THE MATTHEW HOLMES CONSORTS

(The Cambridge Consort Books c.1588 - ?1597)

Matthew Holmes was responsible for compiling the largest body of surviving English lute, bandora and cittern music, together with music for 'consort-of-six'. His interest in consort music seems to have begun around 1588 when he became precentor and a singing man at Christ Church, Oxford, and associated with another singing man, Richard Reade, whose interest in the form led him to compose numerous pieces. (Lyle Nordstrom, *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, 1972)

The expression 'consort-of-six' as used here refers to that special grouping of instruments (treble viol or violin, flute or recorder, bass viol, lute, cittern and bandora) which was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I and is represented by four major sources: printed publications by Thomas Morley (The First Booke of Consort Lessons, 1599 & 1611) and Philip Rosseter (Lessons for Consort, 1609) and manuscript collections: The Walsingham Consorts *c.*1588 and The Matthew Holmes Consorts *c.*1588 – ?1597 (often known as 'The Cambridge Consort Books').

The term 'Consort' originally denoted any music whereby different families of instruments come together in a group, but in the 20th century a non-historical distinction was made between 'whole' consorts of like instruments and 'broken' consorts' of different families.

Holmes' consort music was written out in the following manuscripts which are in the possession of Cambridge University Library:

Dd.3.18 Mainly lute duet trebles and consort lute parts.
Dd.14.24 Cittern solos and consort parts.
Dd.5.20 Bass consort parts and an inserted section of lyra viol tablature and music for division viol, including a number of divisions on consort lesson bass parts, including 'James's Galliard' and Dowland's 'Lachrimae')
Dd.5.21 Mainly recorder consort parts but with two pages of parts for 'treble violan'. (the smallest size of violin used at the time), mistakenly copied by Holmes into his recorder book.
The main 'treble violan' book and the bandora book**,** which we can assume would have originally existed**,** are not extant.
The Matthew Holmes consort books are, nevertheless, one of the richest sources of Elizabethan consort music, particularly by virtue of having the largest number of fine lute parts to accompany consorts in this and other collections, such as Thomas Morley's *The First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599 & 1611) for which the lute book is missing. The set is also interesting in that treble violan (treble violin) and recorder are specified rather than the more usual treble viol and flute.

For a fuller introduction and list of sources for the individual pieces, see the introduction in the Score.

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1	The French kings maske	Anon
2	Alfonsoes paven	?Augustine Bassano or Alfonso Ferrabosco II
3	La Bergera galliarde	Anon
4	Nightingale	Anon
5	Complainte or Fortune (Fortune my foe)	Trad. Hanging ballad tune
6	Primiero	Anon
7	Duncombs galliarde	Anon
8	Tarletons jigg	Anon
9	Long paven	John Johnson
10	Dowlands round Battell galliarde	John Dowland
11	Katherine Darcies galliarde	John Dowland
12	The Jewes Daunce	Richard Nicholson
13	De la Tromba paven	?Richard Allison
14	James Galliarde	?James Harding
15	The Sprytes songe	Anon
16	Reades first paven	Richard Reade
17	Reades second paven	Richard Reade
18	Reades galliarde	Richard Reade
19	Dowlands first galliarde	John Dowland
20	Nutmigs and ginger	Anon

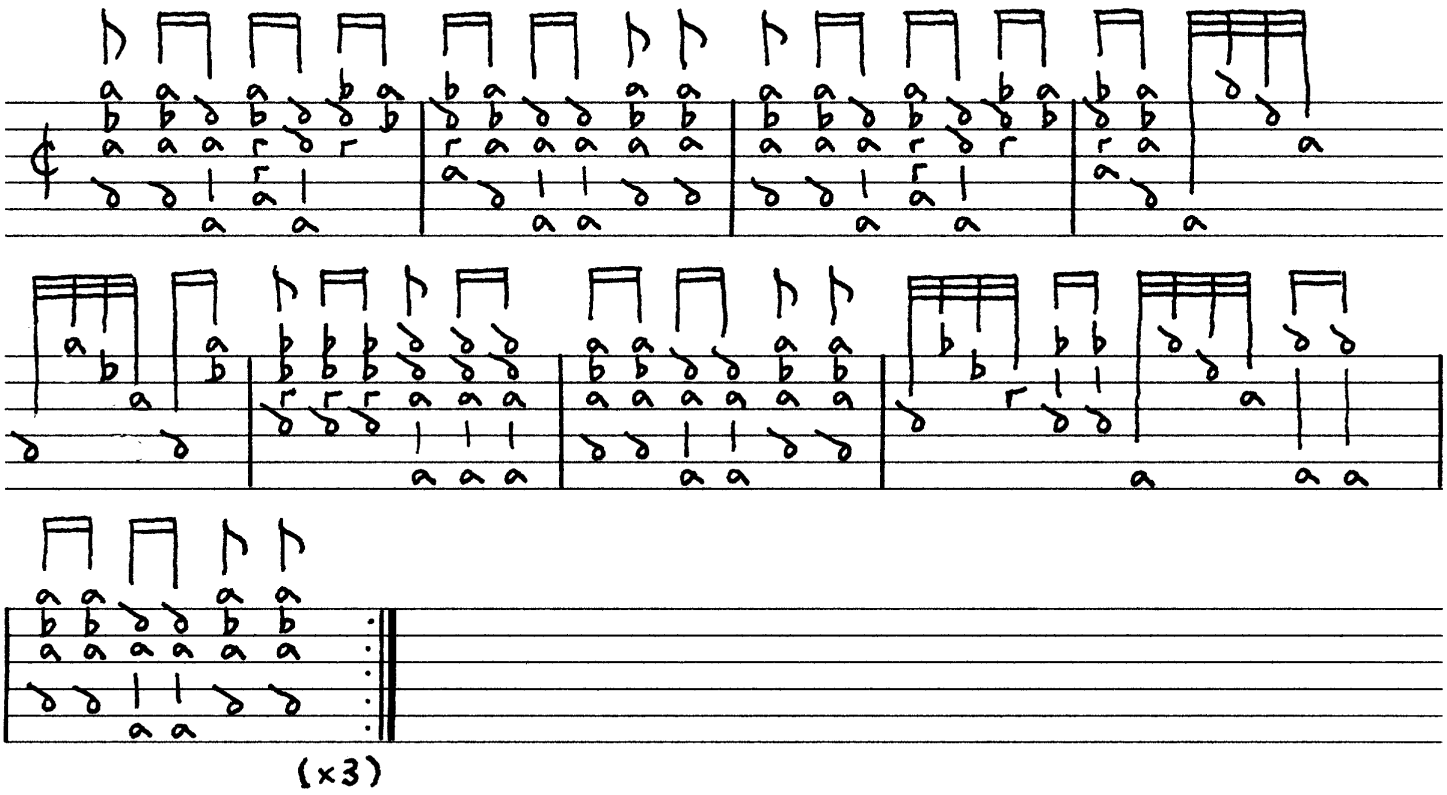
Variations from the source
The Bandora part

The list below shows tablature (tab) as appears in the source and which was considered to require alteration. The tablature letters start at the top course and work downwards. A course which is not notated is shown by a hyphen.

All bandora parts are by Ian Gaskell apart from De la Tromba paven, which comes from the *Browne Bandora and Lyra Viol Book*.

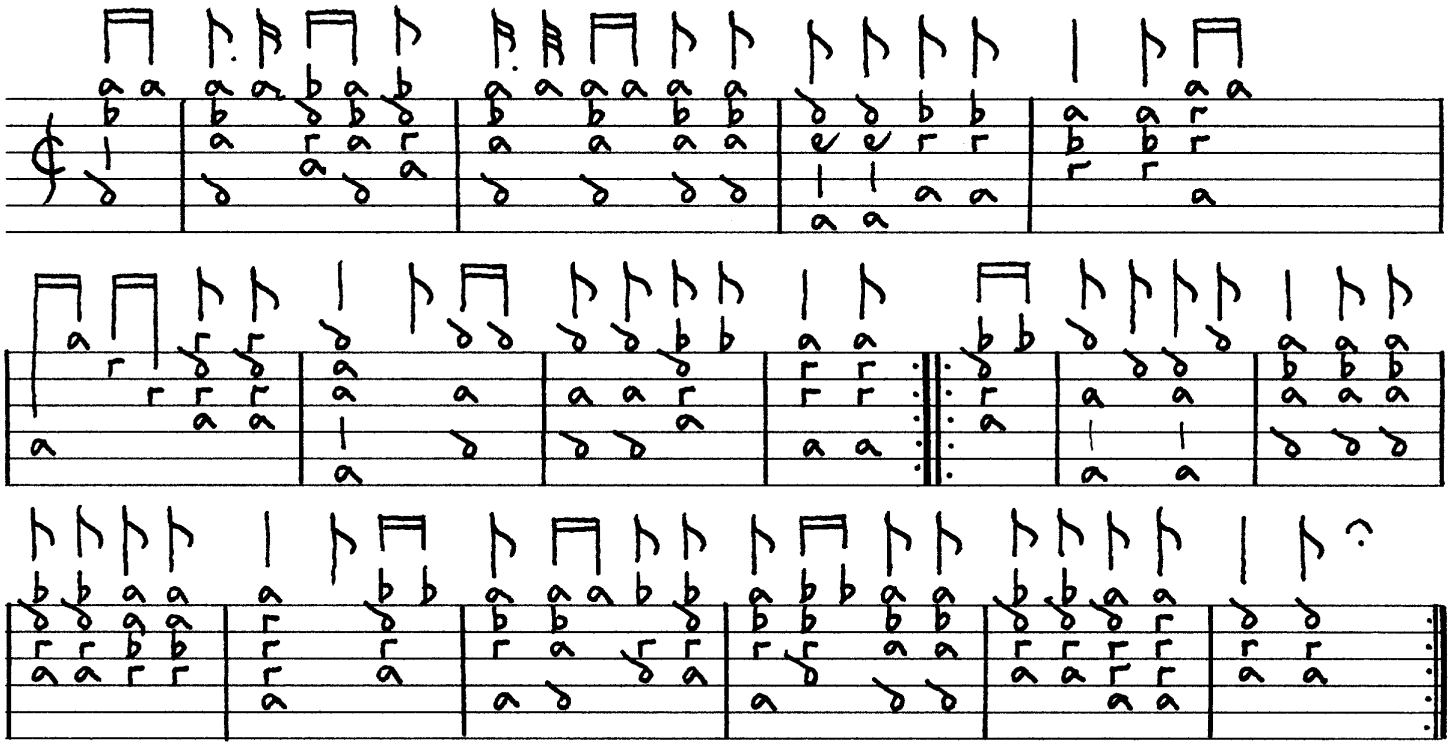
13	**De la Tromba paven**	1st and 2nd sections	bar 7 missing
		2nd section	2nd time last minim rest
		3rd section	bar 1 1st minim - d c e - - tab
			bar 1 2nd minim - d e - - a tab
			bar 1 4th minim - c a c - - tab

