CHAMBER MUSIC COLLECTION

Johann Sebastian BACH

A SELECTION FROM THE WELL-TEMPERED CLAVIER

TRANSCRIBED FOR FLUTE DUO

by Pamela WIJNBERG / Nerina von MAYER / Albie van SCHALKWYK

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Classics

FLUTE DUO

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Foreword

As professional instrumental performers and educators we have long felt the need to expand the flute duo repertoire. As passionate Bach lovers our quest included investigating the monumental keyboard work, The Well-Tempered Clavier. We quickly discovered that many of the pieces would be ideal candidates for duos for the modern flute.

It is well known that Bach himself used The Well-Tempered Clavier as one of his own primary teaching sources. In the process of transcription, we perceived excellent potential for the development of technical and musical skills in the context of the flute duo repertoire. Performance suggestions for each transcription are provided, highlighting these specific challenges.

We have taken great care to provide transcriptions that work well in performance. Harmonious voice placement for maximum tonal blending and the equal sharing of musical material between players were major considerations. Proposed dynamic and articulation indications have been included.

As a matter of principle we accepted the challenge of retaining the colours of the original Bach keys.

May you find much pleasure in performing these pieces.

Nerina von Mayer

Pamela Wijnberg

Albie van Schalkwyk

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"The Well-Tempered Clavier is the highest and best school; no one will ever create a more ideal one."
- Frédéric Chopin

General Performance Notes

Articulation

Original indications have not necessarily been retained but have been changed to be idiomatic for the flute.

Although the context should always be the deciding factor, we have used accents and articulation marks as follows:

- dot (·) separate and light, as in the French *detaché*, depending on the note value.
- dash (-) tenuto as an aspect of expressive sound quality rather than note length, not the same as in romantic repertoire.
- dot plus dash (‥) with a singing tone even though detached.
- accent (>) usually a dynamic increase; in longer notes or slower tempo a *fortepiano* (***fp***) effect.
- Comma (’) indicates a phrasing break as opposed to a full breath.

Dynamics

Suggested dynamic indications are included and should always be seen in the context of the whole.

In many passages these indications also help to clarify primary and secondary voice roles, enabling correct balance.

Breathing

Breathing recommendations are often included to support performance ideas.

Ensemble

It is essential for two players to approach balance, sound quality, articulation and phrasing in a unified way. This requires a high level of attentive listening and flexibility.

In the execution of some rhythmic figures, the two players should strive to sound like one, e.g. not coming late after rests or tied notes, ending notes together, deciding on exact interpretation of rhythmic motifs such as dotted notes, building phrases together in a rhythmically integrated way.

Awareness of the musical and technical requirements of any ensemble piece is considerably enhanced by getting to know the other parts. We suggest that players learn and perform both parts.

For more specific notes, please see the individual pieces.

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1. Prelude in D minor, WTC I no.6

Performance Notes

This prelude provides an opportunity to develop the even playing of triplets with varying articulations and challenging note intervals. The first note of each triplet must retain its subtle prominence, regardless of pitch or indicated articulation. To maintain the defining characteristic of triplet flow and matching sound quality, care must be taken when the leading voice passes to the other player: avoid coming in late after the semiquaver rest (e.g. bar 2).

In bar 1, flute 2 should take care to articulate the repeated D's clearly (as indicated by the sign) in order to avoid the effect of a long note. Rather feature its rhythmic contribution to the line in the style of a singing pizzicato.

