Glenn Gould

Klavierstücke

Piano Pieces

MUS
M
22
.G697
S56

5 Kleine Stücke / 5 Short Pieces
(1951)

2 Stücke / 2 Pieces
(1951 / 52)

herausgegeben von / edited by
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Preface

Glenn Gould's *Five Short Piano Pieces* are undated, but likely he composed them in 1950, when he was seventeen or eighteen years old; he played them at a concert in the Concert Hall of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto in January 1951, on a program that also included his *Sonata* for bassoon and piano. This was a period of compositional activity for Gould at a time when he was already an admirer of the music of Arnold Schoenberg and an ardent defender of twelve-tone music and its exponents. In the brevity of the pieces might be seen the influence of Webern, but the sonorities and the compositional technique are much freer and individualistic.

The first two pieces exploit twelve-note rows to a limited extent in the presentation of "Principal" and "Secondary" statements, but there is also free writing not controlled by serial considerations. The third and fourth pieces, while atonal and highly chromatic, are not serial and reflect texturally, in a canon and a two-part invention, Gould's extensive and intimate understanding of the music of J. S. Bach. The final piece is in the nature of an improvisation or brief fantasy.

Gould could be careless in his musical copying and the manuscript (which, with some sketches, is in the National Library of Canada, Ottawa) contains what are certainly errors. These have been corrected directly in the musical text and indicated in the following notes. Indications of dynamics, tempo and articulation are by Gould, as are the comments on the manner of performance appended to each piece.

In this edition, in accordance with general practice, an accidental applies to all repetitions of a pitch in the same octave until cancelled or changed.

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August 1994

I

bar 7: middle part, beat 1: D♭ – the flat sign is missing in the MS, but D♮ is inconsistent with the strict presentation of the series at this point; however the sketch has D♮ notated clearly, and the MS has D♭ marked later in the bar.
lower part, beat 3: D♮ – the MS lacks the natural sign.

bar 14: Gould indicates that the upper part is a "Secondary statement" but at this point the "Principal Statement" (the series in retrograde) passes in bar 14 from beat 2 in the LH to beat 3 in the RH and concludes in the upper part on the first beat of bar 16.

II

bar 3: LH beat 2: in the sketch the first note is clearly E, not F as in the MS.

bar 5: RH beat 4: the last note is uncertain; it appears that Gould tried to erase a flat sign, but it remains unclear whether it was attached to B or A. The sketch has B♮–A (8th. notes), which suggests that the correct MS reading is A♮.

bar 6: middle part, beat 3: A♮ – the MS lacks the natural sign, but the part writing and the following A♭ on beat 4 indicate that the A♭ on beat 1 in the upper part is not to be retained in the middle part.

bar 8: In the MS the second group of octaves (D–E♭) in the bass is notated as eighth notes. The final pair of octaves (E–E♭) was crowded into the end of a full bar and was apparently the correction of an omission; the composer then did not correct the rhythmic notation for the bar.

bar 10: RH beat 2: in the sketch, but not in the MS, the second chord is also arpeggiated.
RH beat 4: B♮ in final chord – the MS lacks the natural sign.

bar 13: middle part, beat 4: C♮ – the MS lacks the natural sign, but C♮ is required for the presentation of the series.

bar 15: upper part, beat 3: A♮ – the MS lacks the natural sign.

III

bar 1: no time signature in MS; the piece is written on three staves.

bar 9: bottom part, beat 4: E♮ – the MS lacks the natural sign.

bar 13: top part, beat 2: the second group of 32nds is notated in the MS as 16ths.

bar 15: top part, beat 1: the group of 32nds is notated in the MS as 16ths.

IV

bar 1: no time signature in MS.

bar 2: RH beat 3: A♮ – the MS lacks the natural sign, but a comparison with bar 5, LH, confirms reading.

bar 5: LH beat 2: C♮ – the MS lacks the natural sign, which is in the sketch.
LH beat 3: the MS clearly has A G♯ E♯ E♮, with E♮ on beat 1 of bar 6. A comparison with bars 1 and 2, RH, indicates the correct reading.

bars 7–8, 13–15: The fingerings are Gould's.

bar 7: LH beat 3: G♮ is musically logical, but the MS lacks the natural sign.

bar 8: LH beat 3: F♮ – the MS lacks the natural sign, but the fingering implies it.

bar 10: RH beat 3: the musical sense suggests C♮, but the MS lacks the natural sign.

bar 14: RH beat 3: logically D♮, following D♯, but there is no accidental in the MS.
LH beat 3: the musical sense suggests F♮, but the MS lacks the natural sign.

