John Playford's Country Dances

Arranged for 5-course guitar

In "Princess Anne's Lute Book"
NL.D.Hgm Ms.4 E.73

Transcribed by Monica Hall

2009

Introduction

There are very few manuscript sources of music for 5-course guitar which are unquestionably of English provenance. The most substantial of these is a manuscript now in the Nederlands Muziekinstituut in the Hague, NL:DHgm Ms.4 E.73 known as "Princess Anne's Lute Book". This belonged to Princess Anne, the younger daughter of the English King, James II, who succeeded to the throne as Queen Anne in 1704. On the flyleaf of the manuscript there is a note

> "This curious M.S. was Princes An's lute Book & presented to W^{m} Shield by his friend James Smith".

William Shield (1748-1829) was a prolific composer and Master of the King's Music from 1817-29. He reproduced three pages from the manuscript in his "Rudiments of Thoroughbass" (London, 1815) and he states in a note at the bottom of the page

> The above 3 Airs were engraved from Princess (afterwards Queen) Anne's lute book, which was given to me by an aimiable brother Professor who values the new flights of Beethoven more than all the old curiosities in the kingdom.

In the past this manuscript was wrongly believed to have belonged a different Princess Anne, the eldest daughter of King George II, who married William IV of Orange in 1734 and spent the rest of her life in the Netherlands. Shield possessed a substantial collection of music, books and musical instruments which was auctioned after his death. The manuscript seems to have disappeared from view until 1919 when it was sold by the antiquarian bookseller, O. Haas of London to the Dutch book collector D.F. Scheurleer who presumably believed that it had belonged to the later Princess Anne. It was subsequently acquired by the Nederlands Muziekinstituut in the Hague. The music in it is unquestionably for the 5-course guitar but because the music is in tablature Shield seems to have been unaware that it was for guitar rather than lute and the misnomer "Princess Anne's Lute Book" has persisted ever since.

The contents of the manuscript are quite varied and include a substantial number of arrangements of music for the theatre by Purcell, pieces from the French repertoire, notably by De Visée and at least thirteen arrangements of country dance tunes found in the different

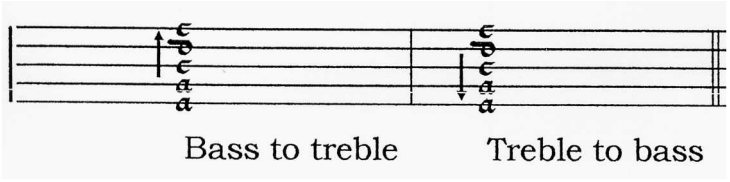
editions of the "The dancing master" published by John Playford from 1651 until the early eighteenth century[1].

The arrangements are on the whole quite simple although they do feature some of the unusually dissonant strummed chords which are also found in Corbetta's "La Guitarre royale" printed in 1671 and dedicated to Charles II. Corbetta was guitar master to Princess Anne in 1677 and it is not beyond the realms of possibility that at least one or two of the arrangements are by him. Although only one piece in the manuscript can be attributed to him with certainty[2] he seems to have cast a long shadow over the contents as a whole.

A few of the titles call for some comment. "O how happy is he or ye Siege of Limeric" is a contrafactum of a hornpipe from Purcell's "Dioclesian" which has been commandeered to commemorate the siege which took place in 1690. "May Hill" will be familiar to at least some people as the tune used for the hymn "All things bright and beautiful". "Bobel" or "Christchurch bells" is actually a three part round and can be played by three guitars, each entering in turn. The amended title probably refers to the bells of the church of St. Mary-le Bow in Cheapside in the City of London. "King James March" refers to King James II and "Young Jemmy" to Charles II's eldest illegitimate son, James, Duke of Monmouth. "Maggot" is an old English term for a "fanciful idea" and is often used to refer to a pleasant piece of music, usually a country dance.

Editorial notes

The original is in French tablature and neatly copied with few obvious mistakes. The strummed chords are indicated in the usual way by placing the note value on the tablature stave with the tail down for a down-stroke [bass to treble] and up for an up stroke [treble to bass]. As Django software does not support this feature the direction of the strokes is indicated by arrows



[1] The pieces by Purcell and Playford were originally identified by Elizabeth C.D. Brown. See her "Announcement regarding the Princess An Lutebook" in L.S.A.Quarterly, XLIII/3, September 2008, p. 38. Her more detailed study of the ms. is in progress.

[2] The minuet on p.135 is attributed to Corbetta in two later manuscripts, B:LcMs. Ms.245 (ca.1706), p.36 and B:Bc.Ms.S 5615 (1730), p.84.

Only two ornaments are used throughout

x = a trill in most cases probably starting on the upper auxiliary note

, = a mordente

Ascending appoggiaturas are usually notated in tablature. In one or two places a slur is placed over the highest note of the D minor chord (represented by E in alfabeto). These cannot conveniently be produced with Django software and have been omitted.

Open courses to be included in strummed chords have been filled in where appropriate.

