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ARIOSO

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Cantata “Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe”
Sinfonia, BWV 156 (1729)

Concerto for harpsichord, strings and continuo No 5 in f minor
Largo, BWV 1056 (1738)

Viola and piano

e minor

Urtext edition by Erlend Vestby, 2020

PREFACE

The title *Arioso* was not given by Bach himself, but was used early to describe the character and style of the piece. Perhaps a title like this was necessary because the *Arioso* appears in two of J.S. Bach's compositions, both included in this edition. The first is the *Sinfonia* from Cantata BWV 156, and the other version is the much more ornamented 2nd movement, *Largo,* of the harpsichord concerto BWV 1056. The title *Arioso* is only used when this movement (usually BWV 156) is played by its own, and not in connection with the rest of the work. This might be another reason for using a unique title for such occasions. The inspiration to the composition came probably from the *Andante* in Telemann's Flute Concerto in G major, TWV51:G2. The first two bars here are identical to Bach's *Arioso.*

Arioso is Italian and means "airy". The term first appeared in the 16th century to describe an aria of a melodious and songlike character as opposed to a declamatory character. D. Scarlatti, a composer and performer contemporary with Bach, used the term to describe music "in a flowing melodic style."

The most common edition of the *Arioso* for violin or cello and piano or organ was made by Sam Franco in 1915. This version is more richly harmonised than the original version, and includes editorial slurs, dynamics, articulations, bowings, and fingerings. I decided to create a historically informed edition to stay closer to Bach's language and composition, and to give performers more freedom in their interpretative choices.

Instrumentation and keys

BWV 156 in d minor: Solo oboe. 2 violins, viola and basso continuo. (Strings arco)
BWV 1056 in f minor: Solo harpsichord. 2 violins, viola and basso continuo. (Strings pizz.)

<u>This new edition is written in various keys and instrumentations:</u>

- Violin, viola or cello and piano
- Violin, viola or cello and organ
- Violin, viola or cello and strings

They are written in d minor, g minor, f minor and e minor.

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

This edition of the *Sinfonia* BWV 156 is made after the surviving anonymous copies of the instrumental parts (A) created between 1750 and 1761, just after Bach's death. Bach's own manuscript and the original parts were lost to history early on. I have compared these copies with the first printed edition (E1) of the Cantata, made in 1886 by Ernst Naumann for Breitkopf und Härtel Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe.

The edition of the *Concerto* BWV 1056 however is made primarily after J.S. Bach's own autograph manuscript (MS). I have also used the first printed edition (E2) of this work made in 1869 by Wilhelm Rust for Breitkopf und Härtel Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe. Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749-1818), musicologist, organist and the first biographer of J.S. Bach, made a copy of the MS which I have also consulted (F).

The *MS* has been the primary source and has also been used to compare *A* and *E1* when making the *Sinfonia* due to the lack of survived autograph manuscripts of the Cantata. The *E2* has been used to better understand the writings of *MS* and as a quality control. *F* is the source that has the largest discrepancies to all the other sources. Some changes have been necessary in order to make the transposition (g minor), but the copy also includes more embellishments than in the other sources (marked in blue in the score). *F* has its own chapter below where the major differences are shown.

Abbreviations:

S: = solo part
1: = 1st voice (1vln)
2: = 2nd voice (2vln)
3: = 3rd voice (vla)
C: = continuo (bass)

b = bar number
n = note in the bar. Slurs, ties, grace notes and rests are not included when counting.

MS = manuscript (1738) (J.S. Bach of BWV 1056)
A = Autograph (1750-1761) (anonymous copy of BWV 156 parts)
F = Copy of BWV 1056 by J. N. Forkel (1760-1789) (transposed to g minor)
E1 = first edition BWV 156 (1886) (Ed. Ernst Naumann)
E2 = first edition BWV 1056 (1869) (Ed. Wilhelm Rust)

SINFONIA, BWV 156

C: b4, n4 – D in *A*, *E1* and *F*. Double stop D/C# in *MS*. C# in *E2.*

S: b4, n10 – G in *A.* A in *MS*, *E1, E2* and *F*.

1: b14, n3 – D in *A*, *MS, E2* and *F*. B in *E1*.

S: b14, n12-19 – Slurs 3+1 x2 in *MS*. Slurs 4+4 in *E2*. Slurs 2+2 x2 in *A.* Slurs 2x3 +1+1 in *E1*. No slurs in *F.*

S: b14, n16 – A in *A* and *E1.* G in *MS, E2* and *F*.

1, 2, 3: b17, n1 – C, A and A in *A* and *E1*. C, A and D in *MS, E2* and *F*.

3: b18, n1 – E in *E1*. D in *A, MS, E2* and *F.*

S: b18, n11 – Tie in *A* and *E1*. No tie in *MS, E2* and *F*.

LARGO, BWV 1056

S: b2, n4-8: No tie or slur in *F.* The tie appears in *E2,* the slur in *MS.* The embellishment is only written in *MS.*

3: b2, n4: D in *F.* C in all other sources.

S: b2, n13-15: Slur in *F*. No slur in *MS, E2, A* or *E1.*

C: b4, n4 – Double stop D/C# in *MS.* C# in *E2*. D in *A*, *E1* and *F*.

