English Music for the Cornett: Verses by Henry Loosemore and John Coprario from MS Drexel 5469

Edited by
Helen Roberts

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for Organ, Sackbut, Cornett and Violin

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Preface

Compiled over a period of around thirty years between the late 1620s and early 1640s, Henry Loosemore's Organ Book (NYpL, MS Drexel 5469) transmits organ accompaniments to a selection of choral music by leading English composers of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. The MS is copied in one hand throughout (Loosemore's own, according to Thurston Dart who surveyed and inventoried the source in 1960[1]) and provides a snapshot of liturgical musical performance practices in use at King's College, Cambridge during Loosemore's long tenure as organist there between 1627 and his death in 1670.

Along with 81 pieces of liturgical choral music (full and verse anthems and several items of service music) the MS includes two enigmatic instrumental works for a mixture of wind and string instruments with organ accompaniment: *A Verse for the Organ, a Sagbot & Cornute* by John Coprario, and *A Verse for ye Organ, a Sagbot, Cornute, & Violin* by Loosemore himself. No instrumental parts for these pieces have yet come to light, and the fragmentary nature of the source materials have so far hindered their appreciation by modern performers on period instruments. However, close engagement with Drexel 5469 and the performance practices with which it may have been associated have enabled new light to be shed on these two rare examples of instrumental writing with winds from pre-Civil War England. Both are presented here in modern performance edition for the first time.[2]

The two instrumental pieces, both unique to this source, are copied into the section of Drexel 5469 identified by Dart as dating from the period immediately before the suspension of Prayer Book services in English churches in 1644. He notes that the prevalence of other works by Loosemore himself (in comparison to earlier sections of the MS in which composers of national significance are well represented) suggests contemporaneity with a slowing in the of supply of new choral repertoire from other institutions, including the Chapel Royal, in the years before the Interregnum.[3] However, John Coprario died in 1626, so regardless of when the pieces were copied into the MS, at least Coprario's offering must date from significantly earlier. Despite their titles, both pieces have stylistic aspects in common with items from the fantasia-suite genre of which Coprario was an early exponent, and although both are missing the later movements, these were often based on dance forms and so their omission from repertoire designed for performance in church, as the nature of the source implies, should probably come as no surprise. The only other surviving examples of fantasia-suites for cornetts and sackbuts are two pieces by John Hingeston,[4] Master of the Music at Oliver Cromwell's private court. Although these are likely to date from somewhat later than the Drexel examples, they do survive with their instrumental parts intact. These pieces, along with further examples of early fantasia-suite compositions for violin, bass viol and organ by Coprario, have informed the reconstruction of the instrumental parts provided here.

1 Thurston Dart, 'Henry Loosemore's Organ-Book', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society,* 3 (1960), pp. 143–51 (p. 148).

2 An extended version of this introduction containing an in-depth discussion of the research processes behind the present edition, and of the sources and literature surrounding English performance practices with winds and organ during this period, can be found on the Research Catalogue (forthcoming, 2020). Ian Payne included a transcription of Loosemore's *Verse*, with reconstructed instrumental parts, in his published dissertation (Ian Payne, *The provision and practice of sacred music at Cambridge colleges and selected cathedrals, c.1547—c.1646 : a comparative study of the archival evidence* (New York, London: Garland, 1993), pp. 338–48.) Payne's reconstruction, which comes to very different conclusions to my own, was the starting point for practice-led investigation of this repertoire.

3 Dart, 'Henry Loosemore's Organ-Book', pp. 149–50.

4 GB-Ob MSS Mus Sch E.382, pp.152–153 (Organ); GB-Ob MSS Mus Sch D. 205, pp. 48–49 (Cornett); GB-Ob MSS Mus Sch D. 211, pp. 25–26 (Sackbut); John Hingeston, *Fantasia. For cornetto (trumpet), sackbut (bass trombone) & organ continuo*, ed. by Robert Paul Block (London: Musica Rara, 1971); John Hingeston, *Fantasia. For 2 trumpets (cornetti), bass trombone (sackbut) & organ continuo*, ed. by Robert Paul Block (London: Musica Rara, 1971).

The appearance of instrumental pieces in liturgical organ books is rare in seventeenth-century England. Even the large collection of partbooks at Durham Cathedral,[5] which transmit a significant proportion of surviving cathedral repertoire from this period, contain only two organ voluntaries, and no music survives that can be directly associated with the two cornett and two sackbut players who were in the regular employ of many English liturgical establishments throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. Recent research has established a set of performance practice parameters surrounding the use of winds in liturgical choral music in English cathedrals around this time,[6] but this does not answer the question of the role that the Drexel verses fulfilled in the King's College soundscape to which they clearly belonged. Both Thurston Dart and subsequently Ian Payne cite a poem by Nicholas Hookes of Trinity College, Cambridge, published in 1653, that hints at the type of performance scenario in which these pieces may have been played. It is worth quoting the following entertaining excerpt:

> We have good *Muisck* and Musicians here,
> If not the best, as good as anywhere:
> A brave old *Irish Harper*; and you know
> *English* or *French way* few or non out-go
> Our *Lutenists*; the Lusemores too, I think
> For *Organists*; the Sack-buts breath may stink,
> And yet old *Brownes* be sweet; o'th' Violin,
> *Saunders* plays well, where *Magge* or *Mel* han't been,
> Then on his *Cornet* brave thanksgiving *Mun*,
> Playes in King's Chappell after Sermon's done:
> At those *loud blasts*, though he's out-gone by none,
> Yet *Cambridge* glories in *your self* alone:[7]

The poem is addressed to a 'Mr Lilly, Musick-Master of Cambridge' who, by the evidence of the poem's opening lines, was a local viol player.[8] It gives a list of personnel associated with performances in King's College after the Sunday sermon (presumably recalling a time before the suspension of choral services), and the correlation between the line-up of instruments Hookes provides and those for which Henry Loosemore wrote his *Verse* hints at the type of scenario in which his piece, and presumably others like it now lost, may have been heard. Dart identifies 'Magge' and 'Mel' as two violinists in the royal band of Charles I, favourably comparing the standard of violin playing available in Cambridge with that of the finest royal musicians.[9] Payne identifies the sweet-breathed sackbut player as John Browne, leader of the Cambridge waits from 1641–2,[10] and I suggest that 'brave thanksgiving *Mun*' could possibly be associated with Edmund Salter, also a Cambridge wait. Salter's probate records show him owning three lutes and three cornetts at the time of his death in 1657.[11] Like evidence from Durham, where the cathedral band were reported to play 'so loud that they may be heard half a mile from the church',[12] a rather lusty performance style is implied in Hookes' final lines.[13]

5 For a thorough analysis of the contents of Durham's seventeenth-century partbooks, and of their copying and productions, see Brian Crosby, 'The Choral Foundation of Durham Cathedral, *c*.1350–*c*.1650' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Durham University, 1993), pp. 221–332.

6 Helen Roberts, 'Wind Instruments in Provincial English Cathedrals *c*.1580–*c*.1680: Towards a Performance Practice' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, 2020).

7 Nicholas Hookes, *AMANDA, A SACRIFICE To an Unknown GODESSE, OR, A Free-will Offering Of a loving Heart to a Sweet-Heart* (London: Humphrey Tuckey, 1653), p. 58.

8 More information about 'Mr Lilly' can be found here: Andrew Ashbee, 'Lilly [Lillie], John.' *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001). Accessed 16th July 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.16657>

9 Dart, 'Henry Loosemore's Organ-Book', p. 151.

10 Payne, *Provision and Practice*, pp. 150, fn. 4. Payne cites: Alan H. Nelson, ed., *Cambridge 2: Editorial Apparatus*, Records of Early English Drama (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).

11 Nelson, *REED Cambridge*, p. 745. The crossover of personnel between the civic waits band and the musicians of the cathedral or chapel is documented elsewhere during the first half of the seventeenth century and the musical and political implications of this are considered in further detail in Roberts, 'Wind Instruments in Provincial English Cathedrals', pp. 123–136.

12 Peter Smart, *A short treatise of altars, altar-furniture, altar-cringing, and musick of all the quire, singing-men and choristers, when the holy Communion was administered in the cathedrall church of Durham* (London, 1643), p. 19.

13 See Roberts, 'Wind Instruments in Provincial English Cathedrals', pp.153–165 for a discussion of performance aesthetic in vocal music of this period, informed by performance practice considerations.

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The reconstructed instrumental parts in this edition reflect the findings of practice-led research into the relationship between the English transposing organ in widespread use in the British Isles up until the Restoration, and the Christ Church cornetts, two instruments purchased by Christ Church Cathedral in 1605 and still preserved, in excellent condition, in the library of Christ Church, Oxford. This research was carried out during a workshop in November 2018 at the University of Birmingham. During the workshop, I had the use of the St Teilo organ, an instrument built by Martin Goetze and Dominic Gwynn for the Experience of Worship project between 2010 and 2011.[14] The instrument is effectively in F, pitched a fourth higher than 'singing' pitch, but with an additional fold-down 'modern' keyboard enabling use of the instrument in both its native 5' pitch and in modern C. Use of this organ demonstrated that the extended range of the organ parts as transcribed in Drexel 5469, particularly at the low end of the bass register, meant that they could not be played in their entirety using the additional 'modern' keyboard (with a range from *F* to *d'''*) with which the St Teilo organ is fitted, designed to render 'at pitch' performances. Use of the historical keyboard, with a range from *C* to *a''*, however, matches the range of the organ parts perfectly, resulting in a sounding pitch of a 4th higher than notated pitch. When adopted by the winds, this resultant upwards transposition also has the added advantage of lifting the instrumental parts (extrapolated from the individual lines of the organ part) out of the extreme low end of the register of both the cornett and sackbut, and bringing them in line with the ranges we might expect to encounter in writing for these instruments based on continental and English sources.

In addition to this primary upwards transposition by a 4th necessitated by the organ, the Christ Church cornetts are pitched approximately a tone lower than what is currently understood as the probable absolute pitch of both the Christ Church Cathedral organ (an instrument about which pitch deductions can be made from surviving correspondence relating to Restoration organ works carried out in Oxford)[15] and the King's College organ, built by Thomas Dallam in 1606. These are precisely the organs with which the Christ Church cornetts would have been played, and on which compositions such as those presented here may have been performed.[16] A secondary upwards transposition at sight by a tone in the cornett parts to reflect this relationship between the absolute organ and cornett pitches also has the advantage of placing the these parts in friendly keys, negating the addition of a flat brought about by matching the organ pitch. The same is true of the violin and trombone parts and results in a tessitura, range and key which would not be out of place in many compositions for this combination of instruments found in continental repertoire of this period.

These considerations of pitch and key outlined above have directly informed the reconstruction of the instrumental parts in this edition. In the Loosemore, this is a relatively straightforward process of assigning individual lines of the organ part to each instrument. The sackbut takes the bass line, the cornett the alto voice, and the violin the top voice, reflecting the order in which Loosemore lists the instruments in the title of his piece, and the order in which we might expect to find these instruments in continental repertoire.[17] In the Coprario, the top line of the organ part, with an upwards transposition of a 4th, would be anachronistically high for the cornett, requiring an alternative solution to be found. Examination of Coprario's writing for strings in a similar idiom to his *Verse* shows that the melody instrument part is often an amalgam of all three top voices in a predominantly four-voice texture, with material being taken mainly from the middle two voices, either at pitch or in octaves, to render the instrumental part.[18] This approach is corroborated by the cornett writing in Hingeston's *Fantasia: for one Cornet, Sagbutt and organ*, in which the organ and upper instrumental parts cross frequently, and in which organ counter-melody is a

14 See: http://www.experienceofworship.org.uk/project/introduction-and-overview/ [Accessed: 21st October 2020] for an overview of this project, and Sally Harper, P. S. Barnwell, and Magnus Williamson, eds., *Late Medieval Liturgies Enacted: The experience of worship in cathedral and parish church* (London: Routledge, 2017) for a discussion of the project's research findings.

15 Bruce Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2002), p. 91; Stephen Bicknell, *The History of the English organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 111.

16 Haynes gives a pitch of *a'*=489 for King's College and *a'*=490 for Christ Church Cathedral, with a 5Hz margin of error in either direction. Haynes, *Performing Pitch*, p. 458.

17 See for example Giovanni Paolo Cima's Sonata à 3 (violin, cornetto and trombone) from *Concerti Ecclesiaticci* (1610); Amadio Freddi's *Messa, vespro et compieta* (1616), scored for violin, cornett, 5vv. and continuo; Nicolaus a Kempis's Symphonia secunda à 3 (violin, cornetto and trombone) from *Symphoniae unis, duorum, trium, IV et V instrumentorum…* (1647); Giovanni Gabrieli's Canzon IV à 6, Canzon XIV à 10, and Canzon XVII à 12 from *Canzoni e sonate* (1615).

18 See for example Coprario's fantasia-suite for violin, bass viol and organ edited by Richard Charteris as number 98a in volume 9 of *Musica Britannica*, pp. 174–5.

clear feature of writing for this ensemble.[19] The bass instrument line in the fantasia-suites of both Coprario and Hingeston are almost exact transcriptions of the organ bass line, with the addition of occasional rests and rhythmic alteration, and this is the approach adopted here.

In order to reflect the historical performance context in which these two pieces may be situated, and to make the edition useful in a wide variety of modern performance scenarios, materials are provided in a series of key and pitch combinations:

Organ:

- A 5th higher than written pitch. For use with non-transposing organs where the instruments and organ are at the same pitch. In a performance at *a'*=440 this would approximate the original sounding pitch, based on current understanding.
- A 4th higher than written pitch. For use with non-transposing organs where the instruments and the organ are one tone apart, for example with an organ at *a'*=490 and instruments at *a'*=440, or an organ at *a'*=466 and instruments at *a'*=415.
- At written pitch. For use with English transposing organs with solo instruments whose absolute pitch is one tone below the organ, for example, an organ in F at *a'*=490 and instruments at *a'*=440.

Instruments:

- A 5th higher than notated in the organ part, for use with instruments at the same pitch as the organ. Alternatively, these parts can be used with an organ one tone higher and played as written to achieve the tone-up transposition required.
- A 4th higher than notated in the organ part, for use with solo instruments pitched one tone lower than the organ and transposing up at sight.

Transposition raises obvious questions when using meantone or other unequal temperaments for a given repertoire. Further information on choice of temperament for English music of this period can be found in the Research Catalogue article that accompanies this edition.

On the question of reconstructing instrumental parts for these two pieces, along with Loosemore's only other surviving instrumental piece for three viols, Dart had this to say:

> … the texture of all three pieces is too complex for one to be able to restore the missing parts with any degree of confidence. For the moment, therefore, the music must remain as dead as the men for whom it was in all probability composed: Saunders on the violin, 'brave thanksgiving Mun' on the cornett, 'old Browne' on the trombone, and Henry Loosemore himself at the Dallam organ.[20]

It is hoped that this edition goes some way to resuscitating these pieces after centuries of neglect, but further questions about the context in which they would originally have been performed and which may impact on modern interpretation of the materials concerned still remain. Dart presumes, not unreasonably, that Drexel 5469 was produced by Loosemore 'for use by him and his assistants in the organ-loft at King's',[21] but were there other spaces in the chapel, equipped with an organ, that might have been used to accompany these pieces? Given the lack of comparable repertoire, how closely would the instrumental parts have adhered to the notated organ lines, and was an element of improvisation involved in their performance? The mystery of these pieces is far from solved, but by presenting a wide range of performance materials here, I have sought to provide the modern musician with the tools to address some of the remaining performance practice issues themselves, and to enjoy two distinctive and interesting contributions to a repertoire now all but lost.

19 GB-Ob MSS Mus Sch E.382, pp.152–153 (Organ); GB-Ob MSS Mus Sch D. 205, pp. 48–49 (Cornett); GB-Ob MSS Mus Sch D. 211, pp. 25–26 (sackbut).

20 Dart, 'Henry Loosemore's Organ-Book', p. 151.

21 Dart, 'Henry Loosemore's Organ-Book', p. 149.

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Editorial Method

This edition aims to preserve the materiality of Loosemore's original organ book within the limits of practicality for the modern musician. The original six-line organ staves have been modernised. Loosemore's bottom stave originally has an F clef on the fourth line up and the top stave a C clef on the second line up. On the modern five-line stave these have been replaced with F4 and G2 clefs respectively. The MS shows a cut C time signature before the start of the piece and this has been retained. Note lengths in the edition are original. The barring is irregular in the source, with up to ten semibreves between barlines. Given the long phrase lengths that characterise particularly the Coprario, original barring has been maintained to preserve any sense of line that it might imply. Only rests that appear in the source are included in the edition. Mid-measure ties are original, but dotted notes over the barline in the original are represented as ties in the edition. Notes shown with a *custos* in the source are represented by a crossed notehead. The source contains no indication of note length in these instances and no attempt has been made to compensate for this in the edition.

Sharp signs are used to indicate naturals in the source; these have been modernised. In the source, accidentals apply only to the note to which they belong; this has been maintained in the edition, as have accidentals repeated in the bar that would be unnecessary in modern usage, reducing the need for editorial cautionary accidentals. The source is generally consistent in respect of accidentals, but some editorial additions have been made. In the organ score, these are represented by small accidentals in square brackets next to the note. Cautionary accidentals are used in only two places in the Loosemore to highlight moments of false relation and are presented in round brackets.

In the instrumental parts, accidentals are used in the same way as in the organ score, applying only to the note before which they appear. Editorial accidentals are shown above the note to which they belong and refer only to that note.

The organ part is given in score with the editorial instrumental parts for ease of ensemble performance. There are points in the organ parts of both pieces where the harmony is incomplete (see for example bb. 30–31 in the Coprario and the cadence in bar 27 of the Loosemore). The addition of missing notes is at the discretion of the performer. In the Coprario, the spread of the parts in the organ score is occasionally quite extreme. The performer might consider leaving out the very bottom part, where it is doubled by the sackbut, in these instances.

Critical Commentary

The MS source, whilst confusing to sight read due to the lack of alignment between voices, is nonetheless clear and accurate. The following corrections have been made to the organ transcription:

<u>Coprario</u>

b. 12, alto voice, 7th crotchet beat missing in MS

b. 20, tenor voice, 1st note only represented by custos on previous line in MS

b. 25, alto voice, 1st note, dot missing in MS

b. 32, bass voice, 12th and 13th notes notated as quavers in source

<u>Loosemore</u>

No corrections necessary.

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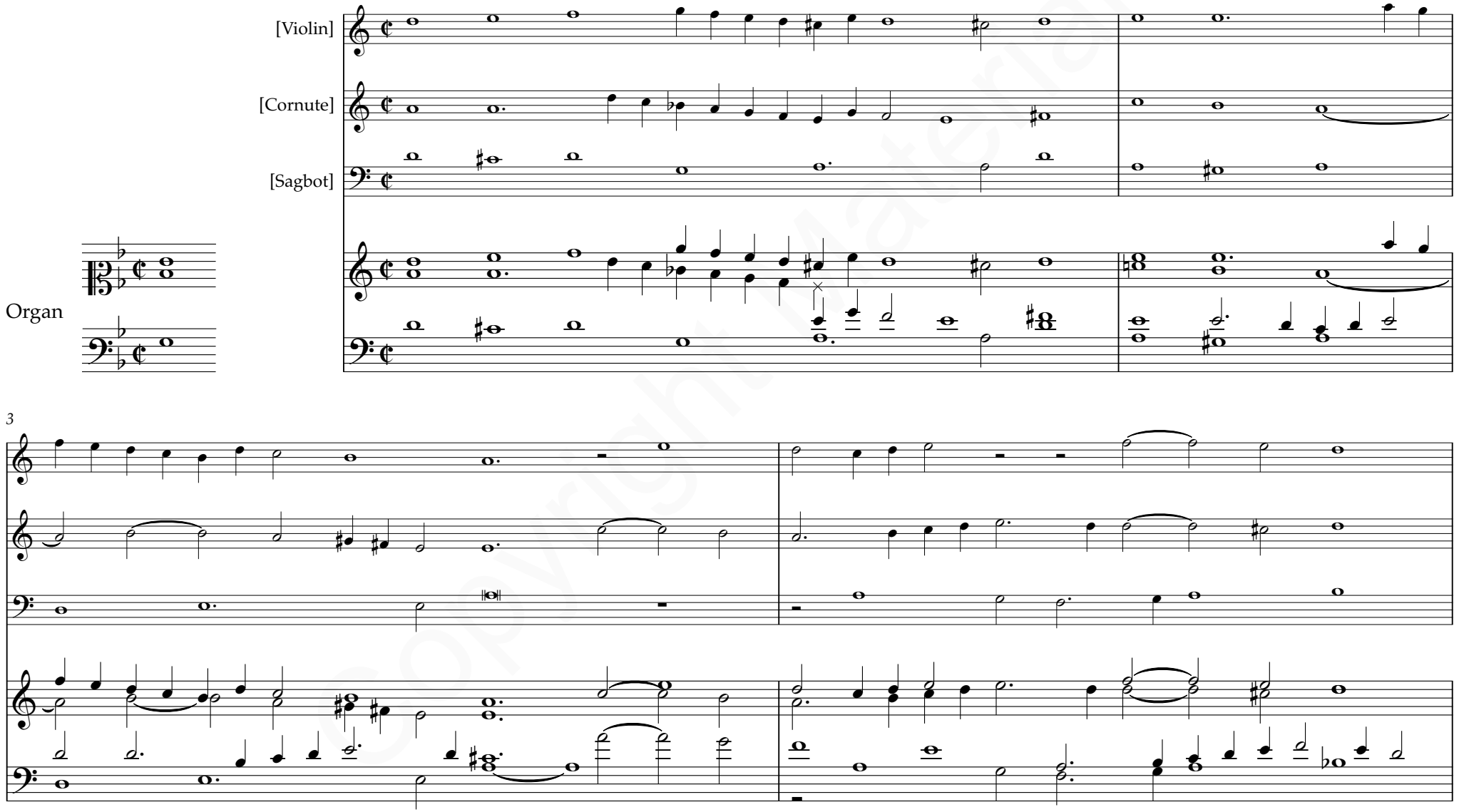
A Verse for ye Organ, a Sagbot, Cornute, & Violin

Organ part a fifth higher, editorial instrumental parts a fifth higher

Henry Loosemore
ed. Helen Roberts
NYPL MS Drexel 5469, pp. 202-4



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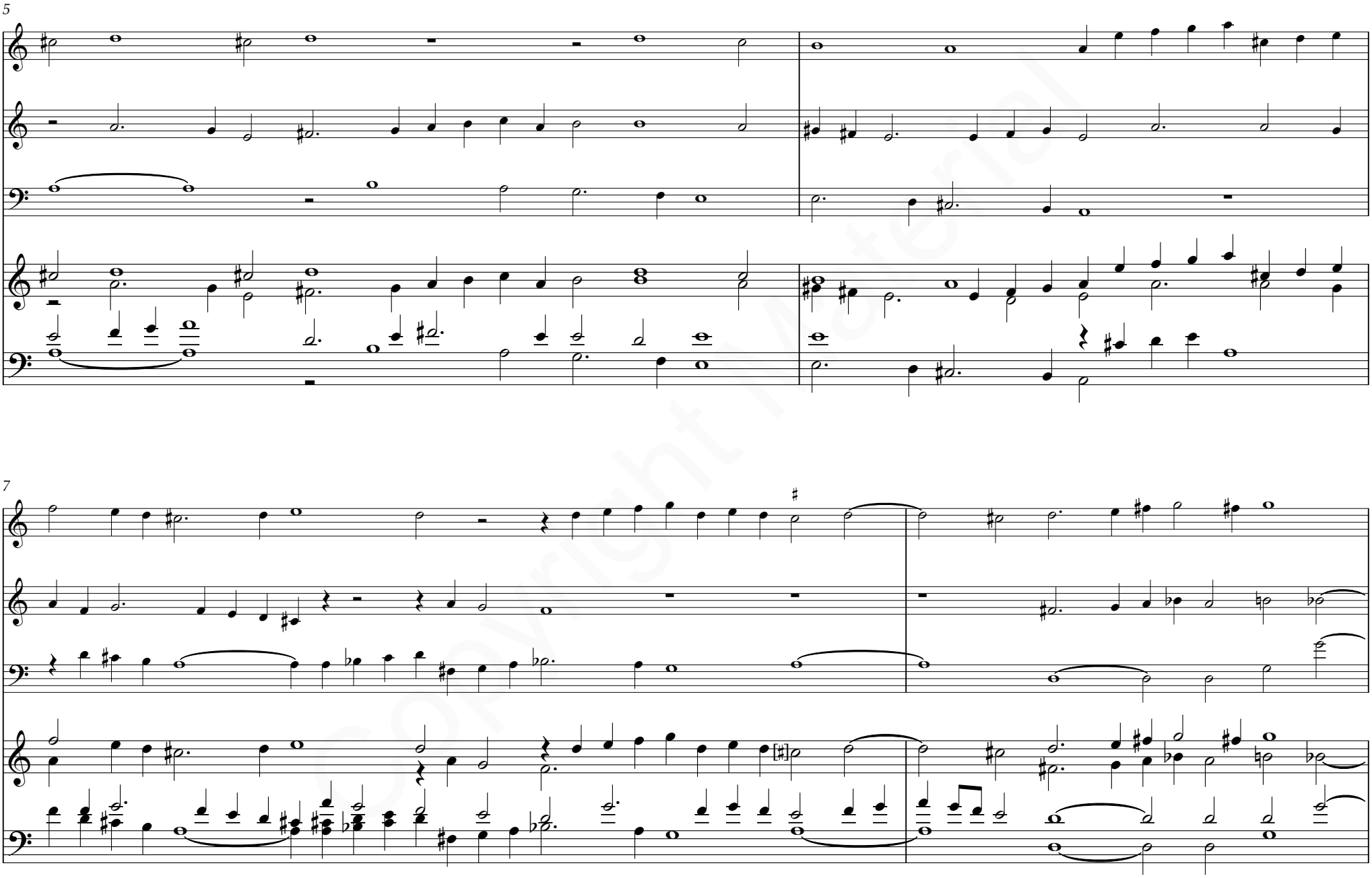

