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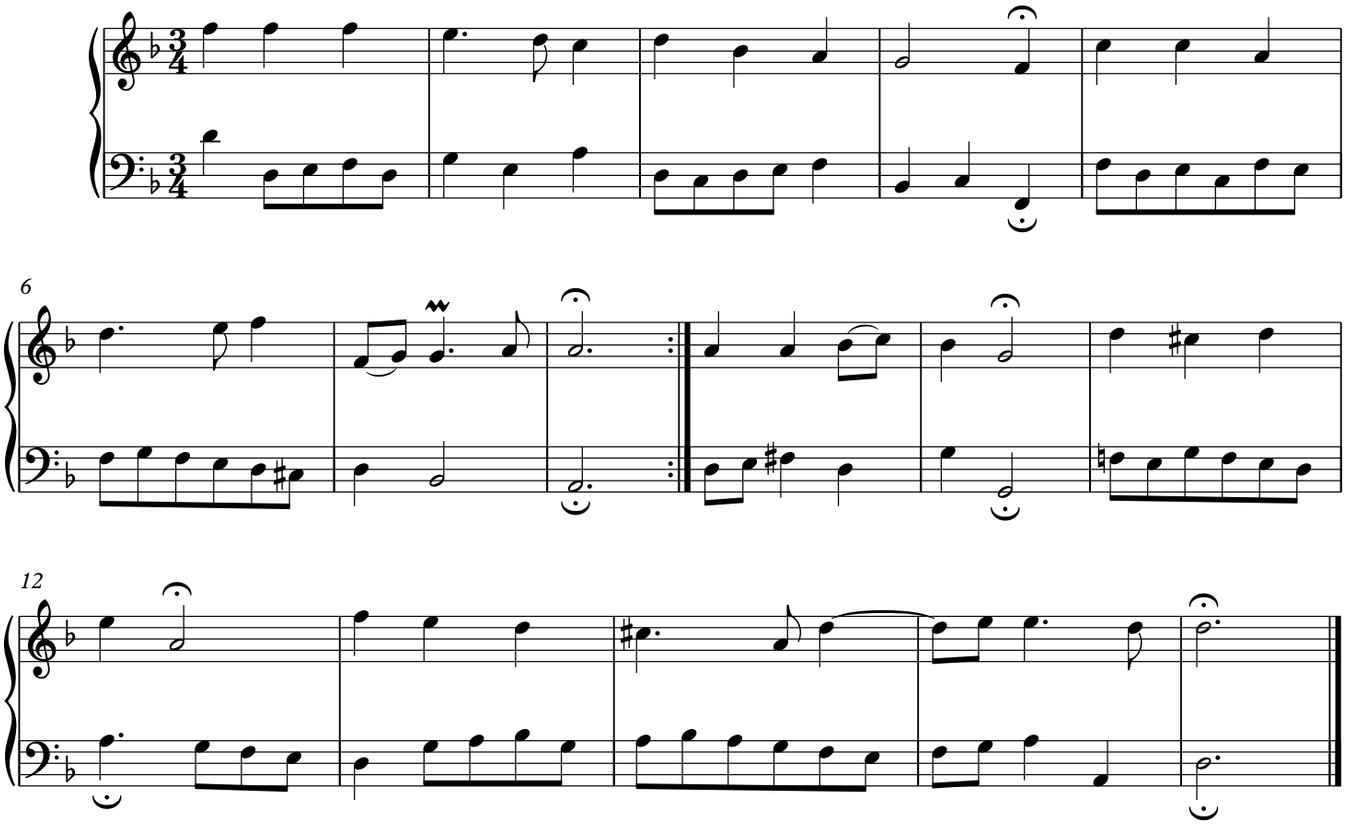
1. Liebster Immanuel

(Dearest Immanuel)

