

Eetu Ranta-aho

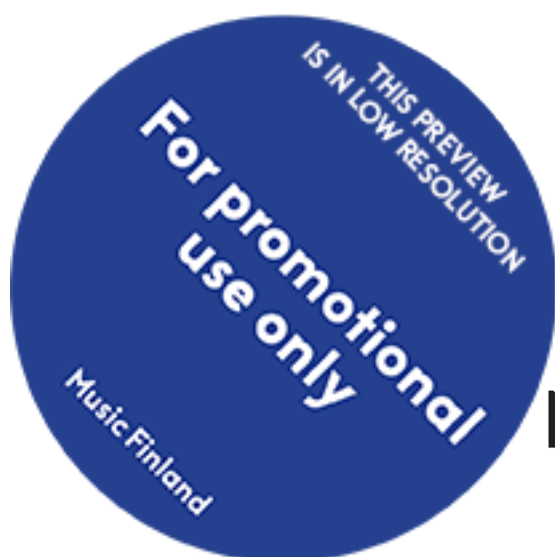
Super Suite

&

Transcriptions from the
Tournus manuscript
(Sainte Colombe)

for cello

2026



Music Finland

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Super Suite (2026)

Eetu Ranta-aho

&

Transcriptions from the Tournus manuscript (ca. 1690-1700)

Sainte-Colombe



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Super Suite:

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Transcriptions of viola da gamba works by Sainte-Colombe from the Tournus manuscript (transcriptions by ER, based on the Edition Gutenberg's 'Pour la Basse')

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Program note

Super Suite is a reflection on and homage to the enigmatic musical world of Sainte-Colombe's solo viola da gamba works.

Written more than three centuries ago, these works still feel remarkably modern. They move freely between measured and unmeasured time, stretch meter, and make use of *notes perdues* ("lost notes"), described by Marin Marais as fleeting embellishment-like passages played with rapid separate bow strokes.

I was struck by how contemporary Sainte-Colombe's music still sounds. Its freedom of rhythm and gesture, its sudden bursts of virtuosity, and its quiet intensity feel less like historical curiosities than invitations to continue the conversation.

Super Suite takes Sainte-Colombe's music and techniques as its point of departure, following them wherever they seem to lead.

Use of these pieces

When performed in the same concert, the pieces should be performed in the following order:

1. Super Suite
2. The Tournus Manuscript

Between Super Suite and the Sainte-Colombe transcriptions, but they may be performed before the Sainte-Colombe pieces.

The transcriptions may be omitted when performing the complete

paired with the transcriptions. However, it can also be

be performed without Super Suite, and individual

and separately.



Notes

On the transcriptions from the Tournus Manuscript

The Güntersberg Edition Pour la basse (G231) was used as the basis for the transcriptions. This edition is based on the so-called Tournus Manuscript, dating from around 1690–1700.

Sainte-Colombe uses certain embellishments that I have included in the transcriptions: the trill (♯) and (♯) mordent. I have chosen to use these standardised symbols instead of the original symbols used by Sainte-Colombe and in Pour la basse, as the originals may cause confusion for players who are not familiar with the notation of the viola da gamba repertoire. For example, the mordent is originally marked with a + above the note, which in modern string notation commonly indicates left-hand pizzicato.

The 'lost notes'

Sainte-Colombe uses so-called 'lost notes' (this name was given to them by Marin Marais). The lost notes are notated as small detached eighth notes. Their number is irregular. They should be played very quickly with individual short bow strokes, possibly beginning slowly and then becoming faster. When these notes appear within a metre (i.e. when there is a specified time signature), the metre should be observed. Within free metre, the manner of playing is nevertheless the same: very fast. These principles apply to the lost notes both in Super Suite and in the transcriptions: they should be executed in the same manner in both.

Metre

Sainte-Colombe uses free metre in sections without barlines. The performer should decide how to interpret the passage and where to place emphasis according to the musical context. The same principle applies to the free-metre passages in Super Suite.

