Johann Paul von

# Westhoff

## Six Suites

for violin solo

Urtext edition

Edited and revised by Daan Alberga

after the first edition (1696)

Amsterdam, 2019

# Table of contents

Preface....3
Suite in A minor....6
Suite in A major....9
Suite in B-flat major....12
Suite in C major....15
Suite in D minor....18
Suite in D major....21

## Colophon

This edition is solely based on the first edition, published in 1696, Dresden.

Copyright © by Daan Alberga
Amsterdam, 2019
Contact: daan.alberga@gmail.com

All rights reserved.

This online pdf edition can freely be used for study and performance, both commercially and non-commercially, both professionally and non-professionally.

Selling, commercial reprint or distribution, editing, both in print and digitally, or any commercial use other than performing, is not permitted without prior written consent of the editor.

The music in this edition has been engraved with Lilypond, www.lilypond.org

# Preface

Johann Paul von Westhoff's suites for solo violin mark the beginning of the extensive performance repertoire for solo violin. They are the first known multi-movement works for solo violin, and as such, their importance and influence can hardly be overestimated. Their publication, in 1683 of one suite, and in 1696 of this set of Six Suites, are for example certain to have been known to Johann Sebastian Bach, and must have influenced, or even inspired, his three Sonatas and three Partitas for Violin without Bass, which were completed in 1720 (but only published in 1802).

Johann Paul von Westhoff was born in Dresden in 1656 and lived there for much of his life[1]. He received his musical education from Heinrich Schütz. He was a known violinist in his time, but also taught contemporary languages. We know that he travelled to Italy, France and the southern Netherlands. From 1698 or 1699 to 1705 (the year of his death), he worked at the Weimar court, where Bach worked as of January 1703 and where they certainly have met. Otherwise, relatively little is known about Westhoff.

Of Westhoff's music, only little has survived. The aforementioned suite from 1683 is known, as well as an earlier suite with accompaniment from 1682. We know that he has published another set of solo violin suites, supposedly twelve, which he is said to have had printed at his own cost in Dresden, but this set is lost.

These Six Suites for Violin Solo were long lost as well, and only rediscovered in 1971 in the City Library of Szeged, Hungary. They were republished by Amadeus Verlag in 1974, but this publication has not yet entered the public domain. The 1696 edition is publically available on the internet, but difficult to read, with its now unfamiliar musical notation. This new edition aims to serve the public interest and make Westhoff's work directly and freely available for anyone, for study and performance, both commercially and non-commercially, both professionally and non-professionally. However, selling, commercial reprint or distribution, editing, both in print and digitally, or any commercial use other than performing, is not permitted without prior written consent of the editor.

## Source

The only source used for this publication is the first edition from 1696, being the only edition that is in the public domain. (There are mentions of another version of this edition, but I so far found no confirmation of its existence.) This edition consists of thirty landscape oriented pages of chalcographic print. The title page and the last page of the D major suite are missing, leaving the original title uncertain and the second half of the D major Gigue still lost. The suites do not carry individual titles, but their keys are indicated as A♭, A♮, B, C, D♭ and D♮, in that order. All suites consist of an Allemande, a Courante, a Sarabande (sometimes "Sarabante") and a Gigue.

The staves have eight lines, grouped three-two-three and are marked by both a C and a G clef. The notes are relatively similar to modern notation. The notation of accidentals follows the rules from that time.

## Critical notes

The primary aim of this edition is to provide material that can be used for study and performance; readability for present-day performers is therefore key. However, as coming as closely as possible to the original intentions of the composer is an integral part of the modern performance practice, this edition also aims to reproduce where possible the original writing in modern musical notation, with only minimal changes and additions where needed to facilitate readability.

Five line staves with a modern treble clef have been chosen over eight line staves with both a C and a G clef. Key signatures are not always in accordance with the piece's key: the A major suite only indicates F-sharp and C-sharp (all G-sharps are marked individually) and the D minor suite has no key signature. This nowadays unusual choice has been preserved, as this should not, or only minimally hinder interpretation. Key signature accidentals are repeated in all octaves in the first edition; this has been reduced to only one.

[1] Großes Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste, Leipzig und Halle, 1748.

Rhythms are represented as originally written, even if that would be unusual these days – e.g. some of the Sarabandes are written in a slower rhythm than now customary – but this should not hinder readability. Open beamed notes (e.g. in the A minor Courante) have been replaced by filled unbeamed notes (i.e. crotchets). Voices that are partially silent for some beats are simply left out in the first edition, rather than having rests. This has been preserved in this edition, despite being unusual. This choice has been made since this produces few or no ambiguities and additional rests would be superfluous, even if theoretically necessary. Beaming follows the first edition.

Repeats have not been altered. Short repeats are indicated by two Segno "𝄋" marks (e.g. the D minor Allemande), like in the first edition. Ambiguous placement of the 𝄋 has been left ambiguous; exact interpretation is up to the performer.

Omissions and mistakes have been corrected, marked by parentheses or dotted lines where interpretation could be useful, e.g. slurs, bar lines, ornaments, and some accidentals. Sparsely, courtesy accidentals have been added.

Note stems in the first edition generally point upwards for the soprano and tenor voice and downwards for alto and bass. These have not been preserved in this edition, as that would have deteriorated its readability. Instead, bass voices generally point downwards and most other voices point upwards, with exceptions where needed for better overview.

The order of the first print, i.e. ordered progressively from A minor to D major, has not been altered.

### On the title of the works

The works are widely referred to as either "Partitas" or "Suites". Since the title page is lost, there is no certainty on the composer's intentions. However, in the time of composition, "Suite" or "Dance Suite" was certainly a common term for a series of dances for one or more instruments. The word "Partita" or "Partia" was in the time typically used for different types of music, often variations on a common theme, even though it was becoming more and more fashionable towards the end of the seventeenth century to compose these variations in the form of different dances, which influenced its meaning, especially in the Germanic region. Indeed, it is certain that Bach would call his suites for violin "Partias" twenty-four years later, although he kept the word "Suites" for the works for cello, which were composed in the same period.

Westhoff's intentions cannot be retrieved, but since the pieces would in the time certainly have been recognisable as "Suites", that term has been chosen in this publication.

## Specific remarks on the first edition, per suite

### The Suite in A minor ("A♭")

The open beamed notes in the Courante have been replaced by filled unbeamed notes. In measure 8, the first D could be interpreted as semibreve.

### The Suite in A major ("A♮")

The key signature (F-sharp, C-sharp only, no G-sharp) of the first edition has been preserved, despite the A major key.

In the Courante, the trill in measure 5 could have been intended on the G-sharp. It is unclear if the piano in measure 28 was intended on the A or E.

### The Suite in B-flat major ("B")

Sarabande has been written "Sarabante" in the first edition. This has been adjusted.

### The Suite in C major ("C")

Sarabande was written "Sarabante".

In the Gigue, the rhythm in measure 3 and 4 seems a mistake in the first edition: 𝅗𝅥. 𝅘𝅥𝅗𝅥 ♩. 𝅘𝅥𝅗𝅥 instead of 𝅗𝅥. 𝅘𝅥𝅗𝅥. ♩ 𝅘𝅥𝅗𝅥 ; this has been corrected.

### The Suite in D minor ("D♭")

There is no key signature in the first edition, despite its key; this has been preserved in this edition.

The second beat of the penultimate measure of the Courante cannot be played as written in the first edition. There are several ways to complete the chords and make them playable; the choice is up to the performer.

Sarabande was written "Sarabante". In the first measure, the second F-sharp is written as a semibreve.

The first edition's bar 28 of the Gigue shows the wrong rhythm: ♩ ♪. ♩ ; this has been corrected.

### The Suite in D major ("D♮")

In the Allemande, the open G string on the fourth beat of measure 1 is crossed out in the first edition – indeed, this would be difficult to play, although it would harmonically make sense. It has been left out in this edition.

The Courante's open beamed notes have been replaced by filled unbeamed notes.

Sarabande was written "Sarabante".

The second part of the Gigue is lost; any attempt to compose an alternative is left to the performer.

## Final words

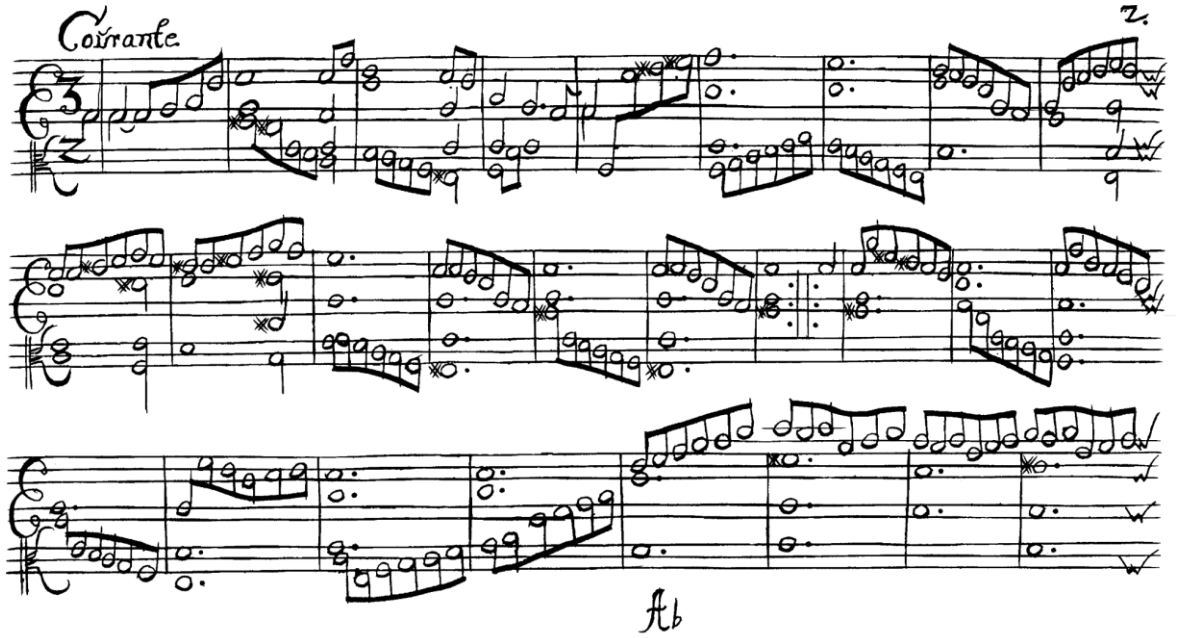
These suites mark the beginning of the serious concert repertoire for solo violin. As such, their inaccessibility felt as a loss to me. They are highly original, influential, and to me fascinating and fantastic to study and listen to. Therefore, no edition being available in the public domain, I decided to make one myself.

It is my wish that this edition contributes to the more frequent study and performance of these remarkable works, both professionally and for anyone else capable of playing them. Therefore, this edition is made available freely for anyone to study and play, privately and publically, commercially and for free. Selling, commercial reprint or distribution, editing, both in print and digitally, or any commercial use other than performing, is however not permitted without prior written consent of the editor.

In case of a planned public performance of this work, wholly or partially, I would be delighted to be informed. My contacts details can be found in the Colophon.

