Giuseppe Tartini

Selected pieces from
26 Piccole Sonate for violin solo

Arranged for tenor viola da gamba
(and including versions for bass and treble instruments)

Richard Yates
February 2022

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Introduction

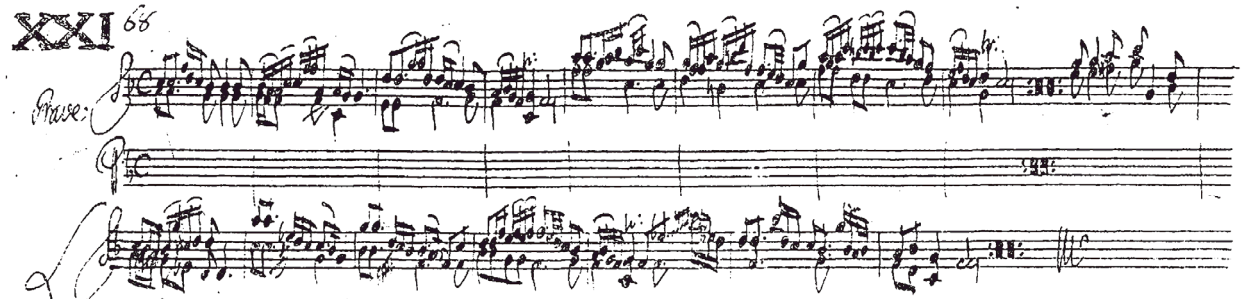
Giuseppi Tartini's *26 Piccole Sonate* for violin were composed sometime before 1750. The manuscript is undated, but he referred to the set in a letter written in that year. Some of these sonatas have either no bass staff or just a blank one. Tartini wrote of the set that even those with written bass lines do not need them and that he, himself, played them solo.

The ones with no bass line incorporate accompanying notes and chords into the violin part and the resulting textures are reminiscent of many movements in Bach's violin sonatas and partitas, albeit without the counterpoint. The musical idiom looks forward into the Rococco and beyond.

There is great ingenuity in Tartini's crafting of both melody and accompaniment onto the four strings of the violin and this task then becomes the challenge in arranging the *Piccole Sonate* for the viol's six strings tuned mostly in fourths rather than in fifths.

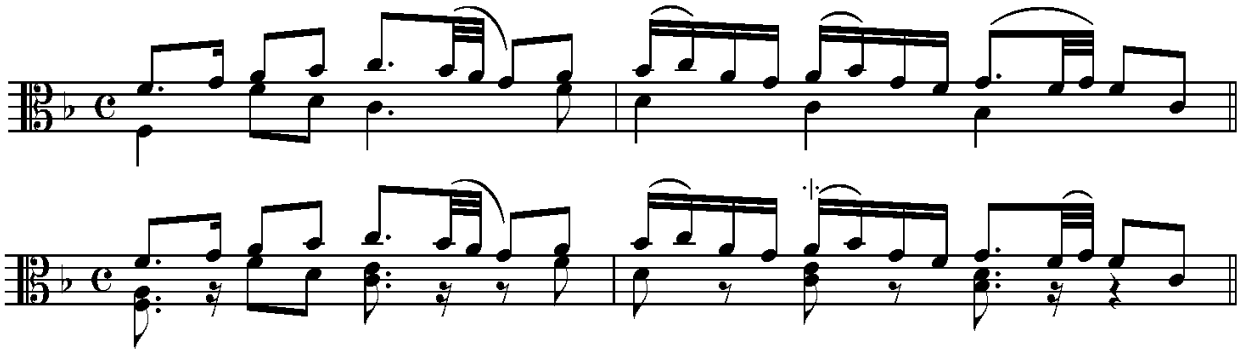
Changes from the original for a viol version are inevitable given the differences in the instruments and the goal of making an idiomatic viol score. The most notable changes are in bowing and the filling in of chord tones where the violin can play widely spaced notes on adjacent strings. It should also be mentioned that Tartini was not exactly fastidious or consistent in his notation and so the process of making a viol version must first mend the original in many places.

The sources for this edition are two: a facsimile of the original manuscript and an edition by Giovanni Guglielmo (*26 Piccole Sonate*, Giuseppe Tartini, edizione critica a cura di Giovanni Guglielmo, Edizioni G. Zanibon, 1970). As can be seen in the following sample from the facsimile, many details are not clear and in those instances the Guglielmo edition was consulted – but not always adopted.



A word about the notated duration of notes: Solo string music is commonly inexact about note durations when there are double stops. A change in bow direction after a dyad necessarily ends both notes but that level of detail is ignored in the notation. Usually the simple logic of what actually occurs in the sound is obvious and it makes a cleaner score to not note the small rests. But with a transcription to a different instrument, especially with the addition of more chord tones, a more accurate score showing the actual sound can be useful. I have used that approach in most, but not all, the scores in this edition. It may be too finicky, but it is something of an experiment. Time with the score will tell if this was worth the clutter and the effort. Please let me know if you have an opinion.

This example, showing first the directly transcribed manuscript and then the viol version illustrates several of the typical modifications that have been made:



Regarding tempo: The pieces selected are almost all from the slower movements and they tolerate, and even benefit from, slow and expressive playing on the viol. The few faster movements benefit from crisp articulation but do not need blazing speed. Violins are inherently speedy and the players often overindulge. The Rococco style aims for elegance and grace, not necessarily virtuosity. Yes, Tartini is most-known – even only-known – for the "Devil's Trill" sonata, but the *Piccole Sonate* are in a different category altogether.

This edition includes versons for treble viol and bass viol that are direct transpositions of the tenor version with the appropriate clefs. No changes to notes or fingerings have been made for those versions, so they may need adjustments to work best on those instruments.

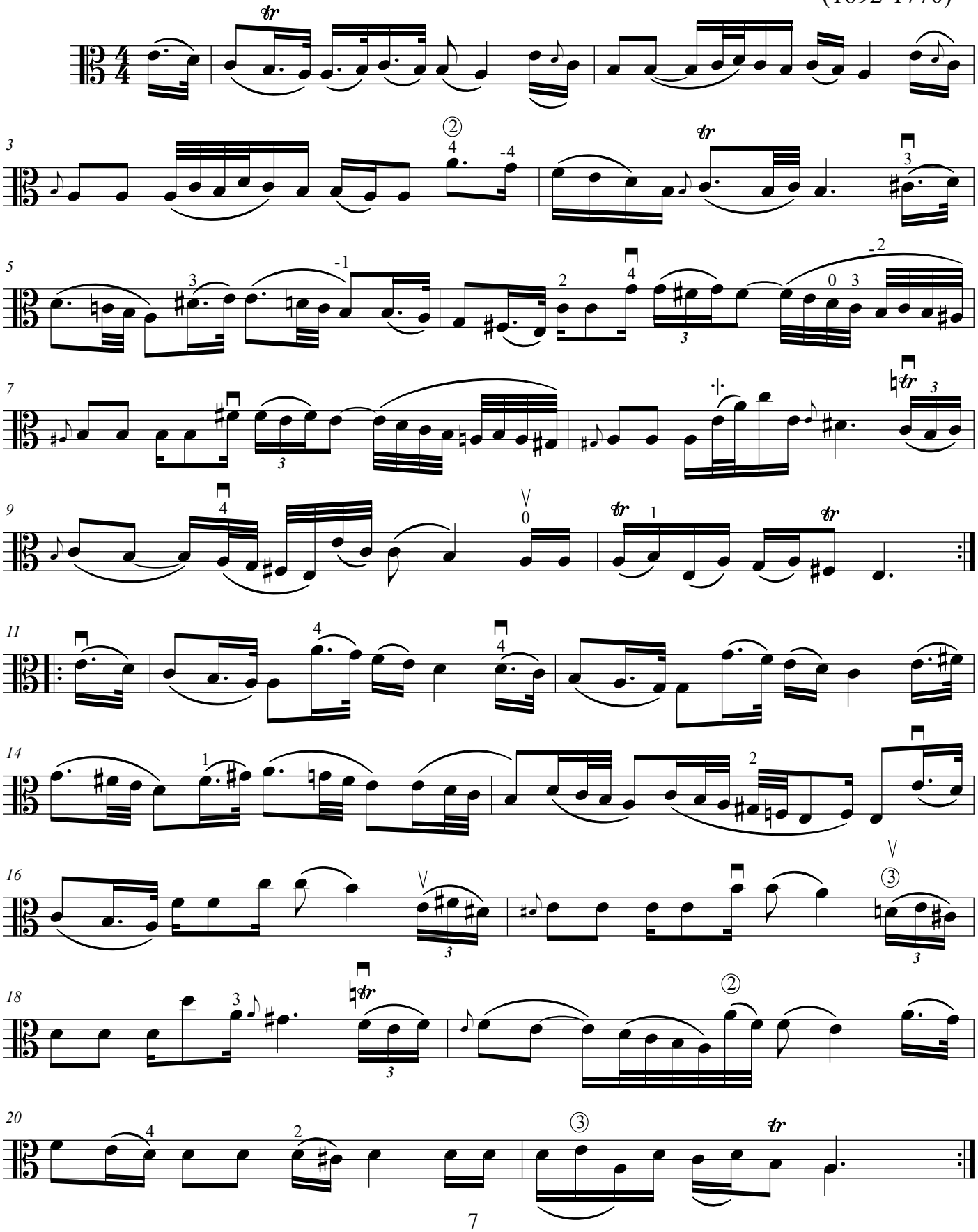
Richard Yates
Salem, Oregon
March 2022
dick@musicforviols.org

Tenor viola da gamba

Andante

Sonata Piccola XIII, B.h 1

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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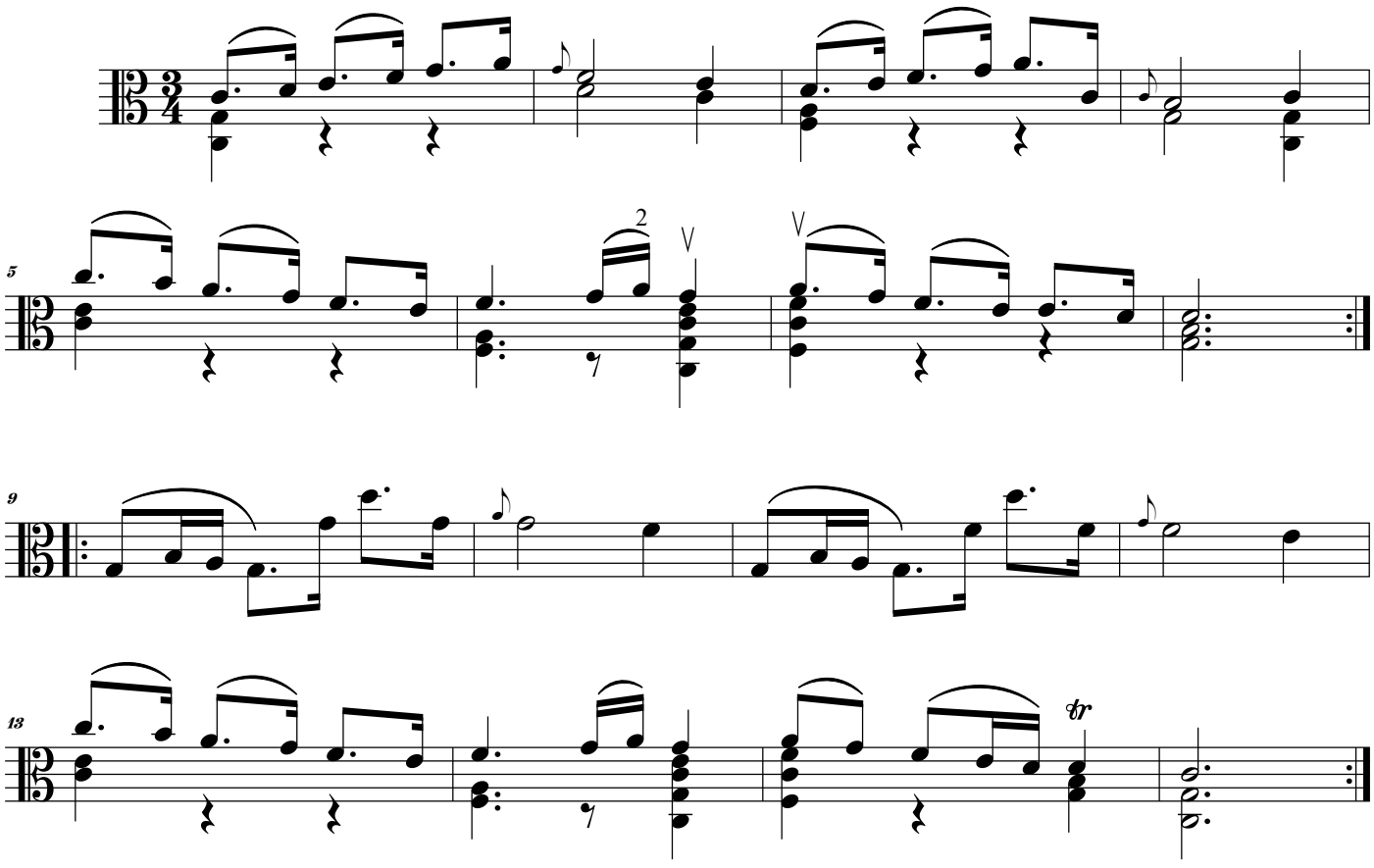
Tenor viola da gamba

Menuet

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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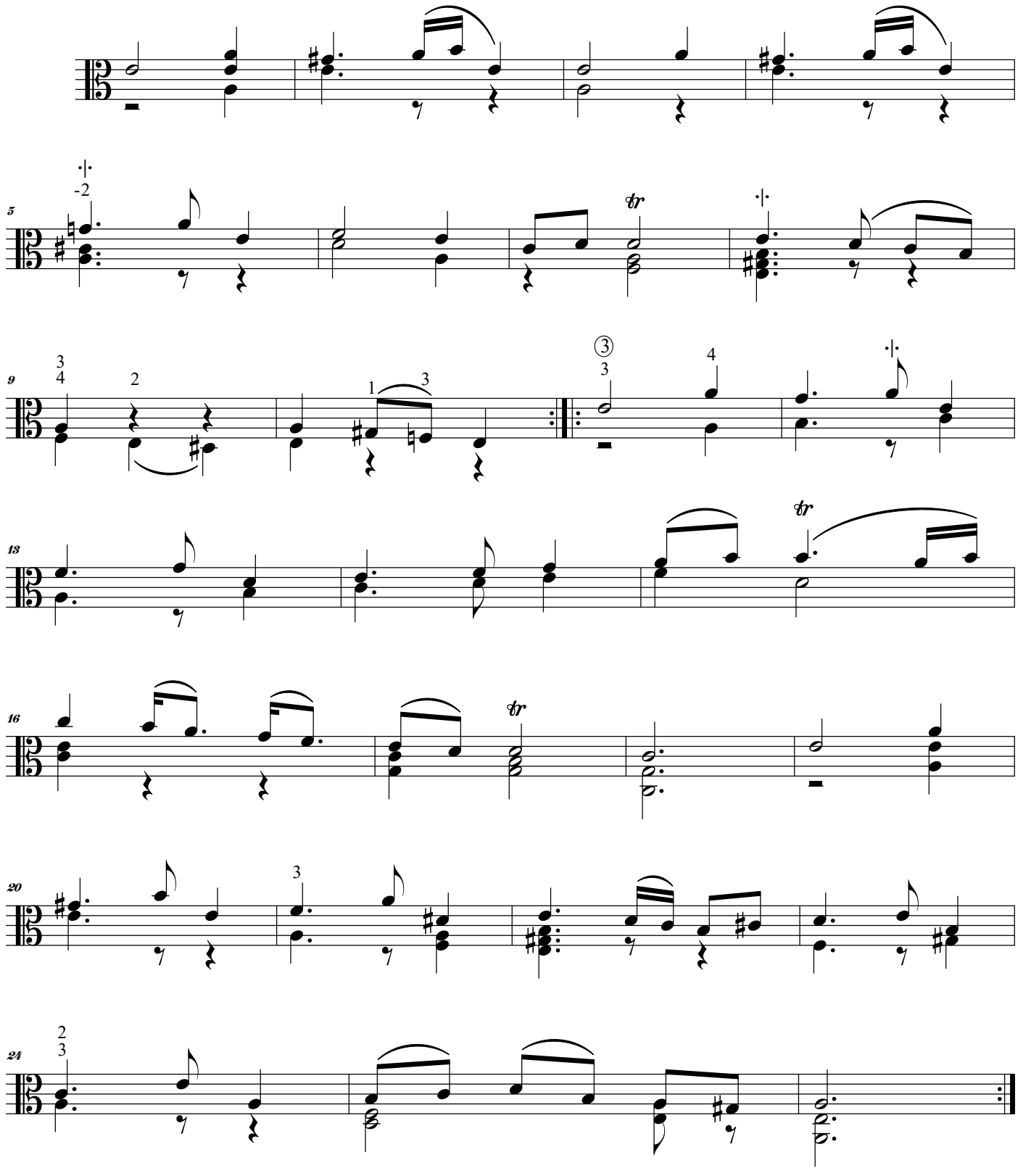
Tenor viola da gamba

Andante

Piccola Sonata XXII, B.a 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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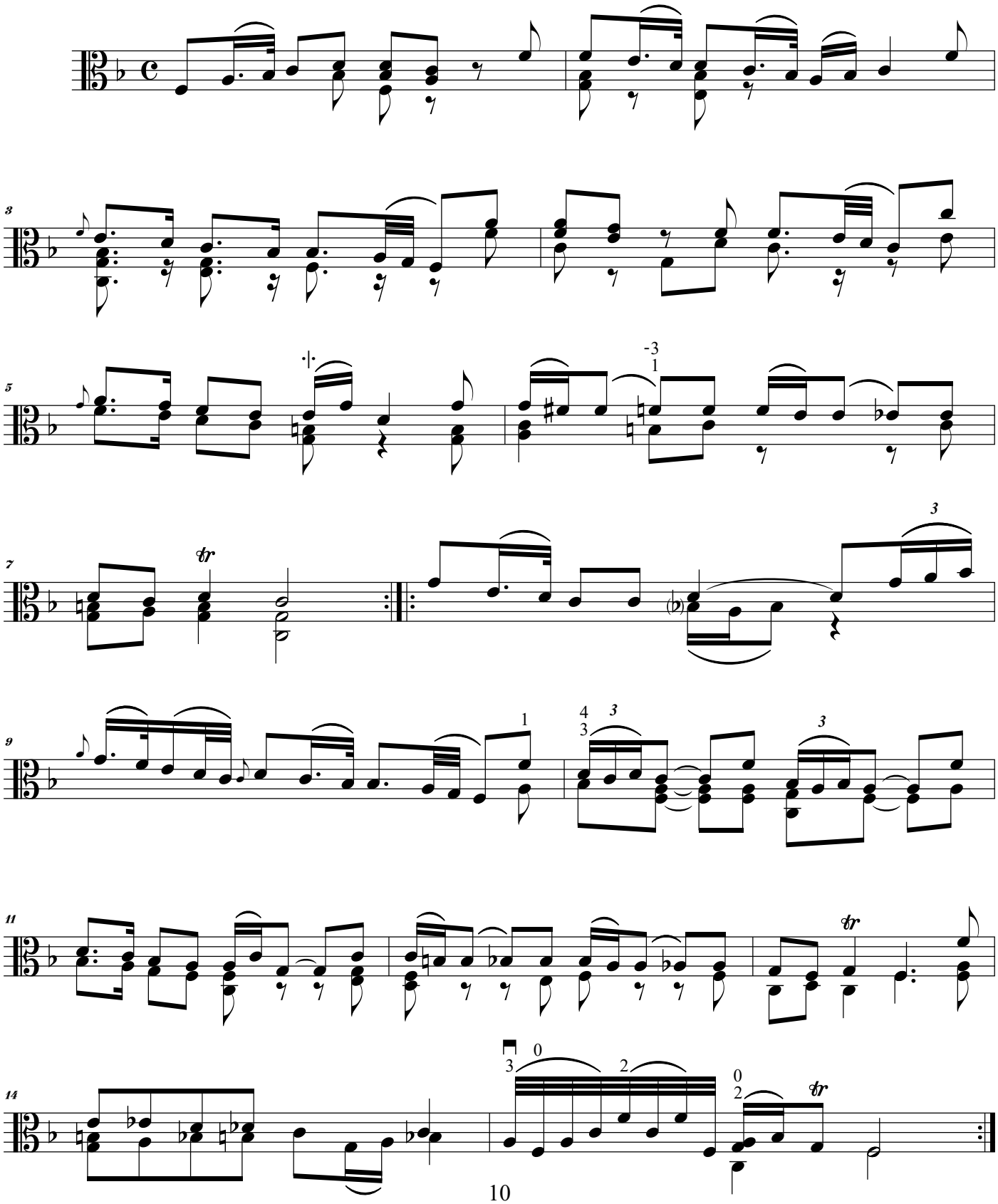
Tenor viola da gamba

