Three Trio Sonatas

Based on Concertos by

Arcangelo Corelli

(1653-1713)

Arranged for ATB recorders by R. D. Tennent

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FOREWORD

> *Although the universall Admiration of Corelli's Works have allmost equaliz'd his Meritt, yet there are many Gentlemen Lovers of Musick who want a true Taste of his perfections, his Compositions being for the Violin only, if so agreeable an Instrument as the Flute could be accomodated with the same benefitt, it would add to the Honor of the Composer, the Pleasure of the performer, and supply that Instrument's defect of good Musick, which has been so much of late Complain'd of. This thought was the only motive of the following Transposition . . .*
>
> John Walsh (London, 1720)

Can a *concerto grosso* be performed with just three recorders? Part of the answer comes from the title page of Corelli's Opus 6, published posthumously in 1714:

> *Concerti Grossi con duoi Violini, e Violoncello di Concertino obligati, e duoi altri Violini, Viola, e Basso di Concerto Grosso, ad arbitrio, . . .*

i.e., two violins and cello are obligatory but additional strings (violins, viola and *basso*) are *optional*. Indeed, except for the optional *ripieno* parts, the works are stylistically similar to the forty-eight trio sonatas by Corelli published in Rome between 1681 and 1694 (Opp. 1–4) and it is quite possible that most of the material was initially composed for use in trio sonatas. In any case, the Opus 6 works may certainly be performed as if they were trio sonatas.

Numbers 9 to 11, arranged here, are three of the four *concerti da camera* (chamber concertos) in the Opus 6 set of twelve. Each consists of a suite of dance-based movements in the same or related keys, introduced by a stately prelude. Some of the dance movements are preceded by a short *adagio*; in No. 11 (Sonata II here), an *adagio* is extended by an *andante largo*.

But what about the use of recorders rather than strings? Many transcriptions of Corelli's sonatas and concertos were published in the 1700s for "flutes" (i.e., recorders) and other instruments, but these generally assumed a conventional *basso continuo*, typically cello and keyboard. However, there is evidence[1] that recorder ensembles existed at that time, though very little music was composed specifically for them in the baroque era. It is presumed that they played music originally written for other instruments. So it seems quite likely that recorder ensembles were playing Corelli trio sonatas (and maybe even concertos) in the 1700s, and it is not inauthentic to continue this tradition today. The arrangements here are in the original keys, but a few octave transpositions were necessary to fit the ranges of the recorders and, in some of the movements, rapid string figurations were streamlined for performance on recorders.

R.D.T.

[1] http://www.recorderhomepage.net/families.html

Three Trio Sonatas

for ATB recorders

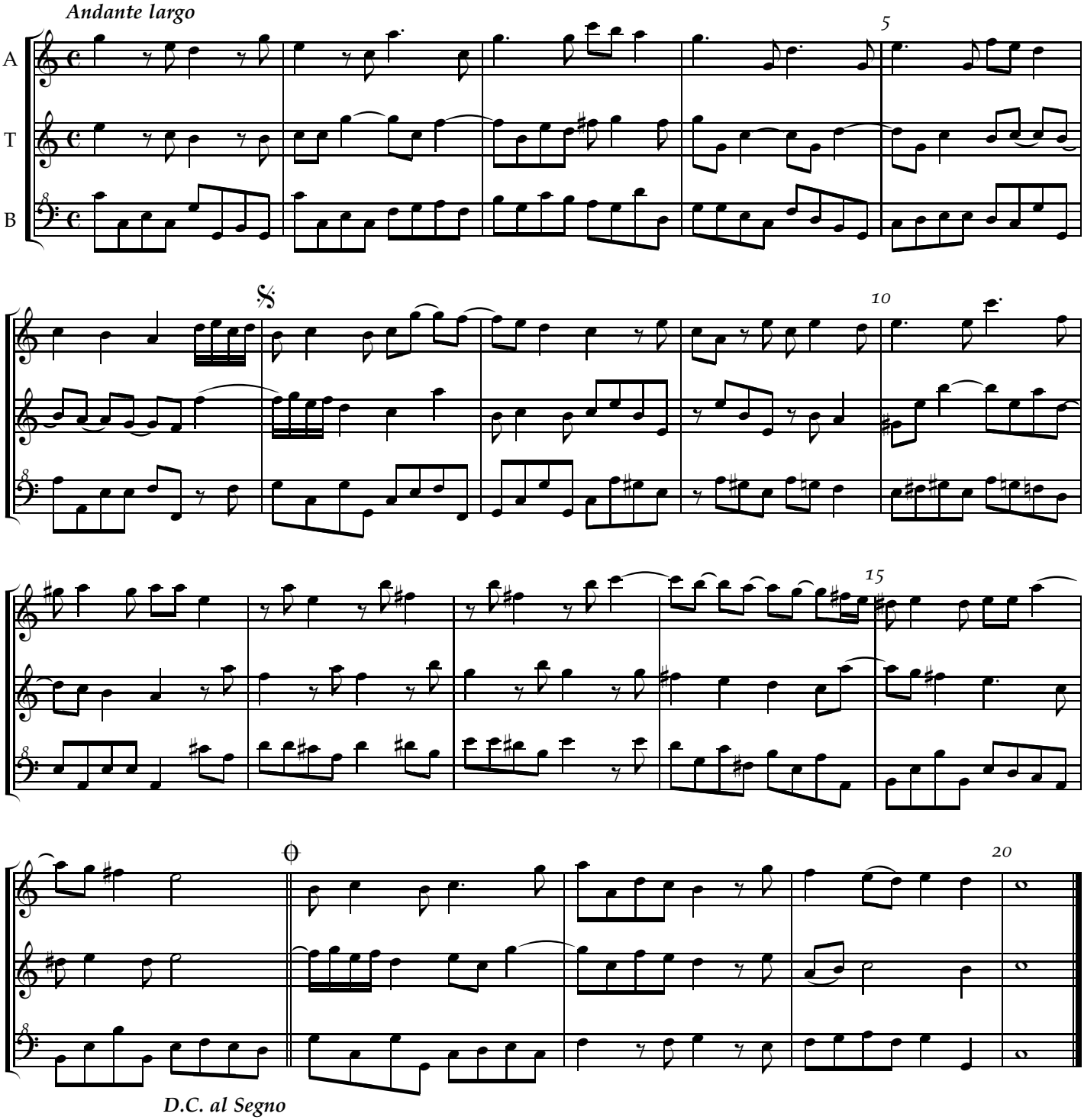
Arrangement by R. D. Tennent

Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)

Sonata I†

1. Preludio

Andante largo



†Opus 6, No. 10

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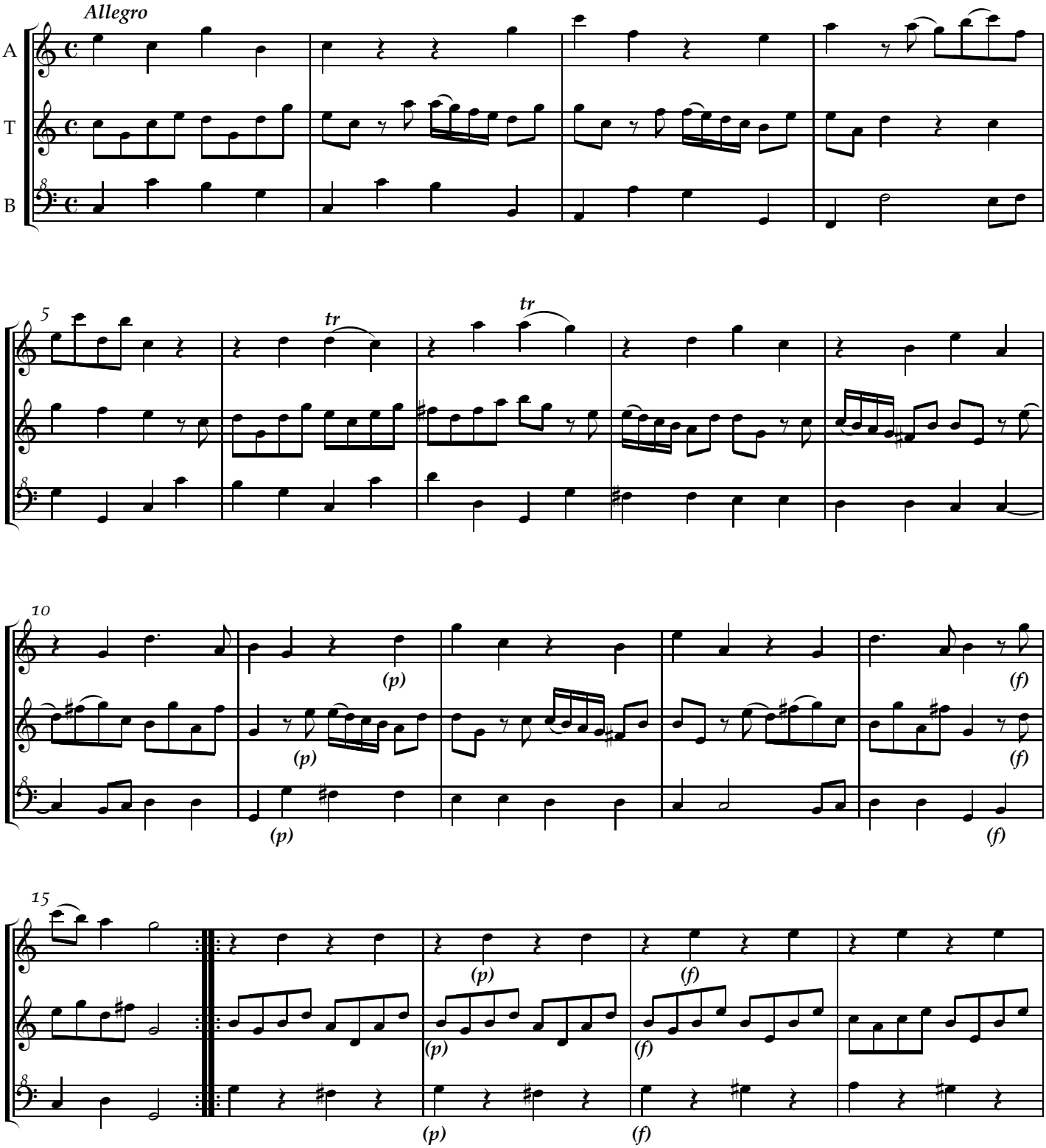
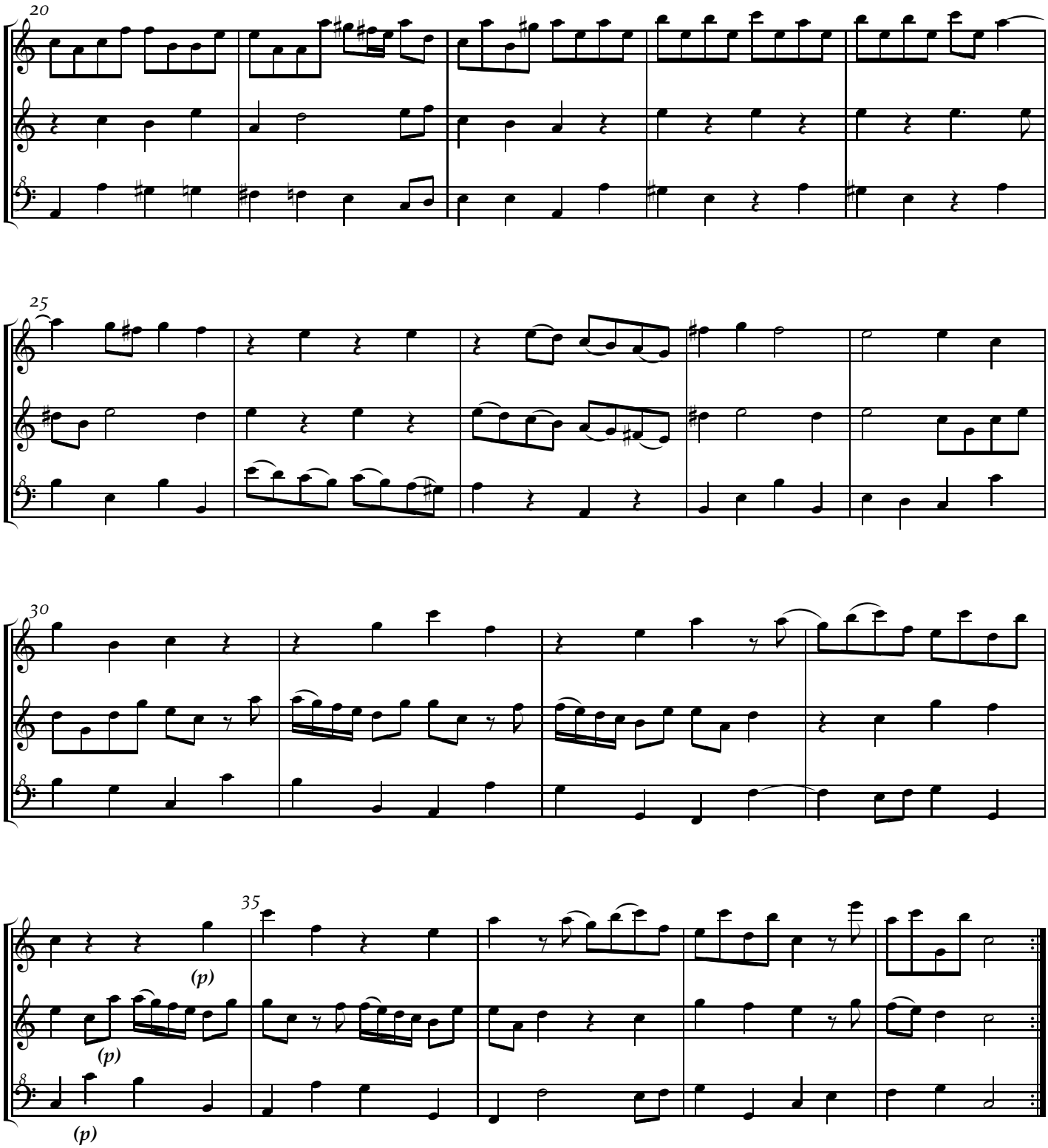
2. Allemanda

