The Big Bach Lutebook
Music by Johann Sebastian Bach
Volume II

Six Suites for Cello, original title:

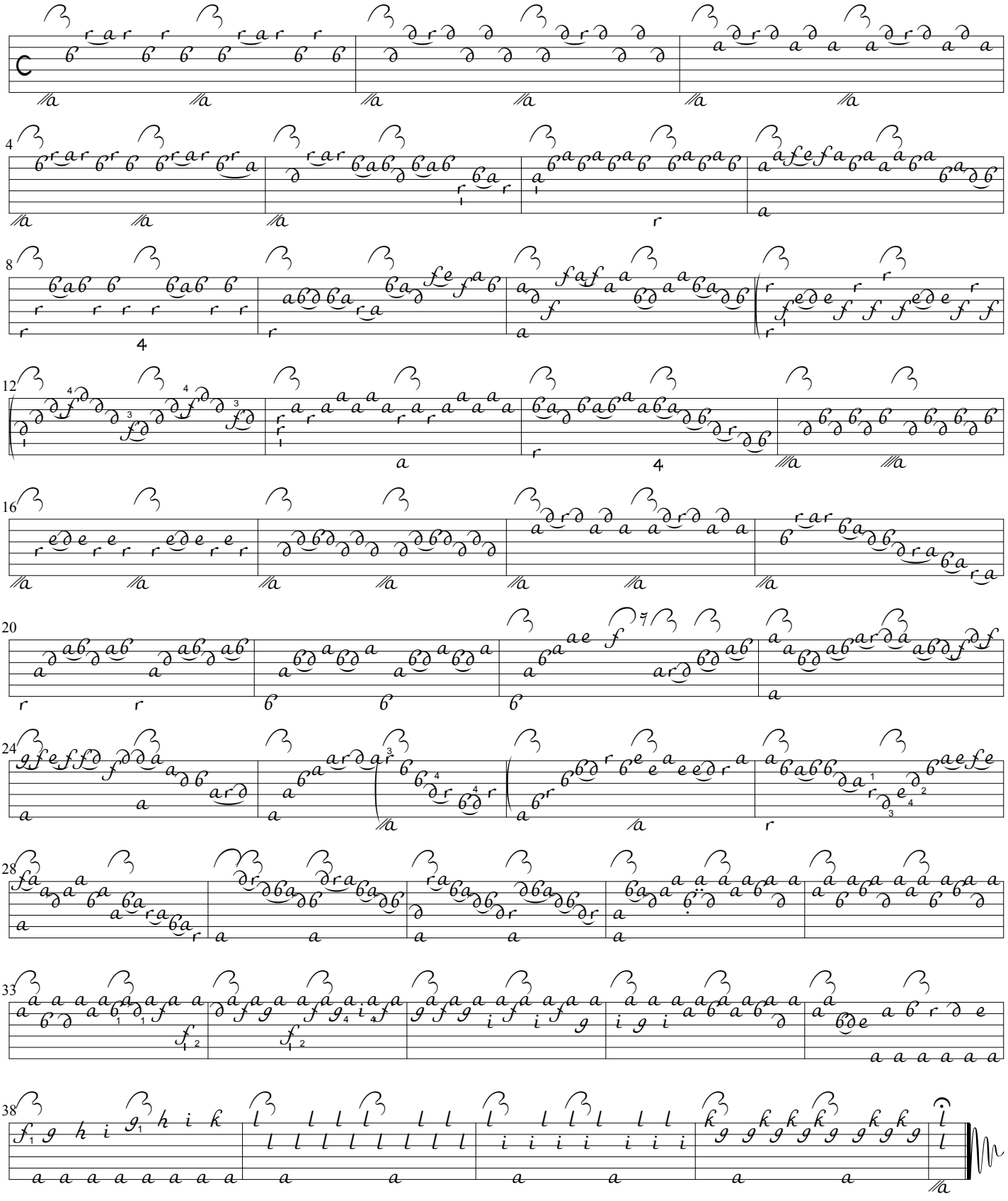
6 / Suites a / Violoncello Solo/ senza / Basso / composeés / par / Sr. J. S. Bach, Maitre de Chappelle

BWV 1007, G major, transposed to E flat
BWV 1008, in D minor, arranged for theorbo in A in the original key
BWV 1009, in C major, arranged for theorbo in A in the original key
BWV 1010, in E flat, transposed to B flat
BWV 1011, in C minor, transposed to A minor,
(a different arrangement from BWV 995 in Volume I)
BWV 1012 in D major tuning (upper six courses: f#', d', a, f#, d A)

Lute tablature by Clive Titmuss, updated October 31, 2009

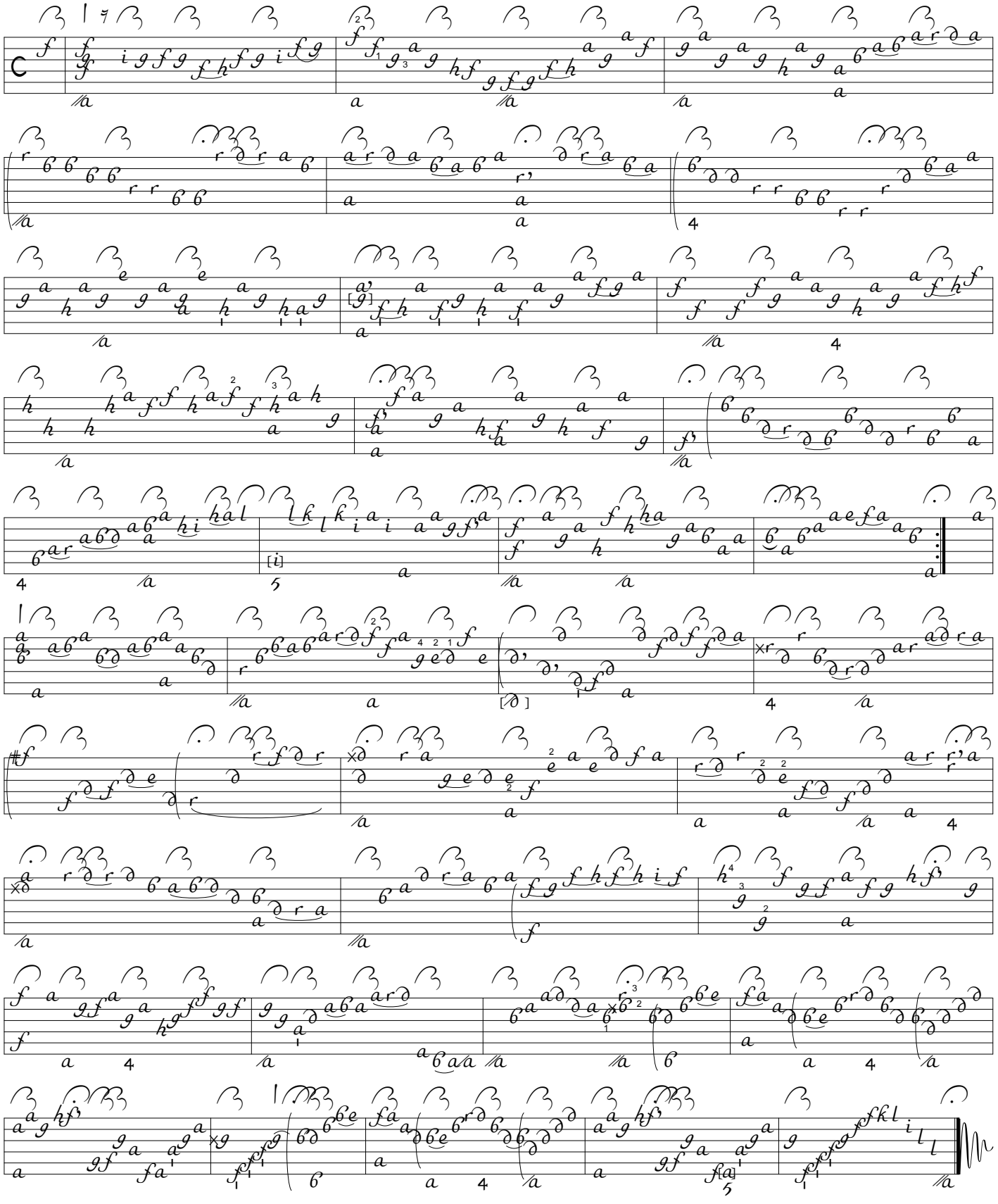
Cello Suite I: Prelude

J.S Bach (BWV 1007)



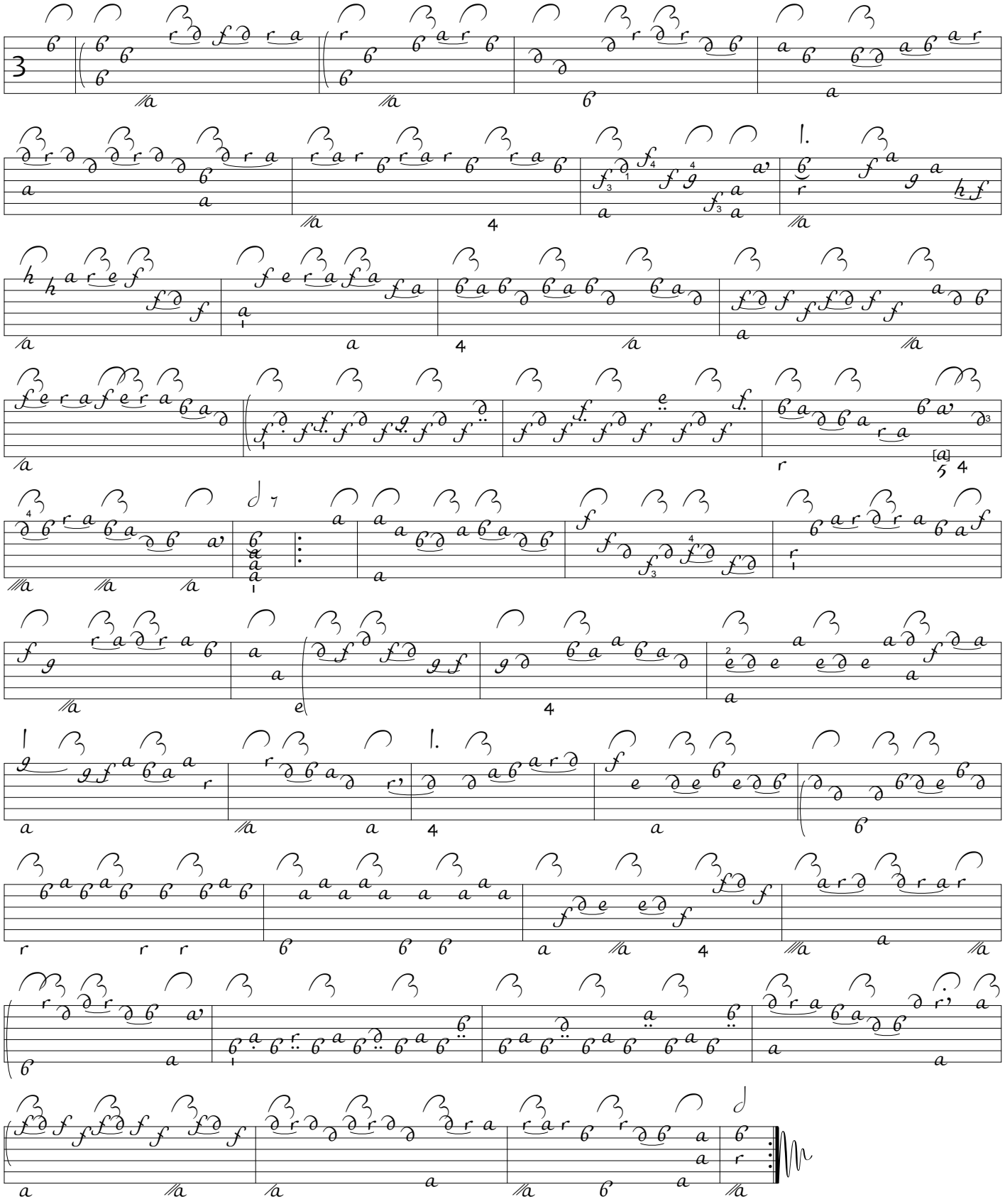
Allemande

BWV 1007



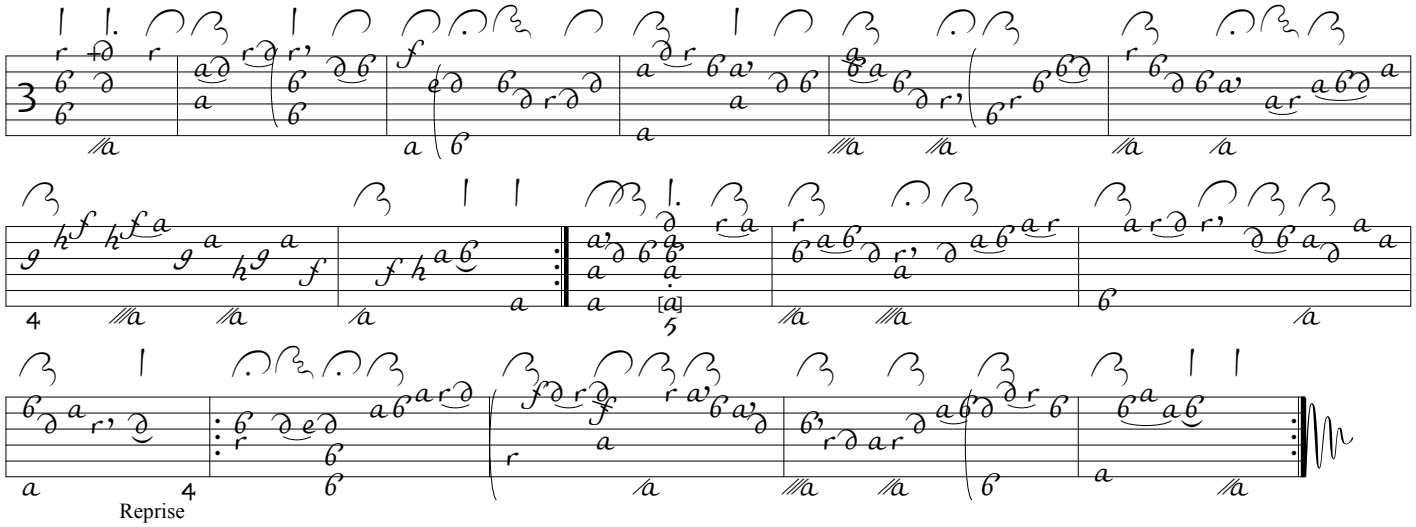
Courante

BWV 1007



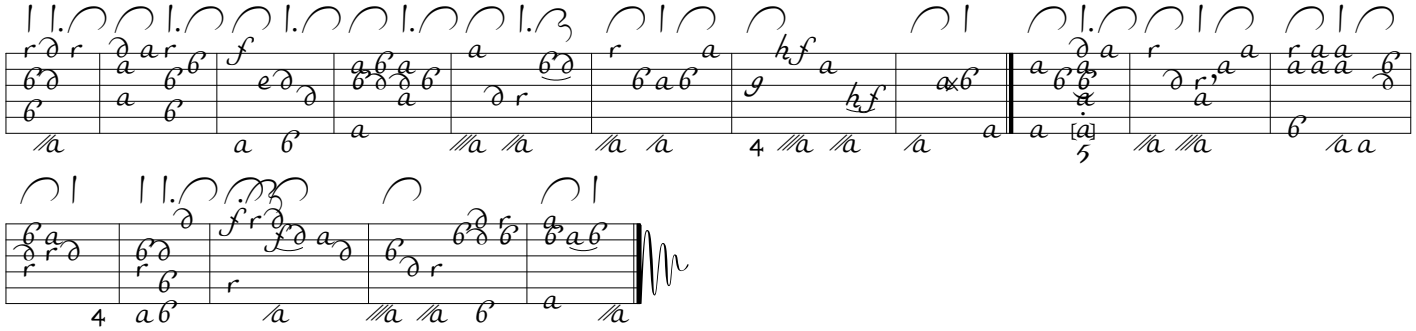
Saranbande

BWV 1007



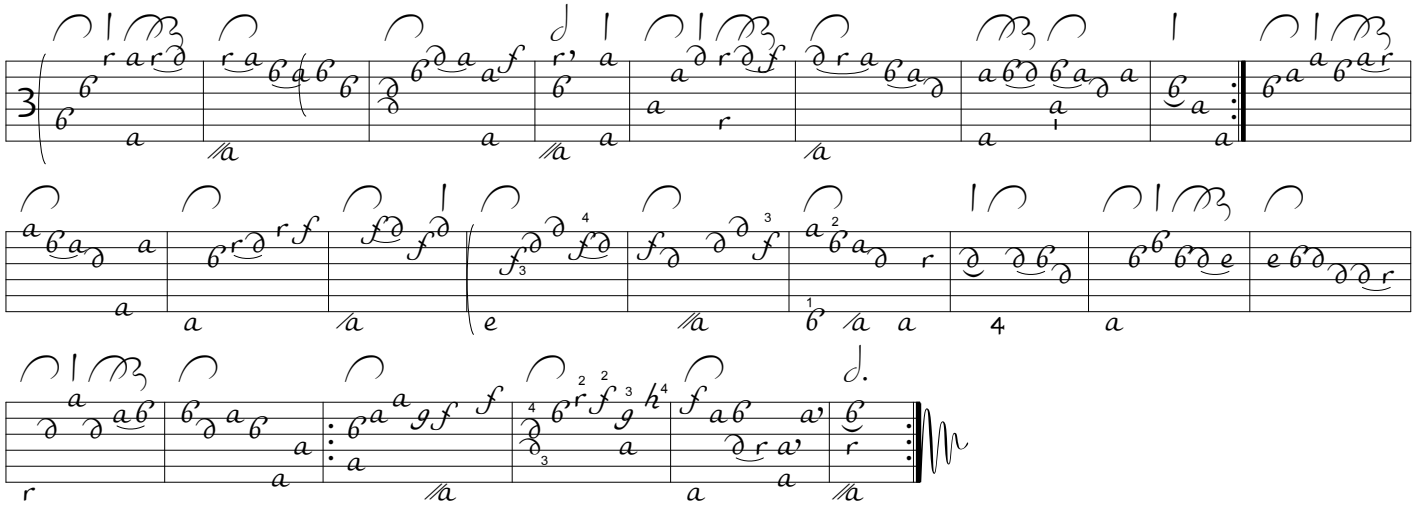
Sarabande (simple)

