Domenico Scarlatti

The well-known and yet again unknown genius

Scarlatti-portrait, painted by Antonio Velasco

Biography

These biographical data were kindly made available to me by Siegfried Holzbauer, Austrian media artist. You can follow his preoccupation with Domenico Scarlatti here: http://scarlattidaily.blogspot.com

1685

born on Friday, October 26th at 8:57 pm in Naples as the son of Alessandro Scarlatti (* May 2, 1660, Palermo, † October 22, 1725, Naples) and Antonia Anzalone, as the sixth of 10 children, baptized Giuseppe Domenico (Giuse Domco) on November 1st in the Parrochia della Carita (S.Liborio, Chiesa di Montesanto), called Mimo

1701

Organist and composer at the Neapolitan court orchestra, lessons with Francesco Gasparini

1702

Scarlatti spends the second half of the year with his father at the Medici court in Florence, where Alessandro works for Prince Fernando de 'Medici, on the return journey they both keep one Month in Rome

1703

Performance of his first two operas l'Ottavia ristituita al trono at the Teatro San Bartolomeo, Naples and Il Giustino on December 19th at the Palazzo Regio, Naples. His father works in Rome, Domenico lives and works independently of his father for the first time

1704

His third opera l'Irene was performed at the Teatro San Bartolomeo, Naples, during the carnival season

1705

Hhe leaves Naples and goes to his father in Rome, who soon sends him to Venice

1707

Encounter and friendship with Georg Friedrich Händel, whom he did over the next three years repeatedly accompanied on his travels through Italy

1708

Scarlatti goes back to his father in Rome, organ contest with Handel in the Palazzo della Cancelleria of Cardinal Ottoboni

1709

in the service of Queen Maria Casimira of Poland, he composed 7 operas for her (1710 La Silvia, 1711 L´Orlando overo la Gelosa Pazzia and Tolomeo et Alessandro, 1712 Tetide in Sciro, 1713 Ifigenia in Aulide and Ifigenia in Tauri, 1714 Amor d'un ombra)

1710

Encounter and friendship with Thomas Roseingrave during a stay in Venice

1711

Domenico becomes Kapellmeister at Queen Maria Casimira's private theater in Palazzo Zuccari

1713

Vice-Maestro di Capella at the Vatican Capella Giulia, Roseingrave returns to England

1714

Scarlatti also goes to the service of the Portuguese ambassador to the Vatican Marquis de Fontes, finally rises to Maestro di Capella in St. Peter's Basilica

1715

first performance of one of his operas (Ambleto) in a public theater (Capranica Theater, Rome), another opera, La Dirindina, is performed in Lucca

1717

Domenico obtained legal independence from his father through a notarial act

1718

Hhis last opera: Berenice, also performed in the Capranica Theater

1719

Scarlatti gives up his position at the Vatican in August, planned trip to England on November 29th, arrival in Lisbon, busy traveling until 1728

1720

Stay in Palermo / Sicily, on May 30th performance of his opera Narciso (new version by Amor d´un´ ombra e la gelosia d´un´aura) by Th.Roseingrave at the Haymarket Theater in London, beginning of the composition and performance of vocal works ("serenate" e.g. Contesa delle stagioni) on the occasion of the birthdays and name days of the Portuguese royal couple, for which Scarlatti also sings himself

1723

Scarlatti is mestre de capela at the court of Joãos V (Capellmeister of the Royal Portuguese Chapel in Lisbon), he teaches the 12-year-old Infanta Maria Barbara de Braganza (born 1711) and her brother Don Antonio, with Maria Barbara, Queen of Spain from 1746, he stays connected all his life

1724

Stay in Paris, travel to Rome for the revival of his opera Tolomeo et Alessandro supervise in the palace of Count André de Melo e Castro, he meets Johann Quantz and makes the acquaintance of Carlo Broschi, better known as Farinelli

1725

Scarlatti returned to Naples after 20 years, where he met Johann Adolf Hasse and visits his father, who dies in Naples on October 22nd, another stay in Paris

1728

Married 16-year-old Maria Catarina Gentili (born November 13, 1712 in Rome) on May 15 the St. Pancratius Church in Rome, with her he later has 5 children

1729

Marriage of Maria Barbaras with the Spanish heir to the throne Fernando, move to Seville, Andalusia (on the orders of King João V), Scarlatti continues to teach Princess Maria Barbara (Maestro de Musica de la Prinzesa nra.Sra.) And Prince Fernando, birth of his first son Juan Antonio

1731

Birth of his second son Fernando (the other children: Mariana, Alexandro and Maria)

1733

Moved to Madrid, Scarlatti now spends at the court of the Spanish king Felipe V Spring in Aranjuez, summer in the Palacio Real La Granja de San Ildefonso in Segovia (until 1747, then in Buen Retiro) and the rest of the year in the Escorial

1737

Farinelli (Carlo Broschi) is employed at the royal Spanish court, Domenico lives in the Calle Ancha de San Bernando, Madrid

1738

On April 21, he was raised to the nobility as a Knight of the Order of Santiago (Cavallero del orden de Santiago / Cavaliere di S.Giacomo) by the Portuguese King João V, as the first His works are published in 30 sonatas for harpsichord as essercizi per gravicembalo in London - he dedicates it to João V in gratitude for the knighthood, portrait Domenicos by Antonio de Velasco (Instituiçao José Relvas, Alpiarça, Portugal)

1739

his wife Maria Cathilina dies at the age of 27 on May 6th in Aranjuez, the 5 minors come into the care of their grandmother Margarita Gentili, an additional 12 sonatas Reprint of the Essercizi with a foreword by Th.Roseingrave appears under the title XLII Suites de pieces pour le clavecin at Cooke in London, ten were published during his lifetime further printed collections of his sonatas (published in London, Paris and Nuremberg)

1741

HMarried the Spaniard Anastasia Maxarti Ximenes (born in Cadiz), with whom he had 4 more Has children (Maria Barbara, Rosa, Domingo and Antonio)

1742

Scarlatti now lives on Calle de Leganitos, Madrid

1746

Death of Felipe V, Maria Barbara's coronation as Queen and Fernando as Fernando VI King of Spain, in the meantime Scarlatti has overtaken Farinelli the rank at court, in all friendship

1749

Scarlatti's last child, Antonio is born

1752

Scarlatti is to see with Farinelli on a (copperplate engraving by Joseph Flipart after a) painting by Jacopo Amiconi, it is the only other Scarlatti portrait that dates from his lifetime is preserved, Scarlatti is ill, can no longer leave his house, the collection of copies of his works (sonatas) begins, according to his dictation, in the 15-volume codices from Venice and Parma

1753

he receives from Pope Benedict XIII. a complete indulgence for himself and his family

1754

Scarlatti composes the Missa quatuor vocum in G minor

1756

he composes his last work: Salve Regina in A major for soprano and strings

1757

Scarlatti dies on Saturday 23rd July in his house at 35 Calle de Leganitos in Madrid, he is buried in the Convento de San Norberto (the monastery was dissolved in 1845).

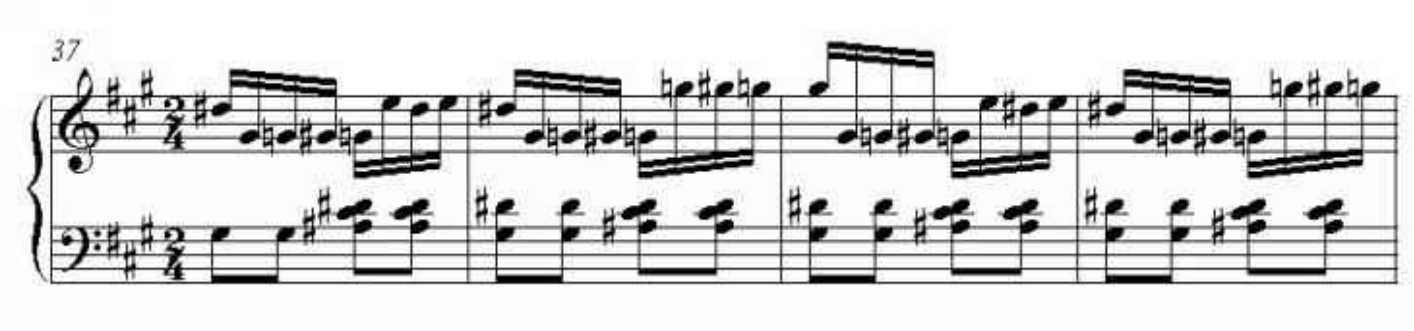
Preface

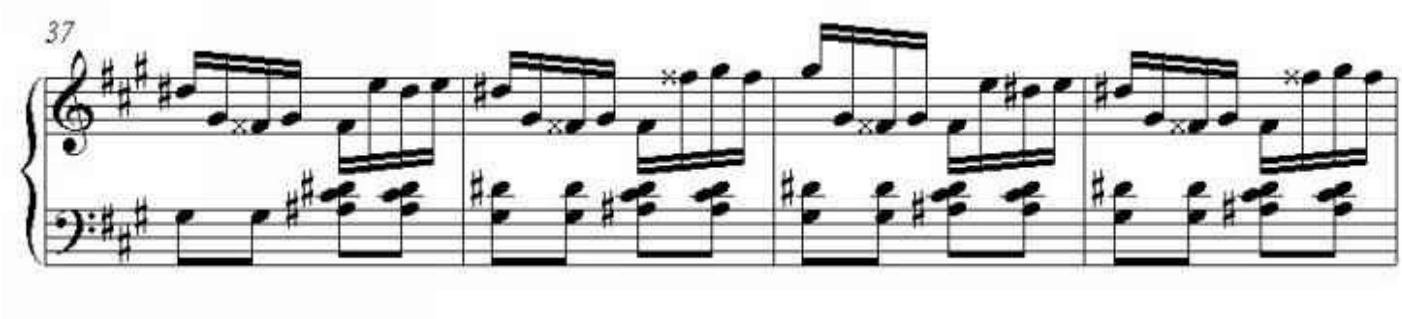
Scarlatti, born in the same year as Bach and Handel, was the revolutionary of the three in several ways.

It is the task of this website to unearth this treasure and make it accessible.

As for the sources to which I have referred, there are essentially four, namely three original text editions and also a few facsimile prints of Scarlatti's manuscripts. The bad habit of late Romanticism, where all possible (and impossible) pianists wanted to improve Scarlatti's sonatas "and adapt them to the demands of the time" by adding octaves, adding thirds and sixths and even - listen and be amazed - by inserting cadenzas they had invented themselves, the results of the Liszt School, which was unspeakable in this respect, fortunately belongs to the past. One could only speak of Scarlatti paraphrases here with great benevolence. What Scarlatti had in mind is clearly and unmistakably written down by himself in the original text and thus documented for all time and does not require any of the "improvements" mentioned, which were made by people who had no idea of Scarlatti's intentions and meaning.

The first of my sources was the internet edition of the Canadian harpsichordist John Sankey. Unfortunately, this edition has some disadvantages, some of which have to do with the notation program used. This program has no pause characters, so the relevant places are simply left blank. Especially for the music lover who is theoretically not too well versed, this means guesswork in many places and can easily lead to misinterpretations. Another disadvantage is that the tones e sharp, b sharp, c flat and f flat do not seem to exist in this program, not to mention double sharps. As a result, enharmonic tones had to be noted, which in many cases led to confusing results. An example from K25 (Sonata in F sharp minor) to the score should clarify this. First Sankeys, then the correct notation:



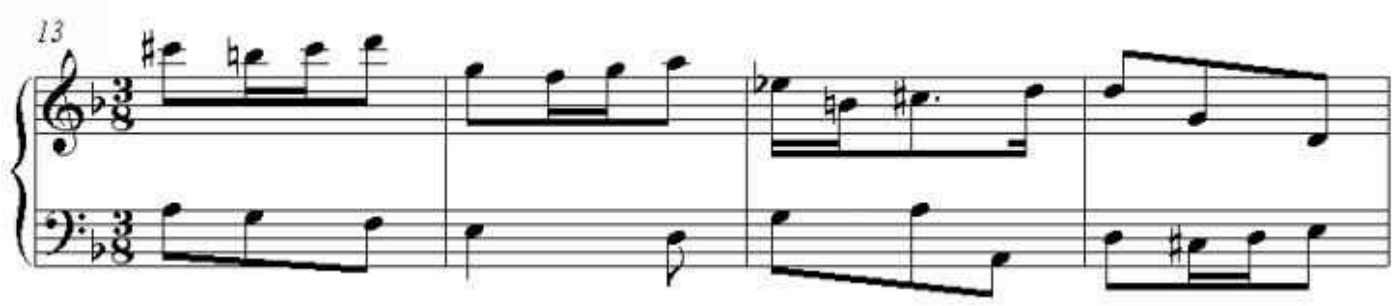


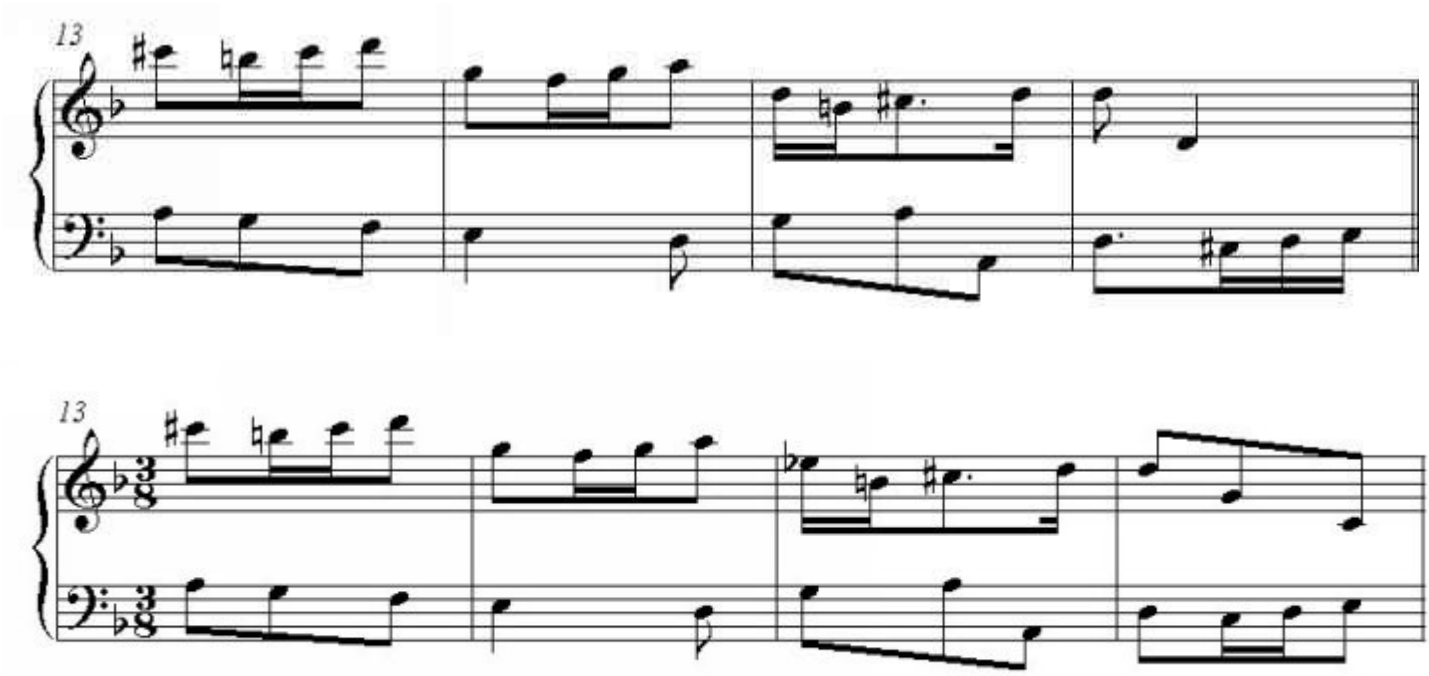
If you accept these disadvantages, this edition has the advantage that it can be downloaded free of charge from the Internet. However, it only extends to K176. Perhaps it was realized in 2000 that the notation program used was insufficient. However, one may wonder why one of the complete notation programs was not used. (Maybe too expensive?)

Another point of criticism of this edition is this: Mr. John Sankey did not stick to the original text at certain points, but instead built in traps, that is, presumably knowingly made mistakes, although this edition claims to be an original text edition. There is probably no discussion about the term original text: it concerns the faithful reproduction of the manuscript musical text. Perhaps he did so in order to be able to prove at some point that someone, without naming Sankey's name, pretends to be his own copy, but without realizing that he is thereby exposing himself to be a forger. The fact that such an approach cannot deceive the connoisseur but disregard the composer makes this edition and its publisher again questionable.

The same goes for his midi recordings, which are also available on the Internet, which were definitely worth studying carefully, especially where the exemplary treatment of the trills is concerned. His insights into the treatment of the trills coincide with mine. Unfortunately, there are also error traps installed there in many places, and probably on purpose. And that by someone who himself writes that the spread of Scarlatti's music is one of his highest goals!

As one of the many examples I cite measures 13-16 from K94. First the score, then the midi recording:





I also had two four-volume editions of selected Scarlatti's sonatas at my disposal, one of which is exemplary and the other under the motto "You can't be better".

The Hungarian edition (Edition Musica, Budapest) is exemplary. A selection has been made from all four periods in Scarlatti's work. One or the other will miss the one or the other sonata - every choice is a choice. Sonatas that are controversial in terms of music theory (more on this later) were not shied away from, but understood and published.

That cannot really be said of the edition of Edition Schott. It seems that Scarlatti's particularly conspicuous sonatas were not understood and somehow classified as not tenable in terms of music theory and were therefore avoided like the plague. It is and remains a mystery until you consider that the lack of need was obviously at work here. So: good, good, most good. The best boy in the class! That's a shame, but also very typical. At least this edition contains some sonatas that complement the Hungarian edition, which I without hesitation consider far more important and honest than the Schott edition.

A very exemplary complete edition of the original text is provided by Kenneth Gilbert and published by Heugel - Paris. Edited with great care, it is to be regarded as the most important source today. It is based on the Venice manuscripts and refers in various places to the deviations from the Parma manuscripts. The original manuscripts are unfortunately lost. It is just a shame and incomprehensible that with such care and so much goodwill, Scarlatti's method of key signatures was not adopted. It seems as if no one cares about the reasons that have moved Scarlatti to his way of key signatures in many sonatas (mainly up to around K150, but also occasionally later). In the foreword of this edition it is stated quite succinctly:

"... interpreters and musicologists are demanding more and more urgently a source-critical new edition of the 555 sonatas that have survived, based on today's editorial standards."

An indication of this phenomenon would have been in place. But more about that later.

As the original source, I had access for some time to a small collection of facsimile prints of Scarlatti's manuscripts, i.e. the copies made for the Spanish Queen Maria Barbara, which are kept in Venice and Parma. It should be clear that studying these facsimile prints was very instructive. Here Scarlatti's intentions become clear in a wonderful way. Aside from the enchantment these manuscripts bring about, which open up a bygone world on their own, they are the only well that cannot be reinterpreted. What it says there was written down by Scarlatti himself. And therefore more valid than all later editions combined. However, it must be said that Scarlatti's style of notation has not always been happy in our eyes today. He wrote so that the note c' was the dividing line between the two staves. Probably because of avoiding auxiliary lines as much as possible. In the following examples this has been transformed into a more modern notation where necessary.

General remarks

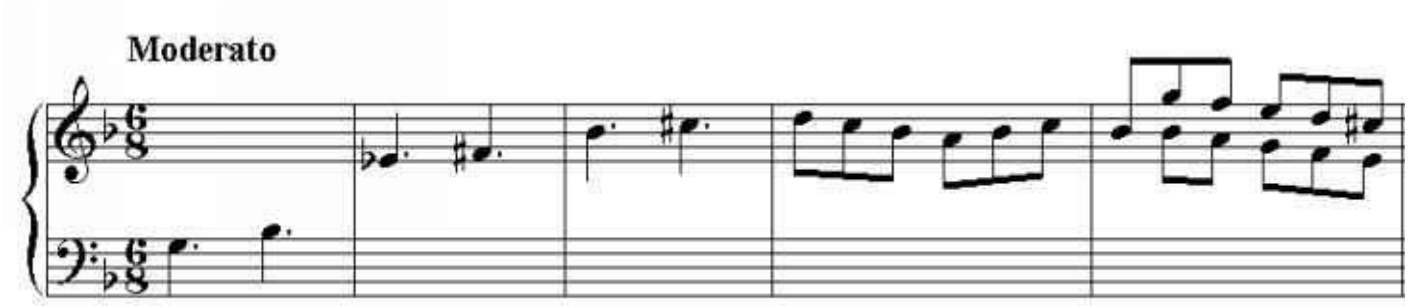
In general, it can be stated that there were four distinct periods in the composition of the sonatas. This fact alone is unusual for a composer of his time. Unusual because fellow composers saw tonality as an essential renewal and devoted themselves entirely to it without having undergone major stylistic developments. That cannot be said in his case. Scarlatti had an intimate relationship with the not so long ago modality, which also explains his interest in Spanish folk music, which is also modal in nature.

As far as these four different periods are concerned, the following is a classification:

- Up to about K100 (to be precise, K95) the "Italian" sonatas, which despite all their ingenuity and incredible details are still deeply rooted in the tradition of Italian baroque music.
- Up to around K300 the "Spanish" sonatas, in many of these sonatas influences of Spanish folk music, especially flamenco, are evident.
- Up to around K400, a period in Scarlatti's composing characterized by the pursuit of the greatest possible simplicity. It is noticeable that most of the sonatas of this period are in major. In the other periods, major and minor are roughly in balance. In many of the sonatas of this period, virtuosity takes a back seat, although the virtuoso Scarlatti never denies himself.

- From K400 the "late style". All the elements mentioned appear simultaneously and intertwined, including the virtuosity and are abstracted into absolute music. K427 and K517 e.g. are the first concert studies that have ever been written.

Scarlatti was not necessarily a polyphonic composer like Bach, for example. The polyphonic elements of his music are mostly limited to imitation except in the early period and in some compositions of the late period, these are fugues. These do not have the polyphonic rigor in the sense of Bach, the greatest polyphonist of all, but represent Scarlatti's views on polyphony. Noticeable is e.g. the Sonata K41 . The use of the second voice does not bring the theme as it "ought to be", but rather the counterpoint that is preferred in this case. That is against all laws of the fugue. However, this approach illustrates Scarlatti's views on musical freedom. Whenever he found it musically necessary, he "disregarded" the laws of tonality and formal theory already formulated by his contemporary Jean Philippe Rameau (1683-1764). He also saved this concept of freedom from the modality. Some Sonatas such as K30 have a striking theme. The beginning of this fugue cannot be classified either tonally or modally when listening. Only in the fourth bar does the harmonic structure take shape. Therefore this joint was later called "cat fugue". Here are the first bars:



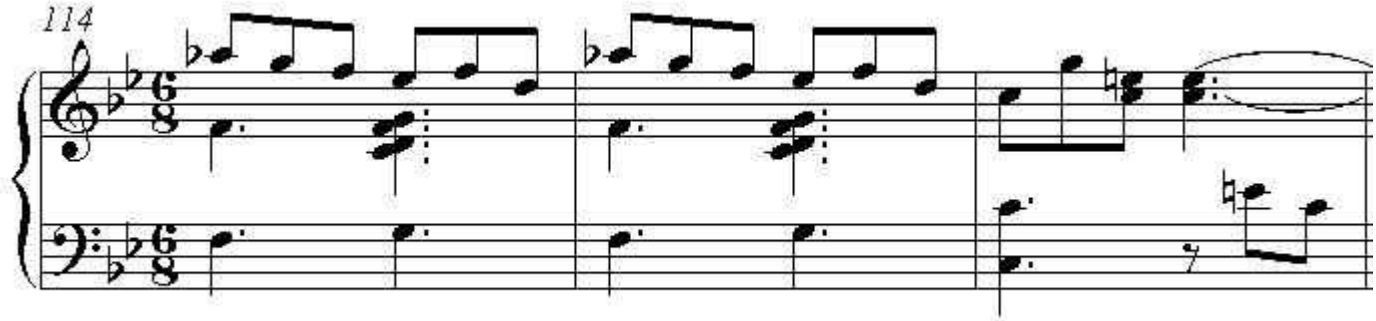
Occasionally, fugues also appear in later periods, of which K417 is a masterful example. This fugue is three-part at the beginning, but then changes to two-part, underlaid by a perpetuum mobile-like 8th note accompaniment (alla-breve time) in the left hand and, with its almost 5 minutes length, belongs to the sonatas of larger size. This sonata as well as K434 show Scarlatti at the height of a very own polyphonic mastery.

During this first period the fashion dances of the time such as the minuet also appear a few times. Scarlatti's minuets are always short pieces of great melodic beauty. Later minuets, of which there are some, are already largely stylized and can no longer be easily recognized as minuets.

Scarlatti's music is always intended to be extremely rhythmic and therefore predestined for dance. From K96, however, the Spanish dance forms have largely become the basis of his music. This is by far not just talking about flamenco, which Scarlatti got to know during his four-year stay in Seville and which has become an important source of inspiration for him. Dances like the

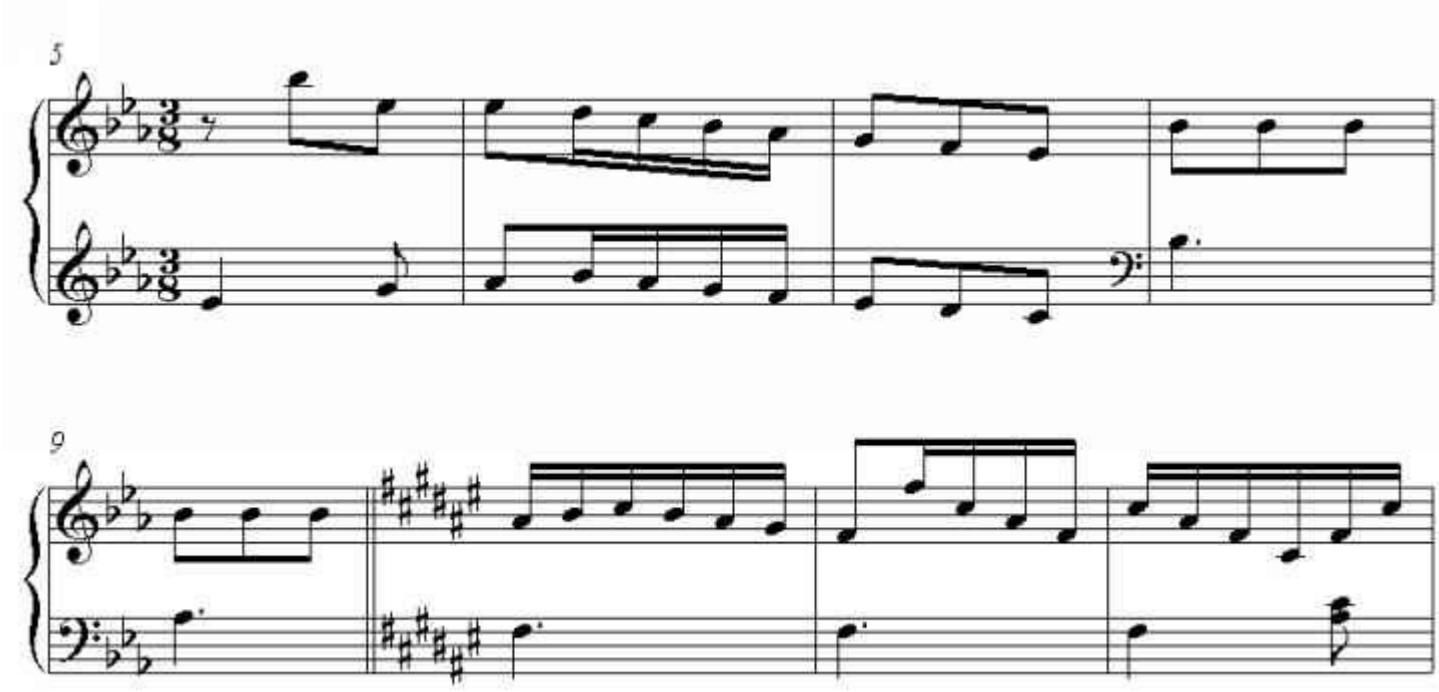
Seguedilla (K239 , but also in K380) find their echo in his music. The same applies to the farmers' fanfares in the village, which appear as the main motif for the first time in K96. The "deadly sin" parallel fifths is also repeatedly used structurally, that is to say quite deliberately. All these elements come from the modality, in this case from Spanish folk music, which is also modal in character. It is Scarlatti's great achievement that he does not quote these elements, but has made them his own and seamlessly integrated them into his own style, which sees tonality and modality as a unique unity. This happened at a time when the "highly learned" composer colleagues could only muster a weary smile of contempt for folk music. Scarlatti was therefore the first composer ever to create national art music. It is a revolutionary act. However, it should always be kept in mind that the main emphasis is on "art music".

In addition, it is mainly at the beginning of the Spanish period that the greatest musical contrasts were set against each other in blocks without any transition, a way of seeing that also stems from the modality. There are major - minor, tonal - modal, polyphonic - homophonic, and sudden key changes, especially with half-closings (e.g. K174 : half-closure in G major, further on in E flat major). In this sonata, as in many others, there appears a cadence dominant - tonic, where the dominant seventh chord is a suspended chord that is not resolved. The fourth appears in place of the third:



In the Gilbert edition bar 114 is missing. I am sure that this bar belongs here.

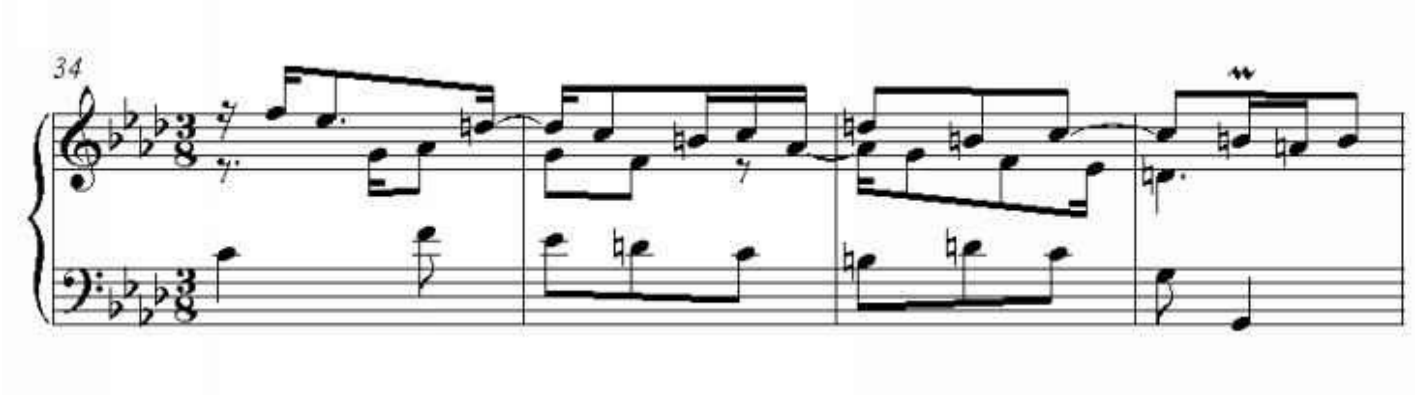
There is also an unexpected key change in Sonata K371 , from E flat major to F sharp major:



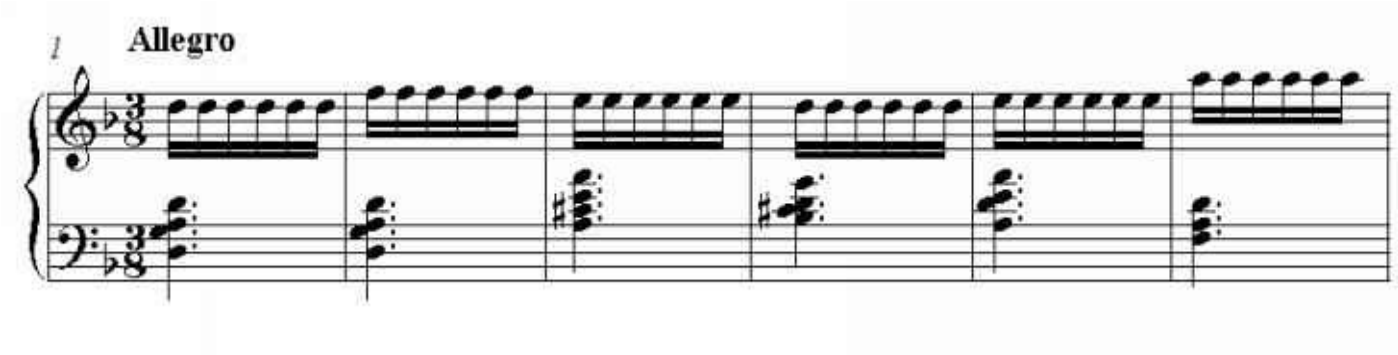
The reason for this key change is that a sequence begins in F sharp major that leads back to the basic key via G sharp minor, B flat minor and E flat minor. So the sequence does not move away from the basic key, but begins at a remote point, from there to lead back to the basic key. This approach is again unique for the Baroque period; no other composer of that epoch used it.

Most of Scarlatti's sonatas are essentially two-part conceived. This serves the transparency and clarity of the music. Take K363 as an example, a sonata that is consistently kept in two parts. To intensify the musical happening, there is sometimes a transition to three-part music, and now and then to chordal structures.

Sometimes Scarlatti goes over to three voices by lengthening the notes of a line so that they overlap, e.g. in K365 :

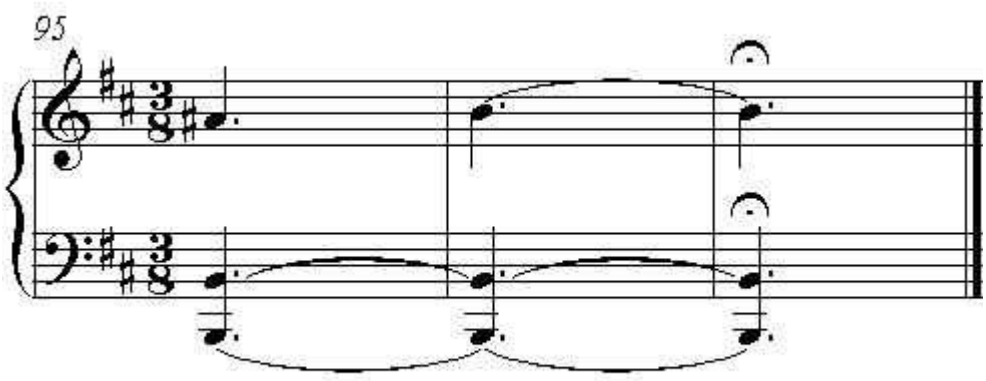


In other sonatas, suspended chords are used structurally as main chords, e.g. in K141 :



Another and no less important revolutionary act was the renewal of playing technique. These are examined in more detail in a separate chapter. Contemporaries have described his own playing as an experience of a previously unknown sonority. In part, this can be attributed to Scarlatti's technical inventions. After all, a larger part of the scope of the instrument was used simultaneously than ever before. This was done by constantly crossing the hands, through arpeggios, which sometimes ran through the entire range of the harpsichord at a rapid pace, and through the use of the aforementioned dissonant suspended chords, which, interestingly, were not resolved. The latter also points to a more modally oriented understanding of harmony. In addition, his playing style was certainly not staccato, because the fullness of the sound would have fizzled out, but legato and even molto legato. Furthermore, reference must be made to the way the appoggiaturas are played, the so-called "acciaccaturas". These were struck by Scarlatti at the same time as the main note, i.e. in each case as a dissonance. All these elements are the only way to explain the new richness of sound that so fascinated his contemporaries. If one considers that the greater part of Scarlatti's music is in two parts, this conclusion is undoubtedly justified.

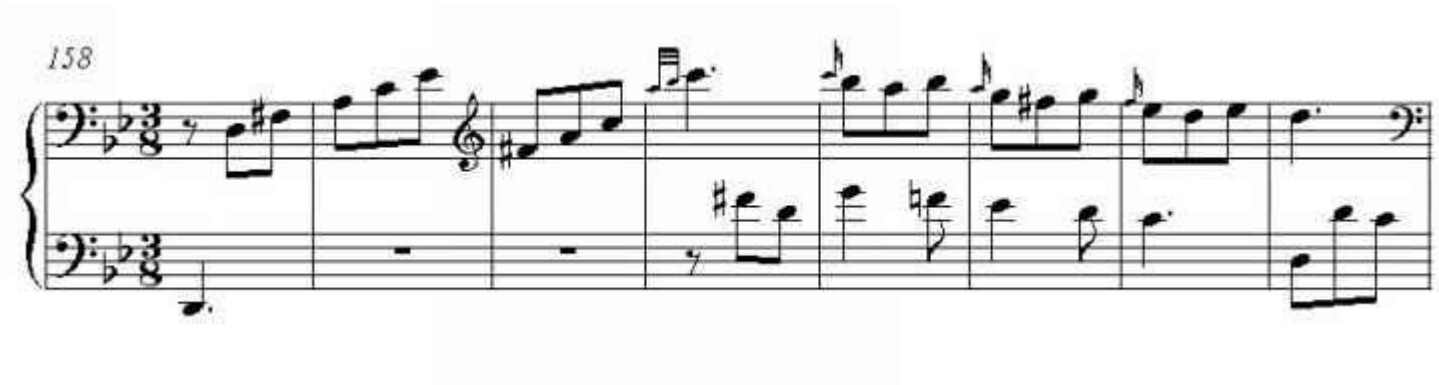
Another argument in favor of the more modal understanding of music is that there are hardly any final chords in the sonatas and if so, then in the minor sonatas they are mostly minor chords and only rarely, as was the predominant practice of the time, major chords. Such final chords are most likely to be found in the first period. Most sonatas end with either a single note, an octave, or a double octave. So with a harmonic illusion that consists in the fact that the previous tones are still in the ear. Often the upper closing tone is prepared by a long lead on the seventh (tension - solution), while the lower closing tone already sounds. As an example, the final bars of K173 in the sounding version:



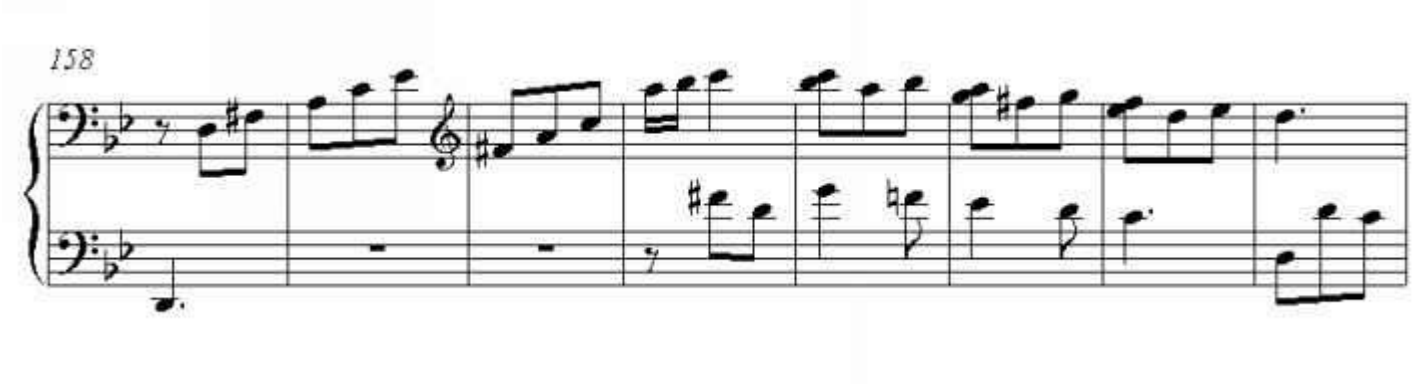
As far as the appoggiaturas are concerned, two forms can be distinguished:

- the acciaccatura, i.e. the appoggiatura that sounds together with the following note and
- the melodic appoggiatura, the length of which is relative because it depends on the context.

