Four Poems

for Organ

Kevin McCarter

These four musical poems are the fruits of an experiment. I thought it would be interesting to consider parallels between musical structure and some of the traditional structures of poetry. The four types of poems I selected have a long history. They have been adopted by poets writing in English but originated in other languages — Italian for *ottava rima,* Japanese for *tanka,* French for *virelay*, and Welsh for *englyn*. The correspondence I worked with most consistently was between the length of a musical phrase and the number of syllables or poetic feet in a line of poetry. Thus *Ottava Rima* has eight phrases of five measures, reflecting eight lines of iambic pentameter, and *Tanka* has five phrases of either five or seven measures, responding to the 5-7-5-7-7 syllable count of the poetic form. My *Virelay* and *Englyn* are longer poems, containing more than one stanza. My imagination was also stimulated by other aspects of the poetry, such as the pattern of rhymes and traditional groupings of lines, but the ways that I drew on these features varies from piece to piece.

Four Poems

Ottava Rima 2
Tanka 4
Virelay 6
Englyn 9

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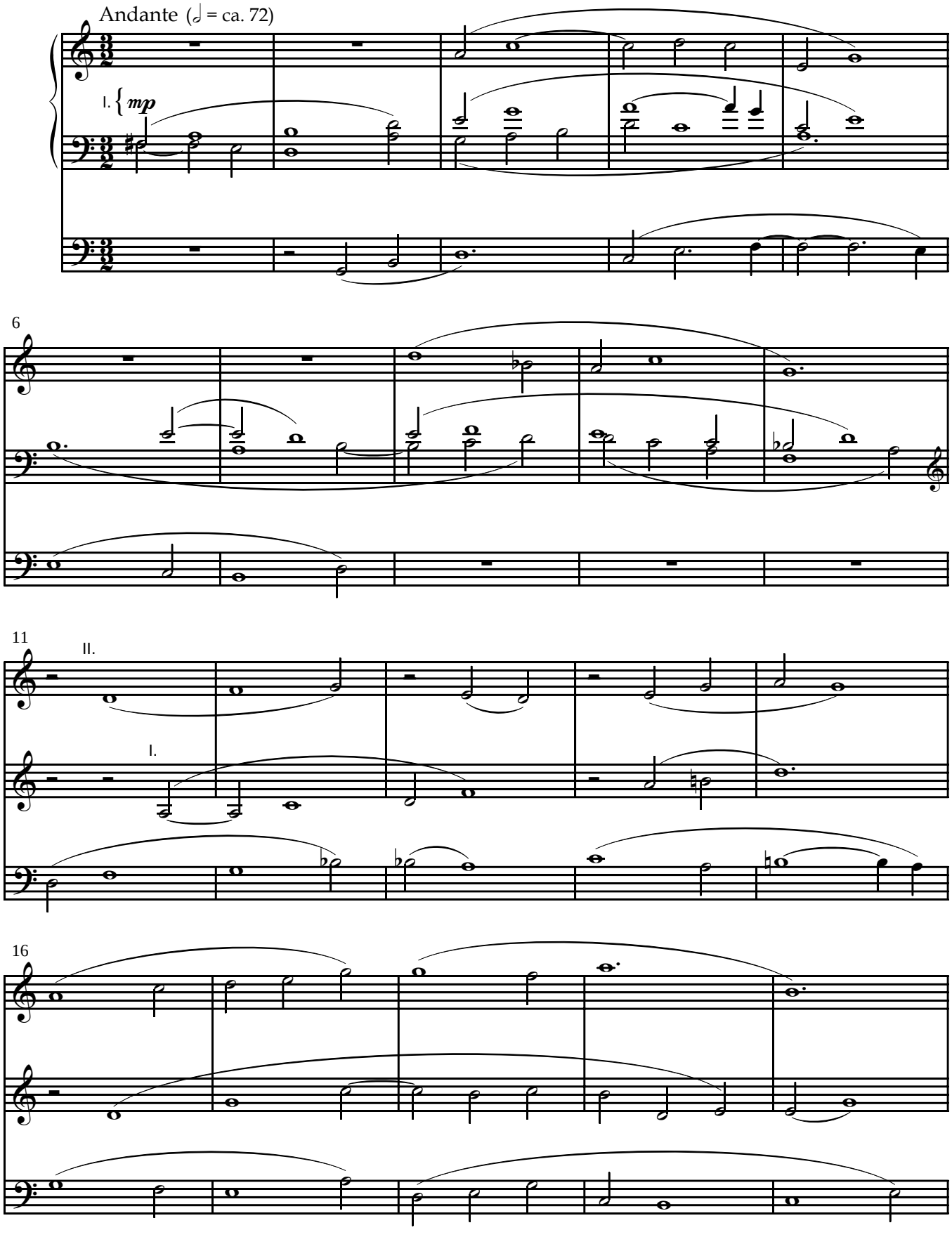
Ottava Rima