S: b5, n1-5: No slur in *E2* or *F.* The slur is written in *MS*. The tie appears in all sources.

S: b10, n12, 14: No flat in *F.*

S: b11, n7-8 – Double stop A/C and C/A in *MS*. It is difficult to tell which of the notes were intended. C, A in *E2* and *F*. A, C in *E1* and *A.*

S: b12, beat 3: No slur in *F.* Slur in *MS* and *E2.*

S: b13, n13,15 – *MS* shows double stop B/G on both notes. It is difficult to tell which of the notes were intended. *E2* indicates B, G. *A*, *E1* and *F* show G, B.

2: b14, n4 – G in *F.* B in all other sources.

S: b14, n12-19 – Slurs 3+1 x2 in *MS*. Slurs 4+4 in *E2*. Slurs 2+2 x2 in *A.* Slurs 2x3 +1+1 in *E1*. No slurs in *F.*

2 and 3: b15, n2 – the two voices swap notes in *F.* (D one octave down.) Notated here as printed in *MS*, *E2, E1* and *A.*

S: b17 and 18, last beats – no embellishment sign in *F.* Notated in *MS* and *E2.* The exact position in *MS* is unclear and is here placed as found in *E2.* B17: Slur in *F* covers 4 notes, *MS* appears to cover 3 notes, the slur in *E2* covers 2 notes. B18: Slur in *F* only.

2 and 3: b18, n3: Notes swap in *F*. (D one octave down.) Notated here as printed in *MS*, *E2, E1* and *A.*

C: b19, n2 – Flat in *MS.* No accidentals in *E2* or *F.*

S: b19, n5-6 – Tie in *MS*, no tie in *E2* and *F.*

S: b20, last beat – Slur over 2 last notes in *MS.* Slur over 2 first notes in *E2.* No slur in *F.*

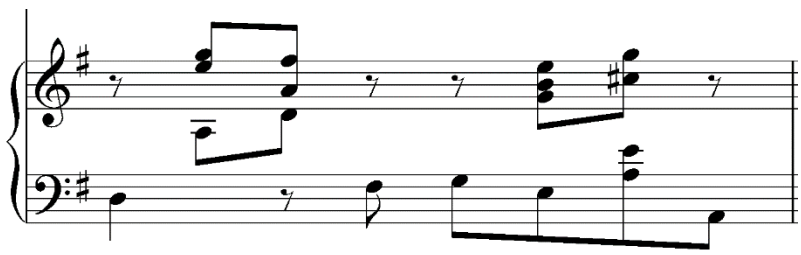
Special differences between *F* and the other sources:

There are specific grace notes and embellishments added in the copy by Forkel that are not written in the other sources. These are embellishments that might have been added by contemporary performers. I have therefore kept them in the score marked in blue.

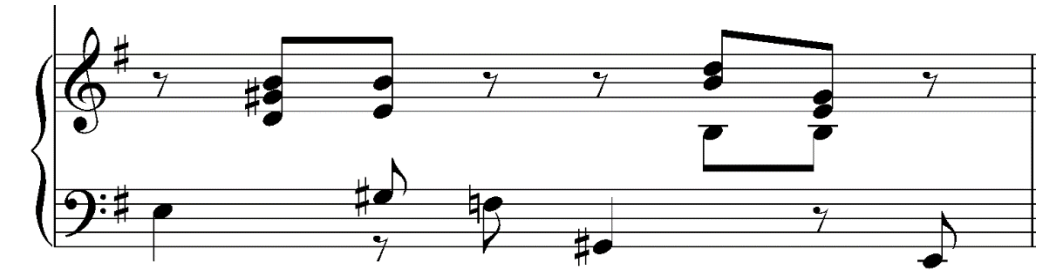
Slurs and other minor differences in *F* are marked in the commentary above in the same way as the other sources are discussed.

Larger differences are described below in arrangement for piano:

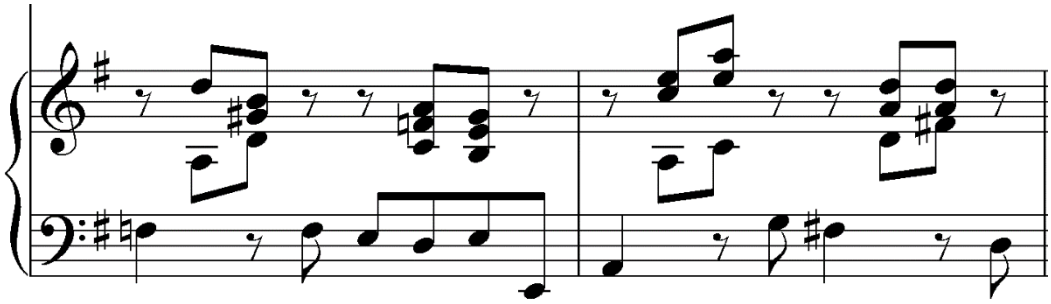
- Piano, b6:



- S: b8-9 – The ossia staff shows a different embellished line found in *F* only.
- Piano, b8:

