MICHAEL PRAETORIUS

Dances from *Terpsichore*

from Syntagma III (1612)

In modernized notation for flexible ensembles of all types



XX. à 4

BRANSLE de la Grenee

(Bransle of the famous Dancing Master La Grenee)

Suite of four Dances for 4-part Ensembles

by Michael Praetorius

About this Terpsichore Edition:

This new edition is based on the original version of the complete Syntagma Musicum by Möseler Verlag Wolfenbüttel, edited by Friederich Blume.
The Terpsichore section was edited by Gűnther Oberst (1931). The actual score was created from the original part-books (typeset in old notation with no meters) complete with copious editorial notes on discrepancies etc.
It faithfully retained Praetorius' clefs, meters, time signatures, key signatures & repeat markings even though some were confusingly inconsistent.
This edition has retained the original keys but modernised the meters & time signatures and rationalised the accidentals. Repeats and da capos have been written out in full, in some cases containing suggested ornamentation for variety.
The various dances have been assembled into 'suites' in much the same order as the Möseler edition but are available individually by catalog number. Likewise the parts (in a variety of clefs & transpositions for mixed ensembles). Ensembles are free to construct their own favourite suites.

Listening resources: (YouTube)

Collegium Terpsichore; Fritz Neumayer
Early Music Consort of London; David Munrow
New London Consort; Philip Pickett
Praetorius Consort: Christopher Ball
Voices of Music: van Proosdij
Ricercar Consort; Pierlot/Fernandez
La Fenice; Jean Tubery
La Bande des Luths; Philippe Mayleet
Accademia del Ricercare; Pietro Busca.
Westra Aros Pipers: Bertil Farnlof
The Toronto Consort
Renaissance d'un Orgue; Jean-Charles Ablitzer
Doulce Mémoire; Denis Raison Dadre
Hammered Dulcimer; Carole Koenig



Henri Bonnart: The Dancing Master

XX. à 4
BRANSLE de la Grenee
(Bransle of the famous Dancing Master La Grénée)
Suite of four Dances for 4-part Ensembles
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Terpsichore was a massive project undertaken by Praetorius (M.P.C.) in 1612 to publish a collection of popular French courtly music, mostly from the famous French Dancing Masters at Versailles whom M.P.C. respectfully acknowledges in the titles.

'La Grenee' (Pierre La Grénée, d. 1610, a.k.a. 'la Bourgoigne' - from Burgundy) was one of the many celebrated dancing masters in Paris. The dancing masters played a very important role at the various courts throughout Europe and were highly esteemed and very well paid. Dancing was an essential skill at court. It defined the status and prestige of the court and the courtiers. MPC says of them: "... it should be noted that the melodies and airs, as they call it, of these dances were composed by French dancers who were at the same for the most part good violinists or lutenists, and arranged according to their steps in dances, courants, ballets and processions: when they instruct in dancing their students, the great Lords, Earls, and other persons of rank, they play these same dances on the violin or lute."
MPC goes on to say: "There are three hundred masters in Paris dancing and, in some part, composing...." and: "Thus, the airs and melodies of these masters and other such composers of these dances have been communicated to me by Anthoine Emeraud, dancing-master of my Gracious Prince and Lord, Friedrick Ulrich, Duke of Braunschweig & Lüneberg. To these melodies, I have humbly added a bass and inner parts and signed my name to them."

The name Bransle (pronounced 'Brawl') is really just a generic title for 'round & line dances' of all kinds. A Suite of Bransles traditionally opened the courtly Ballet starting with the simpler Bransles and culminating in the riotous Gavottes. The Bransle de Bourgogne (Burgundy) was livelier and danced by the young.

To quote Erika Schneiter, renaissance dance expert (notes for the excellent Ricercar recording):

> "As a rule, balls lasted for eight hours or more. The beginning followed a set ceremonial pattern: the senior person present opened the ball with his partner, and the next in line gradually joined in the dance. To start with, they would dance a Branle-suite. Bransles, or Branles are round dances from various parts of France. The pairs danced in rows or in a circle with a basically sideways movement through the ballroom. Praetorius describes the motion as: "not as brutal as the Galliard or the Courrante, but very gentle, with but a slight movement of the knees." The Branles doubles and the Branles simples, so called because of their double-pace to the left followed by a double or a single pace respectively to the right, were just the thing for the veterans in the ballroom. They [the seniors] were absolved from the more lively "Branles gay", such as the running and jumping peasant dances, the Branle de Bourgogne, de Village, de Poictou and de Montirande, in which the younger generation indulged. There were lots of Branle-dances, varying from region to region. Of the Branle de Montirande or du Haut Barrois, Arbeau says, "It is danced by young ladies and gentlemen of noble descent, who dress up as sheep and farmers for masques to amuse themselves with their peers."

The 5-part pieces seem to be intended for winds, whereas the 4-part settings seem ideal for strings.
This Suite is an ideal piece to try as many varied settings as possible (high-low, loud-soft, different consorts, call & response, ornamentation, etc.) Praetorius himself highly recommends it. He was a famous organist and his own organ (the Copenius organ in Copenhagen containing triple manual & lots of interesting stops) could easily do it. There is a very interesting recording of this organ available on YouTube.

Alan Bonds,
abonds@swiftdsl.com.au
Perth, Western Australia (2021)

Modernizing *Terpsichore* for Modern Players

Terpsichore (part of *Syntagma III*) was a massive project undertaken by Praetorius (M.P.C.) in 1612 to publish a comprehensive collection of popular French courtly music, mostly from the famous French Dancing Masters at Versailles whom M.P.C. respectfully acknowledges in the titles.

In some cases the pieces were given complete in both 4 and 5 parts (e.g. Caroubel), some just the melody line plus bass (labelled Incerti), some just the melody which M.P.C. harmonized himself. His inventive part-writing shows why he was regarded as one of the finest composers in Europe.

The article by Peter Holman on the whole project [*Terpsichore* at 400. Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of Great Britain, Vol. 7 (2013)] is essential reading.

So too is the Translation of the Preface to *Terpsichore* by Bruce R. Carvell. [Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America, Vol. 20 (1983)].

What M.P.C. was attempting is very similar to the work of modern musicologists transcribing folk-music - i.e. to faithfully reproduce the pieces as they were given him, not editing or arranging them. The later accepted conventions of meter & mode were not yet established but being rapidly developed in late 16th C. Italy.

