SUITE IN A MINOR FROM
NOUVELLES SUITES DE PIÈCES DE CLAVECIN,
BY JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU:

A CRITICAL EDITION, TRANSCRIBED FOR HARP

by

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I am grateful for the support of my family, especially my mother, who has always had big dreams for me and has given me the encouragement to persevere. I also appreciate my husband Abe's comments on the transcription and paper.

Finally, I am inspired by my daughter, Katerina, who danced along to this suite delightfully.

Table of Contents

List of Examples

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter 1: Introduction

I created the first harp transcription of a complete keyboard suite by Jean-Philippe Rameau: the Suite in A minor from *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin*. This addresses two significant gaps in harp literature. First, in surveying published Baroque transcriptions for the harp, I found that most of the existing transcriptions of dance suite movements are of single movements, rather than entire suites. Second, few of Jean-Philippe Rameau's harpsichord pieces have been transcribed for harp.

My transcription of a full keyboard suite by Rameau adds an important new work to the advanced harp repertoire. The authors of the Grove article on Rameau describe the first two movements of his Suite in A minor—the allemande and courante—as "among the finest and most highly developed in the French repertory."[1] The abundance of ornaments and the counterpoint throughout this suite present particular difficulties for the harp and provide a worthy challenge for harpists.

I begin in Chapter 2 with the historical context for my transcription: an overview of Baroque harp transcriptions, harpists' treatment of Baroque suites, and harp transcriptions of music by Rameau specifically. I address how the gaps in that literature inspired my transcription of Rameau's Suite in A minor. In Chapter 3, I introduce one of the keys to understanding the transcription: Rameau's ornaments and French Baroque performance practice as it pertains to the suite. I discuss in Chapter 4 the challenges a harpist faces when learning Rameau's suite. In Chapter 5, I describe my process for transcribing the suite, including how to preserve Rameau's intentions as I understand them while making this work accessible for those unfamiliar with its style. I examine each movement, including its character and interesting notes about its transcription, in Chapter 6. In "Notes for the Performer," Chapter 7, I give

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[1] Graham Sadler and Thomas Christensen, "Rameau, Jean-Philippe," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed October 7, 2020, https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000022832?rskey=xkfl62.

general directions regarding performance practice and specific movement-by-movement directions regarding the execution of ornaments, special techniques, and interpretation.

Chapter 2: BACKGROUND

Overview of Baroque Transcriptions for Harp

Twentieth- and twenty-first-century harpists, in search of additional Baroque repertoire beyond what was originally written for the harp, have published their own transcriptions for harp of works originally composed for the keyboard, violin, and lute. Henriette Renié was the first harpist to publish many transcriptions of this sort, producing the twelve volumes of her *Les Classiques de la harpe* between 1892 and 1923.[1] Other harpists such as Carlos Salzedo, Marcel Grandjany, and Odette Le Dentu followed her lead. Most of these transcriptions have been of short pieces, or miniatures, which harpists typically perform in sets of their own devising.

Treatment of Baroque Suites

Many composers of the Baroque period wrote dance suites meant for concert performance rather than for dancing. While modern keyboard players often perform entire Baroque suites, harpists usually perform single movements only. It is only recently that harpists have begun to publish and perform transcriptions of entire Baroque suites, primarily by J.S. Bach.

Marie-Claire Jamet transcribed Bach's first lute suite, BWV 996, in 1984.[2] Cristiana Passerini used a keyboard transcription to create her harp transcription of Bach's second lute suite in 2007.[3] Also in 2007, María Luisa Rayan-Forero transcribed three Partitas (originally for keyboard) by Bach, BWV 825-827.[4] The first of these was a required work on the USA International Harp Competition in 2010.

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[1] Jaymee Haefner, *One Stone to the Building: Henriette Renié's Life through Her Works for Harp*, (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2017), 89.

[2] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Suite No. 1, BWV 996*, trans. by Marie-Claire Jamet (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1984).

[3] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Suite in Do Minore, BWV 997: From the copy of J.F. Agricola for Harpsichord*, trans. by Cristiana Passerini (Milan: Rugginenti, 2007).

[4] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Partitas Nos. 1-3, BWV 825-827*, trans. María Luisa Rayan-Forero (Salt Lake City: Lyon & Healy Publications, 2007).

Harp Transcriptions and Performances of Music by Rameau

Henriette Renié, Marcel Grandjany, Carlos Salzedo, Lucile Lawrence, Luigi Maria Magistretti, Daniel Burton, and Odette LeDentu, among others, have published harp transcriptions of miniatures by Rameau. But in comparison to J.S. Bach and Georg Frederic Handel, Rameau has been neglected.

Few existing Rameau harp transcriptions are of an advanced level or are programmed on harp recordings or recitals. The published transcriptions of a higher level include Salzedo's and Renié's transcriptions of "Tambourin," from Rameau's *Pièces de Clavecin*; Salzedo's transcription of a Rigaudon from the same suite; and Renié's transcription of "L'Egyptienne," from the other suite in *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin*. Of these, "L'Egyptienne" is programmed most often. Salzedo's transcription of "La Joyeuse" from the *Pièces de Clavecin* for two (or more) harps is also worth mentioning because, although it is not for solo harp, it is performed regularly.

Agnès Clement, a French harpist, has recorded more of Rameau's music than any other harpist. She included three miniatures (movements) from Rameau's suites in her first published recording.[5] She presumably created her own transcription of at least "Les Sauvages" (from the same suite as "L'Egyptienne"), as a transcription of that movement has not been published publicly. Ms. Clement also performed "La Rappel des Oiseaux" from the *Pièces de Clavecin* at a concert at Indiana University in 2013.[6] She apparently created her own transcription of Louis-Claude Daquin's "Le Coucou" for her 2019 recording, *Le Rossignol en Amour*, as it is quite different from the published transcription by Renié.[7] Ms. Clement seems to favor French Baroque music, and I suspect she is comfortable creating her own transcriptions.

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[5] Agnès Clément, *Dance*, Lyon & Healy Records, 2012, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020, Apple Music.

[6] Agnès Clément, *USA International Harp Competition: Laureate Recital*, recorded July 13, 2013. William and Gayle Cook Music Library, 2013, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020.

[7] Agnès Clément, *Le Rossignol en Amour*, Genuin, 2019, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020, Amazon Music.

Rameau's Suite in A Minor

Jean-Philippe Rameau was a composer of the French Baroque, a younger contemporary of François Couperin. Rameau is known today for his treatises on music theory and composition, his three books of solo harpsichord music published between 1706 and 1728, and his operas and cantatas. In their Grove article on Rameau, Graham Sadler and Thomas Christensen write that Rameau's dramatic compositions "stand alongside those of Lully and Gluck as the pinnacles of pre-Revolutionary French opera."[8] Rameau was also an innovator: his "*Pièces de Clavecin en Concerts*" (1741) was one of the first chamber works featuring harpsichord as an obbligato instrument, as opposed to the harpsichord player improvising from a basso continuo part.