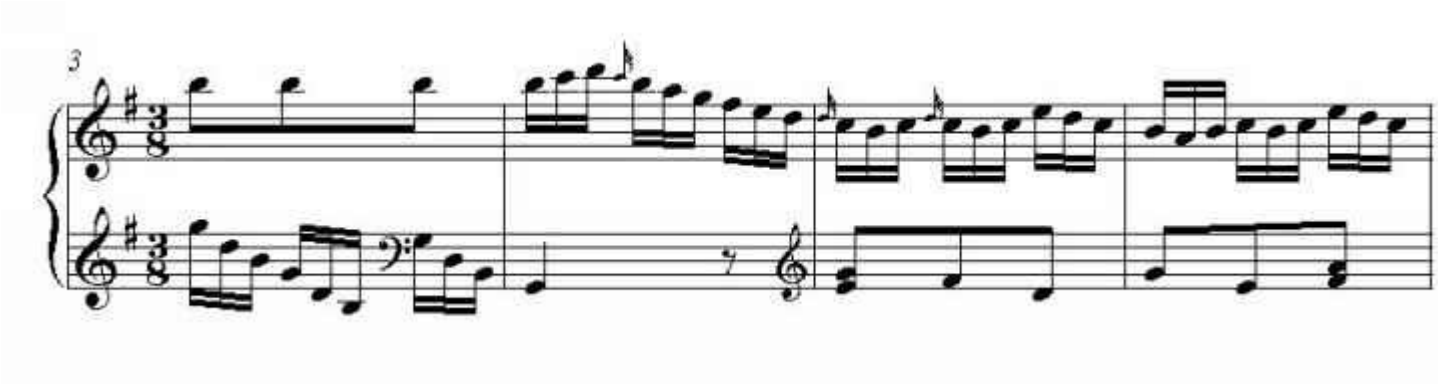
The acciaccatura appears in passages of notes of the same value and is struck together with the note following it, which in any case means a dissonance. An example from K121 (G minor - Allegrissimo) ::



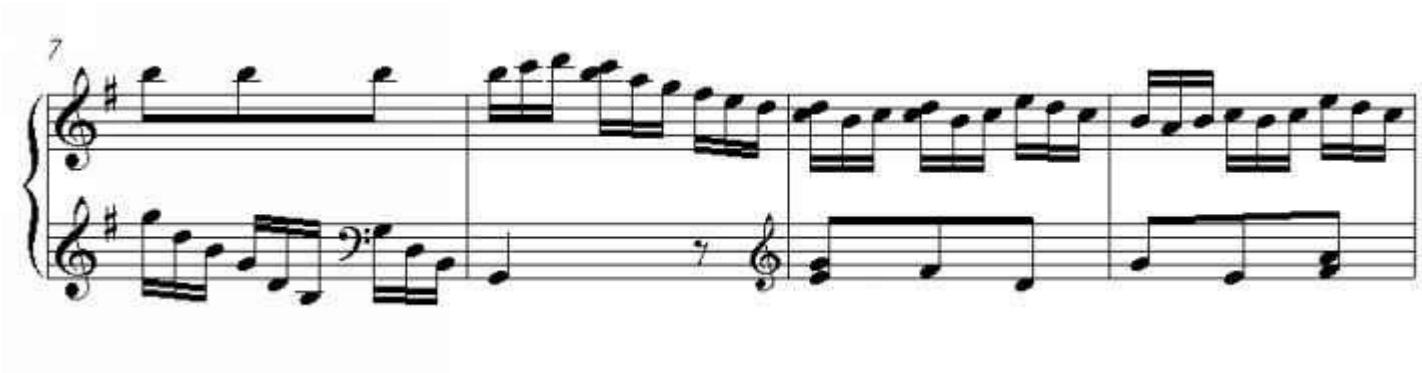
The way of playing is as follows:



Another of many examples for the acciaccatura can be found in K124 (G major - Allegro) :



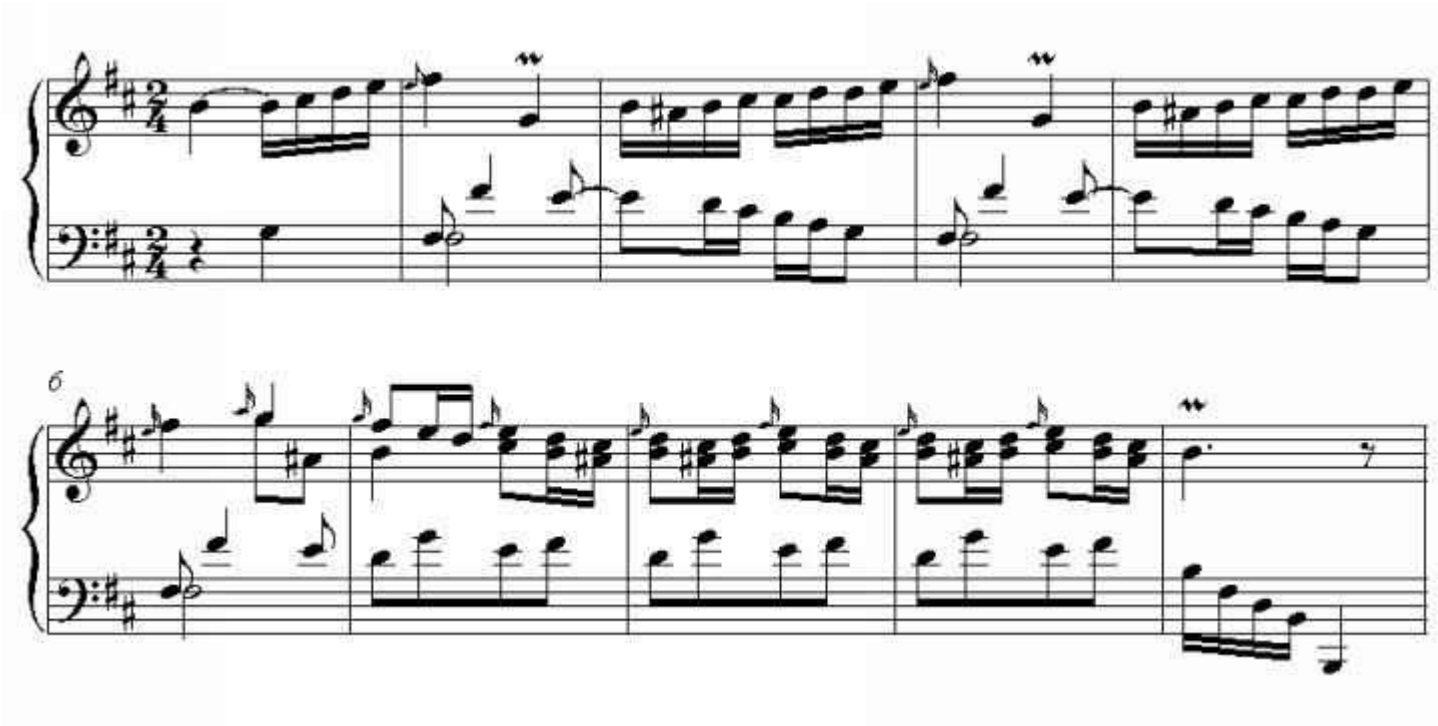
The way of playing is as follows:



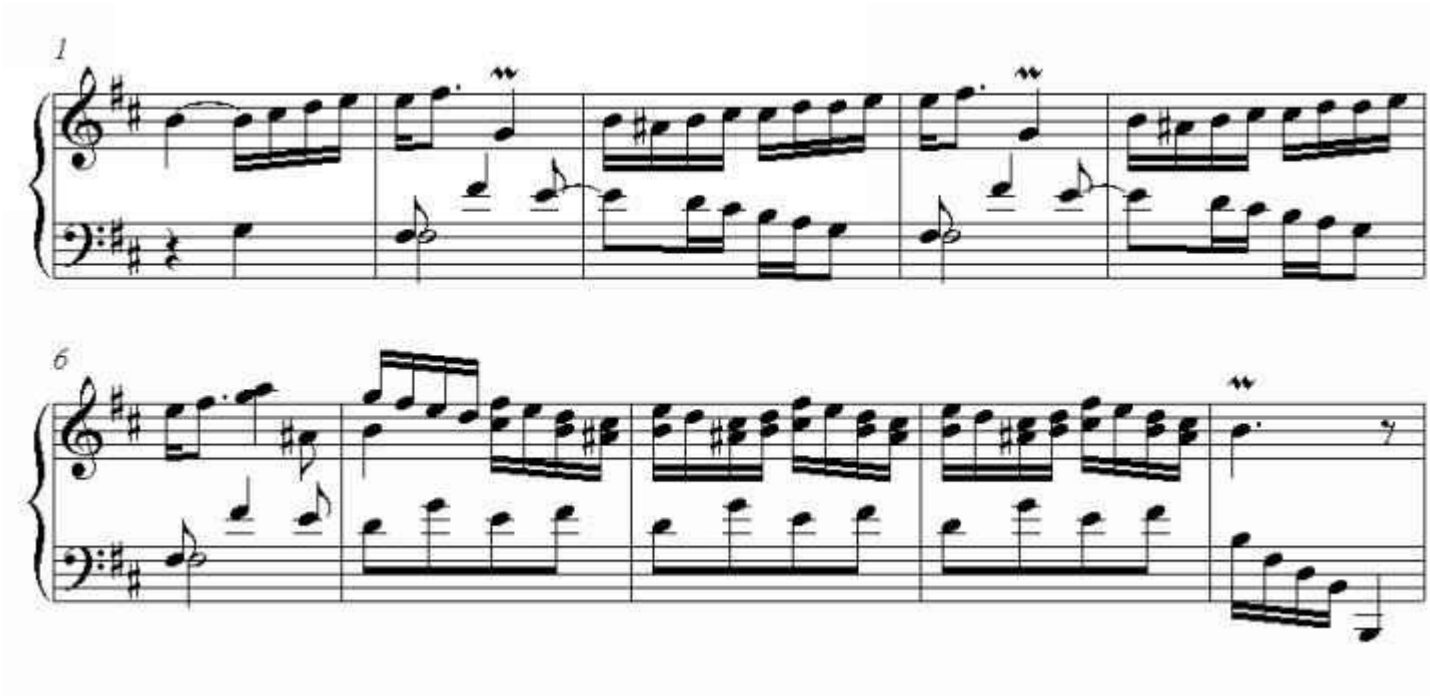
The "rule of thumb" for the melodic appoggiatura is:

The note value of such a appoggiatura is either 1/3 or 1/4 of the main note, depending on its length. An example for both forms:

K173 (b minor - Allegro)

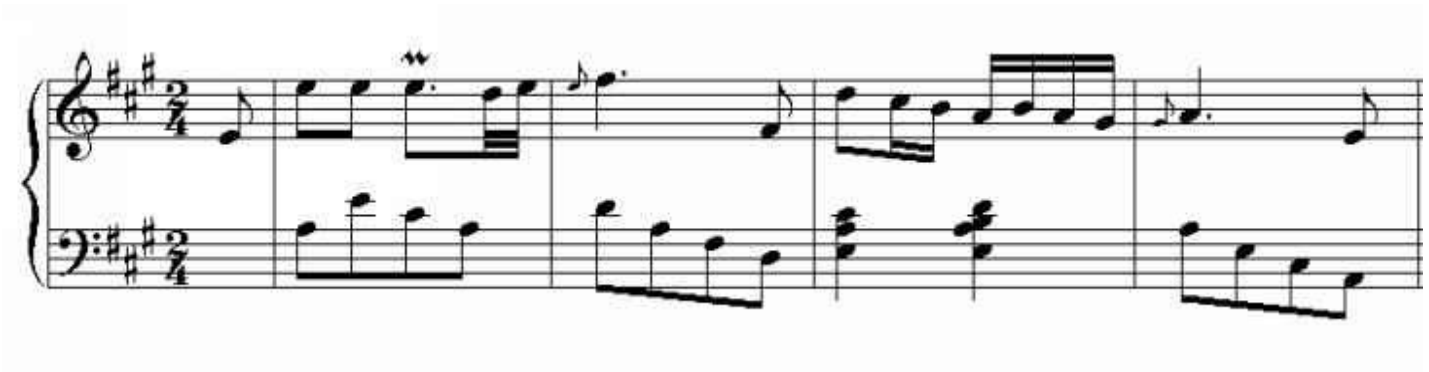


The way of playing is as follows:

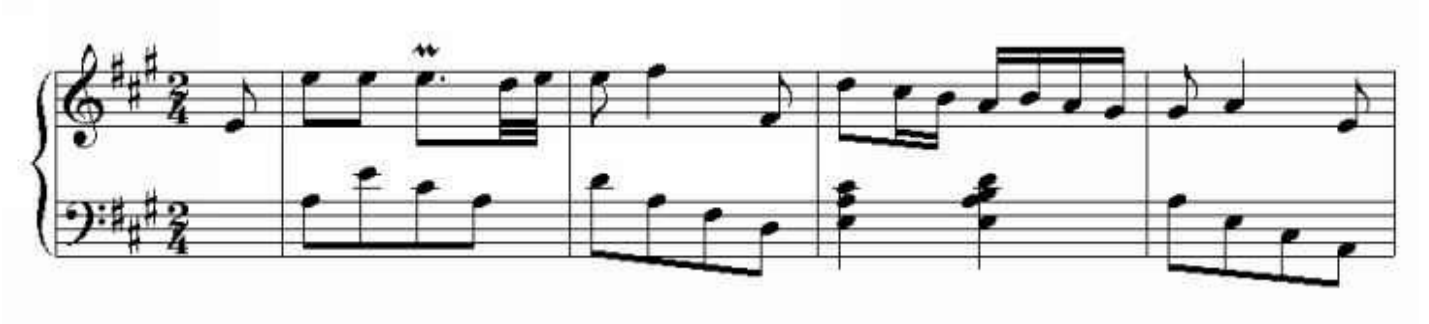


In this case the main note has the value of 4 sixteenths. So the appoggiatura gets the value of a sixteenth and the main note is shortened by this value. The point of such appoggiaturas is that the agogic accent remains on the main tone and in such cases is not on the beat. This ensures lively rhythmic and sound patterns.

K181 (A-Dur - Allegro)

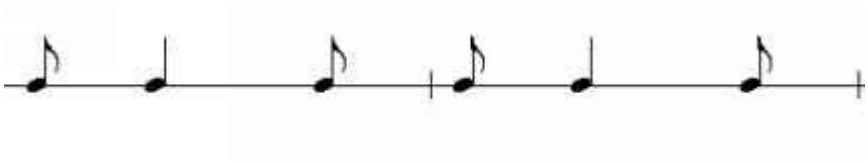


The way of playing is as follows:

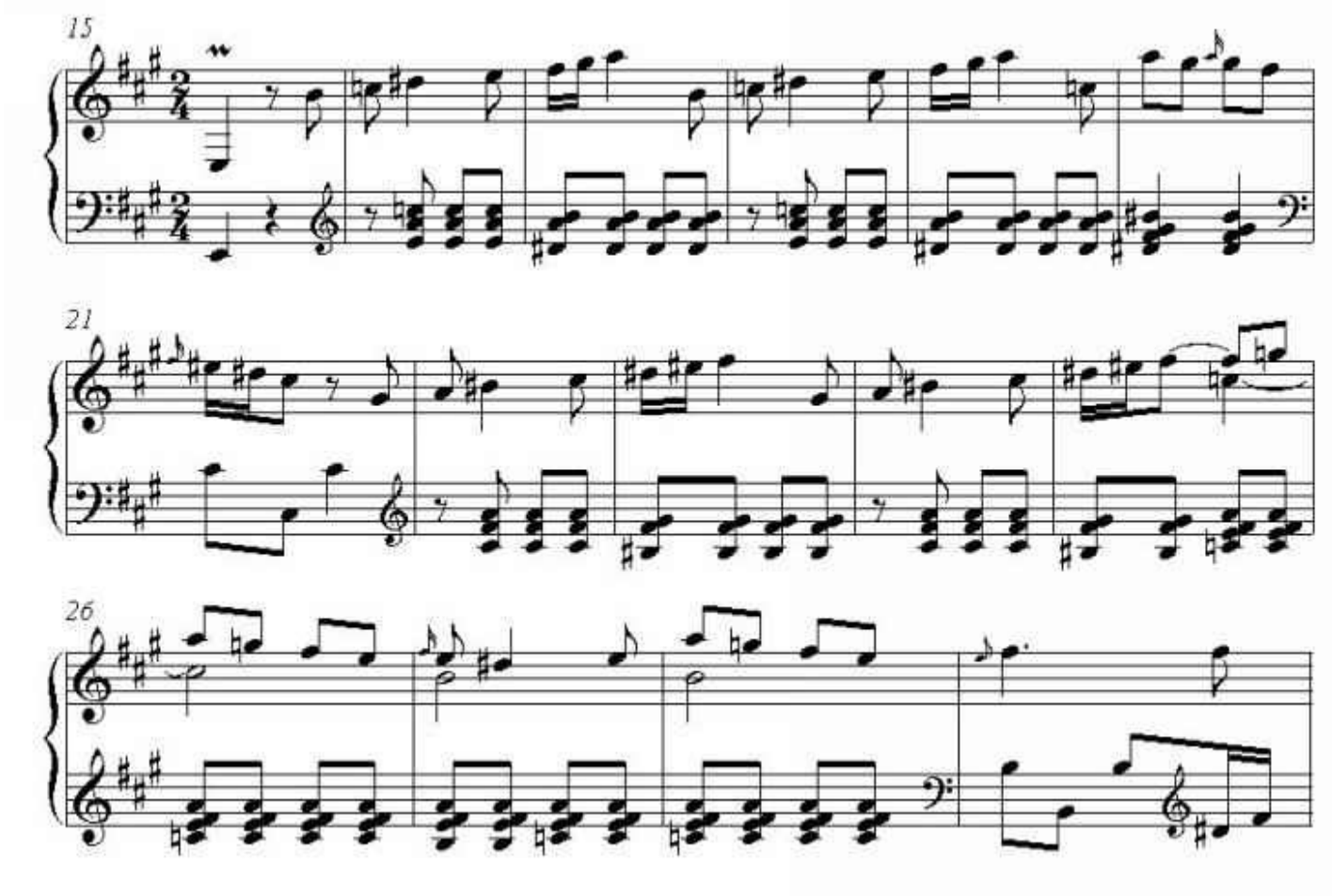


The main note has a length of three eighth notes. The appoggiatura is given the value of an eighth note and the main note is shortened by this value. What

has been said above applies to the agogic accents. The main rhythmic motif in this sonata is this:



This sonata has a very clearly defined second theme, which appears six times in all, on five different pitches. Here is the example for the first and second appearance:

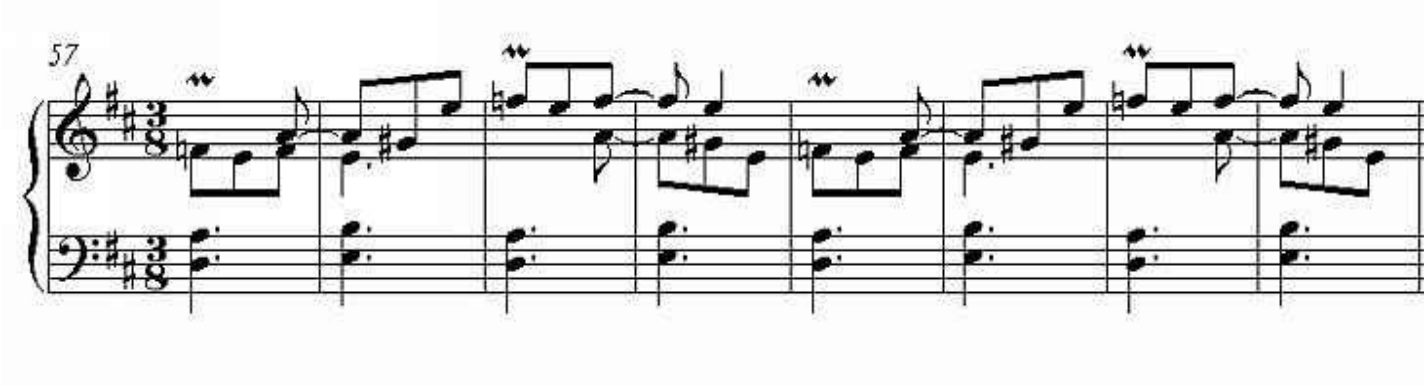


Before his Spanish period, Scarlatti had a harpsichord in use, the size of which was enlarged downwards by a fourth. In K6 and K7 or also in K26 e.g. this can be seen clearly.

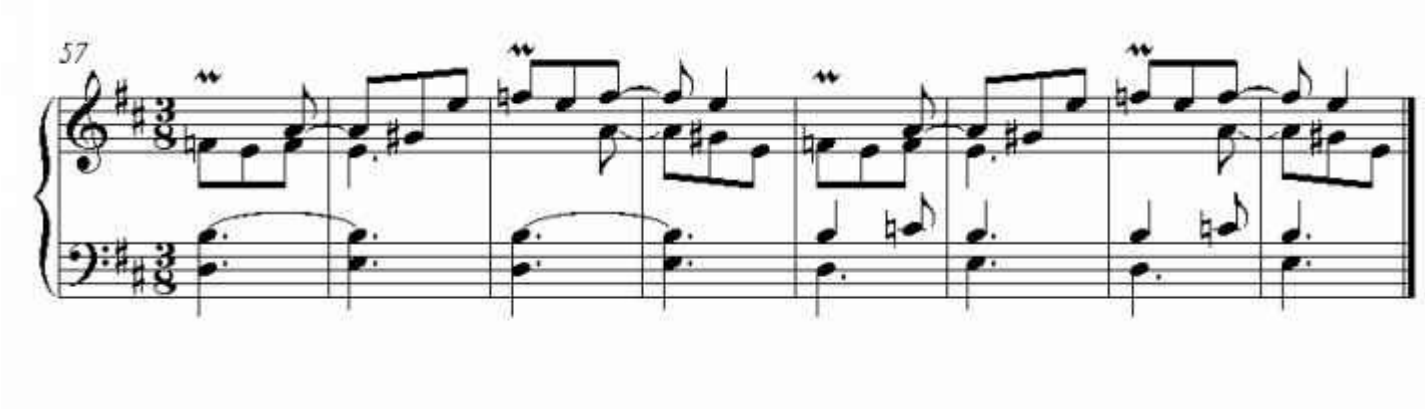
From the Spanish sonatas (i.e. from K96) a larger size of the harpsichord was prescribed than the usual one (C-c'''), upwards by a fifth and downwards by a fourth (G'- g''') . It is well known that the Spanish court had many instruments, including clavichords, the forerunners of the piano. The only instrument at the Spanish court that actually had the prescribed range is a one-manual harpsichord. So it can be assumed that this was Scarlatti's favorite instrument. From K387 the range of this harpsichord has been expanded in depth to F'. There was no such instrument at the Portuguese court. By the way, why should a composer prescribe tones that an instrument does not contain? His sonatas

from K96 onwards were probably composed for this instrument. Unfortunately, it is unknown which instrument Scarlatti used in his four years in Seville. Due to its size, it cannot be determined exactly from which sonata Scarlatti stayed at the Spanish court.

Another indication of Scarlatti's more modal thinking are the already briefly mentioned parallels of fifths, which appear regular and structural from the start and which are known to be forbidden in tonality. It is nonsense to believe that a composer with his qualities should so often "unconsciously" have made such "mistakes". These parallel fifths have been used very deliberately. An outstanding example, representative of many, from K96 (D major - Allegrissimo) ::



As an example of the mental state of certain musical circles, a rape at this point, which has been downloaded from the Internet and is obviously taken from a printed edition, is given here:



The "editor" is a music theorist who has felt the need to "improve" Scarlatti's "primitive mistakes" (= parallel fifths). Music theorists are characterized by the fact that they understand nothing about the tonality and absolutely nothing about the modality. So they constantly have to explain and do not know what to do. So he "composed" what, in his opinion, Scarlatti must have had in mind. Fortunately, Scarlatti himself does not seem to have been able to implement these ideas for which he was accused. The result is - to put it mildly - a disregard for the great composer and a deliberate falsification and rape of his work. Unfortunately, the source is not given on the Internet. However, it is

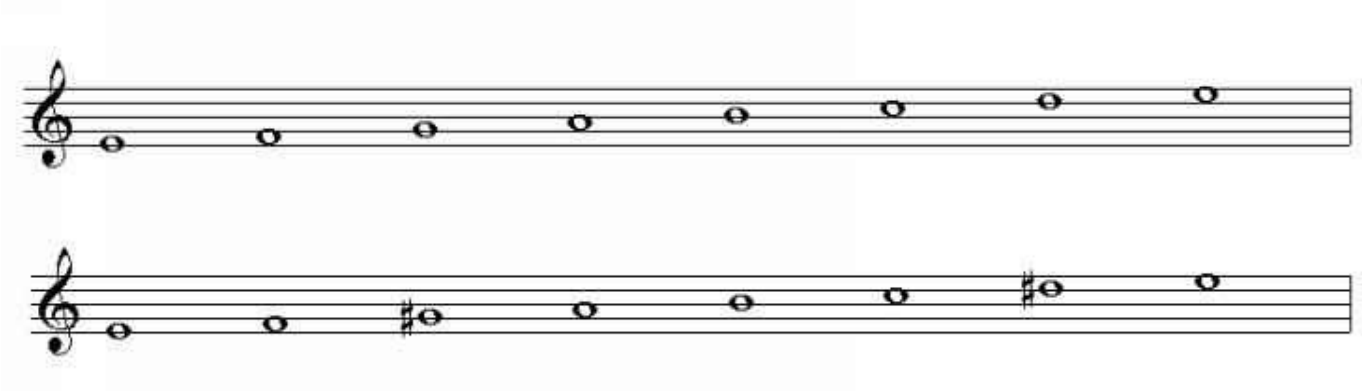
probably an older edition, which can be deduced from the fact that the sonatas have all possible titles, just not the only correct one, namely "Sonata".

Another example of structural parallel fifths can be found in Sonata K394 , which will be discussed later.

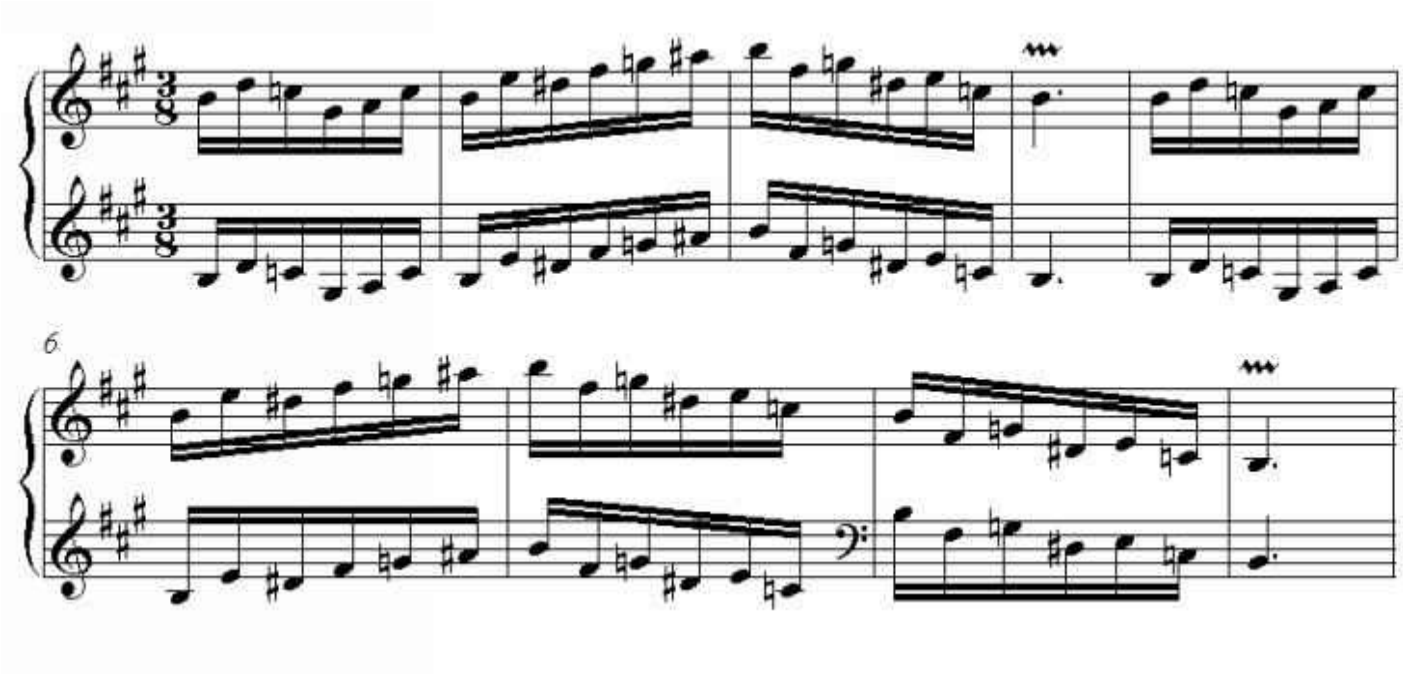
Other, more hidden examples can be found e.g. in K21 in bars 30 and 34..

In some sonatas there are cadenza-like passages such as in K33 or again in K394, where a real cadenza appears, a unique piece in Scarlatti's work and also for the period. These cadences and cadenza-like passages can be freely interpreted rhythmically.

In some sonatas such as K33 , K101 or K155 one encounters strange unison passages. In the case of K101, when they first appear, these explain the Spanish gypsy scale, which is structured differently than the Hungarian one. The Spanish gypsy scale is an alteration of the Phrygian mode:

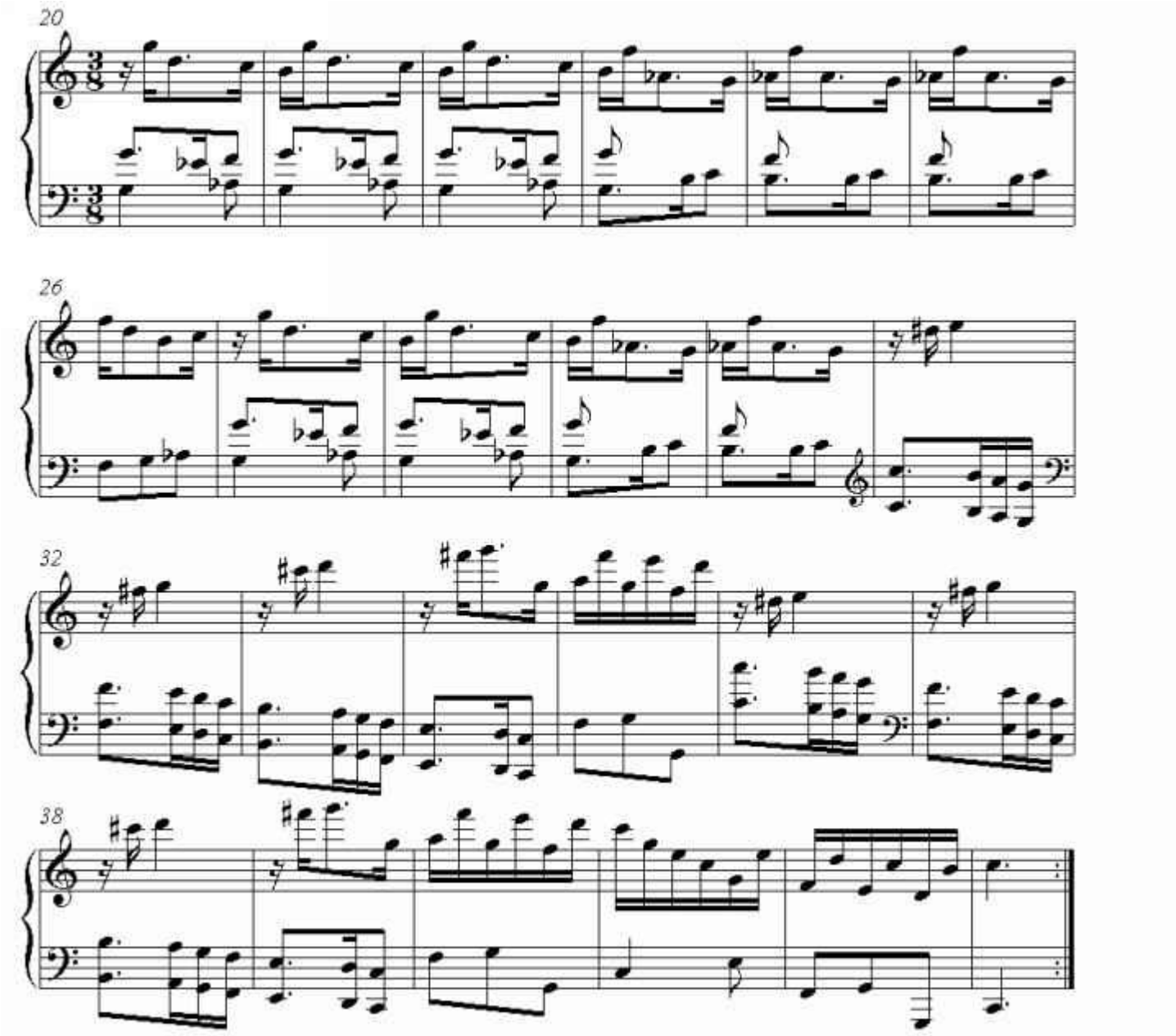


E and A are the main notes, with E being the root note. That, too, comes from the modality, of course. The tones G and D have been altered in order to act as leading tones to the main tones. The very fact that the Spanish gypsy scale is older than the tonality proves its modality. Here is the example from K101 (A major - Allegro)::



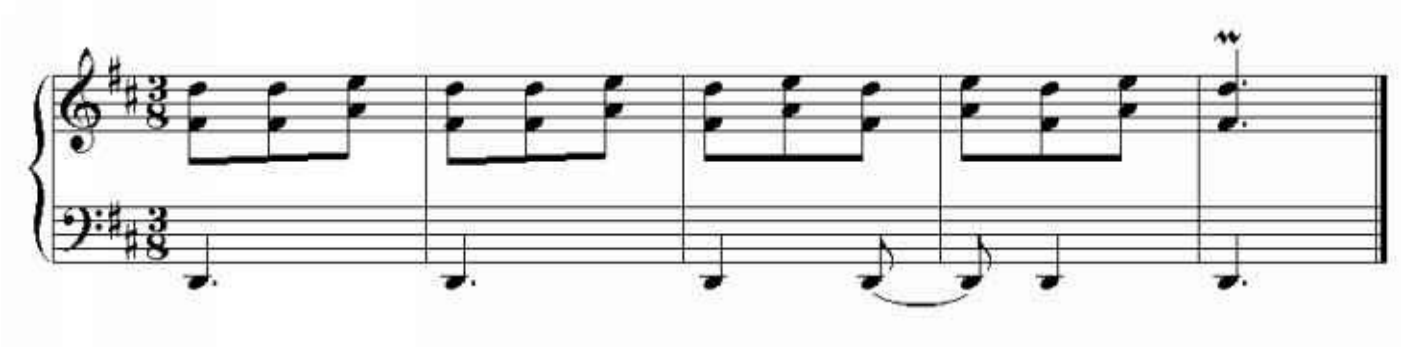
Incidentally, the interaction between dissonants and consonants is one of the most masterful qualities in Scarlatti's music.

The "normal" division of the music of his time into four or eight bar periods is replaced by Scarlatti more often than was the case with other composers by asymmetrical periods, i.e. three or five bar periods, e.g. This becomes clear in the example from K101. The repetition of the first four-bar period is extended to a five-bar period. Such expansions or reductions in periods of several bars occur very frequently and are one of Scarlatti's stylistic means, who used this stylistic device to increase musical tension. This is mainly due to Scarlatti's unconventional thinking, but it is also reflected in Spanish folk music. Indeed, he was the most unconventional of all composers of his era and therefore probably the most interesting. An example from K383 shows the irregularity in the division into bars:



The repetition of the first seven-bar period is shortened to four bars. This is followed by a five-bar period, which is extended in its repetition to a seven-bar period and then concluded by a final bar.

Regarding the metrics of the sonatas, it can be said that with Scarlatti the ternary meters are by far the majority (3/8, 3/4, 6/8, sometimes 9/8 or 12/8, with 3/8 time being the most common appears). The hemiole 3/4 appears regularly on 6/8, e.g. in K96 (at the end), in K153 or K159, in the case of 3/8 time, distributed over two bars. As an example, the last bars of K96:



In the example above from the same sonata, note the hemiolas in the upper part.

There is a theory that the ternary element comes closest to the basic human feeling. Other theories deny this. Perhaps there are certain differences from people to people. Be that as it may, there seems to be an indication of this in the case of Scarlatti. Other composers in later epochs also had a preference for ternary meters, for example Frederic Chopin or Alexander Skriabin.

Another important element in Scarlatti's music is perhaps best described as "non-stop music". The flow of the music only comes to a rest on the closing notes at half and full closing. In some sonatas, however, several semicircles appear. A short period, consisting of a few bars, is repeated once or twice, each time a whole tone higher, occasionally a whole tone lower each time. These passages usually appear at the beginning of the second block and appear in every period in Scarlatti's compositions.

About the form

In the case of Scarlatti's sonatas, of course, one cannot yet speak of the classical sonata form, which was first developed by Haydn and Mozart. However, approaches to the sonata form are often recognizable. There are development-like passages, in some sonatas two musically contrasting themes, here and there clear codas, etc.

In Scarlatti's sonatas, there are several types of form:

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1. The two-part forms

This is the basic form of most sonatas, in the sense of A - A '. However, a distinction must be made here between two types of form.

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The type with one main motif

This is the most common type of form. A main motif, which often appears as an imitation in the second part, forms the essential musical material of an entire sonata. Often smaller motifs are derived from this main motif, which are then carried out in a sequence.

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The type with two opposing main motifs

This type appears mainly at the beginning of the "Spanish" period, when Scarlatti confronted his own musical notions with the fascinating influences to which he was exposed. The contrasts that resulted from this are certainly extremely interesting. In some sonatas of this period, purely tonal parts without any transition are confronted with purely modal parts. As examples I will mention K105 and K107. From this confrontation, Scarlatti developed the idea of symbiosis, which led to intriguing results in later sonatas. Just as intriguing, however, are the examples just mentioned and other similar sonatas. It should now be clear that such an approach was extremely unusual for his own as well as for later times. At a time when Philippe Rameau's definition of tonality was making waves and was welcomed and understood as a new creed by almost every composer, Scarlatti was the one who deeply doubted this new definition. It could be that Scarlatti experienced the transition from modality to tonality as just as revolutionary as the composers of the post-war period saw the departure from tonality. His achievement lay in recognizing the new, but he combined this new with traditional values. The fact that this resulted in results that not a single other of his contemporaries could show should also give today's composers cause for thought.

As if to give extra emphasis to this duality, a great many sonatas are later laid out in pairs.

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2. The three-part forms

In Scarlatti's wealth of forms, the three-part song form A - B - A is of course not missing. However, this form appears only a few times, namely in K202, K235, K273, or K282. The A-parts of K202 e.g. are fast, brilliant, playful and virtuoso. The contrasting B section, on the other hand, a pastoral and one of the deepest testimonies to the flamenco influence, represents a completely different world. However, this extreme contrast is masterfully combined into a unity. Especially the transition from the B part to the last A part is unique in its simplicity and conciseness. The harmonic turns of the B part are among the most extensive that Scarlatti has ever written. Some of the modulations in this section are so unusual that a parallel with Wagner comes to mind. The visionary faculties, which Scarlatti has in places, celebrates one of its highlights here.