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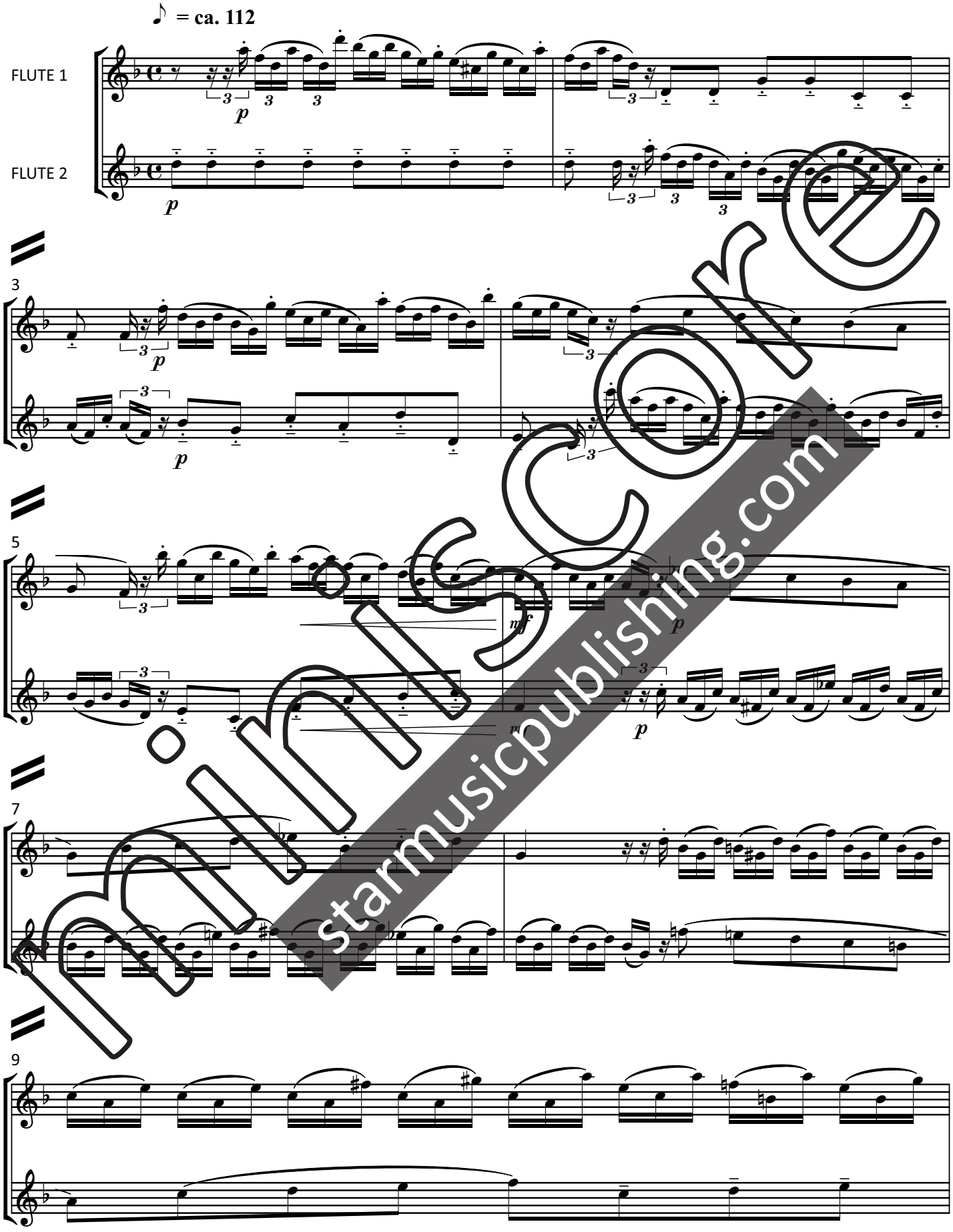
"It is not a mechanical routine but something essential to my daily life. I go to the piano, and I play two preludes and fugues of Bach. I cannot think of doing otherwise. It is a sort of benediction on the house. It is a rediscovery of the world of which I have the joy of being a part. It fills me with awareness of the wonder of life, with a feeling of the incredible marvel of being a human being. The music is never the same for me, never. Each day it is something new, fantastic and unbelievable. This is Bach, like nature, a miracle."
- Pablo Casals

1. Prelude in D minor, WTC I no. 6

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2. Prelude in G minor, WTC I no. 16

Performance Notes

In the same way as the birdsong-like long trills have been given different dynamic nuances, the trill speeds may also be graduated for a fluid effect. All long trills should start on the beat and on the upper note.

The melodic voice needs to maintain a sense of natural forward motion to maintain musical flow, supported by the purposeful walking quavers.

Strive for good legato at all times, especially in larger intervals, (e.g. flute 2, bar 3). In passages where wide intervals occur (e.g. the two-note slurs in bar 3, flute 2), the rhythmically more important bottom notes should be emphasised to drive the phrase forward. The main thematic motif (e.g. flute 1 bar 2 and flute 2 bar 4) should not be rushed but treated melodically.

