Six Canons

from

The Musical Offering, BWV 1079

by

Johann Sebastian Bach

for violas in two, three, and four voices

Score

Arranged by Thomas Hall
Chapman University

Arranger's Note

In May, 1747, the famous capellmeister of Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach, visited the distinguished and musically active court of King Friedrich II (The Great) at Potsdam. During the visit, Bach did some well-publicized improvisation on a theme presented to him by Friedrich. After the trip, Bach made good on a promise to write a proper fugue using the King's theme as a subject. He enlarged on that promise and the result was *The Musical Offering* BWV 1079, which is dedicated to the King. The *Offering* consists of thirteen different pieces, all based on the King's theme, and emphasizing contrapuntal techniques: two fugues, a trio sonata, and ten canons. Six of those canons are presented here in a performance edition for violas.

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Thomas Hall
Orange, California

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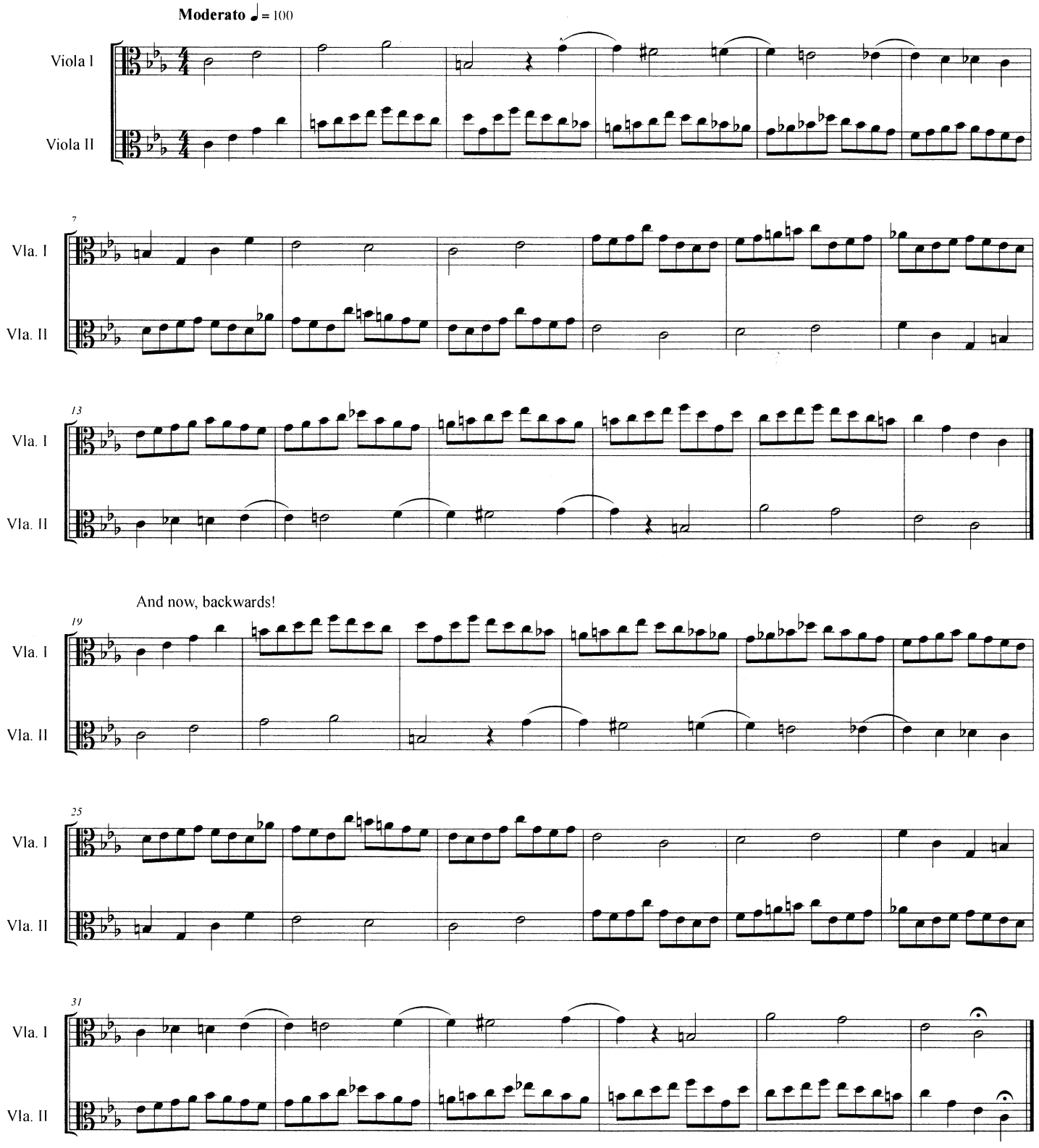
Canon a 2, Cancrizans

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

This canon was originally presented on a single staff with c-clefs at both beginning and ending measures; one line played simultaneously forward and backward, combines to make a duet.

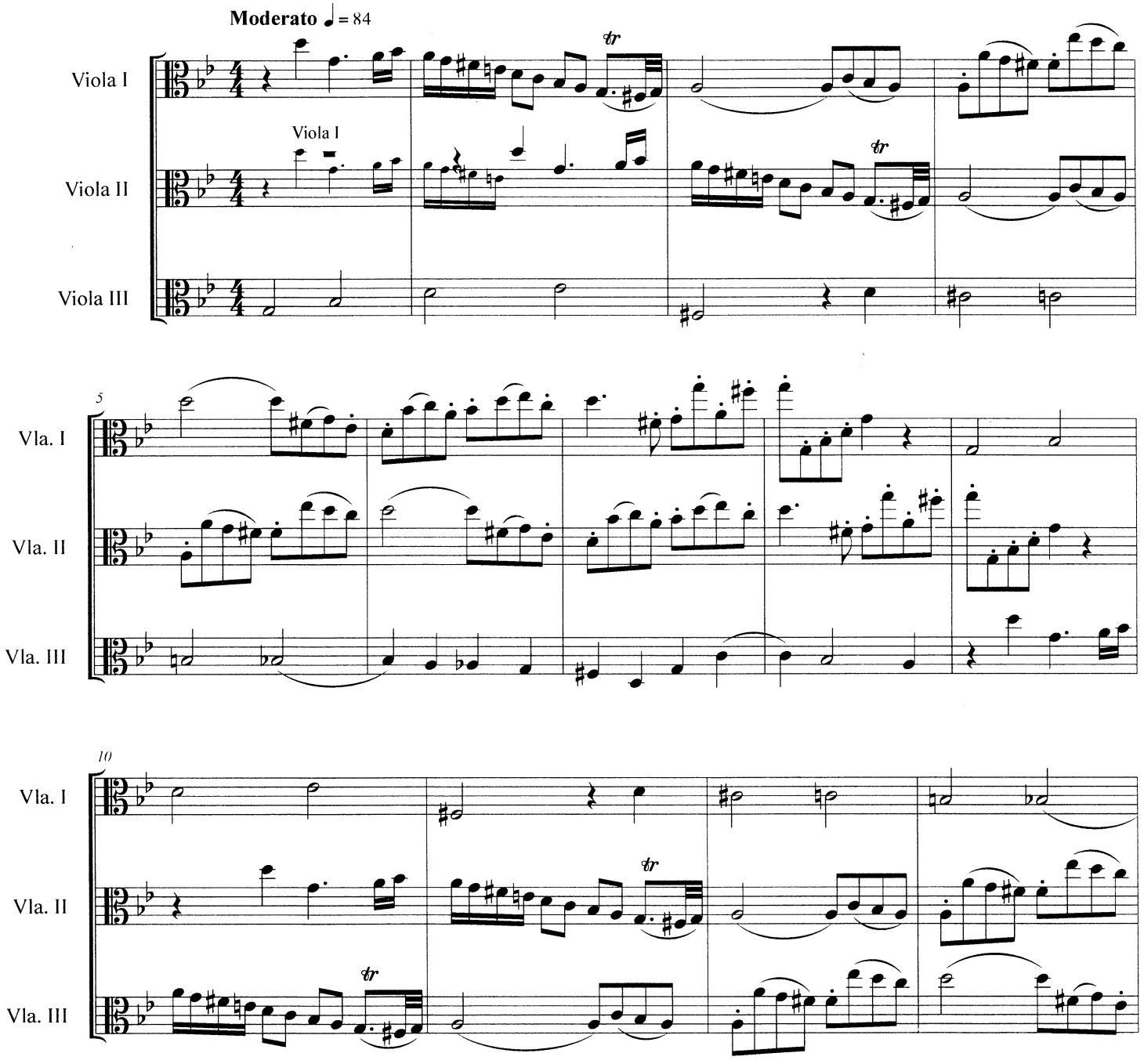
Moderato ♩ = 100

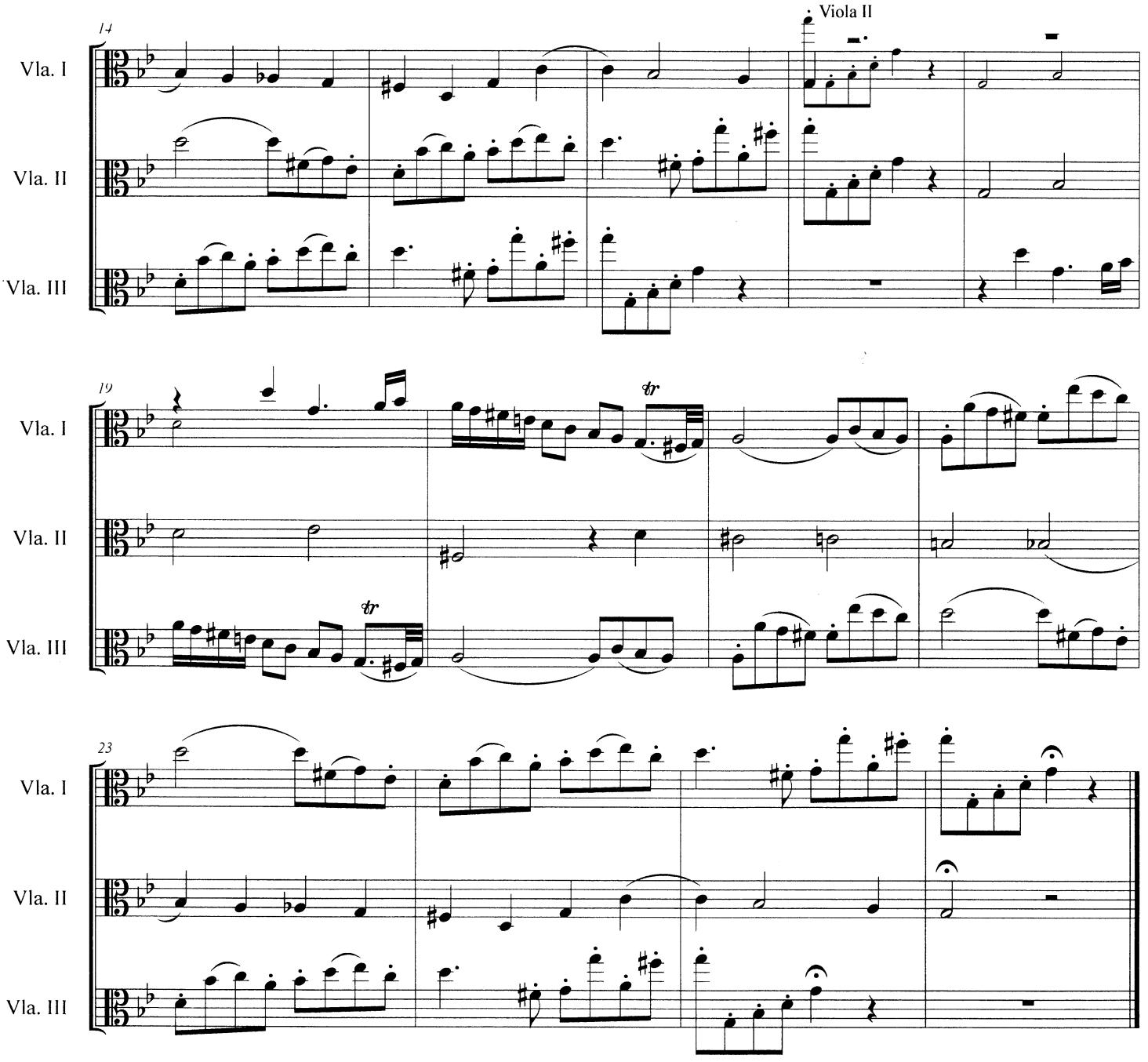


Canon a 2, in Unisono

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach




14
Viola II
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
19
tr
tr
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
23
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Larghetto ♩ = 56

Viola I

Viola II

Viola III

The King's theme

4

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

7

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III

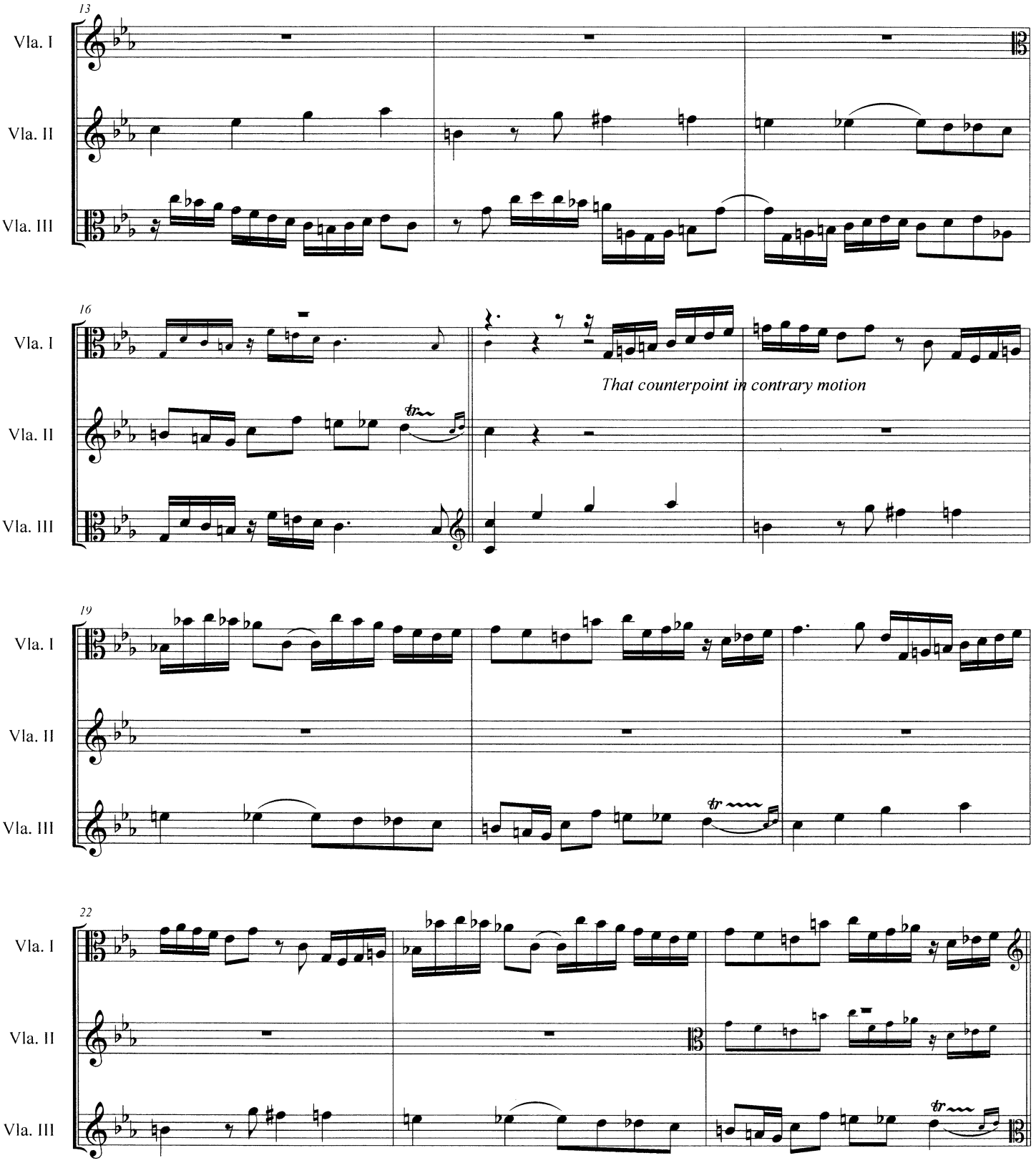
A counterpoint to the King's theme

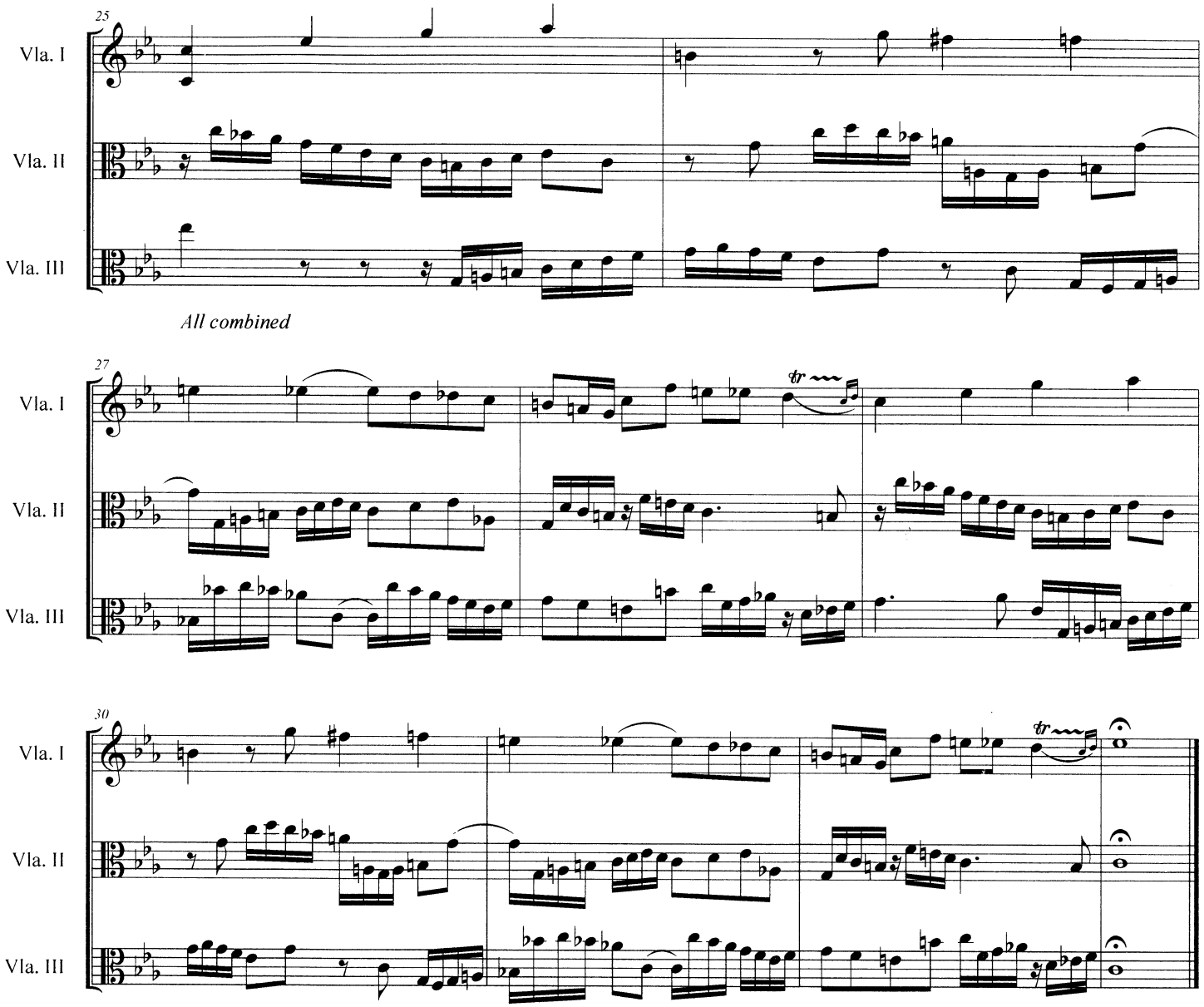
10

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla. III


13
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
16
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
That counterpoint in contrary motion
19
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
22
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

