The MAYRON COLE PIANO METHOD

Canon in D

Johann Pachelbel 1653 – 1706

(pronounced POCK-el-bel)



Johann Pachelbel was a German composer who lived in the Baroque period. *(The Baroque Period was roughly from 1600 through 1750).* Johann's family was middle-class, and his father was a wine merchant. When he was still a boy, his father could see Johann's interest in music and hired for him a music teacher. Within a short time, young Pachelbel showed great academic and musical abilities.

When he was only sixteen, Johann became a student at the University of Altdorf in Numberg (a small town outside of Nuremberg, Germany). That same year he was appointed organist of the St. Lorenz church in Numberg. After one year, Pachelbel was forced to leave the university due to financial difficulties. But he was such a good student at Altdorf University that he gained a scholarship to the School at Regensburg despite the fact that the school's normal quota of students was already filled when he auditioned. Pachelbel so impressed the school authorities with his high academic qualifications that he was admitted.

Pachelbel was permitted to also study with music teachers not on the faculty of the School at Regensburg. One of those teachers introduced Pachelbel to Italian music and Catholic church music. Pachelbel stayed at the School at Regensburg until he was twenty.

He then traveled to Vienna, Austria. Vienna was a cultural center at that time and several renowned composers worked there. Pachelbel stayed in Vienna five years and was eager to absorb all the musical culture that Vienna offered.

In 1677, Johann Pachelbel moved to Eisenach, Germany where he was employed as the court organist working with another organist named Daniel Eberlin. While in Eisenach, Pachelbel met members of the large Bach family and became a friend to J.S. Bach's father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, and also became a tutor to Johann Ambrosius Bach's children.

But a restless Johann Pachelbel spent only one year in Eisenach. During that period, his employer died and court musicians were left jobless. His friend, Daniel Eberlin, came to the rescue and wrote a glowing letter of recommendation for Pachelbel describing him as "*a perfect and rare virtuoso*." This letter of recommendation was absolutely needed in order for Pachelbel to obtain another job.

Pachelbel journeyed to Erfurt, Germany and obtained the position of church organist. He worked there for twelve years. During this time he renewed his friendship with the Bach family and became godfather to J.S. Bach's sister, Johanna Juditha. Pachelbel boarded in the elder Johann Christian Bach's house. During the time Pachelbel was in Erfurt he established his reputation as a leading German organist and composer. (continued on page 58)

