Johann Sebastian Bach

Chorales in 5 Parts
for Brass Quintet

Johann Sebastian Bach.

Settings for Brass Quintet
by
Paul Von Hoff

About this collection

This collection of chorales from the cantatas and oratorios of Johann Sebastian Bach was developed to fill a need that I perceived while my, at the time very new, quintet was looking for pedagogical material to strengthen our core chamber music competencies. We wanted something simple, where deficiencies in intonation or attacks would be clearly audible, unobscured by difficulties in individual parts, as well as something that would still be musically satisfying even after long periods of detailed work. Bach chorales have been used by many ensembles for this type of work in the past, so this music seemed to be the perfect starting point. As we tried a few of the commercially available versions, we were frustrated that the common solution of making 4 parts into 5 by just to doubling one of the parts (most often the bass), did not really address the more complex task of working on perfect balance and intonation with 5 independent voices who must be adjusting and rebalancing as the voicing and doublings shift through the ensemble as is common in the quintet repertoire. If the trombone and tuba are doubling the entire time, they must necessarily listen to each other first, leaving the upper three voices to adjust to them with little concession the other way. My solution was to choose a set of Bach's chorales of varying harmonic complexity and set them for 5 voices, carefully adding a 5th voice that moves among the inner 3 parts and resembles types of voicing encountered in the quintet literature without changing the essence of the chorale. I have left the soprano and bass parts unaltered.

This collection was created with a professional quintet in mind. As such, the range used for the bass instrument will not always be accommodating to a developing tuba player, especially one playing on a large Bb or C tuba. Bass trombonists should have no problem.

How to use this collection

This collection is designed to be explored slowly. As each chorale becomes familiar to the group the following list of chamber music skills should be attended to. The goal is perfection. If the quintet can develop consistently perfect mastery on the following skills in these chorales then the mastery will begin to transfer to the literature even when the music is significantly more challenging. The idea is to get a taste of perfect intonation or a perfect entrance. The more often tasted the more the palate of the quintet will seek the experience again. This list is just a starting point and by no means exhaustive.

Entrances - Every musician's note speaks at the same time

Releases - Every musician's note ends at the same time and with the same shape

Articulation - Basic articulations from all players should be complementary

Intonation - Every chord with as few beats as possible and completely pure for major chords

Balance - All five voices are can be clearly heard, especially inner lines with moving 8th notes

Coordination - Group breathes together after fermatas without huge silences in the music. The fermatas should be thought of almost as breath marks that might slightly elongate the note rather than indefinite holds.

Shape - An intentional shape for each phrase is presented to the audience. Individual lines could contribute to that with unique dynamic and directional shape, but a listener should be able to clearly perceive a group intent.

Table of Contents

1. Chorale from BWV 62 - Come now, Savior
2. Chorale from Christmas Oratorio - Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light
3. Chorale from BWV 121 - We will now praise Christ
4. Chorale BWV 368 - In Sweet Rejoicing
5. Chorale from St. John's Passion - Your Imprisonment brings us Liberty
6. Chorale from St. Matthew's Passion - O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
7. Chorale from BWV 4 Christ Lay in Death's Bonds
8. Chorale from BWV 20 - O Eternity, you word of thunder
9. Chorale from BWV 9 - Salvation has come to us all
10. Chorale from BWV 227 - Jesus, my joy
11. Chorale from BWV 25 - Rejoice Greatly, O My Soul
12. Chorale from BWV 48 - Lord Jesus Christ, only comfort
13. Chorale from BWV 38 - Out of Deep Anguish I Call to You
14. Chorale from BWV 80 - A Mighty Fortress
15. Chorale from BWV 60 - It is enough
16. Chorale BWV 252 - Now Thank We All Our God
17. Chorale from BWV 140 - Sleepers Awake

Additional Notes

BWV 227 is the only 5 part chorale in this book where no voices were added. Bach wrote this one with 5 parts. One of the most difficult aspects of this chorale is to balance the trumpets when they arrive at unison notes at the end of phrases.

BWV 140 is a chorale that has been left in 4 parts with additional lines to perform it in any combination of a quintet missing a member. A useful tool for every quintet from time to time.

License

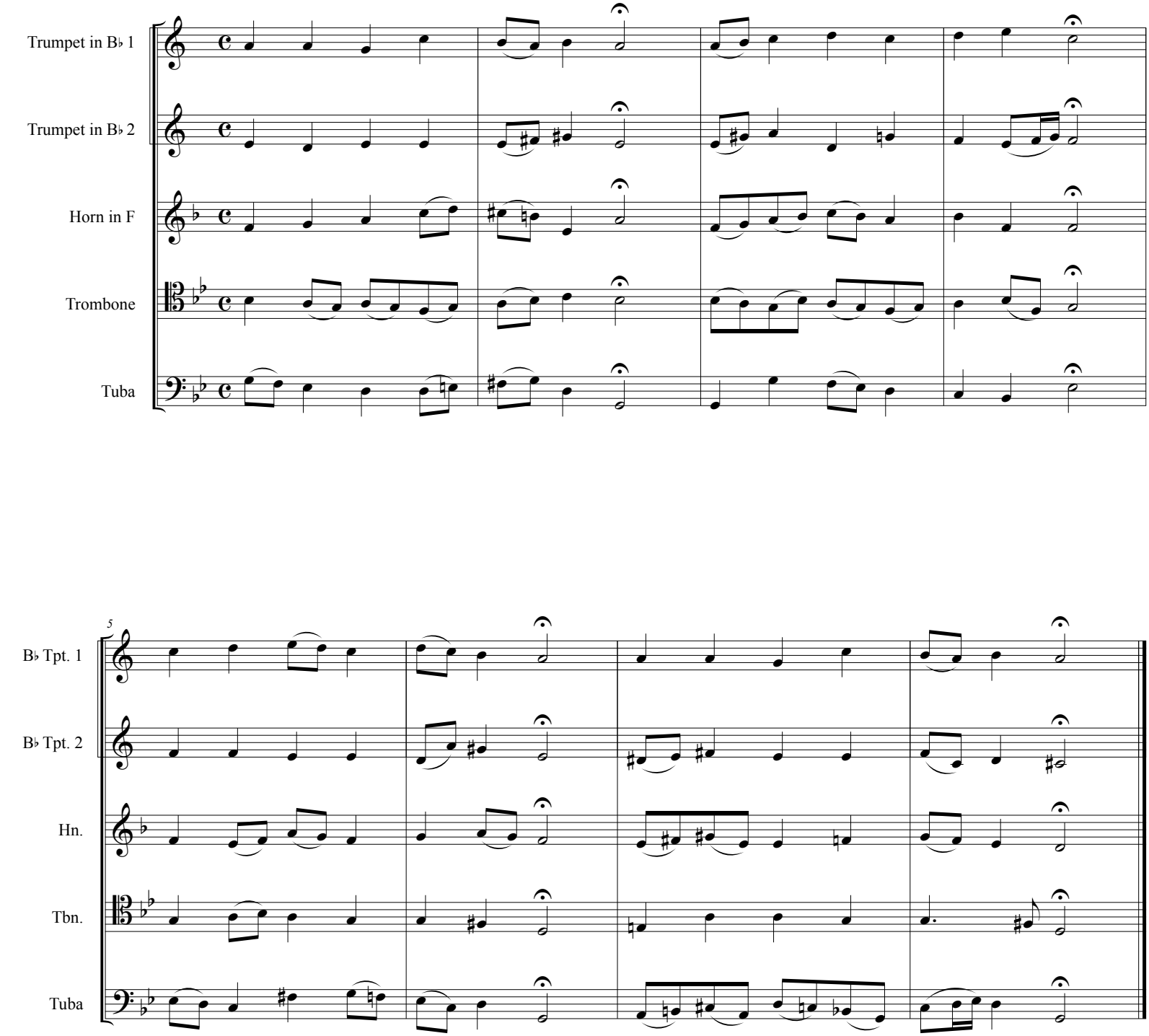
This book is licensed for use under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial license and may be freely distributed and duplicated **if** done so in its entirety and used for educational purposes, rehearsals, or public performances.

If you and your quintet have enjoyed using this book please consider buying one of Gaudete Brass's recordings from Cedille Records. (http://www.cedillerecords.org) If you represent an educational institution whose students have benefited from this book please consider inviting the Gaudete Brass to share our vision of the exciting world of brass chamber music.

