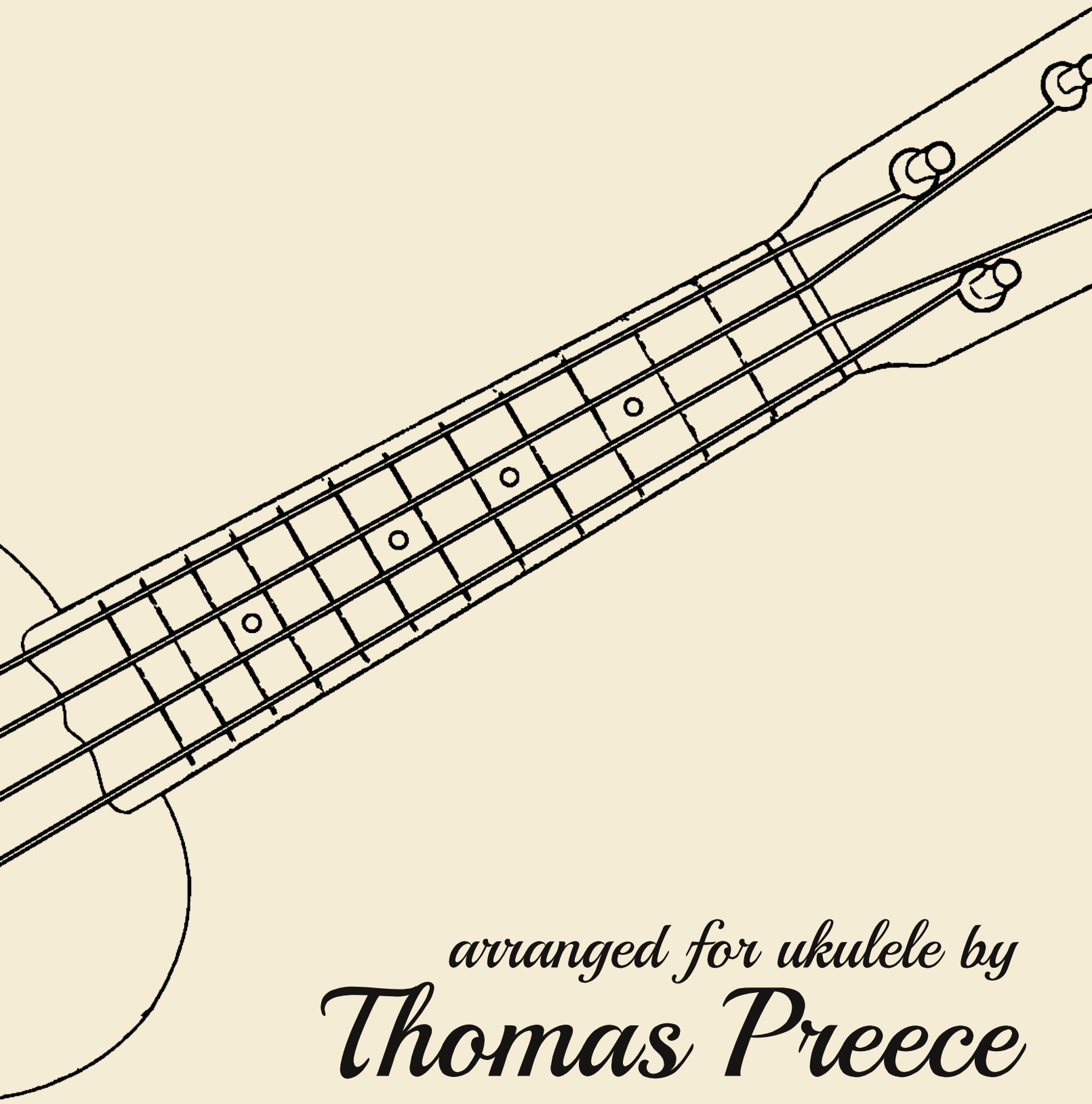
Selections from the Bach Cello Suites



arranged for ukulele by

Thomas Preece

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Thank you once again for your interest in my arrangements, and I hope you enjoy them!

Selections from the Bach Cello Suites

arranged for Ukulele by Thomas Preece

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Introduction and Performance Notes

J S Bach's *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello* are some of the most famous works for solo cello. They are studied and performed by cellists across the world, and have also been arranged for many other instruments, including the ukulele. While this collection is not the first ukulele arrangement of the suites, previous works have consisted only of one or two movements: this is the most complete arrangement to date.

The main reason for arranging 'selections' from the *Cello Suites,* rather than the entire collection, is simply the suitability of the various movements for the ukulele. Despite the fact that both instruments have four strings, the cello and ukulele are remarkably different beasts: as well as the obvious difference in pitch, the ukulele is a much less sonorous instrument than the cello and, being played by plucking with the fingers rather than with a bow, cannot sustain such long notes. This means that the slower movements, such as the Sarabandes, are more or less out of the question. Similarly, the cello's much greater range has required some movements to be arranged in a different key for the ukulele, and certain passages to be moved up or down an octave, in order to fit into the instrument's range.

Of course, arranging for ukulele isn't simply about working around the instrument's weaknesses, but also about playing up to its strengths. Chords have been added, especially to longer notes, to fill out the sound and provide a richer texture. The ukulele's re-entrant tuning (that is, having a high 4th string) lends itself to the use of campanella style, where as far as possible, adjacent melody notes are played on separate strings. These should be allowed to ring freely, rather than stopping each note before playing the next. The trade off with this technique is that the left hand fingerings become more complicated, and so I have tried to strike a balance between the campanella sound and playability. That said, string choices and other aspects of the performance are always down to the player: there's no need simply to follow my tabs precisely at all times, and if you find an alternative that works better for you, then by all means use that instead!

Metronome markings are given as a guide only - you may find that some pieces are harder to play at full speed on ukulele than on cello, and the *Sarabande* is almost impossible to play as slowly as marked while still sounding good! Articulations and dynamics have largely been omitted, except where necessary to clarify the intention of the composer. Generally, a slur indicates that the notes should be played as a hammer-on or pull-off.

My general picking technique is to use the thumb and one or two fingers, depending on the piece in question. Where two notes are indicated at the same time, I usually play these as a 'pinch', with thumb and forefinger, and where three or four notes are indicated, as a downward strum with the thumb. You should of course experiment with different techniques, to find the method of playing that you prefer.

Notes on Specific Pieces

The collection begins with an arrangement of *Suite No 1 in G* in its entirety, consisting of the six movements of *Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande,* a pair of *Minuets,* and a *Gigue.* This is the standard form of Bach's suites, although the paired movements (known collectively as 'galanteries') varies: Suites 1 and 2 have minuets; Suites 3 and 4 have bourrées, and Suites 5 and 6 have gavottes. Where both galanteries have been arranged for a suite, they are intended to be played in ABA form: beginning with the first, then the second, and then finally a repeat of the first.

While the *Sarabande* is not especially suited to the ukulele, it has been included in *Suite No 1* for completeness: this is the only suite in which all of the other movements were found to work well on the instrument, and so it is the only one which appears completely. I have also been able to arrange the entire suite in its original key of G major - something which was not necessarily possible for many of the other movements.

All of the arrranged movements of *Suite No 2* end with a D minor chord, fretted 2215. This can be quite a stretch, particularly on longer-scaled ukuleles; if this proves too difficult for you, you can play the A string open, although it won't sound quite as good.

I have tried where possible to keep the fingerings within the first twelve frets, but not to stick rigidly to this rule where using higher frets improves the piece. One particular example of this is the first *Bourrée* of *Suite No 3* , which goes up to fret fifteen. An alternative fingering can be found for soprano players, although I would generally advise playing these pieces on a concert or tenor ukulele in any case.

While all of the movements have been arranged for re-entrant ukulele (that is, an ukulele tuned gCEA, with a high G string), I have included a low-G arrangement of the *Prelude* from *Suite No 1* as a bonus - this can be found at the end of the collection.

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Another advantage of the Creative Commons licence is that you're very much allowed to make photocopies - this will come in particularly handy for the few movements that have an awkward page turn. Alternatively, you can download a special copy of just these pages for easy printing from the Preece Music website, http://preecemusic.com

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank everyone who has helped, assisted or encouraged me on this project. Particular thanks go to Matt Warnes of Omega Music for inspiring the project, and to Joop Kiefte for his help in designing the cover.

About the Arranger

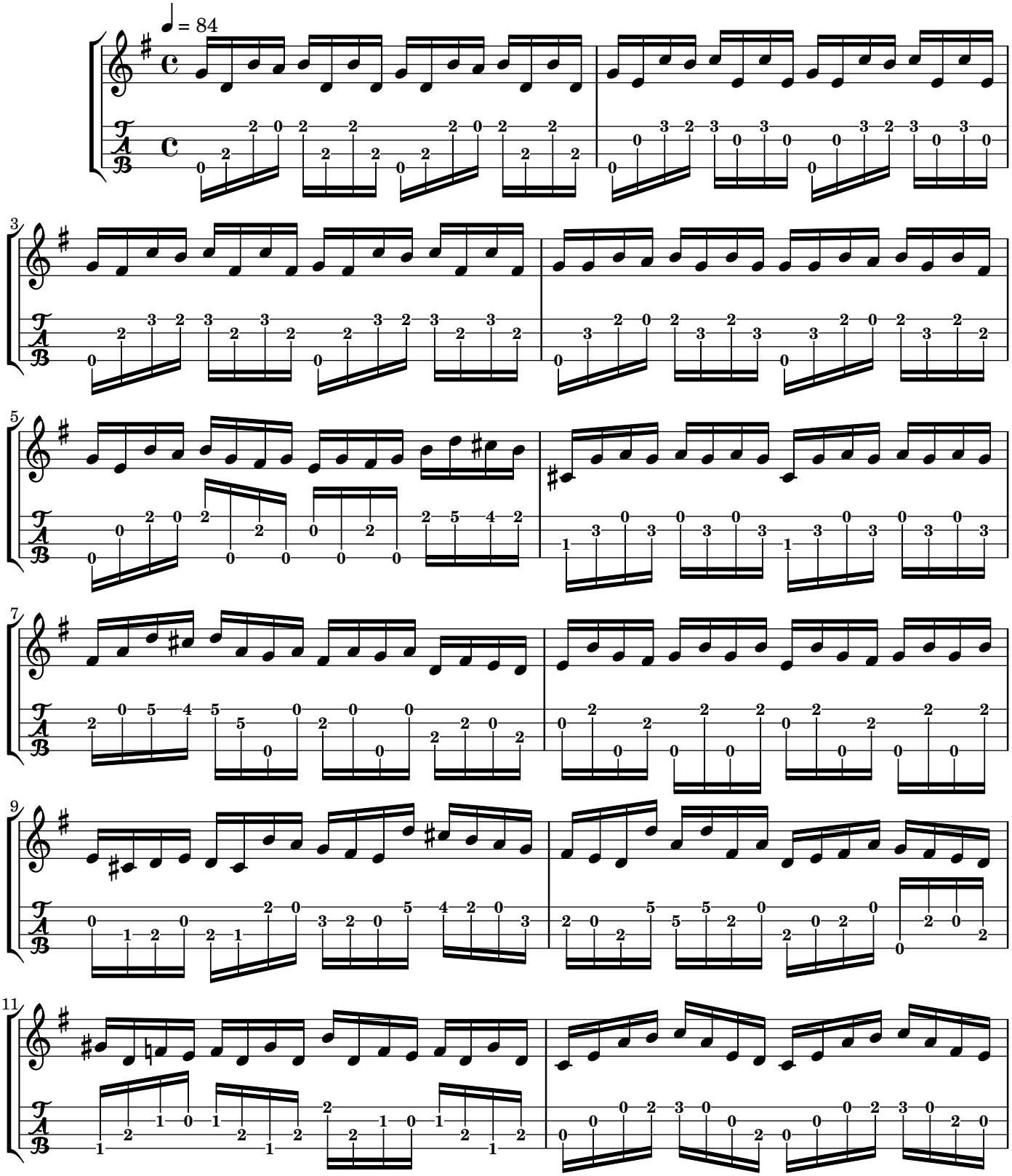
Thomas Preece has been a musician since his primary school days, where he learned to play piano and cello, studying the *Bach Cello Suites* in his teenage years. Since 2011 he has primarily focused on the ukulele, and is pleased to be able to present this arrangement of music he had previously enjoyed for his new instrument. He lives in Reading with his cat, Biscuit.

