Francesco Corbetta

Selected pieces for baroque guitar from B.Lc Ms. 245

Copied by Jean Baptiste de Castillion
(1680-1753)

Transcribed and edited by Monica Hall

2010

INTRODUCTION

Most people who play the baroque guitar today are familiar with the manuscript of music by François Le Cocq and other guitarists, B:Bc.Ms.S5615 copied by the Flemish clergyman and guitarist, Jean-Baptiste de Castillion in 1730. It is less well known that Castillion copied another manuscript of seventeenth-century guitar music now in the library of the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Liège, B:Lc.Ms.245. Although this has no title page, it has Castillion's coat of arms on the binding and includes an engraved portrait of him as a young man, showing him in clerical dress. As he was ordained at Antwerp in 1705, it may have been made around that date, perhaps to celebrate his ordination. In 1706 he became assistant to the Bishop of Ghent and in 1743 was appointed Bishop of Bruges, a post which he held until his death in 1753.

B:Lc.Ms.245

B:Lc.Ms.245 is copied in the same hand as the later manuscript. It was presumably from this manuscript that Castillion selected the pieces for the second section of B:Bc.Ms.S5615, "Recueil des pieces de guitarre de meilleurs maitres du siècle dixseptième". At first sight it therefore seem less interesting. It includes almost all of the pieces from Robert de Visée's "Livre de Guittarre" (1682), several pieces from Giovanni Battista Granata's "Capricci Armonici" (1646); and the pieces by Lelio Colista, Miguel Perez de Zavala and Gaspar Sanz which were recopied into B:Bc.Ms.S5615. The main interest lies in the substantial number of pieces attributed to Francesco Corbetta. Two of these are from his "Varii Capricii per la Ghittara Spagnuola" (1643) and nine from "La Guitarre Royale" (1671). However, fifty of the pieces are not found in any of Corbetta's surviving printed books. Although thirteen pieces were recopied into B:Bc.Ms.S5615 and a few are also found in two other manuscripts, GB:Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94 - Henry François de Gallot, "Pieces de Guittarre de Differends Autheurs" and GB:Lbl Add.Ms. 31640 – Santiago de Murcia, "Passacalles y Obras", many are apparently unique. Corbetta is known to have published other books which have not survived, and Castillion may have had access to copies of these.

In the manuscript the pieces are roughly arranged by key. There are several groups which may have formed suites or part of suites and a number of miscellaneous pieces. Of the latter perhaps the most interesting is the Courante in C minor also found in Murcia's "Passacalles y Obras". In "La Guitarre Royale", Corbetta has included three groups of pieces in this key, but none includes a courante. Murcia's "Obra por la K en Tercera Traste" includes the allemande "Le Tombeau sur la Mort de Madame d'Orleans", the sarabande

which follows the "Allemande sur la Mort du Duc de Gloaster", and the gigue from the third group of pieces. It is possible that the courante found here belongs with these. Two of the pieces in B flat major, the Allemande and Brand, survive in what seems to be a pirated edition of Corbetta's "Varii Scherzi di Sonate per la Chitarra Spagnola (1648).[1] The Allemande in A major is a variant of the Allemande in D major.

THE CONTENTS OF THIS EDITION

The pieces which are also found in B:Bc.Ms.S5615 have been omitted, with the exception of the Gigue in G major which forms part of the suite in that key.[2] These are

		Composer	Key	B:Bc Ms.S5615[3]
p.25	Gigue	F.Corbet	C major	p107
p.33	Passacaille	F.Corbetta	D minor	p.86
p.39	Passacaille	F. Corbetta	F major	p.92
p.34	Allemande	F.C.	A minor	p.83
p.35	Allemande	F.C.	A minor	p.94
p.36	Courante	F.C.	A minor	p.95
p.36	Menuet	F.C.	A minor	p.84
p.37	Menuet	F.C.	A minor	p.97
p.38	Gigue	F.C.	C major	p.108
p.46	Gigue	F.C.	D minor	p.93
p.57	Passacaille	F.Corbet	A minor	p.104
p.96	Chacone	F. Corbetta	C major	p.106

The following pieces which are apparently unique to the manuscript have also been excluded from this edition

p.24	Rondeau	F. Corbet	C major
p.41	Sarabande	F. Corbetta	C major
p.95	Ballet	F. Corbetta	F major
p.108	Passacaille	F.C.	G minor
p.136	Folies	F. Corbetta	D minor

[1] ["Guitarra Española y sus diferencias de Sones" (?)] ca. 1650. Published in facsimile by the Deutsche LautenGesellschaft.
[2] Published in facsimile by Editions Culture et Civilisation, Brussels (1979).
[3] All are attributed to F. Corbet in B:Bc Ms.S5615.

The Rondeau, Sarabande and Ballet are short and very simple and the Passacaille and Folies are rather predictable sets of variations.

For a more detailed description of the manuscript see my article "Recovering a lost book of guitar music by Corbetta" in Consort : Journal of the Dolmetsch Foundation, Vol. 61, Summer 2005.

CRITICAL NOTES

All the pieces in the manuscript are in standard French guitar tablature; chords to be strummed rather than plucked are indicated by placing the note values on the stave with the stem down for a down stroke (bass to treble) and up for an up stroke (treble to bass). As the software used for this edition does not support this feature, chords to be strummed are indicated with an arrow to the left-hand side of the chord pointing upwards if the chord is strummed from bass to treble and downwards if the chord is to be strummed from treble to bass.

It was standard practice not to indicate the open courses to be included in strummed chords. These have not been filled in editorially; only open courses represented by the letter "a" in the original are indicated. Castillion occasionally puts dots on the lines to indicate when a course should be omitted. These are not reproduced in this edition; in the places where he uses them it is fairly obvious that the open courses should be omitted as they will be dissonant.

At the beginning of the manuscript Castillion has copied the information about ornaments found in de Visée's "Livre de Guittarre" (1682) and the same symbols are used in the music. These are as follows

× = trill , = mordent # = vibrato slur under note = appogiatura

A reprise is indicate with the symbol :S:

Castillion invariably puts a slash through the time signatures. This is not reproduced.

The following notes give the title, composer's name and page number as found in the manuscript. Corbetta's name appears in different forms – F. Corbet, F. Corbetta or F.C. These are followed by concordances with GB:Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94 (Gallot) GB:Lbl Add.Ms. 31640 (Murcia) and corrections to the tablature if any.

Piece in C minor

p.1 Courante – F. Corbetta p.125 Murcia, f.120v

Pieces in G major

p. 2 Allemande – F. Corbet p.60

p.3 Courante – F. Corbet p.60
1. Rhythm uncertain – there is a superfluous crotchet in the original.

p.4 Courante - F. Corbetta p.66 Murcia, f.109v

p.5 Sarabande – F. Corbet p.61

p.6 Gigue – F. Corbet p.62 B:Bc, p.89/Gallot, f.10v

Pieces in D minor

p.7 Allemande – F^{co}. Corbetta p.68

p.8 Courante – F. Corbetta. p.68

p.9 Sarabande – F. Corbetta p.69
1. c-a on 4th course changed to c-a on 3rd course cf. b.24.

p.10 Gigue – F. Corbetta p. 70
1. 2 bars in 1
2. 2 bars in 1
3. A quaver note value is missing

Pieces in G minor

p.12 Prelude – F. Corbetta p.123 Gallot, f.75v/Murcia f.73v
1. c on 4th course changed to d
2. The note should be tied to previous note

p.13 Allemande – F. Corbetta p.79

1. b. 13 - last chord/b.14 – first chord – d on 5th course changed to b. The chord immediately preceding is a typical Corbetta dissonance.

p.14 Courante – F. Corbetta p.80

p.15 Sarabande – F. Corbetta p.80

p. 16 Gigue – F. Corbetta p.81
1. c on 5th course changed to 4th course
2. The minor variation in bars 20 & 22 of the repeat phrase is probably intentional, although it is possible that the f on the first course in b.20 is an error and should be on the second course.

Piece in E minor

p.18 Courante - F.C p.73
The time signature in the manuscript is ¾.

Pieces in G minor

p.19 Allemande – F. Corbetta p.106

p.20 Sarabande – F. Corbetta p.99

p.21 Sarabande – F. Corbetta p.106 Gallot, f.44v

p.22 Gigue – F. Corbetta p.107
1. Note values reversed; original has semiquaver followed by a quaver

Pieces in B flat major

p.24 Allemande – F. Corbetta p.90 Gallot, f.46v
1. Letter e on 3rd course changed to c

p.25 Courante – F. Corbetta p.92 Gallot, f.46

p.26 Sarabande – F. Corbetta p.92 Gallot, f.46v

p.27. Brand – F. Corbetta p.93 Gallot, f.44
1. 2 bars in 1

p.28 Ballet 1 – F. Corbetta p.135
Castillion has only indicated a petite reprise at the end. However the piece is probably intended to be in rondo form and could end at bar 17 where I have indicated *fin* in brackets. The whole could be repeated after the Ballet which follows.

b.11 – Castillion has a rest on the pick up beat which Django software indicates with a note value only.

p.29 Ballet 2 - F. Corbetta p.135
The barring is irregular with 2 bars in 1 in the first three bars of the first half and the penultimate bar in the second half.

Pieces in F minor/major

p.30 Allemande – F. Corbetta p.124
1. Missing note i added.

p.31 Courante - F. Corbetta p.40 Gallot, f.40v

p.32 Sarabande – F. Corbetta p.41 Gallot, f.41

Pieces in D major/minor

p.33 Allemande - F. Corbetta p.131
p.34 Courante - F. Corbetta p.44
p.35 Sarabande - F. Corbetta p.45 Gallot, f.48

Piece in A major

p. 36 Allemande – F. Corbetta p.85 Gallot, f.51v
1. Bar line inserted
2. d on 3rd course changed to 2nd course
3.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO CASTILLION'S TEXT

The purpose of the transcription is to reproduce Castillion's tablature as it stands as far as this is possible with the available software. I have therefore corrected only what seemed to be very obvious errors. There are however some places where, although the music makes sense, it is possible that Castillion or his source has in fact made an error. Possible improvements are as follows:

p.3 Courante in G major
b.12 - the first beat - c on the third course could be e.
p.4 Courante (2) in G major
b.2 - the last chord – c on the fourth course could be e. [Murcia (f.109v) has e.]

p.14 Courante in G minor

b.7 - the 4th crotchet - g on the second course could be e.

p.18 Courante in E minor

b.16 - the 2nd crotchet – bass note could be the open fourth course rather than fifth.

b.28 - the 2nd crotchet – c on the fourth course could be e.

p.22 Gigue in G minor

b.2 - the last crotchet - g on the second course could be e.

p.26 Sarabande in B flat major

b.6 - the 2nd and 3rd chords [C7] are unplayable as written although harmonically speaking correct. Gallot (f.46v) has B flat stopped at 1st fret on fifth course which makes sense and may well be what Corbetta intended as he was rather fond of doubling the 7th in this way. Castillion may have thought this was unacceptable and tried to correct it!

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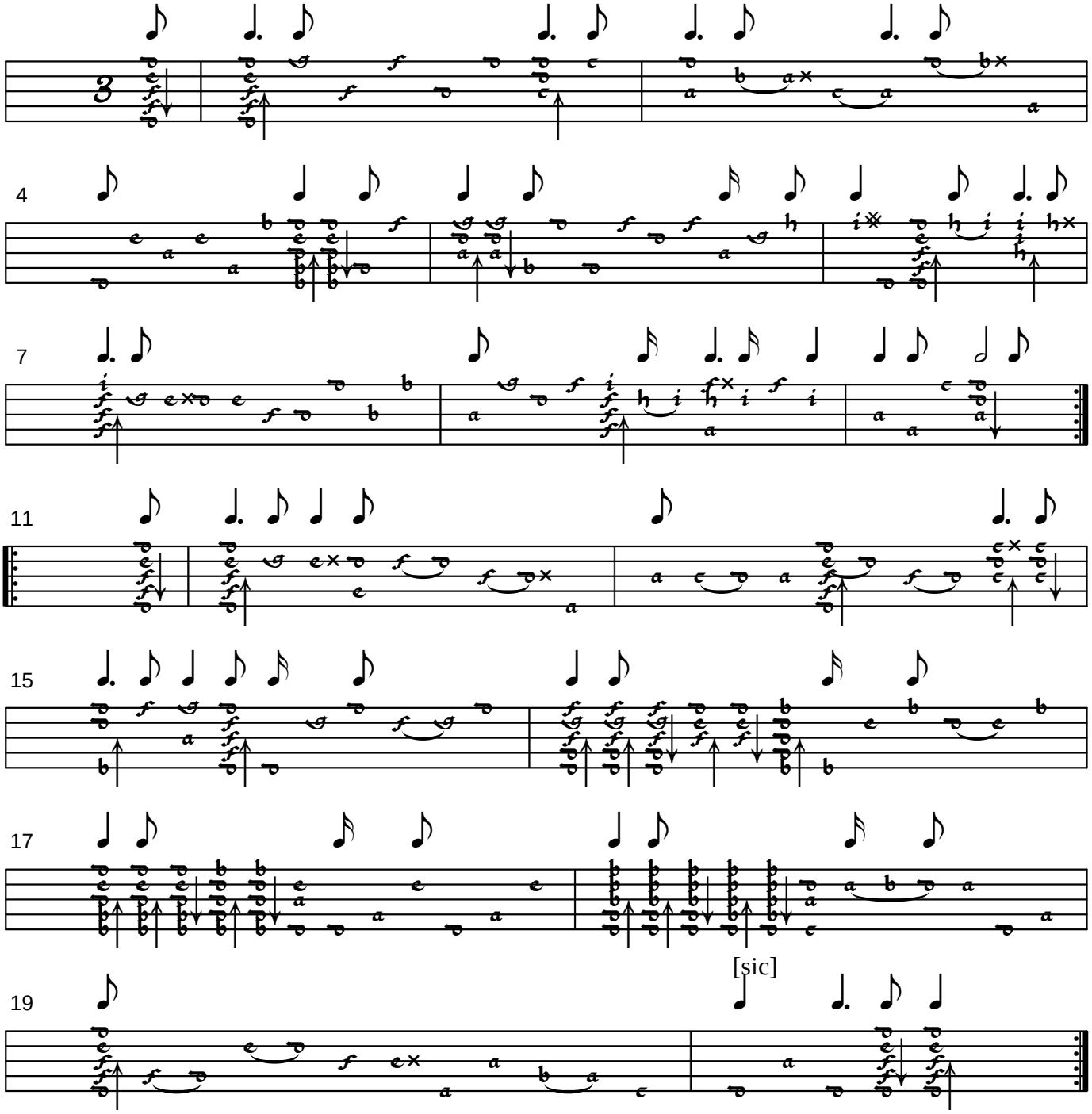
Allemande 30
Courante 31
Sarabande 32