They were presented as part-books not scores.[see IMSLP369232-PMLP176492]

The work by the editors of the complete *Syntagma III* in the 1930's by the Möseler Verlag Wolfenbűttel in the same spirit as M.P.C. himself is remarkable - faithfully transcribing the part-books into score form without attempting to edit or 'correct' anything. [see IMSLP342801-PMLP176492]

As a result the modern musician confronts a bewildering array of anomalies and inconsistencies:

- time signatures - e.g. the Courantes are notated variously as 6/4, 3/2, 3/1, etc;
- clefs - give a clue to which instruments preferred. e.g. the tenor/alto part is in either treble and alto clef;
- key signatures - are modal not tonal;
- accidentals - literally given to every note (not within the bar), no cautionary corrections next bar;
- slurs and ties - very inconsistent both within and between pieces

In 'modernizing' the score I have:

- transcribed time signatures to more familiar modern equivalents;
- attempted to spell out the hemiolas using beaming or altered barlines;
- not altered key signatures, but regularized repeated accidentals and added cautionary accidentals;
- chosen alto clef for the alto/tenor part, but parts in treble and tenor clefs will be available;
- slurs & ties are standard - but suggested added slurs & ties are dotted;
- labelled the parts simply as S,A,A,T,B - not instr. names;
- written out all repeats & Da Capos in full to avoid confusion and train-wrecks;
- provided a transposed version for strings when playing with B♭ instruments (who don't like sharps);
    - this is not really satisfactory for the C instr's, but the only workable solution
    - better for C instruments (alone) to play in the original key, likewise B♭ instr's (alone).

Parts are available on request.

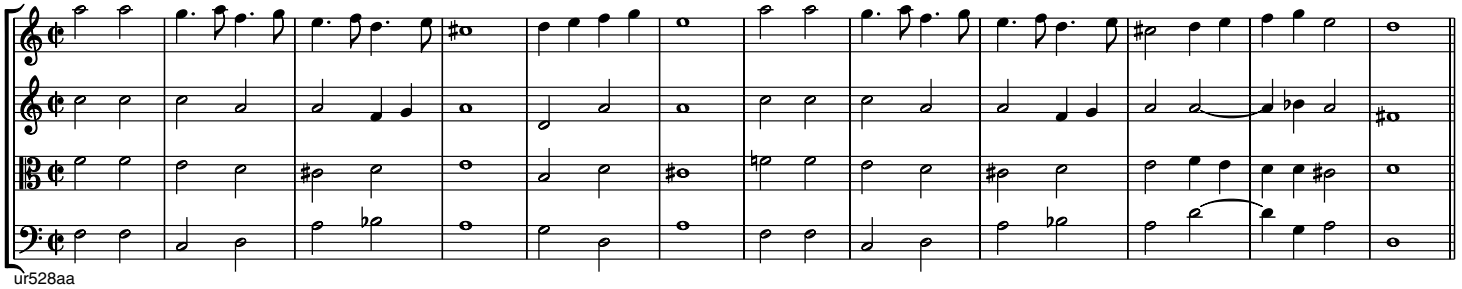
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BRANSLE de la Grenee

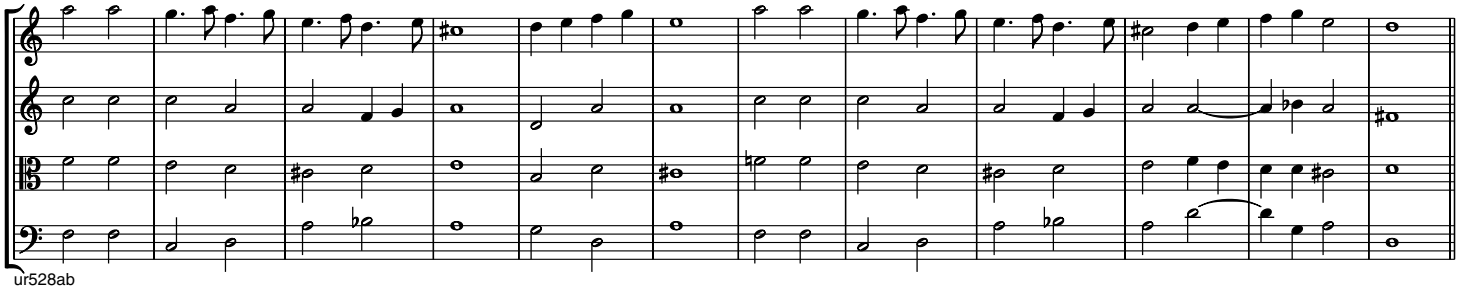
M.P.C.