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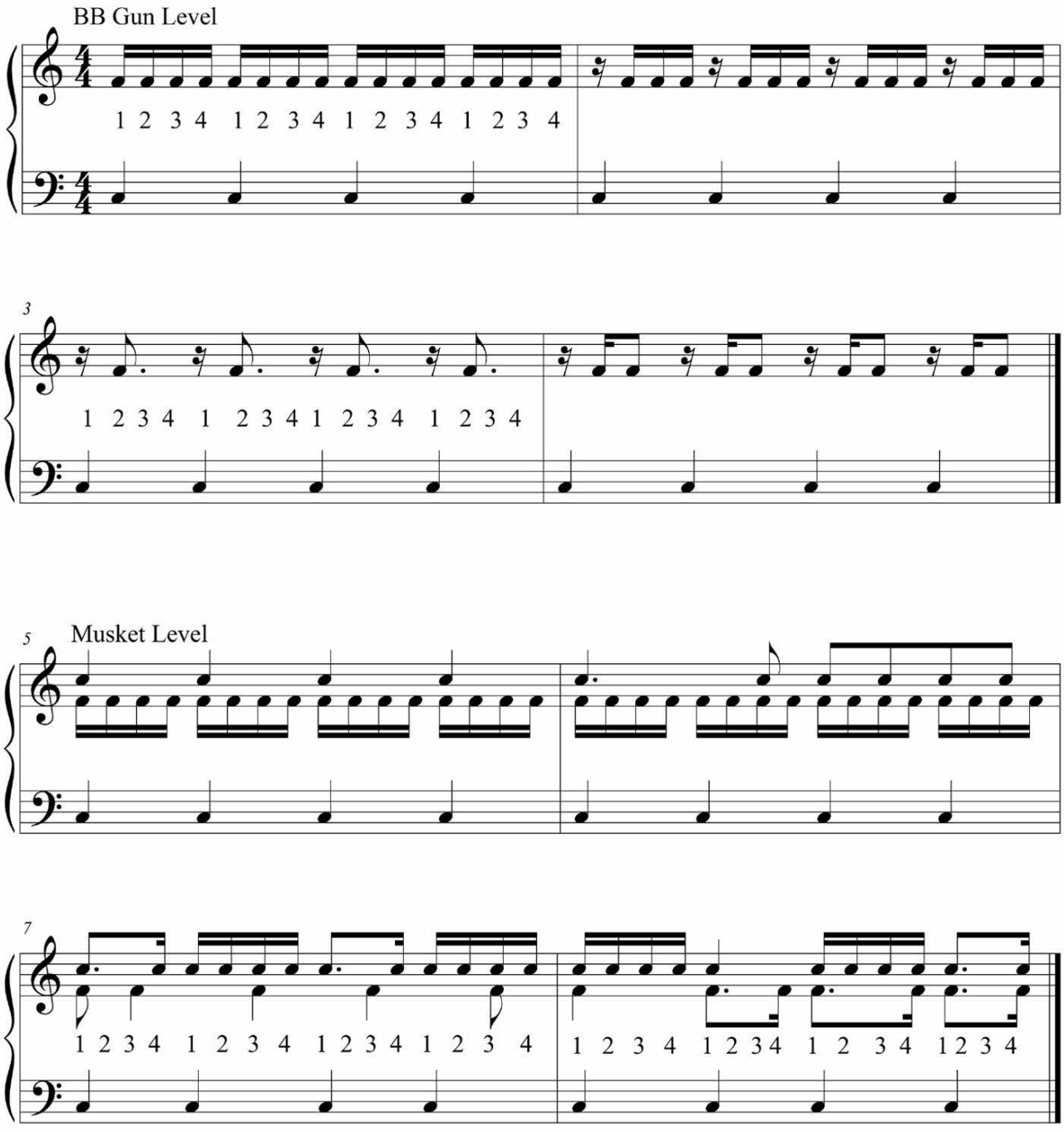
Canon in D Rhythms

Up until this **Canon**, you have counted four sixteenth notes as: 1 e + a. But in this composition, please count to four on each beat since all the beats throughout the **Canon** are broken into four sixteenth notes. So, instead of counting the 16th notes as 1 e + a, you will count them as 1 2 3 4. That will make counting the 32nd notes in this composition more simple.



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Cannon Level (Pardon the pun!)

9

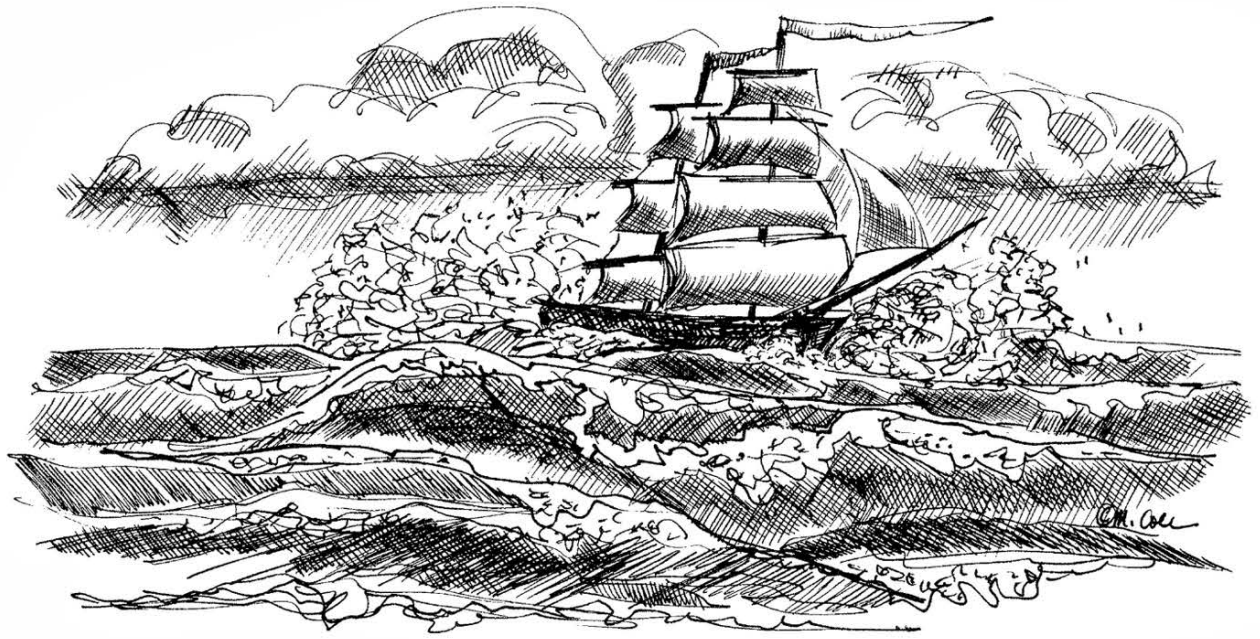
1 2 + 3 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 2 + 3 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