Andante Cantabile

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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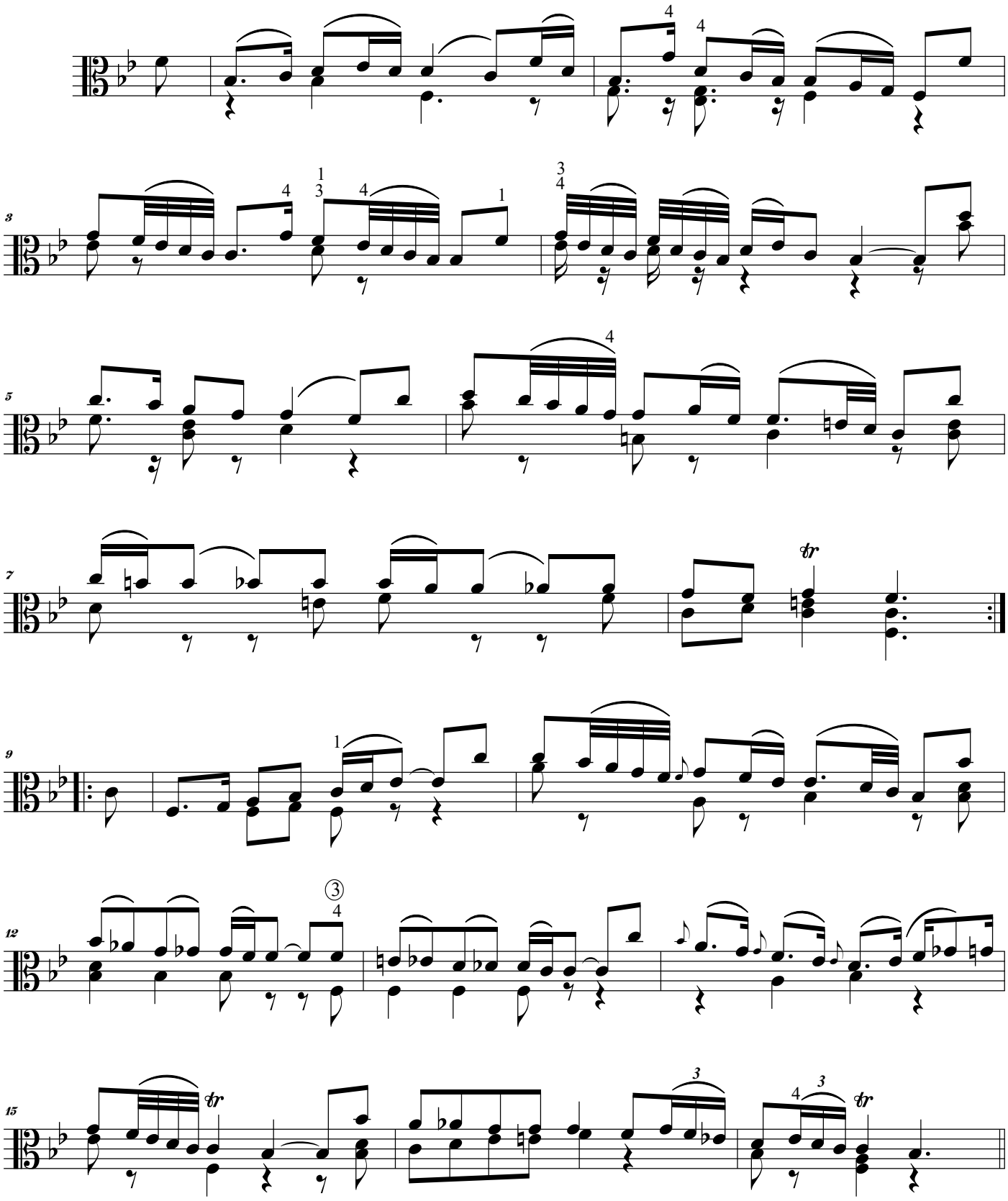
Tenor viola da gamba

Grave

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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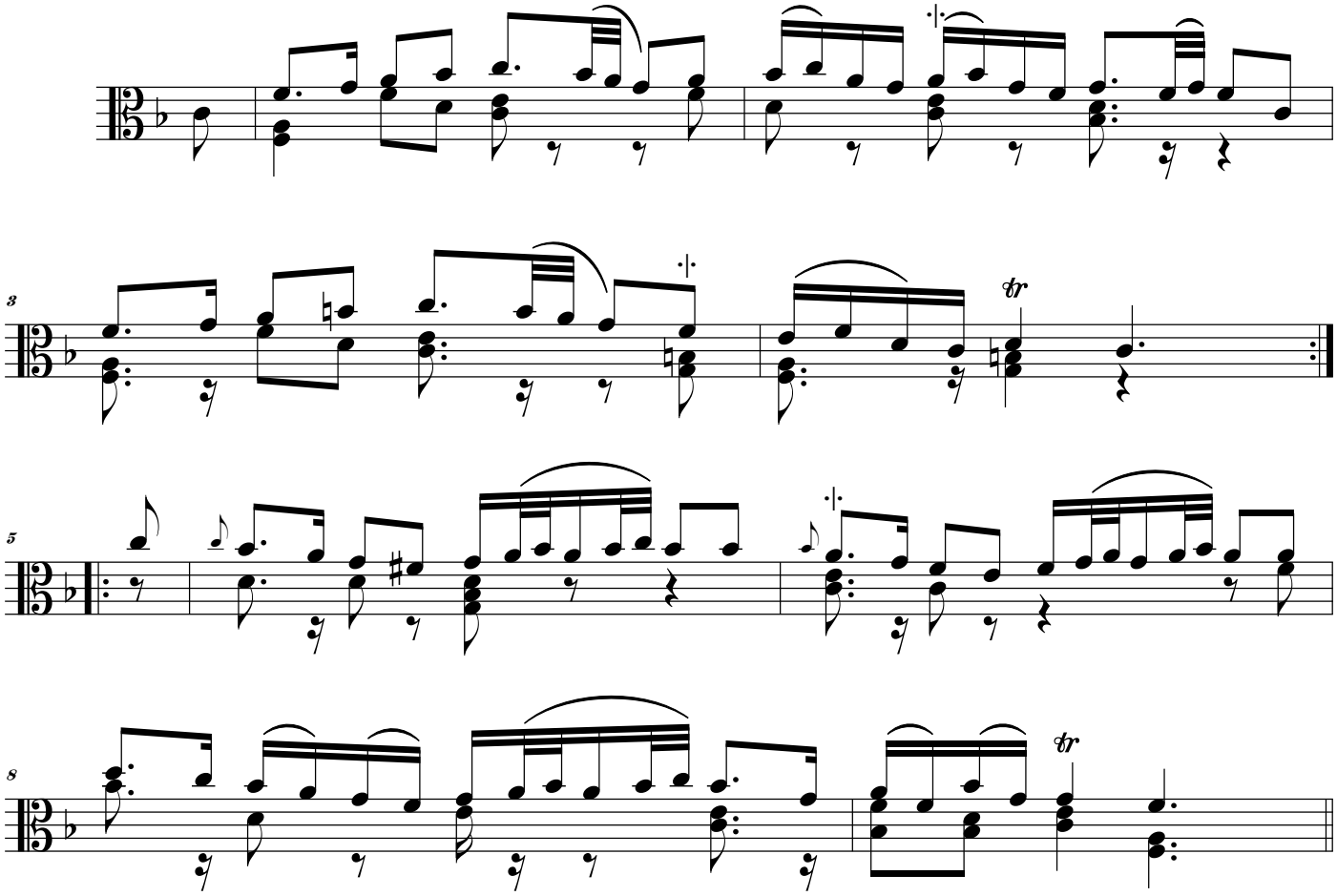
Tenor viola da gamba

Aria

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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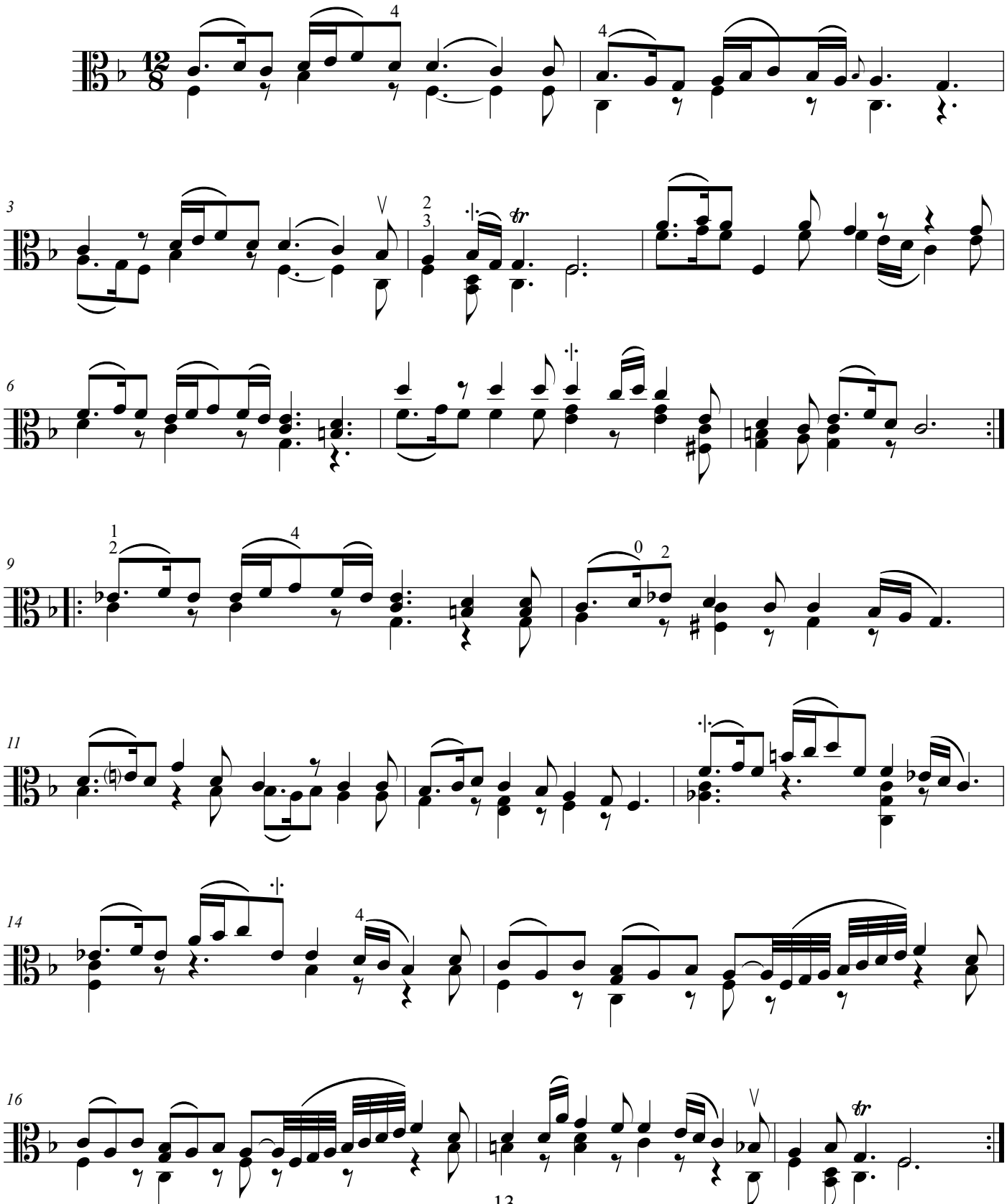
Tenor viola da gamba

Andante Cantabile

Sonata Piccola XXIV, B.D 4

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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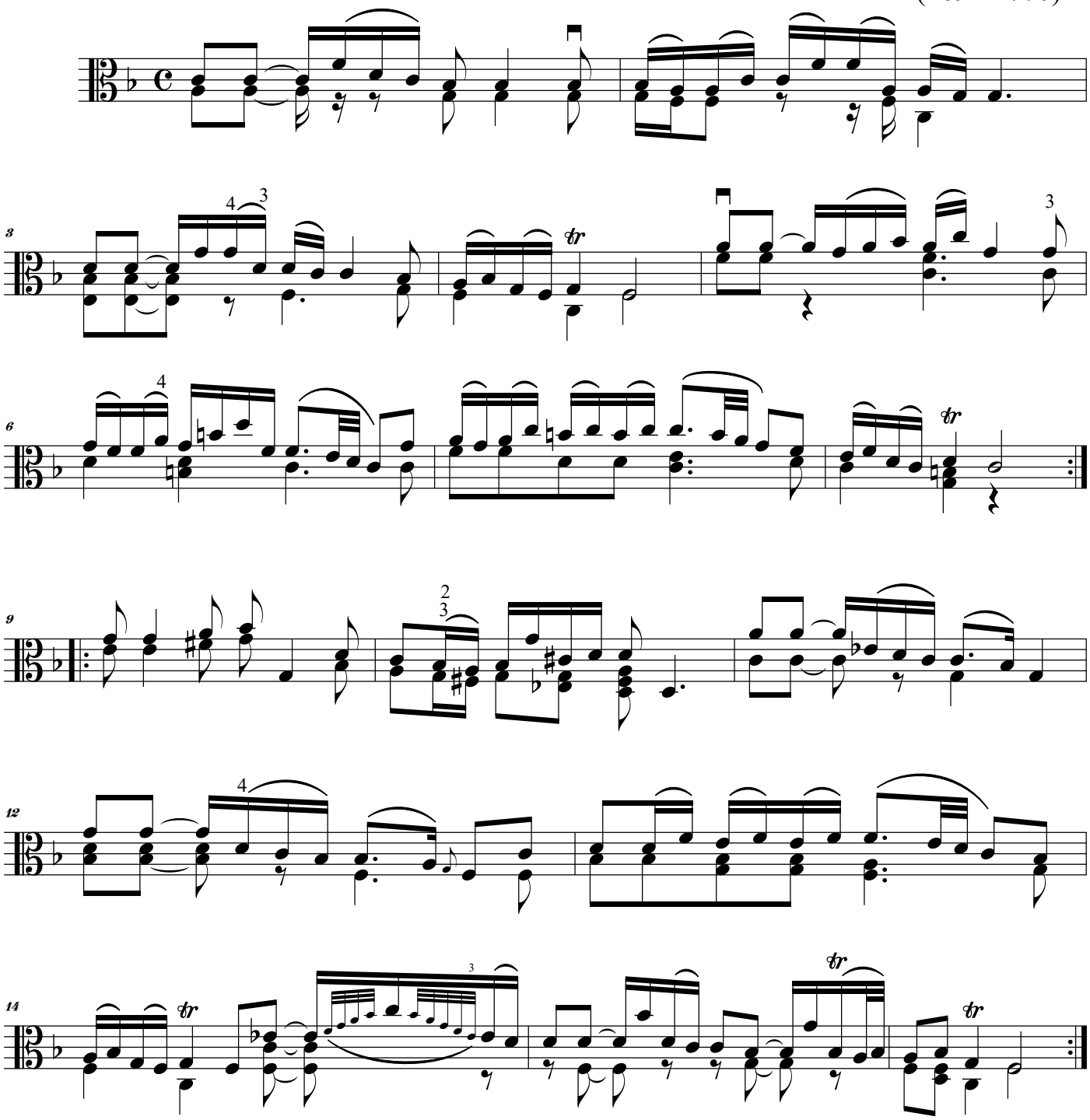
Tenor viola da gamba

Grave

Sonata Piccola XXI, B.F 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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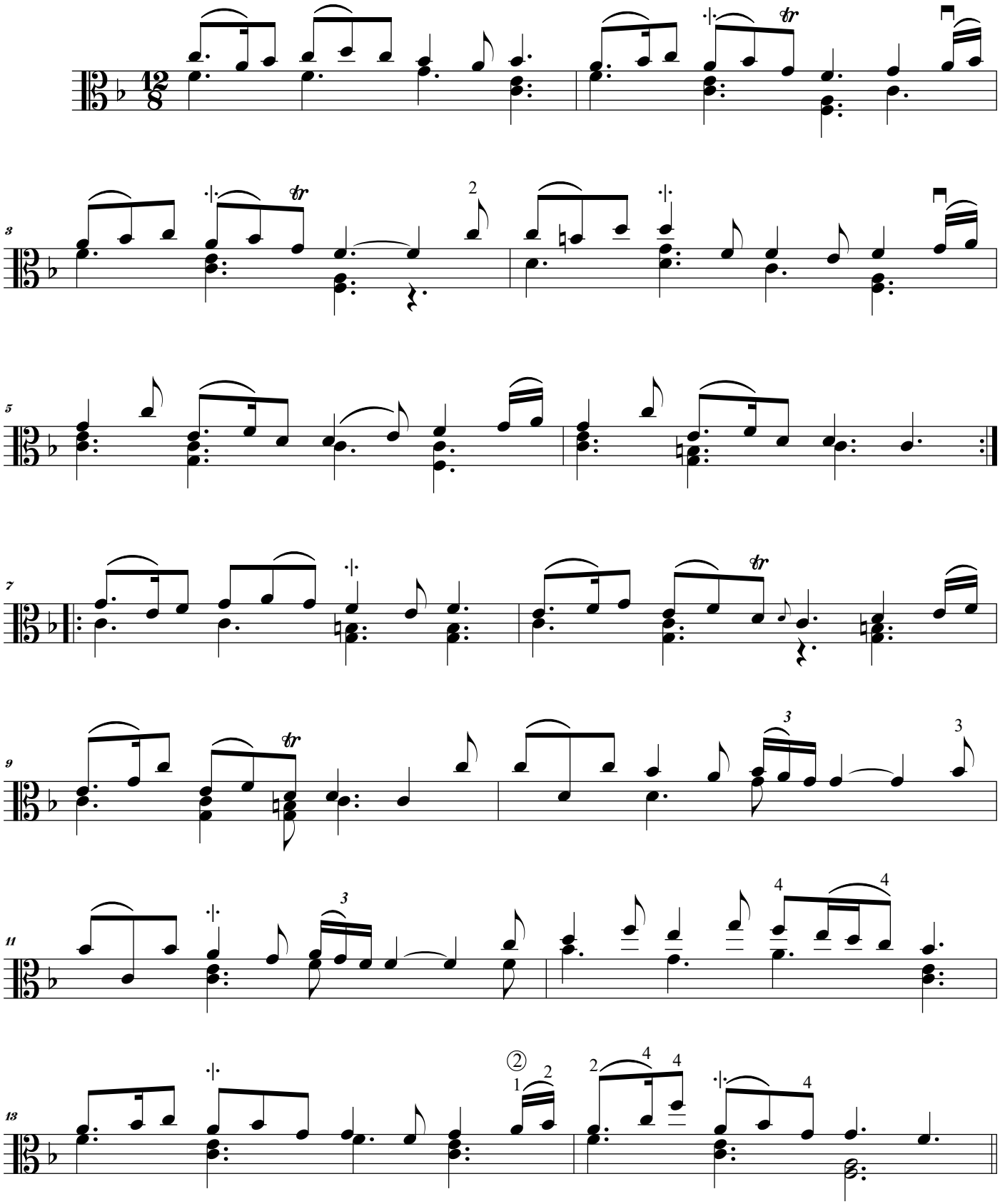
Tenor viola da gamba

[Siciliana]