1. The French kings maske

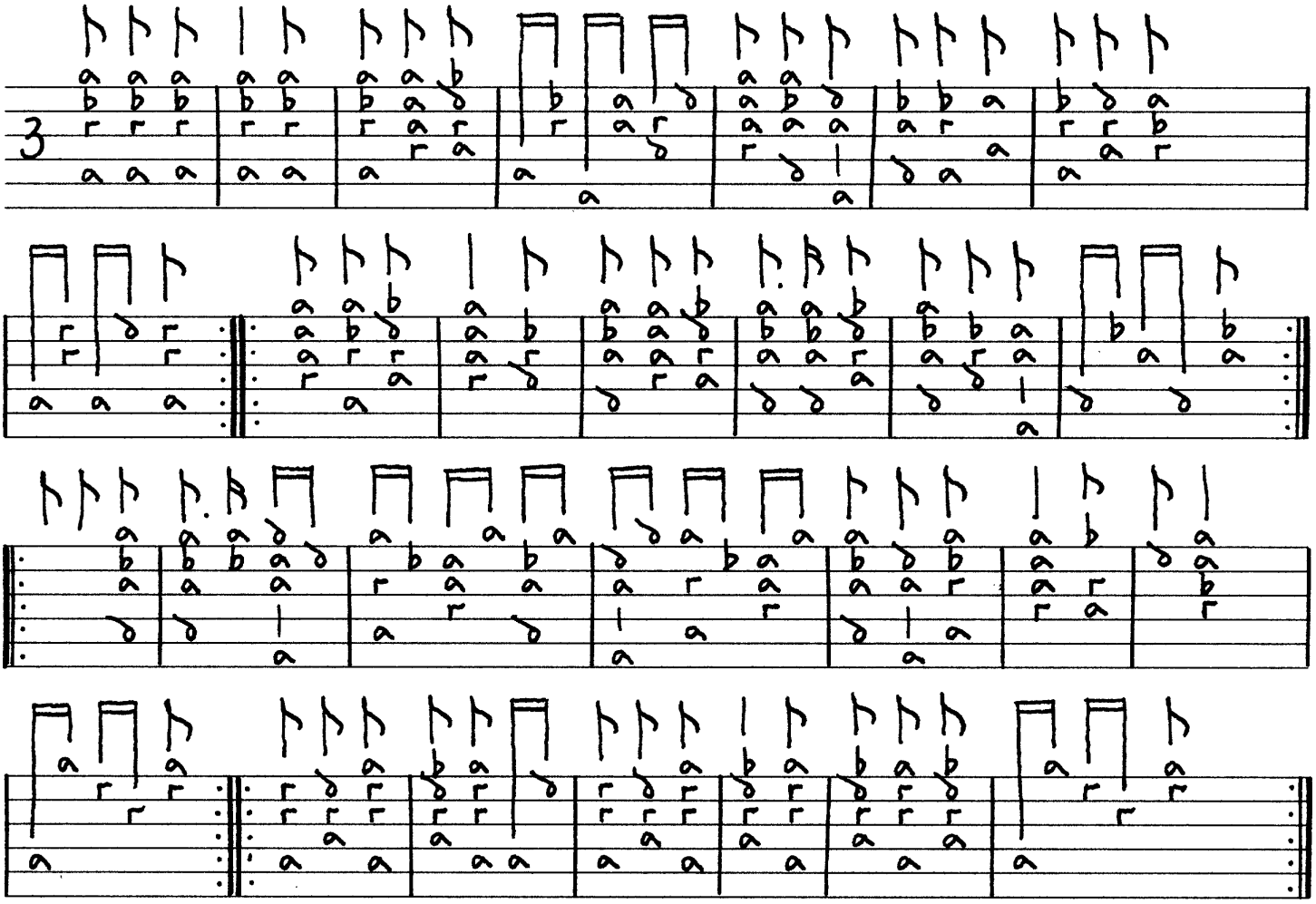


2. Alfonsoes paven

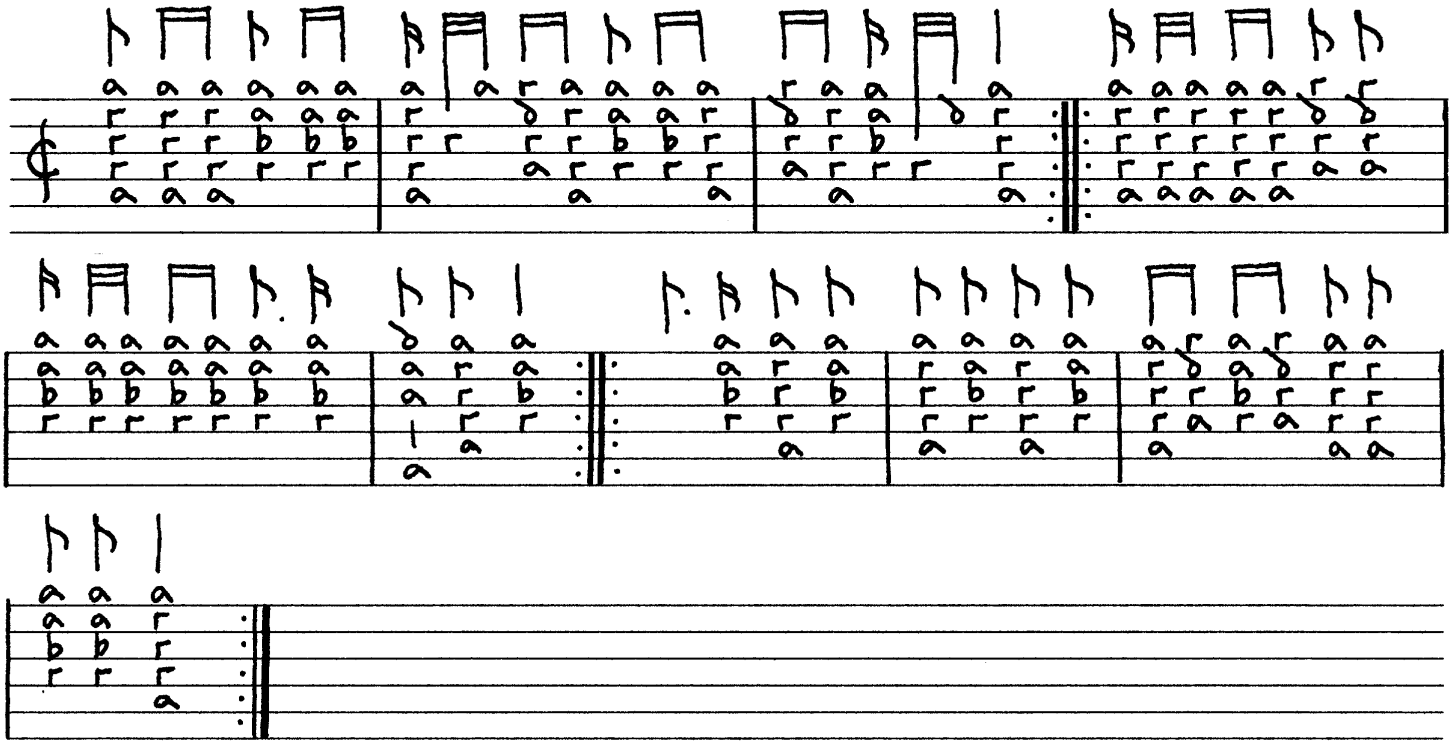
Alfonso Ferrabosco



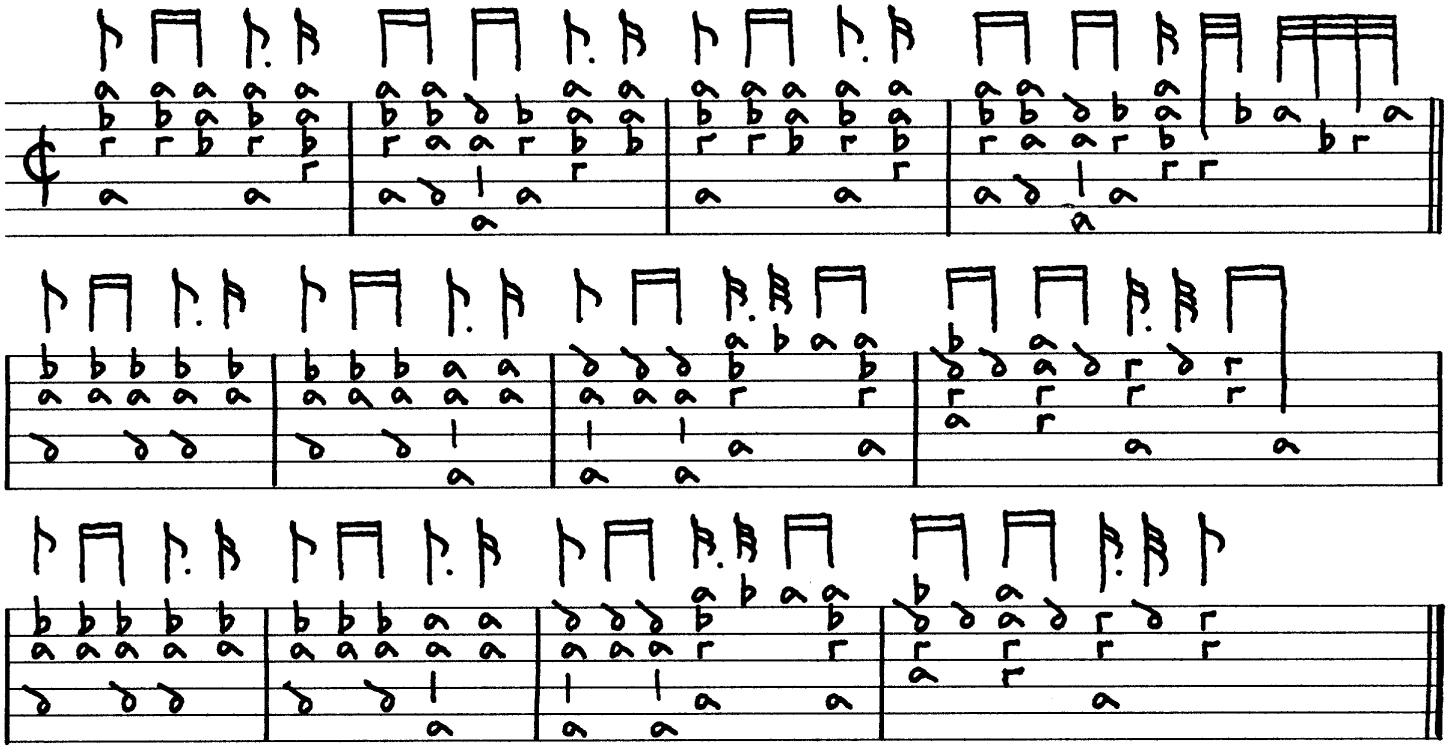
3. La Bergera galliarde



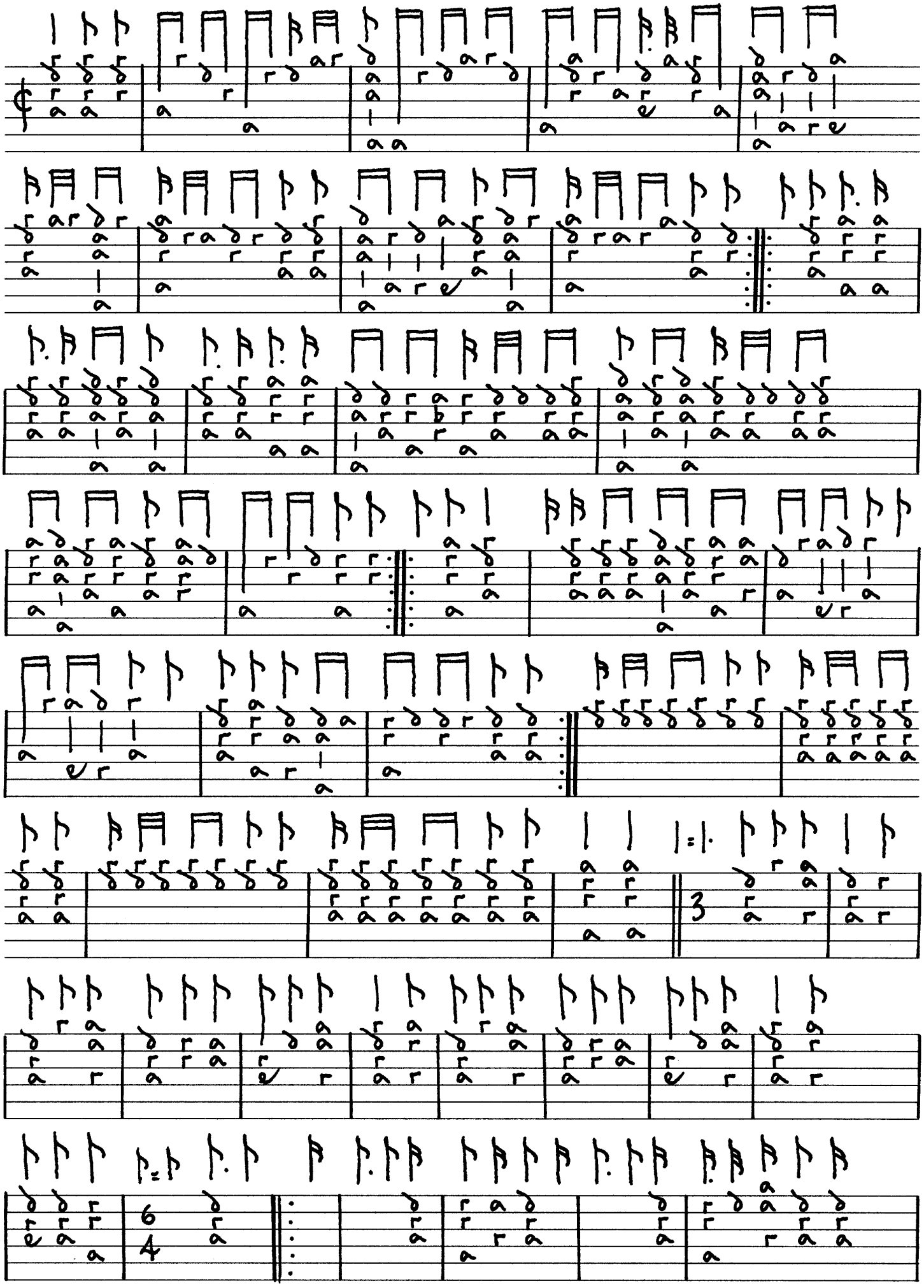
