ORGAN SONATA

1958

by

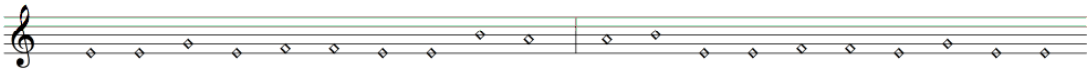
Peter Tranchell

written for Peter Geoffrey Le Huray

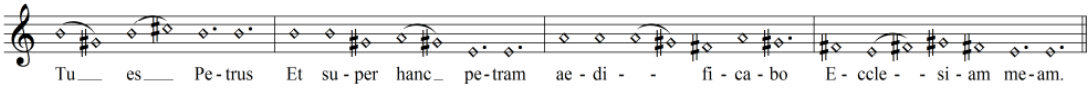
Each movement may be played separately either loud or soft

The Acrostic

E E G E F F E E H A
P T R O R Y L U R Y



The Antiphon



Coverdale Publications

Peter Tranchell's ***Sonata for Organ*** was written in 1958 for, and partly based on the name of, Peter Le Huray, a fellow lecturer in the Music Faculty of Cambridge University, and Director of Music at St Catharine's College. We can be certain that Dr Le Huray performed the *Sonata* and probably broadcast it on the BBC Third Programme, but have so far discovered no extant recording.

As well as using the letters of the dedicatee's name, the work also makes prominent use of the plainchant melody *Tu es Petrus*. The first movement ***Preludio – Allegro molto*** is a toccata, with *perpetuum mobile* semiquavers in the right hand and mildly dissonant left hand chords in short crotchet and semiquaver phrases, suggesting the rhythms of Morse Code:

·– –· – ·–· – – – ·–· –·– – ·–·· ··– ·–· –·– –

which are, of course, the non-musical letters of the name Peter Geoffrey Le Huray: *P T R O R Y L U R Y* . The pedals then enter with an angular version of the theme based on the musical letters EEGEFFEEHA (H = B natural) substantially in 6ths, 7ths, 8ves and 9ths. The left hand then introduces a two-part version of the EEGEFFEEHA theme, continuing on to a new melody and more dissonant harmonies. This section forms the central part of an arch-structure, with a short coda finishing on a highly spiced E major chord. Throughout this movement the harmonic idiom is highly chromatic and often dissonant, though there is always a sense of quasi-tonal movement and logic.

Andante ostinato is imbued with feelings of longing, with two major climaxes, ecstatic or anguished, perhaps both. The opening three-part counterpoint makes extensive *ostinato* use of the retrograde version of the theme (ABEEFFEGEE), and this is in evidence for most of the movement. The predominantly dissonant idiom gives way in the post-climactic coda to lush, late romantic harmonies, again ambiguously suggesting fulfilment or resignation, nostalgically surmounted by the ABEEFFEGEE theme marked *"as a solo"* (see registration notes below).

Tu es Petrus in fuga starts with a grand, richly harmonised statement of the *Tu es Petrus* melody *(Tempo comodo ma non lento)*, before embarking upon a fugue *(Allegretto con moto)*, based on EEGEFFEEHA as the main subject, and of extreme complexity, both contrapuntal and rhythmic. The 4/4 time signature is as often as not 3 + 3 + 2 / 8 in effect, and the periodic appearances of the plainchant melody in this rhythm, over a somewhat irreverent *oom-cha-cha* accompaniment, strongly suggest Tranchell the theatre-composer. The fugue ends with two further expansive harmonisations of *Tu es Petrus,* linked by a characteristically pianistic flourish.

The present edition, the first of Peter Tranchell's *Organ Sonata* to be published, has been faithfully reproduced from the composer's manuscript, including the layout of the title page. There are many accidentals which would normally be regarded as redundant, but these were left in the score, as in a piece of this complexity it is useful, even during performance, to be reminded of an accidental which occurred earlier in a bar. It is entirely probable that Tranchell, ever the practical musician, had this in mind.

Registration is not specified by the composer in any detail, though there are suggestions of balance. For example, the *Preludio* contains instructions such as *en dehors* and *equal manuals*. However, the choice is explicitly left to the player as to whether to use loud or quiet registrations for each movement.

The following thoughts arise purely from having performed the work on a variety of organs, both romantic and classical in design. They do not carry any more authority than that.

Preludio seems to need gentle, clear and contrasting colours, with the pedal heard at 8' pitch only, ideally independent of the manual stops. 16′ pedal tone can, of course, be used, but the clarity of the line and its thematic significance might well be a deciding factor, as in a Bach trio movement.

A conventional romantic approach suits the *Andante ostinato*, especially in the build-up to the two climaxes, which can both be made to sound intense and dramatic without approaching the weight of full organ. Again, clarity of texture is the best guide. At *tempo, ma piu adagio* the nostalgic AHEEFFEGEE theme (transposed up a major 3rd) seems to call for an enclosed solo reed, such as a Clarinet or Corno di Bassetto, set against typical English string tone. Even so, there are bound to be many alternatives: in a classically voice organ, flutes or mutations plus a gentle tremulant might yield a more expressive melody-line than a reed-stop, though it is not difficult to imagine the composer's preference here.

Again, the finale may be registered entirely conventionally as an introduction and fugue. The sheer agility of the pedal part demands promptly speaking stops, and there is still an energetic lightness to the music, which encourages the player to avoid heaviness, even in the triumphant closing pages.

Norman Harper
November 2011

★

Norman Harper was organ scholar at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he read for a music degree and studied organ with Peter Le Huray and Gillian Weir. He undertook to learn the Sonata for performance at the Peter Tranchell Commemoration Weekend at Gonville & Caius in September 2005: "I gave myself just over a year, during which I performed separate movements here and there in recitals and as voluntaries. I then played the whole work at Westminster Abbey during summer 2005, in Caius Chapel in September and in October in a recital in King's College Chapel."

A CD of the Highlights of the Weekend, including Norman Harper's performance of the Sonata, is available – see www. coverdale-publications.co.uk

Computer set in 2011 by John Gwinnell from the holograph manuscript **MS.Tranchell.1.27** in the Cambridge University Library, and published with permission of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library

