Christopher Preston

(d. ca. 1689)

Suite in G and 2 Hornpipes from *Melothesia*, 1673

For Solo Harpsichord

Edition by Martin Perkins

CK0073

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Christopher Preston – Suite in G and 2 Hornpipes from *Melothesia*
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First published in Great Britain in 2026 by Cat on the Keys Music.

Cat on the Keys Catalogue number: CK0073

Introduction

The English keyboard player and composer Christopher Preston is an obscure character in the musical world of late seventeenth-century England. No records of his birth survive, and it cannot be ascertained if he was a descendent of the organist Thomas Preston of the previous century. Court records show that he was appointed to the royal household as a musician-in-ordinary for the virginals in 1668. This position included the right of succession to Christopher Gibbons (second son of Orlando Gibbons), whom Charles II had appointed at the Restoration. After Gibbons' death in 1676 Preston assumed the position in the king's Private Musick.

The present 6 pieces comprise his total printed output of one suite of pieces in G major and two hornpipes, published in *Melothesia: Or, Certain General Rules for Playing Upon A Continued-Bass. With A choice Collection of Lessons for the Harpsichord and Organ of all Sorts*, 1673. This important early printed collection resulted from a commercial collaboration of Matthew Locke with the music printer John Carr, who rose to the challenge of printing keyboard music, a rarity due to the complexities of including more than one note per stave using the traditional block printing. Its title indicates the market demand not only for solo keyboard pieces, but also for instruction on how to accompany according to the rules of figured bass. The 68 pieces in the collection include offerings by many of the most important keyboardists of the early Restoration period, including John Roberts, John Moss, William Hall and Gehard Diesineer as well as Matthew Locke himself.

A manuscript source of the Almain is found in GB-Och 1177; this has been published in *Late-Seventeenth-Century English Keyboard Music*, ed. Candace Bailey, Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, 81 (Madison WI, 1997).

Editorial Procedure

In the edition beaming has been modernized. Accidentals have been modernized and necessary additions are included in the main text in cue size. Accidentals that are suggested owing to melodic contour are placed over the stave. Editorial suggestions, such as ornaments, are placed within square brackets.

Critical Commentary

Bar	**Position in Bar**	**Comment**
2. Almain		
8	2	LH: crotchet e
9	3	LH: a
3. Corant		second time bars editorial.
1	2	crotchet g tied to g.

Martin Perkins, 2026.