Pieces in D major/minor

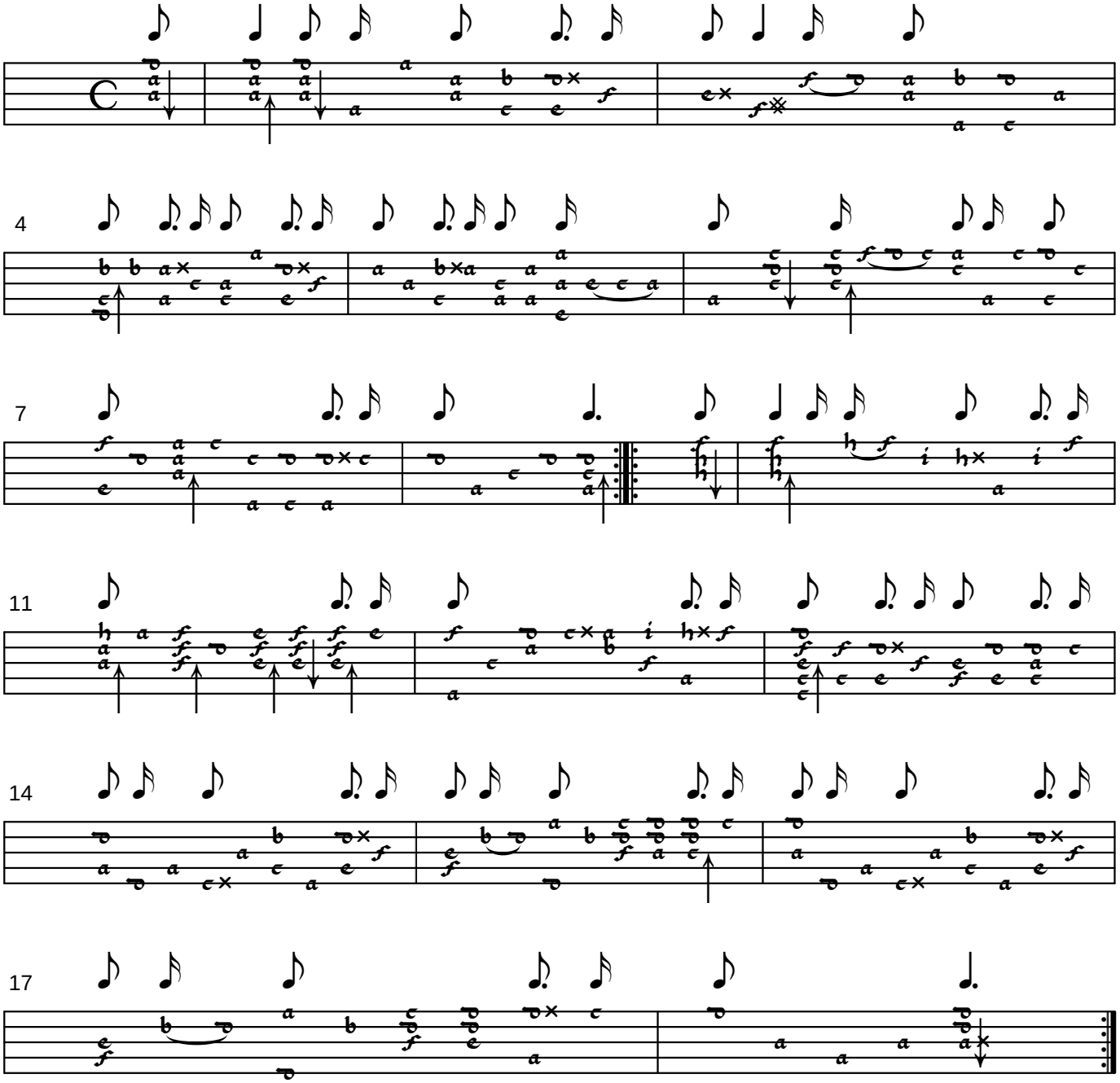
Allemande 33
Courante 34
Sarabande 35

Allemande in A major 36

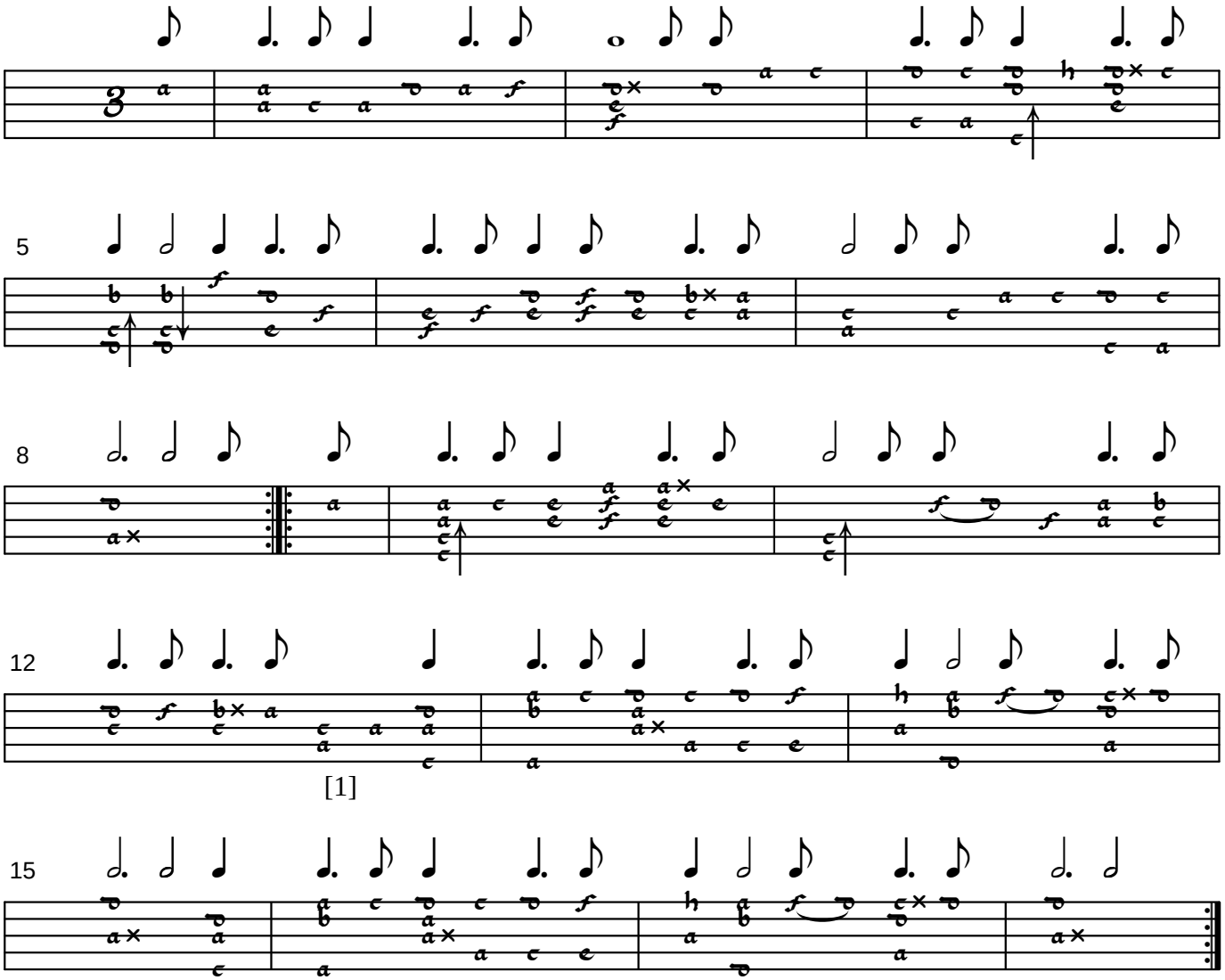
Courante in C minor



Pieces in G major - Allemande



Courante (1) in G major



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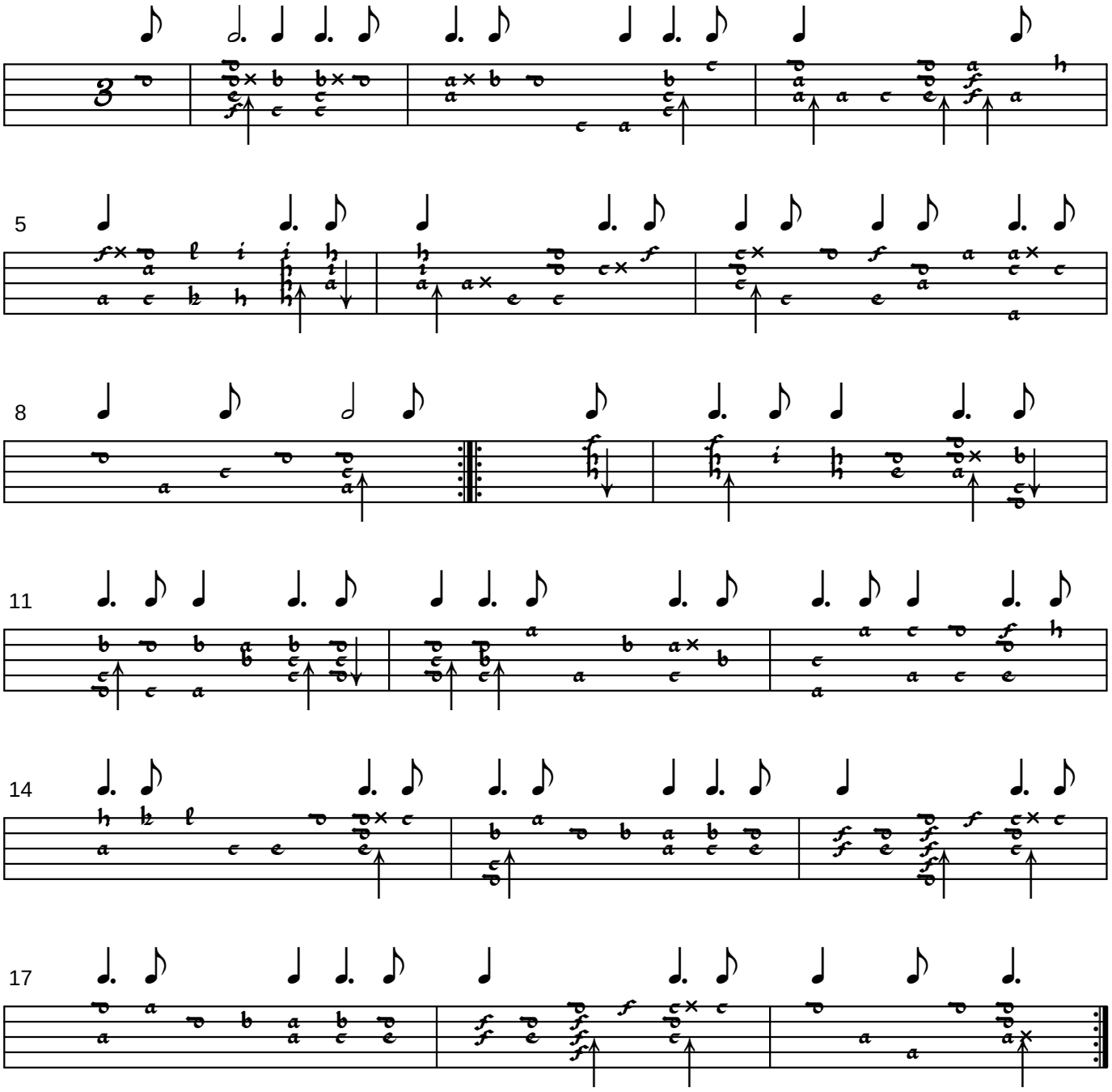
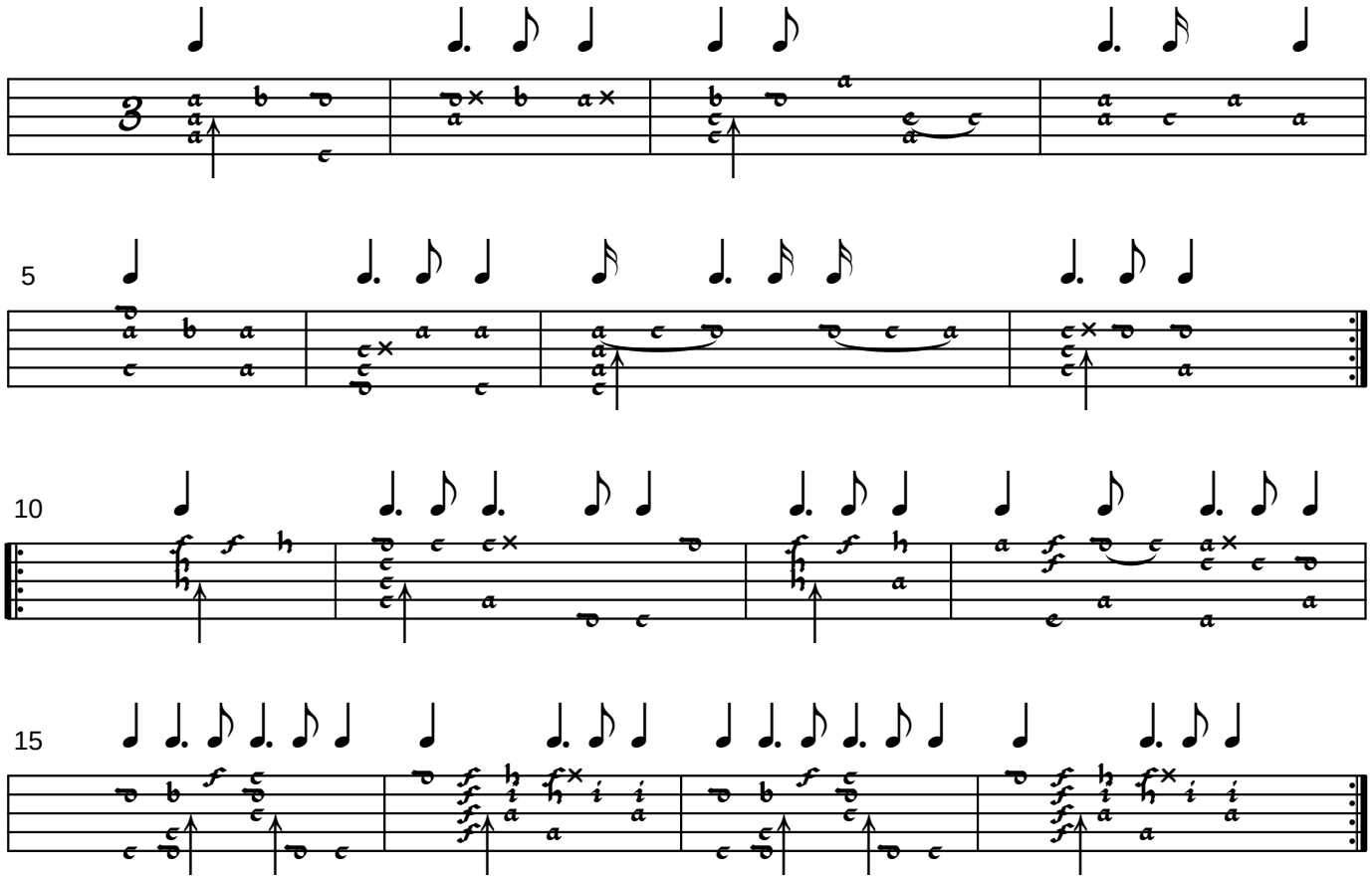
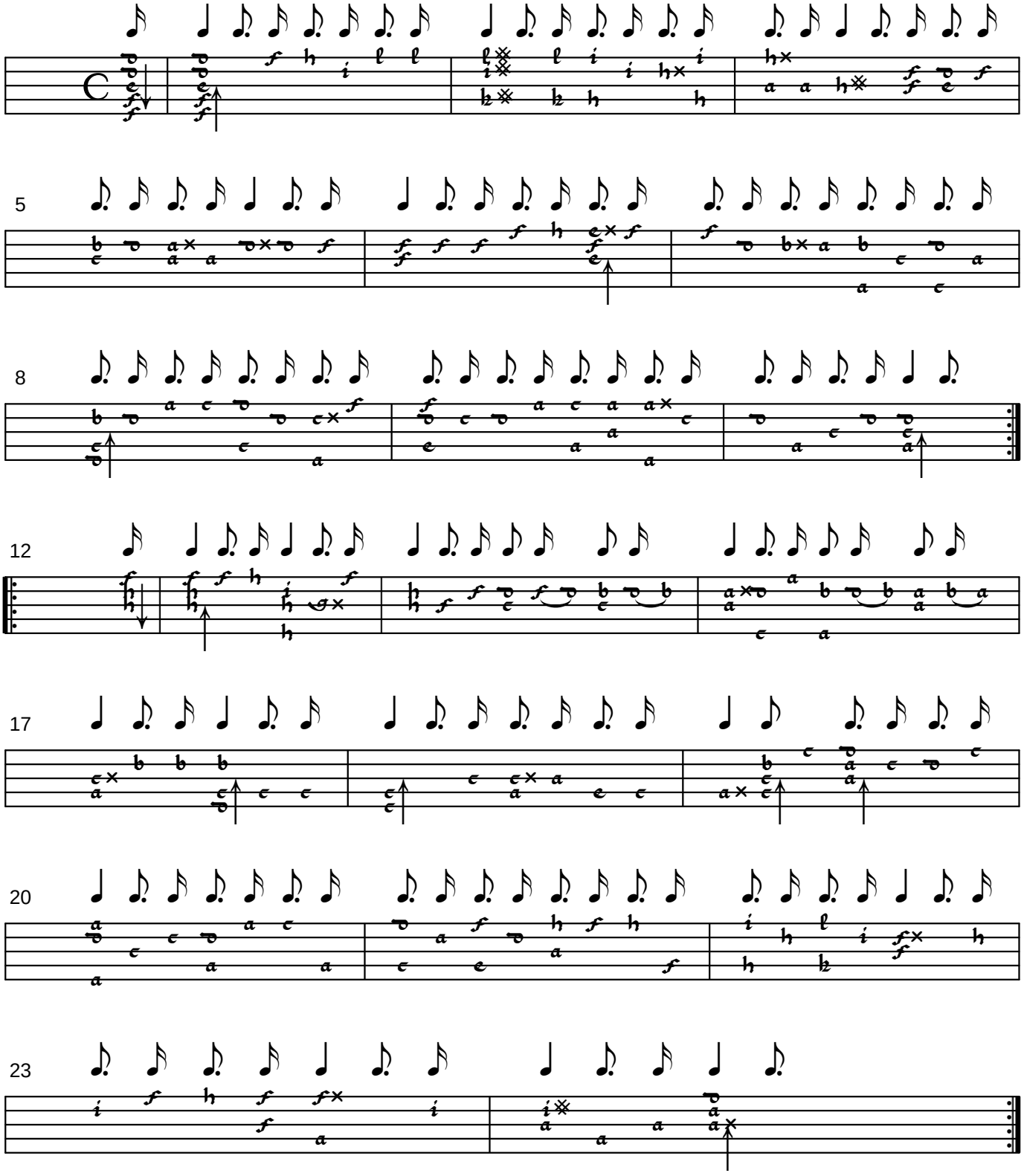


[sic]

