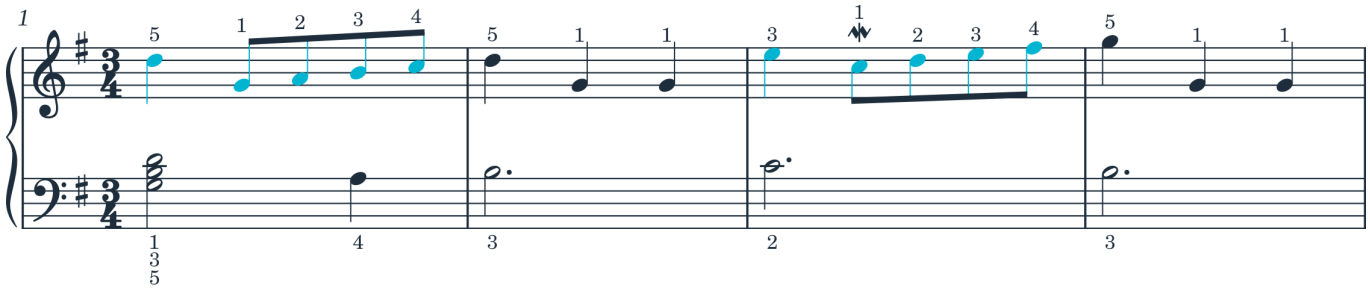
Inside the *Minuet in G*

Christian Petzold (long credited to J. S. Bach), Minuet in G major, BWV Anh. 114 — from the 1725 Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach

A famous piece with a borrowed name. In 1725 Johann Sebastian Bach gave his wife, Anna Magdalena, a notebook of keyboard music. The family copied in pieces they liked to play, often without writing down who composed them. This minuet is one of them, so for about 250 years it was printed as "Bach's Minuet in G." In 1979 the scholar Hans-Joachim Schulze found it inside a complete harpsichord suite by **Christian Petzold** (1677–1733), the organist of the royal court in Dresden. Its catalog number says **BWV Anh.**: the *Anhang* (appendix) of the Bach catalog lists works that are doubtful or not really Bach's. The tune is so catchy that a 1965 pop hit, *A Lover's Concerto*, borrowed it. Its partner in the notebook, a minuet in G minor by Petzold, is Handout 381.

THE OPENING · A MOTIF YOU CAN HOLD IN ONE HAND



Bars 1–4 with **suggested** fingering. The motif in **cyan**.
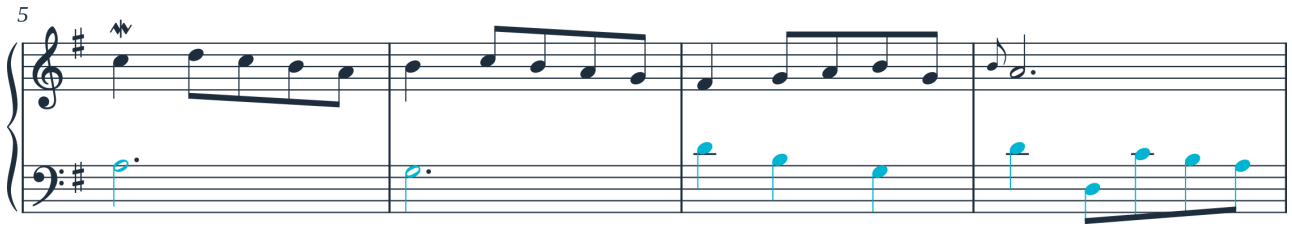
Bar 1 · drop, then climb

The right hand drops from D down to G, then **climbs back by step**: G–A–B–C. All five notes sit under one hand in **G position** (thumb on G, finger 5 on D), so bars 1–2 need no moves at all.

Bar 3 · the same idea, reaching higher

Bar 3 keeps the rhythm and the drop-and-climb, but starts a step higher (E) and climbs all the way to the **high G** in bar 4. Bars 9–12 bring bars 1–4 back note for note.

TWO-VOICE TEXTURE · THE LEFT HAND HAS A TUNE TOO



Play only the **cyan** notes and you hear a melody of its own. From bar 1 the left hand walks G–A–B–C–B–A–G, one long note per bar, then answers with D–B–G in bar 7. In bar 8 the hands trade jobs: **the right hand holds its A while the left hand moves** in eighth notes. Two independent lines like this make a **two-voice, polyphonic texture** (Handout 356), the same idea as Bach's Inventions. The squiggle on the C in bar 5 is a **mordent**: a quick dip to the note below and back, C–B–C (Handout 389); editions disagree about which bars carry one, so treat them as decoration. The small B in bar 8 is an **appoggiatura**, not a quick grace note: in Bach's time it falls on the beat and leans into the A for about a beat; a longer B would clash with the left hand's C (Handout 389).