Rameau wrote his *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin* around 1728, as the first half of his third book of solo harpsichord pieces. The A minor Suite is followed by another suite in G major. The A minor Suite begins with three traditional dance suite movements, followed by three character or "genre" pieces with evocative titles, and it ends with a Gavotte and six Doubles, or variations. The movements are all in binary or rondeau form and are all in either A minor or A major.

In his biography of Rameau, Cuthbert Girdlestone praises the A minor suite, writing that "there is nothing… like the sweep of the Allemande and the Courante with which it opens. There is the same majesty in the Sarabande and the same wiry vigour in 'La Triomphante.'"[9]

To my knowledge, there are no previously published harp transcriptions or recordings of any entire suite by Rameau, nor even of any single movement from the A minor Suite that I have chosen to transcribe. This makes the suite an ideal vehicle for addressing what I have identified as gaps in the Baroque harp transcription literature.

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[8] Sadler and Christensen, "Rameau, Jean-Philippe."

[9] Cutherbert Girdlestone, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: His Life and Work*, rev. ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 2014), 27.

Chapter 3: FRENCH BAROQUE ORNAMENTATION

AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

A basic introduction to French Baroque ornamentation and performance practice is necessary to understand my transcription of Rameau's suite.

Explanation of Ornaments

Ornaments are a central feature of the music of the French Baroque. Composers of the French Baroque include Jean-Henri d'Anglebert, François Couperin, and Rameau. Rameau explains his use of ornaments in the following table:

Figure 3.1. Rameau's ornament table.[1]

The A minor Suite uses the following ornaments:

[1] Jean-Philippe Rameau, *The Books of 1705-06 and 1724*, vol. 1 of *New Edition of the Complete Keyboard Words*, ed. Siegbert Rampe, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2004), 16.

- Rameau's *cadence* corresponds to the modern trill and starts on the upper neighbor of the ornamented note.
    - The *cadence appuyée* (meaning "pressed trill") is a trill that begins with an elongated first note.
    - The *double cadence* is a trill with a turn at the end.
- The *pincé* is now known as a mordent.
- The *port de voix* and *coulez*, both notated by the same symbol, are lower neighbor and upper neighbor ornaments, respectively.
- *Pincé et port de voix*, which appears frequently throughout the suite, is a lower neighbor followed by a mordent on the main note. When possible, the lower neighbor has a longer value than the mordent (or *pincé*) notes.
- *Son coupé* is a type of staccato, which on the harp needs no particular change in technique when it appears in measures 36-37 of "Fanfarinette."
- The *arpegement simple* indicates an arpeggiated or slowly rolled chord, either ascending if the slash through the note stem is placed below the chord and angled upward, or descending if the slash through the note stem is placed above the chord and angled downward.

I also referred to d'Anglebert's table of ornaments. Although d'Anglebert used different names for the ornaments and published his table nearly forty years before Rameau's suite, d'Anglebert's table is easier to read and helped confirm my understanding of the ornaments.

Figure 3.2. Jean-Henri d'Anglebert's ornament table.[2]

While the tables above tell the performer which notes to play and that ornaments will generally be played on the beat (rather than before the beat, as became common practice in the Romantic period and later), in practice it is not always obvious how to interpret the ornaments. The performer must decide, for instance, how many "shakes" or repeats of a trill are appropriate for a given movement's tempo and rhythm. And when two ornaments appear simultaneously, as happens frequently in Rameau's Sarabande, the performer must decide whether to play one ornament after the other or to overlap. Finally, sometimes a *cadence* or trill may best be interpreted starting on the main note rather than on the upper neighbor, such

[2] Jean-Henri d'Anglebert, *Pièces de clavecín*, Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1689, *IMSLP: Petrucci Music Library*, accessed August 10, 2020. http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/4/42/IMSLP597709-PMLP43812-Pieces_de_clavecin_compose-es_par_-...-Anglebert_Jean-Henri_bpt6k1280279x.pdf.

as in certain scalar passages (see "La Triomphante" measures 3, 5, and 6) or under a slur (see "La Triomphante" measure 5 in the lowest voice).

Rameau thought that the interpretation of ornaments should be left up to the good taste of the performer (and her teacher, when applicable). He wrote that "it will be by example and never by rules that he [the master] can show the man of taste how to use his fine talents as a performer."[3] "I give no examples of *roulades*, trills and *ports de voix*, because youth needs a teacher in all these matters."[4]

Notes Inégales

"*Notes inégales*" means "unequal notes." They are a rhythmic ornament, used most often in the French Baroque, in which pairs of quick notes may be subtly unequal. The first note will be longer, usually not to the point of being dotted but rather towards the style of swung eighth notes in jazz (my own, imprecise comparison), followed by a shorter second note. This style is used primarily in figures with stepwise motion and is used by some performers in the Allemande and Courante of Rameau's suite for the sixteenth notes and eighth notes, respectively. The "affect" of the piece dictates when and how much to use *notes inégales*. It can be related to the practice of emphasizing or lingering on an important word in texted music or of lingering on dissonances, as one does in the two-note slur.

French Double Dotting

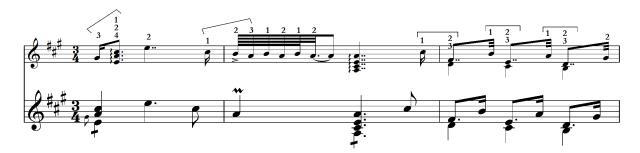Double dotting, also known as overdotting, was in widespread use during the French Baroque. This technique was famous used in French overtures but was also typical for the Sarabande.[5] It consists of lengthening the note on the first (stronger) half of a beat, then shortening the note on the second (weaker)

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[3] Frederick Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music: With Special Emphasis on J.S. Bach* (Princeton University Press, 1983), 11.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Hefling, Stephen E. "Dotted Rhythms." *Grove Music Online*. Accessed August 10, 2020. https://doi-org.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08054

half. I use the *ossia* staff in my transcription to suggest how the performer may employ double dotting in the Sarabande.

Example 3.1. Sarabande, measures 1-3. Double dotting written out in the *ossia* (upper) staff.

Repeats

In a Baroque dance suite movement in binary form, both halves are generally repeated, even when the composer did not mark a repeat sign, as in the B section of the Sarabande.[6] Performers often choose to use the repeats of Baroque suites to add their own ornaments and embellishments.[7] As these repeats should be free and improvisatory, I leave those choices to the performer rather than imposing my own version. Additionally, because the suite is already densely ornamented, even an exact repeat would not be boring for the listener. In "Notes for the Performer," I merely suggest the option of repeating with or without one's own embellishments.

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[6] Peter Holman, "Notation and Interpretation," In *A Performer's Guide to Music of the Baroque Period*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Burton (London: ABRSM, 2017), 31.

