Goldberg Variations

J. S. Bach

BWV 988

For Guitar Ensemble

Transcribed and Engraved

by

Steve Shorter

N. 16.

Clavier Ubung

bestehend

in einer

ARIA

mit verschiedenen Veränderungen

vors Clavicimbal

mit 2 Manualen.

Denen Liebhabern zur Gemüths-

Ergetzung verfertiget von

Johann Sebastian Bach

Königl. Pohl. u. Churfl. Sæchß. Hoff-

Compositeur, Capellmeister, u. Directore

Chori Musici in Leipzig.

Nürnberg in Verlegung

Balthasar Schmids.

For

Eli Kassner
and
Glenn Gould

From

The Guitar Society of Toronto Orchestra

Table of Contents

Introduction 5
Variation 01 12
Variation 02 14
Variation 03 Canon at the Unison 16
Variation 04 18
Variation 05 20
Variation 06 Canon at the Second 22
Variation 07 At the tempo of a Giga 24
Variation 08 26
Variation 09 Canon at the Third 28
Variation 10 Fughetta 30
Variation 11 32
Variation 12 Canon at the Fourth 34
Variation 13 38
Variation 14 42
Variation 15 Canon at the Fifth 46
Variation 16 Overture 50
Variation 17 54
Variation 18 Canon at the Sixth 56
Variation 19 58
Variation 20 60
Variation 21 Canon at the Seventh 64
Variation 22 66
Variation 23 68
Variation 24 Canon at the Octave 72
Variation 25 76
Variation 26 80
Variation 27 Canon at the Ninth 84
Variation 28 86
Variation 29 90
Variation 30 Quodlibet 94
Table of Ornaments 96
Acknowledgements 97
Copyright 98
Errata 99

Introduction

The motivation behind this transcription and re-engraving of these Goldberg Variations is a simple one; to make available to guitarists one of the great treasures of Baroque art. In that quest, a single value has come to dominate this work

1) to preserve and render as accurately as possible the structure(s) of Bach's work in the context of a modern guitar ensemble and a standard instrument.

The "standard" guitar being considered has 19 frets and is in dropped D tuning. ie. strings are tuned DADGBE. The original key is preserved throughout the transcription, as it is best accommodated and serves the original intent most faithfully.

Starting from this foundation, whatever resources were assembled that the structures demanded. In general it could be stated that each voice that is present in the variation has its representative as a single instrument in the ensemble. The resulting work therefore contains 13 variations for 2 guitars, 13 variations for 3 guitars and 4 for 4 guitars.

While the clavier is dissimilar to the the guitar in many ways, the Goldberg Variations are unsurprisingly quite sympathetic to it. Both the clavier and guitar are plucked chordophones that suffer the similar acoustic defects (strengths?) of volume and sustenance.

Most of the original structure(s) can be preserved through octave transposition when carefully considered. In the few instances where this is not possible, alternatives were developed and documented. Bach's instrumental works are of such a quality that they can often be considered as "generic music": they transcribe well for instruments other than the target of its original composition. That is mostly the case with the Goldberg Variations. To the extent that there may be variations that are idiomatic to the keyboard, they have been accommodated as much as possible and are included for completeness.

Guitar fingering is interperative and personal, particularly for music not initially conceived for guitar, so this work is presented with no guitar fingering. All slurs are phrasing slurs and appear as in the original.

The Aria has two versions presented. Version 1.7e is for two guitars in standard tuning, version 1.8 is for three guitars in dropped D tuning.

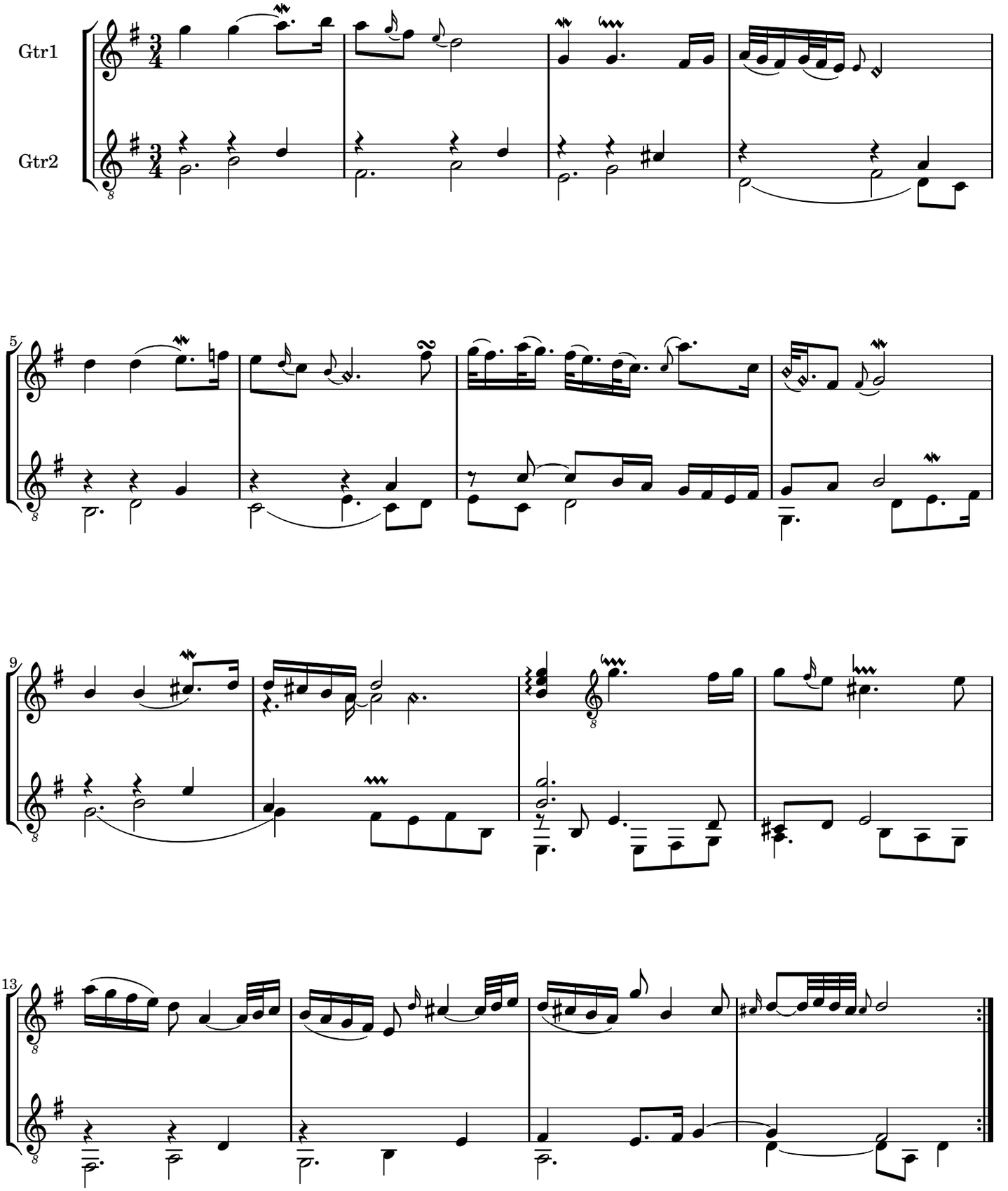
Finding a reliable authority for Goldberg Variations, BWV 988, is problematic as discussed by Erich Schwandt[1]. The source materials from which this transcription is derived are the Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 3, the facsimile of Bach's own copy ('Handexemplar') of the first edition, and the results of the OpenGoldberg project. These documents are in the Public Domain and can be found here

http://imslp.org/wiki/Goldberg-Variationen,_BWV_988_(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian)

[1] http://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr/vol3/iss1/2

Aria

1.7e



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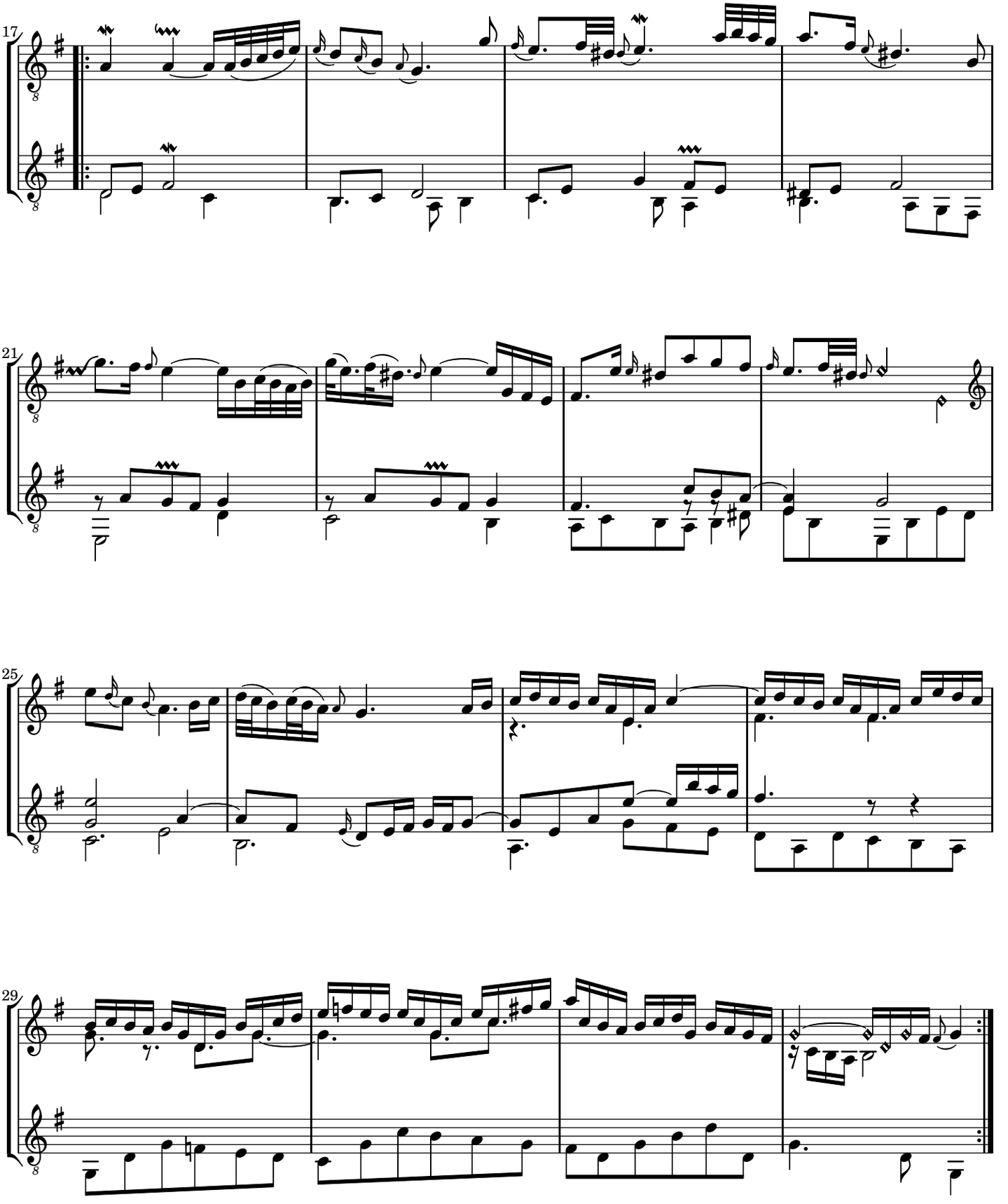

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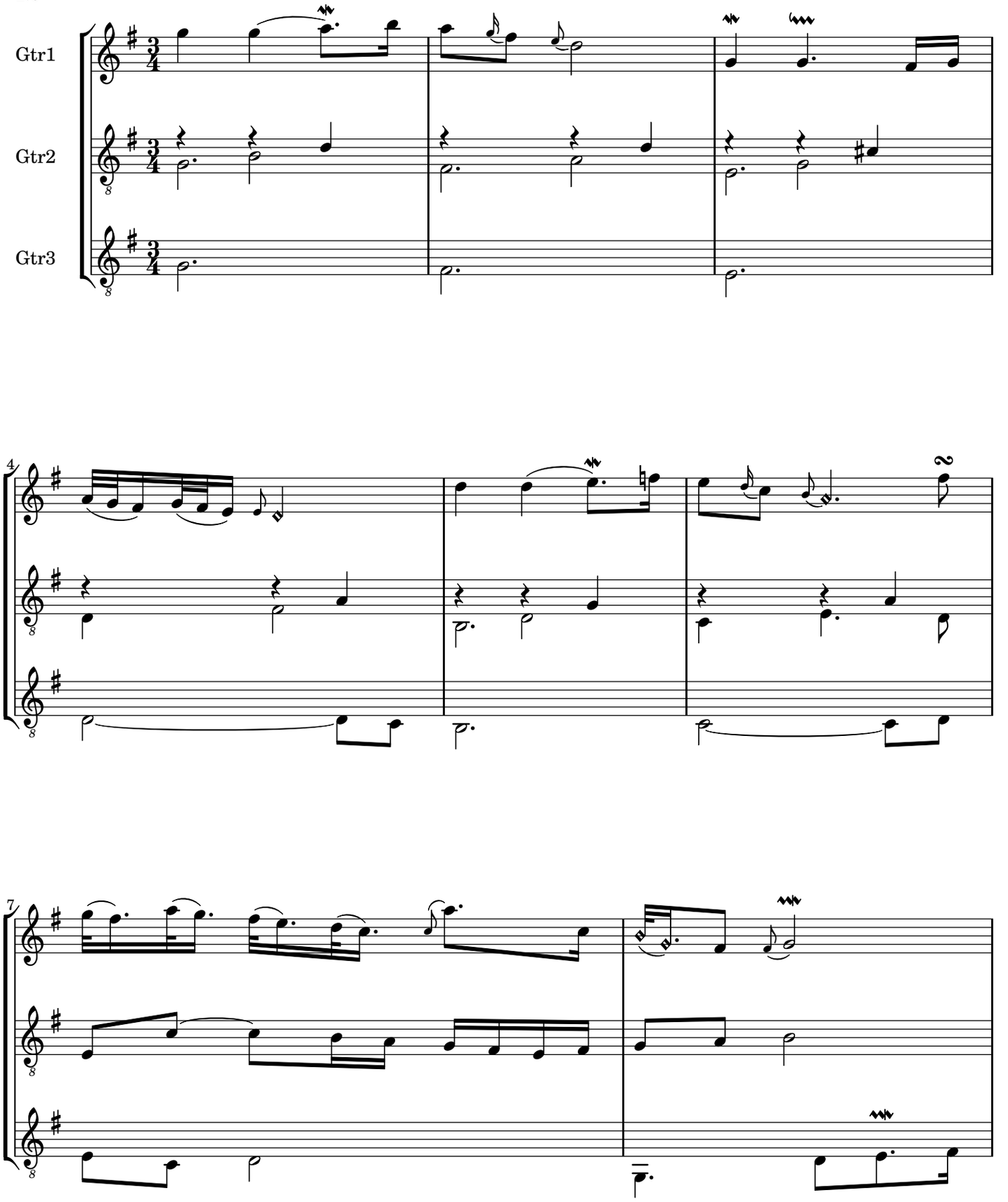
Aria

1.8



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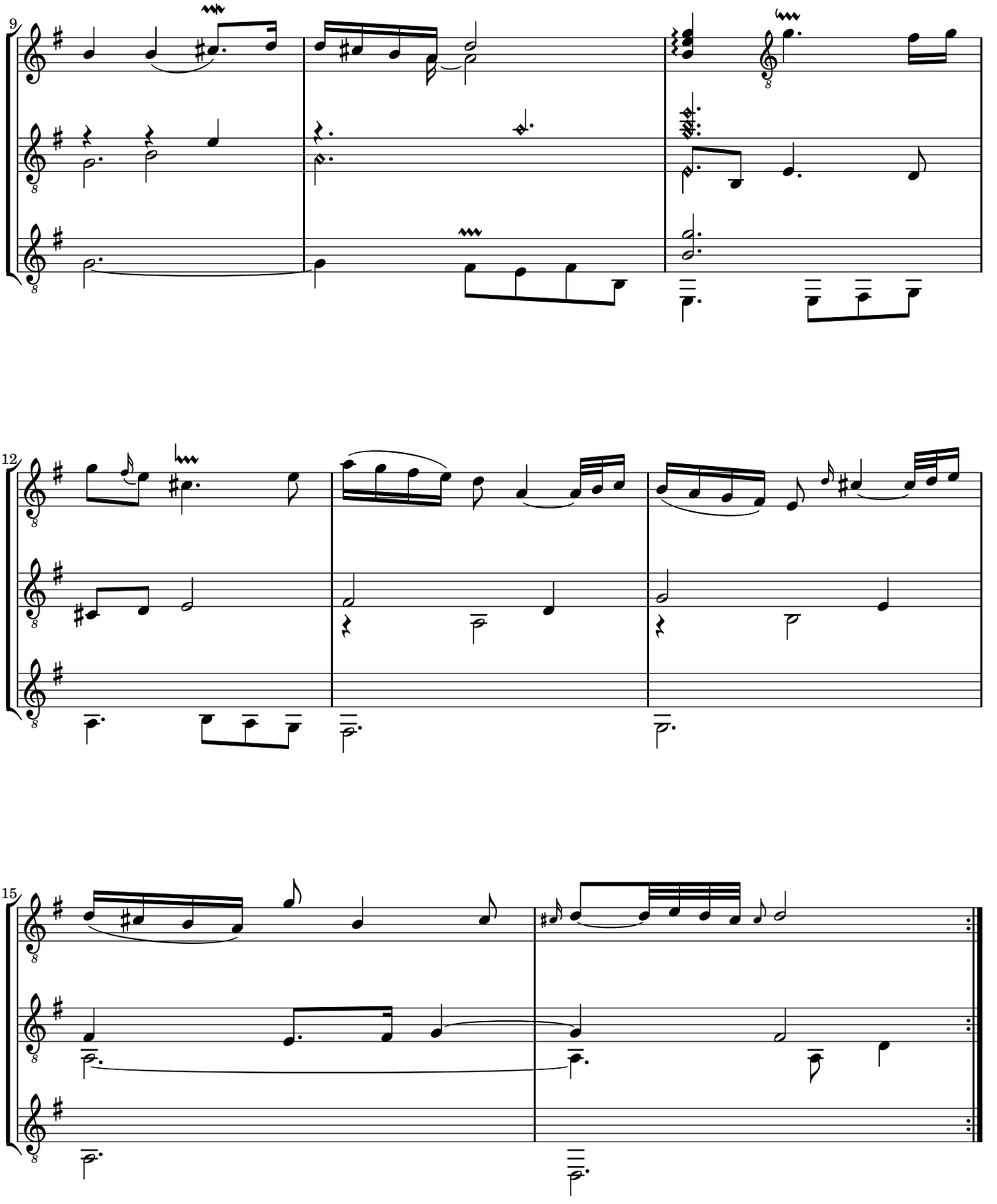

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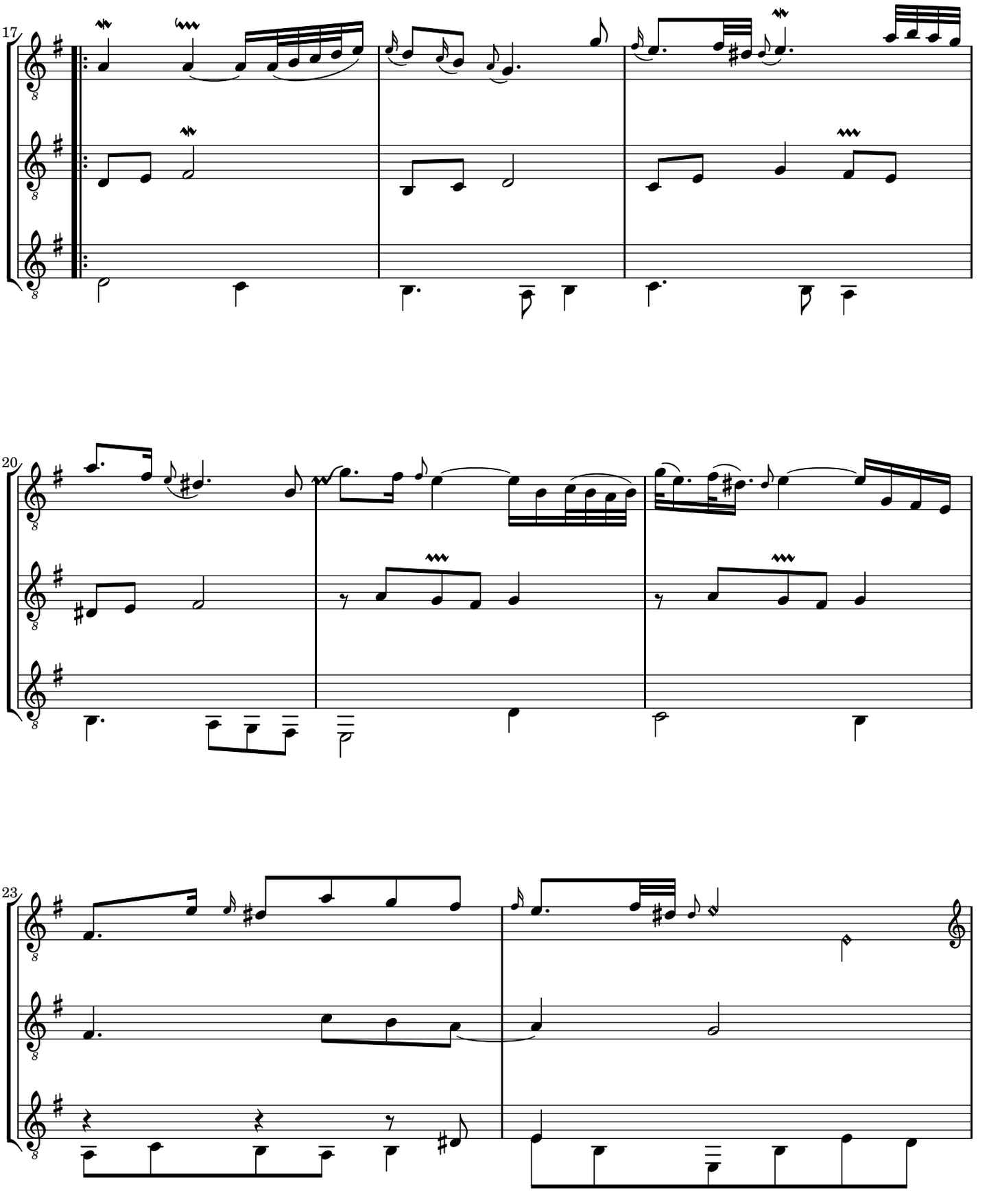

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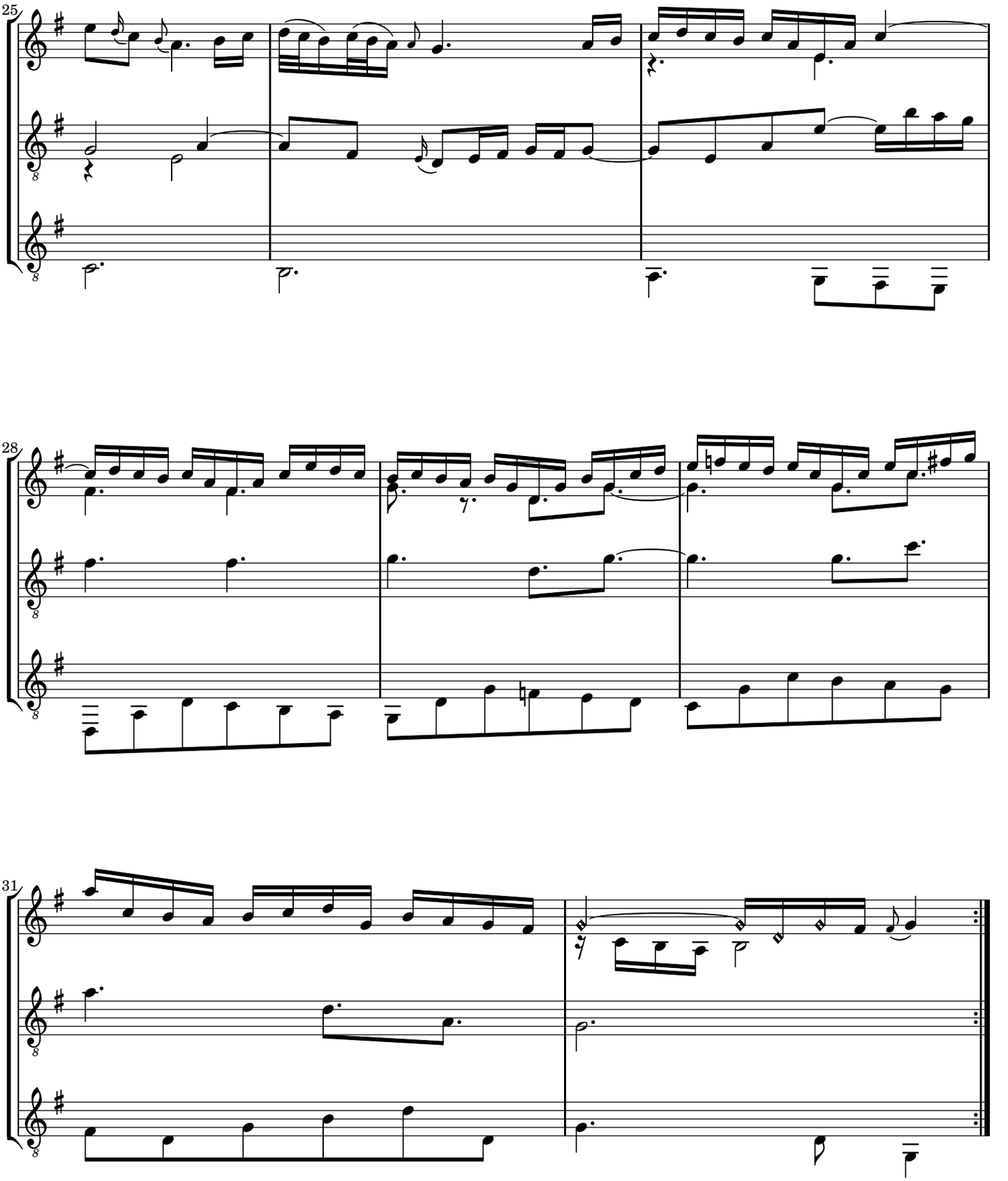

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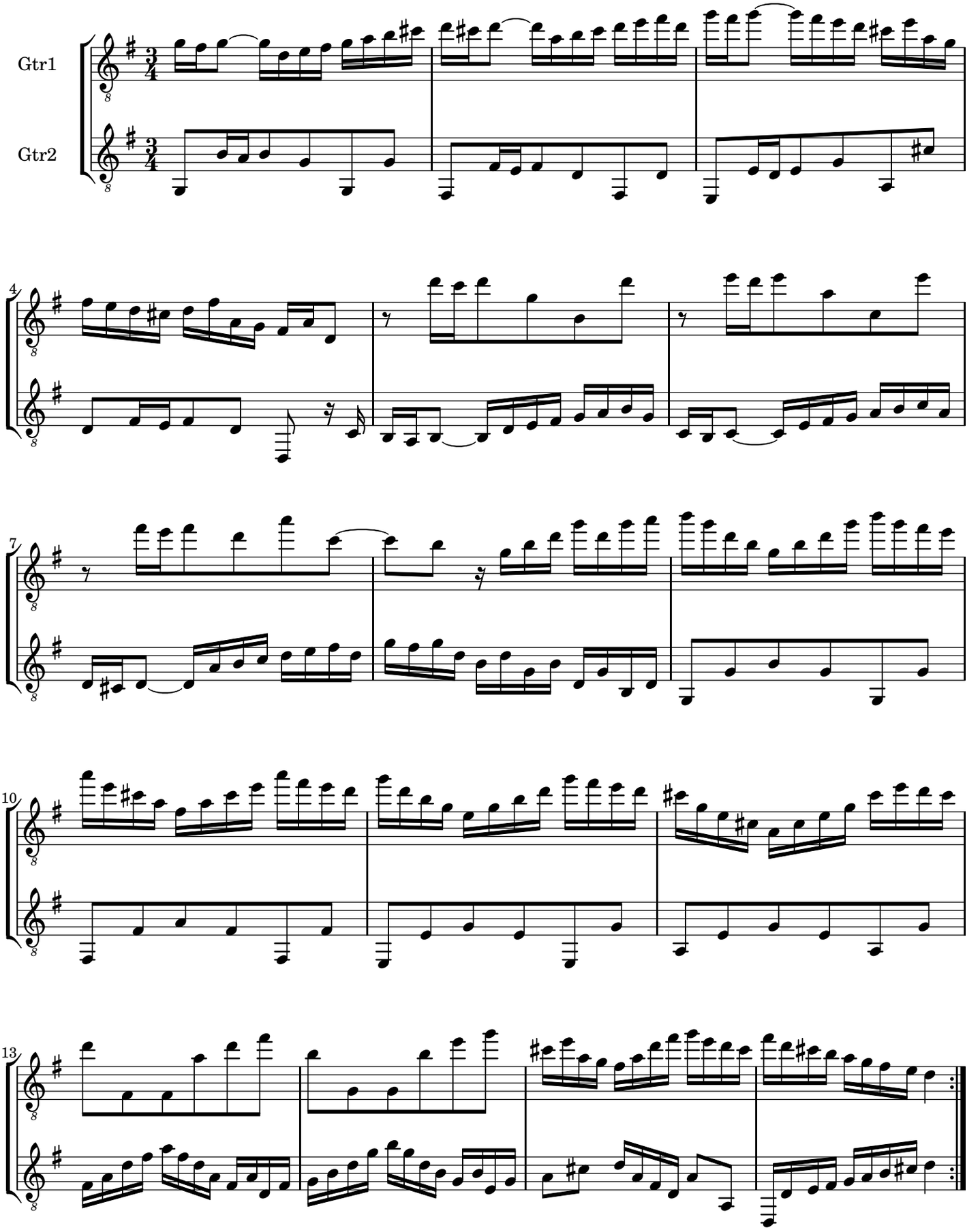
Variation 01



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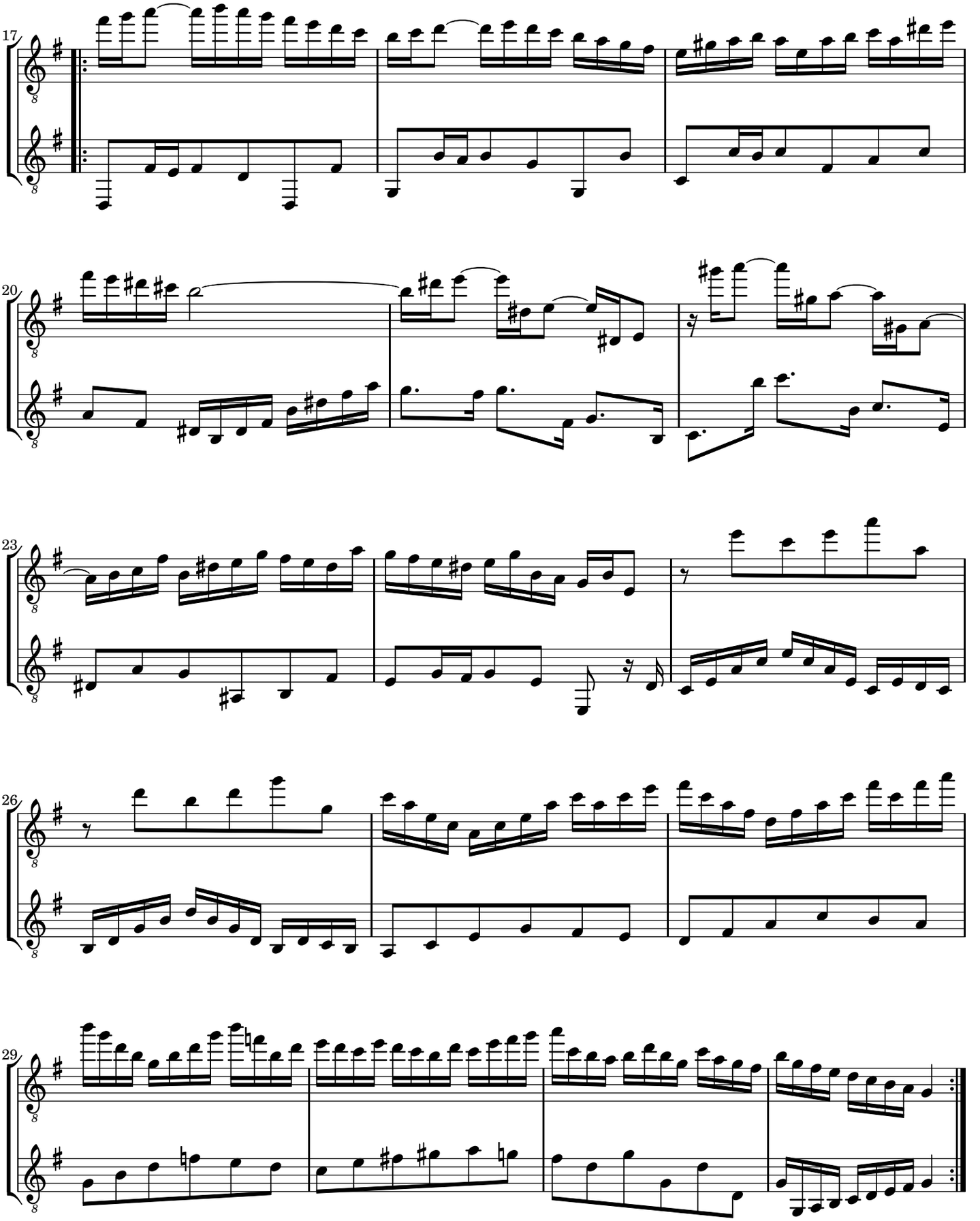

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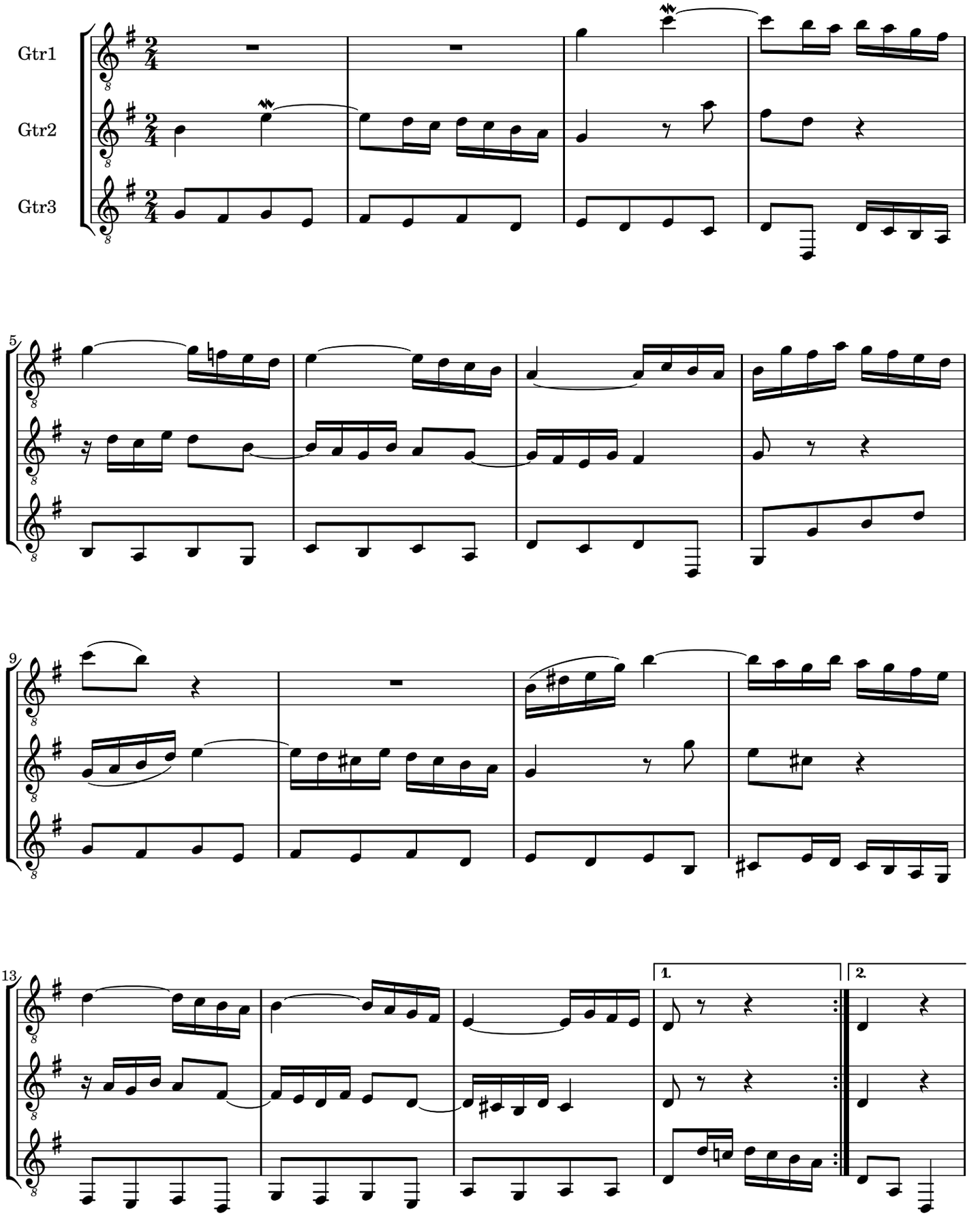

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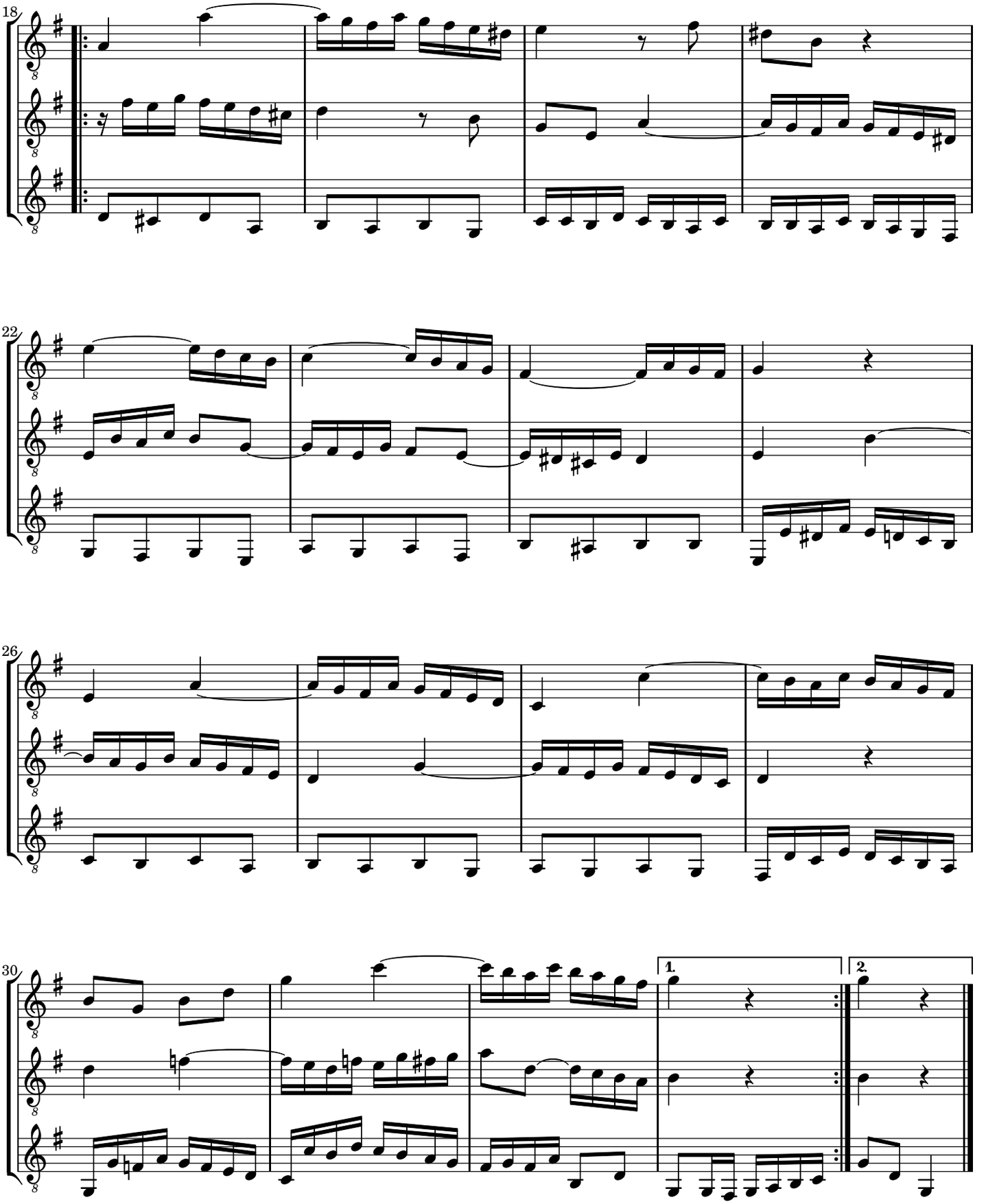

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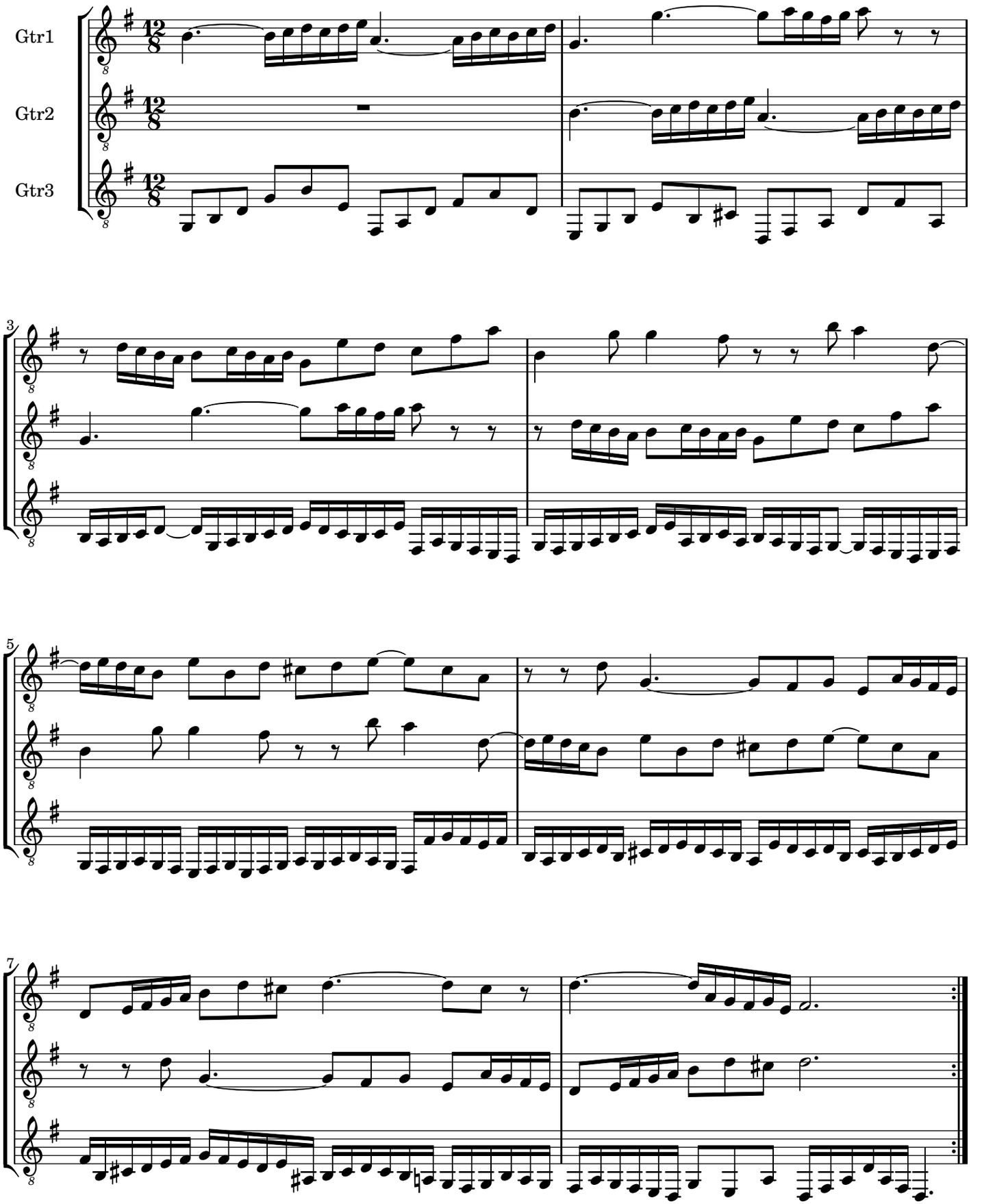
Variation 03