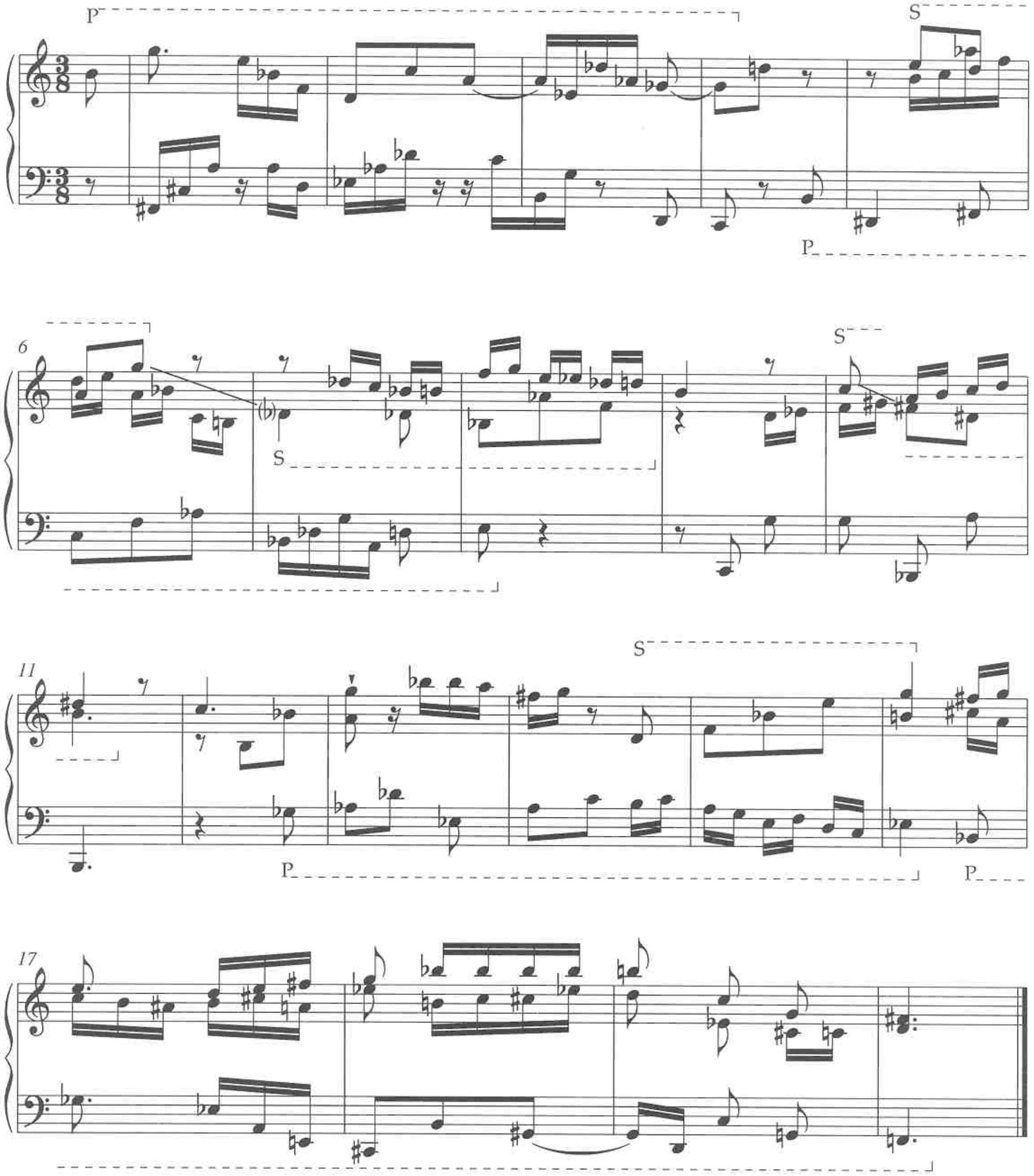
V

bar 6: RH: the final E♯ is clearly written in the MS, although there is no ♯ in the sketch.