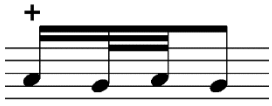


- Piano, b10-11 (octave differences):

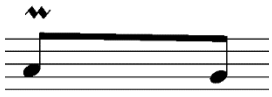


- S: b15:

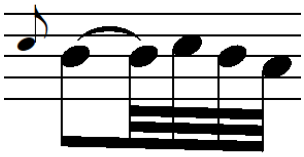
F:



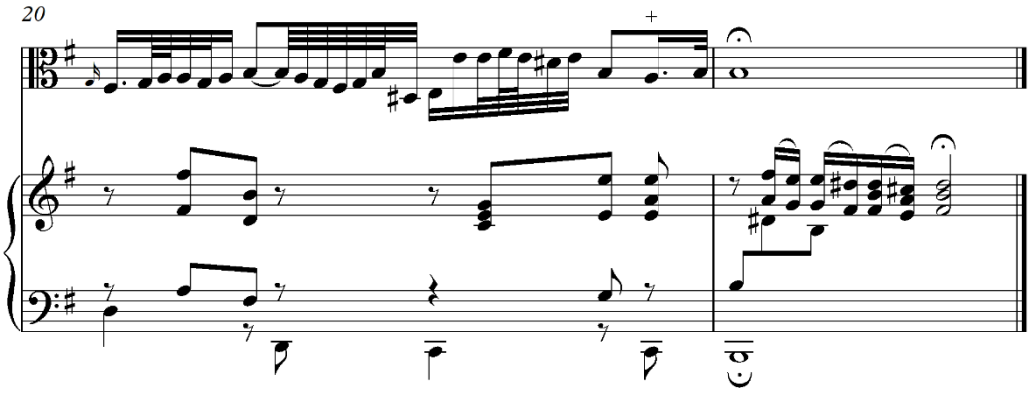
Other sources:



- S: b16, last beat:



- Two last bars in *F.* The printed version is as found in *MS* and *E2:*



ADAGIO AND LARGO

There are some uncertainties with the tempo relationship between a*dagio* and *largo* in the Baroque era. They were both used to describe a slow movement, but which of them were the slowest depended on who you asked. The Italian writers and composers mostly saw *adagio* as slow and *largo* as very slow. Most French musicians placed them the other way around. It is uncertain what Bach himself thought, but it is a possibility that he didn't make a distinction between them at all; they just meant "slow". I will shortly explain some of the various other meanings *adagio* and *largo* could have that may explain why BWV 156 and BWV 1056 are marked differently:

According to musicologist David Fallows, *adagio* in the Baroque era up until the Classical period, meant a slow movement that asked for extra embellishments from the performer. The *Sinfonia* marked *adagio* is sparingly embellished, whilst the harpsichord concerto marked *largo* is much more elaborated. This might be the very reason that they are marked differently. Both the *adagio* and the *largo* should be played equally slow, but the *adagio* also needs to be embellished.

Bach expert and performer, Anthony Newman, argues that *adagio* has a slow tempo with emphasis on the strong beats. *Largo* is also slow, but with emphasis on strong as well as weak beats, increasing the number of accents in the bar. With the long and many embellishments written out in the *largo,* extra accents and heavy beats might come naturally as a result of these.

