Cello Suite I in G

BWV 1007

by J. S. Bach

Arranged for Alto Recorder or Flute

by Peter Billam

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Cello Suite I in G major, BWV 1007

The Cello Suites, written in Cöthen around 1720, have been called "the apotheosis of the Dance", a title they share with Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. No-one but Bach has written such rich music for the solo line. Everywhere there are several voices implied. allowing Bach to write not just melody, but also counterpoint and harmony. The flow of new motifs serves the needs of the implied counterpoint, but the motifs also have their own motivic logic, balancing identity for each movement with variety within it. Casals points out the implication for the performer: "It is fantastic to think that with one note after the other there can be melody, the central voices and the bass all together. A wonderful polyphony . . . We have to give the proper expression to each voice."

The six suites have different characters. Casals spoke of the "fundamental mood of optimism" of the G-major suite, contrasting with the "tragic feeling" of the suite in d-minor, or the "heroic" suite in C-major. Rostropovic spoke of the "Lightness" of the first suite, the "Sorrow and intensity" of the second, the "Brilliance" of the third.

Within each suite, the character of each movement should be differentiated, and there should always be variety from one dance tempo to the next. Casals observed "The first thing we must understand when playing the cello suites is that, as with the partitas for violin and for keyboard, the Prelude gives the character to the whole work". Of the Allemande he said "How it sings! It's not like an exercise, it's a melody; we must shape the phrases in a natural way" and "Rubato, yes; but *within* the bar, without upsetting the dance character". Of the Sarabande he said "A Sarabande is not a romance, or an adagio; it is a Spanish dance, which used to be performed in the churches, and is still danced in Sevilla. We must not be lost between one beat and another". The later movements are more and more dance-like, with the tempo firmer and the downbeats more marked.

Many wonderful recordings are available; for example by Pierre Fournier, Pablo Casals, Pieter Wispelwey, or Jaap ter Linden, or on the viola de gamba by Paulo Pandolfo, on the flute by Wilbert Hazelzet, or on the recorder by Marion Verbruggen.

The first three of the six suites can be played on the recorder, especially the first suite in G-major. Of course the chords have to be played as arpeggios, and some low notes have to be rewritten; these are given here in chords, with the lower note for flute players, and the upper for recorders. The most uncomfortable passage is the string of high f#'s in the second-last bar of the Prelude. All slurs in this edition are editorial suggestions only, and can be disregarded with a clear conscience.

Peter J Billam

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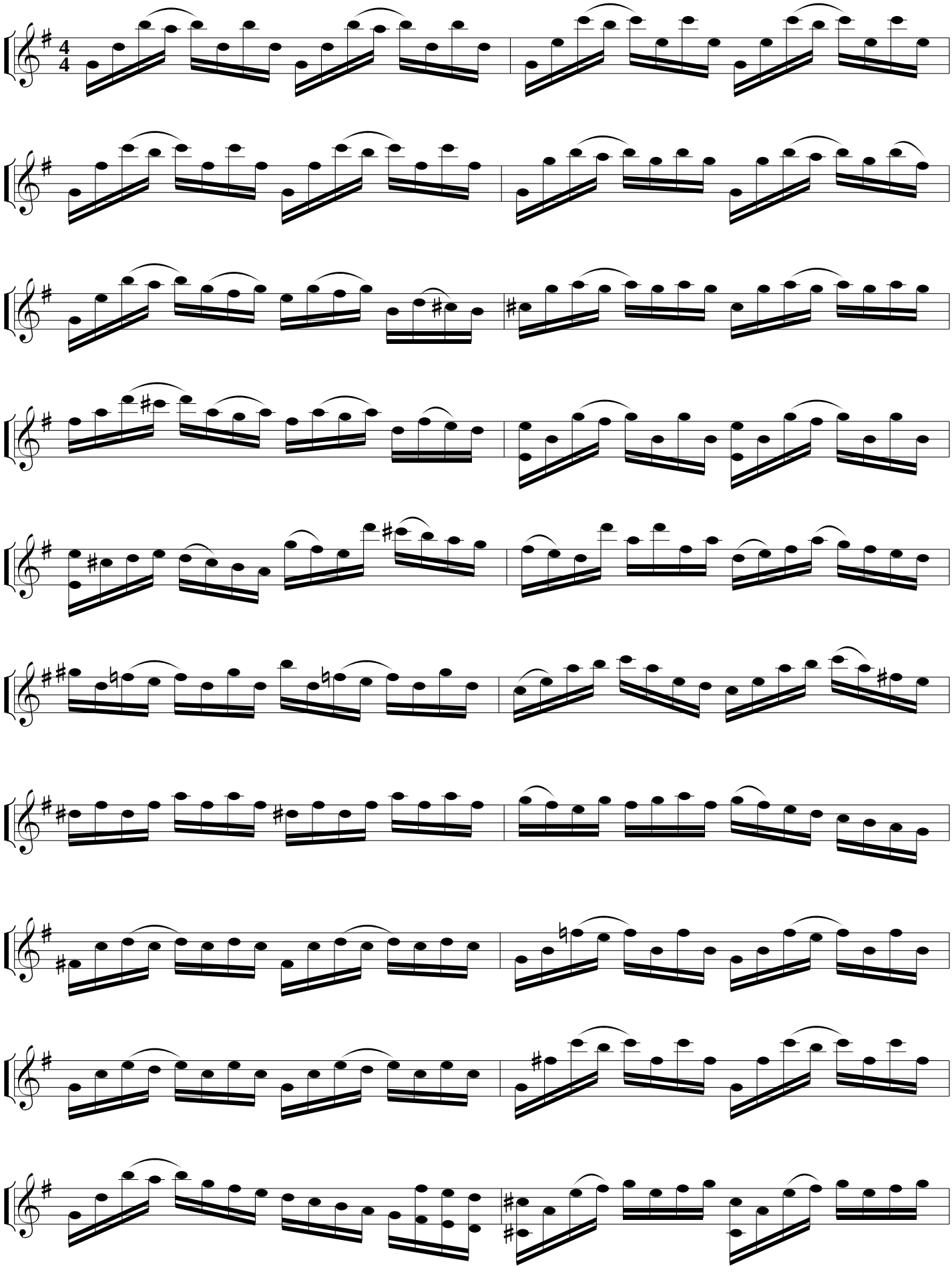
Prelude