Chorale from BWV 62

Come now, Savior

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
Paul Von Hoff



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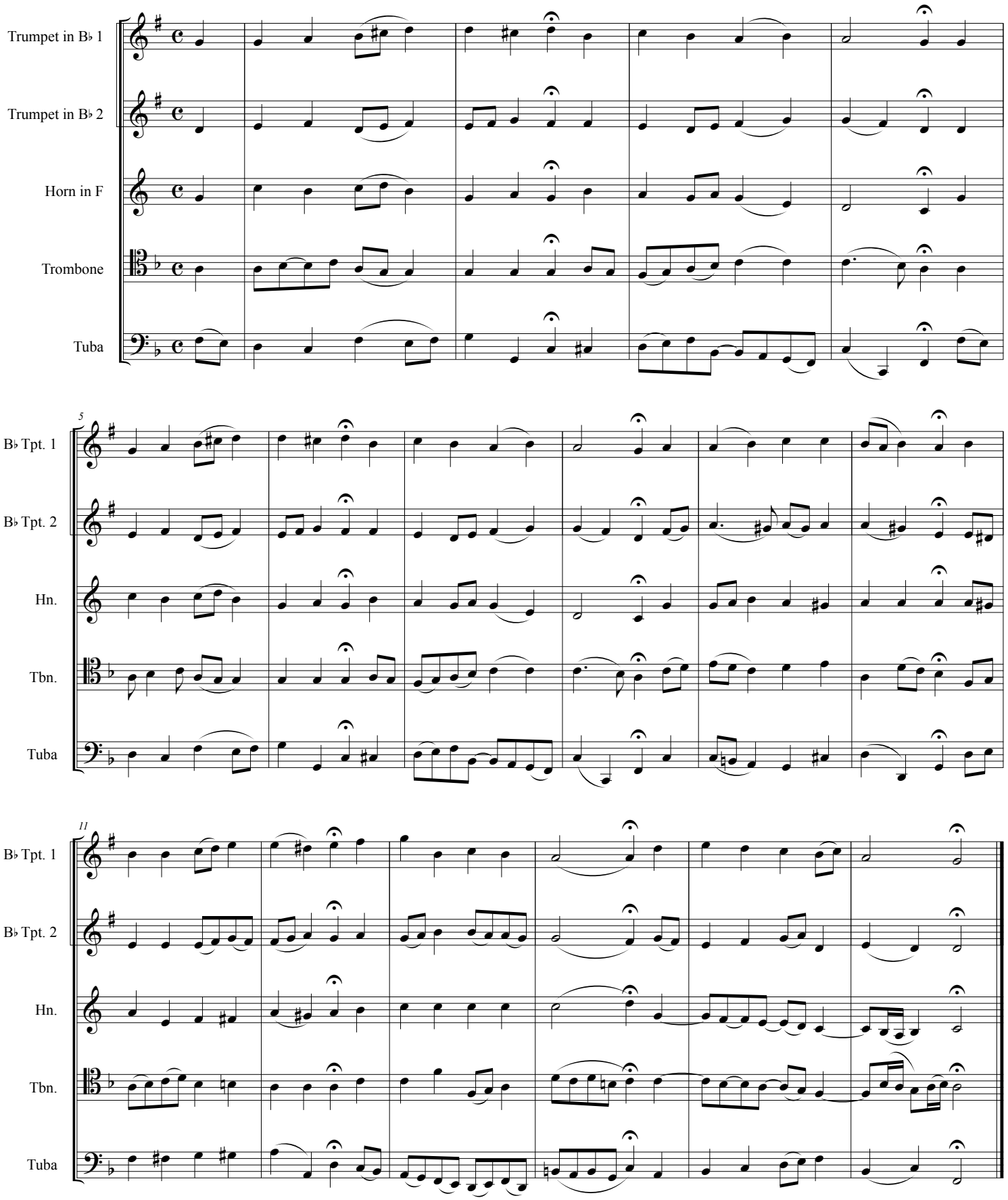
Chorale from Christmas Oratorio

Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
Paul Von Hoff



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Chorale from BWV 121

We will now praise Christ

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
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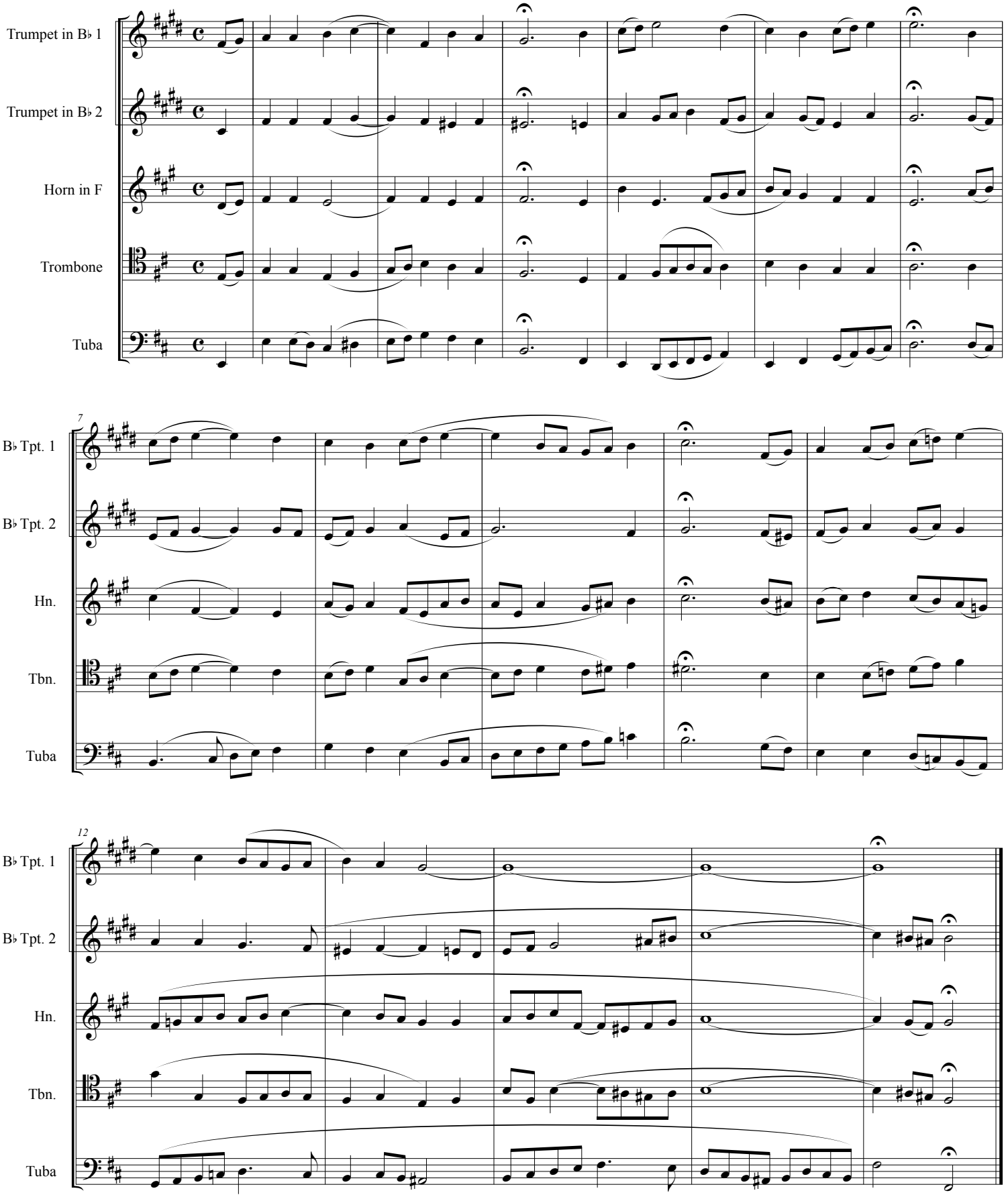

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Chorale BWV 368

In Sweet Rejoicing

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
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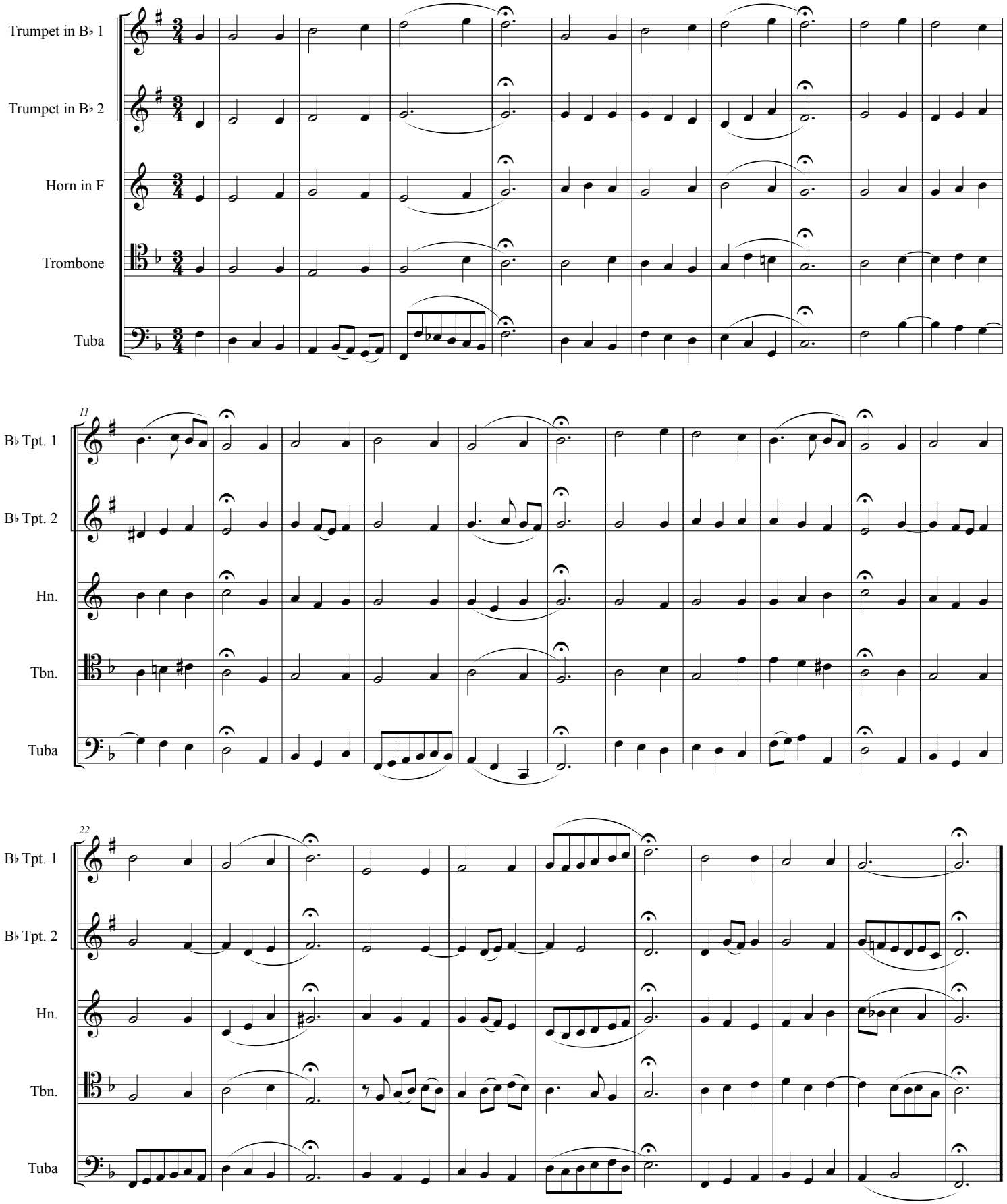