SEQUENCES · ONE SHAPE, A STEP LOWER EACH TIME

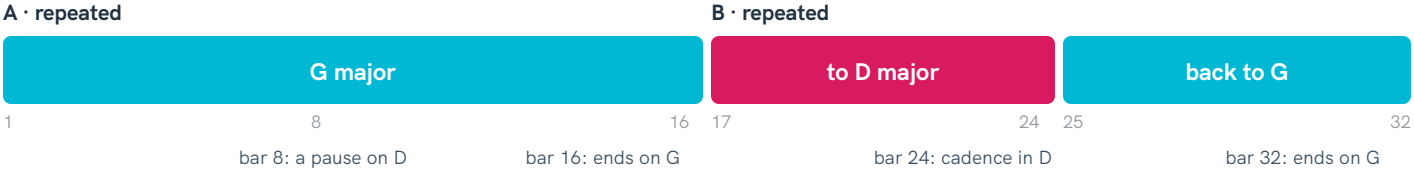


Bar 13 plays a five-note shape that starts on **C**. Bar 14 plays the same shape starting on **B**, and bar 15 on **A**. A pattern repeated on higher or lower notes is a **sequence** (Handout 355). You already met this one in bars 5–6. Spot the stepping-down line C–B–A and you only have to learn the shape once.

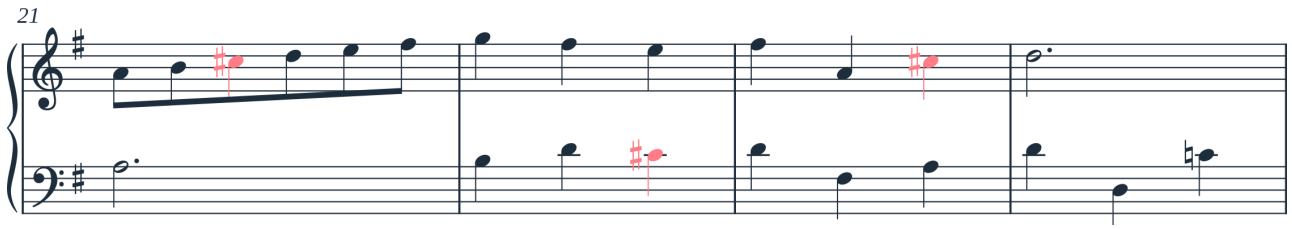
© 2026 Tissimo. All rights reserved.

THE FORM

Binary: two halves, each repeated



The minuet has two halves of 16 bars, and **each half is repeated**. This plan is called **binary form** (Handouts 233 and 354). The first half stays in **G major**. The second half travels to **D major** (watch for the C♯s in bars 20–23) and closes there in bar 24, then turns for home. Bar 25 starts with D falling to G, a nod to bar 1, but the opening tune does not come back, so the form is plain binary.



Bars 21–24: **C♯** replaces C, and bar 24 lands on D. The C♮ at the end of bar 24 (left hand) turns D into D7, which leads back to G for bar 25.

PRACTICE RECIPE

1. **Learn it in 4-bar phrases,** hands separately: 1–4, 5–8, 9–12, 13–16, then the same in the second half. Bars 9–12 are a free gift: they repeat 1–4.
2. **Keep the right hand in G position for bars 1–2** (thumb on G). In bar 3 put 3 on E so that 1–2–3–4–5 land on C–D–E–F♯–G. In bar 7 put the thumb on the F♯.
3. **Left hand: let the fingers walk.** 5–4–3–2–3–4–5 plays the G–A–B–C–B–A–G line of bars 1–6 without lifting the hand. Hold each long note for its full three beats.
4. **Hands together, slowly,** listening for both tunes. Play the quarter notes slightly detached and the eighths smoothly: it gives the dance its lift.
5. **Add the ornaments last.** Learn the notes without the mordents and the appoggiatura first, then add them once the hands feel secure.

TRY IT Play the left hand alone and **sing the right hand** (or the other way round). Then find the sequence in bars 5–6 by yourself: which note does each bar start on?

LISTEN
Scan to hear the whole minuet and the bars on this sheet
tissimo.co/worksheets/minuet-in-g

© 2026 Tissimo. All rights reserved.