LBMP–022

GASPARD CORRETTE

MESSE DU 8e TON POUR L'ORGUE

A L'USAGE DES DAMES RELIGIEUSE,
ET UTILE A CEUX QUI TOUCHANT L'ORGUE

Edited by

Jon Baxendale

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INTRODUCTION

Little is known about the life of Gaspard Corrette. He is thought to have been born around 1670, though extensive searches in Rouennais baptism records for the period 1668–1672 suggest that he was not born in the city. We know nothing of his musical training or when he was appointed as organist at the city church of Saint-Herbland, close to Rouen Cathedral. From its situation, we may conjecture that Corrette was associated with Jacques Boyvin, the cathedral's organist, who seems to have been influential in the younger musician's developing style. Other biographical details are scant: it is thought Corrette moved to Paris in *c*. 1720, where his son, the composer Michel, was probably based. Sources suggest that Gaspard died before 1733, though no known source confirms this date.

Saint-Herbland was an important city parish. It is reported that, during the eighteenth century, the church sported seven priests (Cailleux, 2011) and an instrument equal in size to the cathedral itself. Its first organ had been built between 1630 and 1631 by the Scottish émigré William Lesseler, who had settled in Rouen in 1611. Though modest in size, the organ was enlarged in 1685 by Clement Lefebvre and his son, Germain, to include a *Positif de dos* and an extended pedal division of 29 notes for the sum of 3,500 *livres* (Dufourcq, 1971, 1/216–220) and again during Corrette's tenure in 1704–1705 by the Rouennais builder Antoine Vincent. Comparing the instrument's 1999 restoration with the specification provided by Dufourcq, Vincent's work appears to have involved adding a second Trompette to the Grand Orgue and moving its Vox Humana to the Positif. The Récit's three rank Cymbale also seems to have been altered to become a two-rank Plein Jeu and the pedal extended with the addition of a four-foot Clairon. Saint-Herbland closed after the French Revolution, and the instrument moved to Saint-Michel, Bolbec.

The only record of Corrette's activities comes in his single publication, *Messe de 8^e. Ton*, a slim volume containing 22 organ mass versets, two of which are alternatives for the Gradual and Élévation. Versets were played *alternatim* with the chant, a practice that had its roots in the early Catholic liturgy where the organist would perform a short piece of music to replace every alternative verse of a mass section, hymn or canticle. At the same time, the priest would say or sing the replaced verse (more on this below).

The music is set firmly in Tone 8 (*finalis* G), although the Élévation, a Cromhorne en Taille, is in Tone 1; its alternative 'Fond d'Orgue (no. 24) was probably added to allow all the music to remain in Tone 8. 'Graduel' (no. 15) also has a complementary movement, a 'Basse de Trompette ou de Cromhorne' (no. 23). It was probably included in the book as a sober alternative to the *menuet*-like dance rhythms of the set piece: although versets mimicking dances had been used since Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers's *Livre d'Orgue* (1665), there would have been occasions—dependent on the texts of the day and the type of mass being celebrated—when the set piece might have been wholly inappropriate.

The title page carries no dedication. Instead, we are told that the mass was written for use by 'des Dames Religieuse, et utile a ceux qui touchent l'orgue'. This indicates that the music was not intended for use in parish churches or cathedrals but in convents, and the book's contents reflect this intention. Regulations governing church offices had been laid down in a series of liturgical documents or ceremonials. They stipulated the services at which the organist was expected to be present, the parts of the liturgy in which the organ was required and how it was to be played. One of the more important of these was the *Caeremoniale episcoporum* (Rome, 1600). It stipulates that *alternatim* playing was expected for the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei of the Mass Ordinary and hymns and canticles at various daily offices (van Wye, 1980, 301). It also requires that the missing portion of the texts be sung while the organist played and, if that was not possible, that the text be recited verbally. Other ceremonials were similarly developed in France: Martin Sonnet's *Caeremoniale Parisiense* (1662) is one of 26 examples (Higginbottom, 1977, 20).[1] It restricted the use of the organ considerably in Parisian churches and stipulated that the organist was obliged to quote the plainchant in the first and last Kyrie, the verses 'Suscipe deprecationem nostram' and 'In Gloria Dei Patris' of the Gloria, and the first Sanctus and Agnus Dei (Sonnet, 547-548). However, these parameters did not extend to monastic houses, which established bespoke liturgical practices. For example, Carmelite nuns in Paris developed their own ceremonial in 1616, and the requirement to quote the plainchant in the manner later prescribed by Sonnet was not observed. Mindful of this, Corrette has not used or alluded to plainchant in his organ mass, though the registrations he requires and the range and nature of the genres he employs follow a comprehensive rhetorical scheme that will be discussed later. Similarly, following the practices of the Carmelites and other religious houses, the Benedictus has been dispensed with and replaced with an Élévation.

Corrette's organ mass was the last to be published during the *Grand siècle* and it has an impeccable pedigree. Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers (1667), Nicolas Lebègue (1678) and Nicolas de Grigny (1699) published single masses, while François Couperin produced two in 1690. Nicolas Gigault and André Raison were responsible for three and five masses in 1686 and 1688, respectively.

Why composers stopped writing organ masses cannot be said with any certainty, yet the dearth of composed masses was something Christophe Ballard, 'seul imprimeur du Roy', must have noticed since he reissued Grigny's *Premier livre d'orgue* in 1710 under his auspices. By this point, it is unlikely that the liturgical music of any composer mentioned above was available. While others such as Louis-Nicolas Clérambault and Louis Marchand produced suites of organ pieces that were more suited to the canticles Magnificat and Benedictus, none showed the same interest in addressing the Mass Ordinary. It could be that the prescriptive practices of the ceremonials, which became more relaxed as the eighteenth century progressed, brought about a decline in the organ mass. However, it is significant that this coincided with a rise in domestic music-making. The increased need for secular music created a flurry of publications of chamber and solo instrumental and vocal music that was, undoubtedly, a more attractive and lucrative occupation for those who published 'chez l'auteur', and even more so for those who were able to establish contracts with the likes of Christophe Ballard and later 'le Veuve' Boivin and Jean Le Clerc.

The Corrette publication was published in the first months of 1703, though his license to print had been granted on 6 December of the previous year. Records from the *Chambre Syndicale*, to whom Corrette had to present these credentials, are unfortunately missing for the period of November 1700 to September 1703, though the legally required 'Extrait du Privilege du Roy' indicates that Corrette had the rights to print 'tout ses œuvres en Musique tant Vocalle qu'instrumentalle tant celles qu'il a composées que celles quil composera cy apres' for a period of ten years. This blanket form of privilege became increasingly popular with composers as the century progressed and indicates that Corrette had plans to publish further. Whether or not this occurred cannot be said: their licencing would have been covered by this single document and, since composers' print runs tended to be in small batches of ten to twenty copies (Devriès-Lesure, 2005, 78), it is possible other publications existed that are now lost. The title page informs us that the book was available from the premises of Henri Foucault, a popular music seller based on rue Saint-Honoré on Paris's right bank, and the price was a modest four *livres*. Copies were also

[1] *Caeremoniale divini officii secundum ordinem fratrum B. Virginis Mariae de monte Carmeli.*

available in Rouen from Corrette himself. The composer's choice of engraver was wise. The late seventeenth century saw a rise in music engravers, and among these were a handful who we musicians or who had musical knowledge. Henry de Baussen was one of the better and, by 1703, had been active as a specialist music engraver since the 1680s. His list of clients until this point is impressive and includes Jean Baptiste Lully, Marc Antoine Charpentier and Corrette's fellow Rouennais organist-composer Jacques Boyvin. Future clients would include Louis-Nicolas Clérambault, Gaspard Le Roux and François Couperin. Baussen's style is clear and readable, and he appears to have been an early proponent of allowing chords to share a single stem. Slight deviations in clefs, noteheads and beams suggest they were not punched, though they remain remarkable in their consistency; accidentals and stems were, however. The most striking quality of Baussen's work, though, is that it is accurate, with hardly any ambiguities or mistakes, though a large number of ties appear to have been omitted. With the exception of the Offertoire, each verset is contained within one or two pages, which negates the need for page turns.

