JOSEPH IGNATZ SCHNABEL (1767–1831) AND HIS GUITAR QUINTET

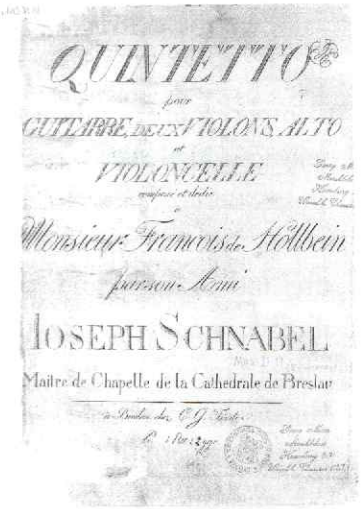
By Han Jonkers

Joseph Ignatz Schnabel, born May 24, 1767, in Naumburg am Quais, Lower Silesia (today Nowogrodziec, Poland), and died June 16, 1831, in Breslau (today Wrocław, Poland), was a cathedral Kapellmeister and composer. Primarily a composer of church music with instrumental accompaniment, he is considered the founder of a distinct Silesian tradition that is also known as the Breslau school. Until 1804 Schnabel was concertmaster at the Breslau Theater, also filling in as conductor on occasion. In 1805 he became Kapellmeister of the cathedral, later music teacher at the Royal Institute for Church Music and at the Catholic Teachers Seminar. Schnabel presumably had twenty-five children, most of whom didn't survive until adulthood, some of whom became musicians. Mention should be made of his brother, Johannes Michael Aloysius Schnabel (1775–1842), who was a clarinetist, guitarist, and piano maker. Johannes Michael received his musical training from his father; he introduced the guitar to Breslau and attained virtuoso skills on the instrument, which is reflected in many concerts and by his reputation as a sought-after guitar player.

Quintet in C major for guitar and string quartet

Only one piece for guitar by Joseph Ignatz Schnabel has come down to us: *Quintetto pour Guitarre, Deux Violons, Alto et Violoncelle*, which was probably published in 1825 by C.G. Förster and mentioned in a printed source in 1831. A copy of the original edition, formerly in the private possession of the Hamburg guitarist Georg Meier (1865–1942), is held by Wrocław University Library. It was published only in parts, not in score format. In 1958 the Quintet appeared in *Die Gitarre in der Haus- und Kammermusik*, a series edited by Heinrich Albert and issued by the Wilhelm Zimmermann publishing house, Frankfurt/Main. Albert reproduced the guitar part precisely, but the string parts exhibit many typographical errors, which made it necessary to consult the first edition in Wrocław.

The Quintet was dedicated to Schnabel's friend Monsieur François de Holbein, who was an actor, author, and director at various theaters in Germany and Austria. Holbein lived in Breslau from 1804 to 1806. The occasion for which Schnabel composed this piece is not known. The work, which to the present day is very rarely played, is undoubtedly one of the very few pieces by German composers of the turn of the nineteenth century for this scoring.


QUINTETTO
pour
GUITARRE, DEUX VIOLONS, ALTO
et
VIOLONCELLE
Monsieur François de Holbein
par son Ami
JOSEPH SCHNABEL
Maître de Chapelle de la Cathedrale de Breslau

This twenty-minute work is in four movements: 1. Larghetto/Allegro, 2. Larghetto (Cantabile), 3. Minuetto & Trio (Allegro Moderato), and 4. Rondo (Allegro). The Casal Quartet and I recorded Schnabel's Quintet on our CD *Flexible Sky* (Bayer Records, BR 100 386, 2015). With the assistance of the Casals Quartet, who carefully edited the composer's original string parts to correct all typos, I have prepared a score of the Larghetto (Cantabile) of the piece for presentation here, engraved by Brad DeRoche.

References

Friedrich Mehwald, *Biographie Herrn Joseph Ignatz Schnabels* (Breslau: Leuckart, 1831).

F. J. Fétis, *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*, 8 vols. (Bruxelles: Melin, Cans et Compagnie, 1835–44), VIII, 115–17; see *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/bub_gb_LM09AAAAcAAJ/page/115/mode/2up?view=theater.