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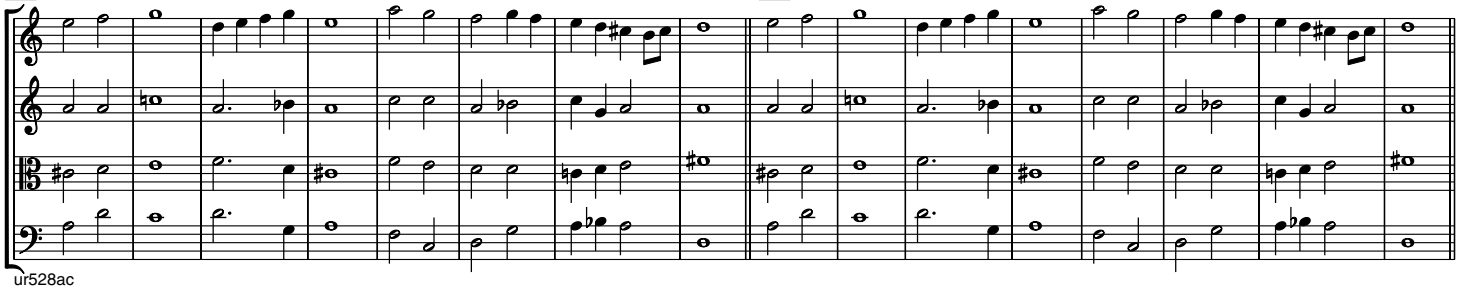
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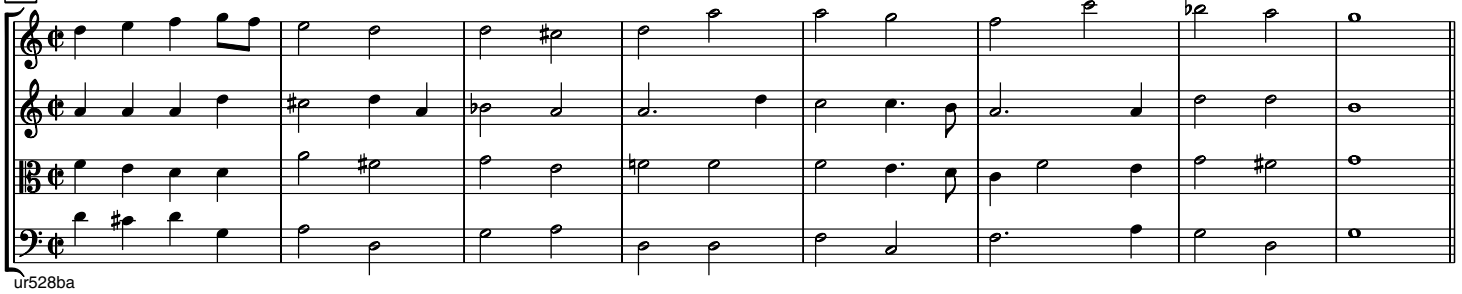
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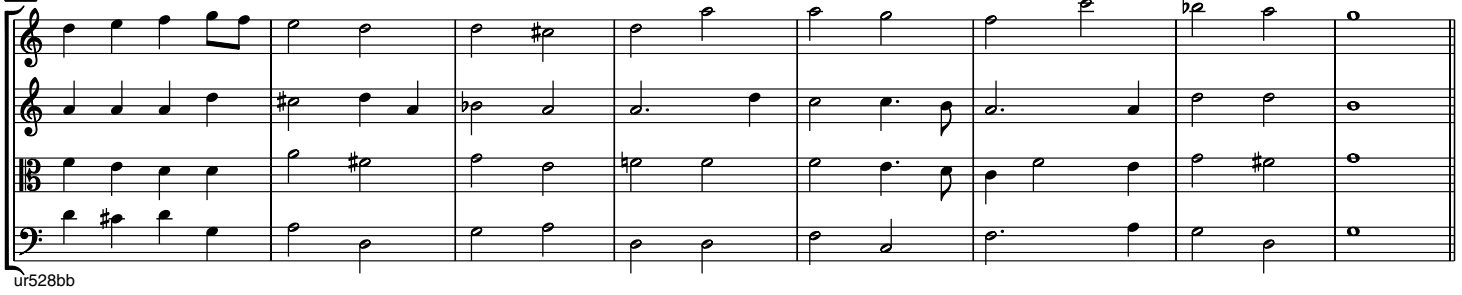
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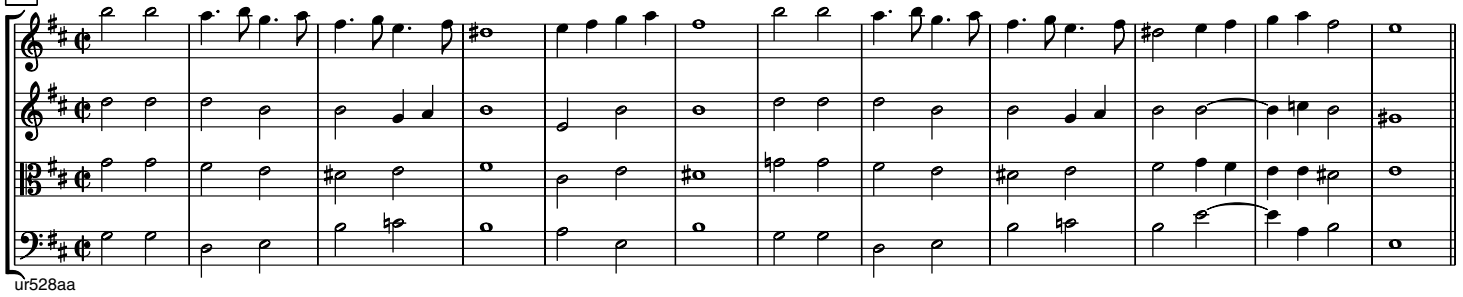
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BRANSLE de la Grenee

