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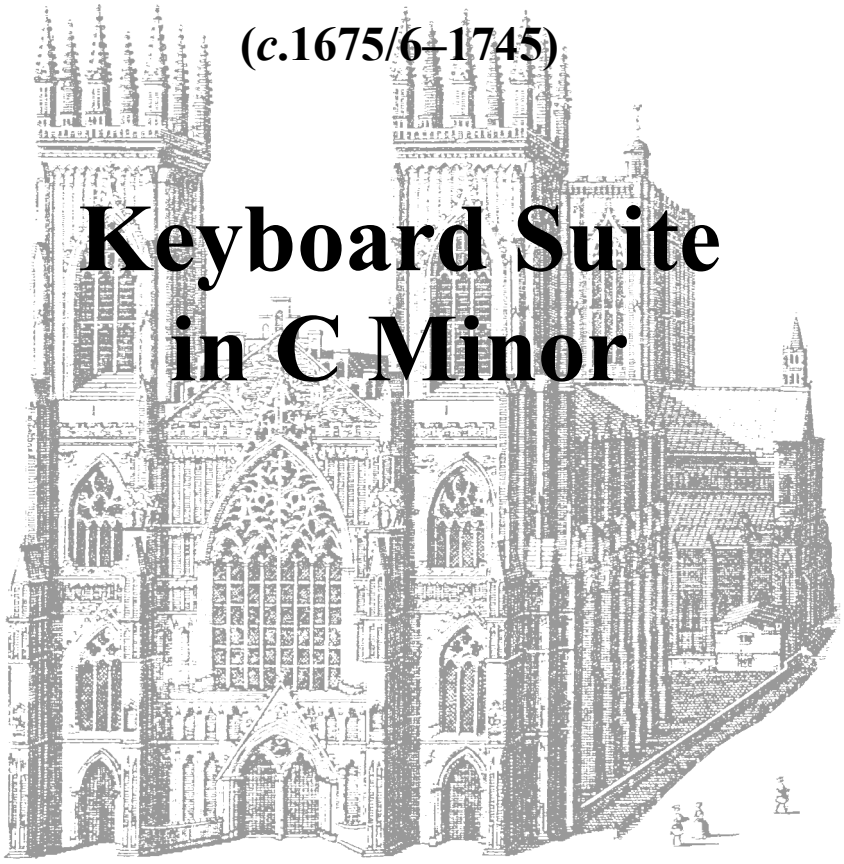
William Davis

(*c.*1675/6–1745)



Keyboard Suite in C Minor

In association with

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William Davis (*c*.1675/6–1745)

Keyboard Suite in C Minor

Edited by David Newsholme

INTRODUCTION

William Davis was a church musician who spent the majority of his life in the employ of Worcester Cathedral, successively as a chorister, player of the 'little organ', King's Scholar, Lay Clerk and Master of the Choristers.[1] He was a highly accomplished composer of sacred music and his output includes 16 anthems (six of which are incomplete), a service in G minor that includes canticles for Matins and Evensong, and a Jubilate in D minor, which was intended to accompany a setting of the Te Deum by Elway Bevin. Also amongst Davis' extant compositions are two multi-voiced secular pieces, a number of solo songs and several duets and catches, some of which were published in *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Music*.

In musicological circles, Davis is best known as the author of British Library Add. MS 31468, an important source of English organ and harpsichord music composed after 1660 that was copied at around the turn of the eighteenth century. This manuscript is the sole extant source of Purcell's Voluntary in D minor in the version for double organ; it also contains music by John Blow, William Croft and Christopher Gibbons. Davis included his own substantial composition for keyboard in this volume: an impressive four-movement keyboard suite (no. XLIII). Andrew Woolley has described the piece as 'a fine Croft-like suite',[2] although the tightly wrought and densely ornamented Allemande is highly suggestive of Blow's own pieces in this style, while the incessant syncopation of the Minuet recalls keyboard music by Purcell and Locke.

Davis' music has hitherto been overlooked in favour of that by his more illustrious London contemporaries. However, this excellent suite is undoubtedly worthy of more serious consideration by musicologists and performers alike.