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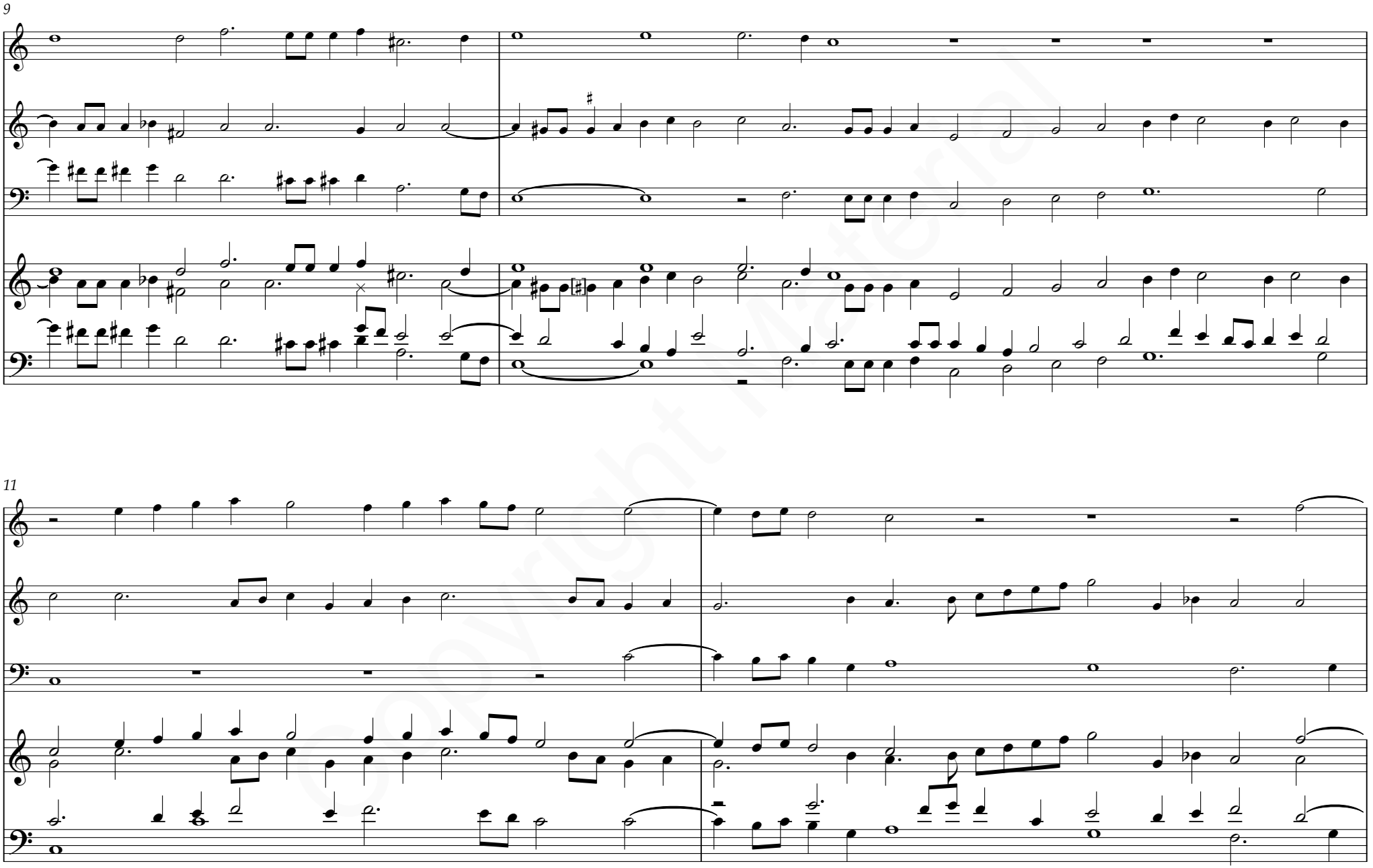

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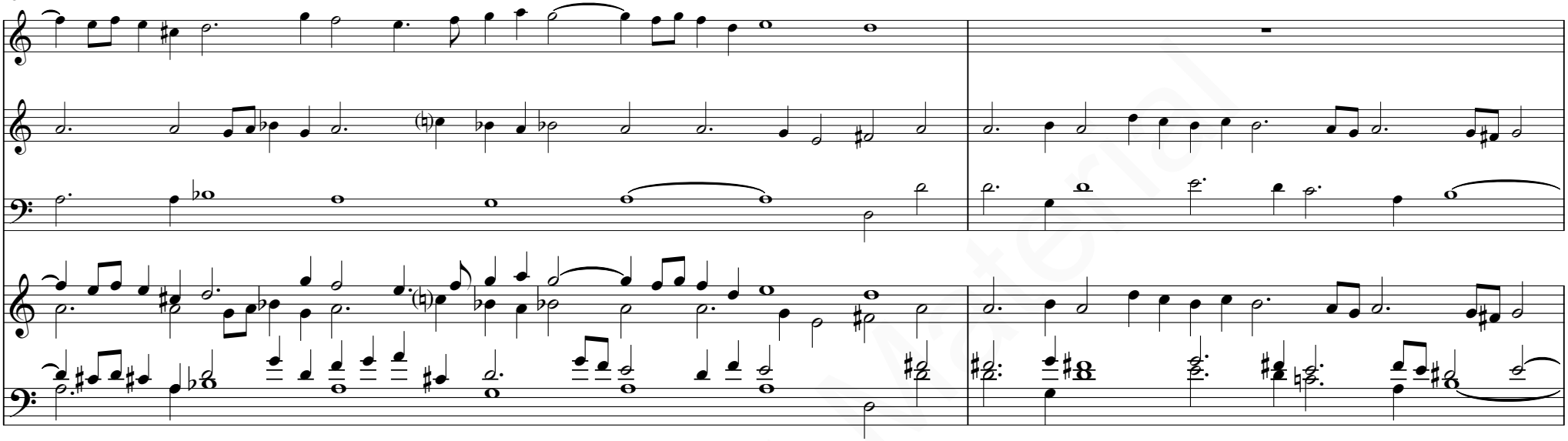

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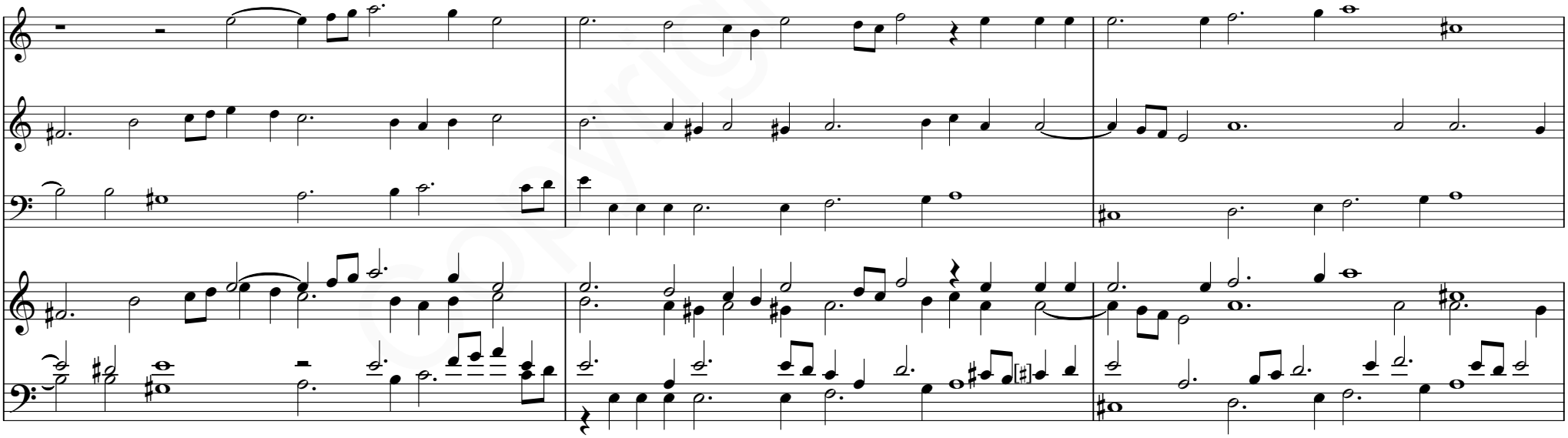

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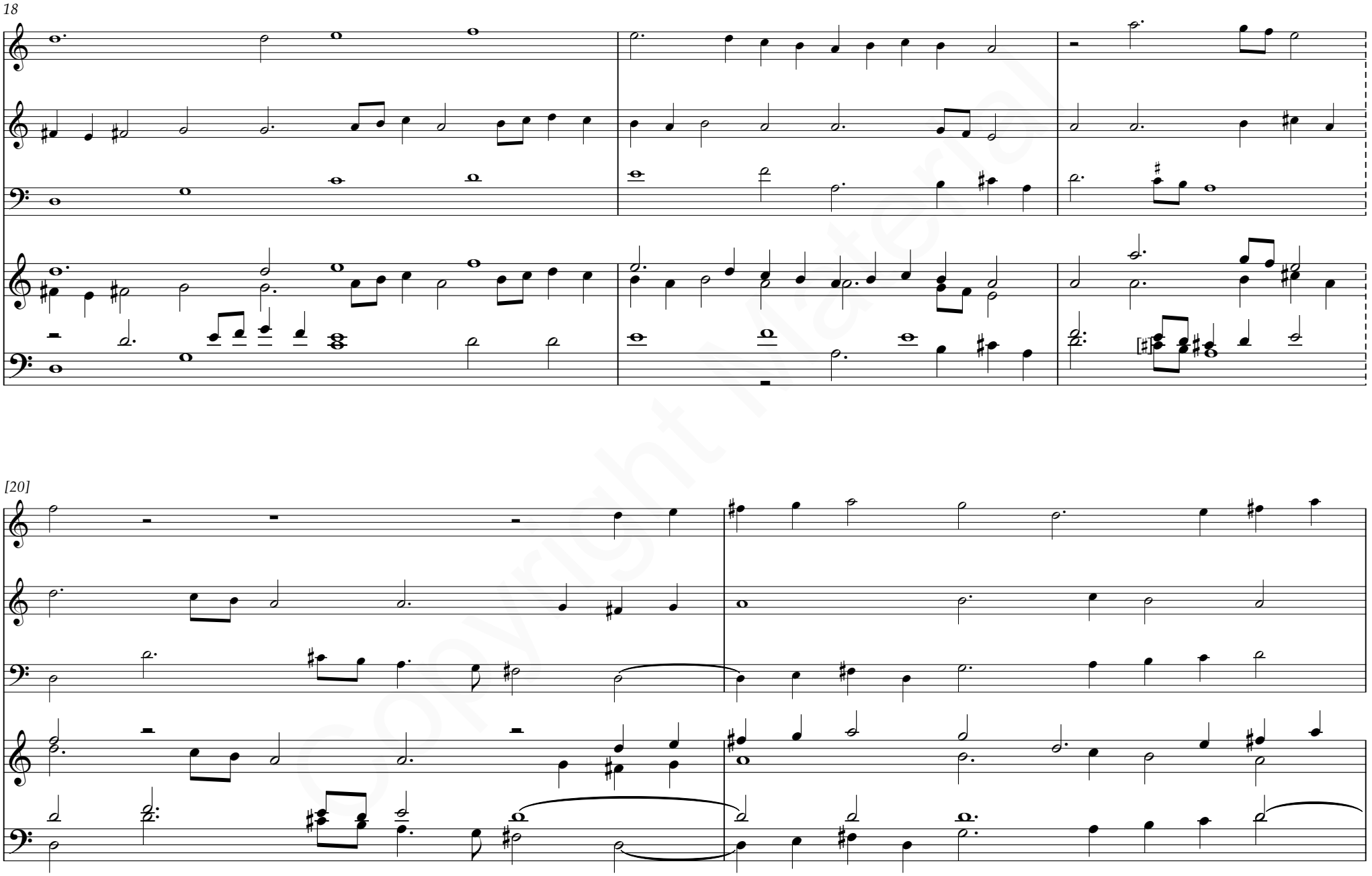

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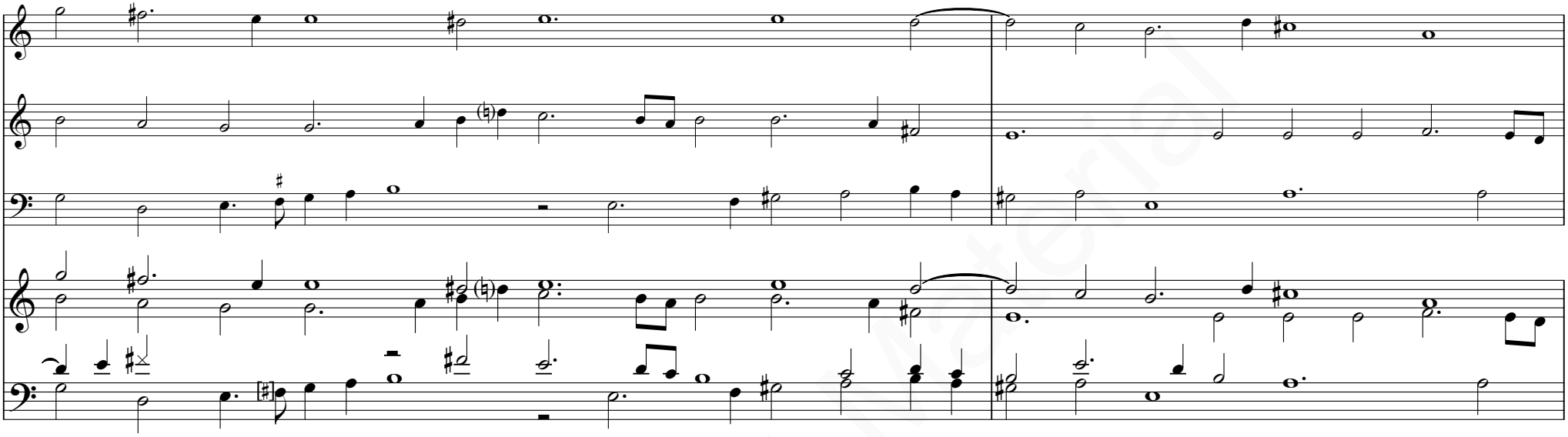

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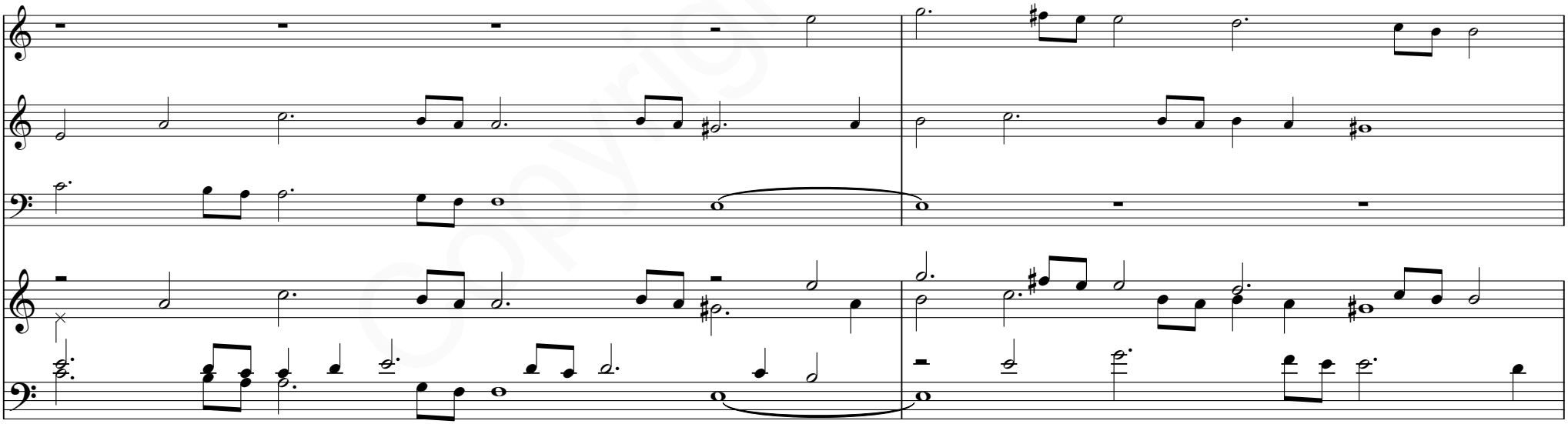

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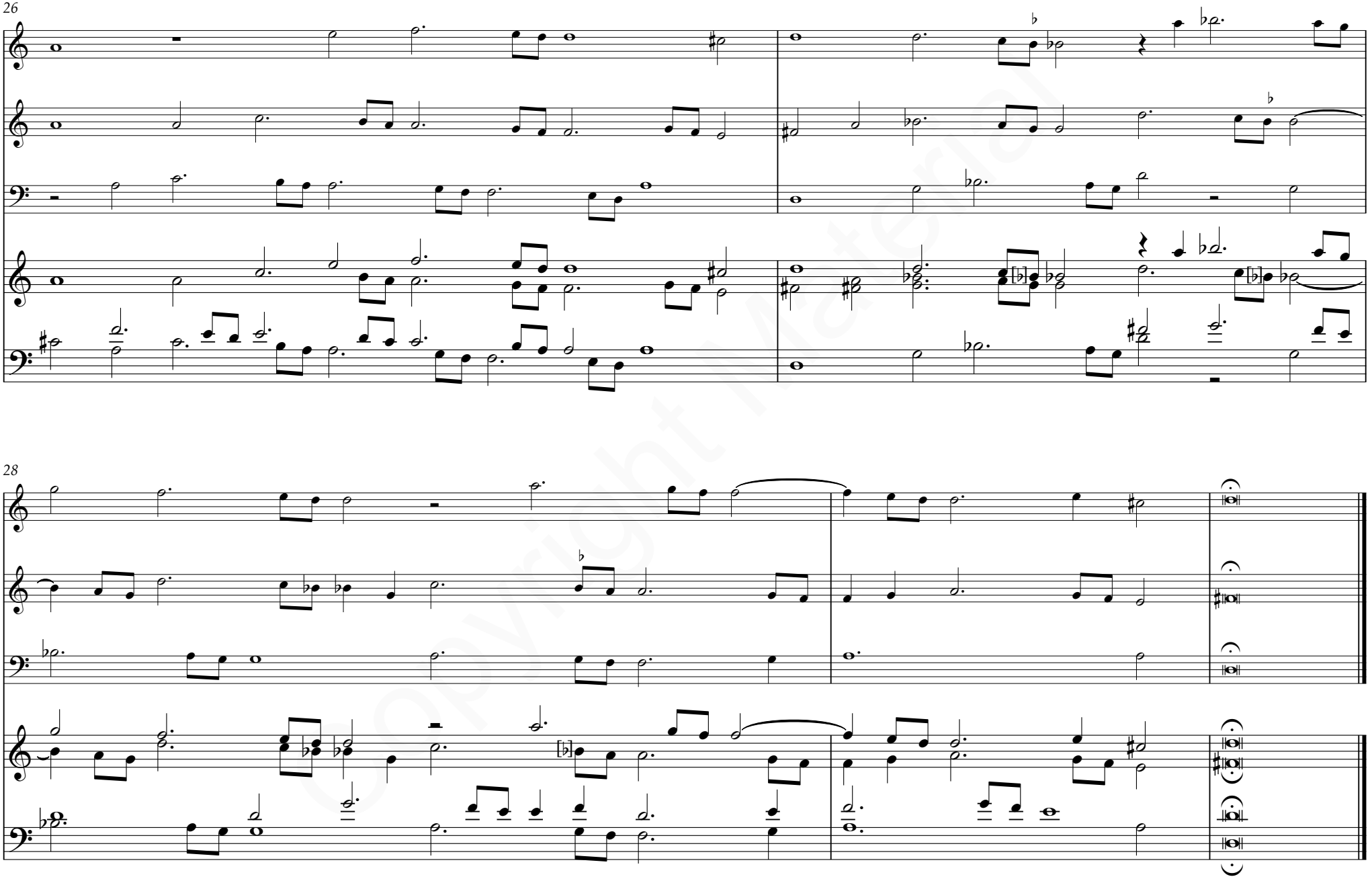

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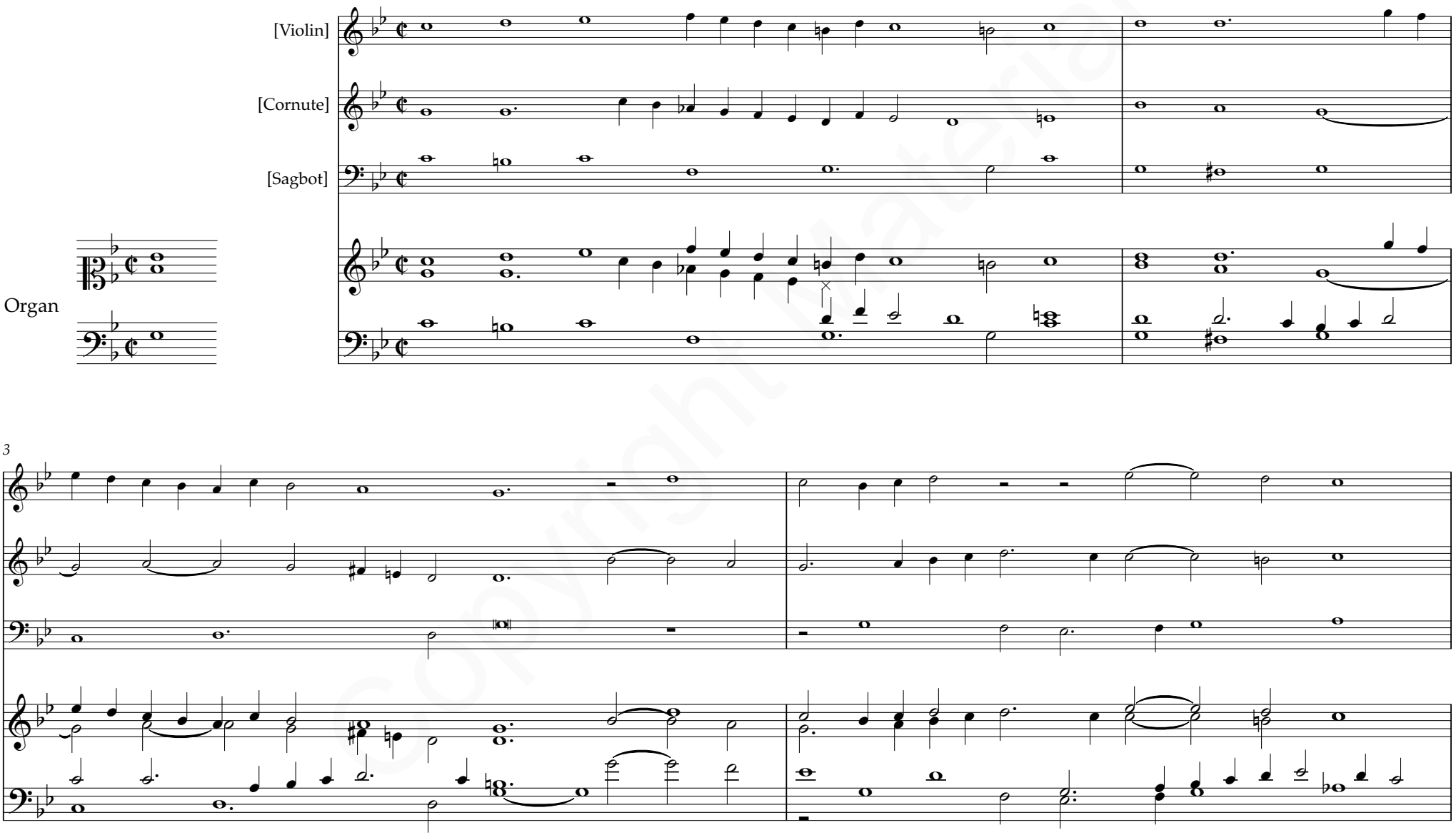
A Verse for ye Organ, a Sagbot, Cornute, & Violin