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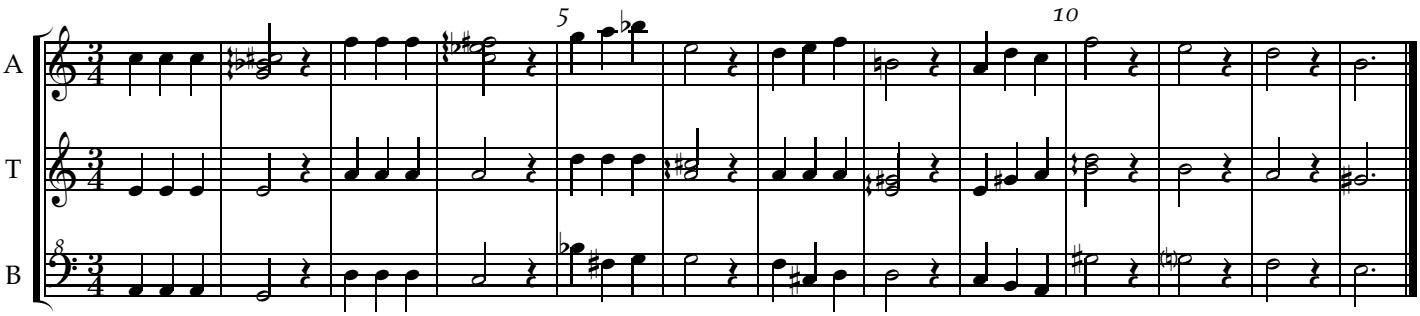
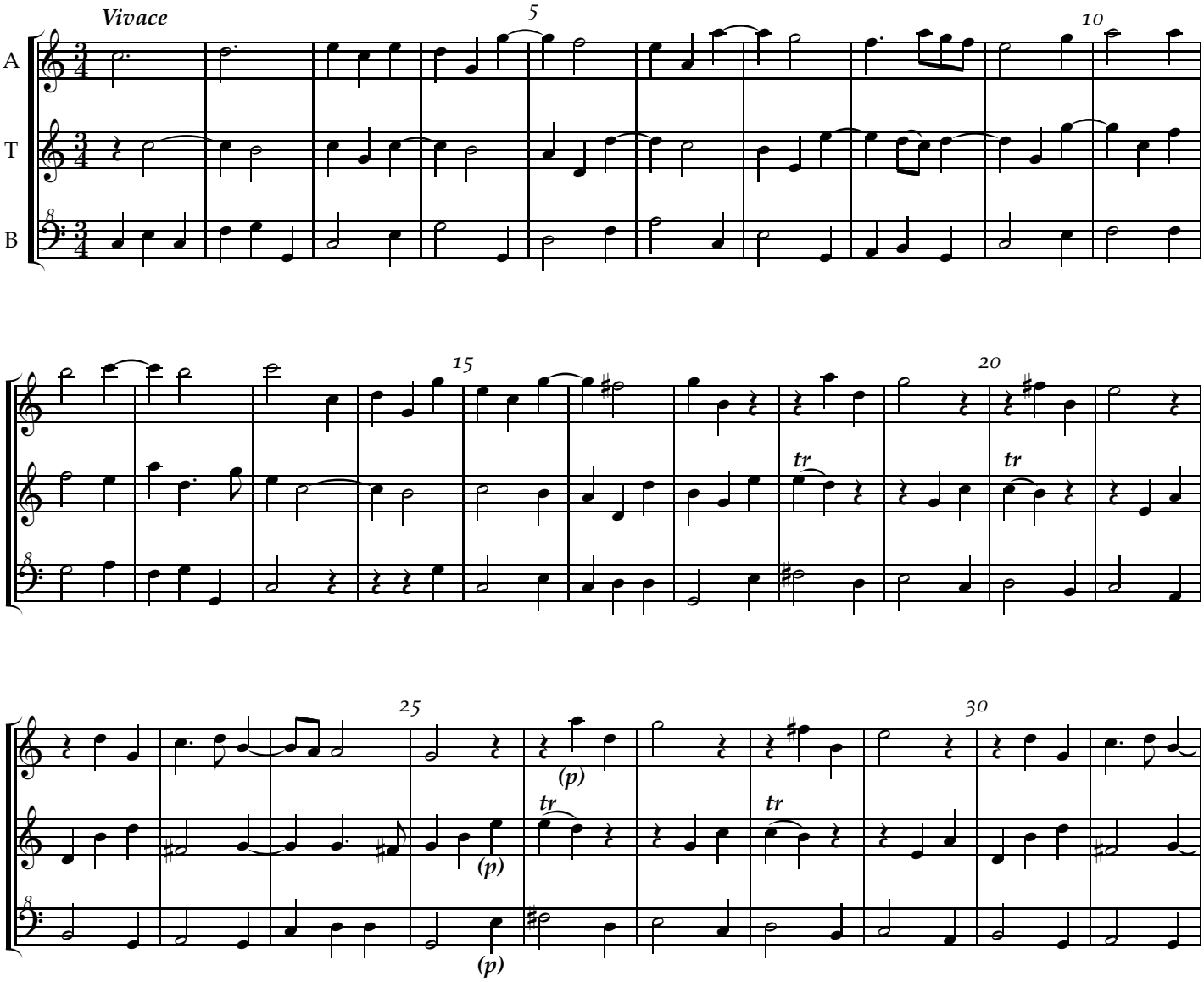
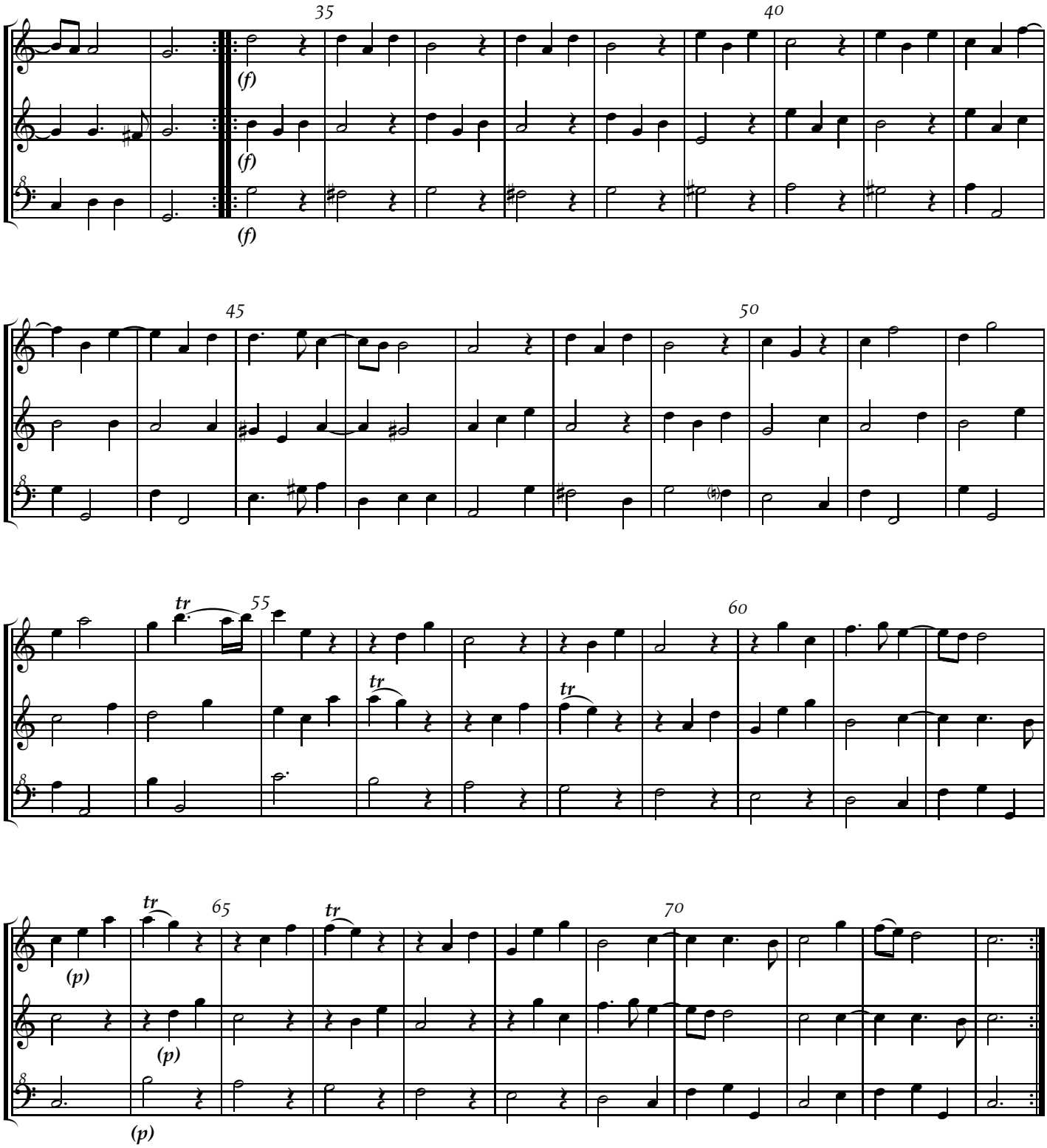
3. Adagio