The music itself is standard fare for such publications. As mentioned, Corrette adopts a broadly uniform approach to registration and genre and, from this viewpoint, his music is not unlike any organ masses composed during the preceding half-century. This is demonstrated in the following table, which compares Corrette's scheme with Couperin's *Messe pour les convents* (1690):

Mass section	**Couperin (1690)**	**Corrette (1703)**
Kyrie I*	Plein jeu	Grand plein jeu
Kyrie II	Fugue	Fugue
Christe II	Récit de Chromhorne	Cromhorne en Taille
Kyrie III	Trio a deux dessus	Trio a deux dessus
Kyrie IV	Dialogue sur la Trompette du Grand Clavier	Dialogue a deux Chœurs
Gloria I*	Plein jeu	Prelude a deux Chœurs [*petit and grand plein jeu*]
Gloria III	Petit fugue sur la Chromhorne	Concert pour les Flûtes
Gloria V	Duo sur les Tierces	Duo
Gloria VII	Basse de Trompette	Recit tendre Pour le Nazard
Gloria IX	Chromhorne sur la taille	Dialogue de Voix humaine
Gloria XI	Dialogue sur la Voix humaine	Basse de Trompette ou de Cromhorne
Gloria XIII	Trio les Dessus sur la Tierce et la Basse sur la Trompette	Dessus de Tierce par accords
Gloria XV	Recit de Tierce	Tierce en Taille
Gloria XVII*	Dialogue sur les Grands jeux	Dialogue a deux Chœurs
Gradual	Not given	Trio [a deux dessus] or Basse de Trompette ou de Cromhorne
Offertory*	Dialogue sur les Grands Jeux	Dialogue a trois Chœurs
Sanctus I*	Plein jeu	Plein jeu
Sanctus III	Recit de Cornet	Duo
Élévation	Tierce en Taille	Cromhorne en Taille or Fond d'Orgue
Agnus I*	Plein jeu	Plein Jeu a deux Chœurs
Agnus III*	Dialogue sur les grands jeux	Dialogue en Fugue (grand jeu)
Deo Gratias*	Petit plein jeu	Grand Plein Jeu

Table 1: Comparative registrations: Couperin, *Messe pour les convents* and Corrette: *Messe du 8^e Ton*.

It has been mentioned that Corrette's registration follows a broad rhetorical framework and while some variation exists in intervening couplets, key movements (here marked with an asterisk) remain the same. When compared with other composers, a picture begins to emerge that suggests certain registrations were so inexorably linked with mass sections that perceptive congregants would have known their place in the order of service purely from the sounds coming from the organ. This is not by chance: uniformity was inferred by the ceremonials and similar registrations were probably adopted to complement this philosophy.

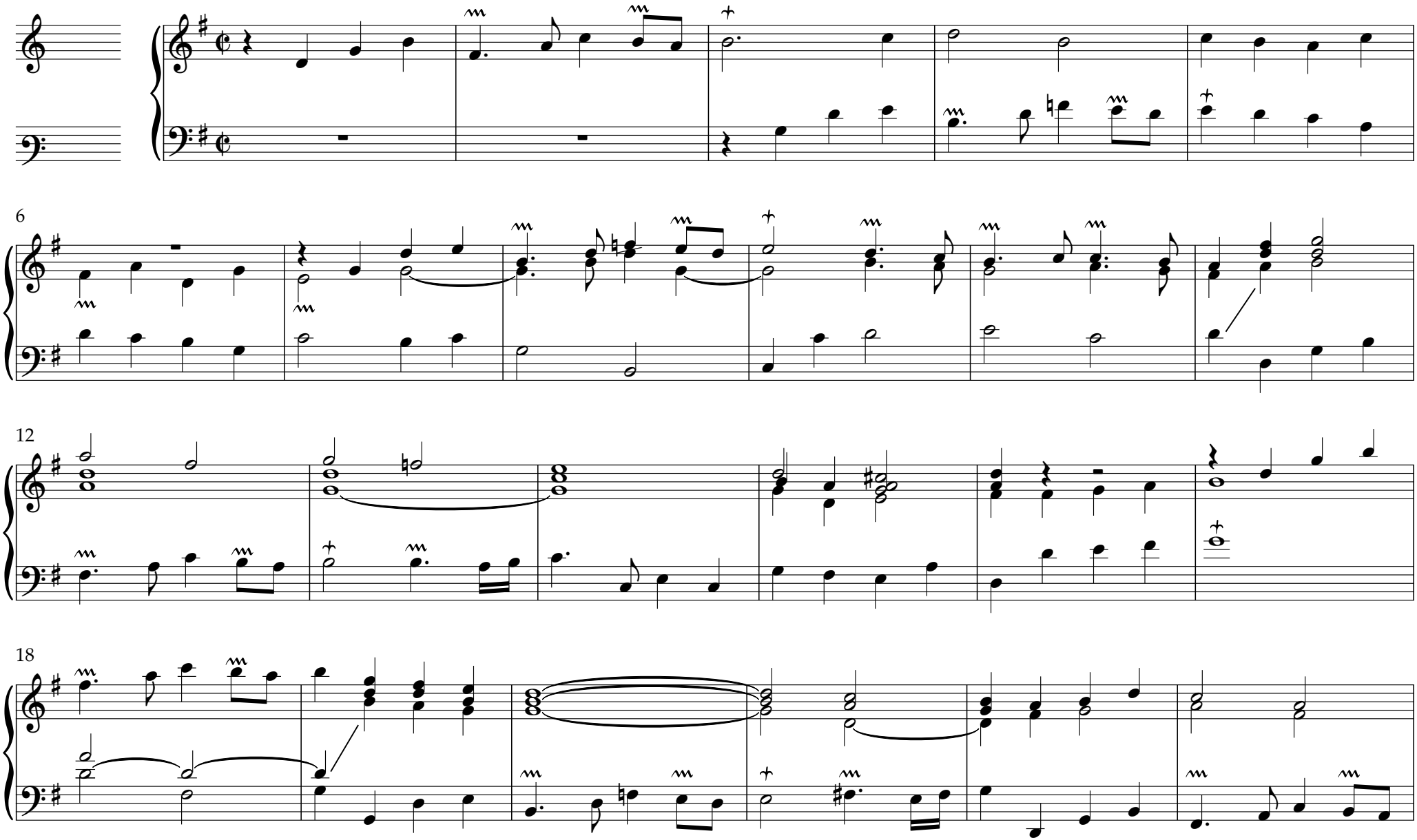
At this point, we should turn our attention to improvisation. Benjamin van Wye (1980, 308) suggests that such skills were widely cultivated by organists who held prominent positions in cathedrals and parish churches and that this explains the meagre amount of music published before *c.* 1680. Although accounts seem to provide some evidence of organists' abilities as improvisers (e.g., l'Abbé Fontenay's report of Marchand's arrival in Paris (1776, 79)), these are anecdotal and should be treated with a degree of circumspection. Wye bases his thesis on the number of services organists in principal establishments had to play during a church year, which could amount to several hundred. He might well be correct, but while many should have developed skills in improvisation as a matter of course, this did not preclude musicians from composing, and Wye does not consider the principal reason for organists not publishing before Nivers's *Livre d'orgue* in 1665. Until 1660, an embargo allowed only typeset music to be printed, and the monopoly for this such publications belonged to Robert Ballard, 'seul imprimeur du Roy'. Since typeset music was not suitable for polyphonic compositions, we must assume that most keyboard composers disseminated their music as manuscripts. However, once the strictures against engraved scores had been lifted, composers were able to circumvent Ballard and publish engraved books 'chez l'auteur' and free from any of the liabilities they would previously have encountered (Devriès-Lesure, 2005, 81). Another significant influence was the rise of domestic music-making, which catalysed professional performers into becoming composers (q.v.).[2] This began during the last decades of the seventeenth century and is demonstrated in the number of secular music books that became readily available, a market that even foreign publishers like Estienne Roger fostered with inexpensive bootlegs of popular French music.