Organ part a fourth higher, editorial instrumental parts a fourth higher

Henry Loosemore
ed. Helen Roberts
NYPL MS Drexel 5469, pp. 202-4



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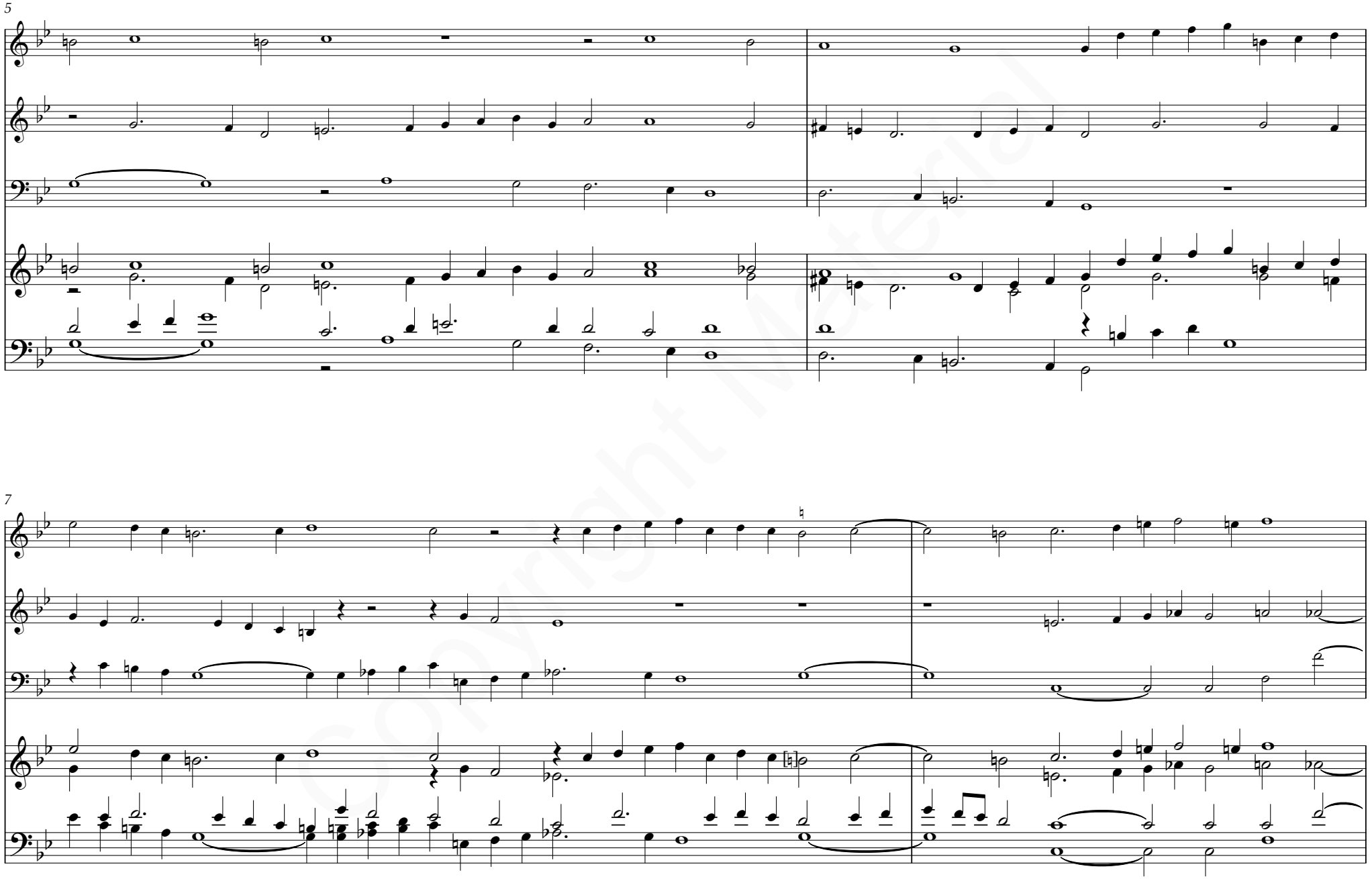

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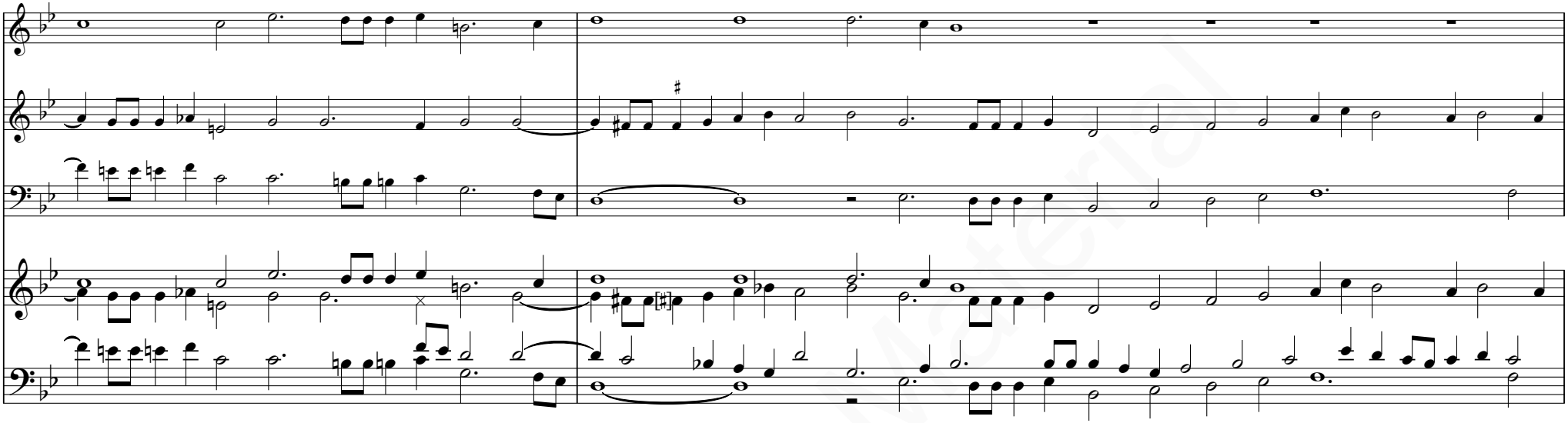

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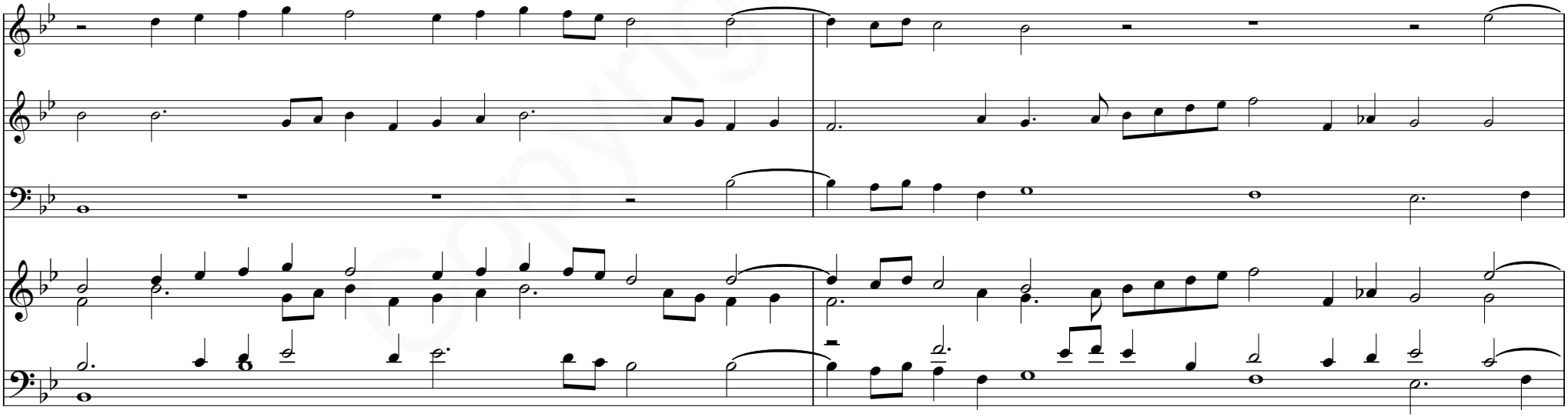

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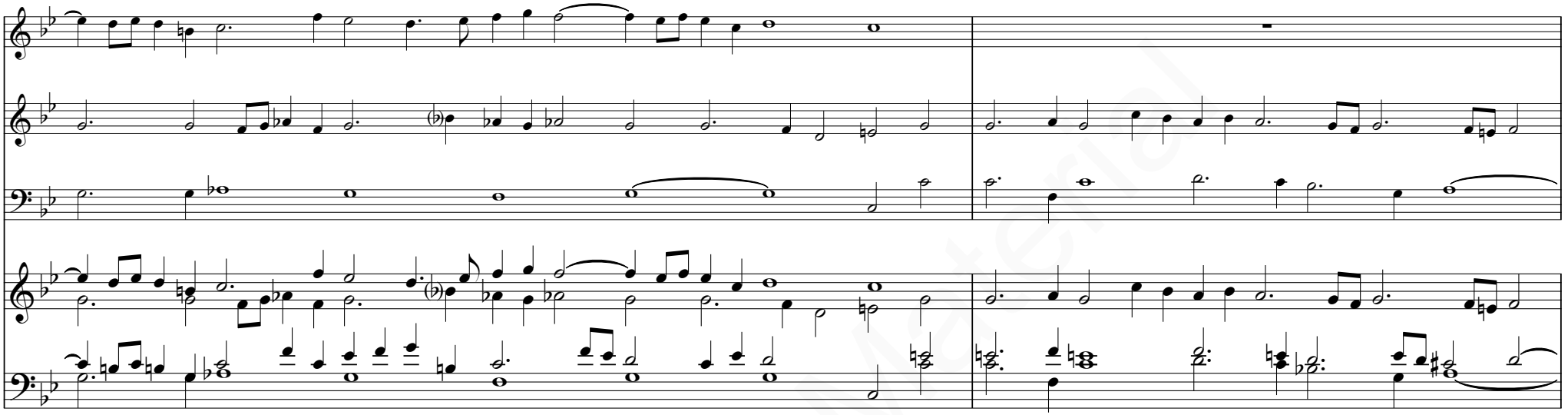

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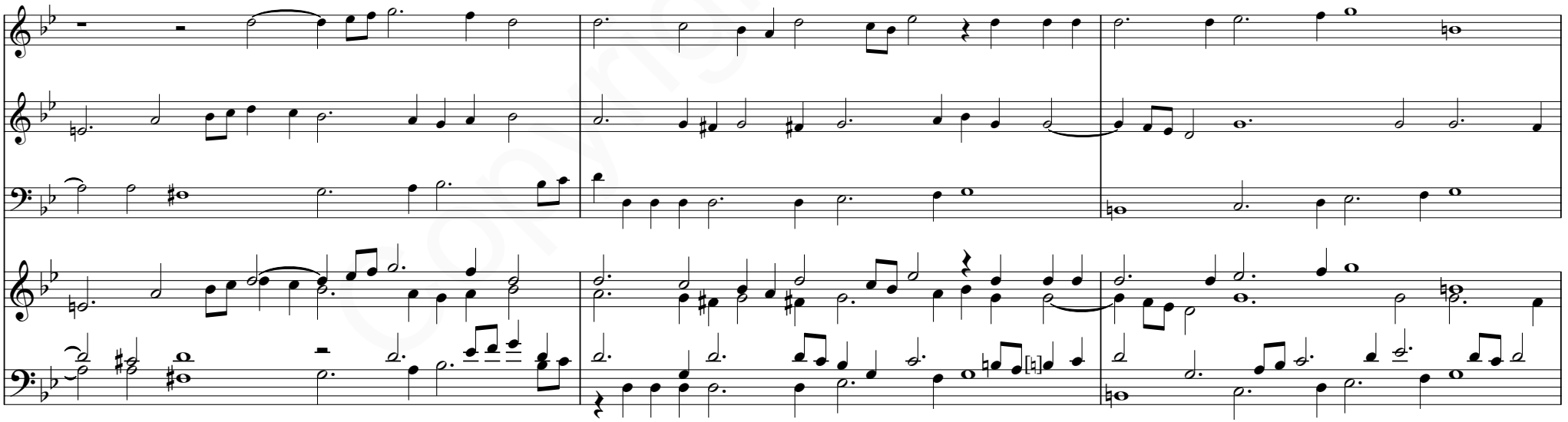

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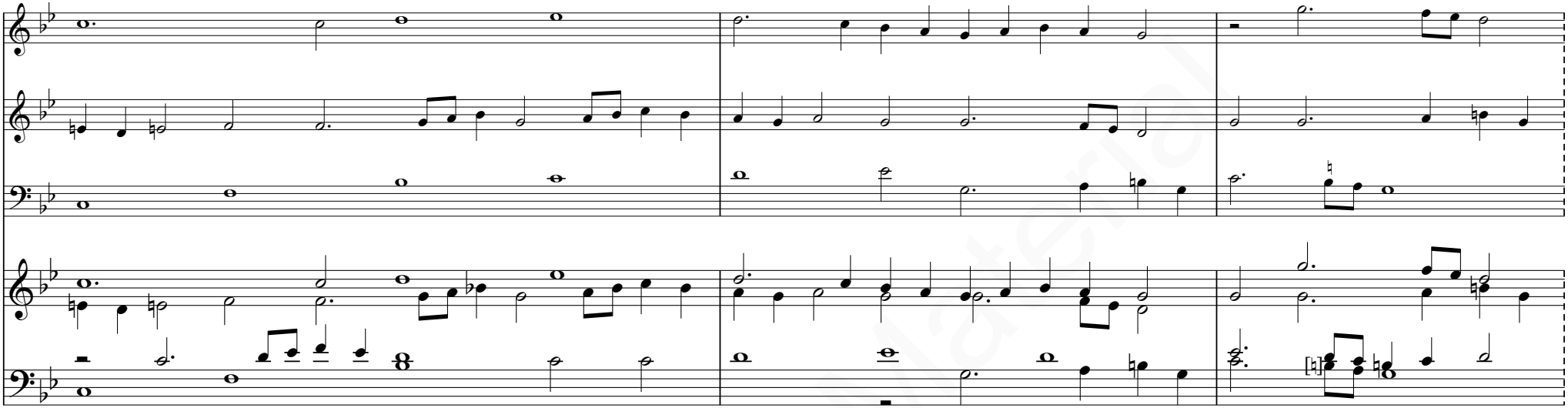

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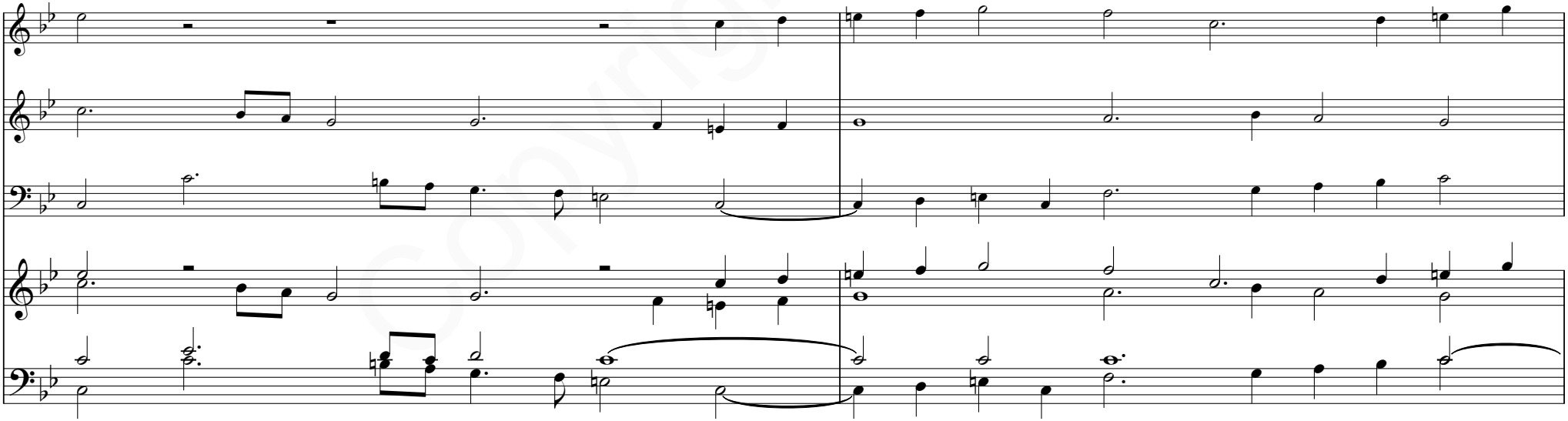

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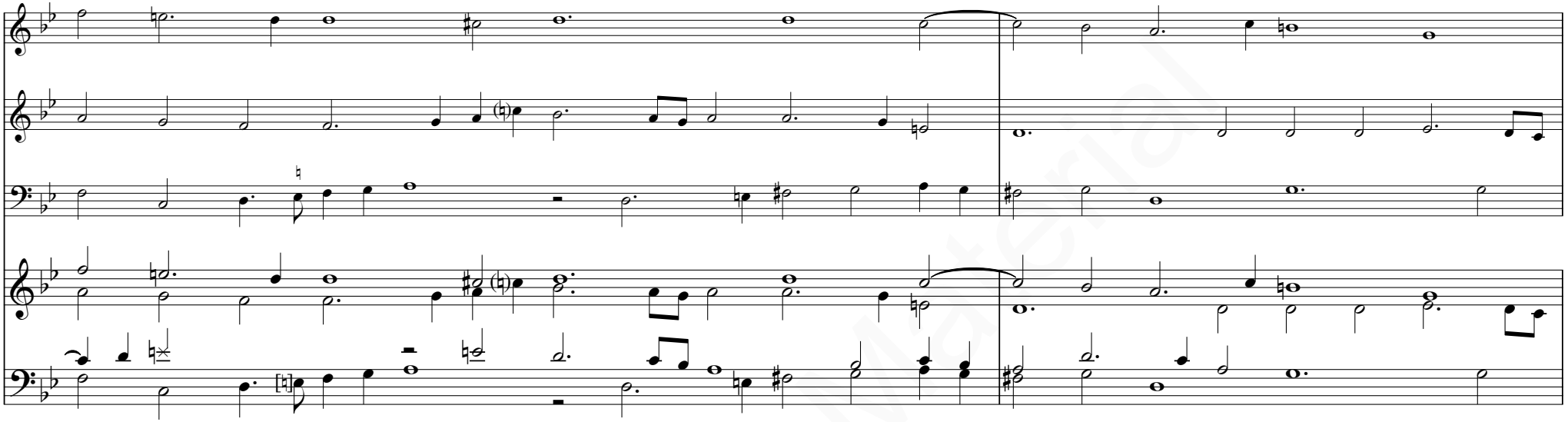

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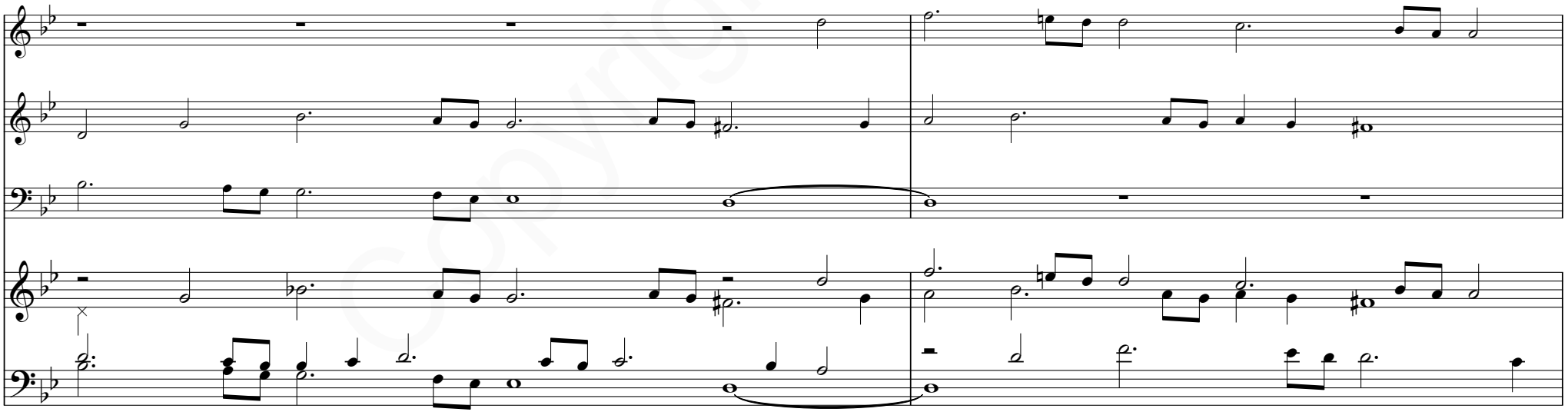

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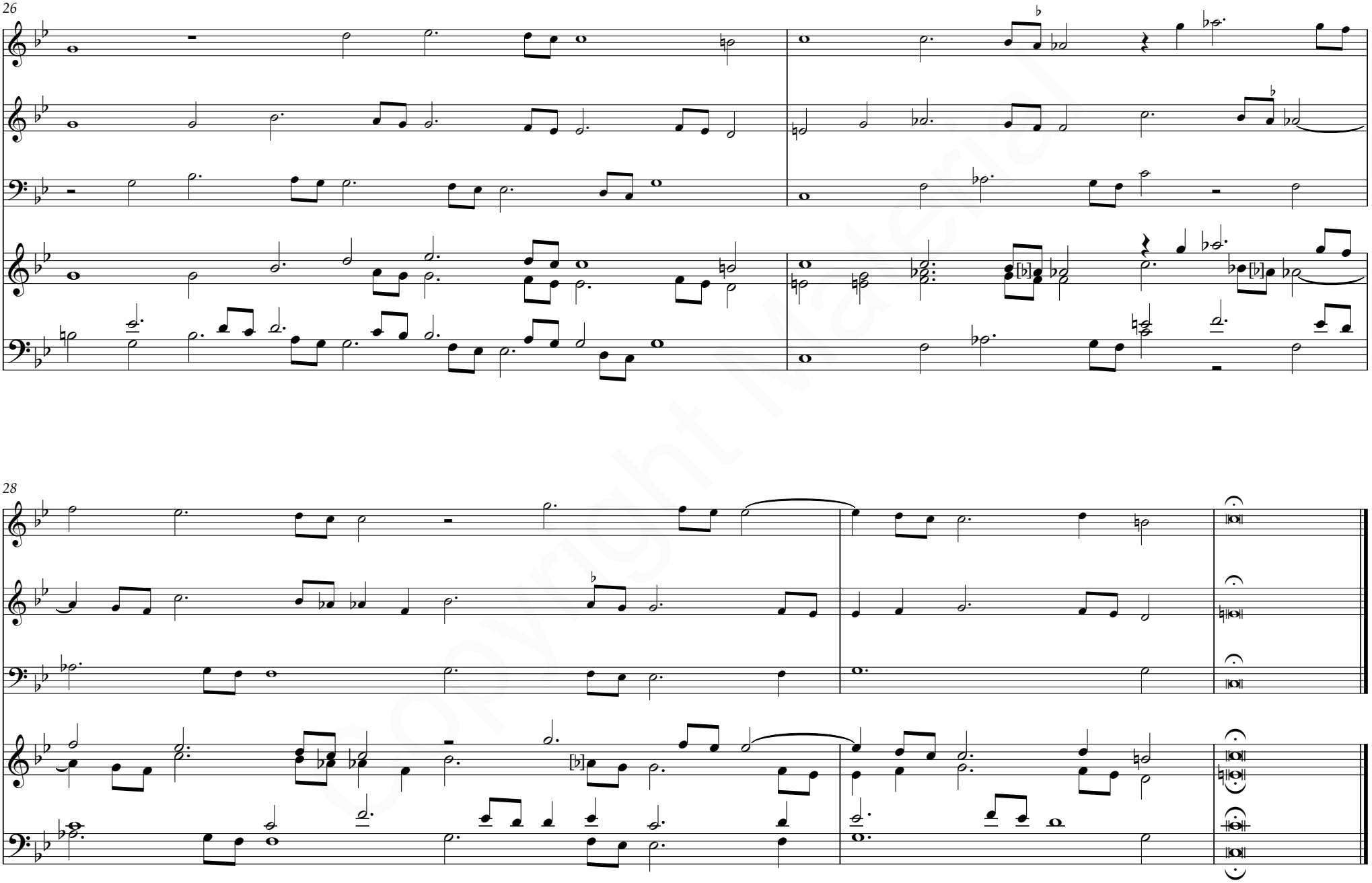