In some sonatas such as K513 anticipates the three-movement structure of the later classical sonata, i.e. the multi-movement. This is about type A - B - C, in this case Andante - Allegro - Presto.

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3. The four-part forms

The four-part form A - B - A - B that appears a few times, e.g. in K176 actually belongs to the category of the two-part form with two main motifs. Elements A and B are as opposite as they can be. In the case mentioned, the opposites consist of major-minor and andante-allegro. This A-B block is then repeated in a varied manner. So it is a further variation of the two-part type with two main motifs.

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4. One-part Sonatas

Some of Scarlatti's sonatas are in one piece, such as K112. This sonata has no real half-ending. At the point of the half-close, the music simply continues without interruption.

In the chapters on the four creative periods, this matter is discussed in more detail.

About the harmonic structure

The "usual" modulation scheme of the Baroque period is also often found in Scarlatti's work, it is about the half-closing-full closing principle. The half-ending is on the dominant and the full ending on the tonic. Scarlatti, however, would not be Scarlatti if there were not numerous exceptions in this field too, which are very idiosyncratic and certainly extremely unusual for the time. These are harmonic structures that are unique in their appearance even in later epochs of music history. All of the exceptions discussed below are dictated by musical logic, which for Scarlatti was significantly more important than the strict rules of music theory, in which he apparently never really believed. He was probably the first to believe that bans can only limit creative freedom. Through his work, he has often harshly challenged music theory. Here, too, there is the reference to the modality, which could unfold in complete freedom. Scarlatti also made use of this right for himself and consistently enforced it. Some of his innovations in this area have never been repeated after him. This is indicative of his courage and his unconventional attitude, which, however, is essentially more conventional than that of all his contemporaries, since it is based on principles of modality. One can wonder whether Scarlatti's music can really be

attributed to the tonality without reservation. This is certainly true for many of the elements appearing there, and certainly not for many others. So Scarlatti has become a problem for music theory, which however rightly bears its name as long as practice proves its ineptitude.

With regard to the exceptions mentioned, I will limit myself to a few striking examples in this context. All of these examples are unusual and often unique in the history of tonality, as long as one wants to limit oneself to classifying this music as purely tonal. Here a unique opportunity has not been recognized by all know-it-alls. It concerns the chance of the symbiosis between modal and tonal music, which Scarlatti (the only one) has realized. The importance of this conclusion cannot be overestimated. Although music theory and publishers are unable to do anything sensible with it, it is precisely at this point that Scarlatti's uniqueness lies. Official music theory prefers not to concern itself with Scarlatti at all, and the appreciation he received from his contemporaries Handel and Bach is hushed up. So far so good. As far as the publishers are concerned, I will come back briefly to the edition of selected sonatas from Edition Schott. All sonatas in which elements appear that cannot be unequivocally assigned to the tonality have been eliminated - almost to punish Scarlatti for her own ignorance. It has to be mentioned, unfortunately you can't avoid it, people ask about it and after all it is a market, but its really extraordinary achievements should not be mentioned!

Unfortunately, it is the case that the tonality babblers, who are characterized by the fact that they understand absolutely nothing about the tonality, do not dare to venture into the uncertain area of modality and certainly do not get involved. To this day it is incomprehensible that current music theory does not know how to help itself other than to be able to examine phenomena of music, which are located both before and after the tonality, only through the tonality glasses or, better, vice versa: that they can look through the tonality magnifying glass under their glasses, which is probably the more likely solution to the riddle.

After these inevitable things are settled once and for all, we return to Scarlatti and henceforth keep him free from the odor of theorists and certain publishers.

1. The tonality of the half-close

There are major sonatas whose semi-finals end on the dominant, but in a minor key. As examples of several I will mention K518 and K545. The idea behind this way of dealing with modulations, which also applies to the major sonatas, both of which end in minor, has already been explained in the chapter on form. It concerns sonatas with two opposing main motifs, which in these cases consist of major and minor. If applied consistently, no other result is possible than with Scarlatti. And he was consistent. This is perhaps even clearer with the type of major sonatas, both parts of which end in minor. An excellent example is K107.

2. Major - minor

The first type to be discussed here are two-part major sonatas, both blocks of which end in minor. The aforementioned K107 not only sets major and minor against each other, but also tonality and modality, the latter being inspired by flamenco. Scarlatti's consistent musical thinking made him start both blocks in major and end in minor. This concerns a procedure that is very rare in the history of tonality. After Scarlatti, only Chopin used a similar procedure in his second ballad. Unfortunately, it is unknown whether Chopin knew Scarlatti's music.

The reverse type occurs a few times: sonatas in minor that end in major blocks (e.g. K174 or K519).

There is also a four-part type A - B - A - B, as already explained in the chapter on the form of the sonatas, whereby e.g. the A parts are in minor and the B parts are in major (K176). To further distinguish one from the other, the A parts are slow and the B parts are fast.

3. Sudden unprepared change of key

One of the surprising elements in Scarlatti's music are sudden, unprepared key changes to very remote keys. Often these take place after the halfway point, e.g. in K488 in B flat major. The half-ending ends in F major, i.e. the dominant. The second part begins in D flat major. The note f, the root note of the half-ending, is transformed to the third of D flat major.

This wealth of form and harmonic structure, briefly touched on here, is absolutely unique in the music history of the Baroque period. In addition to "normal" structures, there are also structures that cannot be denied because they are there. And yet these are ignored. In the chapters on the four creative periods, this matter is discussed in more detail.

Technical innovations

Scarlatti's own playing is described by contemporaries as an experience of a previously unknown richness of sound. There are two reasons for this:

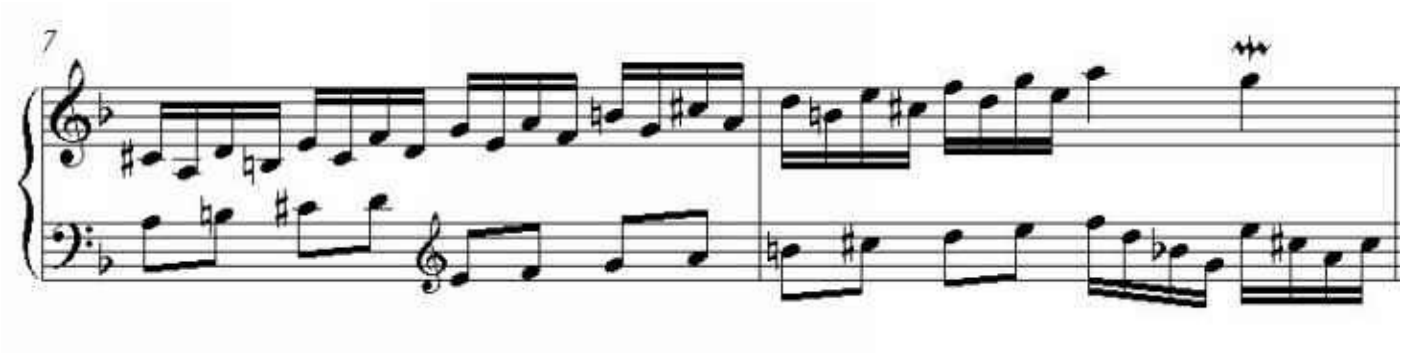
The newly invented playing techniques of the virtuoso par excellence, Scarlatti, are certainly an important contribution to this richness of sound. A much larger part of the harpsichord's circumference is used at the same time than was customary up until then and afterwards. However, that cannot be the only explanation. It can be concluded that Scarlatti hardly or not at all played staccato, but legato to molto legato. A combination of these two elements can explain the richness of sound, which was fascinating for his contemporaries.

First of all, the technical aspect will be discussed. These new playing techniques are already fully developed in the early sonatas. There is no question that Scarlatti achieved something downright revolutionary in this

area. I will give one or two examples of every technical update, mind you of many or almost countless examples. The following should be mentioned in this context:

- The repetitions of notes at high speed, often spread between both hands.

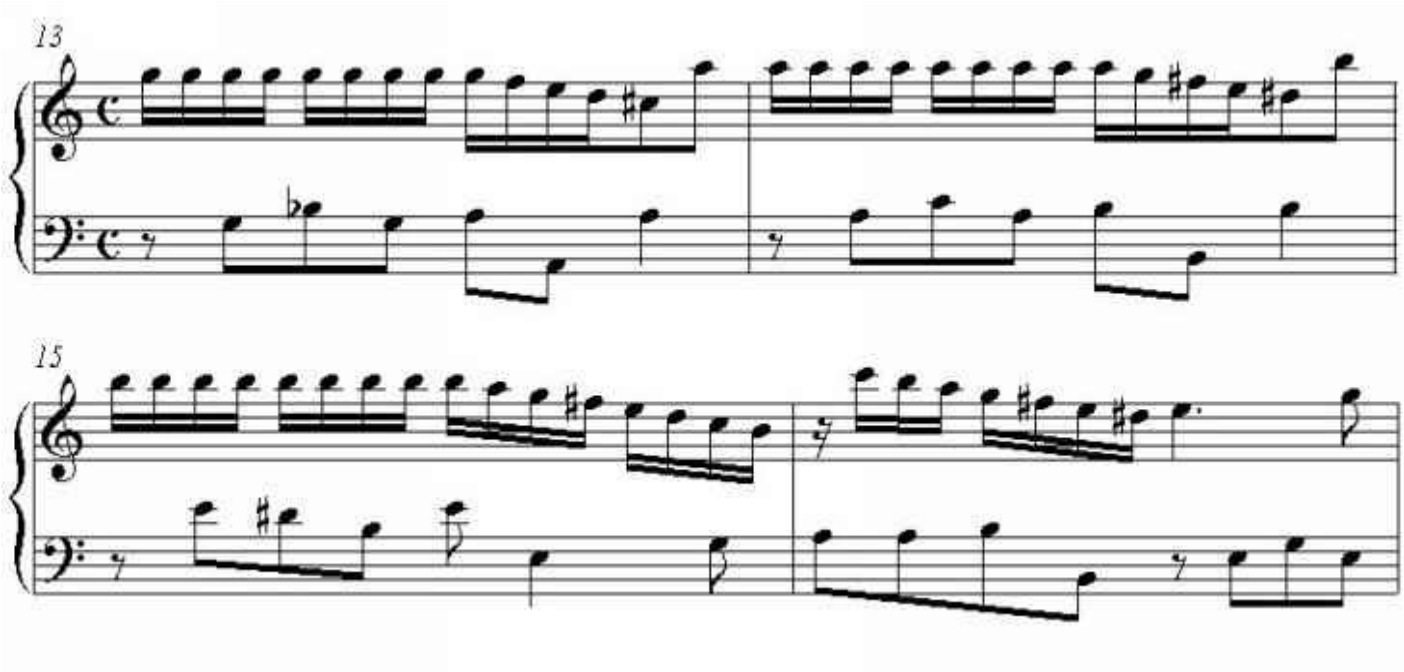
K1 - d minor - Allegro



The interesting thing about this as well as the parallel passages is the use of ninth chords, which dissolve into a seventh chord (bar 8, 3rd and 4th beat). Here an understanding of harmony becomes apparent very early on that was far ahead of its time.

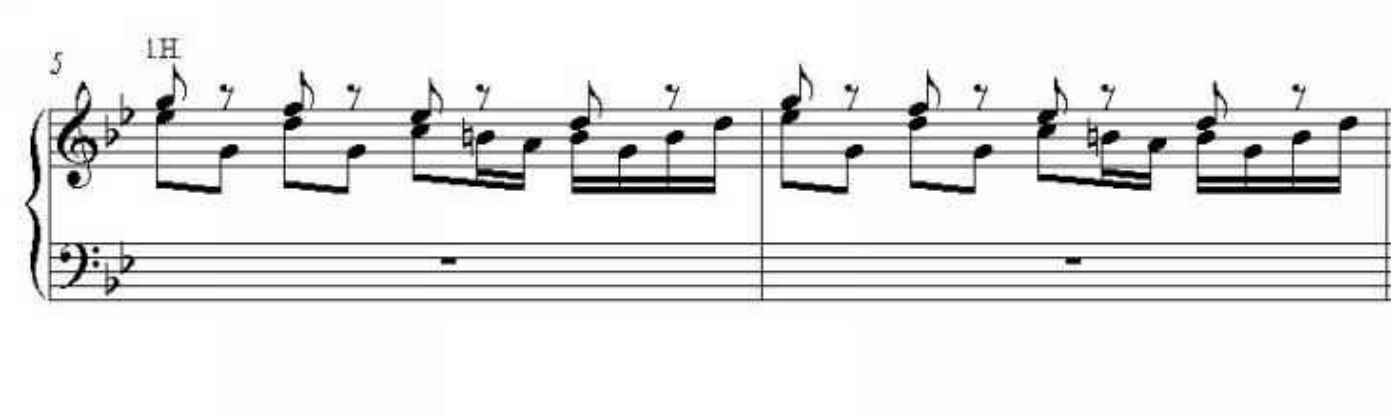
An example of repeated notes in the right hand:

K149 - a minor - Allegro

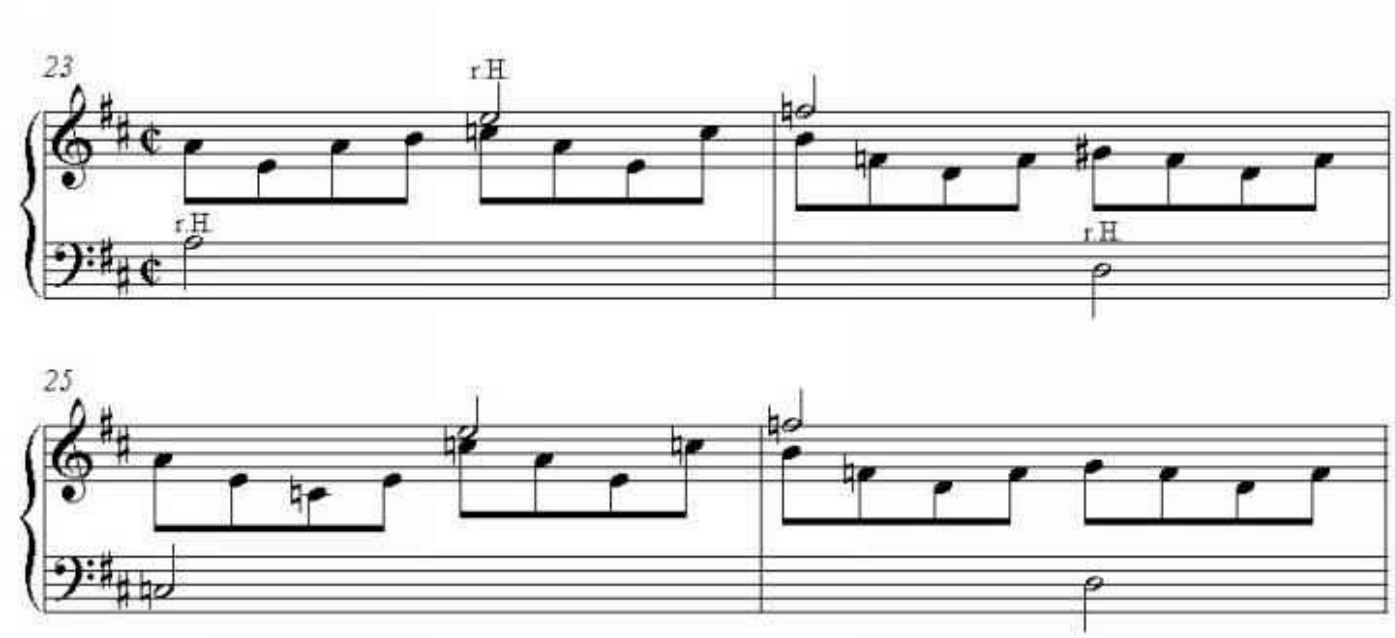


Crossing the hands, both right and left. Two examples of this:

K11 - c minor

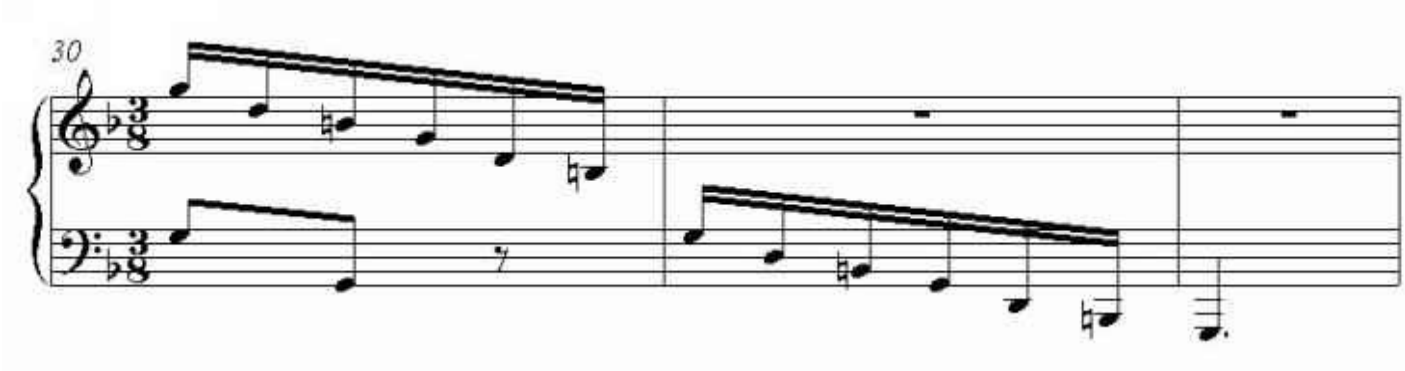


K53 - D major - Presto



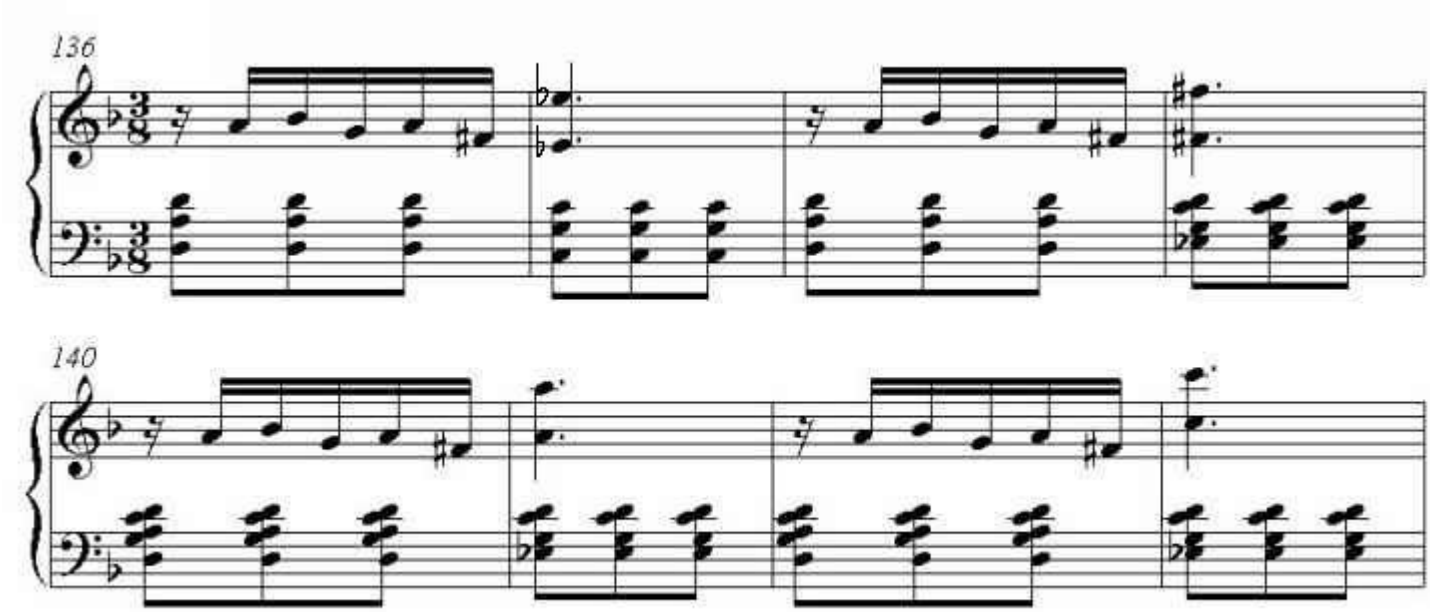
Arpeggios over several octaves:

K107 - F major - Allegro

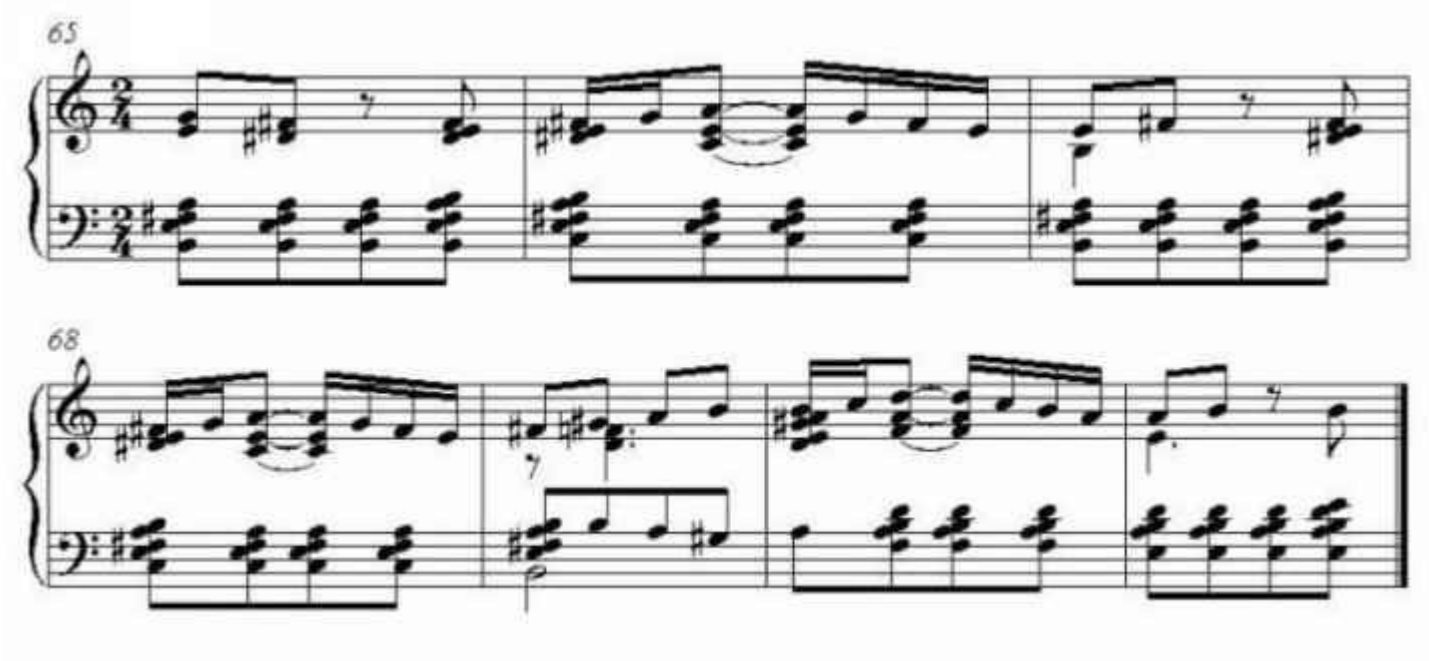


Block-like chords, which in most cases are very dissonant and, interestingly, often not resolved into a consonant chord. This phenomenon also finds its explanation in Scarlatti's essentially modal view of music. Two examples:

K105 - G major - Allegro

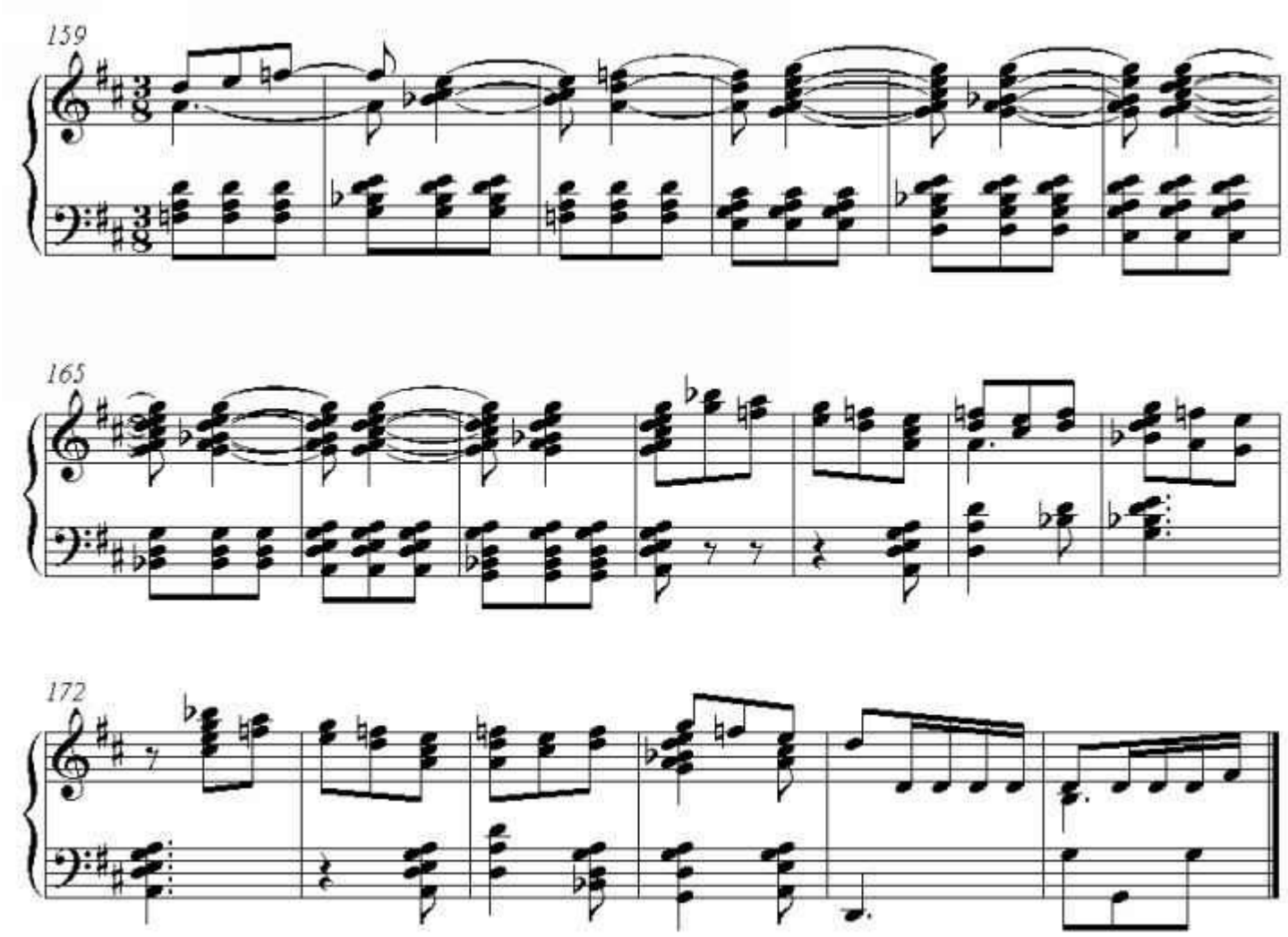


K175 - a minor - Allegro



Block-like chords with a range greater than an octave:

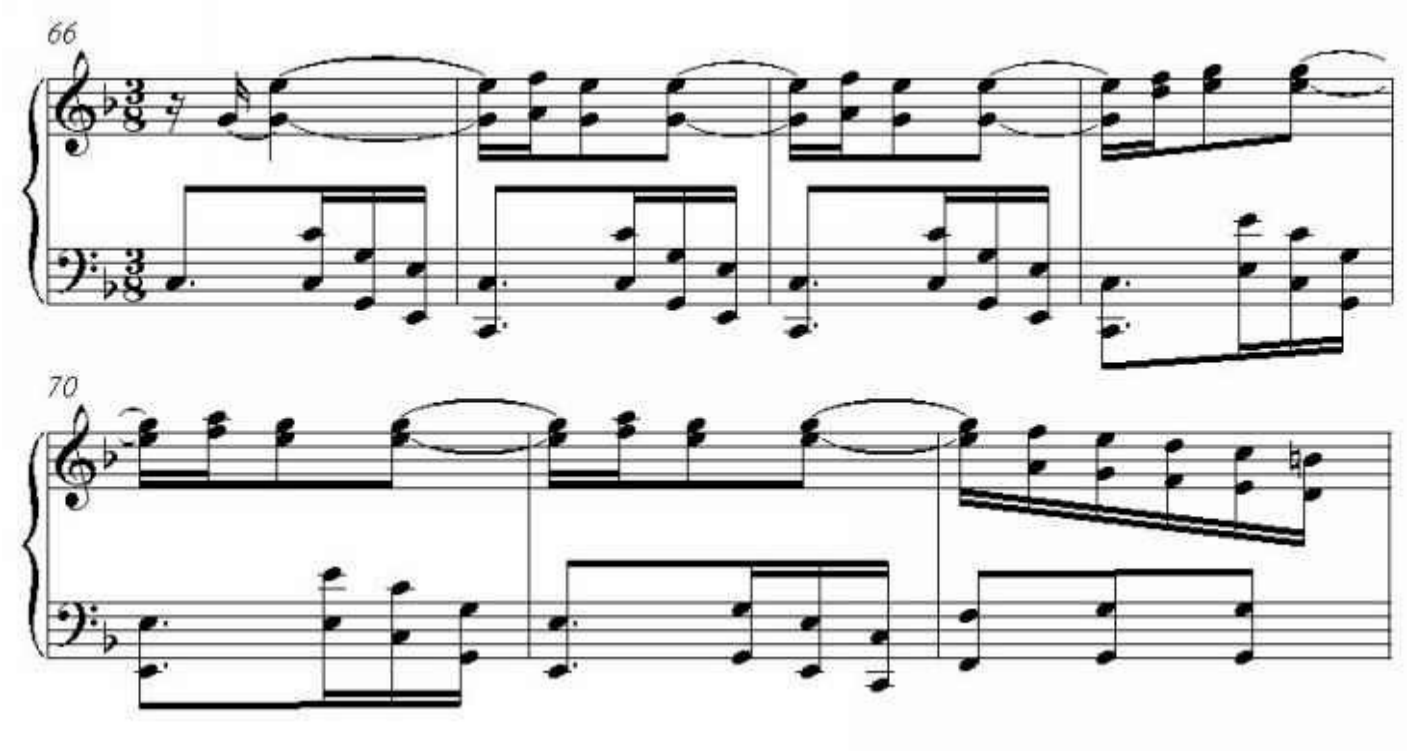
K119 - D mjor - Allegro



Passages in thirds and sixths, the latter always in one hand.

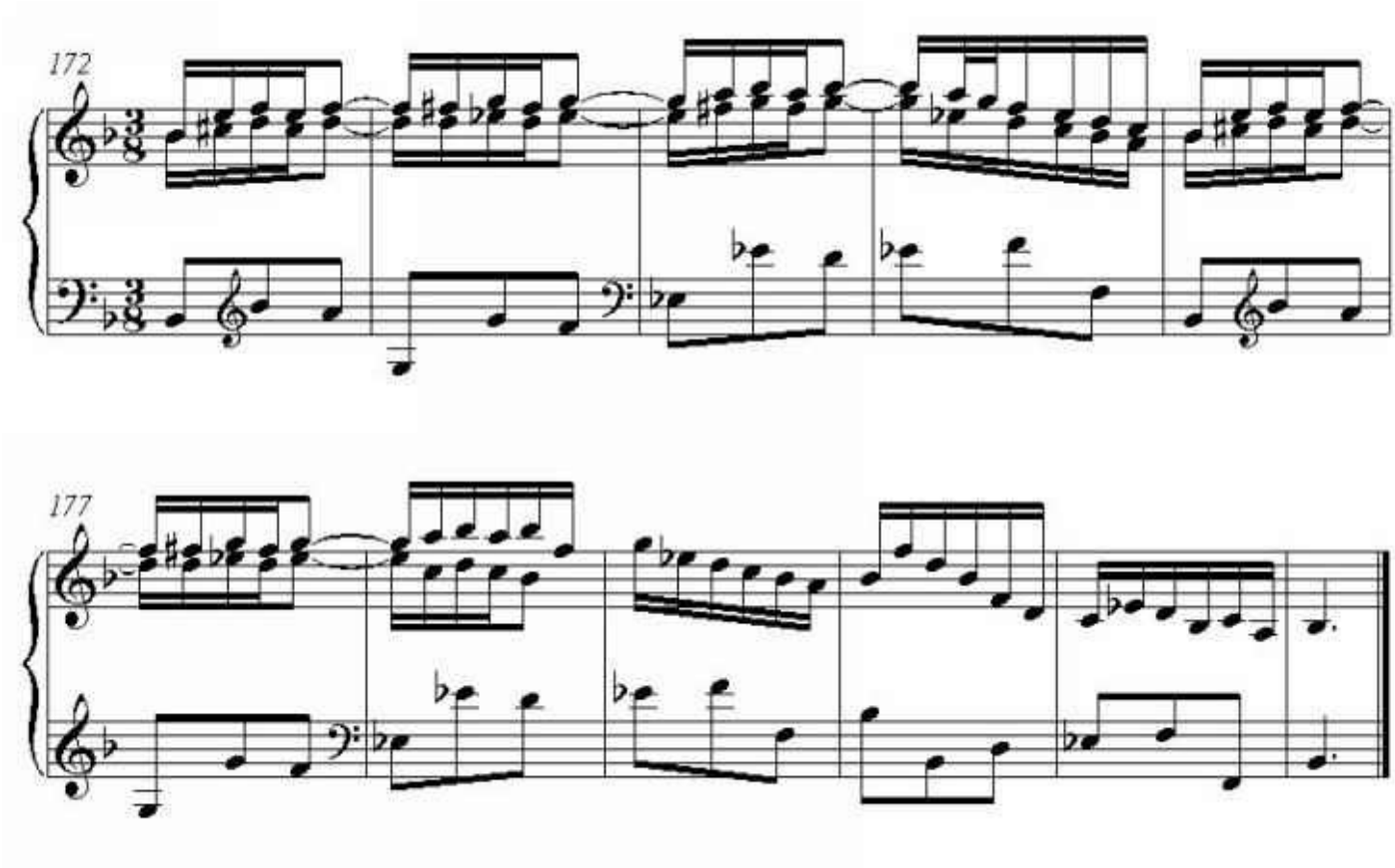
Two examples:

K44 - F major - Allegro



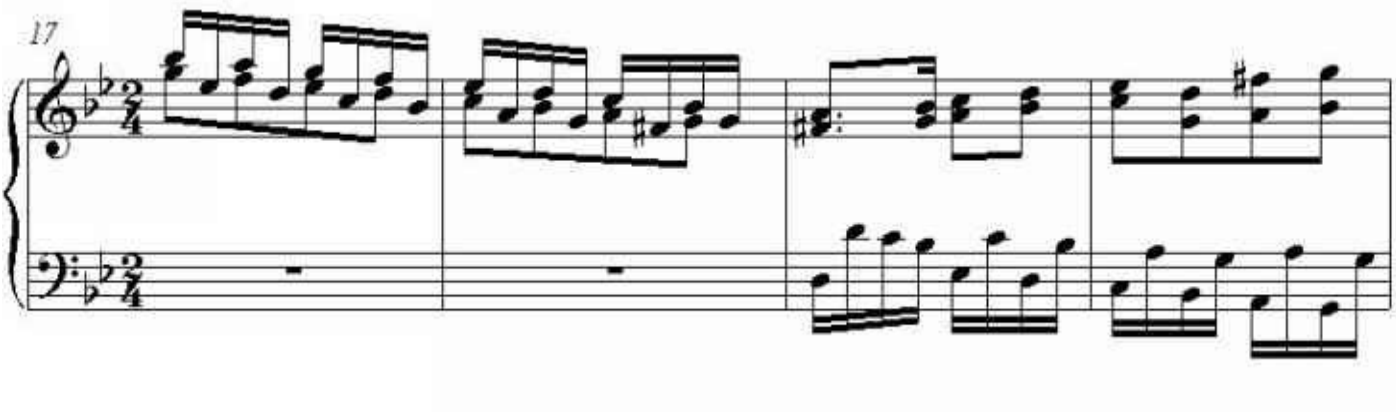
In this example, the richness of sound is mainly achieved through the octaves of the left hand.