[7] Davitt Moroney, "Keyboard," in *A Performer's Guide to Music of the Baroque Period*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Burton (London: ABRSM, 2017), 63.

Chapter 4: CHALLENGES OF TRANSCRIBING FRENCH BAROQUE KEYBOARD MUSIC FOR THE HARP

Rameau's suite is neither immediately accessible for harp nor possible to play directly from a keyboard edition. It requires

- pedal markings,

- fingering indications,

- consideration of the contrapuntal texture and redistribution of voices as needed between the two hands,

- muffling indications to preserve clarity of sound within the contrapuntal texture,

- special techniques such as playing low on the strings and harmonics, and

- understanding of Baroque performance practice, including realization of the complex French Baroque ornamentation.

Pedal Markings

Most of the pedal changes in the suite are straightforward. But the sheer quantity of pedal changes required in some movements, particularly the Allemande and the Courante, would be difficult to execute unless marked clearly and thoroughly. In addition, there are two special situations, which I will detail in the following paragraphs.

The first situation occurs in the Allemande at the end of measure 4, where a C natural in the bass clef is immediately followed by a C sharp in the treble. I take advantage of the enharmonic capability of the harp by having the harpist play the last note of the bass clef as a B sharp rather than a C natural. The alternatives are to leave out a note or to have the C natural turn by default into a C sharp in the following sixteenth note with the C sharp in the upper voice.

Example 4.1. Allemande, measure 4, as written.

Example 4.2. Allemande, measure 4, with the enharmonic.

Secondly, several times throughout the suite, notes implied in the ornaments necessitate pedal changes that would not be obvious to the harpist performer at first glance. The first example occurs in measure 4 of the Allemande. In beat 1, the end of the *double cadence*, or turn, in the highest voice implies a G natural. If this turn were not present, the G pedal could remain G sharp, as the G is sharp in both measure 3 and later in measure 4.

12

Example 4.3. Allemande, measure 4.

A similar case appears in the Courante in measure 26. In the second half of the measure, the harpist must move the F pedal to F sharp to accommodate the *pincé* (mordent) in the left hand. Note that I choose to interpret this ornament as including an F sharp rather than F natural; a survey of recordings reveals that some performers choose one option and some the other. I prefer the F sharp here to continue the interval pattern from the preceding measure 25, where left hand plays an A – G sharp – A *pincé*.

Example 4.4. Courante, measure 26.

In measure 72 of "Les Trois Mains," the *cadence* (trill) in the last beat clearly requires a D natural. The D pedal has been in the sharp position since measure 70, and the harpist might not think to move it until D natural appears in the written music in measure 76.

Example 4.5. Les Trois Mains, measures 70-72.

In "Fanfarinette," a G natural pedal is required for the trills in measures 24 and 25. It becomes retroactively clear in the Bärenreiter edition by measure 28, with the courtesy accidental G sharp, that the ornaments in measures 24 and 25 are meant to be played with G natural as the upper neighbor. But this may not be immediately obvious unless the harpist notices that the harmony sounds strange with a G sharp.

Example 4.6. Fanfarinette, measures 22-29.

A few more occurrences: The turn in the lower voice of the Gavotte in measure 18 necessitates an F sharp pedal, but this is not written in the Bärenreiter edition. The same figure occurs in the Second Double in measure 23 and in the Fifth Double in measure 22.

Note: In the Third Double, measure 18, I omit the *pincé* at the end of the ornament in the lowest voice, turning the turn into a simple *cadence*. The turn would have required an F sharp pedal and would have created the effect of a pedal slide at the end of the measure due to the ringing F natural in the middle voice. While the harpist must still move that pedal in measure 19, it no longer creates the undesirable pedal noise when moved slightly later.

Example 4.7. Third Double, measure 18, as written and as I amended it.

Fingering indications

Harpists typically need extensive fingering indications for advanced music. It is common practice among even advanced harpists to copy "markings"—pedal and fingering indications—from their teachers or colleagues. Such well-respected harpist-transcribers as Grandjany, Salzedo, and Renié included copious fingering indications in their published transcriptions. See the examples by Grandjany and Salzedo below:

Example 4.8. Bach-Grandjany *Etude No. 2.*[1]

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[1] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Etude No. 2: "Fugue" from Violin Sonata No. 1*, in *12 Etudes for Harp: Selected from Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin*, Op. 45, trans. Marcel Grandjany (Carl Fischer, 1970), 14.

Example 4.9. Bach-Salzedo *Bourée from Partita I*.[2]

I include extensive fingering indications in my transcription, as I believe these are necessary to make the suite accessible to harpists. In many cases, not only are my fingering choices the easiest and most functional, but they also promote a clean sound and clear phrasing.

Contrapuntal Texture and Voicing

It is generally more difficult to play highly contrapuntal pieces on the harp. This is so for two major reasons:

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[2] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Bourée: From the Partita I*, trans. Carlos Salzedo (New York: Lyra Music, 1973), 5.

1. Harpists use only four fingers of each hand, rather than all five fingers as on a keyboard instrument, so they have fewer options at any moment.

2. The harp continues ringing longer than a keyboard instrument, particularly in the lower register. Although the harp's resonance is part of what makes the instrument so beautiful, at times this leads to unwanted overlap in the sound and less clarity.

These challenges hold true for Rameau's suite, in which every movement has two to four independent voices. "Les Trois Mains" provides the most striking cases of redistribution between the two hands. Compare, for example, measures 2-3 from the Bärenreiter edition to my transcription. (Note that in my edition, the right hand plays from the upper staff, and the left hand plays from the lower staff.)

Example 4.10. "Les Trois Mains," measures 2-3, Bärenreiter edition.

Example 4.11. "Les Trois Mains," measures 2-3, harp transcription.

The example above also illustrates how I use stemming and dotted lines preserve Rameau's voices.

Muffling Indications

Harpists can maximize clarity of sound with strategic muffling and playing lower on the strings in the bass registers. My transcription includes muffling indications throughout. These come in three main varieties: regular muffles, flat hand muffles, and finger muffles.

The most interesting use of the regular left hand muffle appears in the Courante. In measures 11 and 12, I take the lowest voice into the right hand to allow the left hand to muffle the preceding harmony, which would otherwise clash with the new harmony in the second half of each measure (i.e., D major against G major in measure 11, C major against F sharp diminished in measure 12).

Example 4.12. Courante, measures 11-12, my edition.

The flat hand muffle, executed by either the thumb or fourth finger, is extraordinarily useful in contrapuntal music on the harp, as the muffle occurs simultaneously with the playing of a new harmony. It mirrors legato pedaling on the piano. I suggest this type of muffle in every movement of Rameau's suite. A typical example is found in "Les Trois Mains" in measures 37-39. The flat hand with the thumb is indicated by the "+," and the flat hand with the fourth finger is indicated by a circled 4 (see the downbeat of measure 39).

