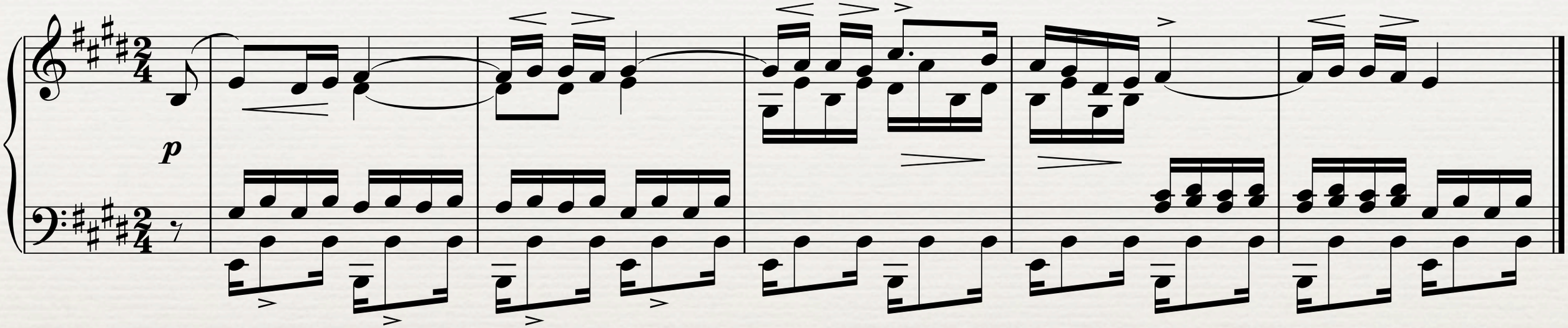
Melody and Counterpoint

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



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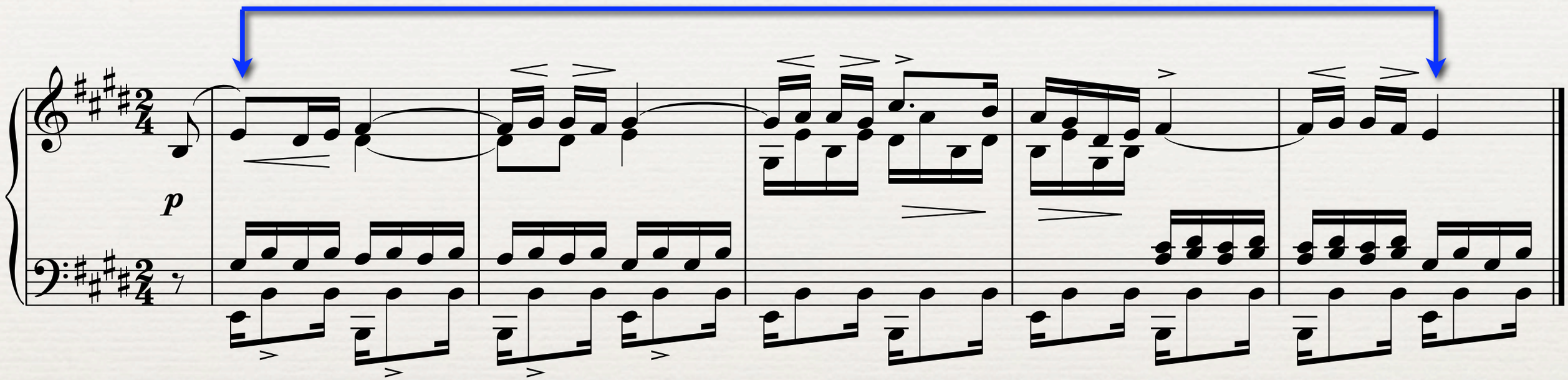

- The melody outlines a symmetrical arch from E at the beginning to E at the end.

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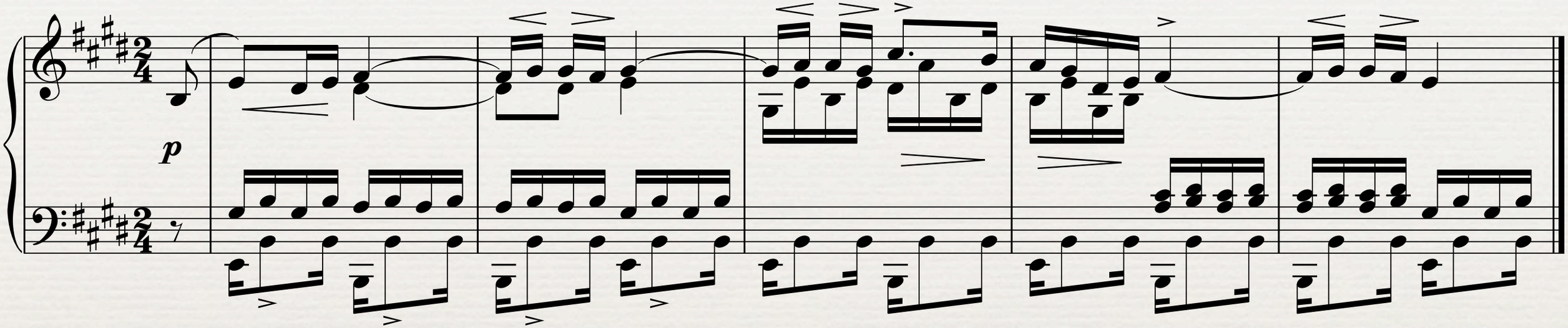

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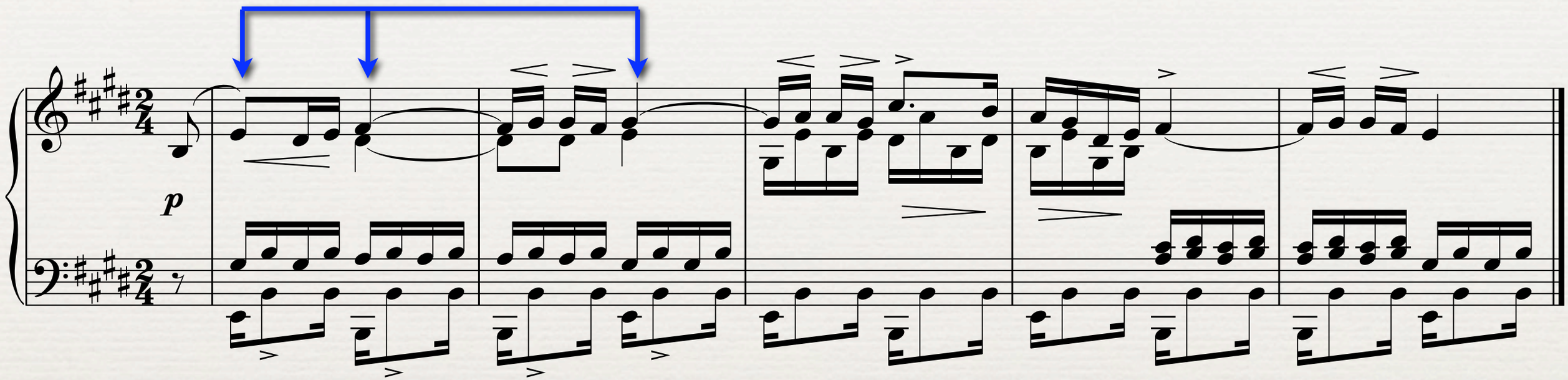
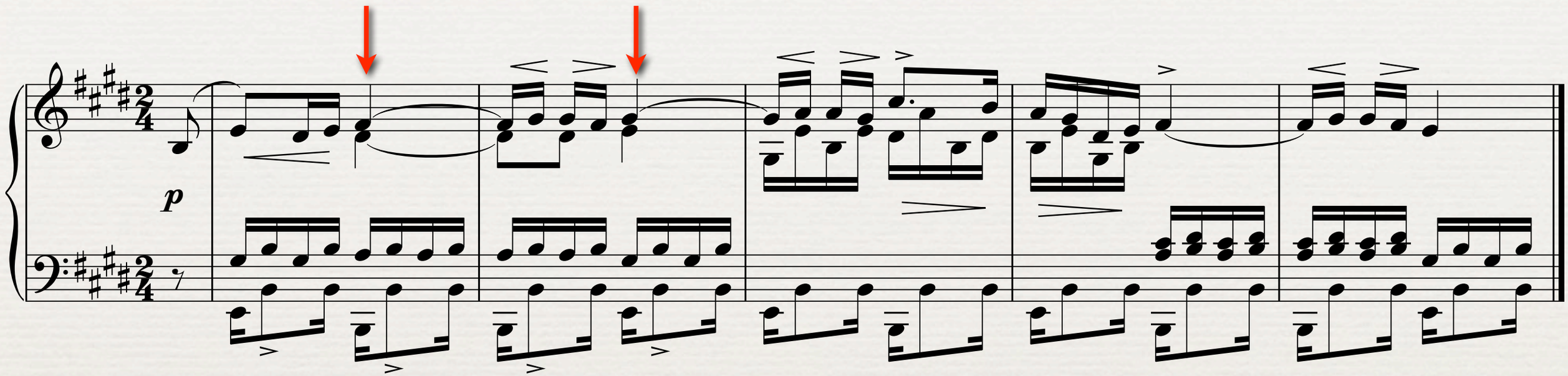


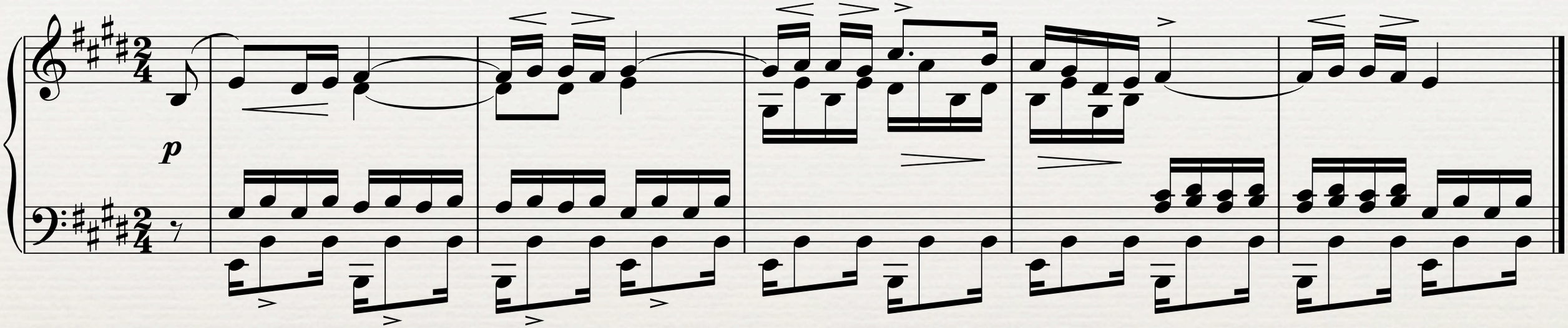
- In bars 1 - 2 these notes are heard as primary, with neighbor figures decorating but not fundamentally altering the stepwise ascent.

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



- In bars 1 - 2 these notes are heard as primary, with neighbor figures decorating but not fundamentally altering the stepwise ascent.
- Note that the extended tones F# and G# occur on the second beat and are tied over to the following downbeat, creating a syncopation.

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



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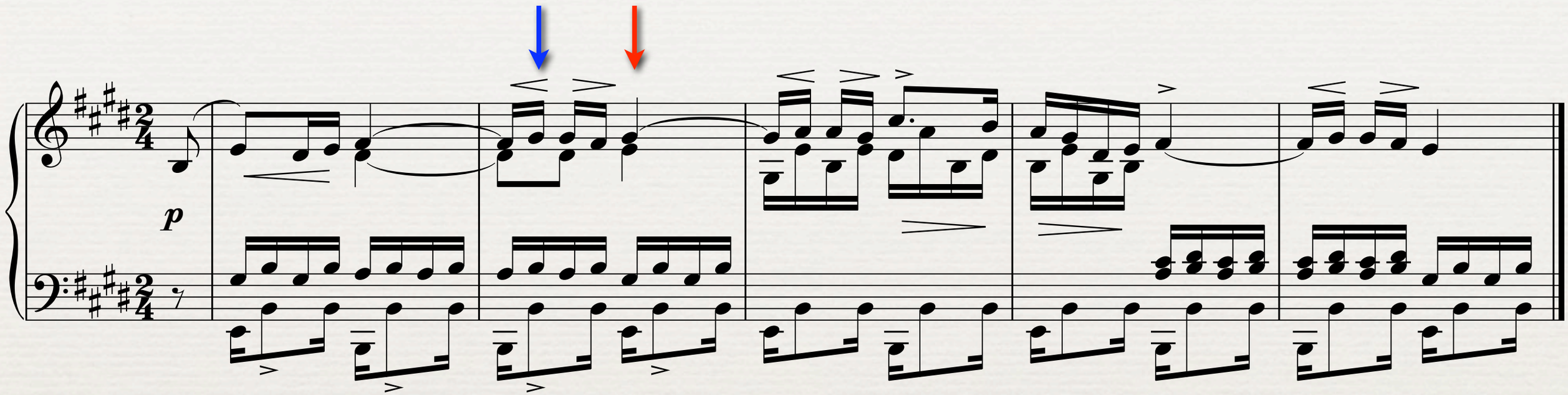
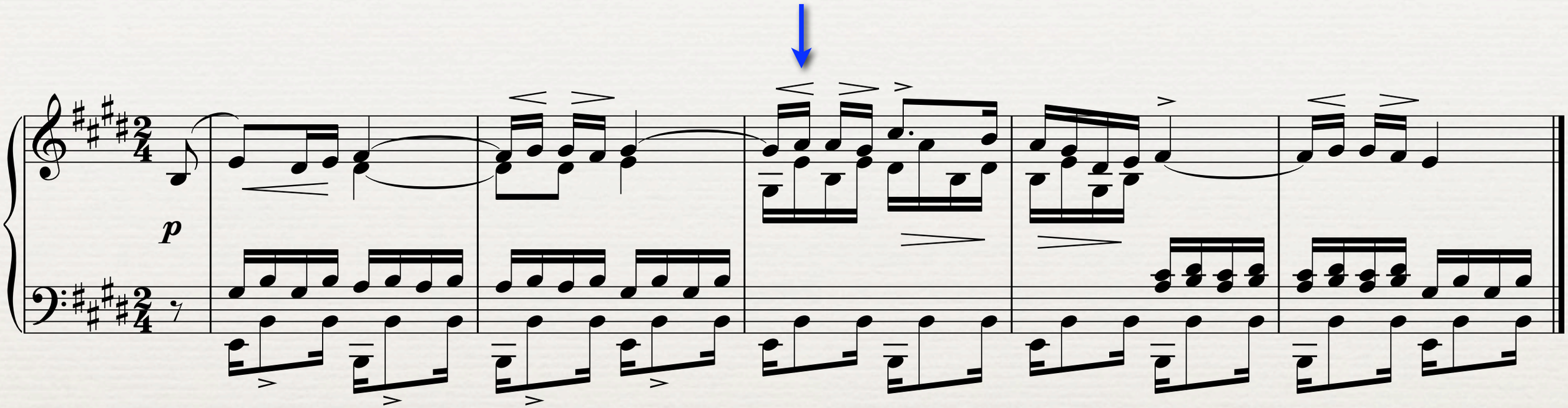


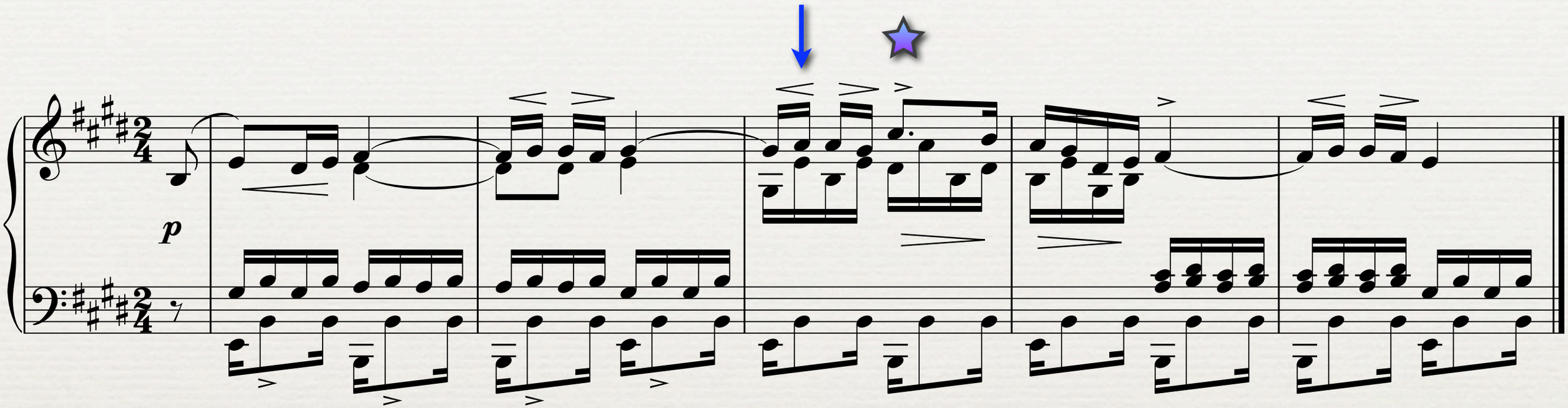
- In bar 2, the G# neighbor tone on the first beat anticipates the longer G# on the second beat.

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



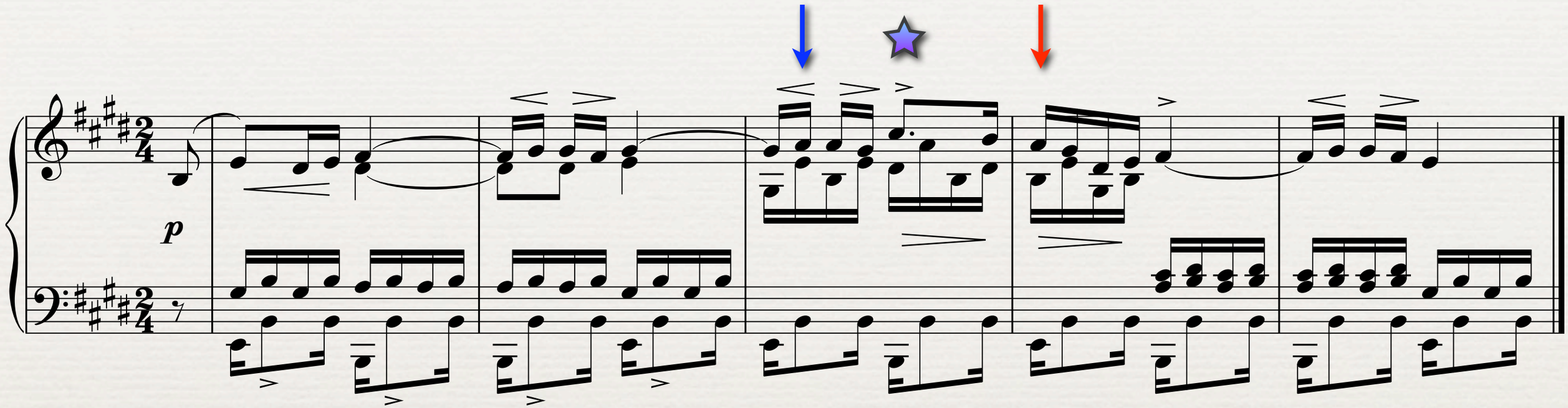
- In bar 2, the G# neighbor tone on the first beat anticipates the longer G# on the second beat.
- We expect the same thing to happen in bar 3

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



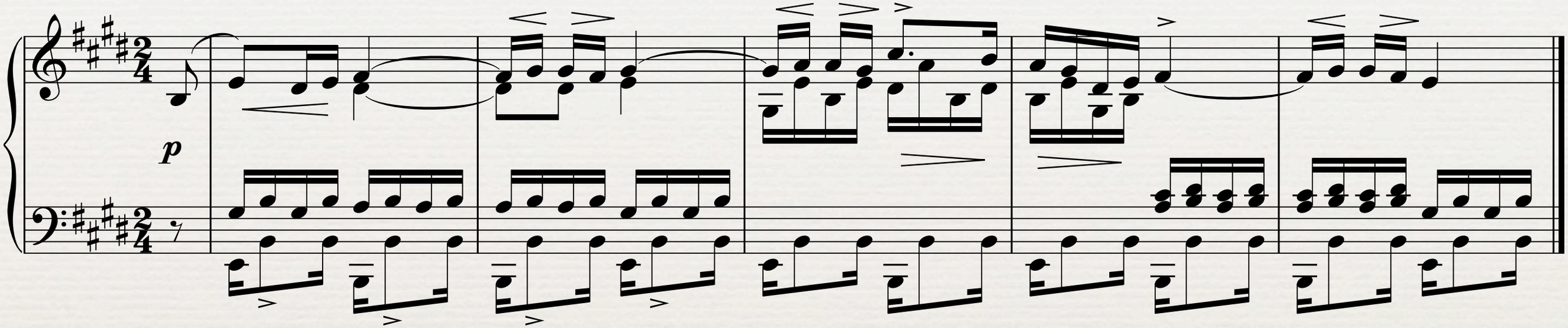
- In bar 2, the G# neighbor tone on the first beat anticipates the longer G# on the second beat.
- We expect the same thing to happen in bar 3
  - Instead a leap to C# takes place

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



- In bar 2, the G# neighbor tone on the first beat anticipates the longer G# on the second beat.
- We expect the same thing to happen in bar 3
  - Instead a leap to C# takes place
  - This shifts the expected A natural to the downbeat of bar 4.

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



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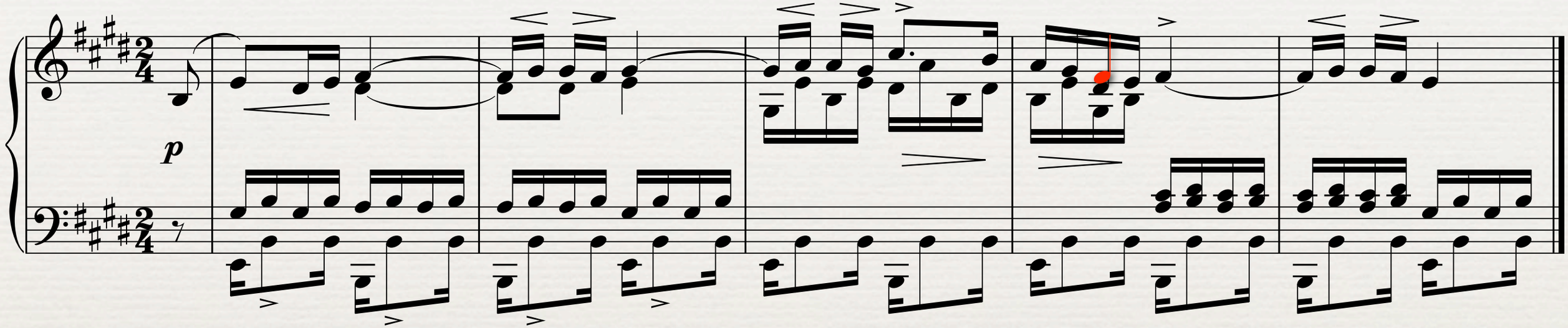
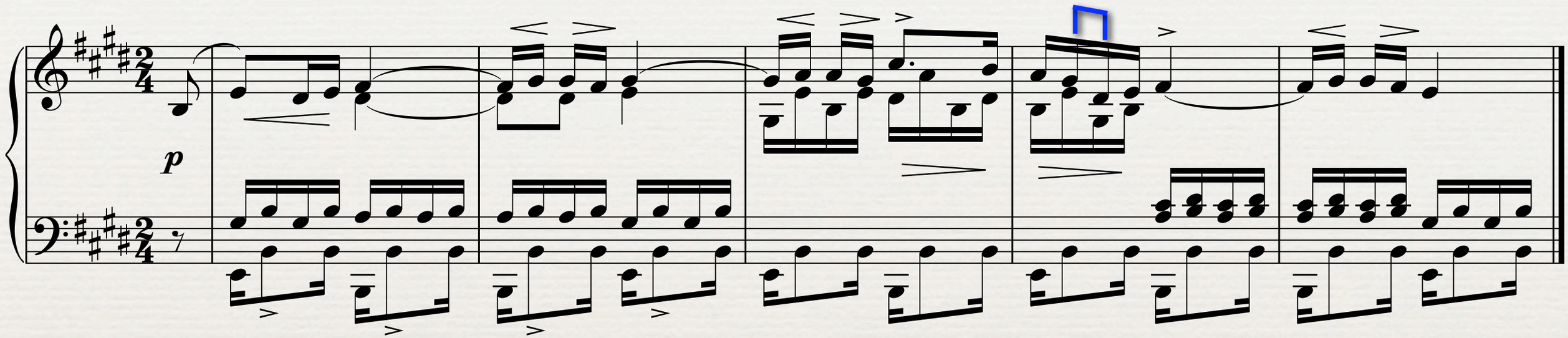


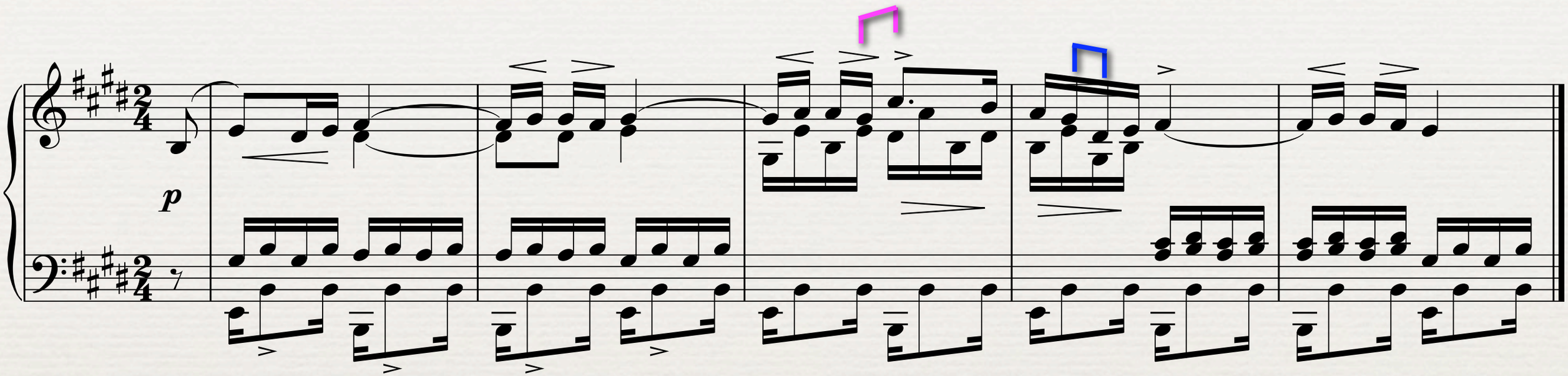
- Because the A is followed by a G#, we might expect to continue the stepwise downwards motion to an F#.

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



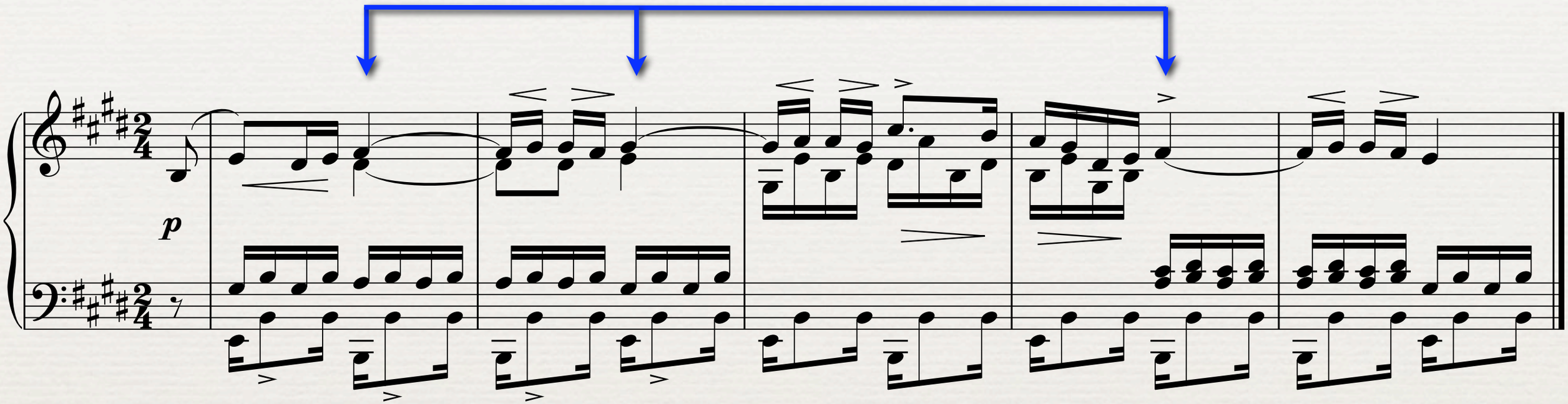
- Because the A is followed by a G#, we might expect to continue the stepwise downwards motion to an F#.
- This motion is interrupted by a descending leap to D#

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



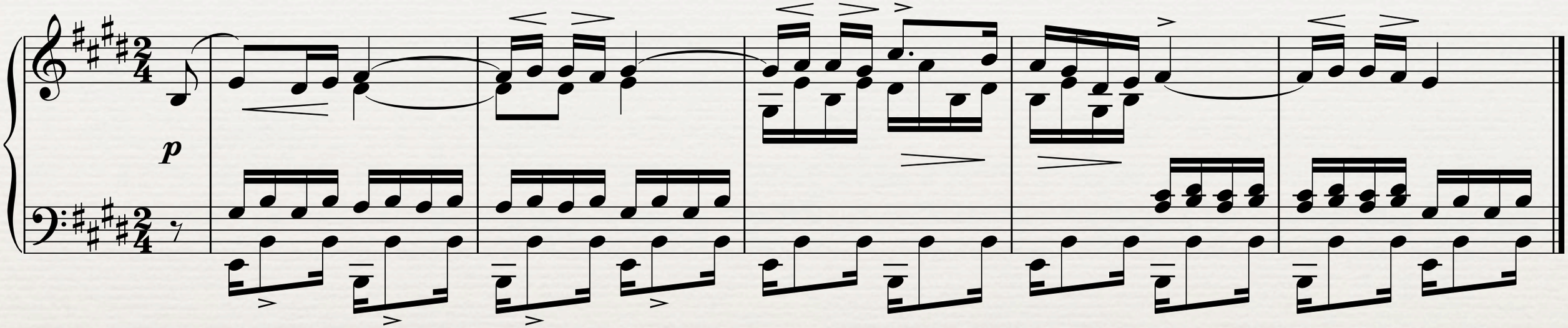
- Because the A is followed by a G#, we might expect to continue the stepwise downwards motion to an F#.
- This motion is interrupted by a descending leap to D#
    - The descending fourth balances the ascending fourth in bar 3

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



- Because the A is followed by a G#, we might expect to continue the stepwise downwards motion to an F#.
- This motion is interrupted by a descending leap to D#
  - The descending fourth balances the ascending fourth in bar 3
  - The F# arrives on the second beat—and is tied over the barline just like the F# in bar 1, and the G# in bar 2

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



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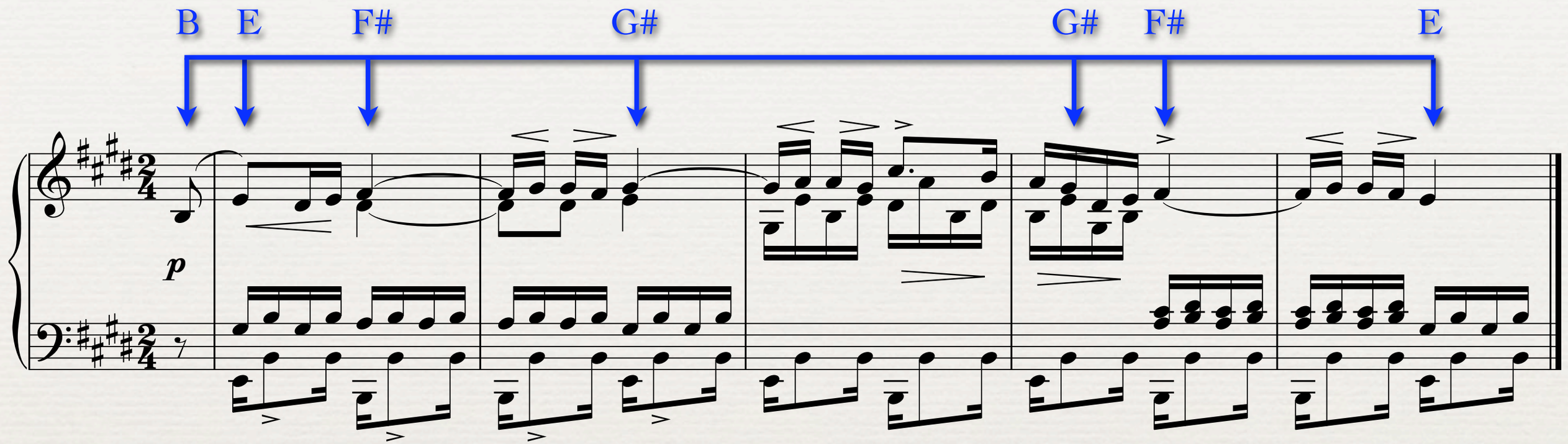
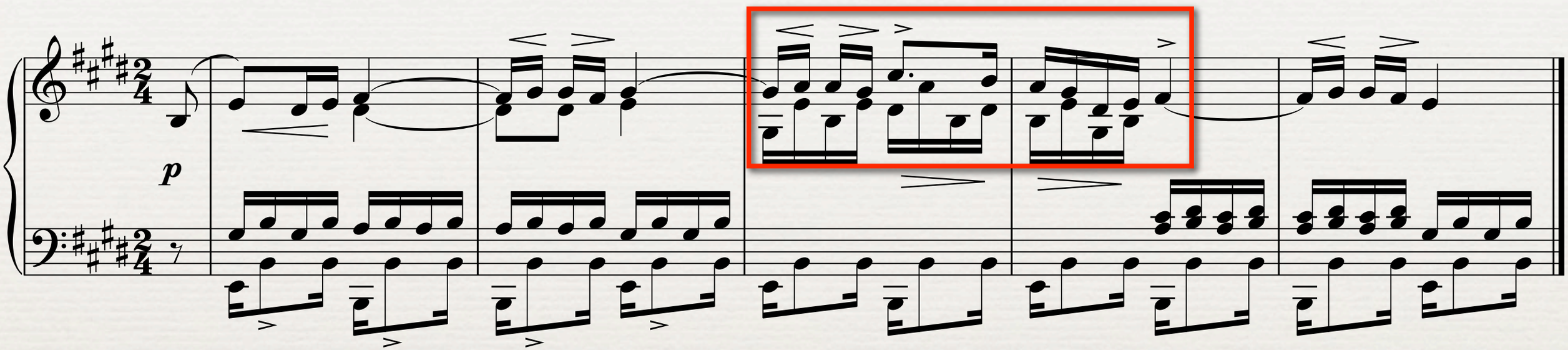


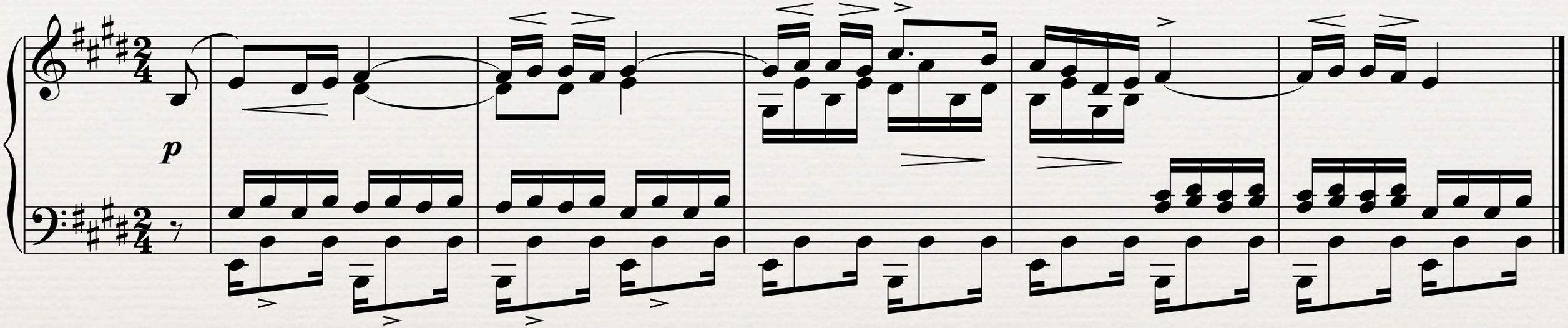
- The melody outlines the tonic triad, beginning with a B upbeat, then moving in stepwise motion up to G# and back down to E again.

