

# **Jean-Philippe Rameau**

**Premier Livre de Pièces de Clavecin  
(Paris, 1706)**

**Edited from the original printing  
By Tom Ó Drisceoil**

**2011**



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## PREFACE

Up until fairly recently, the only edition of Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Premier Livre de Pièces de Clavecin* that was widely available on the internet was the old *Œuvres Complètes*, edited by Camille Saint-Saëns in 1895<sup>1</sup>. This edition (reprinted by Dover) was the first modern edition of this previously little known collection; and, while it was excellent for its time, it is deficient in a number of respects. The ornaments were 'modernised' to suit late-19<sup>th</sup> century practice. Almost all *ports de voix* and *cadences* were changed to trills, appoggiaturas and other such ornaments common to romantic music, and *pincés* were removed entirely; all *arpeggements* were written out – sometimes incorrectly. In a number of instances, the harmony was changed (most notably in the *Prélude*).

It was not until 1958 that a proper scholarly edition was finally prepared to suit historically informed practice. This was edited by Erwin Jacobi, and was published by Bärenreiter, receiving several revisions and 15 separate printings (as of 2006). However, Jacobi carried a number of mistakes and faulty readings forward from the Saint-Saëns, and a few of these were not corrected in any revision.

Twenty-one years later, in 1979, Kenneth Gilbert prepared a new and exemplary edition for Heugel's *Le Pupitre* series<sup>2</sup>. It was Gilbert who first recognised that the sign at the end of the unmeasured section of the *Prélude* (interpreted by both Saint-Saëns and Jacobi as a tie) is in fact a *chapeau*, and indicates that the unmeasured section is to be repeated.

The lack of a freely available reliable edition of the *Premier Livre* on the internet seemed to me a gaping hole (considering the work's importance), and so I decided to create this present edition.

### The *Premier Livre*

In 1706, when the *Premier Livre* was published, Rameau was relatively unknown. A friend of Louis Marchand, he had recently moved to Paris to establish himself as a composer. Rameau's book follows on from a number of fairly recent publications by important composers such as Marchand (1702), Clérambault (1704), Dandrieu (1704) and Gaspard Le Roux (1705), and it comes just before the second book of Jacquet de La Guerre (1707).

The work is comprised of the single suite in A minor, though it is not identified as such. Though the influence of Marchand and Jacquet de La Guerre can be detected in this single suite, nevertheless, the composer's individuality can be sensed quite clearly. The first *Allemande* and *Courante*, for instance, can stand alongside their longer counterparts in the *Nouvelles Suites*. The pair of Sarabandes are unusual in French music, and they are presumably intended to be played in an ABA design, the first being repeated after the second<sup>3</sup>. The *Prélude* is perhaps the most interesting movement in the present work. It is one of the latest examples of an unmeasured prelude, and its design shows the influence of Louis Couperin and of Jacquet de La Guerre (both of whom incorporated measured

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1 Paris: Durand, 1895.

2 Paris: Heugel, 1979. (LP 59)

3 Bates: French harpsichord music in the first decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. (Early Music, May 1989), p.186.

sections into unmeasured preludes).

The original printing of the *Premier Livre* survives in a single exemplar, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (shelf-mark Rés. Vm<sup>7</sup> 677). The scarcity of the work might possibly indicate that it was not terribly popular. Indeed, Rameau moved back to Dijon in 1709 to take up his father's post as organist of the Cathedral of Saint-Bénigne. A second printing, issued in 1741, survives (also in a single exemplar) in the collection of the Bibliothèque Municipale of Bordeaux, where it bears the shelf-mark M. 623. It is bound with copies of Rameau's harpsichord books of 1724 and 1726/7 - and for this reason, it escaped notice until the 1970s. Except for the title-pages and the presence of a royal *privilège* in the 1741 issue, the two printings are identical - no corrections were made to the plates.

The fact that the music was re-issued in 1741 (the same year as the *Pièces en Concerts*) is quite interesting, especially considering that it would have been considered quite old-fashioned by then. Unmeasured *préludes*, for instance, were not written much after the present work (with the exception of Siret). Rameau's pre-eminence in the Parisian music scene in the 1740s did not seem to encourage the public in purchasing the work, as its survival in only one exemplar will demonstrate.

