Freu dich sehr o meine Seele

cum 12 variationibus

Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706)

transcribed and edited by
Chaldean Urtext

from
Heinrich Nikolaus Gerber's 1716 autograph manuscript copy,
Library of Congress, Washington, DC
(shelfmark Box 19, Moldenhauer Archives)

Dedicated to Charles

Hilf, daß ich mit Fried und Freud
mög von hinnen fahren heut

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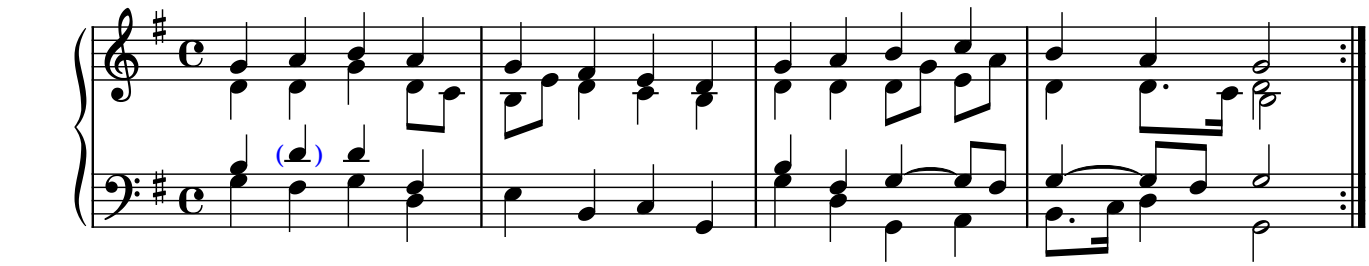
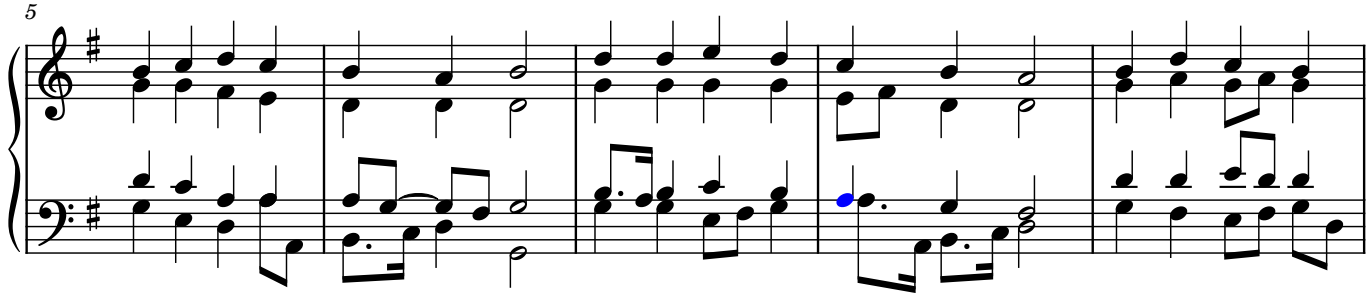
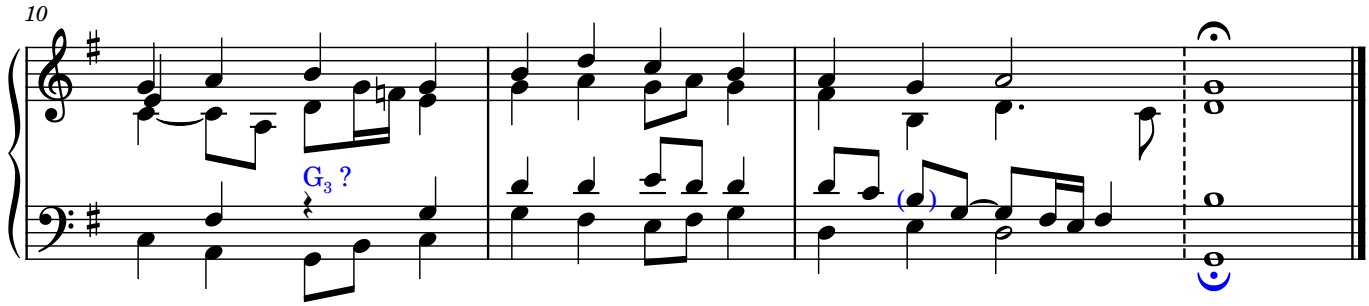
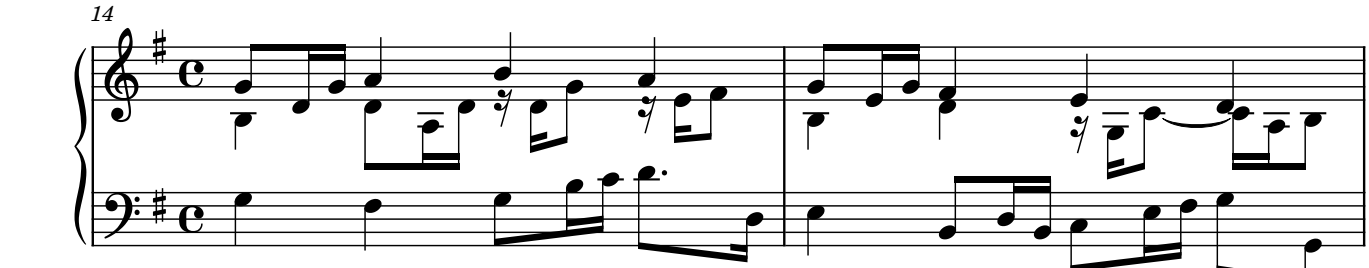
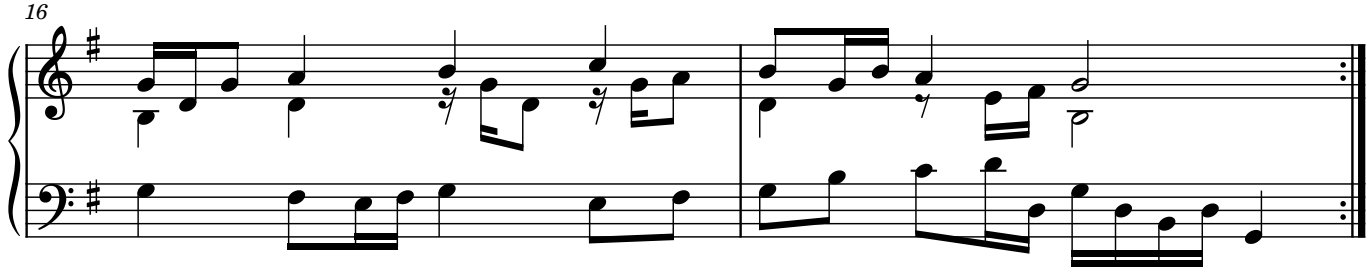






Variatio 1





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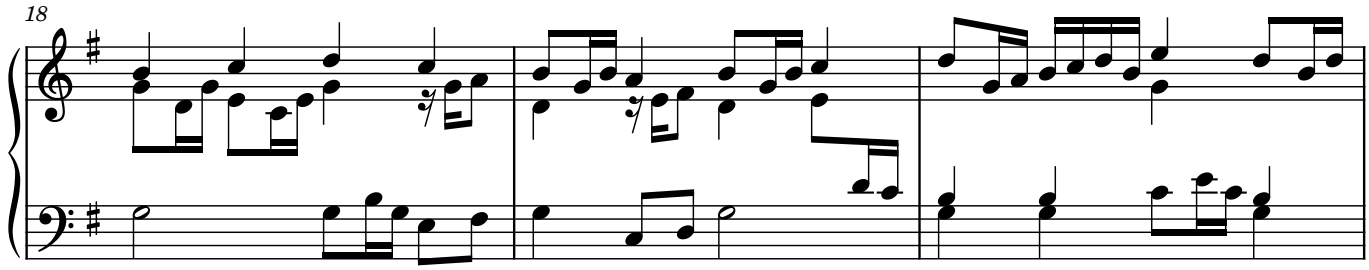

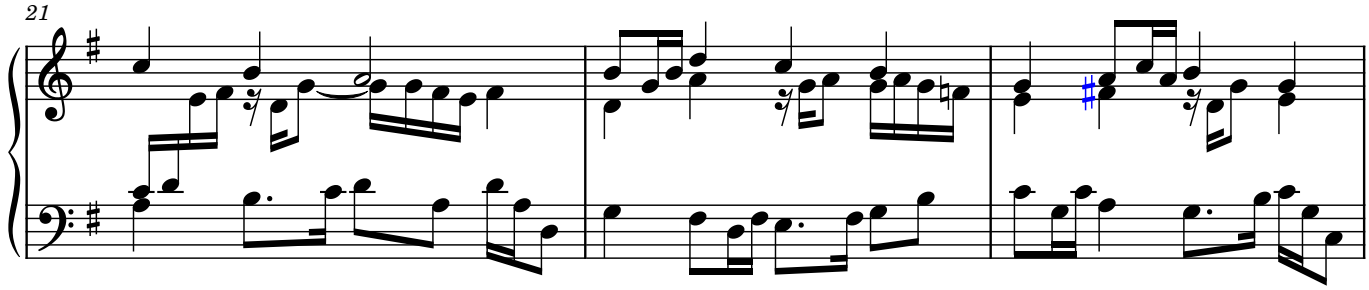

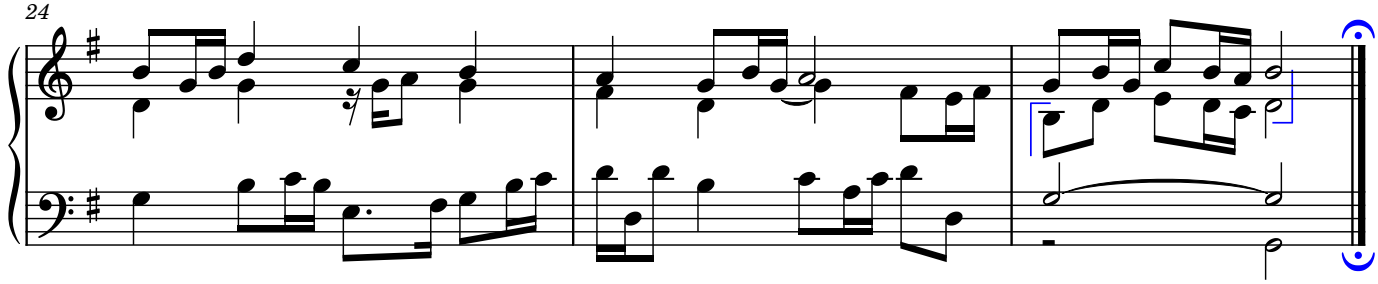

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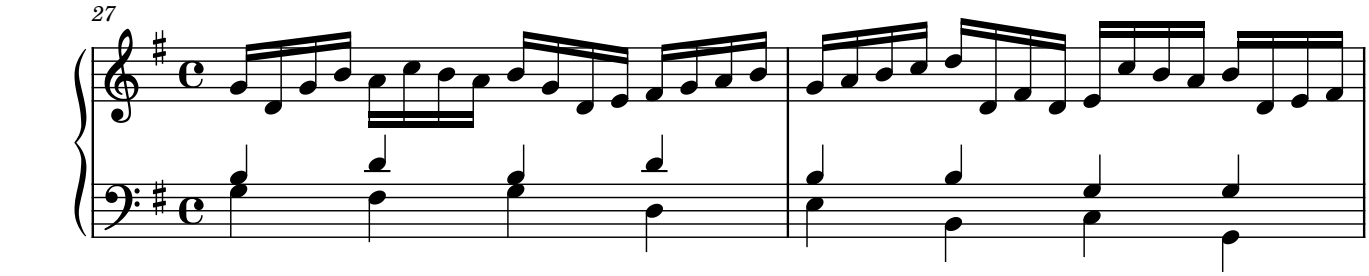