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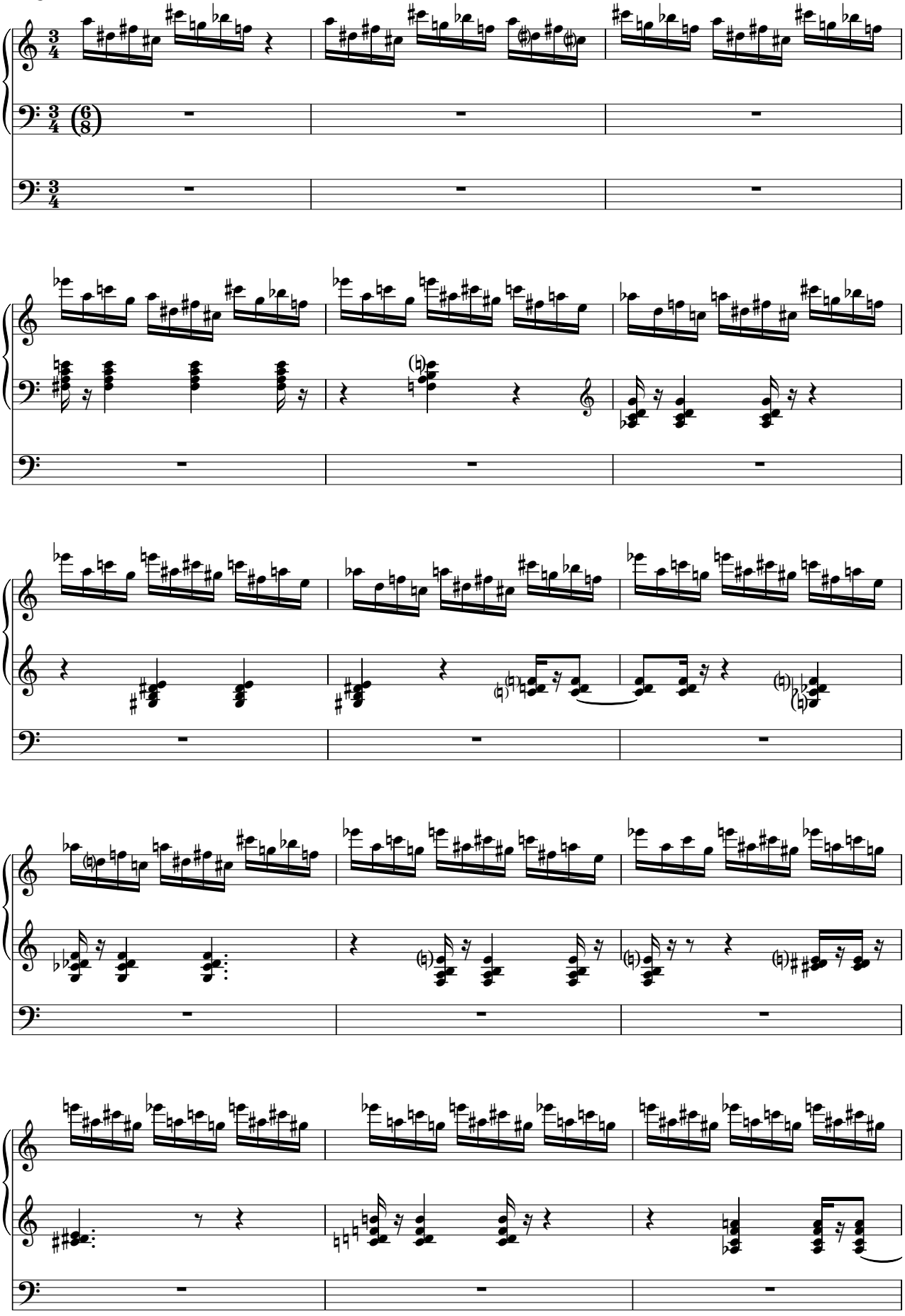
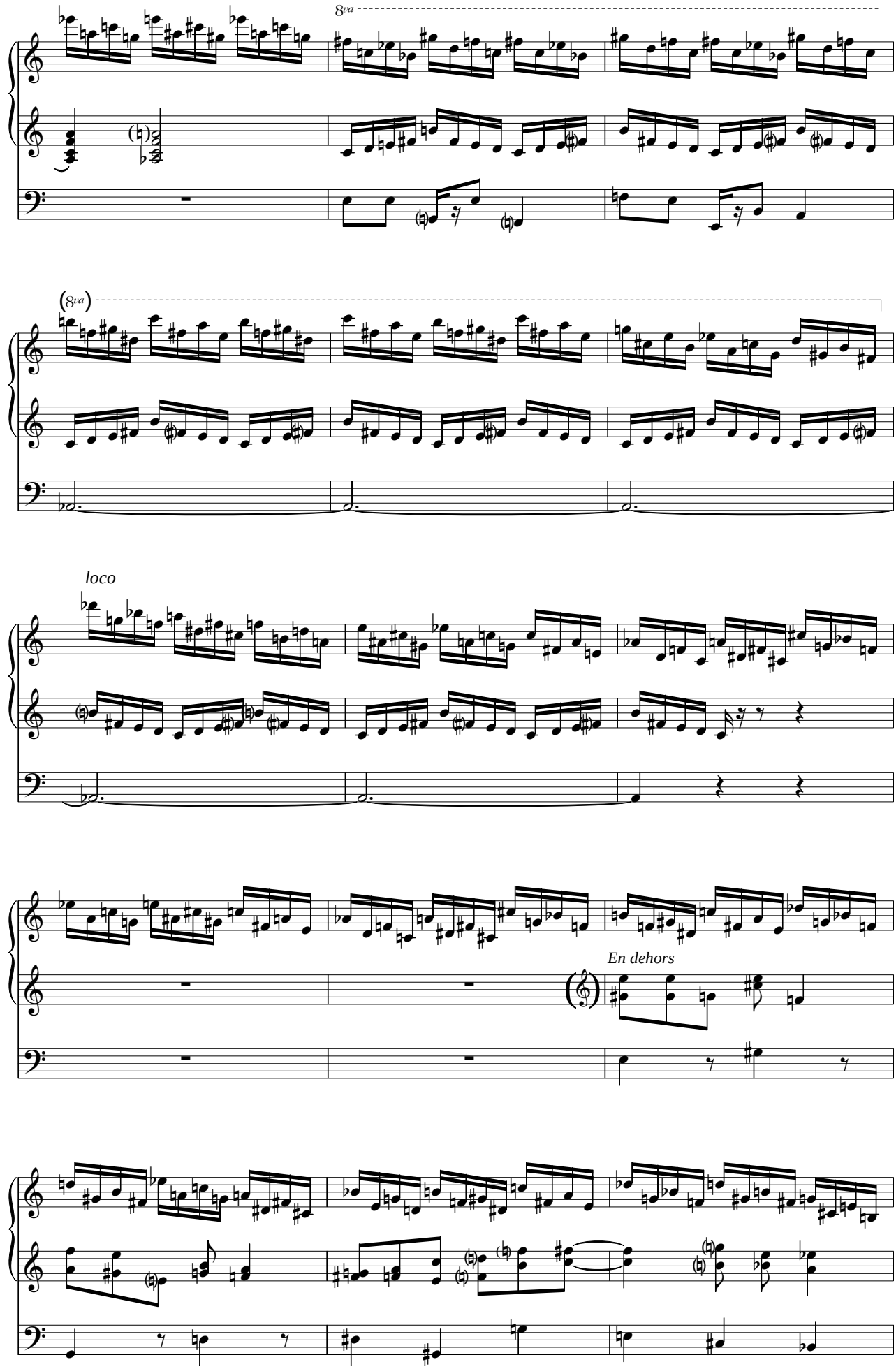
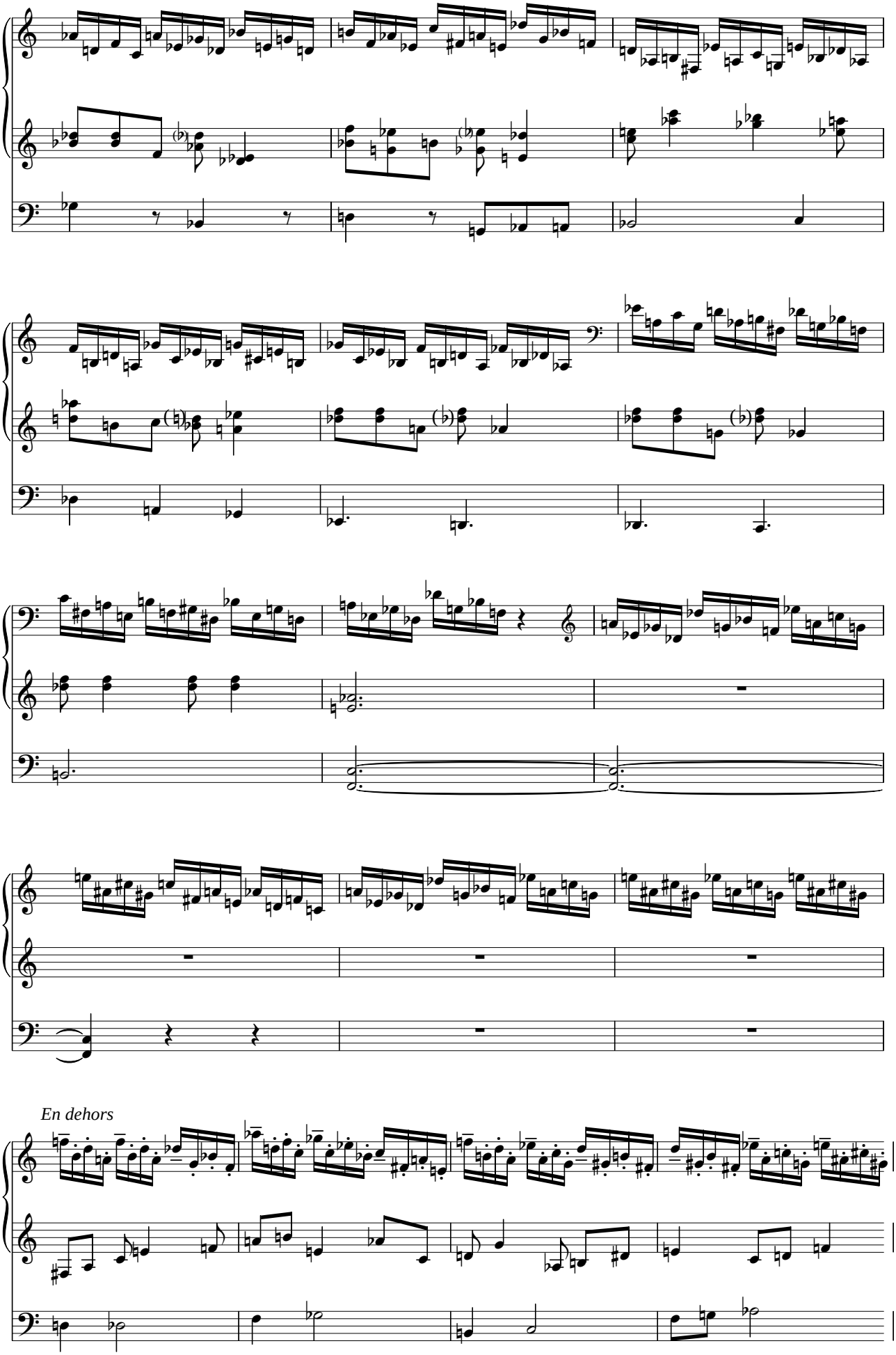
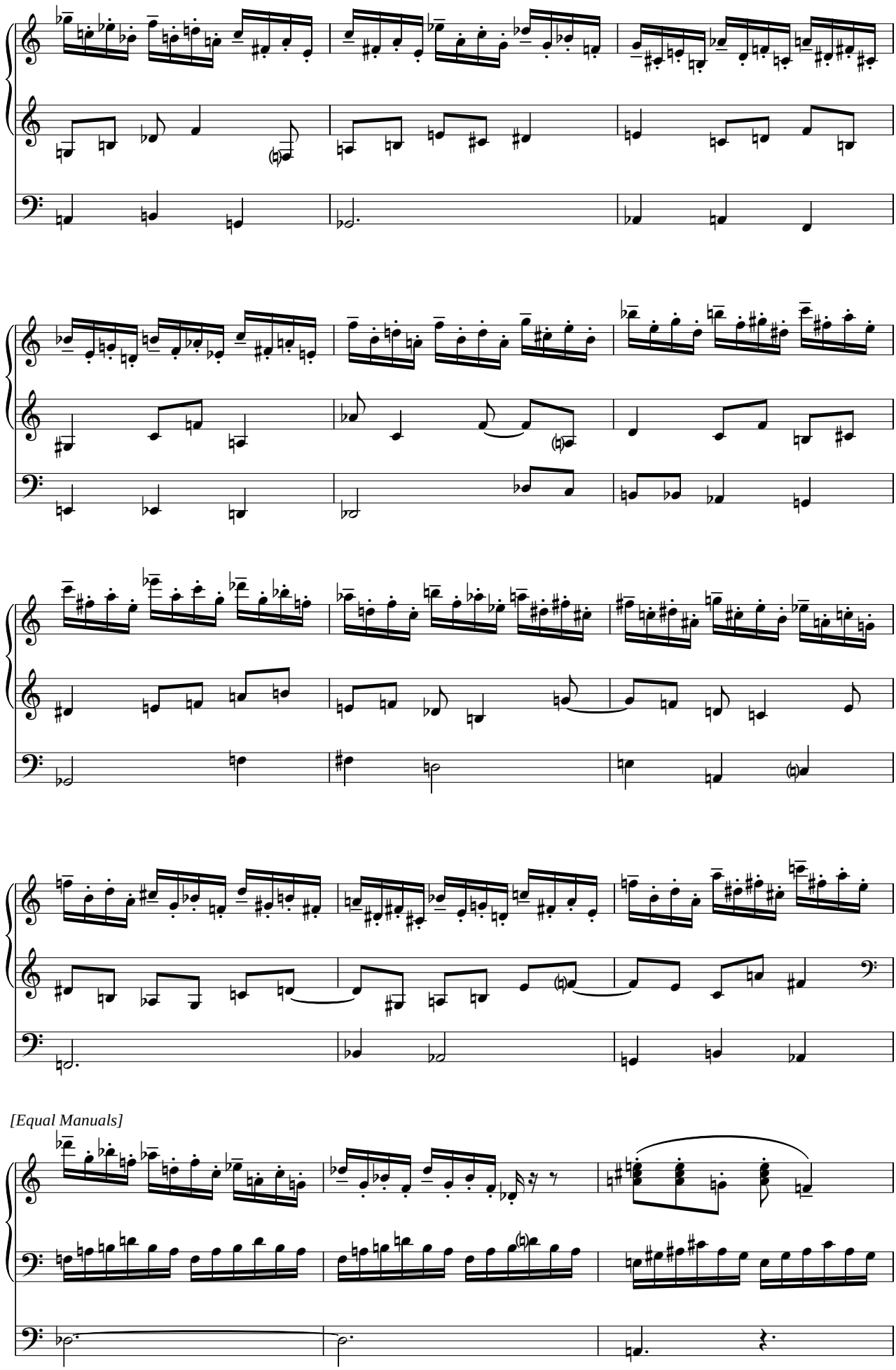
PRELUDIO