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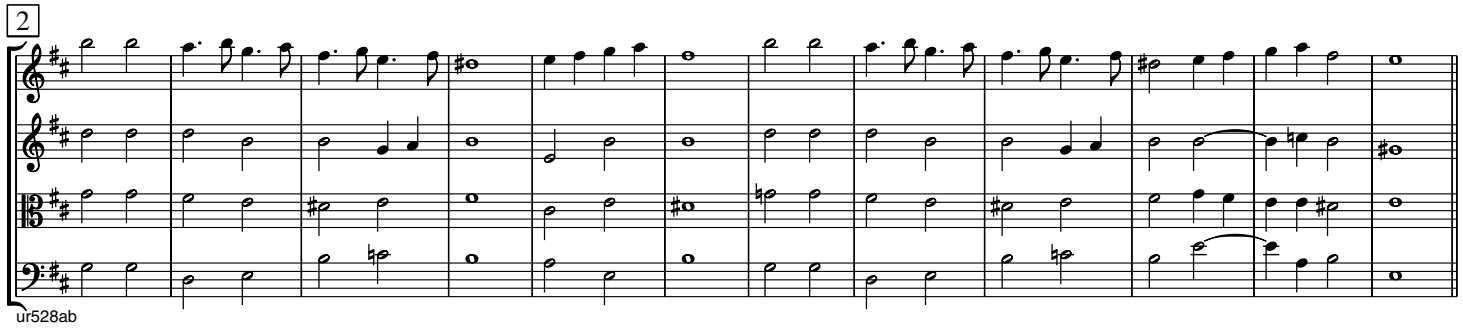
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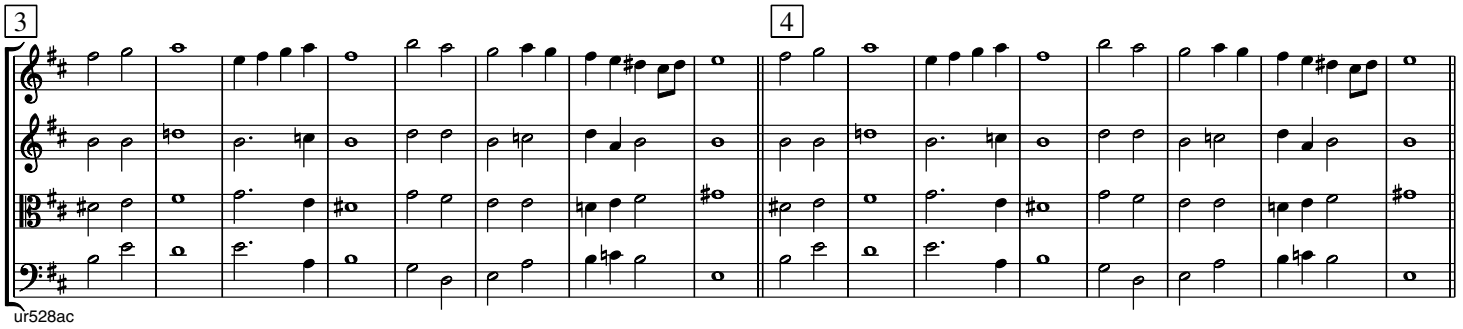
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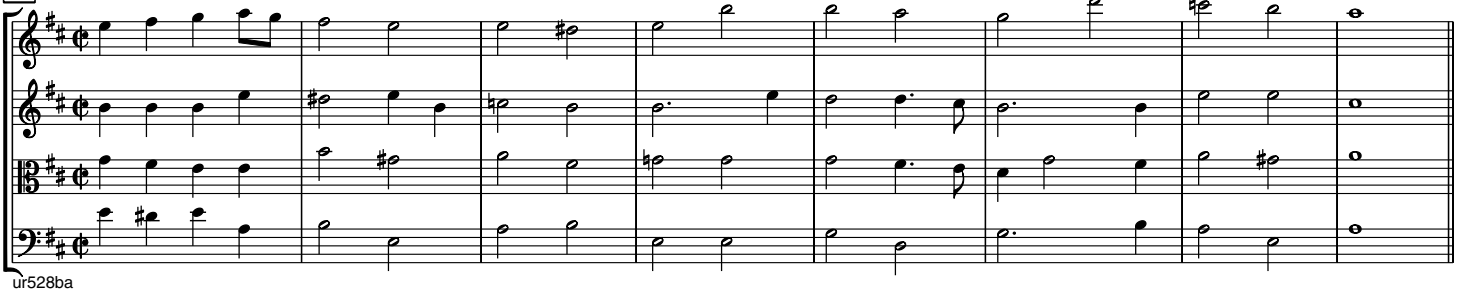
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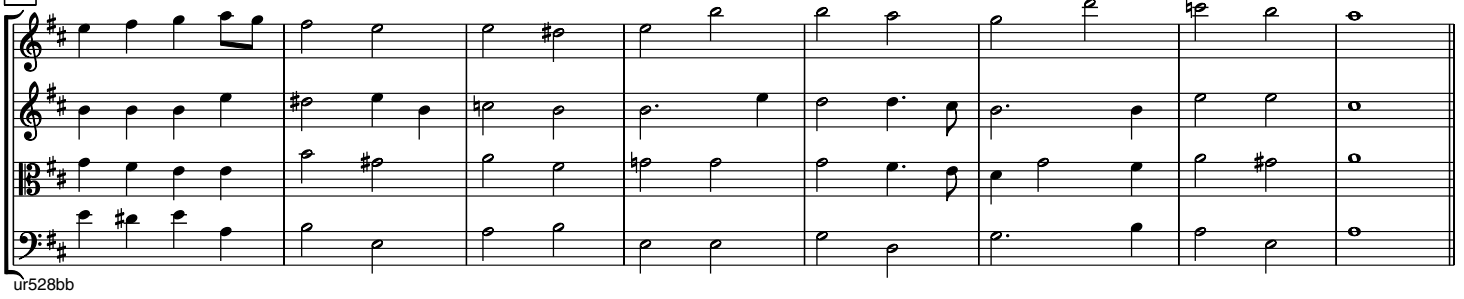
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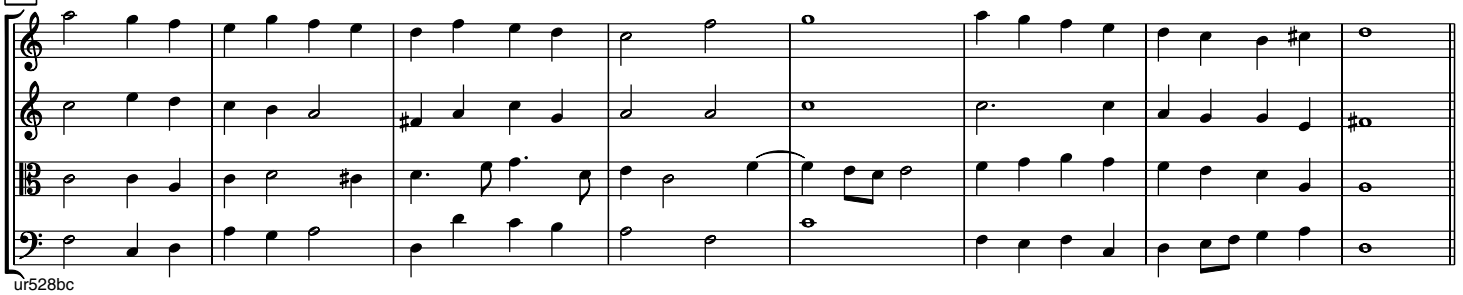