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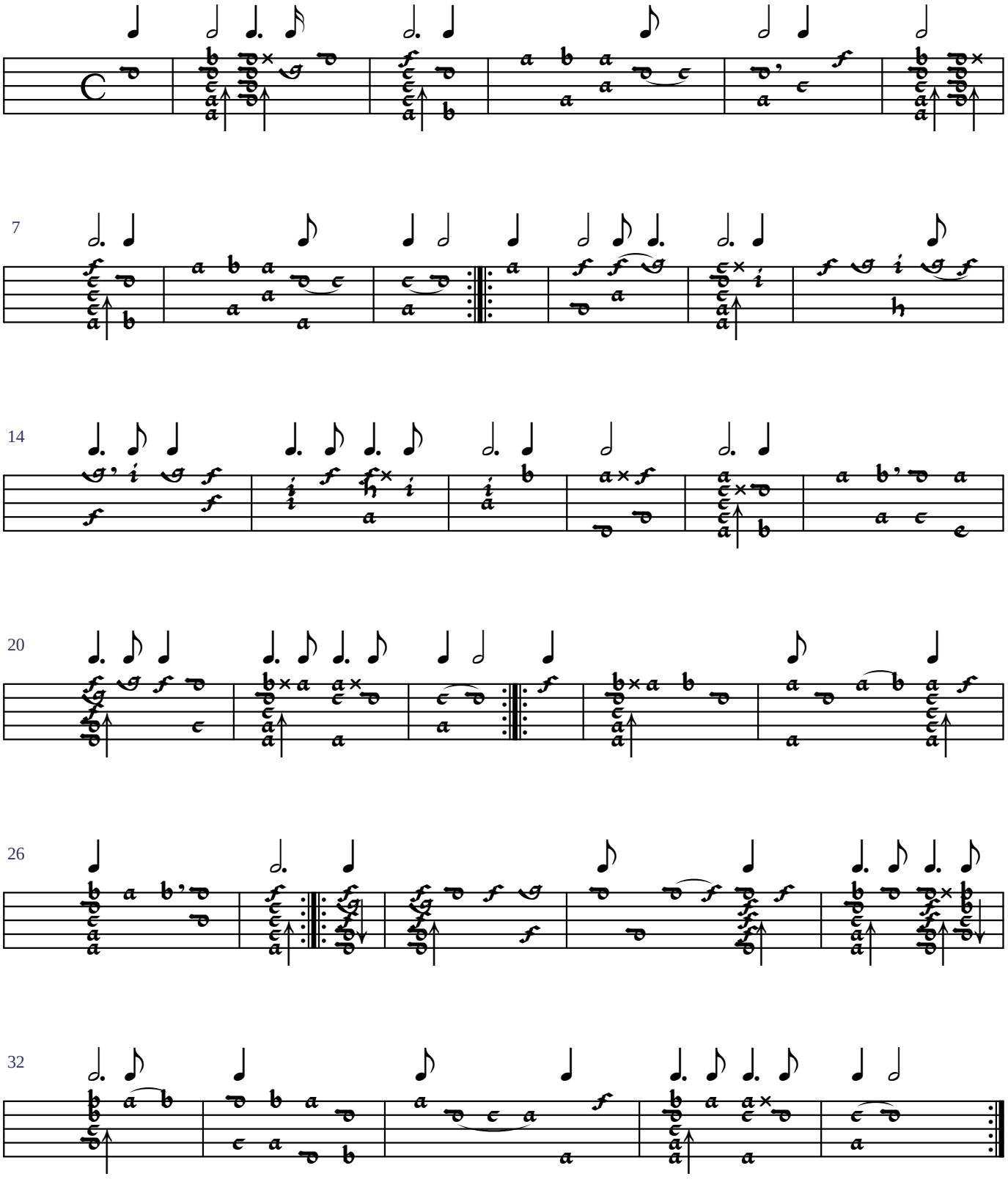
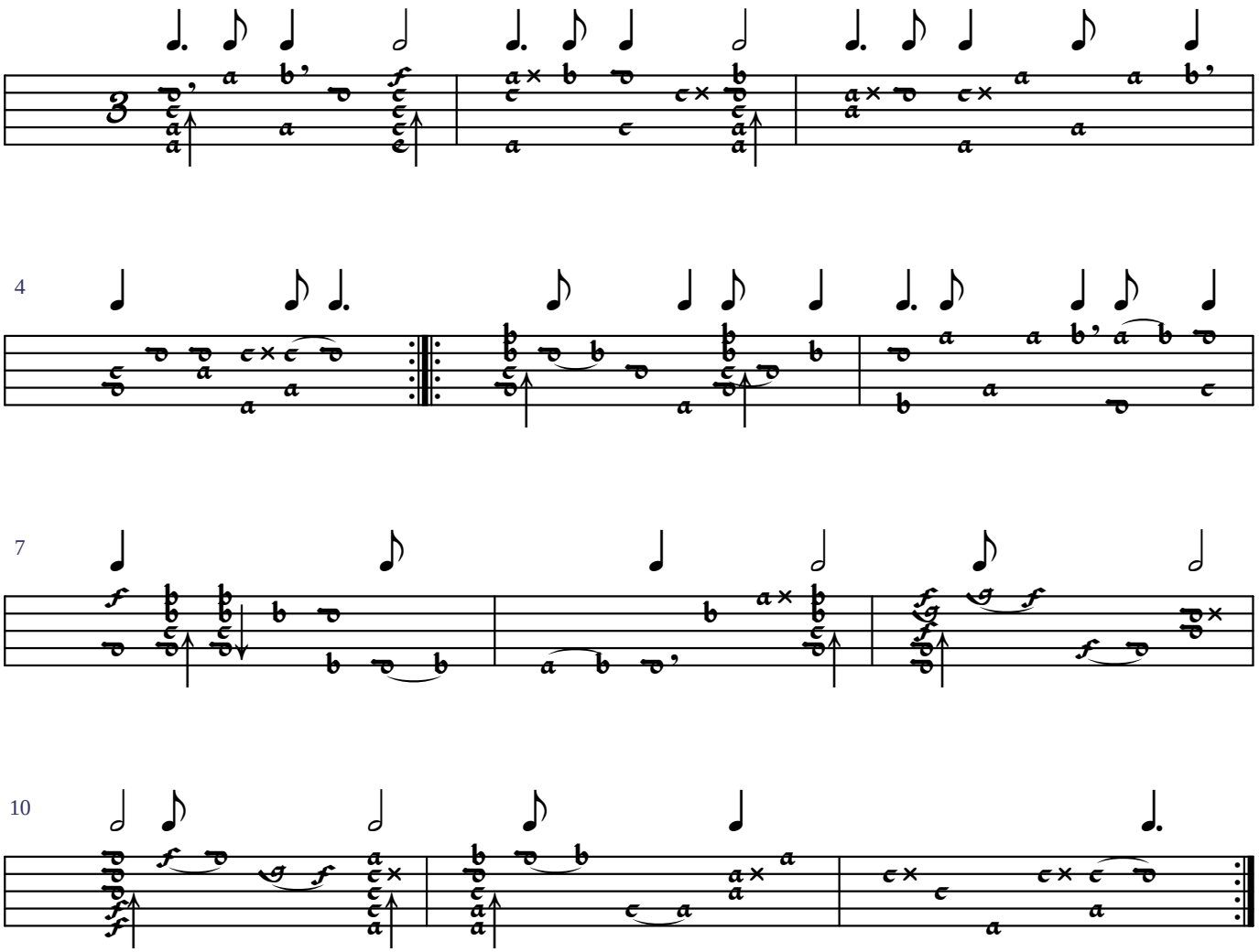
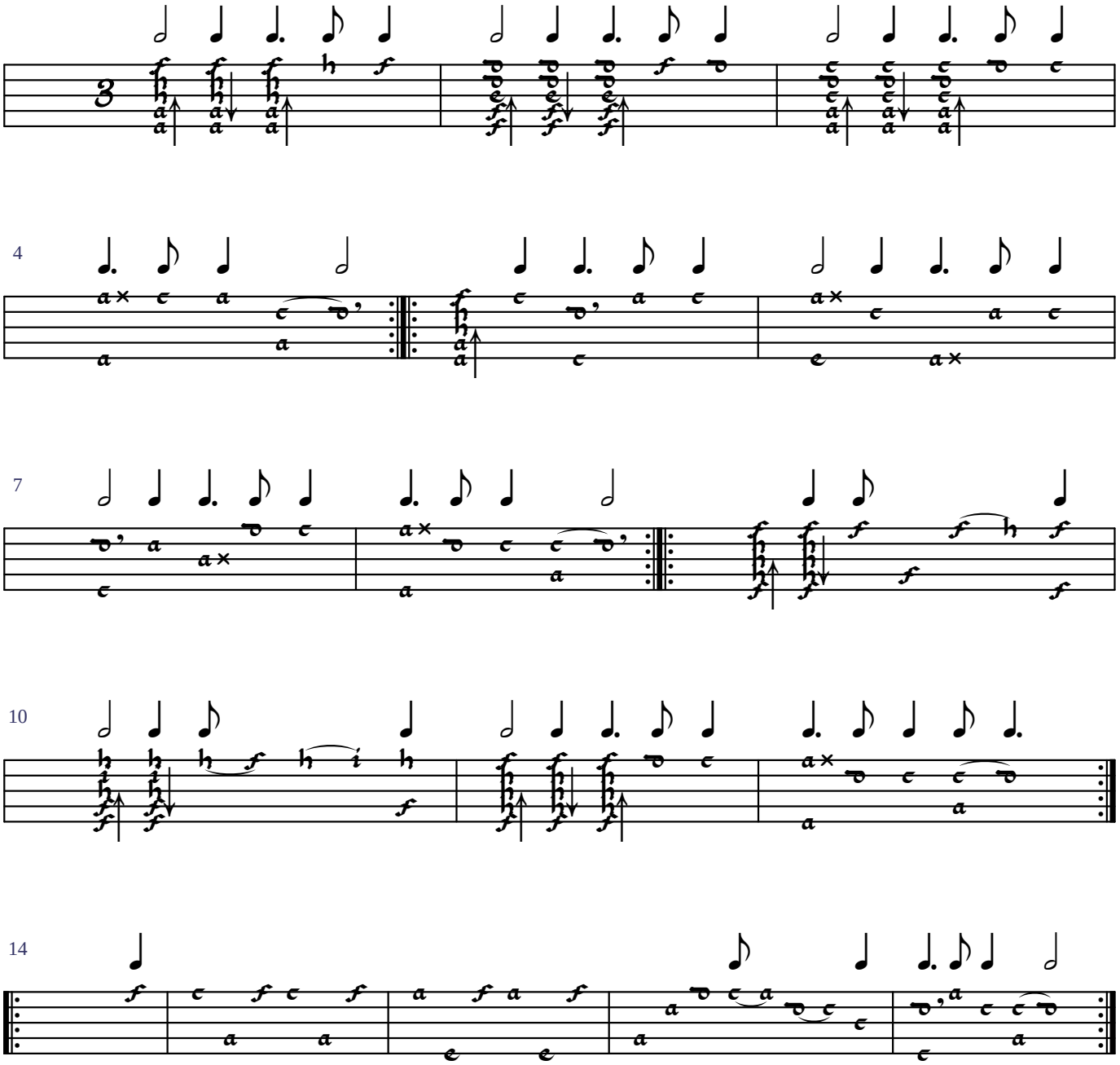
Huntington's Maggot = Rigodon, p.23



