J. S. Bach

(1685 – 1750)

Free Samples
from
Unaccompanied Suites 1 - 6

BWV 1007 - 1012

Transcribed for

Trumpet

A transcription of the *Unaccompanied Cello Suites* for trumpet (or any wind instrument for that matter) presents three interesting questions—where to breathe, how to handle multiple stops, and the problem of *tessitura*. In trying to find places to breathe (especially in the preludes), I looked for the major phrases and if they were impossible in one breath, tried to decide what Bach would have done if he were transcribing for a wind instrument. In some cases, eliminating one note in a pattern (such as a passing tone) was all that was needed. In other situations, a broadening of the tempo both before and after a breath was a reasonable solution. (When executed correctly, this type of breath will seem to be part of the music.) Multiple stops, especially at cadences, were simulated with grace notes, which should be played broadly and melodically. However, the polyphony in some of the movements presented problems. In these instances (mainly in the slow movements), I opted for notating only the principal melodic line and then added grace notes and such only to enhance the simple purity of that line. The *tessitura* problem was solved by careful choice of key (notation is "in C")—however the low Fs will require some "finesse"on anything other than the B-flat instrument. (An *ossia* is provided.)

In the matter of notation, a slur is a general articulation marking and can also indicate a large or small phrase. Notes without slurs are detached and could be possibly any length (from short to long) depending upon interpretation. A *tenuto* mark indicates a broadening of tempo—usually at cadential points to facilitate breathing—and could be interpreted as a slight *ritardando*.

Dynamics are not notated except for the four instances in the original manuscript of *Suite No. 6*. Because dynamics are relative and not absolute, I would suggest always playing with a full sound (whatever dynamic level that implies), making use of echo effects in the many places that the music provides, and allowing the music to rise and fall naturally. The few notated trills are also in the original manuscript and invite their use elsewhere. Some trills, especially those before breath marks, might be better interpreted as mordents.

Tempo indications are general suggestions only. I refrained from using fanciful descriptive terms such as *con brio*, or *quasi una fantasia* because they may suggest a particular style. To quote Pablo Casals, *"Where interpreting Bach's music is concerned, there are no hard and fast rules...The best thing to do is to discard all preconceived ideas and try to approach in our performances whatever the music conveys to us..."*

This transcription is not intended to be a blueprint to be followed exactly—but rather, it is the raw material from which a personal interpretation can be built.

Ralph Sauer
Los Angeles Philharmonic

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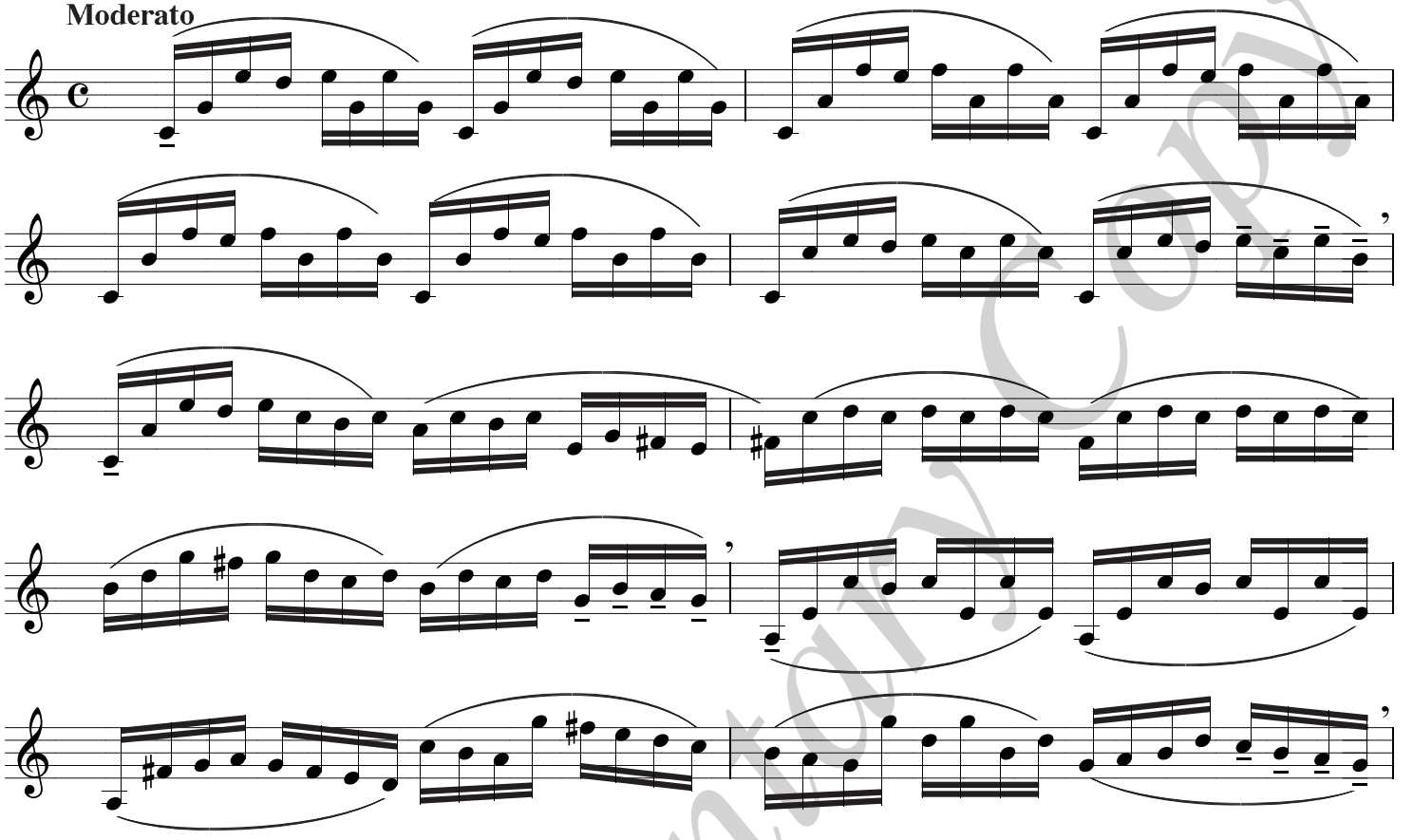
Suite I

