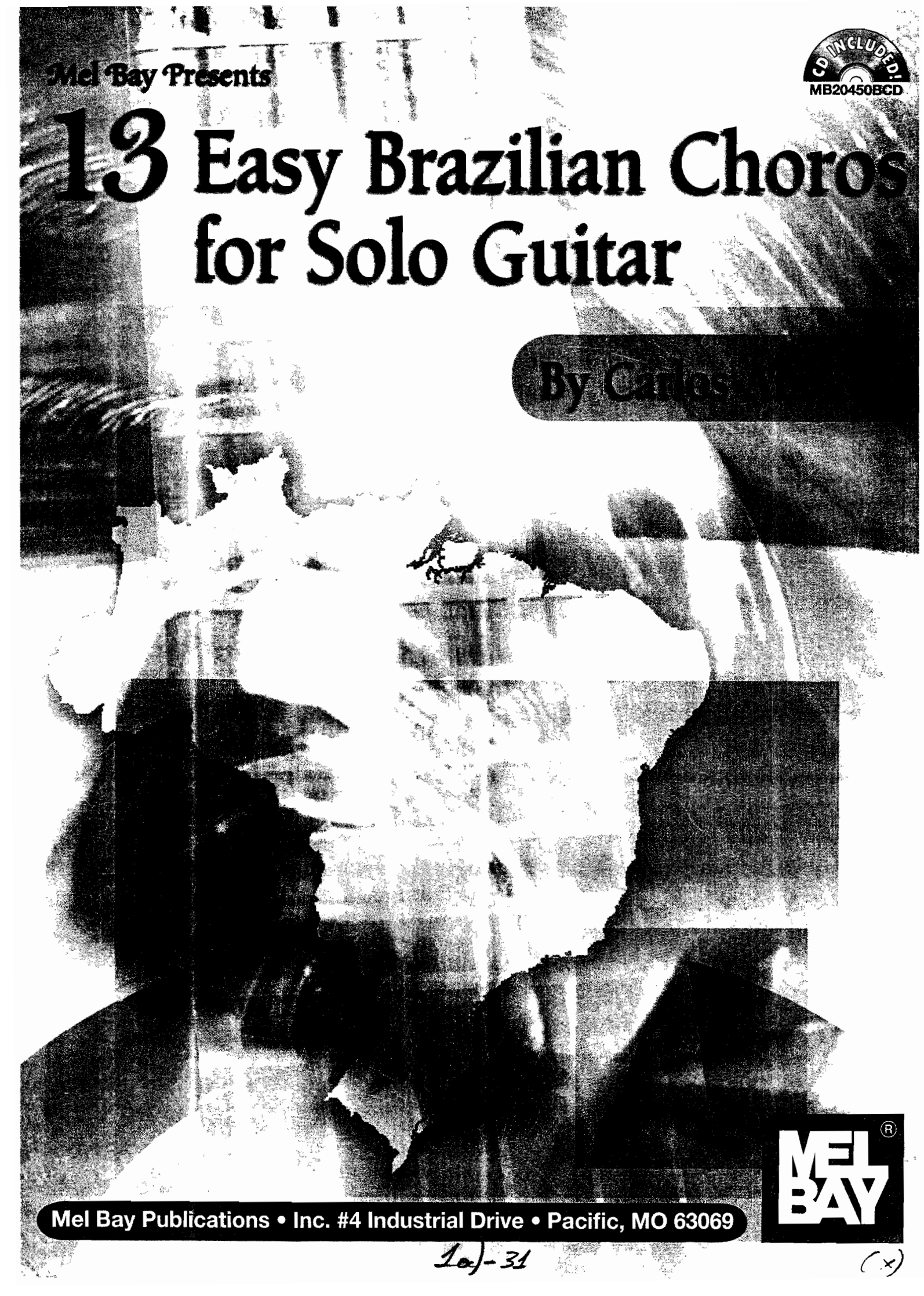
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13 Easy Brazilian Choros for Solo Guitar
By Carlos
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Mel Bay Presents

13 Easy Brazilian Choros for Solo Guitar

By Carlos Almada

CD Contents

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Rubens Tubenchlak: Guitar

Flavio Henrique Medeiros: Revision and fingering of score

Recorded at Omega Studio (Niteroi)
Engineered by
Carlos Castanheira

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

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Introduction

The *choro* is a very important Brazilian instrumental style, originated in Rio de Janeiro during the late 1800's. It is thus a typical *carioca* style (*carioca* means from Rio de Janeiro). Originally, the word "choro" was used to name instrumental groups composed of flute, *cavaquinho* (a kind of Brazilian ukulele) and two guitars (later on, several kinds of percussion instruments were included as well). These groups used to play in *carioca* high society parties in a peculiar syncopated interpretation pieces based on the fashionable dancing styles of that time: polkas, mazurkas, waltzes, waltzes and scottisches, all of them imported from Europe. Those rhythms were later "nationalized" by composers, such as Joaquim Callado, Chiquinha Gonzaga and Ernesto Nazareth, among others, and were combined with the African rhythm of the lundu. This mixture resulted in new styles with a very strong Brazilian accent, although their names were initially identical or similar to the original European styles (polca, mazurca, valsa and xótis).

The great popular success of this new Brazilian way of playing the old rhythms, and its gradual and natural evolution, has brought up other rhythmic variants: the Brazilian tango, the maxixe (that has also contributed to the creation of the samba) and, finally, the choro, which became a specific style around 1930.

Besides the aforementioned names, the great choro composers are Sátiro Bilhar, Anacleto de Medeiros, Patápio Silva, Pixinguinha, Jacob do Bandolim, Benedito Lacerda, Luis Americano, Zequinha de Abreu, João Pernambuco, K-Ximbinho, among others. Nowadays, it is very common to also consider as choro the related styles, such as the polca, the Brazilian tango, the maxixe, the xótis, and even the ternary ones like the mazurca and the valsa.

The main features of choro are:

1. Tempo: usually, the choros are written in medium to fast tempos (from 80 to 120 beats per minute).
2. Time signature: 2/4 (like almost all Brazilian rhythms).
3. Form: AA-BB-A-CC-A (i.e., the well-known rondo form, inherited from the European polka). Parts B and C are always written in related keys (for instance, if part A is in C major, parts B and C could be in G major and A minor, and if part A is in A minor, parts B and C will probably be in C major and A major.
4. Melody/Harmony: the melodic lines are almost always based on arpeggios of diatonic triads, secondary dominant and diminished seventh chords, scale-like passages, and chromaticism (perhaps the most characteristic choro hallmark).
5. Rhythm: this is undoubtedly the greatest difficulty for the beginner. The typical rhythmic figurations of the choro are strongly syncopated, and they are used in several of the possible variations for groups of eighth and sixteenth notes, many times with the addition of ties and dots.

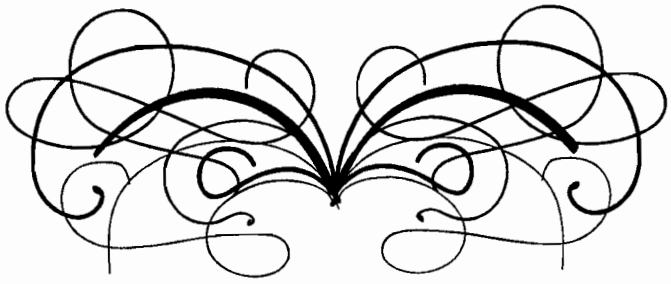
As one can easily imagine, it would be very hard for a guitar student to start reading the scores of the traditional choro repertoire, almost all of them with many technical difficulties. It would be much better if he could start with some easier pieces – of intermediate level – in order to be presented to the choro language in a more gradual and appropriate manner. That is the main goal of this book. It has thirteen studies (in the thirteen most used keys for choro guitar) written in a reduced form (two parts instead of the conventional three), and in the principal stylistic variants of the choro: besides choros, there are polcas, maxixes, Brazilian tangos and xótis. The more common

and characteristic rhythmic figurations are present in each of the studies as the principal generator of motives. Also aiming at the simplification of execution, all studies were composed with only two voices (melody and bass) and with no chords (although harmonies are quite evident due to the melodic particularities of choro).

Regarding the interpretation, I think that the enclosed CD will help a lot.

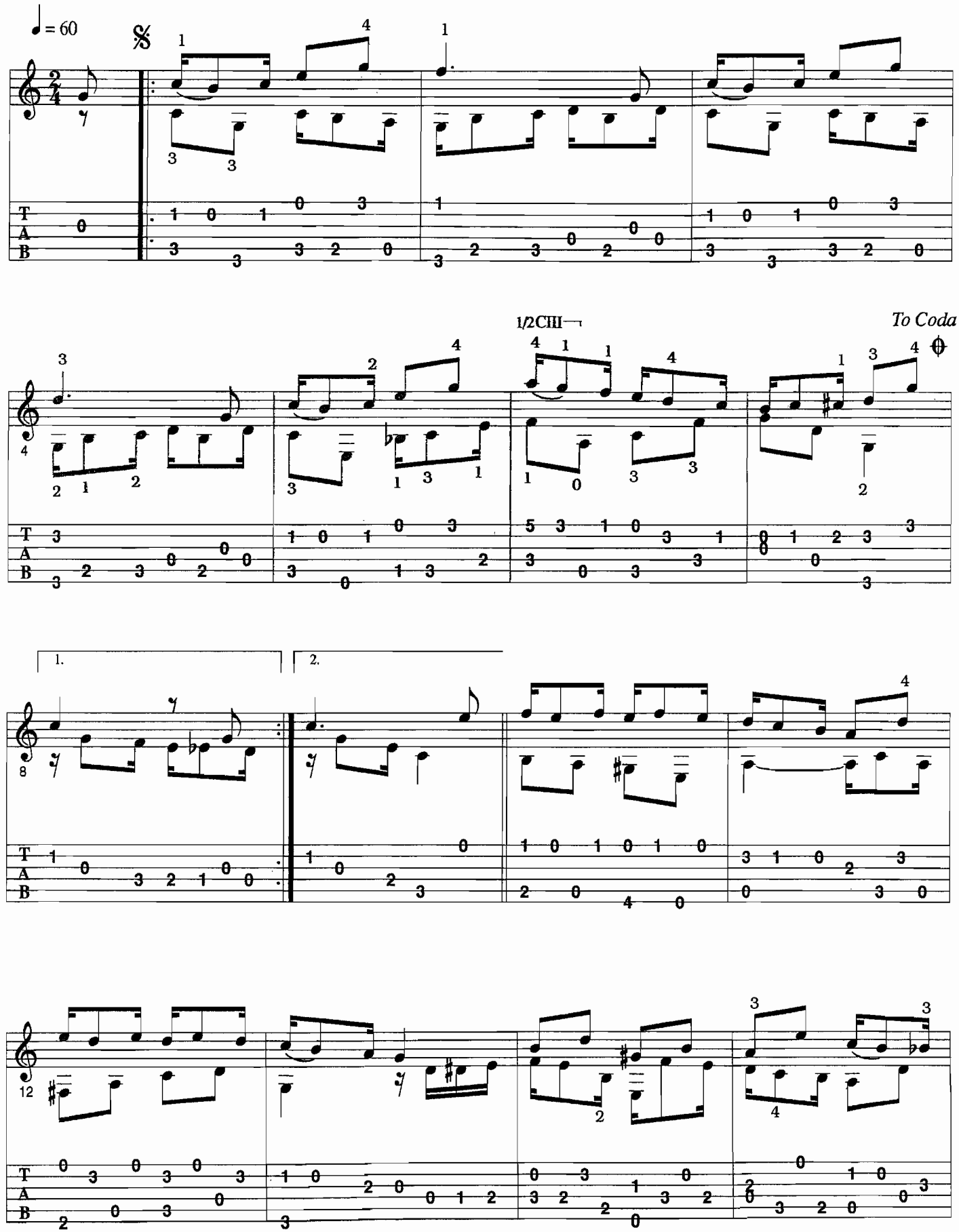
Carlos Almada

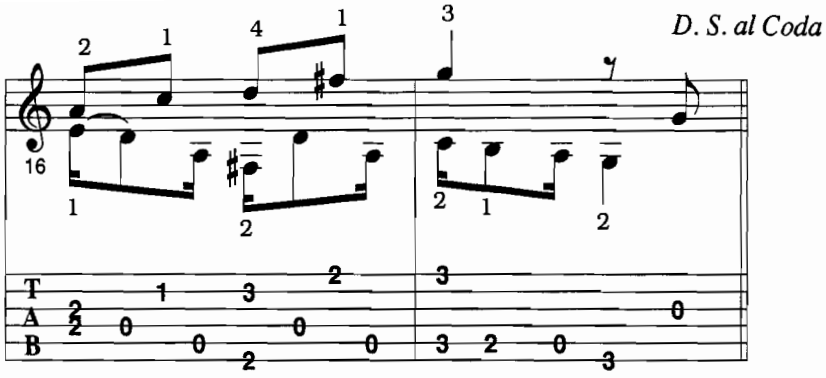
This book is dedicated to my son, Roberto.