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A Verse for ye Organ, a Sagbot, Cornute, & Violin

Organ part in the original key, editorial instrumental parts a fourth higher

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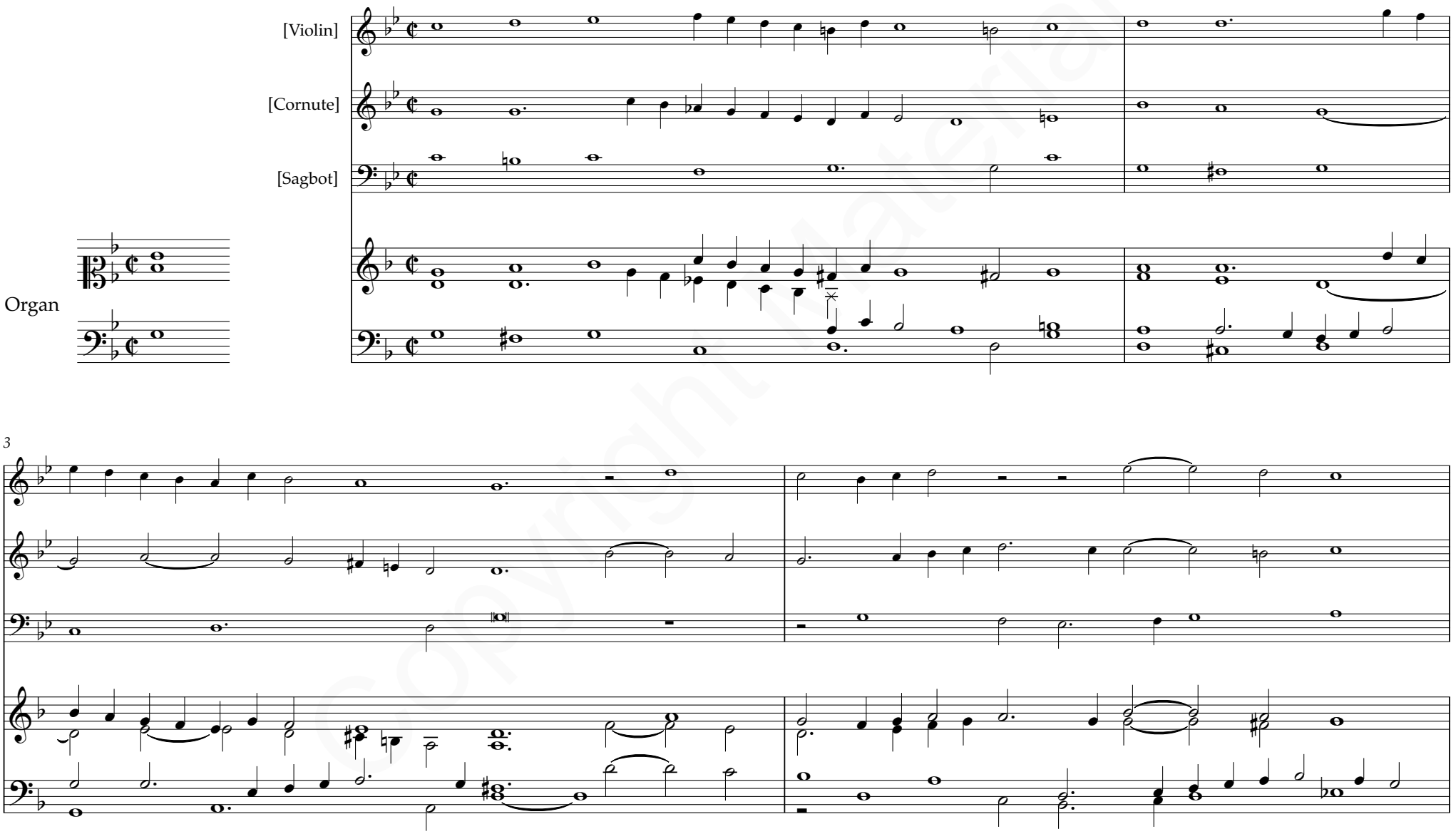

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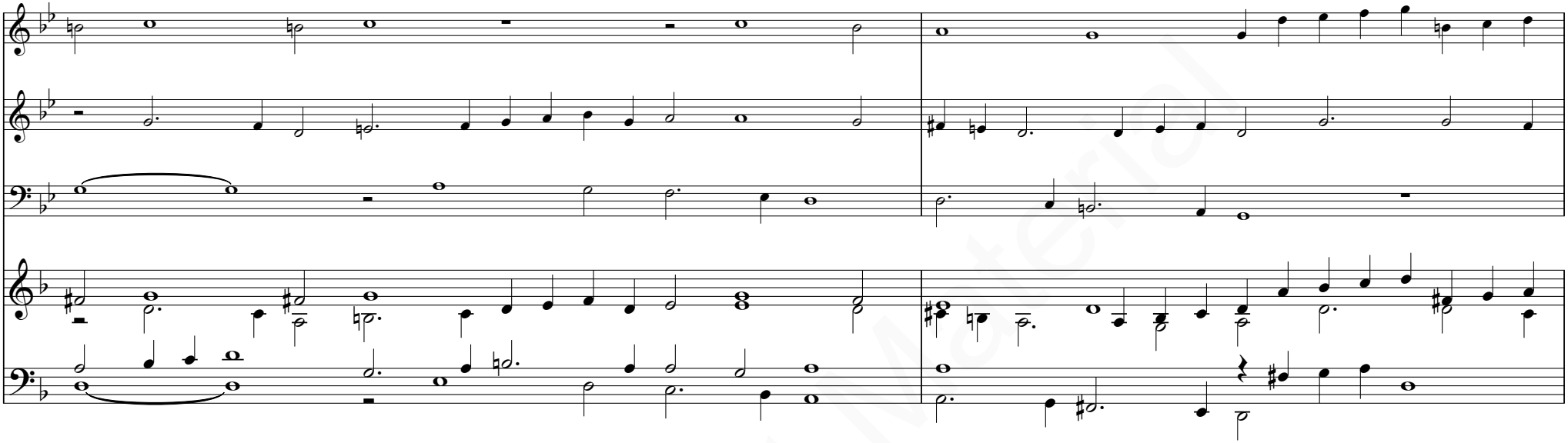

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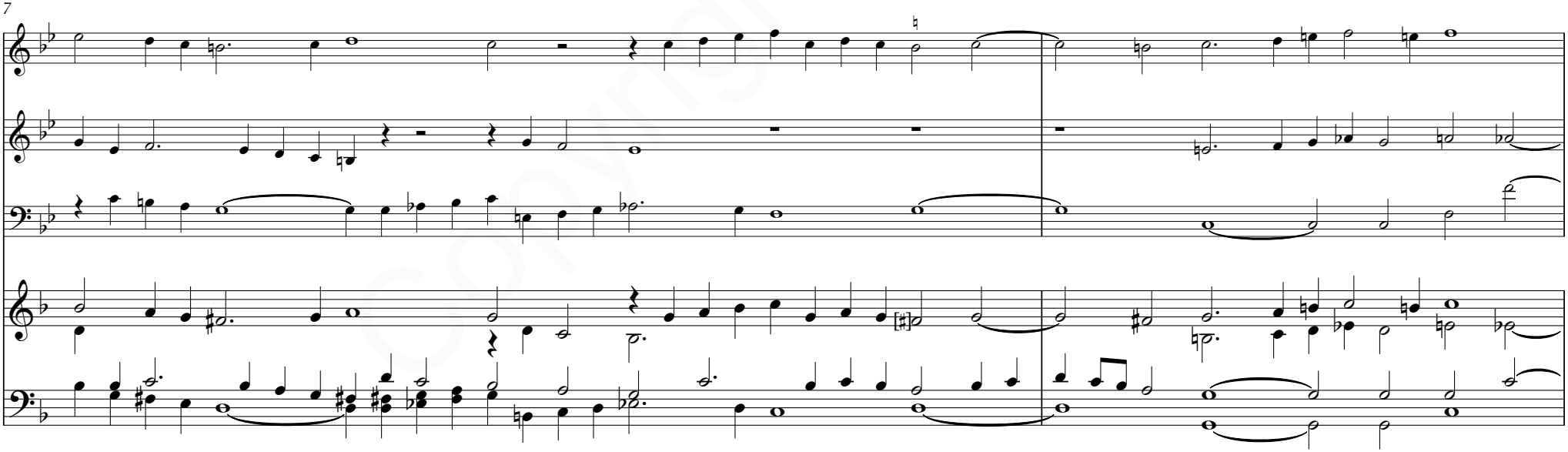

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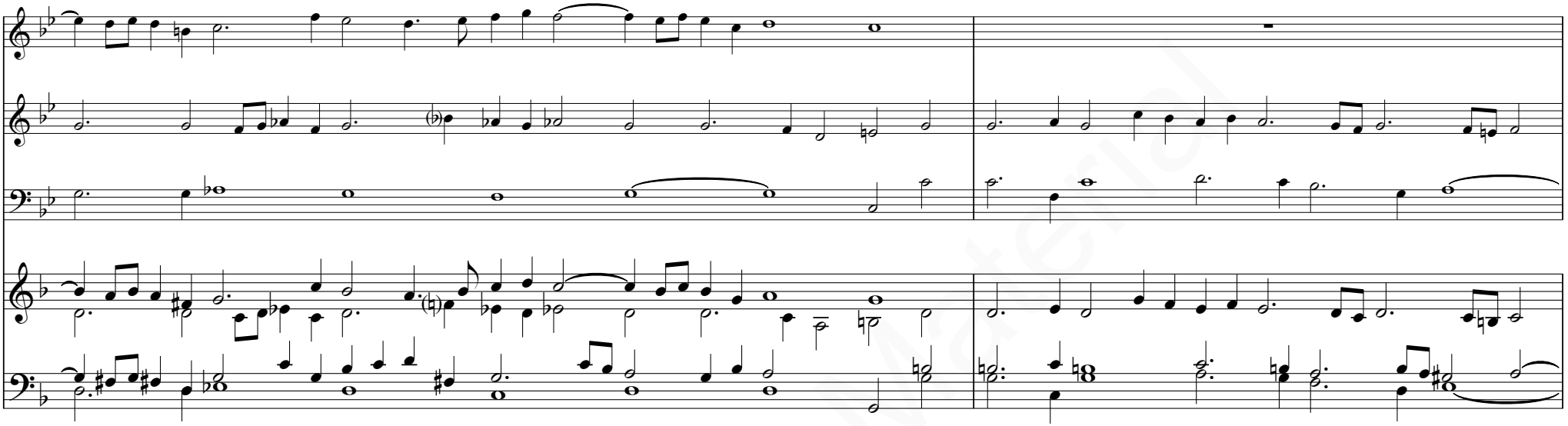

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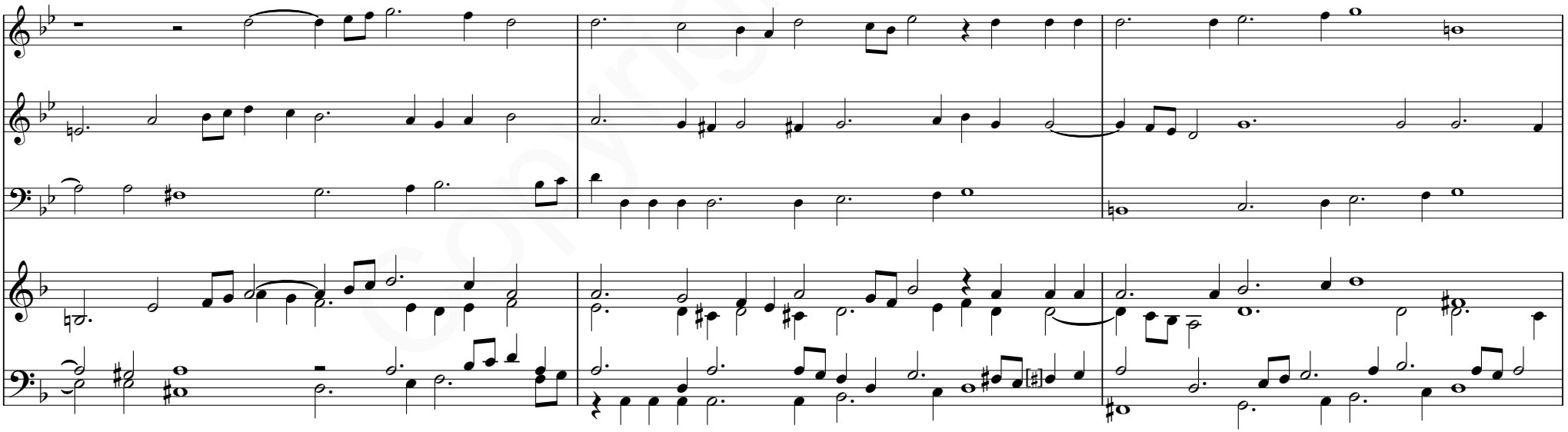

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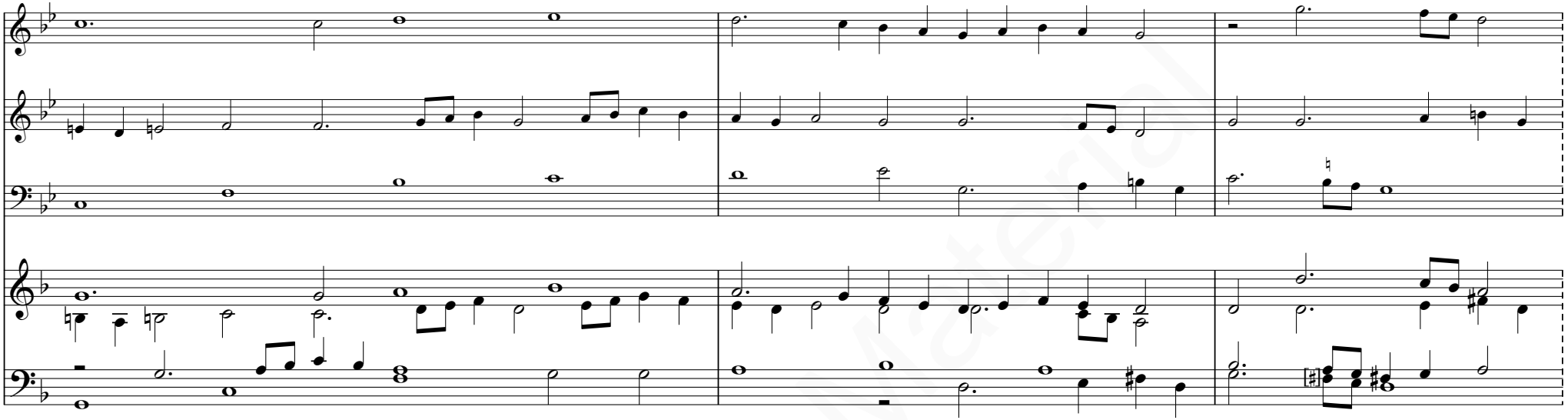

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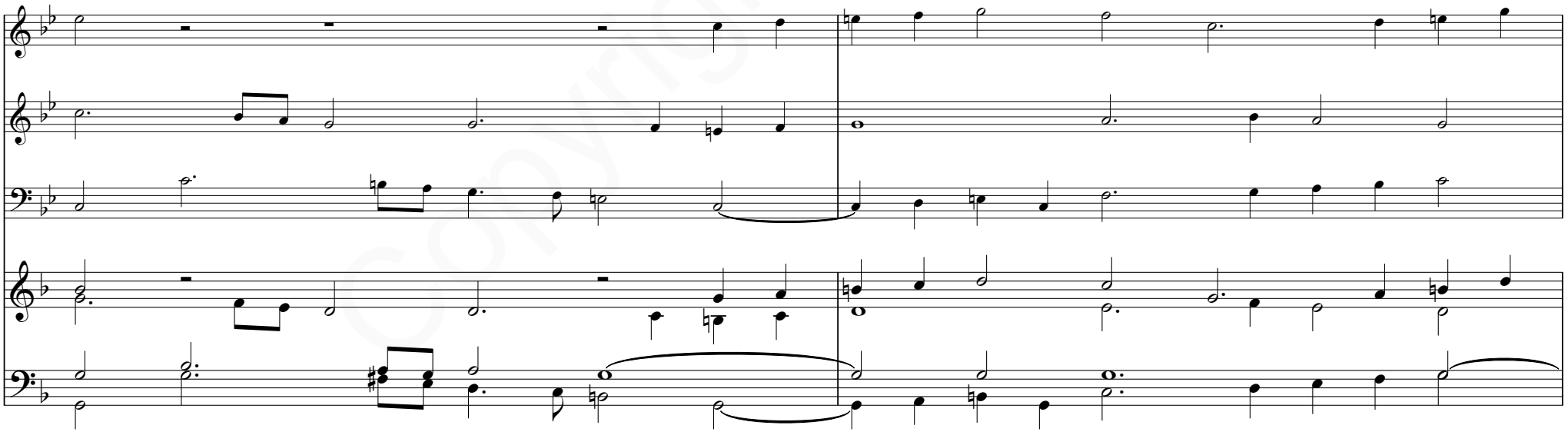

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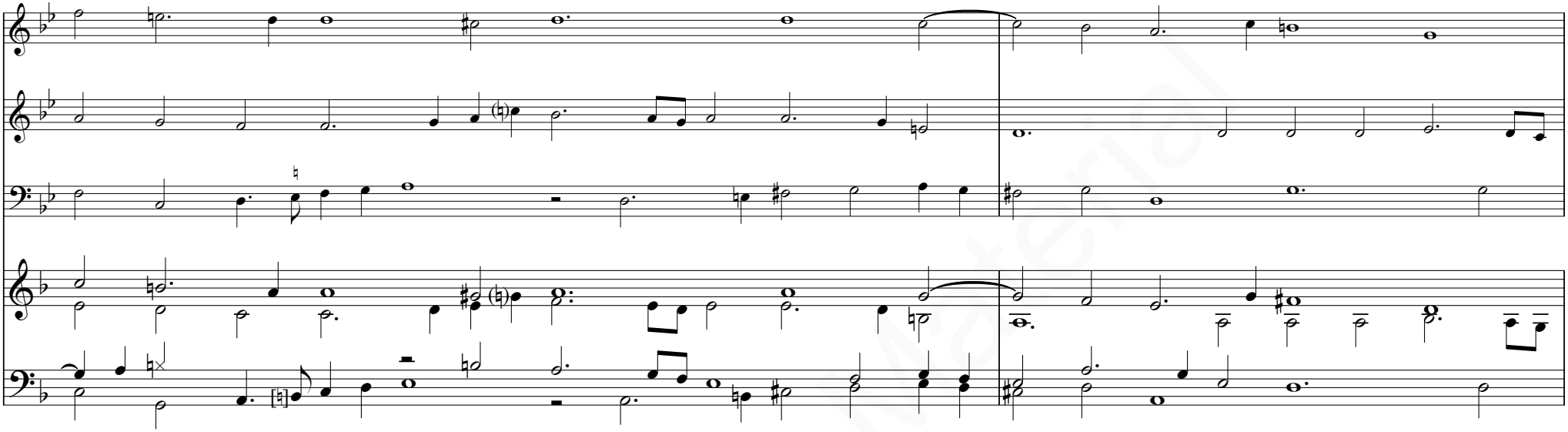

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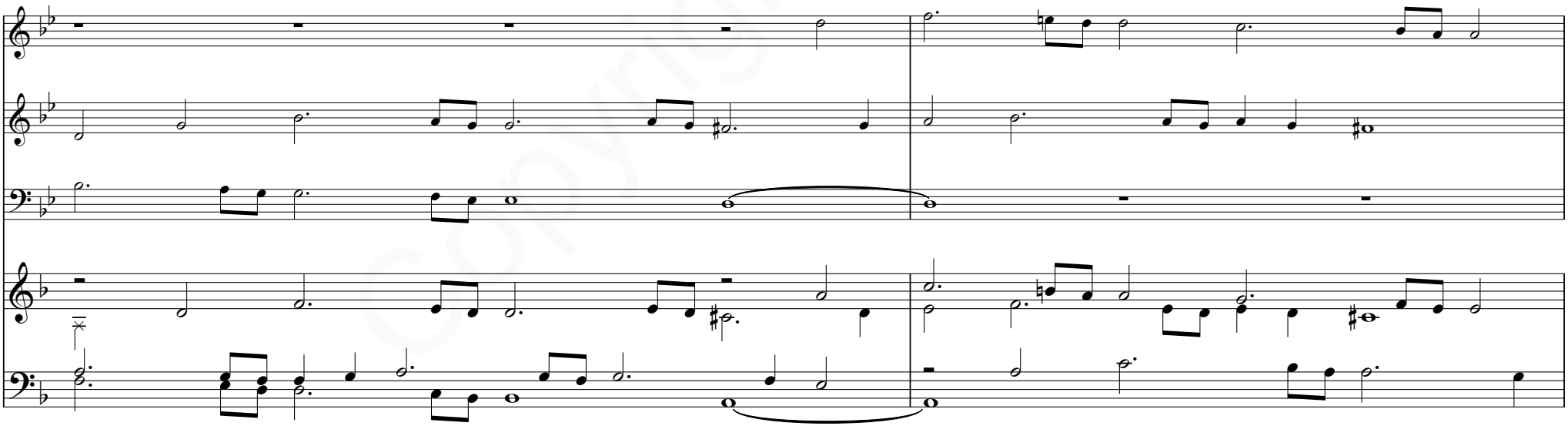

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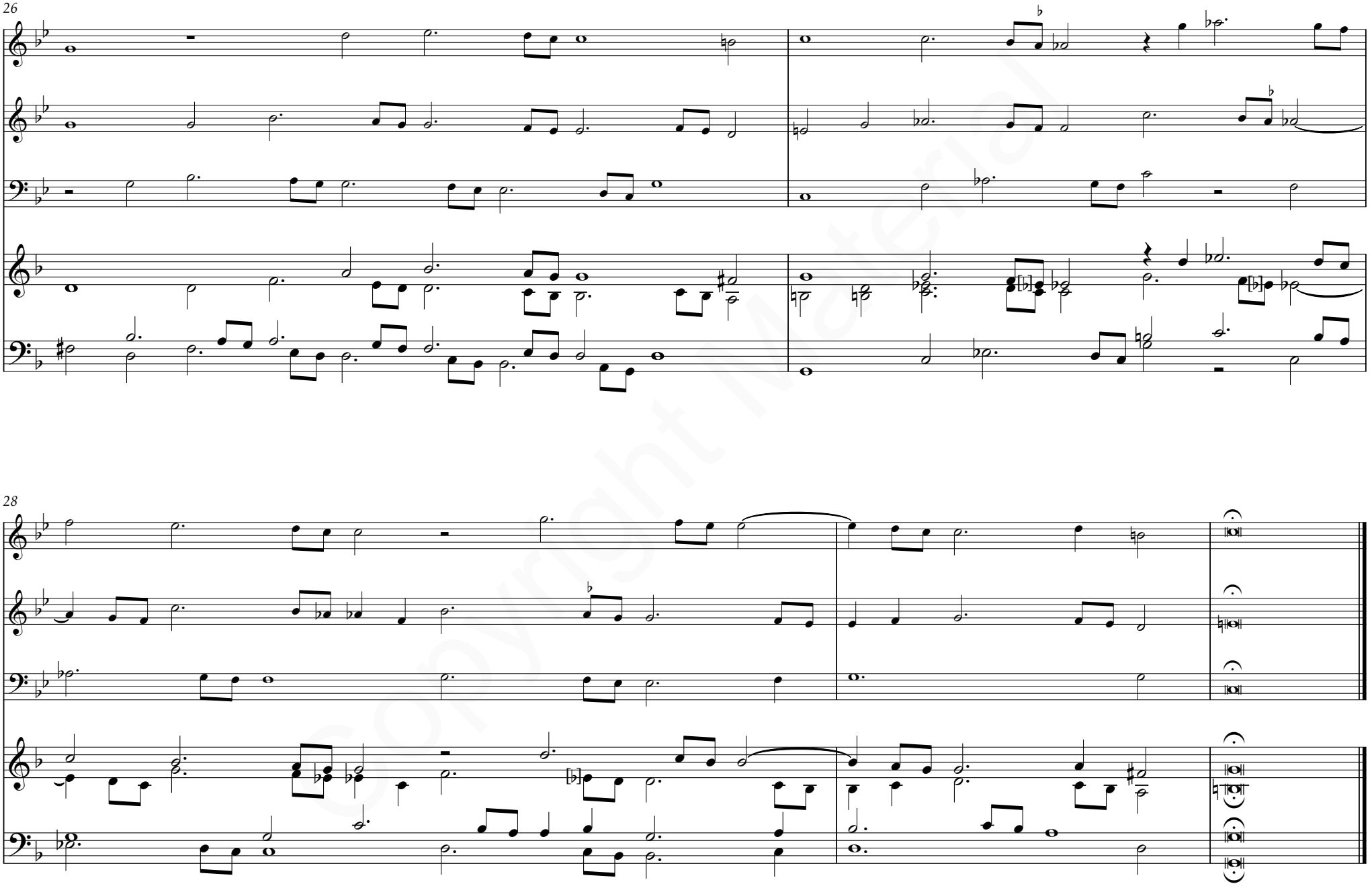

