

J. S. BACH

Goldberg-Variationen

Vierter Teil der Clavier-Übung

Goldberg Variations

Fourth Part of the Clavier Übung

BWV 988

Herausgegeben von / Edited by
Christoph Wolff

Fingersätze von / Fingerings by
Ragna Schirmer

Urtext der Neuen Bach-Ausgabe
Urtext of the New Bach Edition



Bärenreiter Kassel · Basel · London · New York · Praha
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Urtextausgabe aus: *Johann Sebastian Bach, Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, herausgegeben vom
Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Institut Göttingen und vom Bach-Archiv Leipzig, Serie V, Band 2:
Vierter Teil der Klavierübung (BA 5048-01), vorgelegt von Christoph Wolff.

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VORWORT

Die sogenannten *Goldberg-Variationen* bilden das gewichtige Schlussglied der vierteiligen Bachschen *Clavier-Übung*. Auch wenn die Angabe „vierter“ bzw. „letzter Teil“ im Originaltitel fehlt (vielleicht, weil es sich um das erste Werk Bachs im Verlag von Balthasar Schmid aus Nürnberg handelte), steht ihr Zusammenhang mit den übrigen Teilen außer Frage. Im Gesamtplan der Serie komplettiert die Gattung „Variationen“ Bachs enzyklopädische Darstellung der wichtigsten Formen und Stile der Tastenmusik in exemplarischen Kompositionen. Das Erscheinungsdatum der Originalausgabe ist dokumentarisch nicht belegt, muss jedoch im Rahmen der Schmidischen Verlagsproduktion in die Zeit 1741/42 fallen.

Mit den Kompositionsarbeiten wird Bach kaum vor 1739, dem Erscheinungstermin des *1. Teils der Clavier-Übung*, begonnen haben. Denn in der gleichzeitigen Auftreten retrospektiver Momente (z. B. Kanontechnik) und stilistischer Züge (zur Verwendung volkstümlicher Melodien vgl. auch die Bauformen der ersten beiden Teile) zeigen sich charakteristische Züge des späten Barock. Mit dem Erscheinen der *Clavier-Übung* wandte sich Bach zu einer Gattung zu, die für ihn ein besonderes Interesse hatte. Die frühen *Aria* und *Canons* im *Clavier-Übung* sind um Variationen angeordnet. Das 32-taktige *Thema* wird in der Wiederholung der *Aria* durch Bach in Erweiterung des *Canono*-Modells von „acht Fundamentaltönen“, denen er sich als theoretische Reflexion auf die 30 Variationen in einer Serie von 14 Zirkelkanons BWV 1087¹ noch eigens zuwandte. Die zyklische Struktur des Gesamtwerks betont Bach durch die Gliederung in zehn Gruppen zu je drei Sätzen, die durch Kanons in aufsteigendem Intervallabstand abgeschlossen werden; eine Ouvertüre markiert

zudem den Beginn der zweiten Werkhälfte. Klimax und Symmetrie spielen als Formprinzipien ausgewogen ineinander. Die Bezeichnung *Goldberg-Variationen* bürgerte sich im 19. Jahrhundert aufgrund eines anekdotischen Berichtes in J. N. Forkels *Bach-Biographie* von 1802 ein. Demnach soll Bach das Werk im Auftrag des Grafen Keyserlingk aus Dresden für dessen Hauscembalisten Goldberg geschrieben haben, damit dieser mit den Variationen des *Canons* schlaflose Nächte vertreibe. Das Fehlen einer üblichen formellen Dedikation an Keyserlingk im Originaldruck sowie das junge Alter des 1721 geborenen Johann Gottlieb Goldberg sprechen jedoch gegen ein solches Auftragswerk. Der wahre Kern von Forkels Geschichte mag darin zu finden sein, dass der Graf bei einem Besuch Bachs in Dresden (etwa im November 1741) ein Exemplar des Werkes edizierten bekam und seinen begabten Cembalist zu dem genannten Zweck später hängend ausliehen ließ. Die vorliegende Ausgabe bietet den Text der Neuen Bach-Ausgabe (NBA), die in den Bänden 1 und 2 dieser revidierte Text, für den die Originalausgabe als Primärquelle maßgeblich ist, beruht auf einem systematischen Vergleich aller verfügbaren Quellen und berücksichtigt erstmals Bachs Handexemplar des Originaldruckes, das wichtige Korrekturen und Ergänzungen enthält.

Christoph Wolff

ZUR EDITION

Zusätze des Herausgebers sind, wie in der NBA üblich, durch Kleinstich (Noten- und Verzierungszeichen), Strichelung (Bögen) bzw. Kursivdruck (Buchstaben-text) gekennzeichnet. Über sämtliche textkritische Einzelheiten sowie weitere Fragen zur Werk- und Überlieferungsgeschichte unterrichtet der Kritische Bericht zu NBA V/2.

¹ Die Erstausgabe dieser Kanons erschien als Vorabdruck aus NBA V/2.

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PREFACE

The so-called Goldberg Variations constitute the significant conclusion of Bach's four-part *Clavier Übung*. Even though the indication of "part IV" or "last part" is missing on the original title (perhaps because it was the first work of Bach published by Balthasar Schmid of Nuremberg) its connection with the remaining parts is obvious. In line with the overall plan of the series, the genre "variations" complete Bach's encyclopedic presentation of the major forms and styles of keyboard music in exemplary compositions. There is no documentary evidence for the date of the publication of the original print, but considering the context of Schmid's other publications it must fall within the years 1741/42.

It seems unlikely that Bach began the composition before 1739, the year of the appearance of part III of the *Clavier Übung*, since the simultaneous incorporation of retrospective devices (e.g., canonic technique) and stylistic modernisms (concerning the use of popular tunes, cf. the Peasant Cantata, BWV 1079) is a characteristic element of his mature style. In the monumental work of the last decade of his life, in which he wrote the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (BWV 980), the *Goldberg Variations* (BWV 988), and the *Mass in B minor* (BWV 232), Bach wrote the movements in a style that is as much a reflection of the number of variations as it is a reflection of the number of movements. The work is a traditional "overture" in the sense of the "preludes" to which he dedicated the first series of 14 circular canons, BWV 1085–1098, as a theoretical reflection on the 30 variations. The cyclical structure of the variations is emphasized by the division of the whole into ten groups of three movements, which close with canons of increasing intervals of imitation; in addition, an overture marks the beginning of the second half of

the work. Principles of climax and symmetry govern the overall structuring in a well balanced form.

The designation *Goldberg Variations* came into use in the 19th century as a result of an anecdotic report in J. N. Forkel's Bach biography of 1802. According to this the work was commissioned by Count Keyserlingk of Dresden for his house harpsichordist Goldberg so that the latter might dispel his insomnia by playing the variations. However, the lack of a formal dedication to Keyserlingk in the original print as well as the young age of Johann Gottlieb Goldberg (born in 1727) clearly speak against such a commission. The true extent of Forkel's story may derive from the dedication of a copy of the work to the Count on the occasion of one of Bach's Dresden visits (possibly in November 1741), and the Count may have had his gifted harpsichordist play it frequently later-on for the purpose referred to above.

The present edition offers the text of the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* (NBA) series V, volume 2. This is based on the original print as the primary source, but it also takes into account the various editions and the results from a systematic collation of all available sources and for the first time takes into account Bach's personal copy of the original print, which contains important corrections and additions.

Christoph Wolff

EDITORIAL NOTE

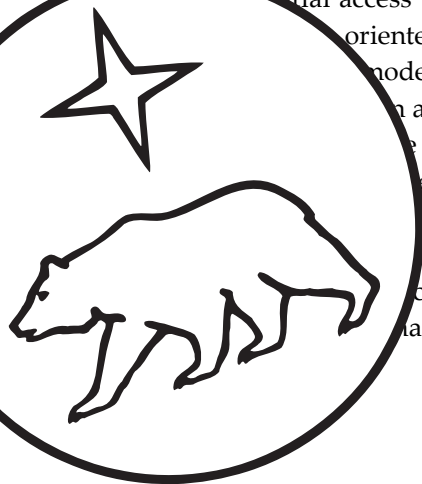
Following normal NBA practice, editorial emendations are printed in smaller type (slurs are dotted, letters in italics). The Critical Report of NBA V/2 should be consulted for all textcritical details as well as for the discussion of further historical aspects of the work.