I. 8' (4')
II. Contrasting color
Ped. 8' (16')

Kevin McCarter



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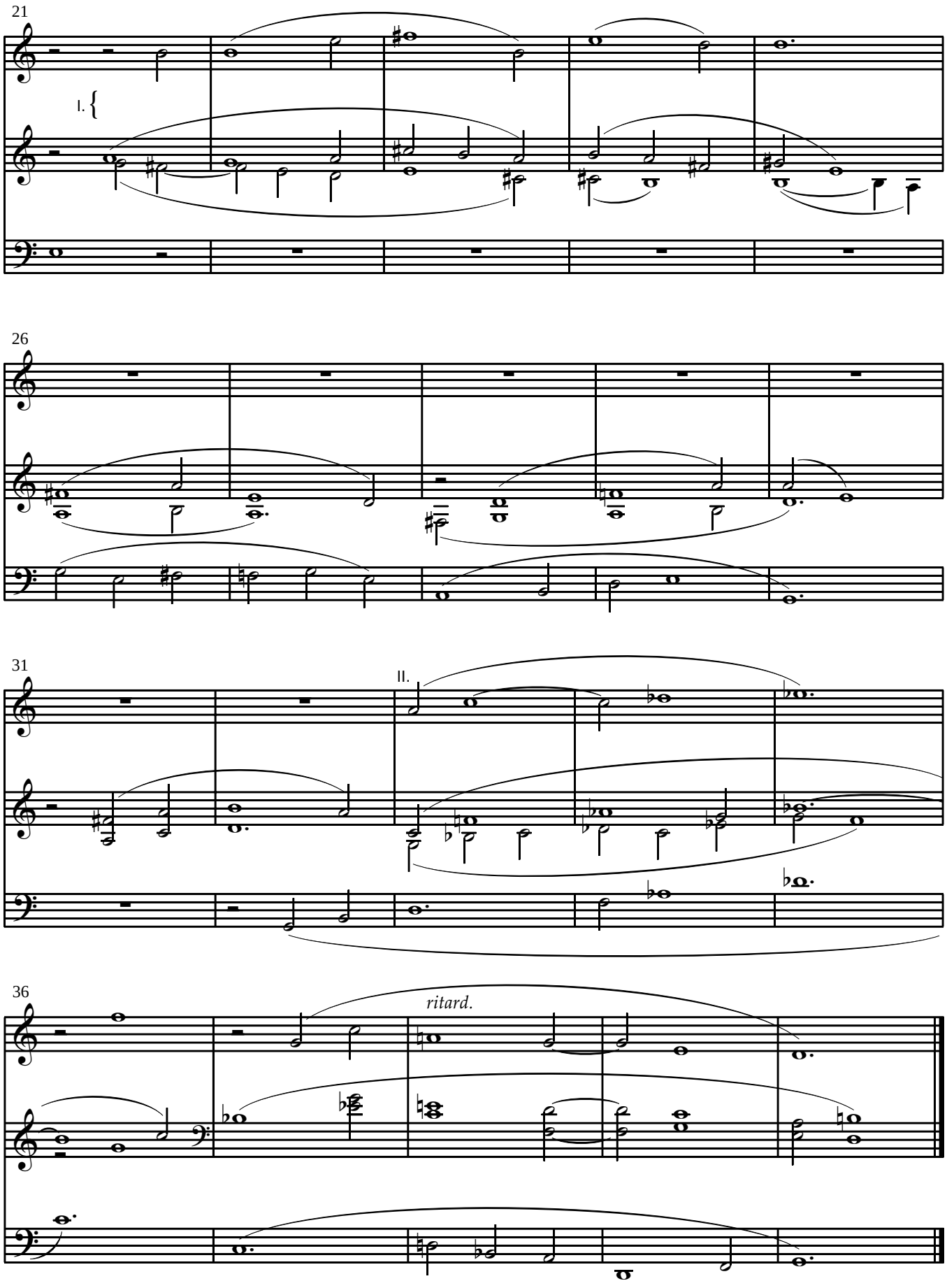
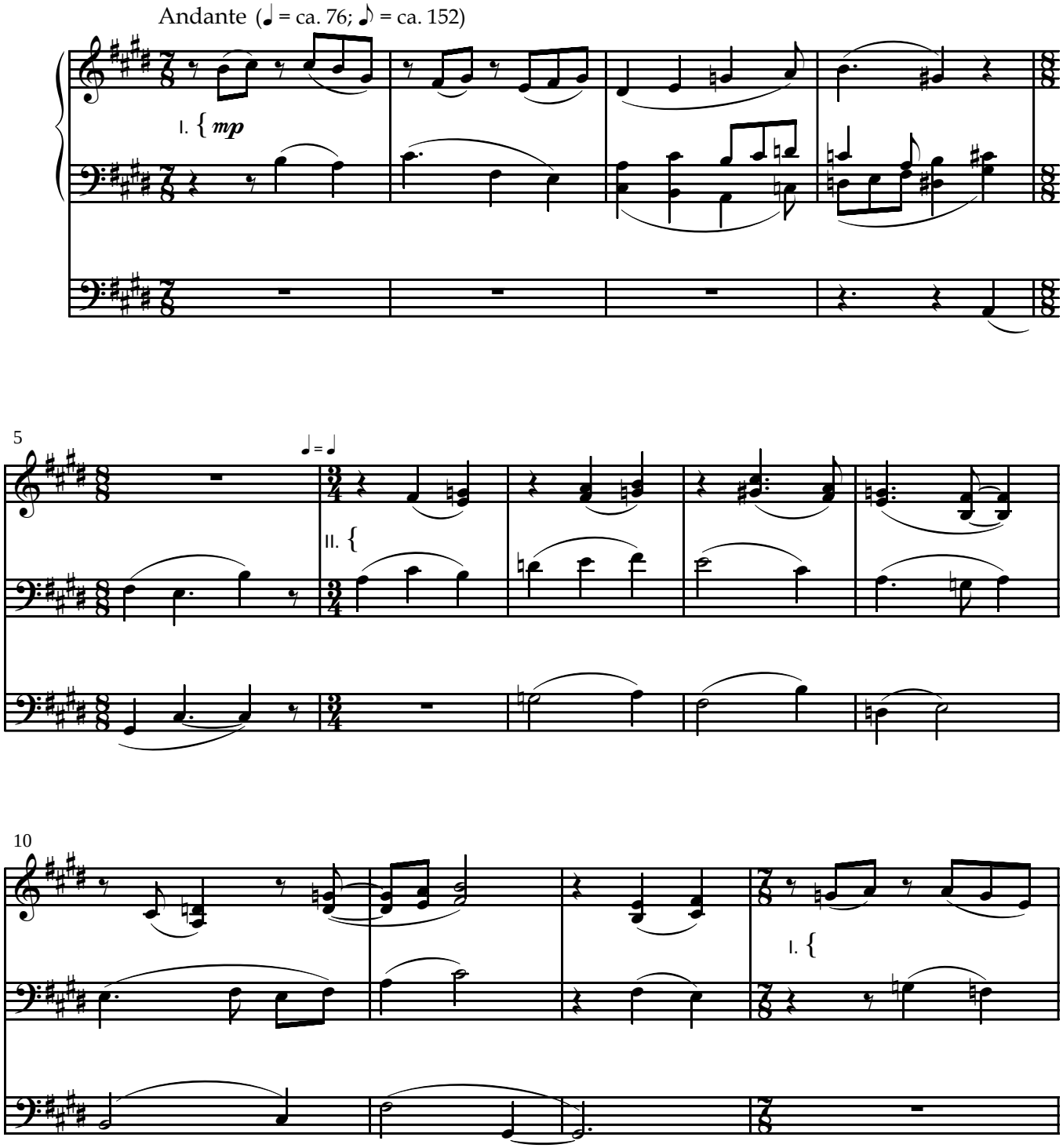