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



- The melody outlines the tonic triad, beginning with a B upbeat, then moving in stepwise motion up to G# and back down to E again.
- However, between the first and second G#s the stepwise continuity is disrupted by both syncopation and by leaps, which helps to intensify the need for the melody to resolve.

Chopin: Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E Major



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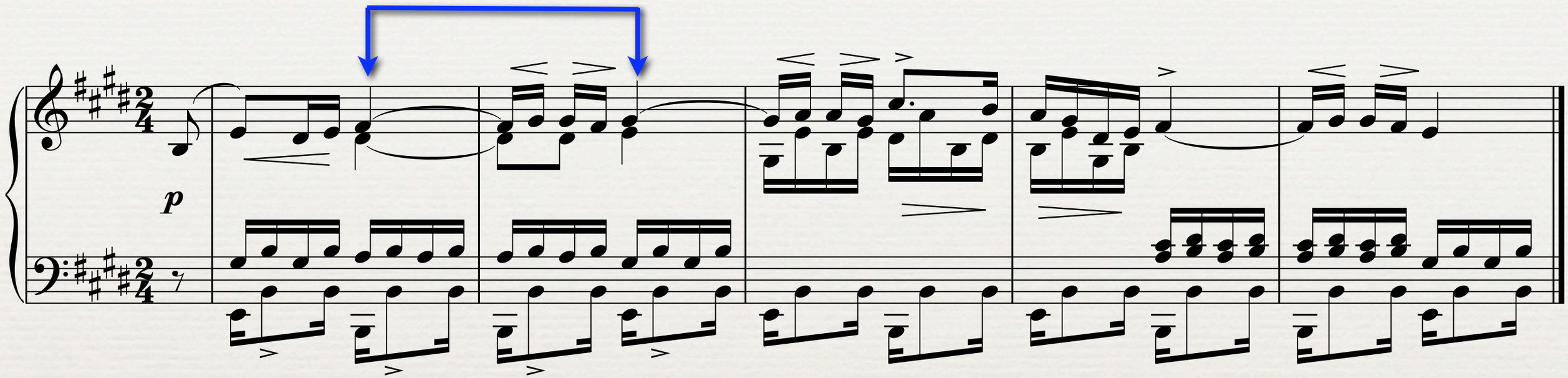

- Note that while the F# in bar 1 and the G# in bar 2 are consonant

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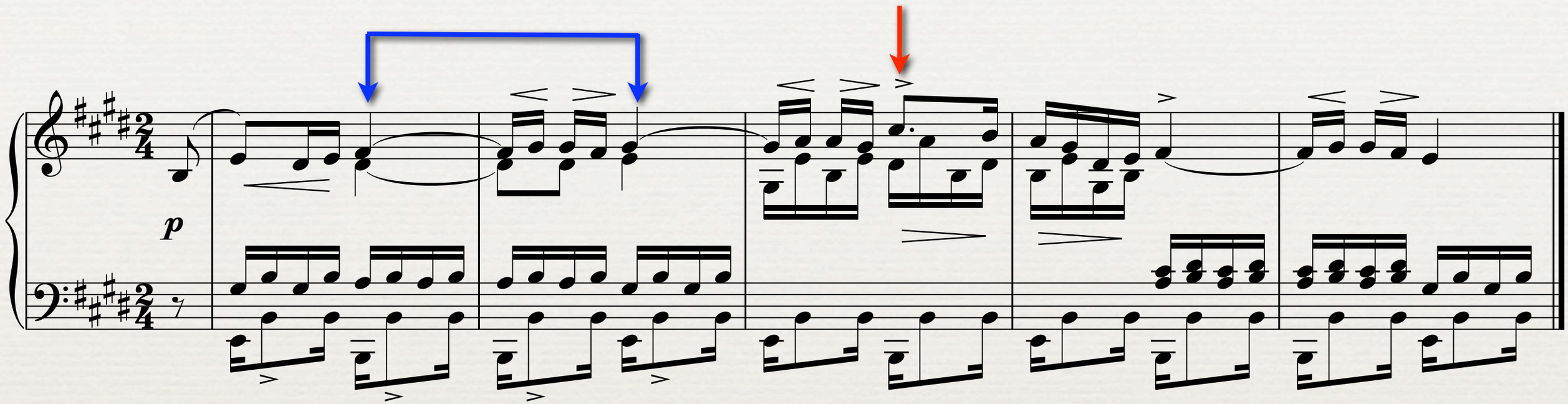

- Note that while the F# in bar 1 and the G# in bar 2 are consonant
- The C# in bar 3, at the same metric location, is *dissonant*.

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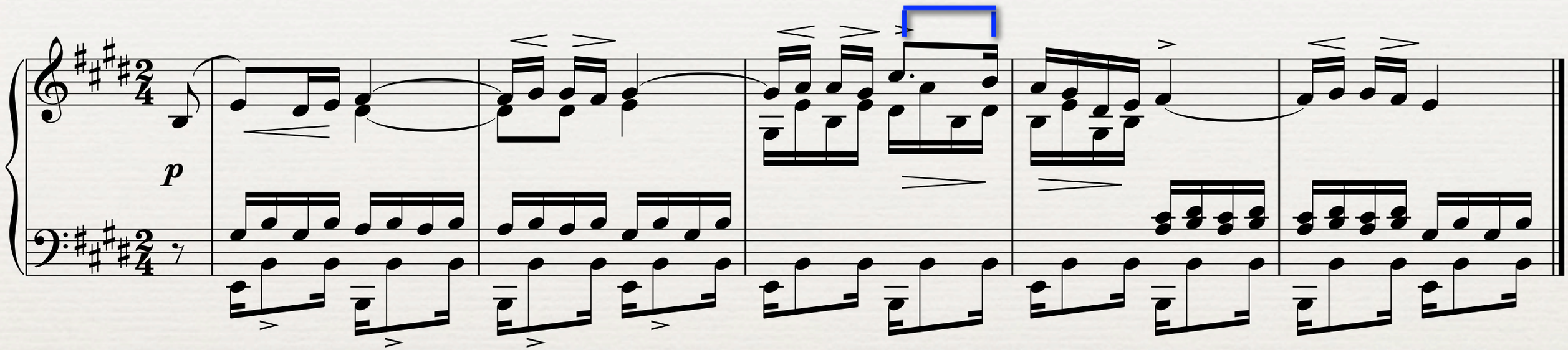

- Note that while the F# in bar 1 and the G# in bar 2 are consonant
- The C# in bar 3, at the same metric location, is *dissonant*.
- The resolution of the C# provides a rhythmic augmentation of the preceding neighbor figures

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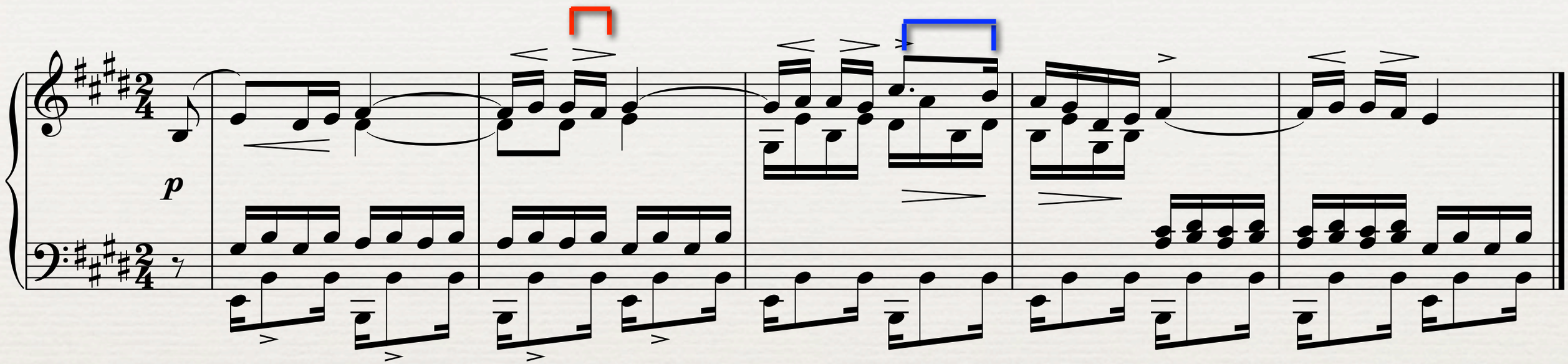

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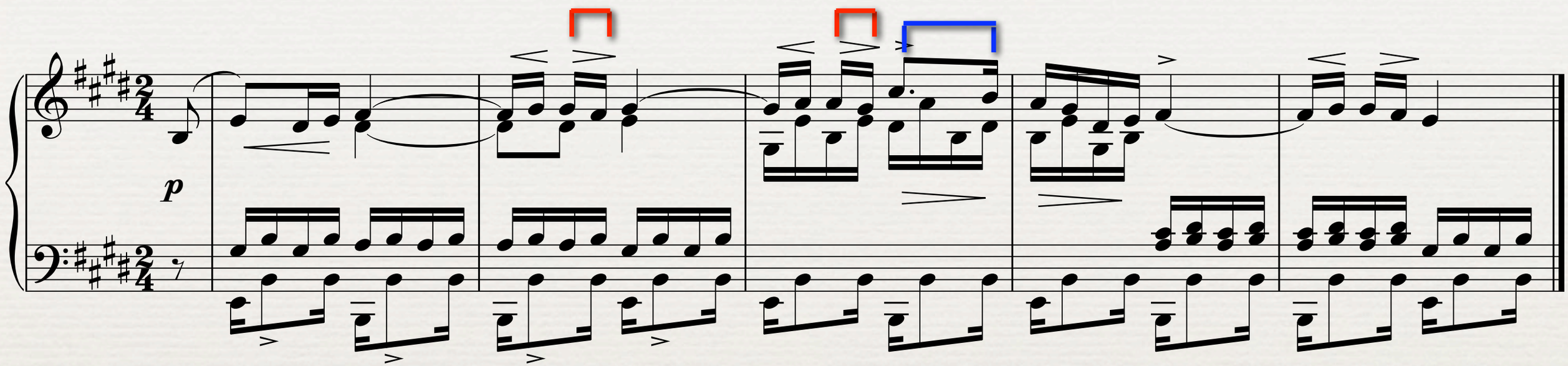

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    - Bar 3

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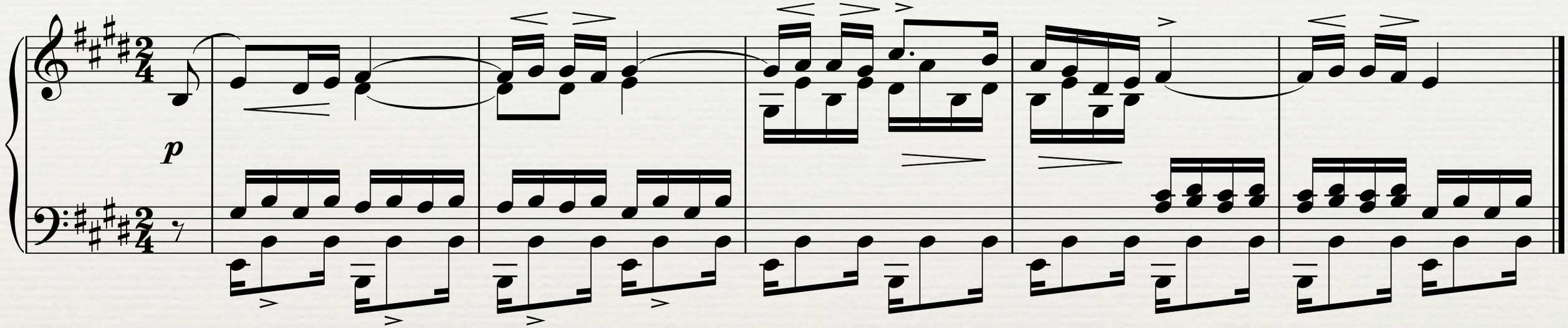

- We can distinguish two structural levels in a melody

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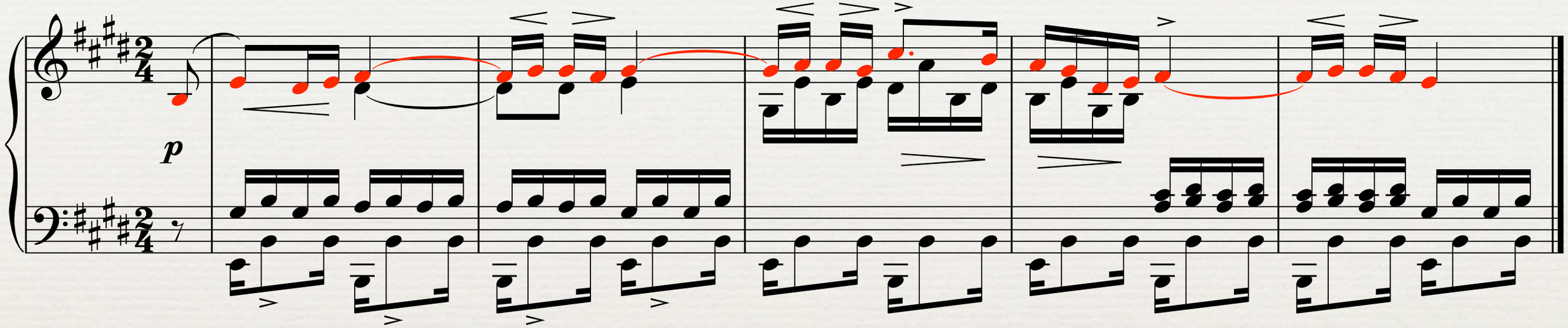

- We can distinguish two structural levels in a melody
  - The *surface level*, which is the melody as heard, note for note

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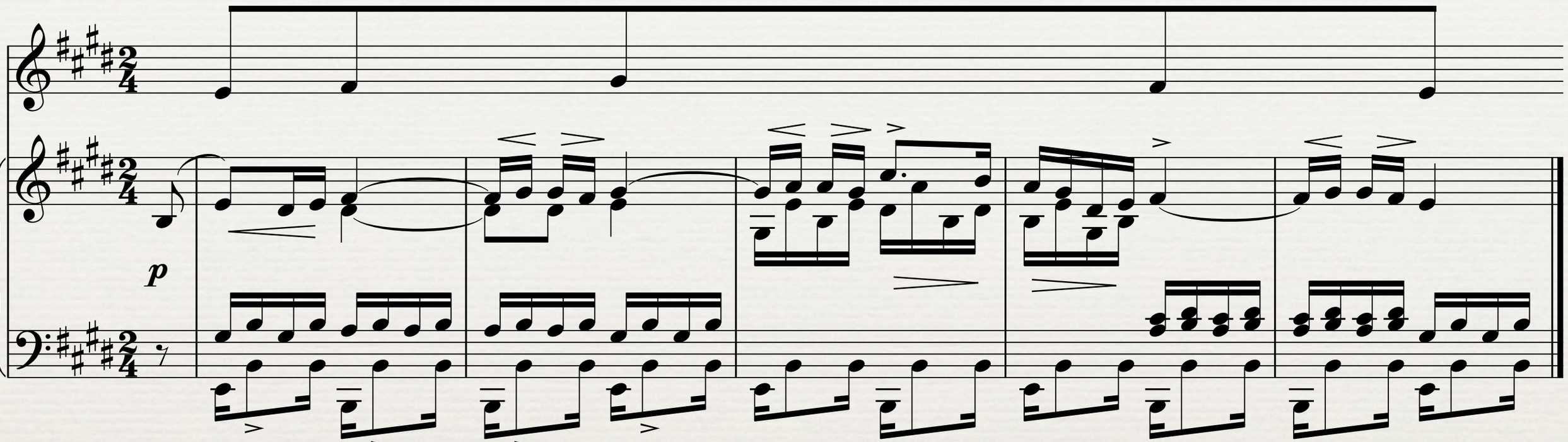
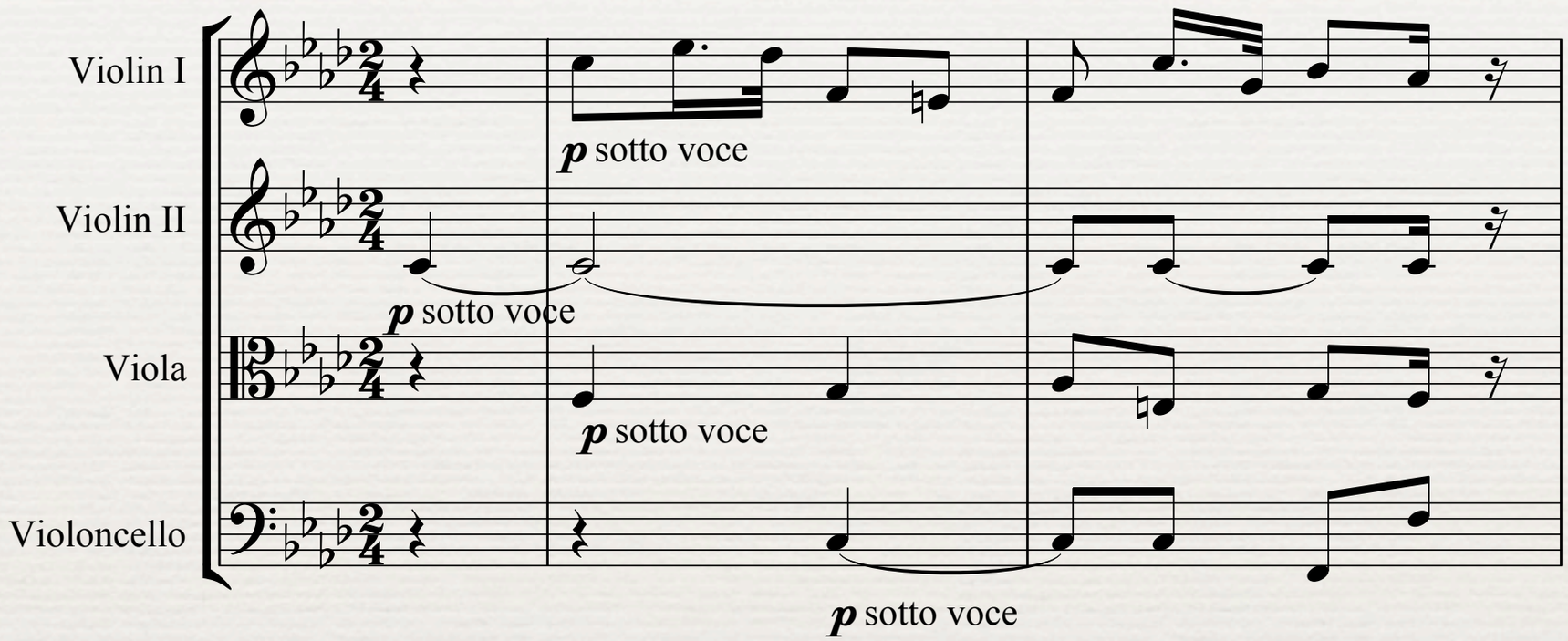


- We can distinguish two structural levels in a melody
  - The *surface level*, which is the melody as heard, note for note
  - A more *reduced* level that includes the principal tones only, without embellishing figuration

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



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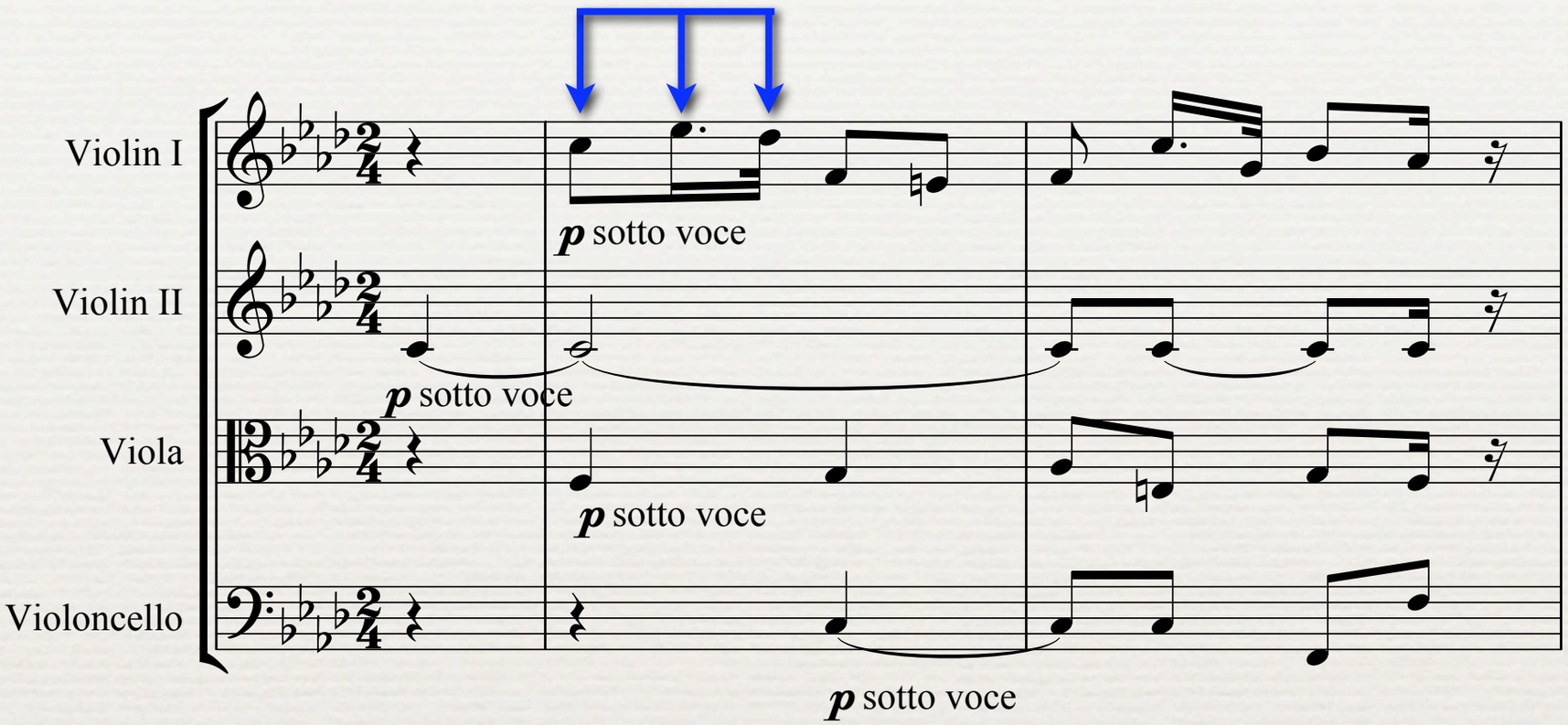

- In bar 1, the leap to E♭ and descent to D♭ suggest that downward motion will follow

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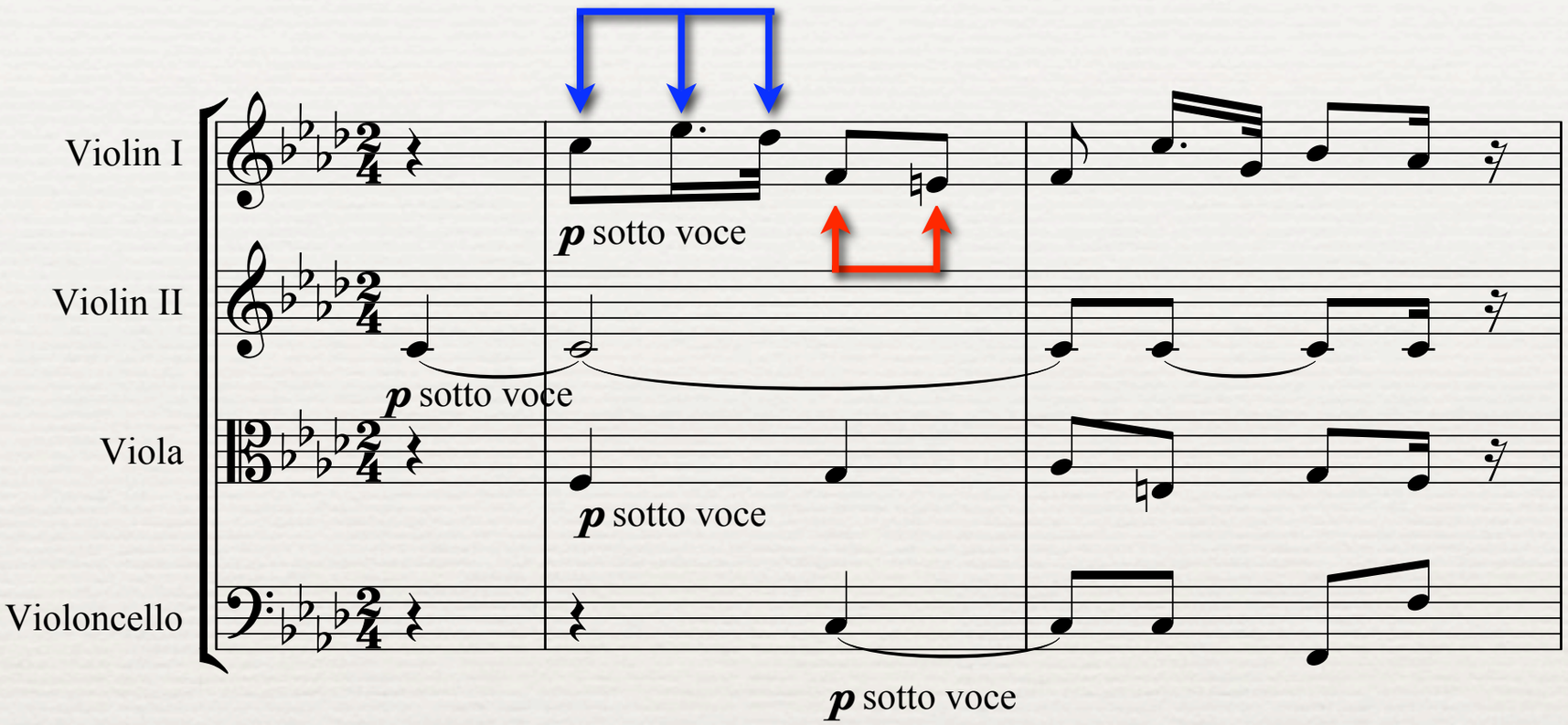
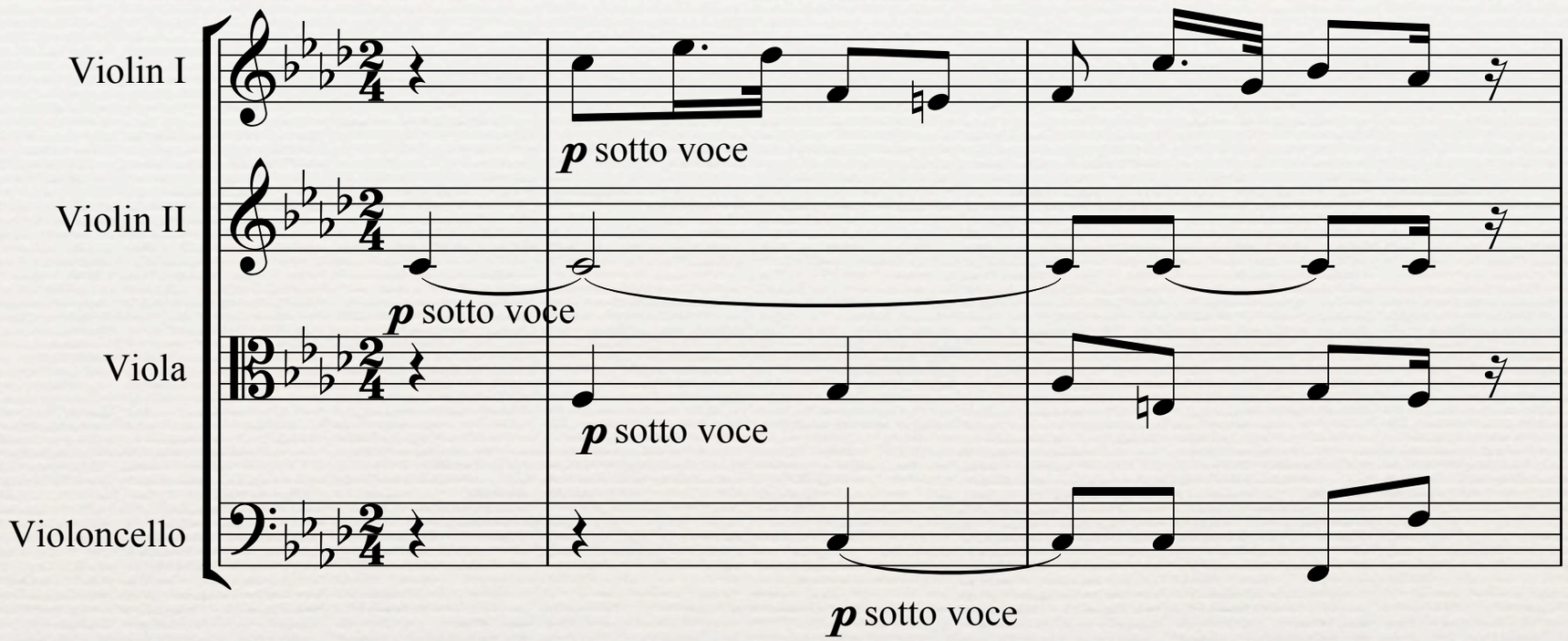


- In bar 1, the leap to E♭ and descent to D♭ suggest that downward motion will follow
  - As it does with the descent to F and E♮.