5 Short Pieces

Glenn Gould
1932 - 1982

I



Note: To be played in a moderate tempo ± quietly ± but with definite contrast between the parts

P⌐ - - - - ¬ = Principal statements

S⌐ - - - - ¬ = Secondary statements

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II

P

P

S

5

P

9

S

12

P

14

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Note: This is to be played delicately and with careful phrasing.
Dynamics: reserved, as with all this set, but ***mf***

III

♩ = **Andante**

CANON

mf

1st

2nd

6

9 3rd

cresc.

11

13

f

f

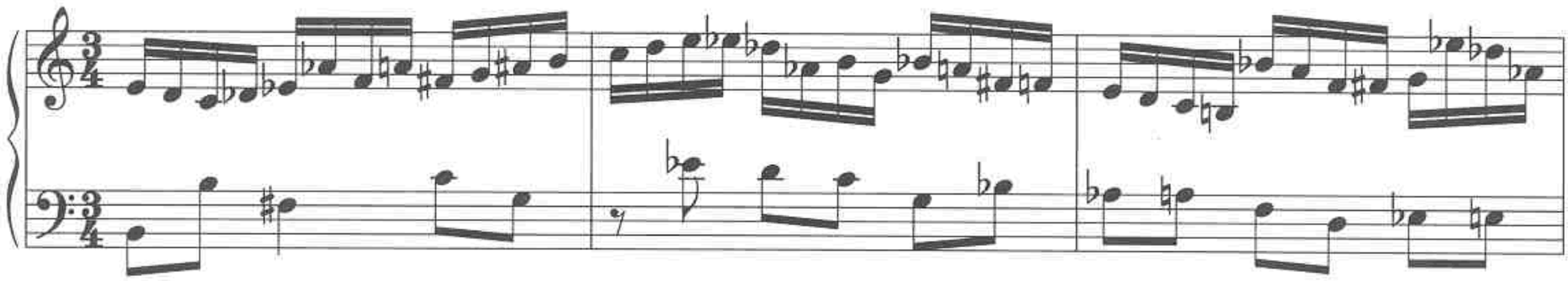
15

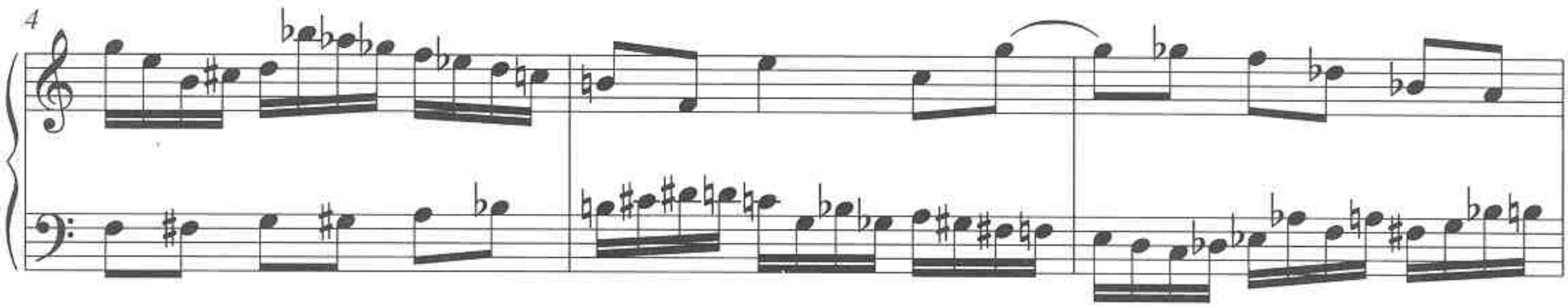
ff

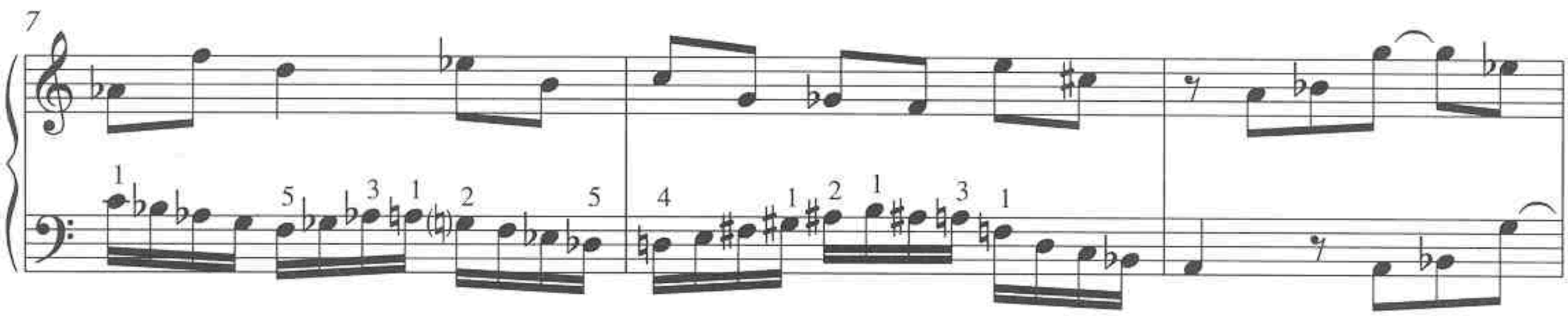
ff

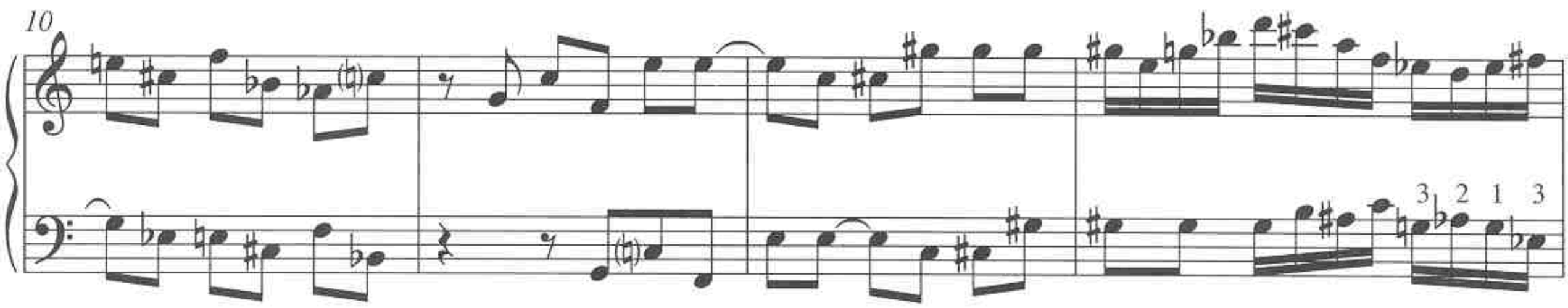
IV

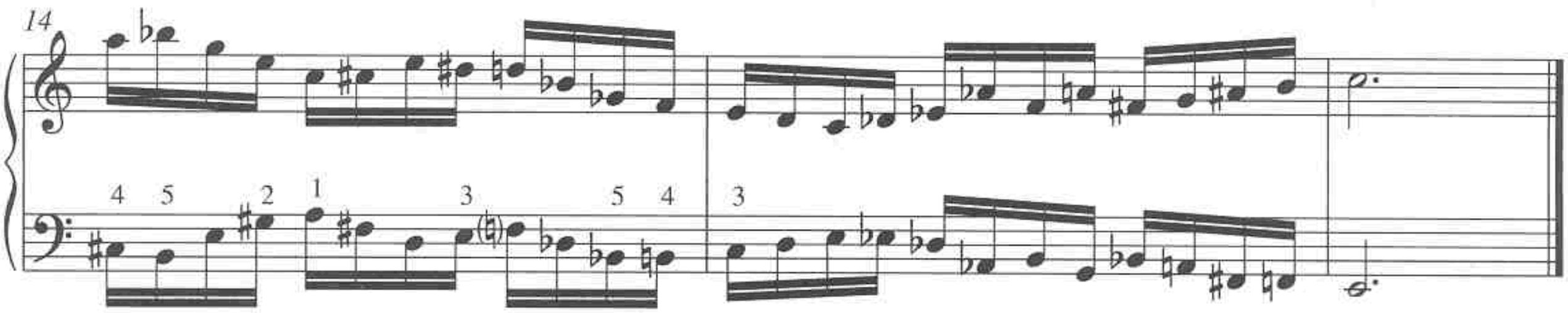
Vivace











Note: To be played as quickly as is consistent with technical competence.
The little canon in the middle is meant to ridicule its serious predecessor

V

This little piece, which brings the set to a close, should be played very seriously with a mystical effect.