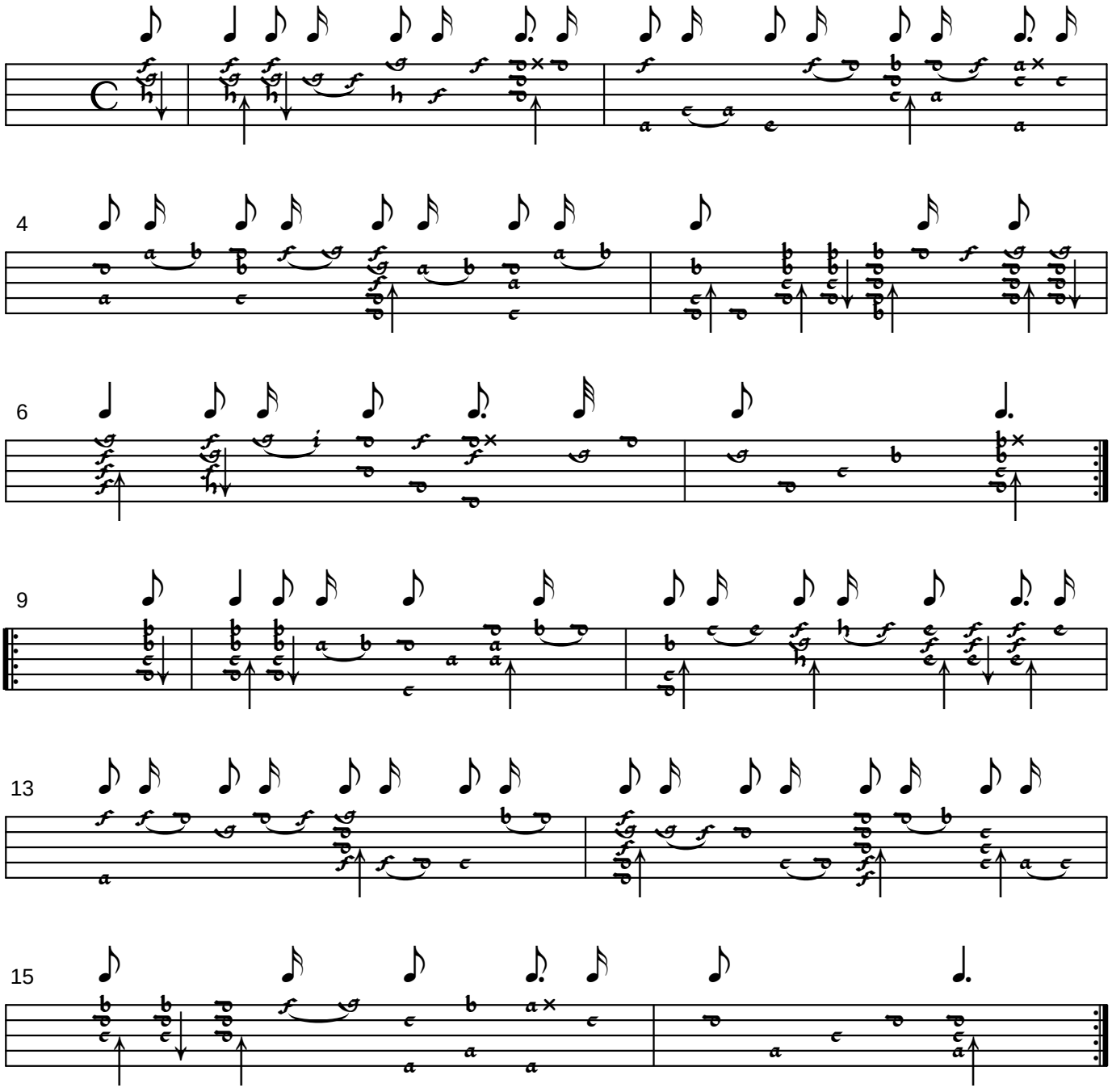
Sarabande in G major



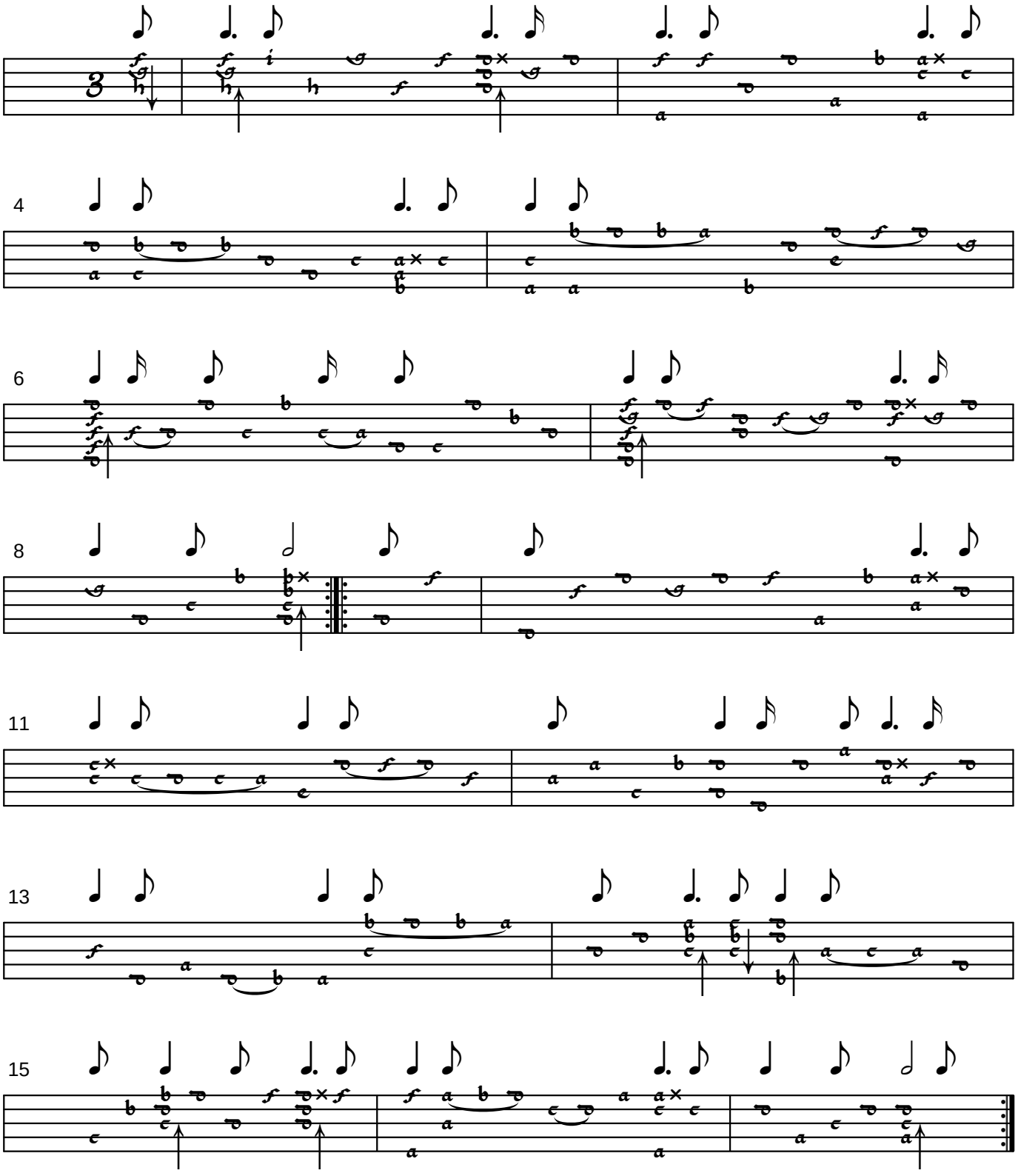
Gigue in G major



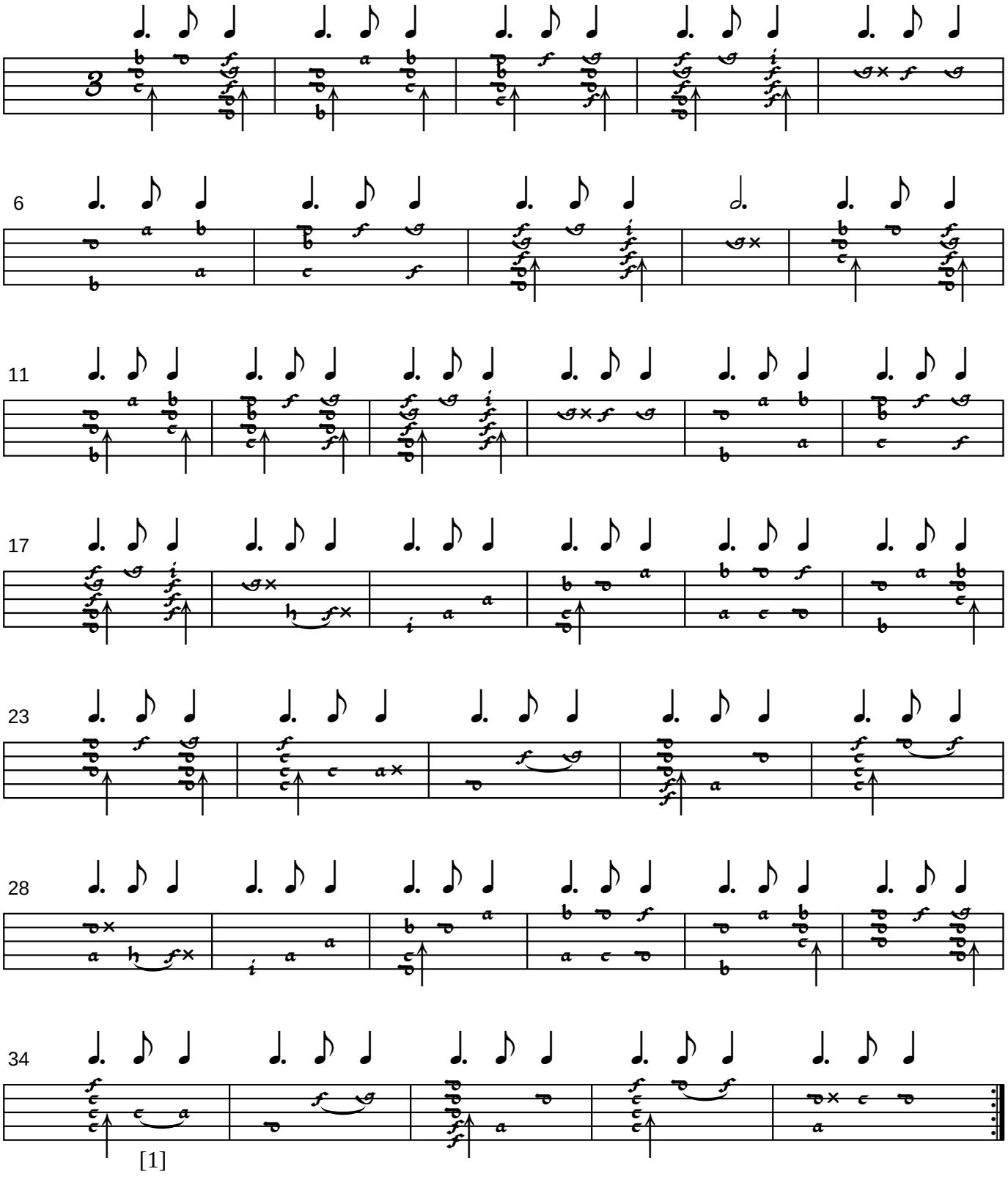
Pieces in D minor - Allemande



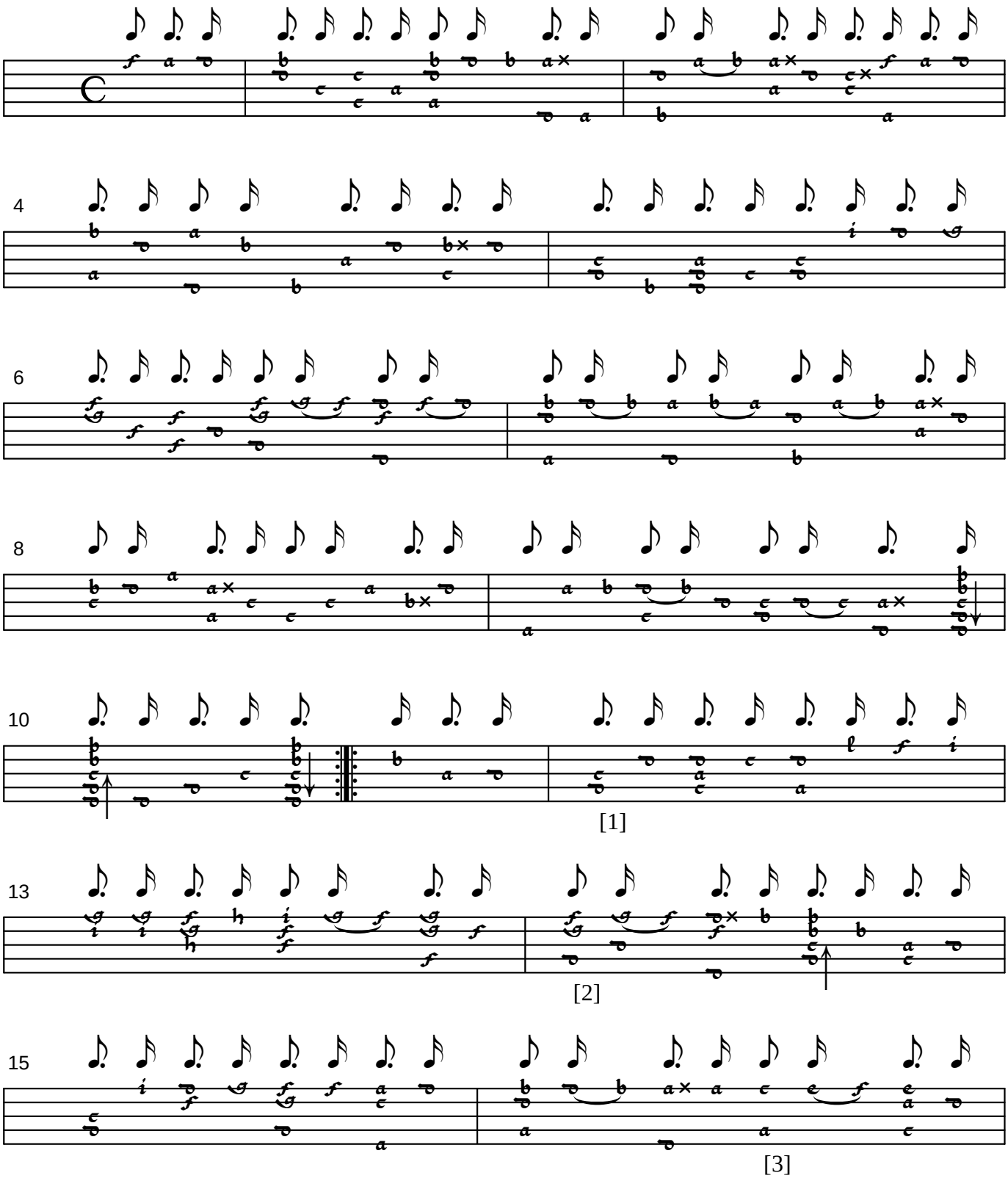
Courante in D minor

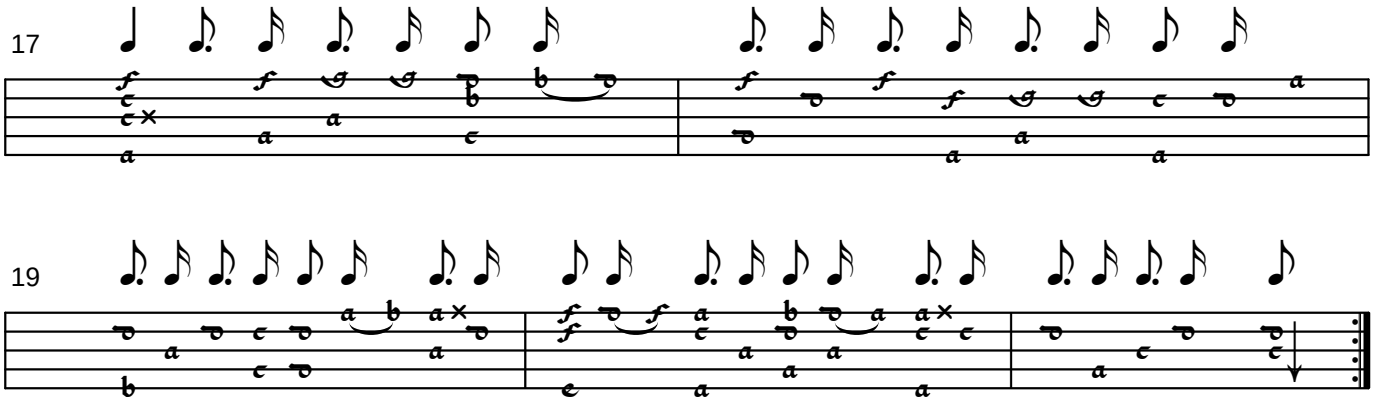


Sarabande in D minor



Gigue in D minor