4. Corrente

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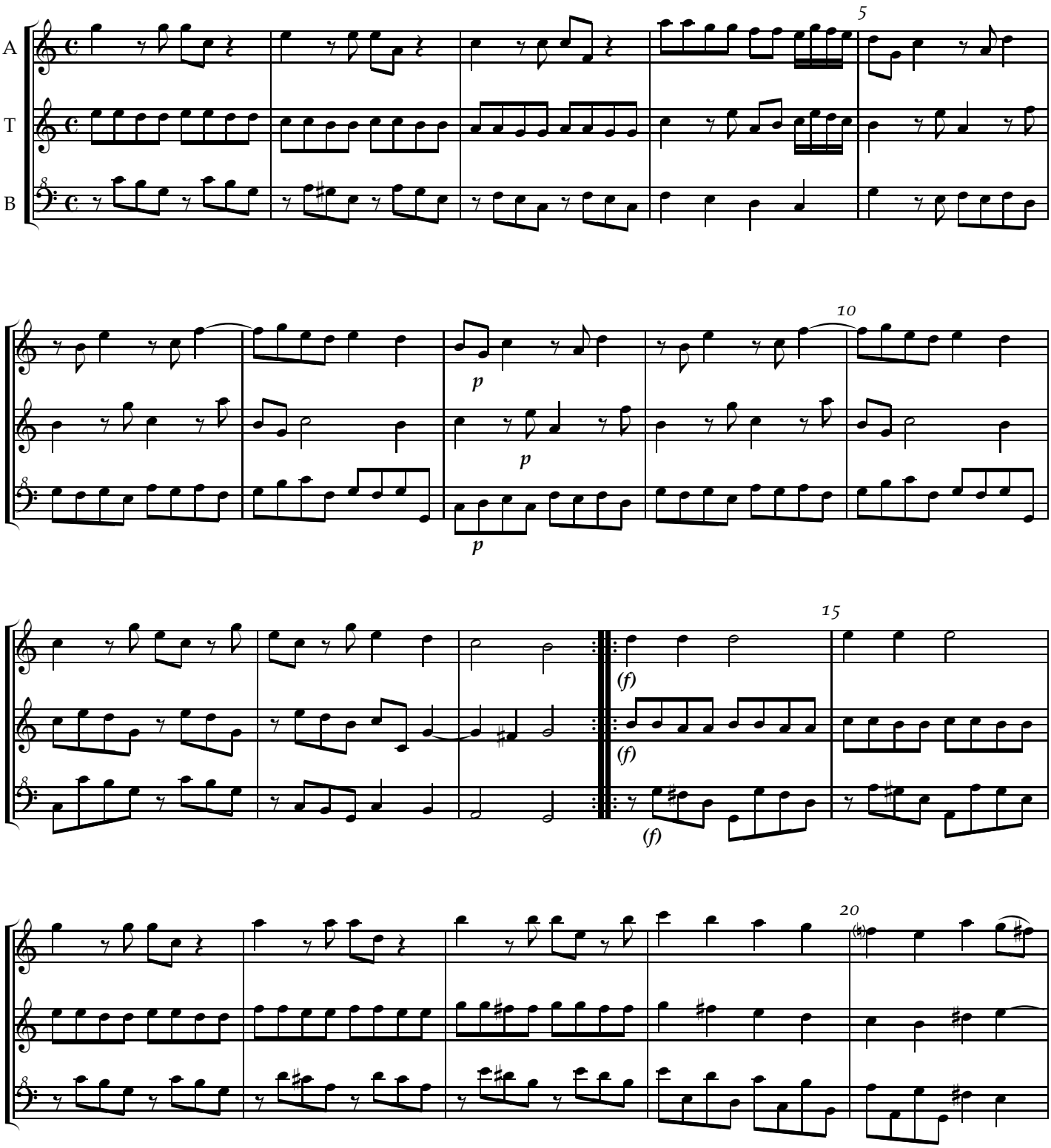
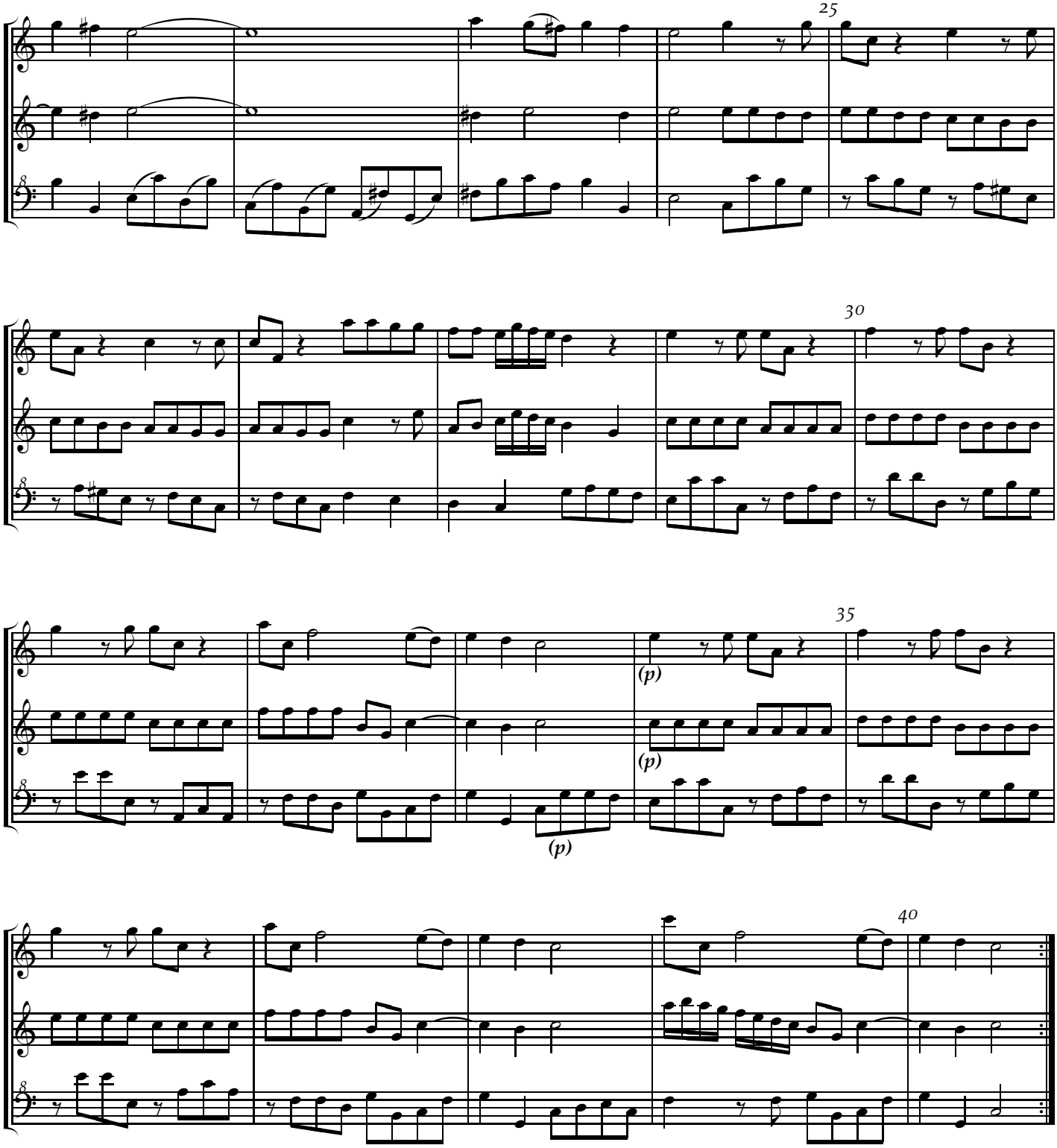
5. Allegro