1 The first edition of these canons appeared as pre-print from NBA V/2.

NOTES ON FINGERING

Writing fingerings for a piano edition of the *Goldberg Variations* by Johann Sebastian Bach is a particular challenge in as far as this work was explicitly composed for a two-manual harpsichord. The primary function of the instructions therefore has to be to bring the hands, which often cross on a single-manual piano, into comfortable playing positions. This immediately raises the question of priority: Which hand should be allowed to lead? Which hand must twist itself around, subordinate itself to the other? Consequently, the decision for fingerings is already interpretation. Rhythm, articulation, accents, and indeed even tempos are influenced by the position of the hand.

For the present edition, I attempted in each case to choose the version that seemed the most comfortable to me from among the vast number of possibilities. I believe that this practical edition, prepared by Christoph Wolff on the basis of extensive source studies, provides initial access to the music.



oriented on the force conversion of the modern piano. I attempt to remain as possible. When required, the thumb's on black keys. remain in a steady position of the voices between the concerned, I endeavored to let character of the original print,

which probably corresponded largely to that of Bach's (no longer extant) handwritten engraver's copy. The stemming of the notes usually offers a distinct performance instruction. In the canons, which are based on continuously increasing intervals, a consistent treatment of the second voice is often technically not possible; here it is necessary to divide up the voice between the right and left hands. I made an effort to avoid the taking over of individual notes, and to always take into consideration the logic of the voice leading. The study of these canons requires particular diligence on the part of the performer.

Questions of embellishment and articulation as well as of register changes, implied by octave transpositions on the piano, will have to be answered by each performer himself. In indicating the fingerings, I took into account the embellishments and hand positions indicated in the music. Of course, the fingerings, along with more embellishments and different "registers" are to be used.

I would like the indication of hand position in this edition to be understood as suggestions. In studying Johann Sebastian Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, each musician should find his individual interpretation and consequently the fingerings that are most suitable for him.

Ragna Schirmer
(translated by Howard Weiner)

Aria mit verschiedenen Veränderungen

BWV 988

Handwritten musical notation for measures 1-6. Measure 1 is marked with a fermata and a wavy line. Measure 6 ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Fingerings 3 and 4 are indicated.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 7-12. Measure 7 starts with a fermata and a wavy line. Measure 12 ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Fingerings 4, 5, 1, 2, 4, 1, 3, 4 are indicated.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 13-22. Measure 13 starts with a fermata and a wavy line. Measure 22 ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Fingerings 1, 3, 4, 2, 1 are indicated.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 23-27. Measure 23 starts with a fermata and a wavy line. Measure 27 ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Fingering 2 is indicated.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 28-32. Measure 28 starts with a fermata and a wavy line. Measure 32 ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Fingerings 4, 1, 2, 1, 3, 2, 3, 5, 1 are indicated.

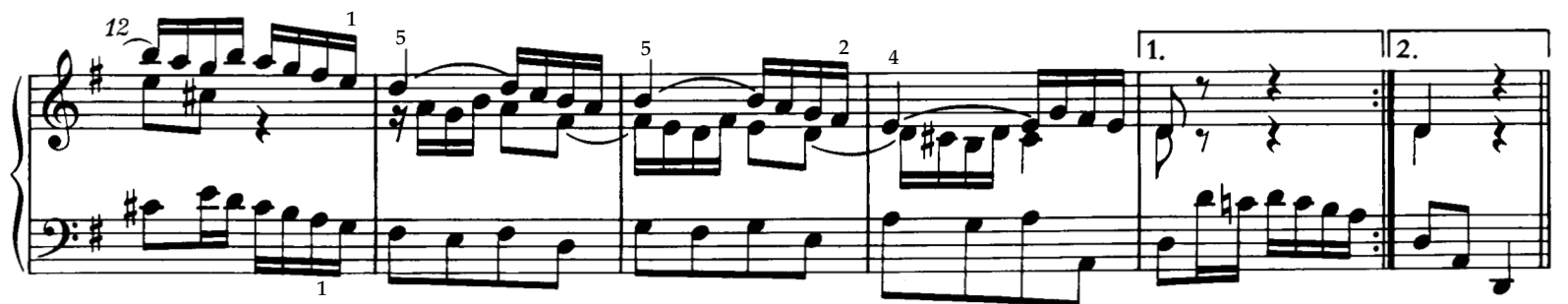
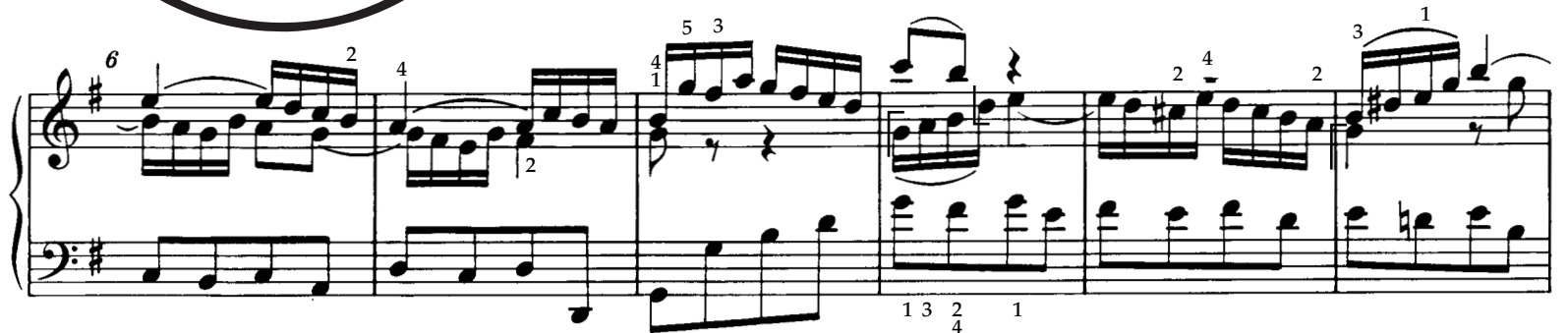
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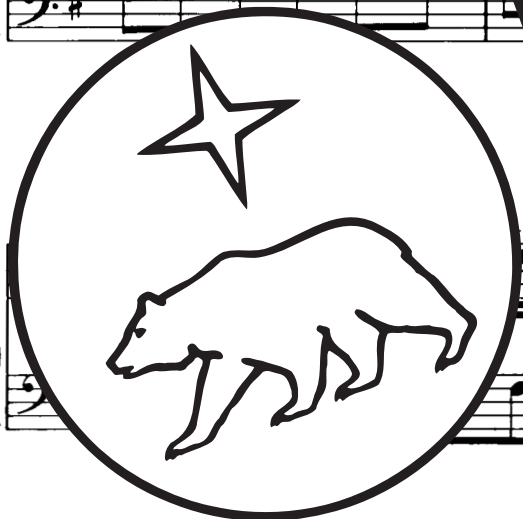


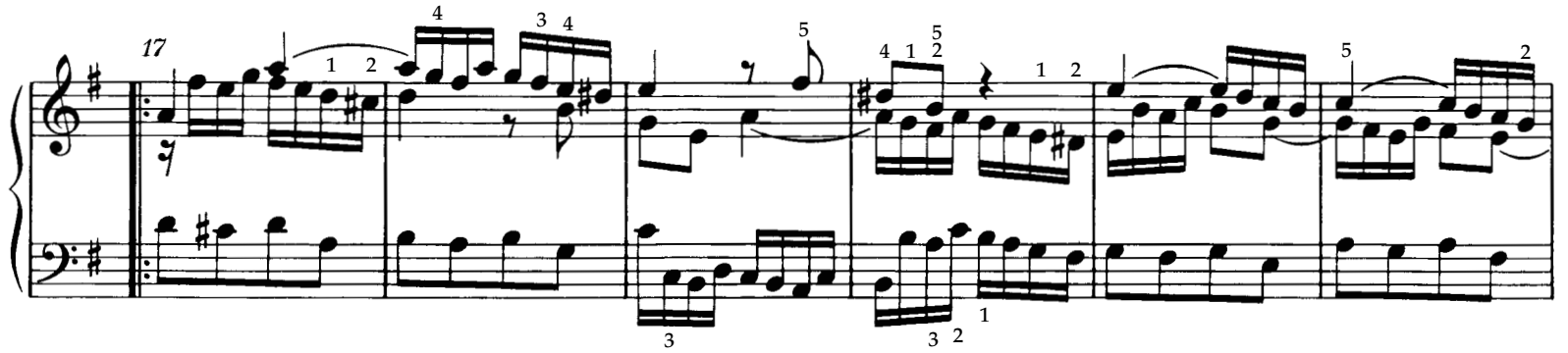
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Bärenreiter
Leseprobe
Sample page





alla Unisono! 1. Clav.