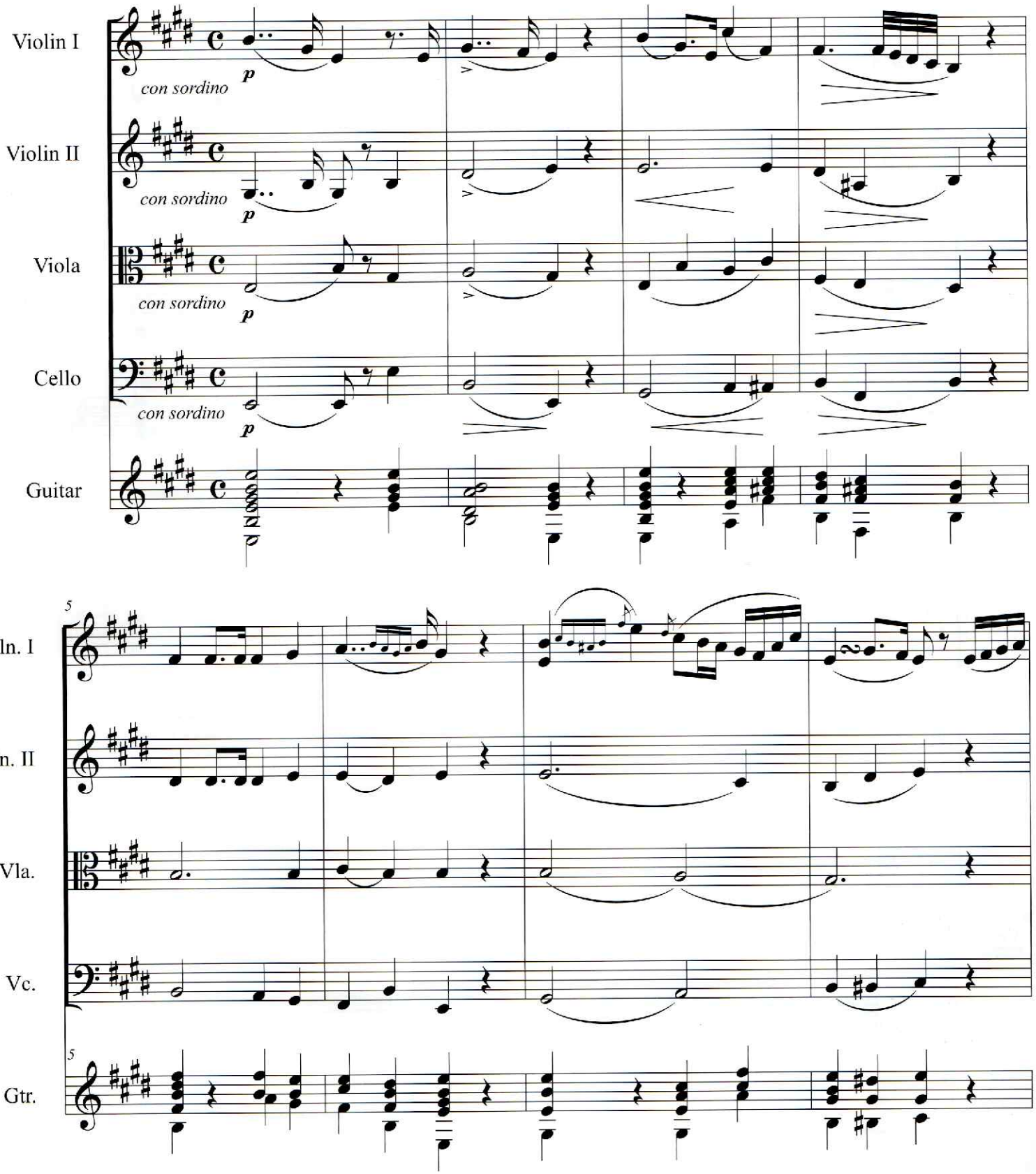
Dutch guitarist Han Jonkers studied at the conservatory in Maastricht and afterward with Oscar Ghiglia and Konrad Ragossnig. He won third prize in Viña del Mar (1983) and second Prize at the Casals competition in Barcelona (1985). Concert tours took him through South America (Brazil, Peru, and Bolivia), South Africa, Asia, New Zealand, and Belarus. He published a series of guitar editions and seven CDs. He has published articles in *Gitarre & Laute*, *Classical Guitar*, and others. Visit www.hanjonkers.com.

