Choralvorspiele

Johannes Brahms

Opus 122, for Organ, 1896

with earlier settings by Isaac, Bach and Praetorius

Arranged by Peter Billam for Recorders

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Three Chorale Preludes by Johannes Brahms

and earlier settings by Isaac, Bach and Praetorius

The three chorale preludes come from Johannes Brahms' last work, *Eleven Chorale Preludes for Organ*, Op. 122, composed in 1896. In a chorale prelude, the composer takes a known hymn tune and weaves several contrapuntal voices around it. The audience would be expected to recognise the hymn tune on which it is based, and to know the text that it referred to; this edition therefore includes settings of the tunes to which the preludes refer.

The Lutheran approach to popular songs was more sophisticated than that of the Calvinists; instead of forbidding them outright, they wrote religious words to fit the tunes, and forbade the singing of the old words. Thus the earlier song *Innsbruck, ich muß dich lassen* (Innsbruck, I must leave you) by Heinrich Isaac became the hymn *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen* (O world, I must leave you) with new words by Johannes Hesse. In this form, it was harmonised ten seperate times by J. S. Bach; the version offered here has three descant voices.

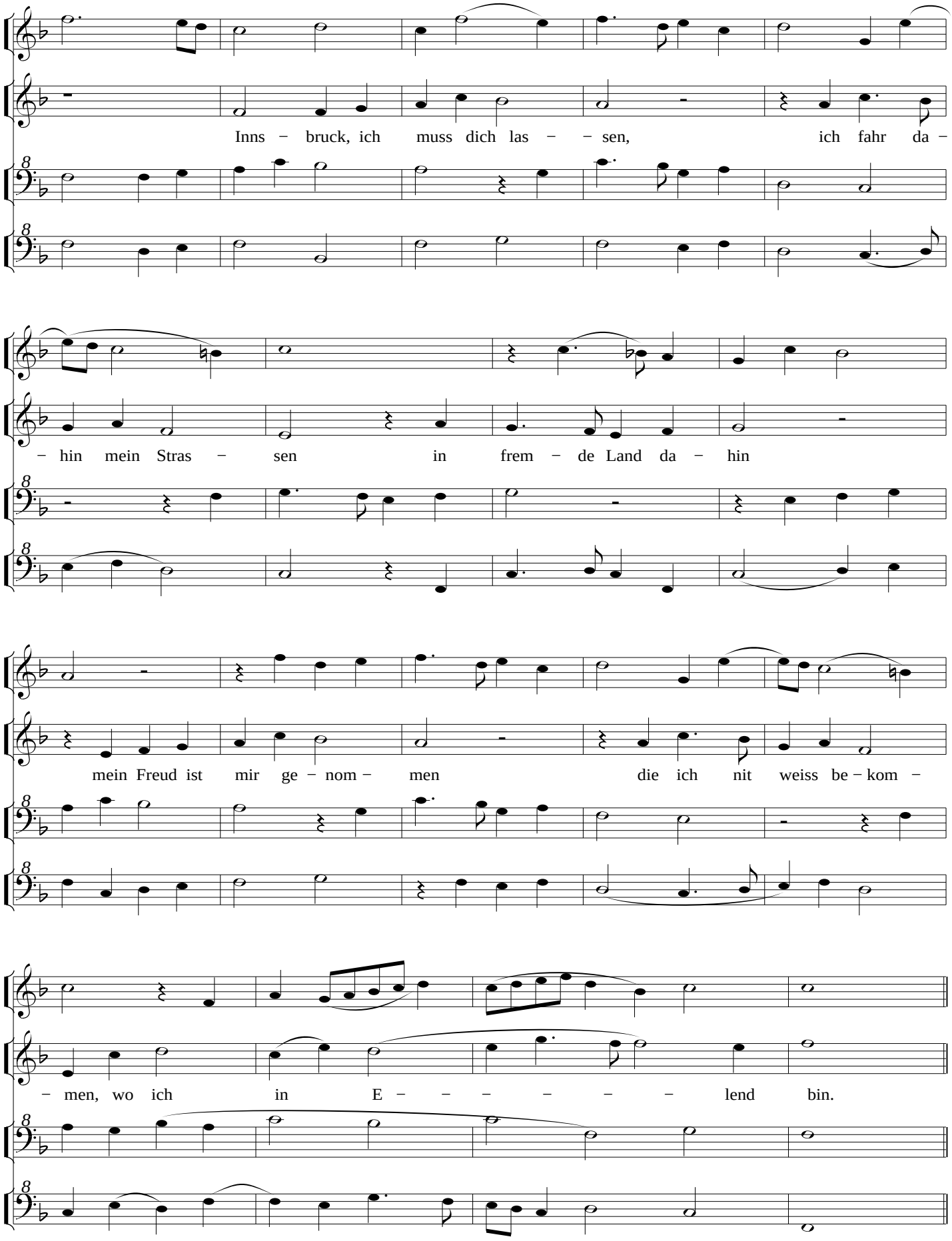
O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen was written as a hymn by Johann Crüger in 1649 to words by Simon Dach; again, this harmonisation is by Bach. The text and melody of the carol *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen* are from the sixteenth century; this famous setting is by Michael Praetorius.

Brahms' *Eleven Chorale Preludes Op 122*, the culmination of his lifetime study of early music, were his farewell to his craft and art. They were written at Ischl, his country retreat, shortly after the death of Clara Schumann, and shortly before his own death of liver cancer. Six of them were transcribed for piano by Busoni in 1902. Number 3, *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen*, spacious and serene, is reminiscent of the last movement of the *Deutsches Requiem*. Number 6, *O wie selig seid ihr doch*, which also refers to *Selig sind die Toten* in the *Requiem*, is an paradisial unbroken pastoral 12/8. The appeal of the tender number 8, *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen*, is more harmonic.

These pieces let us marvel at the depth and the unity of this unbroken tradition which spans already from Isaac through Bach and Brahms to Busoni, almost five hundred years.

Peter J Billam

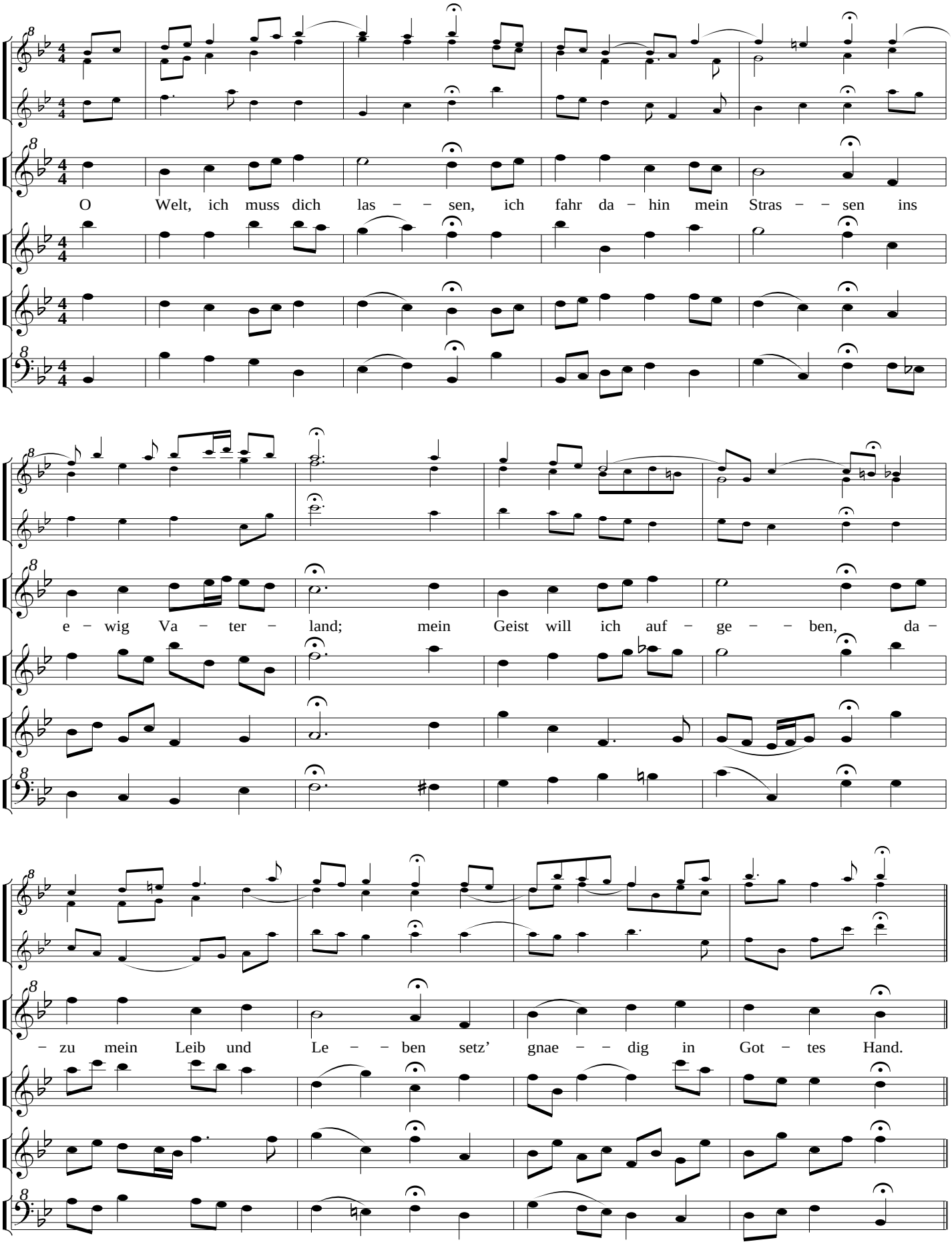
Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen



Text: Johannes Hesse

Harmonisation: J. S. Bach, BWV 97

O Welt, ich muss dich lassen



Transcribed for sSA−SATB recorders: Peter Billam, June 1998

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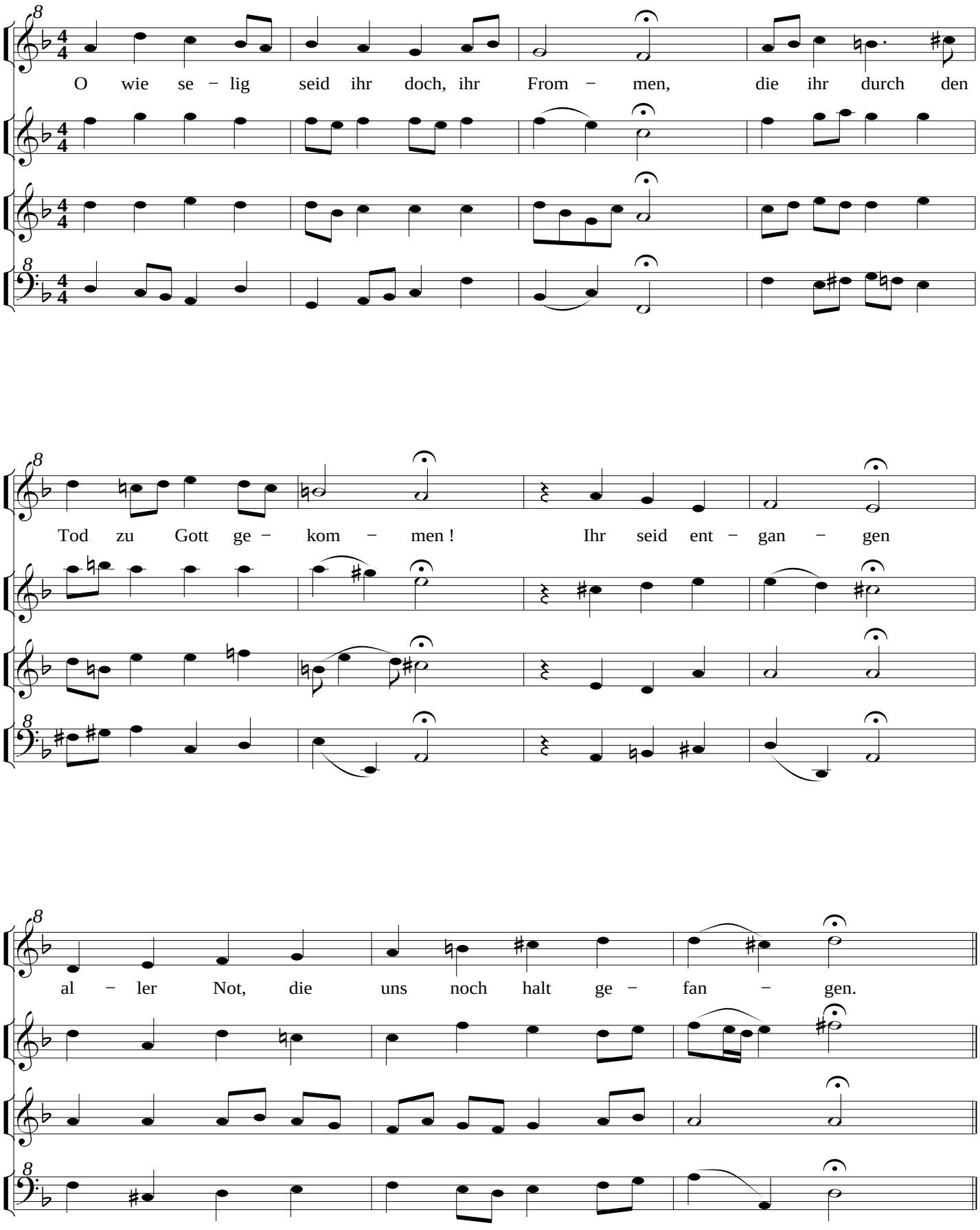
Harmonisation: J. S. Bach, BWV 405