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Chorale from St. John's Passion

Your Imprisonment brings us Liberty

Johann Sebsatian Bach
Brass Quintet by
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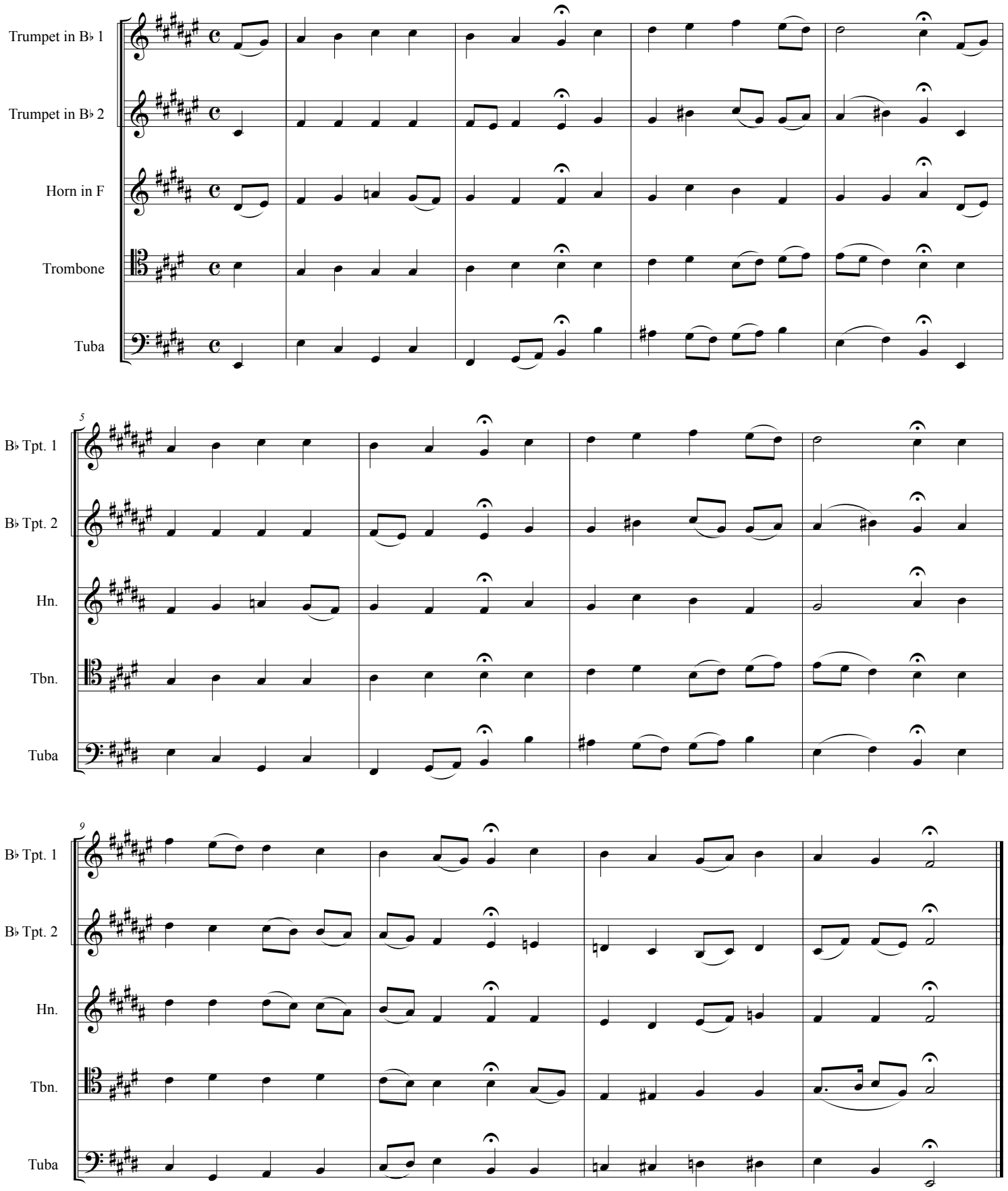

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Chorale from St. Matthew's Passion

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
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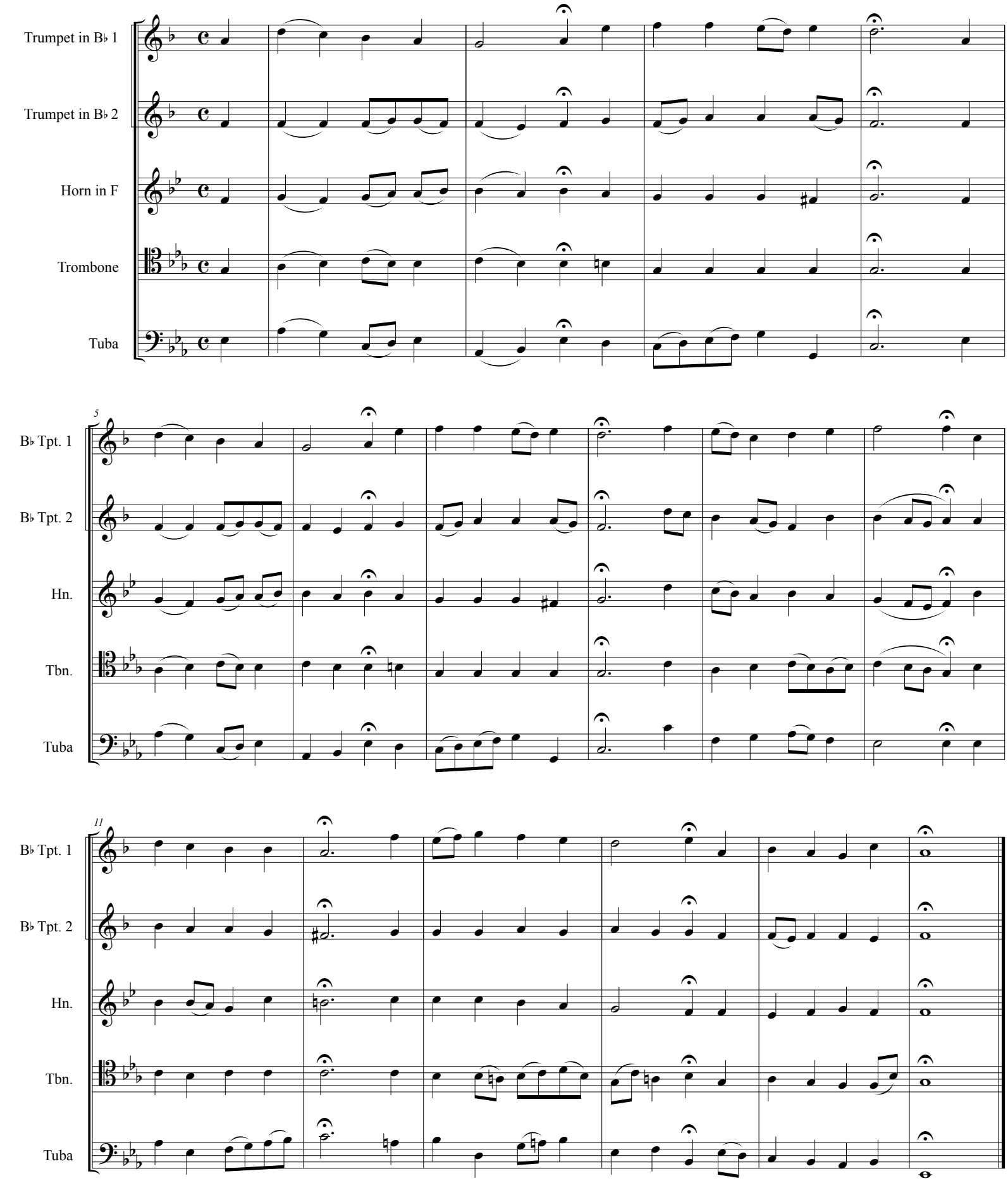