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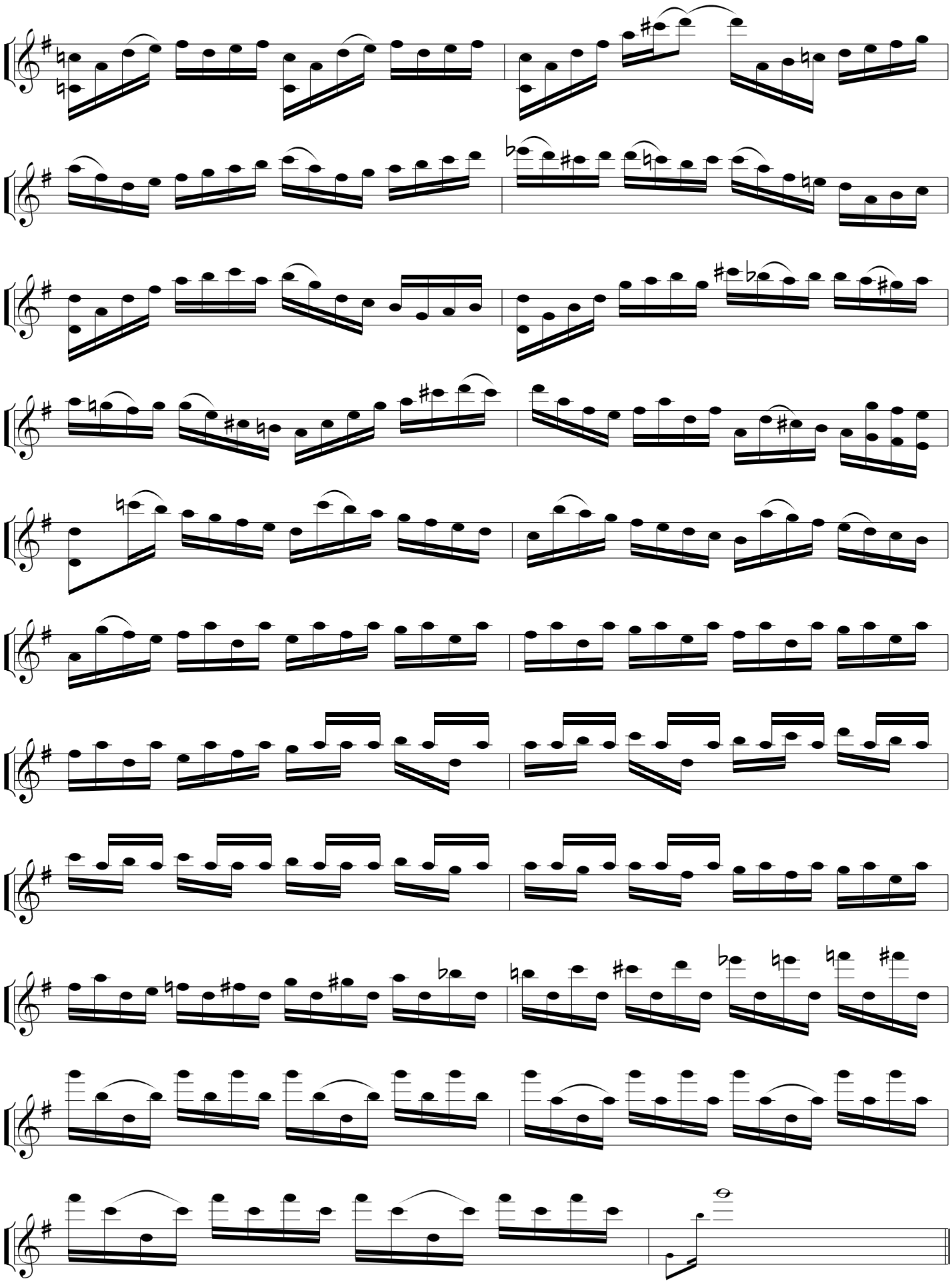
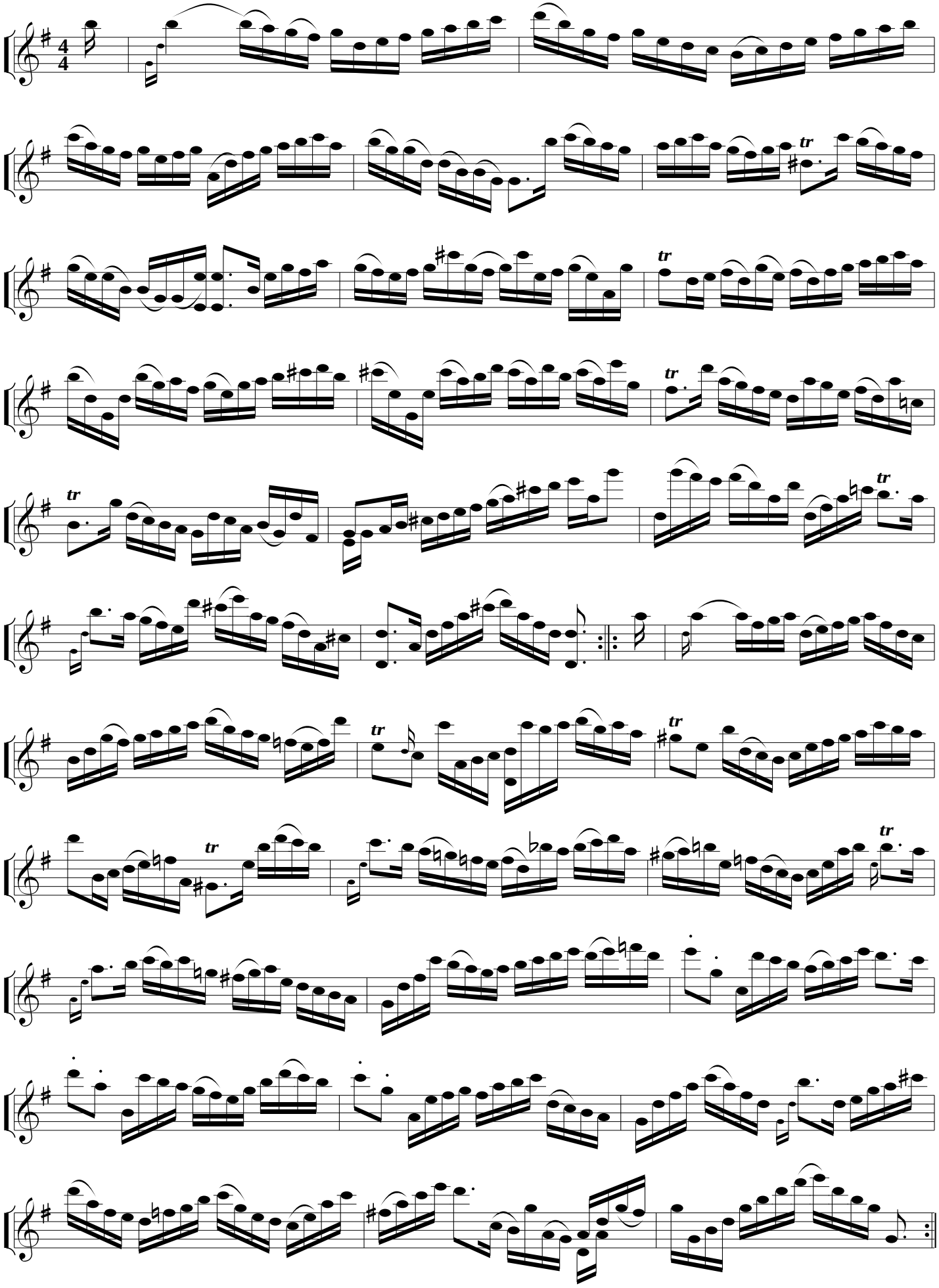