Canon at the Unison



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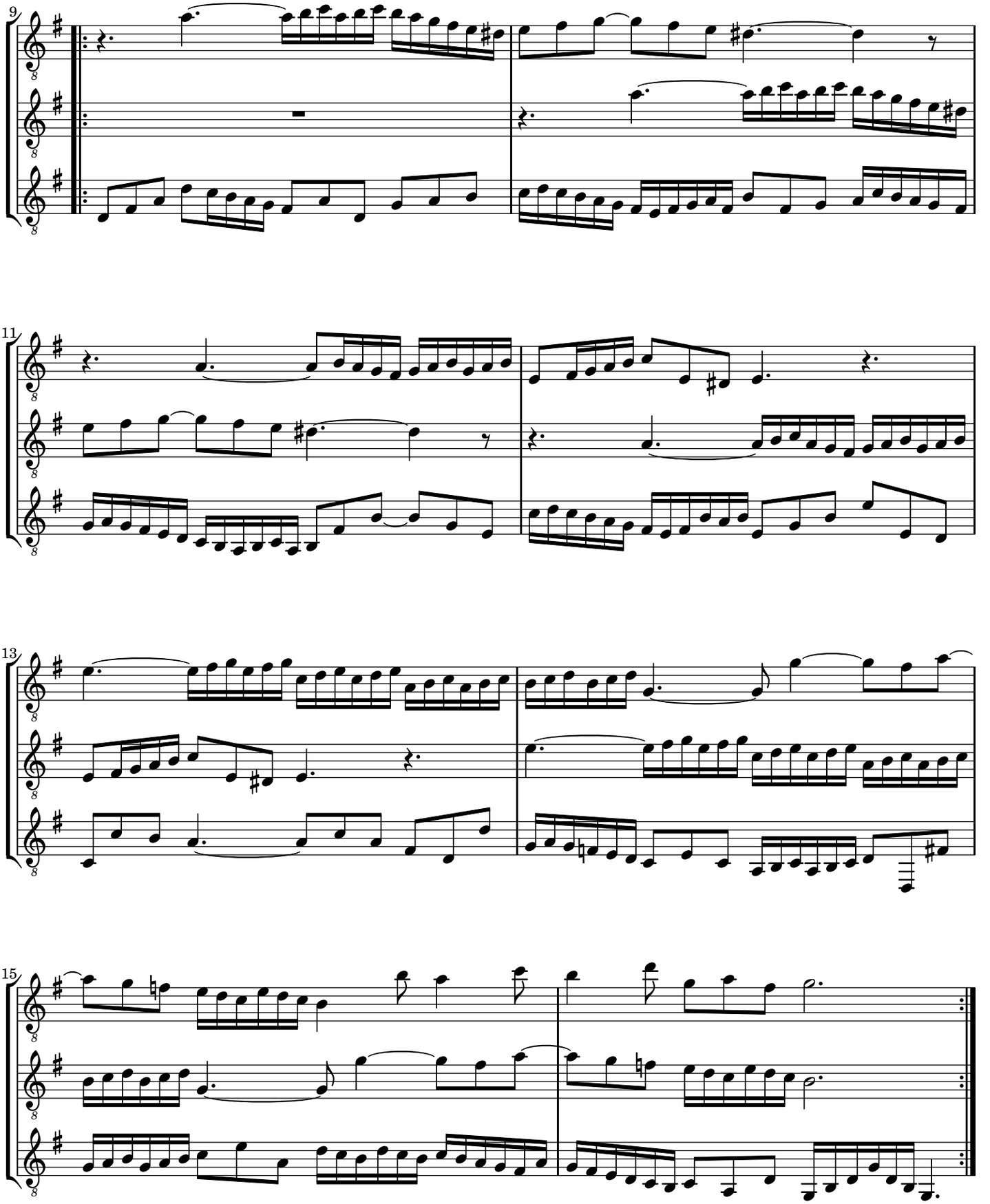

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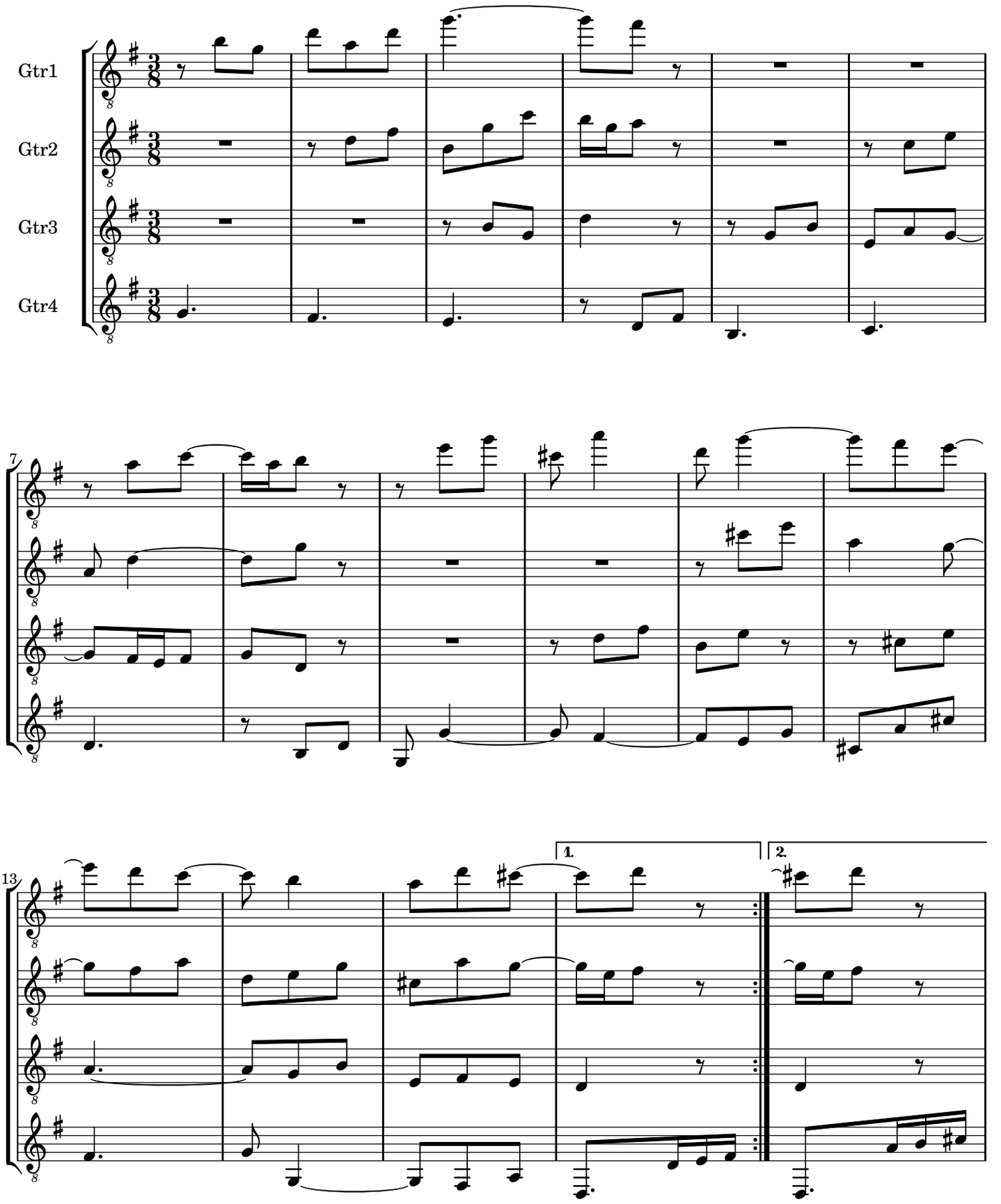
Variation 04



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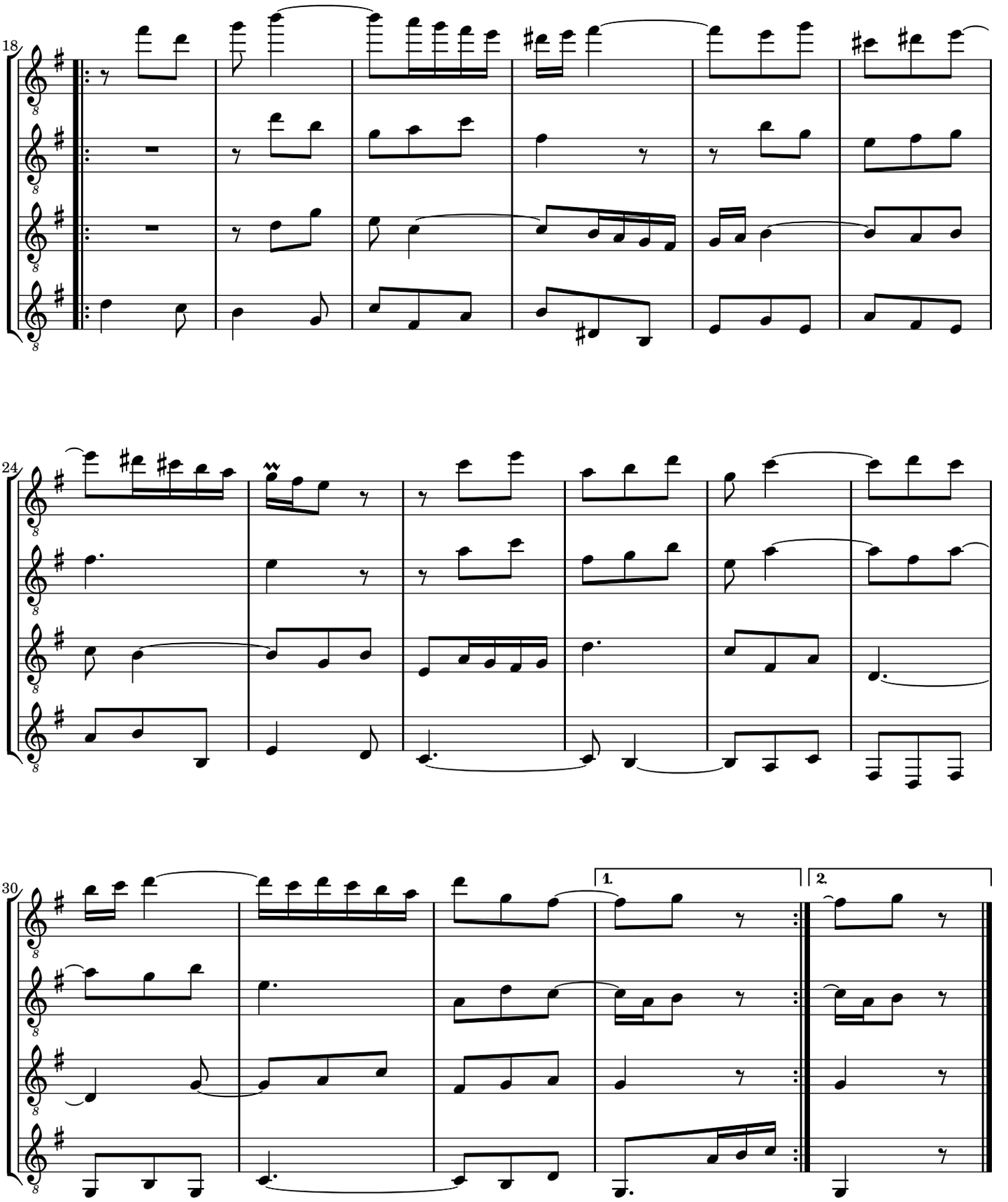

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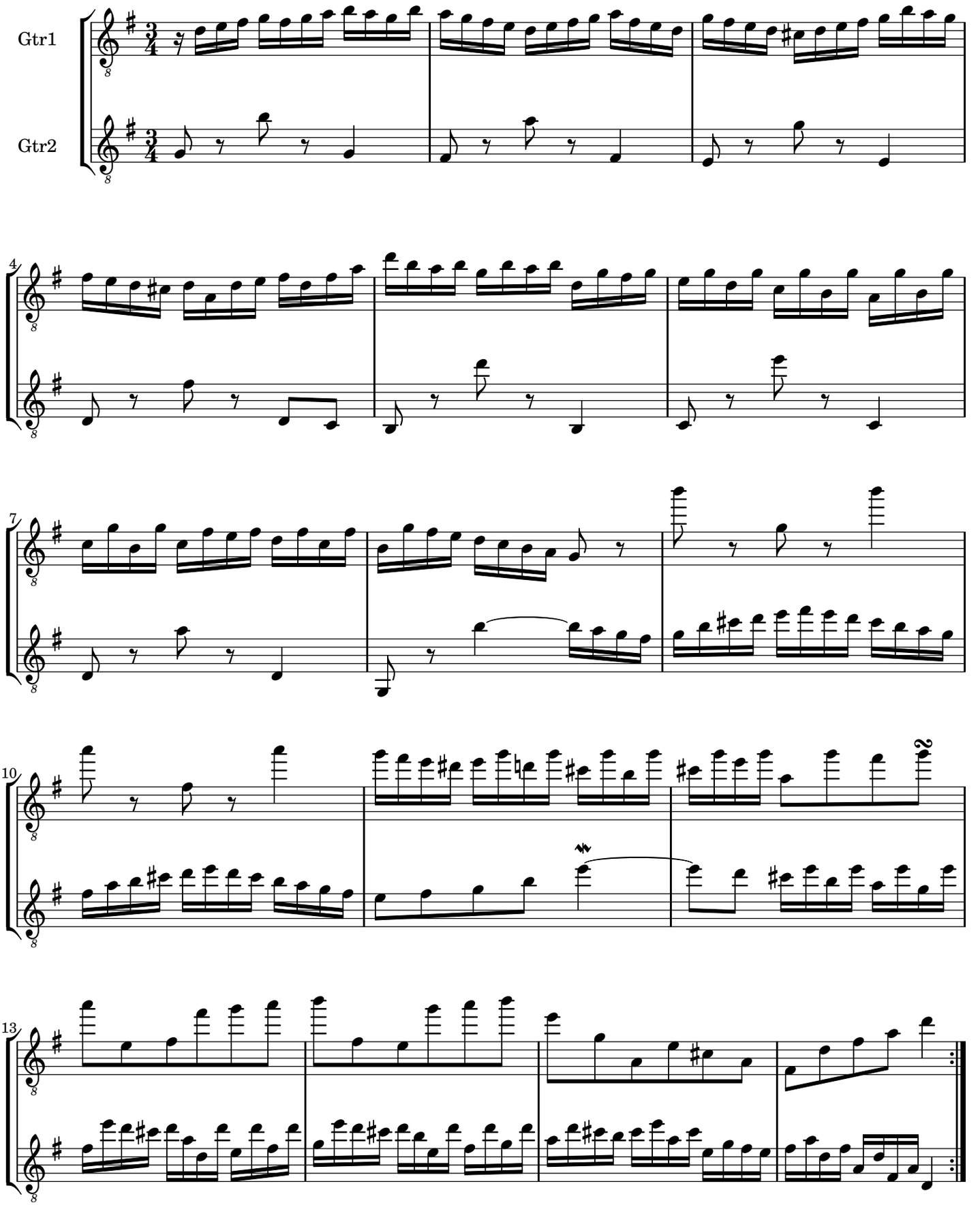
Variation 05



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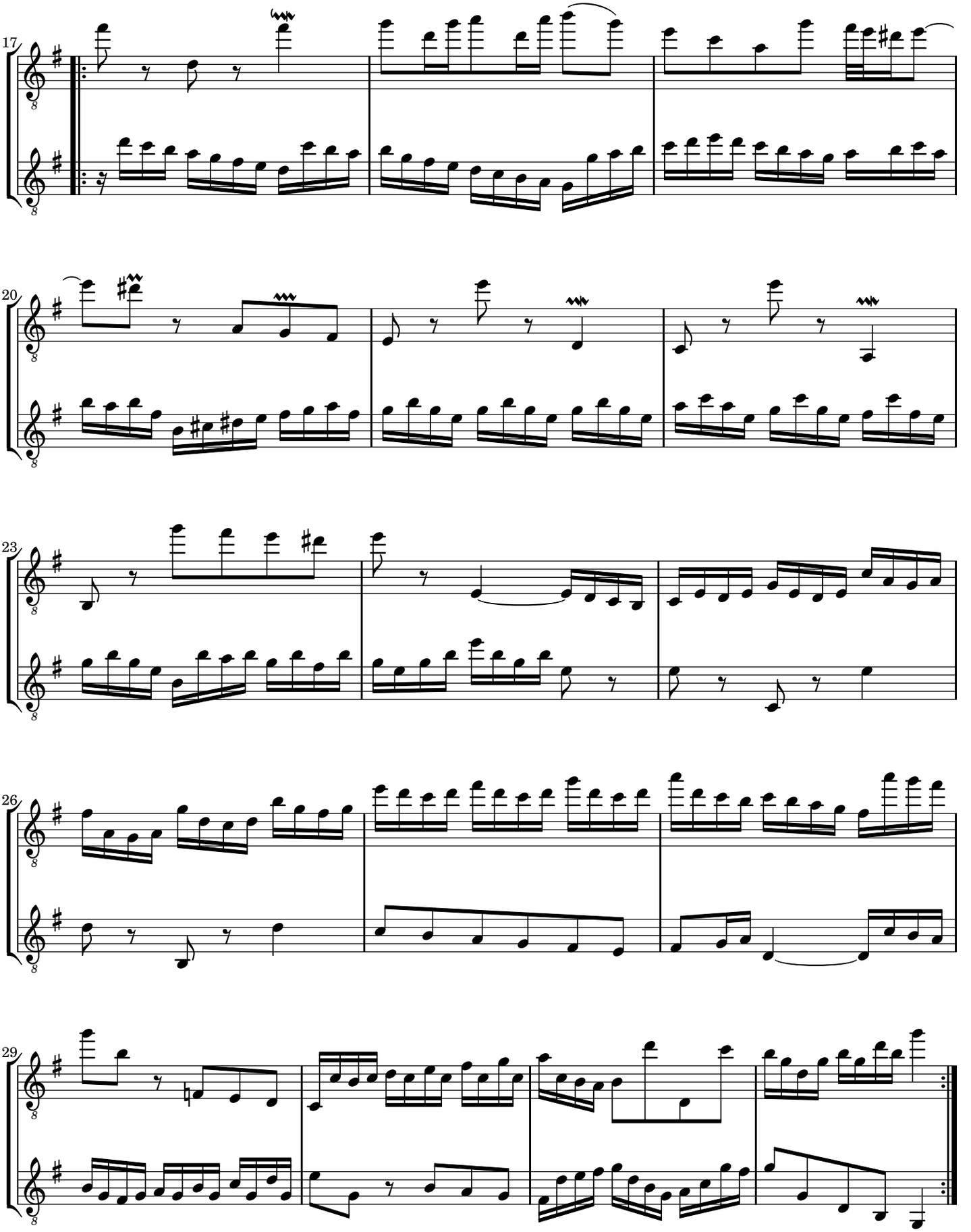

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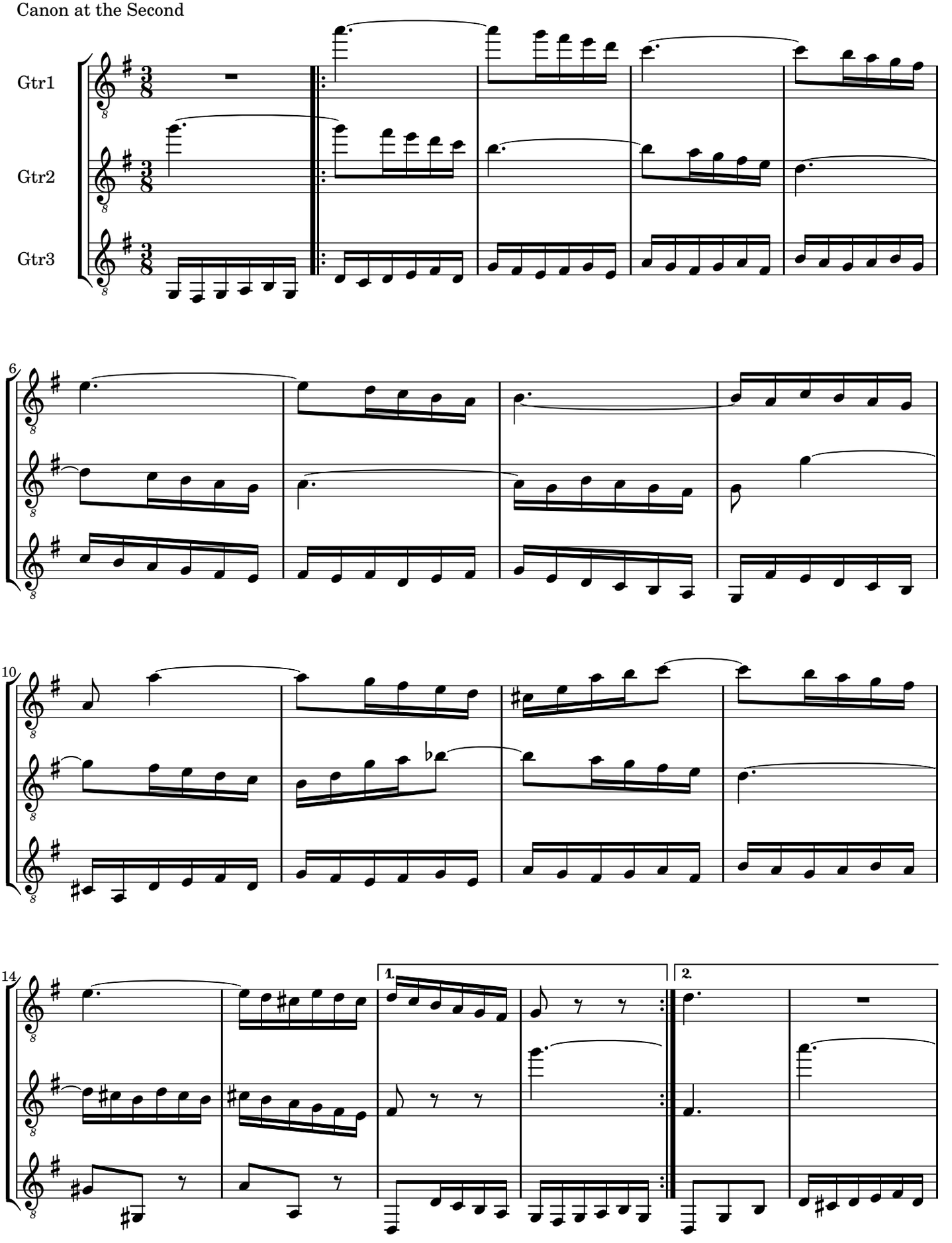
Variation 06

Canon at the Second



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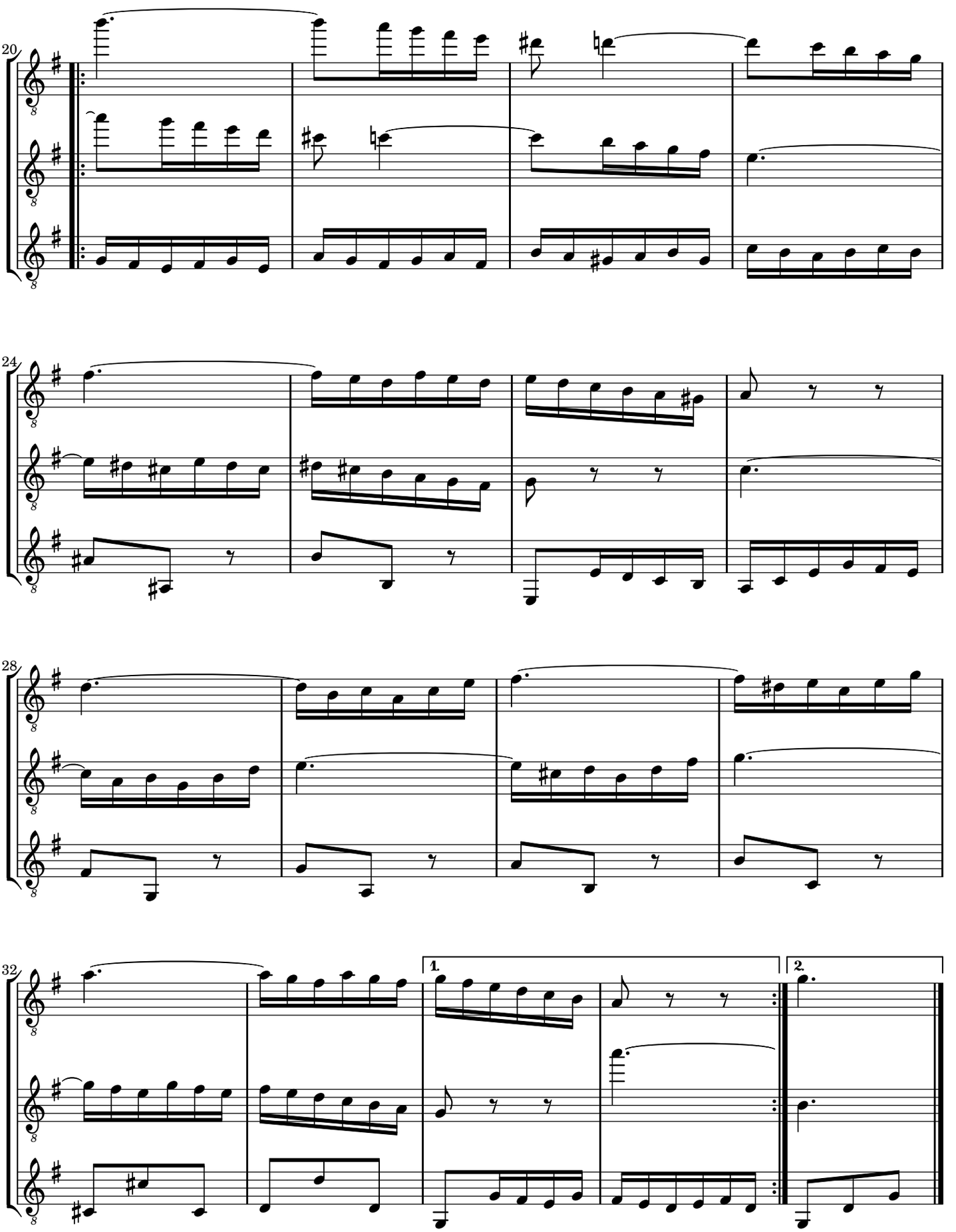

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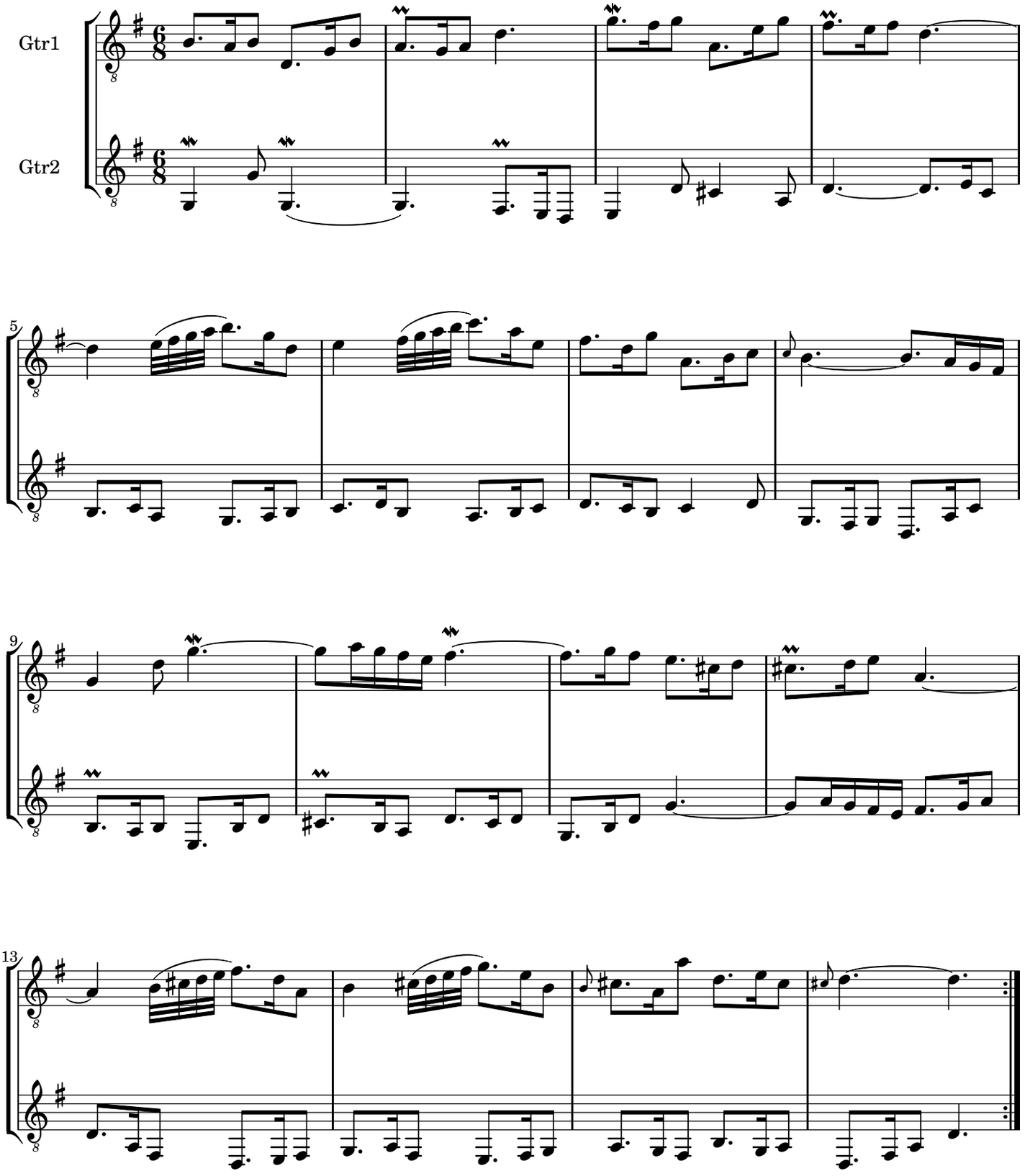
Variation 07

At the tempo of a Giga



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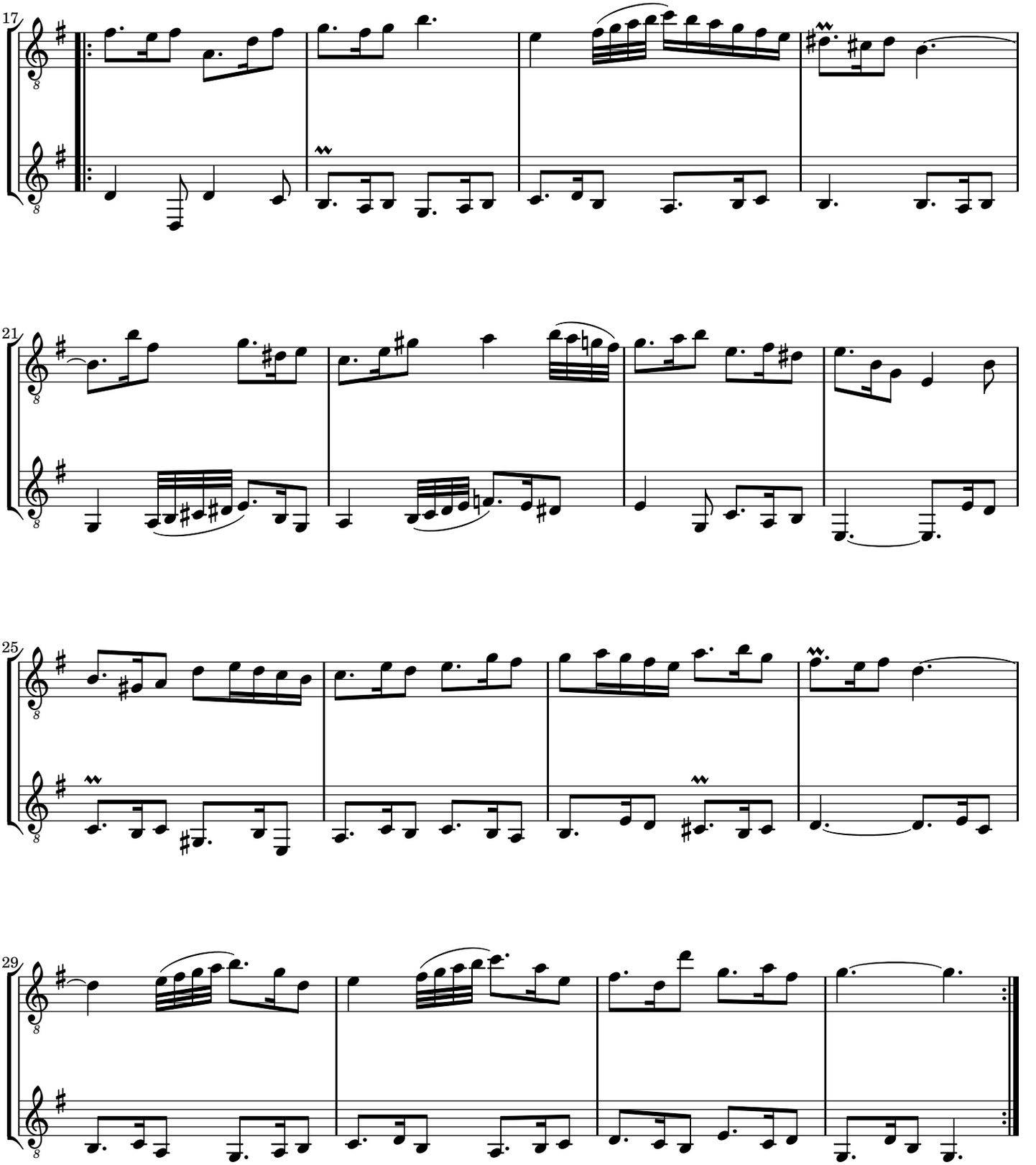

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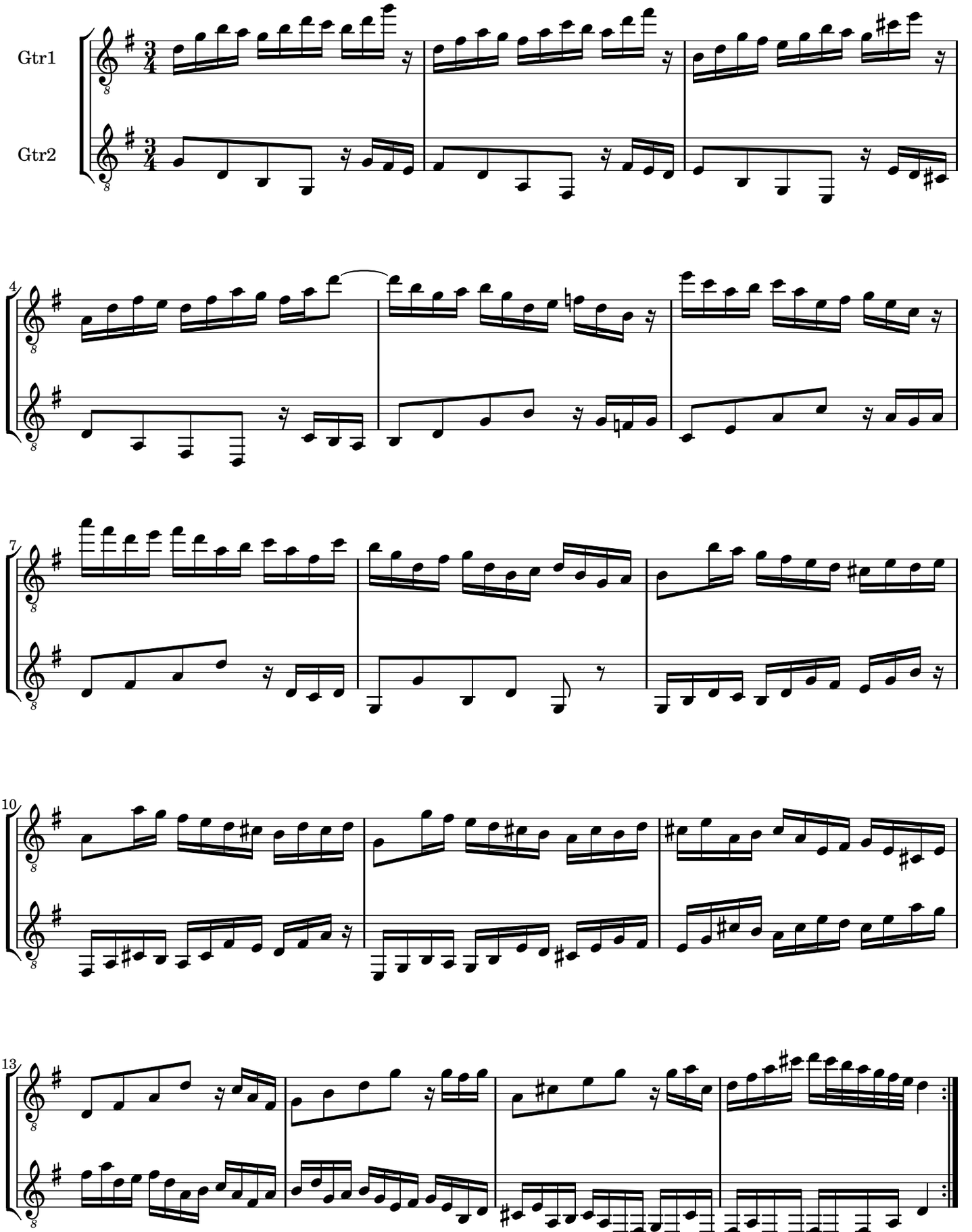
Variation 08



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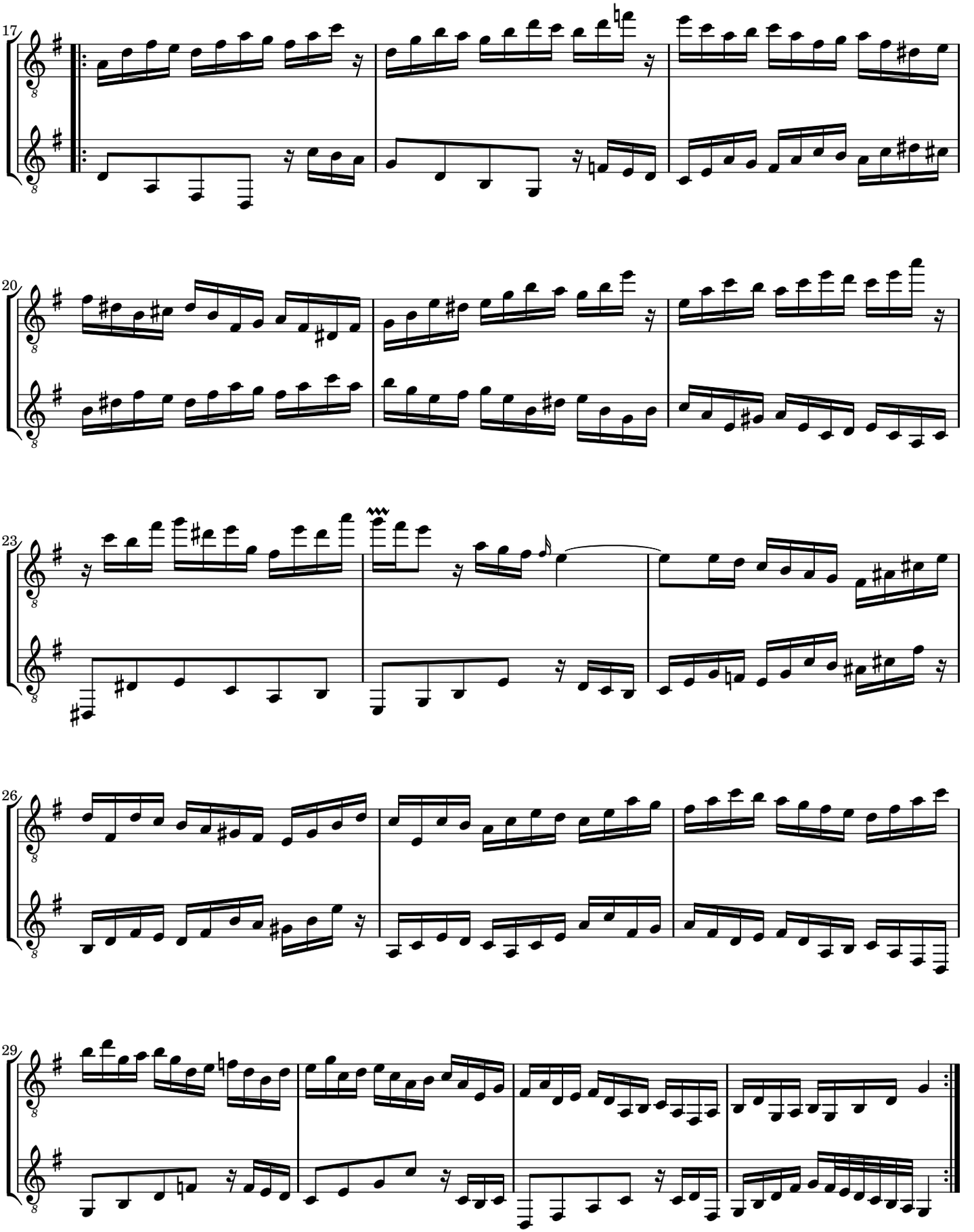