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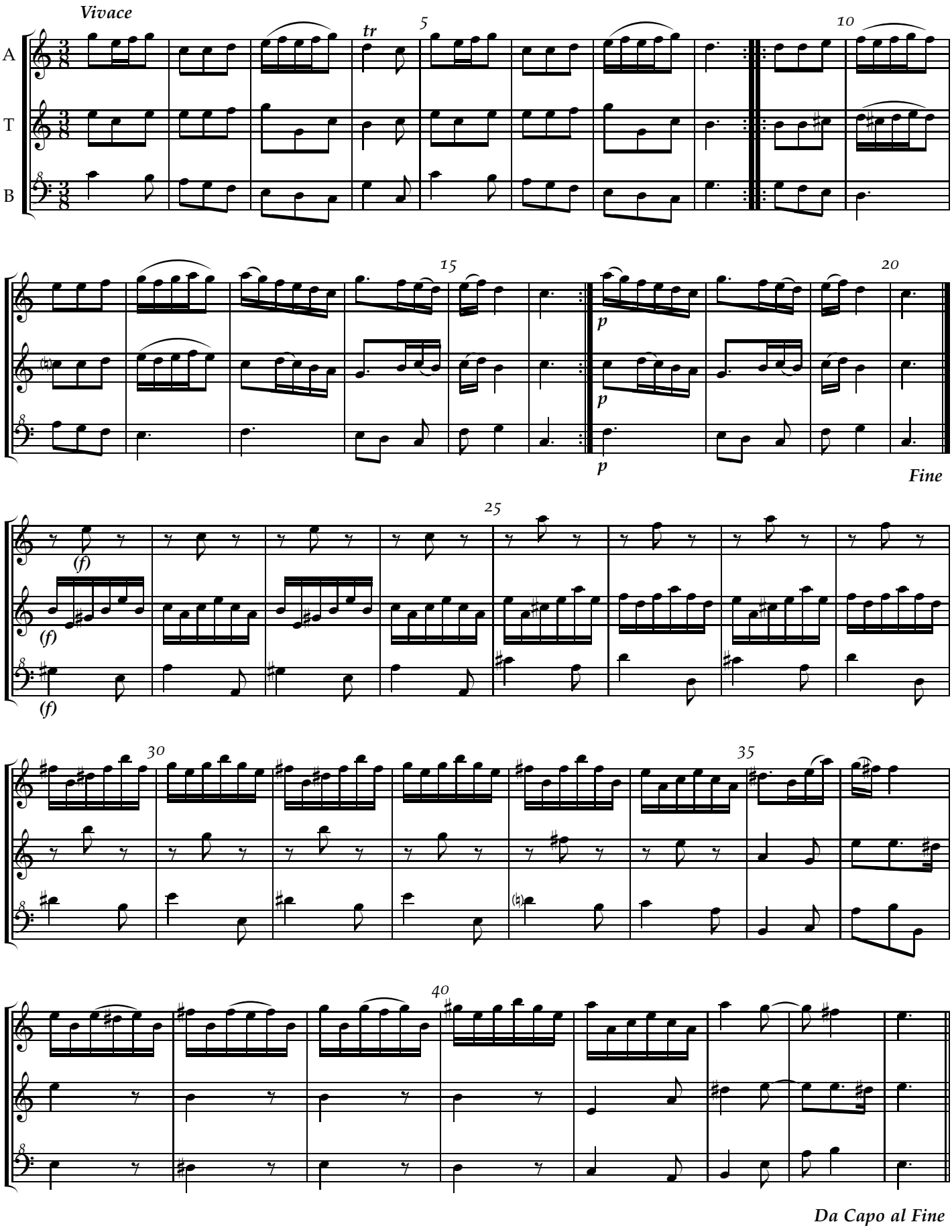
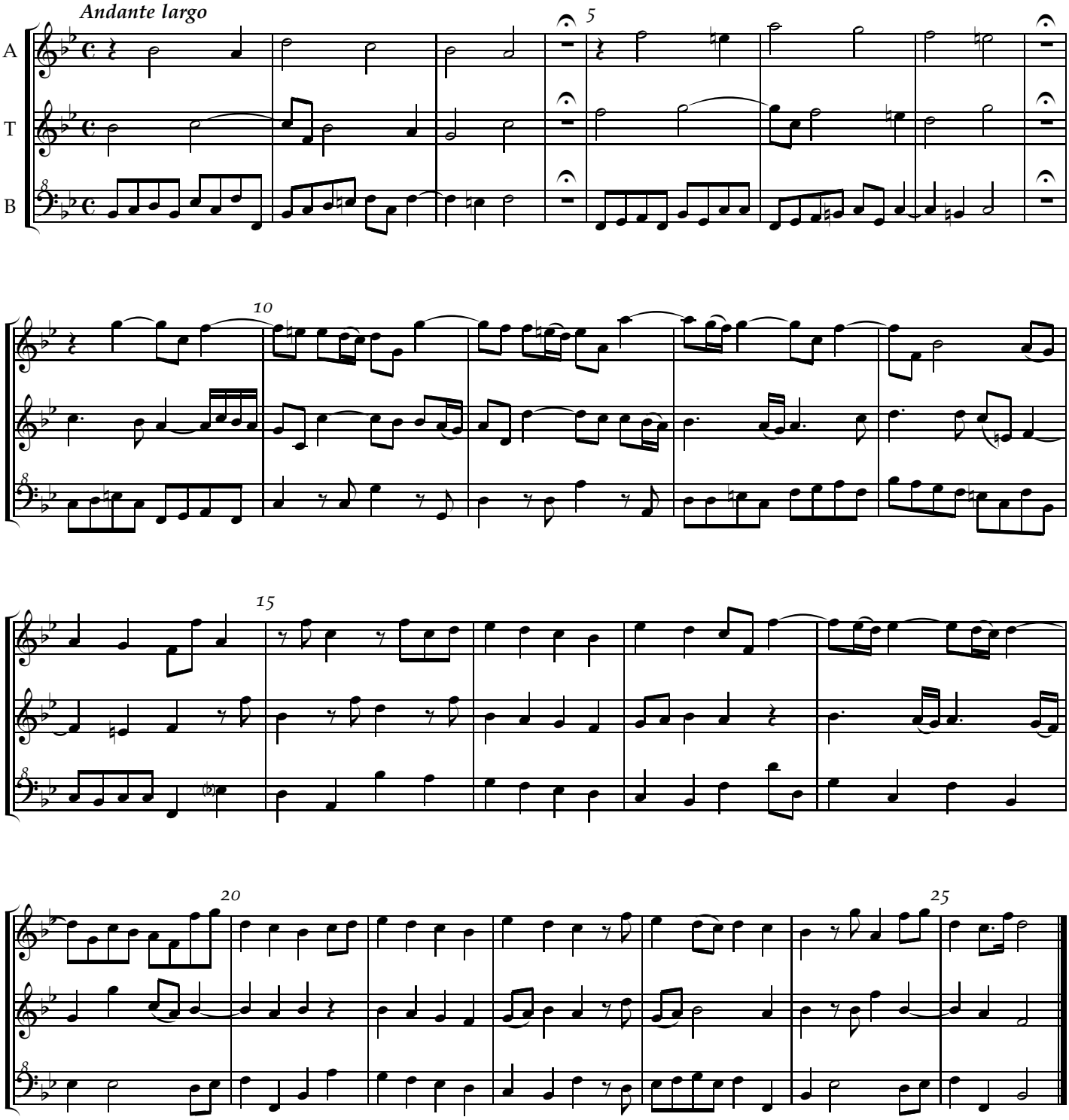
6. Minuetto



Sonata II†

1. Preludio



†Opus 6, No. 11

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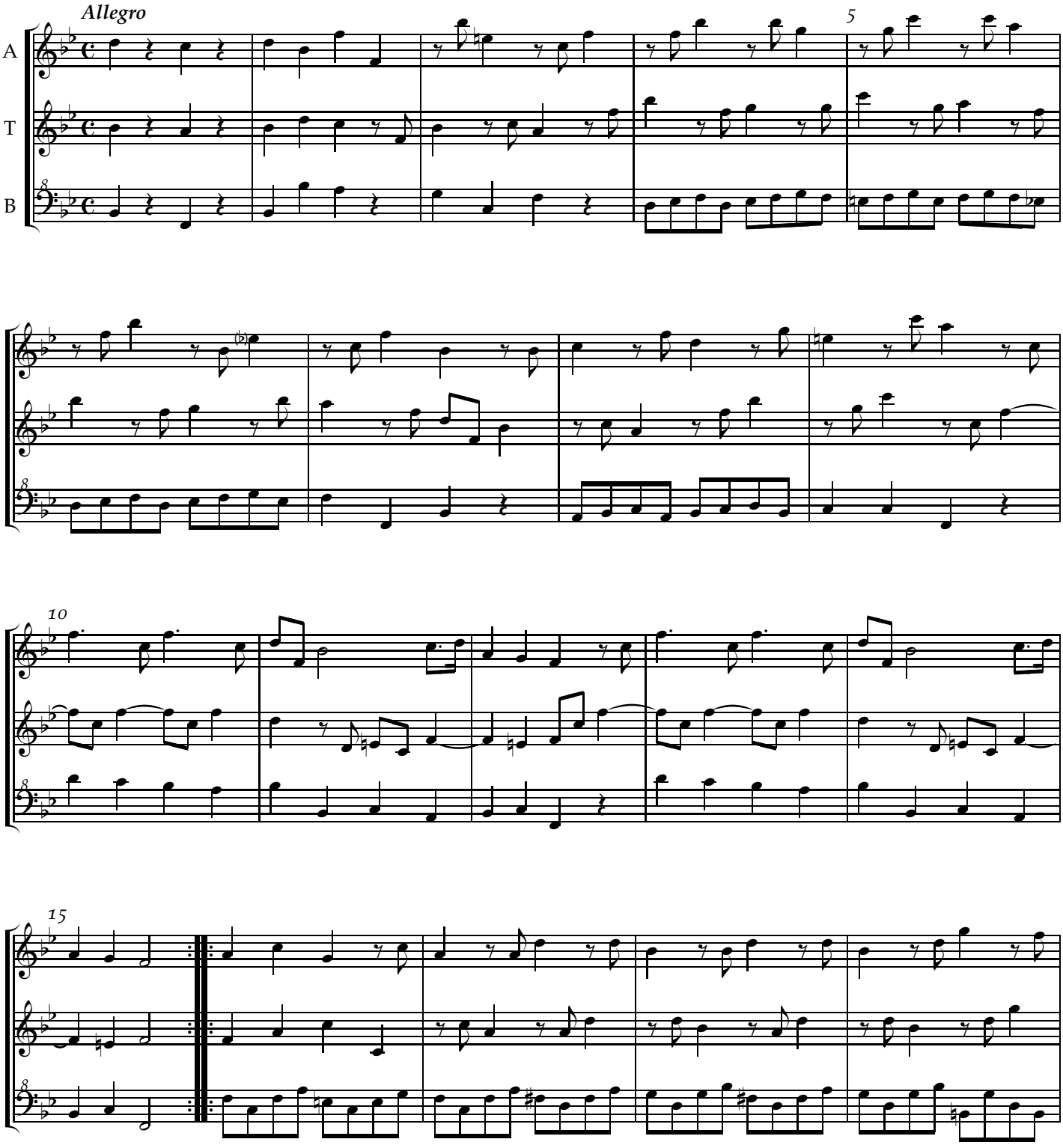

