Divisions on ‘I am the Duke of Norfolk’

For Violin, Bass Viol
and Basso Continuo

Edition by Martin Perkins
from GB-Ob MS. Mus. Sch. C.61.

CK0092

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Anon: Division on ‘I am the Duke of Norfolk’
Edited by Martin Perkins

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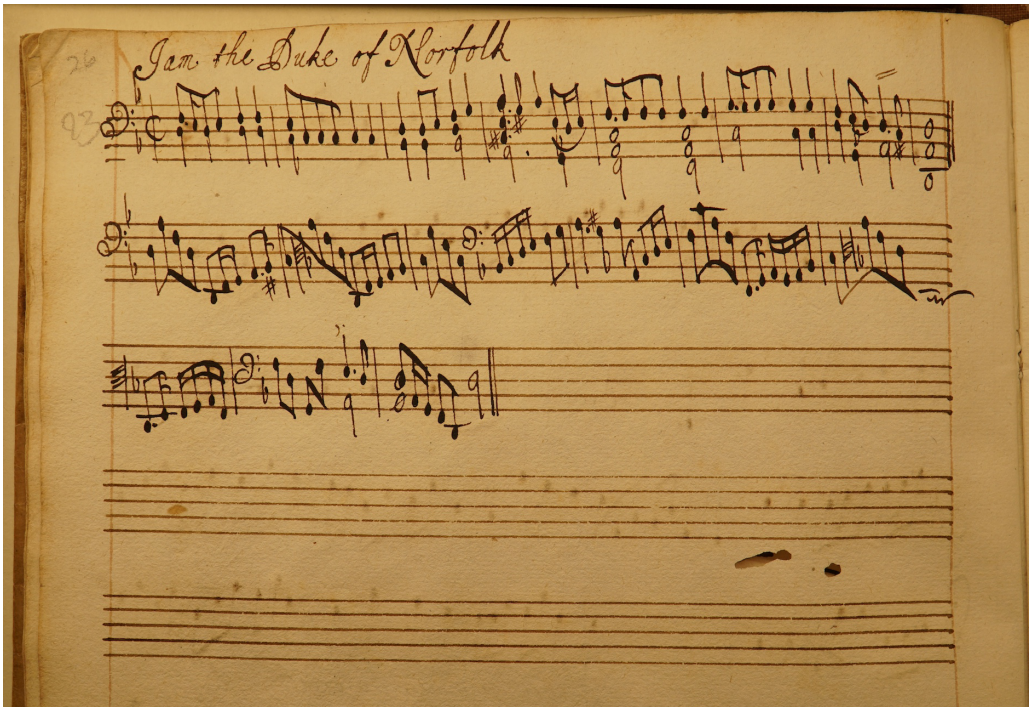
Introduction

The well-known tune 'Duke of Norfolk' appears in a variety of 17th and 18th century sources. Numerous Broadside Ballads dating from the early 1600s onwards use the tune 'I am the Duke of Norfolk', but it was also known as 'Paul's Steeple' from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. It is found in John Playford's *The English Dancing Master*, from the 1st edition (1651) until the 10th (1698) under the name 'Paul's Steeple'. The tune is almost identical to the one included in his *The Division Violin*, 1684, where it is called 'Paul's Steeple' in the contents, and 'Duke of Norfolk or Pauls Steeple' on the page of music. The origins of these titles are unclear.

The present set of divisions on 'I am the Duke of Norfolk' is found in the collection of music assembled for the Oxford Music School *c* 1688-1700 by the professor of music Edward Lowe. The manuscript Mus. Sch. C.61. held at the Bodleian Library contains a variety of instrumental works including grounds, division, sonatas and other consort music, by Blow, Corelli, Finger, Jenkins, Lully, Matteis, Henry Purcell, Christopher Simpson, and Francis Withy. The copyist was Francis Withy himself (*c*1645–1727), a singing-man at Christ Church, Oxford, and one of the assistants to Edward Lowe, and these is some evidence that he was the composer.

A fragment of the tune – just two iterations of the melody – is written on page 26, titled 'I am the Duke of Norfolk'. This is scored for bass viol alone and takes up three of a possible twelve pre-lined staves available on the page.



Mus. Sch. C.61. p. 26

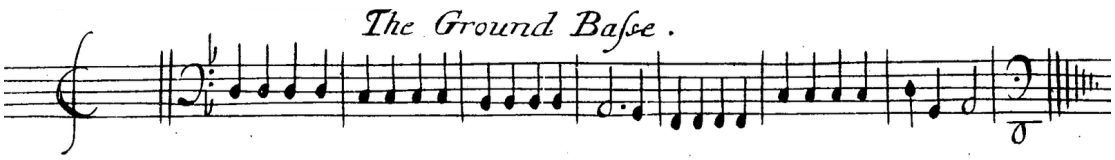
The following page is empty of music, and the work as presented in this edition starts on page 28 without title. Even on page 28, the full scoring is not clear because there is no opening statement of the ground bass, and no basso continuo staff until page 29. The opening few variations do not require a fundamental bass because the tonic of each chord is present in the bass viol part. However, further variations are left wanting without the bass: In the ninth variation (bar 65) on page 29, the violin and bass viol pass a motif between them which leaves the start of bars 65-67 without any bass note. At this point a basso continuo staff is added below and continues until the end of the page. On page 31 the music reverts to just violin and bass viol parts, and these start at the bottom of the page after seven empty staves at the top. These remaining three variations (13-15) are unnumbered.

The fragmentary nature of these pages leads to a conclusion that Withy was not copying but composing: his initial attempts at writing a complete set of divisions for solo bass viol were curtailed perhaps once he realised the creative potential of including a treble instrument with bass viol. The basso continuo line was included at the point he realised the harmony would be incomplete without it. Rather than include the ground bass before the start of the work (as he does in the ground bass pieces earlier in the manuscript, such as his own two sets divisions for bass viol in G minor, pp. 8-9 and pp. 10-11), or at the very end of the work such as the examples in *The Division Violin*, 1684, he inserts it at the point he realises it is crucial to the composition. The opening fragment for bass viol is too short to make a comparison of thematic content. Although it doesn't work as an introduction to the subsequent variations with violin and continuo, it has been included in the edition as an appendix.

There are more features which point to Withy composing rather than copying from another source. Several errors have been made in the process: notes are crossed out and some of these have note names added above or below for clarification. In some instances, notes have been added in cue size. These smaller notes sometimes confirm the added note names, such as in bar 29, but often not, such as bar 30. Some placements of the cue-sized notes further suggest Withy was filling out the counterpoint and refining the composition after the fact.