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



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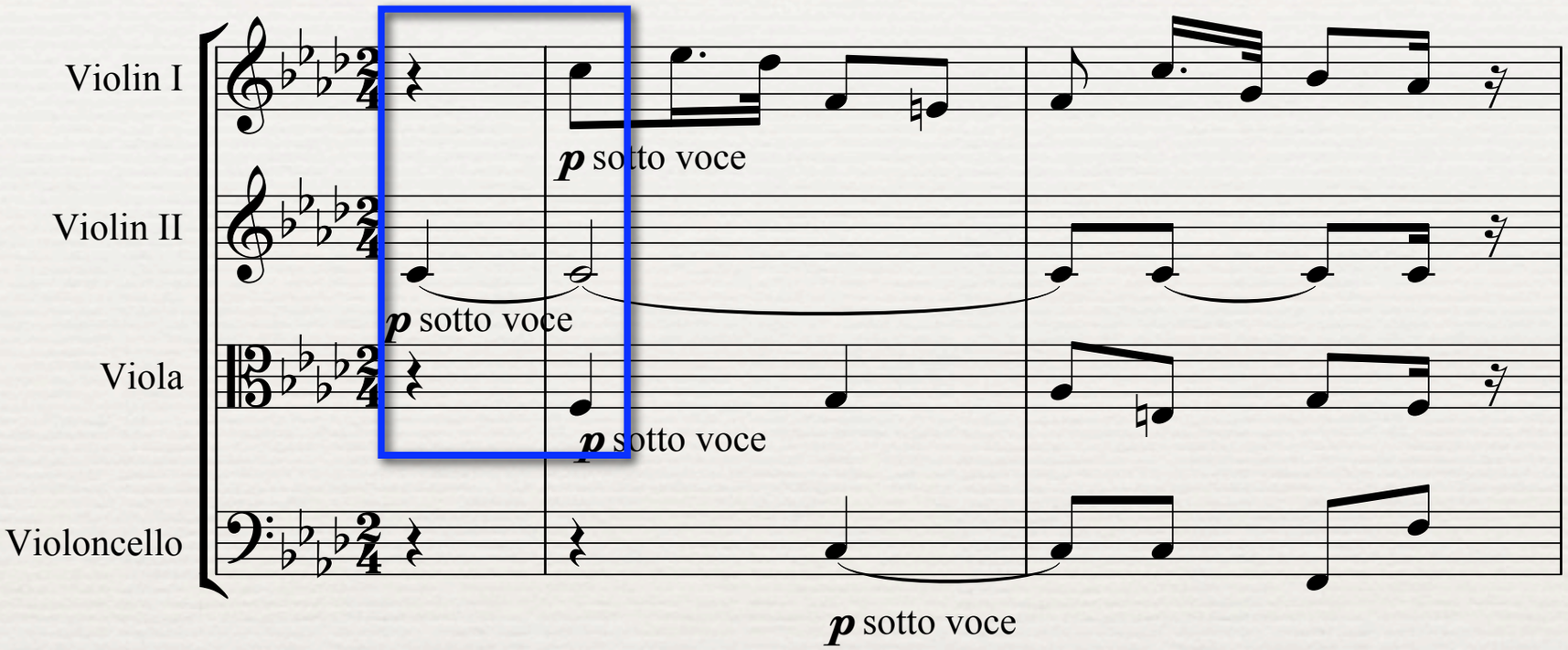
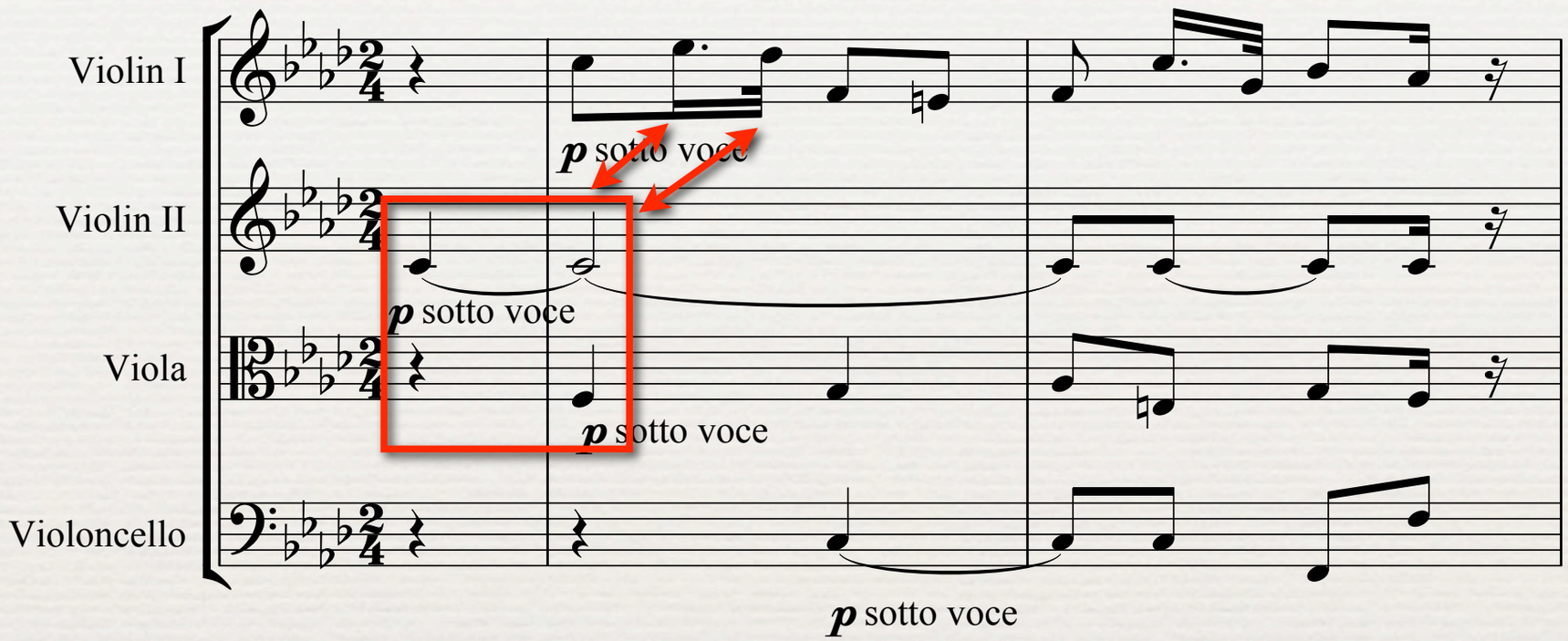


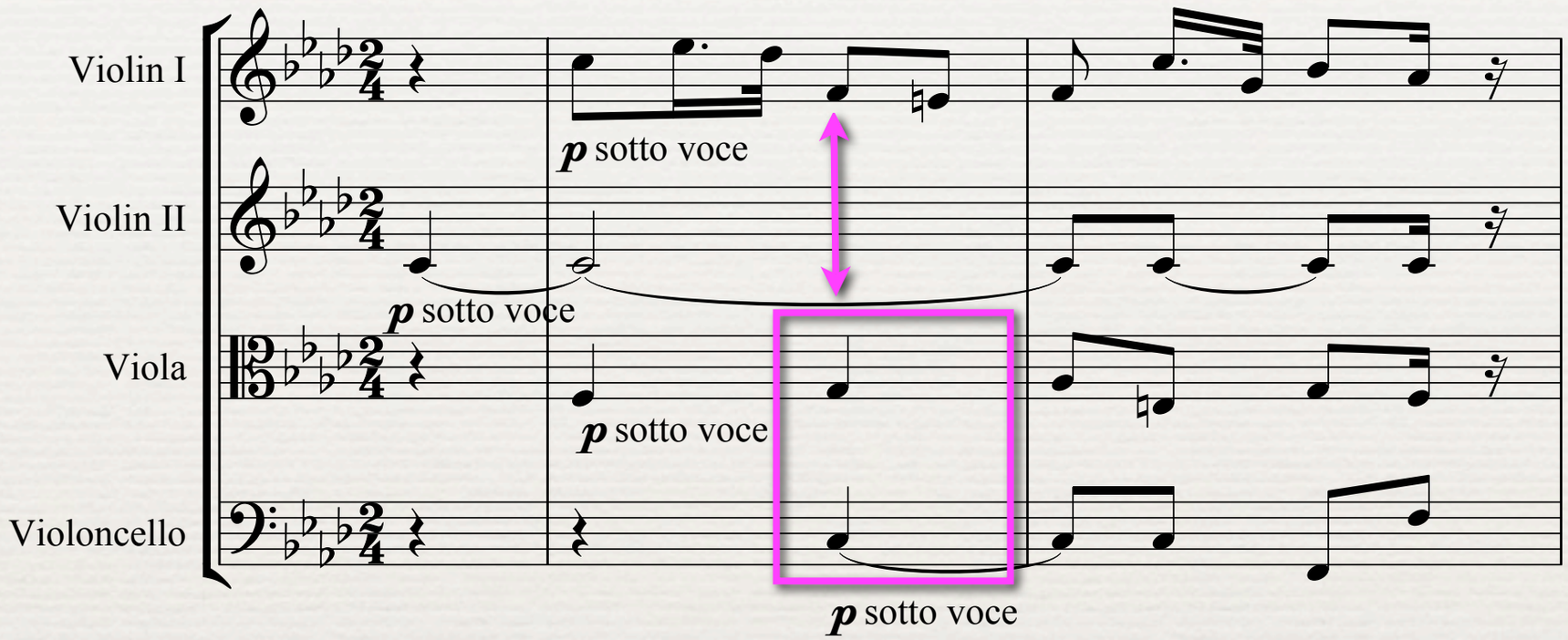
- The opening of the melody forms a perfect fifth with the viola

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



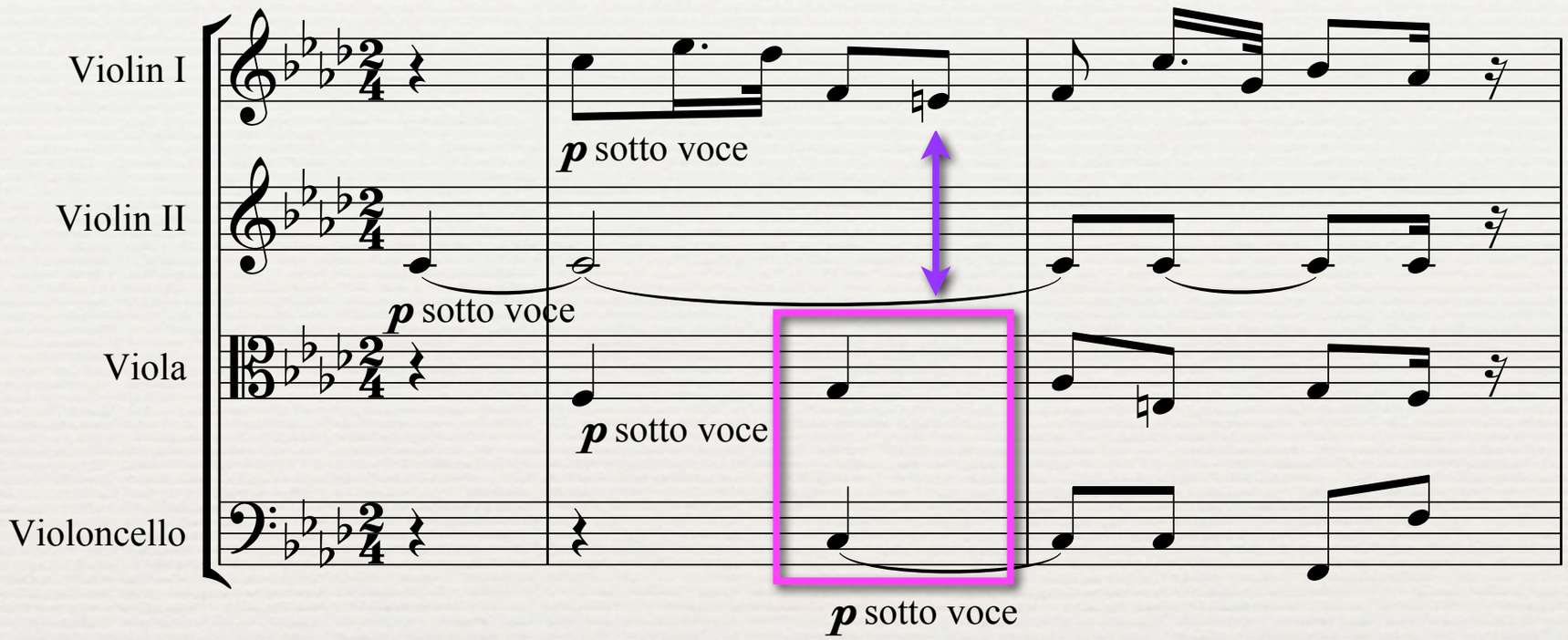
- The opening of the melody forms a perfect fifth with the viola
- The E♭ and D♭ are heard as dissonant against that fifth

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



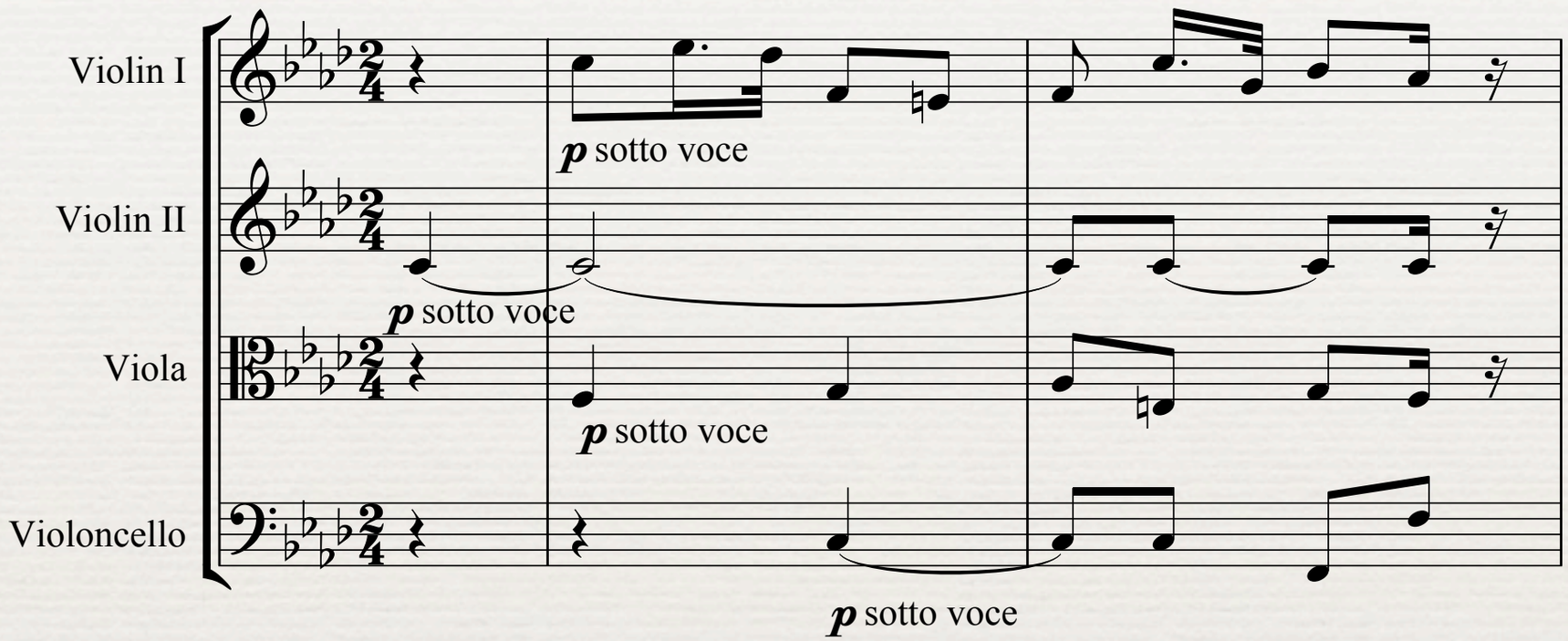
- The opening of the melody forms a perfect fifth with the viola
- The E♭ and D♭ are heard as dissonant against that fifth
- The F♮ on the second beat is dissonant against the fifth in the voice and ‘cello.

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



- The opening of the melody forms a perfect fifth with the viola
- The E♭ and D♭ are heard as dissonant against that fifth
- The F♮ on the second beat is dissonant against the fifth in the voice and ‘cello.
- Finally the E♮ is consonant with the harmony.

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



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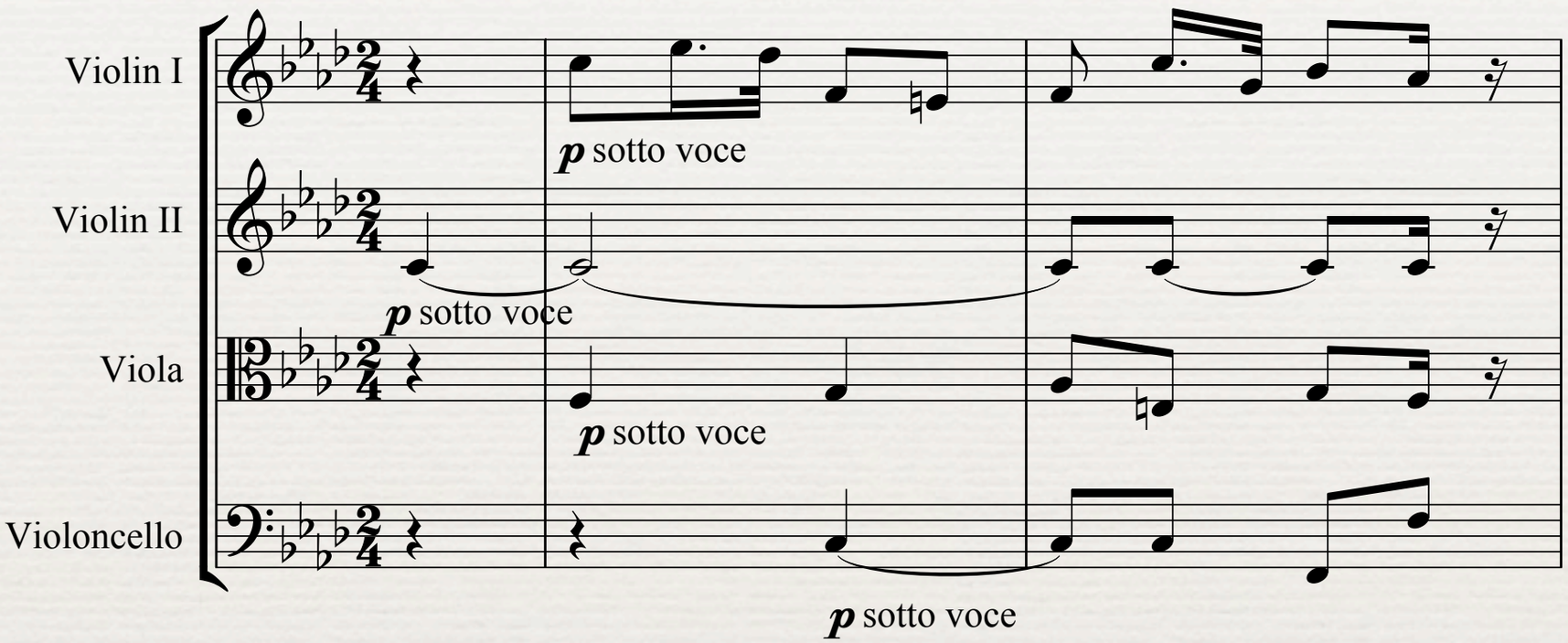
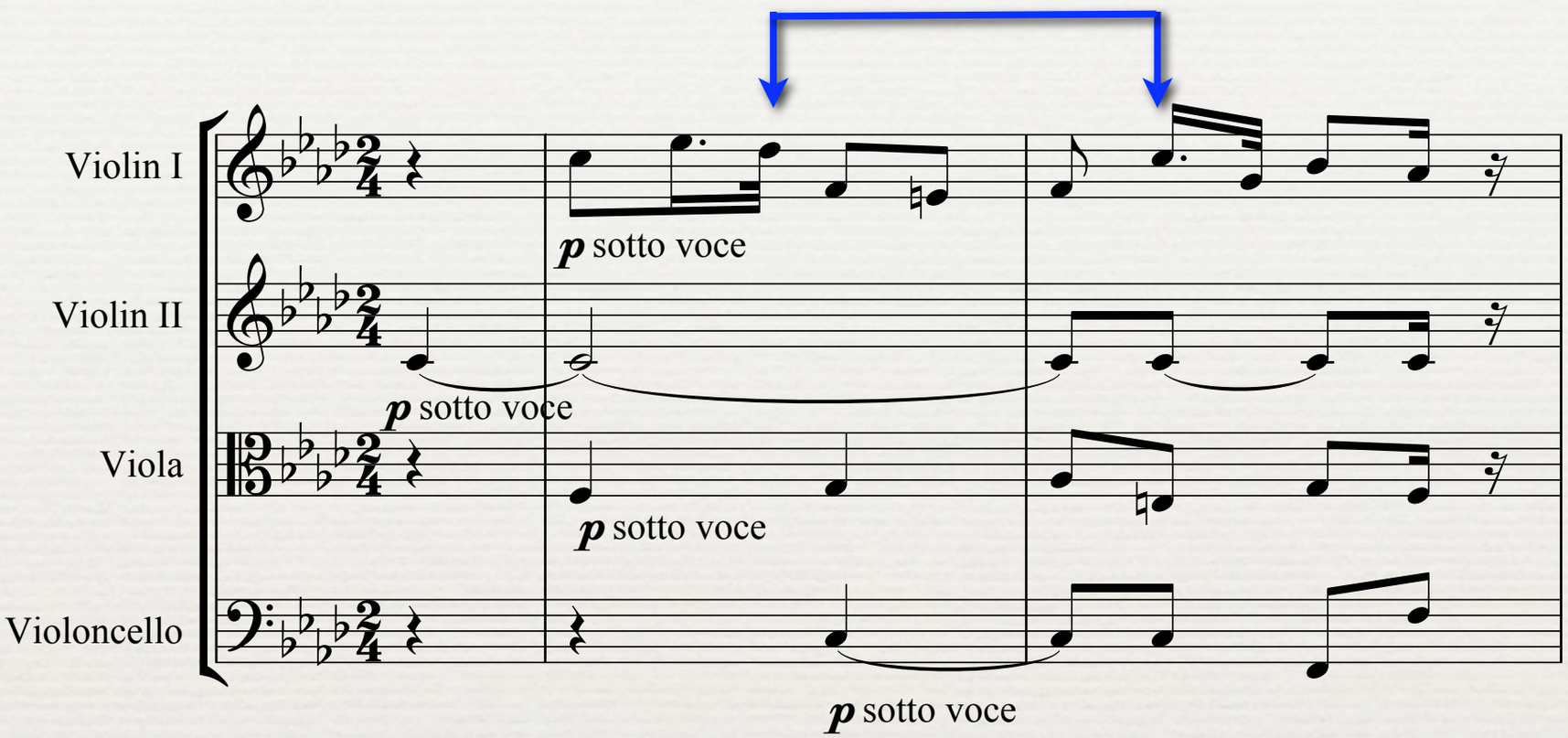


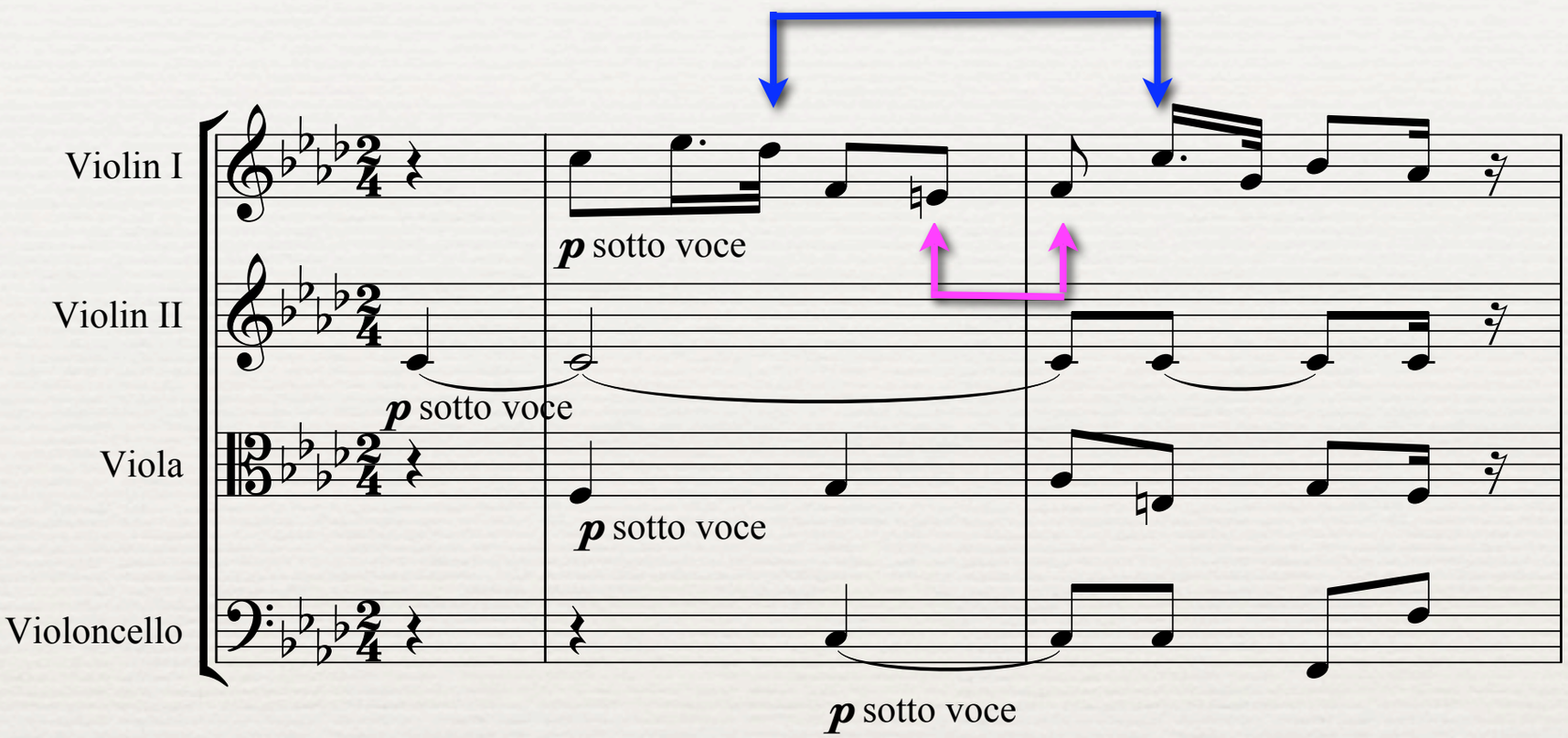
- Dissonances set up in bar 1 are resolved in bar 2

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



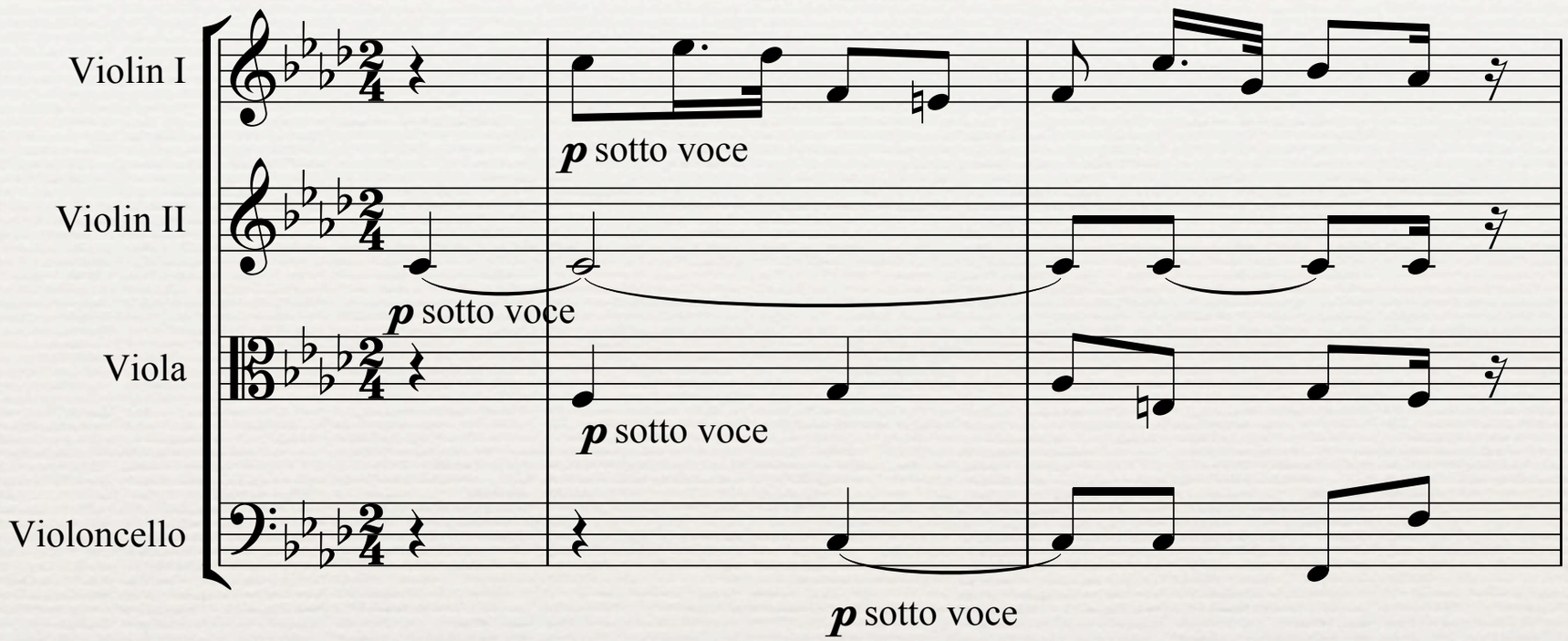
- Dissonances set up in bar 1 are resolved in bar 2
  - The D♭ resolves to C

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



- Dissonances set up in bar 1 are resolved in bar 2
  - The D♭ resolves to C
  - The E♮ resolves to F

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



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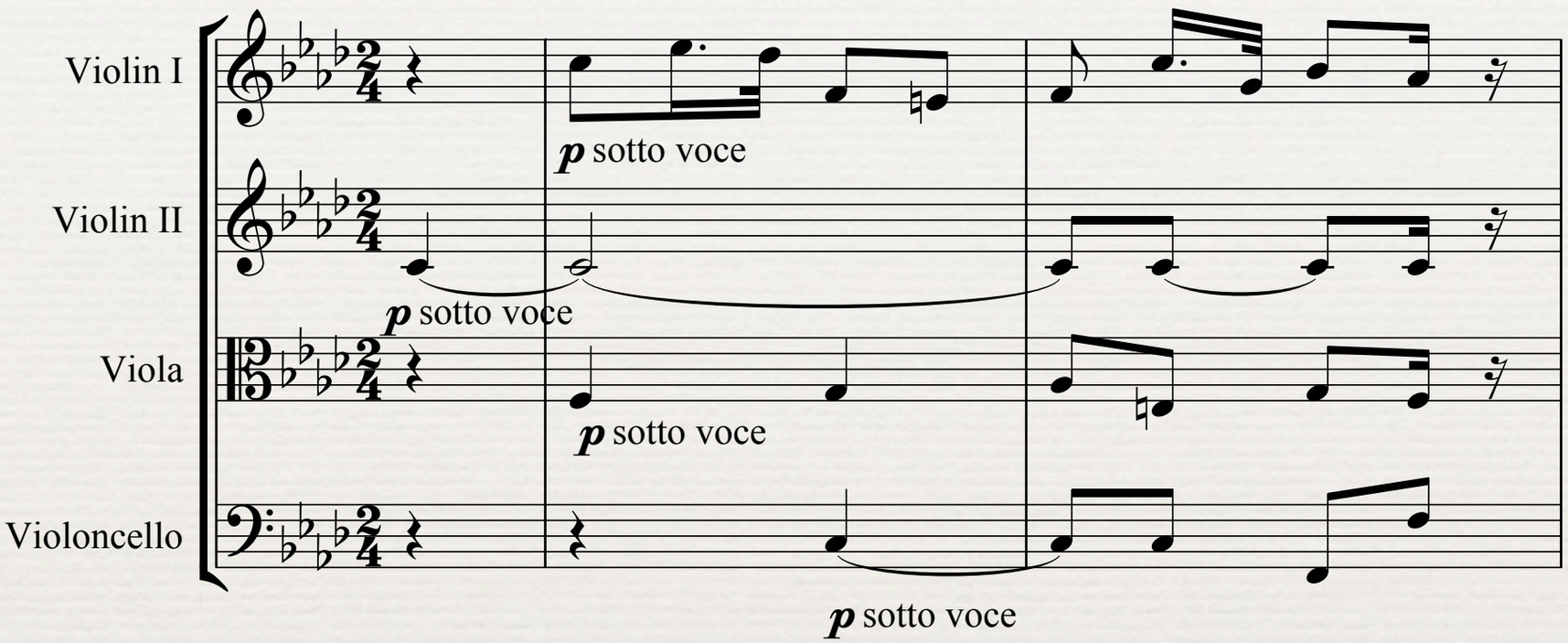
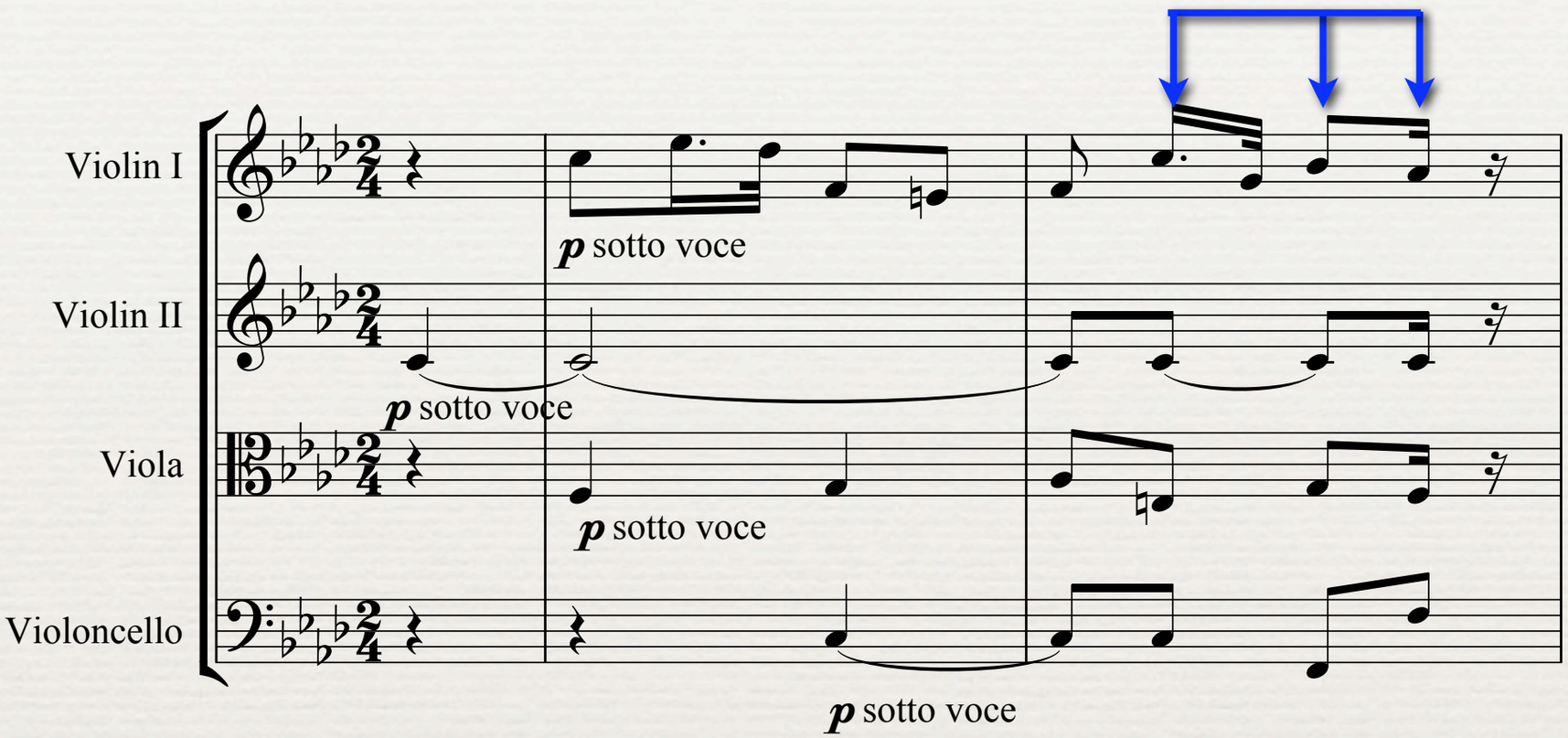