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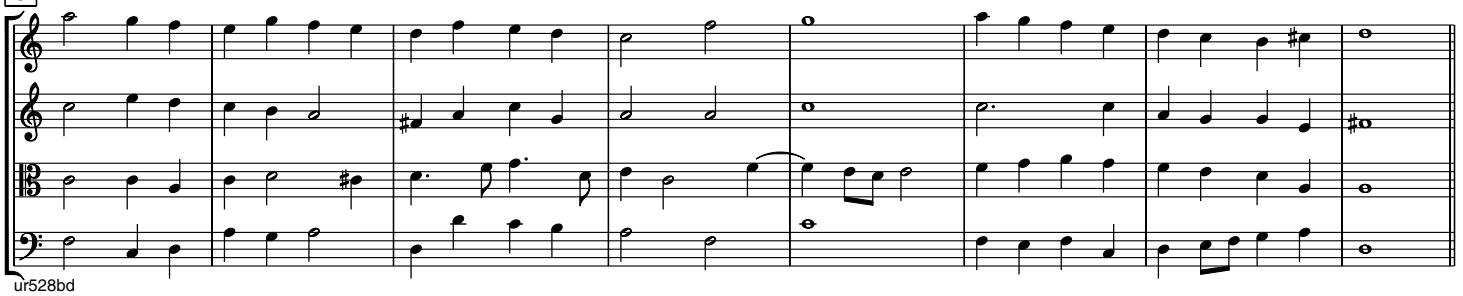
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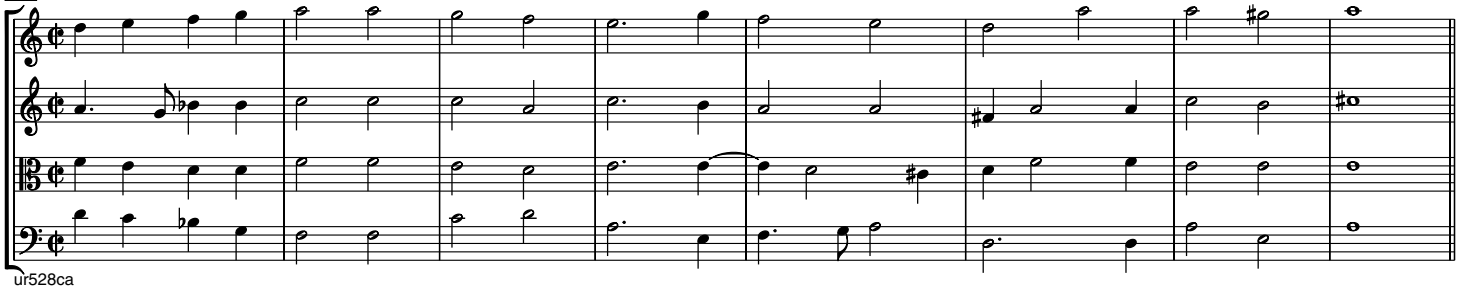
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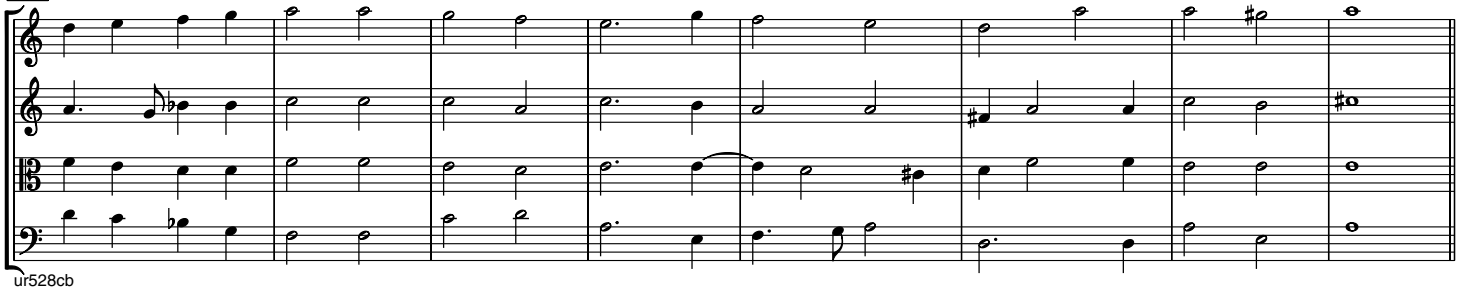
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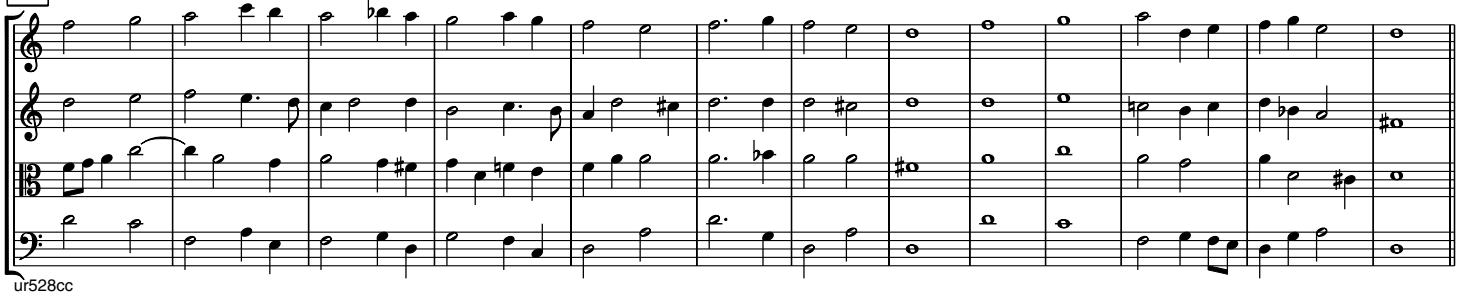
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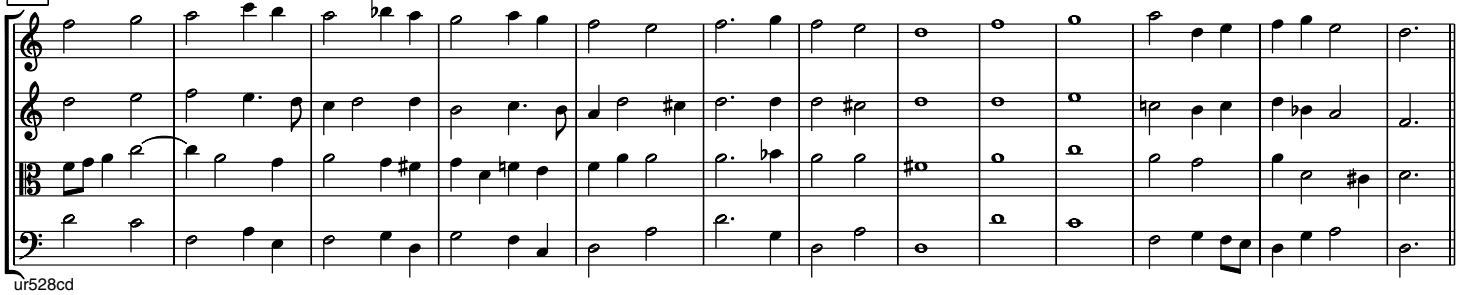