### Editorial method

This present edition is based solely on the 1706 printing found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. I have decided to reproduce the orthography of the original where this is practical. However, the needs of modern-day performers necessitated departure from this in a number of respects. Time-signatures have been changed to suit modern use (in the *Courante*, the *Gigue* and the *Vénitienne*). With the exception of the unmeasured section of the *Prélude*, accidentals follow modern convention, where these last for the duration of the bar in question. Cautionary accidentals always appear as *ficta*. The *cadences* vary in their appearance in the original printing, and they have been regularised to the ♯ symbol. Repeat signs follow the modern convention, rather than the mixture of *chapeaux* and *renvois* used by Rameau - with the exception of the *Vénitienne*, where I have reproduced Rameau's orthography exactly. Clefs have also been modernised, an incipit is given at the start of every movement indicating the clefs and key signature of the original, while clef-changes present in the original print are noted in the Critical Commentary. The spelling of movement titles have not been modernised.

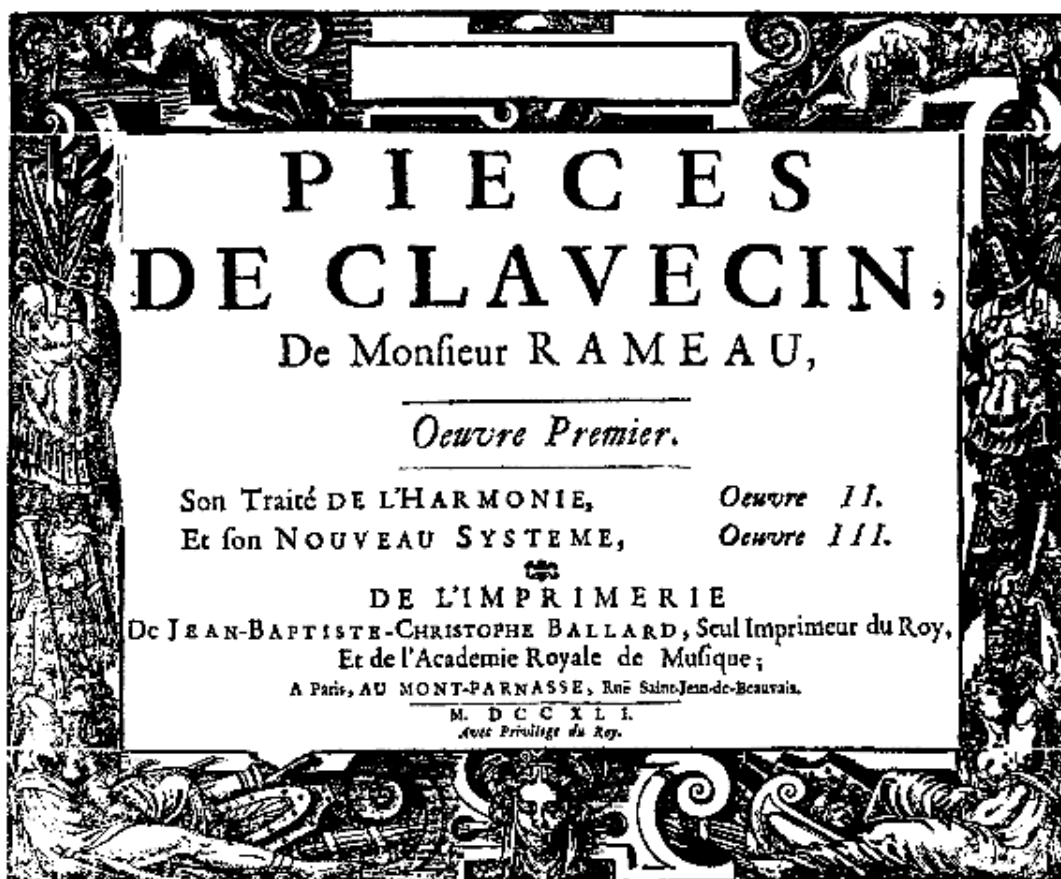
Tom Ó Drisceoil  
Cork | 23 March, 2011.