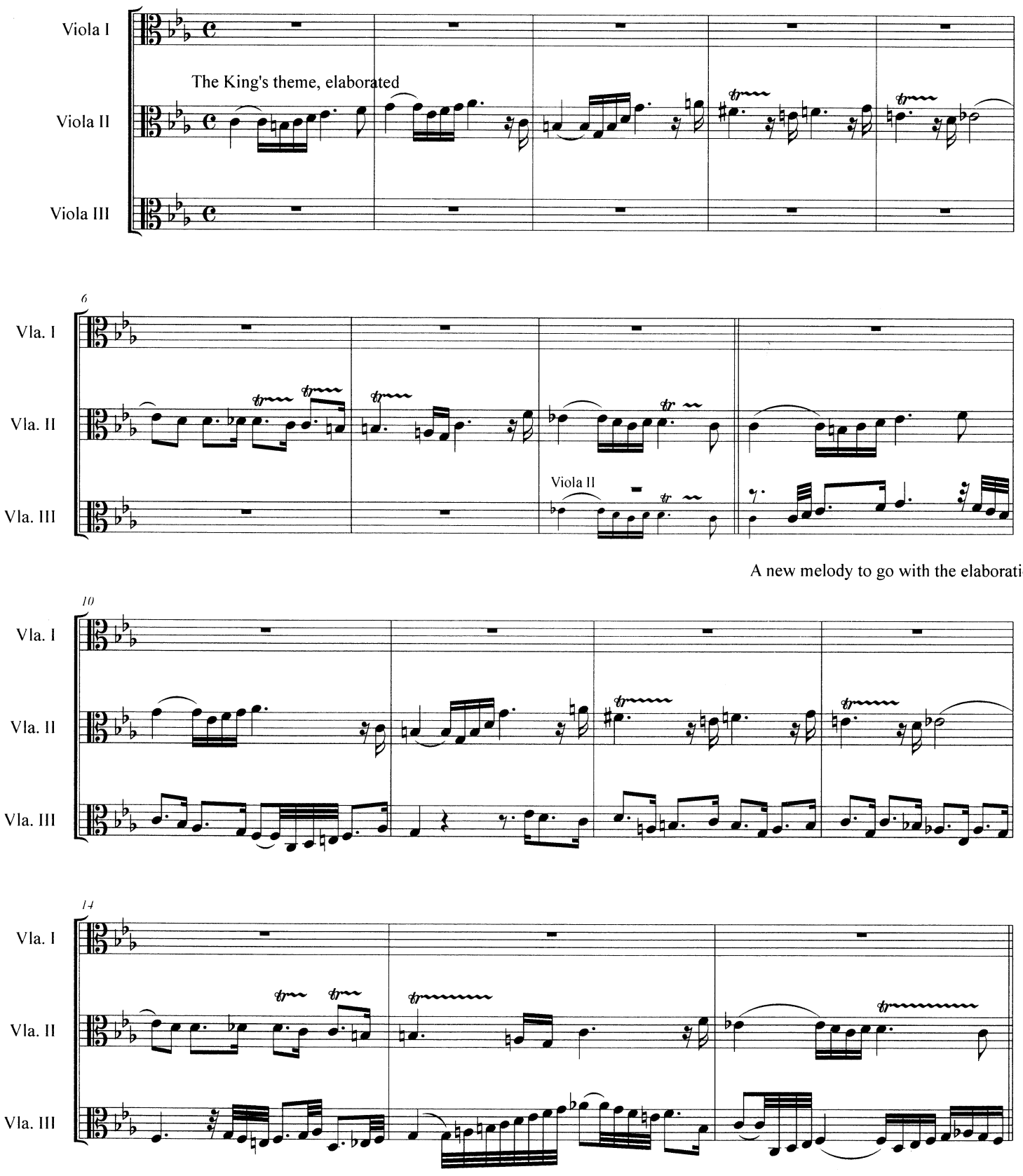

25
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
All combined
27
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
30
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

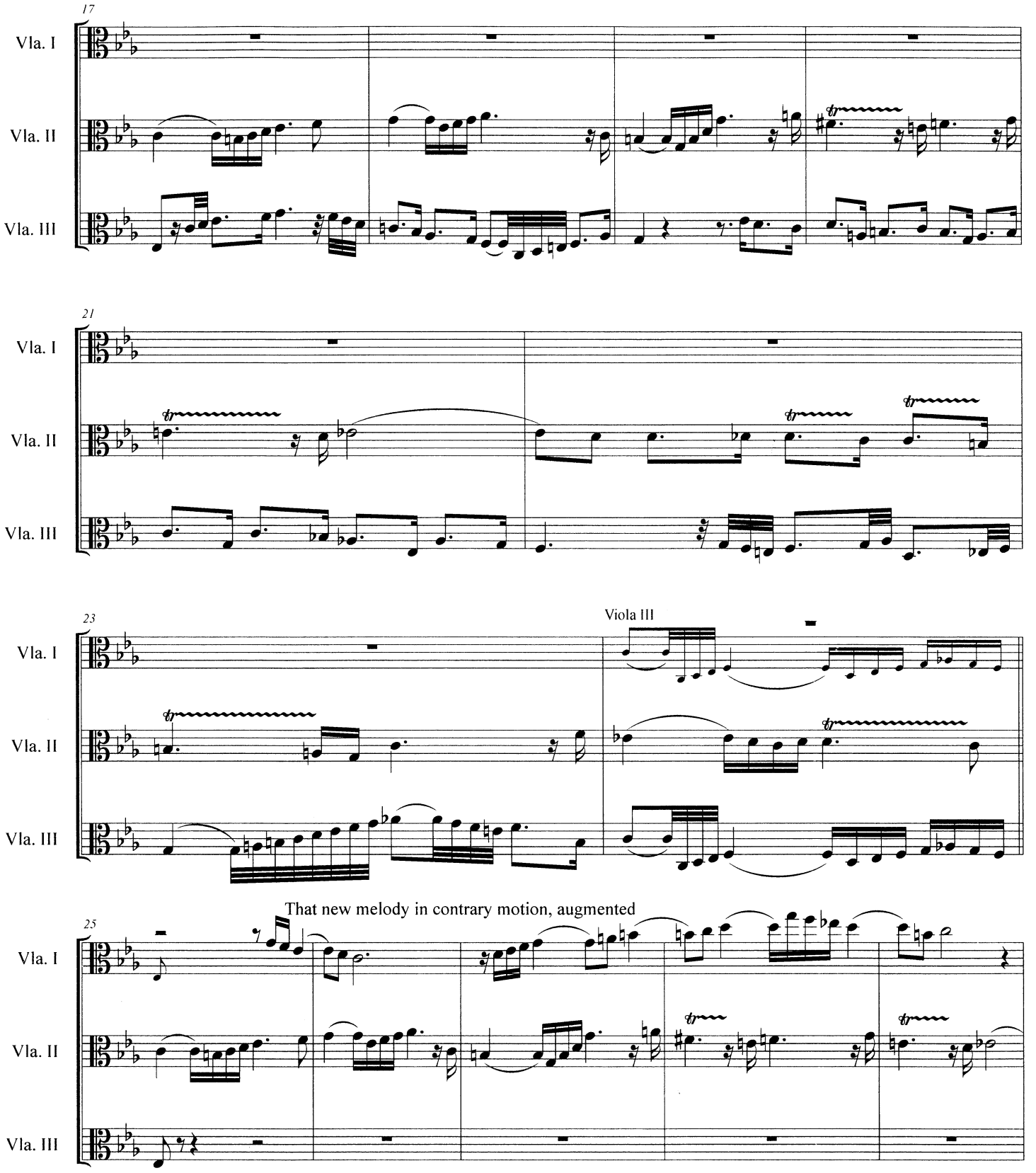
Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

from *The Musical Offering*

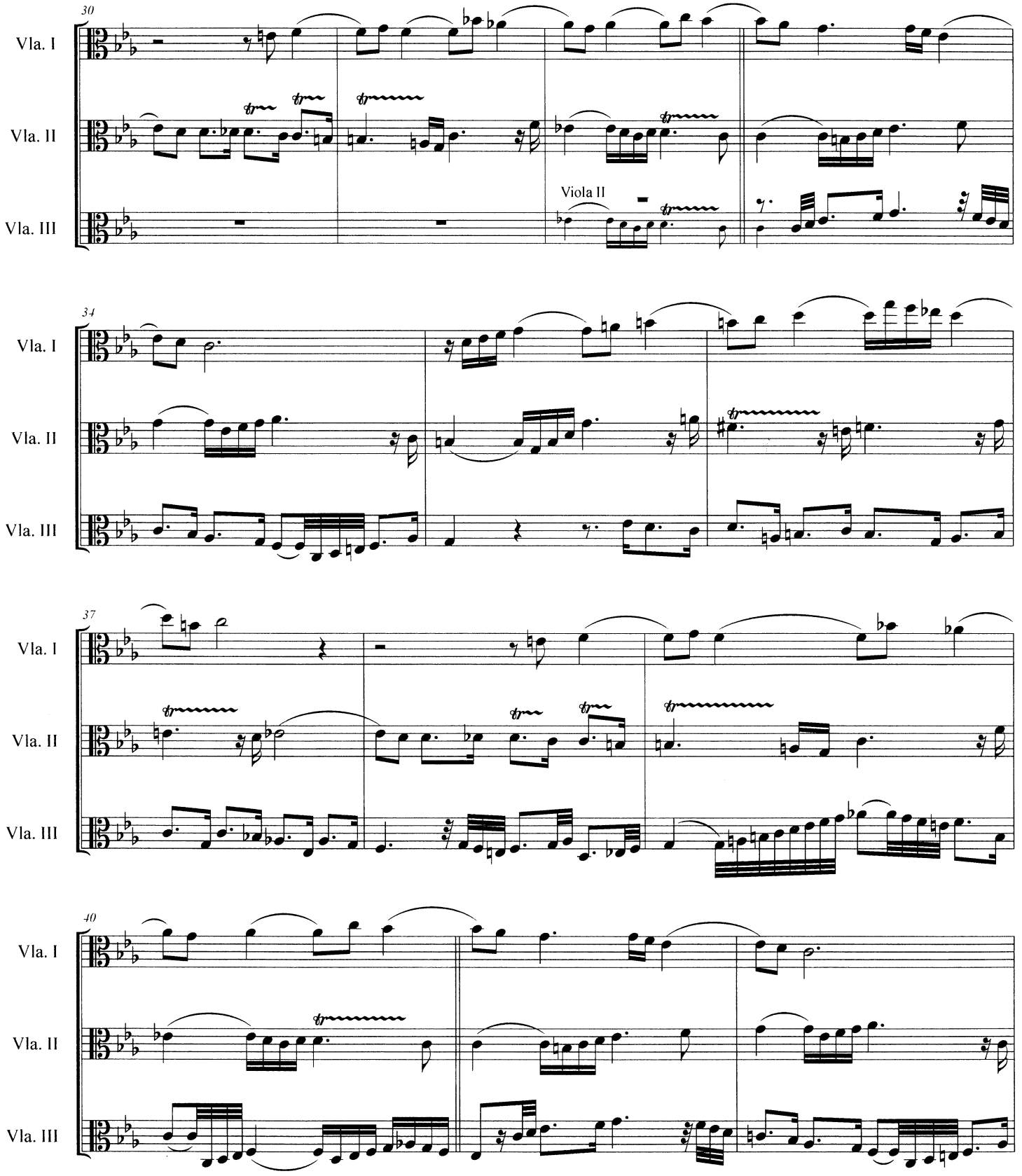
J. S. Bach

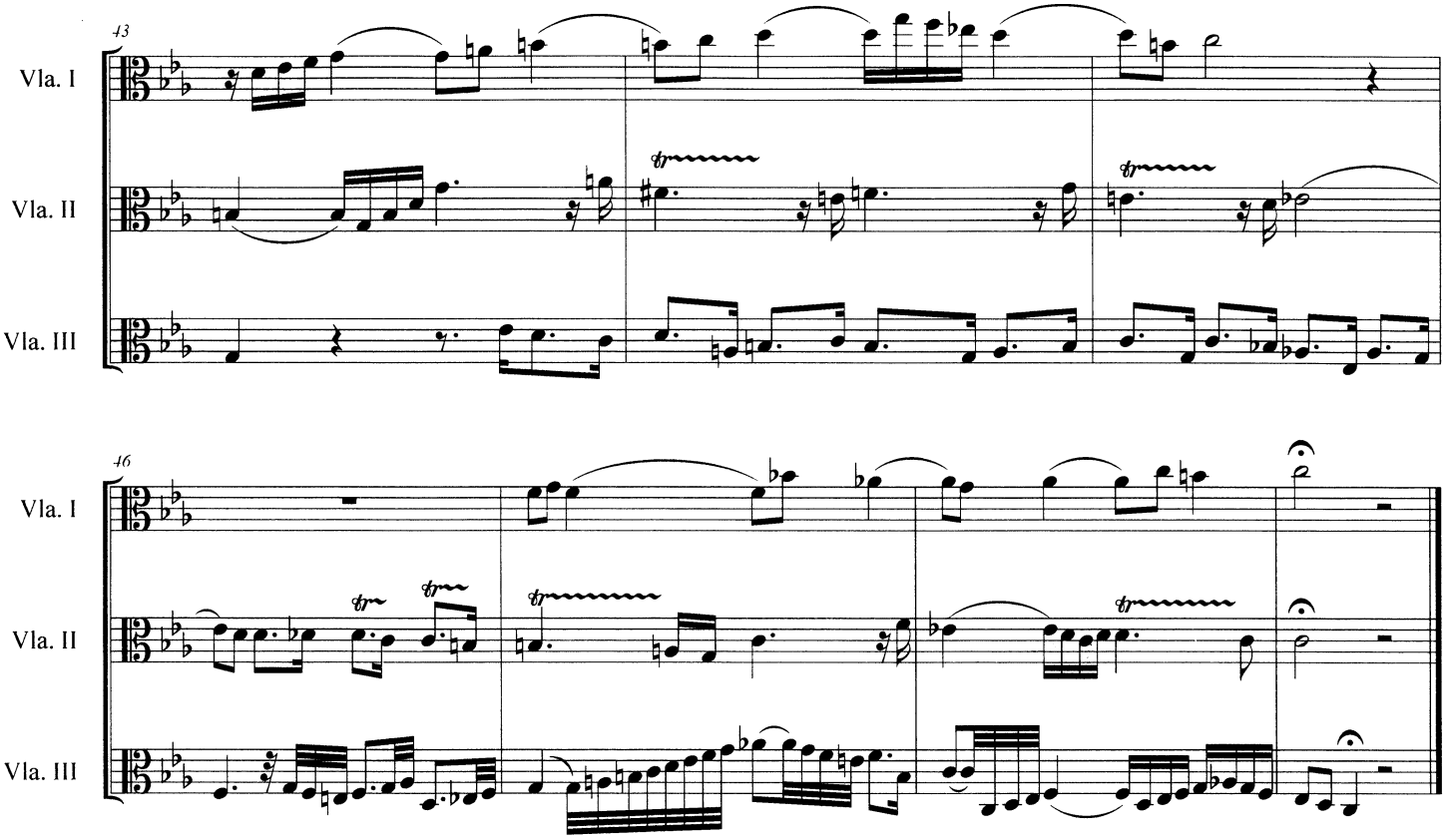
Largo ♩ = 56




17
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
21
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
23
Viola III
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
That new melody in contrary motion, augmented
25
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

All combined !




43
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
46
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III

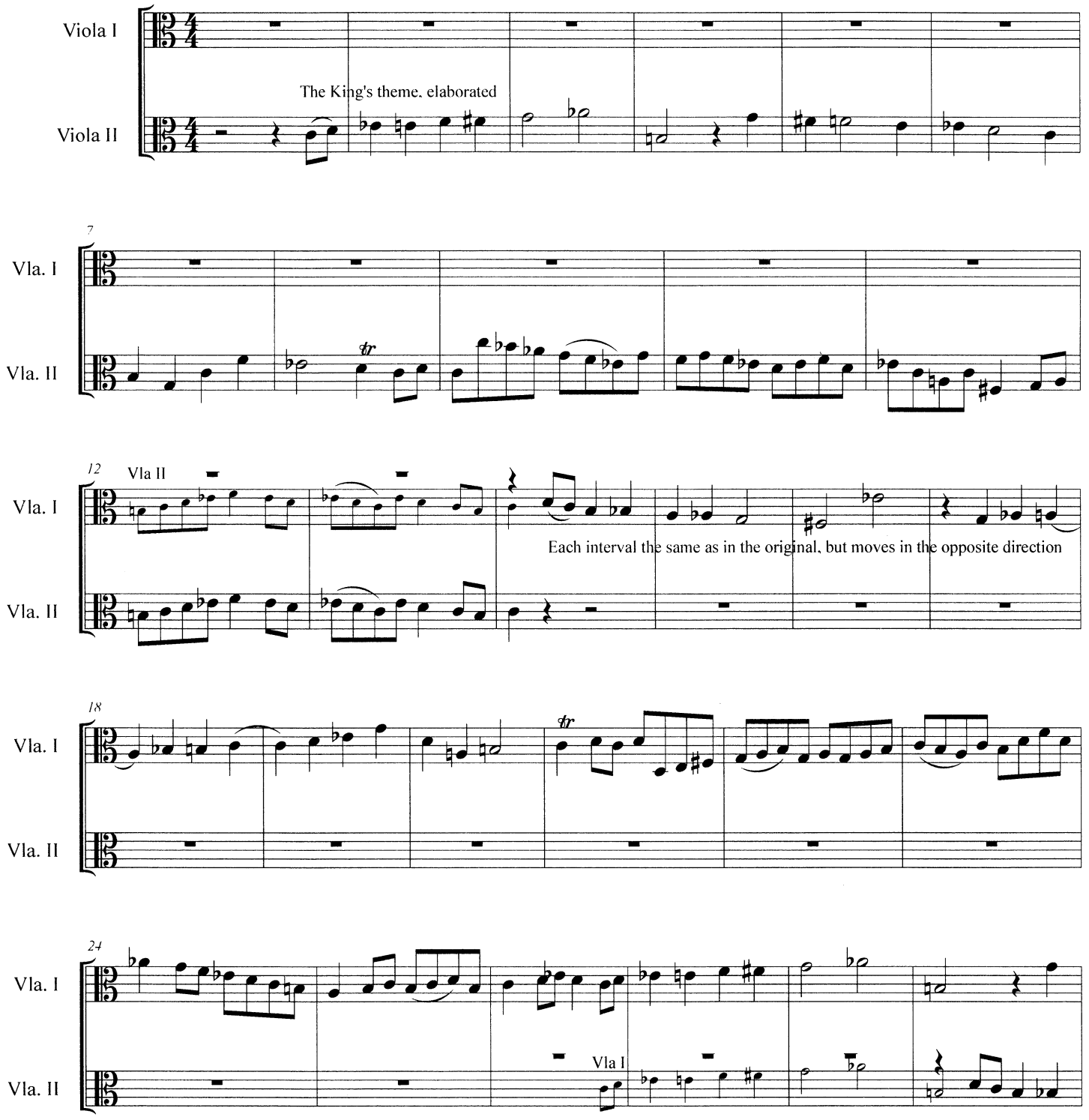
Canon a 2

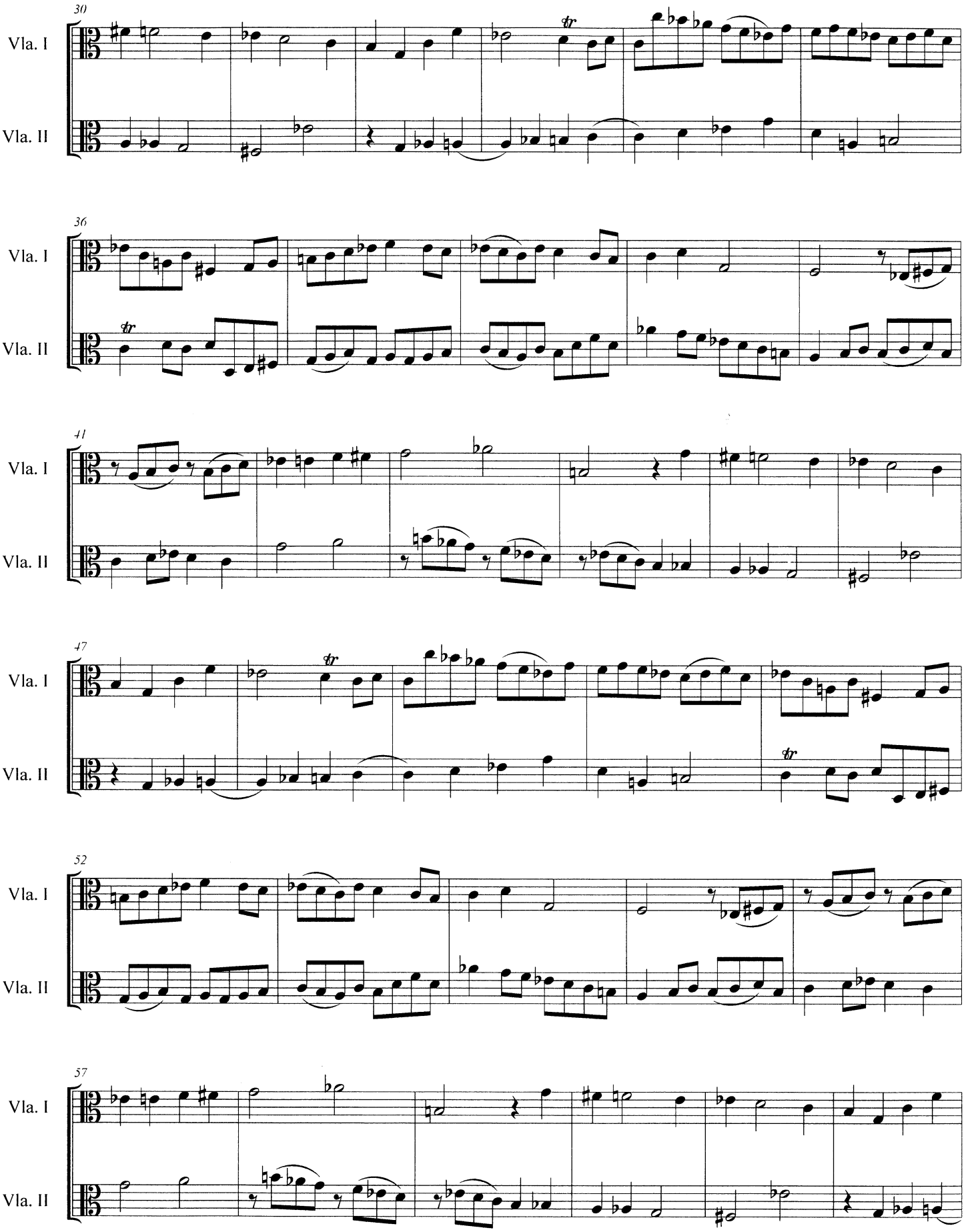
(Puzzle Canon, Contrary Motion)

