Dietrich Buxtehude

Suite BuxWV 236

Arranged for Baroque Lute
by
Wilfred Foxe

TREE EDITION

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Albert Reyerman

For Janette

Johannes Voorhout: Domestic Music Scene, Hamburg 1674
Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte

Foreword

The fact that Buxtehude left no original music for the lute[1] is a matter for regret, particularly since the composer is known to have kept company with lute players. Indeed, as Kerala Snyder[2] points out, the only known image of Buxtehude is in a painting by Johannes Voorhout, 'Domestic Music Scene' and the composer is there pictured with Johann Adam Reinken, organist at St Catherine's Church, Hamburg; Johann Theile, a player of the viola da gamba; and an unidentified woman playing the lute who also appears in another Voorhout painting 'The Artist and his Family'. It is likely that the lute player was related to Voorhout and, judging by her hand positions, she must have been a competent player; perhaps this is amongst the reasons why, within the picture, the composer's attention is turned towards her.

The suite transcribed here is probably Buxtehude's most popular work in the genre[3] and its four movements adhere to the Allemande-Courante-Sarabande-Gigue pattern of the classical suite in much the same way as the keyboard works of Froberger or the lute works of Esiais Reusner the younger. The original suite is in E minor and, in addition to transposing the suite down a tone, some chords have been respaced, inner parts thinned out (particularly in the Gigue), and some bass notes either raised or lowered one octave. Where a phrase extends beyond the range of the lute, the entire phrase has been transposed to preserve its melodic integrity[4]. As with any arrangement, it is advisable to consult the original composition.[5]

Wilfred Foxe
Wigston Magna
March 2006

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[1] In 1954 the Copenhagen publisher Engstrøm & Sødring Musikforlag issued the following title: Diderich Buxtehude, *Vier Suiten für Clavichord oder Laute*, Aus der Tablatur übertragen und herausgegeben von Bo Lundgren. The volume was a transcription into staff notation of manuscript, Ihre 285, from the library of the University of Uppsala, Sweden. The four suites in question (BuxWV 231, 238, 236, & 239) are notated in German keyboard tablature, a system which combines the letter names of notes with rhythm signs. Although it is possible for lutenists to play from German keyboard tablature in much the same way as they might from staff notation, there is no tradition of this practice and the pitches found within the suites (C – c''') often lie outside the range of the baroque lute. Hence it is unlikely that the manuscript was intended to be used by lute players. See also Georg Karstädt, *Thematisch-Systematisches Verzeichnis der Musikalischen Werke von Dietrich Buxtehude,* 2nd edition, Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden 1985, pp.176-181 for the thematic index of the MS.

[2] See Kerala J, Snyder, *Dieterich Buxtehude Organist in Lübeck,* Schirmer Books, New York, 1987, p.111.

[3] See Snyder, *Op cit*., p.274. The suite is found in four sources.