21
I.
26
31
II.
36
ritard.

Tanka

I. Flute 8' (4')
II. Contrasting 8' (4')
Ped. 8' (16')

Kevin McCarter



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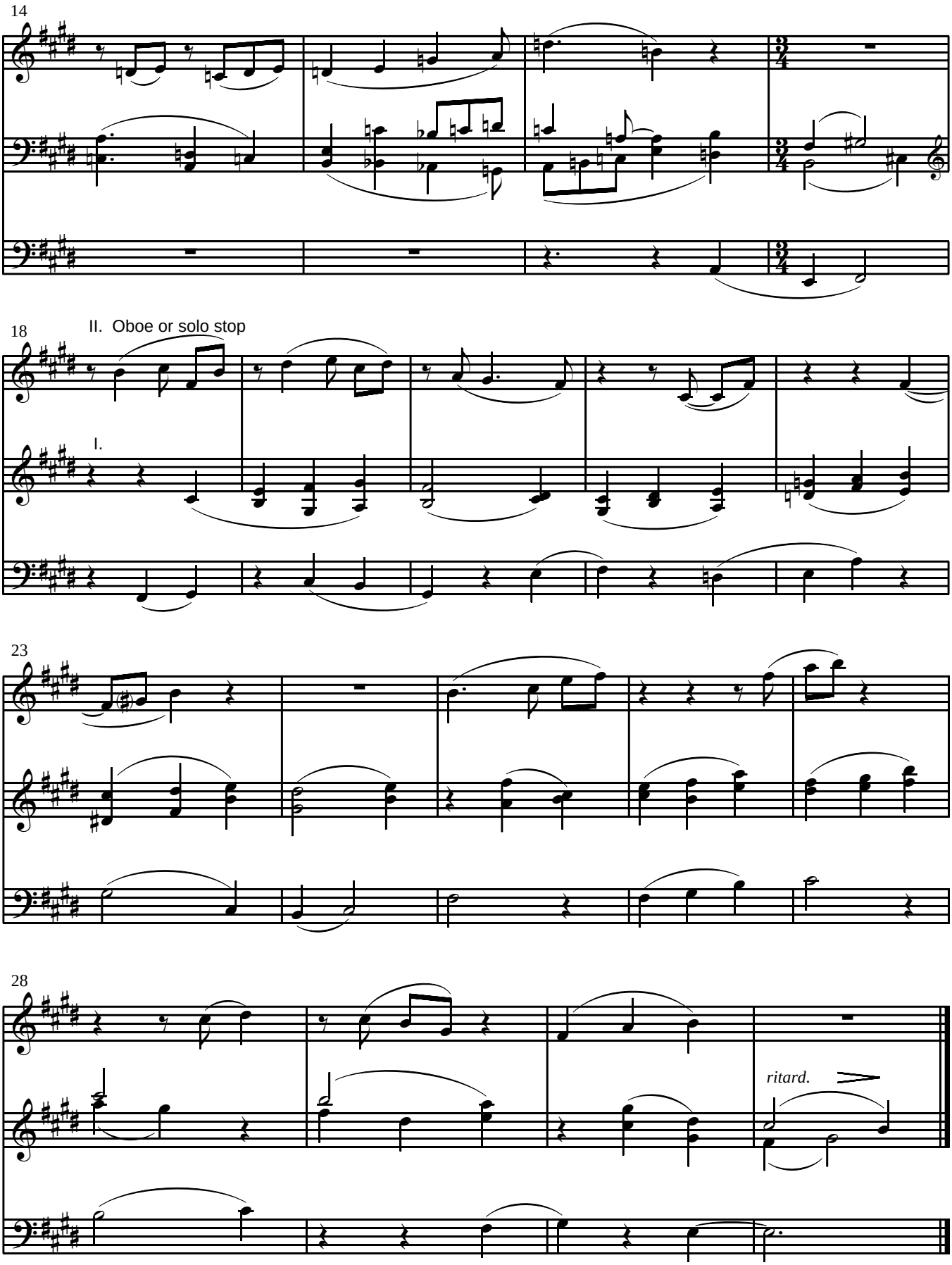
14
18
II. Oboe or solo stop
I.
23
28
ritard.