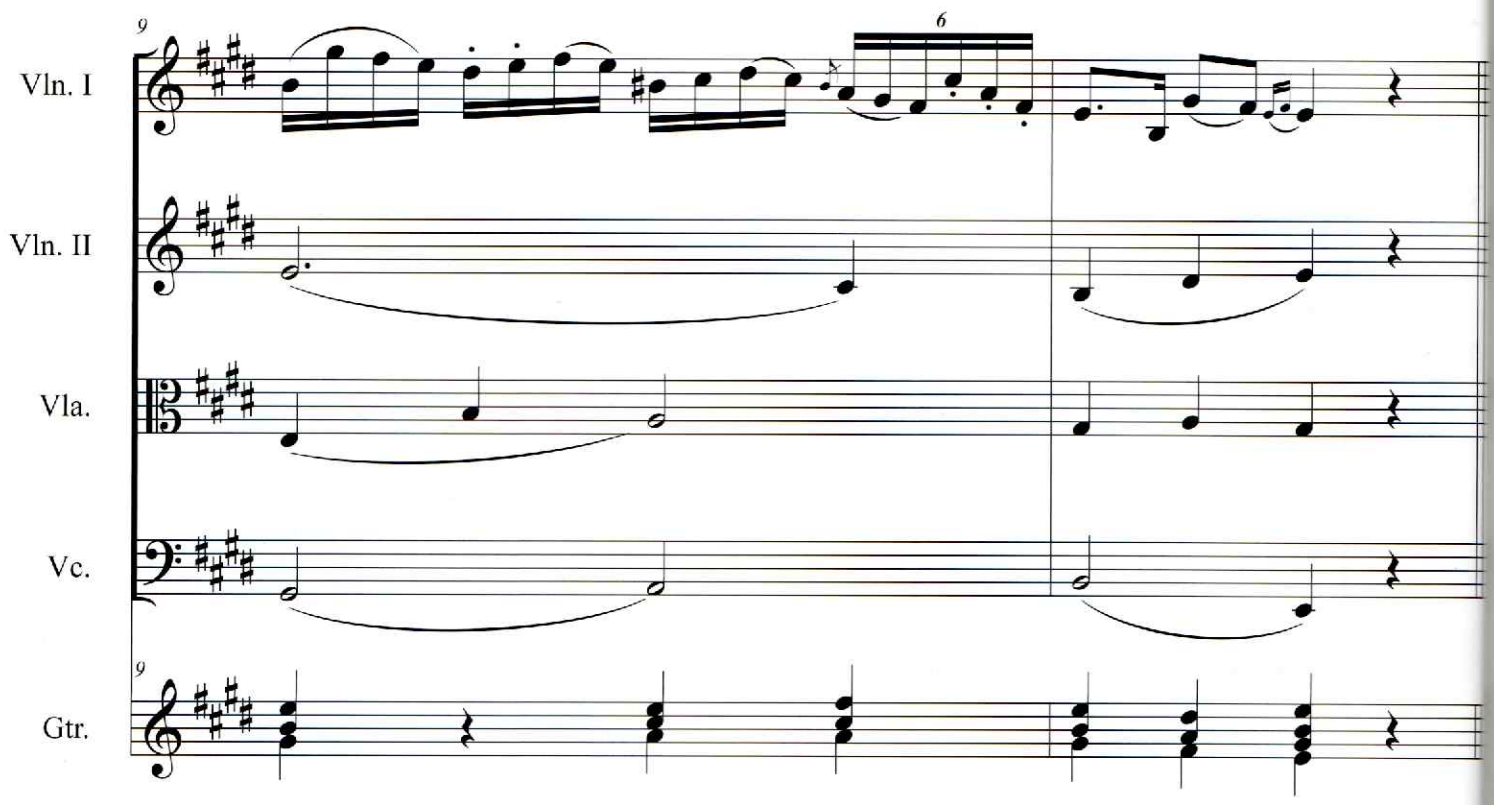
Quintet

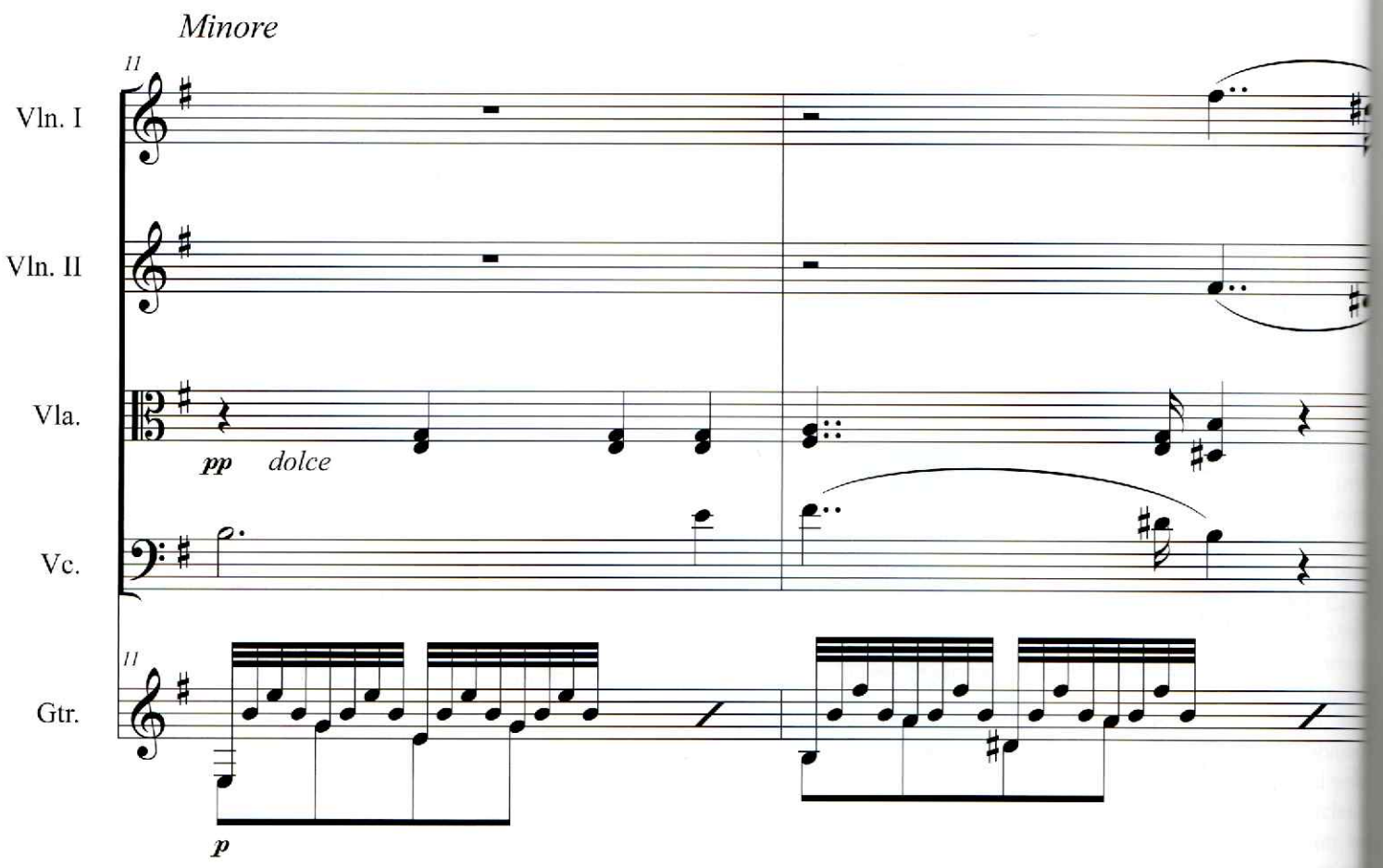
Larghetto

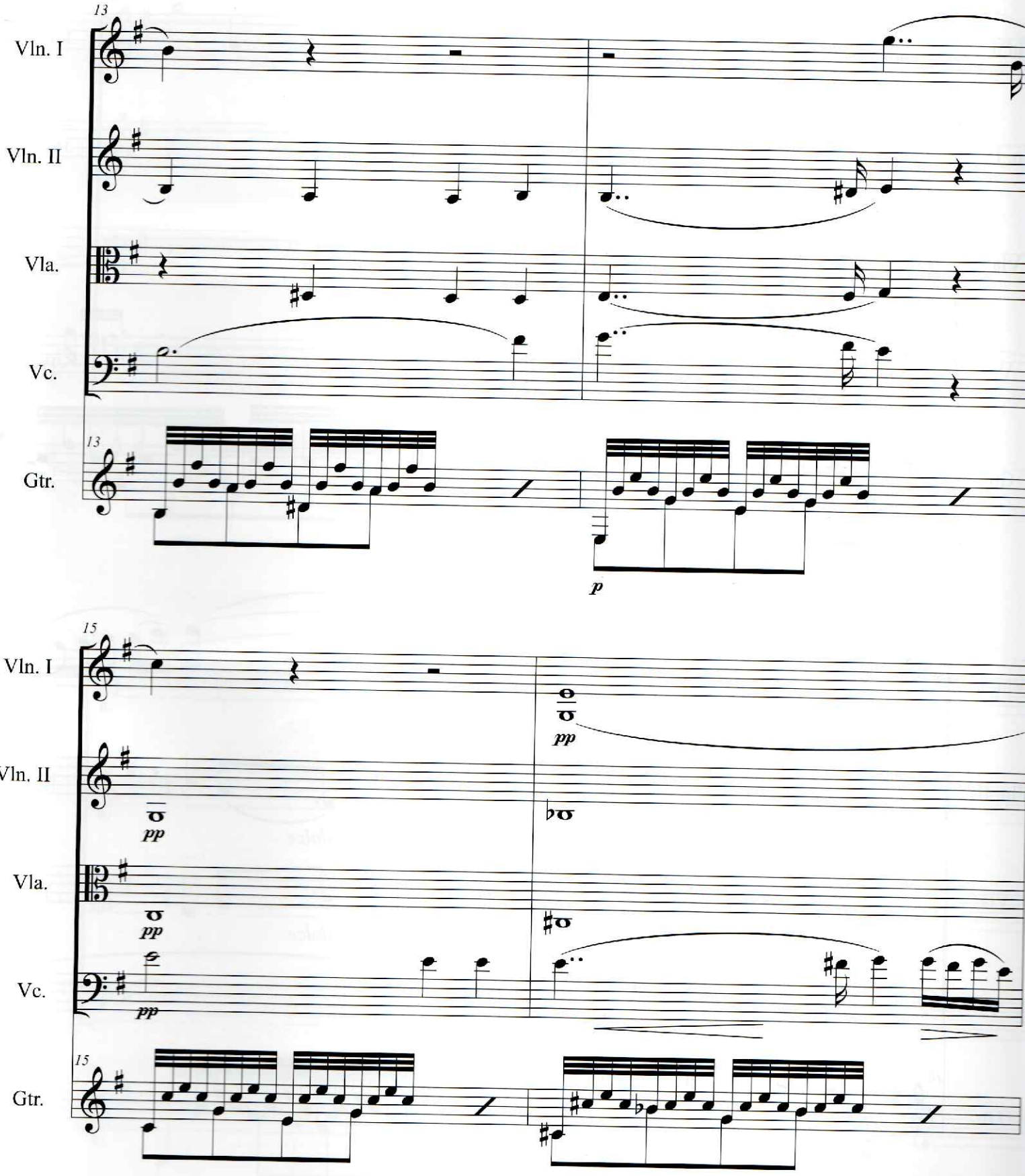
Joseph Ignatz Schnabel

Cantabile




9
6
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
9
Gtr.


