Renaissance duets for Guitar

arranged for two guitars by

Frank Wallace

1. Nobilis Humilis
2. Edi Beo
3. Hui Matin
4. Now Wolde Y Fayne
5. He! mi Enfant
6. Pucelete
7. Cedit Frigus
8. Stella Splendens
9. Ecco la Primavera
10. Beata Progenies
11. Plus Dure
12. There is no Rose
13. Ecce Quos Natura
14. Aro Que Nostre
15. Rodrigo Martinez
16. Mano á Mano
17. Vos me Matastes
18. Mass movements
19. Y Dezid
20. No So Yo
21. Benedicamus
22. Imperayritz de la Ciutat
23. Fenice Fu

Gyre Publications

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Renaissance duets for Guitar

These duets were gathered over many decades of experience and from many sources from the 12th-16th centuries. They come from a time when the human voice reigned supreme in the musical world and all possess dynamic rhythm and lyrical melodic line. As you will see, most are for equal voices with a relatively small range, so they lend themselves perfectly to two guitars.

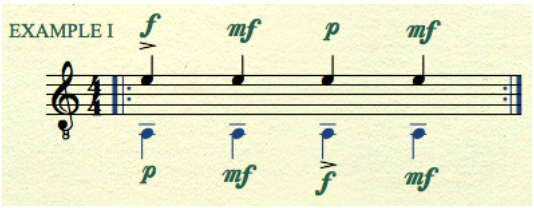
I present them to be used for various purposes: sight-reading, learning new clefs, history lessons, ensemble skills, learning the fingerboard. For the latter purpose, I have indicated at the beginning of each piece the positions which might be appropriate, including alternative positions on the fingerboard and reading up one octave, a valuable skill. When not indicated, assume 1st or 2nd position.

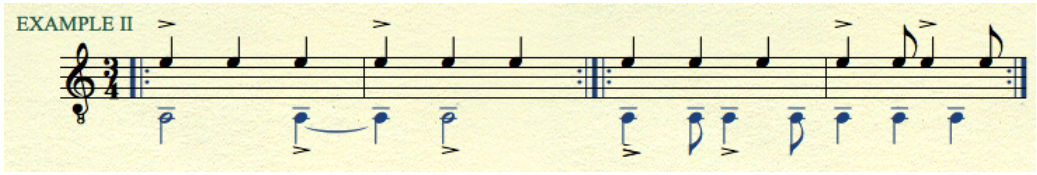
CLEFS: guitar music is notated one octave lower than it sounds. Gyre Editions always use an 8 under the treble clef to confirm this custom. Fenice Fu, at the end of the book, deletes the 8vb so that for the piece to sound properly, you must read up one octave from what you are accustomed to.

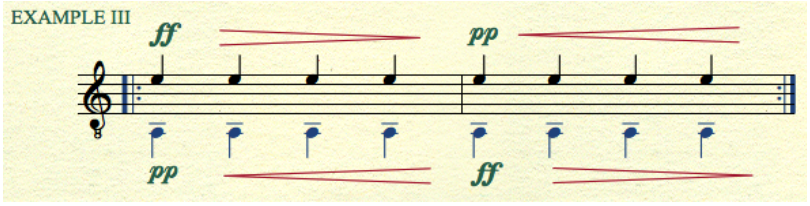
SLURS: add slurs as you see fit to express a lyrical line. There is no historical information on this subject in these early time periods, nor is it our purpose here to re-create authentic historical performance. We do know that plucked instruments from this time were probably always played with plectra and most had gut strings - steel or bronze was not yet developed.

HEMIOLA: the alternating division of 6 beats from 3 groups of 2 to 2 groups of 3, sometimes done in melodic succession, sometimes simultaneously in multiple voices/parts or irregularly overlapping as in Mano a Mano (see #16m page 17, measure 3-4). Characteristic of Spanish Renaissance and Baroque music, as well as certain flamenco styles, the hemiola adds drive and excitement. Practice feeling the accents going against each other in the exercises below. It is helpful to use a rest stroke on the accents (even with the thumb) when first attempting this so you can exaggerate and truly feel the shifting rhythms. Two unaccented notes together are both free stroke.

Begin by playing Example I very deliberately executing each note separately then together. Exaggerate! Proceed to Example II with a very rhythmic feel, still exaggerating the differences in dynamics between the parts. Finally, in Example III try for a more lyrical feel, this is no longer hemiola but rather the lyrical rise and fall of different lines. I have found that there is a "catch-22" in hearing and playing music: one cannot play what one cannot hear; but also one cannot hear what one cannot play. So even when you are playing these pieces as duets with a friend or teacher, you will hear the rise and fall of the other part better if you have learned to execute these exercises. There are innumerable places in your solo repertoire where this technique can add grace, clarity and excitement as well as new timbral palettes.







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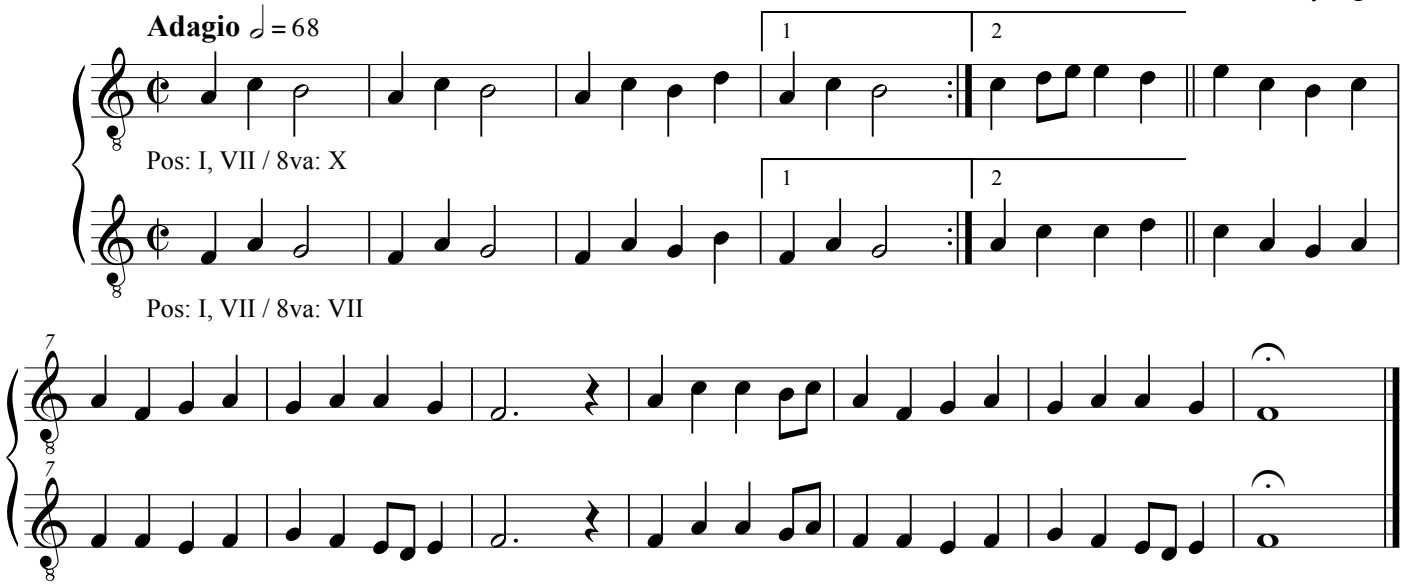
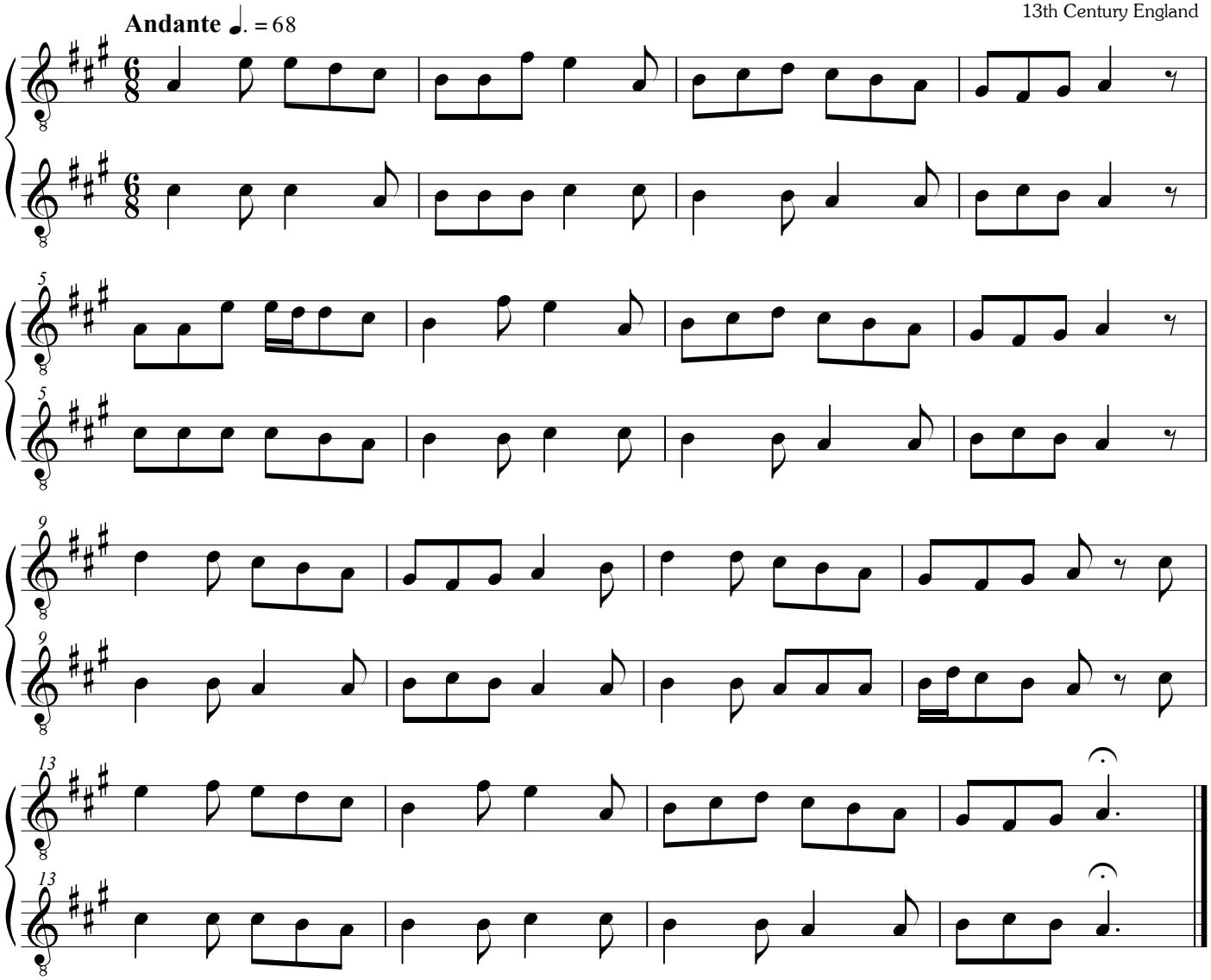
I. Nobilis Humilis