Virelay

I. Flute 8' (4', 2 2/3') or diapason 8' or solo stop
II. Strings 8' (4')
Ped. soft 8' (16')

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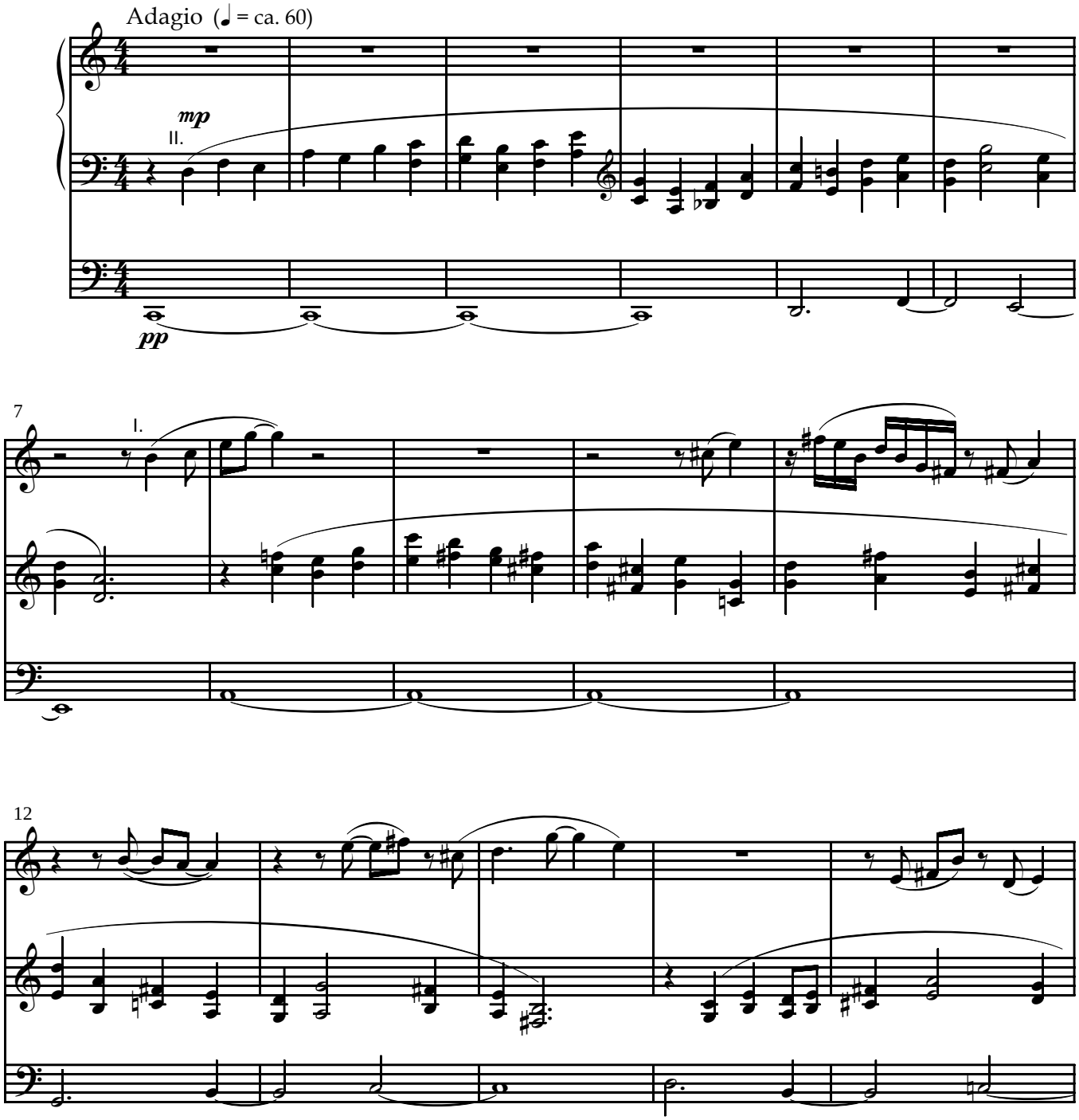