The work has been given the Viola da Gamba Society catalogue number: VdGS Anon 84.

The basso continuo is presented in semibreve notes as it appears in the manuscript. However, a more appropriate performance of this part would be to play crotchets, following the models found in *The Division Violin*, 1684:



Editorial Method

In the edition, the original beaming has been retained. All accidentals found wanting are indicated in cue size, with suggestions needed to iron out augmented intervals placed over the affected note. Ornamentation symbols are sparse in the manuscript: there are three instances of small, double oblique strokes used in bars 35, 91 and 111. These are all notated as double strokes in the edition (as are those found in contemporary printed works, such as Matteis's *Ayres for the Violin*) meaning a shake, or trill:

Critical Commentary

Bar	Part	Position in Bar	Comment
17	violin	5	a'', crossed out.
26	viol	3-5	c, c, c. note names 'e g ϵ' placed over the stave.
27	viol	2	c, cue size.
29	viol	2-3	'c a' written over the semiquaver and quaver f. Notes added in cue-size.
35	viol	2	g; cue-size f added but without crossing out the g.
37	viol	3	f; corrected to g with 'g' written under the stave.
47	viol	2	quavers e-f; f crossed out to leave crotchet e.
51	violin	10	b-flat and d. Beaming suggests a b-flat was original note and d the correction.
67	violin	9	e', corrected to f' with 'f' written under the stave.
82	violin	1	g', 'e' written over the stave.
94	viol	9	c', corrected but not crossed out. Beaming suggests a was original note and c' the correction.
95	violin	9-10	e'', f'', crossed out.
	viol	13-14	dotted crotchet, quaver.
96	violin	2-3	sharp signs over the notes scratched out.
102	viol	6	d, corrected with 'd' written above stave.
111	viol	5	d'', with 'e' written over stave.

Martin Perkins, 2026.

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GB-Ob MS. Mus. Sch. c. 61

pp. 28-31

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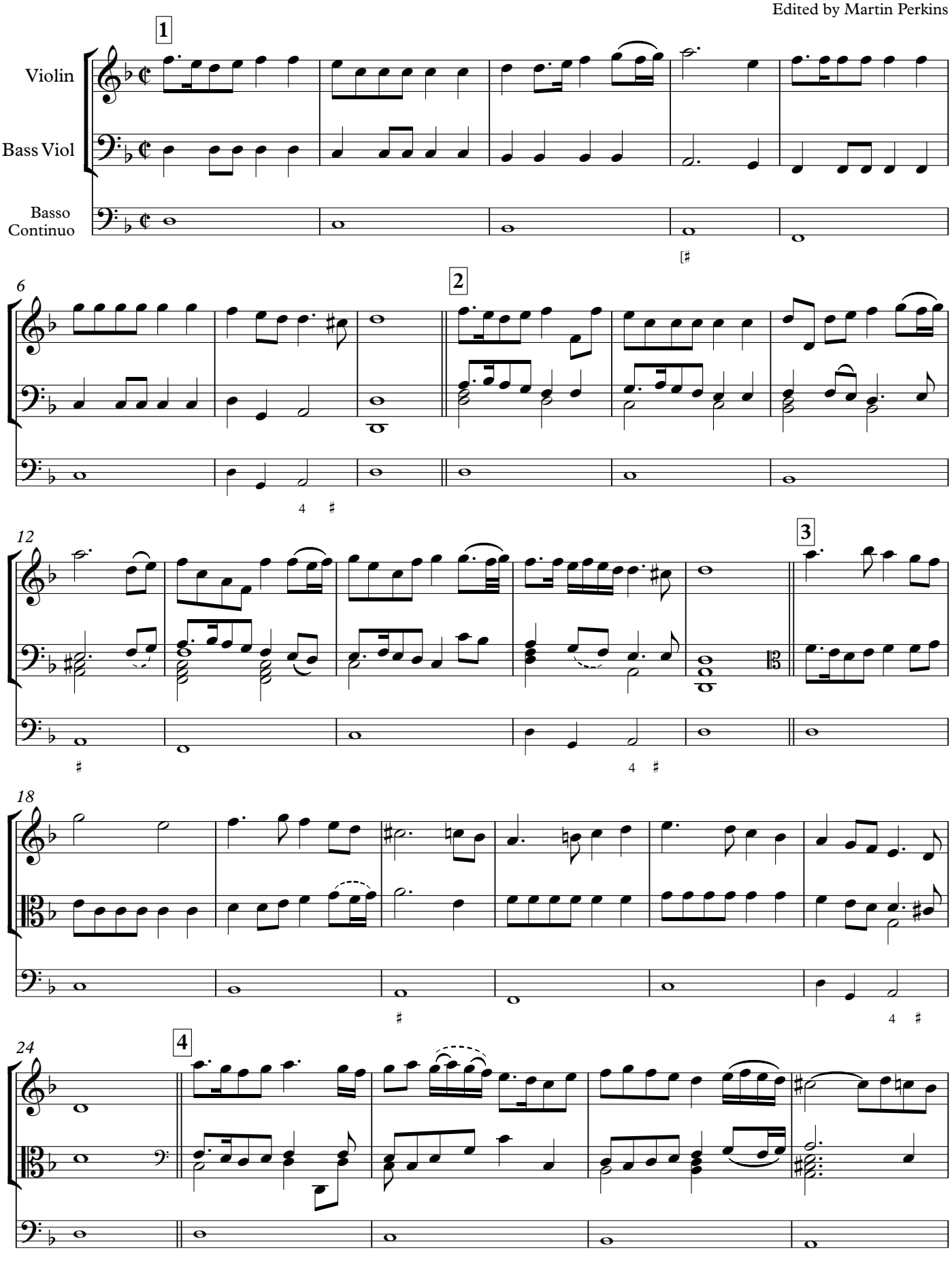