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Chorale from BWV 4

Christ Lay in Death's Bonds

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Brass Quintet by
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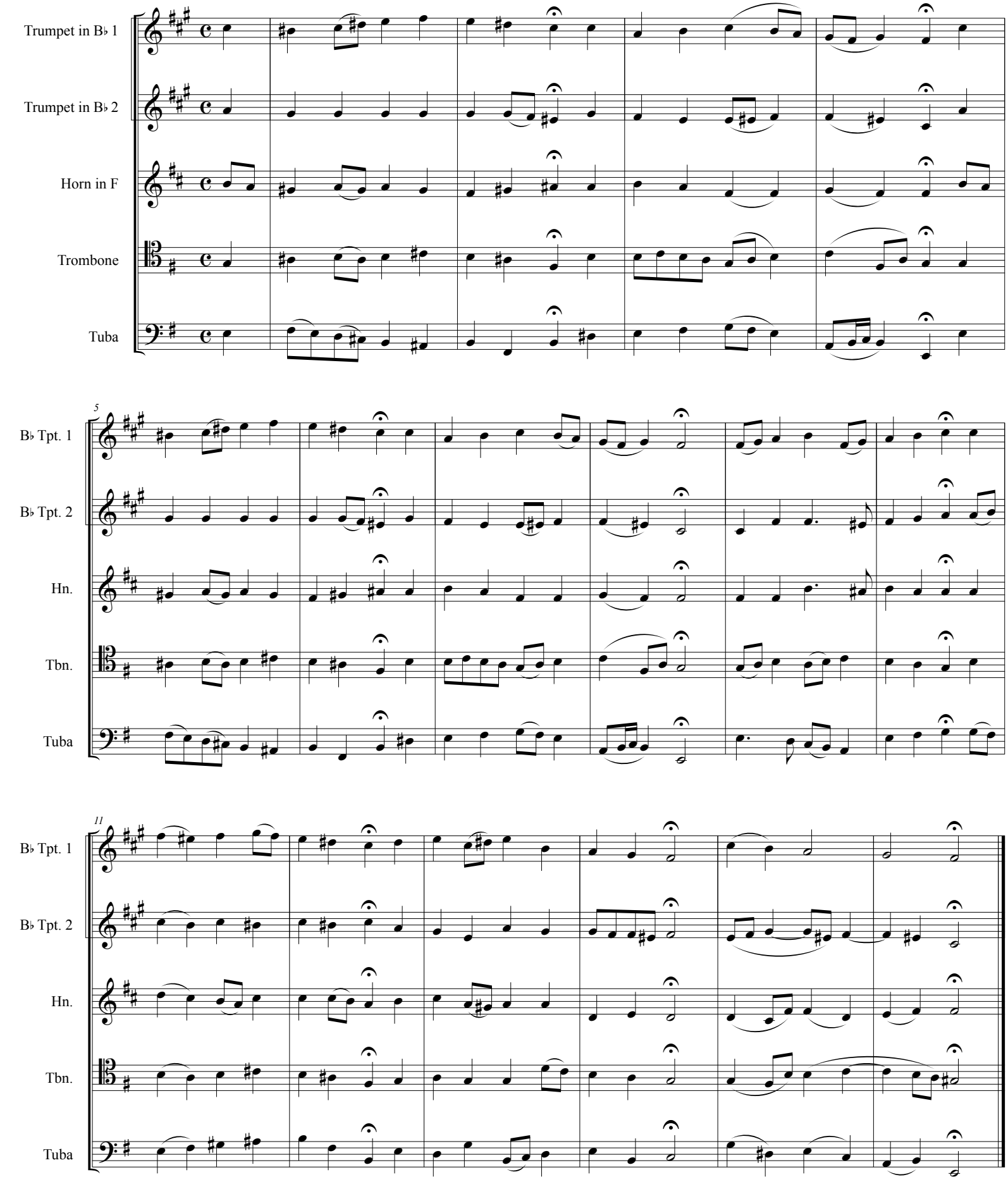

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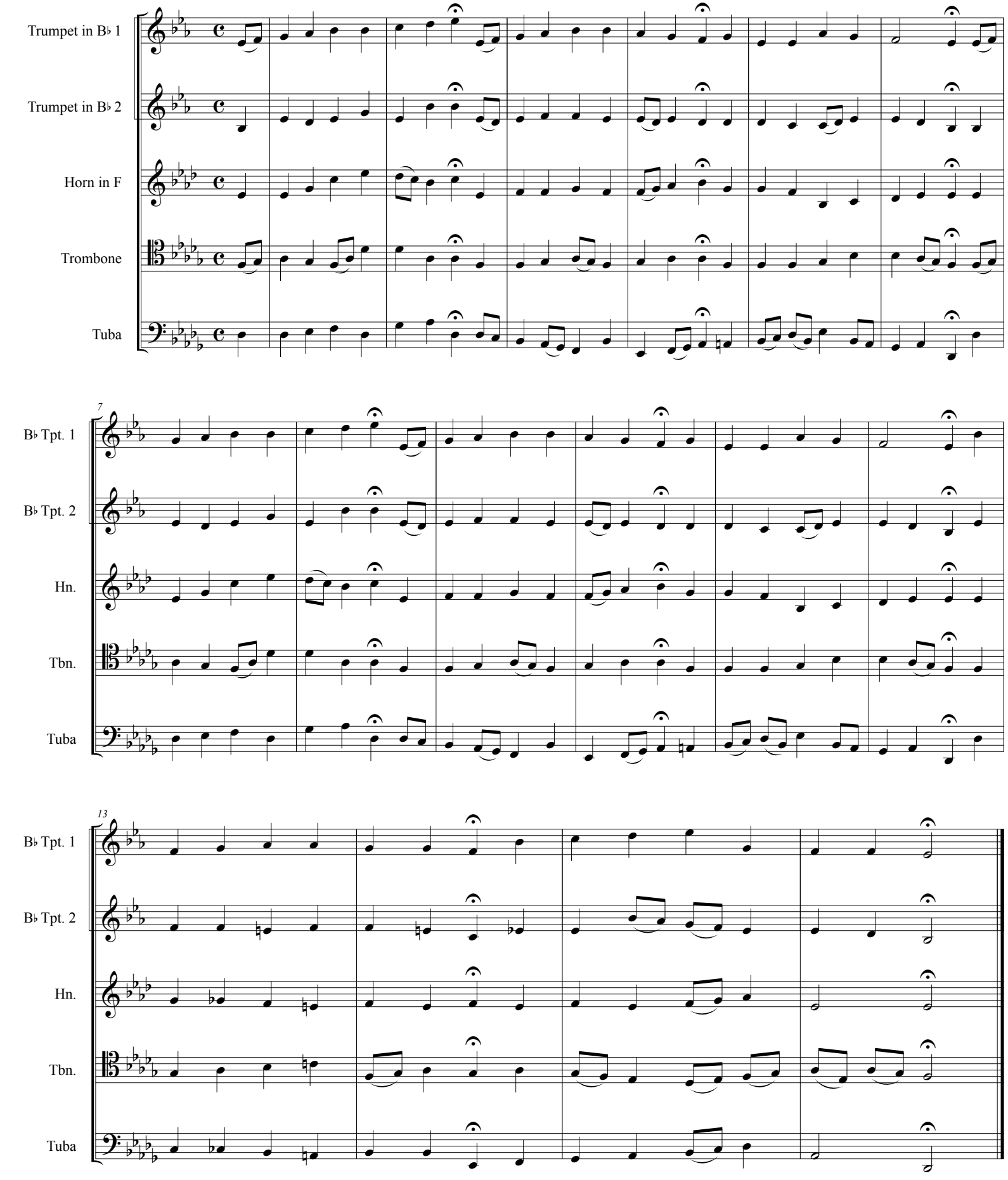
Chorale from Cantata 20