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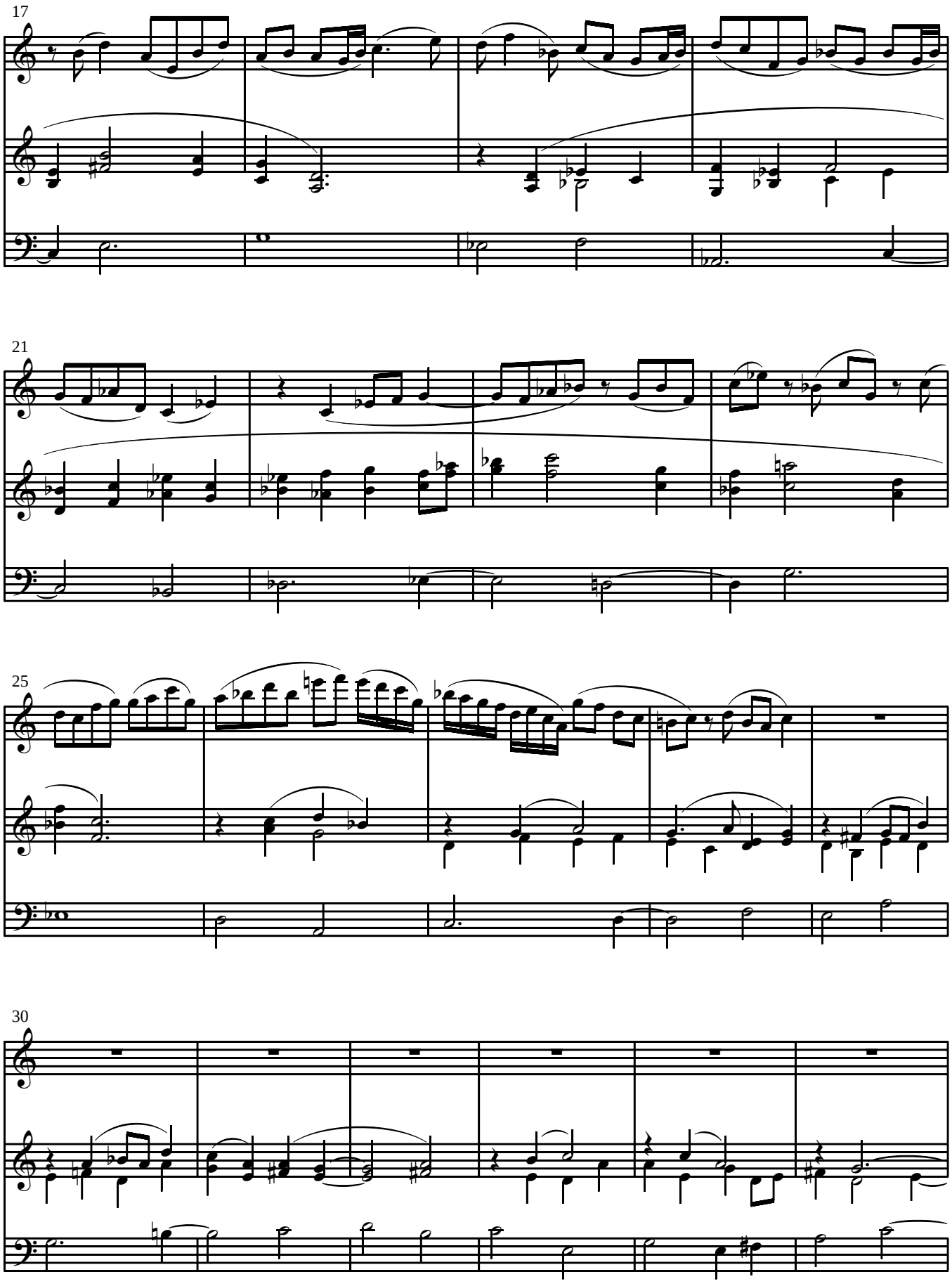