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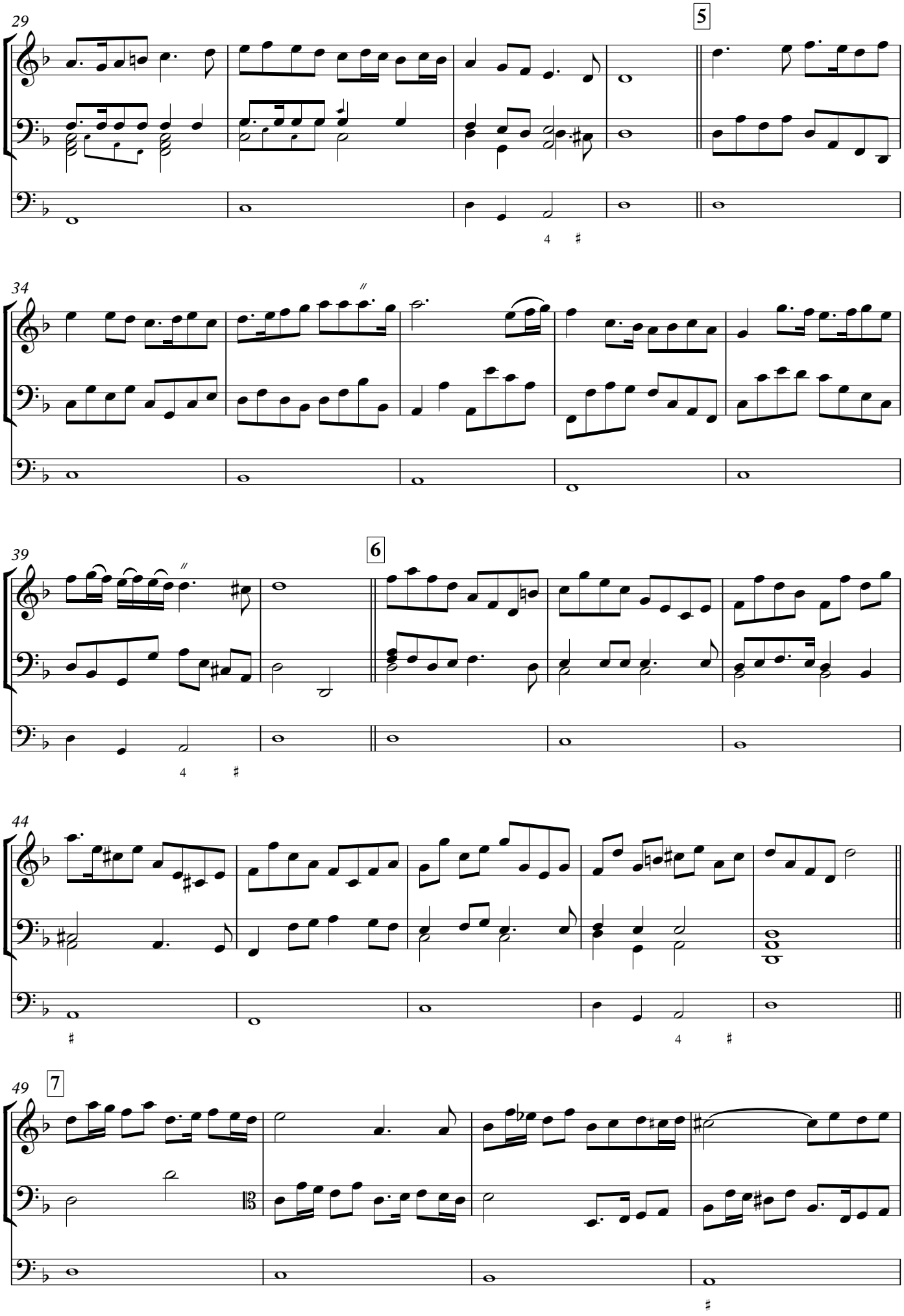

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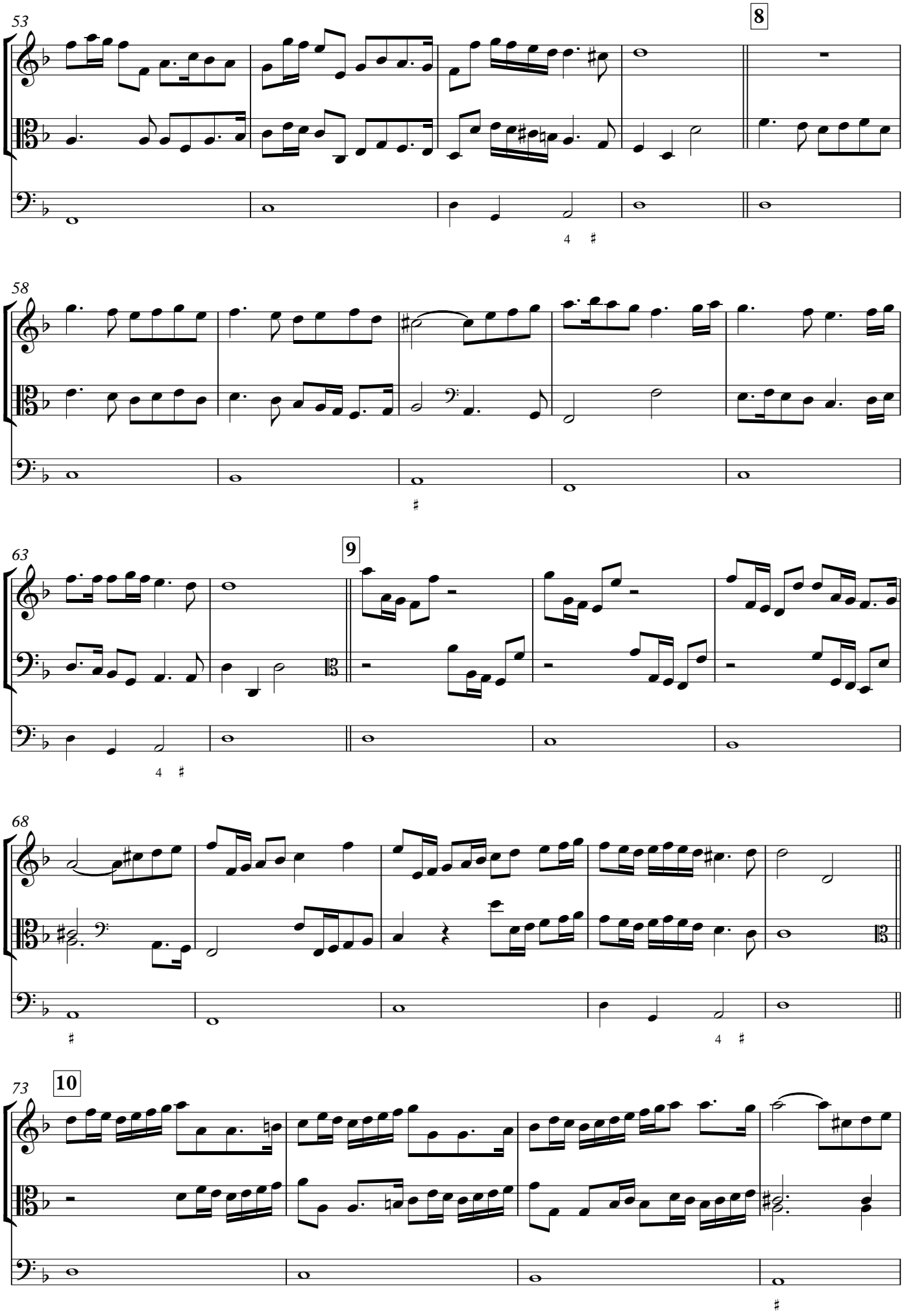