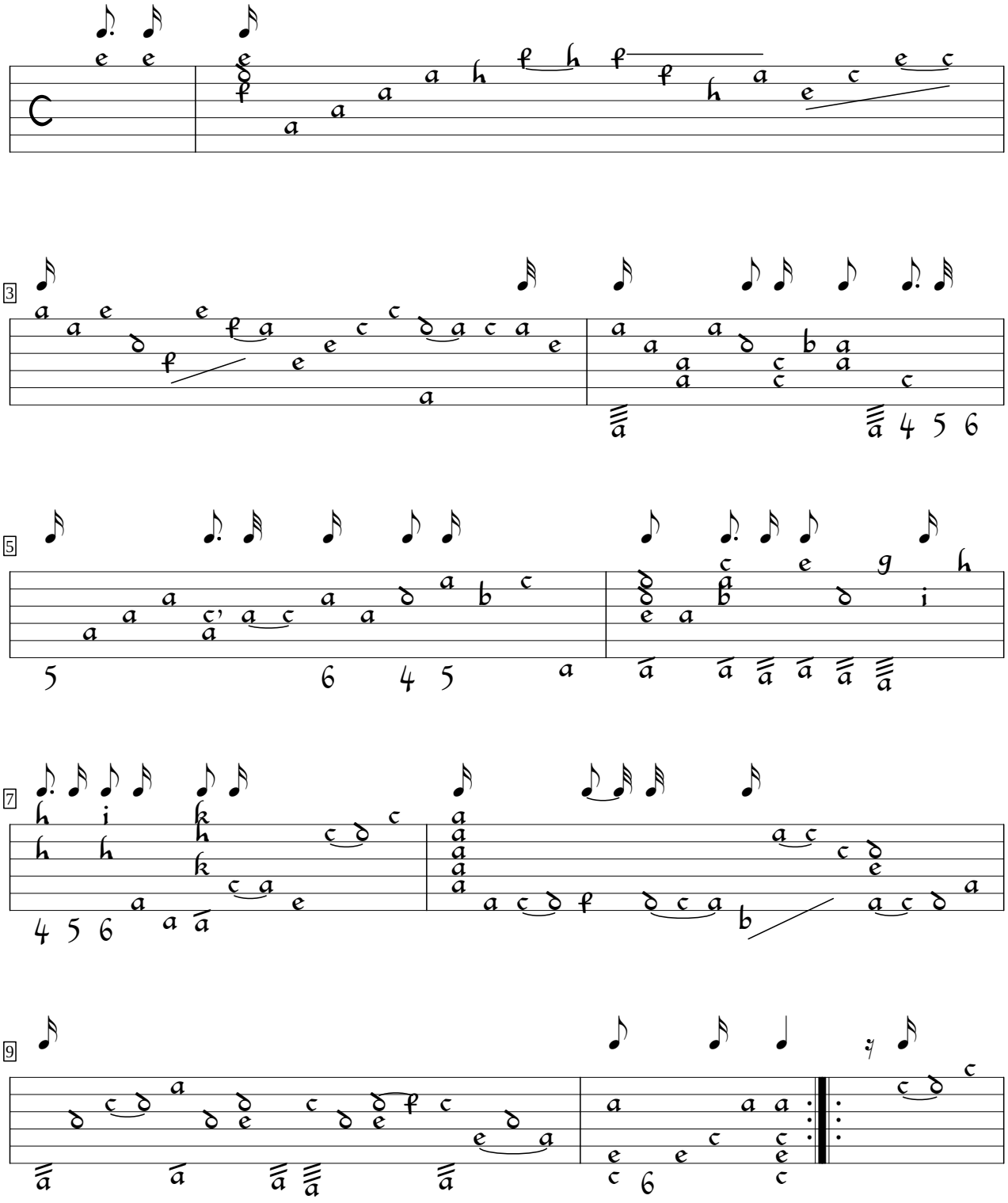
[4] There is one notable exception: in the Allemande at the end of bar 7 and the beginning of bar 8, the upper part was an octave higher in the original.