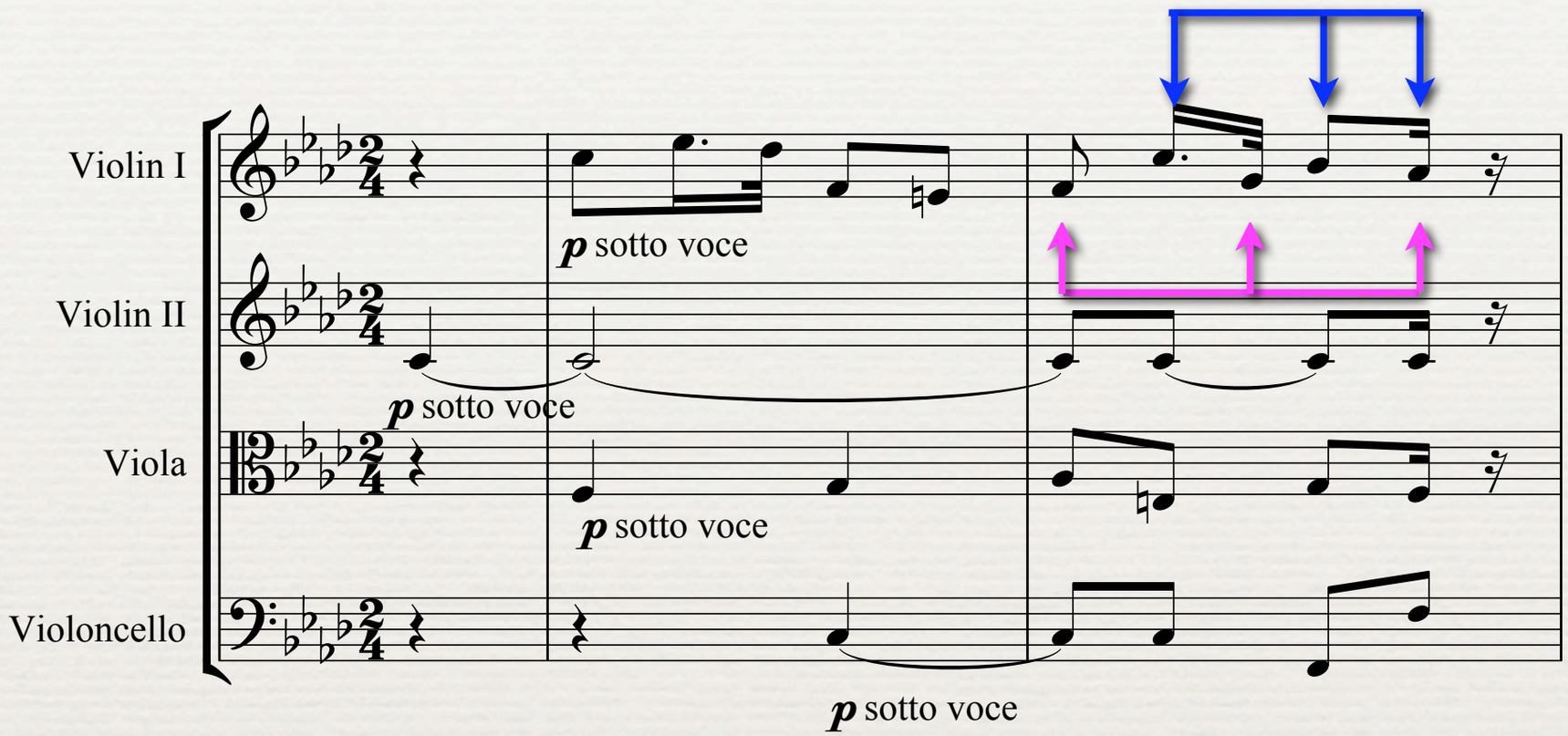
- Two distinct melodic strands are formed in bar 2, both converging on A♭:

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



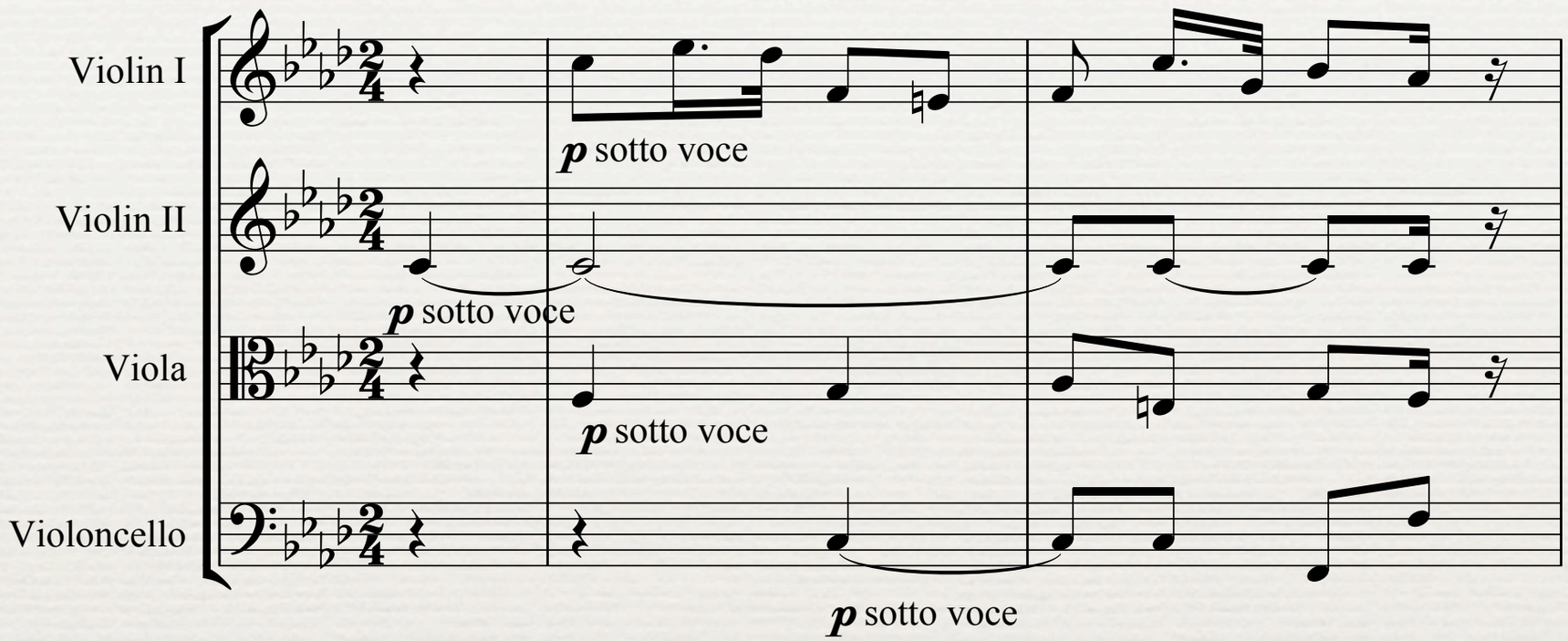
- Two distinct melodic strands are formed in bar 2, both converging on A♭:
  - An upper line descending by step

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III

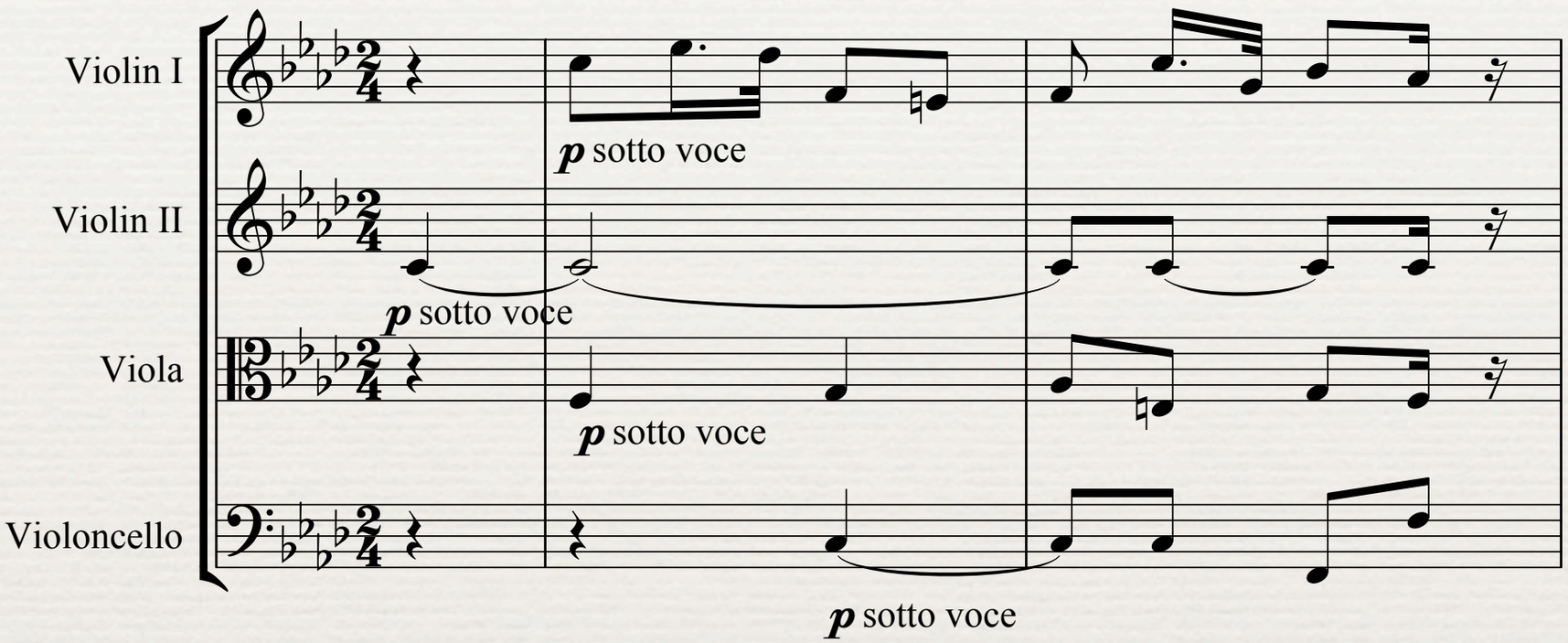


- Two distinct melodic strands are formed in bar 2, both converging on A♭:
  - An upper line descending by step
  - A lower line ascending by step

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III

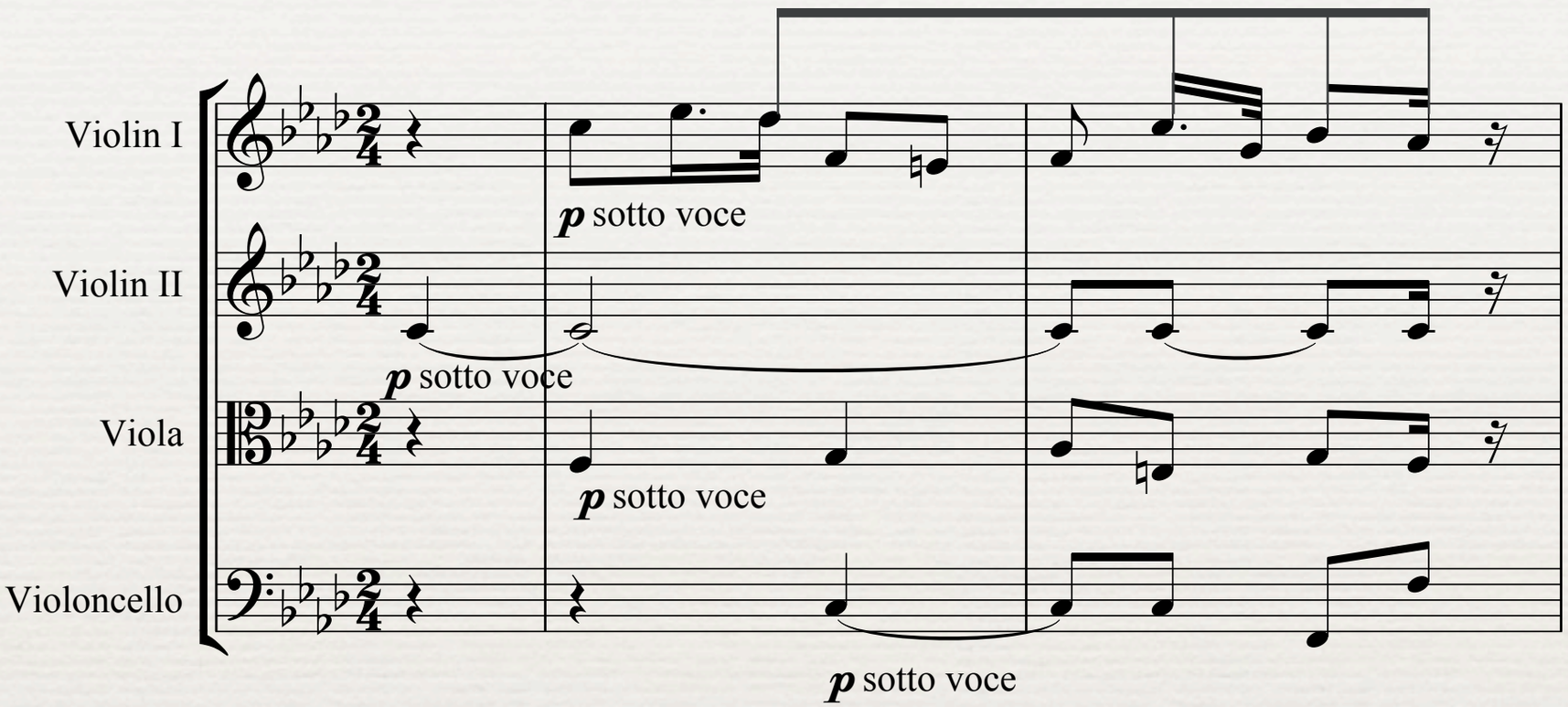


Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



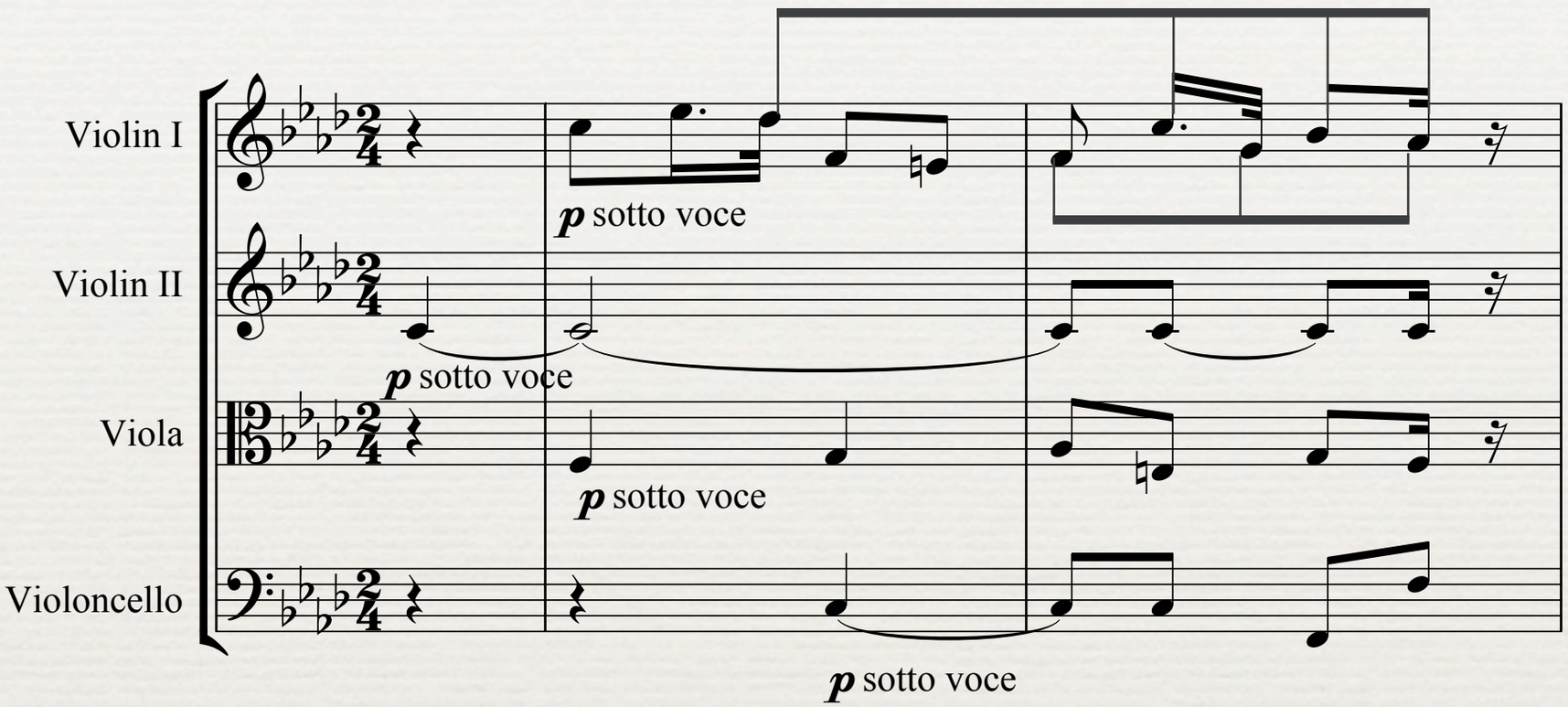
- The extra beaming in the Violin I line serves to show the implied two-voice texture.

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



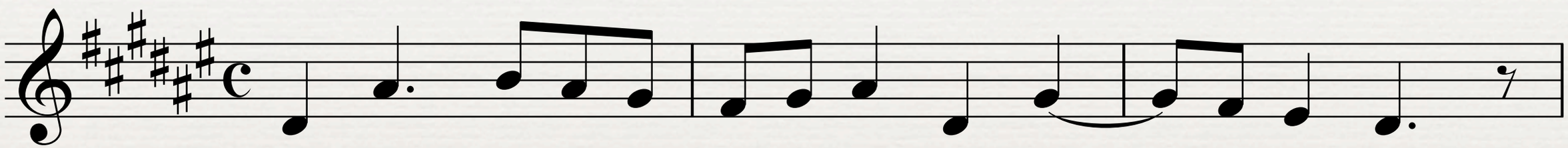
- The extra beaming in the Violin I line serves to show the implied two-voice texture.
    - Upper voice

Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59 No. 1:III



- The extra beaming in the Violin I line serves to show the implied two-voice texture.
  - Upper voice
  - Lower voice

Bach: Fugue in D# Minor (WTC I)



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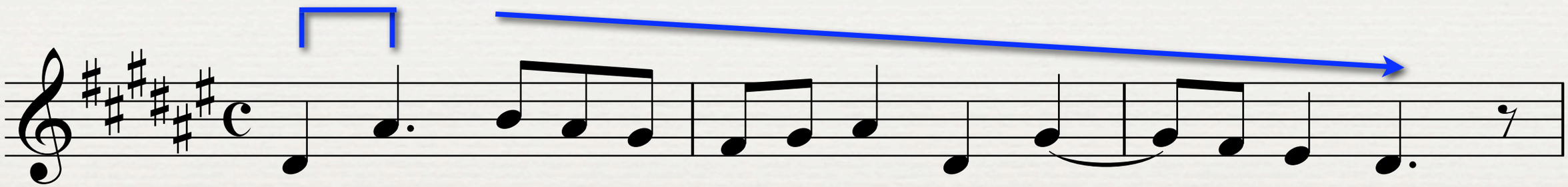
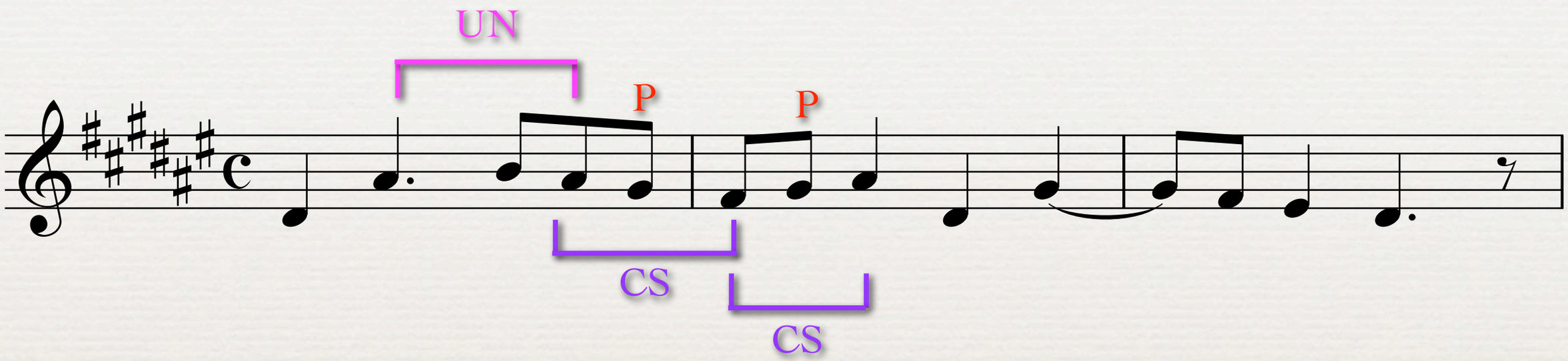


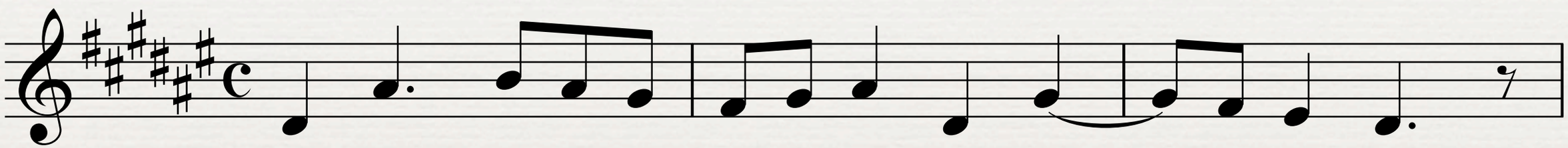
- An initial leap of a fifth from D# to A# is balanced by subsequent motion in the opposite direction.

Bach: Fugue in D# Minor (WTC I)



- An initial leap of a fifth from D# to A# is balanced by subsequent motion in the opposite direction.
- However, the A# is decorated by neighboring, passing, and chordal skip tones before returning to A# in bar 2.

Bach: Fugue in D# Minor (WTC I)



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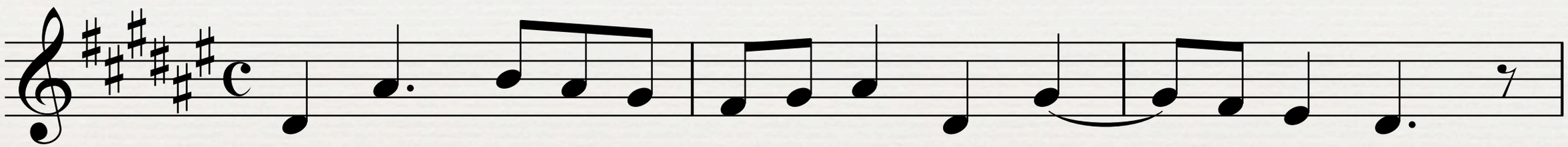
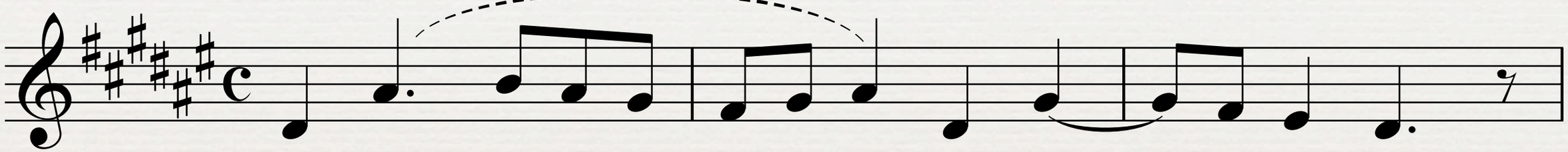


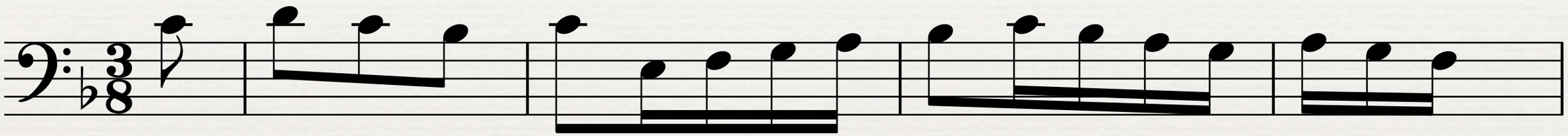
- When a tone like A# remains active in its context, even though other tones may intervene, that tone is said to be *prolonged*.

Bach: Fugue in D# Minor (WTC I)

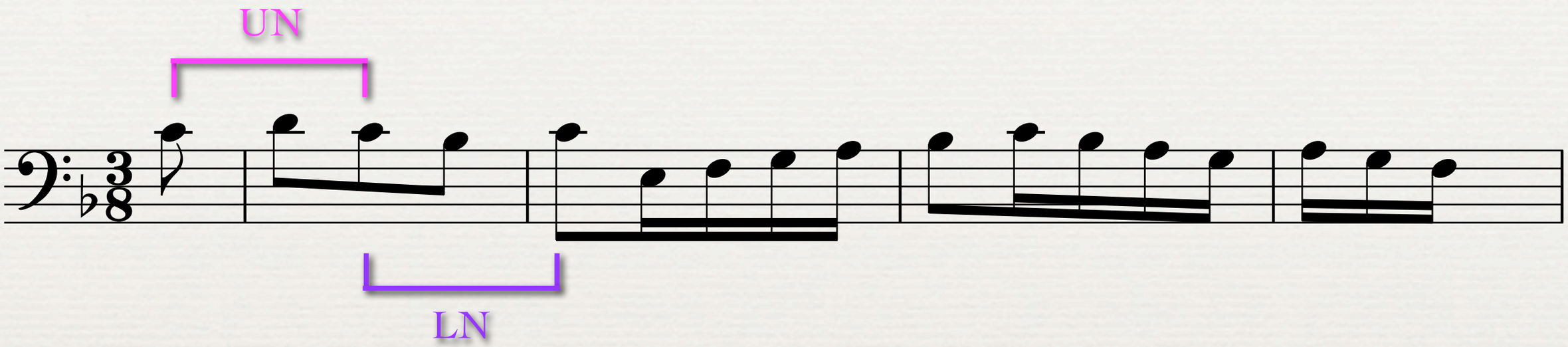


- When a tone like A# remains active in its context, even though other tones may intervene, that tone is said to be *prolonged*.
- The extra stemming and the broken slur indicates this *melodic prolongation*.

Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)

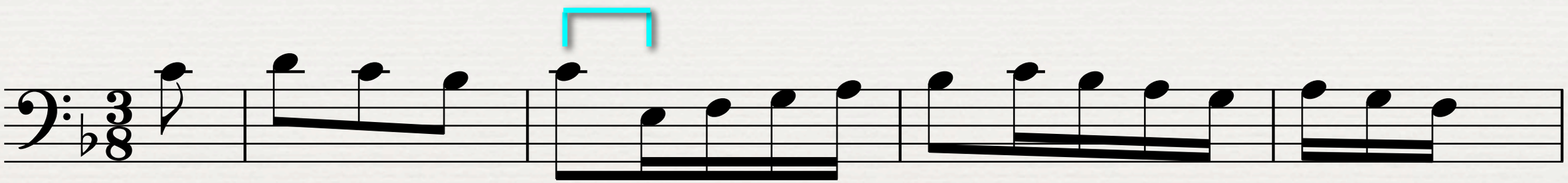


Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)



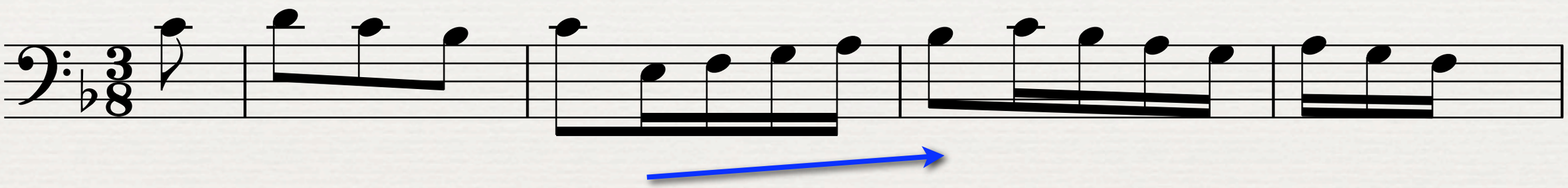
- The first part circles around C, decorated by upper and lower neighbor figures.

Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)



- The first part circles around C, decorated by upper and lower neighbor figures.
- A leap to ^7 creates a temporary gap in the line

Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)



- The first part circles around C, decorated by upper and lower neighbor figures.
- A leap to ^7 creates a temporary gap in the line
  - The gap is filled by rising stepwise motion.