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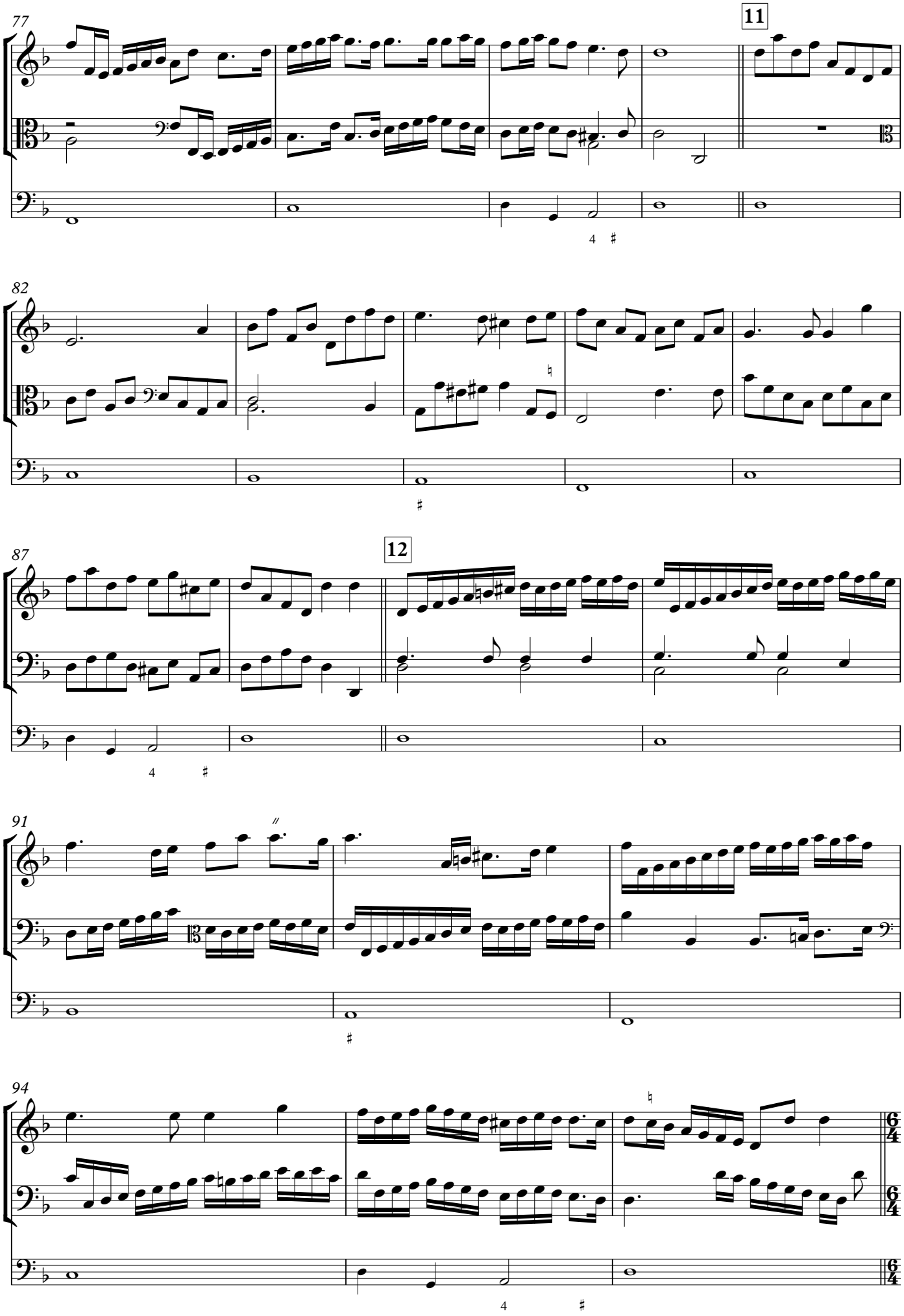

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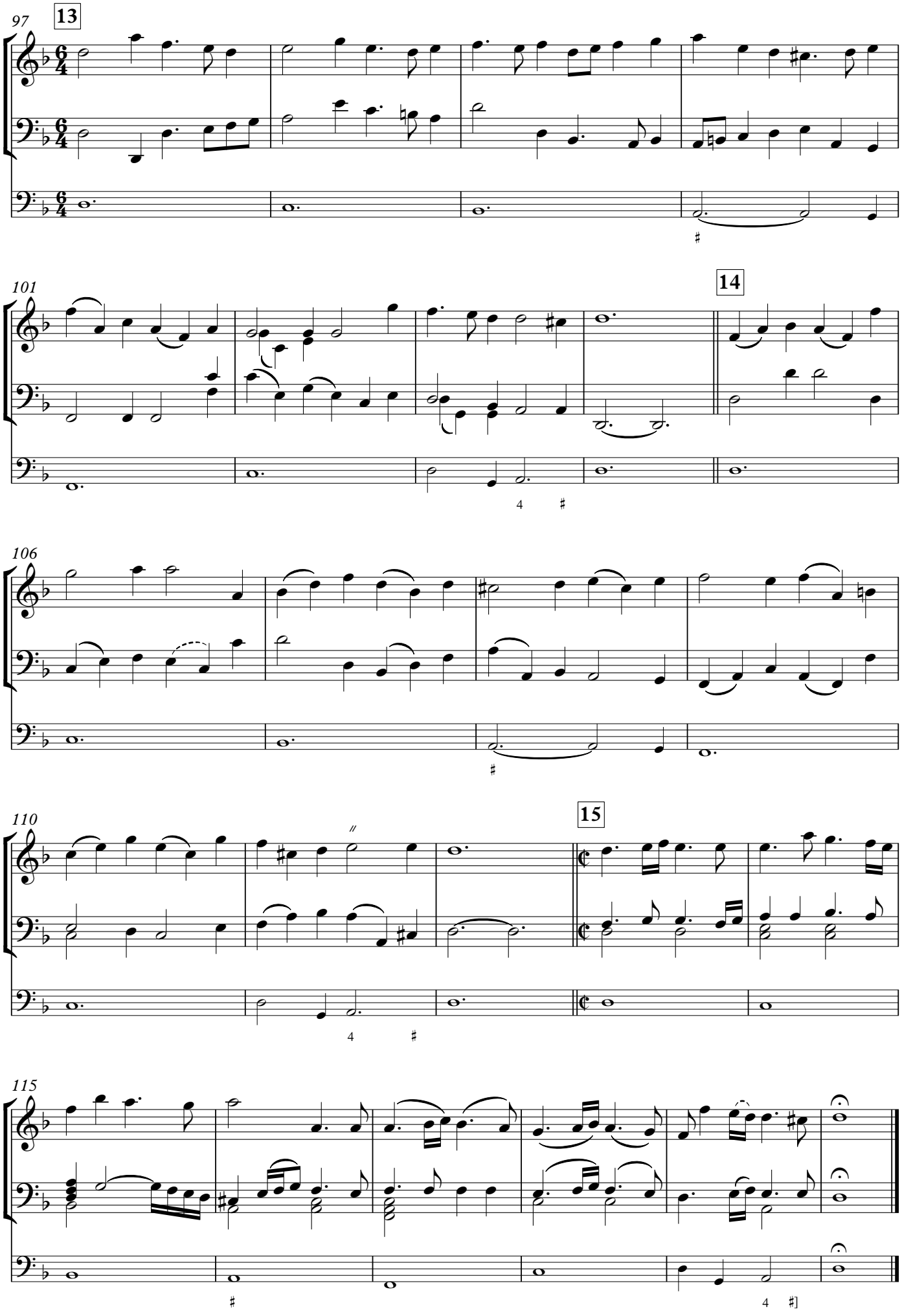