Amsterdam, July 2019

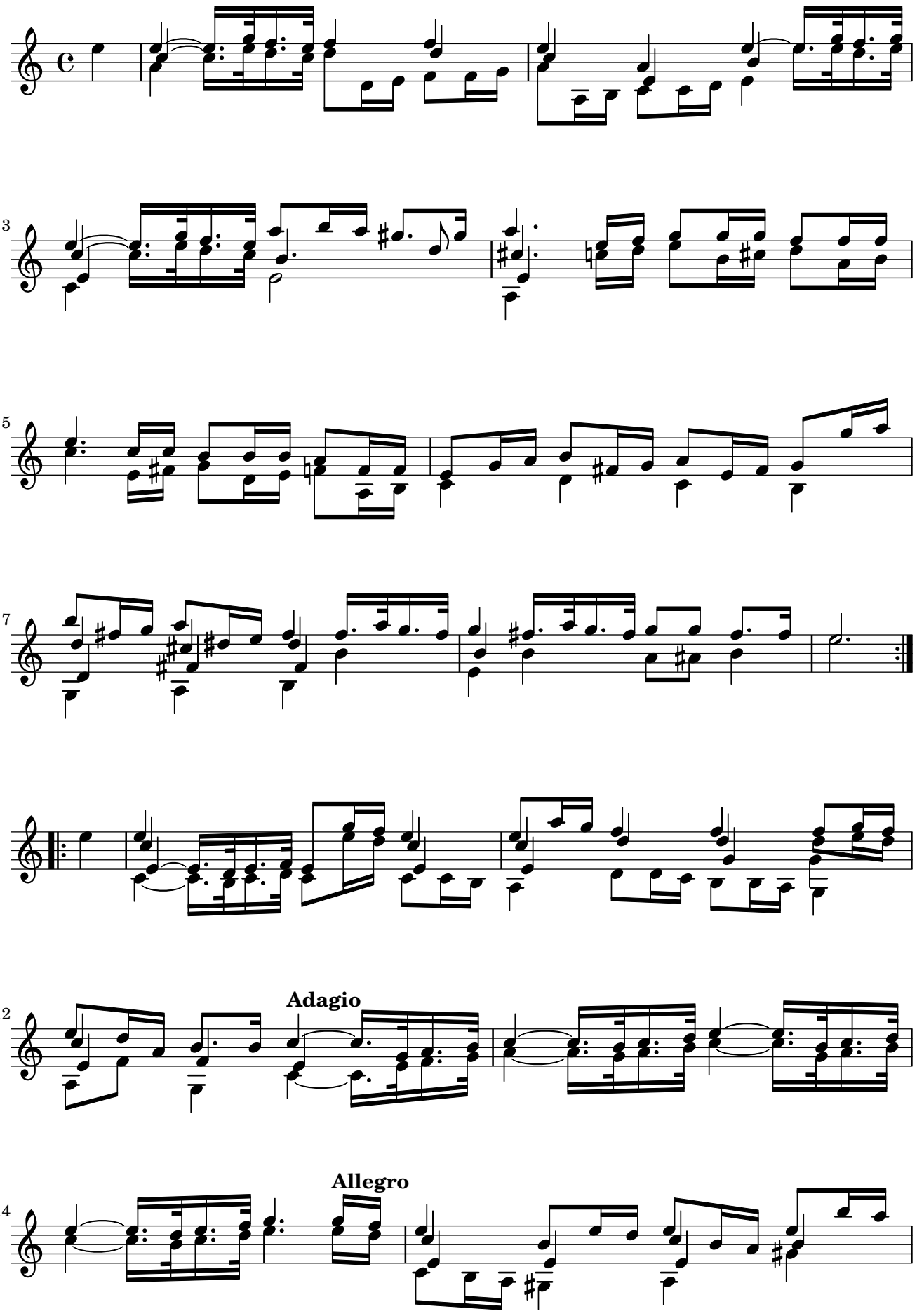
Daan Alberga

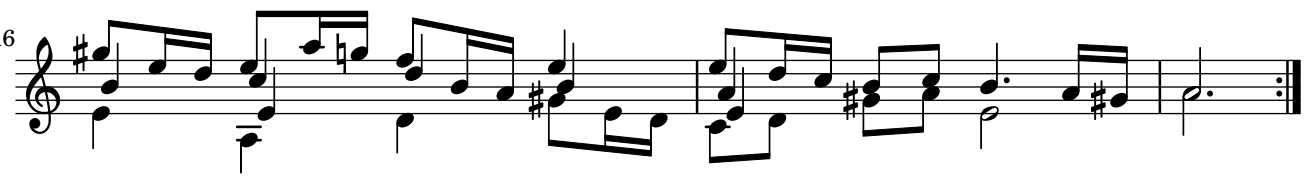



*The first page of the A minor Courante from the first edition.*

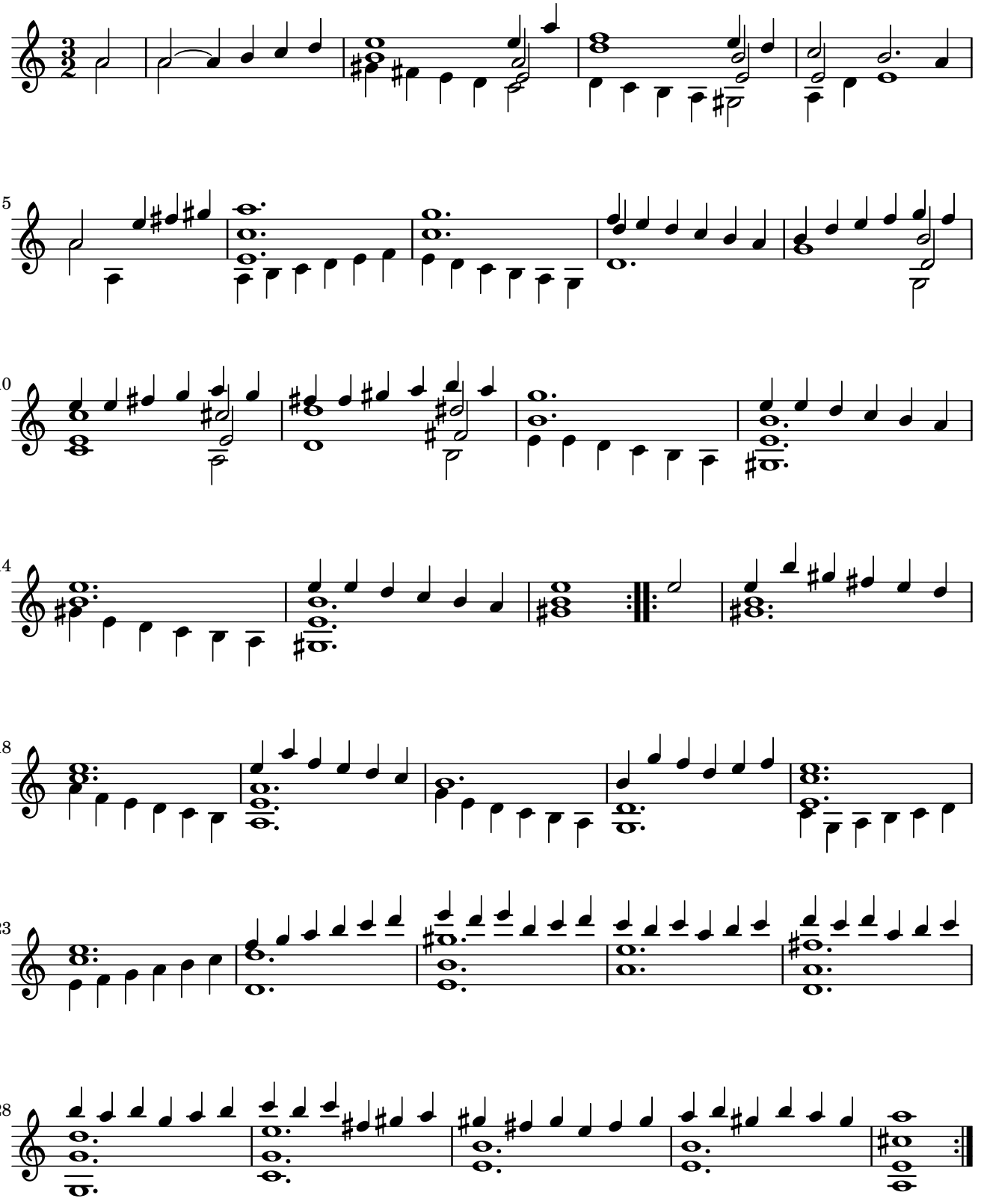