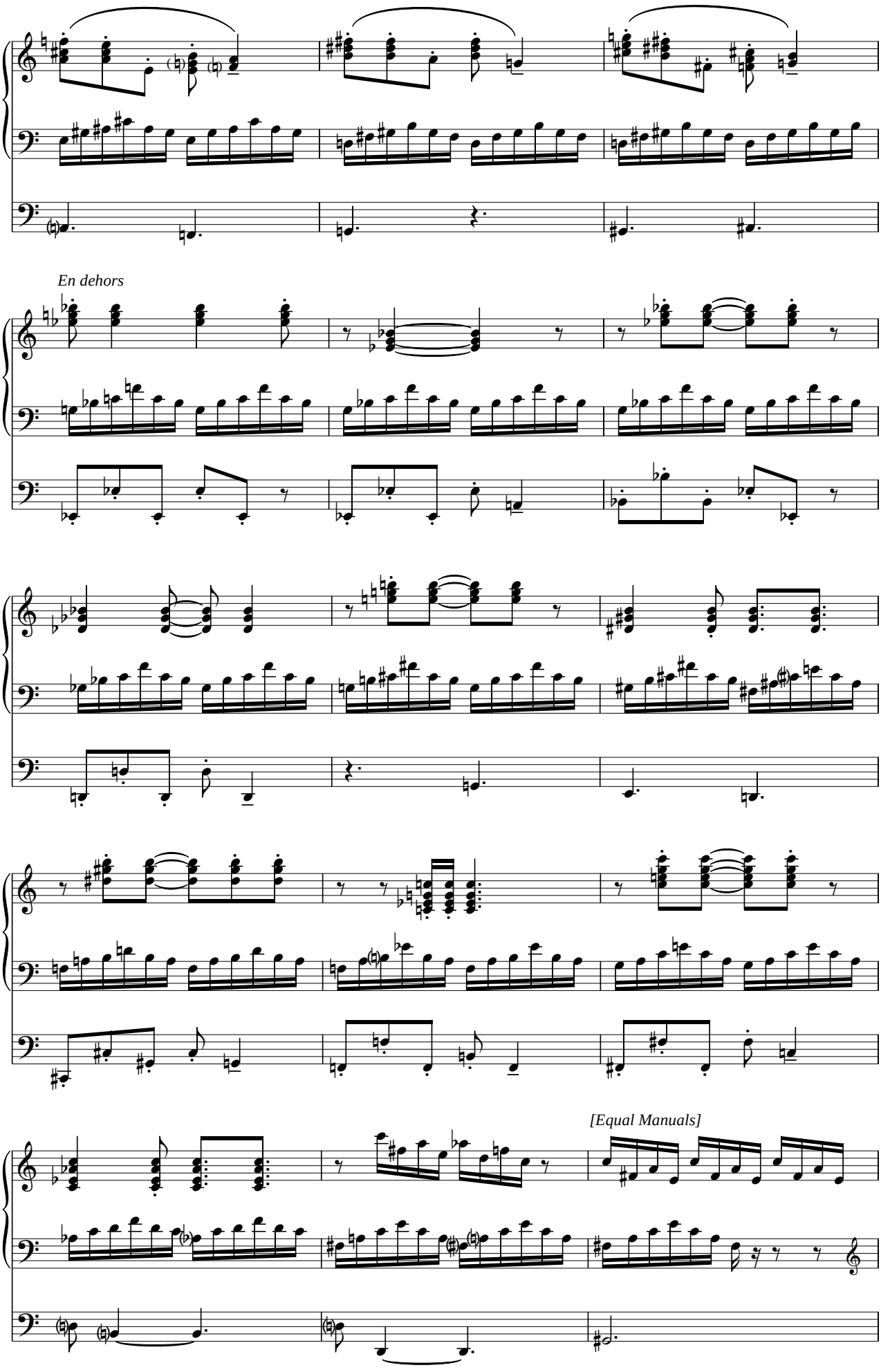
Allegro Molto

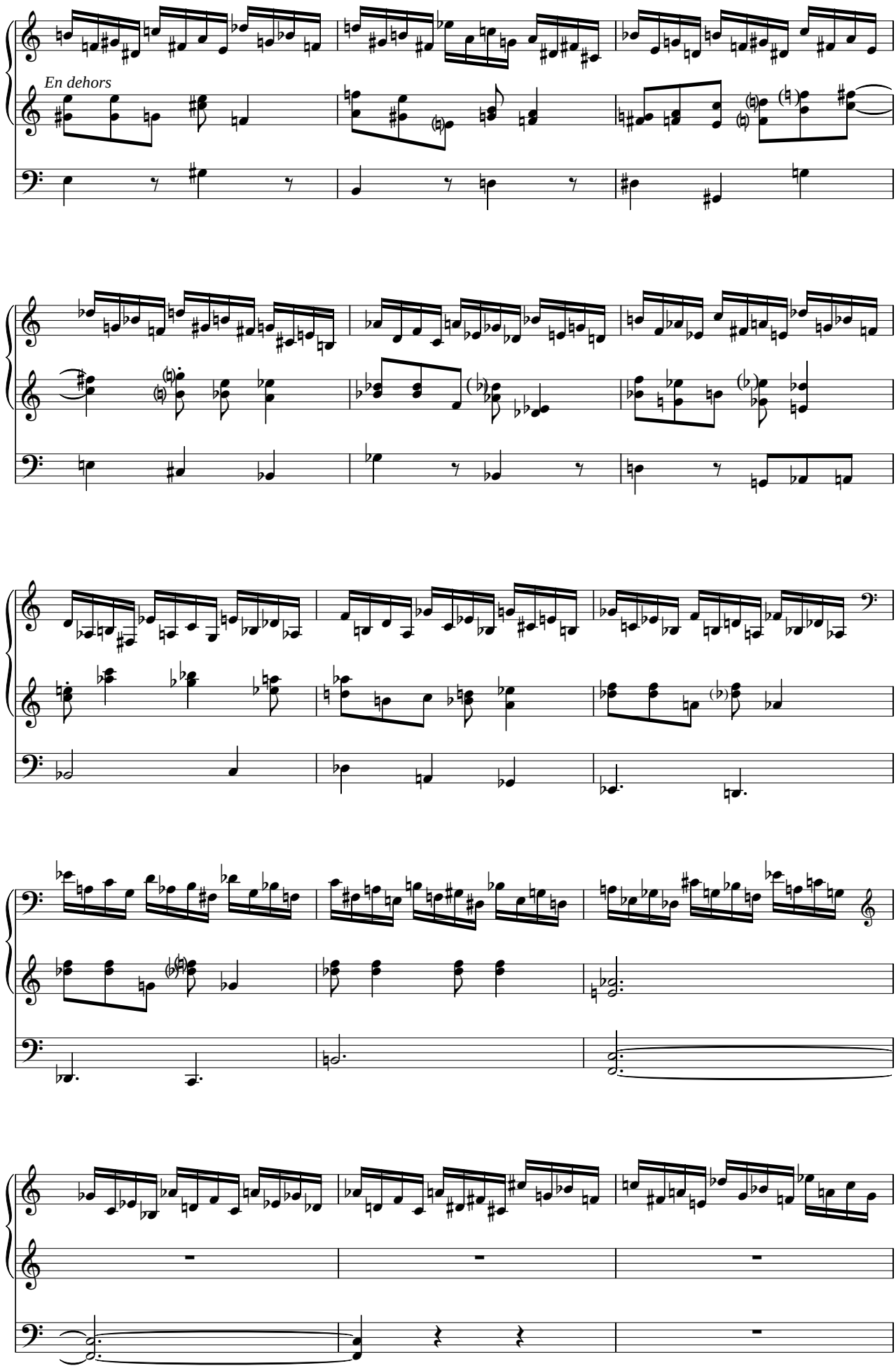


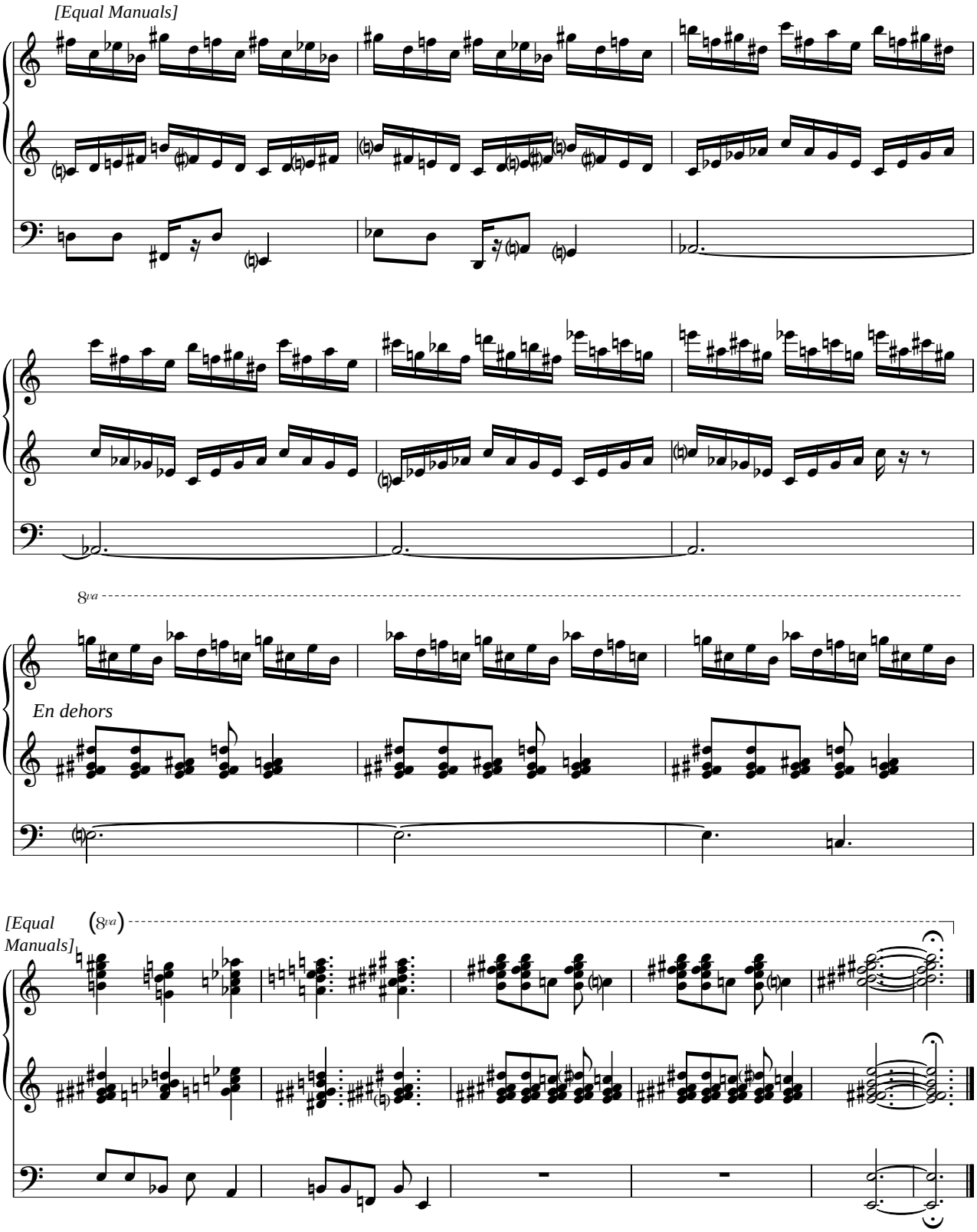

8va
(8va)
loco
En dehors


En dehors

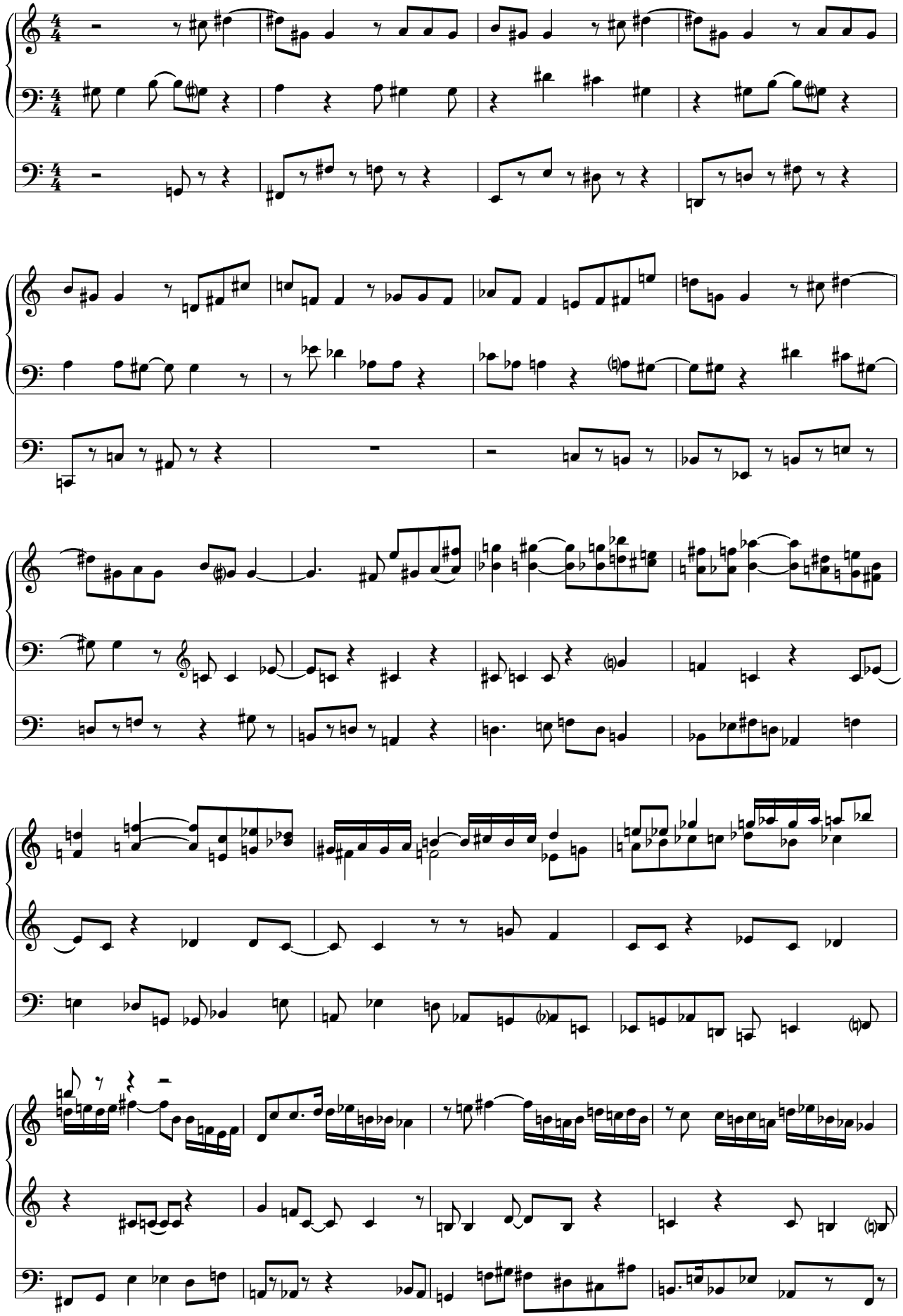

[Equal Manuals]