O Eternity, you word of thunder

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
Paul Von Hoff



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Chorale from Cantata 9

Salvation has come to us all

J.S. Bach
Brass Quintet by
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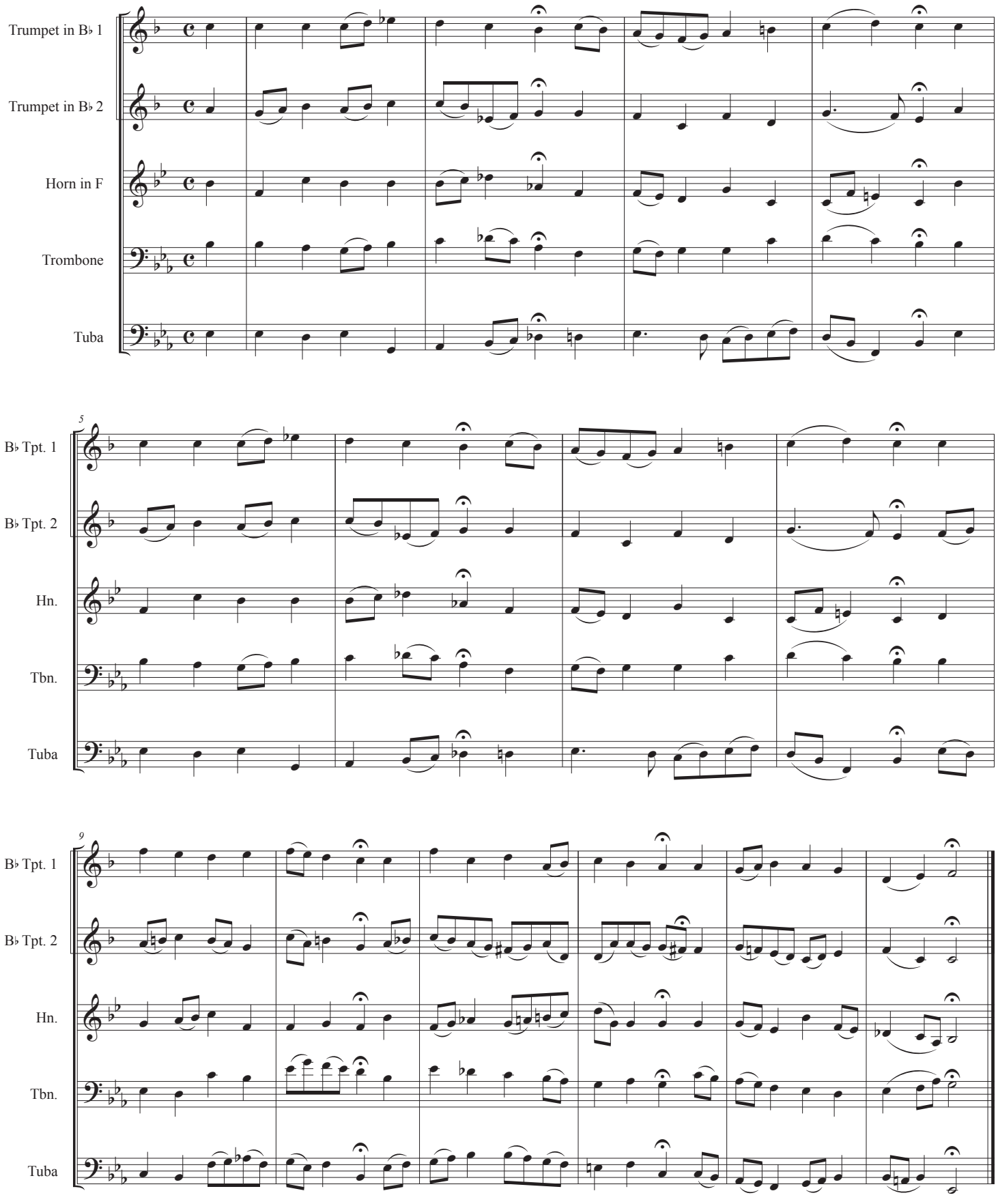

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Chorale from BWV 227

Jesus, my joy

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Brass Quintet by
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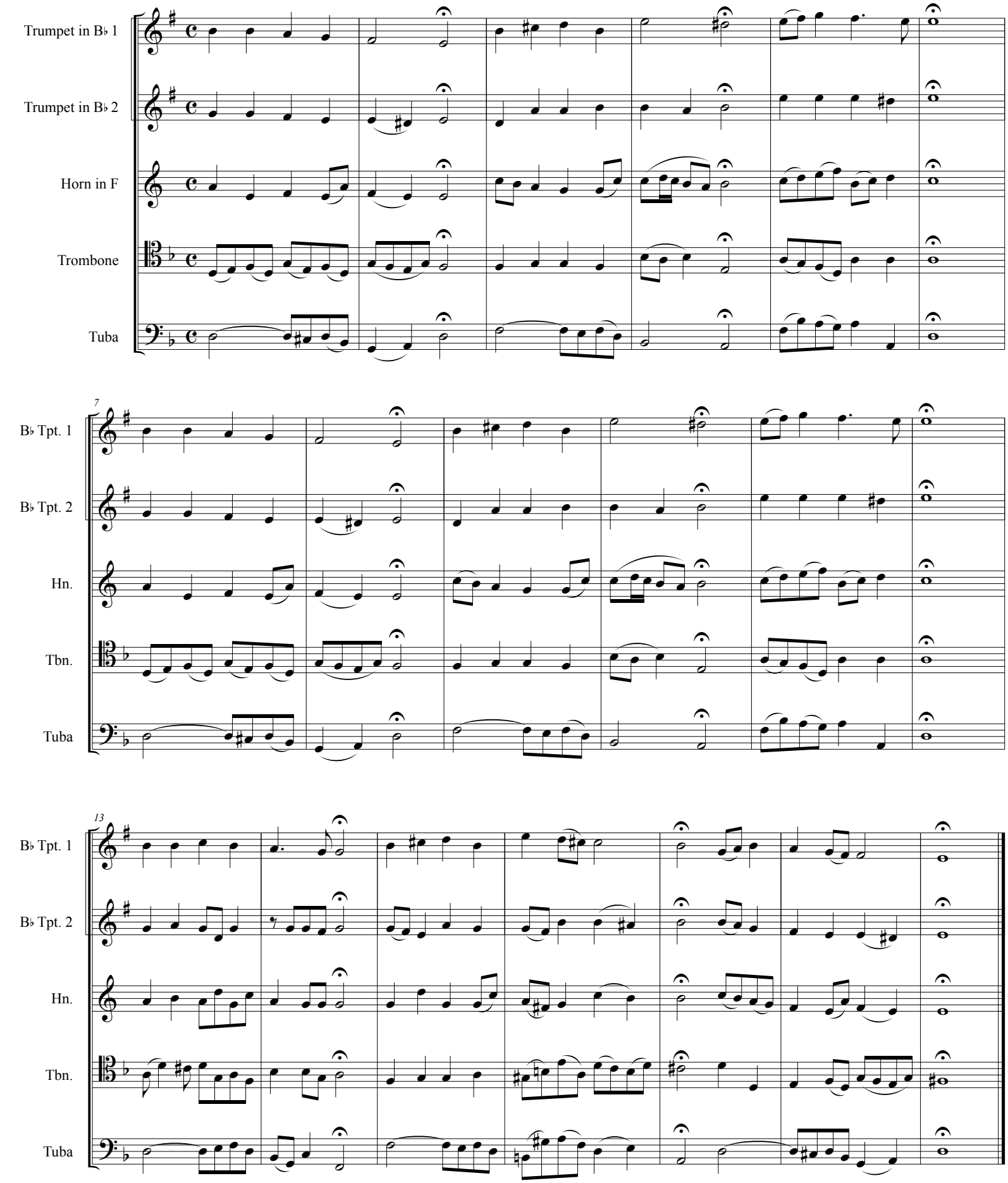

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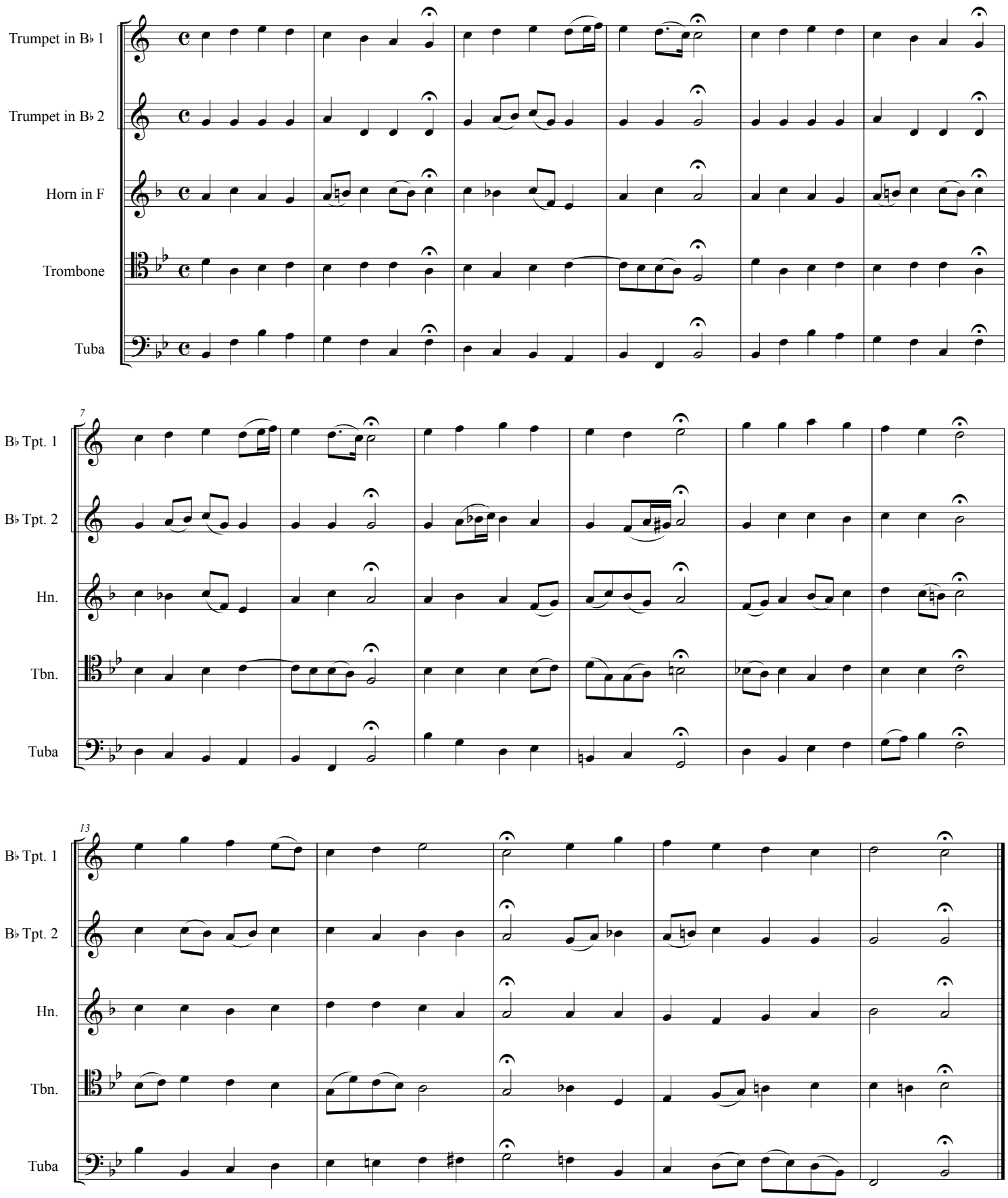
Chorale from BWV 25