# Suite in A minor

## Allemande

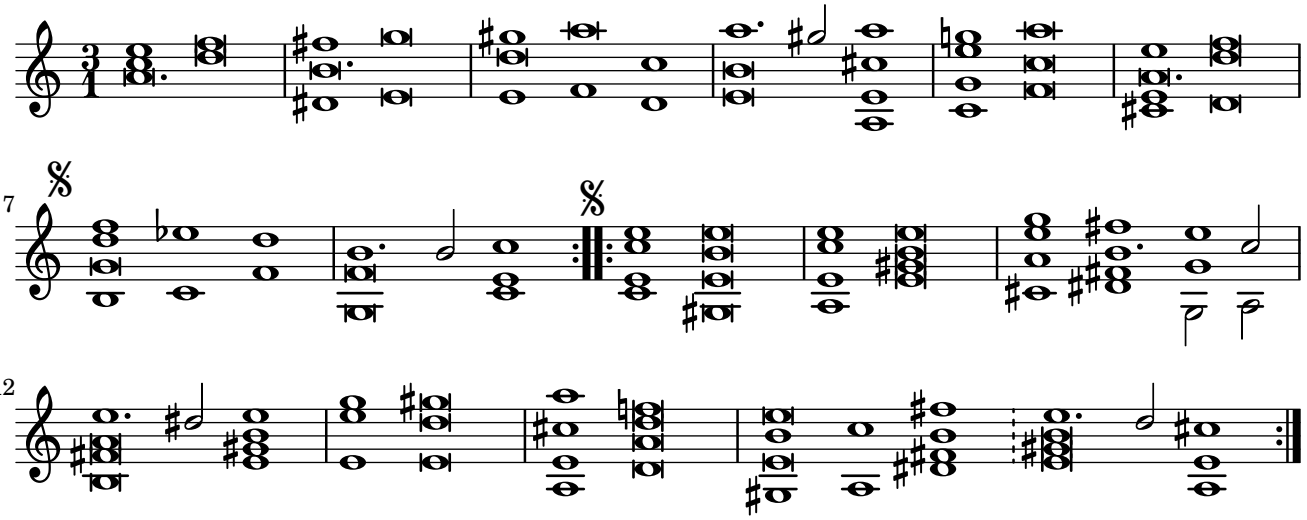




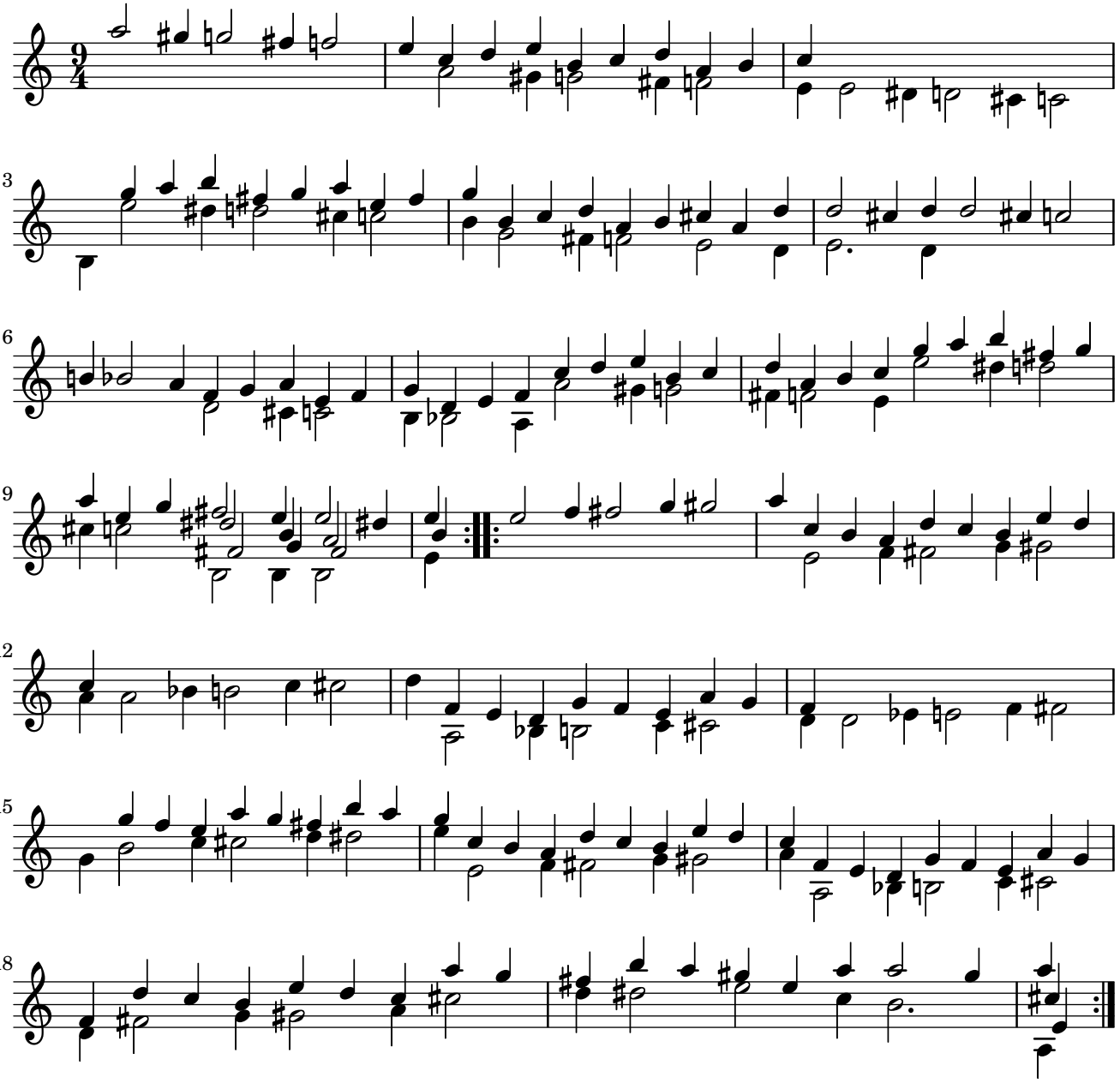
## Courante



## Sarabande

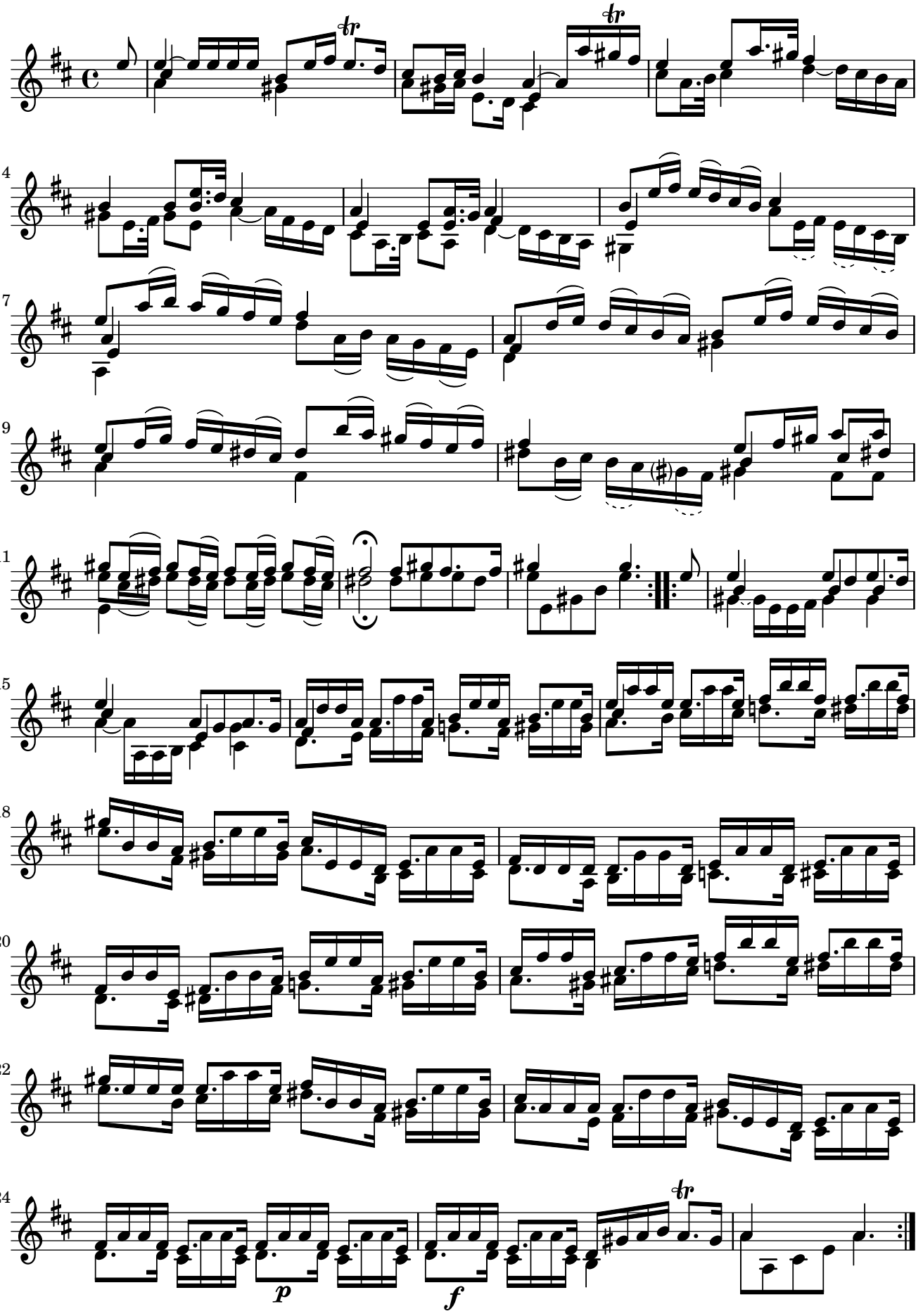


## Gigue

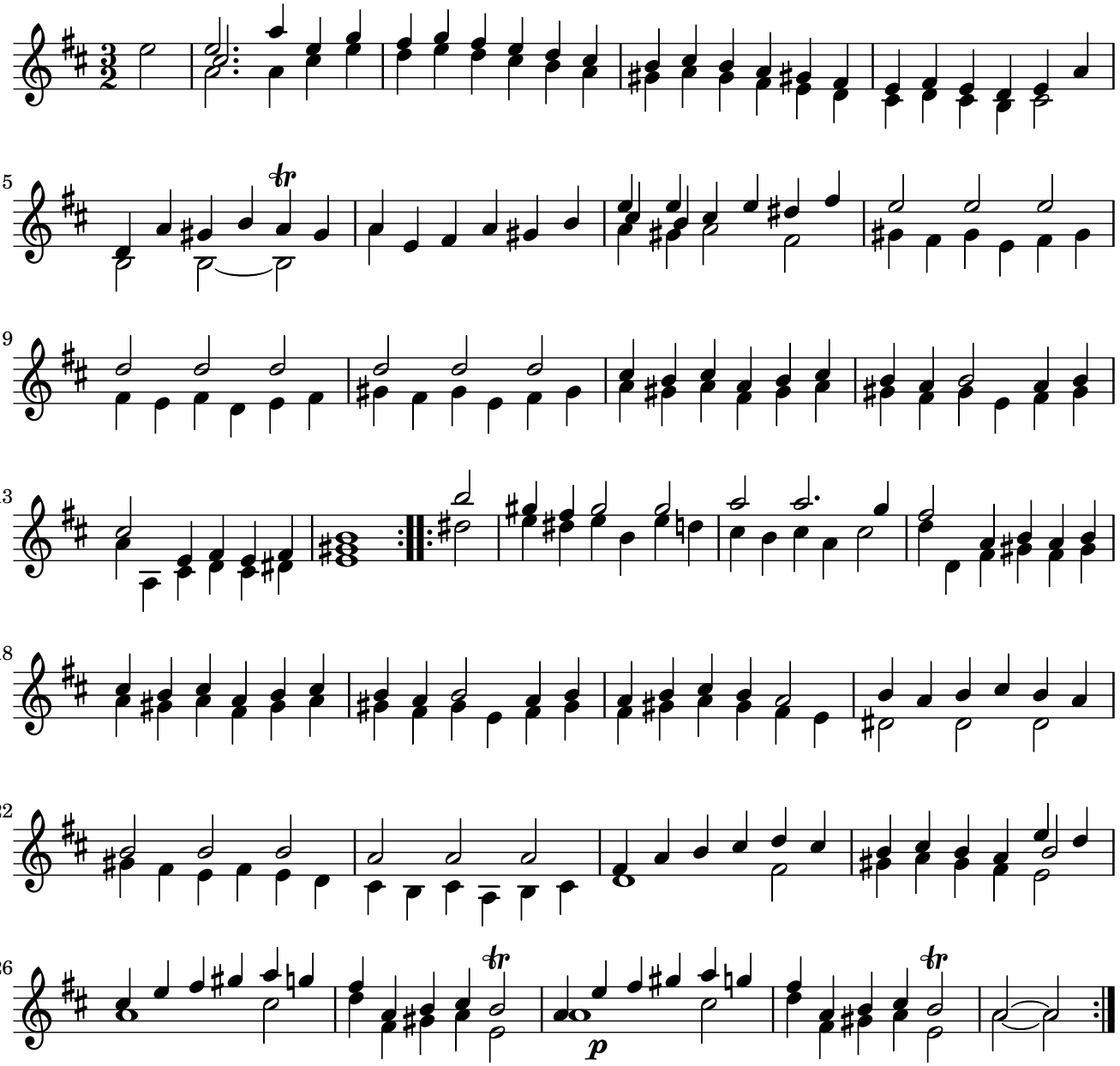


# Suite in A major

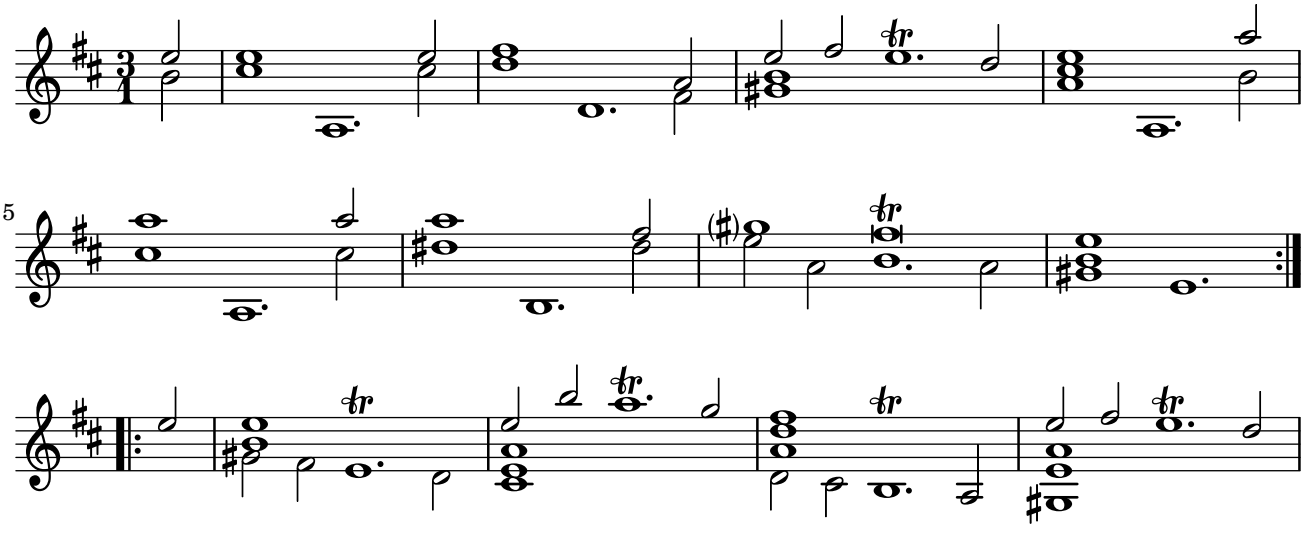