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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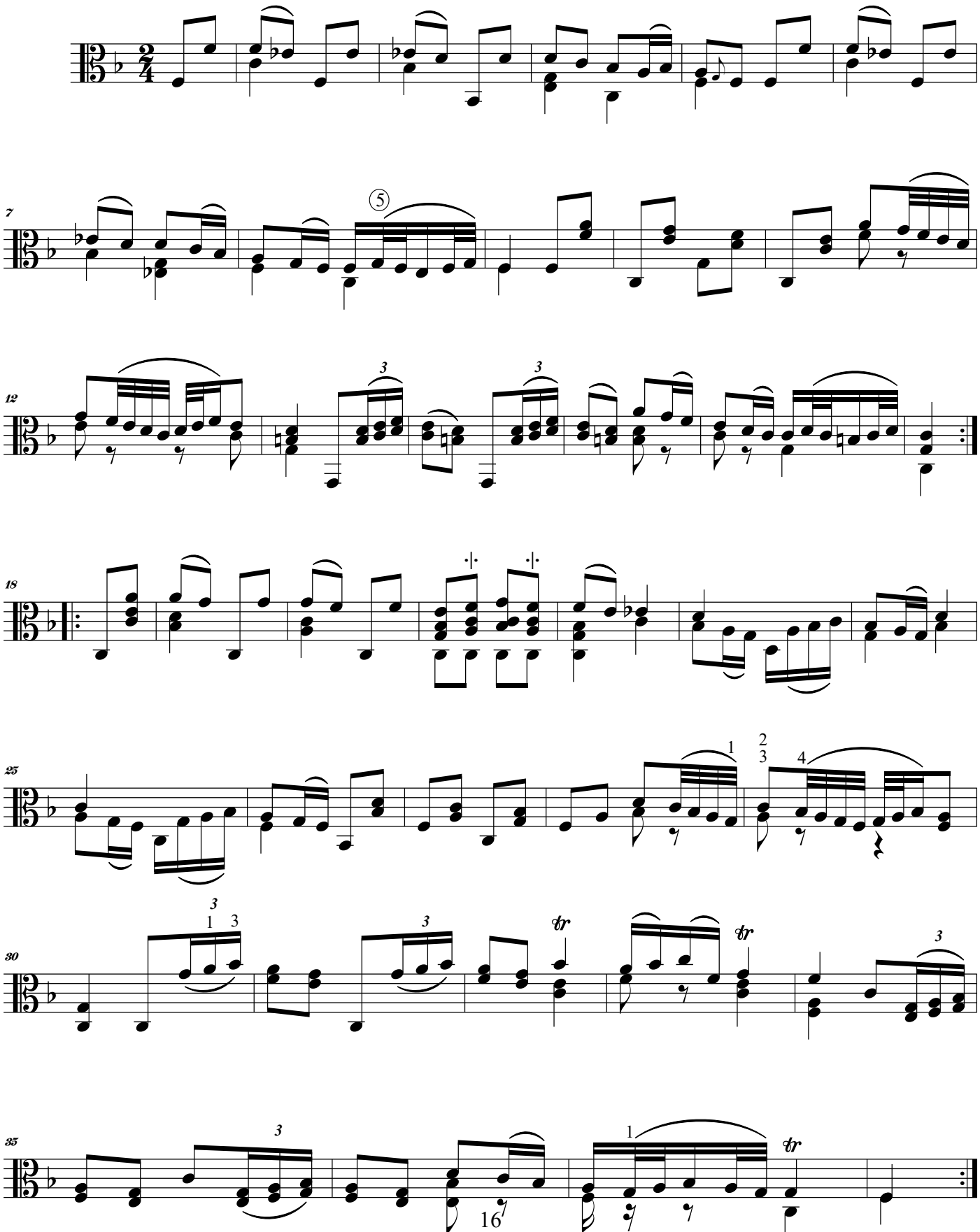
Tenor viola da gamba

Andante

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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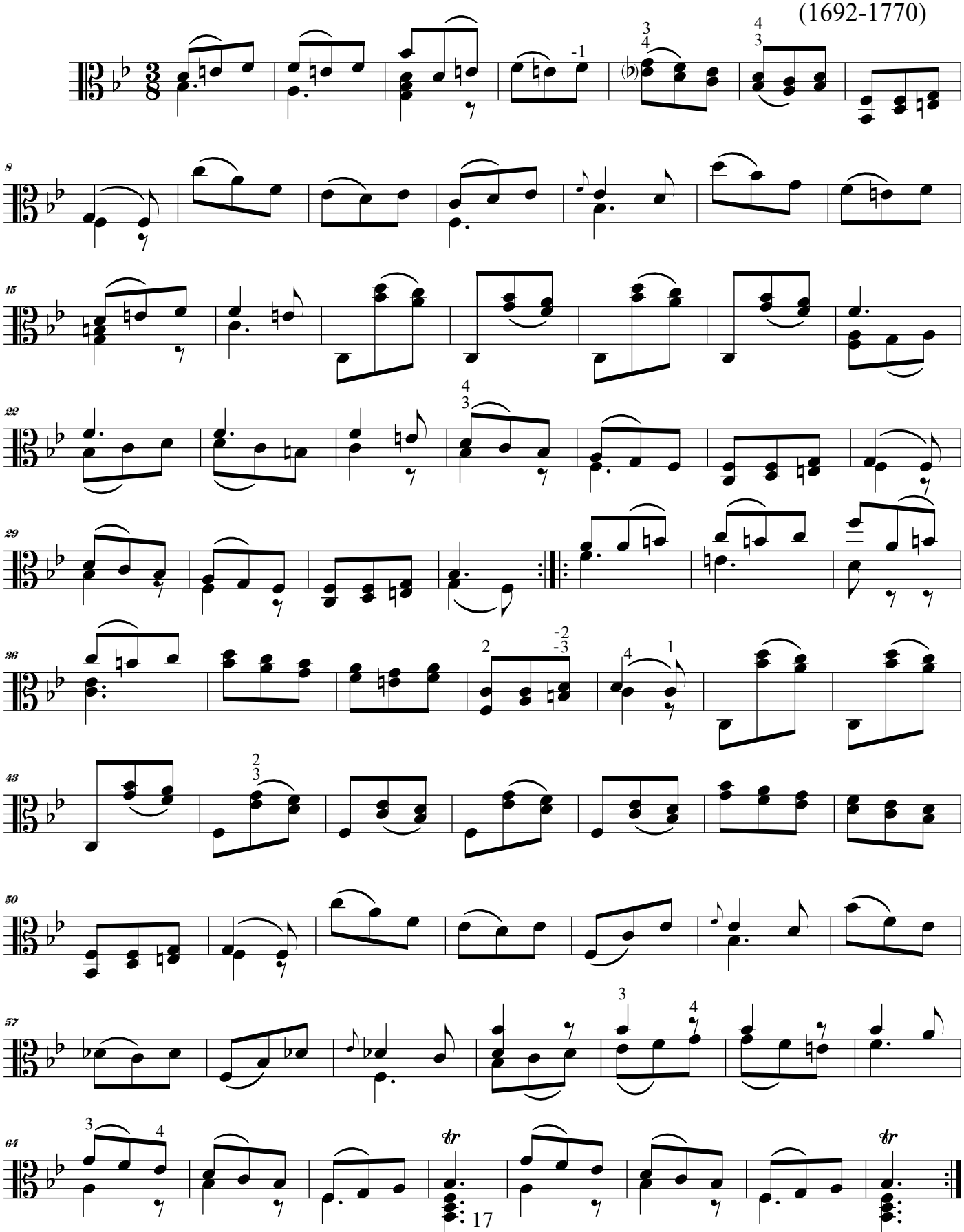
Tenor viola da gamba

[Allegretto]

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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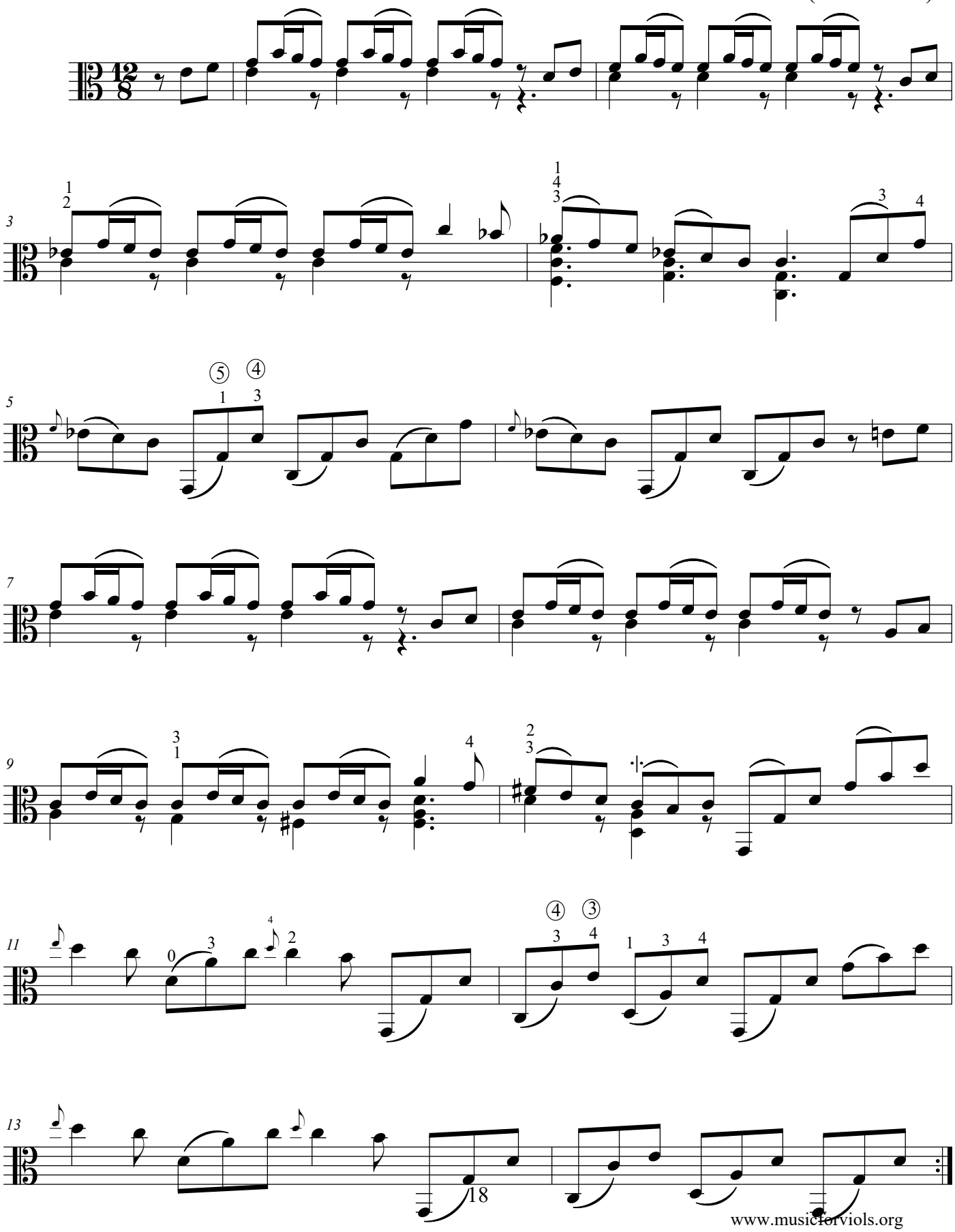
Tenor viola da gamba

[Giga]

Sonata Piccola XVI, B.C 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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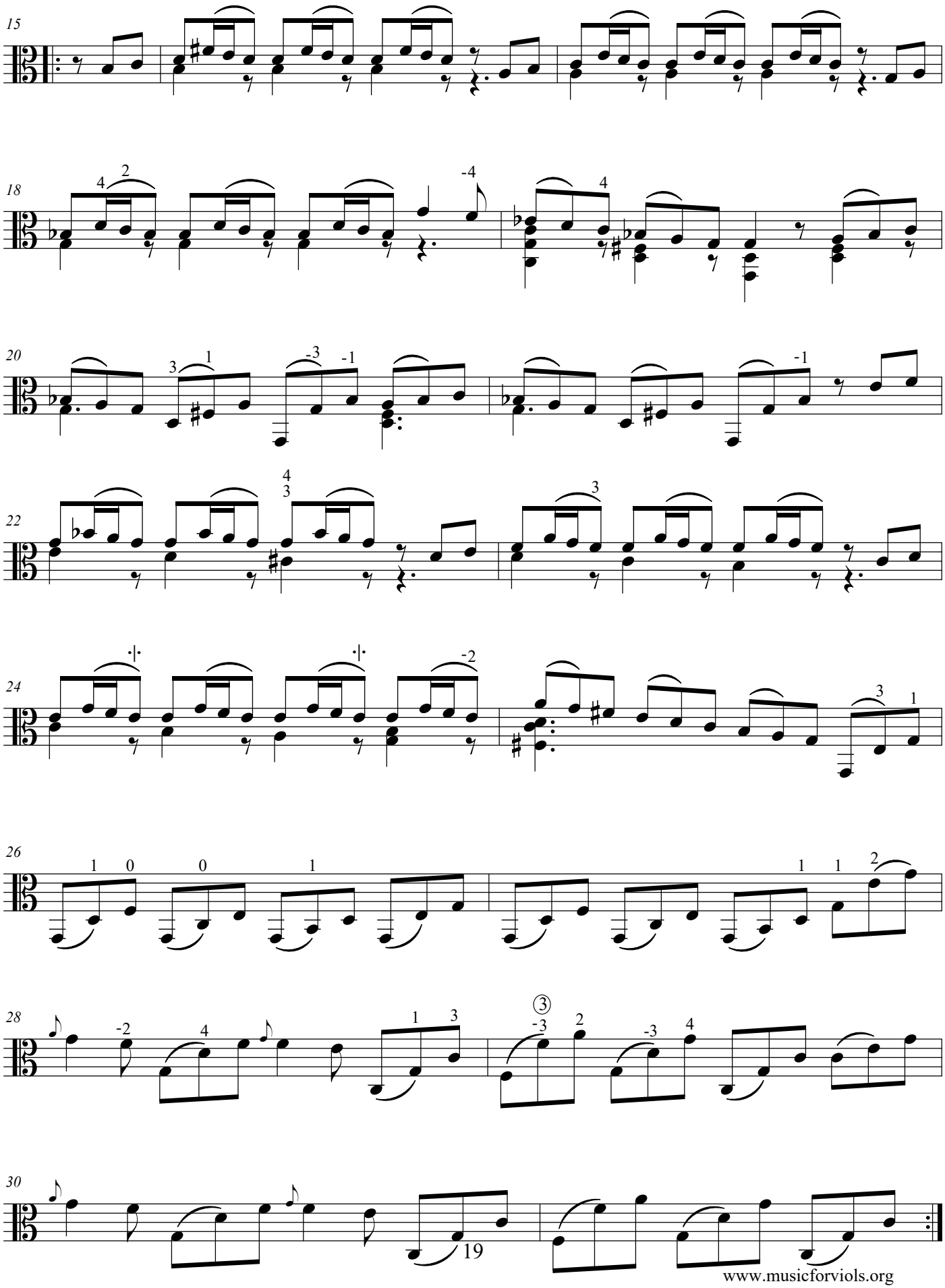

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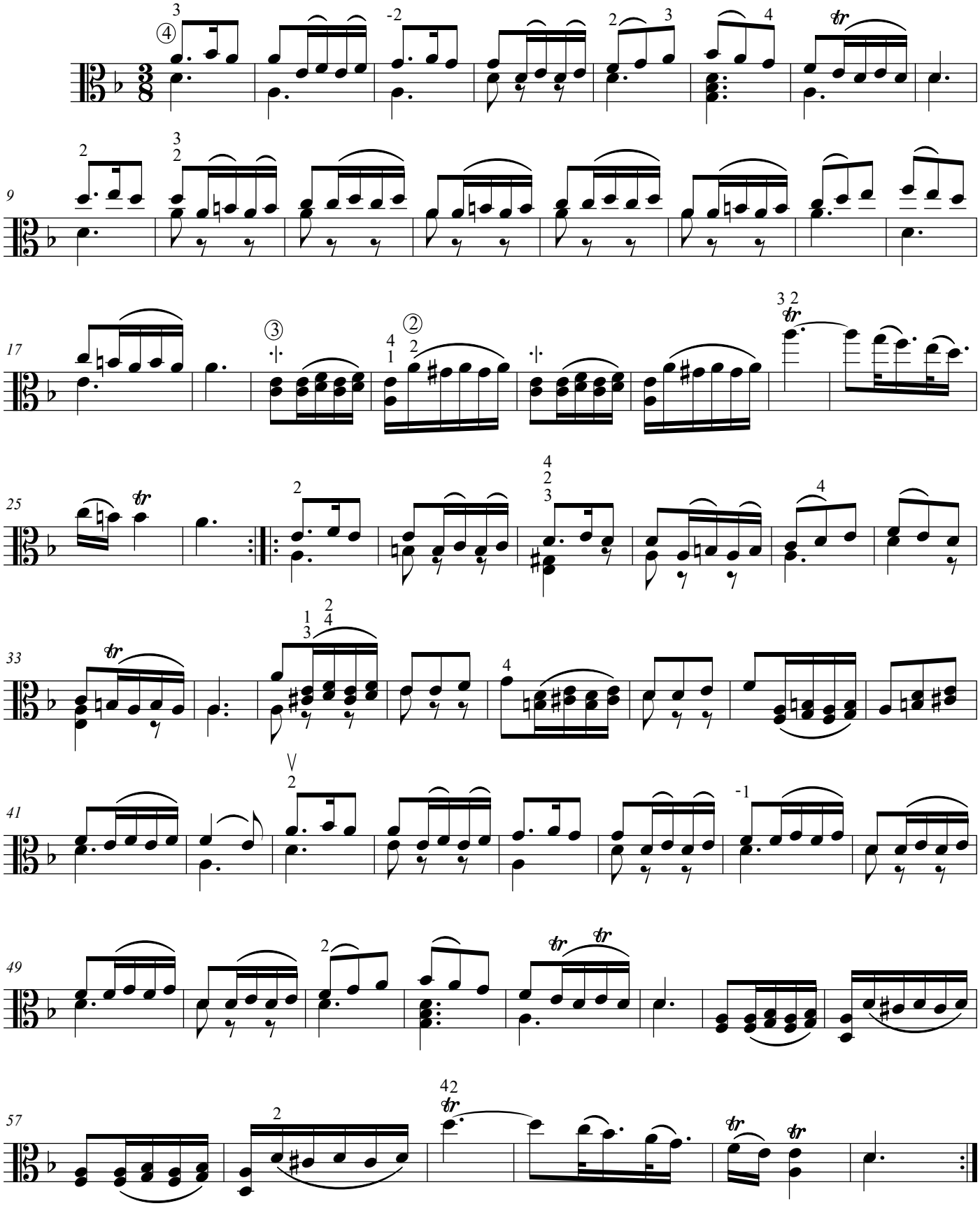
Tenor viola da gamba

Allegro assai

Sonata Piccola XXII, B.a 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)

Allegro assai



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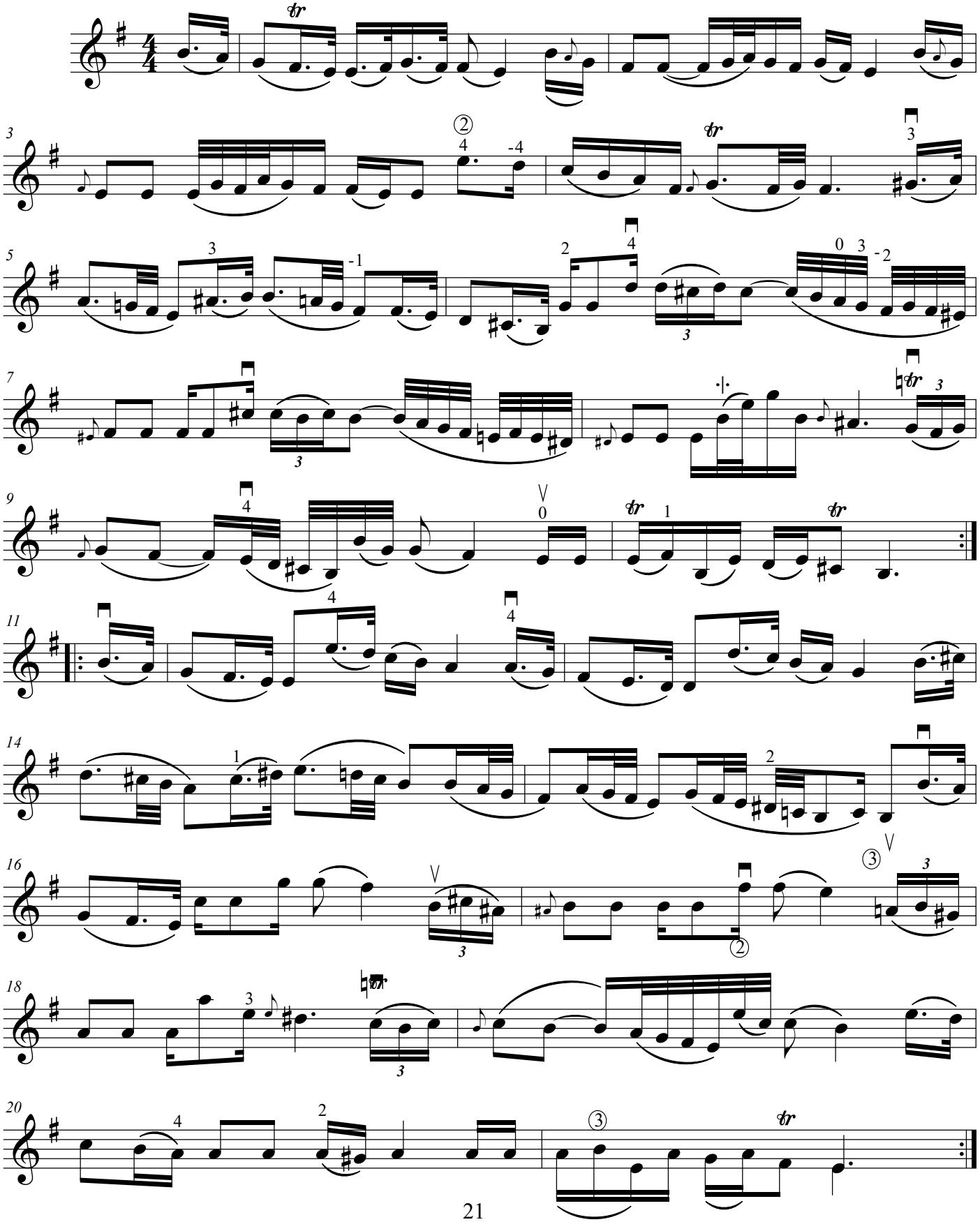
Treble viola da gamba