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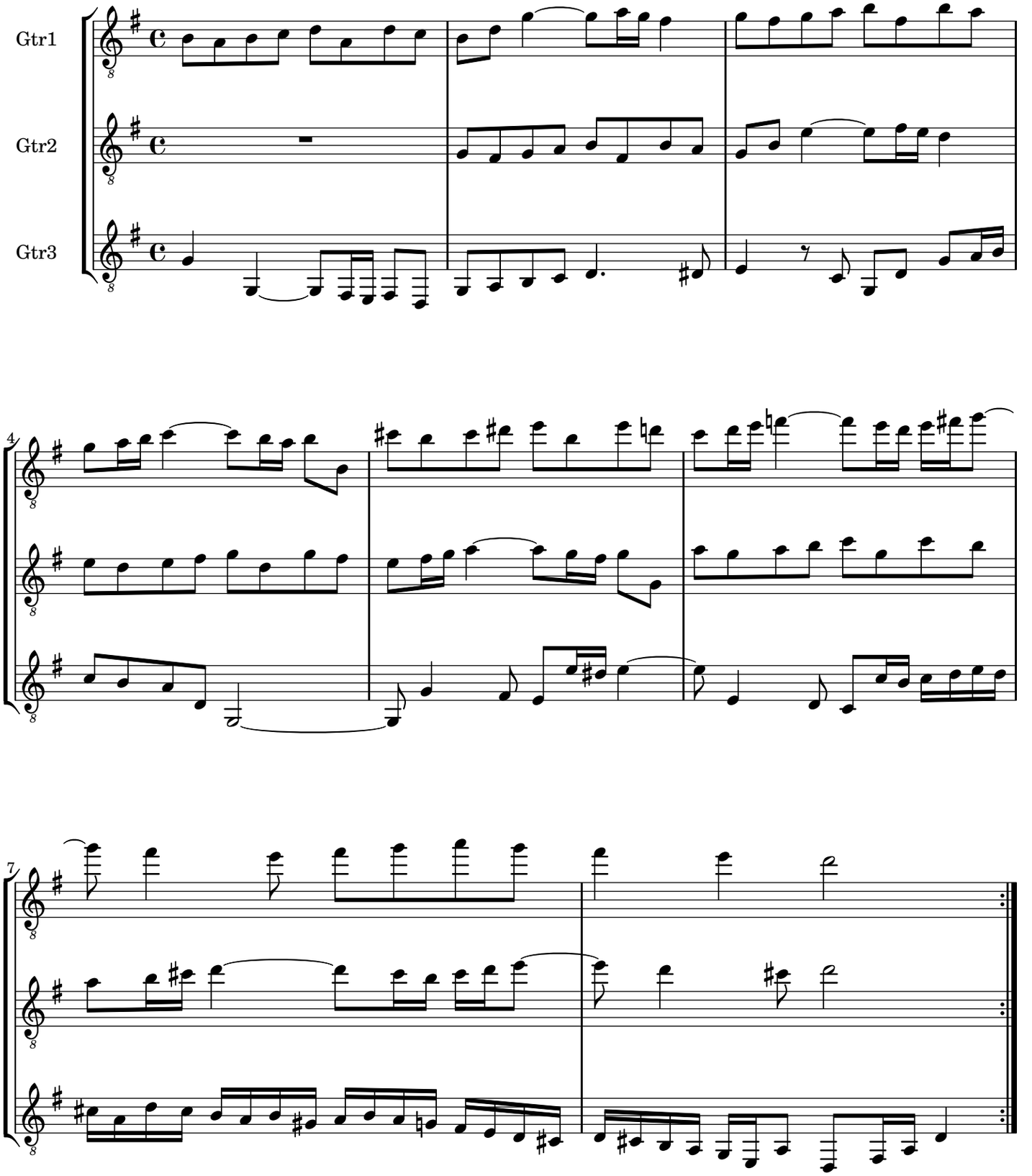
Variation 09

Canon at the Third



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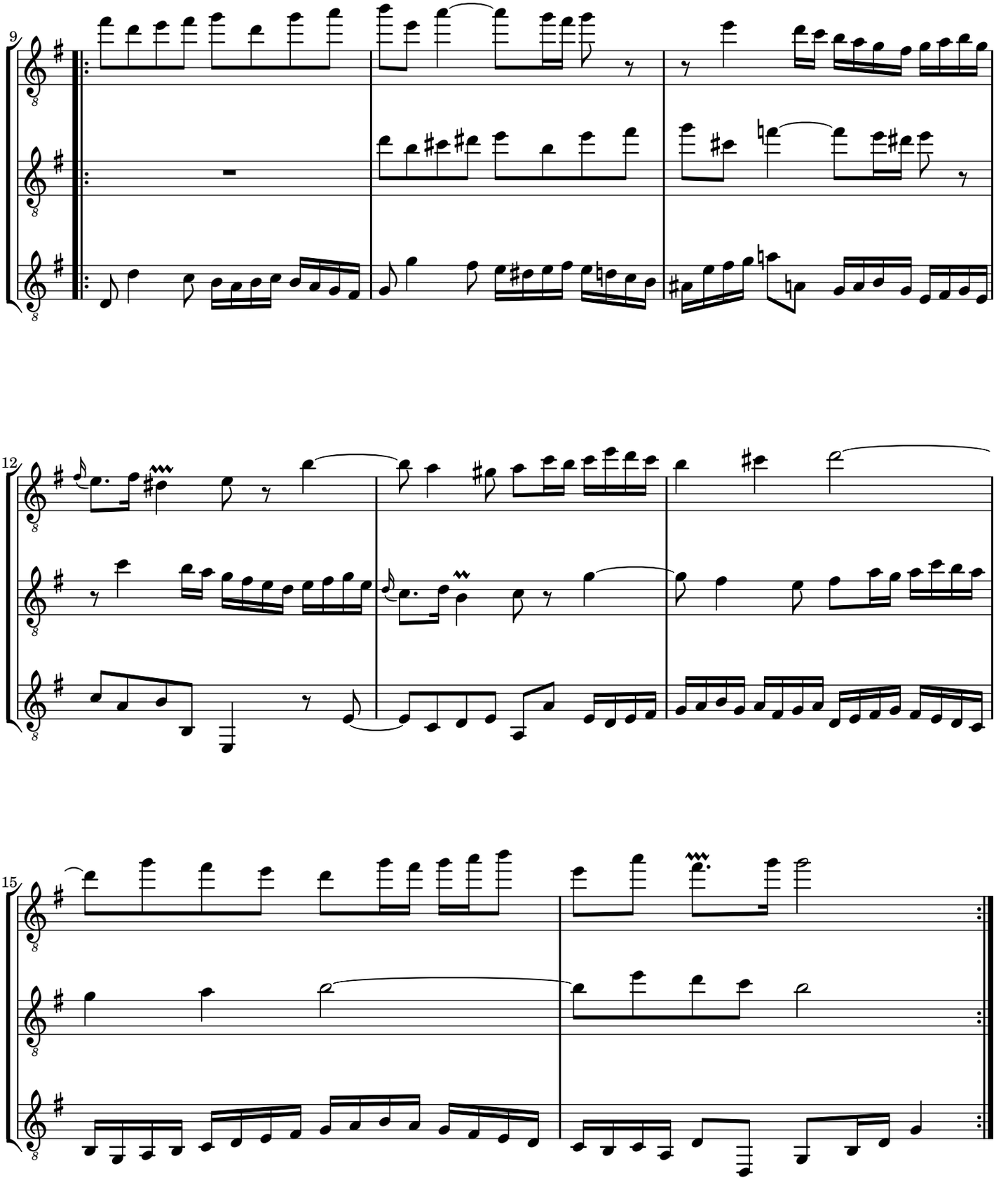

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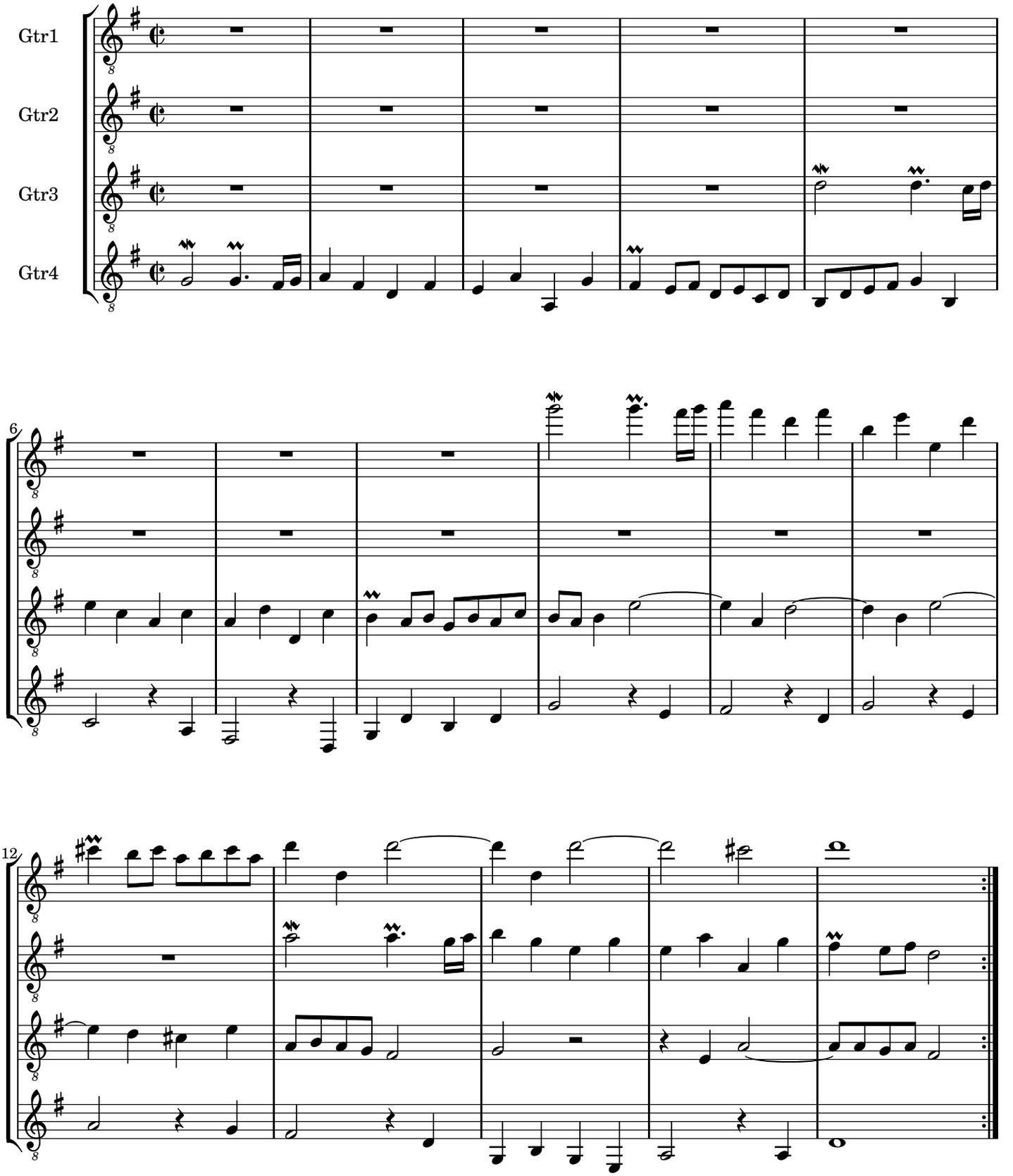
Variation 10

Fughetta



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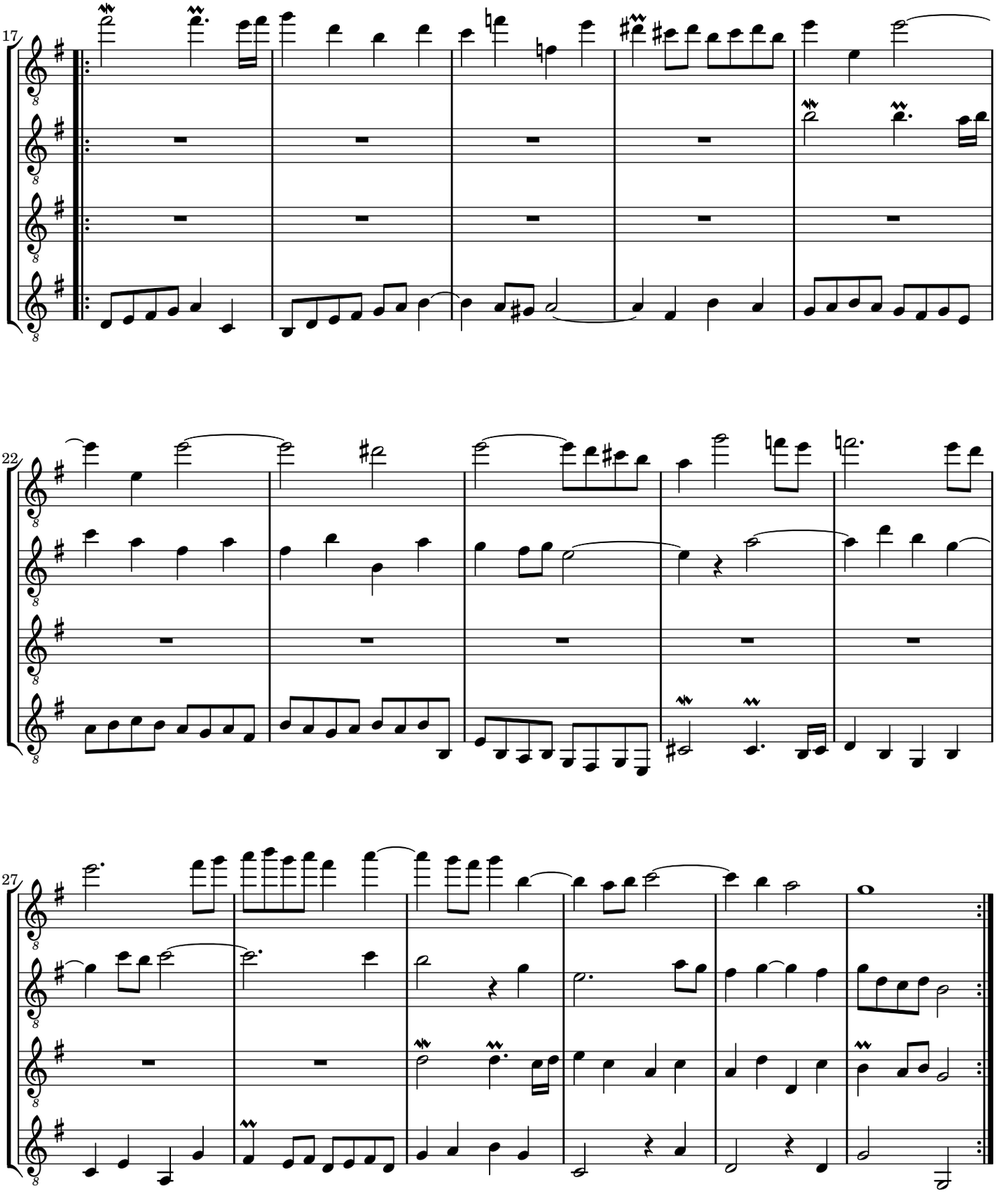

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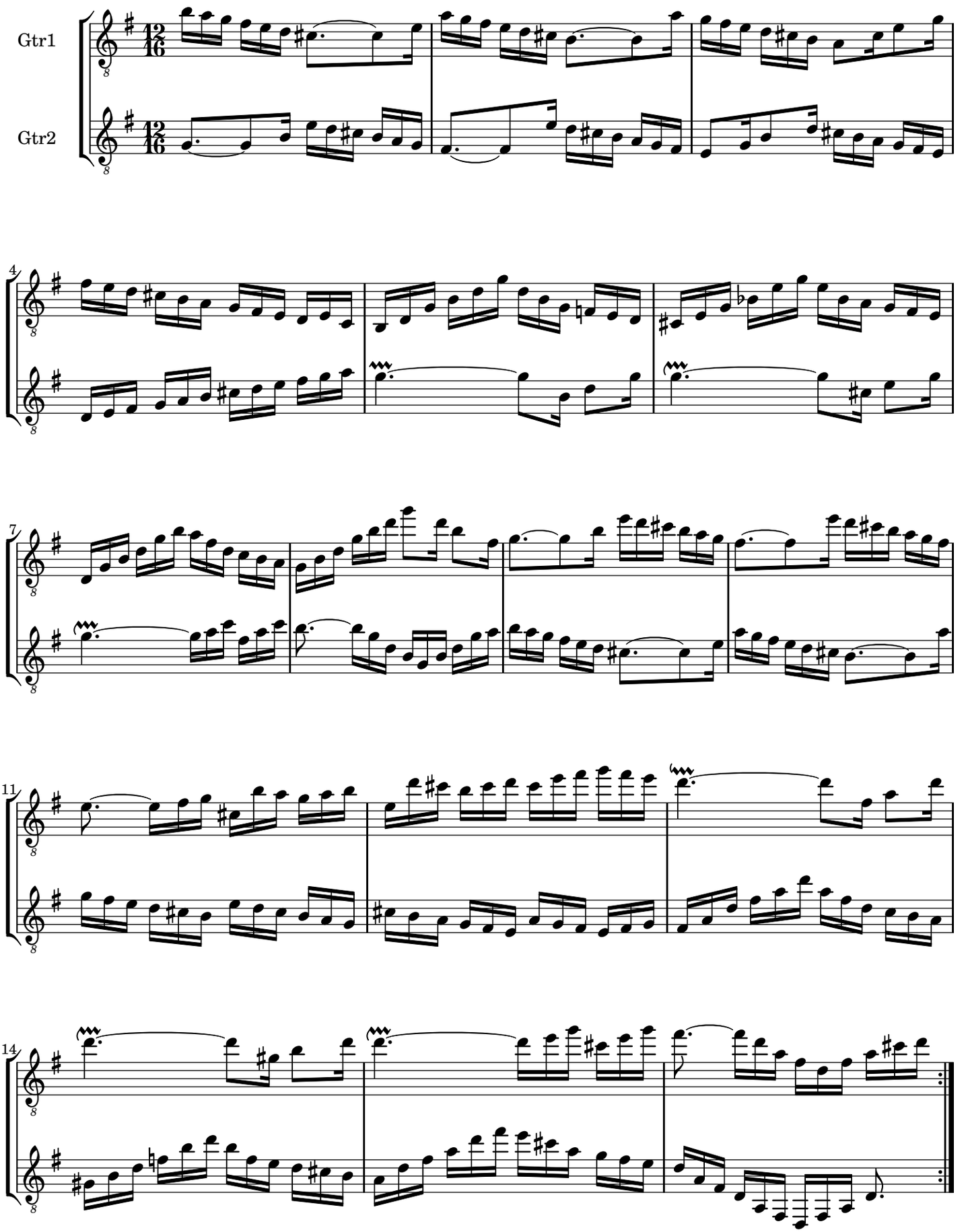
Variation 11



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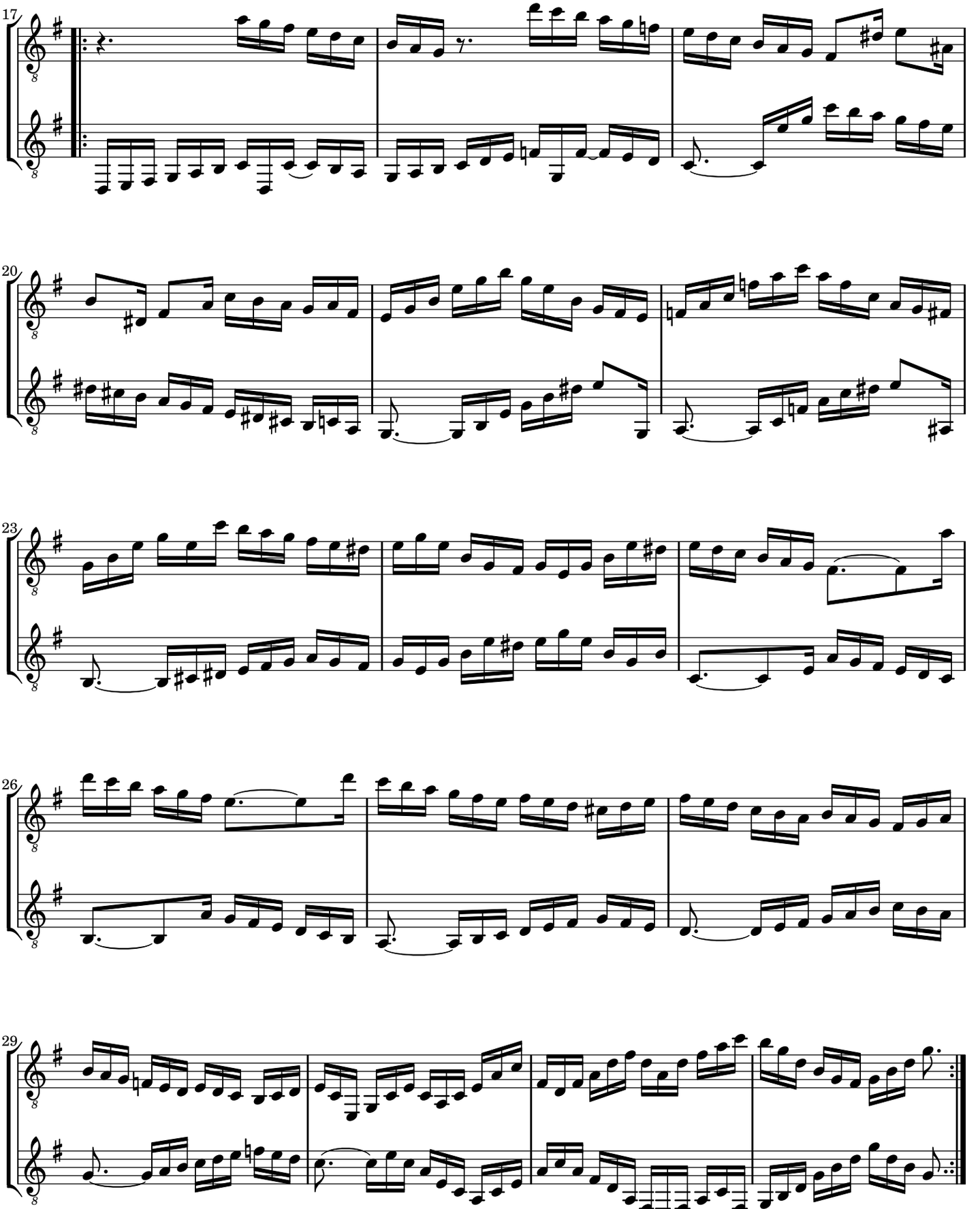

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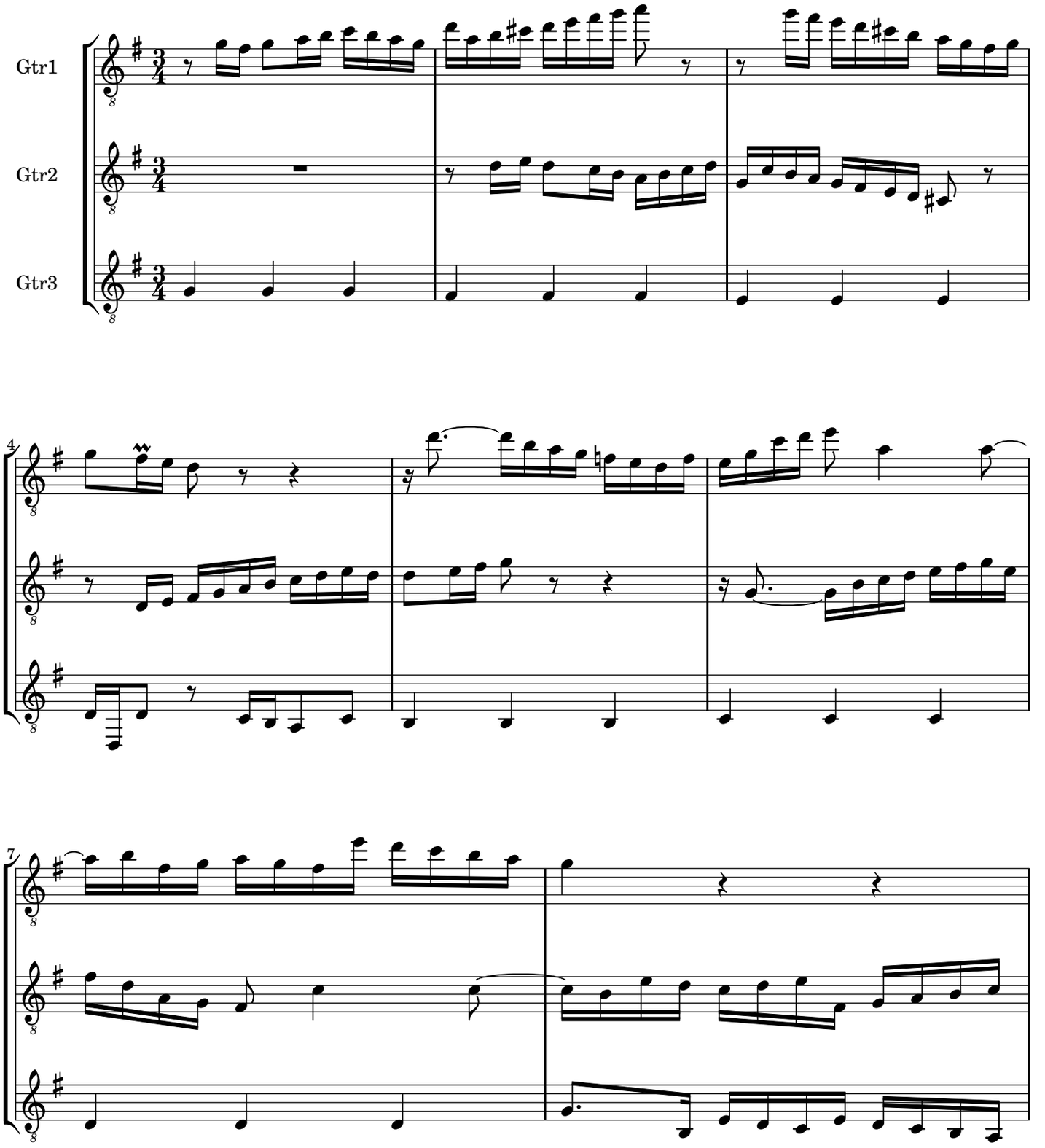
Variation 12

Canon at the Fourth



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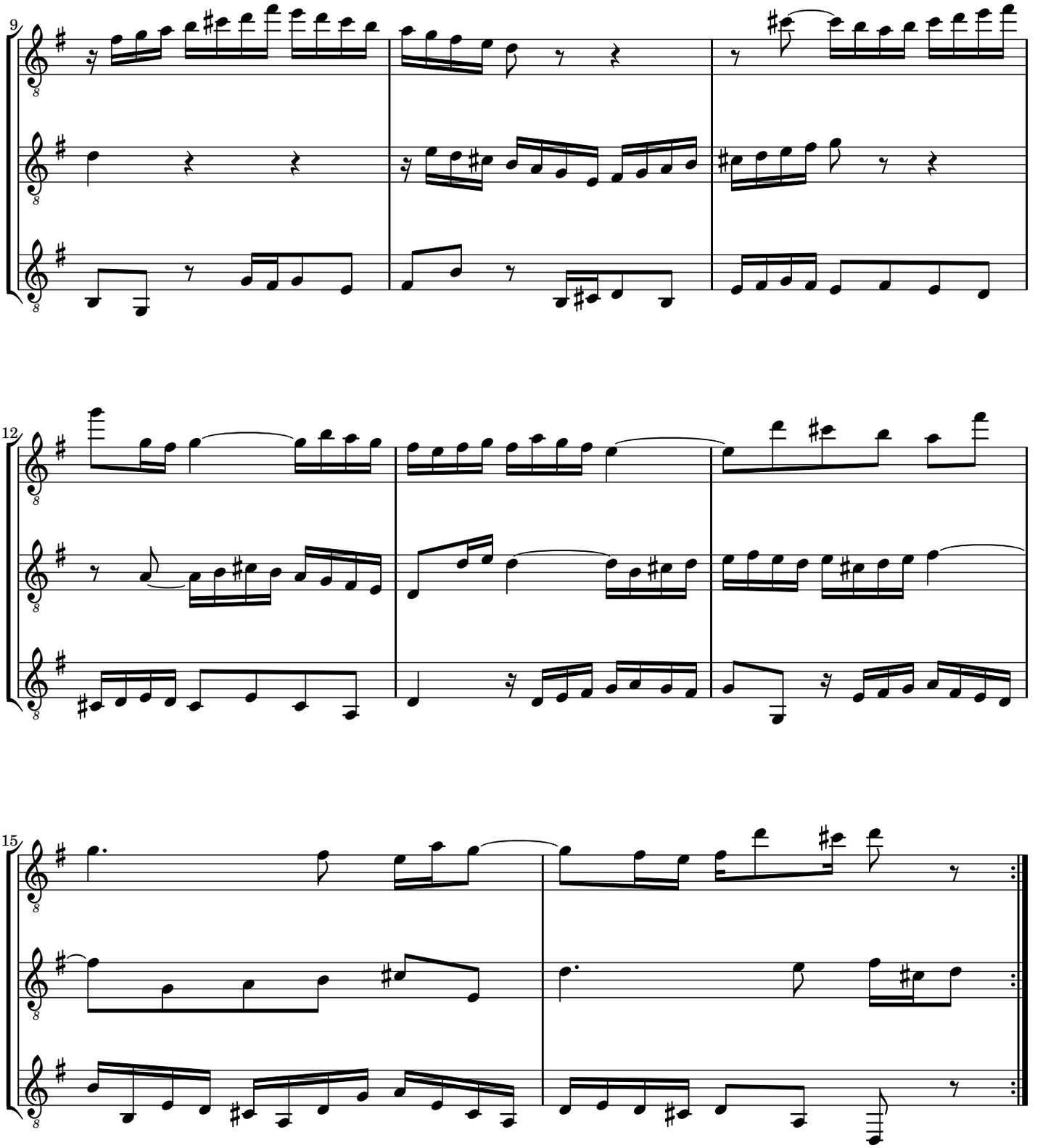

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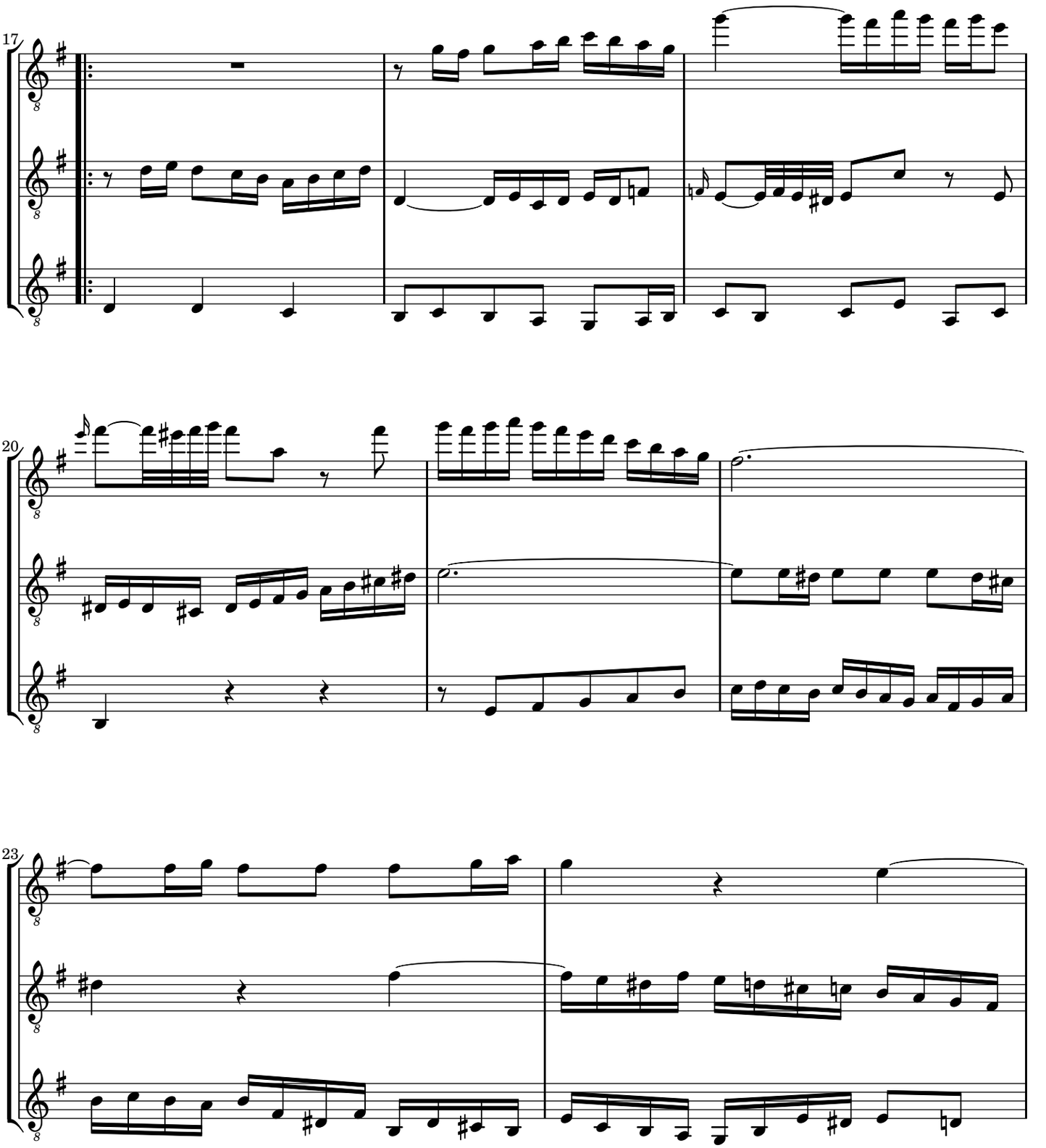

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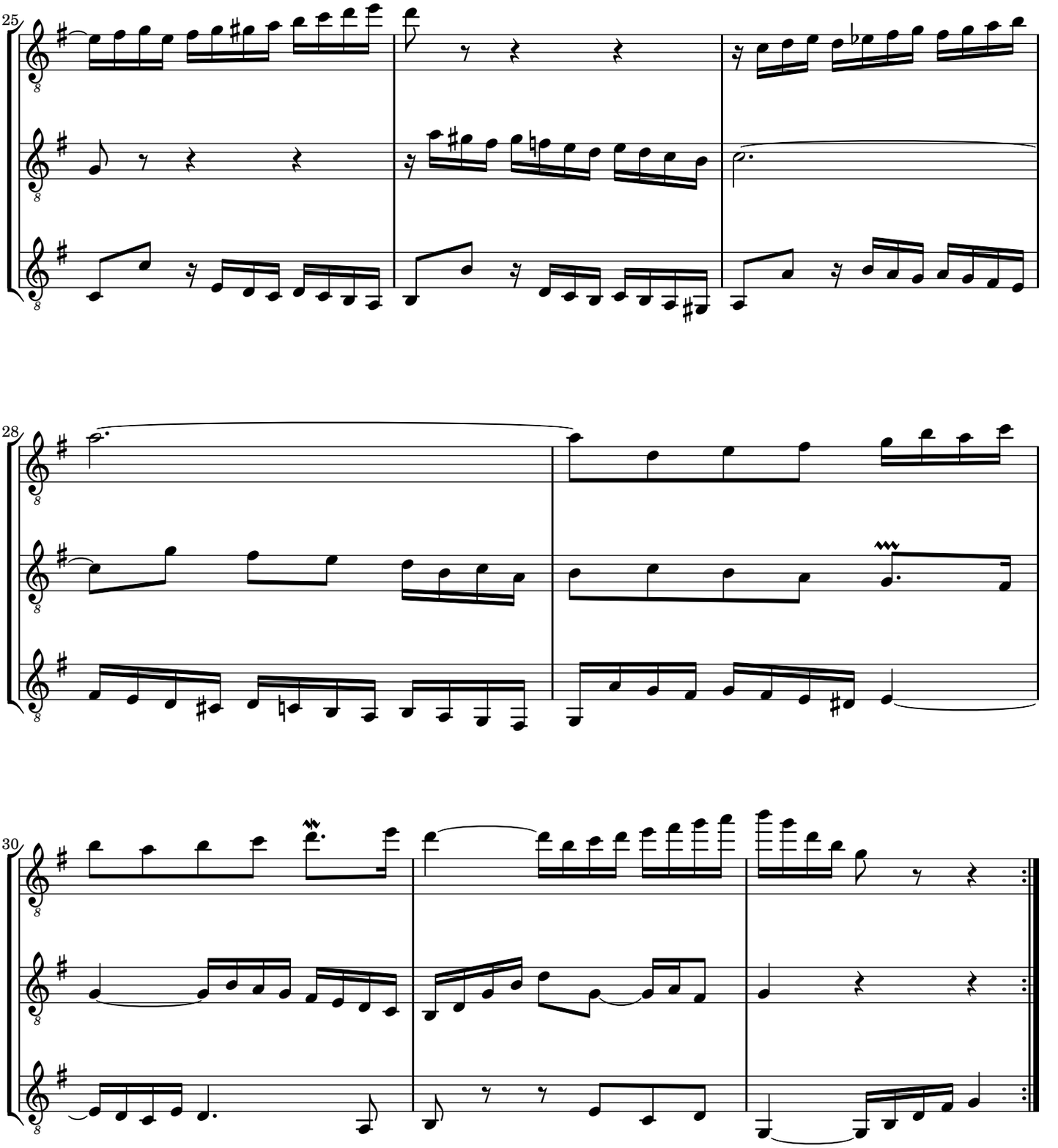

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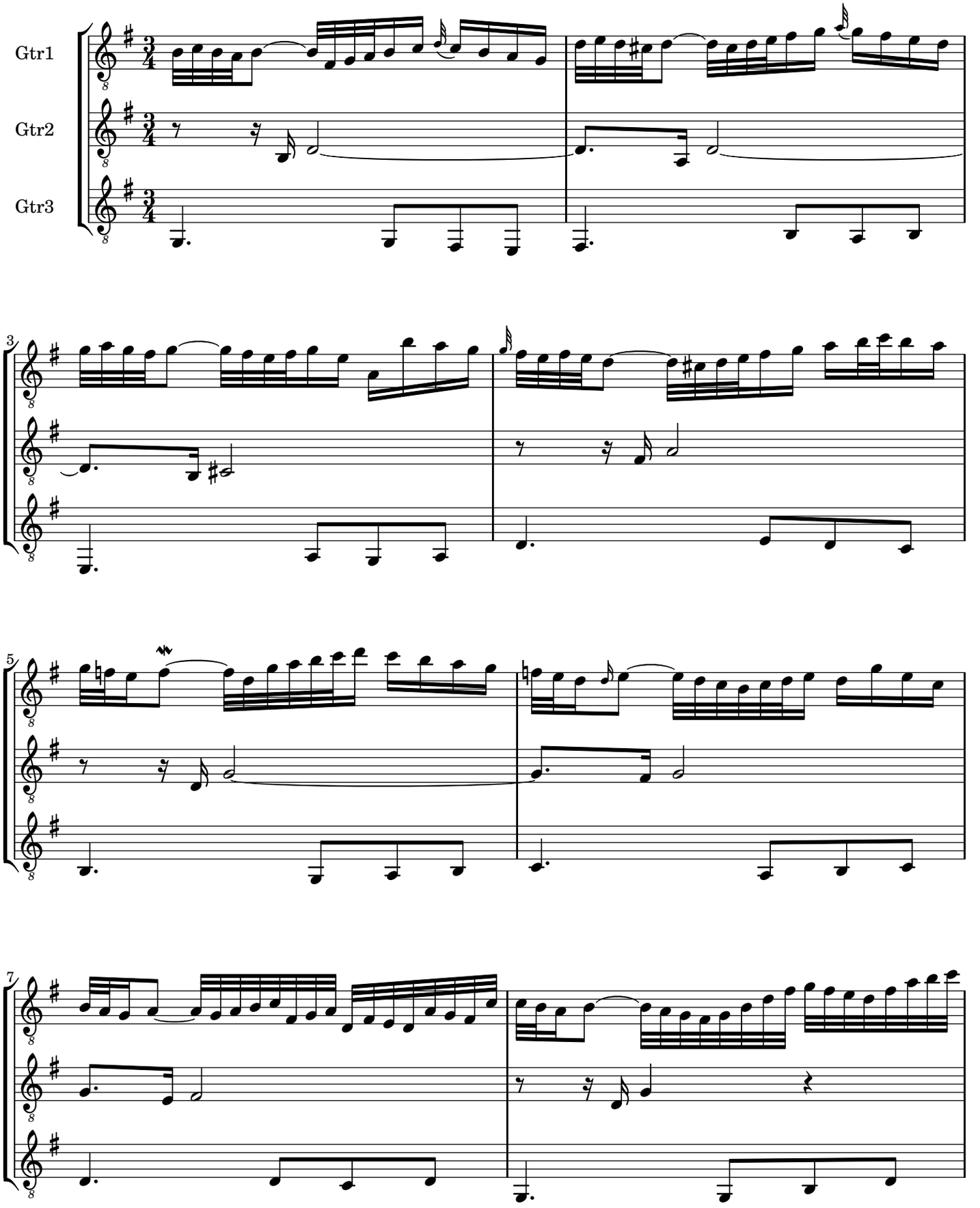
Variation 13



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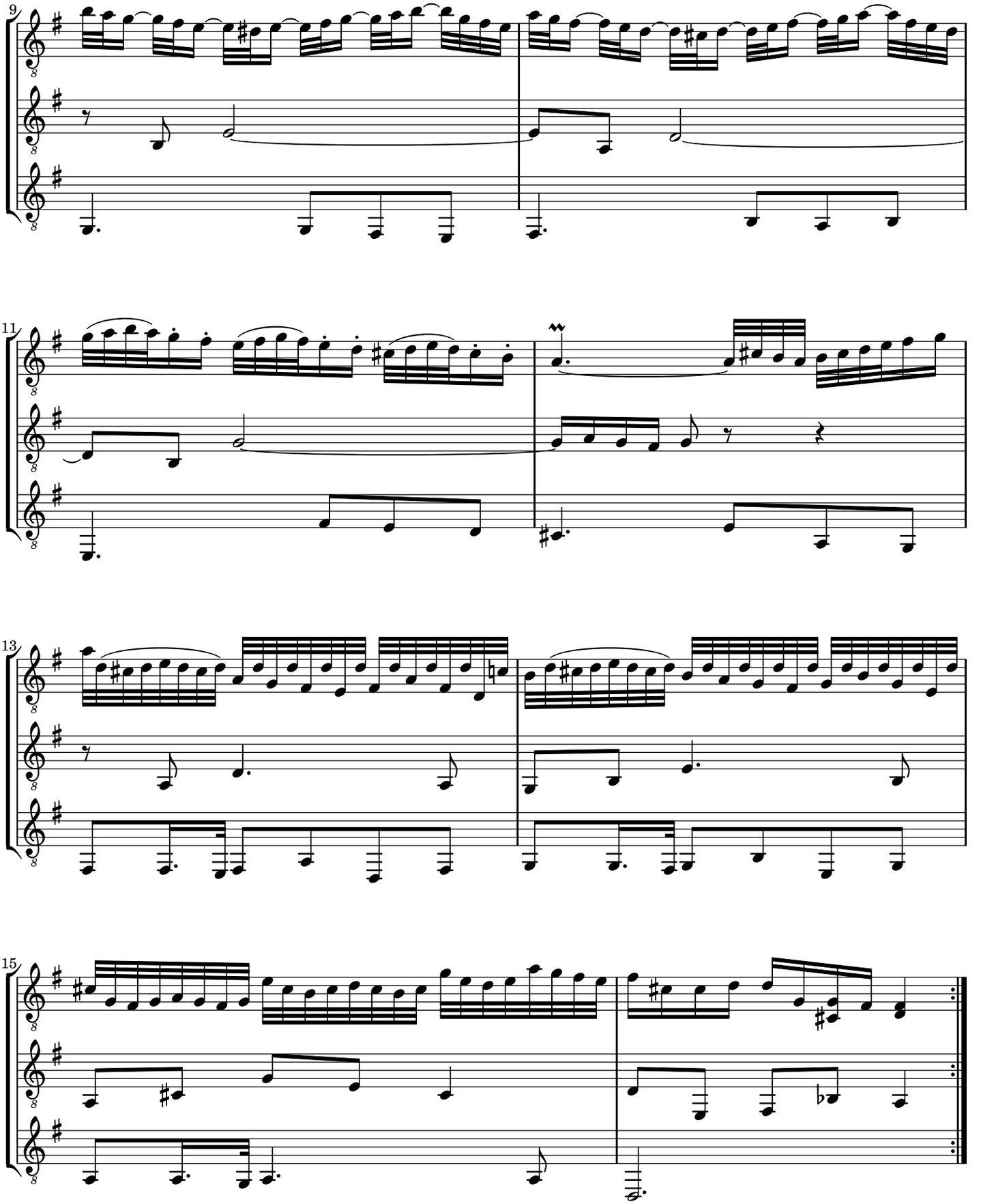