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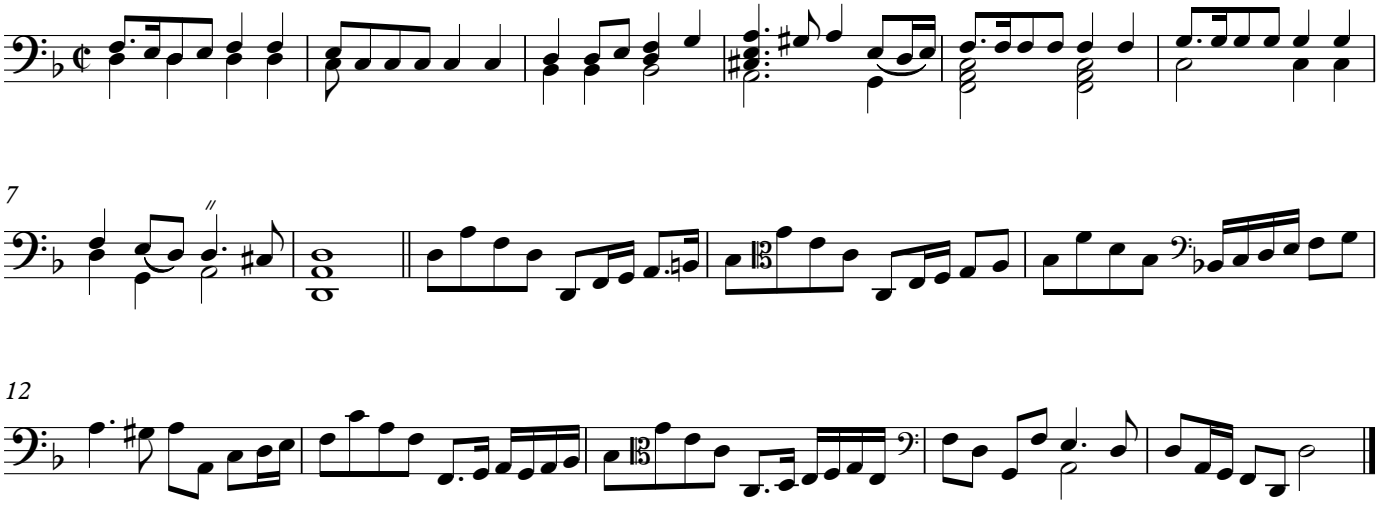
Appendix:

Fragment for bass viol, 'I am the Duke of Norfolk' p. 26



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Divisions on I am the Duke of Norfolk

Violin

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pp. 28-31

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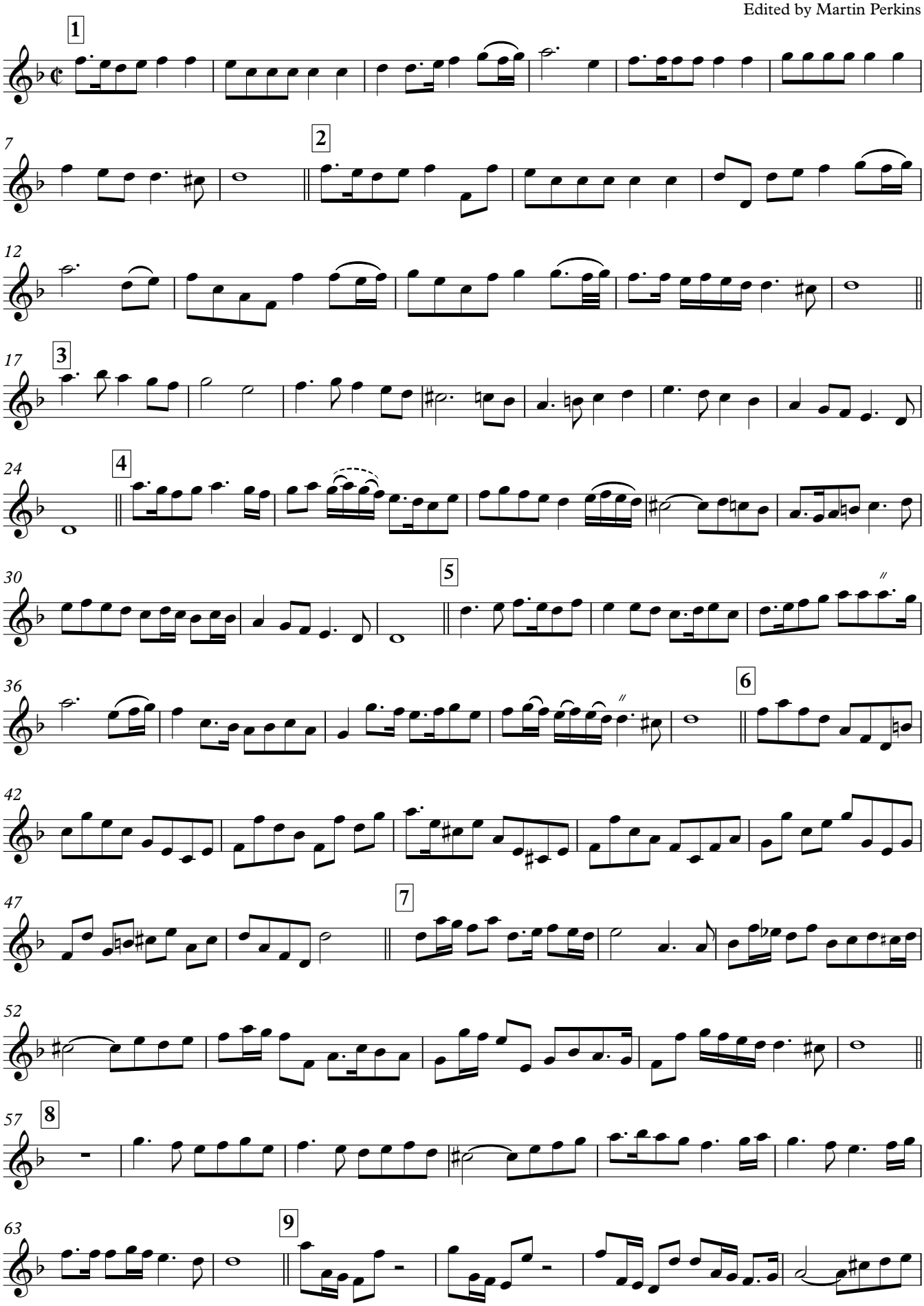