Hymn to St. Magnus
anon. 12th Century England



II. Edi beo thu

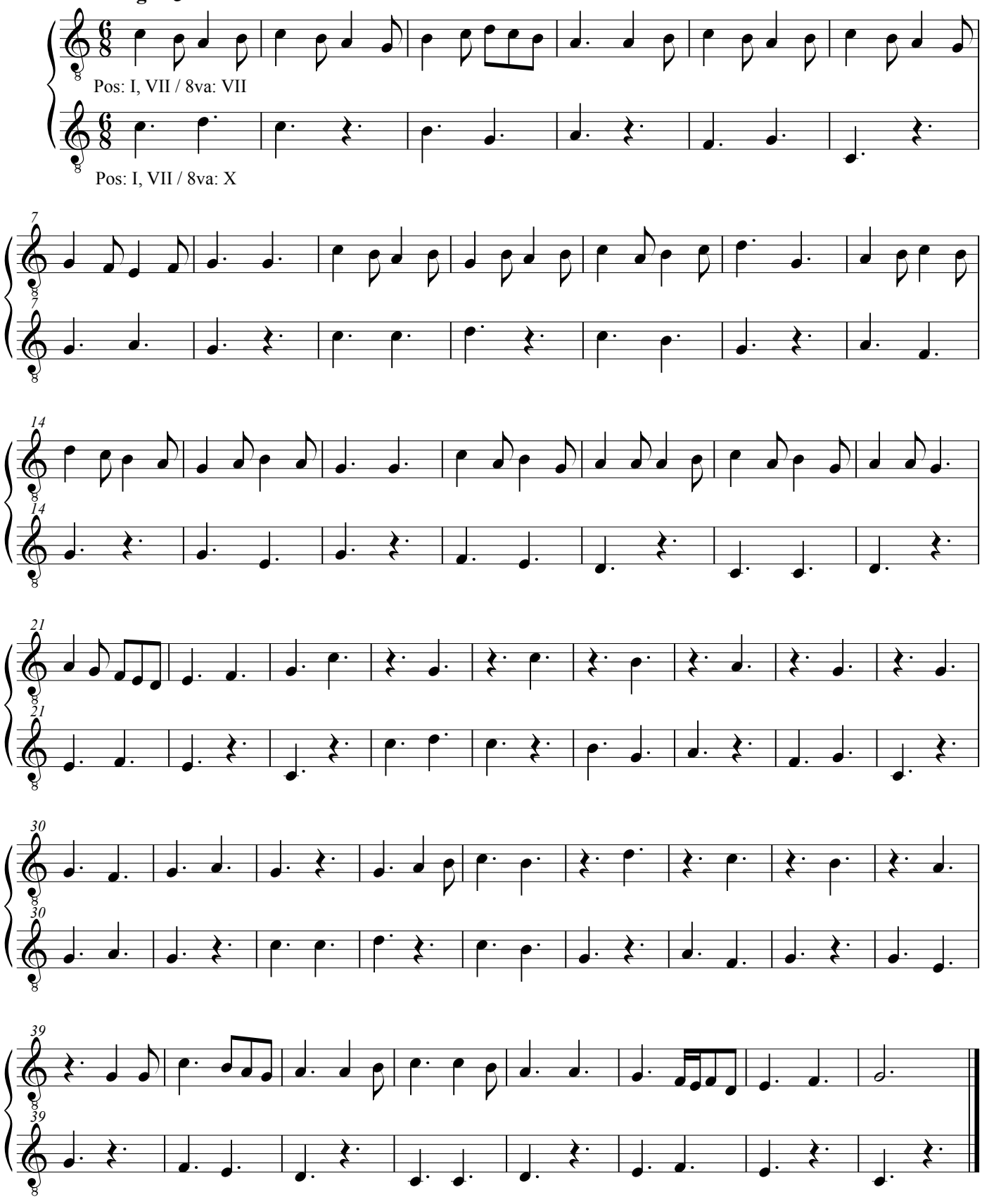
Anonymous
13th Century England



III. Hui Matin

Gautier de Coinci
13th Century France

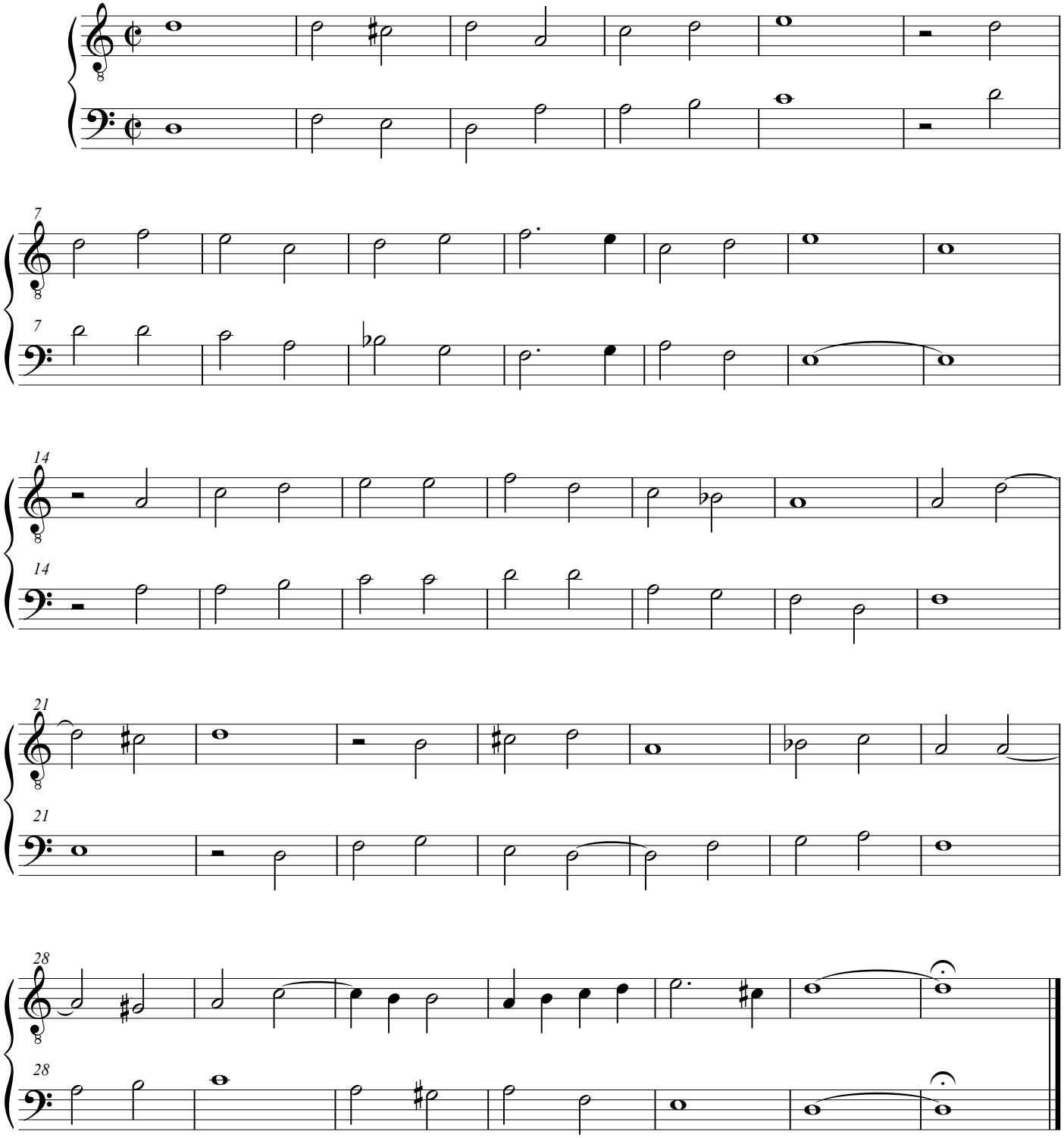
Allegro ♩. = 132



IV. Now Wolde Y Fayne

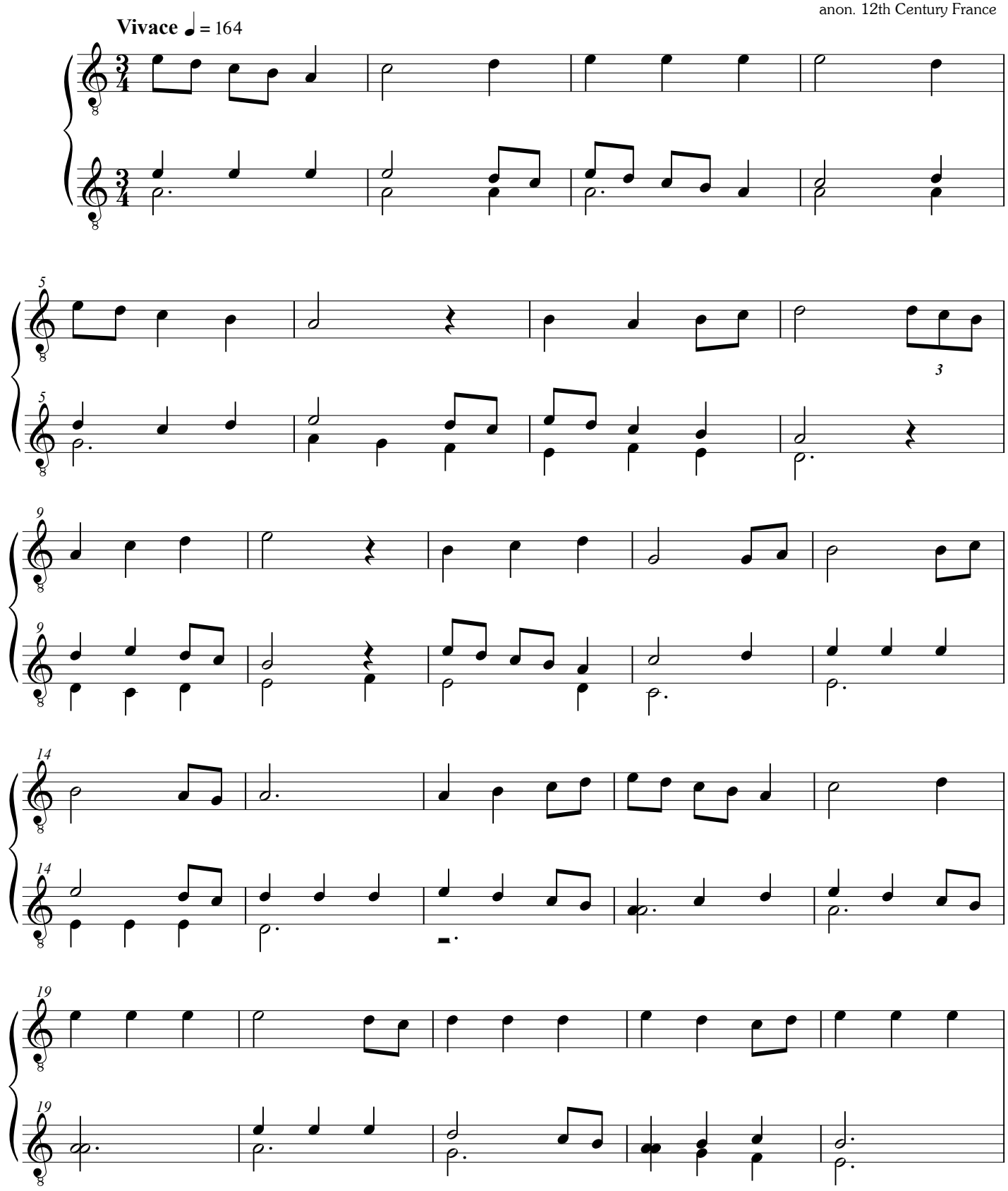