Melody: Johann Crüger, 1649

O wie selig seid ihr doch



Text Simon Dach; Transcribed for SATB recorders, Peter Billam, 1998

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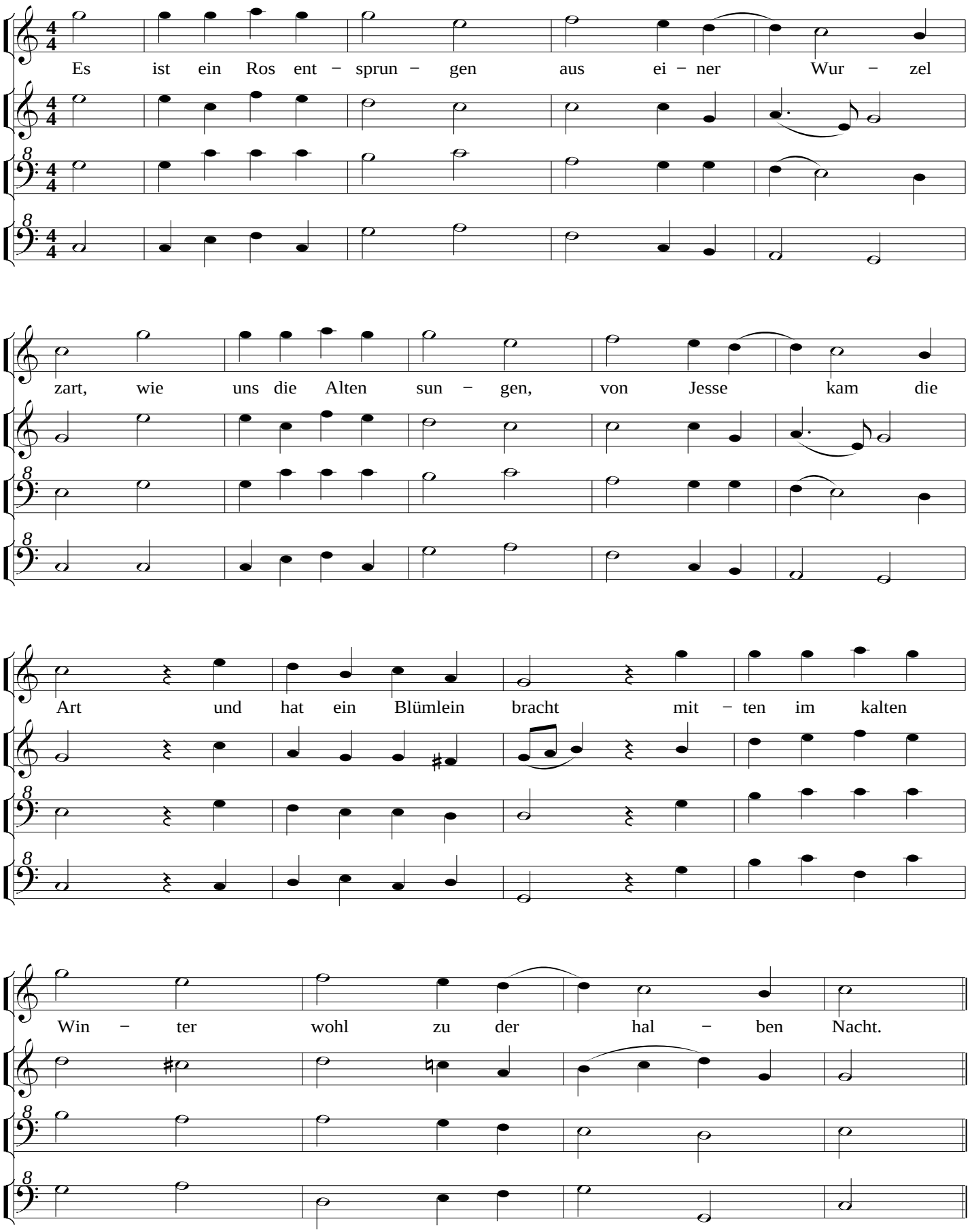
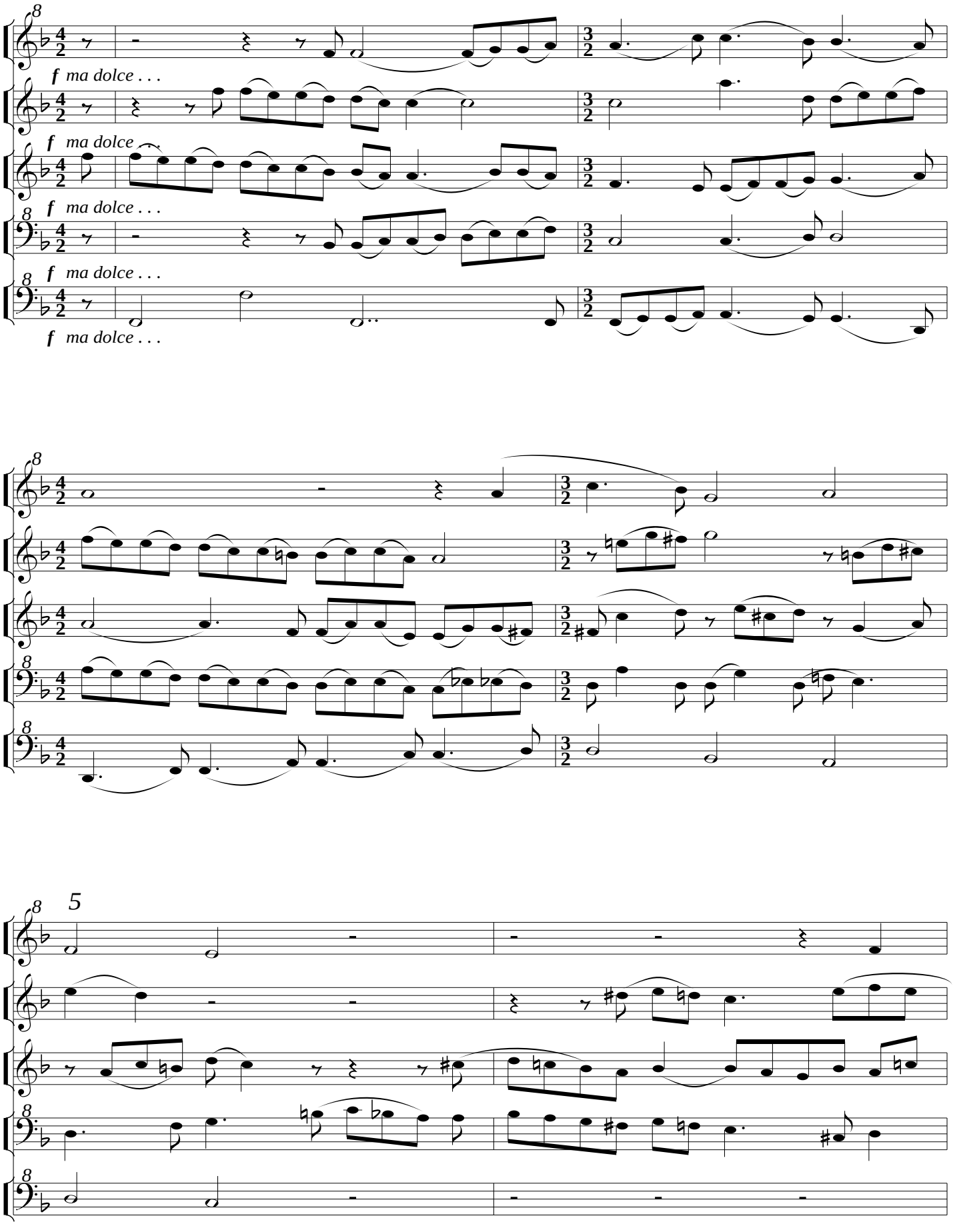
Michael Praetorius (1571 − 1621)

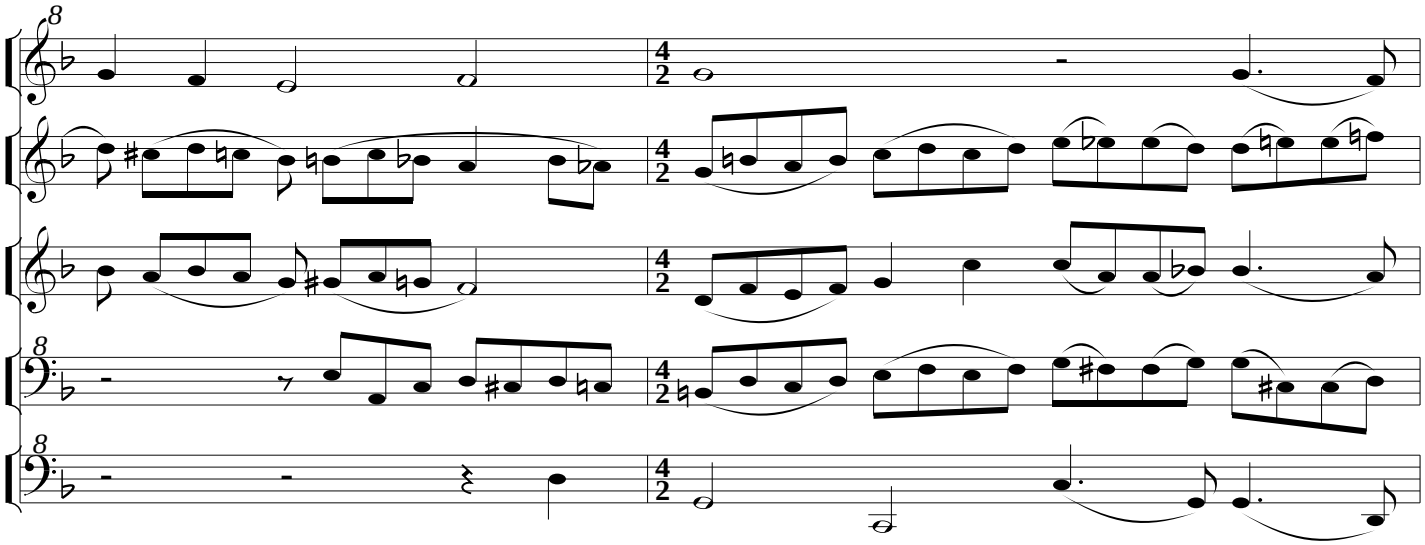
Arranged for ATBB recorders

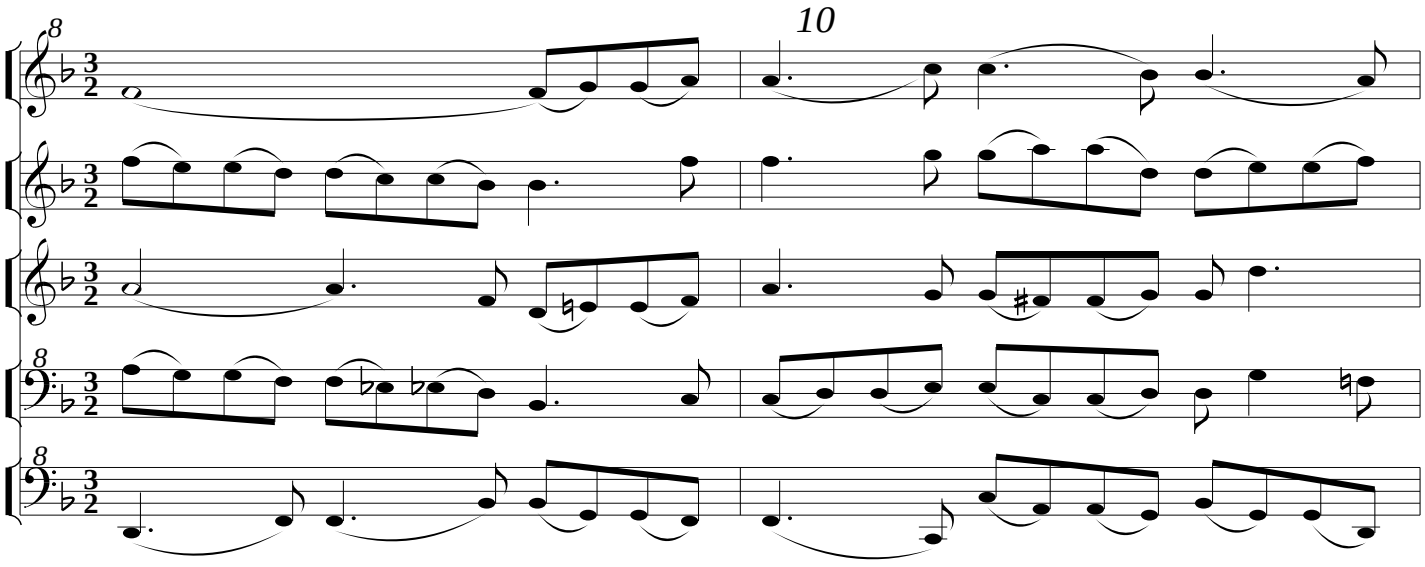
Es ist ein Ros entsprungen



Nr. 3 O Welt, ich muss dich lassen



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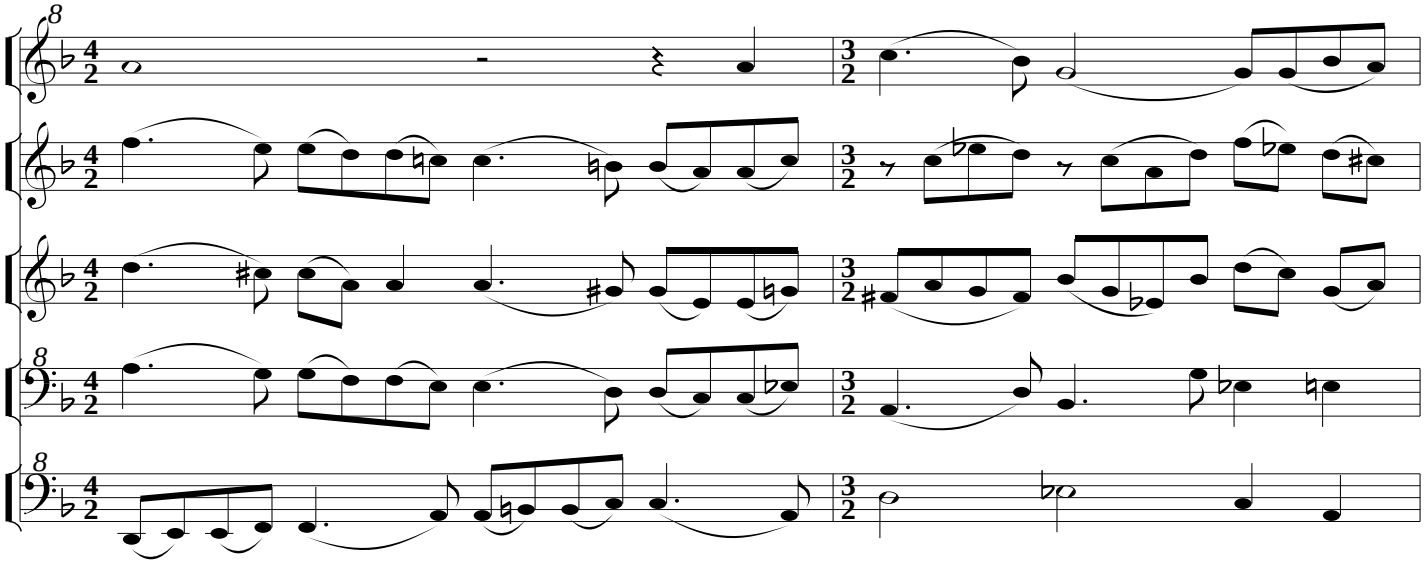