Sainte-Colombe sometimes uses too few or too many notes within a bar. For example, a 3/4 bar may contain one sixteenth note too few, or another bar one eighth note too many. I have retained these irregularities as they appear in Sainte-Colombe's original pieces. The metre should nevertheless remain perceptible: the notes within the bar should be accommodated by stretching or compressing their durations.

I decided not to use this technique in Super Suite, but instead use similar effects through tuplets.

Artistic idea

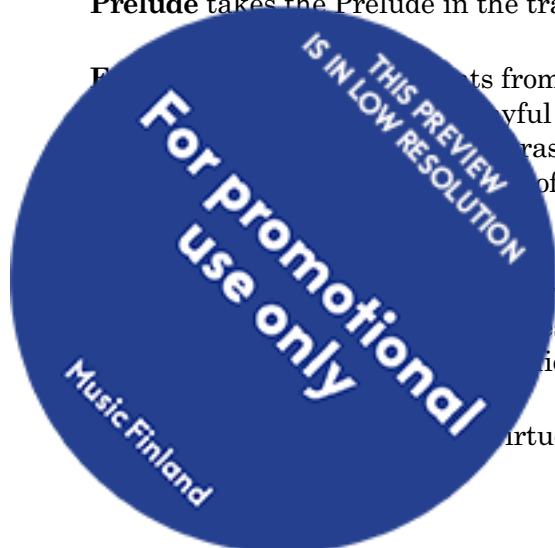
I have been fascinated by Sainte-Colombe's music for some time. The idea of Super Suite is to take certain elements from his music and push them into overdrive, following the directions in which they seem to be heading and taking them to their limits.

Prelude takes the Prélude in the transcriptions as its point of departure, referencing it quite directly.

Prelude starts from the Courante, Allemande and Gavotte. The Courante and Allemande are playful and capricious, bouncy and springy, while the Gavotte is a stern and dignified contrast to this playfulness. Where the Prelude stays relatively firmly within the boundaries of Sainte-Colombe's world, Extra-veer veers off into paths yet

abandoning the dance to its most elemental skeleton: the strong second beat. Tone and rhythm are especially important: they should become the main focus of variation. The harmonic and melodic material is reduced to a minimum.

Prelude turns virtuosic writing into overdrive.



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Super Suite

dedicated to Senja Rummukainen

Eetu Ranta-aho

1. Prelude

Violoncello

Enigmatic

p

Vc.

[1]

calando

Vc.

2

pp

ten.

p

Vc.

[2]

ten.

rall

f

p

Vc.

3

A tempo

poco a poco più agitato

Vc.

[3]

6

Vc.

p

6

6



Vc. [3]

f

Vc. [3]

pp

calando.....

Vc. [3]

mp

p

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2. Extra-veer

♩ = 150 (détaché)

Violoncello

mp grazioso *mp*

6

Vc.

mp

11

Vc.

mp *p*

16

Vc.

p

21

Vc.

f *p* *f* *p*

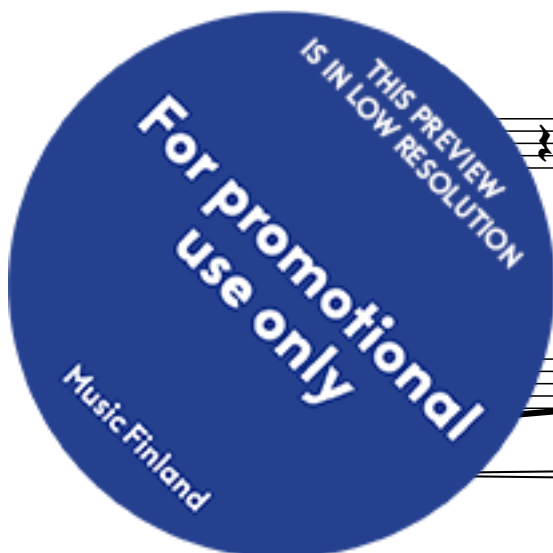
28

Vc.

mf

f

p *f*



durations are approximate in this section

Vc. 