K57 - B flat major - Allegro



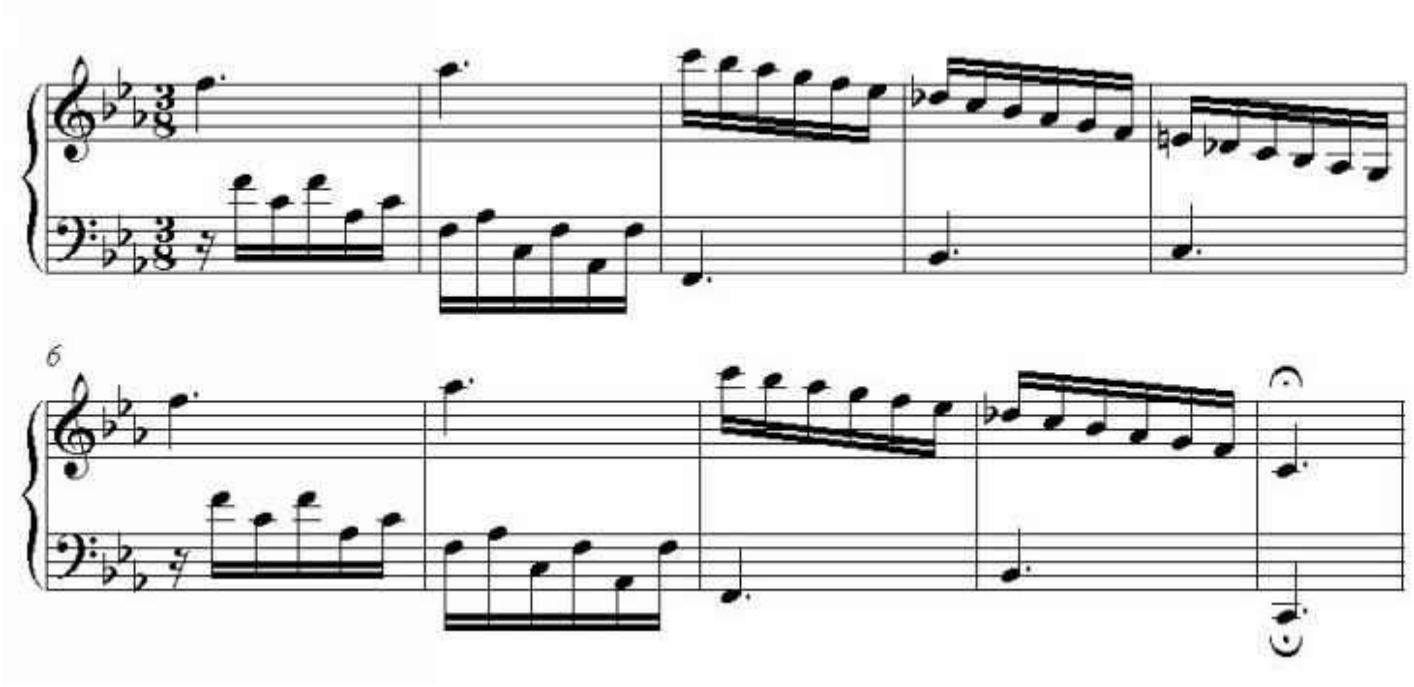
Interlocking hands:

K22 - c minor - Allegro



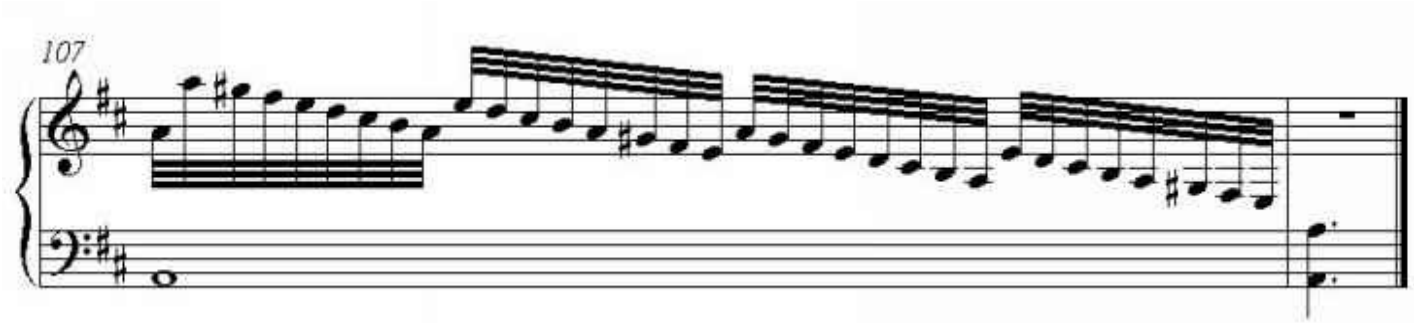
Broken chords and scales, both over several octaves:

K50 - f minor - Allegro



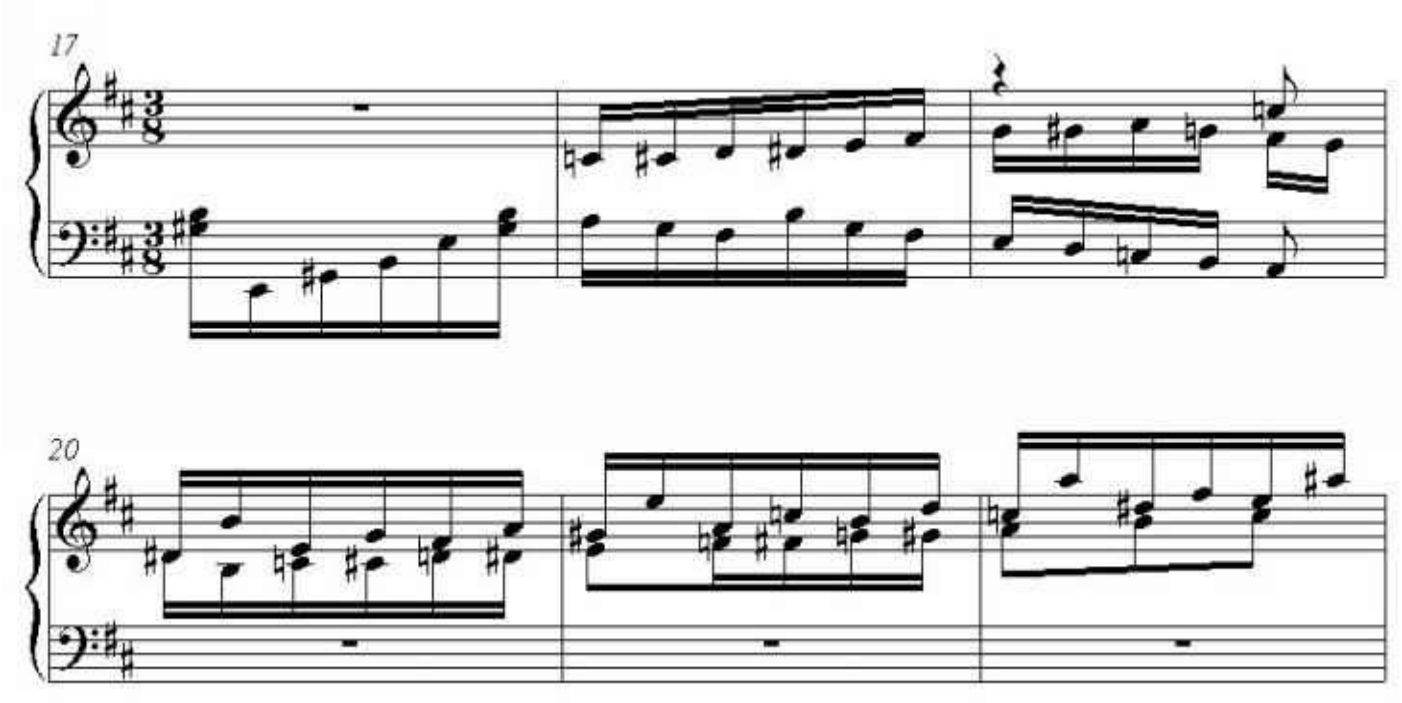
Scales at the highest speed:

K62 - A major - Allegro



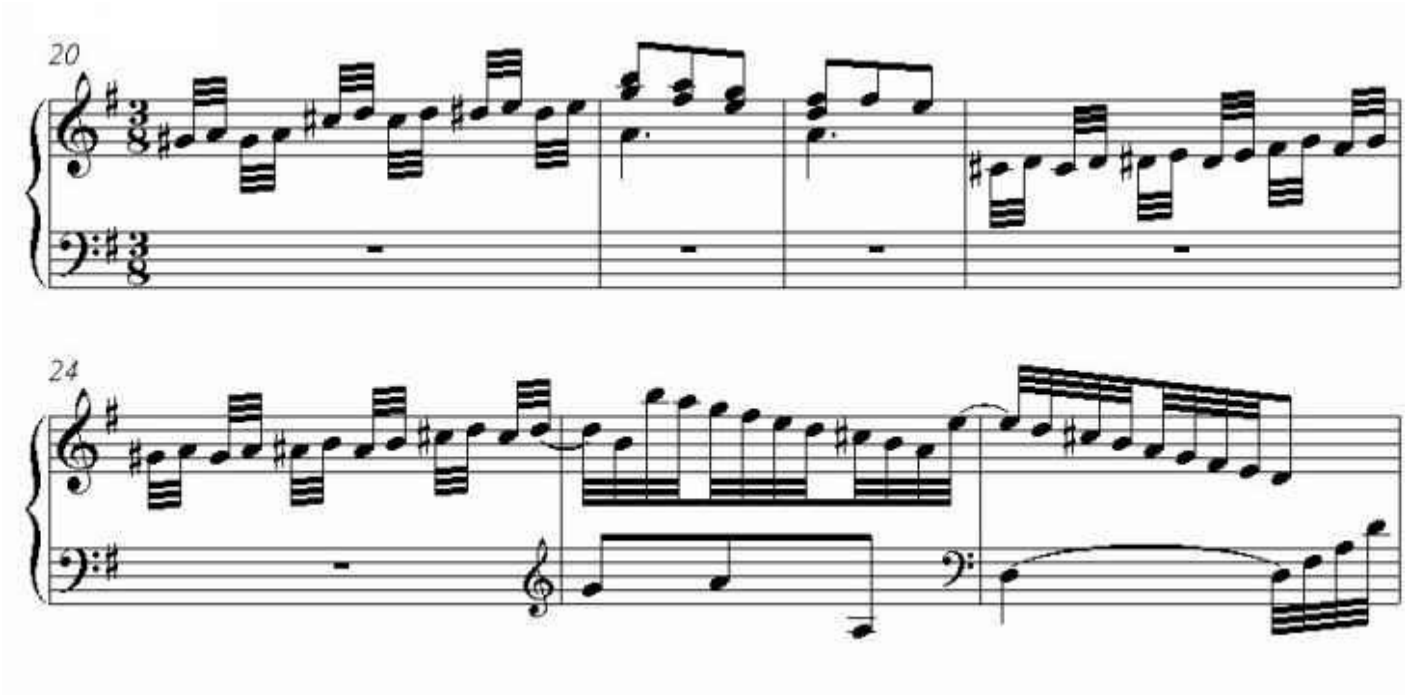
Chromatic passages:

K65 - A major - Allegro



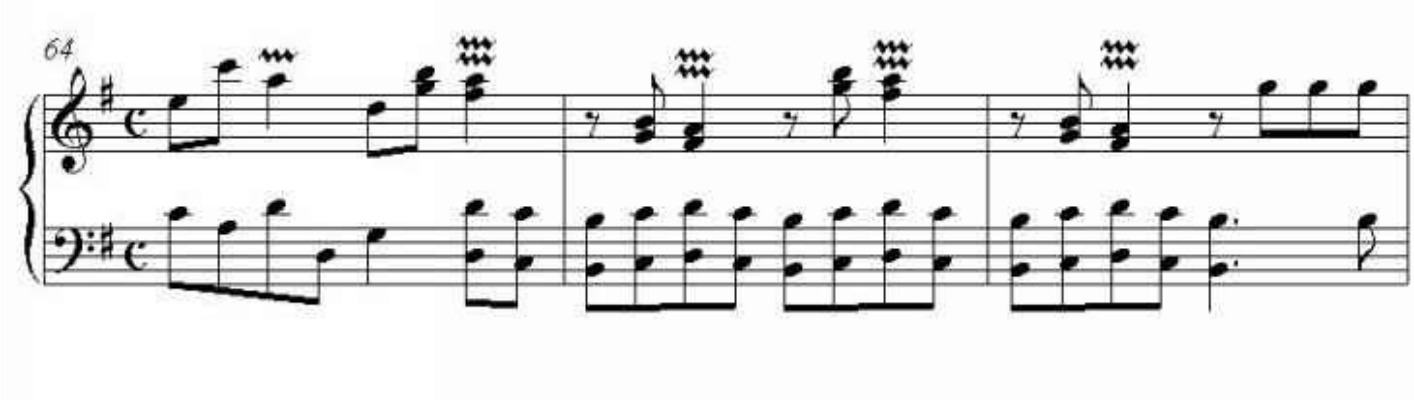
Trills with alternating hands:

K146 - G major



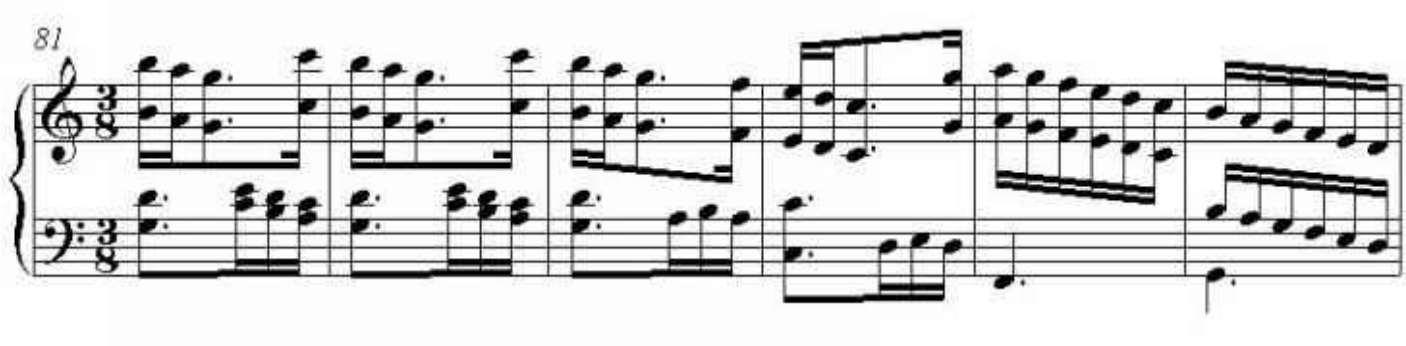
Double trills:

K169 - G major - Allegro con spirito



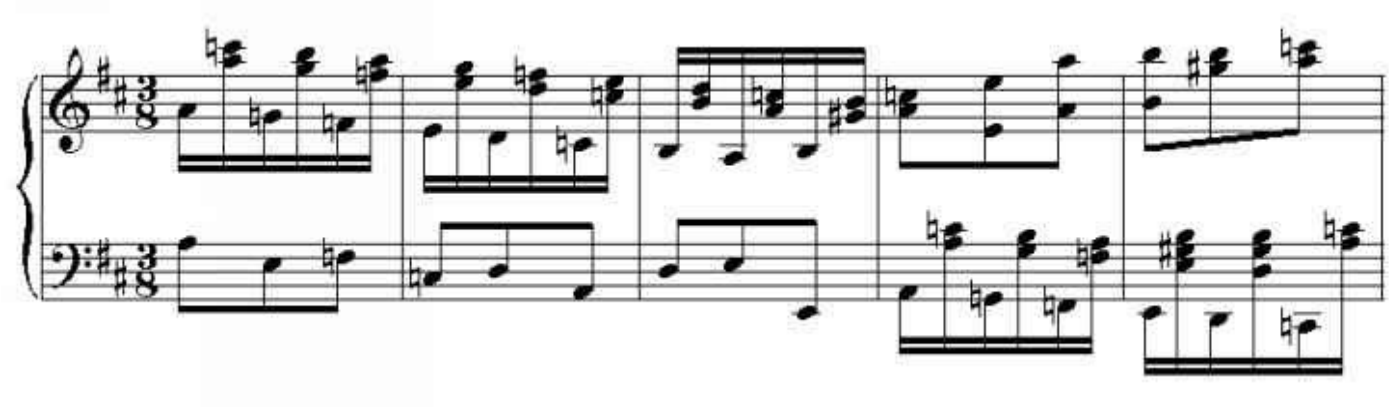
Octave passages (in examples 8 and 15 you can already see octave passages in the left hand):

K143 - C major - Allegro



Big jumps:

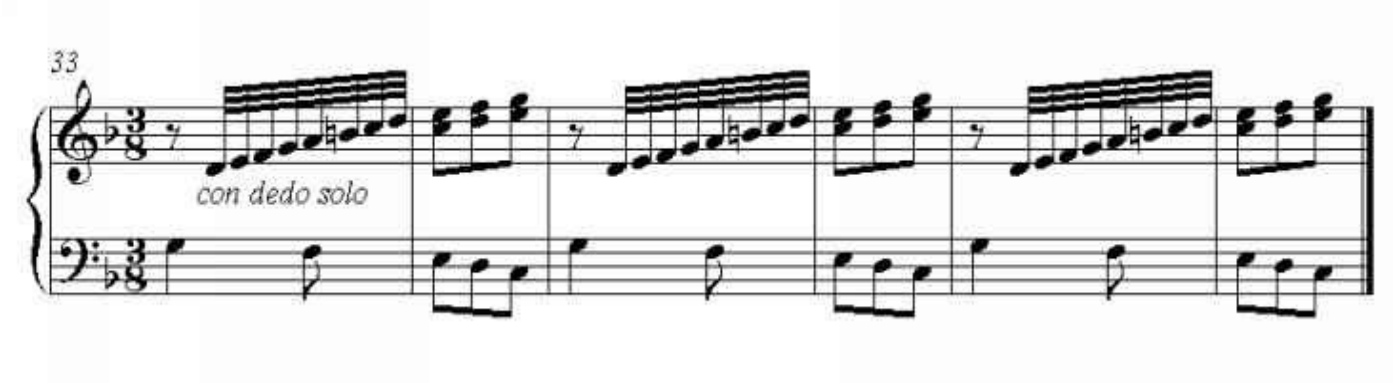
K299 - D major - Allegro



This sonata is one of the most technically demanding in Scarlatti's entire work.

Glissandos:

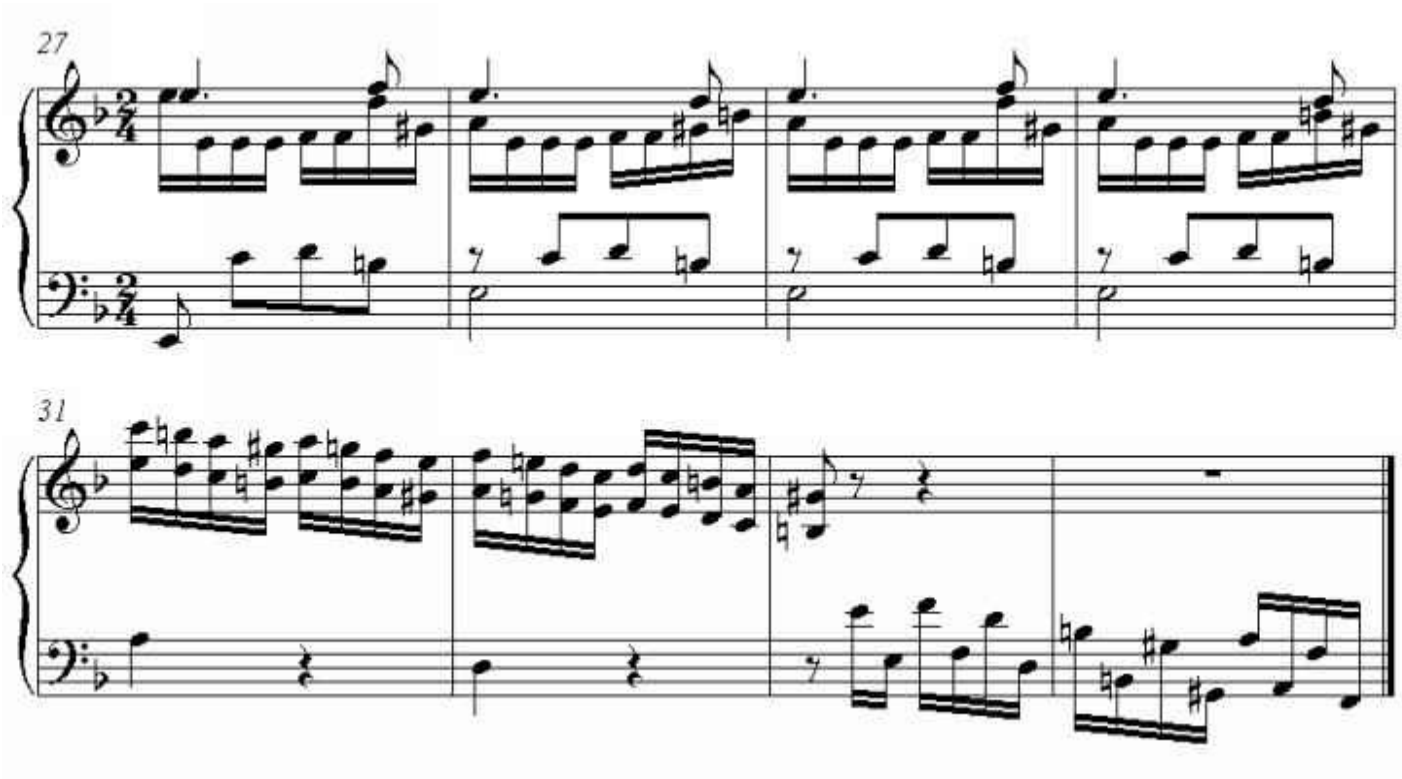
K379 - F major



"Con dedo solo" means "with one finger", thus sliding or glissando

The following example combines some of the technical innovations, namely note repetitions, large jumps, sixth passages and broken octaves:

K366 - F major - Allegro



All these technical innovations serve to enrich and broaden the sound. It should also be remembered that there is only one way of playing that supports this. This is the variety from legato to molto legato. If you take into account the testimonies of his contemporaries, who report a previously unknown richness of sound, there is only one logical conclusion: Scarlatti played like this himself.

The early Sonatas

Just imagine: the tonality has just been created that has grown to become the new standard for all composers of the Baroque era. Rameau had just been the first to formulate the strict laws of tonality. Scarlatti, too, surrendered entirely to tonality in the early period. This early period in Scarlatti's composing ranges from K1 to K95. It is also the only period of his career in which pieces for a solo instrument with harpsichord accompaniment were created, namely the sonatas K73, K77, K78, K80, K81, K88, K89, K90 and K91. It can be assumed that these sonatas were written at the Portuguese court, where apparently a member of the royal family played a melody instrument. The solo instrument was a violin, as can be clearly seen from the few double stops and chords in the solo part. These duo sonatas are conceived as the only sonatas to be accompanied by basso continuo. They are the most baroque sonatas in Scarlatti's oeuvre. This suggests that they are commissioned works. Where Scarlatti was able to compose freely, his works show completely different qualities. One should keep this point in mind. Through his employment first at the Portuguese and then at the Spanish court as a music teacher, Scarlatti was able to compose whatever he thought was right. Incidentally, some of these duo sonatas are composed in several movements and thats unique in Scarlatti's sonatas.

Even in this early period, the sonatas for solo harpsichord are much more interesting.

Scarlatti originally called these compositions "Essercizi" (K1 - K30) - that is, exercises, the term "sonata" appears afterwards in his manuscripts. This suggests that these compositions were originally created for teaching purposes. Their musical content, however, extends much further than that of the common etudes of later epochs - think of Czerny or Cramer, especially the etudes of Czerny, Beethoven's pupil, are of no great musical value. Scarlatti's sonatas - insofar as they are to be understood as exercises - are exercises both in terms of playing technique and music. Both elements are completely equal.

Regarding the musical aspect, it should first be noted that in this first period Scarlatti's concept of tonality was often based on the medieval modes. This means that Scarlatti understood the major scale as an alteration of the Mixolydian and the minor scale as an alteration of the Doric mode. This is evident from the key signatures:

- K4 and K8 e.g. are in g minor and have one flat as key signature;

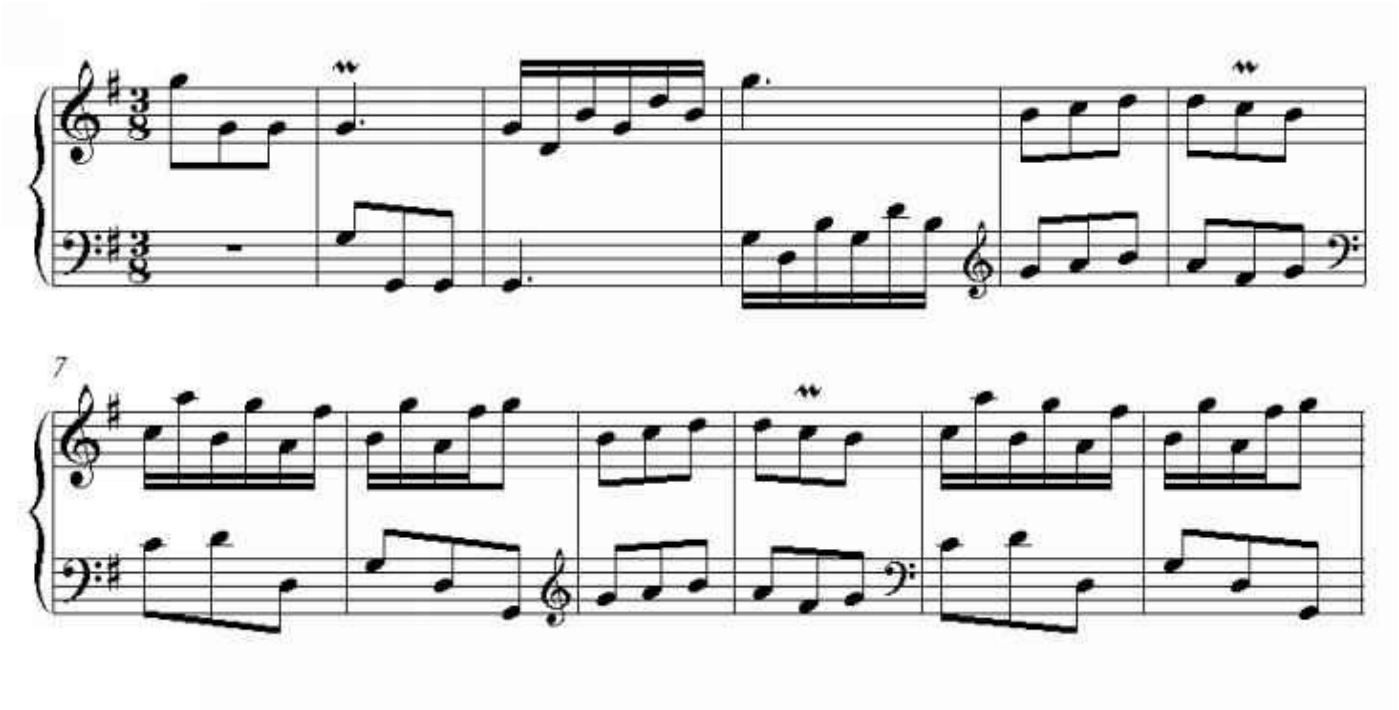
- K20 e.g. is in E major and has three sharps as key signature, K26 is in A major and has two sharps. Etc.

Scarlatti did not really use the modes mentioned, but his understanding of major and minor as derivations from the modality is certainly interesting and gives food for thought, also where the interpretation is concerned.

Even in the later periods, this method of key signatures appears occasionally, especially at the beginning.

The formal layout of most of the early period sonatas is very simple. The pieces are in two parts, the second part is a variation of the first. Often the main motif appears at the beginning, which is then treated imitatively in the second voice. An example:

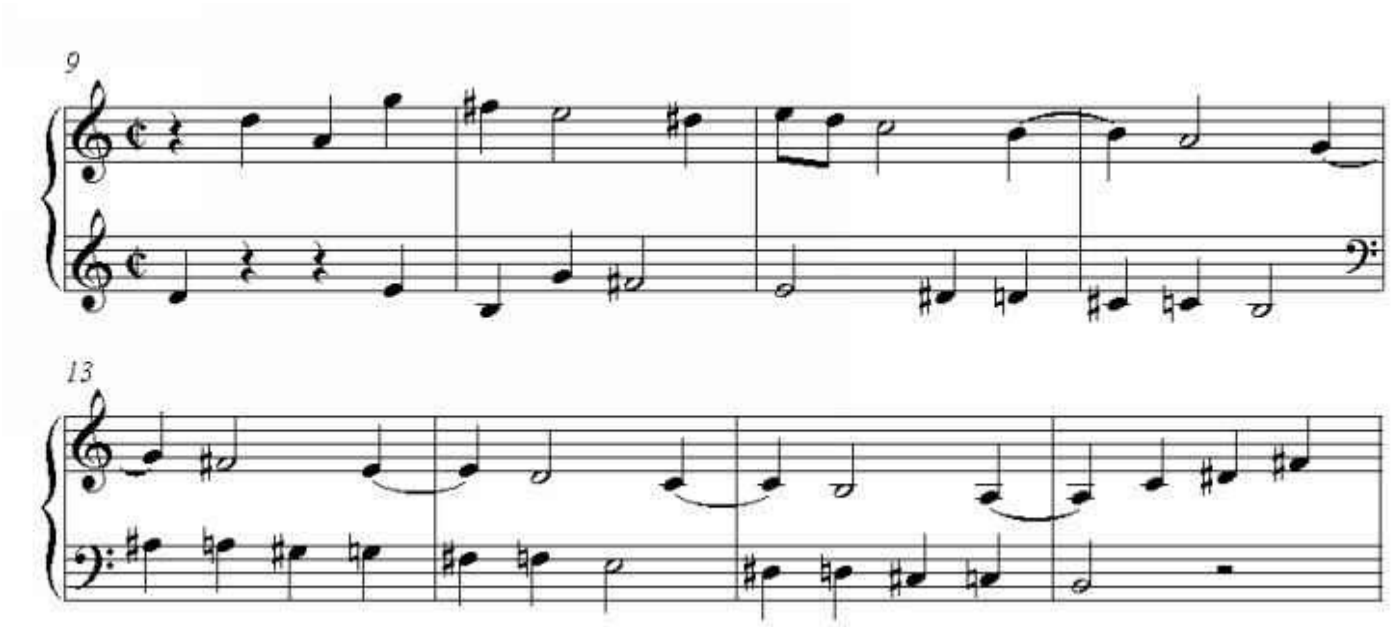
K2 (G major - Presto)



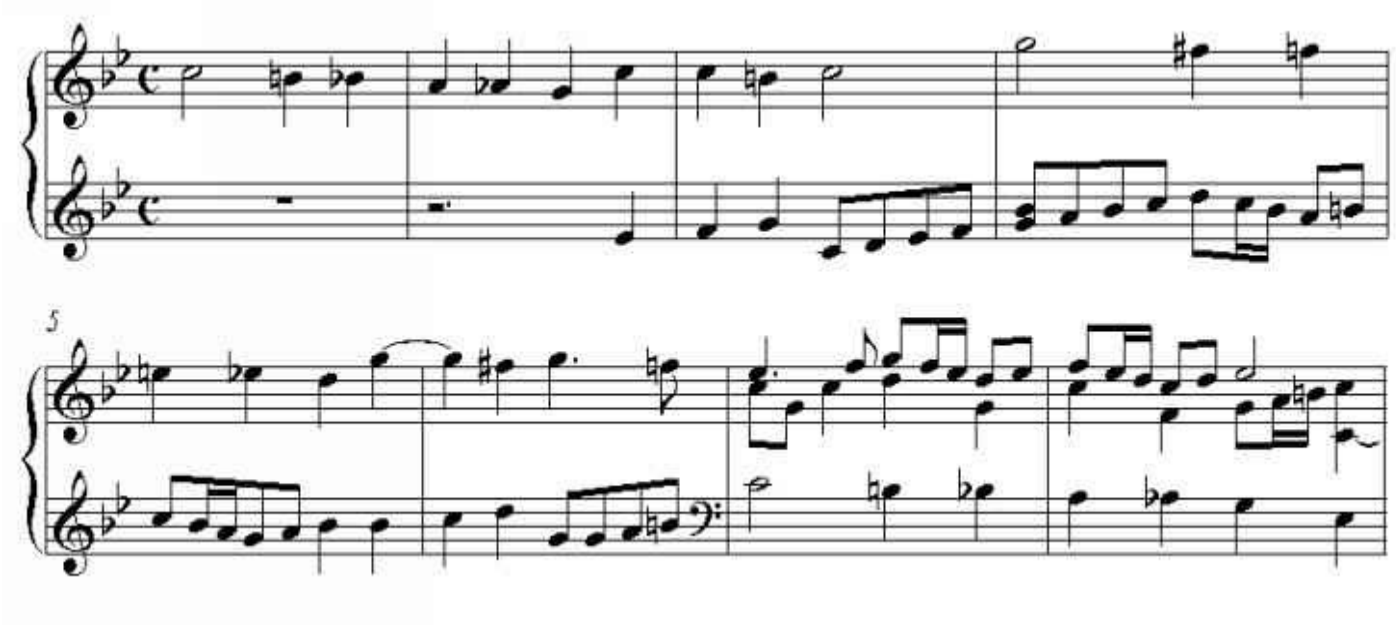
Bars 9-12 are the echo of bars 5-8. These echo effects play a major role in Scarlatti's music. Reference is made to it frequently in the following.

In the baroque period a distinction was made between the "genus diatonicum" and the "genus chromaticum". The terms speak for themselves. In the genus diatonicum mainly the notes of the prevailing scale were used, in the genus chromaticum all chromatic notes. The genus chromaticum was used to convey feelings of great pain. Scarlatti used the genus chromaticum very seldom and when he did, then only in places. An example can be found in

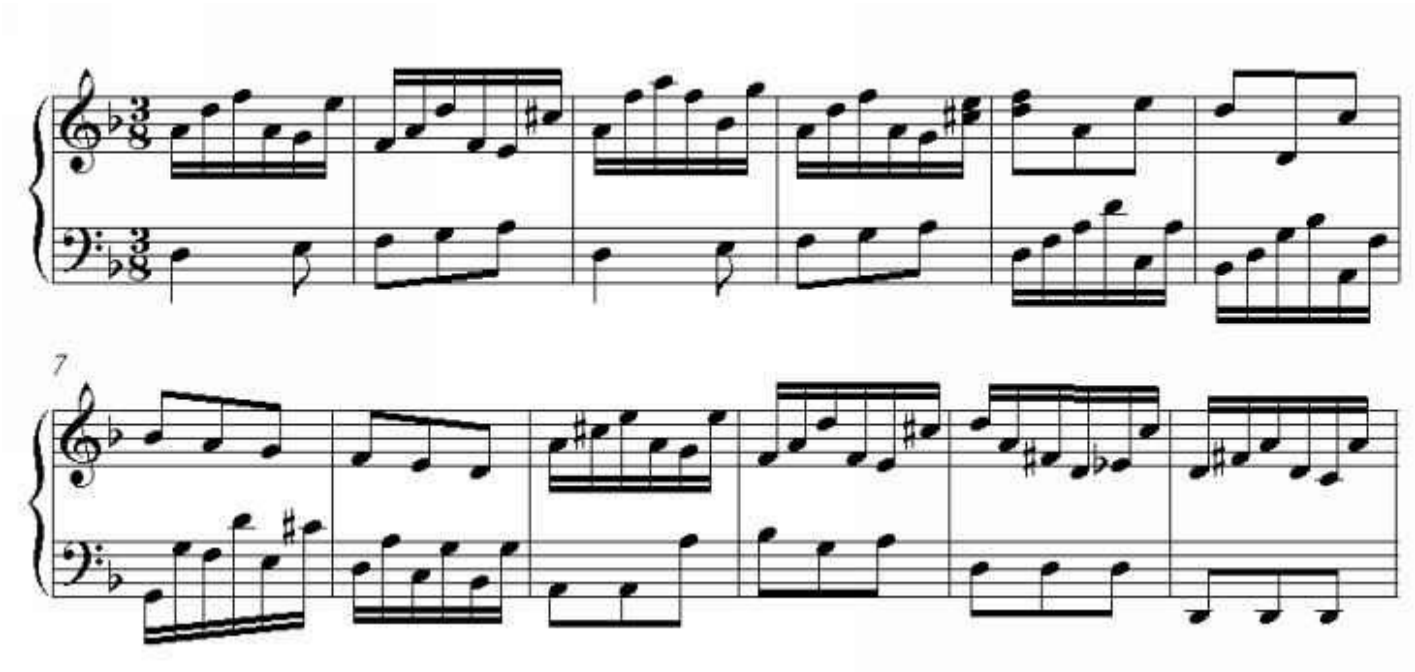
K3 (a minor - Presto) :



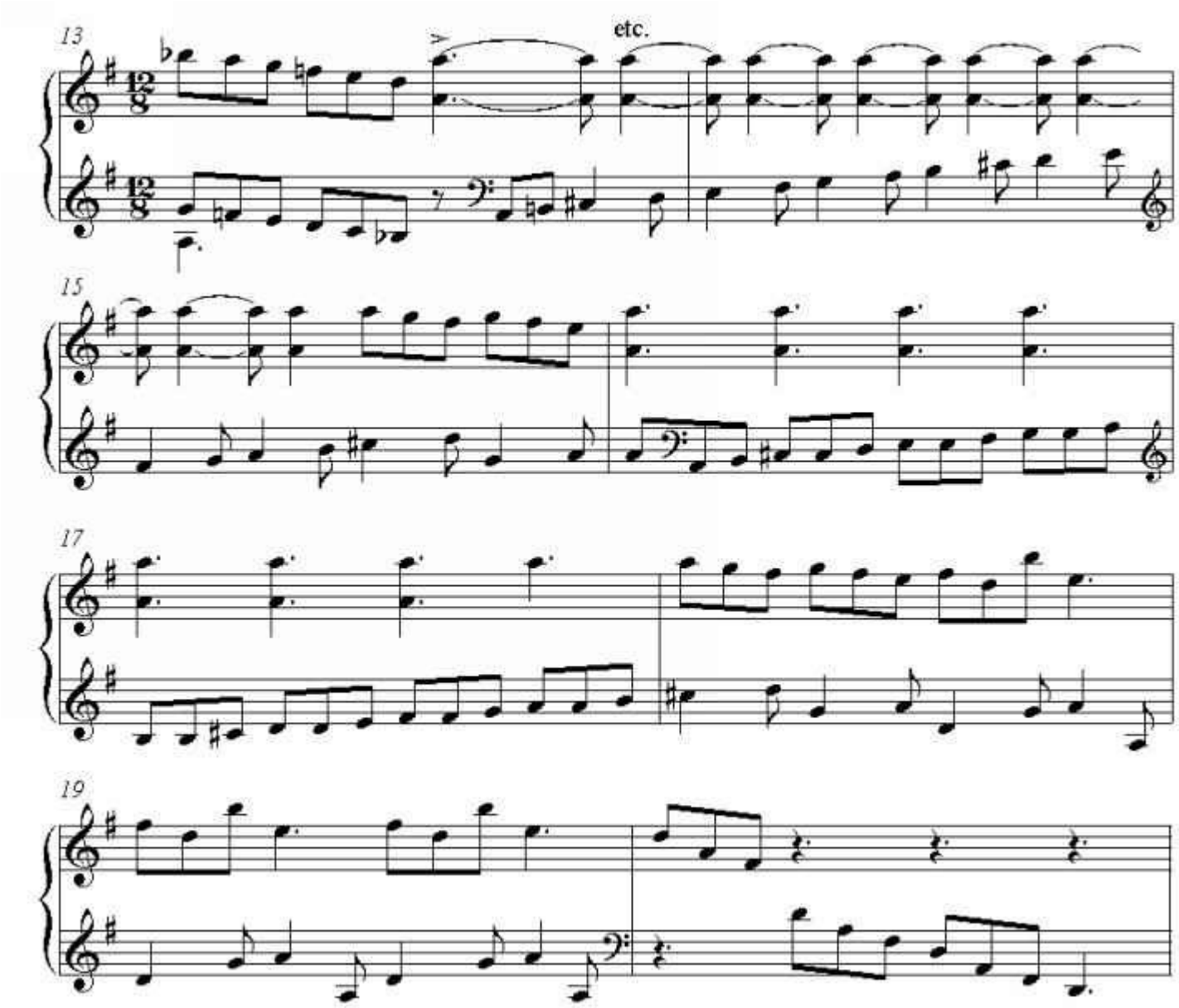
Another example of the genus chromaticum can be found in the fugue **K58** . Incidentally, this sonata is a true polyphonic masterpiece and also one of the very few minor sonatas that end with a major chord. As an example, the first bars:



As an example for the virtuoso treatment of chord breaks, **K10 (d minor - Presto)** may serve:

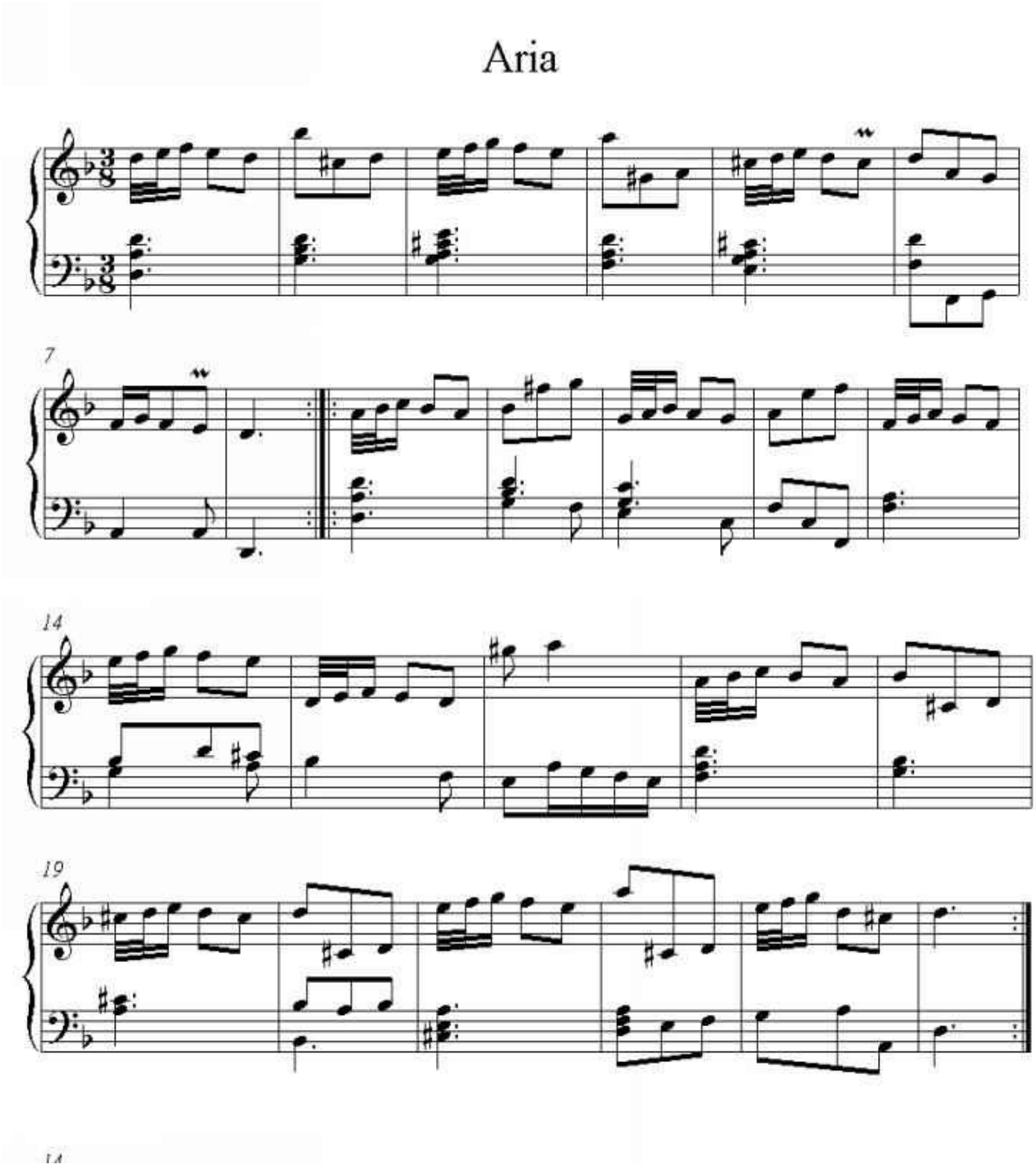


There are regular passages in Scarlatti's sonatas where one hand is in absolute counter-rhythm to the other. An early example is **K14 (G major - Presto)** :

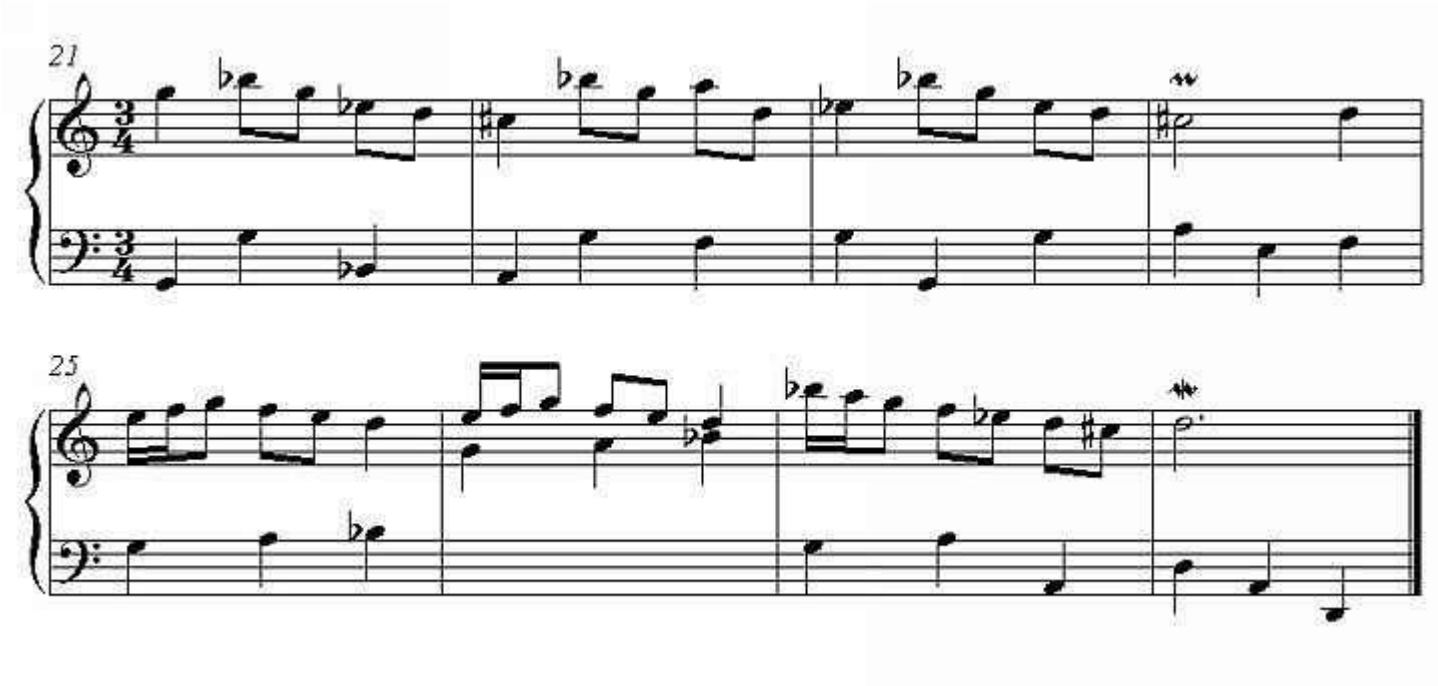


Incidentally, this sonata is the first tarantella in Scarlatti's work.