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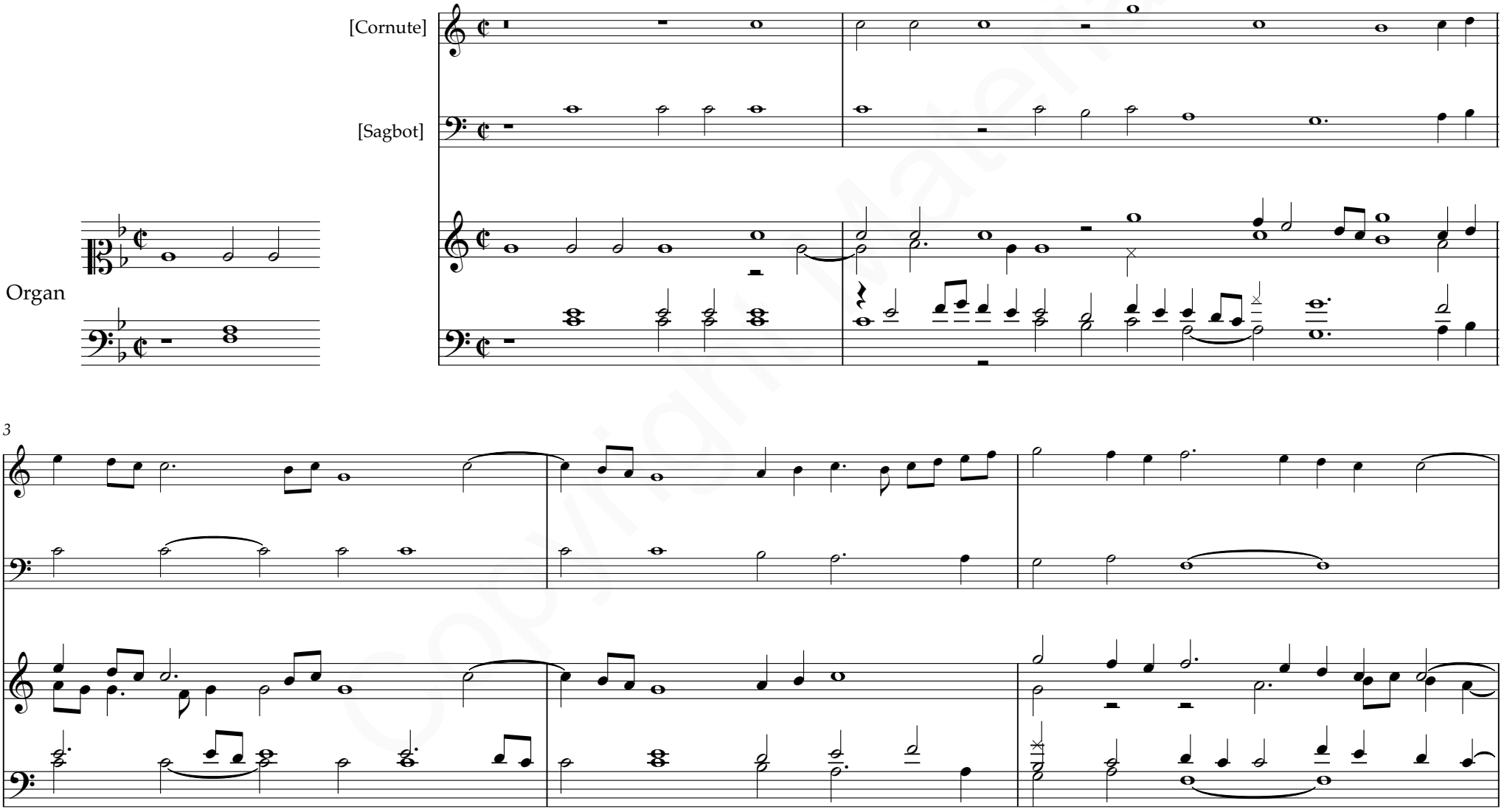

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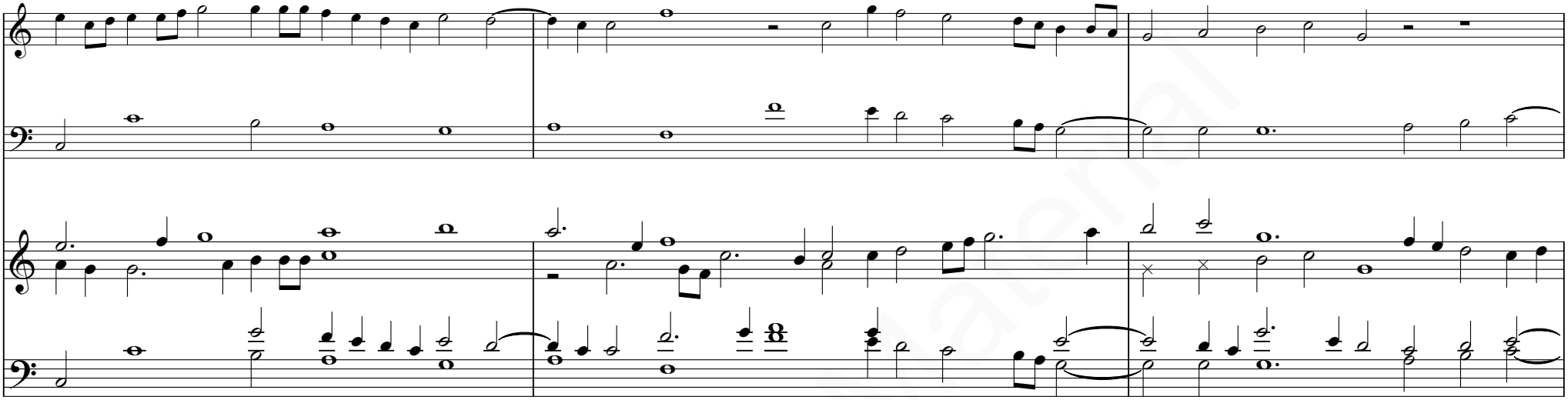

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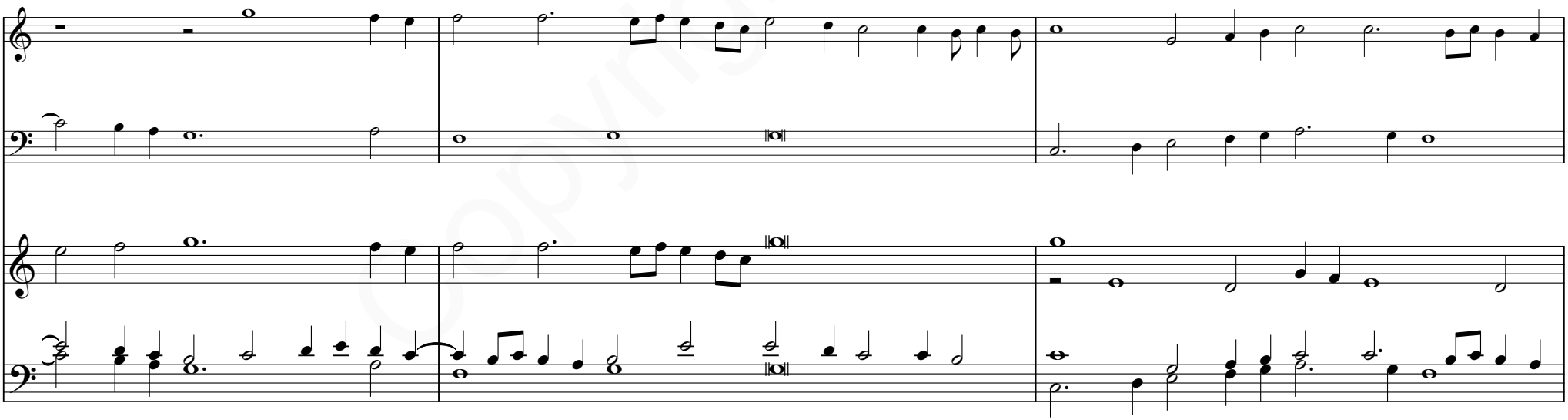

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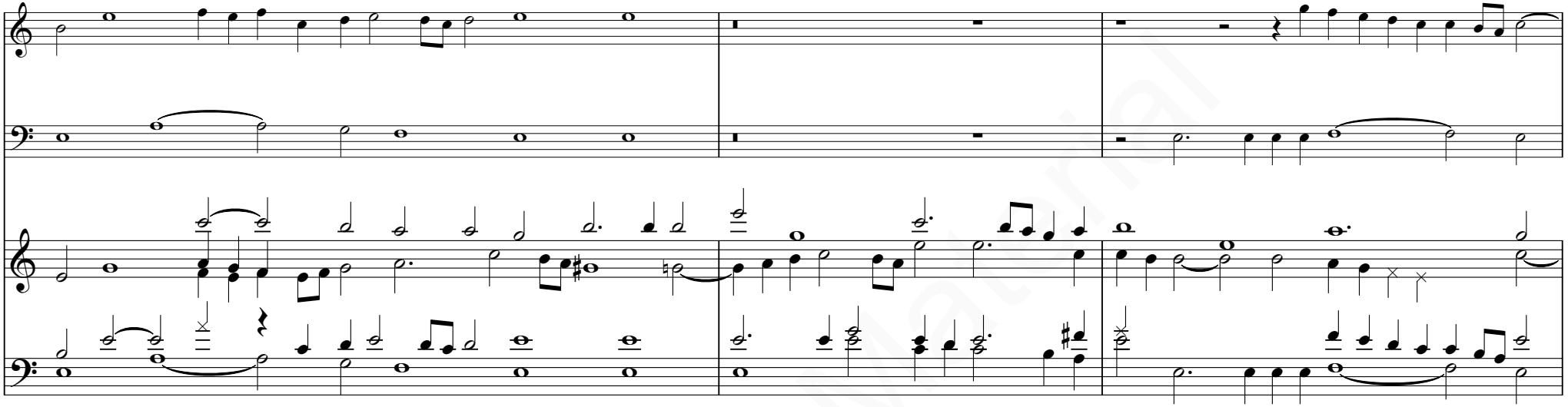

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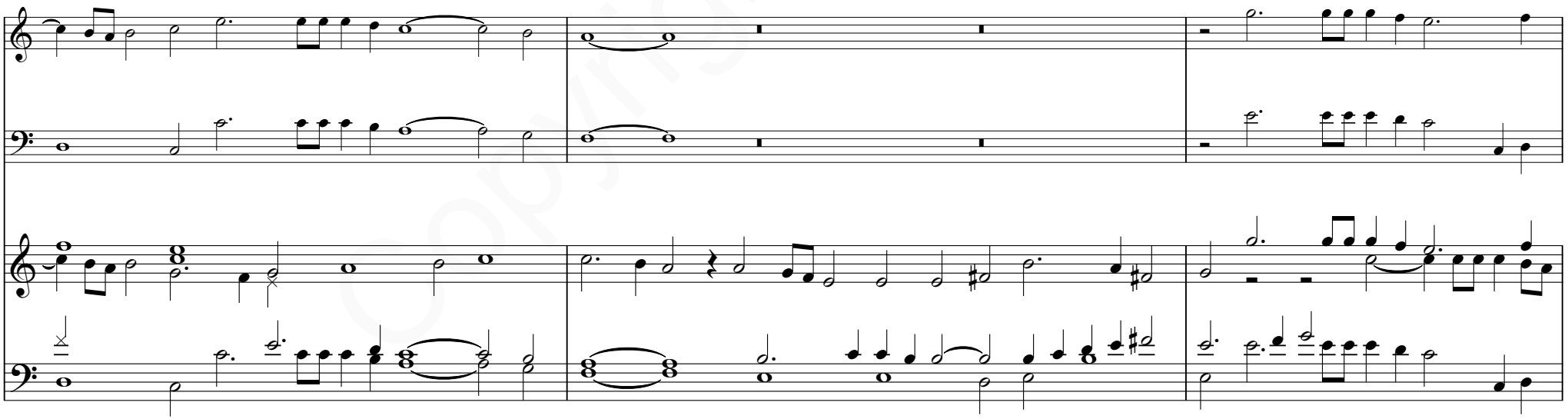

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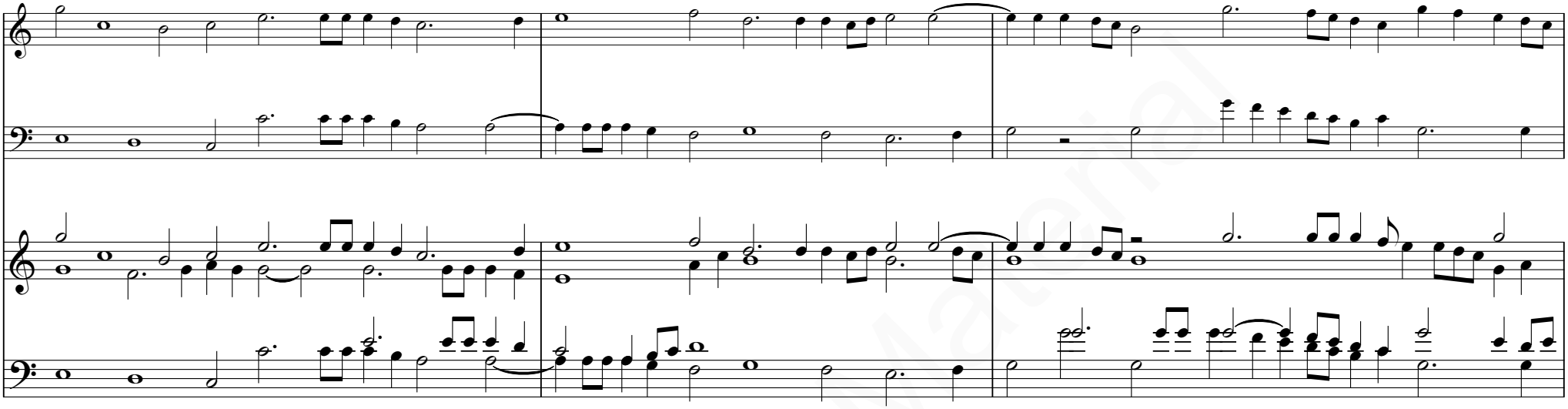

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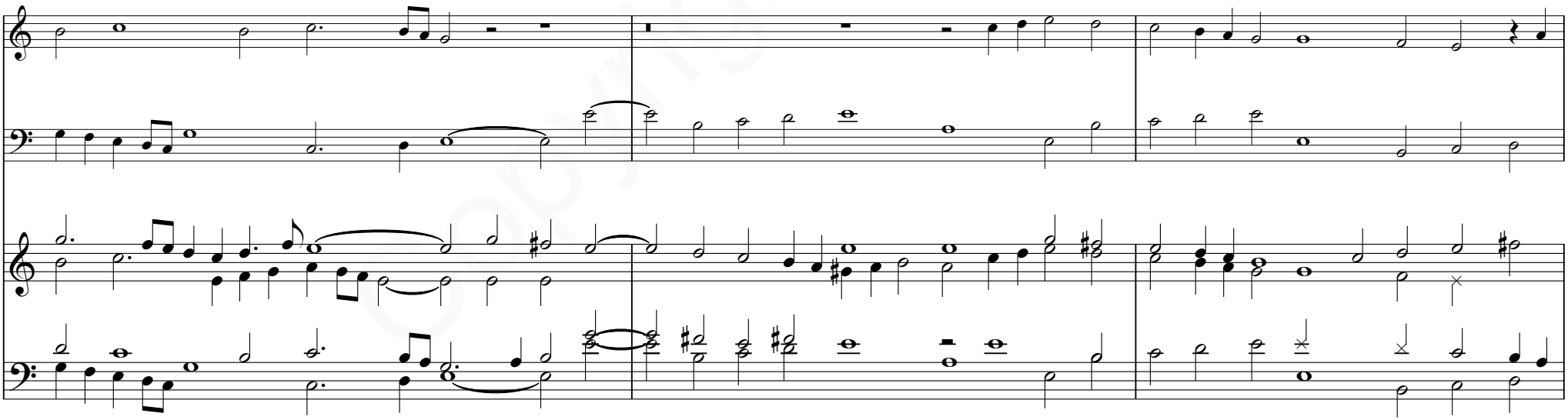

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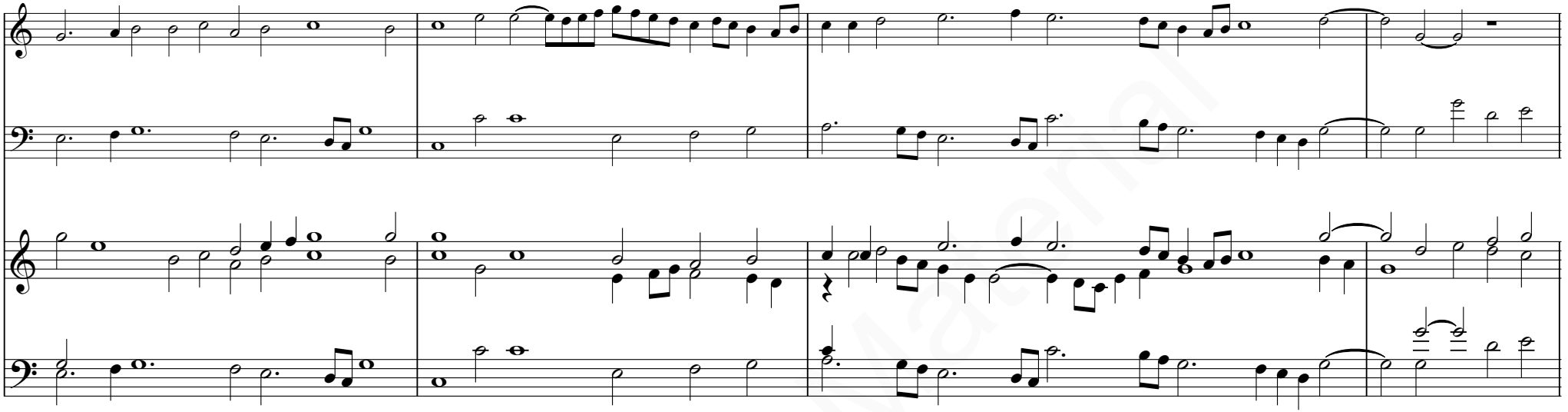

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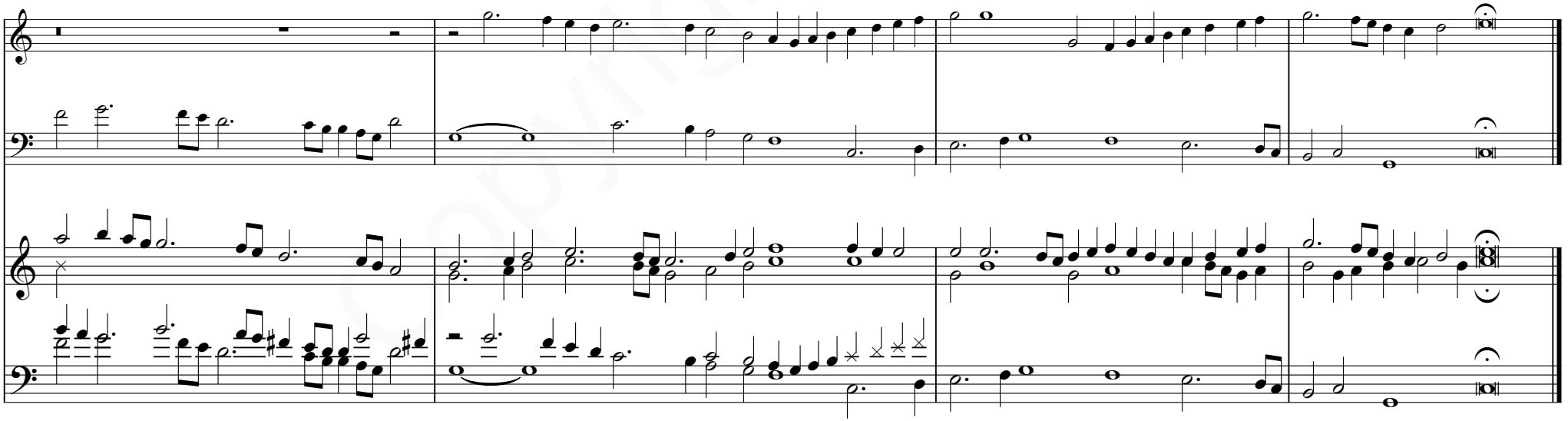

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Organ part a fourth higher, editorial instrumental parts a fourth higher

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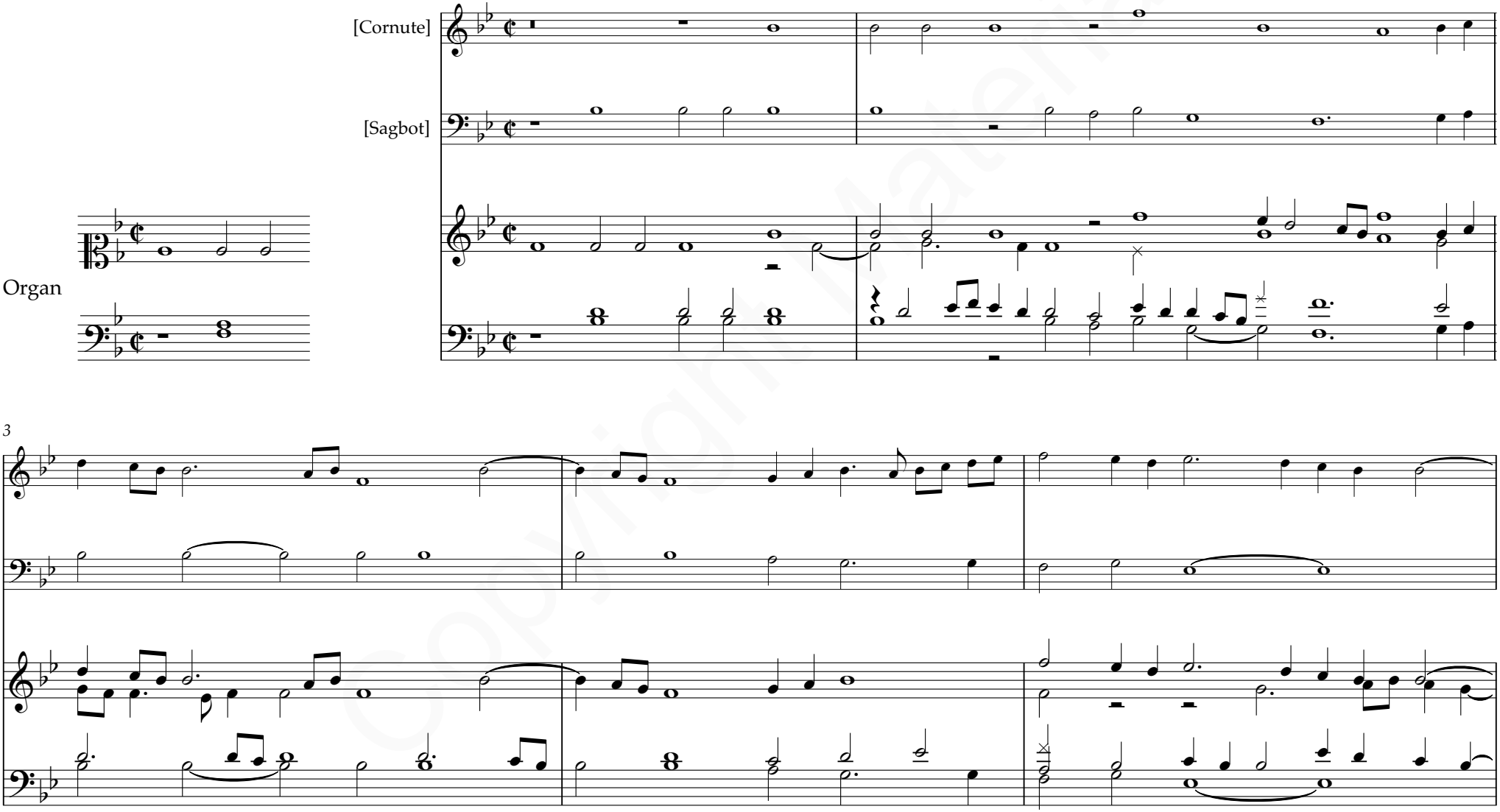
ed. Helen Roberts
NYPL, Drexel 5469, pp. 199-201