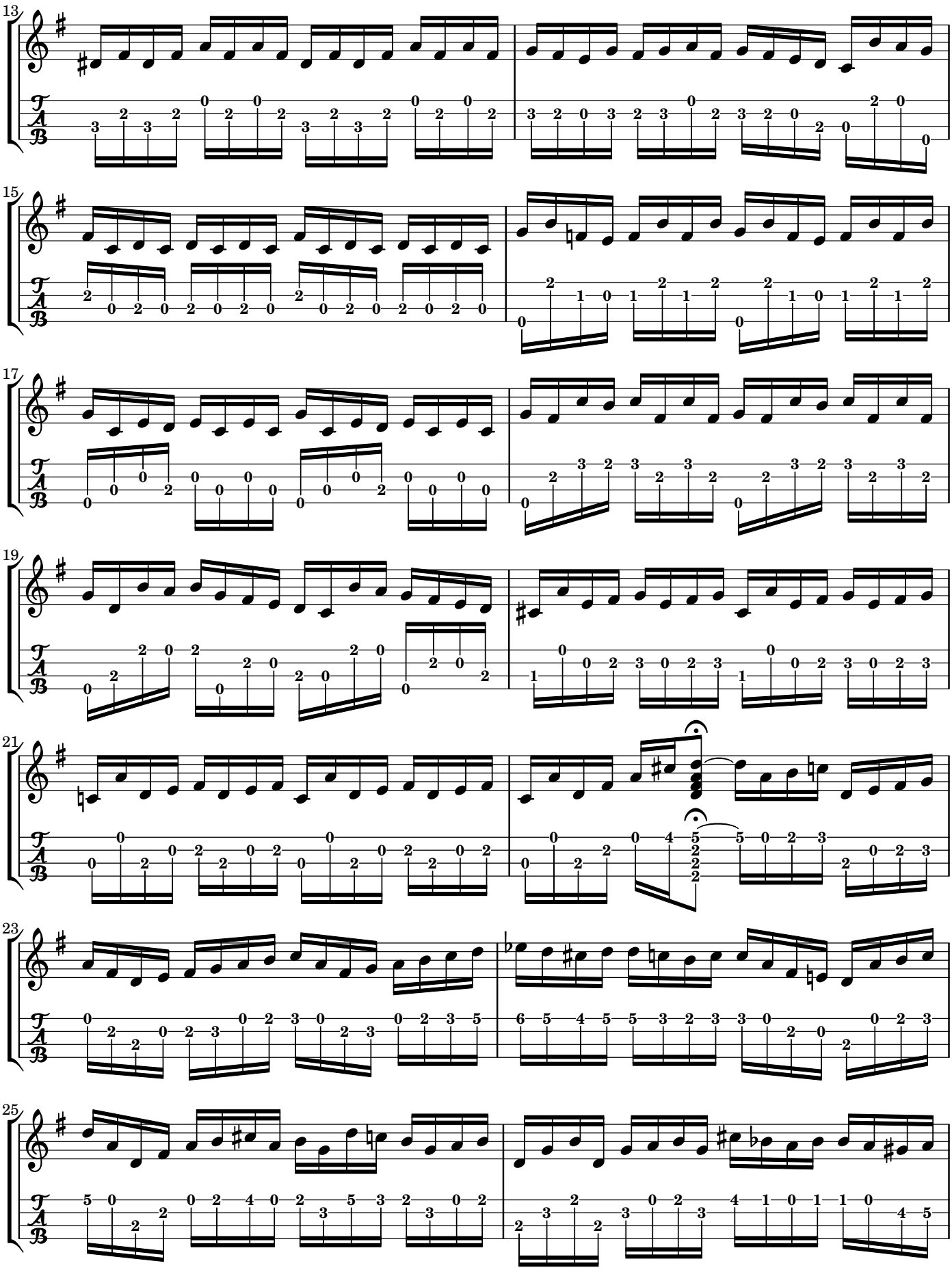
Prelude

from Cello Suite No 1

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

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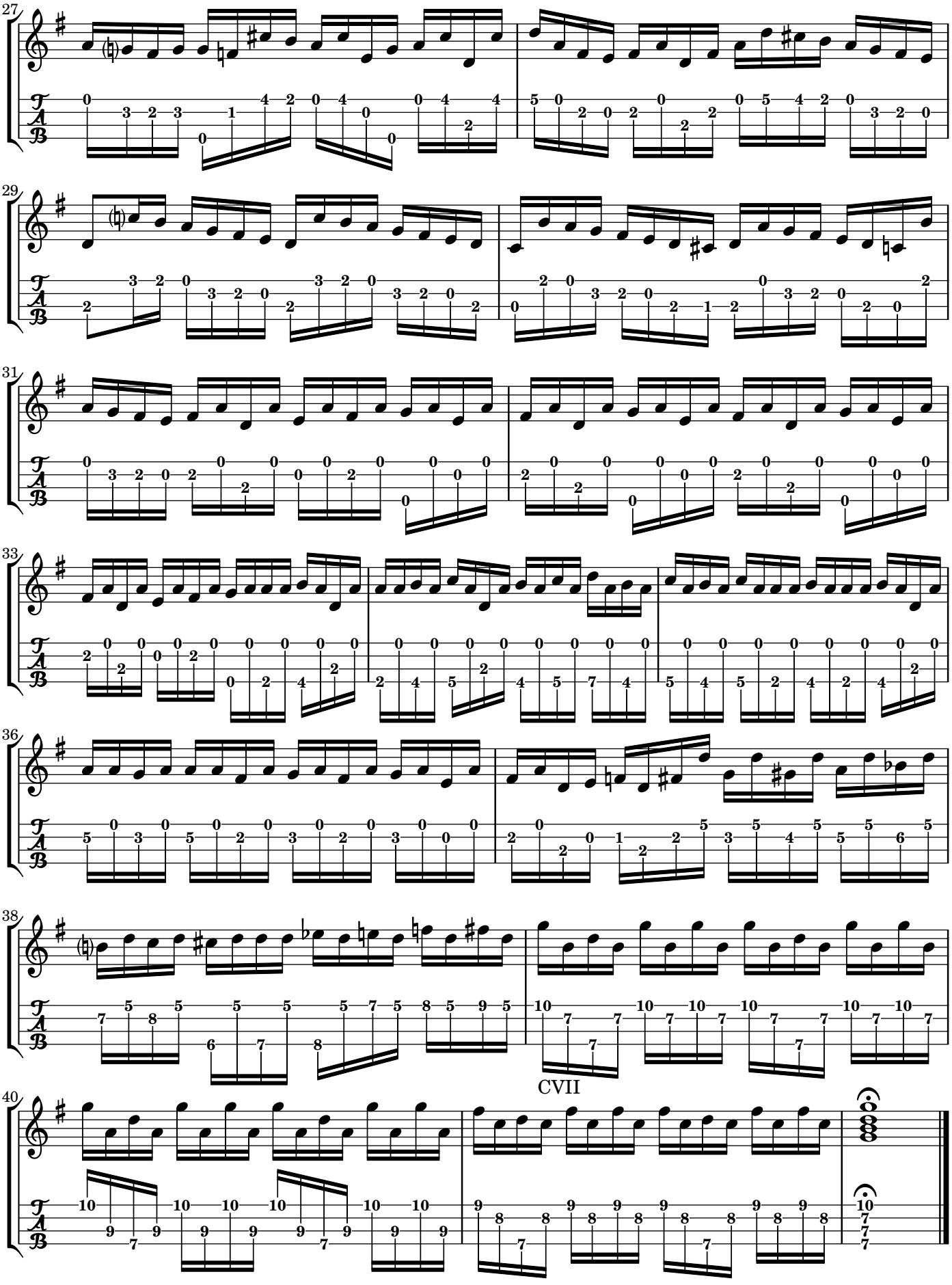
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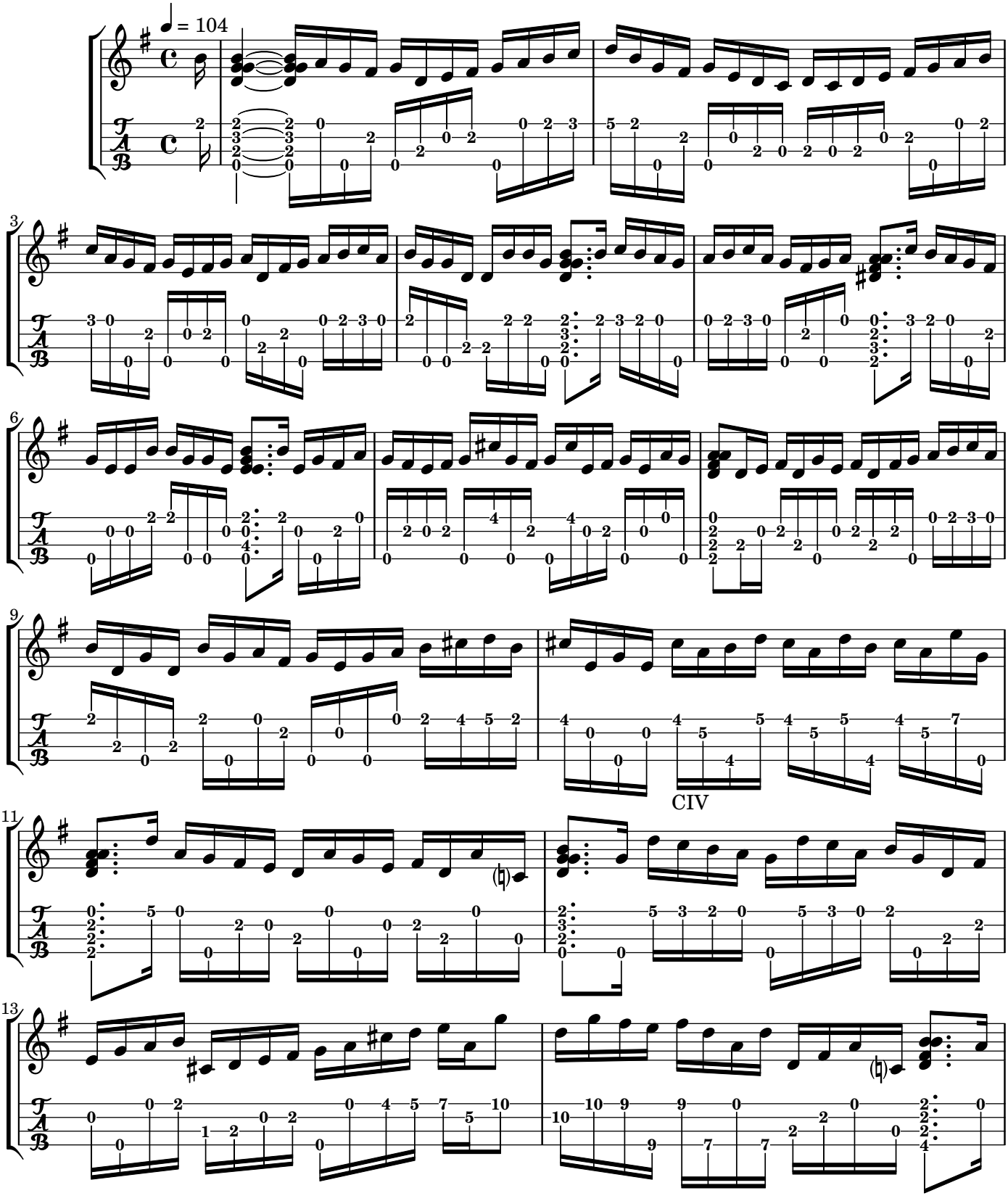
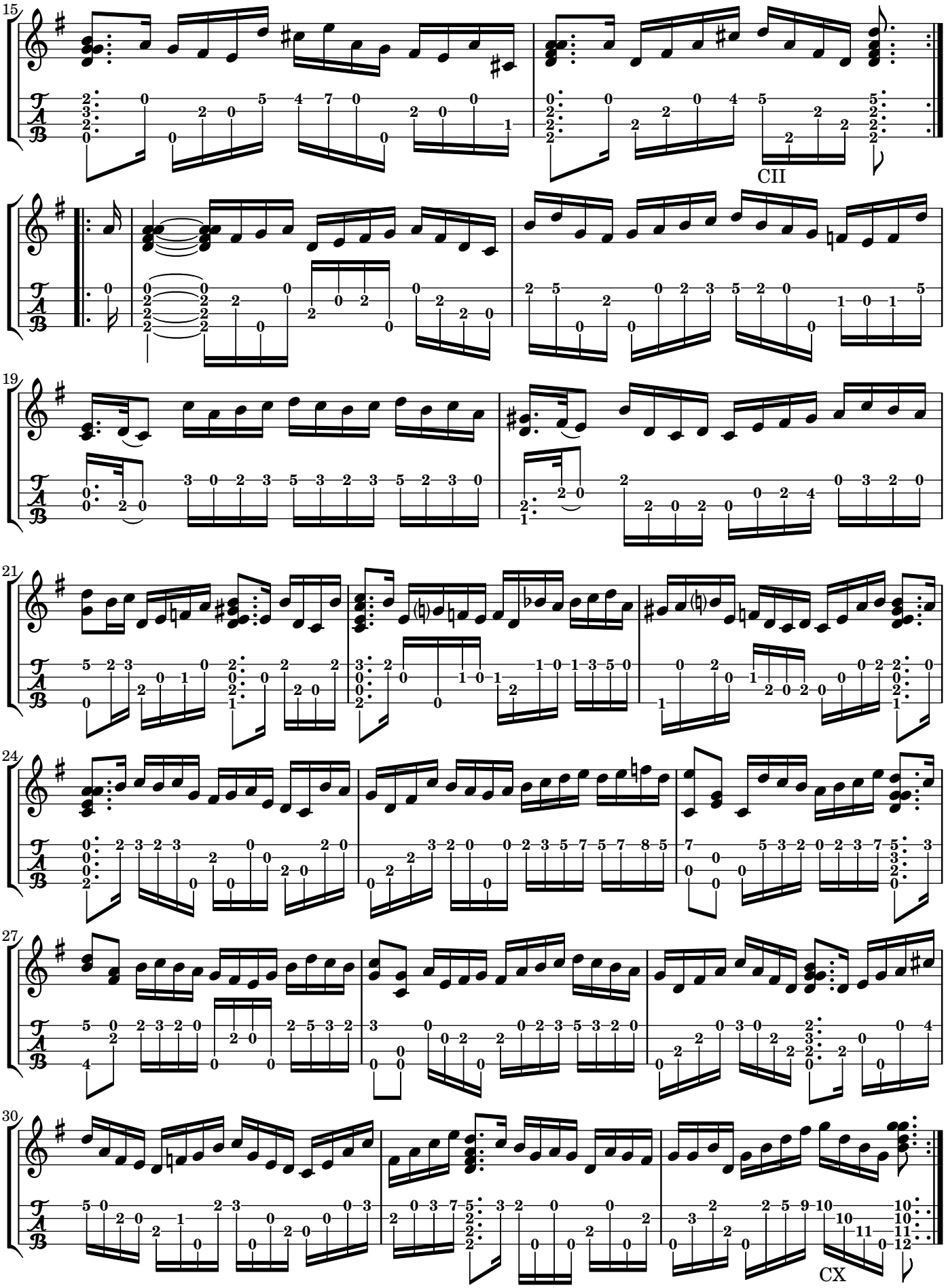
Allemande

from Cello Suite No 1

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

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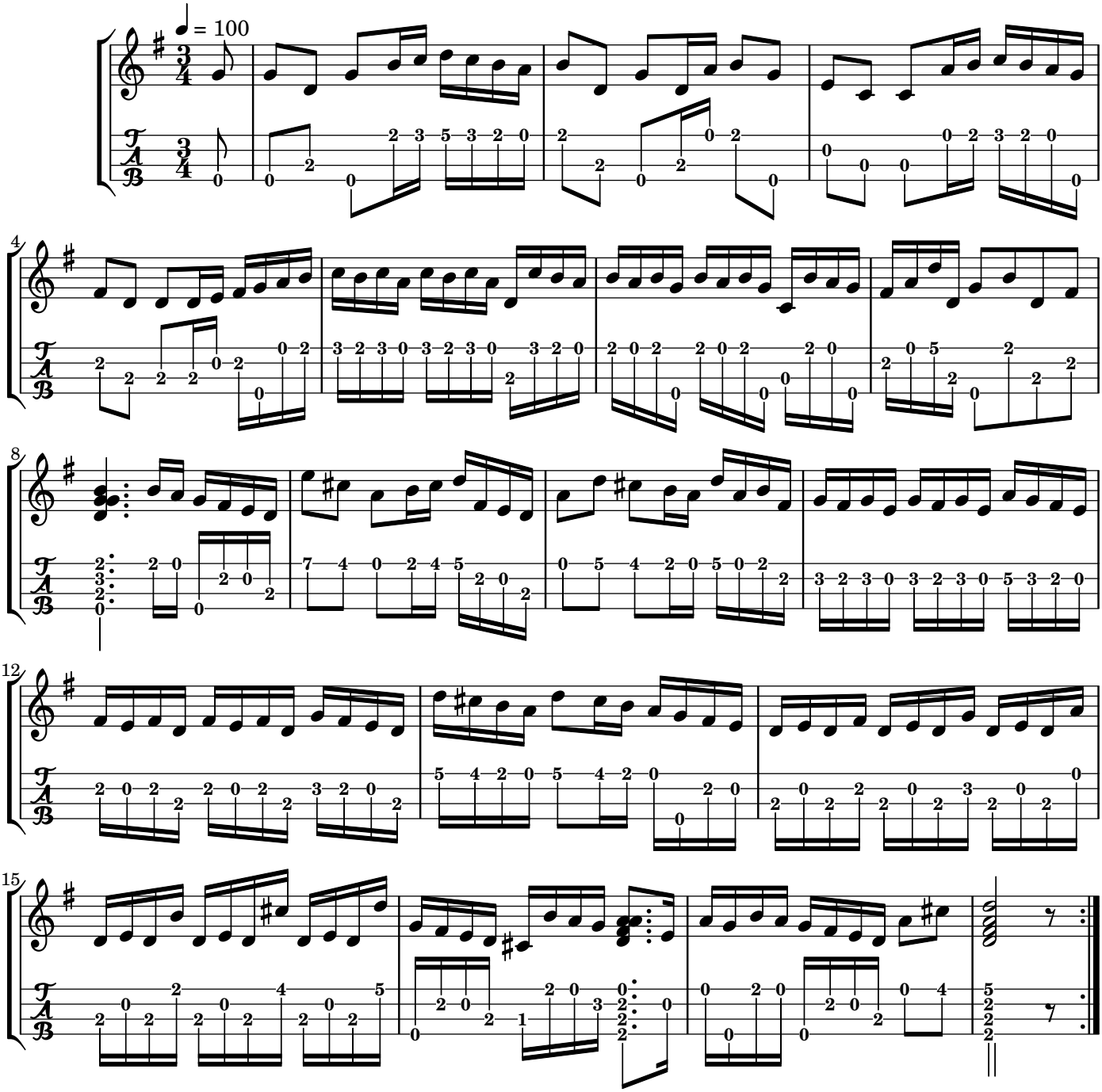
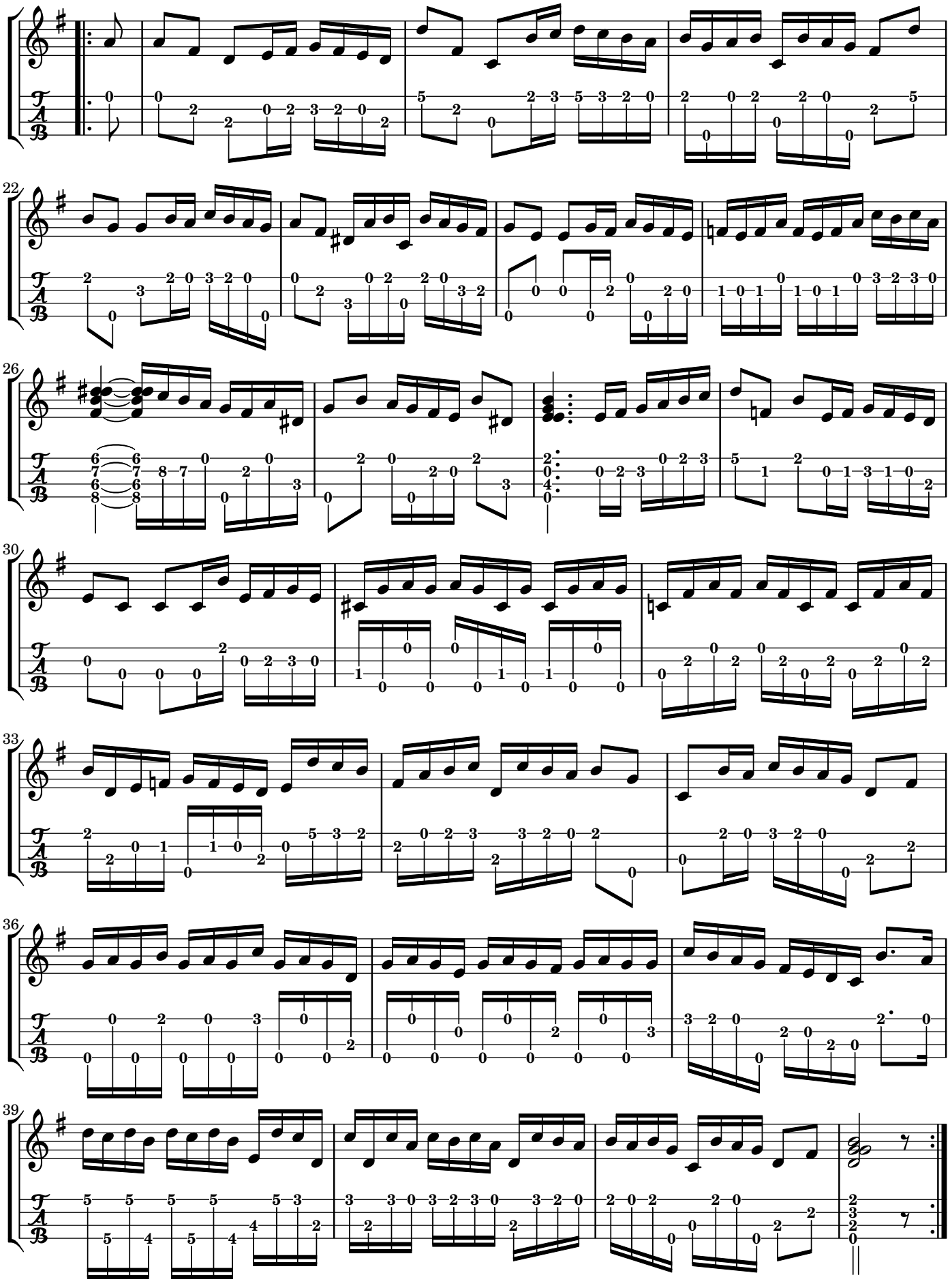
Courante