Praeludium

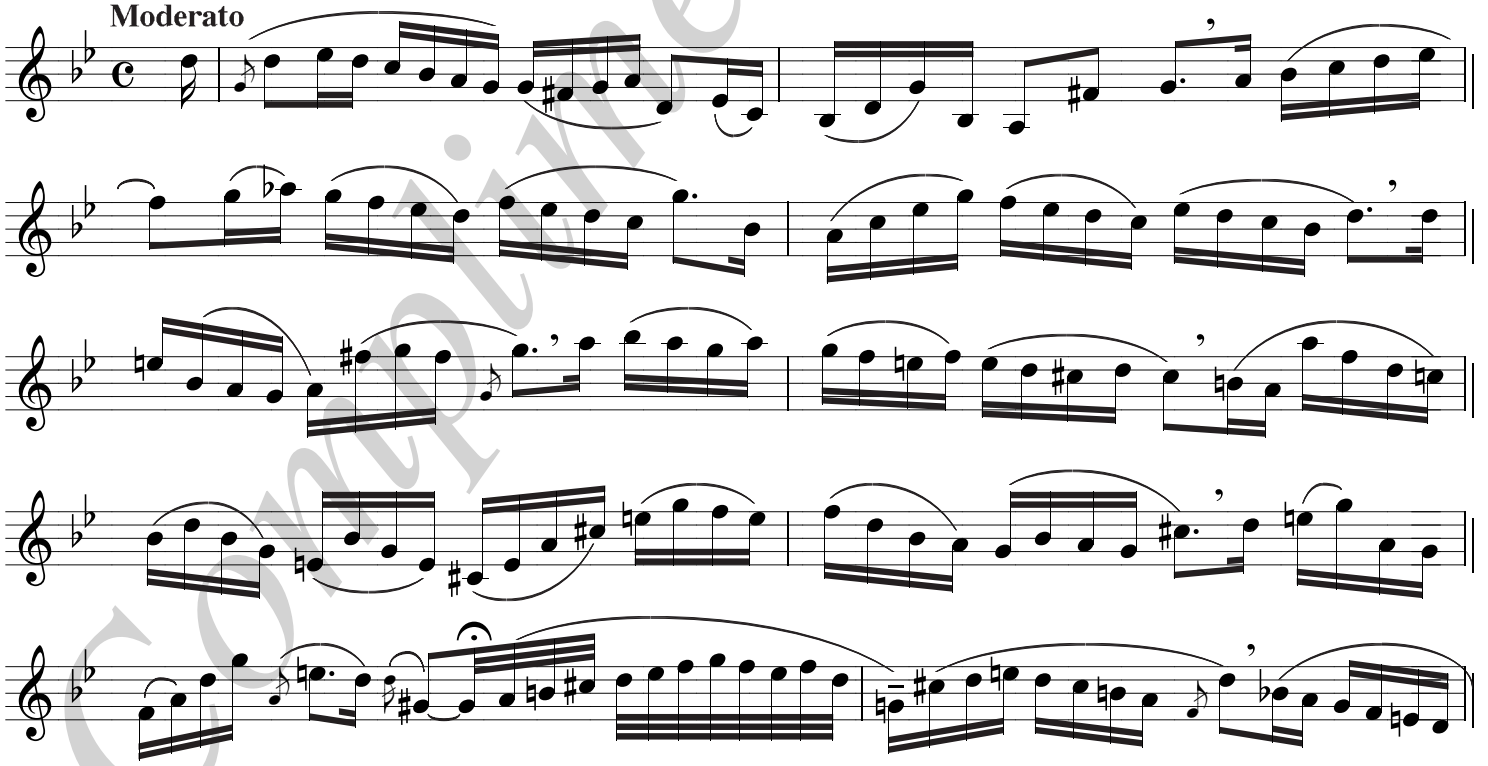
Moderato



Suite II

Allemande

Moderato