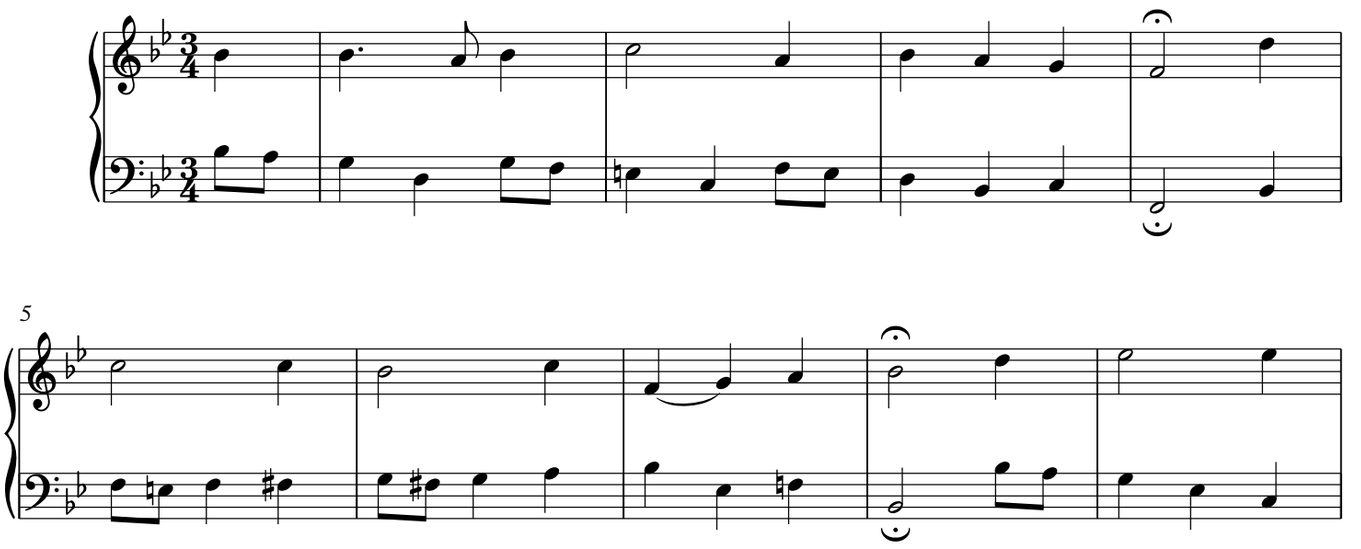
BWV 485

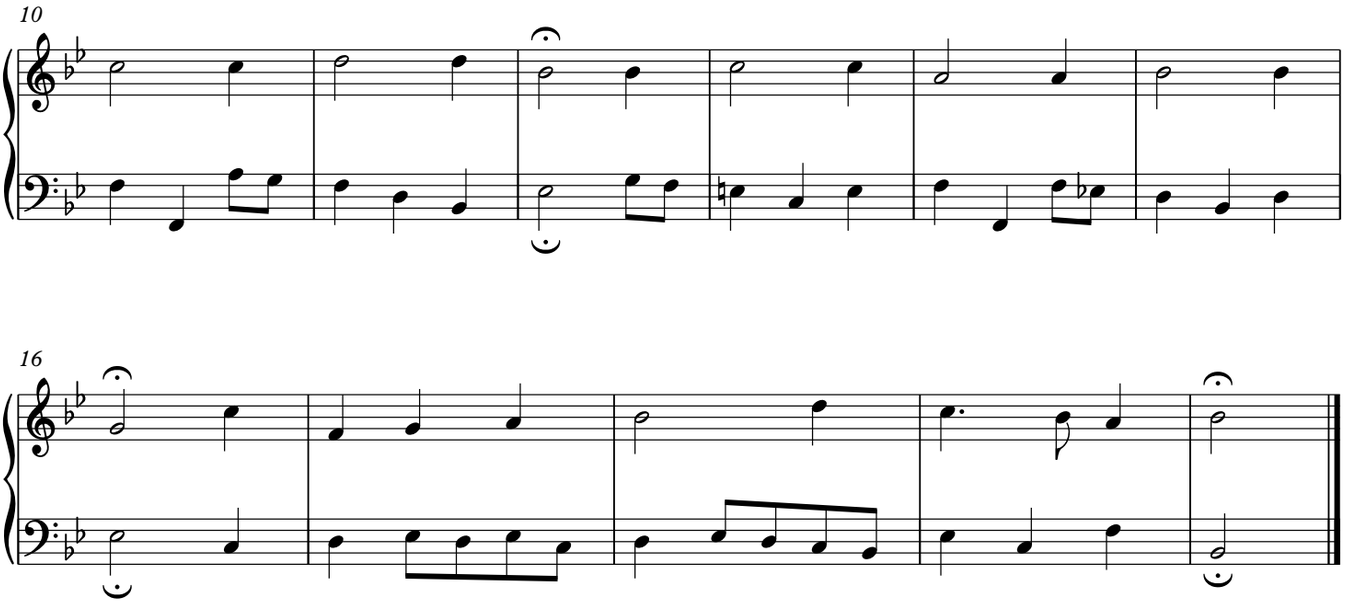


2. O Jesulein süss, o Jesulein mild

(Sweet Jesus, gentle Jesus)