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1. Prelude

Christopher Preston
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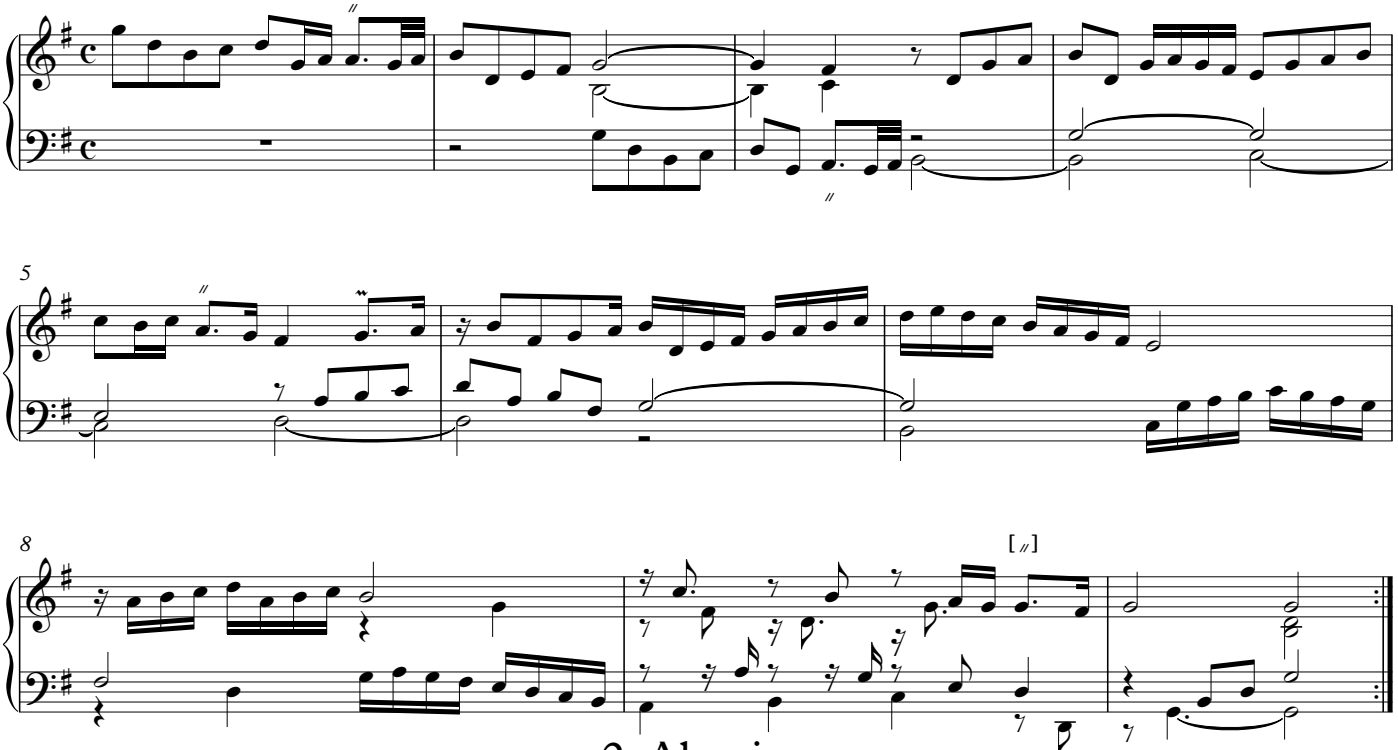
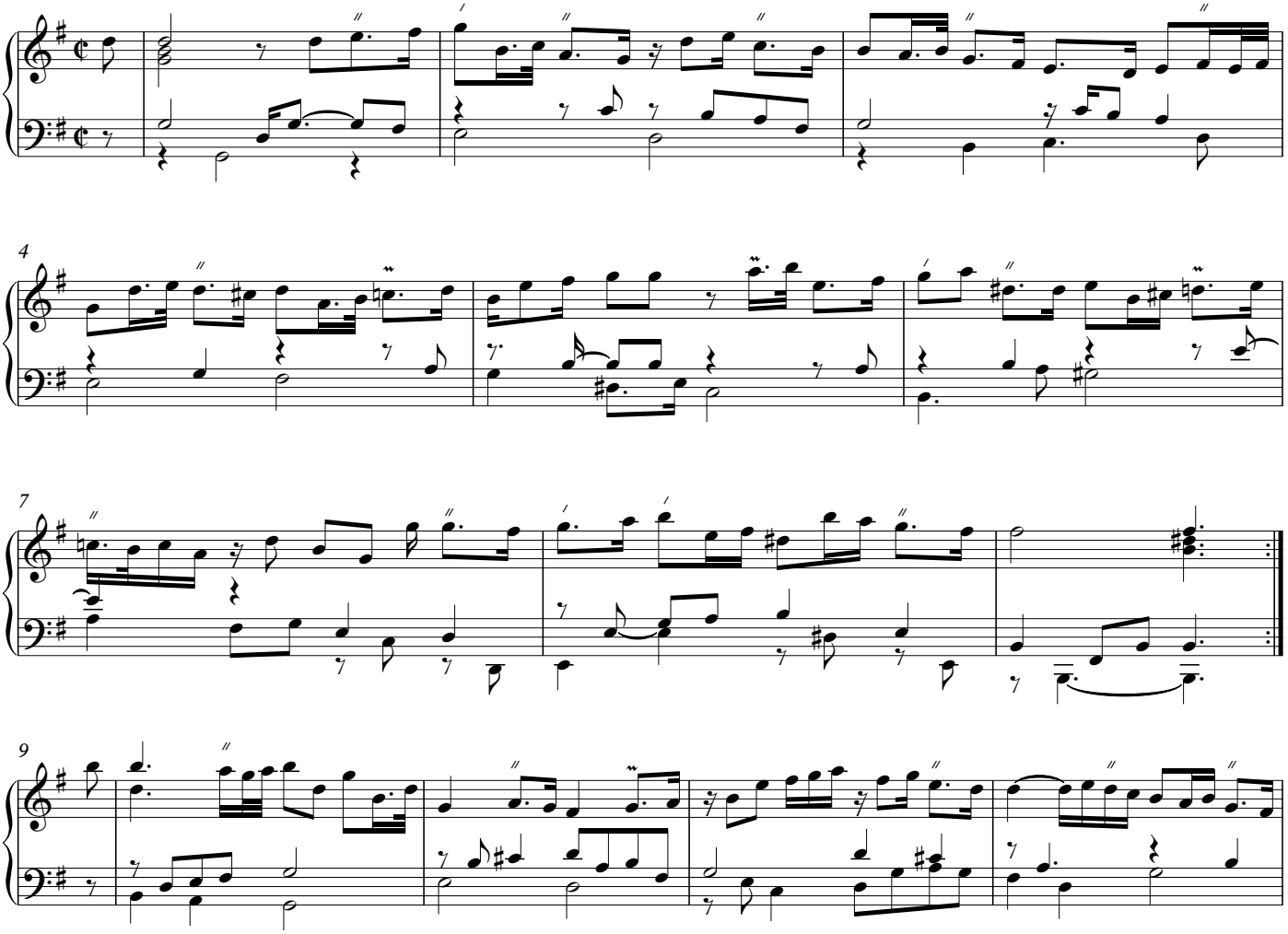