Handwritten musical notation for measures 1-6. The piece is in G major (one sharp). The right hand features a melody with various fingerings (e.g., 5, 4, 1, 2, 1, 7, 7, 4, 2, 1, 4, 1) and slurs. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with triplets and other rhythmic patterns.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 7-8. The right hand continues the melodic line with fingerings like 7, 2, 1, 5, 1, 1, 3, 1, 5, 4, 2. The left hand accompaniment includes a triplet in measure 7.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand has fingerings such as 2, 3, 1, 3, 1, 5, 3, 1, 4, 5, 5, 7, 2. A large circular logo is overlaid on the left side of this system, containing a five-pointed star above a stylized bear walking to the right.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 13-14. The right hand includes fingerings like 13, 2, 1, 5, 2, 5, 4, 5, 5. The left hand accompaniment features a triplet in measure 13.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 15-18. The right hand has fingerings such as 15, 5, 21, 53, 4, 1, 2, 5, 2. The left hand accompaniment includes a triplet in measure 15.

Bärenreiter
Leseprobe
Sample page

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9

3 1 3 2 1 1 3 1 3 2 3 1 2 3 2

13

1 4 3 5 4 5 2 4 5 2

17

1 1 1 3 1 3 2 4 1 3 5 2 2 3 1 2

25

1 2 1 2 1 4 2 1 4 1 1 4

29

1 3 2 5 1 3 2 sopra

Variatio 6. Canone alla Seconda. a 1 Clav.



6

12

23

29

1.

2.

Variação 7. 1. a 1.º verso Clav.
al tempo do Giga

an der schönen Blauen Elbe

1

2

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Bären-Leseprobe". The score is written for piano on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It features various musical notations including notes, rests, and fingerings (e.g., "1", "2"). A large, semi-transparent watermark "Bären-Leseprobe" is overlaid diagonally across the score. In the bottom left corner, there is a circular logo containing a stylized line drawing of a bear walking to the left, with a five-pointed star above its head. The page number "5" is visible in the bottom right corner.

22

5

1 4 5

1 4 1 1

5

1 4

1 3

Musical score for measures 27-32 of 'The Rose Tree'. The score is written for a piano in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of two staves, Treble and Bass. The melody is primarily in the Treble staff, with the Bass staff providing harmonic support. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of measure 32.

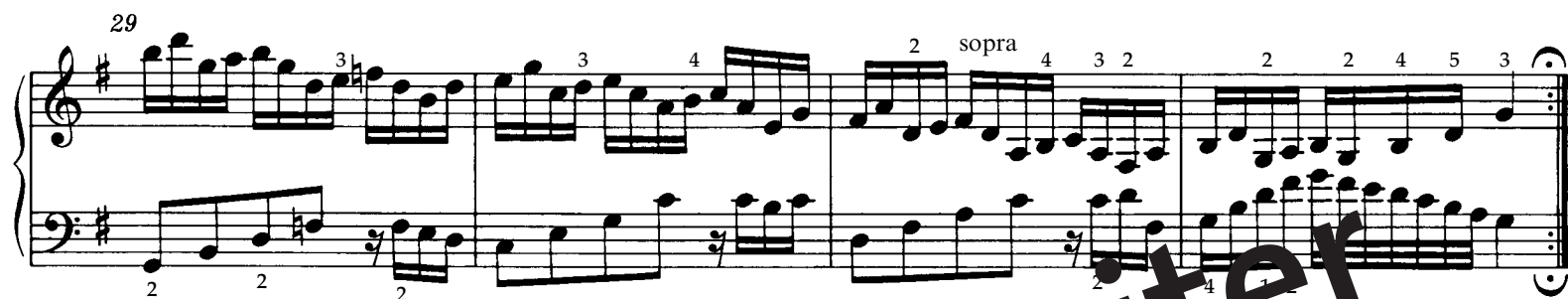
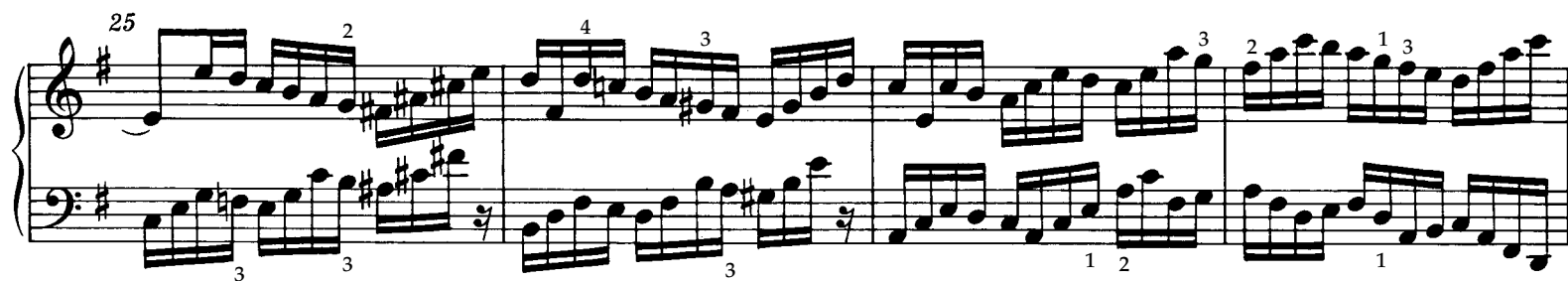
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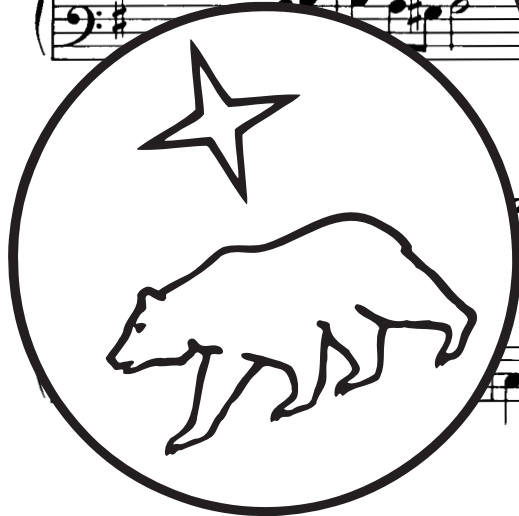