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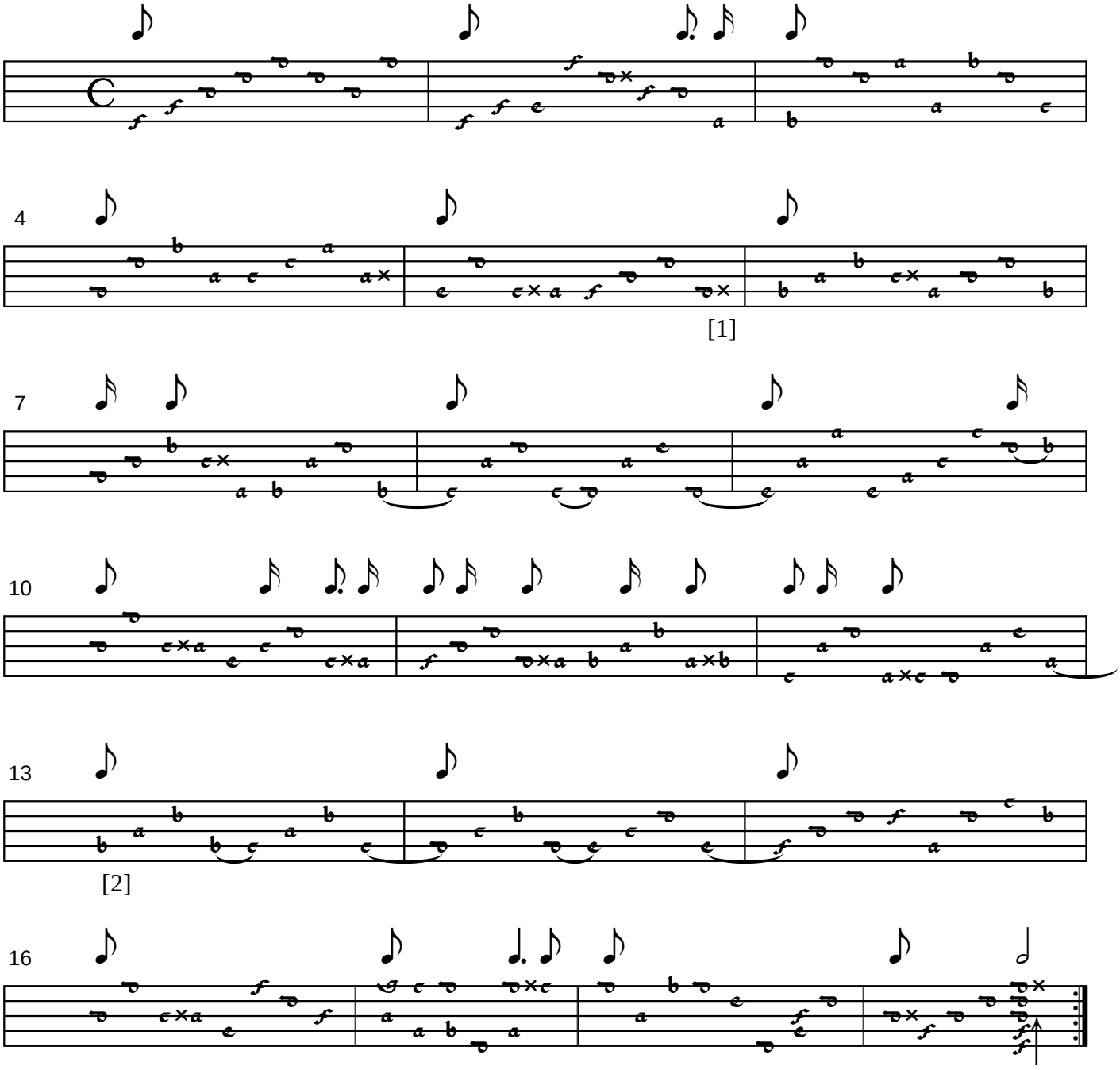
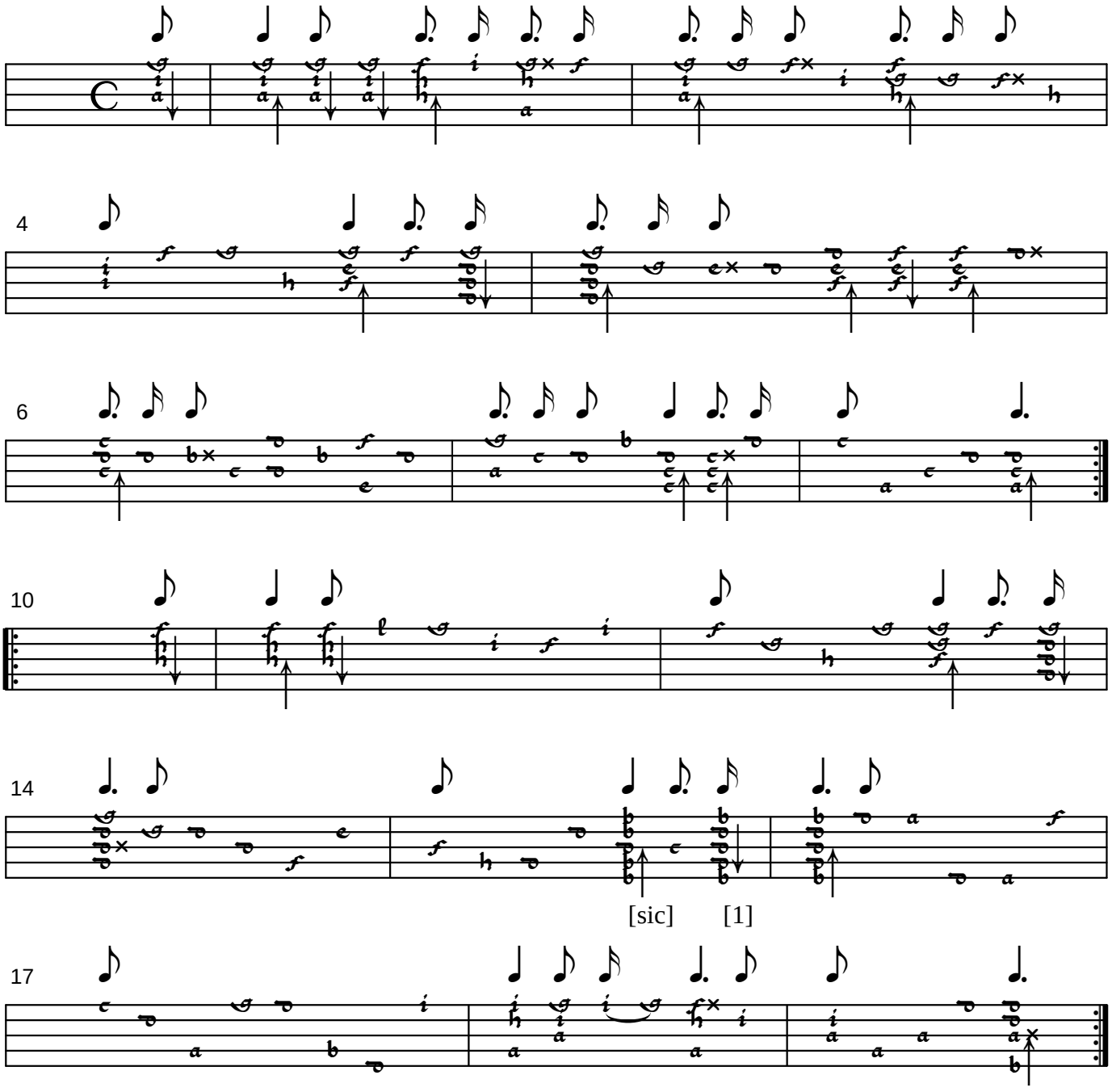
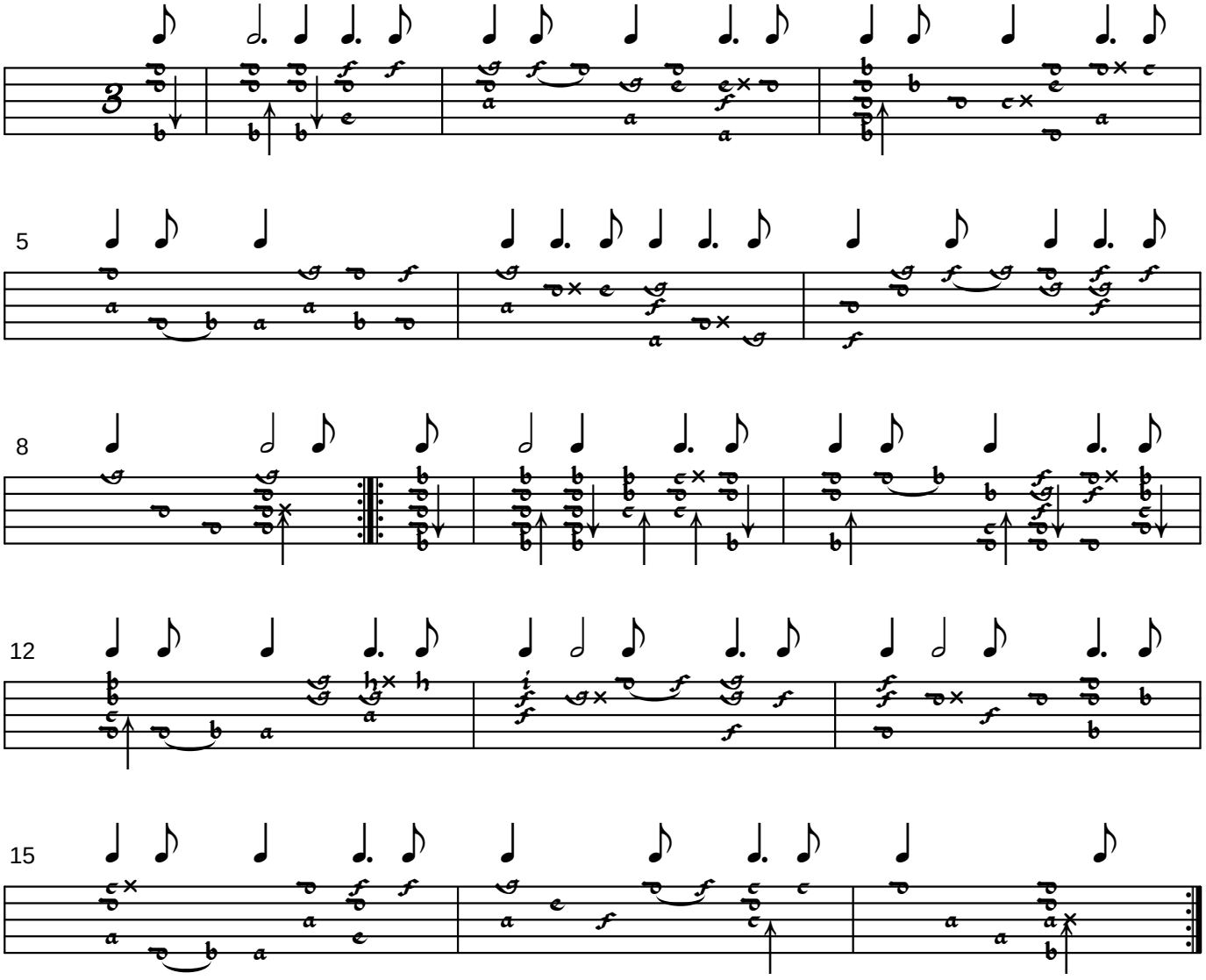
Pieces in G minor - Prelude



Allemande in G minor



Courante in G minor



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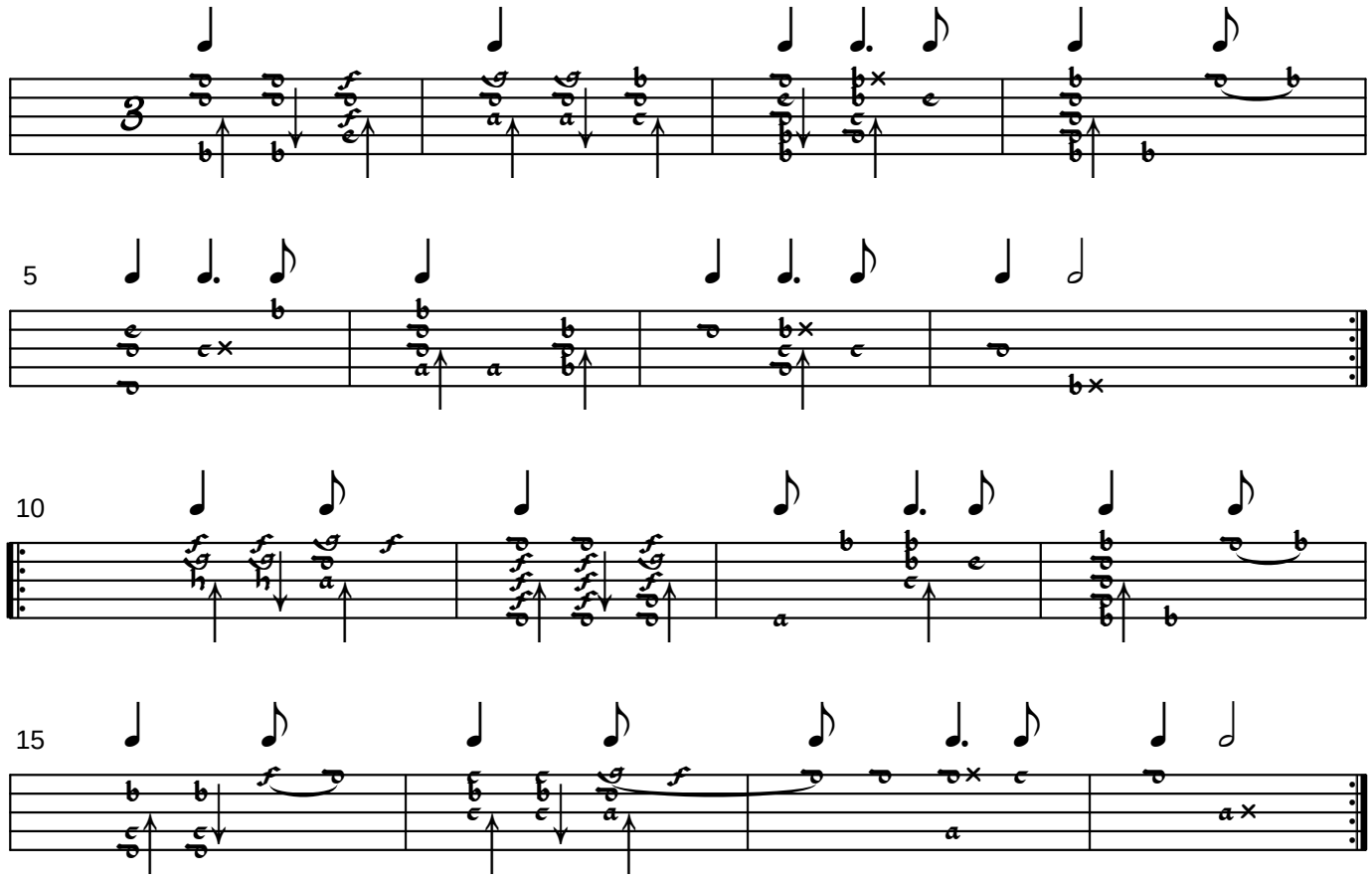
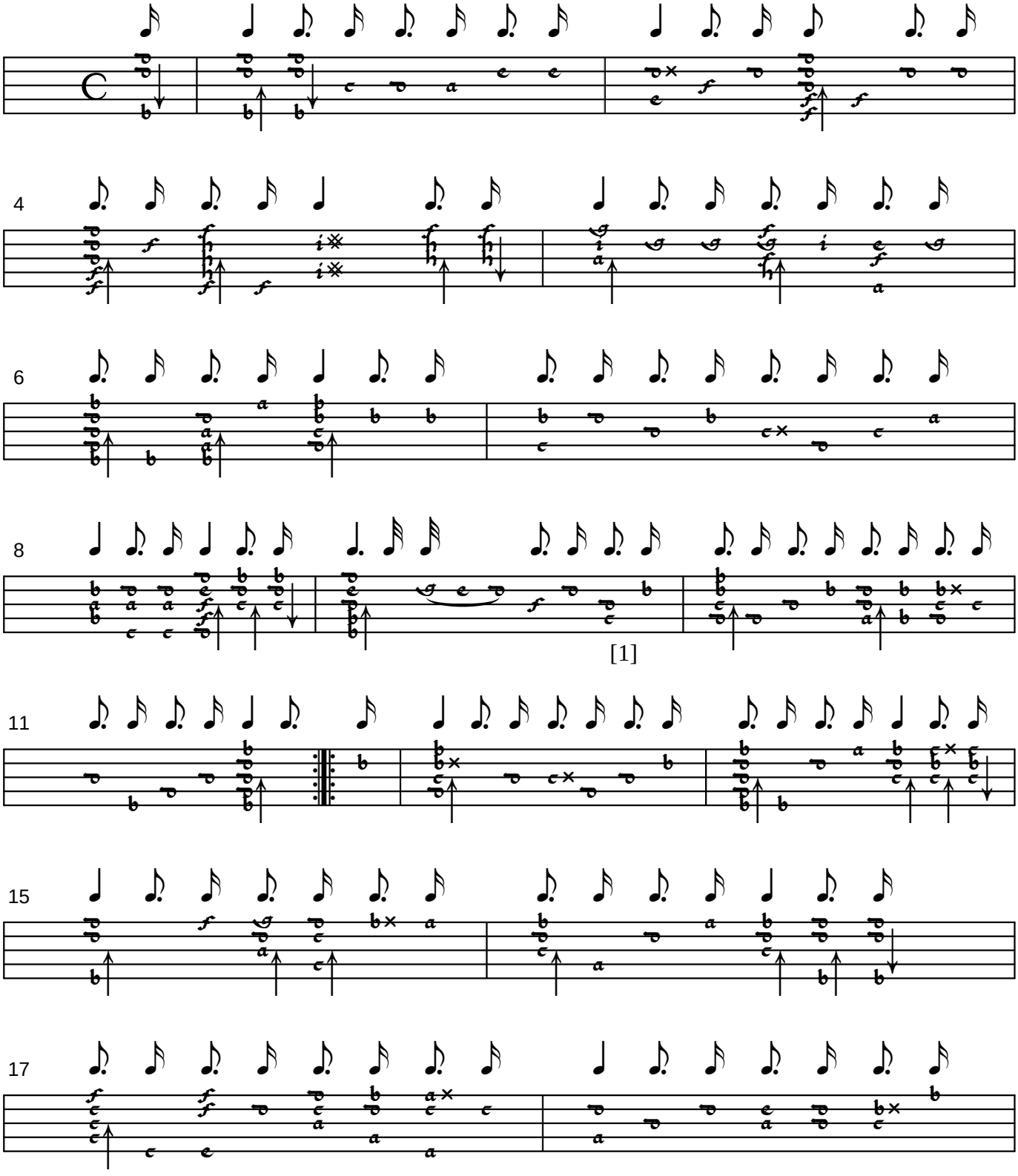
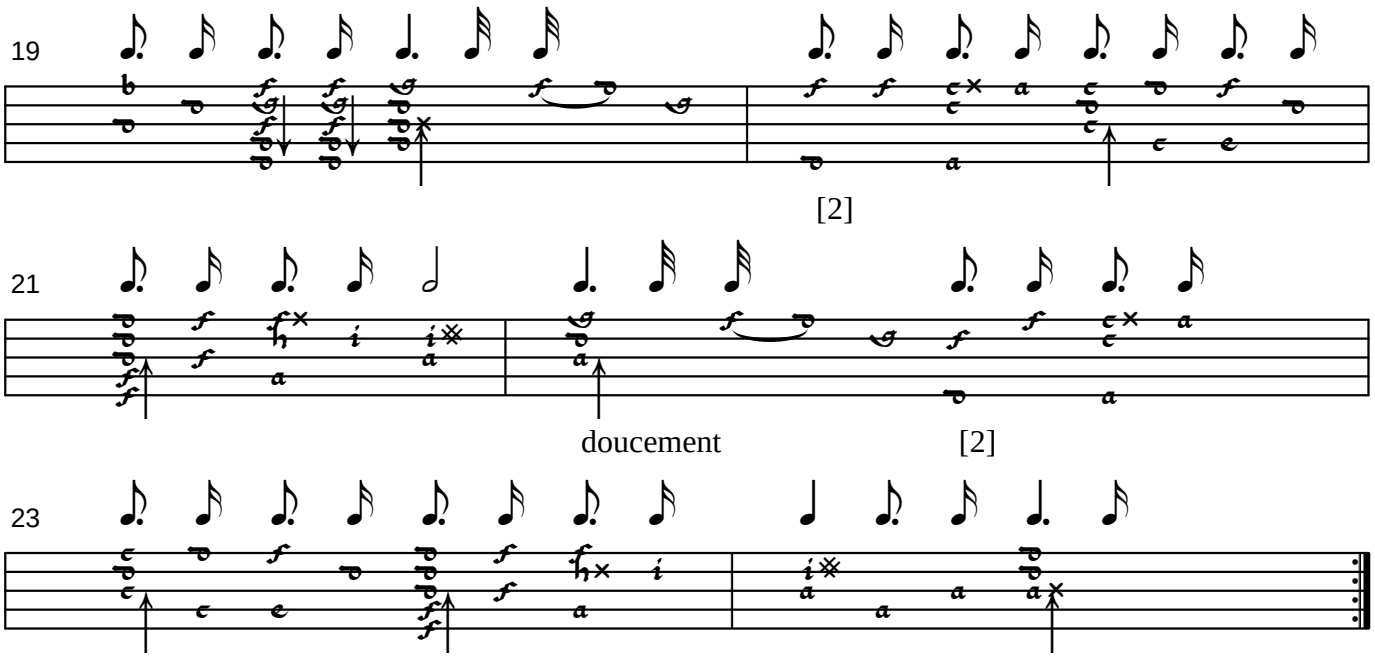