BWV 1007



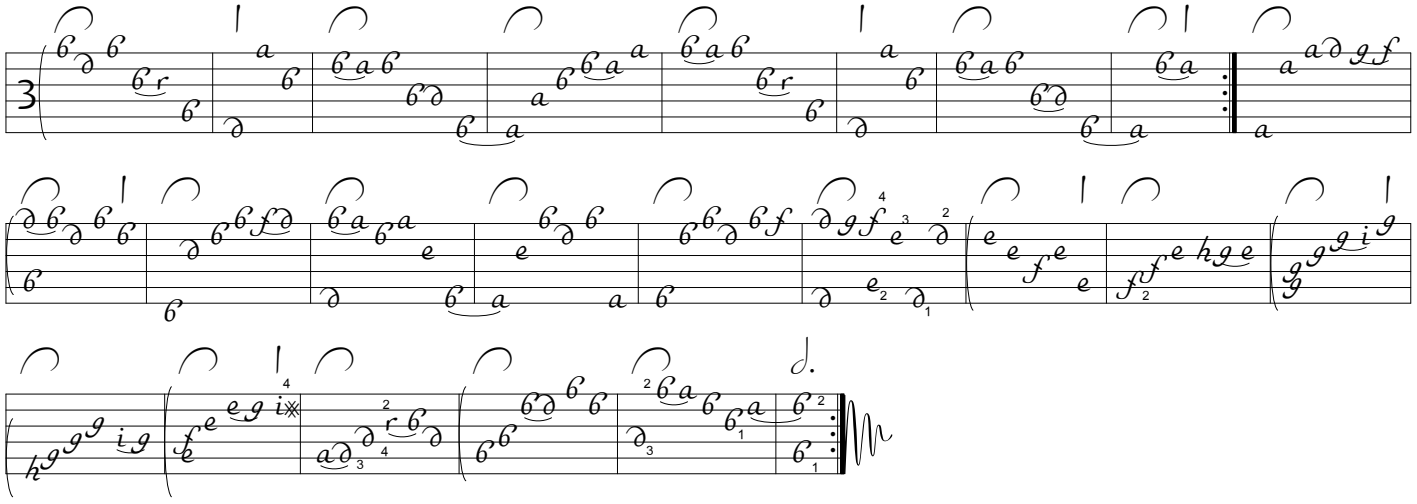
Menuet I

BWV 1007



Menuet II

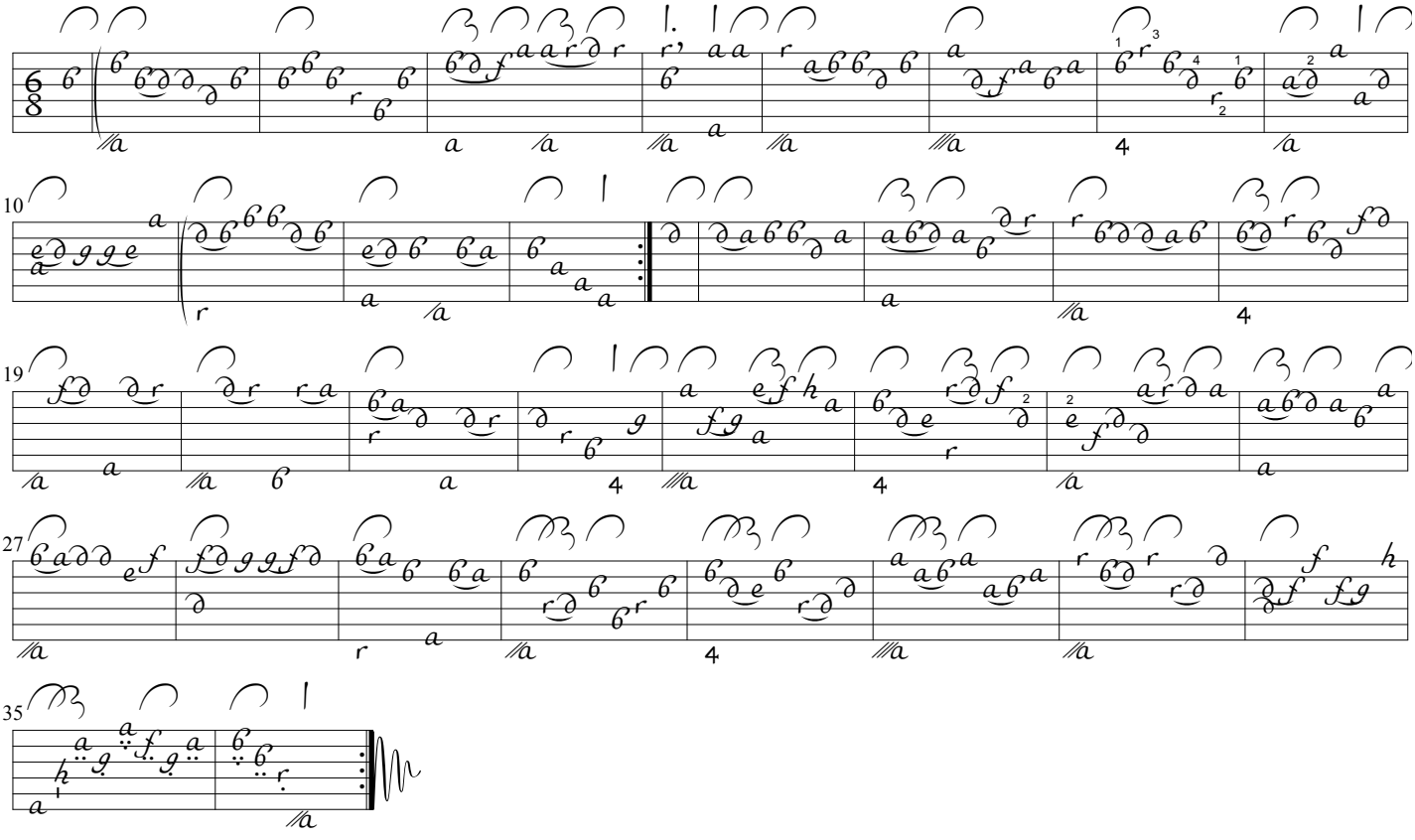
BWV 1007



Menuet I da Capo

Gigue

BWV 1007



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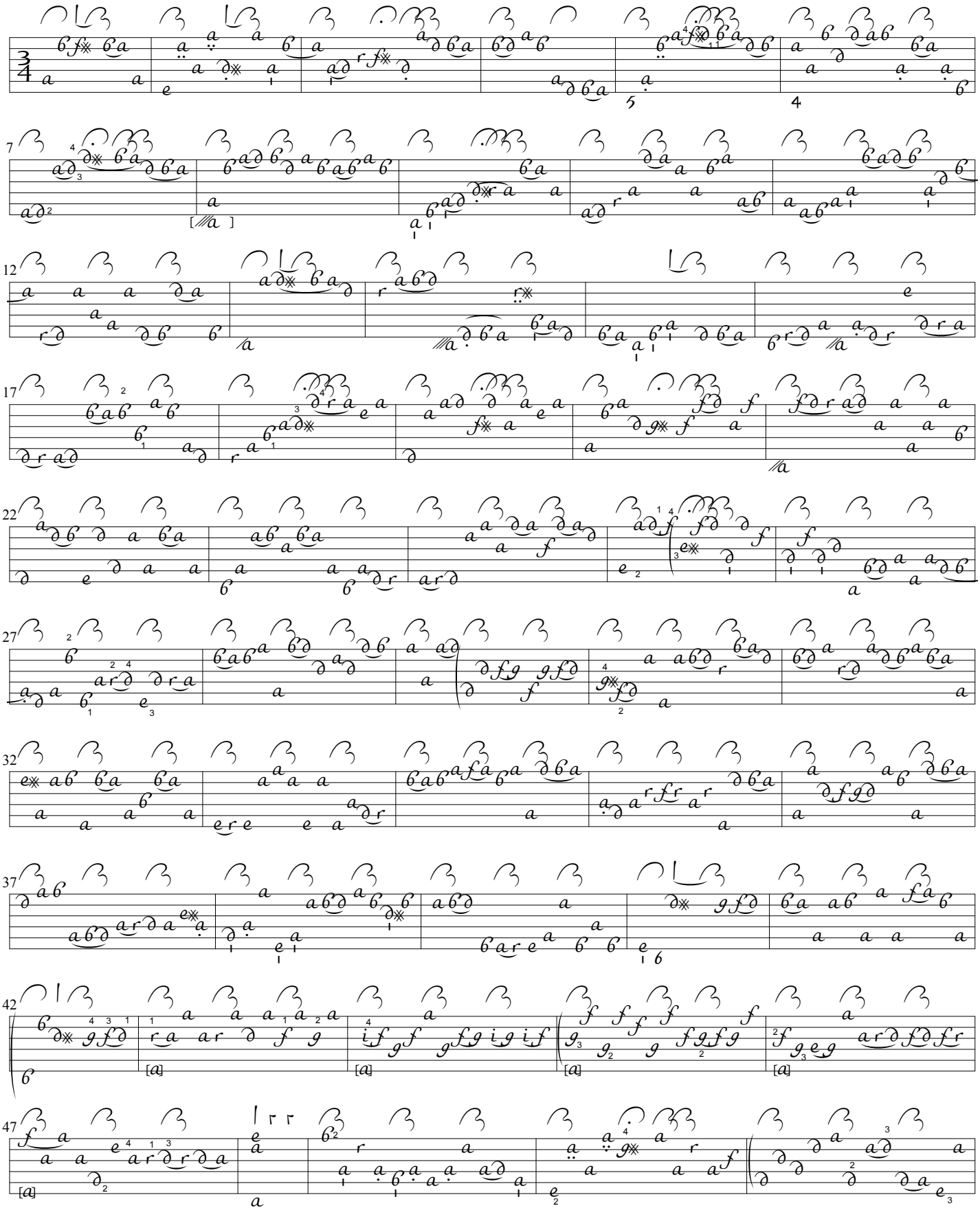
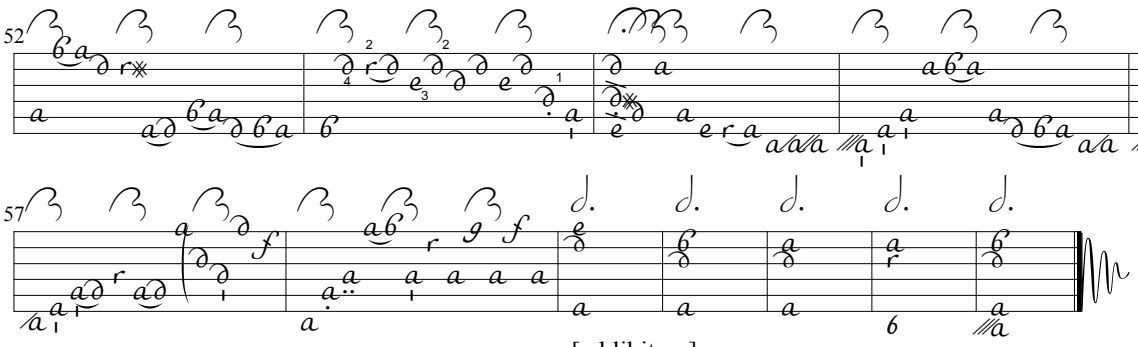
Cello Suite II: Prelude

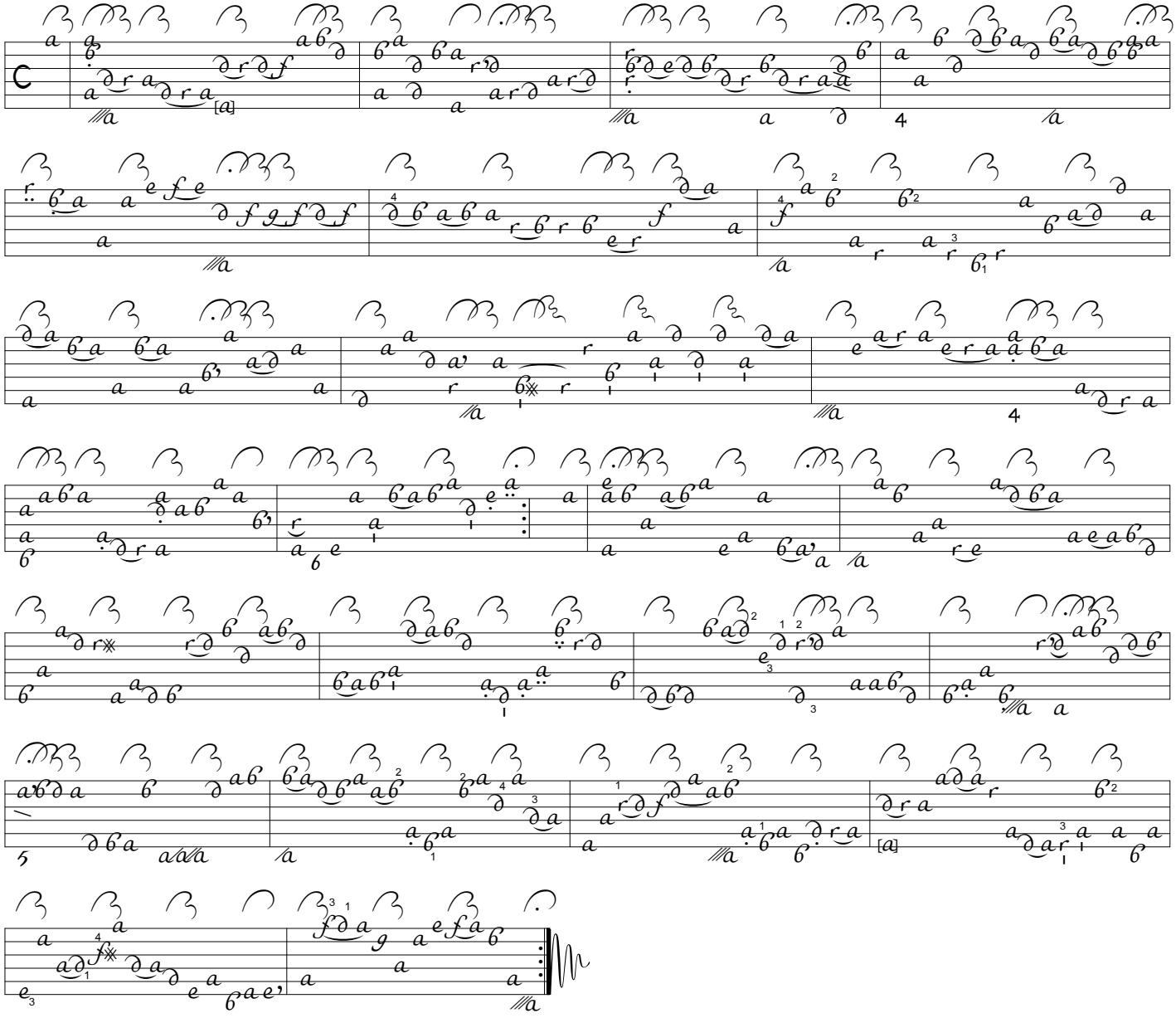
J. S. Bach (BWV 1008)



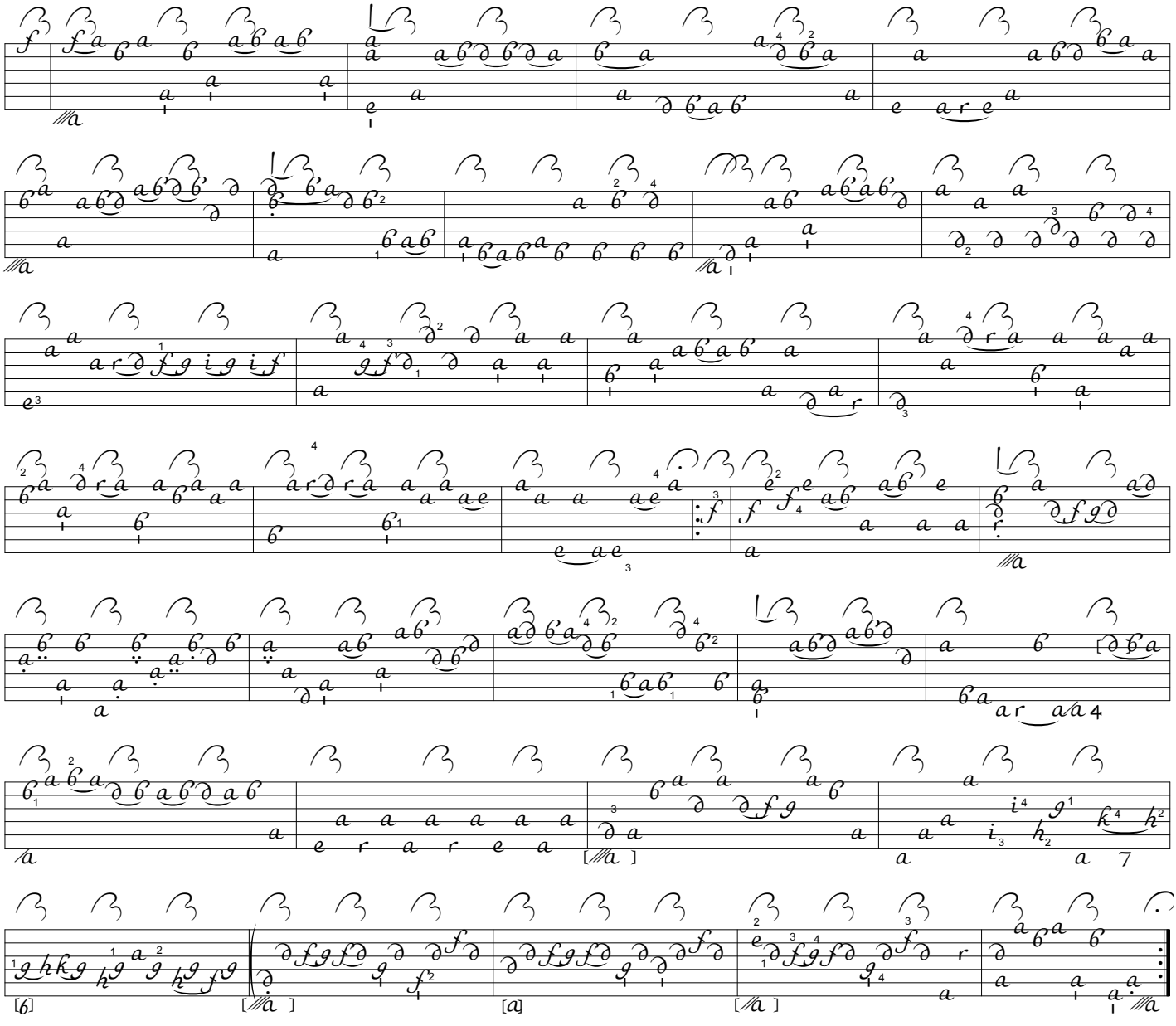


[ad libitum]