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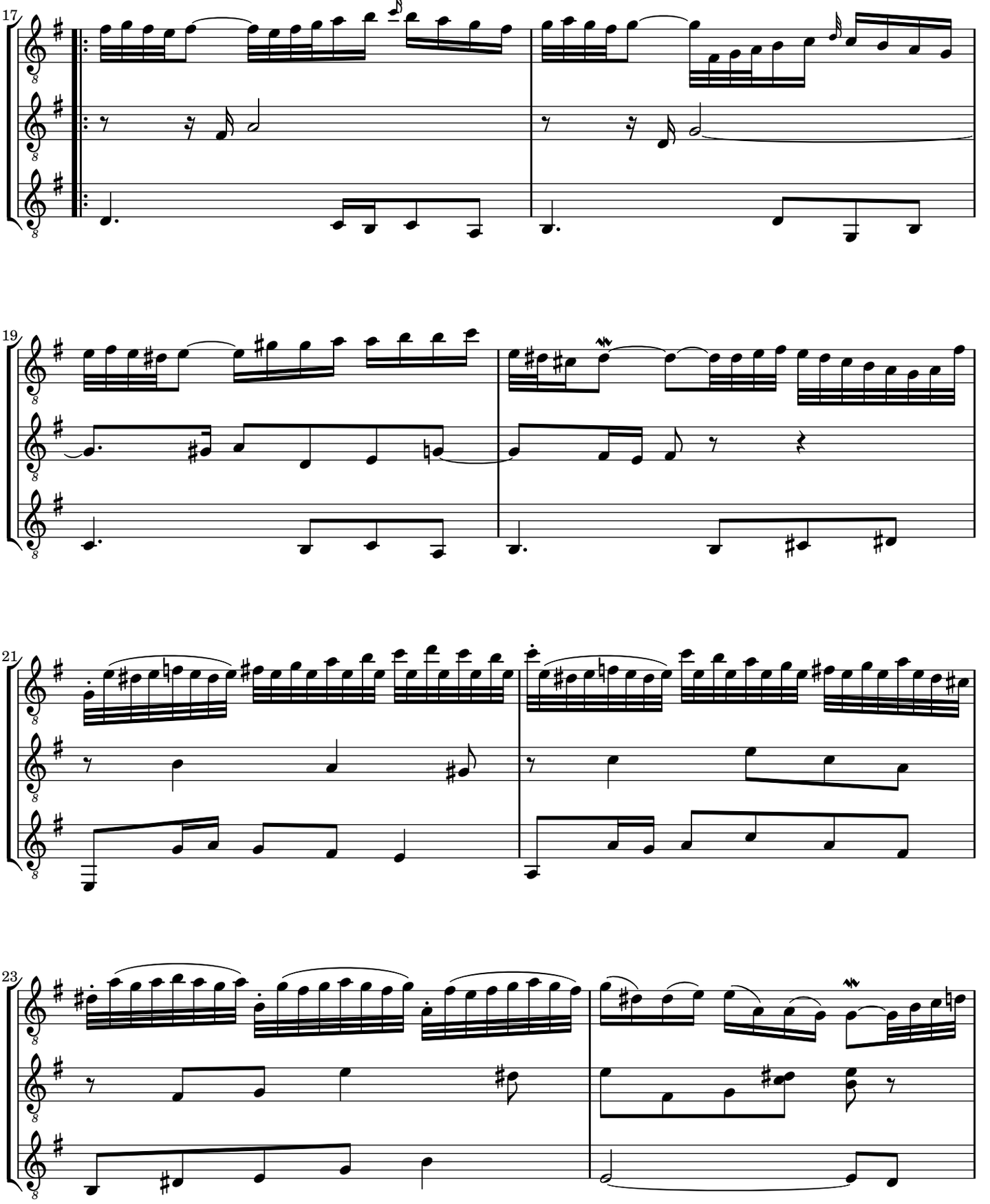

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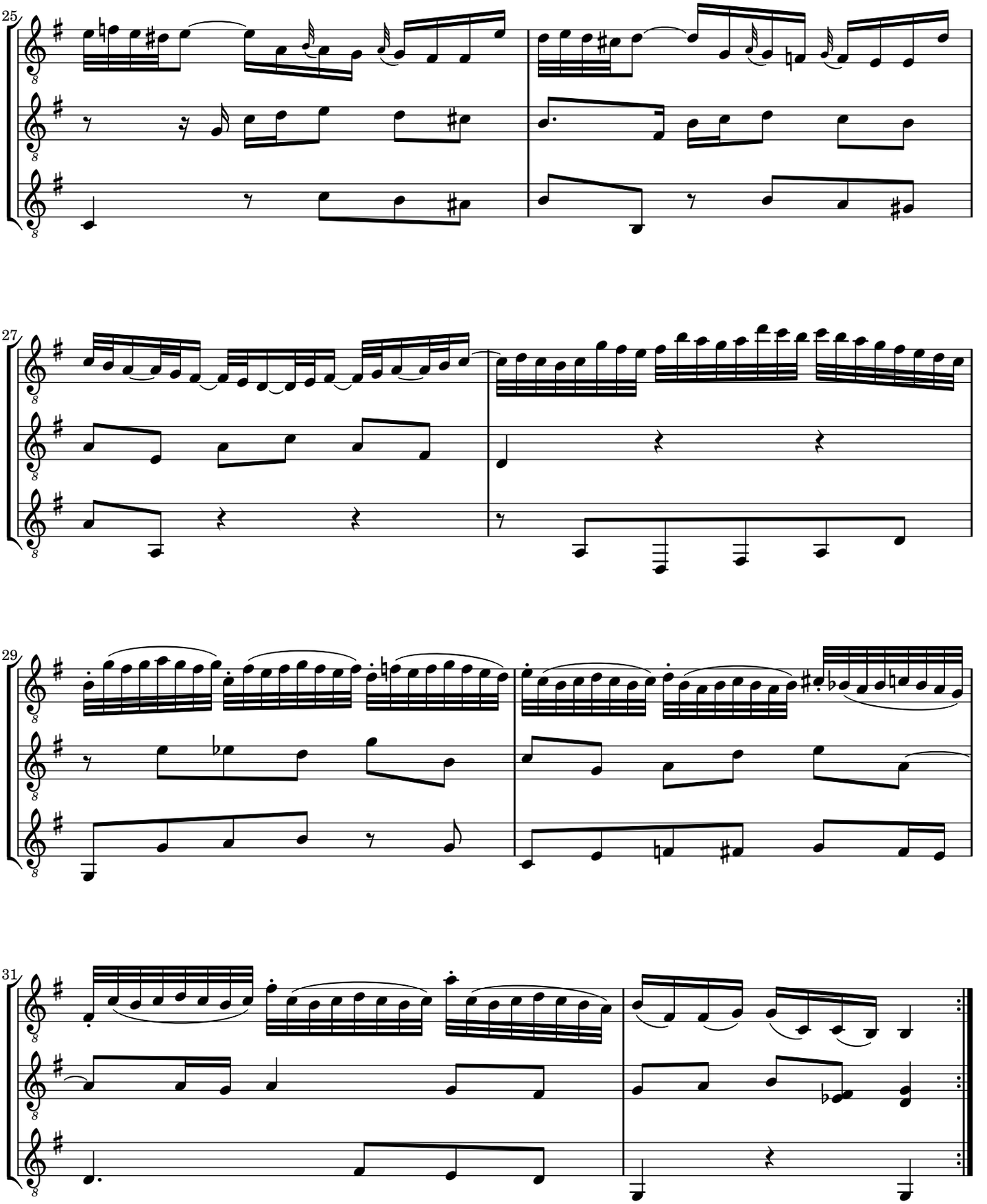

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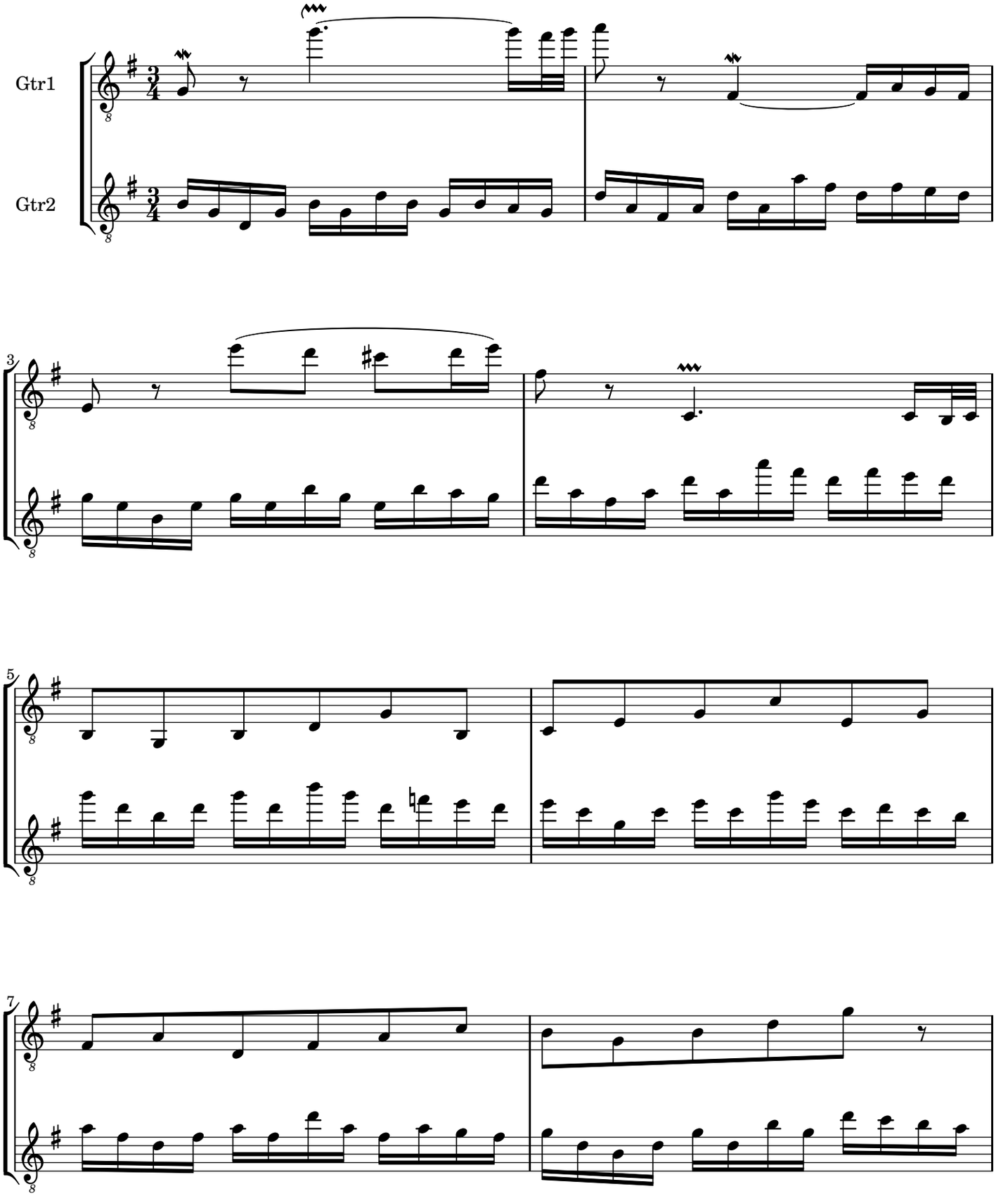
Variation 14



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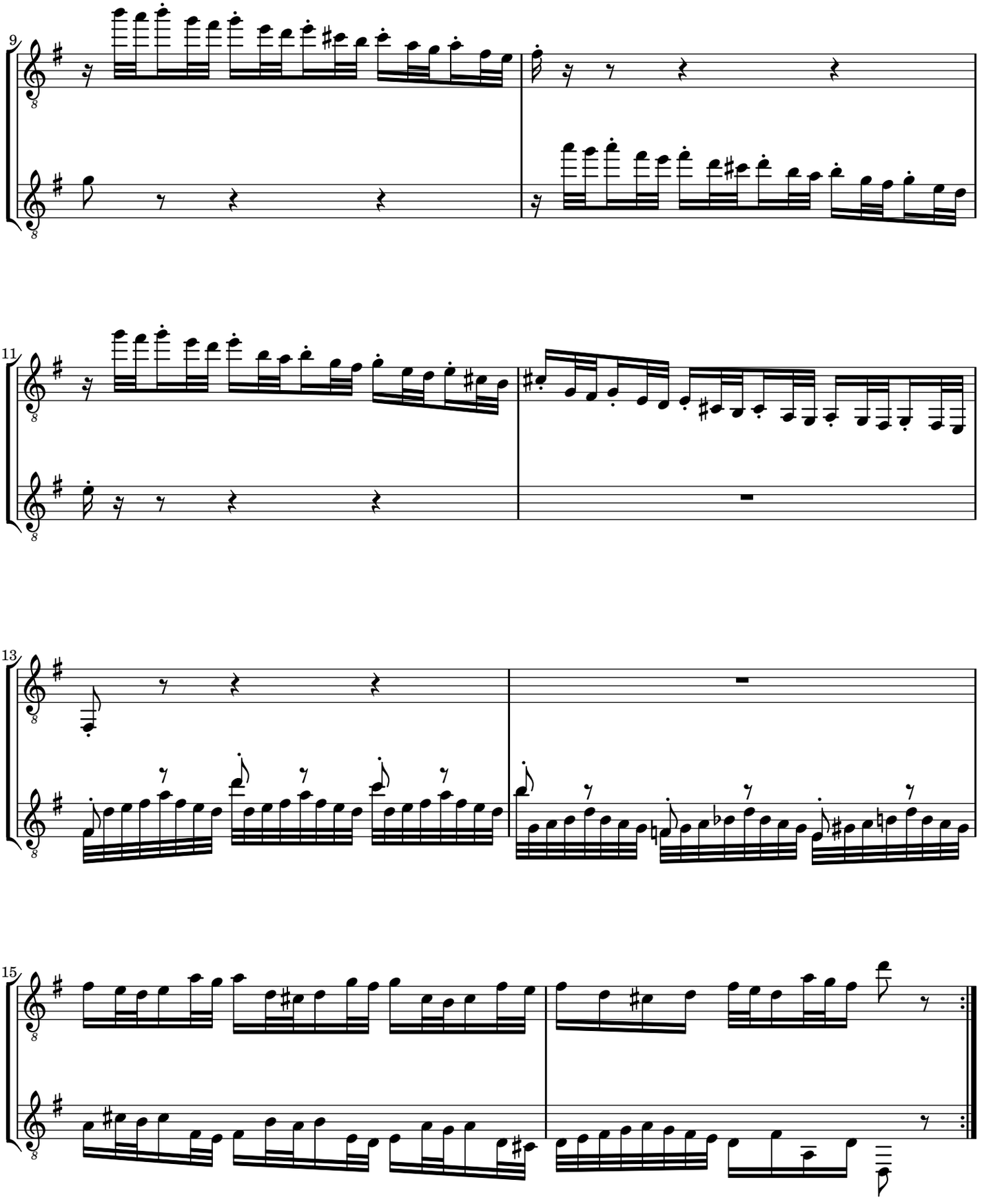

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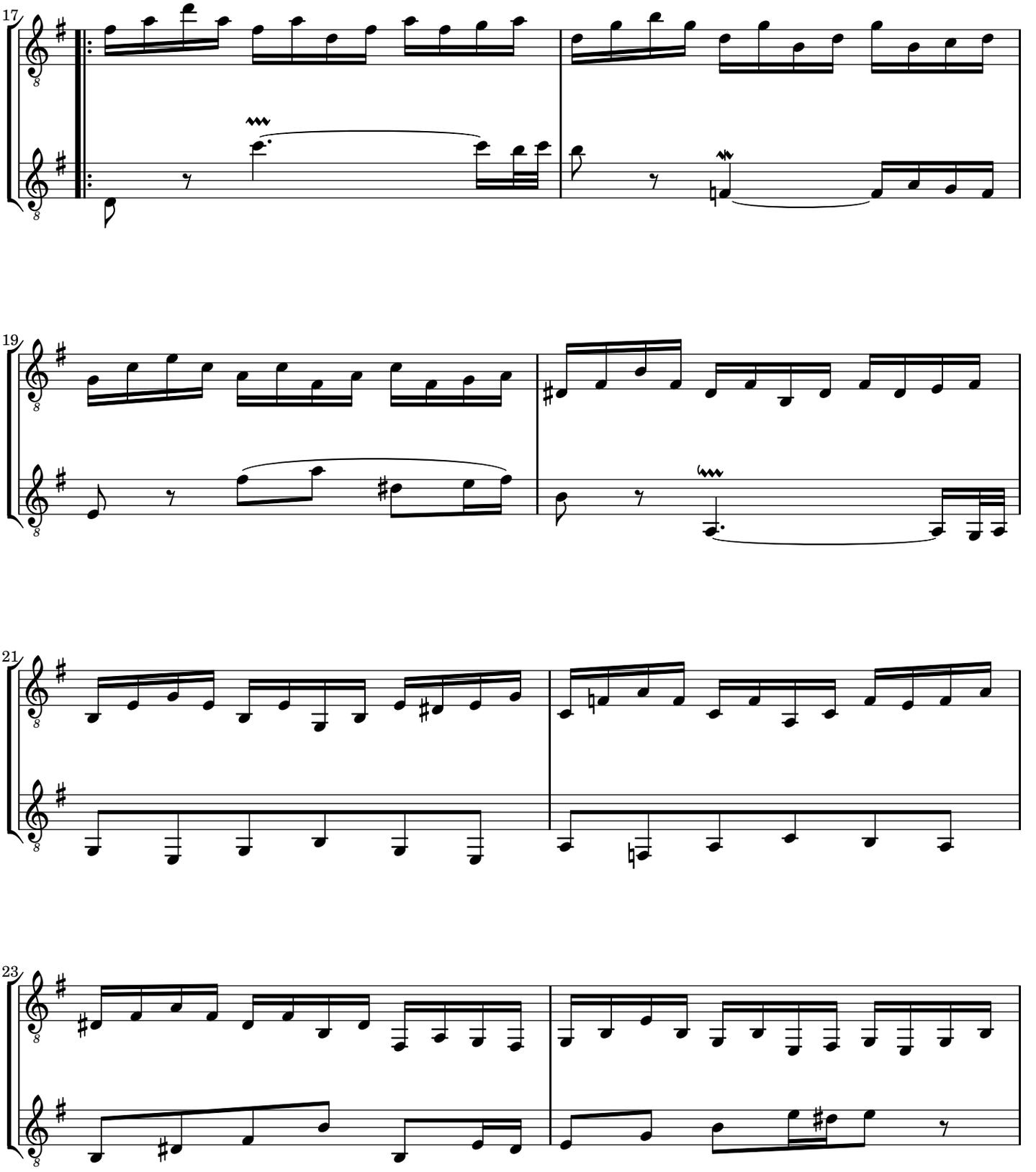

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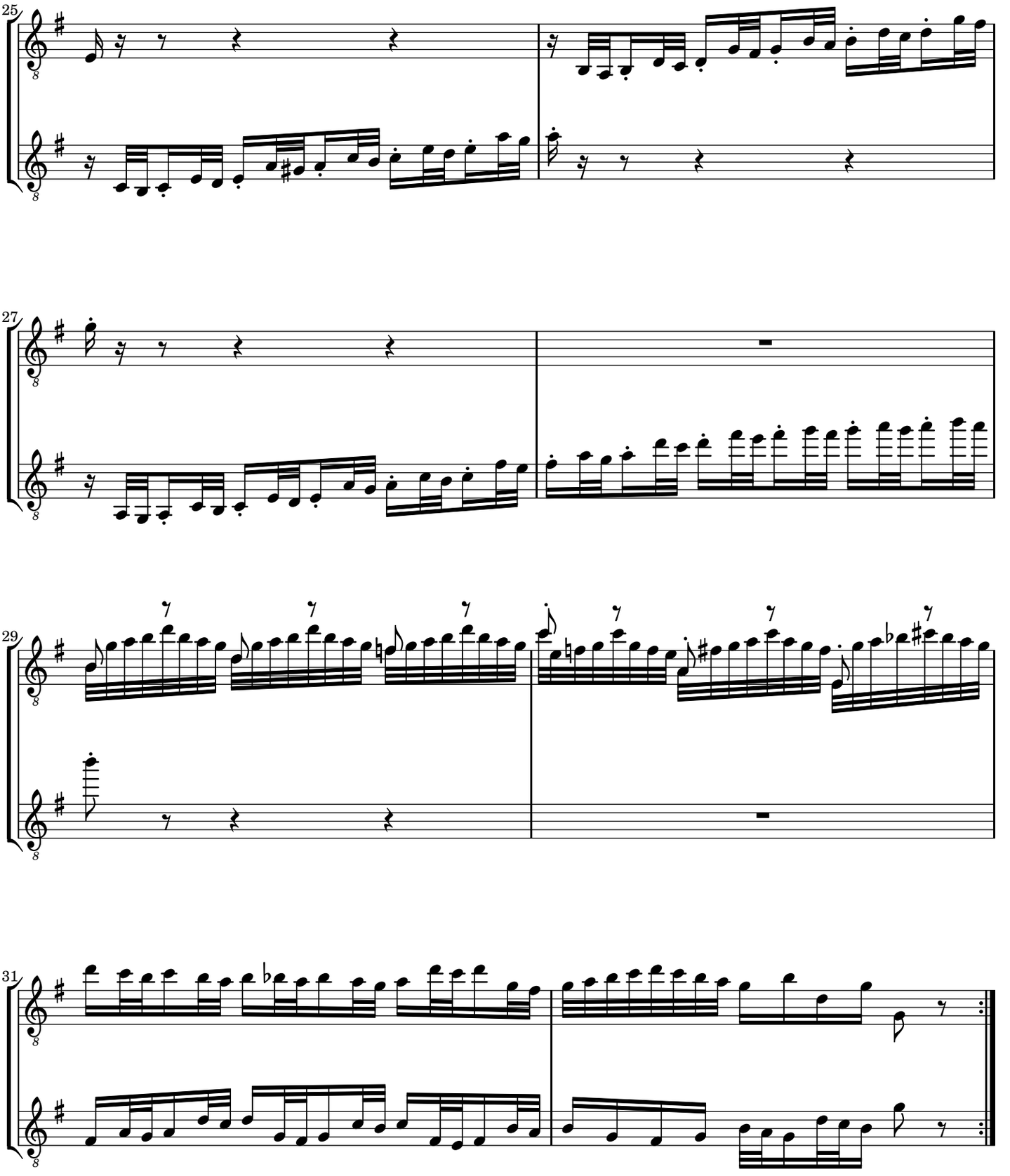

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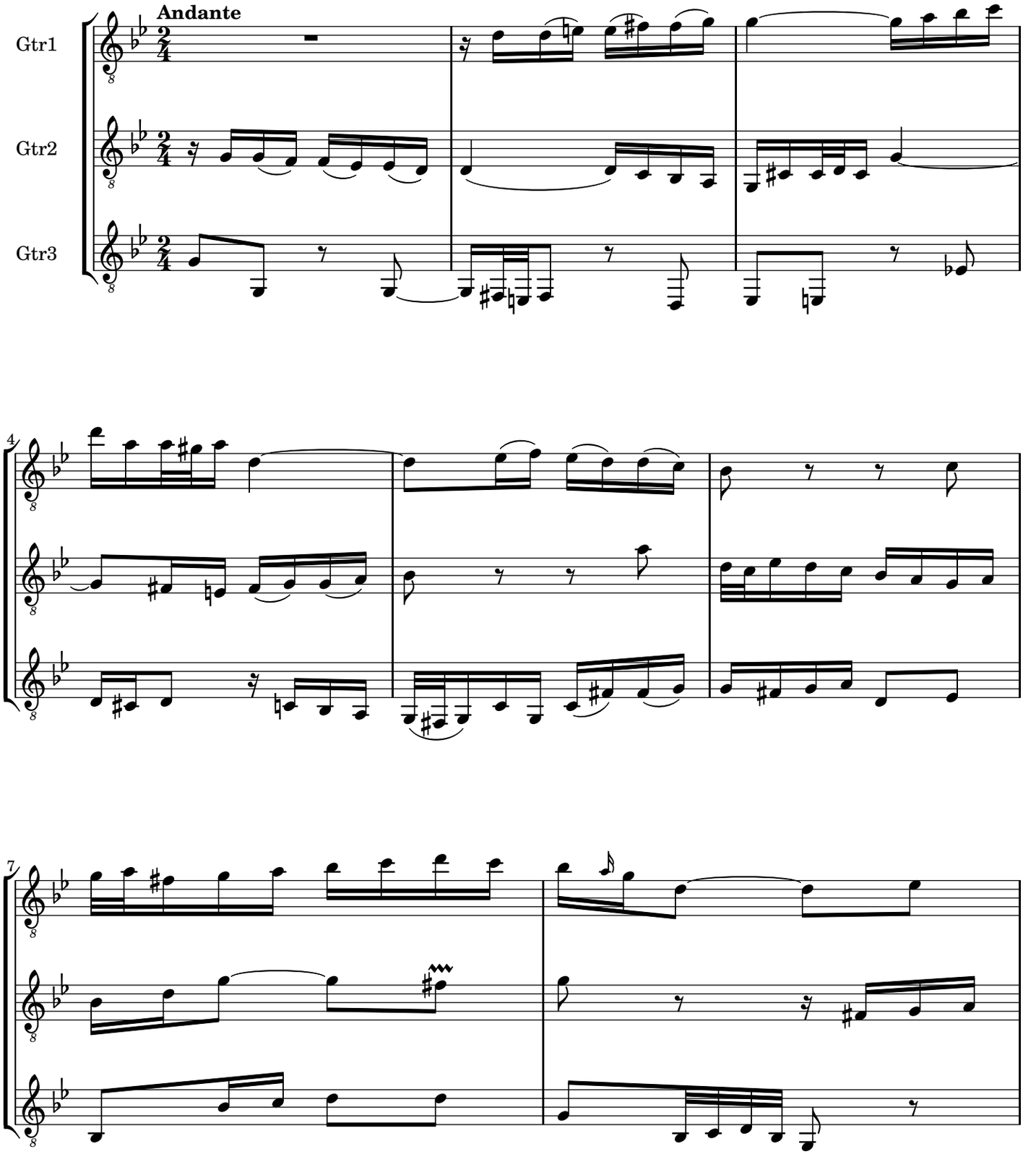
Variation 15

Canon at the Fifth



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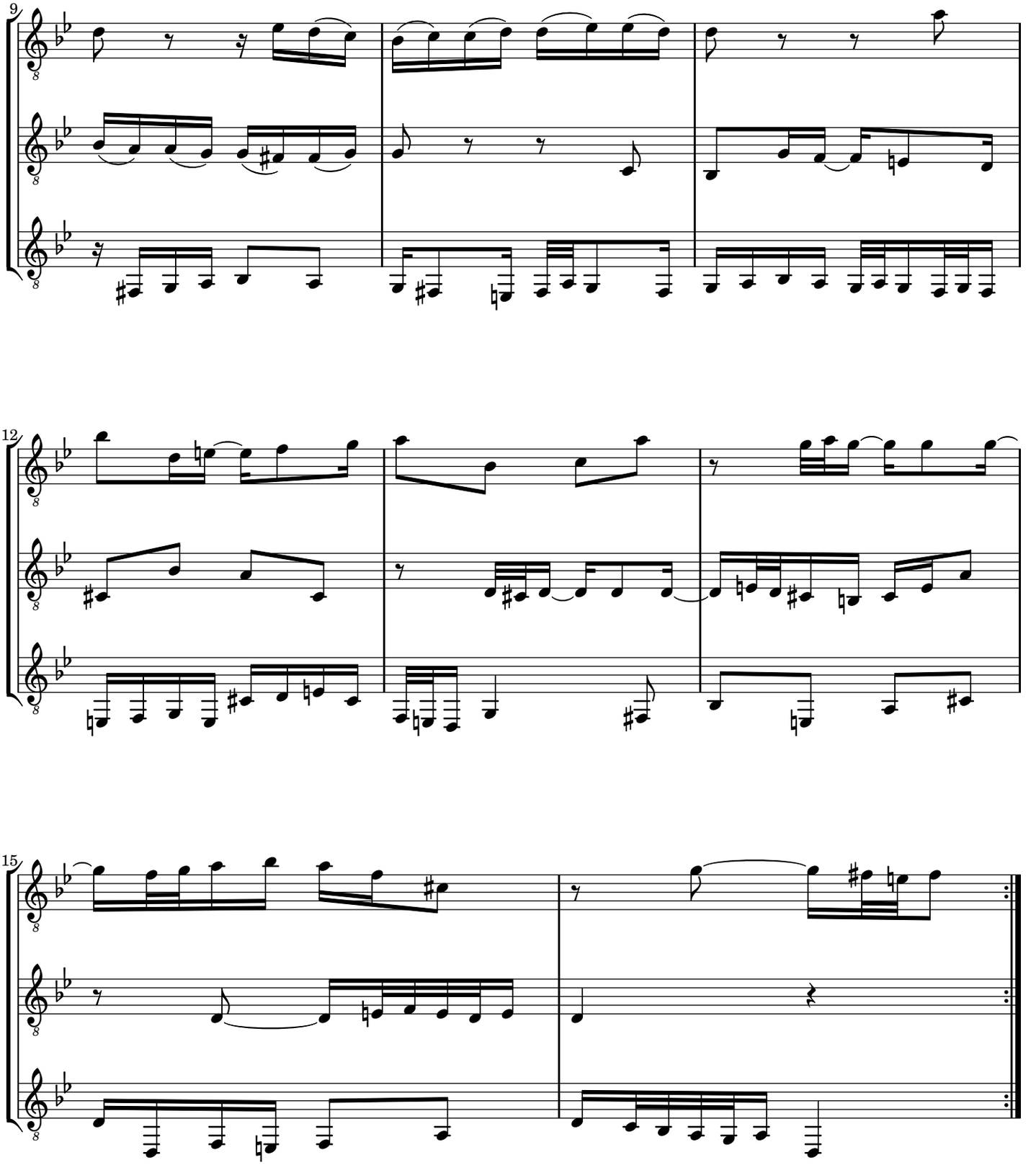

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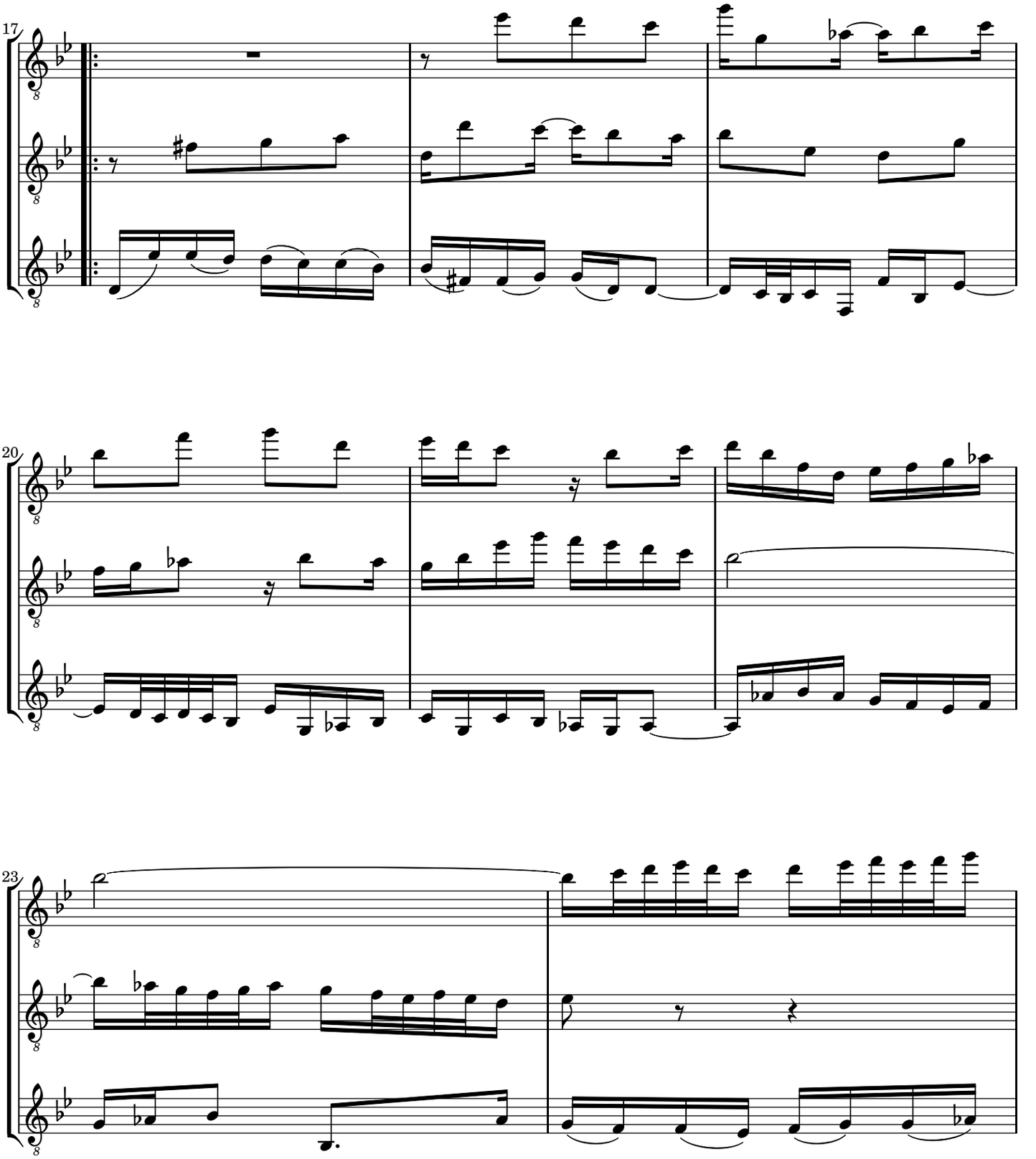

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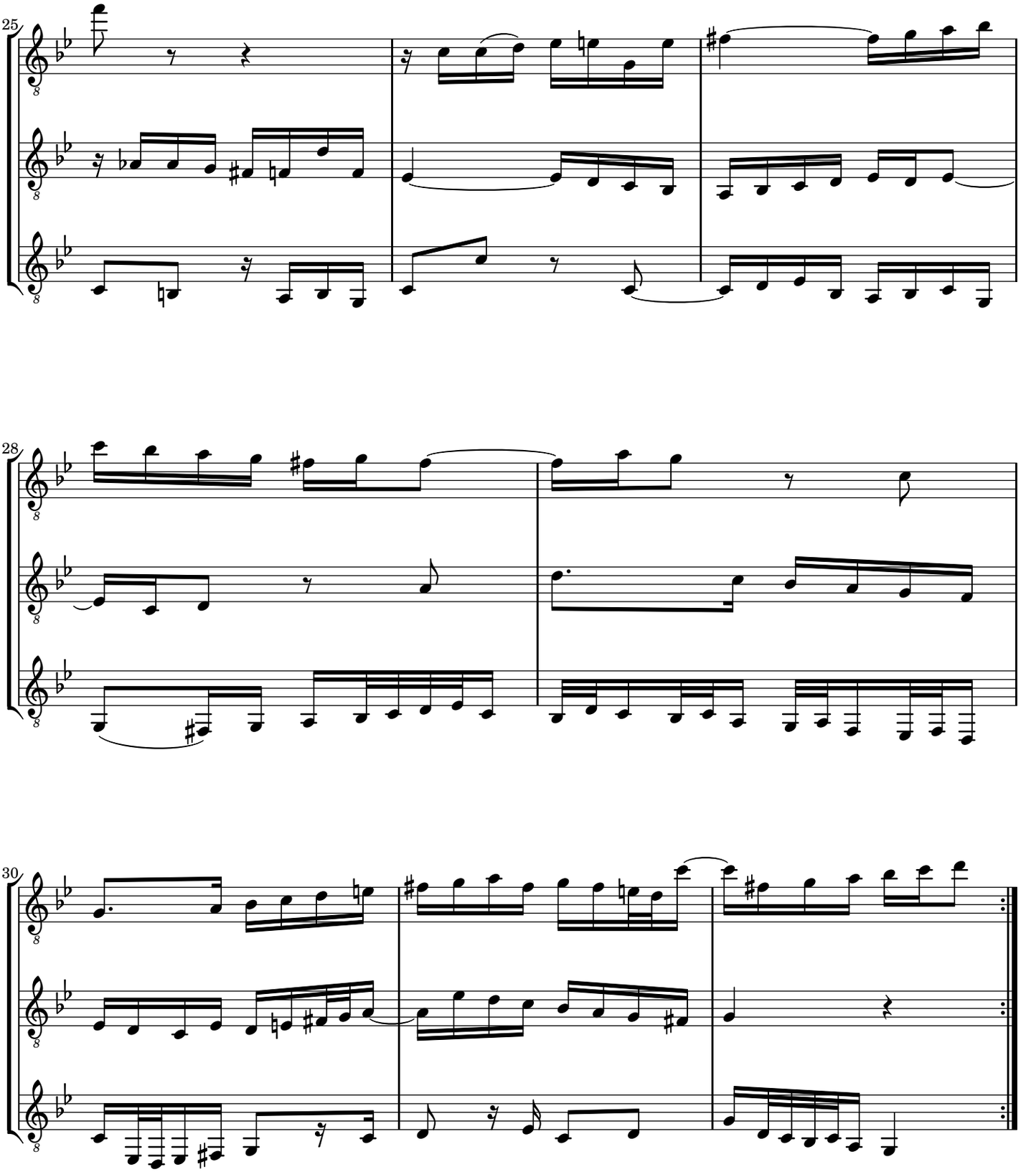
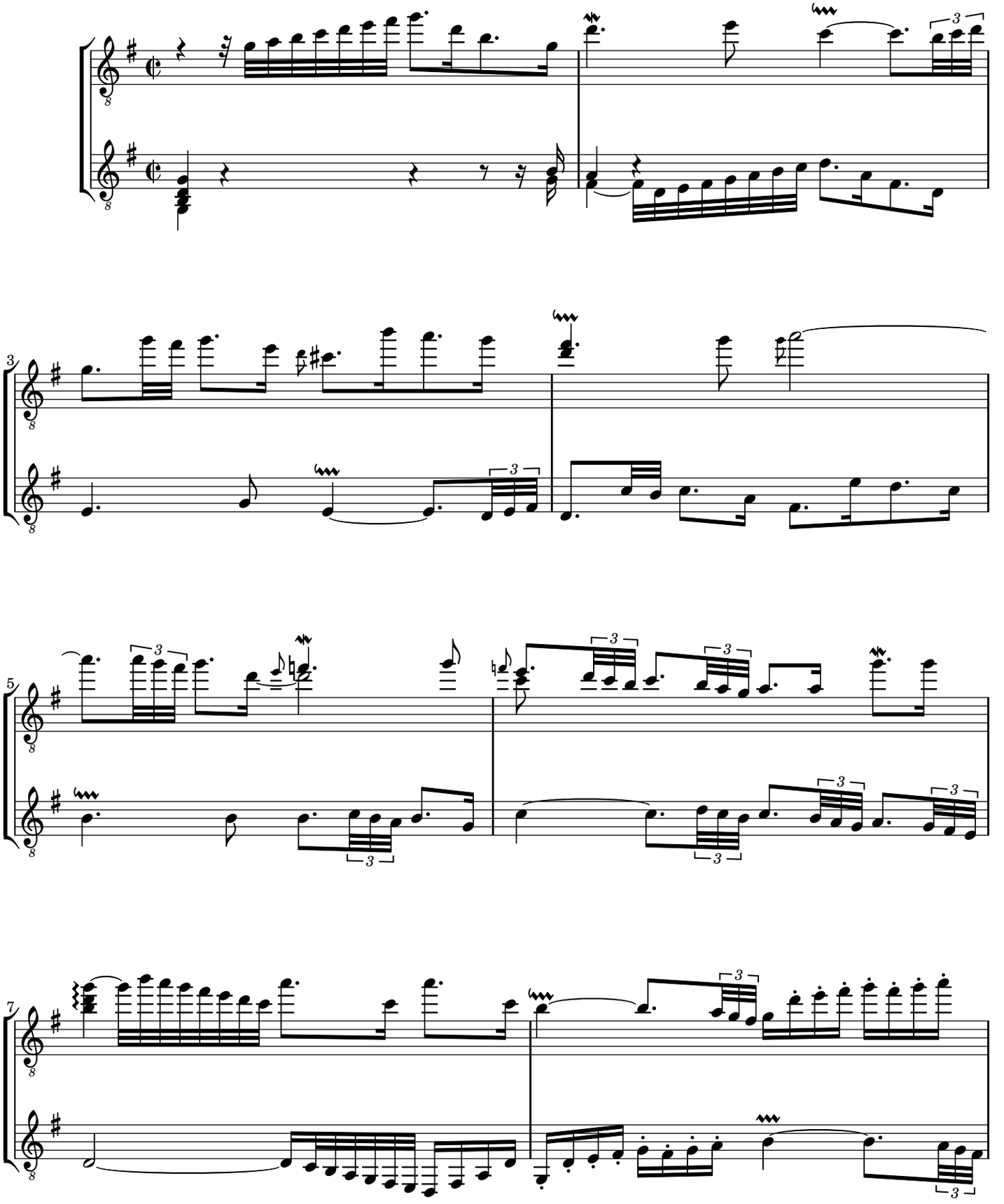


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 16

Overture



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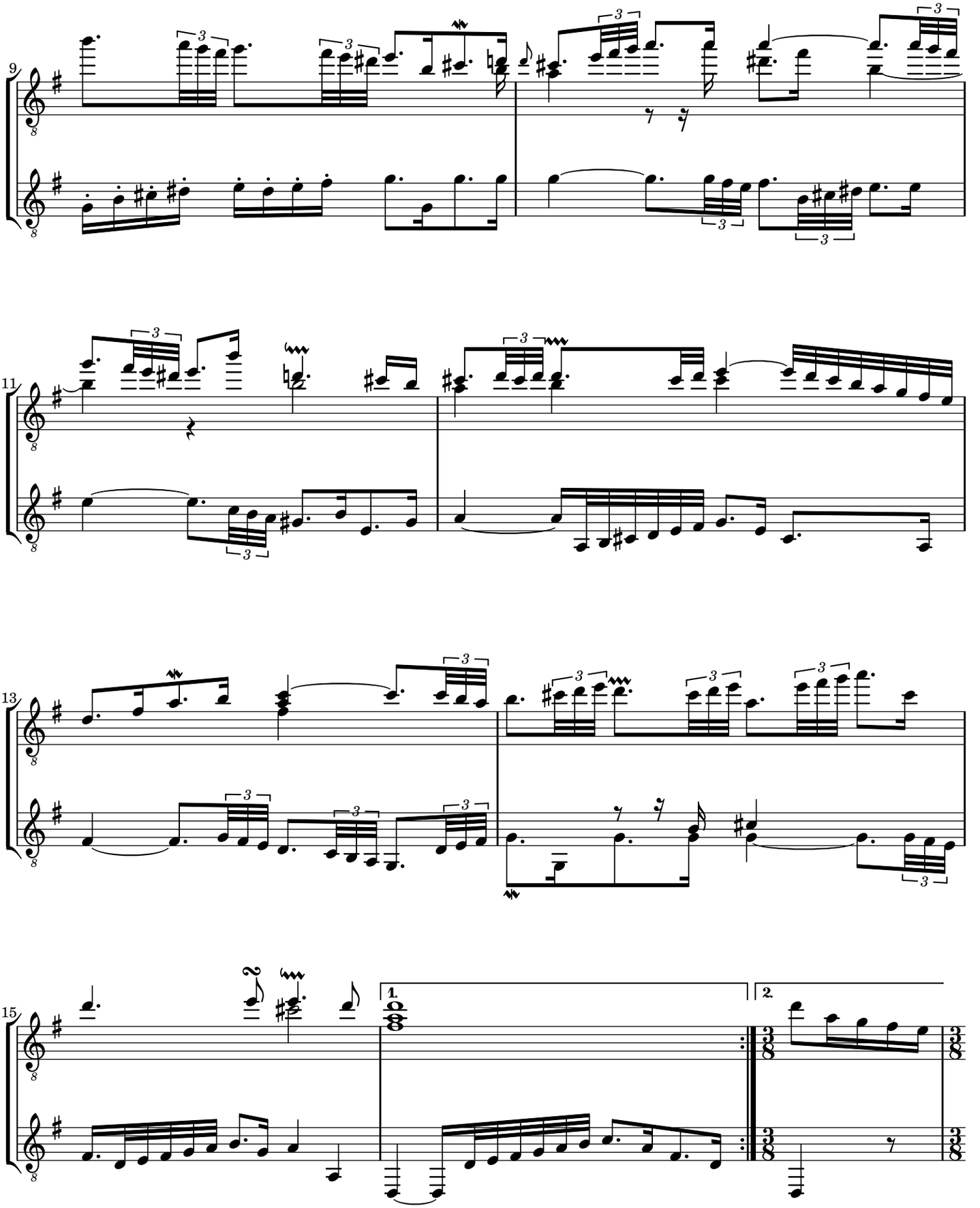