## Allemande

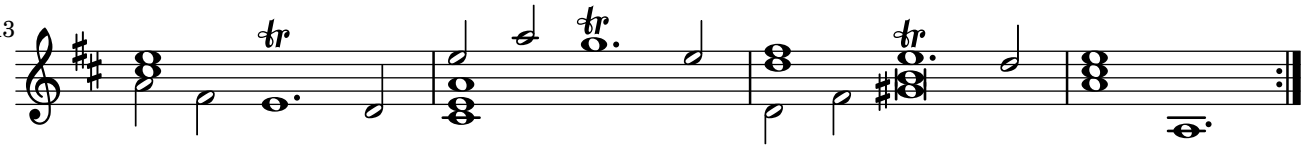


## Courante

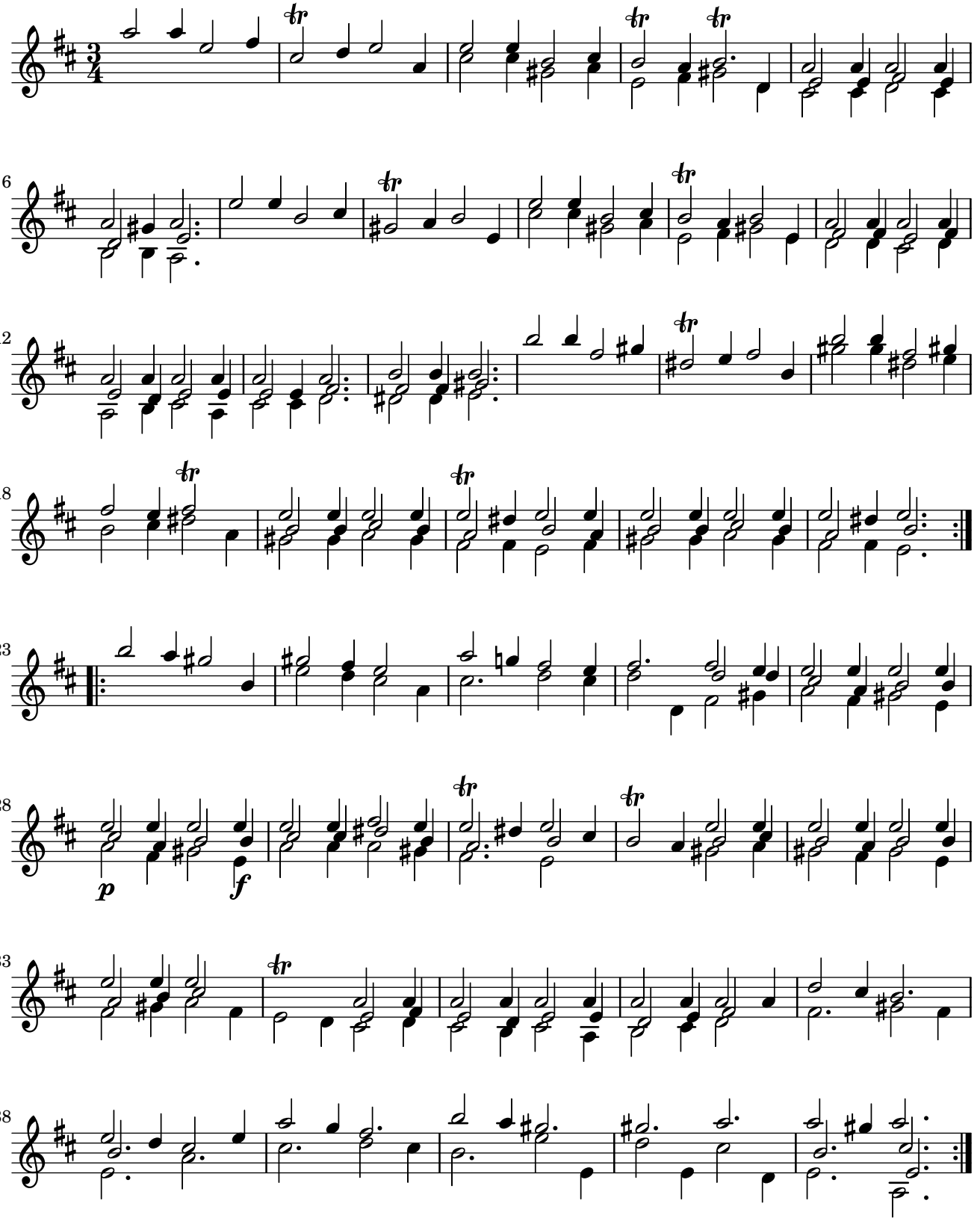


## Sarabande



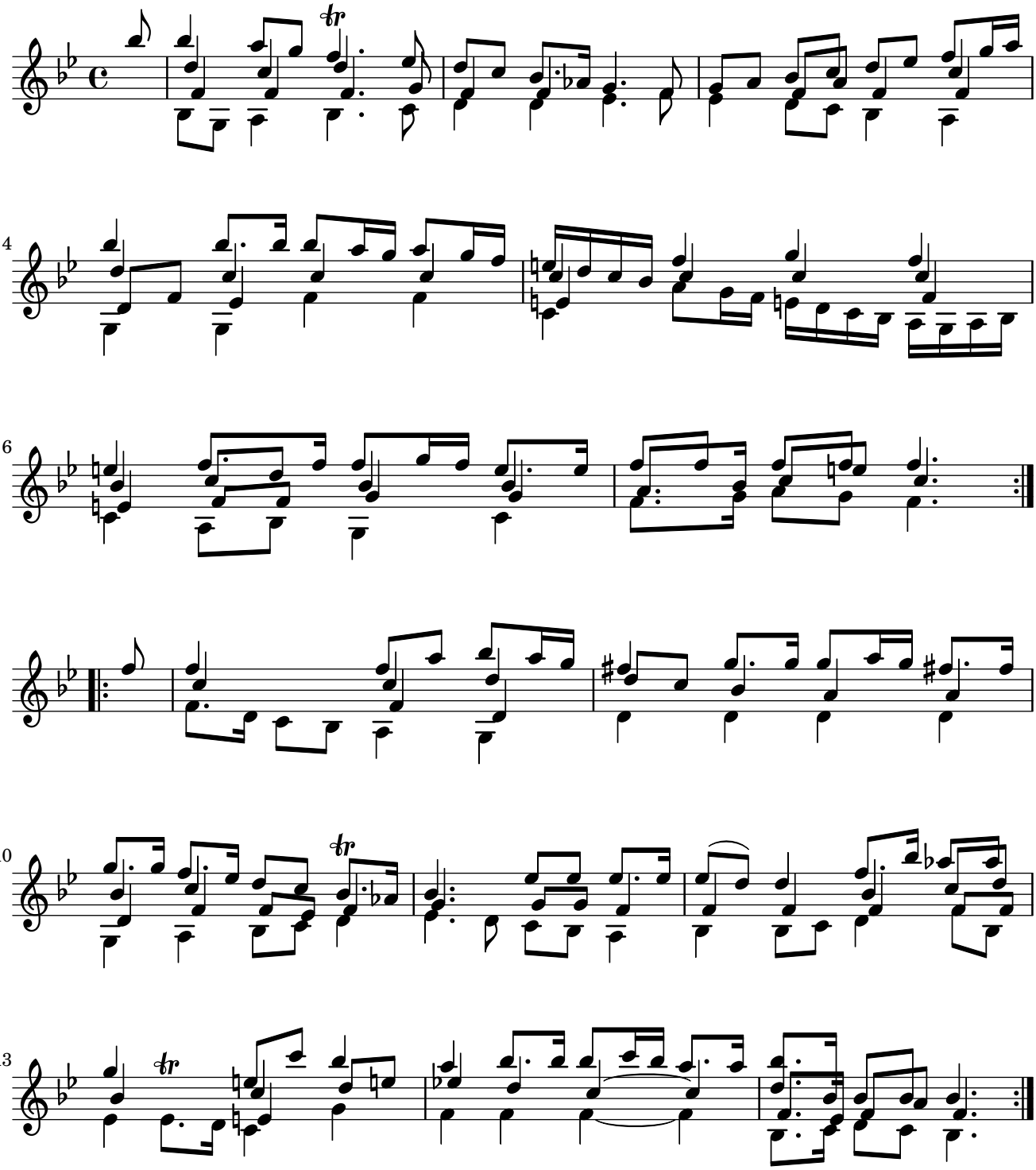


## Gigue

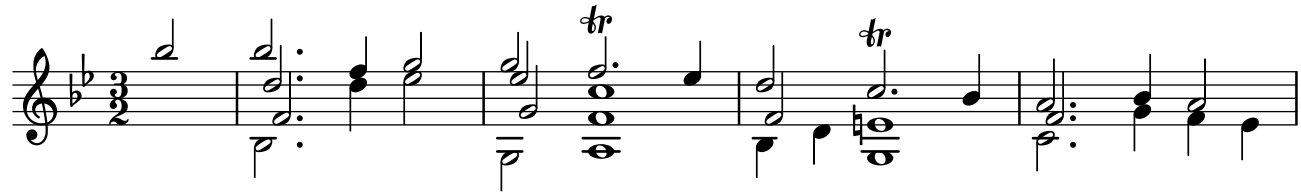