BWV 493

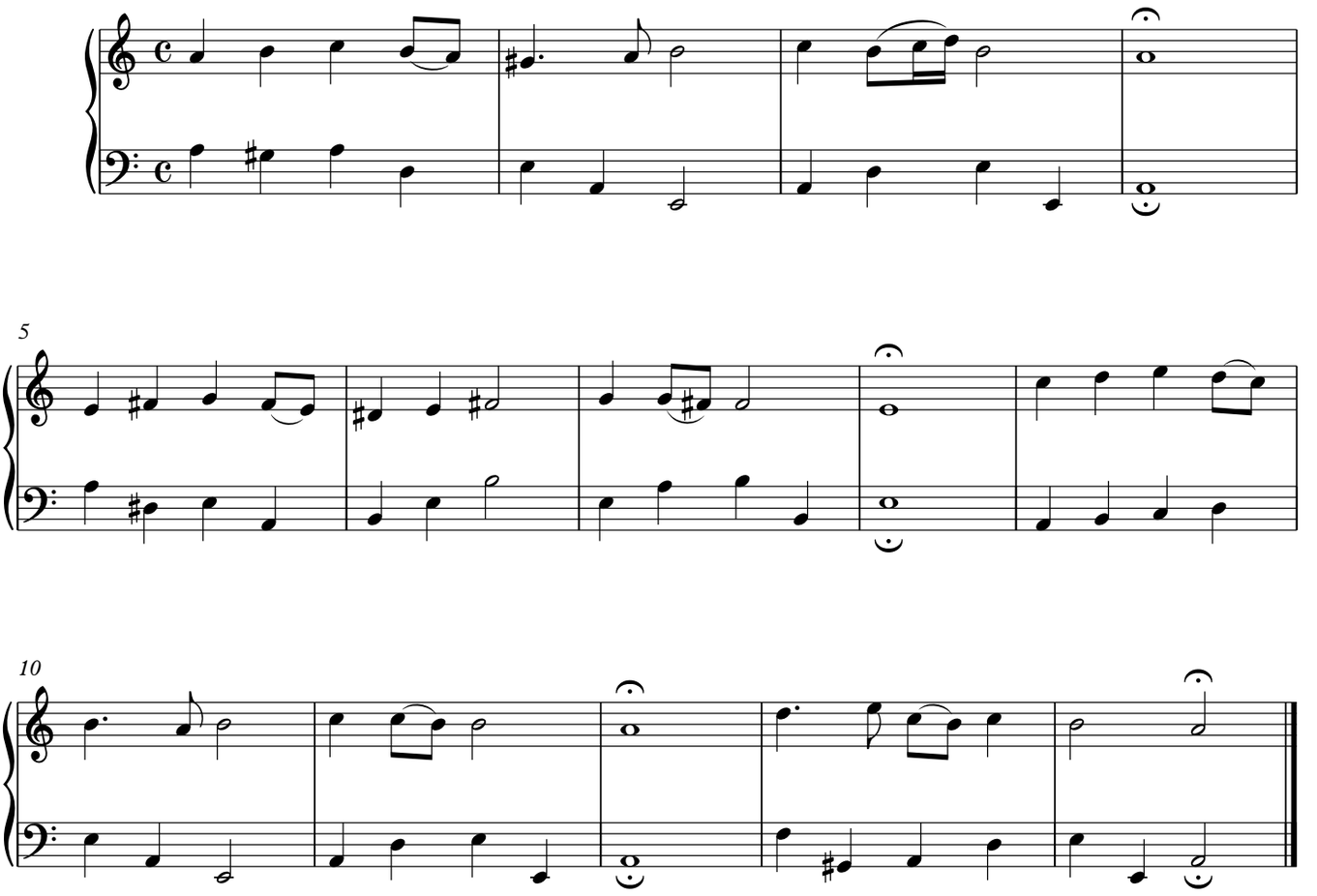




3. Jesu, meines Herzens Freud

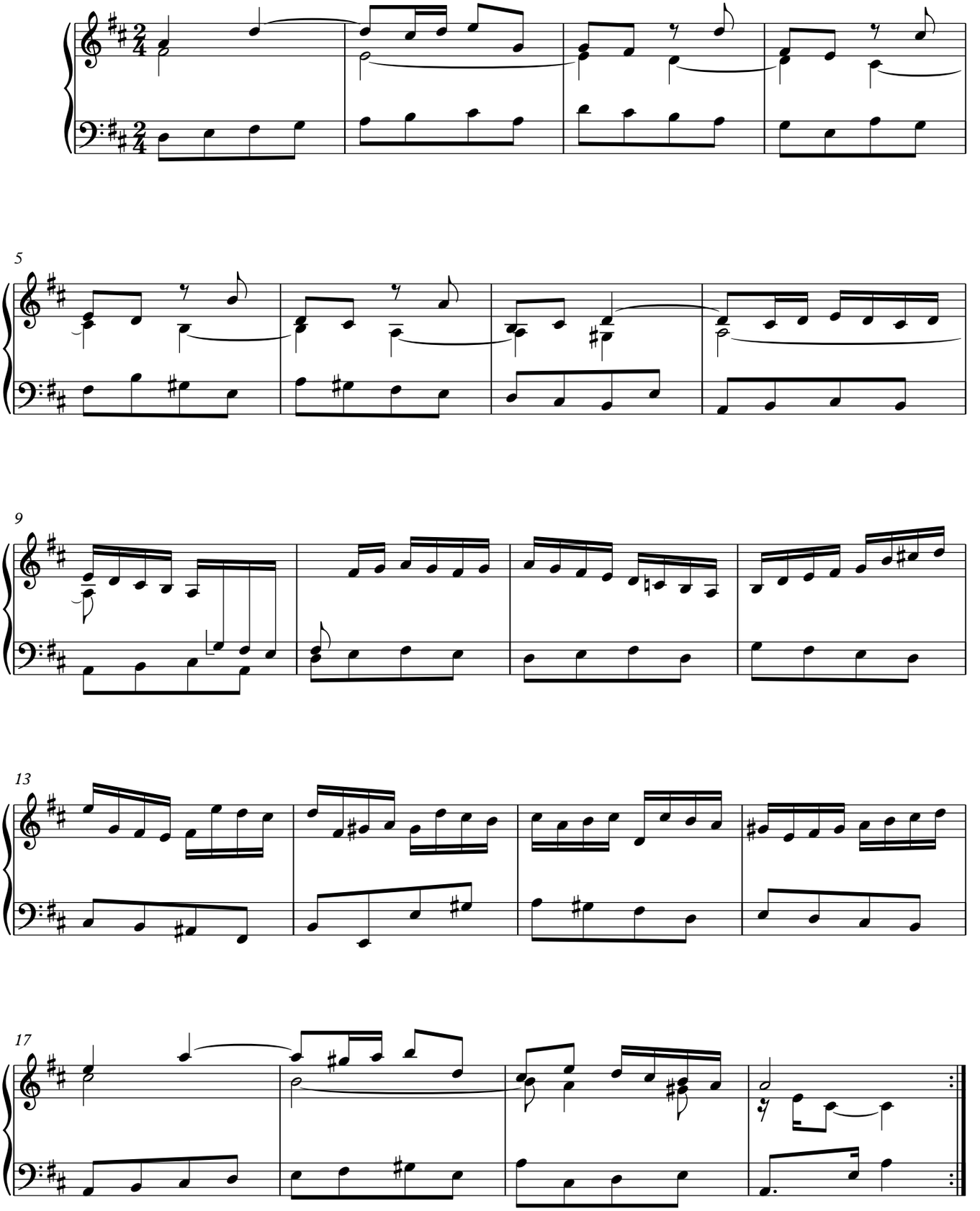
(Jesus, joy of my heart)