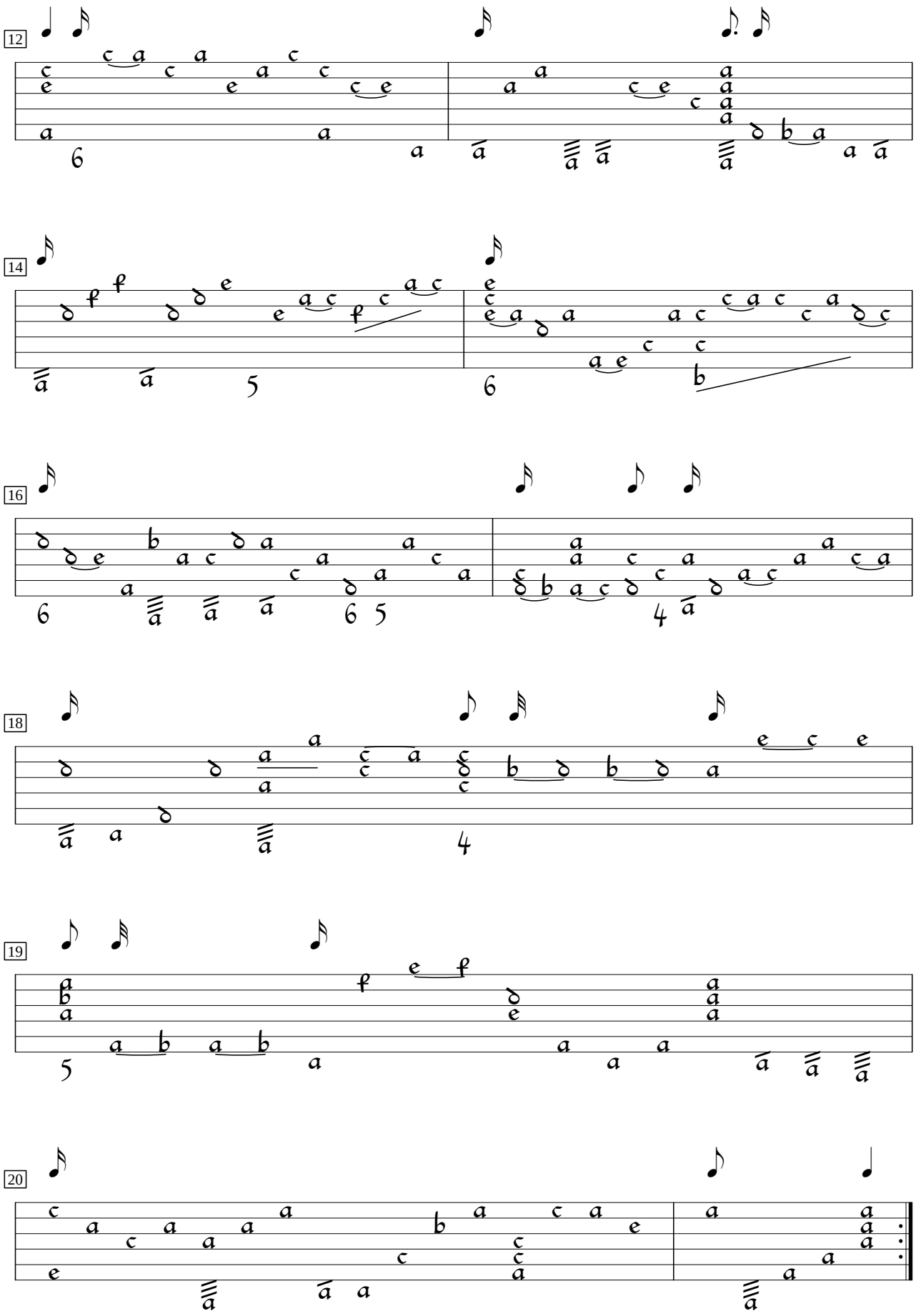
[5] Buxtehude's keyboard suites are now most accessible in: Dietrich Buxtehude, *Keyboard Suites*, Dover Publications, New York, 2002, BuxWV 236 is there number XI, pp.33-5.