Gigue in G minor

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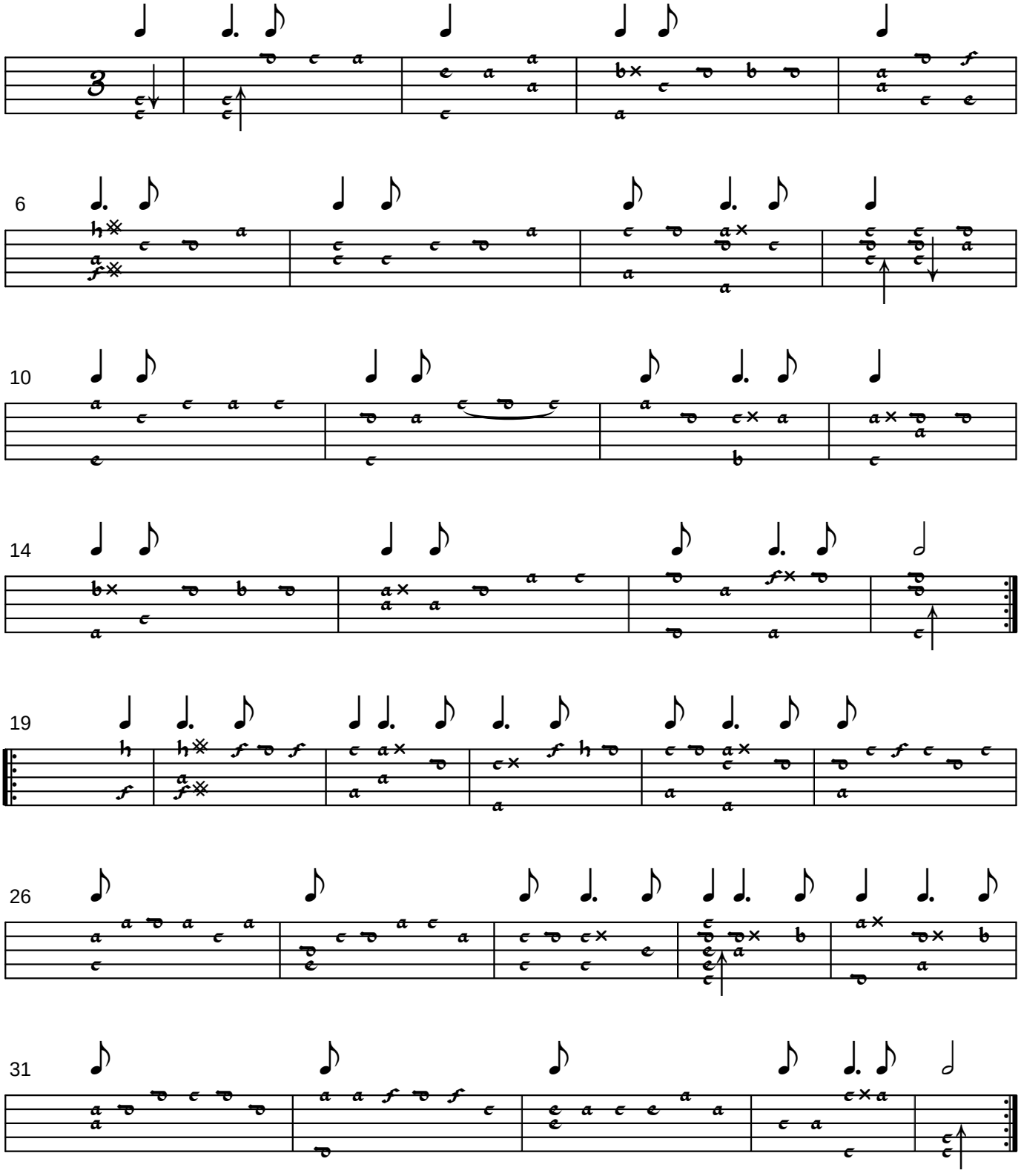
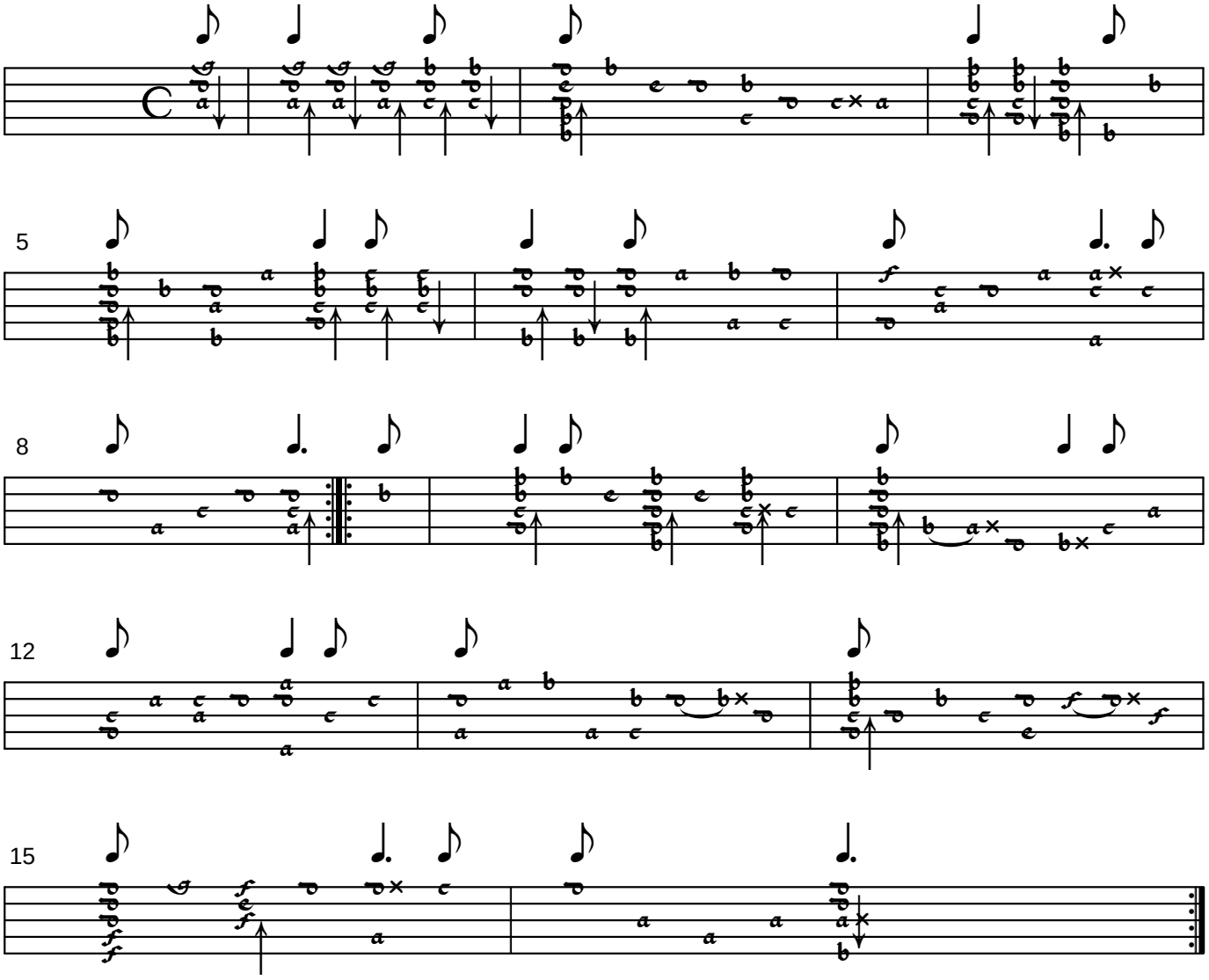
[2]
21
doucement
[2]
23