BWV 473



12. Prelude in D major

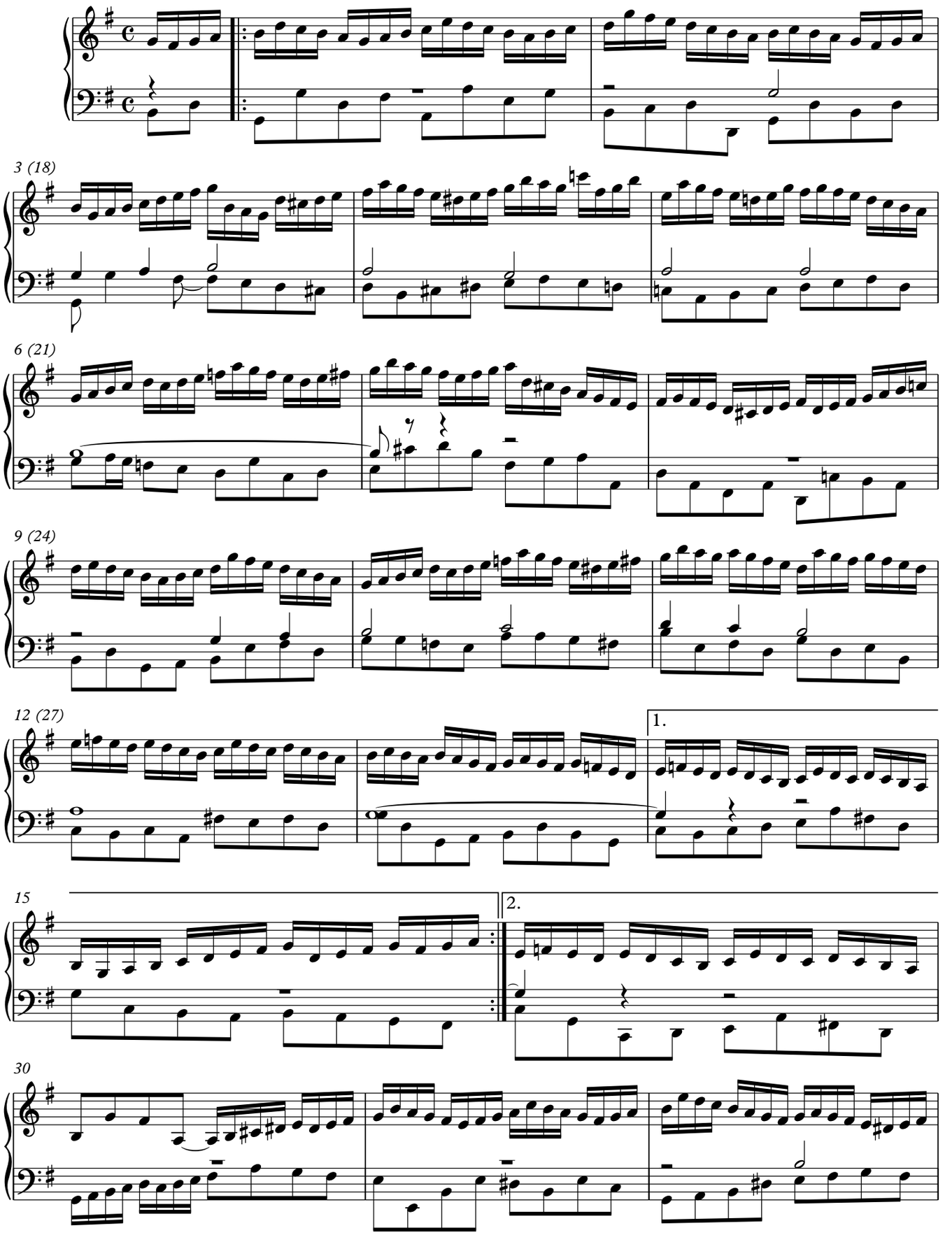
BWV 936



20. Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein

(Dear Christians, let us rejoice together)