from Cello Suite No 1

J S Bach

arr T E Preece



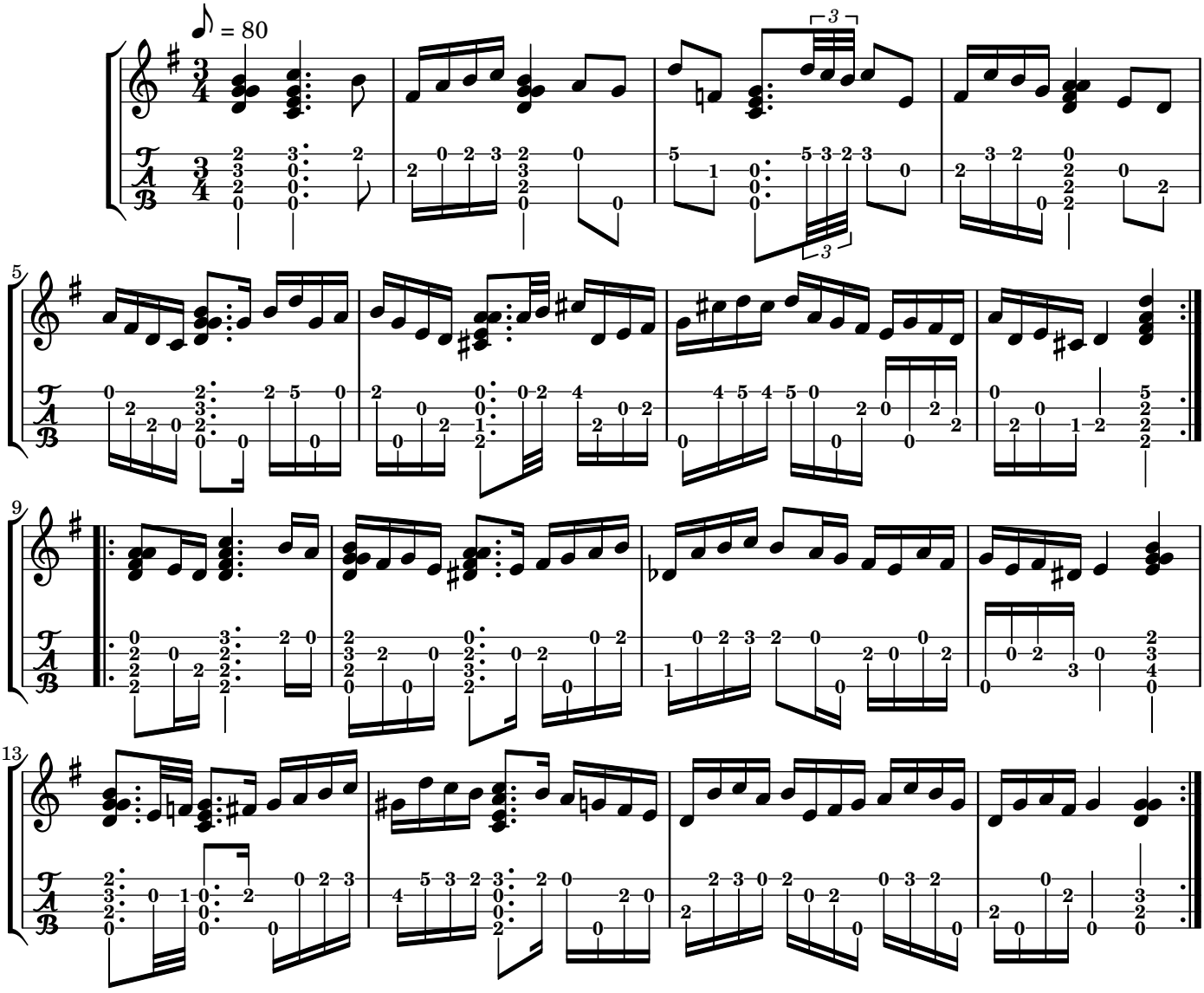


Sarabande

from Cello Suite No 1

J S Bach

arr T E Preece



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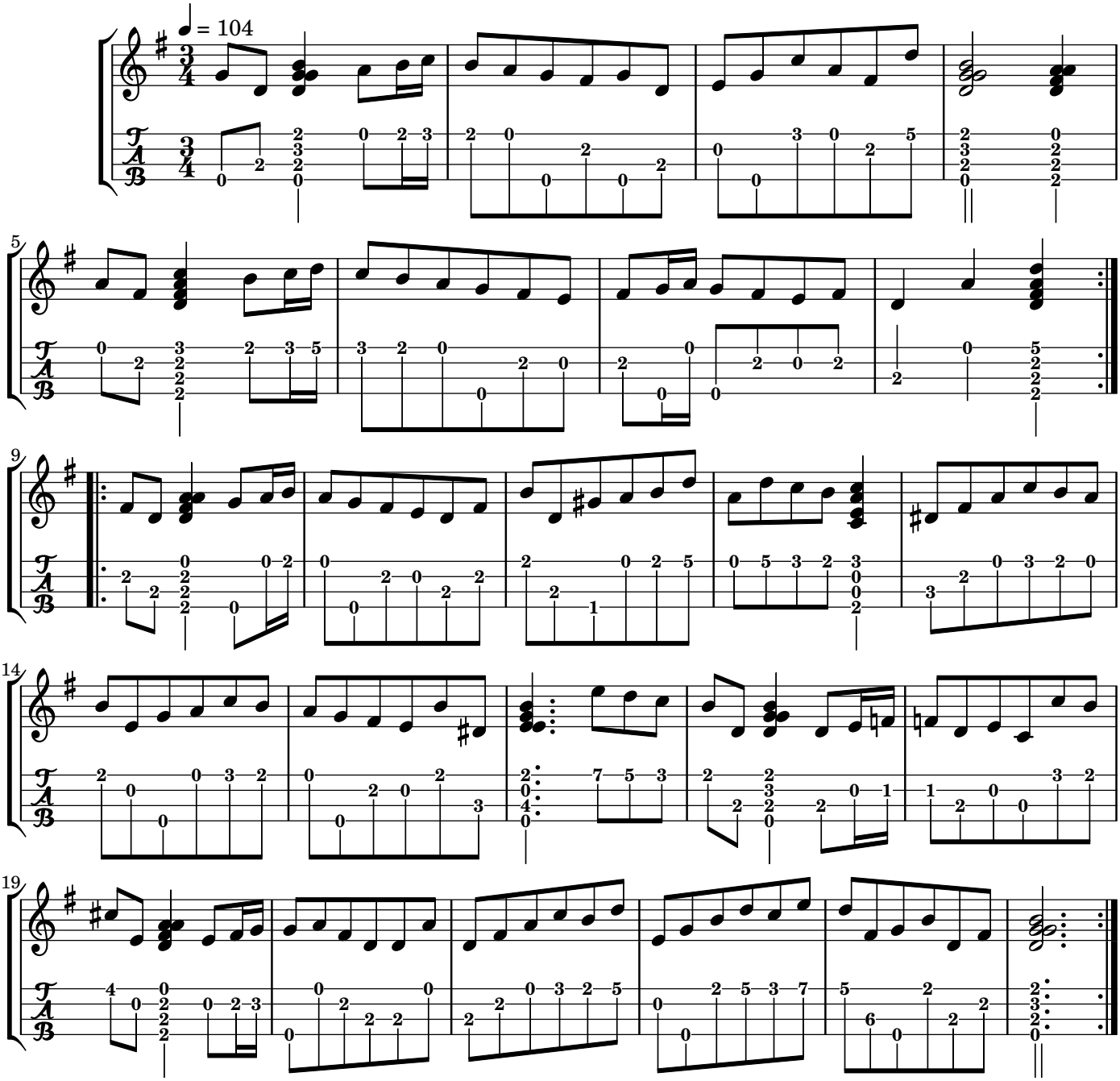
Minuets