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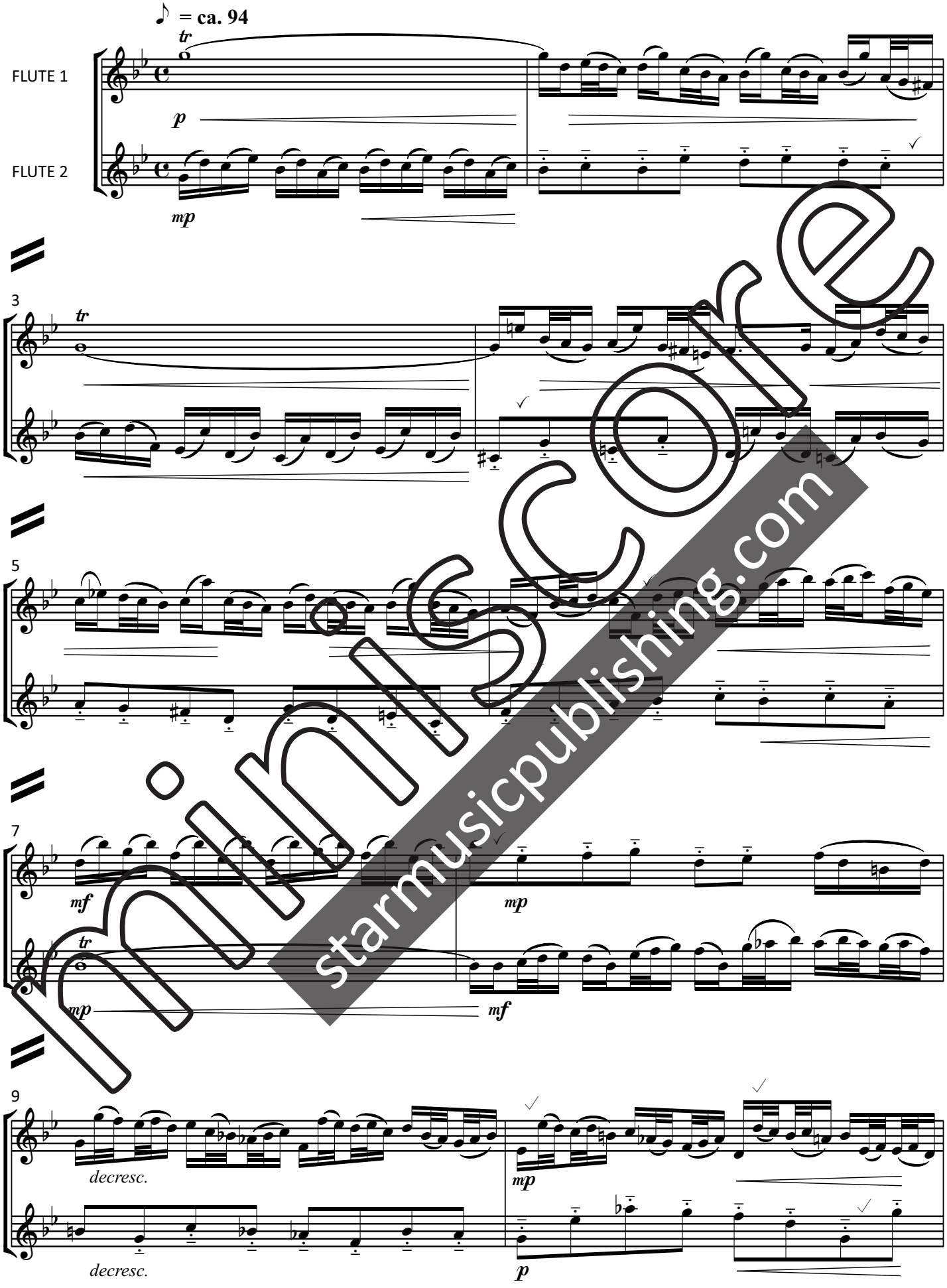
"I admit it is a habit. He (Bach) has given me such joy that I try to bring something of that joy to others…. I believe that a musician must know the Well-Tempered Clavier inside-out… I try to pack them into my pupils at all costs."
- Nadia Boulanger

2. Prelude in G minor, WTC I no. 16

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3a. Prelude in C♯ major, WTC I no. 3
3b. Prelude in C♯ major, WTC I no. 3 - version in D♭ major