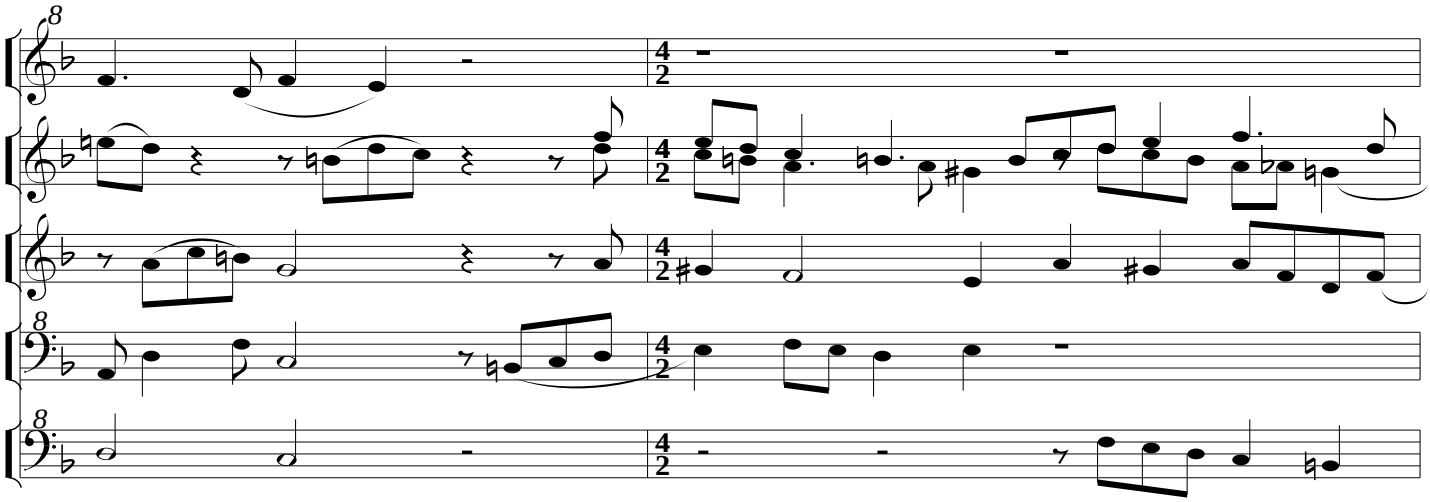

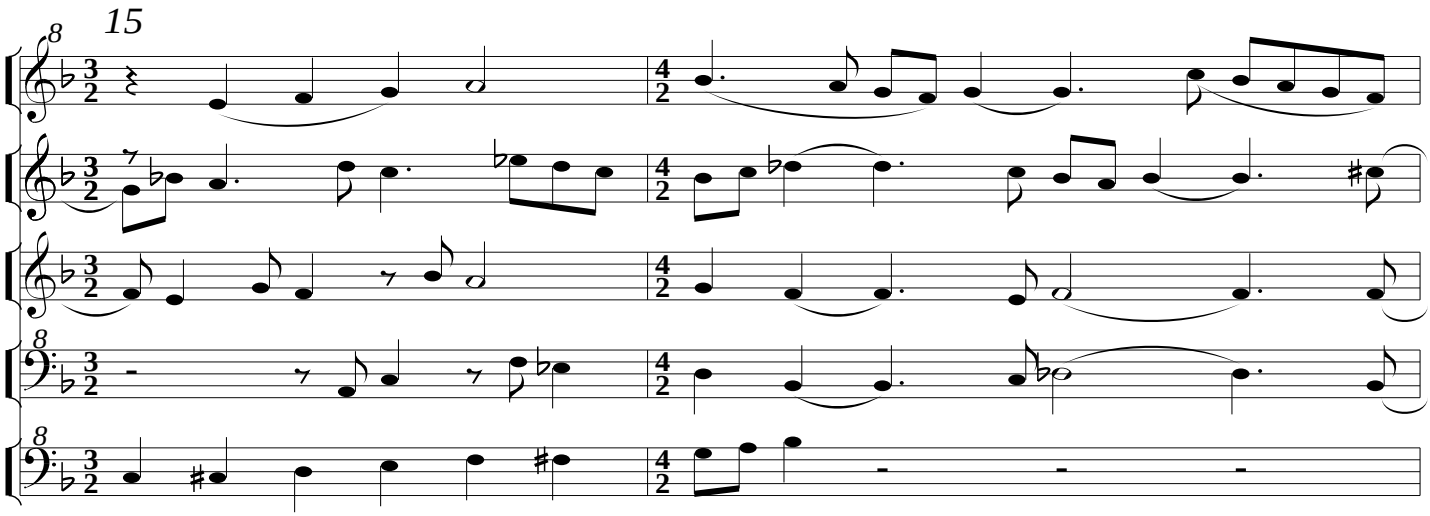
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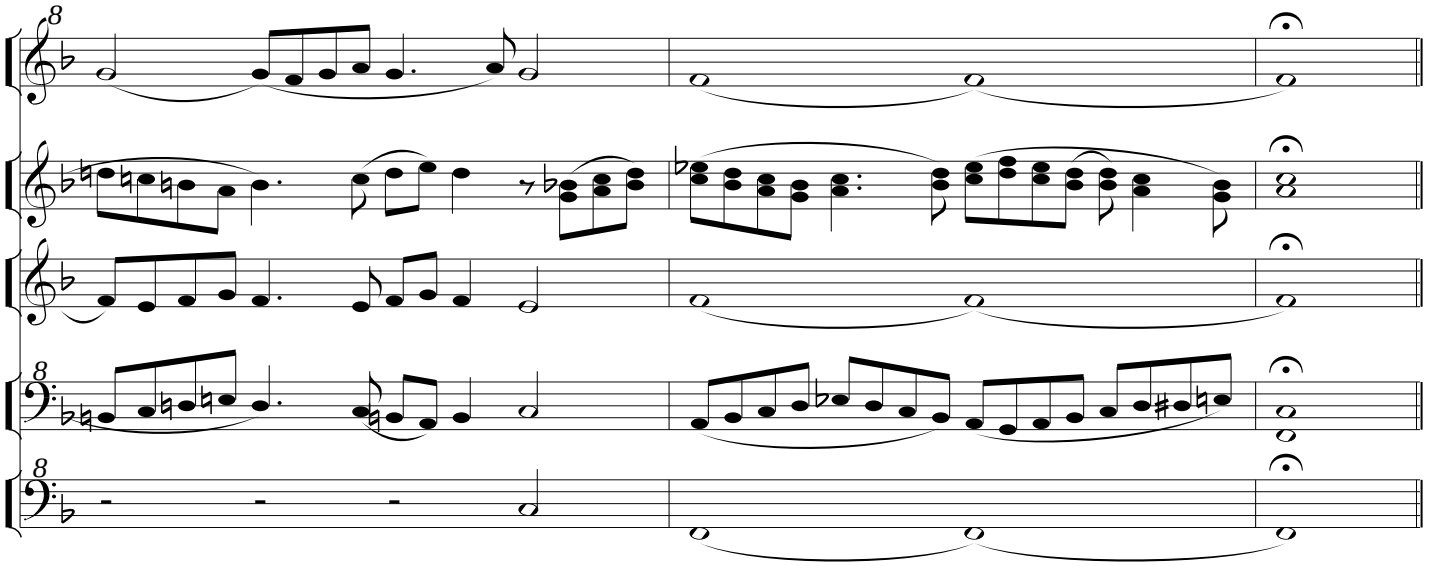
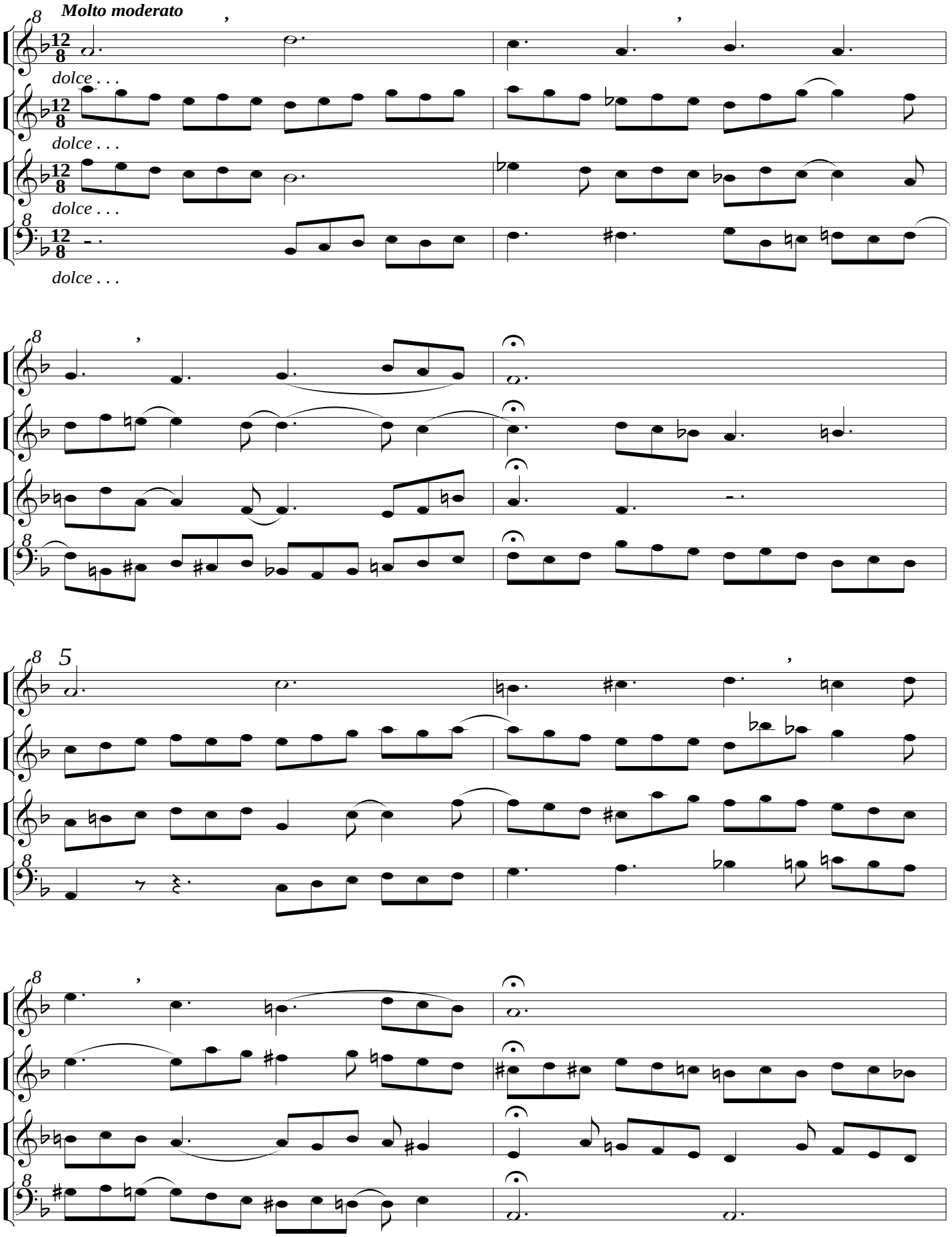
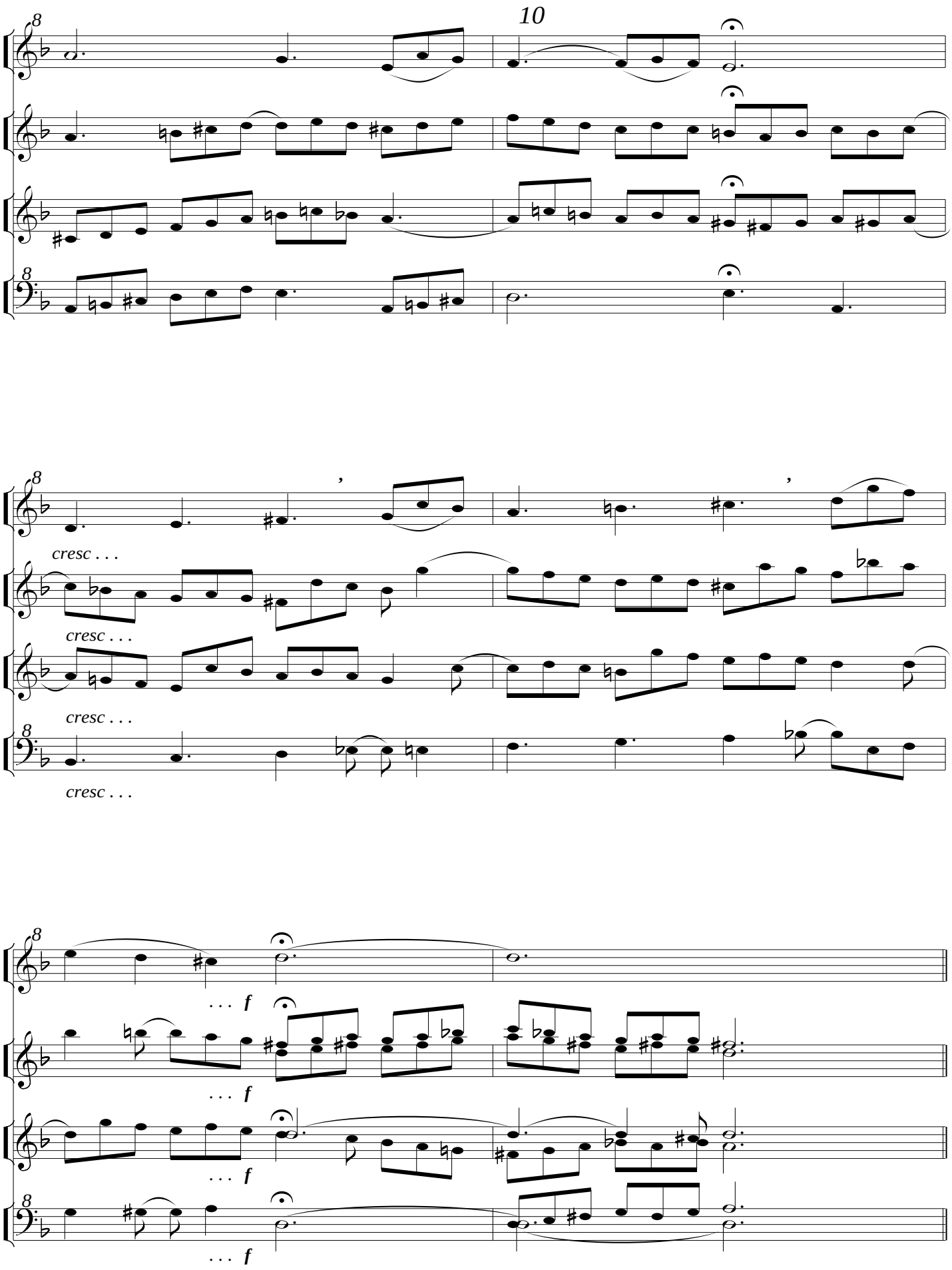