Example 4.13. "Les Trois Mains," measures 37-39, with the flat hand indications circled.

The third type of muffle, the finger muffle, I use sparingly. It was favored by Salzedo and some of his students, but it is not as ubiquitous a technique in the harp repertoire as the regular left hand muffle. It can be useful in places such as measures 18 and 20 of "La Triomphante," where the left hand must play a I chord immediately after a V chord. My suggestion of a fourth finger muffle (see below) provides a little more clarity to the sound by clearing the bass line.

Example 4.14. "La Triomphante," measures 17-20, with the finger muffles circled.

Playing Low on the Strings

Pieces in the standard harp repertoire occasionally direct the harpist to play low on the strings in the bass register. Renié used this in her transcription of Franz Liszt's "Un Sospiro" and in her original composition "Legende." I suggest in my transcription that the harpist play low on the strings in a few places where excessive ringing of the bass strings might otherwise muddy the sound. Among these are the end of each section of "La Triomphante" and throughout the Second Double of the Gavotte.

Harmonics

Overlapping voices in measures 6, 8, and 10 of "Les Trois Mains" presented particular difficulty. This is challenging enough on the keyboard but quite awkward on the harp. Harmonics provide an elegant solution to this puzzle, allowing the lower voice notes to be played an octave lower than written but sounding in the desired register. The distinctive timbre of the harmonics also helps differentiate the two voices.

21

Example 4.15. "Les Trois Mains," measures 6-10.

Suggested Realization of the Ornamentation

Providing a suggested realization of the sophisticated ornaments was a major part of this project. I use *ossia* staves liberally to preserve the original ornament signs while also providing a clear guide to performance. Alfred editions, with their lighter-inked *ossia* staff suggesting ornament realizations, were my inspiration.

Chapter 5: PROCESS OF TRANSCRIBING THE

RAMEAU A MINOR SUITE FOR THE HARP

My primary source for the transcription was the Bärenreiter Urtext edition of Rameau's harpsichord music.[1] I also referred to a facsimile edition,[2] which was made from the composer's first edition of the piece. (There is no extant autograph.) I familiarized myself with the suite by listening to recordings.

As I began to learn the suite on both the harp and the piano, I found the suite to be quite beautiful, but much more difficult on the harp than on the piano. I could play the suite on the piano without adding many markings to the Bärenreiter edition, but that was impossible on the harp. To address this difficulty, I devised a system of color-coded markings to the Bärenreiter edition. See Appendix B for my marked copy of the Bärenreiter edition. Here is what my color choices mean:

- Purple: pedal diagrams.

- Pink: pedal changes.

- Green: fingering and muffling.

- Blue: Notes on the ornaments and changes to the score, such as moving notes to a different staff, omitting an ornament, and changing beaming or stemming.

Next, I wrote out most of the suite by hand to depict how the score and ossia staves appear in my transcription. I made many decisions at this point, including how to notate the suggested realization of the ornaments, how to stem and beam the notes to preserve the continuity of the voices, when to change clefs, and how to make it clear to the performer which hand should play which notes. I also listened to various

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[1] Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Pièces de Clavecin*, ed. Erwin R. Jacobi., rev. ed., 2003 (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1958).

[2] Jean-Philippe Rameau, "*Nouvelle suites de pièces de clavecin : avec des remarques sur les différens genres de musique*" (New York: Performer's Facsimiles, ca. 1995).

recordings for inspiration and to see how different performers' interpretation of the ornaments compared to what I had chosen.

Writing out a suggested realization of the ornaments was particularly difficult, as I had to commit to one interpretation from the options available and then represent that interpretation with specific rhythms. Before writing the ornaments out, I could simply fit the notes within the allotted beats, varying how quickly I played it or how many shakes I included. This is truer to the spirit of the piece and historical performance practice as I understand it. But giving the performer a fixed starting point seemed a better choice than being vague in my suggested realization. Instead, I address the freedom to vary the ornamentation in the performer's notes.

Finally, I made decisions regarding the final presentation of the transcription. I decided where and when to add *ossia* staves above and below the "regular" staves and how large to make the music so that it would be easily readable. I decided not to attempt to notate the *notes inégales*, as this would be quite difficult to read and would stray too far from Baroque notation practices, imposing an interpretation that should be left to the individual performer.

A challenge throughout this process has been remaining true to my understanding of Rameau's intentions while also making the transcription accessible for someone not already familiar with the style of the piece. My personal interpretation is inevitably present in the many decisions I made regarding fingering, muffling, the suggested realizations of the ornaments, etc. But I have retained as much of the original as possible.

Chapter 6: SUITE IN A MINOR:

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH MOVEMENT

Allemande

The Allemande was a common opening movement of Baroque keyboard suites. Allemandes are typically ornate, contrapuntal, and dense with sixteenth notes, and all three are true of this Allemande. Peter Holman writes that performers must be careful not to confuse the more complex and slower French Allemande, such as in Rameau's suite, with the simpler Italian *allemanda*.[1] Carol Henry Bates describes the French allemande of the early eighteenth century as "pseudopolyphonic, with occasional points of imitation."[2]

This movement was difficult and time-consuming to transcribe due to the interplay of the three voices, the frequent ornaments, and the sheer number of running sixteenth notes. I was creative in my fingering choices in places like measure 3, alternating the sixteenth notes between the hands to facilitate performance and keep finger noise to a minimum. I had to be particularly mindful of the left hand, in places omitting ornaments on the bass wire strings that would clutter the sound, indicating (in measure 5) where the left hand brushes a ringing string where a full muffle is not possible, or redistributing ornaments to the right hand for cleaner execution.

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[1] Holman, 30.

[2] Carol Henry Bates, "French Harpsichord Music in the First Decade of the 18th Century," Early Music 17, no. 2 (1989), 188.

Example 6.1. Allemande, measure 3.

Courante

The eighteenth century French courante had complex rhythmic patterns and hemiolas in triple meter. It was the slowest of all the French dances and contrapuntal. In their excellent book *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach*, Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne give this example of the typical rhythmic patterns found in the Courante:

Figure 6.1. Typical rhythmic patterns found in the Courante.[3]

Sarabande

When Rameau wrote the A minor Suite in the 1720s, the Sarabande was typically a slow, stately dance.[4] This movement is in triple meter and in binary form. The following figure shows two typical rhythmic patterns in the classic French Sarabande, which appear throughout the movement:

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[3] Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 119.

[4] Holman, 30.

Figure 6.2. Typical rhythmic patterns in the sarabande. From *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach*, by Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne.[5]

Little and Jenne suggest emphasizing these characteristic rhythmic patterns by double dotting in this way:

Figure 6.3. Suggestion for the execution of the characteristic Sarabande rhythm.[6]

Rameau has also emphasized the rhythm patterns discussed above by featuring lush arpeggios marked *harpégé* beginning on the second beats of six measures sprinkled through the Sarabande. The rhythmic notation for these measures is ambiguous, appearing to have too many beats, but the voice leading makes itself clear to the performer after familiarity and practice.