The title page of the original edition



The ornament table of the original edition



The title page of the 1741 re-issue

**ATTRIBUTION DE LA CHARGE**  
de Seul Imprimeur du Roy pour la Musique.

**P**A R Lettres Patentes du Roy, données à Fontainebleau le cinquième jour du mois d'Octobre, l'An de Grace mil six cent quatre-vingt-quinze, Signées, LOUIS ; & sur le replis, Par le Roy, PHELYPEAUX, Scellées du grand Sceau de cire jaune ; Confirmées par Lettres de Surannation, données à Marly le vingt-huitième May mil sept cent quinze ; Signées comme dessus : Toutes lesdites Lettres Verifiées & Registrées en Parlement le sept Juin 1715. Il est permis (à J-B-Christophe Ballard, Seul Imprimeur du Roy pour la Musique, & Noteur de la Chapelle de Sa Majesté,) d'Imprimer, faire Imprimer, Vendre & Distribuer toute sorte de Musique, tant Vocale qu'Instrumentale, de quelque Auteur ou Auteurs que ce soit, avec très-expresses inhibitions & défenses à tous Imprimeurs, Libraires, Tailleurs & Fondateurs de Caractères, & autres Personnes généralement quelconques, de Tailler, Fondre, ny Contrefaire les Notes, Caractères, Lettres grises, & autres choses inventées par ledit Ballard ; ny d'entreprendre ou faire entreprendre ladite Impression de Musique, en aucun lieu de ce Royaume, Terres & Seigneuries de l'obéissance de Sa Majesté, nonobstant toutes Lettres à ce contraires, sans le congé & permission dudit Ballard ; A peine de confiscation des Livres ou Exemplaires, Notes, Caractères, & autres Instruments servant au fait de ladite Impression de Musique, & de six mille livres d'Amende ; Ainsi qu'il est plus amplement déclaré esdites Lettres : Sadite Majesté voulant qu'à l'Extrait d'icelles mis au commencement ou fin desdits Livres imprimez, soy soit ajoutée comme à l'Original.



The royal *privilege* of the 1741 re-issue



Premier Livre  
de Pieces de Clavecin

*Composées*

par Monsieur Rameau Organiste

des RR. PP. Jésuites de la Rue St. Jacques,  
et des RR. PP. de la Mercy.