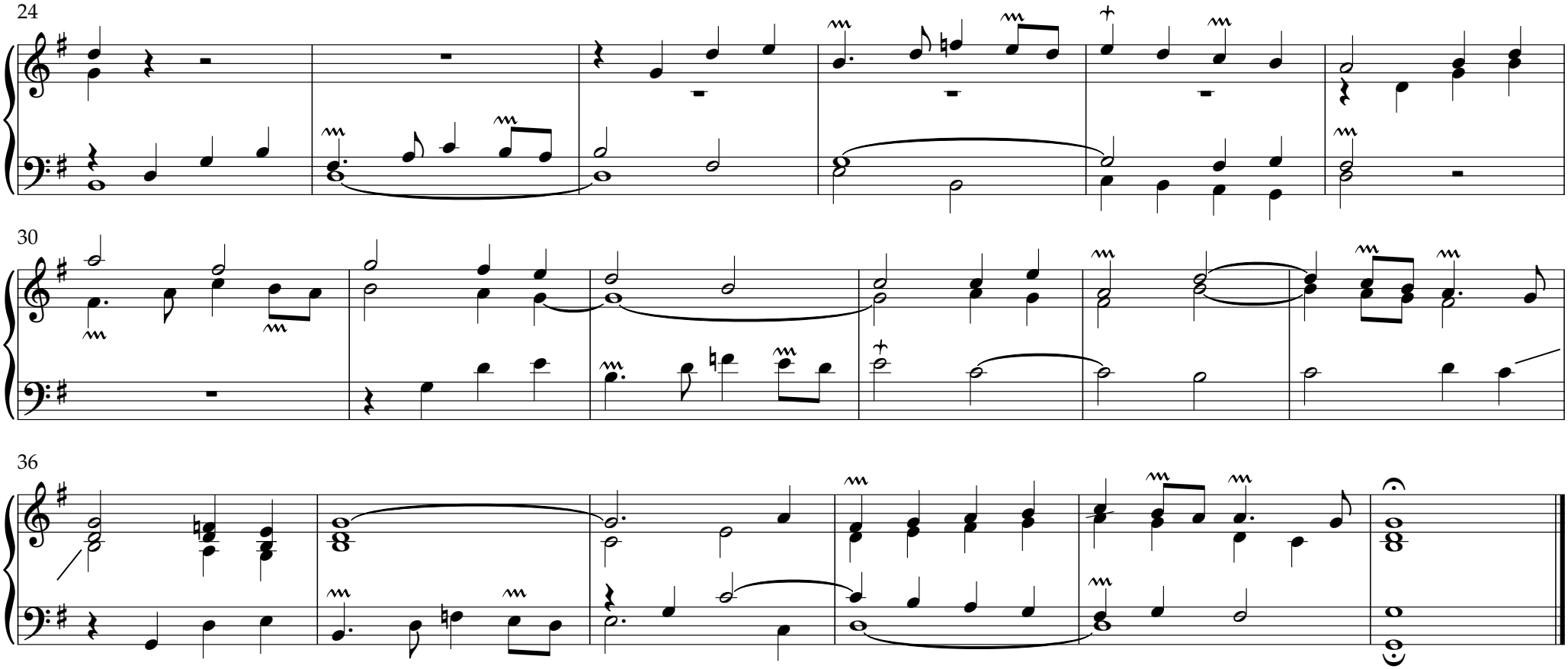
Returning to printed and manuscript organ books, we must question why, if organists were adept improvisers, such books existed at all. It is true that the market cultivated by highly trained organists possibly found customers in provincial towns where professionals were rarely employed, though the difficulties amateurs might have encountered in performance seems to counter such a scenario. However, this does not account for a discovery by Catherine Caumont of a 1707 manuscript that contains 111 pieces, 80 of which are unknown elsewhere.[3] Its copyist attributed several works to Nicolas Lebègue, Jacques-Denis Thomelin, Nivers and Jacques Boyvin. An analysis of genre and style reveals the remaining pieces also to be the work of Boyvin, and that they are unattributed suggests they were written for Boyvin's personal use as liturgical music. One

[2] Some did: the value of Jean Henry D'Anglebert's engraved plates at the time of his death was some 1600 *livres* (Herlin, 2001, xxi), demonstrating its popularity.

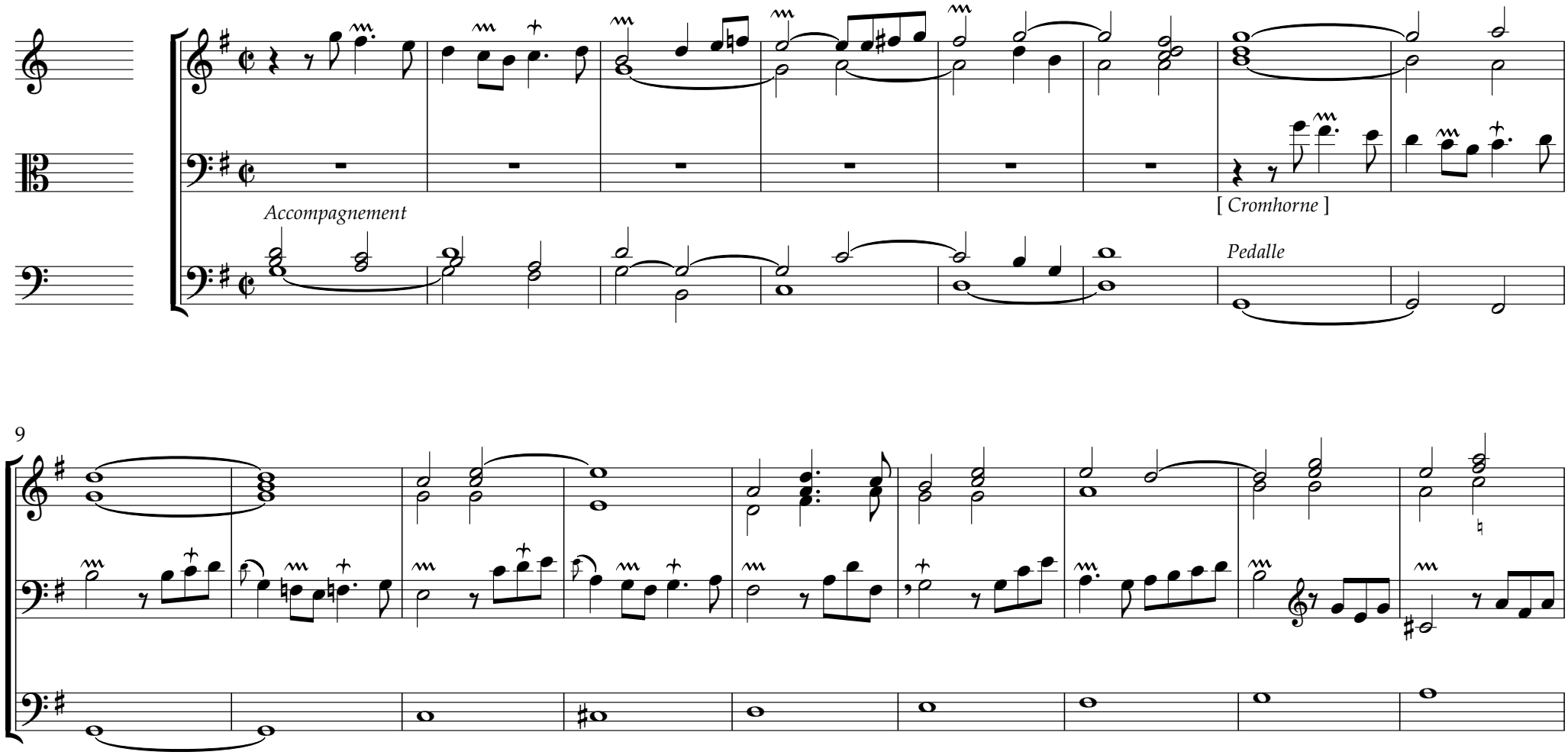
[3] See *Le Manuscrit Caumont Orgue*, ed. J. Baxendale (2021).