Minore
11
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
pp
dolce
Vc.
11
Gtr.
p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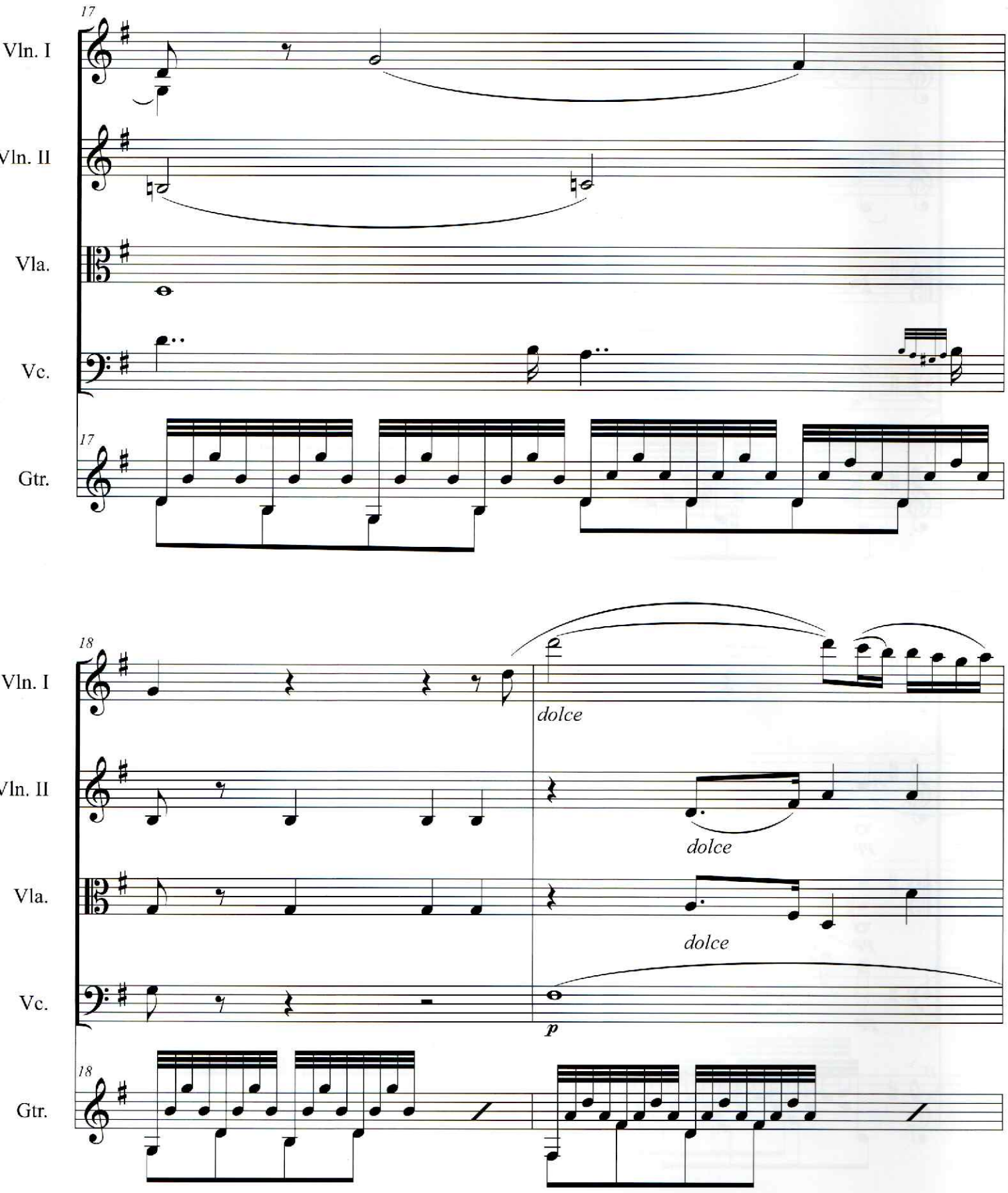
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
13
Gtr.
p
15
Vln. I
pp
Vln. II
pp
Vla.
pp