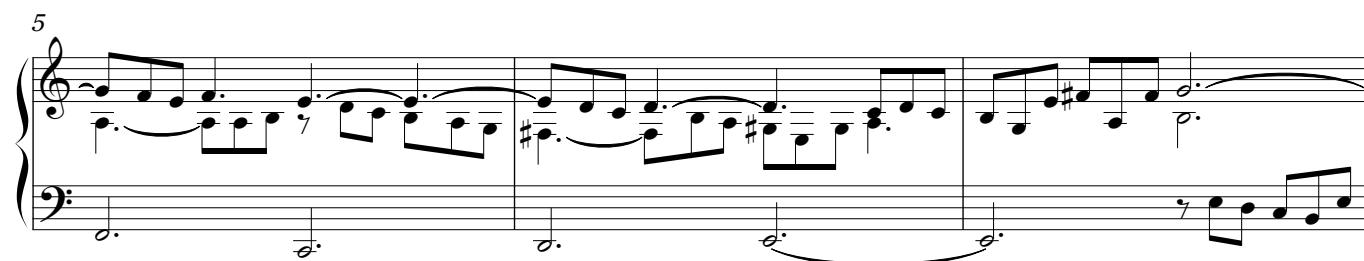
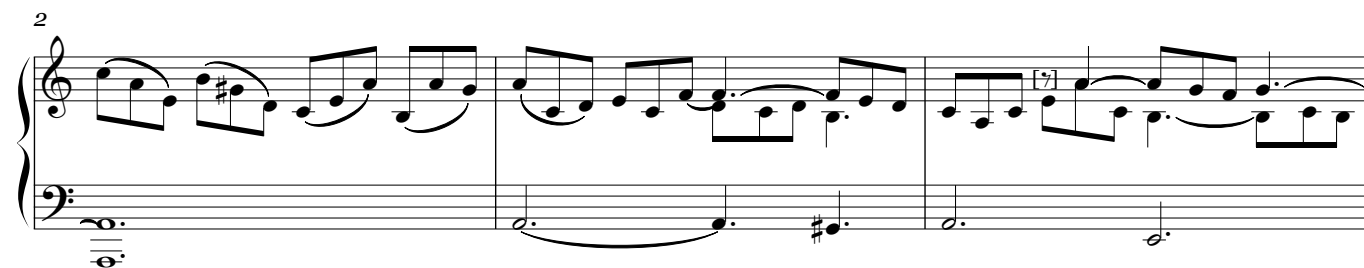
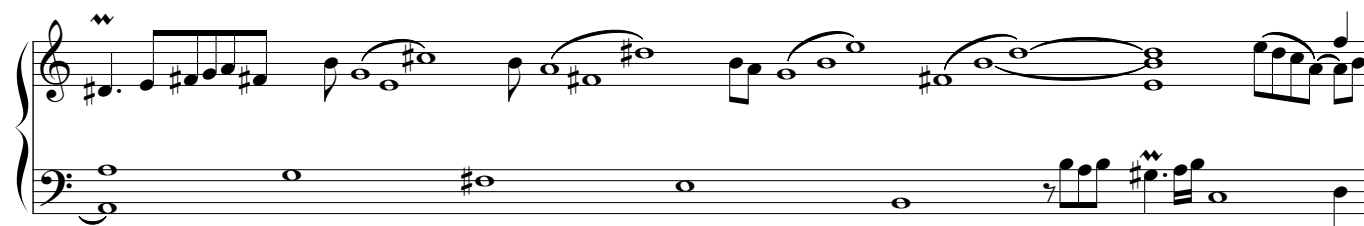
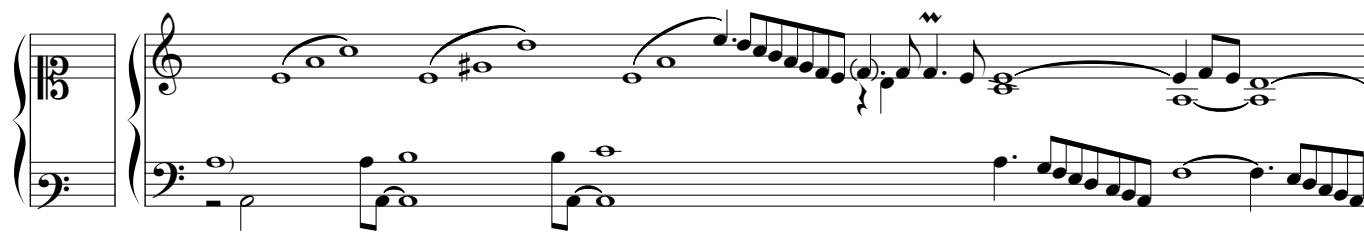
*Gravées par Roussel*  
*1706*

Et nouvellement editées par

Tom Ó Drisceoil  
2011

*Prélude*

Jean-Philippe Rameau  
ed. Tom Ó Drisceoil 2011



8

Measures 8-10. Treble clef: G4 (half), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (half). Bass clef: G3 (half), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (half), C#3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (half).

11

Measures 11-13. Treble clef: D4 (half), C#4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (half), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (half). Bass clef: C#3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C#2 (half).

14

Measures 14-16. Treble clef: D4 (half), C#4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (half), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (half). Bass clef: C#3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C#2 (half).

17

Measures 17-19. Treble clef: D4 (half), C#4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (half), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (half). Bass clef: C#3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C#2 (half).

20

Measures 20-22. Treble clef: D4 (half), C#4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (half), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (half). Bass clef: C#3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C#2 (half).

23

Measures 23-25. Treble clef: D4 (half), C#4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (half), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (half). Bass clef: C#3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C#2 (half).

*Alemande*

4

7

10

13

1.

2.

16

Measures 16-18 of a musical score. Measure 16 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 17 has a treble staff with a half-note chord and a bass staff with a half-note chord. Measure 18 continues with eighth-note chords in the treble and eighth-note accompaniment in the bass.

19

Measures 19-21 of a musical score. Measure 19 has a treble staff with eighth-note chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 20 features a treble staff with a half-note chord and a bass staff with a half-note chord. Measure 21 continues with eighth-note chords in the treble and eighth-note accompaniment in the bass.

22

Measures 22-24 of a musical score. Measure 22 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 23 has a treble staff with a half-note chord and a bass staff with a half-note chord. Measure 24 continues with eighth-note chords in the treble and eighth-note accompaniment in the bass.

25

Measures 25-27 of a musical score. Measure 25 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 26 has a treble staff with a half-note chord and a bass staff with a half-note chord. Measure 27 continues with eighth-note chords in the treble and eighth-note accompaniment in the bass.