CANTERBURY
SUMMER 2016

DAVID NEWSHOLME

1 For full details of Davis's career see David Newsholme, 'The Life and Works of William Davis (*c*.1675/6–1745', Ph.D. dissertation, University of York, 2013 (available at <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/5162>), and *idem*, 'World of Worcester: Rediscovered Sacred Music of William Davis', *Musical Times*, 156 (Summer 2015), pp. 73–99.

2 Andrew Woolley, 'An Unknown Autograph of Harpsichord Music by William Croft', *Music & Letters*, 91 (2010), pp. 149–70 (at p. 166).

William Davis: Keyboard Suite in C Minor

I.	Allemande	1
II.	[Minuet]	3
III.	Sarabande	4
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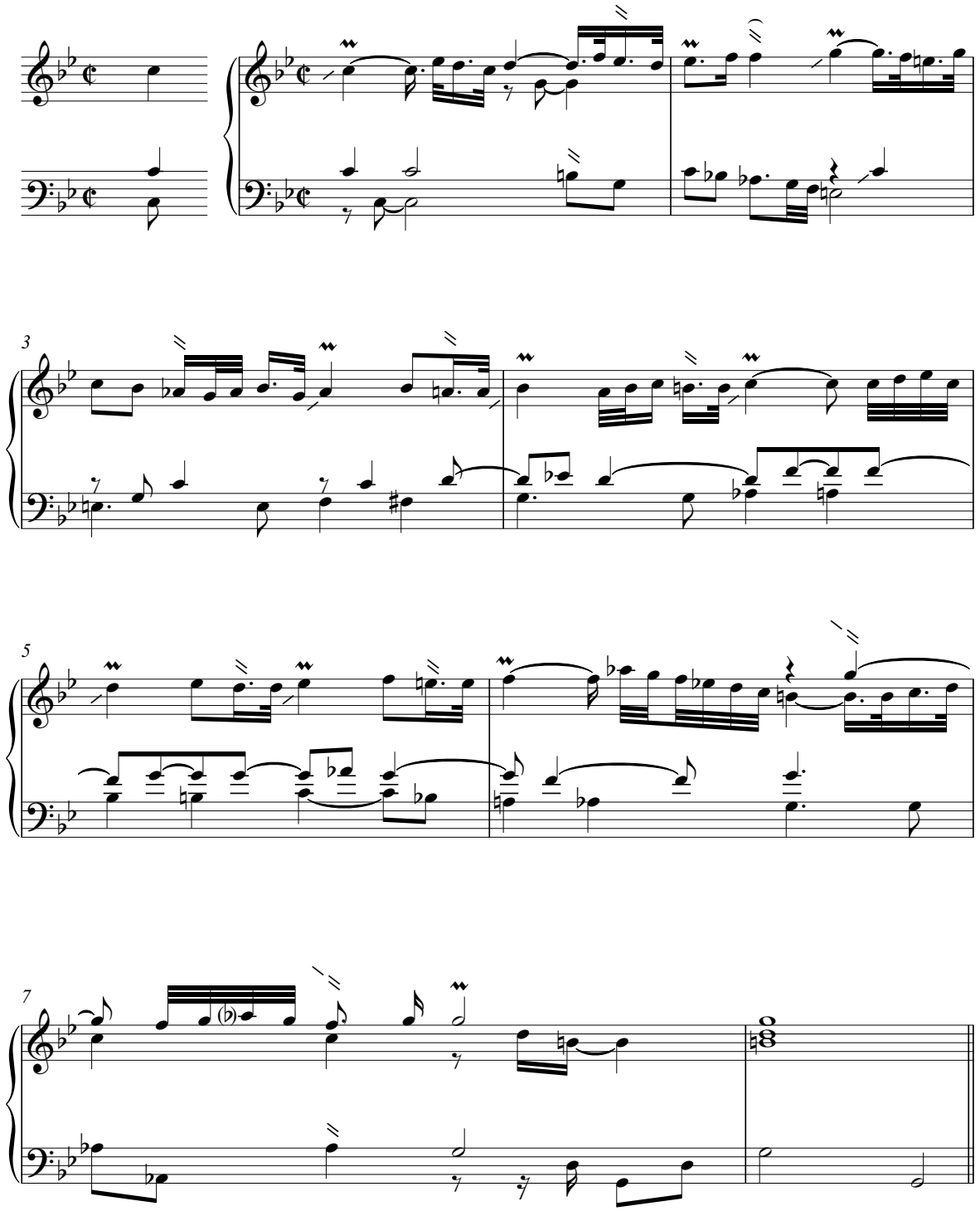
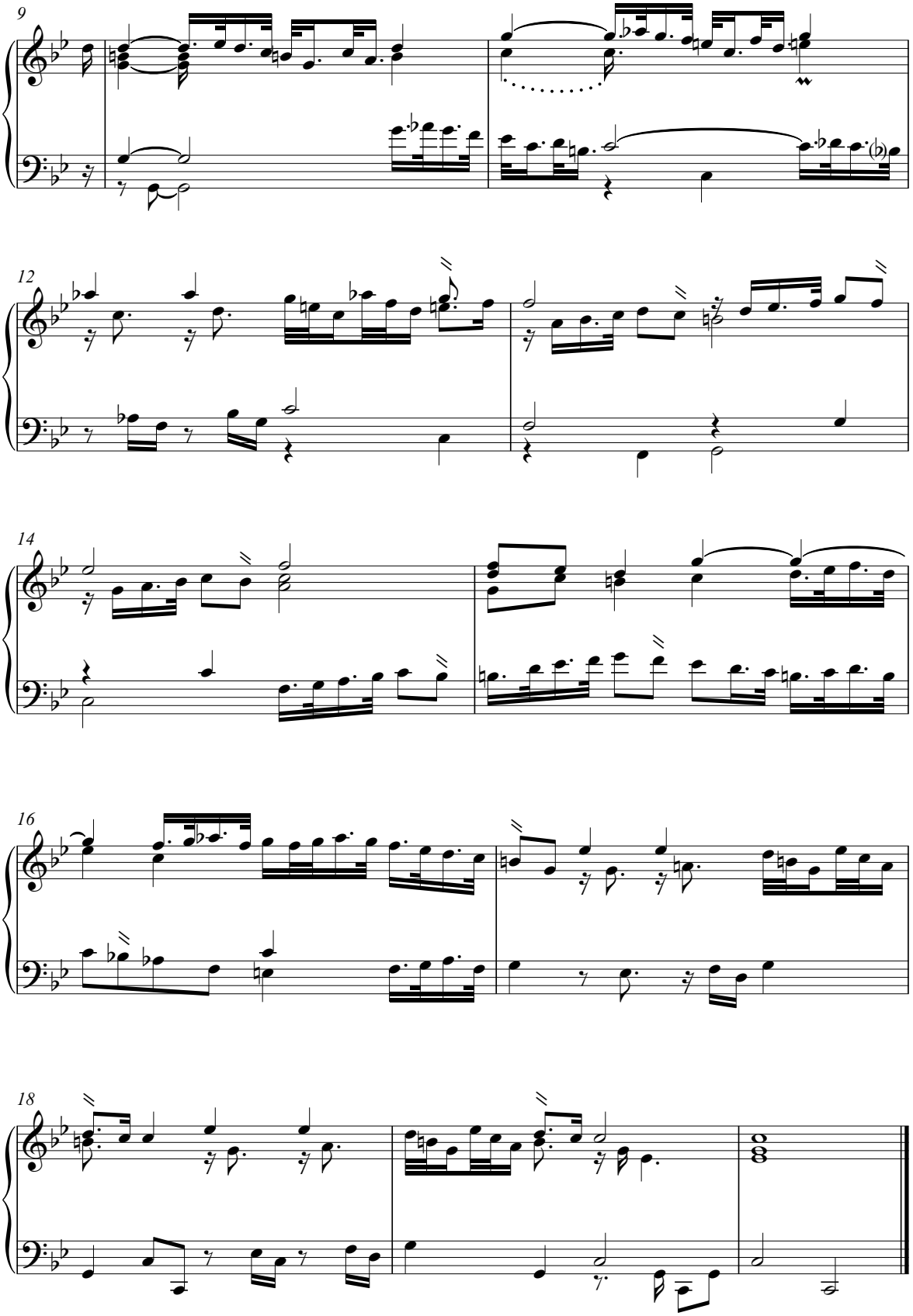
I. Allemande