Choro in C

Carlos Almada




D. S. al Coda
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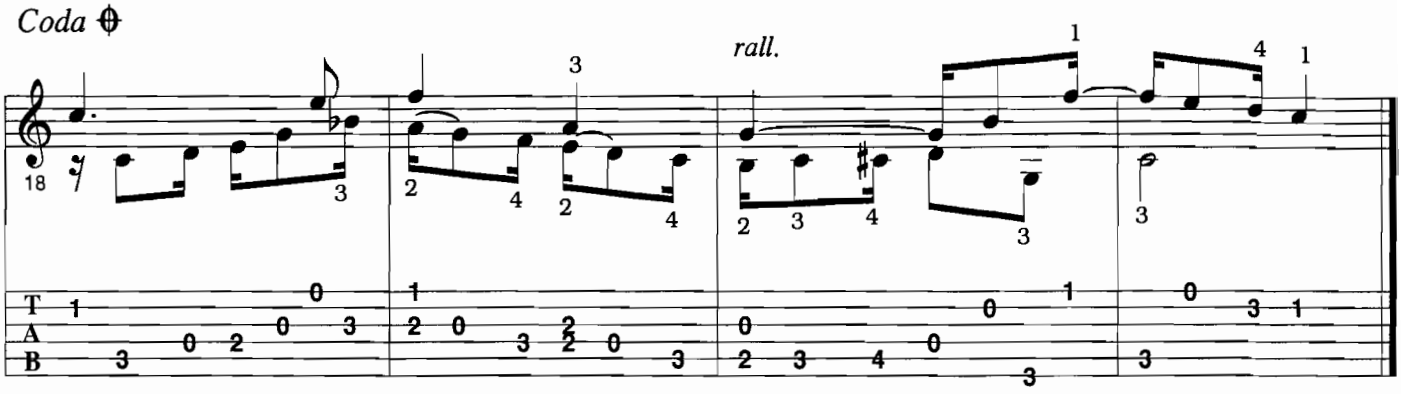
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18
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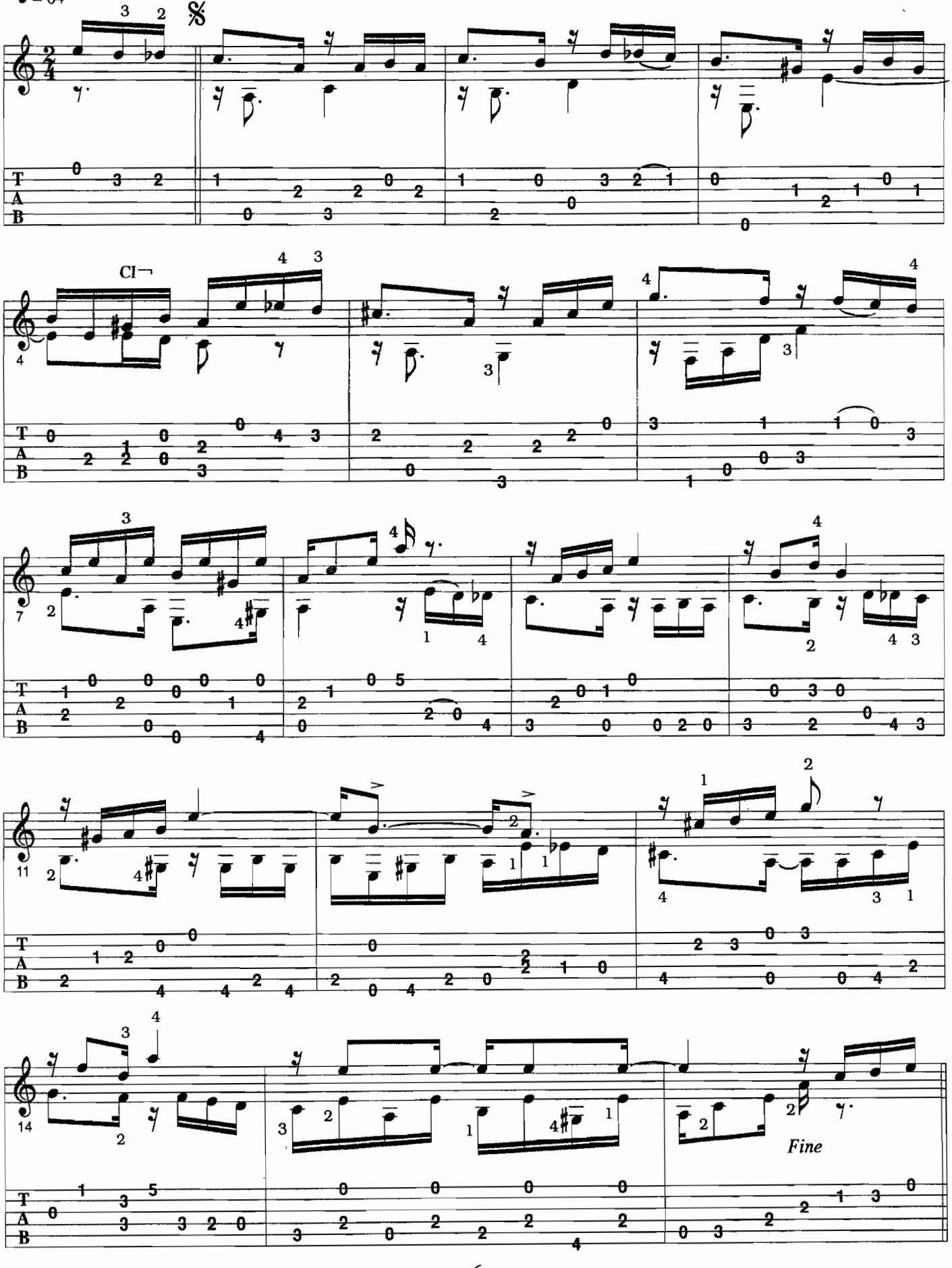
A
B

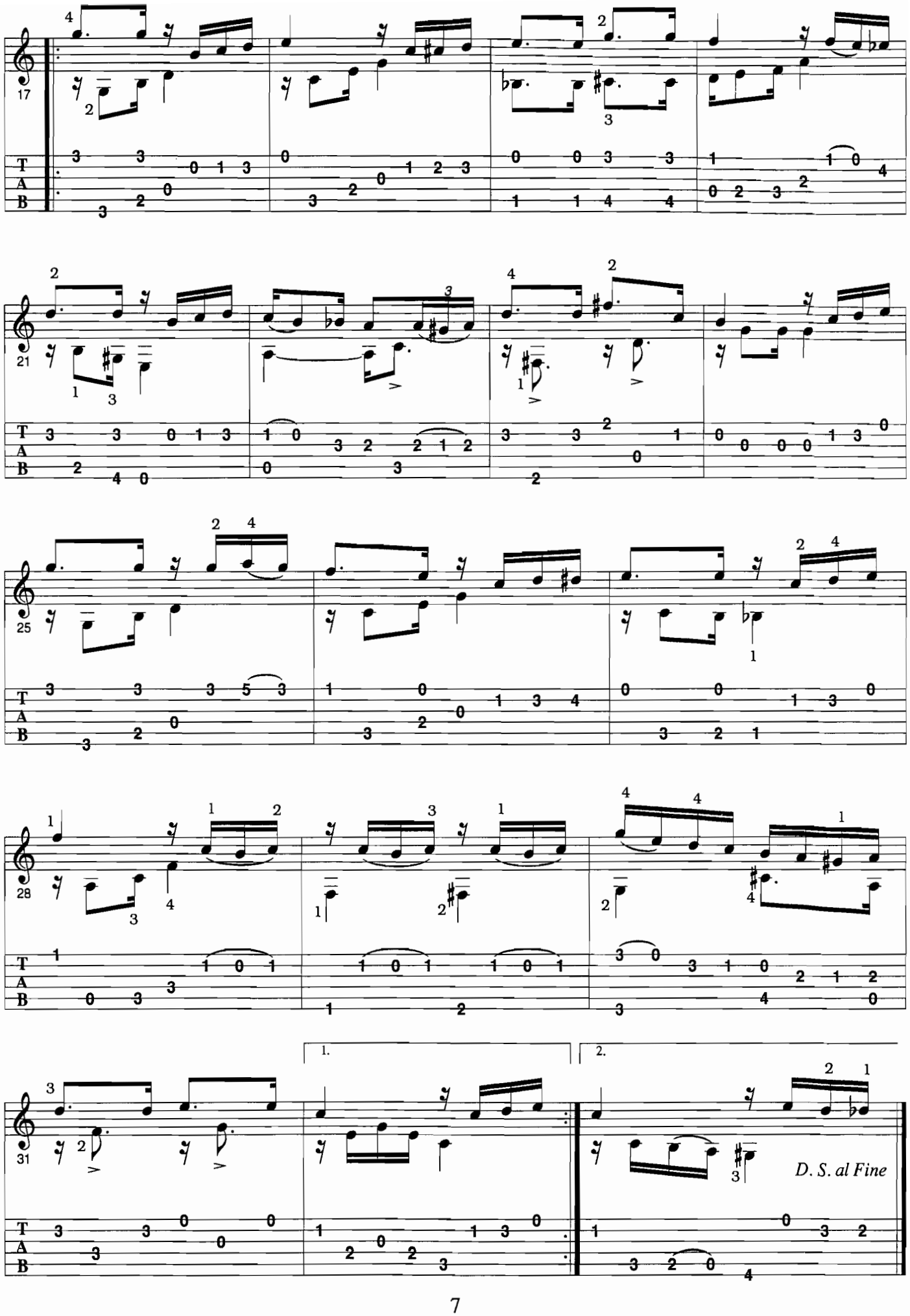
TRACK 2

Choro in A minor

Carlos Almada

♩ = 64




17
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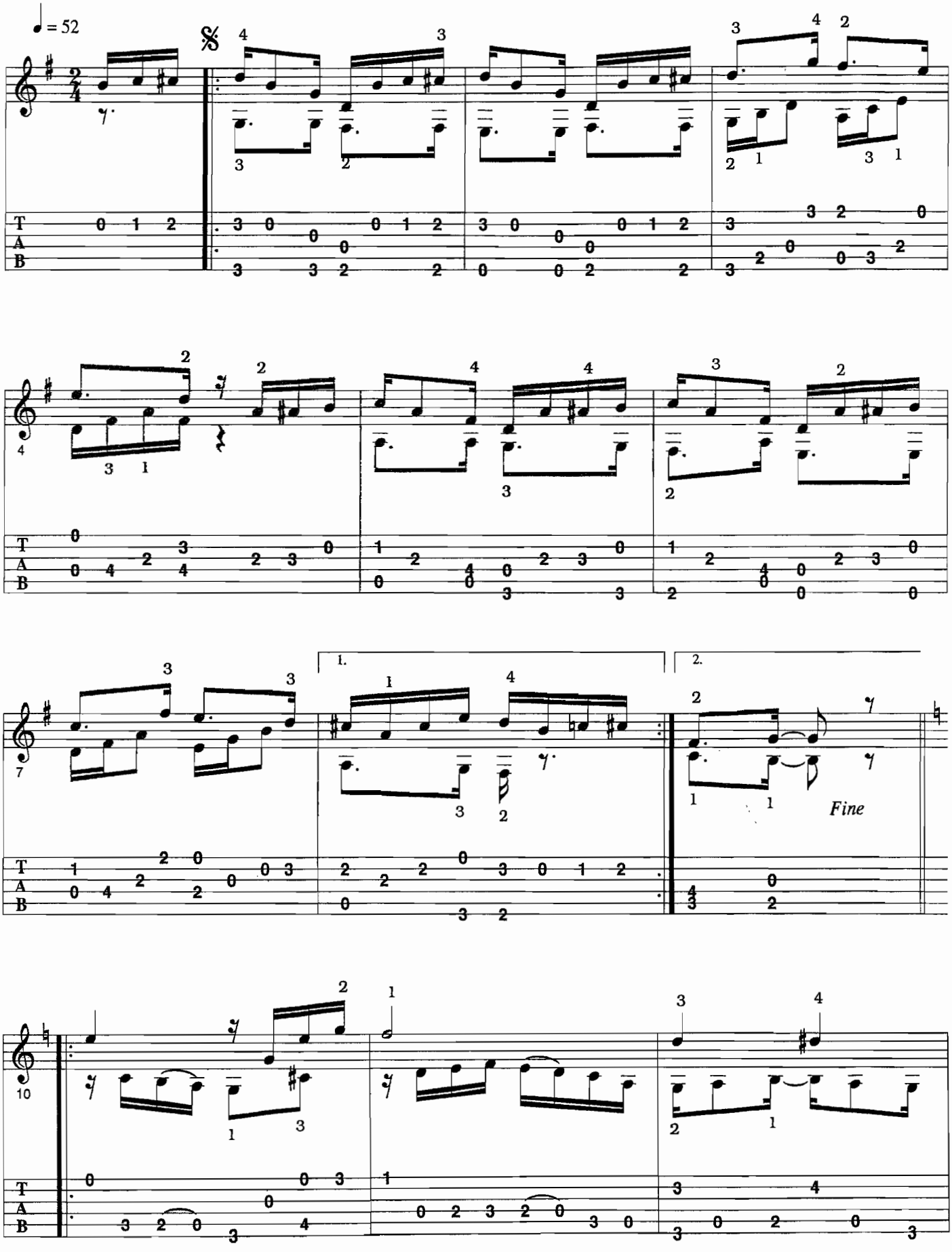
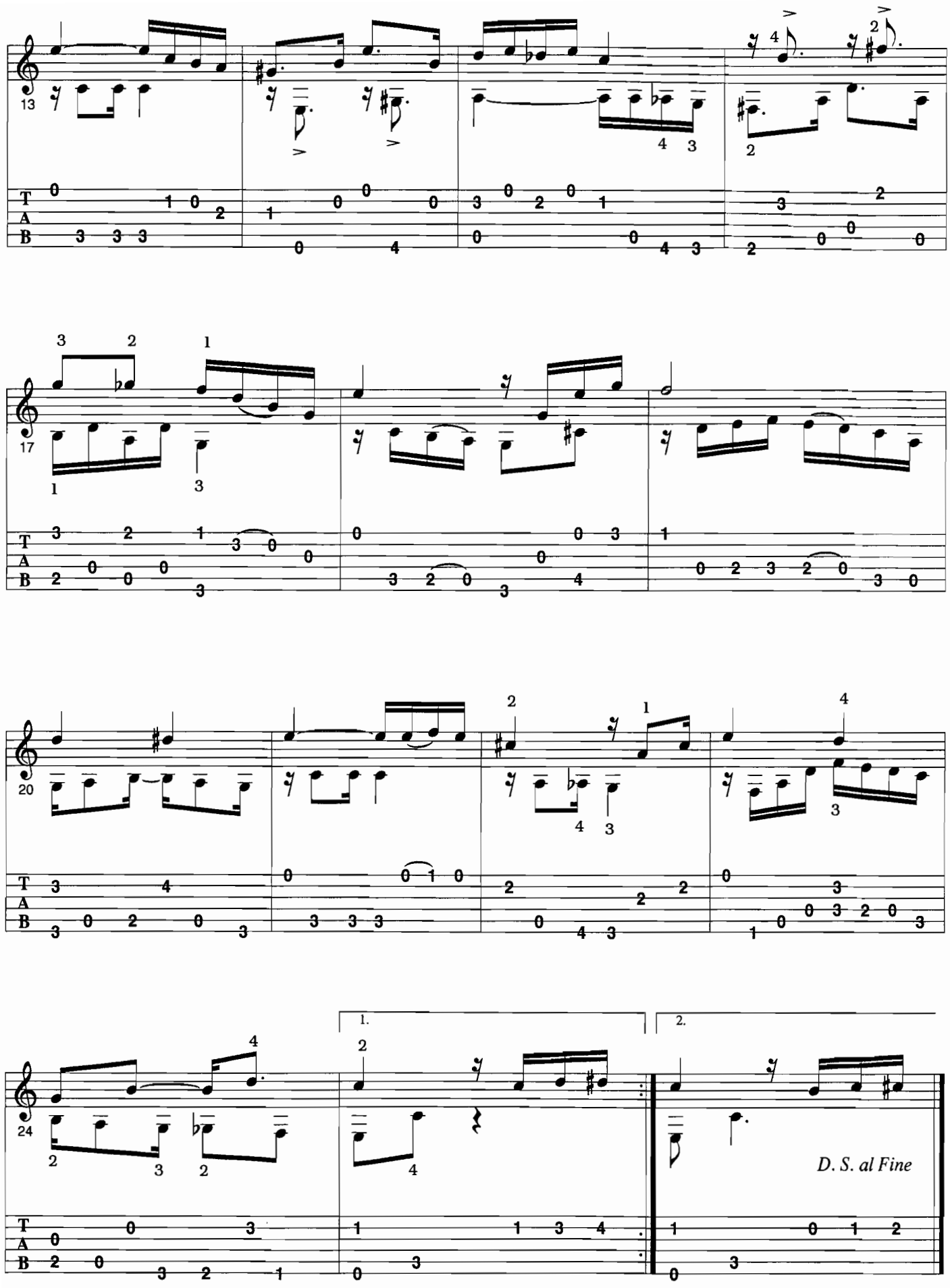
2.
D. S. al Fine