In **K32 (d minor)** the minuet type appears for the first time in Scarlatti's sonatas. This short piece is of such melodic beauty that Scarlatti called it "Aria" rather than "Minuet". This beautiful piece deserves to be quoted in full:

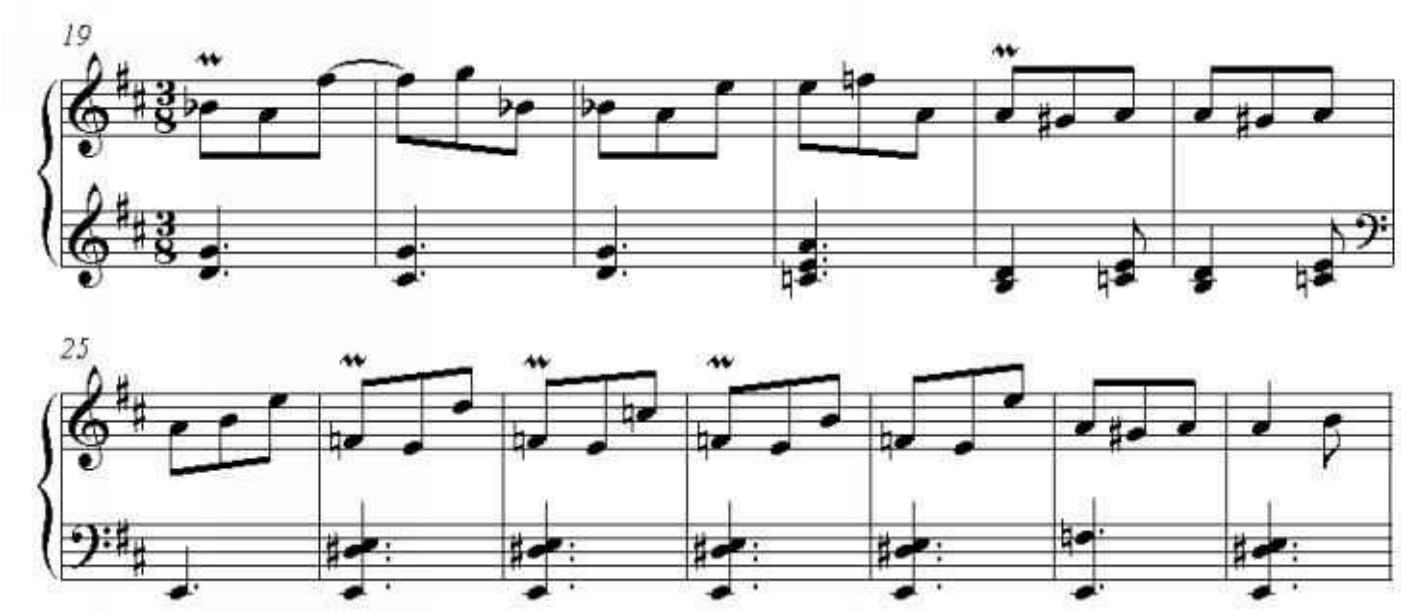


In some of the early sonatas the "Neapolitan sixth" appears, not only as a cadenza but also, which is remarkable, as a loose melody tone. Both forms appear in **K34 (D minor - Larghetto)** ::

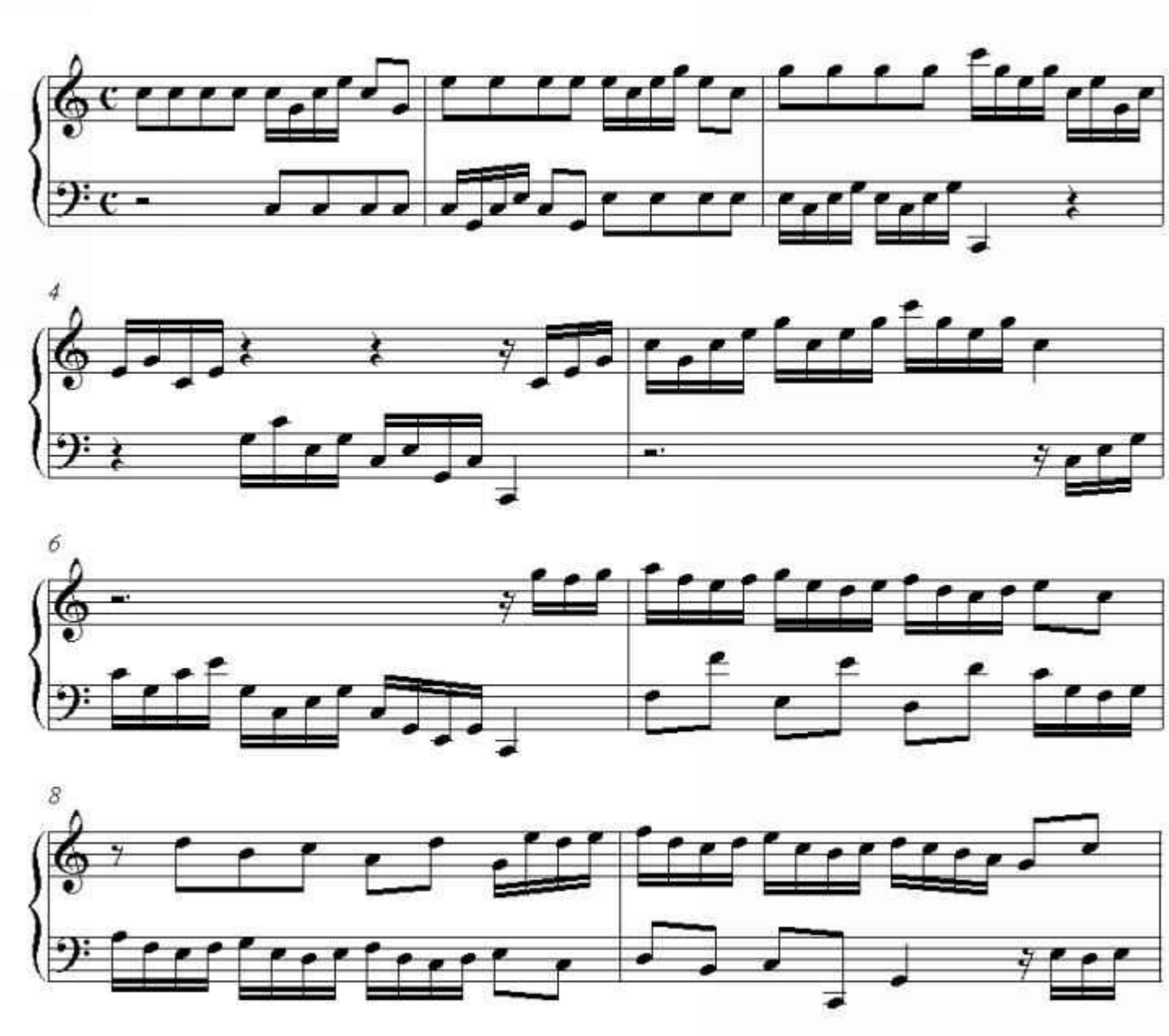


The cadence appears in bars 21-24, the loose melody tone in bar 27.

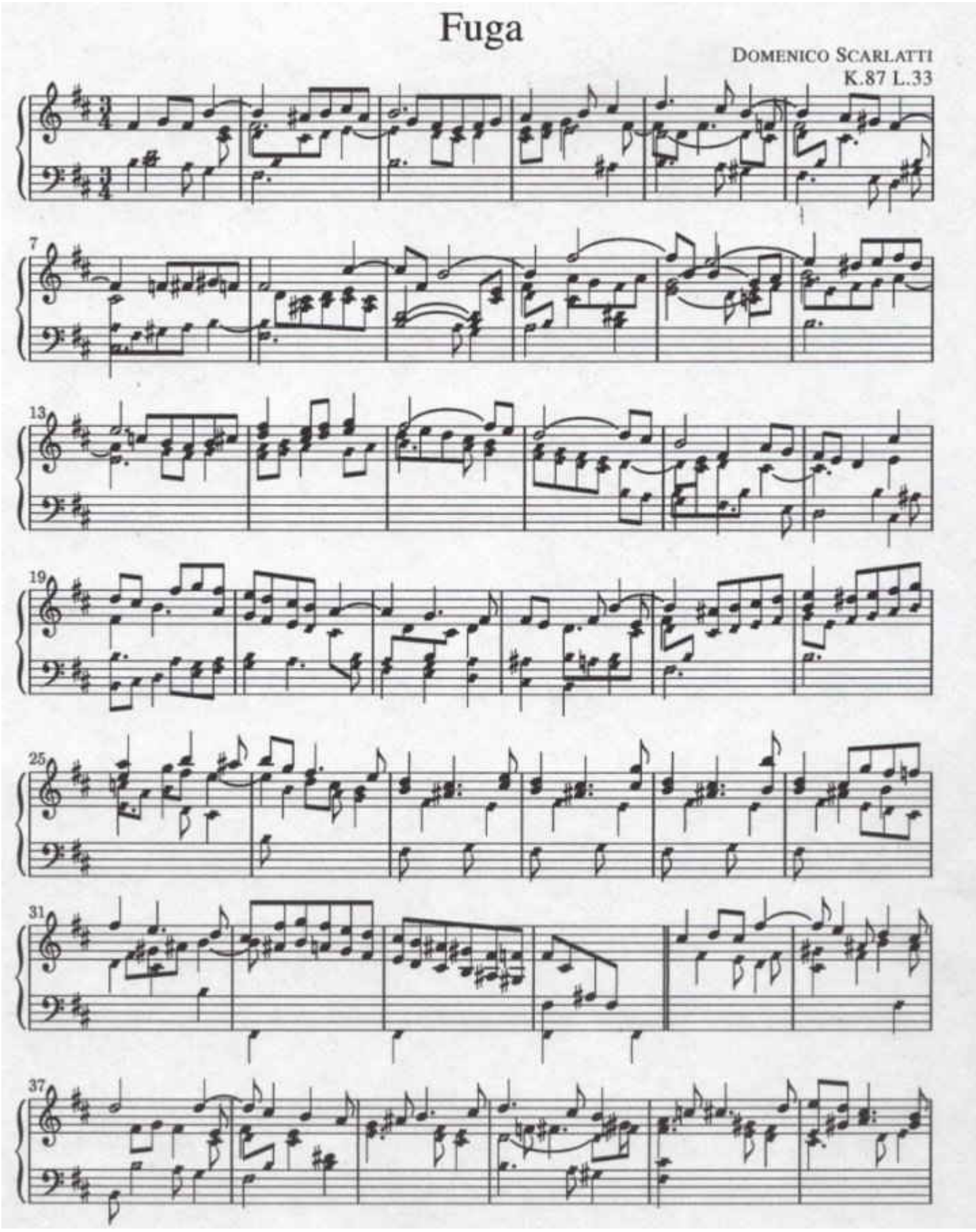
The Sonata **K62** is not in the right place in the Kirkpatrick catalog. Stylistically, this sonata belongs to a later period, namely the early Spanish period. Bars 19-30 prove that:



Typical for the early period is rather **K72** , a celebration of the joy of playing:



The fugue **K87** is undoubtedly one of Scarlatti's strangest compositions. The usual structure (one-part, two-part, three-part, four-part) is not present. From the beginning there is four voices. There are also several themes. This piece is both a fugue and also not a fugue:



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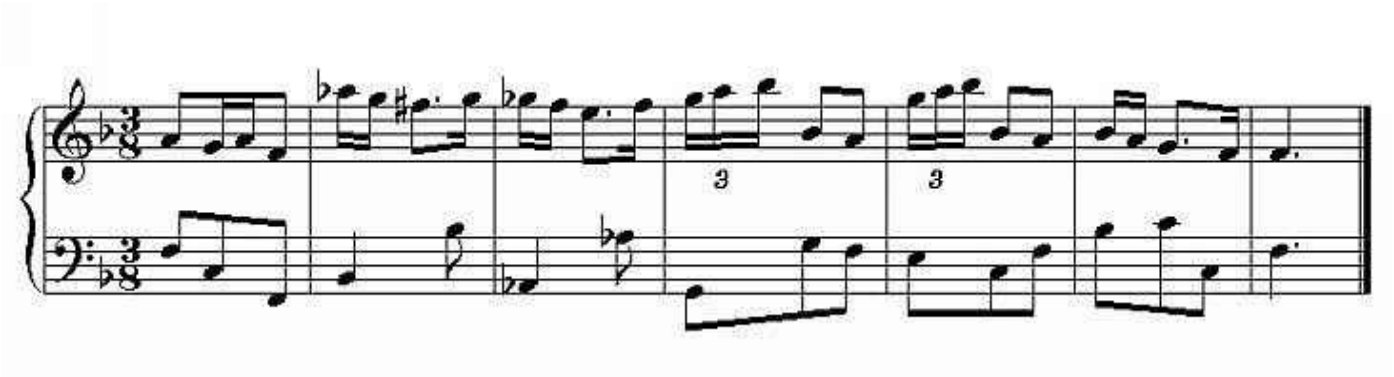
The disadvantages of Sankey's notation program become clear again here.

A strange passage from the minuet **K94** must not go unannounced. As if out of nowhere in the completely "normal" course of the music suddenly a place appears where the peculiar chromatic melody course lets the "ordinary" harmonization appear in an iridescent light:

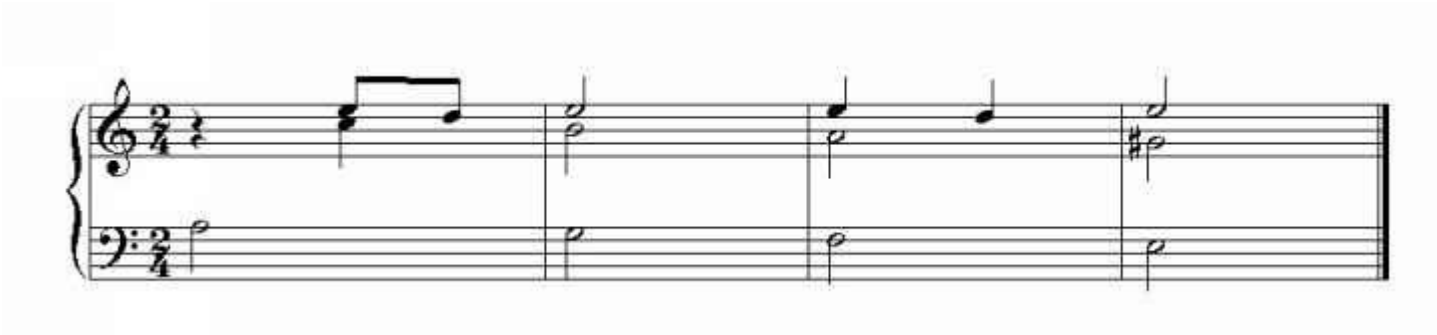


If one compares K95, the last sonata of the early period, with K96, the first sonata of the Spanish period, one could speak of a stylistic break with a little bad will. However, this is not the case, one should speak of a style enrichment. What Scarlatti owes to the knowledge of Spanish folk music and thus the musical world Scarlatti is examined in the following chapter.

The "Spanish" Sonatas

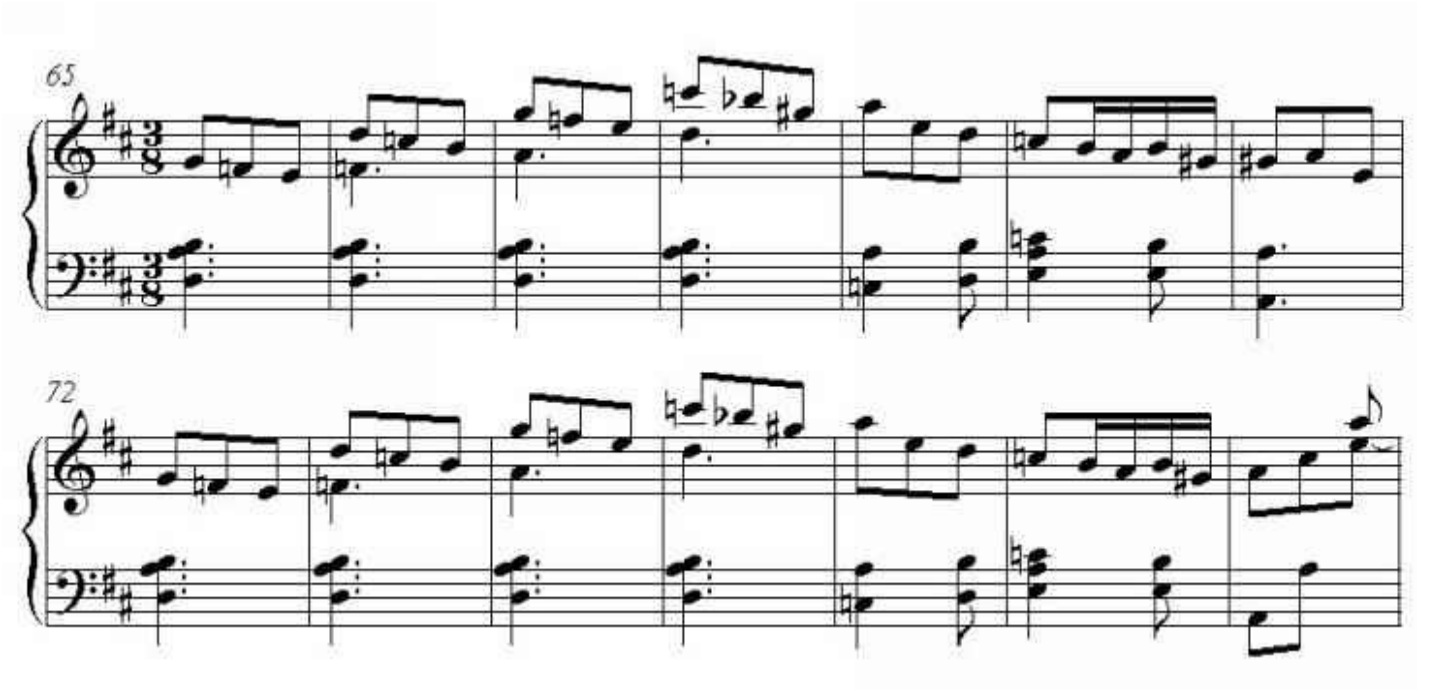
It would surely go too far to claim that Scarlatti has transformed from a baroque composer to a flamenco composer, a claim that can sometimes be read on the Internet. In essence, there are relatively few sonatas that refer directly to flamenco or other Spanish dance forms. This is because Scarlatti has made all these elements his own and seamlessly integrated them into his style. K105, K107 or K175 may serve as examples for the so-called flamenco sonatas. It should be noted, however, that even in these sonatas whole blocks appear that are kept purely tonal and have nothing to do with flamenco. This is often overlooked, as is the importance of juxtaposing such very contrasting blocks. In these cases it is a matter of the hard confrontation between tonal and modal. The fact that Scarlatti succeeded in forging a unit out of it speaks for his ingenuity. From around K136 (with the exception of K175, where the confrontation is carried out again and even more consistently than before), Scarlatti's concern is less and less about the confrontation of tonal and modal elements, but increasingly about the integration of the Spanish folk music elements that fascinate him into his own style, i.e. an assimilation. Only in one sonata of the late period does a pure flamenco quote appear again (K492, to be discussed later).

Spanish musicologists today take the point of view that composers like Antonio Cabezon have used the flamenco formula, which is undoubtedly correct, e.g. In this form:



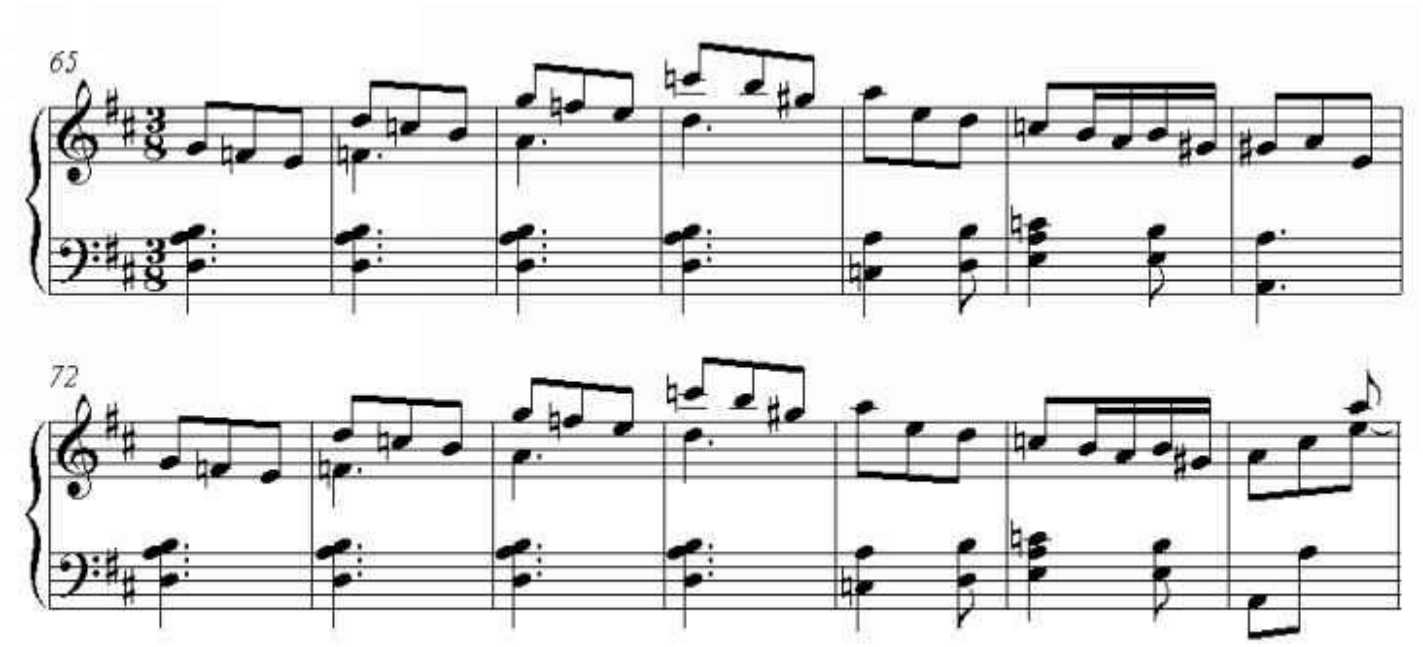
However, Scarlatti rarely used the flamenco formula, an example follows later.

At the very beginning of the Spanish period, the Neapolitan tone, used as a pure melody tone, appears again, in :**K96**



What is interesting about this example is the fact that in bars 68 and 75 all three melody tones, including the Neapolitan tone, are in complete dissonance with the chord used. This is a means of generating a tension that is released in the following bars. Here, too, the means of asymmetrical construction is used. From bars 65 to 72 a seven-bar phrase that is reduced to six bars when repeated.

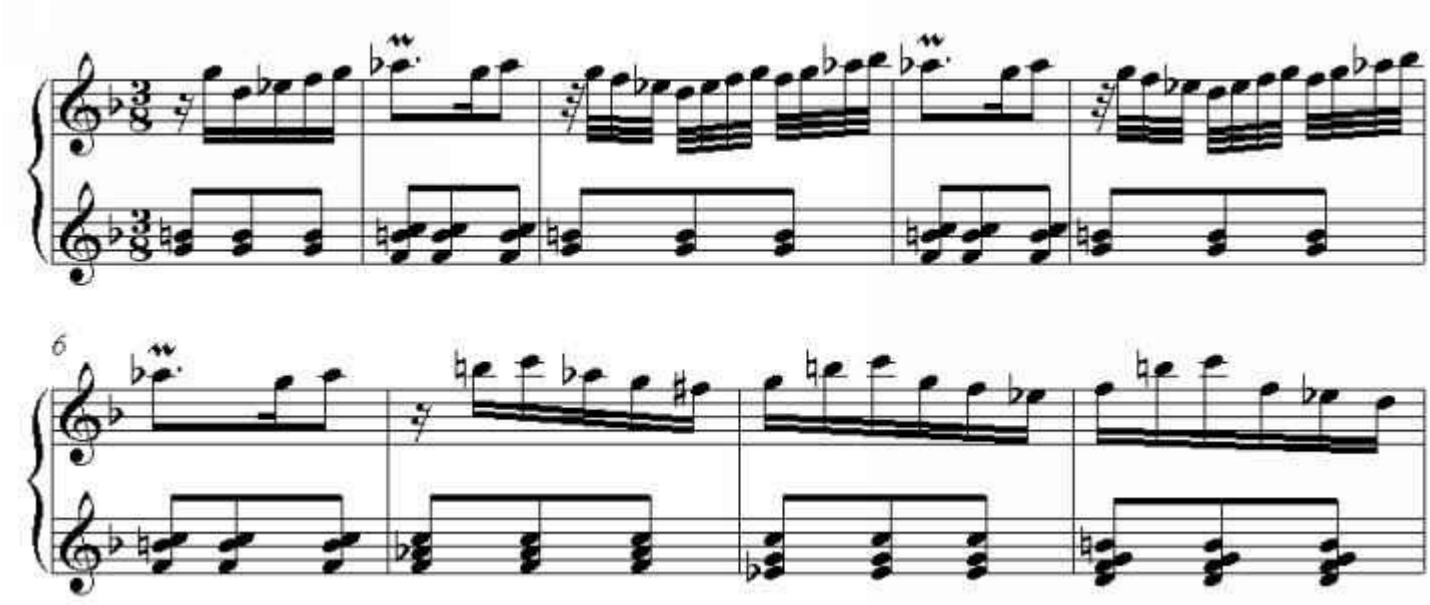
In the rape edition already quoted, this passage reads as follows:



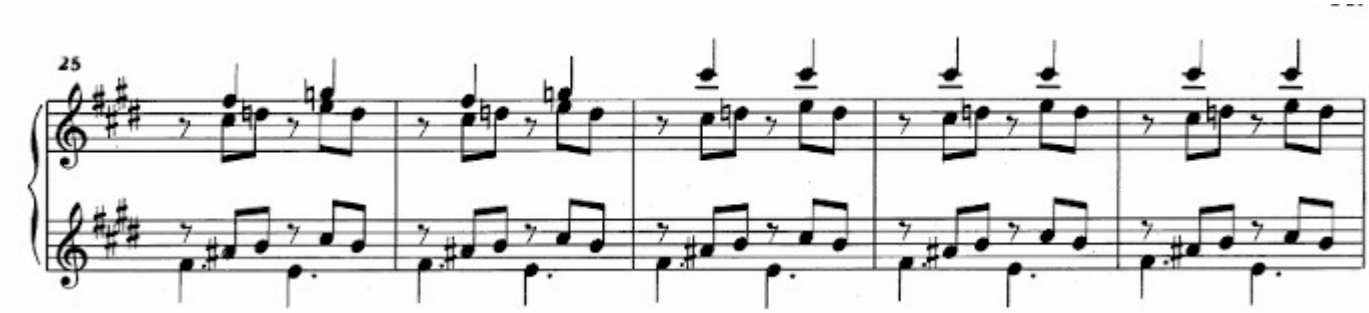
The Neapolitan melody tone b flat has been simply deleted in favor of the tone b.

However, there are numerous examples of places in Scarlatti's music, where these Spanish elements appear briefly in all purity. A few examples may illustrate this.

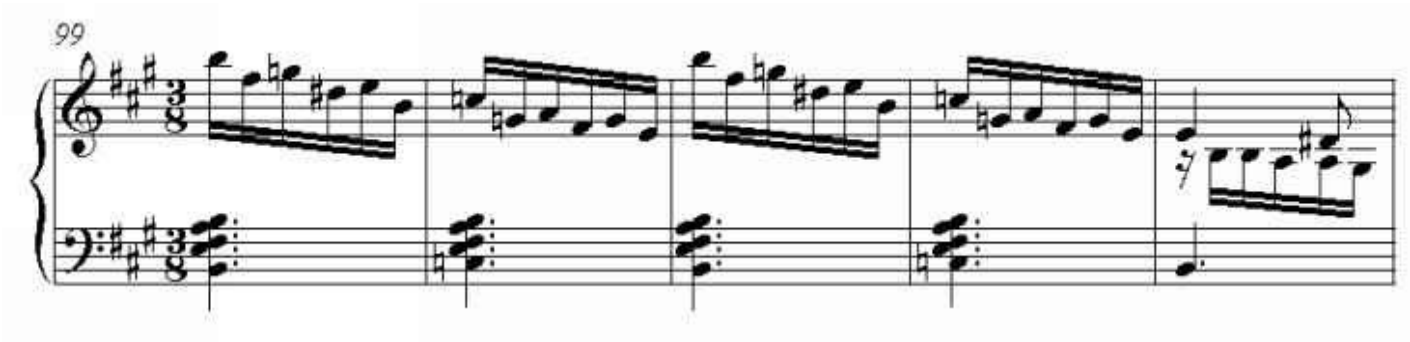
K107 (F major - Allegro)



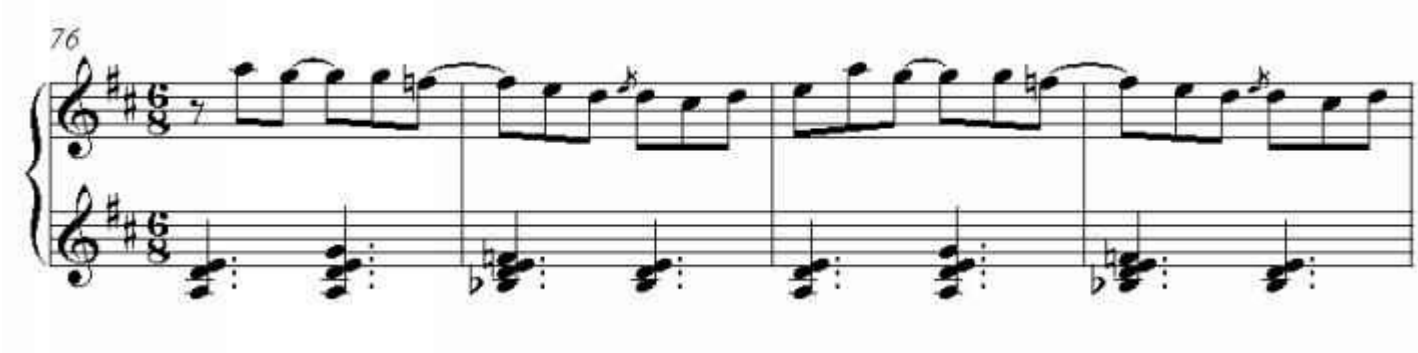
Sonata K135 (E-major - Allegro)



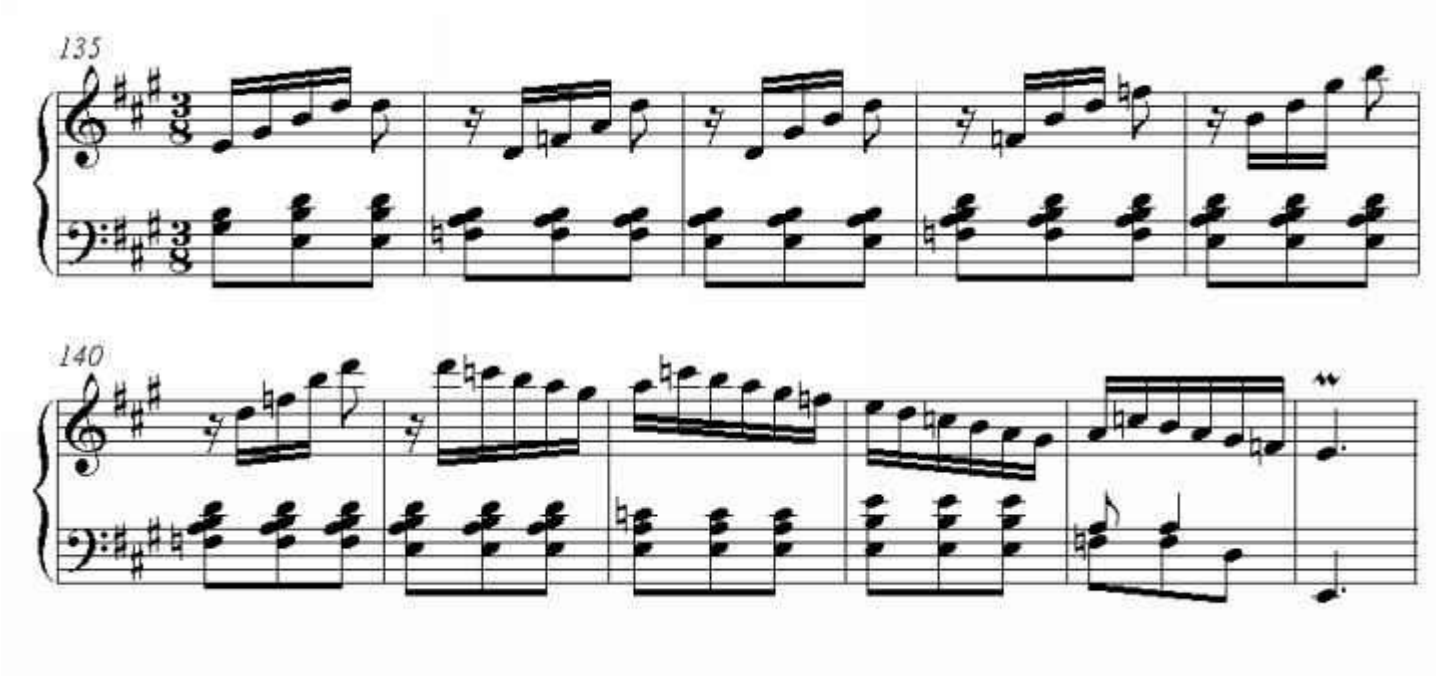
K136 (E major - Allegro)



K137 (D major - Allegro)



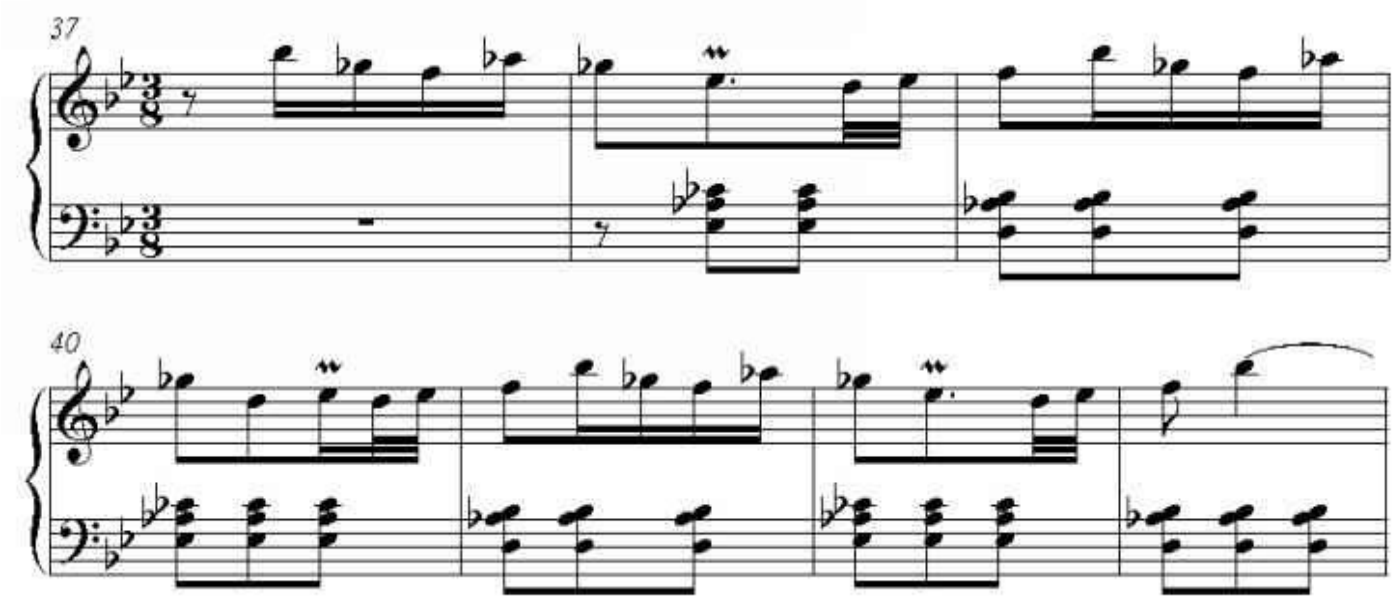
K114 (A major - Con spirito e presto)



The first thing that is striking about these examples is the modality of the material. This cannot be emphasized enough. Such passages cannot be explained according to tonal principles. This starts with the unresolved suspended chords. (In the harmonic structure, the minor seconds acts as the leading tone to the fundamental tone. This phenomenon comes from the Phrygian modality.