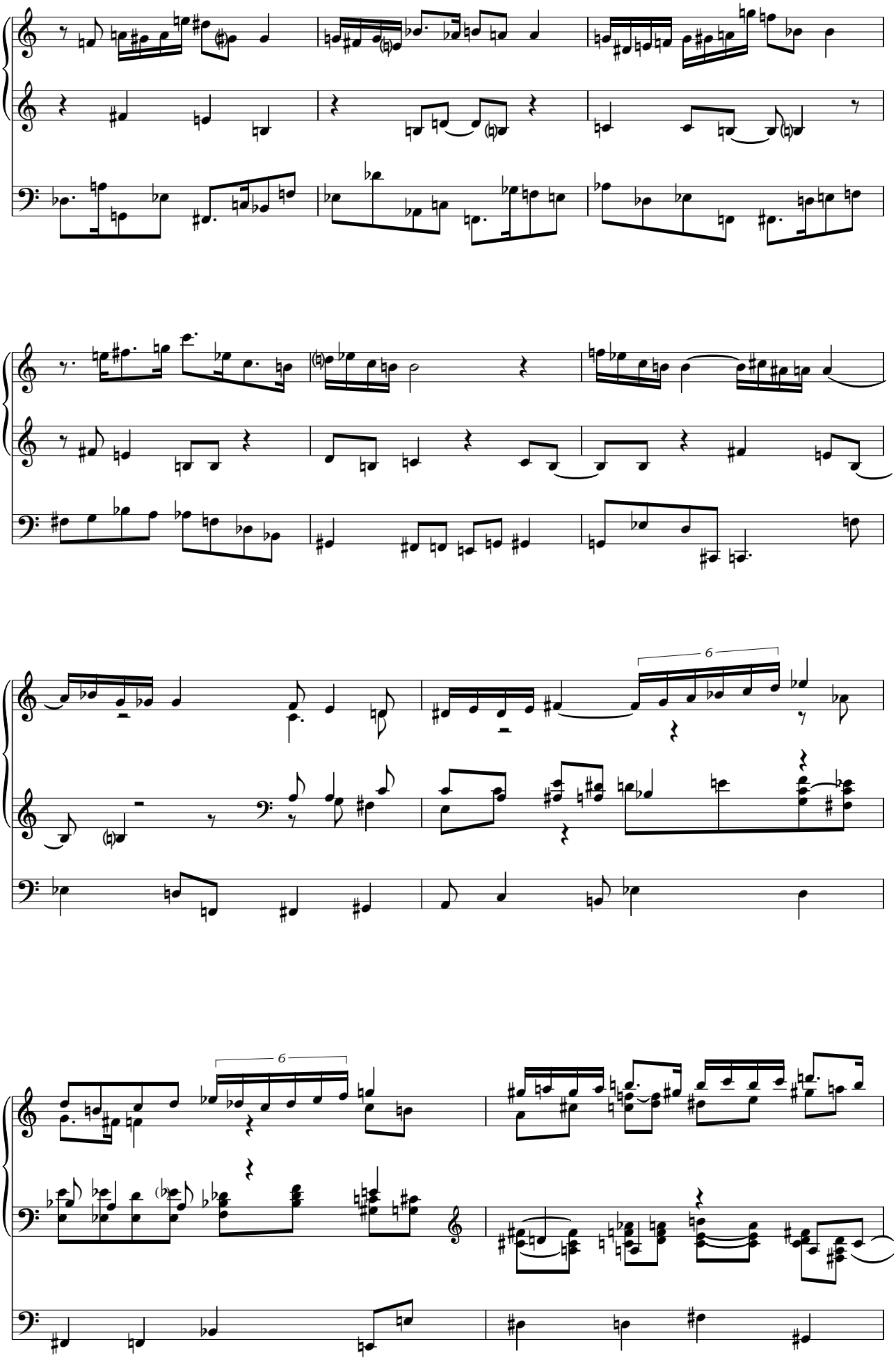

En dehors
[Equal Manuals]

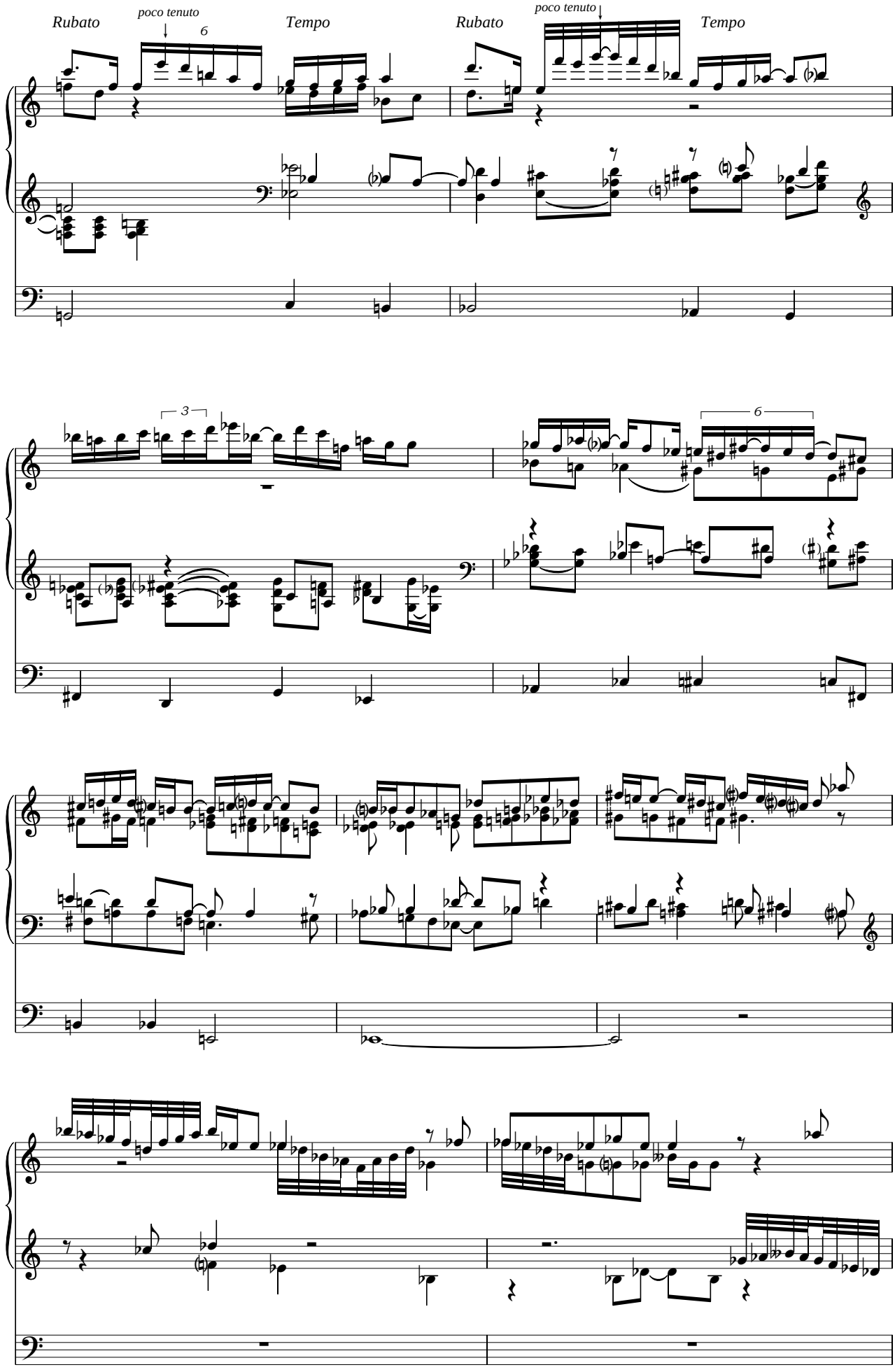

En dehors

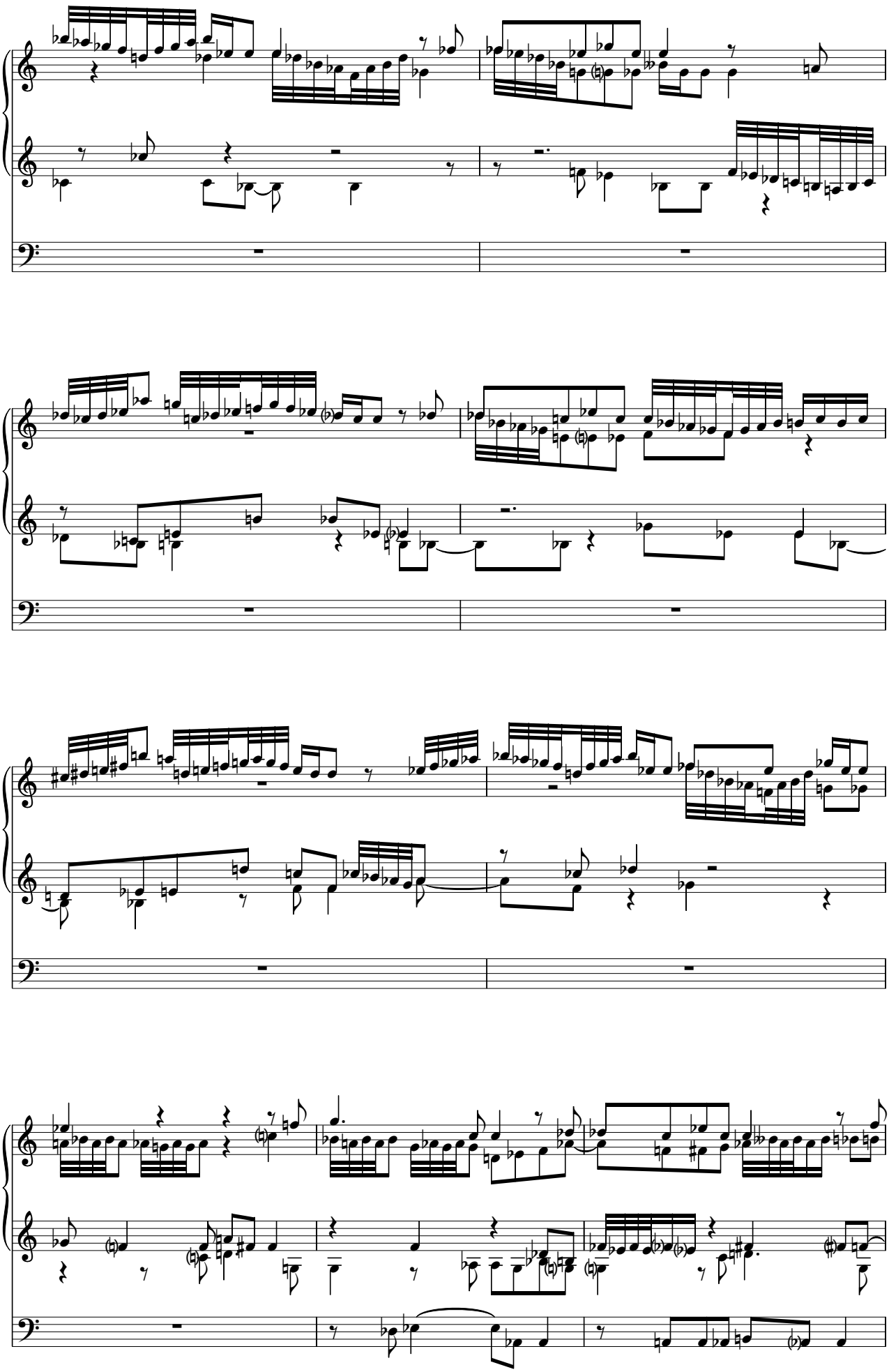

[Equal Manuals]
8va
En dehors
[Equal Manuals]
(8va)