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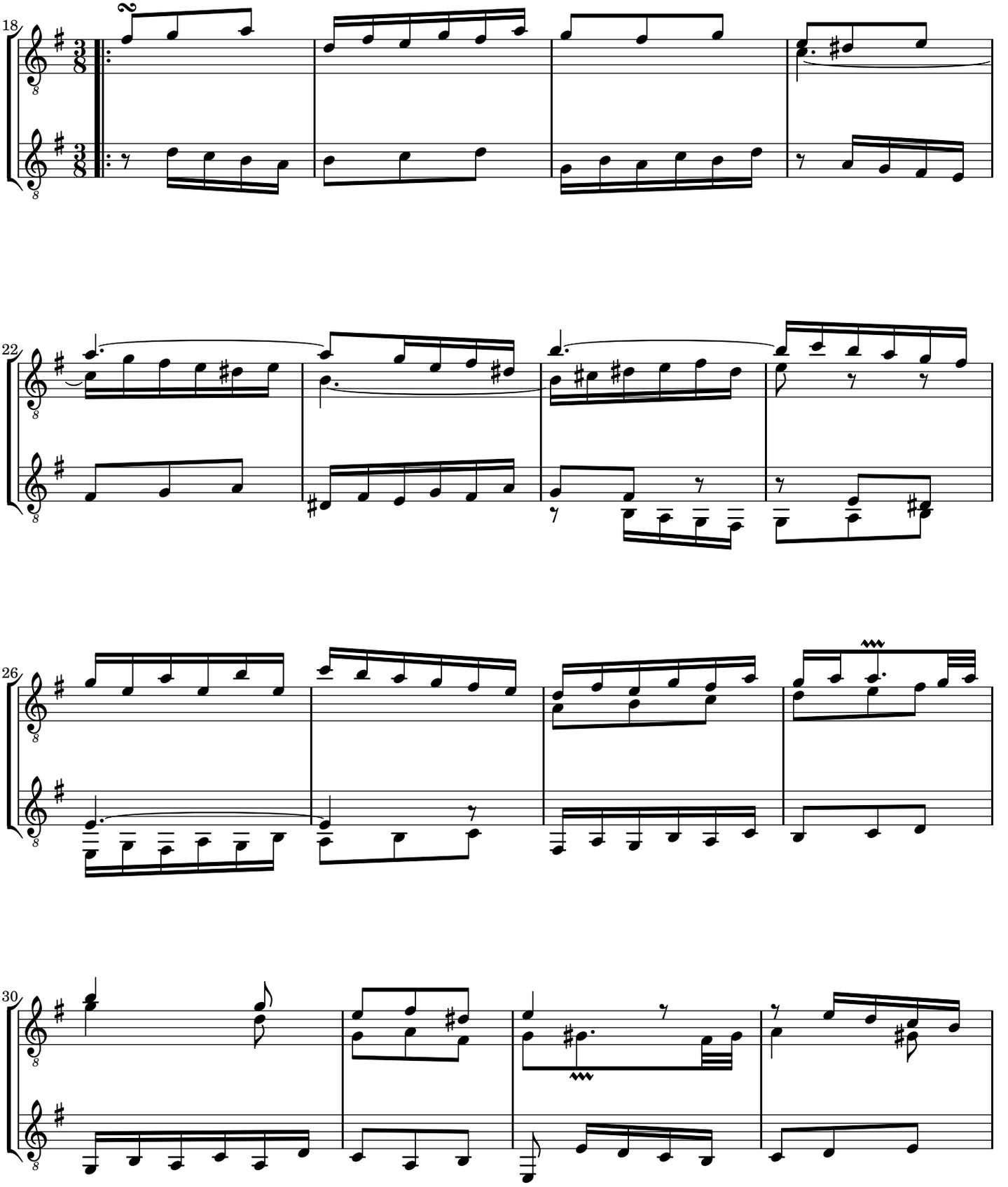

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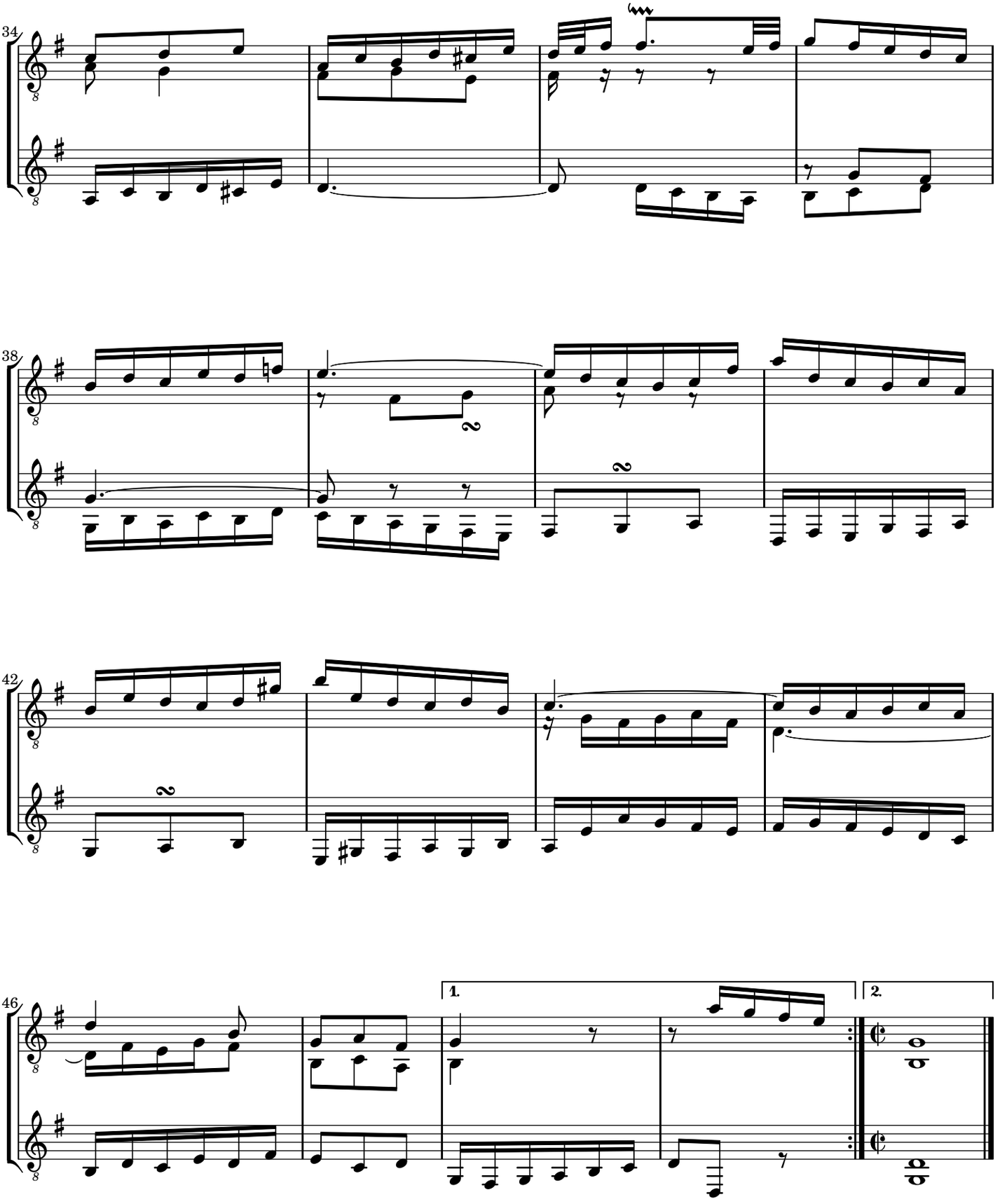
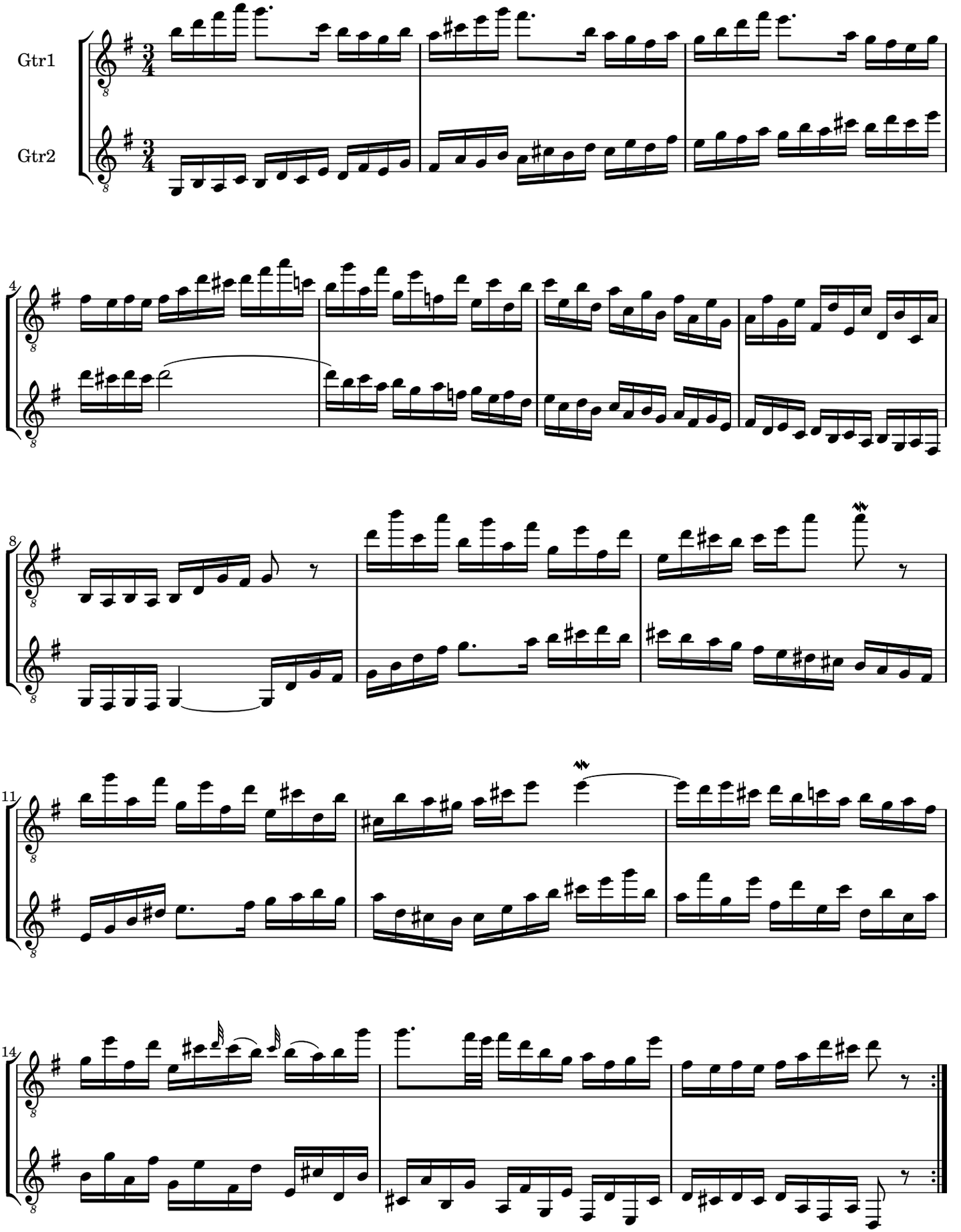
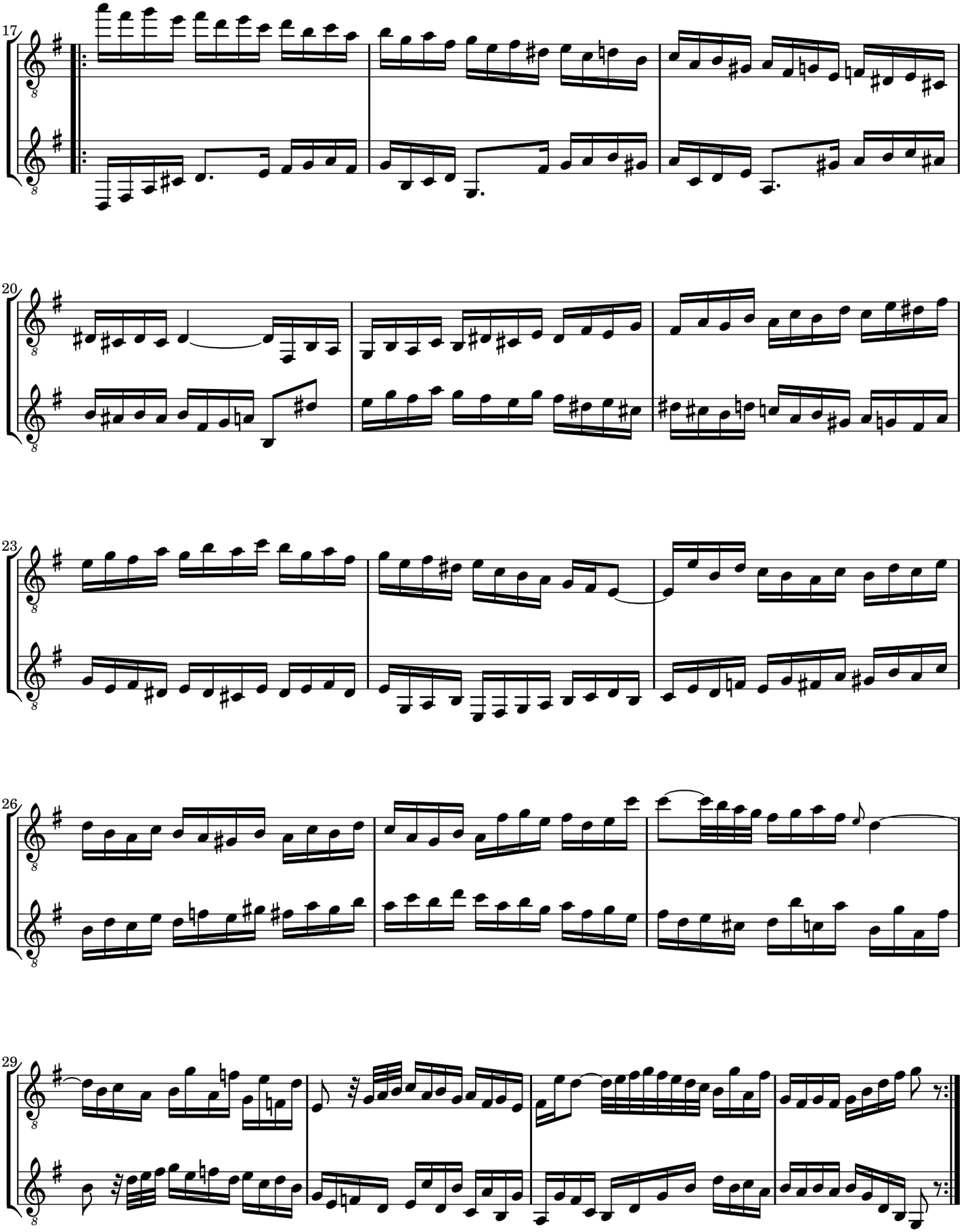


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 17



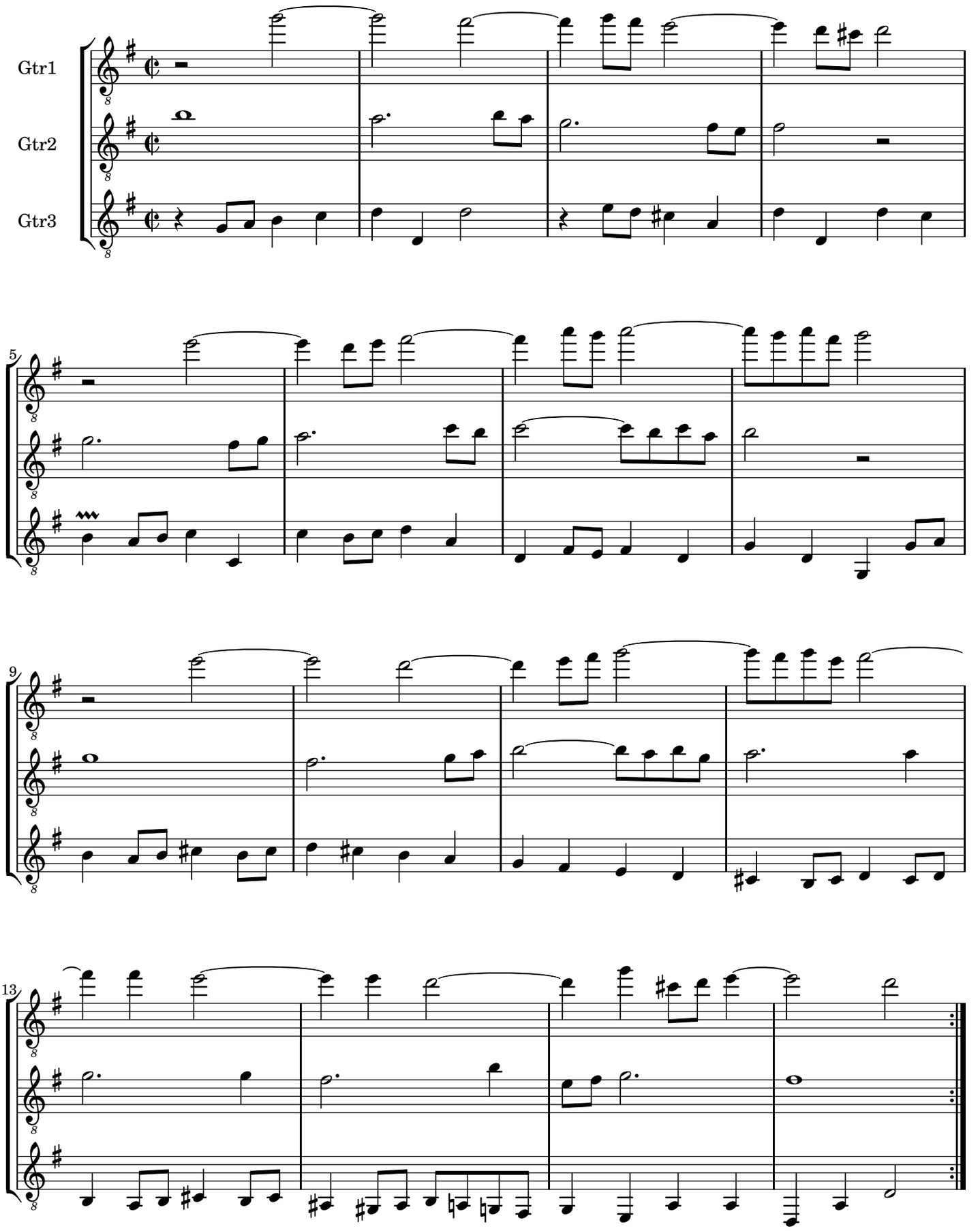
Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA



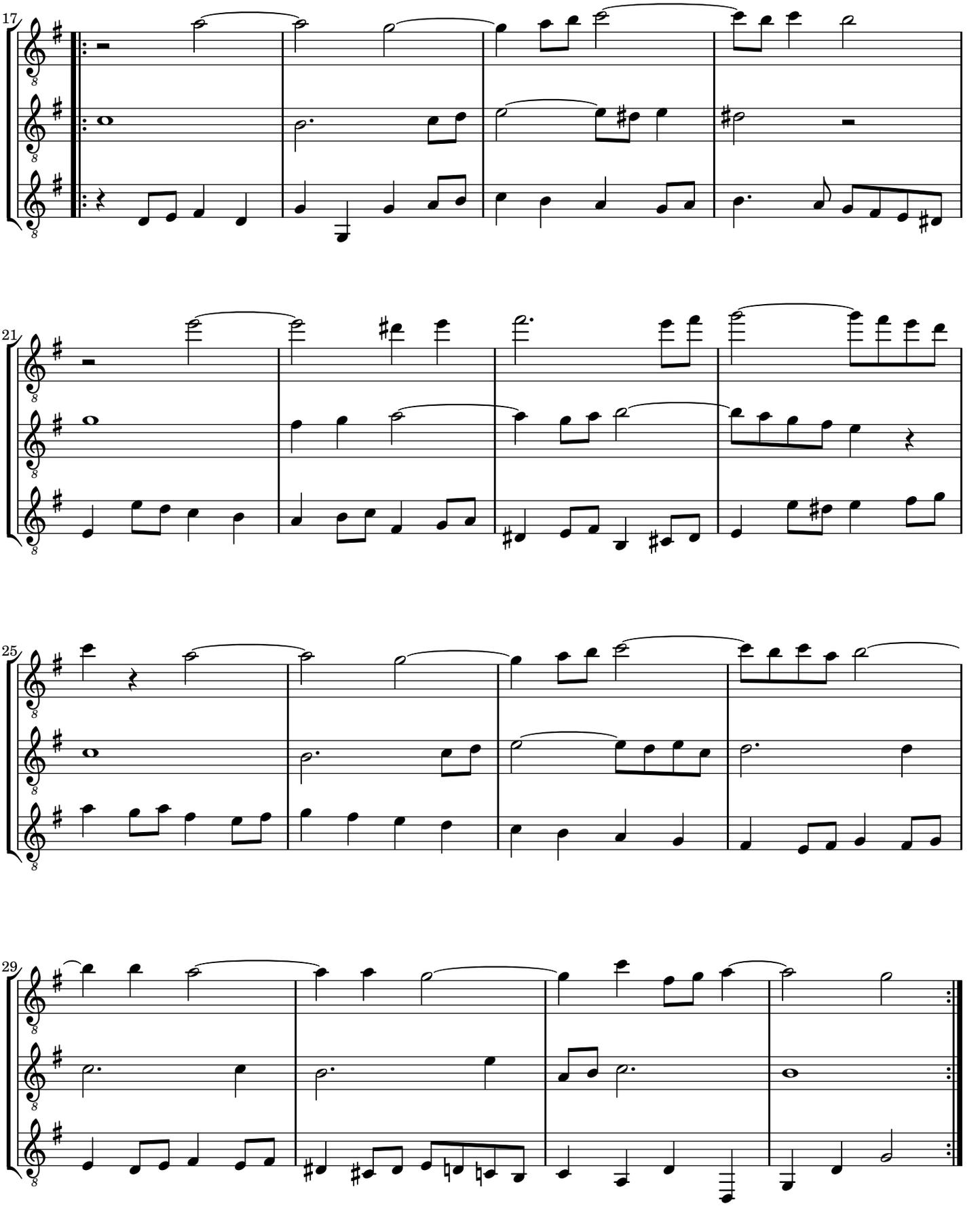
Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 18

Canon at the Sixth

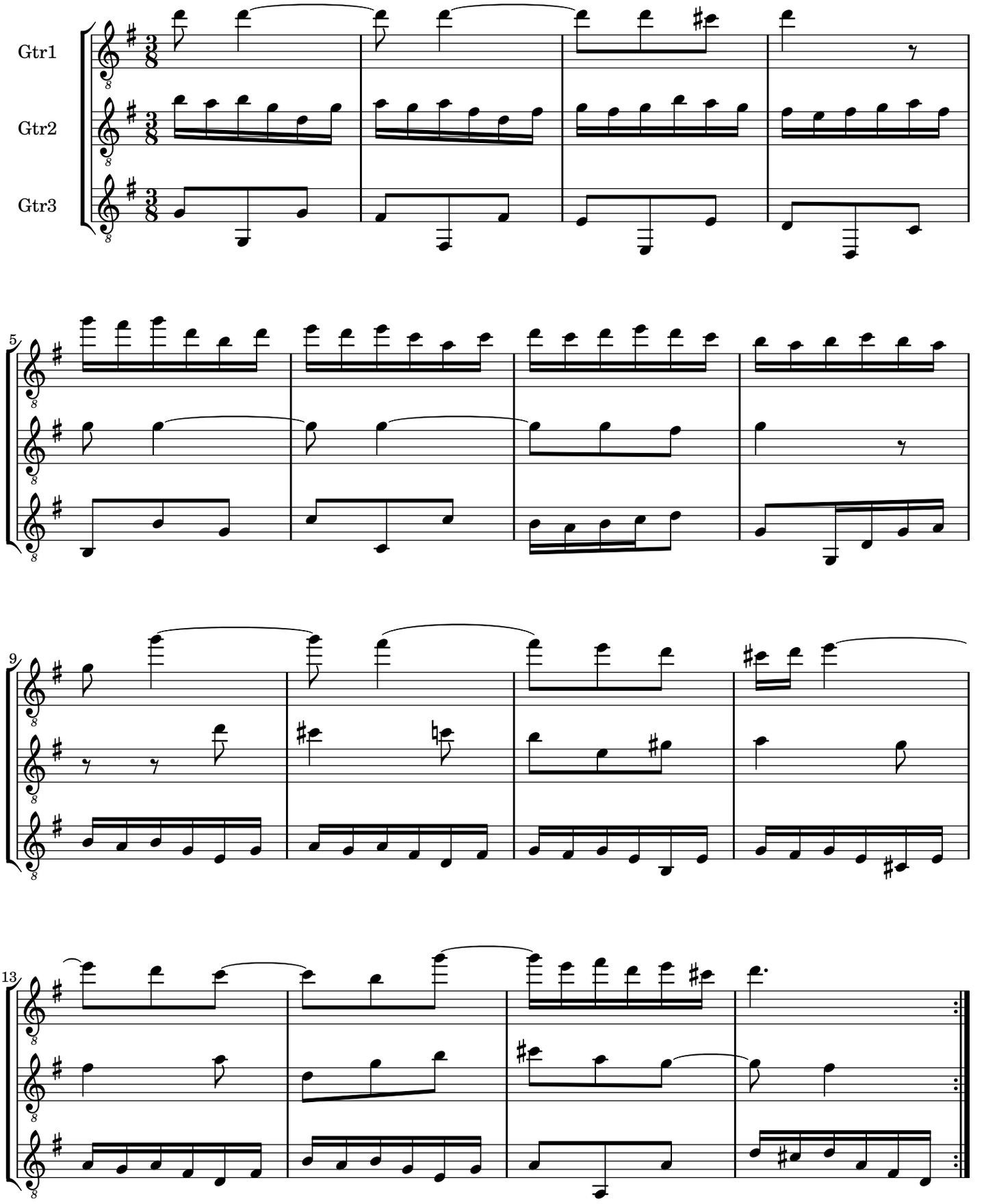


Steve Shorter (2014). Benjamin Esham (2007). CC BY-SA



Steve Shorter (2014). Benjamin Esham (2007). CC BY-SA

Variation 19



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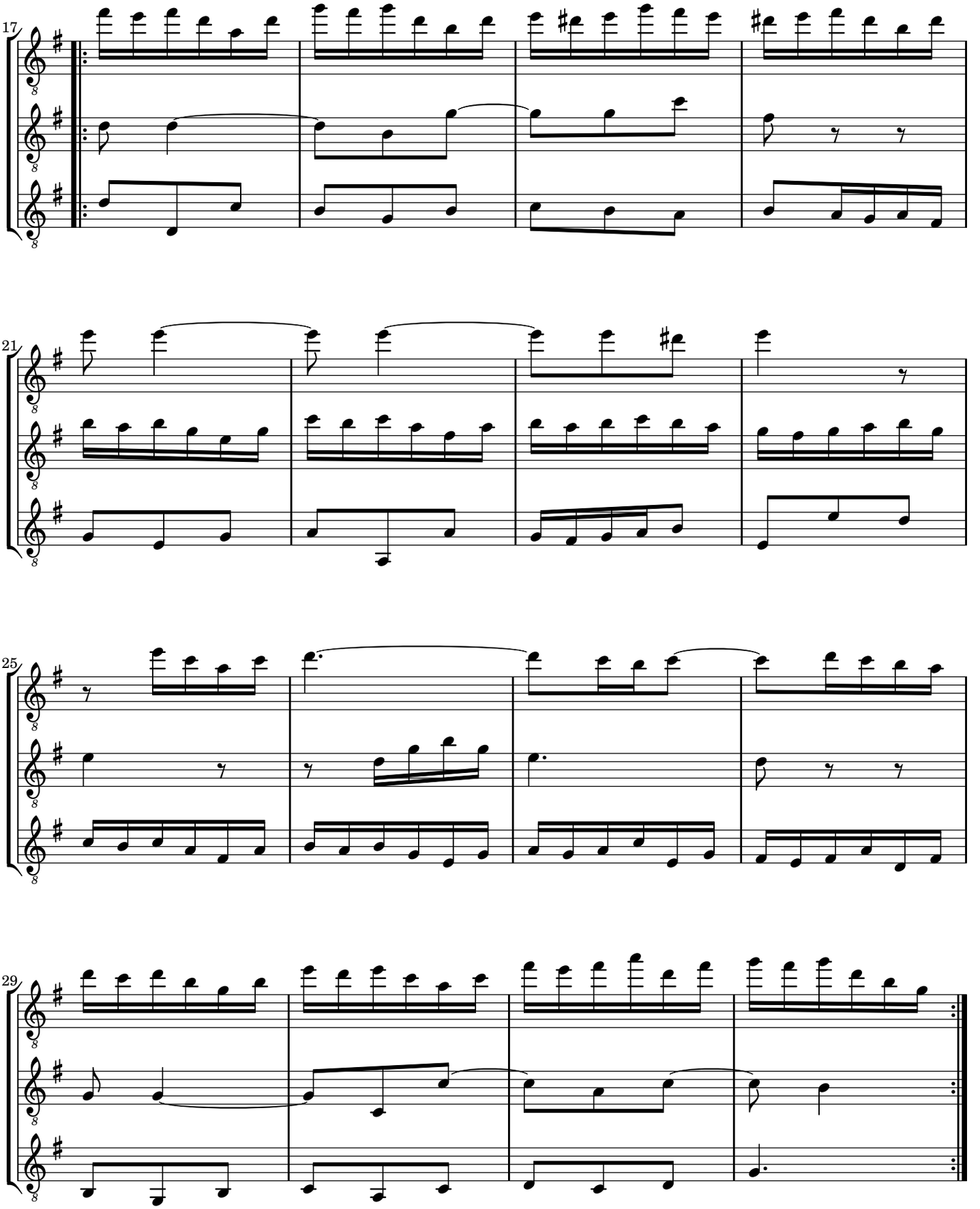
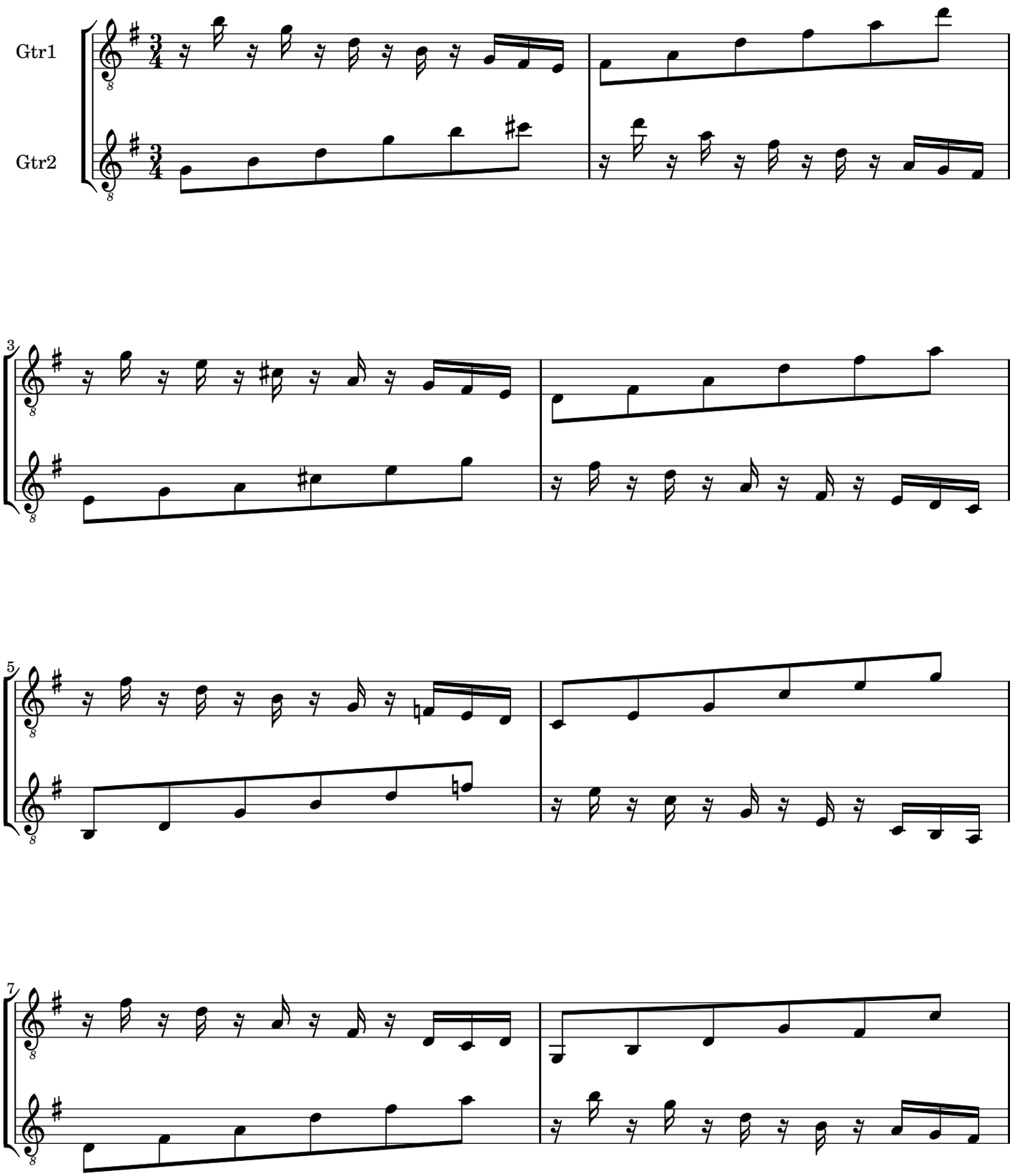
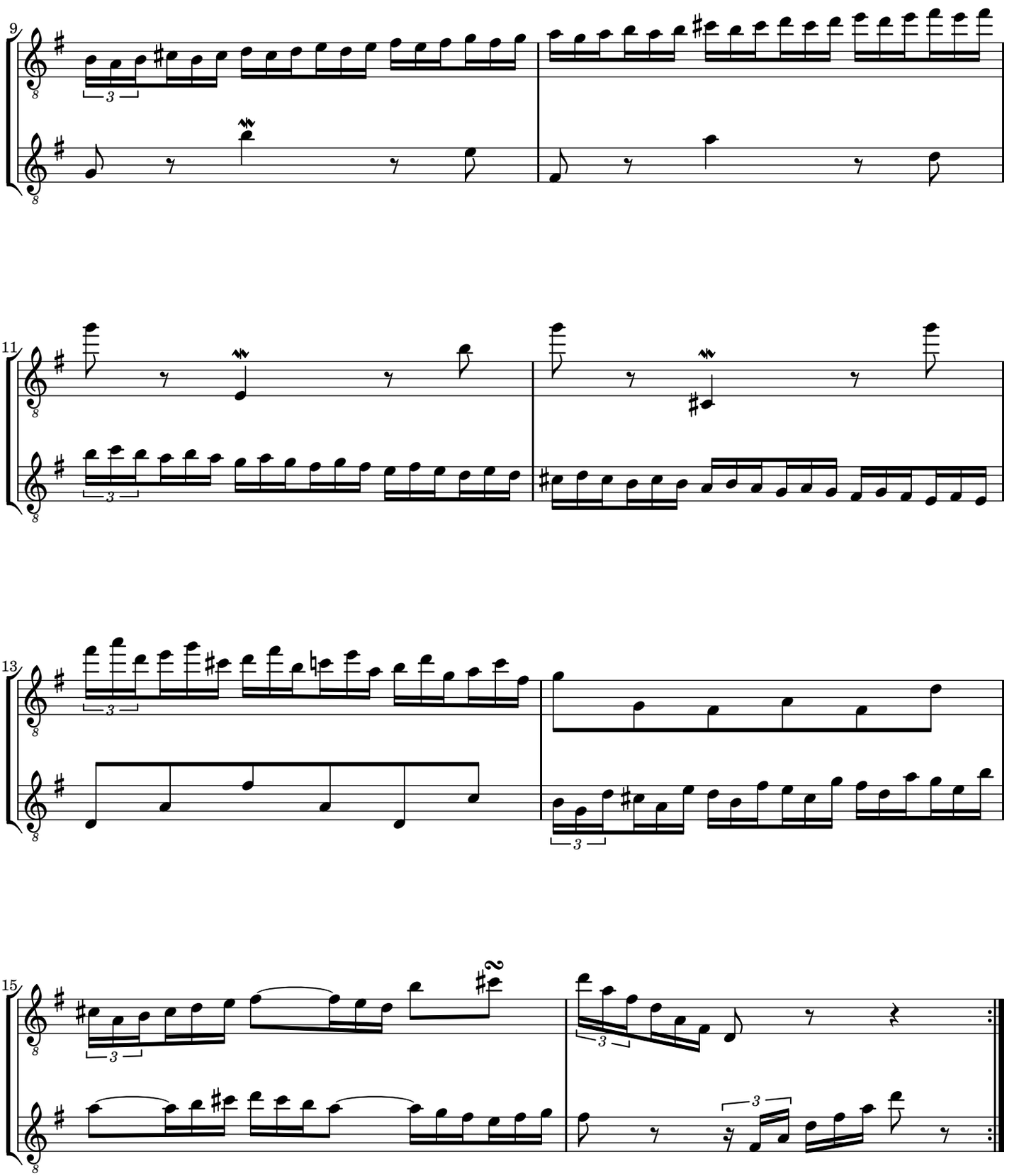