"(Franz) Kroll has written this prelude in the key of D flat in place of C#, and might plead, by way of justification that Bach, had he lived at the present day, would certainly have done the same: for, without doubt D flat is a key more familiar to us than C#, but in his day, the reverse was the case. The C# Prelude, however, affords convincing proof that his powers of feeling and of invention were definitely influenced by the key: this ardent midsummer mood, this flashing, glimmering and glistening ("Blitzen, Flirren und Flimmern") were evolved from the spirit of the C-sharp major key; the veiled, soft key of D-flat would have suggested treatment of a totally different kind… it has a quiet, almost languishing character, and seems to suggest a siesta under the shade of leafy trees, on grass fragrant with blooming flowers, and all alive with the hum of insects." (Dr Hugo Riemann: Analysis of J.S. Bach's Wohltemperiertes Clavier)

Following Kroll's words, we have included a version in D-flat Major.

Performance Notes

The C-sharp tonality provides an excellent opportunity to overcome the flautist's bane - the second C-sharp above bottom C, which on most flutes tends towards unwelcome sharpness.

This lilting dance in ⅜ is ideally suited to flute duo transcription. It lies comfortably beneath the flautist's fingers, despite the daunting key signature.

The supporting dance rhythm must always follow the lead of the main player in terms of dynamics and phrase directionality.

The last eight bars will require fluent and accurate ensemble work to achieve a legato effect, as the two voices overlap and continuously pass the melody from one player to the other.

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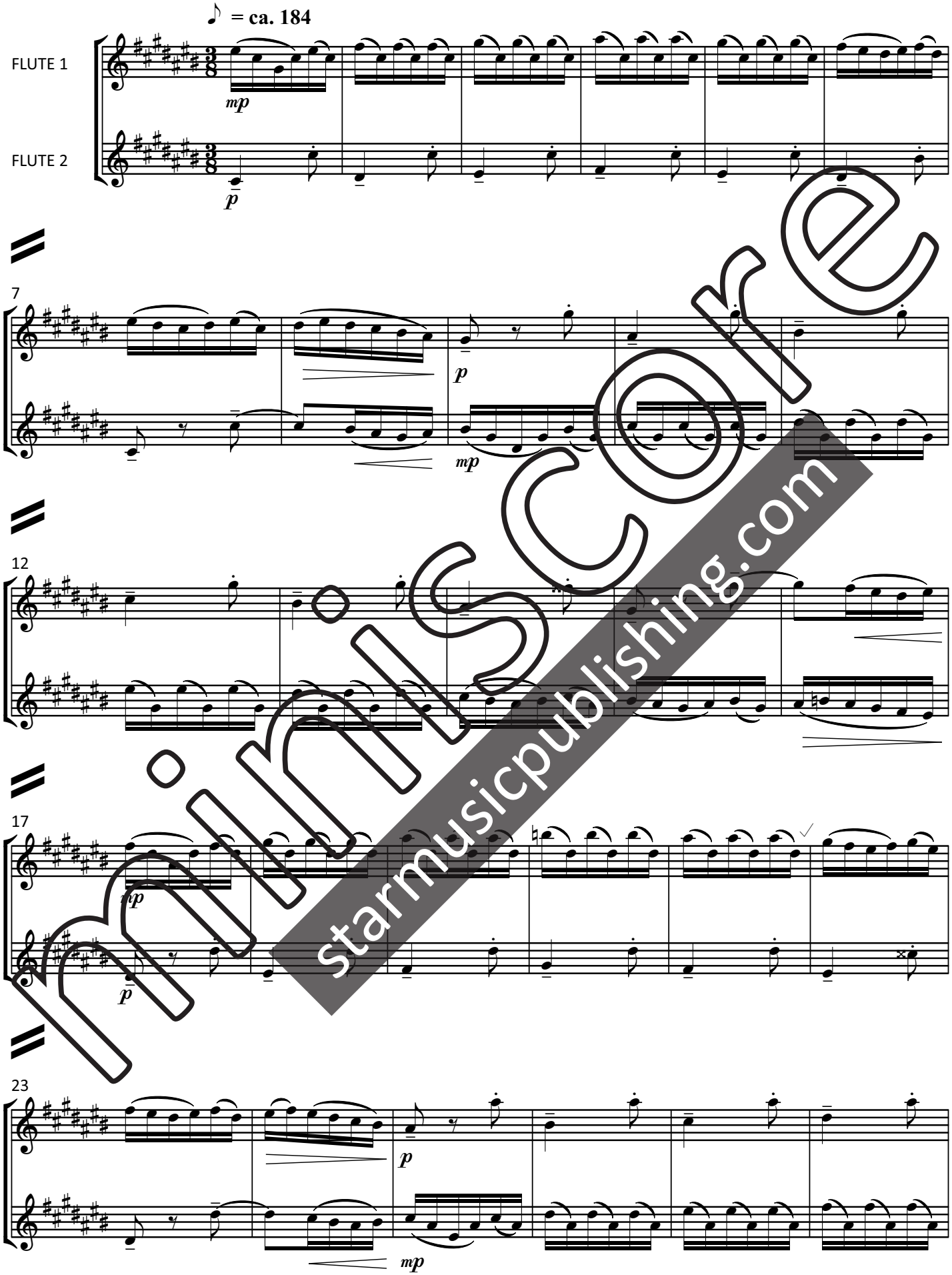
"She played Bach. I do not know the names of the pieces, but I recognized the stiff ceremonial of the frenchified little German courts and the sober, thrifty comfort of the burghers, and the dancing on the village green, the green trees that looked like Christmas trees, and the sunlight on the wide German country, and a tender cosiness; and in my nostrils there was a warm scent of the soil and I was conscious of a sturdy strength that seemed to have its roots deep in mother earth, and of an elemental power that was timeless and had no home in space."
- W. Somerset Maugham (from 'The Alien Corn')