4. Nightingale

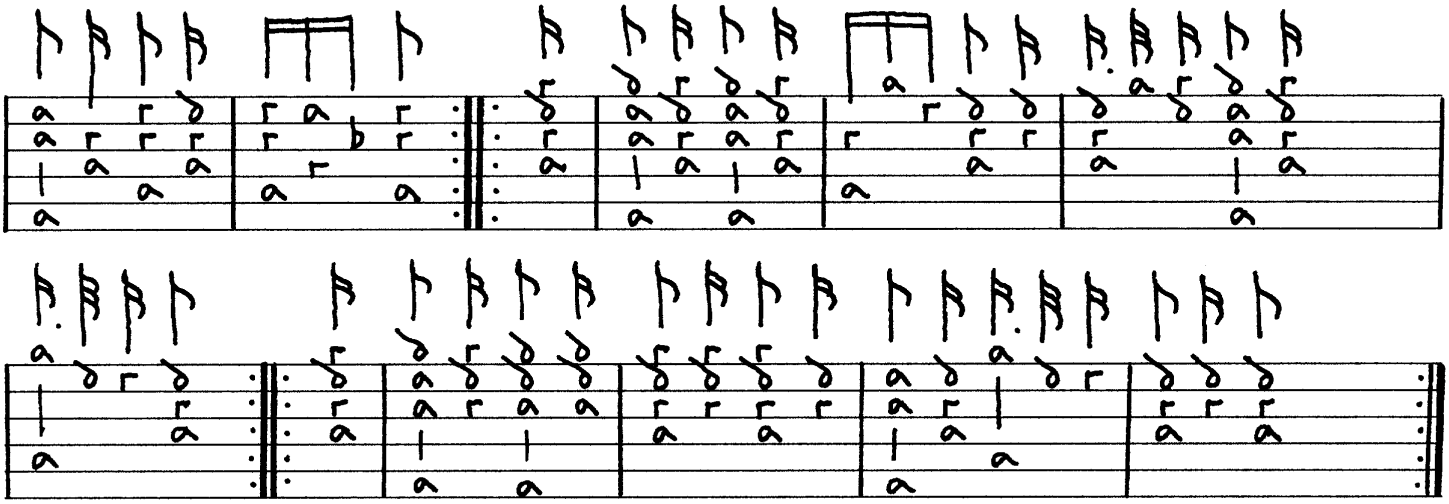


5. Complainte or Fortune (Fortune my foe)

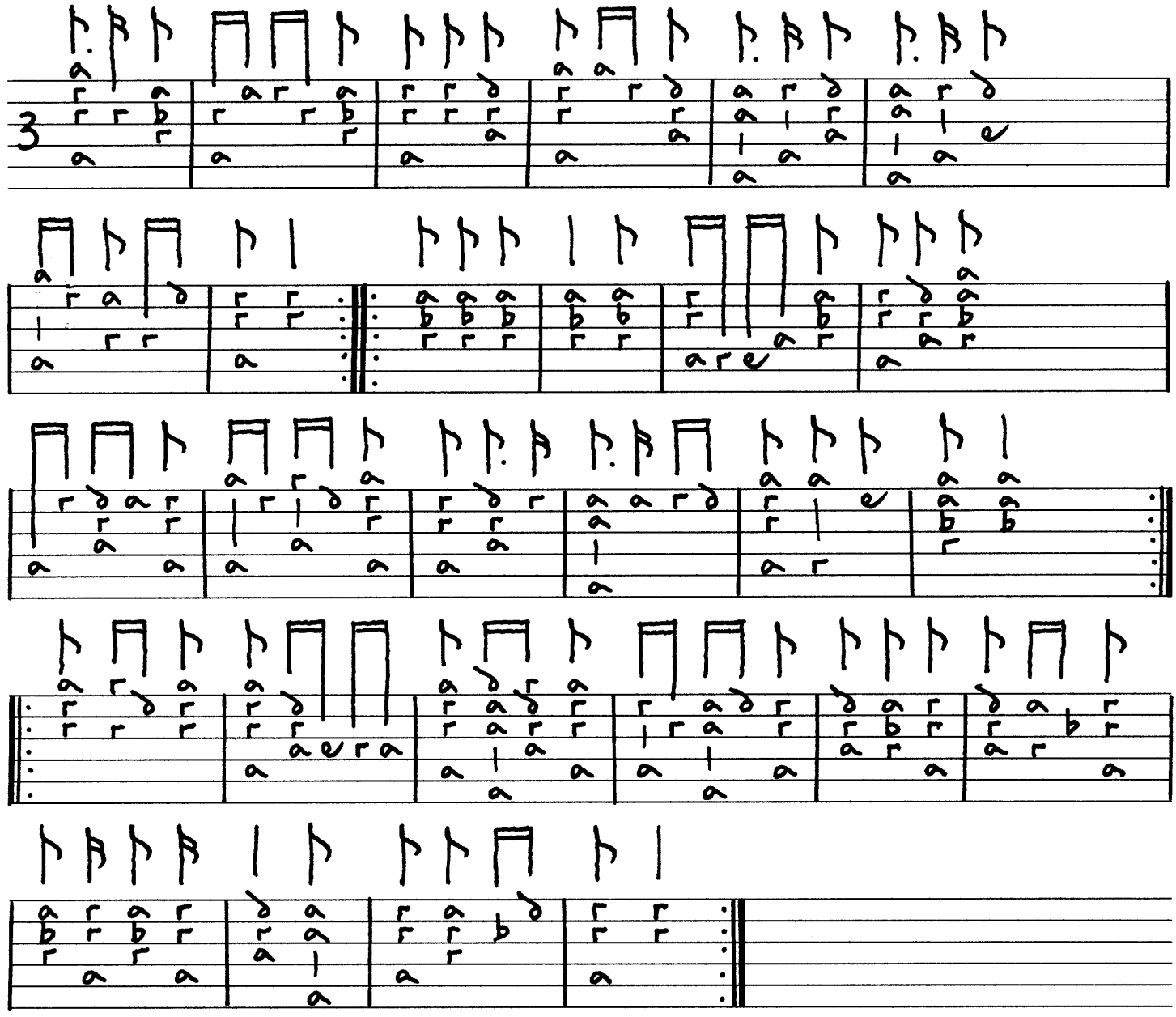


6. Primiero

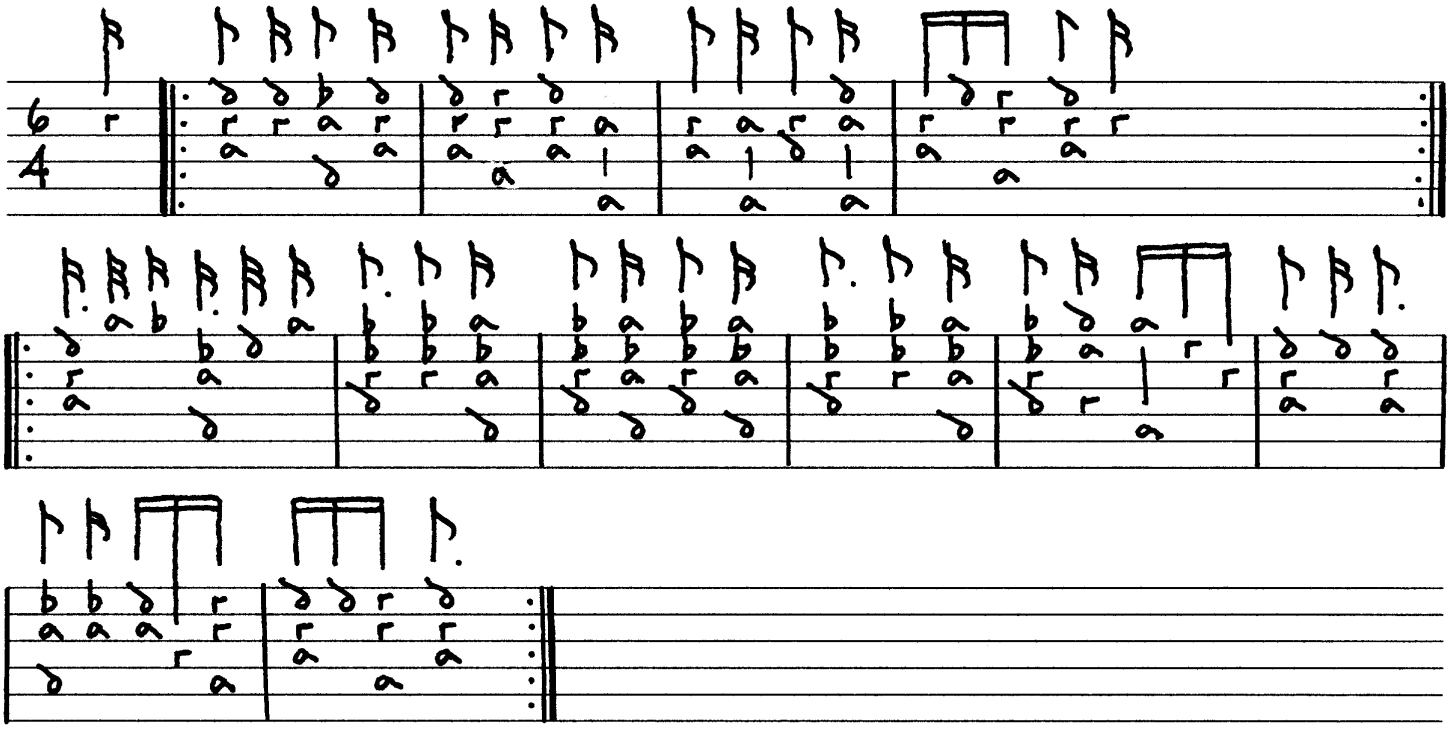




7. Duncombs galliarde