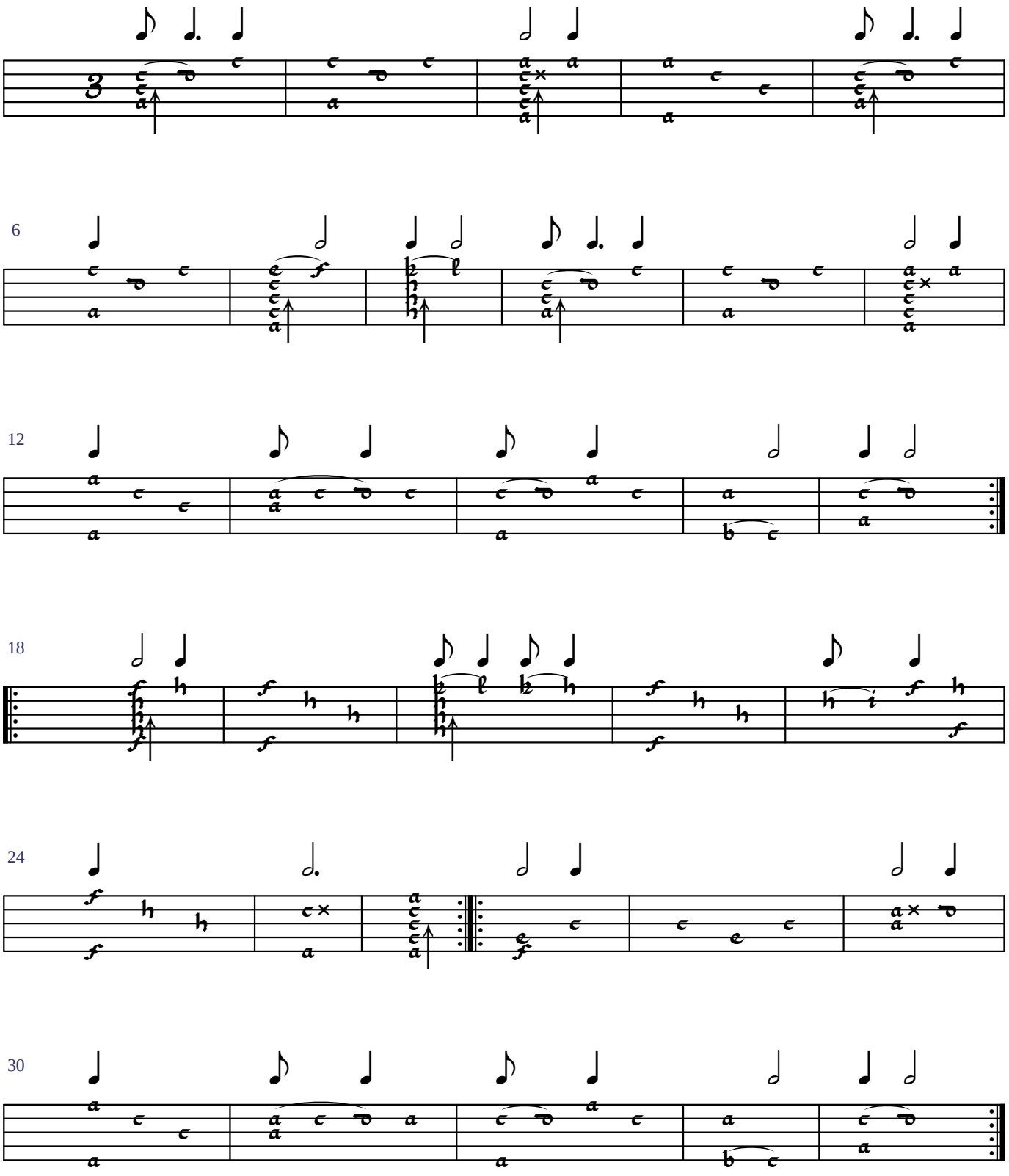
O how happy is he or ye Siege of Limeric = Chanson, p.31