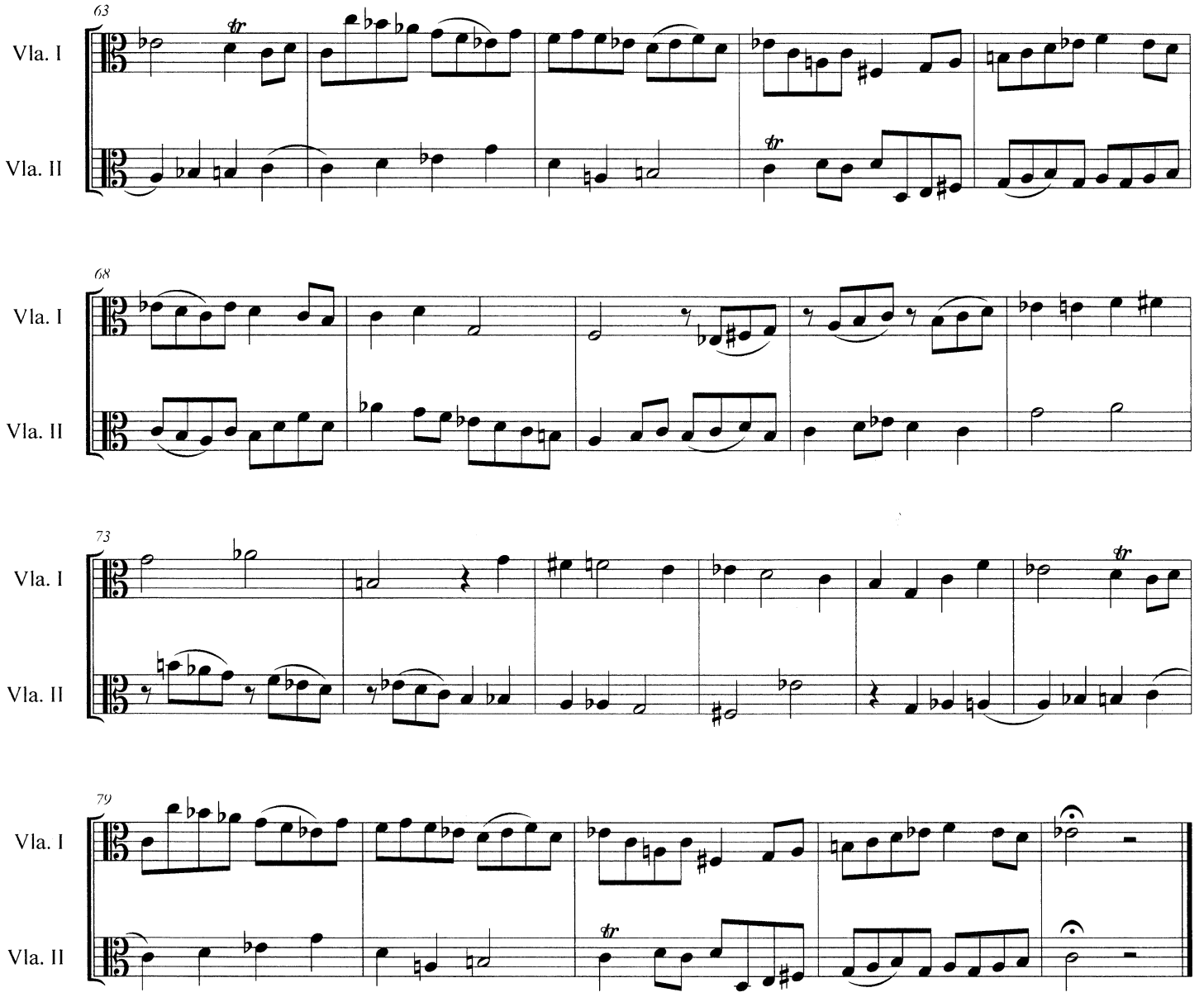
from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Allegro ♩ = 120