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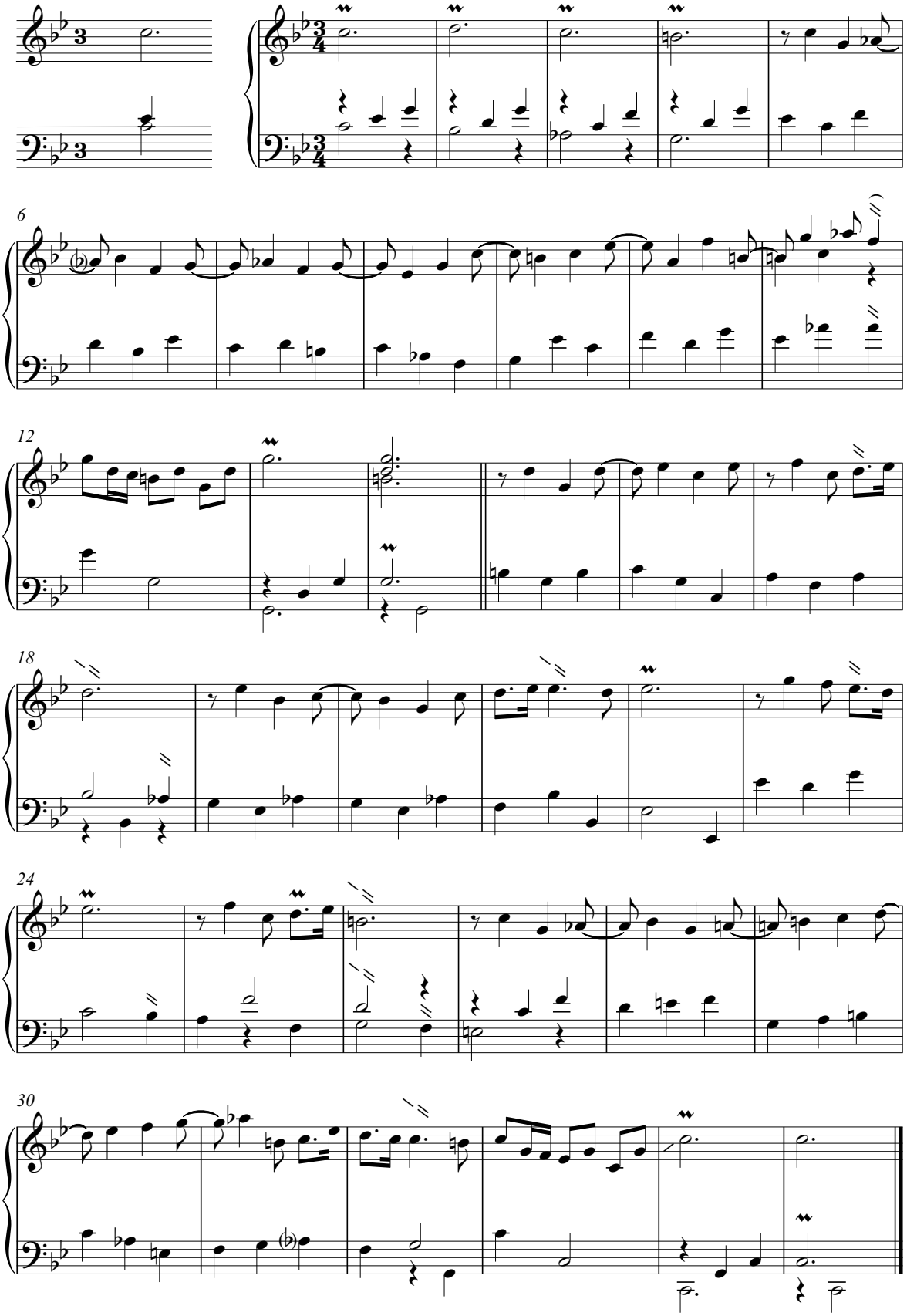
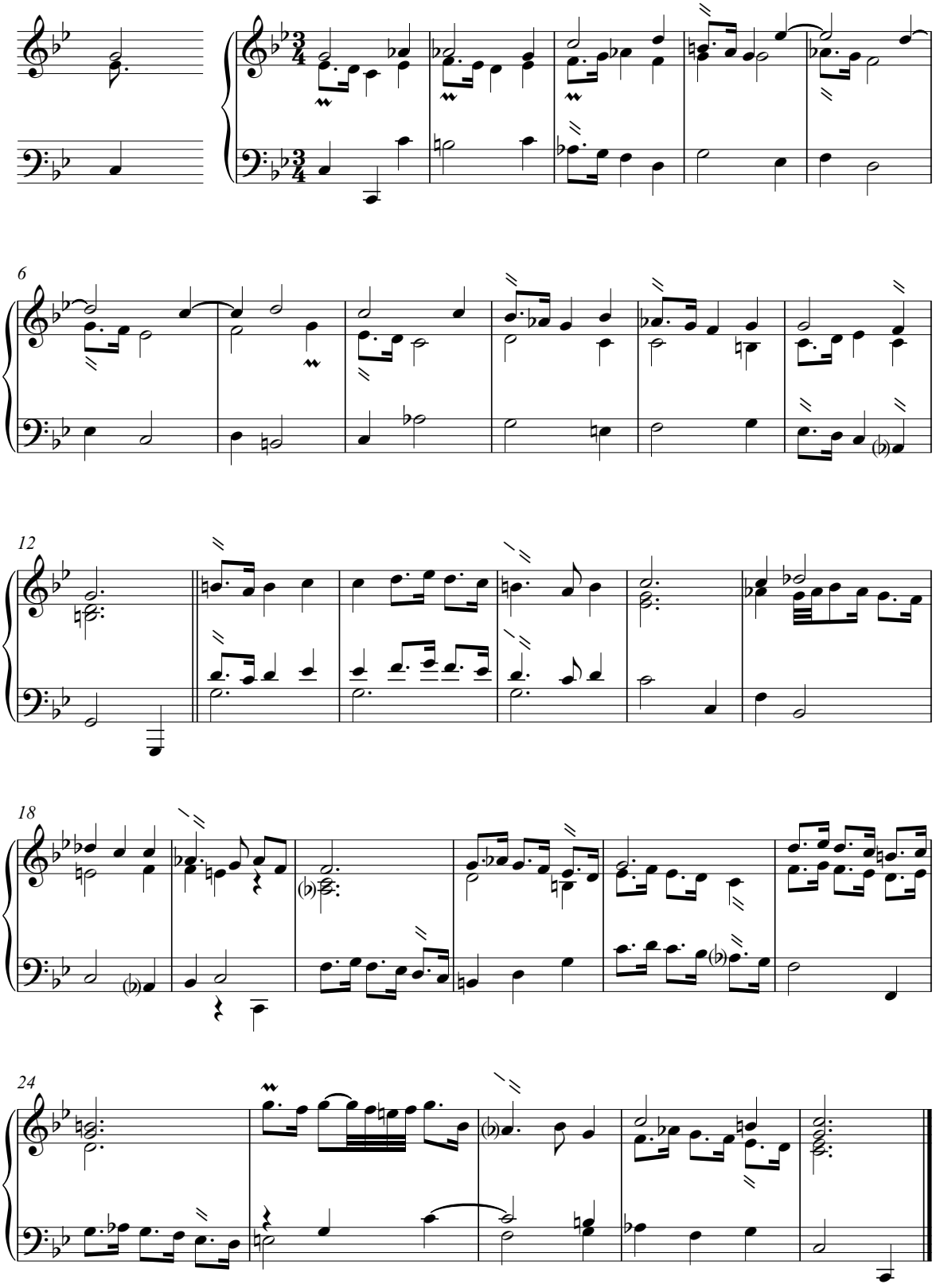
