A Question of Instrumentation:

Adapting Wind Music Recorded at the Court of King Louis XIV for Modern Performance

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Introduction

The musical establishment of Louis XIV was unparalleled in size and scope.[1] Musicians were divided into several classes among the *Maison Militaire*, the *Chambre*, the *Chapelle*, and *L'Écurie*. *L'Écurie* alone was divided into five main performing groups of wind instruments: *Les Grands Hautbois*, *Musettes et Hautbois de Poitou*, *Les Cromornes*, *Les Fifres et Tambours*, and *Les Trompettes*. David Whitwell argues that *Les Grands Hautbois* in particular served as an important link from the consort music characteristic of the Renaissance to the Harmoniemusik characteristic of the Classical period (which remains in the canon today).[2]

In addition to the frequent performance of music, King Louis XIV also established the Royal Library of Music in 1665, to serve as a repository both for music currently being performed and any and all older manuscripts that could be acquired. He appointed François Fossard and André Danican Philidor to serve as librarians and copyists, tasking them to "recover[… all] ancient music".[3]

Despite the wealth of wind music performed and archived and the historical significance of this music to the development of the wind ensemble and its repertoire, it is rarely if ever performed today. A significant barrier to modern performance is that much of this music remains in manuscript, in collections where many pieces are for unspecified instrumentation. By examining the instrumentation of contemporary ensembles for which the music was written and comparing the ranges of individual parts to those of contemporary instruments, we can begin the process of producing performance editions of these works for modern performance.

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[1] Material for this paragraph is taken from:
David Whitwell, "Court Wind Bands in France," Part 2, Chap. 1 of *The Baroque Wind Band and Wind Ensemble*, The History and Literature of the Wind Band and Wind Ensemble, Volume 3 (Austin, TX: Whitwell Publishing, 2011), 25-56.

[2] David Whitwell, "The Hautboisten Tradition and the Birth of Harmoniemusik," Part 1 of *The Baroque Wind Band and Wind Ensemble*, The History and Literature of the Wind Band and Wind Ensemble, Volume 3 (Austin, TX: Whitwell Publishing, 2011), 3-21.

[3] Orlan E. Thomas, "Music for Double-Reed Ensembles from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: 'Collection Philidor'" (DMA dissertation, Eastman School of Music, 1973).

The Transcription Process

For this study, I selected the manuscript entitled *Collection of Many Old Airs Composed for the Rites, Coronations, Weddings, and Other Solemnities under the Reigns of Francois I, Henry III, Henry IV, and Louis IX, along with Many Concerts Performed for their Entertainment* from the *Collection Philidor*.[4] Guided by David Whitwell[5], I selected eight collections of pieces that appear to be specifically designated for winds from this manuscript. Although it was common practice in France at this time for pieces with unspecified instrumentation to be also performed by winds at various occasions,[6] these pieces have not been considered for the purposes of this study. These transcriptions may be found in Appendix A.

The initial transcription process into modern notation was relatively straightforward. For the purposes of reading by modern ensembles, all clefs were changed to treble or bass clef, although the original contained soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, baritone (bass), and bass clefs. Additional commentary on issues that arose during transcription is noted with footnotes in Appendix A. There were no significant legibility issues that affected the process. Each title is followed by a number in brackets indicating the manuscript pages where it may be found.

Each collection of pieces under consideration has both a date (1610-1660)[7] and an ensemble designation (*les hautbois*, *Les Cromornes*, or *les hautbois et Cornets*) associated with it. However, in no cases were individual lines given a designated instrument to be performed on. Thus, we must make

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[4] André Philidor, "Recüeil de Plusieurs Vieux Airs faits aux Sacres, Couronnements, Mariages, et autres Solennitez faits sous les Regnes de Francois 1er, Henry 3, Henry 4, et Louis 13 avec Plusiers Concerts faits pour leurs Divertissement," *Collection Philidor* (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris), http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k103658m.

[5] David Whitwell, "France," Chap. 4 of *Baroque Wind Band and Wind Ensemble Repertoire,* The History and Literature of the Wind Band and Wind Ensemble, Volume 7 (Austin, TX: Whitwell Publishing, 2012), 81-91; at 81-82.

[6] Stephanie Morgan Henke, "A Study of the Early 18th-Century French Baroque Musical Style: An Oboist's Performance Practice Guide to Jacques-Martin Hotteterre Le Romain's *Troisième Suitte de Pièces À Deux Dessus, pour les Flûtes Traversières, Flûtes à Bec, Hautbois, et Muzettes,* Op. 8" (DMA Dissertation, University of Georgia, 2012), 1-3.

[7] Except one set designated "*pour les chevaliers faits par Henry III*" ("for the knights appointed by Henry III"). Henry III reigned France from 1574-1589, so an approximate era can be thereby obtained.

use of these historical clues in order to first determine a plausible period instrumentation and then to make informed judgments about instrumentation for modern performance.

Historical Ensembles and Instruments

At the time of Louis XIV, it appears that *Les Grands Hautbois* was an entirely double-reed ensemble, featuring *dessus de hautbois*, *haute-contre de hautbois*, *taille de hautbois*, and *basse de hautbois*,[8] that frequently if not always performed in four parts.[9] However, none of the music selected for transcription is in four parts, so clearly this is not the ensemble specified by the term *pour les hautbois*. Echorcheville cites primary sources that list an earlier formation of *Les Grands Hautbois* as containing "2 *dessus*, 2 *tailles*, 2 *haute-contre*, 2 *basses de hautbois*, 2 *cornets* et 2 *saqueboutes*" in addition to each performer doubling on a string instrument.[10] This matches well with the six parts in the first collection of pieces and can be adapted more easily to the five-part writing in most of the remaining. Thus, in addition to the *hautbois*, we have *cornets* and *saqueboutes*.

The cornett of the time is unrelated to the modern cornet. Instead, it was a conical brass instrument with open holes fingered like a woodwind instrument.[11] Historically, the lowest available note is an E4.[12][13] No fingered or keyed brass instruments are in common use nowadays (although the ophicleide does pop up occasionally). Thus, for a reasonable modern equivalent we'll have to forego this criterion, instead looking for a conical brass instrument in the treble range. The most plausible substitution seems to be the actual modern cornet (as the other choice, the flugelhorn, has an exceptionally flared bell, unlike the bell-less cornett).

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[8] Whitwell, "Court Wind Bands in France", 36.
[9] Geoffrey Burgess, "Review: The 'Louisquatorzien' Oboe Band," *Early Music* 23, no. 4 (1995): 714-716; at 715-716.
[10] J. Echorcheville, "Quelques Documents sur la Musique de la Grande Ecurie du Roi," *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 2, no. 4 (1901): 608-42; at 625.
[11] Douglas Kirk, "Cornett," in *A Performer's Guide to Renaissance Music*, ed. Jeffery Kite-Powell (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 106-125; at 106.
[12] In this paper, scientific pitch notation will be used (C4 is middle C; octave numbers switch at each C)
[13] Kirk, 110.

The sackbut is relatively similar in construction to the modern trombone, although with a narrower bore, somewhat different bore shape, and less flare at the bell.[14] The ranges of sackbuts are also similar to modern trombones: the alto has a range from B2-D5 or E5; the tenor, E2-F4; the bass, A1 or G1-C4; and the contrabass, E1-A3.[15] Thus, the trombone serves as a reasonable modern equivalent.

Finally, the nature of the *hautbois* themselves has been the discussion of much scholarly literature, since the word *hautbois* was used to refer to both shawms and modern oboes, as well as any intermediary forms. Bruce Haynes argues that this development occurred in three distinct periods: "the evolving shawm (c. 1620-c. 1660)", "the protomorphic oboe (c. 1660-c. 1680)", and "the definitive oboe (c. 1680)".[16] Specifically, he cites the years 1664-1670 as the likely transition from shawm-like instruments to oboe-like instruments.[17] Since all the music considered in this manuscript is pre-1664, we will consider the shawm family as the meaning of *hautbois* in the manuscript.

Shawms are conical double-reed instruments, and like most instruments of the time come in a variety of sizes. Mersenne cites three sizes: the *dessus* (with a range of C4-C6), the *taille* (G3-G5), and the *basse* (C2-C4).[18] However, Duffin cites treble (*dessus*) a step higher (D4-D6) and describes the *basse* as an extended bass (C2-F3) or tenor (F2-C4), while mentioning that shawm players would often read music up a step in order to accommodate issues of range.[19] There is also some evidence that another size existed between the *dessus* and *taille*, the *haute-contre* (proposed in A), although there

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[14] Stewart Carter, "Sackbut," in *A Performer's Guide to Renaissance Music*, ed. Jeffery Kite-Powell (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 126-138; at 126.

[15] Carter, 127-130.

[16] Bruce Haynes, "Lully and the Rise of the Oboe as Seen in Works of Art," *Early Music* 16, No. 3 (1988): 324-338.

[17] Bruce Haynes, "Baptiste's *Hautbois*: The Metamorphosis from Shawm to Hautboy in France, 1620-1670," in *From Renaissance to Baroque: Change in Instruments and Instrumental Music in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Jonathan Wainwright & Peter Holman (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2005), 23-46; at 34-38.

[18] Anthony C. Baines and Martin Kirnbauer, "Shawm," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deanne Root, https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43658 (accessed March 11, 2018).

[19] Ross Duffin, "Shawm and Curtal," in *A Performer's Guide to Renaissance Music*, ed. Jeffery Kite-Powell (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 85-92; at

is as of yet no extant physical evidence to support this.[2021] Regardless, members of the shawm family map neatly onto extant double-reed instruments: *dessus* to oboe, *taille* to English horn, and *basse* to bassoon.[22]

Les Cromornes consisted of, as one might expect, primarily *cromornes* (although they also sometimes performed with *trompettes marines*).[23] However, the identity of the *cromorne* is somewhat more problematic. By virtue of similarity in name, it was for many years identified with the Renaissance crumhorn,[24] but Boydell convincingly argues that this is unlikely. He provides several primary sources that identify the *basse de cromorne* with the bassoon, which, being cylindrical and lacking a windcap, is quite a different instrument than the crumhorn.[25] Whitwell supports this interpretation, suggesting that it may have been a unique instrument related to the bassoon created by Jean Hotteterre and confirming that it existed in a consort of sizes (*dessus*, *quinte*, *taille*, and *basse*).[26] Unfortunately, we only have two extant families of double-reed instruments today (to wit, oboes and bassoons), so the *cromornes* will also map to these instruments by range.

Instrumentation of the Transcriptions

Appendix B contains tables showing the original clefs and ranges of parts for each set of pieces.

The first Pavane and two airs *en suite* were written for performance on October 17, 1610. Given the six-part writing and date, we can assume the six-part ensemble for *Les Grands Hautbois* discussed above. The top two lines, both notated in soprano clef, must go to treble shawm and

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[20] Baines & Kirnbauer

[21] Rebecca Harris-Warrick, "A Few Thoughts on Lully's Hautbois," *Early Music* 18, No. 1 (1990): 97-106; at 101-104.