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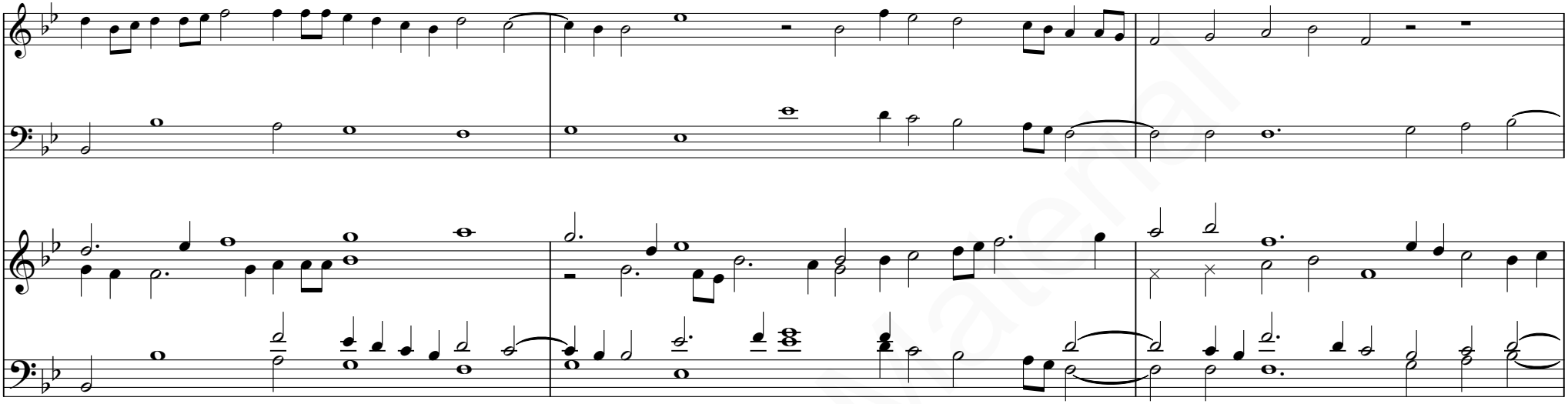

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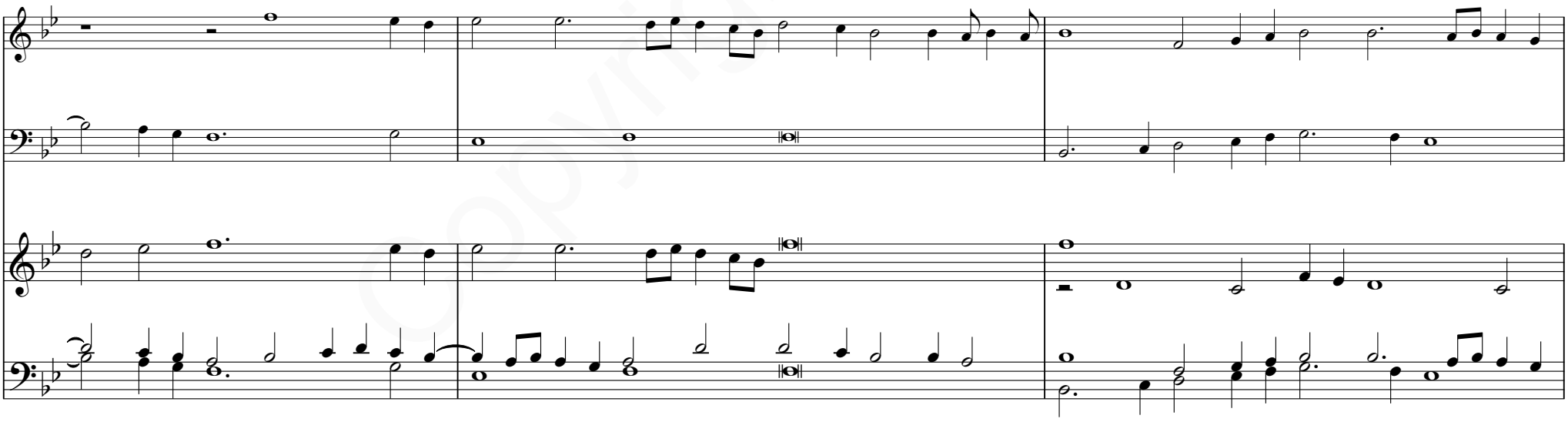

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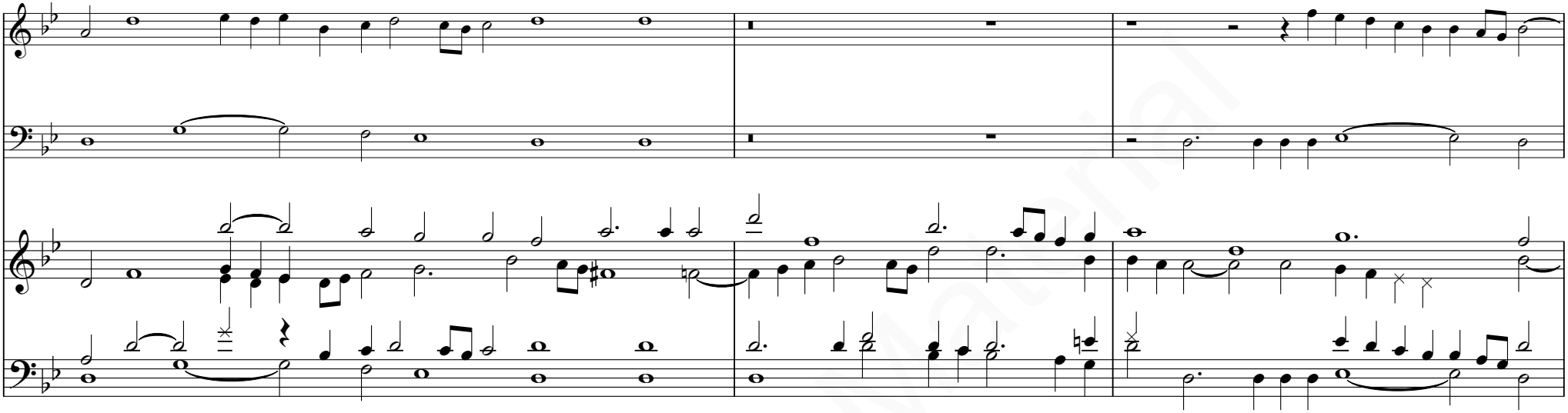

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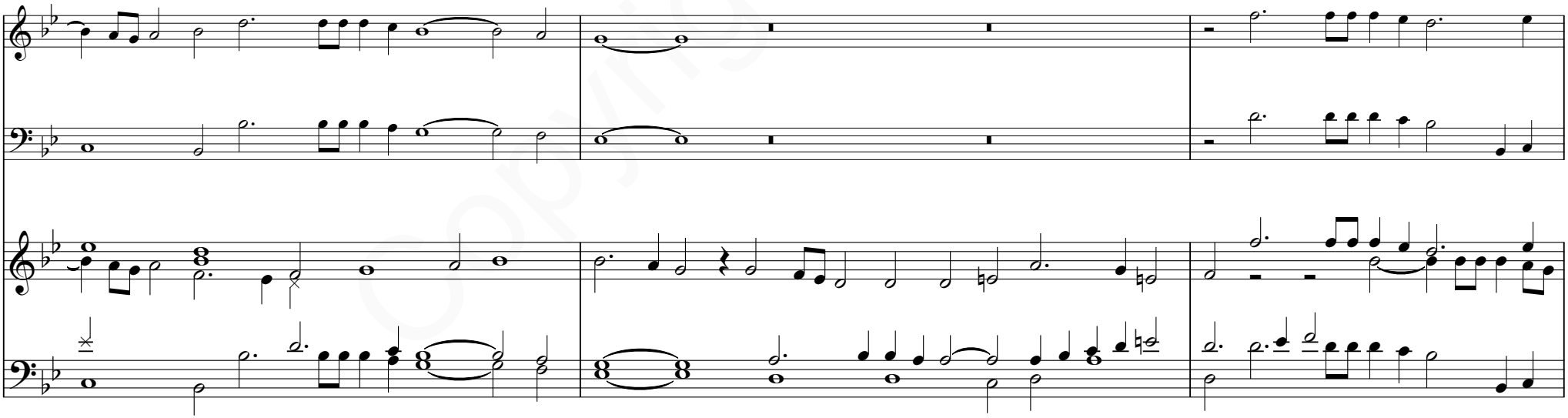

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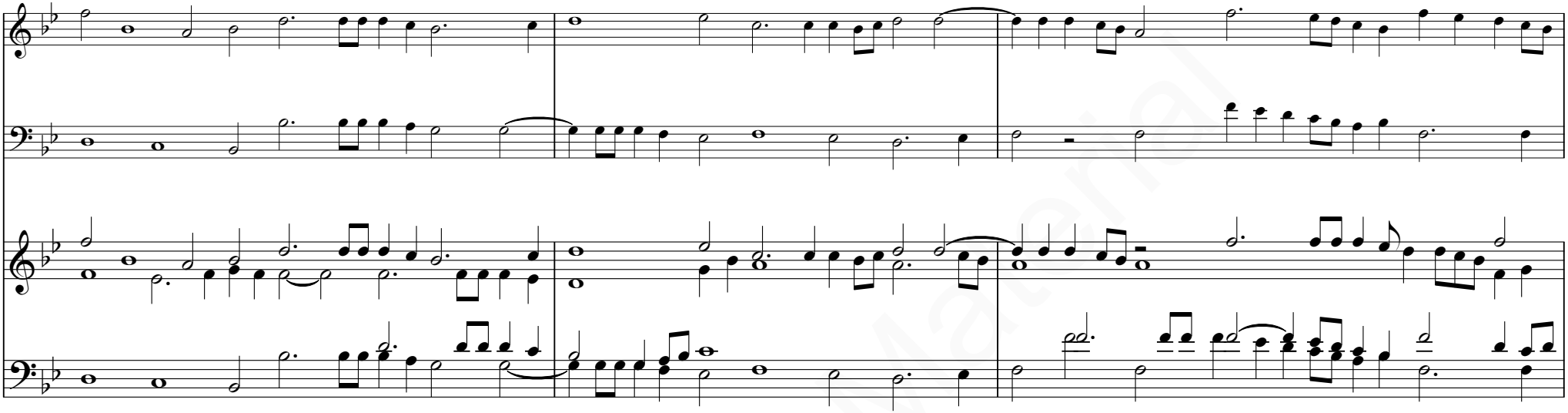

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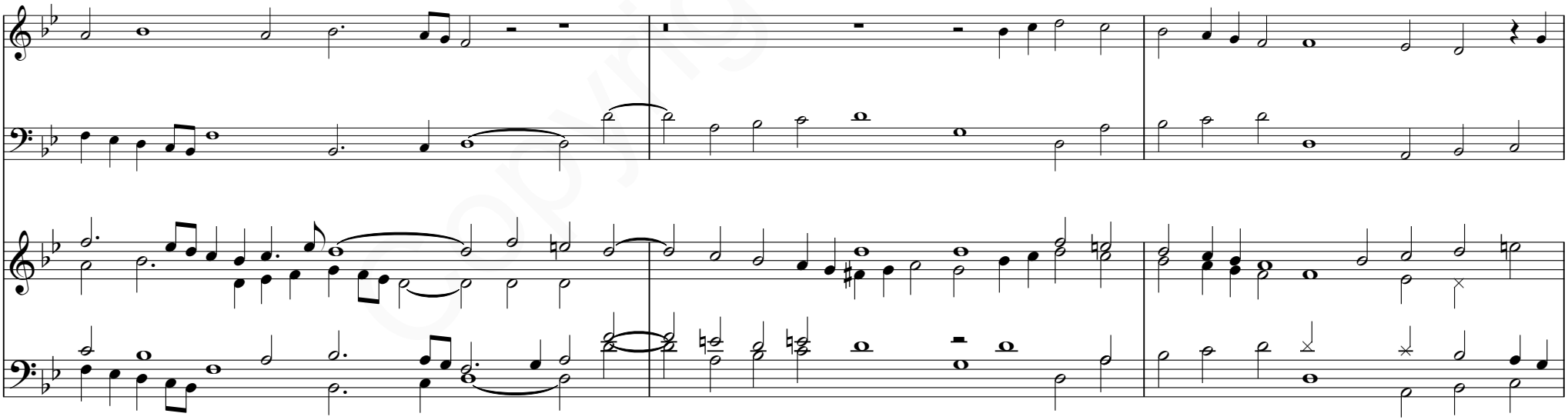

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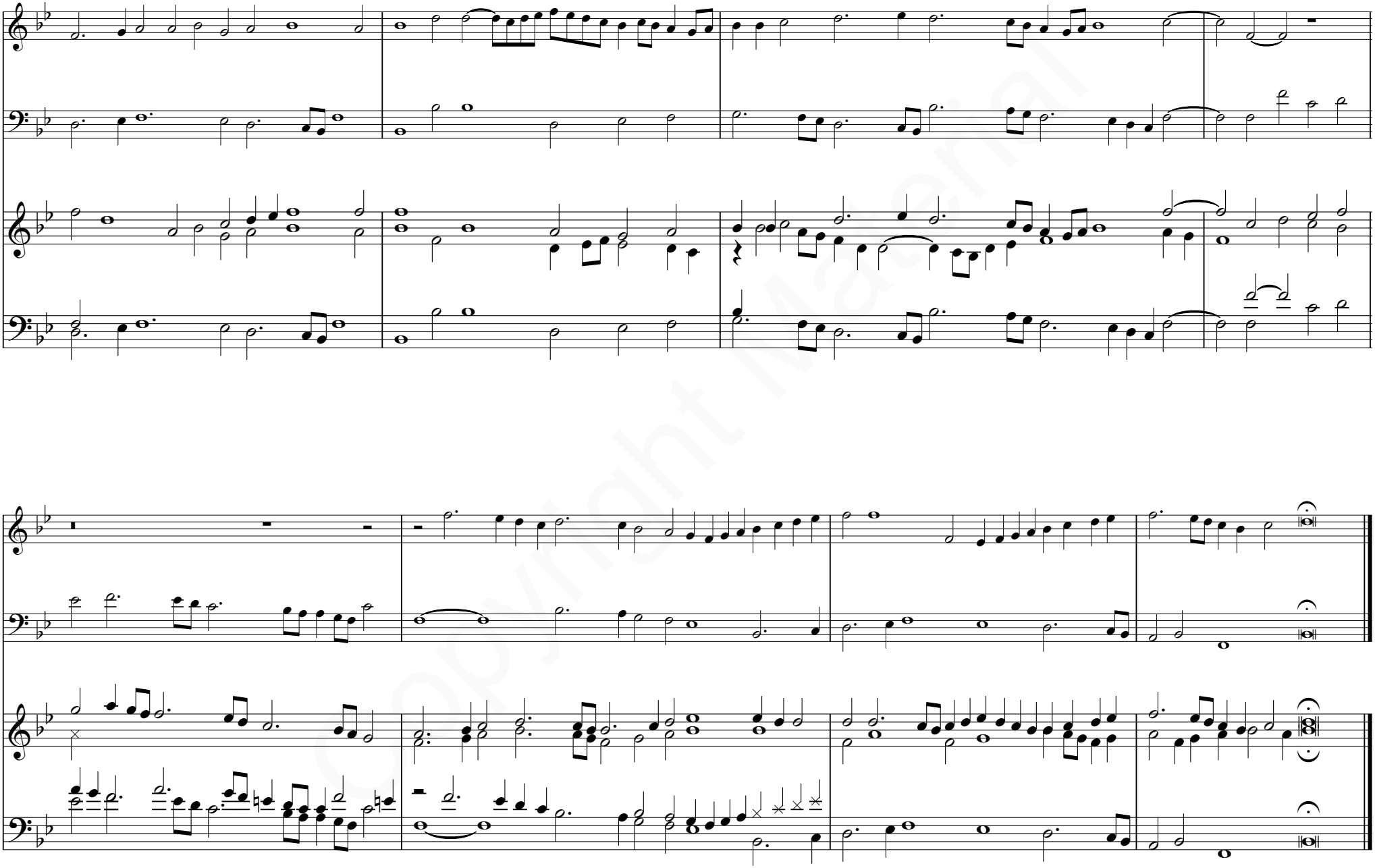

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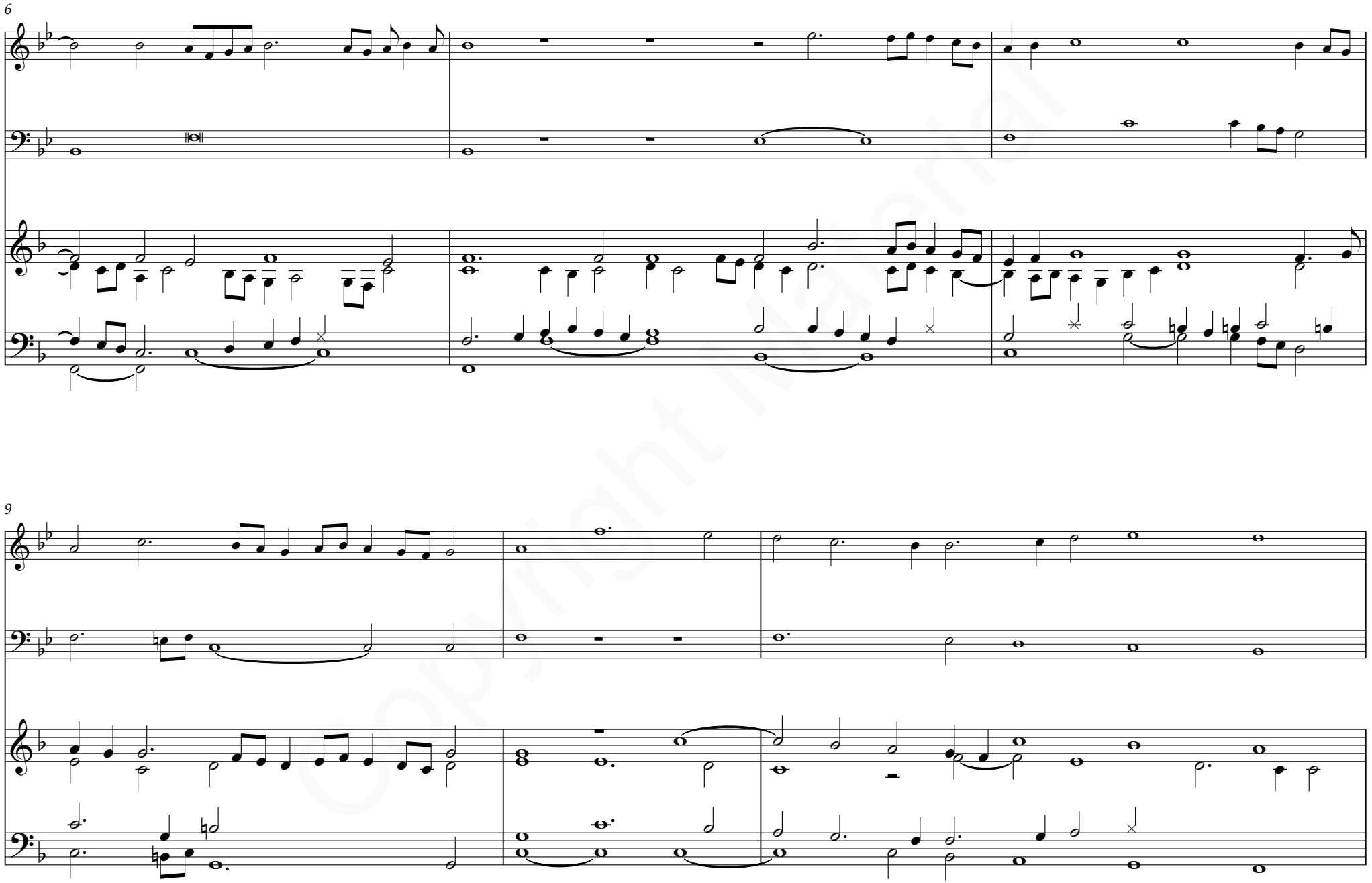

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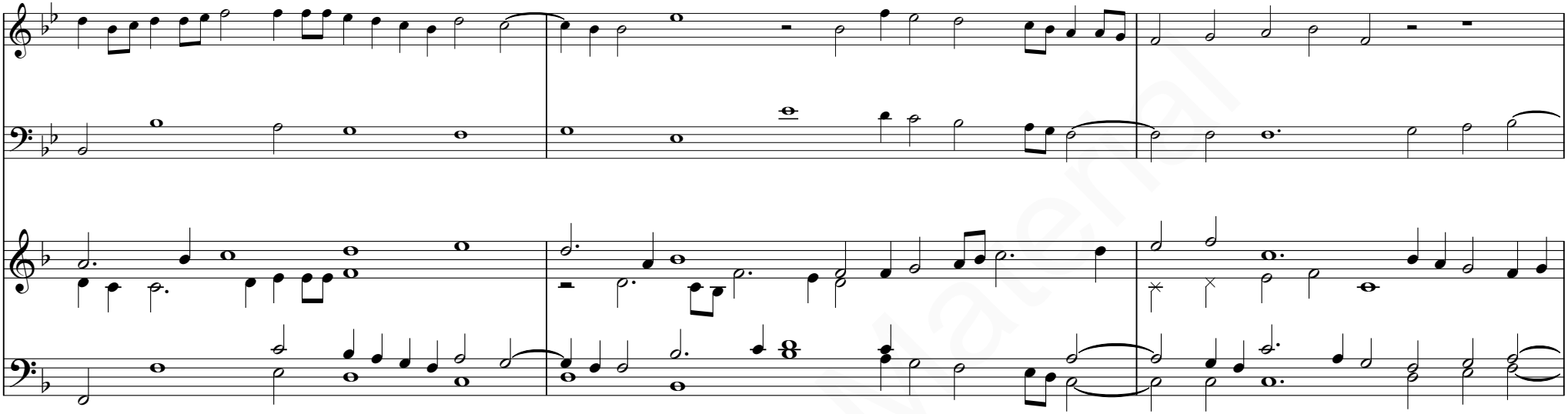

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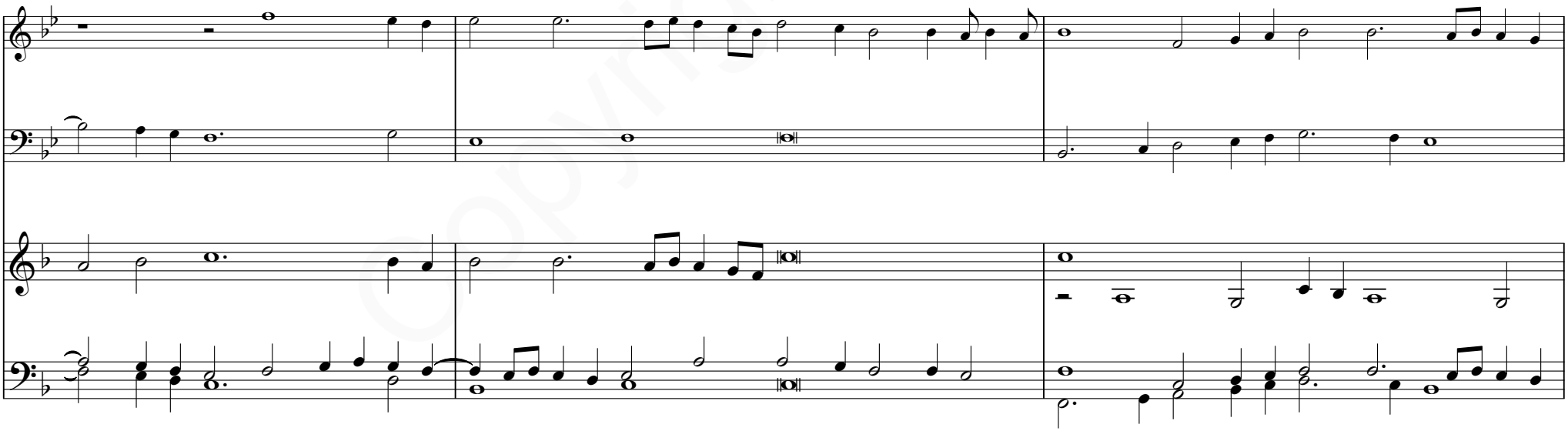