Andante

Sonata Piccola XIII, B.h 1

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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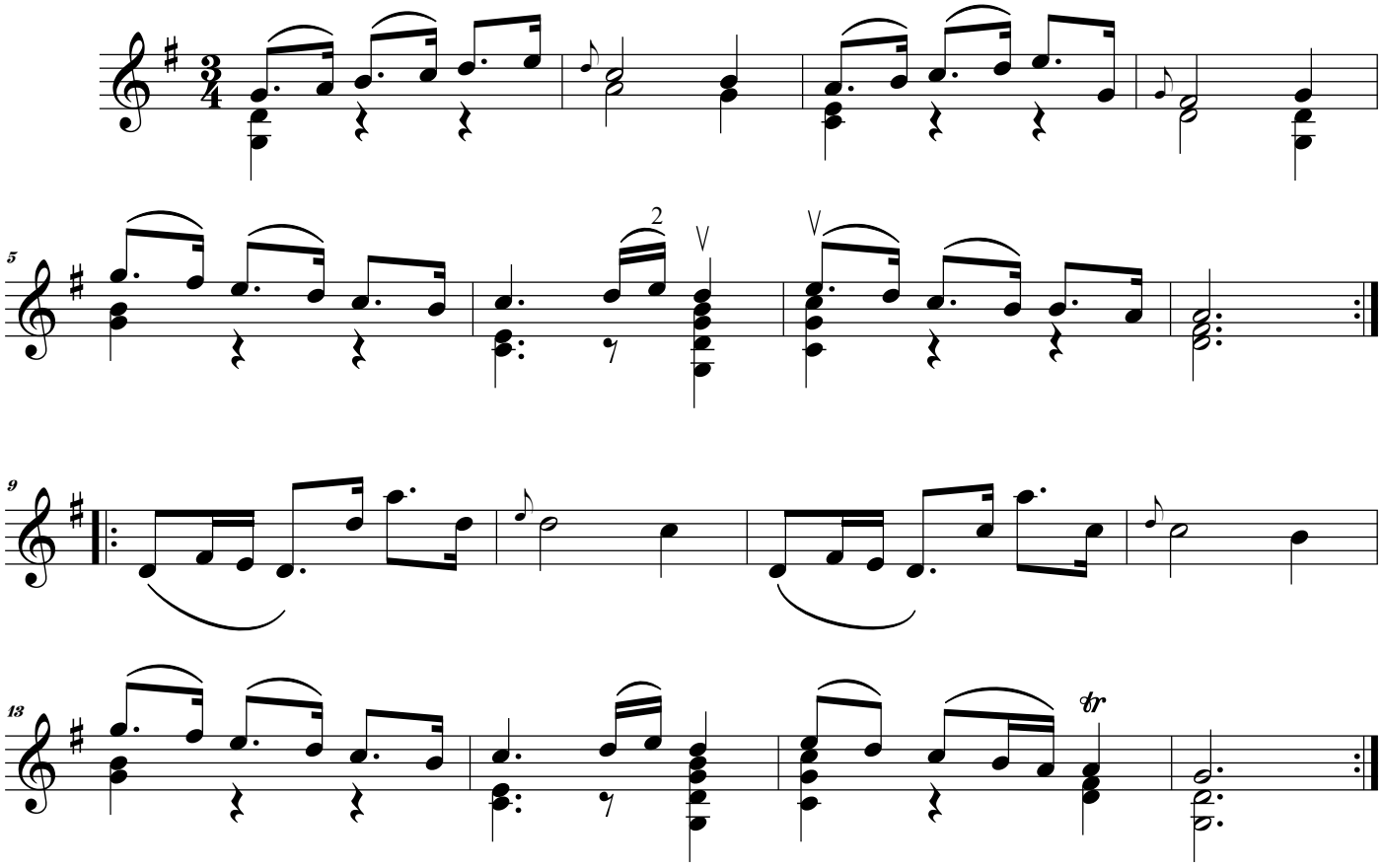
Treble viola da gamba

Menuet

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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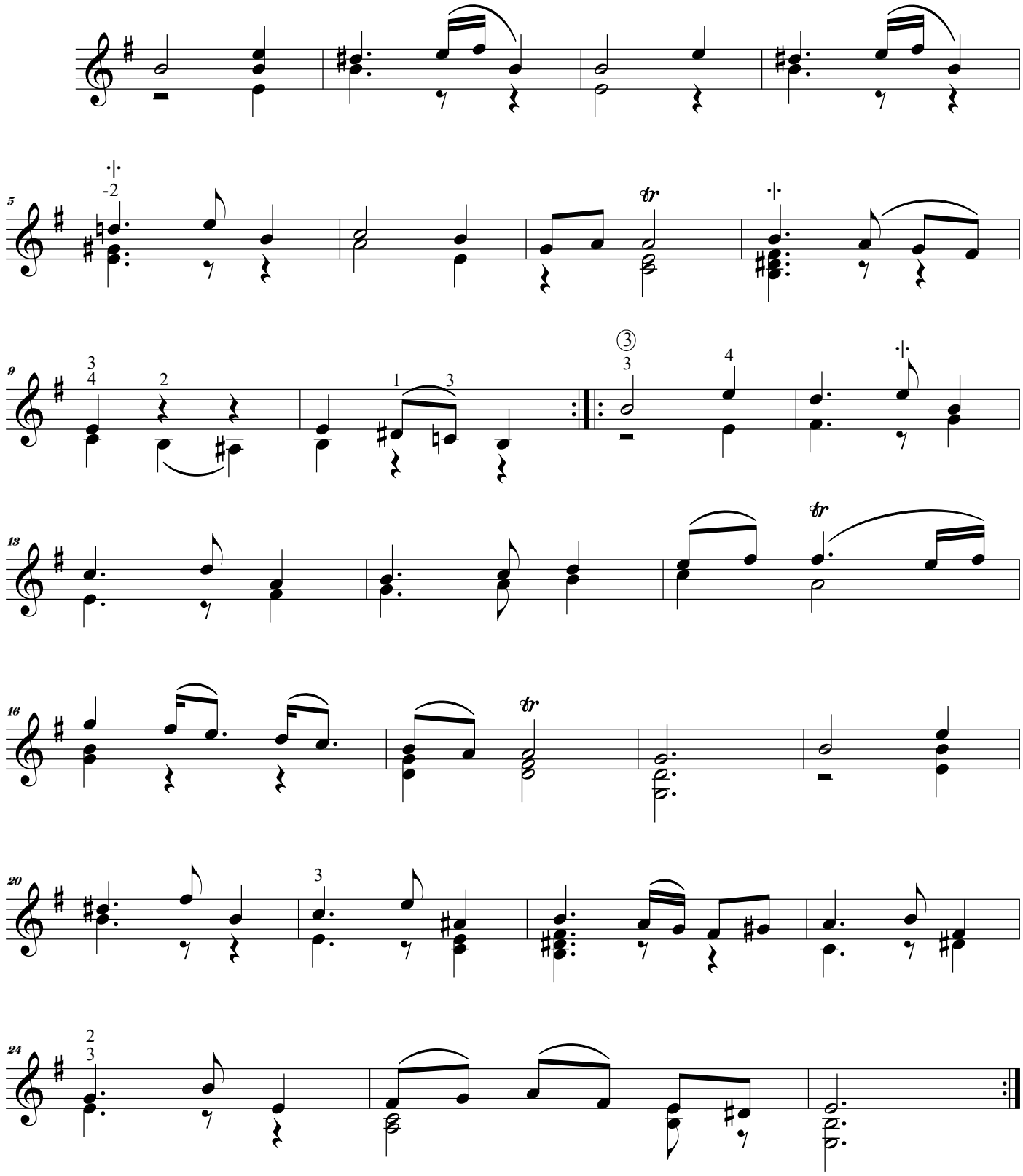
Treble viola da gamba

Andante

Piccola Sonata XXII, B.a 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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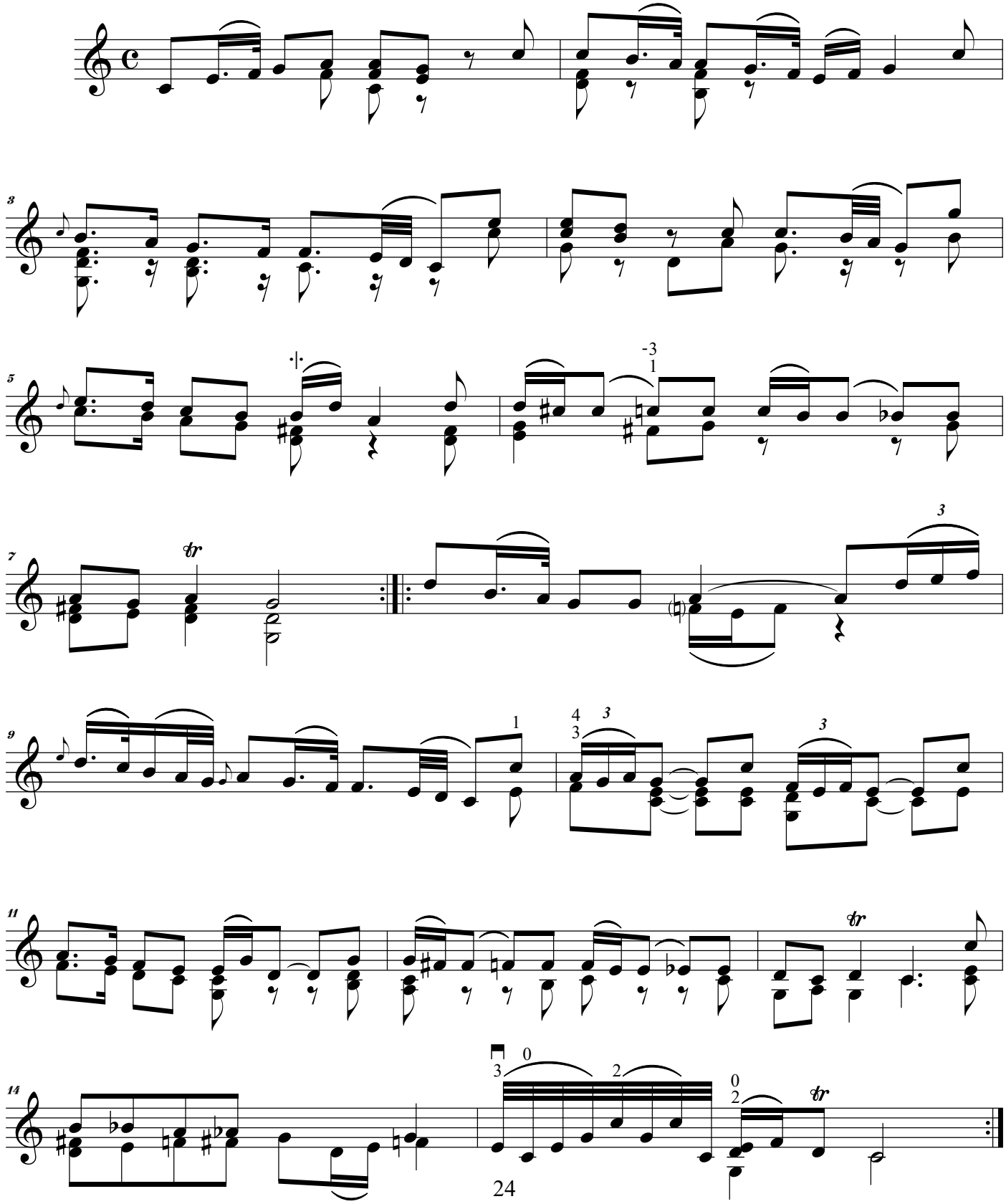
Treble viola da gamba

Andante Cantabile

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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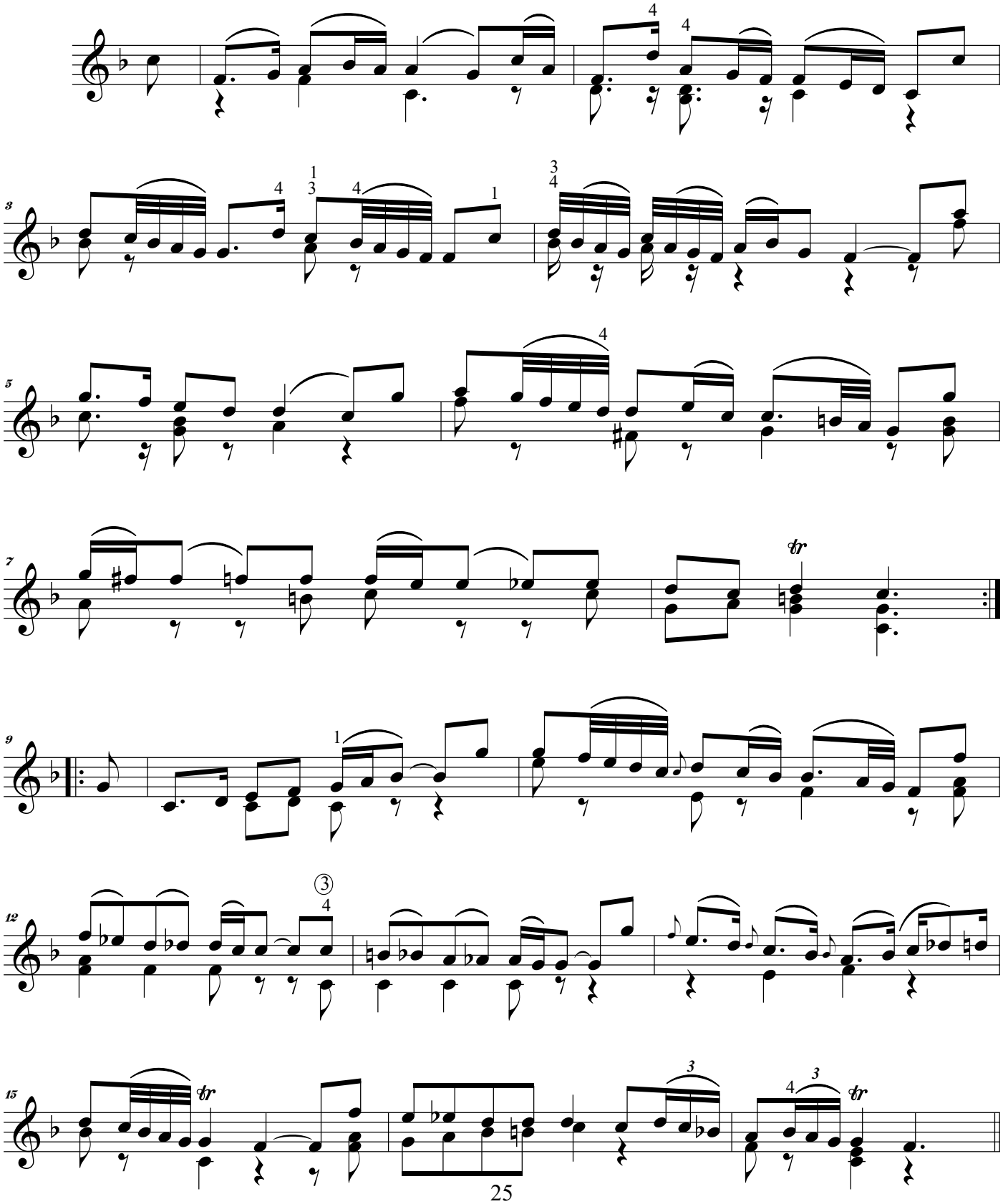
Treble viola da gamba

Grave

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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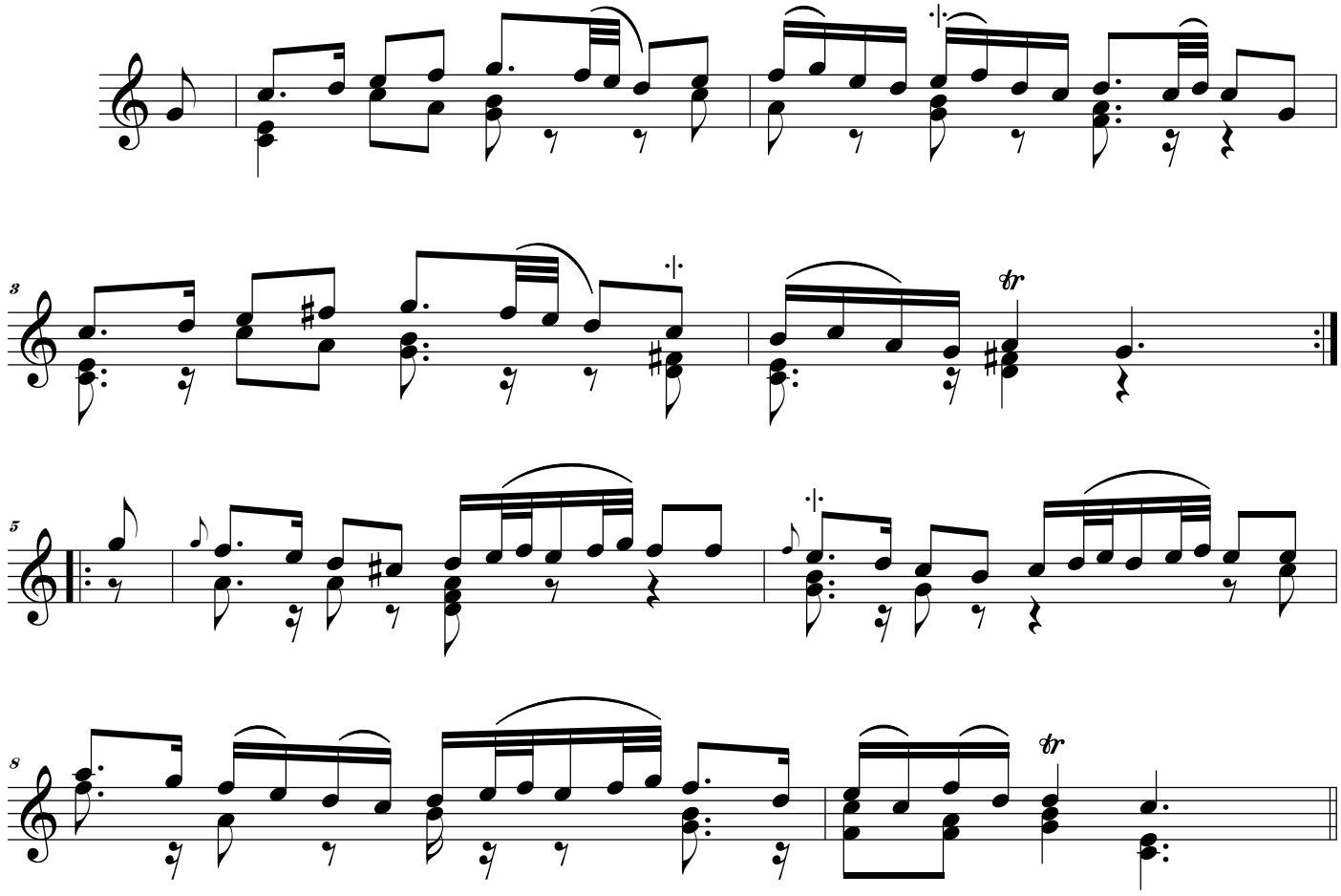
Treble viola da gamba