28

Measures 28-30 of a musical score. Measure 28 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 29 has a treble staff with a half-note chord and a bass staff with a half-note chord. Measure 30 continues with eighth-note chords in the treble and eighth-note accompaniment in the bass.

*2e Alemande*

13

5

10

15

20

26

1.

2.

Reprise

# Courante

7

31

4

8

12

16

20

*Gigue*

Measures 1-4 of the Gigue. The piece is in 6/4 time and D major. The right hand features a melodic line with grace notes and slurs, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Measures 5-8 of the Gigue. The right hand continues the melodic development with grace notes and slurs. The left hand maintains the rhythmic pattern, with some rests in measures 6 and 7.

Measures 9-12 of the Gigue. The right hand features a series of eighth notes with grace notes. The left hand continues the rhythmic accompaniment, with some rests in measures 10 and 11.

Measures 13-16 of the Gigue. The right hand continues the melodic line with grace notes and slurs. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Measures 17-20 of the Gigue. The piece concludes with a double bar line in measure 18, followed by a repeat sign. The right hand features a melodic line with grace notes and slurs, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.



24

System 1 (Measures 24-28): Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 24: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Measure 25: B4, A4, G4, F#4 (accents). Measure 26: E4, D4, C4, B3 (accents). Measure 27: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Measure 28: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Bass clef: Measure 24: G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 25: B3, A3, G3, F#3. Measure 26: E3, D3, C3, B2. Measure 27: G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 28: G3, A3, B3, C4.

29

System 2 (Measures 29-32): Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 29: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Measure 30: B4, A4, G4, F#4 (accents). Measure 31: E4, D4, C4, B3 (accents). Measure 32: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Bass clef: Measure 29: G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 30: B3, A3, G3, F#3. Measure 31: E3, D3, C3, B2. Measure 32: G3, A3, B3, C4.

33

System 3 (Measures 33-37): Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 33: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Measure 34: B4, A4, G4, F#4 (accents). Measure 35: E4, D4, C4, B3 (accents). Measure 36: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Measure 37: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Bass clef: Measure 33: G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 34: B3, A3, G3, F#3. Measure 35: E3, D3, C3, B2. Measure 36: G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 37: G3, A3, B3, C4.

38

System 4 (Measures 38-41): Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 38: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Measure 39: B4, A4, G4, F#4 (accents). Measure 40: E4, D4, C4, B3 (accents). Measure 41: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Bass clef: Measure 38: G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 39: B3, A3, G3, F#3. Measure 40: E3, D3, C3, B2. Measure 41: G3, A3, B3, C4.

42

System 5 (Measures 42-45): Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 42: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Measure 43: B4, A4, G4, F#4 (accents). Measure 44: E4, D4, C4, B3 (accents). Measure 45: G4, A4, B4, C5 (accents). Bass clef: Measure 42: G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 43: B3, A3, G3, F#3. Measure 44: E3, D3, C3, B2. Measure 45: G3, A3, B3, C4.

*1<sup>re</sup> Sarabande*

First system of the 1st Sarabande. The music is in 3/4 time and D major. The right hand features a melody with grace notes and slurs, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Second system of the 1st Sarabande, starting at measure 6. It includes a repeat sign and a first ending. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand features a more active bass line with eighth notes.

Third system of the 1st Sarabande, starting at measure 12. It includes a repeat sign, first and second endings, and a section labeled "Petite reprise". The right hand has a melodic line with grace notes, and the left hand has a steady accompaniment.

*2<sup>e</sup> Sarabande*

First system of the 2nd Sarabande. The music is in 3/4 time and A major. The right hand features a melody with grace notes and slurs, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Second system of the 2nd Sarabande, starting at measure 9. It includes a repeat sign. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand features a more active bass line with eighth notes.

# Vénitienne

§

Musical notation for measures 1-7. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/8. The notation is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure 1 starts with a section symbol (§). The melody in the treble clef features eighth and sixteenth notes with various ornaments (trills, mordents). The bass line consists of eighth and sixteenth notes.

8

Musical notation for measures 8-15. The notation continues in the same key and time signature. Measure 15 ends with a double bar line and the word "Fin" in the bass staff.

16

*1ere Reprise*

Musical notation for measures 16-24. This section is labeled "1ere Reprise". The melody in the treble clef includes trills and mordents. The bass line features some sixteenth-note patterns.

