

### C:1 Gavotte

This is a good piece to choose if you are confident with playing fairly fast moving quaver passages and tonguing lightly; if you are not comfortable with this, maybe consider choosing another piece.

Before starting work on this piece, try to listen online to a recording of the original piece [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mf7COoA\\_7E4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mf7COoA_7E4) (played on the harpsichord), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roXcetgwoMo> (piano) and the saxophone version of this piece <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6wm2iOoV4M> also available as part of your exam downloads; use the code in the back of your book to access these.

Start by getting familiar with the notes, working in four bar phrases. Notice how the phrases start halfway through the bar, on the second minim beat. Watch out for occasional accidentals such as C# and D#, and the mix of middle F natural and low F# in bar 18. Be careful to continue the D# marking in bar 12 throughout the bar, maybe pencilling in the second D# as a reminder. Identify any tricky finger movements, for example the long quaver run from bars 12 to 15, and practise the relevant section many times over to get it under your fingers. Mark in with pencil any breath marks that might be useful, such as before the long quaver passage identified above, with a breath mark halfway through bar 12.

The articulation is a mix of staccato and legato playing, often staccato tonguing the two crotchets at the start of phrases and slurring quavers. Watch out for the exceptions to this, such as the tongued quavers in bar 12. The long quaver passages have different articulation to each other, with two slurred and two tongued quavers in bars 13 – 14, and all tongued (not staccato) in the second half of bar 18 and across bar 19. Aim to get all the slurs, staccato and tongued notes exactly as written. There is also just one tenuto note in bar 15, so make sure you give this note its full length.

The dynamics in this piece are quite wide ranging, with both forte and piano playing, mezzo forte and mezzo piano. Use of crescendo and diminuendo give shape to the piece. Sometimes these are long and drawn out, such as the crescendo from piano to mezzo forte in bars 13 – 15, so practise graduating the increase in sound evenly across the two bars. By contrast, the diminuendo in bar 2 needs a really fast decrease in volume from forte to piano over just one minim beat. Practise reducing the volume rapidly by supporting the air from the bottom of your lungs as you decrease the speed at which you're pushing the air through the saxophone.

When you are confident with the notes, articulation and dynamics, aim for a light feel to your playing, for example by tonguing lightly, particularly on the staccato crotchets, and by moving your fingers as smoothly as possible over the running quaver passages. Finally add in the poco rit in the second to last bar to bring the piece to its natural conclusion.

The gavotte is a graceful style of dance that originated in France and became popular across Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so the gavotte in music is a piece that you would dance the gavotte to. It has two beats per bar, (two minim beats in our piece), and features a mix of steps and hops. This Gavotte is part of a suite (group) of French style pieces written by Bach, originally for harpsichord. He wrote six of these suites, and this piece is from the fifth one. Imagine you were dancing lightly and gracefully to get the right sort of feel!

You could try playing along with a metronome or metronome app, building up to a speed of about minim = 69, (two beats per bar). Then try playing along with the example track provided and finally on your own; practise both with and without the example track, being careful to keep a consistent beat when playing on your own. It may help to tap your toe inside your shoe to help keep the beat when playing solo.