[22] While varieties of bass double-reed instruments abounded at this time, the exact nature is at this point irrelevant, since in any case the only extant bass double-reed instrument is the bassoon. For more information, see:
James B. Kopp, "Precursors of the Bassoon in France before Louis XIV," *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 28 (2002): 63-117.

[23] Echorcheville, 42.

[24] A cylindrical double-reed instrument with a windcap curved at the end to form a J.

[25] Barra Boydell, "The French *Cromorne* in the Early Baroque Period," Chap. 5 of *The Crumhorn and Other Renaissance Windcap Instruments* (Buren, The Netherlands: Frits Knuf Buren, 1982), 183-197.

[26] Whitwell, "Court Wind Bands in France", 39-40.

cornett. Given the range of line 2 (descending only to E4), I have chosen to assign line 2 to cornet, since it matches the cornett's historical range. Additionally, this allows the treble shawm/oboe to take the top line, which contains much of the main melodic material. The third and fourth lines, although written in different clefs (mezzo-soprano/alto) both descend to F3,[27] suggesting performance on the *taille* shawm, which maps to English horn. Lines 5 and 6 must then be assigned to sackbut/trombone and bass shawm/bassoon. The baritone clef only appears in pieces written definitively for *Les Grands Hautbois* (i.e., official performances *pour les hautbois*), while it does not appear in the pieces written for the Paris Civic Wind Band.[28] Additionally, the range of the lowest line typically goes below that of the (most common) tenor sackbut. Thus, I have chosen to assign tenor trombone to line 5, with baritone clef, and the bassoon to line 6.

The next set of pieces comes from a concert for Louis XIII put on in 1627. The first Charivary and Gavotte *en Suitte* have oboe on line 1, English horn on line 3, trombone on line 4, and bassoon on line 5 for the reasons described above. Line 2 has a narrow range from C4-G4 and is once again in mezzo-soprano clef. This range could be played on *dessus* or *taille de hautbois*, or even on a hypothetical *haute-contre* in A. Oboe seems a poor choice in order to differentiate the active melody from the very chordal accompaniment parts. Oboe d'amore, while possible and tempting with the different clef, seems a bold step to hypothesize. The shawm still made use of a number of cross-fingerings,[29] and an instrument in A seems unlikely simply for purposes of intonation outside the key of the instrument (since all the other shawms were constructed in closely-related keys). Additionally, the use of mezzo-soprano clef with range to F3 in the first set of pieces suggests the explanation that mezzo-soprano (i.e., *haute-contre*) parts were played by an instrument that could descend to low F

[27] It is worth noting that in the initial Pavane, the range is just A3-A4, which would sit well on a hypothetical *haute-contre* shawm in A. However, the subsequent airs *en suitte* are written down to F3.
[28] Per Whitwell, "France", 82.
[29] Carl Willetts, "First Steps on the Shawm," *Early Music* 5, No. 3 (1977): 342-351; at 351.

(i.e., the *taille*), but were differentiated in the range of the instrument often used, making the higher clef convenient. Therefore, I have also assigned line 2 to English horn.

The next Charivaris and air *en suite* contain no baritone clef and were written for the Paris Civic Wind Band. I have therefore given an all-double-reed instrumentation, assigning the top two lines to oboes (as they often trade off melodic material and have similar part-writing, in addition to range considerations), the next two to English horn (for the reasons discussed above, despite differing clefs), and the lowest to bassoon.

The final Galliarde transcribed from this 1627 concert has some clef anomalies. Line 2, written in soprano clef, descends to G3, which would only be playable on a *taille* – thus, despite the soprano clef, the line has been assigned to English horn. Similarly, line 4 has a narrow range from D3-A3, which is too low for *dessus* or *taille*. While one could take it to be another bass shawm, this seems extremely unlikely given the clef. A modern baritone oboe could be an interesting choice, although not particularly useful given its rarity. I have chosen to assign the line to alto trombone, since sackbut is still likely to be present in the original ensemble, but the higher clef suggests a higher instrument. (A tenor trombone can of course be substituted to ease modern performance given the extremely limited range.)

The next suite, *pour Les Cromornes*, features large ranges (the top voice covers an octave and a fifth while the bottom covers a full two octaves), definitively showing that *cromornes* could not have been crumhorns (which have a narrow functional range of no more than a ninth or so).[30] Given the widely varying range of each part, I have elected to assign each to a different modern double-reed instrument, allowing the oboe d'amore to differentiate the timbre of line 2 as it would likely have been differentiated by a different size *cromorne*.

[30] Boydell, 4.

The Passe mize from 1615 is designated *pour les hautbois et Cornets* and is unique in that only two lines are provided. Without additional context, it is difficult to say whether it was designed to be played in two parts or whether inner voices are missing or were improvised. Regardless, line 2 can be safely assigned to the bass shawm/bassoon, since no cornets descended that low (due to issues of finger span). The top line, then, was likely played by cornetts, possibly in addition to treble shawms – the option is left in the transcription.

The next Concert for the knights of Henry III (reigned 1574-1589) and the final Ballet for Louis XIII's marriage (1615) warrant no special notes, save that line 2 in each case only descends to A3, slightly strengthening the case for a *haute-contre* in A.

Conclusions

By considering the range and acoustical properties of historical instruments, we can arrive at plausible instrumentation of works from the *Collection Philidor* for modern performance, as demonstrated in Appendix A. However, this is only the first step in the creation of modern performance editions to disseminate these works. A very basic barrier is access to the manuscripts – only a few are available online, so there may be many more works for winds hiding in other untapped manuscripts. Additionally, matters of pitch center[31] and performance practice[32] should be taken into account, under the assumption that modern performers are unfamiliar with these topics. That said, these transcriptions may serve as a starting to point to accustom performers and audiences to this forgotten repertoire.

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[31] See, e.g., Kopp, 63-64.

[32] Note that all ornamentation is denoted simply by + in the manuscript and the transcriptions. For a primer on French Baroque ornamentation and performance practice for winds, see, e.g.:
Henke, 33-68.
Bruce Haynes, *The Eloquent Oboe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 175-274.

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Suitte de Pièces À Deux Dessus, pour les Flûtes Traversières, Flûtes à Bec, Hautbois, et Muzettes, Op. 8." DMA Dissertation, University of Georgia, 2012.

Tertiary Source

Whitwell, David. "France." Chap. 4 of *Baroque Wind Band and Wind Ensemble Repertoire*, 81-96. The History and Literature of the Wind Band and Wind Ensemble, Volume 7. Austin, TX: Whitwell Publishing, 2012.

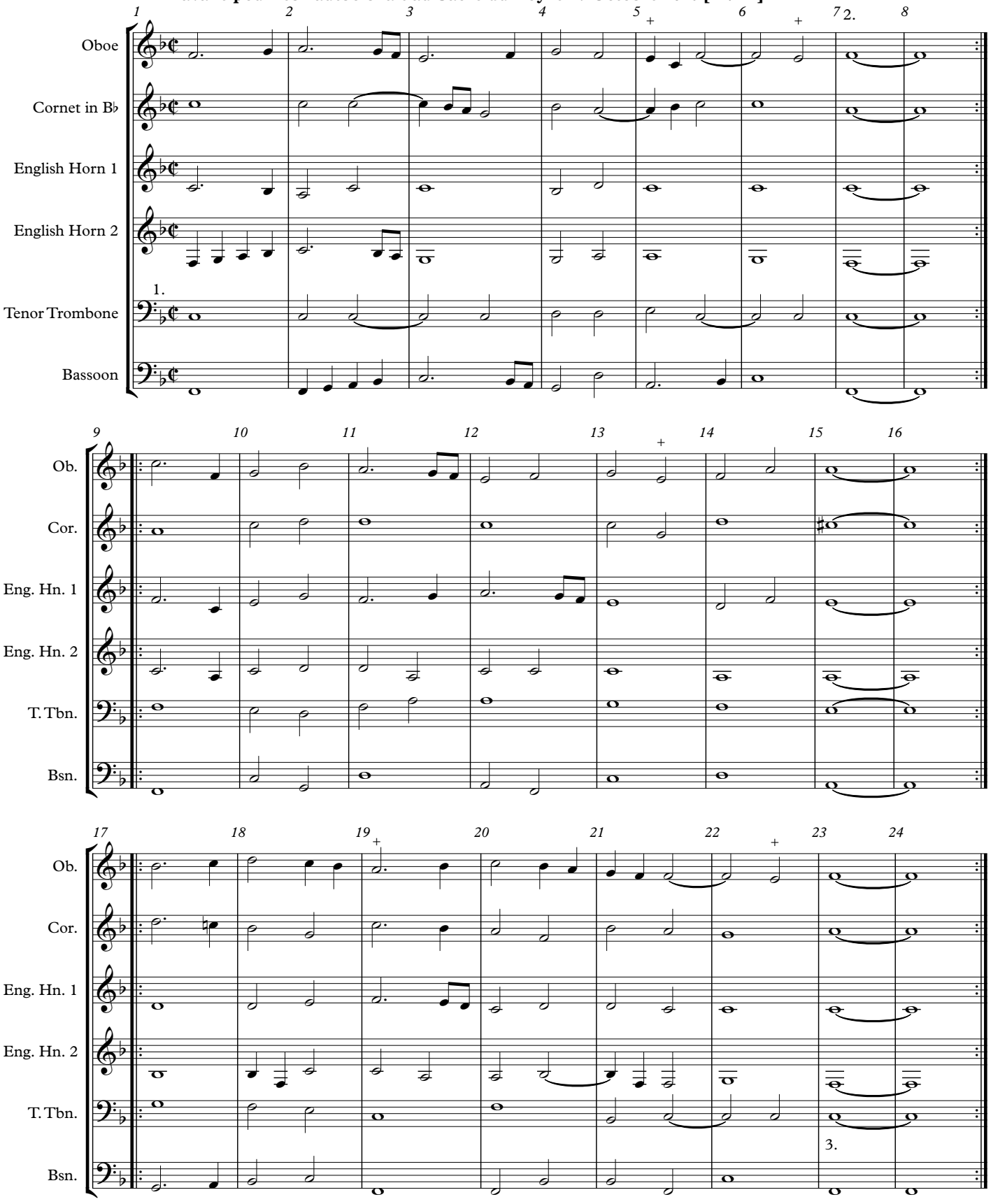
Appendix A:

Transcriptions of Pieces Specifically Designated for Winds from the Manuscript

Recüeil de Plusieurs Vieux Airs faits aux Sacres, Couronnements, Mariages, et autres Solennitez faits sous les Regnes de Francois 1er, Henry 3, Henry 4, et Louis 13 avec Plusiers Concerts faits pour leurs Divertissement