3a. Prelude in C♯ major, WTC I no. 3

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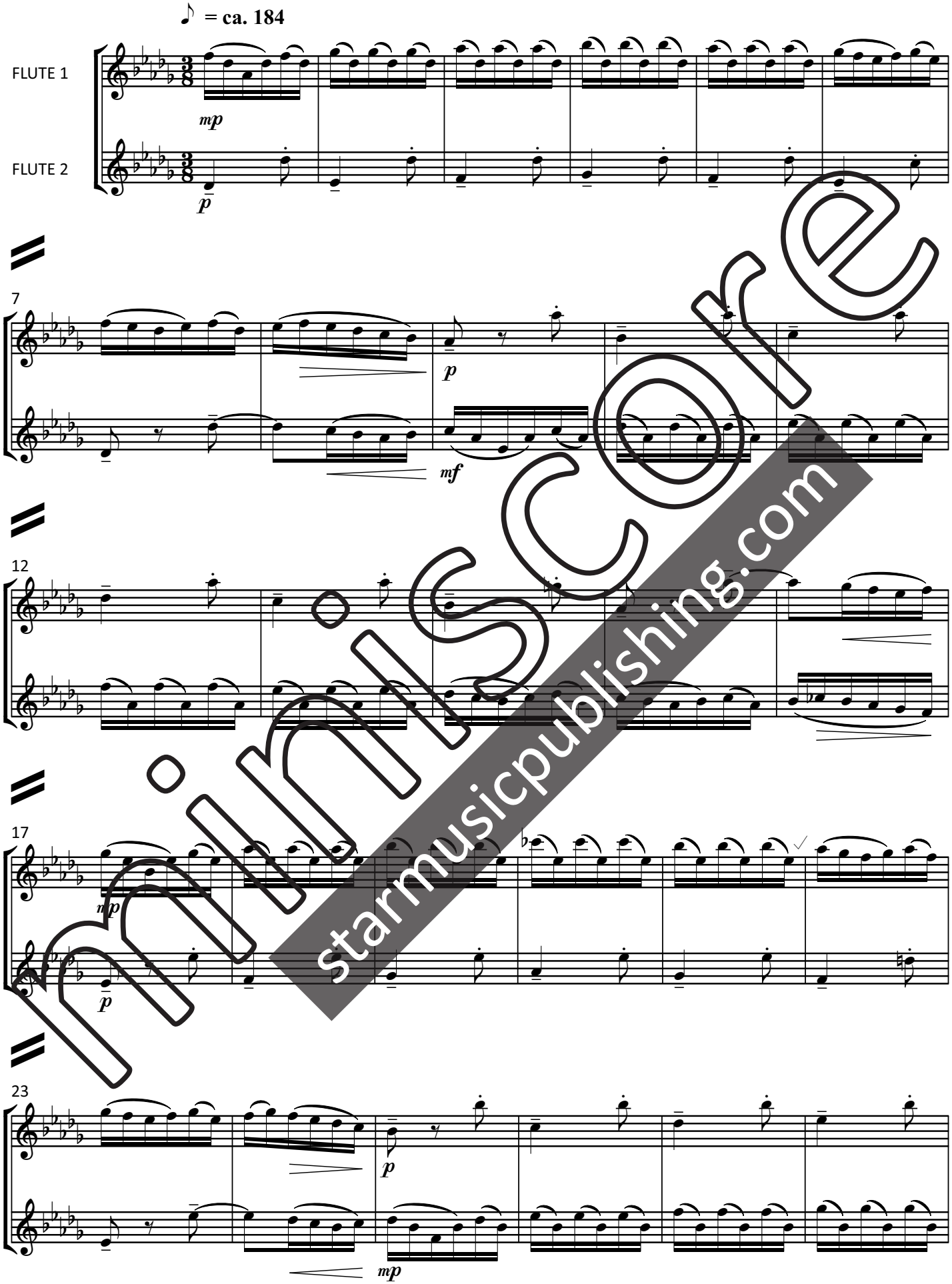
3b. Prelude in C♯ major, WTC I no. 3