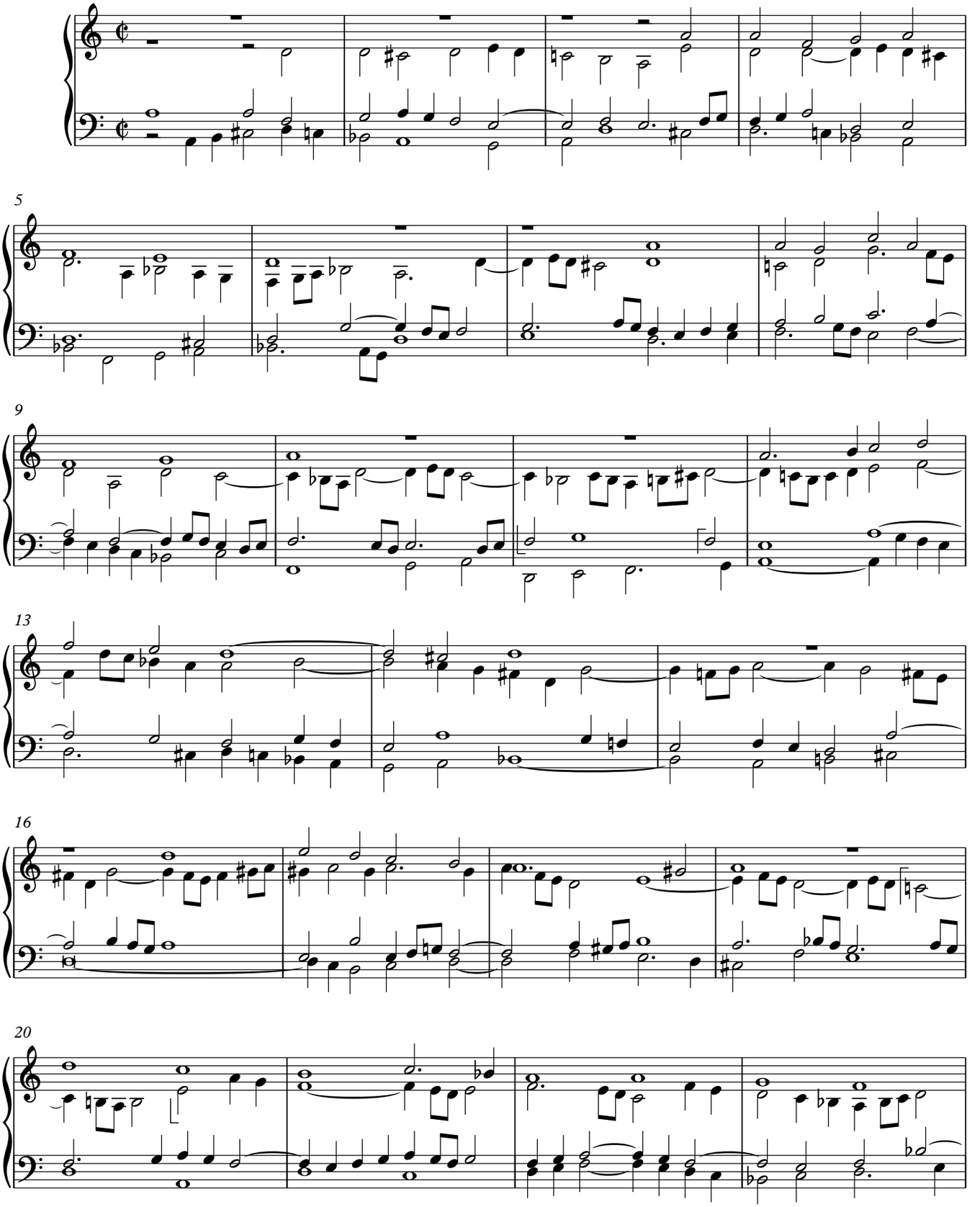
BWV 734



29. Vater unser im Himmelreich

(Our Father in heaven)