2. FUGUE




24
30
36

3. CROMHORNE EN TAILLE



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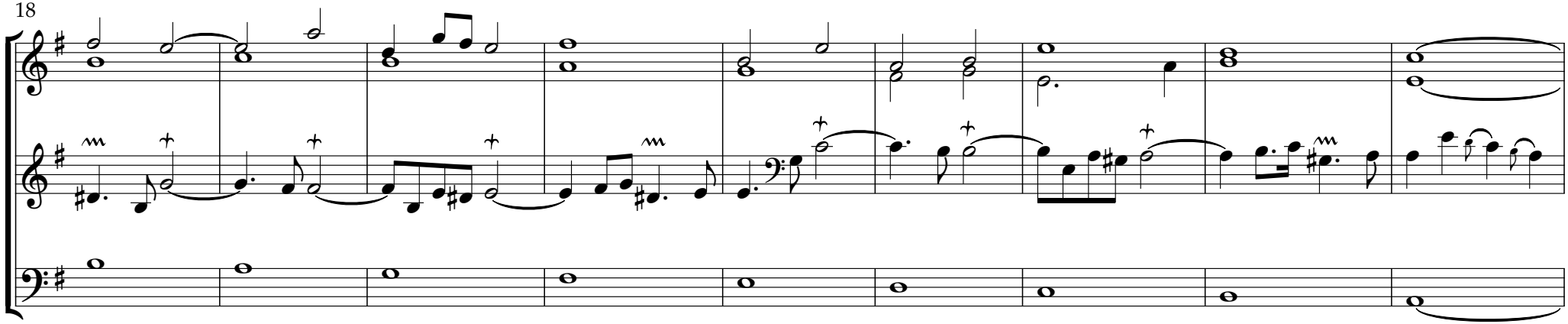