Les Trois Mains

The unusual name "Les Trois Mains," or "The Three Hands," evidently derives from the impression that the performer needs three hands to play it due to the liberal use of hand crossing at the keyboard. This technique, most famously used by Domenico Scarlatti, was "a popular kind of trick" in Europe in the 1720s, according to Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach.[7] Although Scarlatti later became well-

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[5] Little and Jenne, 97.

[6] Ibid., 98.

[7] David Yearsley, "The Awkward Idiom: Hand-Crossing and the European Keyboard Scene around 1730," *Early Music* 30, no. 2 (2002), 227.

known for using the hand crossing, David Yearsley suggests that it is possible that Rameau was the originator of the technique.[8]

Notwithstanding the title, this character movement has just two voices, which often overlap and repeat one another. I deploy harmonics (as detailed in Chapter 4) and hand redistribution to deal with the challenges of playing repeated notes on the harp. Measures 19-26 exemplify the use of alternating hands:

Example 6.2. "Les Trois Mains," measures 19-26.

The ascending arpeggios and descending glissandi at the ends of both halves of this rounded binary movement are already written in a harpistic way. After the difficulties of the rest of the movement, it is a lovely respite.

[8] Ibid., 231.

Example 6.3. "Les Trois Mains," measures 39-42[1].

Fanfarinette

     Cuthbert Girdlestone, one of Rameau's biographers, wrote that the character title "Fanfarinette" was a girl's nickname.[9] This cheerful piece has three voices, but it is more homophonic than the Allemande, the Courante, and "Les Trois Mains."

     "Fanfarinette" appears deceptively simple: short ornaments sprinkled throughout make playing it on the harp more difficult than I initially anticipated. I omitted the lower voice ornaments in measures 9, 29, and 41, because the quick tempo prevents these from being heard clearly on the harp under the simultaneous upper voice ornaments.

La Triomphante

     "La Triomphante," the last character piece in this suite, is a rondeau in A major with a main theme and two contrasting couplets, the second in the relative minor. As detailed in Chapter 6 of this paper, "Notes for the Performer," the theme alternates with the couplets, so that the form is as follows: theme, first couplet, theme, second couplet (in F sharp minor), theme. Like "Fanfarinette," this three-voice movement is only sometimes imitative and has a more homophonic texture.

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[9] Girdlestone, 597.

I redistribute the arpeggios between the hands several times in each section of the rondeau to facilitate fast performance. Here are two examples:

Example 6.4. "La Triomphante," measure 1.

Example 6.5. "La Triomphante," measures 26-27.

The first example, from measure 1, is a basic redistribution between the hands, typical of harp music. The example in measure 27 is a little trickier, as I chose to have the right hand take the inner voice E sharp in what was originally notated as part of a left hand C sharp major chord on the downbeat. This fingering falls easily within the right hand on the harp, following the G sharp *cadence* and F sharp eighth notes in measure 26.

Gavotte and Six Doubles

The Gavotte and its six Doubles, or variations, are all in binary form. The Gavotte is a slow dance in duple meter and in A minor. Each of the Doubles is an étude in different figurations of sixteenth notes.

30

I am surprised no one has thought to transcribe the Gavotte and Doubles before this, as they work surprisingly well on the harp and would make nice teaching pieces for advanced students.

Chapter 7: NOTES FOR THE PERFORMER

General Notes

- Ideally, the performer of Rameau's music should study French Baroque music in depth and with a teacher experienced in playing it. But absent these opportunities, we harpists must do our best. I have used *ossia* staves liberally to suggest interpretations of the ornaments. These are suggestions only, and you may stray from my suggestions at your discretion. Here are some ways you might vary the ornaments:

1. You may add or remove a "shake," making the ornament shorter or longer. This may be necessary or desirable depending on your chosen tempi.

2. You may execute the ornament more quickly or slowly than I have indicated. Again, this will be influenced by your tempi, as well as your individual taste. And while I have endeavored for uniformity in my suggested realization for clarity, not all the ornaments need to be performed at the same speed.

3. When simultaneous ornaments are indicated in the score, you may play them simultaneously, or one after the other. If you play them one after another, one may come before the beat with the other on the beat.

4. You may play an ornament starting before the beat rather than on the beat.

5. If you find that a particular ornament obscures the clarity of the main line, you may omit it or shorten it to just two notes (one "shake"). (I have omitted some ornaments already, particularly those that fell in the bass wires of the harp and that would have been difficult to execute well.)

- Chords marked with a roll, whether ascending or descending, should be played one note after another as a quick arpeggio, starting on the beat.[1] Here is an illustration from a table by Jean-Henri d'Anglebert, another French Baroque composer:

Figure 7.1. *Arpégé* realizations by Jean-Henri d'Anglebert.[2]

- I have not introduced dynamic markings, which were present in neither the first edition of the piece nor in the Bärenreiter edition that I worked from while transcribing the suite. But in my opinion, you absolutely should use musical phrasing in performance. While subtle dynamics were unavailable on the harpsichord, they are inherent in playing the harp. I recommend that you develop your own sense of the piece and its character by practicing it and listening to some of the many available recordings on the harpsichord and piano. The dynamics appropriate to this suite are generally subtle and informed by the harmonic movement.

- You may add your own embellishments and ornaments on the repeats. I have not provided suggestions for this within the score, as then they would be my interpretation rather than your own. As you become familiar with the piece, you may discover your own ideas to vary movements such as the Sarabande on the repeat.

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[1] Davitt Moroney, "Keyboard," in *A Performer's Guide to Music of the Baroque Period*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Burton (London: ABRSM, 2017), 52.

[2] Jean-Henri d'Anglebert, *Pièces de clavecín*, Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1689, *IMSLP: Petrucci Music Library*, accessed August 10, 2020. http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/4/42/IMSLP597709-PMLP43812-Pieces_de_clavecin_compose-es_par_-...-Anglebert_Jean-Henri_bpt6k1280279x.pdf.

- The word "Reprise," found in the Allemande, Courante, "Les Trois Mains," and "Fanfarinette," shows the beginning of the second half of the movement.[3]

Allemande

- This three-voice movement is the most complex of the suite. The middle voice resides most often in the left hand but frequently crosses briefly into the right hand. It is important to maintain awareness of the continuity of this middle voice.