30
Vla. I
Vla. II
36
Vla. I
Vla. II
41
Vla. I
Vla. II
47
Vla. I
Vla. II
52
Vla. I
Vla. II
57
Vla. I
Vla. II

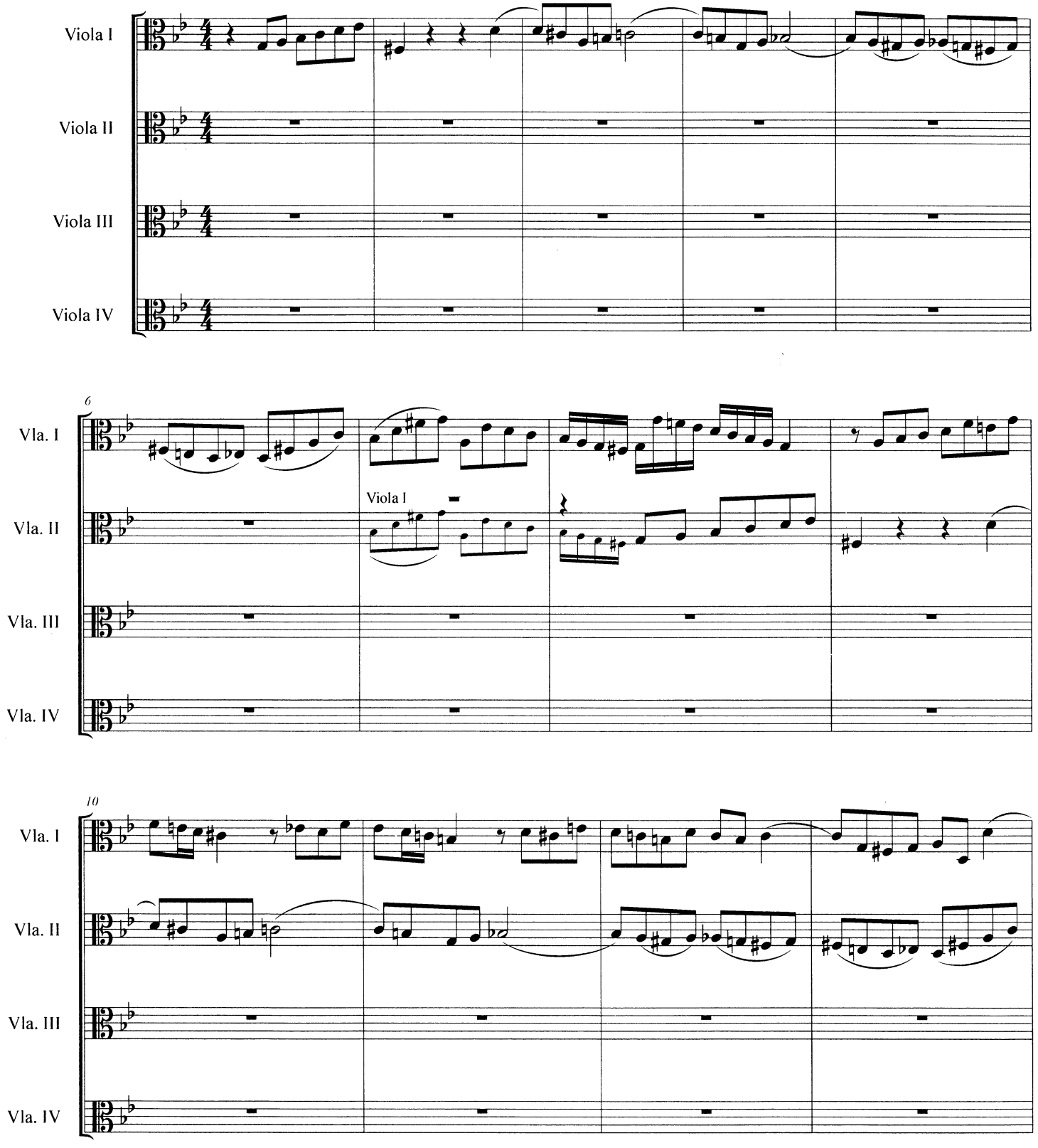

63
Vla. I
Vla. II
68
Vla. I
Vla. II
73
Vla. I
Vla. II
79
Vla. I
Vla. II

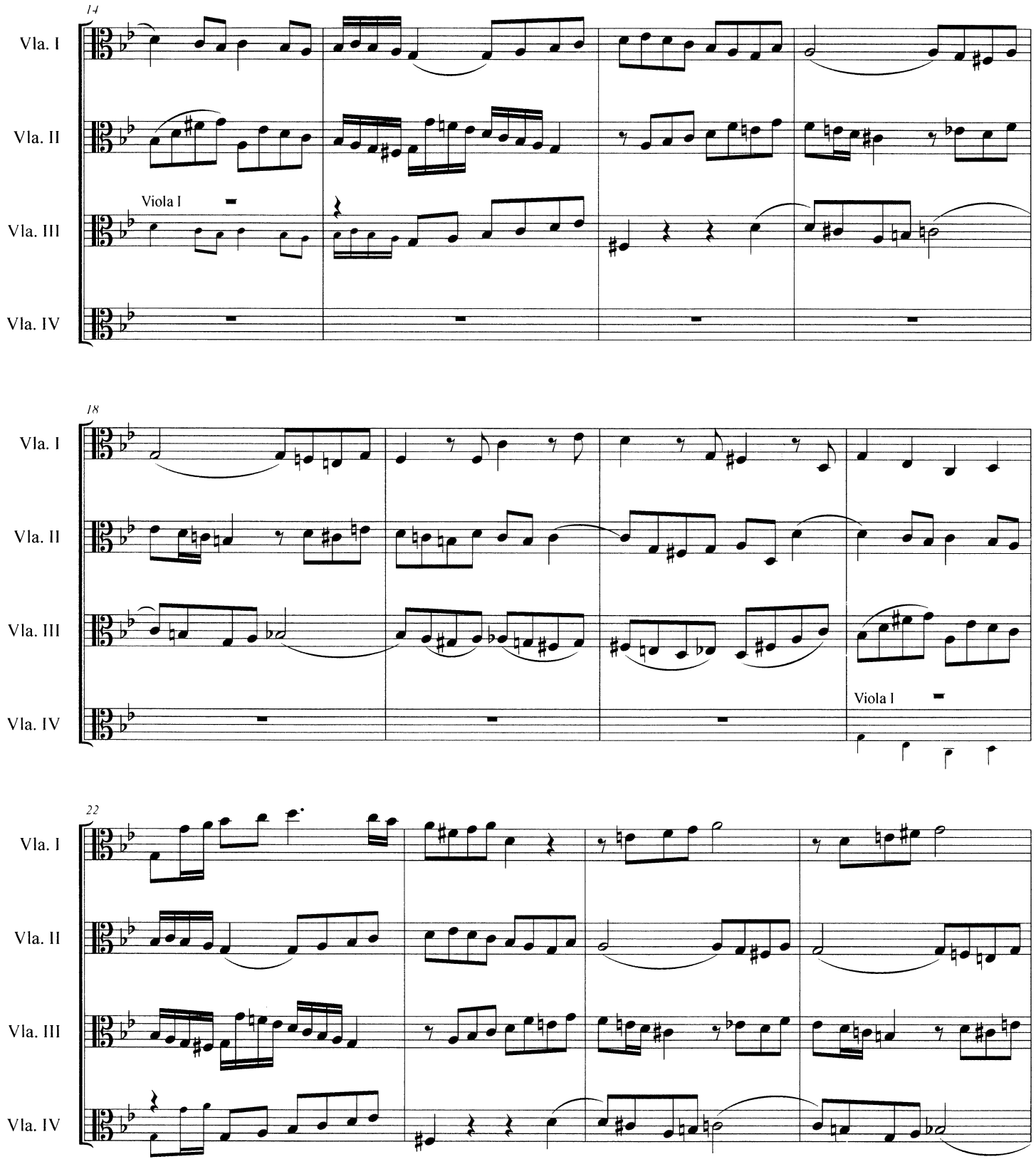
Canon a 4

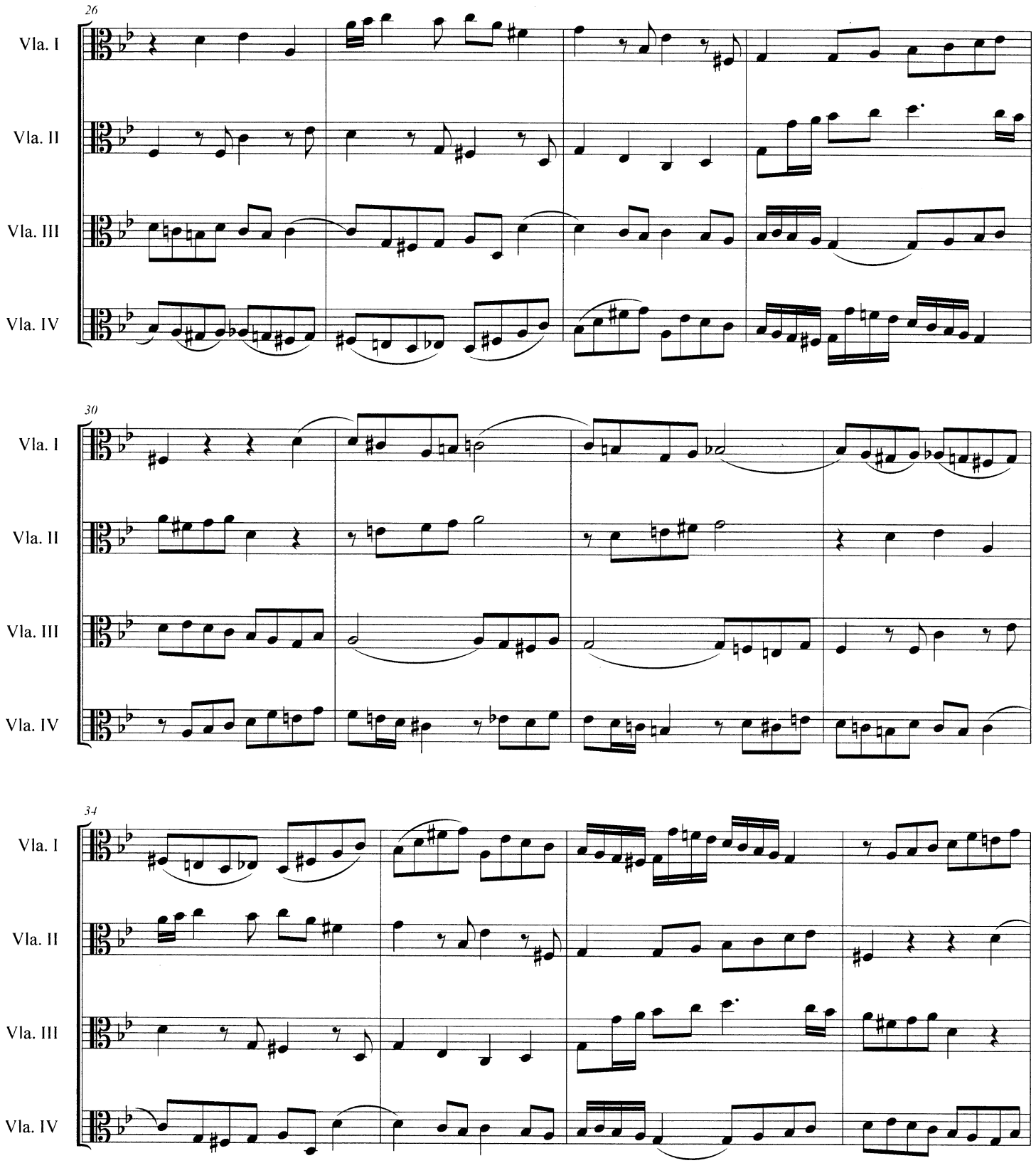
from *The Musical Offering*

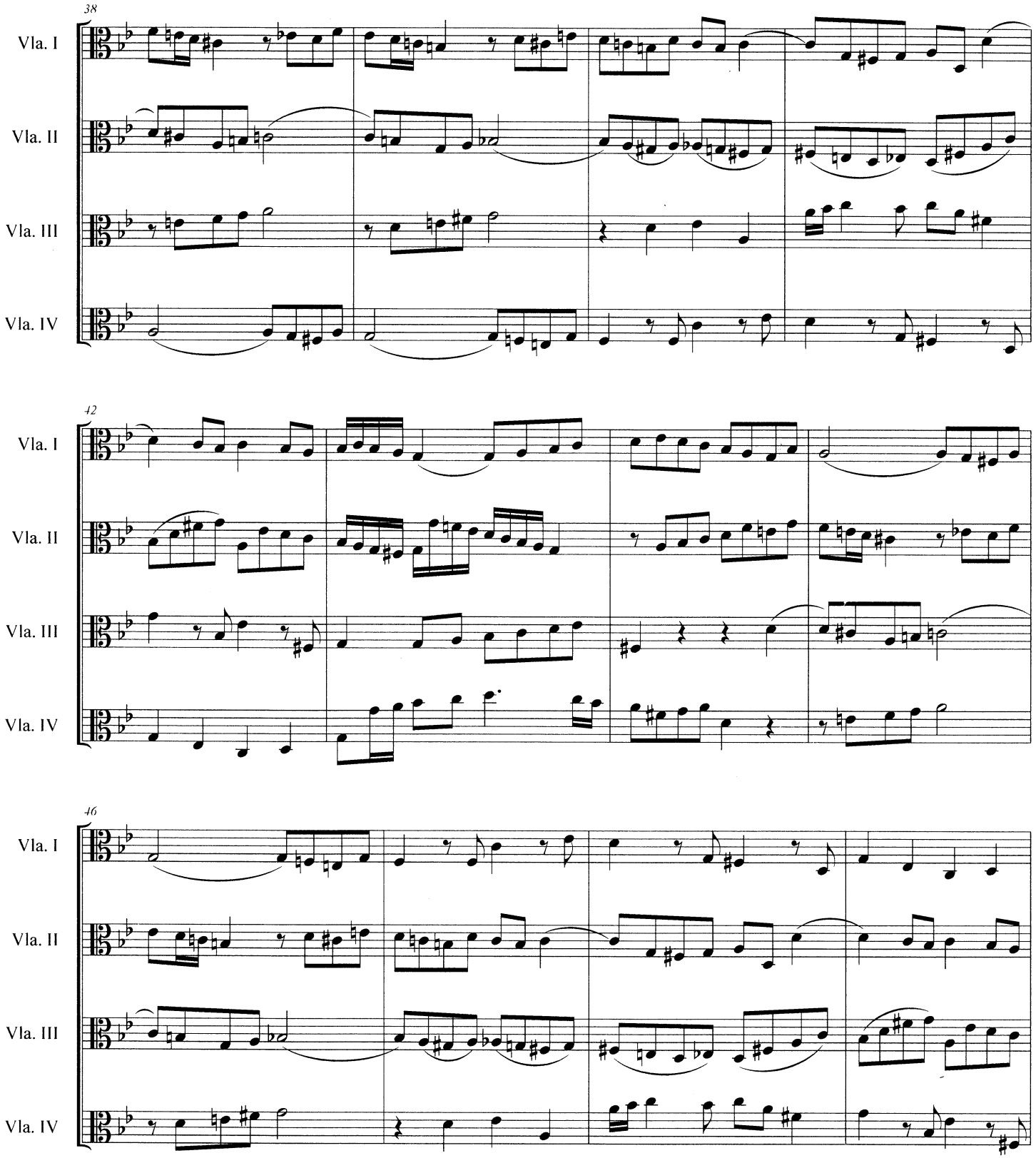
J. S. Bach

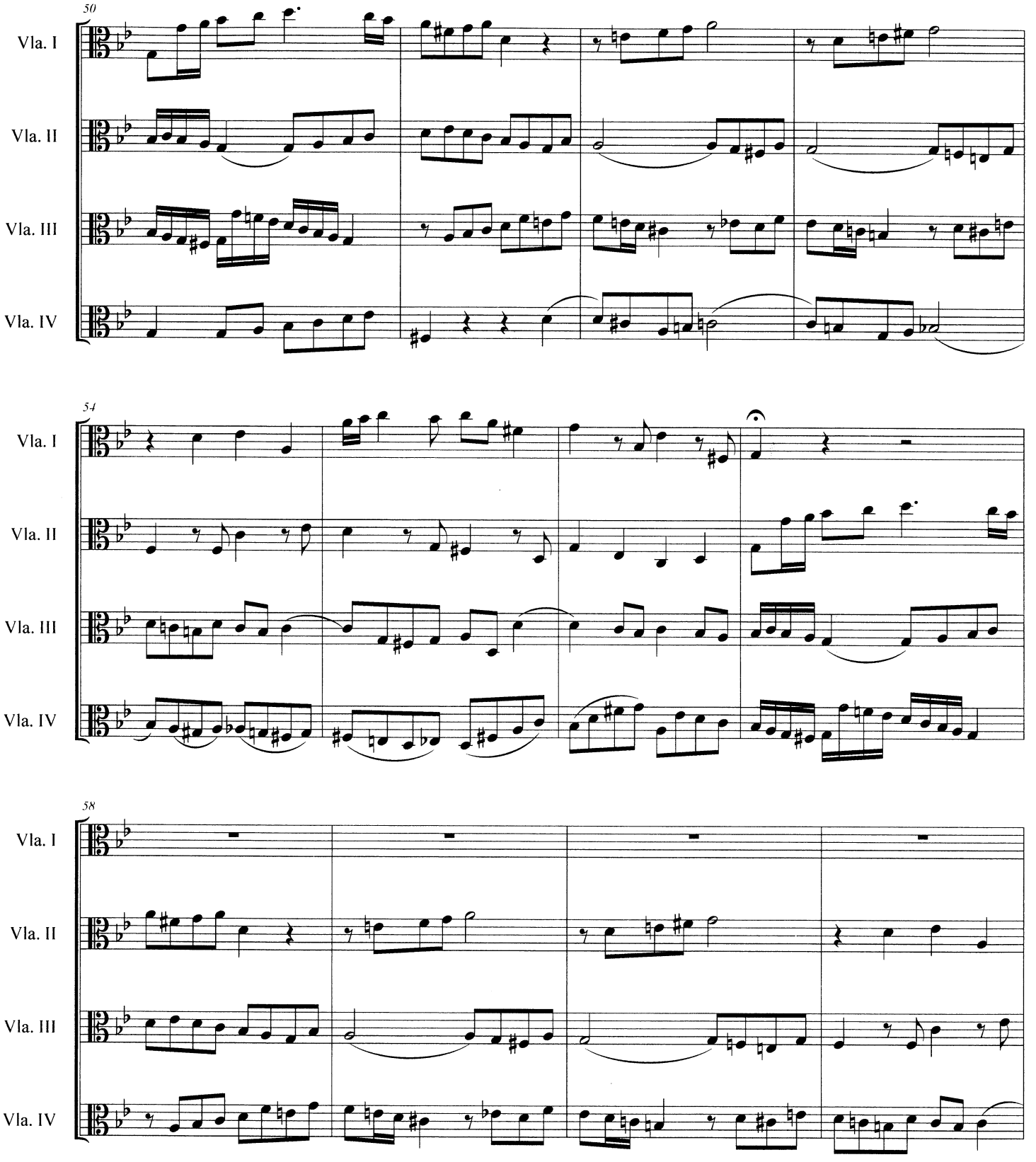
Andante ♩ = 80

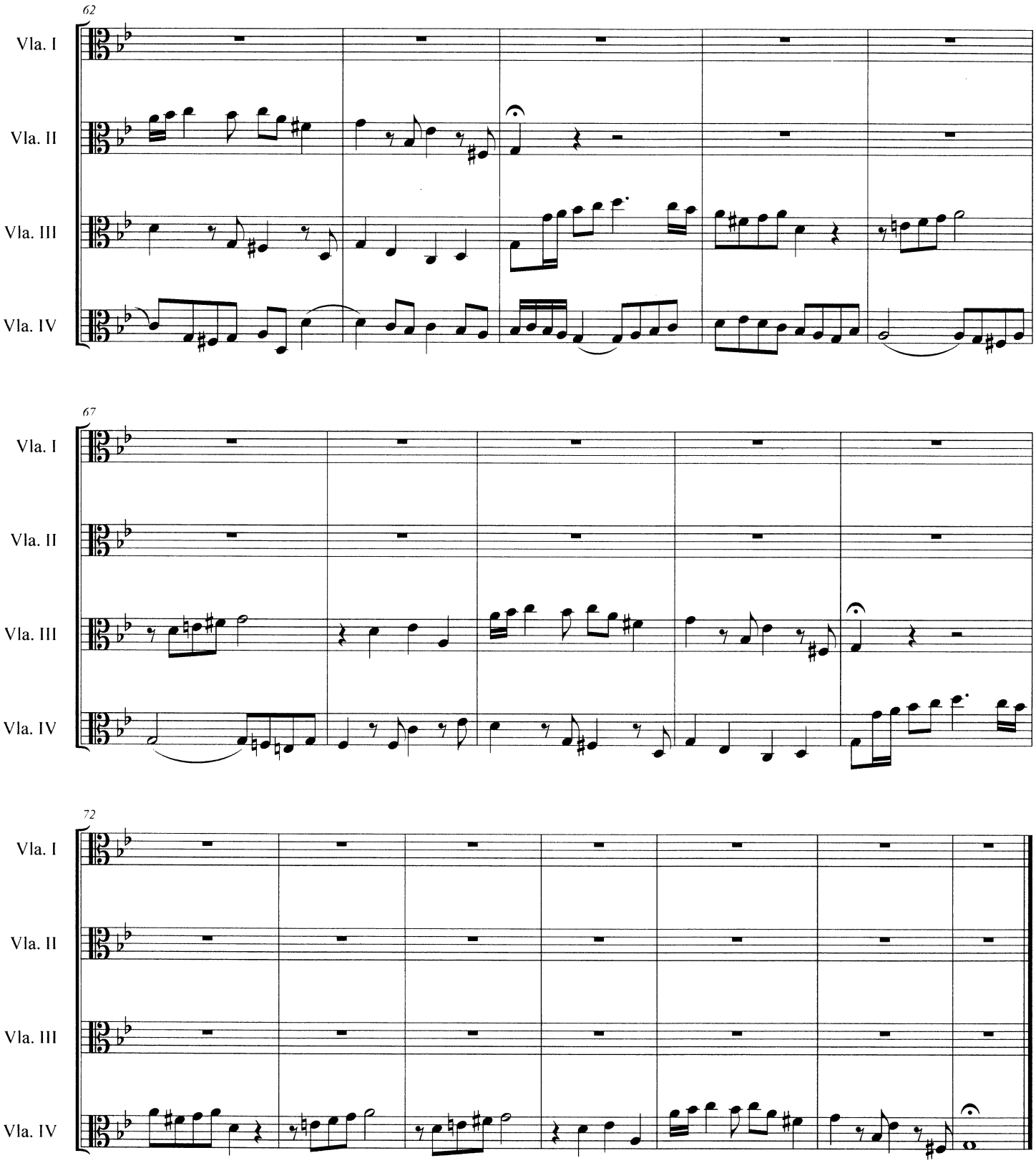



14
Vla. I
Vla. II
Viola I
Vla. III
Vla. IV
18
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
Viola I
22
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV


26
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
30
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
34
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV


38
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
42
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
46
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV


50
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
54
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
58
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV


62
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
67
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV
72
Vla. I
Vla. II
Vla. III
Vla. IV

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Canon a 2 (Puzzle, Contrary Motion) 5

Canon a 4 7

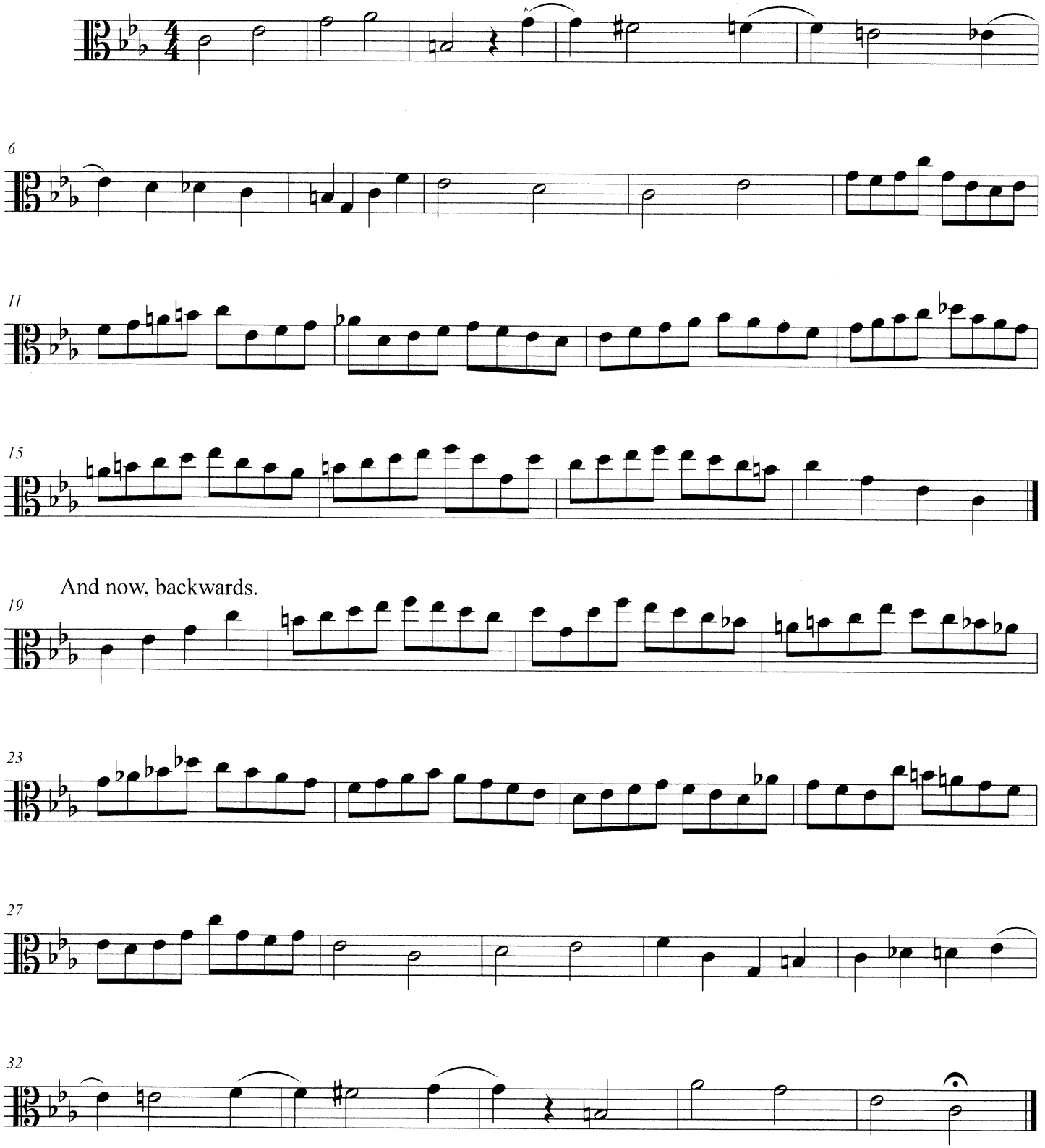
Canon a 2, Cancrizans

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola I

J. S. Bach

Moderato ♩ = 100

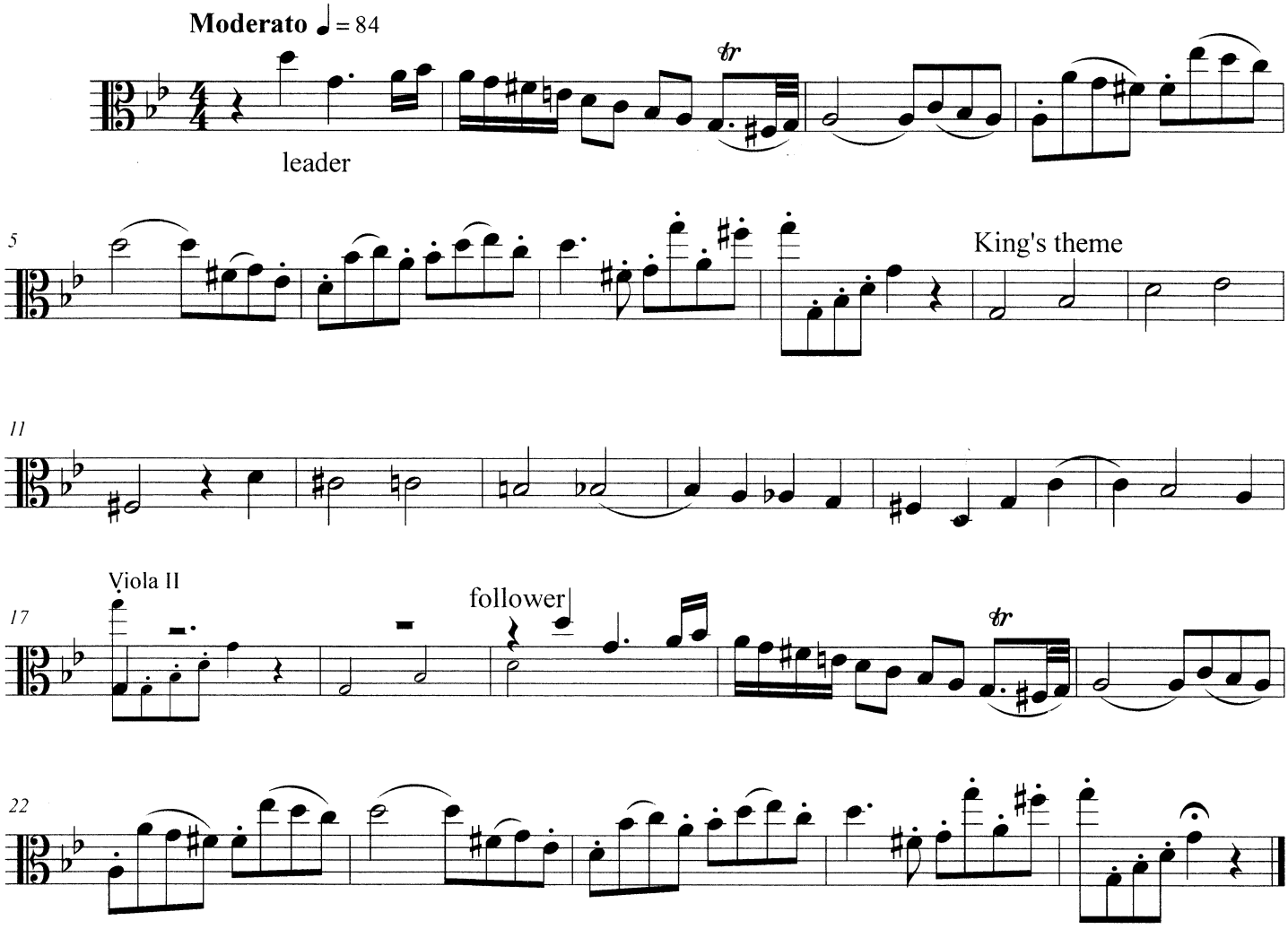


Canon a 2, in Unisono

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola I

J. S. Bach



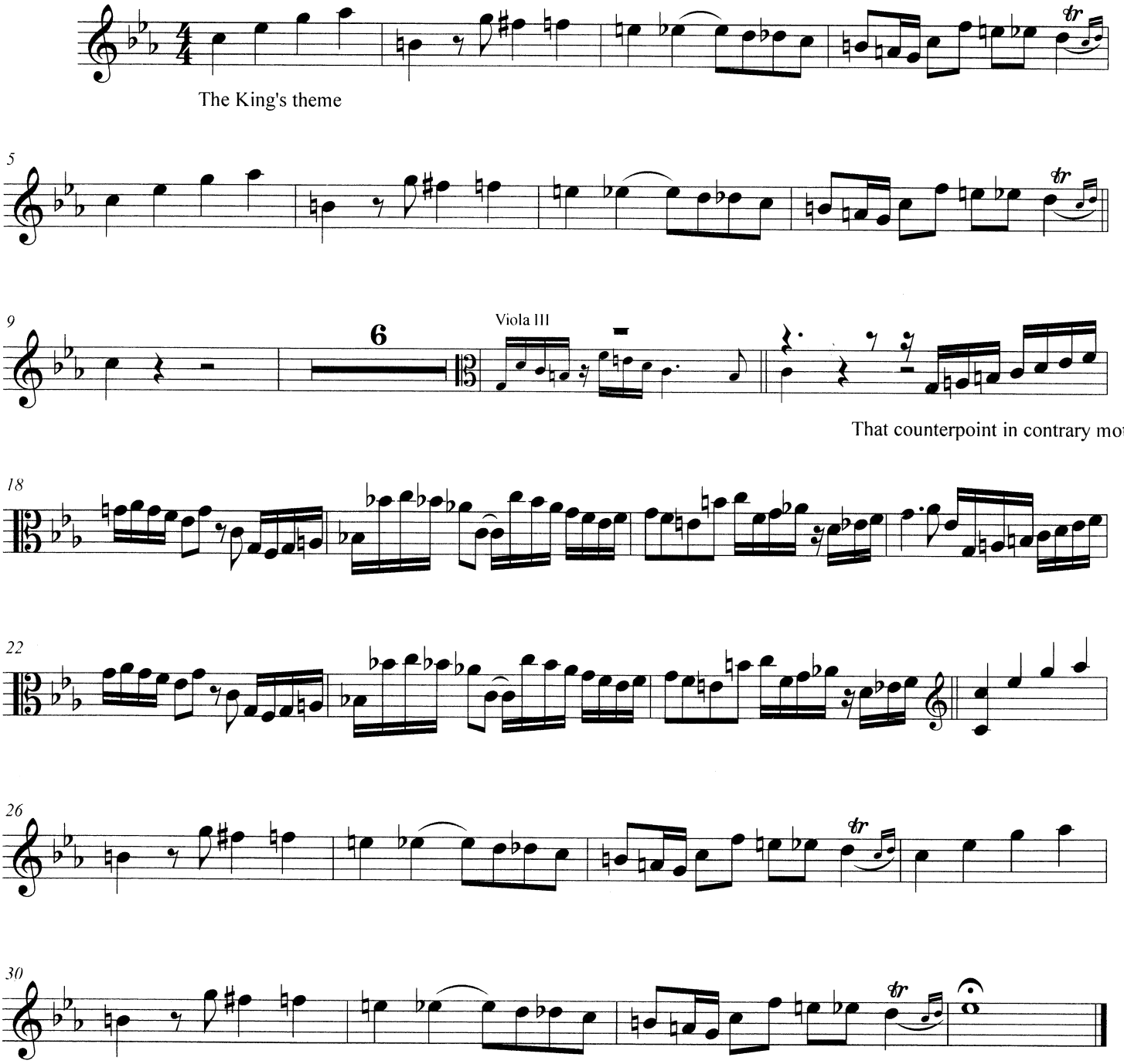
Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola I