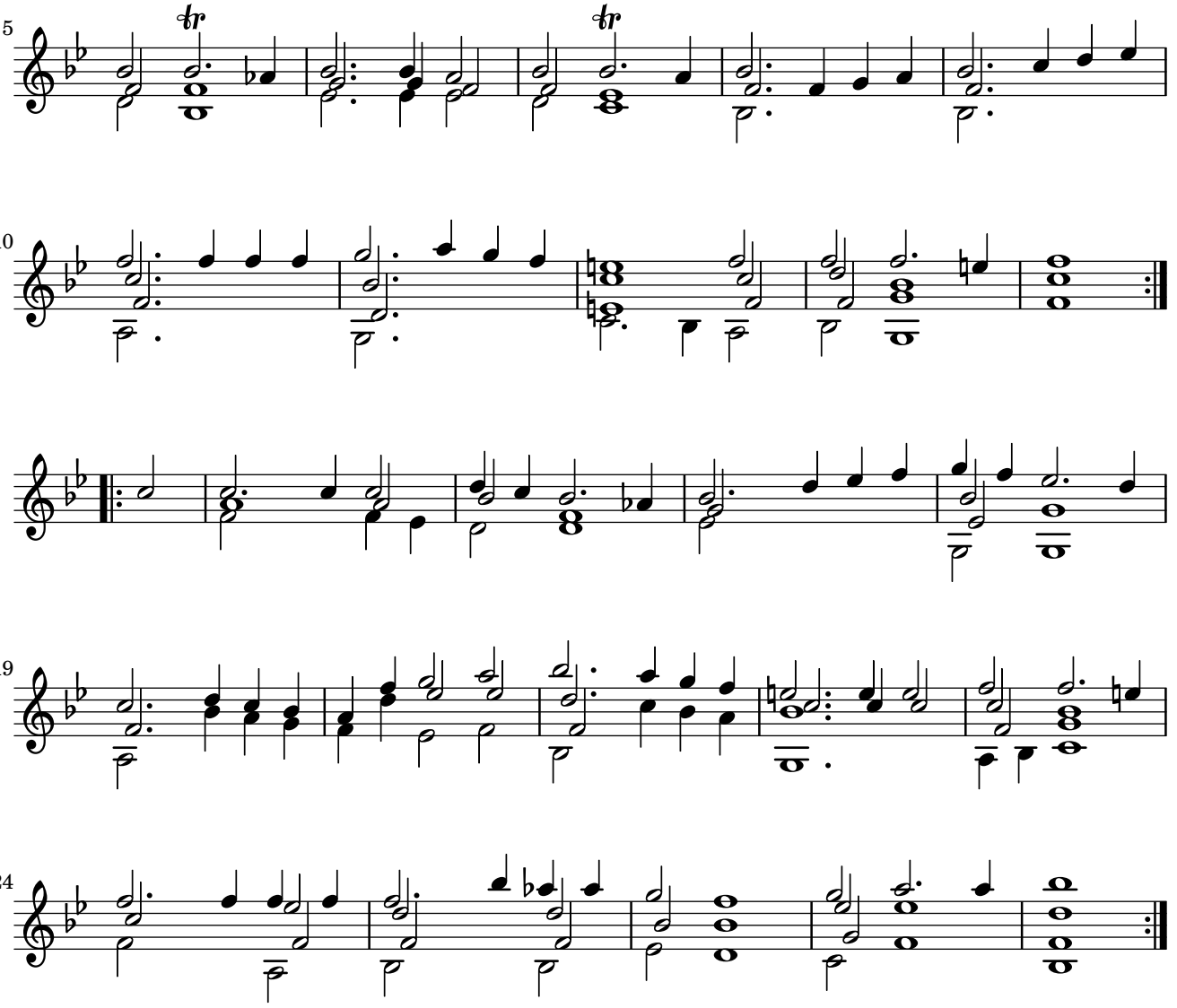
# Suite in B-flat major

## Allemande

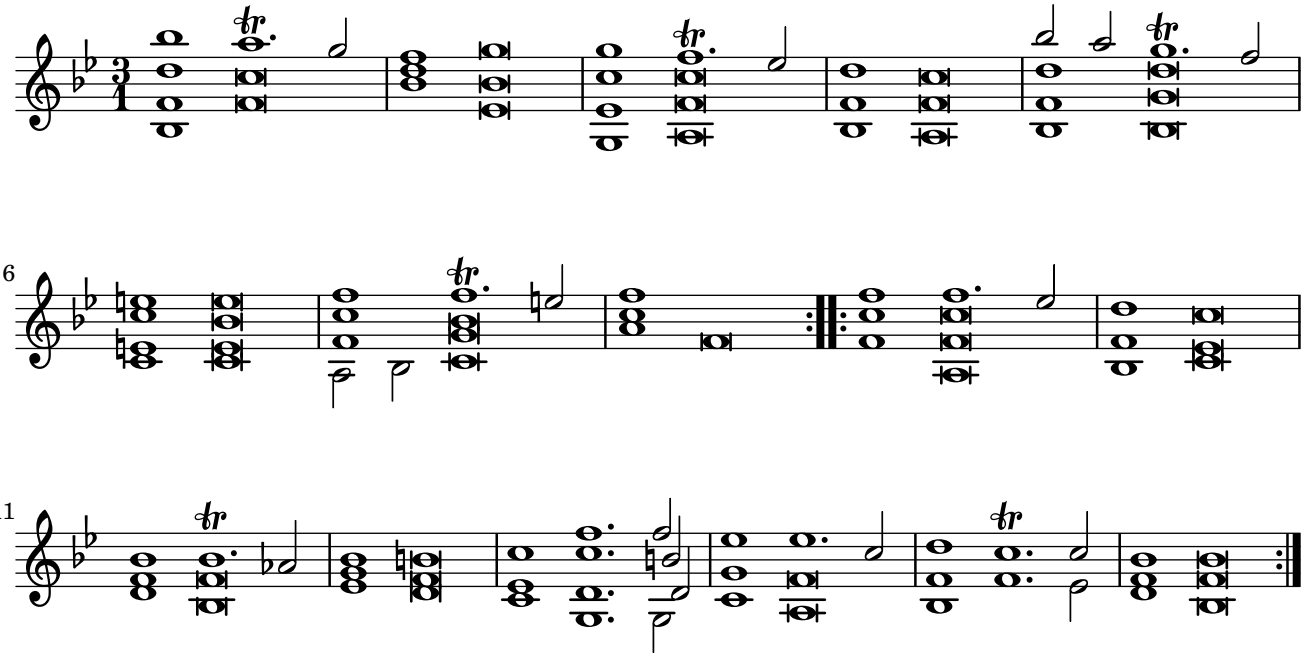


## Courante

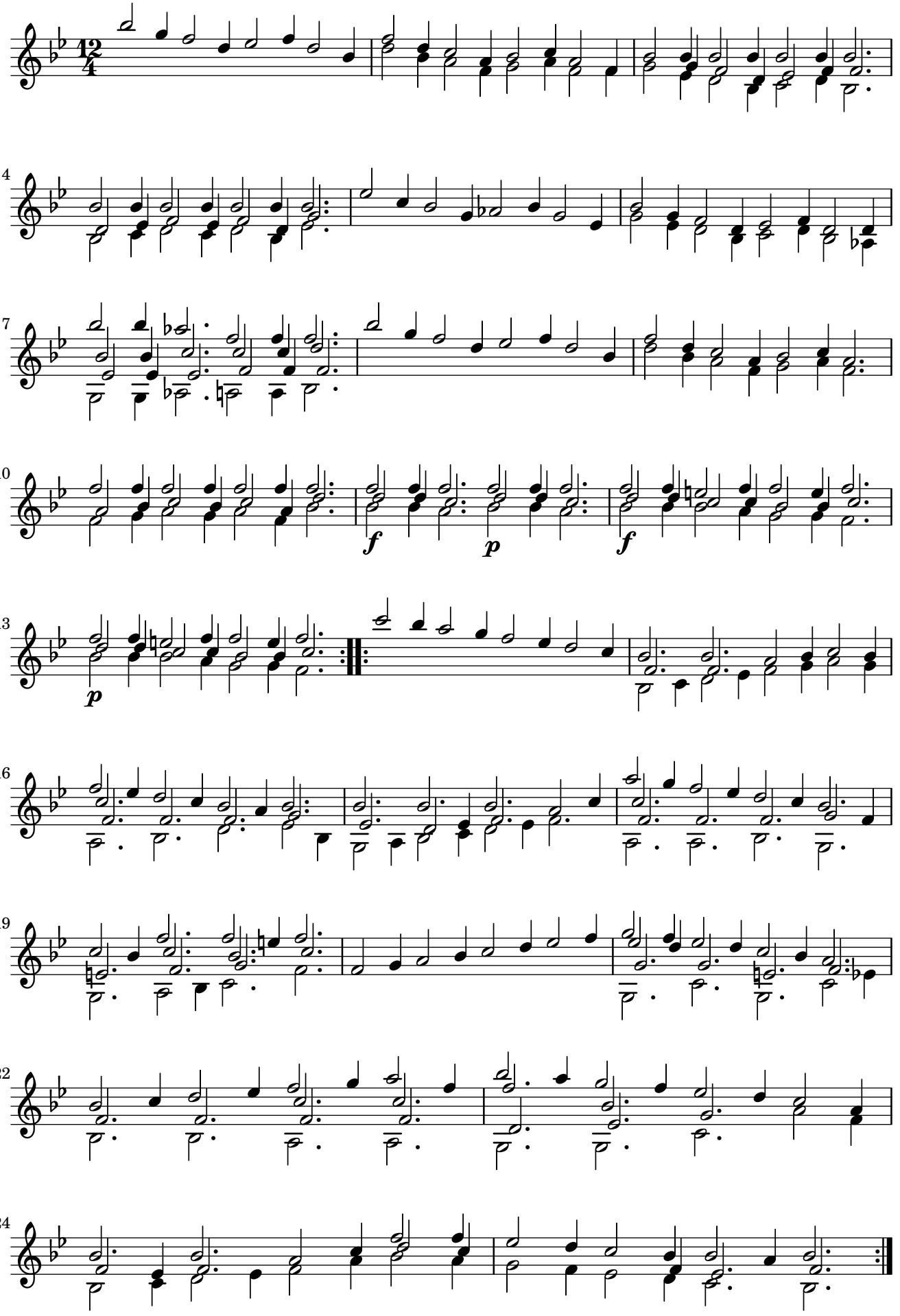




## Sarabande

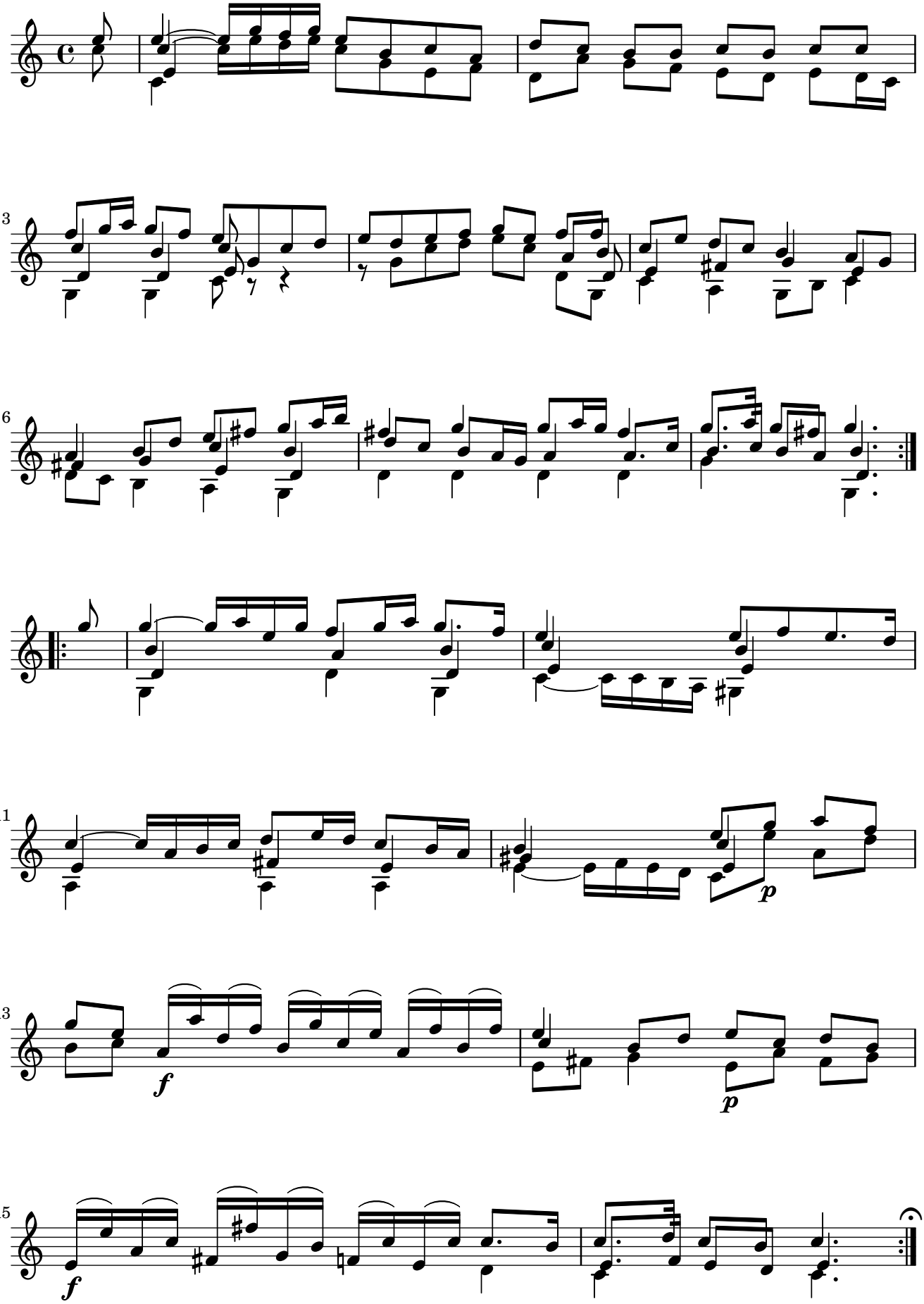


Gigue

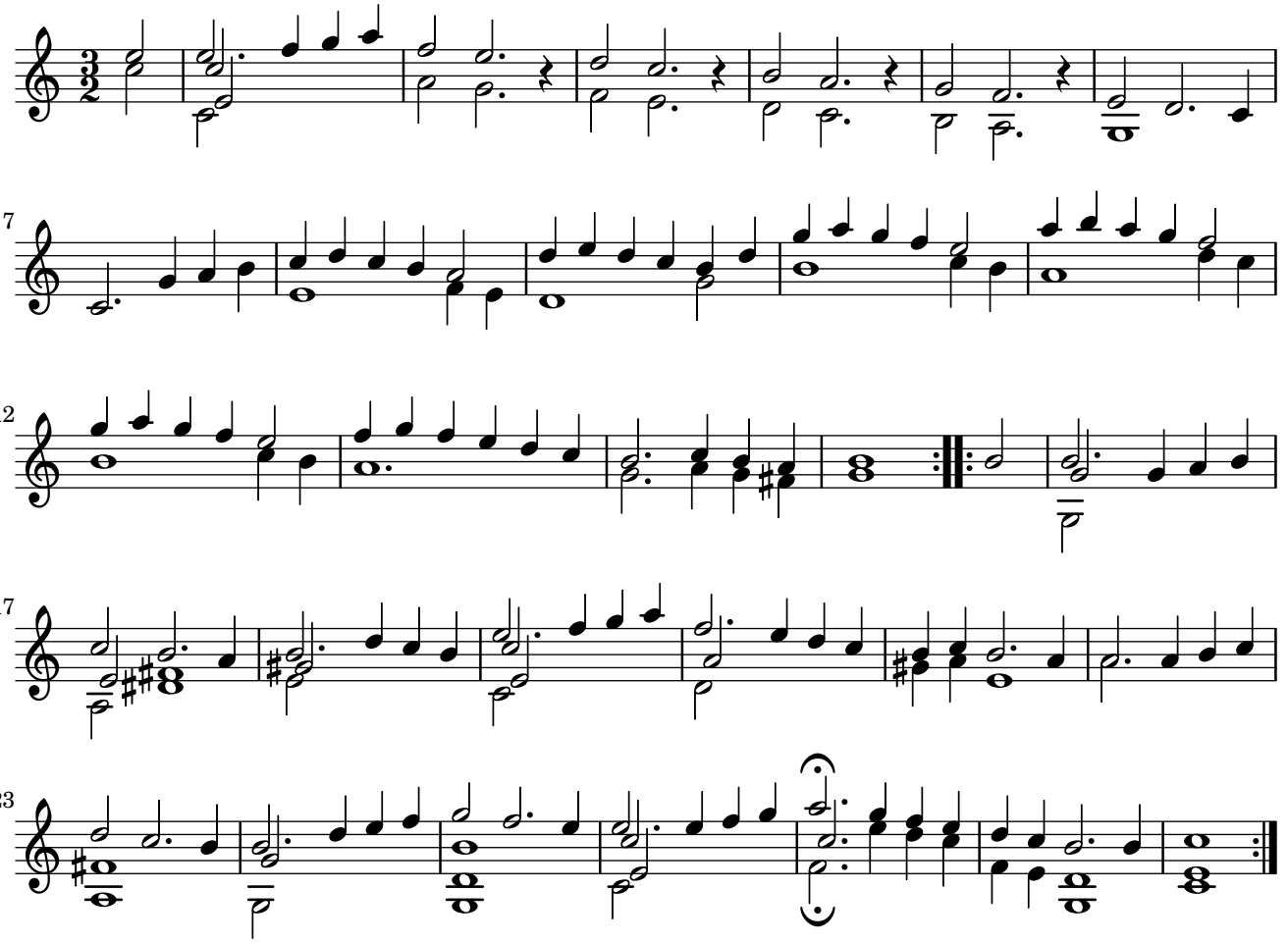