TRACK 3

Choro in G

Carlos Almada




13
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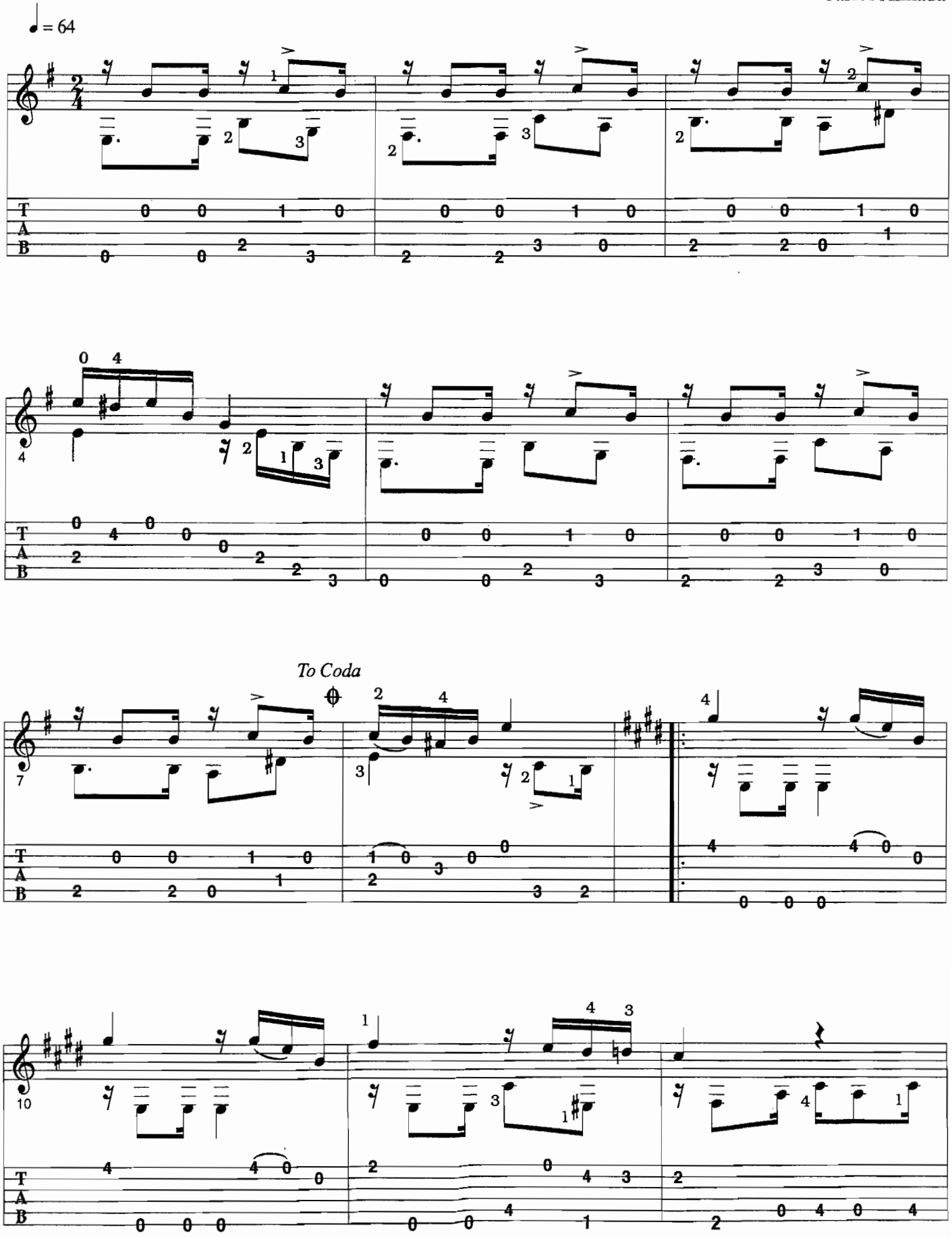
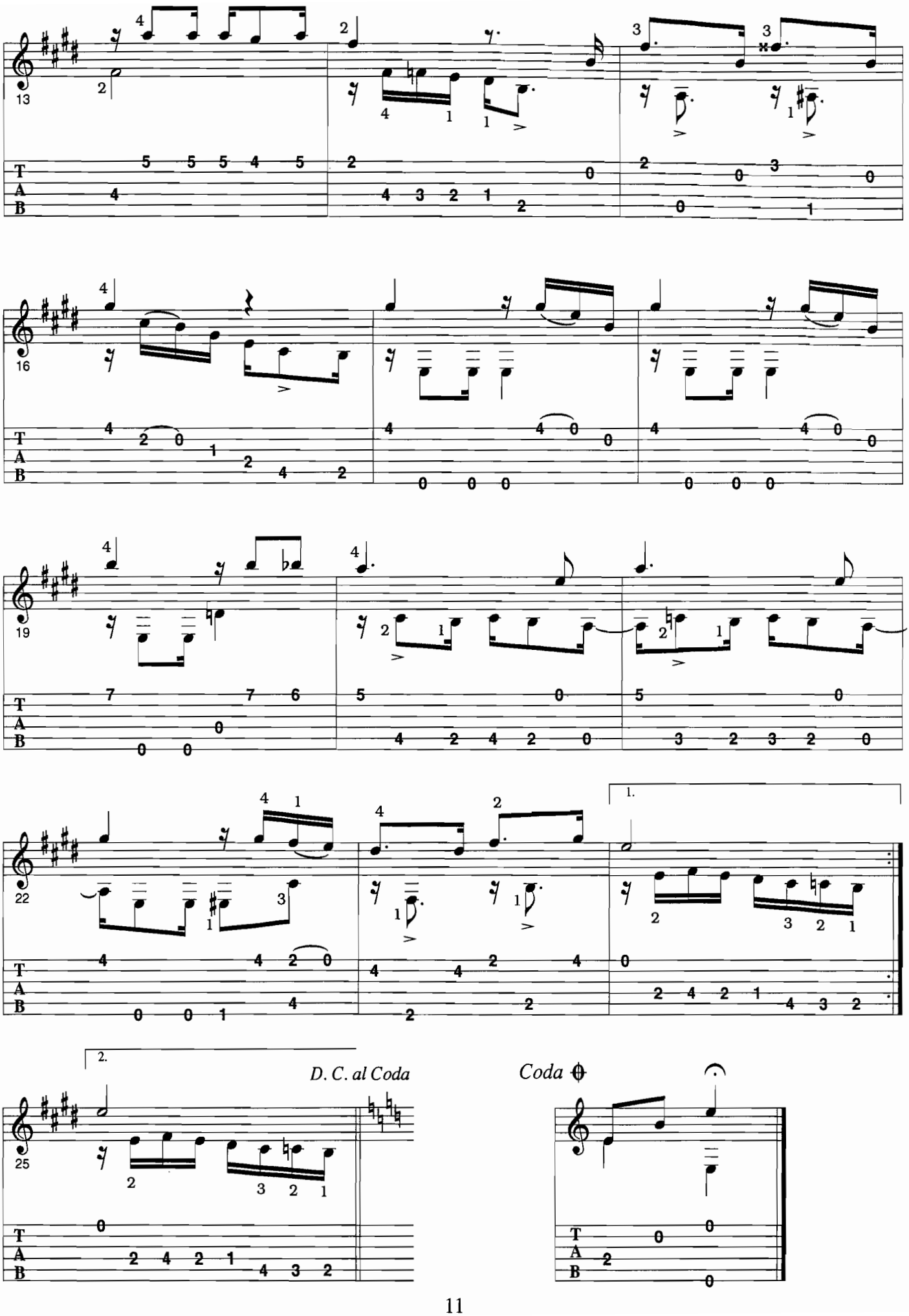
2.
D. S. al Fine

TRACK 4

Choro in E minor

Carlos Almada




13
16
19
22
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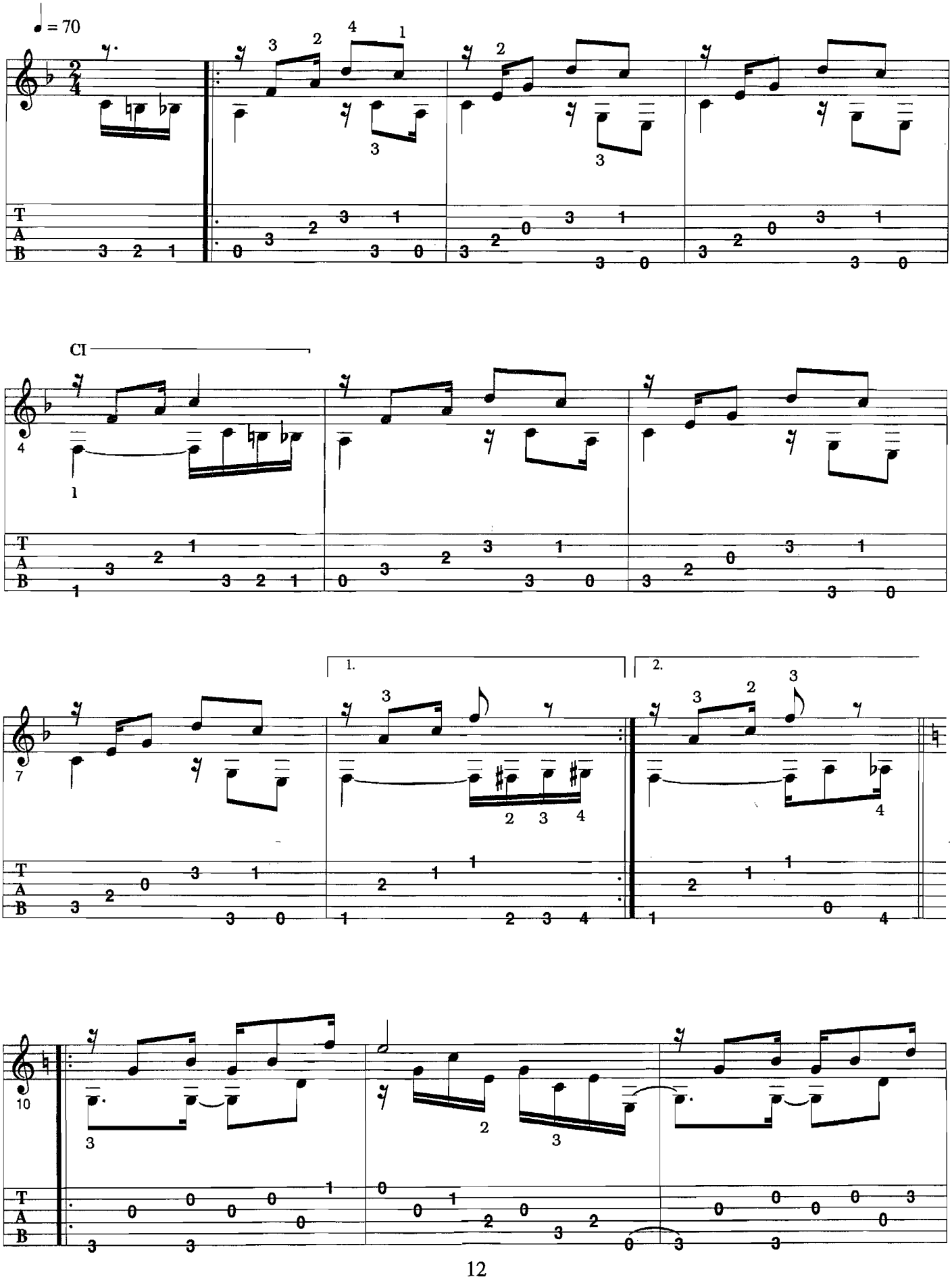
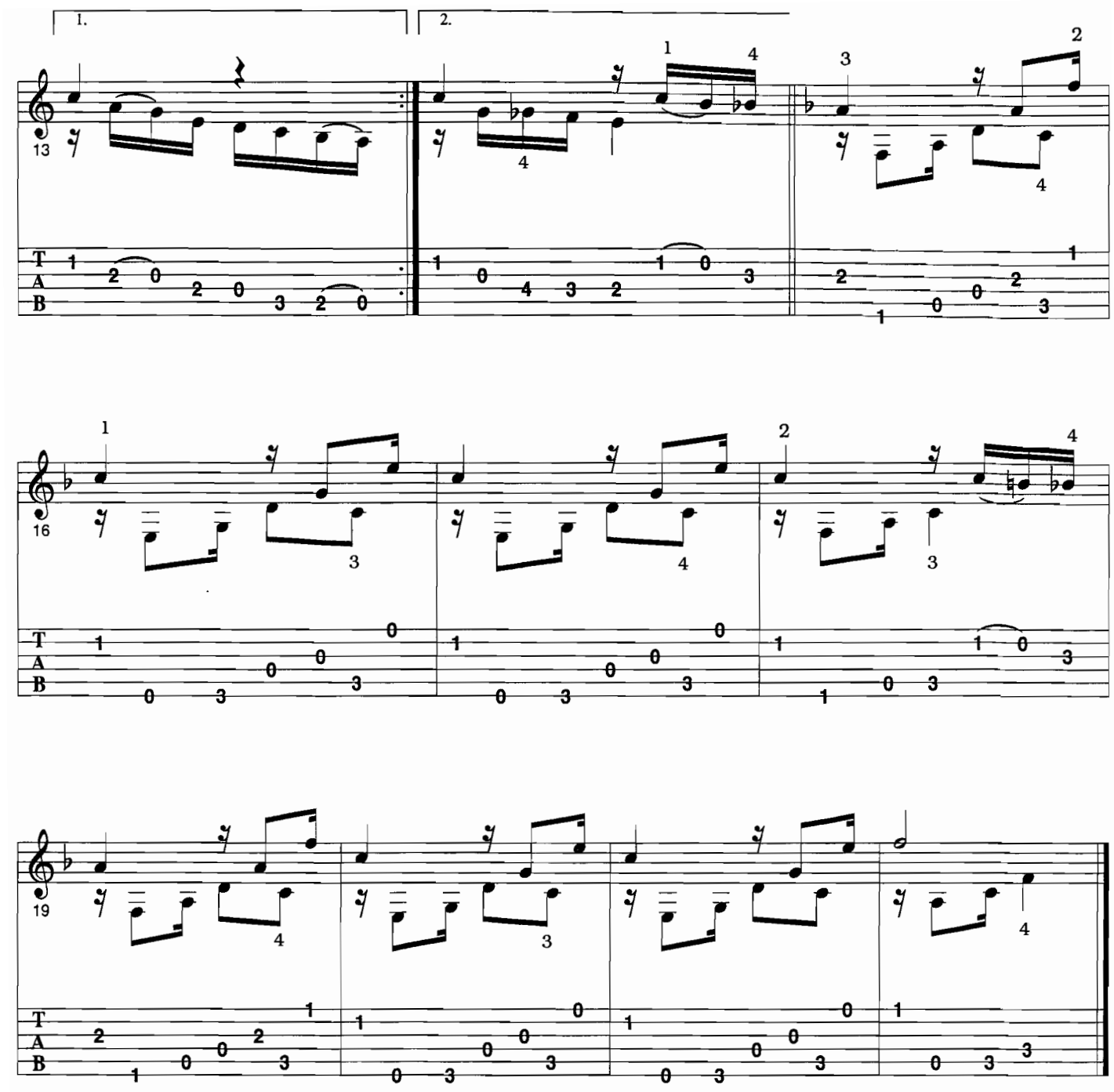
1.
2.
D. C. al Coda
Coda