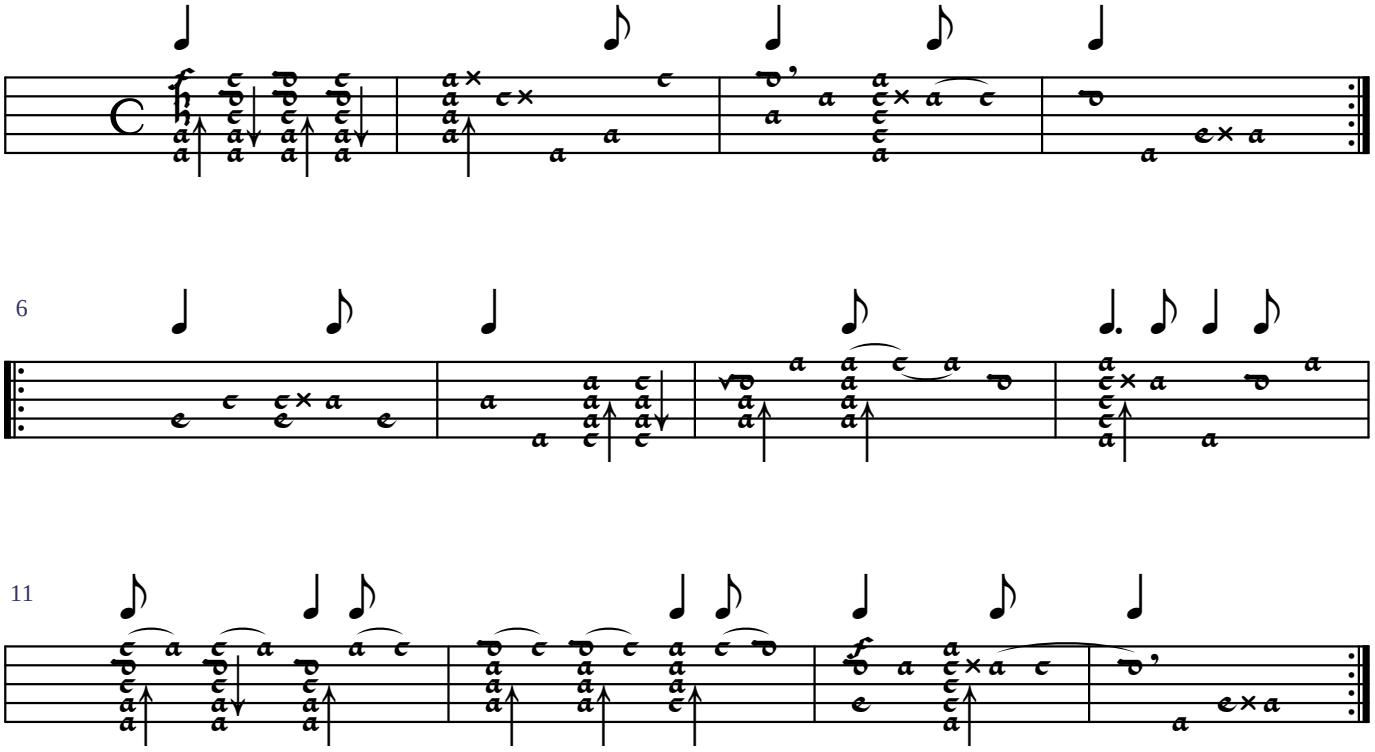
Spannish Jig = Gigue, p.51

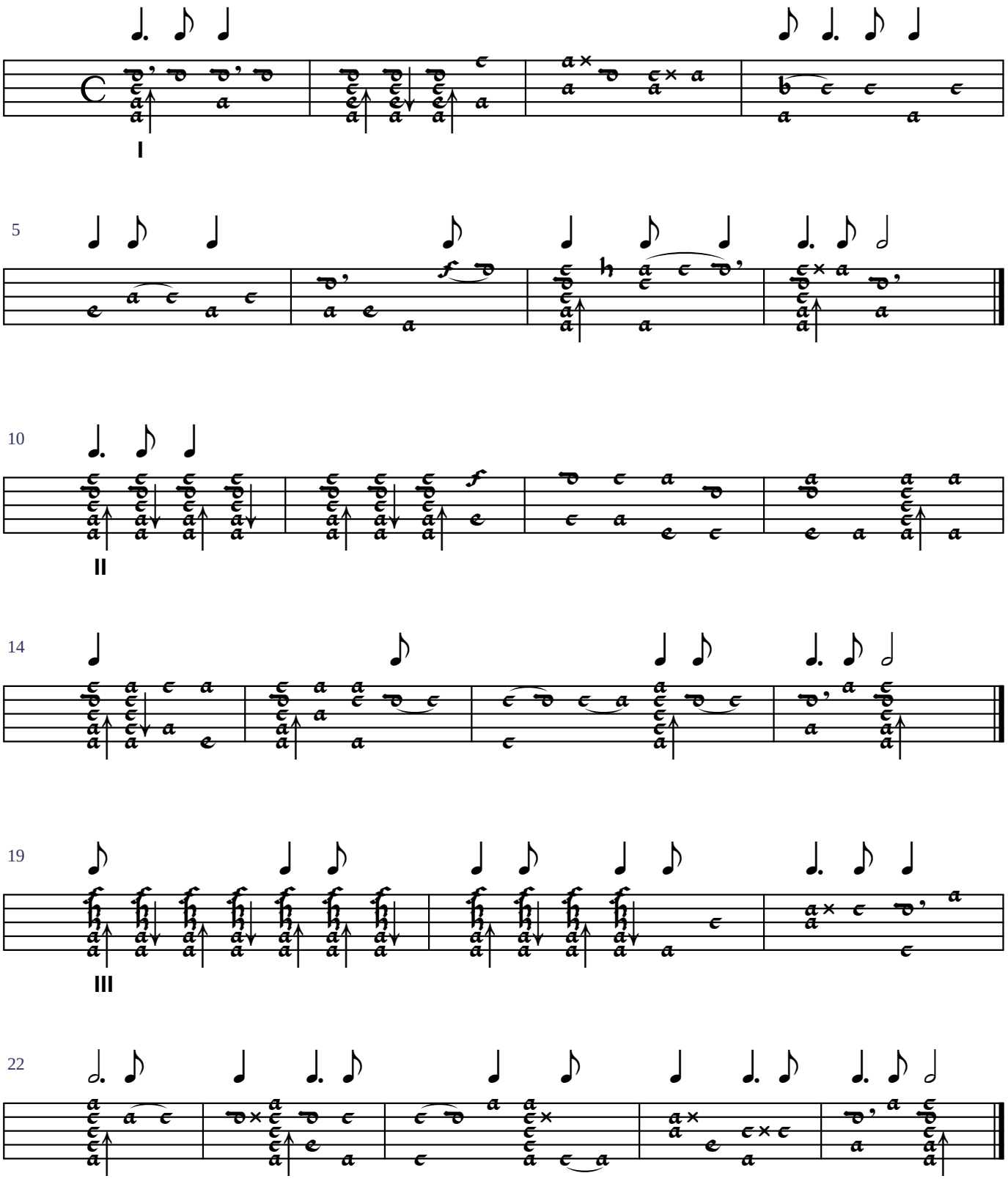


The Jockey = Gigue, p.53