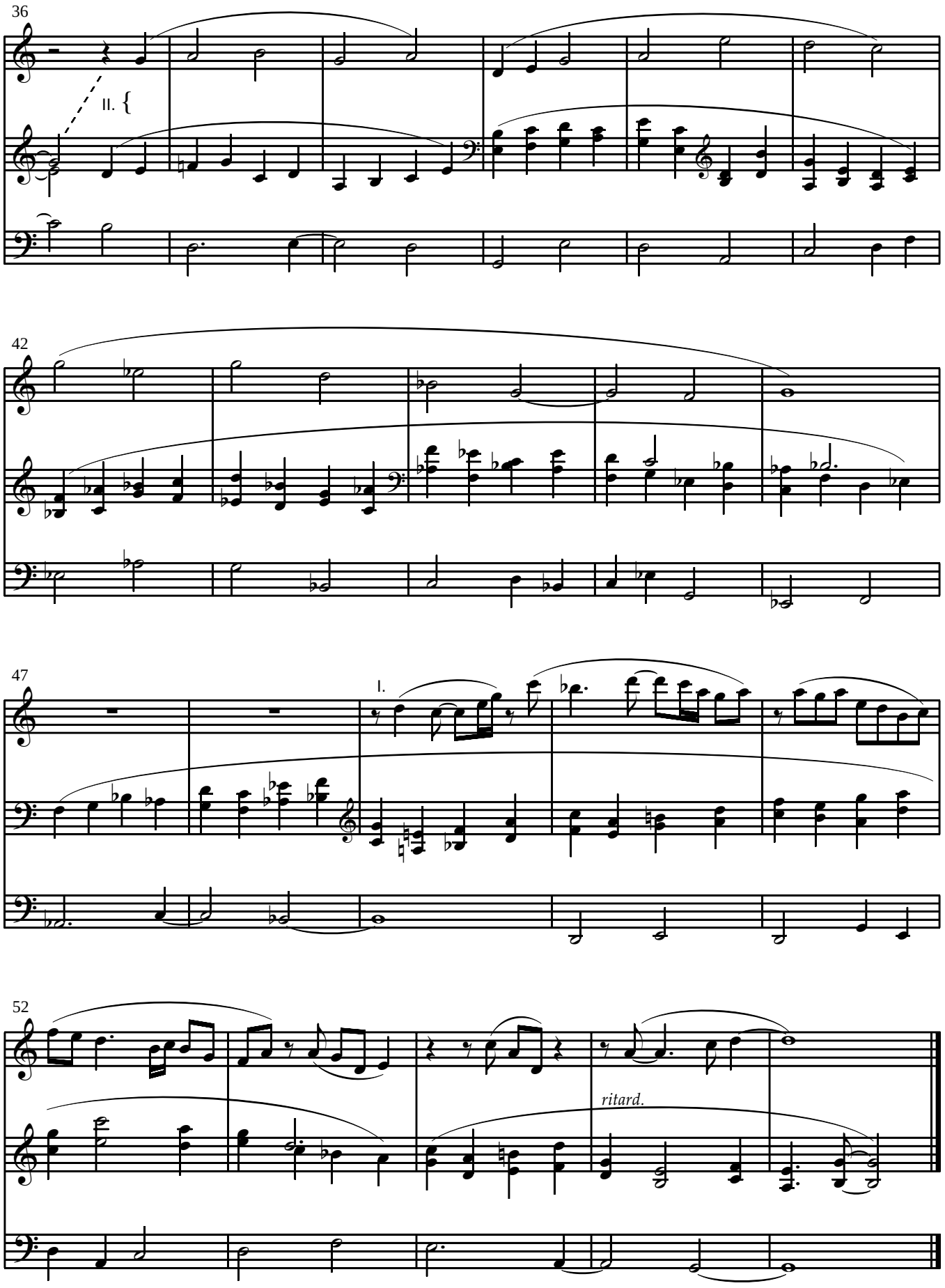
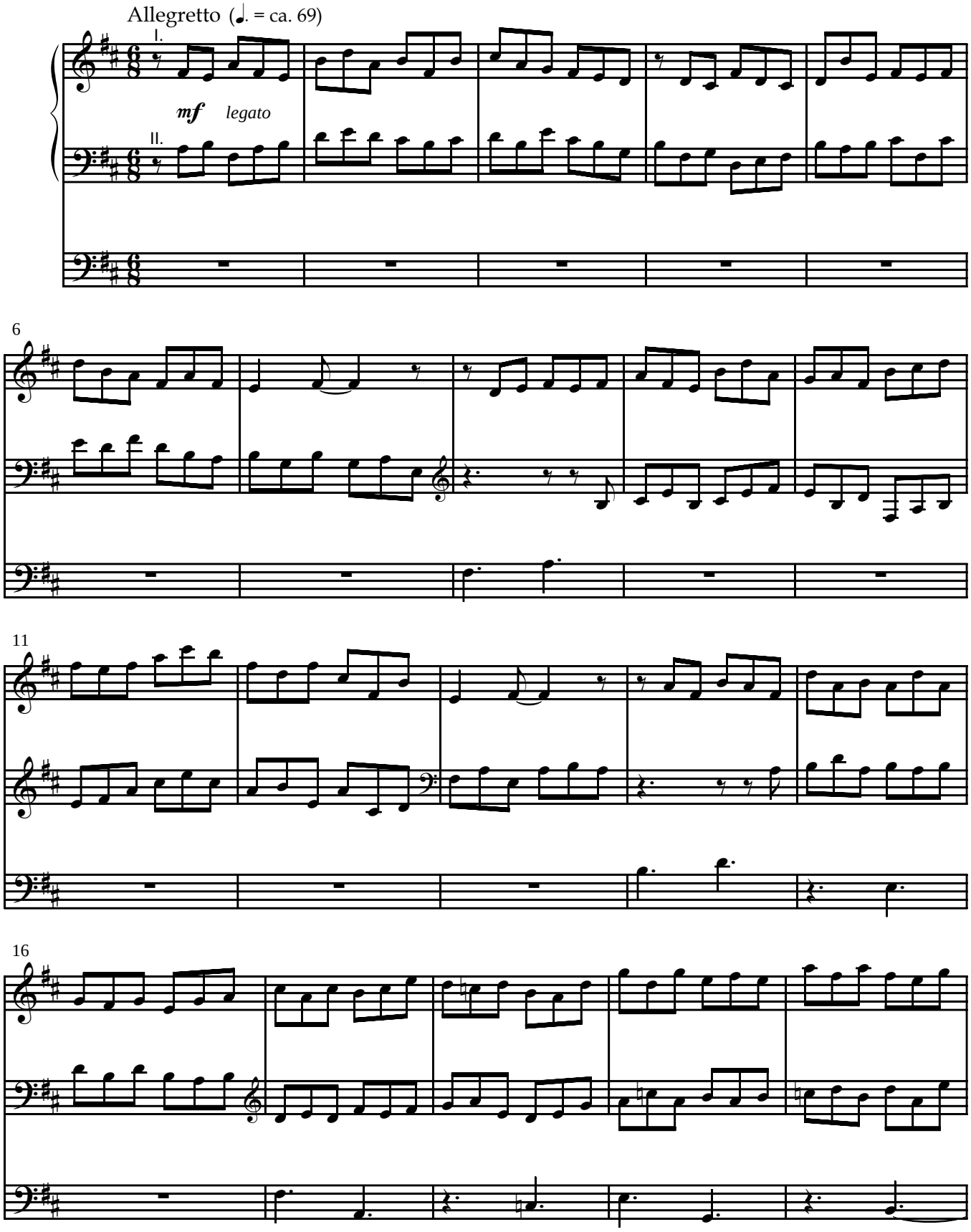