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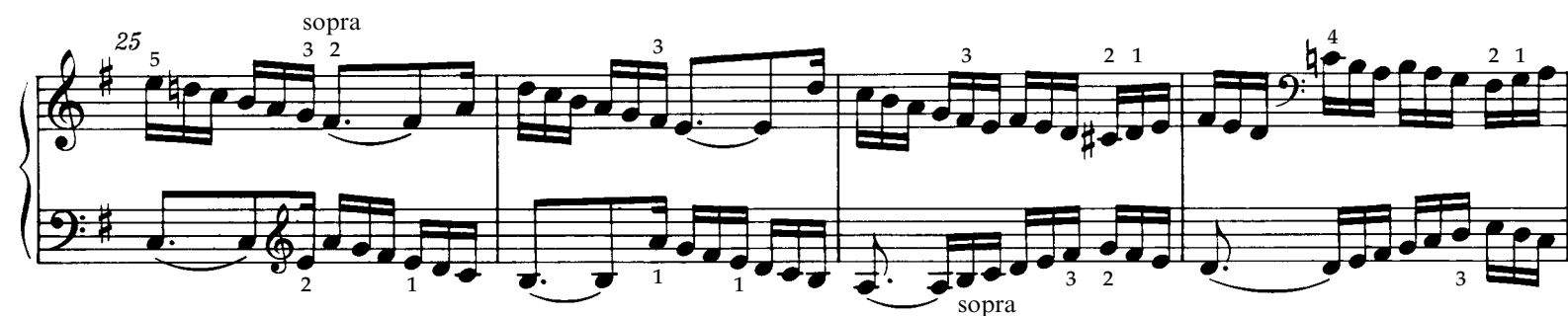
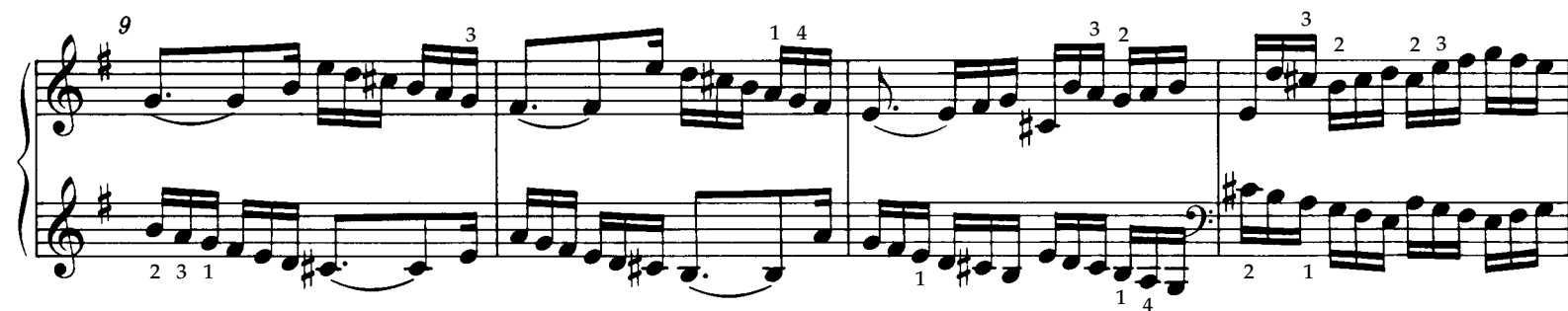


Variazio 10: Fugata 1. Clav.



Variazio 11a: 2. Clav.





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17

3 1 4 3

20

3 4 4 3 3 4 1 2 4

23

1 5 3 1 1 2



2 1 5 2 1 2

29

1 4 5 1 3 1

Variatio 13. a 2 Clav.

3 2 1 4 2 1 2 1 3 1 4

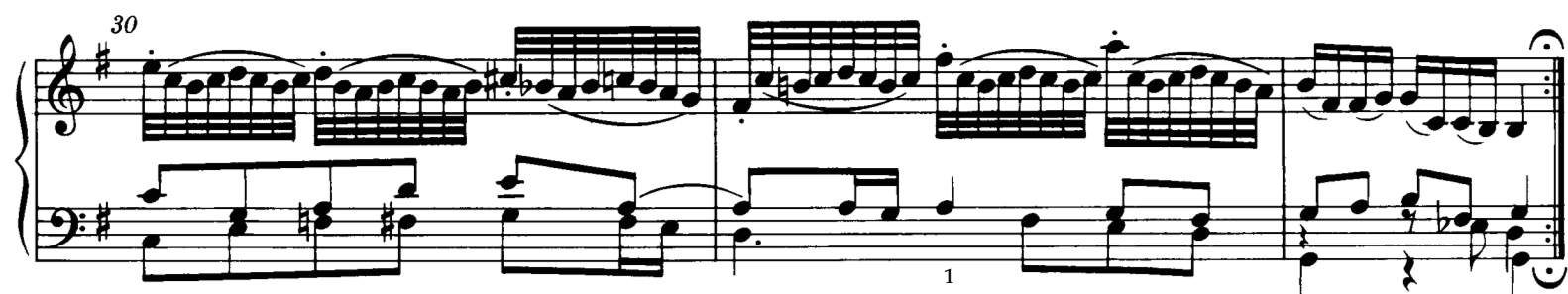
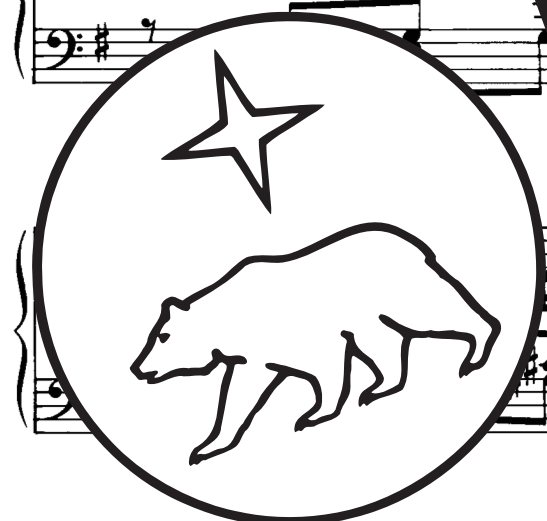
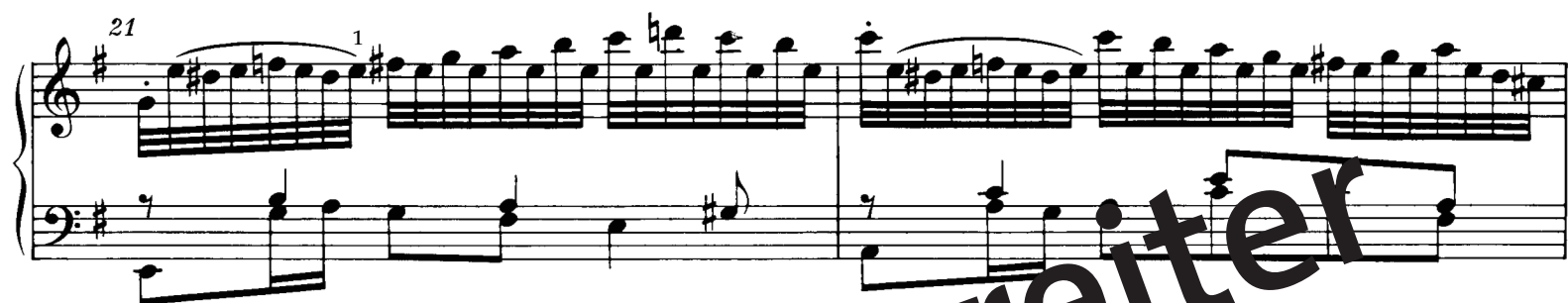
4 2 1 1 3 1 4 2 1 3 1 4