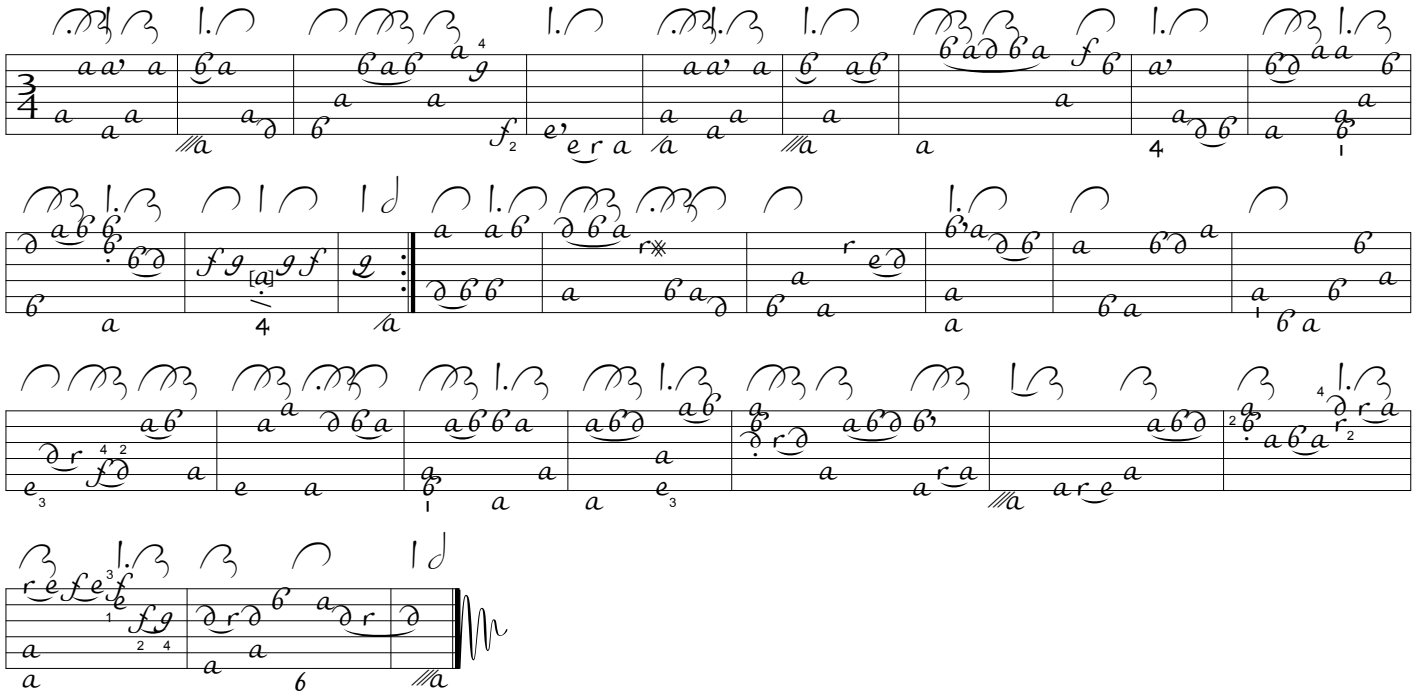
Allemande



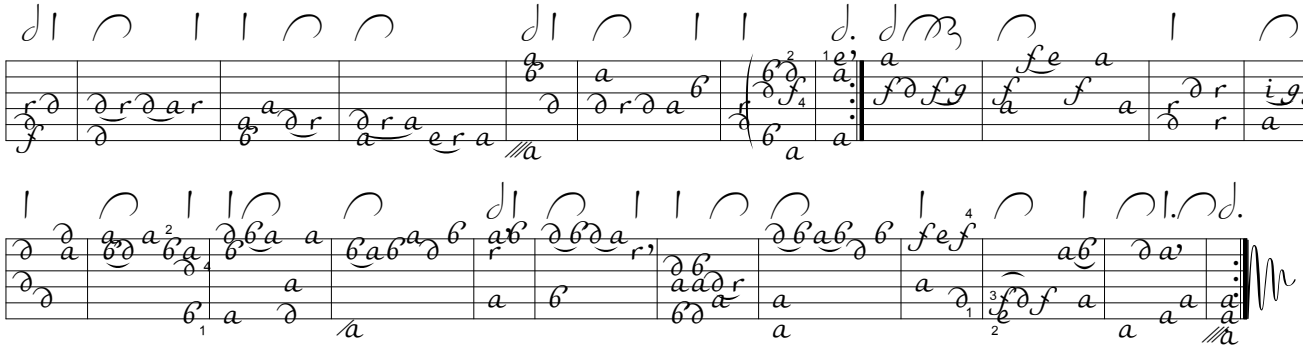
Courante



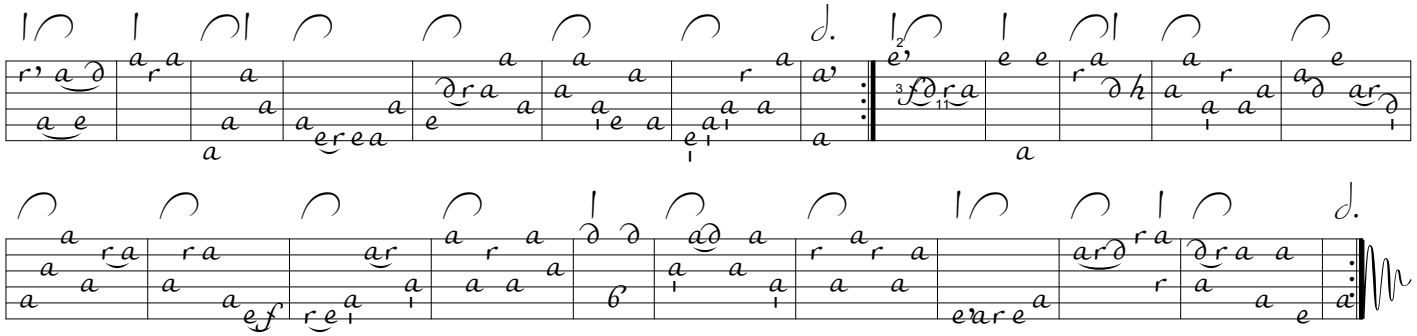
Sarabande



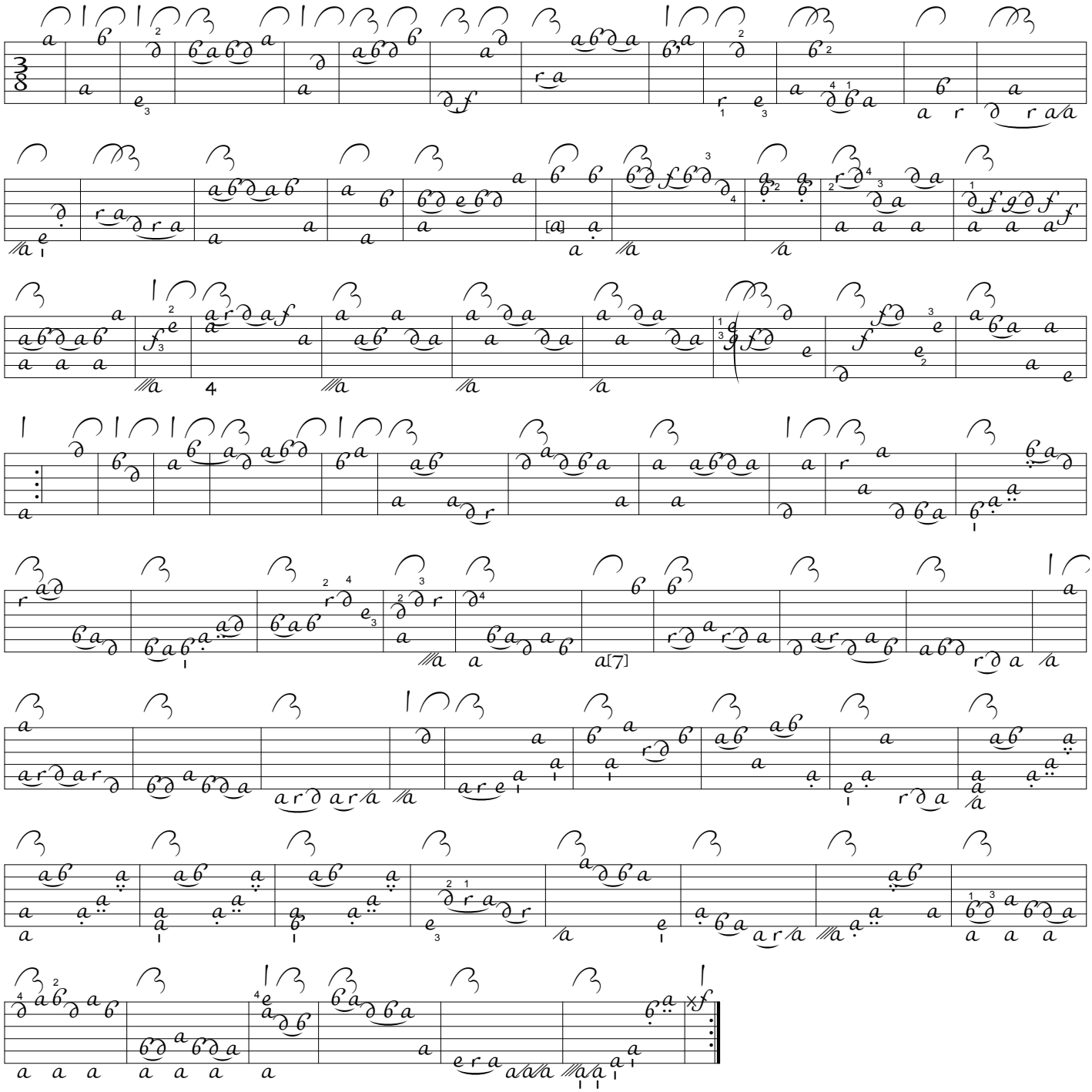
Menuet I & II



Menuet II



Gigue



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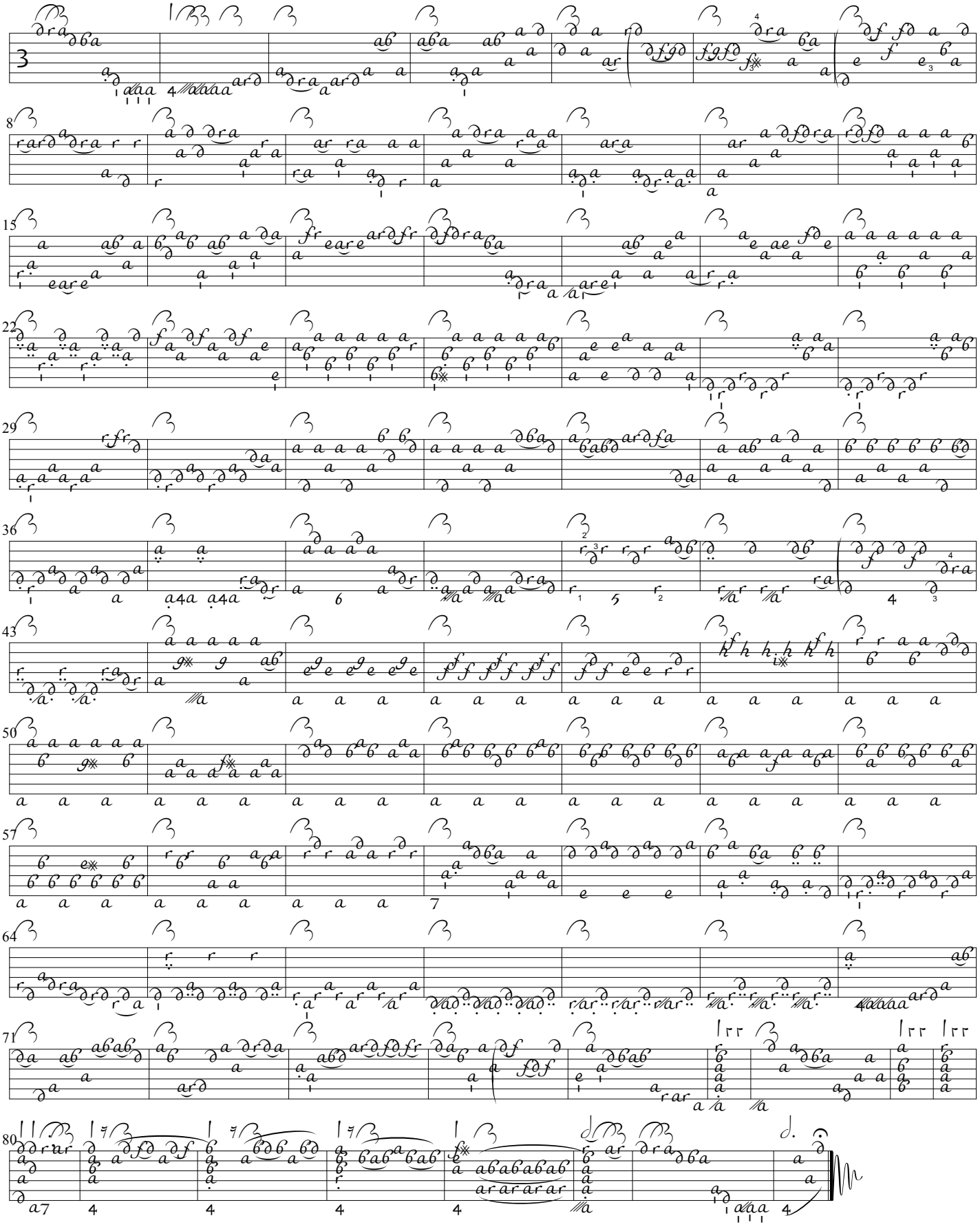
Cello Suite III: Prelude

J. S. Bach (BWV 1009)



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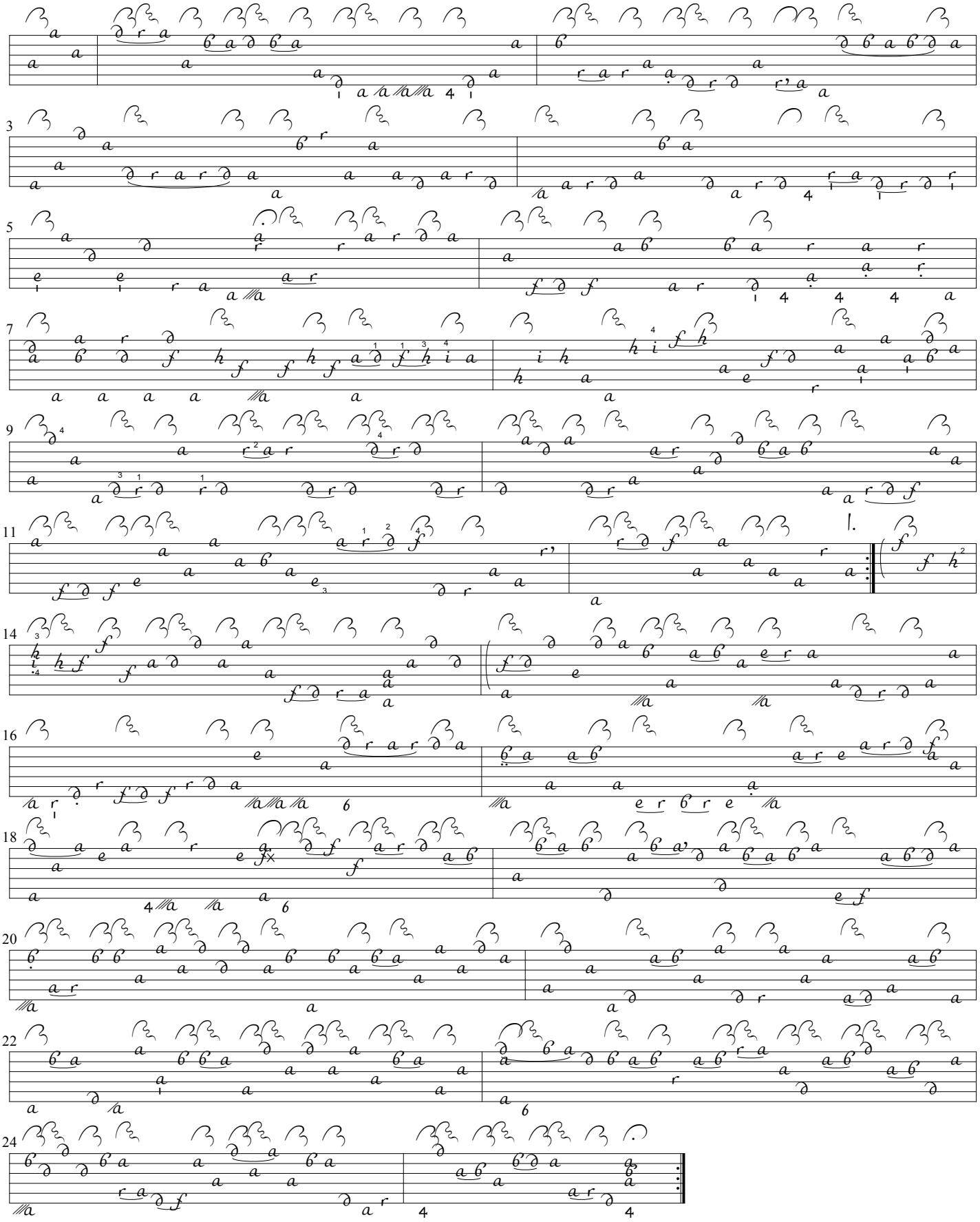
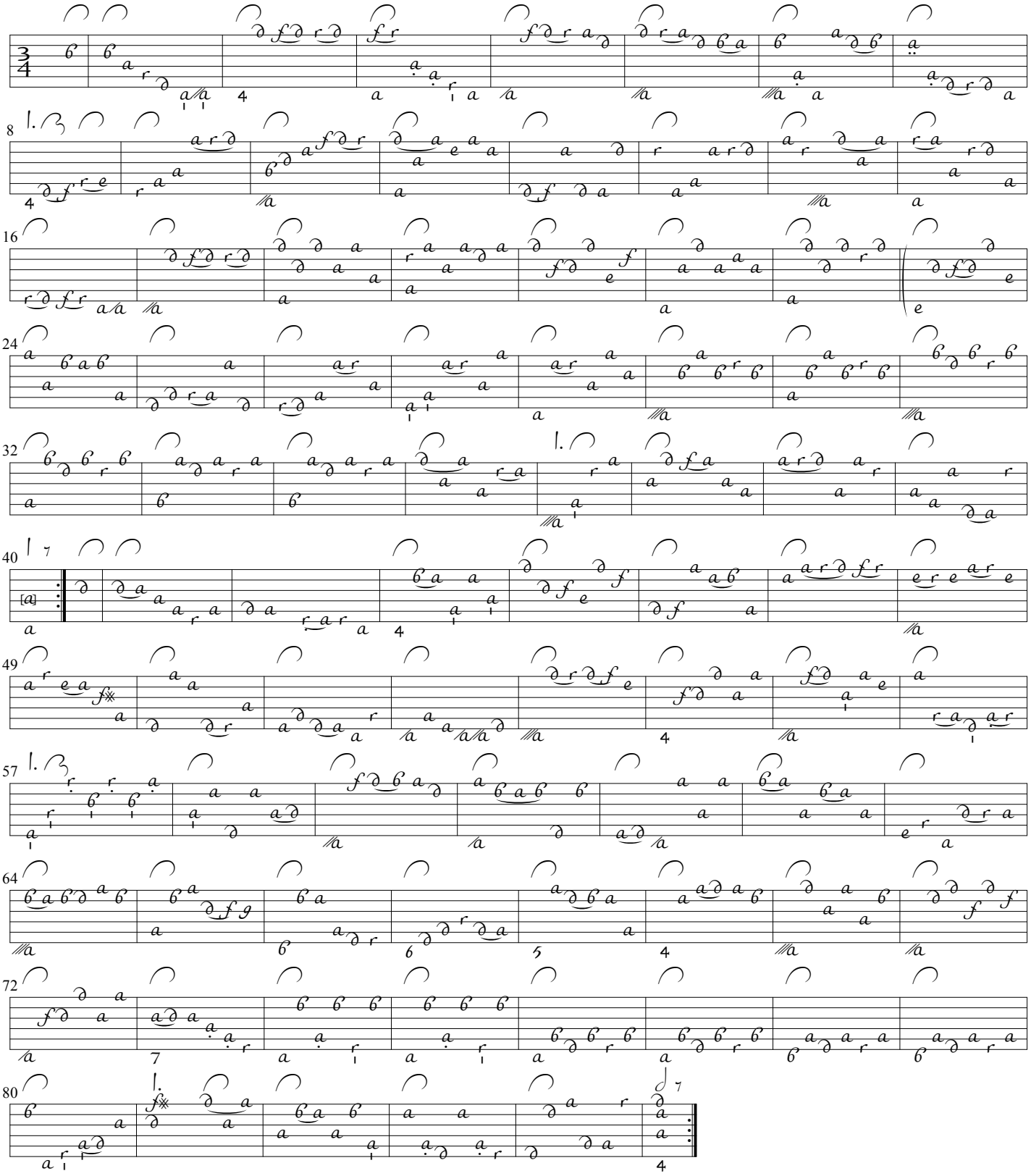
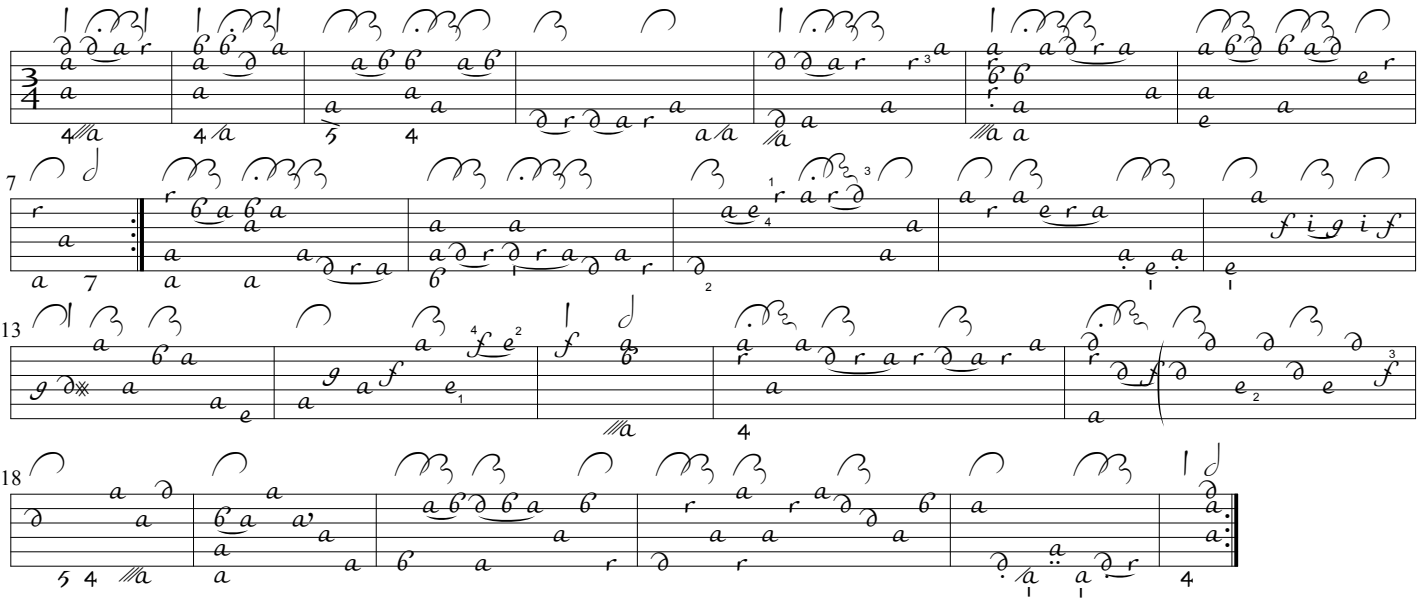
Allemande