Larghetto ♩ = 56

J. S. Bach

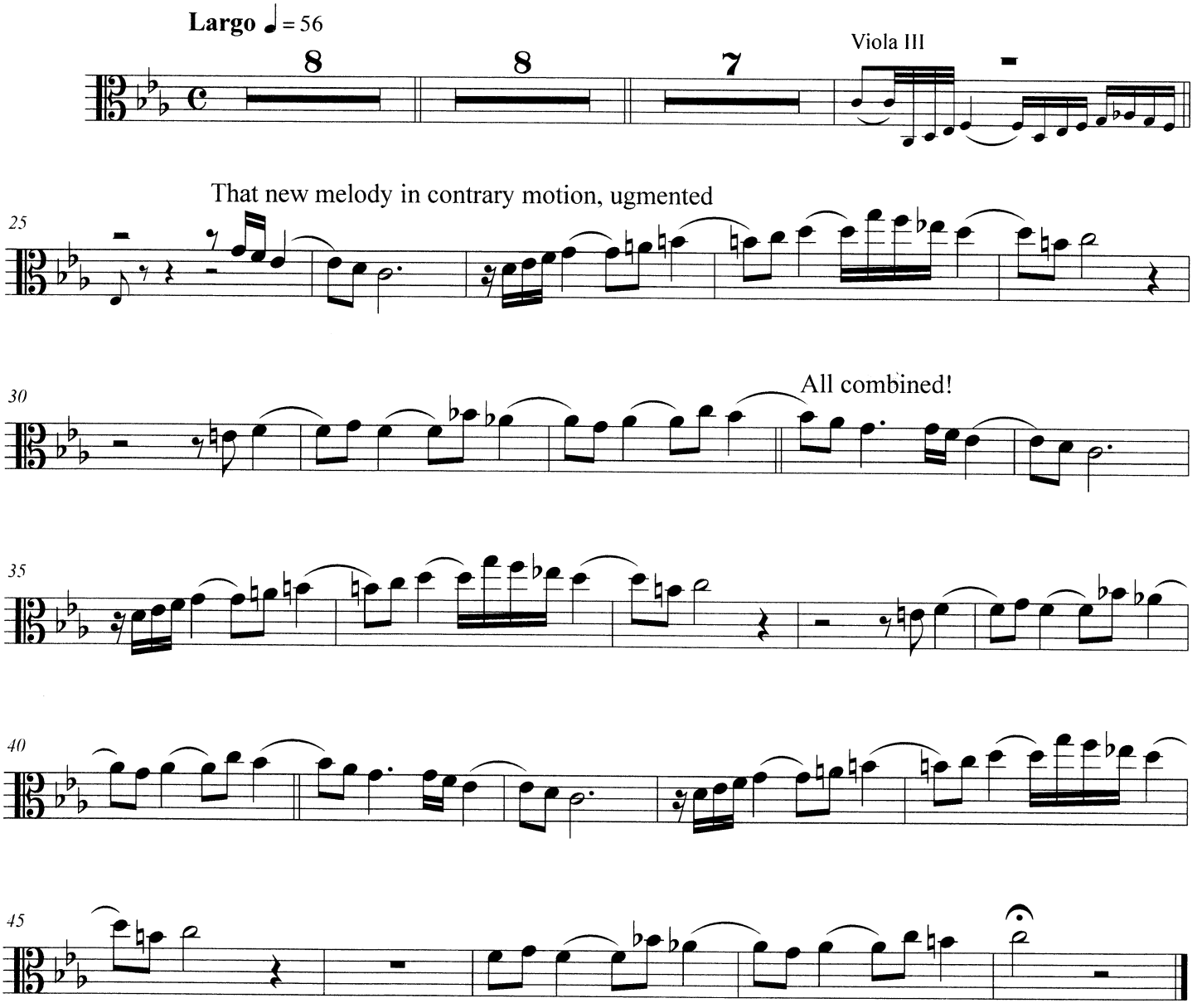


Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola I

J. S. Bach



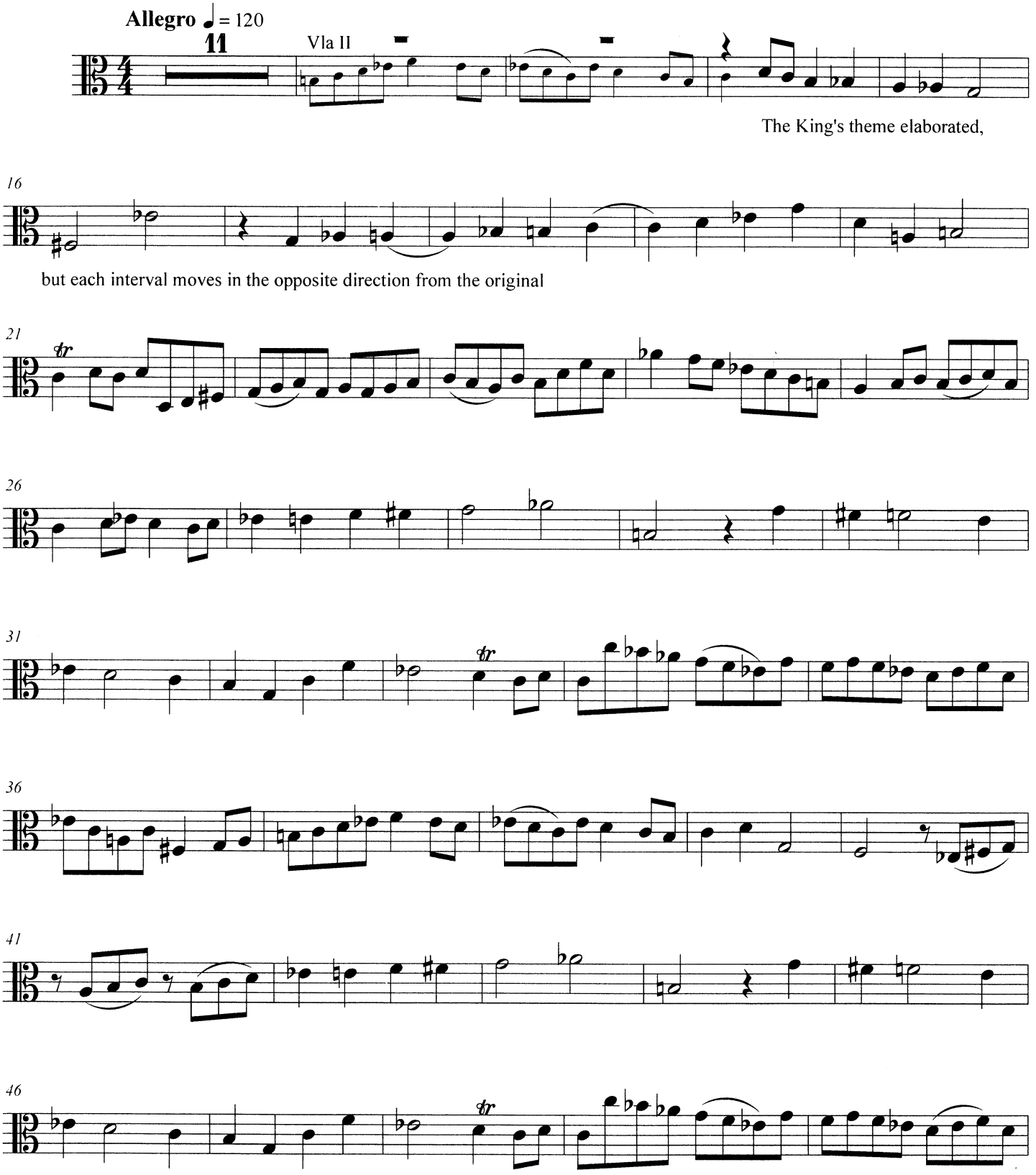
Canon a 2

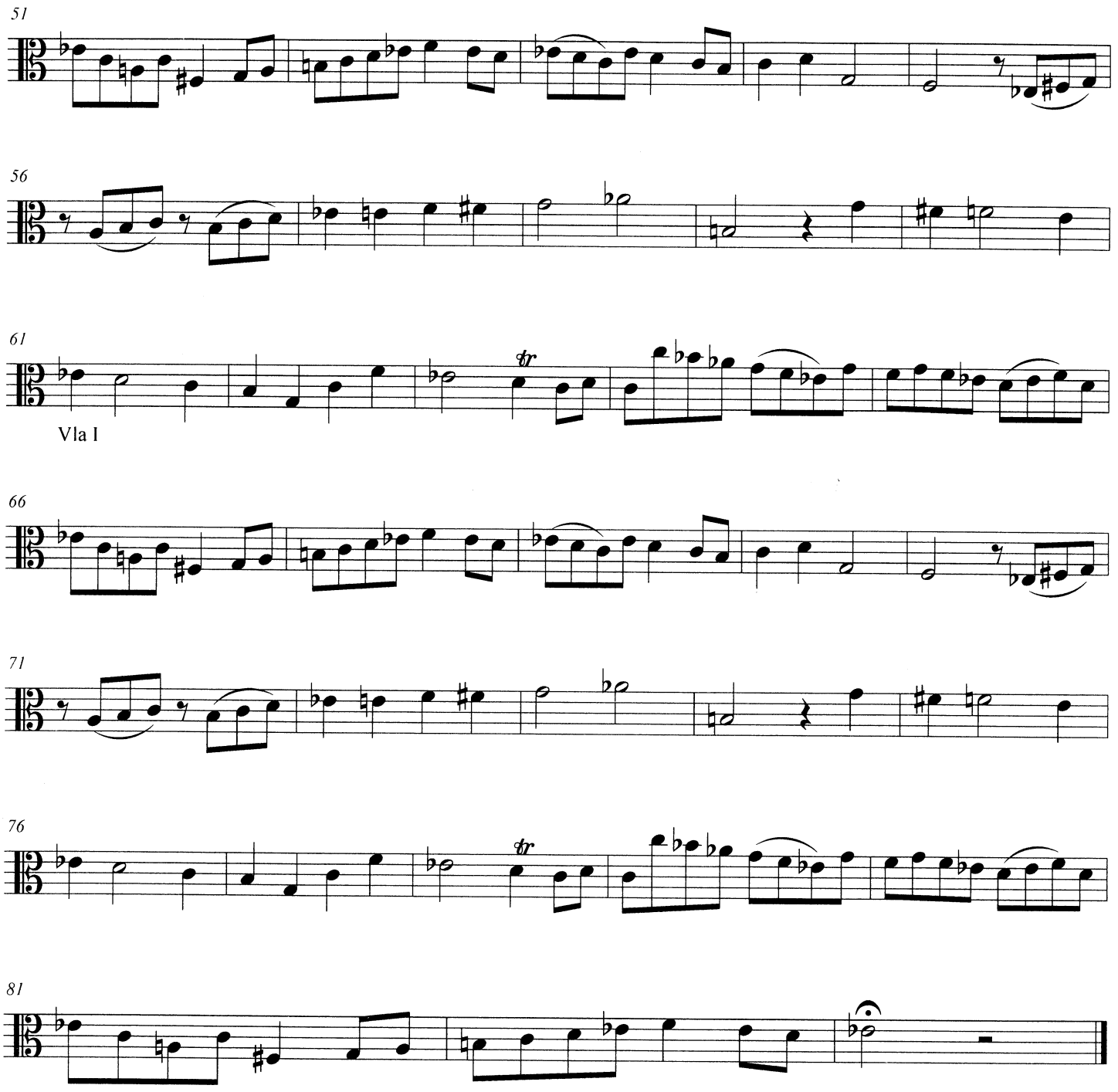
(Puzzle Canon, Contrary Motion)

Viola I

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach




51
56
61
Vla I
66
71
76
81

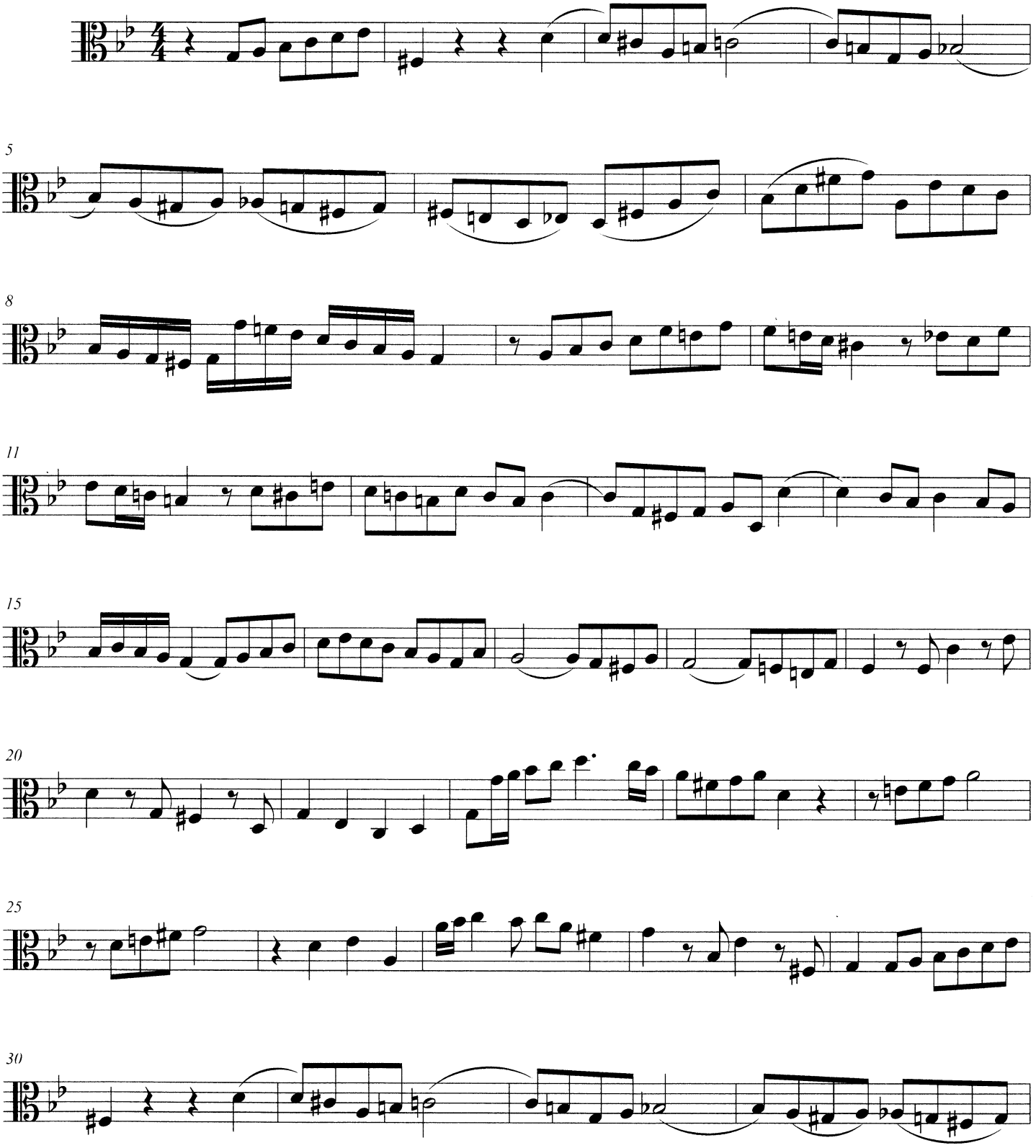
Canon a 4

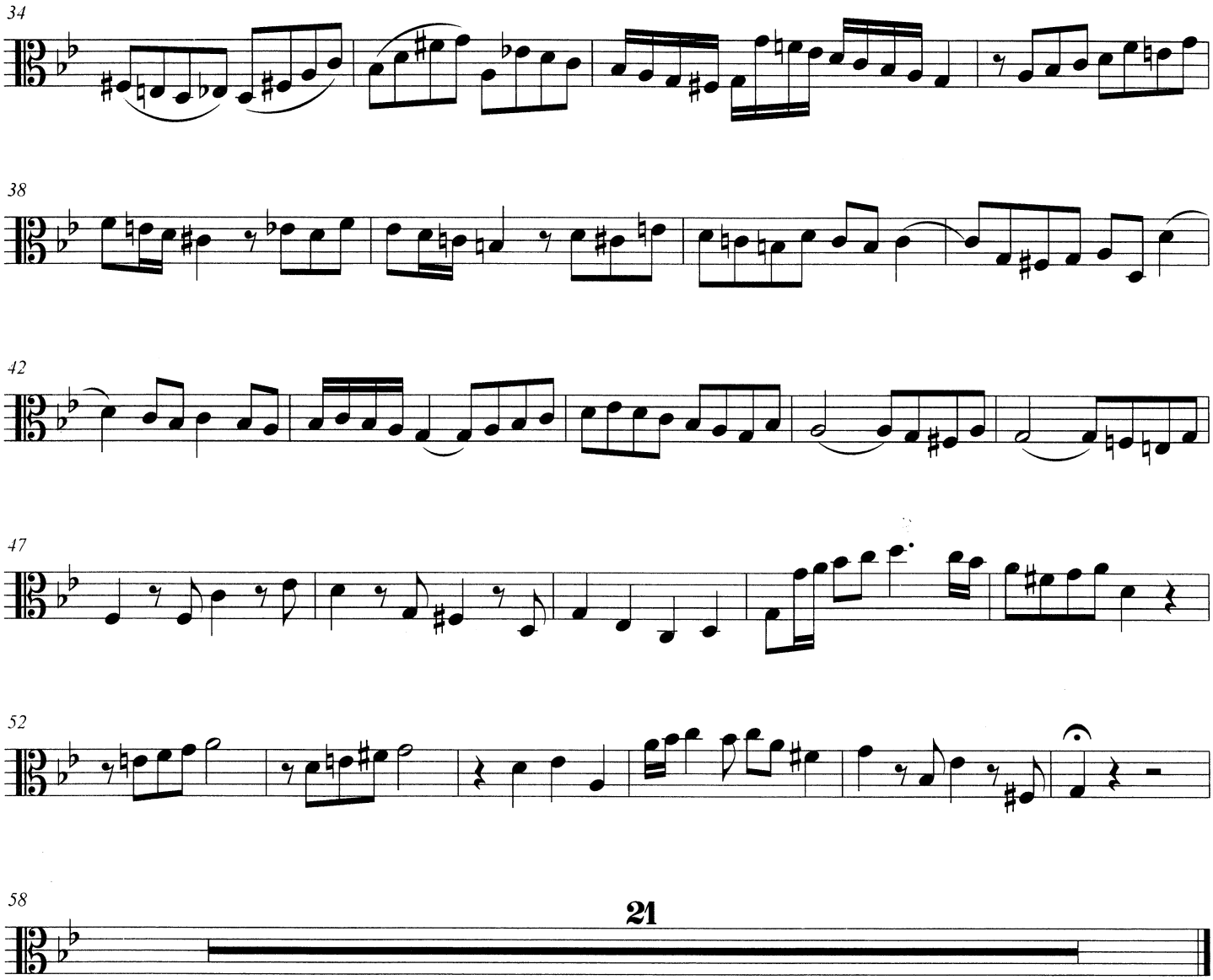
Viola I

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Andante ♩ = 80




34
38
42
47
52
58
21

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for violas in two, three, and four voices