Nr. 6 O wie selig seid ihr doch





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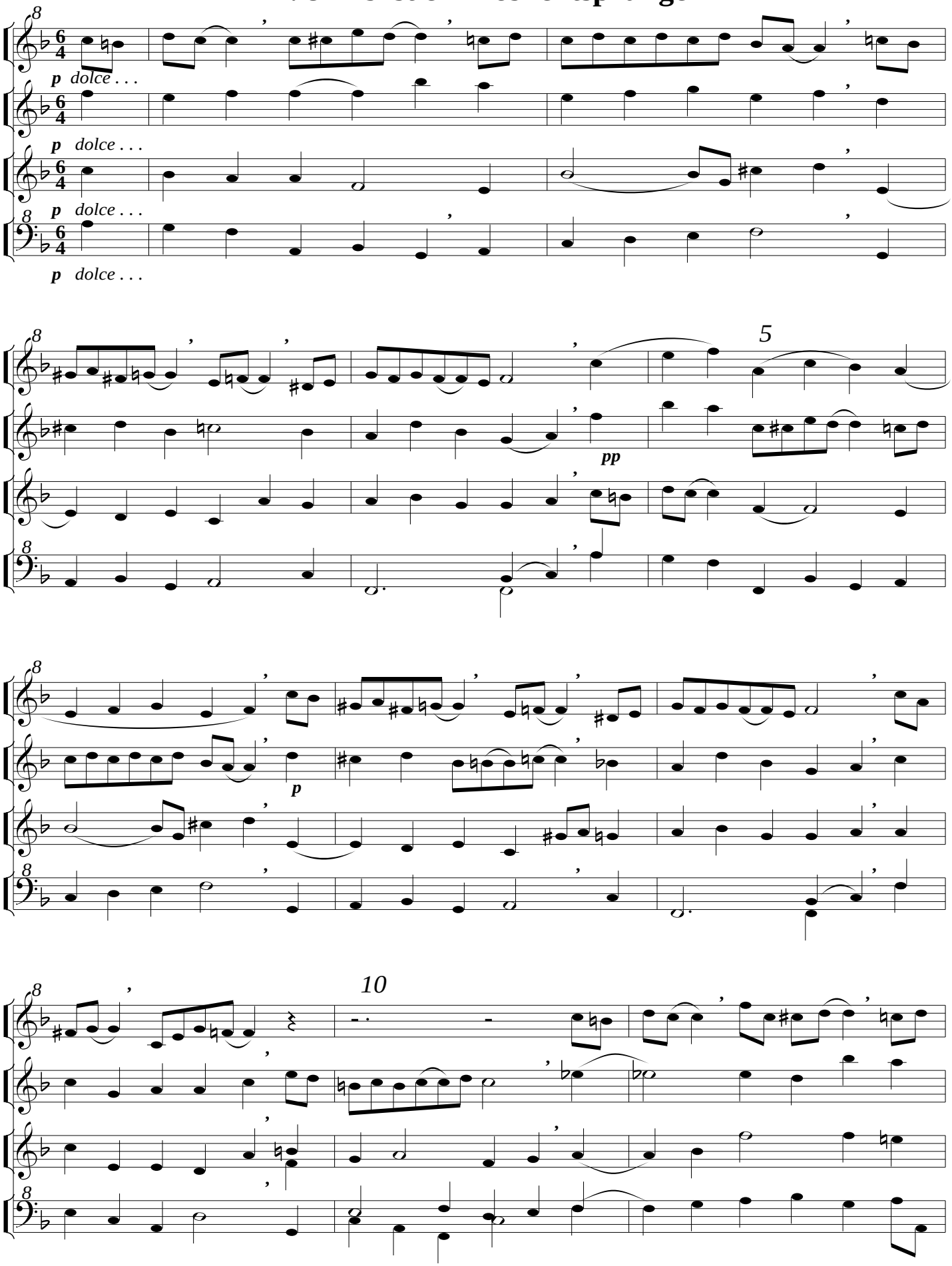
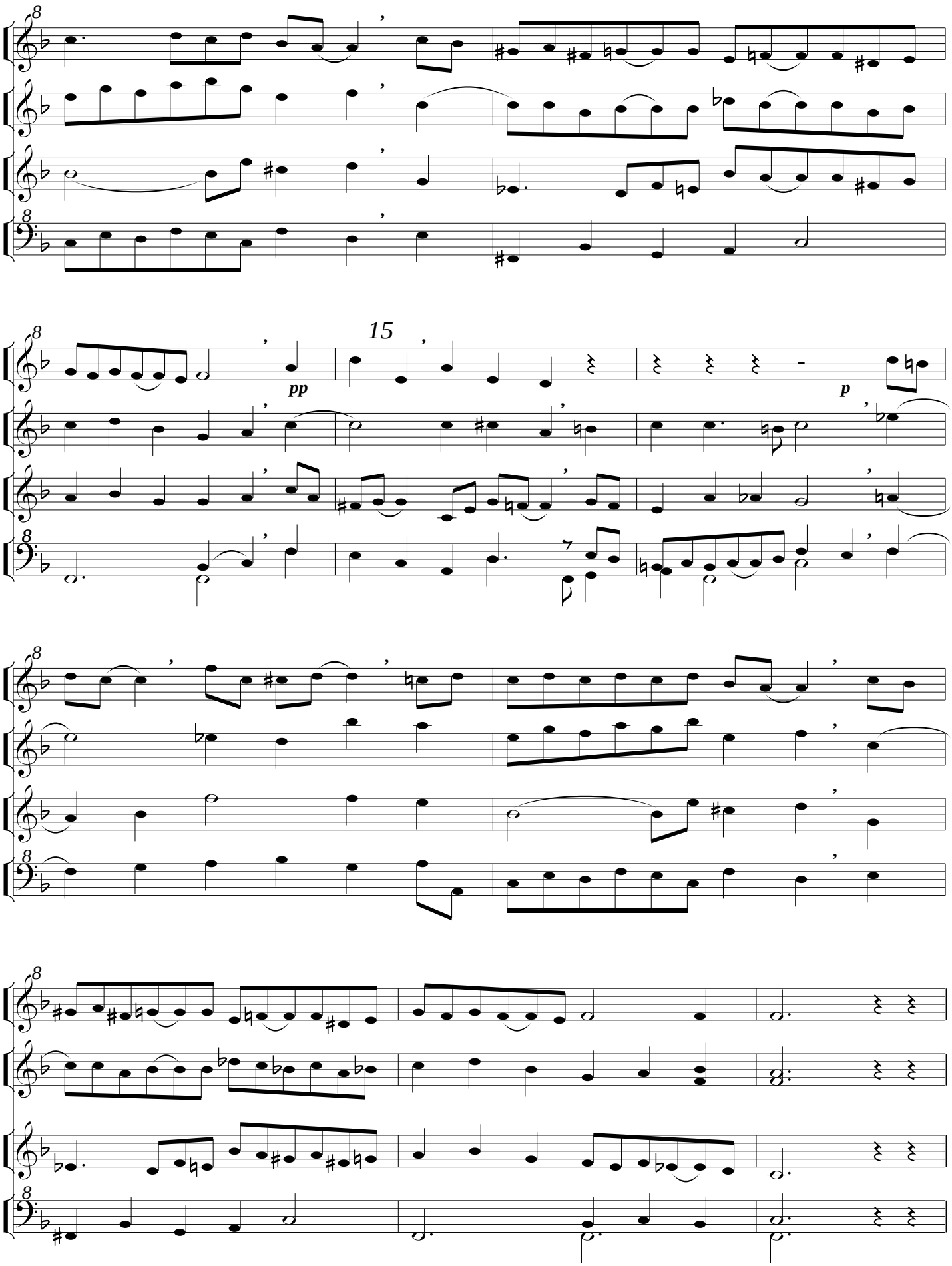
Nr. 8 Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

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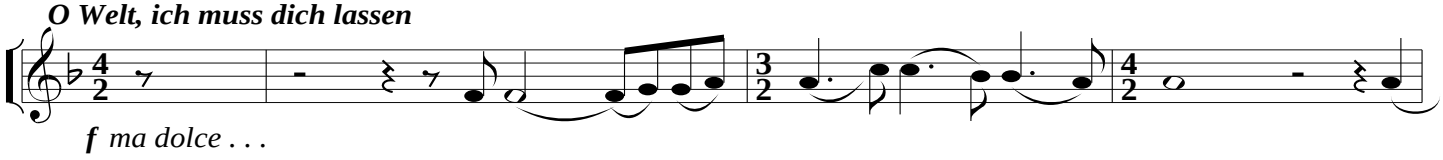
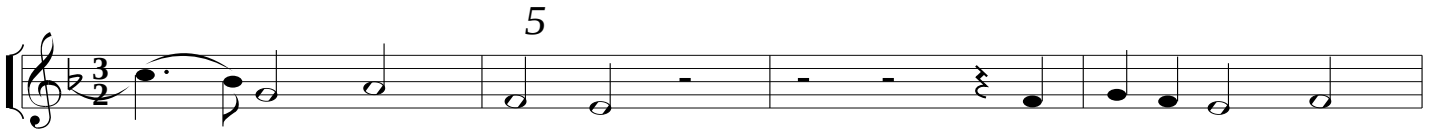
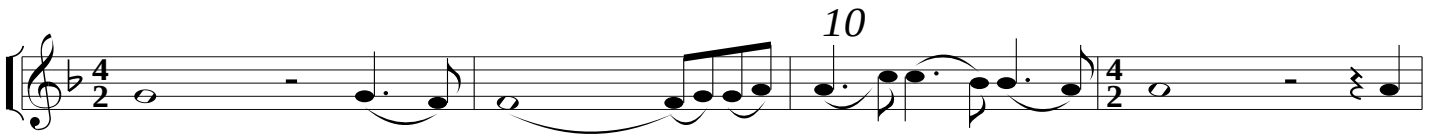
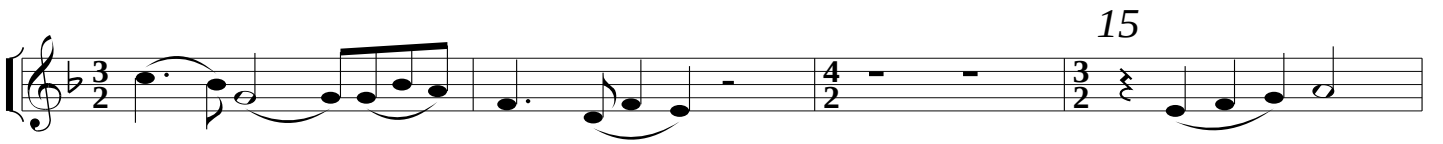
Soprano Recorder