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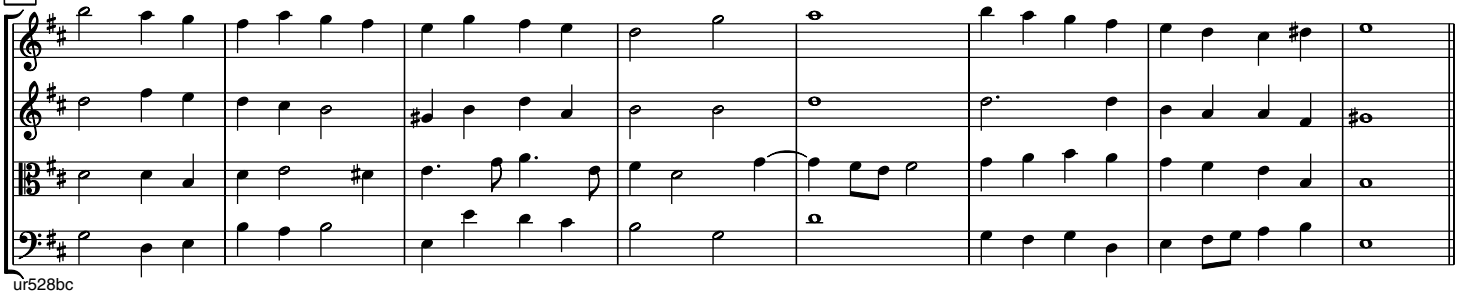
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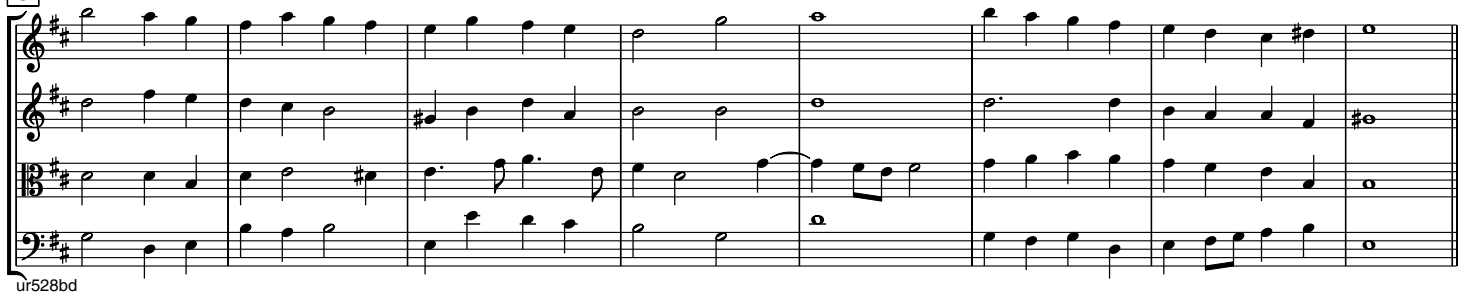
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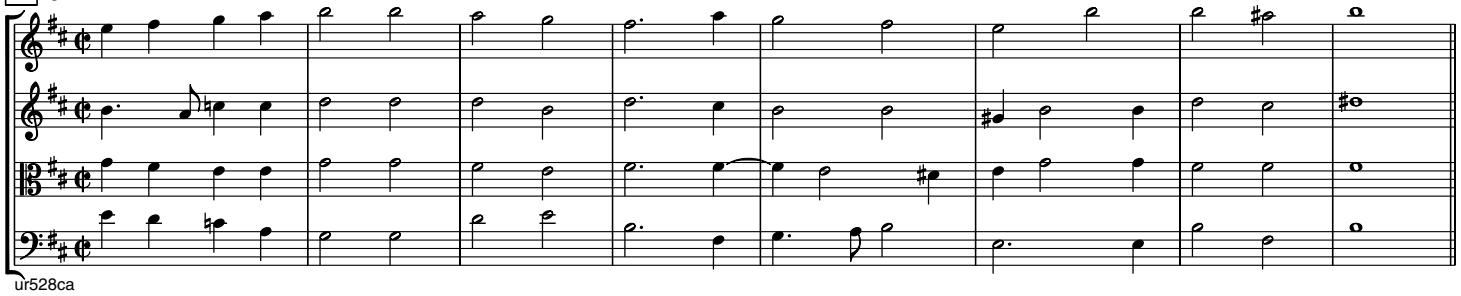
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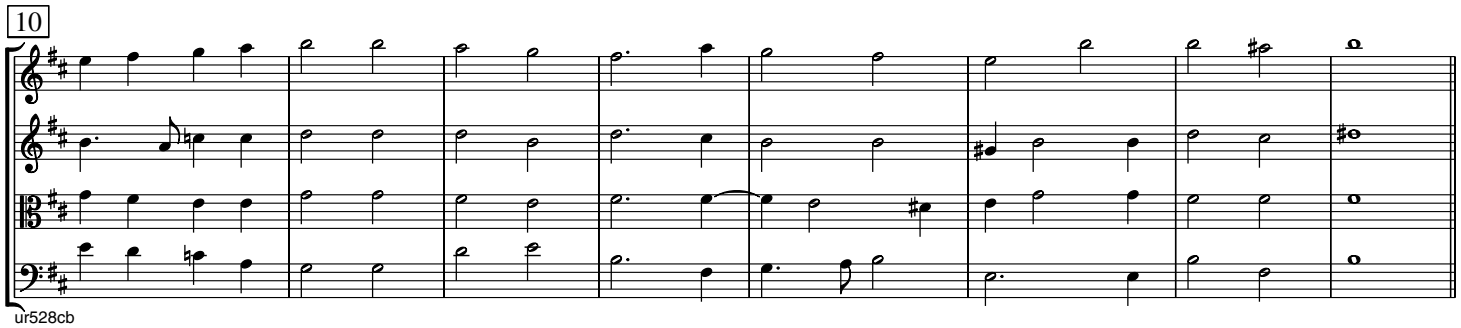
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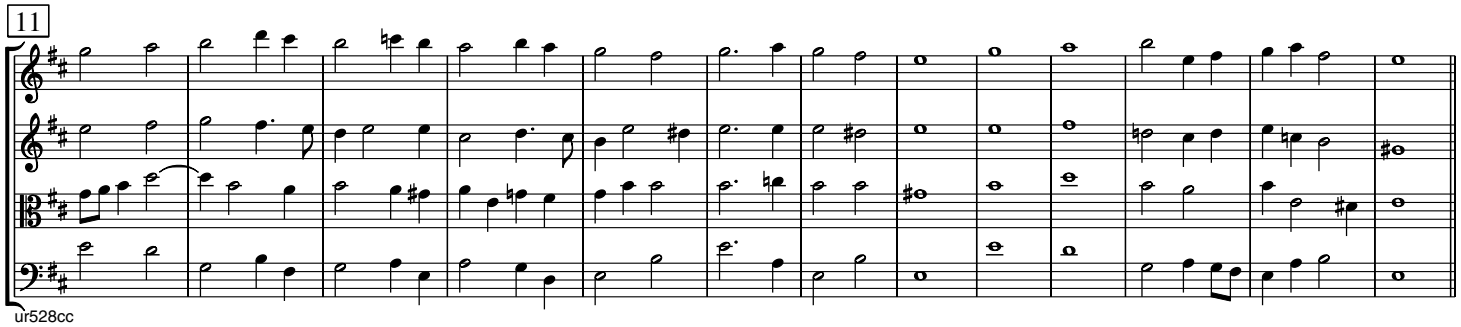