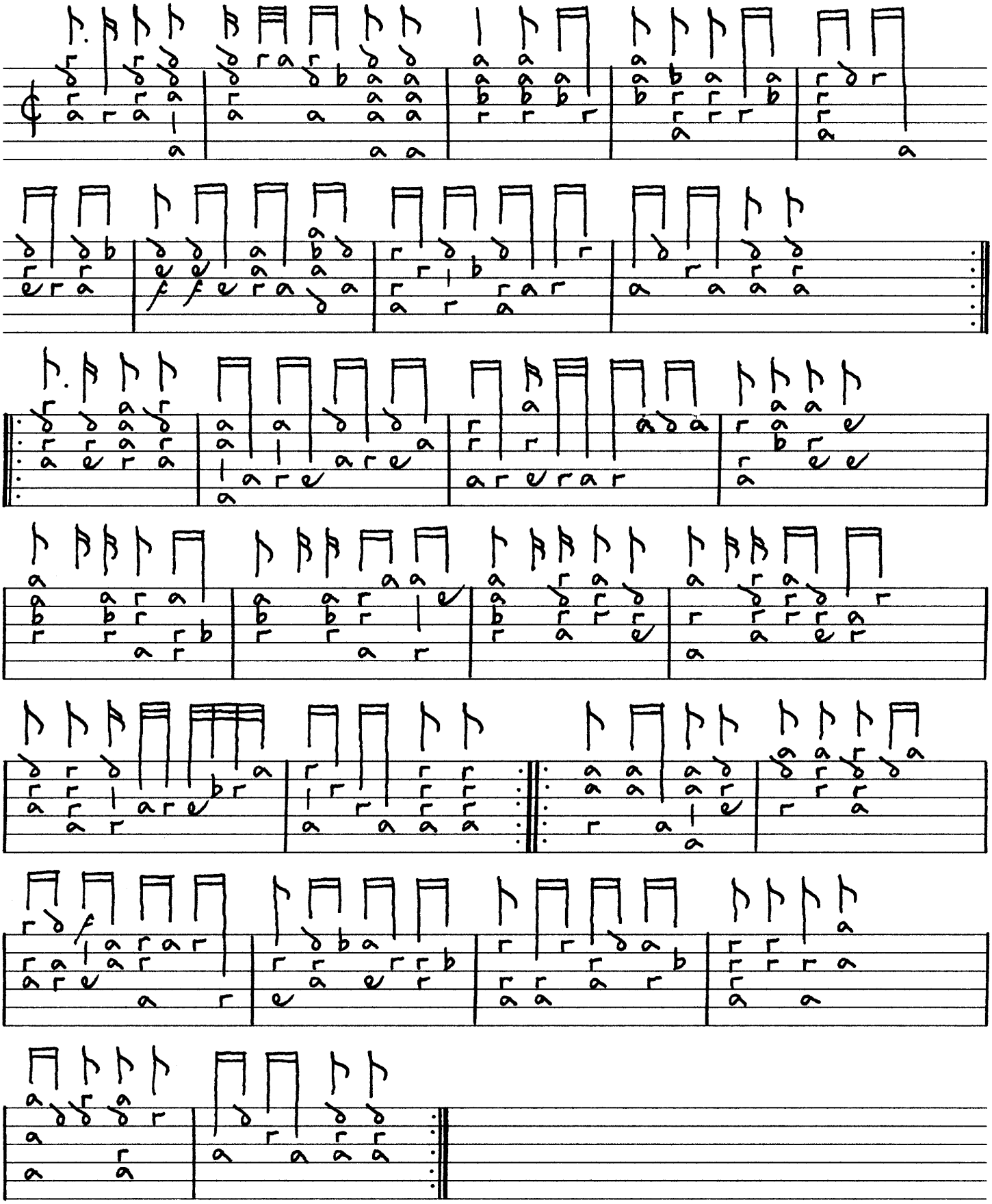


8. Tarletons jigg



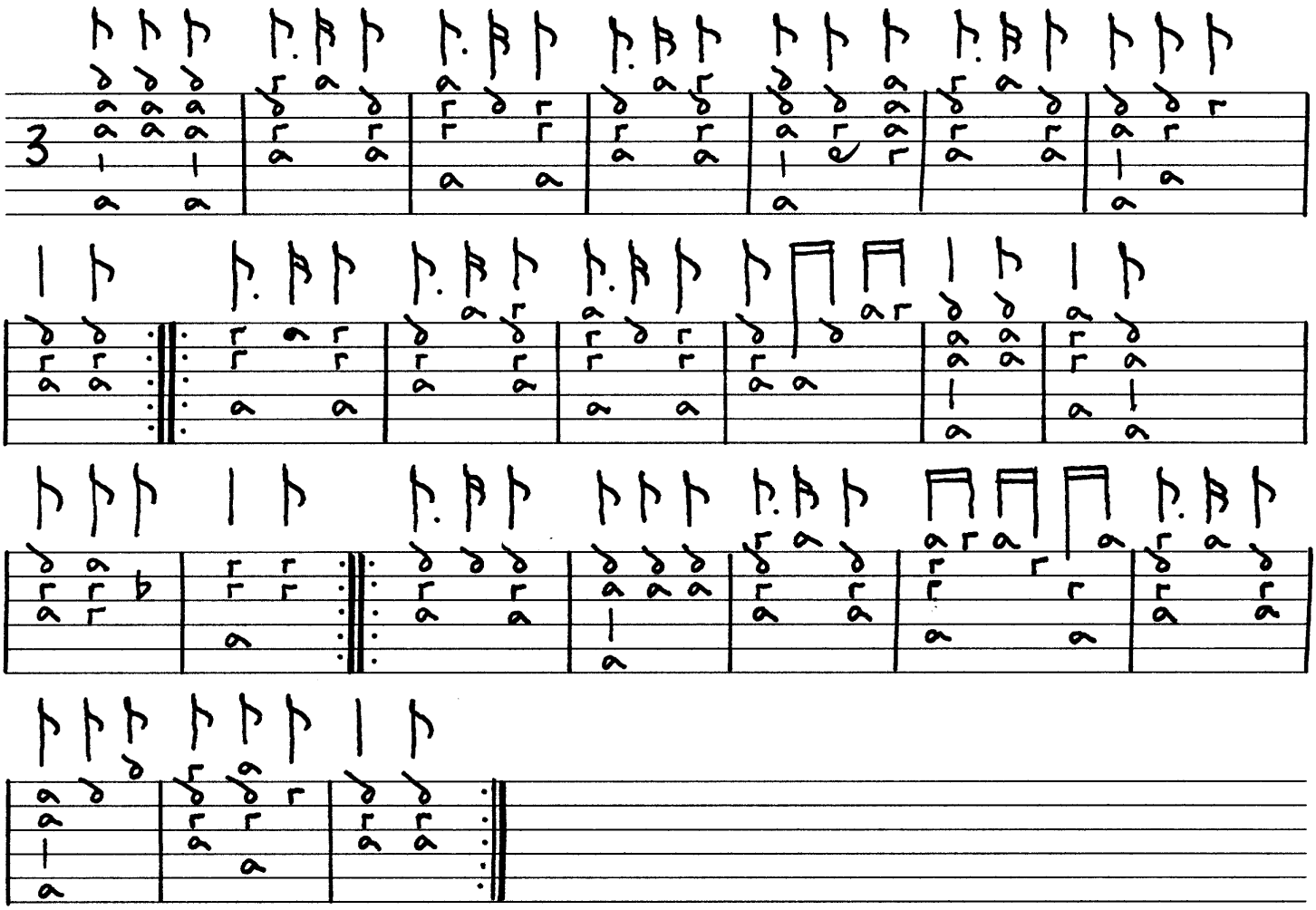
9. Long paven

John Johnson



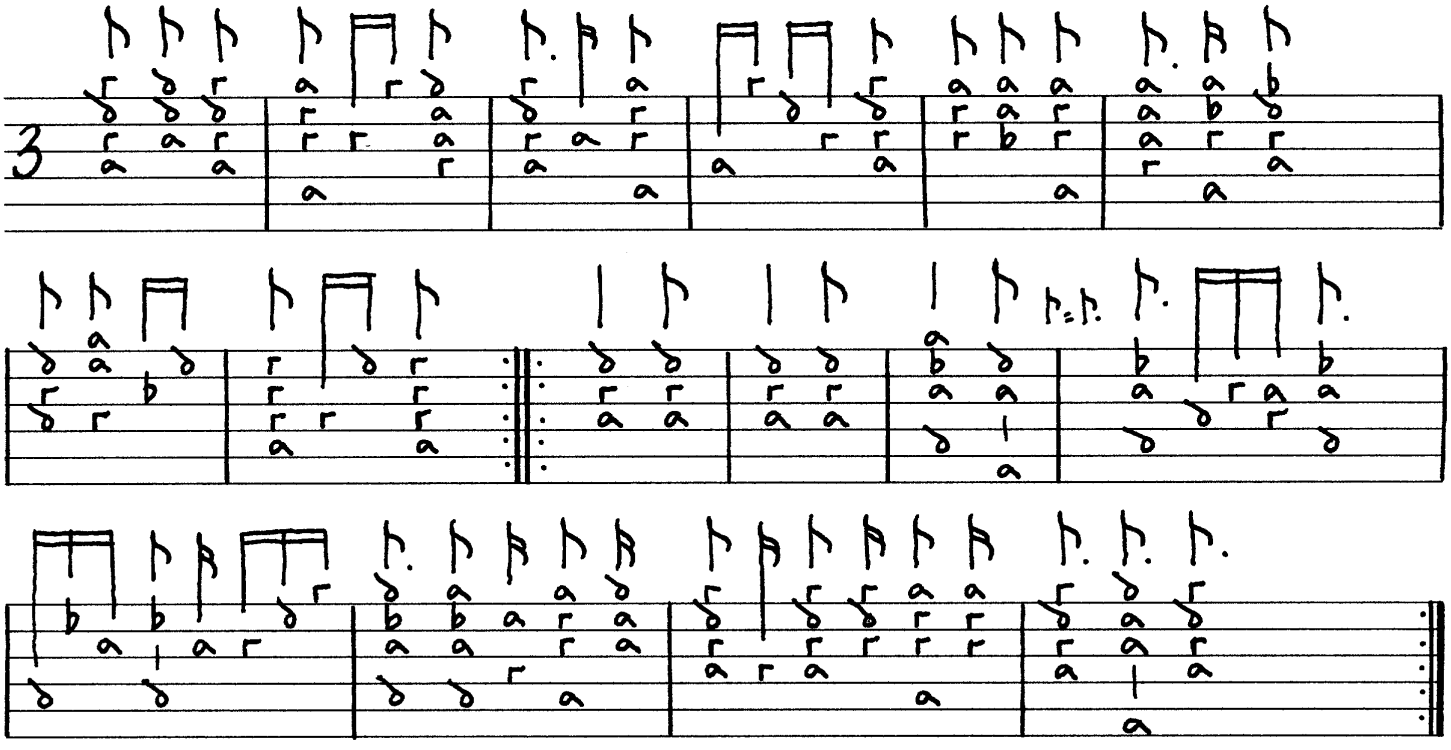
10. Dowlands round Battell galliarde

John Dowland