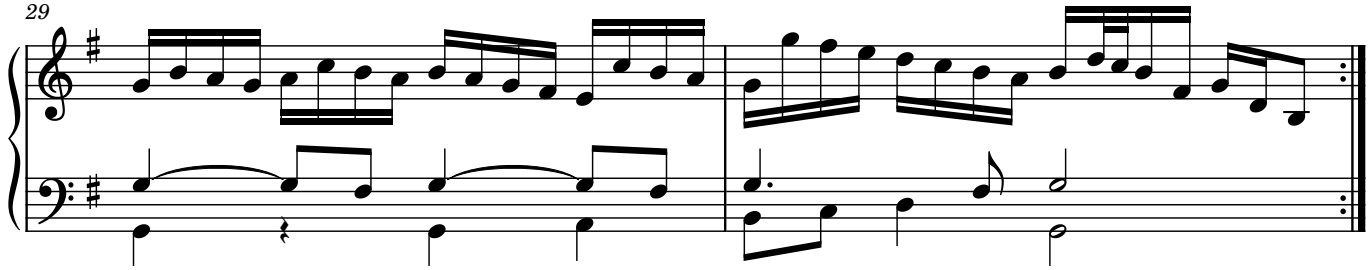

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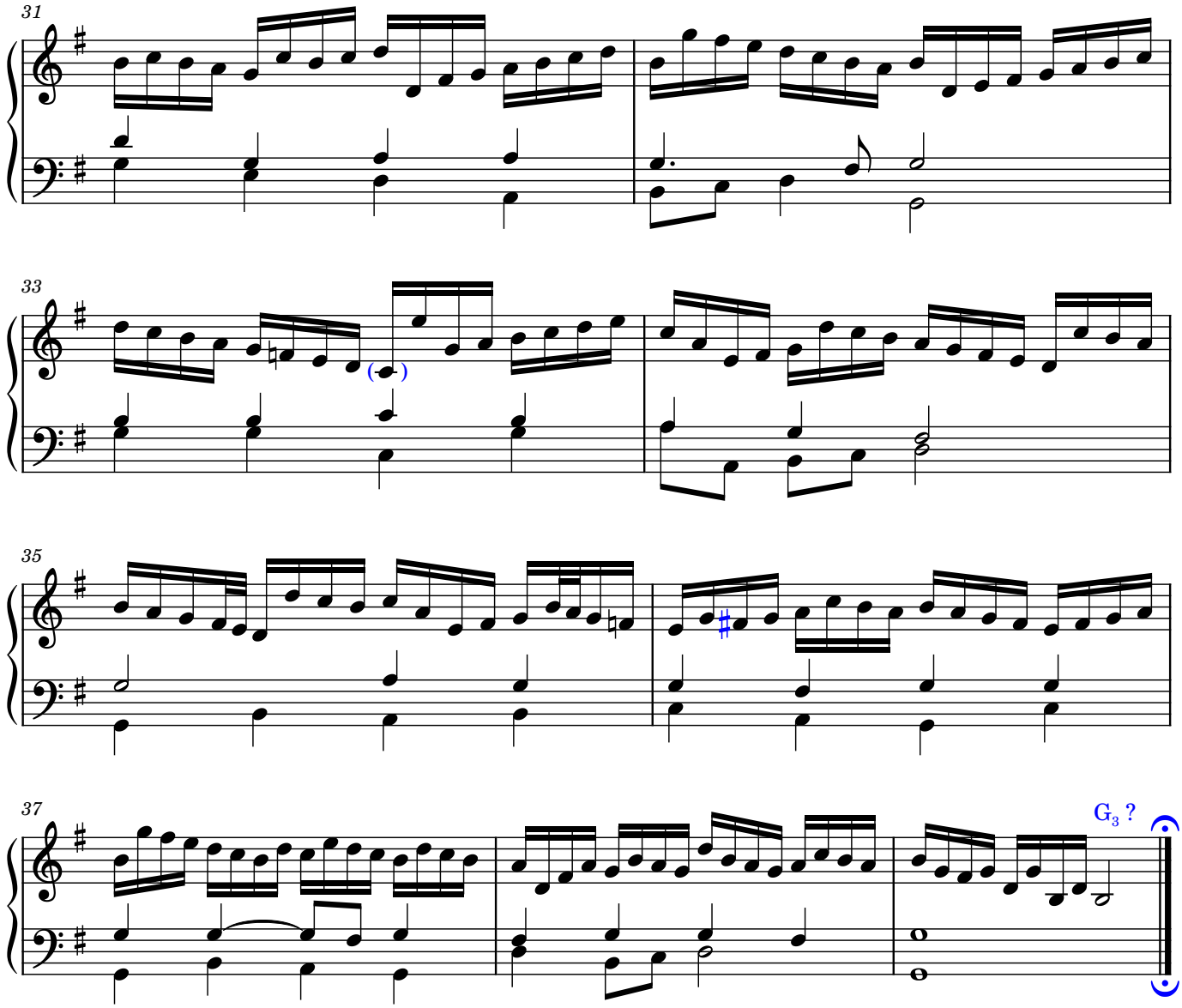
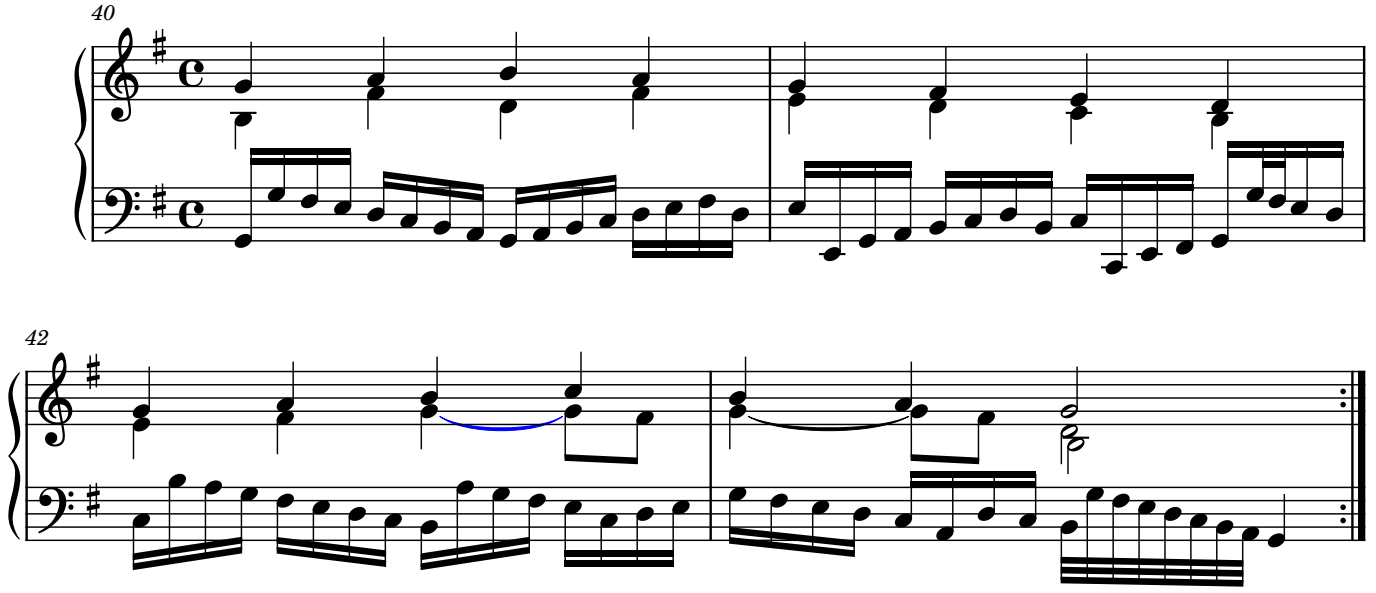


Variatio 3



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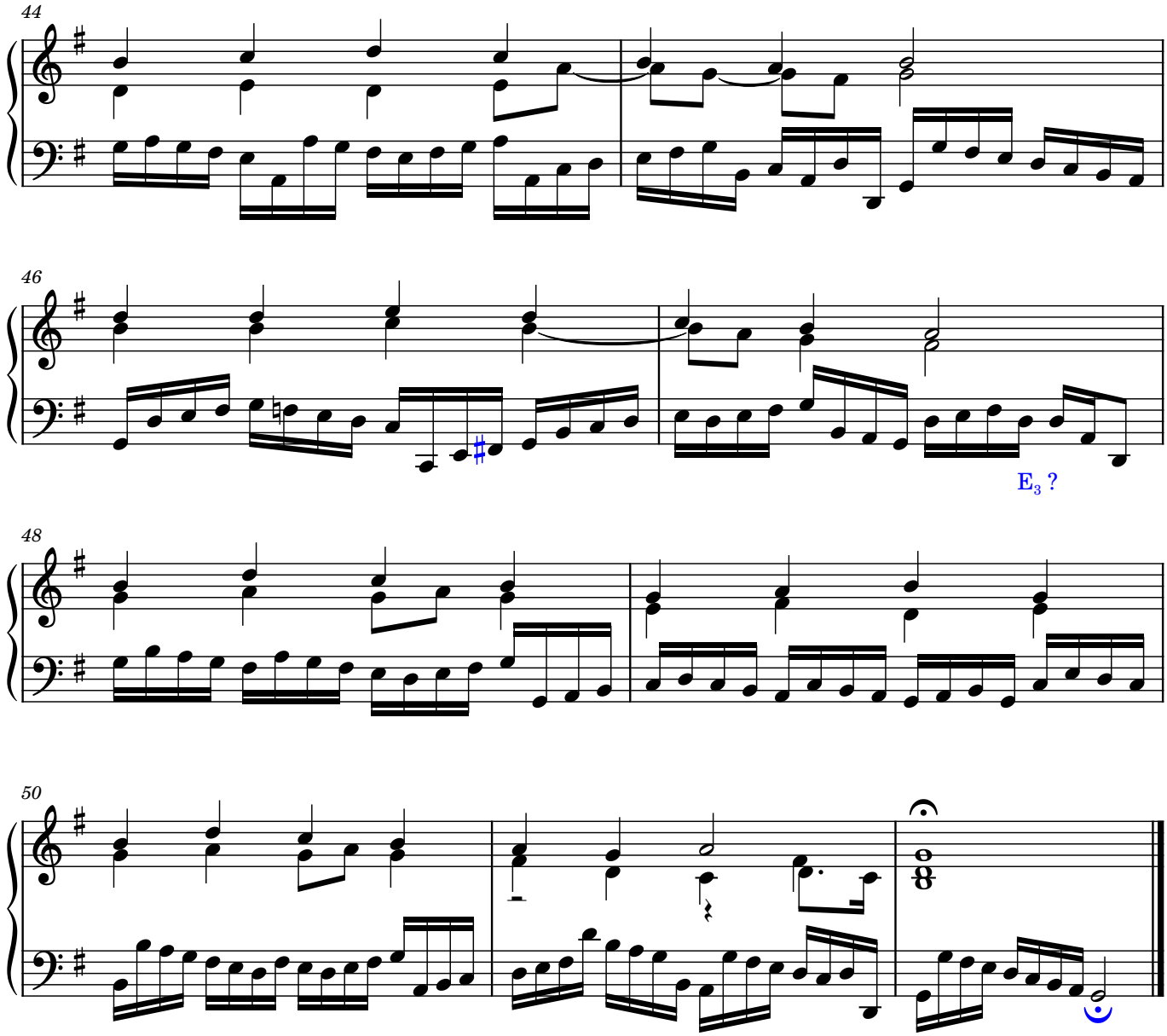