# Suite in C major

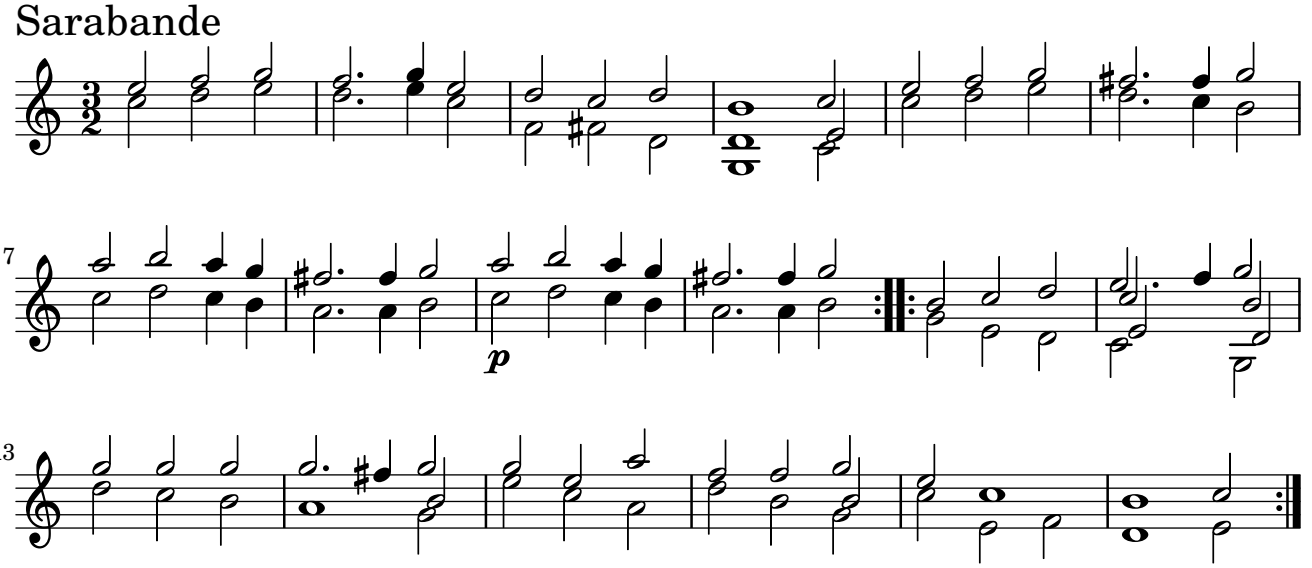
## Allemande



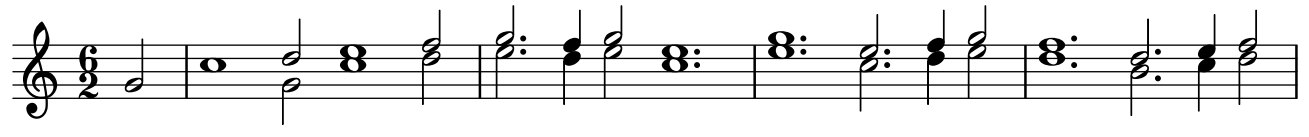
## Courante

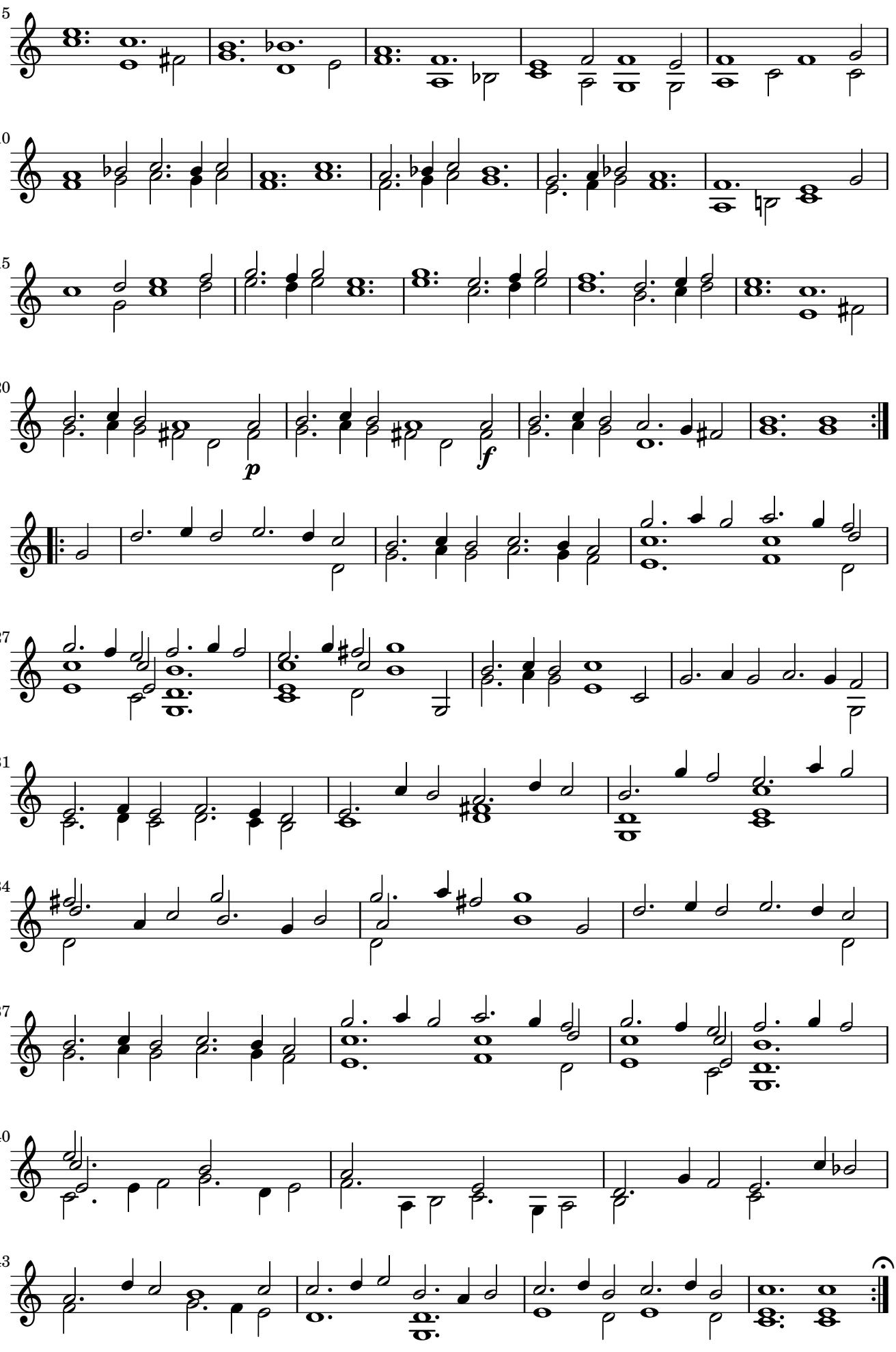


## Sarabande



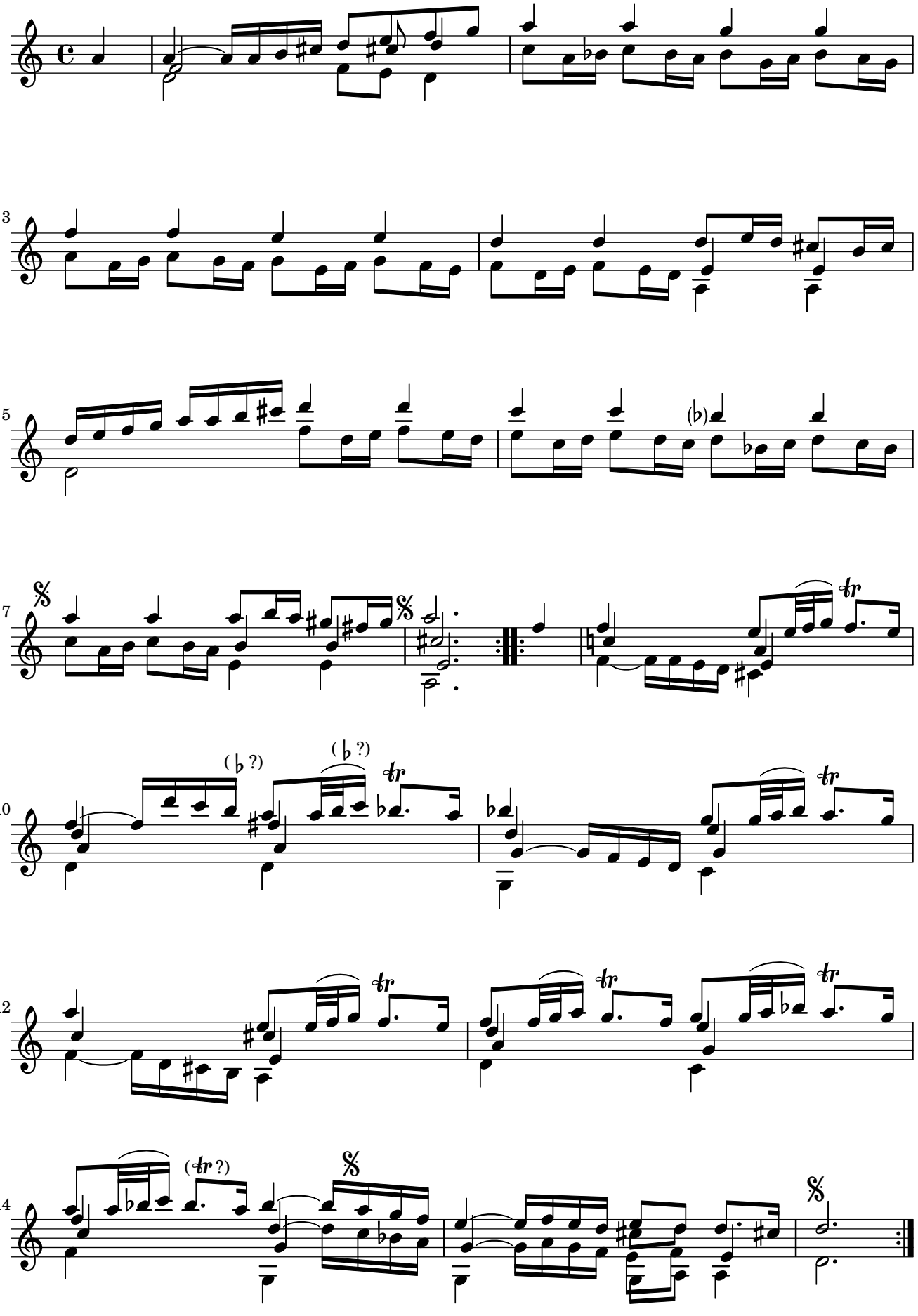