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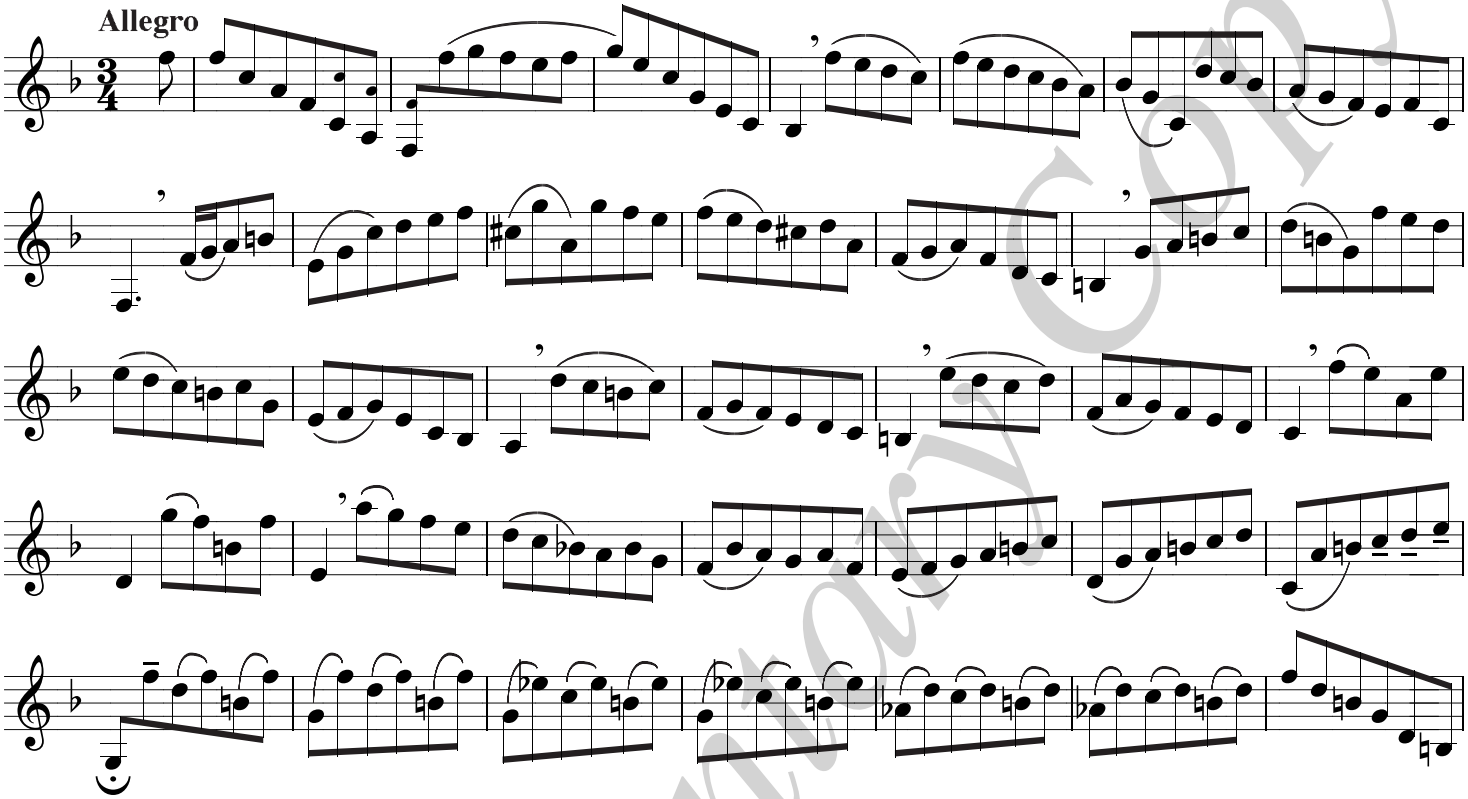
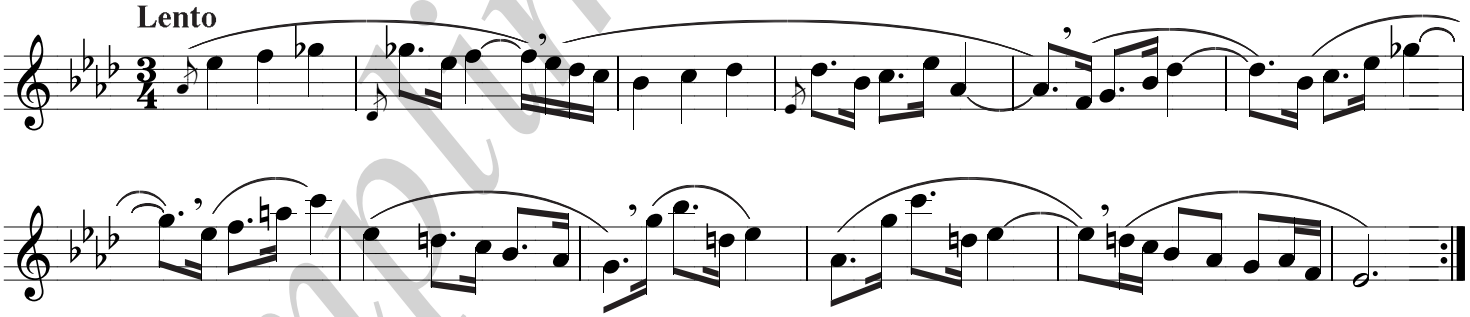
Suite III