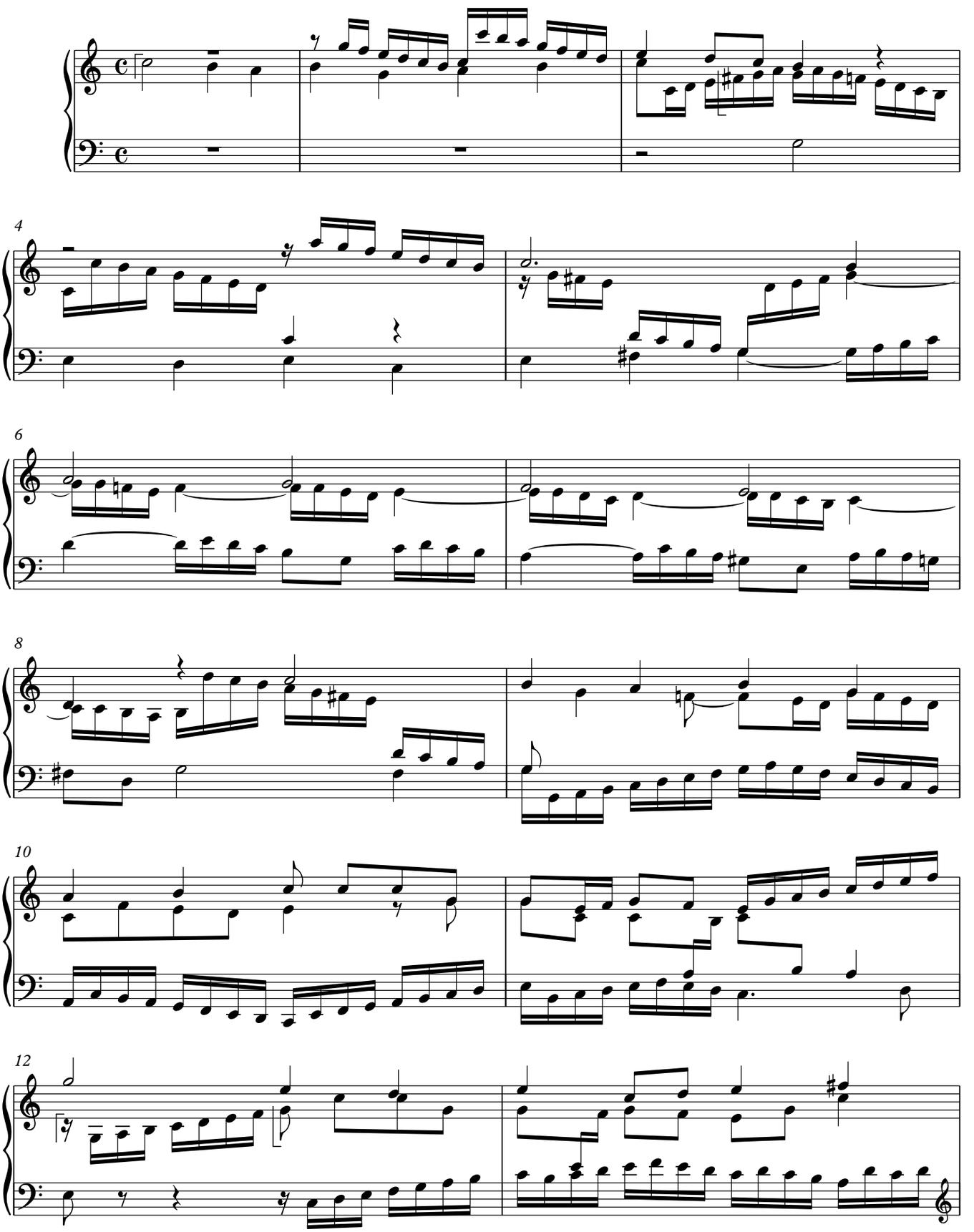
BWV 737



33. Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her

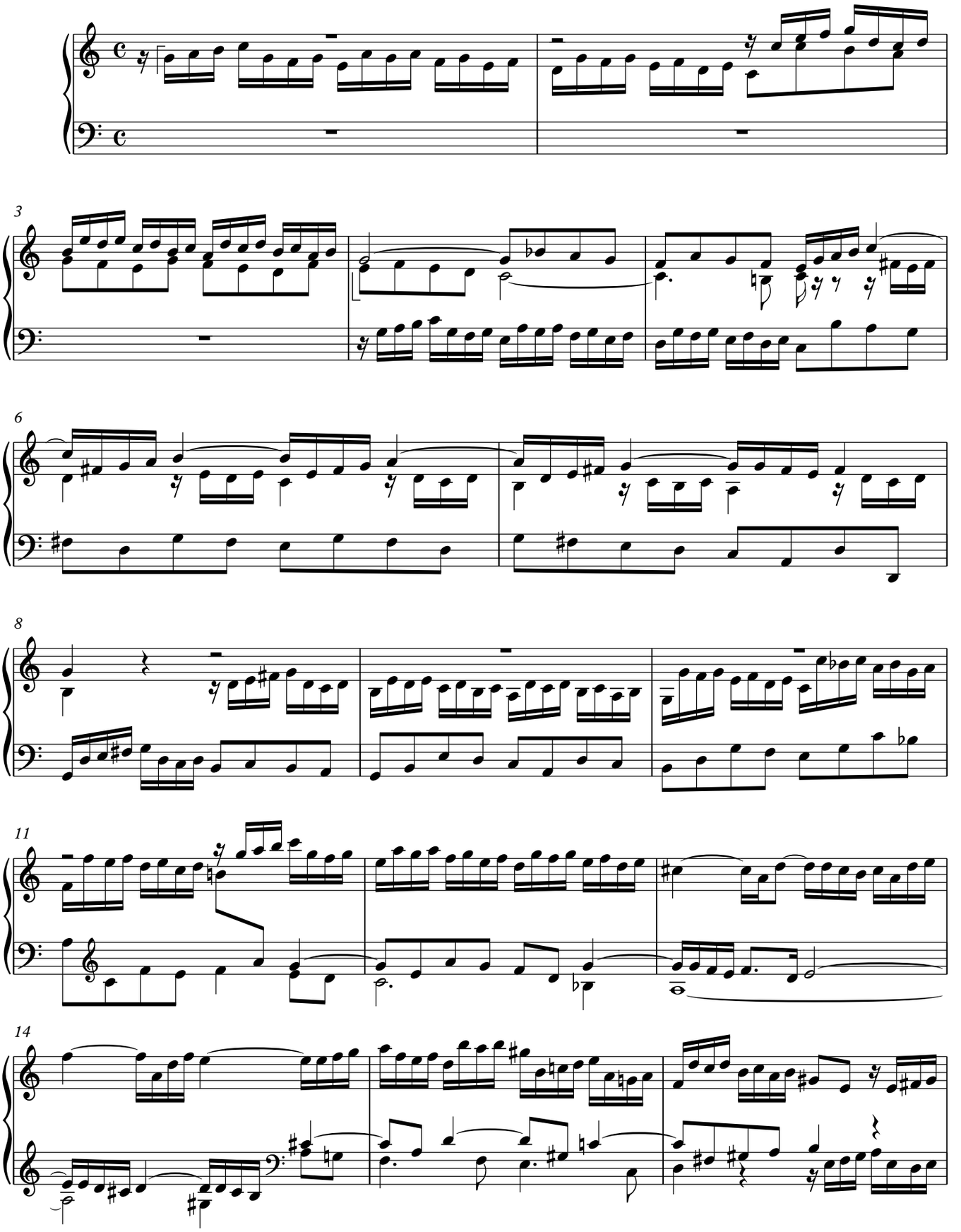
(I have come down from heaven above)

BWV 701



36. Fugue in C major

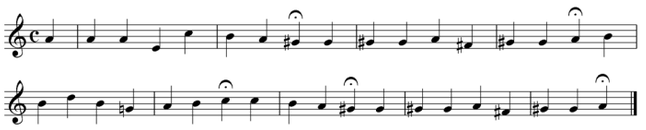
BWV 952



Notes on the pieces

Russell Stinson

4. Ich hab mein Sach Gott heimgestellt, BWV 708 and 708a



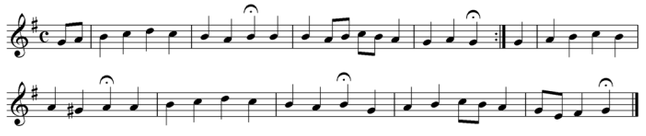
Ich hab mein Sach Gott heimgestellt,
Er machs mit mir, wies ihm gefällt.
Soll ich allhier noch länger leben,
Ohn Widerstrebn
Seim Willen tu ich mich ergebn.