Rejoice Greatly, O My Soul

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
Paul Von Hoff



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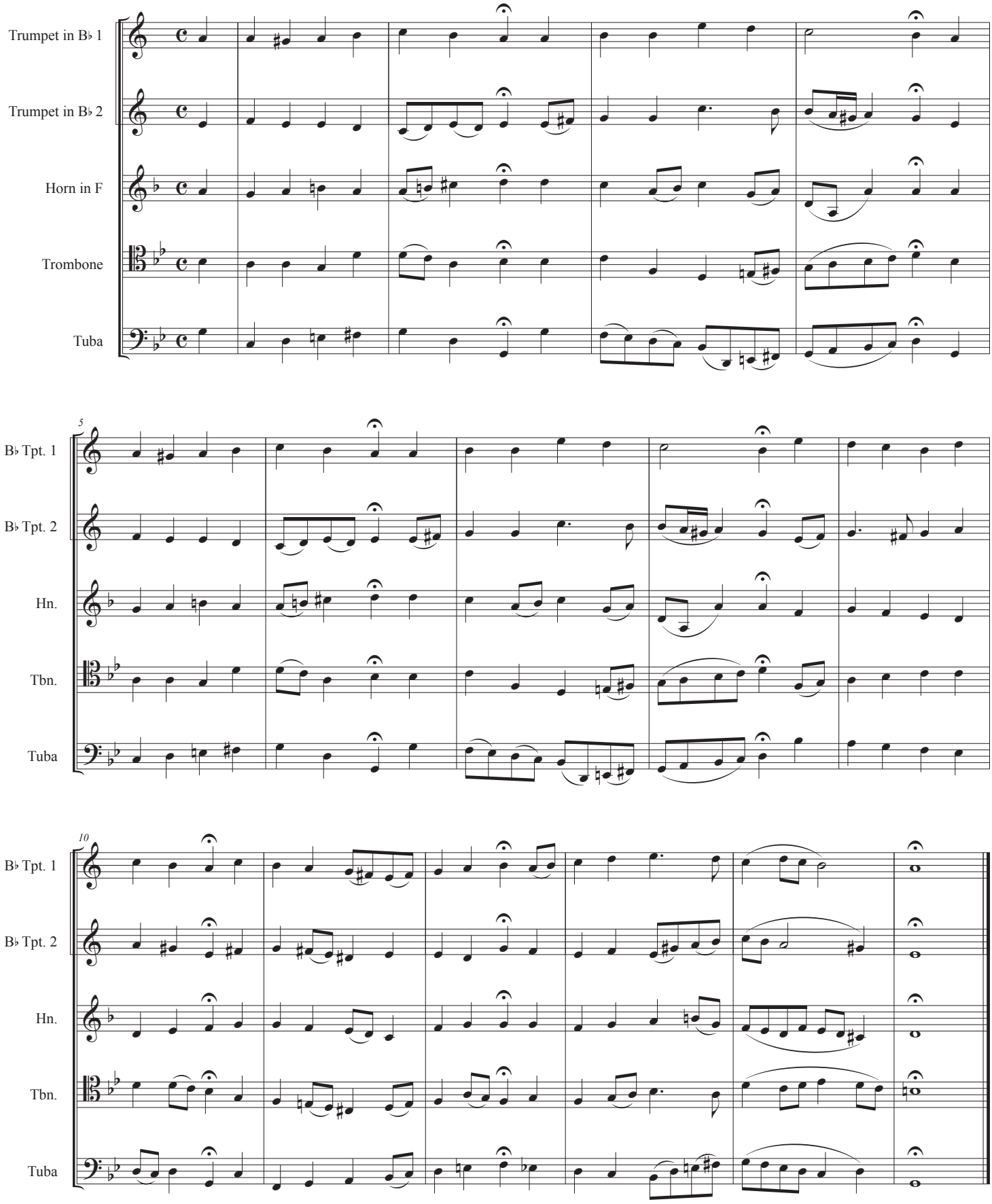
Chorale from BWV 48

Lord Jesus Christ, only comfort

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
Paul Von Hoff



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Chorale from BWV 38

Out of Deep Anguish I Call to You

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Brass Quintet by
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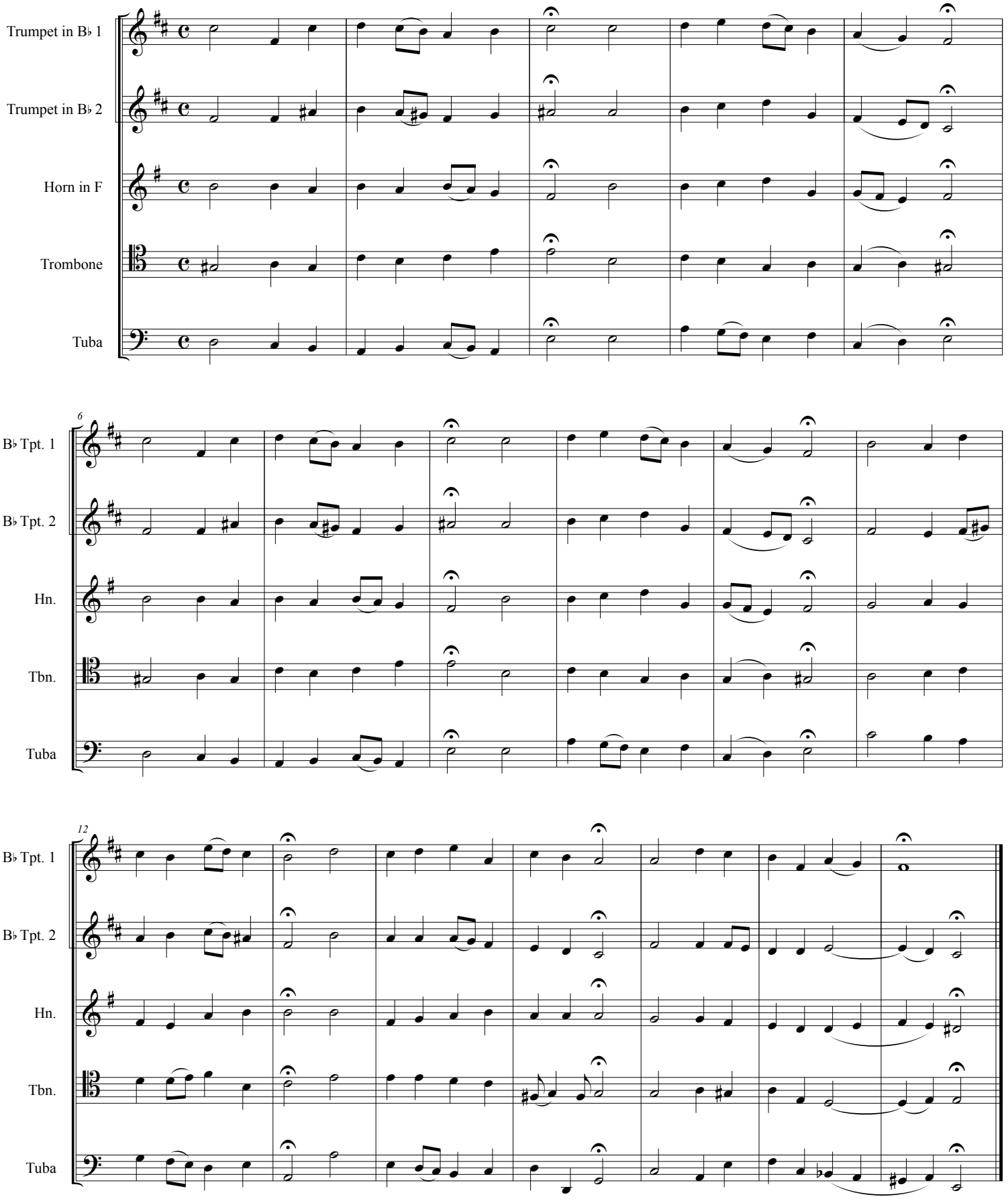