2. Almain



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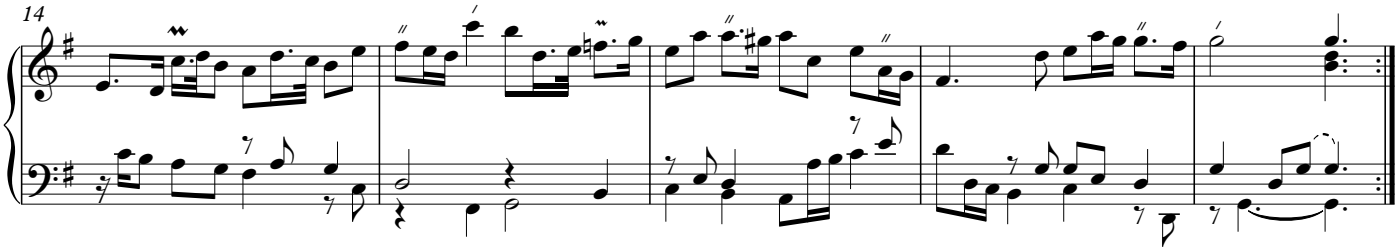
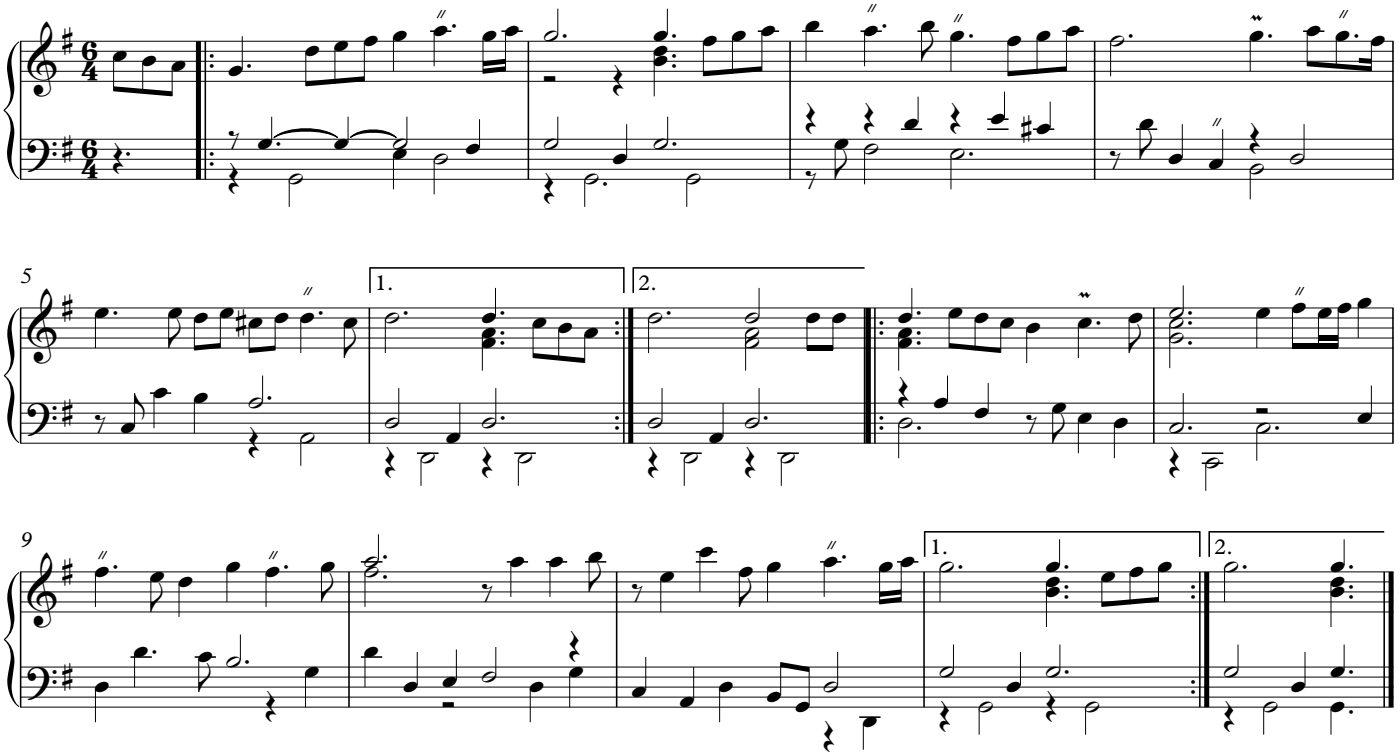
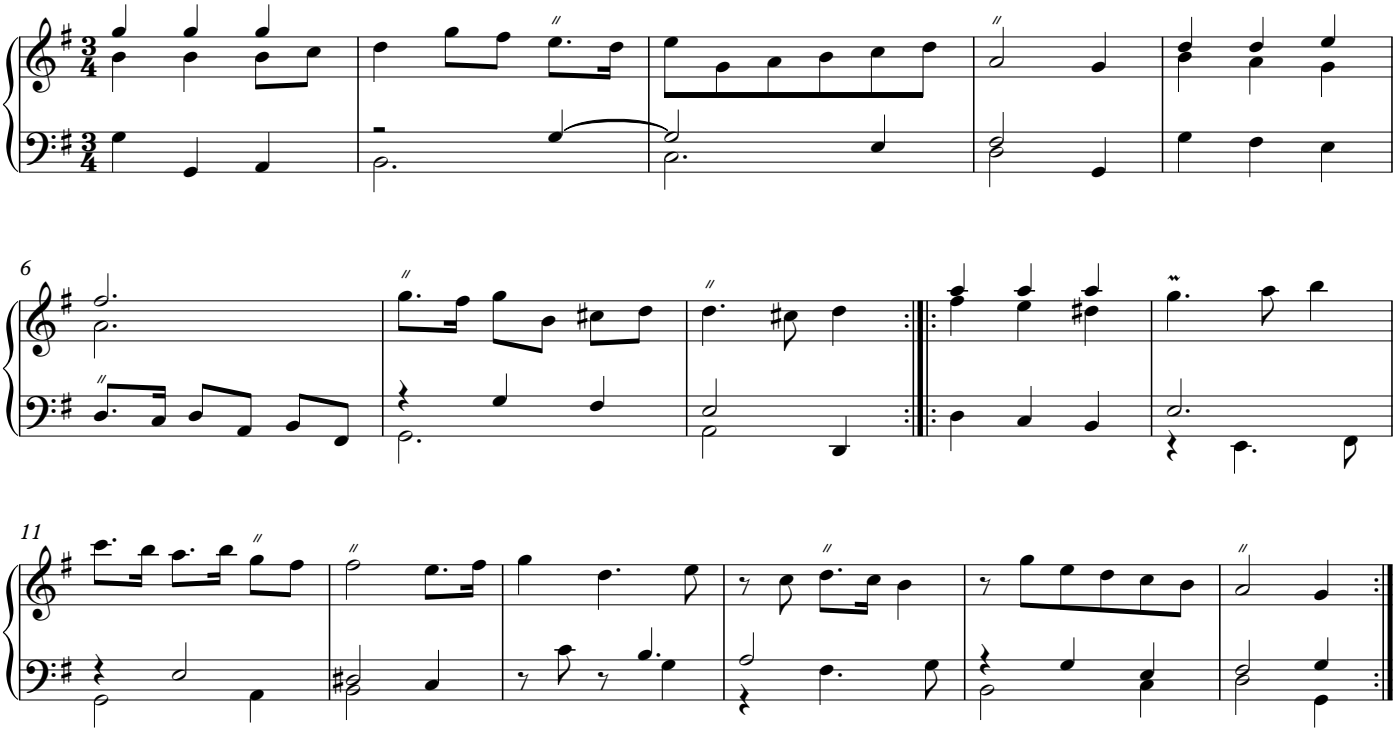