17
21
25
30


36
II.
42
47
I.
52
ritard.

Englyn

I. Flute 8' (4', 2 2/3')
II. Complementary 8' (4')
Ped. 8' (16')

Kevin McCarter



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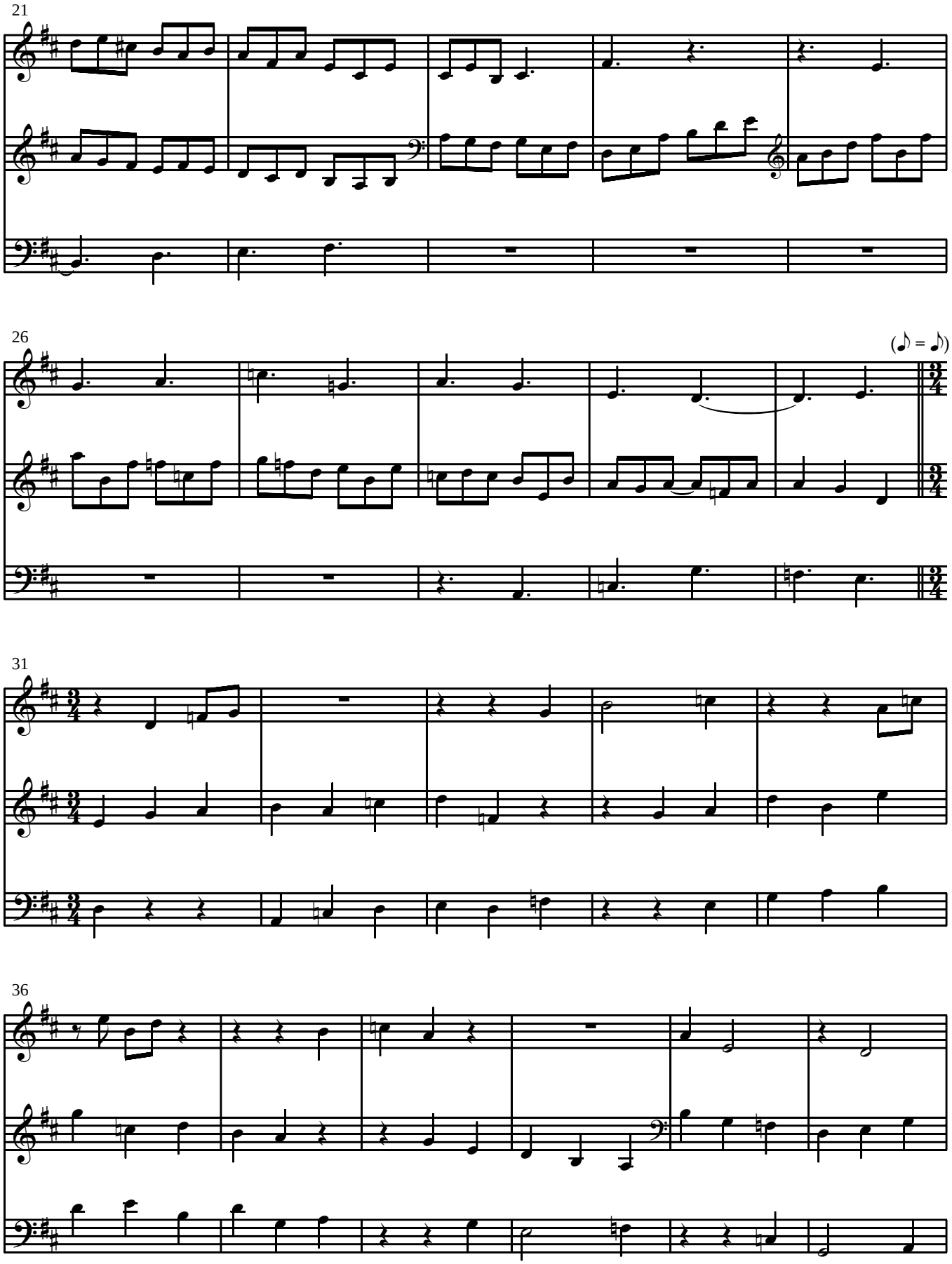
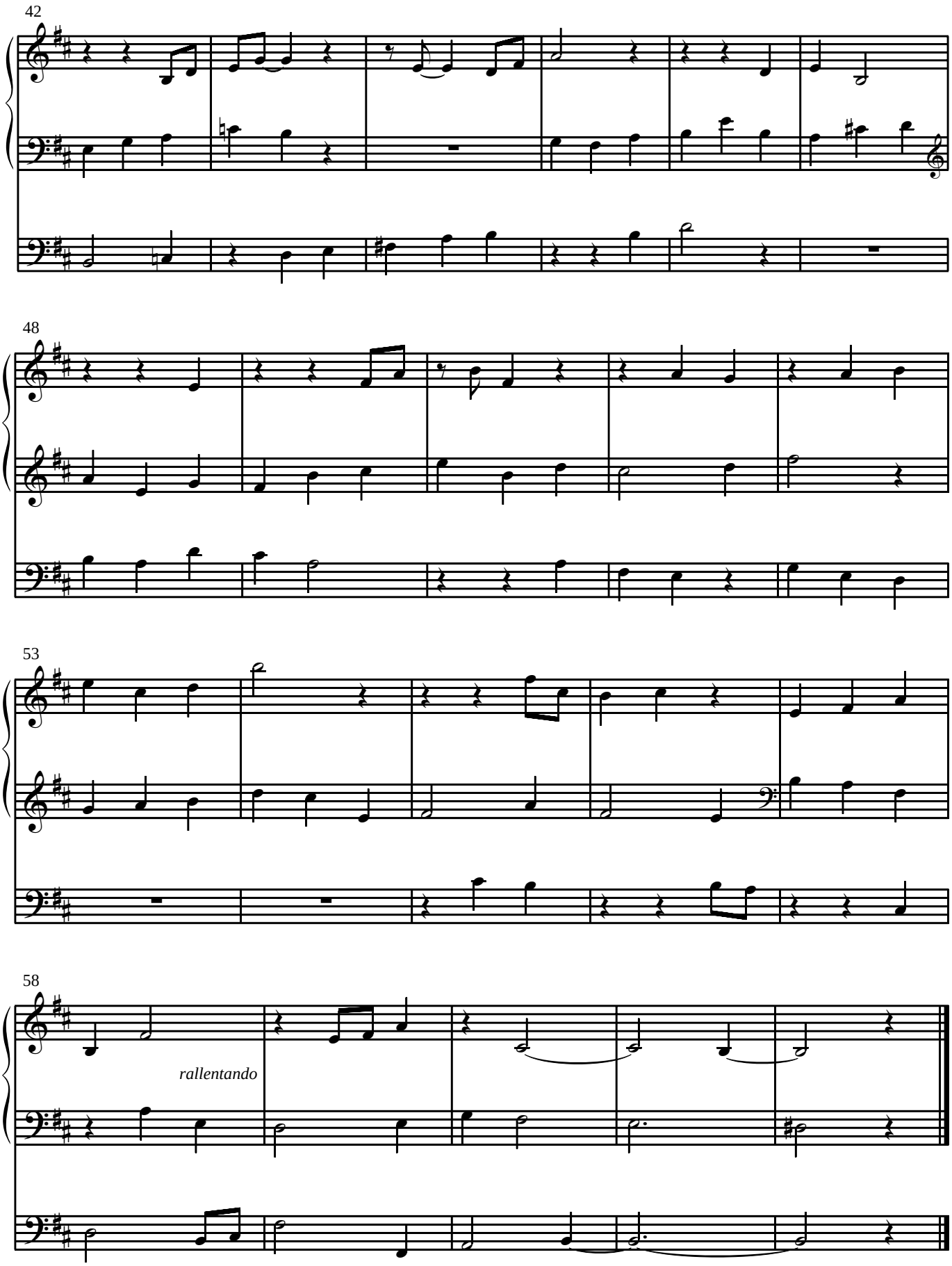

21
26
(♪ = ♪)
31
36


42
48
53
58
rallentando