Courante



Suite IV

Sarabande



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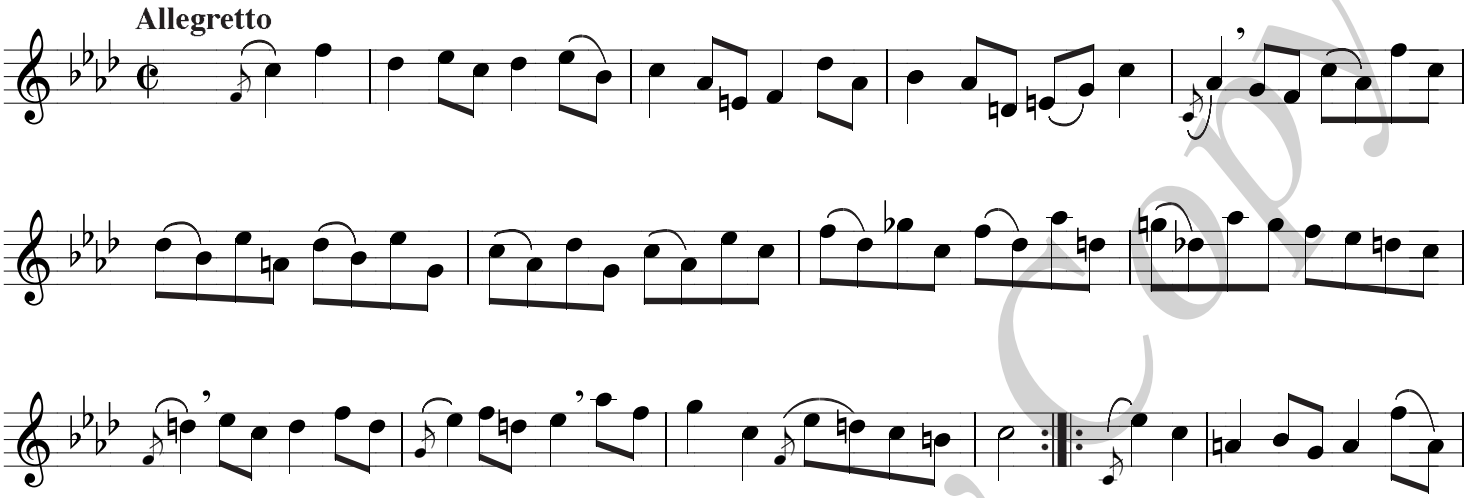
Suite V