- Some performers choose to play this movement with even sixteenth notes, but I suggest that you play it with *notes inégales*, or "unequal notes." This rhythmic ornamentation, used often in allemandes in particular,[4] involves lengthening the first and third sixteenth notes of each beat while shortening the second and fourth sixteenth notes of each beat. The resulting pattern will be strong-weak, strong-weak, or long-short, long-short. The effect sounds similar to swung eighth notes, although it can be more or less unequal than that. It is usually used in stepwise passages. The best way to understand this technique is to listen to recordings. The following recordings display the use of *notes inégales* in the Allemande:

  - Alan Cuckston's recording on harpsichord.[5]

  - Fernando de Luca's recording on harpsichord.[6]

  - Alexandre Tharaud's recording on piano.[7]

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[3] Howard Ferguson, *Keyboard Interpretation*, *from the 14th to the 19th Century: An Introduction*. (Oxford University Press, 1975), 31-32.

[4] Betty Bang Mather, *Dance Rhythms of the French Baroque: A Handbook for Performance* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 210.

[5] Alan Cuckston, *Rameau: Harpsichord Suites/Nouvelles Suites*, recorded November 24, 1990, Naxos, 1991, streaming audio, Accessed August 12, 2020, Amazon Music.

[6] Fernando de Luca, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin (1728)*, 2014, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020, Amazon Music.

[7] Alexandre Tharaud, *Rameau: "Nouvelles suites*," by Jean-Philippe Rameau, harmonia mundi, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020, Amazon Music.

o Susan Toman's recording on harpsichord.[8]

o Jory Vinikour's recording on harpsichord.[9]

In my opinion, the rhythm of this movement works best using *notes inégales*, as it makes the transition into the sixteenth note triplets of measure 16 seamless. See below for a sample of how the rhythm might sound with *notes inégales*.

Example 7.1. Allemande, measures 15-16, written in notes inégales.

Courante

- This movement should be played with *notes inégales*. Arpeggiated sections like those in measures 11-15 and 26-29 should be played with equal notes, while the stepwise passages should be played using *notes inégales*. Here are some recordings in which the performers use *notes inégales* in the Courante:

    o Angela Hewitt's recording on piano.[10]

    o Fernando de Luca's recording on harpsichord. His use of *notes inégales* is more subtle than, for example, Susan Toman's.

    o Trevor Pinnock's recording on harpsichord.[11]

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[8] Susan Toman, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: Nouvelles suites de clavecin*, recorded July 5-6, 2007, Centaur Records, 2008, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020, Amazon Music.

[9] Jory Vinikour, *The Complete Harpsichord Works of Rameau*, by Jean-Philippe Rameau, Sono Luminus, 2012, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020, Amazon Music.

[10] Angela Hewitt, *Rameau: Keyboard Suites*, by Jean-Philippe Rameau, recorded June 1-4, 2006, Hyperion, 2007, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020, Apple Music.

[11] Trevor Pinnock, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: Complete Works for Harpsichord*, CRD Records, 1988, streaming audio, accessed August 12, 2020, Amazon Music.

- o   Susan Toman's recording on harpsichord.

- o   Jory Vinikour's recording on harpsichord.

- The Courante has three voices. The middle voice is traded between the hands.

- I have used flat hand indications ("+ "for a flat thumb and a circled "4") and muffles to help keep the sound as clean as possible.

- In measures 11 and 12, I have taken the lowest voice into the right hand briefly in order to allow a left hand muffle.

- In measure 18, I suggest taking the first note of the middle voice dotted half note *cadence* (trill) in the right hand for facility, as marked in the *ossia* staves.

- It is not completely clear in several *pincé* ornaments whether the lower neighbor should be raised. This occurs in measure 3, Reprise measure 2 (measure 26), and Reprise measure 15 (measure 39).

In measure 3, I have opted for C natural in the *pincé* because of the C natural immediately following the *pincé* in the middle voice. See below:

Example 7.2. Courante, measure 3.

In measure 26, I have opted for F sharp in the *pincé* to imitate the half step lower neighbor in the preceding measure:

36

Example 7.3. Courante, measures 25-26.

In measure 3, I have opted for G natural in the *pincé* because of the C natural quickly following the *pincé* in the upper voice. See below:

Example 7.4. Courante, measure 39.

- In measures 23, 24, and 45—that is, at the ends of the A and B sections—there is a *port de voix* followed by a downward arpeggio. This may be interpreted in a couple of ways:

    1. Play the *port de voix* and the descending arpeggio before resolving the *port de voix*.

2. Play the *port de voix* and its resolution before playing the remaining notes of the descending arpeggio.

Note that this figure also occurs in measures 18 and 19 of the Sarabande, the last measure (measure 23) of the Gavotte theme.

Sarabande

- This movement, while difficult in execution, is quite well suited to the harp, with its lush arpeggios and rolled chords.

- The *harpégé* indication found in measures 4, 13, 15, 16, and 17 means "arpeggio." These may be played freely, without attempting to achieve precise rhythm. These measures all appear to have too many beats as Rameau has notated them. I recommend practicing these phrases without the arpeggios to understand the interplay of the voices.

- The ornaments are particularly open to interpretation in this movement. For example, in measure 15, my suggestion in the *ossia* staves is to play the left hand *port de voix et pincé* on the beat, with the right hand *pincé* immediately following. But the left hand ornament could also be played before the beat or simultaneously with the right hand *pincé*.

- I suggest the use of double dotting, or overdotting, in the *ossia* staves. This means lengthening the note on the first (stronger) half of a beat, then shortening the note on the second (weaker) half. This technique was commonly used in the Sarabande in the French Baroque.

- Although the B section of the Sarabande is not marked with a repeat sign, you may still choose to repeat that section with your unique embellishments.[12]

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[12] Peter Holman, "Notation and Interpretation," in *A Performer's Guide to Music of the Baroque Period*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Burton (London: ABRSM, 2017), 31.

- Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne in their book on Baroque dance suites suggest a tempo of quarter note = 69 for the eighteenth-century Sarabande, as that was a typical tempo for the dance that inspired the concert dance movement.[13]

Les Trois Mains

- Despite the title "The Three Hands," this movement has two voices, with significant voice-crossing throughout.

- Notes in the upper staff are played by the right hand, and notes in the lower staff are played by the left hand. I have used dotted lines to indicate the continuity of musical voices as they move between the hands. Stem direction in this movement indicates voicing, rather than hand distribution.

- The two voices are close together throughout much of the movement. The detailed fingering suggestions will help the performer avoid excess finger noise from the many repeated notes.

- Harmonics are written where they are played and will sound an octave higher than written.

- In the low register sixteenth notes of the Reprise—for example the left hand/lower voice in measures 6-10 of the Reprise (measure 50-54) and the right hand/upper voice in measure 42 of the Reprise (measure 86)—play low on the strings to keep the sound as clean as possible.

Fanfarinette

- In measure 16, I suggest playing the right hand *port de voix et pincé* at the end of measure 15, before playing the left hand *pincé* on the downbeat of measure 16.

La Triomphante

- The performance order is as follows:

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[13] Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 95.