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Chorale from BWV 80

A Mighty Fortress

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Brass Quintet by
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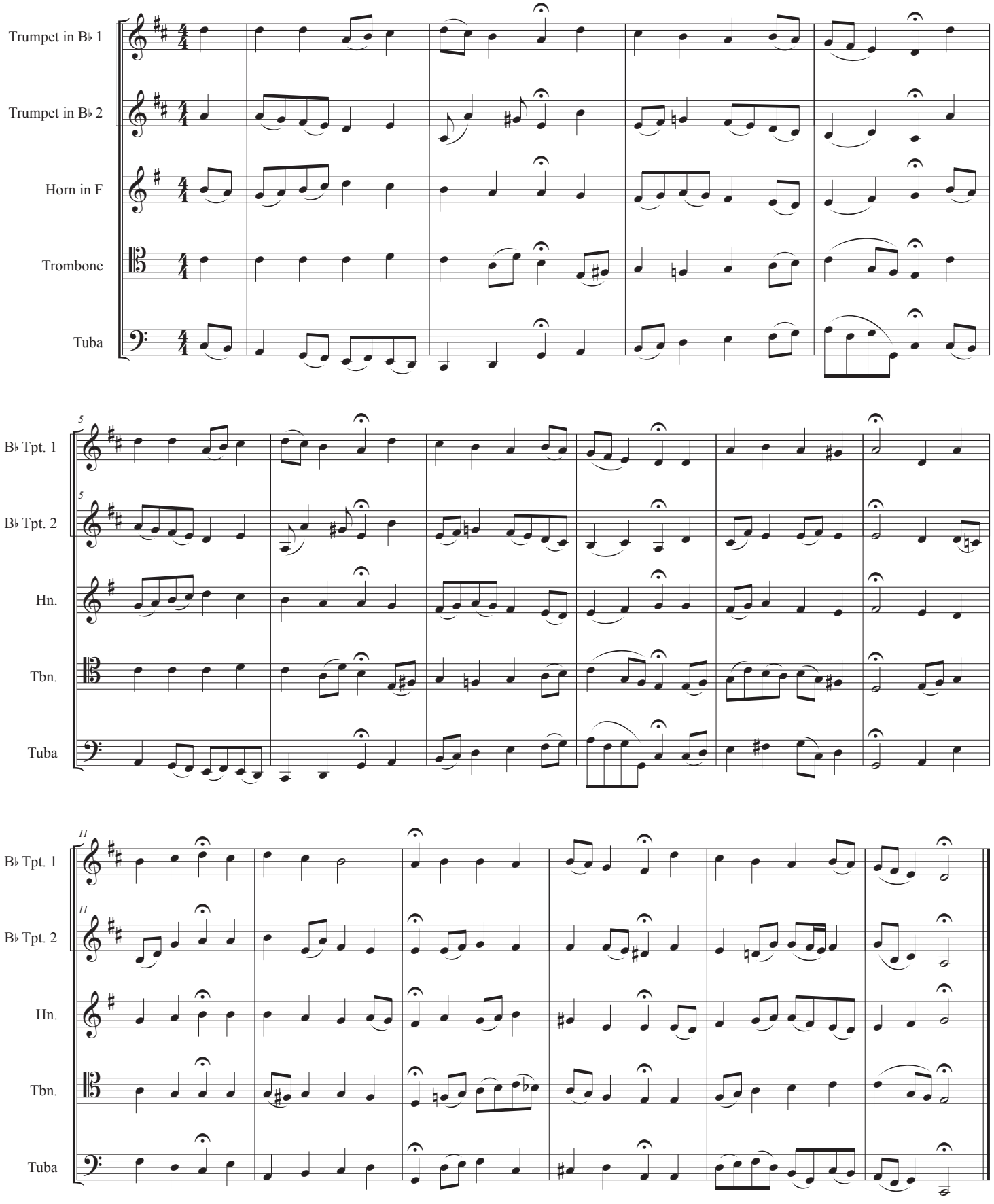

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Chorale from BWV 60

It is enough

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Brass Quintet by
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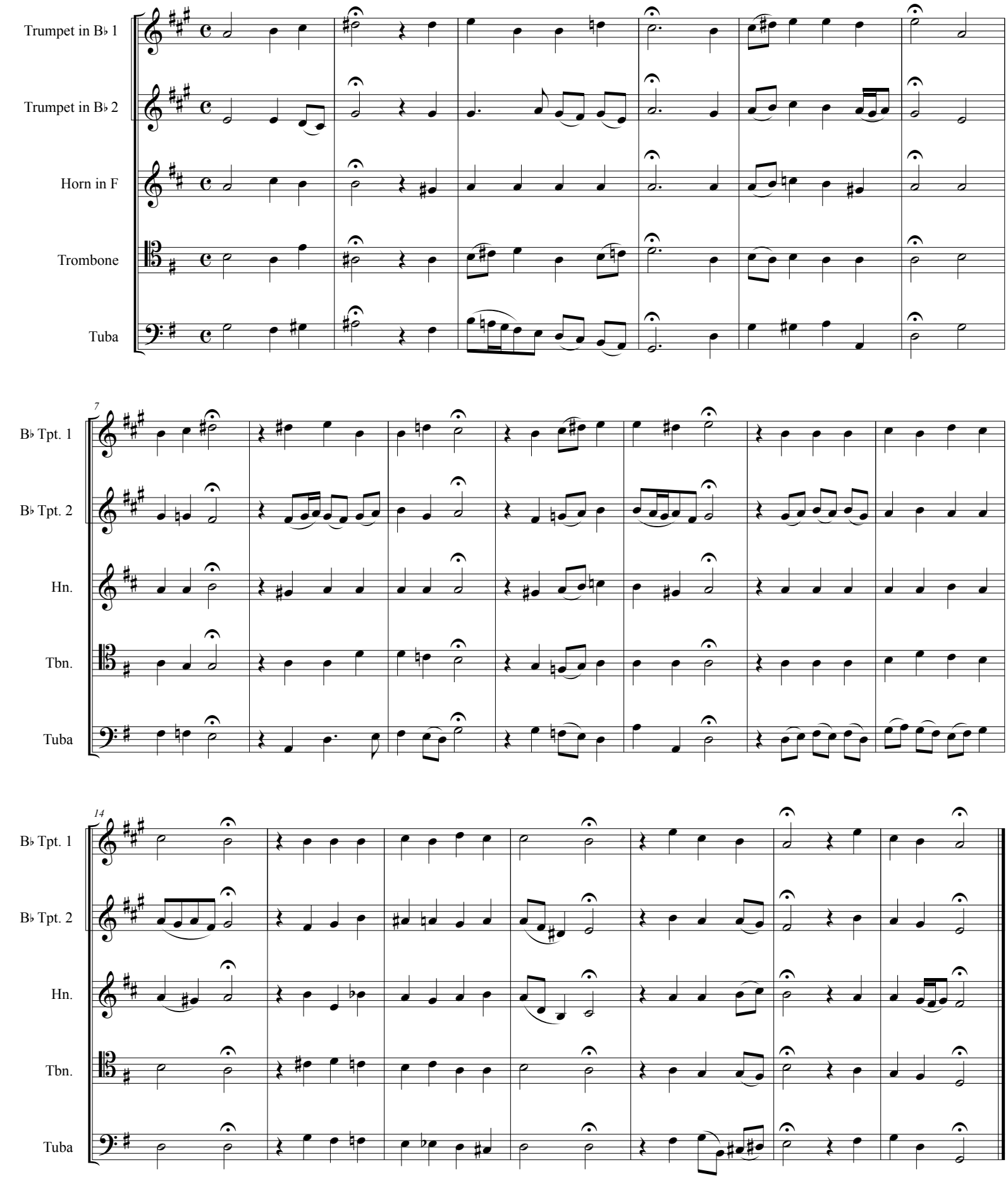

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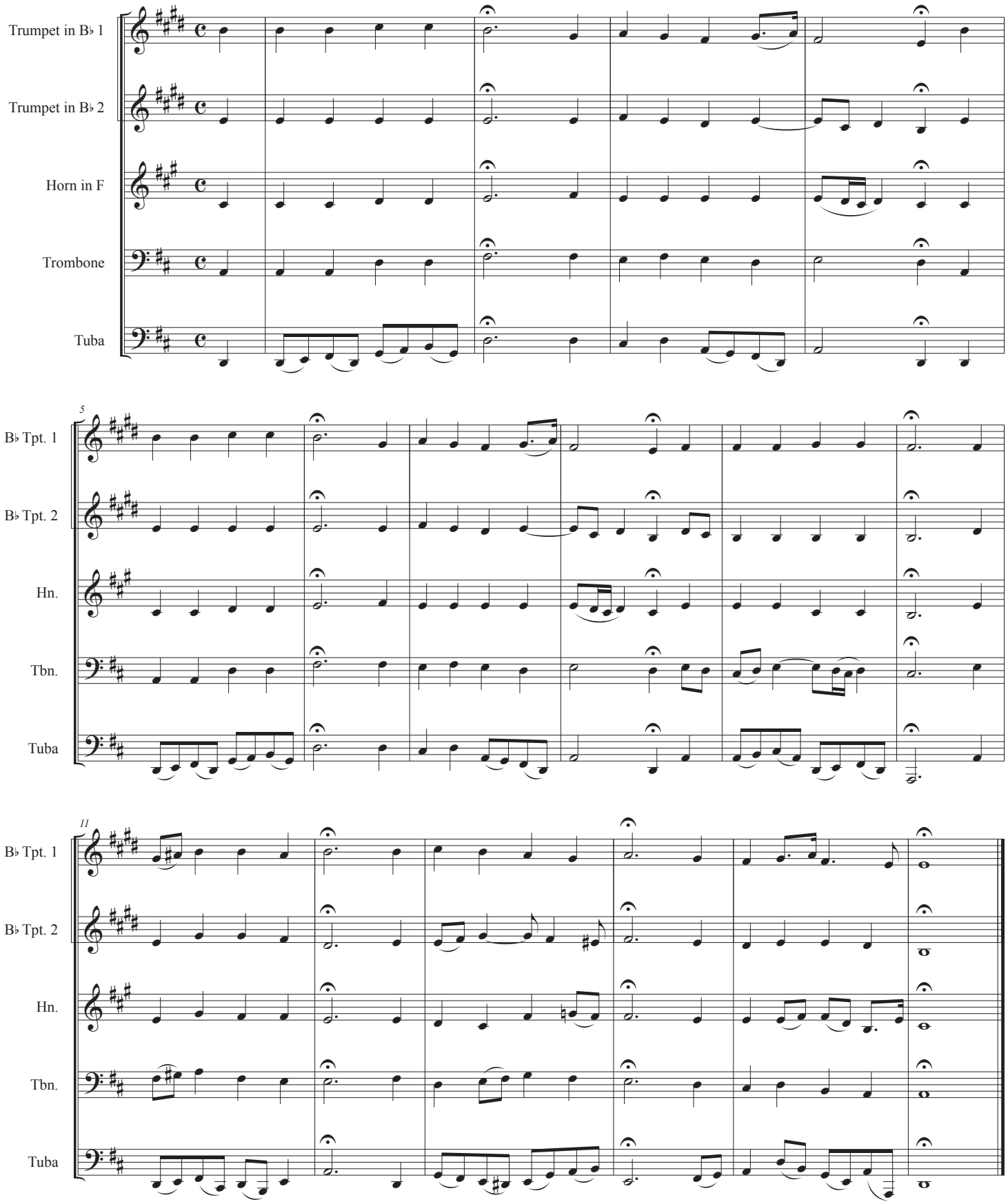
Chorale BWV 252