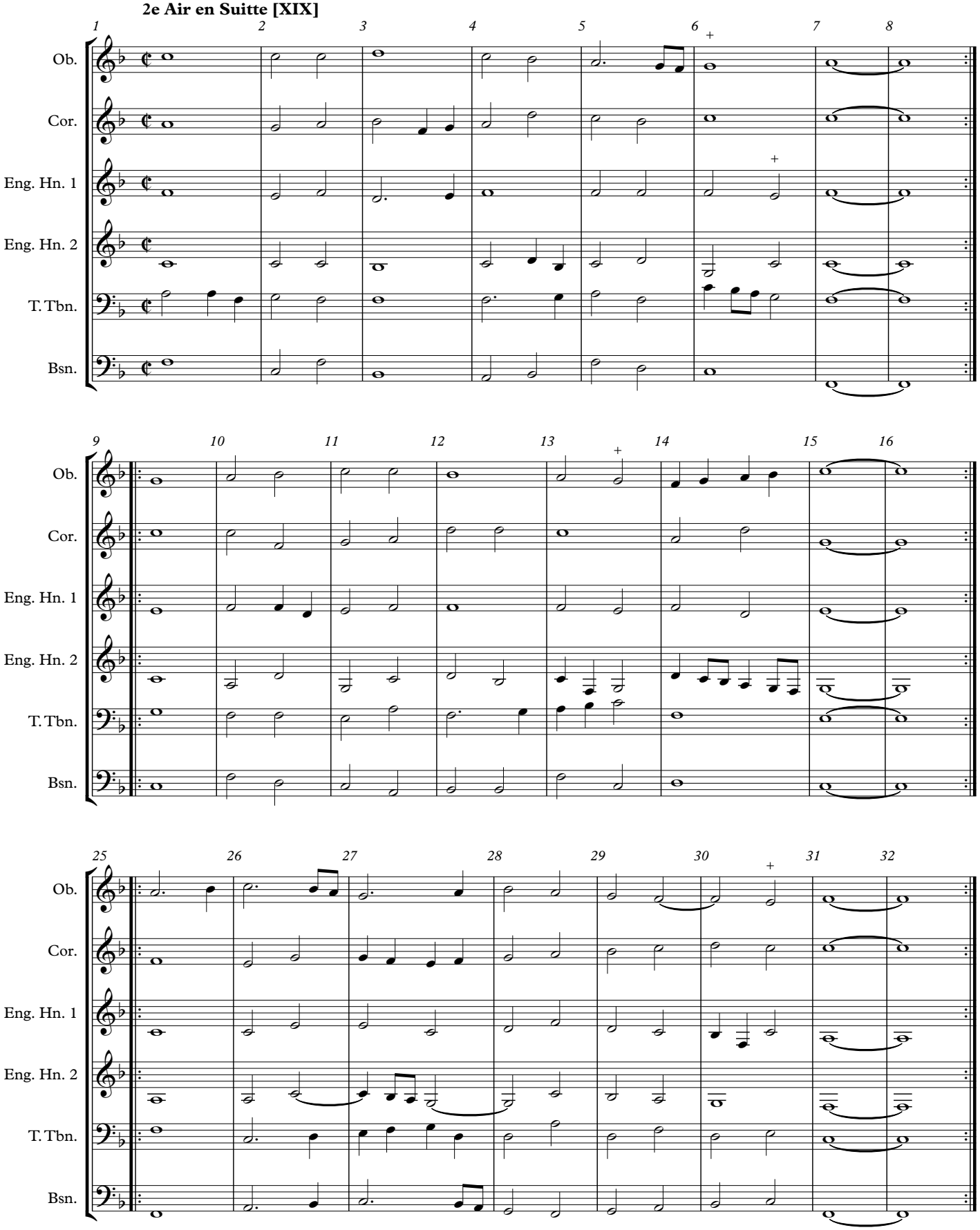
for Modern Performance

Pavane pour les hautbois fait au Sacre du Roy le 17 Octobre 1610 [XVIII]

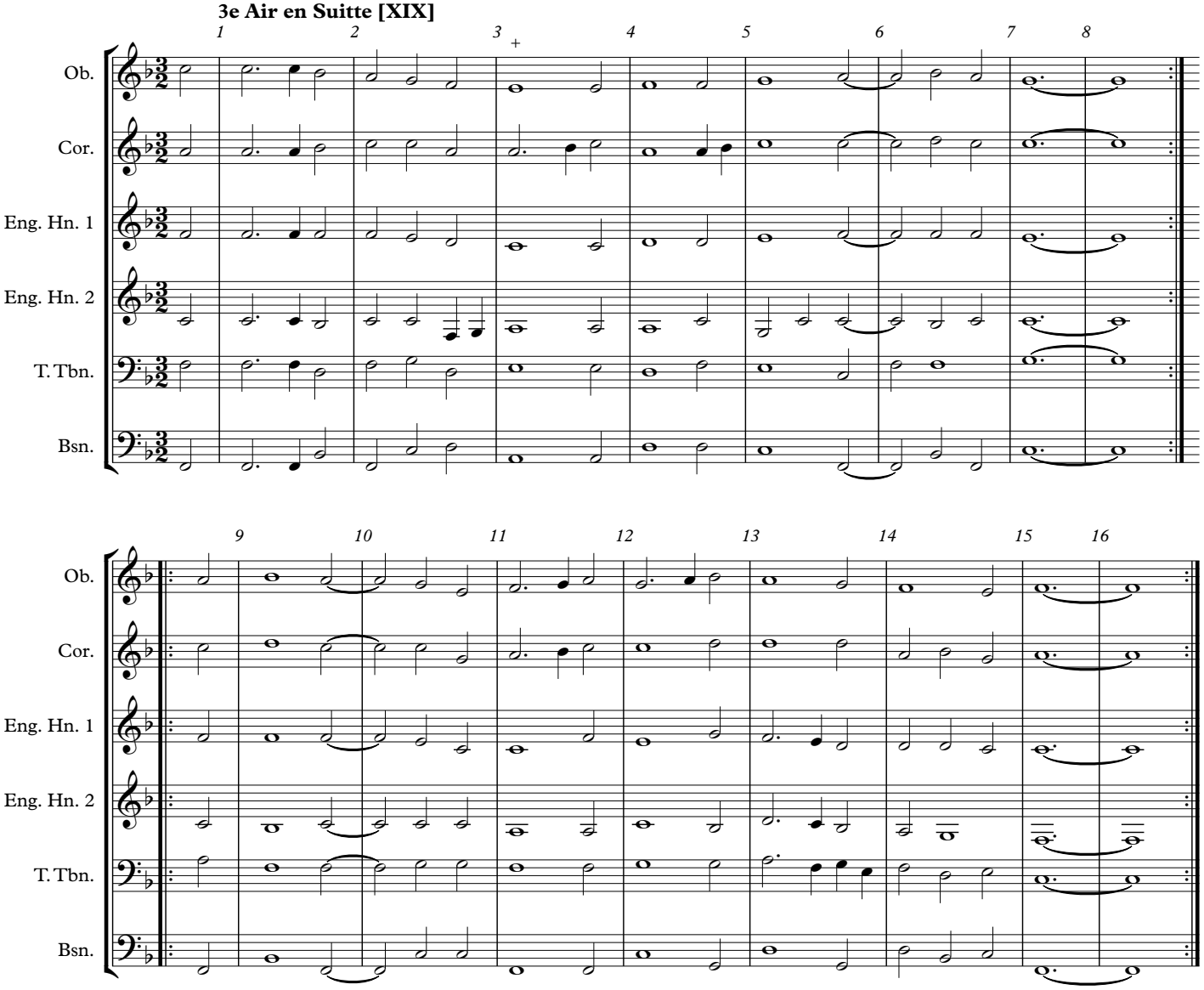


1. The 5th part erroneously has a tenor clef in the first line of manuscript. This is corrected to the baritone (bass) clef on the second and subsequent lines.
2. In the manuscript at here and similar phrase endings, two whole notes are tied together in a single bar. I have interpreted this as two separate bars in order to create 8-bar phrases.
3. No tie in manuscript.

2e Air en Suitte [XIX]

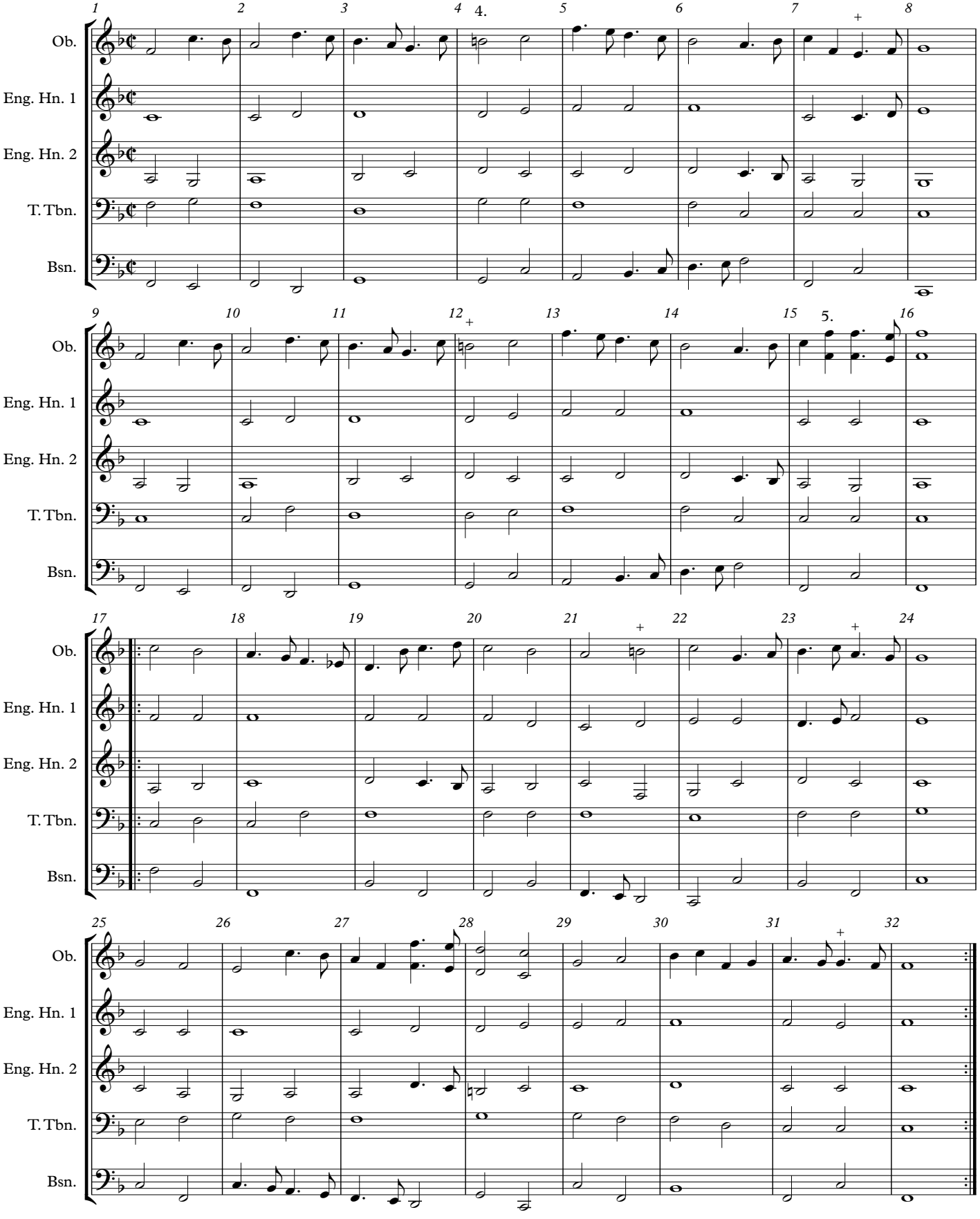


3e Air en Suitte [XIX]



