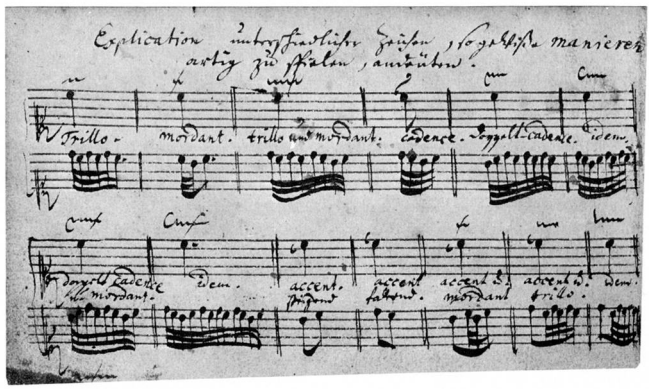
# Little Variations on Kumbayah

An Explication

by

FERGUS BLACK

I've given this piece the subtitle Explication, because that is what Bach called the table of ornaments which he wrote in the preface of the Clavierbüchlein vor Wilhelm Friedemann Bach:




For Grade 5 theory (ABRSM), the student is asked to recognise ornaments (i.e. name them), and also be able to replace a written-out ornament with the appropriate sign

Dictionaries tend to use the word *additional* in combination with words like *grace*, *"beauty"* or *decoration* to define the word *ornament.* My feeling is that the student should be able to play the piece rhythmically and musically, without the ornaments. And that when the ornaments are added, they don't break up the line, or the rhythm.

So my advice would be to play through the lower of the two versions - marked “Piano“ - without any ornaments. Then study the “Interpretation“, and slowly put the ornaments in.

**Bibliography**

Music Notation - Gardner Read, Gollancz
Basic Music Knowledge - Annie Warburton, Cambridge
Music Theory in Practice, Grade 5, Eric Taylor, ABRSM