Viola II

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Canon a 4 8

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Orange, California

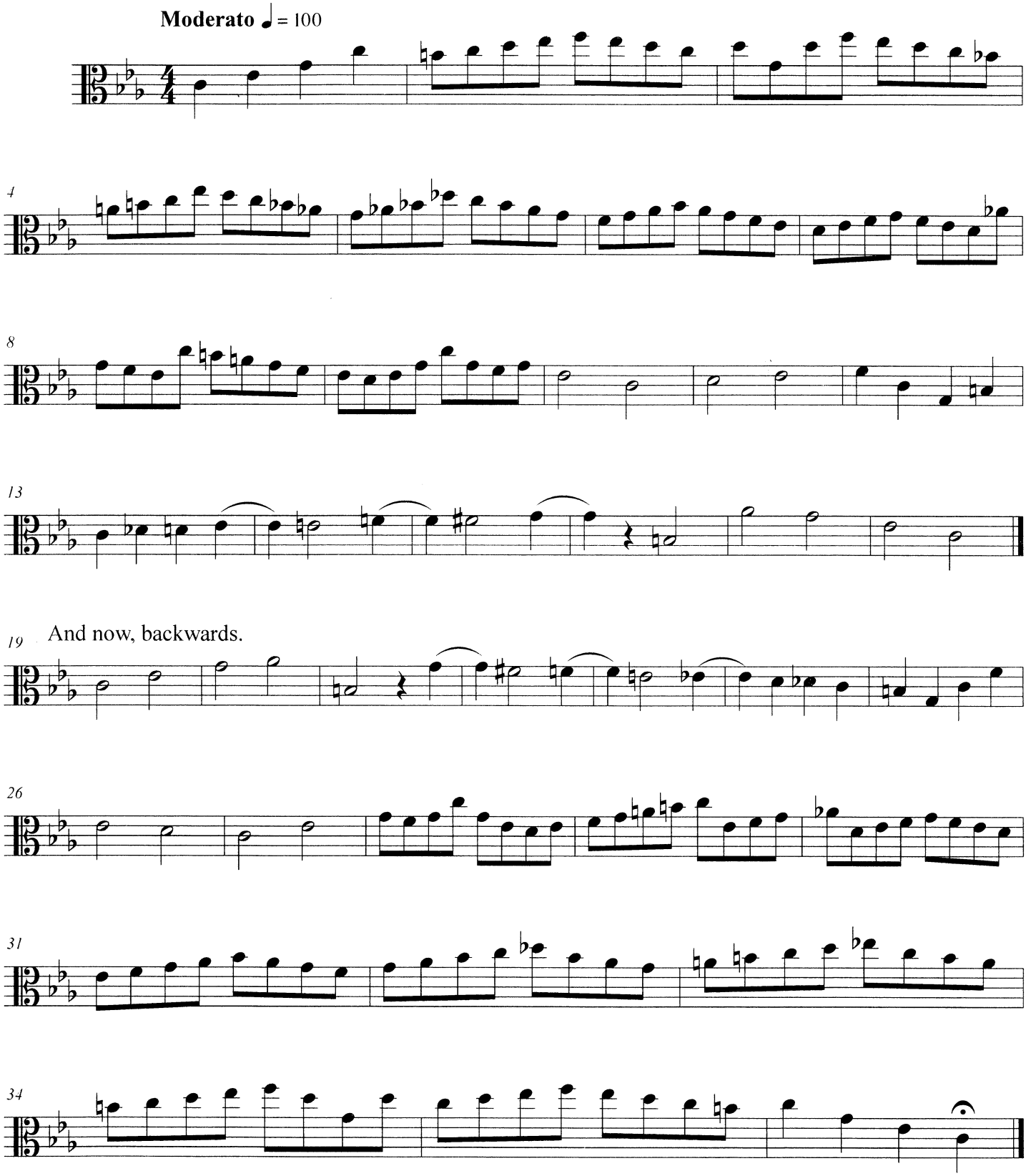
Canon a 2, Cancrizans

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola II

J. S. Bach

Moderato ♩ = 100

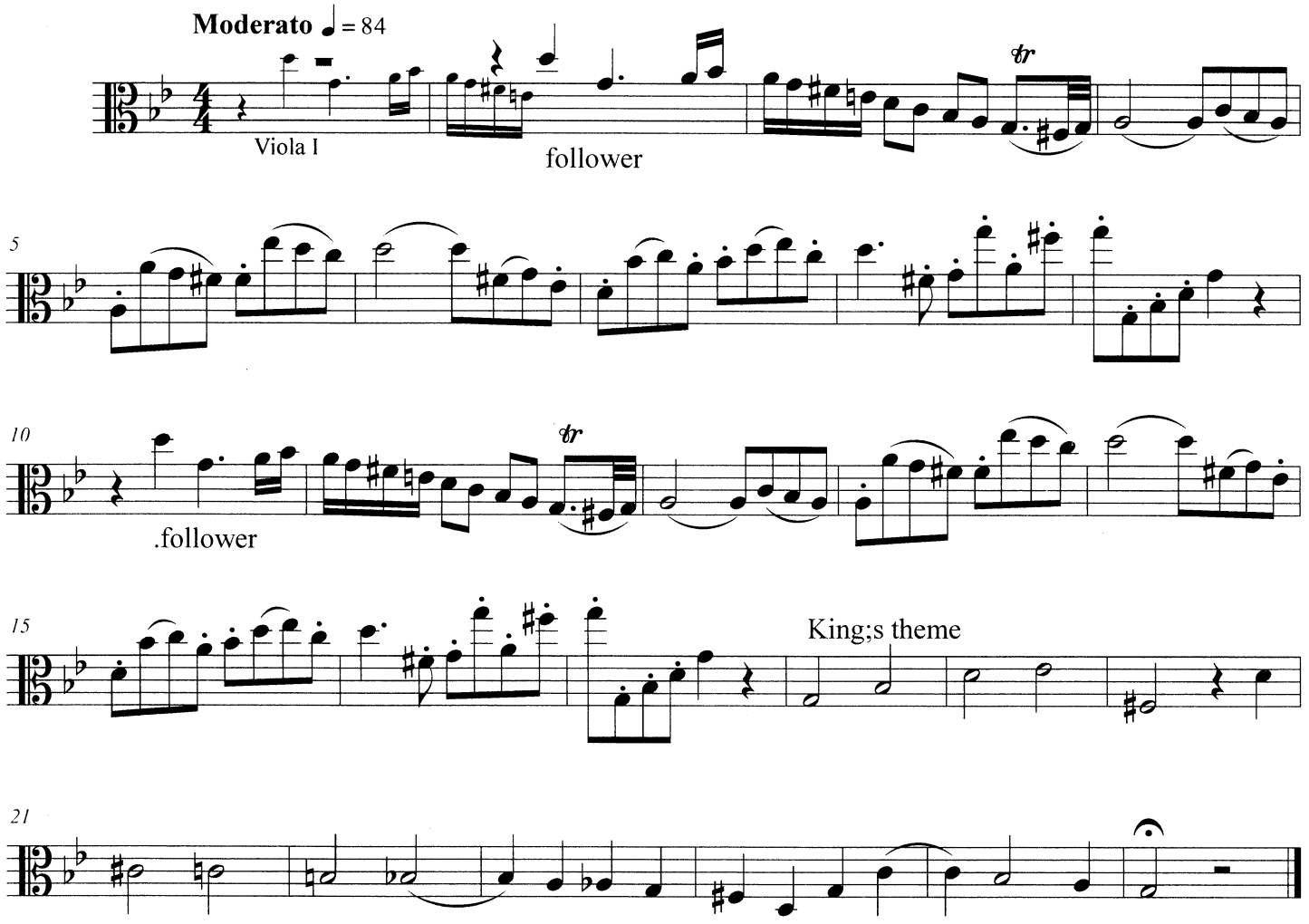


Canon a 2, in Unisono

Viola II

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach



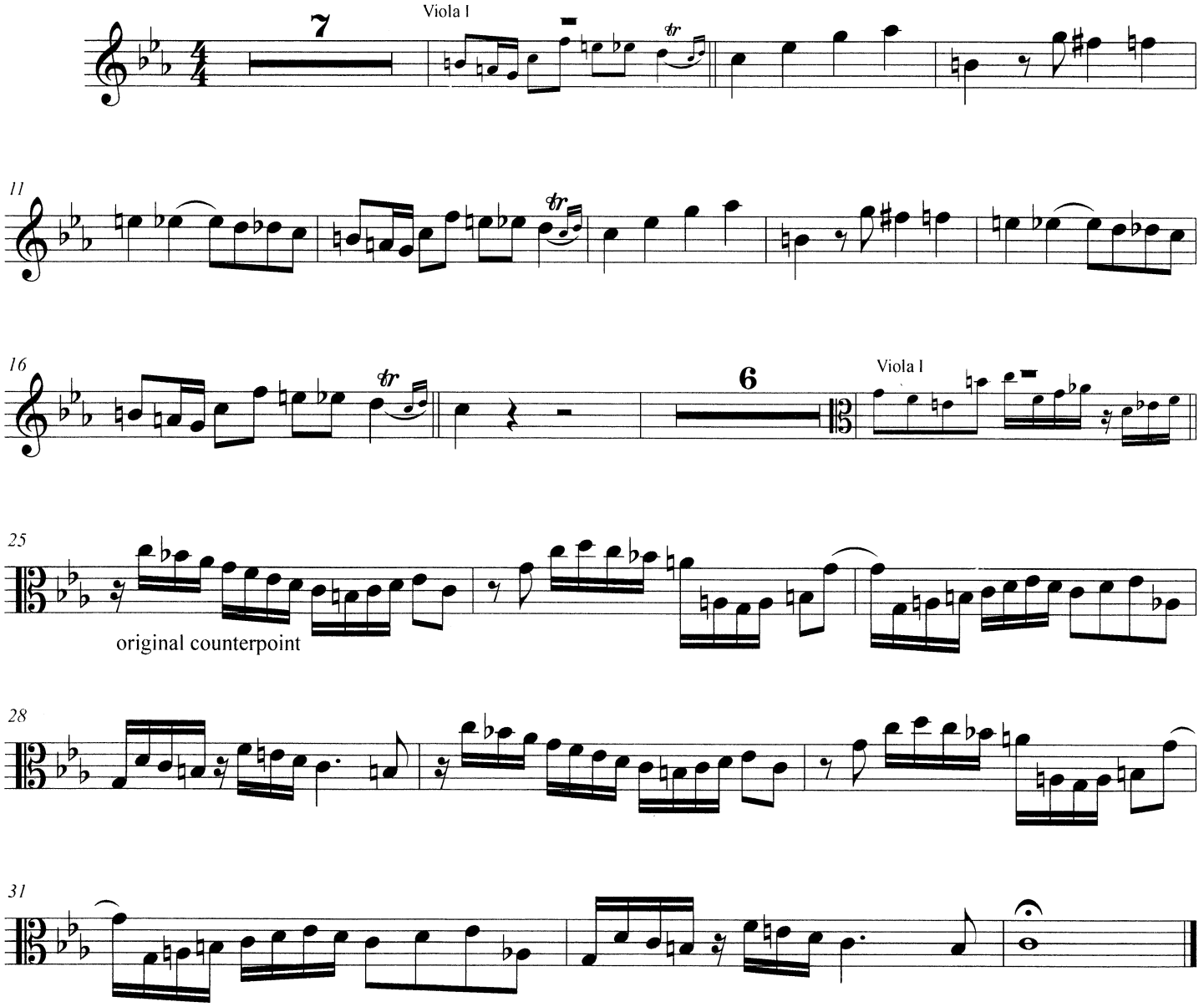
Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola II

Larghetto ♩ = 56

J. S. Bach



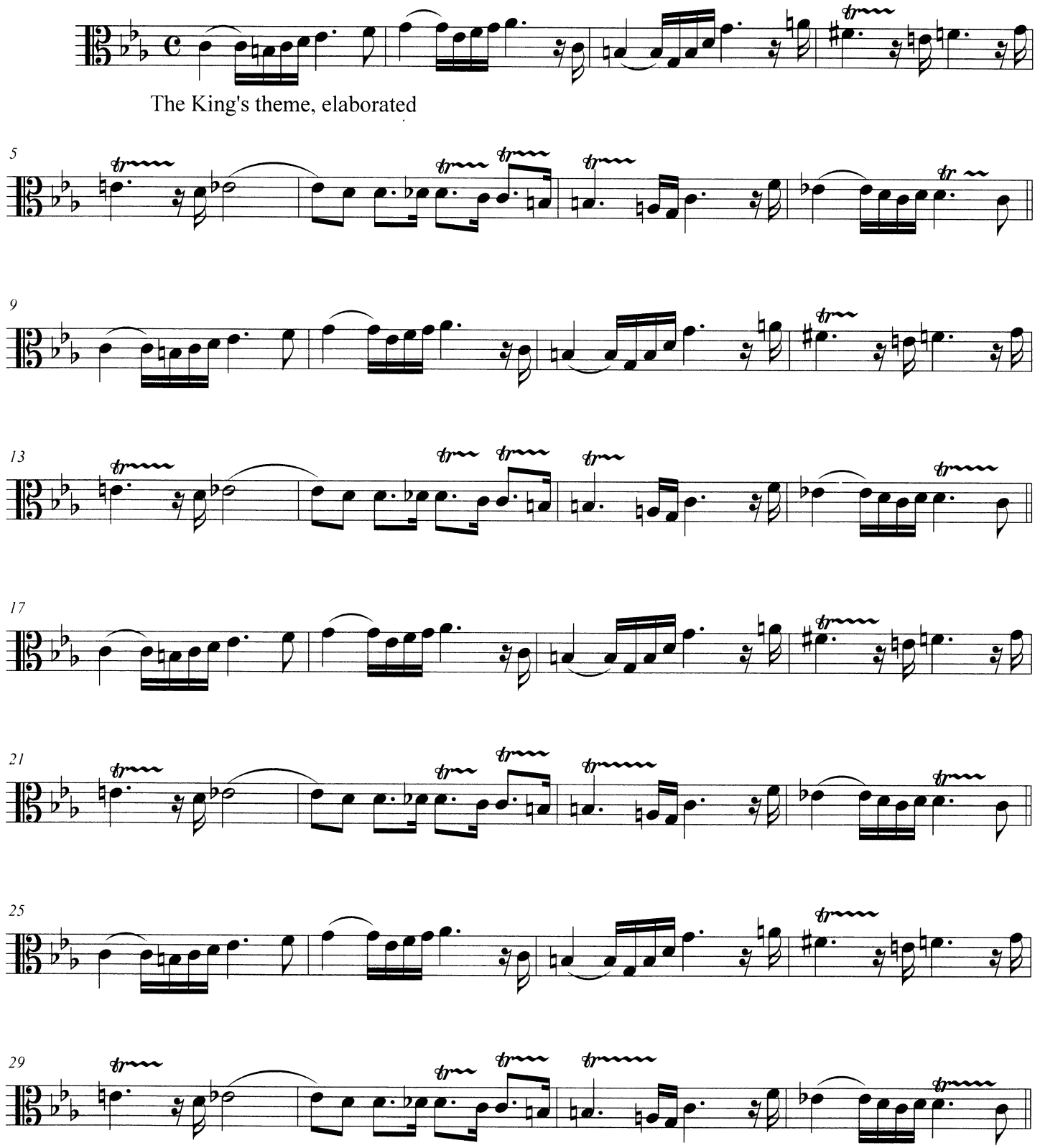
Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