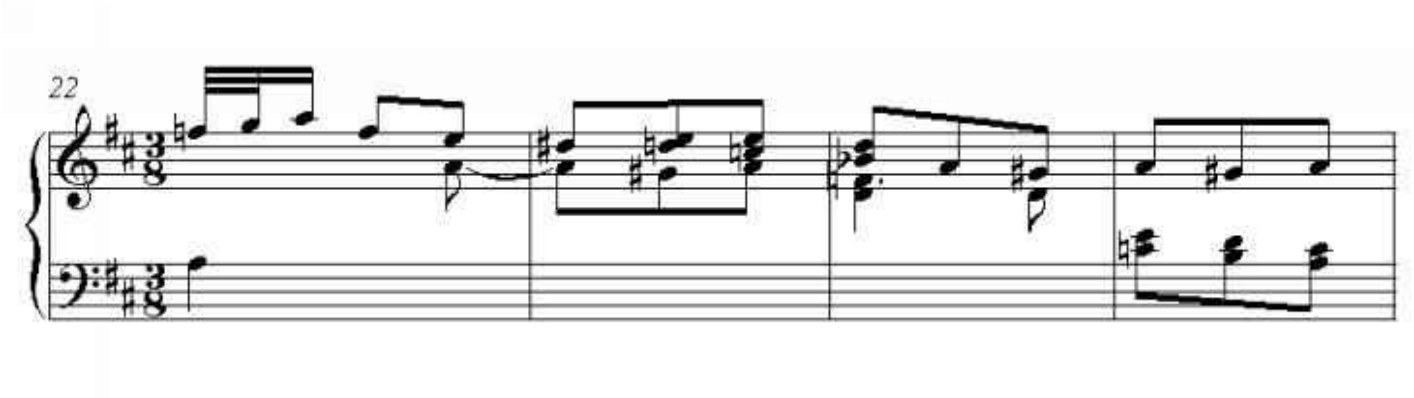
Some more examples:

K116 (c minor - Allegro)

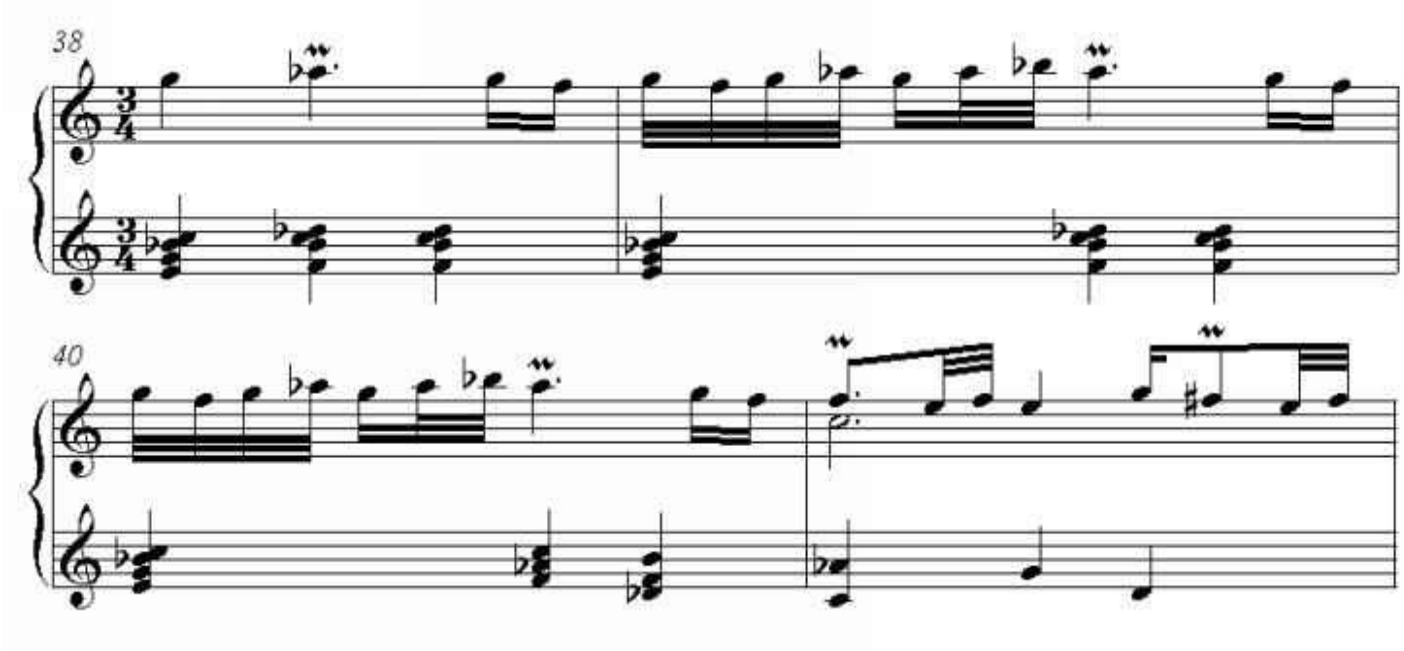


Another example of the Neapolitan melodic tone can be found in measure 24 of

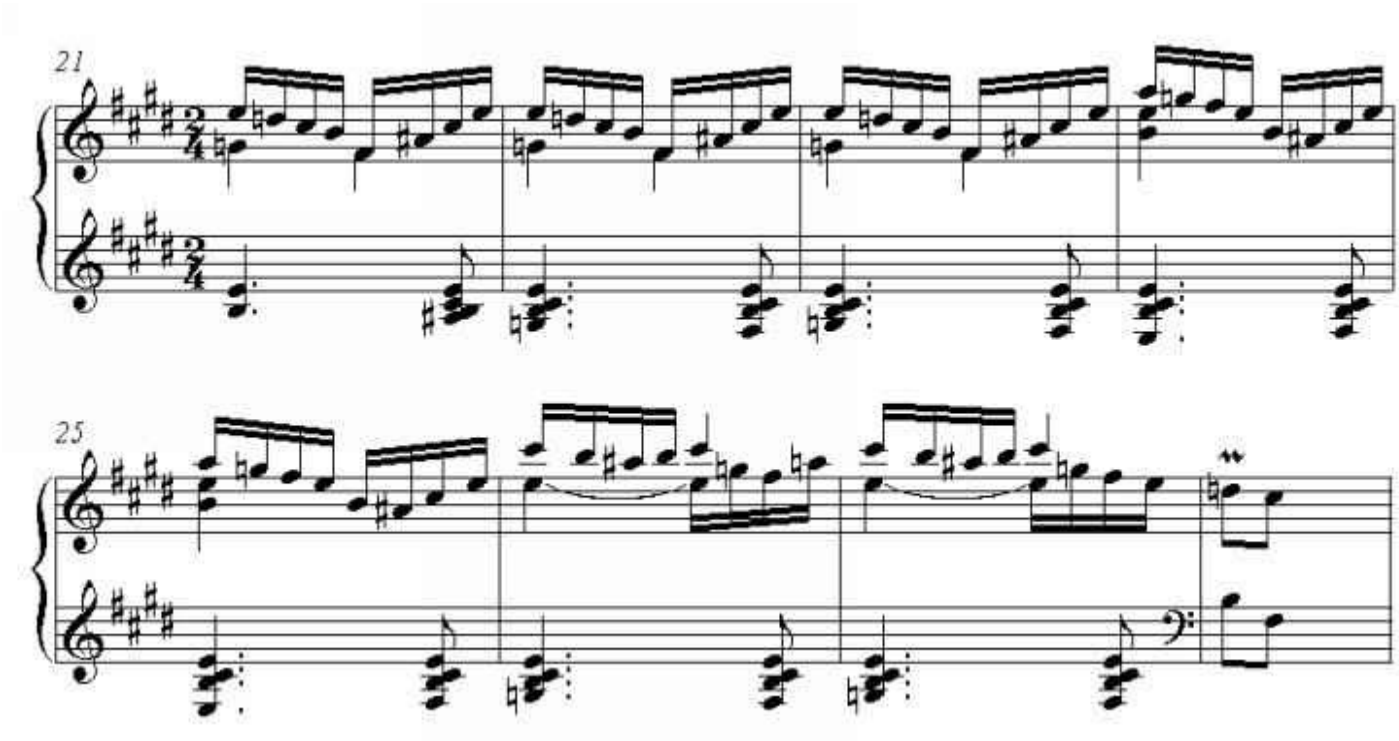
K122 (D major - Allegro)



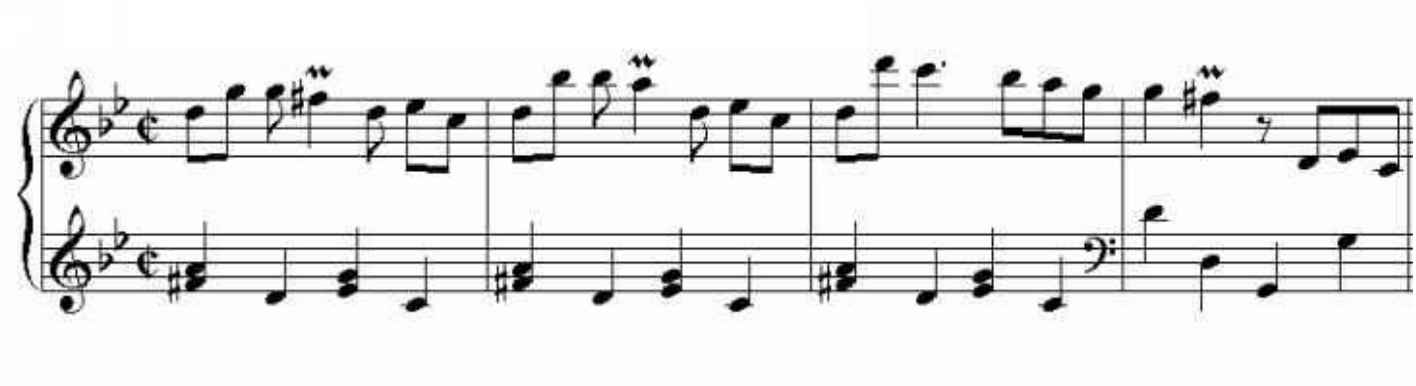
Another example of the flamenco modality **K132 (C major - Andante) :**



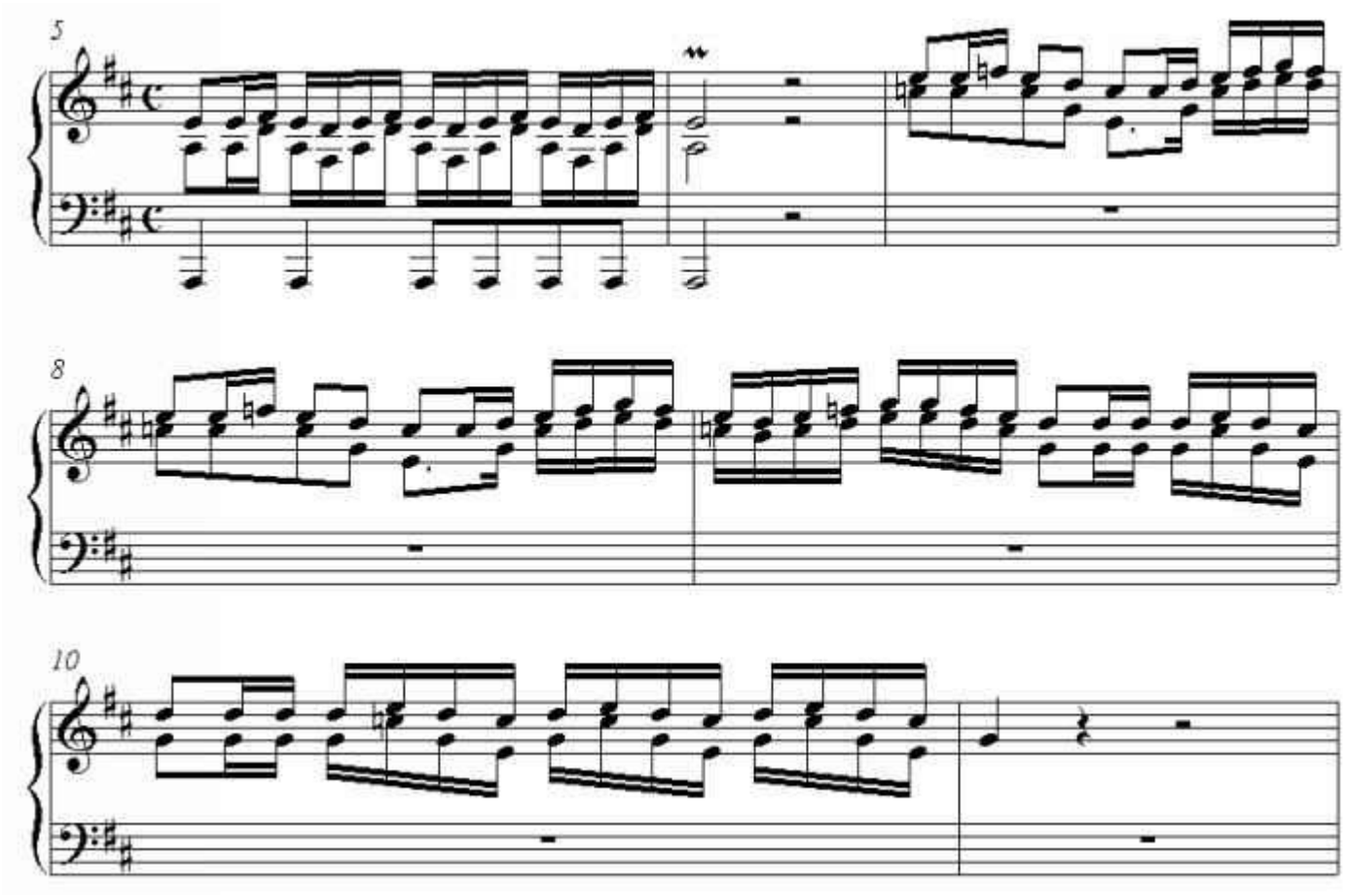
The melisms in this example, like the harmonious structure, come directly from the flamenco culture. Note the B flat minor ninth chords in bars 38 and 39. The note C in the left hand functions as an ostinato. In the further course of the Spanish sonatas, the folk music elements are increasingly stylized and therefore no longer appear so clearly. This development has only a few exceptions such as K175 or the middle section of K202, we will talk about these sonatas later. The first example of this stylization a place in **K134 (E major - Allegro)** is to be mentioned:



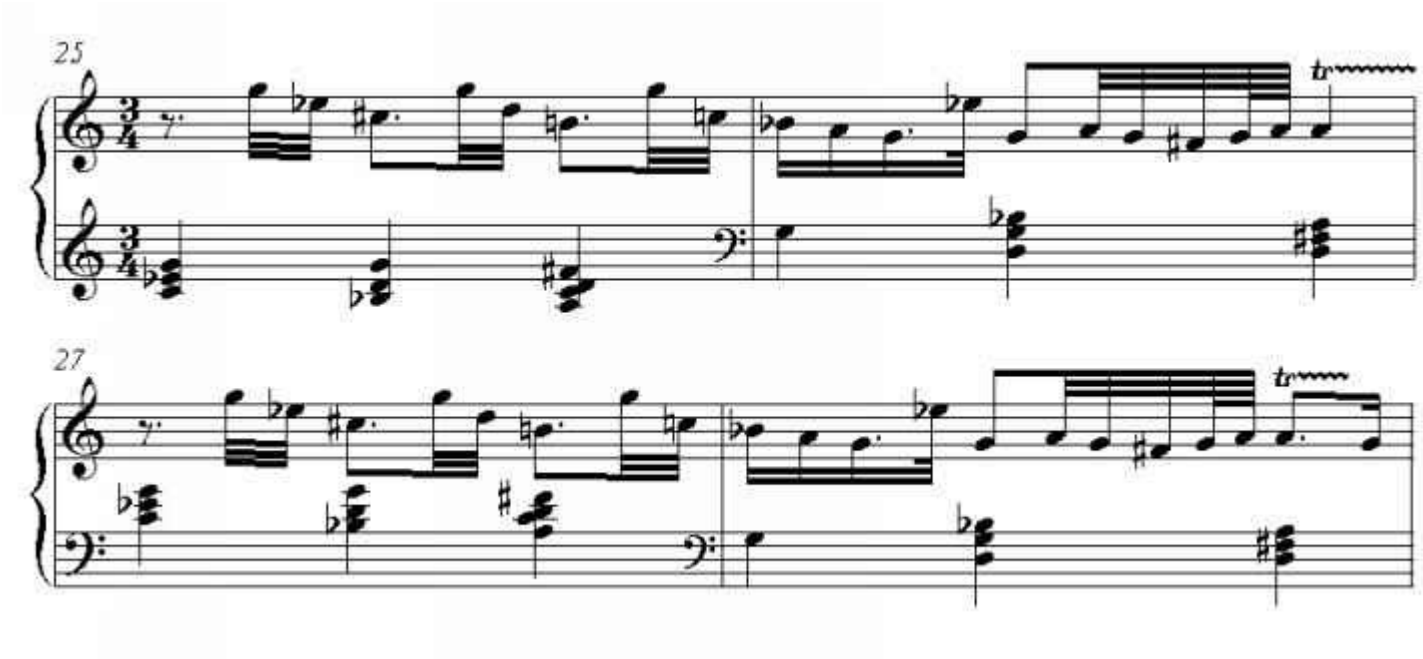
After this sonata the compact block chords become rarer, which leads to a simplification of the musical structure. An example of this type of stylization of the flamenco influence may be found in **K139 (c minor - Presto) :**



Another example of both the strange sudden key changes and the village fanfares can be found in **K140 (D major - Allegro)** . After the half-close in A major, it continues in C major:



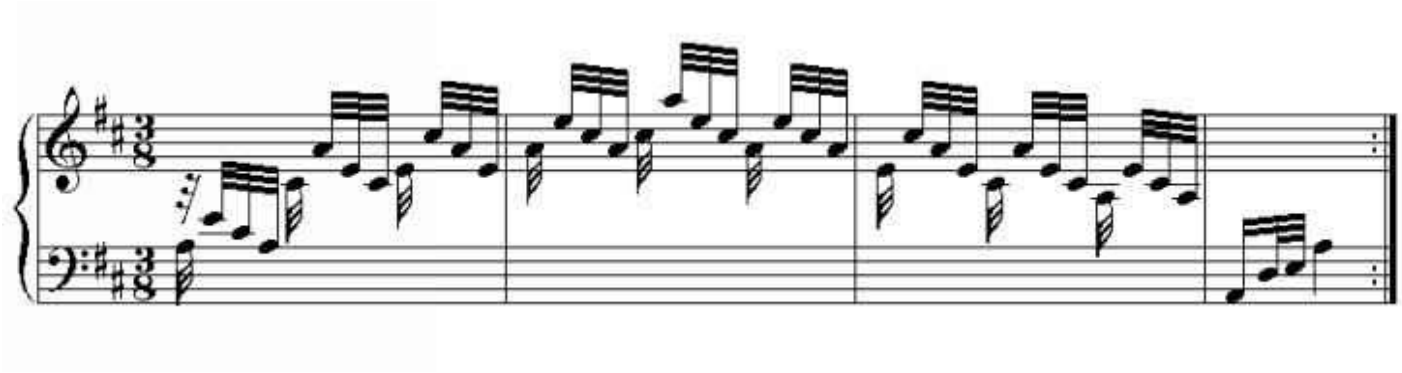
Other notable elements in Scarlatti's style include, for example, the unresolved dissonant melodic tones in **K132 (C major - Andante)** that appear several times in this sonata:



It affects the tones c sharp and b in bars 25 and 27. They are indirect lead tones that find their resolution in the last 32nd note of the same beat. However, this is indirect and so fast that the resolution is not even perceived and these tones are perceived as unresolved.

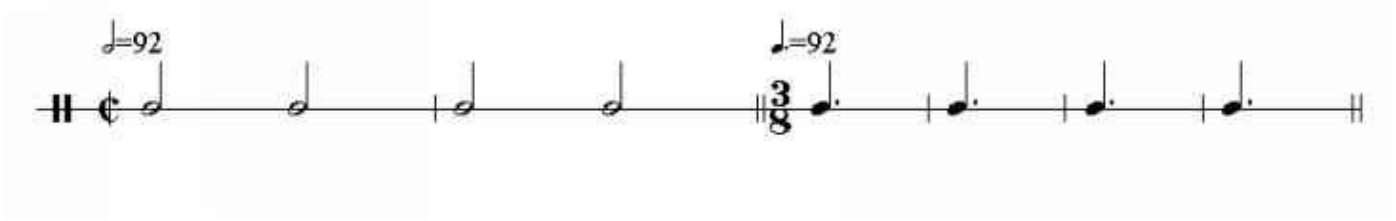
K140 (D major - Allegro) is one of the numerous major sonatas, both blocks of which end in minor, as well as e.g. K182 (A major - Allegro) or **K297 (F major - Allegro)** .

In **K145 (D major - no tempo indication)** , both the half-ending and the full-ending consist of a broken suspended chord. Here is the half-ending:



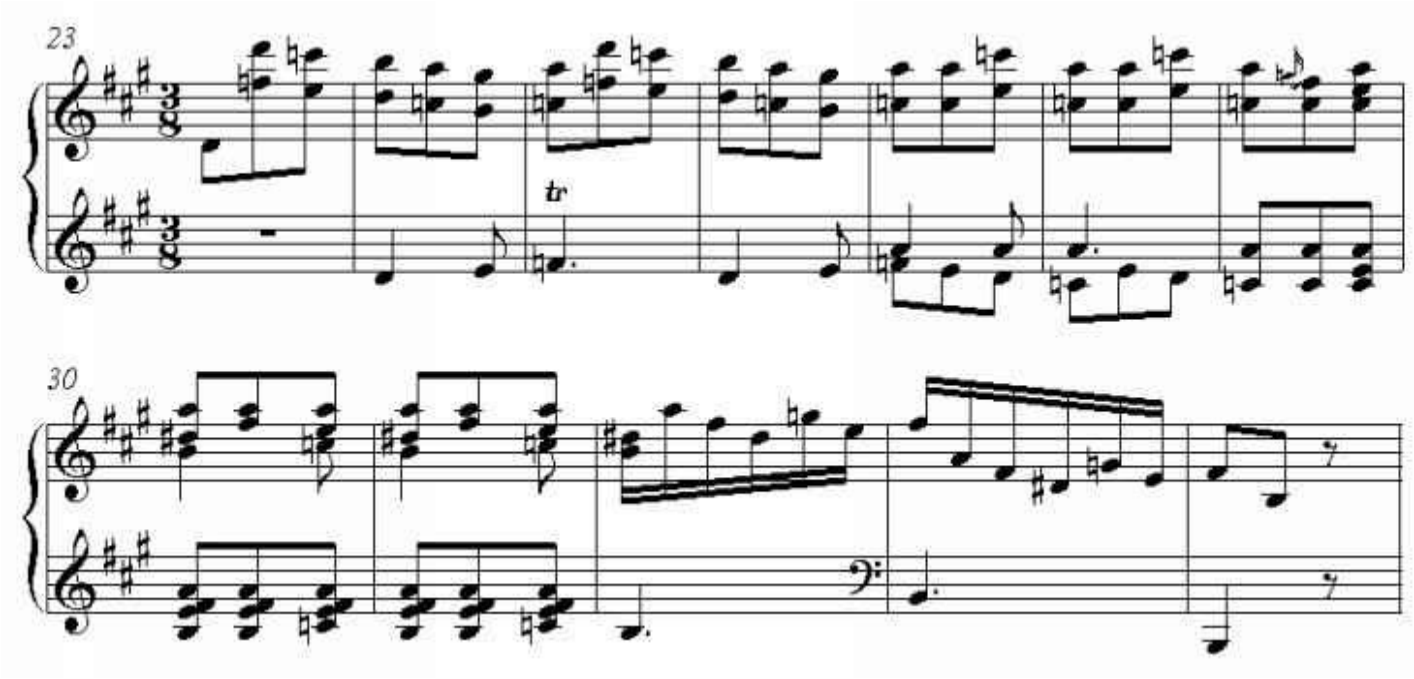
K162 (E major - Andante - Allegro) is one of the formally and harmonically very interesting sonatas. This sonata is also in two parts in the large form, but the parts themselves are also structured. The A-part is two-part, the B-part three-part. The A section consists of an andante and an allegro. The andante is in 3/4 time and modulates from the basic key of E major not to the dominant B major, but to B minor. The Allegro is in B major and ends with the half-close. The second part is in three parts in the sense of A - B - A '. A is the continuation of the Allegro from the first part and modulates from B major to E major. B is a varied repetition of the Andante from the first part and is in E minor. A 'is a varied repetition of the Allegro from the first part. However, this wealth in form and harmonious color forms a perfect unity.

Another two-part sonata type appears in **K170 (C major - Andante - Allegro)** . The A part is called Andante moderato e cantabile. The tempo should by no means be taken too slowly, it is an alla breve beat. So a moderato beat is a half note. The second part is called Allegro and is in 3/8 time. The correct interpretation of tempo, which also applies to many similar time and tempo changes in other sonatas, is this:

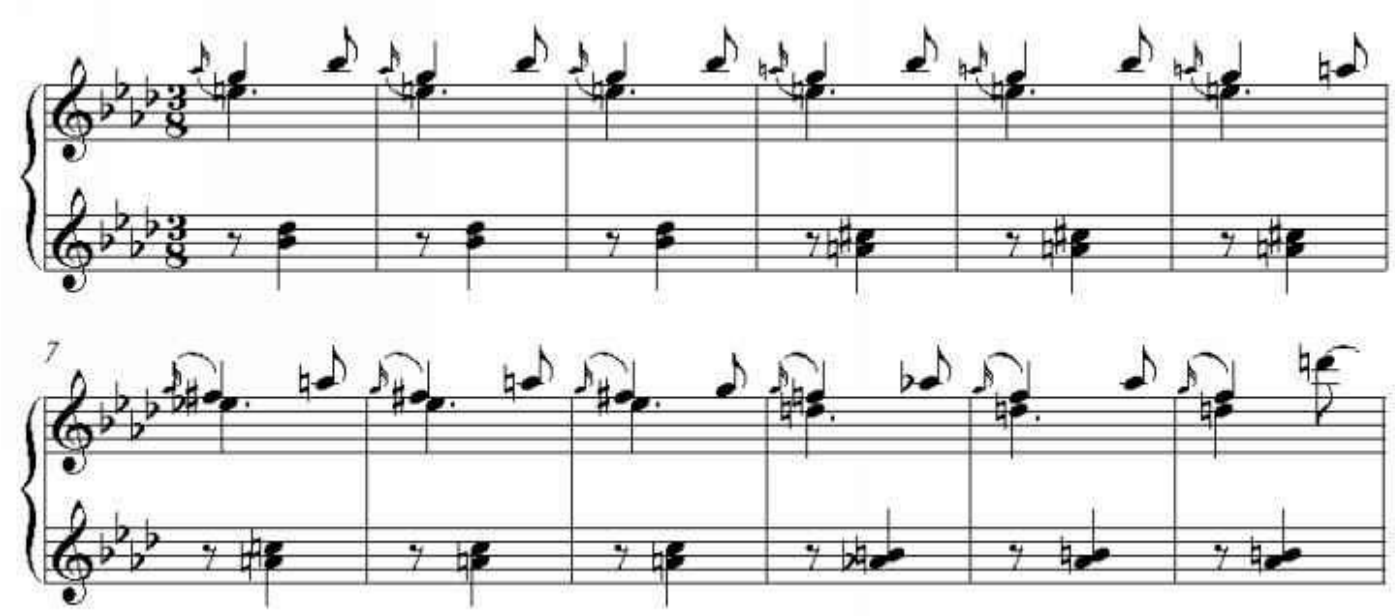


One counting time of the A part corresponds to one bar of the B part. In this way, the increase in Tempo is achieved while a basic meter is maintained.

K182 (A major - Allegro) is again a major sonata with both blocks ending in minor. The flamenco modality is also present in this sonata:

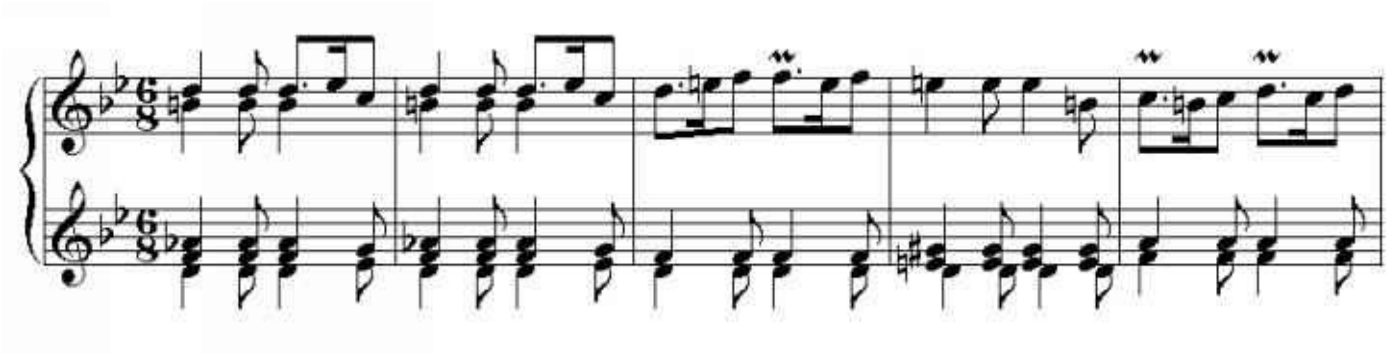


In Sonata **K184 (F minor - Allegro)** a passage appears twice which, from a harmonic point of view, is mainly made up of diminished seventh chords. That is why a clear tonal reference can no longer be perceived at this point:

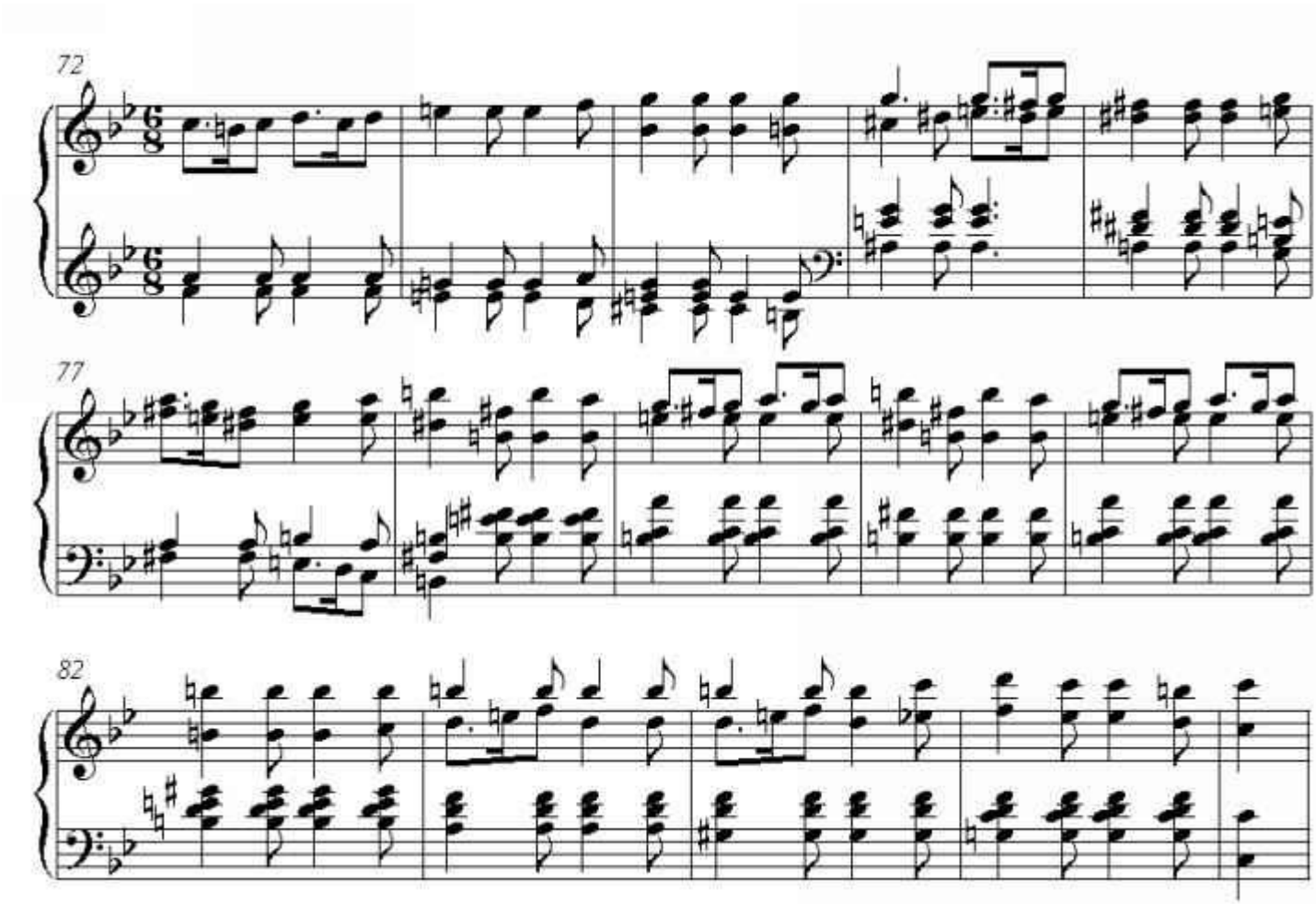


In **K190 (B flat major - Allegro)** the Italian dance form Tarantella appears again. This is in a very fast 12/8 time. It is the only non-Spanish dance form that appears regularly in the sonatas. Other examples of tarantellas are K214, K253, or K262..

The already mentioned Sonata **K202 (B flat major - Allegro - Pastorale - Vivo)** shows Scarlatti in the middle section as a harmonic revolutionary. He was the first composer who, through enharmonic reinterpretation of the diminished seventh chord, got into remote and actually illogical keys. The first example can be found in bars 66-70:



The modulation goes from C minor to A minor. The diminished seventh chord of the 7th degree in c minor b, d, f, a flat is enharmonically reinterpreted to b, d, f, g sharp, i.e. for the first inversion of the diminished seventh chord of the 7th degree in a minor. The same procedure is used twice more, in bars 72 - 86. The whole passage is given here:



The modulations run from d minor (bars 73-74) to e minor (from bar 75) and from a minor (bars 82-84) to c minor (bars 85-86). The diminished seventh chord of bar 75 (a sharp, c sharp, e, g) acts as an intermediate dominant to the dominant seventh chord (b, d sharp, f sharp, a).

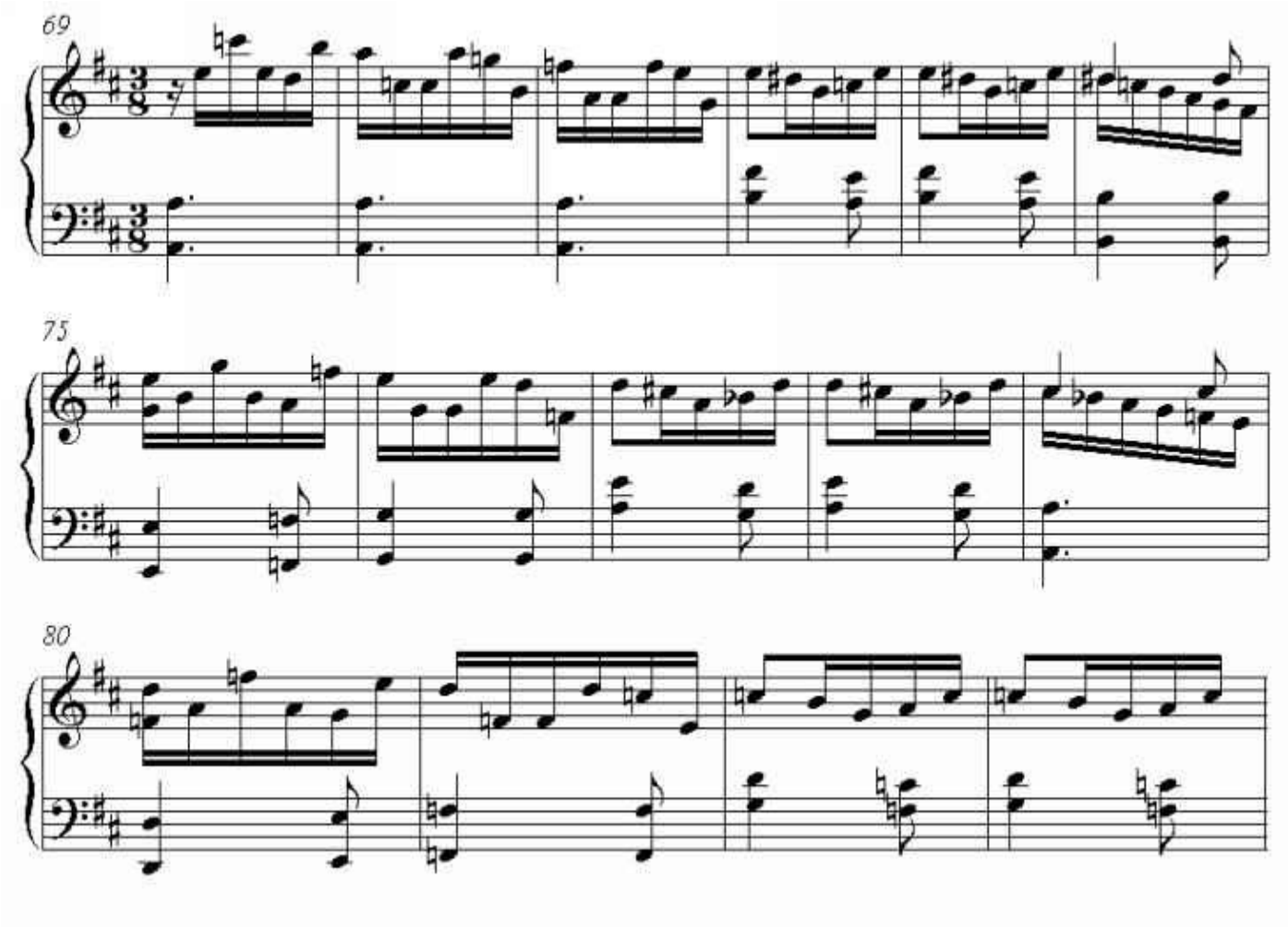
Other three-part sonatas that use a similar formal scheme are e.g. K235, K273 or K282.