MS Ashmole
anon. 15th Century England

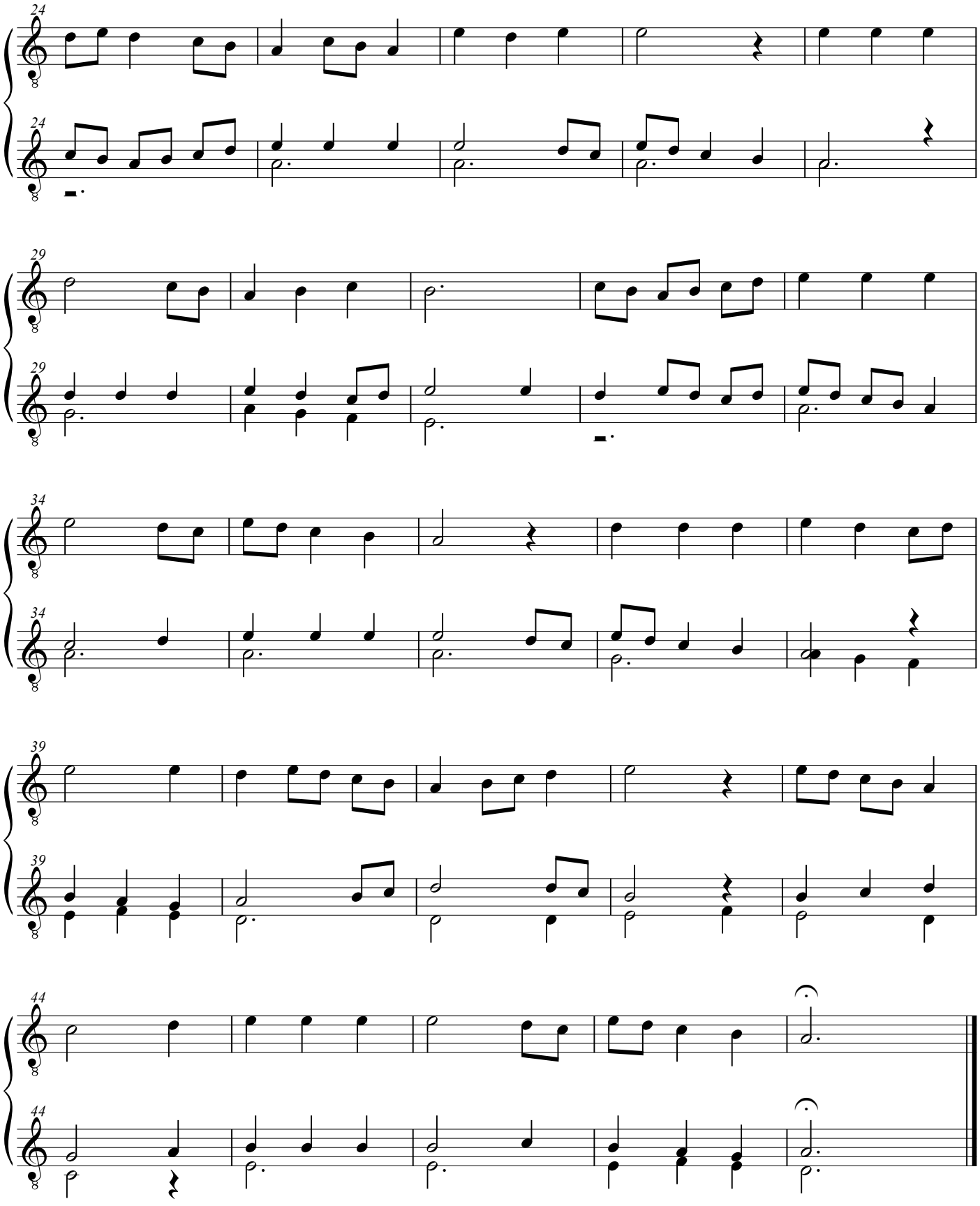
Andantino ♩ = 78



V. He! mi Enfant

#325 Montpelier Codex
anon. 12th Century France

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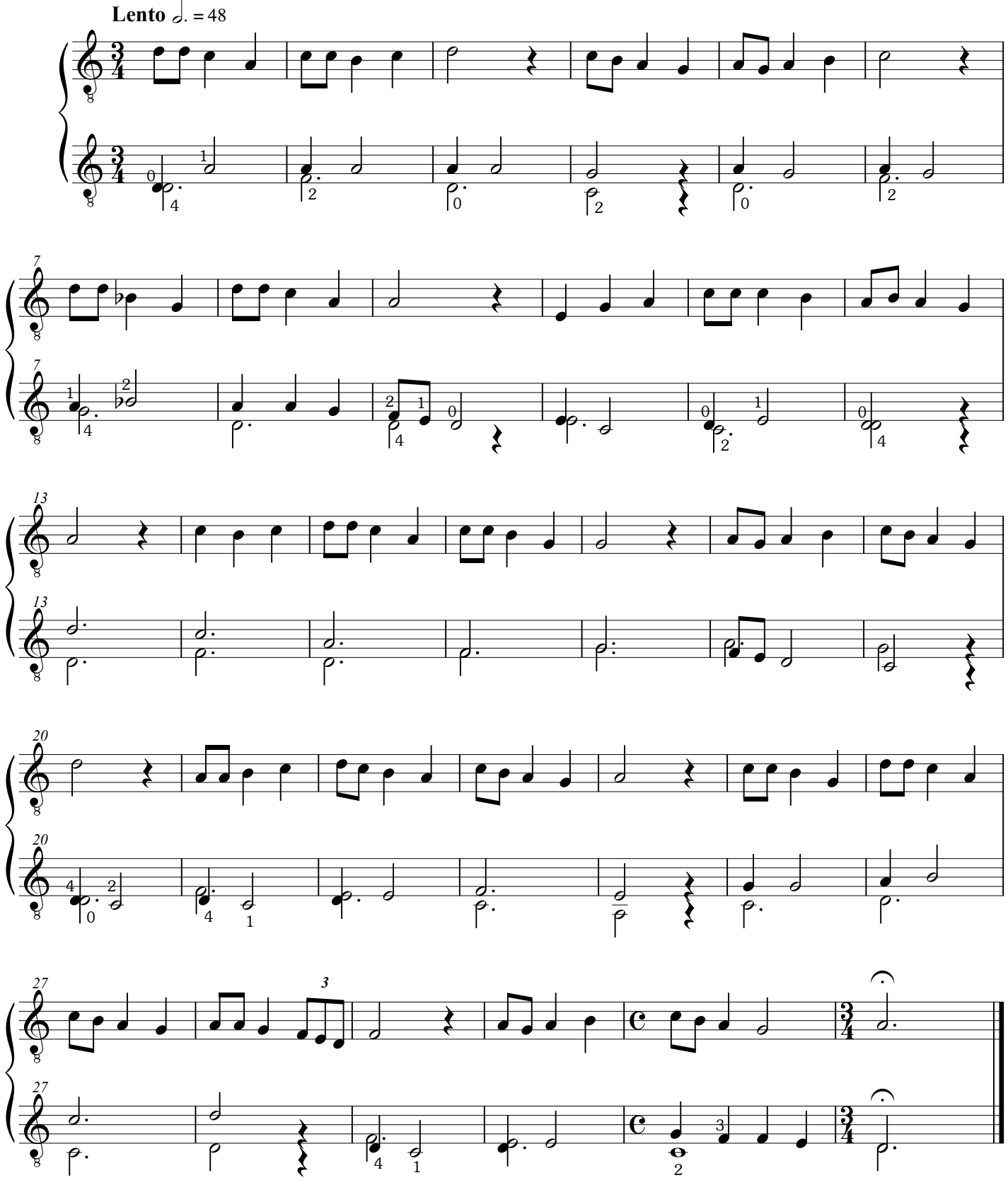
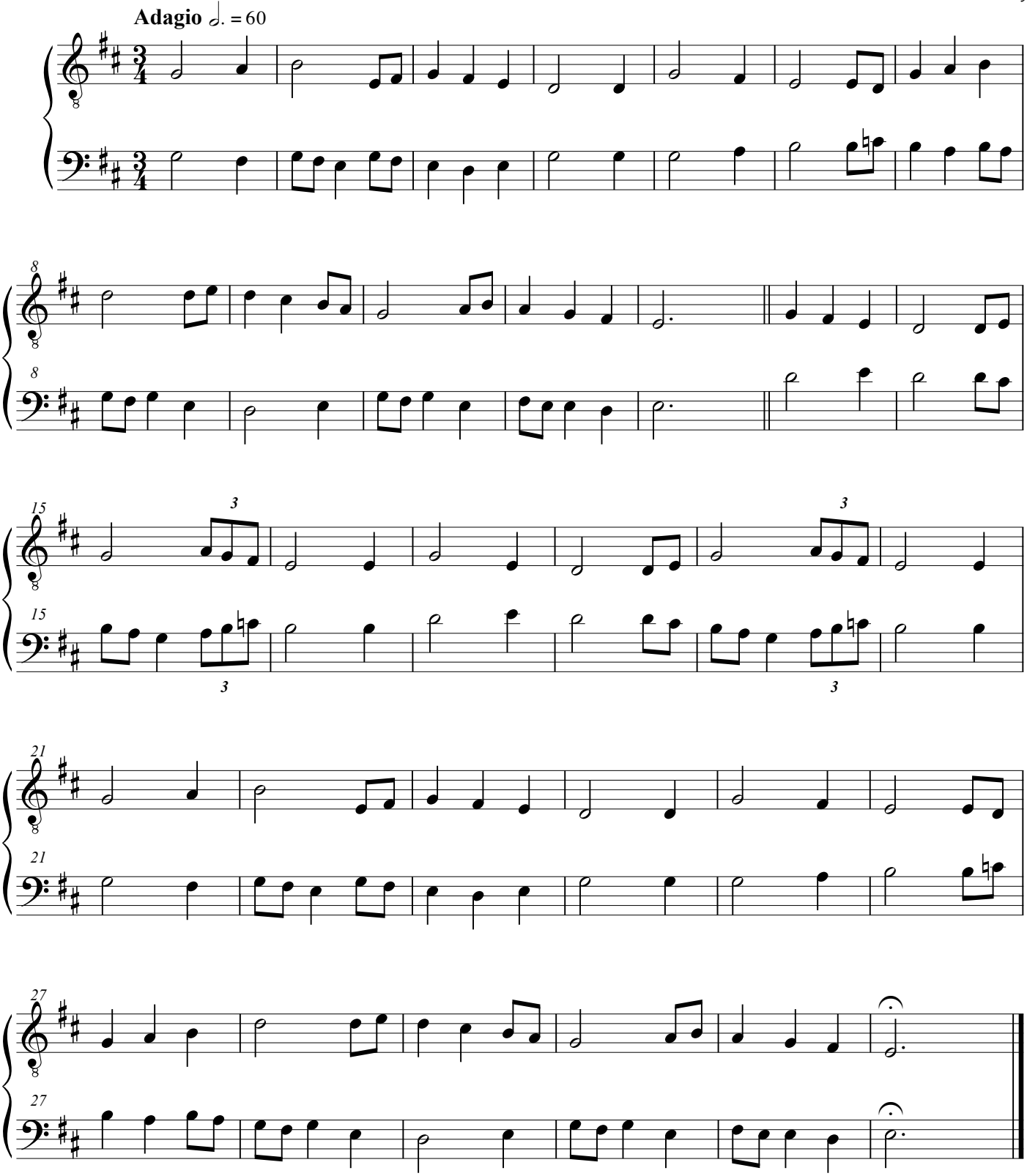
VI. Pucelete - Motet