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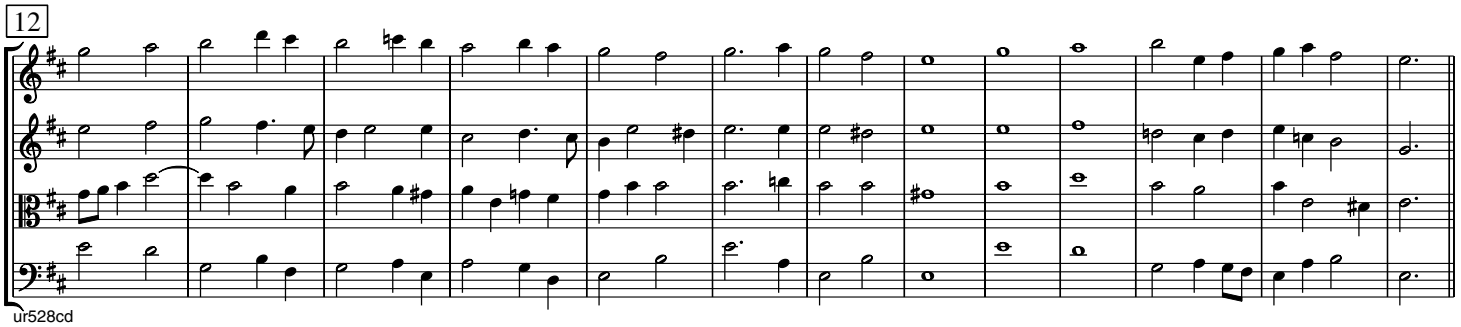
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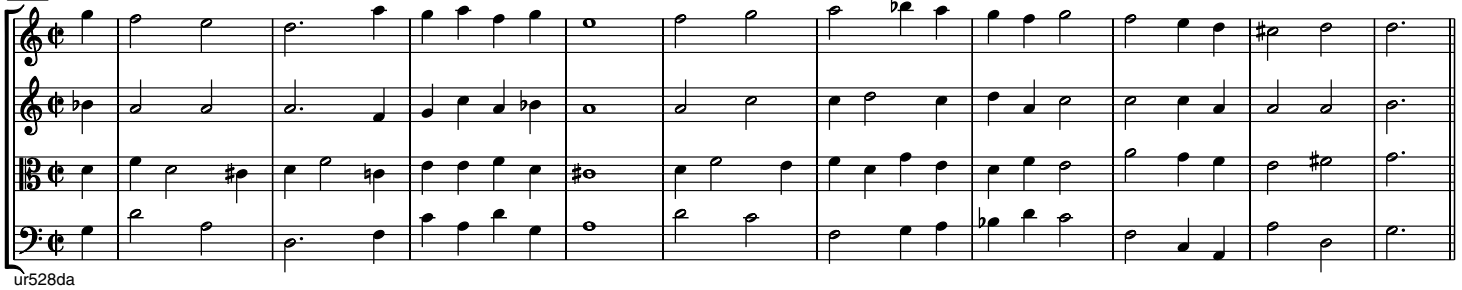
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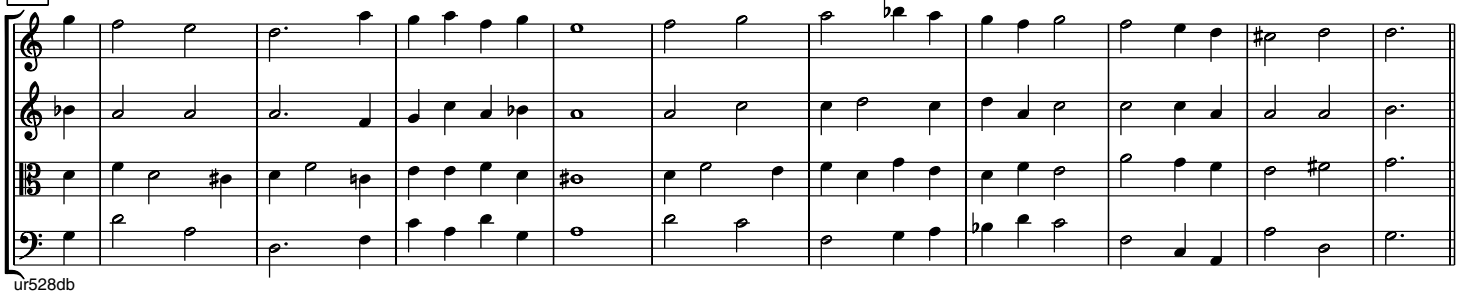
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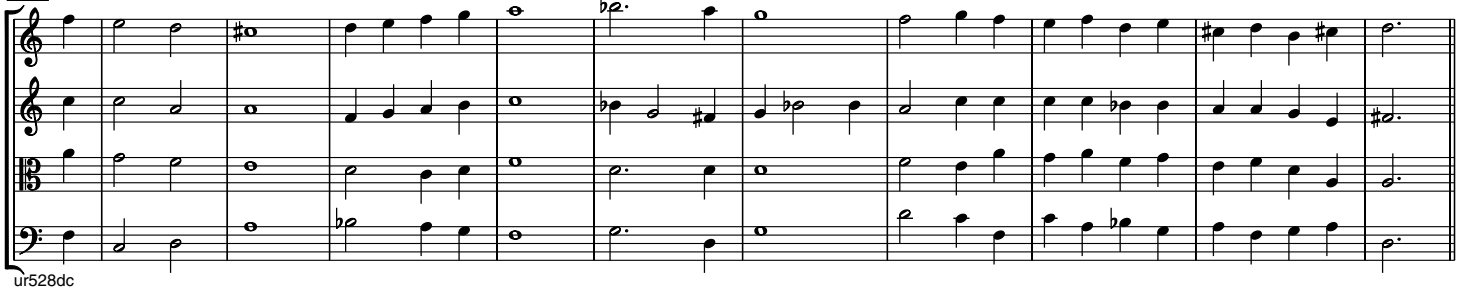
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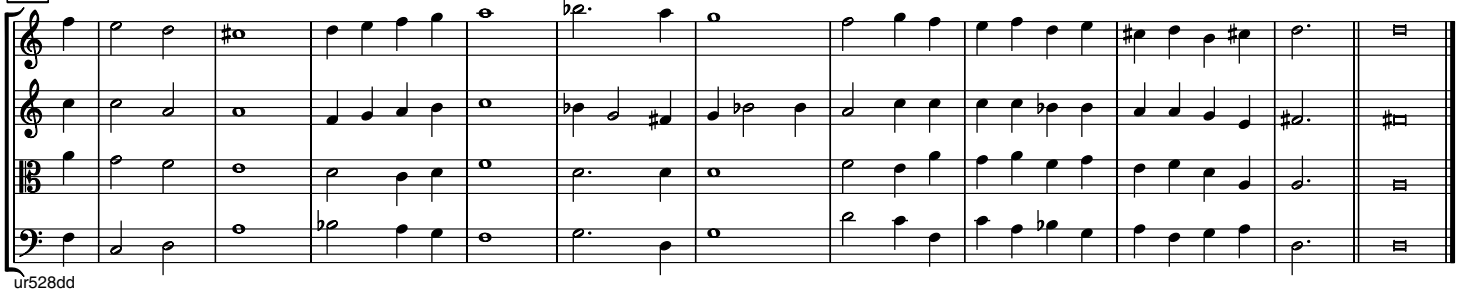