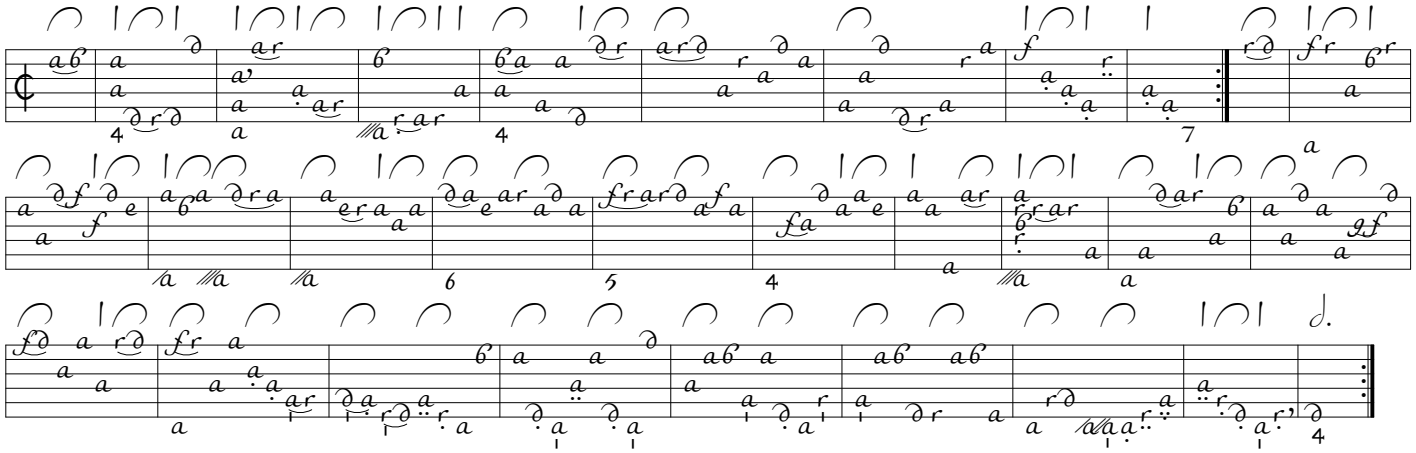
Courante



Sarabande



Bourée I & II



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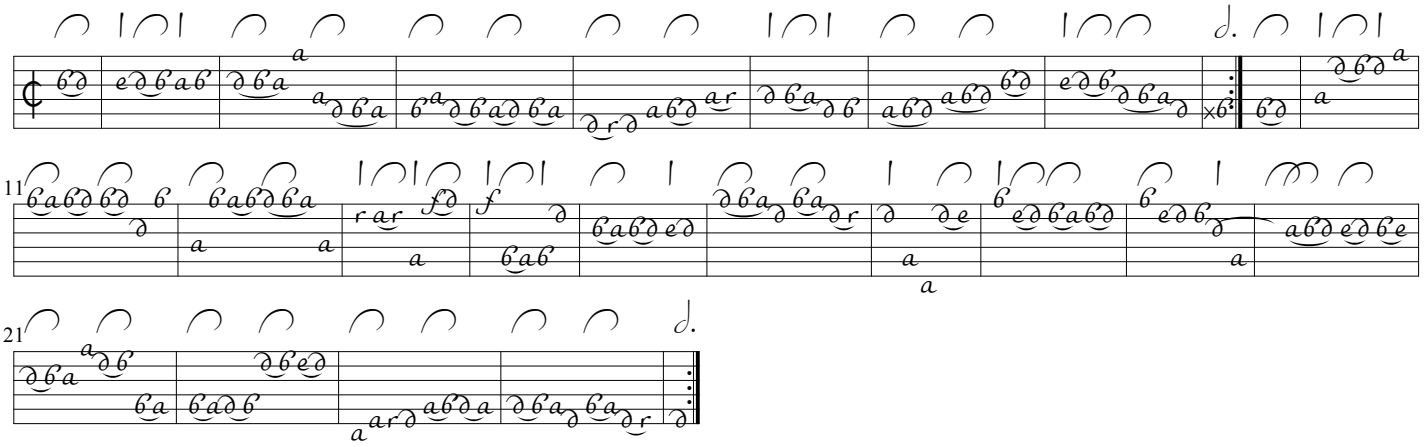
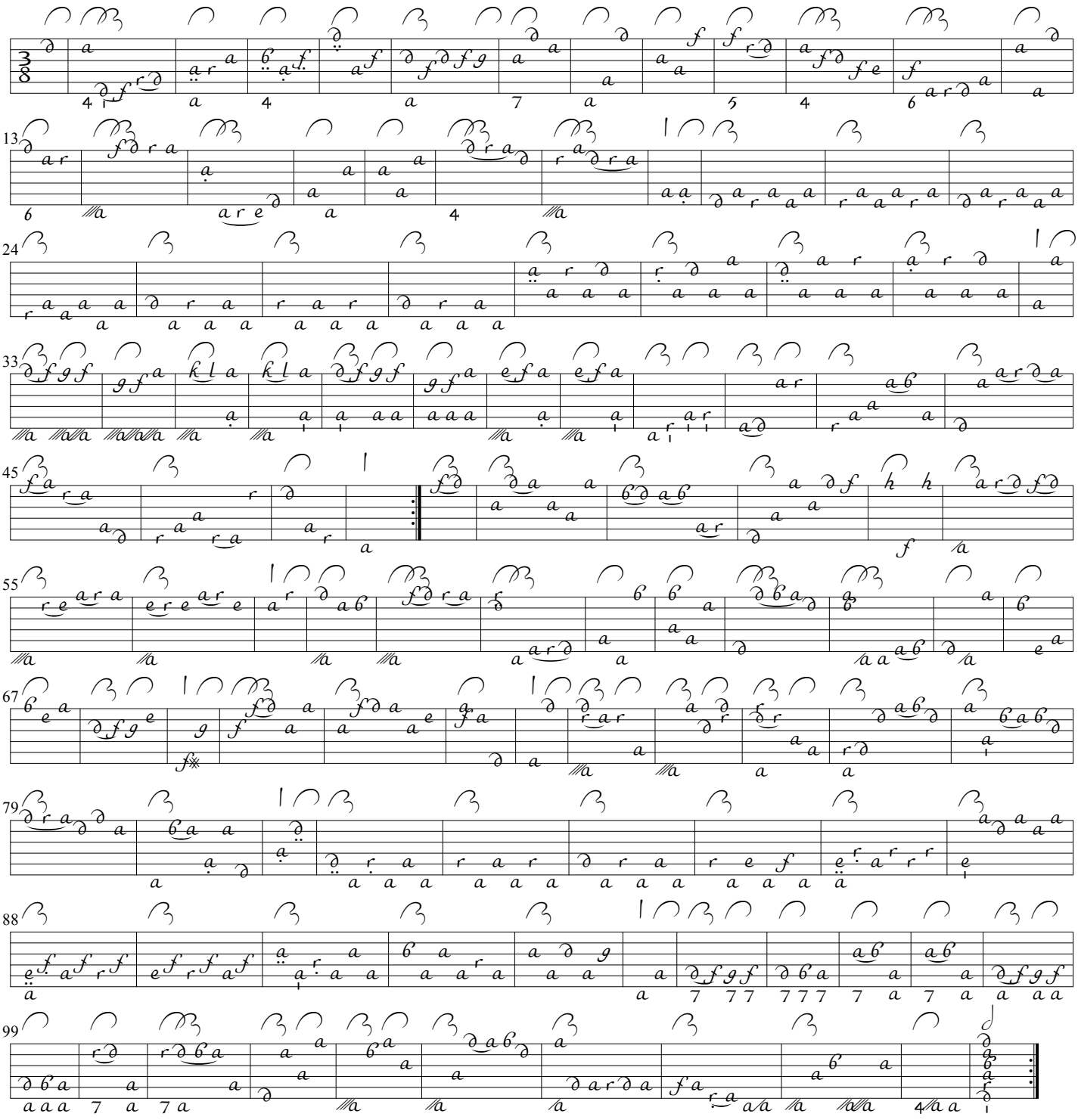


Bourée I da Capo

Gigue



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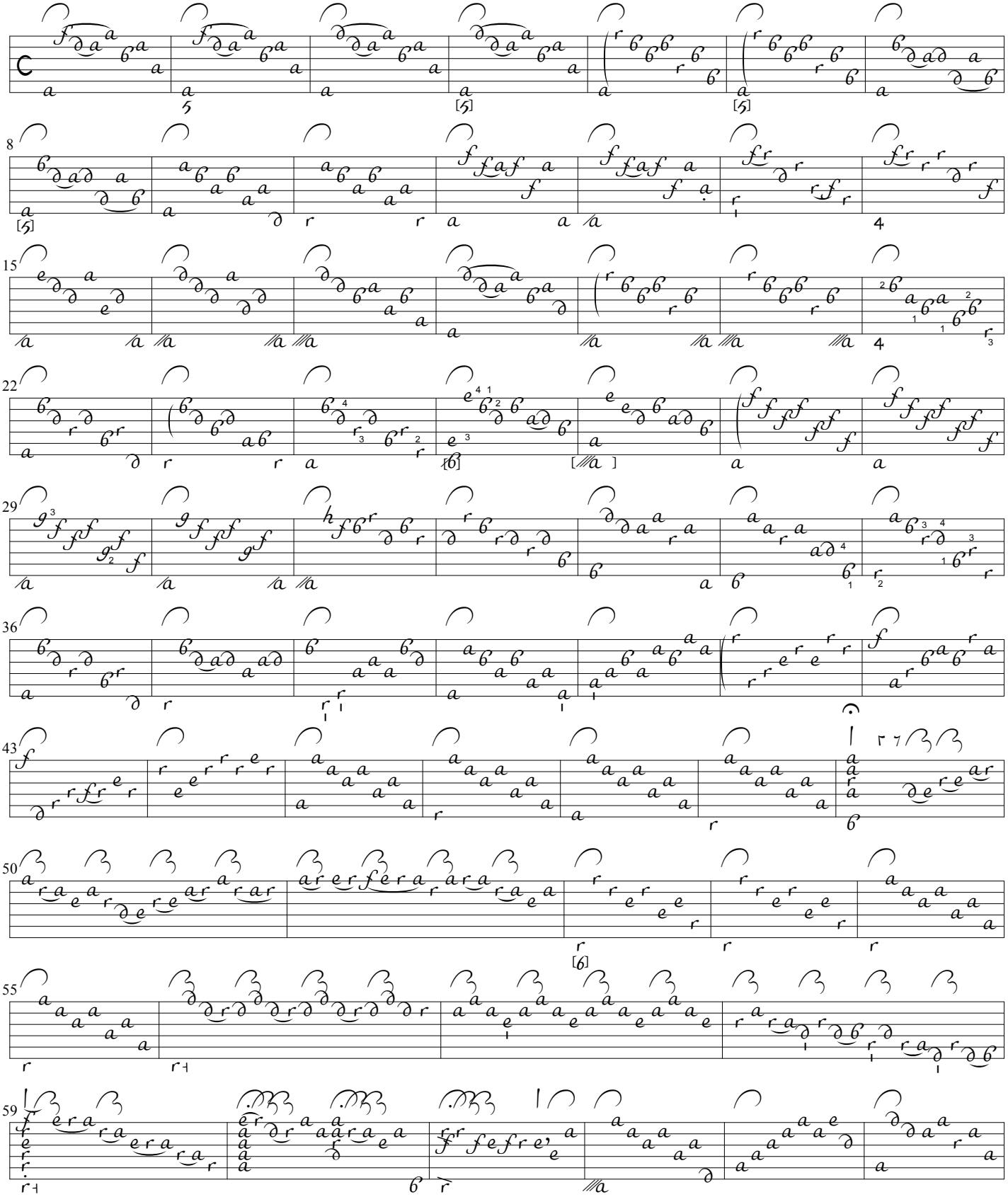
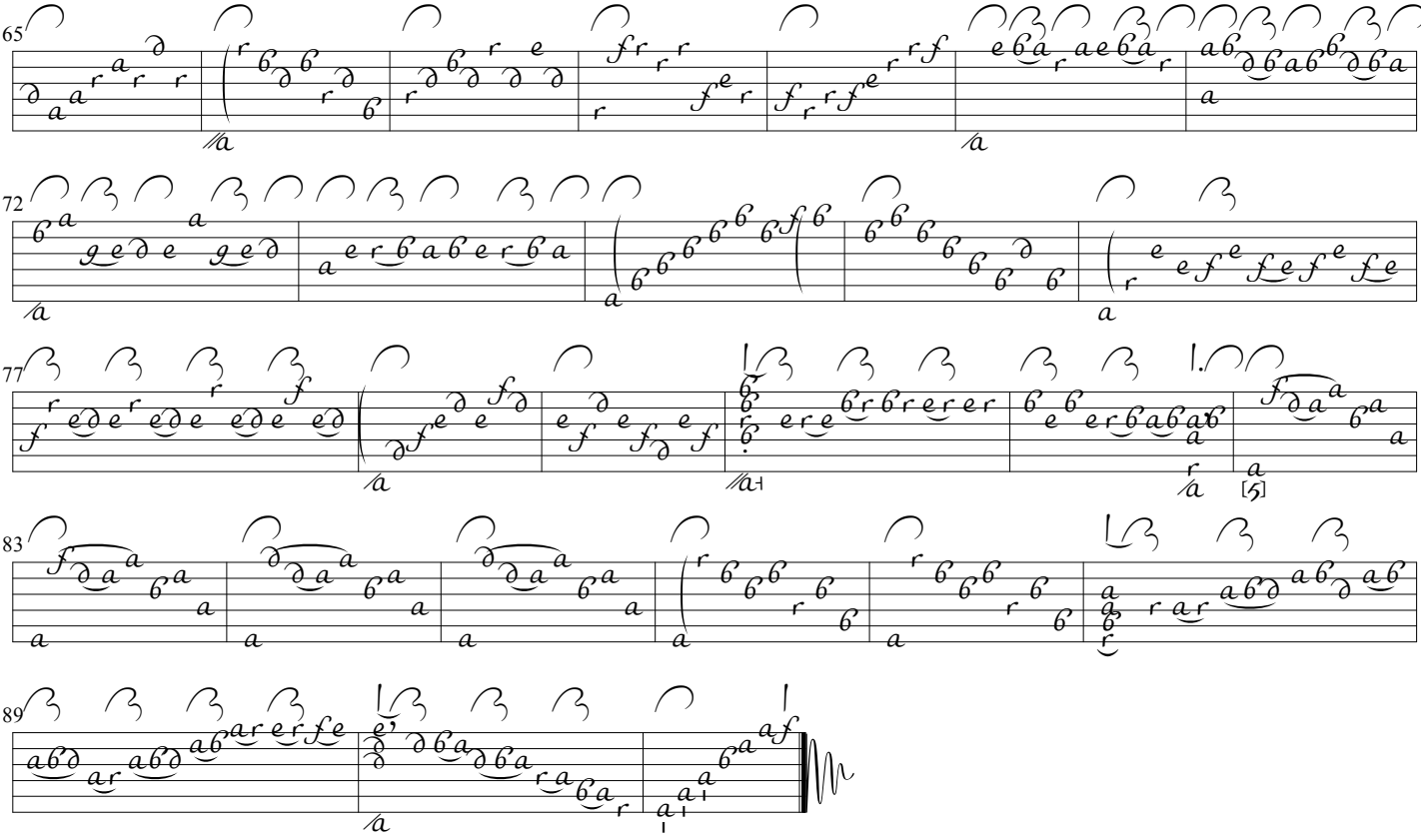
Cello Suite IV: Prelude

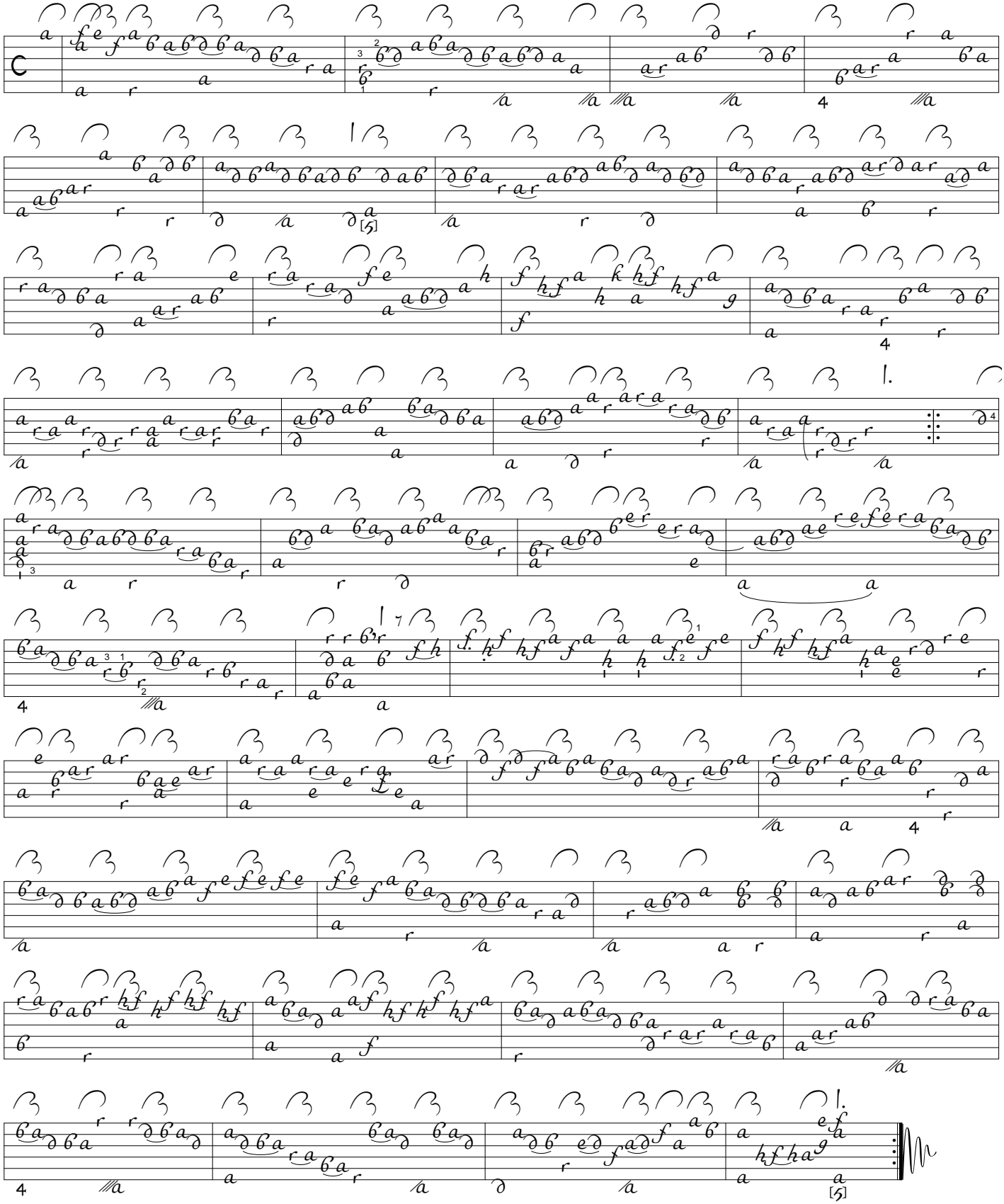
J. S. Bach (BWV 1010)