[illegible]

[44]

Vc.

ord.

rit.....

sul pont. like an echo

ord.

sharp

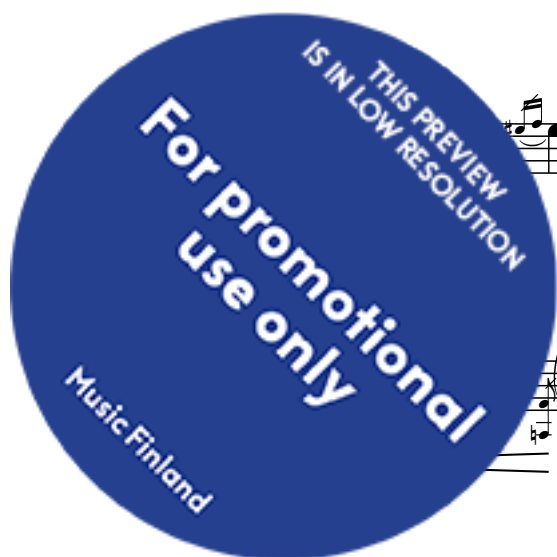
pp

f

A musical score for Violoncello (Vc.) in bass clef. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure starts with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a half note G4 with a sharp sign and a slur. The second measure contains a half note G4 with a sharp sign, a half note F#4 with a natural sign, a half note E4 with a natural sign, and a half note D4 with a sharp sign. The third measure contains a half note C4 with a sharp sign, a half note B3 with a natural sign, a half note A3 with a sharp sign, and a half note G3 with a sharp sign. The fourth measure contains a half note F#3 with a natural sign, a half note E4 with a sharp sign, a half note D4 with a sharp sign, and a half note C4 with a sharp sign. Above the first measure is the word 'ord.' with a slur. Above the second measure is 'rit.....' with a dotted line. Above the third measure is 'sul pont. like an echo'. Above the fourth measure is 'ord.' and 'sharp'. Below the first measure is a wedge-shaped dynamic marking. Below the second measure is a wedge-shaped dynamic marking. Below the third measure is a wedge-shaped dynamic marking. Below the fourth measure is a wedge-shaped dynamic marking. The dynamic markings are *pp* and *f*.

Vc. 

Gavotte poco sul pont., 'old style sound' senza vibrato

risoluto $\mathcal{J} = 70$ [illegible][illegible]

59 Vc. *pp*

65 Vc. *pp* *sul tasto molto* *gliss.* *p* Half tempo, but still light (♩ = 70)

70 Vc. *accel* gradually to sul pont

75 Vc. *veering off... pitch accuracy can falter* ♩ = 160 *sul pont. molto* *più accel*

78 Vc. *repeat ad lib.* *I II III II* *squeaky, random pitches (if any), keep the gesture recognizable. (repeat ad lib with rising tendency)* *p* *ff*

80 Vc. ♩ = 150 *ord.* *mf* *p < ff* *p* *< ff* *mp*

86 Vc. *tenuto* *a tempo* *f* *mp*

pizz. *sul pont. arco* *f* *sul tasto molto* *gliss.* *p*

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3. Molecule sarabande

In this movement, dynamics affect the tone color significantly. More **p**'s -> darker color!

♩ = 50

Violoncello

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *ppp*

9

Vc.

p *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *p* *ppp*

ten. soft, warm

17

Vc.

ppp *p* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *p* *p*

dark

25

Vc.

pp *p* *ppp* *p* *pp*

33

Vc.

ppp *pppp* *pppp* *p* *ppp*

41

Vc.

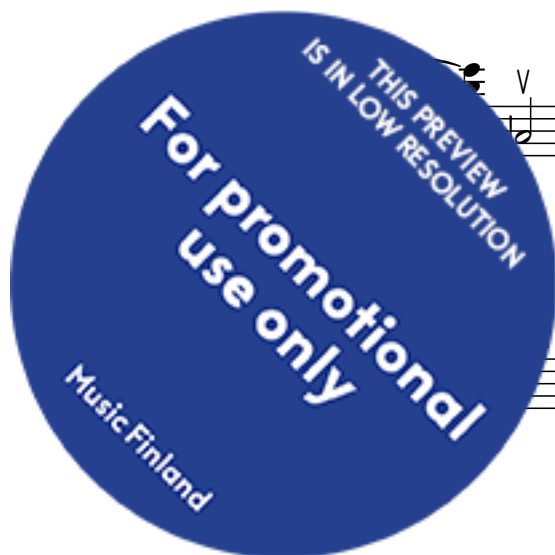
p *ppp* *p*

bright, light

ppp *p*

approximately these pitches (in the utmost highest register)

gliss.