May Hill = Gigue, p. 58

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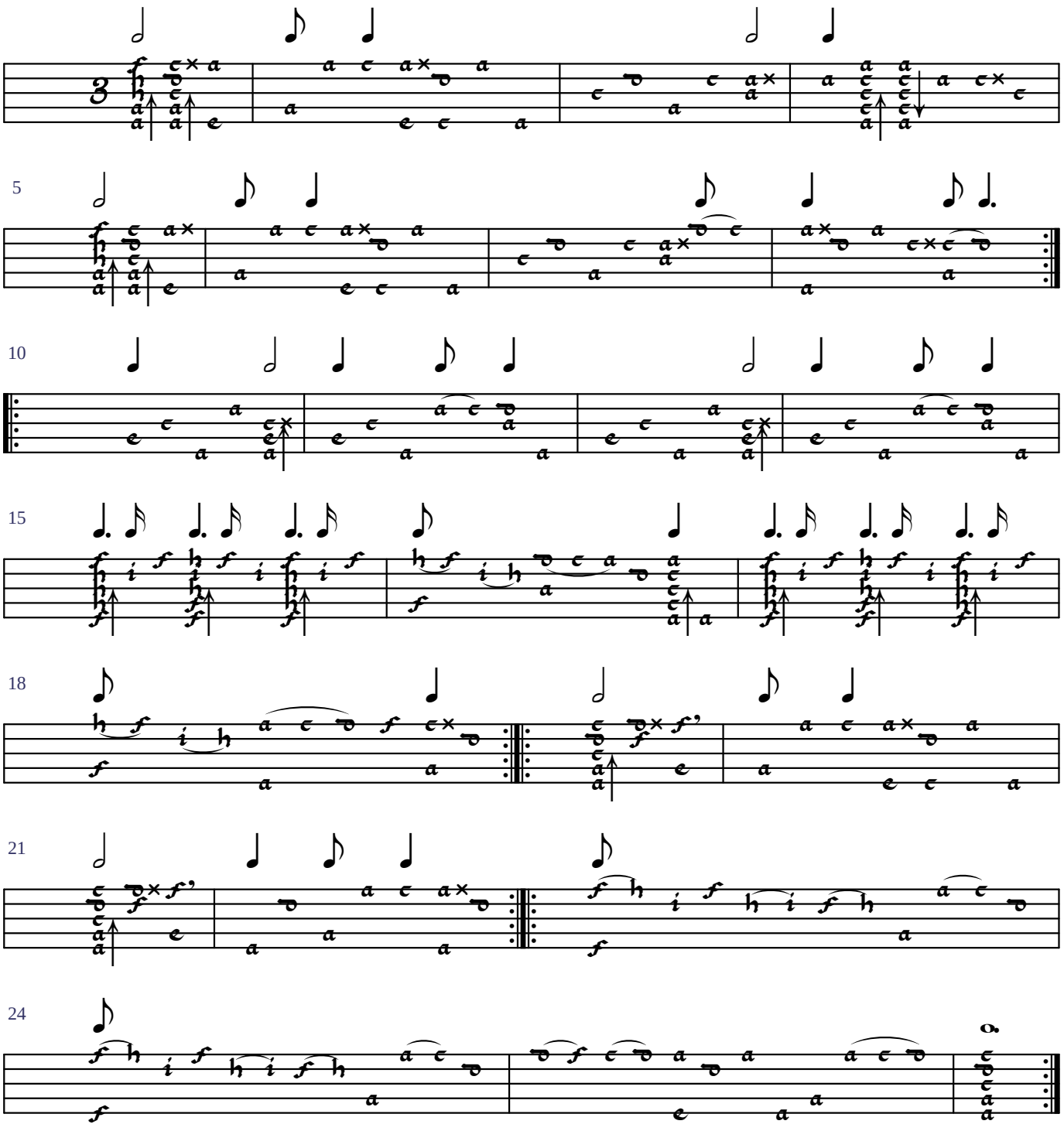