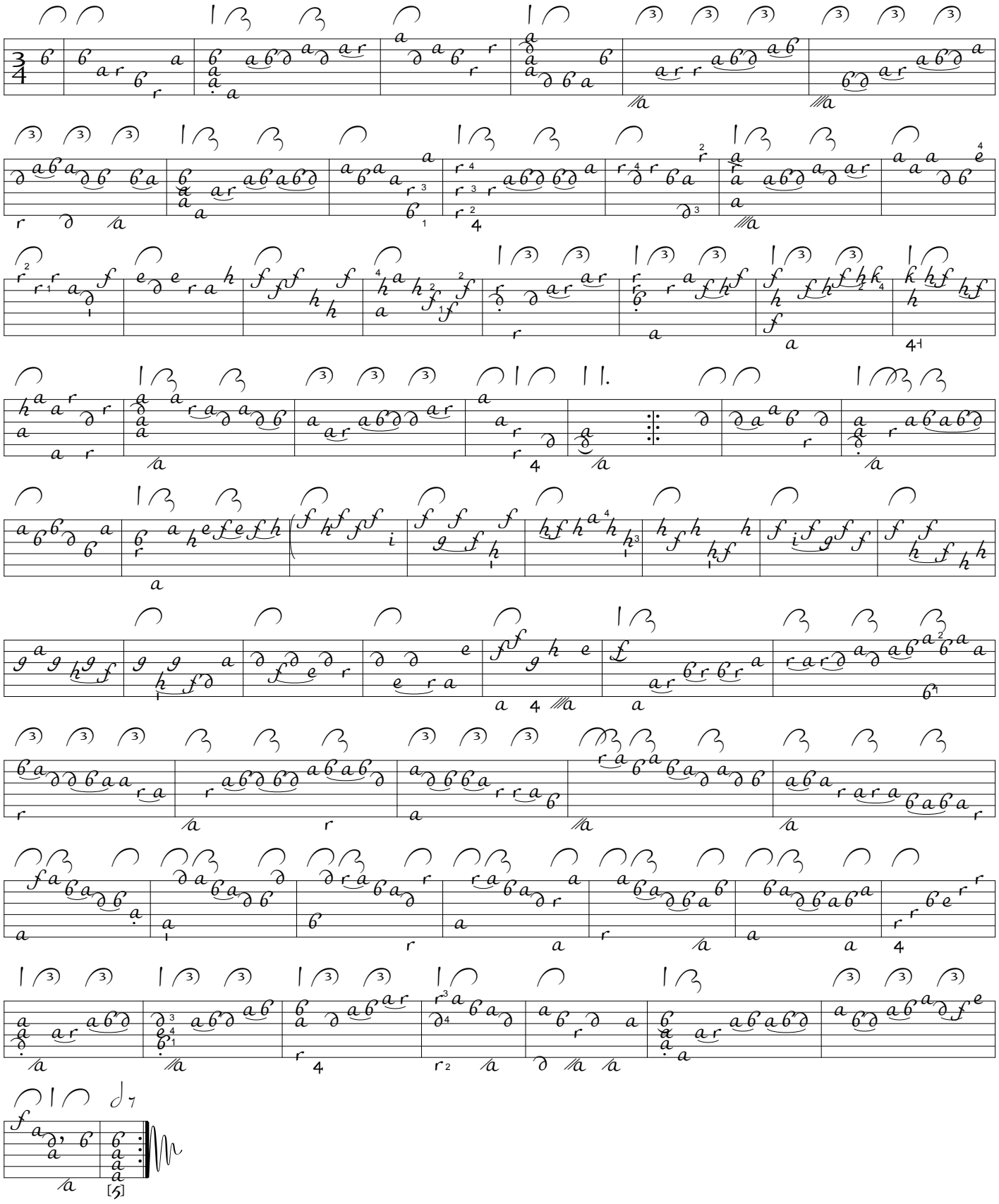
Allemande

BWV 1010



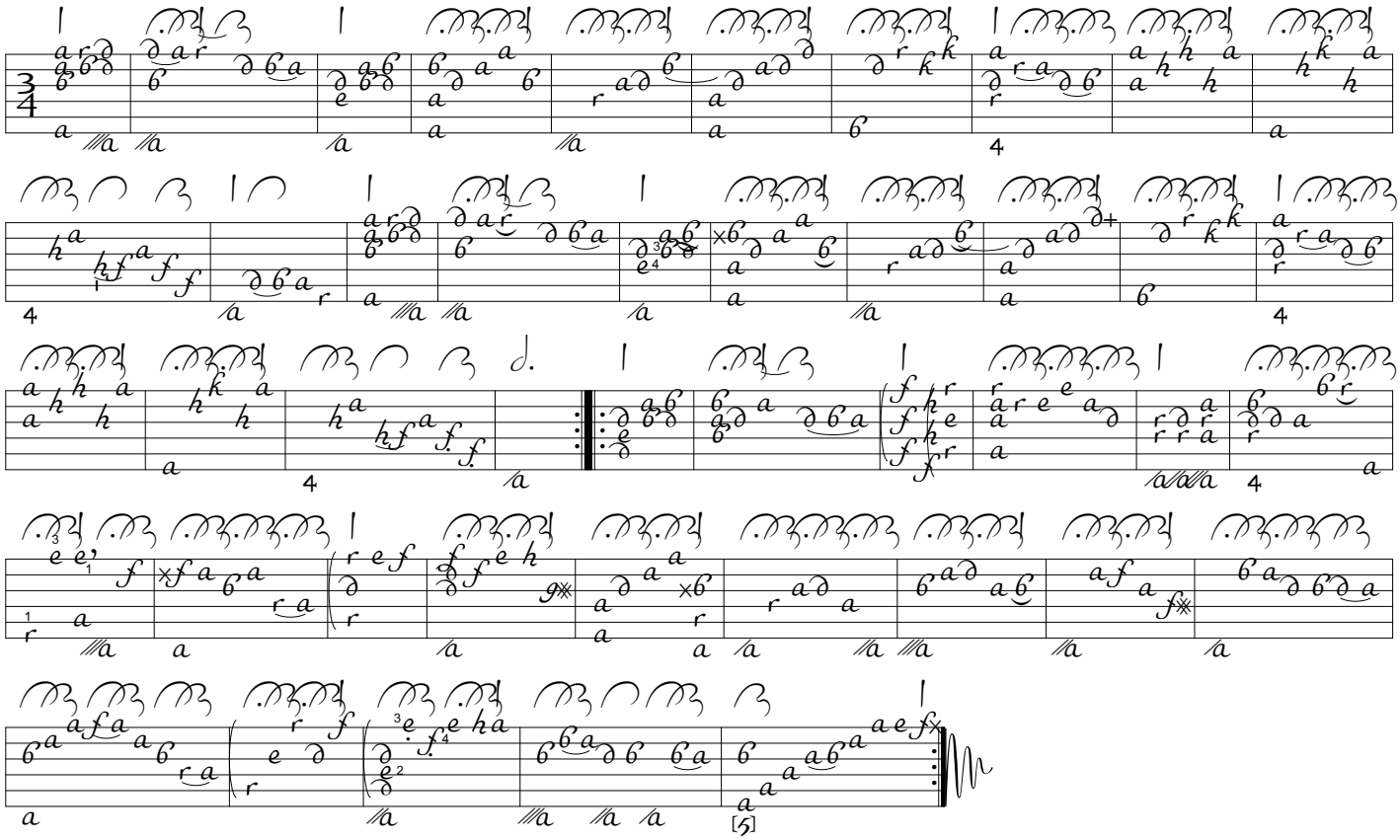
Courante

BWV 1010



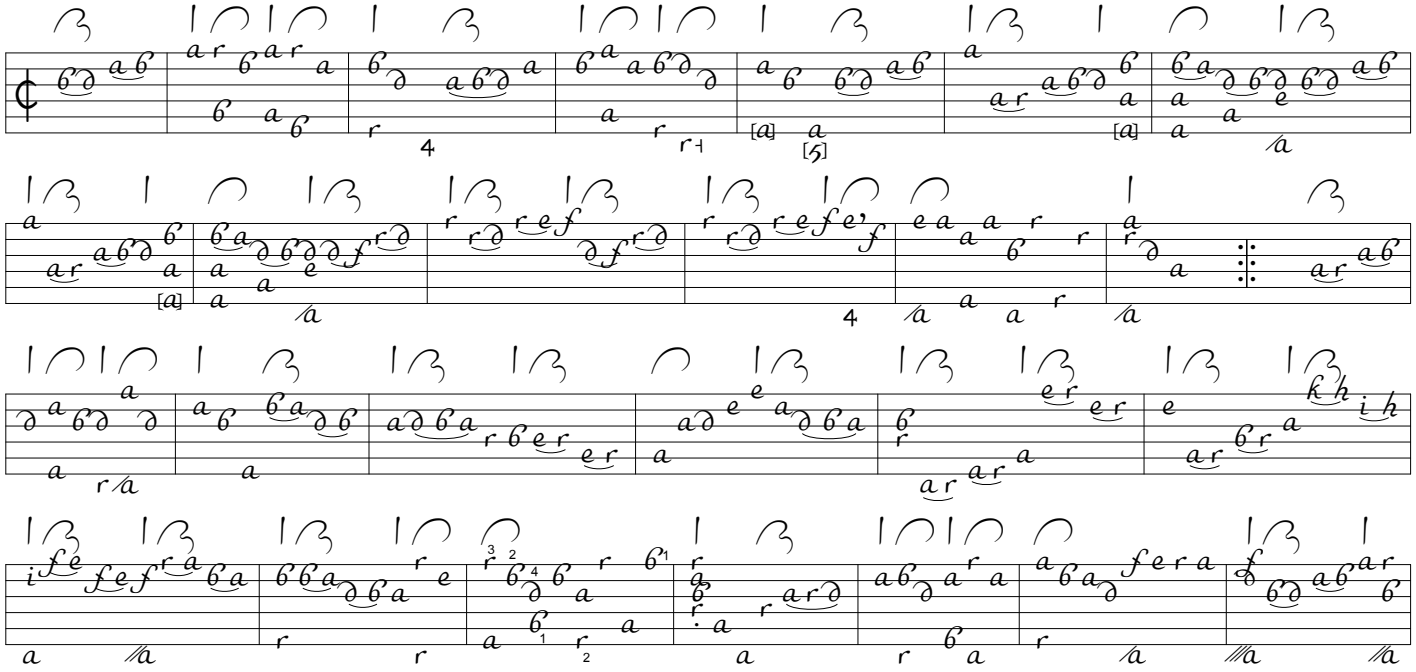
Sarabande

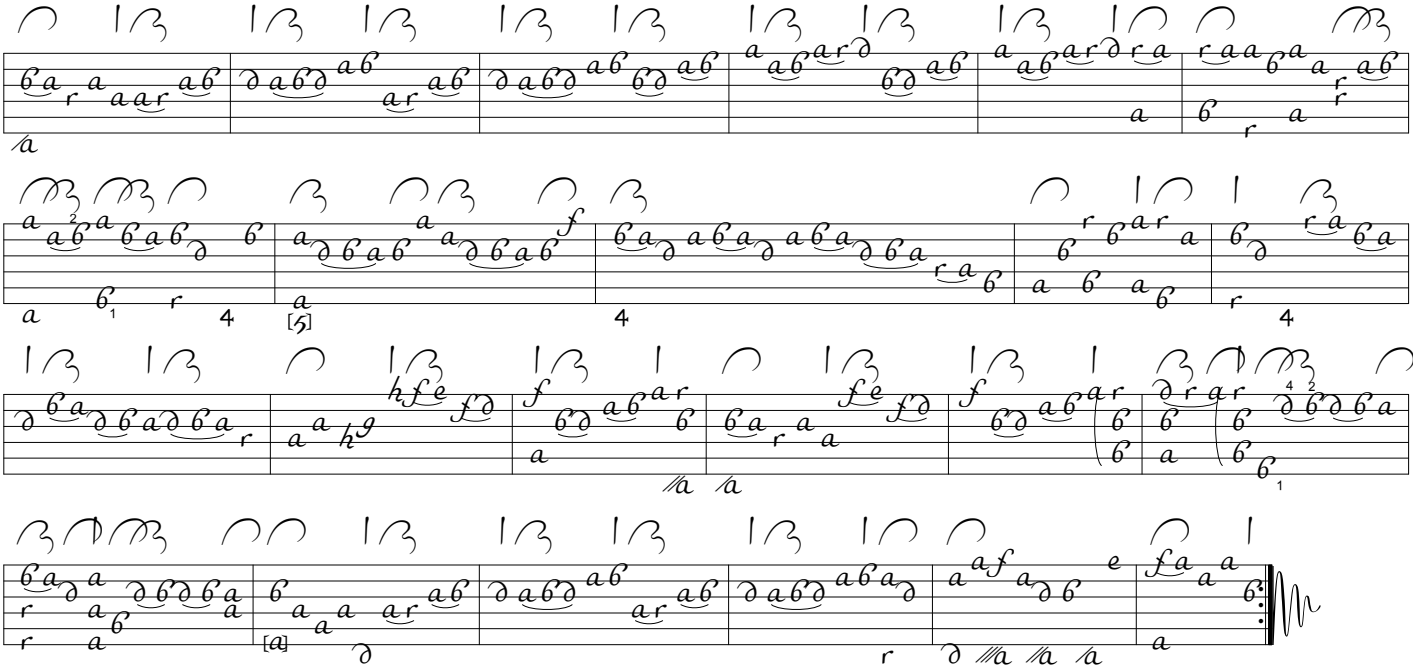
BWV 1010



Bourée I

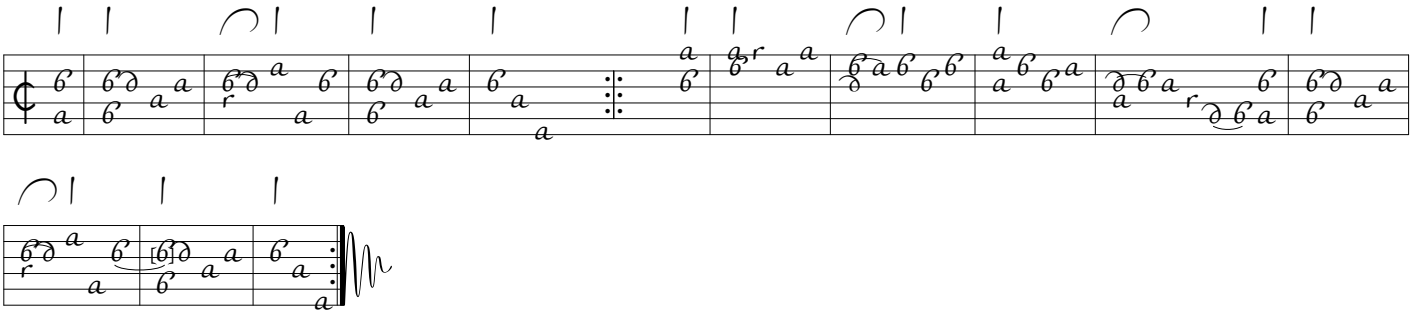
BWV 1010





Bourée II