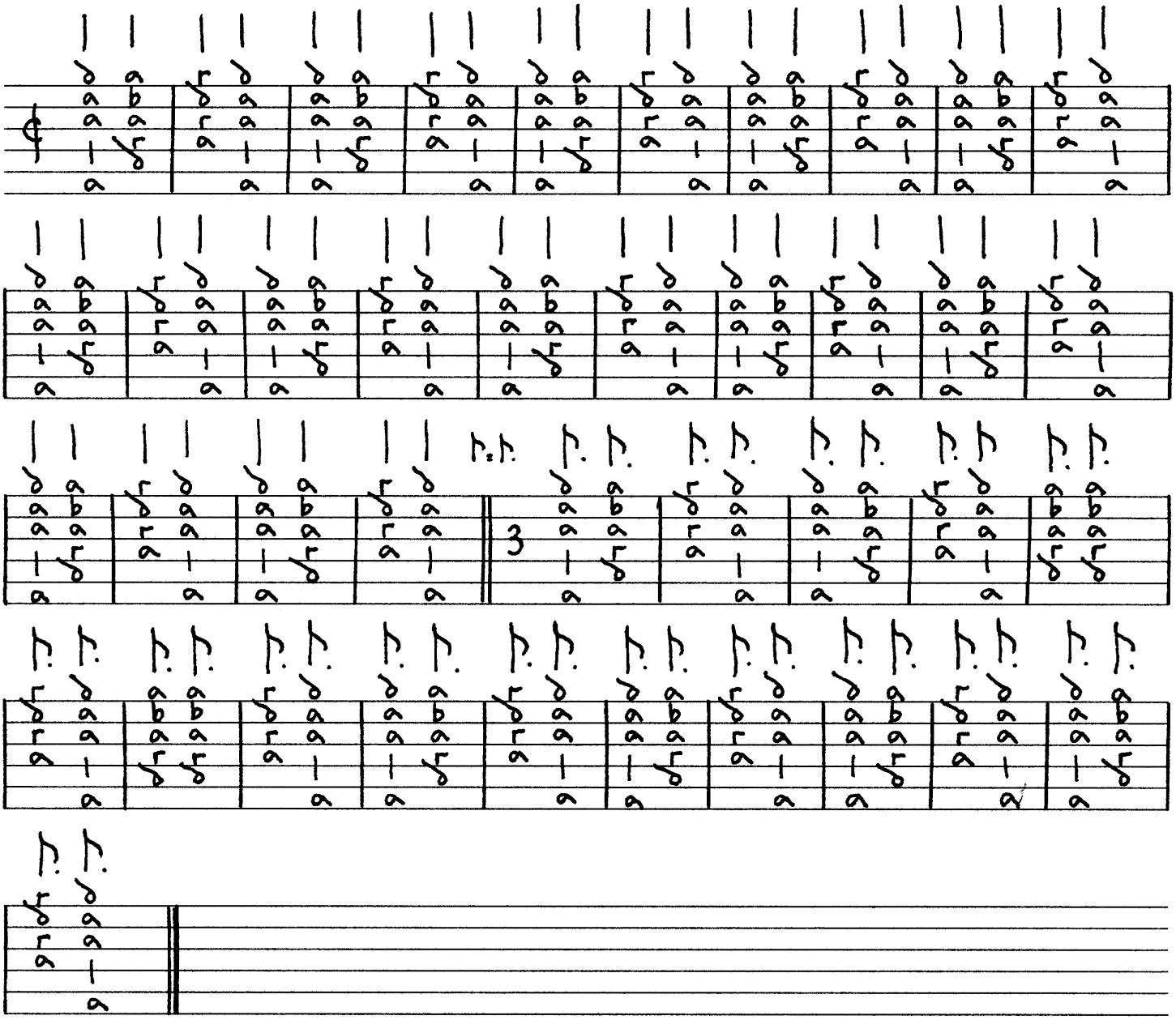
11. Katherine Darcies galliarde

John Dowland



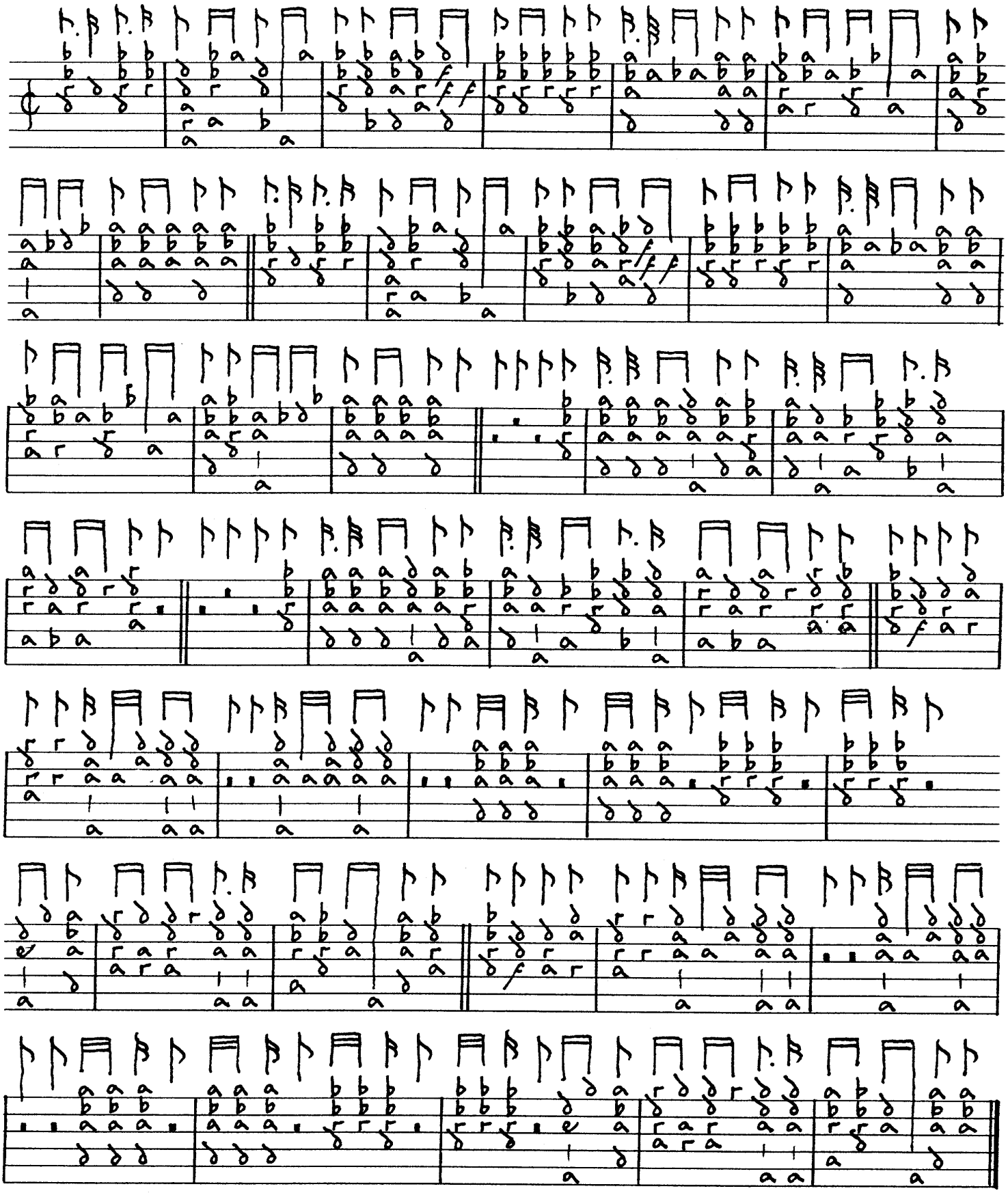
12. The Jewes Daunce

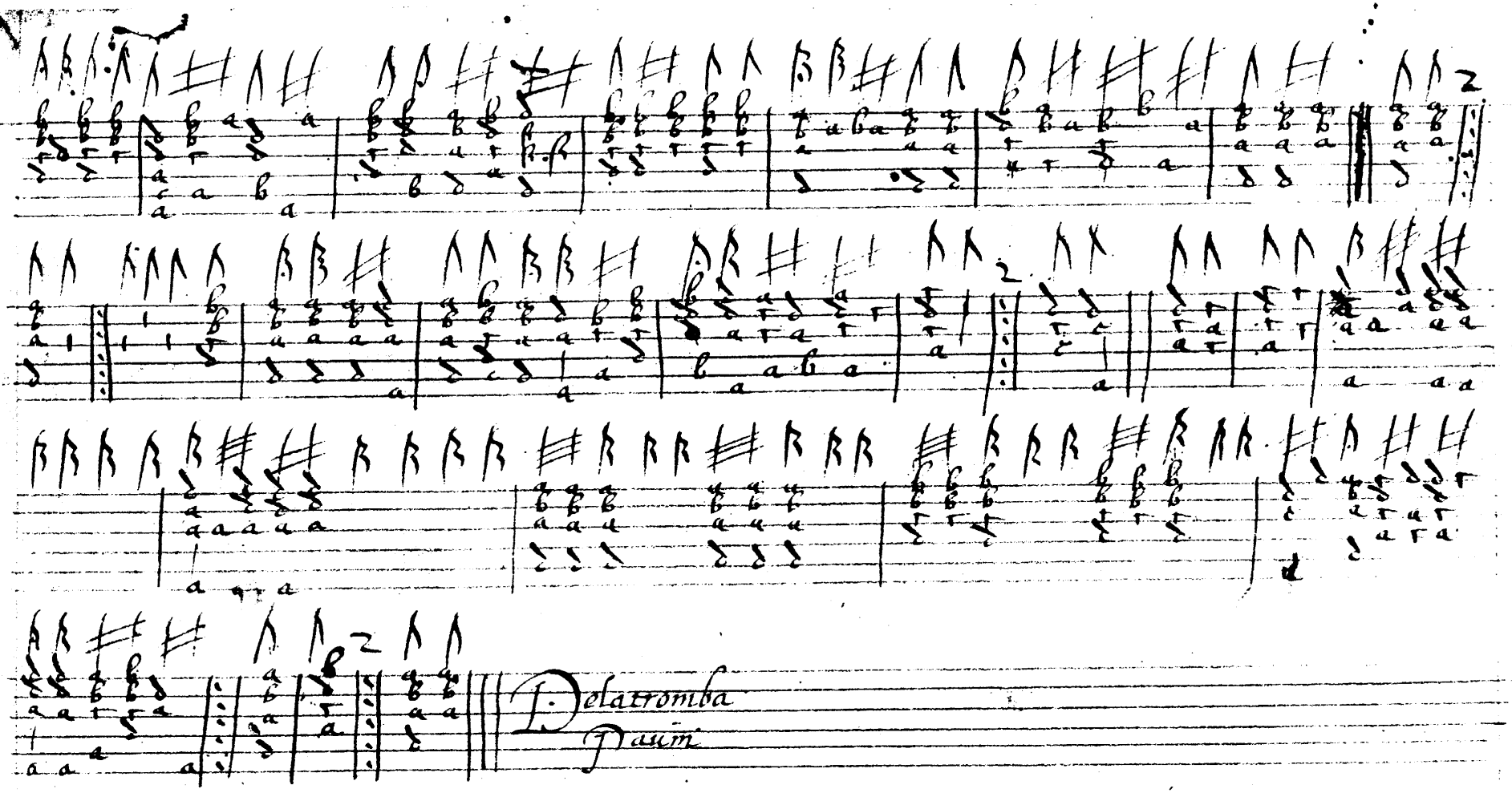
Richard Nicholson



13. De la Tromba paven

(Richard Allison)