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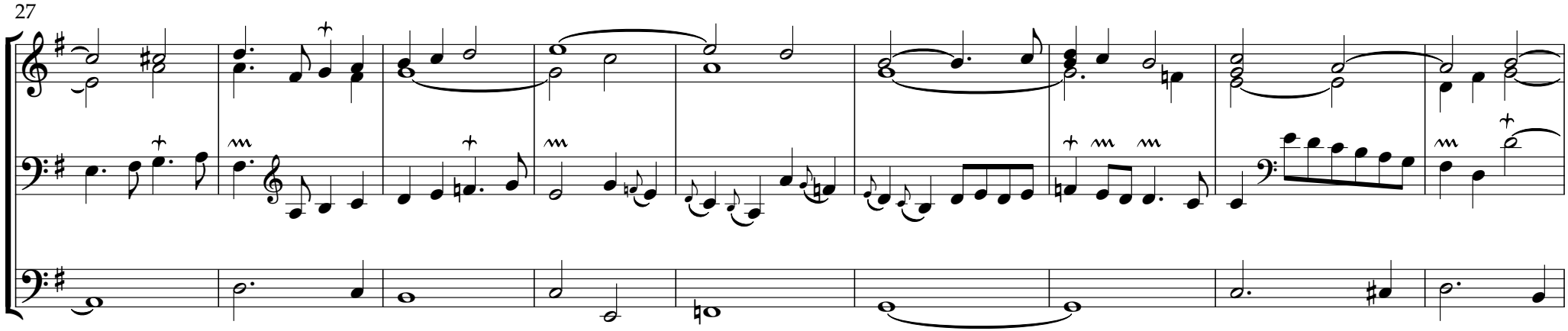
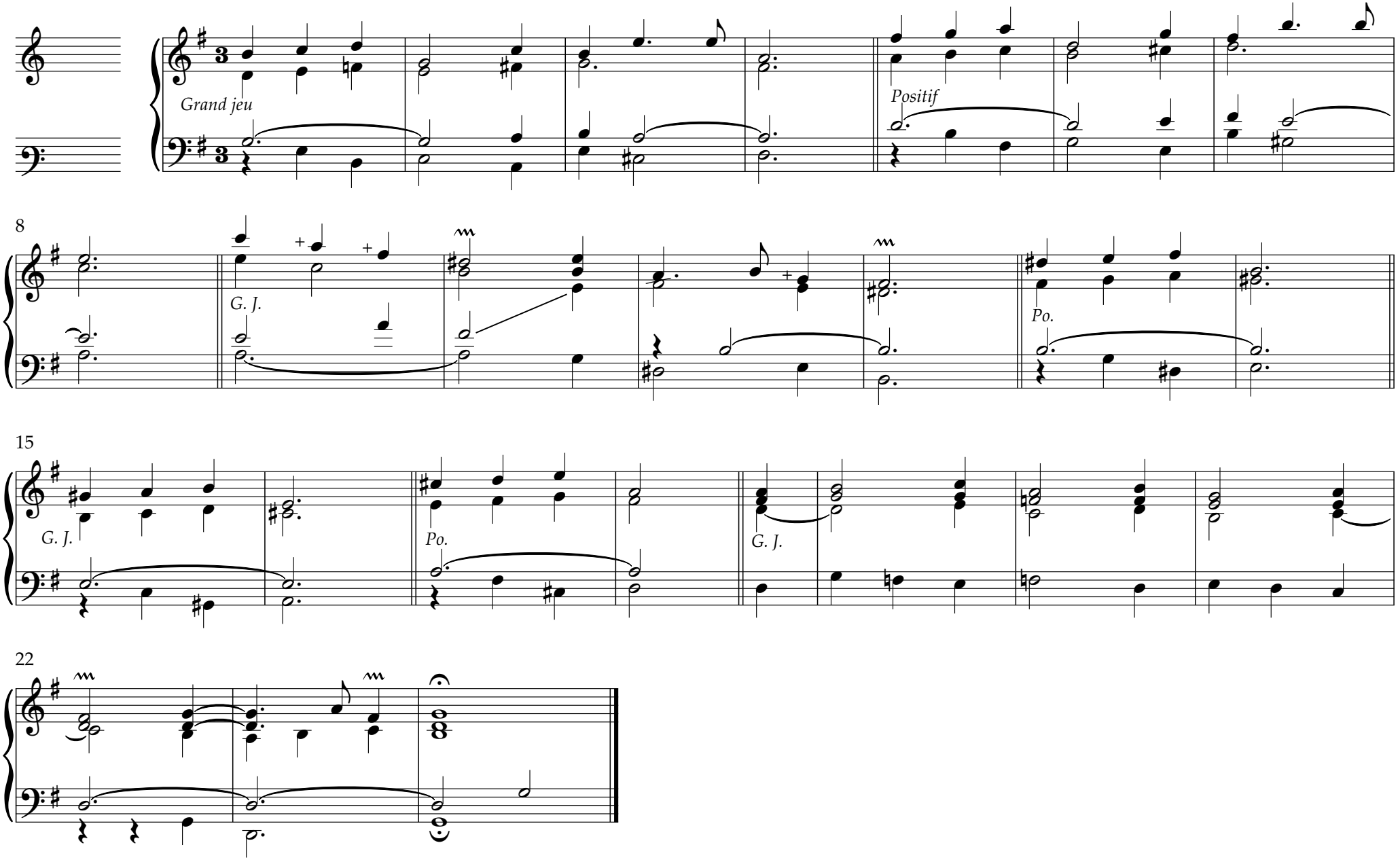
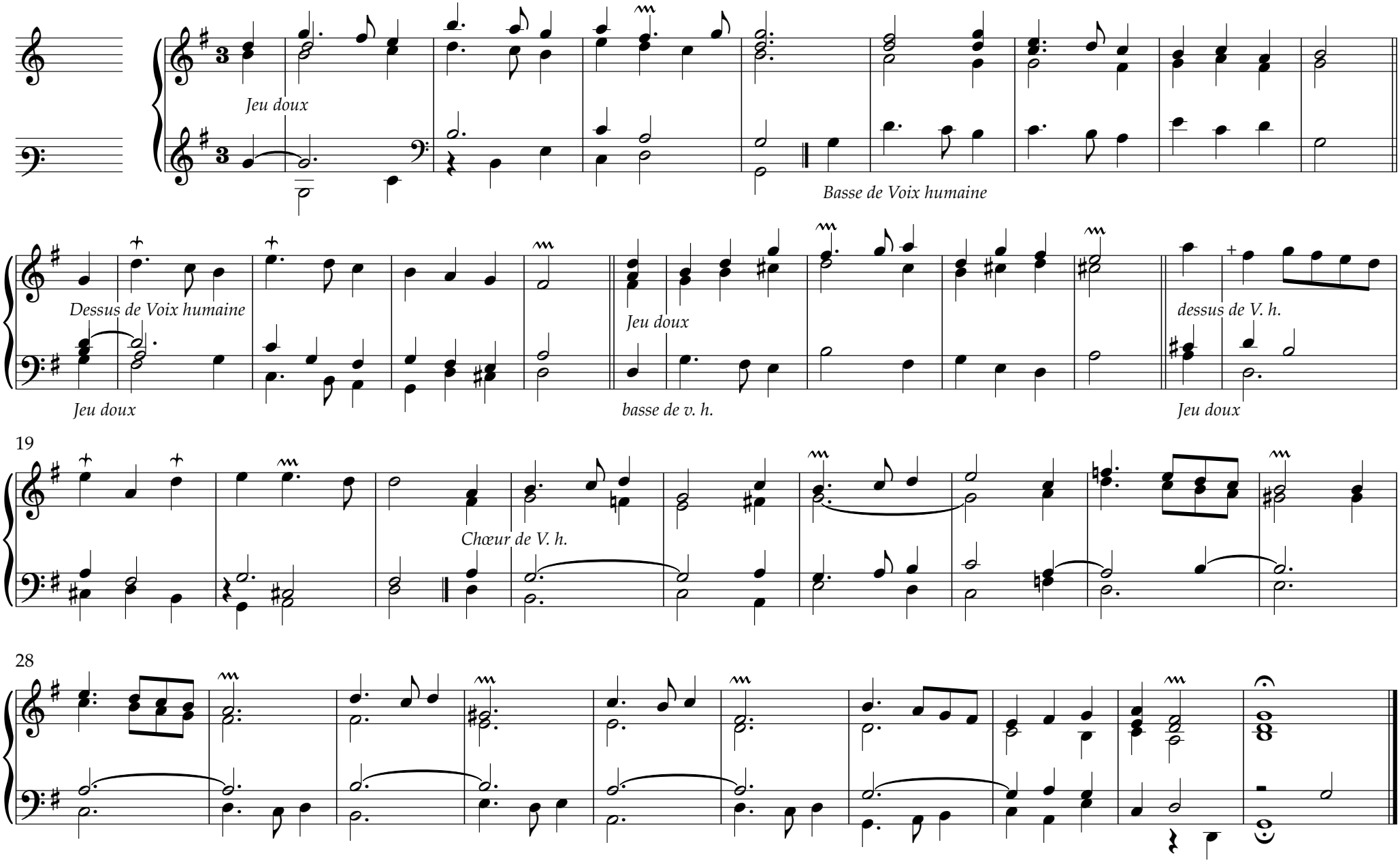
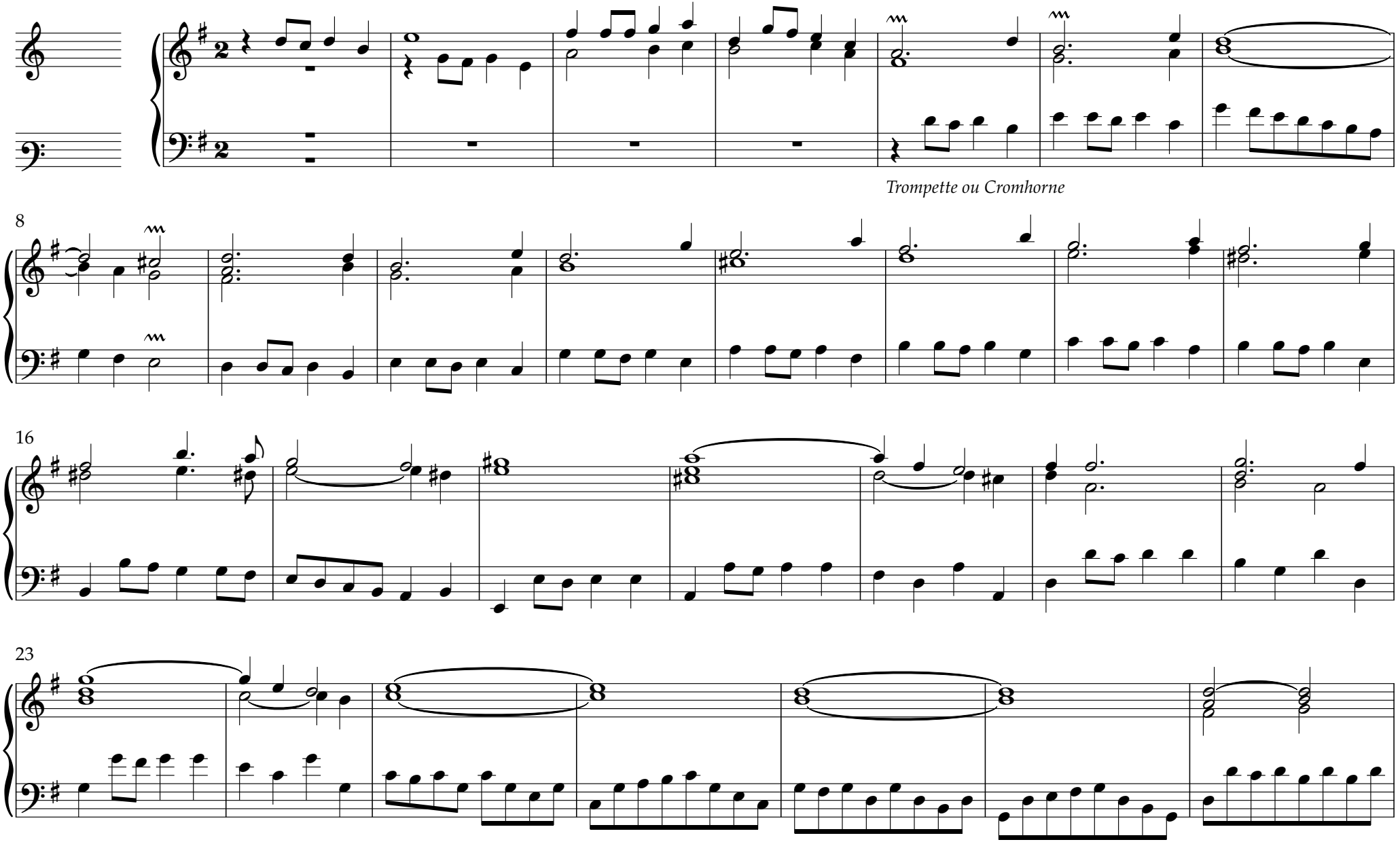
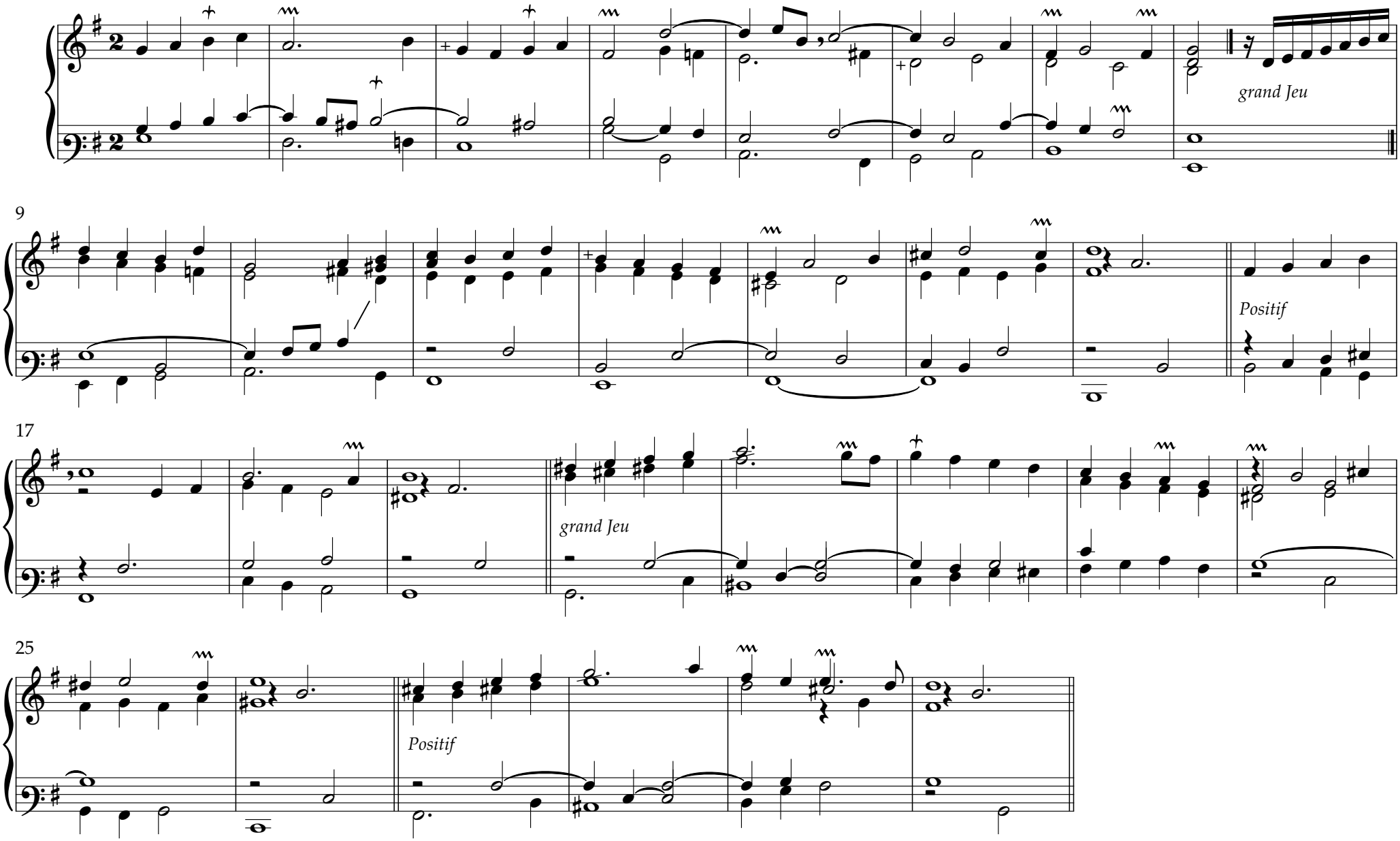