1. Theme

2. First couplet

3. Theme

4. Second couplet

5. Theme

- At the end of the last performance of the Theme, play the left hand as performed on the transition into the first couplet.

Example 7.5. "La Triomphante," measure 12 and the implied final measure to follow.

Gavotte

- The downward roll in measures 8 and 24 may be played slowly, even as descending sixteenth notes.

- I suggest playing the left hand *pincé* in measure 18 before the *port de voix* in the right hand. These could alternatively be played simultaneously.

First Double

- Each Double, or Variation, is an étude. This first Double is a right hand étude for chains of note pairs (a note followed by its upper neighbor) and descending scales.

Second Double

- This is an ascending scale étude for the left hand.

- Play the left hand low on strings throughout to make the sound as clean as possible.

- In measure 6, I suggest brushing by the ringing G sharp (from measure 5) with the fourth finger to muffle it just before playing the A downbeat.

Third Double

- Note the resemblance of the middle voice (the sixteenth notes) to the upper voice of the first Double. Rameau has inverted the counterpoint.

- On the harp, this Double is an étude for finger placement and directional placing.

- I left out the turn, or *pincé*, at the end of the left hand *cadence* in measure 18 because I want to avoid pedal noise after playing the right hand F just before. (The F in the ornament would have to be F-sharp.) But you may add this back in, so that the measure would be played as follows:

Example 7.6. Third Double, measures 18-19.

Fourth Double

- This Double is an étude for constant repeated notes. Replace firmly and as late as possible to minimize finger noise.

Fifth Double

- This is another étude for arpeggiated repeated notes, this time in the right hand and the intervals somewhat wider than in the fourth Double.

- I suggest using a flat hand to execute the left hand alternating octaves in measures 14 and 22 for clarity of sound.

Sixth Double

- This is an étude for arpeggiated repeated notes in the left hand, with wider intervals than those in the fourth or fifth Double.

- Note the strong resemblance of the left hand part of this Double to the right hand part of the fifth Double.

Chapter 8: CONCLUSION

I produced a transcription of the Rameau Suite in A minor that is accessible to the modern harpist. Rameau's suite is a wonderful addition to the harp repertoire, as the first transcription of a major work by Rameau and one of the few complete Baroque dance suites transcribed for harp.

The A minor Suite, with its extensive ornaments and complexity, provides a vehicle for performers to exhibit technical and musical ability. In my performing career, this suite is the most musically and intellectually challenging piece I have ever played. My transcription is appropriate for graduate-level harp recitals and could easily be included as repertoire for one of the major harp competitions.

Transcribing this suite was extraordinarily difficult, but I am thrilled with the result. The piece sounds better on the harp than I had originally hoped. It is exciting to hear this masterpiece for the first time on my instrument. I hope that my transcription will bring other harpists' attention to the beauty and breadth of French Baroque music outside of commonly played character pieces such as "L'Egyptienne." Perhaps other harpists will be inspired to delve into the complexities of other French Baroque keyboard music and create their own transcriptions. This transcription and paper may provide a guide for approaching the transcription process.

Appendix 1. Harp Transcription

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Les Trois Mains

Fanfarinette

La Triomphante

First couplet

95
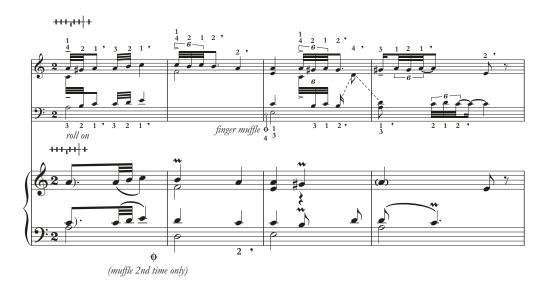
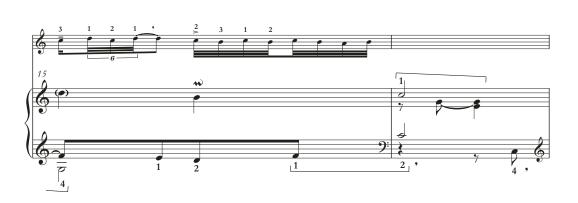# Second couplet

Gavotte

roll on

finger muffle

(muffle 2nd time only)

slow downward roll

97

First Double

Second Double

Third Double

Fourth Double

Fifth Double

Sixth Double

Appendix 2.

Marked Bärenreiter Edition:

Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Pièces de Clavecin*,

ed. Erwin R. Jacobi., rev. ed., 2003 (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1958)