Now Thank We All Our God

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brass Quintet by
Paul Von Hoff



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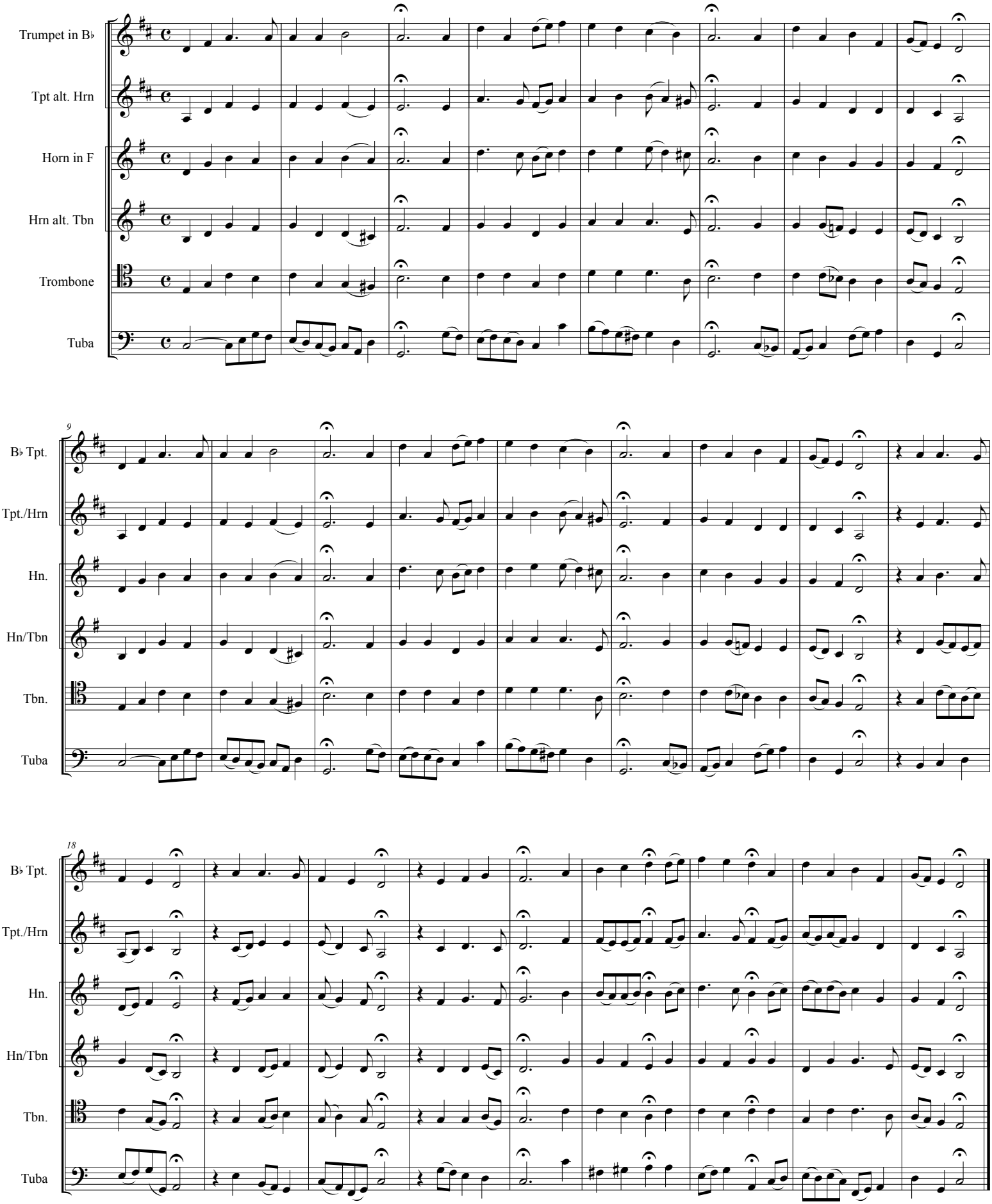
Chorale from BWV 140

Sleepers Awake

Johann Sebastian Bach
Adapted for Brass by
Paul Von Hoff



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About the Author

Paul Von Hoff is a trombonist and chamber music specialist who performs extensively on both historic and modern trombones. Paul is a founding member of the Gaudete Brass Quintet, a modern brass quintet founded in 2004 that has toured extensively, given masterclasses at schools such as Juilliard and Eastman, recorded four albums, most recently recording *Chicago Moves* and *sevenfive* for Cedille Records, and premiered over fifty new works. Paul is also a founding member of Rook, a chamber ensemble dedicated to performing the music of the 16th and 17th centuries, where he plays baroque alto, tenor and bass trombones and Renaissance slide trumpet. Rook can be heard on its album *eleven*, featuring the rare instrumental combination of violin, bass violin, harpsichord and trombone. In addition to Rook, Paul has performed with early music with Piffaro and Bella Voce, and recorded and performed with Three Notch'd Road and The Wayward Sisters. His work on the Renaissance slide trumpet has been featured on the video podcast *Rare and Strange Musical Instruments*.

Outside of music, Paul enjoys exploring the speculative and fantastical worlds of Middle Earth, Narnia, Faerûn, Lankhmar, the Four Corners, and the Oasis. He is currently reading *The Lord of the Rings* to his three children for the third time. He also has a passion for exploring and enjoying good wine with his wife. Together, they are ranked in the top 100 amateur wine reviewers in America on the online wine community Vivino.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Gaudete Brass Quintet who have invested countless rehearsal hours proving that the chorale settings in this book are an enjoyable and efficient way to practice together.
I would also like to thank my wife Carrie and my children Christopher, Chloe, and Anna for their years of support.

About the Gaudete Brass

The **Gaudete Brass** is made up of five musicians who believe strongly in the expressive and communicative power of brass chamber music. Since 2004 the quintet has engaged in creatively expanding the brass quintet repertoire, developing unique programs that have resonated with chamber music audiences all over the country.

The group has engaged in live performances at venues such as Symphony Space and Merkin Hall in New York City and Millennium Park in Chicago, commissioned new works from noted composers such as Stacy Garrop, David Sampson, Jonathan Newman, Kile Smith, John Mackey, and Alice Jones, and appeared on radio broadcasts on WFMT in Chicago, WQXR in New York, and Nashville Public Radio. In the 2020-2021 season Gaudete received a grant from Chamber Music America for a series of online concerts broadcast live from our homes using the open source software Jacktrip.

Gaudete has also presented educational programs and concerts at prominent institutions including The Juilliard School and the Eastman School of Music, community outreach concerts for the Quad City Arts and the Virginia Arts Festival, and has enjoyed multi-year ensemble-in-residence positions at Carthage College and Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts.

While keeping this rigorous performance schedule, Gaudete has recorded four albums: *Brass Outings* (2006), winner of the CDBaby Editors' Choice distinction and nominee for Just Plain Folks Best Classical Chamber Album; *Conversations in Time* with organist R. Benjamin Dobey (2011, Pro Organa); *Chicago Moves*, produced by Grammy winner Judith Sherman and featuring several of its commissioned works (2012, Cedille Records) and *sevenfive* (2017, Cedille Records) featuring five new works commissioned for Chicago's John Corigliano 75th birthday festival.

Gaudete (gow-day-tay) is a form of the Latin word for "Joy." We support the idea that chamber music, even (and perhaps especially) the serious kind, can powerfully communicate both the poignant and the exuberant. To learn more about the Gaudete Brass, please visit www.gaudetebrass.com.