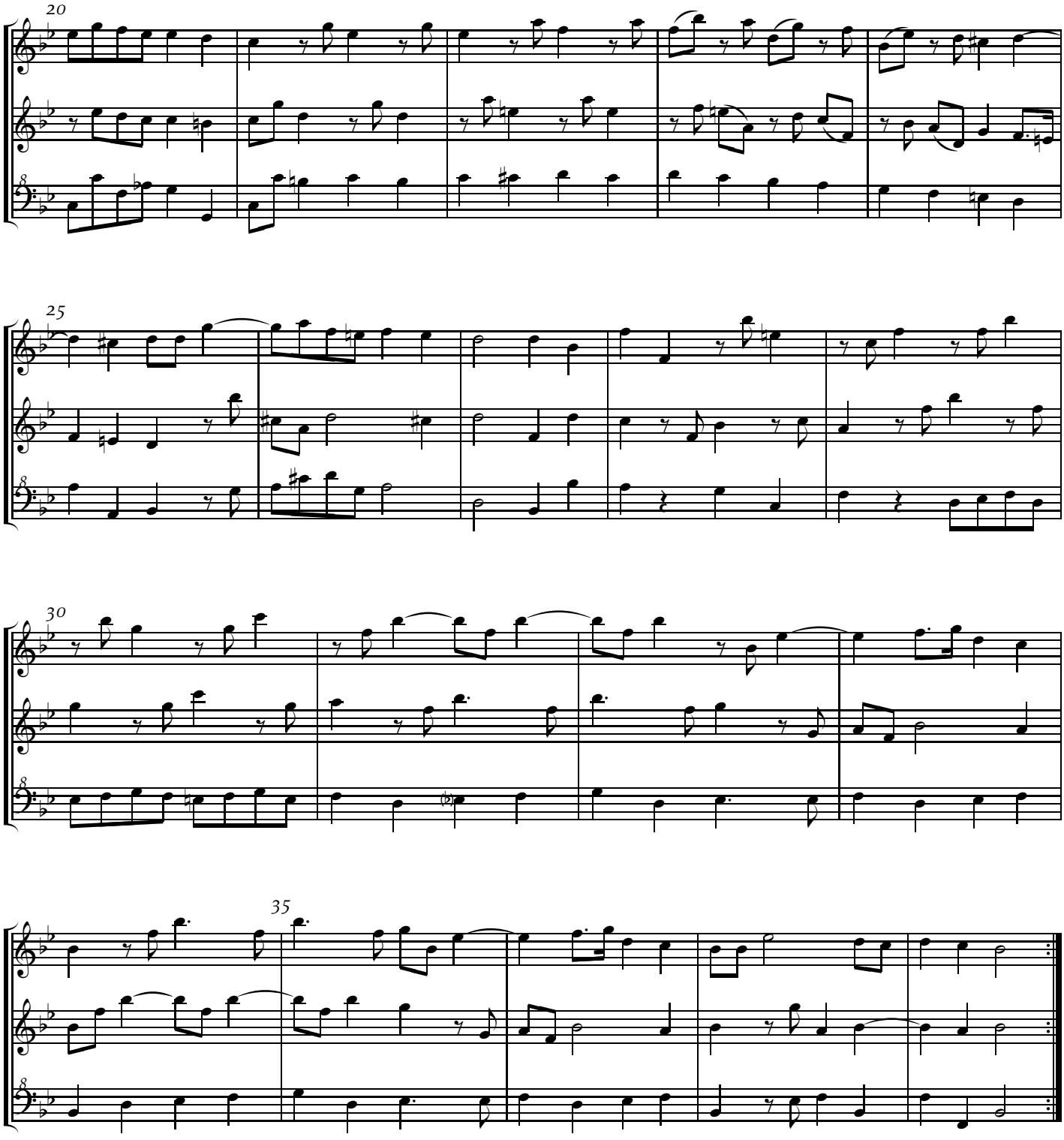
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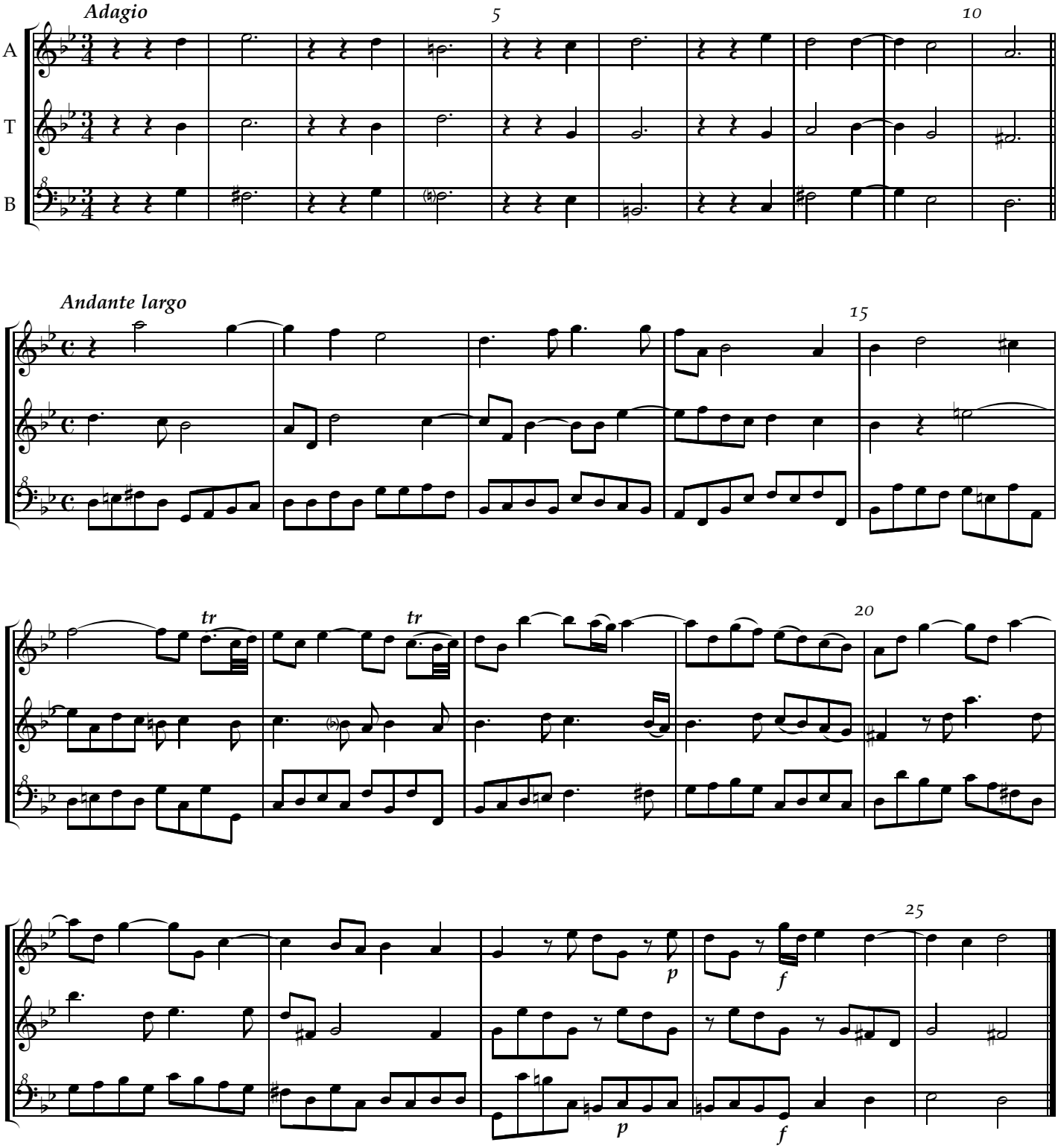
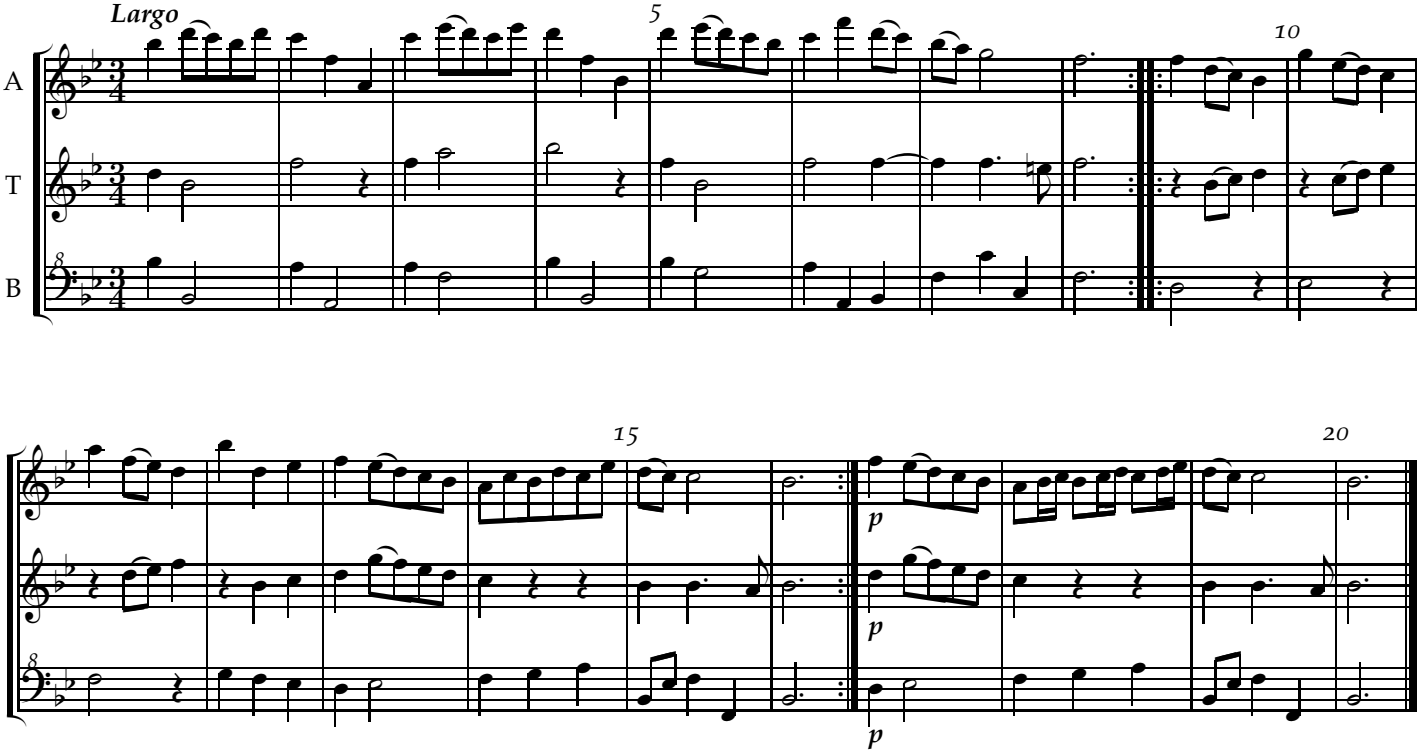
3. Adagio–Andante largo