TRACK 5

Choro in F

Carlos Almada




1.
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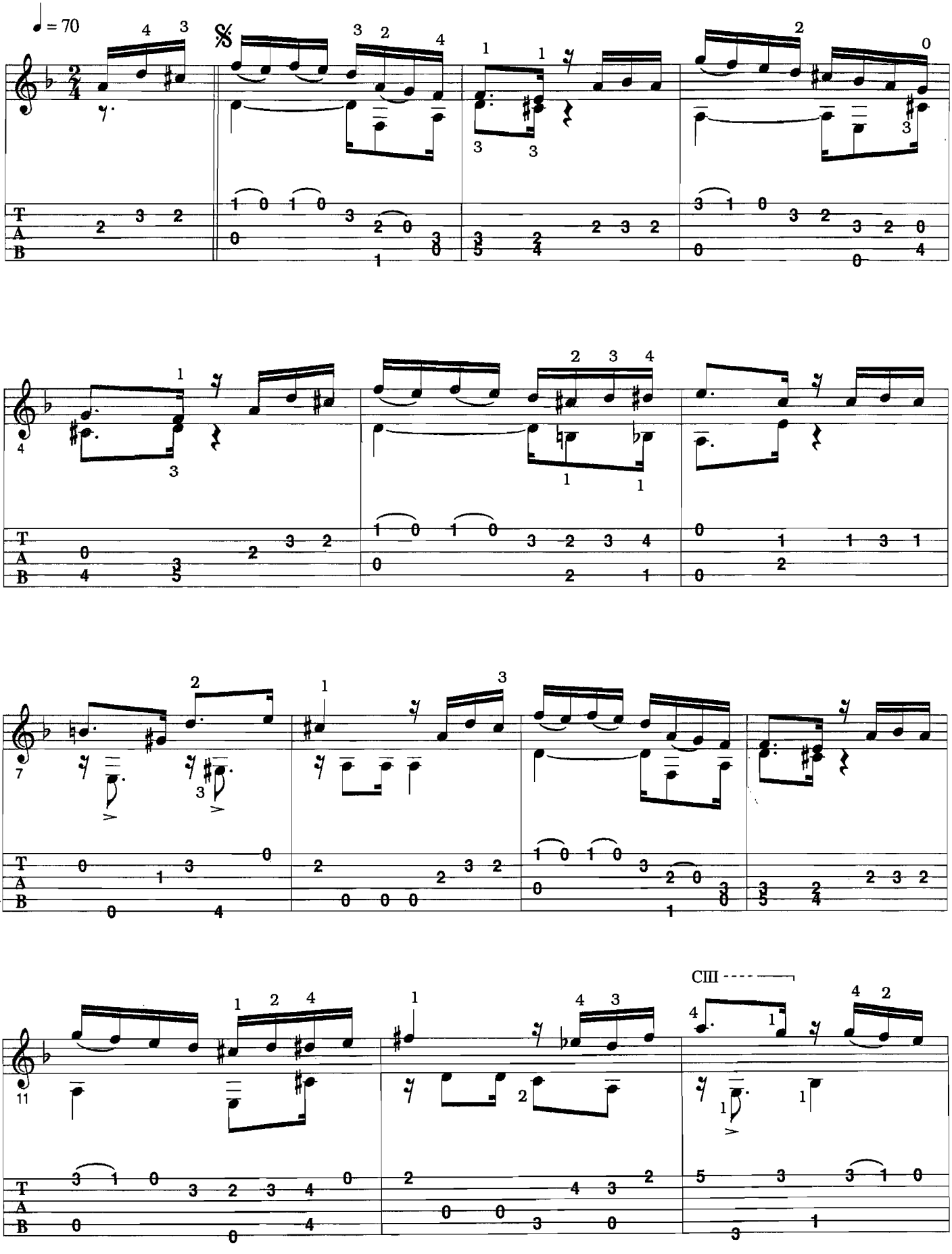
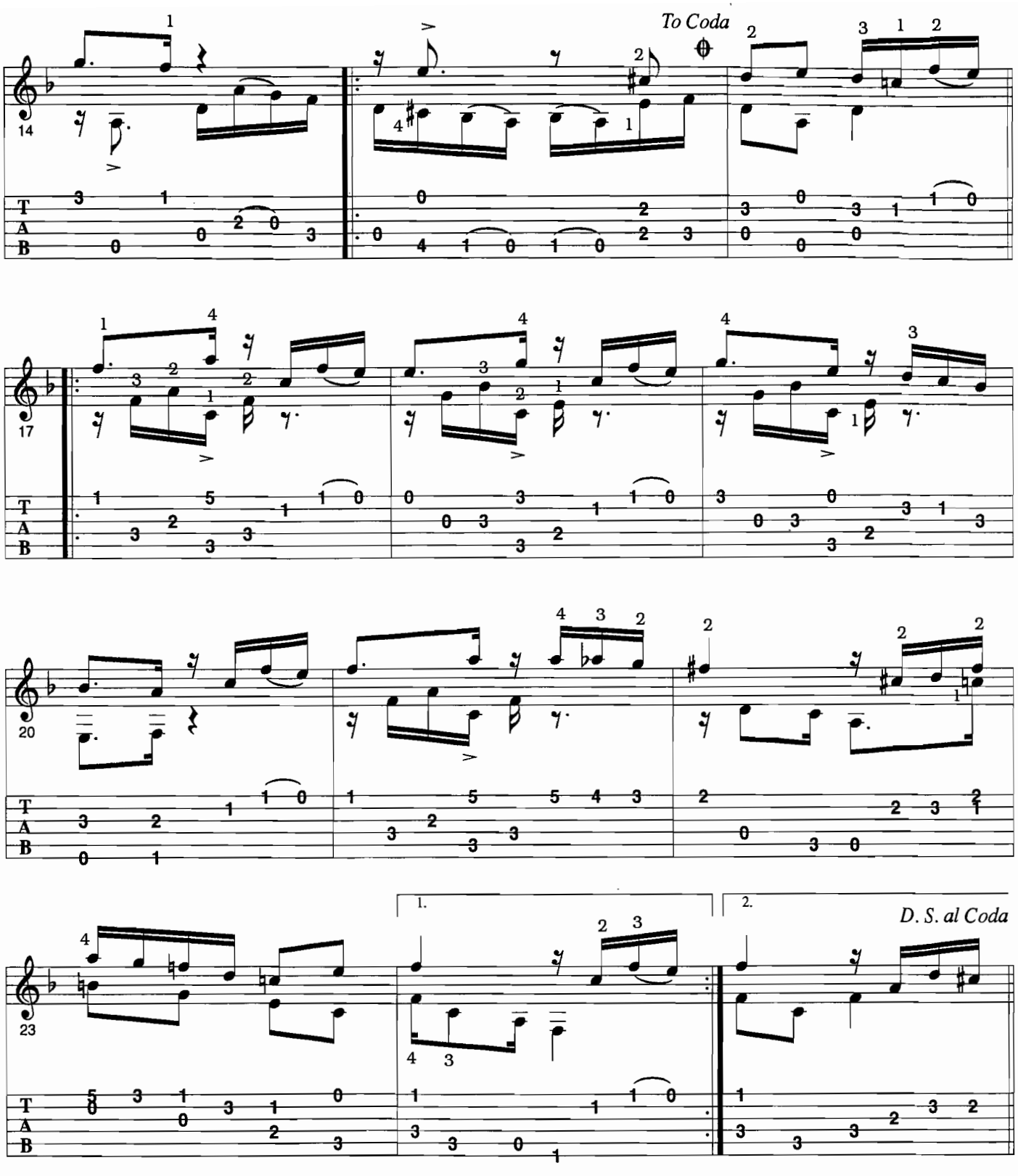
13
16
19
T
A
B