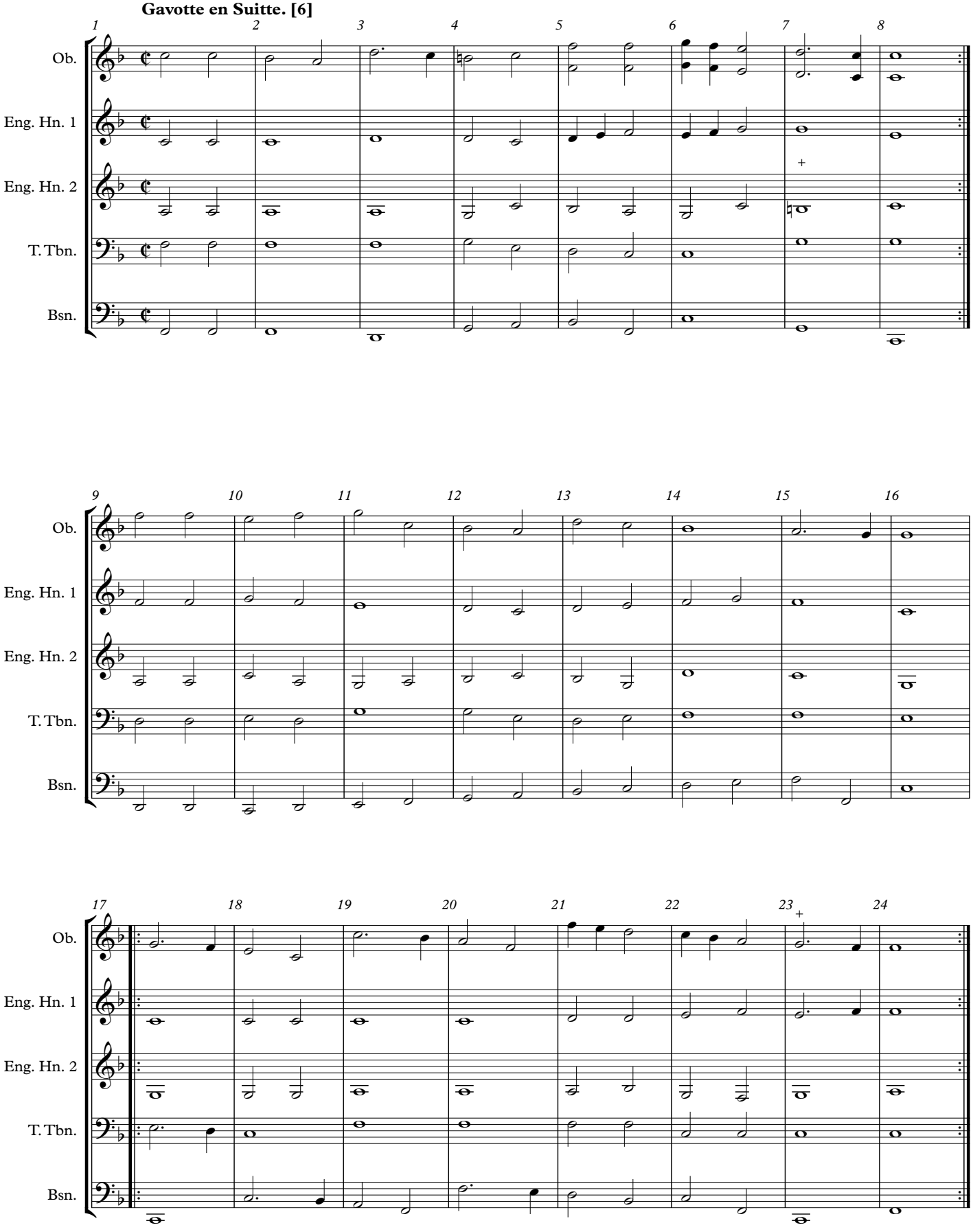
Concert donne a Louis 13 en 1627 par les vint quatre Viollons et par les 12 Aubois de plusieurs Airs choisis de Differants Ballets.

Charivary pour les hautbois [4-5]

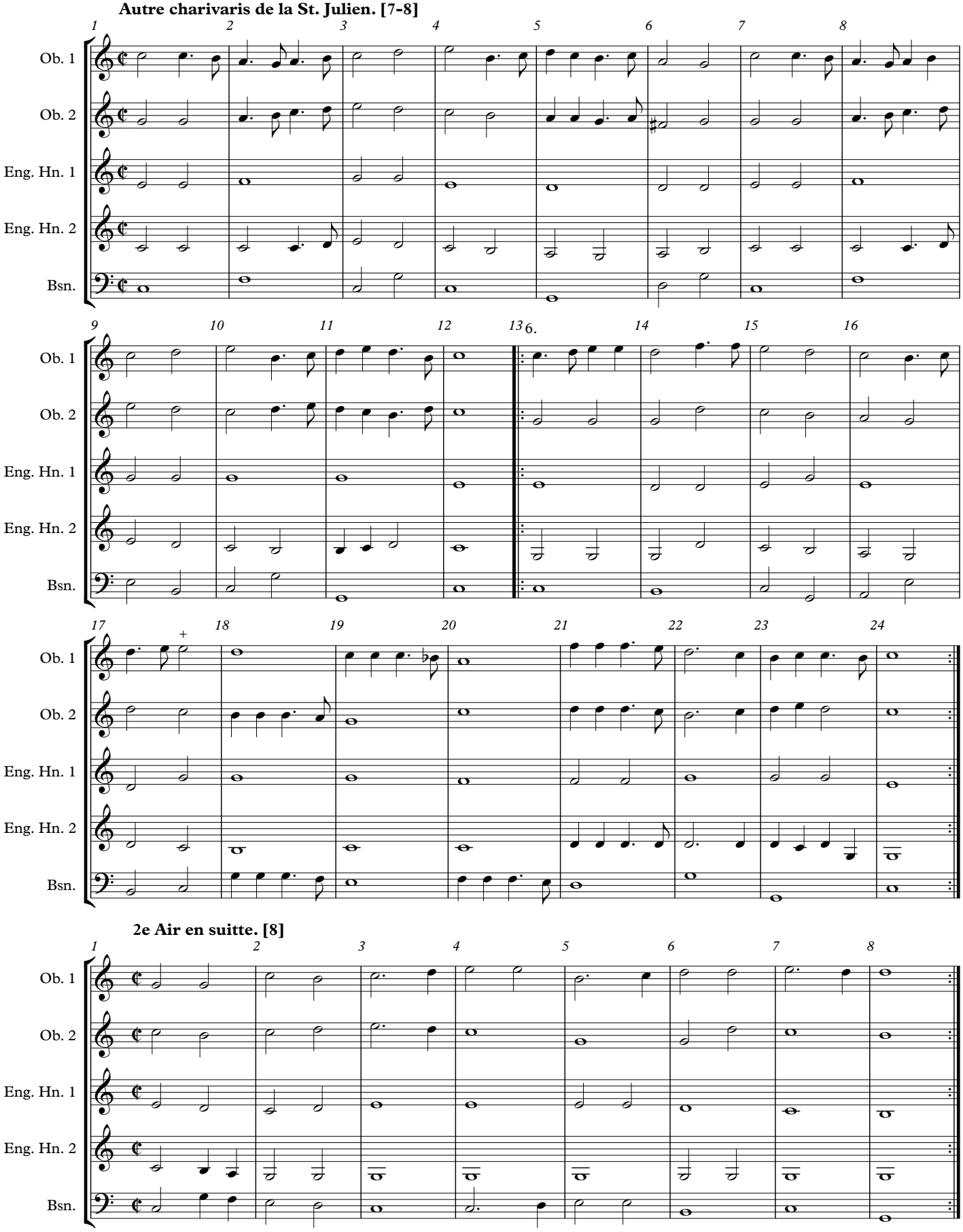


4. Here and elsewhere, sharps in front of notes flatted by the key signature have been replaced by naturals without comment.
5. Octaves here and elsewhere are present in manuscript.

Gavotte en Suitte. [6]

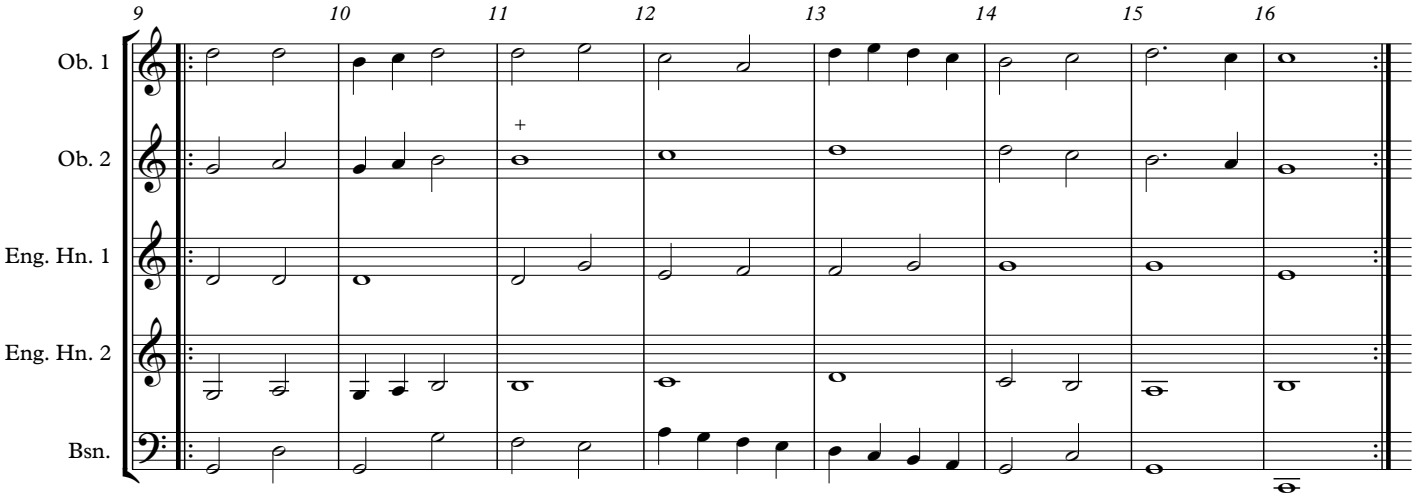


Autre charivaris de la St. Julien. [7-8]