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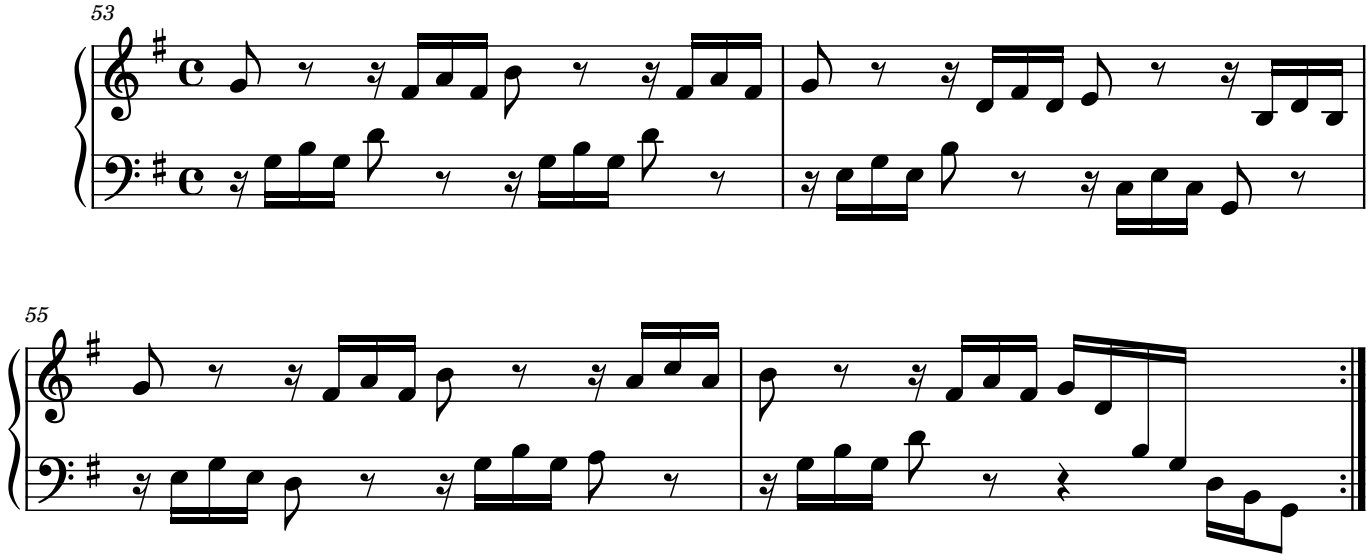

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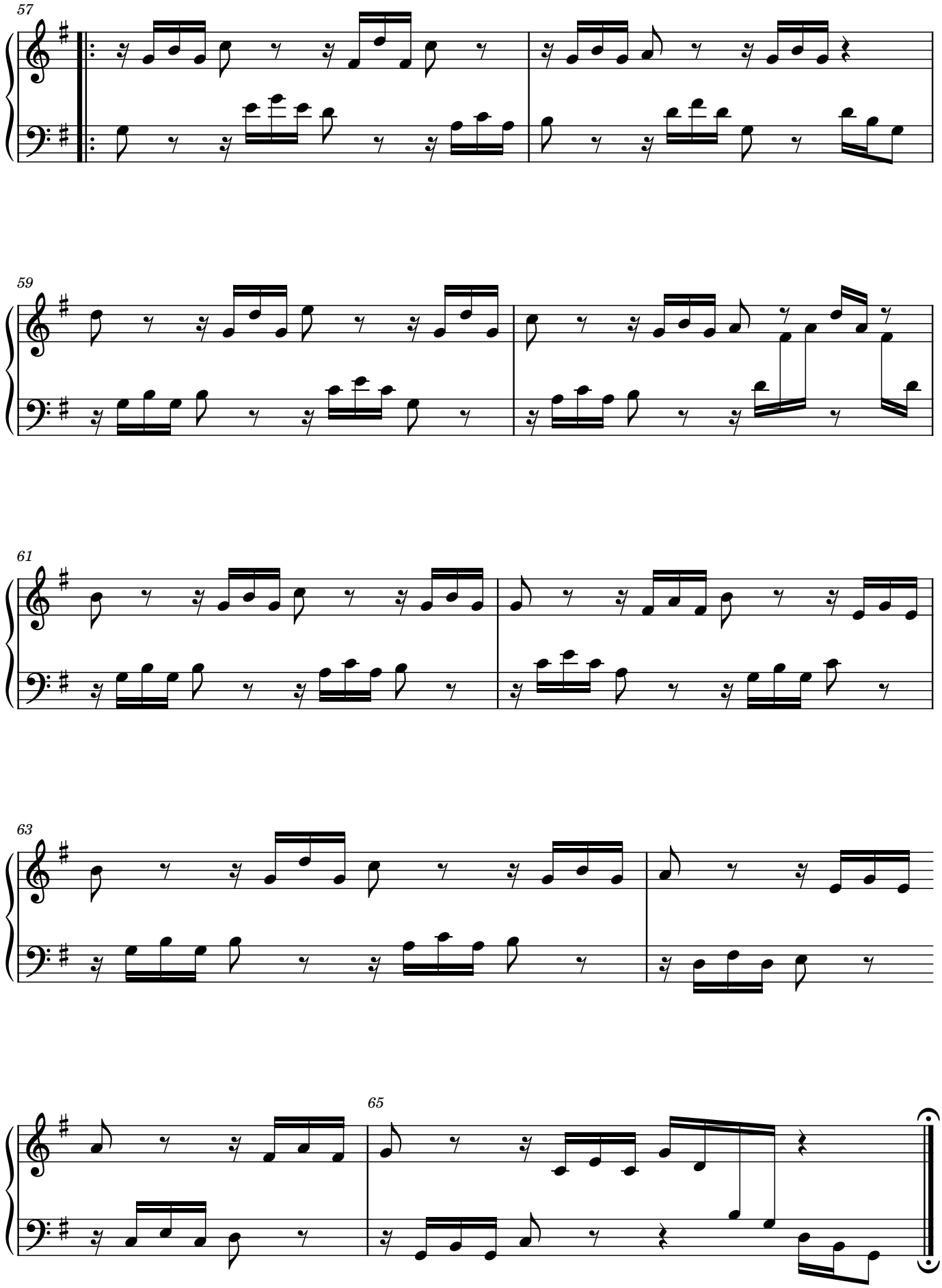

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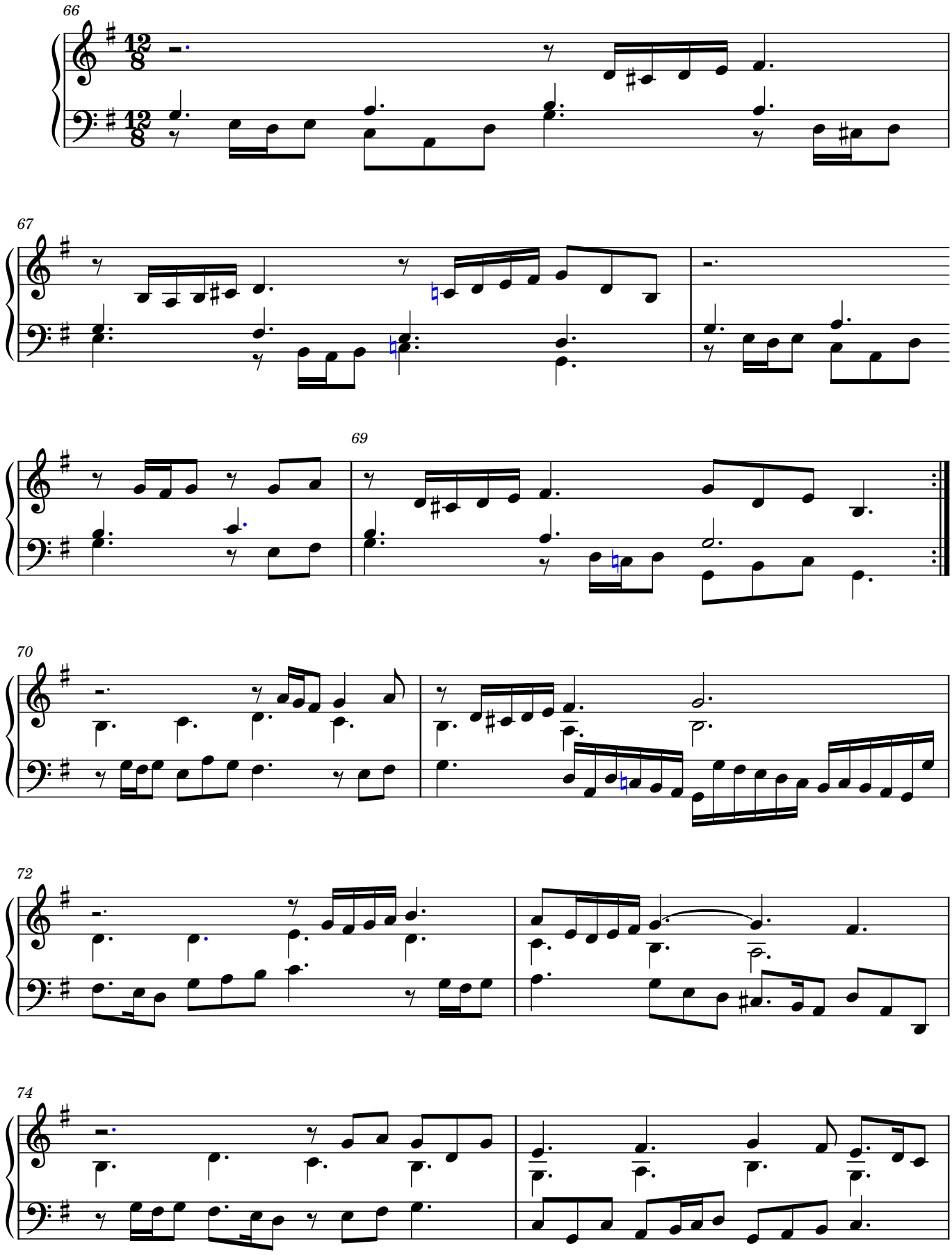
Variatio 5