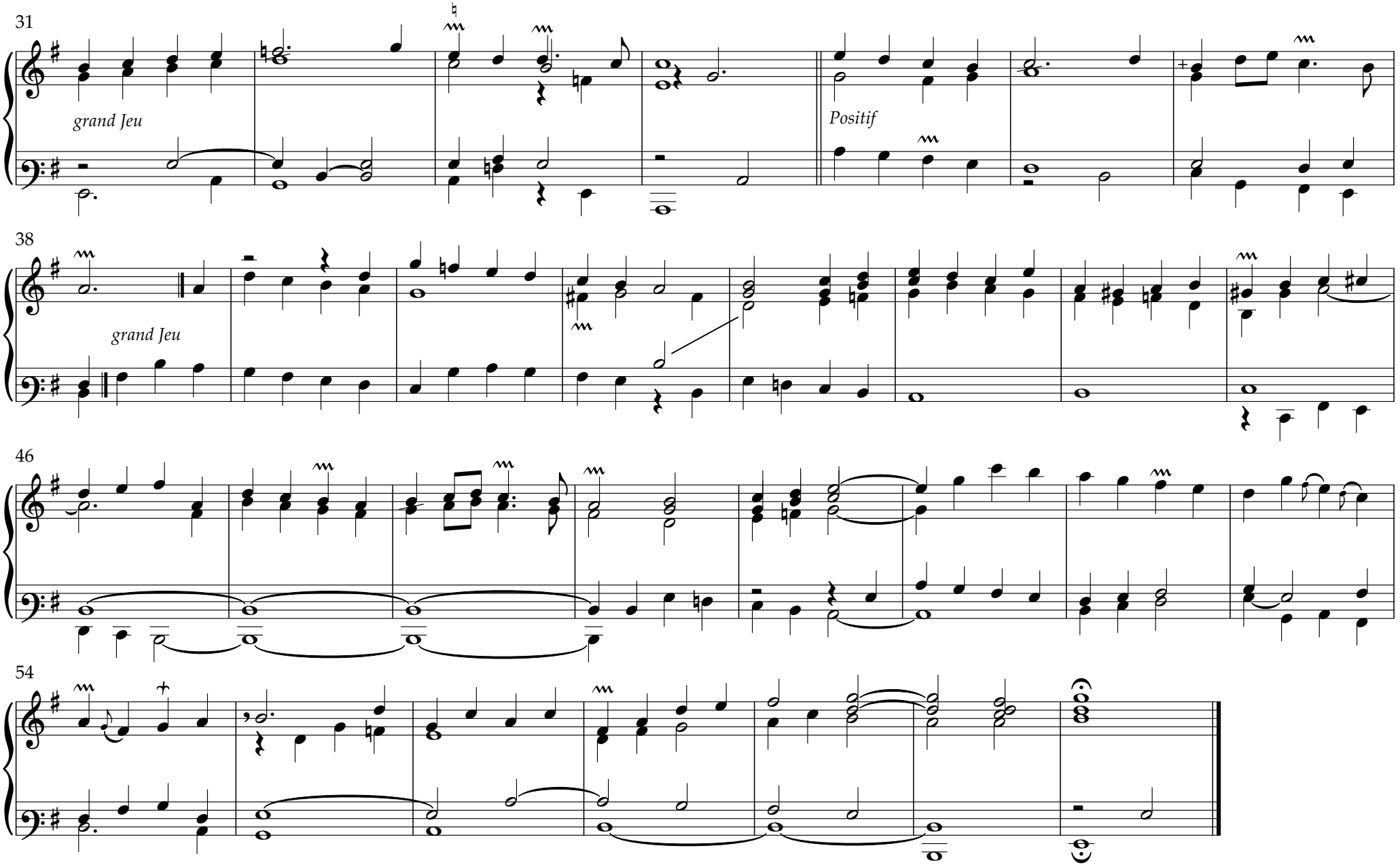

Grand jeu
Positif
8
G. J.
Po.
15
G. J.
Po.
G. J.
22


Jeu doux
Basse de Voix humaine
Dessus de Voix humaine
Jeu doux
Jeu doux
Jeu doux
basse de v. h.
dessus de V. h.
Jeu doux
19
Chœur de V. h.
28