Suite BuxWV 236

Dietrich Buxtehude (c.1637-1707)
Arranged by Wilfred Foxe

Allemande

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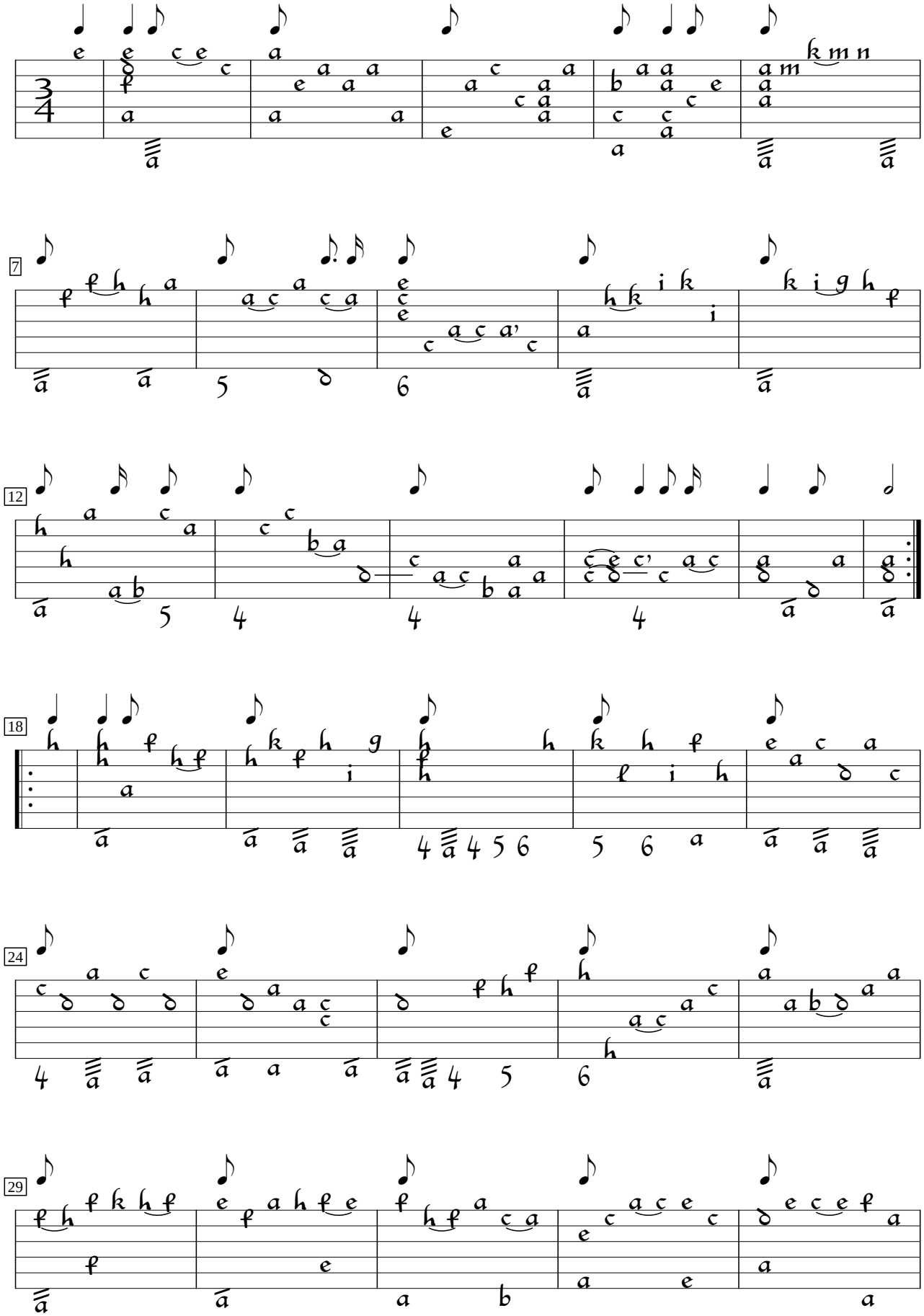
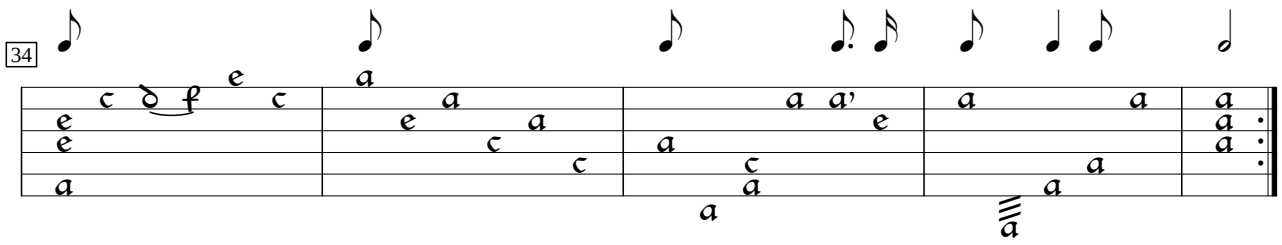
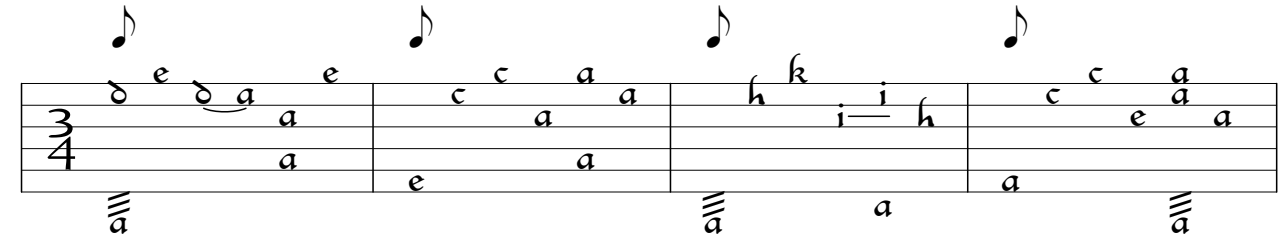
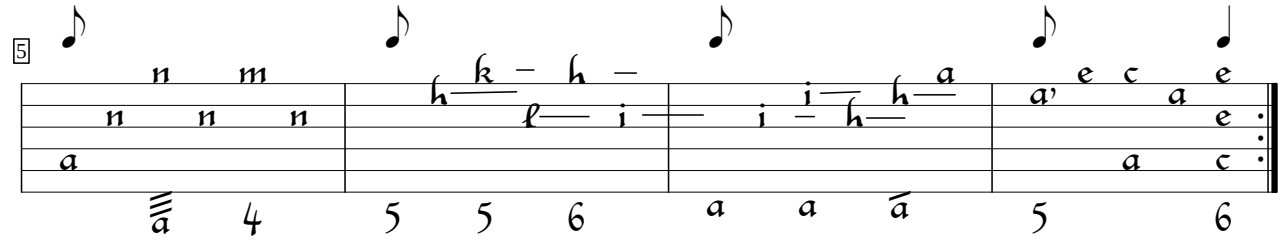
Courante