Vc.
pp
15
Gtr.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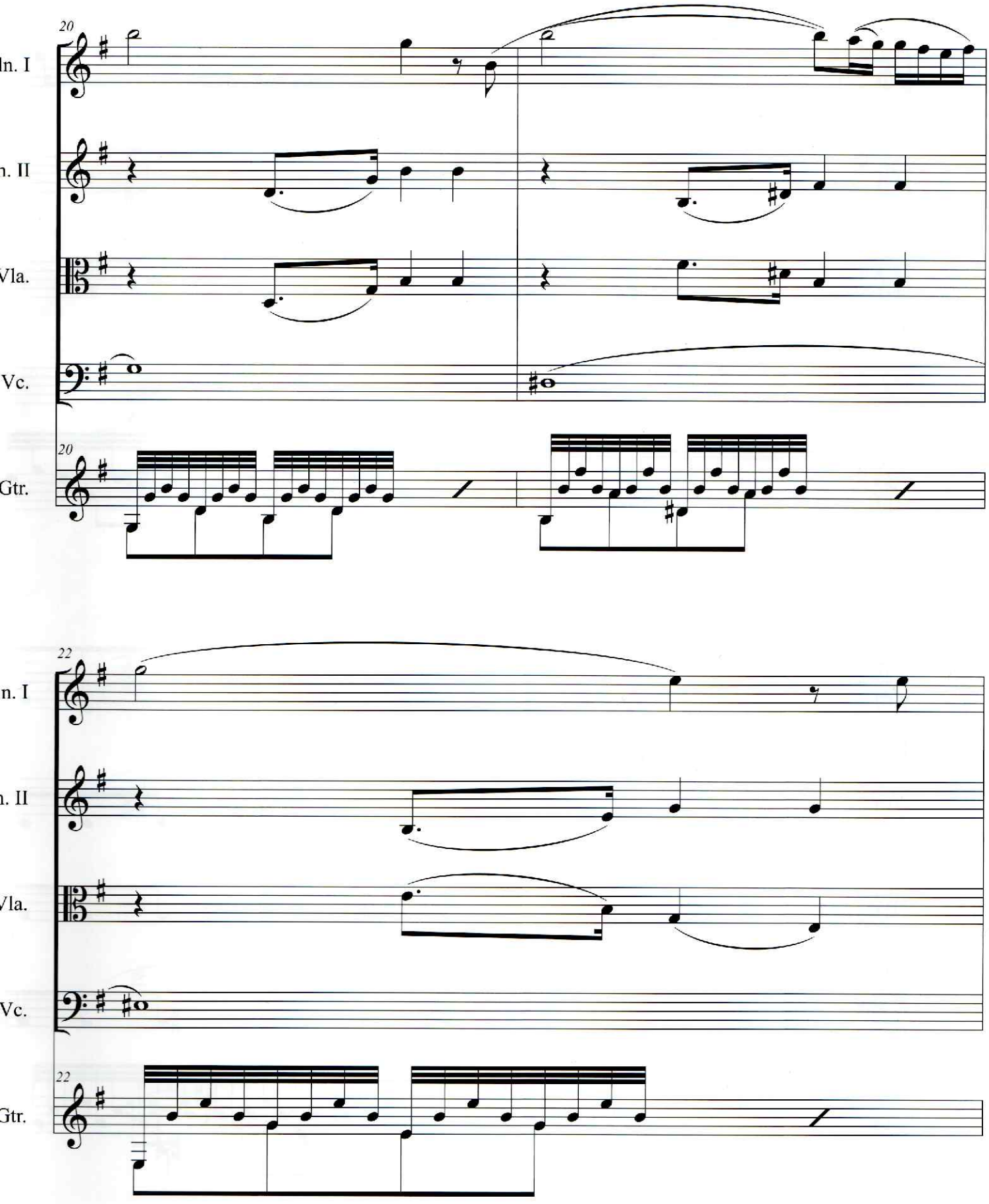
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
17
Gtr.
18
Vln. I
dolce
Vln. II
dolce
Vla.
dolce
Vc.
p
18
Gtr.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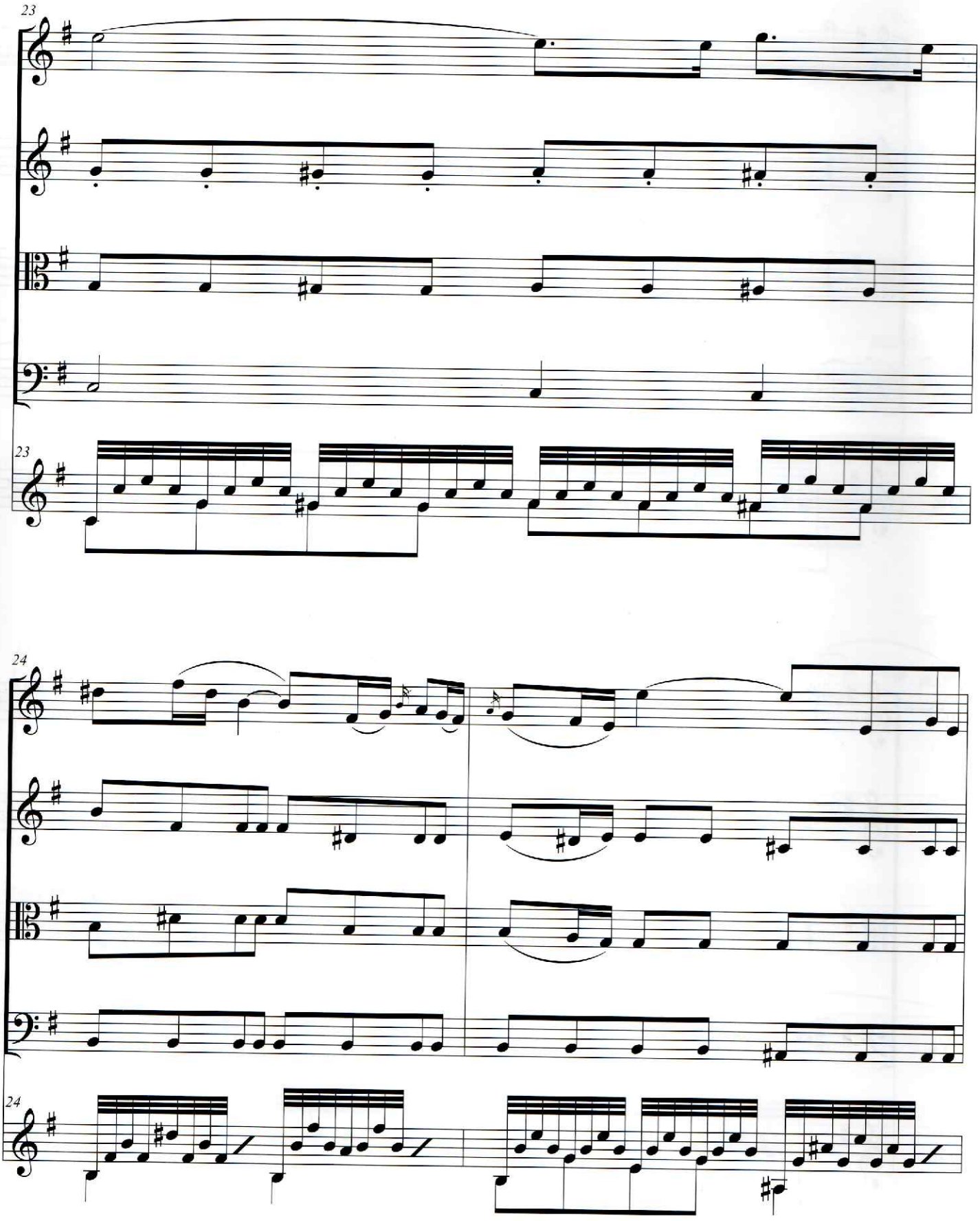