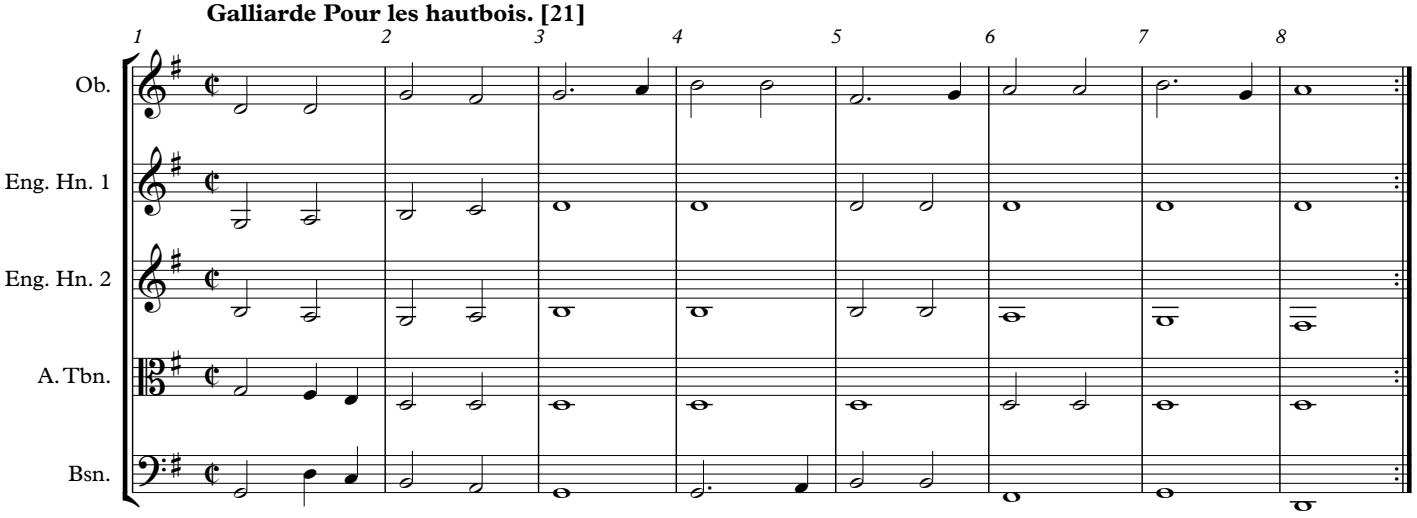


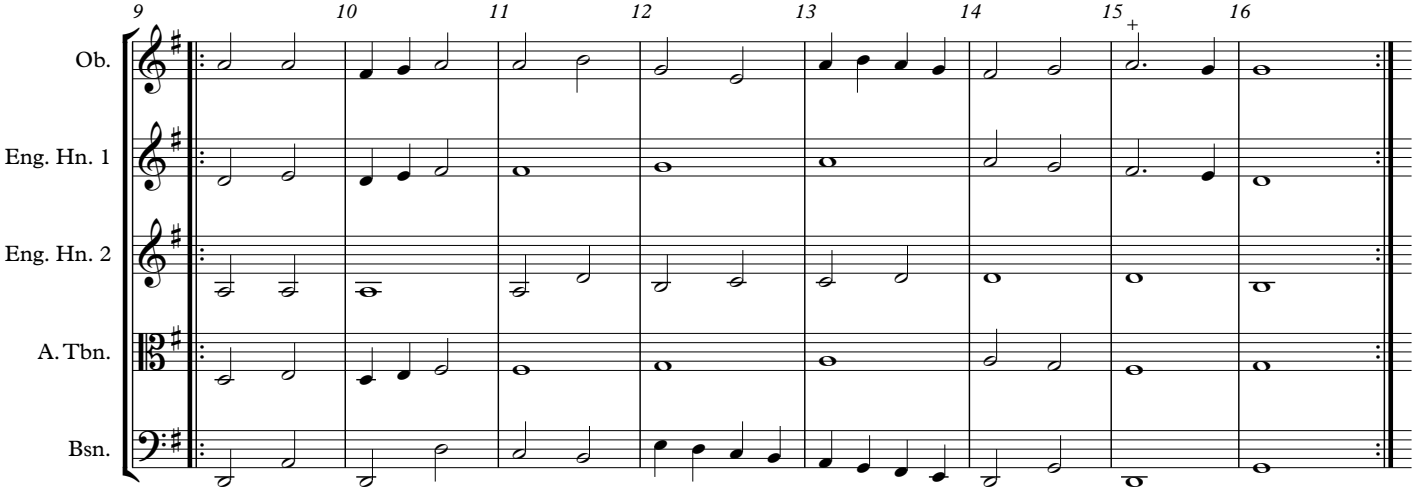
2e Air en suitte. [8]

6. Here and elsewhere, the segno in the manuscript has been interpreted as a forward repeat sign.

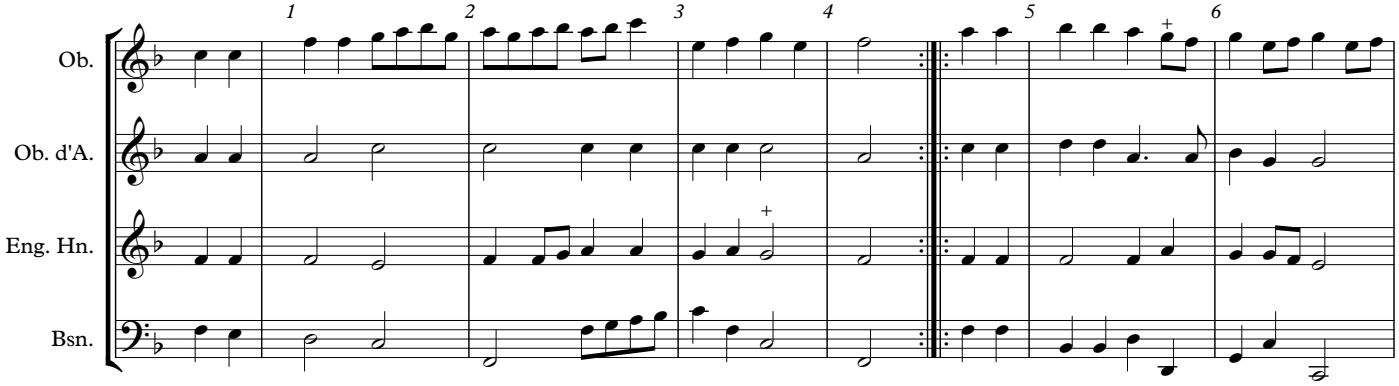


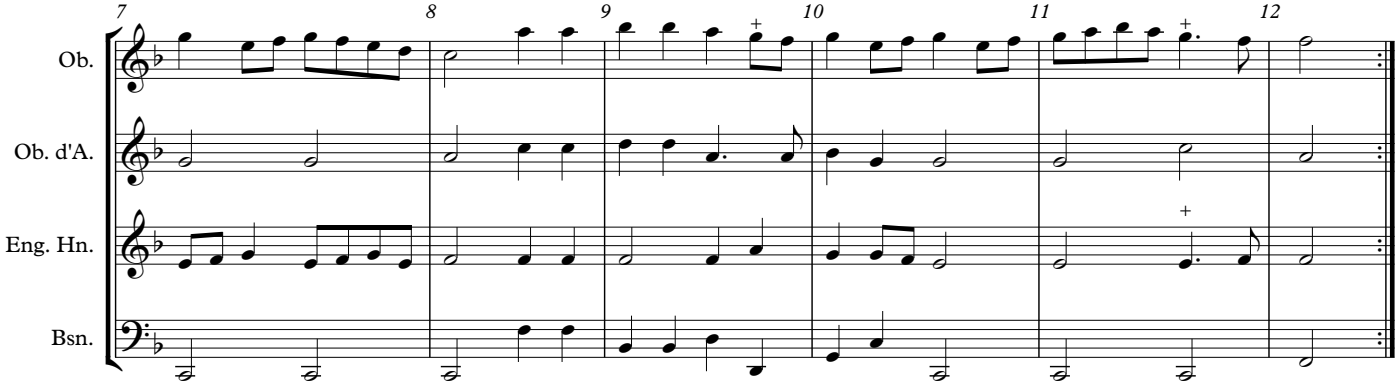
Galliarde Pour les hautbois. [21]