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

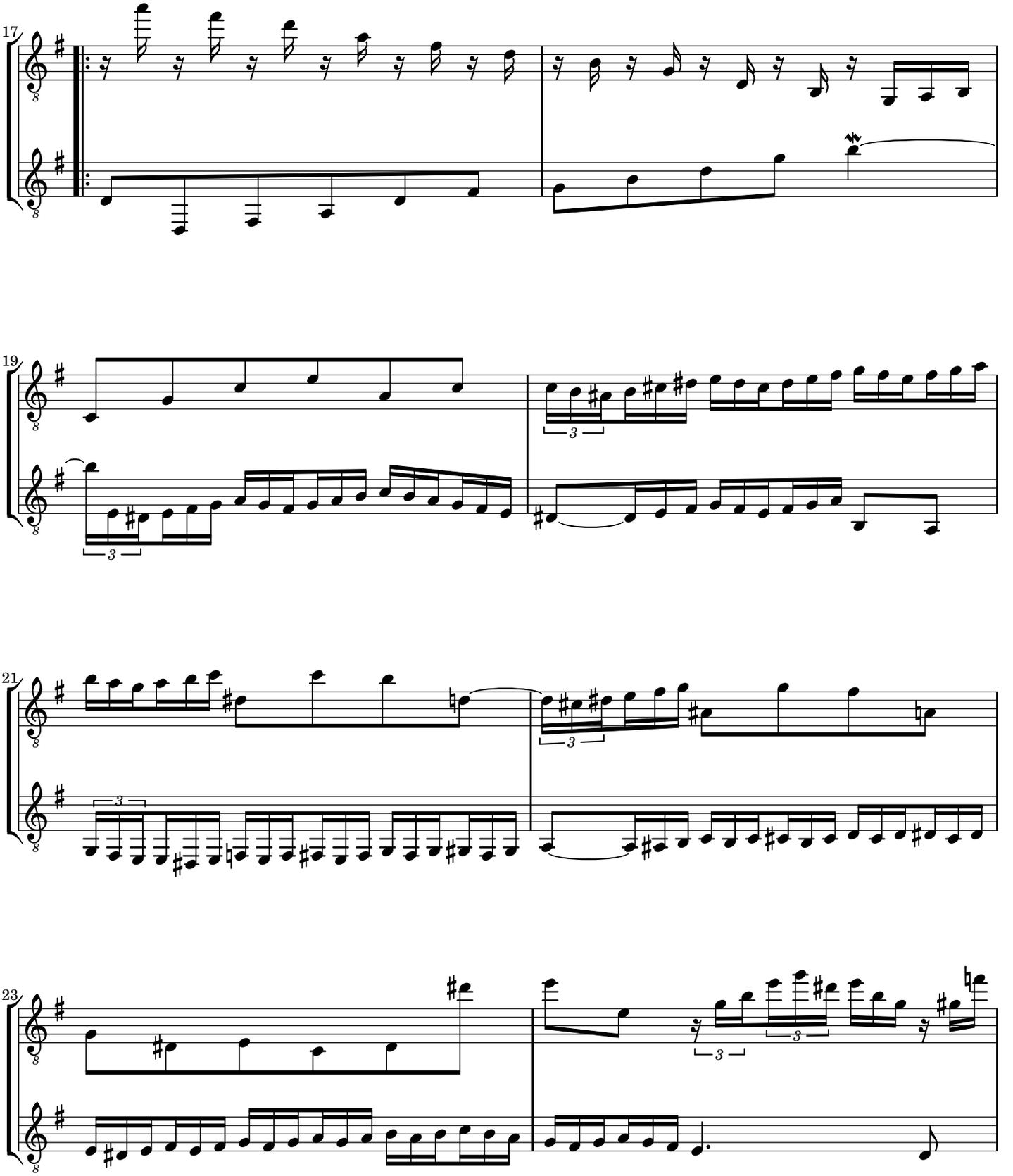
Variation 20



Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA



Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA



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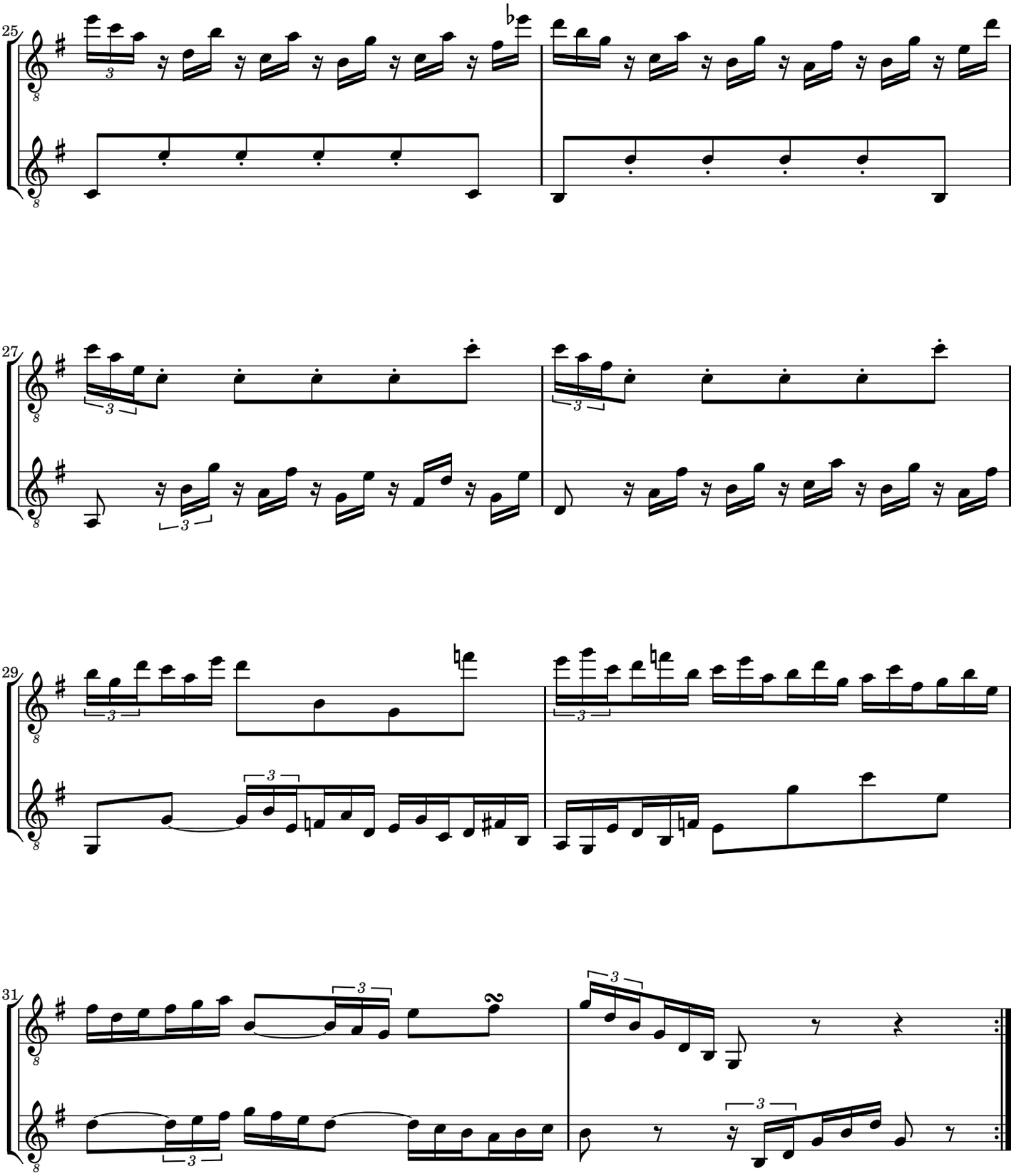
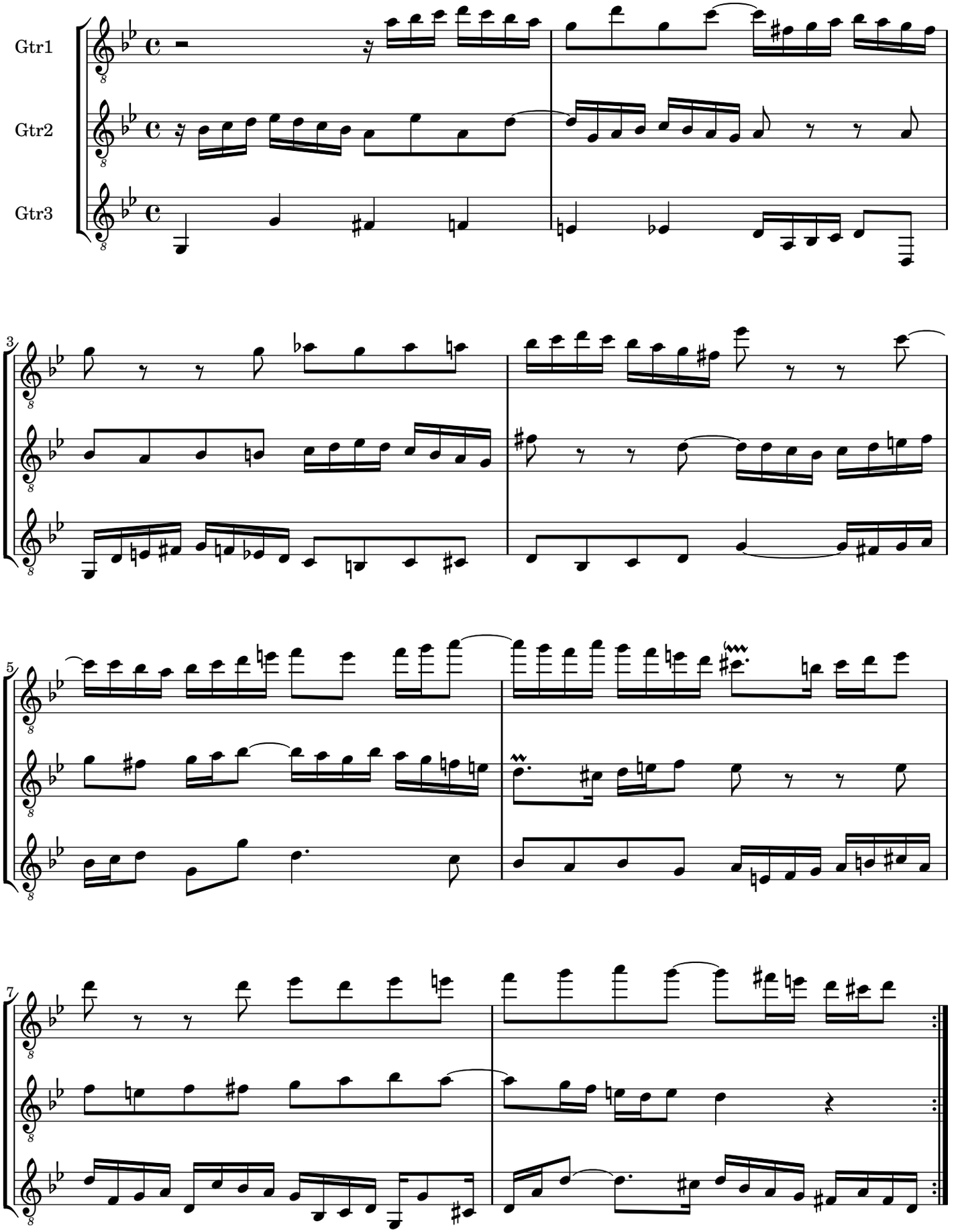


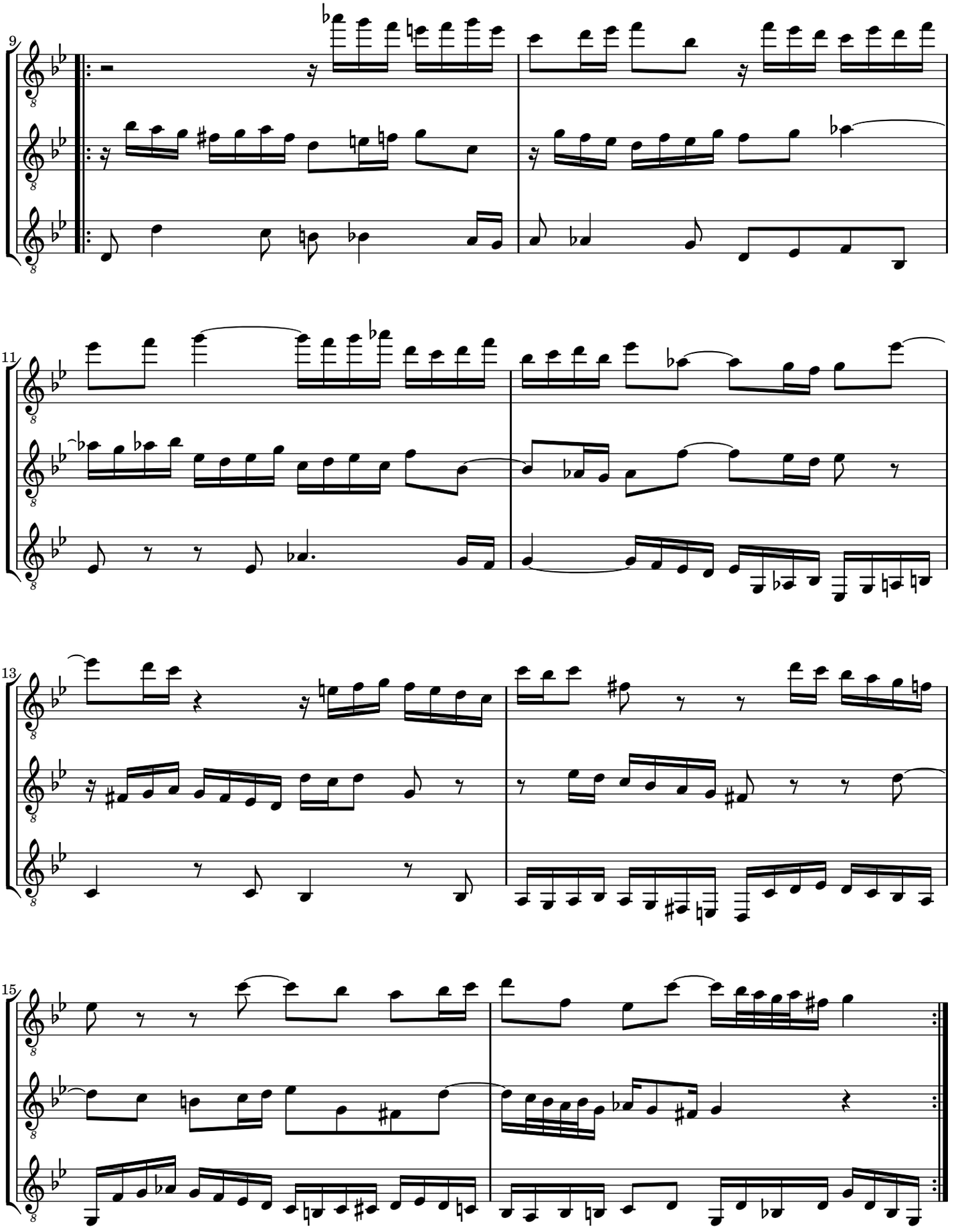
Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 21

Canon at the Seventh

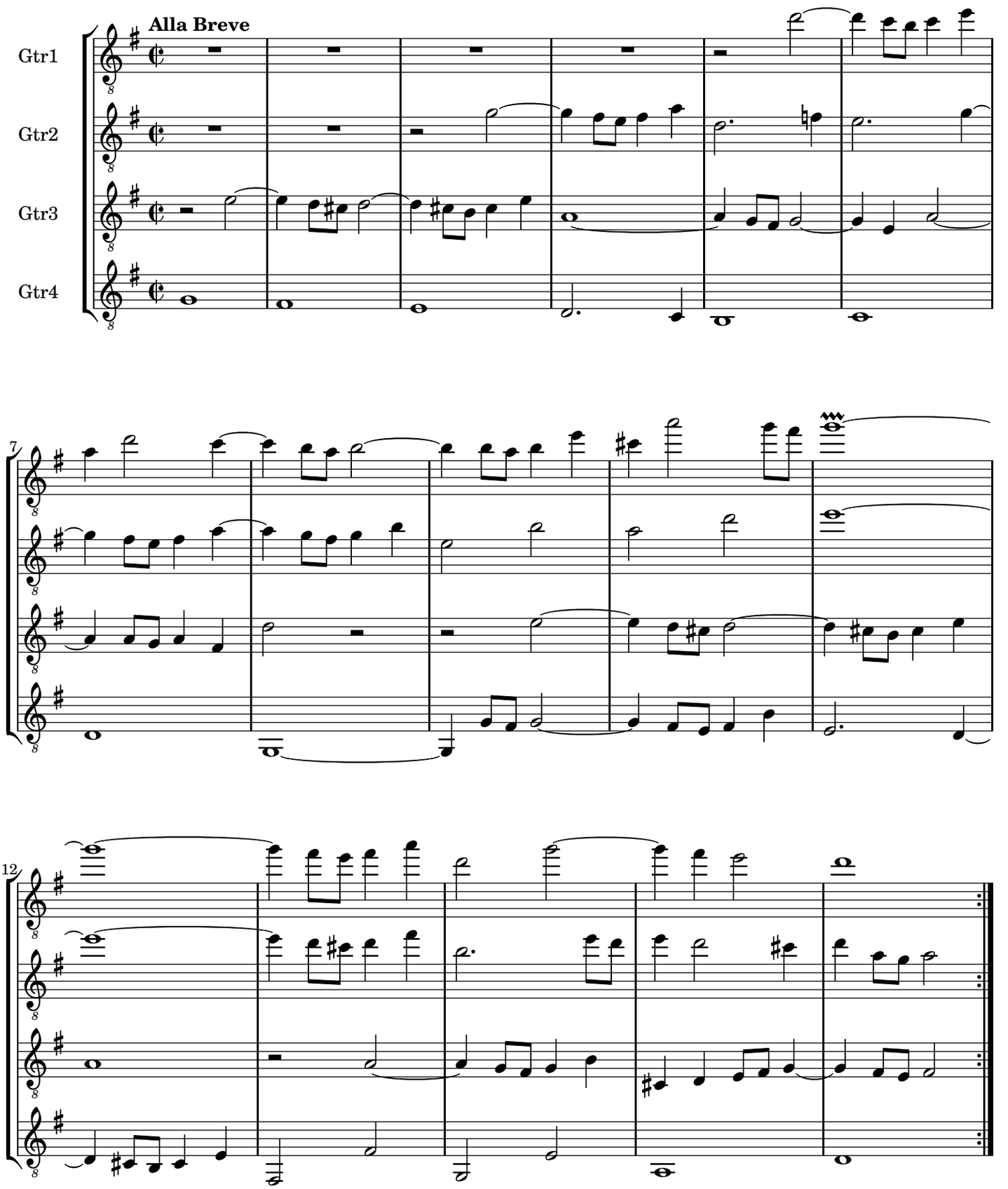


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA



Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 22



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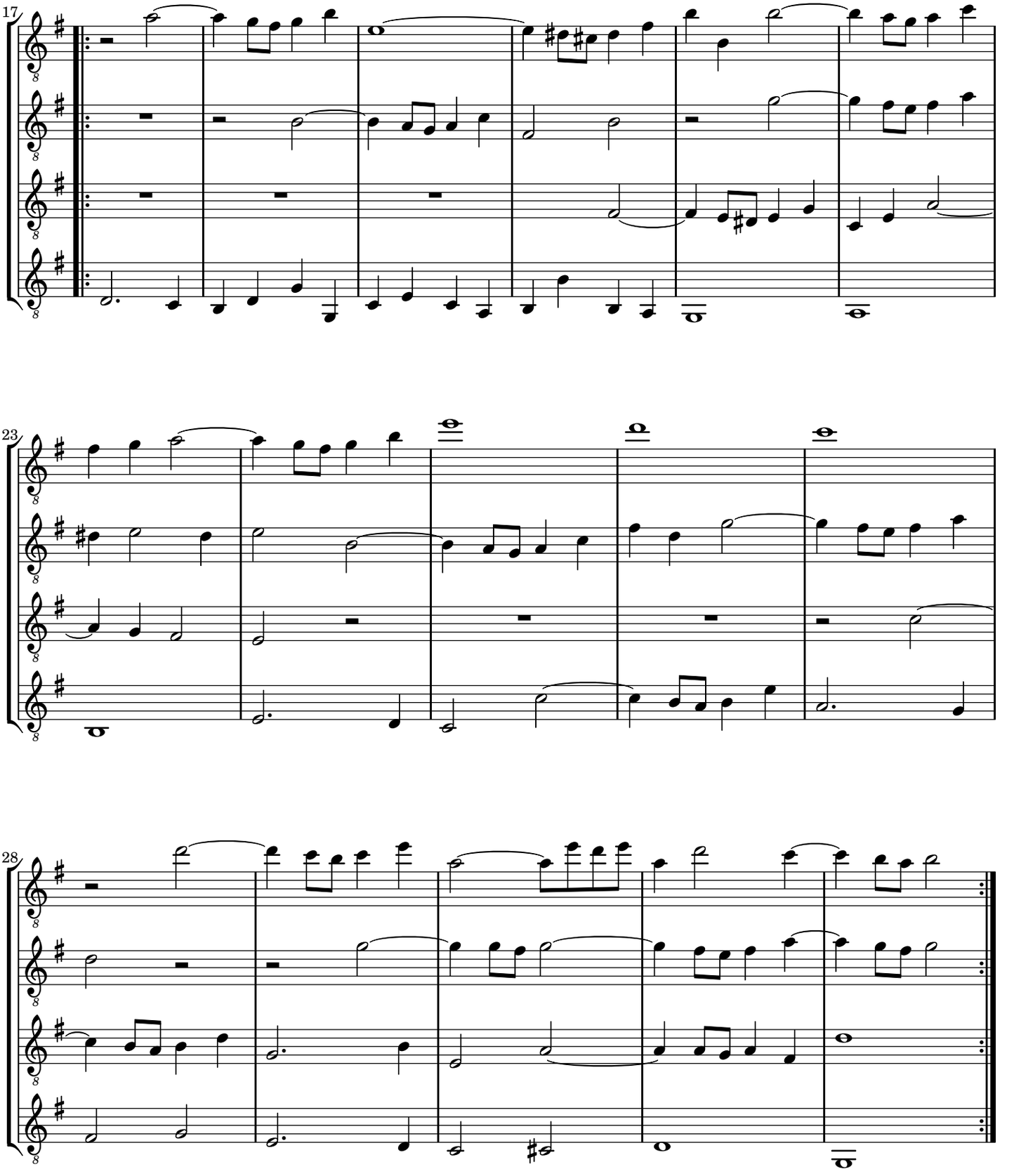
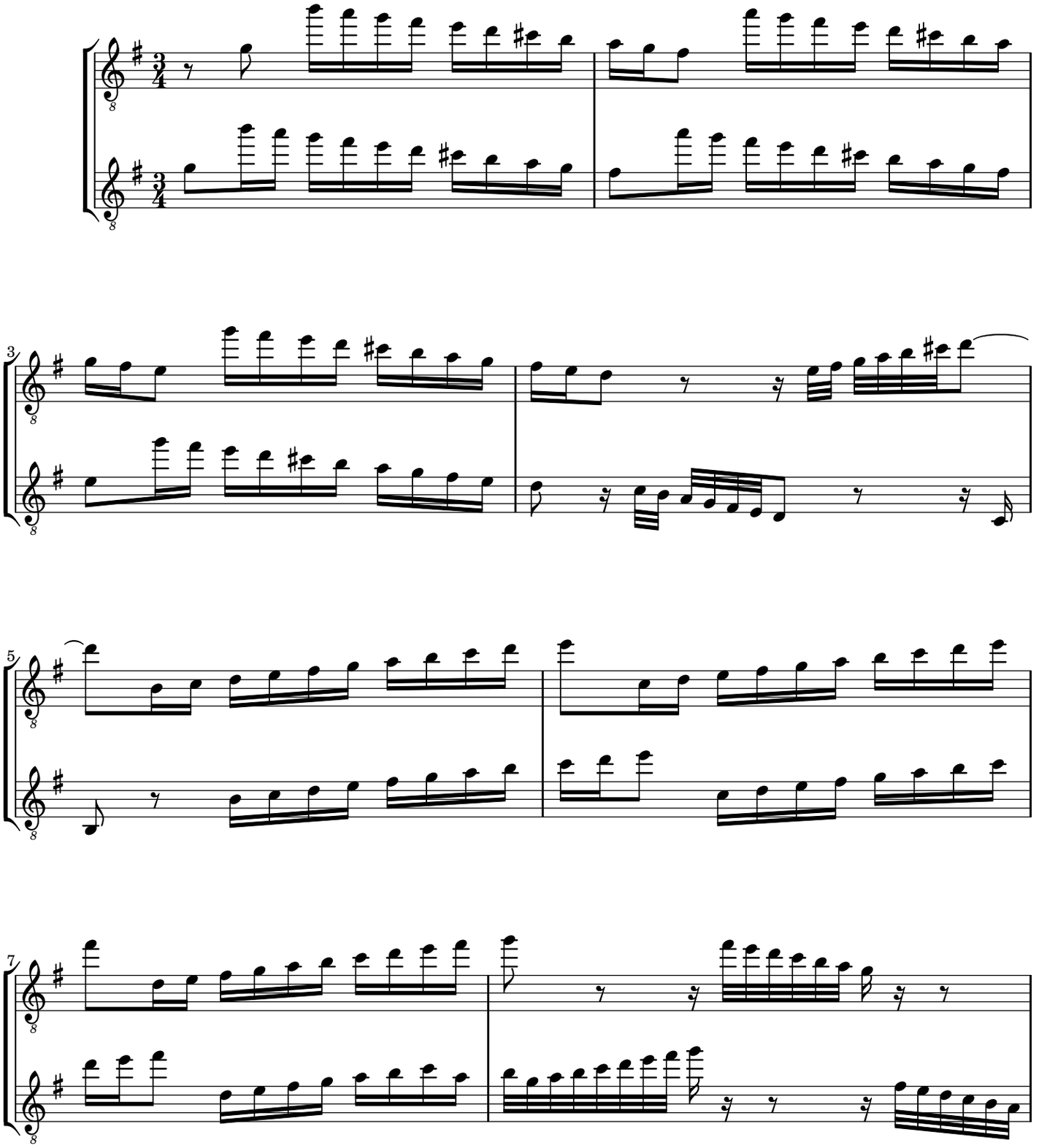


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 23



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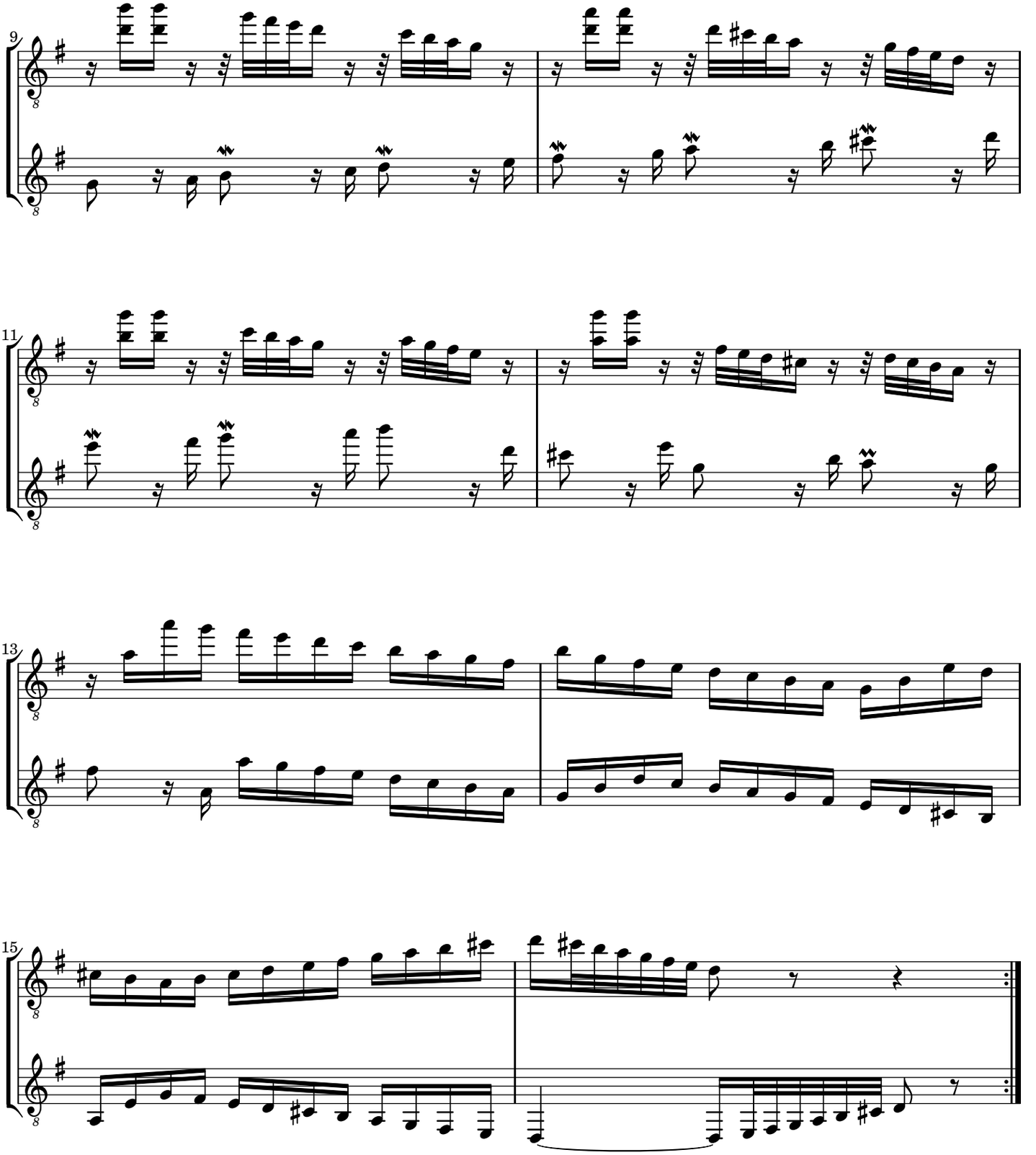

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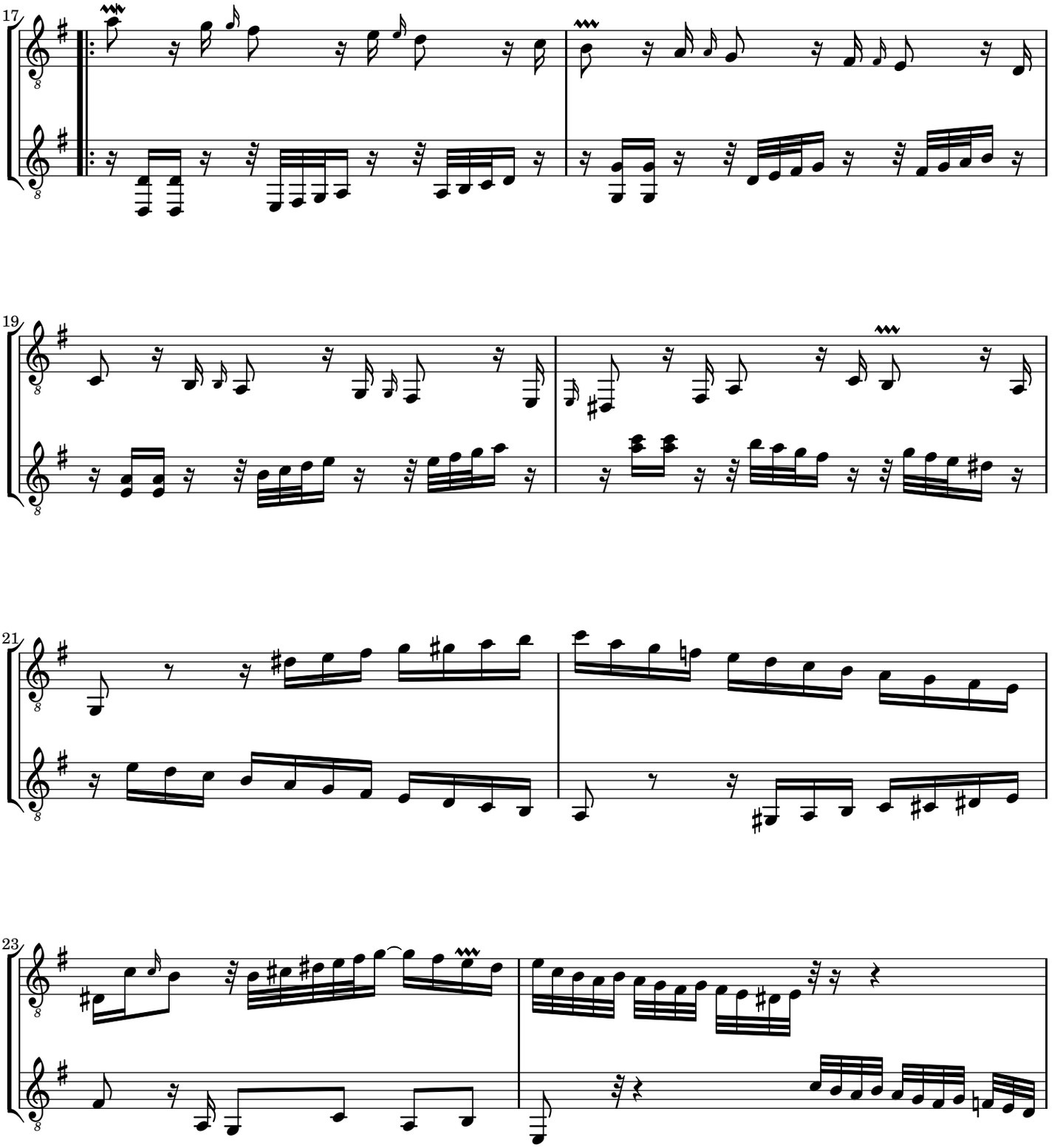

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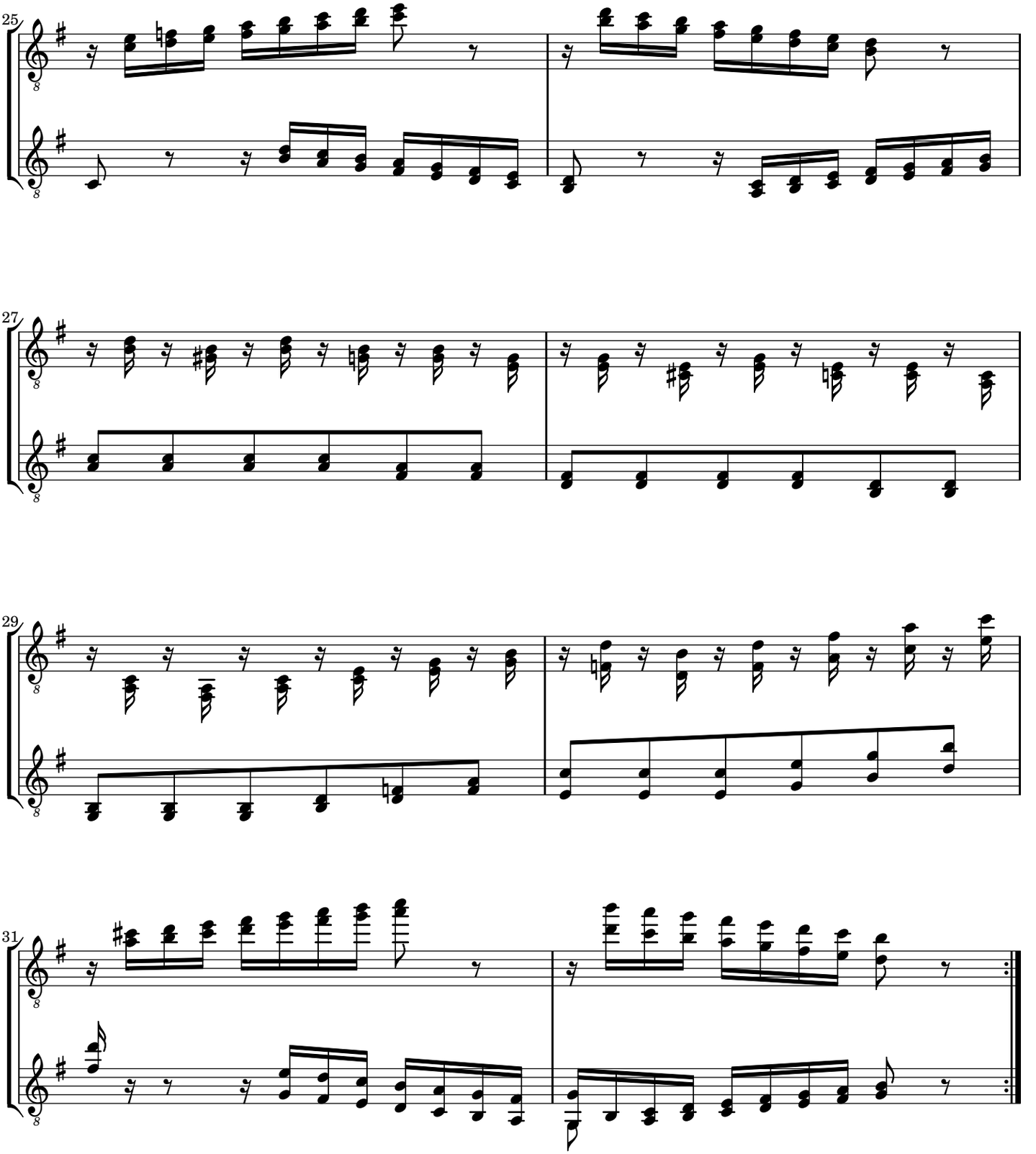
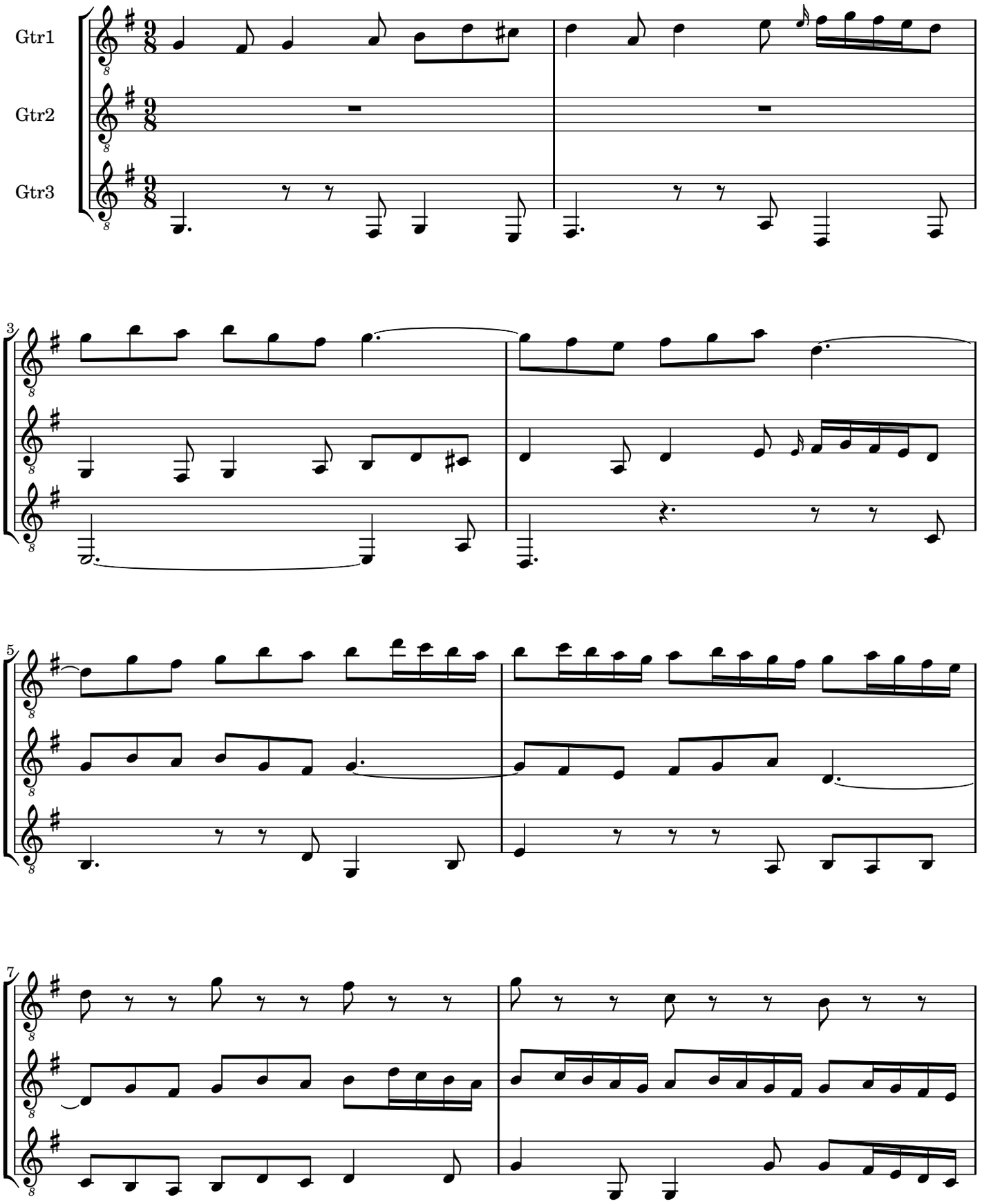


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 24

Canon at the Octave



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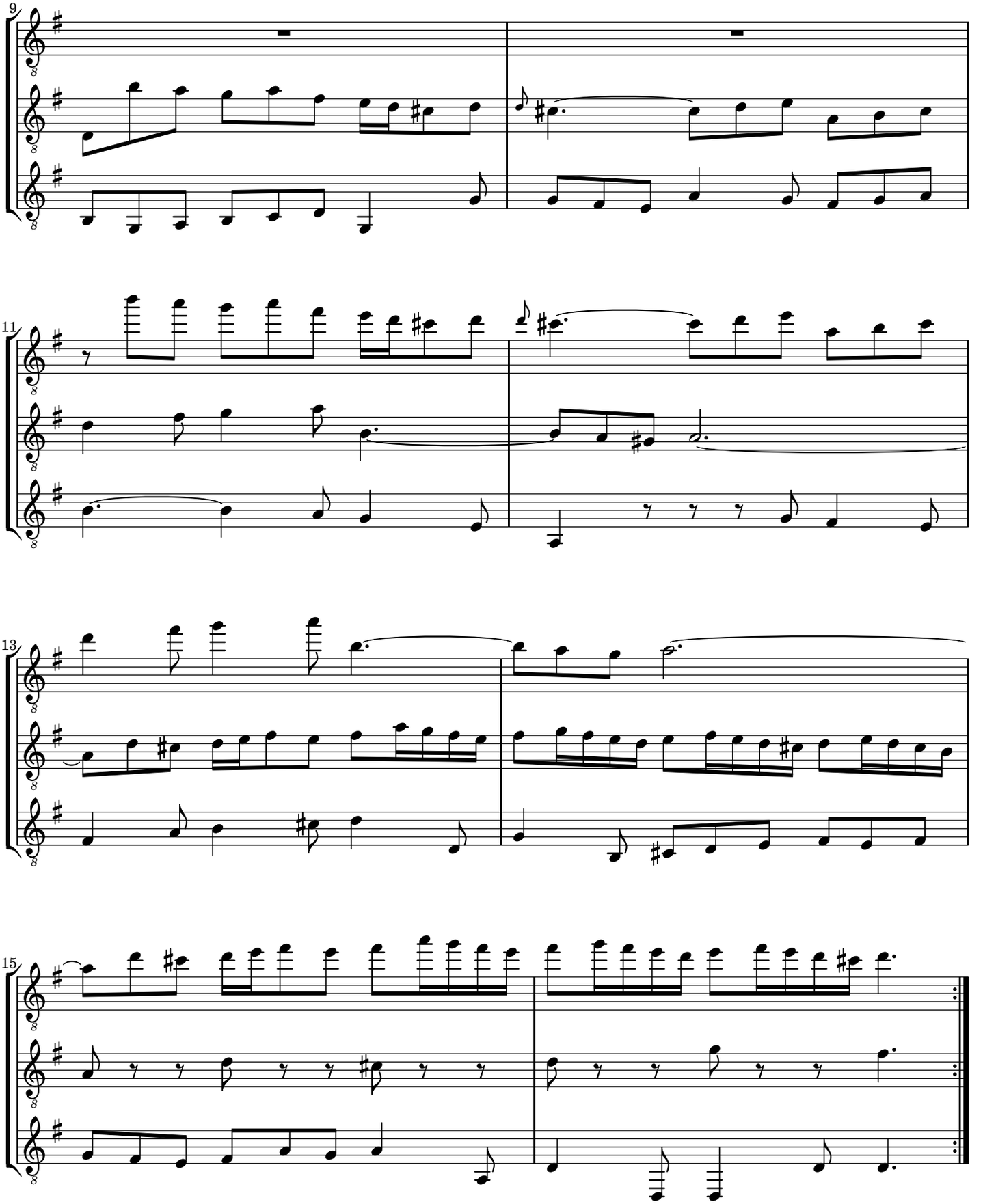

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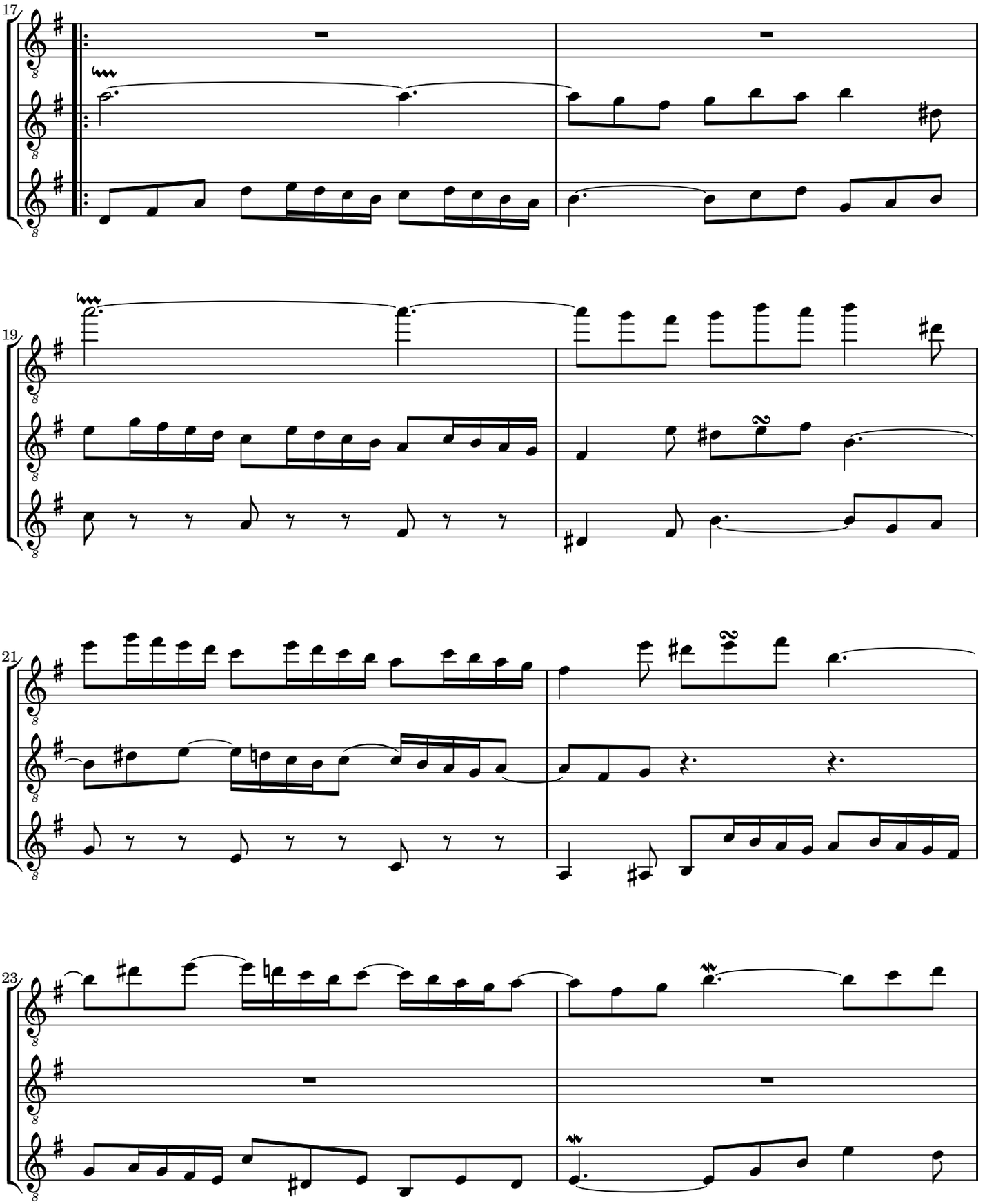

