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The Allemande

The allemande was subjected to many changes in character during its long period of bloom, from the middle of the sixteenth century to about 1740. Here, however, we focus only on the Renaissance allemande. Praetorius describes it thus: “Allemande means the same as a German ditty or little dance, as *Alemagna* means Germany and *un Alemand* is a German. This dance is not as agile and quick as a galliard, but rather more somber and slow because no extraordinary motions are necessary.”⁹⁹

However, the allemande is somewhat more lively than the pavan. Its basic step, which is derived from the pavan’s *double* step, is performed at a faster tempo. Also, at the end of the step, the feet are no longer placed alongside each other; instead, the free leg stays slightly bent in the air next to the supporting leg. At the same time, the supporting leg pushes away from the ground, as if about to jump but with less force, so that the ball of the foot stays on the ground while the heel leaves the ground briefly and flexibly (*suspension*). As with the pavan, the step is then repeated in inversion. The path the dancers trace in the room can be freely improvised or choreographed in advance. Often the *double* left will be danced forwards and the *double* right backwards.

When set to the rhythm of the music, it looks like this:

The drumming pattern in the first staff nicely supports the vitality of the suspension. Skin drums of all kinds are suitable here, as they can produce different distinctive pitches, depending on where they are struck.

While the drumming rhythm underlines the suspension with smaller note values, the melody of many allemandes is characterized by a dotted half-note in measures 2 and 4 (see Example 40). This supports the dance steps in another fashion. Make this rhythm the basic pattern for your allemande improvisations. You can use it on the passamezzo moderno, as well as on other bass models.

CD track	Ostinato bass model	Dance	Template	Playing time
15	Passamezzo moderno	Galliard		8 x / 2'00"

The Galliard

The galliard is a lively dance characterized by its many jumps. In order to execute it convincingly, the dancer must be athletic and in good physical condition. Arbeau mentions it as a dance predominantly for young people. The tempo of the music is determined by the jumps (the dancer can only stay in the air for so long)

⁹⁹ “*Alemande heißt so viel / als ein deutsches Liedlein oder Tänzlein: Denn Alemagna heißt Germania, und un Alemand ein Deutscher: Es ist aber dieser Tanz nicht so fertig und hurtig / sondern etwas schmehmütiger und langsamer / als der Galliard, Sintemaln keine extraordinariae motiones darinn gebraucht werden.*” M. Praetorius (1619), Vol. III, p. 25, translation by Jeffery T. Kite-Powell, *M. Praetorius: Syntagma Musicum III* (Oxford, 2004), p. 43.