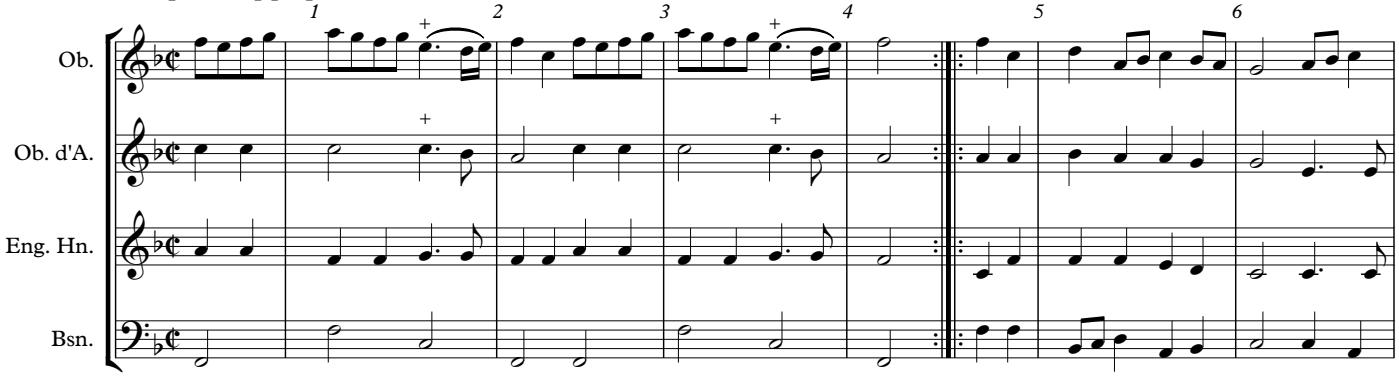


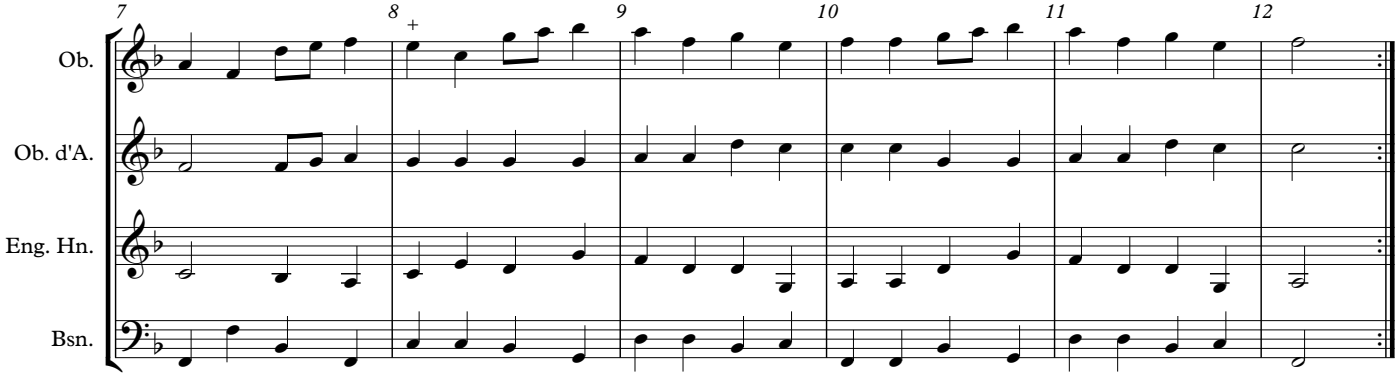
Autre Suitte faitte pour Mr. Le Compte Darcours
Par Mr. Degrignis pour Les Cromornes - Jan 1660
Petit Bransle [39]





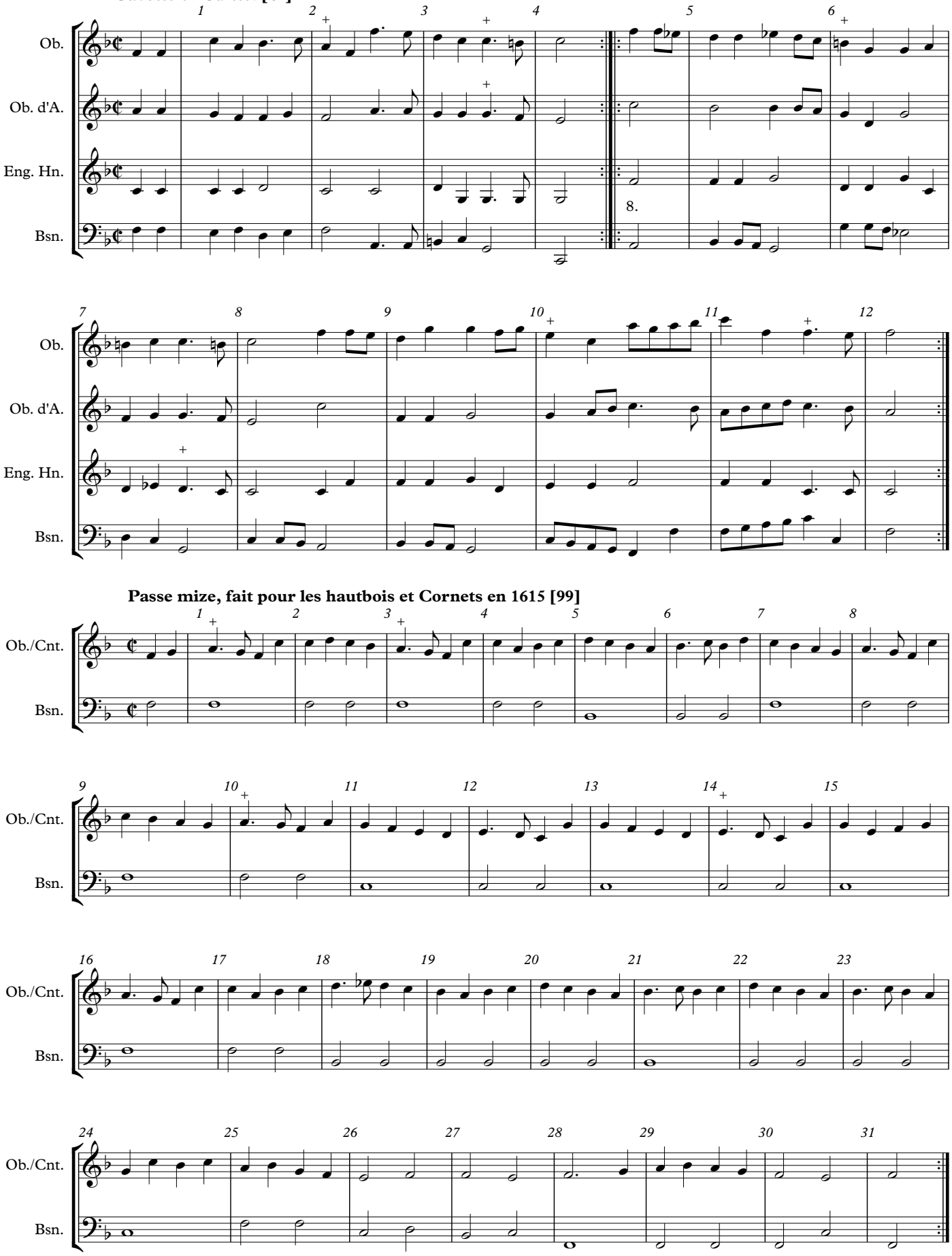
7.
[2e Air.] [40]





7. While there is no title, there is a restatement of the time signature, which elsewhere in the manuscript indicates a new piece.

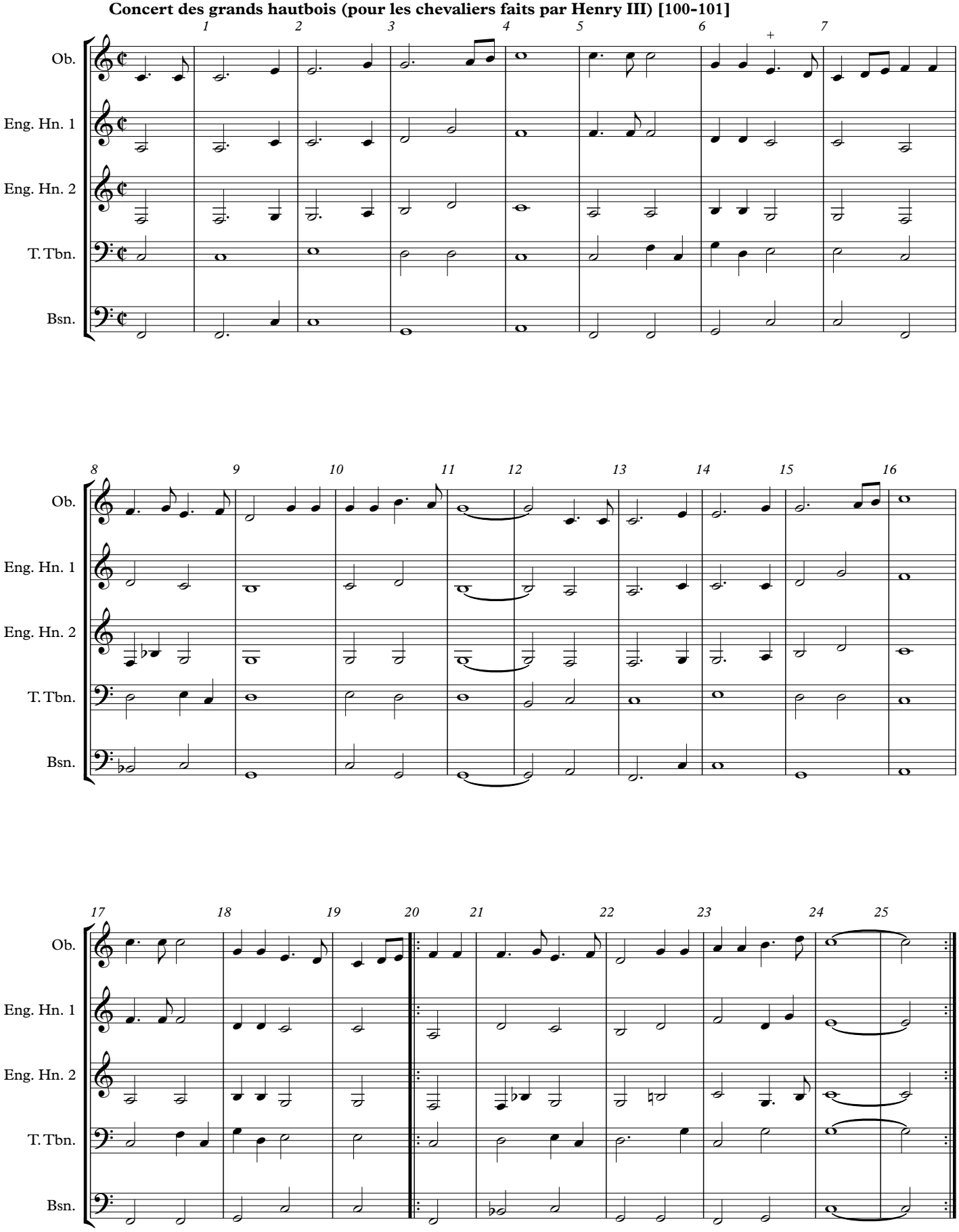
Gavotte en Suitte. [41]