from Cello Suite No 1

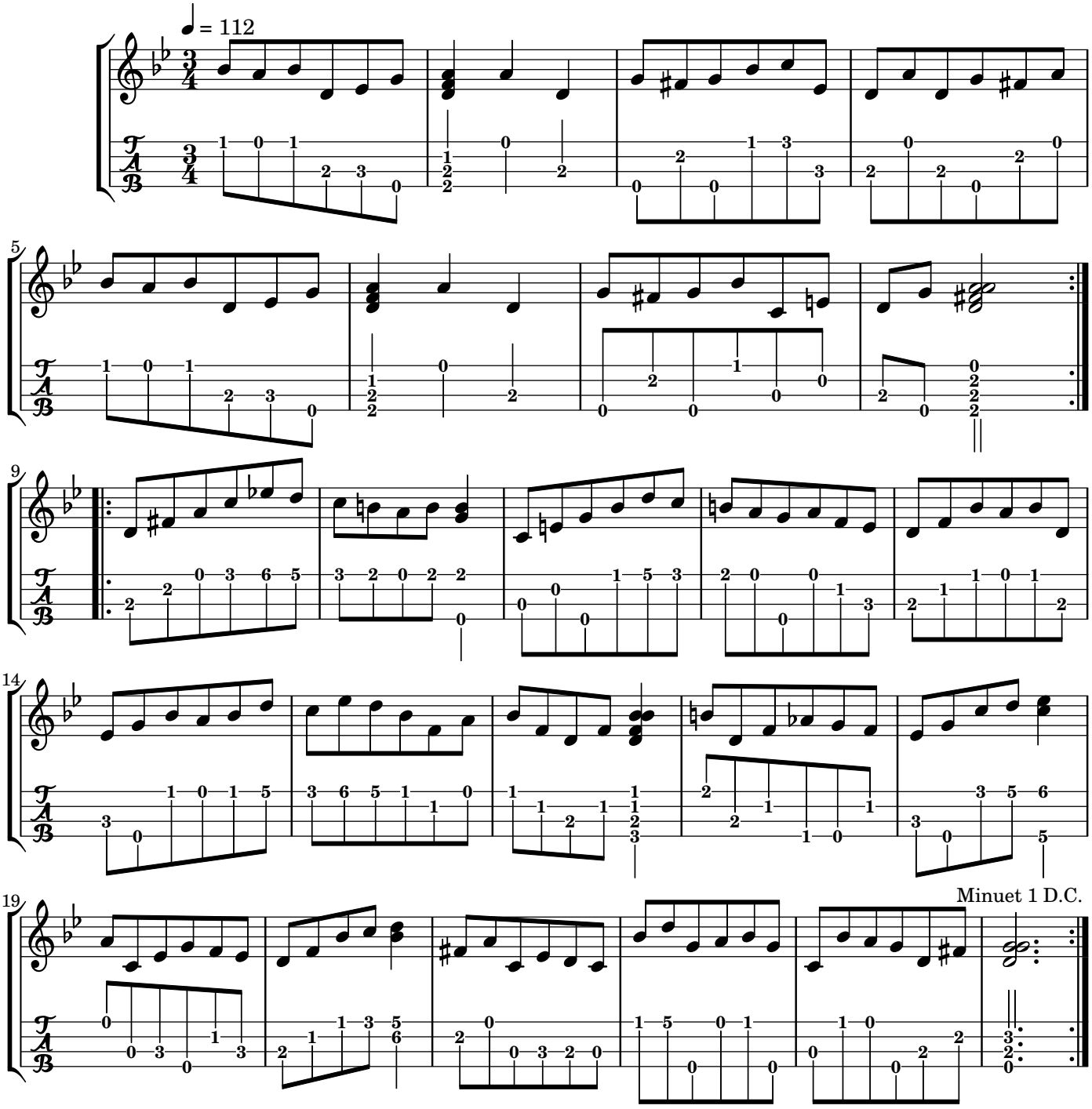
J S Bach

arr T E Preece

Minuet 1



Minuet 2

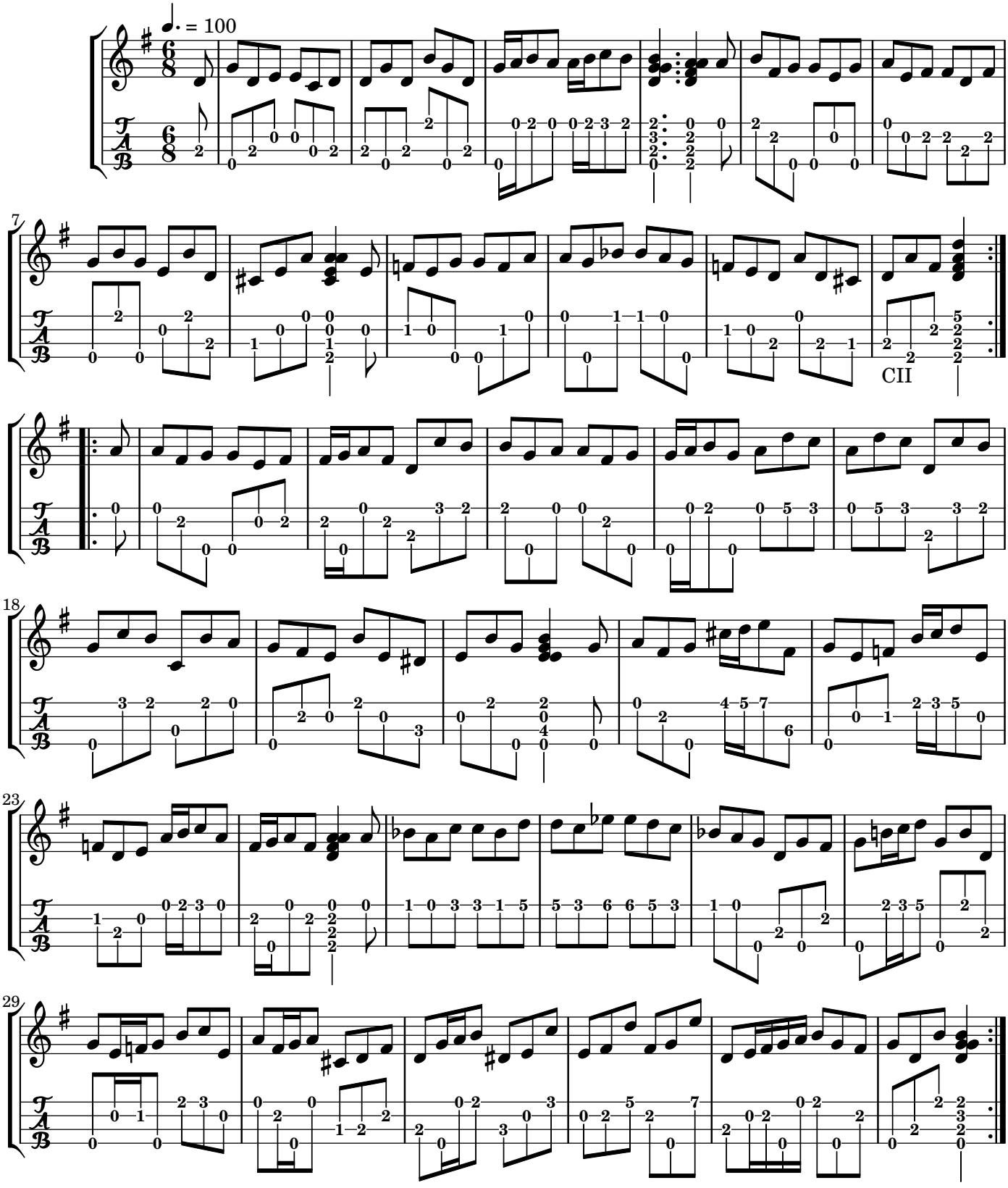


Gigue

from Cello Suite No 1

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

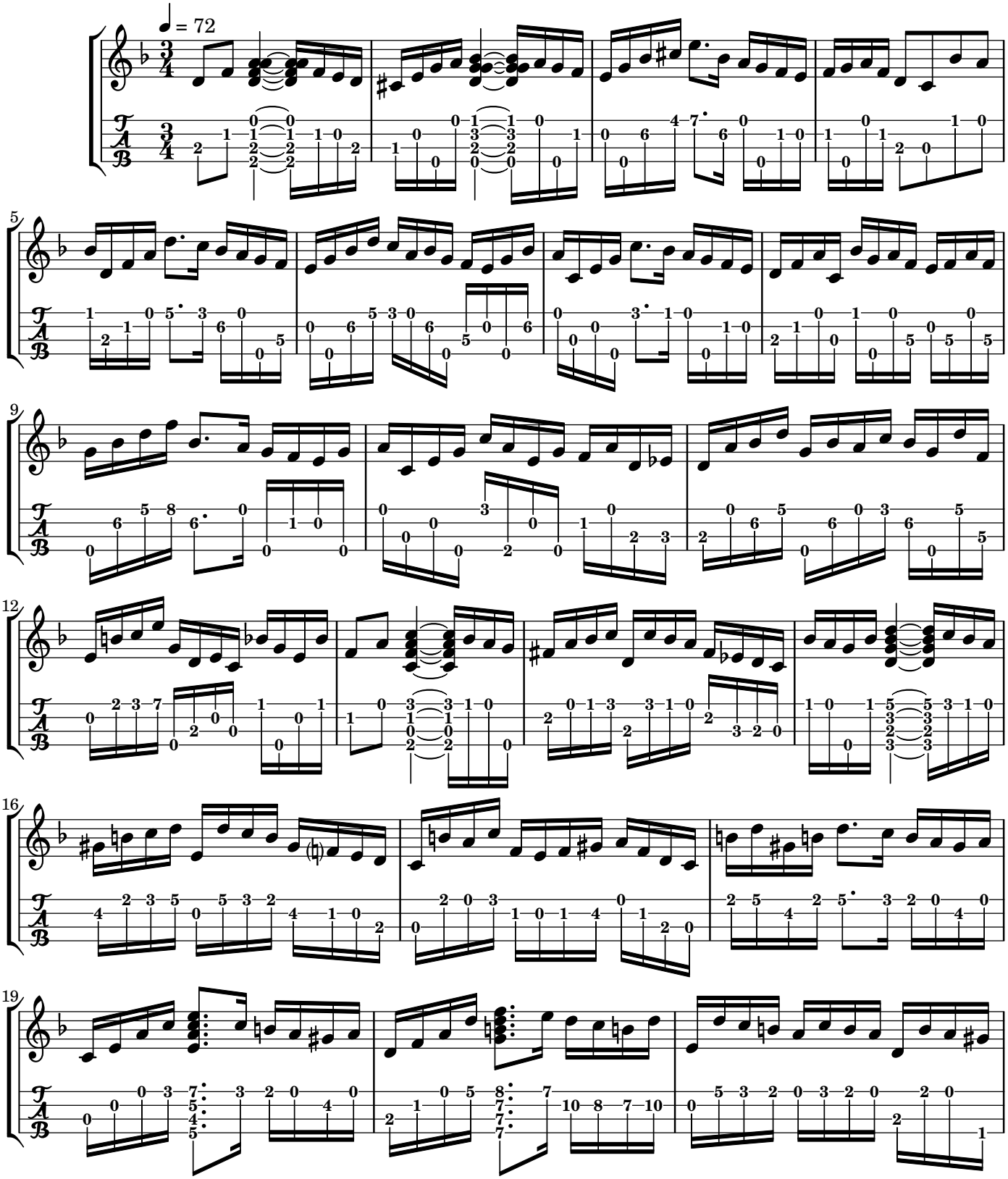


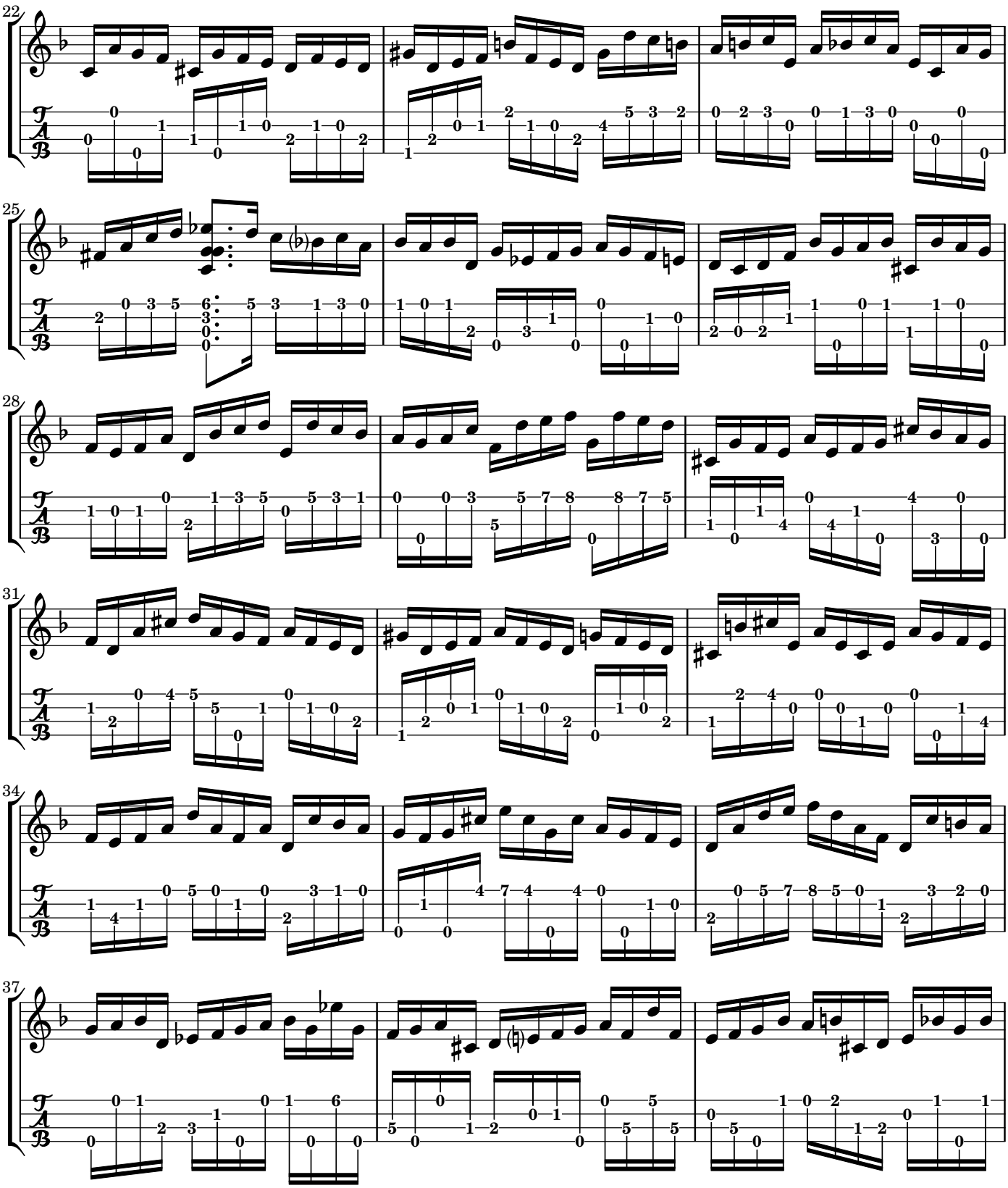
Prelude

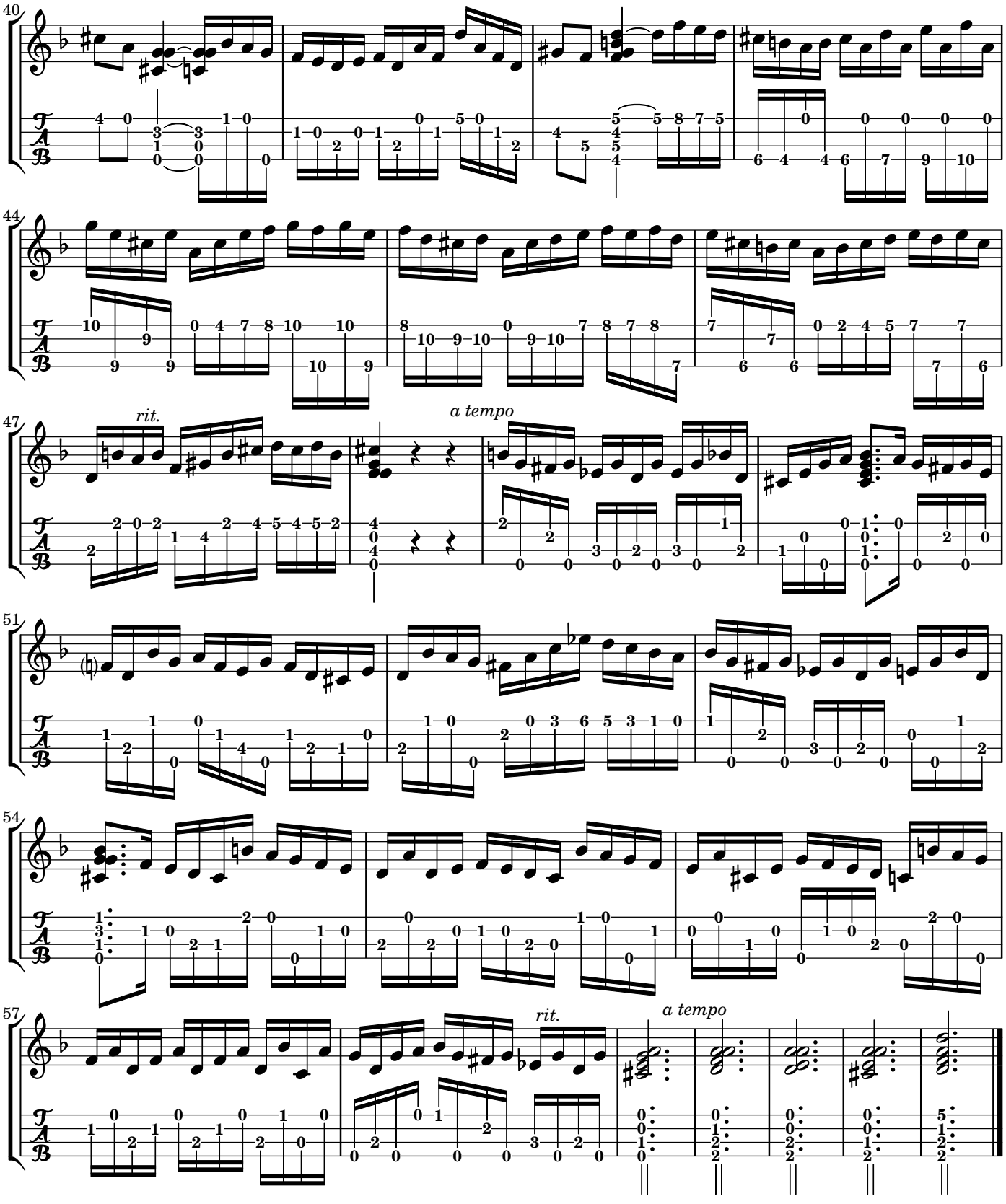
from Cello Suite No 2

J S Bach

arr T E Preece



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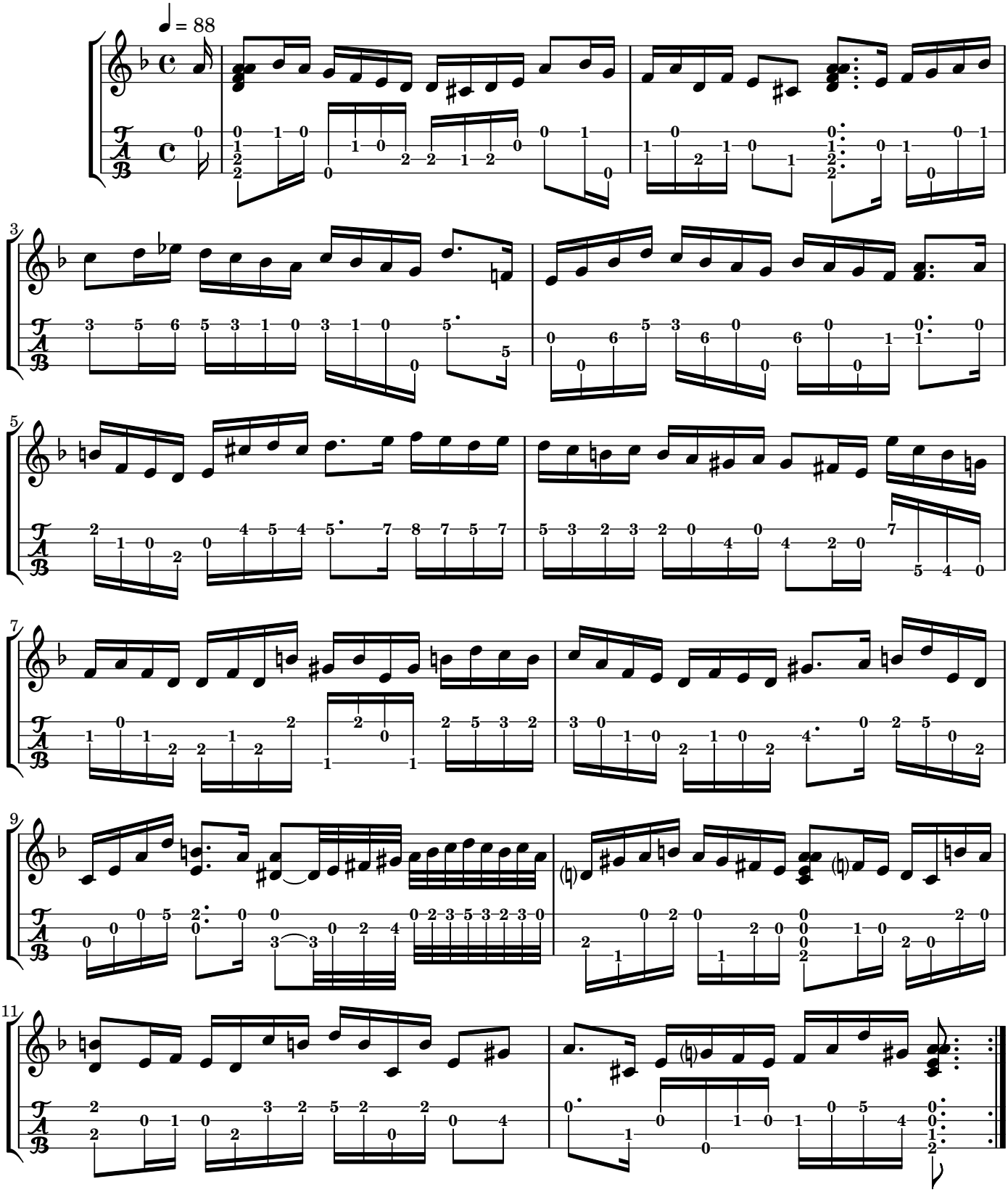
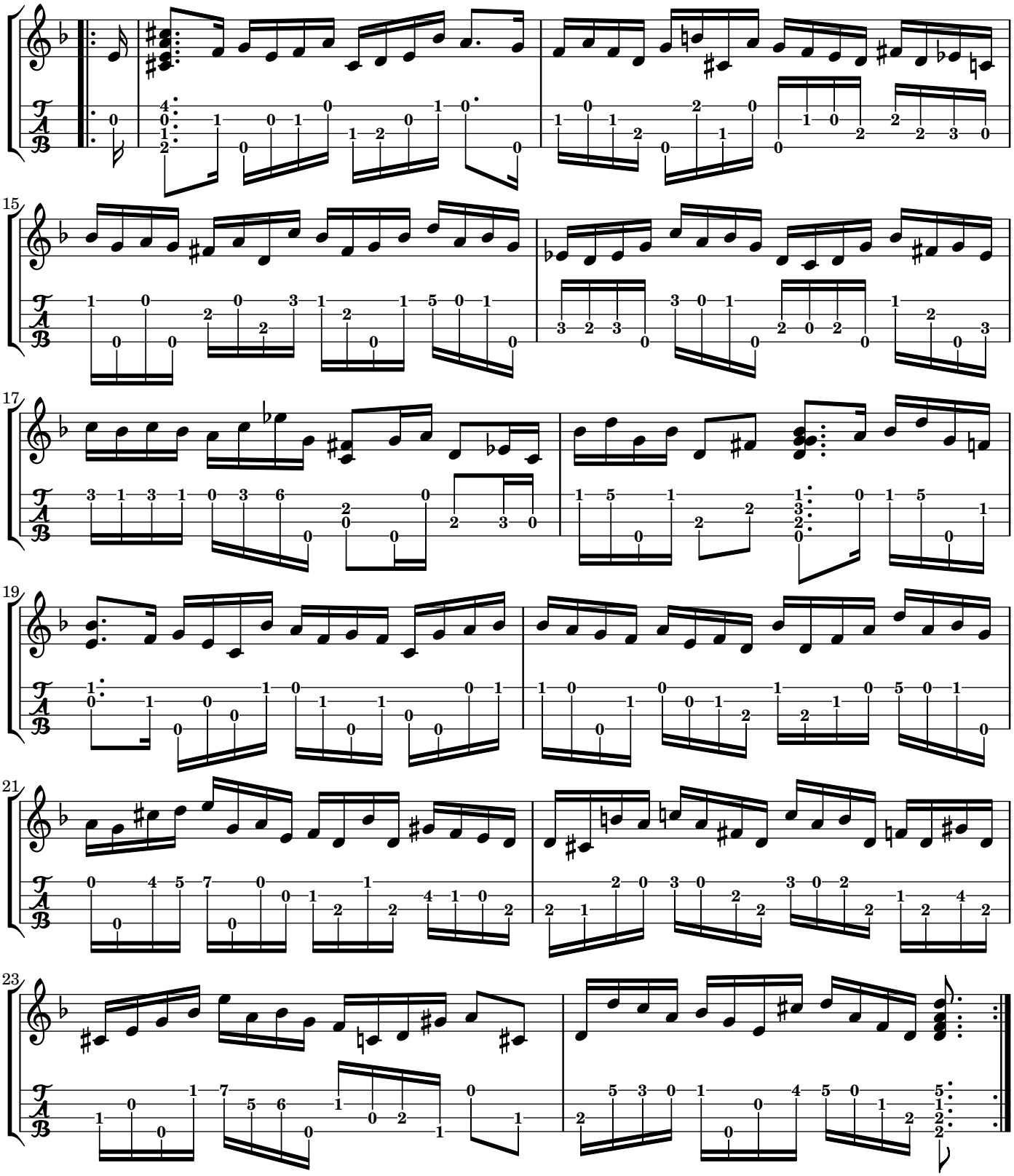
Allemande