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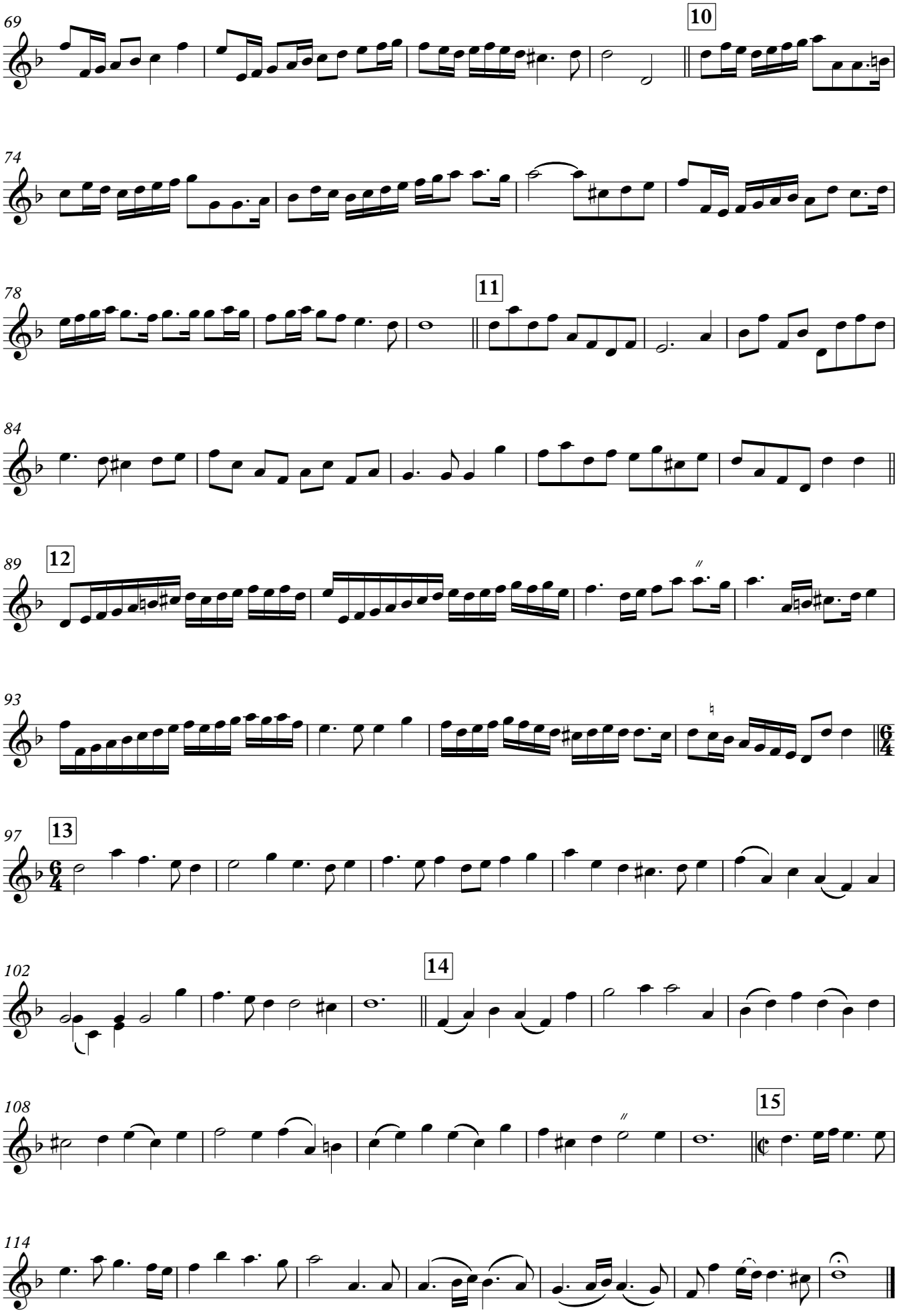