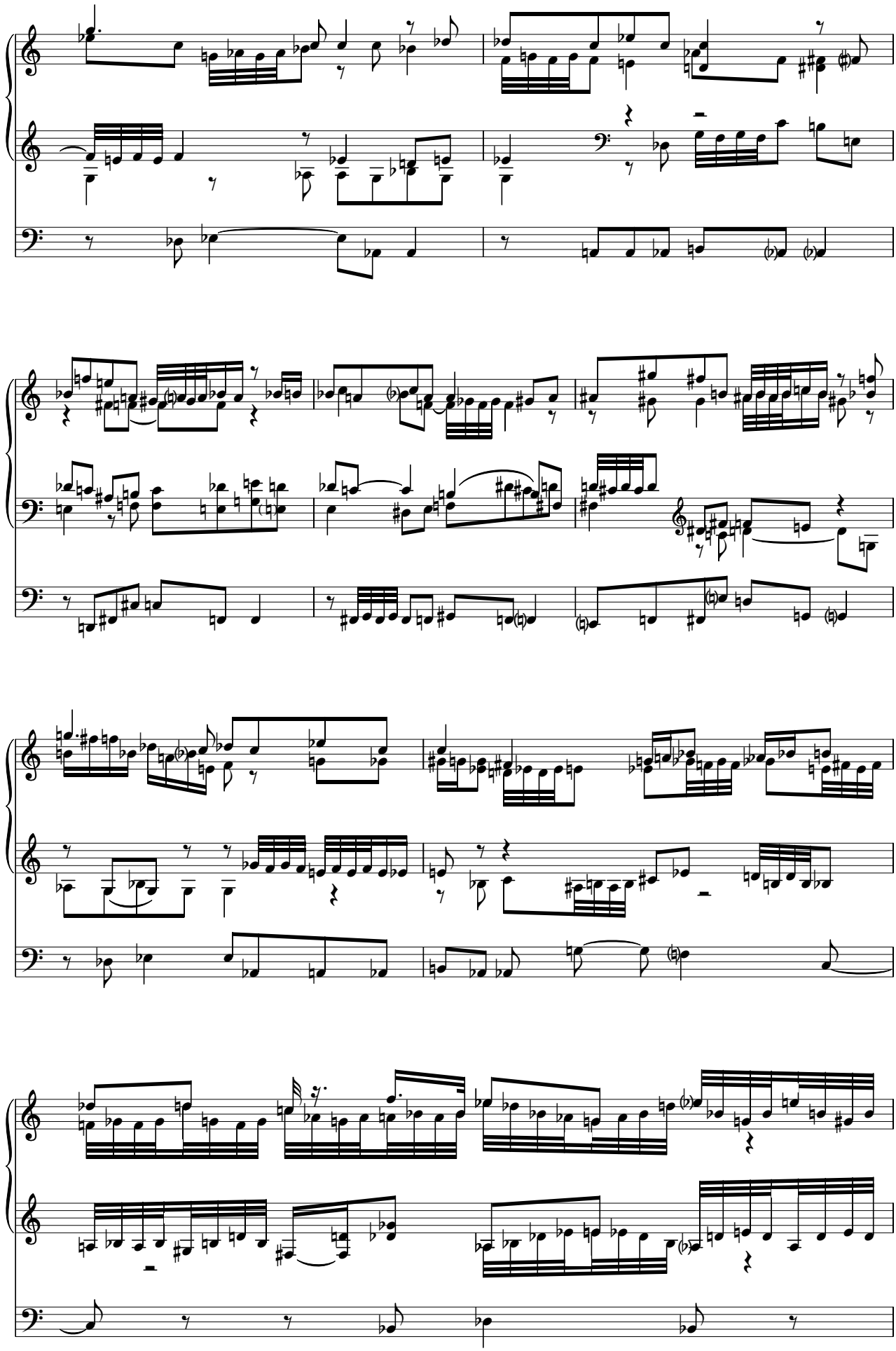
ANDANTE OSTINATO

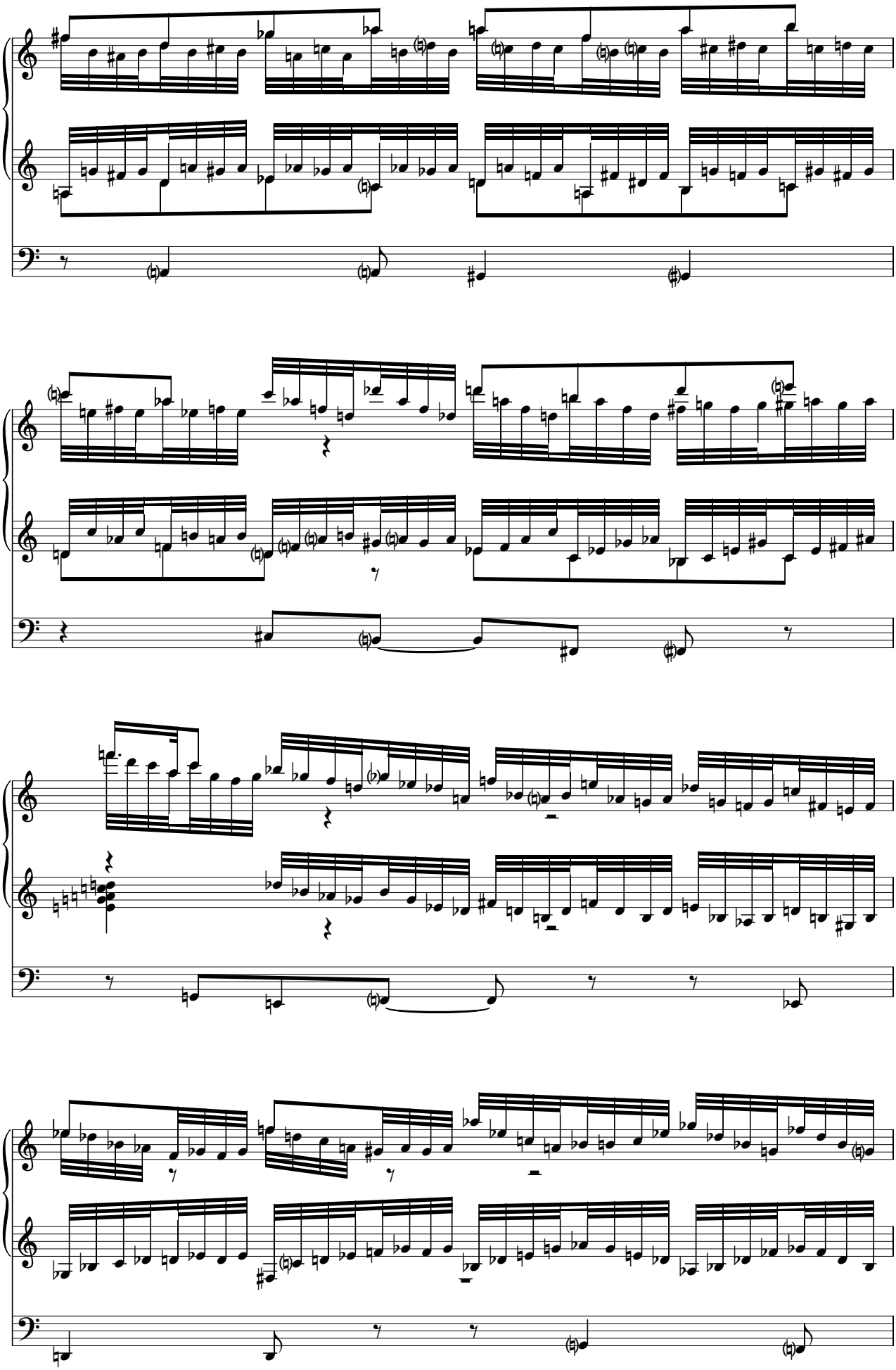


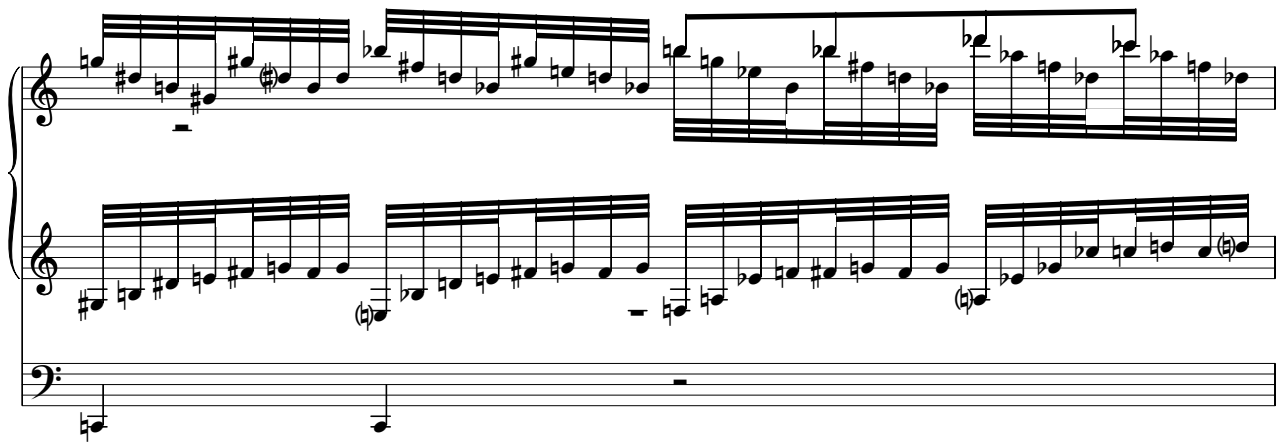

6
6

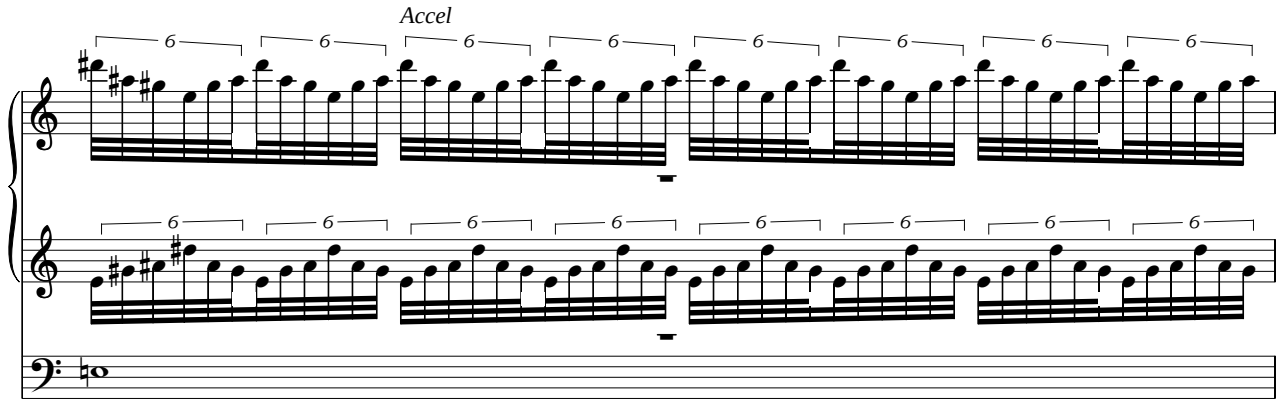

Rubato
poco tenuto
6
Tempo
Rubato
poco tenuto
Tempo
3
6

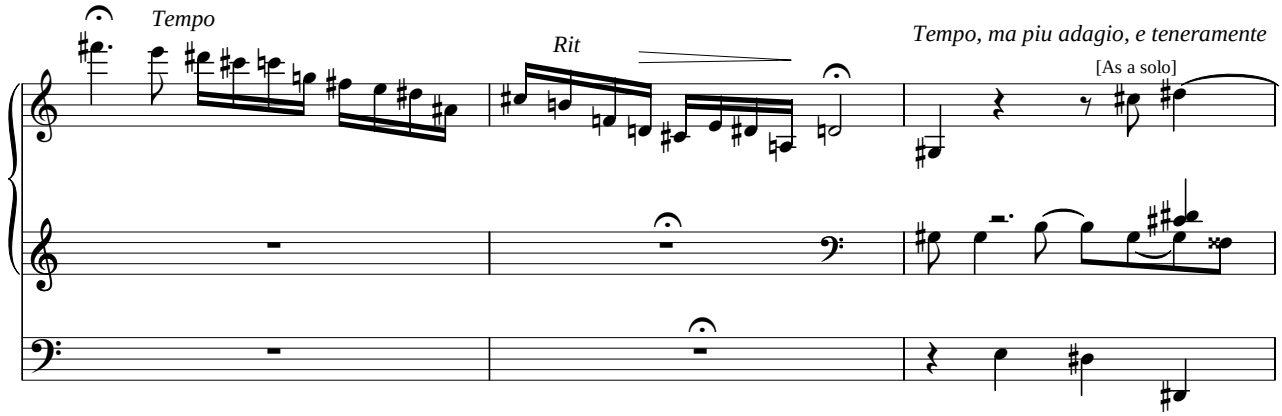