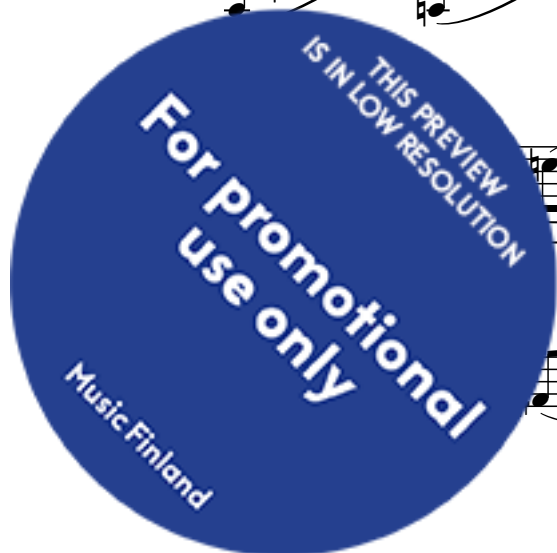
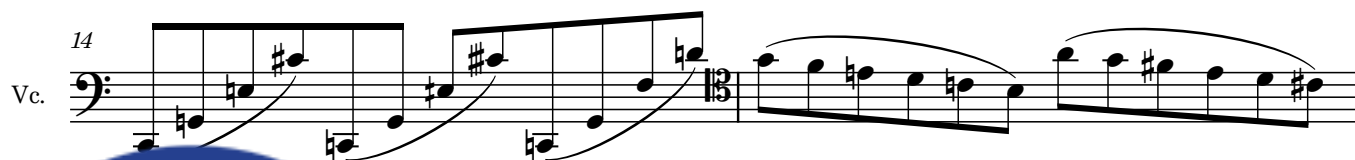
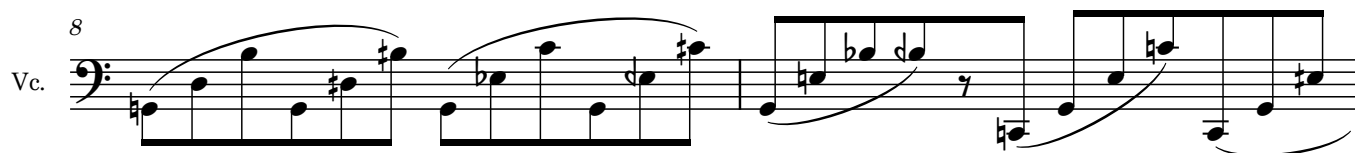
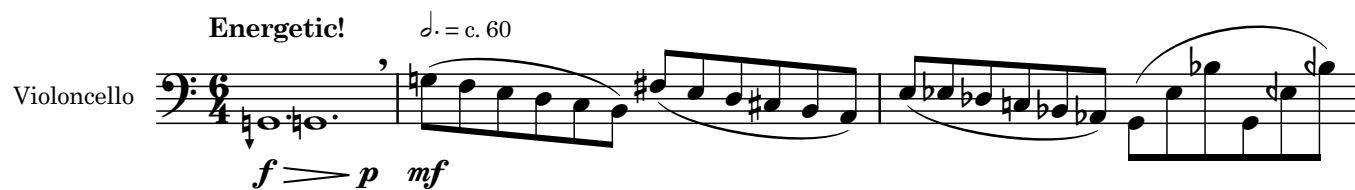


4. Giga

Energetic!

