

Musette

from *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*

Johann Sebastian Bach

♩ = 88

1: □ □ V □ V □
 2: □ V □ V □ V
 3: □ □ □ V □

f

6

Fine

11

16

D.C. al Fine

This *Musette*, which survives in the hand of Anna Magdalena herself, is unattributed, but is traditionally ascribed to J. S. Bach. With its many detached notes in vigorous rhythms, the piece demands energetic playing and is an important introduction to the art of bowing in all its variety.

Begin by bowing according to the eighteenth-century 'Rule of the Down-Bow', which states that the first note of each bar should be a down-bow. Because the first bar contains an odd number of notes, there is a choice of several possibilities: Bowing 1 – retake the bow for the second beat of the bar; Bowing 2 – ignore the rule and 'bow out' the bar; Bowing 3 – add a slur to the first two semiquavers. Experiment with these options and choose for yourself. You can apply these bowings to the scales you are practising, as you can the rhythms in bars 3, 9 and 13–14.

Now think about the left hand, which in this piece especially is as much the source of fine articulation as is the right hand. Start by practising the left hand alone – a very beneficial exercise. Then, if the co-ordination of fingers and bow proves to be tricky, practise by playing one semiquaver note with the left hand alone and then play it with the bow. Repeat on the second note and continue in this way, so that the hands operate alternately. This will encourage the left hand to think ahead of the bow.

In the syncopated passage starting at bar 13, it is good to come away from the slurs – that is, for each one to be 'shaved off' with its own *diminuendo*. This will help the accentuation to sound offbeat. And in bar 18, take care with the intonation of the F sharp and C.