In Sonata **K205 (F major - Vivo)** the same type of form appears as in Sonata K162 already discussed. The typing of the individual parts is different, however. The A section begins in a fast all-breve measure in F major, which is followed by a tarantella in F minor. What has been said about the interpretation of the different meters and the associated tempos for K170 also applies here. The B part first continues the tarantella, then the alla breve part appears again, this time in E flat major and then again the tarantella in F minor, which modulates at the end to F major, the basic key.

Another example of the variety in form and harmonic structure can be found in **K206 (E major - Andante)** . This sonata is in E major and the A section ends "normally" on the dominant B major. The B part, however, modulates about halfway down to E minor so as not to leave this key and the sonata also ends in E minor. It cannot be explained enough that such procedures are absolutely unique in the history of tonality and can only be explained if one considers that Scarlatti maintained an intimate relationship with the modality.

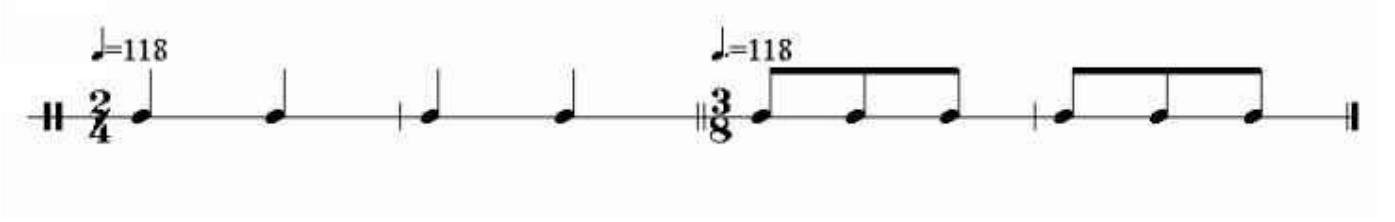
Another peculiar form in the harmonical structure can be found in **K212 (A major - Allegro molto)** . Here, too, it concerns a two-part sonata and the A section runs "quite normally". This part starts in A major and ends on the dominant E major. The B part is in A minor and begins in the parallel key of C major. A minor is reached quickly and is the main key of this part. Only at the end does a short coda appear, which returns to A major.

Another example of the flamenco influence can be found in **K224 (D major - Vivo)** , at the beginning of the second block. Here, too, the "forbidden" fifths parallels are more or less the main thing, because they create a sound image that is frowned upon in the "official" music theory and therefore does not occur in the work of other composers of that time:

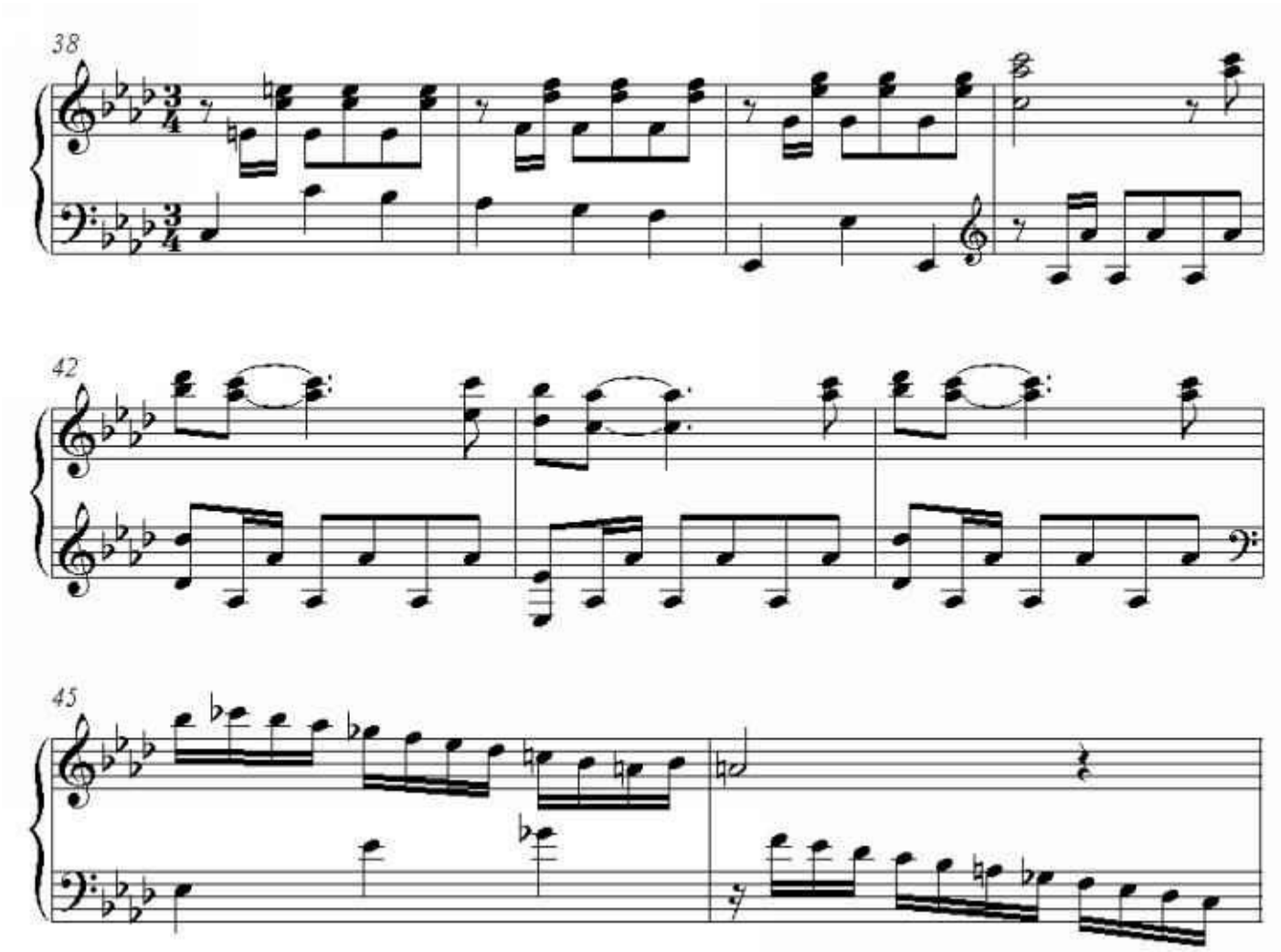


In **K226 (C minor - Allegro)** sudden changes of key appear again, in the second part. A short episode in C major changes to a minor and ends on the dominant E. This 8-bars a minor period is then repeated in G minor and F minor, without any kind of modulation in between.

In **K227 (b minor - Allegro)** both blocks are in different time signatures and tempos. The first block is in 2/4 time, the second in 3/8 time. A beat of the first block corresponds here again to a bar of the second block:



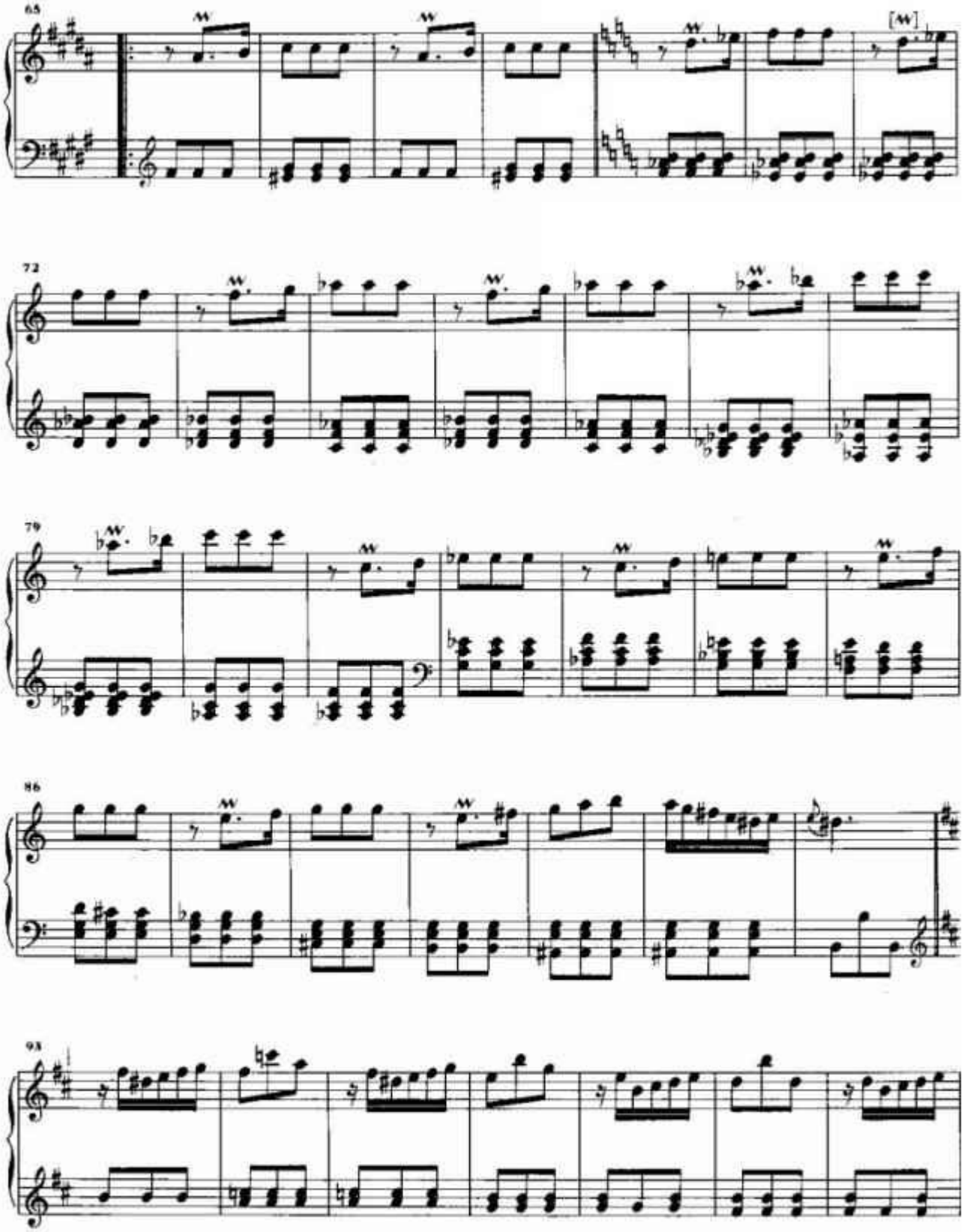
In **K239 (f minor - Allegro)** another Spanish dance form appears, the Seguedilla. The rhythm of this dance is reminiscent of the polonaise. As an example some bars from this sonata:



The rhythm of the Seguedilla also appears in **K380 (E major - Andante comodo)** and in **K491 (D major - Allegro)** ..

No baroque composer has gone so far in his modulations as Domenico Scarlatti on many occasions. As an example follows a page from

K244 (B major - Allegro), namely the beginning of the second block:


65
72
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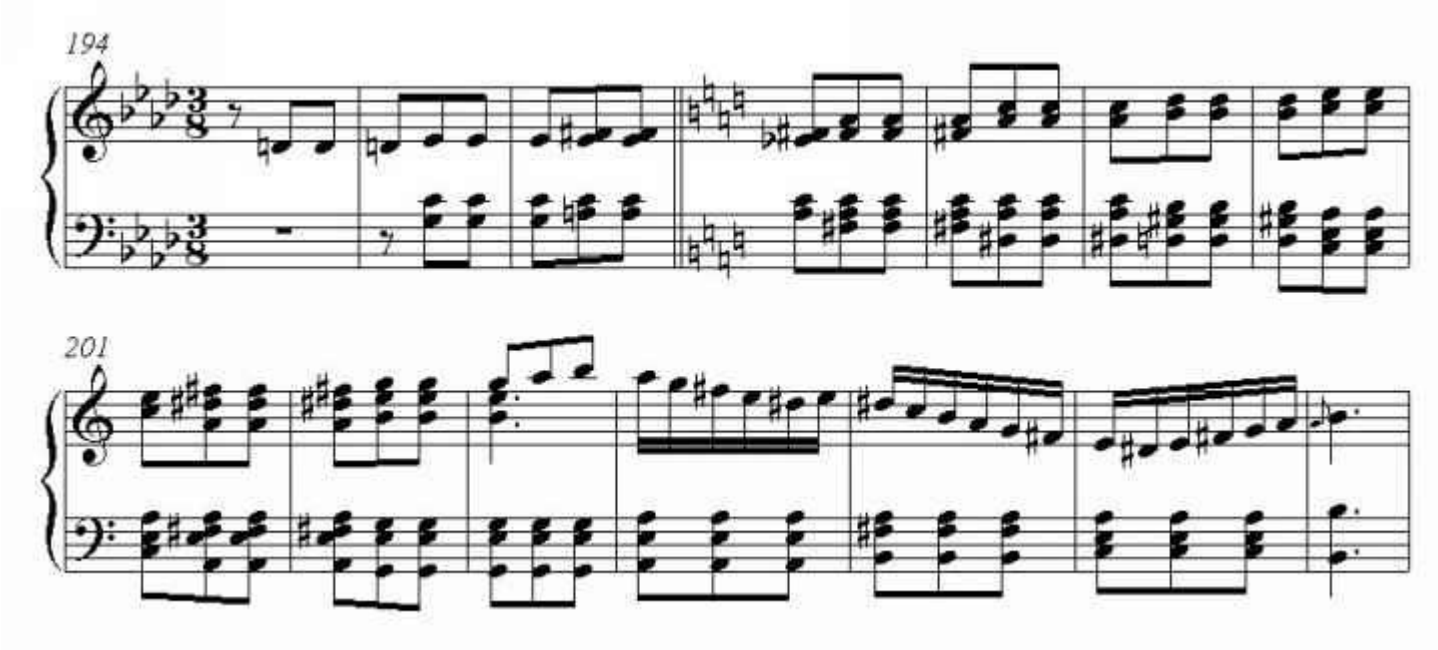
93

This passage from **K264 (E major - Vivo)** proves that the enharmonic reinterpretation of the diminished seventh chord in K202 is not an isolated case, but can be counted as part of Scarlatti's compositional means:



In bars 196 and 197 the diminished seventh chord appears in E flat, f sharp, a, c. This is reinterpreted enharmonically in measure 198 to D-sharp, F-sharp, A-C and acts as an intermediate dominant to the dominant seventh chord E, G sharp, B, D, which belongs to a minor. Immediately afterwards, the modulation is in e minor.

An interesting harmonic scheme appears in Sonata K270 (C major - no tempo indication) . In the first and second part, which are both in three parts, harmonic blocks are set against each other without any modulation:

1st part:

C major - half closure on the dominant G major, E flat major (without transition) - modulation to G minor - half closure on the dominant D major - further in G major.

Part 2:

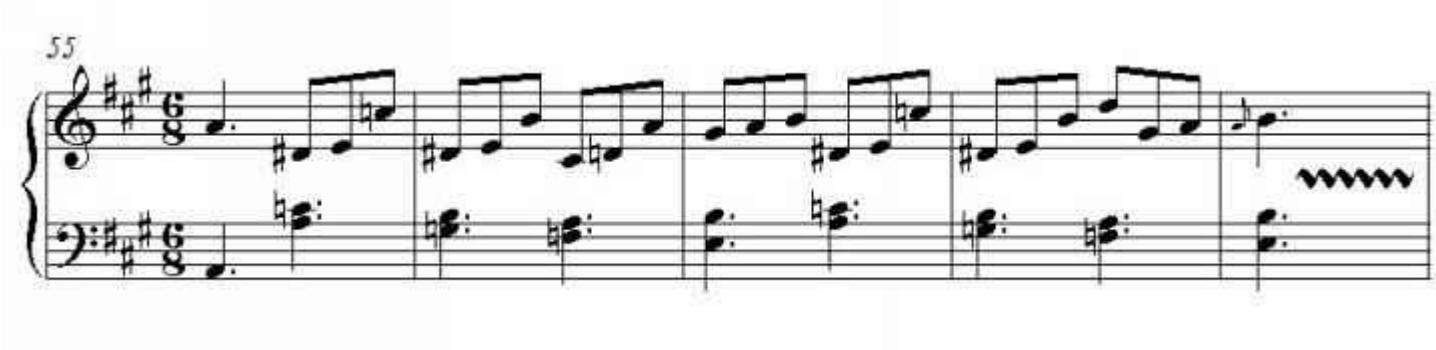
2 bars in G major, A flat major (without transition) - modulations to D flat major, F minor and C minor - half-close on the dominant G major, further in C major.

In K282 (D major - Allegro - Andante - Allegro) the three movements, which later became the sonata standard, are anticipated.

The first part already shows two conflicting themes and approaches to a development. A short coda leads to the Andante in d minor. The sonata ends with a short Allegro finale in D major.

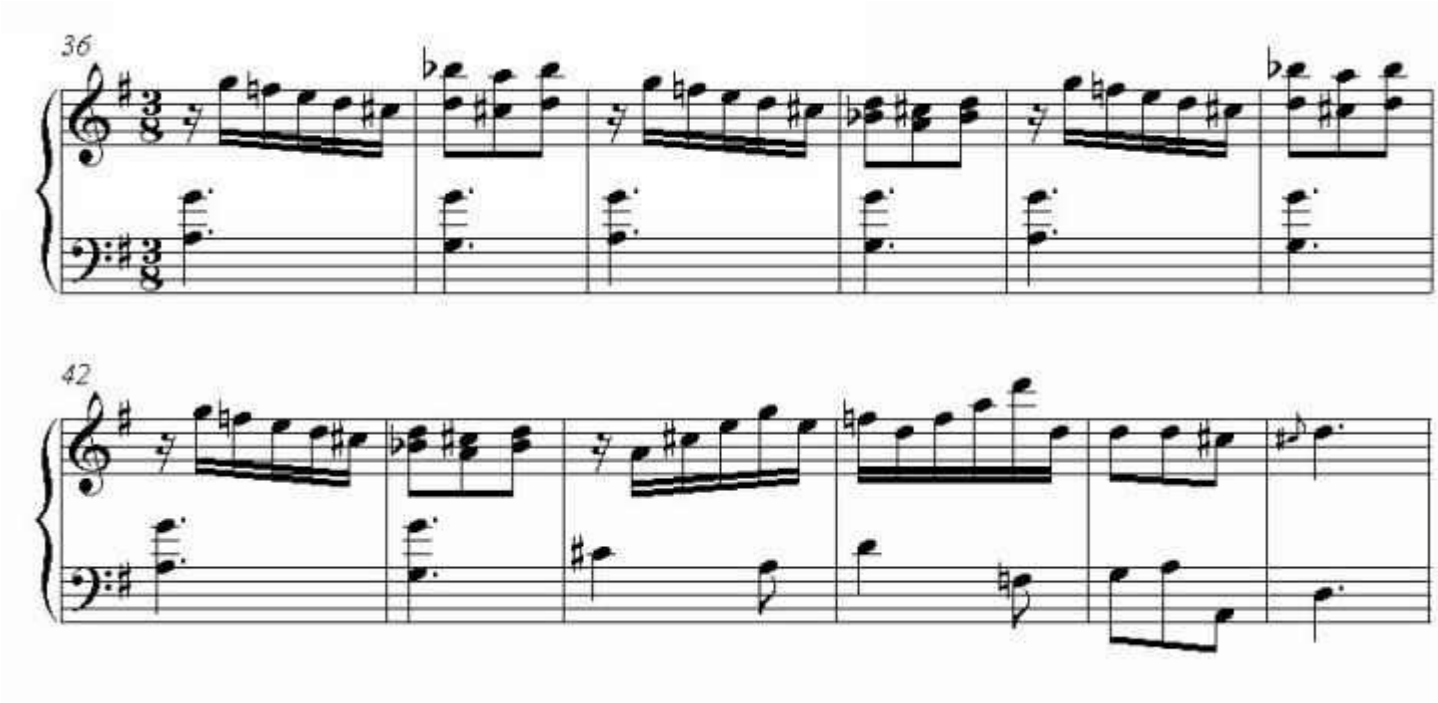
The Sonata **K284 (G major - Allegro)** is, formally speaking, one of the first rondos that was ever composed (A - B - A - C - A). Here, too, Scarlatti has broken new ground.

The already mentioned flamenco formula appears in Sonata **K286 (A major - Allegro)** . However, this is the exception rather than the rule:

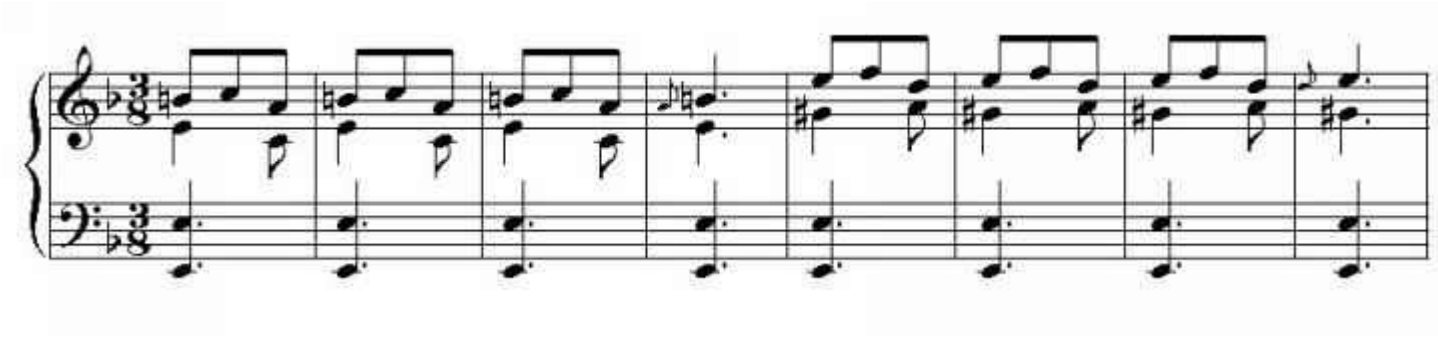


K287 (D major - Andante allegro) was composed for a two-manual house organ. In the collection of the Parma manuscripts there is the following note: "Per Organo da Camera con due Tastatura Flautato e Trombone".

Sonata **K290 (G major - Allegro)** contains a wonderful example of the extensive stylization of the flamenco influence:



Another example of this can be found in **K295 (d minor - Allegro)** :



Sonata **K296 (F major - Andante) ,** one of Scarlatti's longest sonatas, has a particularly interesting harmonic basic scheme. This sonata is also designed in two parts in the large form.

The first part is divided into three sections:

First section:

F major - modulation to C major - half-close to G major,

second part:

A flat major (again without transition) - D flat major - D flat minor - E major,

third section:

A minor.

The second part is divided into two sections:

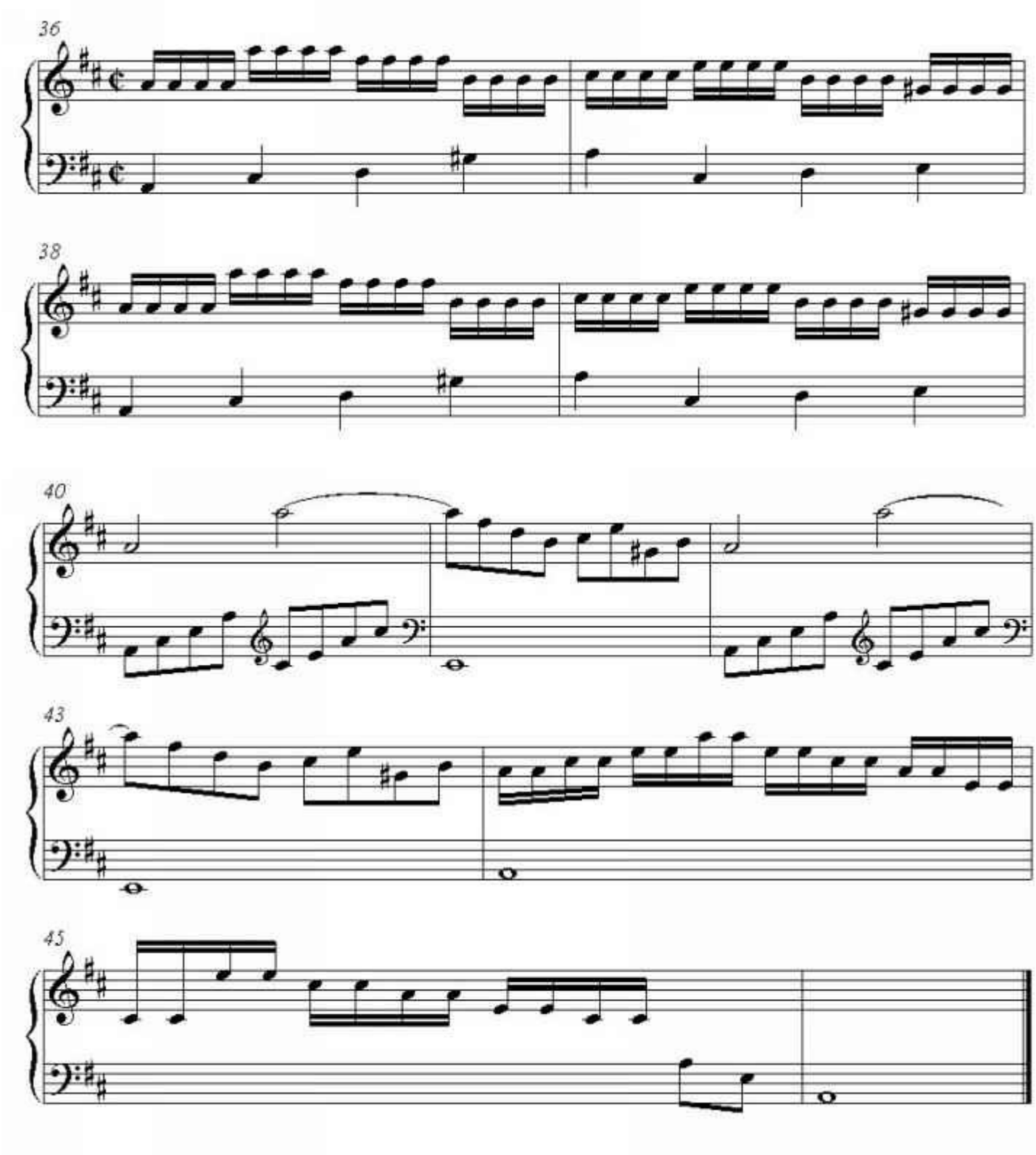
First section:

D minor - modulations according to G minor, F major, C minor, G minor, C minor, B minor, A flat major, E flat major, B flat minor and C major,

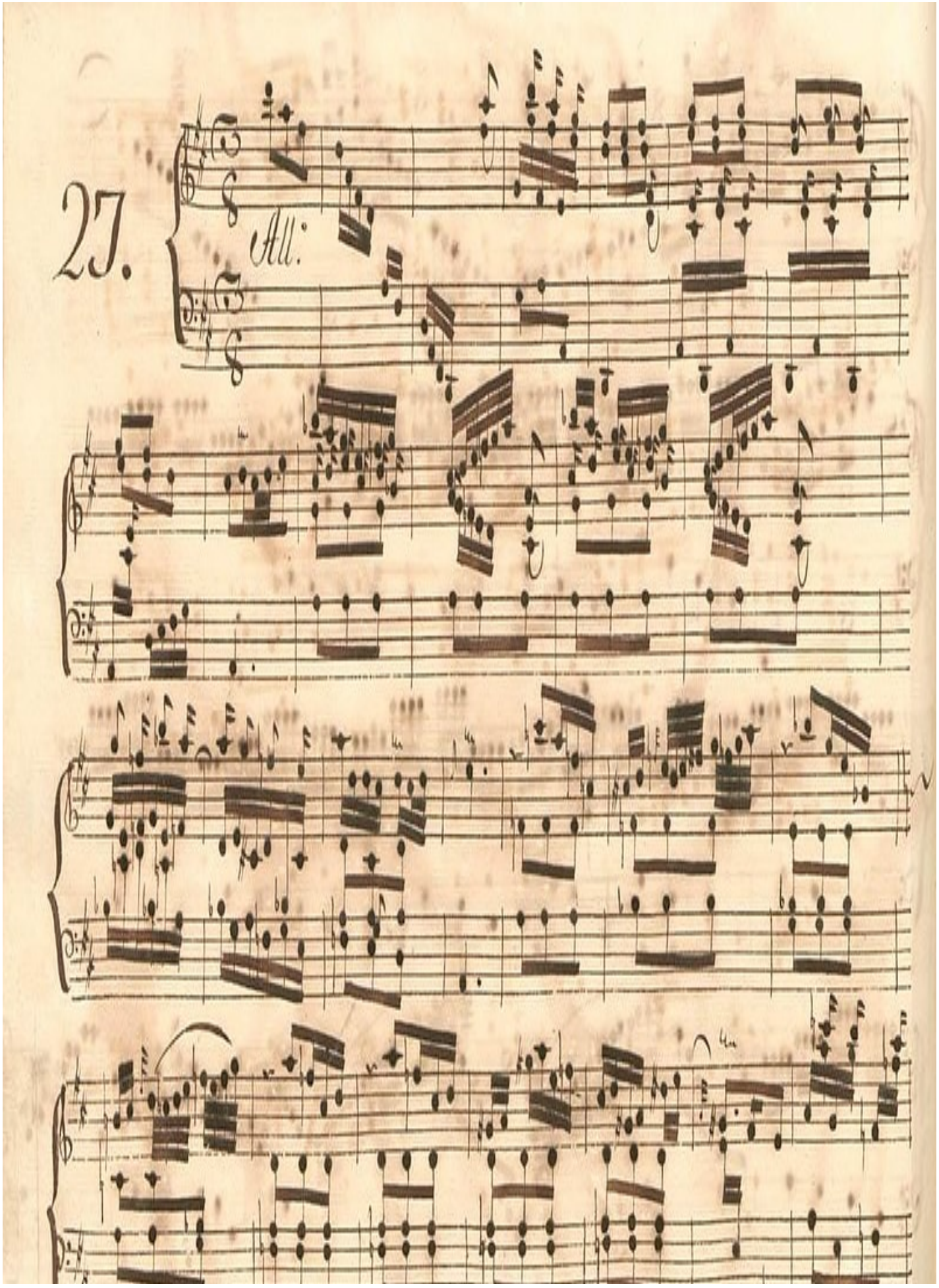
Second part:

Coda in F major.

In Sonata **K298 (D major - Allegro)** there are regular repetitions of notes at high speed (alla breve measure):



At the end of this chapter I quote a page from **K299 (D major - Allegro)** , undoubtedly one of Scarlatti's technically most difficult sonatas:


27.
All.

The middle period

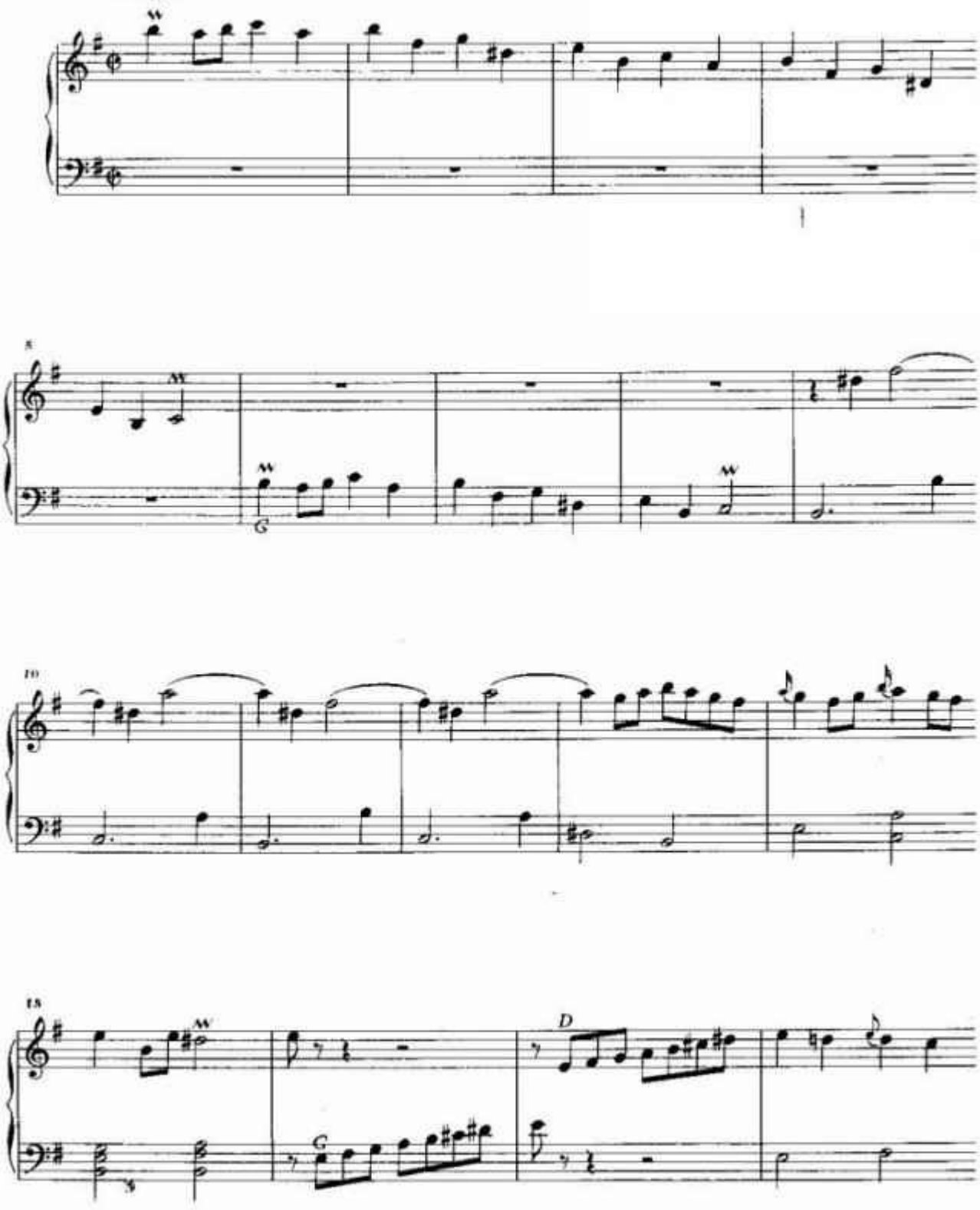
From K300 to K399 we are talking about a period in Scarlatti's composition that is characterized by the pursuit of the greatest possible musical transparency and clarity. Just compare the scores of K299 and K300. A difference like day and night. This "style break", which is not one, is just as radical as the already discussed "style break" between K95 and K96. Most of the sonatas in this middle period are in major. That alone suggests that it concerns a happy period in Scarlatti's life. In all other periods, major and minor are roughly in balance. The virtuosity takes a back seat, but that doesn't mean that these sonatas are technically easy to play. The virtuoso never denies himself. Only the virtuosity is limited to individual passages and the clarity of the musical statement is the primary goal. In no other period is the musical transparency as clear as in this one. Most of the pieces are essentially two-part, chords rarely appear, and now and then three parts are achieved. The influences of Spanish folk music also fade into the background. Sometimes only a single passage reminds of Scarlatti's love for this music.

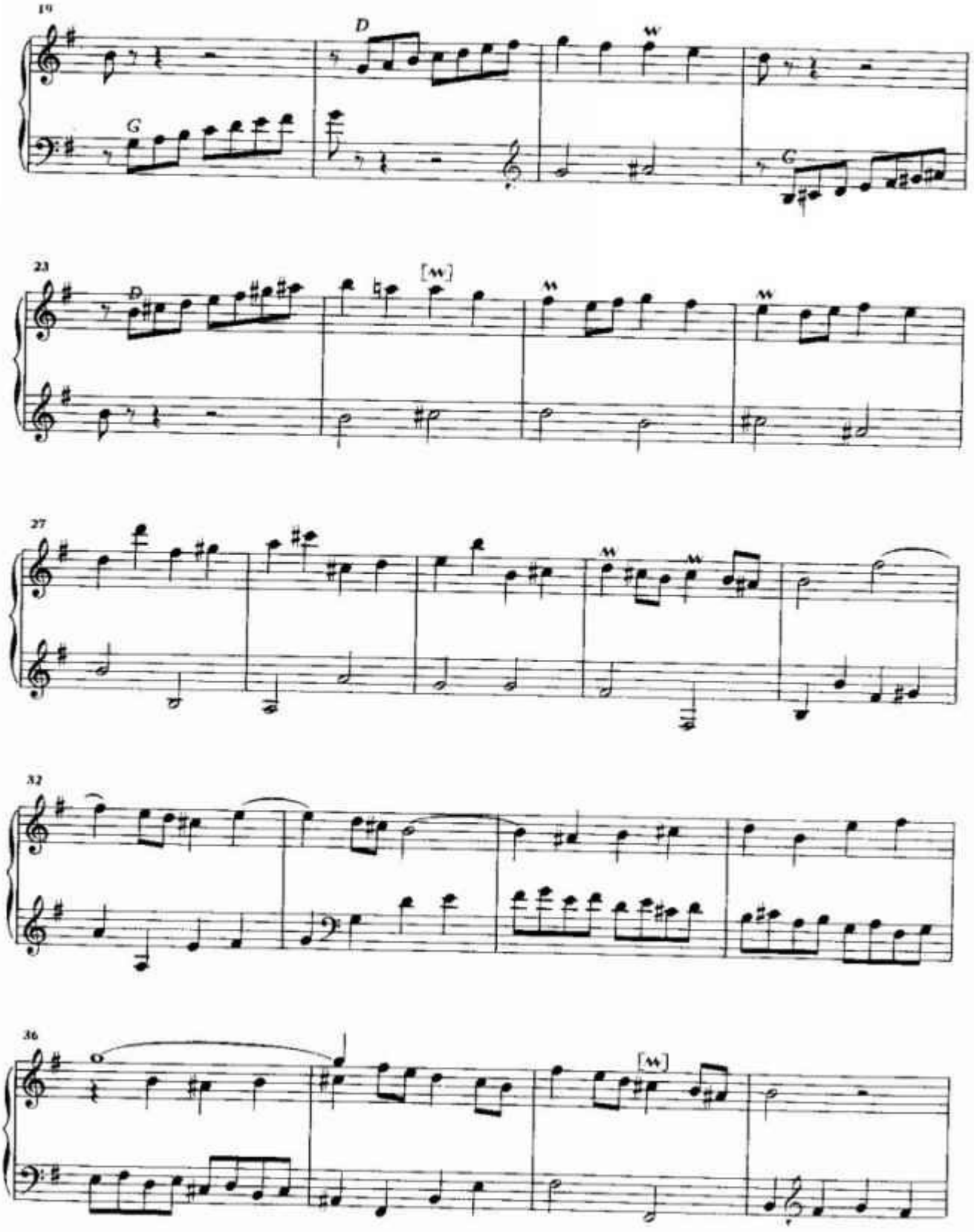
In this middle and also in the late period I content myself with the precise analysis of one sonata each time, as a substitute for all the others. Other sonatas of this middle period are quoted in the chapter "General Remarks".