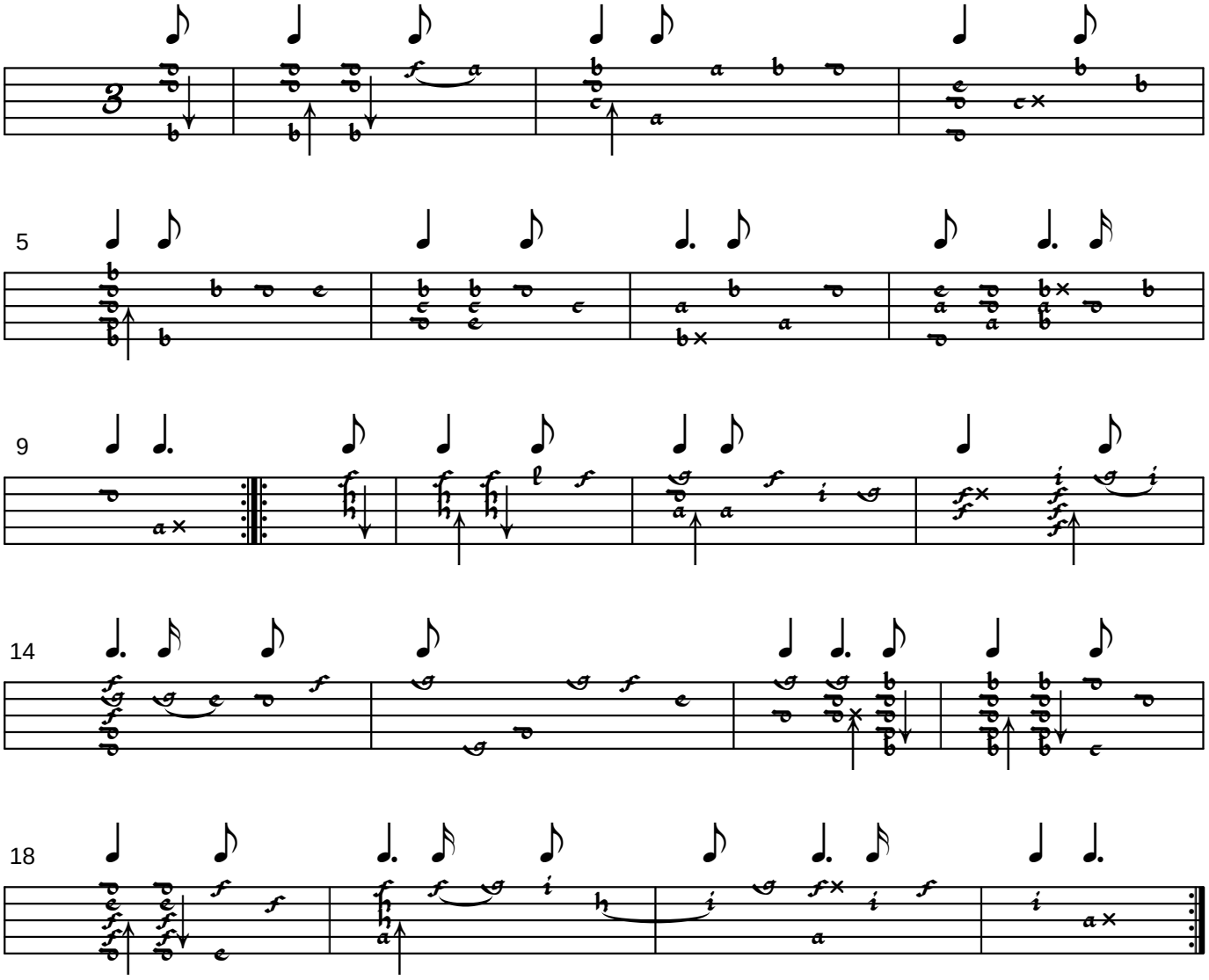
Courante in E minor



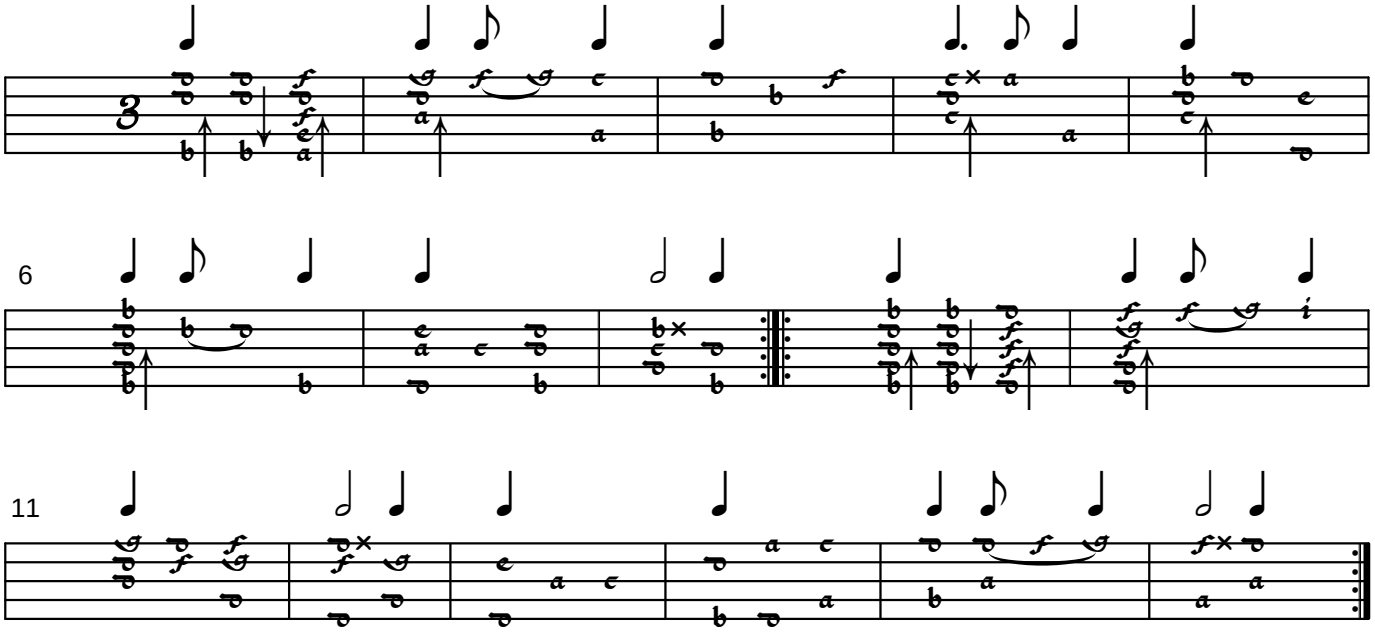
Pieces in G minor - Allemande



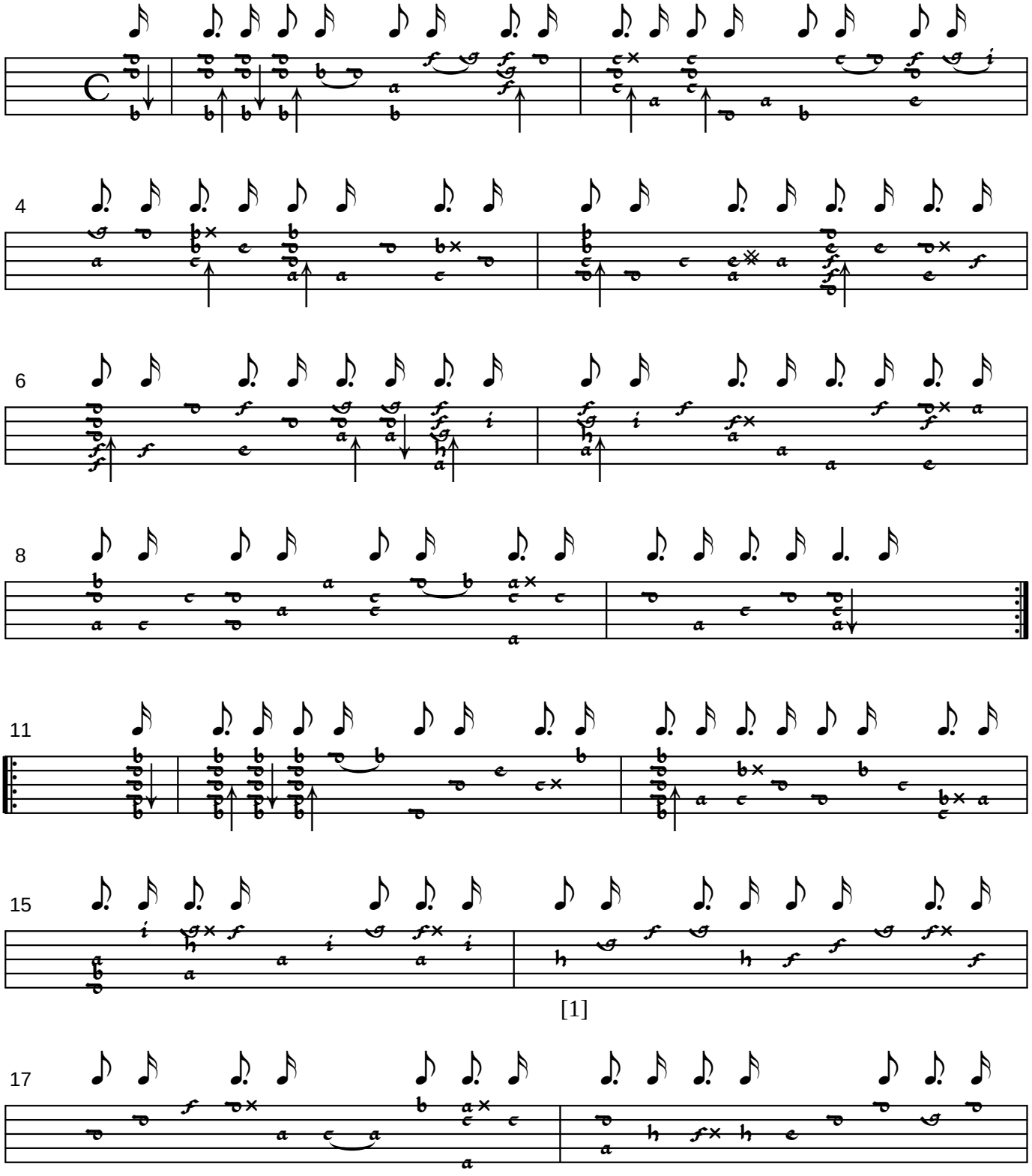
Sarabande (1) in G minor



Sarabande (2) in G minor



Gigue in G minor



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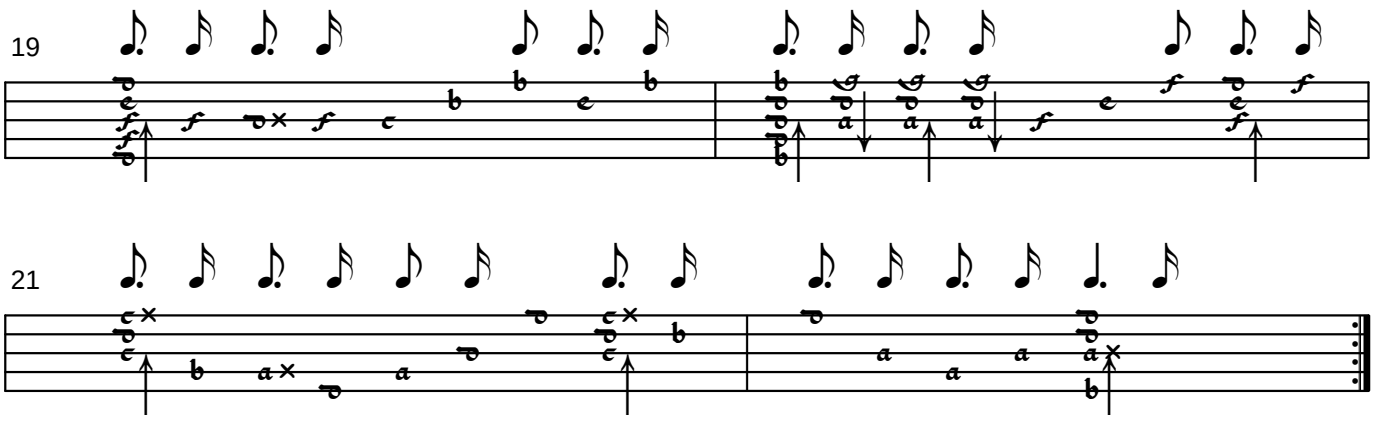
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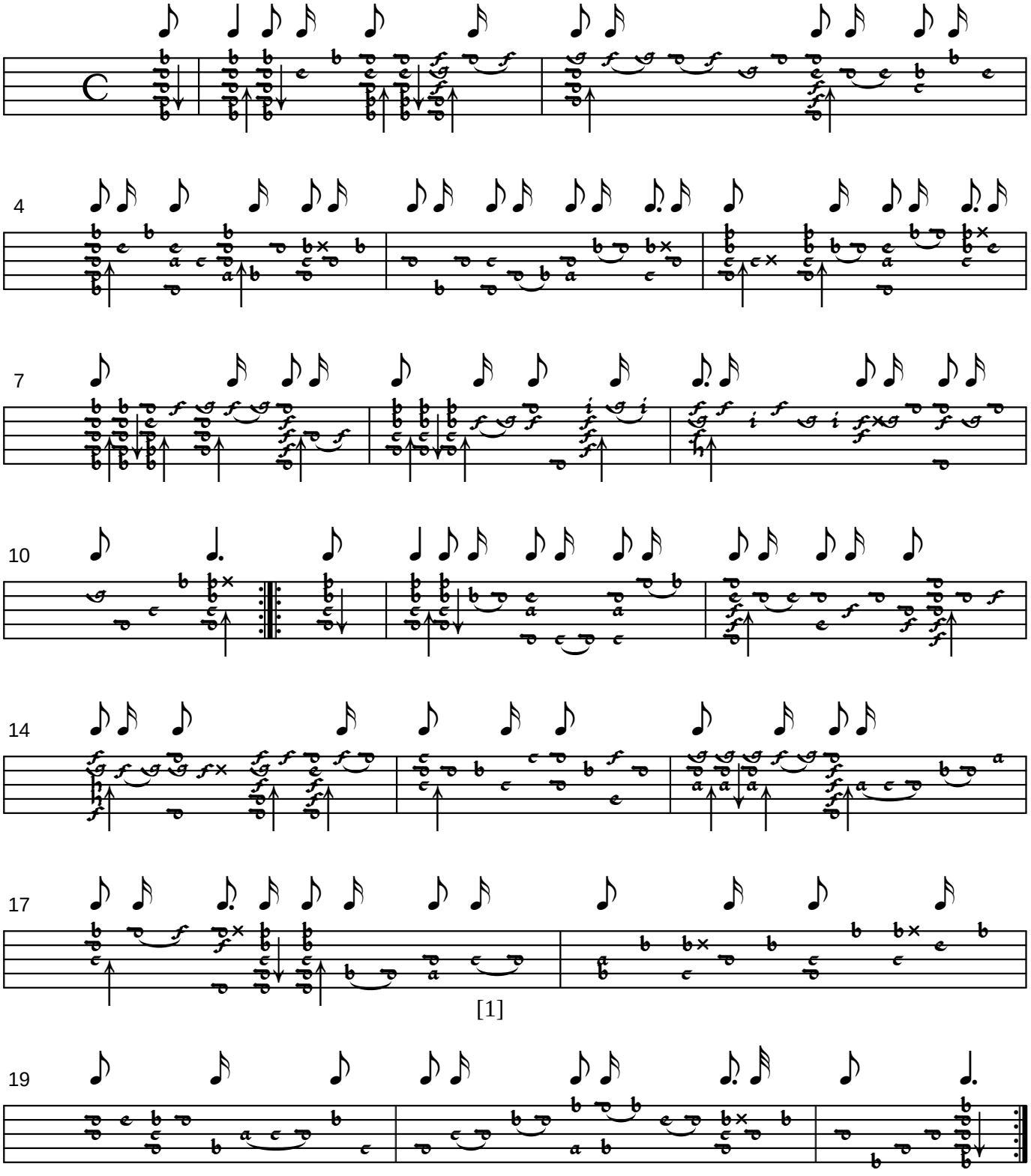
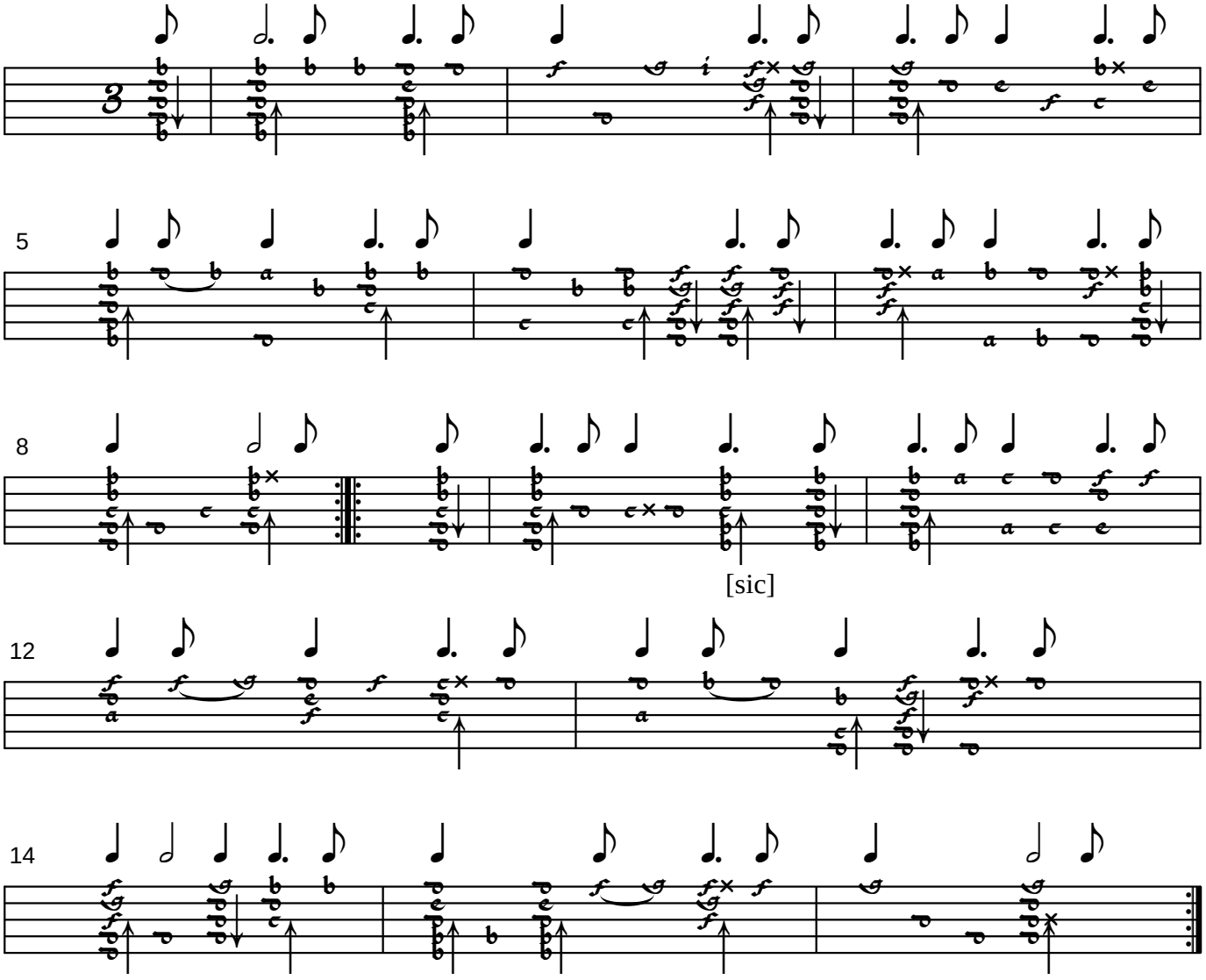
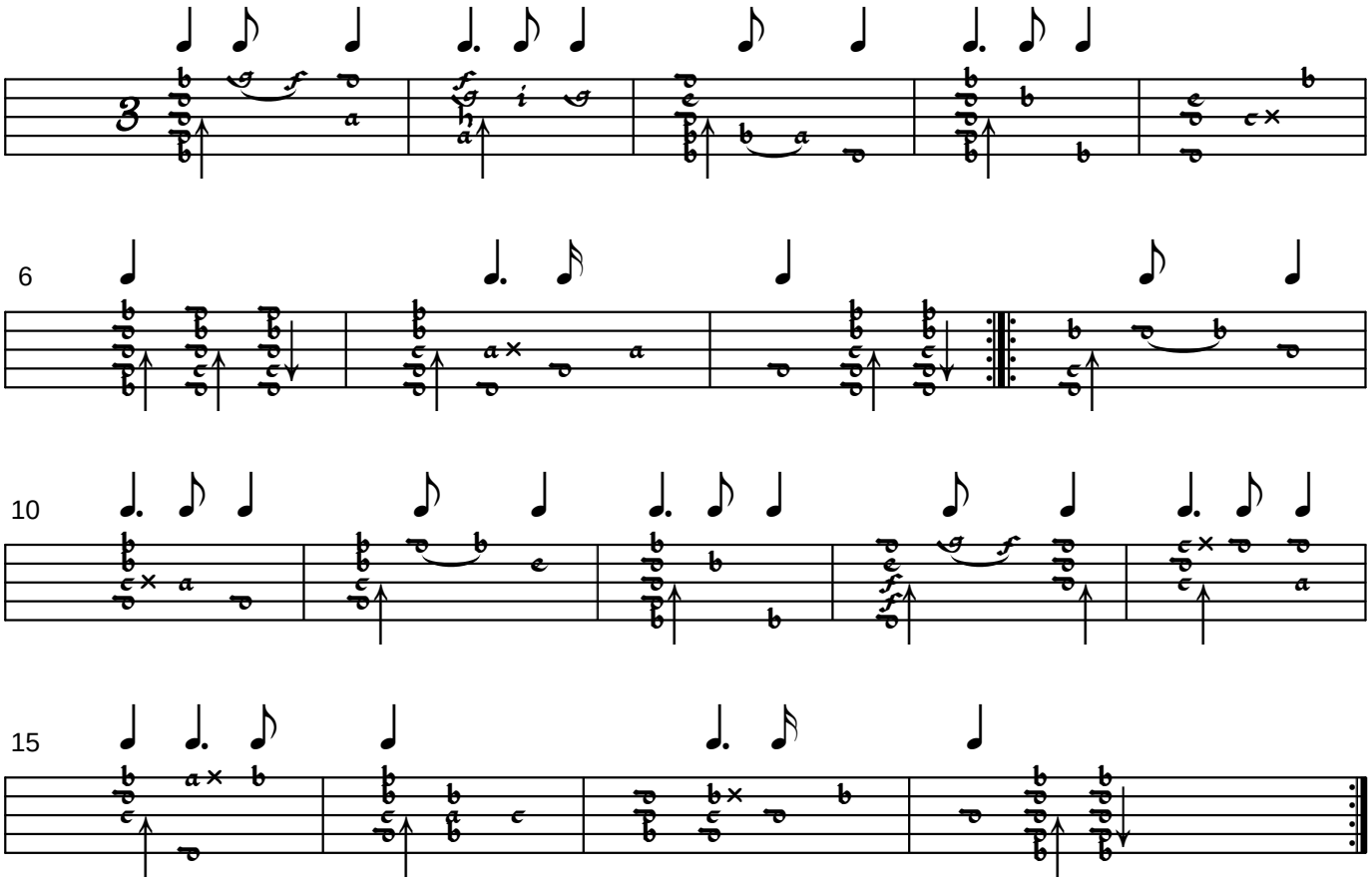


[1]