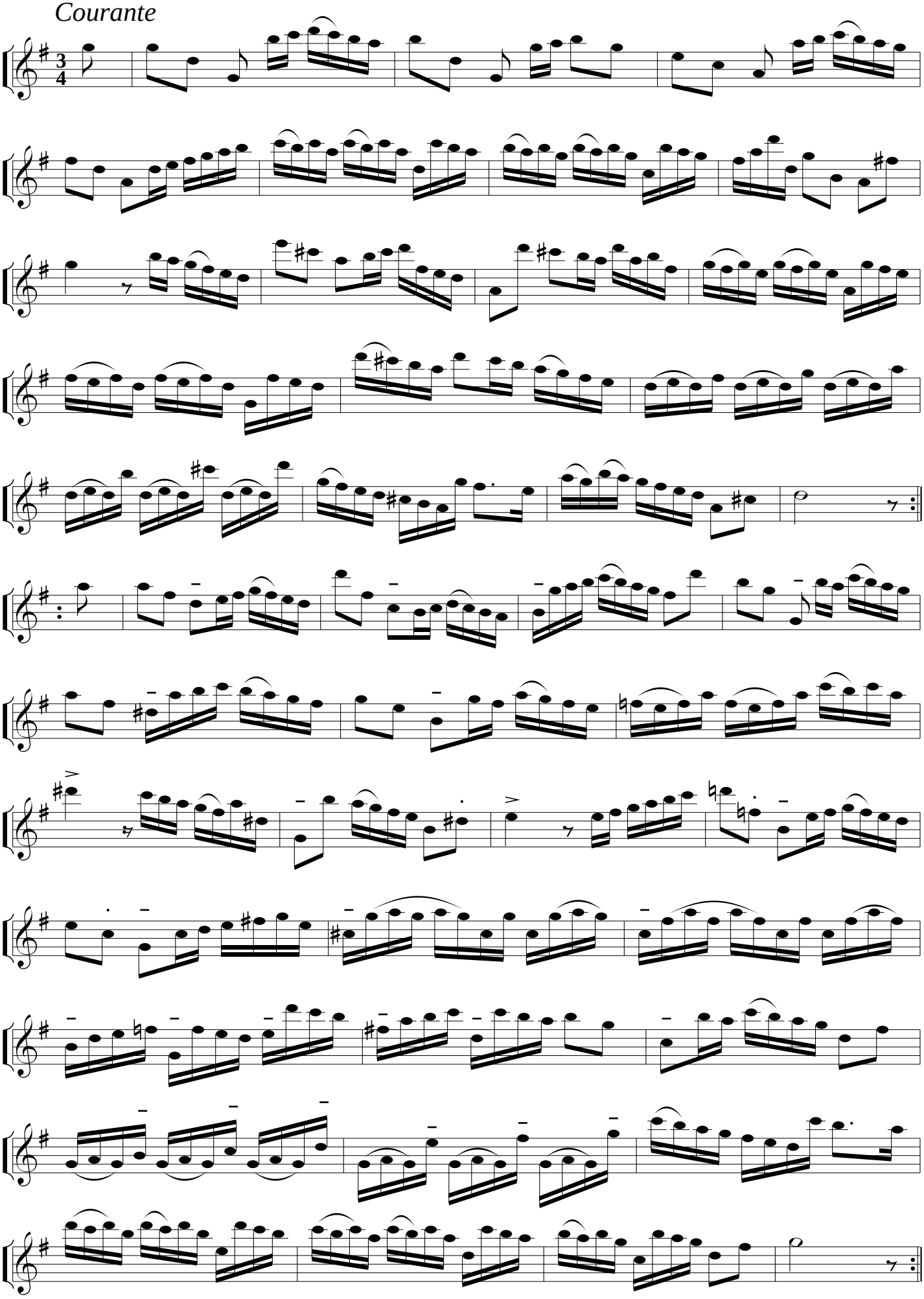