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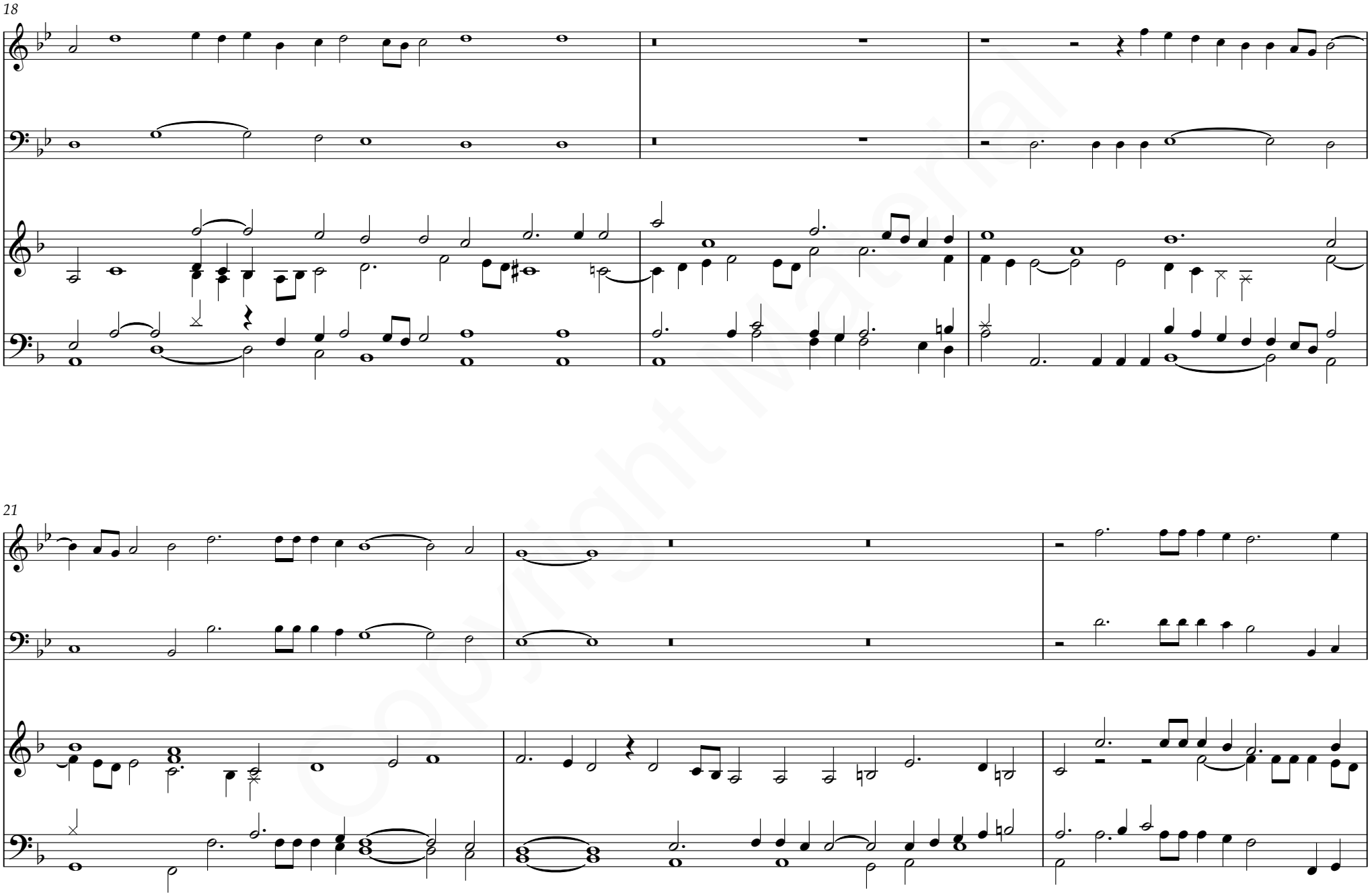

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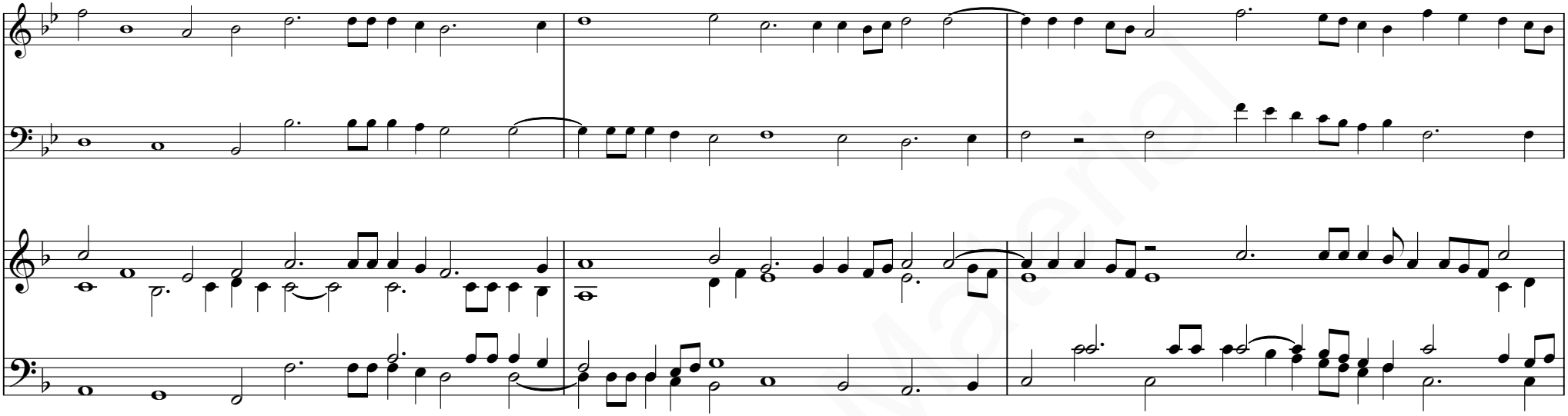

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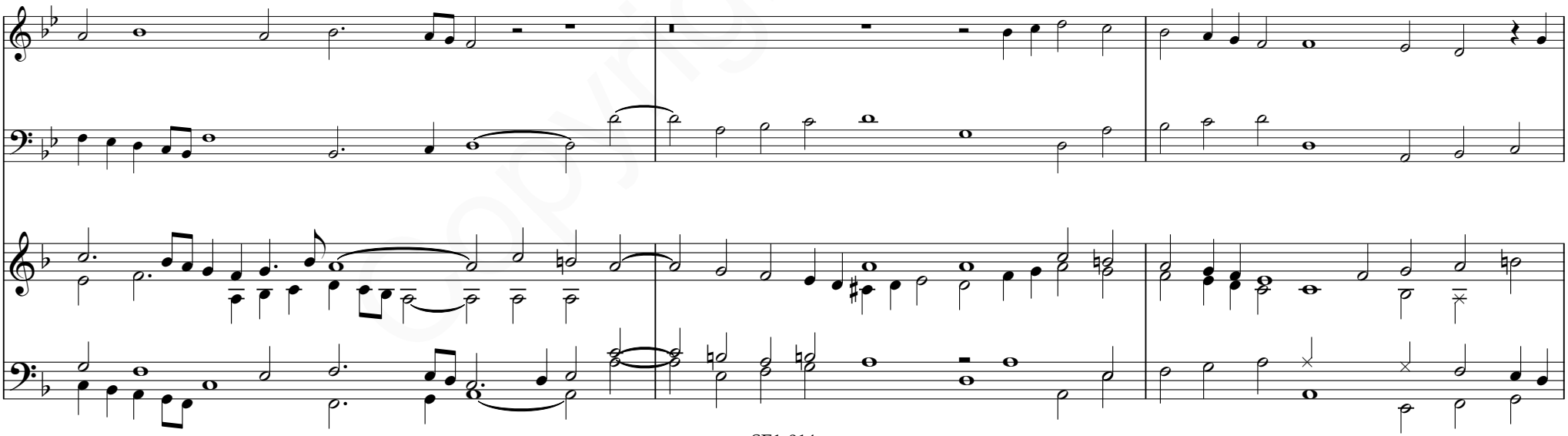

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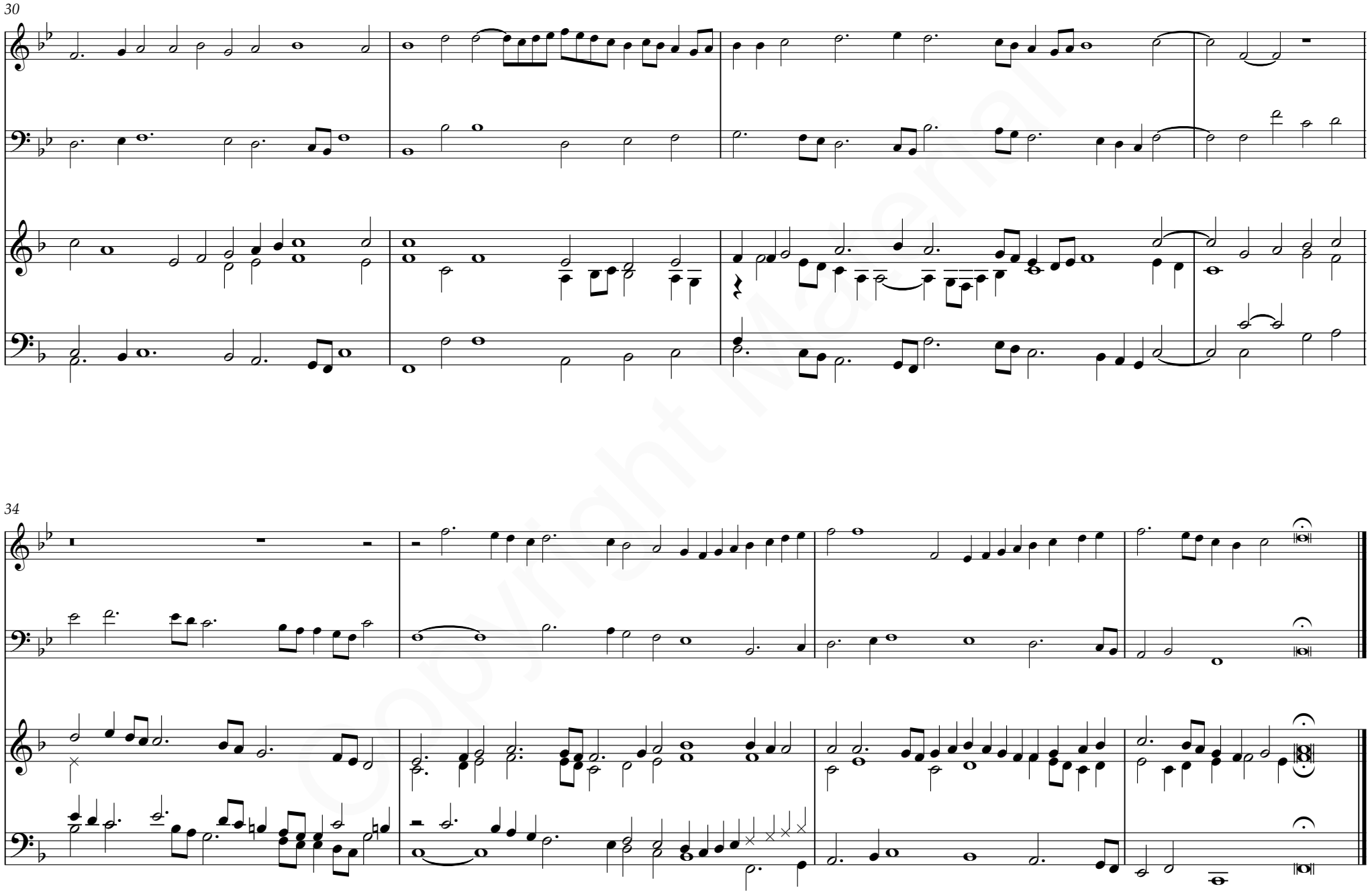

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[Violin]

Editorial instrumental parts up a fifth

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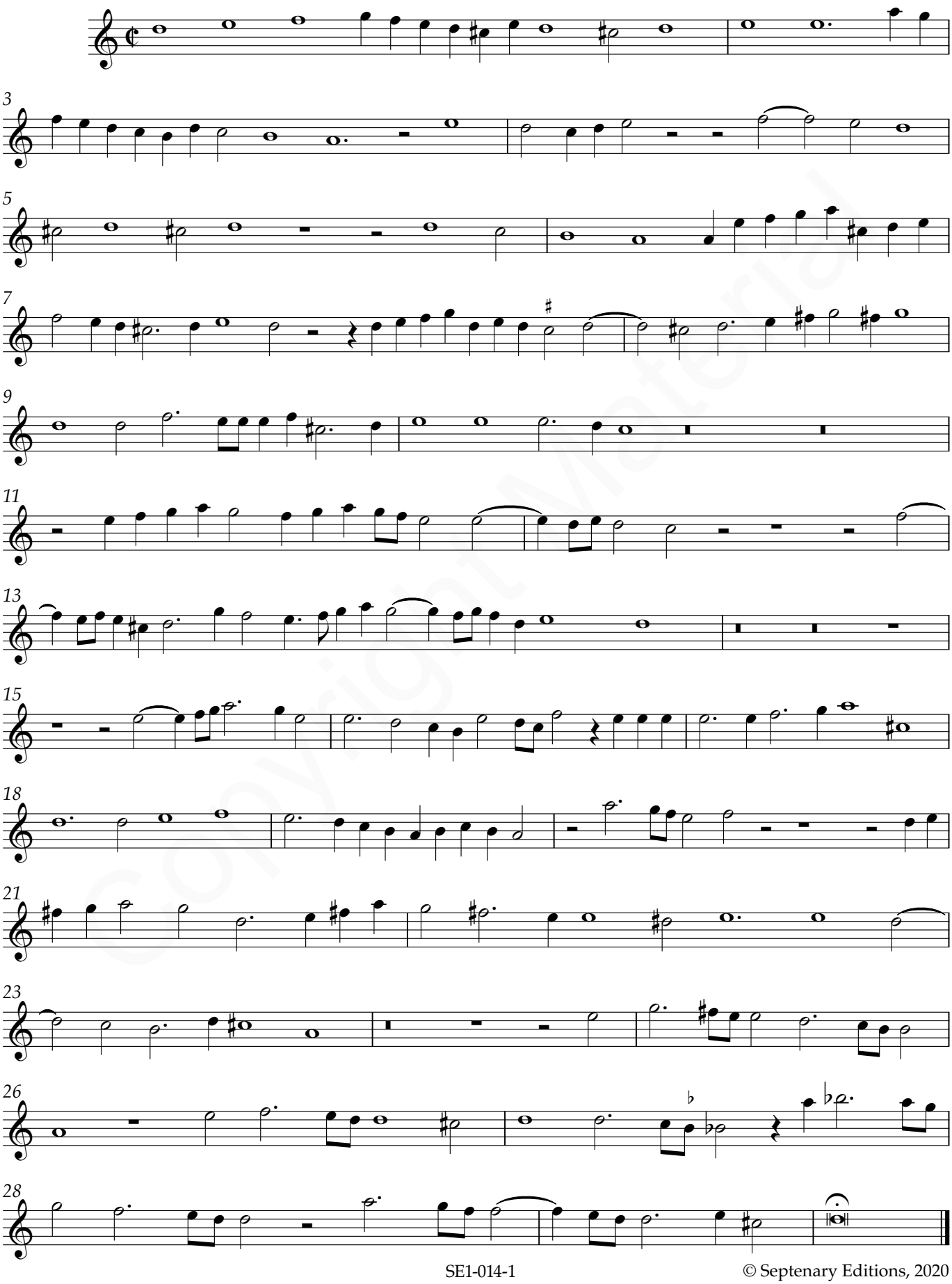

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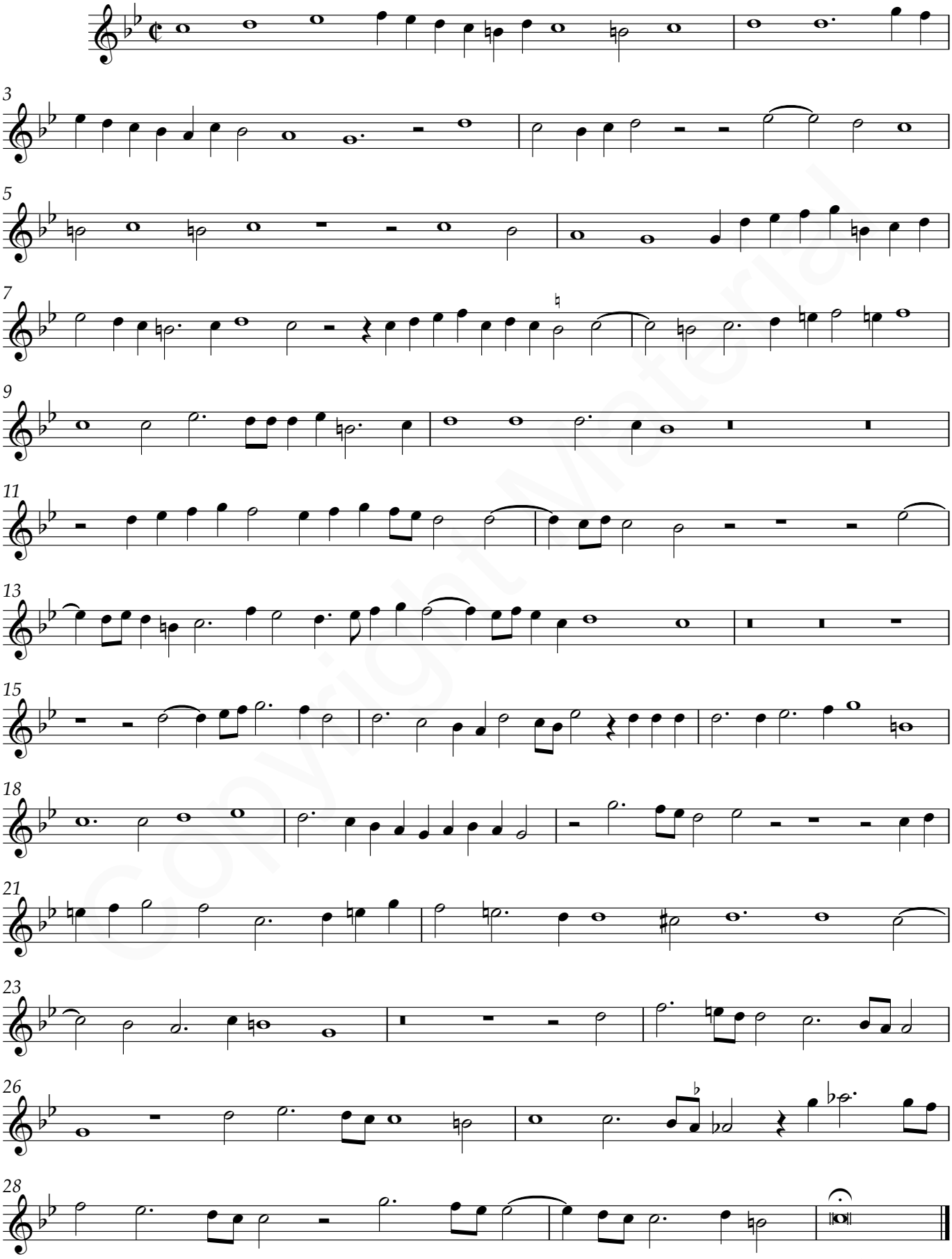

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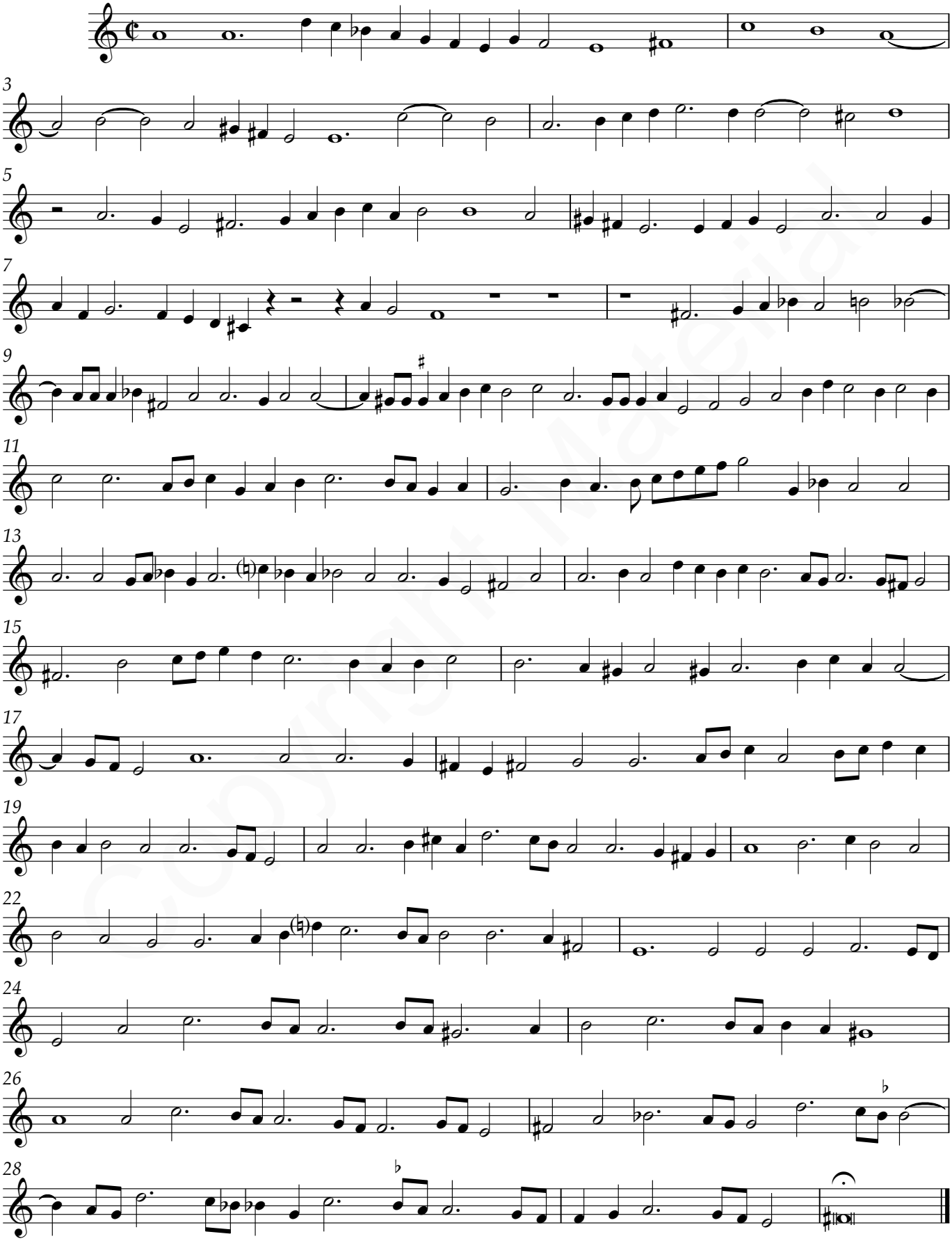