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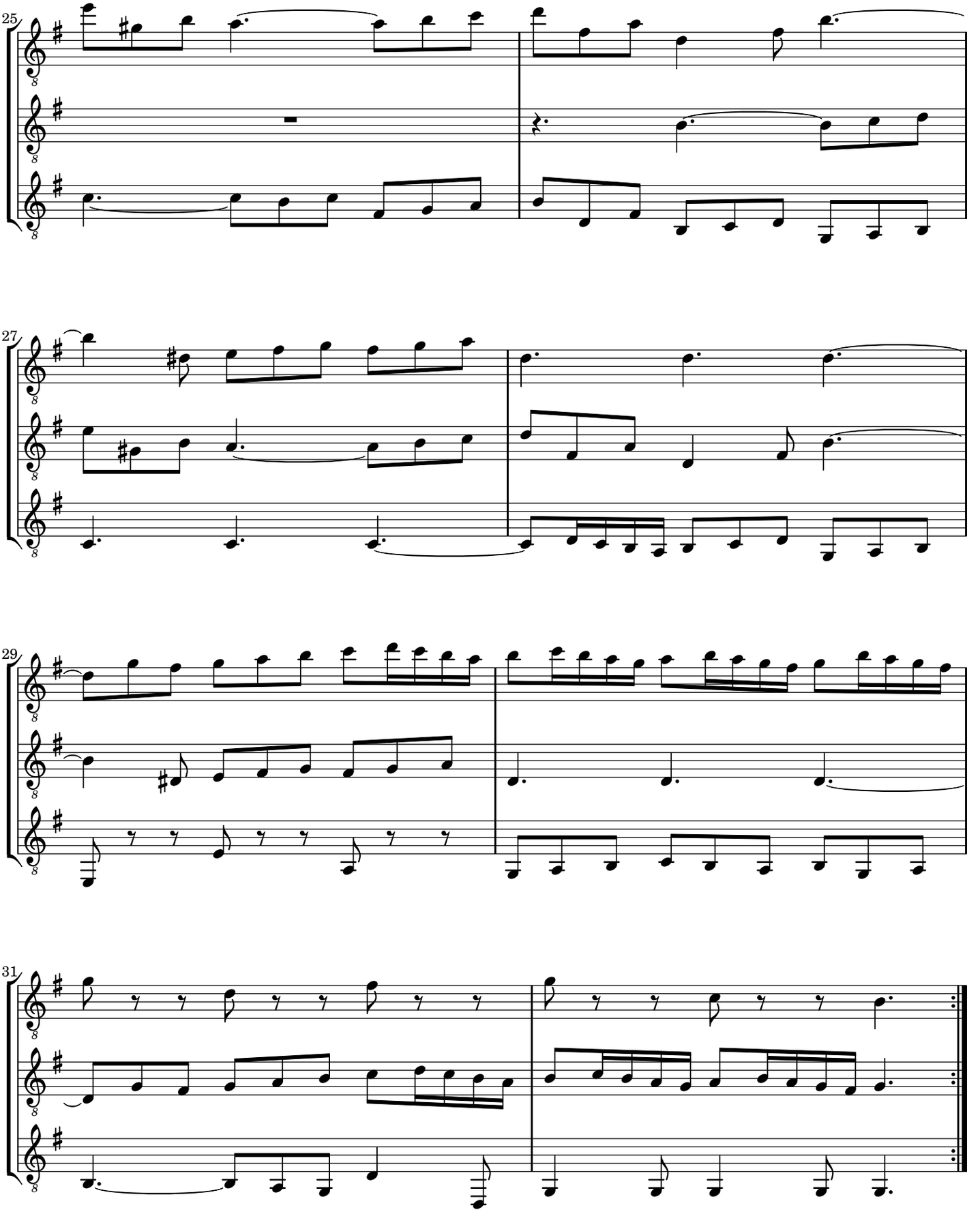
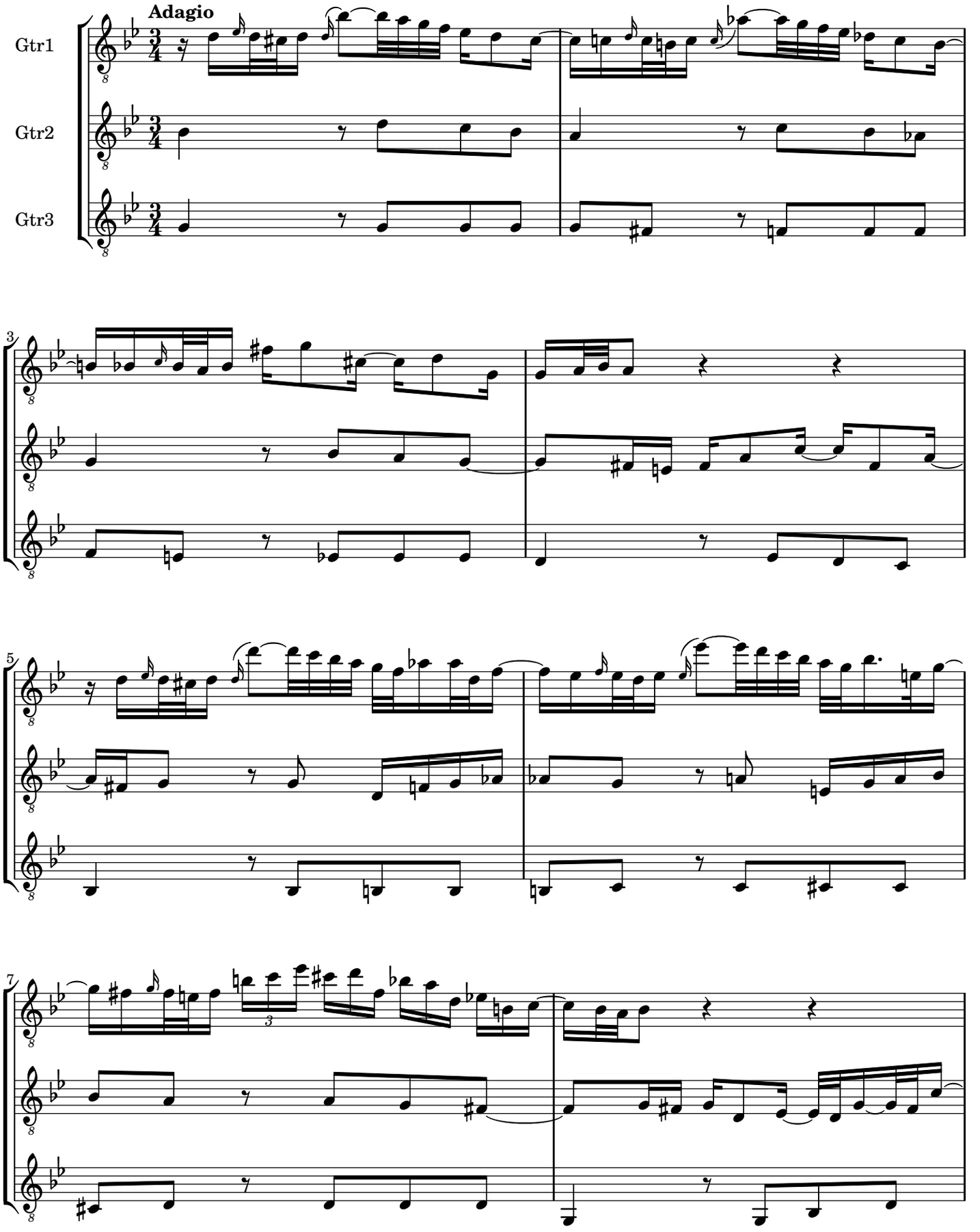


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 25



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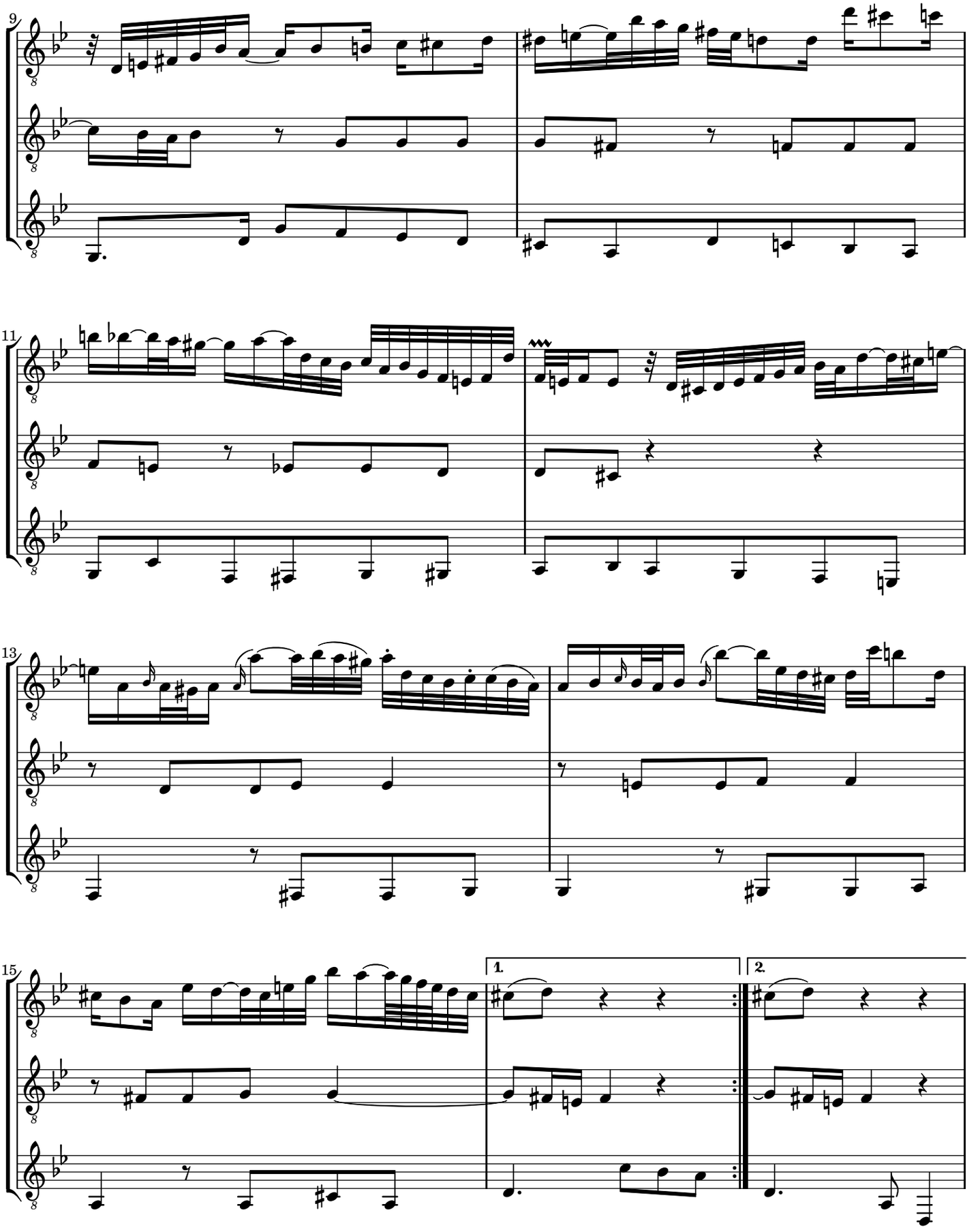

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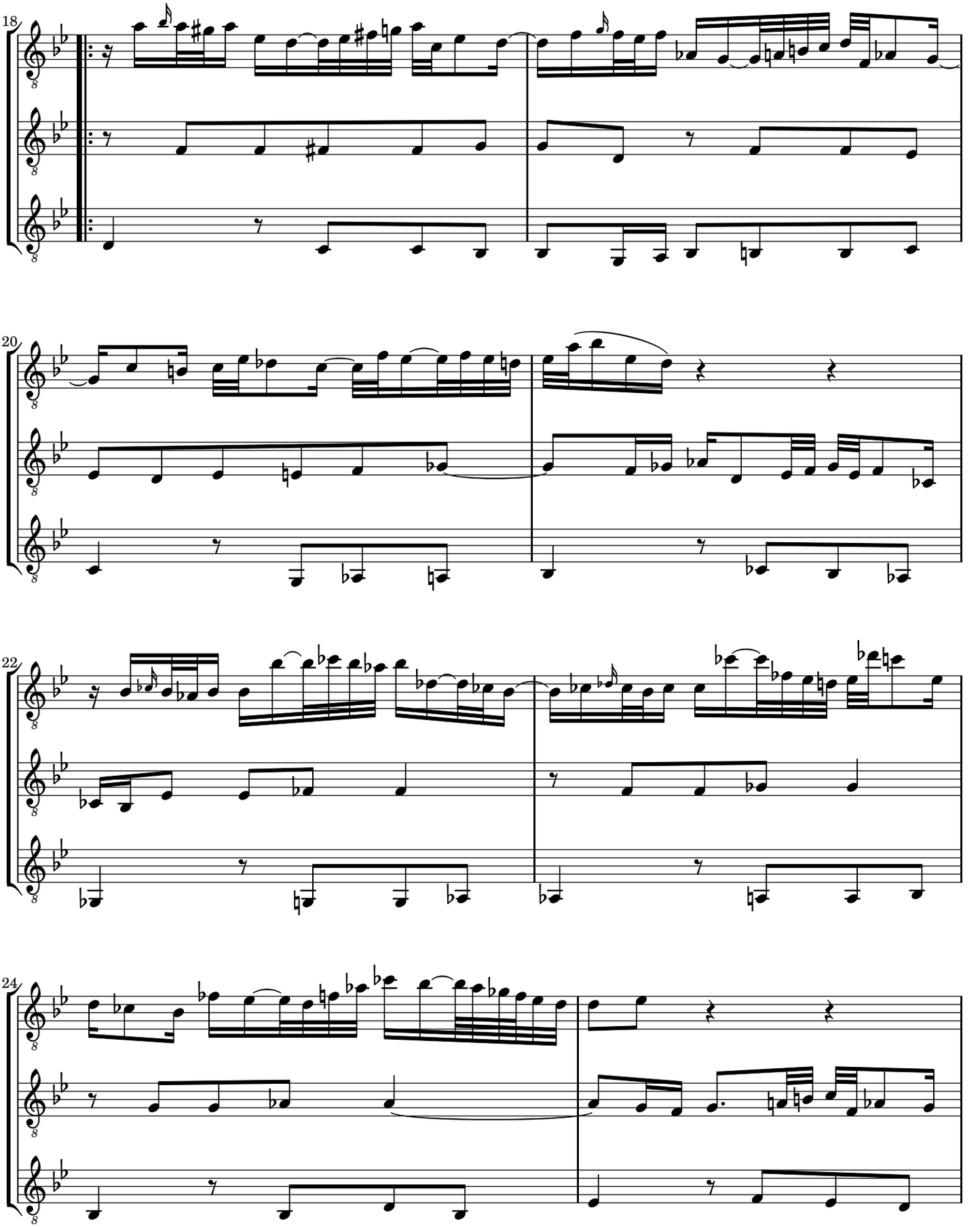

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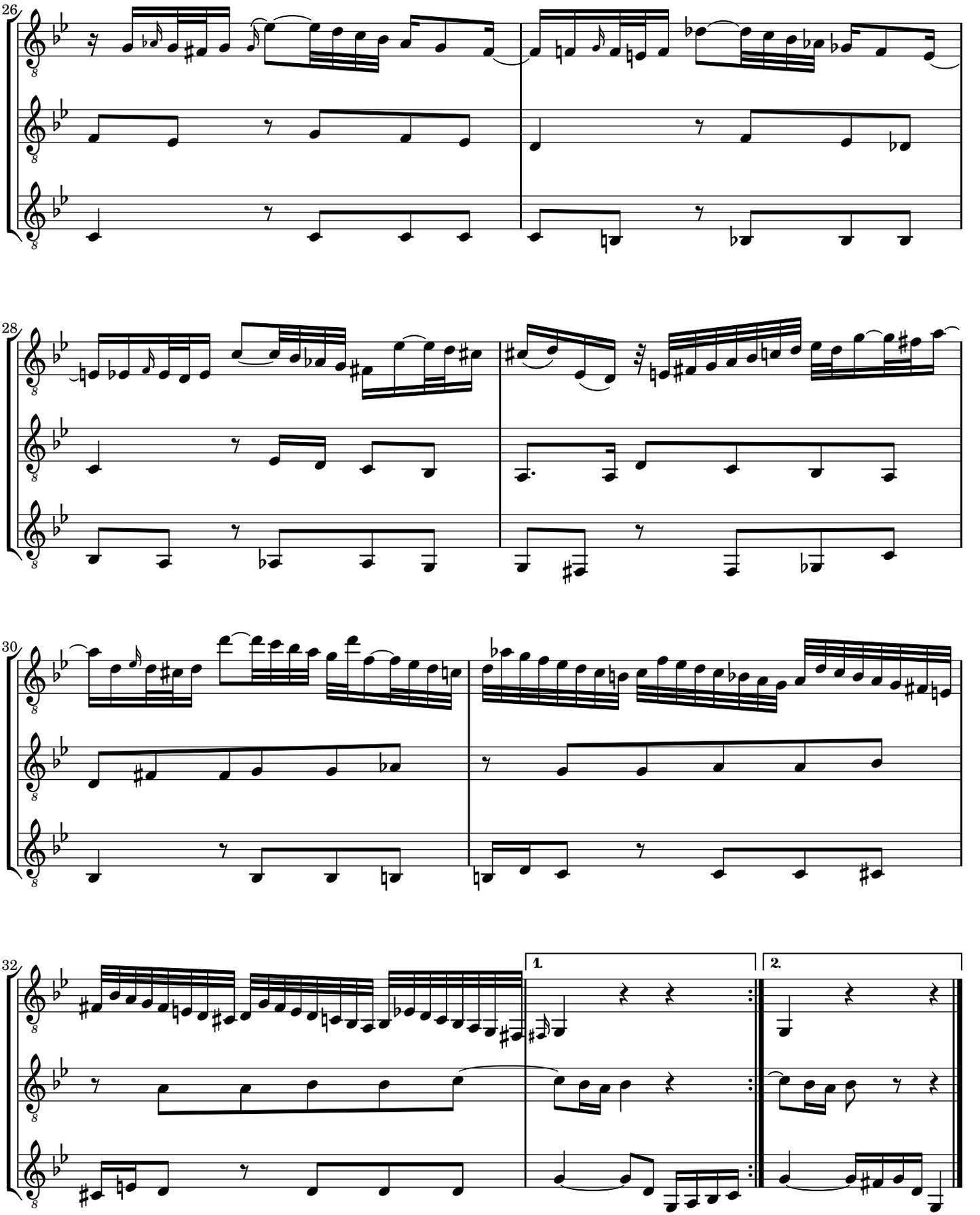
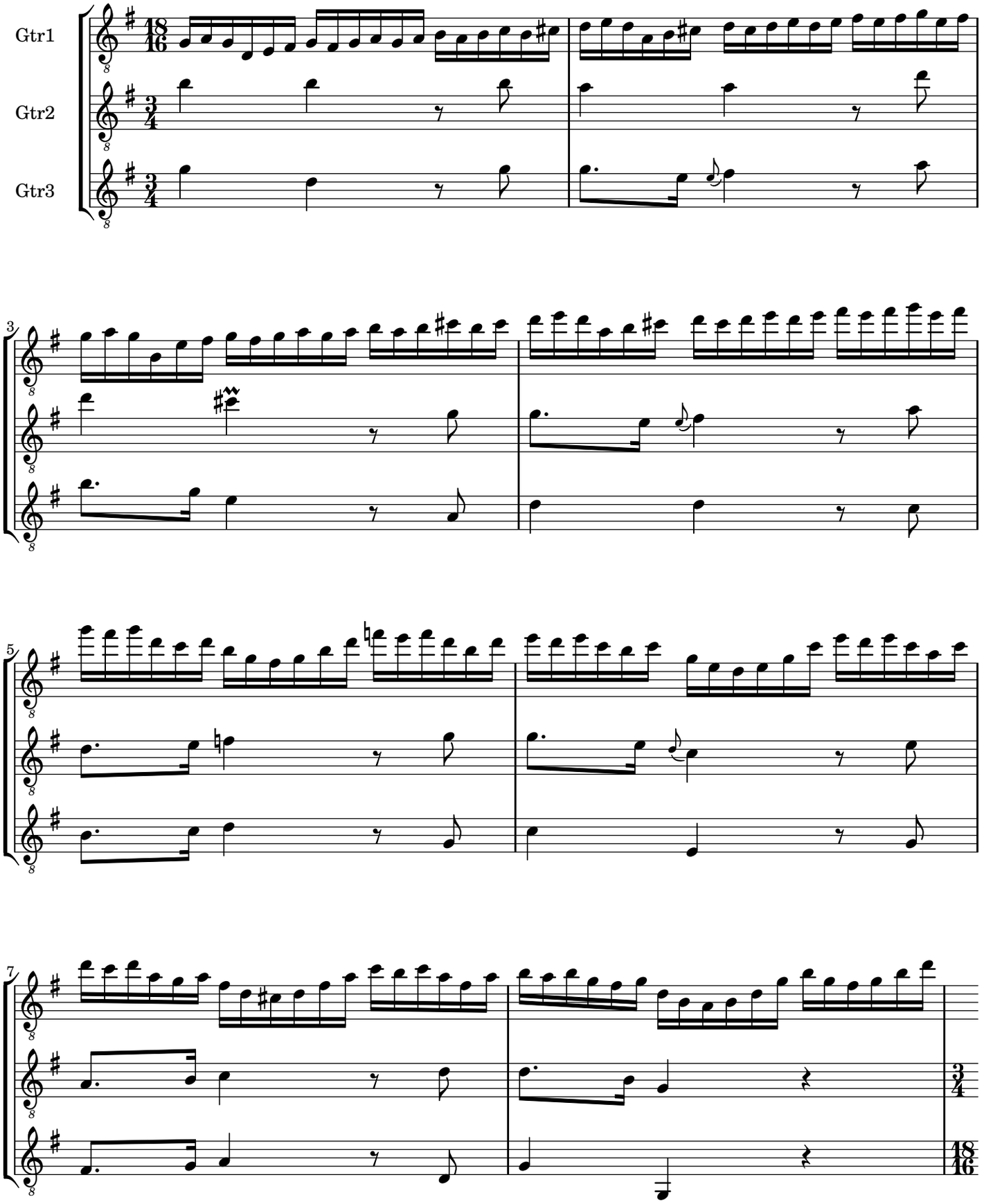


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 26



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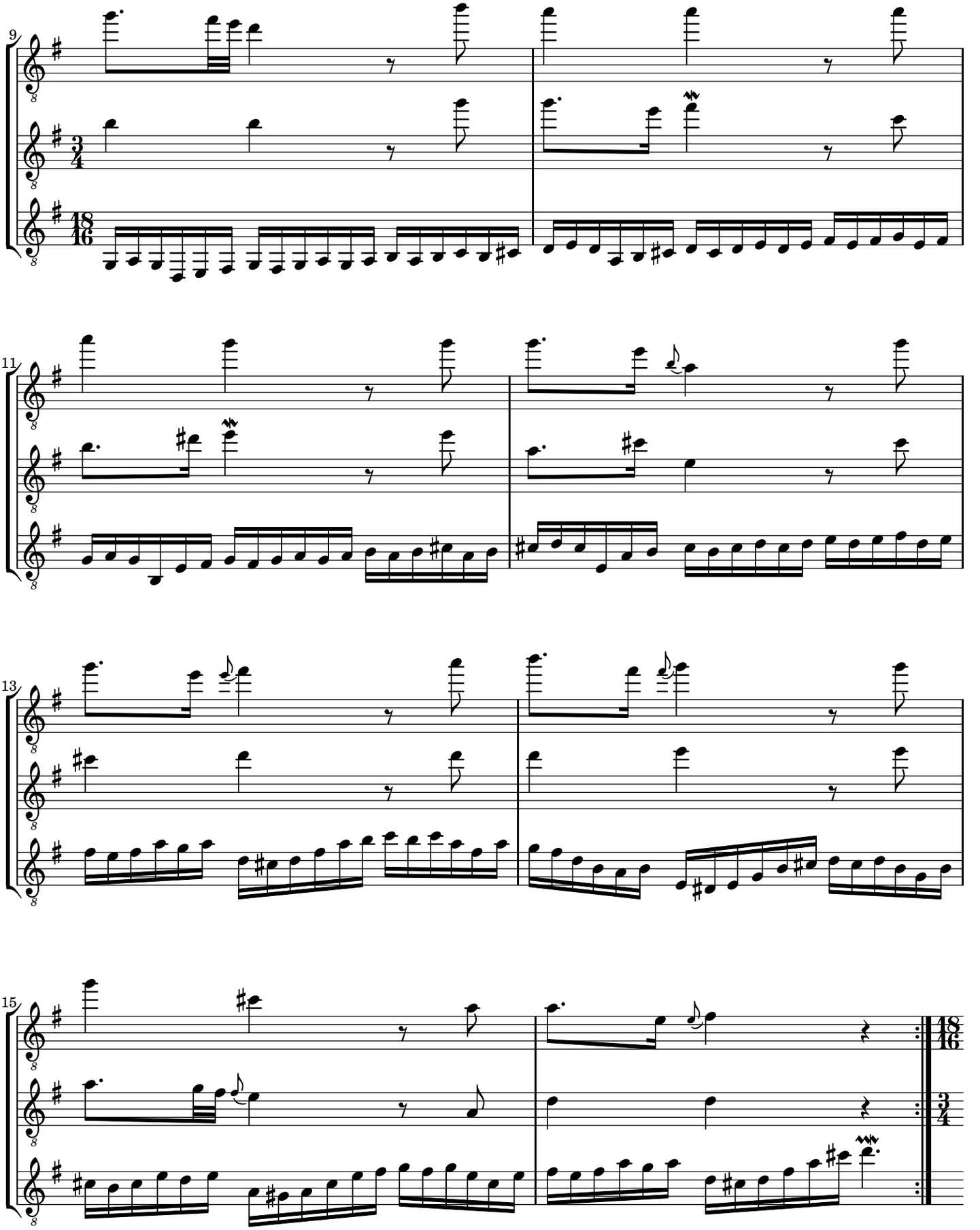

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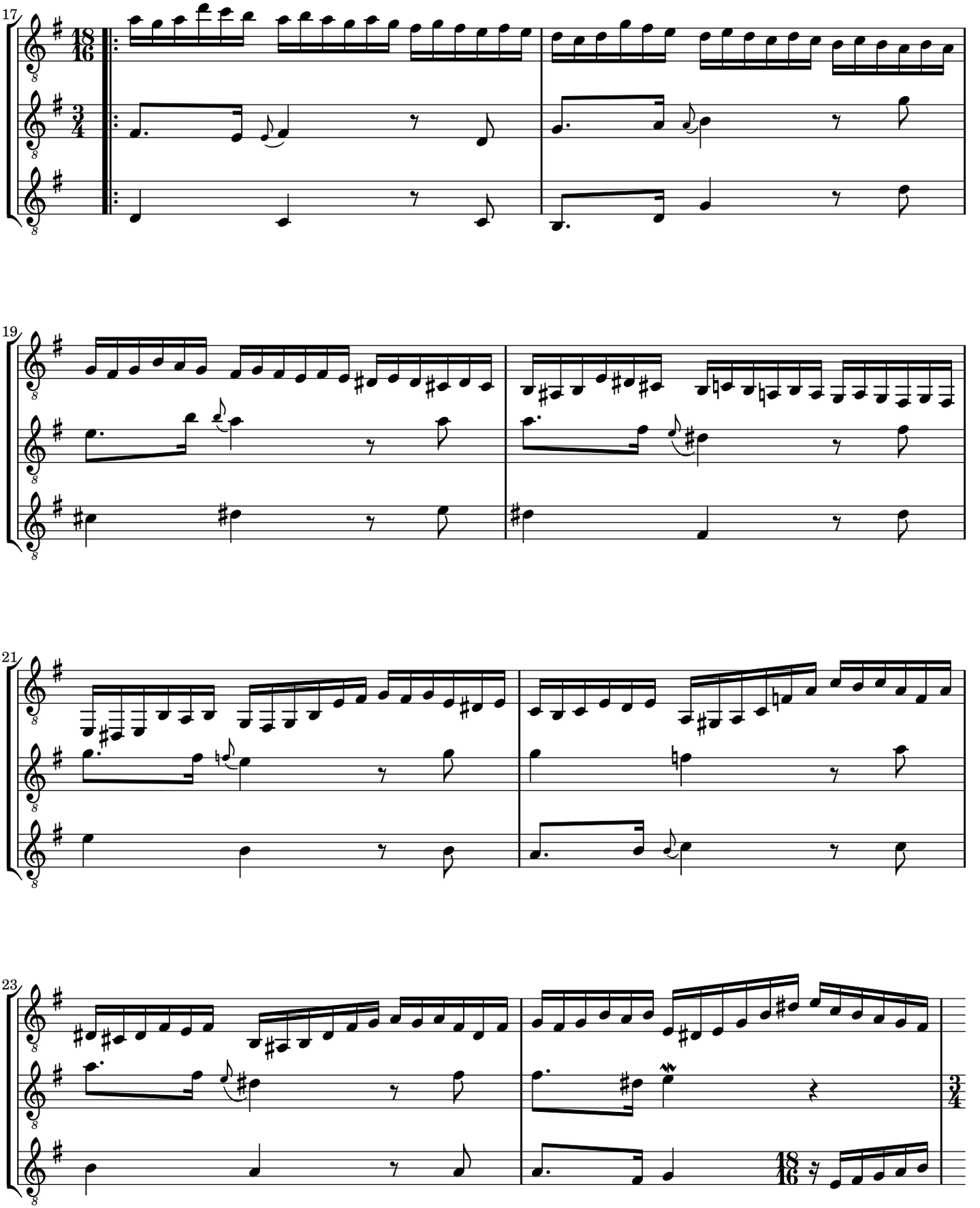

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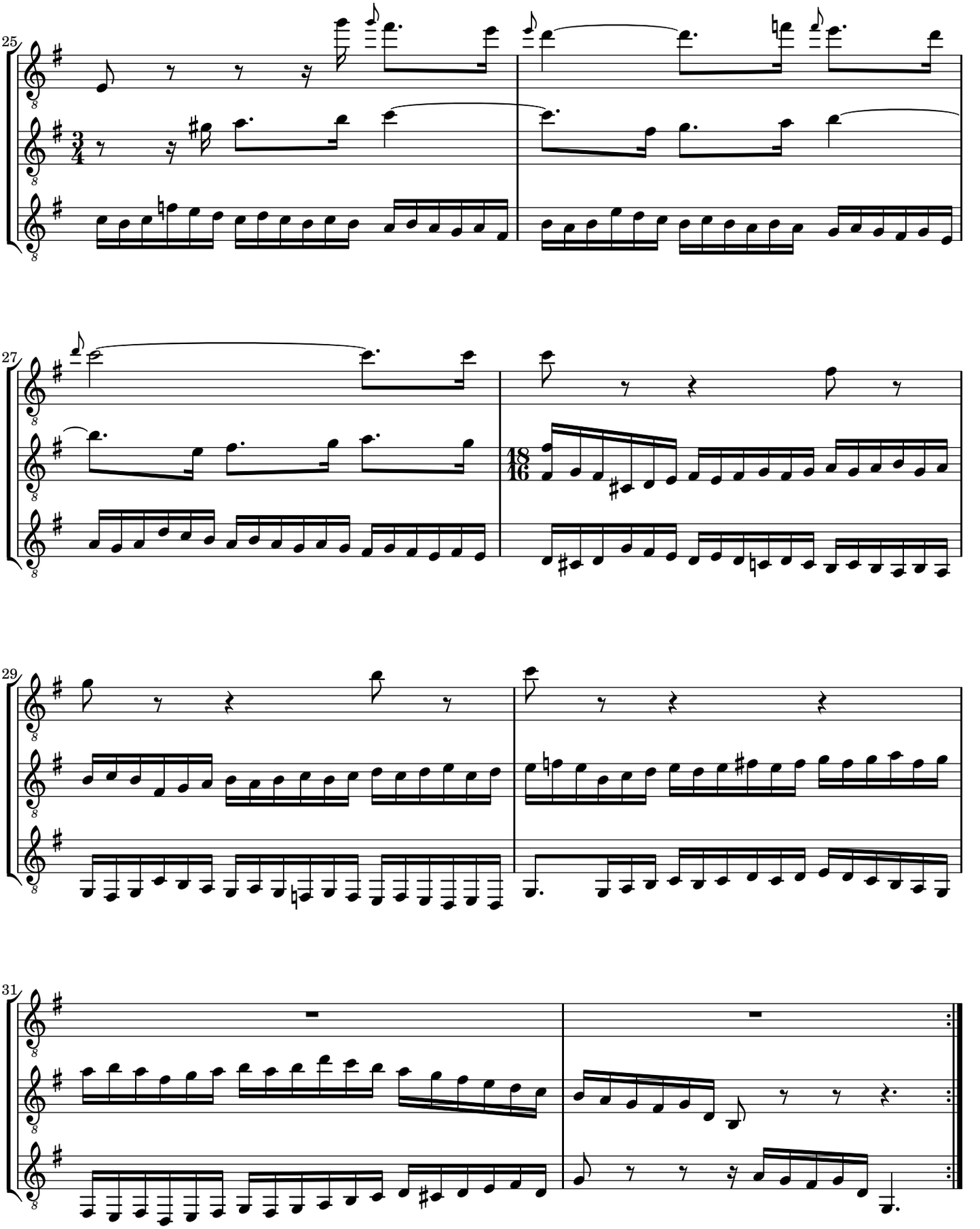
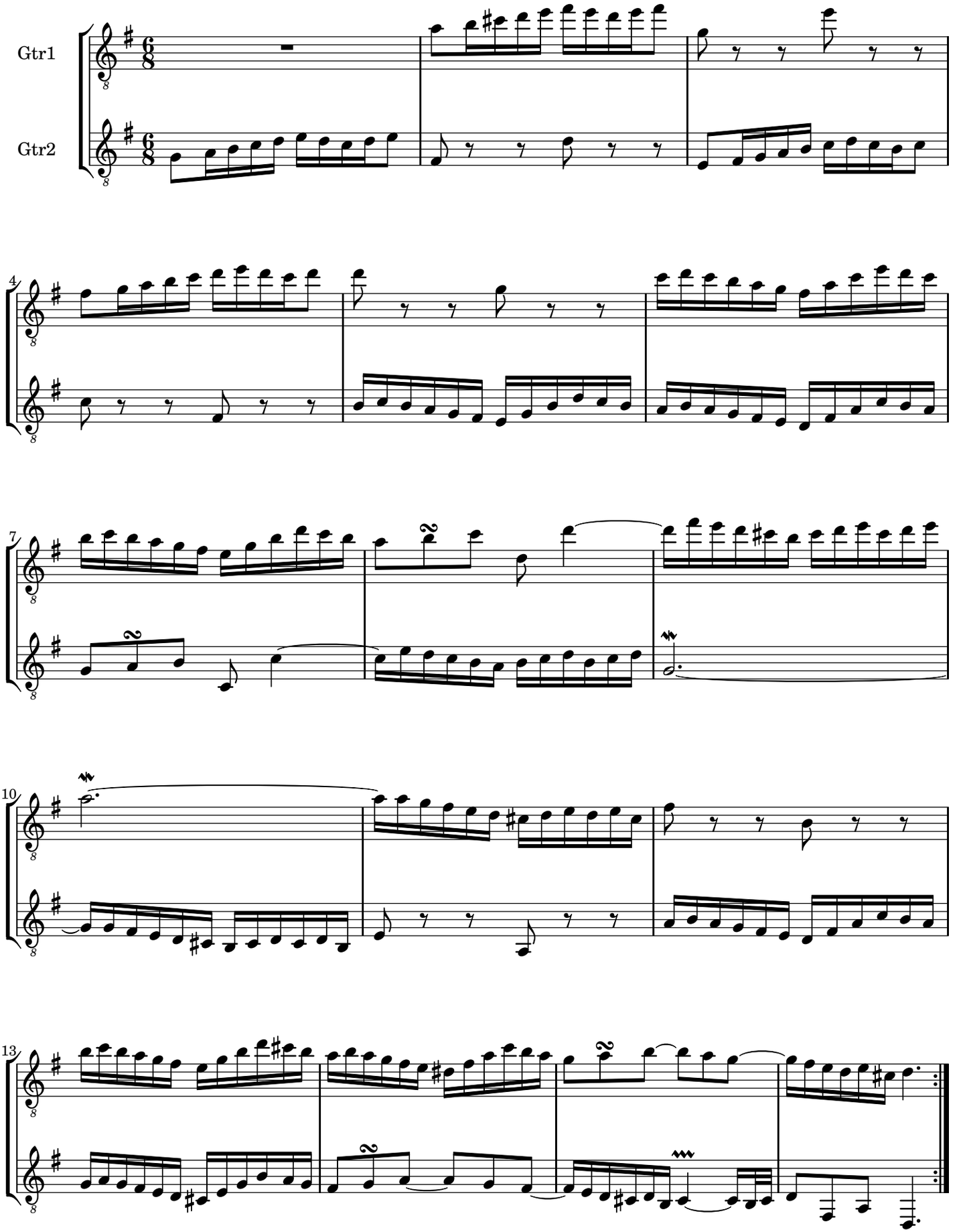


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 27

Canon at the Ninth



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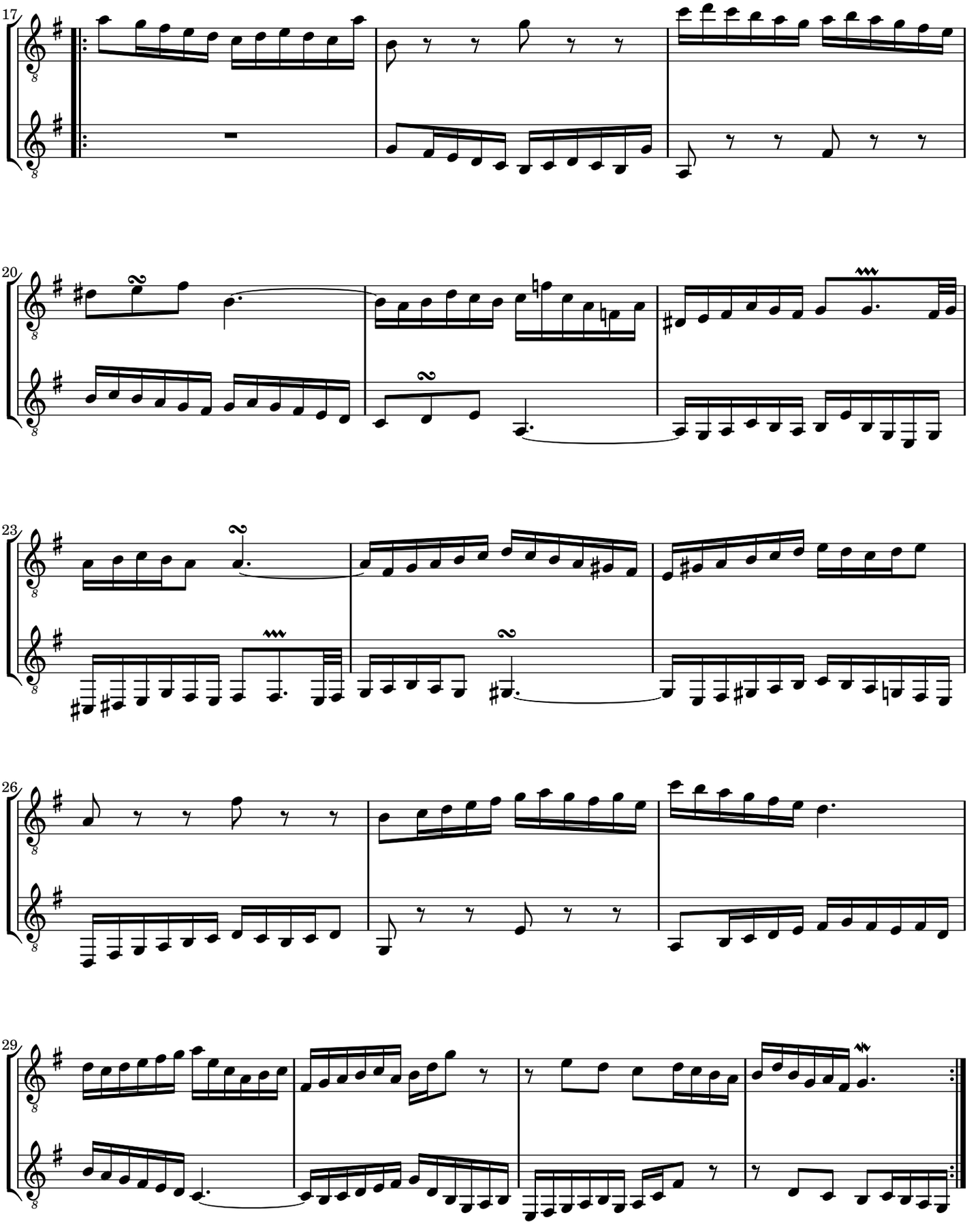
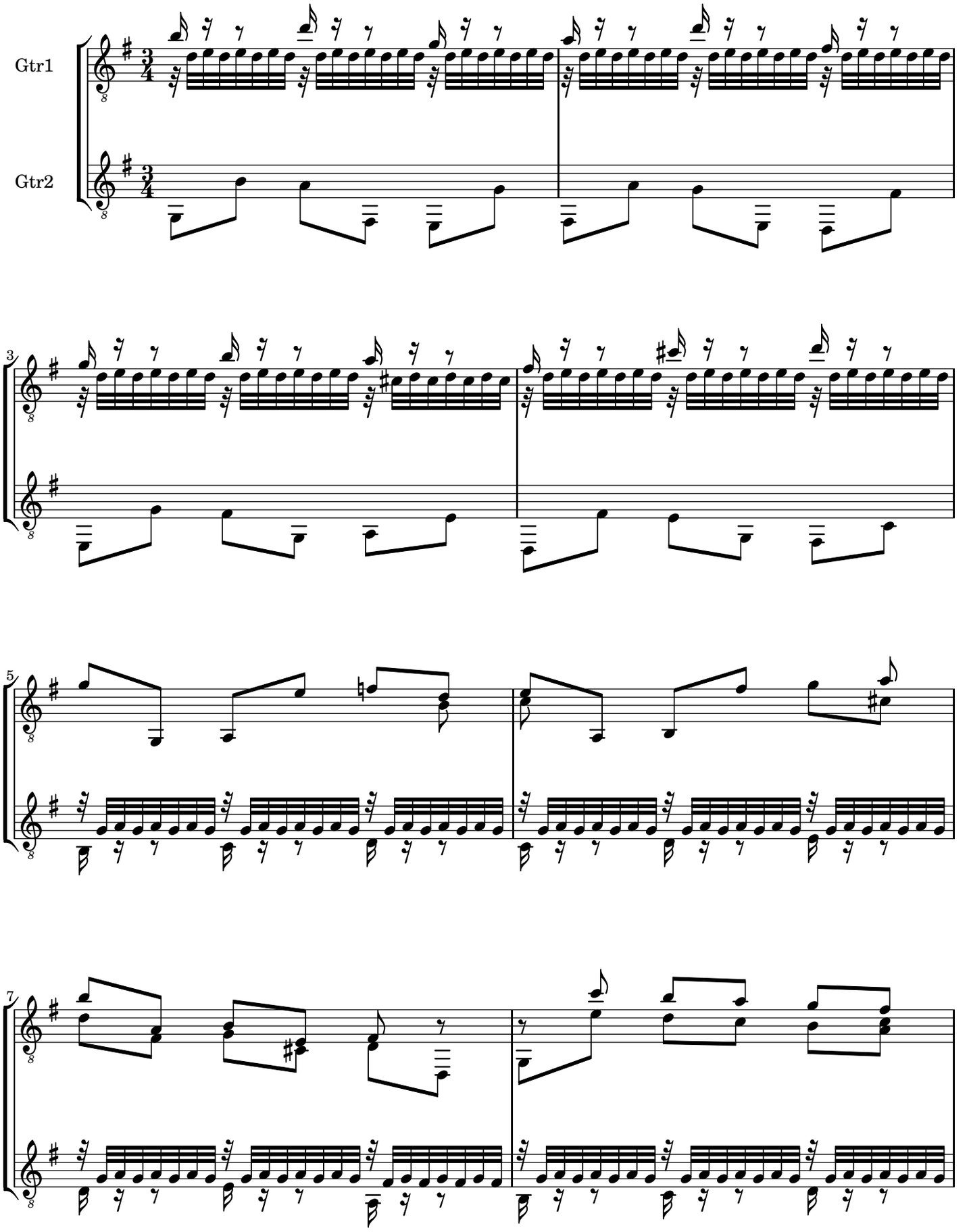