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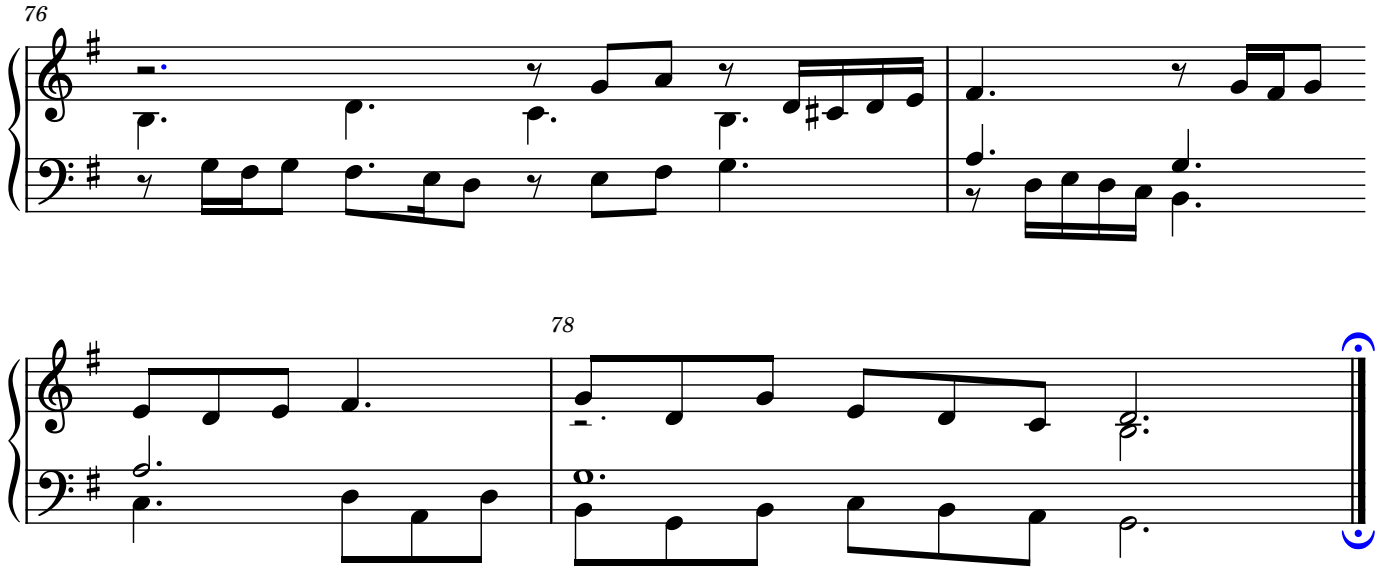
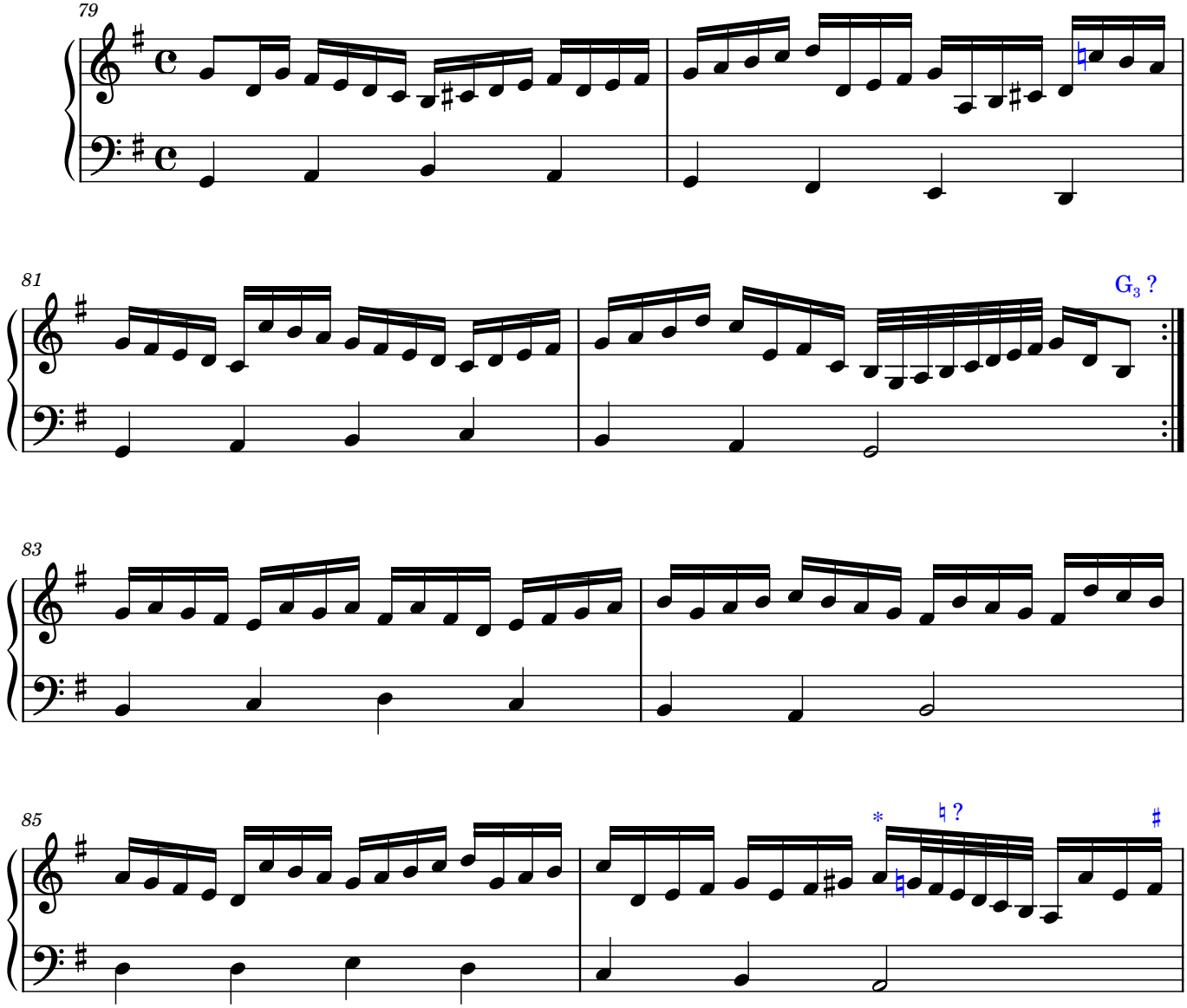


Variatio 6



* m.86 See the critical commentary on p.21 about the rhythm and melody of this grouping.

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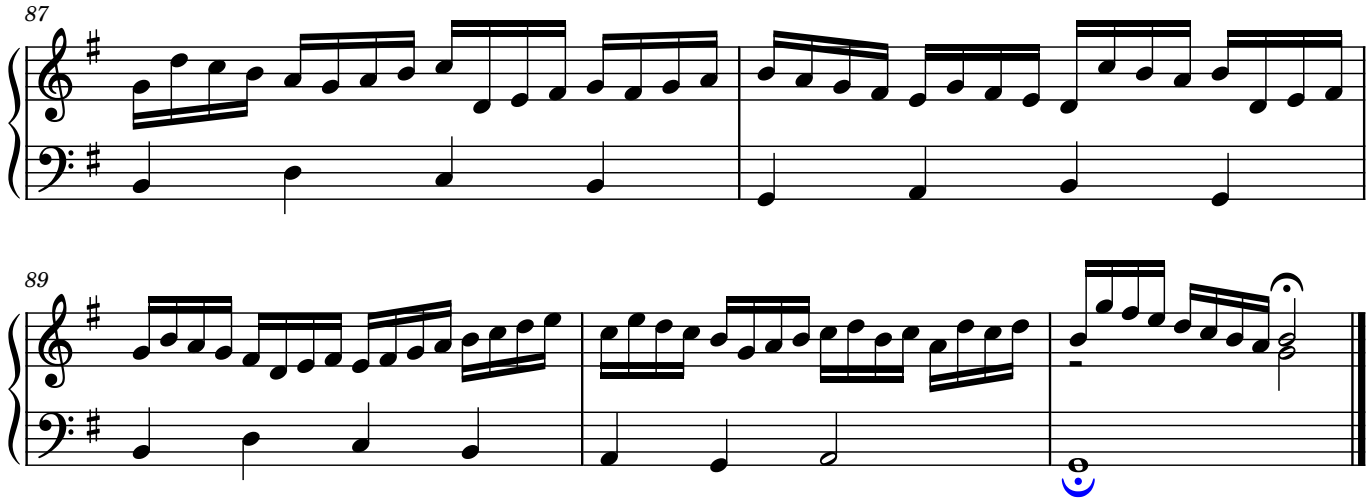
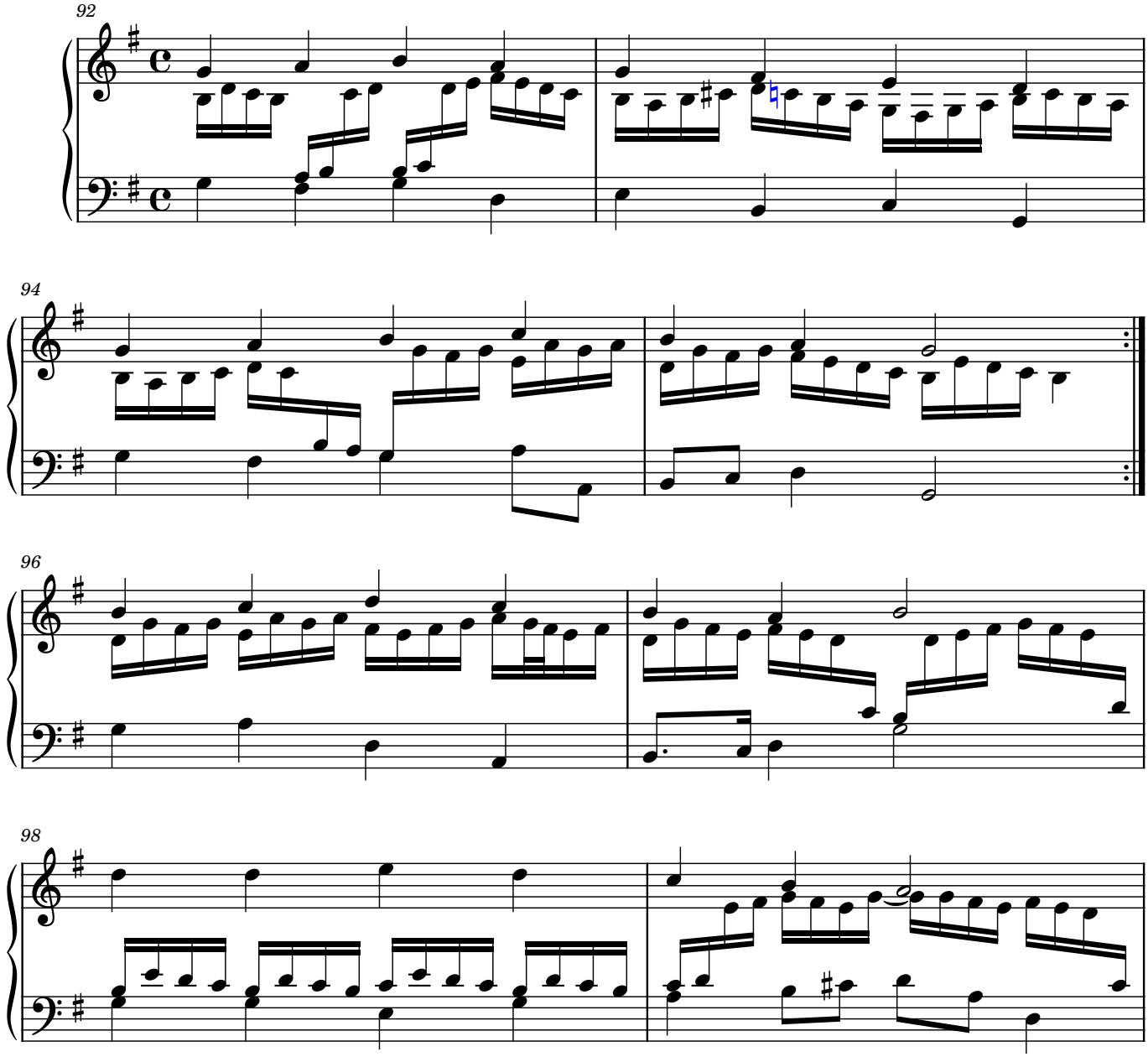