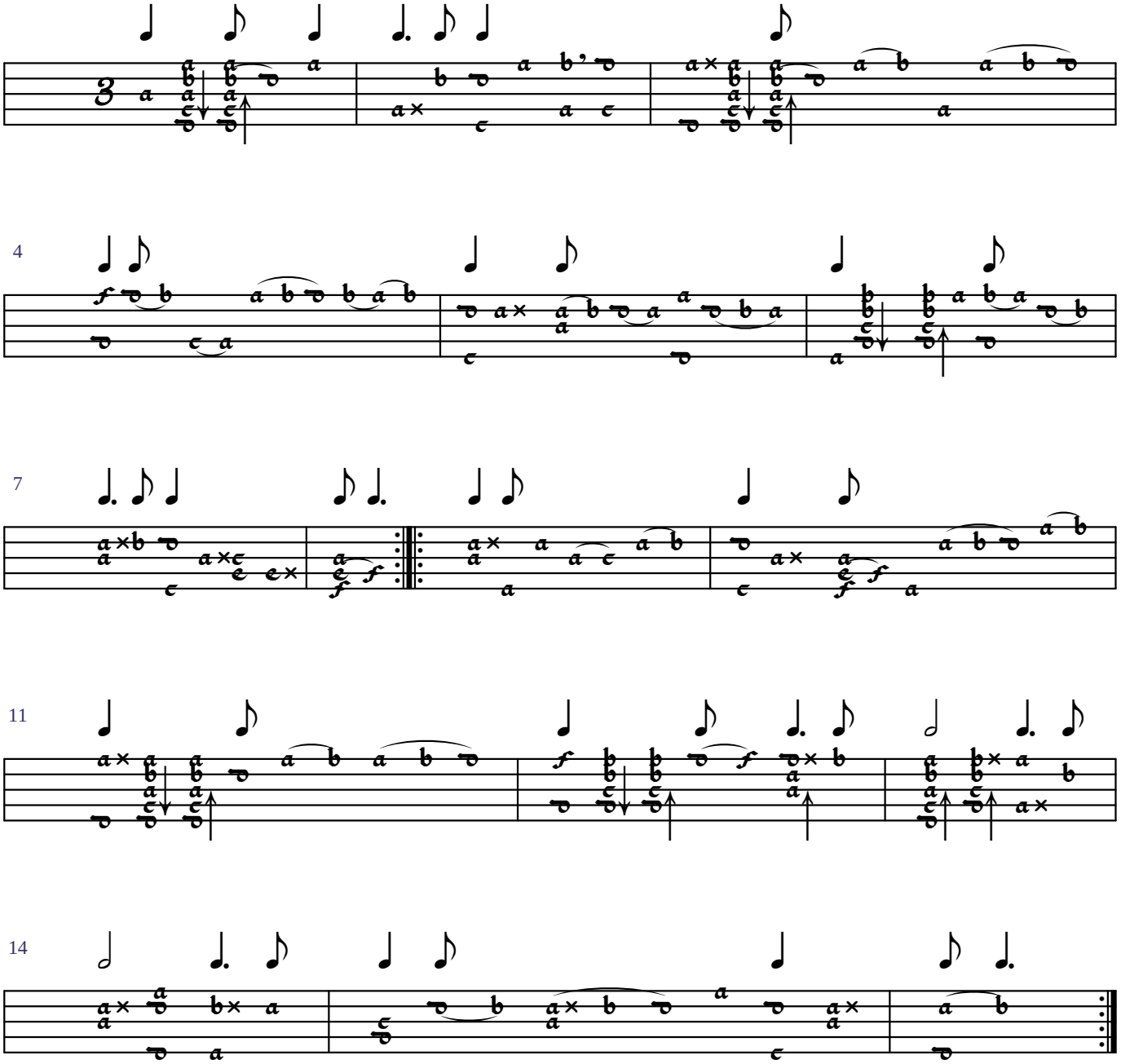
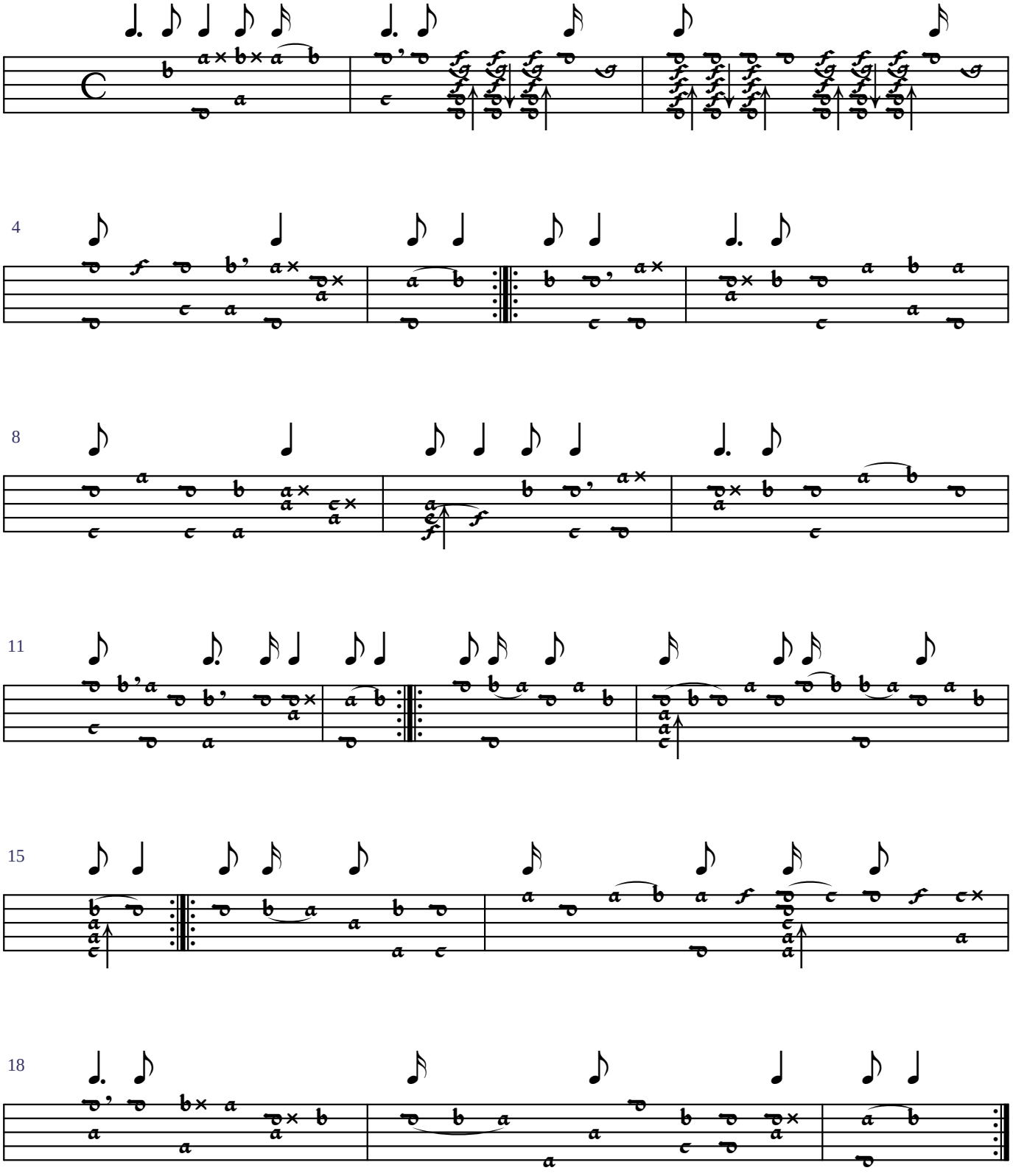
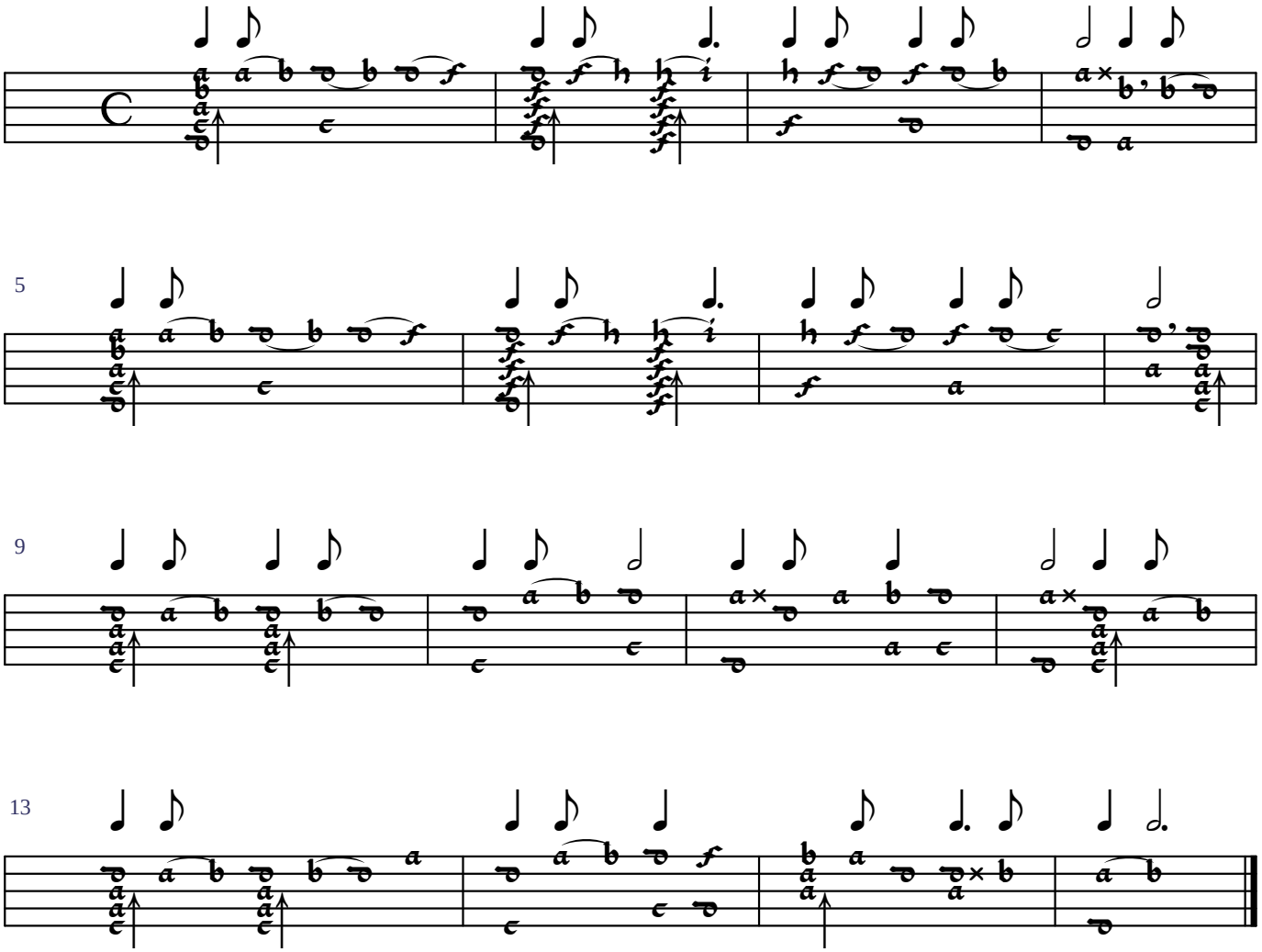