TRACK 6

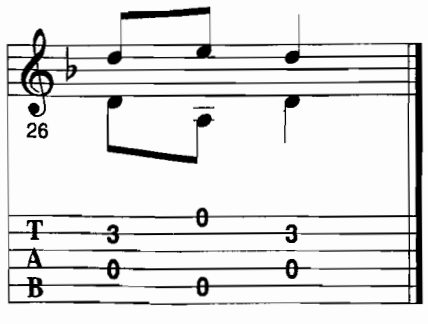
Choro in D minor

Carlos Almada





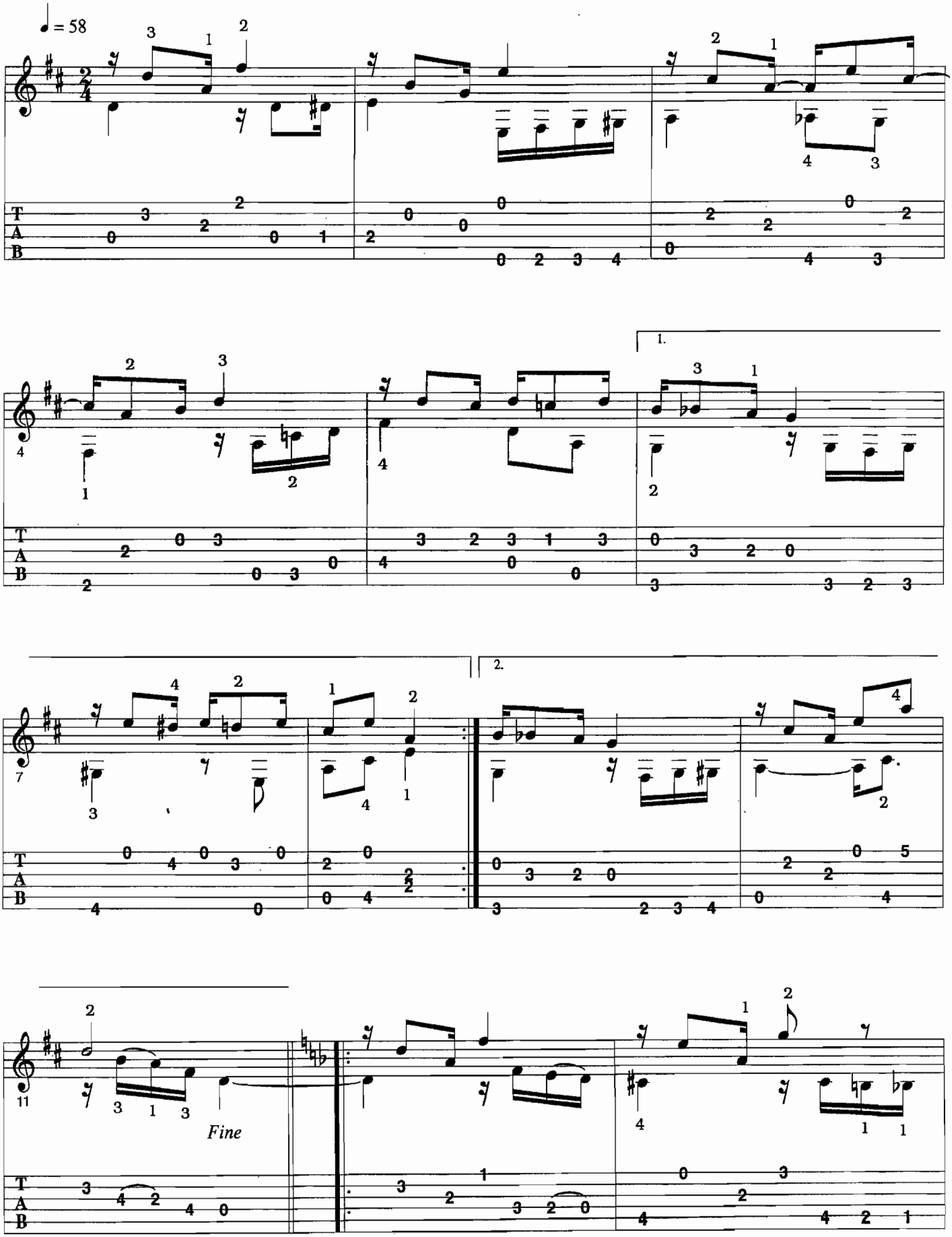
Coda

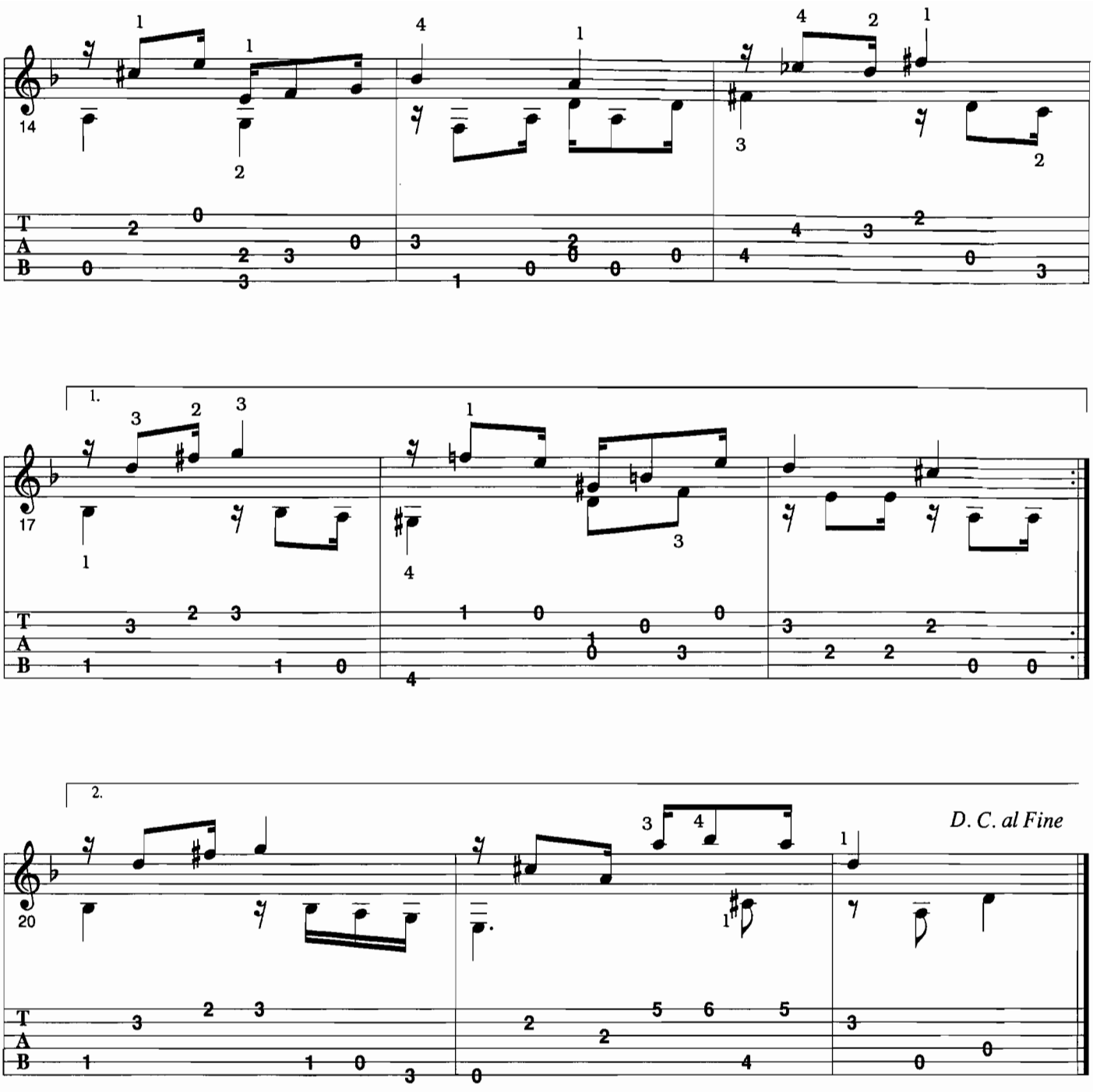


TRACK 7

Choro in D

Carlos Almada

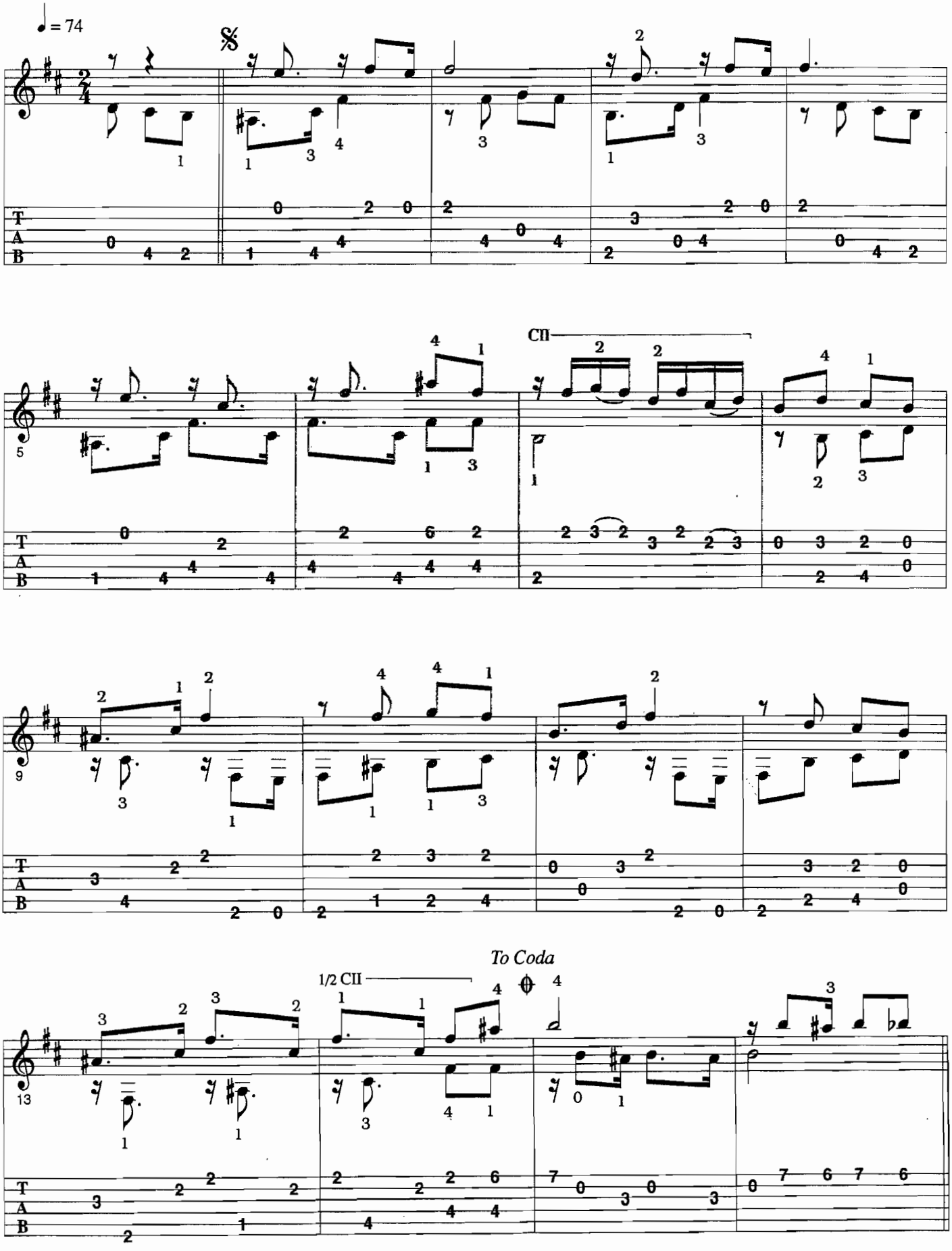


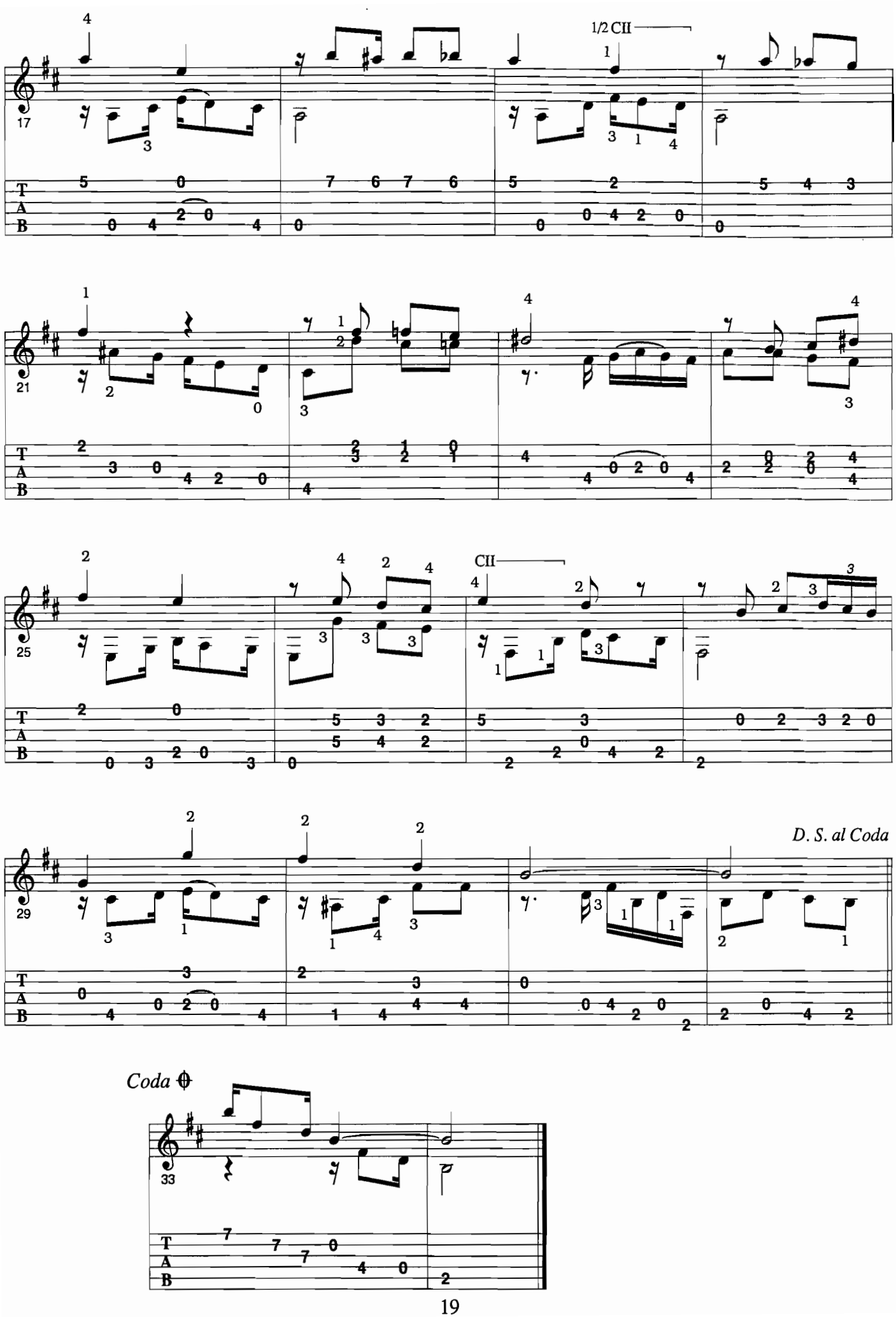

14
17
1.
20
2.
D. C. al Fine

TRACK 8

Choro in B minor

Carlos Almada

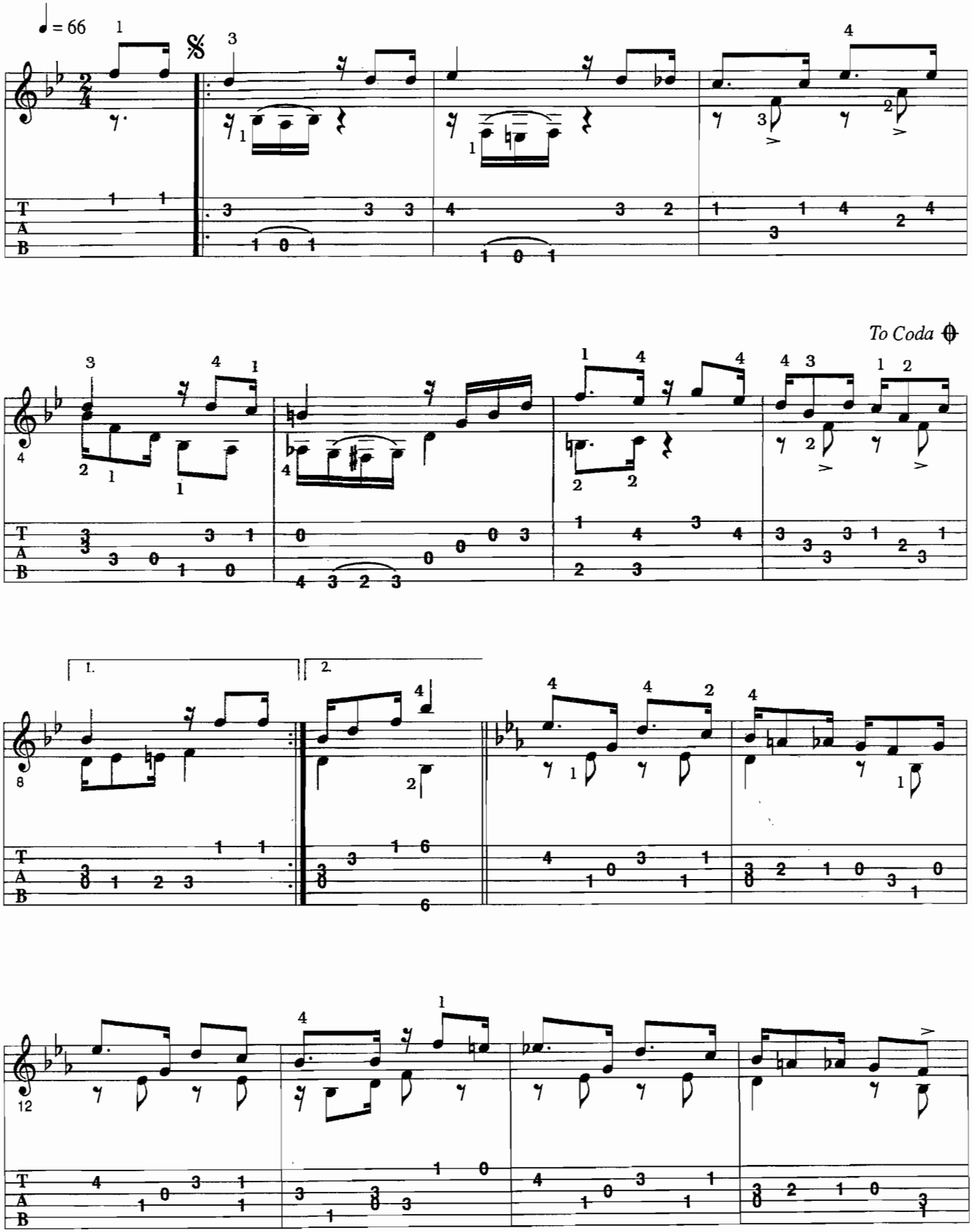