anon., School of Notre Dame
French, 13th century



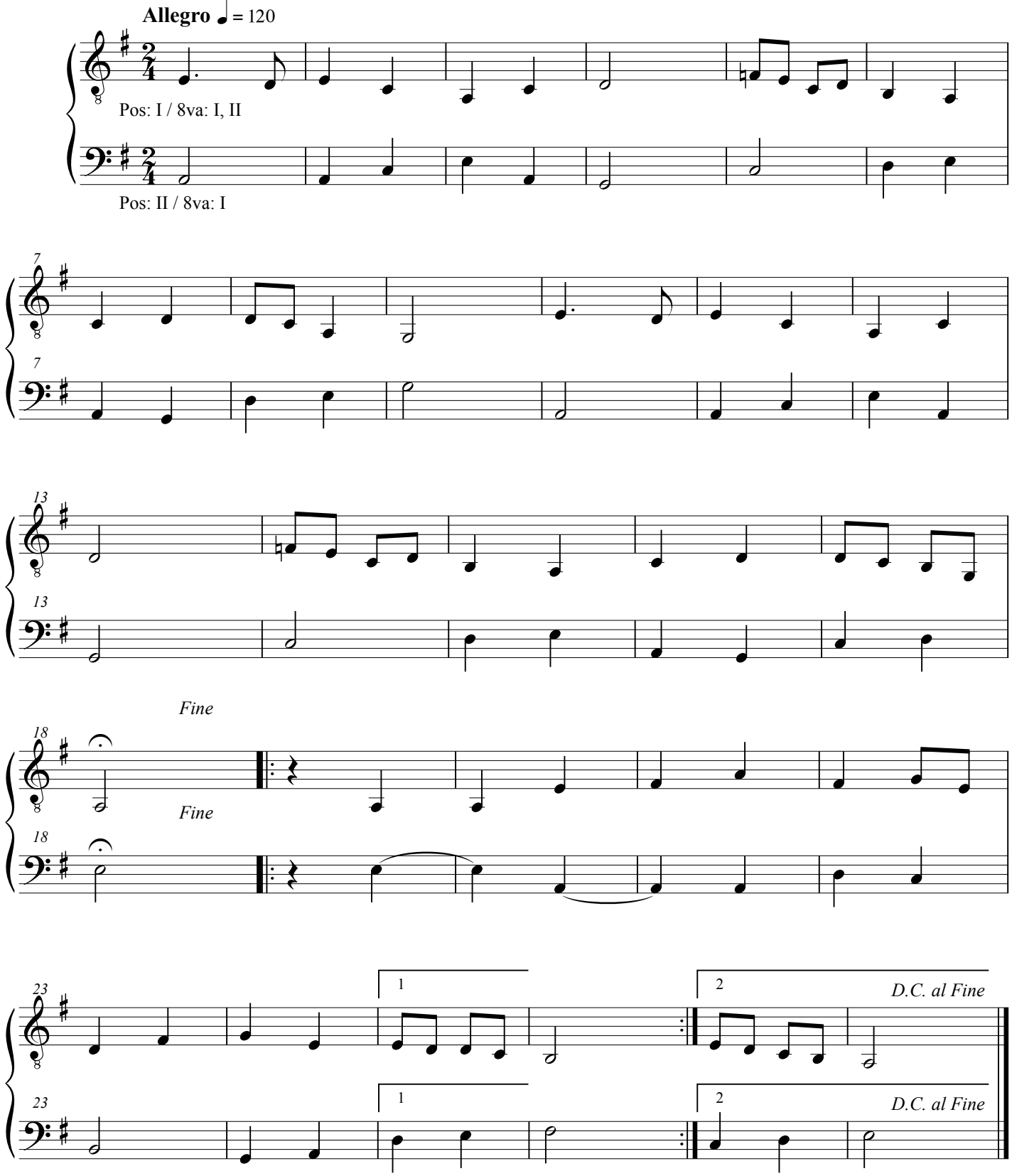
VII. Cedit Frigus Hiemale

Ripoll, Catalunya
anon. 12th Century



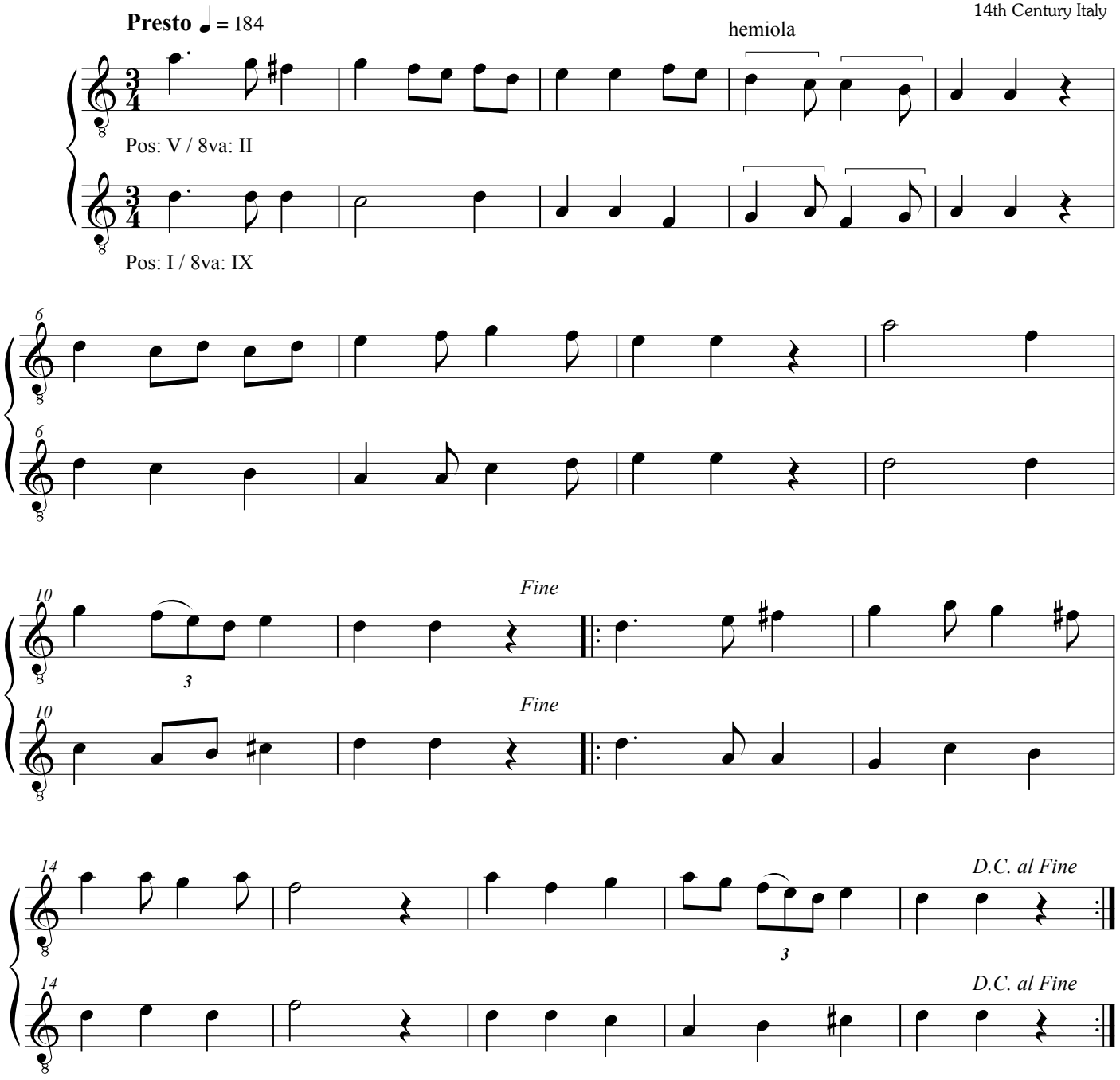
VIII. Stella Splendens

Llibre Vermell
anon. 14th Century Catalunya



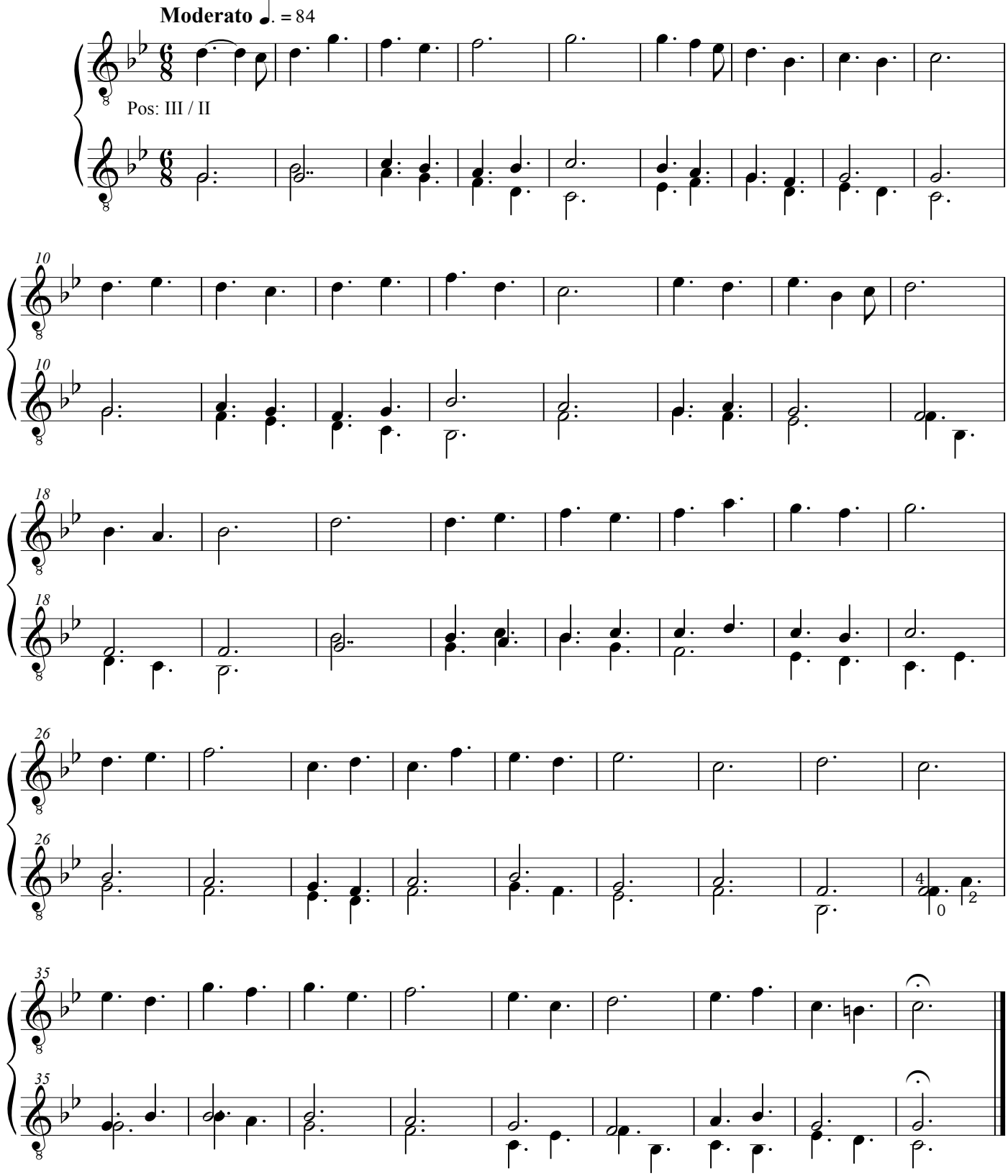
IX. Ecco la Primavera

Francesco Landini
14th Century Italy



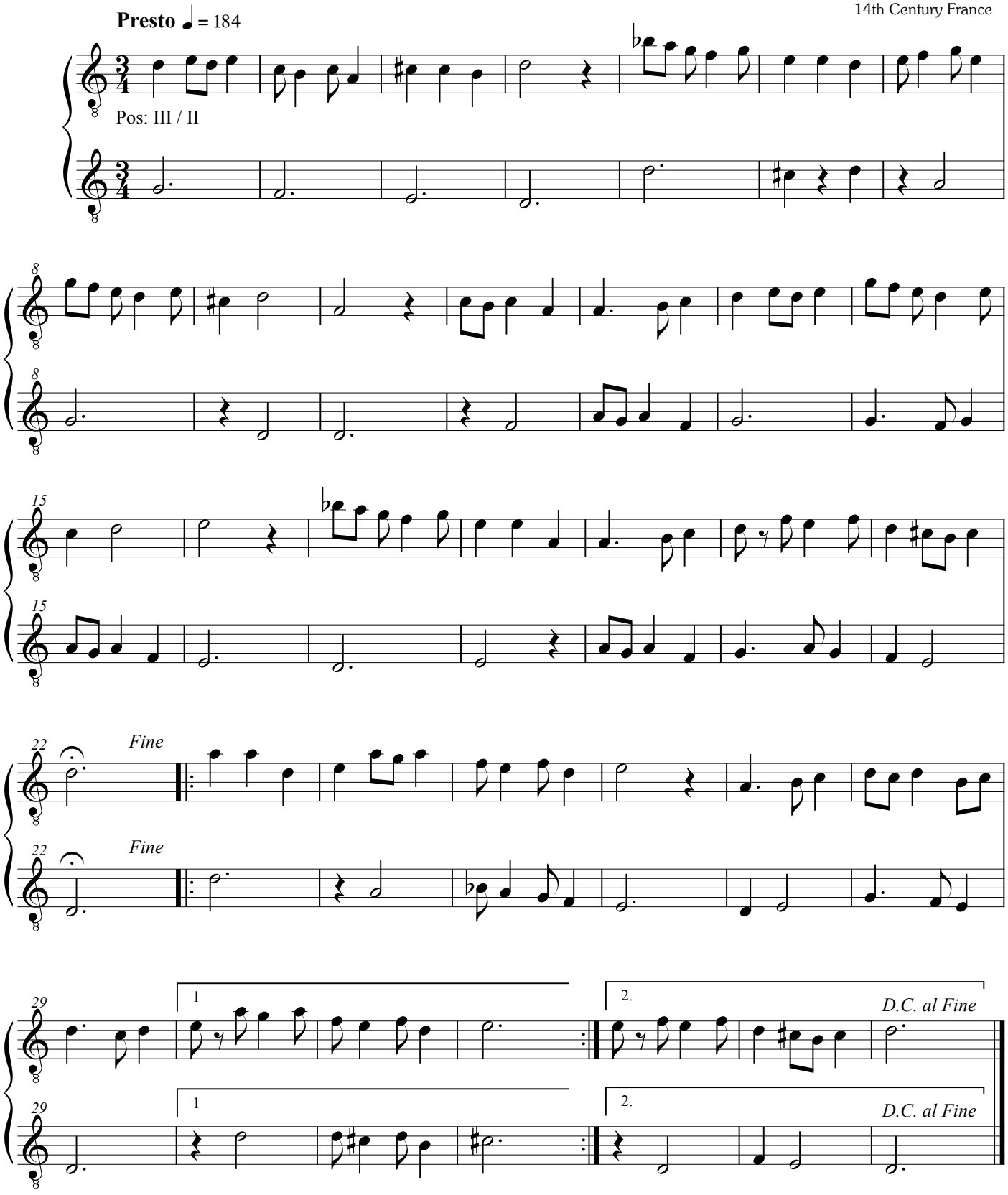
X. Beata Progenies

Leonel Power