7 1 3 4 4 1 2 1 3 1 4

13 3

15 4 1

Bärenreiter
Leseprobe
Sample page



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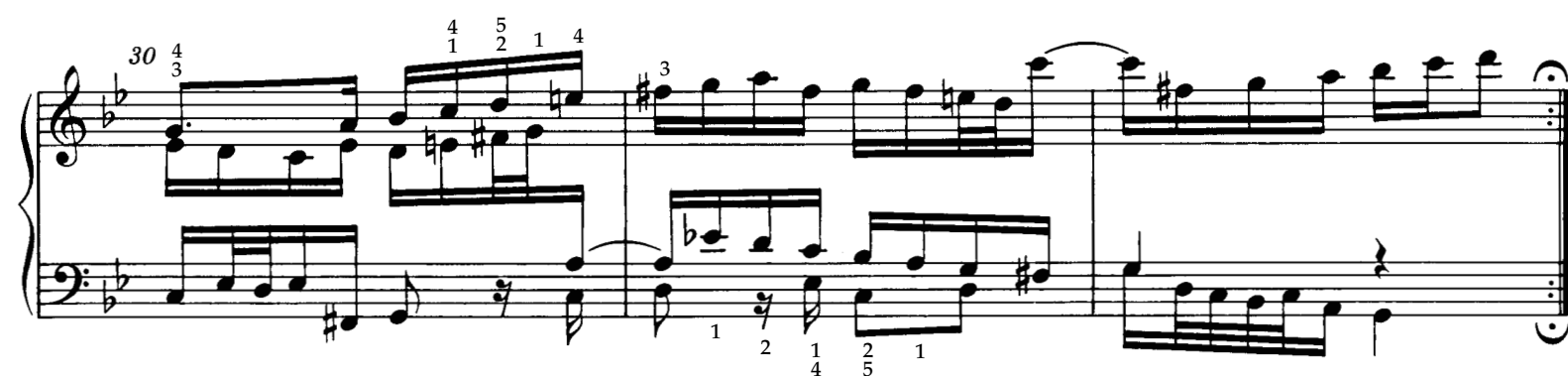
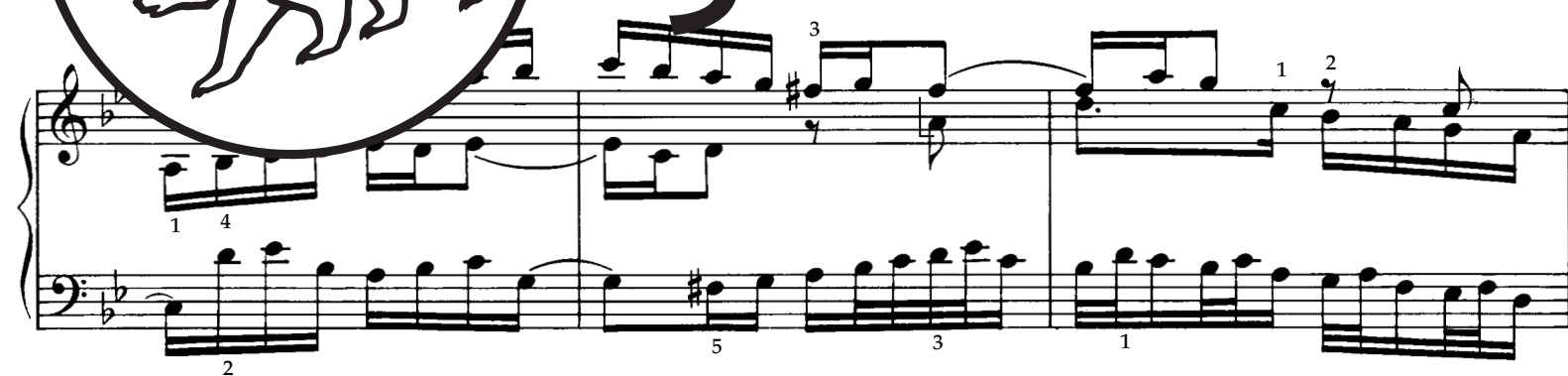


Variation 15 Canon alla Quinta 1. Clav.

andante

4 15 5 2 1 3 2 2 5 5

4 5 3 4 3 2 1 2 1 2 1 4 5 5 21



Bärenreiter
Leseprobe
Sample page



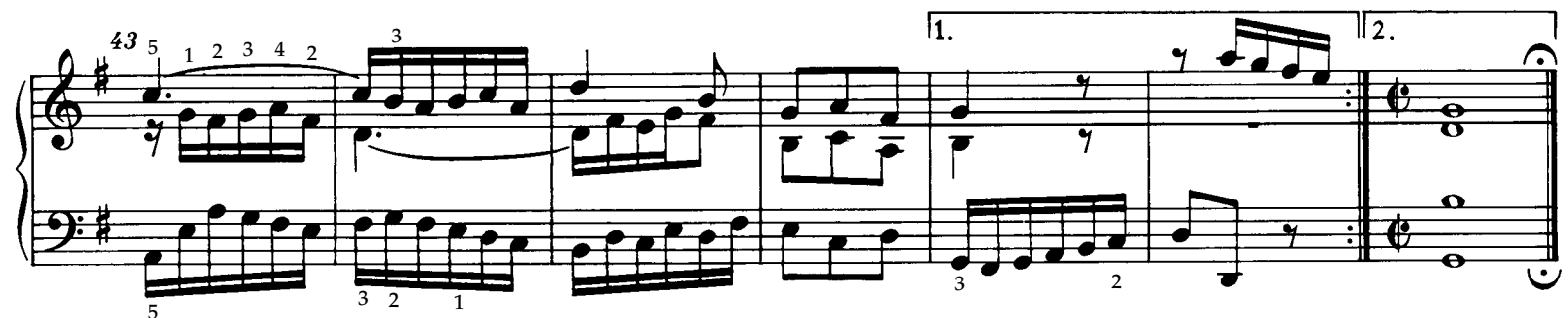
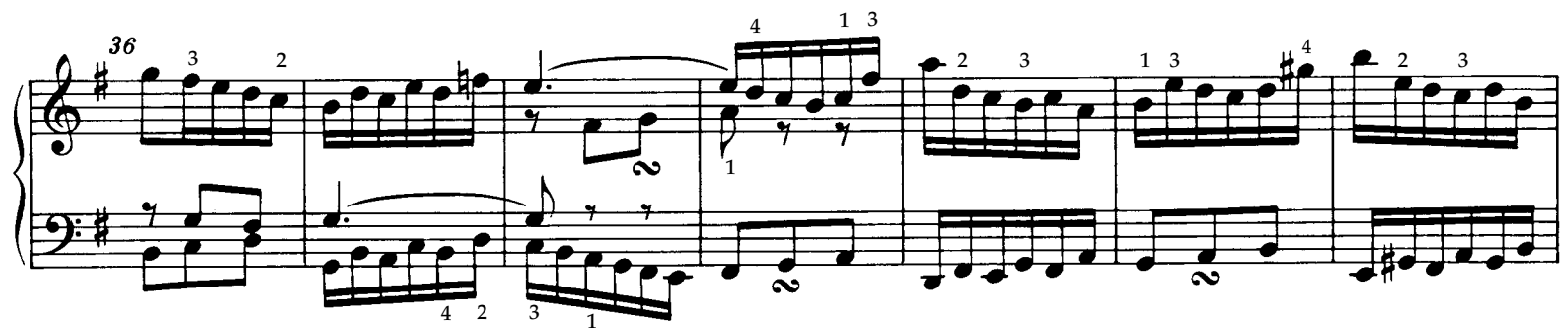
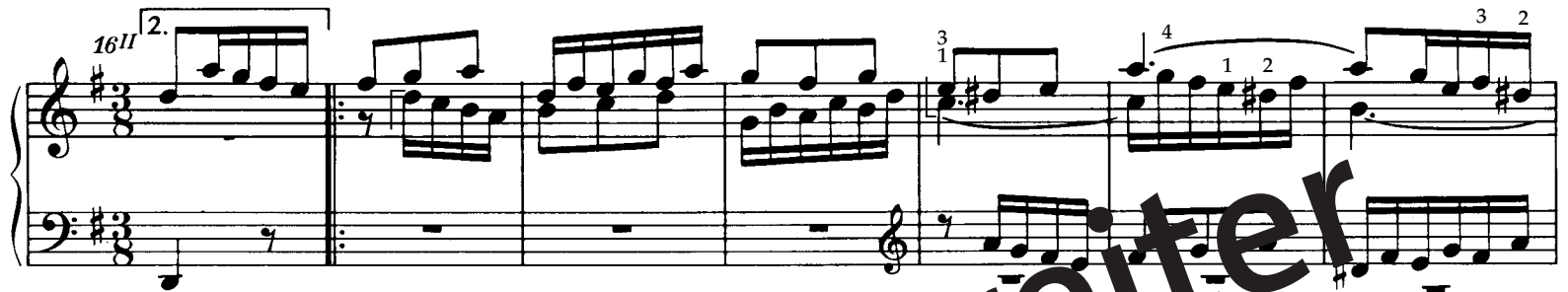
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Variation 1717 2 clav. clav.