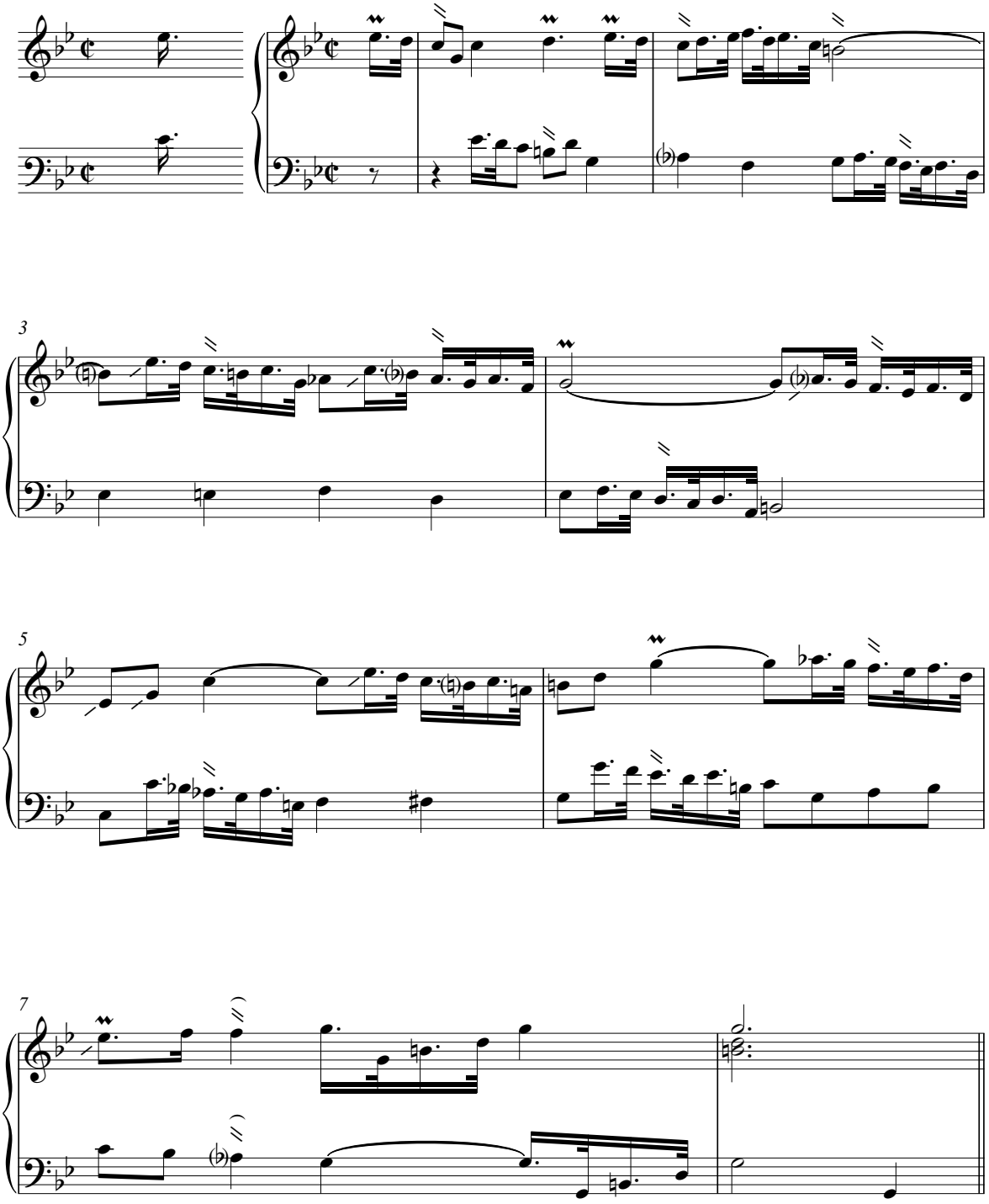
II. [Minuet]