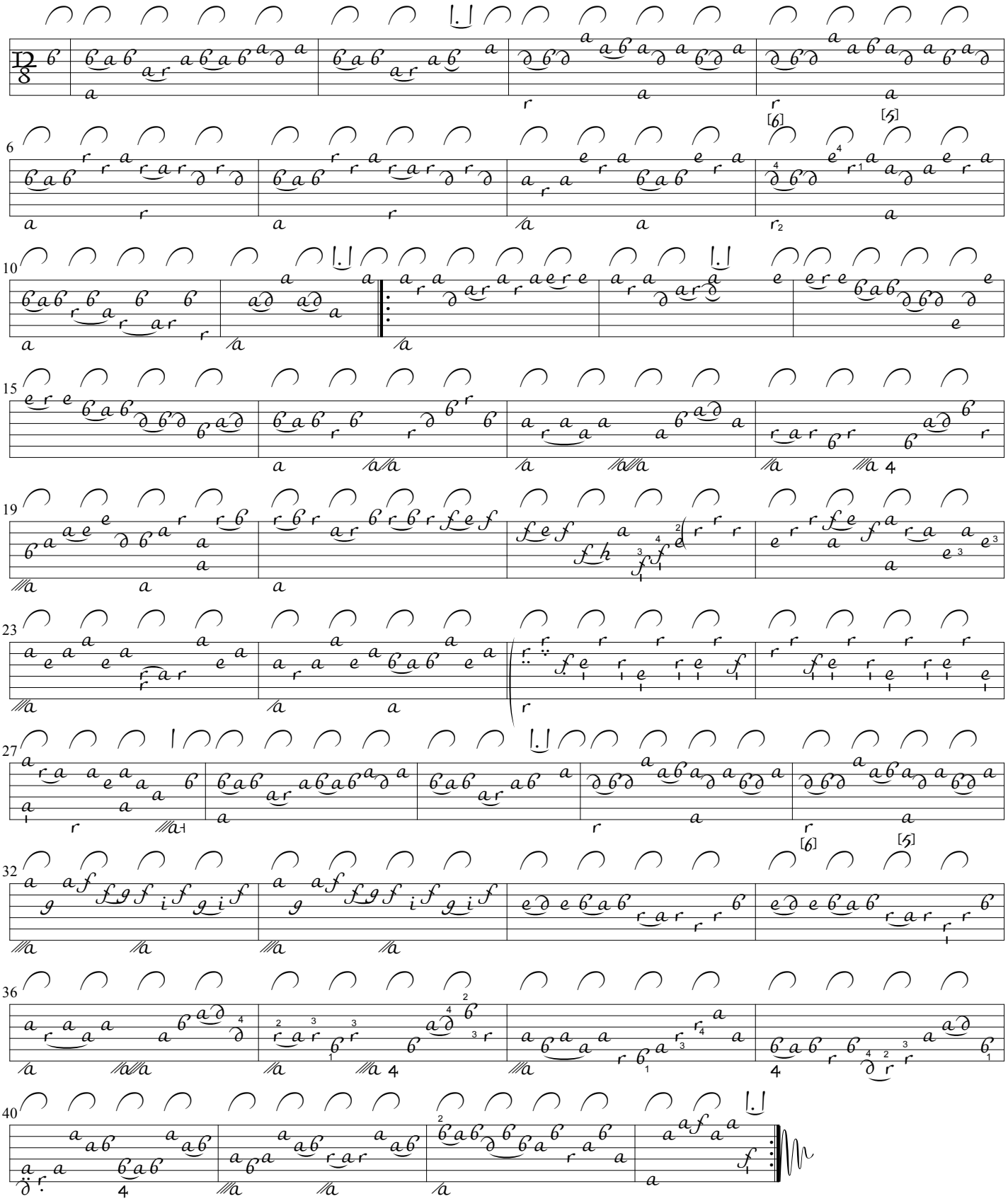
BWV 1010



Bourée I da capo

Gigue

BWV 1010



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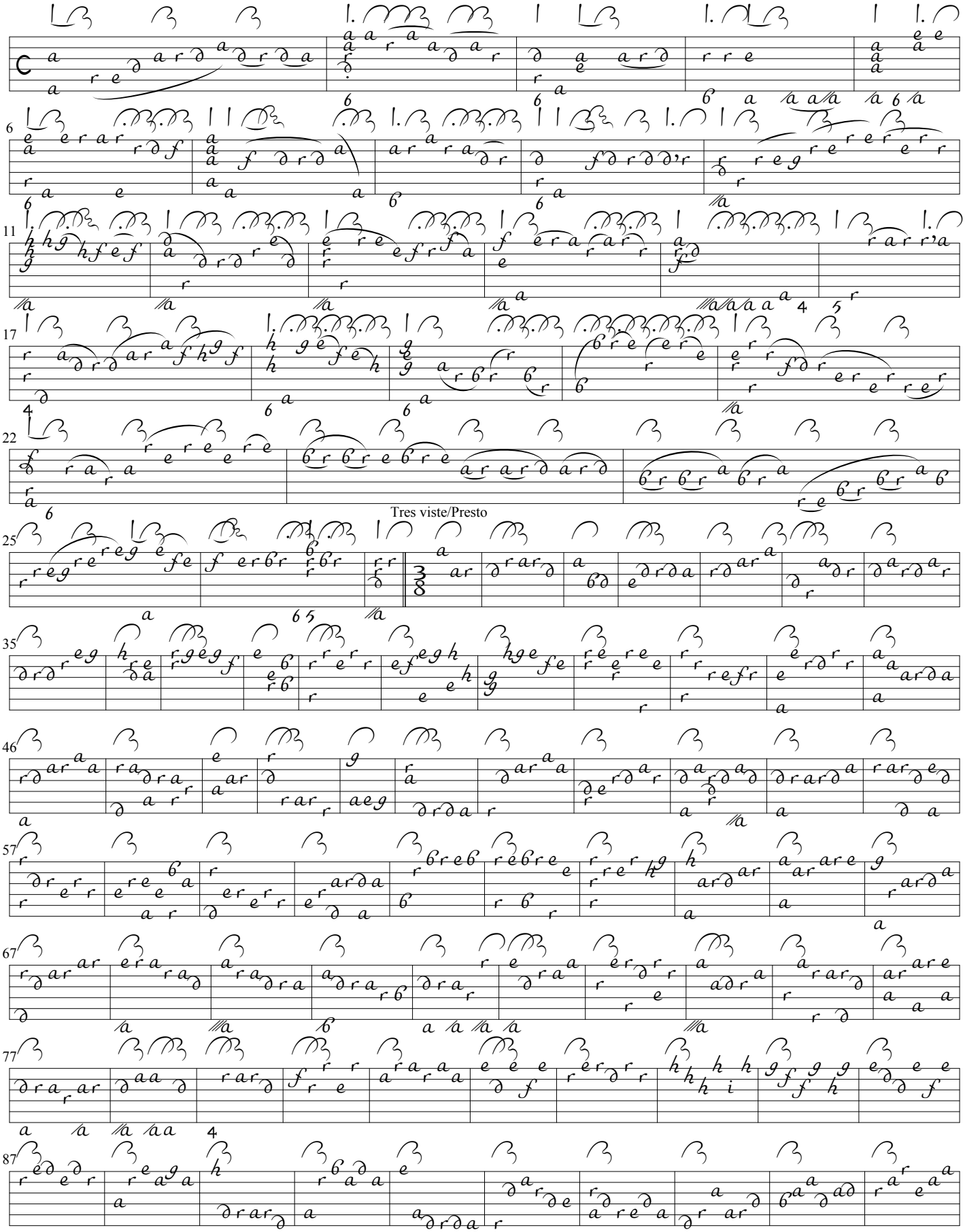
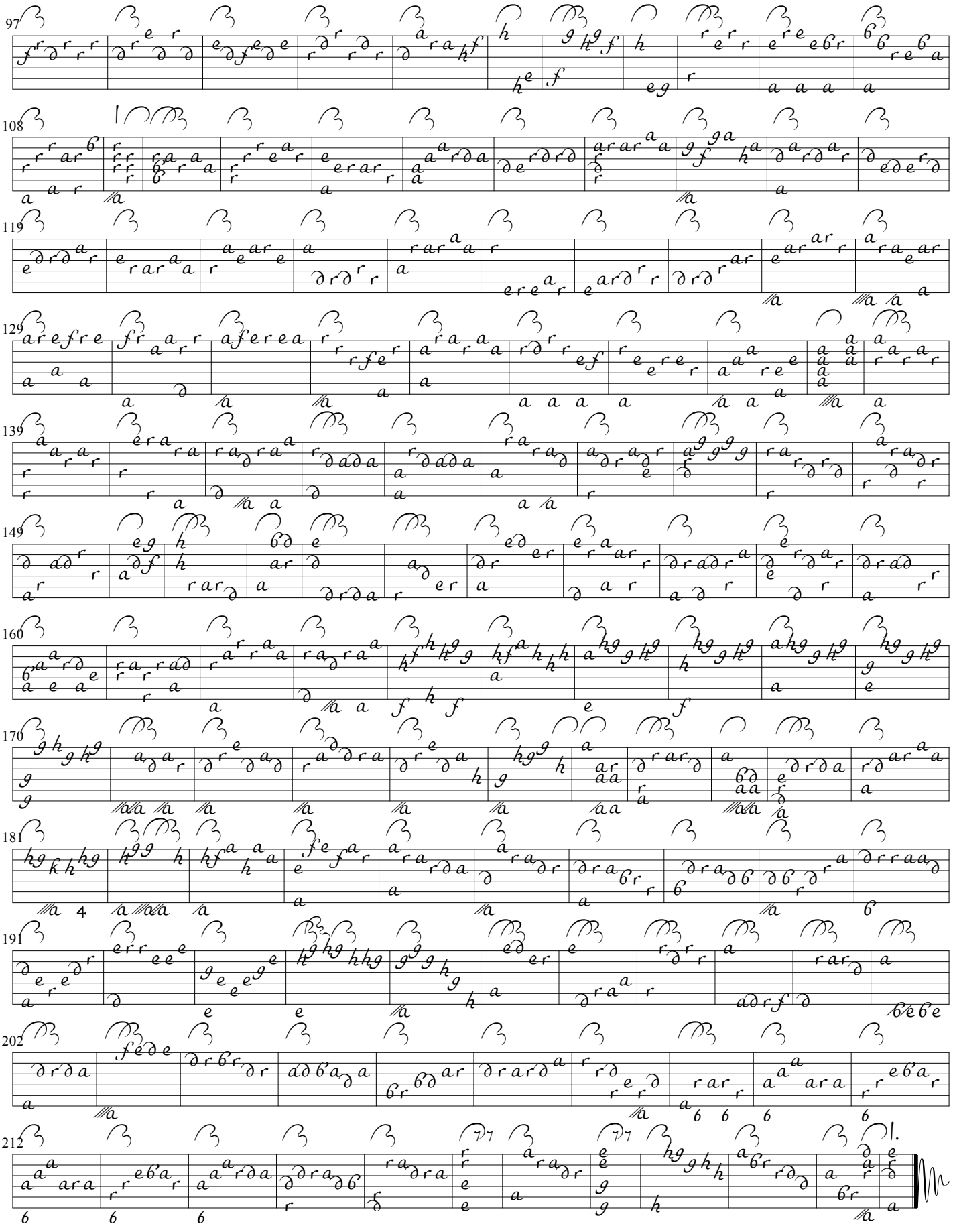
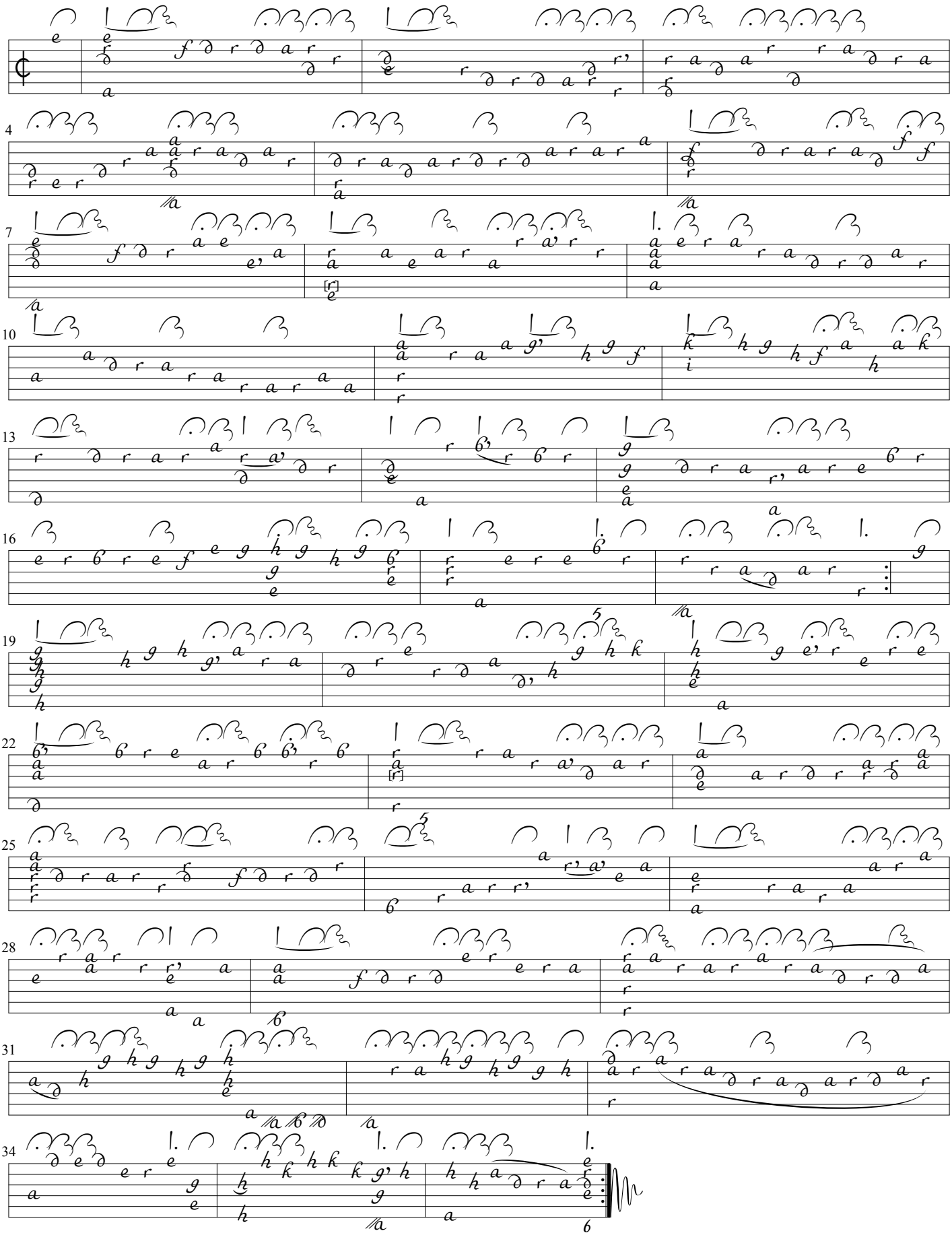
Suite pour la Luth par J. S. Bach: Prelude BWV 995/1011