Variatio 7



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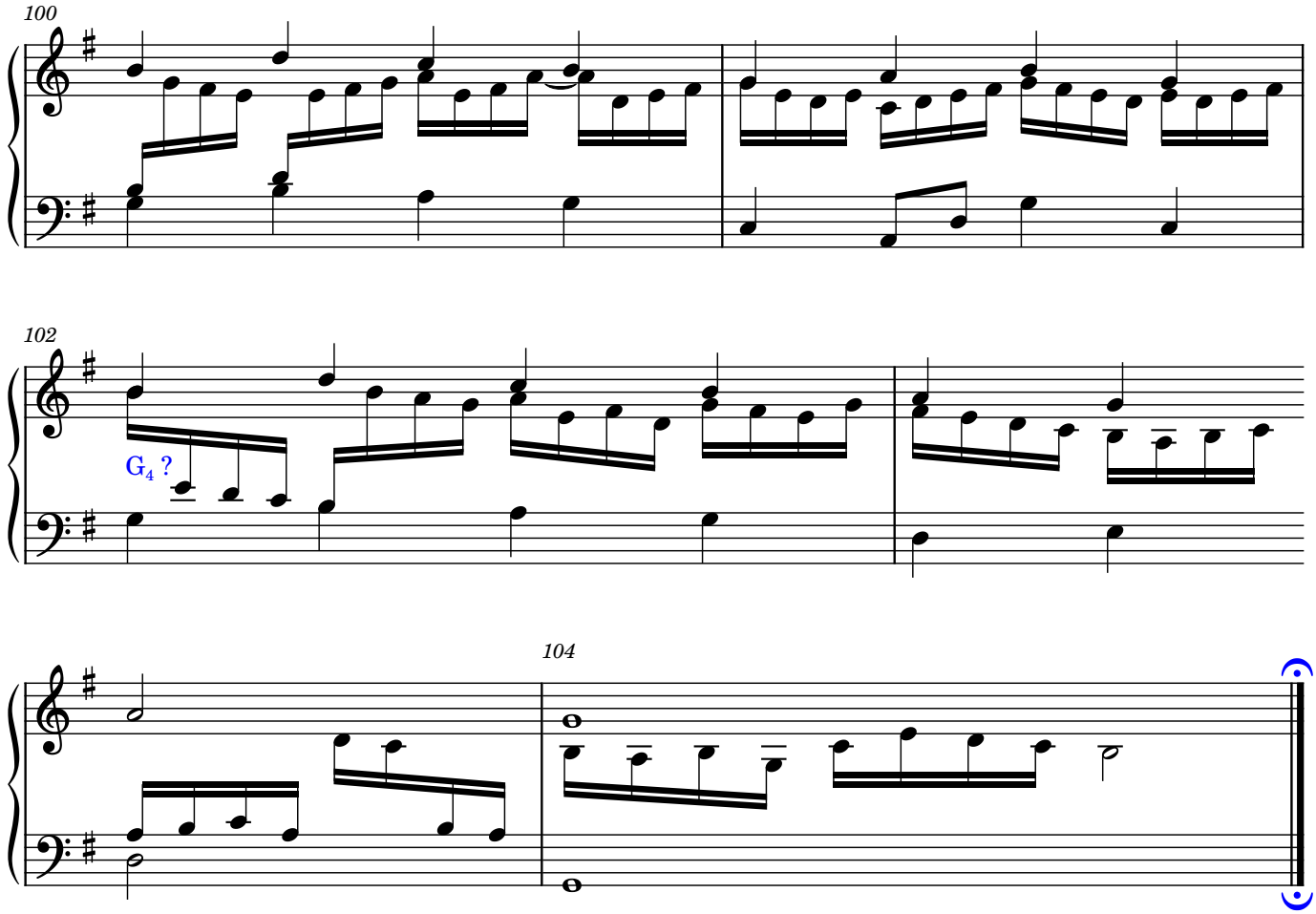
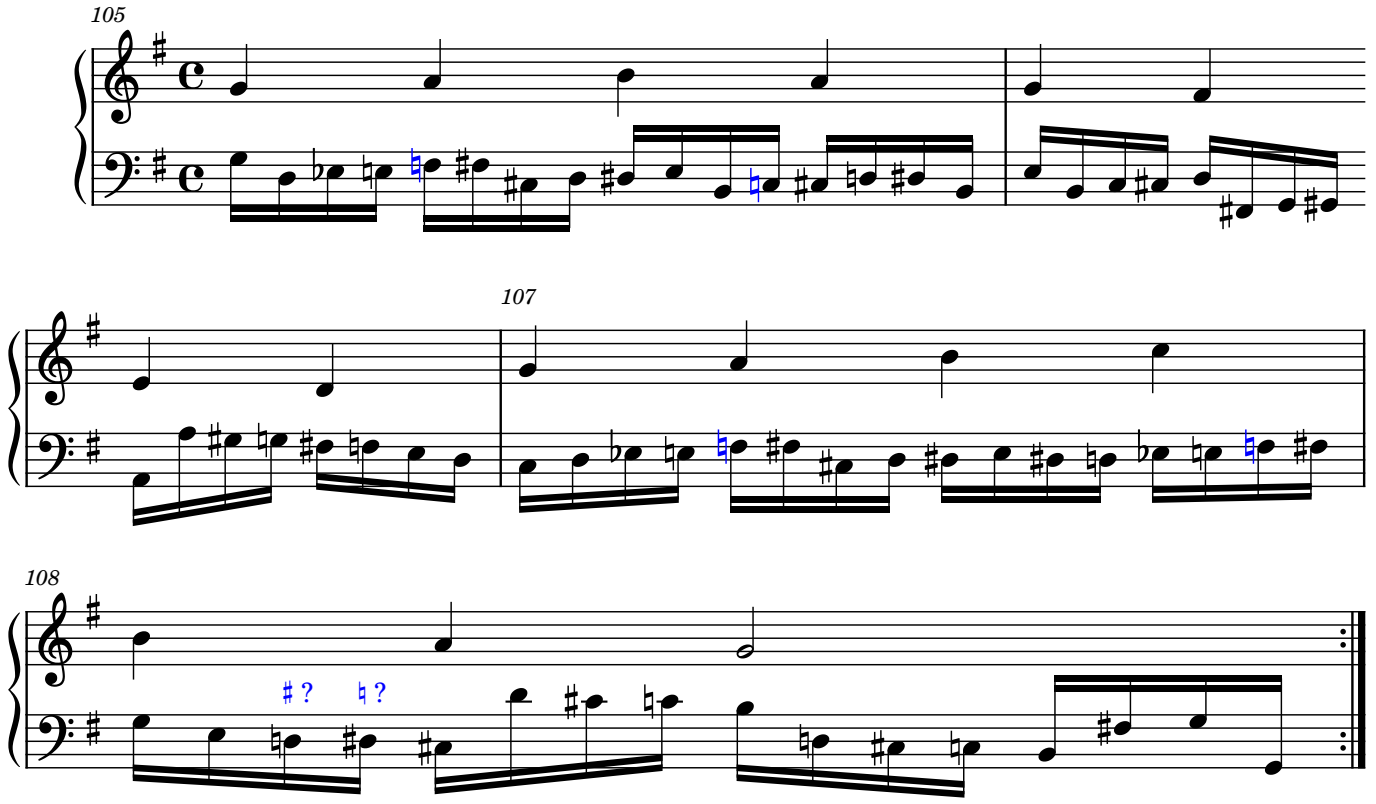


Variatio 8



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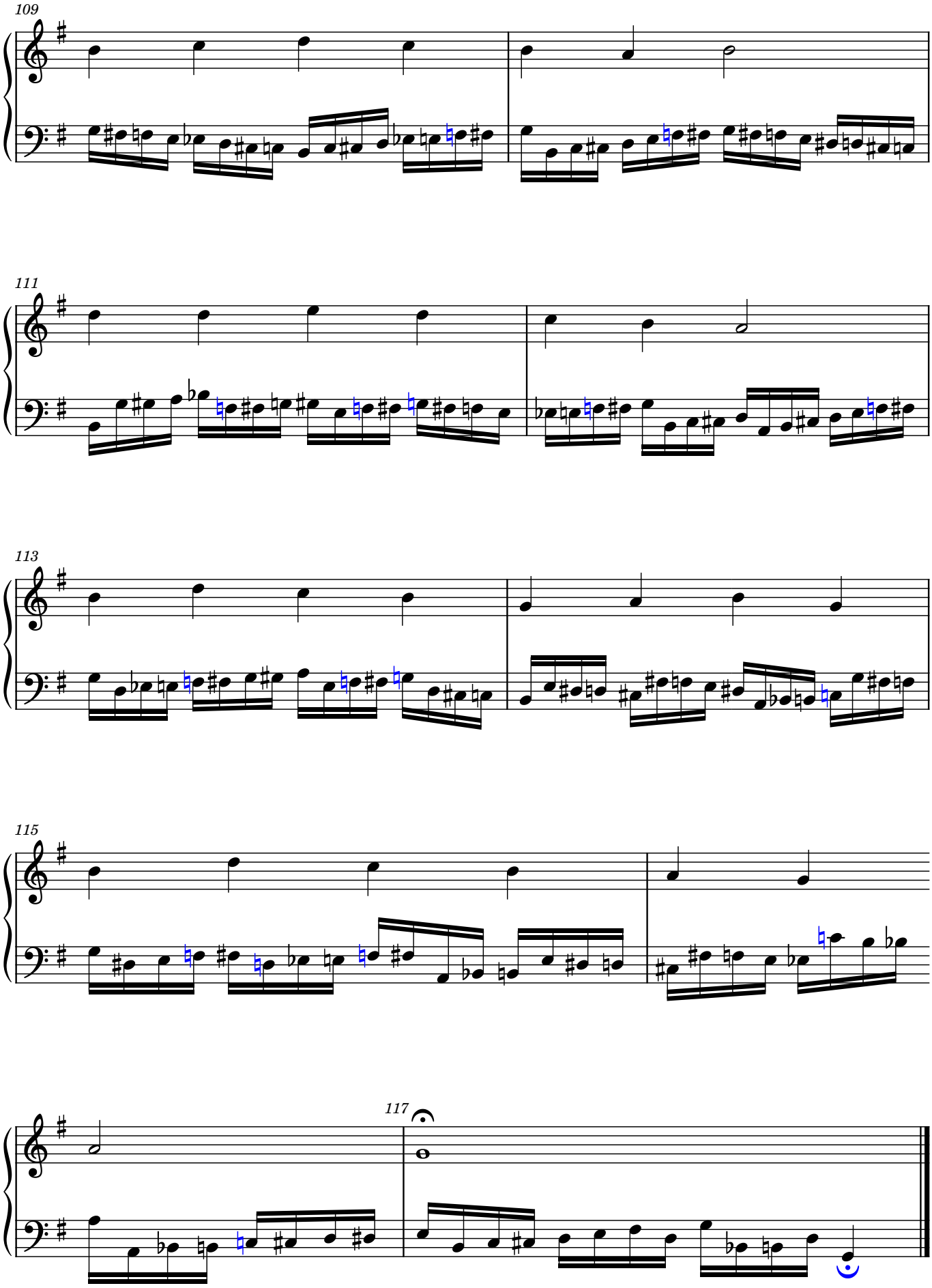