Trompette ou Cromhorne
8
16
23

5. DIALOGUE A DEUX CHŒURS




31
grand Jeu
Positif
38
grand Jeu
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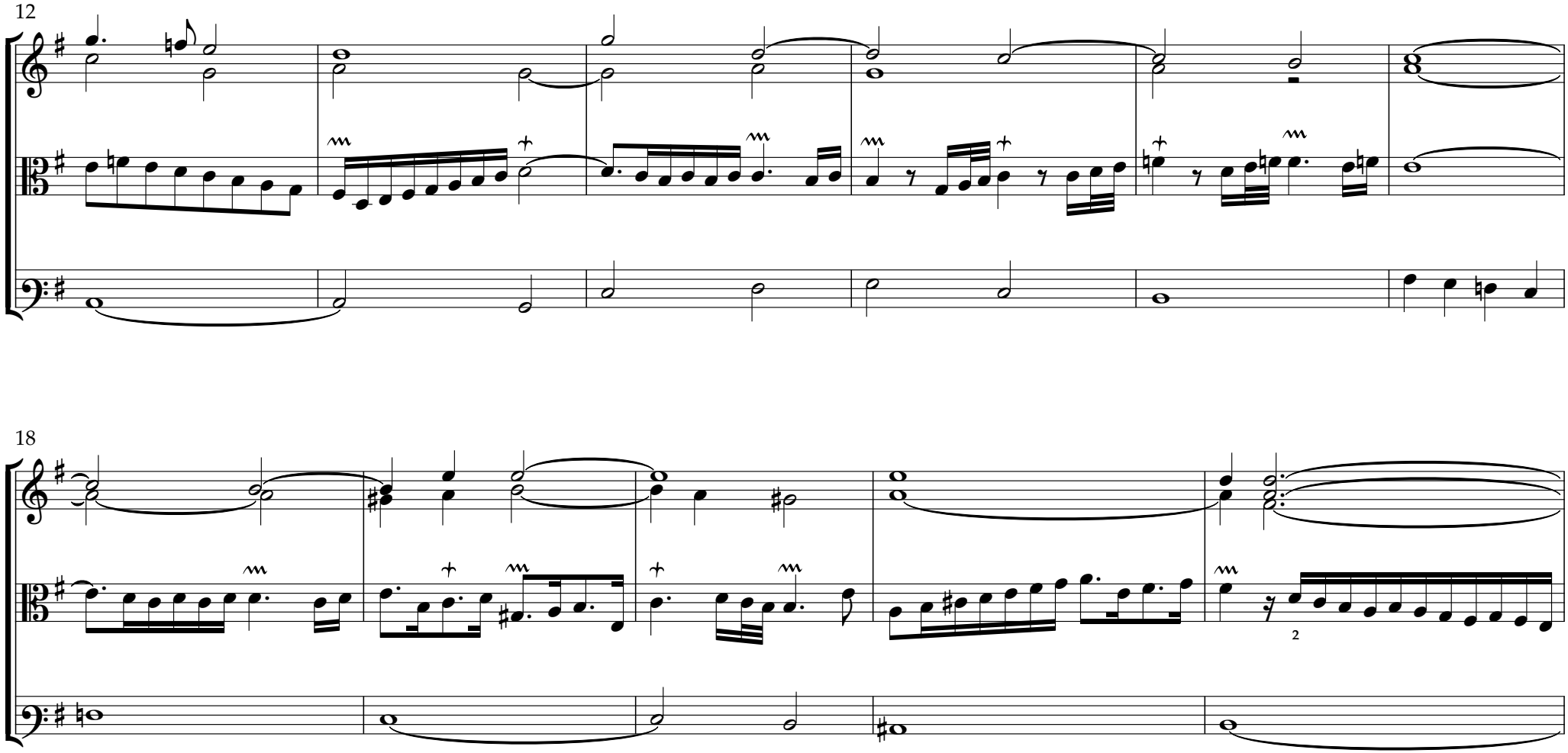
54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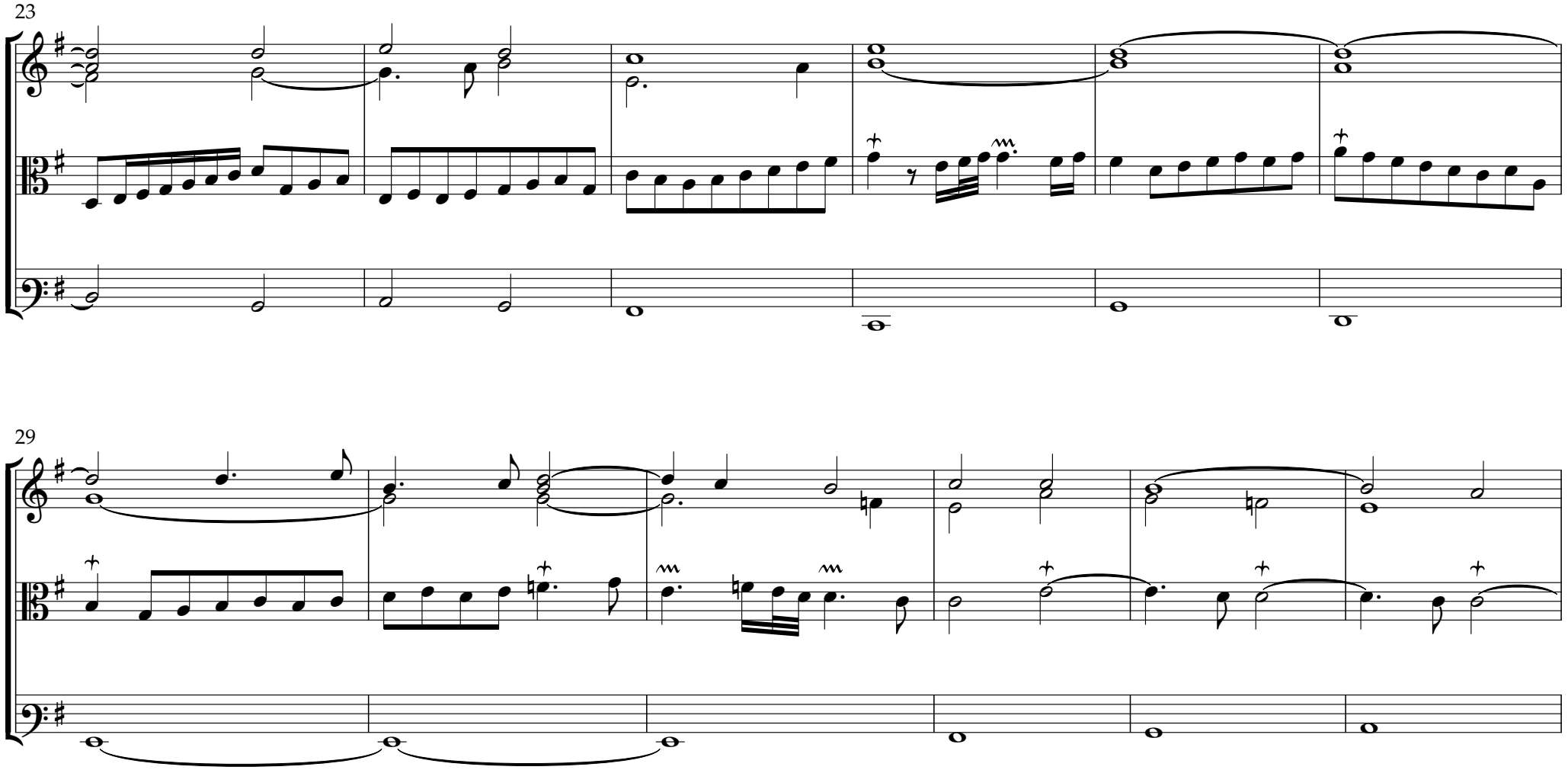
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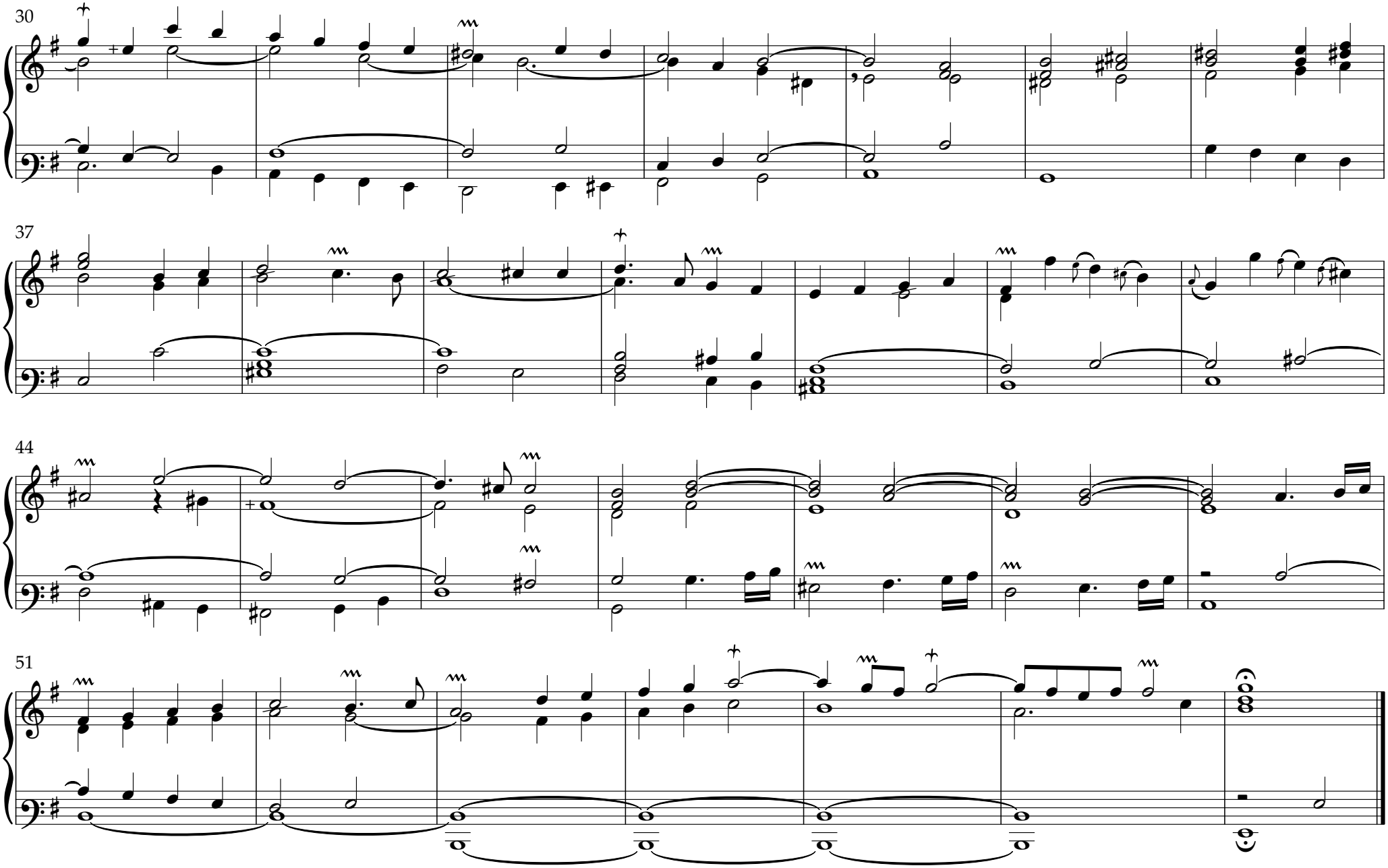

