducing all the accidentals, beamings, repeat signs, and pedal use. As the original manuscript employs the soprano clef in the right hand, the distribution of voices between the two staves is occasionally modified, but without altering the voice leading.

Basil Herold Lausanne, May 2023