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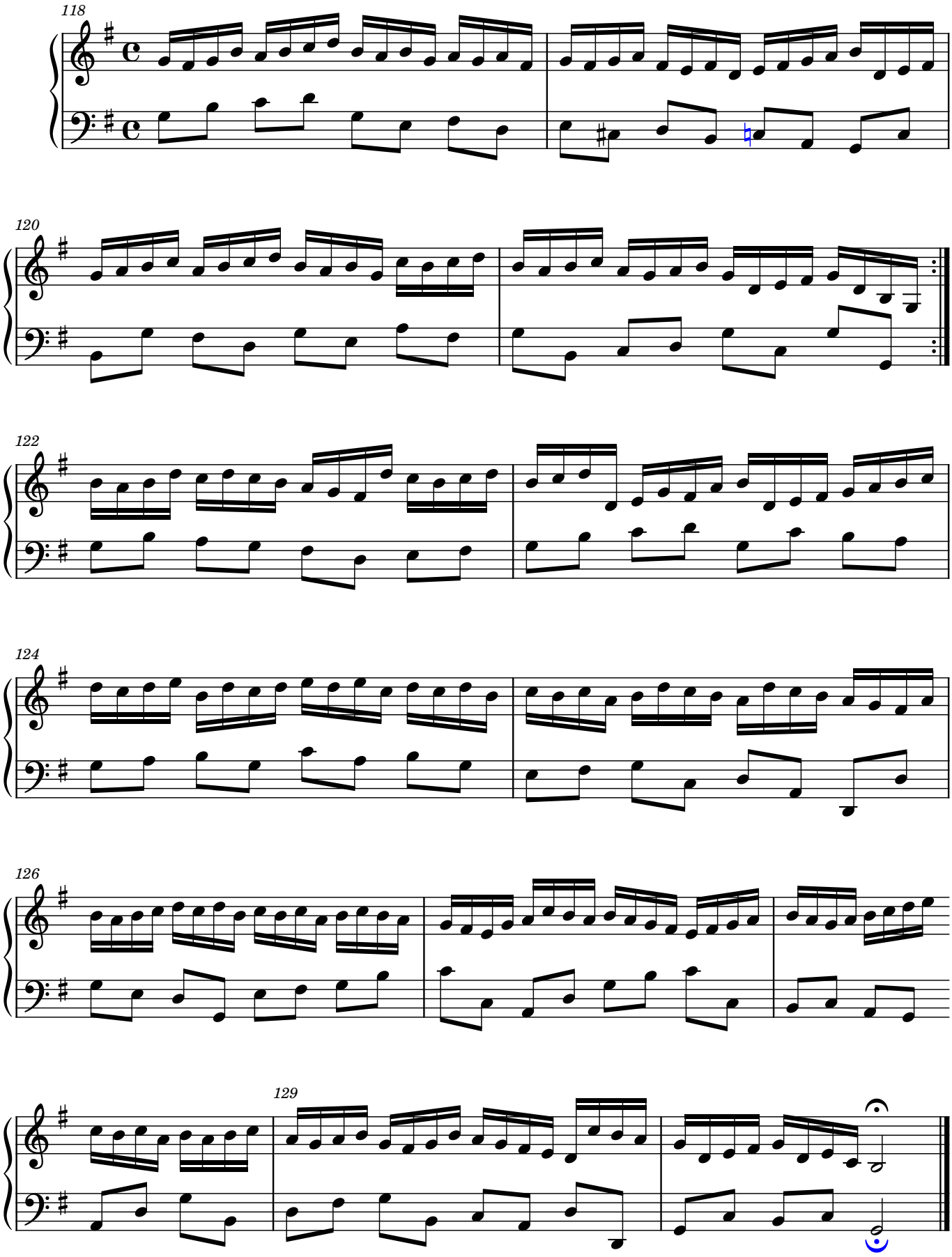
Variatio 9



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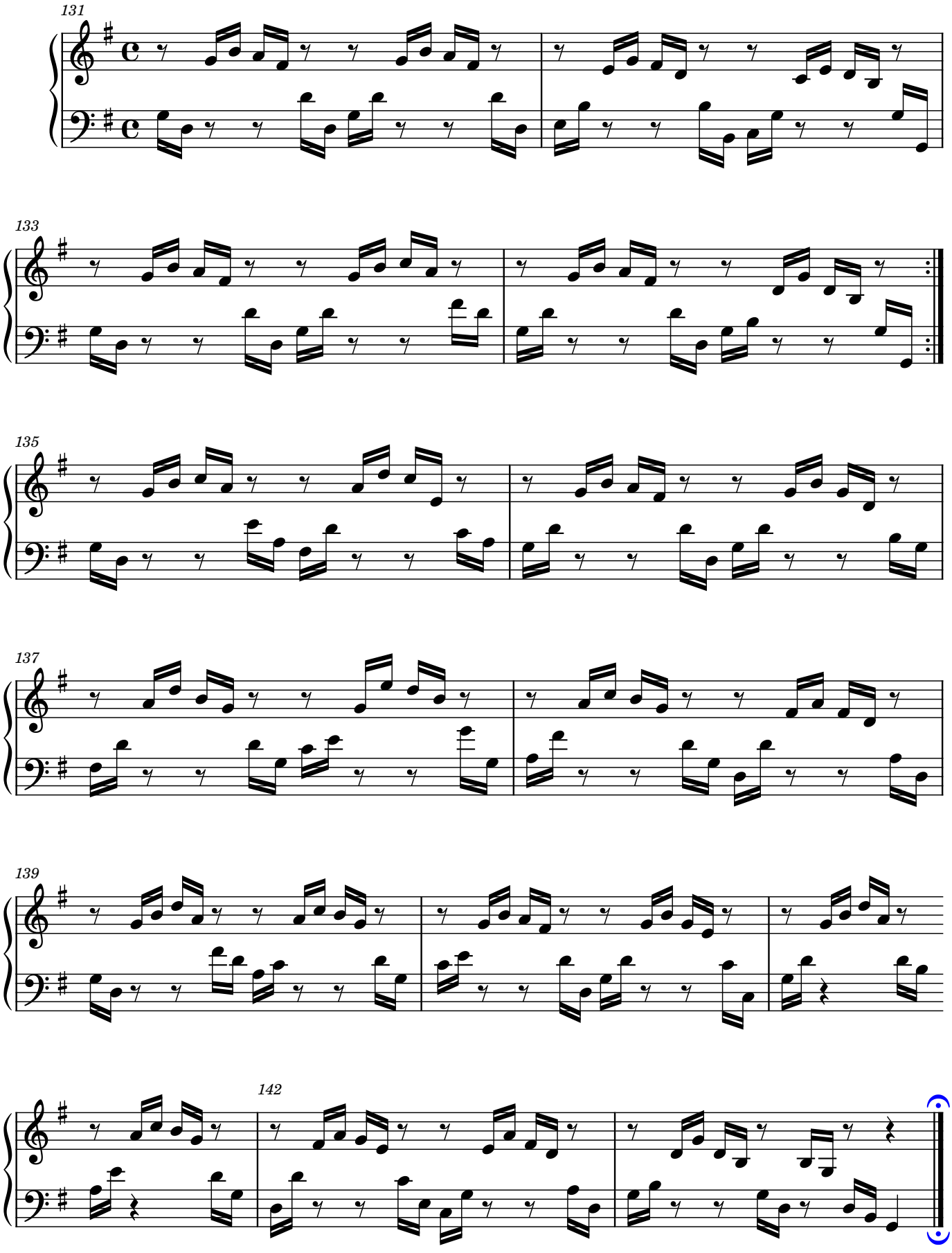
Variatio 10



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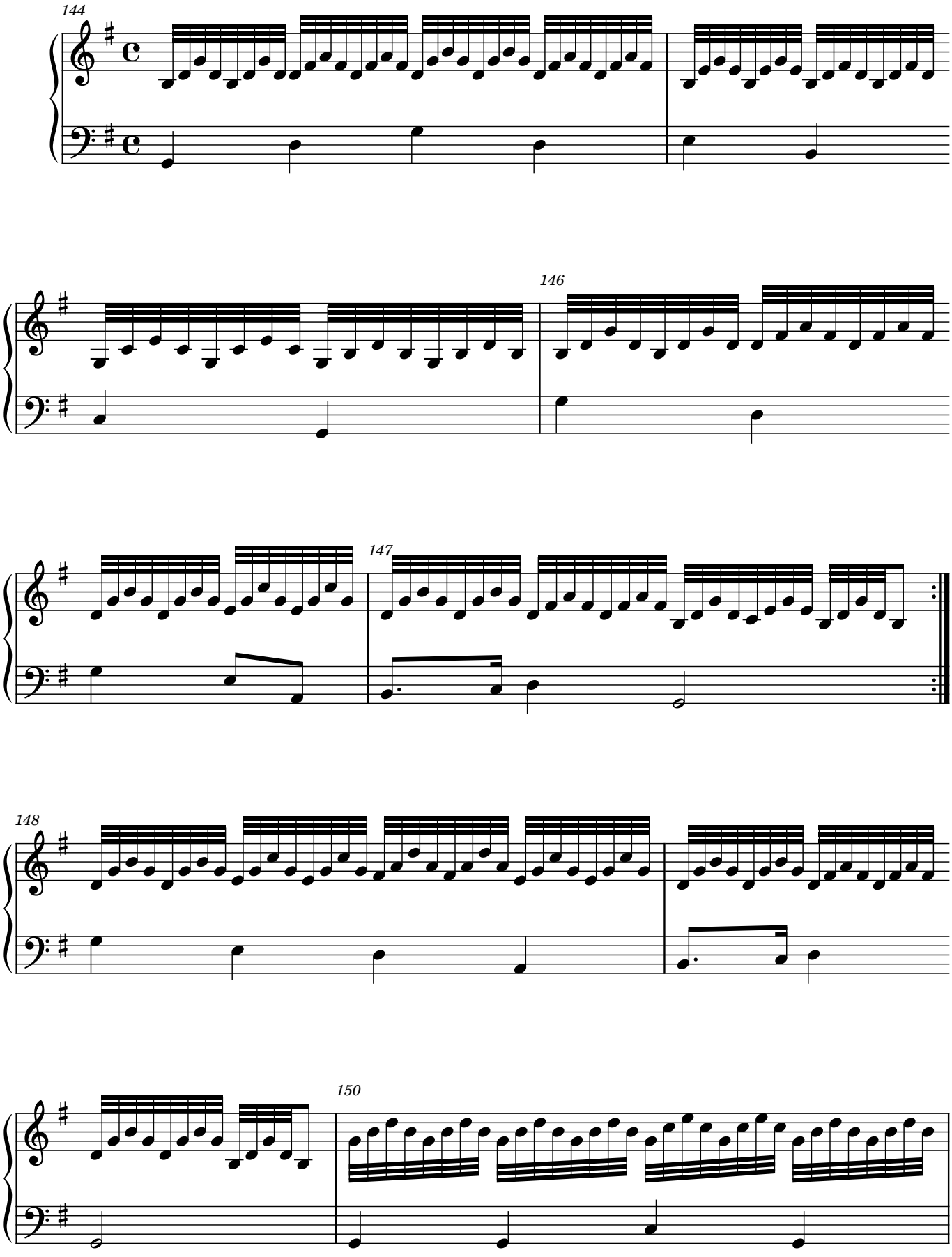
Variatio 11