from Cello Suite No 2

J S Bach

arr T E Preece



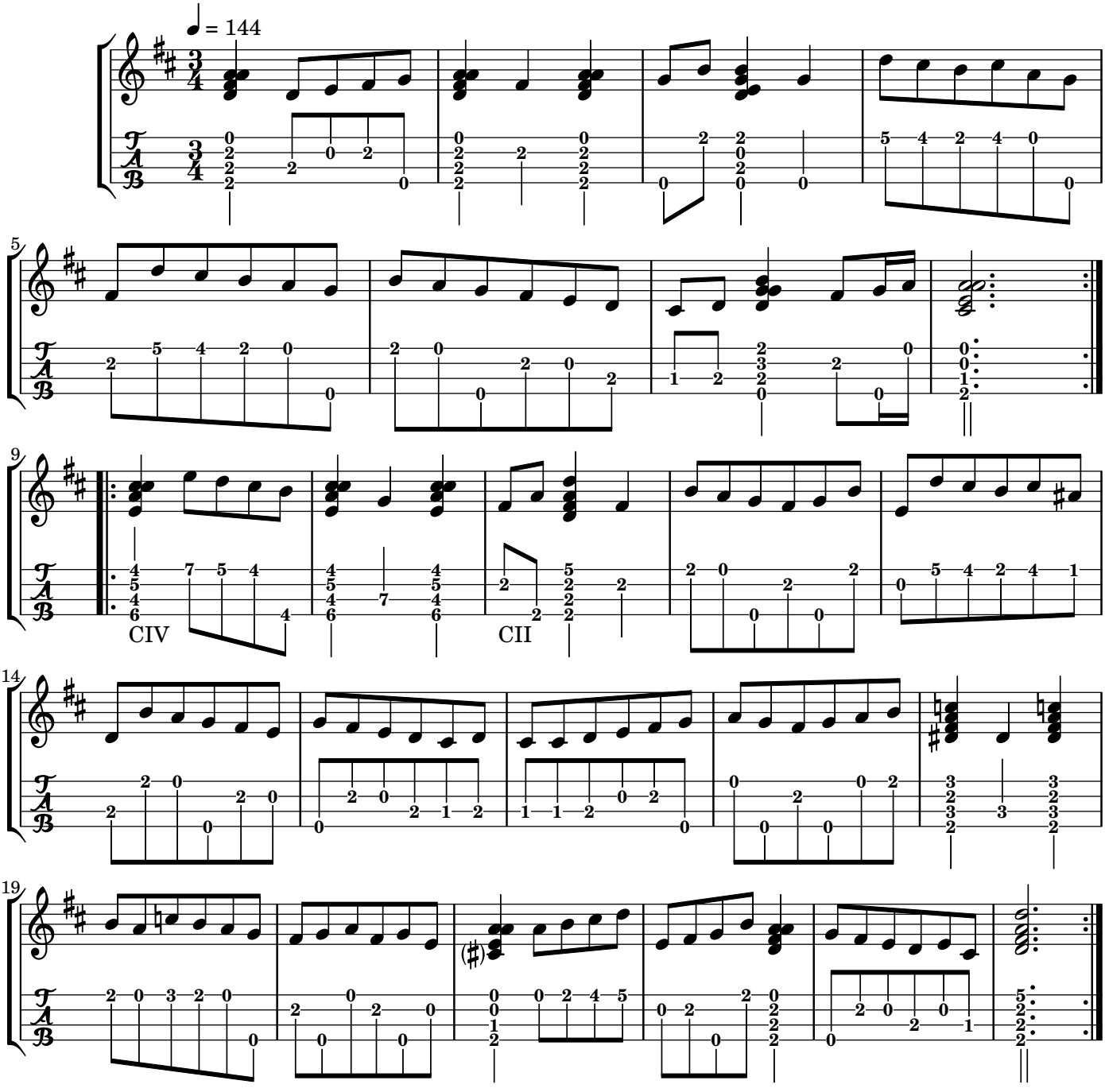


Minuet 2

from Cello Suite No 2

J S Bach

arr T E Preece



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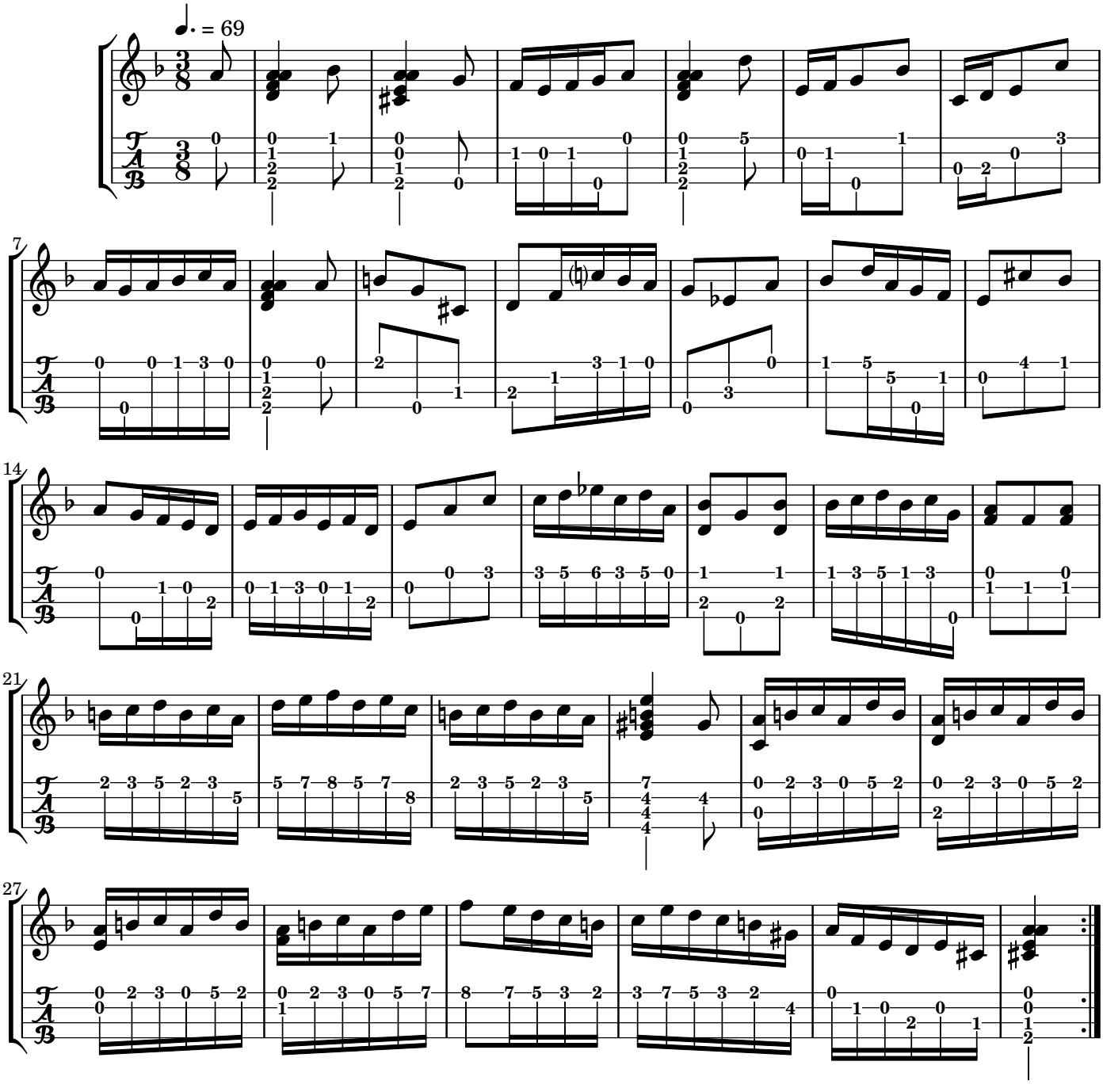
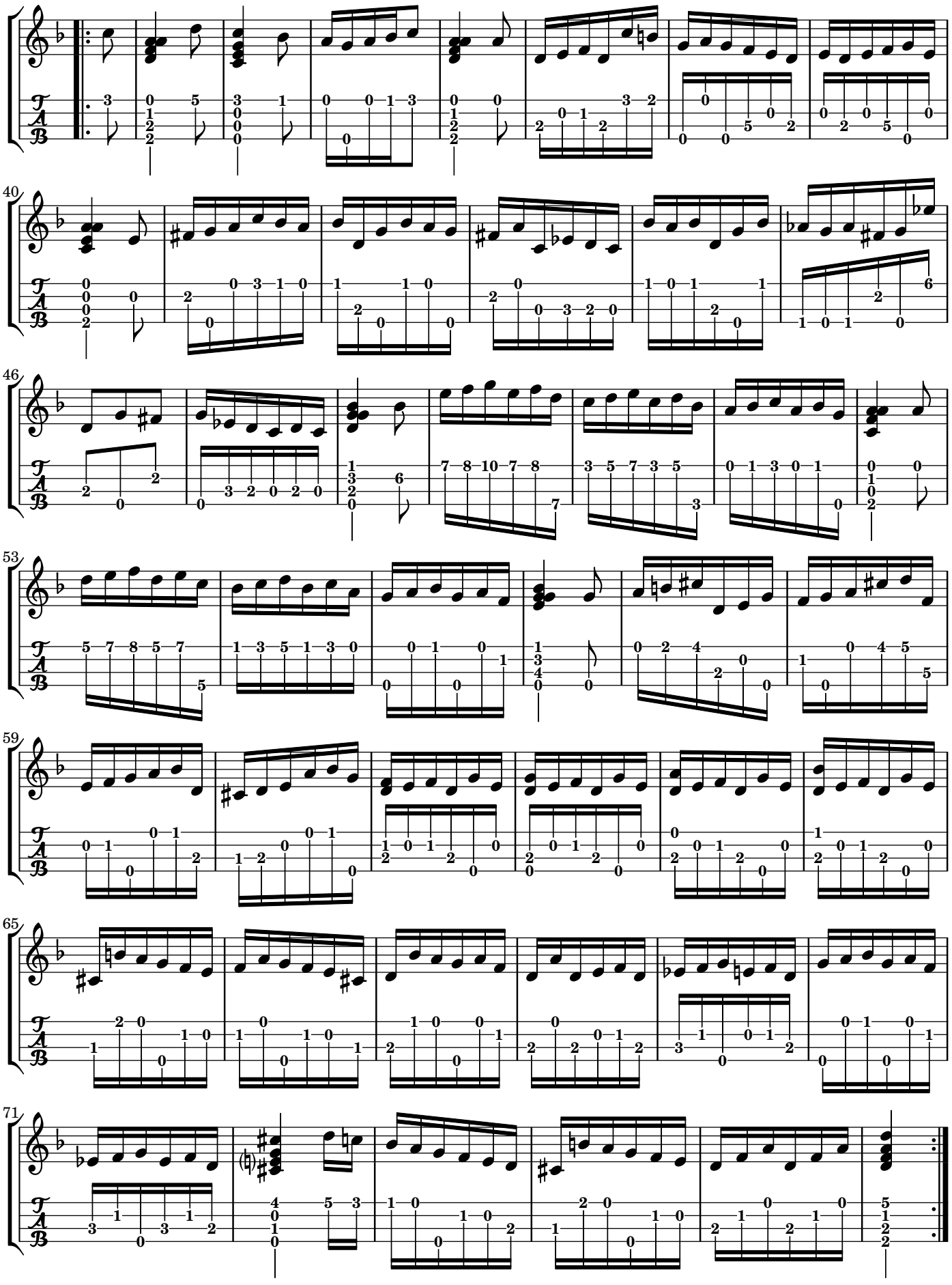
Gigue