[illegible]

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Pärlens reiser'. It consists of two staves, a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps). The melody is written in the treble staff and includes fingerings (1-5) and a repeat sign. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'Pärlens reiser' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Bärenreiter Leseprobe". The score is written for piano and voice. The piano part is on the top staff, and the vocal part is on the bottom staff, marked "sopra". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings. A large, diagonal watermark reading "Bärenreiter Leseprobe" is overlaid across the entire page.

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in a two-staff format. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#), and the lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in the upper staff, and the accompaniment is in the lower staff. The piece is in 2/4 time. The melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a quarter note B4. The accompaniment starts with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, and then a quarter note B3. The melody continues with a quarter note C5, followed by a quarter note B4, and then a quarter note A4. The accompaniment continues with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, and then a quarter note B3. The melody ends with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a quarter note B4. The accompaniment ends with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, and then a quarter note B3.

14

1 4 3 2 1

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in a two-staff format. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The score consists of three measures. The first measure contains a treble staff with a melody starting on G4 and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The second measure continues the melody and accompaniment. The third measure concludes the piece with a final chord in the treble staff and a single note in the bass staff. Above the first measure, the number '14' is written. Above the second measure, the numbers '1 4 3 2 1' are written, indicating a sequence of notes or a specific musical instruction.

17

5 4 1 3 2 5

sopra

20

23



30

2 1 2 1

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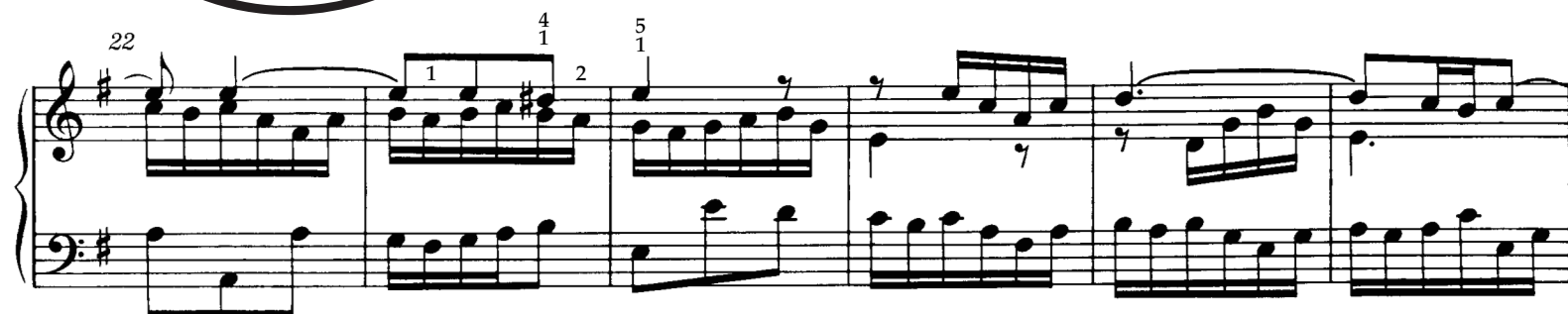
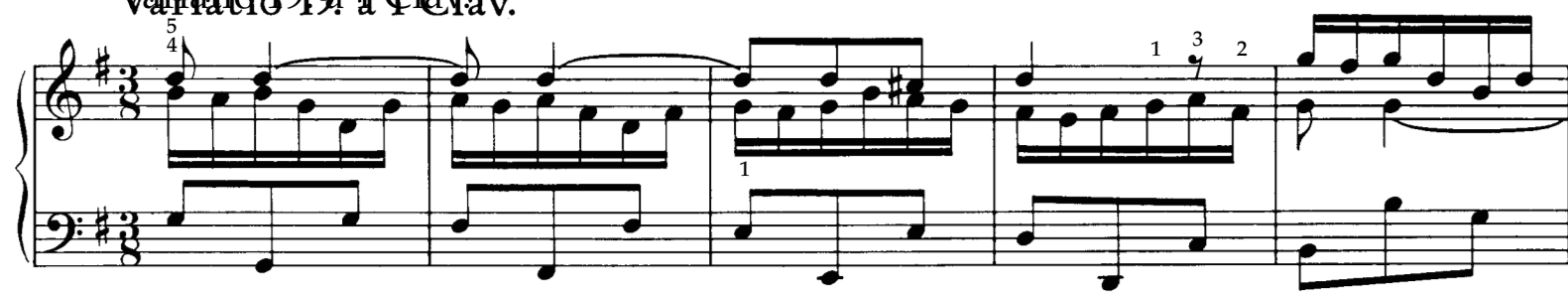
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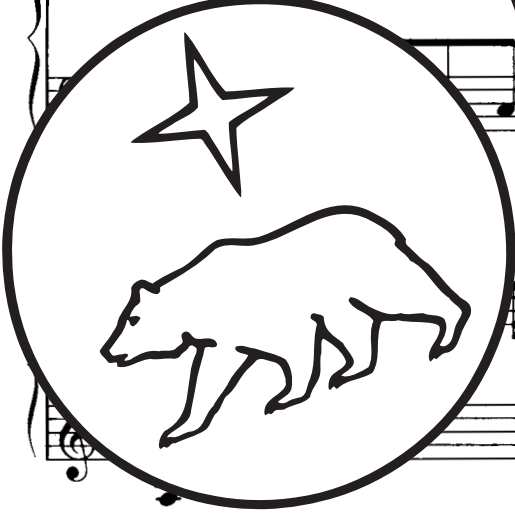
Variation 19 in C Major.



Variation 2020.2a 2a Clav.

musical score for Variation 2020.2a 2a Clav. in G major, 3/4 time, featuring a soprano line and piano accompaniment. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 1, 4, 7, 12, and 14 indicated. Fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and articulation marks (accents, slurs) are present throughout the piece.