10

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

11

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



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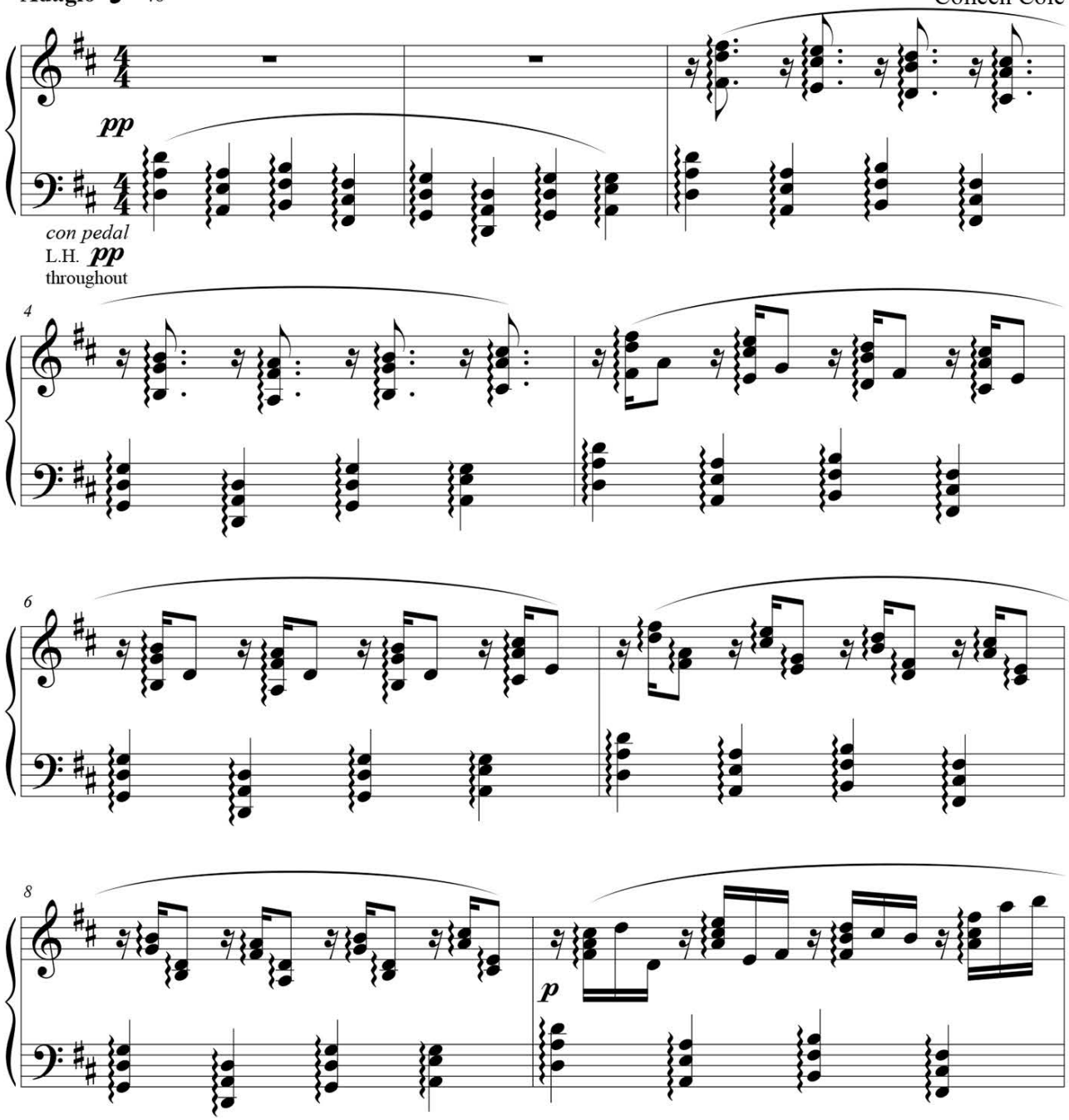
Canon in D