from Cello Suite No 2

J S Bach

arr T E Preece





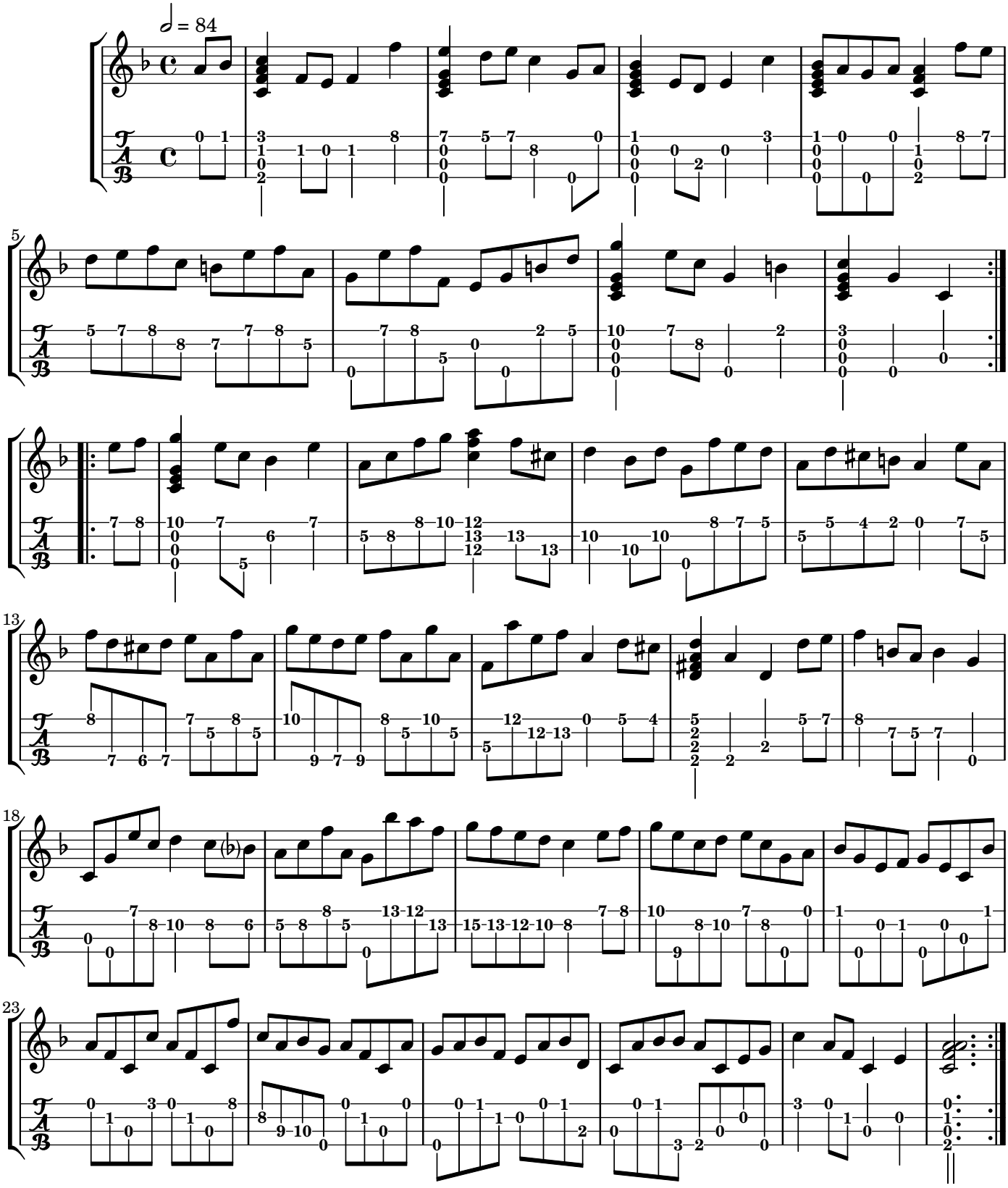
Bourrées

from Cello Suite No 3

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

Bourrée 1



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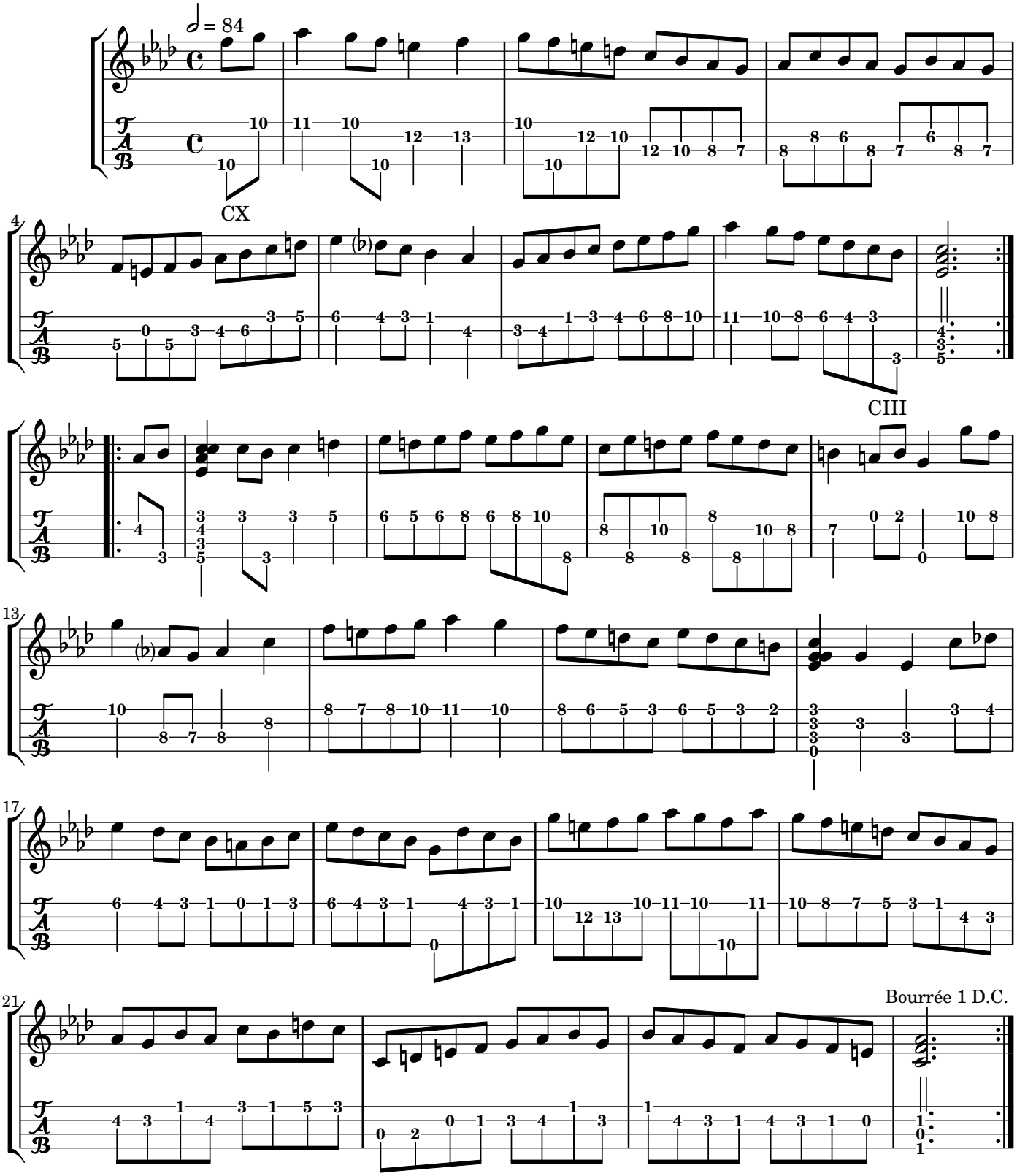
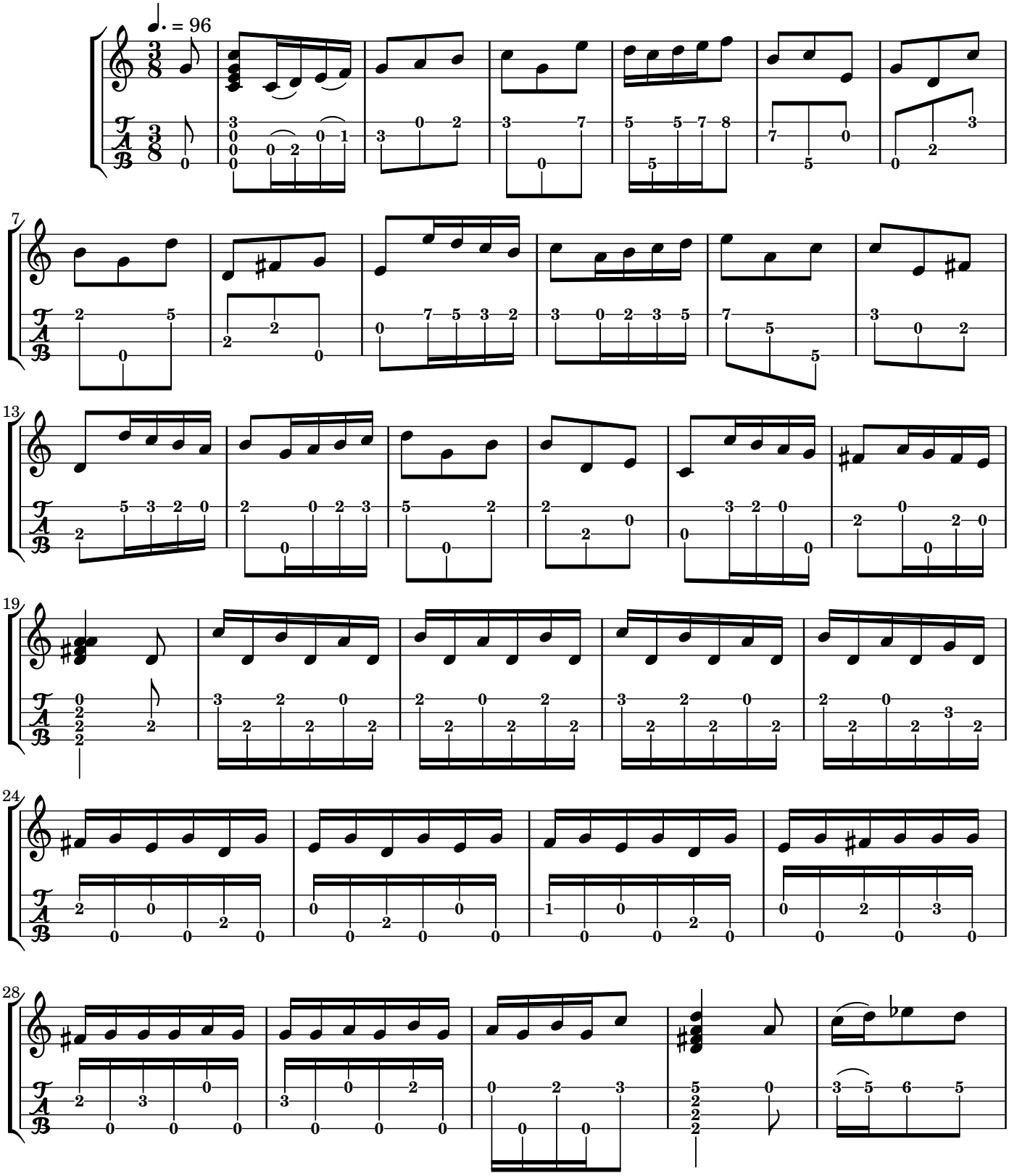


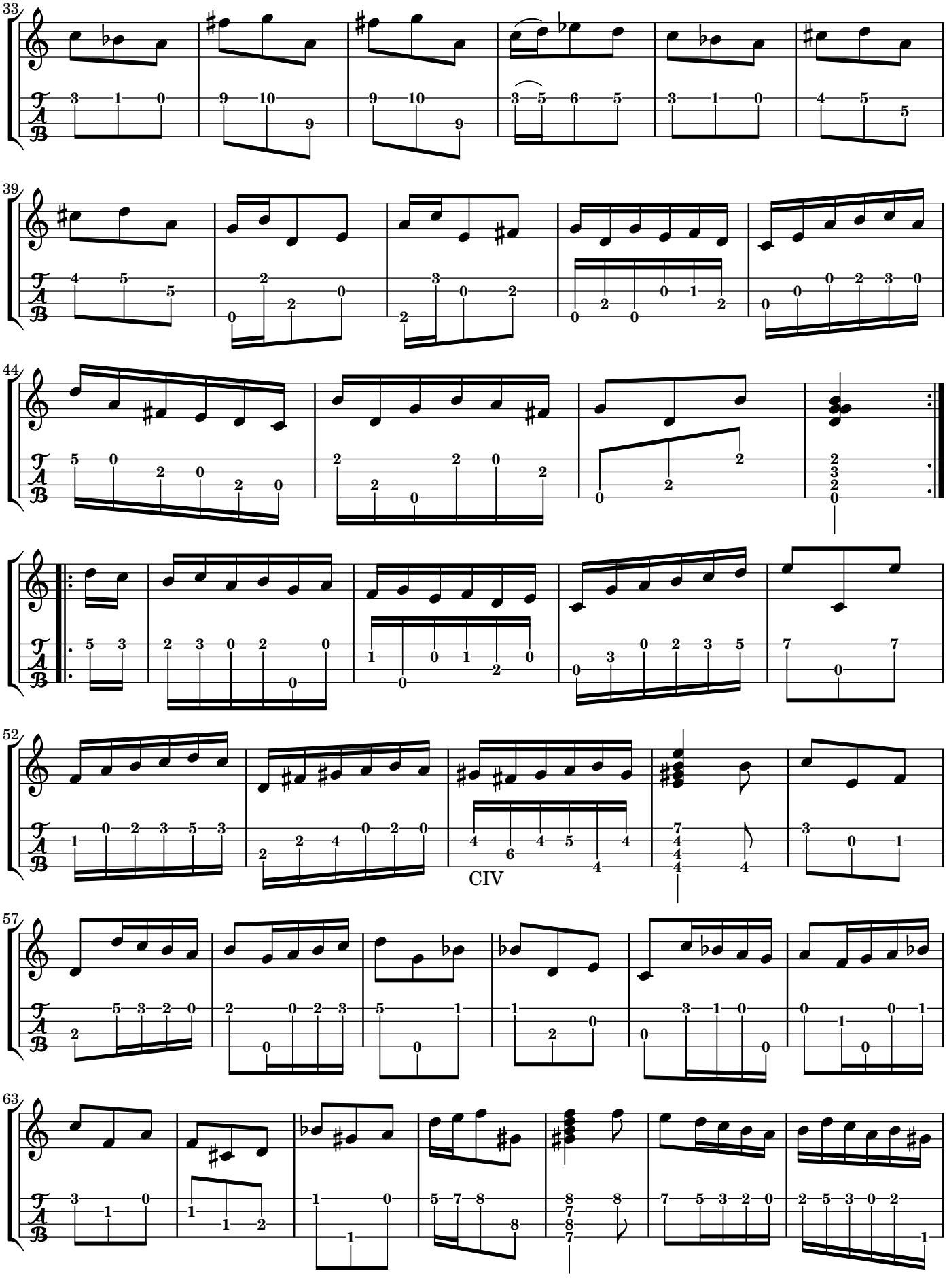
Gigue

from Cello Suite No 3

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

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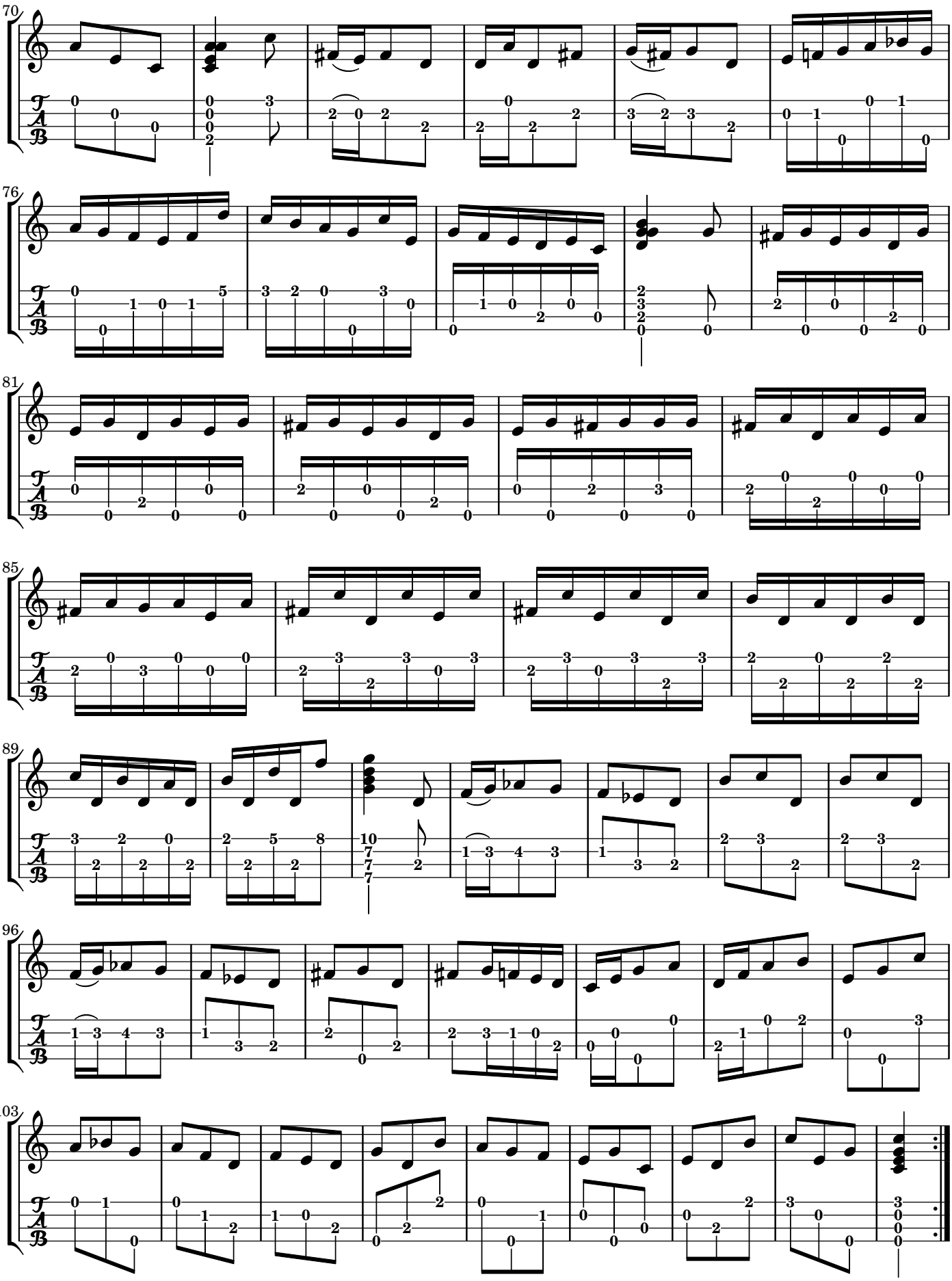
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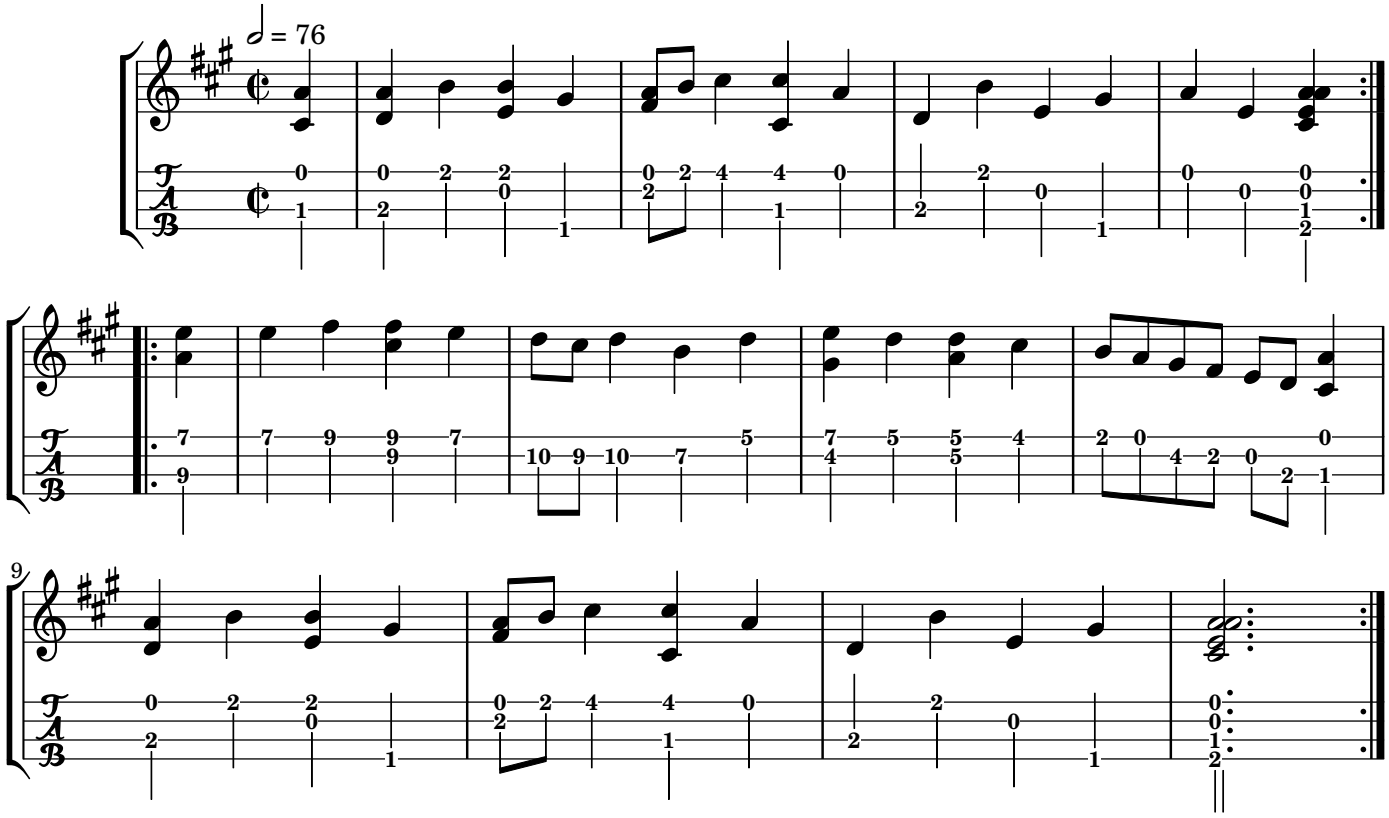
Bourrée 2