30
37
44
51

EDITORIAL PROCEDURE

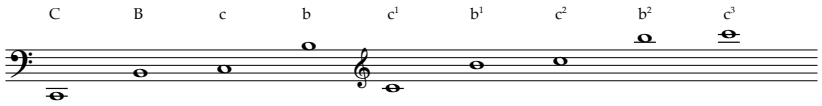
The 1703 imprint of Corrette's *Messe du 8^e Ton* is remarkable for its accuracy, leaving few editorial decisions or interventions necessary. Clefs have been modernised to suit today's players, although a decision has been made to provide a second version in which clefs remain the same. It is hoped this will encourage players to learn and use the various clefs used in French Classical organ music, which it is hoped will provide a closer connexion with the music itself. In music of this period, accidentals apply only to the notes to which they are attached, and this feature has been retained in both versions. In the first version, though, editorial suggestions and advice are placed as *ficta* above or below the notes affected; in such instances, it should be taken that they apply to all further repetitions unless otherwise cancelled by the composer's accidentals.

While Baussen appears to have omitted many ties, the editor has thought it unnecessary to make suggestions in the music itself. Players will need to rely on their musical judgement when ties seem to be missing. However, the commentary does include suggestions and it is worthwhile checking pieces with this section to see what these are.

Stems have been rationalised in each version since there are no musical reasons to follow Baussen's original directions. All time signatures appear as they do in the 1703 impression. Registration suggestions and information on ornaments are not provided editorially since Corrette discusses them in his preface. However, his requirements are sometimes different from his peers and might be preferred. These have been discussed in footnotes of the relevant sections. No editorial ornaments have been made or suggested in the commentary, though information on additional ornaments, alongside explanations, are provided in footnotes.

System of reference:

Pitch references use Helmholtz:



For ease of reference, stave designations are R, L and P; voice numbers are hierarchical and always count the highest note as voice 1; beat references are provided in crotchets for simple time signatures and dotted crotchets/quavers for compound. Thus,

3.2/4 R2 indicates: bar 3; beat 2; note 4; upper stave; voice 2.

COMMENTARY

NB: *ts* indicates a suggested tie.

1. Grand Plein Jeu
12.1 R2: ts.
14.1 R3: ts.
25.1 R3: ts.

2. Fugue
15.2 R2: ts.

3. Cromhone en Taille
16.3 R2: ts.
38.3 R1: ts.

5. Dialogue: use of + instead of petite note.

6. Grand Plein Jeu
7.1 R3: Tie mistakenly placed on preceding d^1.

8. Duo
83.1 R: The turn is misplaced to the left of the rhythm dot. However, Corrette's preface and bars 16 and 53 indicate it is likely misplaced.

9. Recit Tendre de Nazard.
31 L: The offset bass note is a common feature of some Classical French organ music and indicates a final note after the chord has been played.

11. Basse de trompette
48.3 R: ts.

13. Tierce en Taille
1.1 R2: ts.
1.3 R2: ts.
9.1 R2: ts.

16. Offerte
37.2/2 R1: Unclear if turn comes before the note. However, if it does, it will be the only instance in the book. Cf. note to no. 8, 'Duo', bar 83.
148.4 R2: Formerly g^1.
161.1 L1: No aug. dot.

19. Cromhorne en Taille
45.1 R2: ts.

17. Premier Sanctus
5.3 R2: ts.

20. Plein Jeux a Deux Chœurs pour le premier Agnus dei
11.1 R2: ts.

23. Basse de Trompette ou de Cromhorne
10.1 R2: ts.
43.1 R2: ts.
57.1 R2: ts.
59.1 R2: ts.
62.1 R2: ts.

24. Fond d'Orgue
34.1 R2: ts.

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