3. Corant



4. Saraband



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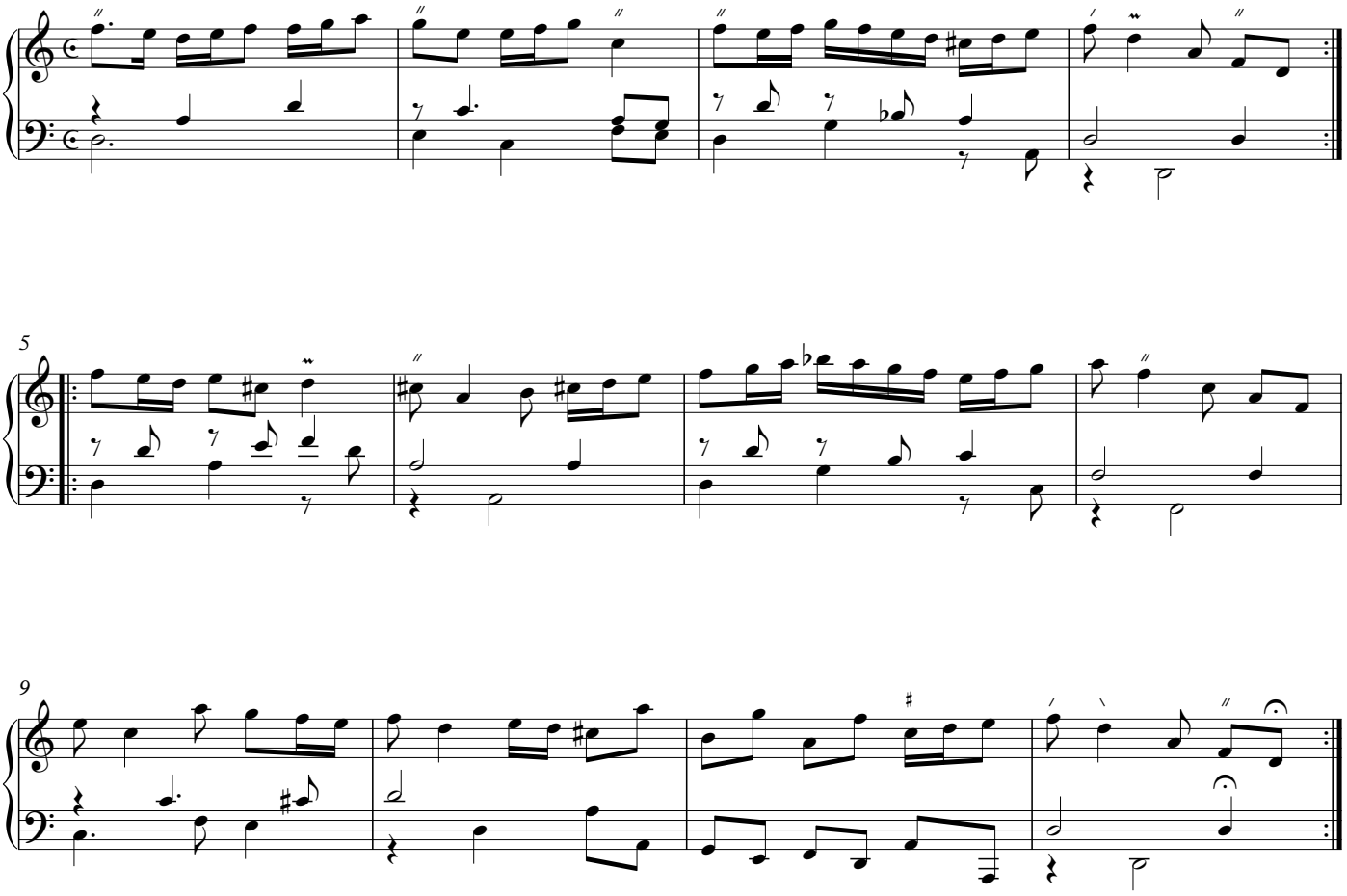