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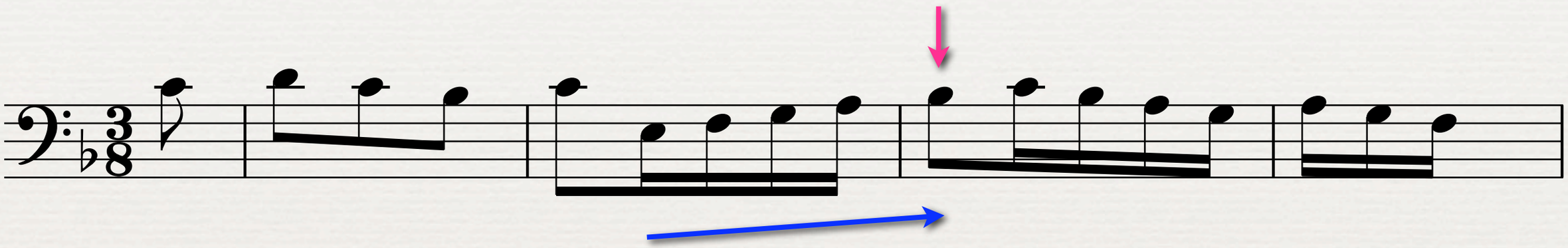
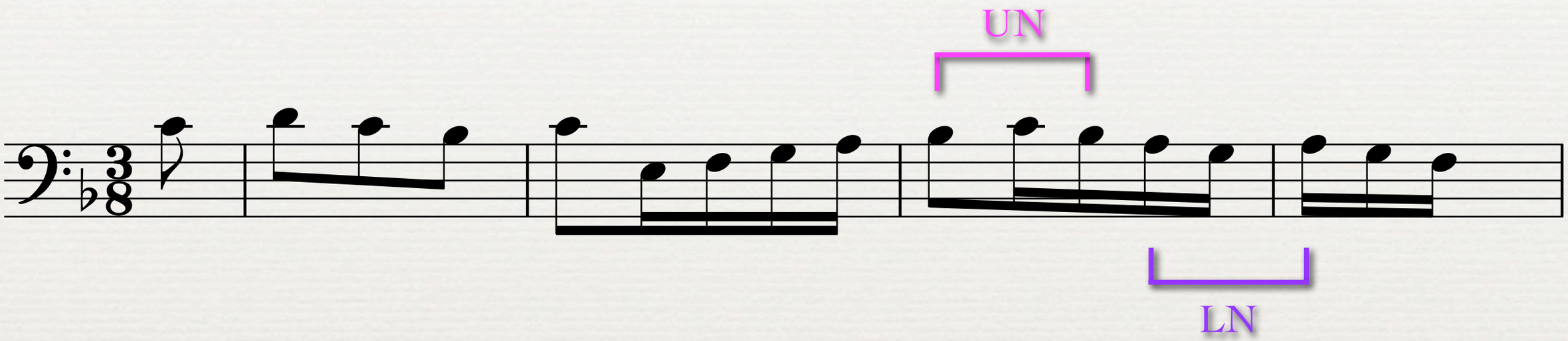


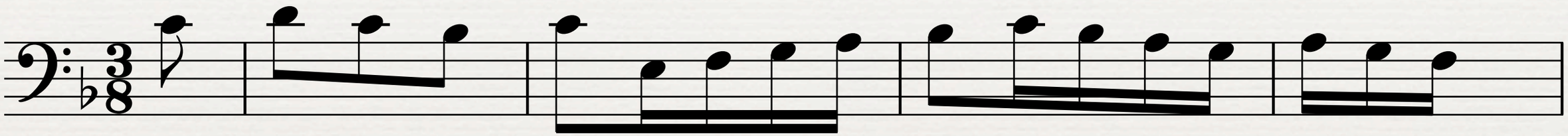
- The first part circles around C, decorated by upper and lower neighbor figures.
- A leap to ^7 creates a temporary gap in the line
  - The gap is filled by rising stepwise motion.
  - That motion reaches ^4 on the downbeat of bar 3

Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)



- The first part circles around C, decorated by upper and lower neighbor figures.
- A leap to ^7 creates a temporary gap in the line
  - The gap is filled by rising stepwise motion.
  - That motion reaches ^4 on the downbeat of bar 3
  - Another set of neighbor figures reaches ^3 on the downbeat of bar 4.

Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)



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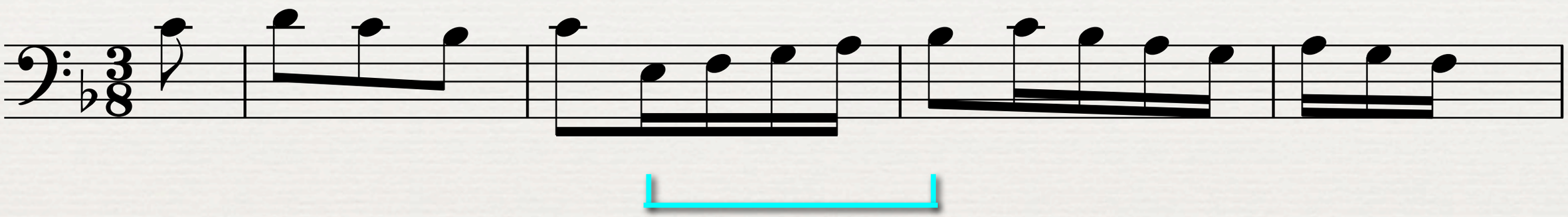
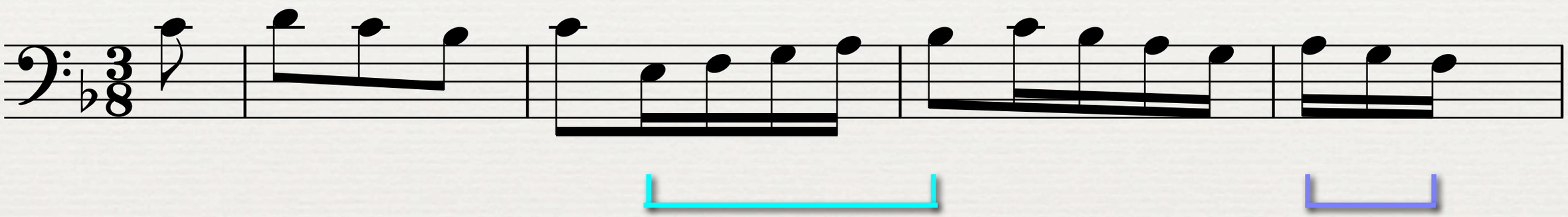


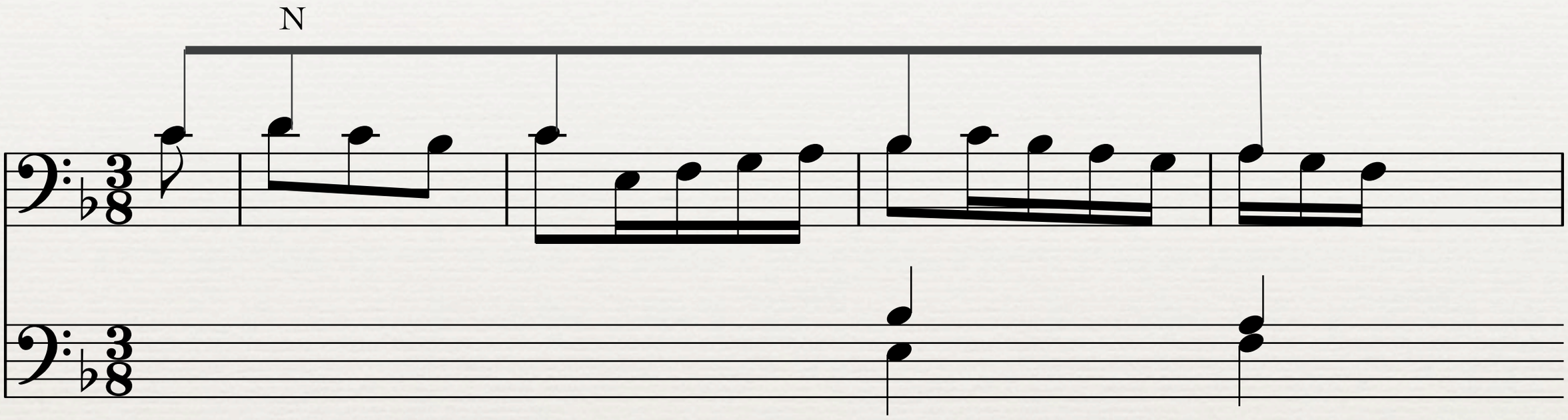
- The motion from E to B♭ creates the interval of a diminished fifth (the notes that begin and end motions are typically more noticeable than the intervening tones.)

Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)



- The motion from E to B♭ creates the interval of a diminished fifth (the notes that begin and end motions are typically more noticeable than the intervening tones.)
- The actual resolution of this interval is not provided until bar 4, provided by the tones A and F.

Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)



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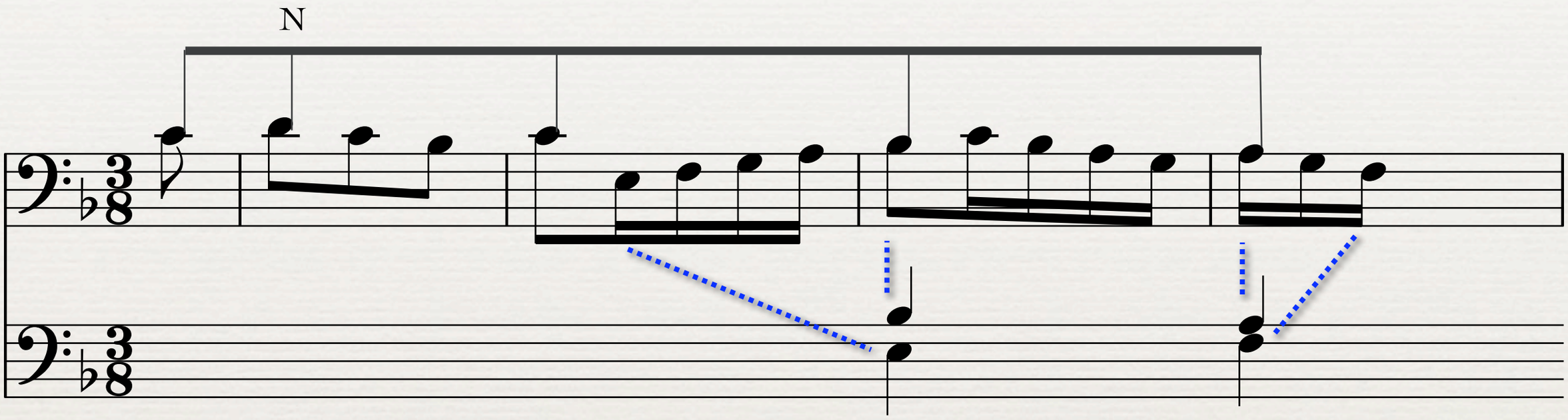
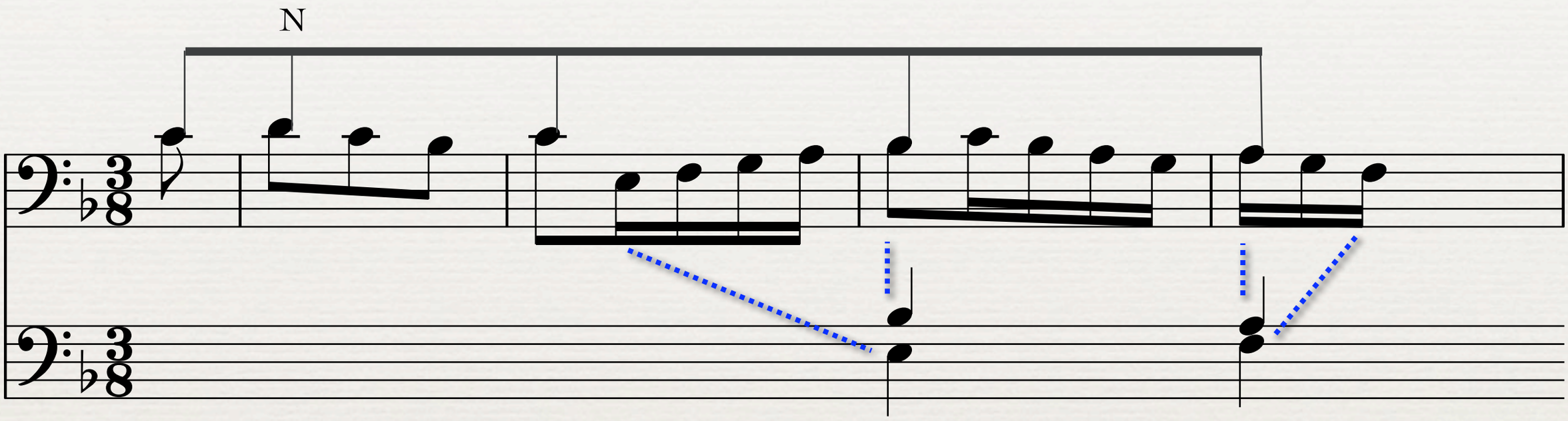


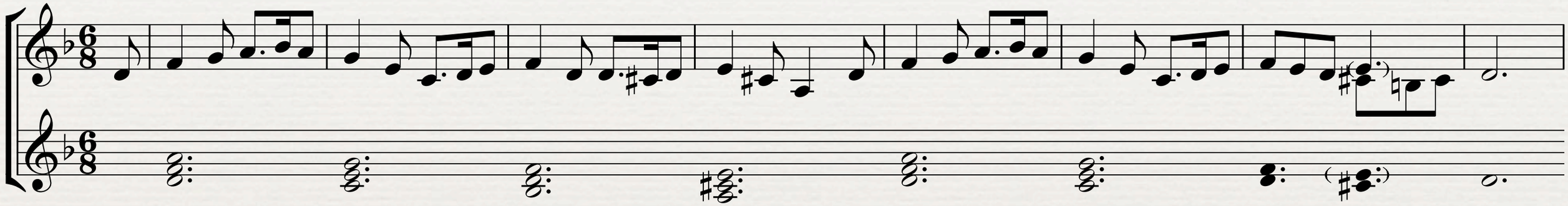
- This creates what is in effect two voices, perceived within a single line of music.

Bach Fugue in F Major (WTC I)

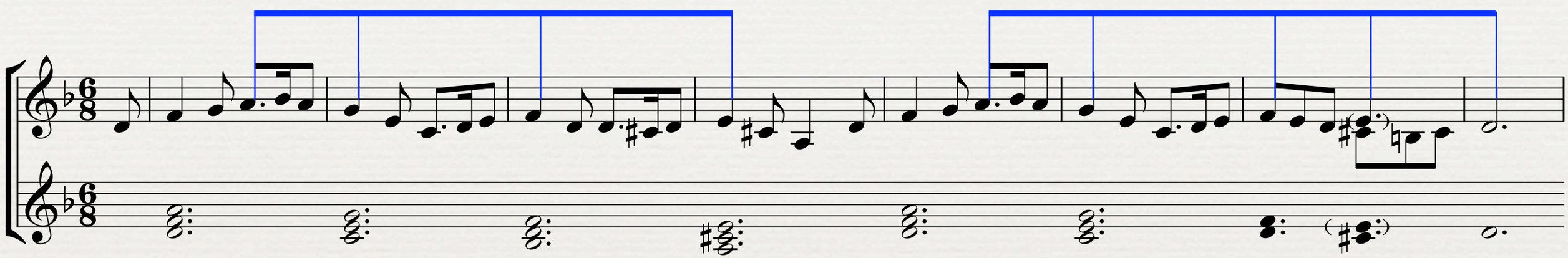


- This creates what is in effect two voices, perceived within a single line of music.
- A melody which articulates two or more distinct voices is called a *polyphonic melody*.

Greensleeves

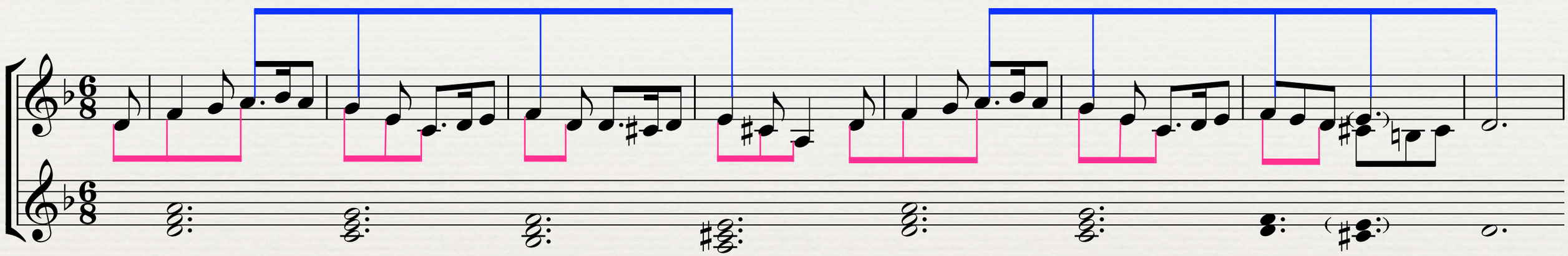


Greensleeves



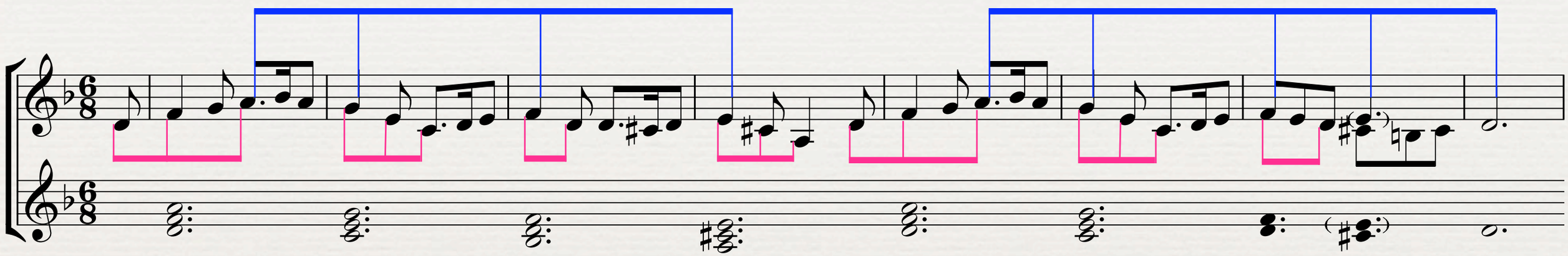
- The climax tone A (embellished with an upper neighbor) initiates a stepwise top-voice descent.

Greensleeves

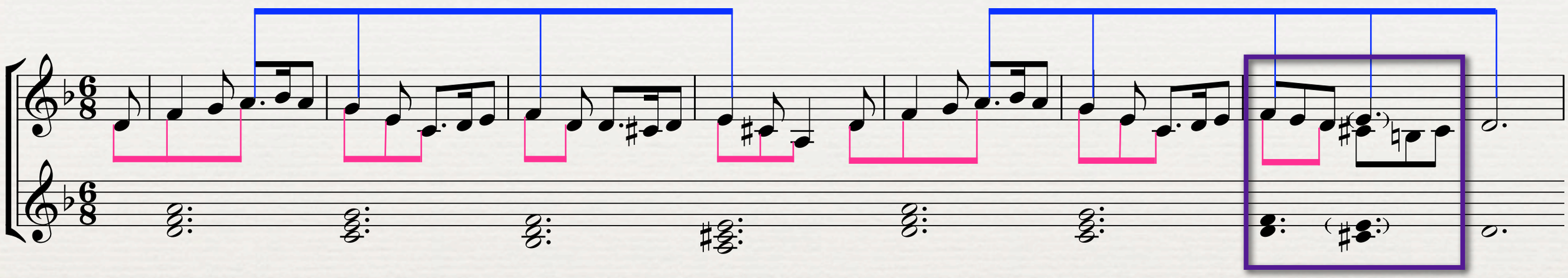


- The climax tone A (embellished with an upper neighbor) initiates a stepwise top-voice descent.
- If each arpeggiation which embellishes the principal melodic notes were played as a block chord, the lower notes would be heard as inner tones, or voices, of the chord.

Greensleeves

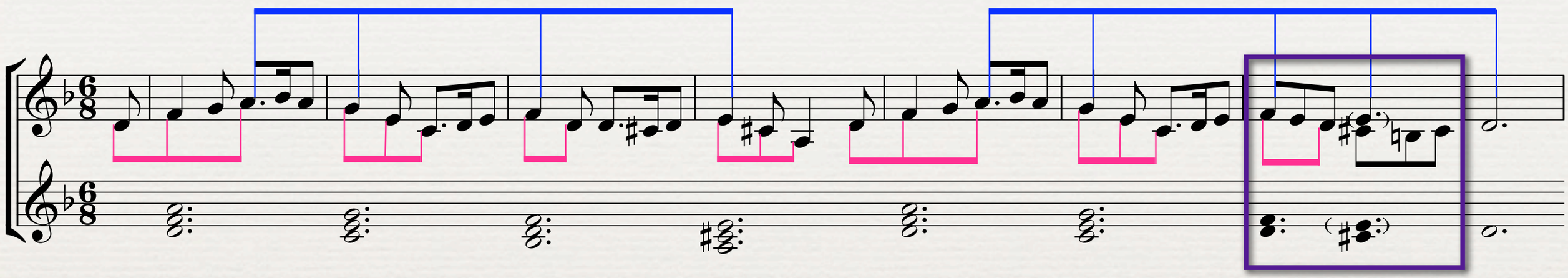


Greensleeves



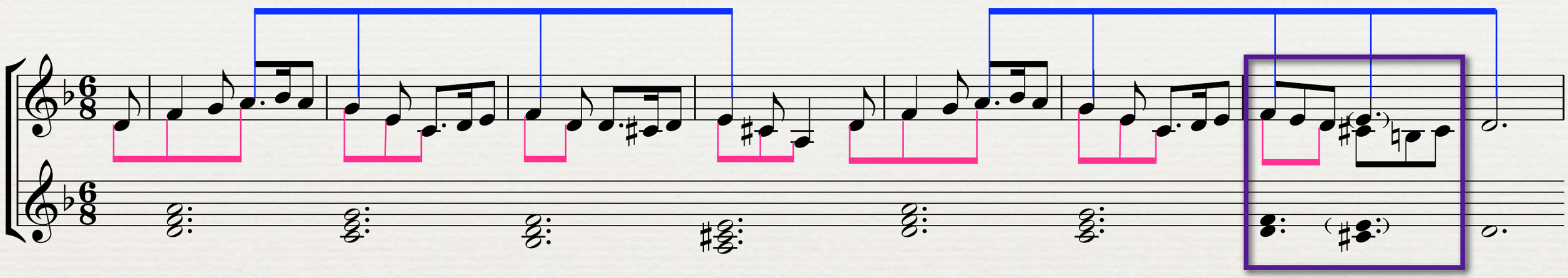
- In bar 7 the tone F is not followed by E (in the framework descent), but by the leading C# on beat 2.

Greensleeves



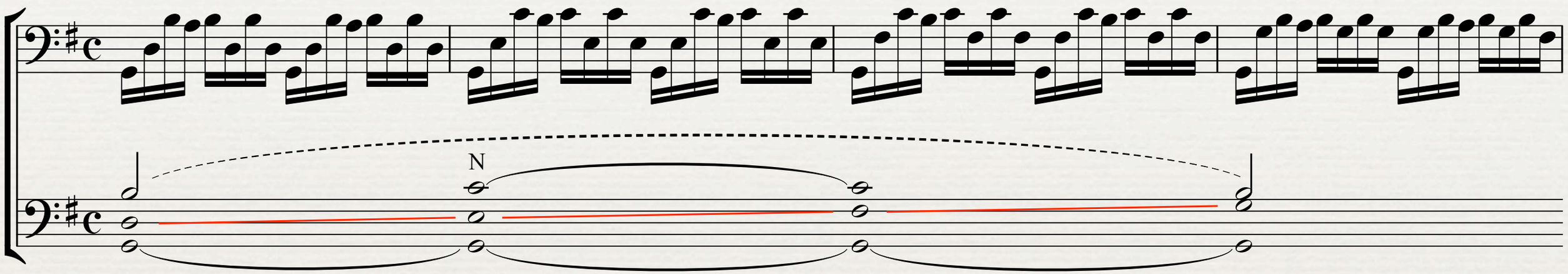
- In bar 7 the tone F is not followed by E (in the framework descent), but by the leading C# on beat 2.
- The effect of melodic fluency is so strong that Schenker regarded the leading tone in contexts such as this a *substitute* for scale degree ^2, which would, if actually present, produce a completely stepwise descending line.

Greensleeves



- In bar 7 the tone F is not followed by E (in the framework descent), but by the leading C# on beat 2.
- The effect of melodic fluency is so strong that Schenker regarded the leading tone in contexts such as this a *substitute* for scale degree ^2, which would, if actually present, produce a completely stepwise descending line.
- Parentheses, as in bar 7, are used by Schenkerian analysts to indicate "implied" or "suggested" tones.

Bach: 'Cello Suite No. 1, Prelude



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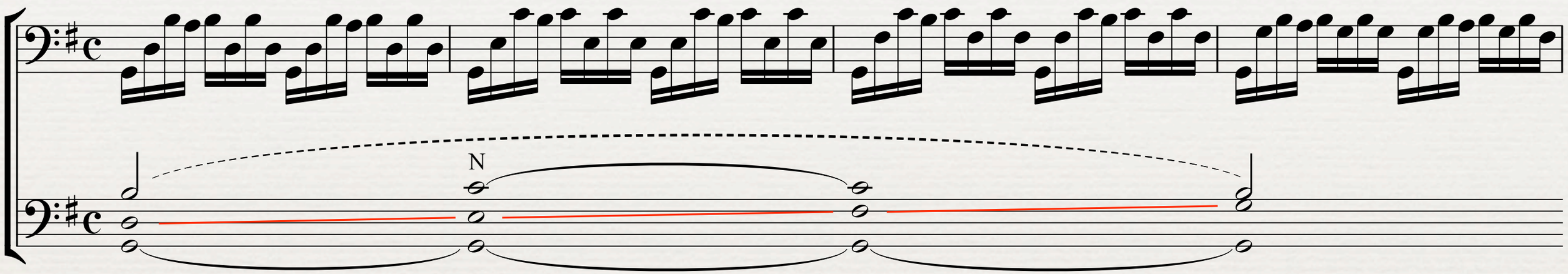
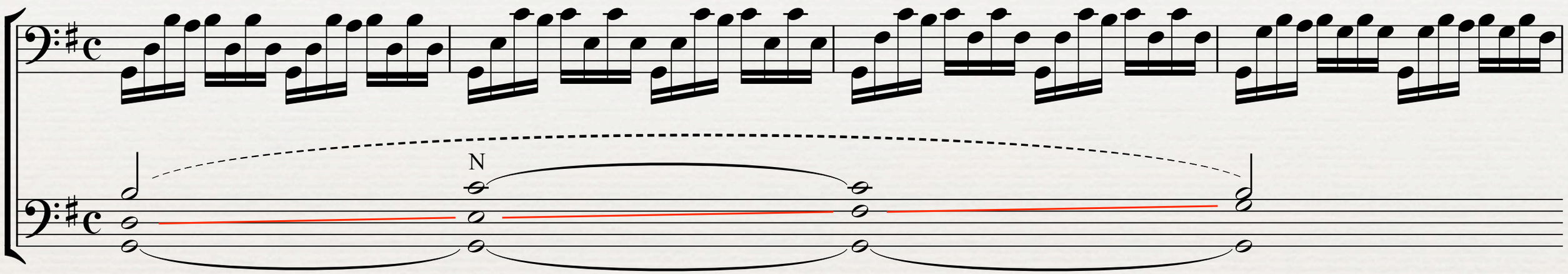


- A single line, written for solo 'cello, here unites different voices that are widely separated.

Bach: 'Cello Suite No. 1, Prelude



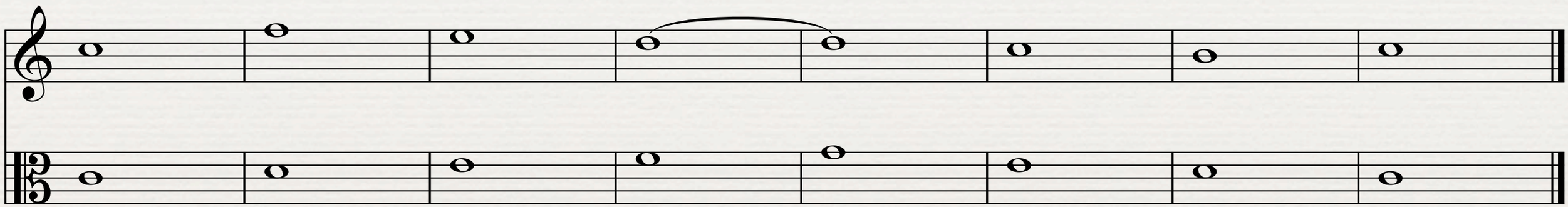
- A single line, written for solo 'cello, here unites different voices that are widely separated.
- Melodic partitions of this type occur frequently—especially in music for solo instruments, where a single line may outline two, three, or more independent polyphonic lines.

Counterpoint and Melody

- Analyzing melodies for their structure isn't all that easy
- Schenker's own studies led him to realize that the classic study of species counterpoint was a superb tool for melodic analysis
    - Many melodies will, in fact, reduce down to lines that tend to resemble the lines of strict species counterpoint
- Thus we can look at *some* melodies, at least, as being elaborations on simpler contrapuntal structures.

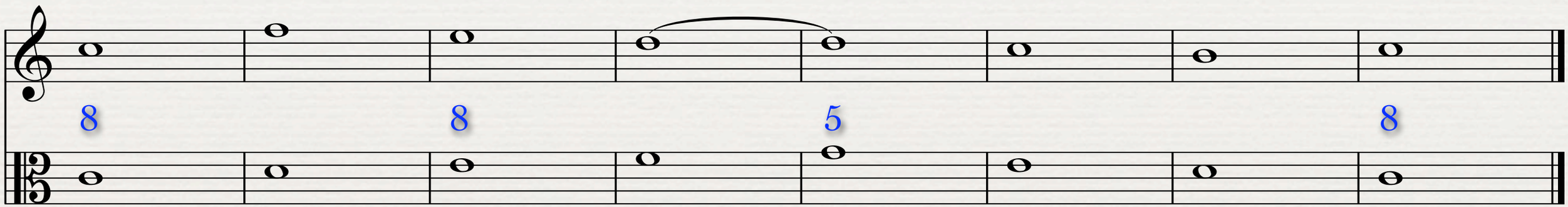
First Species

First Species



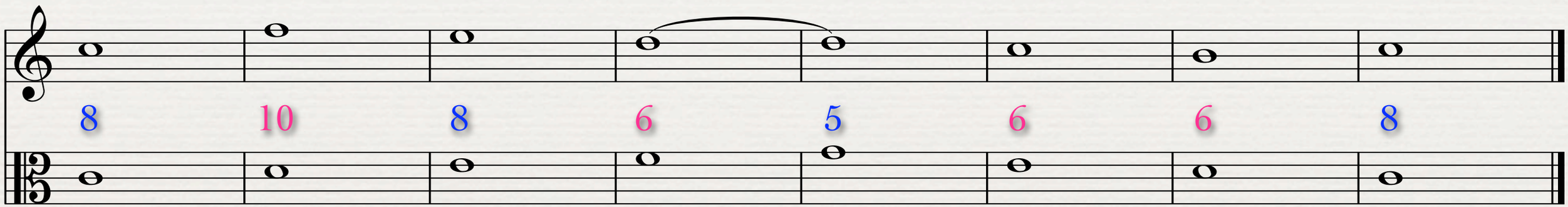
- A counterpoint is added to a pre-existing cantus firmus in the same note values (whole notes), thus creating a note-against-note texture.