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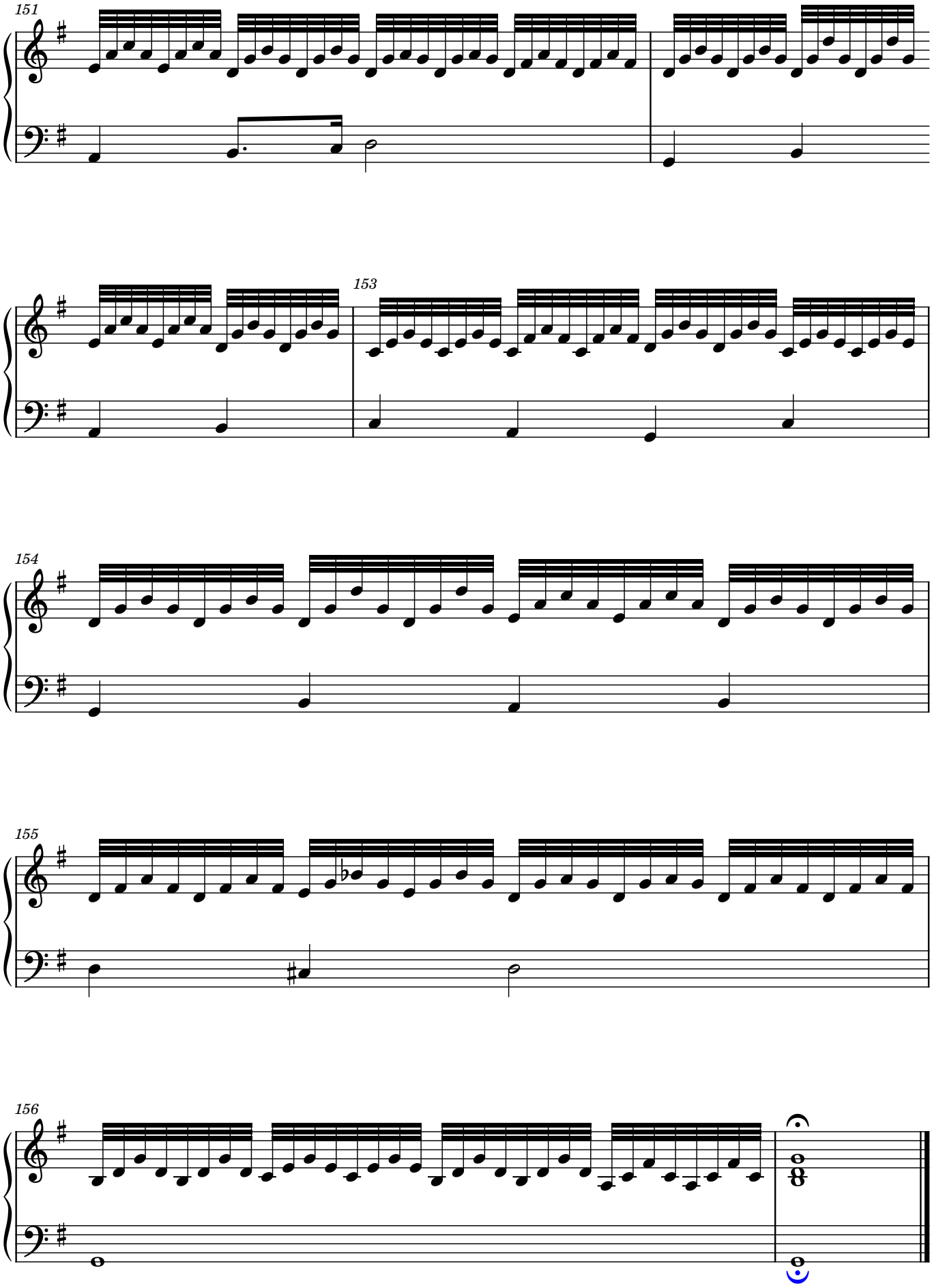

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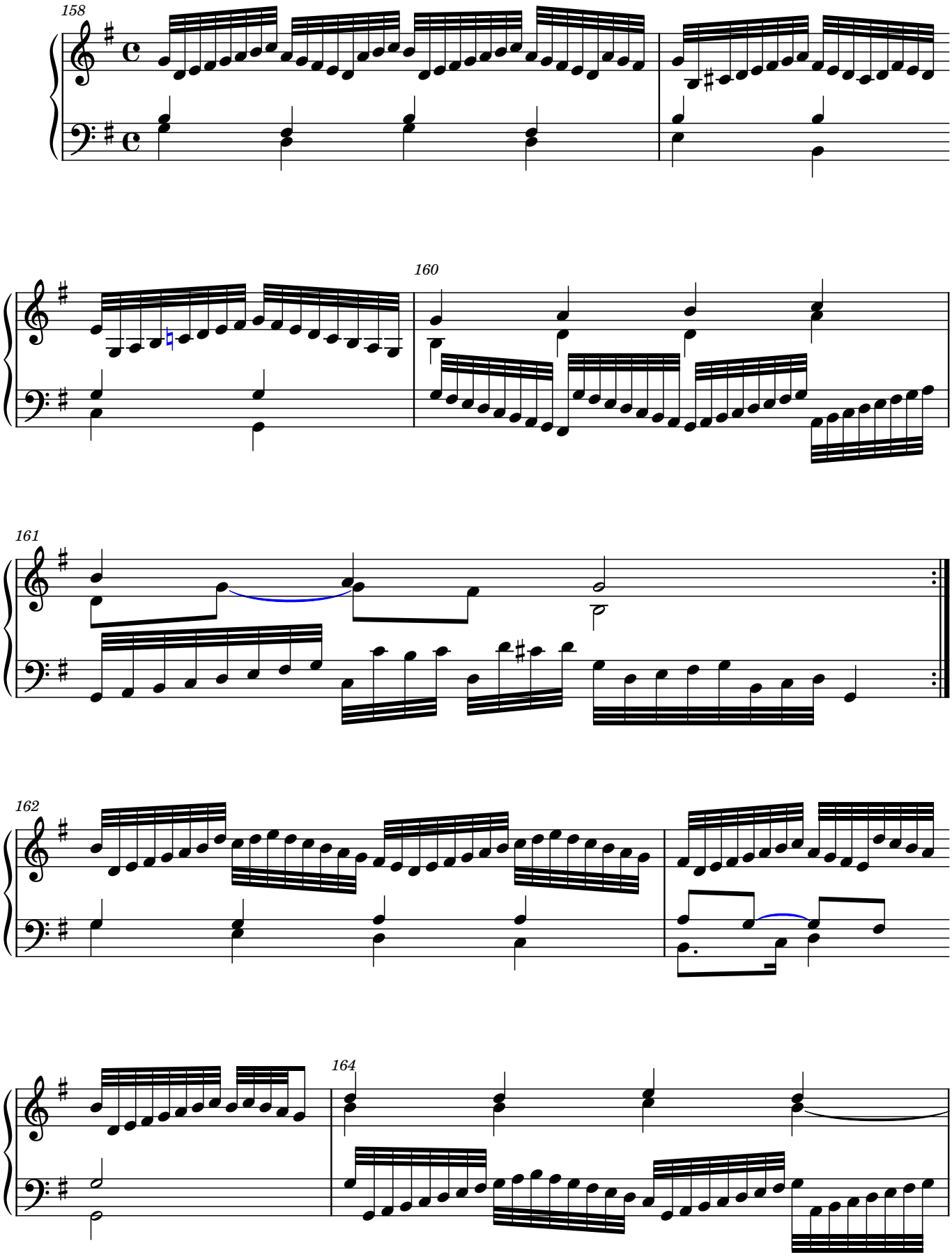
Variatio 12 et Ultima



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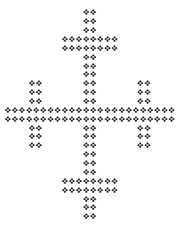
168

170

Soli Deo Gloria



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The source

There is only one source for this set of variations, a manuscript that is part of the Moldenhauer Archives and which is now held in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Its shelfmark is Box 19, Moldenhauer Archives, and there is currently no Répertoire International des Sources Musicales (RISM) record for it. Nor does it appear in Jean M. Perreault's thematic catalogue of Johann Pachelbel's work when searching under the chorale title, under the 17th-century printed anthology it may have appeared in, or under the library's holdings. It was donated to the library in 1987, i.e. before Perreault's catalogue was published.

It is an autograph manuscript by Heinrich Nikolaus Gerber, dated 17 April 1716 on the first leaf and signed on the verso of the final one, along with a calligraphic decorative drawing. It is a folio quire (pamphlet) of four watermarked pages folded into eight leaves and sewn together. The pamphlet's dimensions are 19.5 cm wide by 32.5 cm tall (7 5/8 by 12 ½ inches). The recto of the first leaf also has Gerber's attribution to the composer; its blank verso is followed by 13 sides of music with five or six ruled systems per page, and the final verso with the drawing. The right hand is notated in the soprano clef, i.e. with C_4 on the bottom stave line.

A PDF of the manuscript can be downloaded from the Library of Congress website **here**, and elsewhere on the site is a **brief history** of Hans and Rosaleen Moldenhauer and of their extensive music manuscript collection, which was donated to various major libraries around the world.

The copyist

Based on the manuscript's date, Heinrich Nikolaus Gerber (1702–1775) was only 13½ years old at the time. He is known to be under the tutelage of a local cantor at the time. The manuscript is neatly written and looks like it might have been intended as a fair copy, as there are only a few minor ambiguities. Gerber later studied under J.S. Bach, and his name is primarily known nowadays because he was Bach's principal copyist between 1724 and 1727, at the start of the latter's Leipzig period. During this time, Gerber was responsible for copying important keyboard works such as the Inventions and Sinfonias, French Suites, some English Suites, and the first two Preludes and Fugues of the Well-Tempered Clavier, Part I, among others. Gerber also became a composer, obtaining the position of court organist to the Prince of Schwarzburg at Sondershausen in 1731, and remaining in that role for the rest of his life.

The music

The melody of the chorale *Freu dich, O meine Seele* (Rejoice greatly, O my soul) was written by Louis Bourgeois for Psalm 42 in his *Pseaumes octante trios de David* (the 1551 edition of the Genevan Psalter). The text was written by Christoph Demantius in 1620.

On the Library of Congress webpage relating to the manuscript, it says that the present work is "one in a series published in 1683". This refers to *Musicalische Sterbens-Gedancken* (Musical Thoughts on Dying; referred to as '*MS-G*' from now on), a collection of Pachelbel's keyboard music engraved and printed in Erfurt in 1683, but which is now considered lost. It is known that Pachelbel composed the music in the anthology upon the death of his first wife, Barbara, and their only child, in September of that year during a plague outbreak in Erfurt. That we know about the printed work and its backstory is due to the *Musikalisches Lexicon* (1732), a dictionary of musical terms and of musicians' biographies written by Johann Gottfried Walther, a cousin of J.S. Bach and a major organ composer and musical theorist.

Attempts by musicologists to reconstruct what might have been contained in the print have centred around sets of variations on chorales with lyrical themes of death, in keeping with the overall collection's title. Three sets are now generally accepted: *Christus, der ist mein Leben* (Christ is my life; 12 variations), *Alle Menschen müssen sterben* (Everybody must die; 8 variations) and *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* (My heart is filled with longing; 7 variations). The identity of the fourth varied chorale has been more contested. Previous candidates have been a different set of four variations on F*reu dich, O meine Seele*, and also *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* (What God does, that is done well!; 9 variations), based on stylistic similarities. But perhaps the strongest candidate is the current work, the 12 variations on *Freu dich, O meine Seele*. It was Günter Hartmann who suggested in 1987 that it should be considered so. There are no surviving Pachelbel holograph manuscripts of any of these sets of variations.