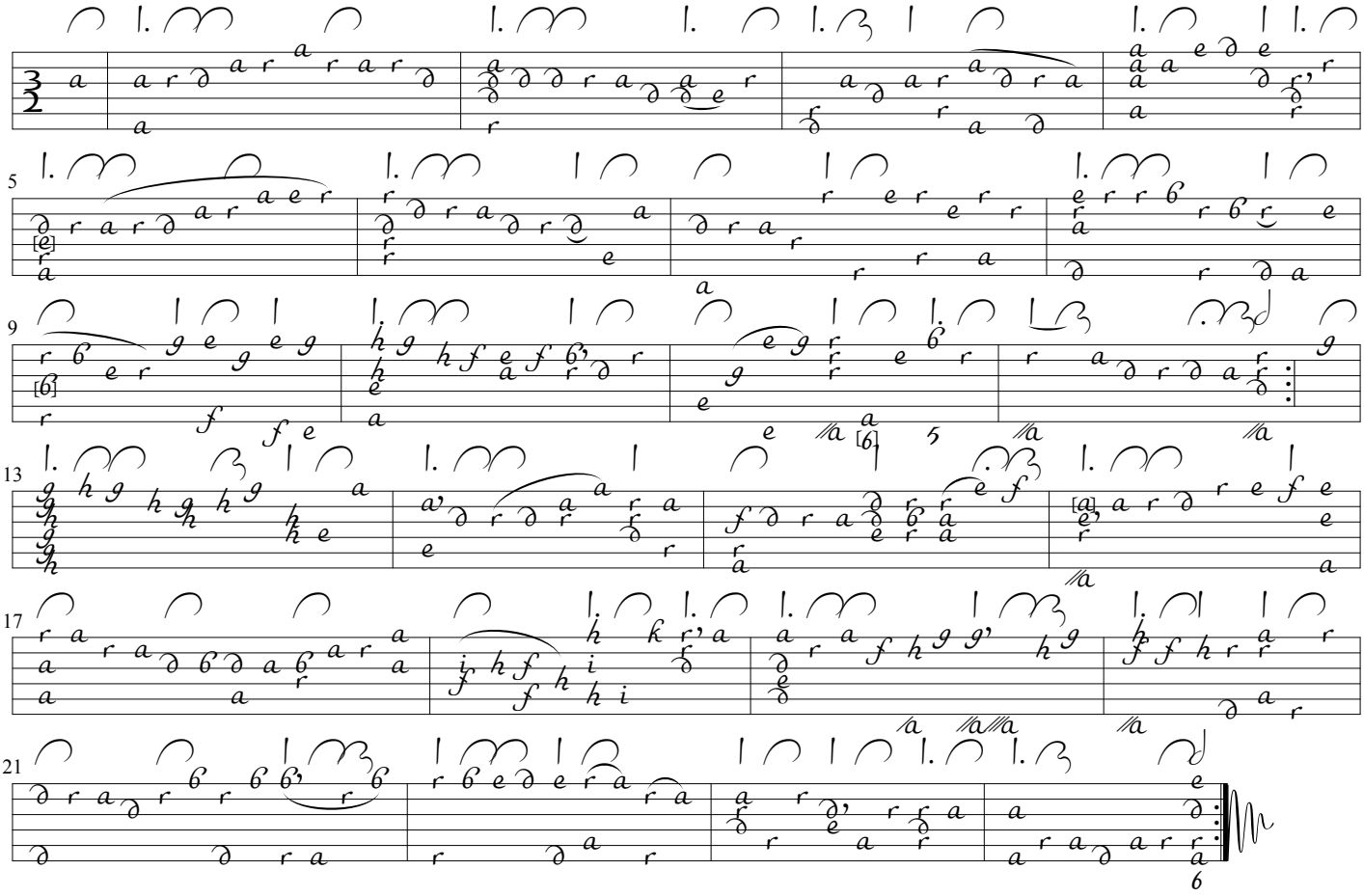
Allemande

BWV 995/1011



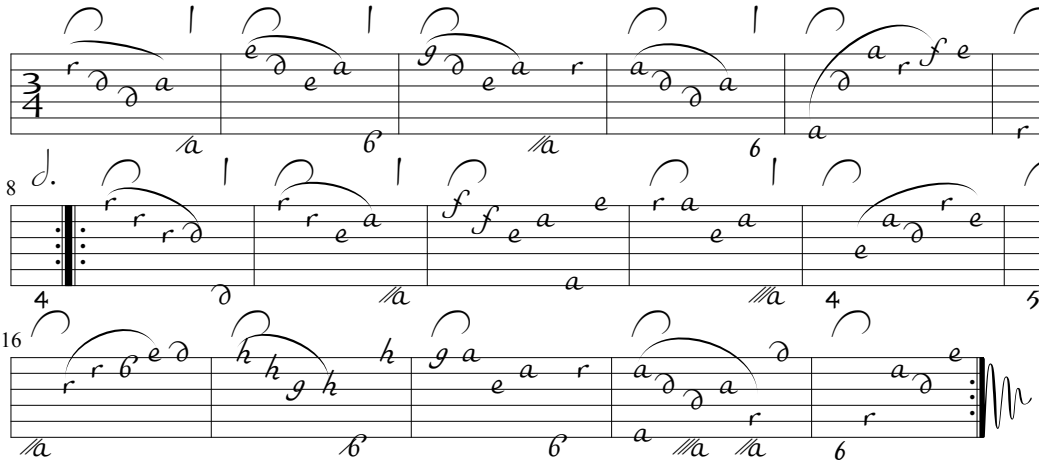
Courante

BWV 995/1011



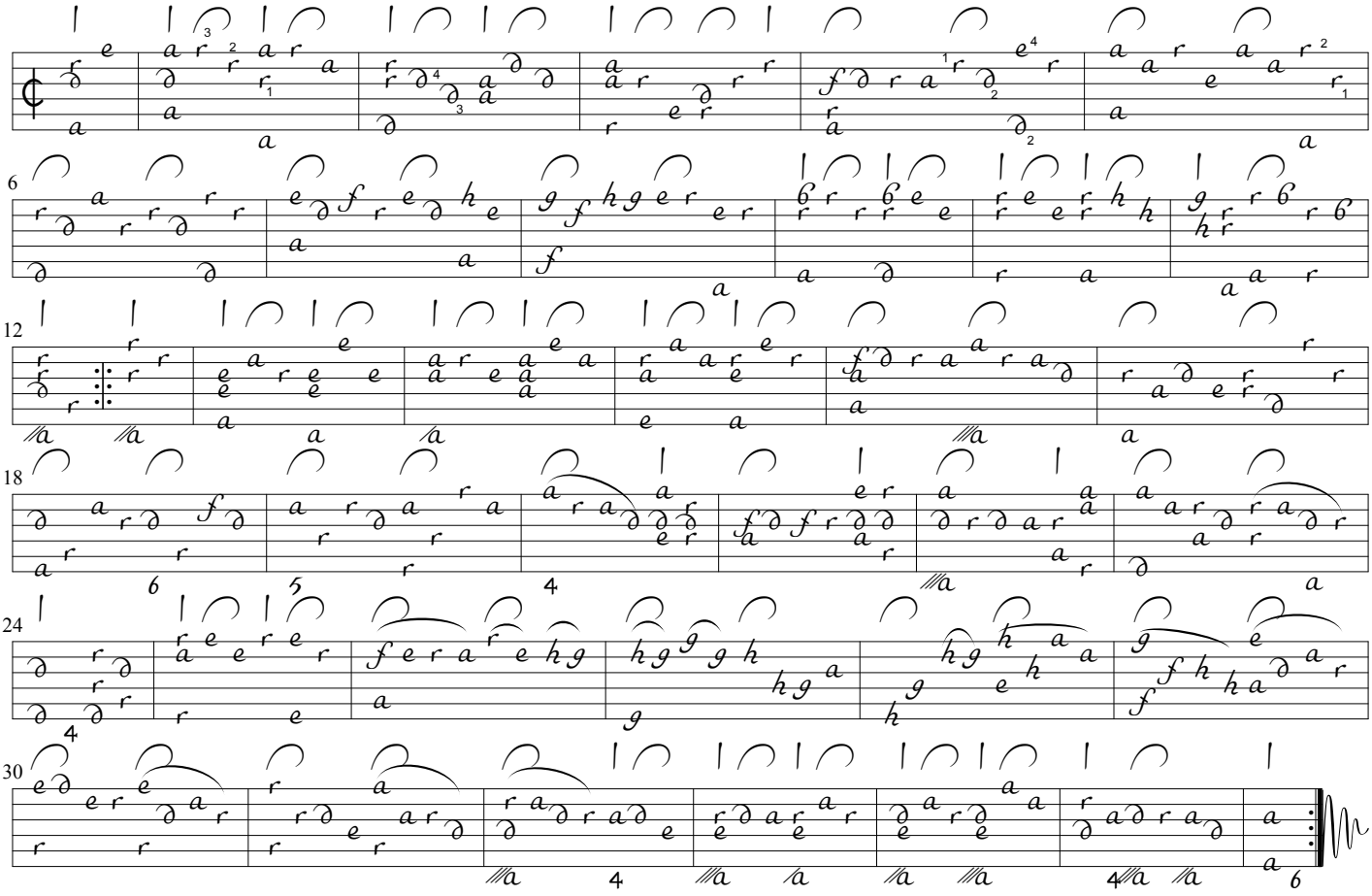
Sarabande

BWV 995/1011



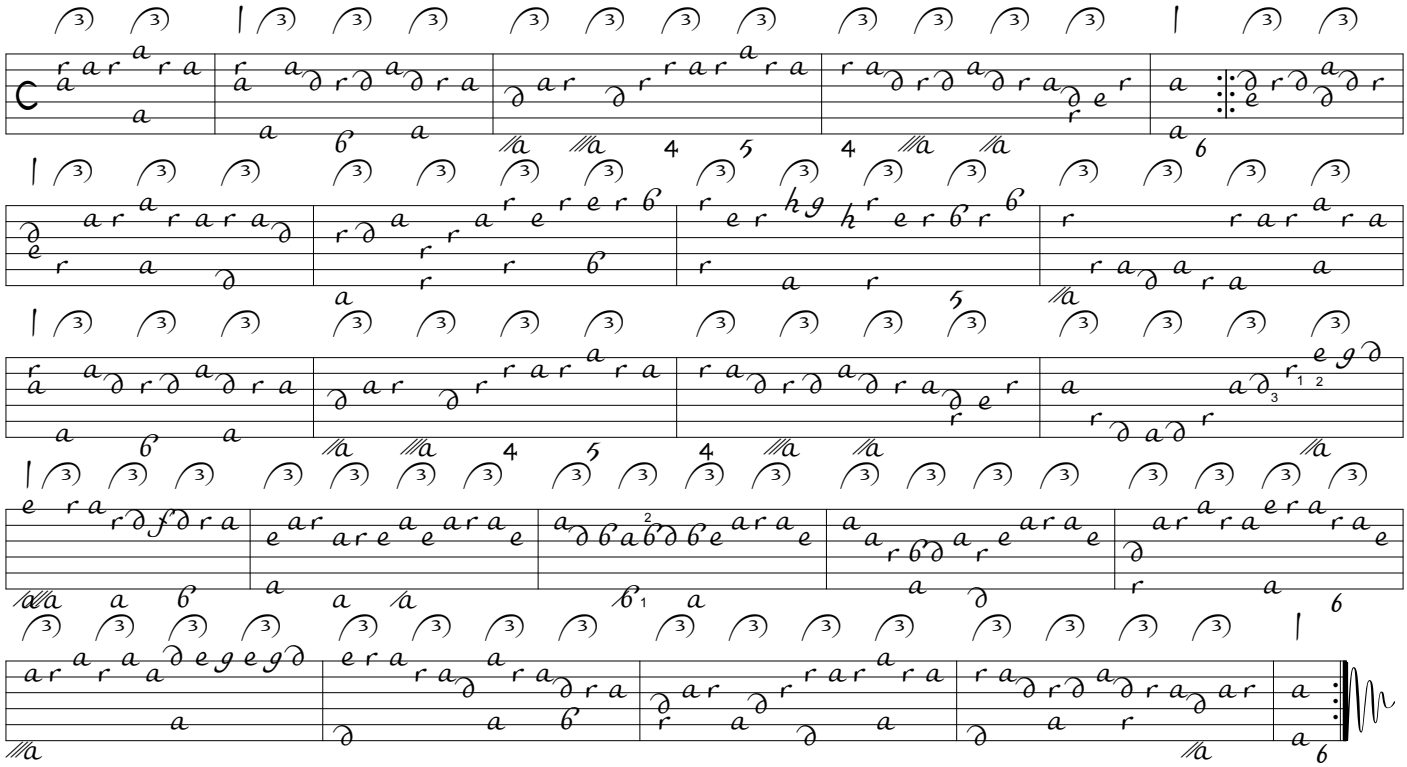
Gavotte I

BWV 995/1011



Gavotte II en Rondeau

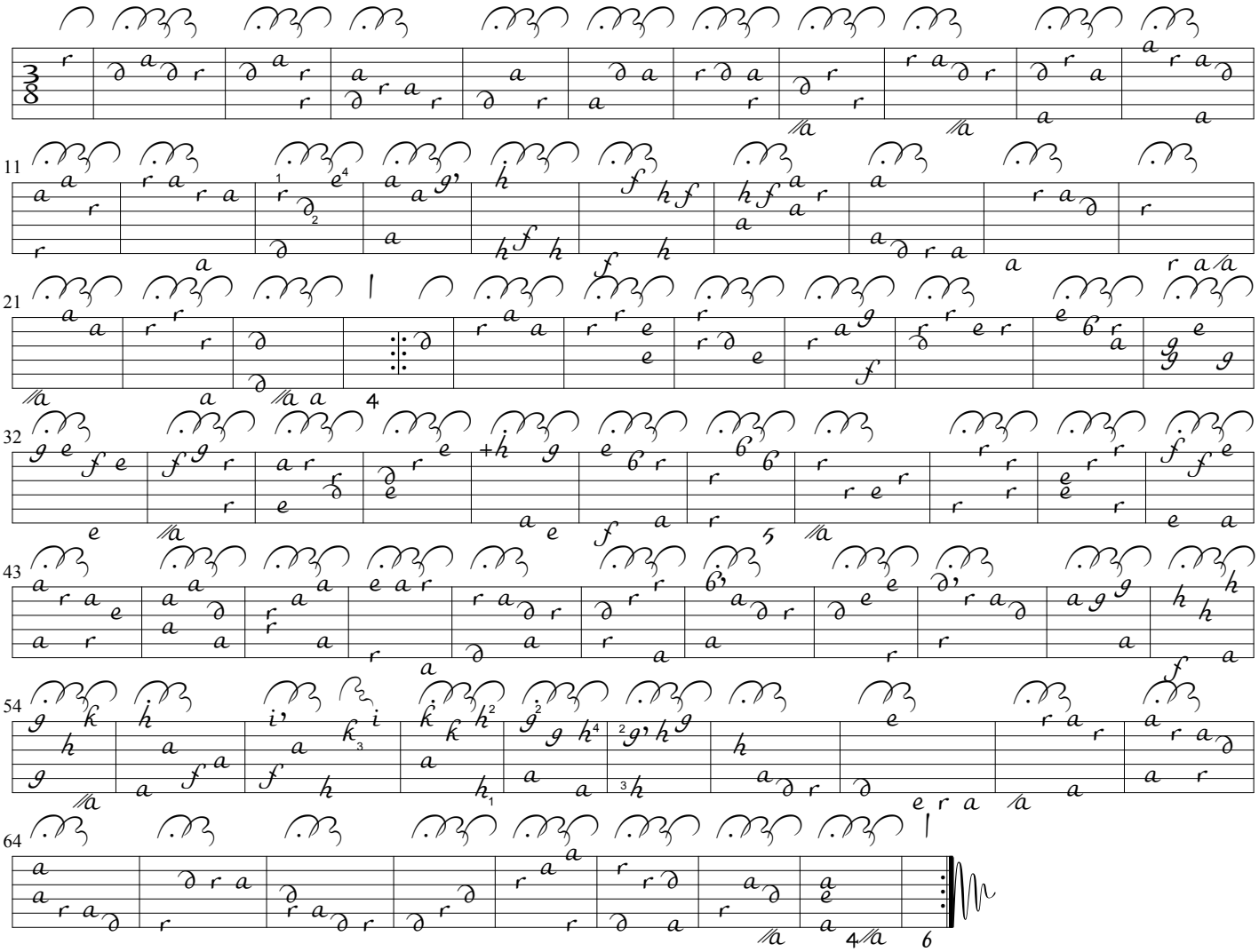
BWV995/1011



[Gavotte I da Capo]

Gigue

BWV 995/1011



lute version by Clive Titmuss © 2009

Cello Suite VI by J. S. Bach (BWV 1012)

Foreword:

Of all of the six cello suites by Bach, the last has an expanded form and technical resources which make it unique. Most striking is the fact that the piece is written specifically for a five string, smaller-sized cello than the standard model. I have remarked on Bach's experimental approach to string writing elsewhere in these Forewords, but here he is exploring territory in a way which is unprecedented. It seems that he may have commissioned that the cello be made and intending that it be used especially as a solo instrument. This instrument may have occasioned a change of writing style which explores an expanded range (clearly heard in the *Prelude* of the original, but collapsed by octave transposition into the range of lute in my transcription), and agile approach to rapid virtuoso writing (Courante and Gigue). The instrument may have owed some of its features to the older division viol, but in cello form, as the *Allemande* and *Courante* both exploit complexities not found in the other suites. The entire suite is animated and unified by an unusual *al fresco* onomatopeoia, with hunting horn calls, trills of a third and other rustic effects found in *Geigenstücke* (fiddle music) of the period.

The D major tuning was used in the 18th century by the Austrian composer and lutenist Lauffensteiner, as well as Germain Pinel, a French lute composer of the middle 17th century.

In the *Prelude* Bach has incorporated a horn call as the subject of an Italian concerto form. The unisons widen melodically into triad forms, heard off the beat, so that in m. 2, when running figures are introduced, the ear is force to change gear and alter its perception of the beat structure. In my transcription I have underlined this interesting clash by fingering the right hand in reverse, with the thumb playing the off beats, and the index playing the main beat, in order to make an easily executed pattern which clarifies the musical intent.

The piece modulates through its permutations, high and low, recalling the technique of the *viola bastarda*. A stunning echo effect is heard in m. 23 in the key of B minor. This recalls Bach's use of this same technique in Prelude of the violin Partita in E major, as well as the transcriptions of Vivaldi concerti for the organ.

In m. 83 a cadenza in doubled note values reaches across the range from low to high. I have applied a technique called "raking play" by Thomas Mace, to suggest how this would work on the lute. The thumb plays successively upwards, the index drags downwards. When the theme recapitulates in m. 90, I would suggest *forte* then *subito piano* in one bar intervals, with *luftpausen* (dramatic pauses), suggesting the echoes of the horn calls heard in open spaces. One may also hear Bach's use of horn calls in the First Brandenburg concerto.

In Bach's huge output there exist only 37 Allemandes, confined to the solo music only. This one is certainly the most improvisatory in overall plan, with a rich diversity of

rhythms, unusually slow harmonic rhythm, and a mastery of notation. The complexity of the rhythm clearly outstrips graphic clarity of the conventions of lute tablature notation. It may be helpful to refer to the cello original to understand how Bach beamed the subdivisions. Within the confines of making the beat perceptibly in four quarters to the bar, one has a lot of latitude in producing the various ties, triplets, dotted notes and *fioriture* which Bach has included. I hope that including both notations will help the player to decide on an appropriate interpretation of this extraordinary masterpiece.

The Courante is highly virtuosic, and requires many slurs to produce the proper rapid motion, interrupted by cadences. Here I have taken the unusual step of doubling an internal (m. 7) and the final cadence in octaves. Look for this typical *Galant* trick in the *Polonoise* in G minor by C. P. E. Bach and the *Minuet* in G by G. Böhm in Bach's little keyboard book for Anna Magdalena Bach. It's a feature often heard in the lute music of Adam Falckenhagen, a Leipzig contemporary of Bach's.

In the Gavotte I have included some bass notes (written in square brackets) transposed into the lower octave. Play these to add an air of finality to the *da Capo* of the first Gavotte.

The Gigue incorporates the "goat trills" or trill of a third found in fiddle pieces and (of necessity) in the horn calls common in the music of the period. At a later date this style would be known (to Haydn) as Cassation music, referring (depending on the authority consulted) to the breaking (French *casser*) of the hunt for a meal, the breaking of the bread, or the breaking of the camp. It was the custom for the riders to enjoy outdoor musical performance, usually by horns and winds, rather than strings, during a break in the chase. This charming effect is not often heard in Bach's works, and it concludes the last of the cello suites in a playful display of virtuosic brilliance.

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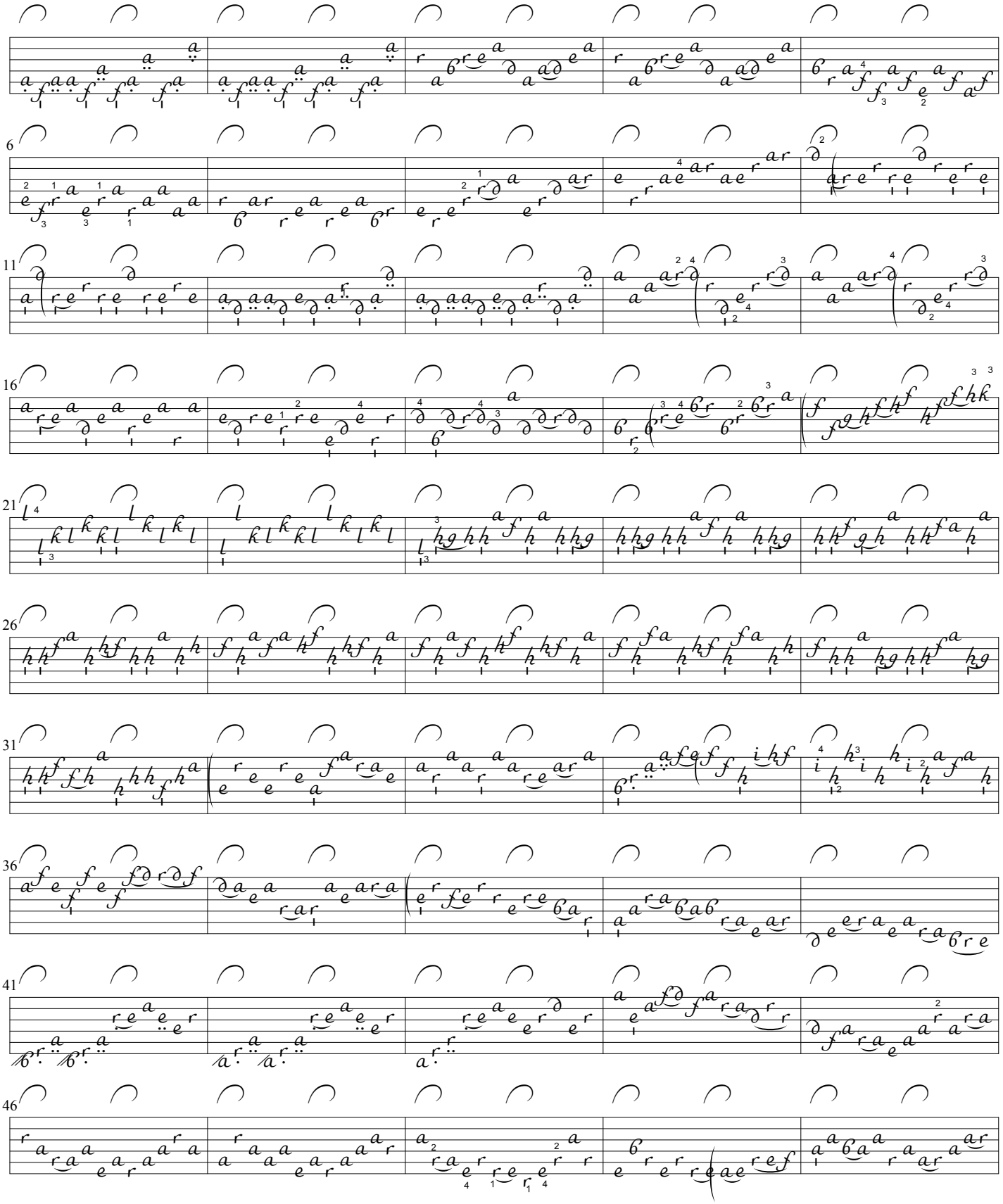
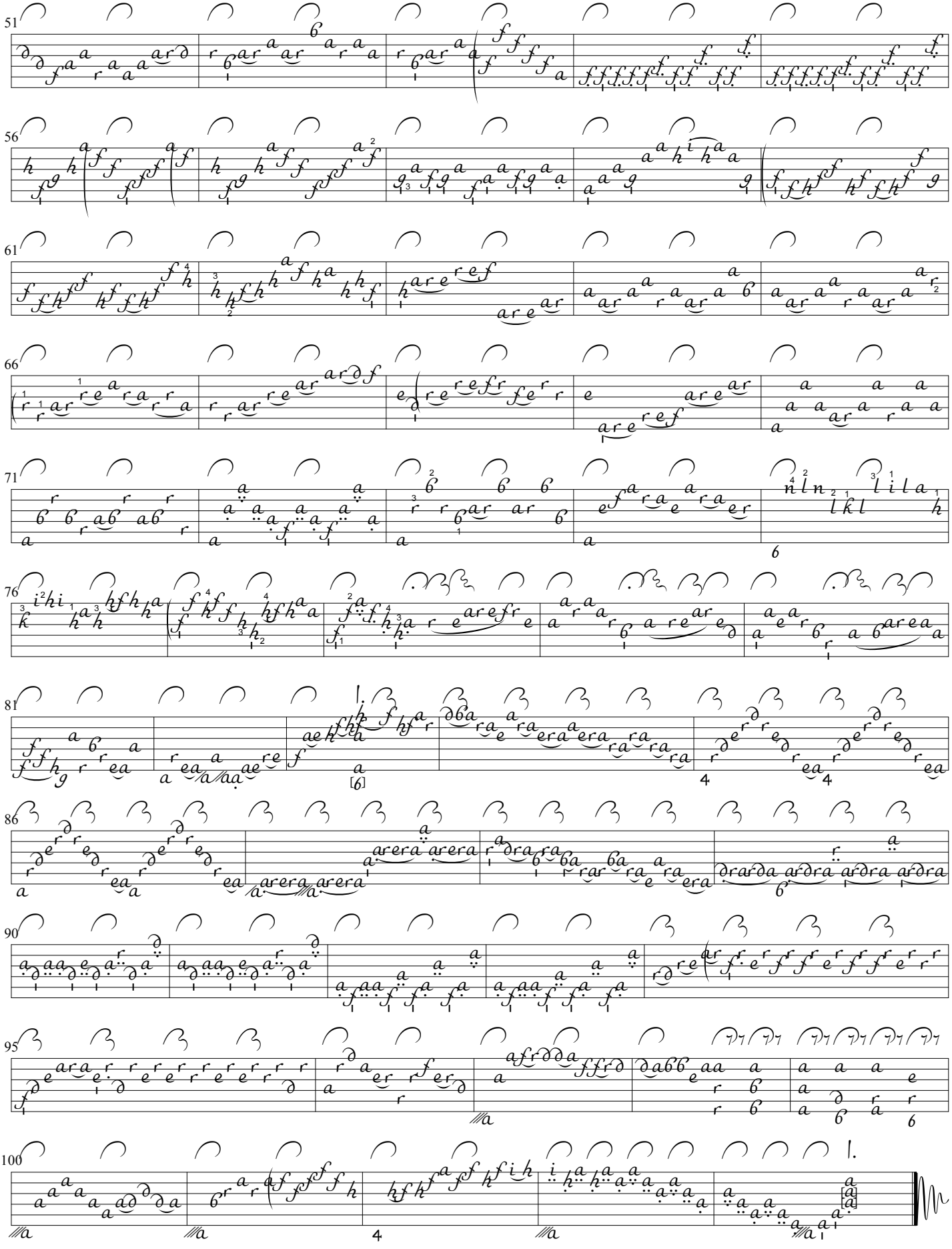
Cello Suite VI [Violoncello piccolo]: Prelude