Aria

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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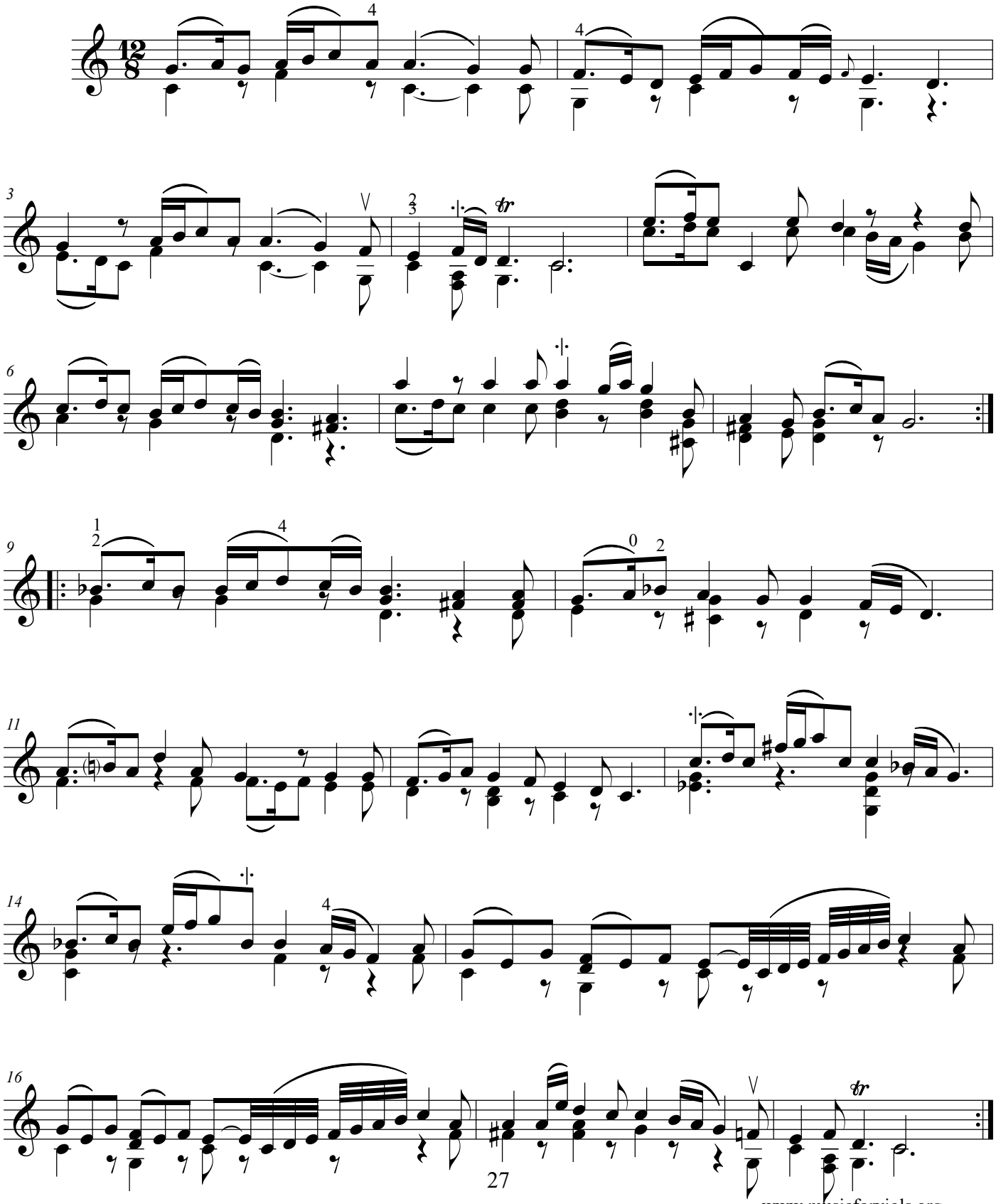
Treble viola da gamba

Andante Cantabile

Sonata Piccola XXIV, B.D 4

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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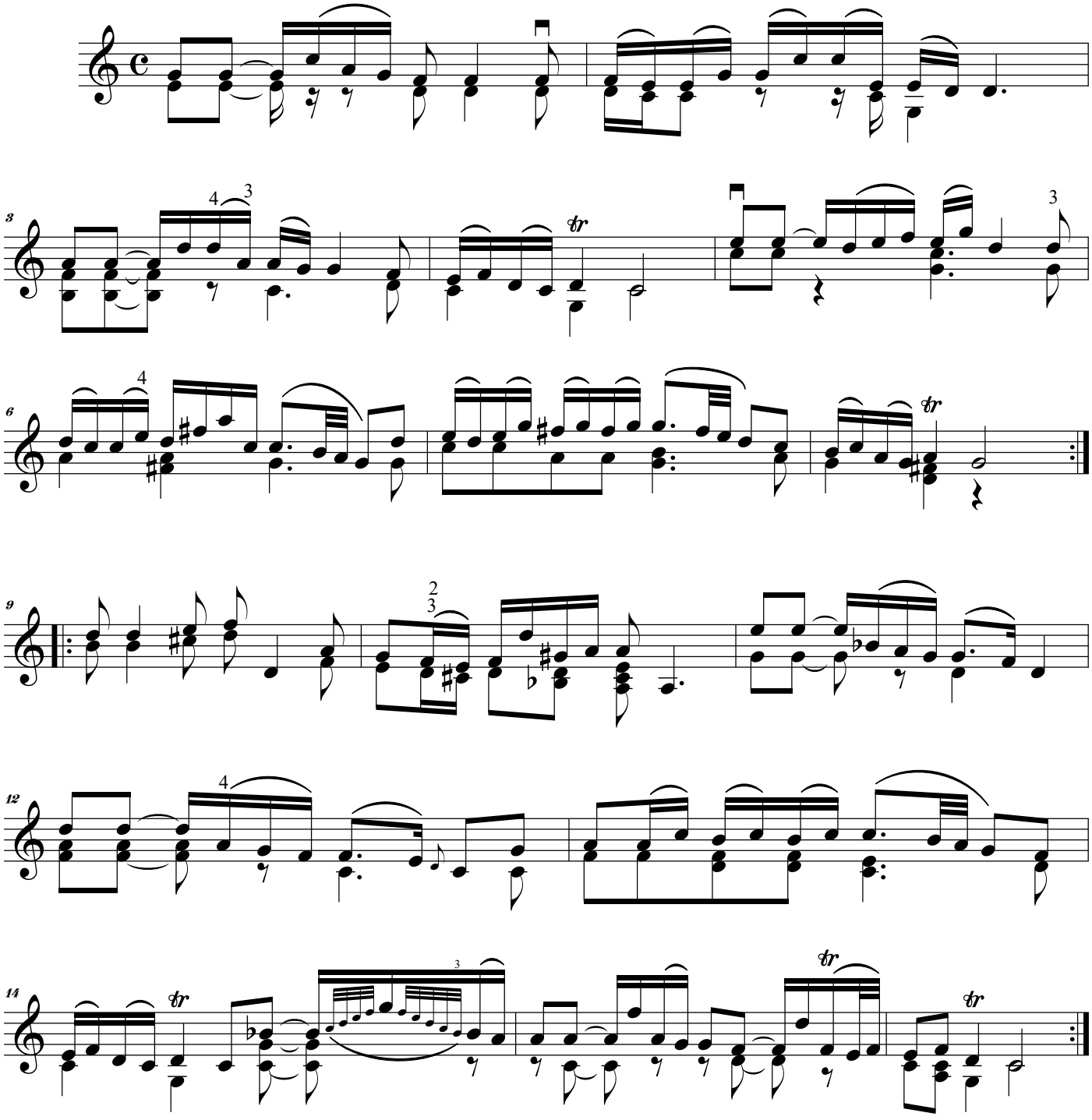
Treble viola da gamba

Grave

Sonata Piccola XXI, B.F 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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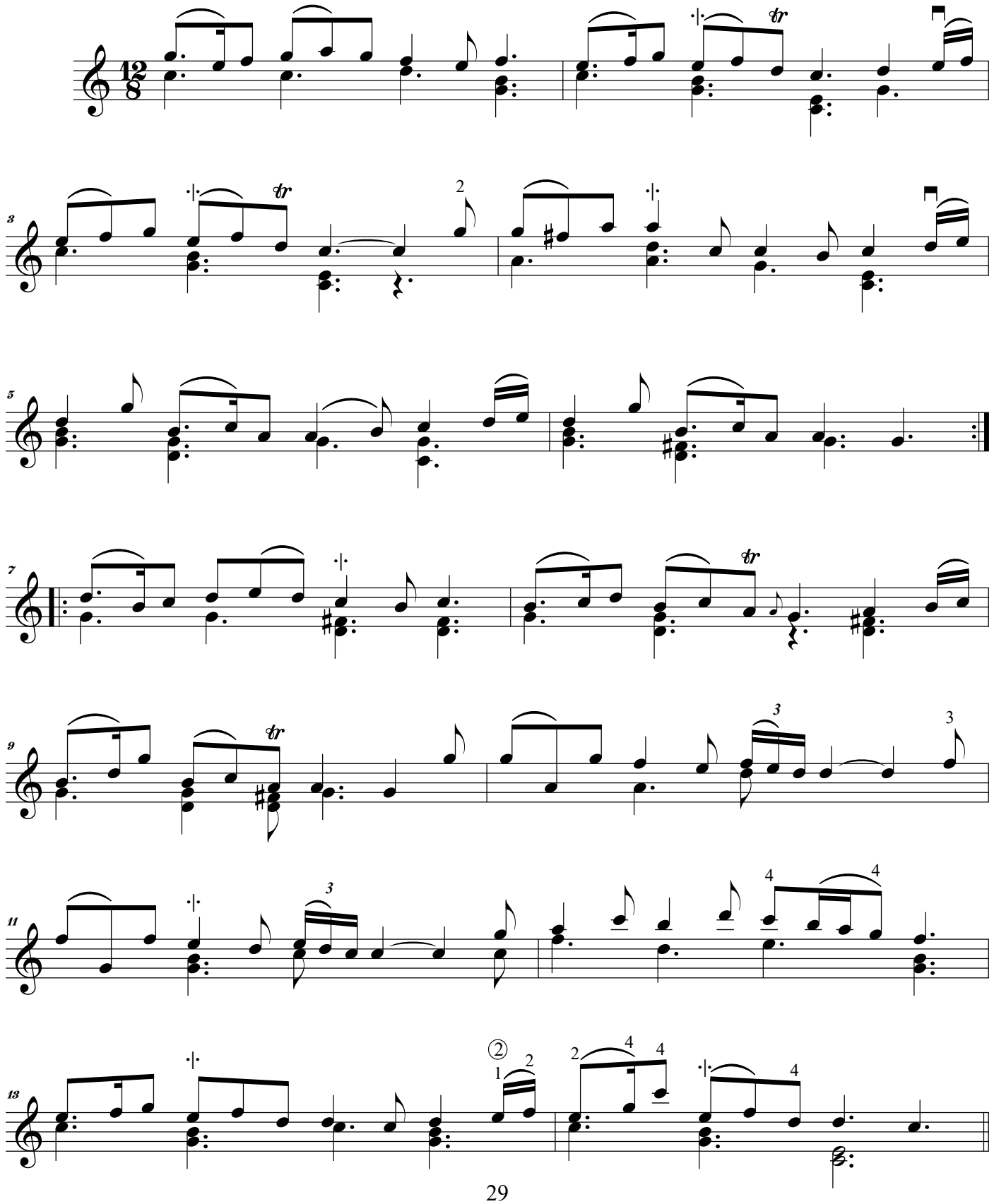
Treble viola da gamba

[Siciliana]

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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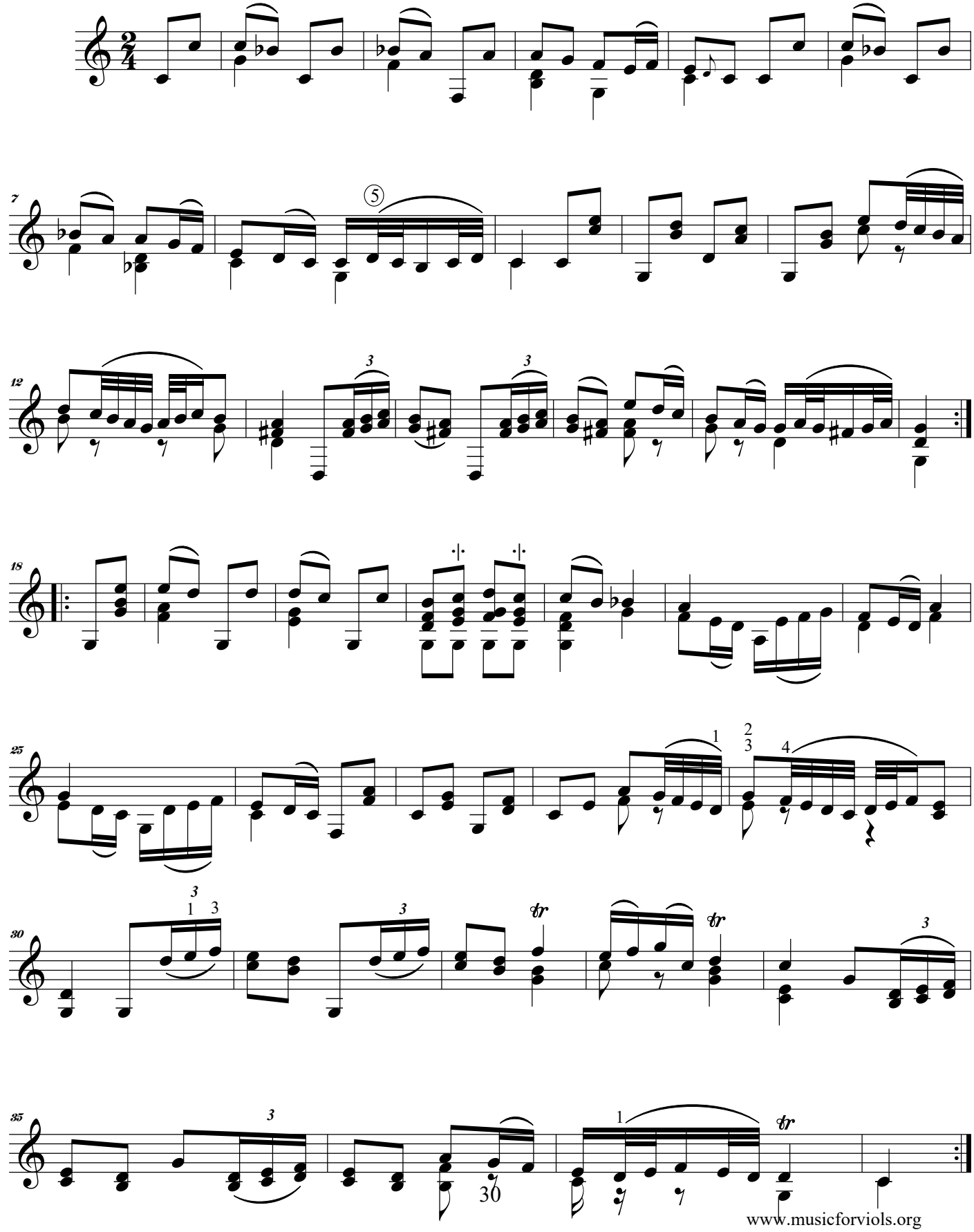
Treble viola da gamba

Andante

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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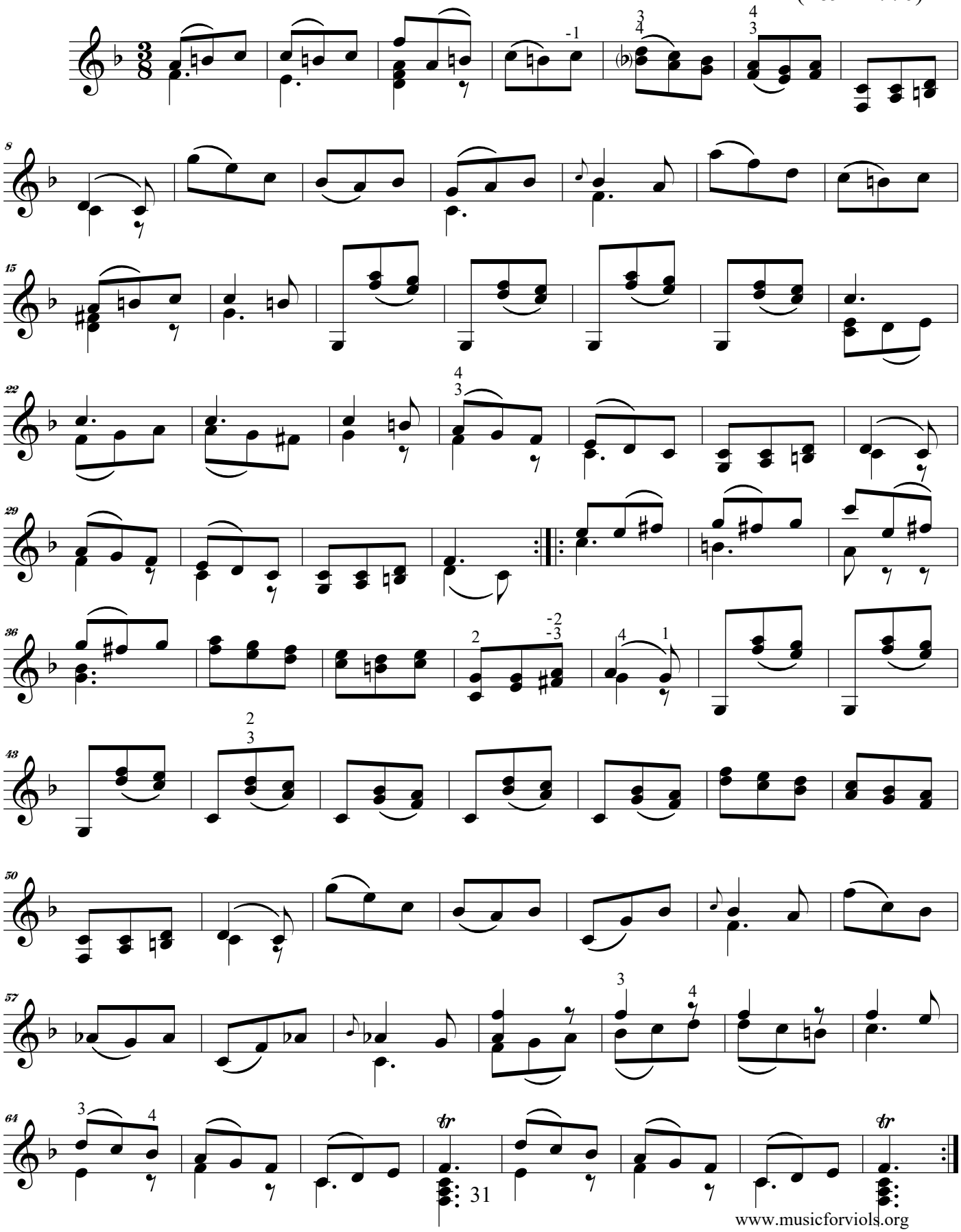
Treble viola da gamba

[Allegretto]

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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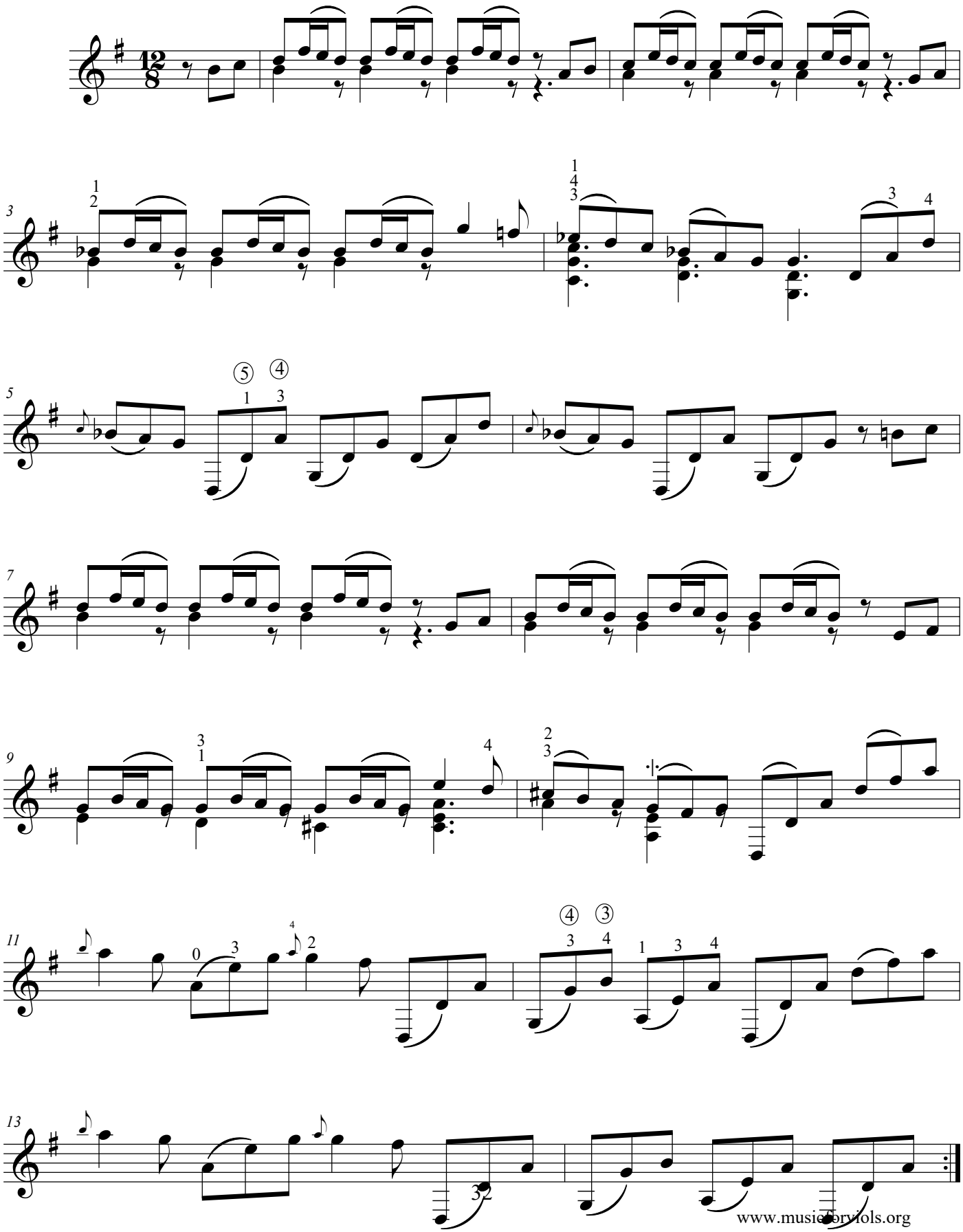
Treble viola da gamba