I have put all my affairs in the hands of God,
So that he may do whatever he wishes with me.
If I am given longer to live here,
I will not resist
As I submit to his will.

Johann Leon, 1589

These modest works – conceived perhaps for voices rather than solo organ – should be understood not as different versions of the same composition but as different harmonizations of the same chorale. Their authenticity has been questioned, but both are ascribed to Bach in a manuscript now known to have been copied by Carl Gotthelf Gerlach, a colleague and possibly a student of Bach's in Leipzig. The high incidence of diminished-seventh chords suggests an early composition date, perhaps no later than 1700.

5. Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr, BWV 711



Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr
Und Dank für seine Gnade,

Darum das nun und nimmermehr
Uns rühren kann kein Schade.
Ein Wohlgefalln Gott an uns hat,
Nun ist gross Fried ohn Unterlass,
All Fehd hat nun ein Ende.

We honour only God on high
And thank him for the mercy he shows,
Because now and for ever
We are protected from all harm.
God is pleased with us,
Now there is great peace for ever,
All hostility has come to an end.

Nicolaus Decius, 1523

There are more organ settings by Bach of this chorale, whose text paraphrases the 'Gloria in excelsis Deo' from the Latin Mass, than any other. In this two-voice arrangement, or bicinium, the right hand takes the hymn tune, while vigorous figuration in the left hand serves as a ritornello, or returning theme. Replete with fast arpeggios and wide leaps, this cello-like melody also alludes to the first phrase of the chorale. Little wonder that such an engaging theme inspired Johannes Brahms in the writing of his organ chorale 'Herzlich tut mich erfreuen', Op. 122, No. 4.

6. Prelude in C minor, BWV 934

This prelude, together with the Prelude in D minor, BWV 935 (No. 8), and the Prelude in D major, BWV 936 (No. 12), comes from Bach's so-called *Six Little Preludes*, BWV 933-8, a collection based on ascending keys (C-c-d-D-E-e) that may or may not have been assembled by the composer himself. According to Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1802), Bach drafted the preludes for his legions of pupils. All six works exemplify binary form, with a double bar at the midpoint.

The C minor prelude so closely matches the Courante from Bach's second French Suite for harpsichord that it may at one time have been intended as a movement within that composition. Not only are the figuration and harmonies remarkably similar, but the texture (in two voices), form, metre, and tonality are the same as well. In an opening gesture reminiscent of Antonio Vivaldi, bars 1-4 establish the C minor tonality, and bars 5-8 feature modulatory, sequential figuration via the circle of fifths. Two-voice texture likewise characterizes the D minor prelude, except that the counterpoint there is imitative, just as in Bach's Two-Part Invention in D minor, which has the same time signature and rhythmic profile to boot. In this prelude the composer has created an arithmetically balanced design whose two halves consist exactly of twenty-four bars each. What distinguishes the D major prelude from the preceding two is the presence of a third voice. As the walking bass and chains of suspensions also demonstrate, the Italian trio sonata as codified by Arcangelo Corelli served as Bach's exemplar.

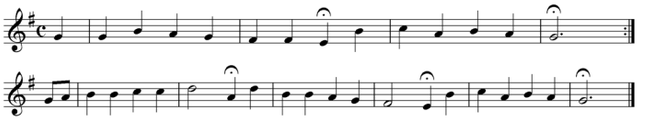
8. Prelude in D minor, BWV 935

See note to No. 6.

10. Bourrée 1, from *Overture in the French Style*, BWV 831

Published in 1735, and a rare example of a Bach work printed during his own lifetime, the *Overture in the French Style* consists of a French overture, nine dances, and a concluding Echo. Its first bourrée exhibits the two defining traits of that dance: duple metre and a quarter-bar anacrusis. Within the context of a perfectly symmetrical binary form, two-voice texture obtains, as in so many of the composer's essays in this dance type.

11. Herr Christ, der einig Gottes Sohn, BWV 698



Herr Christ, der einig Gottes Sohn,
Vaters in Ewigkeit,
Aus seim Herzen entsprossen,
Gleichwie geschrieben steht,
Er is der Morgensterne,
Sein Glänzen streckt er ferne
Vor andern Sternen klar.

Lord Christ, the only Son of God
The father in eternity,
Sprung from his heart,
Exactly as it was written,
He is the morning star,
His radiance extends to far places
Brighter than all other stars.

Elisabeth Cruciger, 1524

According to recent research, Bach during his Leipzig period, and possibly as late as 1740, authored a cycle of eight chorale fughettas (BWV 696-9 and 701-4) for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and New Year. In a chorale fughetta normally the first chorale phrase is set as a short fugue, for the hands alone, but