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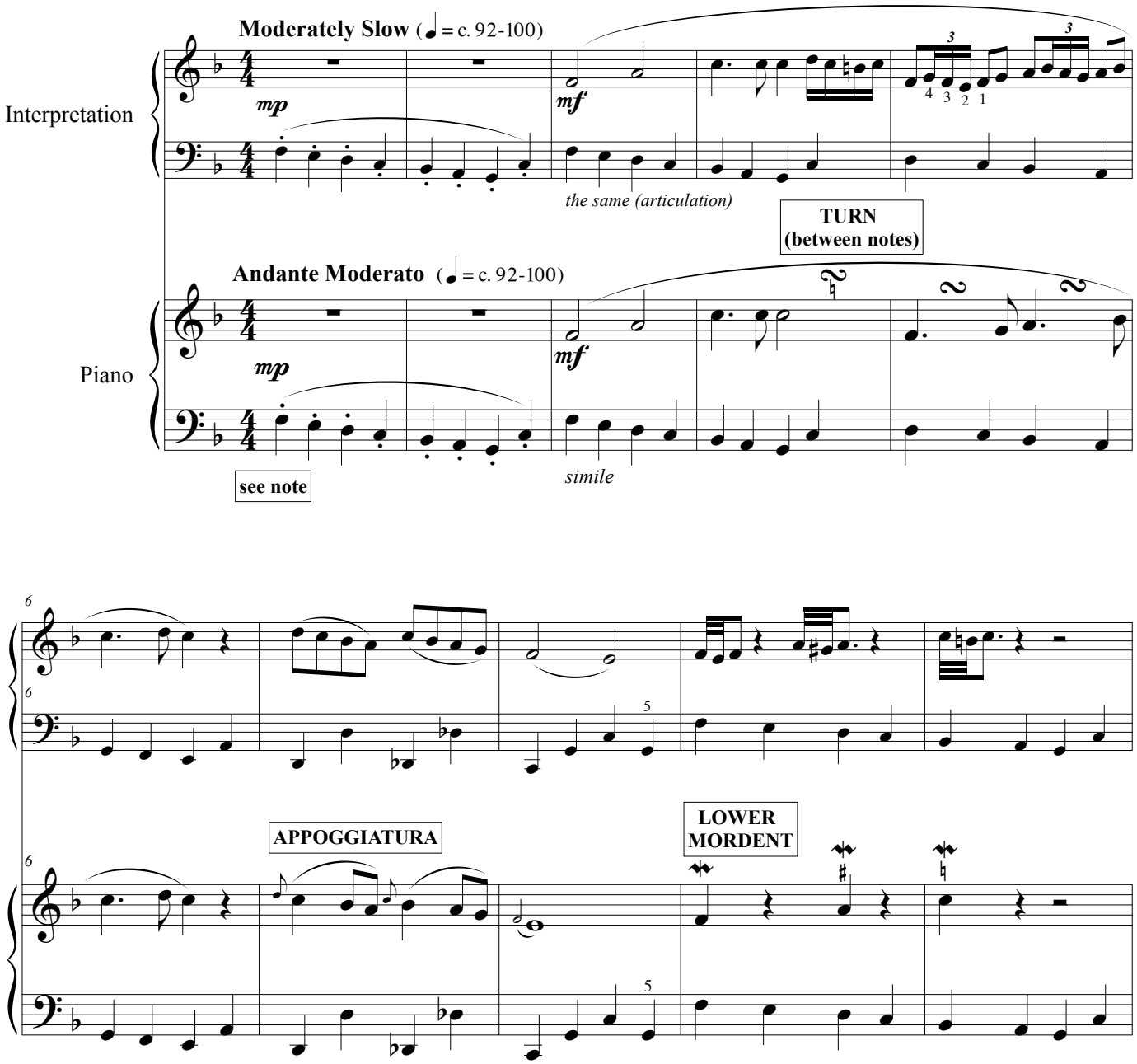
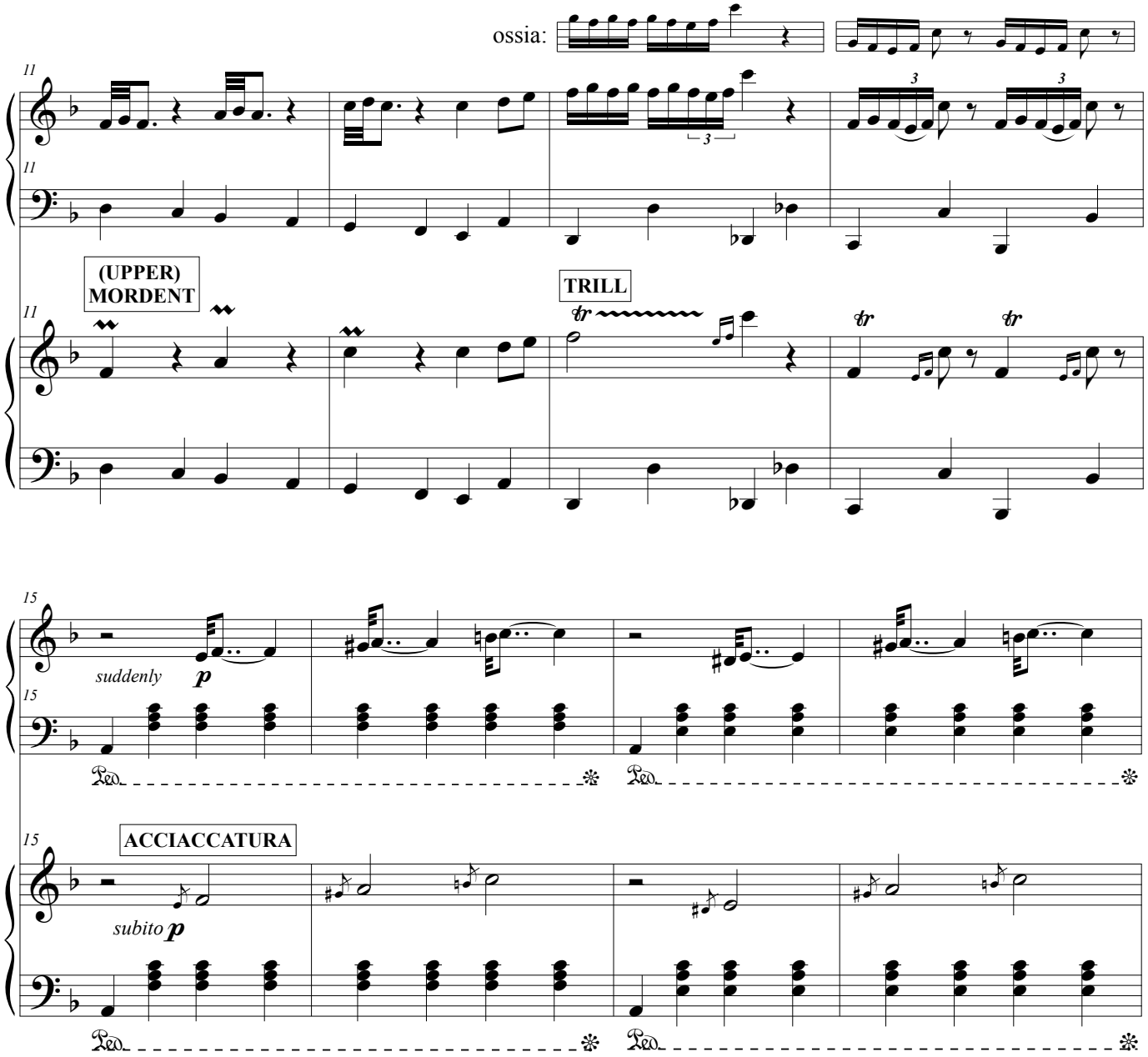