First Species



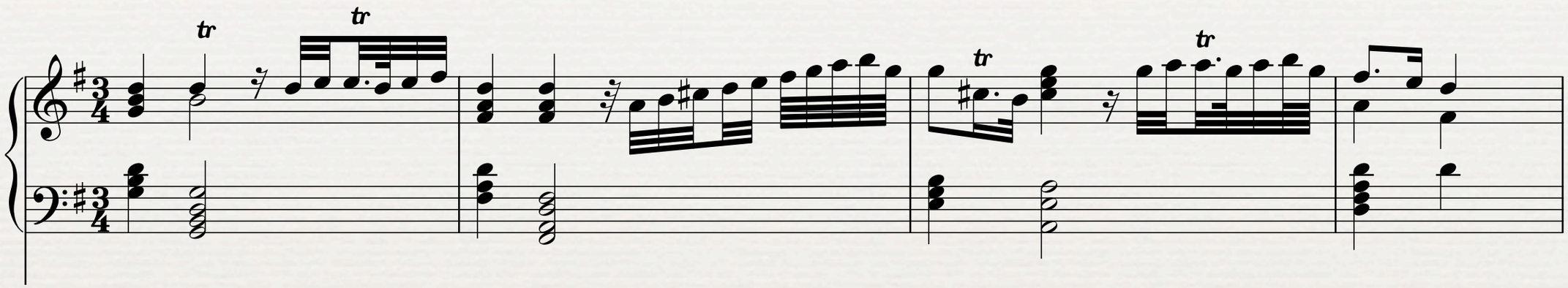
- A counterpoint is added to a pre-existing cantus firmus in the same note values (whole notes), thus creating a note-against-note texture.
  - Begins and ends with octave; other perfect intervals are found throughout

First Species



- A counterpoint is added to a pre-existing cantus firmus in the same note values (whole notes), thus creating a note-against-note texture.
  - Begins and ends with **octave**; **other perfect intervals** are found throughout
  - All other intervals are **consonant**

Handel: Chaconne



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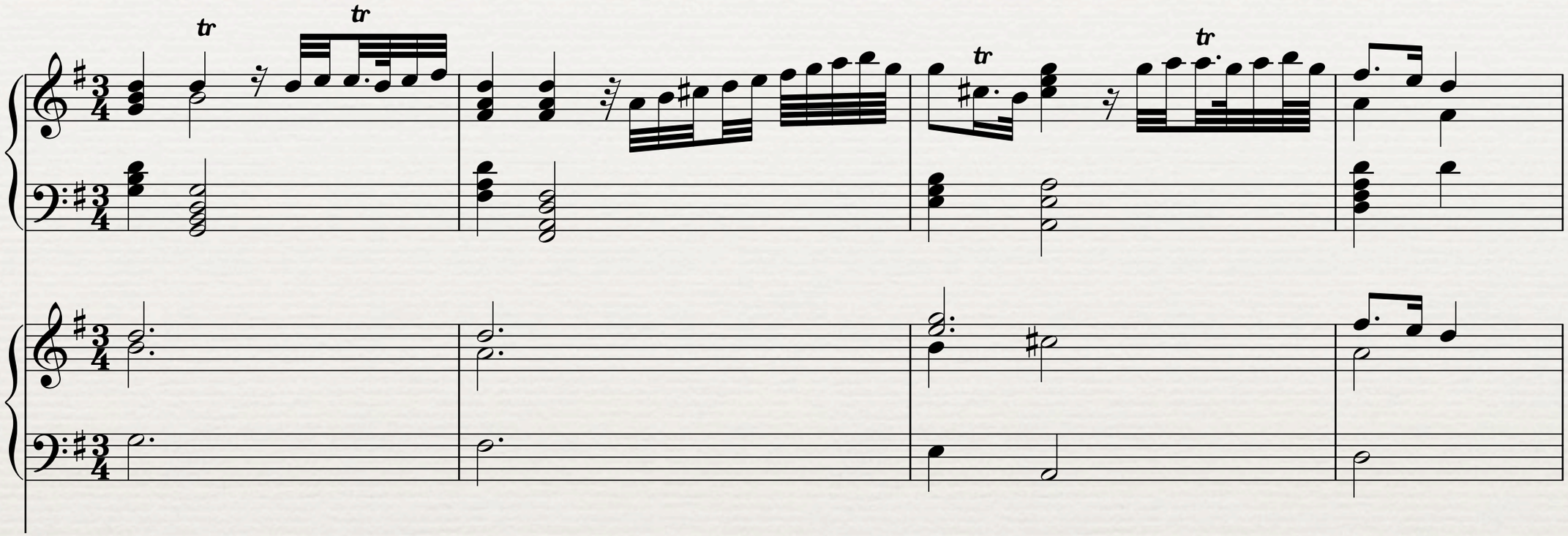
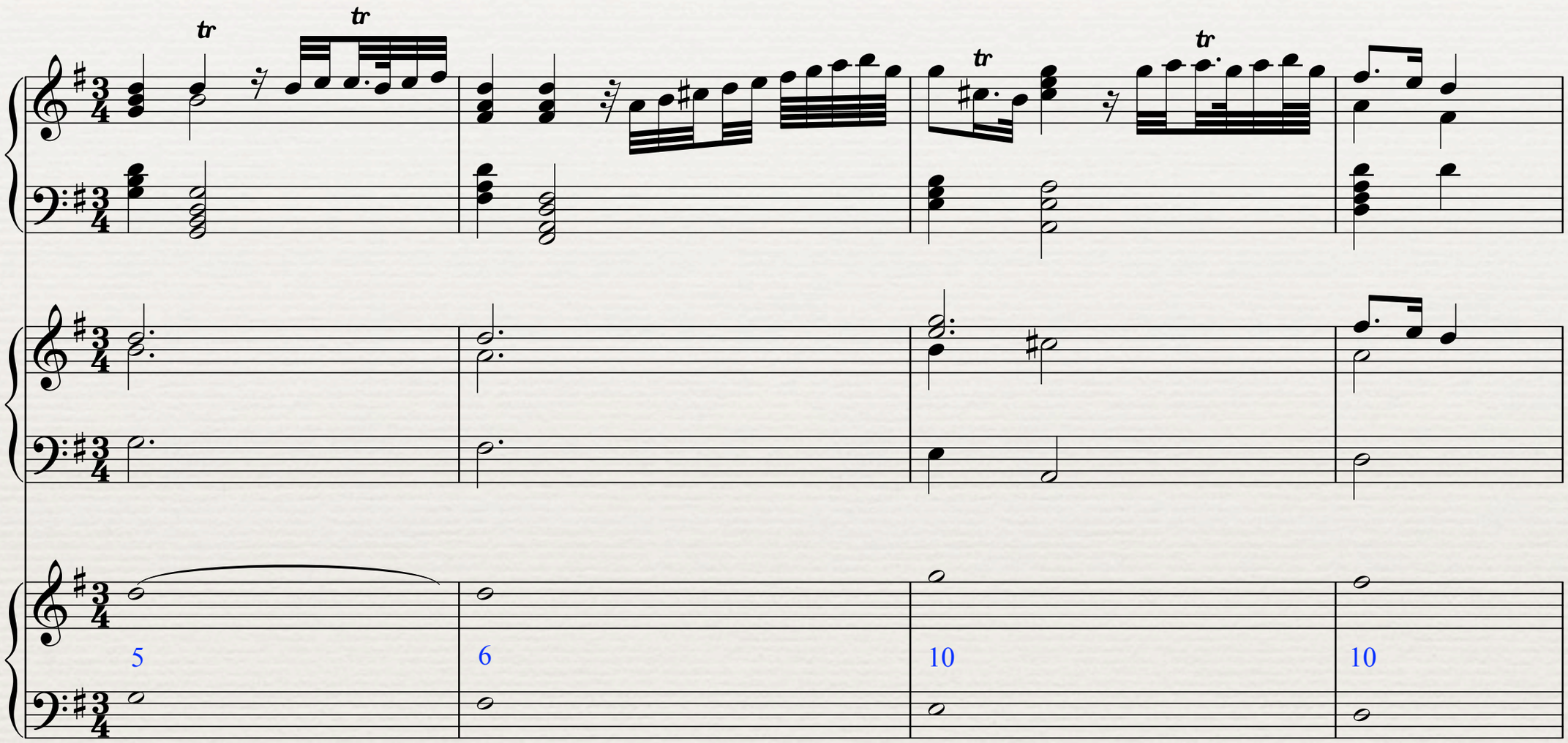


- A harmonic reduction strips away the melodic ornamentation

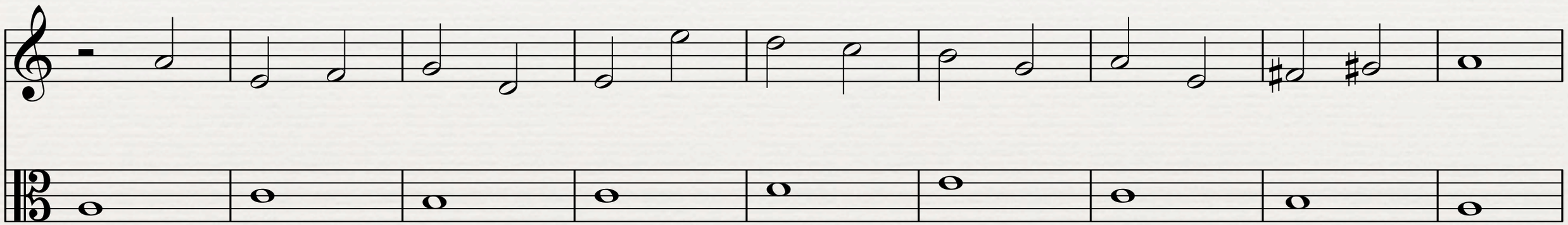
Handel: Chaconne



- A careful study of that reduction reveals a contrapuntal relationship between the outer voices which displays the features of first species counterpoint

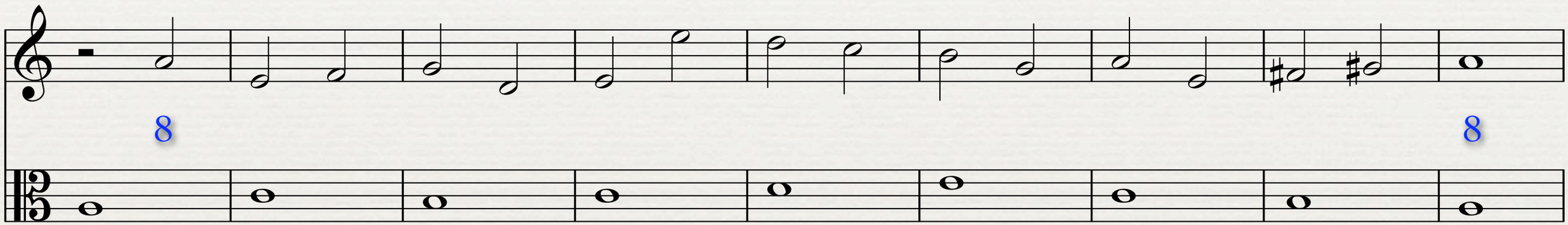
Second Species

Second Species



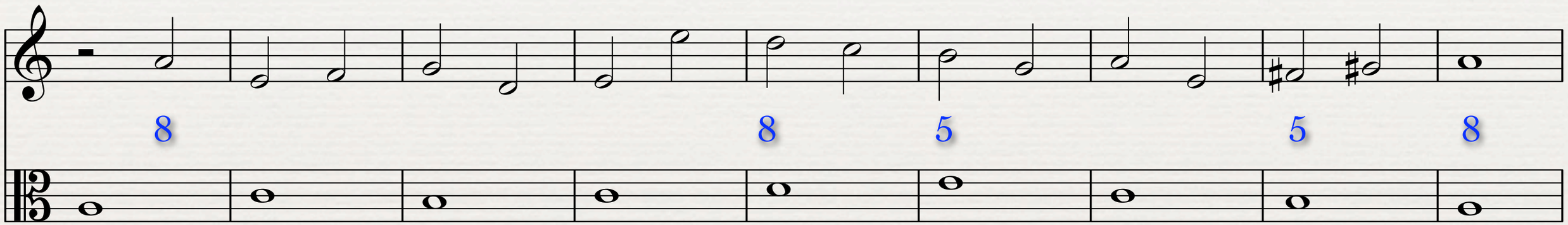
- A counterpoint in half notes is set against whole notes in the cantus firmus

Second Species



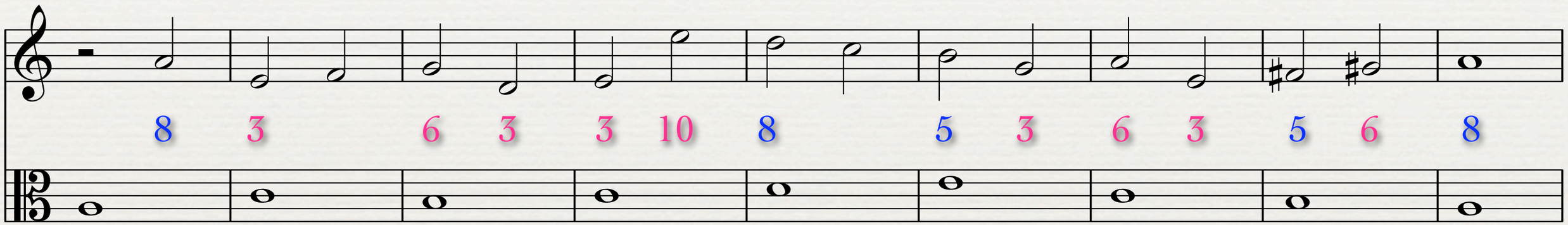
- A counterpoint in half notes is set against whole notes in the cantus firmus
  - Octaves still begin and end

Second Species



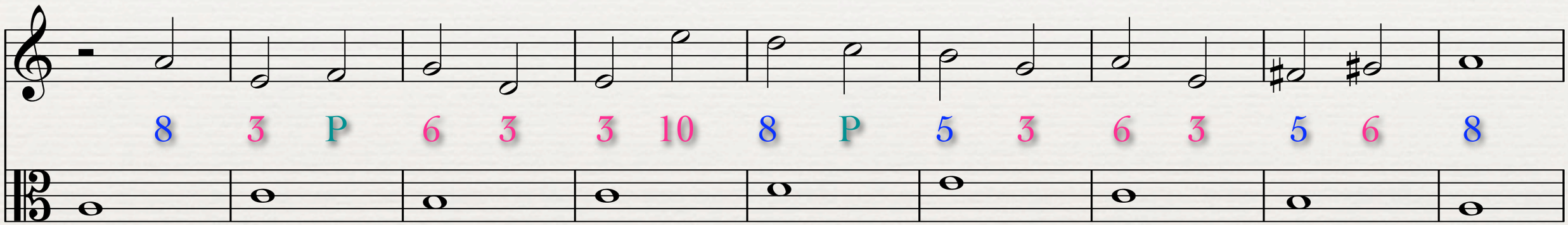
- A counterpoint in half notes is set against whole notes in the cantus firmus
  - Octaves still begin and end
  - Other perfect intervals are found throughout

Second Species



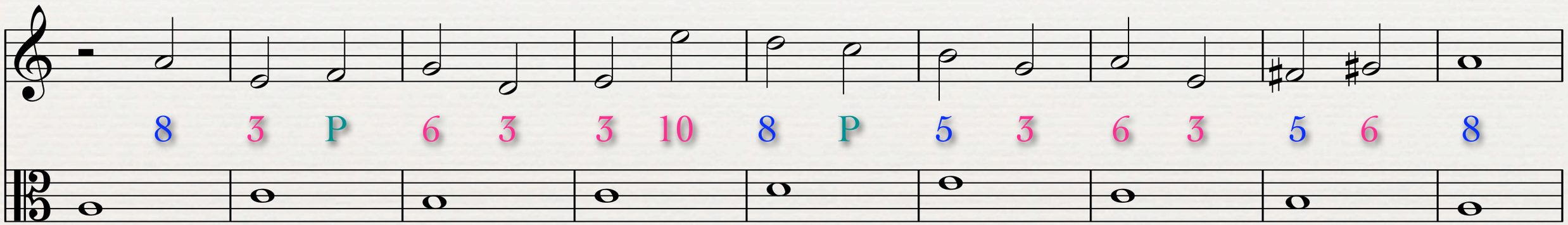
- A counterpoint in half notes is set against whole notes in the cantus firmus
  - **Octaves** still begin and end
  - Other **perfect intervals** are found throughout
  - **Consonant intervals** are used

Second Species



- A counterpoint in half notes is set against whole notes in the cantus firmus
  - **Octaves** still begin and end
  - Other **perfect intervals** are found throughout
  - **Consonant intervals** are used
  - The only dissonances are **passing tones**, only on weak beats

Second Species



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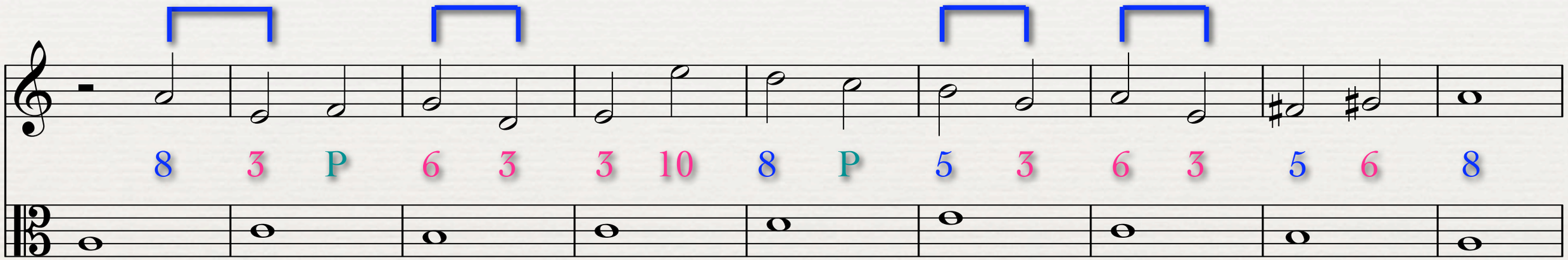

- Leaps are possible, as long as both tones are *consonant*—the familiar *consonant skip* (CS), sometimes also called a *chordal skip*.

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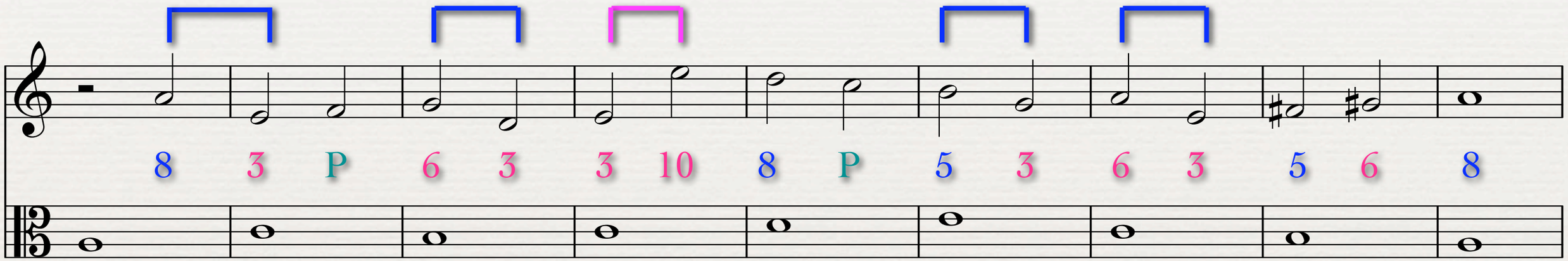

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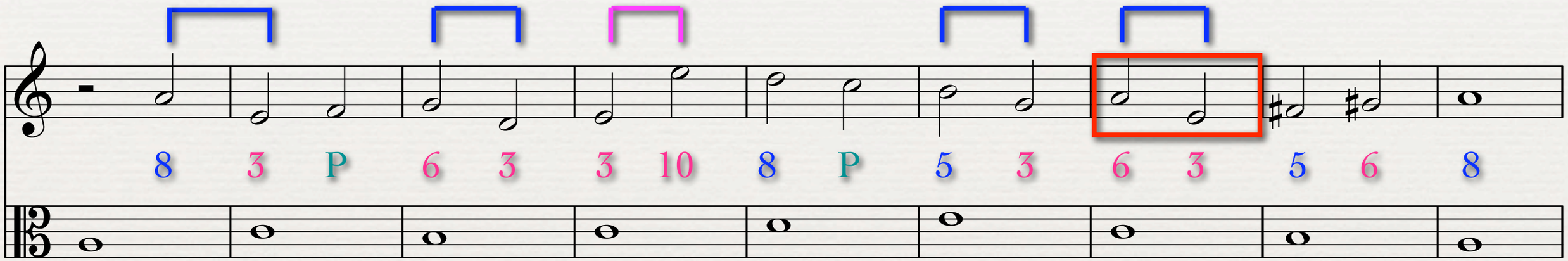
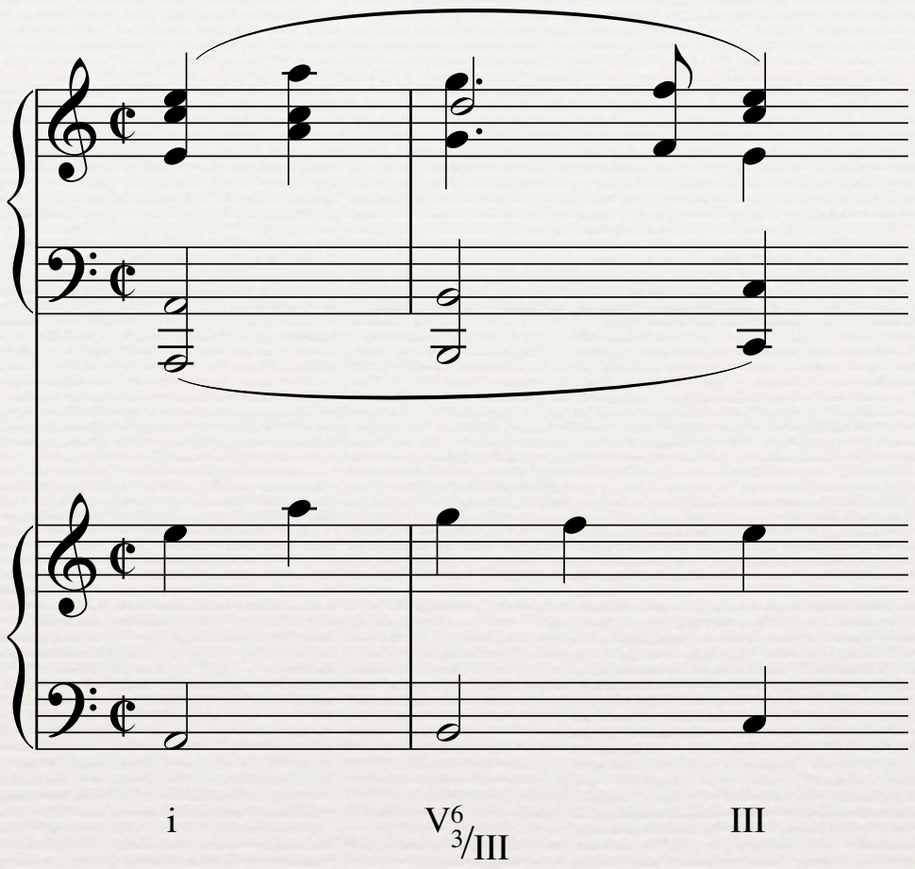


- Leaps are possible, as long as both tones are *consonant*—the familiar *consonant skip* (CS), sometimes also called a *chordal skip*.
- The leap in bar 4 is a *transfer of register*
- The leap in bar 7 is also a *melodic substitution*, in that direct stepwise motion (from A to G) would result in a parallel fifth.

Brahms: Intermezzo, Op. 76 No. 7



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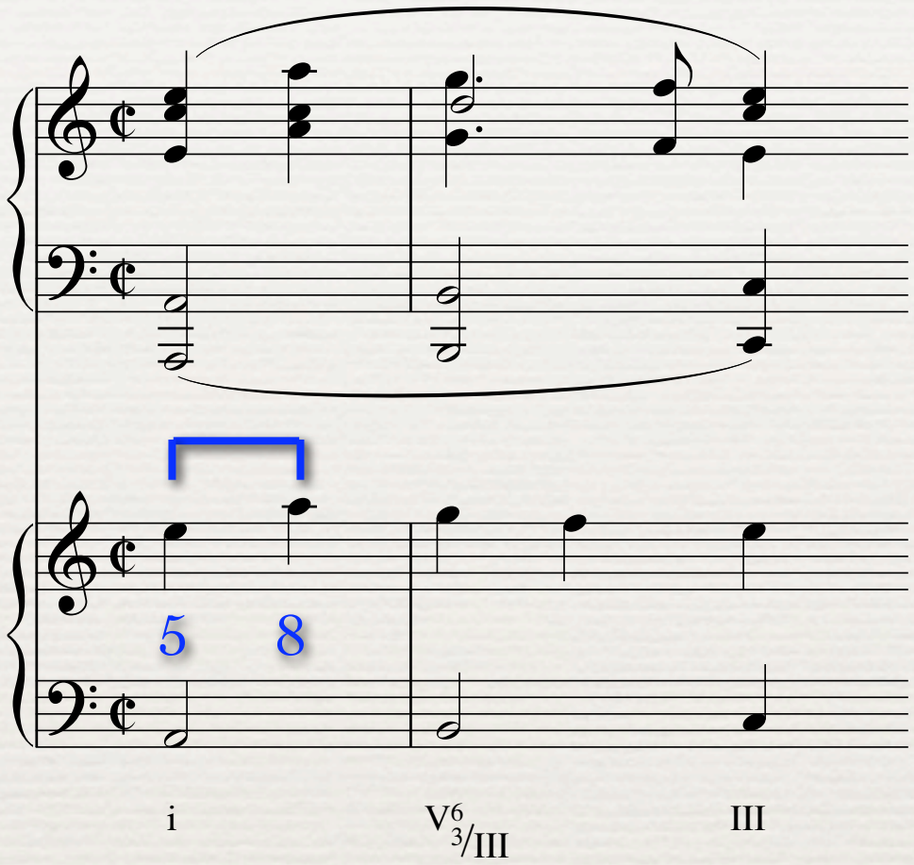

- Opens with a *consonant skip* by a fourth

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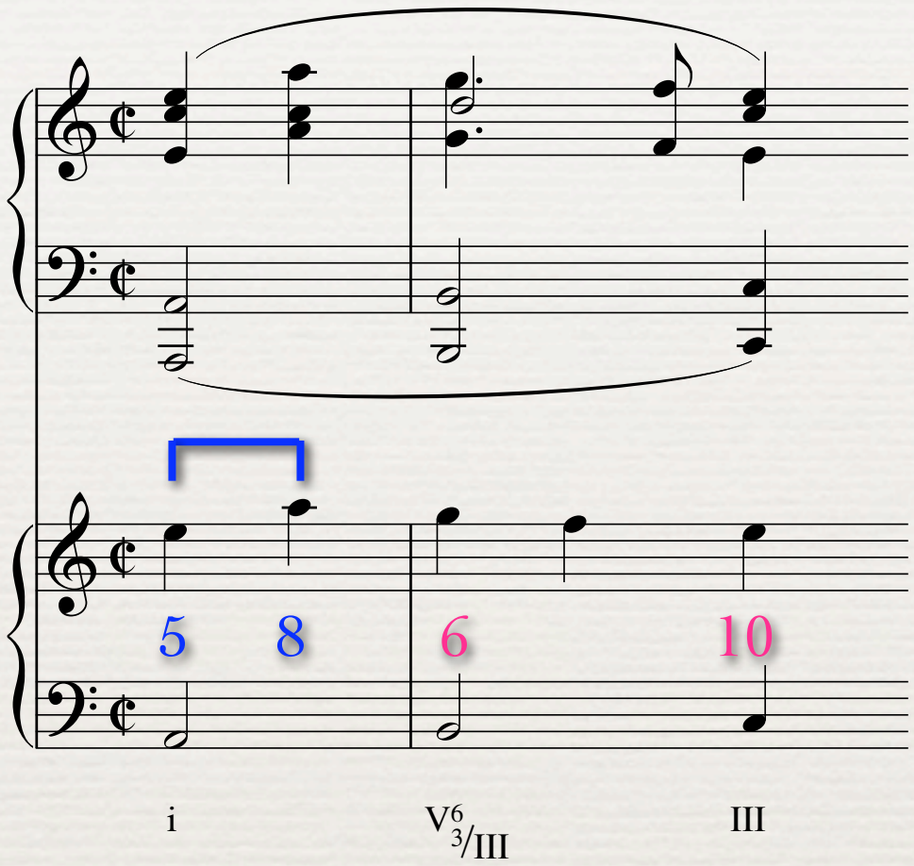

- Opens with a *consonant skip* by a fourth
- Moves from a sixth to a tenth (third)

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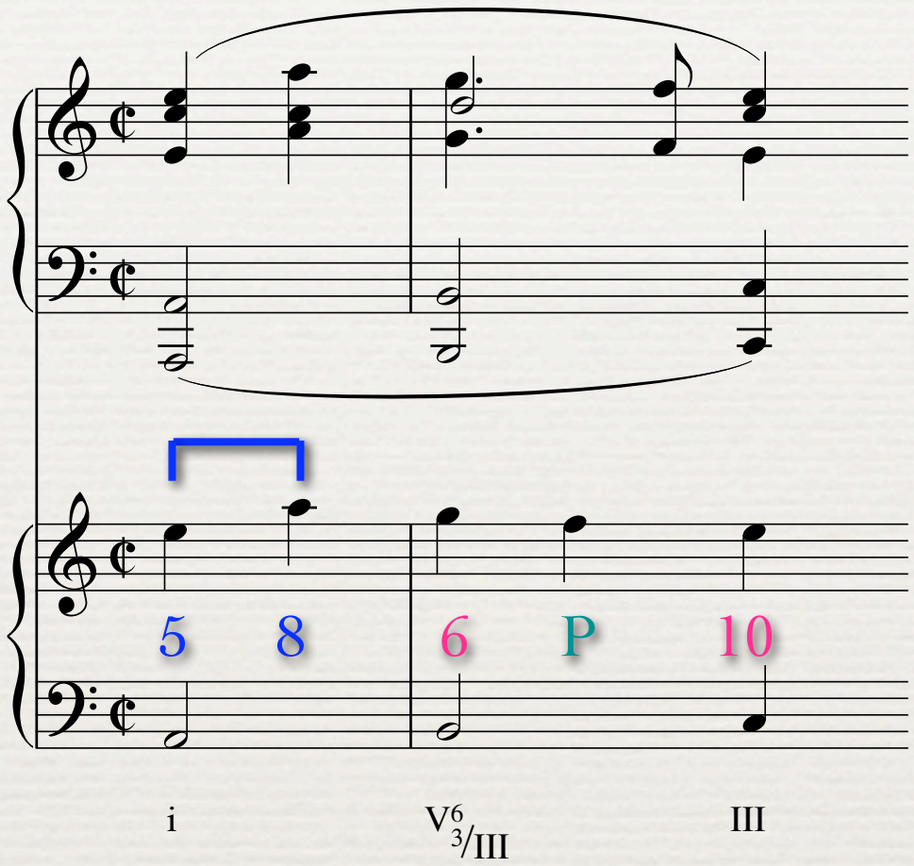
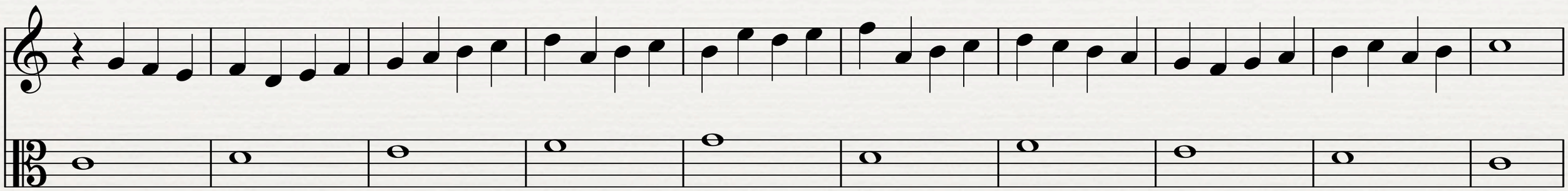
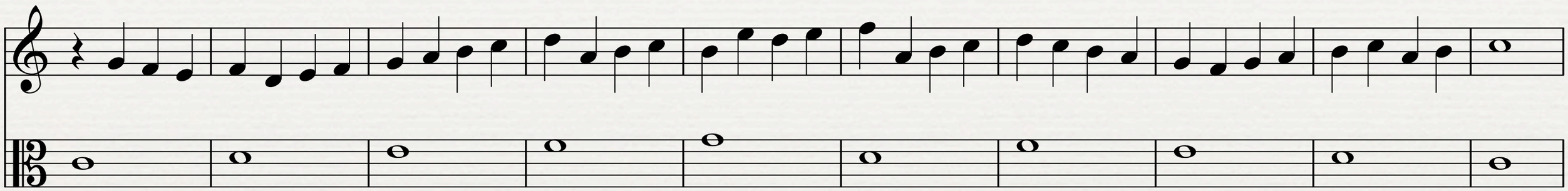


- Opens with a *consonant skip* by a fourth
- Moves from a sixth to a tenth (third)
- Via a dissonant passing tone.