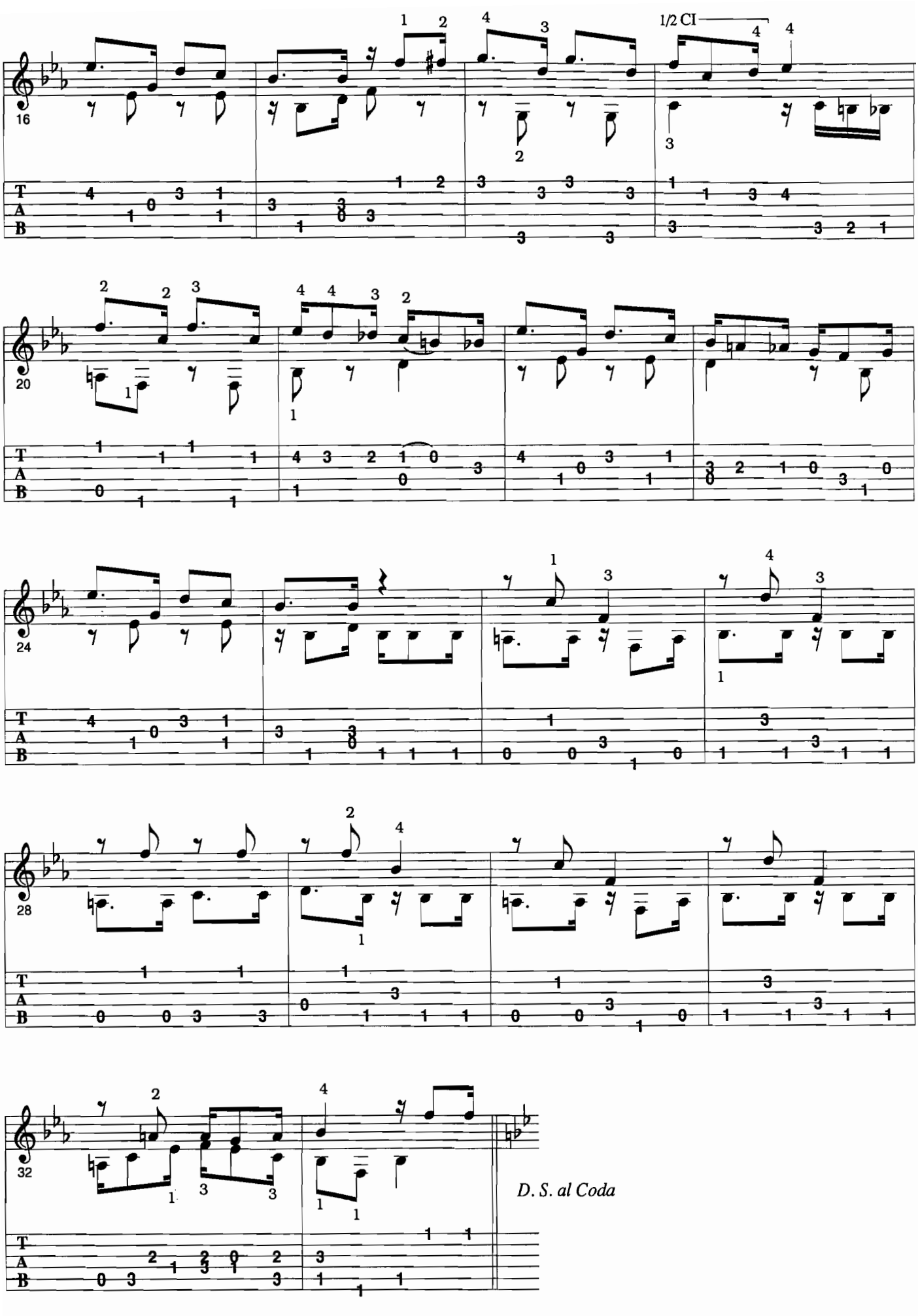

1/2 CII
CII
D. S. al Coda
Coda

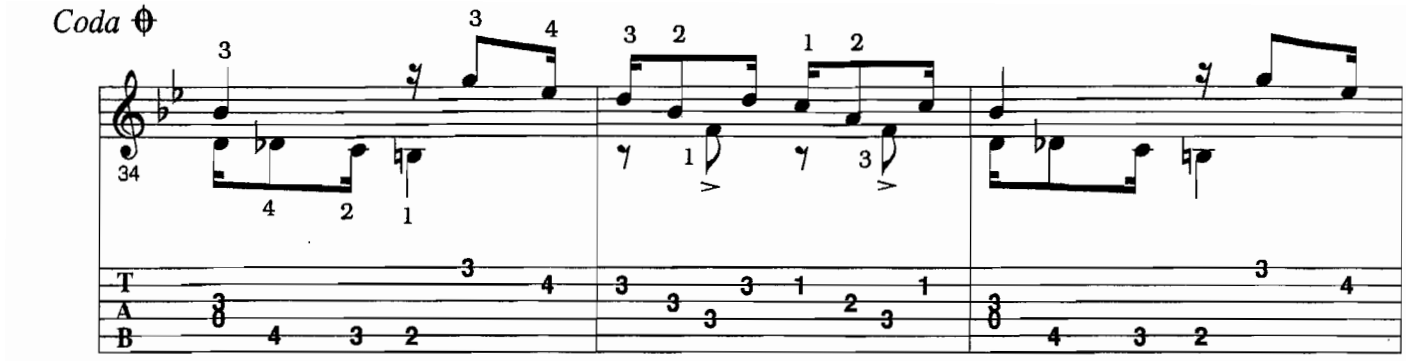
TRACK 9

Choro in B flat

Carlos Almada




1/2 CI
D. S. al Coda


Coda
34
T
A
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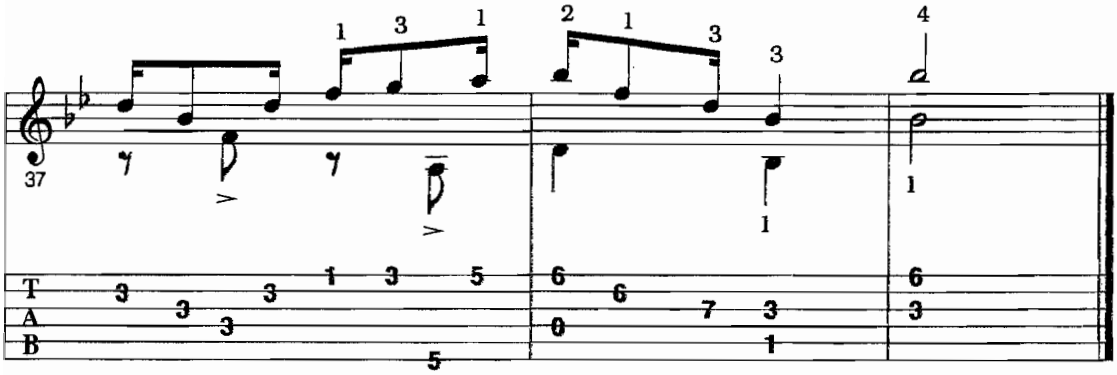
37
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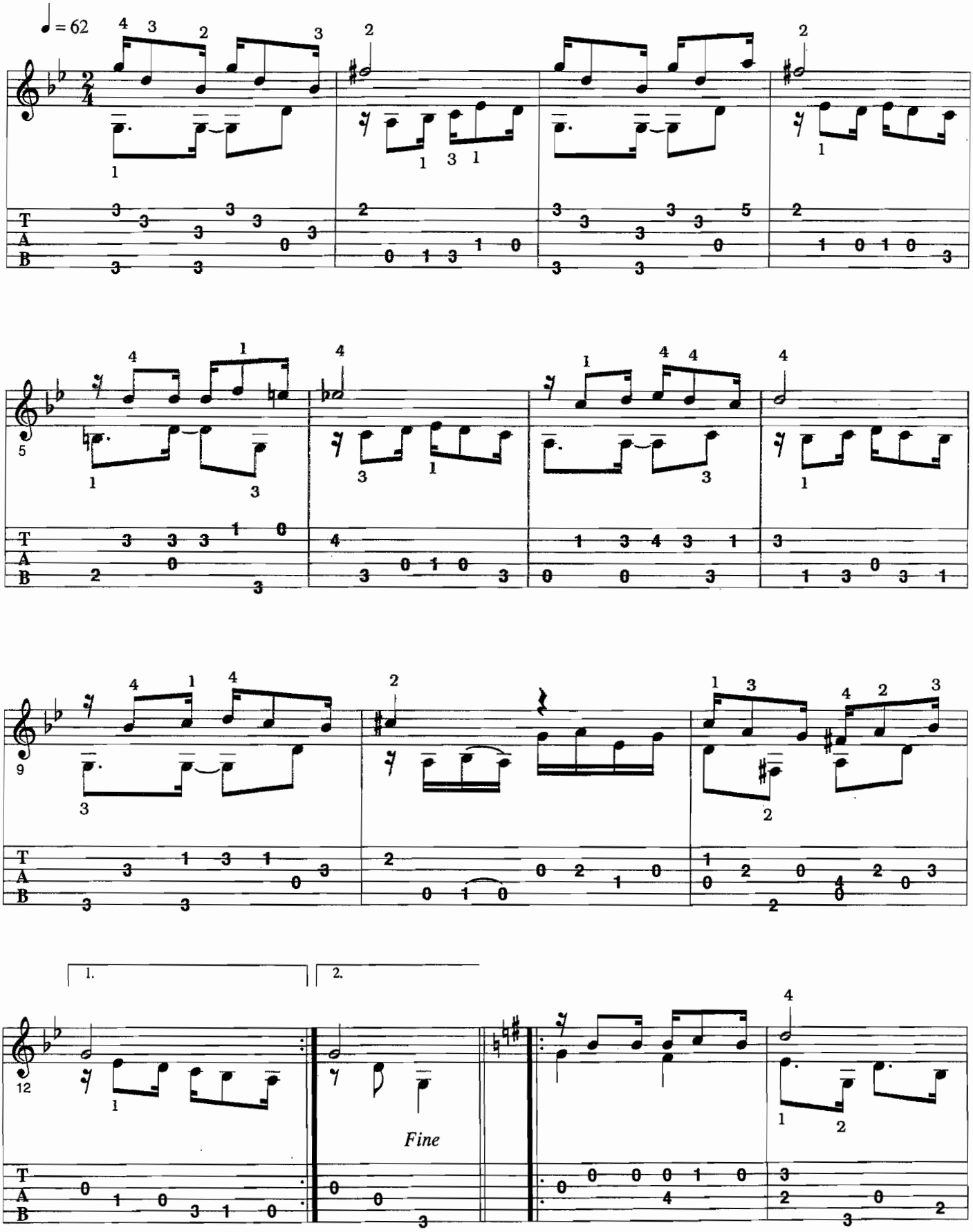
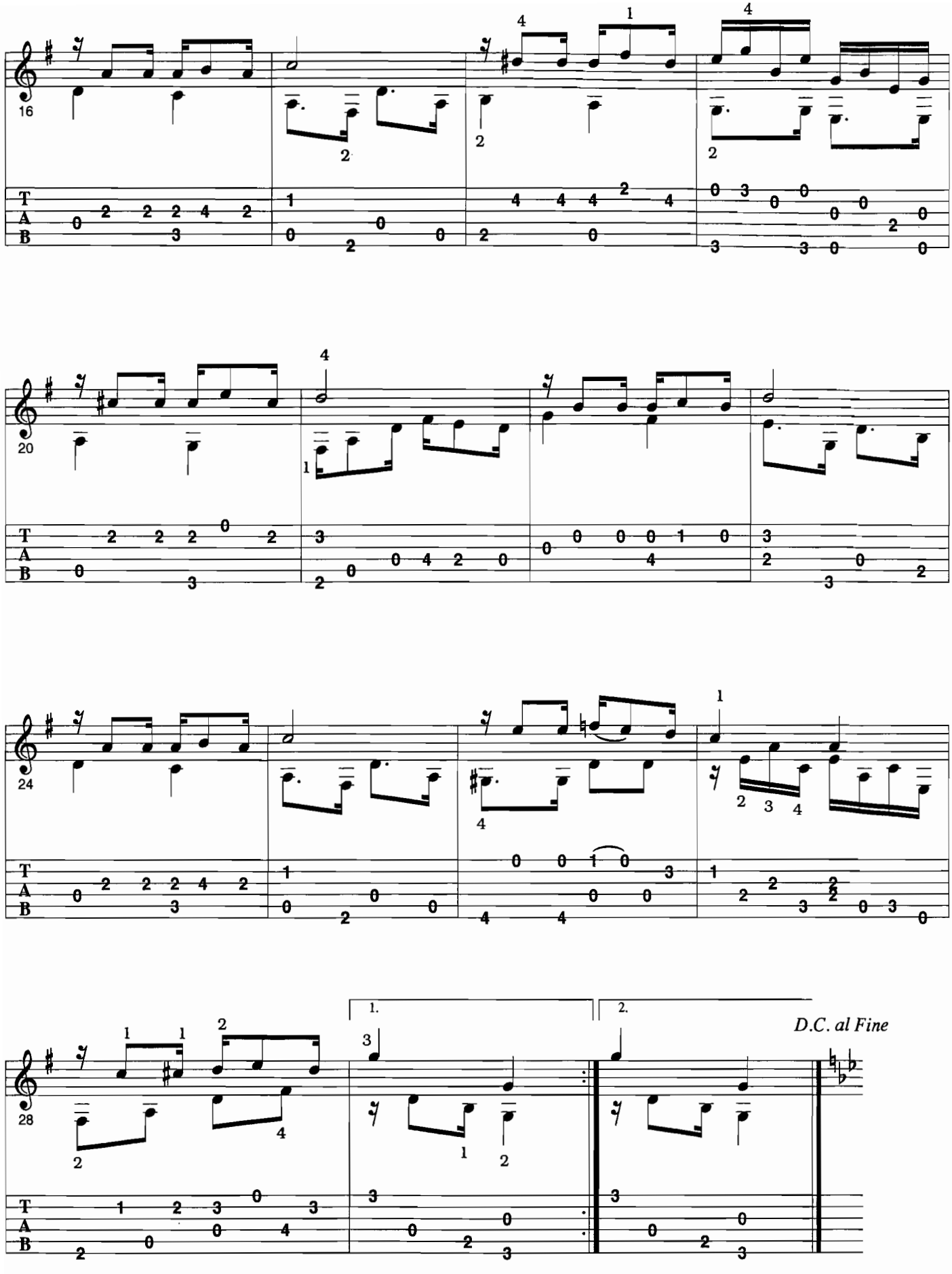
TRACK 10