(orchestrated accompaniment has a 2 measure count-in)

WEDDING
MUSIC

Johann Pachelbel
arranged by
Colleen Cole



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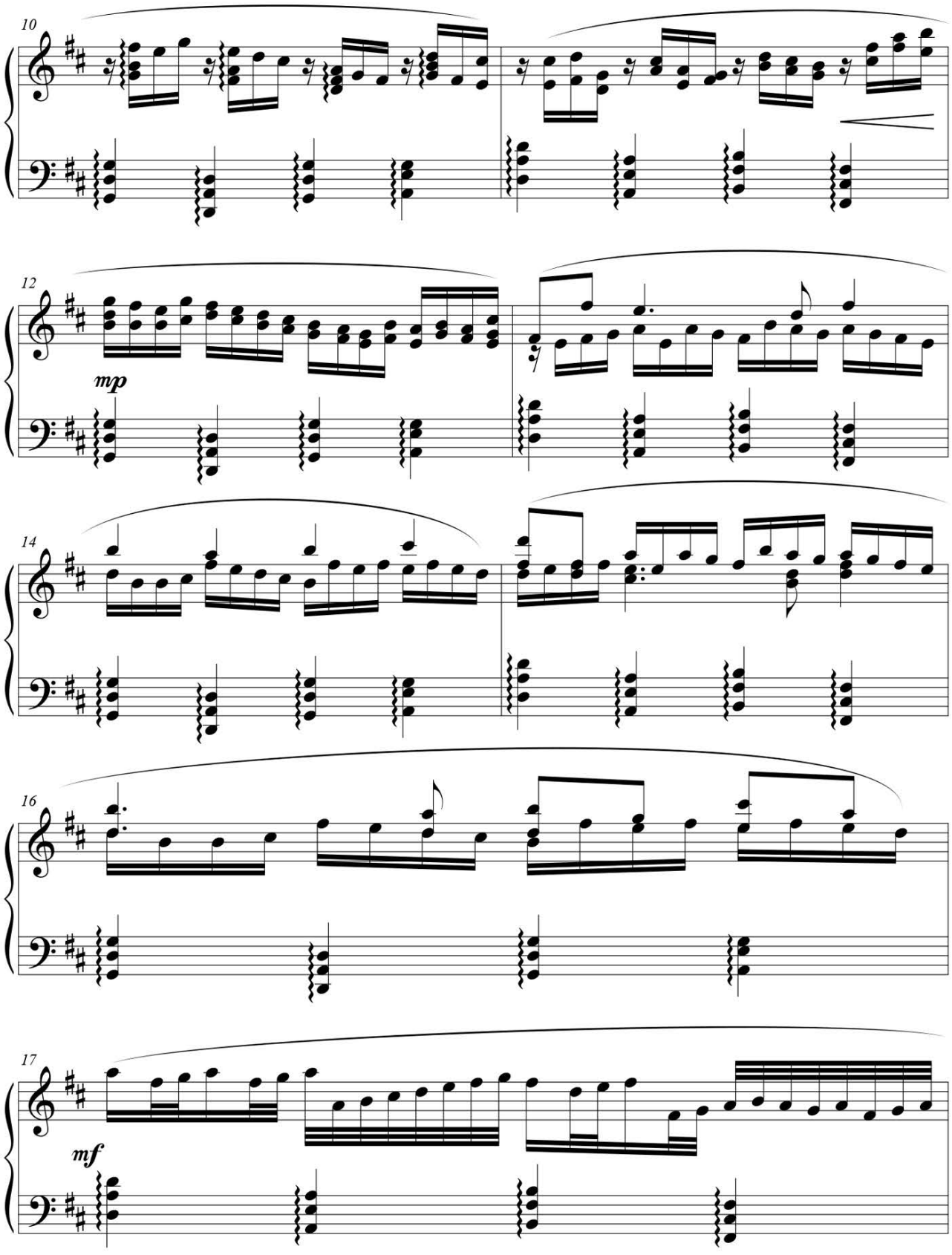