25

§

Musical notation for measures 25-33. This section begins with a section symbol (§). The melody continues with trills and mordents. The bass line has some sixteenth-note patterns.

34

*2e Reprise*

Musical notation for measures 34-45. This section is labeled "2e Reprise". The melody in the treble clef includes trills and mordents. The bass line features some sixteenth-note patterns.

46

§

Musical notation for measures 46-54. This section begins with a section symbol (§). The melody continues with trills and mordents. The bass line has some sixteenth-note patterns. The piece ends with a double bar line.

*Gavote*

§

1 2 3 4

5

6 7 8

*Fin* *1ere Reprise*

10

11 12 13 14

15

§

16 17 18 19 20

*2e Reprise*

20

21 22 23 24

§

24

*Double de la Basse*

28

### *Menuet*

7

14

[Petite Reprise]

[Fin]

## CRITICAL COMMENTARY

Commentary is identified by the bar number (or system number, in the unmeasured section of the prelude), the hand to which it applies (left or right), and the placing of the note (or beat) within the bar (e.g. first note). Voices are indicated from the top down.

### Prélude

- 2<sup>nd</sup> line, right hand, first note. Completion of the tie from previous system lacking.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> line, left hand, first note. Completion of the tie from previous system lacking.
- Bar 2, left hand, first note. Completion of the tie from previous bar lacking.
- Bar 4, right hand, fourth note, first voice. Jacobi and Gilbert both place a quaver *e* here, doubling the second voice. I have followed the original print and left this out.
- 

### Alemande

- Bar 1, left hand, second beat. C3 clef
- Bar 4, right hand, last note, top voice. Beginning of tie to the next bar lacking.
- Bar 5, left hand, first beat. F3 clef.
- Bar 7, left hand, 2<sup>nd</sup> beat. C1 clef.
- Bar 12, left hand. F3 clef.
- Bar 15, left hand, 3<sup>rd</sup> beat, 3<sup>rd</sup> note. Tie to the *a* in the next beat missing.
- Bar 21, last beat, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> notes. These are semiquavers in 1706.
- Bar 23, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> notes. Slur missing here.
- Bar 27, right hand, 3<sup>rd</sup> beat. C3 clef.

### 2e Alemande

- Bar 15, left hand, top voice. Beginning of tie to *e* in next bar missing.
- Bar 27, first note. Dot missing

### Courante

- Time signature in the original is 2/3.
- Bar 5, left hand, 2<sup>nd</sup> note. C3 clef.
- Bar 6, left hand. F3 clef.
- Bar 15, right hand. 2<sup>nd</sup> voice, 3<sup>rd</sup> note. Dot missing after *b*.

### Gigue

- Time signature in the original is 3/2.
- Bar 6, left hand. F3 clef.
- Bar 7, left hand. C3 clef.
- Bar 8, left hand. F3 clef.
- Bar 9, left hand. C3 clef.
- Bar 11, left hand. F3 clef.
- Bar 11, left hand. The first two rests are missing.
- Bar 12, left hand, 2<sup>nd</sup> note. C3 clef.
- Bar 13, left hand. C1 clef.
- Bar 17, left hand, 2<sup>nd</sup> note. F3 clef.
- Bar 29, left hand, first note. Tie to the next is missing.
- Bar 31, left hand. C3 clef.
- Bar 34, left hand. F3 clef.

### 1ere Sarabande

- Bar 17, right hand. Dots missing on all three notes of this chord.
- Bar 17, right hand, 3<sup>rd</sup> voice. Ledger line missing.

### 2e Sarabande

- Bar 10, right hand, first beat. Dots missing on both *b*'s.

### Vénitienne

- Time signature in the original is 3/2.
- Bar 1. The *segno* here, as elsewhere, is given a bar later in Gilbert's edition. I have followed the original here.
- Bar 38, left hand, 3<sup>rd</sup> beat. C3 clef.
- Bar 44, left hand. F3 clef.

### Gavote.

- Bar 4, left hand. F3 clef.
- Bar 10, left hand 2<sup>nd</sup> beat. C3 clef.
- Bar 13, left hand. F3 clef.
- Upbeat of 2e Reprise, left hand. C3 clef.
- Bar 28, left hand. F3 clef.