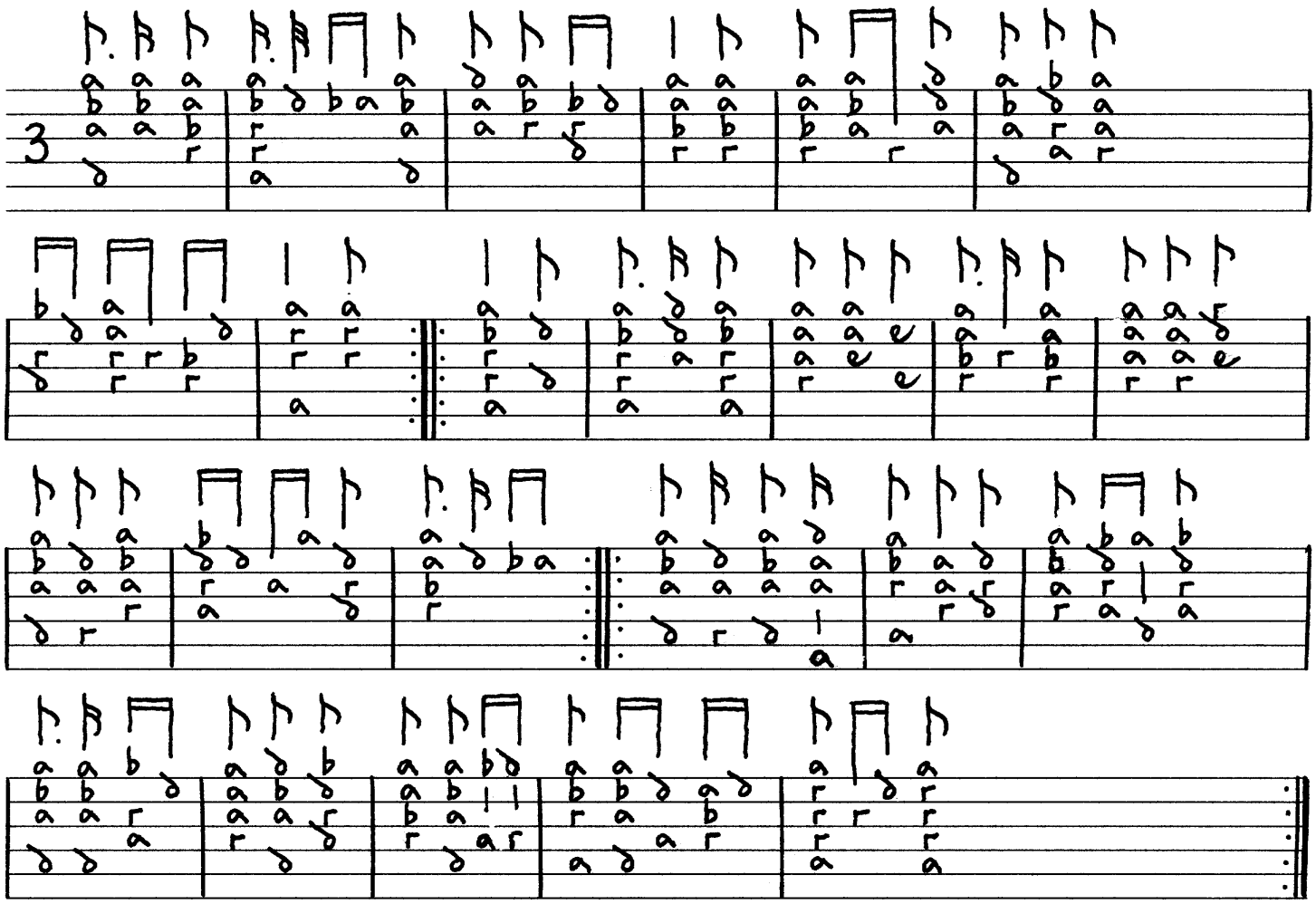




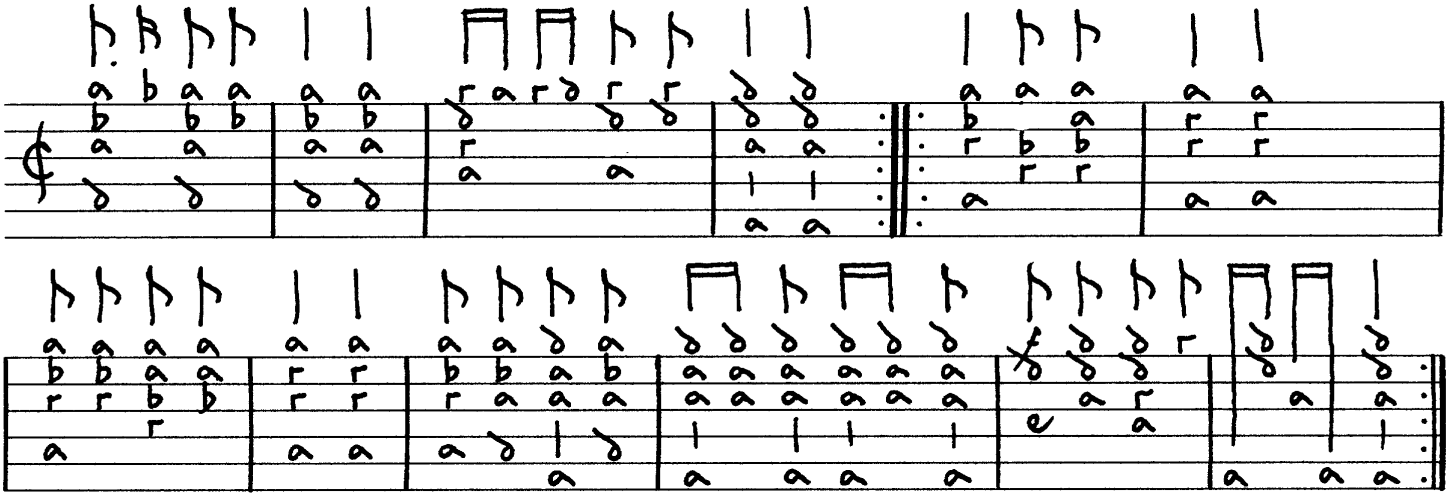
Browne Bandora and Lyra Viol Book f.18r.

14. James Galliarde

(James Harding)