ln. I
n. II
Vla.
Vc.
20
Gtr.
22
n. I
n. II
Vla.
Vc.
22
Gtr.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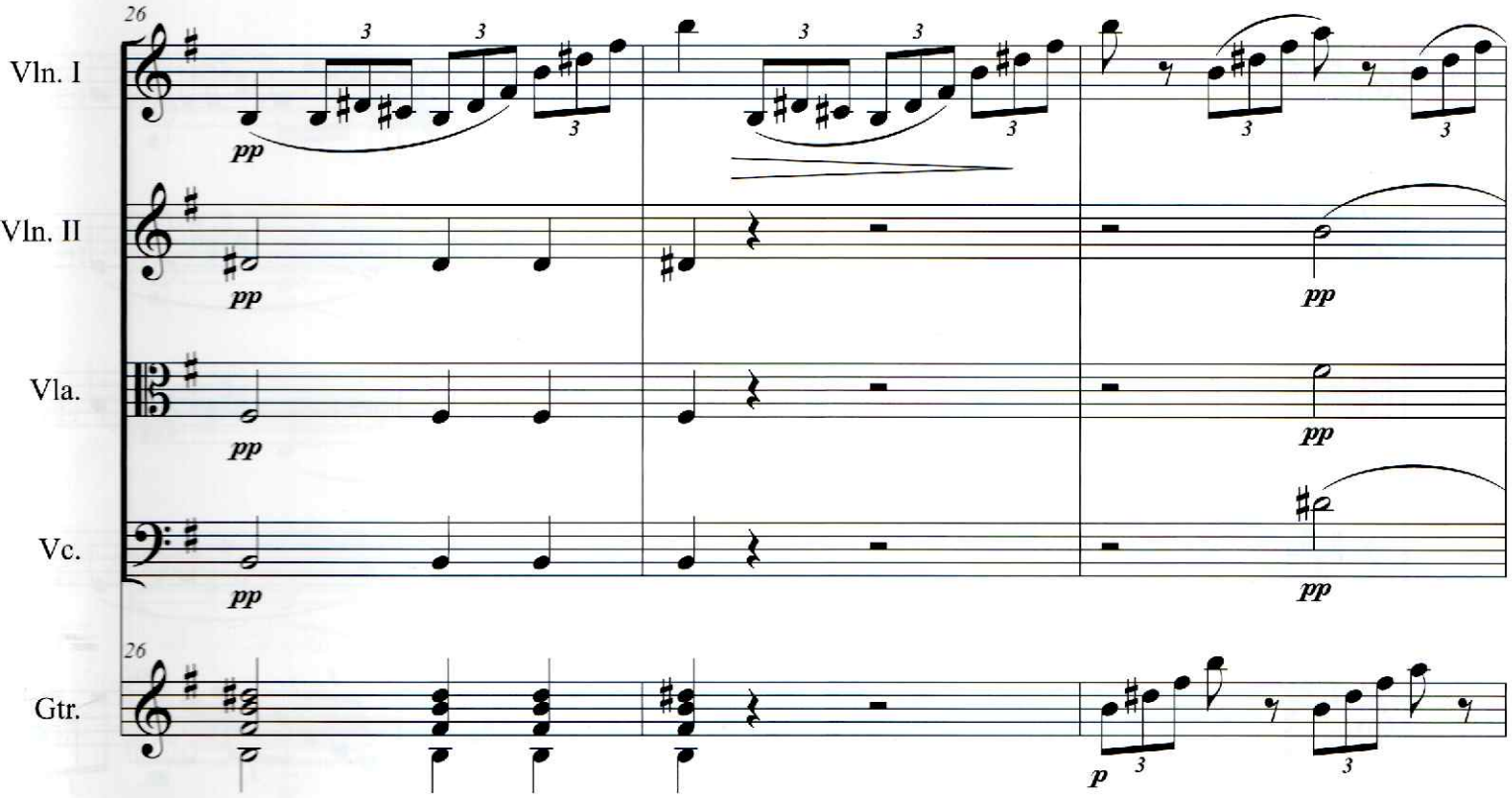
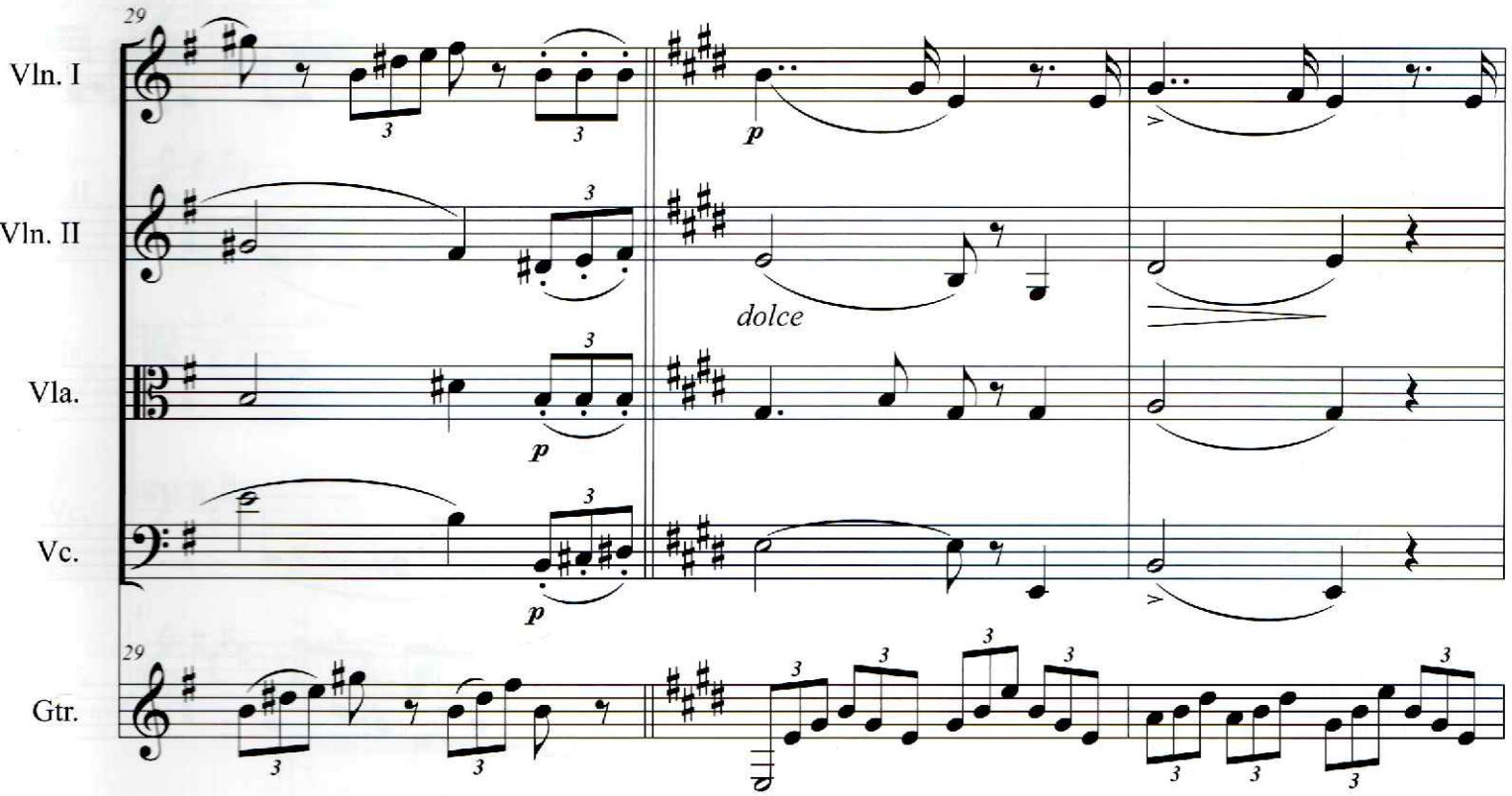
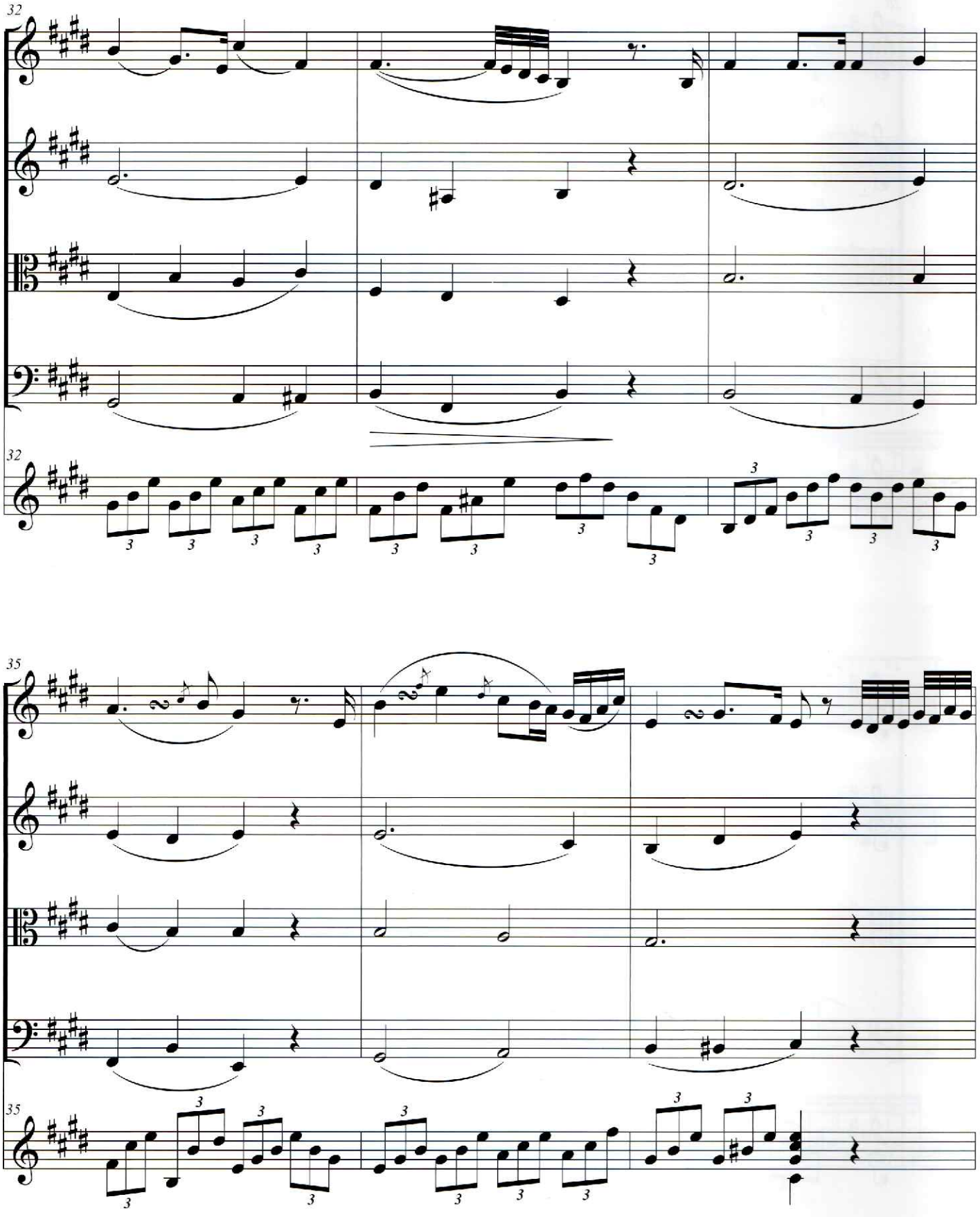