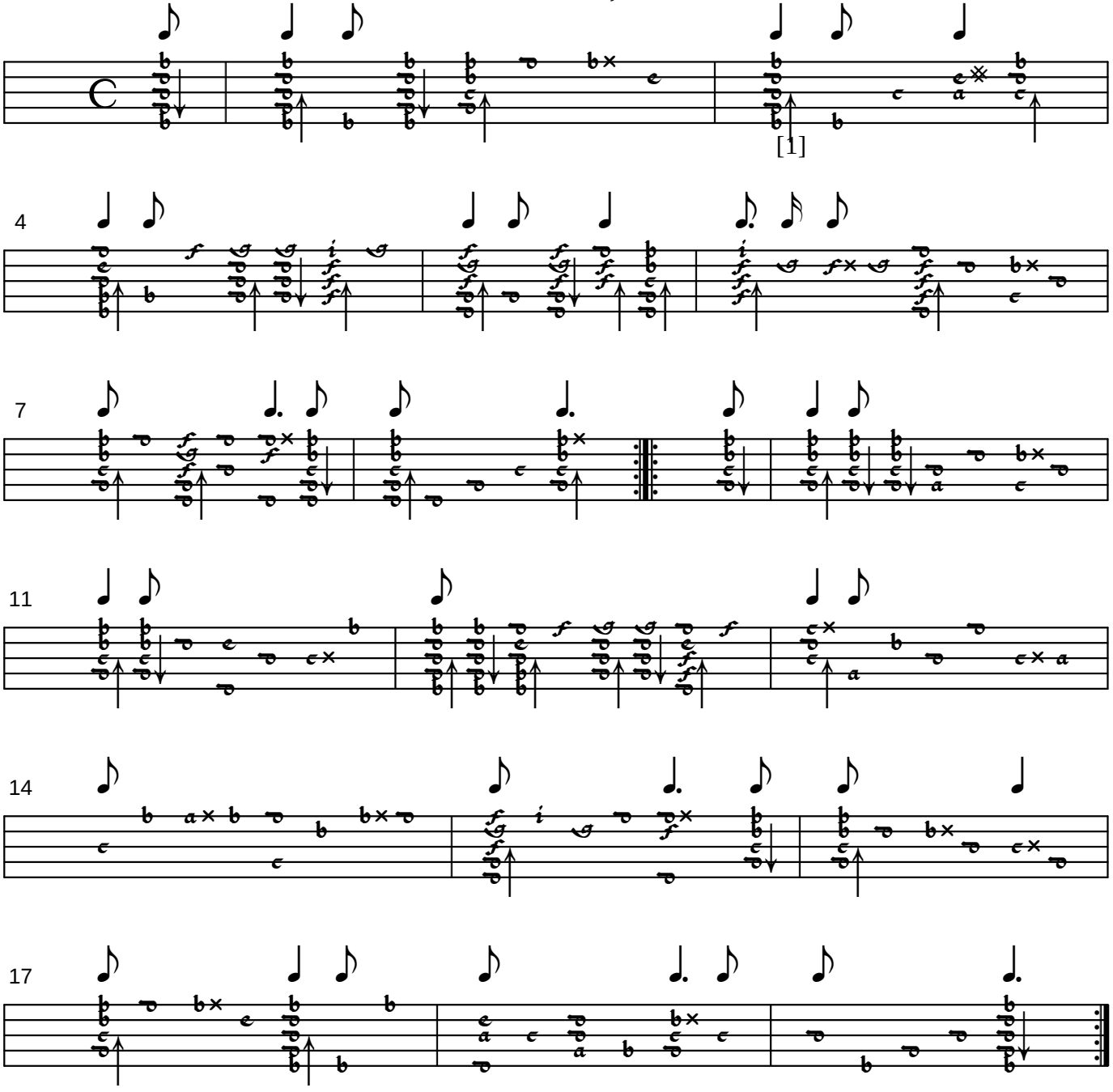
Courante in B flat major



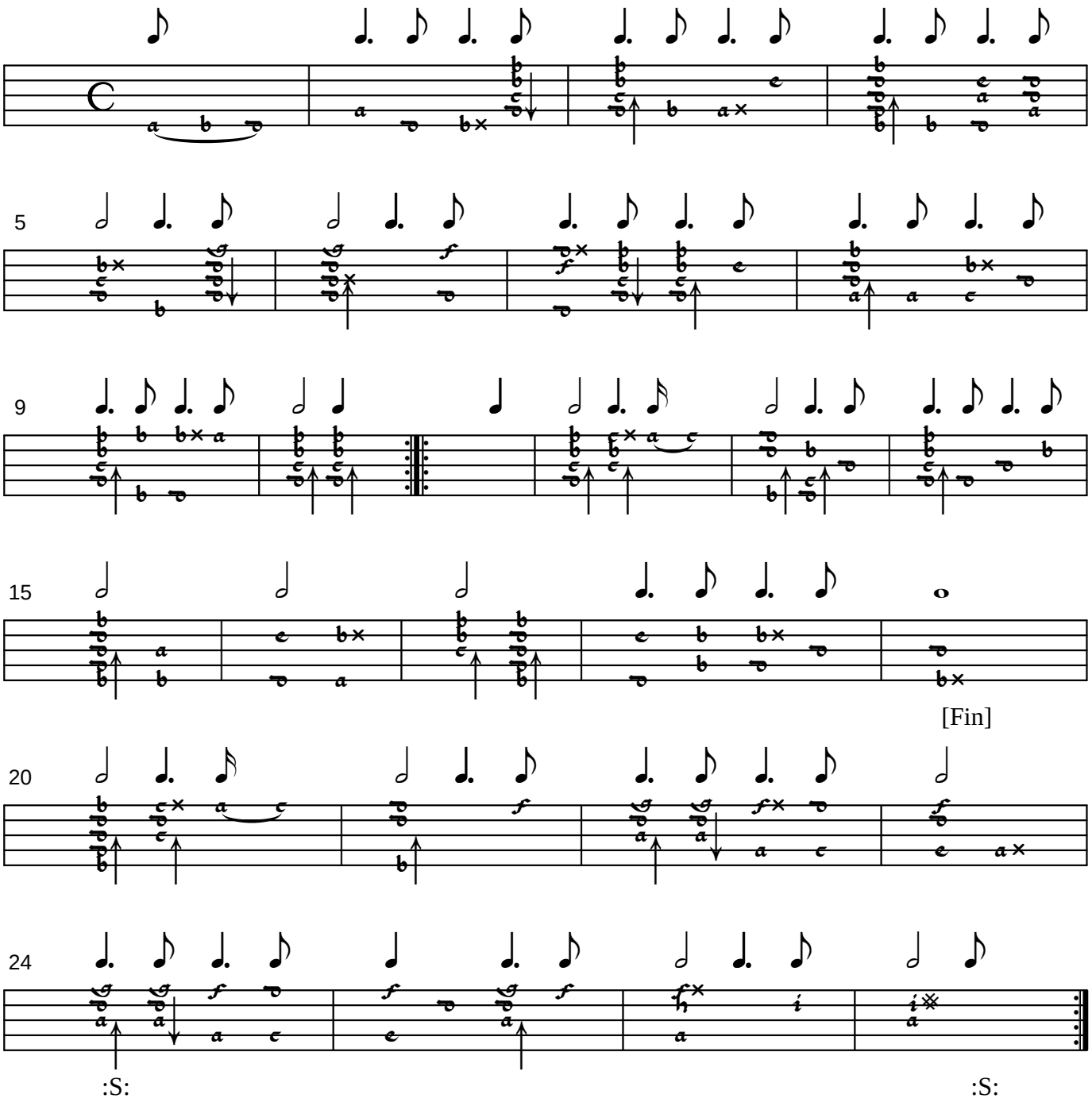
Sarabande in B flat major



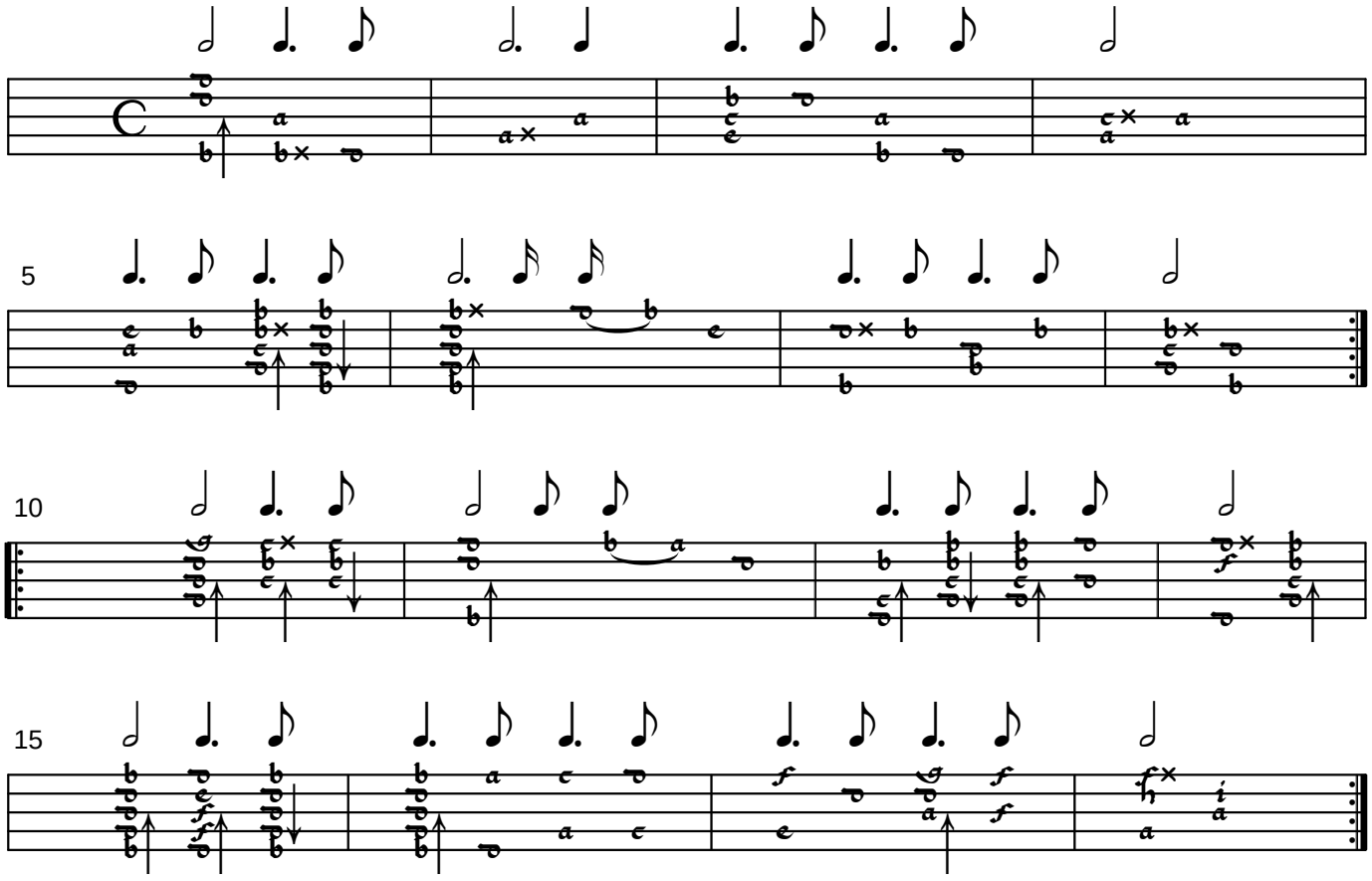
Brand in B flat major

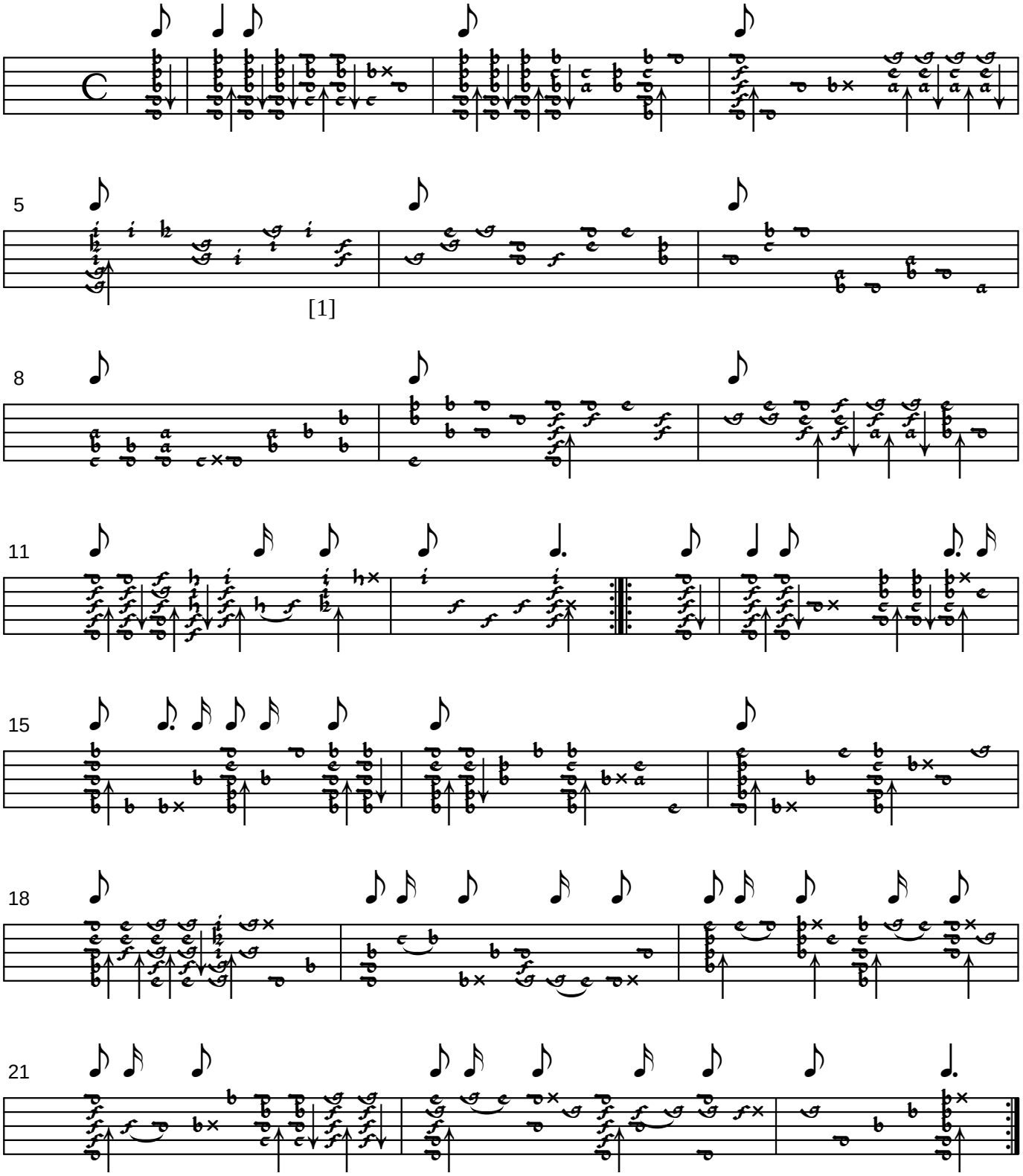


Ballet in B flat major

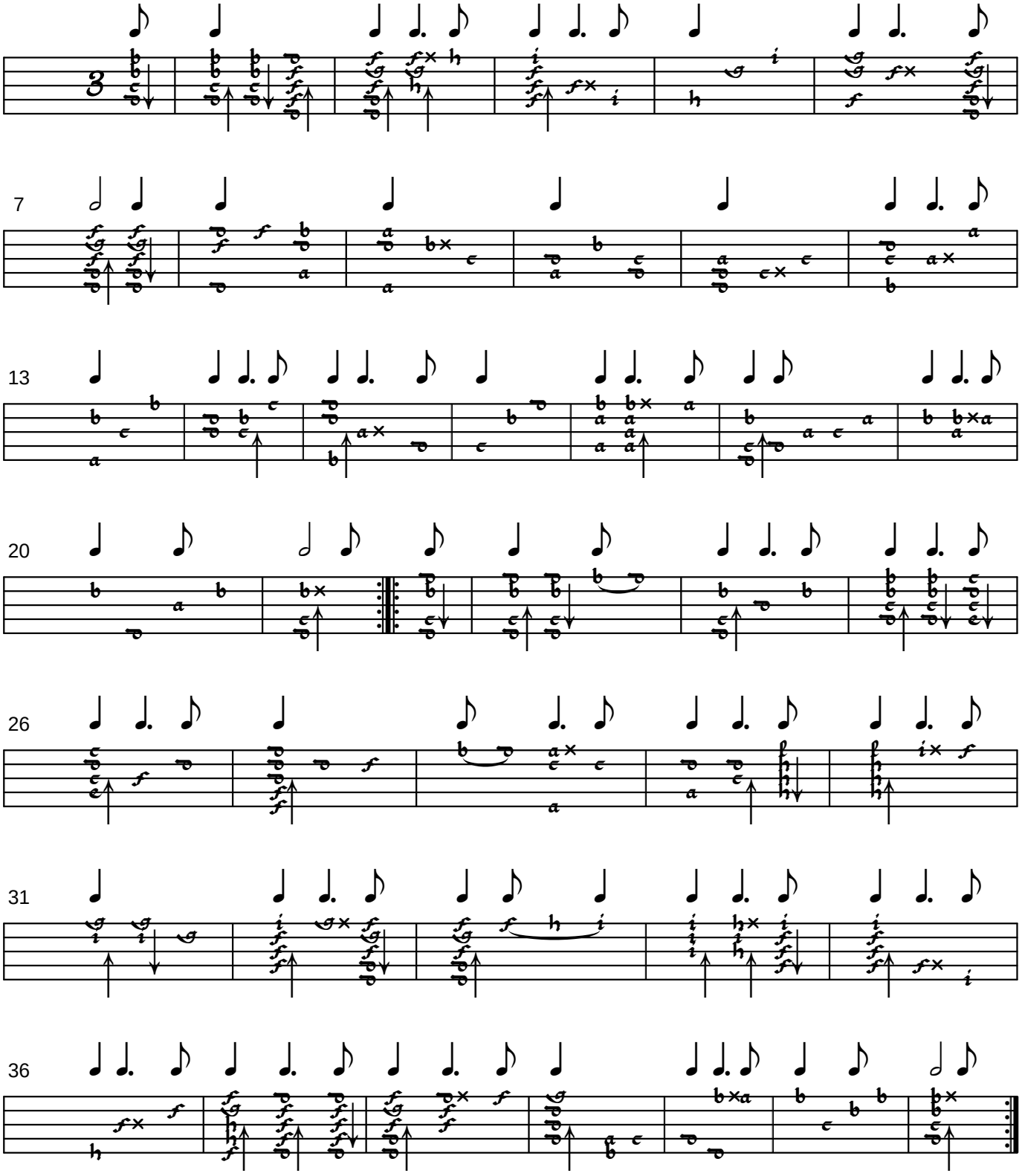


Ballet (2) in G minor