died 1445



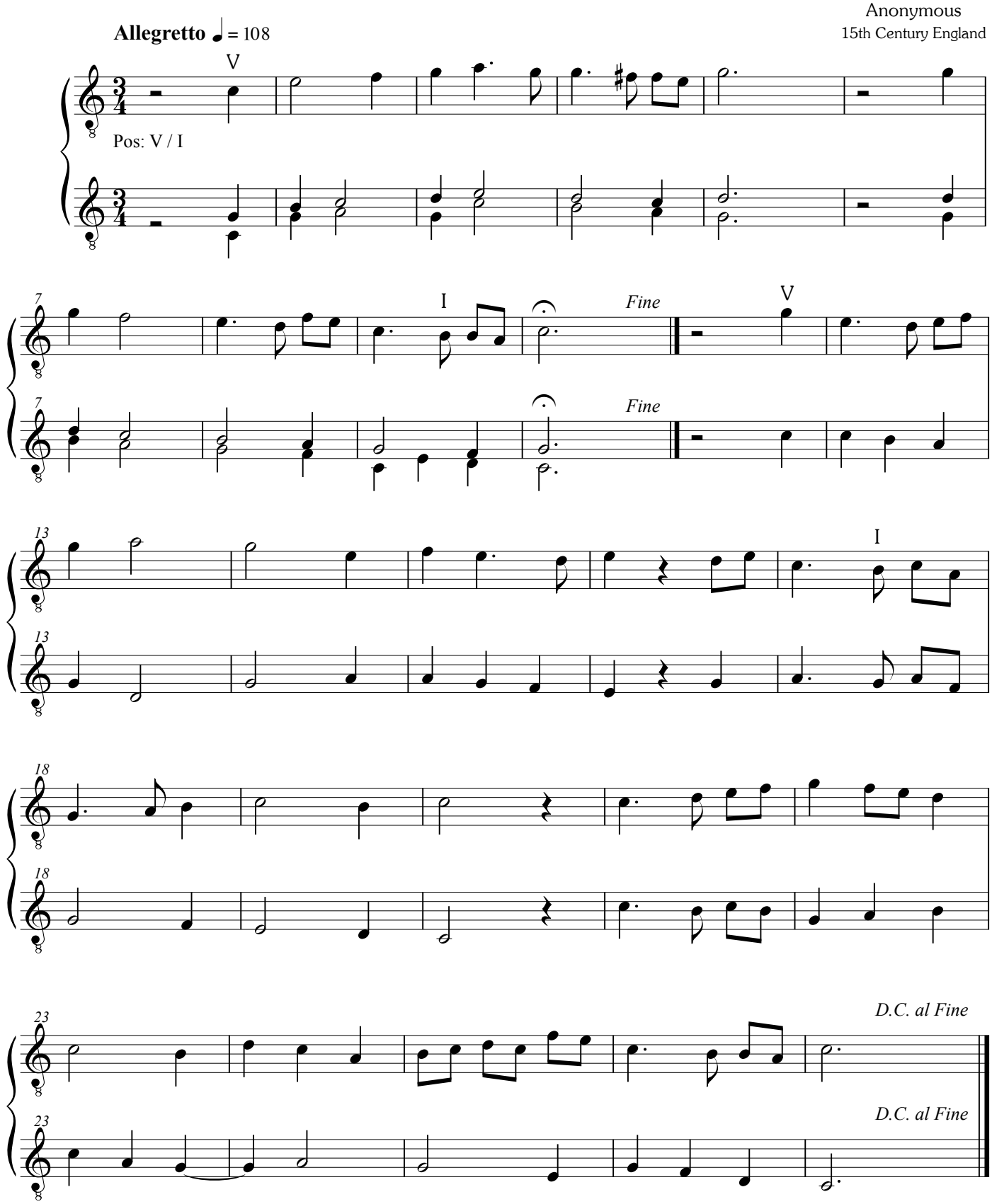
XI. Plus Dure

Guillaume de Machaut
14th Century France



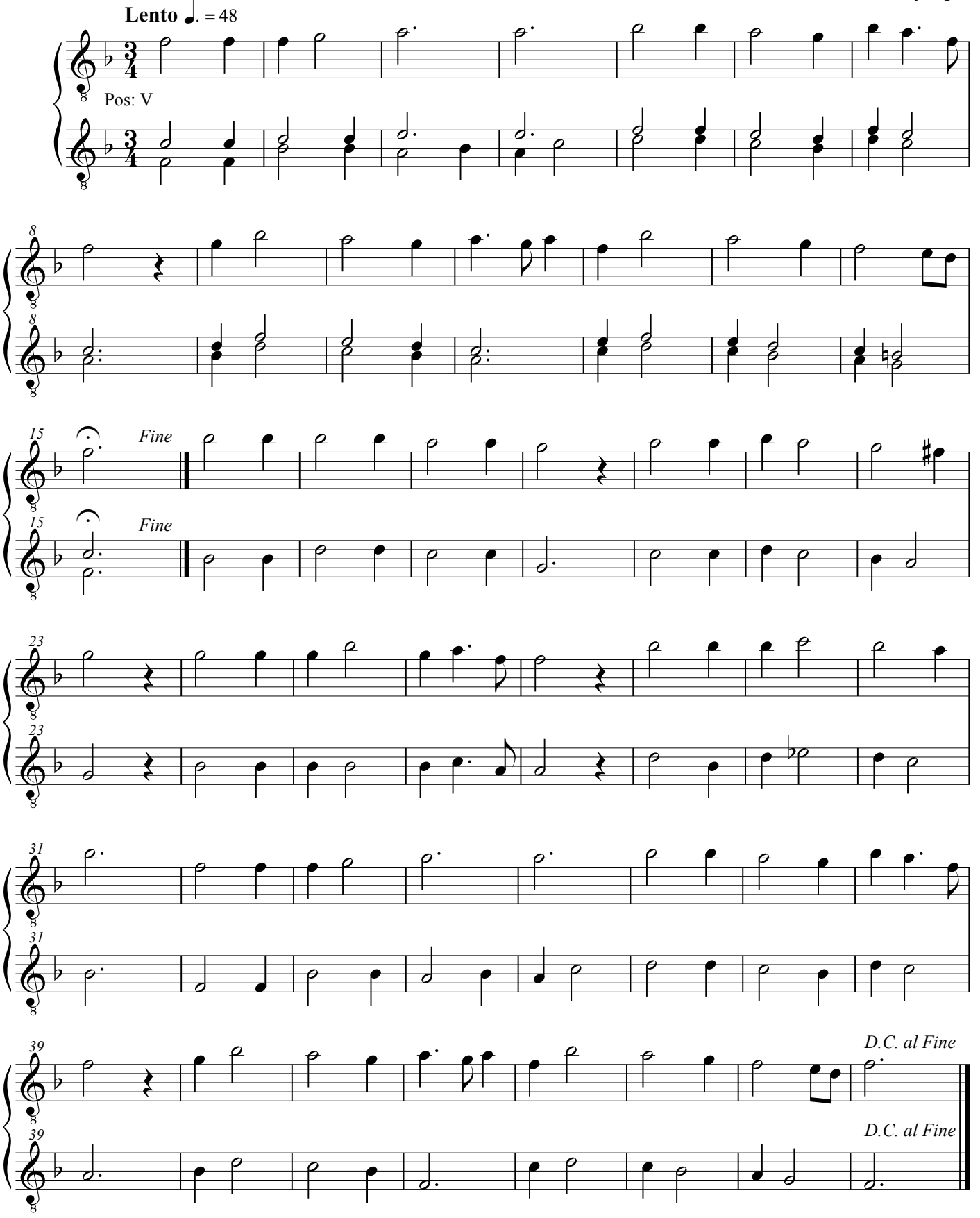
XII. There is no Rose

Anonymous
15th Century England



XIII. Ecce, Quod Natura

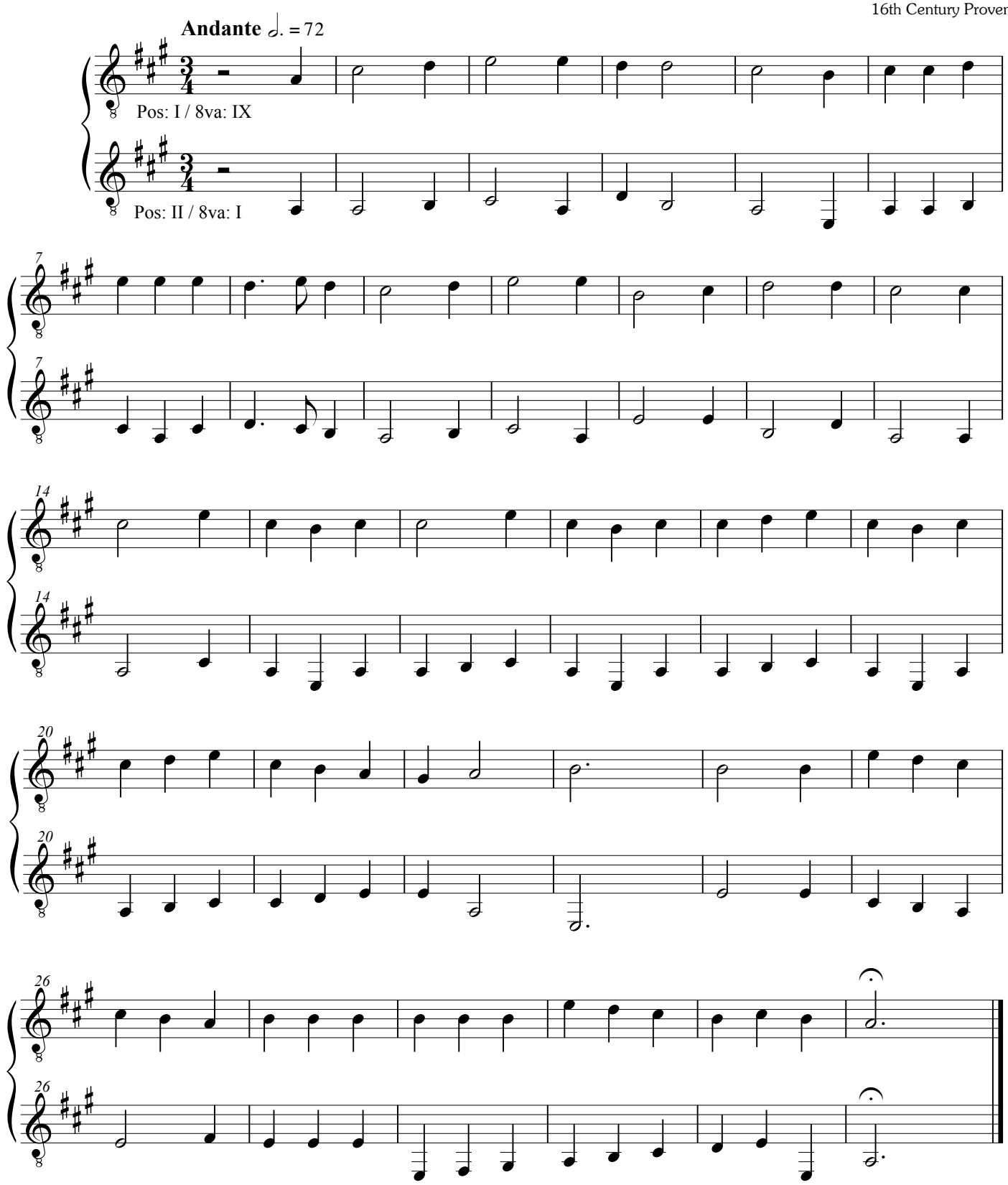
Anonymous
15th Century England



XIV. Aroque Nostre

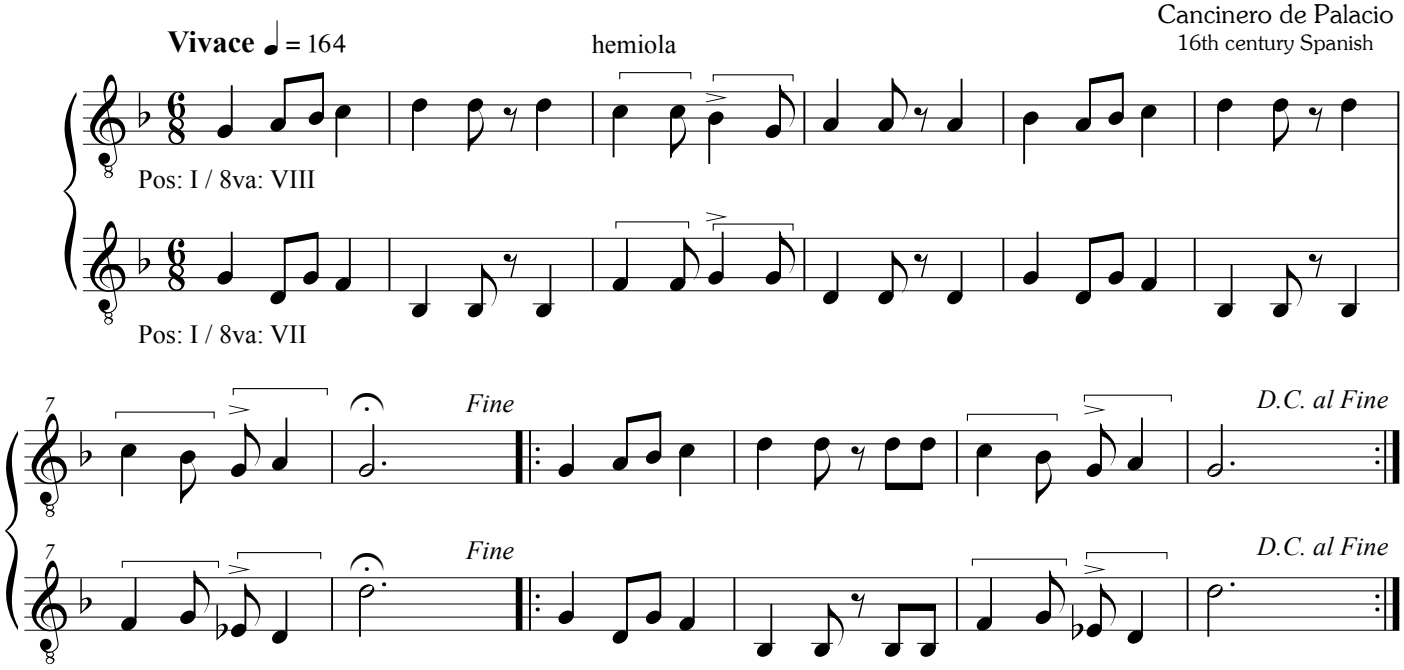
The next three pieces can be played as solos. Try reading both parts simultaneously.