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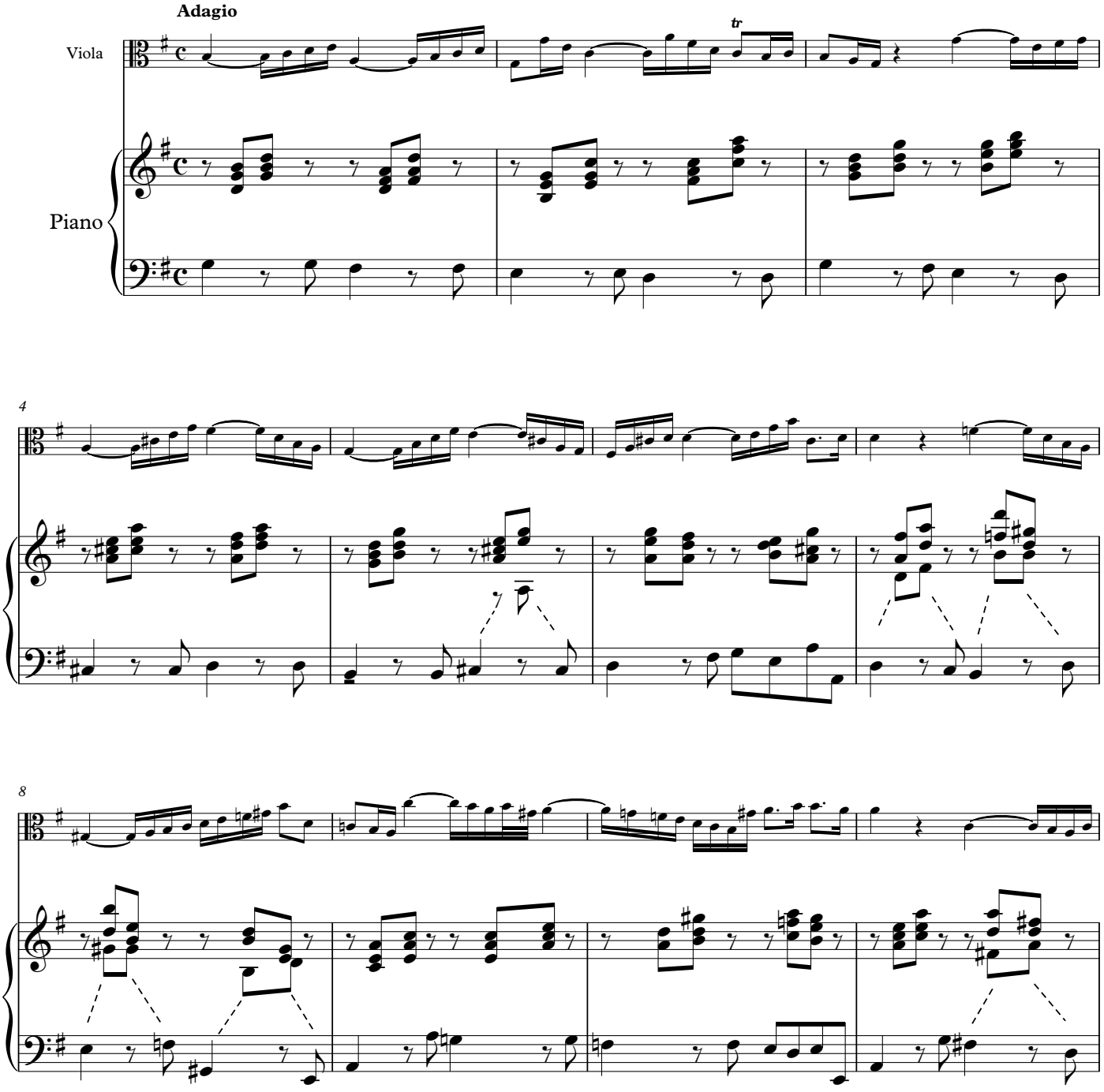
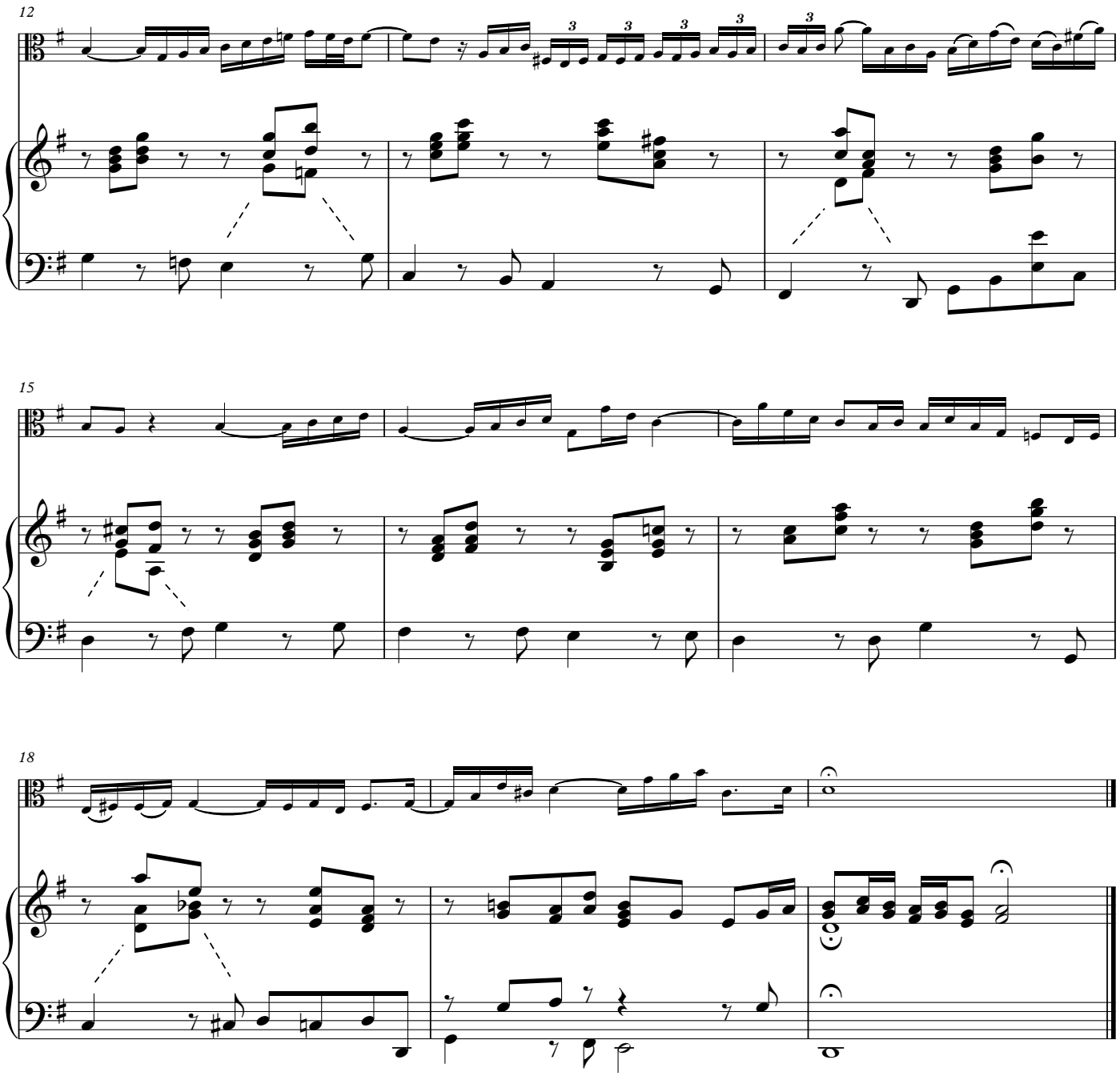
Sinfonia