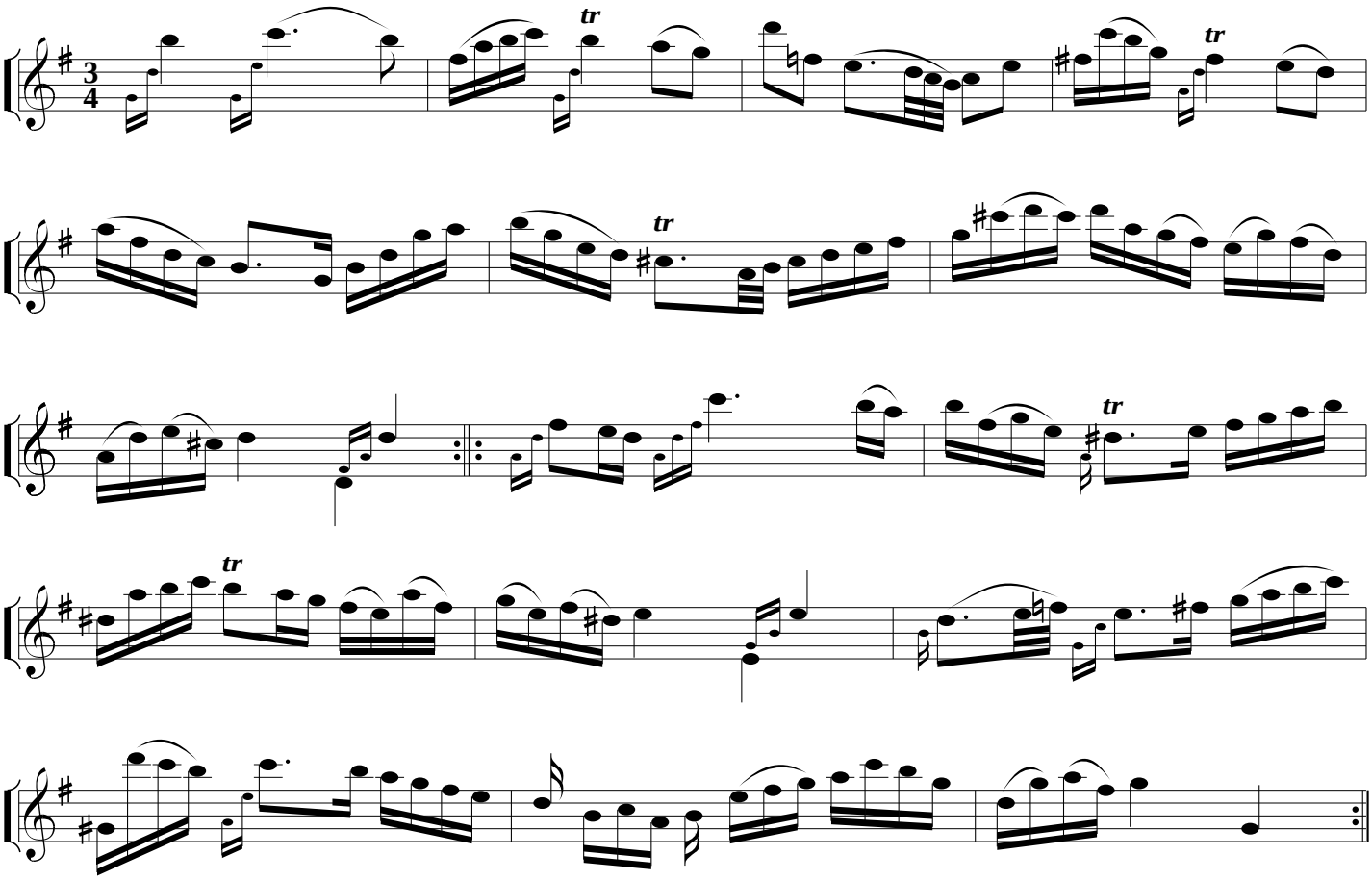
Allemande



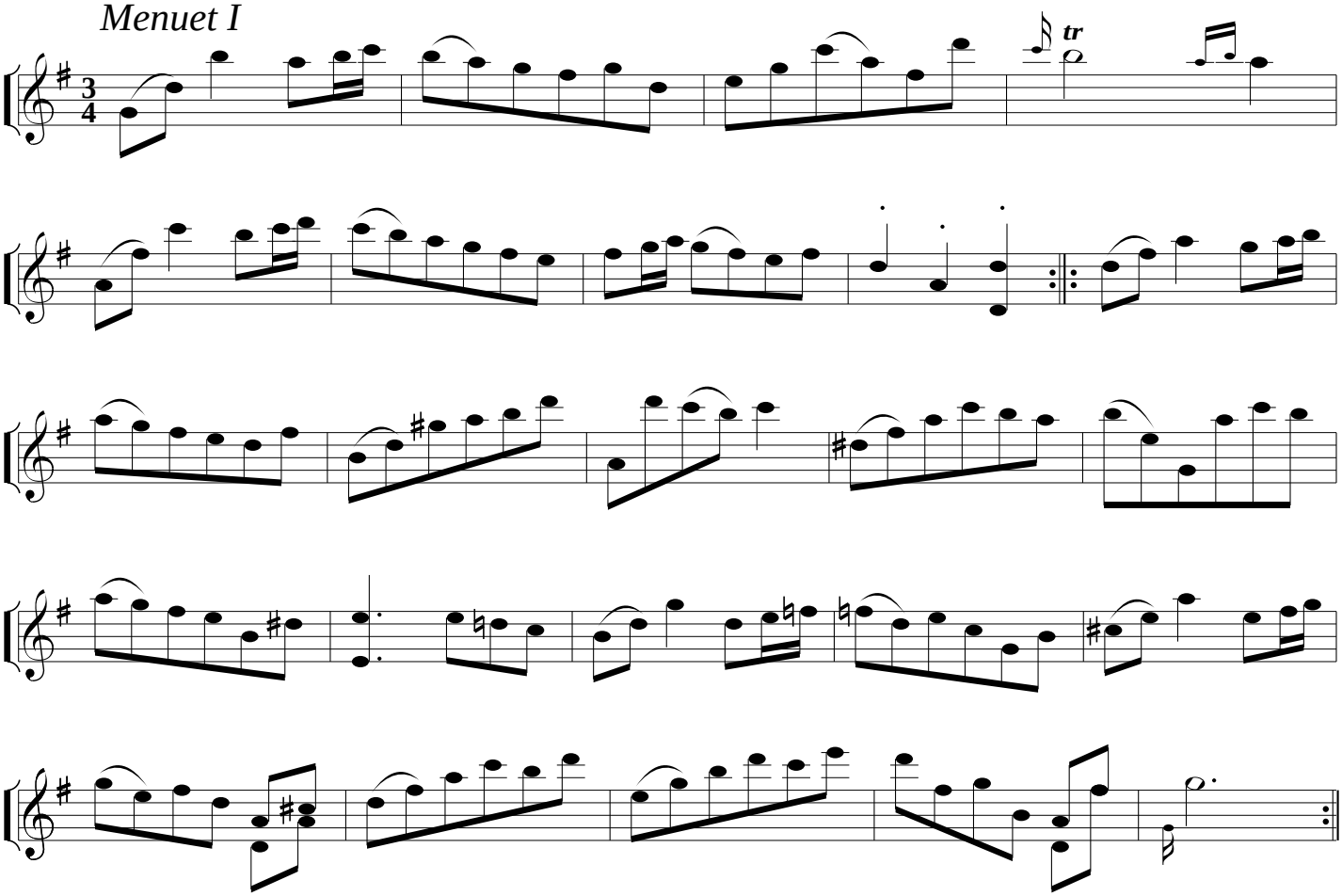
Courante



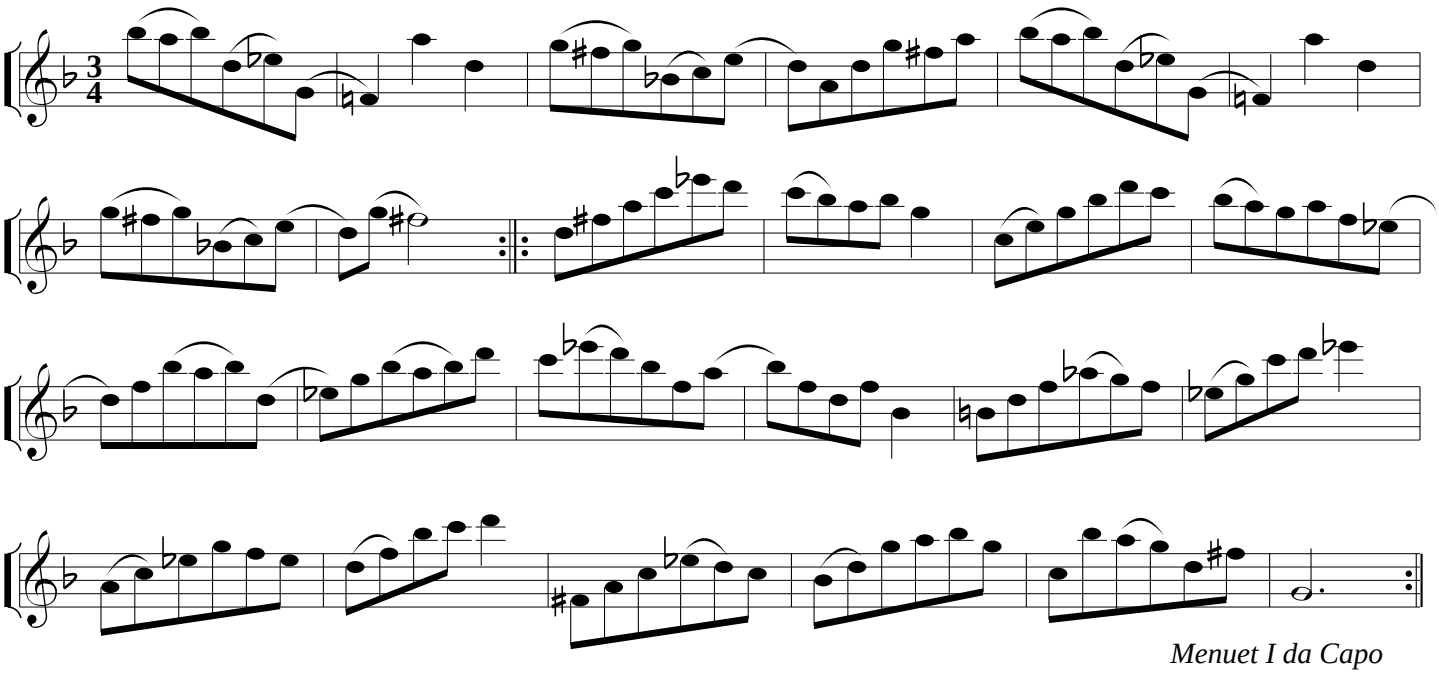
Sarabande



Menuet I

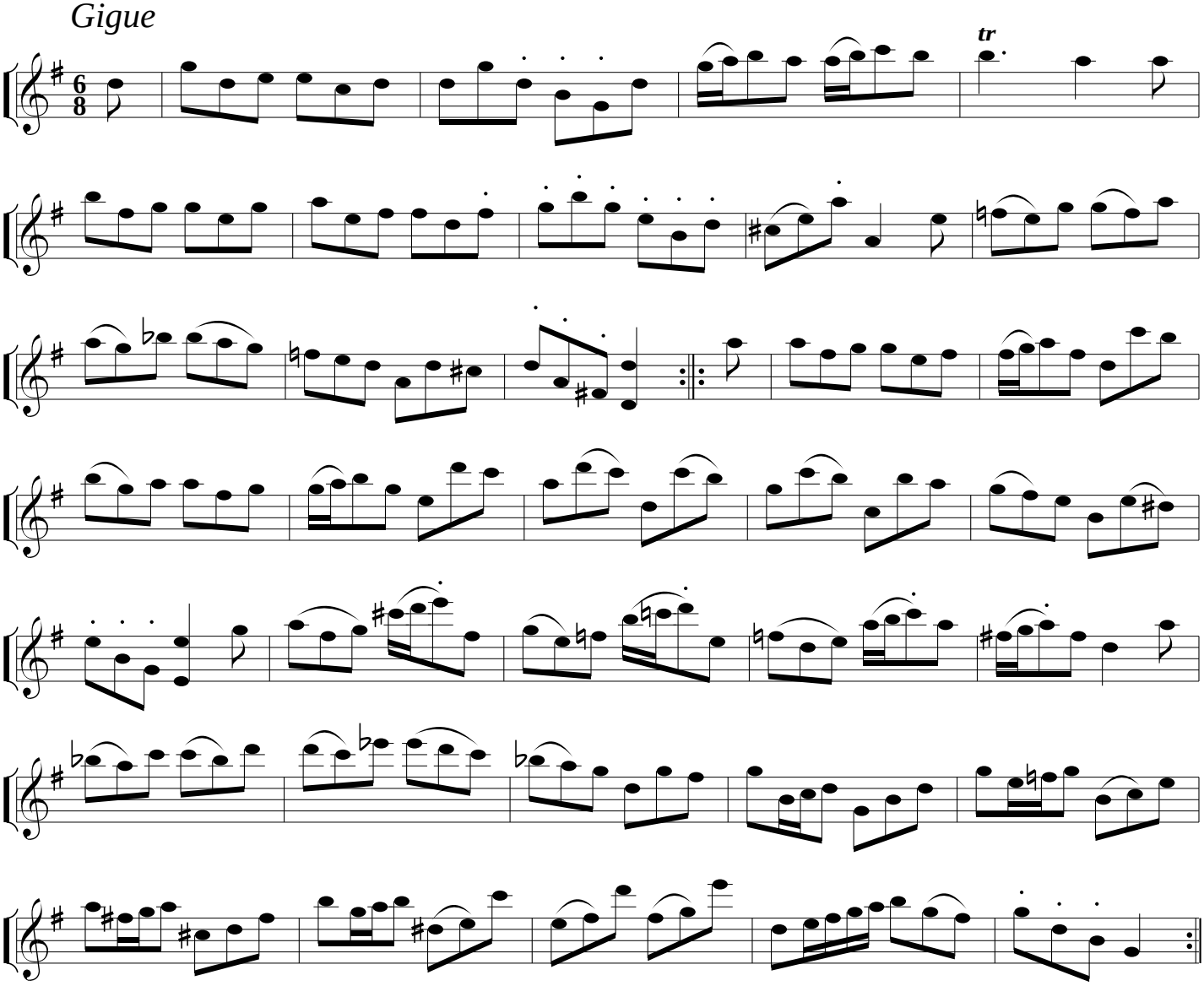


Menuet II



Menuet I da Capo

Gigue



Peter Billam was born in London in 1948, studied piano, and lived in Switzerland from 1973 to 1983, where he studied composition, classical guitar, flute and voice, worked as Musical Director of the *Théâtre Populaire Romand*, and as recording engineer, record producer and computer programmer. He moved to Tasmania in 1983, lectured in composition at the Conservatorium, conducted recorder ensembles and choirs, studied recorder, voice and harpsichord. He founded **www.pjb.com.au**, becoming the first composer to sell scores on-line, with on-line delivery, taking scores from Composer to Performer in one immediate step. *Www.pjb.com.au* offers a new approach to music publishing. These pieces are **written to be read, made to be played !**