Anonymous
16th Century Provence



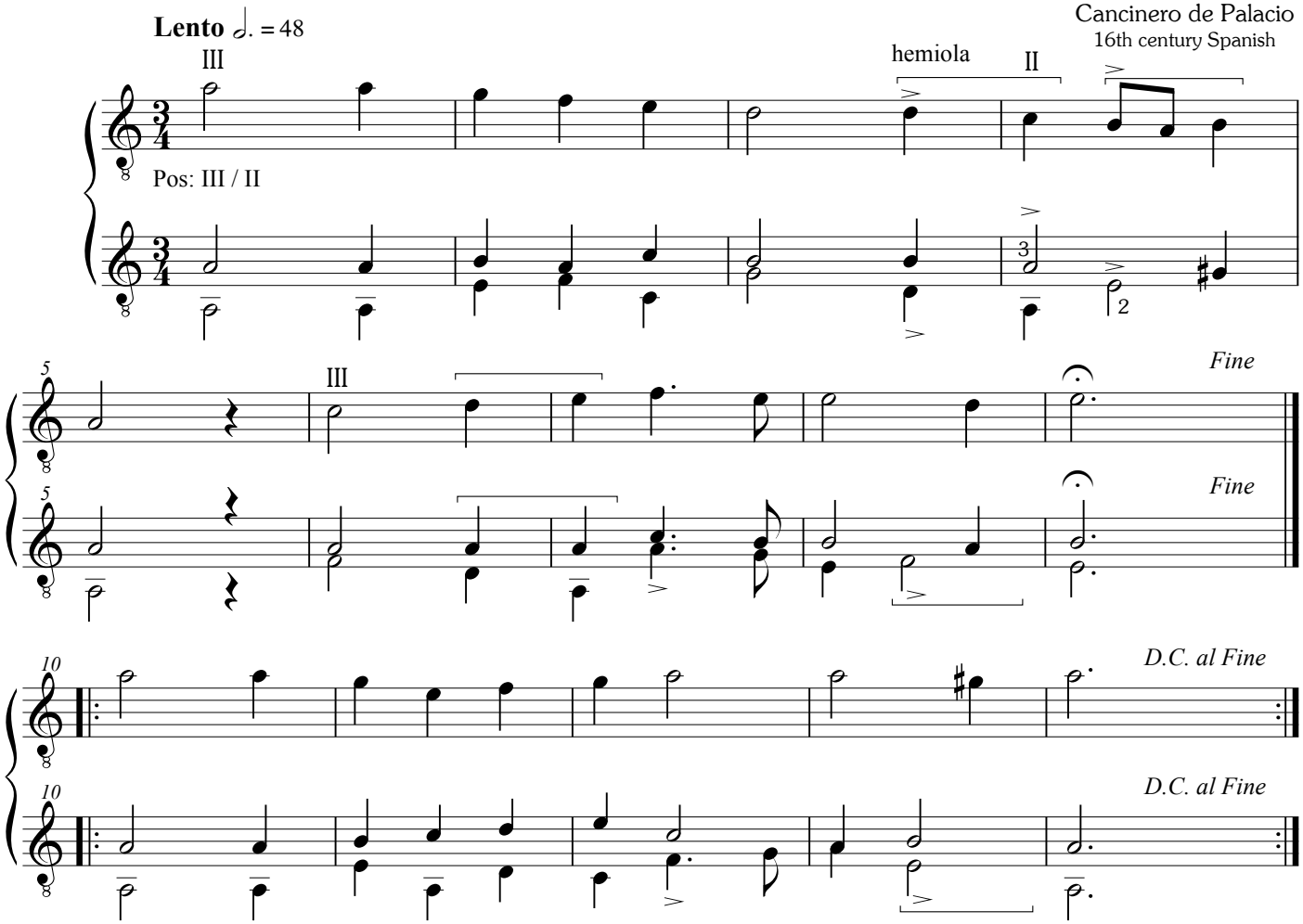
XV. Rodrigo Martinez

Anonymous,
Cancinero de Palacio
16th century Spanish



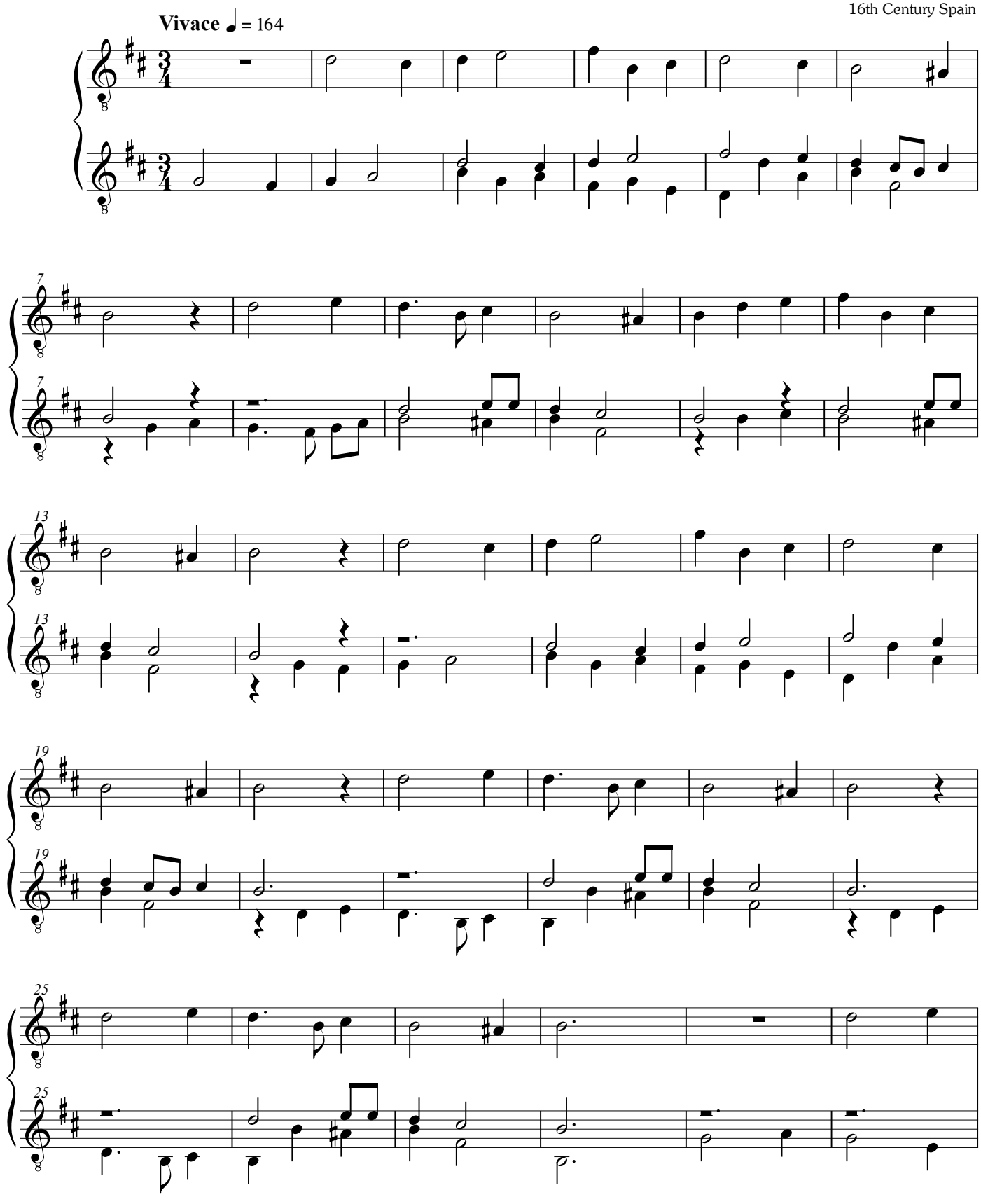
XVI. Mano a Mano

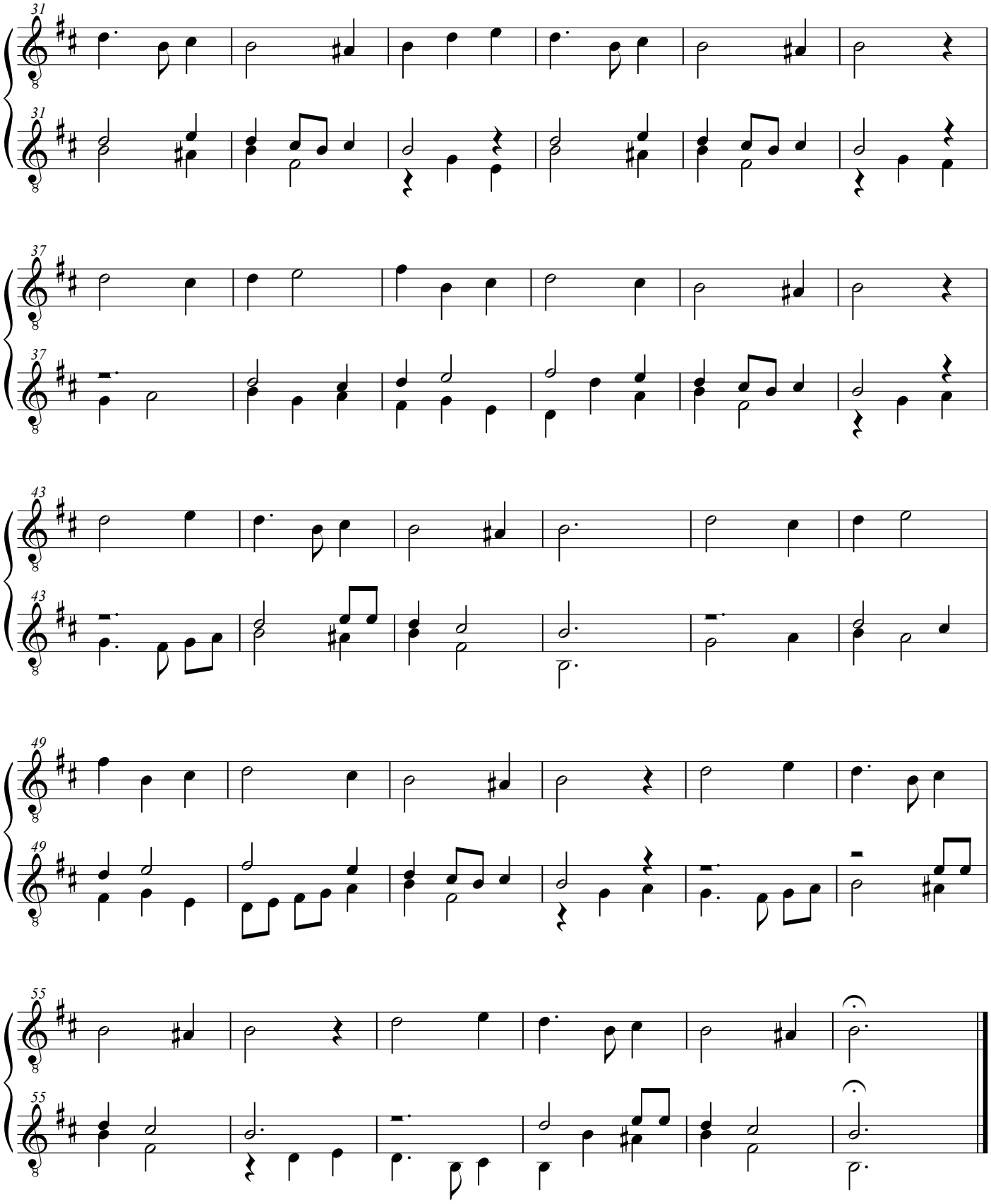
Anonymous,
Cancinero de Palacio
16th century Spanish



XVII. Vos me Matastes

Juan Vasquez
16th Century Spain

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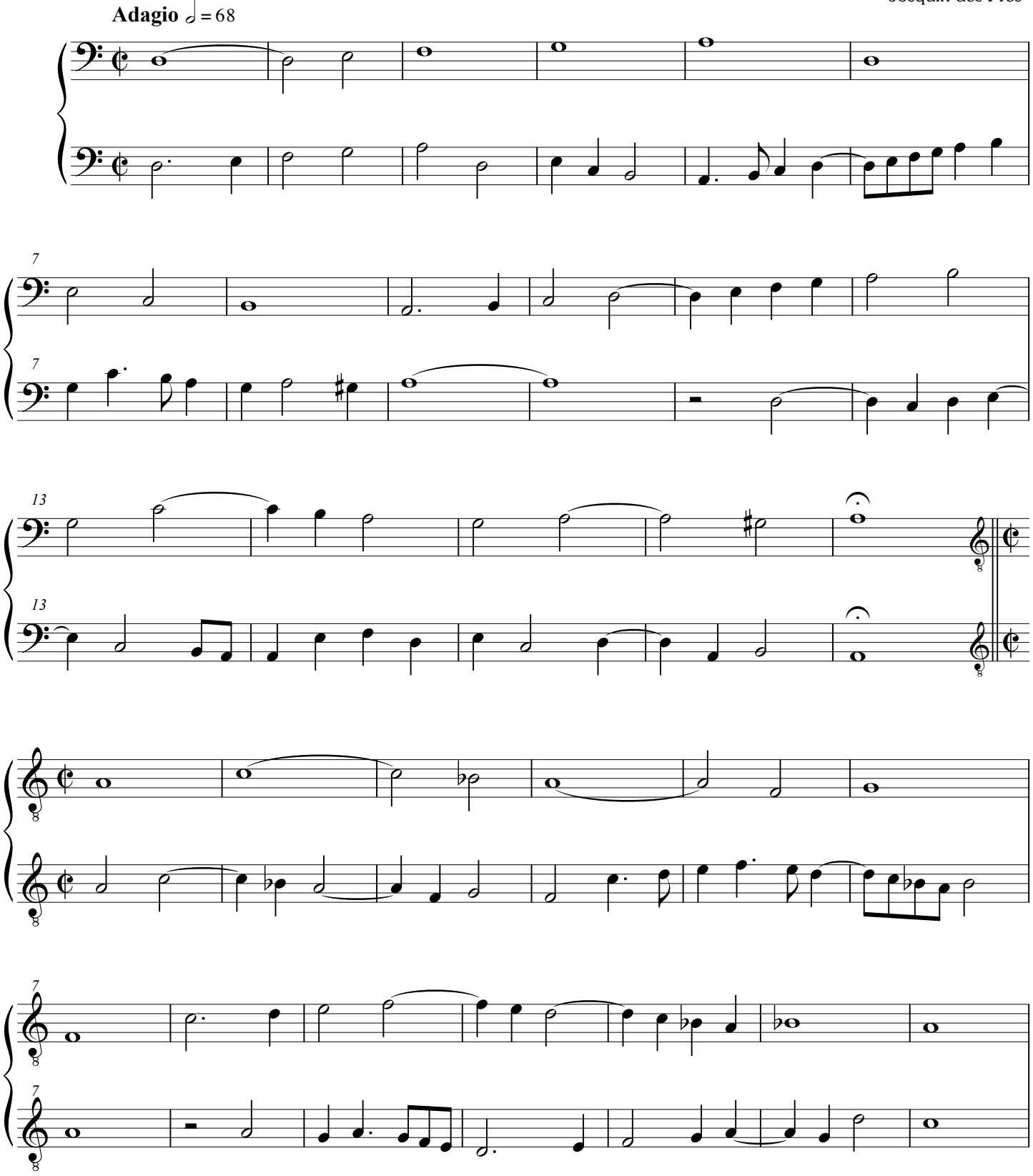
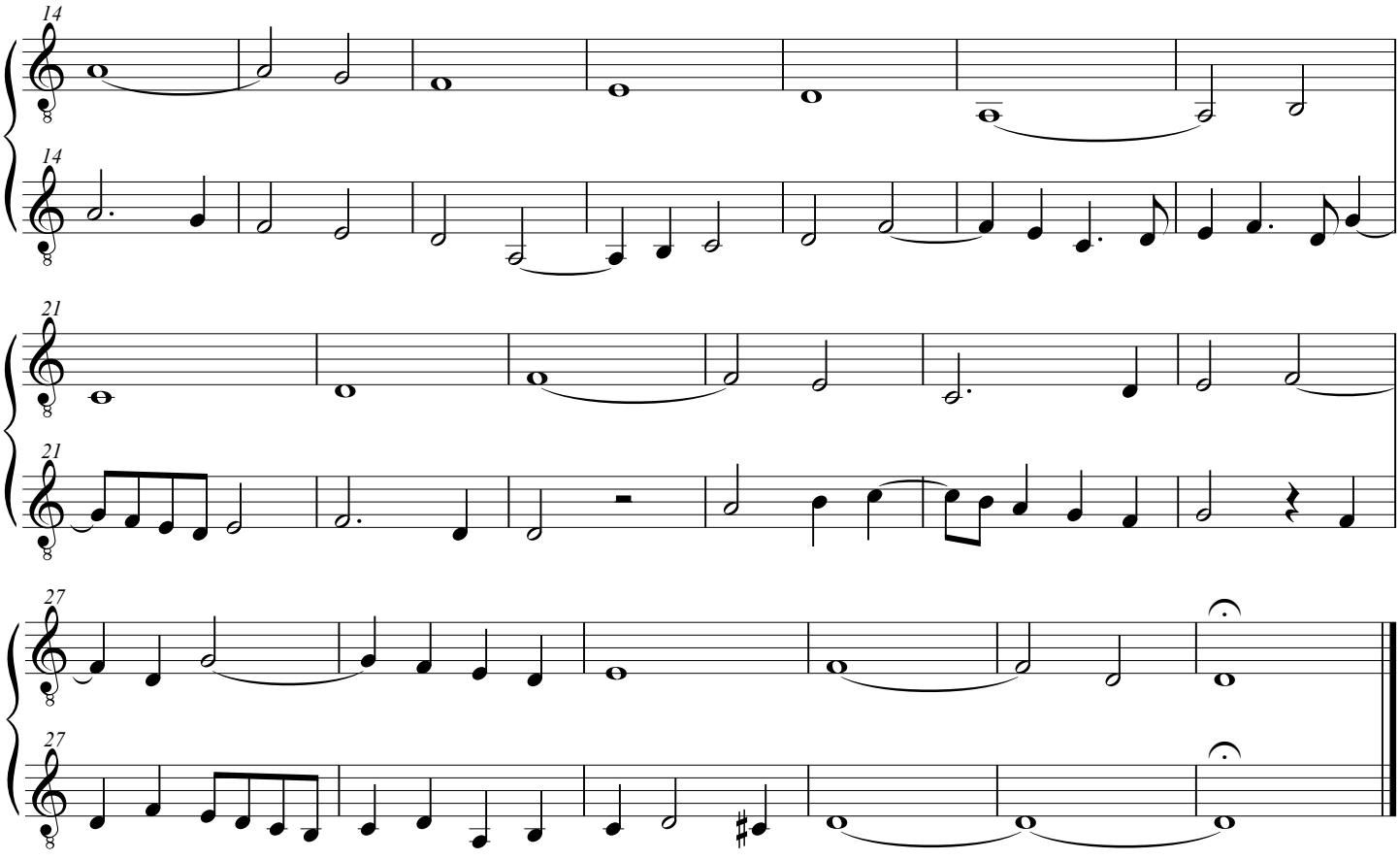
XVIII. Mass Movements