4. Sarabanda



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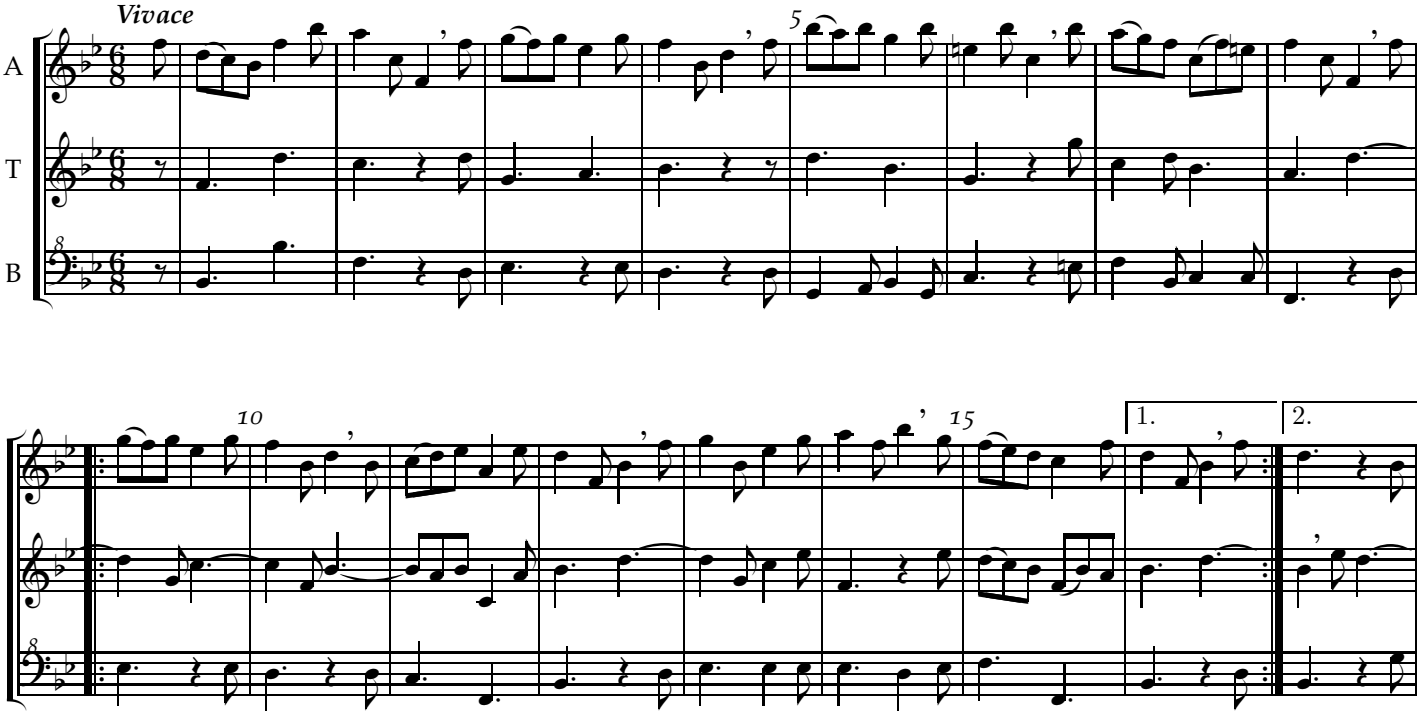

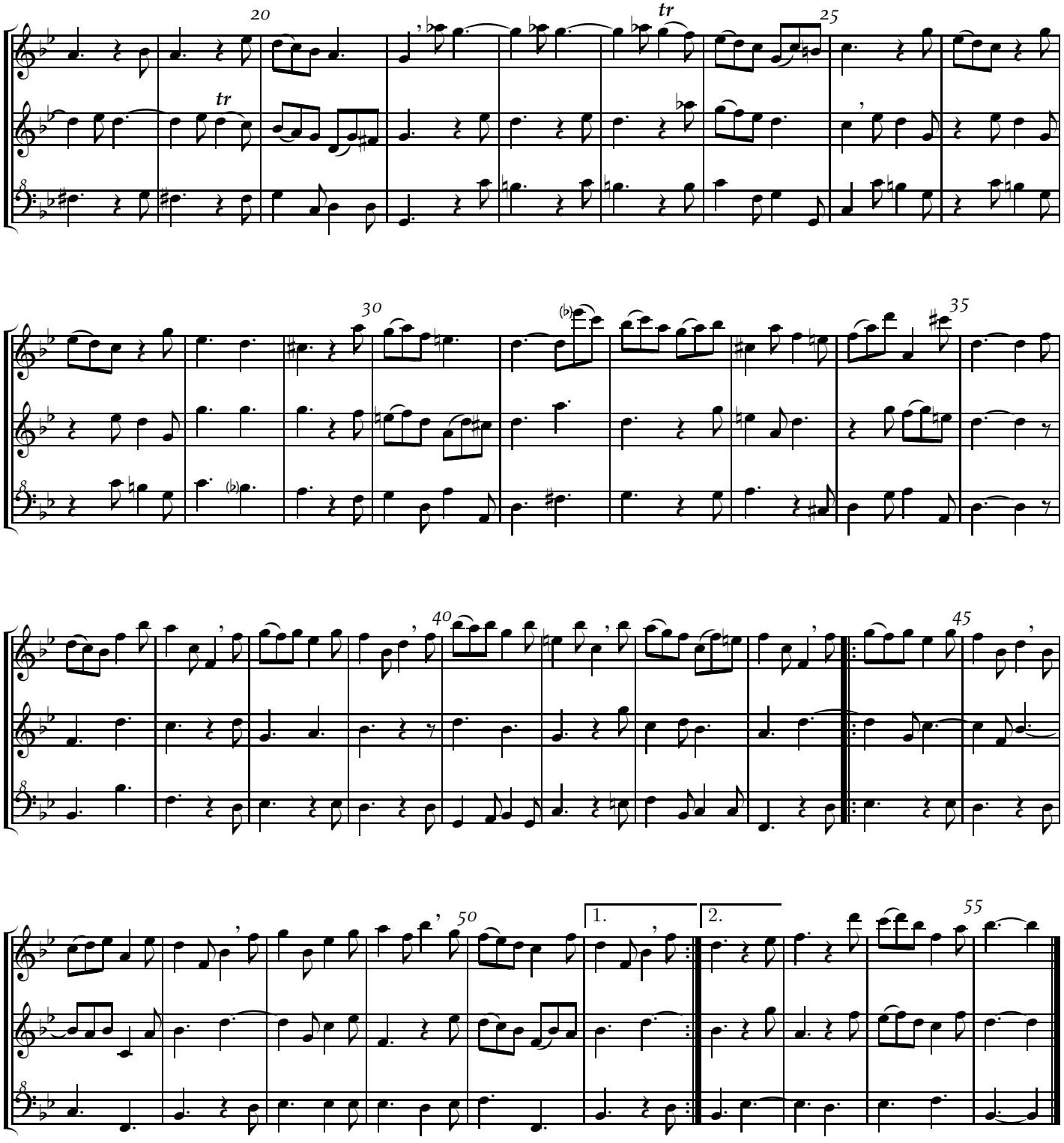
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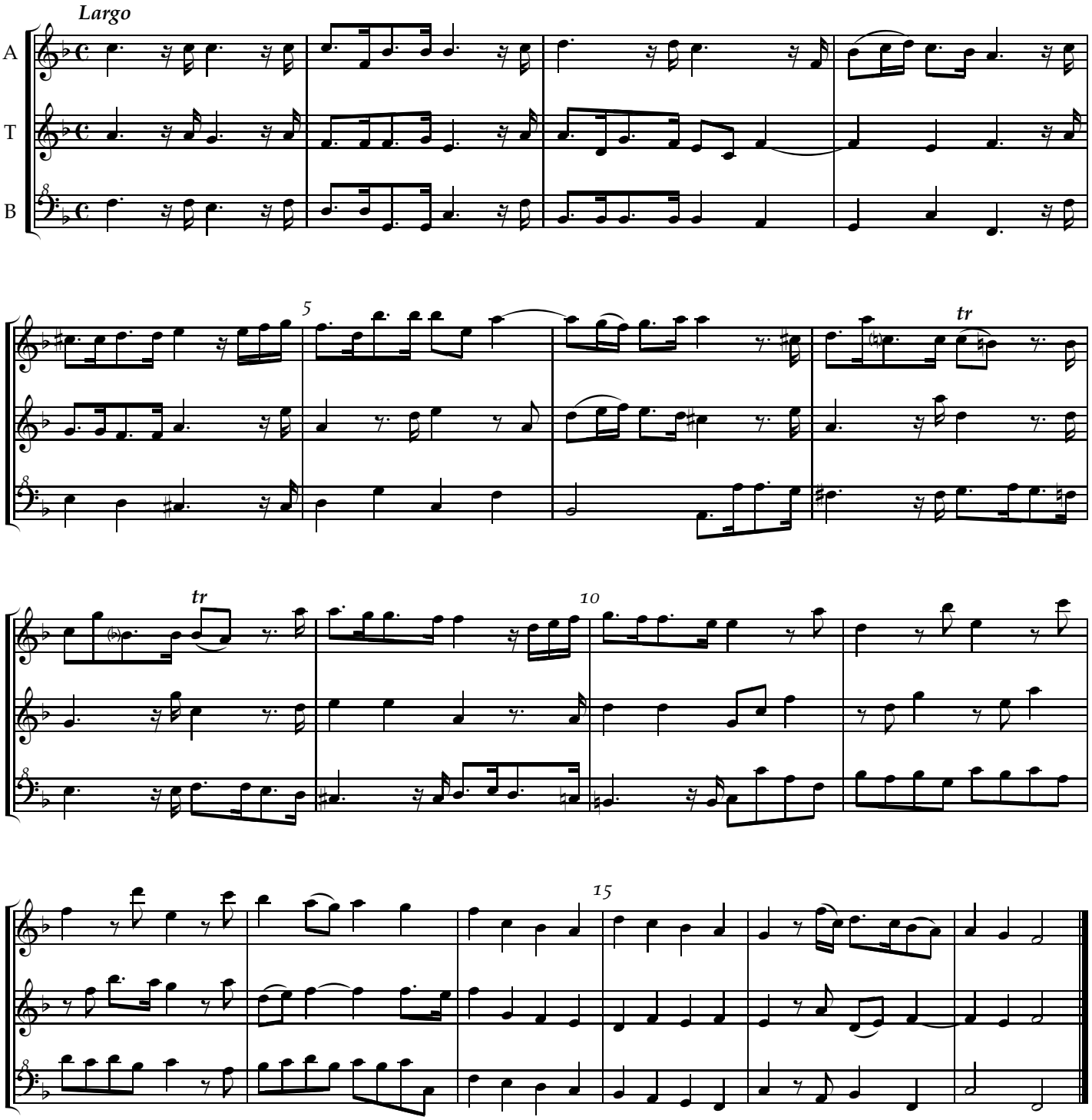
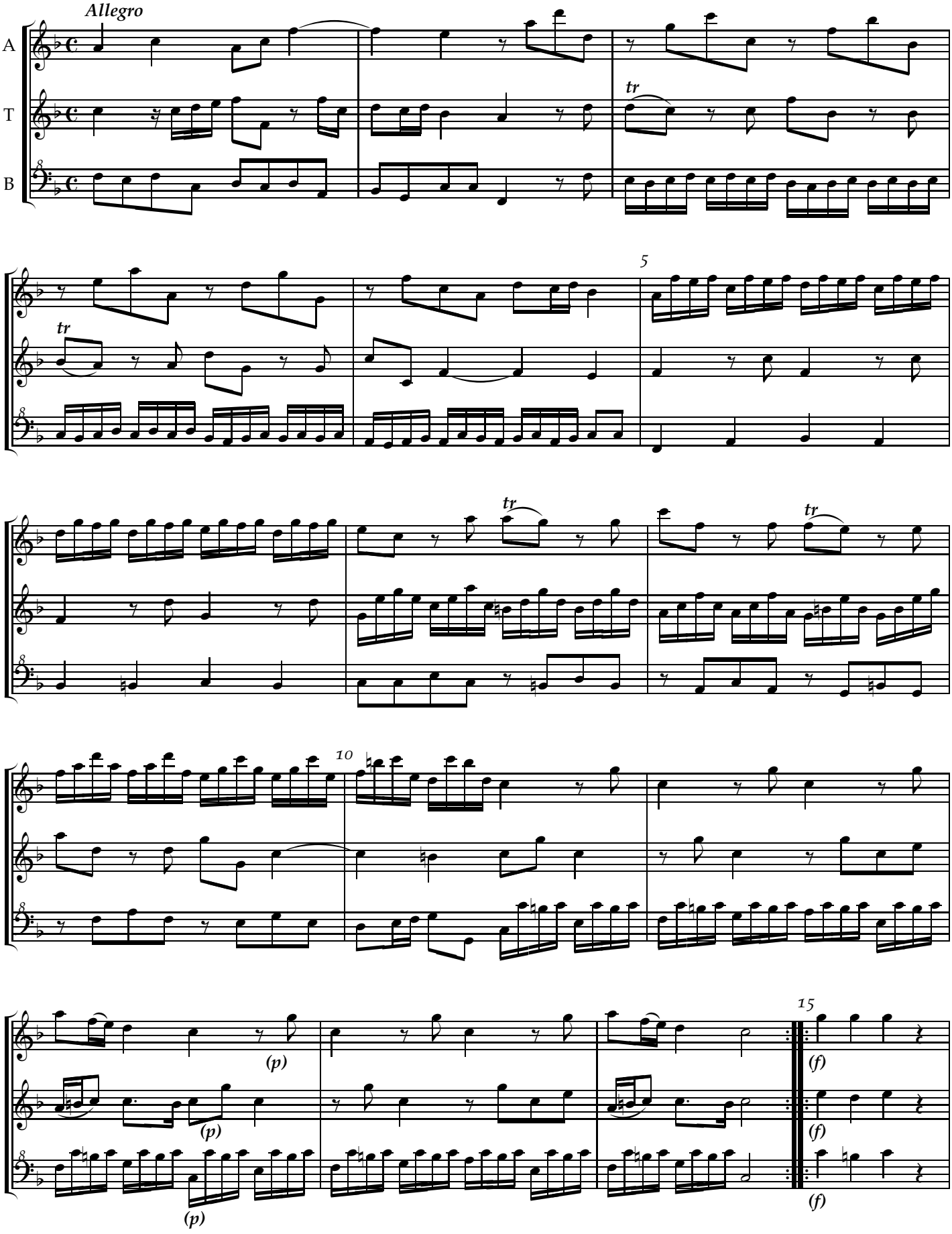
Sonata III†