Ich steh mit einem Fuβ im Grabe

J.S. Bach, BWV 156

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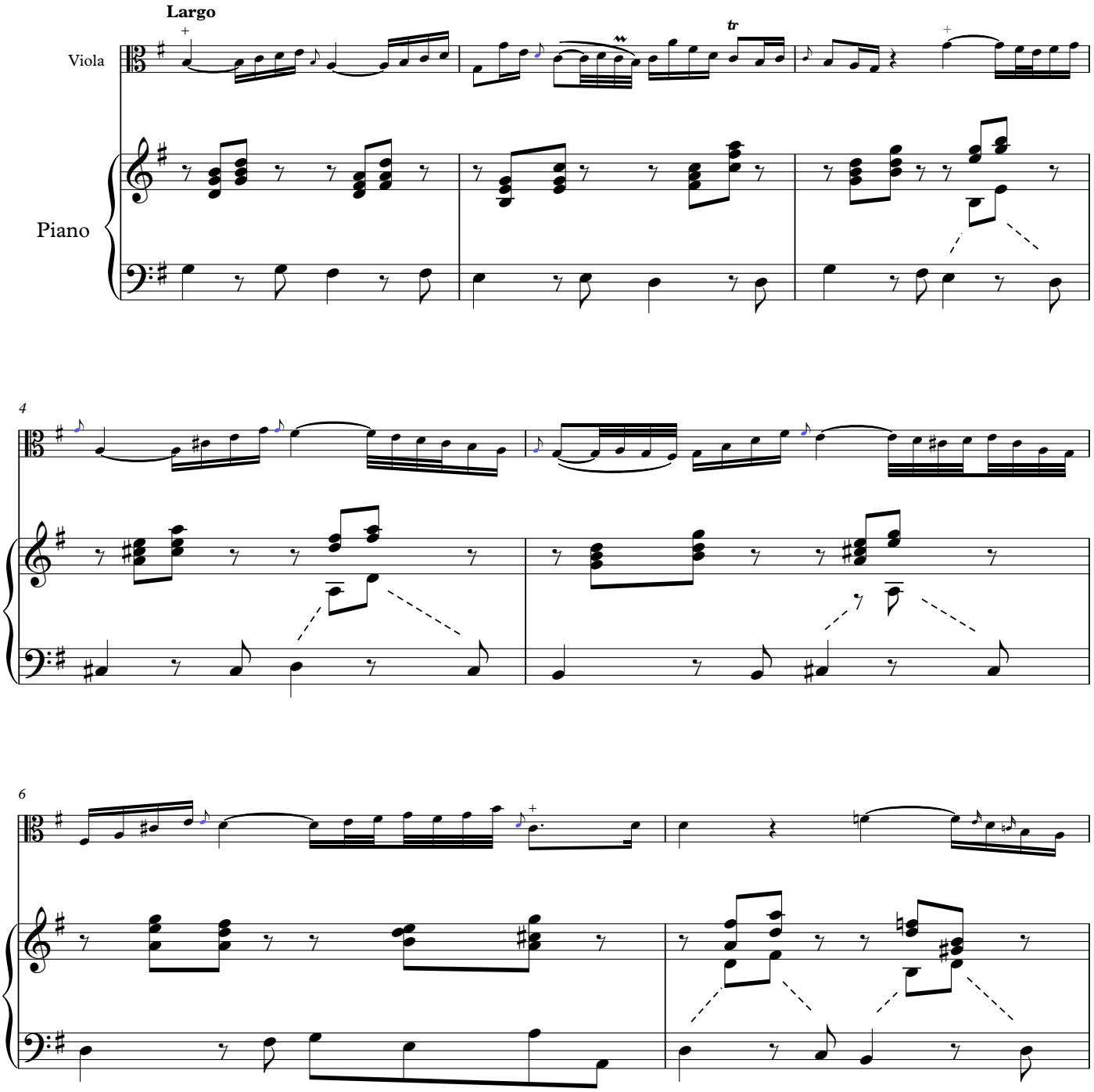
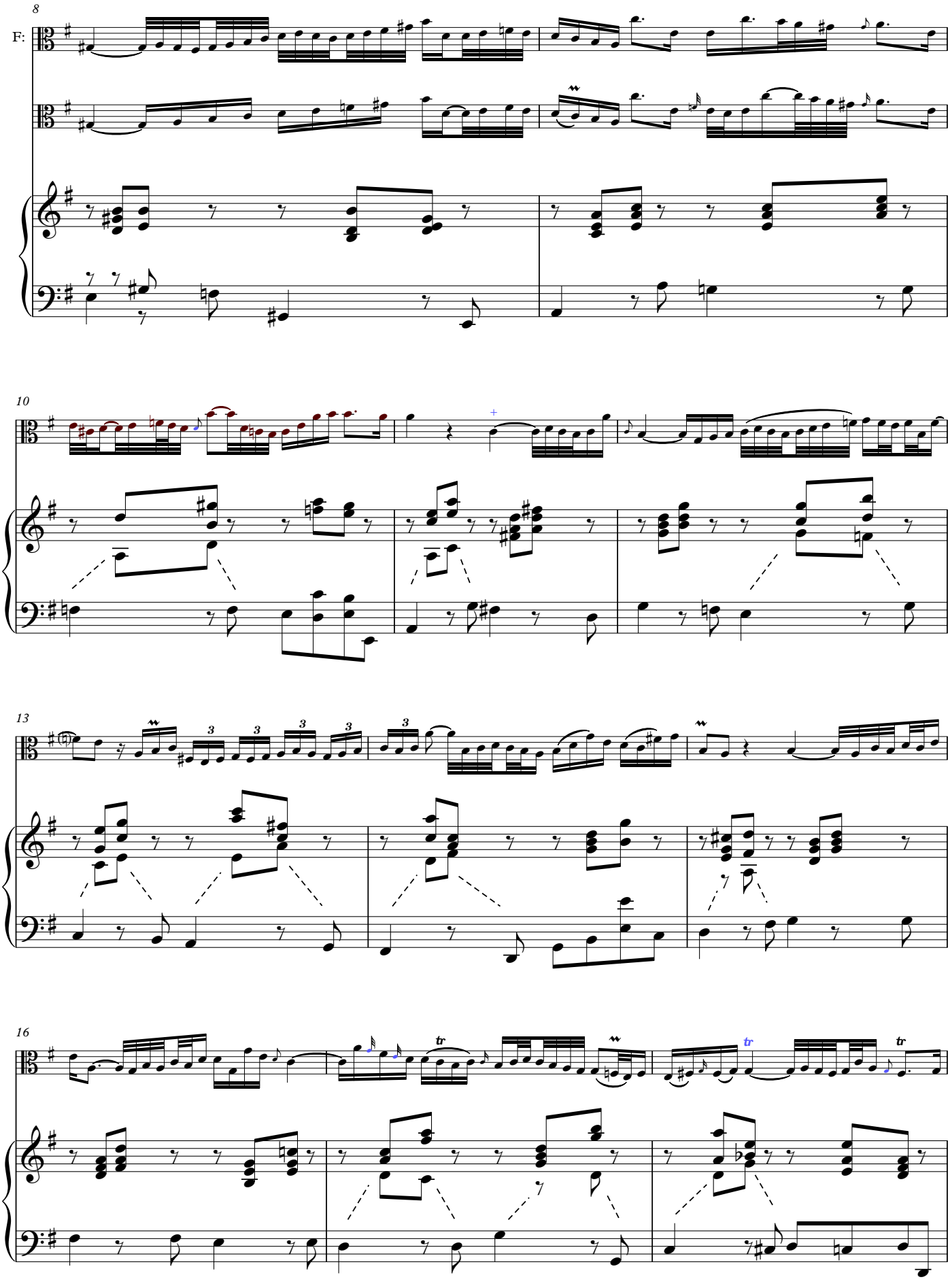
Concerto No 5