♩. = c. 60

Violoncello



Vc. 20 *mf*

Vc. 22 *p*

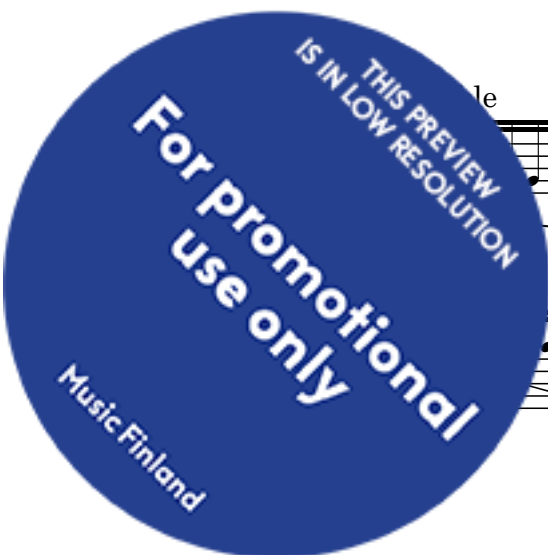
Vc. 24 7 8

Vc. 26 *f*

Vc. 27 *p*

Vc. 30 *f* gliss.

Vc. 33



accel.....

[35]

Vc.

ff *p*

38

Vc.

f

accel. to extremely fast, ad lib.

p *f*

$\text{♩} = 80$

Vc.

42

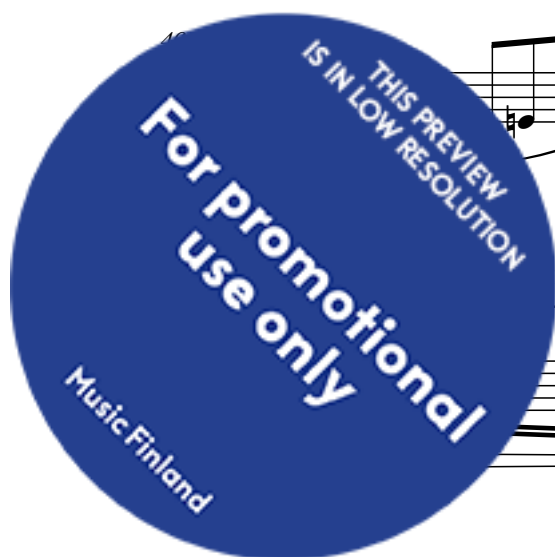
Vc.

44

Vc.

46

te until bow ends



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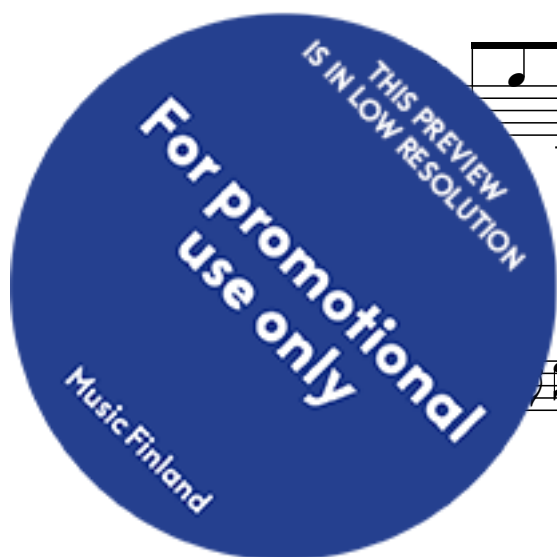
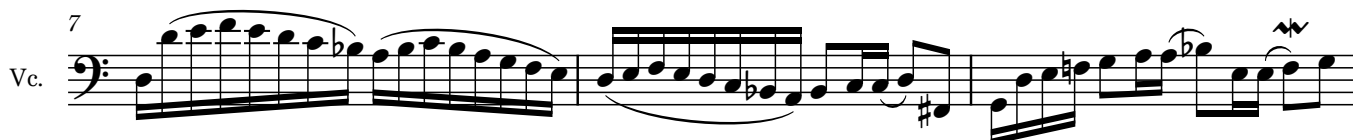
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Transcriptions from the Tournus manuscript

1. Prélude

Sainte-Colombe
transcriptions by ER



20

Vc.