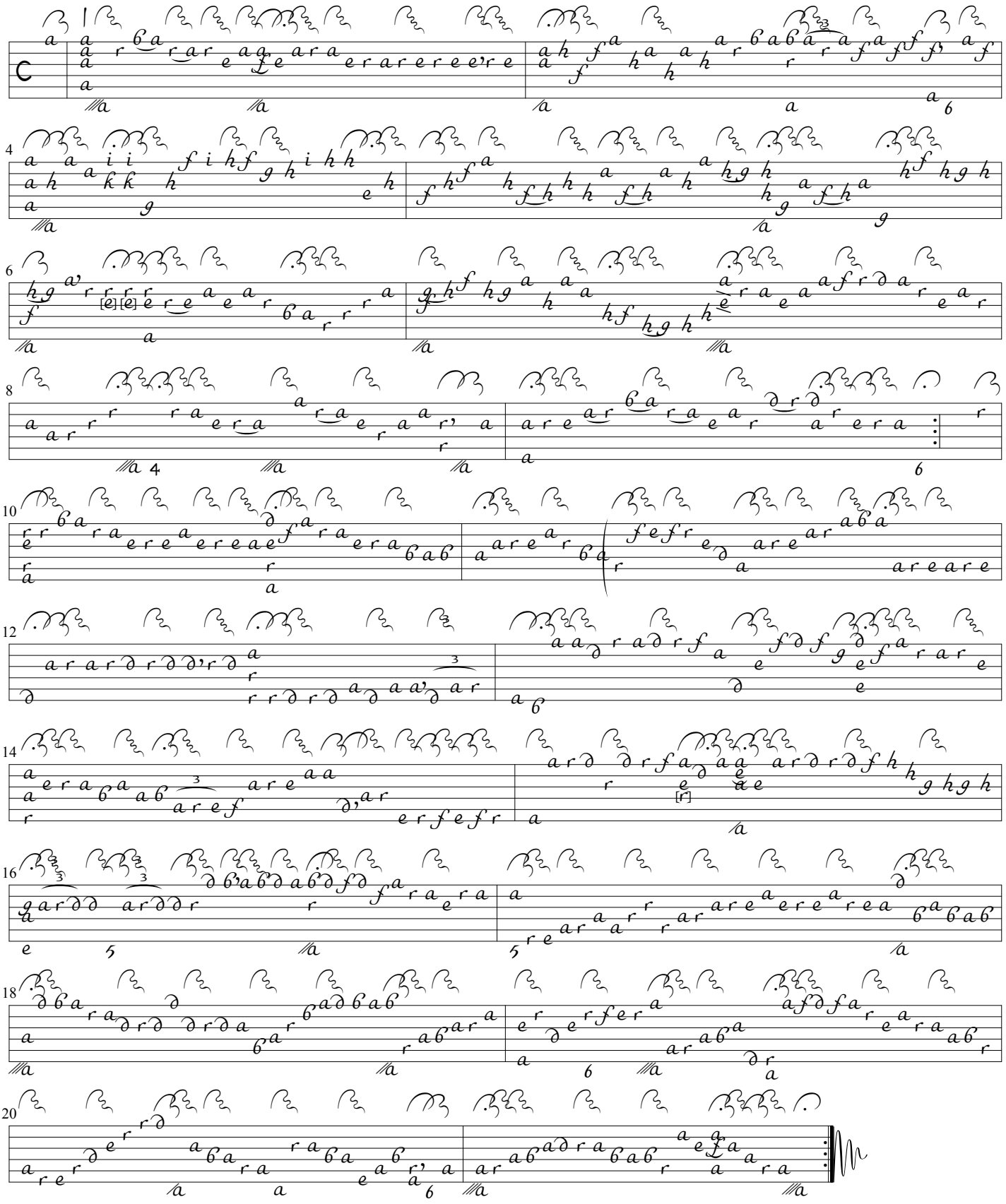
J. S. Bach (BWV 1012)





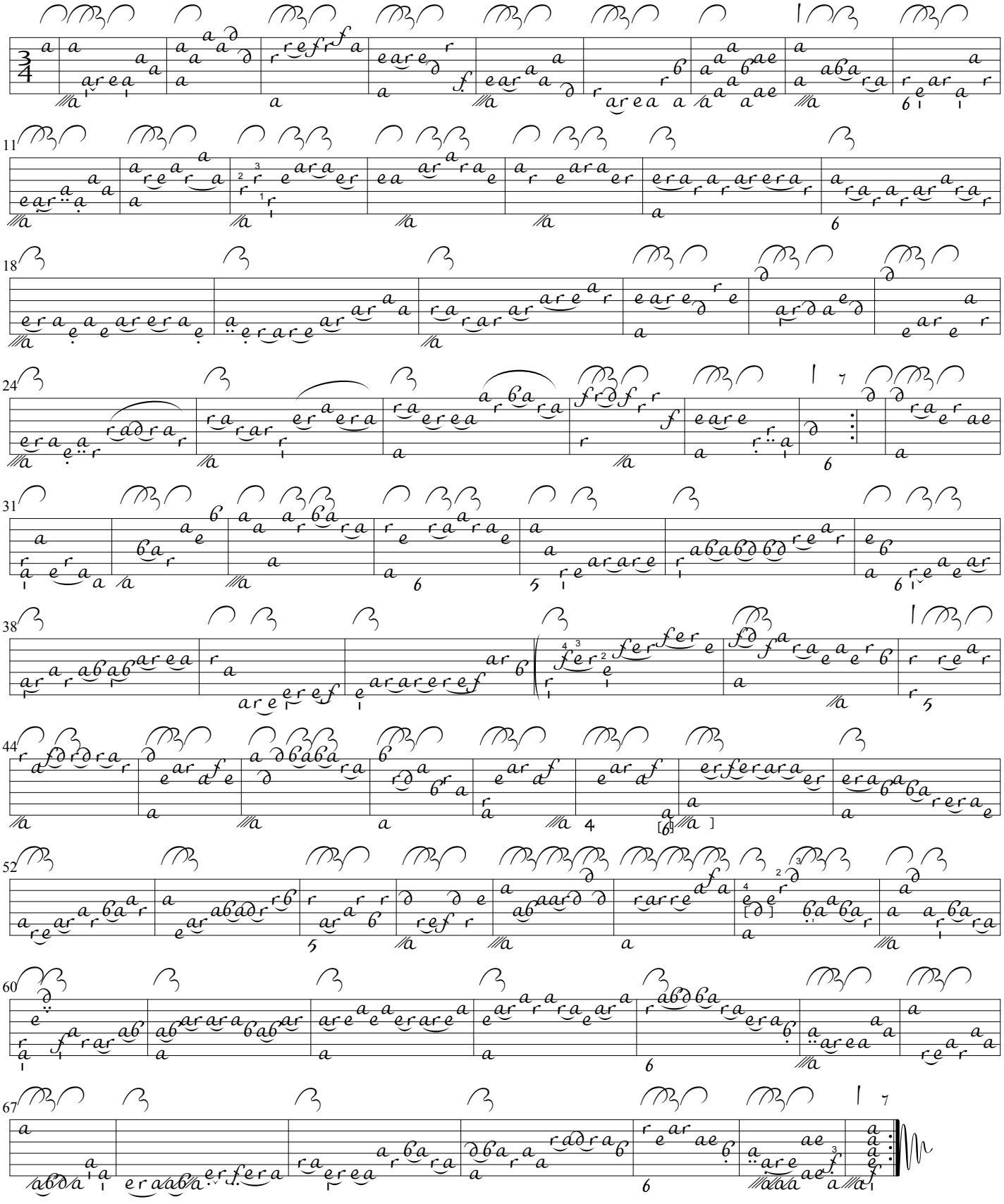
Allemande

BWV 1012



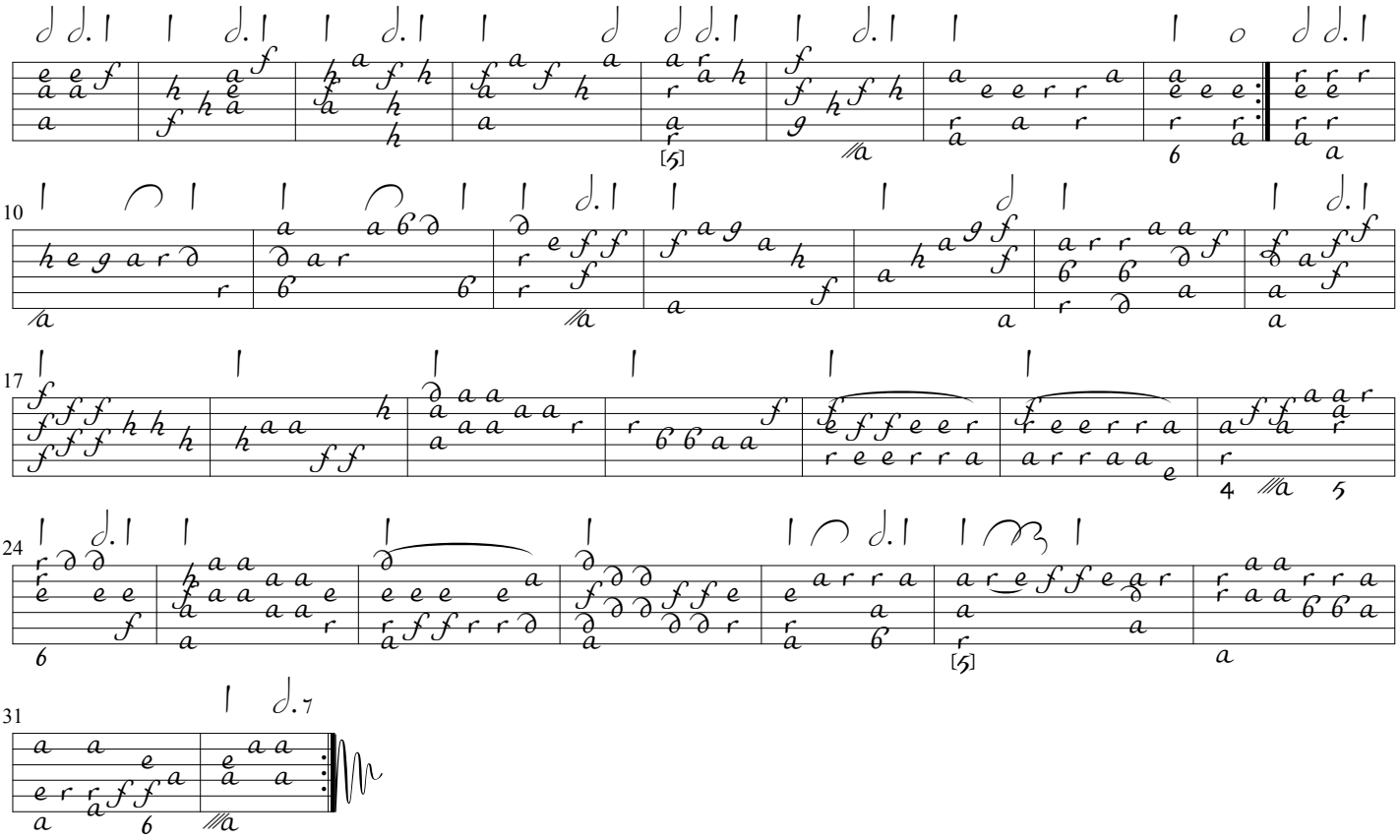
Courante

BWV 1012



Sarabande

BWV 1012



Gavotte I

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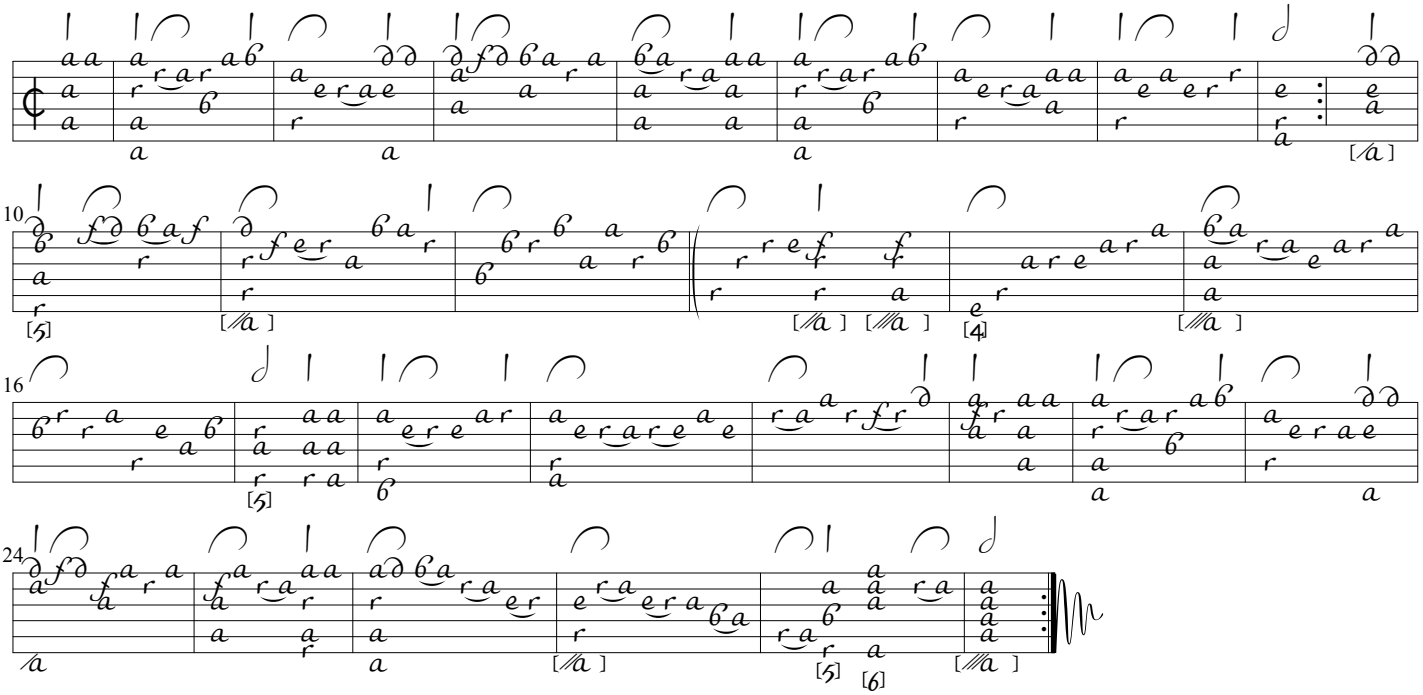

Gavotte II

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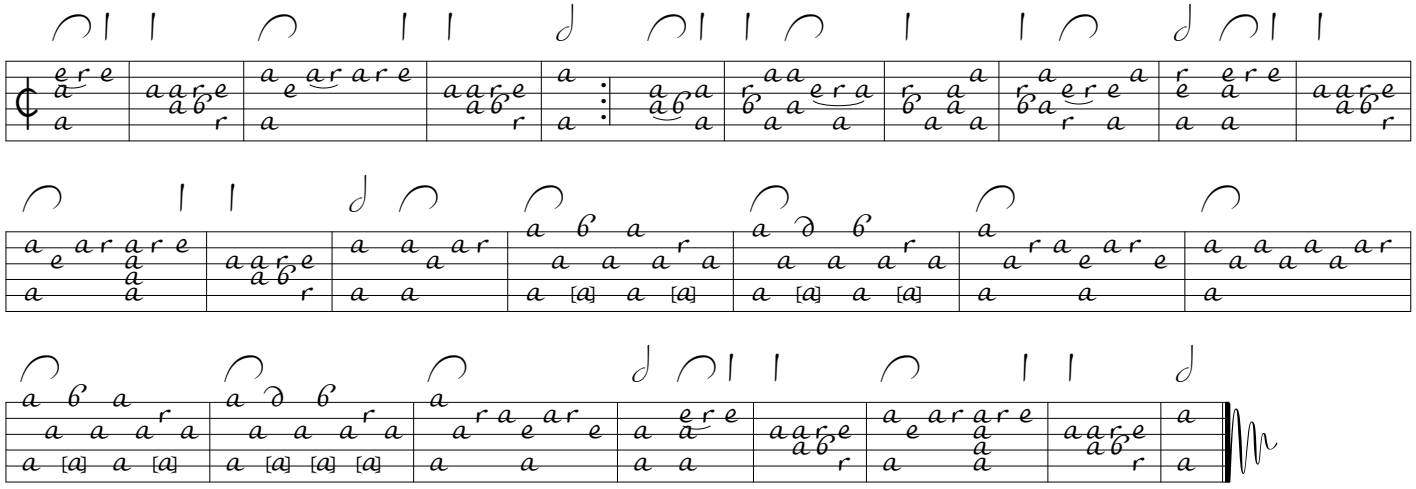
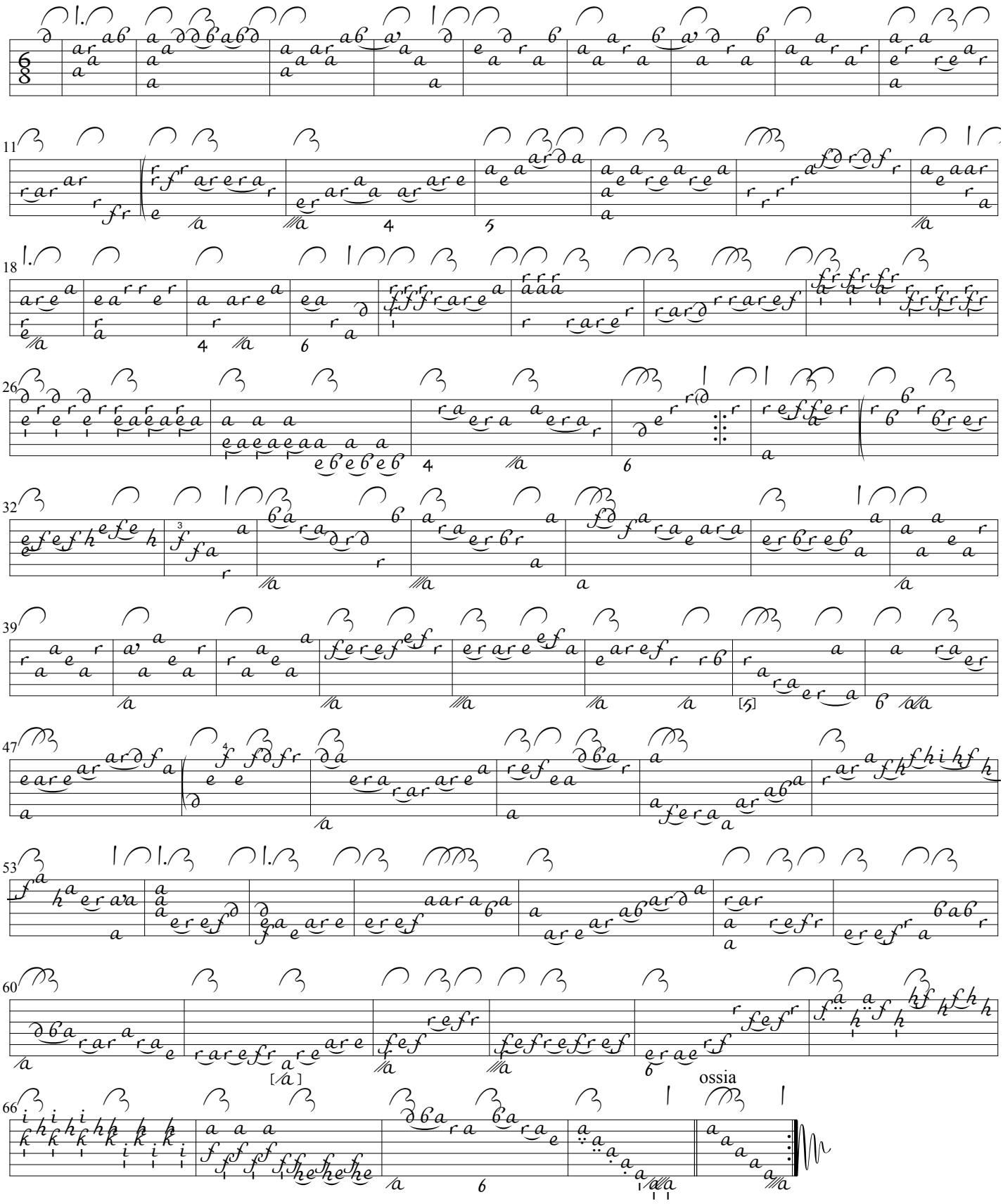


Gavotte I da Capo

Gigue

BWV 1012



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