[Giga]

Sonata Piccola XVI, B.C 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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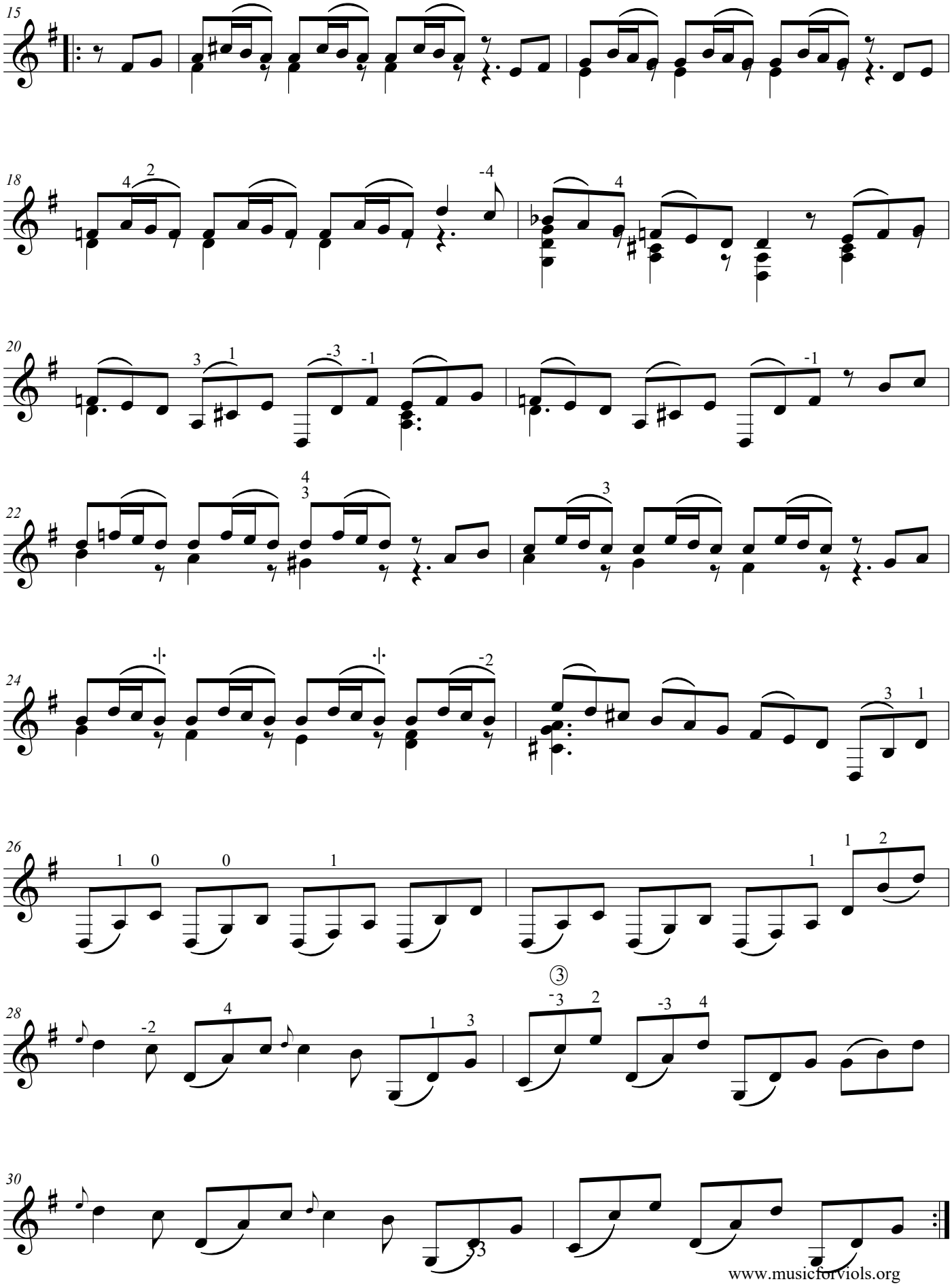

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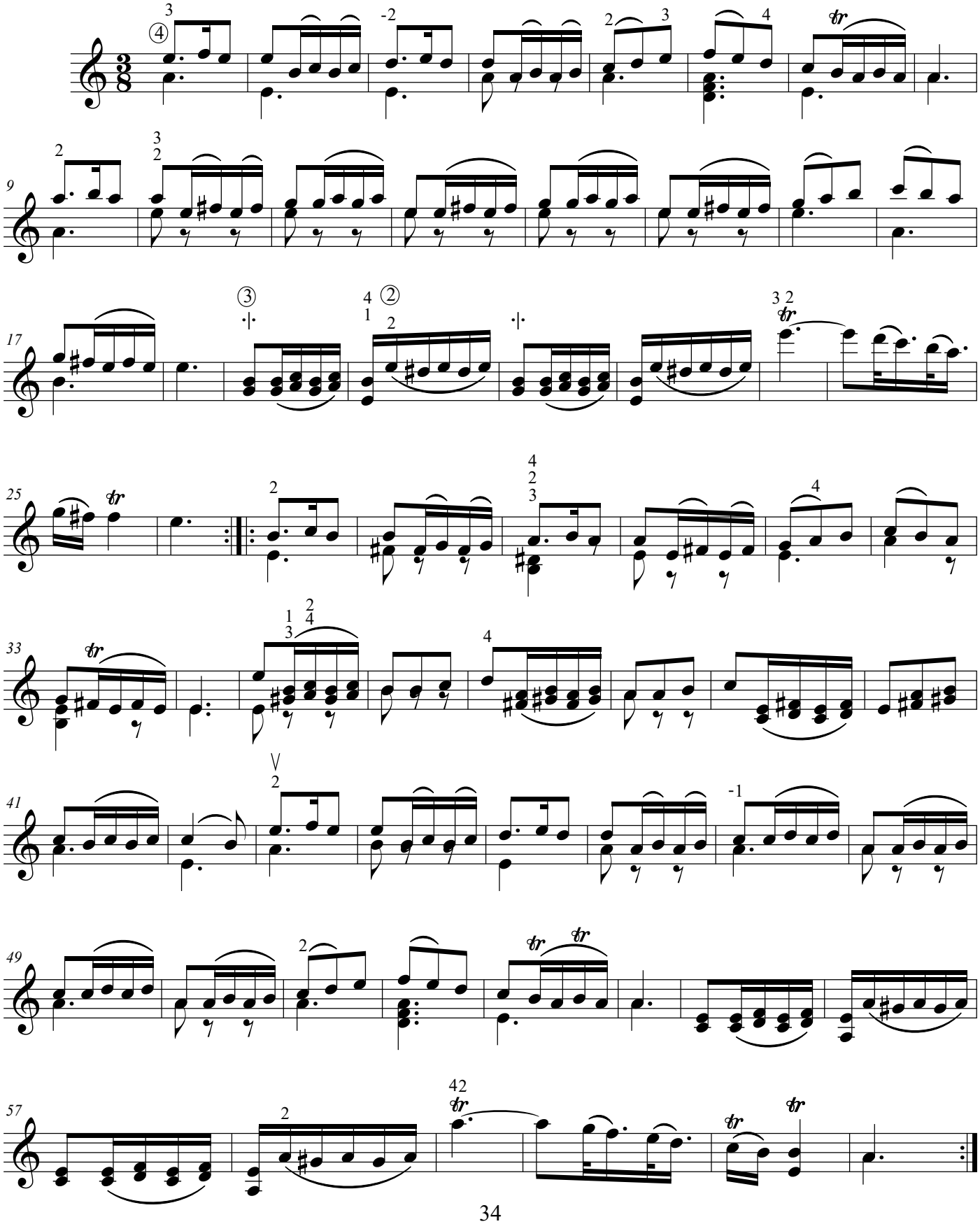
Treble viola da gamba

Allegro assai

Sonata Piccola XXII, B.a 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)

Allegro assai



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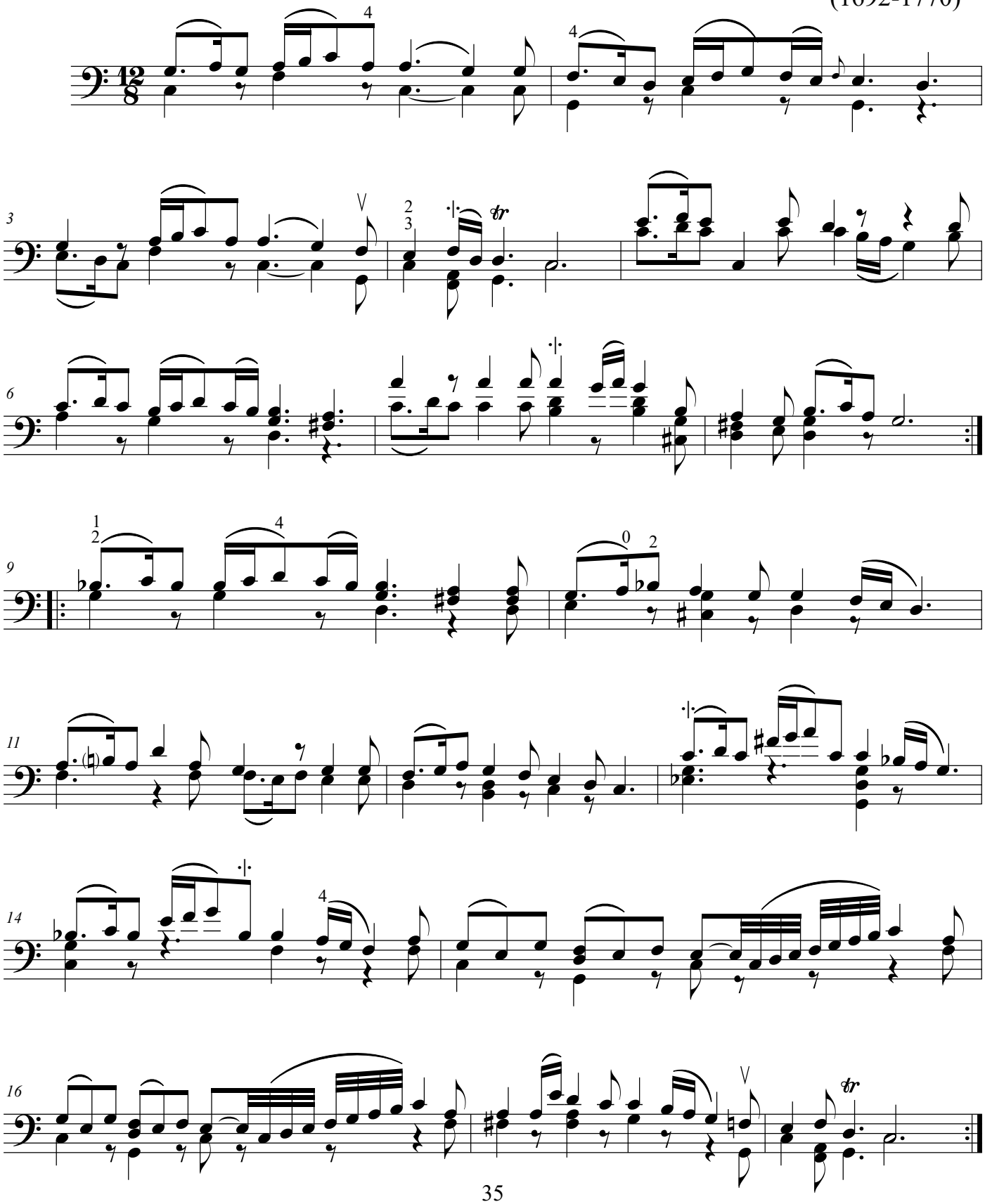
Bass viola da gamba

Andante Cantabile

Sonata Piccola XXIV, B.D 4

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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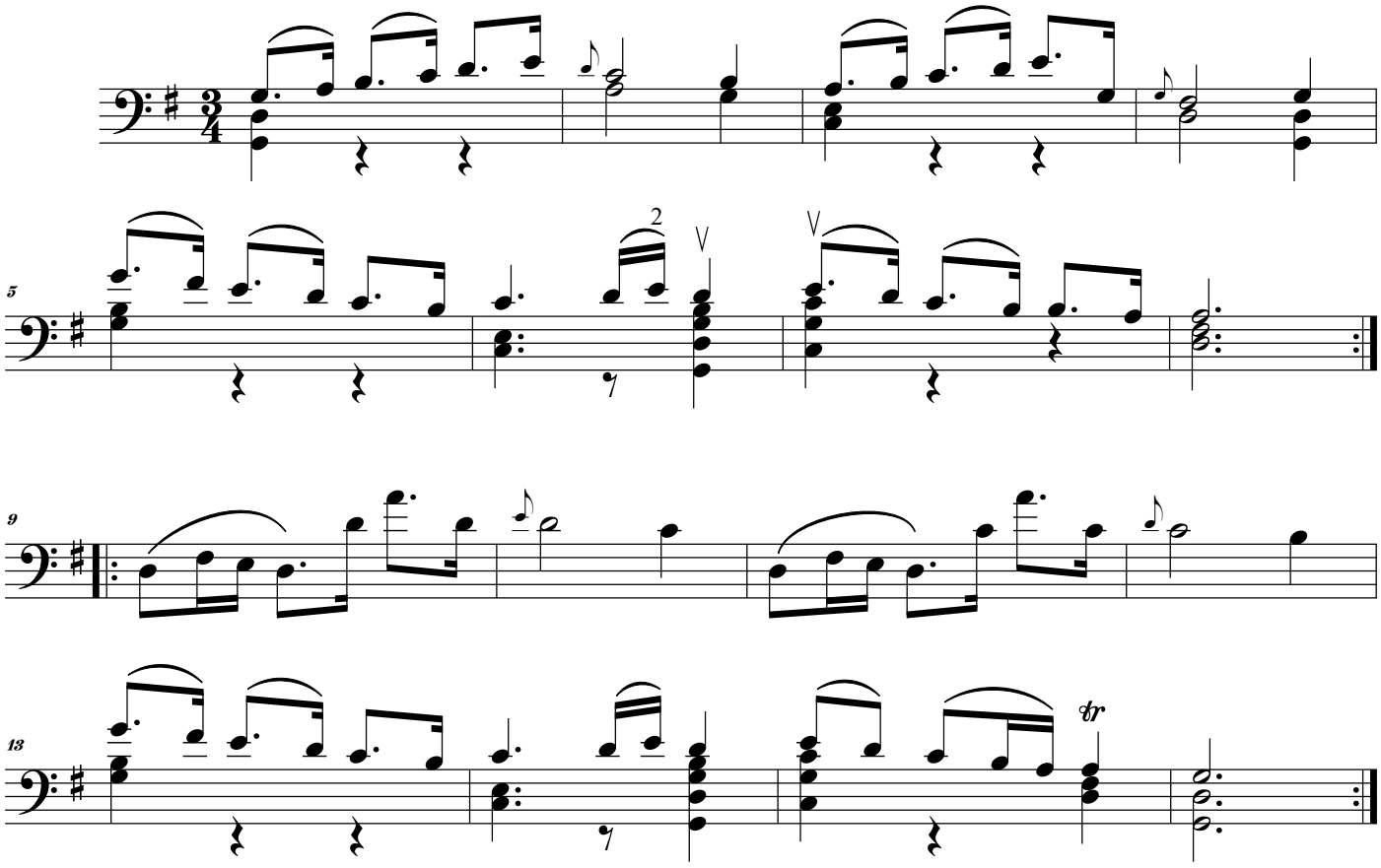
Bass viola da gamba

Menuet

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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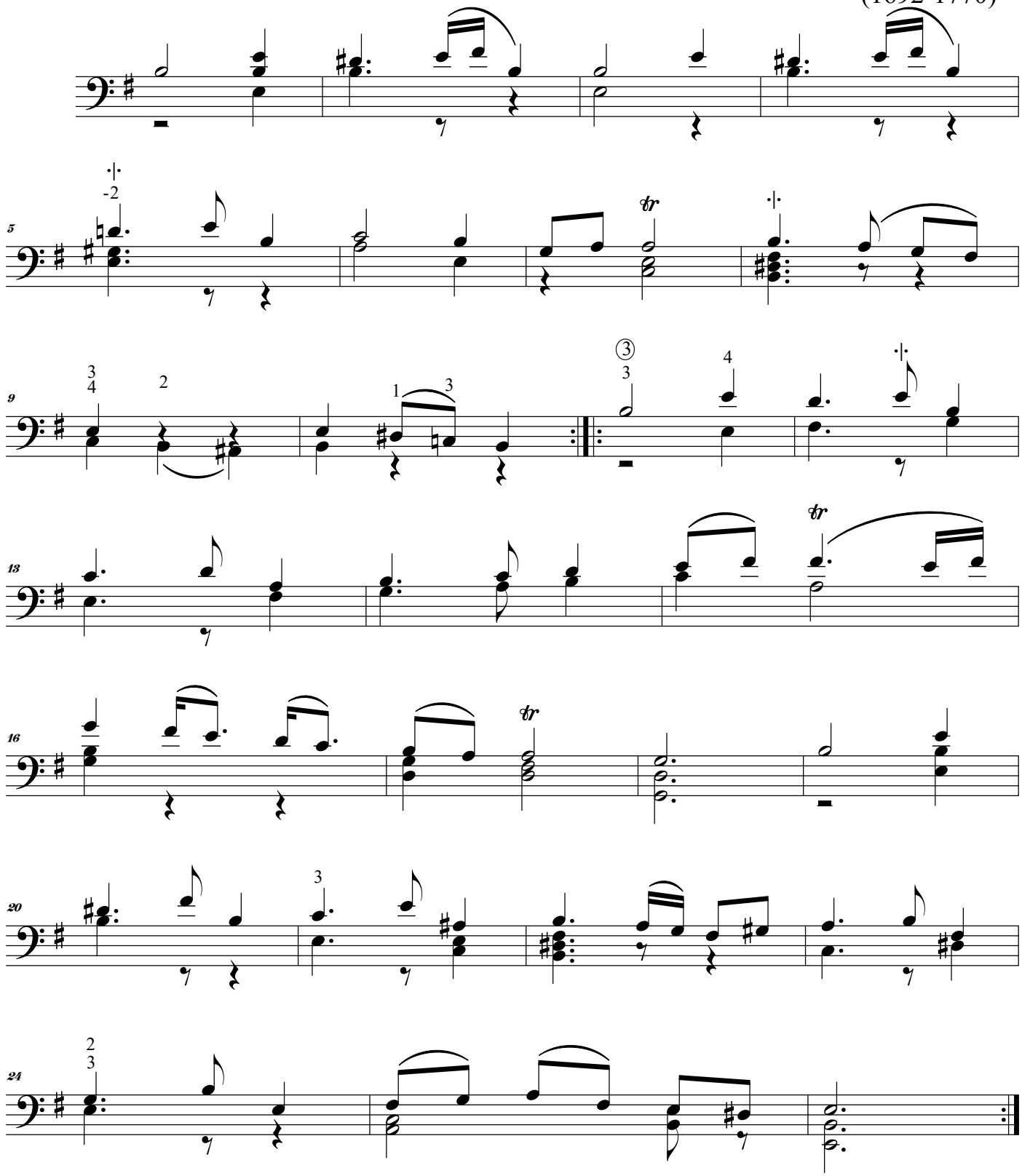
Bass viola da gamba