from Cello Suite No 4

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

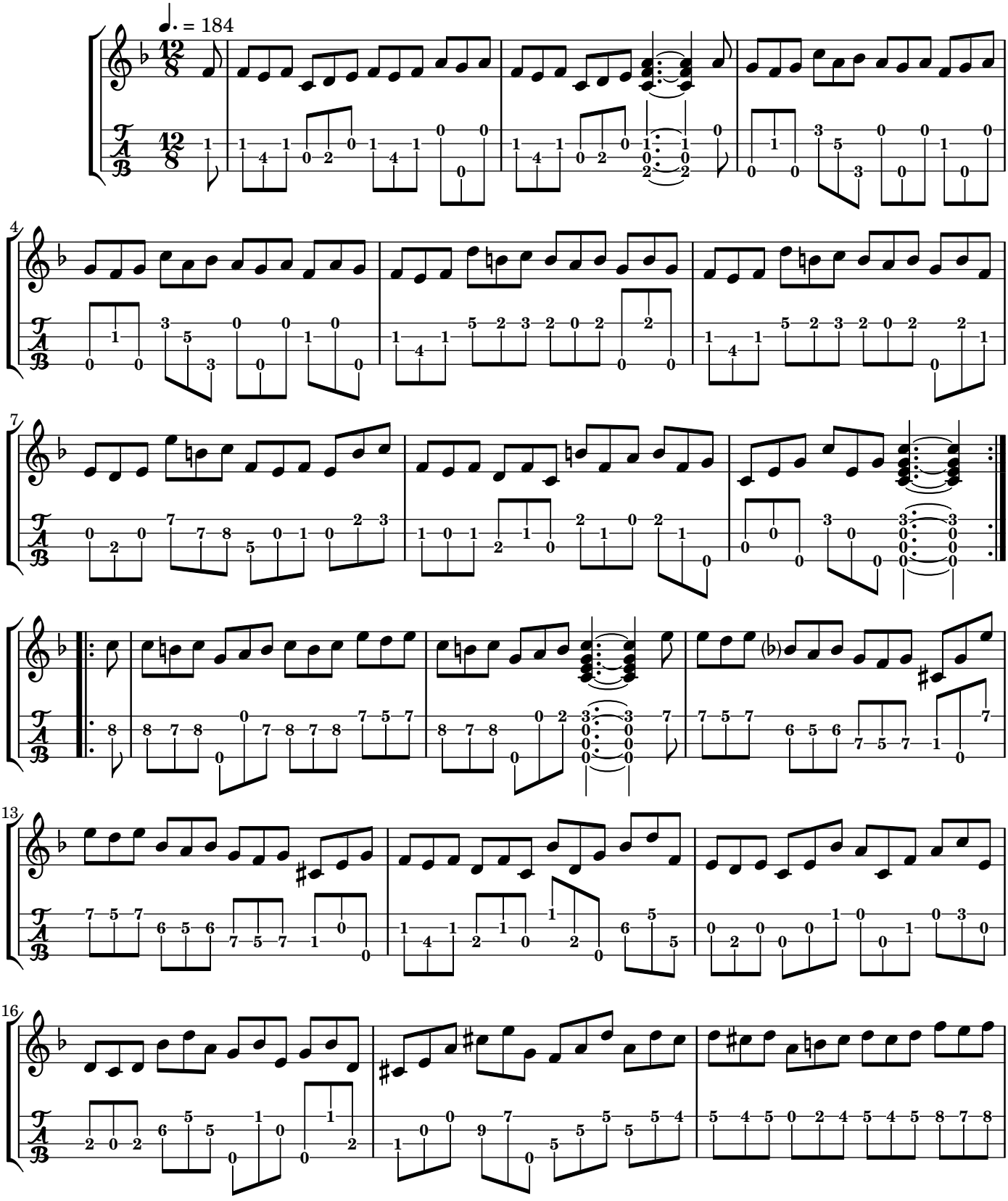


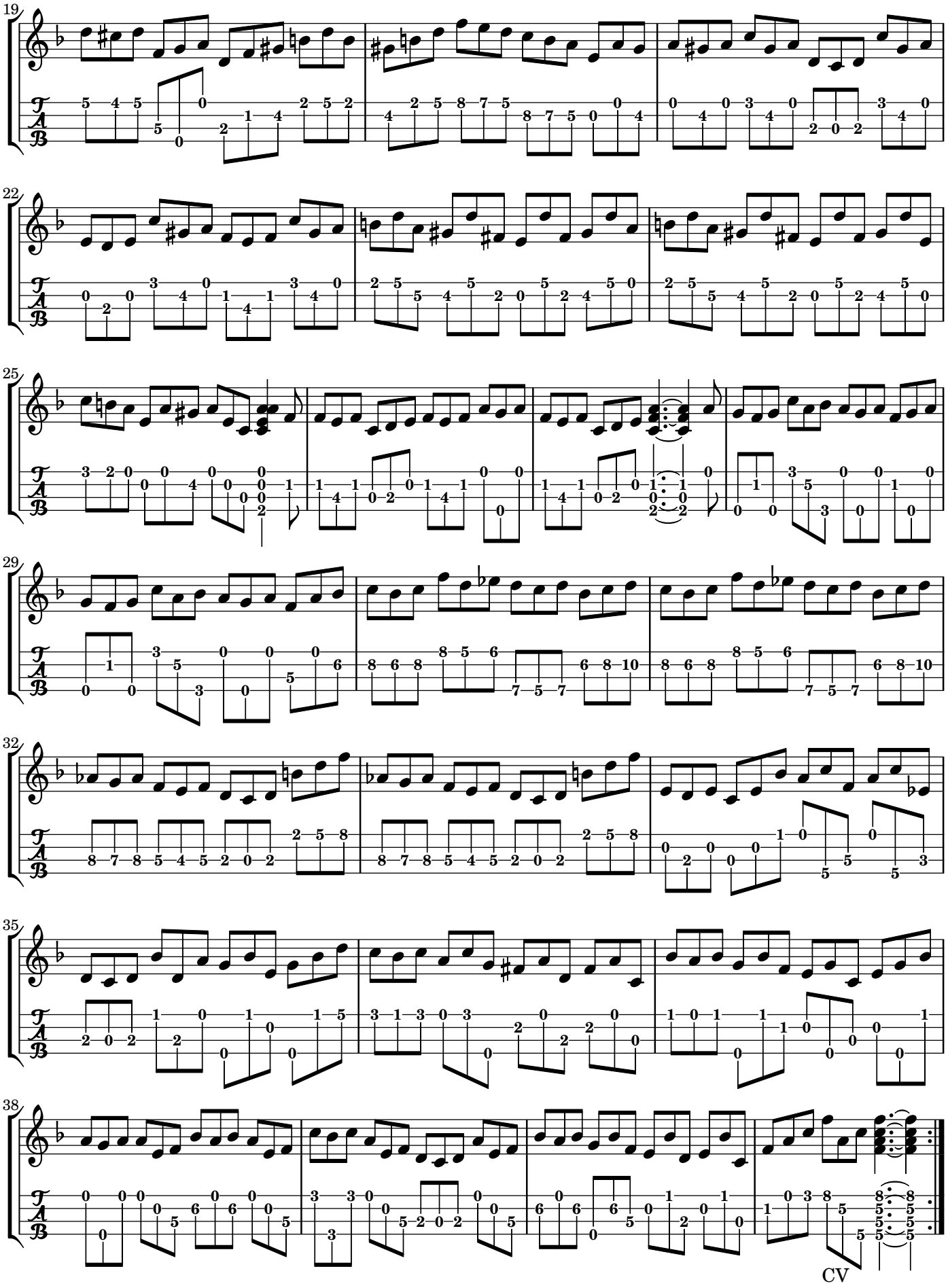
Gigue

from Cello Suite No 4

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

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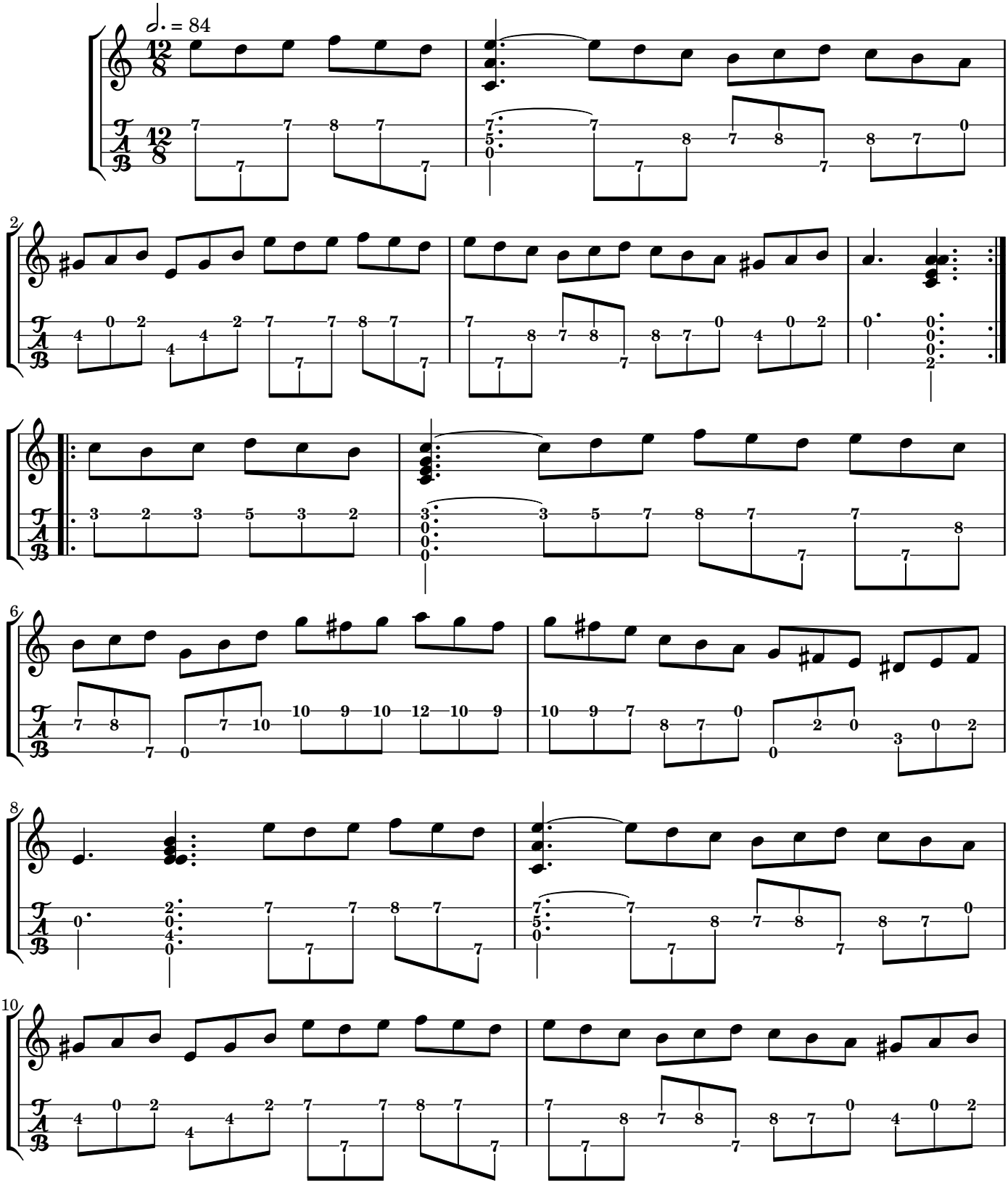
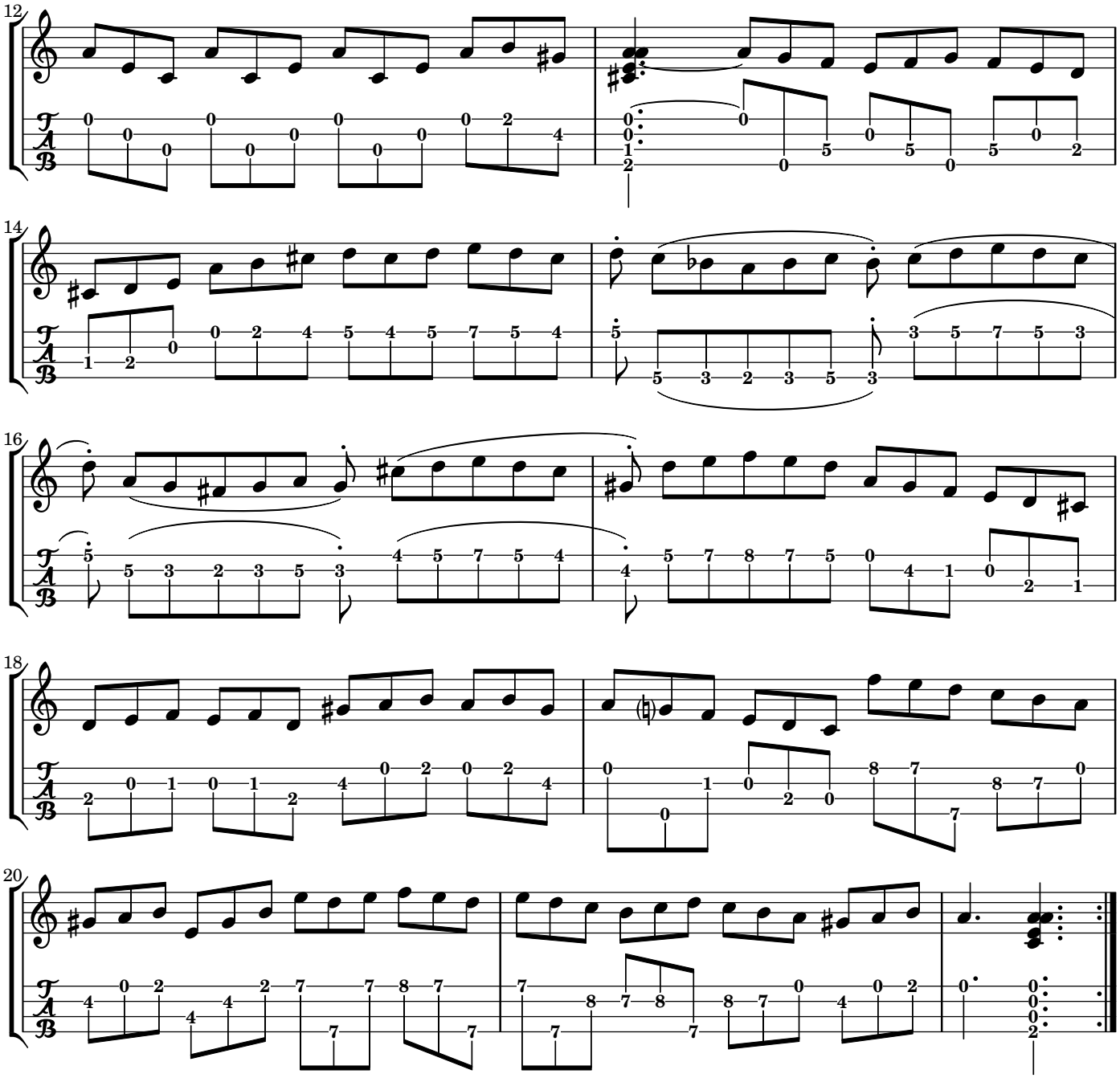
Gavotte 2