Compositions at *www.pjb.com.au* include: *Five Short Pieces*, guitar, 1979; *Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute and guitar, 1980; *Five Rounds*, choir, 1986; *Go Forth and Multiply*, choir, 1986; *Three Violin Duets*, 1987; *Fable*, for piano, 1987; *To Erich Jantsch*, SAATTB recorders, 1988; *A Suite of Curves*, trombone (or horn) and piano, 1990; *Two Recorder Duets*, alto recorders, or other melody instruments, 1991; *Trombone Quintet*, trombone, flute, piano, bass, and percussion, 1994; *Three Songs*, on poems by Jack Kerouac, Vikram Seth and Dylan Thomas, voice and piano (only the first and third of these are available), 1994; *Piano Study*, piano, 1994; *Four Dances*, various ensembles including recorder quartet, string quartet, 1995; *The Poet in the Clouds*, on a poem by S. T. Coleridge, SATB choir, 1995; *Tres Casidas del Diván del Tamarit*, on poems by Federico García Lorca, voice and piano, 1997; *Three Suites*, for the solo line, piano, and piano and a solo line, 2000; *Die Zeiten*, on poems by Kästner, Bachman and Jünger, choir (only the second and third of these are available), 2000; *Three Duets* for flutes, 2001; *For Four Hands* for piano four hands, 