Andante

Piccola Sonata XXII, B.a 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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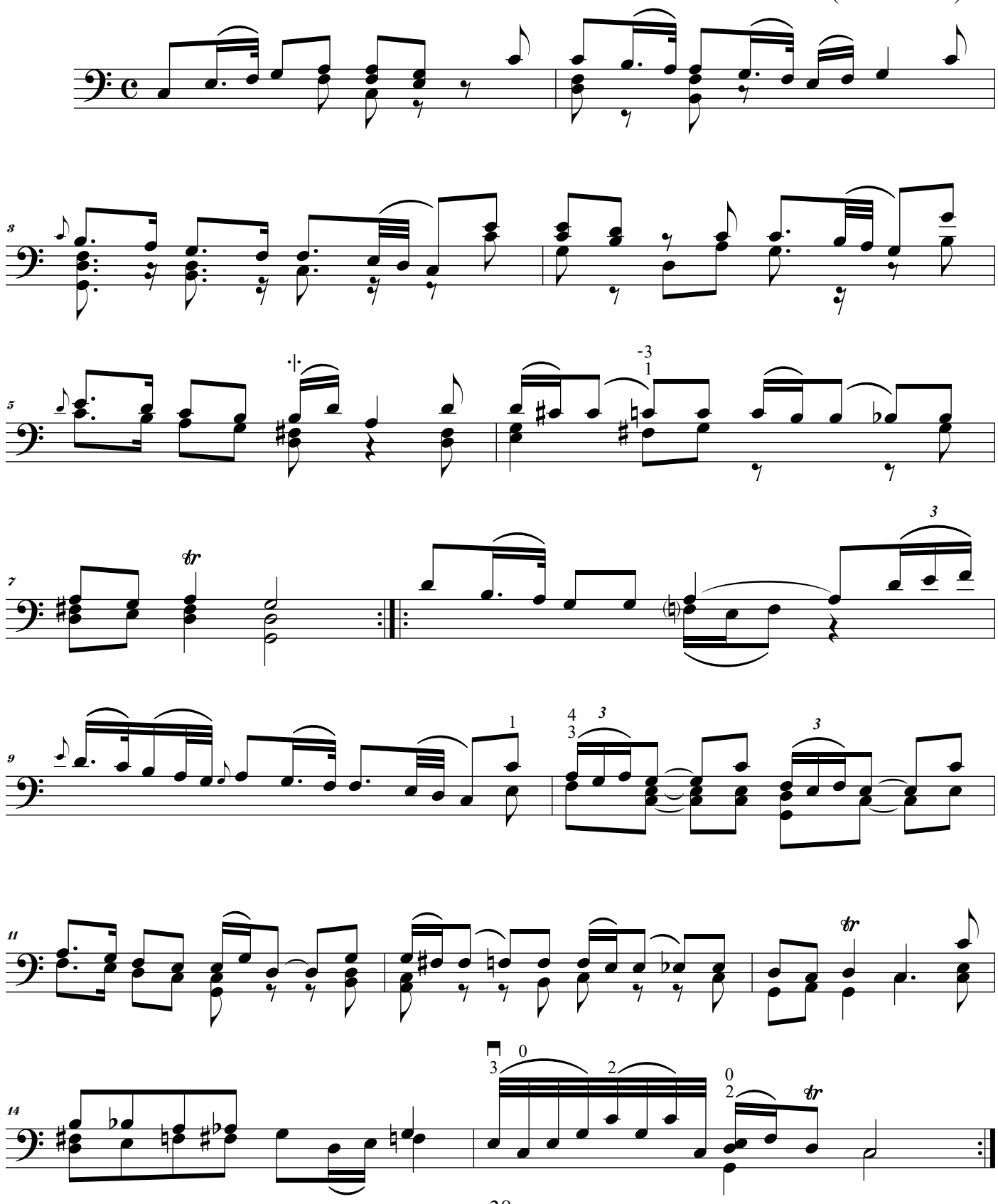
Bass viola da gamba

Andante Cantabile

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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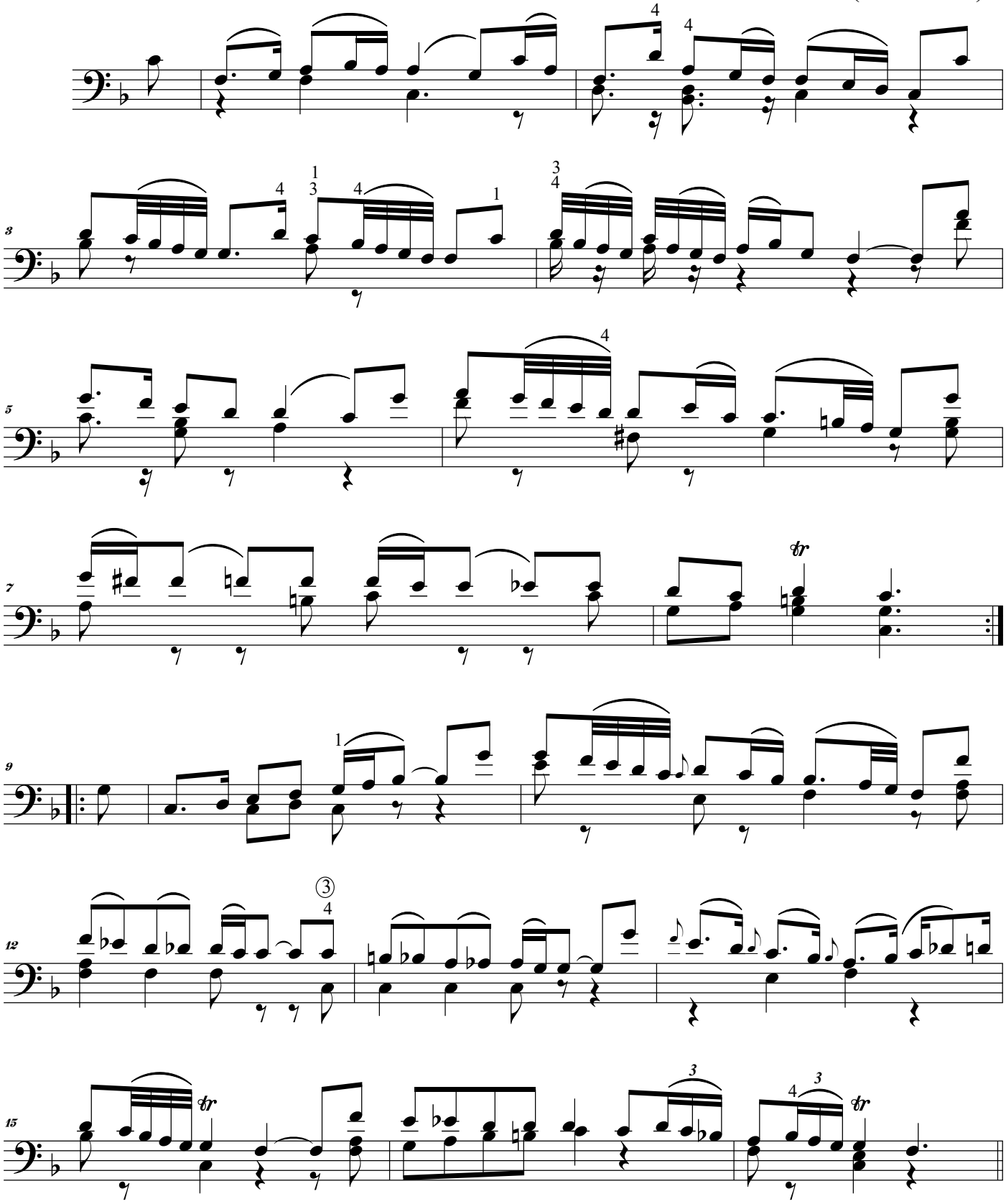
Bass viola da gamba

Grave

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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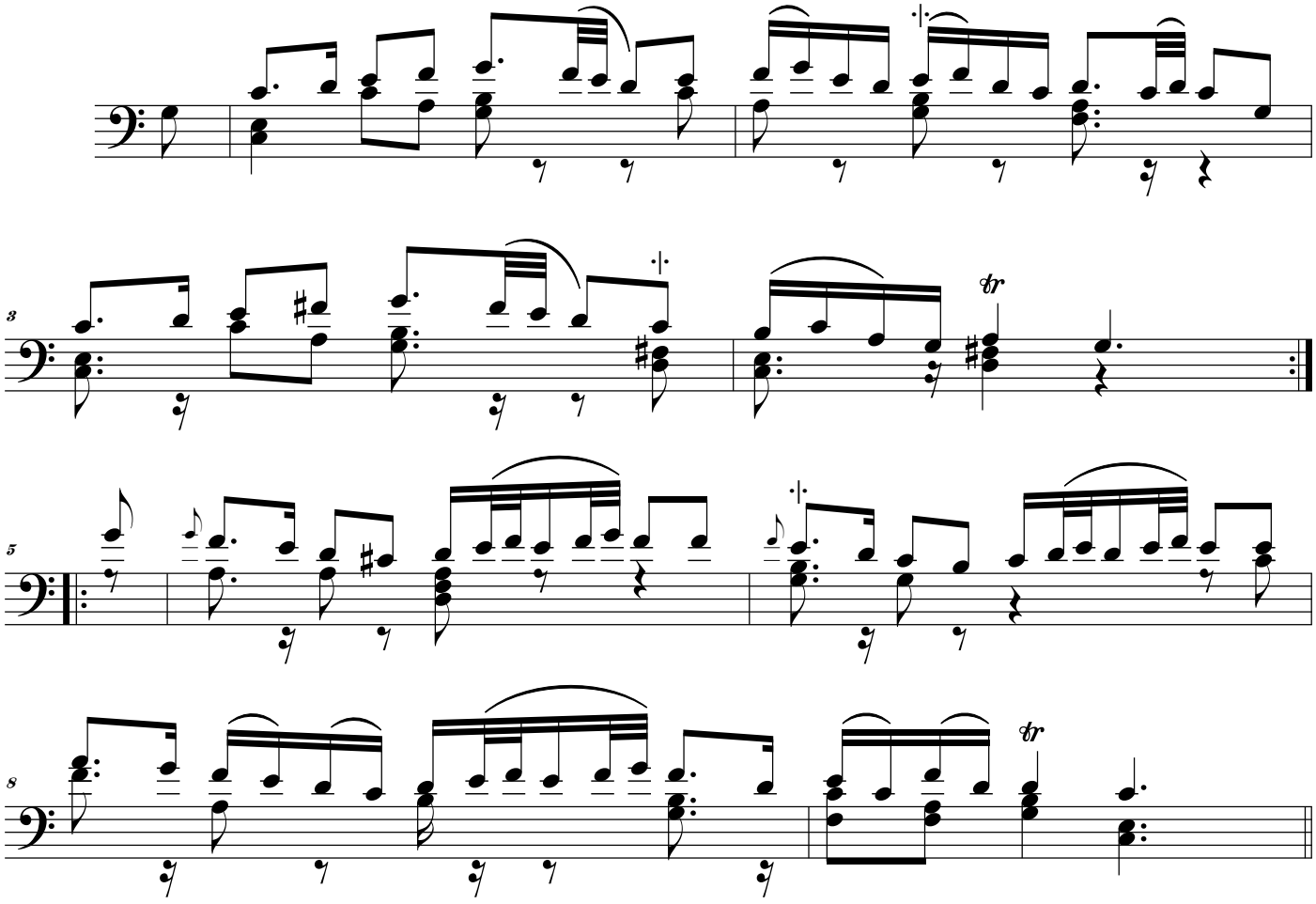
Bass viola da gamba

Aria

Sonata Piccola XXIII, B.E 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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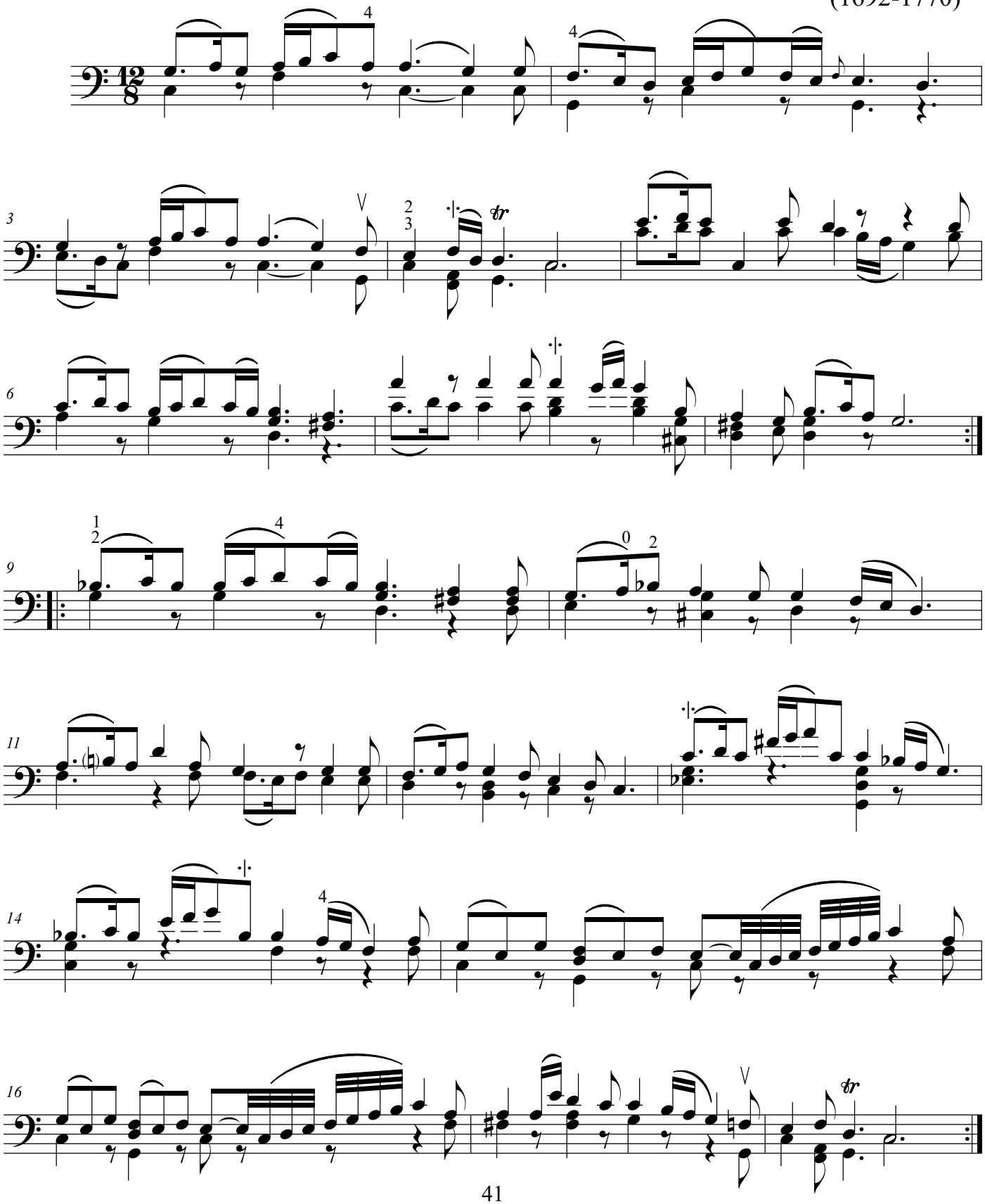
Bass viola da gamba

Andante Cantabile

Sonata Piccola XXIV, B.D 4

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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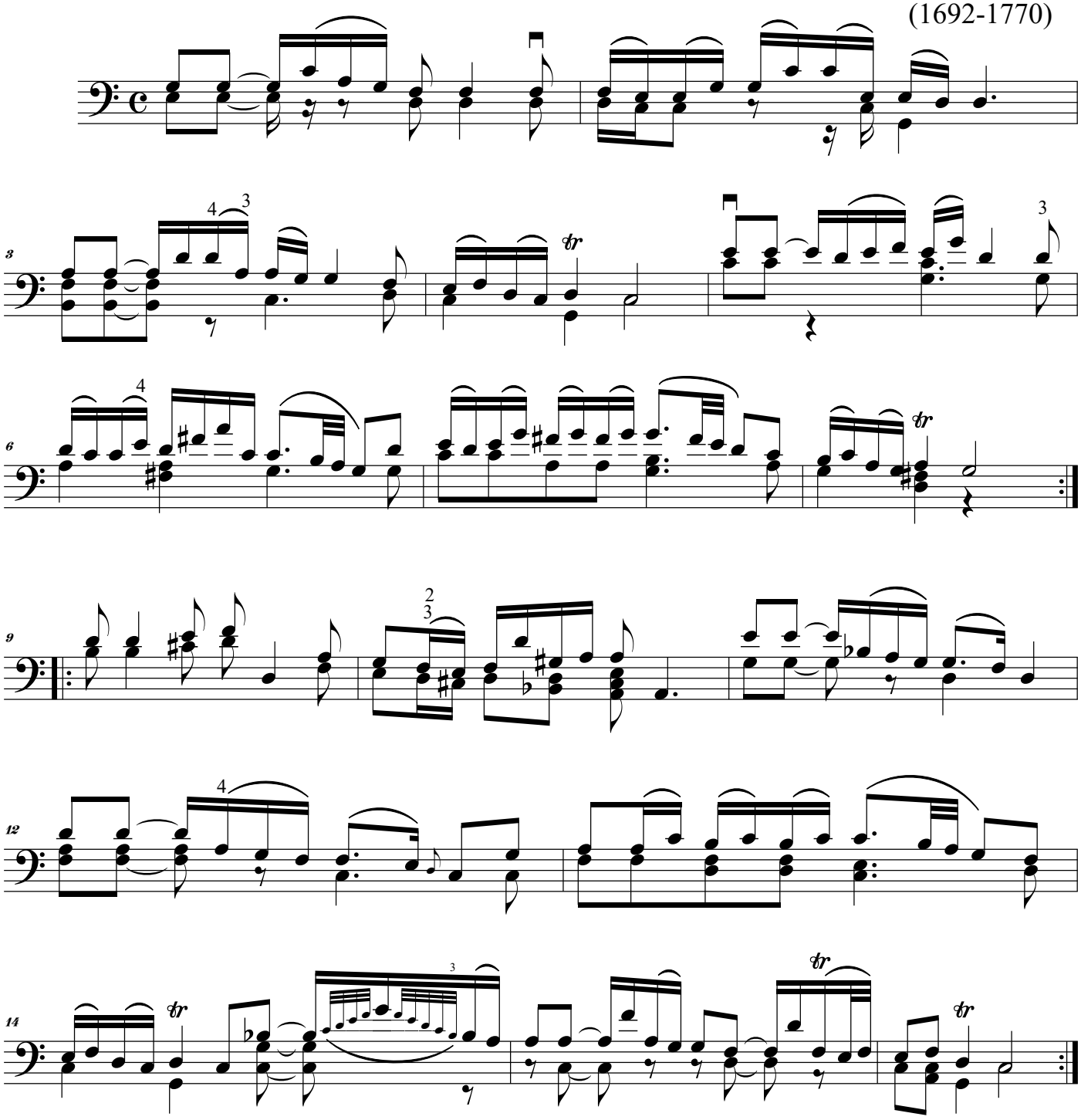
Bass viola da gamba

Grave

Sonata Piccola XXI, B.F 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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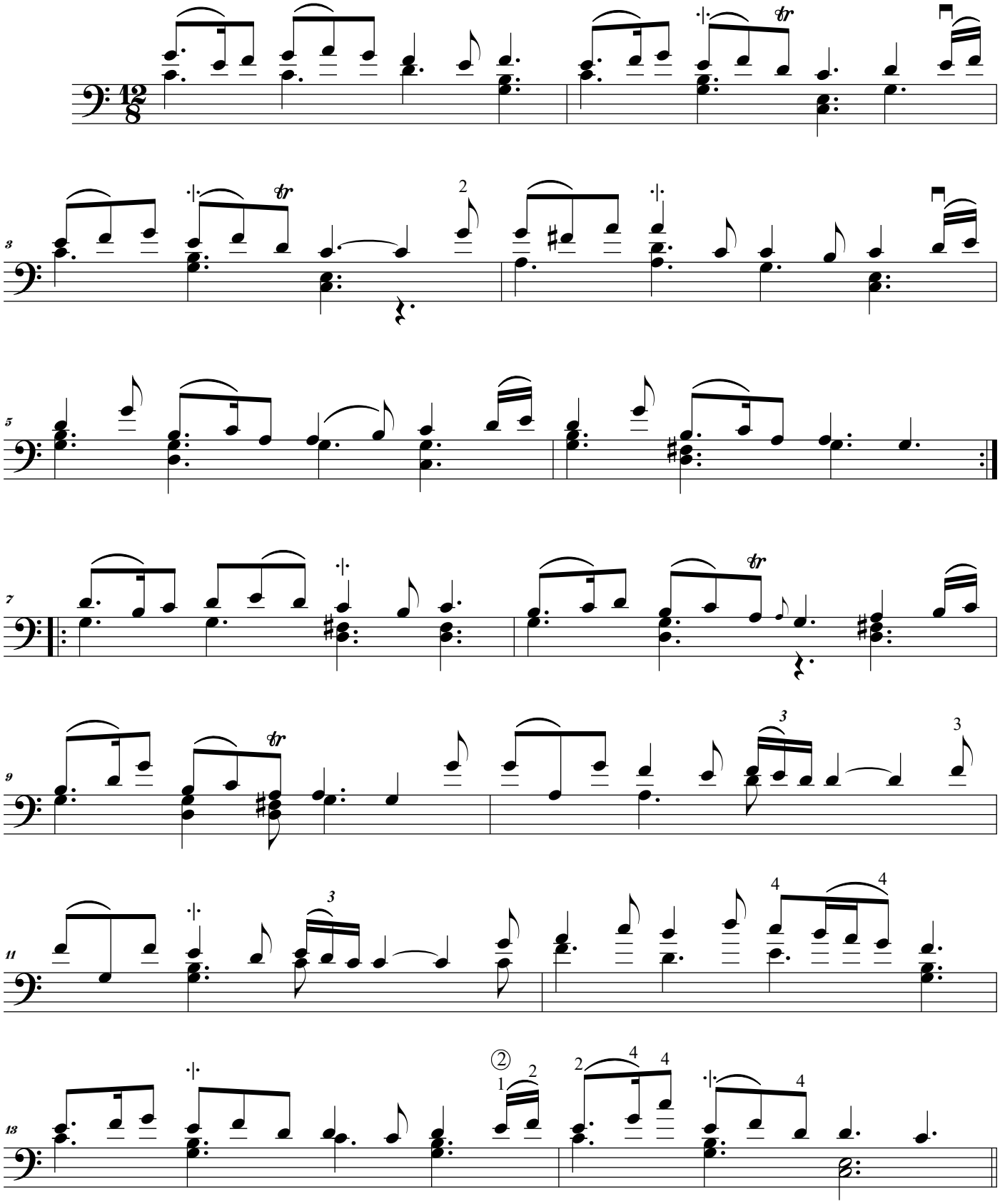
Bass viola da gamba