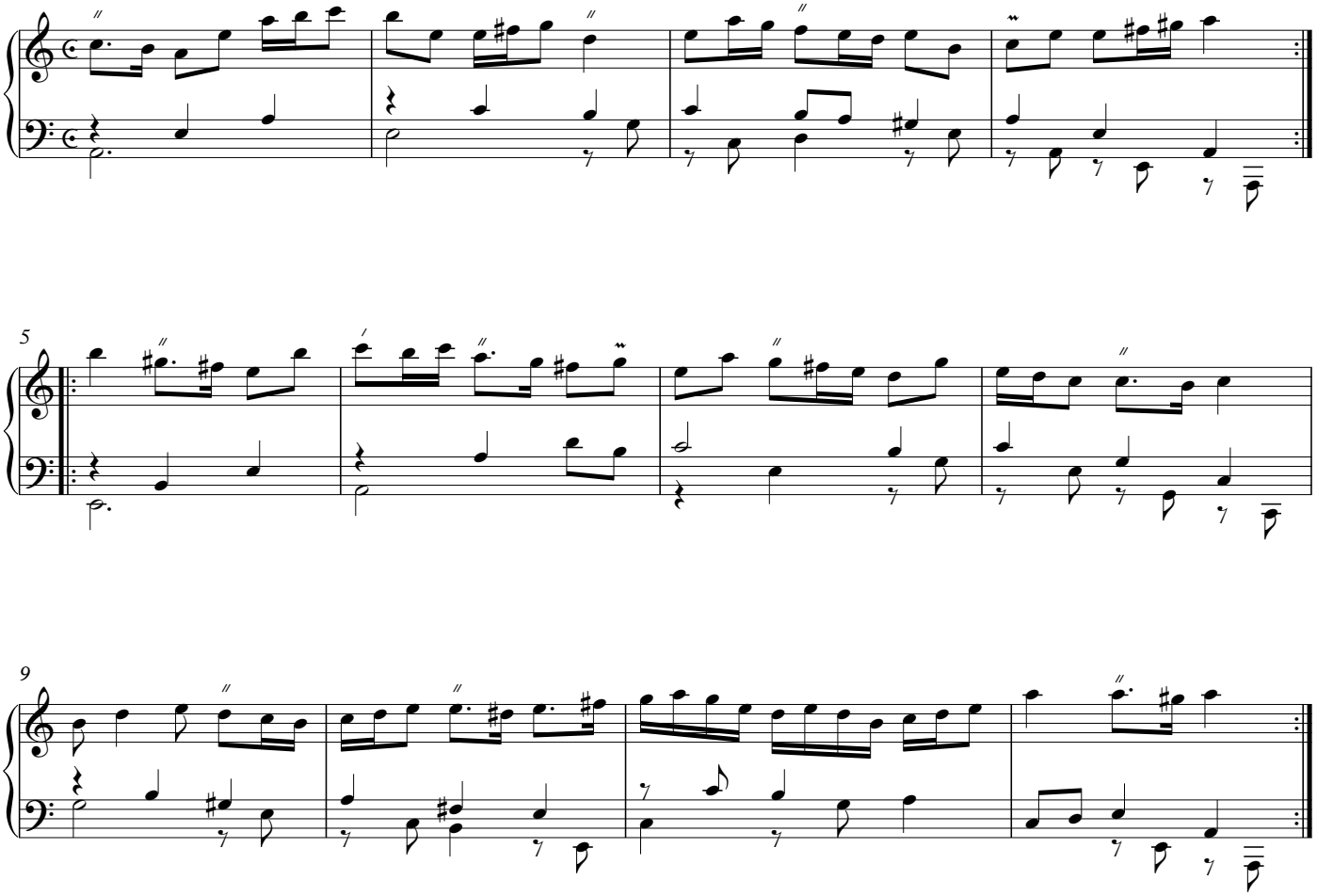
5. Horn Pipe



6. Horn Pipe



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