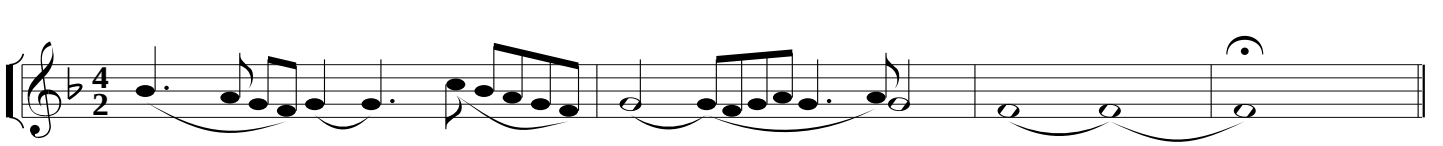
O Welt, ich muss dich lassen



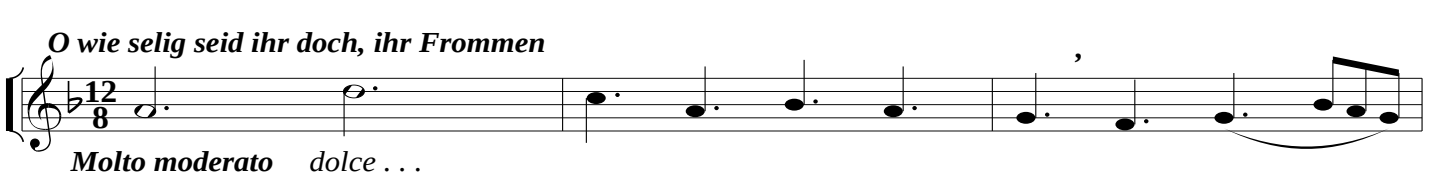


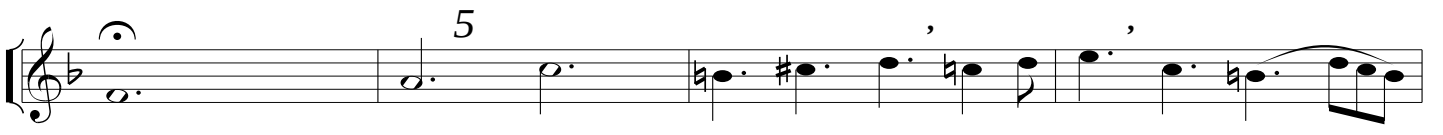


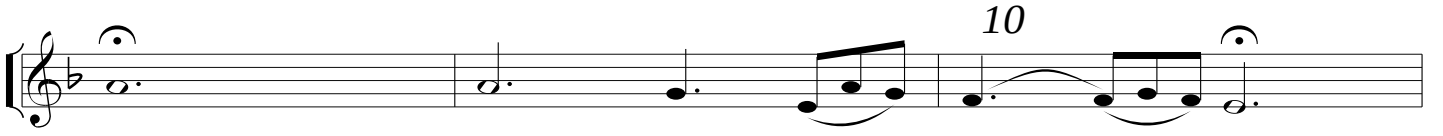


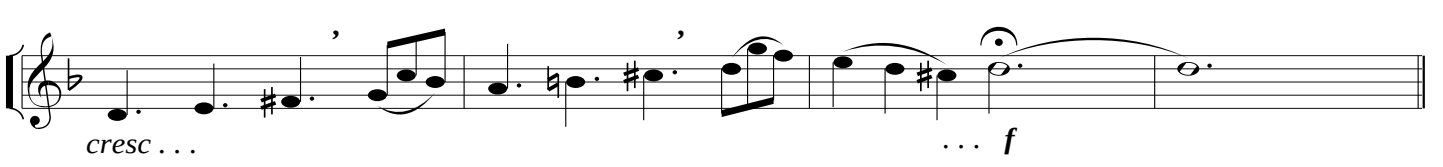


O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen









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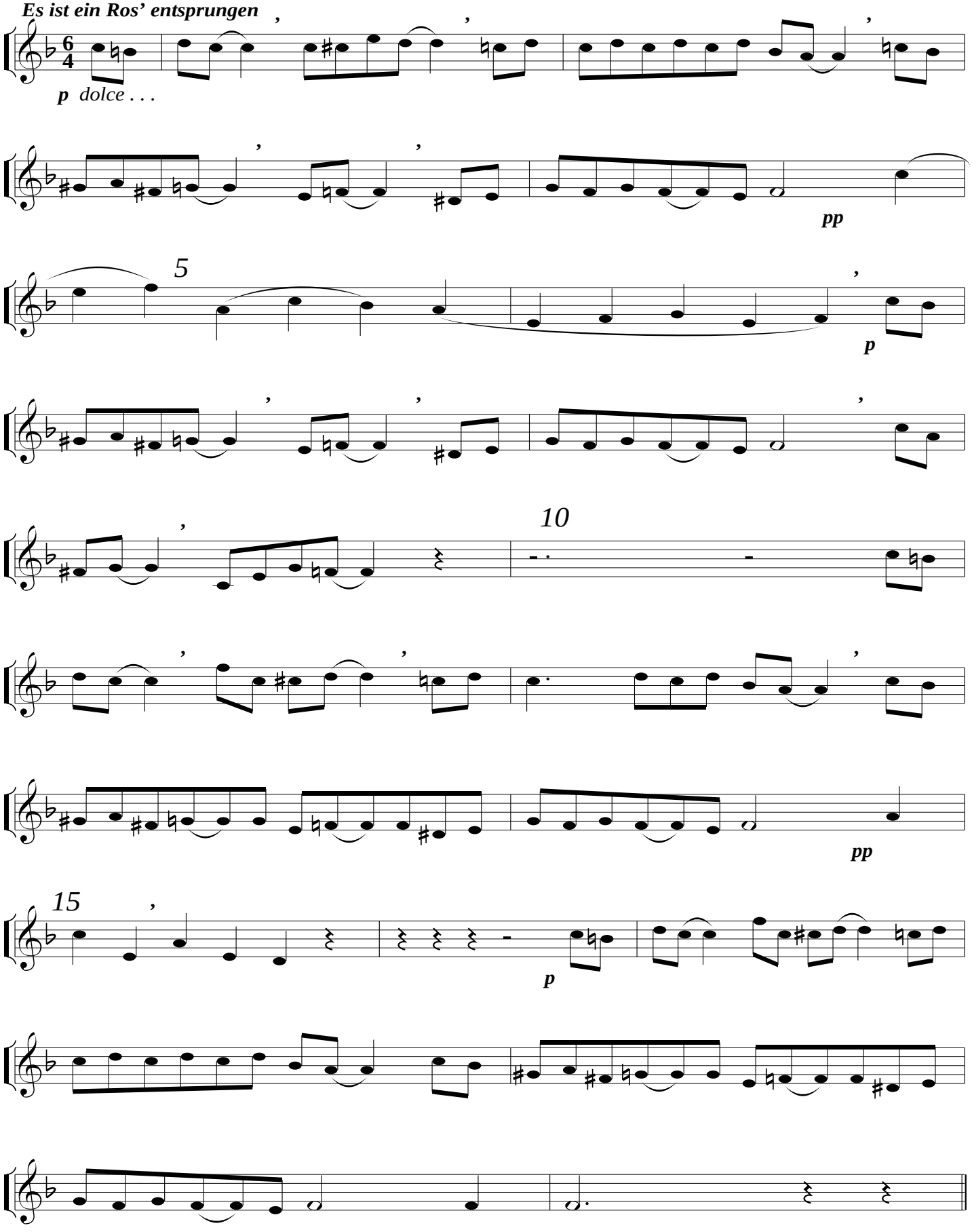
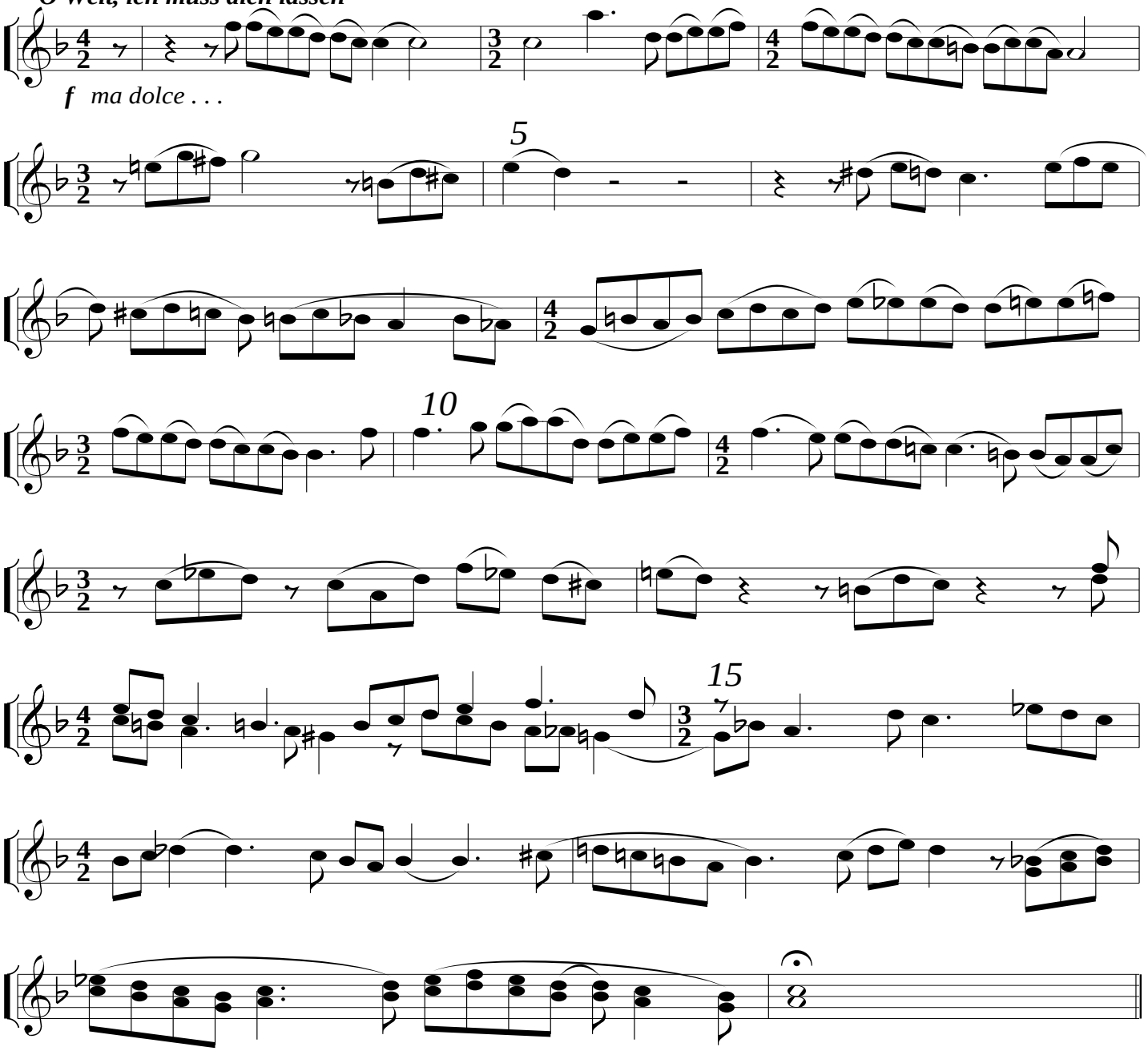
Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen



Alto Recorder

O Welt, ich muss dich lassen



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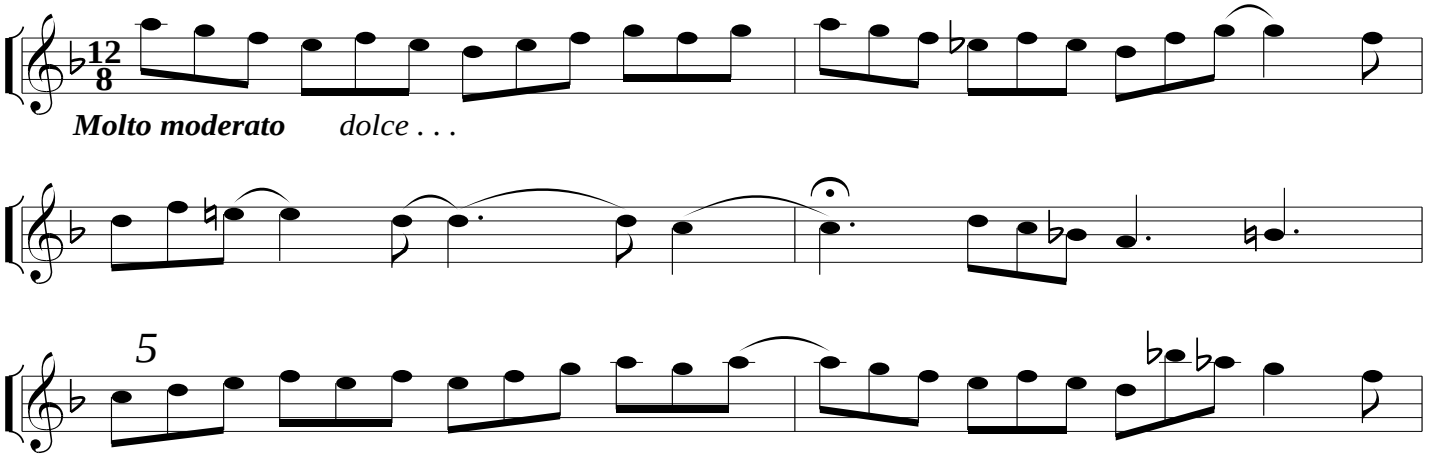