2002; *Three Preludes* for piano, 2003; *Second Solo Suite* for flute, violin, viola or cello, 2003; *Guitar Duet* for two guitars, 2006; *We Who Mourn* for choir, 2007; *Trio With Guitar* for guitar and two clarinets or two recorders or two violas, 2008.

Arrangements include: By J. S. Bach: *Trio BWV 655*, piano and flute; *Vor deinen Thron BWV 668*, piano; *Fugue in F minor BWV 689*, SATB recorders; *Flute Sonata BWV 1031* transposed into G major for alto recorder and keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1032* completed by Peter Billam for flute and keyboard, also in C major for alto recorder, and in G major for descant; *Ricercare a 3, from the Musikalisches Opfer* for keyboard; *Ricercare a 6*, for sSATBG recorders, or strings, or two keyboards; *Fuga Canonica in Epidiapente* for keyboard and melody instrument; from the *Art of Fugue*: *Contrapuncti 1* and *4* for keyboard, and *Contrapunctus 14* as completed by D. F. Tovey, for keyboard, or for SATB recorders, or for strings; *Passacaglia and Fugue in c* for piano four hands; *Chorales with Descant* for melody instrument and piano; *Cello Suites I*, *II* and *III* for flute or alto recorder, *Forty Chorales* for piano, *Der Geist hilft* for SATB-SATB recorders. By Johannes Brahms: *Fugue in Ab minor for organ*, for SATB recorders and gamba, in A minor; *Choralvorspiele for organ* with previous settings by Isaac, Bach, Praetorius, recorders. By Franz Schubert: *Four Songs*, voice and guitar; *Schubert Dances*, recorders and guitar, *Schubert Dances*, piano 4 hands. By G. F. Händel: *Concerto Grosso in A minor* op 6 no 4, harpsichord and recorders; *Recorder Sonata in Bb* no 5, in G for tenor recorder and keyboard. By other composers: *Claudio Monteverdi, Ecco Mormorar l'Onde*, SSATB recorders; *Twelve Italian Songs*, voice and guitar; *John Wilbye, Draw on sweet Night*, SSATTB recorders, and for flute choir; *Telemann, Twelve Flute Fantasias*, recorder; *John Carr, Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute or recorder and guitar; *Fourteen Folk Dance Tunes*, recorder and guitar; *Easy Classical Pieces*, Bb trumpet and piano.

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