version in D♭ major

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7. Prelude in C minor, WTC II no. 2

Performance Notes

The difference in emotional and atmospheric inferences of key colours in the Baroque and Classical periods is clearly demonstrated here. This prelude has a generally bright, amiable character, which is very different from the melancholic or even dramatic implications of the C minor works of Mozart and Beethoven.

The quavers in the opening four bars (and similar) therefore need a light, bouncy character, while avoiding clipping the staccatos.

Our tempo choice flows from the need to feel the piece in two rather than in four, thereby enhancing the cheerful character.

In this prelude the melody often alternates between the two voices and needs a fine balance between the two flutes.

In bars 14 and 16 we offer alternatives of varying difficulty to interpret the ornaments.

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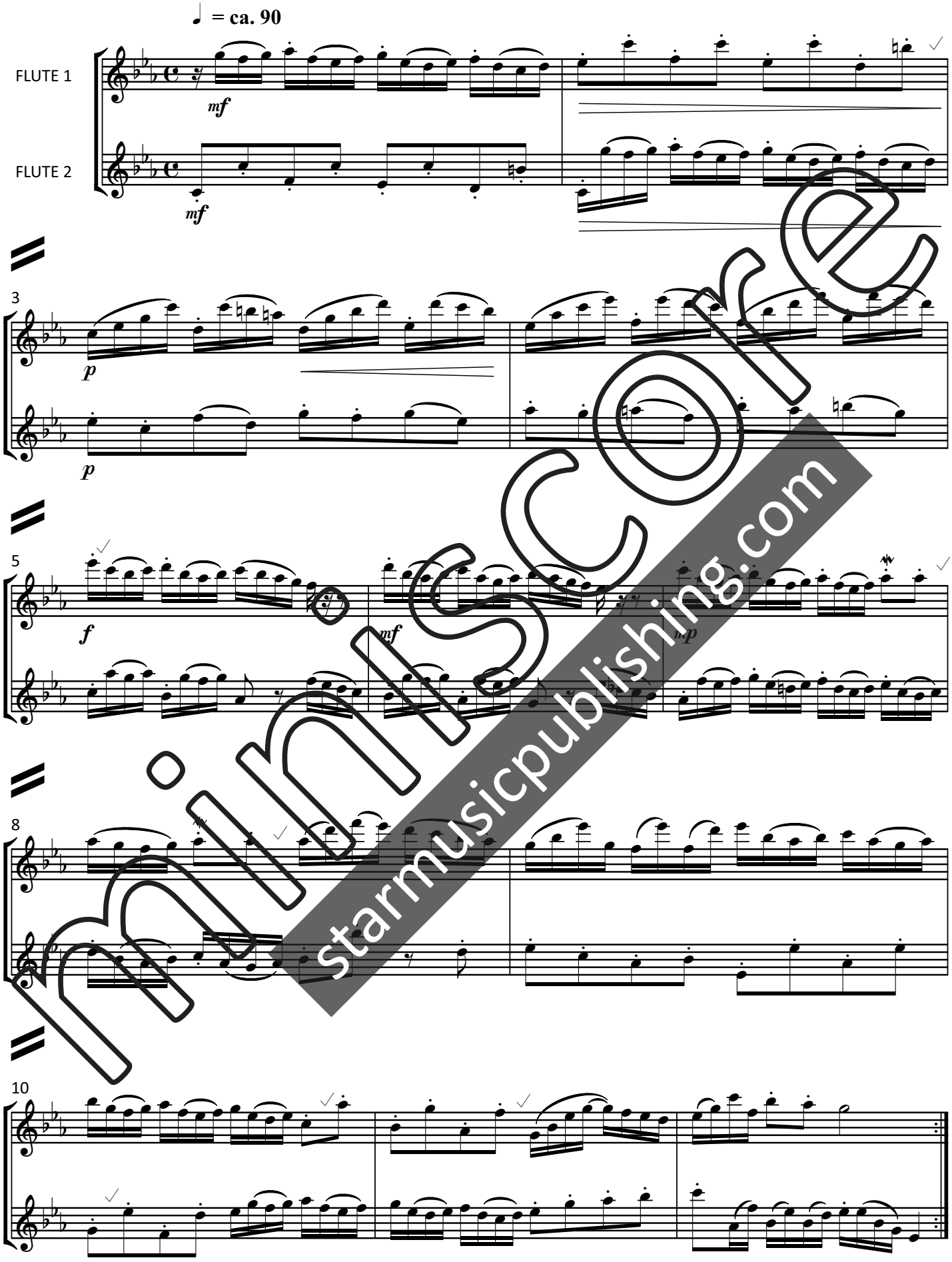
"Bach is the supreme genius of music... This man, who knows everything and feels everything, cannot write one note, however unimportant it may appear, which is anything but transcendent. He has reached the heart of every noble thought, and has done it in the most perfect way."
- Pablo Casals