## Gigue



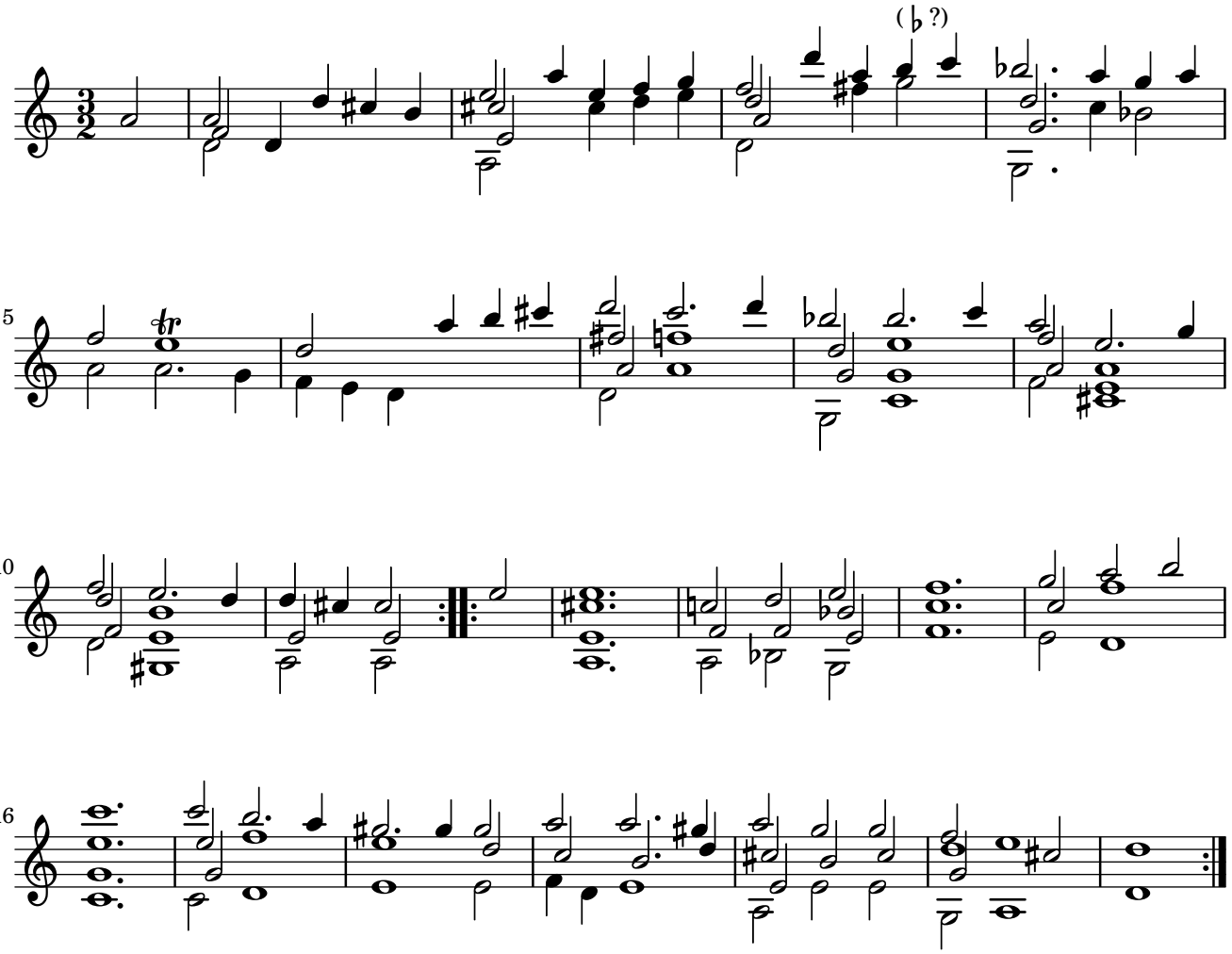

5
10
15
20
p
f
27
31
34
37
40
43

# Suite in D minor

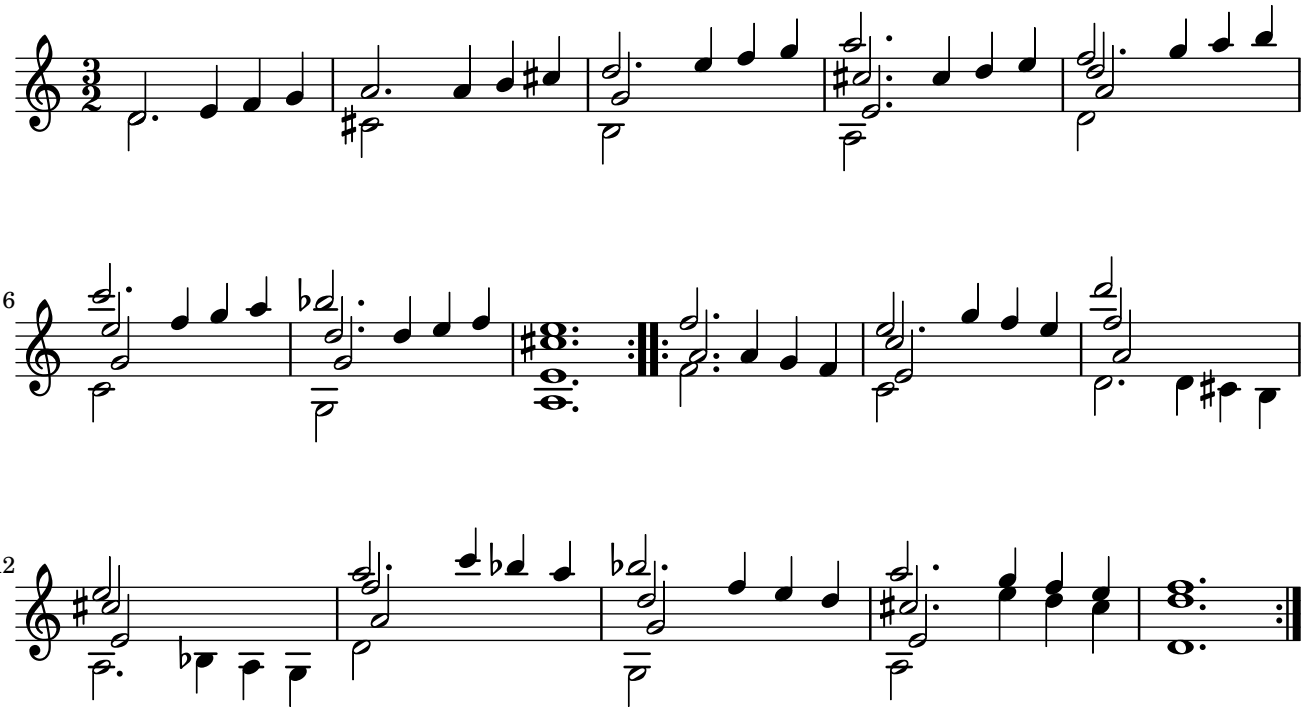
## Allemande



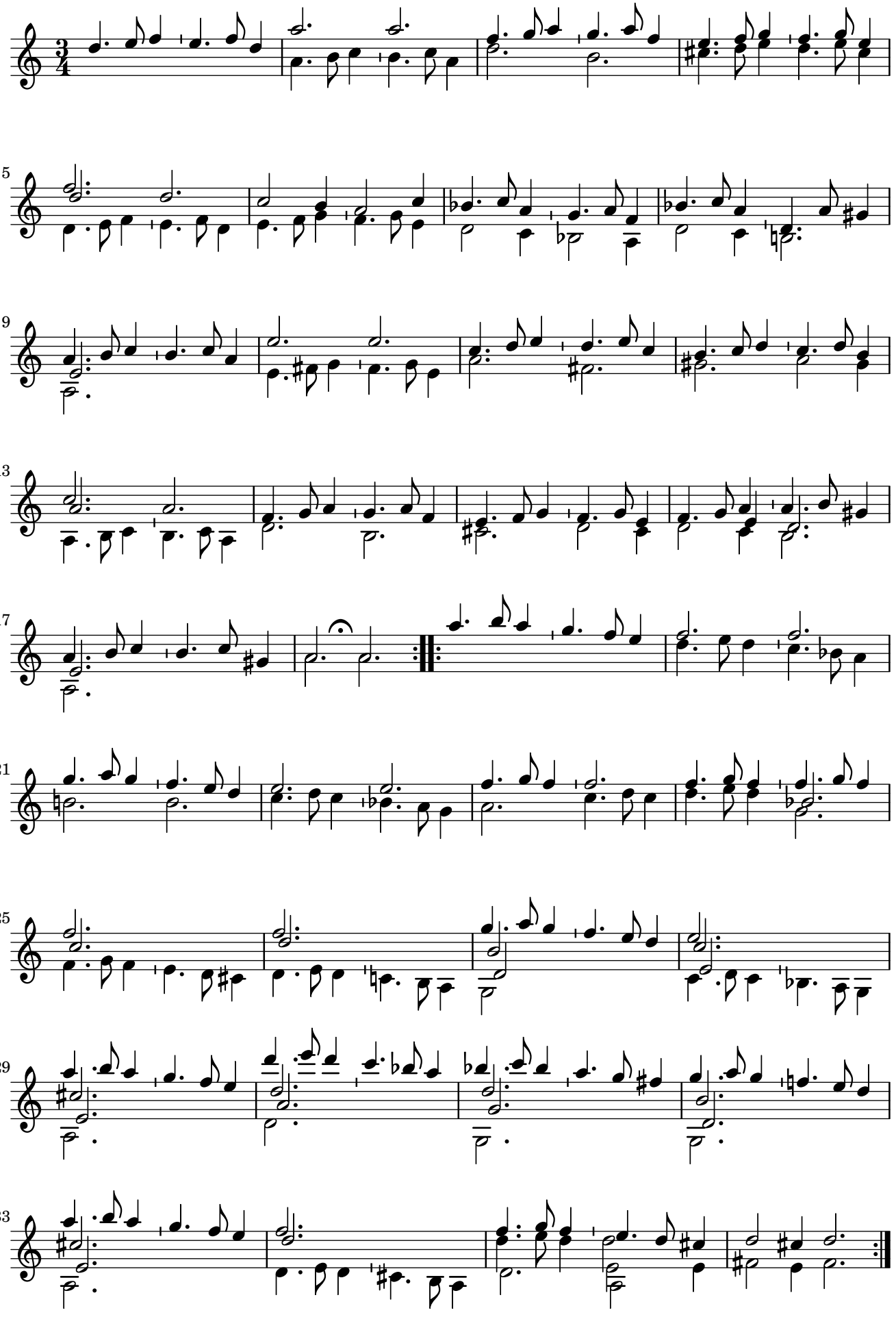
## Courante




## Sarabande

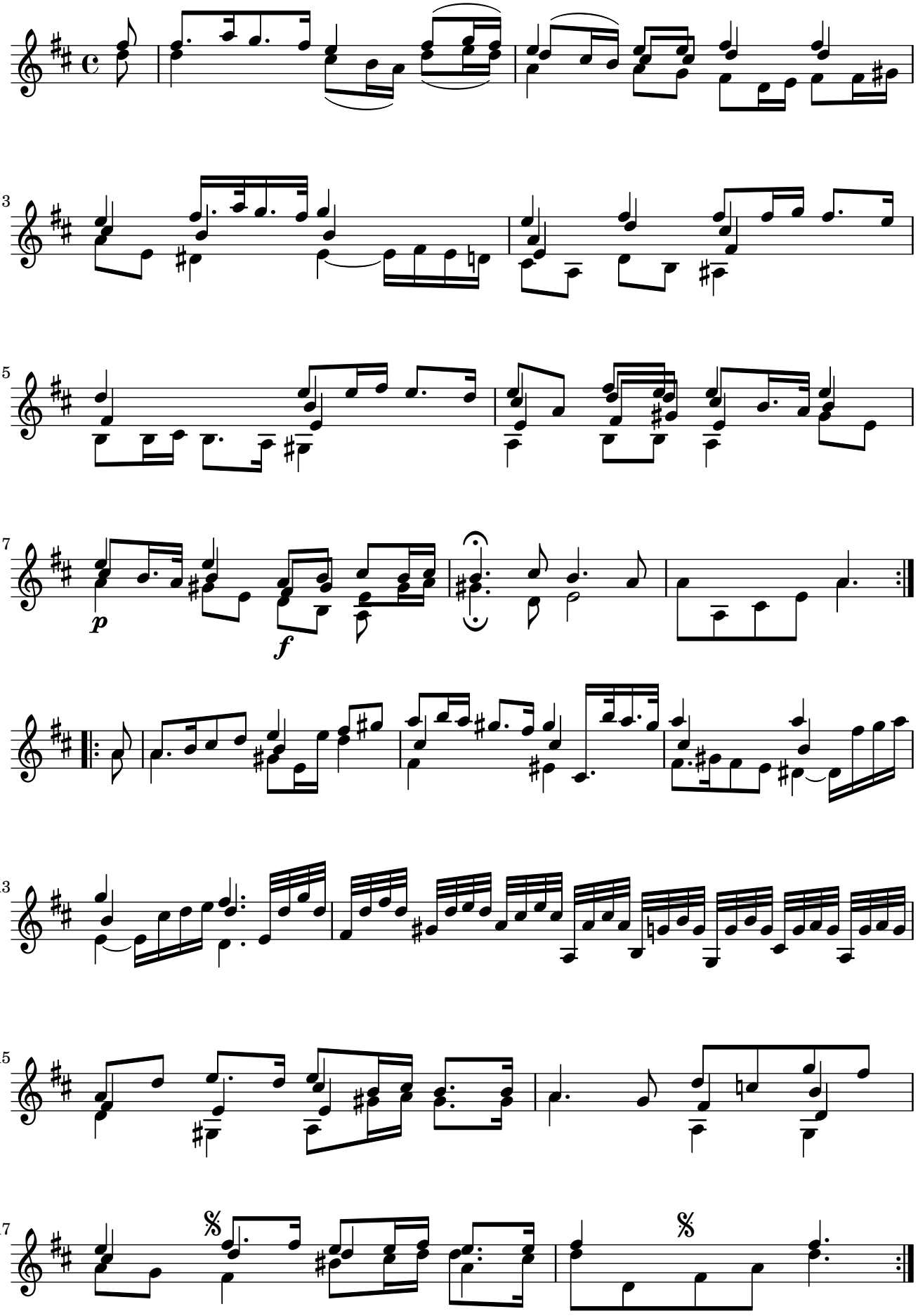