from *The Musical Offering*

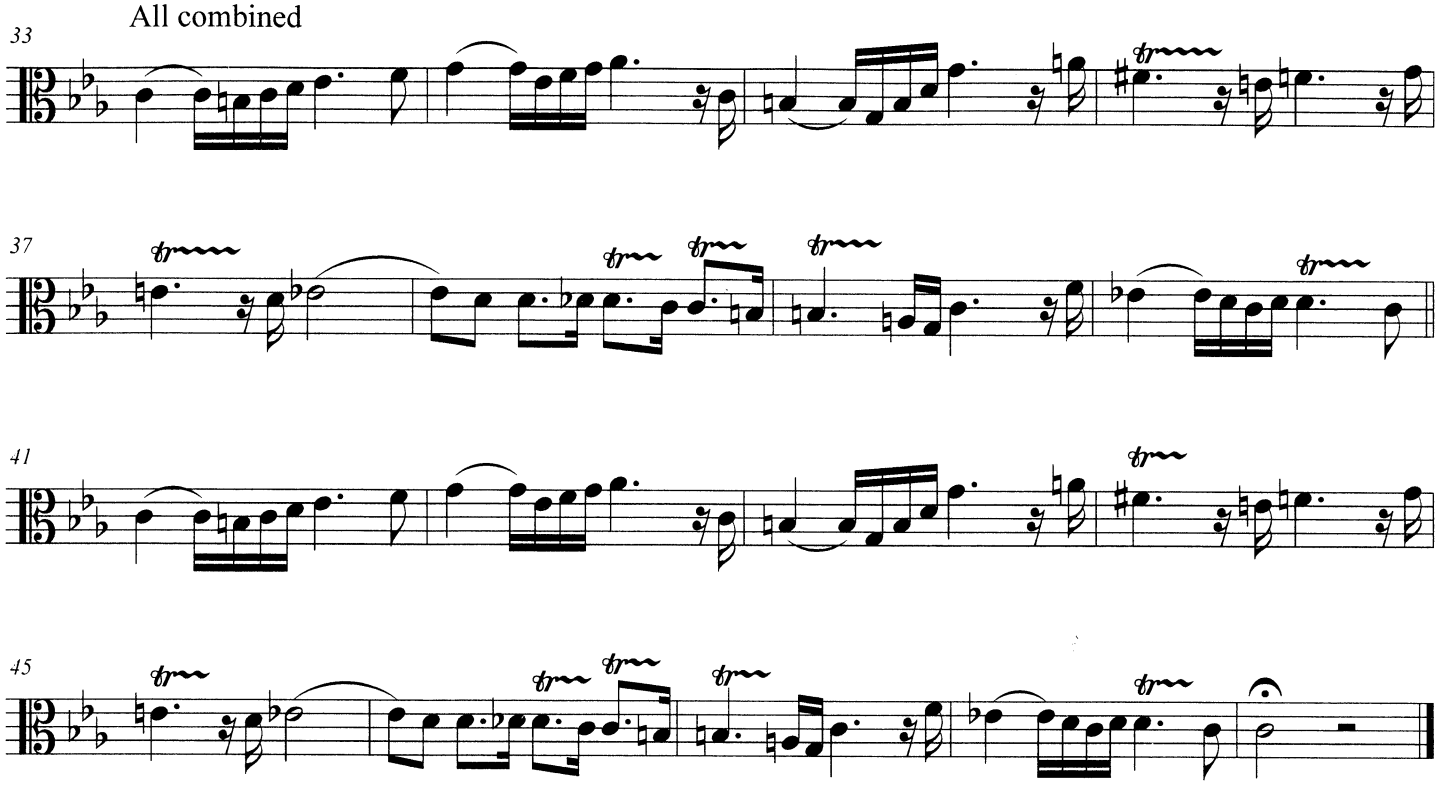
Viola II

J. S. Bach

Largo ♩ = 56



All combined



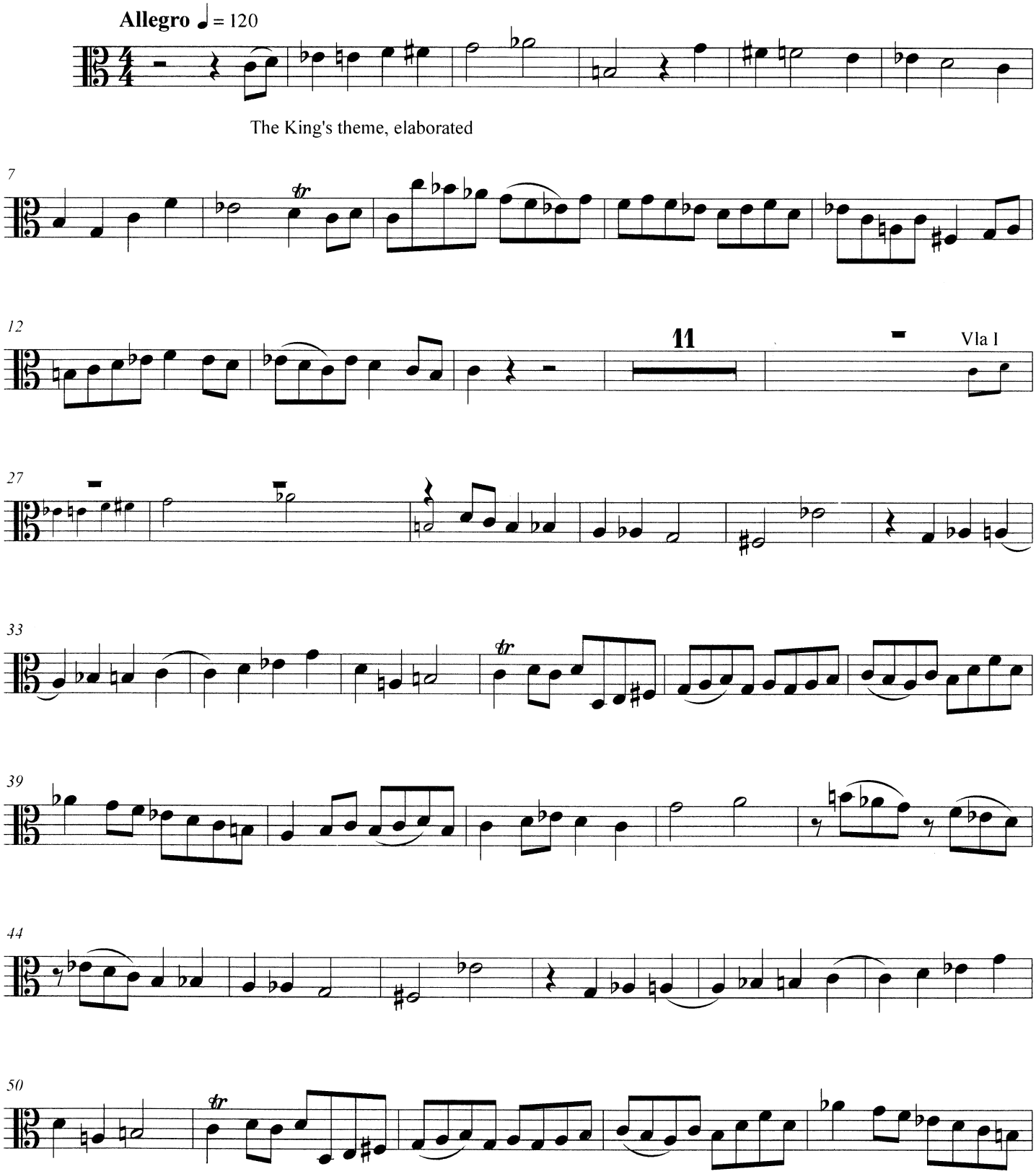
Canon a 2

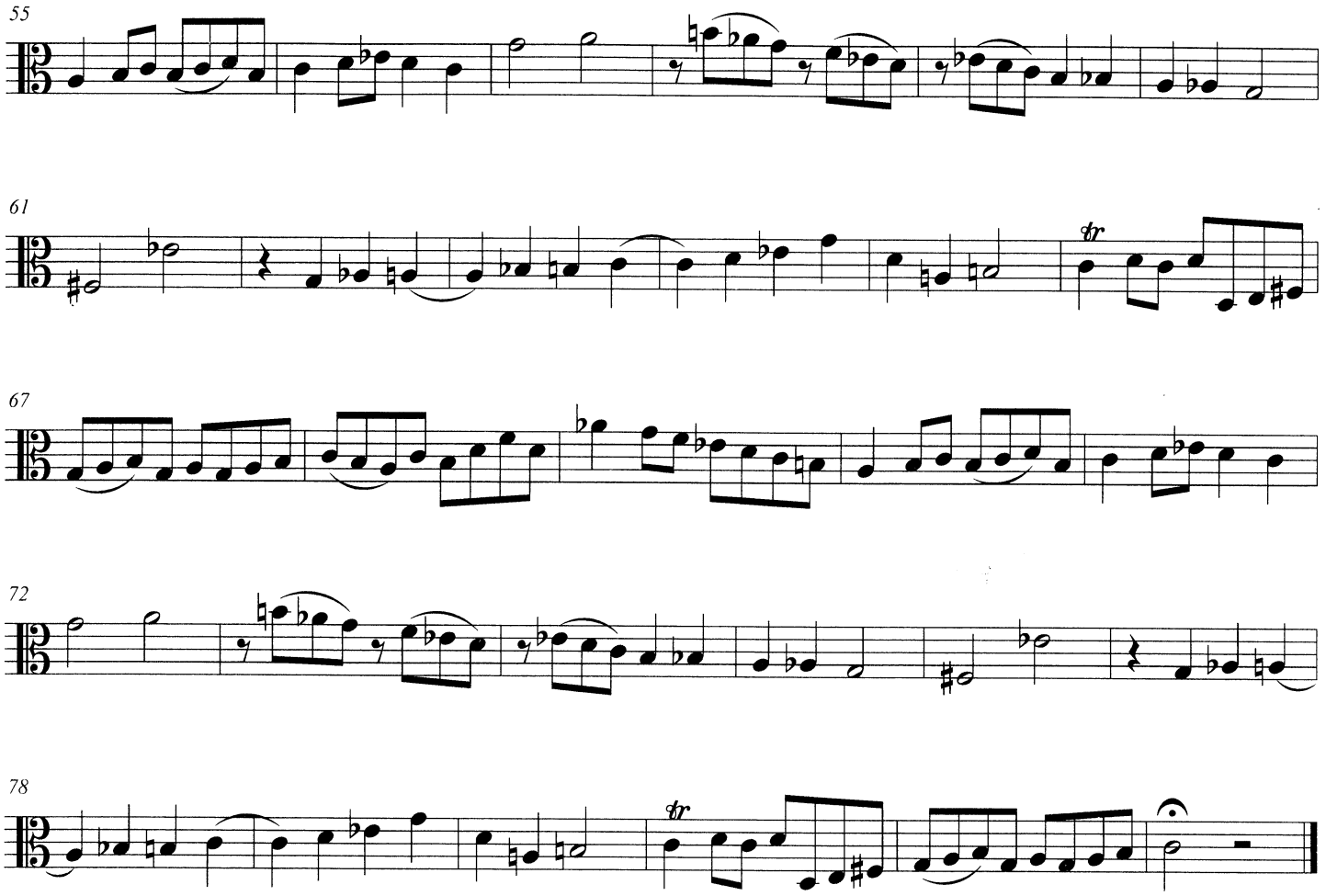
(Puzzle Canon, Contrary Motion)

Viola II

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach



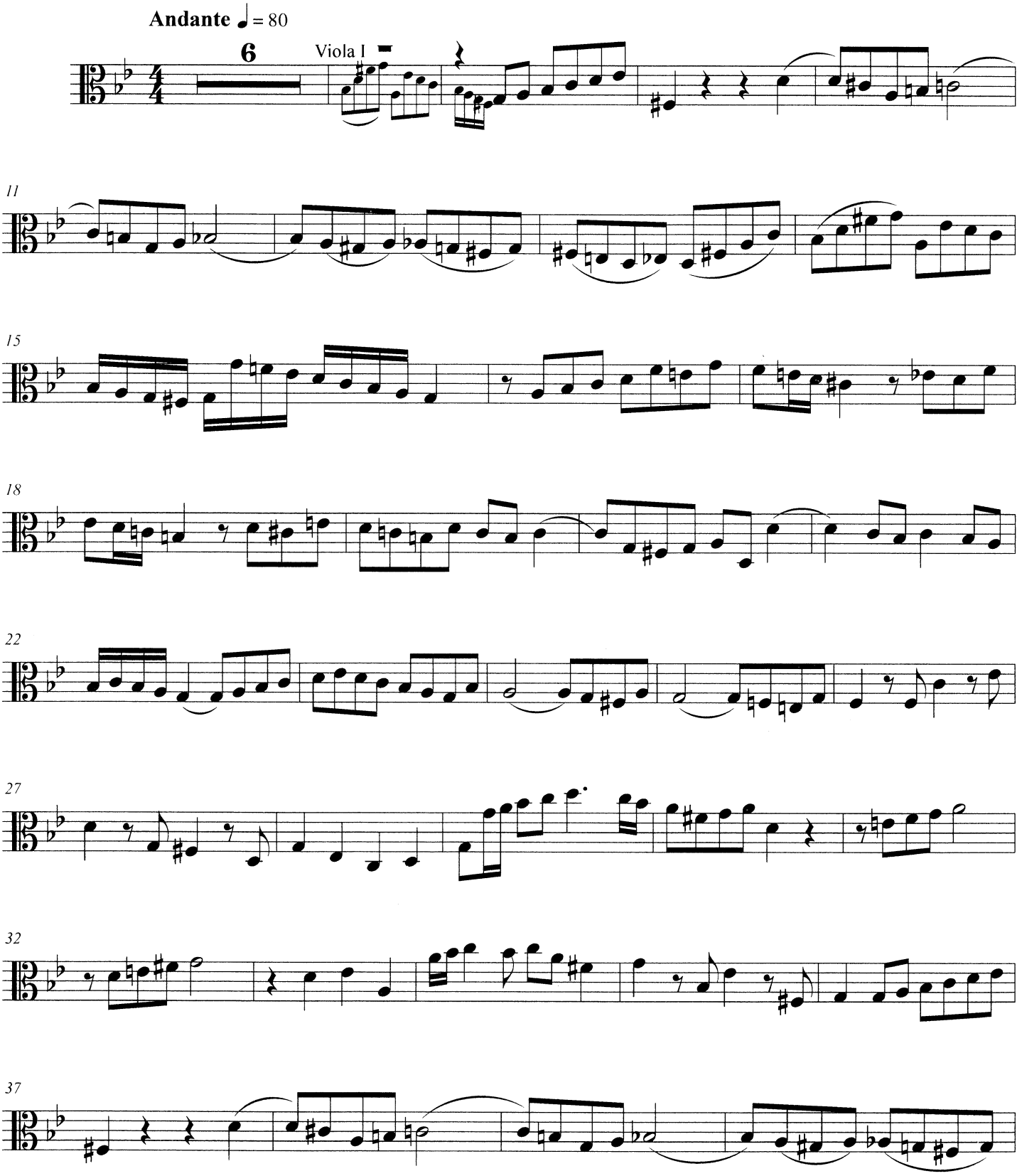

55
61
67
72
78

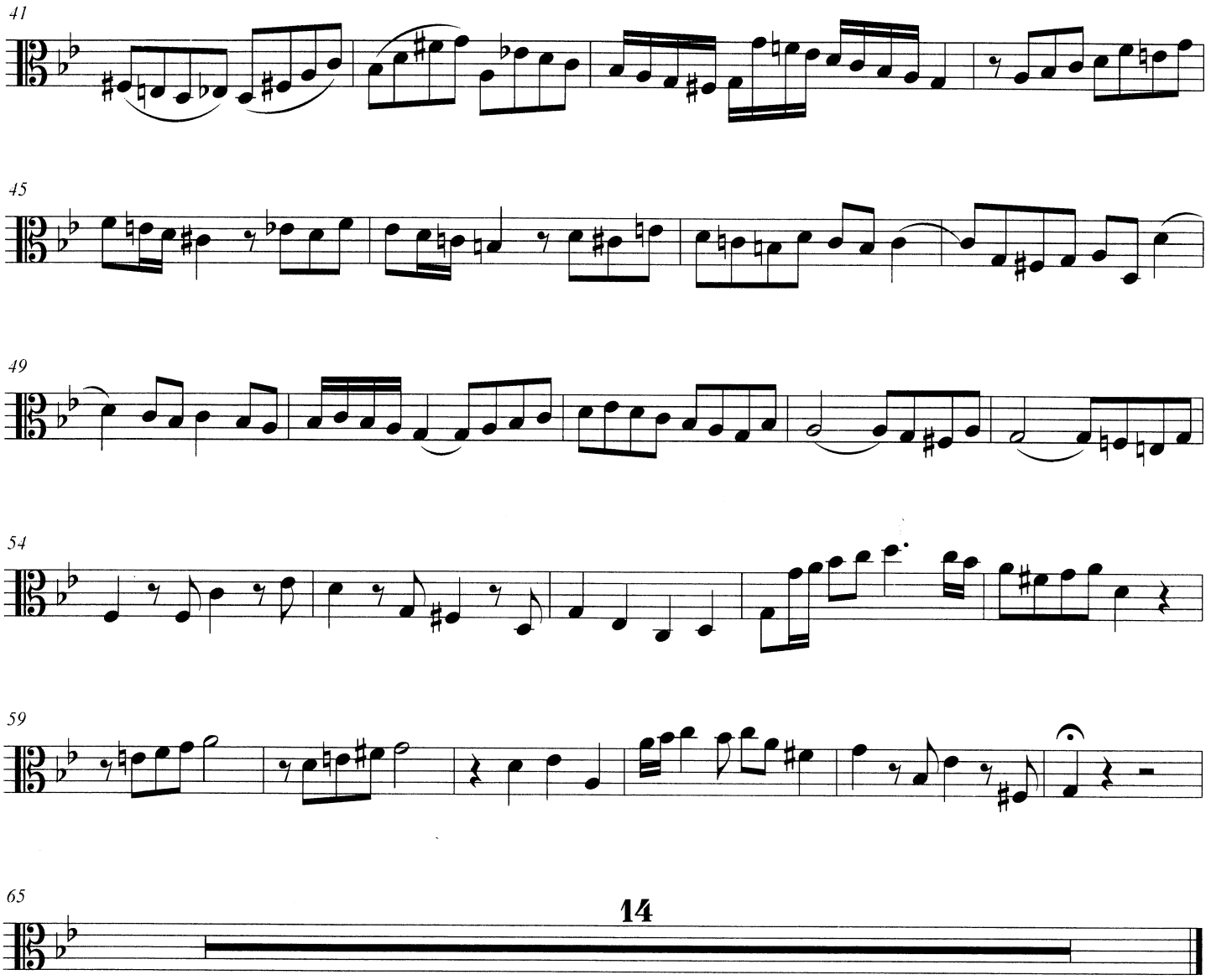
Canon a 4

Viola II

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach




41
45
49
54
59
65
14

Six Canons

from

The Musical Offering, BWV 1079

by

Johann Sebastian Bach

for violas in two, three, and four voices

Viola III

Arranged by Thomas Hall
Chapman University

Arranger's Note

In May, 1747, the famous capellmeister of Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach, visited the distinguished and musically active court of King Friedrich II (The Great) at Potsdam. During the visit, Bach did some well-publicized improvisation on a theme presented to him by Friedrich. After the trip, Bach made good on a promise to write a proper fugue using the King's theme as a subject. He enlarged on that promise and the result was *The Musical Offering* BWV 1079, which is dedicated to the King. The *Offering* consists of thirteen different pieces, all based on the King's theme, and emphasizing contrapuntal techniques: two fugues, a trio sonata, and ten canons. Six of those canons are presented here in a performance edition for violas.

Bach presented the canons in *The Musical Offering* variously, often in far from performance setting, often in playful forms; puzzles, perpetual (no cadence), constantly modulating, multi-voiced written on one staff with unexpected signatures and clefs, in other words, full of tricks. These six canons were chosen from the ten available because they seem to conform to range and other opportunities offered by the viola. Each of these arrangements strives to present the melodic and imitative material in each viola part so that the contrapuntal procedures so masterfully presented will be clear to every player. In order to present performable pieces, and to accommodate orchestration, small liberties have been taken. We hope they are justified by making these artful, beautiful, and remarkable canons available to a larger audience.

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Thomas Hall
Orange, California

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Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium 2

Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu 3

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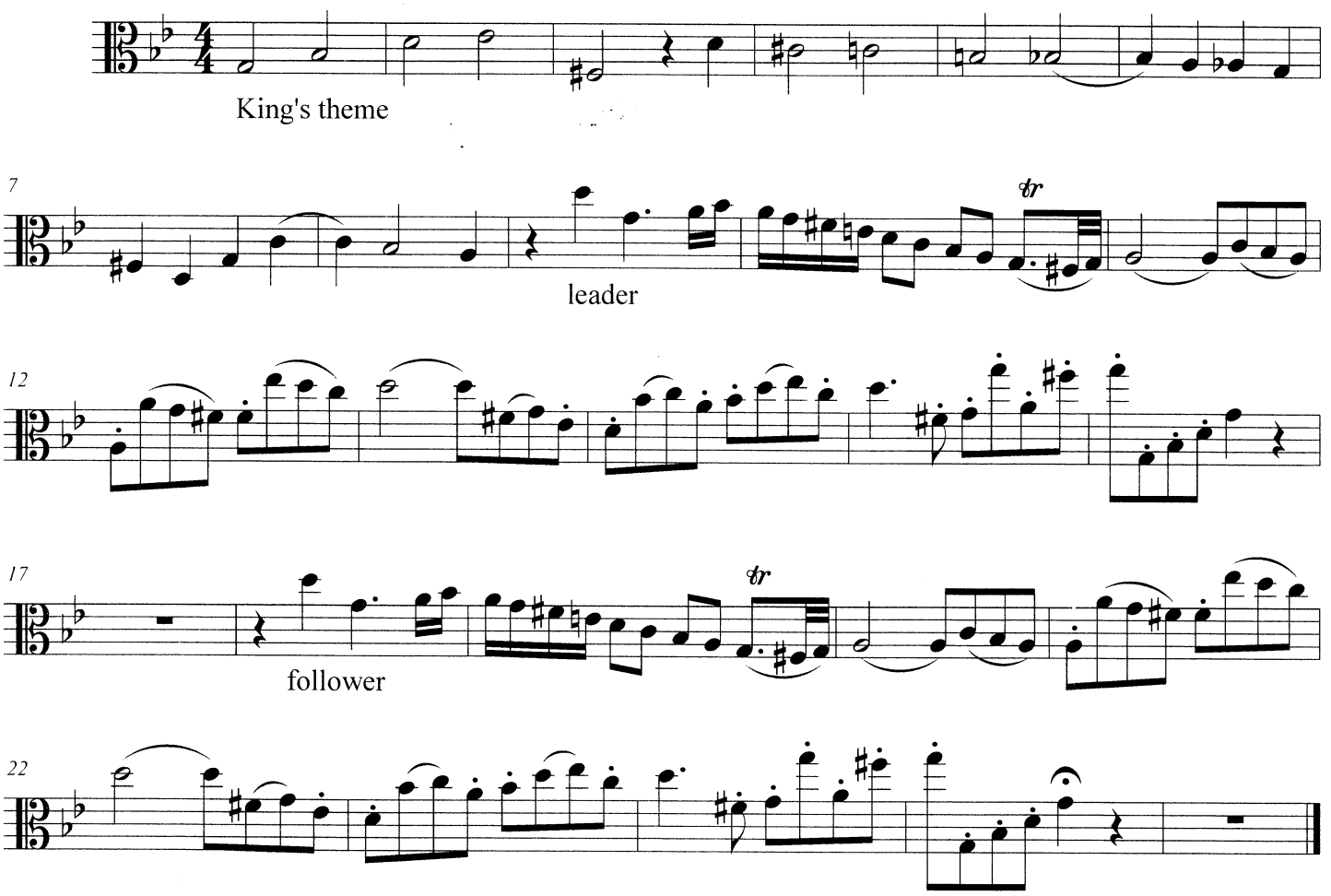
Canon a 2, Unisono