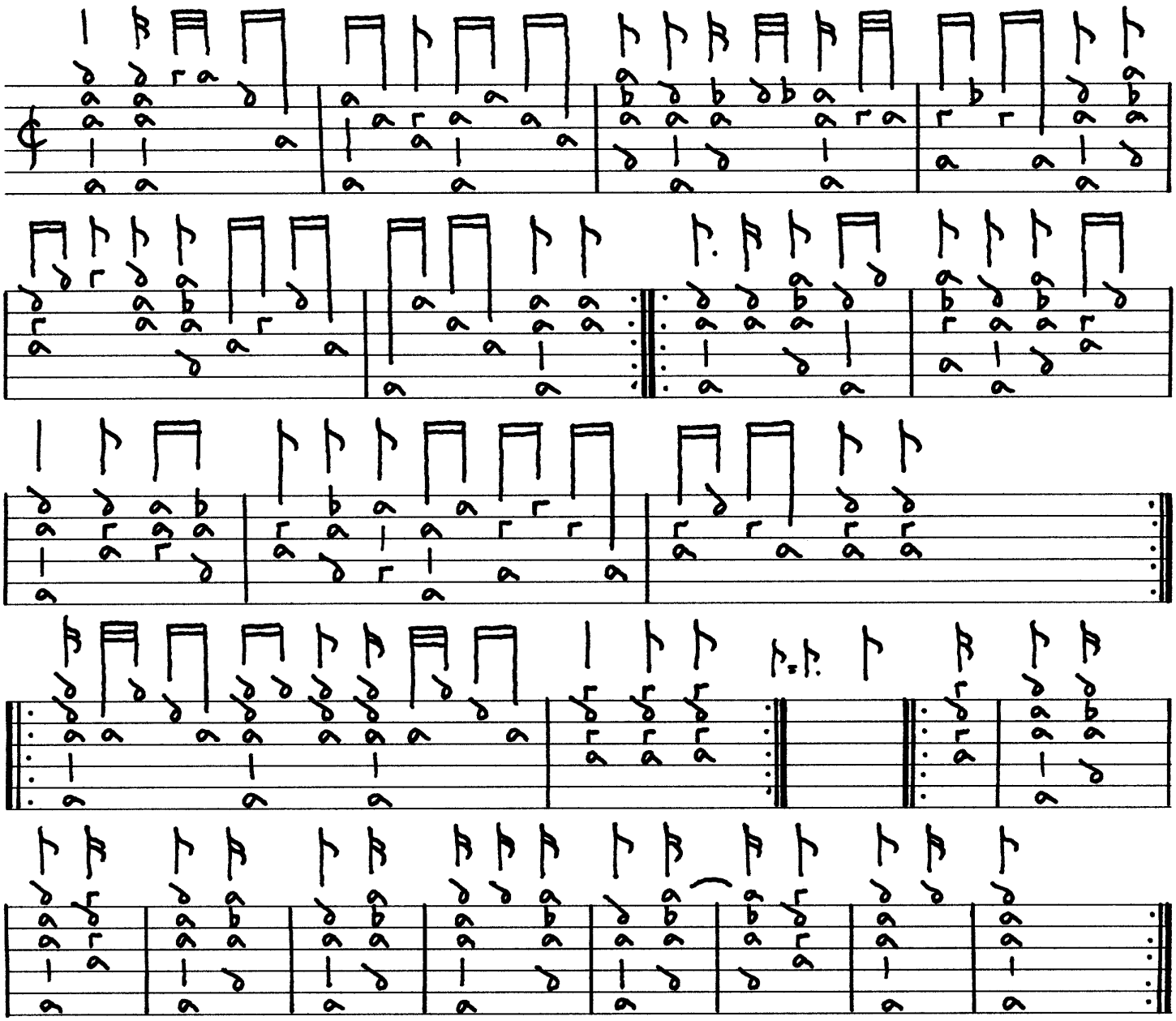


15. The Sprytes songe



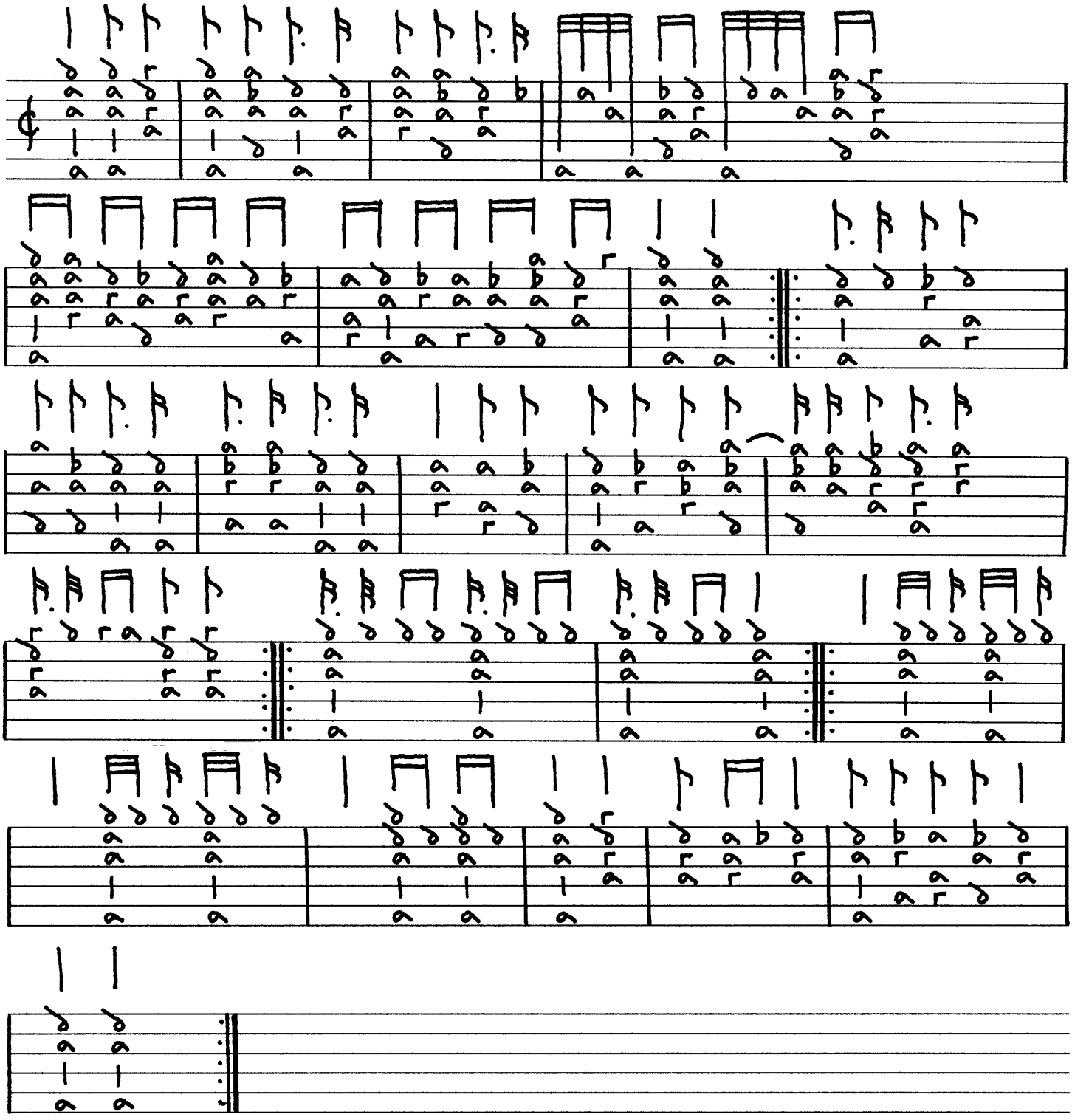
16. Reades first paven

Richard Reade



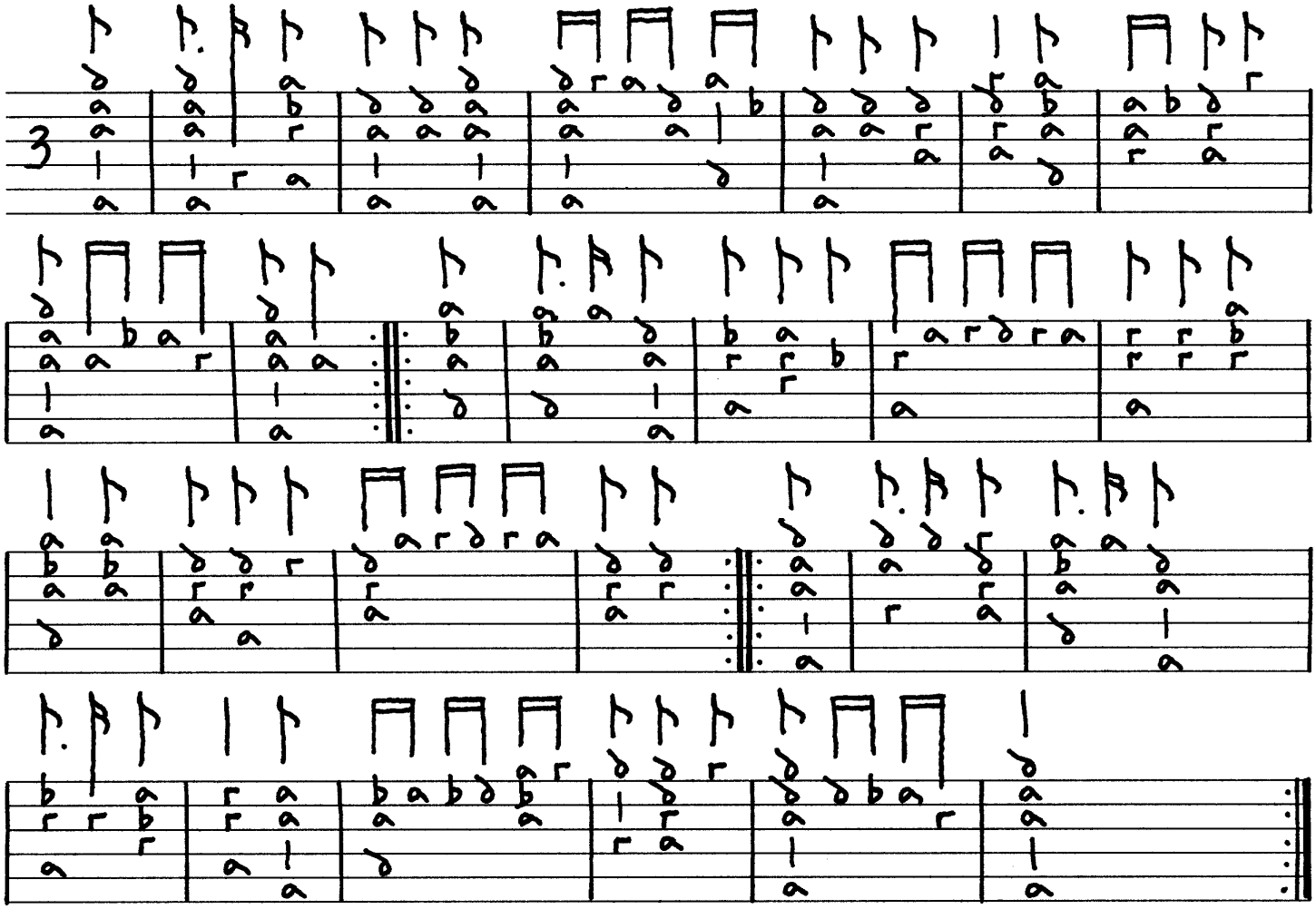
17. Reades second paven