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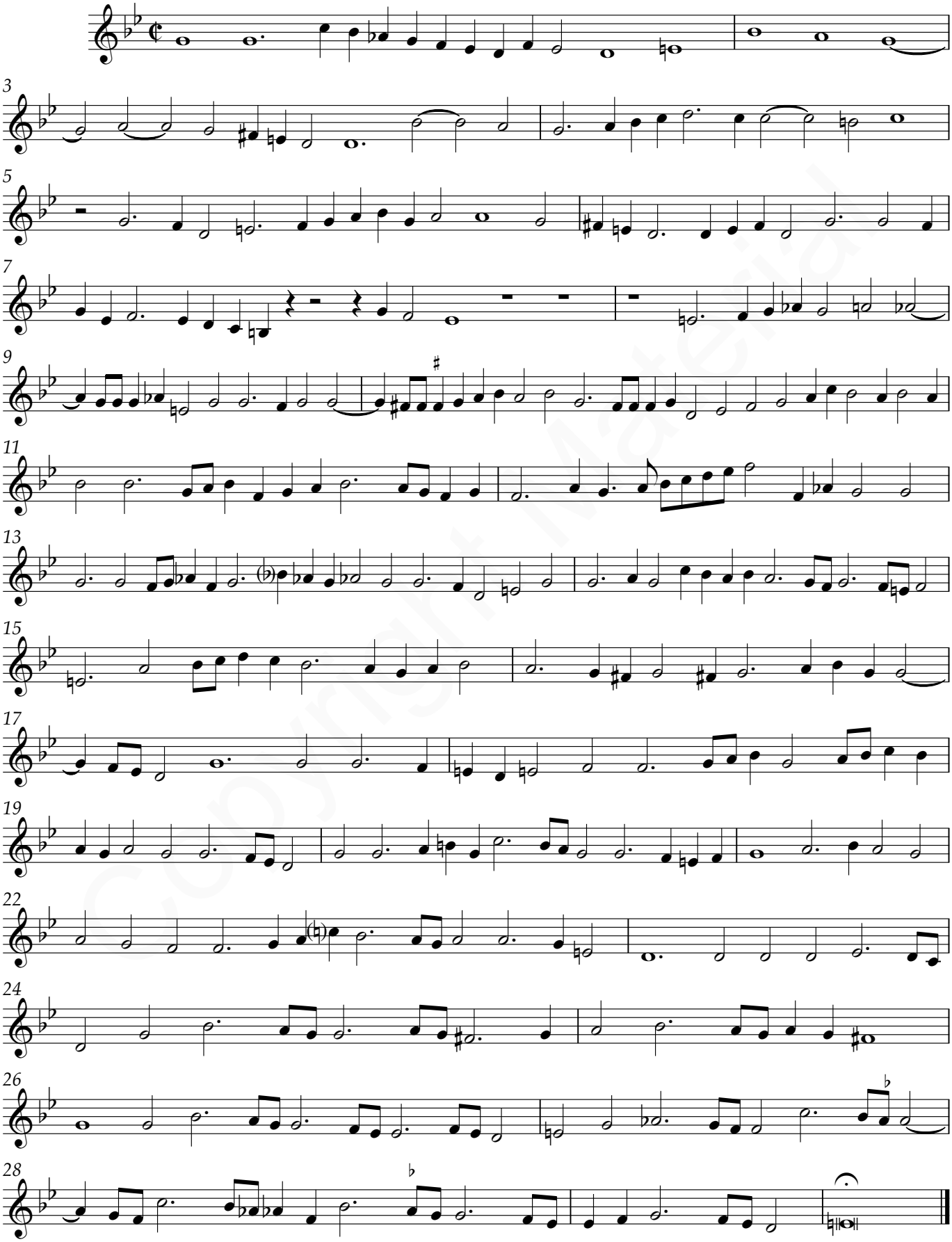

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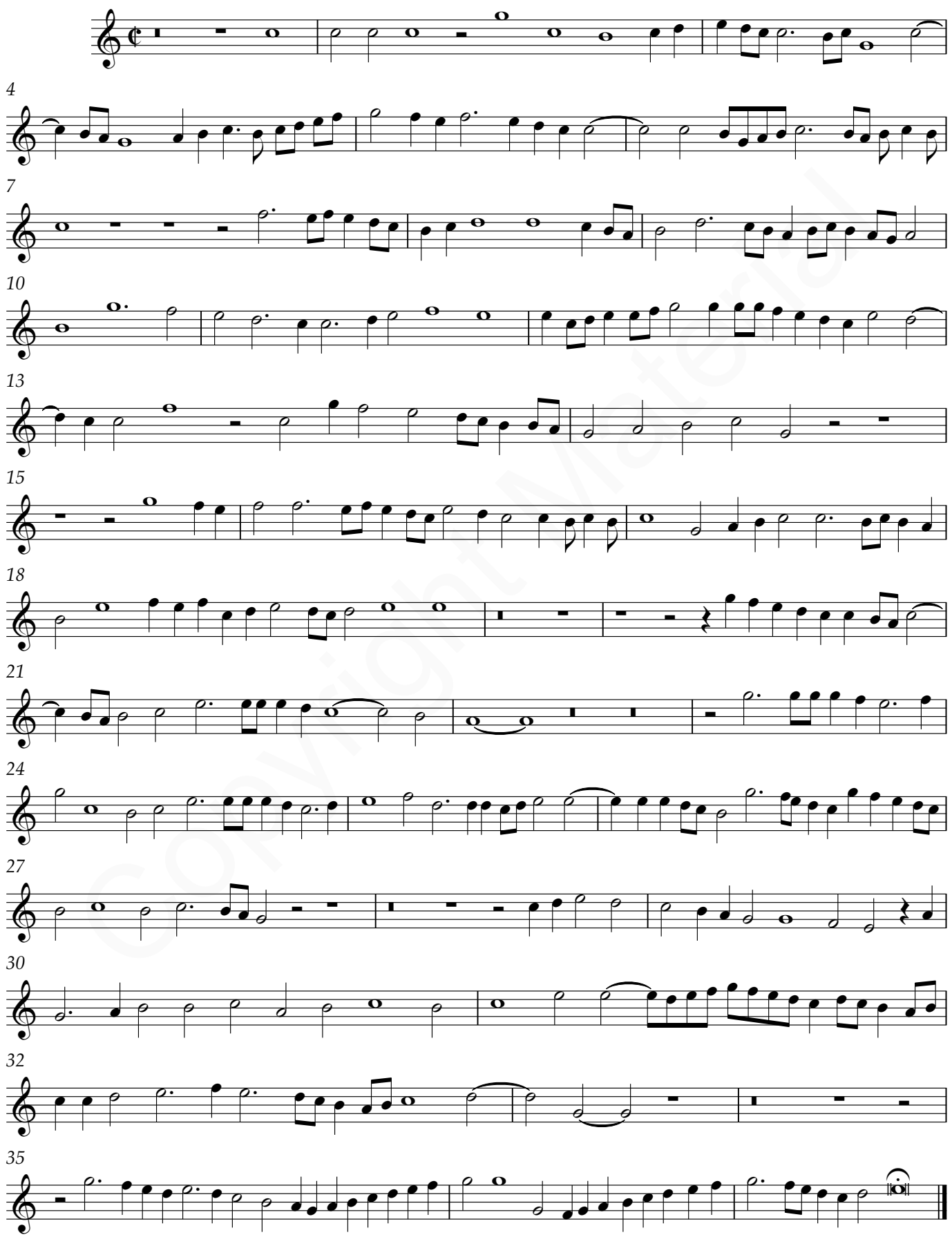

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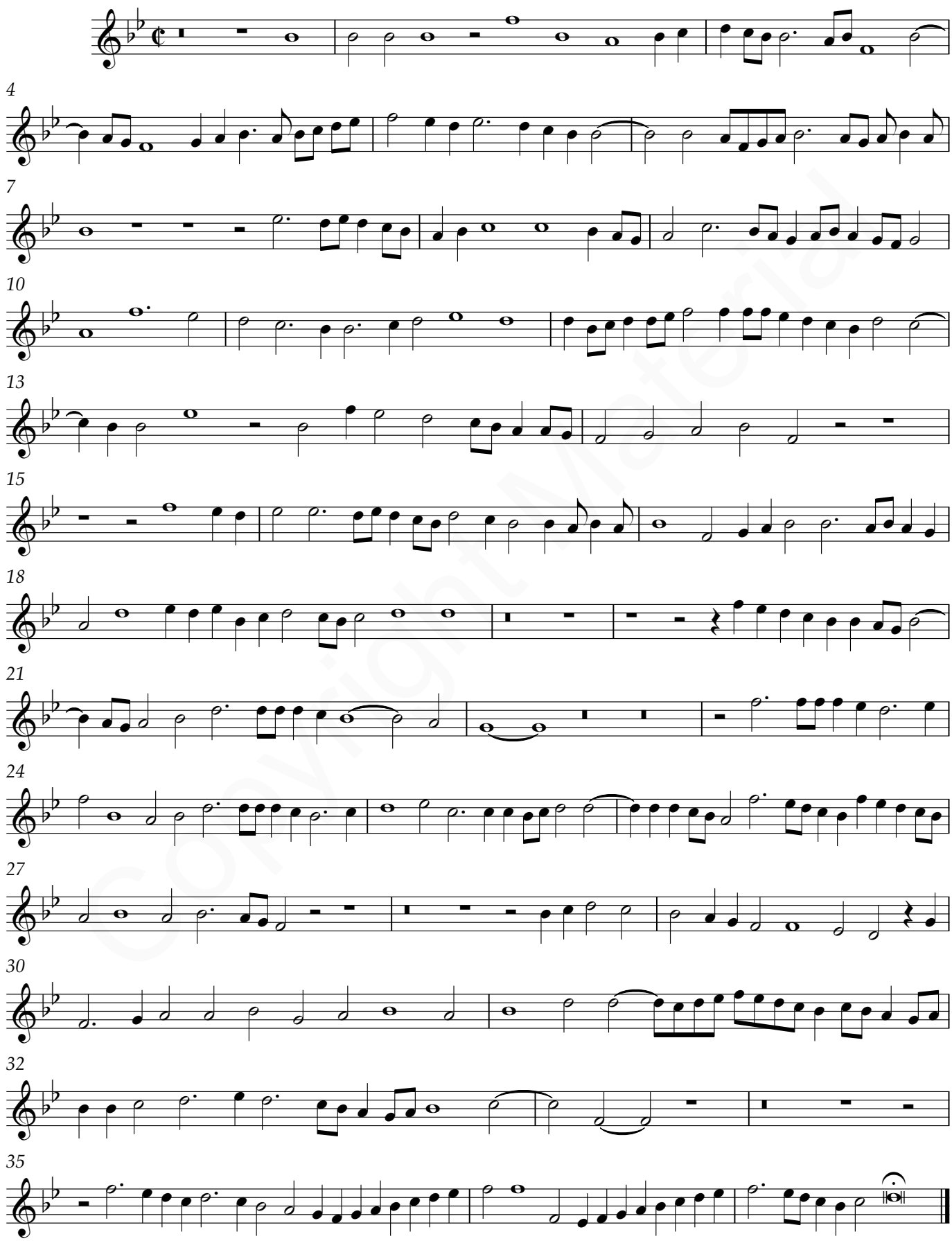

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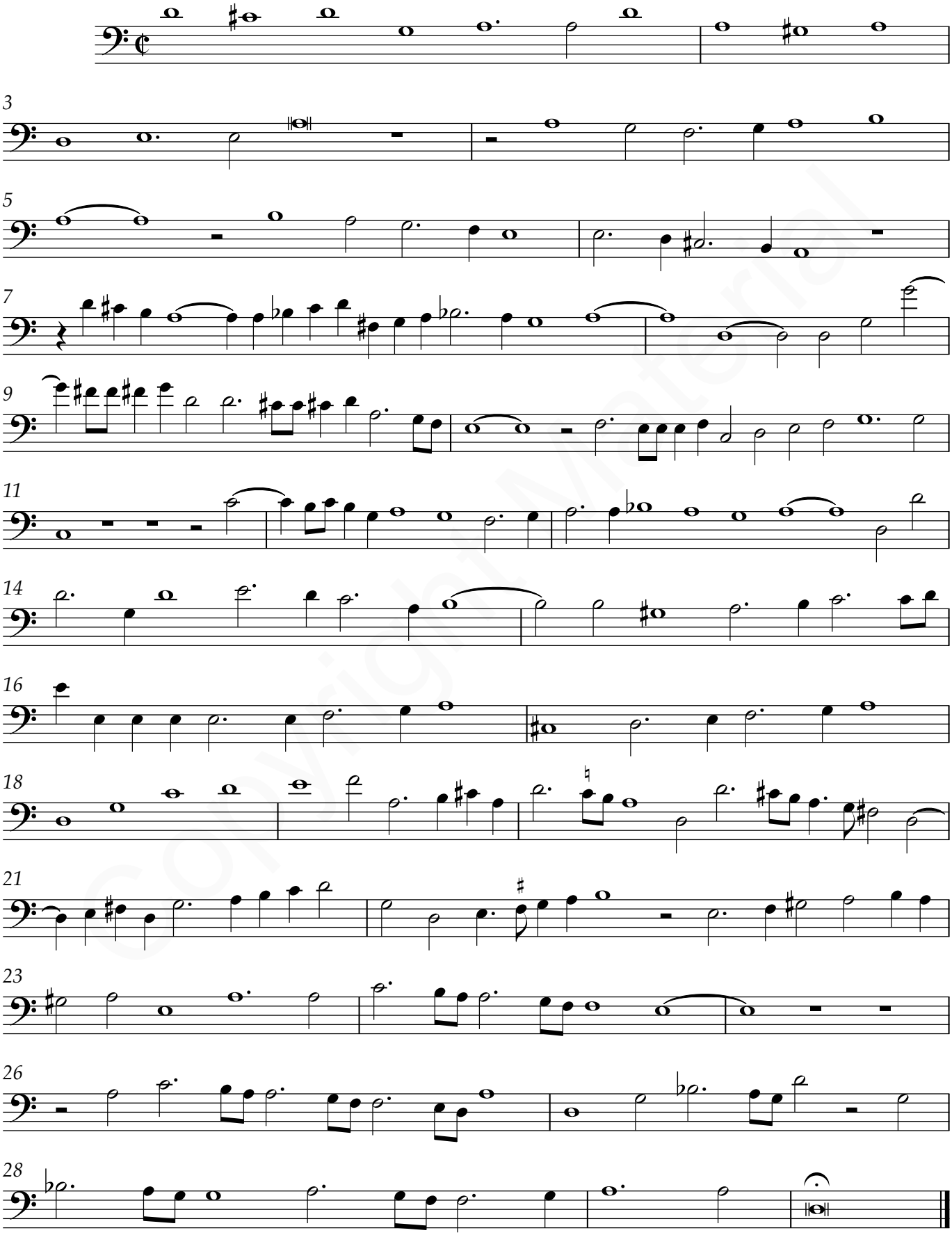

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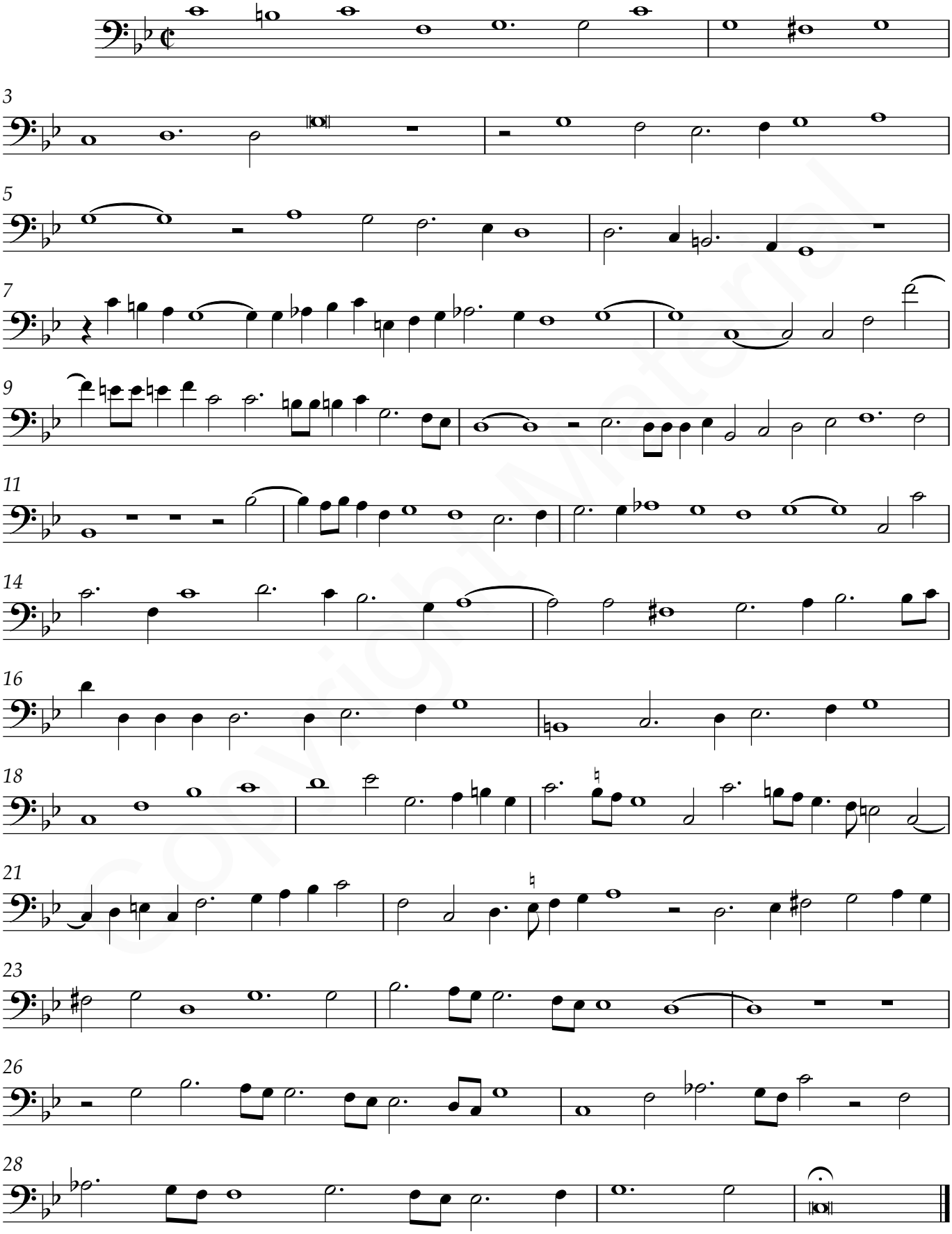

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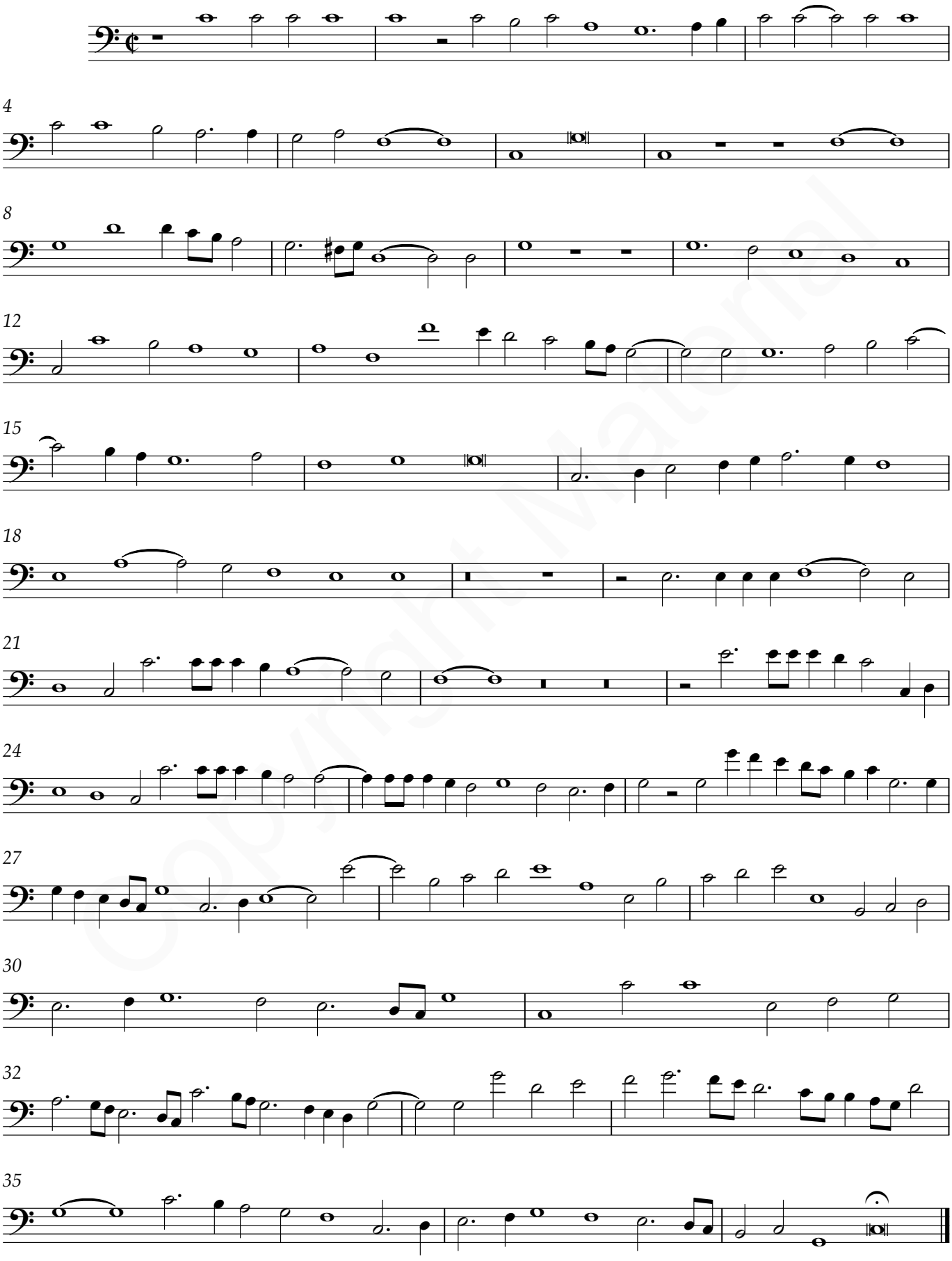

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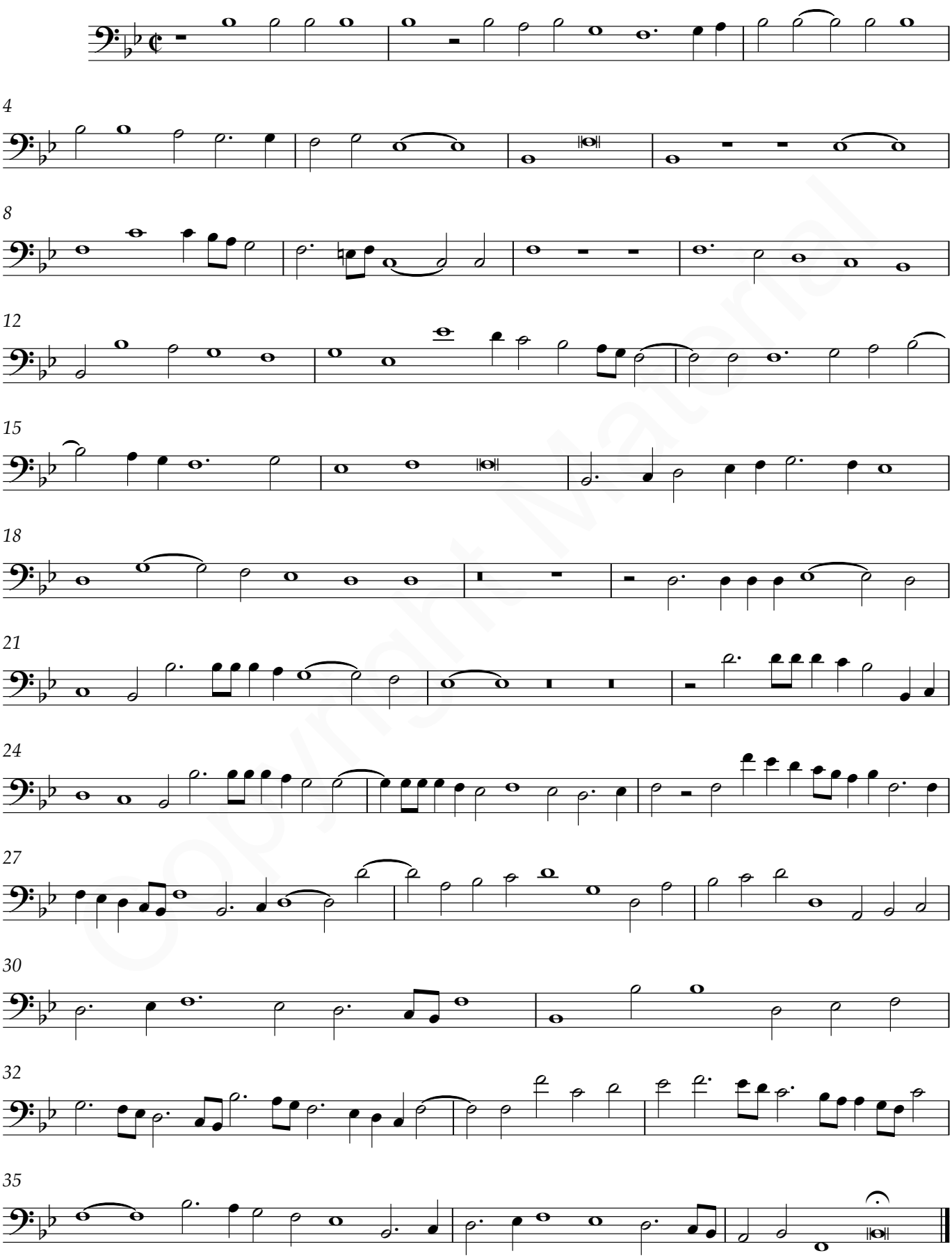

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