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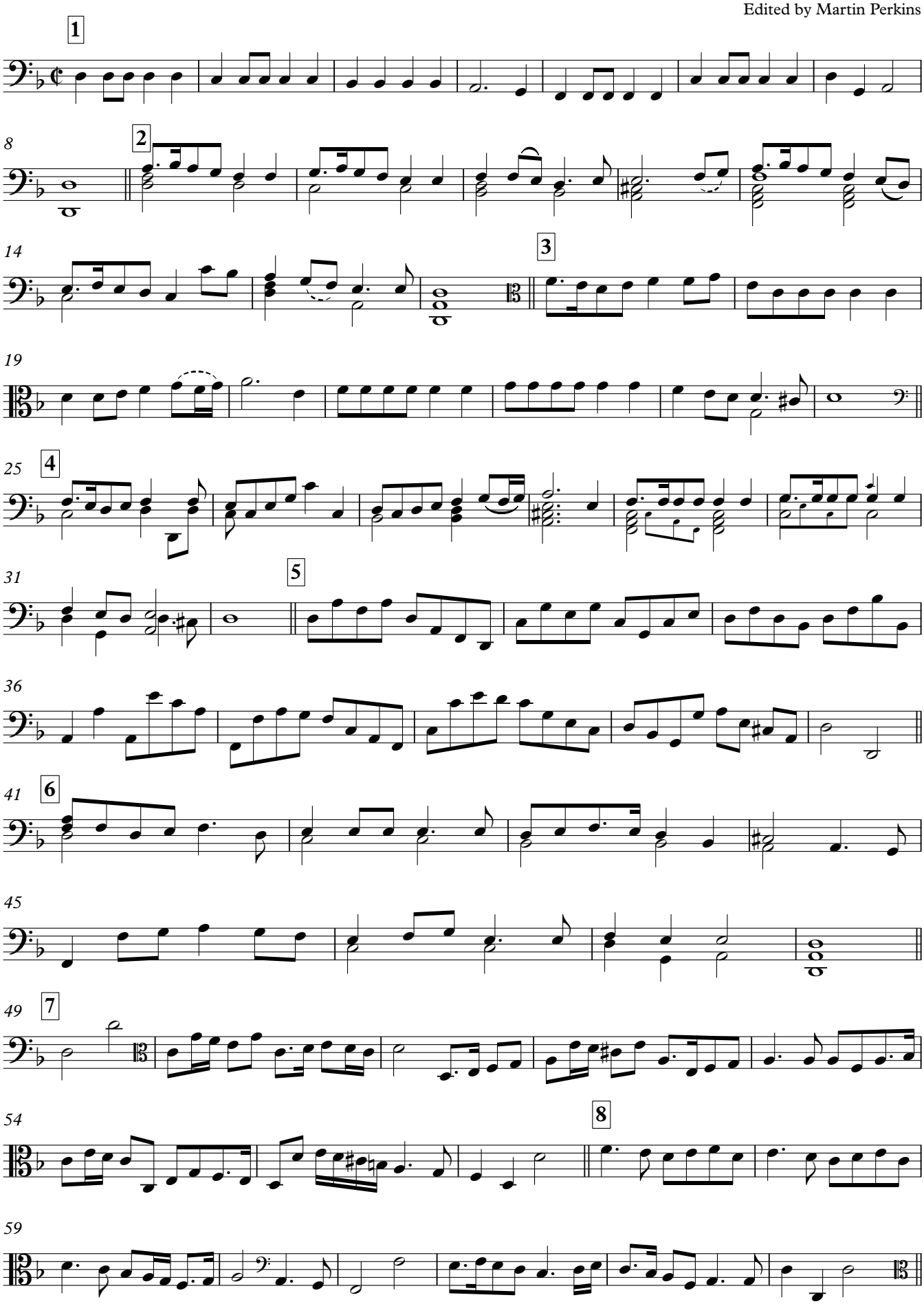

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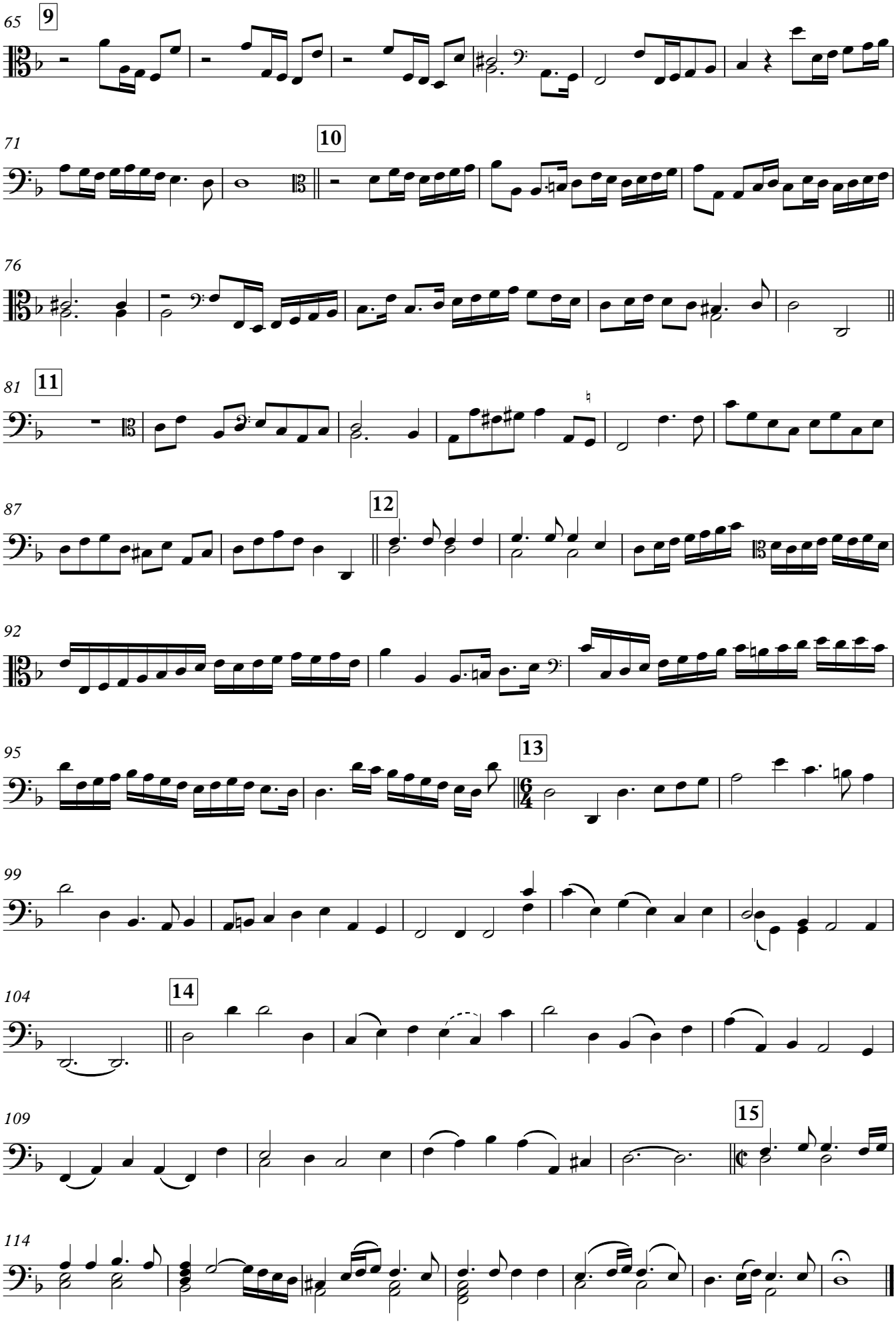