[Siciliana]

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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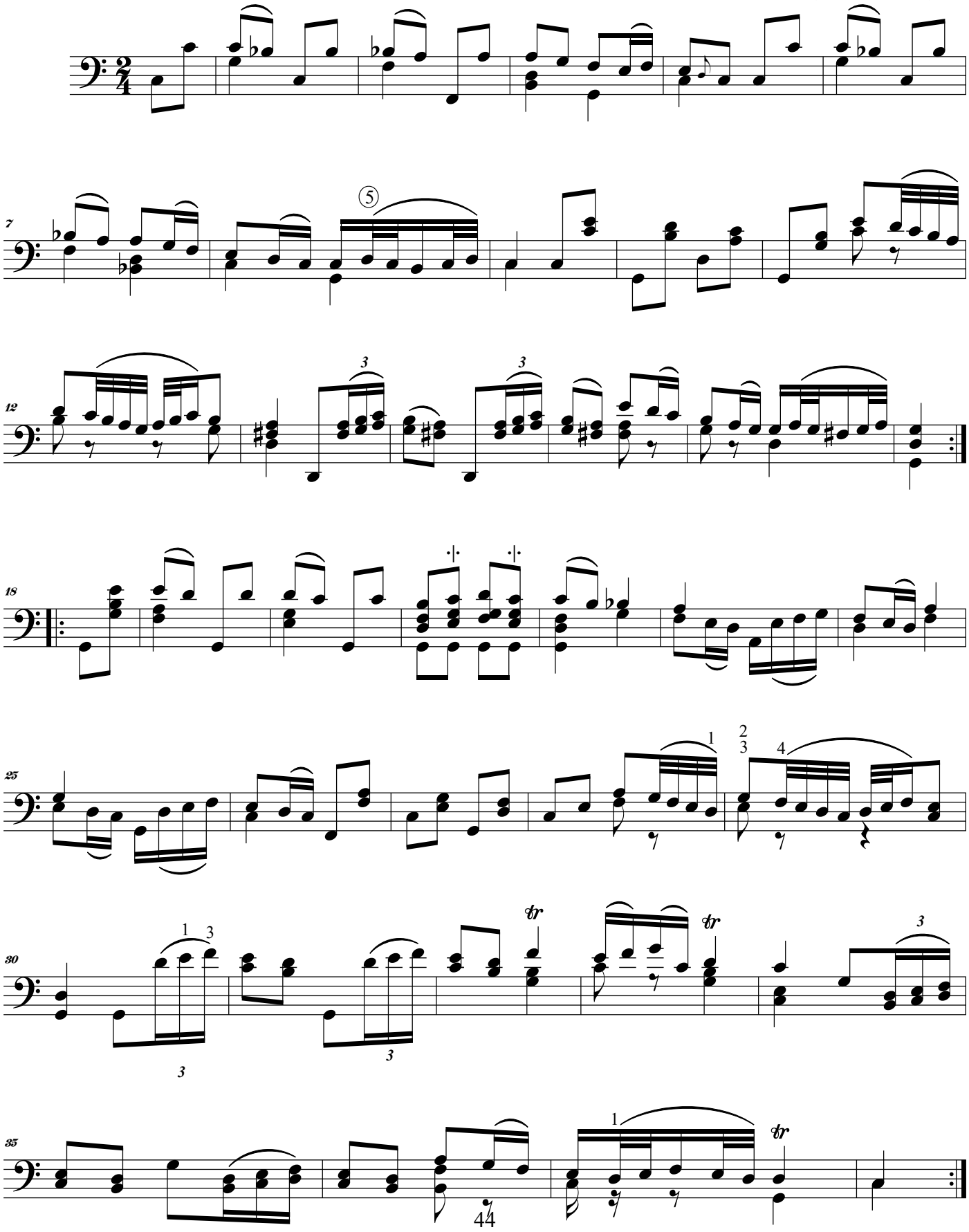
Bass viola da gamba

Andante

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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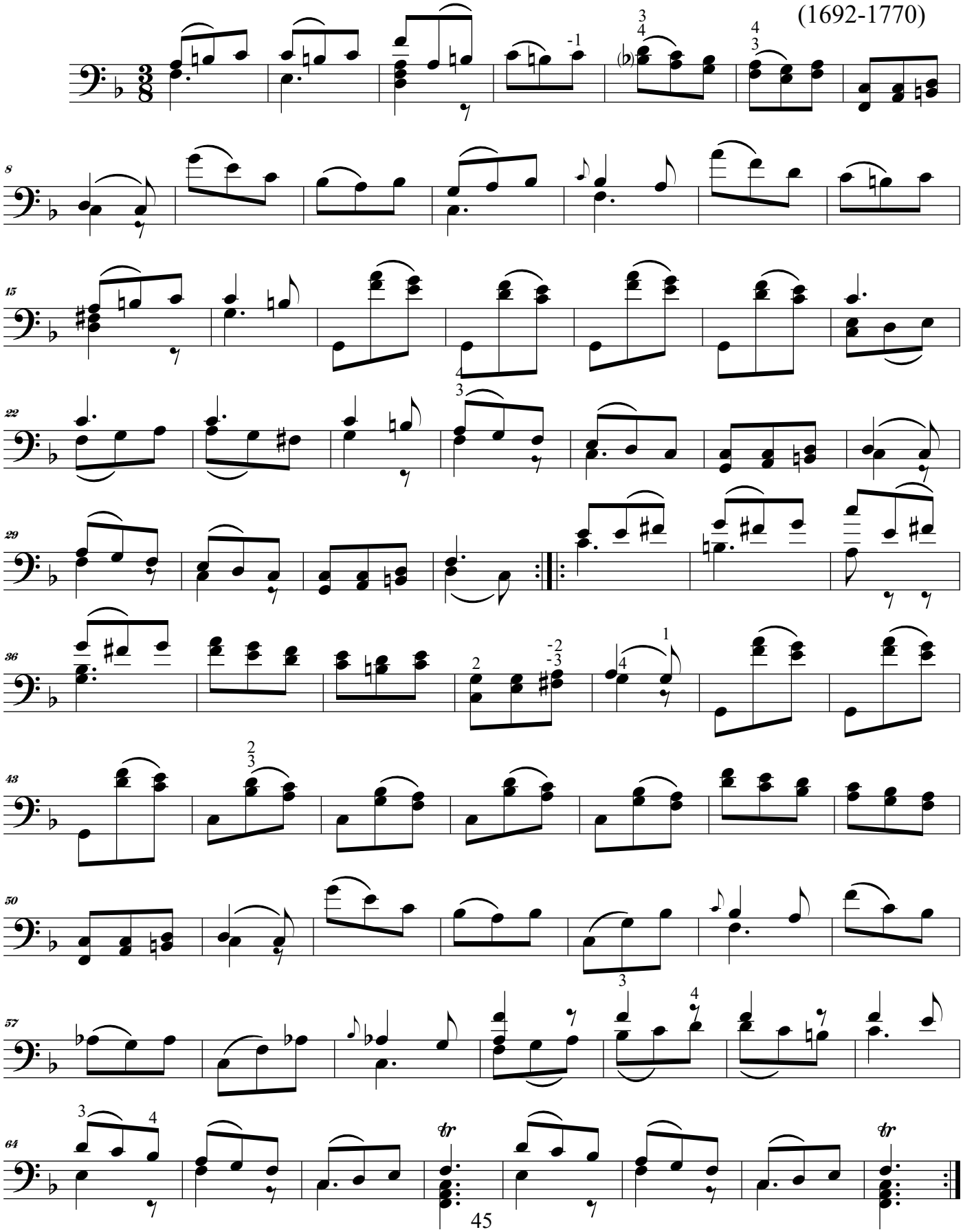
Bass viola da gamba

[Allegretto]

Sonata Piccola XXVI, B.G 5

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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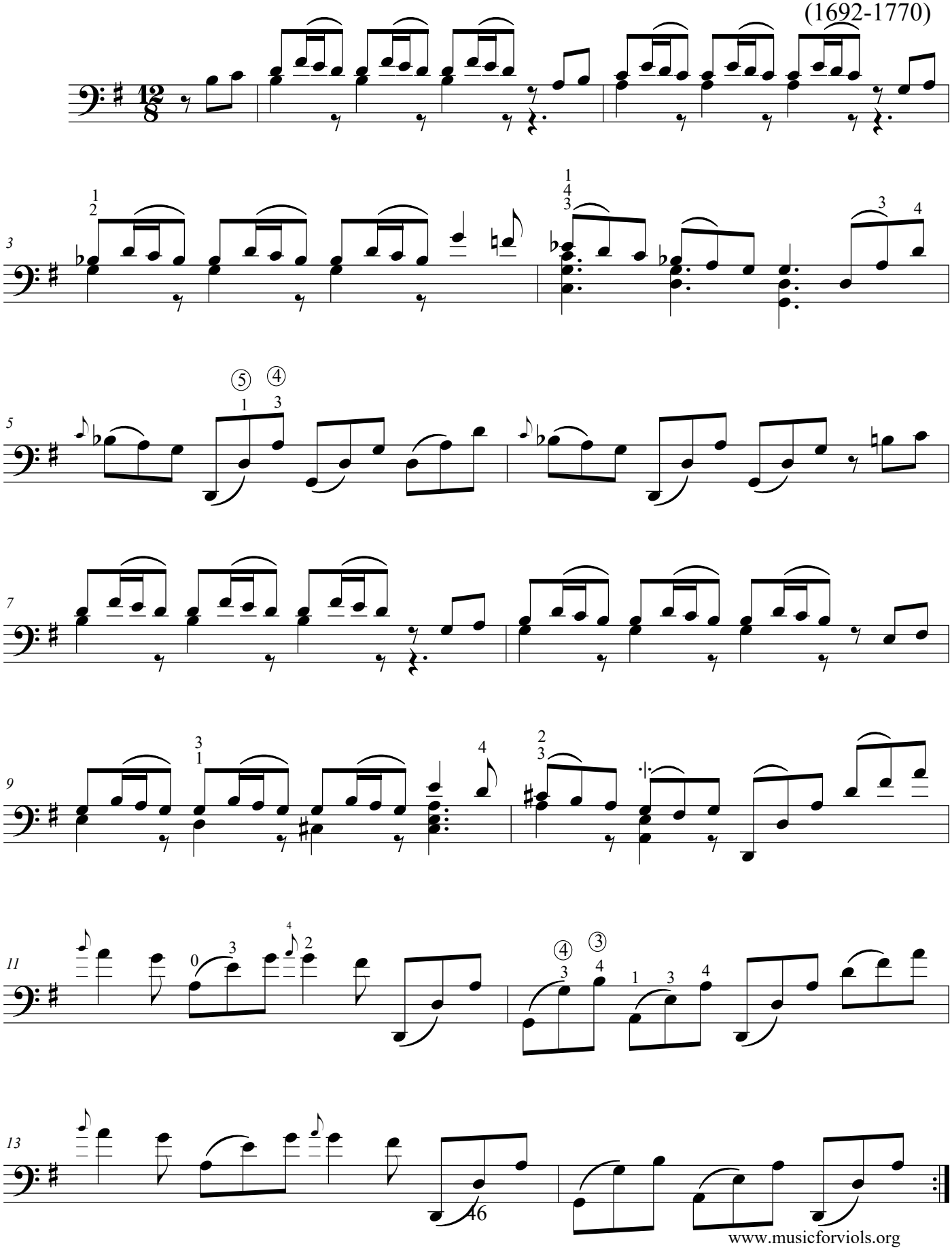
Bass viola da gamba

[Giga]

Sonata Piccola XVI, B.C 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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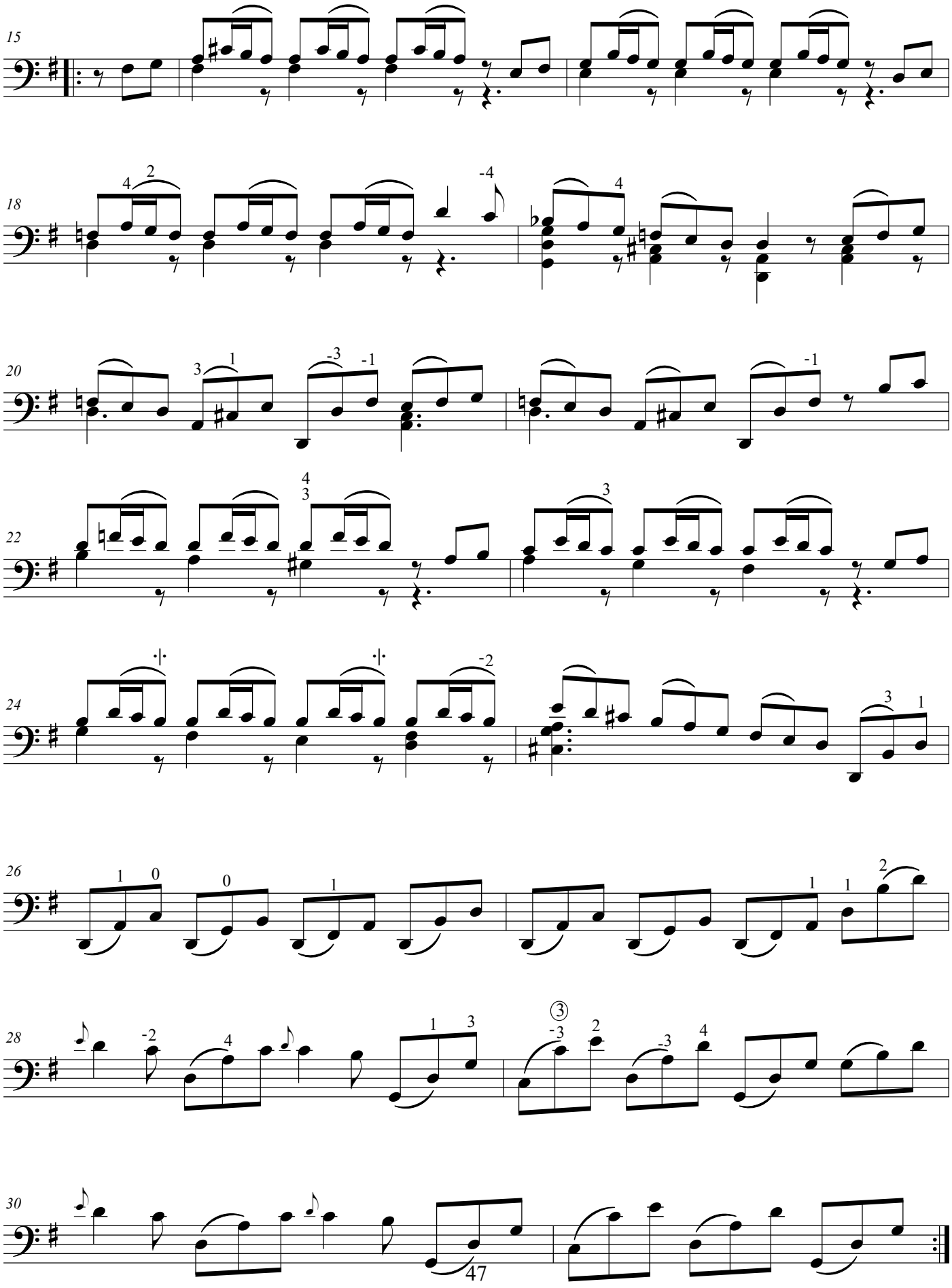

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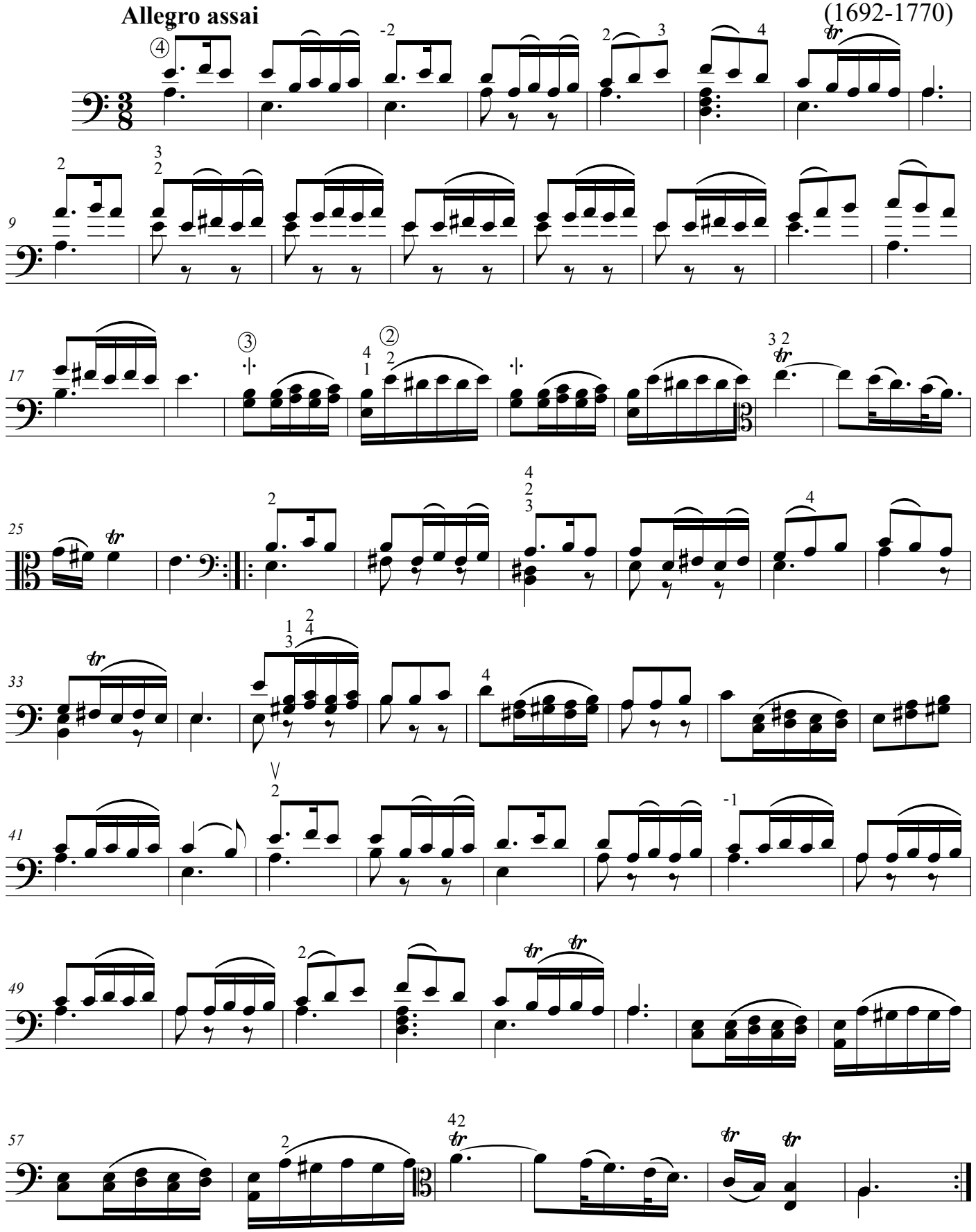
Bass viola da gamba

Allegro assai

Sonata Piccola XXII, B.a 2

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)



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