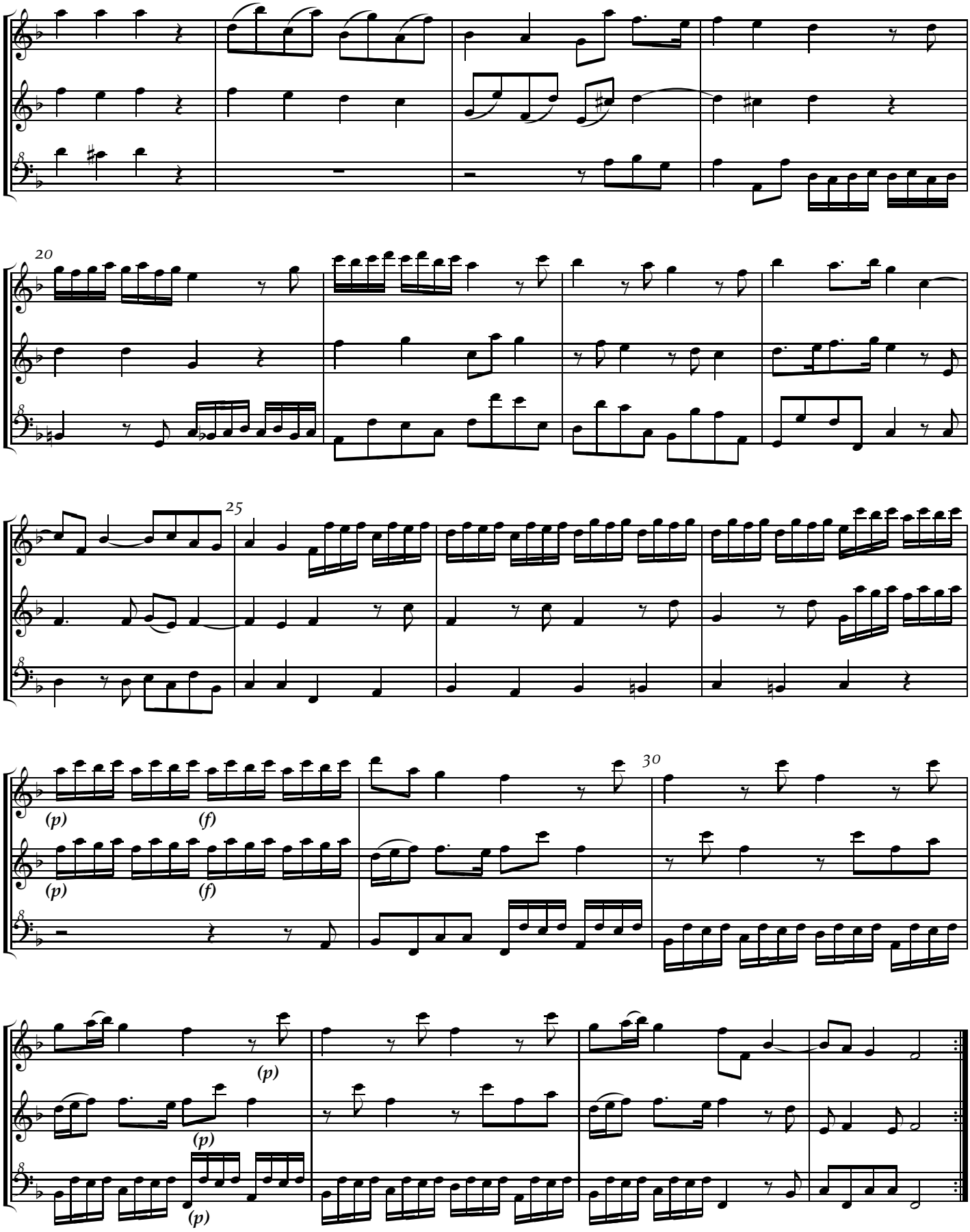
1. Preludio



†Opus 6, No. 9

2. Allemanda

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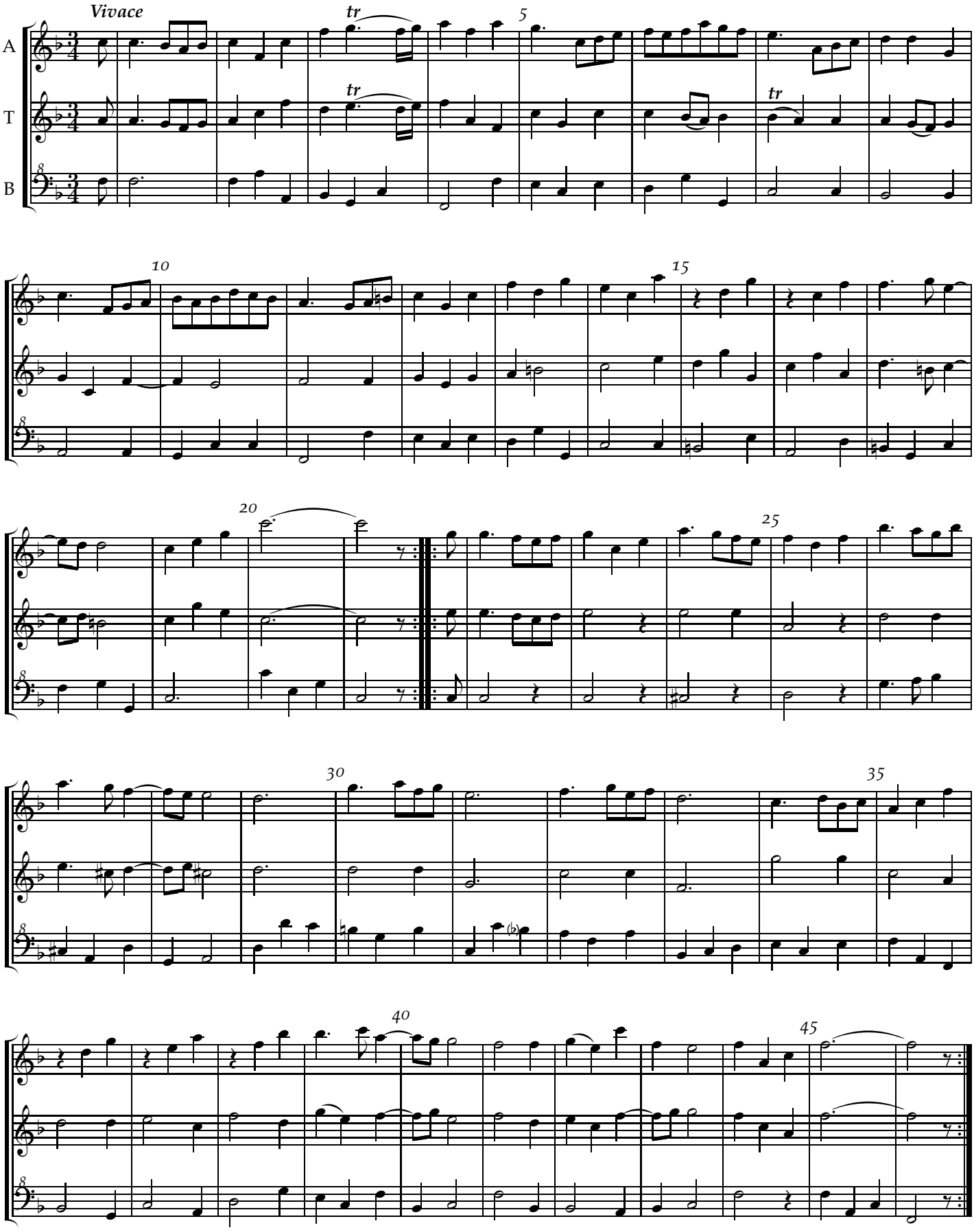
3. Corrente