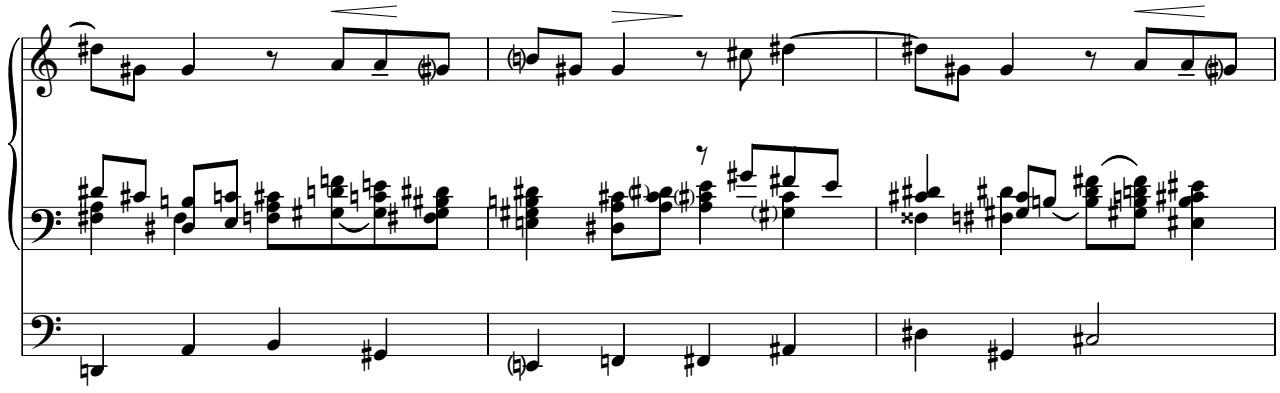


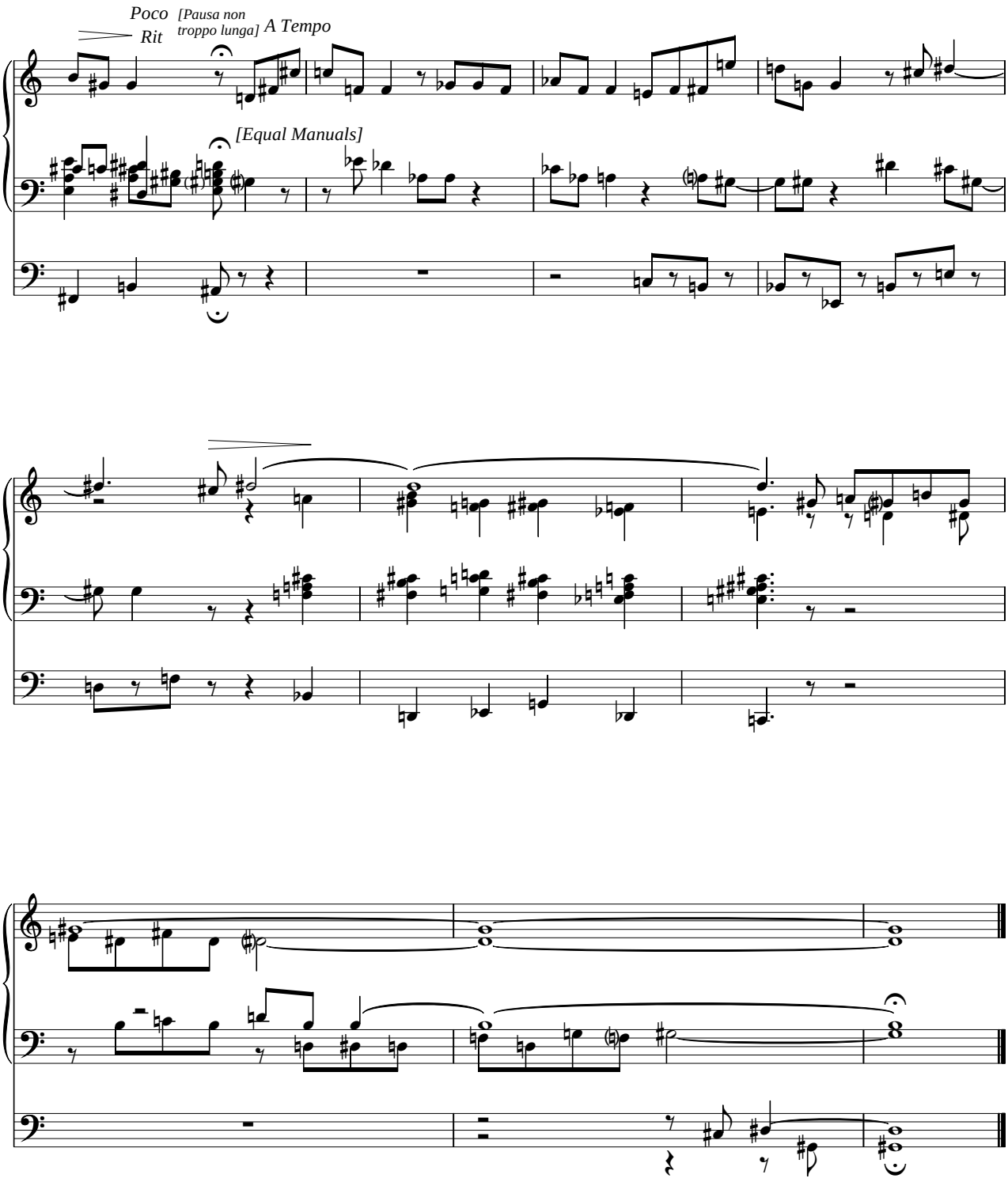





Accel


Tempo
Rit
Tempo, ma piu adagio, e teneramente
[As a solo]



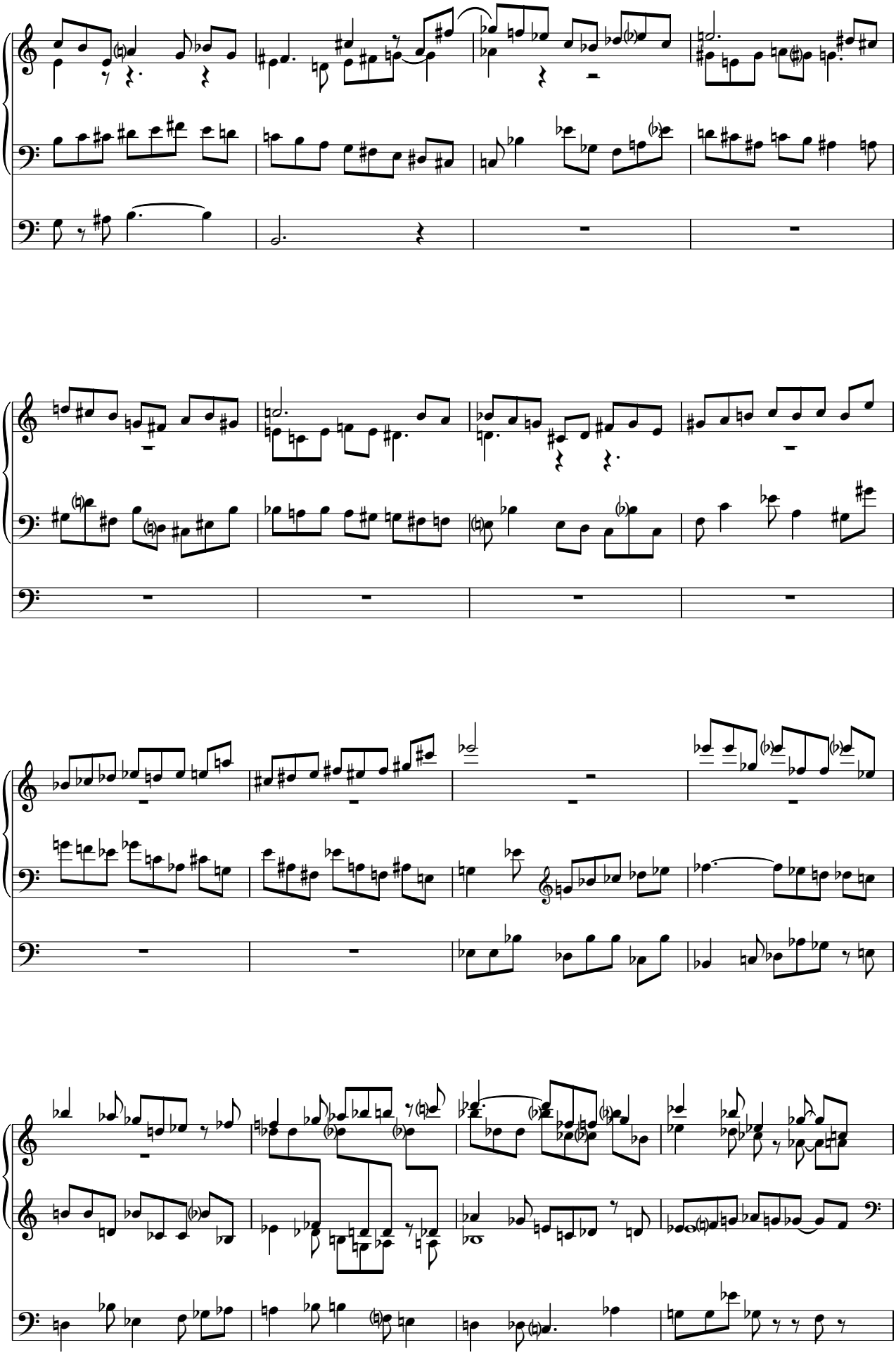

Poco
Rit
[Pausa non
troppo lunga]
A Tempo
[Equal Manuals]