the dots within a slur mean “semi-staccato” - slightly detached

TURN - these turns are between notes - compare this to J, where the turn is over the note.

APPOGGIATURA - takes half the value of the main note - see K for appoggiatura with dotted note.

LOWER MORDENT - *mordere* is the Italian word meaning *to bite*. So bite them!

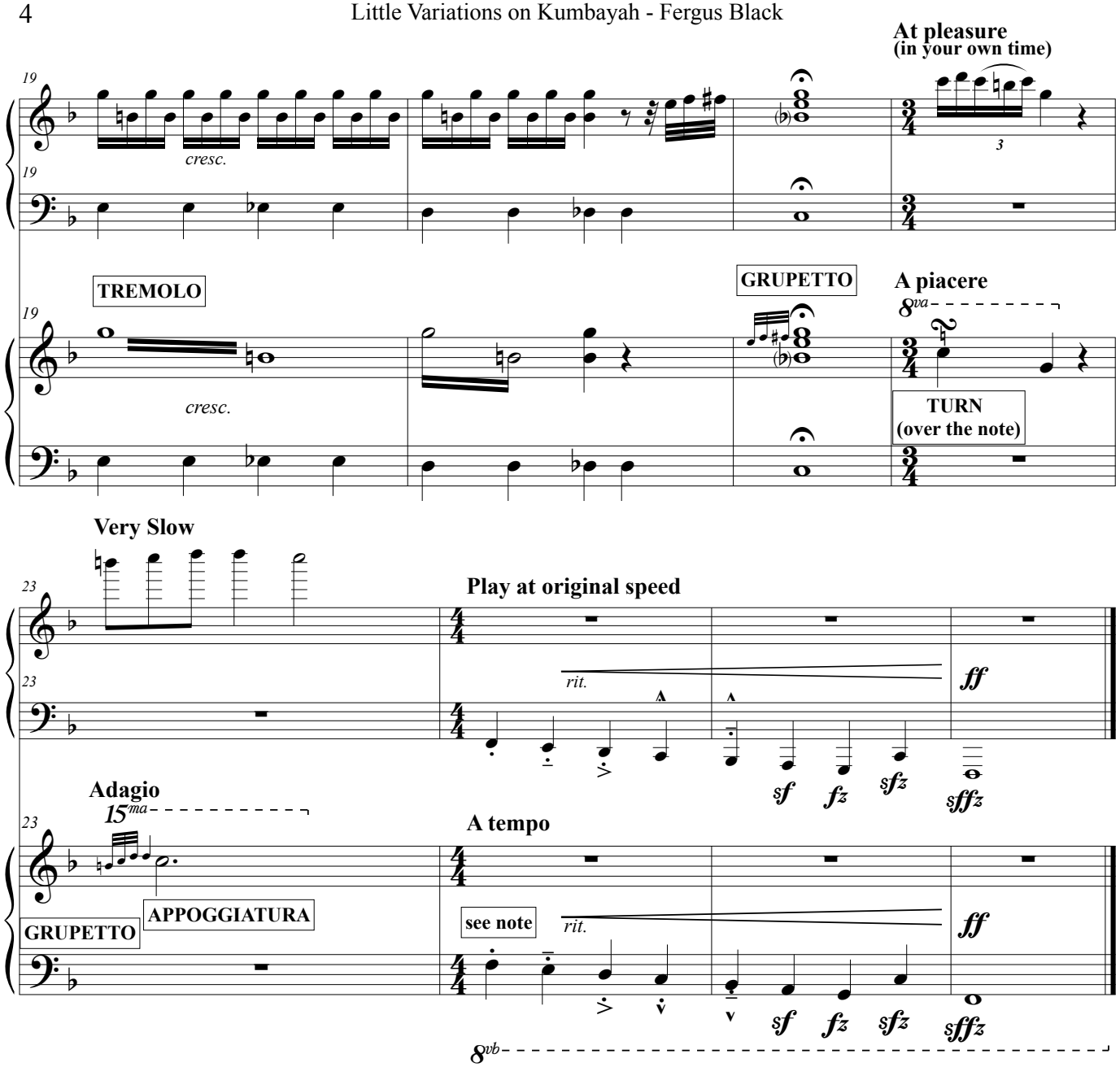



(UPPER) MORDENT - mostly, mordents, both upper and lower, start **on** the beat.

TRILL - How long do you have? How to perform trills would be a book in itself. The main thing is that up until about 1810, trills began on the upper auxiliary, that is the note above the one printed - this is shown in the floating ossia bars above the top stave. Usually those early trills didn't have a *nachslag* - the two little notes that end the turn at the end of the trill - but since I have written them in the main staves, I've included them in the ossia bars as well.

The number of taradiddles (fast notes) you put in depends on the speed of the music and your technical skill. Bear in mind the rule that the ornament shouldn't interrupt the flow of the music.

ACCIACCATURA - not to be confused with the appoggiatura - the acciaccatura has a slash through it. Often called a GRACE NOTE. Usually on the beat in earlier music - might be before the beat in the nineteenth century. Taste, again.




TREMOLO - like a trill, a rapid alternation of notes, but this time not next to each other. As with the trill, the exact number of repetitions depends on the speed of the piece and your technical ability.

GRUPETTO - quick notes before the main note. Probably played on the beat before 1810, before the beat after that.

TURN (2) above the note head.

*Note also the Octava Alta sign*

bar 23: GRUPETTO and APPOGGIATURA - here the appogiatura takes 1/3 of the value of the main note (it could be 2/3rds - it's a matter of taste!)

*Note also that the sign for "2 octaves higher" is 15va, not 16va.*

bar 24-26: ACCENTS - the notes in bars 24-26 get progressively louder, not just because of the crescendo, but because each accent is heavier than the previous one. I don't want to get into a discussion about this - please don't write to tell me that I'm wrong!: there is a long section on accents in Gardner Read's book on Notation.

*Note also that the sign for "1 octave lower" is 8vb, not 8va. Publishers please note!*