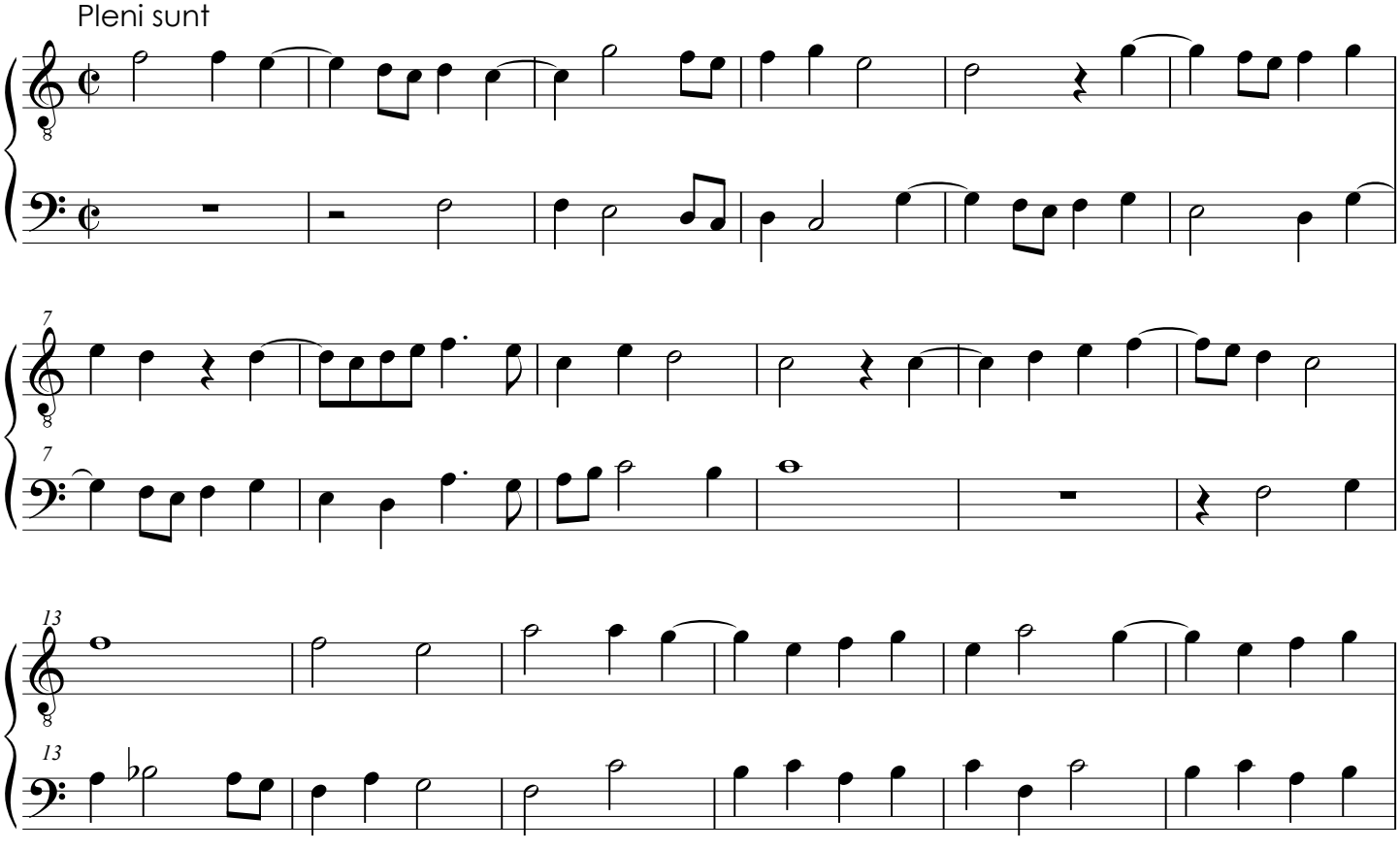
Benedictus from L'Homme Armé

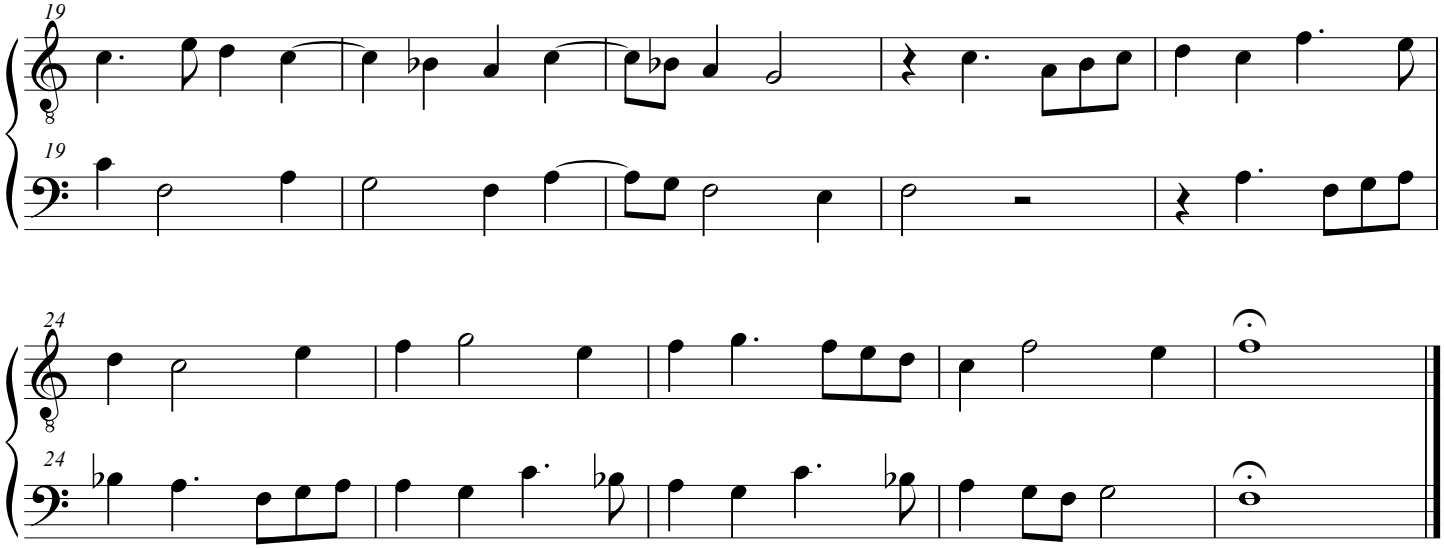
Josquin des Pres





Pleni sunt

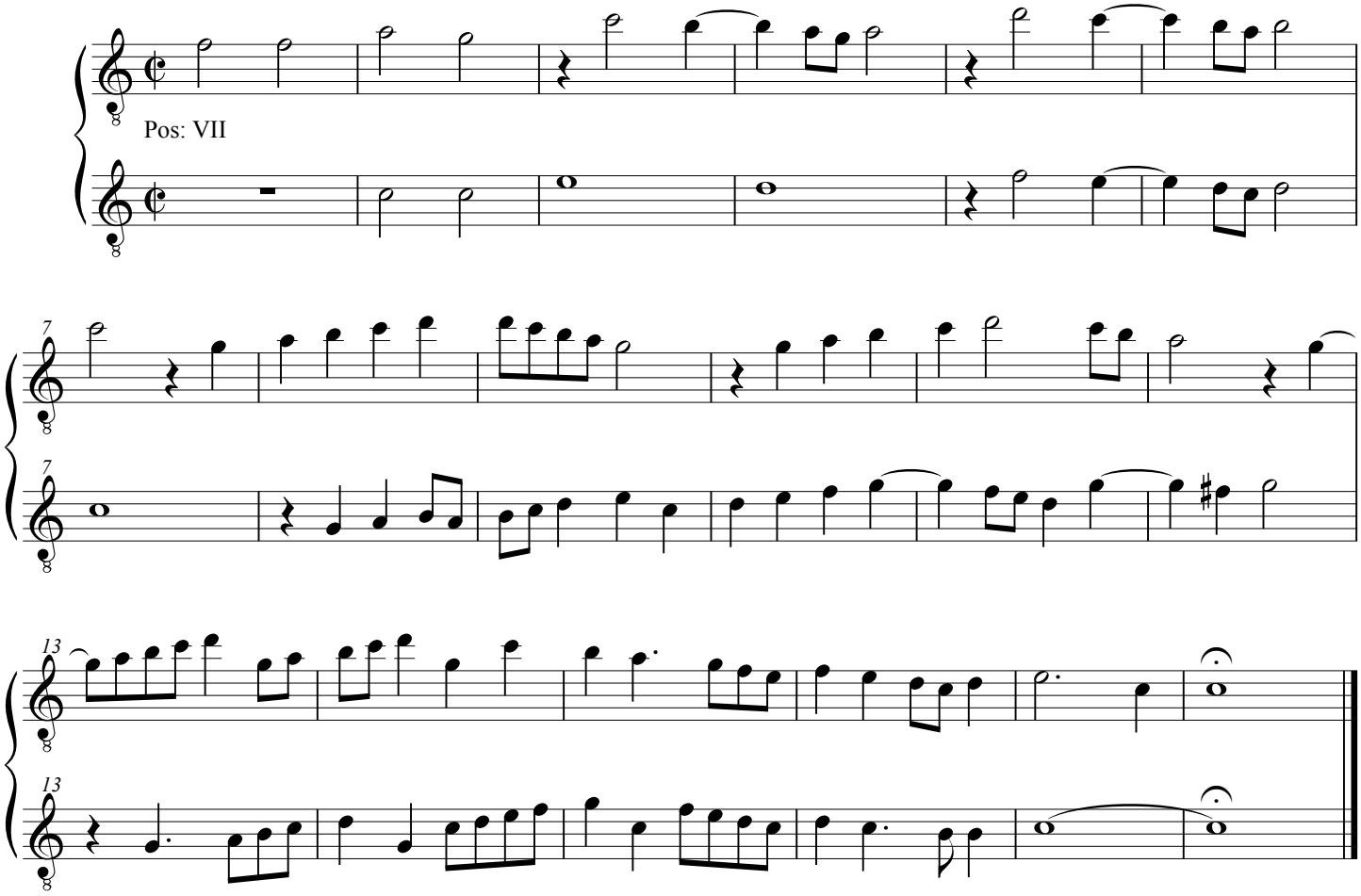




Benedictus

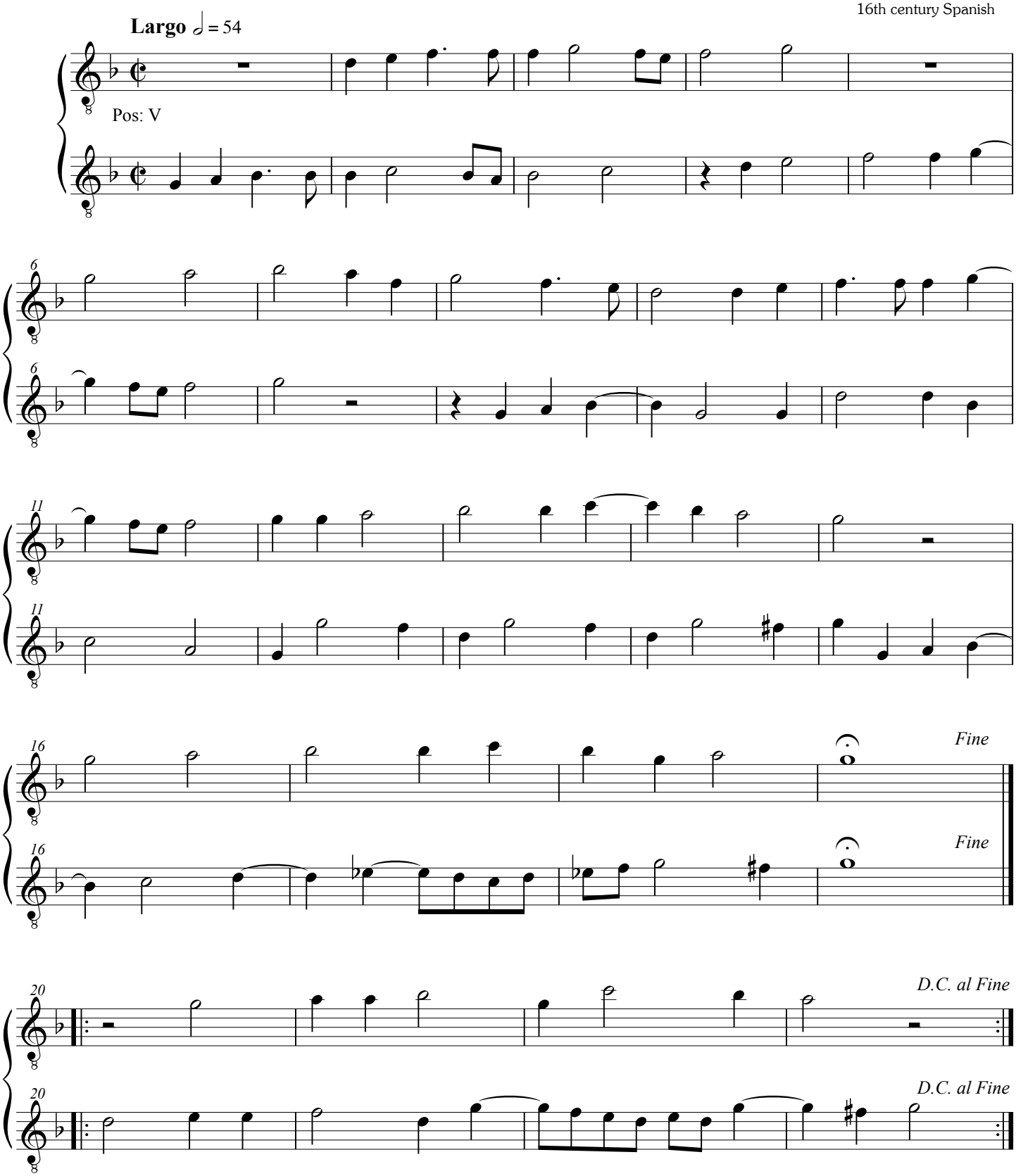
from Missa O Quam Pulchra Es

Pierre de la Rue



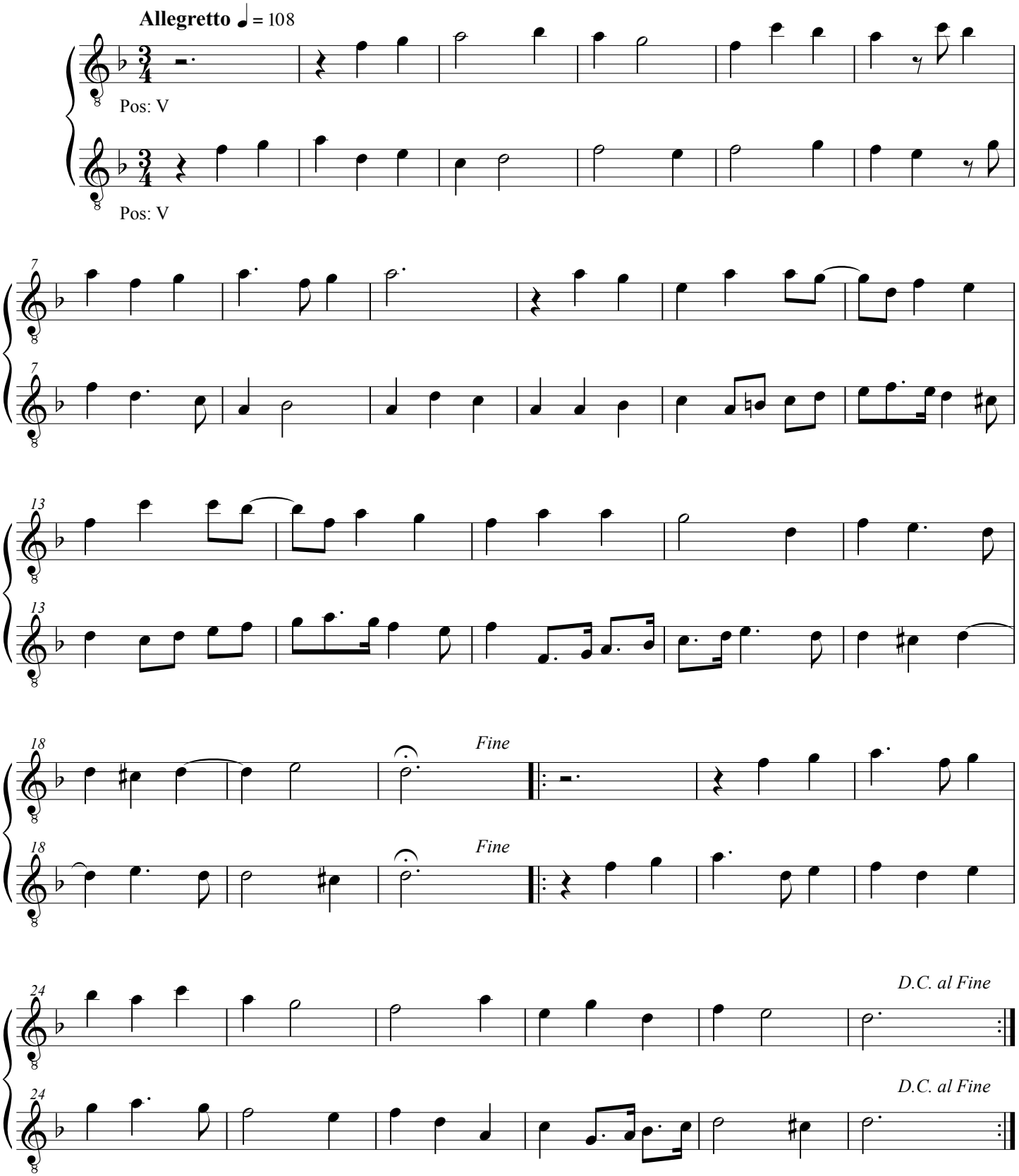
XIX. Y Dezid

Anonymous,
Cancinero de Uppsala
16th century Spanish



XX. No So Yo

Anonymous,
Cancinero de Uppsala
16th century Spanish



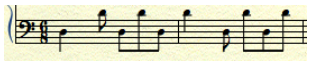