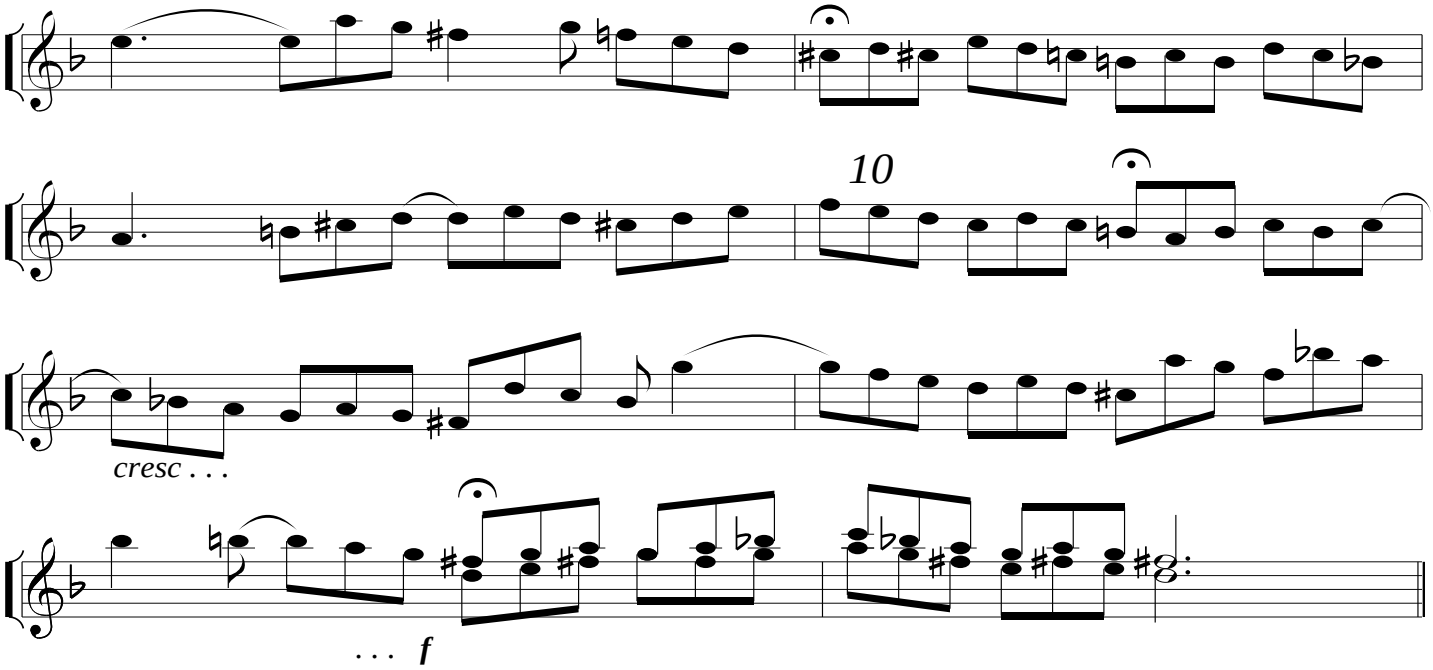

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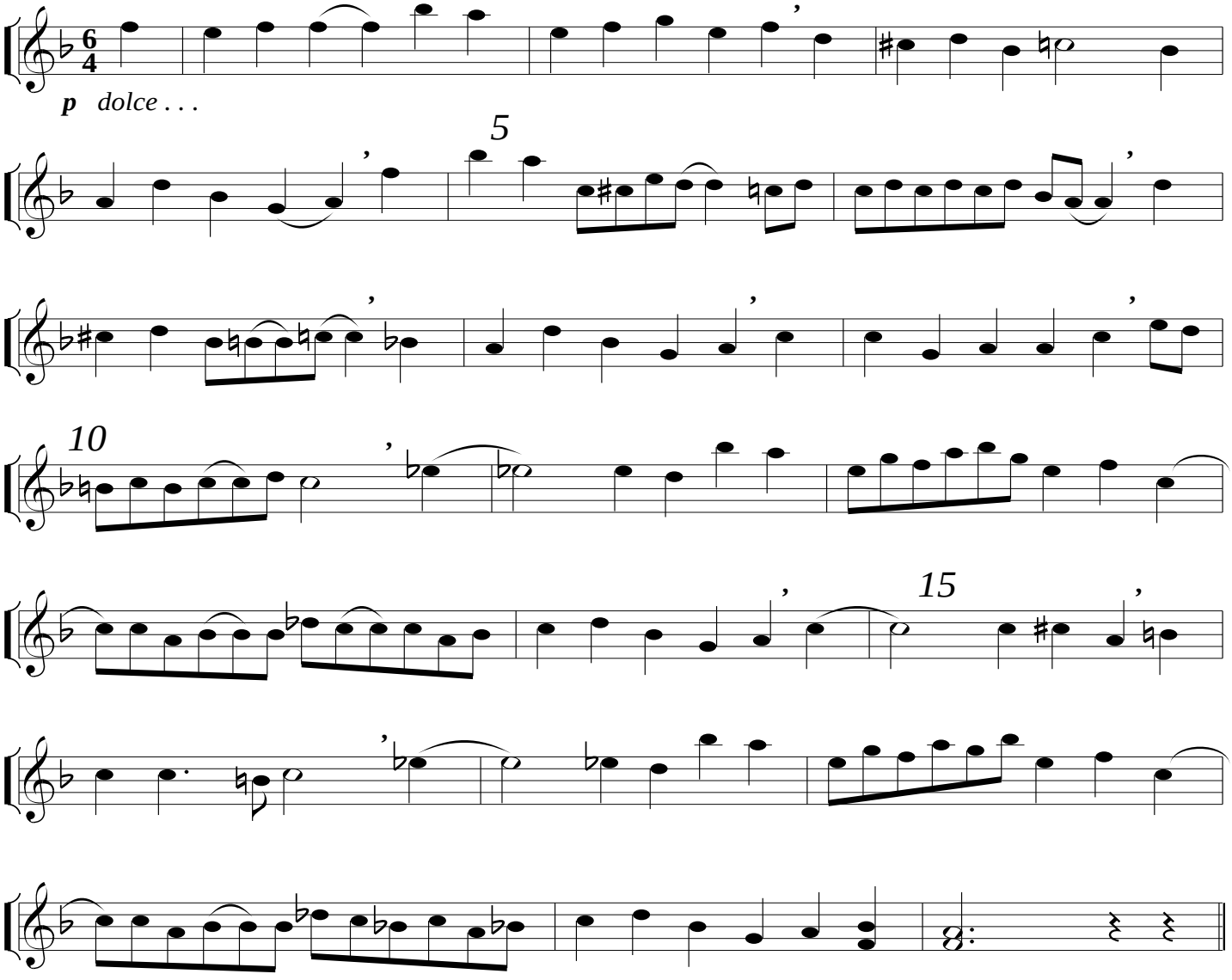
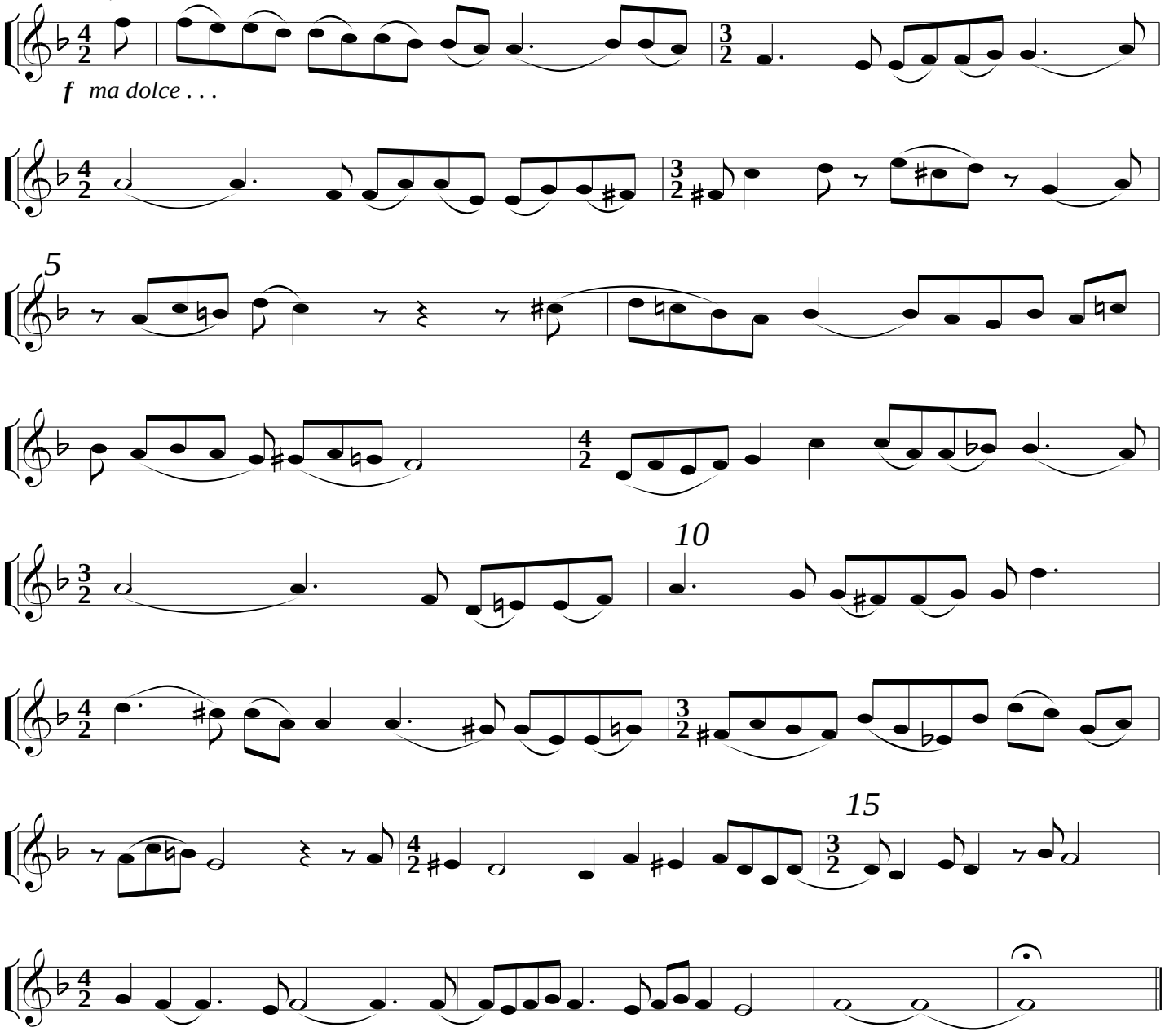


Tenor Recorder

O Welt, ich muss dich lassen



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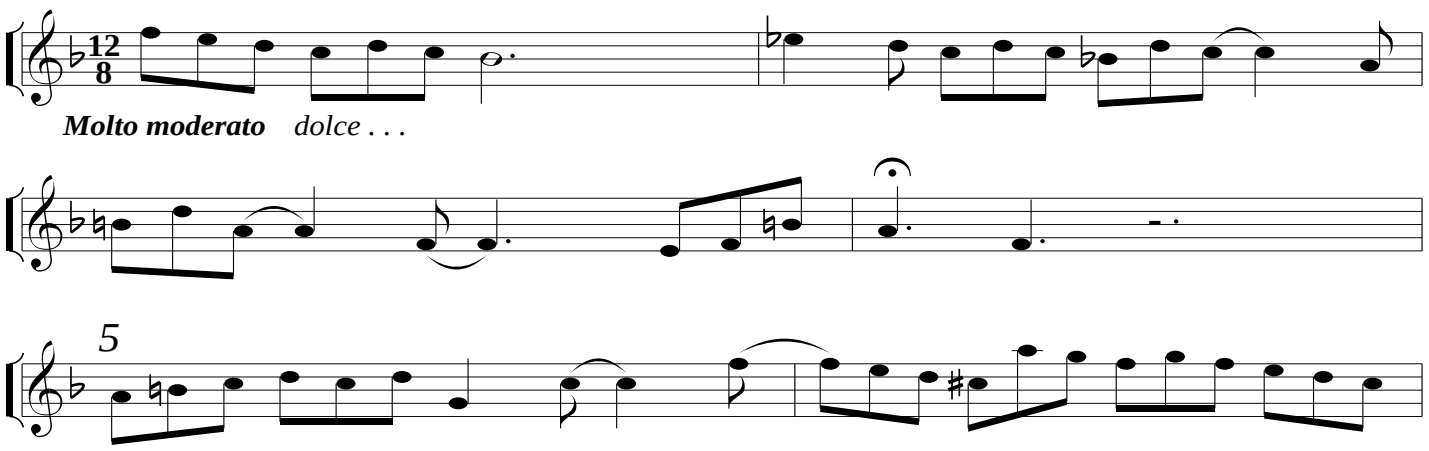