7. Prelude in C minor, WTC II no. 2

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BIOGRAPHIES

Nerina von Mayer

Nerina studied in Cape Town, Vienna and London and holds B.Mus. and M.Mus. degrees in Performance. Alternate Principal Flute in the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra and Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra for 16 years, she performed as soloist with the CTSO, CTPO and CAPAB orchestras and as recitalist for the Cape Town Concert Club. She has recorded for the South African Broadcasting Company and is a well-known recitalist and chamber musician. After heading the Flute Department at the University of Cape Town's College of Music for many years, she now acts as the External Examiner for Woodwinds at UCT and Stellenbosch University. She is also frequently asked to adjudicate at music competitions. She pursues a busy and varied freelance career, teaching and performing on a freelance basis with various Cape Town orchestras. She is a member of the chamber groups Hungarian Trio and Viviamo per l'Arte, and loves arranging music. Married with two daughters, in her spare time she reads widely , enjoys beautiful gardens and practices yoga.

Pamela Wijnberg

Pamela Wijnberg, a professional flautist, educator and arranger, embarked on her musical journey with a dual major in piano and flute from the University of Cape Town. For over 25 years, she has imparted her expertise as a dedicated teacher, nurturing students in Cape Town's premier schools and through her thriving private studio.
Pamela performs solo as well as working alongside talented musicians in collaborative ensembles. Together with Nerina and Albie, they form the successful trio, Viviamo per l'Arte.

Albie van Schalkwyk

Albie van Schalkwyk established himself as performer in a number of fields over the past 40 years. One of the leading chamber musicians and vocal accompanists in South Africa, he has also performed as soloist with SA orchestras, performed solo recitals, given master classes for singers and accompanists, worked as a music producer for the SABC, and arranged music for various combinations, including Broadway musicals and operas for 2 pianos and orchestral pieces for 3 to 8 pianos. He completed his Ph.D. in Music at the University of the Free State in May 2012.
He retired from his post as Associate Professor in Piano and Chamber Music at the SA College of Music, University of Cape Town, at the end of 2017. Since then he has continued his activities as collaborative pianist in chamber music and the art song repertoire, piano teacher (live and online), vocal coach and arranger for multiple pianos, all under the heading of the Musicumbrella Piano Studio.

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