XXI. Benedicamus Domino

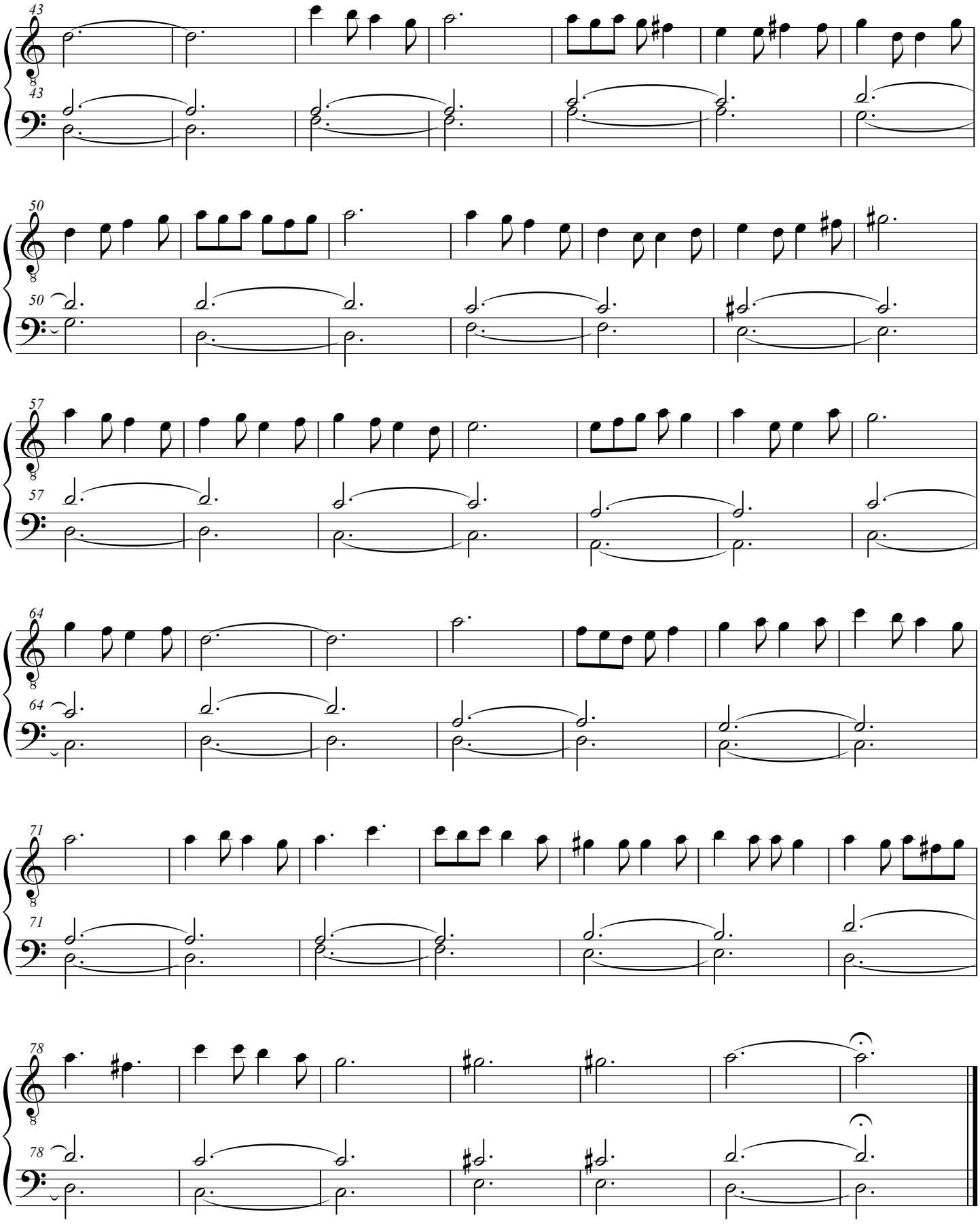
anonymous 14th c.

Allegro ♩. = 132

Pos: V

OSSIA: Improvise
similar rhythms throughout

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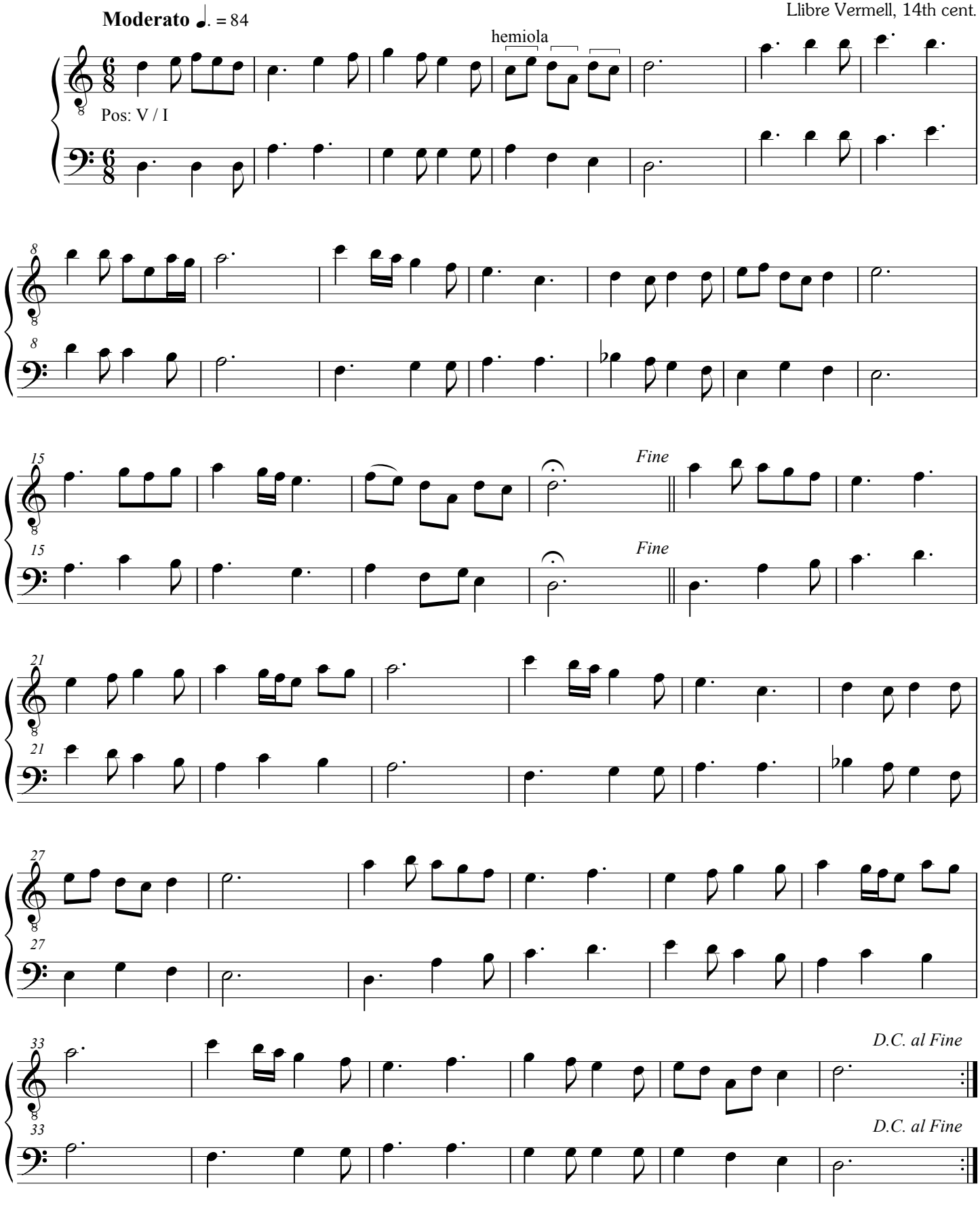
XXII. Imperayritz de la Ciutat

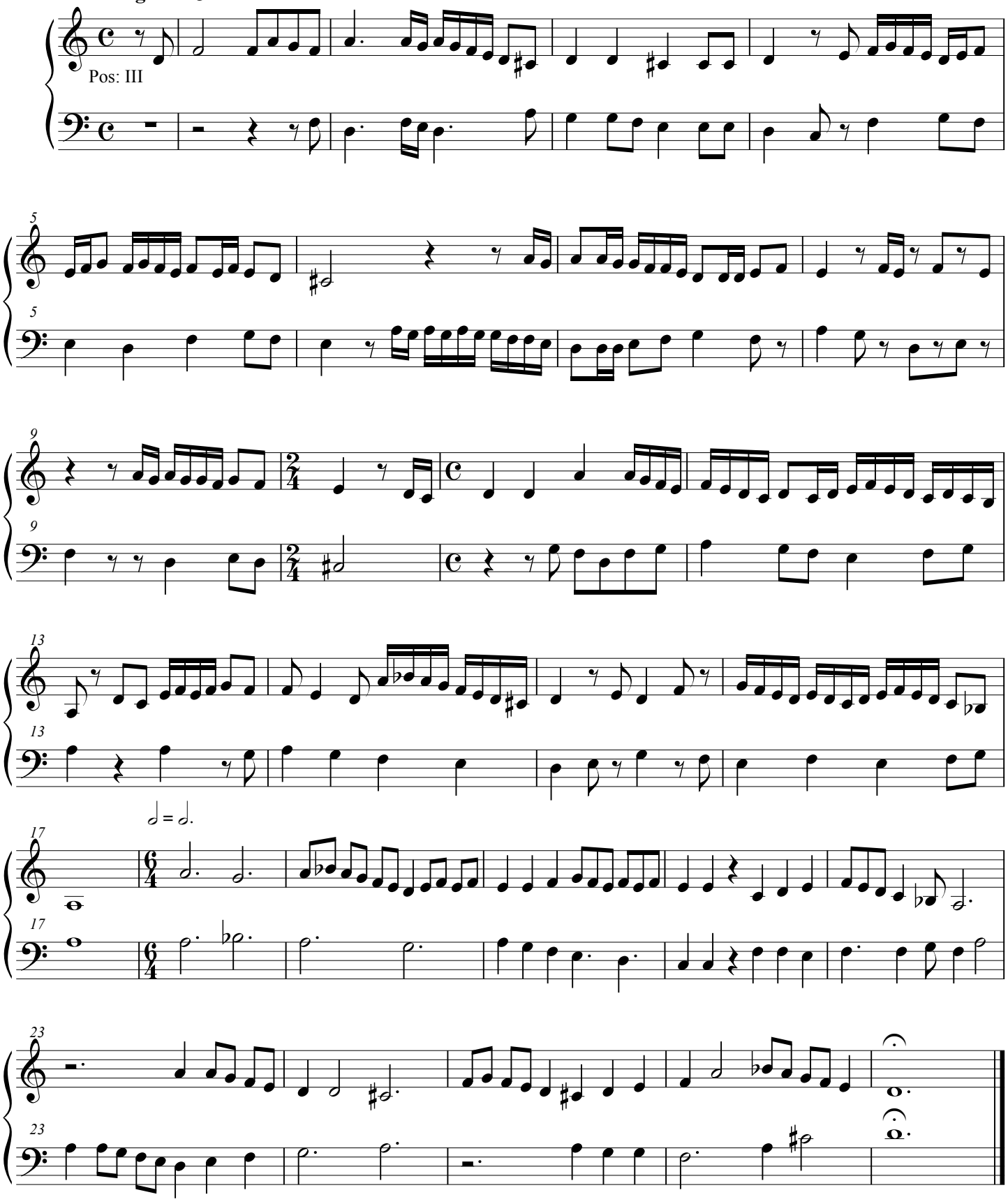
Llibre Vermell, 14th cent.



XXIII. Fenice Fu

Note: clef has no 8 below it, meaning this part must be read up one octave on the guitar.

Jacobo de Bologna, 14th cent.

Allegretto ♩ = 108

Pos: III