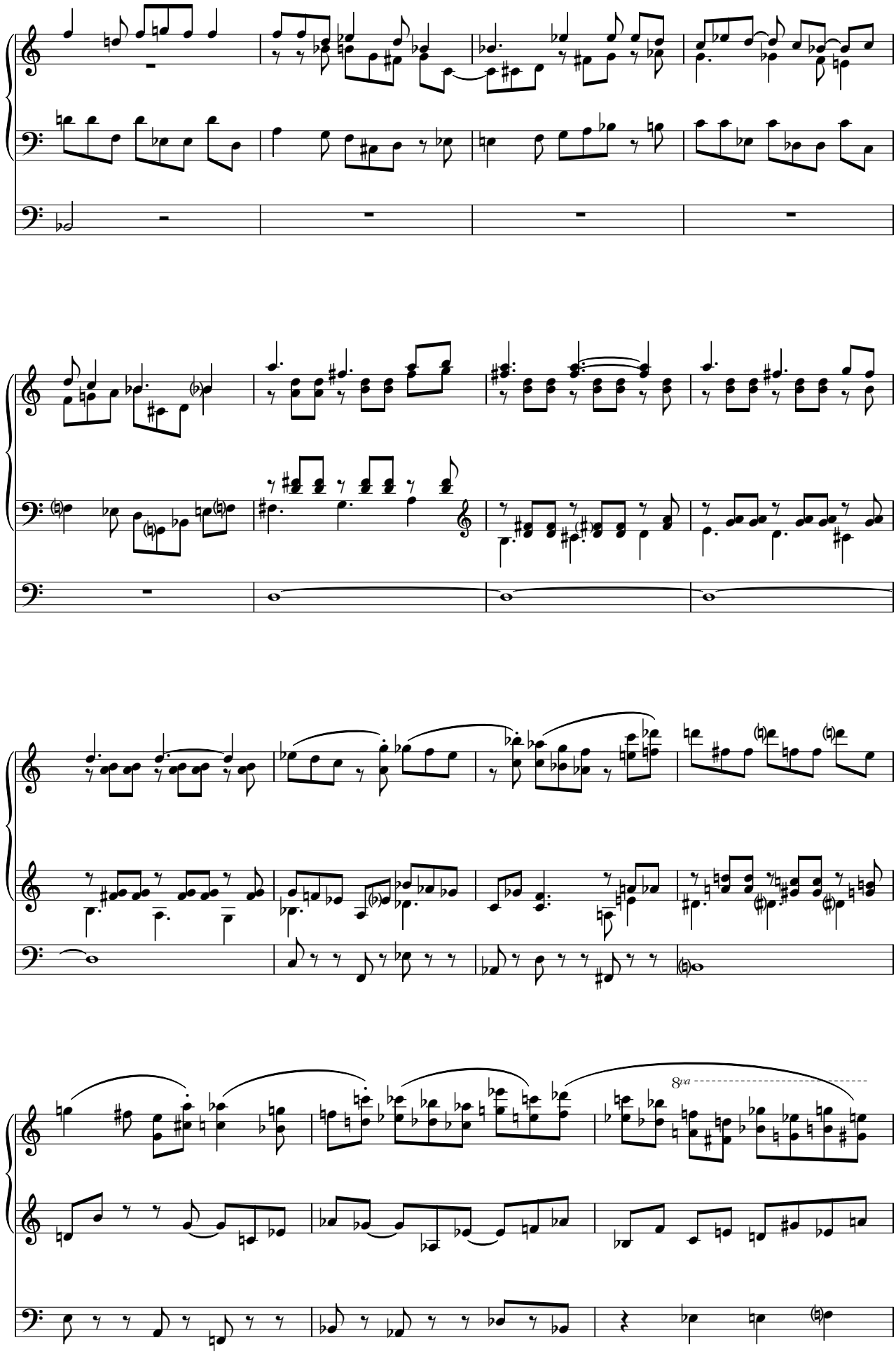
TU ES PETRUS IN FUGA

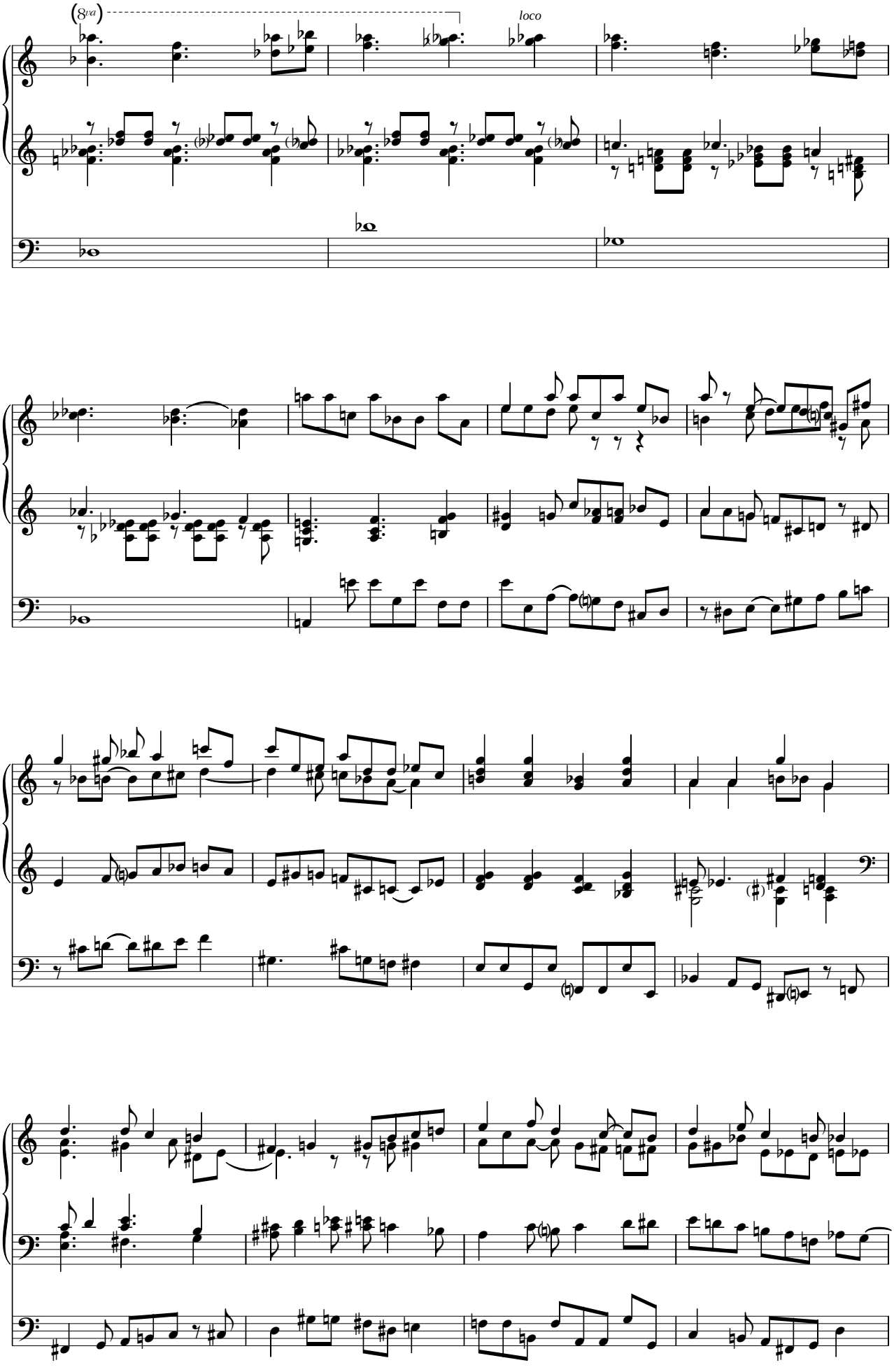
Tempo comodo, ma non lento

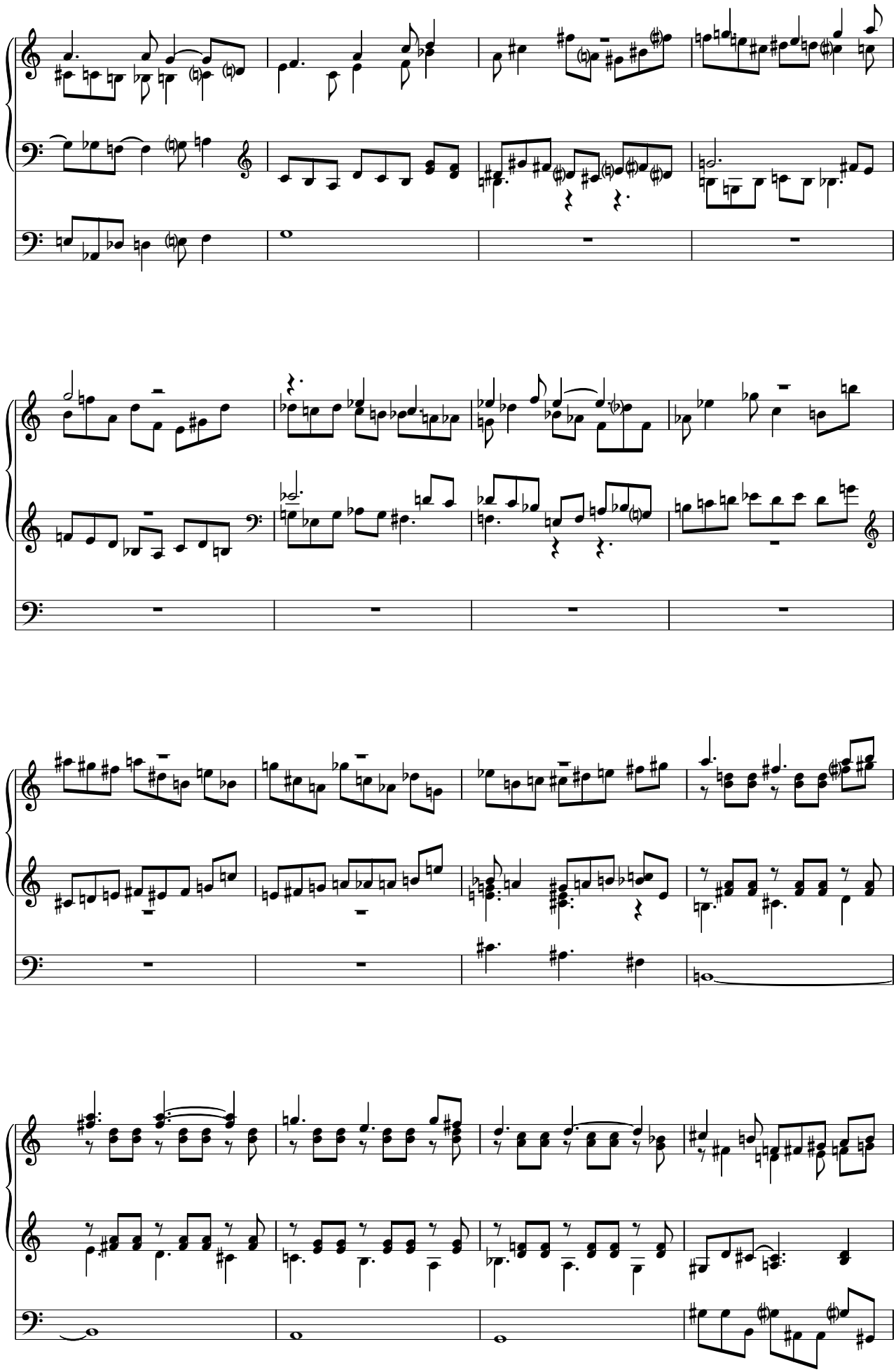
Poco
Rit

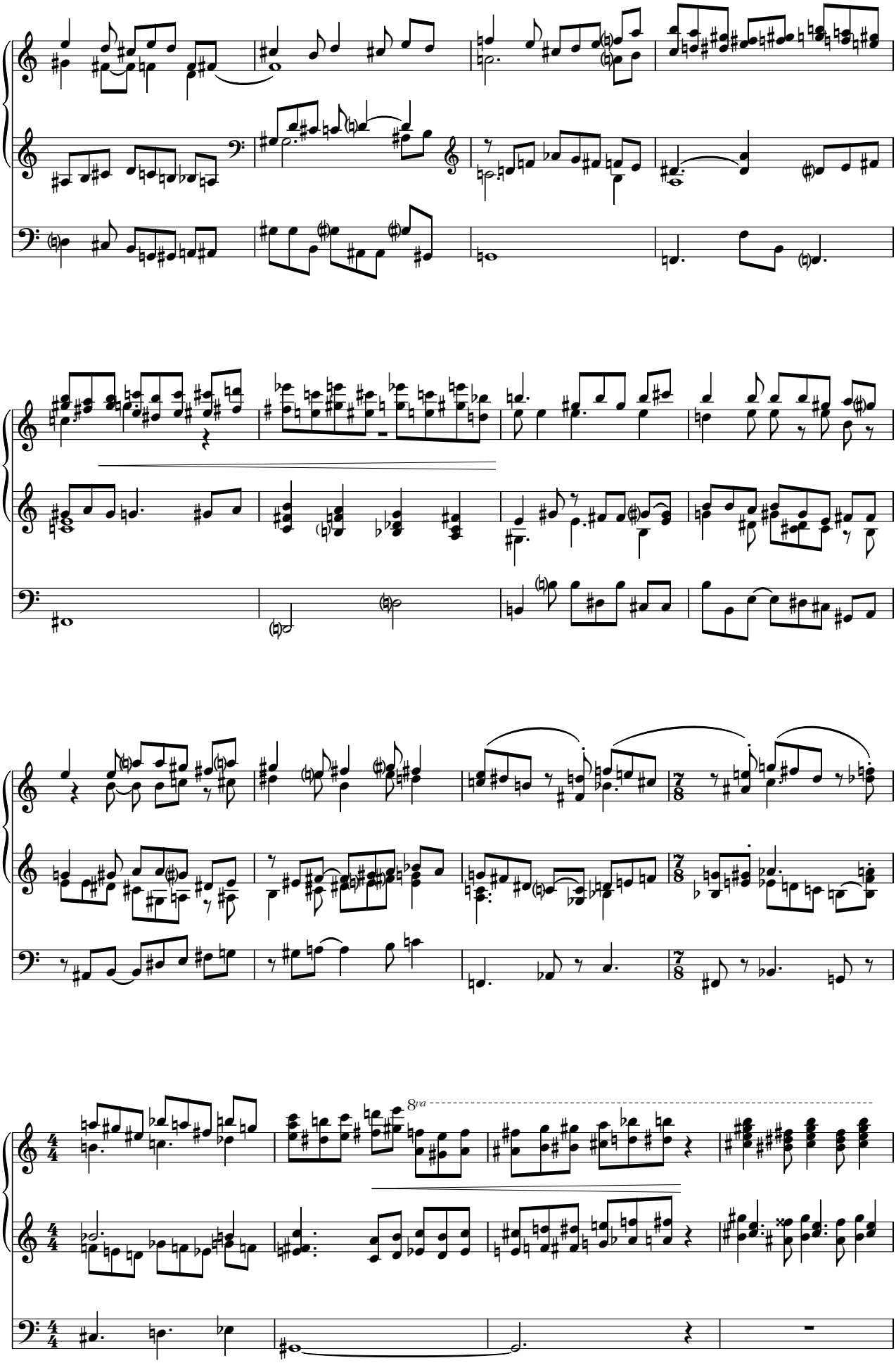
Allegretto con moto