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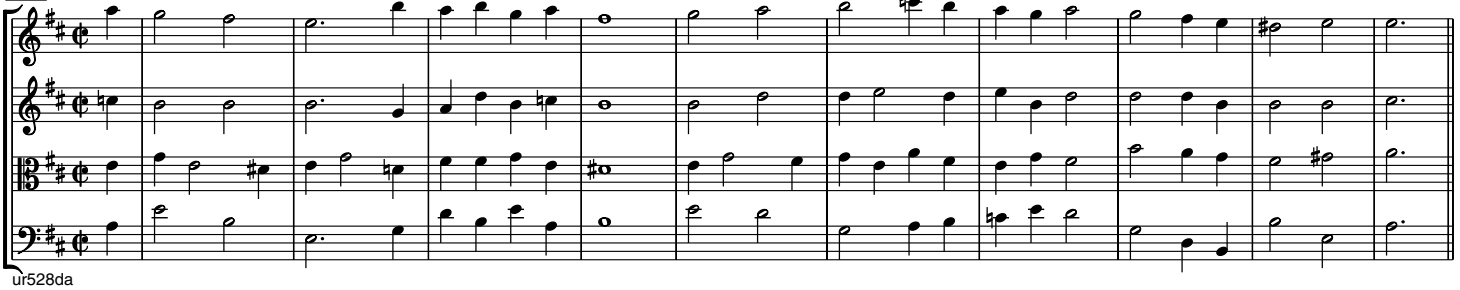
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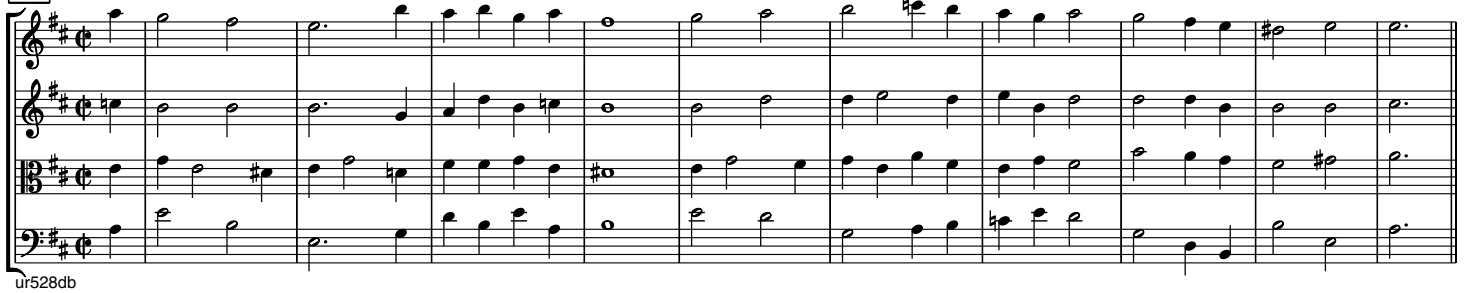
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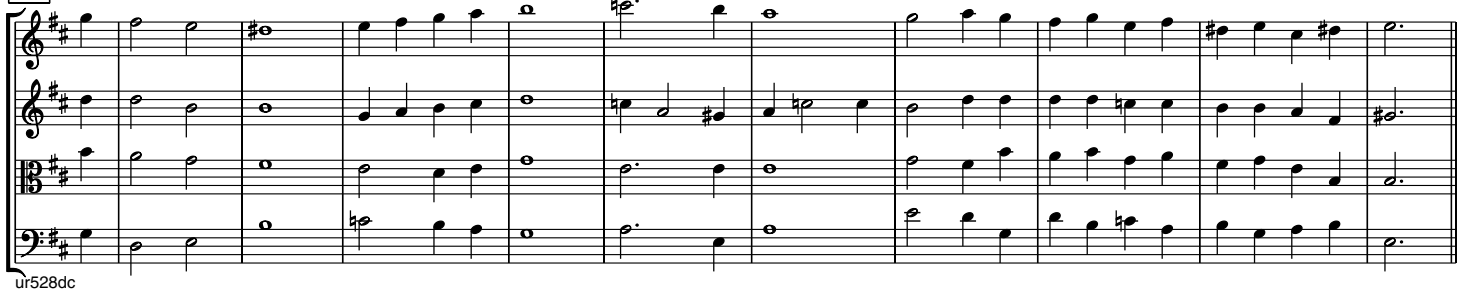
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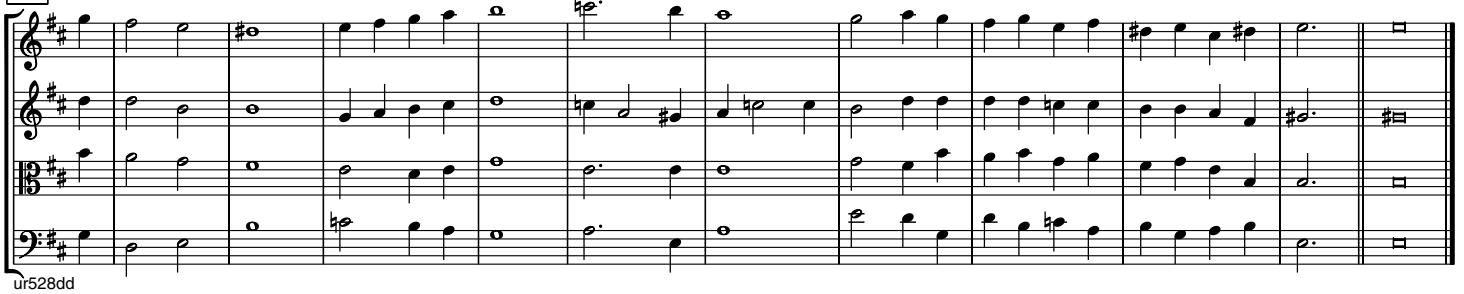
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