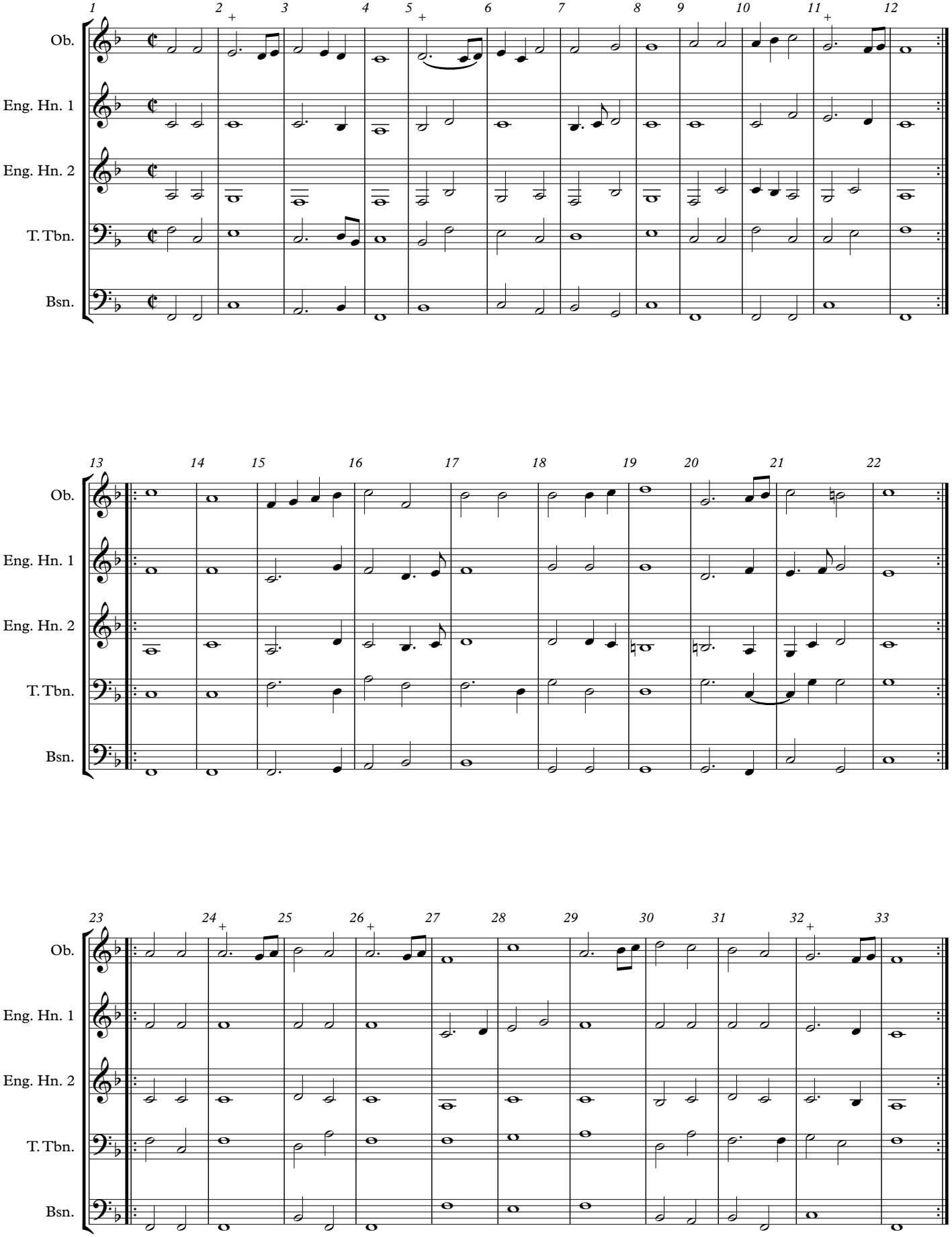
Passe mize, fait pour les hautbois et Cornets en 1615 [99]

8. There are two extra beats at the beginning of this measure in the manuscript that do not match up with the harmony. They are omitted here.

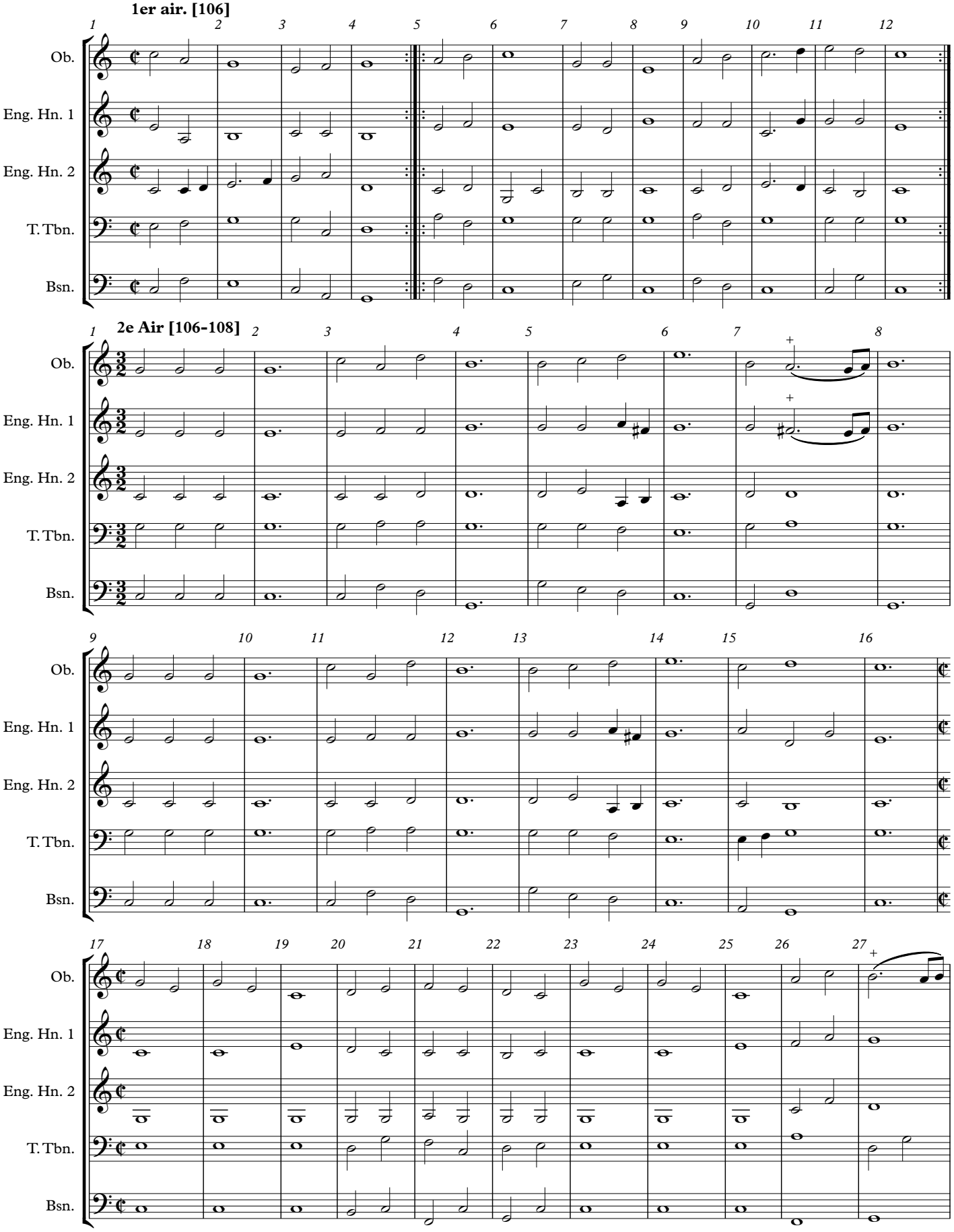
Concert des grands hautbois (pour les chevaliers faits par Henry III) [100-101]

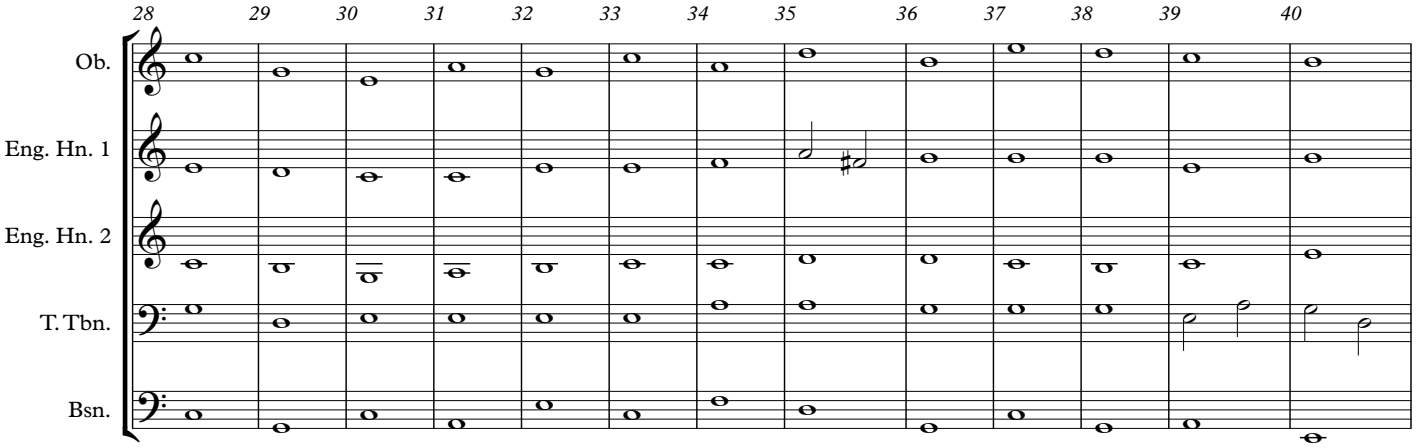


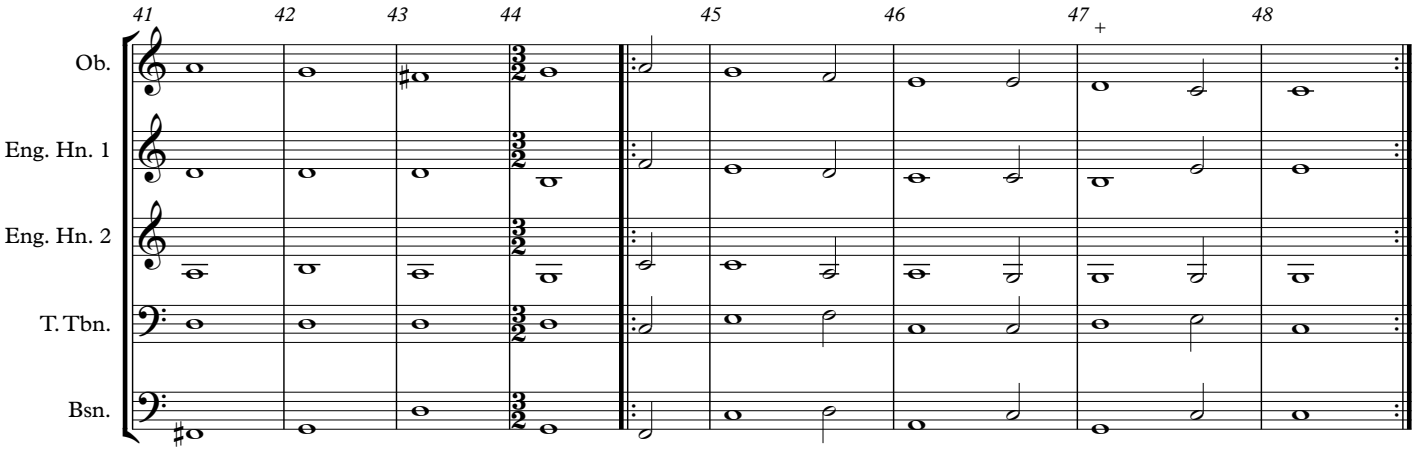
2me air des Chevaliers [101-102]