K394 (E minor - Allegro) is chosen as a representative for all sonatas of the middle period. Mainly because a formal phenomenon appears here that is absolutely unique for the time, namely the first real and very virtuoso solo cadenza in music history. Furthermore, the seldom interrupted two-part voice is typical of this period. This applies especially to the first part. After the cadenza, the second part is initially three-part, and then returns to two-part. Every now and then chords appear too. All of Scarlatti's art of modulation comes to the fore after the cadence. The entire sonata is cited here:

K. 394

Allegro

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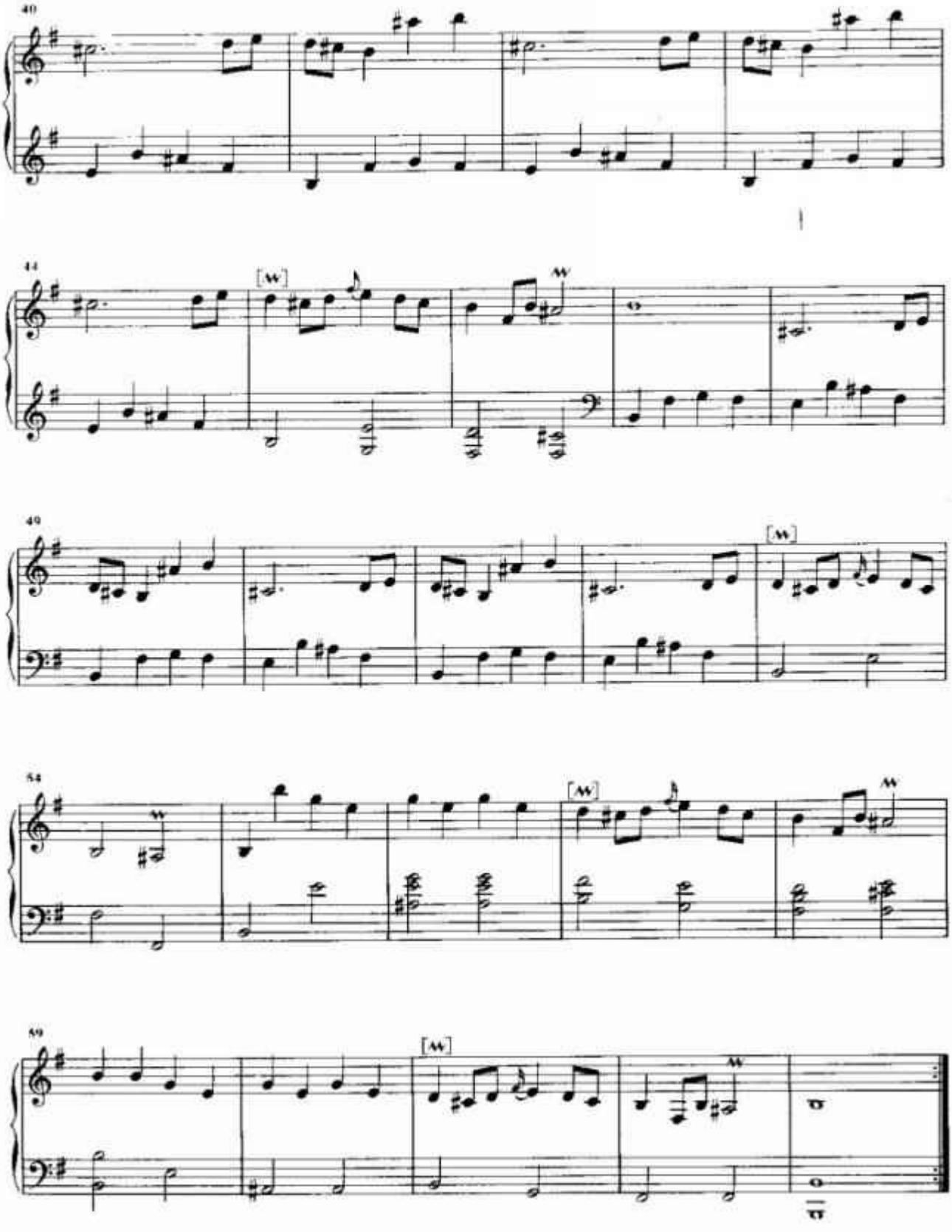
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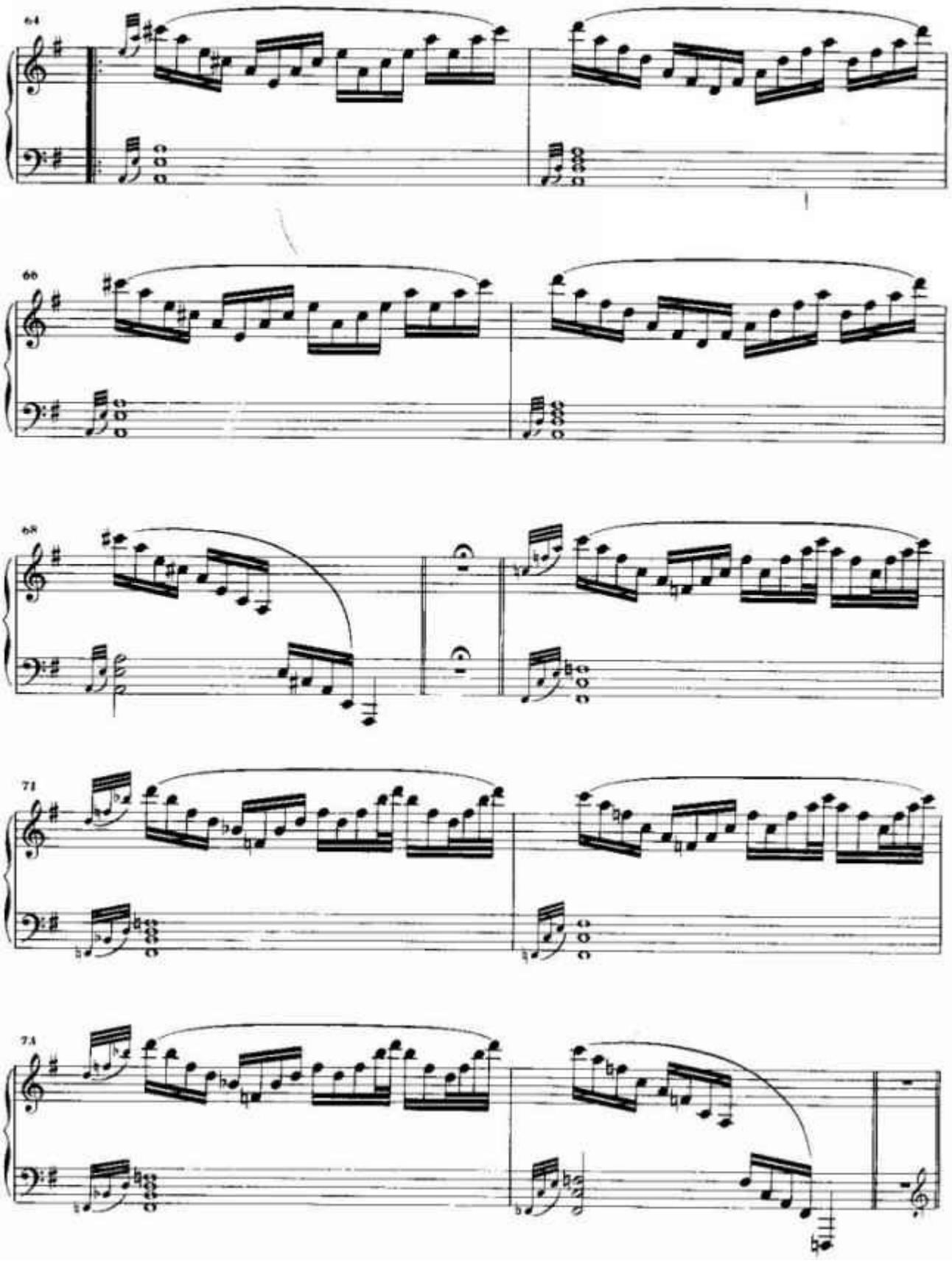
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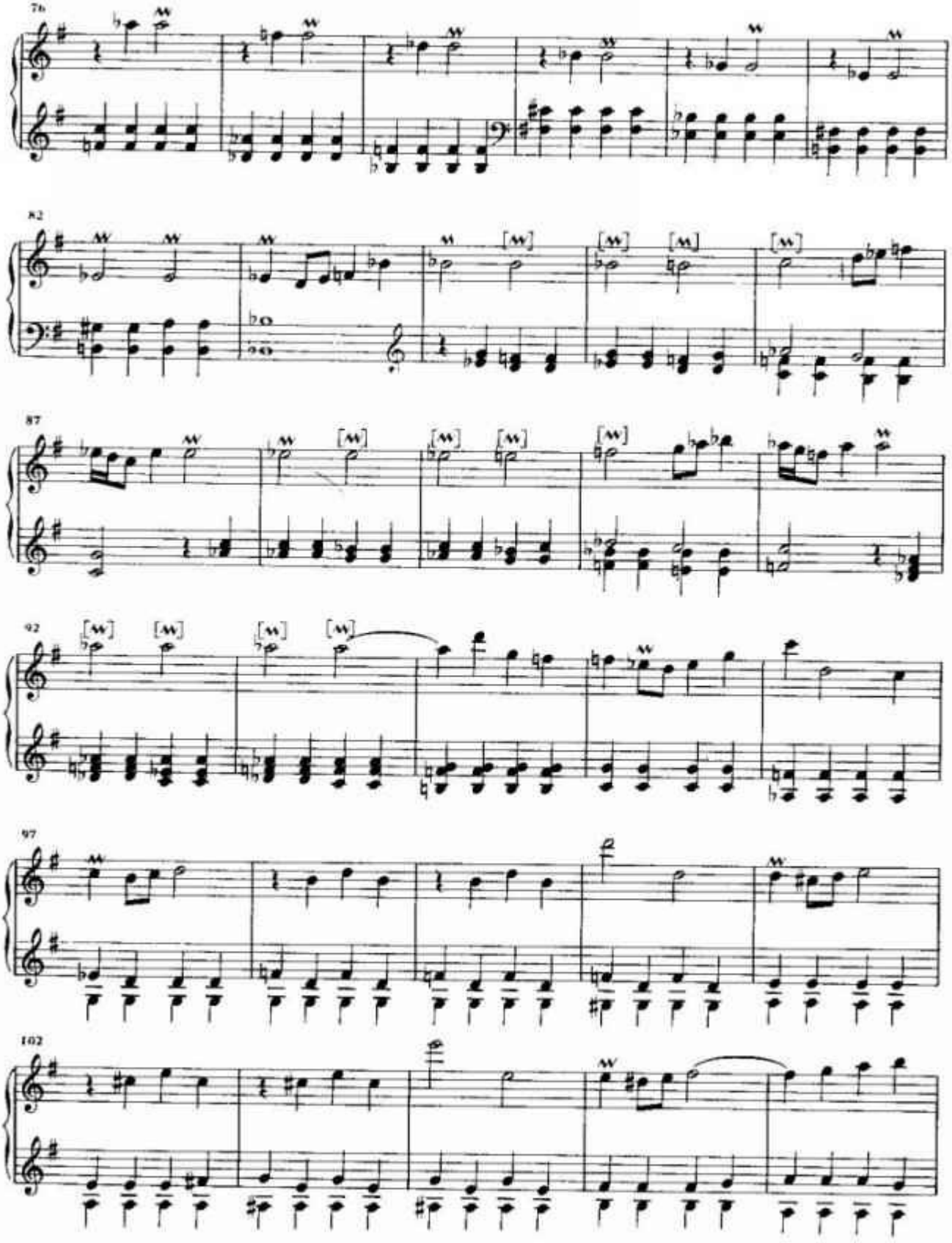

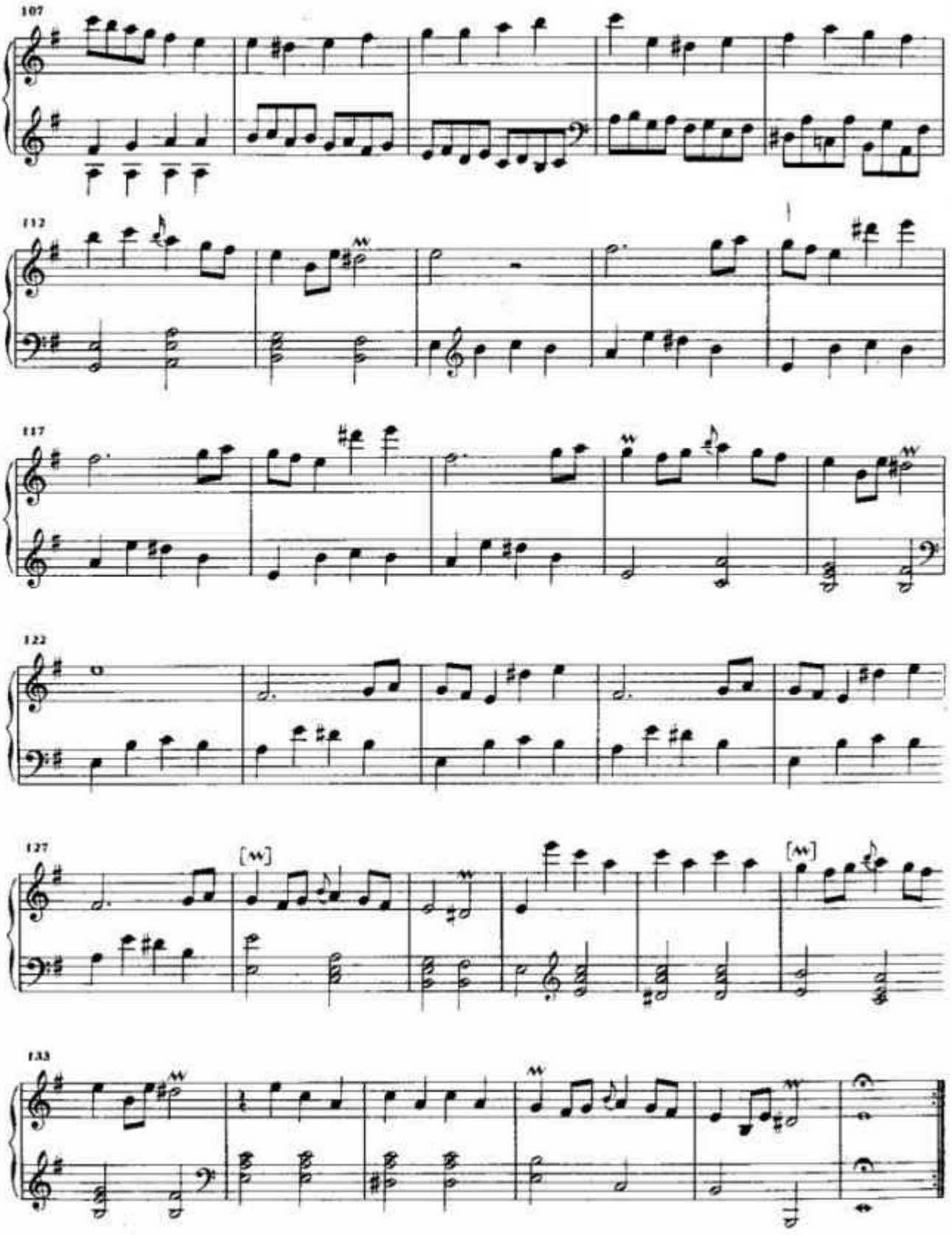
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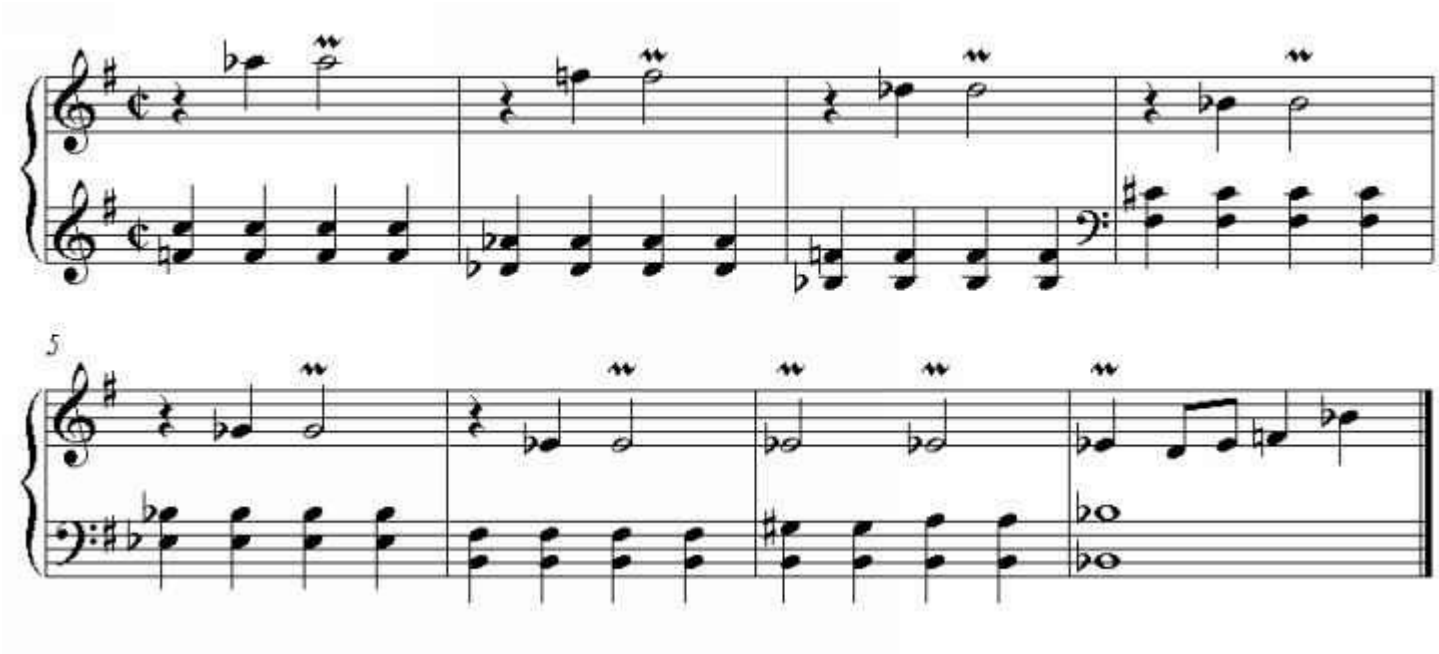
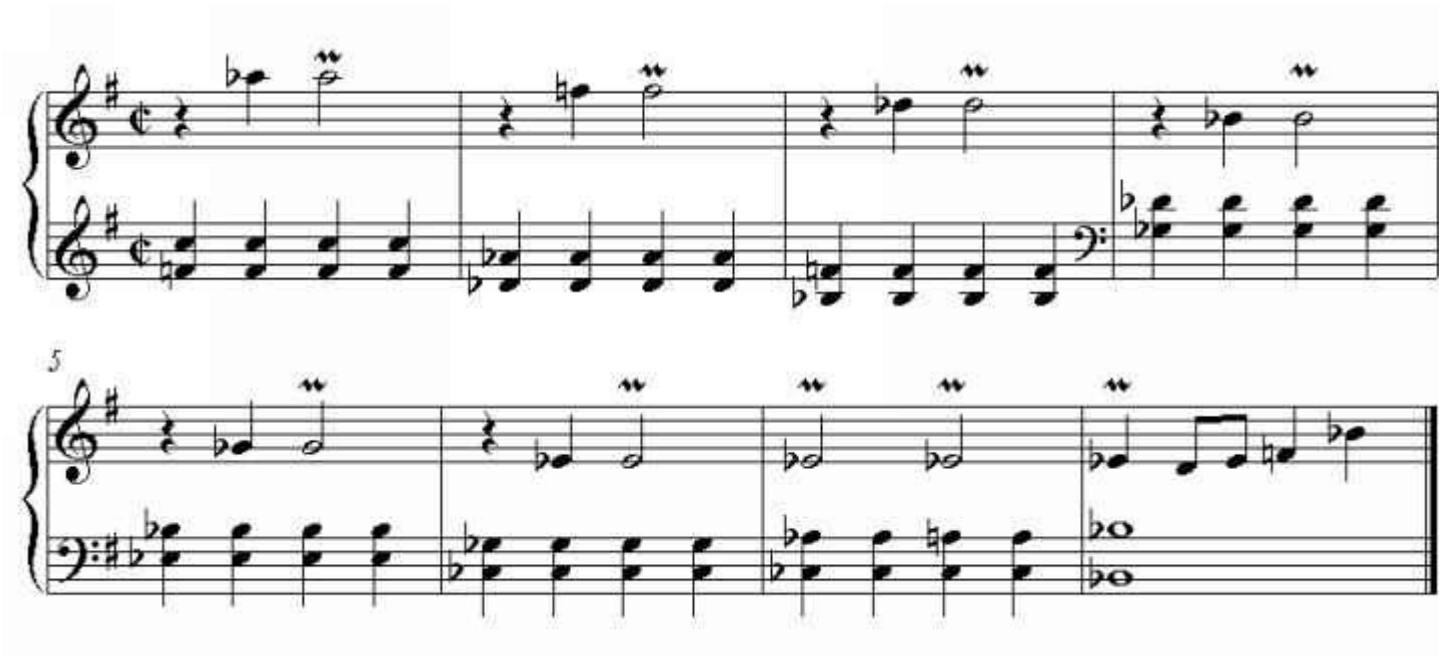
First of all, it should be noted that the passage with the parallel fifths from bar 76 is not correctly notated. Unfortunately, I am not familiar with the manuscript. In the Gilbert edition, this passage reads as follows:



The correct notation should look like this:



The modulation moves from F minor to E flat minor and ends on the dominant B flat. The way it is then modulated back to E minor is unique. Via E flat major, C minor, A flat major, F minor, A flat major, C minor is finally reached. After two bars on the dominant G (from bar 98) an enharmonic transformation of the diminished triad of the 2nd degree of C minor appears. D-f-a flat is transformed into d-f-g sharp, the 2nd inversion of the diminished triad of the 7th degree of A major. The four-bar period of bars 98-101 is repeated a whole tone higher, then the basic key E minor is reached again, which is then no longer left.

Another extremely interesting point is the cadence after the half-close. In the sonata, which is otherwise relatively simple, this outbreak of unbridled virtuosity suddenly appears. The cadence is in two parts. Without modulation, two keys that are far apart from each other are set next to each other, namely A major and F major. The A major passage moves in sixteenth notes, in the F major passage the movement is accelerated even further by the use of 32th notes. The return to simple design could only be made musically credible through the complicated modulations already discussed. These are the signs of genius.

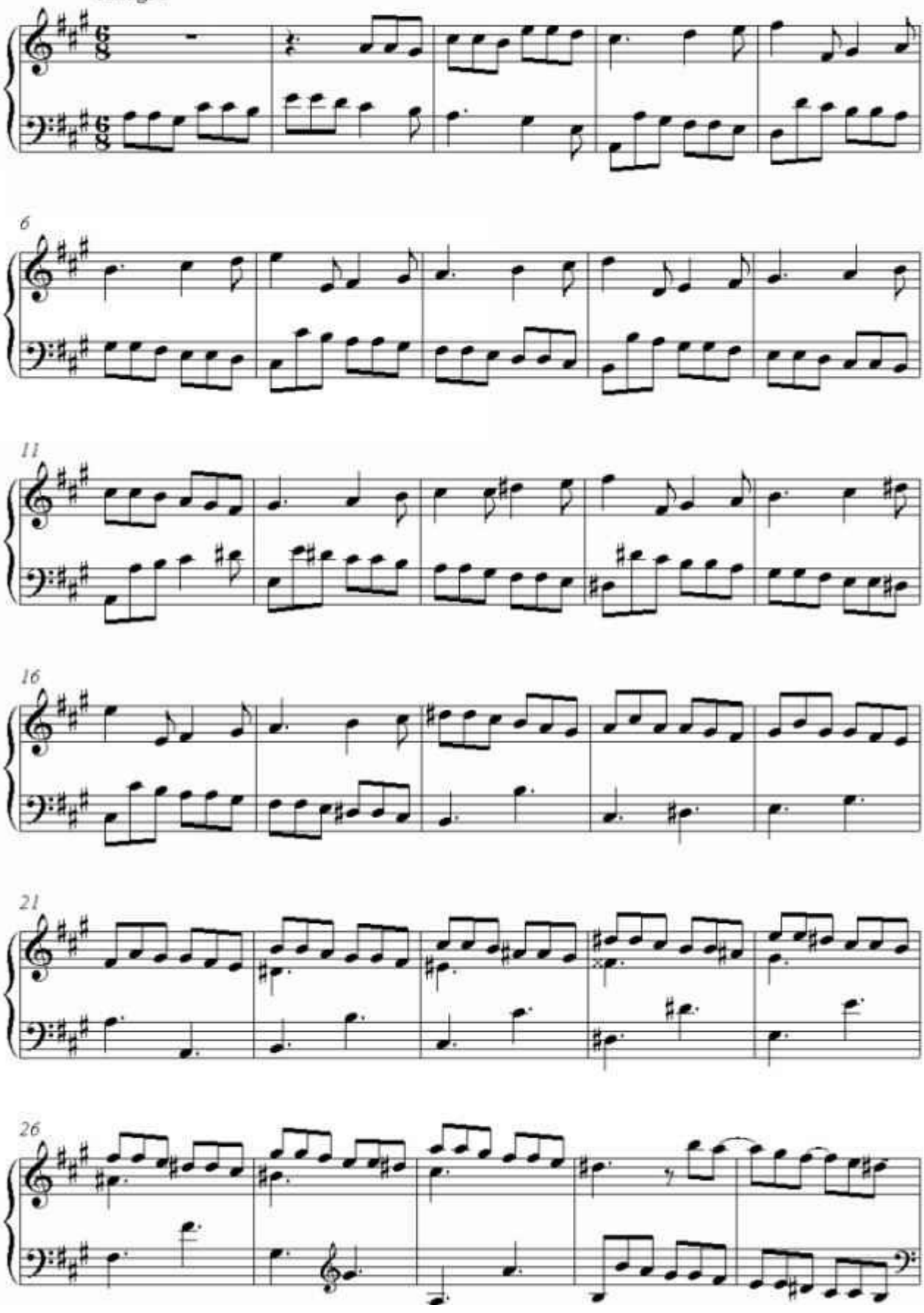
The late Sonatas

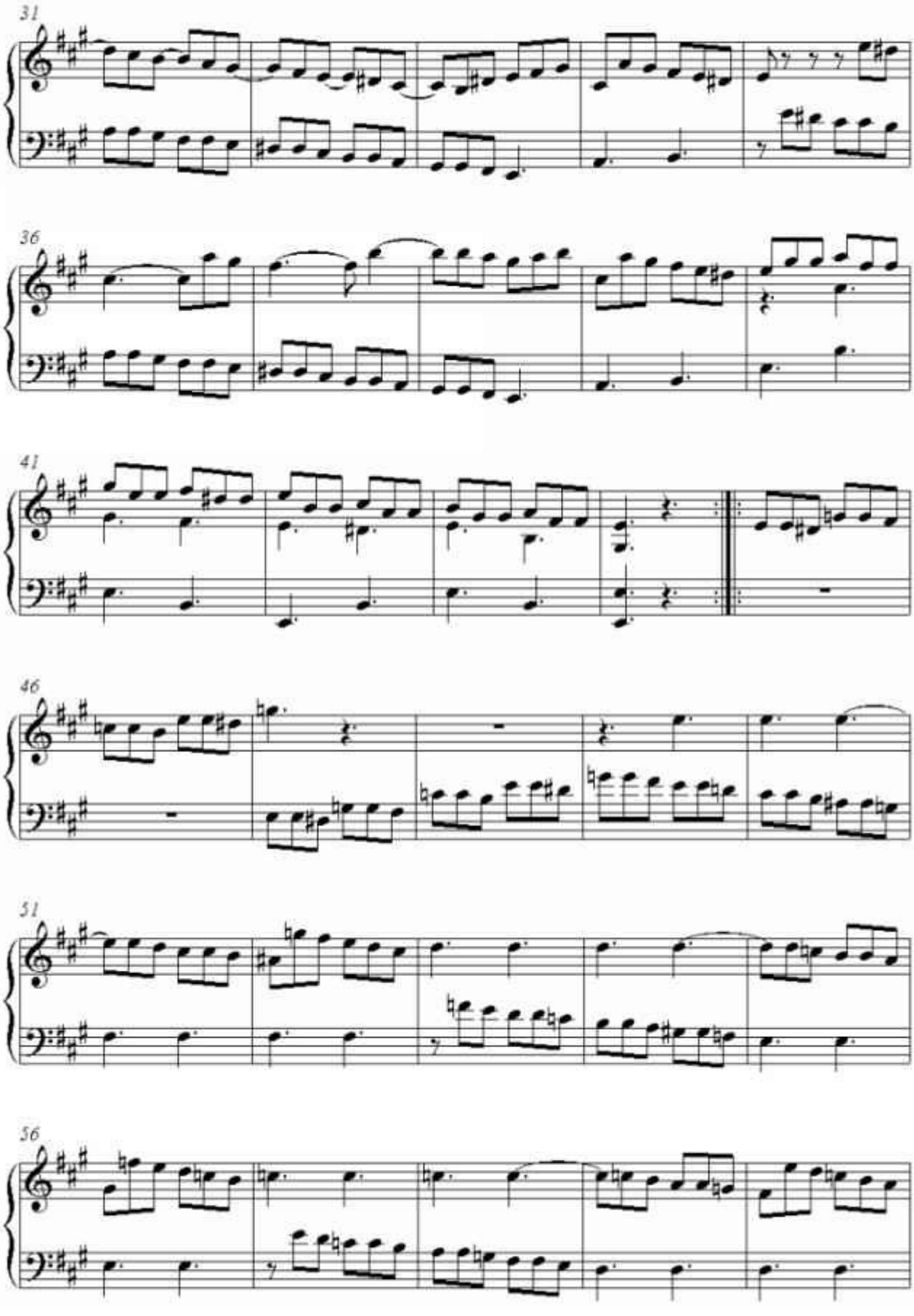
All the elements in Scarlatti's music that have passed the review so far are united in Scarlatti's late style to form a symbiosis of absolute music. It was not easy to choose a sonata representative of the late period. Ultimately, the choice fell on K405 because this sonata combines all the specific elements that are typical of Scarlatti's music. First of all, however, we should point out another sonata that looks into the future: **K466** - almost a Chopin nocturne! At least a forerunner, a premonition of romanticism. It is claimed by music theory and some biographers that the Irish composer John Field was the creator of the nocturnes and that Chopin far surpassed him because of his genius. This sonata proves that Scarlatti deserves this honor and that Scarlatti has already far surpassed John Field as a prophylactic.

And now **K405** **:**

K405

Allegro

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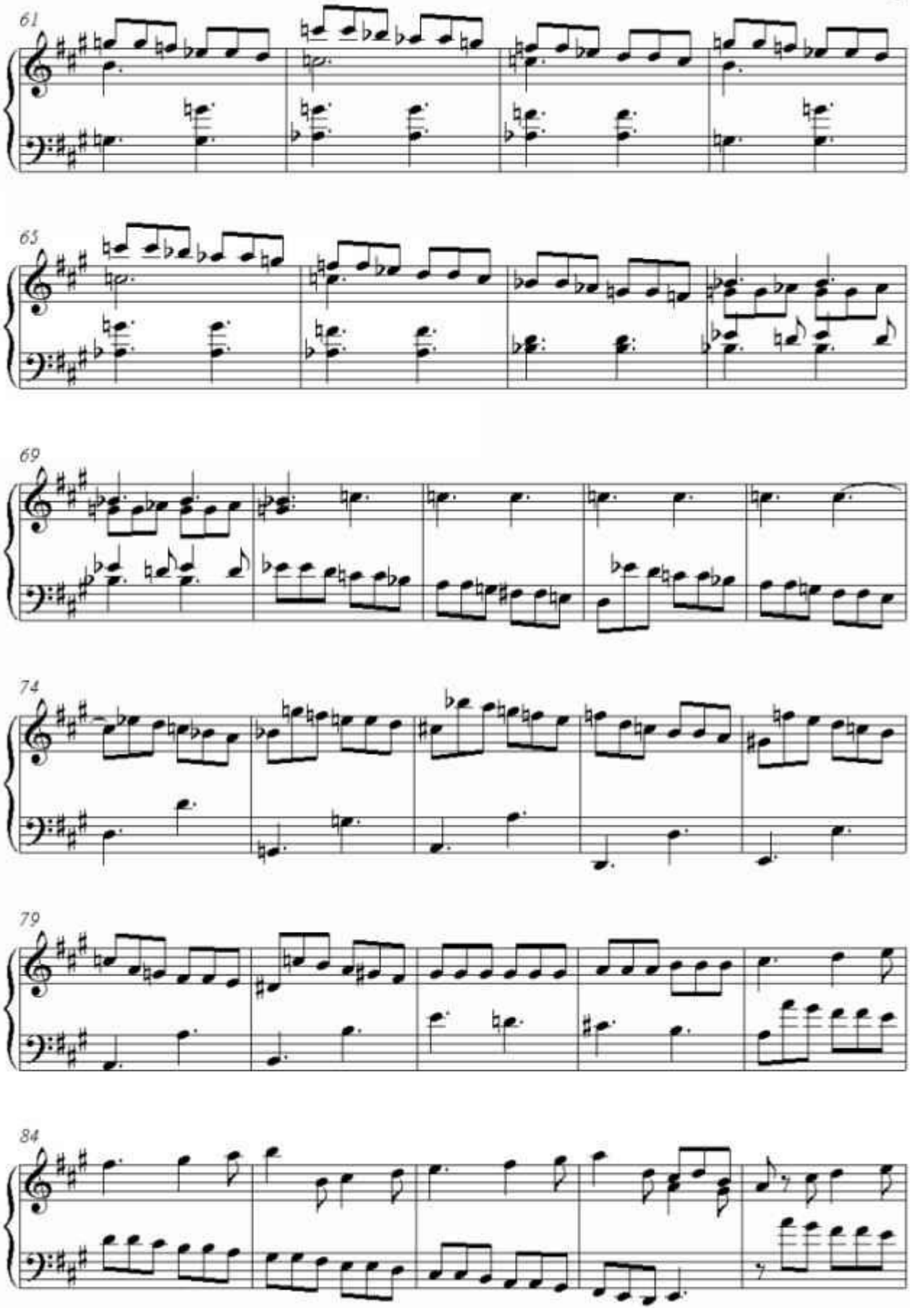
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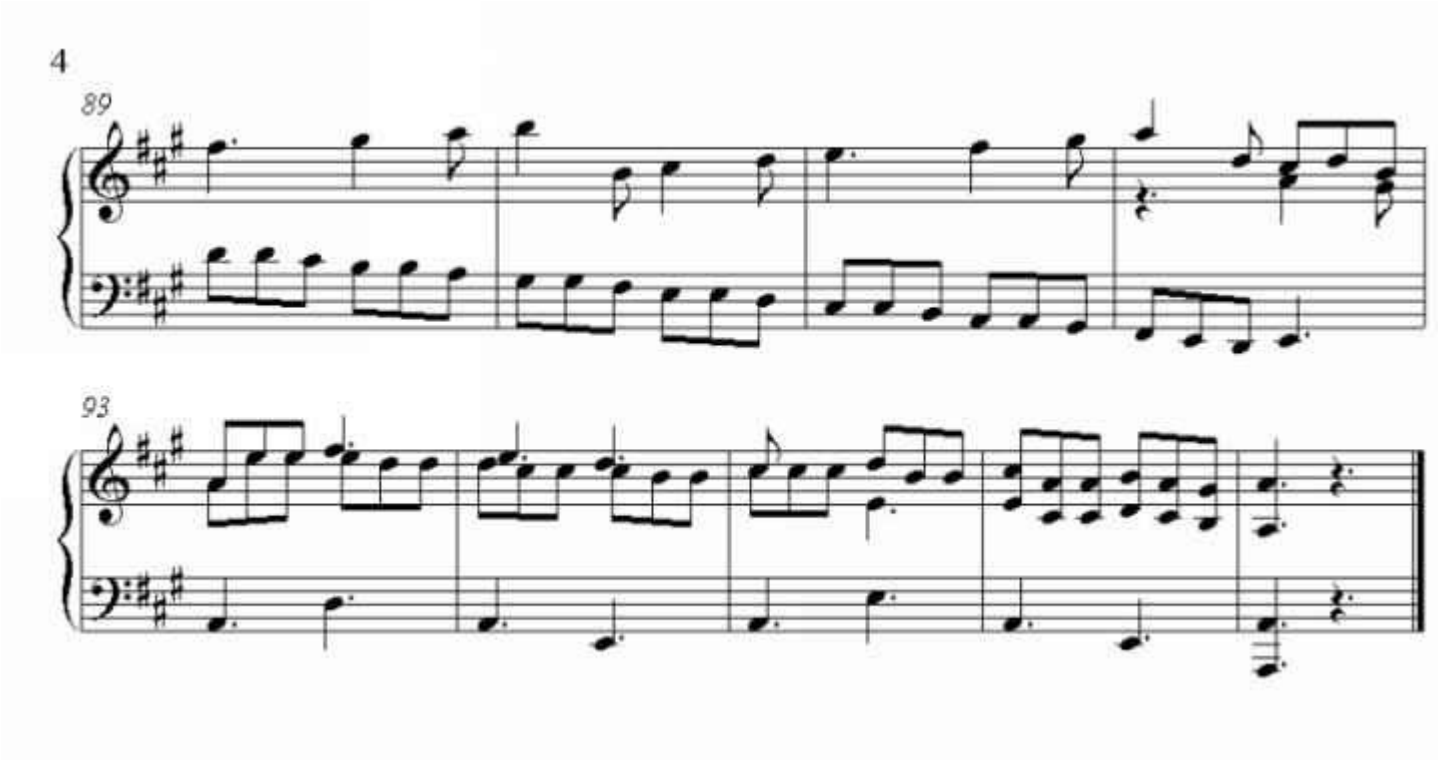

A seven-bar sequence begins in bar 22, which is already largely modulating, namely via E major, F sharp major, G sharp minor, A major, B major, C sharp minor, and A major. Scarlatti's mastery also consists in the fact that the following periods are shortened by one measure each. From measure 29 six measures, from measure 35 five measures, from measure 40 four measures and then the obligatory final measure. In the second part of the sonata there are perhaps the most extensive modulations that Scarlatti has ever written. The most distant key of the basic key A major, namely E flat major, forms a point of rest in bars 68 and 69. The ingenious way in which this E flat major was achieved is a chapter in itself. The key of G is reached via E minor, B minor and A minor. This is where the Spanish gypsy scale begins. Tonally, this belongs to C minor. The parallel key is E flat major, which is reached by the unexpectedly appearing dominant on B flat. The modulation that leads back to the basic key of A major is just as simple as it is ingenious. The problem is solved in the most elegant way via G minor, D minor and A minor, which is transformed into A major. The keys mentioned do not appear in the tonic form, but everything runs through their dominants. This maintains a harmonic tension that is only resolved in A major. Scarlatti is the revolutionary for his time because of such musical procedures. Similar structures cannot be found in the work of his contemporaries Bach and certainly not in Handel.