Choro in G minor

Carlos Almada




16
20
24
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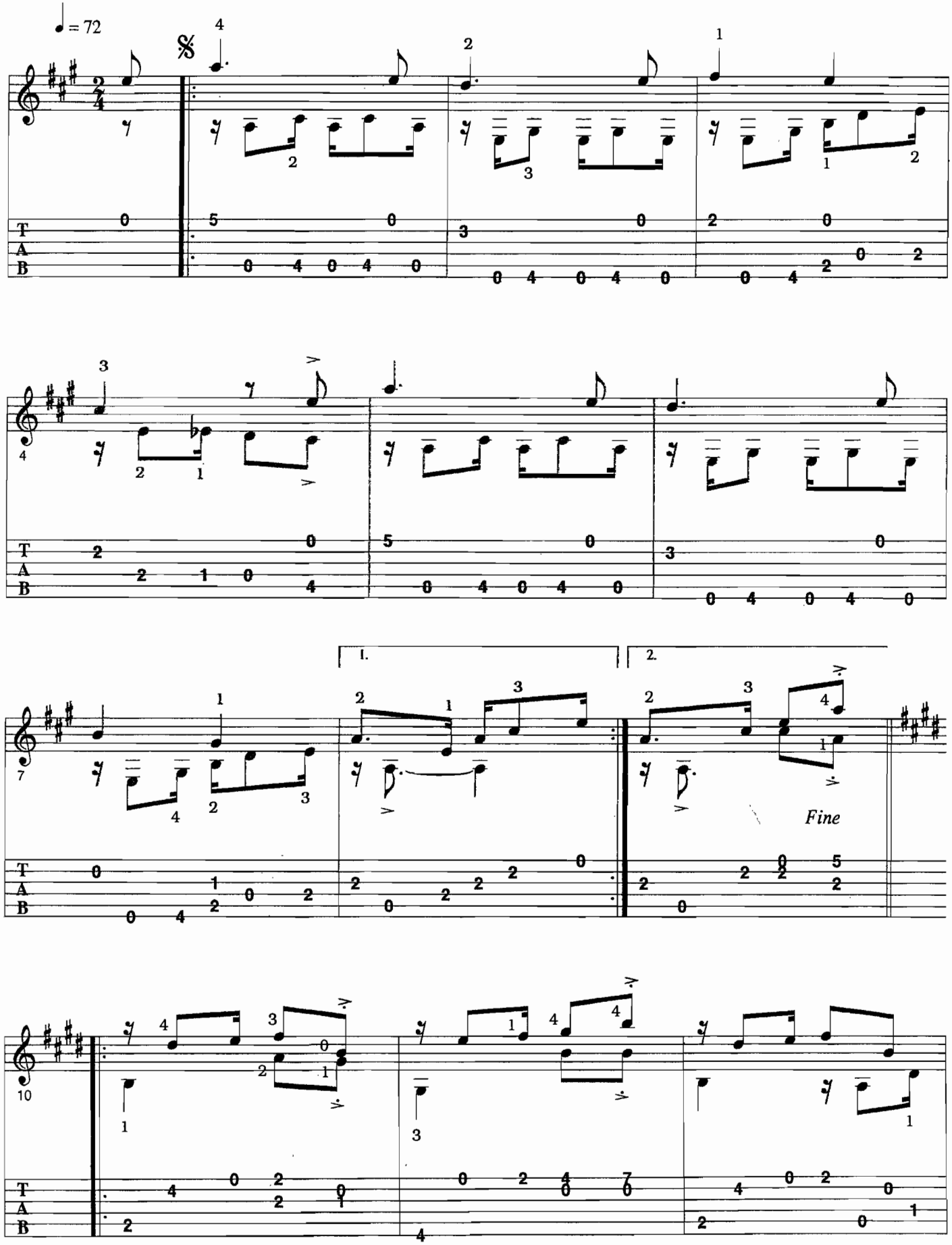
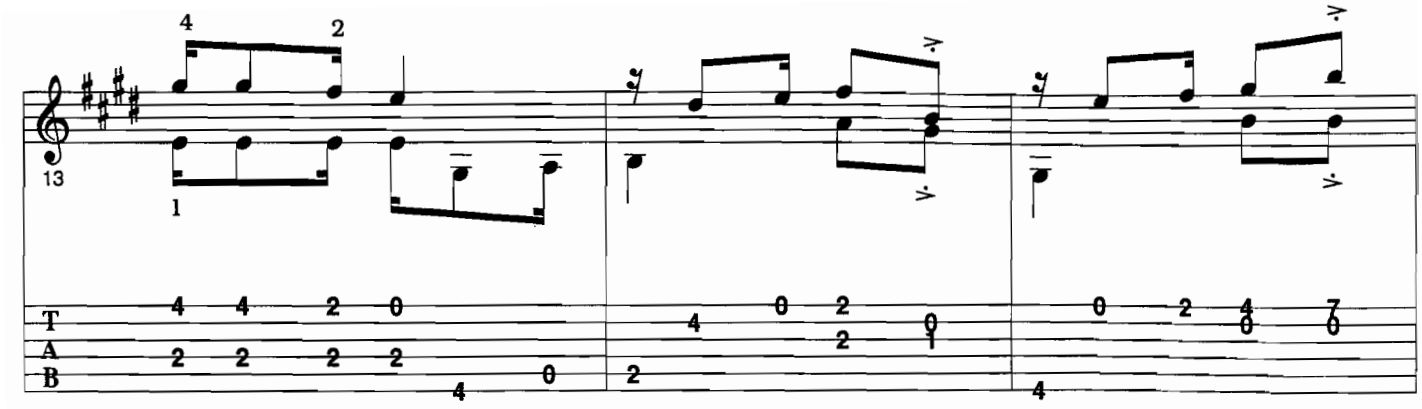
1.
2.
D.C. al Fine