from Cello Suite No 5

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

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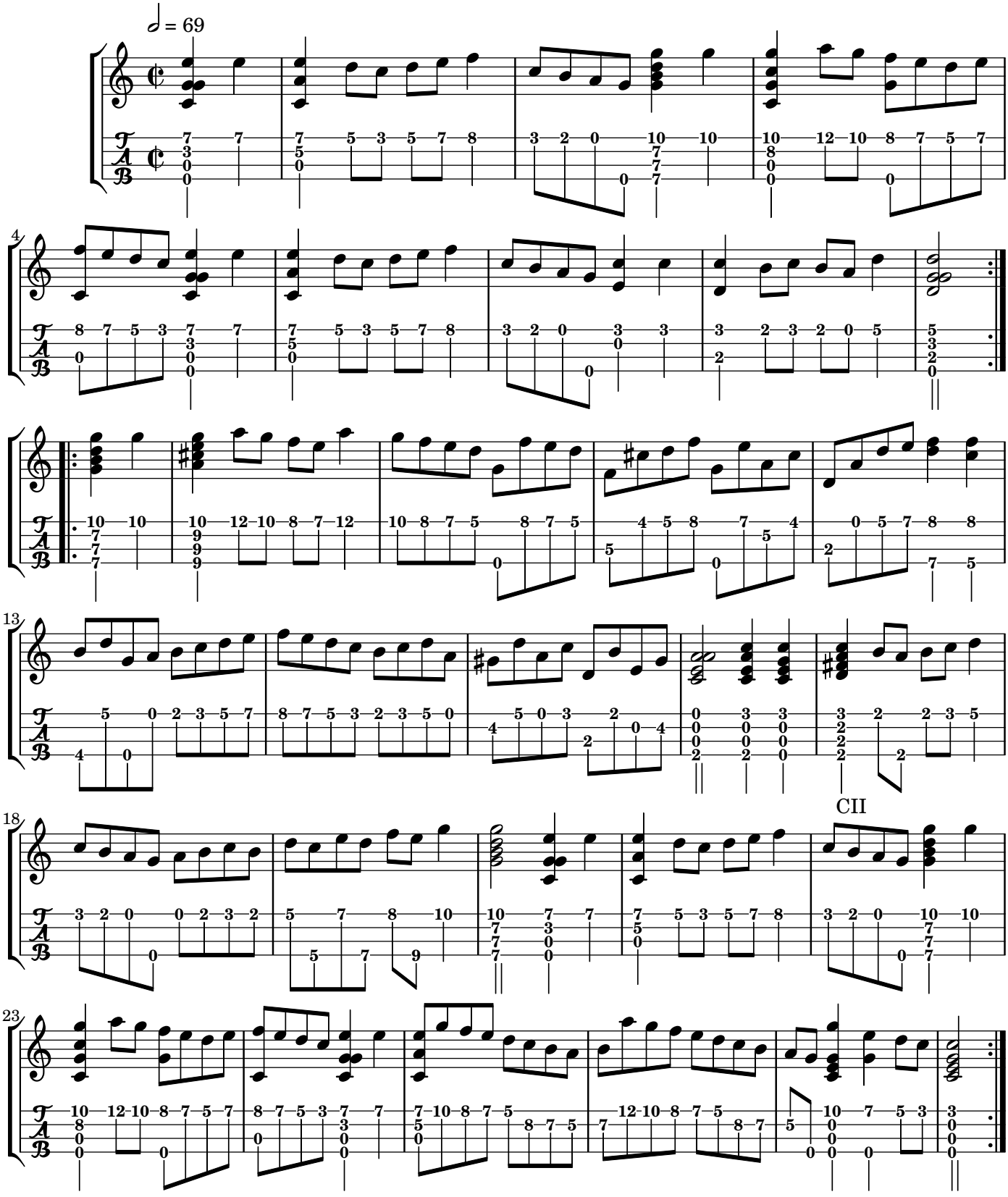
Gavottes

from Cello Suite No 6

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

Gavotte 1



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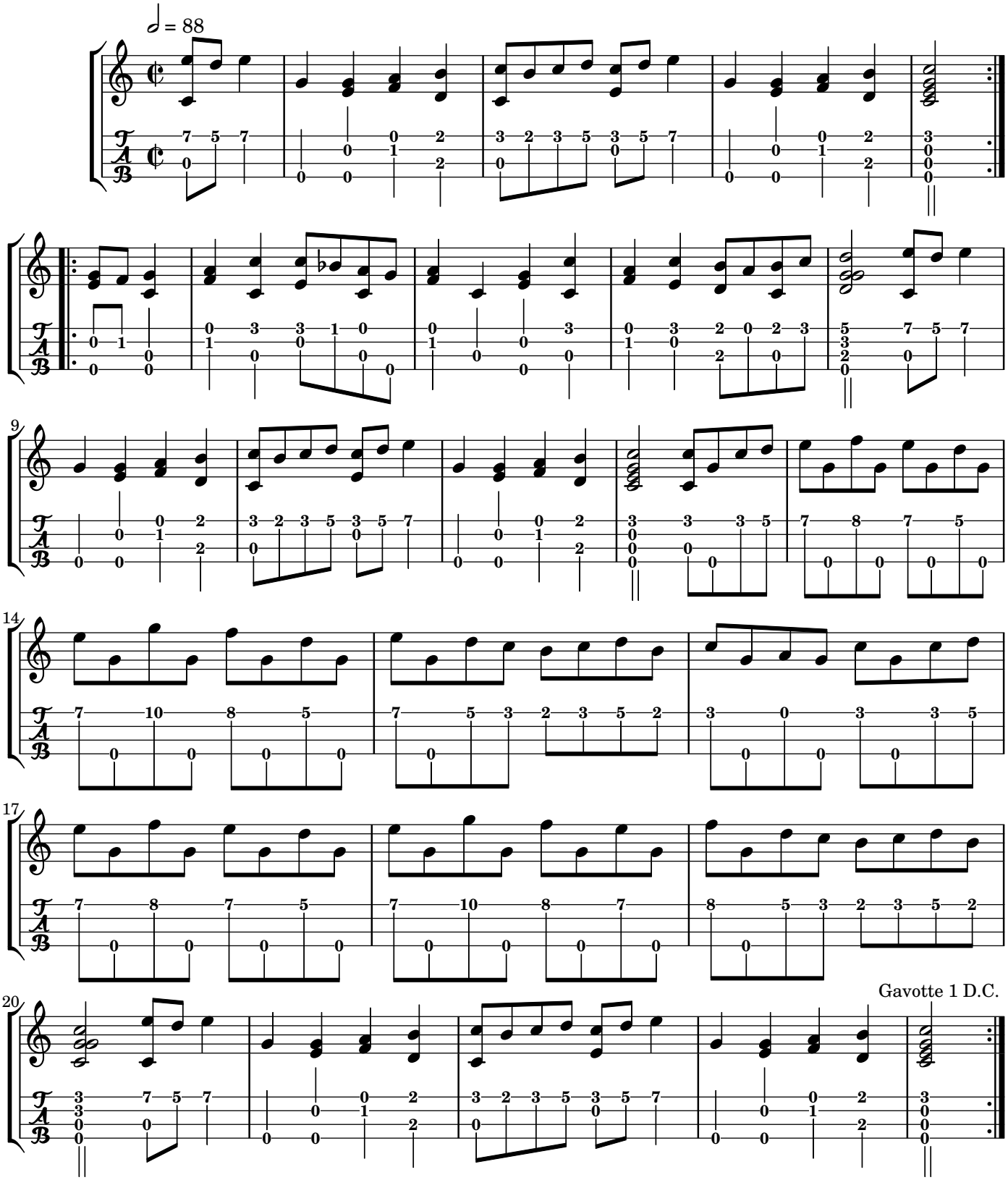
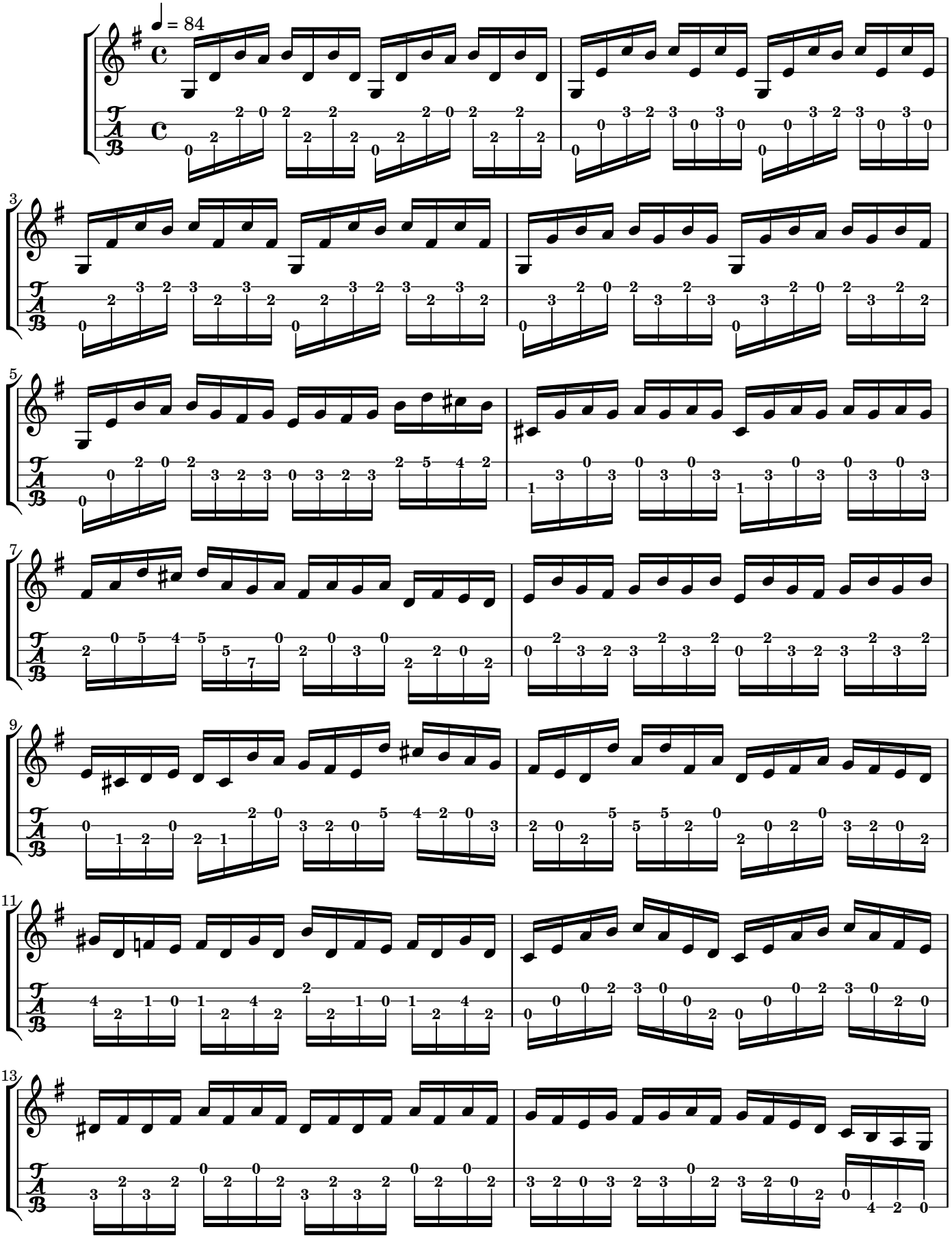


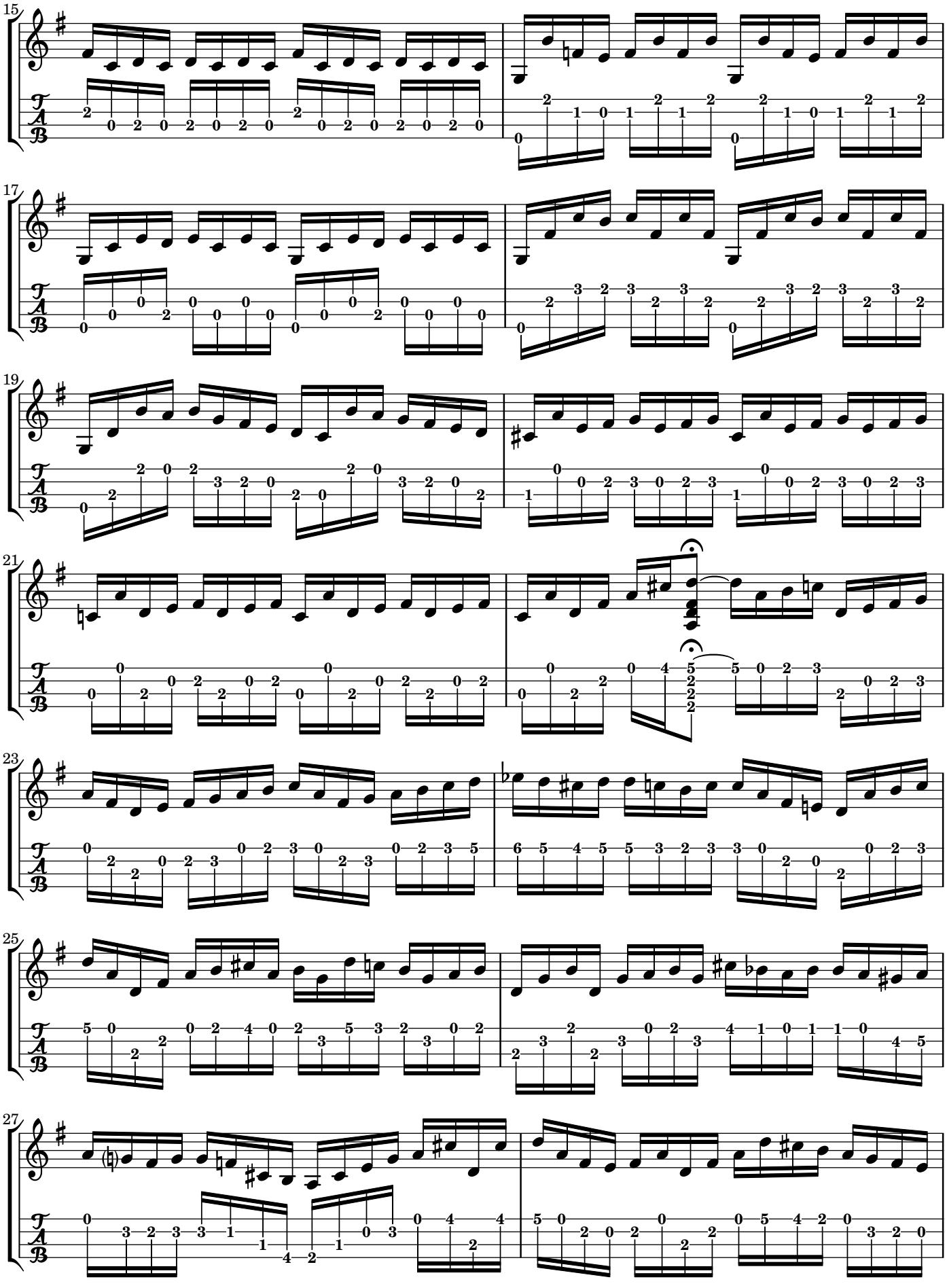
Prelude No 1

for Low-G Ukulele

J S Bach

arr T E Preece

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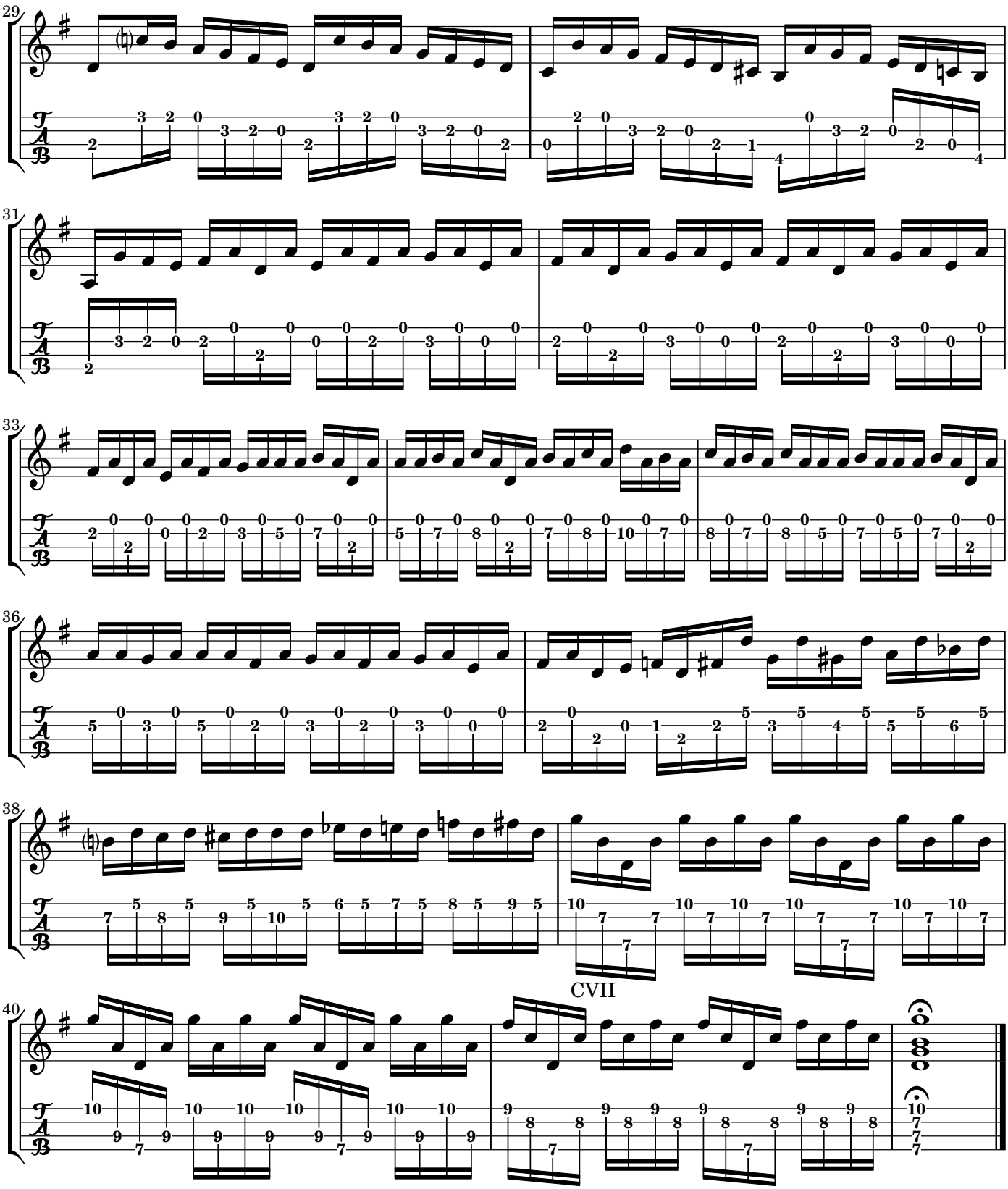
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