for harpsichord, strings and continuo

J.S. Bach, BWV 1056

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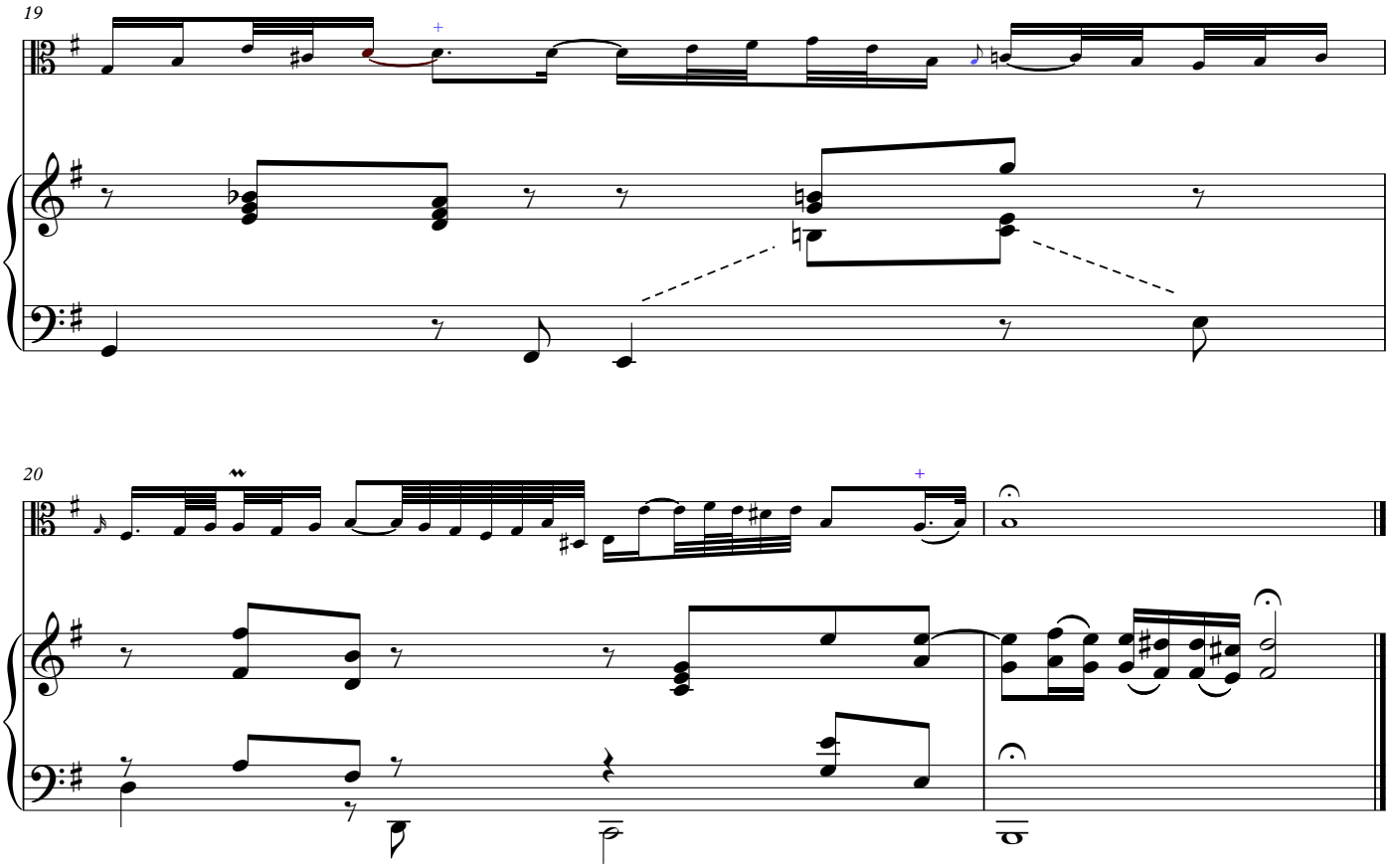
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Viola