Viola III from *The Musical Offering* J. S. Bach

Moderato ♩ = 84



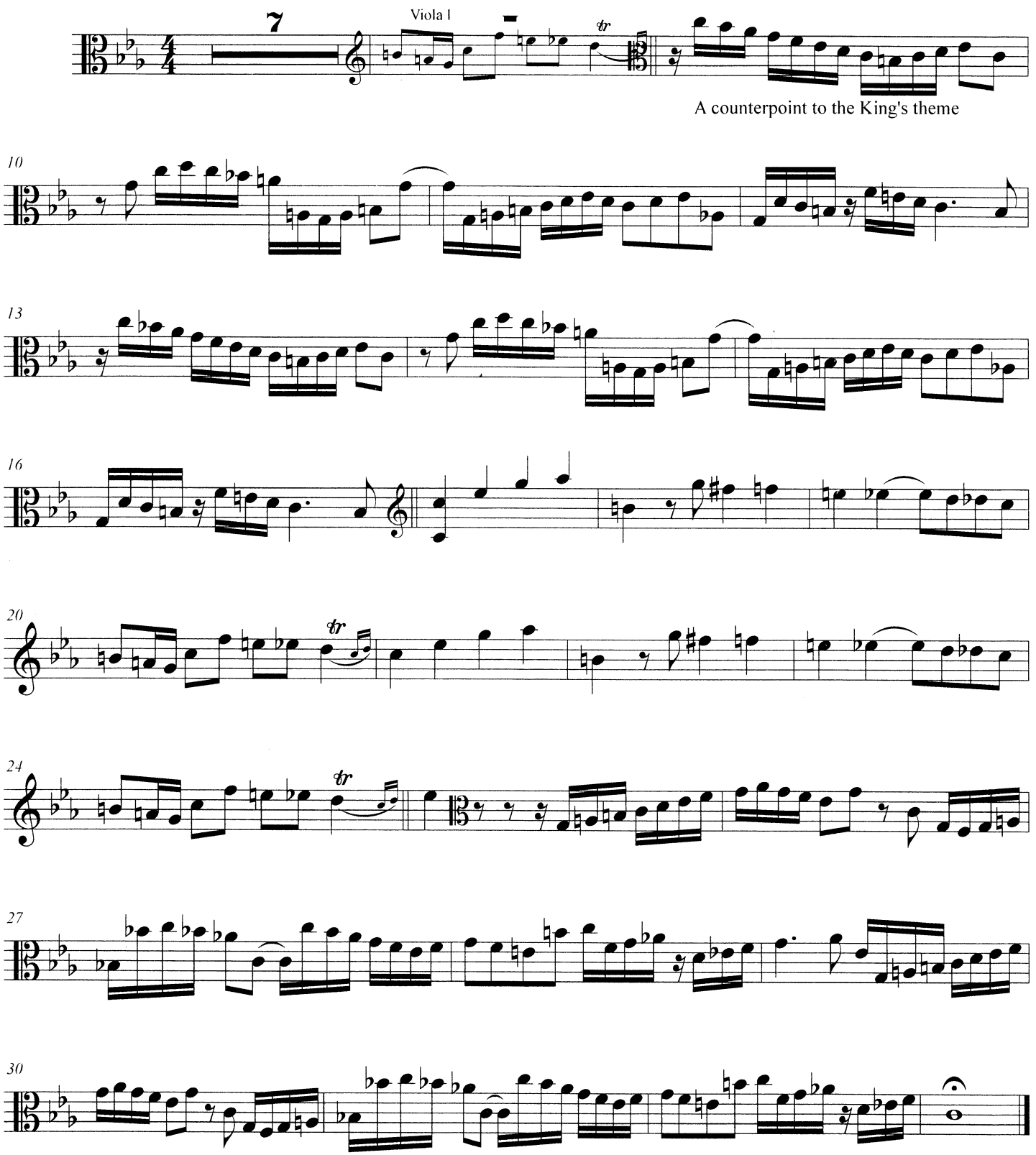
Canon a 2, per Motum Contrarium

from *The Musical Offering*

Viola III

Larghetto ♩ = 56

J. S. Bach



Canon a 2, per Augmentationem, Contrario Motu

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Viola III

Largo ♩ = 56

7

Viola II

A new melody to go with the elaboration

11

15

18

22

25

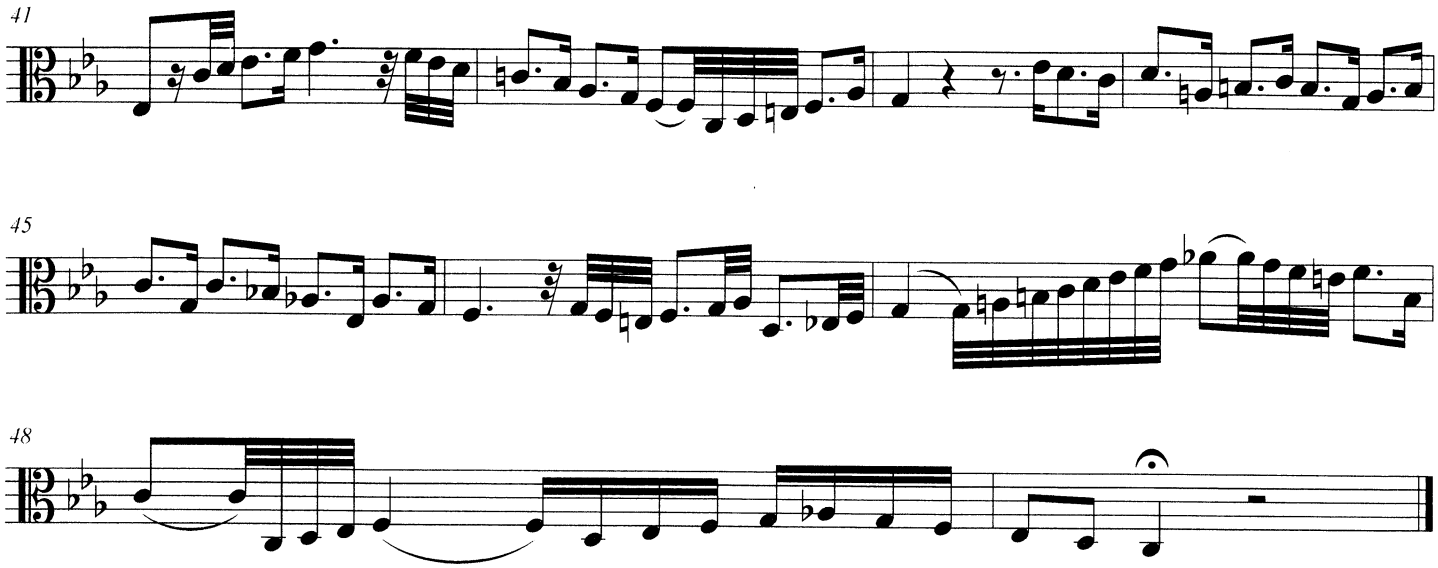
6

Viola II

All combined

34

38


41
45
48

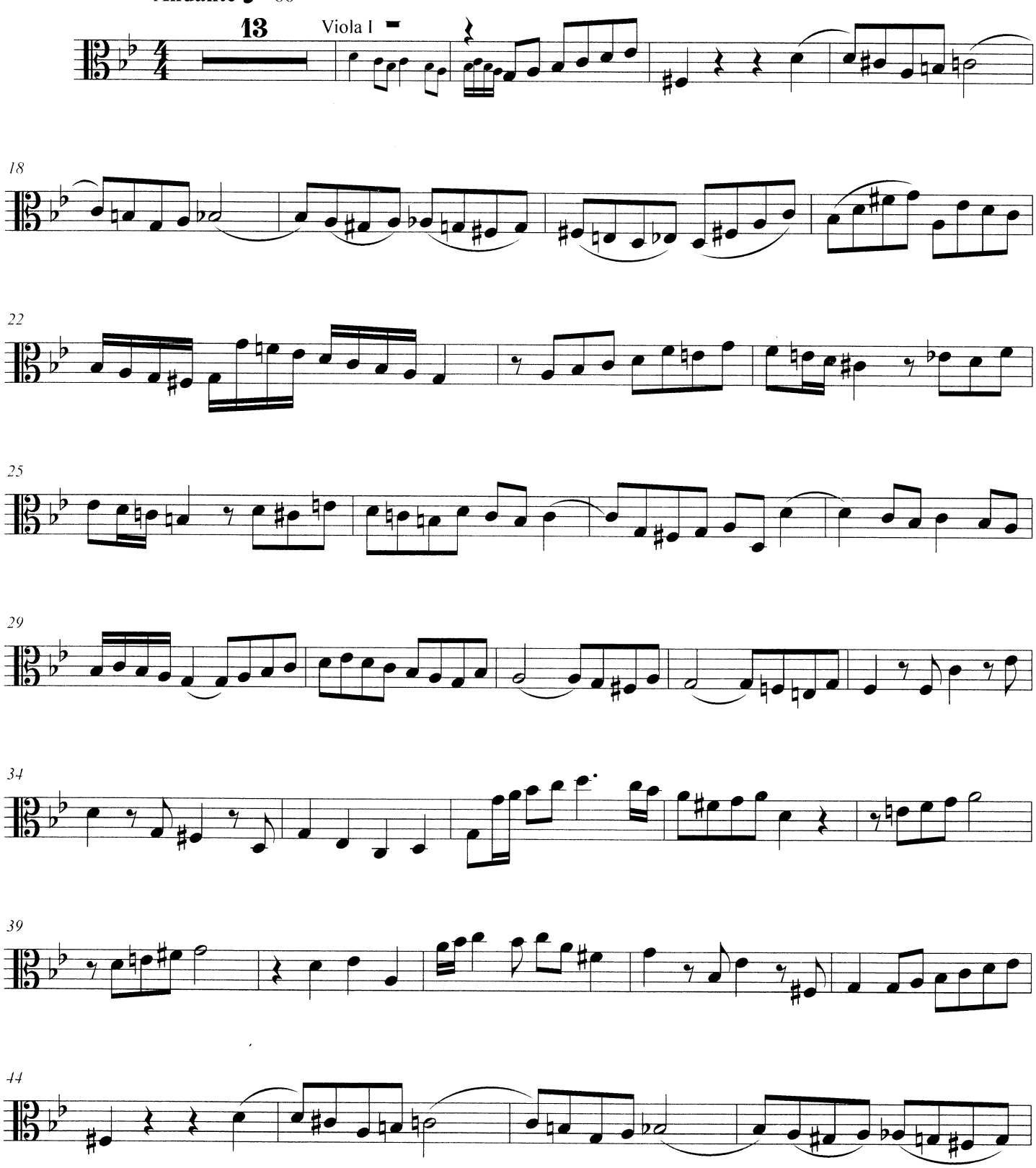
Canon a 4

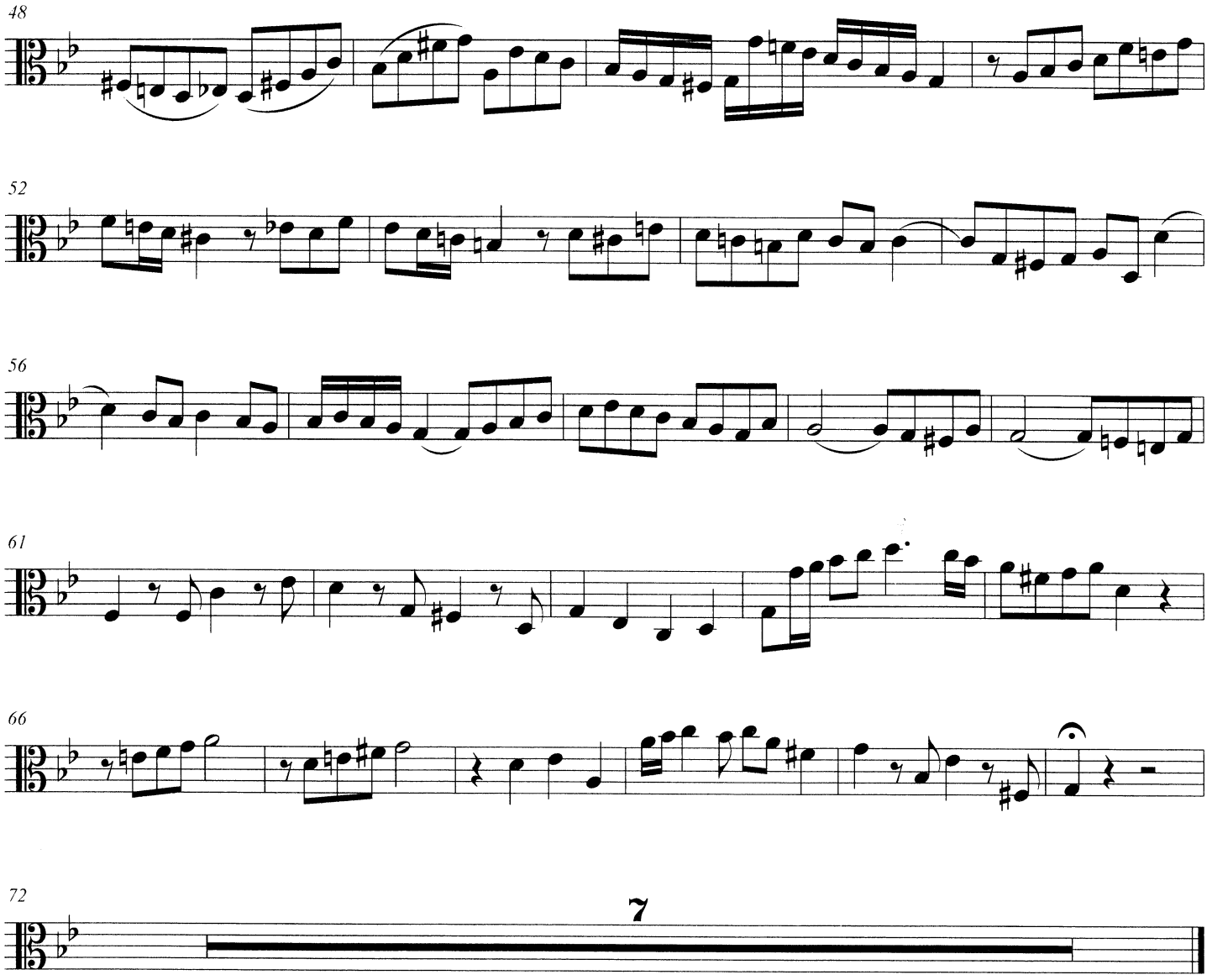
Viola III

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Andante ♩ = 80




48
52
56
61
66
72
7

Six Canons

from

The Musical Offering, BWV 1079

by

Johann Sebastian Bach

for violas in two, three, and four voices

Viola IV

Arranged by Thomas Hall
Chapman University

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Thomas Hall
Orange, California

Table of Contents

Canon a 4 1

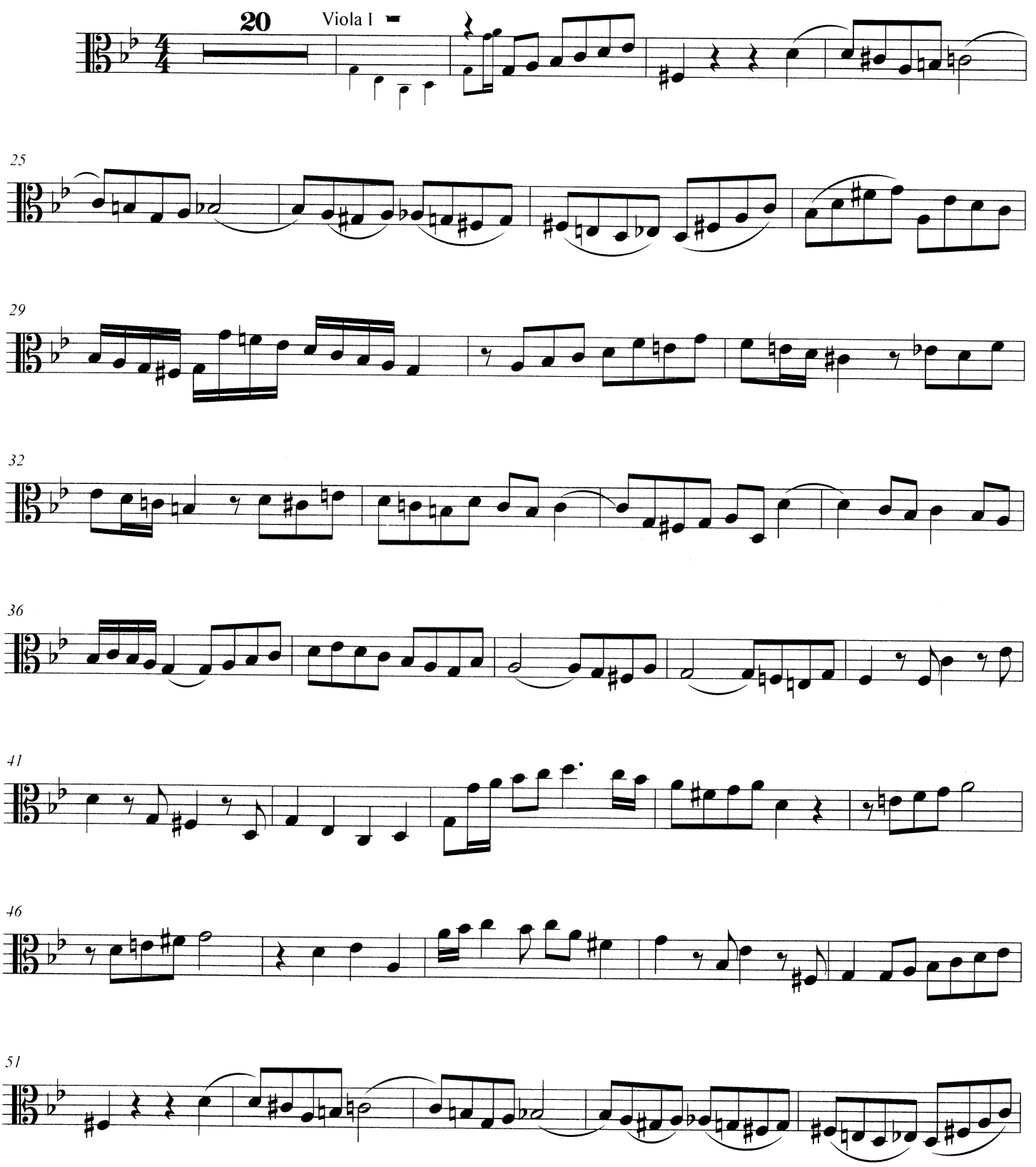
Canon a 4

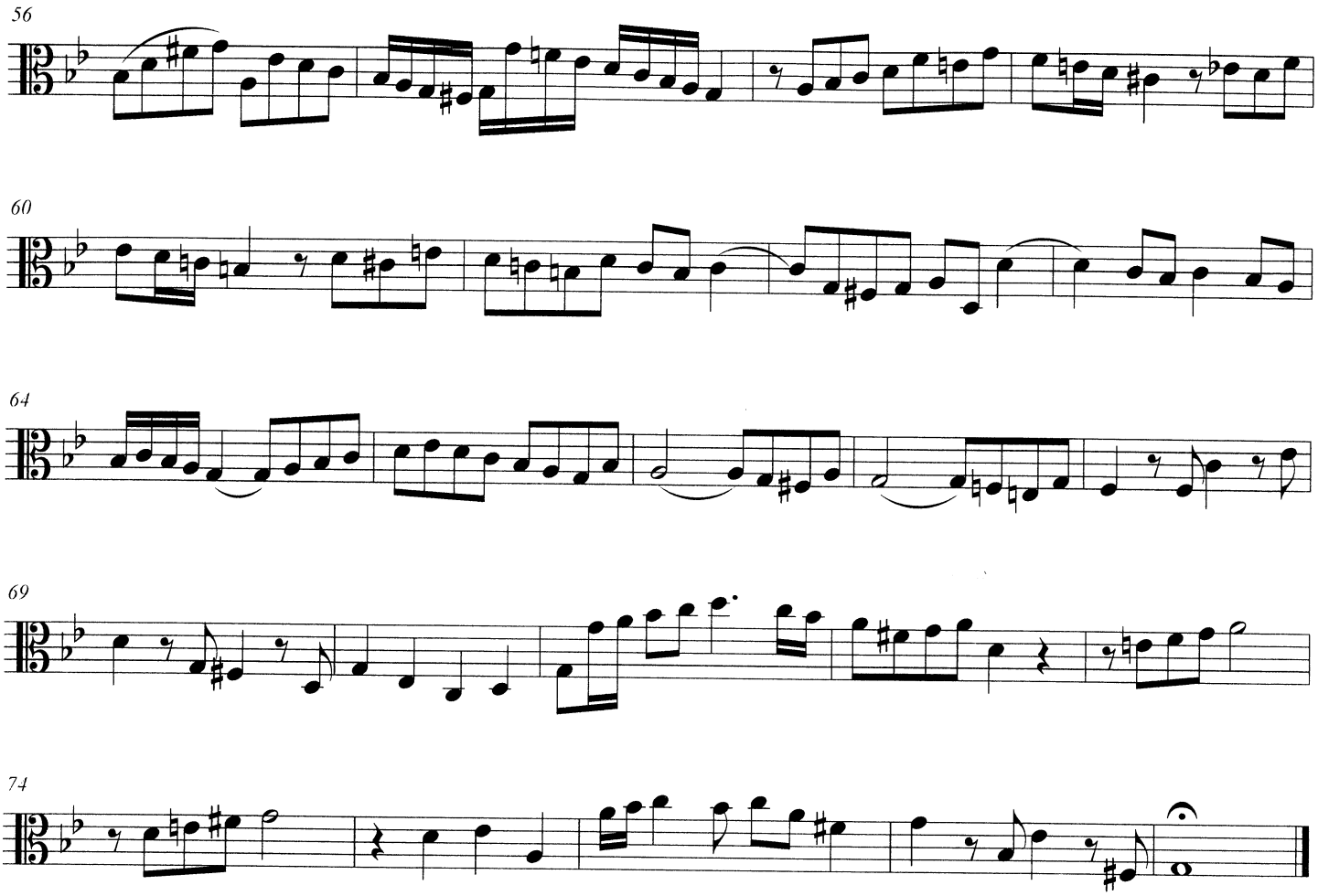
Viola IV

from *The Musical Offering*

J. S. Bach

Andante ♩ = 80

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