Richard Reade



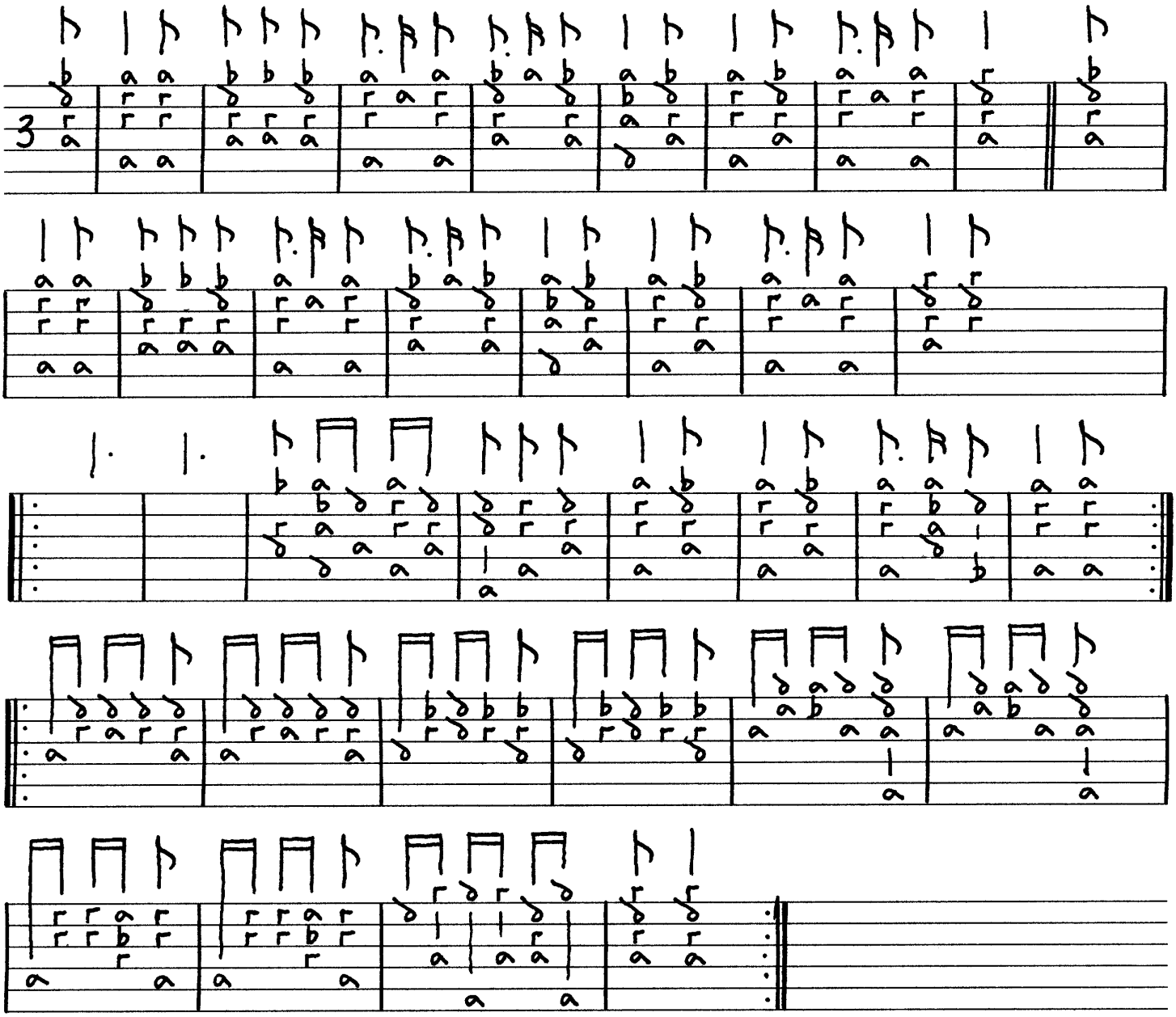
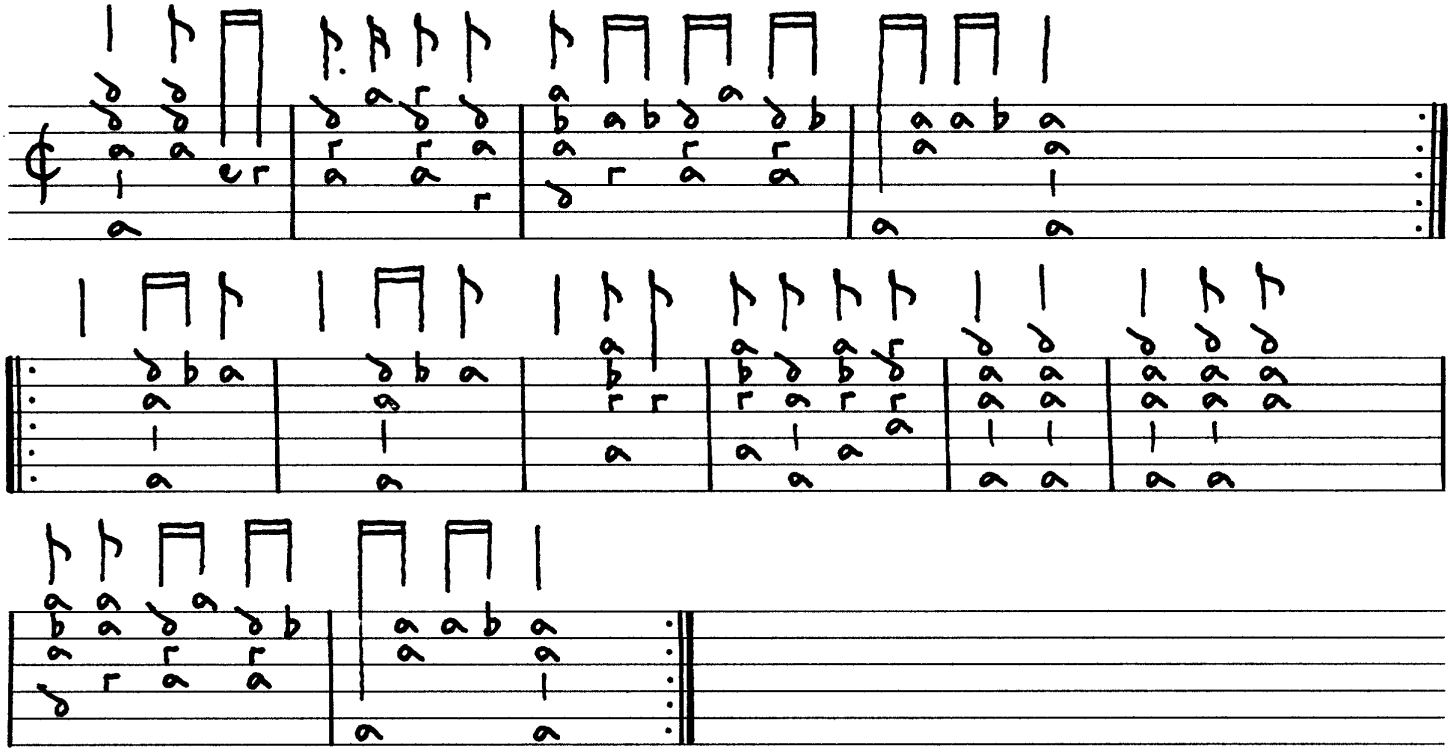
18. Reades galliarde

Richard Reade



19. Dowlands first galliarde

John Dowland



20. Nutmigs and ginger