Gigue

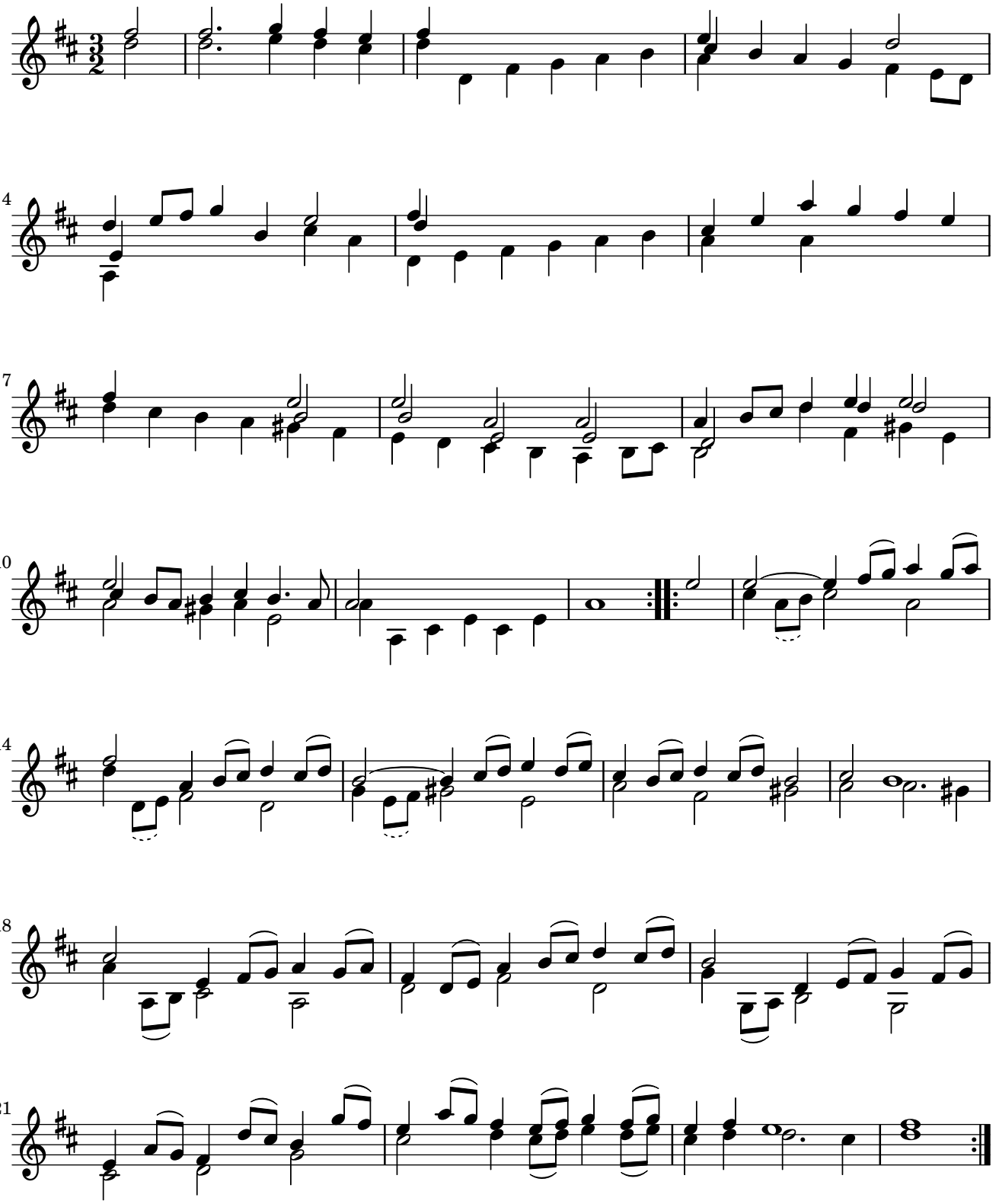


# Suite in D major

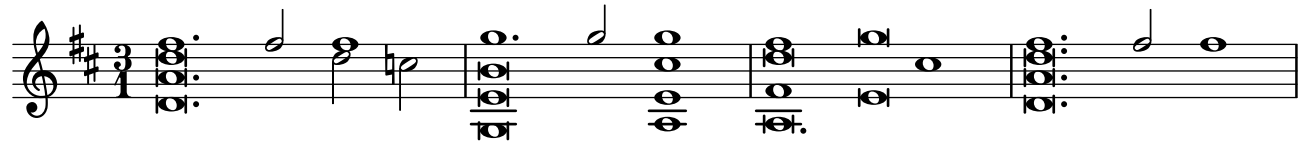
## Allemande

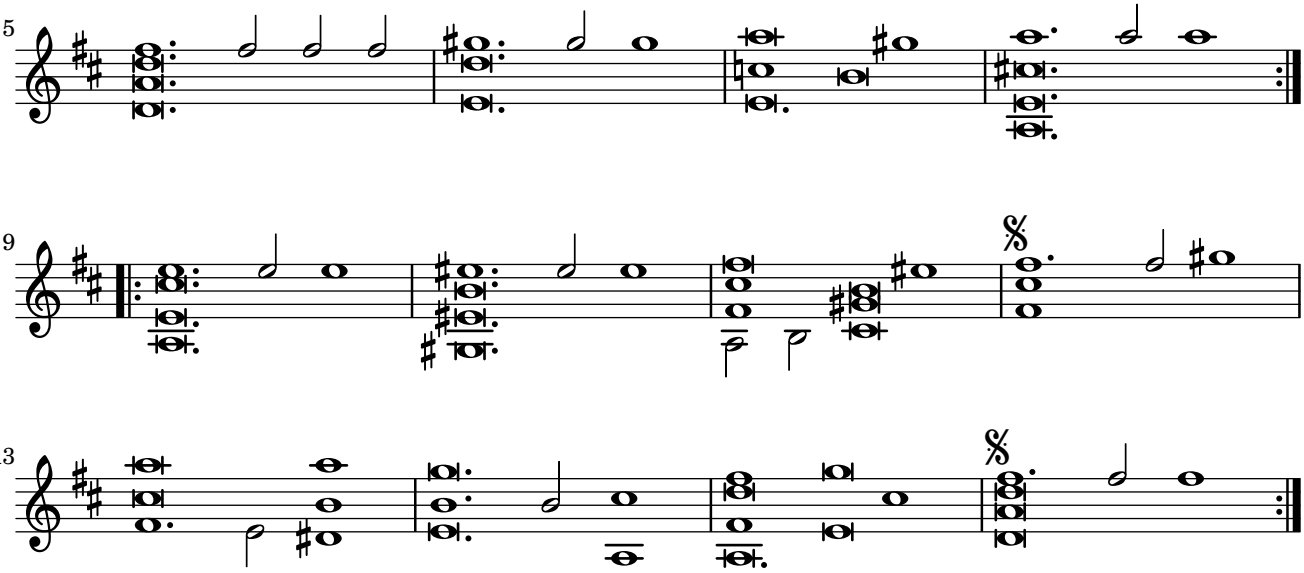
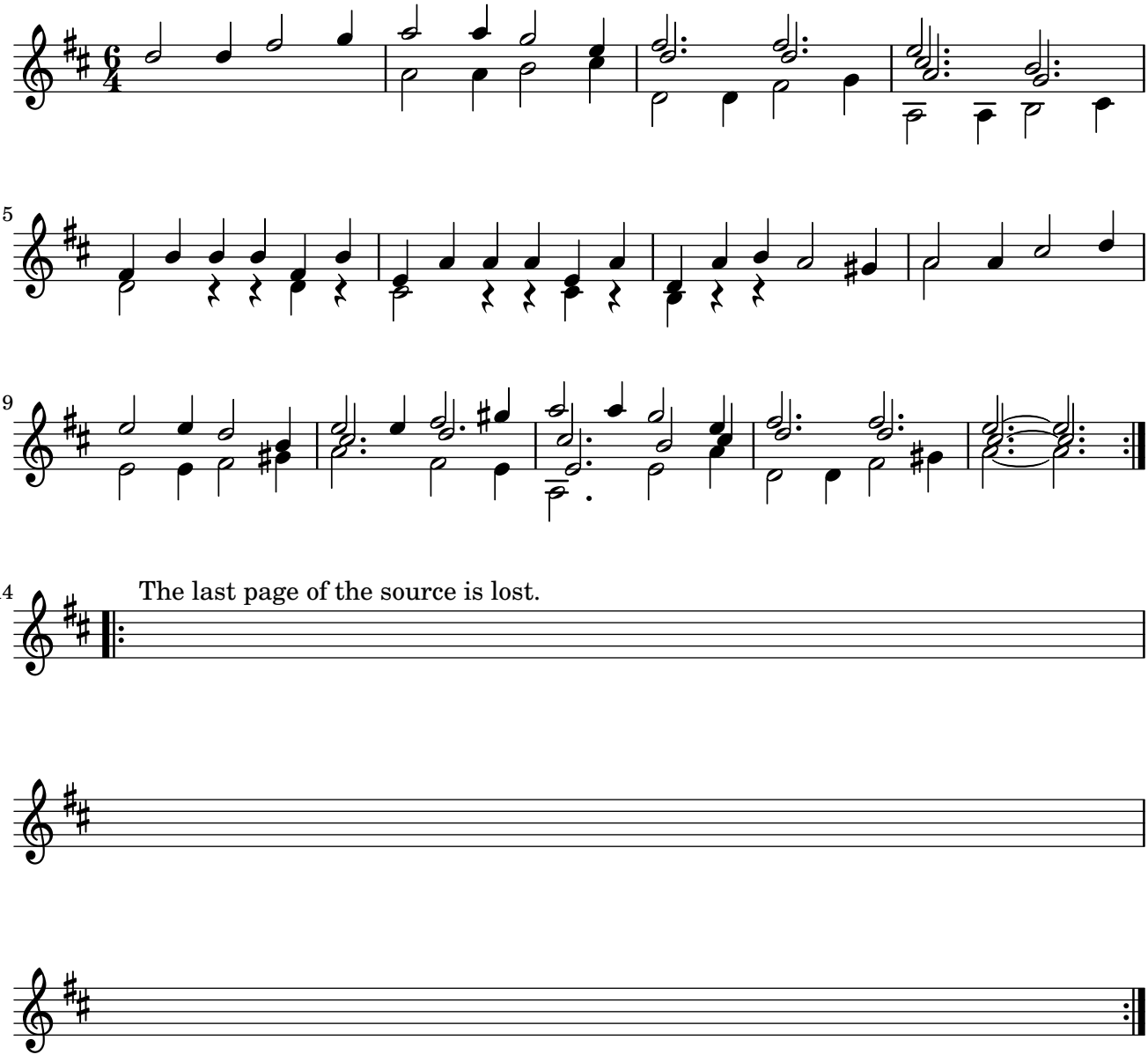


## Courante



## Sarabande





## Gigue