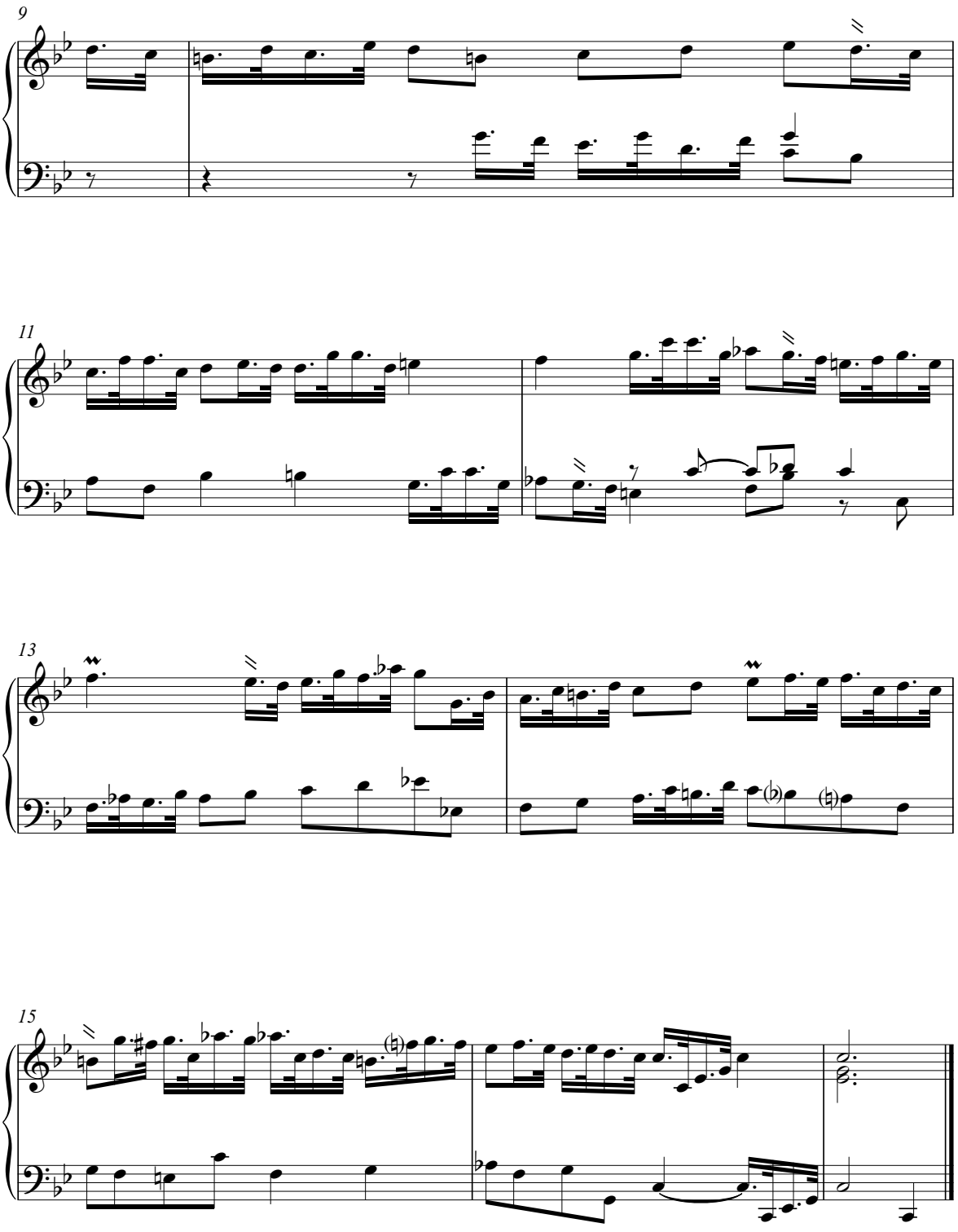


III. Sarabande



IV.

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