Each work considered part of *MS-G* begins with a four-part chorale setting, followed by several variations. Despite the origin of the melodies, this music intended for domestic use is lighter in style than strict chorale settings destined for liturgical use. In the preliminary biographical remarks to Max Seiffert's 1901 edition of Pachelbel's keyboard works, Adam Sandberger describes these variations as being *volkmässig* (popular). Similarly, individual variations are not connected in mood to individual stanzas of the various chorales.

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There is a lightness of touch in the sets of variations considered part of *MS-G.* But there is always one strongly chromatic variation in each set – a musical allusion to grief; in *Freu dich O meine Seele*, it is Variation 8. In this work, the chorale and the variations are 13 measures long (not counting the repeat of the first sections), except variation 11, which ends with an extra measure in which the final chord is in effect reinforced.

The other three chorales commonly thought to have been part of *MS-G* are freely available on IMSLP **here** as the first three pieces in Karl Matthei's edition of Pachelbel's *Ausgewählte Orgelwerke* (Selected Organ Works), vol. 4, published by Bärenreiter Verlag with catalogue number 1016. The edition is undated on the title page but the author's preface is dated 1936. It is thanks to Matthei that these chorale variations survive, as the shared principal manuscript source for all three, which was in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Hamburg, was destroyed in World War II. In Matthei's edition, some individual variations of these three *MS-G* pieces are written on three staves as for pedal organ, with the pedal part separate so that the chorale melody might be emphasised by selecting a different tonal colour for the pedals versus the manuals. But all variations are playable on 18th-century keyboard instruments without a pedalboard (such as harpsichord, clavichord and manuals-only organ) and now the piano, too.

Indeed, Matthei's preface points this out flexibility, as well as giving more information about the search to reconstruct the work, including allusion to Seiffert's different choice of constituent pieces in the latter's edition of Pachelbel's keyboard works. Along with *Alle Menschen müssen sterben*, Seiffert chose *Werde munter, mein Gemüthe* (Be alert, my soul; 4 variations) and *Ach, was Ich soll Sünder machen* (What shall I, a sinner, do?; 6 variations), giving a total of three sets. In his edition of Pachelbel's organ works two years later, Seiffert stated he had found the missing fourth chorale in the set of 4 variations on *Freu dich, O meine Seele* in a manuscript he had discovered in the meantime. All are included in Matthei's edition, and are also available at IMSLP in Seiffert's editions **here** and **here**.

Given that both *Christus, der ist mein Leben* and the Gerber version of *Freu dich, O meine Seele* have 12 variations, Hartmann suggests that the other chorales in *MS-G* might also originally have had the same number, of which some were lost over time. He also writes that some passages in the Gerber version suggest that at some point in the transmission of the music from the composer onwards, there was a (now-lost) manuscript version written in keyboard tablature.

Bibliography

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This edition

This is a transcription of the Library of Congress manuscript with limited editorial intervention. It has been modernized with regard to accidentals, clefs and stem direction, and measure number indicators. Beaming has been kept as per the original, except where noted below. As a result of using the treble clef instead of the original soprano clef, some distribution of parts between the staves has changed.

As is common in the 18th century, the flat symbol is used to cancel a sharp in the manuscript. And if a note altered by an accidental is repeated immediately, the accidental still holds. In other manuscripts and prints, these accidentals can be valid even if there is an intervening note at a different pitch, but this is not the case here. For example, in m.93, if the subsequent C_4 were also altered to be a $C♯_4$, it would not sound as good harmonically. Similarly, if the accidental on the RH $F♮_4$ in m.166 maintained its validity over the barline, one would expect there to be an accidental written in the second beat when it definitely has to revert to be an F♯ so as not to clash with the LH $F♯_3$. (In the absence of any other indicators, it would be slightly unclear whether the F in the first beat reverts to being F♯, as F♮ sounds almost as good.)

All editorial changes and additions are in blue text, apart from rests, which are small, and barlines, which are dashed. The measure count includes the measure created by editorial barline in the initial chorale setting. All page-turn instructions such as “V” and “Volti” in the ms have been suppressed.

Jolando Scarpa’s modern edition, from c.2006, of the same manuscript source has been consulted, and some of the differences between his edition and this present one are noted below.

Critical commentary and revisions

m. is measure; mm. is measures.
RH is right hand/upper stave; LH is left hand/lower stave.
UV is upper voice; MV is middle voice; LV is lower voice.
7.1 means the first beat of the seventh measure.
If no RH or LH given, then the comment applies to both staves; similarly, if no beat number is given, then the comment applies to the whole measure.
Unless stated otherwise, all comments refer to the ms.

1.2 LH UV Scarpa omits the D_4, which is a double-stemmed unison in the ms, meaning that in his edition, the music drops to three parts here.
7.3 LH LV Redundant accidental on the $F♯_3$.
8.1 LH UV The A_3 crochet has been suggested to preserve four-part writing. There is no rest written in its place, and m.5.4 and m.34.1, for example, have similar formulations. Scarpa opts for the same solution, but does not flag it up as being editorial.
10.3 LH UV Rest added to preserve four-part writing, but G_3 could also work.
13 LH Scarpa adds a G_3 to the final chord of the variation, which works musically but does not appear in the ms. Again, it is not flagged up as being editorial.
31.3 RH The third semiquaver of this group is a slight splodge between an E_4 and an $F♯_4$, but the latter notehead is bigger, sounds better, and is favoured by Scarpa also.
39.3–4 RH Scarpa has a G_3 with the comment “or H”, i.e. B♮. But it is definitely $B♮_3$ in the ms, even though G_3 might sound more “final”. This edition follows the ms, with G_3 given as an alternative suggestion.
47.3 LH Although the last semiquaver of the group is clearly written as a D_3, E_3 sounds equally likely as it creates a passing note rather than a slightly prominent repetition. Scarpa writes an E but suggests “or D” next to it.
51.4 RH MV Scarpa omits the $F♯_4$ crochet in the variation’s penultimate chord, but it is in the ms.
66.1–2 RH UV Augmentation dot is missing. It might be a matter of convention, as all other drawn minim rests are lacking the dot (e.g. the start of mm. 74 and 76).
68.4 LH UV Augmentation dot is missing.
72.2 RH LV Augmentation dot is missing.
82.4 RH Scarpa has the final note as a G_3, with no editorial comment. Again, as per m.39, the G_3 might sound more “final” and therefore preferable. And in fact, the note is significantly below the bottom ledger line of the stave, so it might have just been a case of Gerber neglecting to draw a ledger line through the notehead. But there are other variations’ first sections that end with RH Bs. So it has been left as B, with an alternative suggestion of G.

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86.3 RH This is written as a group of seven demisemiquavers (with no tuplet number). It is very unusual to have septuplets in Baroque music, and given that the start and end points of the run seem right, it is most likely that the initial note should be a semiquaver and an additional beam was drawn by accident. Scarpa favours the same solution, but does not flag it up as being editorial.
86.3 RH Given the accidental usage pattern of this ms, the G_4 should revert to being a natural, having been altered two notes before. There is a case for the first $F♯_4$ therefore being flattened also so that the run becomes melodic minor, with the key signature again holding good for the F_4 in the final group. These are the kind of silent alterations that were sometimes expected of contemporary players of Baroque music.
88.4 RH Scarpa has G_4 as the first semiquaver in the group, without flagging it as an editorial change, but the ms does have a B_4. G_4 sounds fine, but then again so does the B_4, so this edition follows the ms.
102.1 RH LV Without flagging it up as editorial, Scarpa changes the first semiquaver to a G_4, which sounds perhaps better than having the unison with the UV. It is left as a suggestion.
108.1 LH This is written as $D♭_3$ (with flat signs used in the ms to signify naturals usually when cancelling a sharp) then $D♯_3$. This edition follows the ms. It is perhaps more likely that the order of the accidentals is an error, as everything else proceeds stepwise. On the other hand, it could be a “turnaround” before the jump in the next group. In such a chromatic movement, it is hard to tell what is intended. But in the parallel passage in m.116.1, the notes proceed stepwise. Scarpa favours changing the order of the accidentals, but with no editorial comment.
118.1 RH It is unclear whether the final note in the first group is a B_4 or an A_4 as both noteheads are drawn. But it is more likely to be a B_4 as usually notes are not repeated from the end of one grouping of four to the beginning of the next. Scarpa favours this solution, but with no editorial comment.
124.2 RH Both B_4 and C_5 are drawn as the first note of the group, but it is more likely to be a B_4, as a C_5 would be a dissonance with the LH B_3. There is a letter adjacent to the noteheads – usually a method to clarify ambiguities – which looks more like a stylised B than a C, but is itself hard to decipher.
129.2 RH Both the initial G_4 in this group and the B_4 three notes later are a bit of a splodge and could both be A_4s, but harmonically are more likely to be G and B than any other combination. Scarpa favours this solution, but with no editorial comment.
132–3 The barline for m.132 is drawn erroneously half a beat late, and also m.133 is split into two, making m.132 4.5 beats, m.133a 1.5 and m.133b 2 beats long. It has been regularised here.
148.3 RH The final A_4 demisemiquaver in the third group is missing, but is supplied as per surrounding groups. Scarpa favours this solution, but with no editorial comment.
156.1 RH It is unclear if the fourth and sixth notes of this group should be a D_4 or an $F♯_4$ (or both together). It seems much more likely that both should be D_4, to follow the ostinato pattern of other measures in the variation (and sounding both together sounds strange). Scarpa favours this solution, but with no editorial comment.
160.4 LH Only seven demisemiquavers are drawn, with the run ending on G_3, but it is almost certain to be an octave run, like the others in the variation. Scarpa favours this solution, but with no editorial comment.
161.2 LH LV The D_3 has a downward stem here with no tail, but a stem direction drawing error for this group seems more likely, as a crochet would clash with the $C♯_4$ (which could be desirable) and then carry for half of the next beat, where it would sound strange against the run in the LH UV. Scarpa has the D_3 as a quaver, with that temporary clash, which does sound good, even though one might expect the previous beat to have a similar quaver to again emphasise a clashing major seventh and then also a minim G_3 in the LH UV for the third and fourth beats to reinforce the IV-V-I movement.
165.3 LH The second $C♯_3$ in this group does not have an accidental, which would make it a C♮, according to the ms’s accidental usage pattern, but this is almost certainly an omission.
166.3 RH Scarpa has the final note of the group as an E_5, but the top stave line definitely cuts through the notehead, despite the latter being a bit higher than the D_5s in the second and fourth groups in the measure.
167.1 RH It is unclear if the sixth note in the group is an $F♯_4$ or a G_4. Scarpa favours G_4, as does this edition, to echo the last thee notes of the next beat.
170.2 RH LV C_4 suggested to be added to the E_4. All the other variations have a C_4 if it precedes a final chord containing a B_3. And it was common practice for players to fill in such chords anyway.
170.3–4 LH UV Mordent suggested as it was common to have one on the highest note of a run, especially for this kind of formulation with an octave below being sounded directly afterwards. Similar to m.161, when playing this, one could hold the first notes of each group of demisemiquavers to be quavers, to reinforce the chordal progression.

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