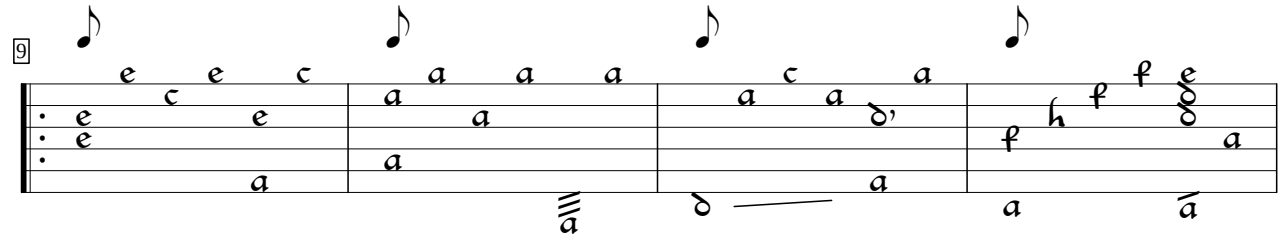


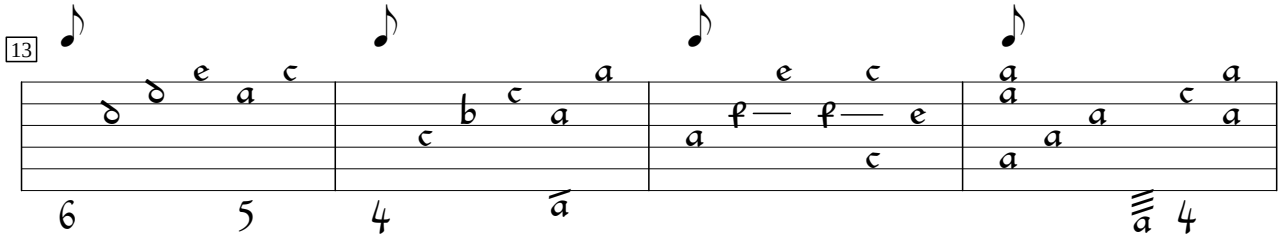


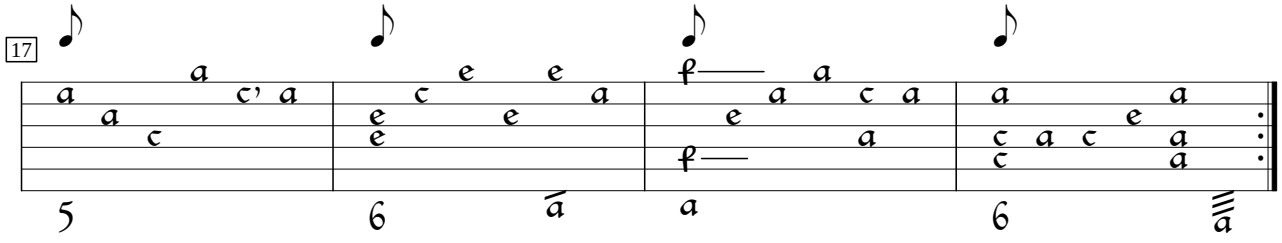
Sarabande



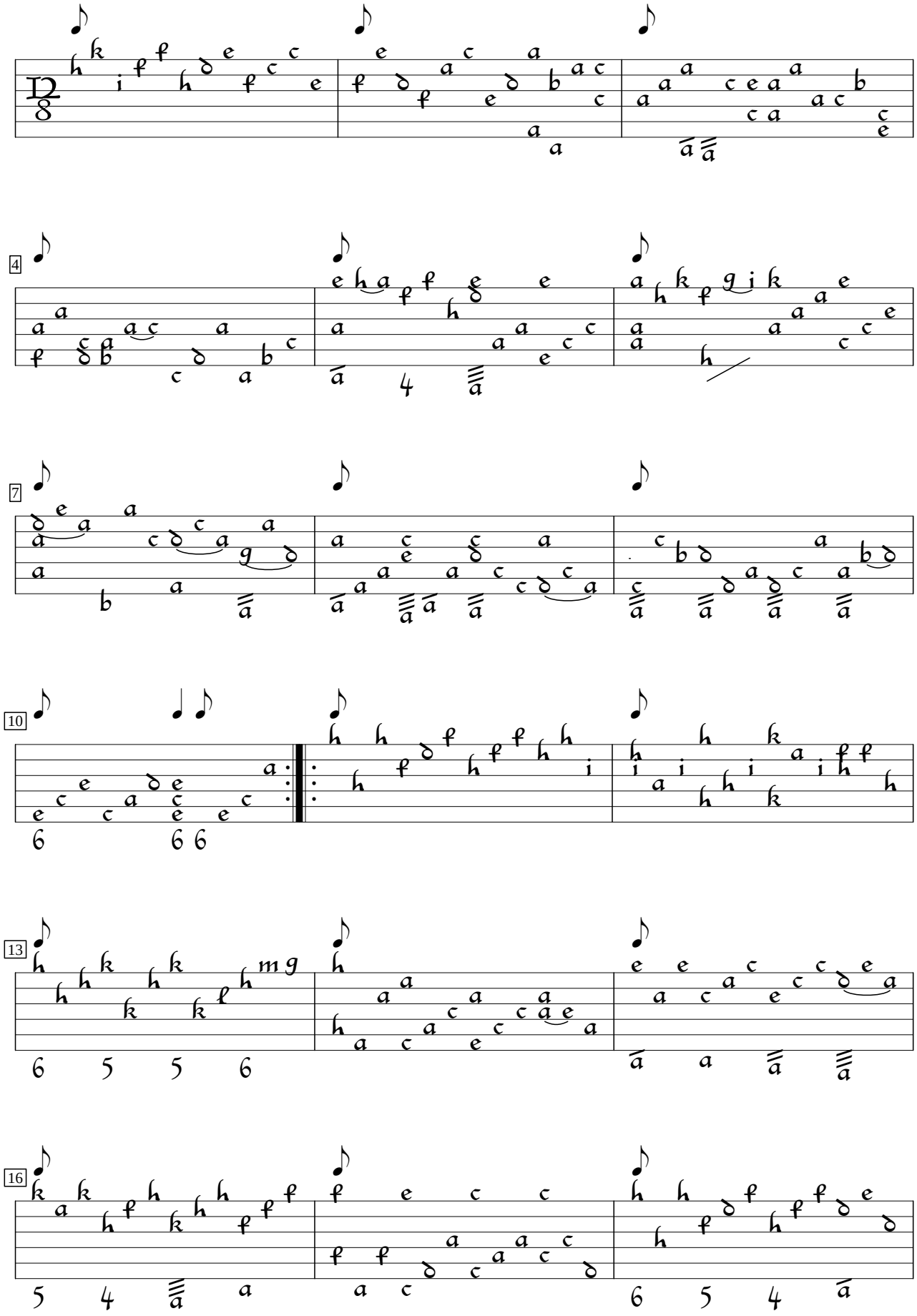