22

Vc.

25

Vc.

28

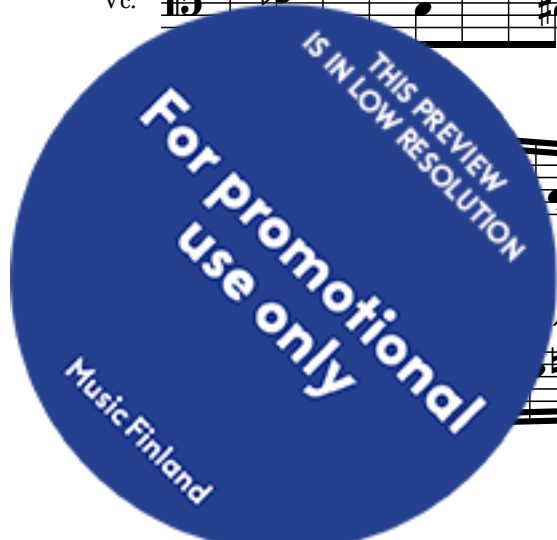
Vc.

30

Vc.



2. Allemande



3. Gavotte

$\text{♩} = 80$

Violoncello

Vc.

5

9

The musical score for '3. Gavotte' is presented in three staves. The first staff is for the Violoncello, starting with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It begins with a tempo marking of 80 beats per minute. The second and third staves are for the Violoncello (Vc.), starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff begins at measure 5, and the third staff begins at measure 9. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.



4. Courante

♩ = 120

Violoncello



Vc.



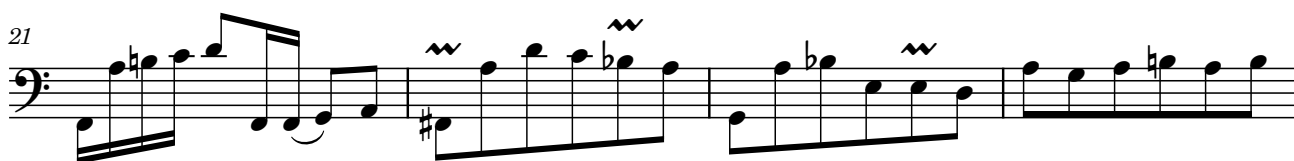
Vc.



Vc.



Vc.



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5. Sarabande

Violoncello

$\text{♩} = 60$

7

Vc.

12

Vc.

16

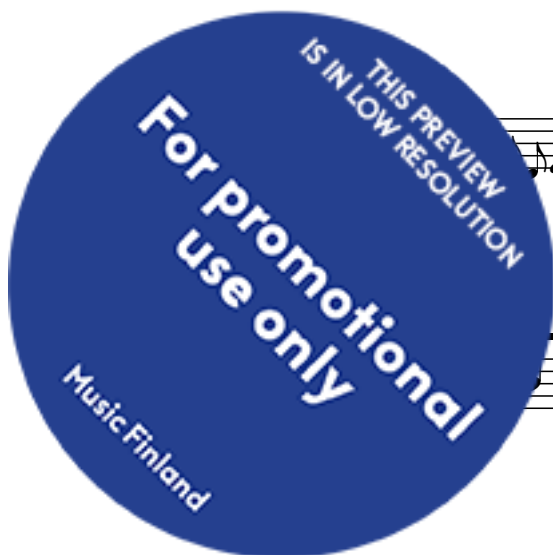
Vc.

21

Vc.



6. Gigue



20

Vc.

22

Vc.

24

Vc.

26

Vc.

The musical score for the Gigue, measures 20-26, is written for a single voice (Vc.) in 12/8 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various musical symbols such as treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and a time signature of 12/8. The score consists of four staves, each containing a line of music. The first staff (measure 20) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff (measure 22) begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The third staff (measure 24) begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The fourth staff (measure 26) begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The music features a variety of note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are also some special markings, such as a 'V' above a note in measure 26 and a '7' below a note in measure 26.