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 28



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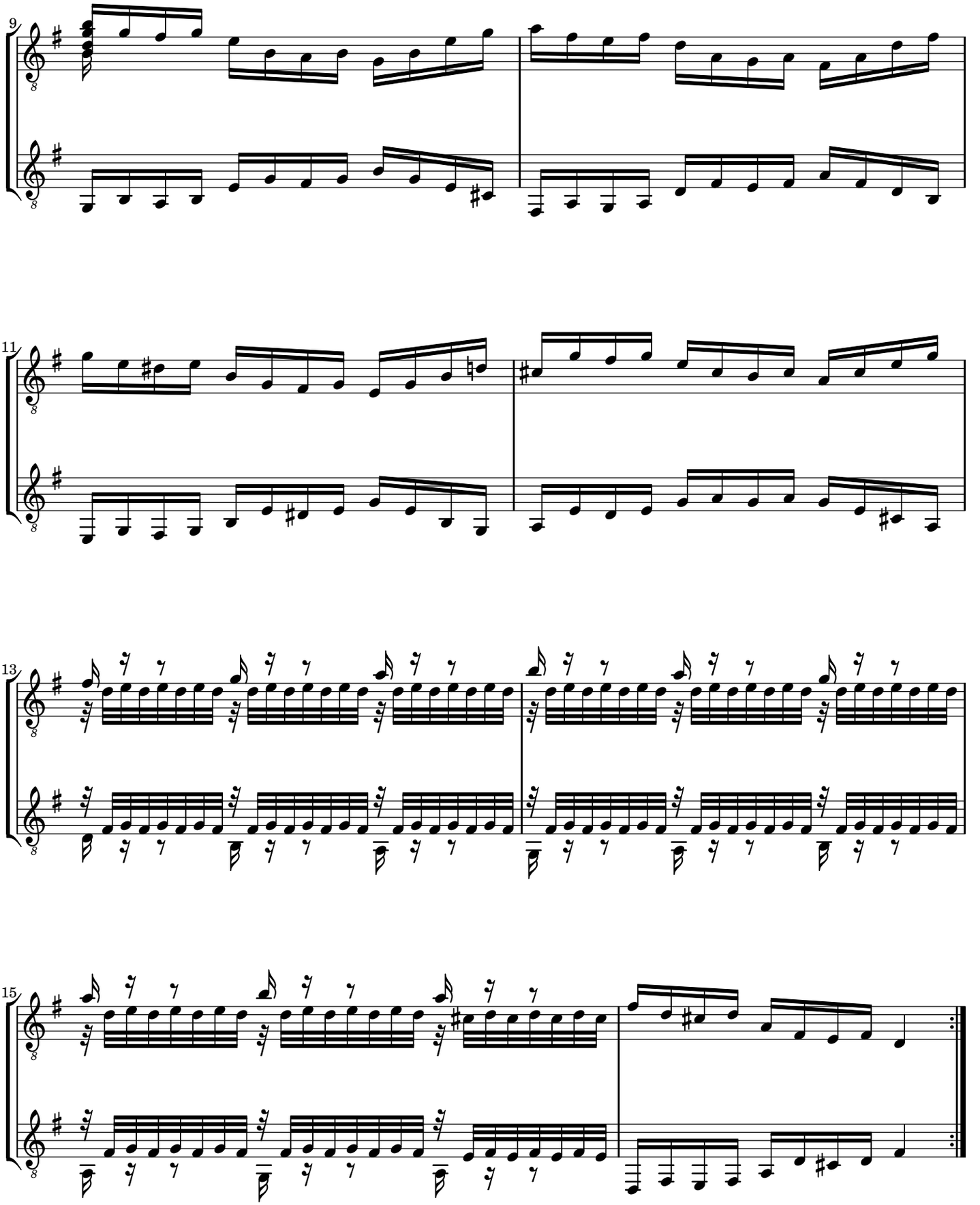

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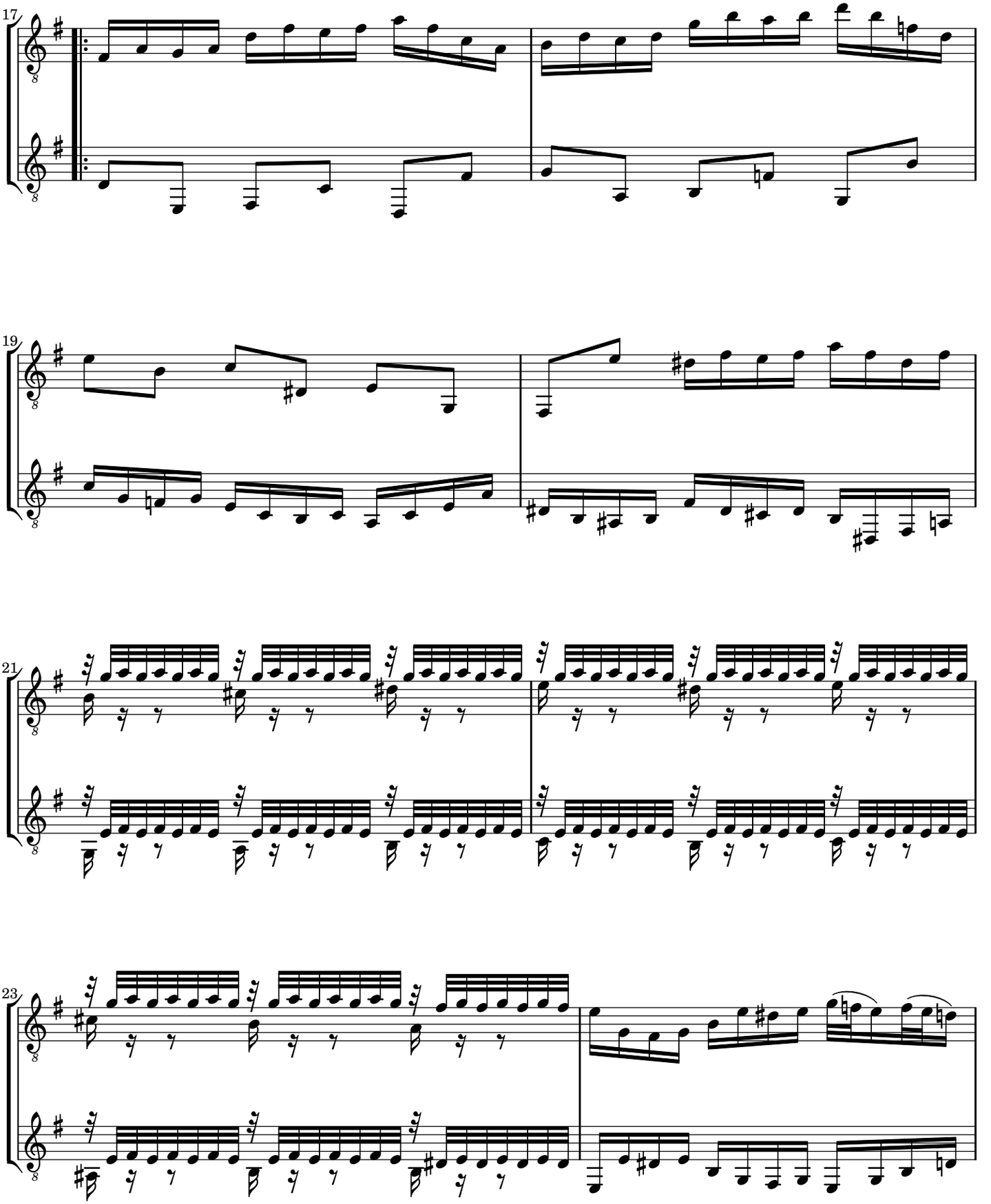

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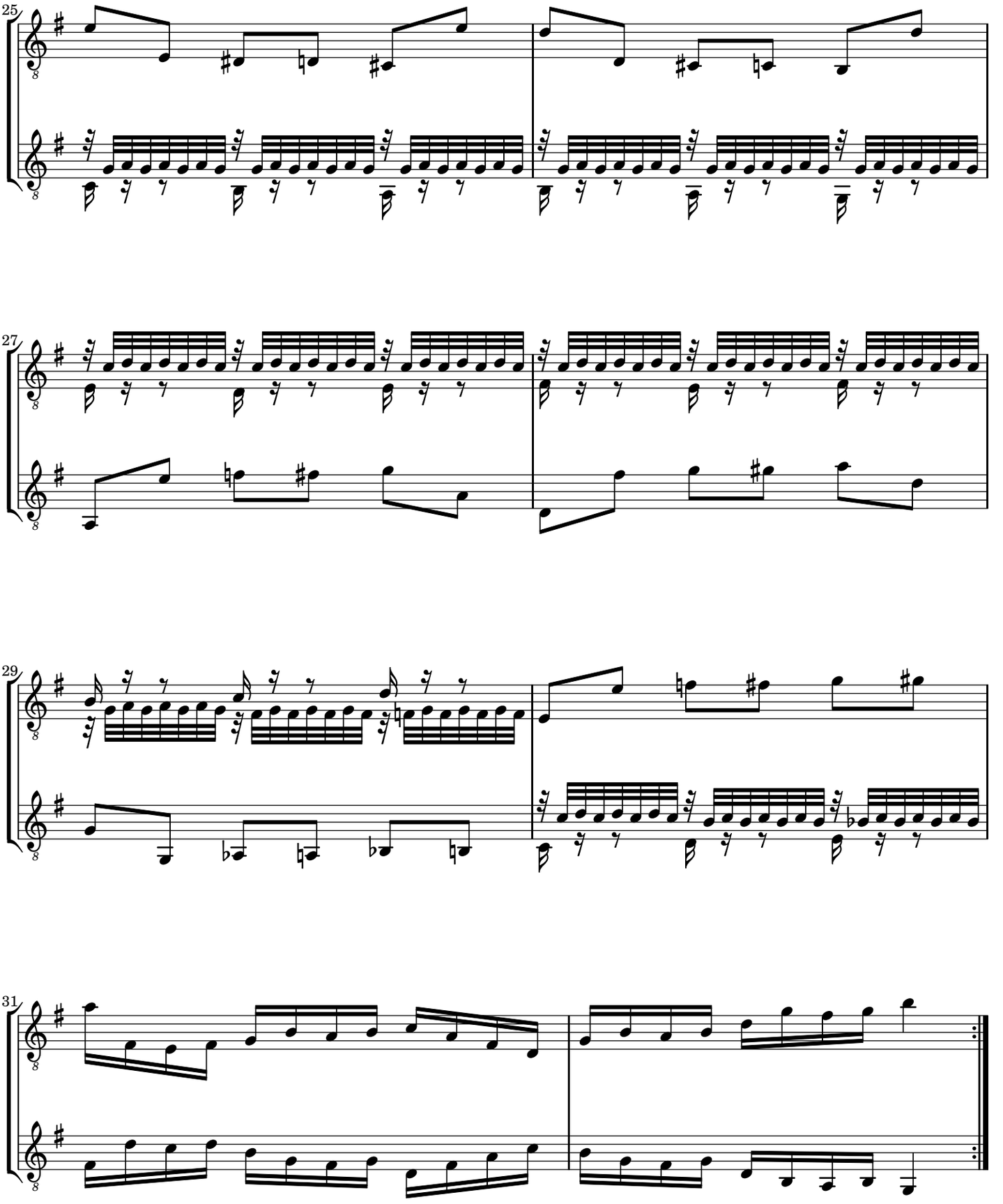
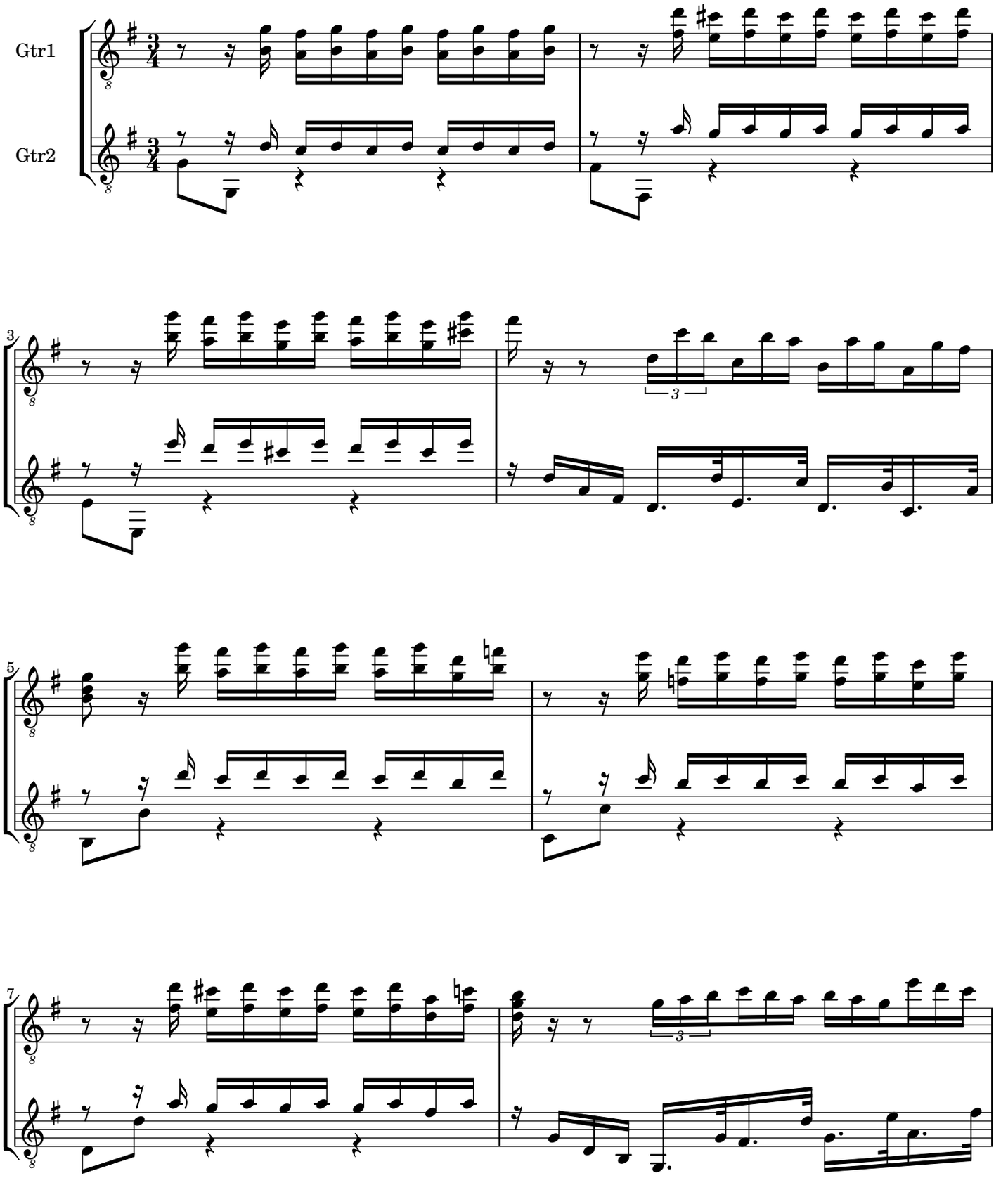


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 29



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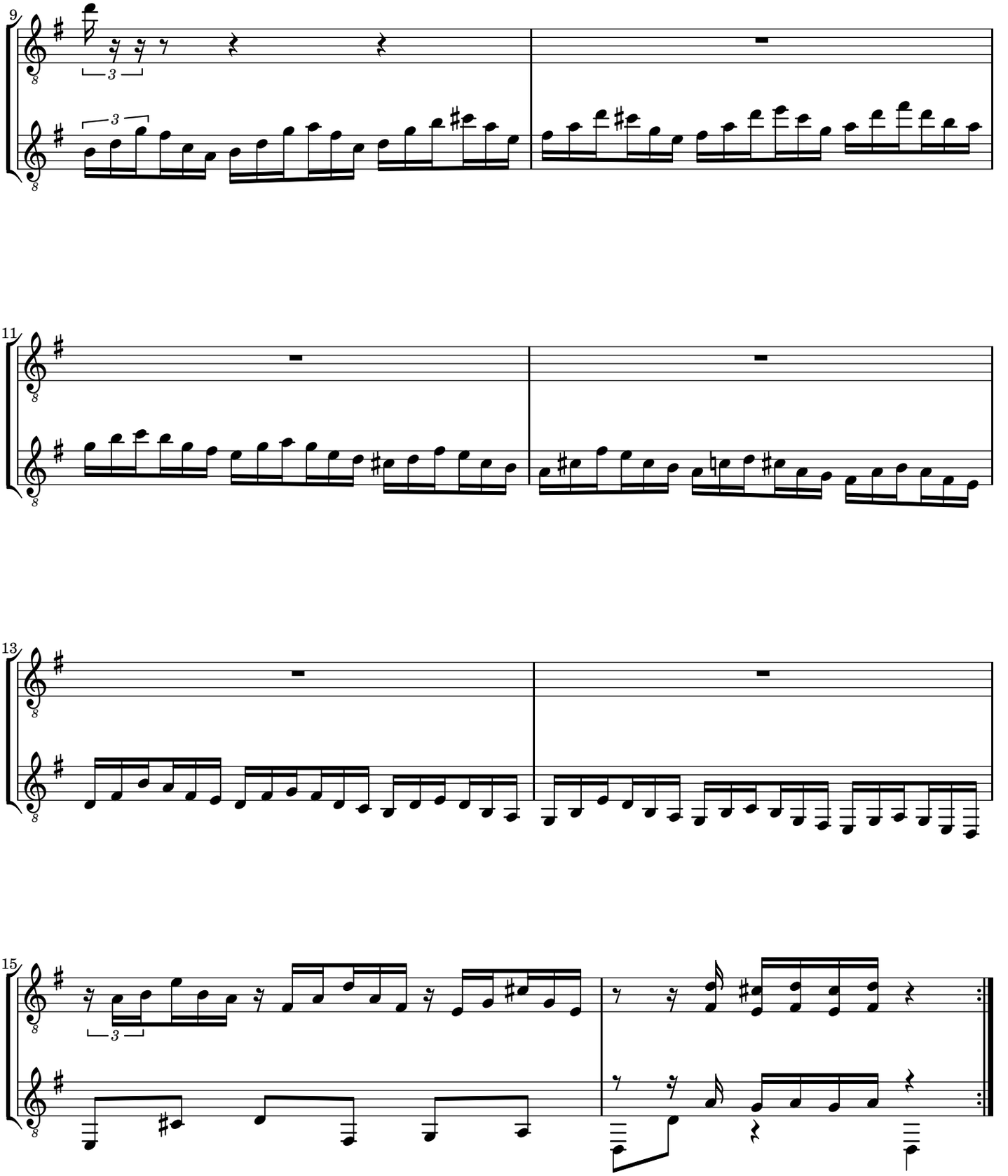

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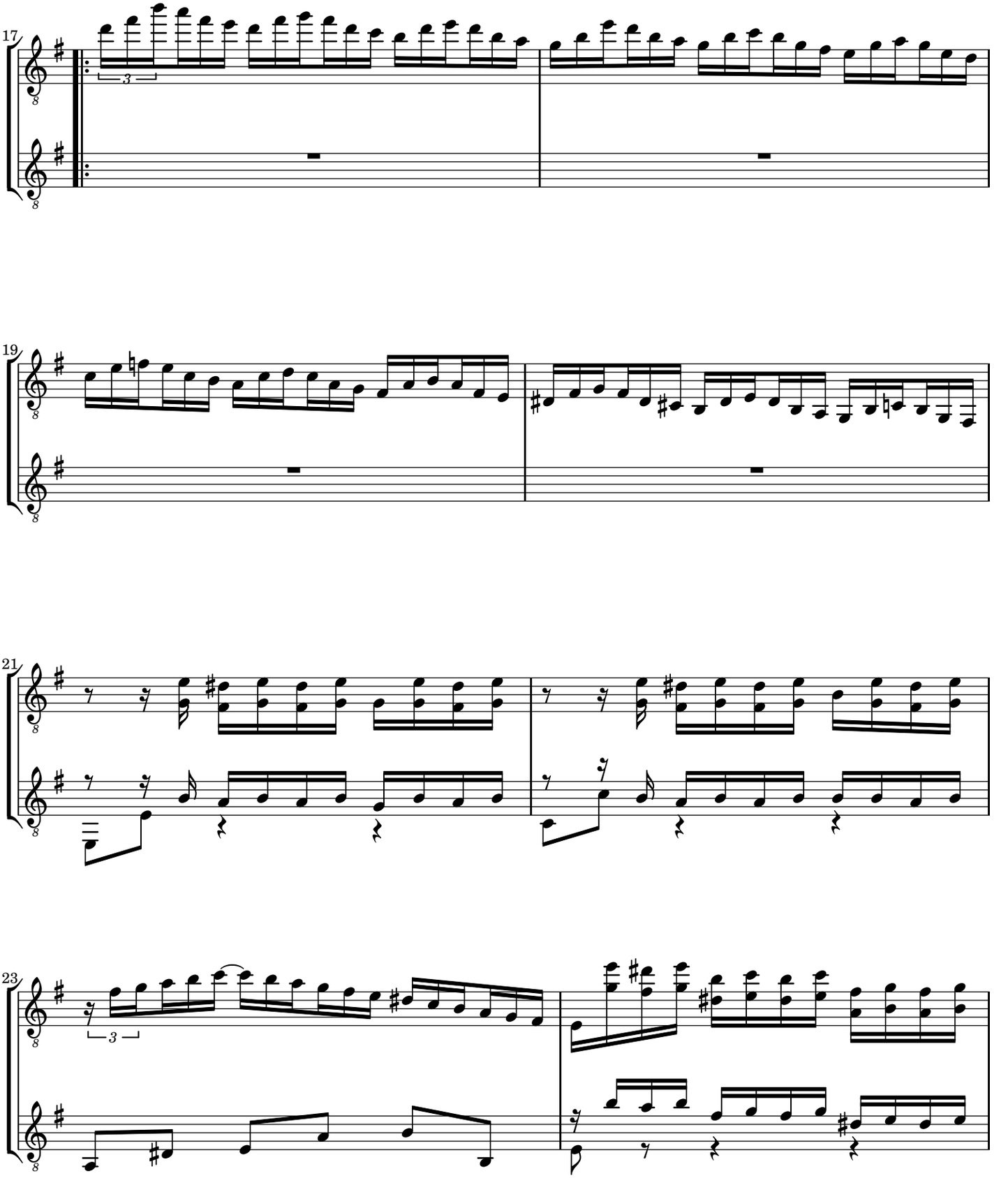

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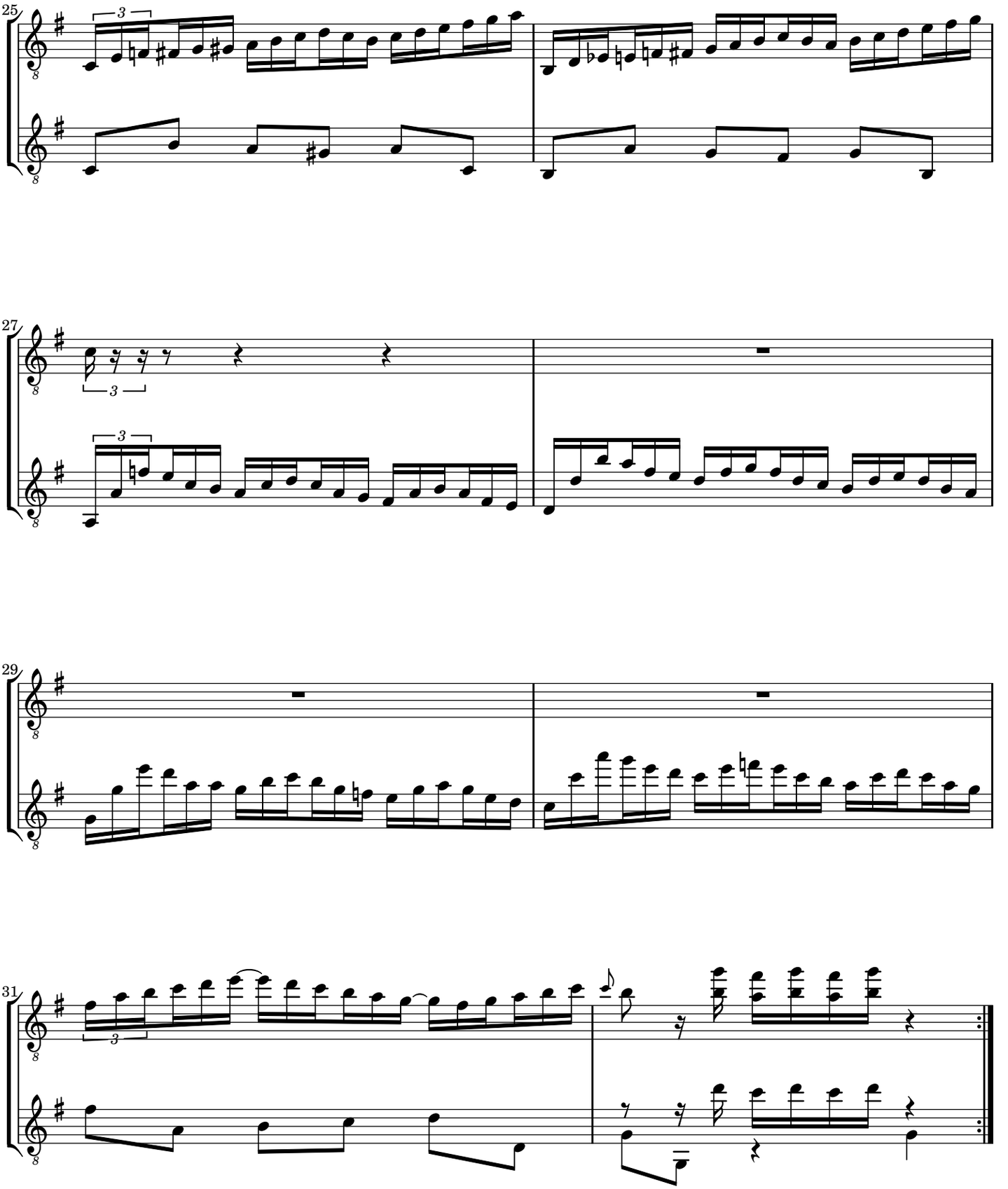
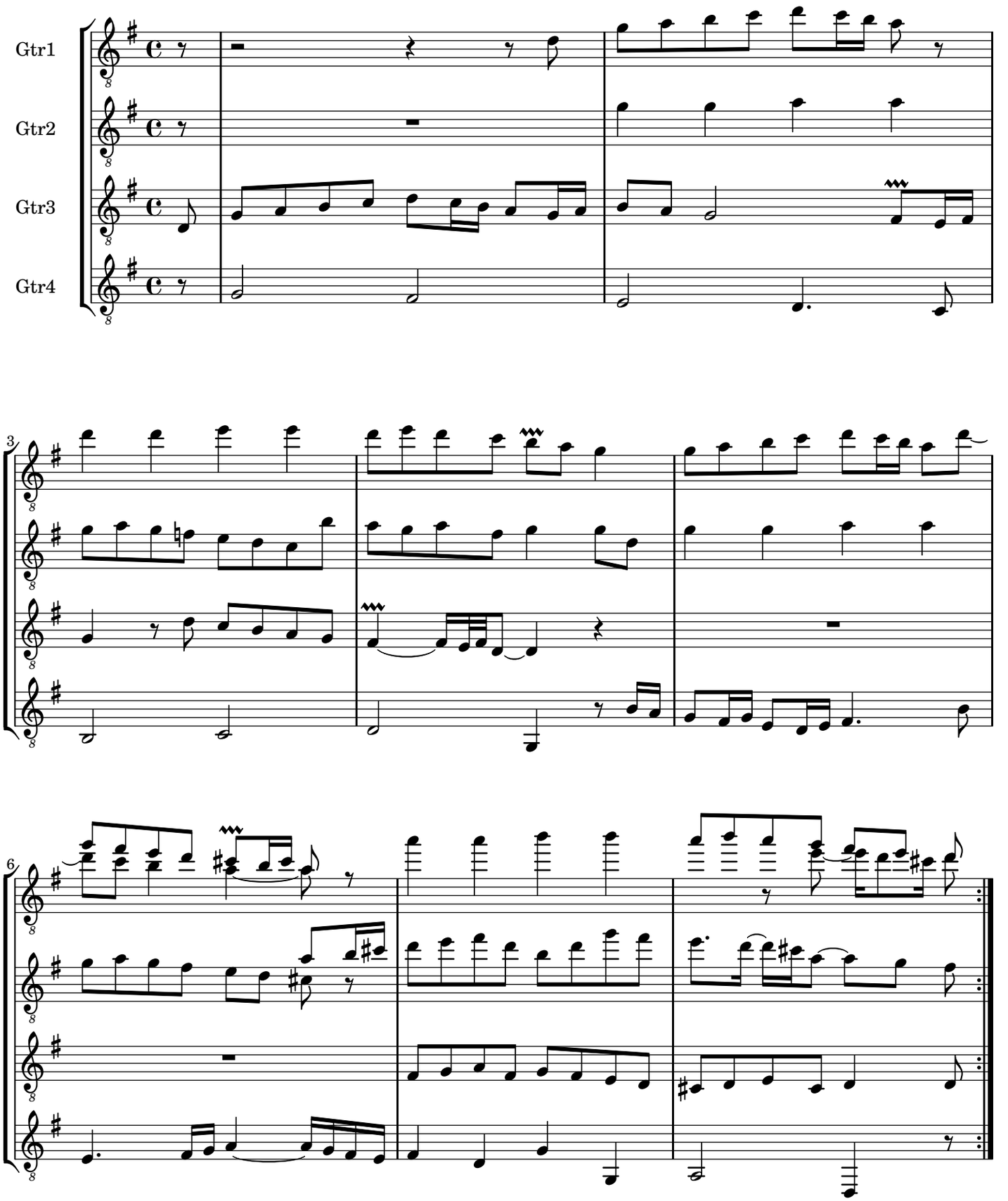


Steve Shorter (2014). Hajo Delzelski (2008). CC BY-SA

Variation 30

Quodlibet



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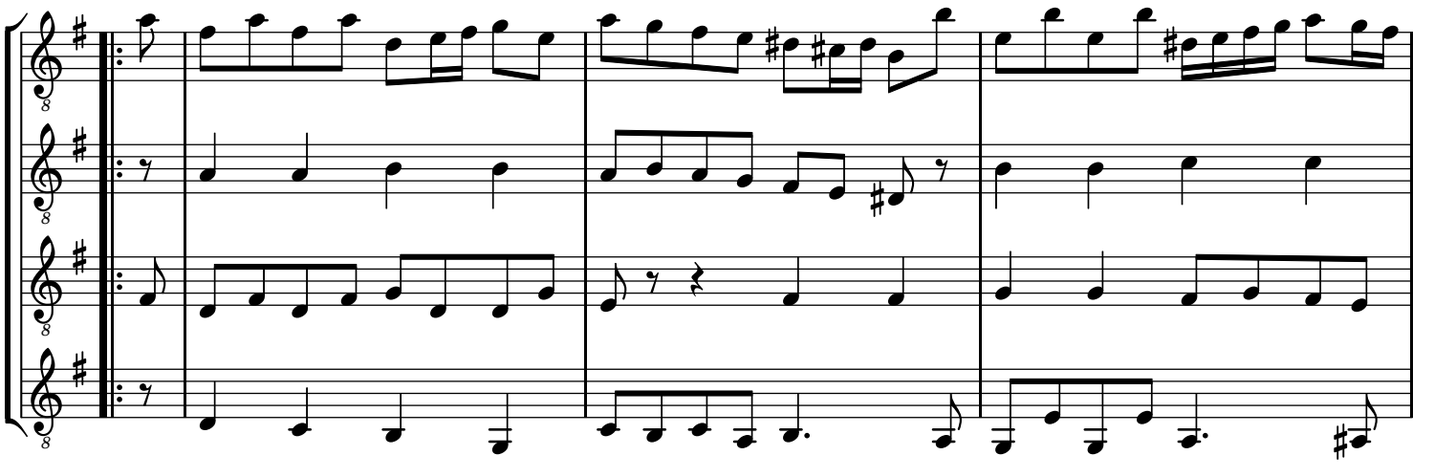

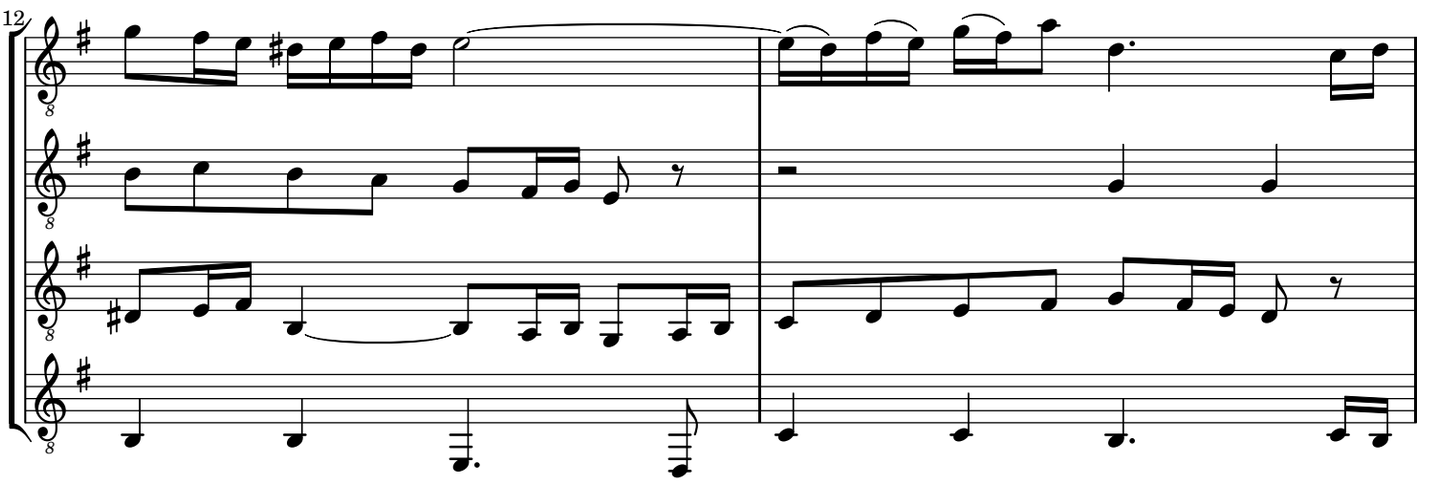

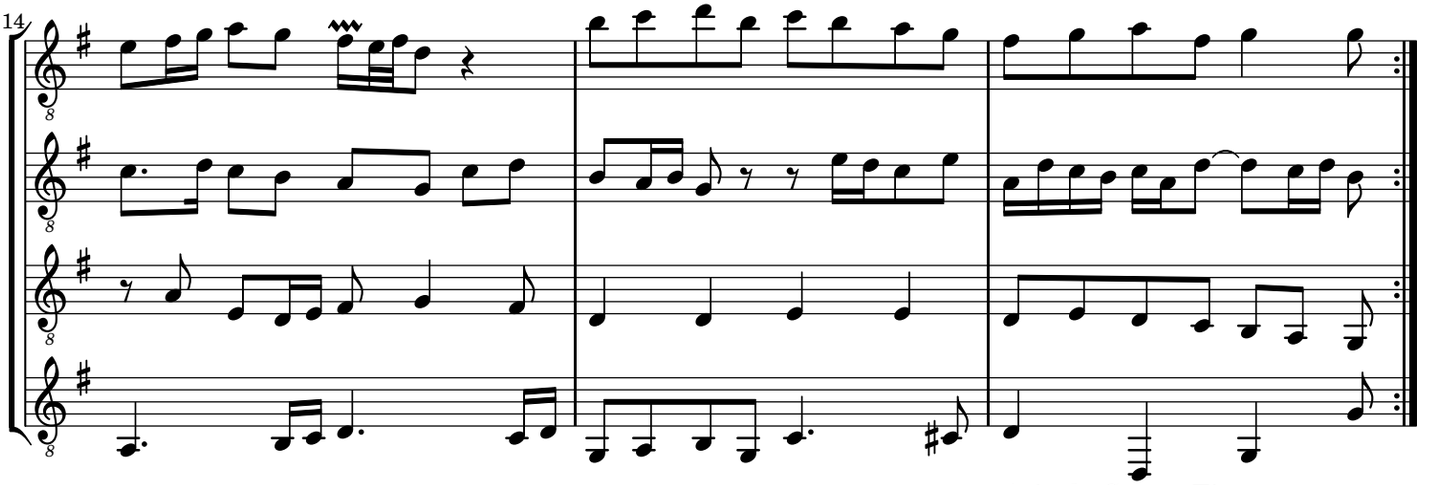

Aria da Capo e Fine.

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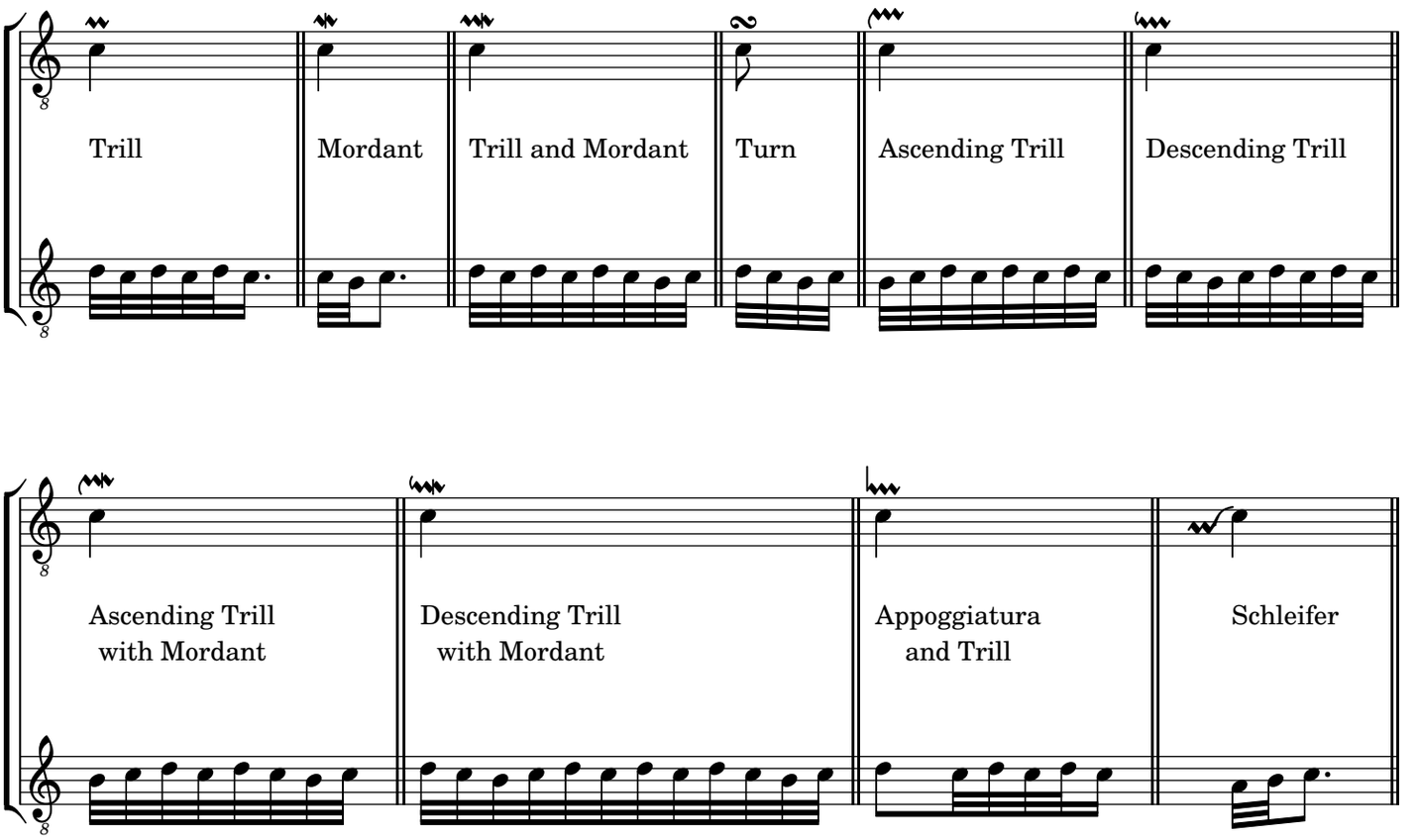
Table of Ornaments

This table of ornaments is taken from J. S. Bach's "Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach", written for Bach's eldest son. It was meant to be schematic rather than literal. Ornaments in this period were typically improvised. Even when notated the exact number of articulations and their length is dependent on its context and the performers preference.



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Acknowledgements

This work is the product of a long chain of dependencies, beginning with the great master himself, J. S. Bach. The technological and social advances that have accrued since that time have allowed the creation and distribution of these Goldberg Variations on the scale that is now possible. Of particular importance is the GNU/Linux operating system, the LilyPond engraving system, the Internet, and the new model of network property upon which these things are all dependent.

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This work is based on source material from the MutopiaProject http://mutopiaproject.org

Special thanks to sync.com

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Aria	JD Erickson (2007)
Variation 1,2	JD Erickson (2007)
Variation 18	Benjamin Esham (2007)
Variation 3 - 17, 19 - 30	Hajo Delzelski (2008)

Engraved by LilyPond version 2.18.0 -- www.lilypond.org

Errata

* Aria - bar 23, missing Schleifer
  version 1.7d is not playable

* Variation 27 - bar 23, "c#" not playable under given intstrument limitations

* Variation 23 - bar 31, "c" not playable under given instrument limititations

All other errata should be sent to steve@linuxsuite.org