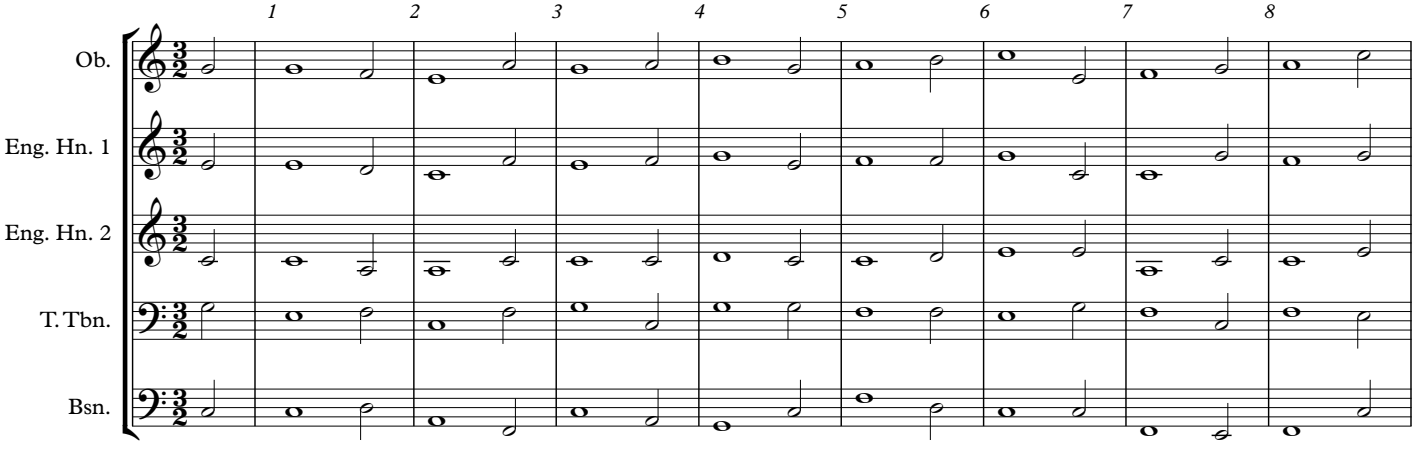
Ballet a cheval pour le grand Carousel a la Place royale au Mariage de Louis XIII (Joue par les grands hautbois).
1er air. [106]

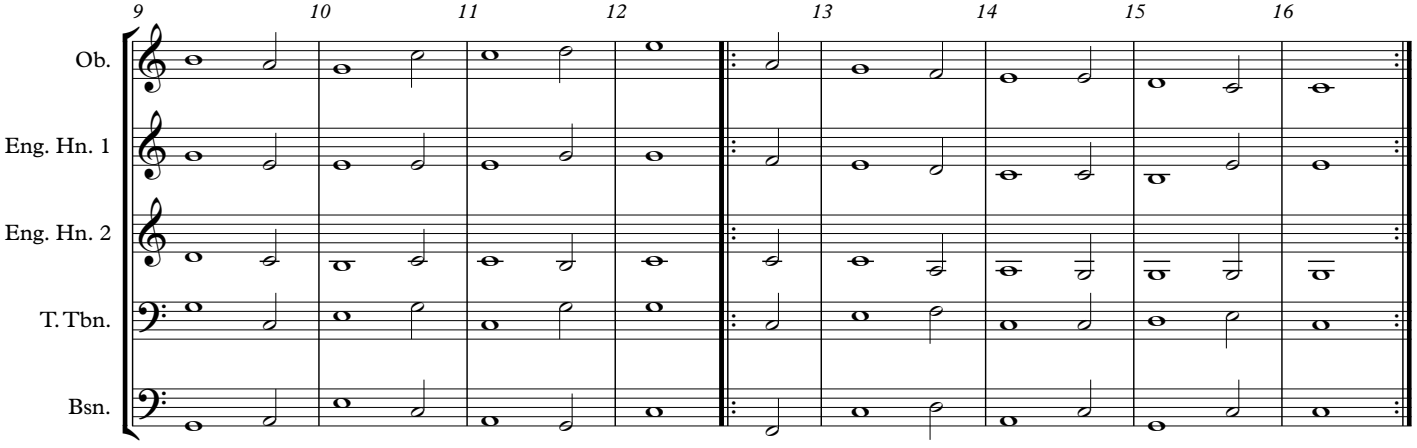




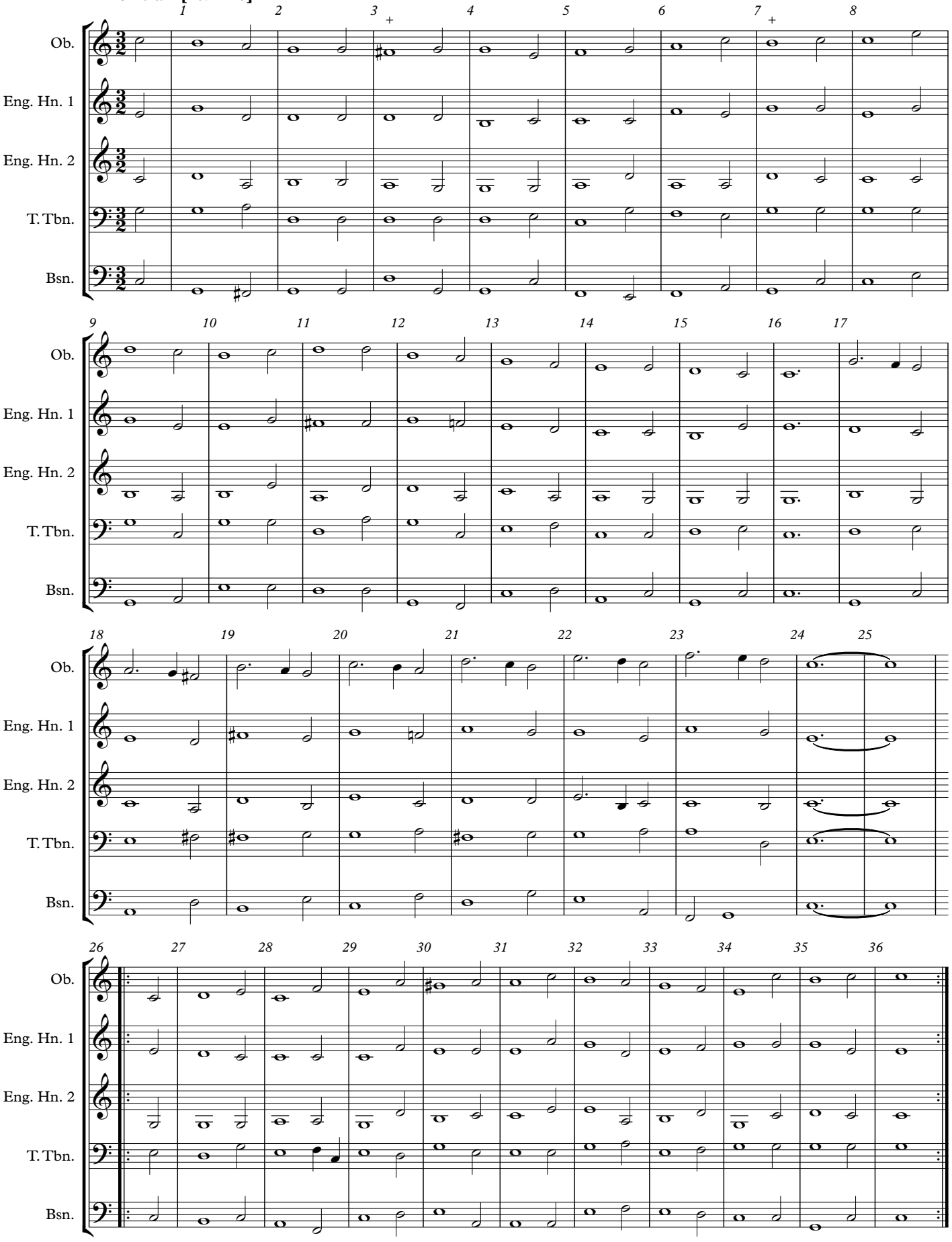


3me air [108-109]





4me air [109-110]



Appendix B:
Manuscript Ranges and Clefs for the Transcribed Works

Pavane pour les hautbois fait au Sacre du Roy le 17 Octobre 1610

Line	Clef	Range
1	Soprano (C)	C4-D5
2	Soprano (C)	E4-D5
3	Mezzo-Soprano (C)	F3-A4
4	Alto (C)	F3-D4
5	Baritone (F)	Bb2-C4
6	Bass (F)	F2-F3

Concert donne a Louis 13 en 1627 par les vint quatre Viollons et par les 12 Aubois de plusieurs Airs choisis de Differants Ballets:
Charivary pour les hautbois

Line	Clef	Range
1	Soprano (C)	C4-G5
2	Mezzo-Soprano (C)	C4-G4
3	Alto (C)	F3-D4
4	Baritone (F)	C3-G3
5	Bass (F)	C2-F3

Concert donne a Louis 13 en 1627 par les vint quatre Viollons et par les 12 Aubois de plusieurs Airs choisis de Differants Ballets:
Autre charivaris de la St. Julien[33]

Line	Clef	Range
1	Soprano (C)	G4-F5
2	Soprano (C)	G4-E5
3	Mezzo-Soprano (C)	B3-G4
4	Alto (C)	G3-E4
5	Bass (F)	C2-G3

Concert donne a Louis 13 en 1627 par les vint quatre Viollons et par les 12 Aubois de plusieurs Airs choisis de Differants Ballets:
Galliarde Pour les hautbois

Line	Clef	Range
1	Soprano (C)	D4-B4
2	Soprano (C)	G3-A4
3	Mezzo-Soprano (C)	F#3-D4
4	Alto (C)	D3-A3
5	Bass (F)	D2-E3

[33] According to Whitwell, "France", 82, these pieces were for the Paris Civic Wind Band.

Autre Suitte faitte pour Mr. Le Compte Darcours Par Mr. Degrignis pour Les Cromornes - Jan 1660

Line	Clef	Range
1	French violin (G)	F4-C6
2	Soprano (C)	D4-D5
3	Mezzo-Soprano (C)	G3-A4
4	Bass (F)	C2-C4

Passe mize, fait pour les hautbois et Cornets en 1615

Line	Clef	Range
1	Soprano (C)	C4-Eb5
2	Bass (F)	F2-F3

Concert des grands hautbois (pour les chevaliers faits par Henry III)

Line	Clef	Range
1	Soprano (C)	C4-D5
2	Mezzo-Soprano (C)	A3-G4
3	Alto (C)	F3-D4
4	Baritone (F)	Bb2-A3
5	Bass (F)	F2-F3

Ballet a cheval pour le grand Carousel a la Place royale au Mariage de Louis XIII (Joue par les grands hautbois)

Line	Clef	Range
1	Soprano (C)	C4-F5
2	Mezzo-Soprano (C)	A3-A4
3	Alto (C)	G3-A4
4	Baritone (F)	C3-A3
5	Bass (F)	E2-G3