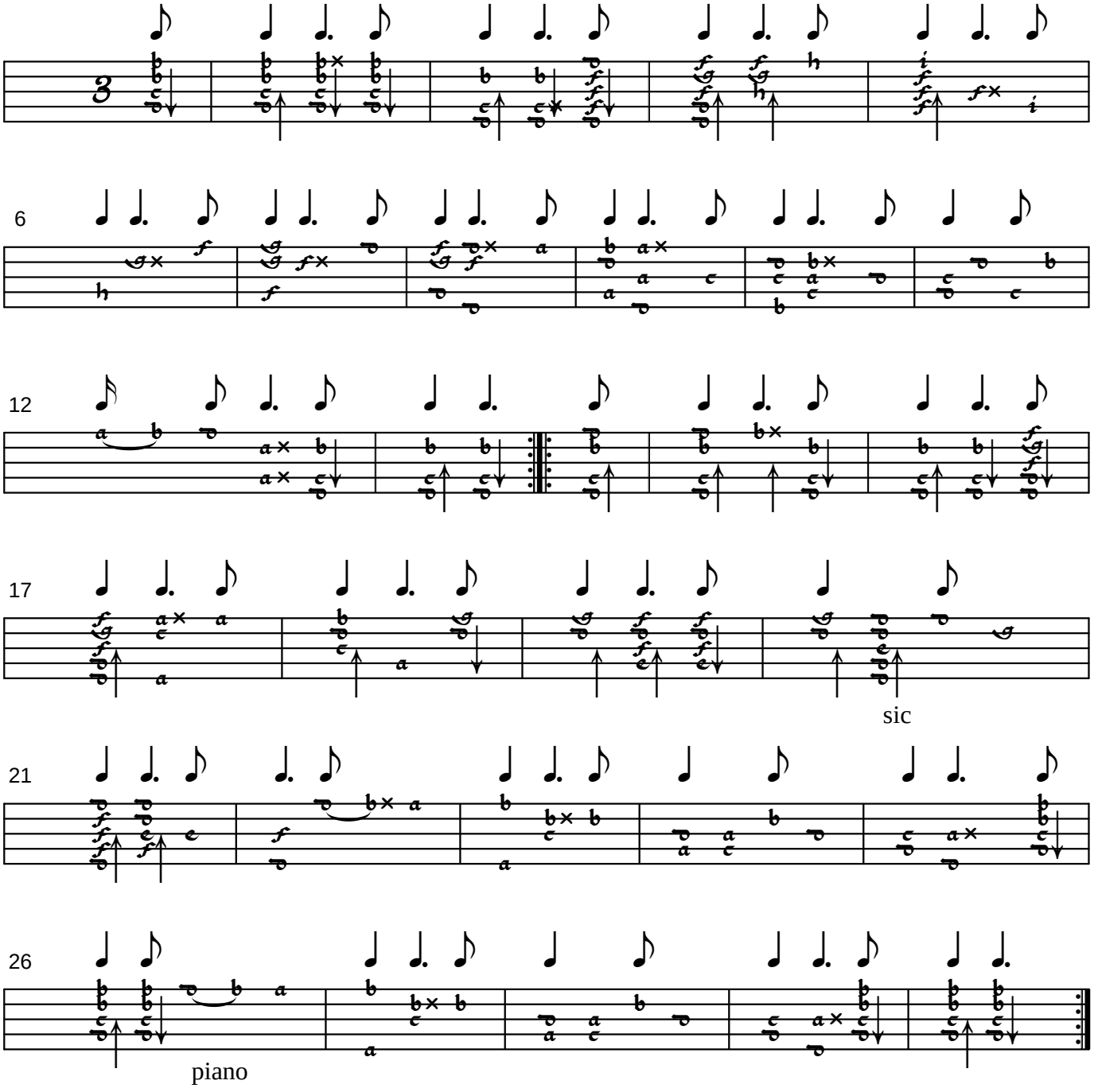


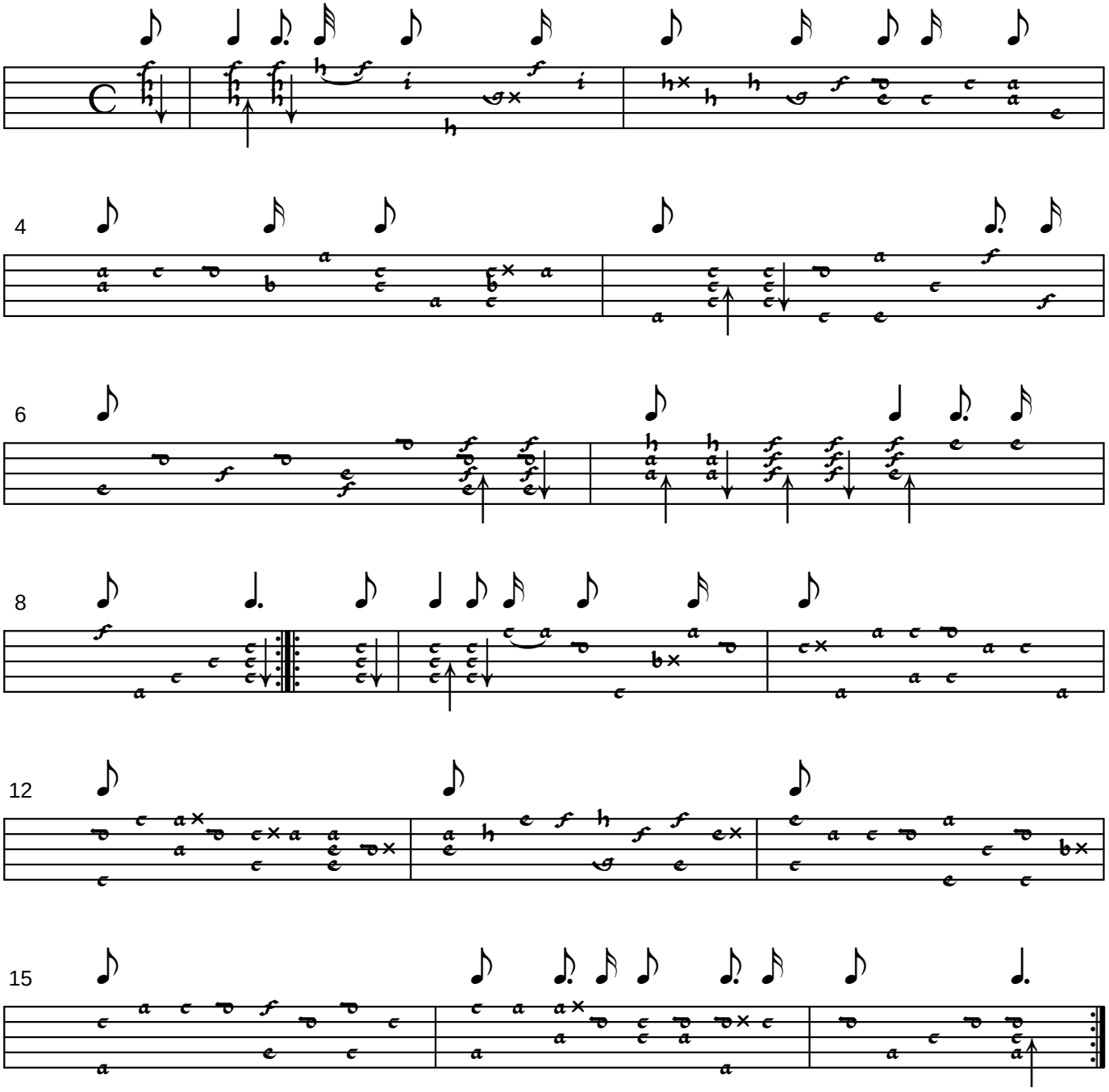

5
[1]
8
11
15
18
21

Courante in F major

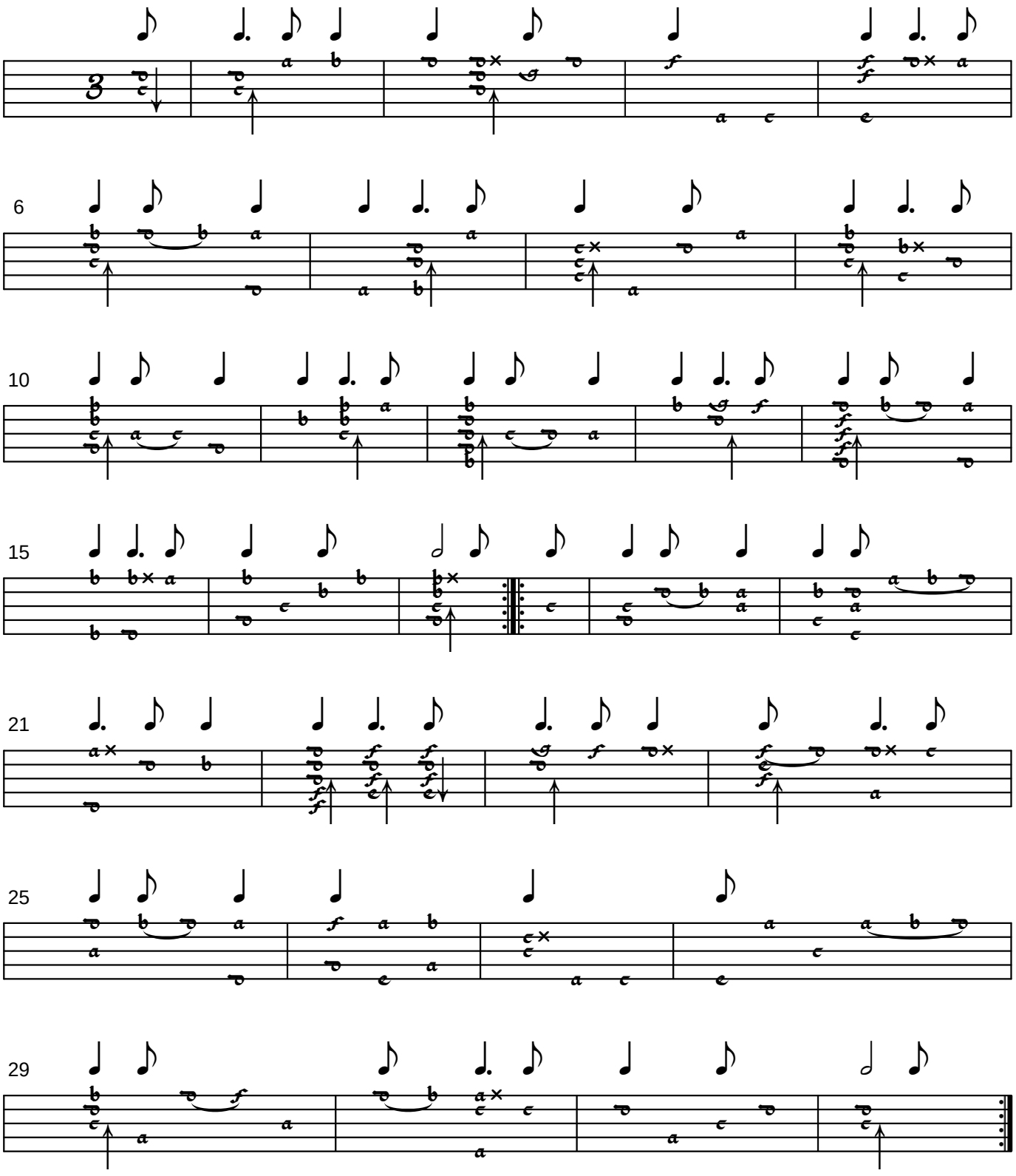


Sarabande in F major

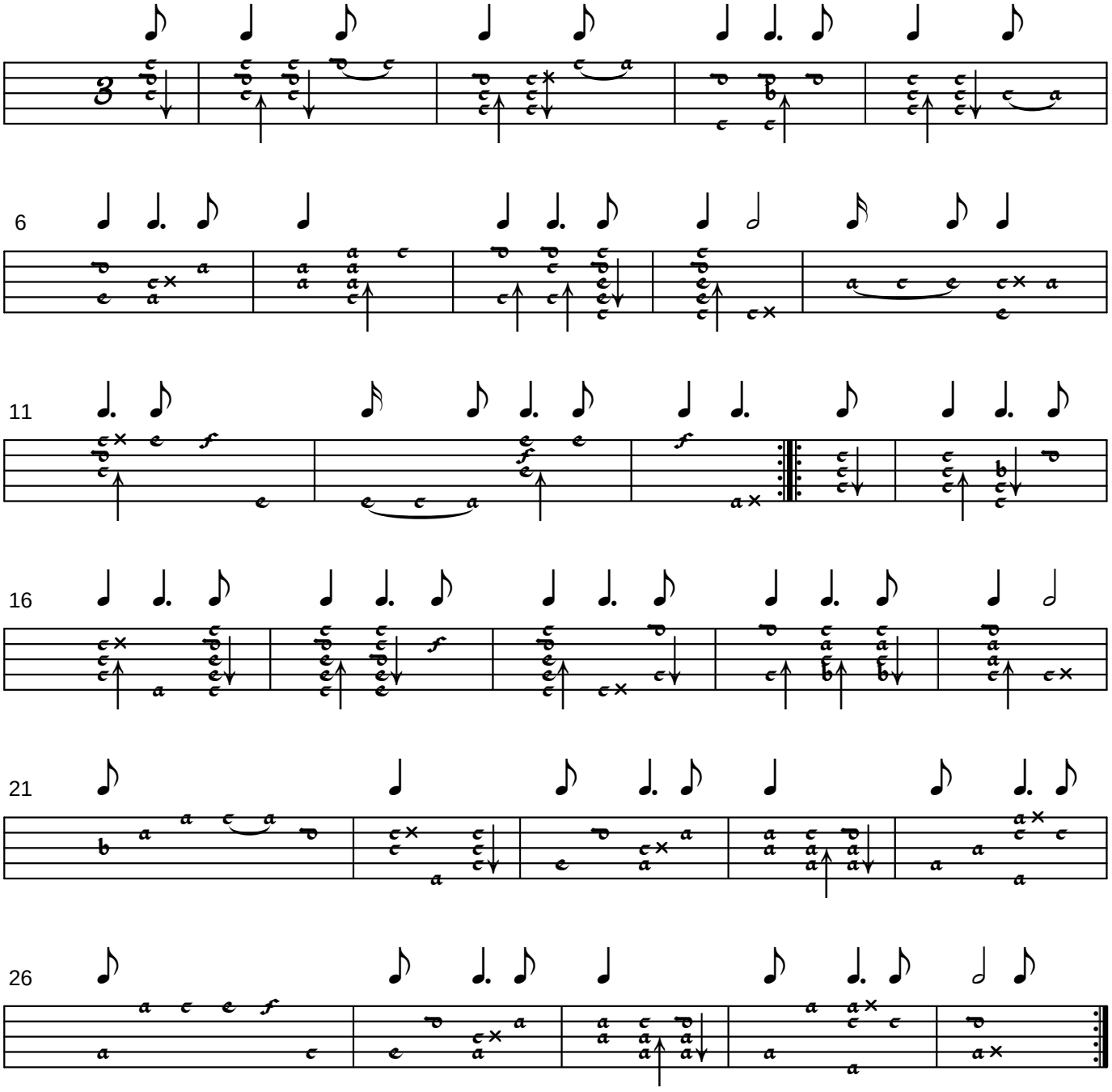
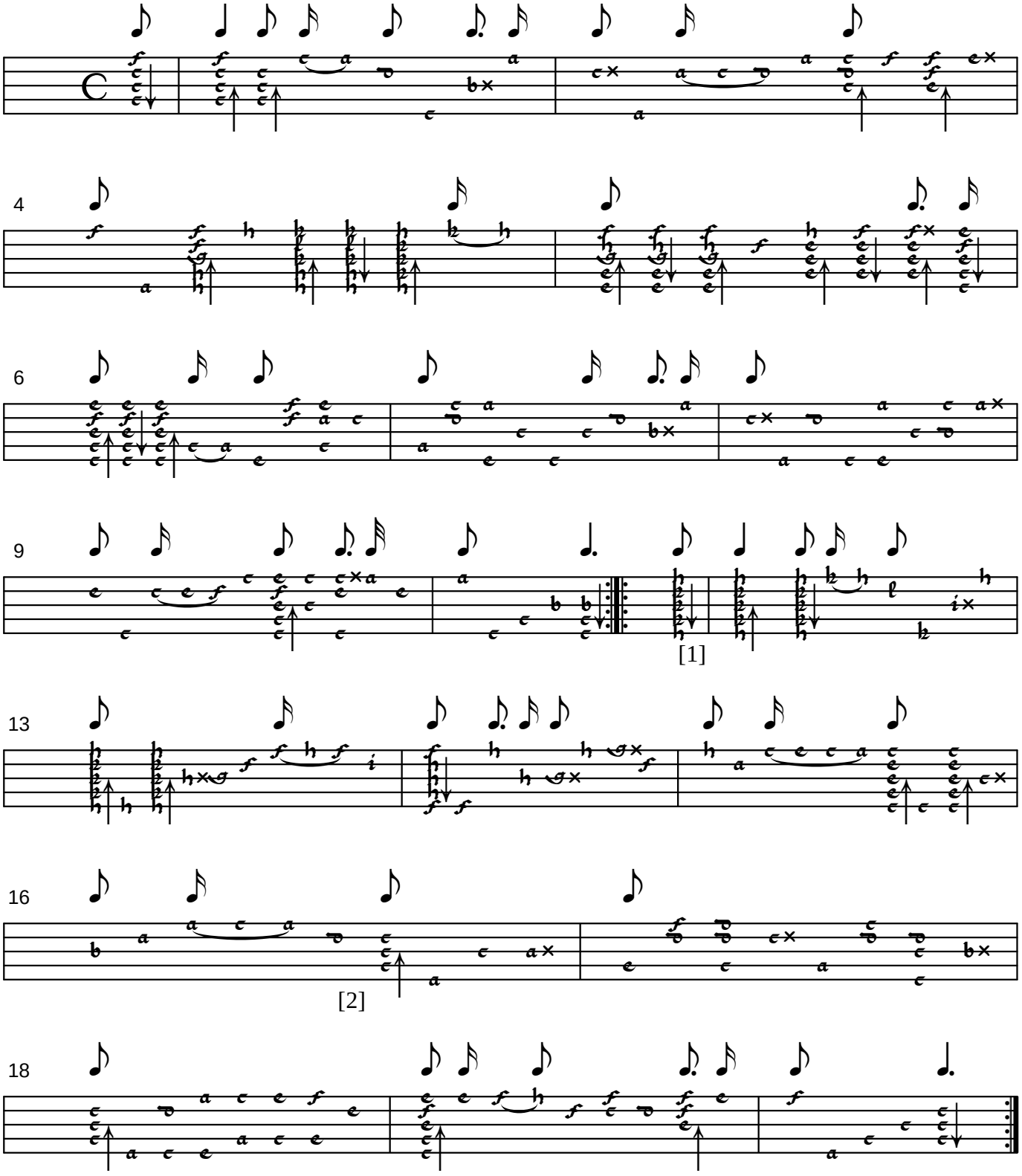




Courante in D minor



Sarabande in D major



Allemande in A major