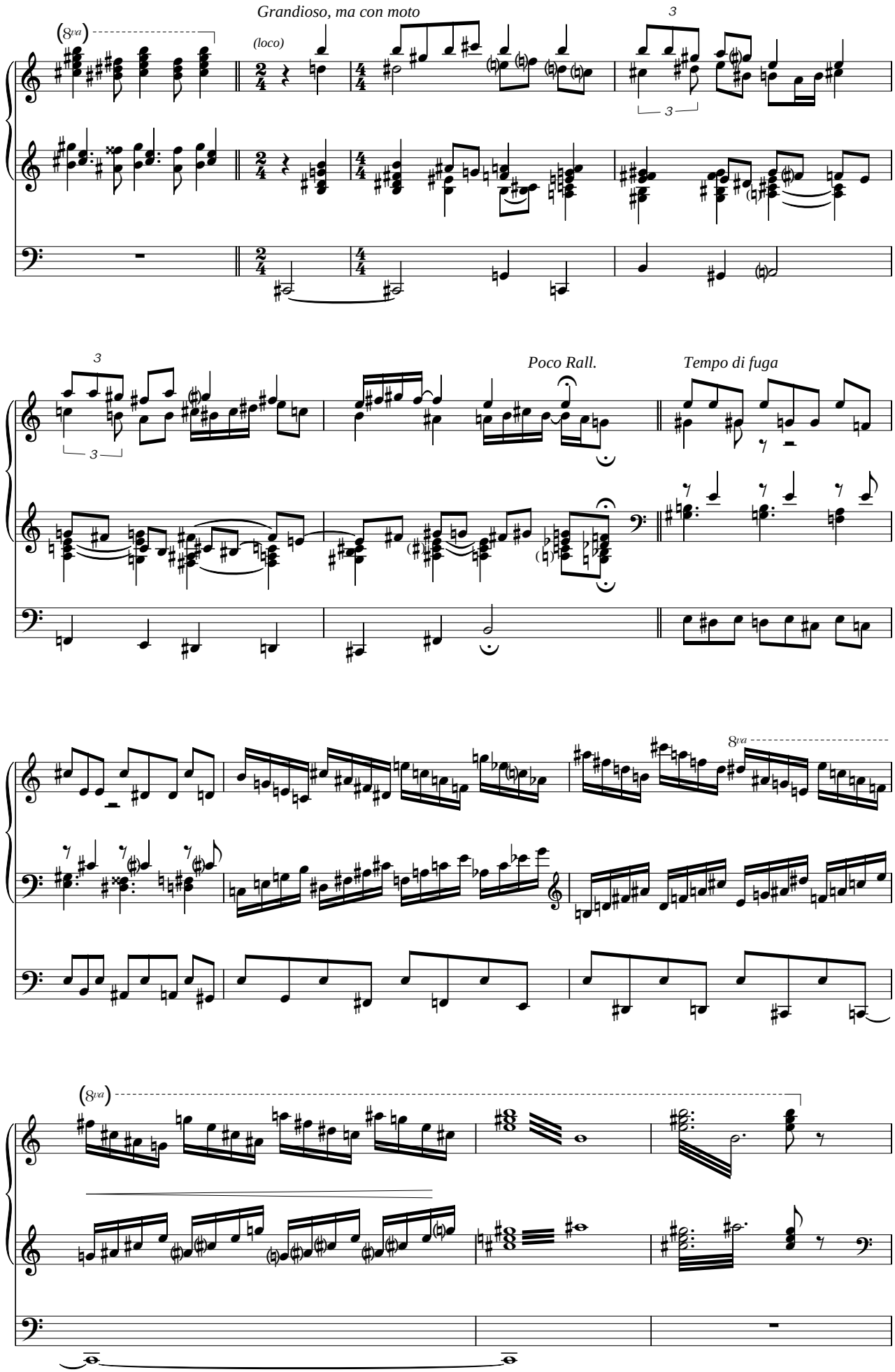


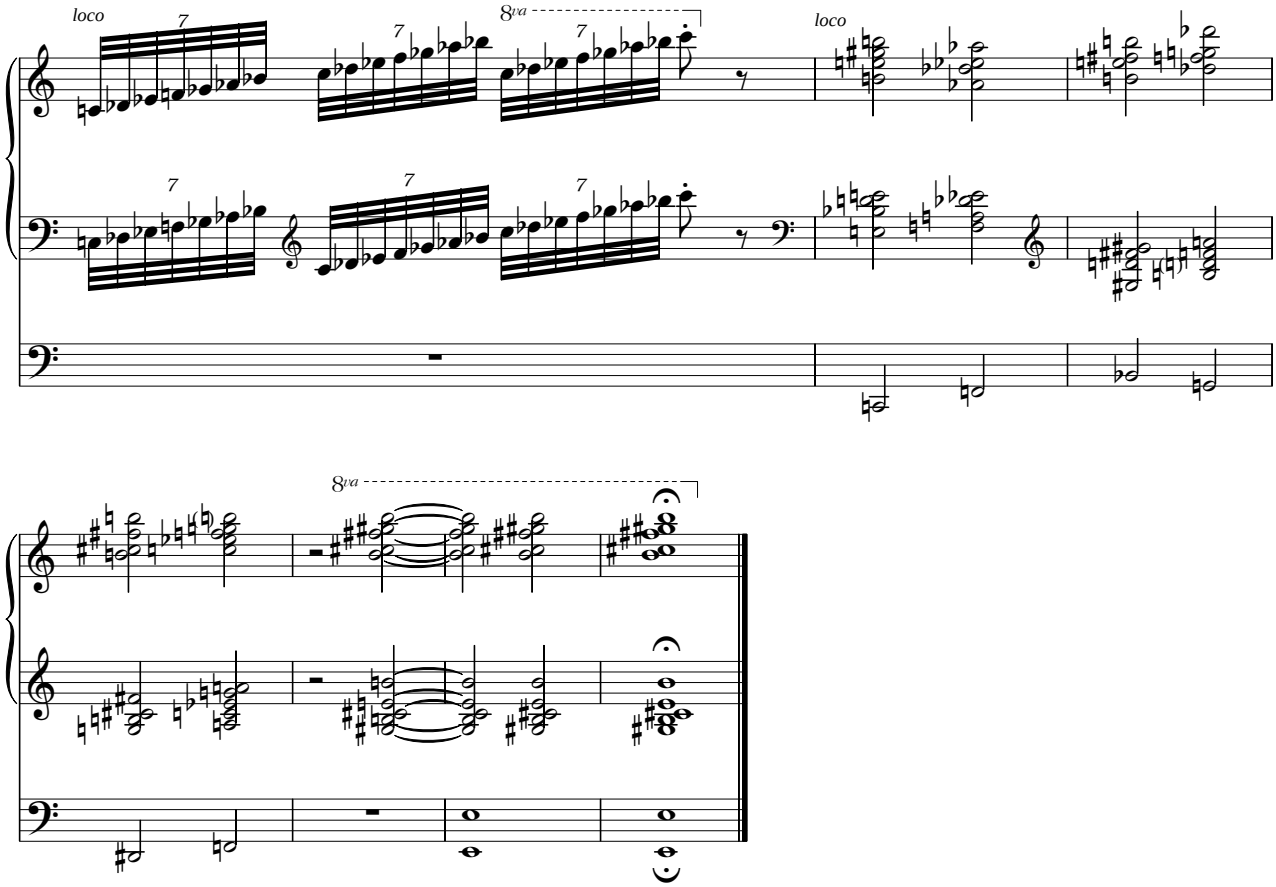

8va


(8va)
loco




8va


Grandioso, ma con moto
(8va)
(loco)
3
3
3
Poco Rall.
Tempo di fuga
8va
(8va)



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