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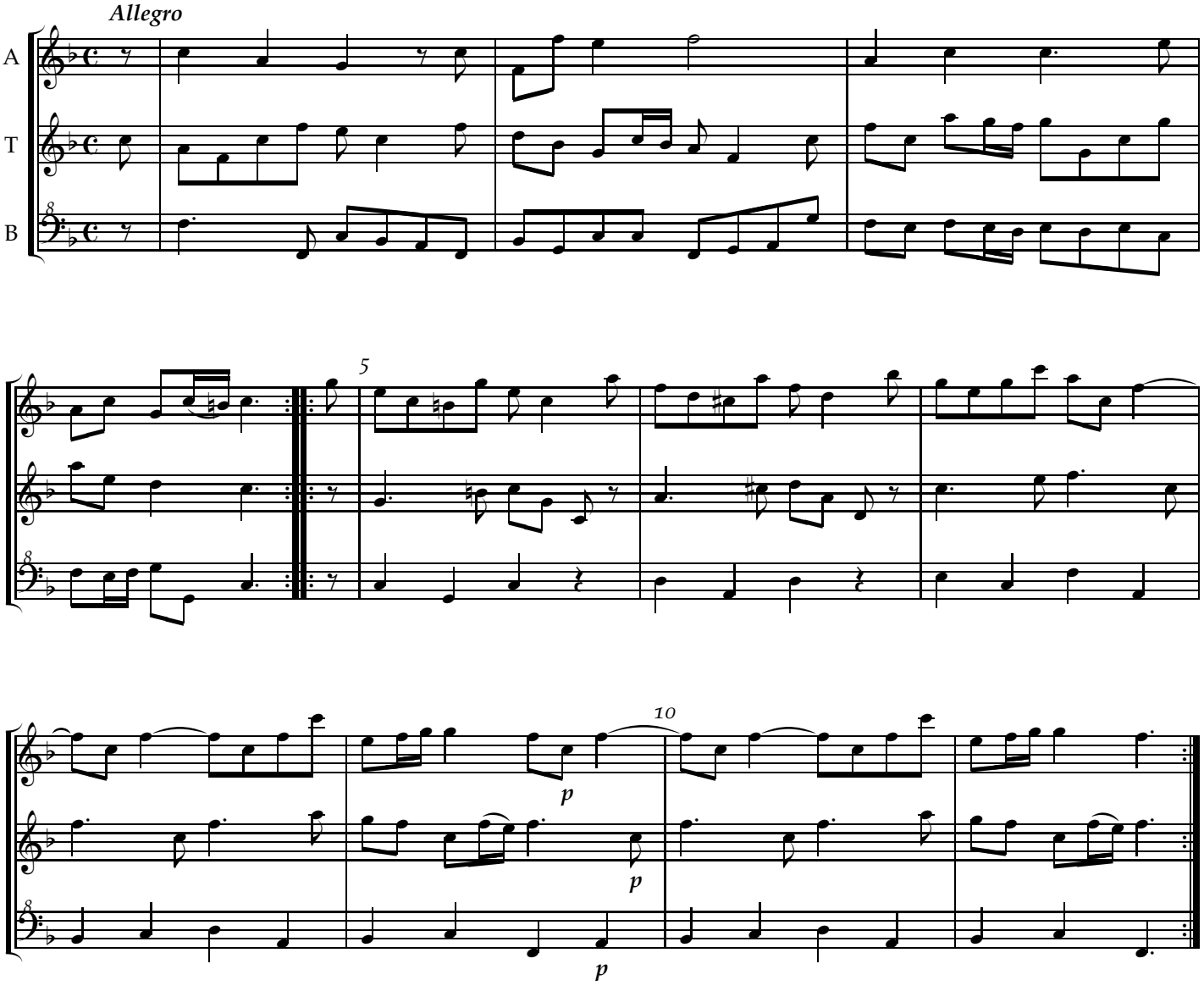

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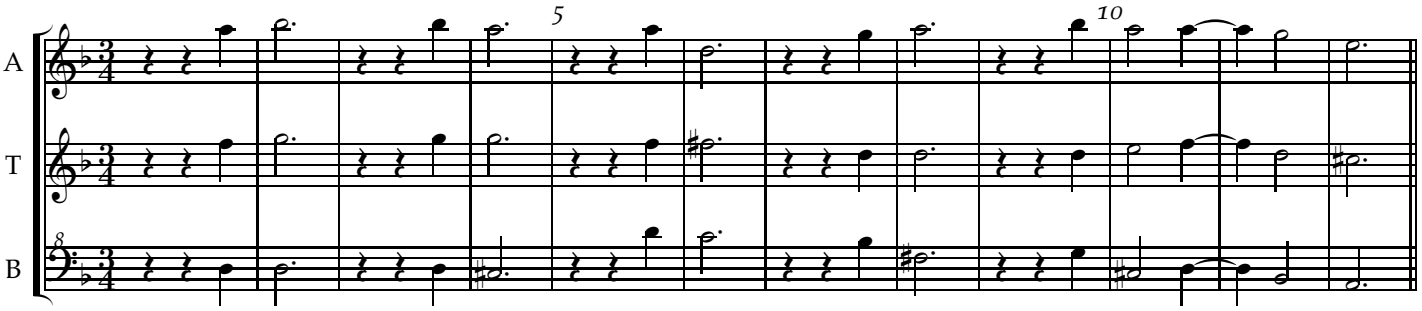
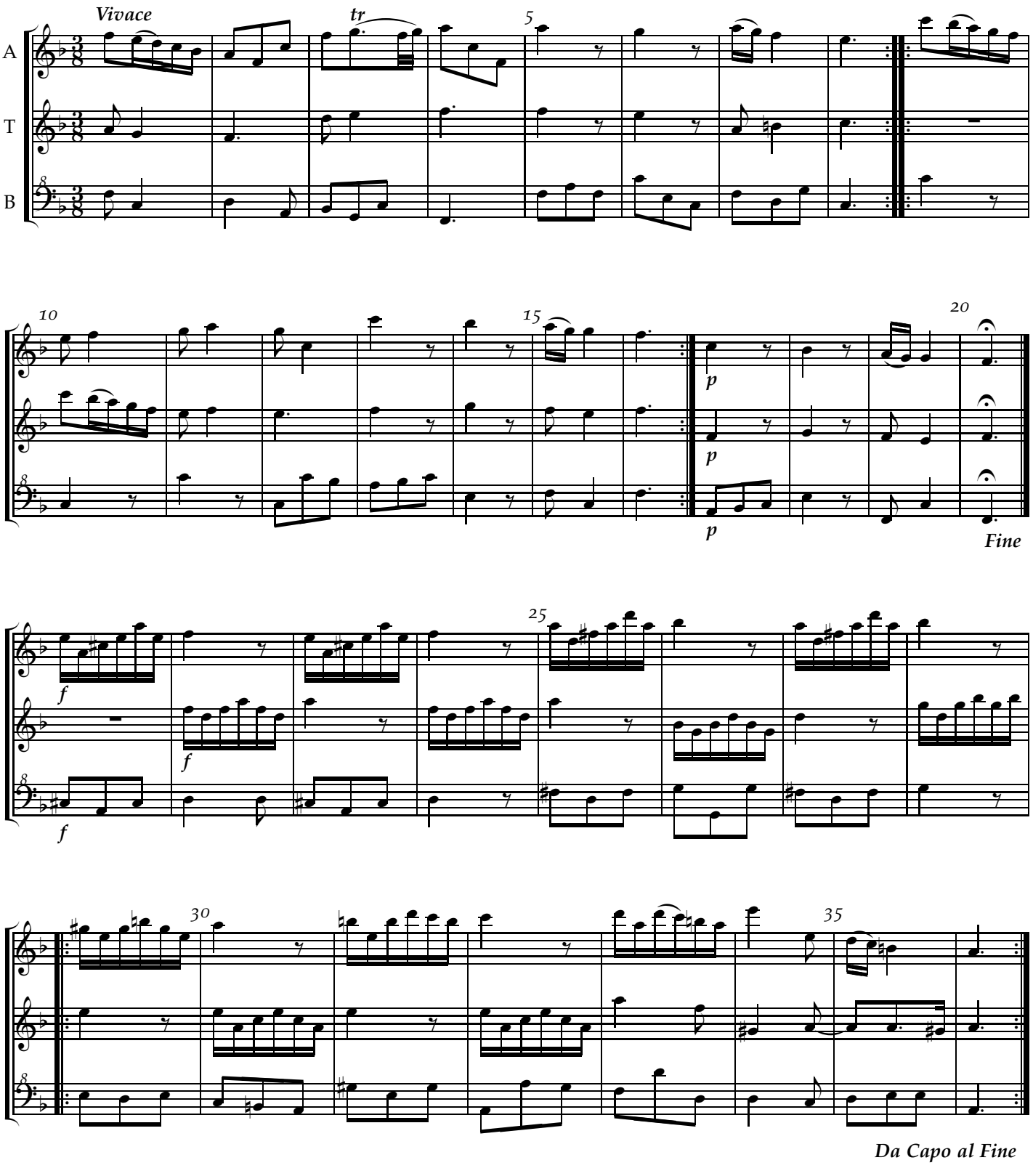
6. Minuetto