Bärenreiter
Leseprobe
Sample page

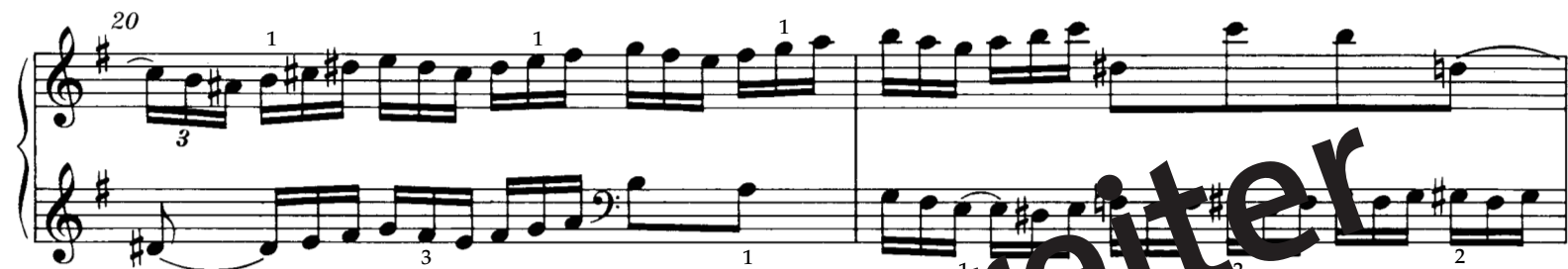


17

sopra



20

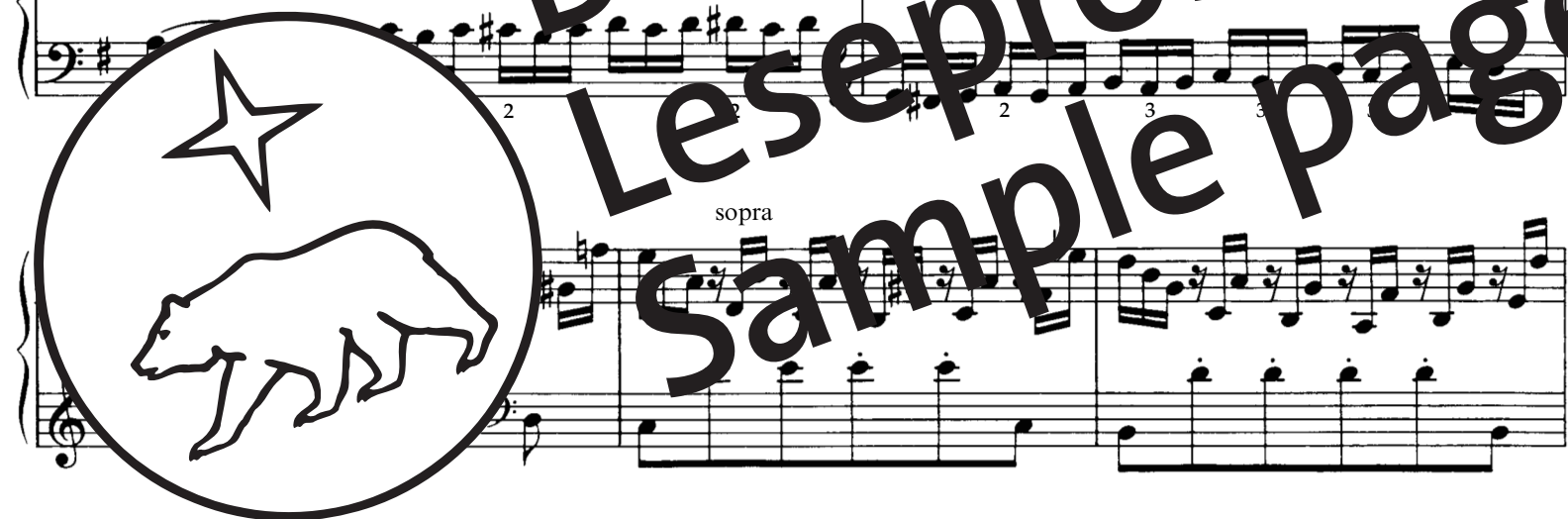


22



24

sopra



27



30

sopra



Bärenreiter
Leseprobe
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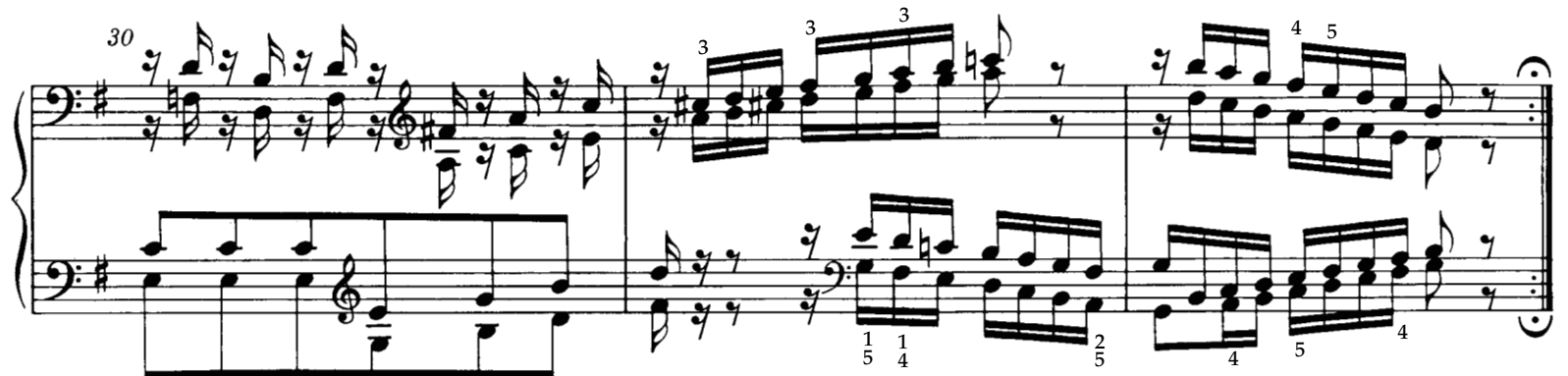
Variation 22. 1. Klav.

alla breve

2 4 5 2 5 2 4 2 1 1 5 4 2 1 7 5 2 4 1 3 4 1 2 3 2 4 1 1 3 2 5 3 1 2 4 22 4 5 2 4 28 4 1 5 2 4 3

Variation 323. a Clav.

Musical score for the piece "Bärenreiter" in 3/4 time. The score is written for piano and includes a large circular logo on the left side featuring a bear and a star. The music is in G major (one sharp) and consists of 13 measures. The score is divided into three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system contains measures 1-4, the second system contains measures 5-8, and the third system contains measures 9-13. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing triplets. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots in the final measure.



Bärenreiter
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17

2 1 5 3 2 1

20

3 5 2 1 2 1

23

4

26

5 1 2 1 2 2

30

1 5 1 2 1 3 1 2 4 1

Variation 25 in 2/4 Clav.

adagio

1 4 3 1 4 5 2 5 1 2 4

4 1 2 4 4 5 4 5 4 5 1 5

7 1 3 5 4 3 1 4 5 4 3 1 1 1

13 3 5 1 3 1 2 2 1

15 3 1 3 1. 2.

1

17

5 2/4 4 4 5 4 5

20

1 2 3 4 2/5 3 1

23

5 3 1 3 1 3 5 2 7 3 1 1 2/5 1 4 1 5

29

4 1b 1 4 3 2

31

3 1 4 3 2 3 1. 2.



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17 2 2 2 3 3

sopra

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system consists of a bass staff and a treble staff. The bass staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. It contains a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes, with fingerings 20, 1, 2, 1, and 3 indicated above. The treble staff contains a few notes, including a dotted quarter note and an eighth note. The second system continues the bass staff with more eighth and sixteenth notes, including triplets and a final measure with a 5-fingered note. The treble staff continues with a few notes, including a dotted quarter note and an eighth note. A large, stylized watermark 'inter' is visible across the bottom right of the page.

The image shows a sample page from a music book. It features musical notation on staves, a large circular logo with a bear and a star, and a large diagonal watermark reading "Bären Leseprobe Sample page".

27 5

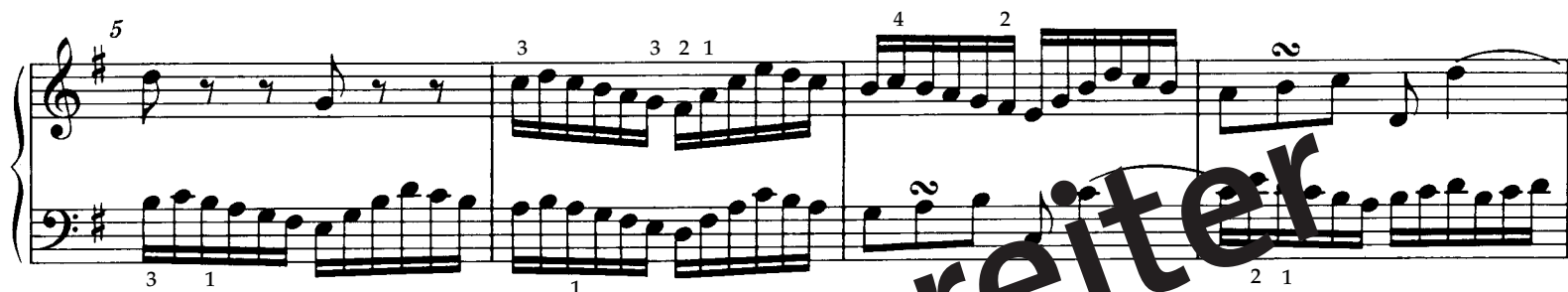
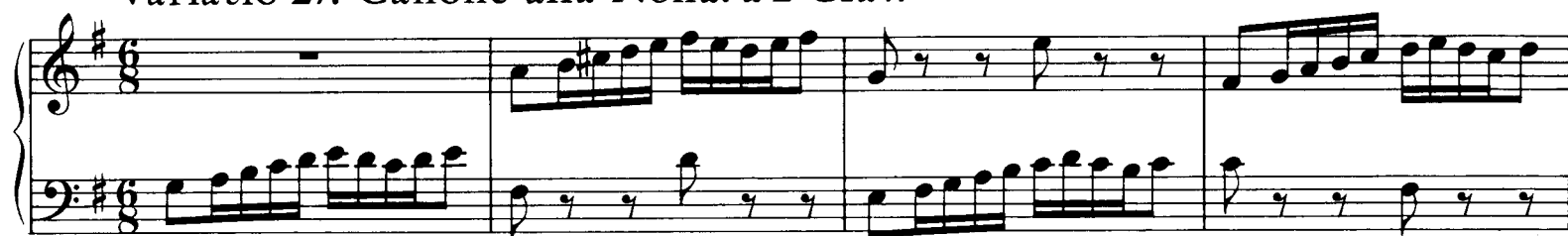
18 16