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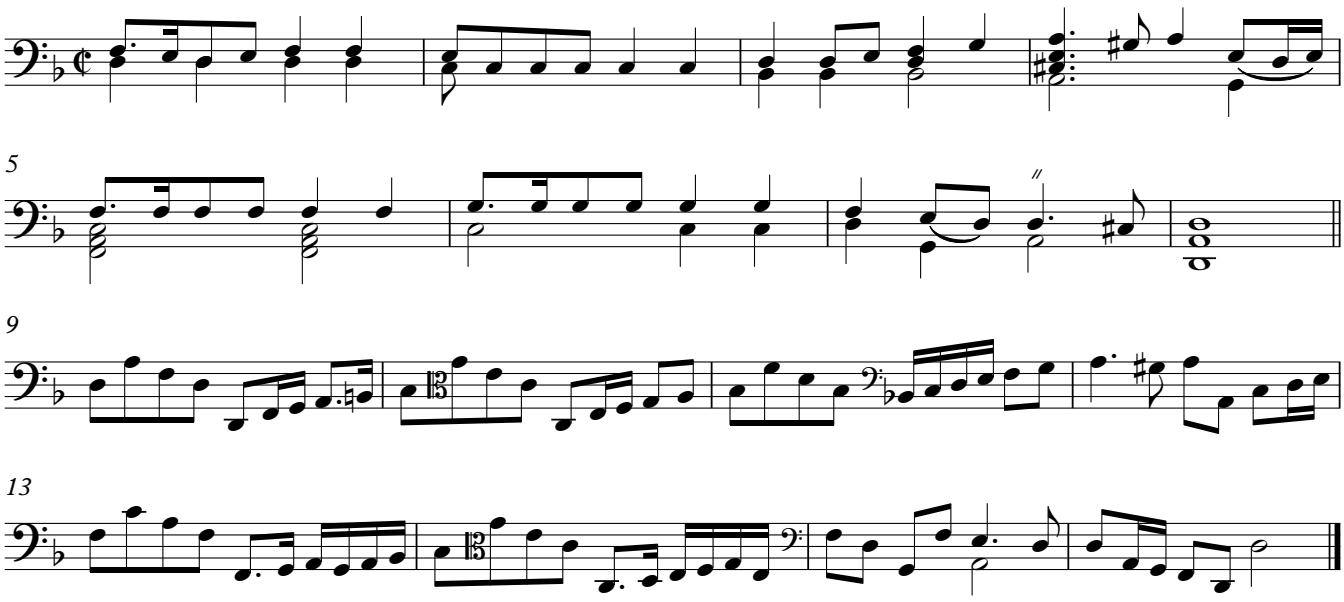

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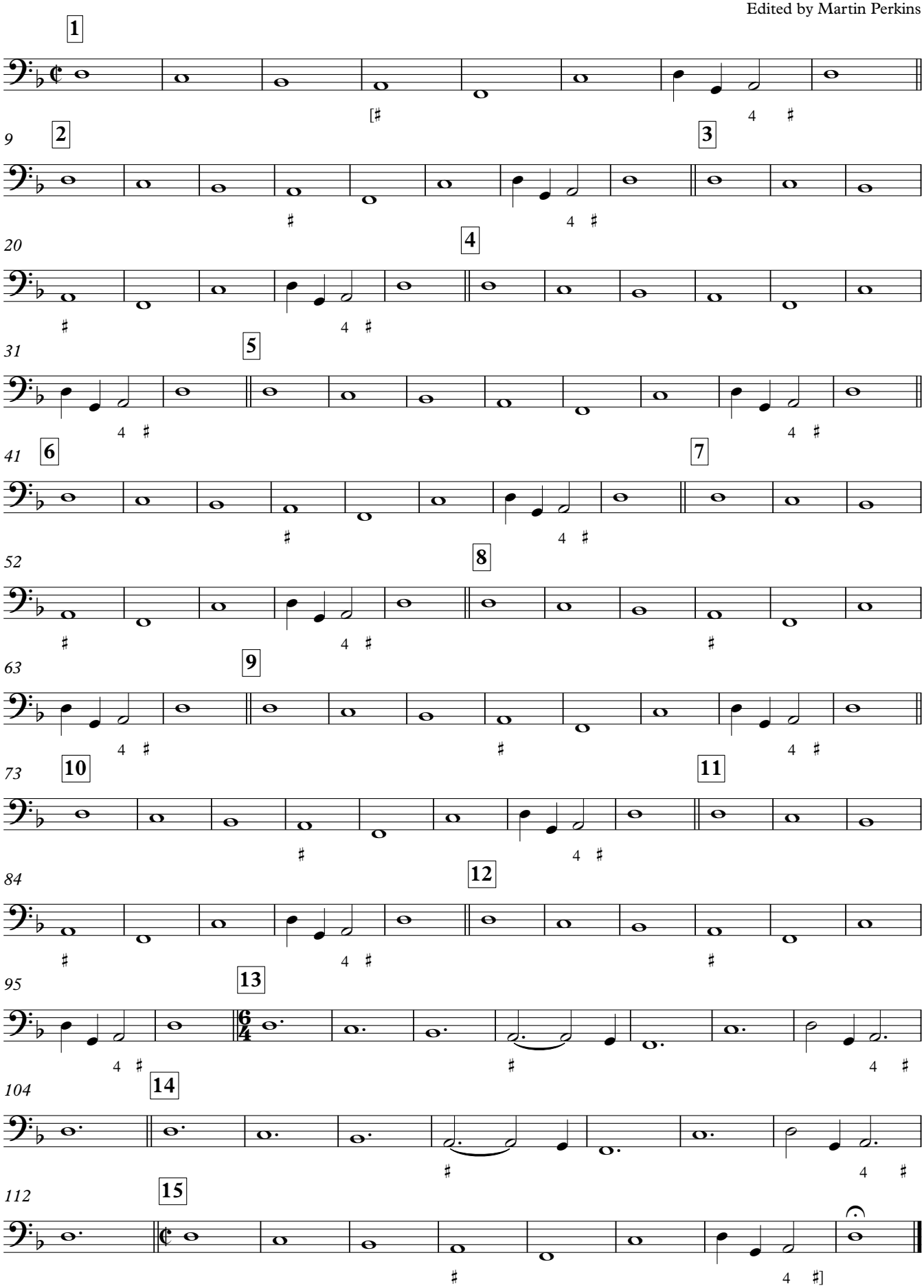

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