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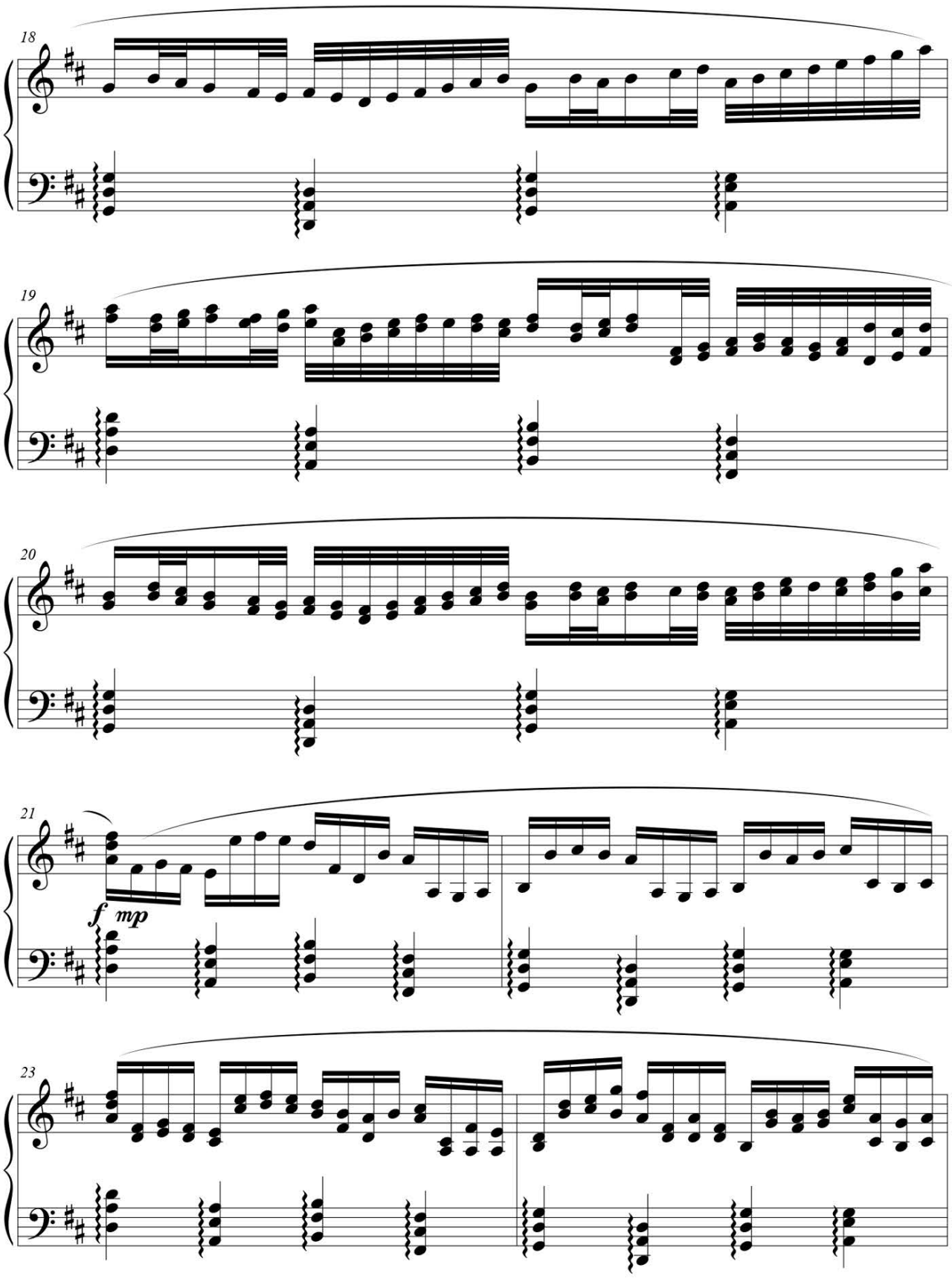