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Les Trois Mains

124

Fanfarinette

La Triomphante

Gavotte

130

1er Double de la Gavotte

133

5me Double

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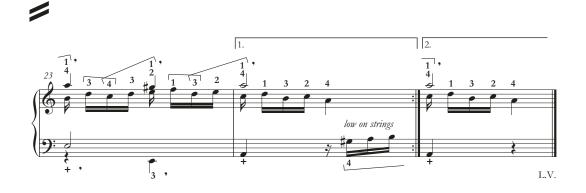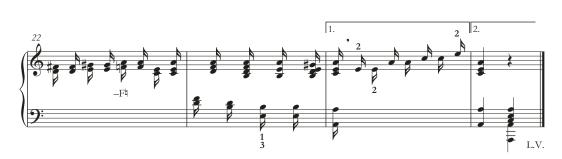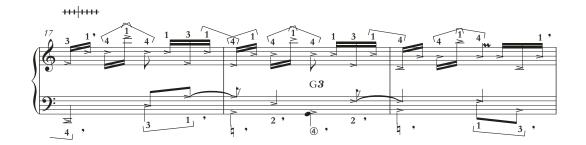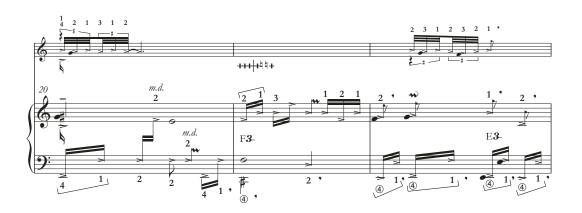
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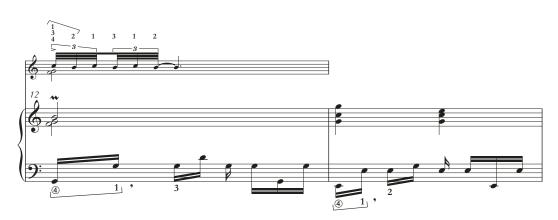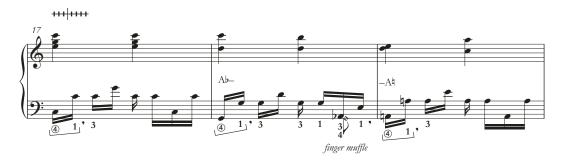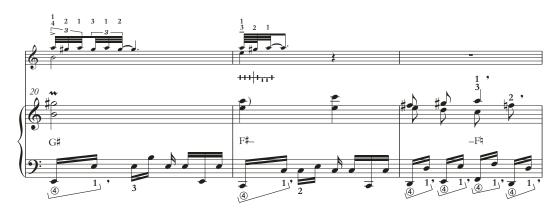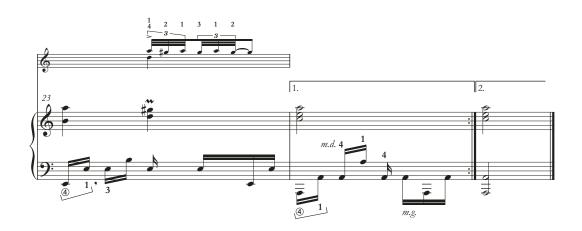
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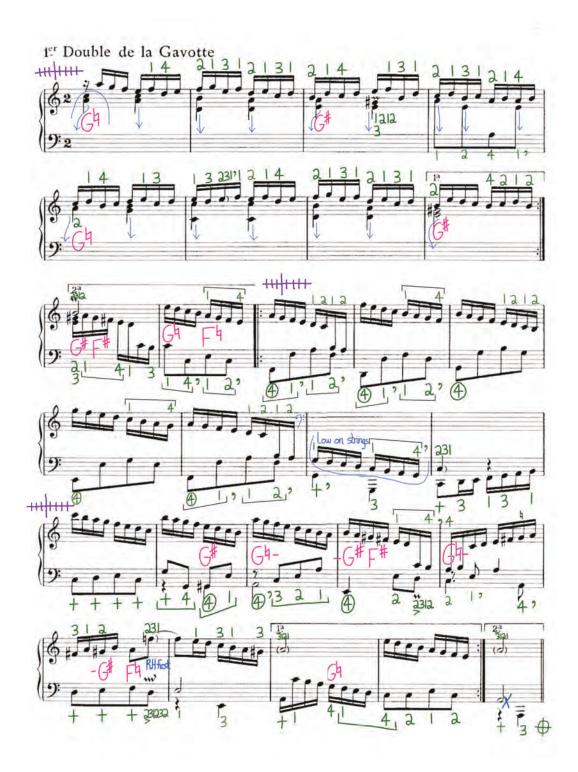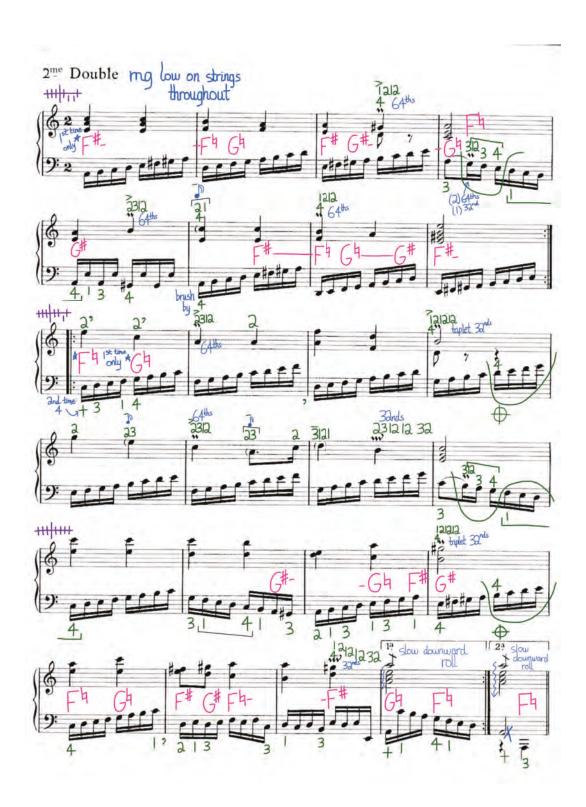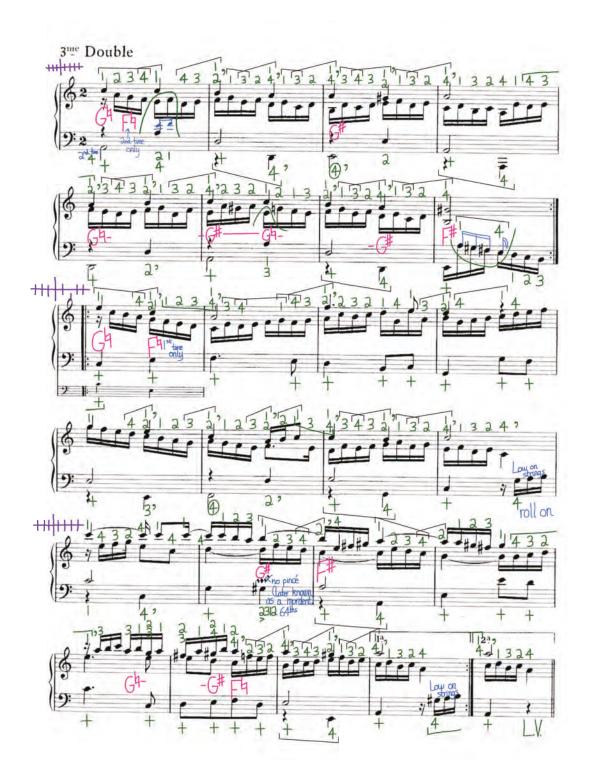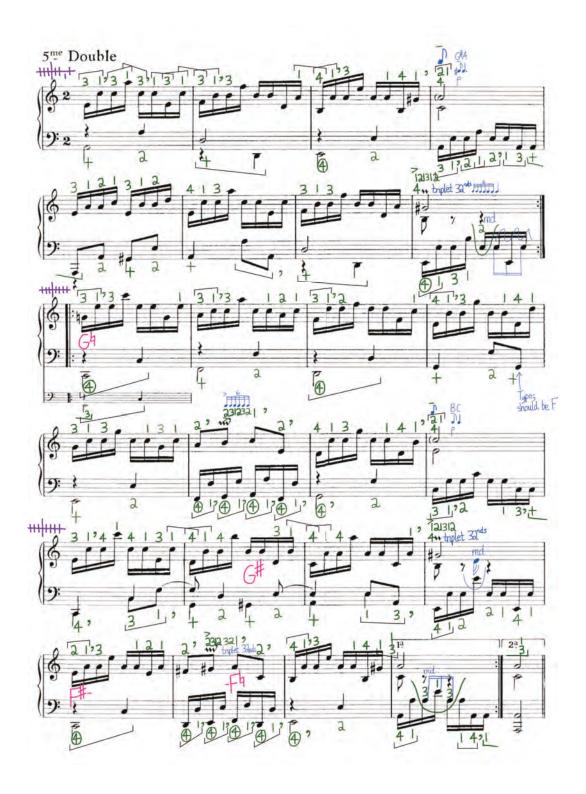
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