Gavotte I

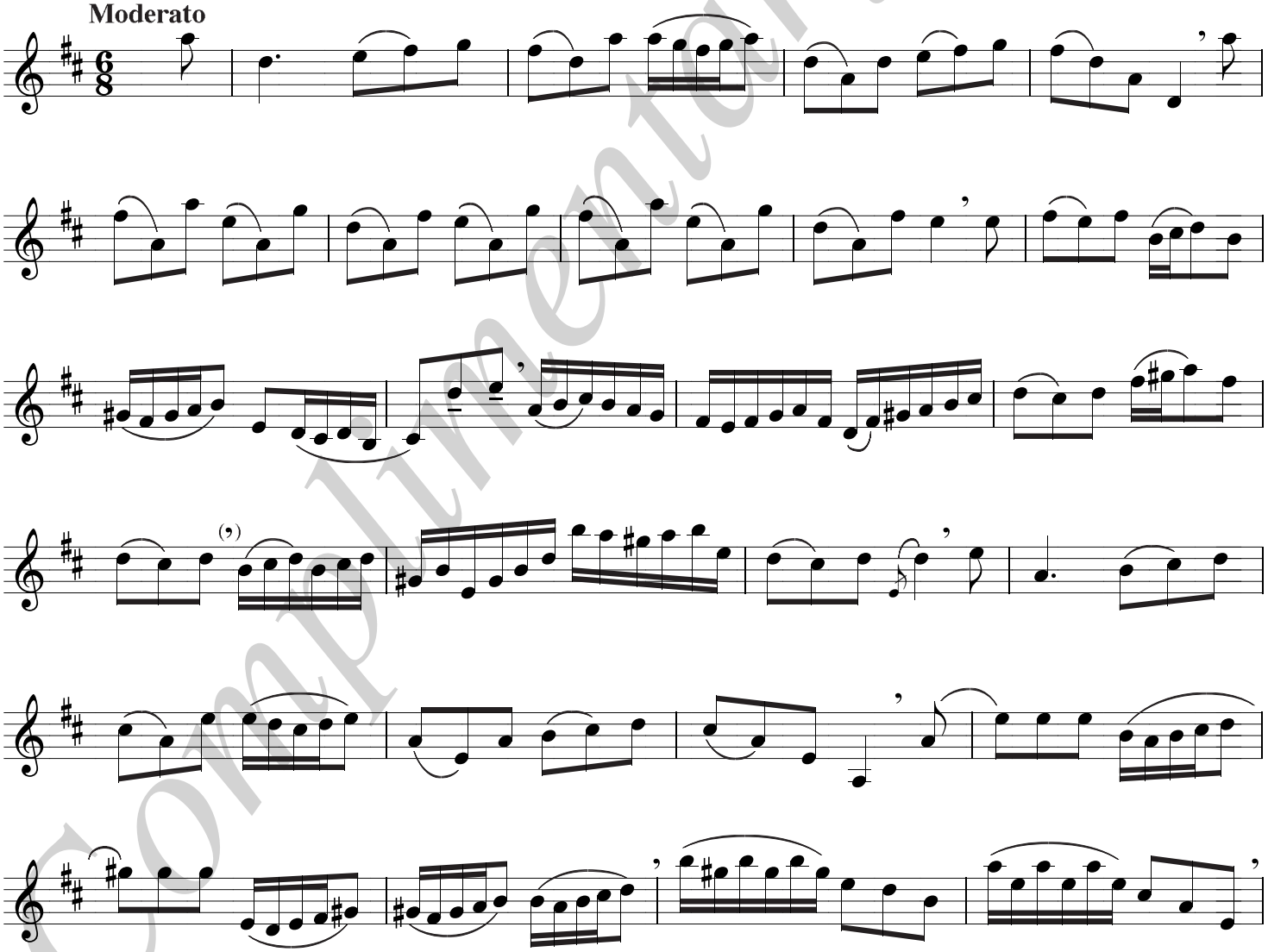
Allegretto



Suite VI

Gigue

Moderato



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