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25

27

p

29



31

33

8va

p *rit. & dim.*

pp

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Under his contract as organist with the Erfurt Church, Pachelbel was required to compose weekly preludes for the church's services. He also had to keep the church organ in good repair. But his most important job was to compose a major work every year to show the church officials his progress as a composer and organist. And each composition had to be better than the one composed a year earlier!

In 1684, Pachelbel's Erfurt landlord, Johann Christian Bach the Elder, died. Pachelbel purchased his house from Johann Christian's widow.

But two years later Pachelbel was offered the position as church organist at the St. Trinitatis Church in Sondershausen, Germany. Many letters and negotiations were exchanged between Pachelbel and the St. Trinitatis officials until Pachelbel was informed by the Erfurt Church officials that he could *not* consider any job offers without the Erfurt Church's approval. The ending to the tense situation was quietly resolved. Pachelbel stayed at the Erfurt church and was given a nice raise in pay. He stayed in Erfurt, Germany for four more years.

Pachelbel married twice while he was in Erfurt. His first wife and infant son died in a plague two years after the wedding. Ten months later, Pachelbel married again. He and his second wife had seven children.

In 1690 Pachelbel asked to leave from the church at Erfurt and was granted that permission. He took with him a letter singing his musical abilities, diligence, and fidelity. Those traits were especially important for a church organist to possess.

Within a week, Pachelbel was employed as a musician-organist at the Royal Court at Stuttgart. Regretfully, he had to leave that post in only two years because the French were attacking the city. His next job was in Gotha, Germany where he was once again the town organist. This job lasted two more years.

In 1694, the huge Bach family gathered together in Ohrdruf, Germany to celebrate the younger Johann Christoph Bach's wedding. Pachelbel had taught Johann Christoph when the young man had been a child so Pachelbel was invited to the wedding. He and other composers were invited to provide the music. This is a little strange since practically every person in the Bach family was a *professional* musician. Pachelbel probably did attend the wedding, but there are no written records of his attendance to verify this fact. And if Pachelbel was at the wedding he most certainly met a nine-year old boy, J.S. Bach. (Yes! *That famous* J.S. Bach!) If this meeting did indeed take place, it would be the only time that J.S. Bach met the great Johann Pachelbel, and vice versa.

While Pachelbel was working in Gotha he was offered positions at Stuttgart and at Oxford University. He declined both job offers.

But in Nuremberg at the St. Sebaldus Church, the church organist died. The church authorities wanted Pachelbel so desperately for the now-vacant position that they offered him the job without his needing to "audition" for the position. Pachelbel accepted the prestigious job and the church officials at Gotha released him from the Gotha position. Pachelbel arrived in Nuremberg in the summer of 1695.

Pachelbel lived the remainder of his life in Nuremberg. He died in 1706 and is buried in the St. Rochus Cemetery in Nuremberg, Germany.

He wrote a large amount of sacred and popular music and was a popular organ teacher. His music had a lovely melodic line (tune). Most of his music was not extremely complicated but was enjoyable to perform. His *Canon in D* is one of his most popular compositions. It has been used in many weddings and is as popular as Wagner's *Bridal Chorus*.

F R E E P I A N O M E T H O D . C O M
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