5 2 1 4 2 1 1 4 2 3 5 4 2 1 1 3 1

4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

A musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". The score is written for a piano and voice. The piano part is in the lower register, featuring a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The voice part is in the upper register, featuring a melody with various intervals and a final cadence. The score is in 3/4 time and the key signature has one sharp (F#).

Variation 27. Canone alla Nonna. a 2 Clav.



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21 3 5



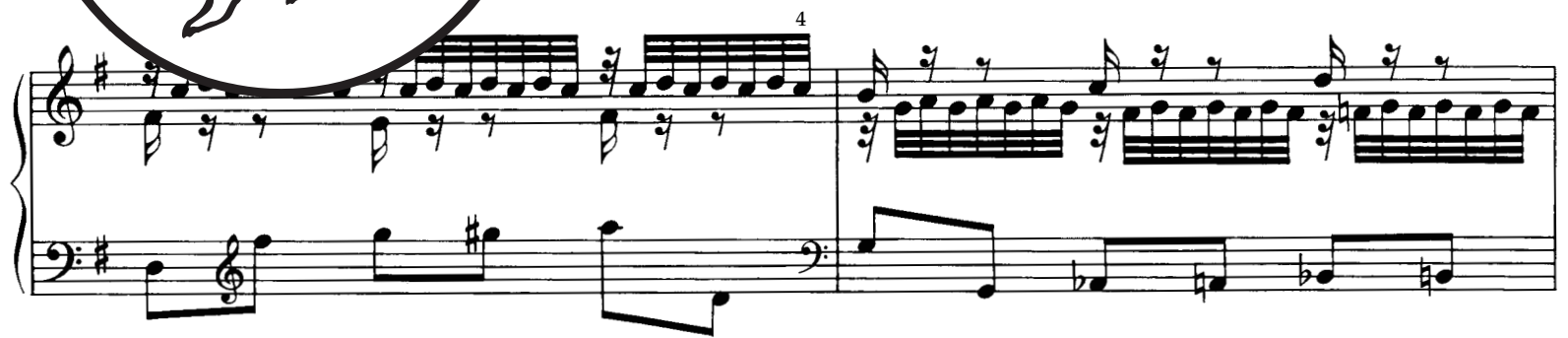
23 sopra 3 5



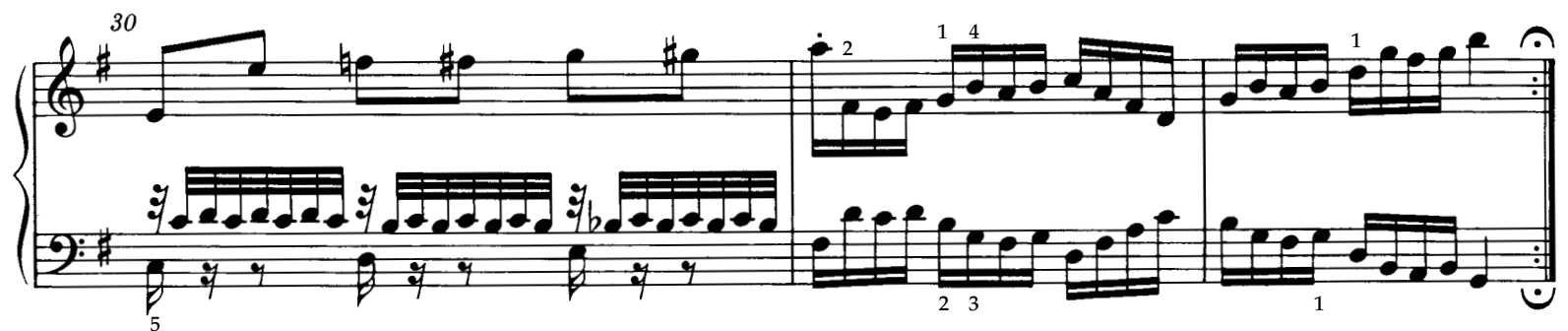
26



4



30 5 2 3 1 4 1



Variatio 29. a 1 ô vero 2 Clav.

5 3 2
2

5 3 2
2

5 4 2
2

sopra

4

3

7

3

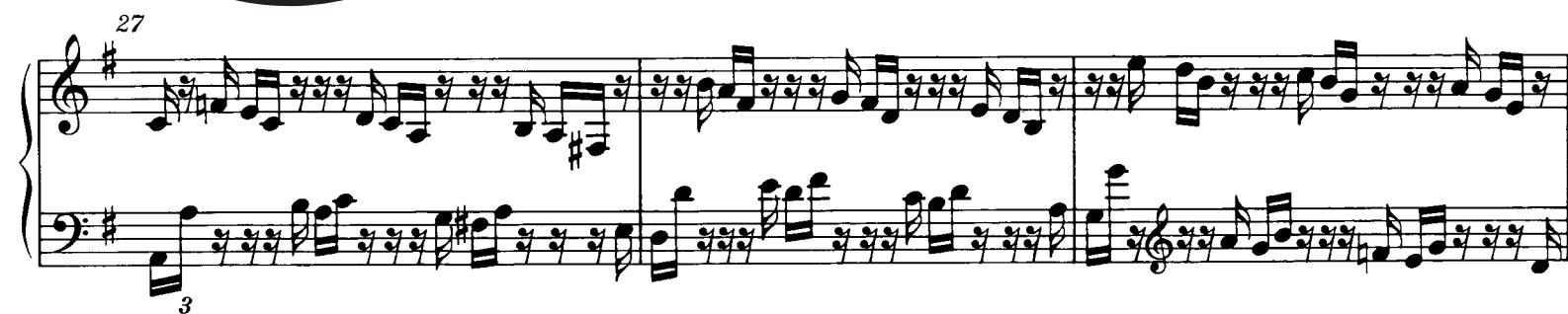
12

14

4



Bärenreiter
Leseprobe
sample page



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Leseprobe
Sample page



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Aria



Bärenreiter
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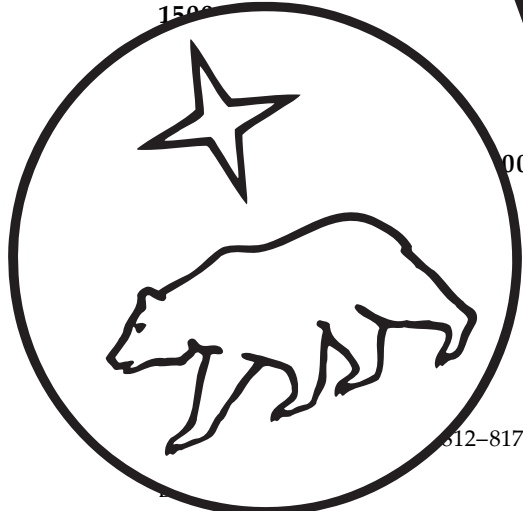
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