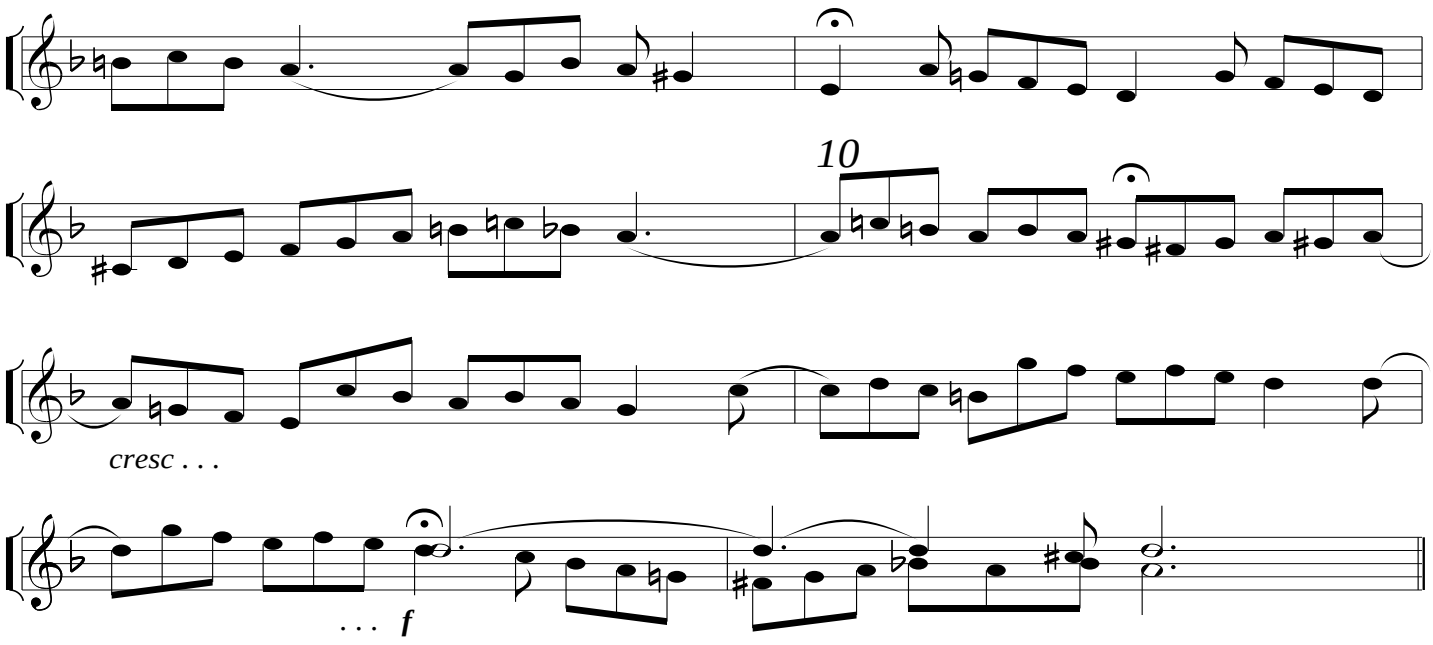

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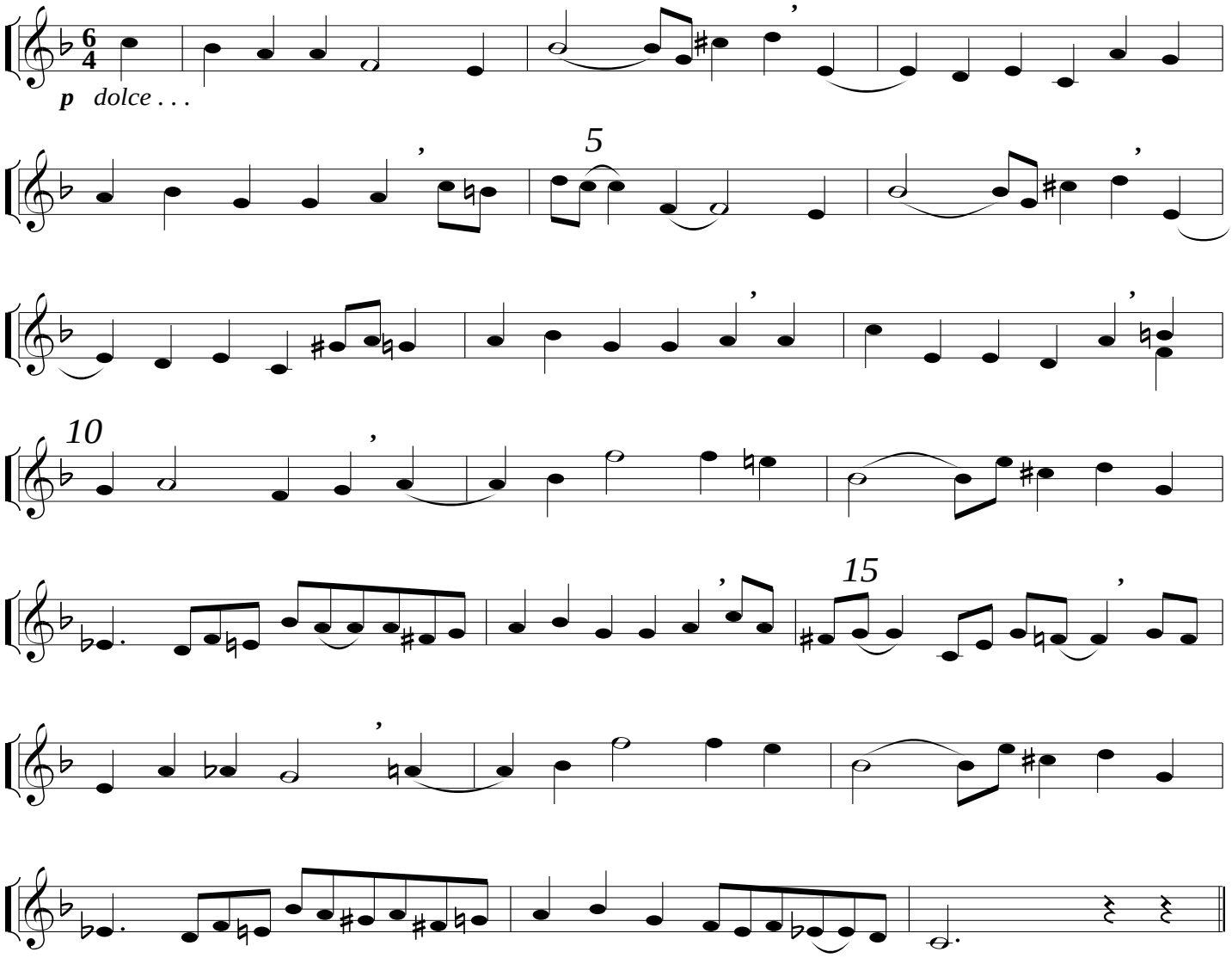
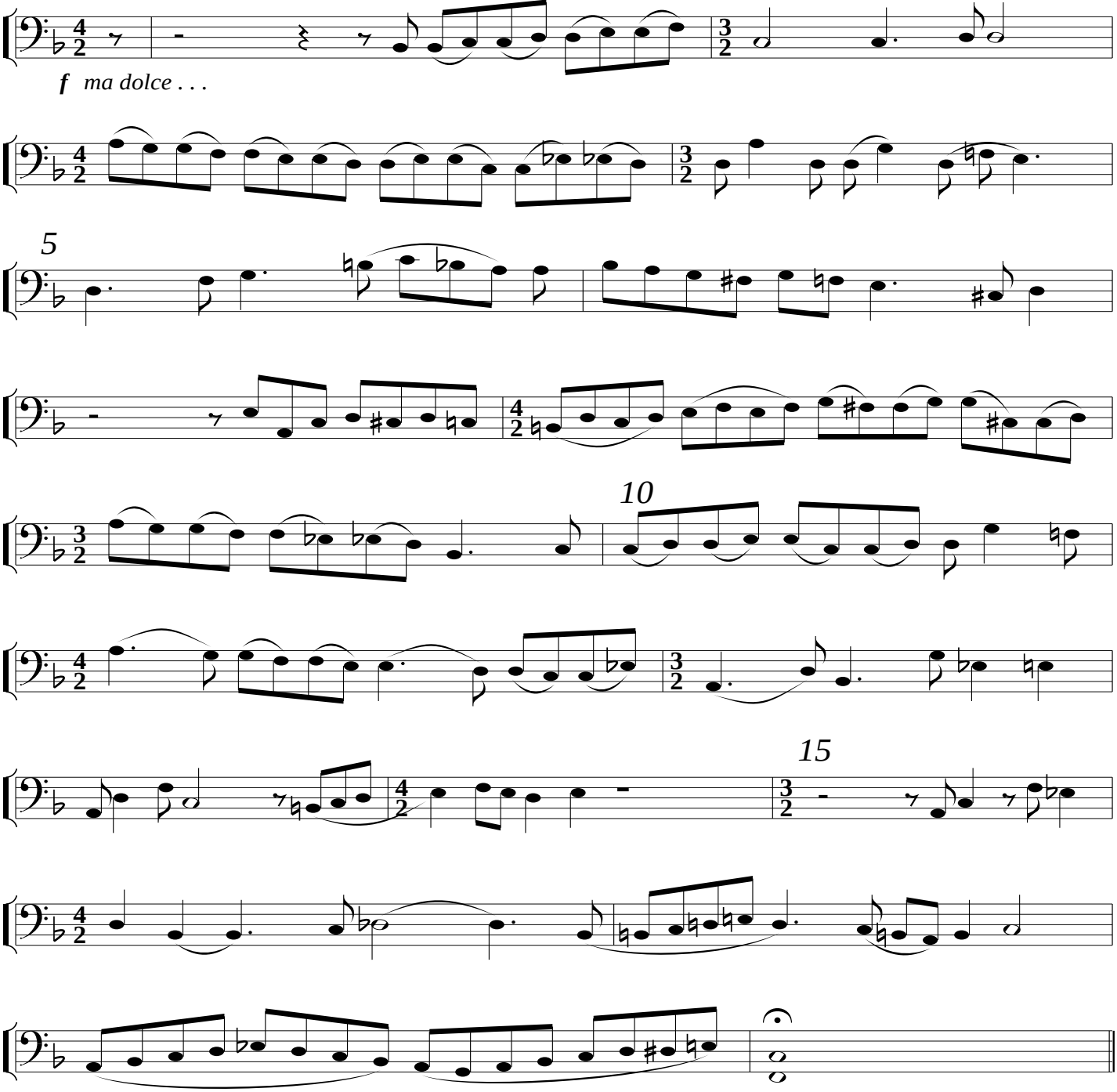


Bass Recorder

O Welt, ich muss dich lassen



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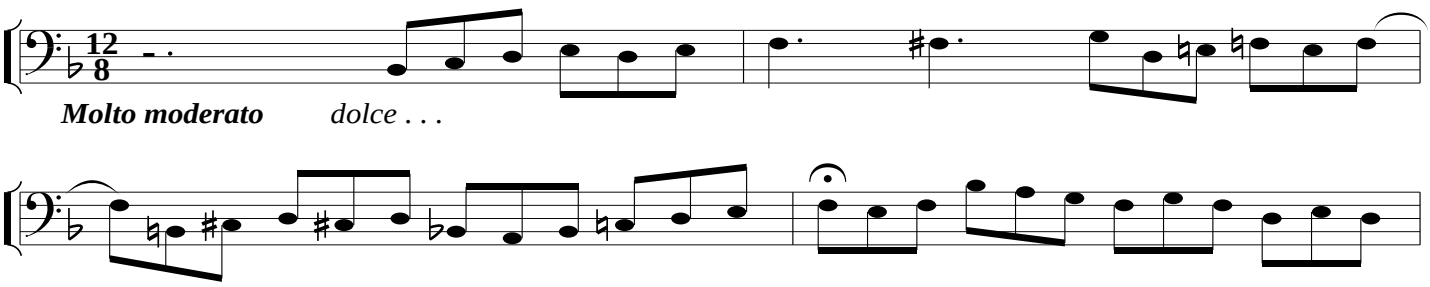