Sinfonia

Ich steh mit einem Fuβ im Grabe

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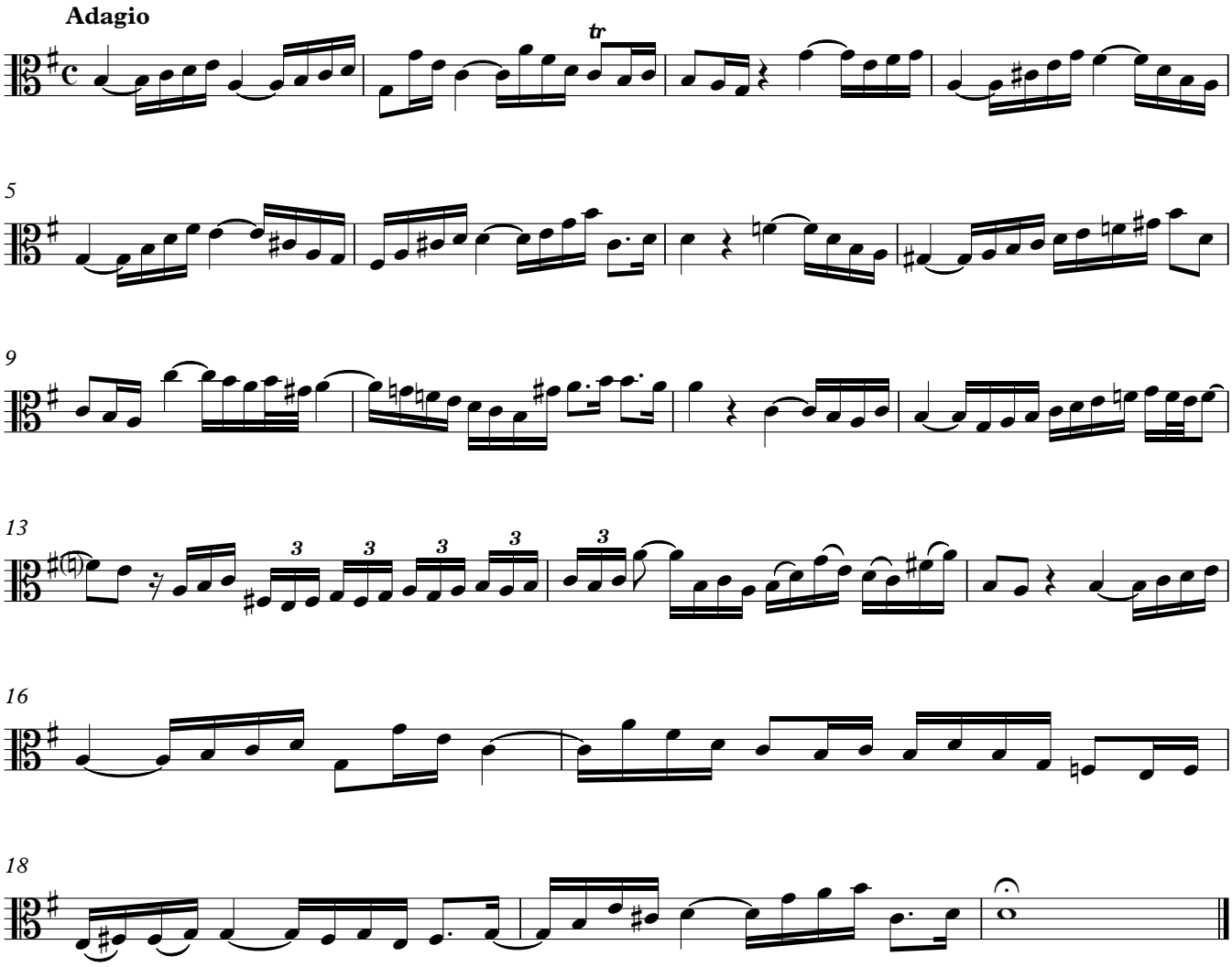
J.S. Bach, BWV 156