A Passepied = Paspie, p.72

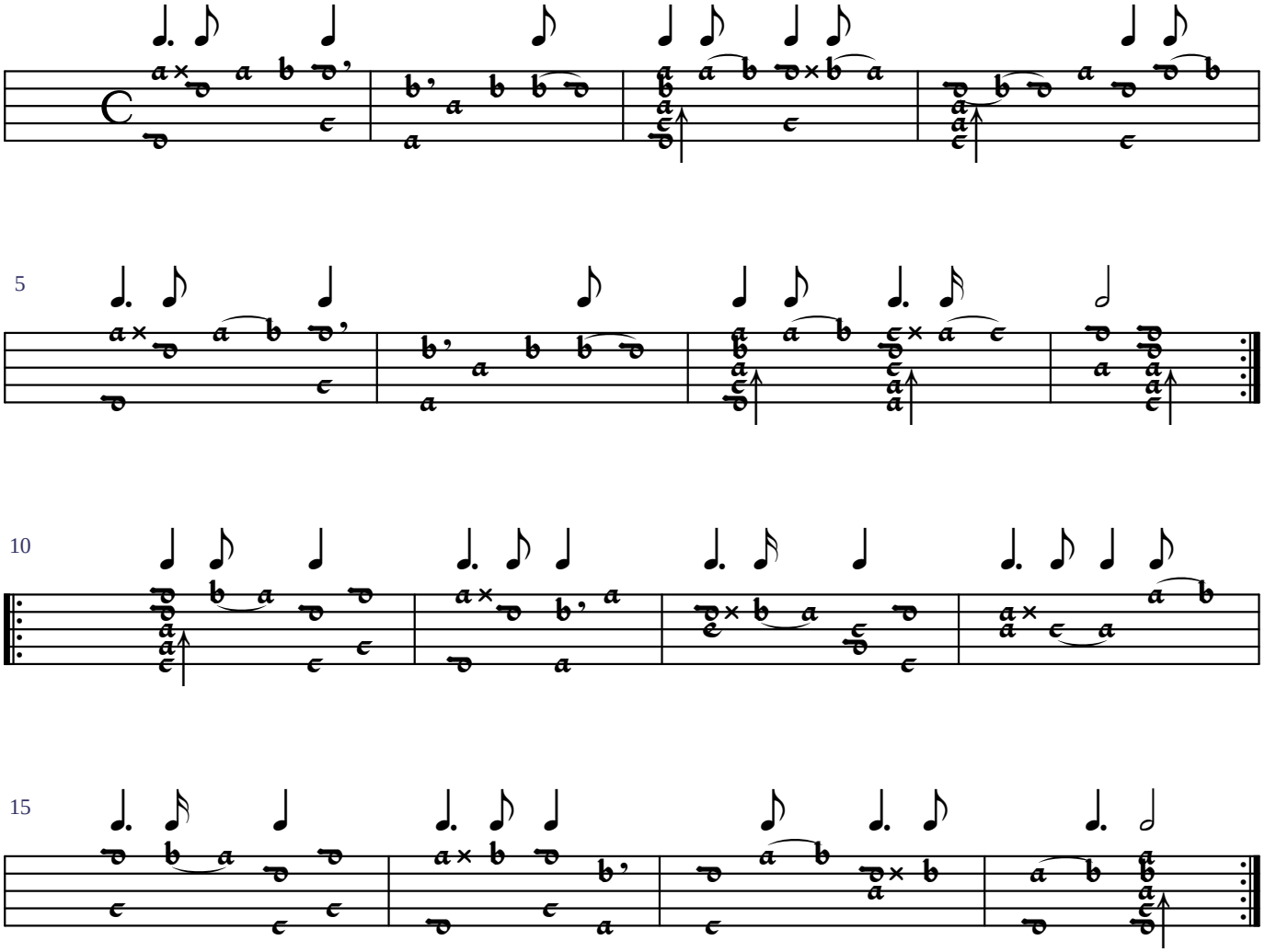


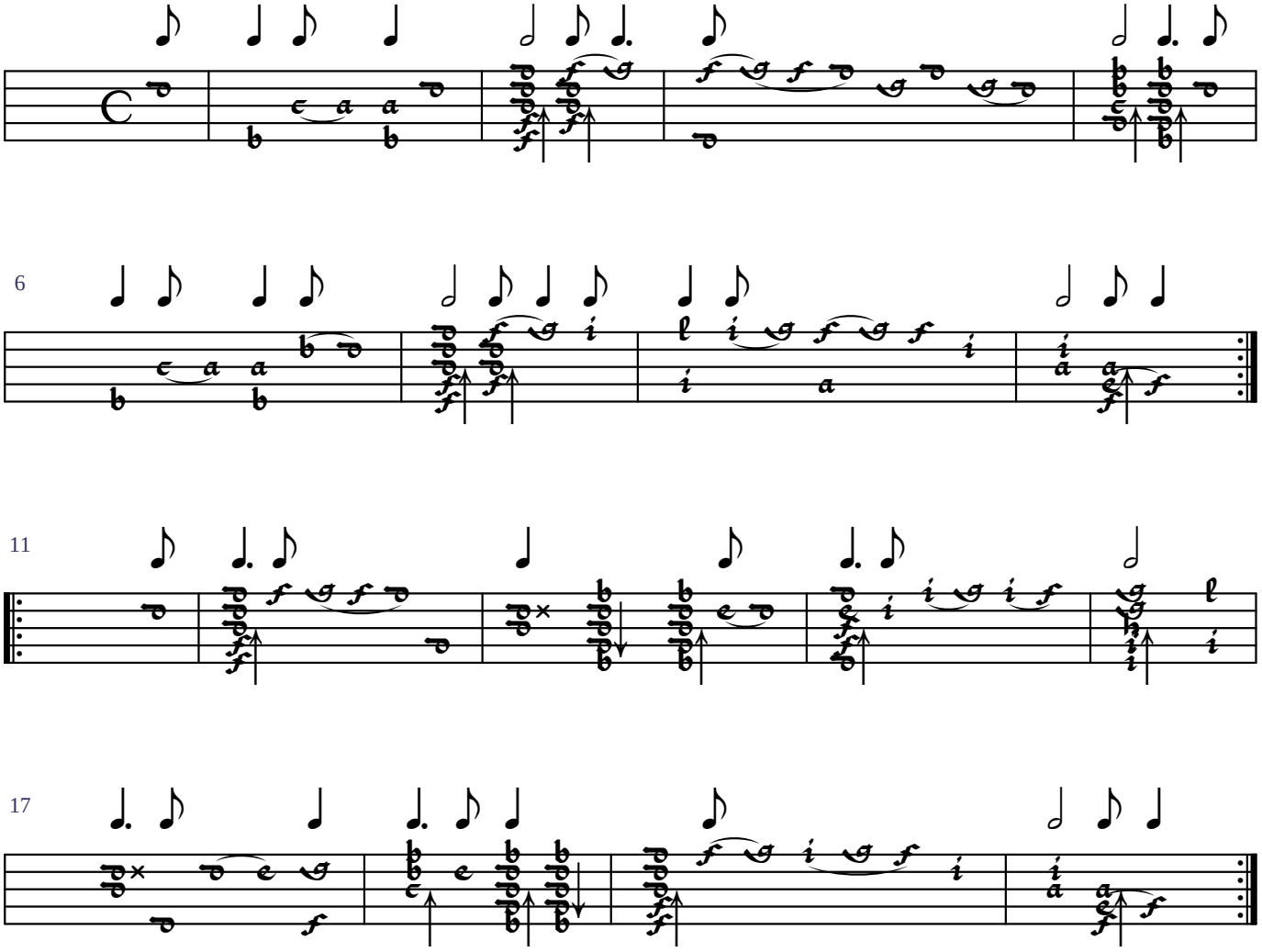
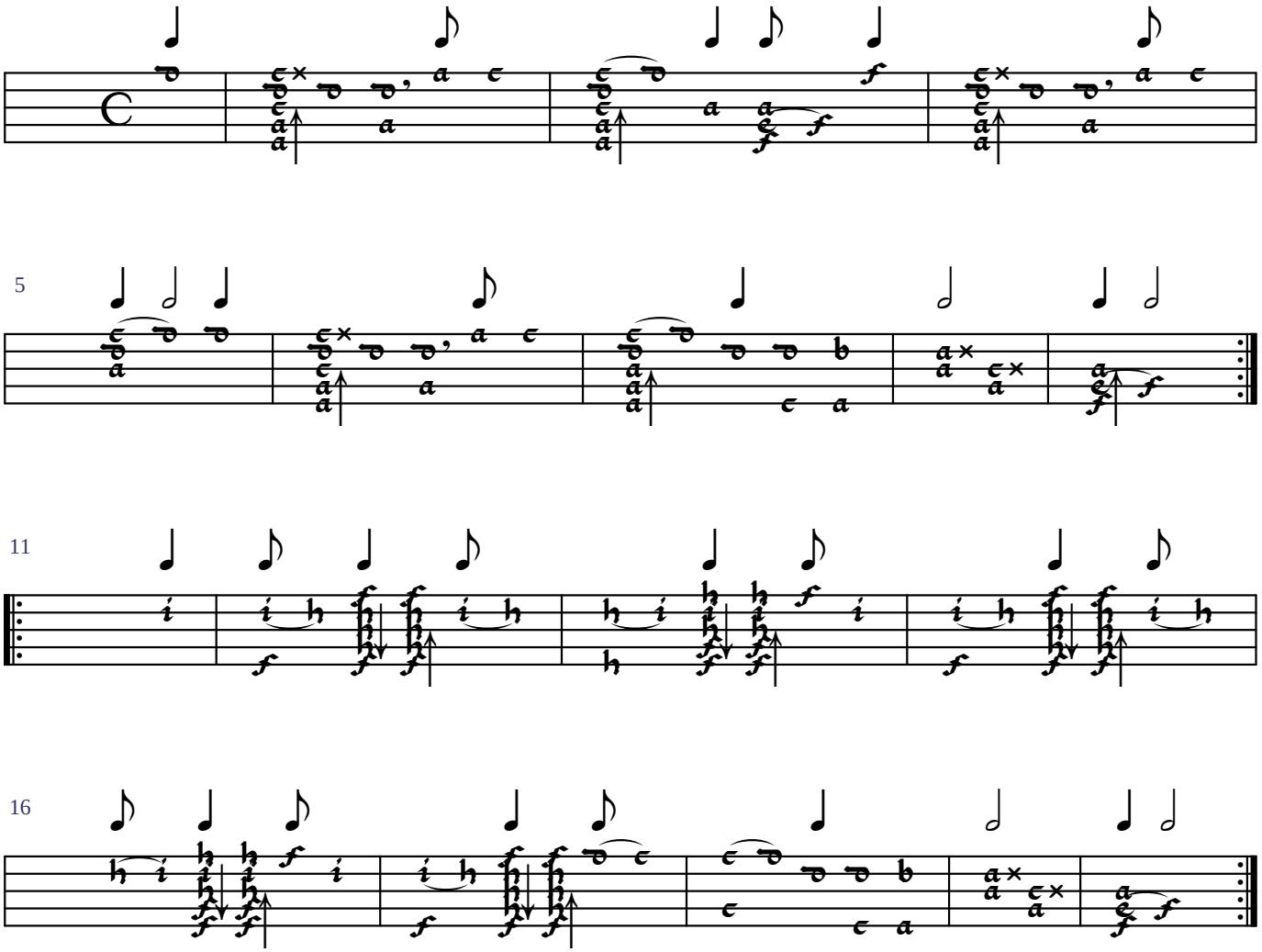


Dragoon's March = Dragon, p.80



The Garter or King James' March = March, p.85





Nobody's Jigg = Gigue, p.119