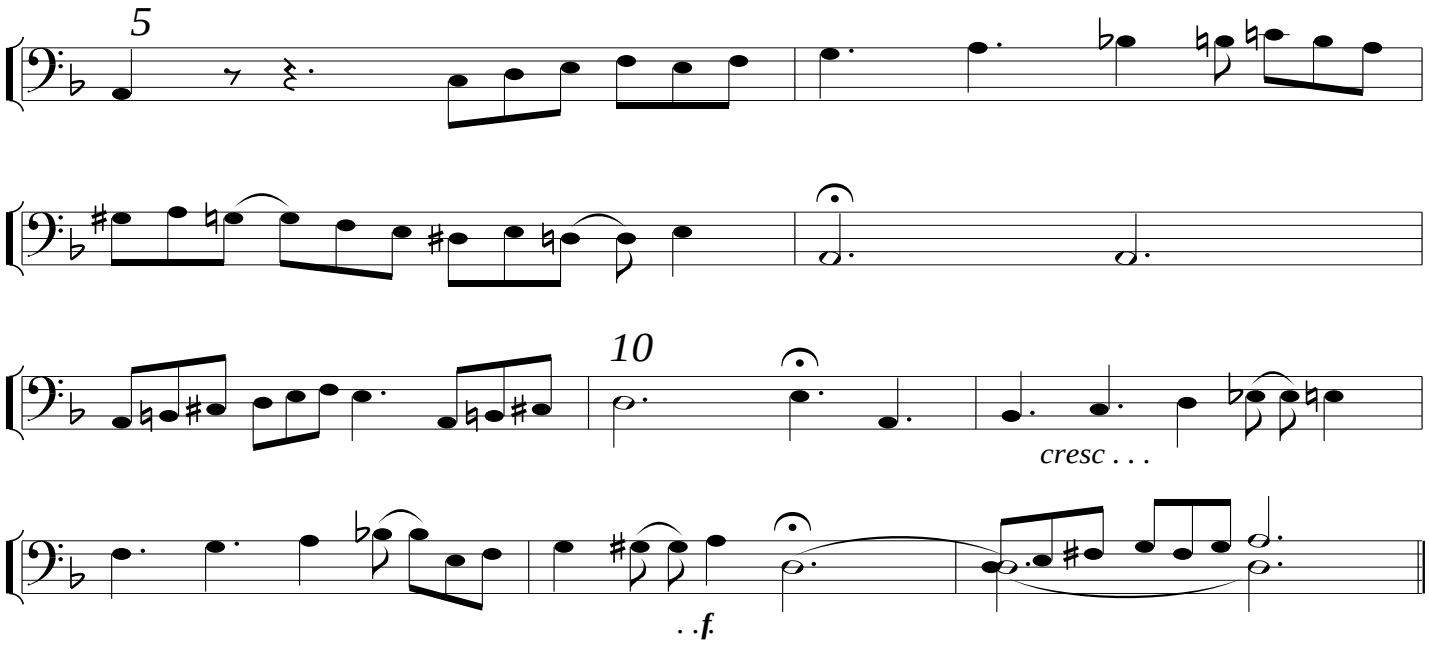

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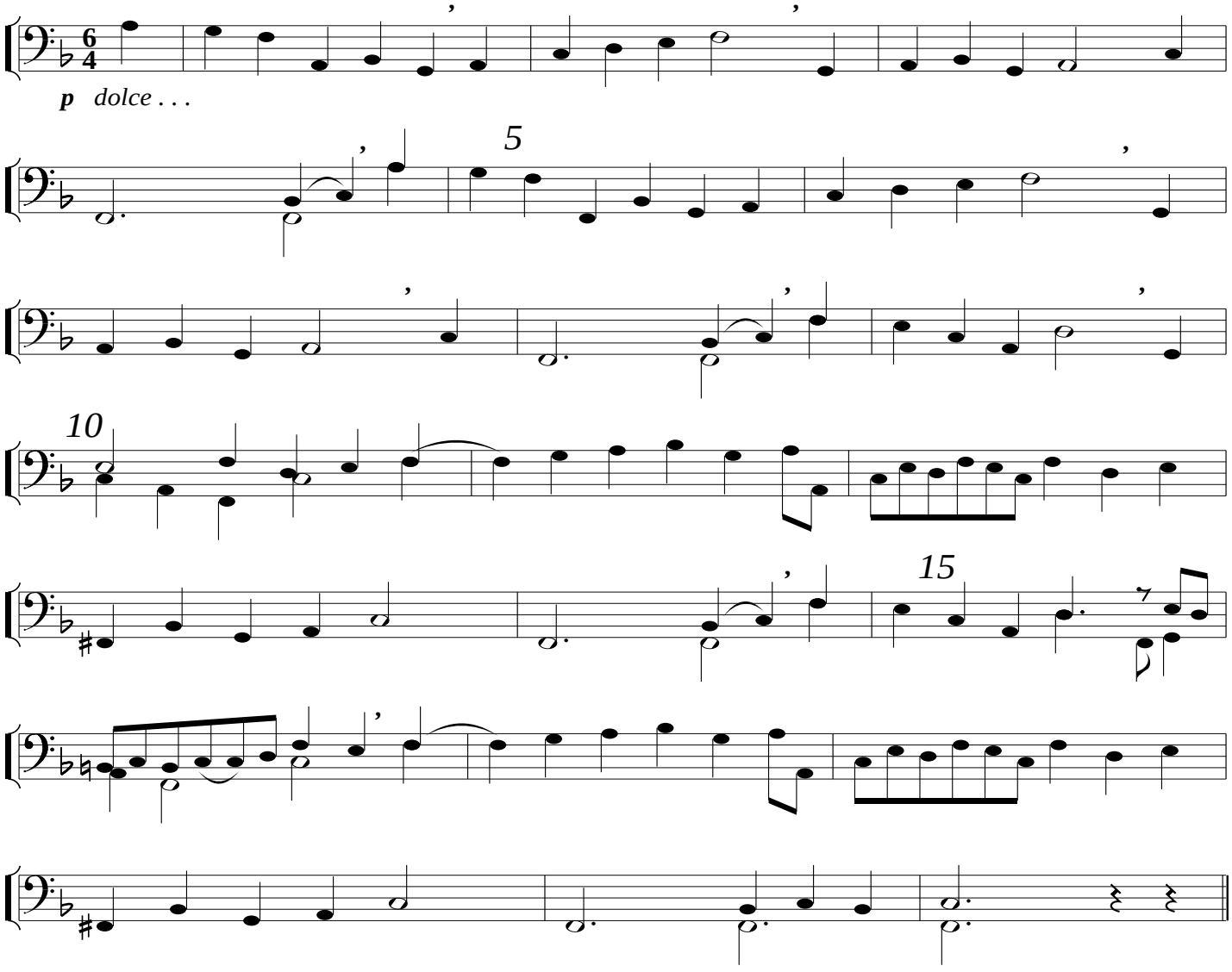
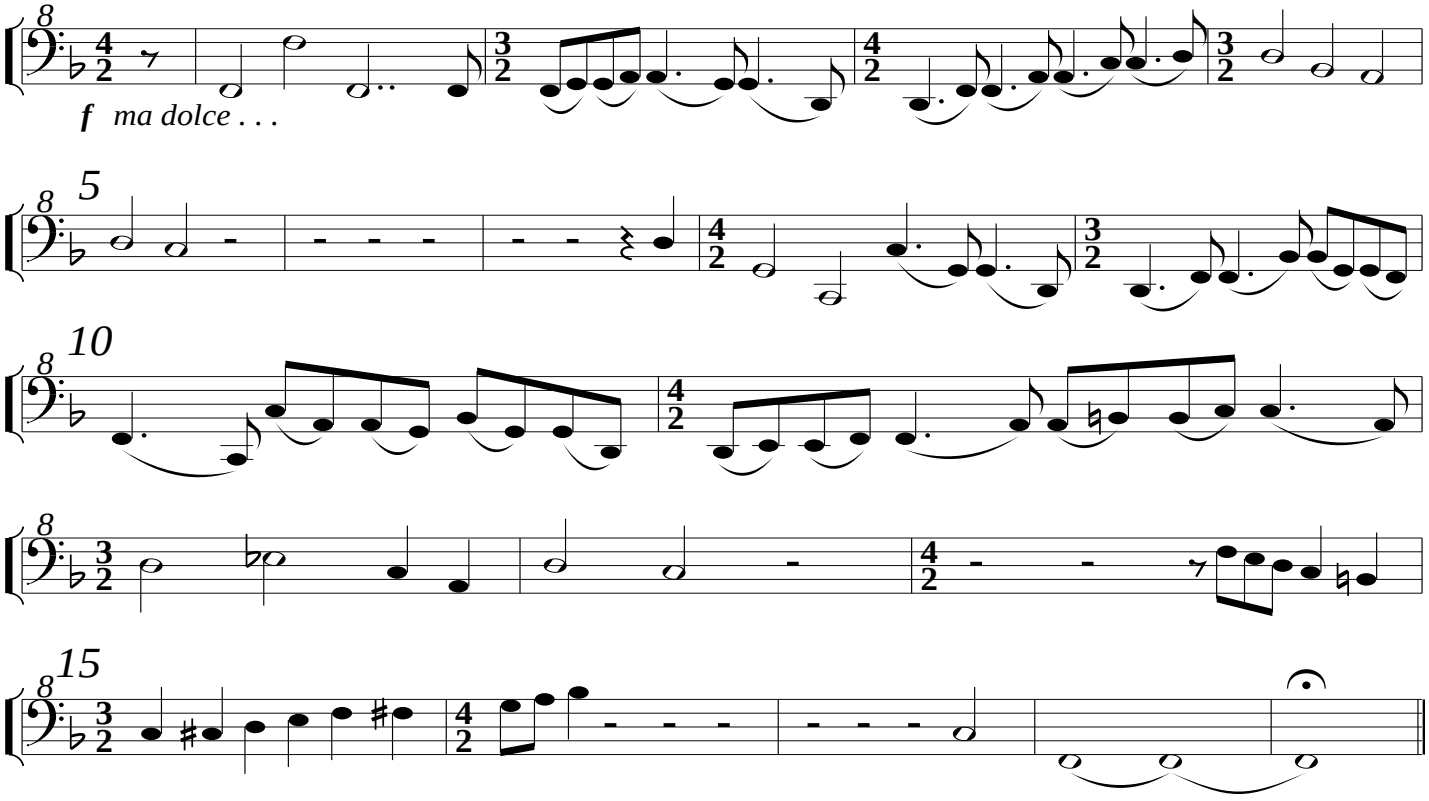
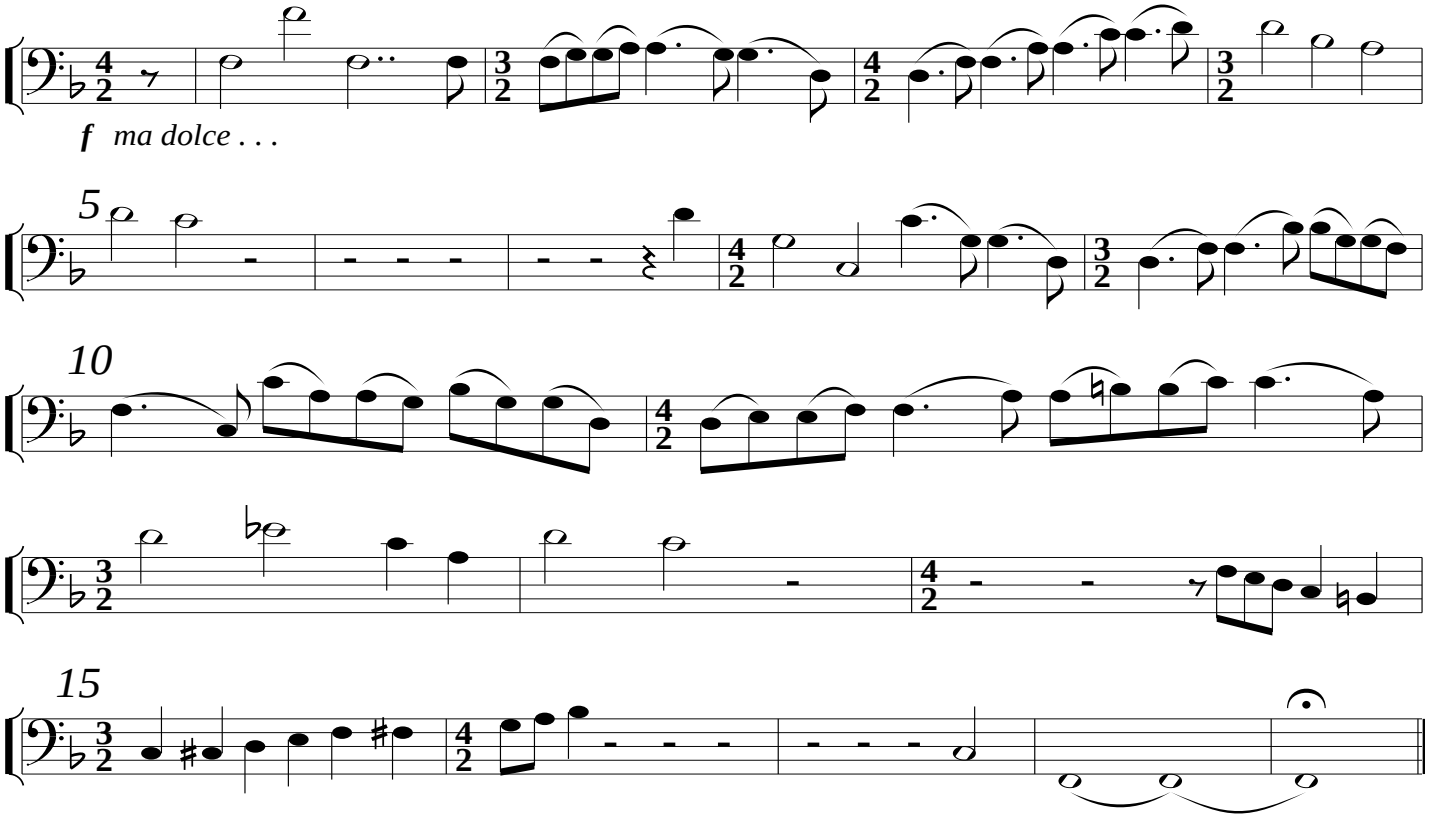


O Welt, ich muss dich lassen

Great Bass (C) part



Part for Contrabass (F) recorder or 'Cello or Gamba



Peter Billam was born in London in 1948, studied piano, and lived in Switzerland from 1973 to 1983, where he studied composition, classical guitar, flute and voice, worked as Musical Director of the *Théâtre Populaire Romand*, and as recording engineer, record producer and computer programmer. He moved to Tasmania in 1983, lectured in composition at the Conservatorium, conducted recorder ensembles and choirs, studied recorder, voice and harpsichord. He founded **www.pjb.com.au**, becoming the first composer to sell scores on-line, with on-line delivery, taking scores from Composer to Performer in one immediate step. *Www.pjb.com.au* offers a new approach to music publishing. These pieces are **written to be read, made to be played !**

Compositions at *www.pjb.com.au* include: *Five Short Pieces*, guitar, 1979; *Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute and guitar, 1980; *Five Rounds*, choir, 1986; *Go Forth and Multiply*, choir, 1986; *Three Violin Duets*, 1987; *Fable*, for piano, 1987; *To Erich Jantsch*, SAATTB recorders, 1988; *A Suite of Curves*, trombone (or horn) and piano, 1990; *Two Recorder Duets*, alto recorders, or other melody instruments, 1991; *Trombone Quintet*, trombone, flute, piano, bass, and percussion, 1994; *Three Songs*, on poems by Jack Kerouac, Vikram Seth and Dylan Thomas, voice and piano (only the first and third of these are available), 1994; *Piano Study*, piano, 1994; *Four Dances*, various ensembles including recorder quartet, string quartet, 1995; *The Poet in the Clouds*, on a poem by S. T. Coleridge, SATB choir, 1995; *Tres Casidas del Diván del Tamarit*, on poems by Federico García Lorca, voice and piano, 1997; *Three Suites*, for the solo line, piano, and piano and a solo line, 2000; *Die Zeiten*, on poems by Kästner, Bachman and Jünger, choir (only the second and third of these are available), 2000; *Three Duets* for flutes, 2001; *For Four Hands* for piano four hands, 2002; *Three Preludes* for piano, 2003; *Second Solo Suite* for flute, violin, viola or cello, 2003; *Guitar Duet* for two guitars, 2006; *We Who Mourn* for choir, 2007; *Trio With Guitar* for guitar and two clarinets or two recorders or two violas, 2008.

Arrangements include: By J. S. Bach: *Trio BWV 655*, piano and flute; *Vor deinen Thron BWV 668*, piano; *Fugue in F minor BWV 689*, SATB recorders; *Flute Sonata BWV 1031* transposed into G major for alto recorder and keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1032* completed by Peter Billam for flute and keyboard, also in C major for alto recorder, and in G major for descant; *Ricercare a 3, from the Musikalisches Opfer* for keyboard; *Ricercare a 6*, for sSATBG recorders, or strings, or two keyboards; *Fuga Canonica in Epidiapente* for keyboard and melody instrument; from the *Art of Fugue*: *Contrapuncti 1* and *4* for keyboard, and *Contrapunctus 14* as completed by D. F. Tovey, for keyboard, or for SATB recorders, or for strings; *Passacaglia and Fugue in c* for piano four hands; *Chorales with Descant* for melody instrument and piano; *Cello Suites I*, *II* and *III* for flute or alto recorder, *Forty Chorales* for piano, *Der Geist hilft* for SATB-SATB recorders. By Johannes Brahms: *Fugue in Ab minor for organ*, for SATB recorders and gamba, in A minor; *Choralvorspiele for organ* with previous settings by Isaac, Bach, Praetorius, recorders. By Franz Schubert: *Four Songs*, voice and guitar; *Schubert Dances*, recorders and guitar, *Schubert Dances*, piano 4 hands. By G. F. Händel: *Concerto Grosso in A minor* op 6 no 4, harpsichord and recorders; *Recorder Sonata in Bb* no 5, in G for tenor recorder and keyboard. By other composers: *Claudio Monteverdi, Ecco Mormorar l'Onde*, SSATB recorders; *Twelve Italian Songs*, voice and guitar; *John Wilbye, Draw on sweet Night*, SSATTB recorders, and for flute choir; *Telemann, Twelve Flute Fantasias*, recorder; *John Carr, Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute or recorder and guitar; *Fourteen Folk Dance Tunes*, recorder and guitar; *Easy Classical Pieces*, Bb trumpet and piano.

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