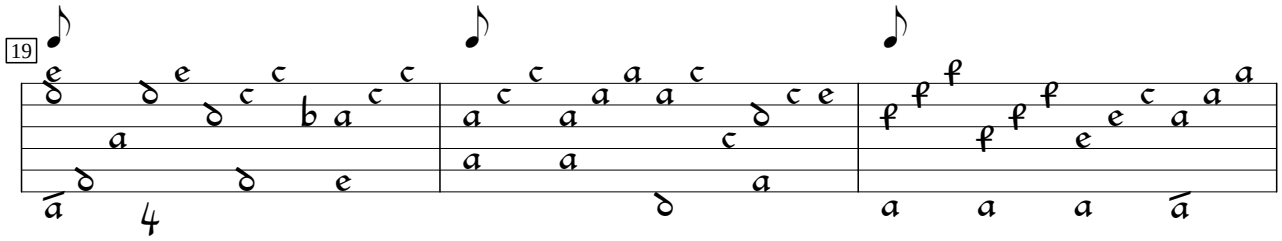


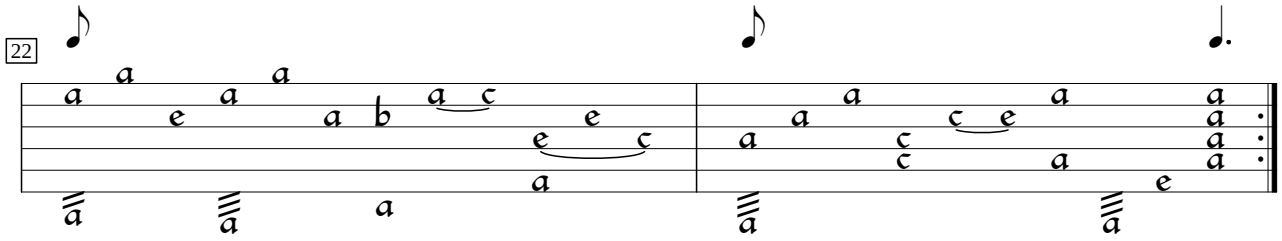




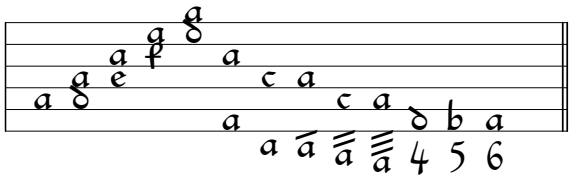
Gigue







Tuning



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