Third Species



Third Species



- Third species employs four quarters against the note, permitting faster embellishment and consonant or dissonant neighbor tones

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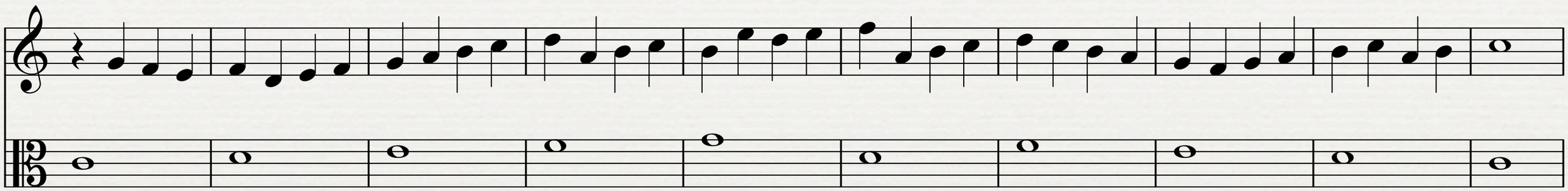

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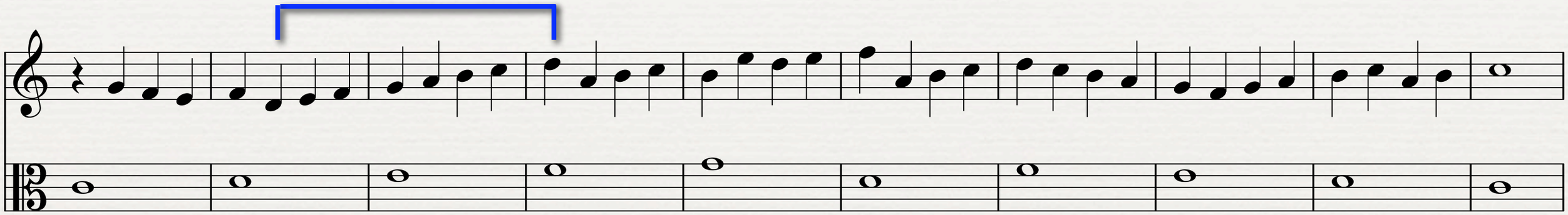

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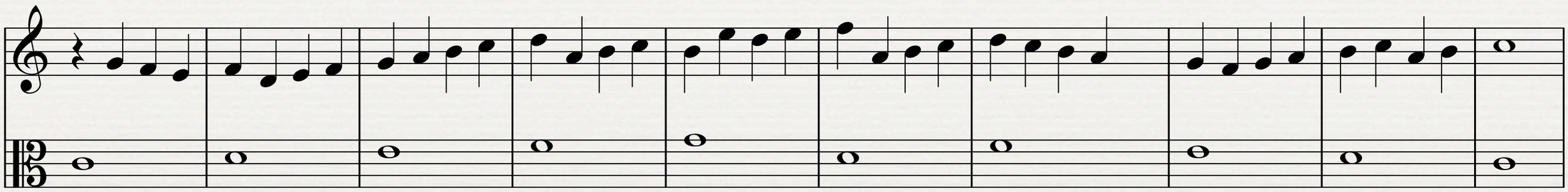
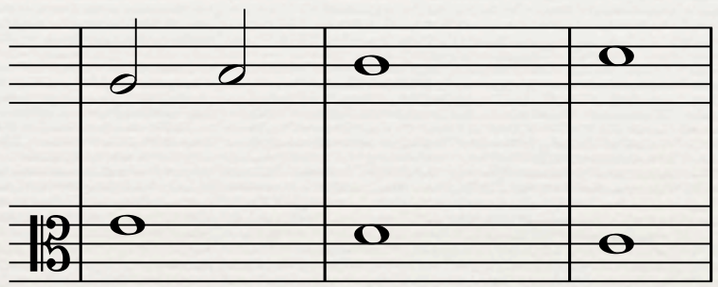
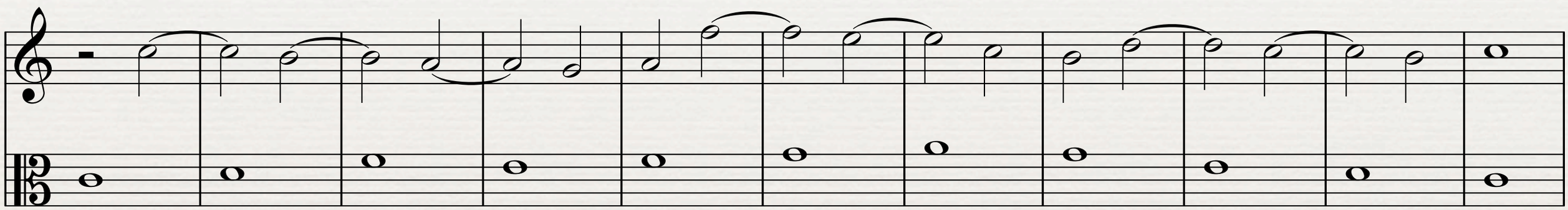


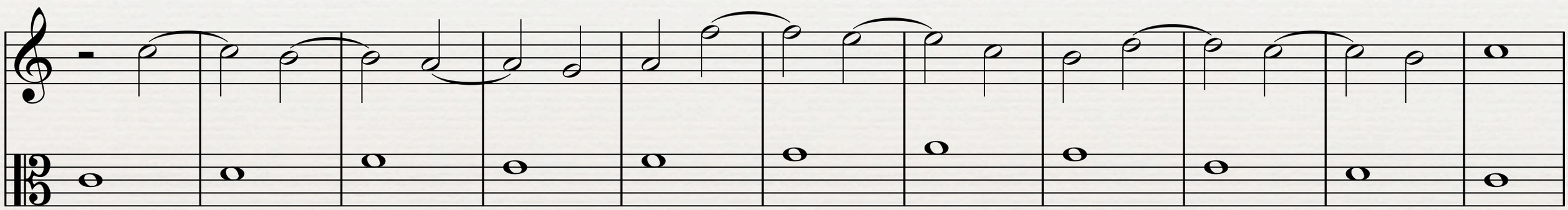


- Third species employs four quarters against the note, permitting faster embellishment and consonant or dissonant neighbor tones
- This species also allows for embellishments which prolong a note
  - Bars 2-4: the d-d motion is a filled-in register change
  - Bars 8-9: by simplifying the third species into second species, we see how neighbor tones have prolonged tones—particularly the b in bar 9.

Fourth Species

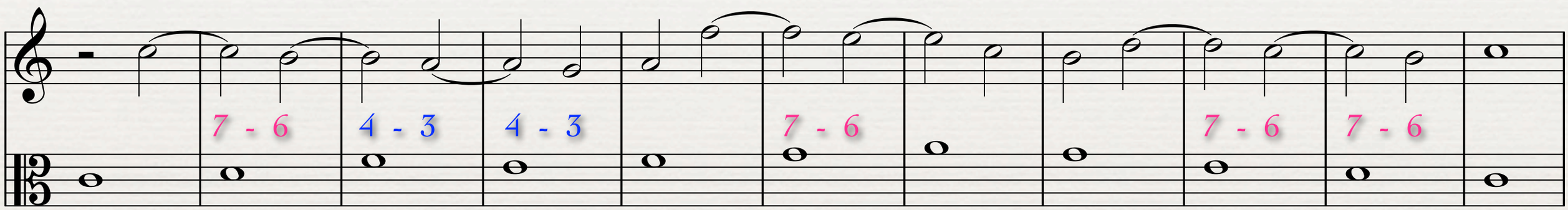


Fourth Species



- Fourth species introduces *suspensions* and/or *accented passing tones* — i.e., dissonances which do not occur on a weak beat

Fourth Species



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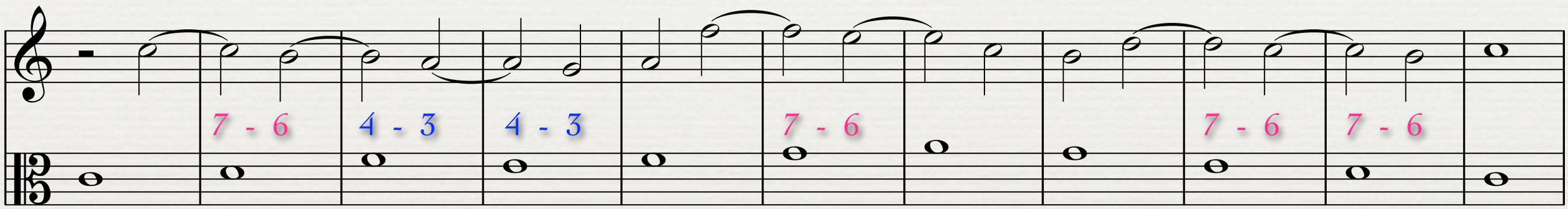
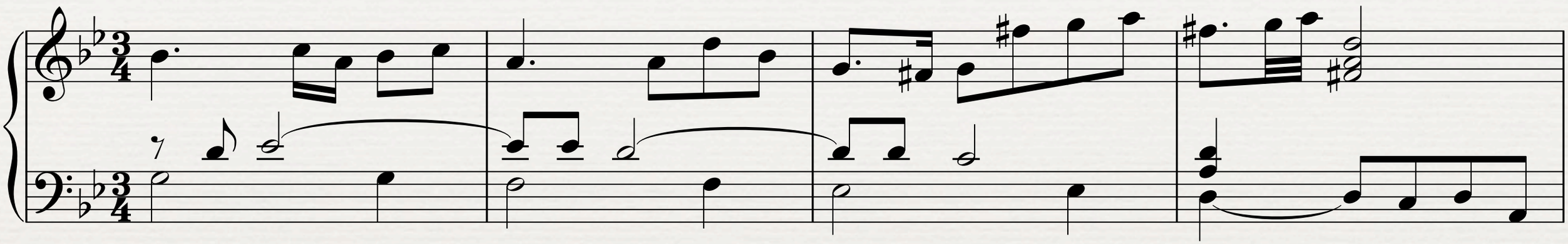
Fourth Species



- Fourth species introduces *suspensions* and/or *accented passing tones* — i.e., dissonances which do not occur on a weak beat
  - The suspensions should be familiar from studies in Harmony
  - Note that the structural weight or significance of a tone does not necessary correspond with its metrical position: the resolution of the tone (the "main" tone) typically comes on a weak beat compared to the suspension proper.

Handel: Chaconne, Variation 9



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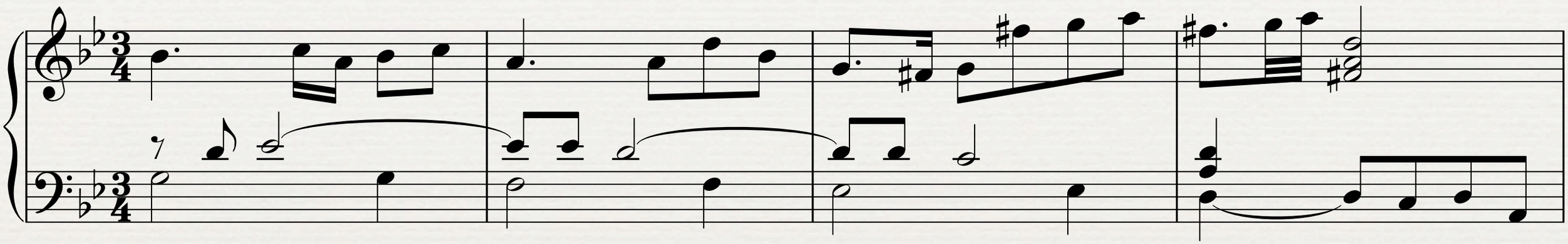
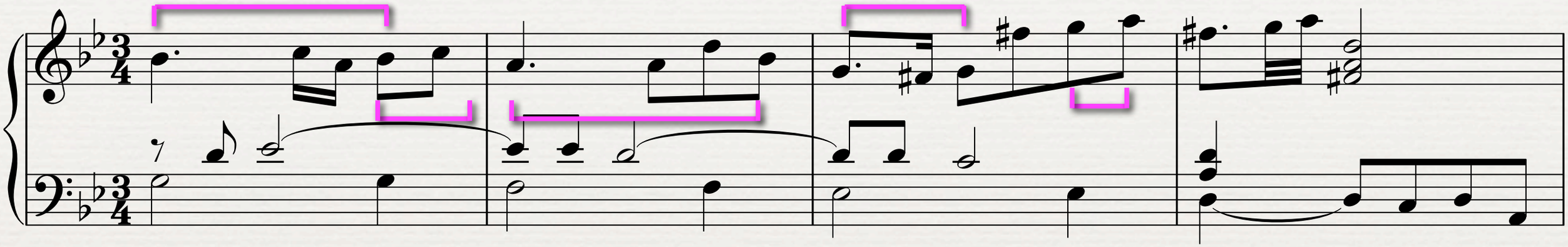


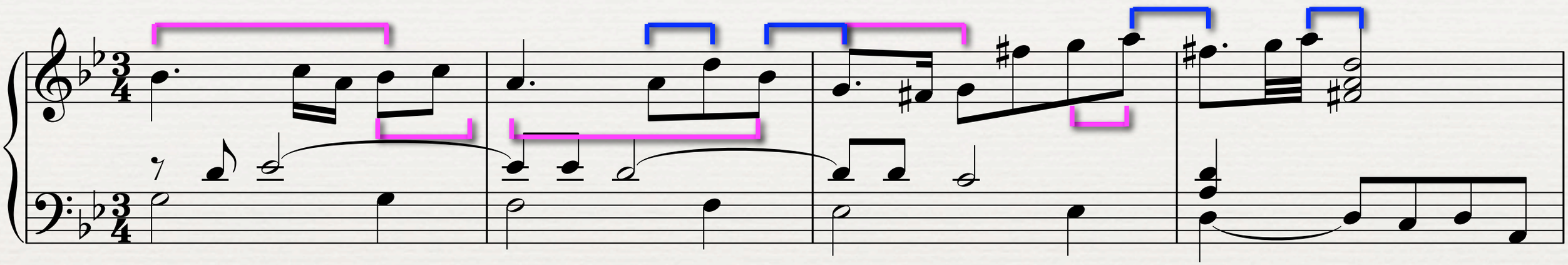
- Identify the melodic figurations

Handel: Chaconne, Variation 9



- Identify the melodic figurations
  - Neighbor tones

Handel: Chaconne, Variation 9



- Identify the melodic figurations
  - Neighbor tones
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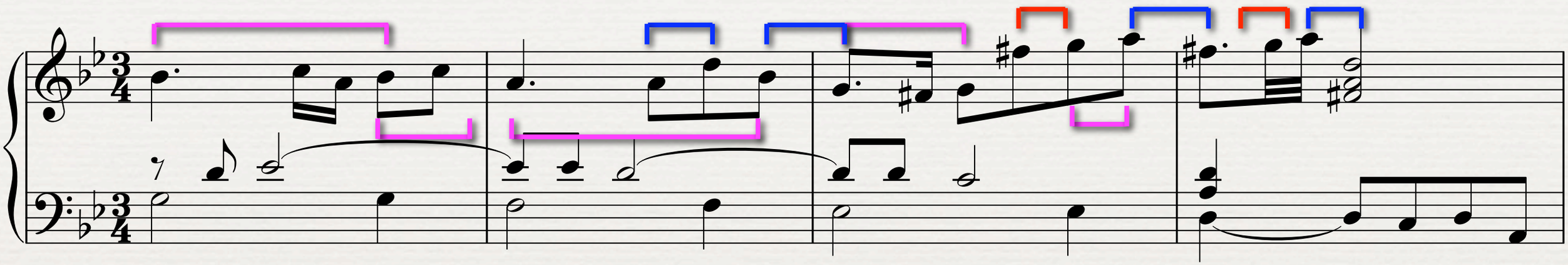
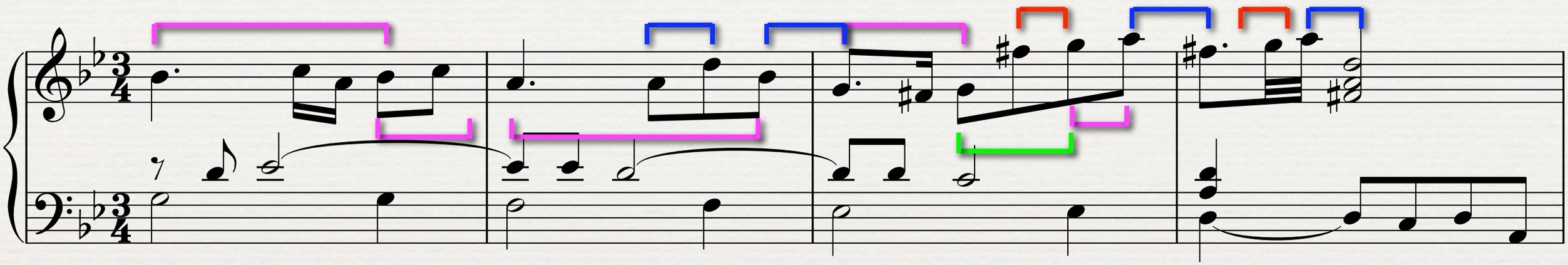


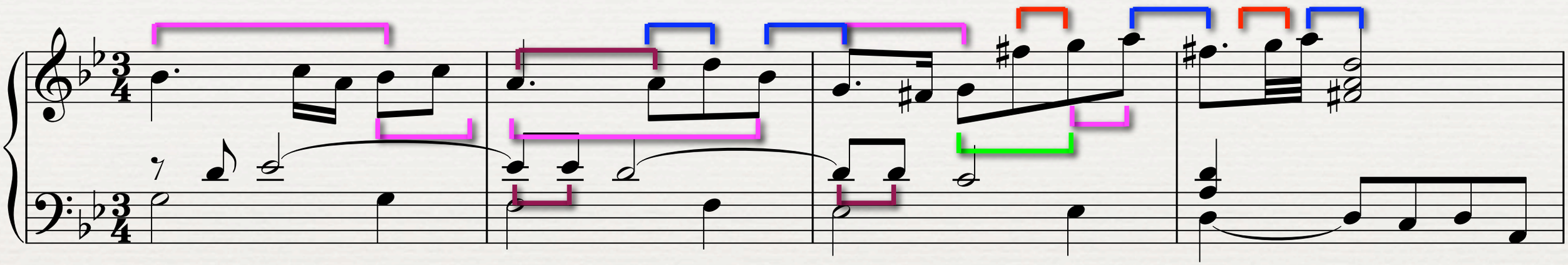
- Identify the melodic figurations
  - Neighbor tones
  - Consonant skips
  - Passing tones

Handel: Chaconne, Variation 9



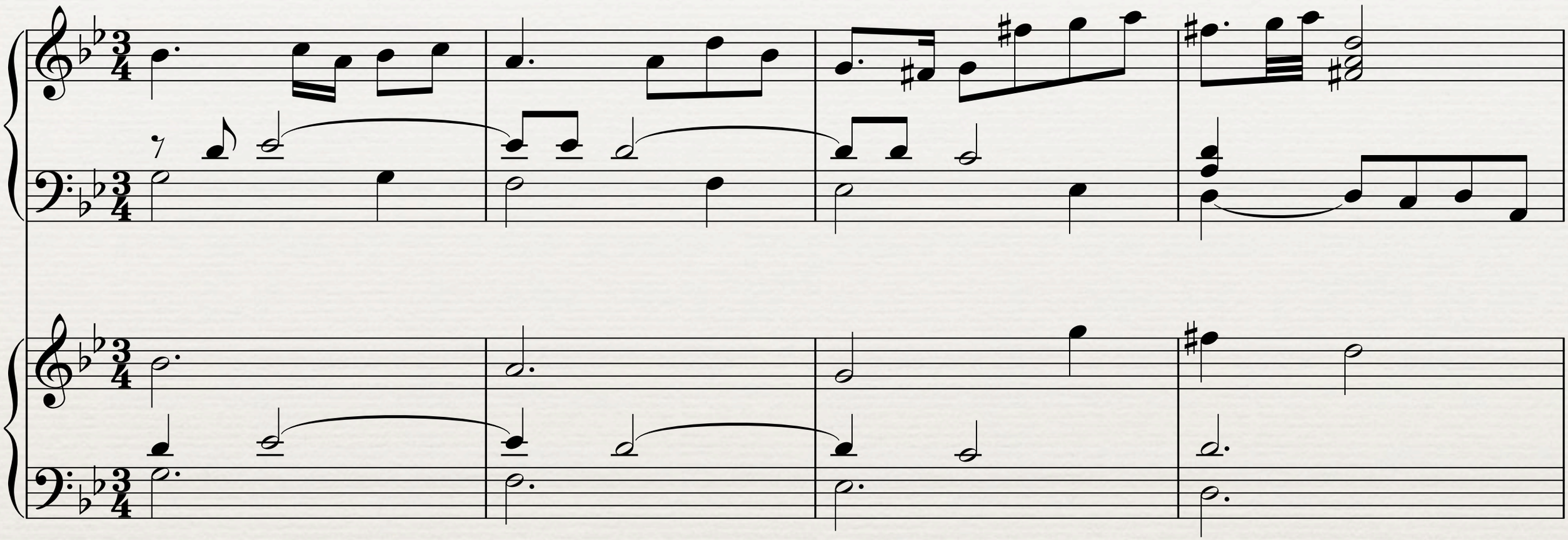
- Identify the melodic figurations
  - Neighbor tones
  - Consonant skips
  - Passing tones
  - Register transfer

Handel: Chaconne, Variation 9



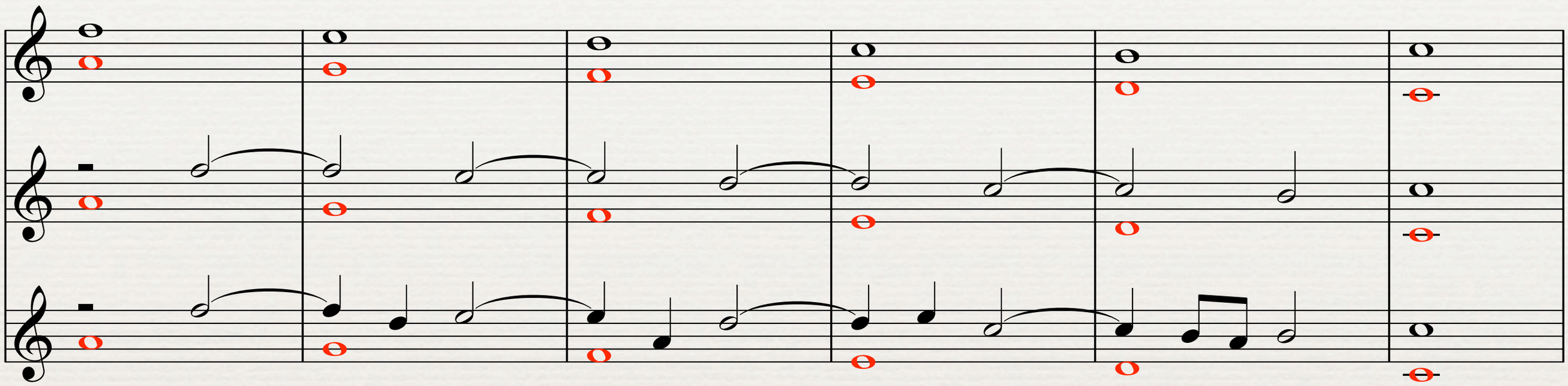
- Identify the melodic figurations
  - Neighbor tones
  - Consonant skips
  - Passing tones
  - Register transfer
  - Repeated notes

Handel: Chaconne, Variation 9



- Reduce those out, and the piece is revealed as an example of fourth species.

Fifth Species



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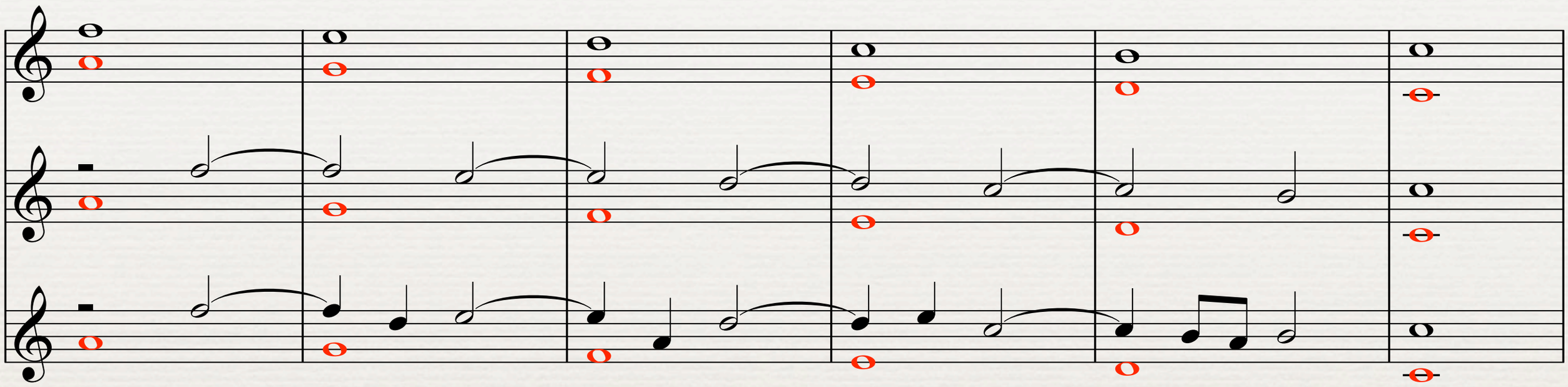
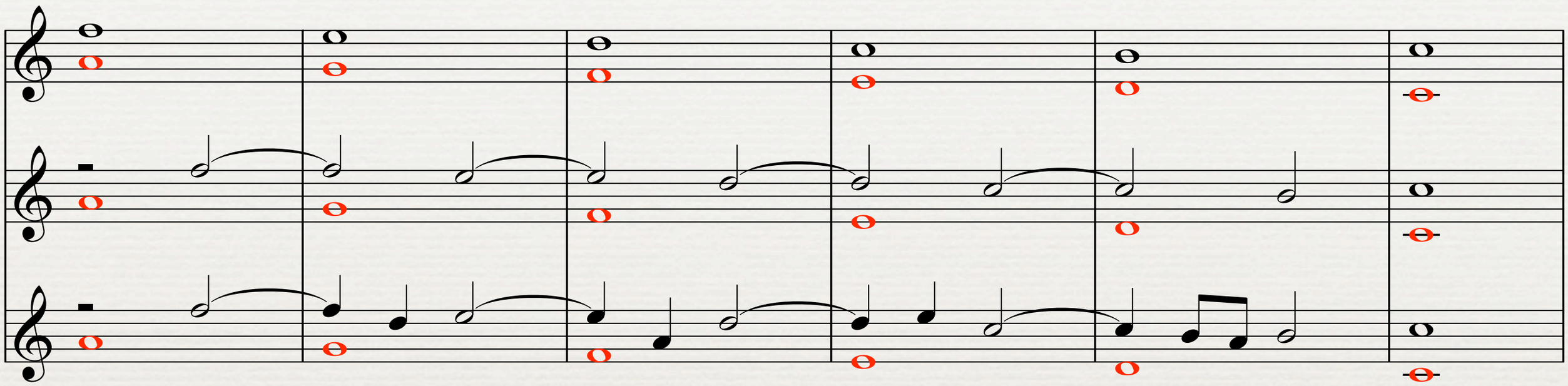


- Fifth species combines the procedures of the previous four species.

Fifth Species



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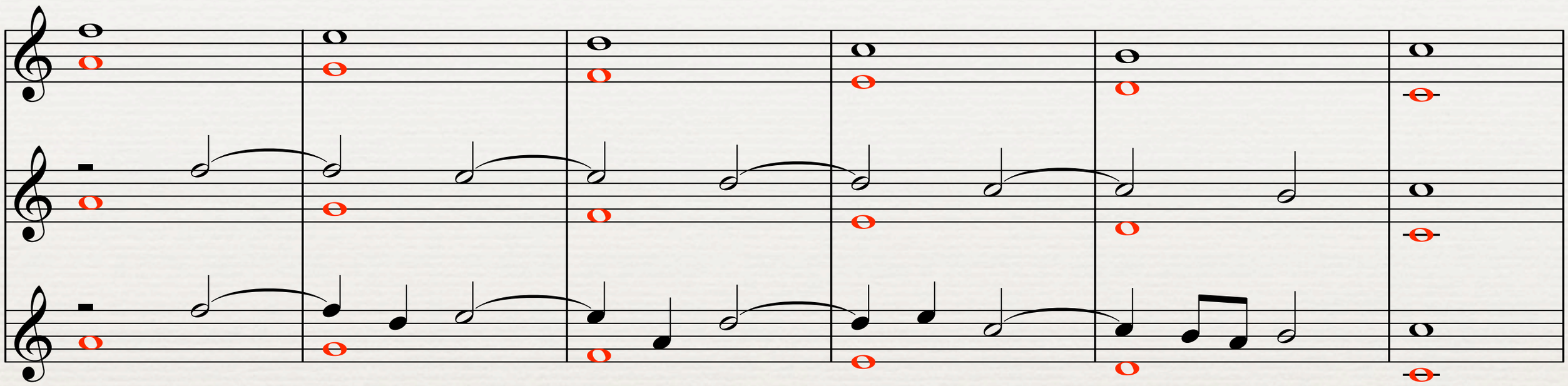

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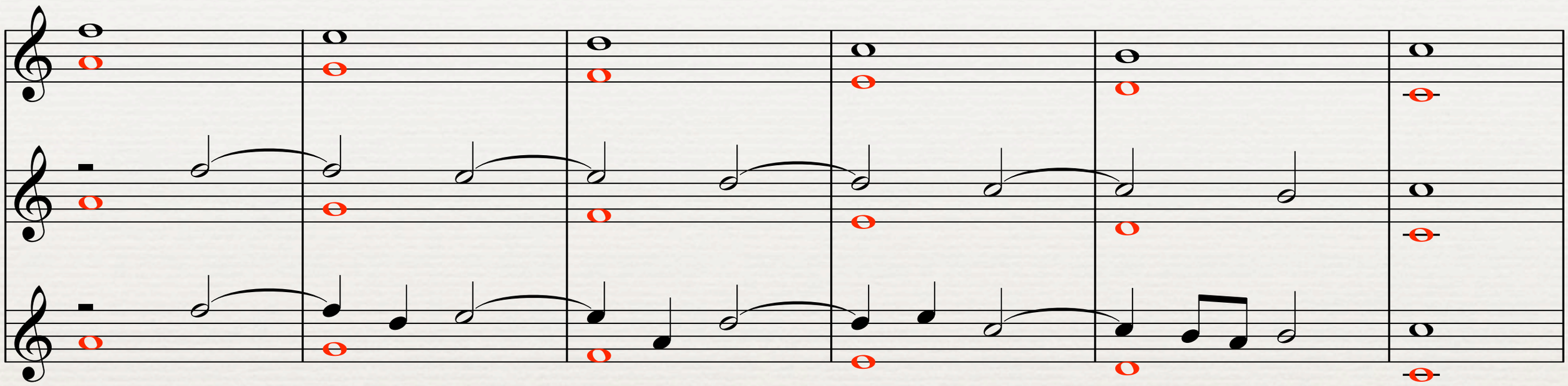
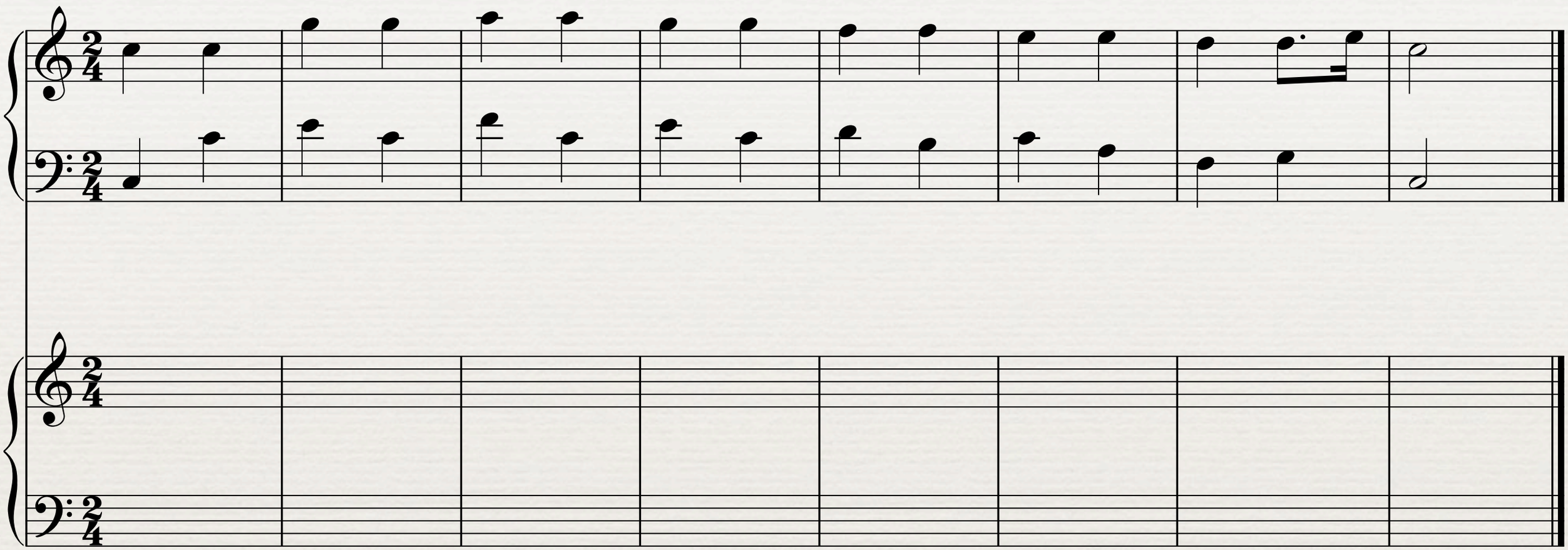
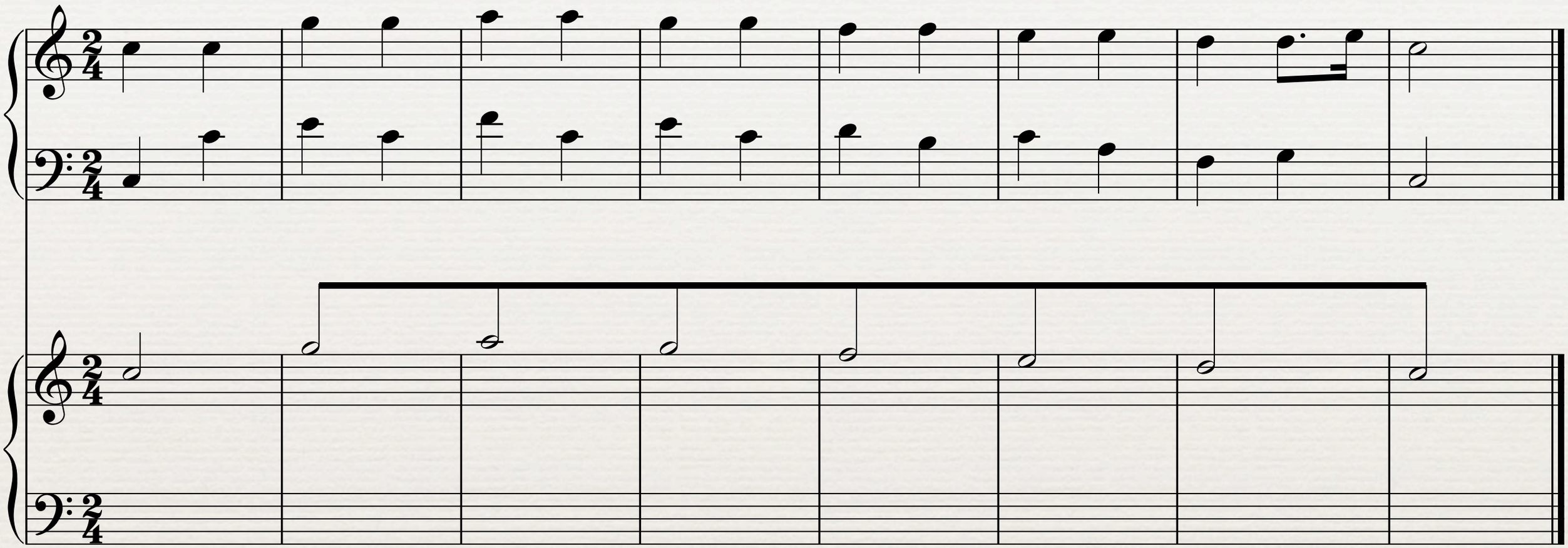


- Fifth species combines the procedures of the previous four species.
  - The upper line shows a first-species setting of a cantus firmus, mostly at the 6th
  - The middle line shows a fourth-species rhythmic displacement
  - The lower line shows a third-species decoration of those rhythmically-displaces notes.

Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265

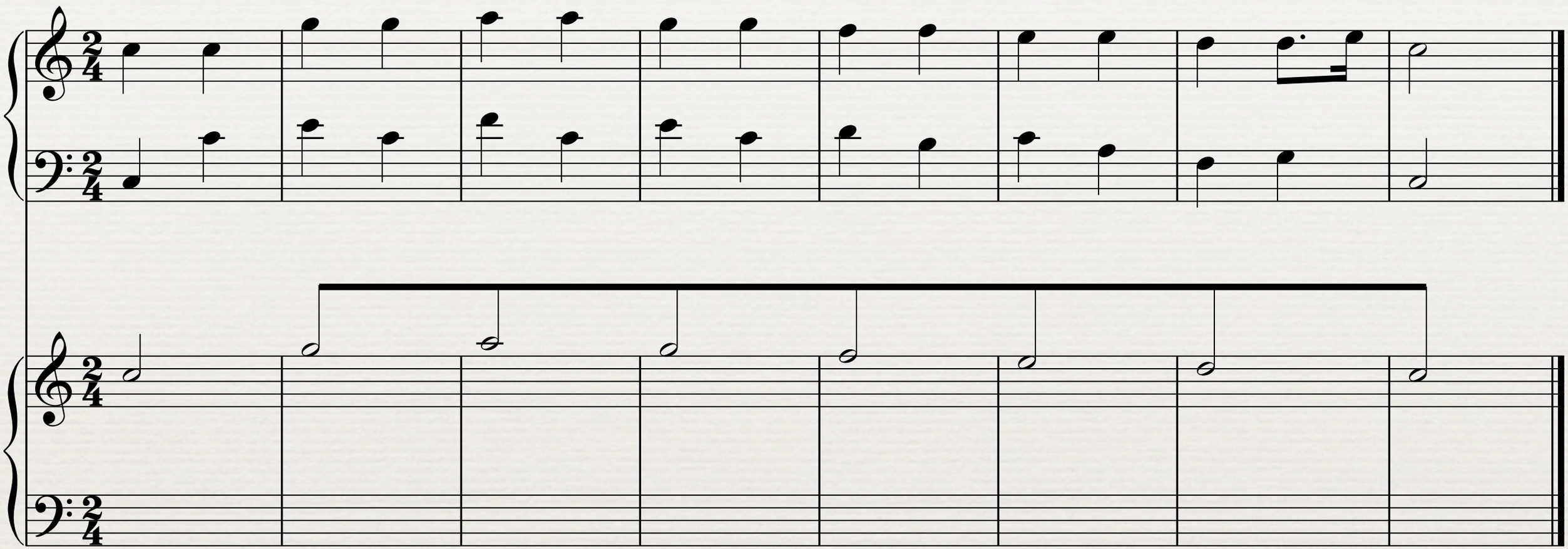


Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265

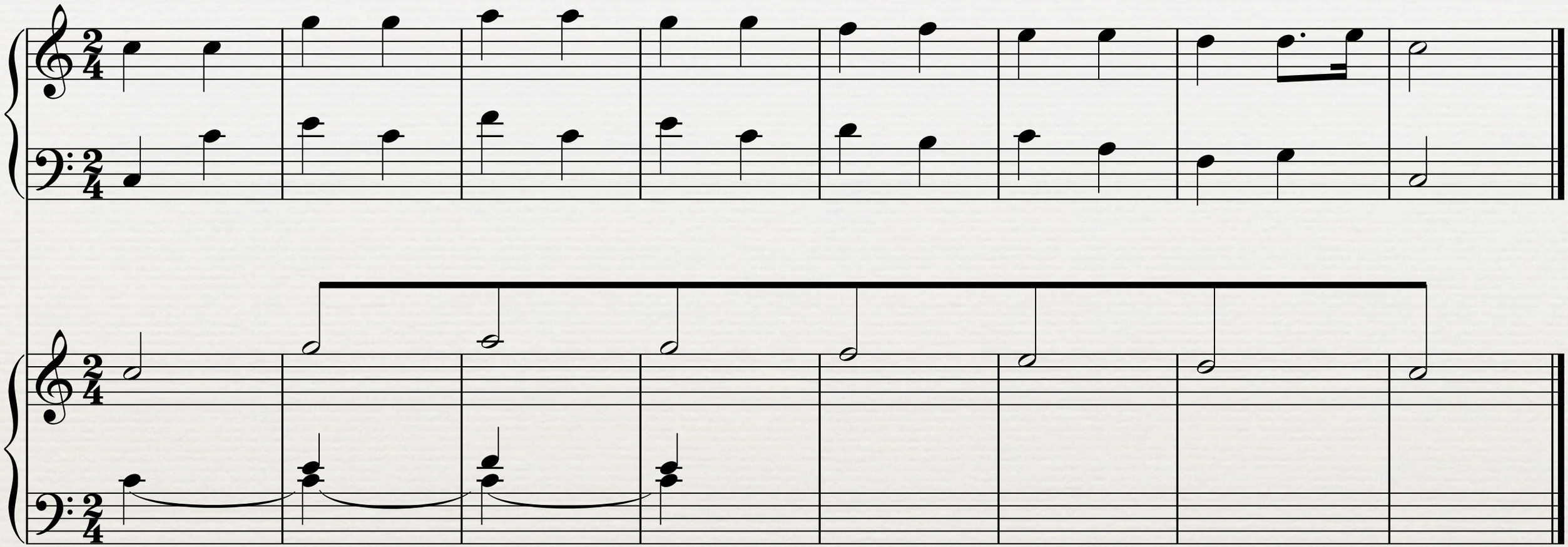


- Reducing out the repeated notes in the melody reveals a very first-species like melodic line.

Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265

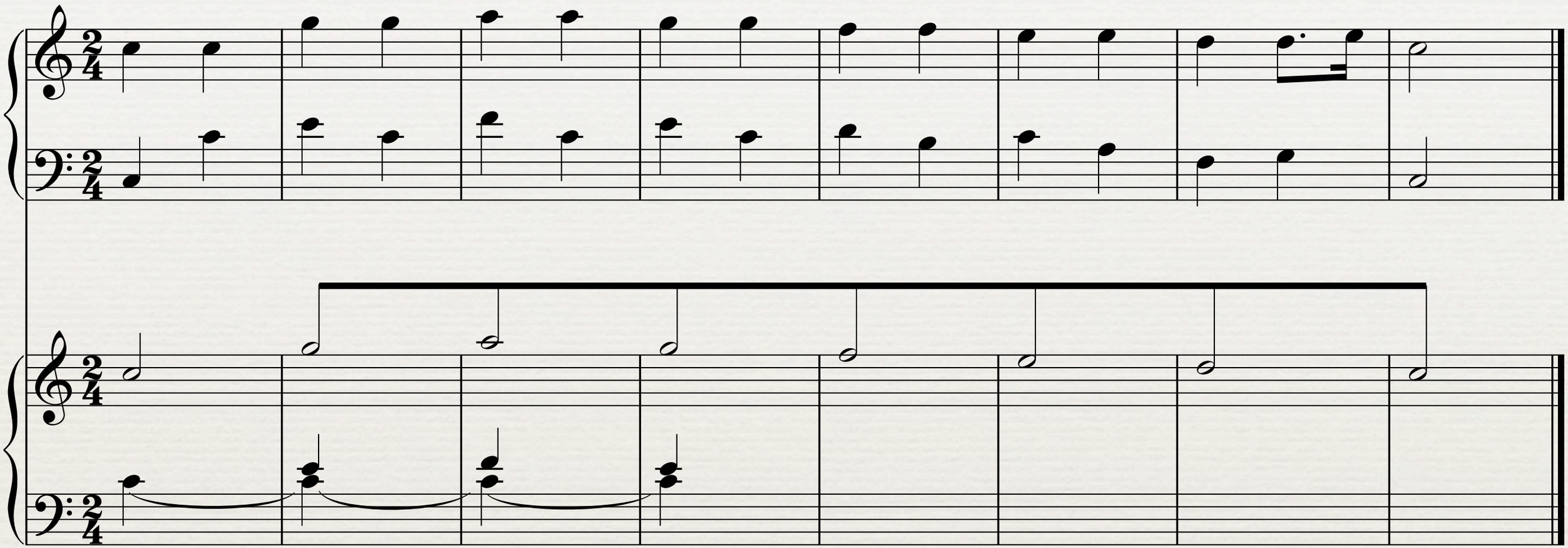


Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265

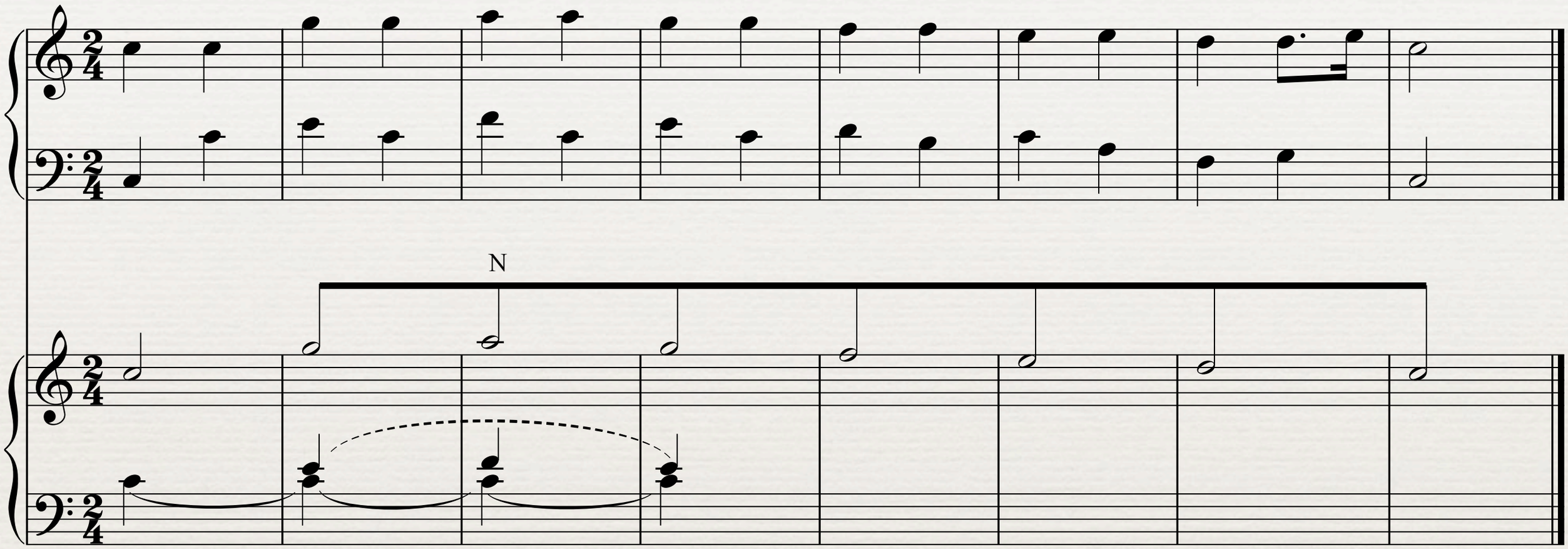


- Examination of the LH part reveals a "two-part", contrapuntal texture.

Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265

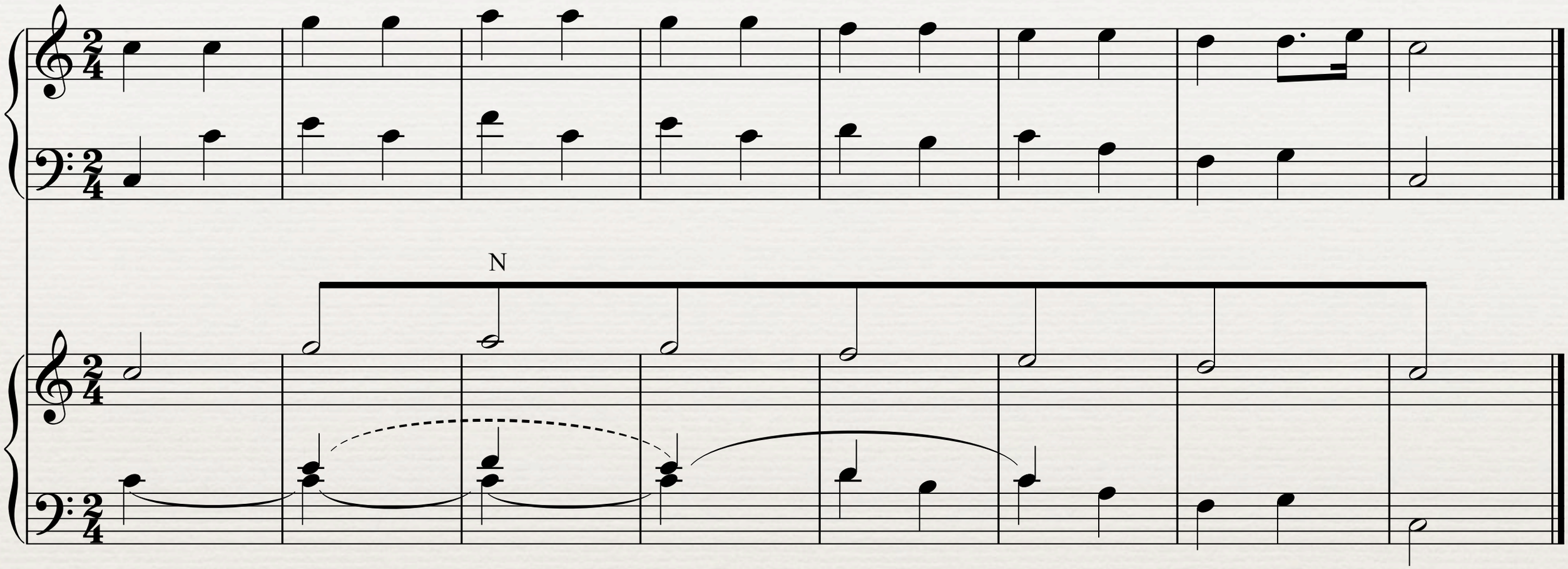


Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265



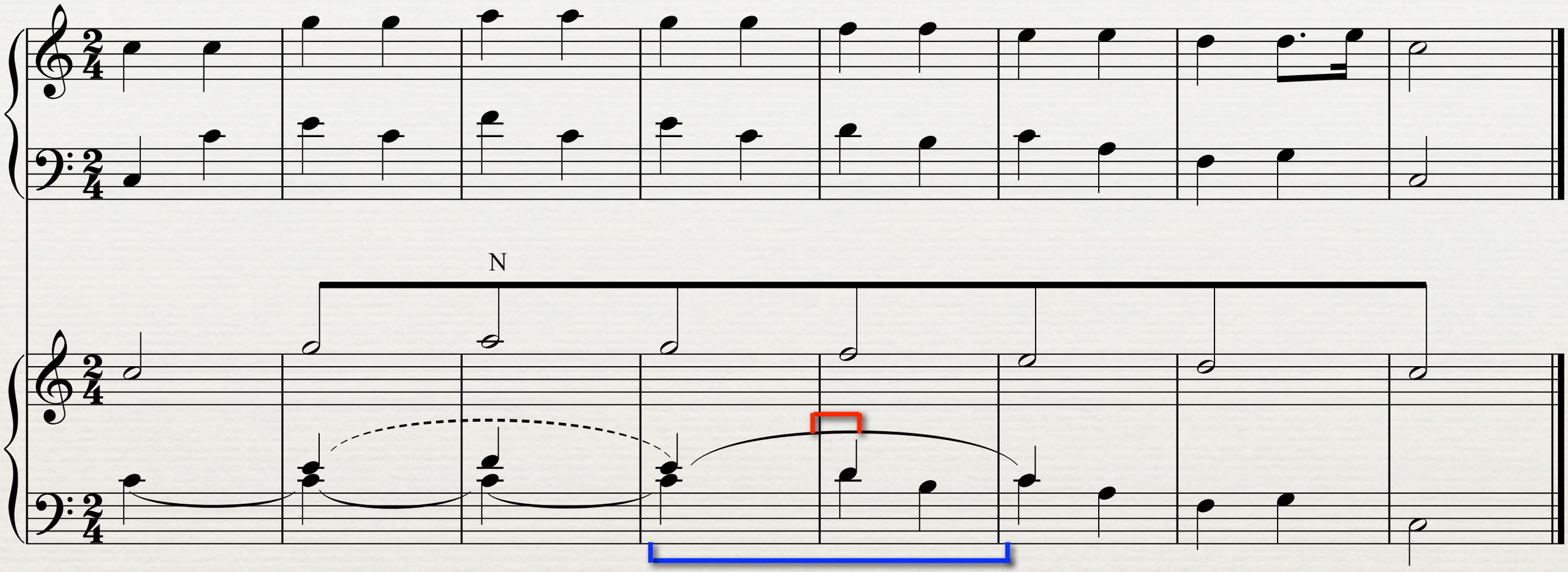
- The "tenor" of the LH displays a neighbor tone (prolonging) motion, matched in the RH melody

Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265



- Completing the LH part, we note that the two-voice texture continues for two more measures, also providing a consonant skip between bars 4 and 6 (with a passing tone filling in the skip)

Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265



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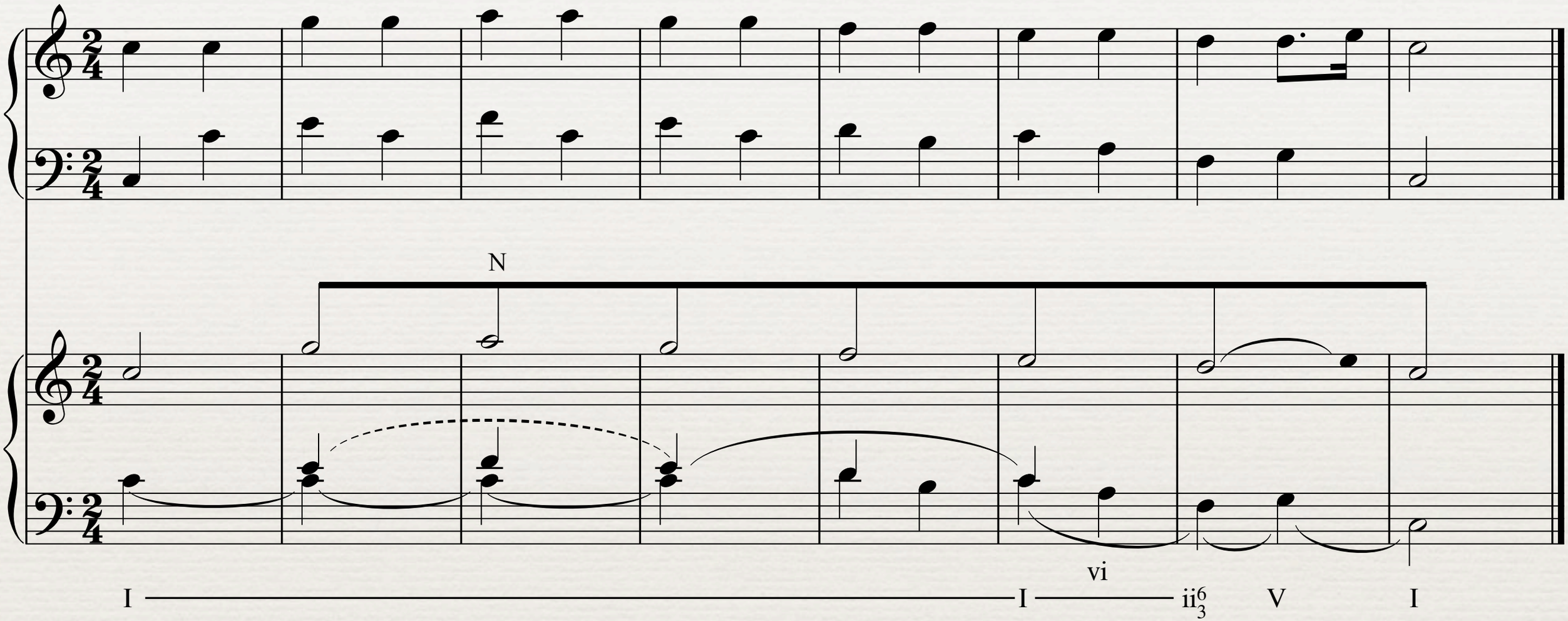
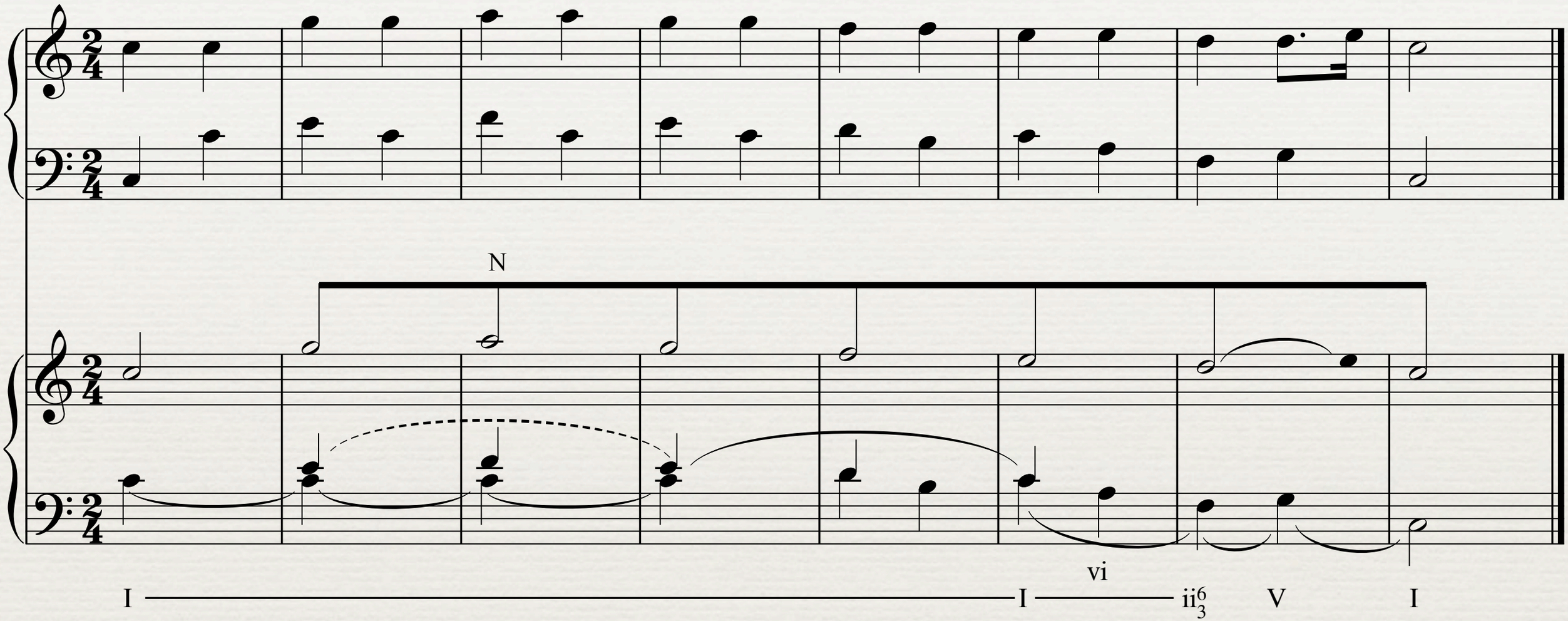
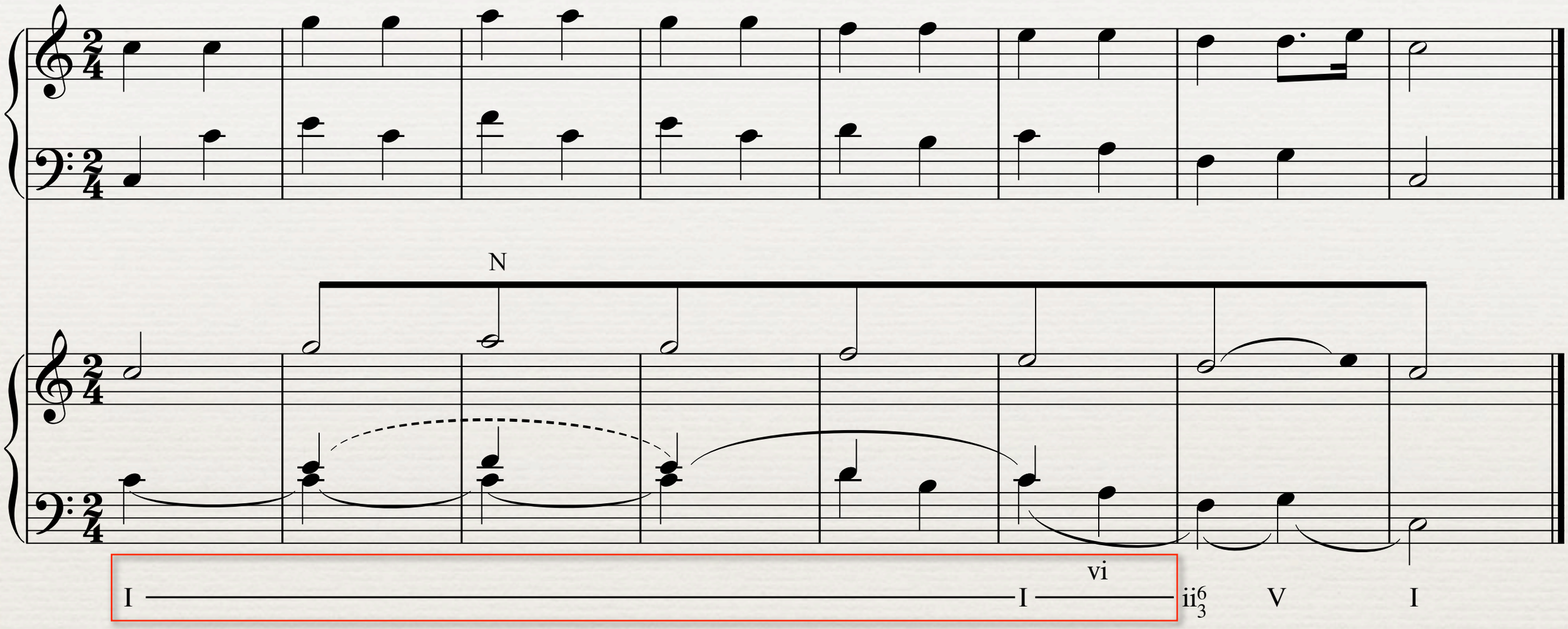


Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265



- Completed with harmonic analysis, which displays:

Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265



- Completed with harmonic analysis, which displays:
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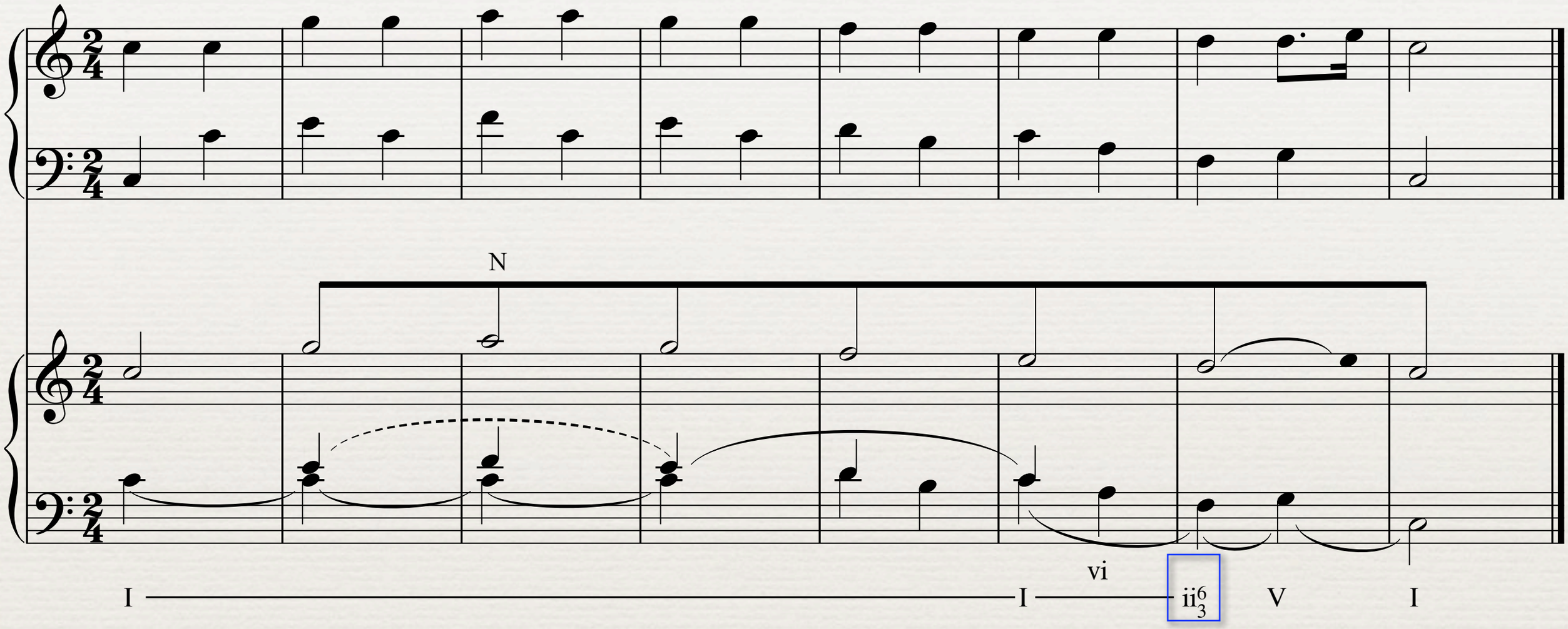
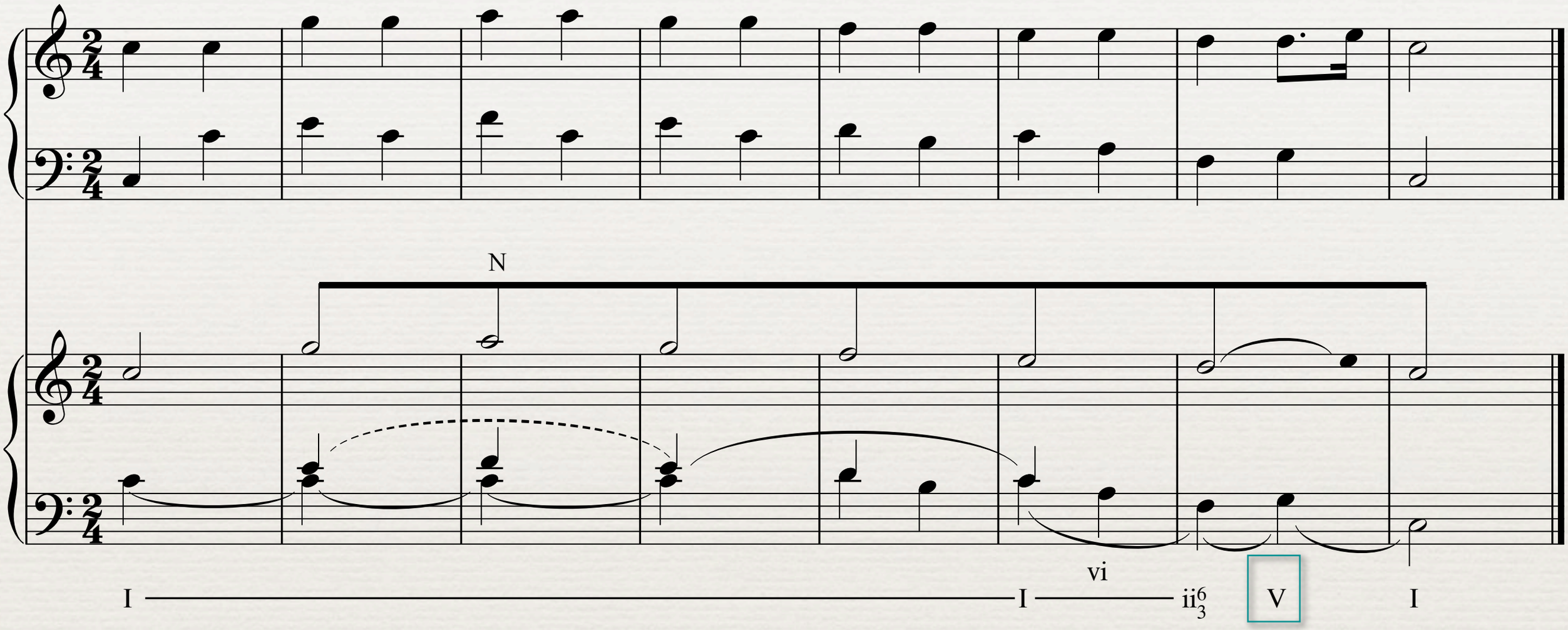
Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265



- Completed with harmonic analysis, which displays:
  - Tonic prolongation
  - Predominant (intermediate) harmony

Mozart: Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman K. 265



- Completed with harmonic analysis, which displays:
  - Tonic prolongation
  - Predominant (intermediate) harmony
  - Dominant