Concerto No 5

for harpsichord, strings and continuo

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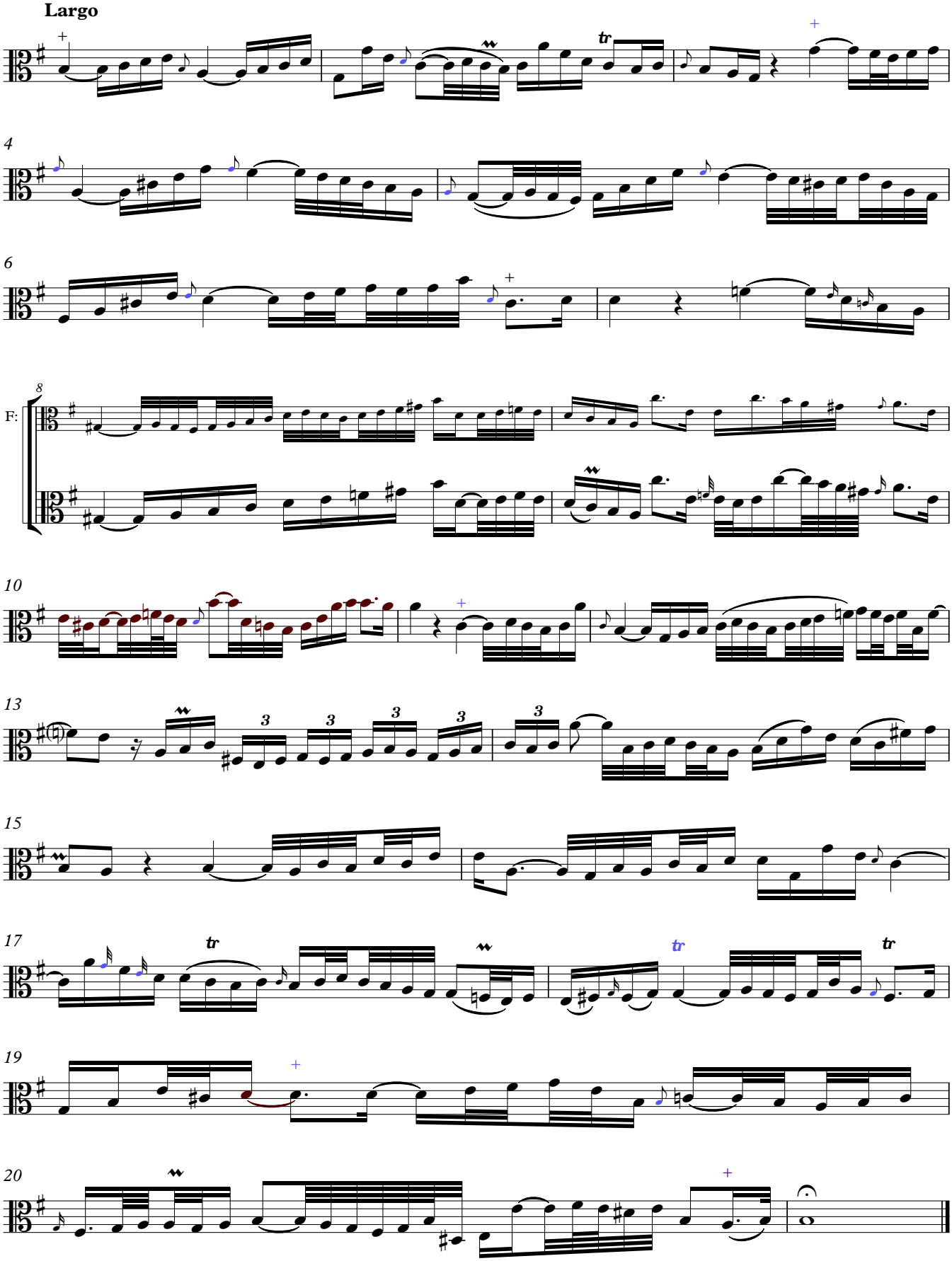
J.S. Bach, BWV 1056

Largo