Maggiore

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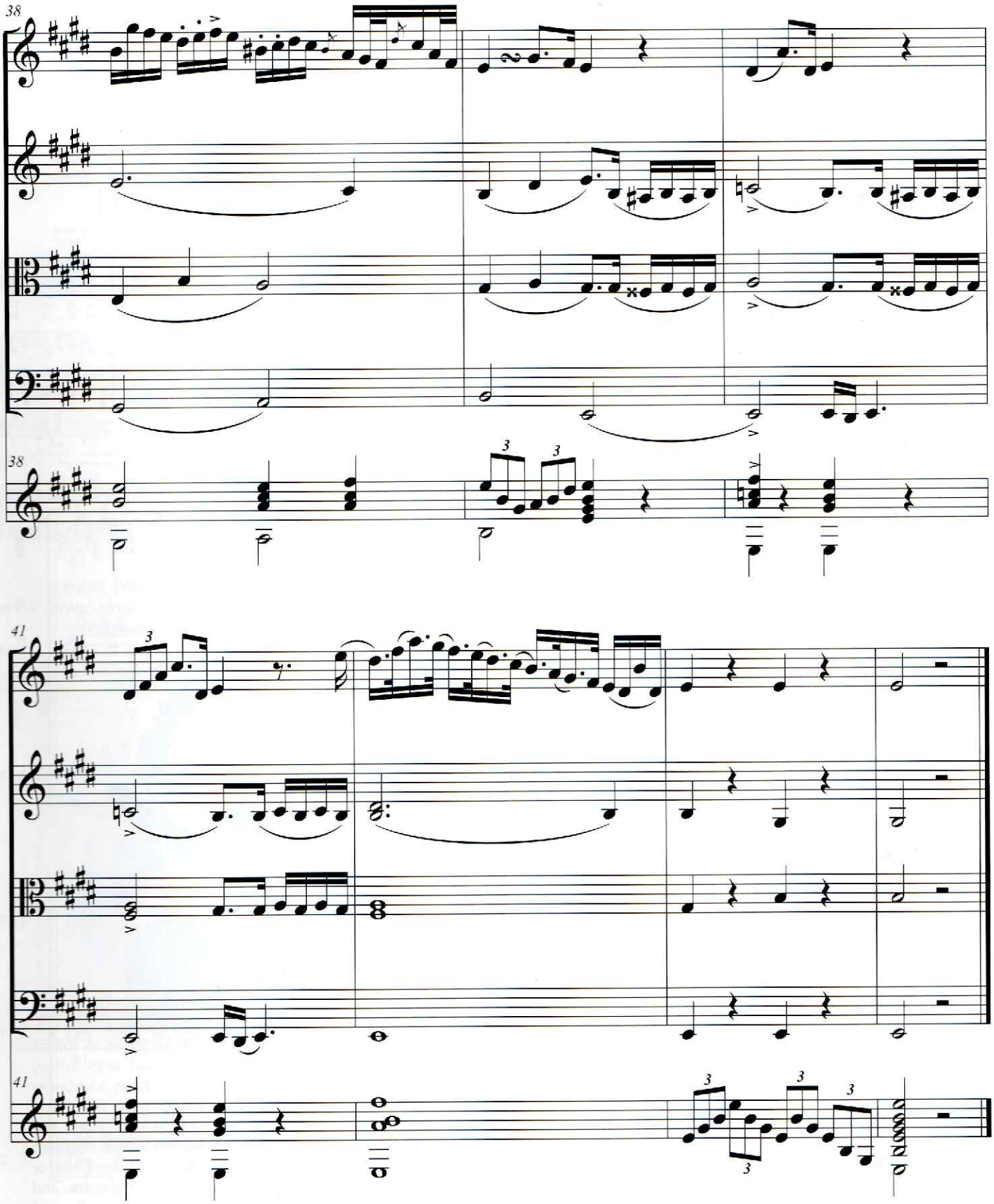
38
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
38
Gtr.
3
3
41
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
41
Gtr.
3
3
3
3
3