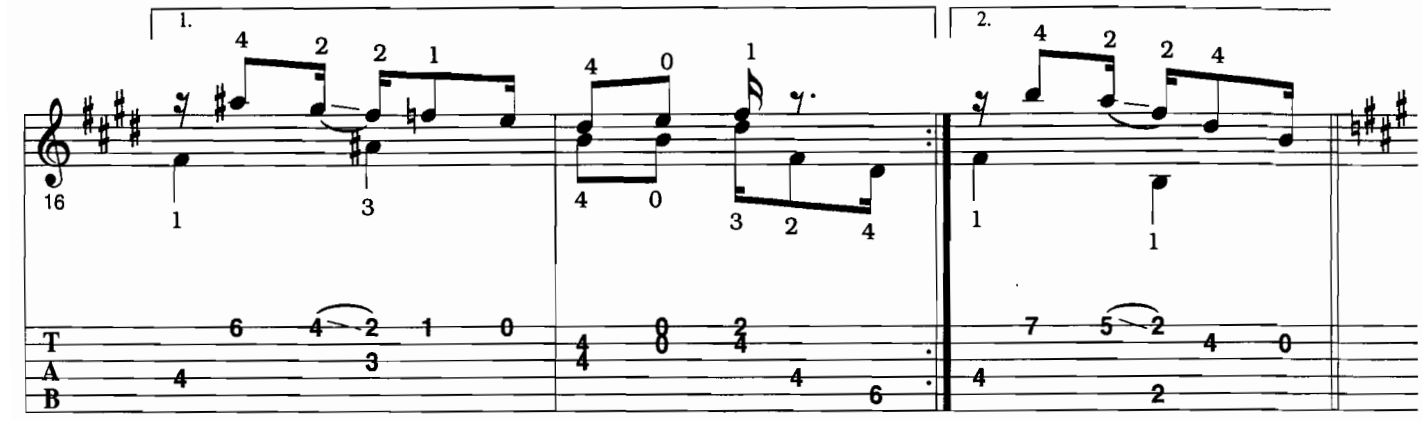
TRACK 11

Choro in A

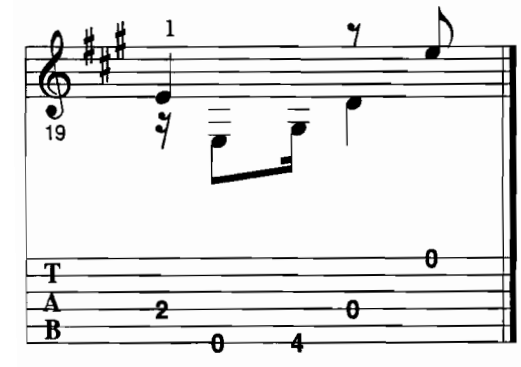
Carlos Almada







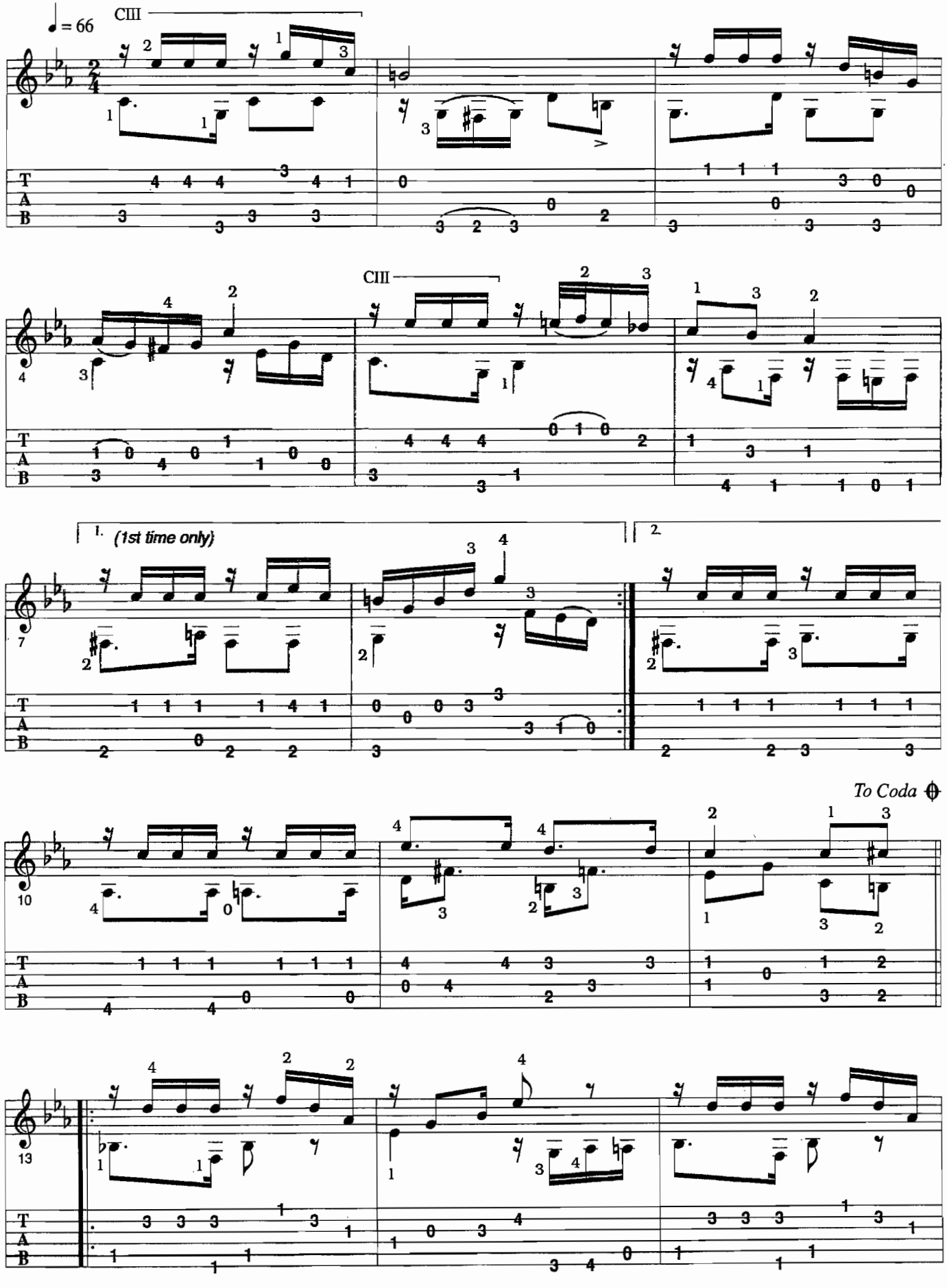
D. S. al Fine

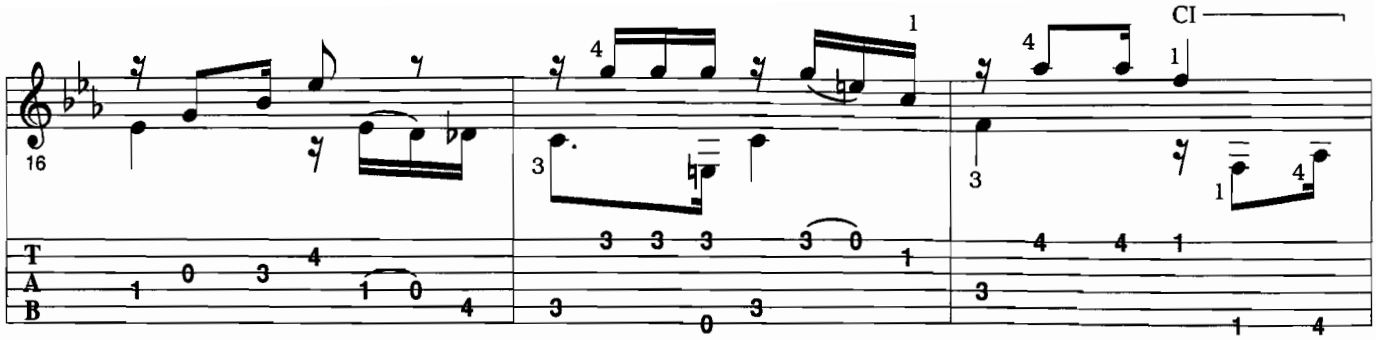


TRACK 12

Choro in C minor

Carlos Almada




CI
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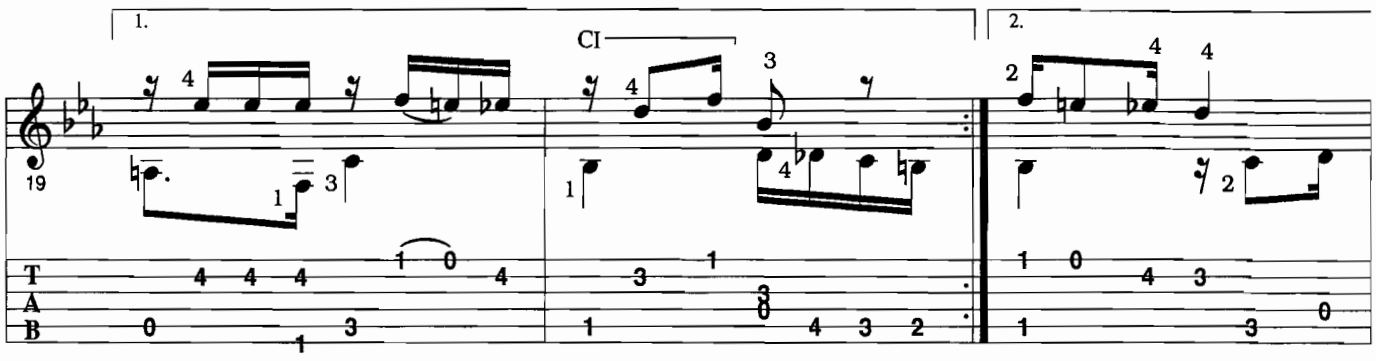
1.
CI
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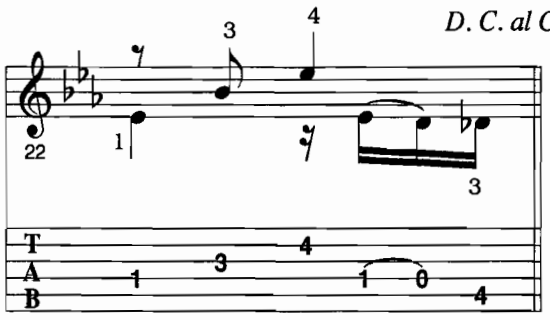
D. C. al Coda
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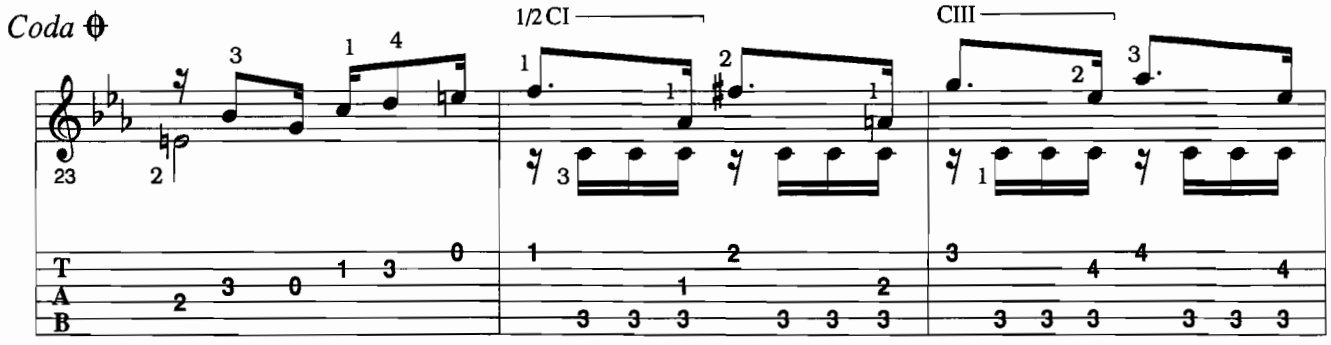
Coda
1/2 CI
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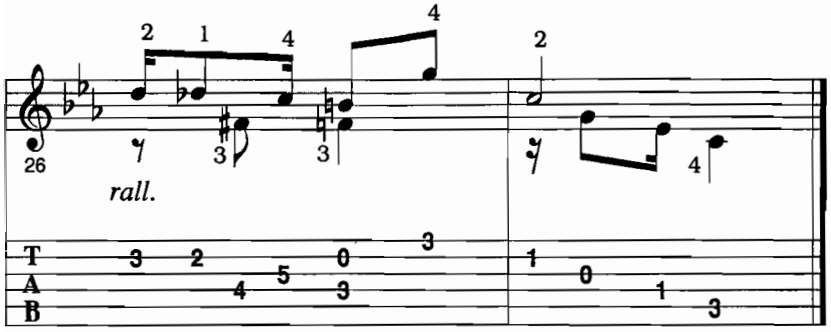
26
rall.
T
A
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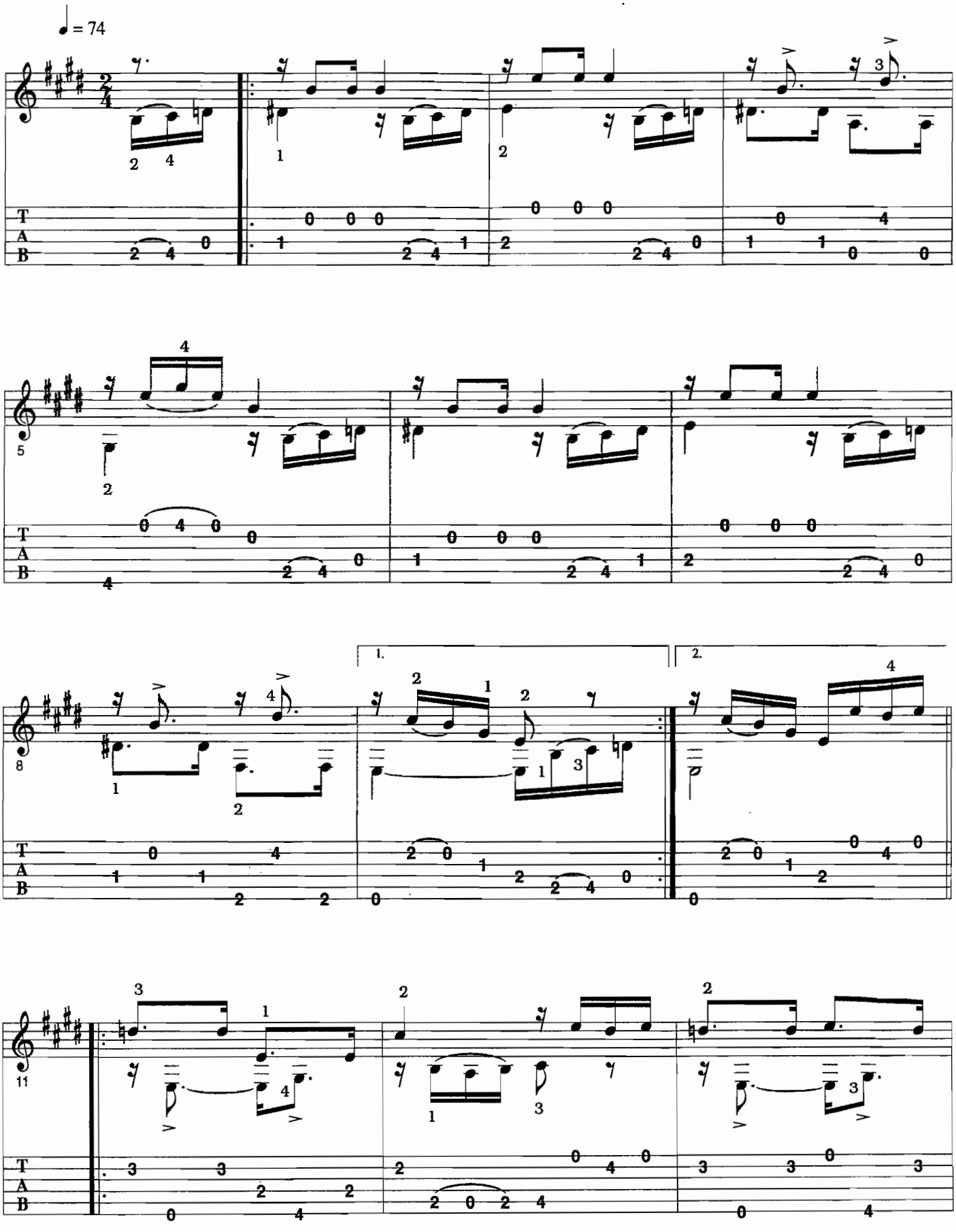
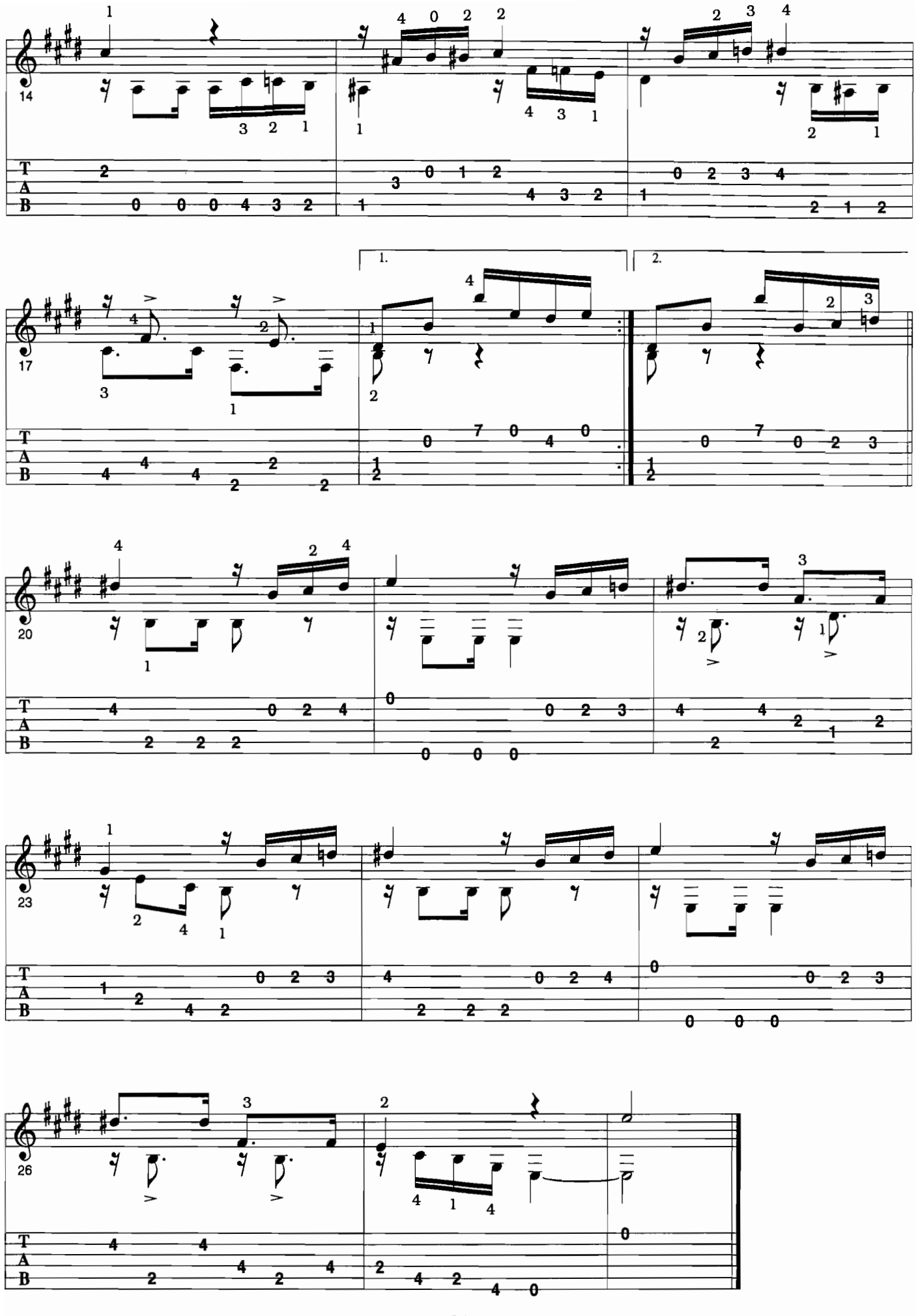
TRACK 13

Choro in E

Carlos Almada




14
17
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