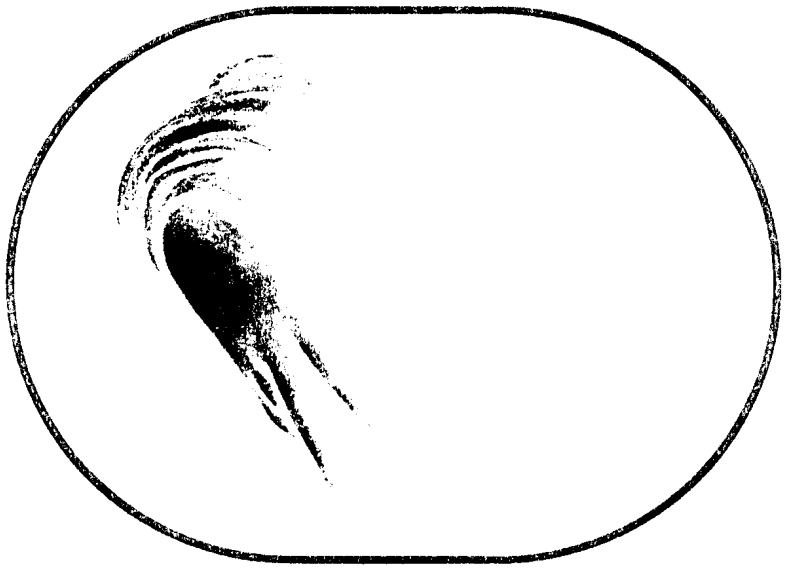
The Baroque Guitar

Solos, Duets and Songs by De Visée, Sanz, Corbetta, the Baroque guitar school and master composers for the lute; Bach, Weiss and their contemporaries.



An illustrated anthology of guitar music in three volumes, with introductions and notes, selected and transcribed by Frederick Noad

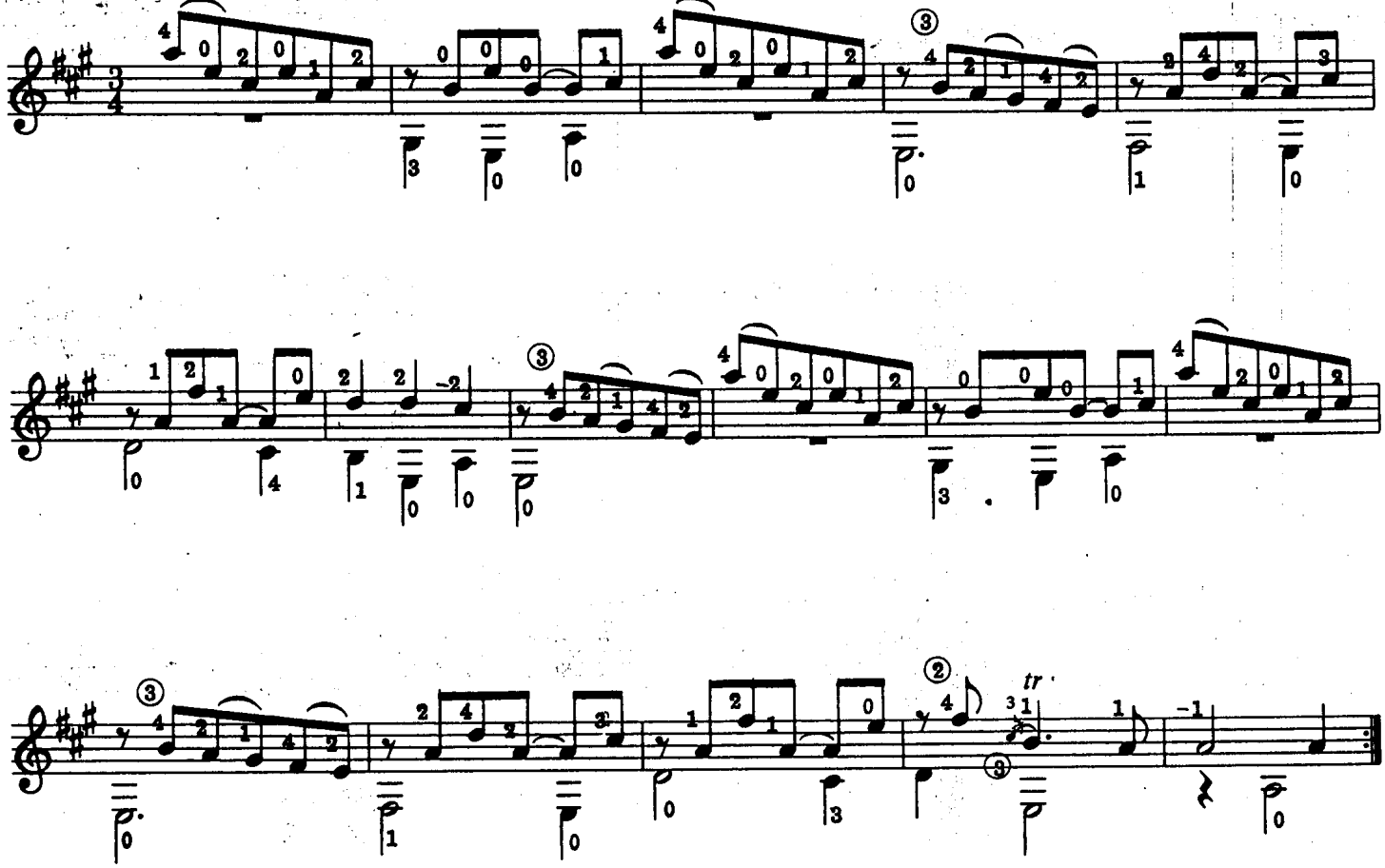
Vivace

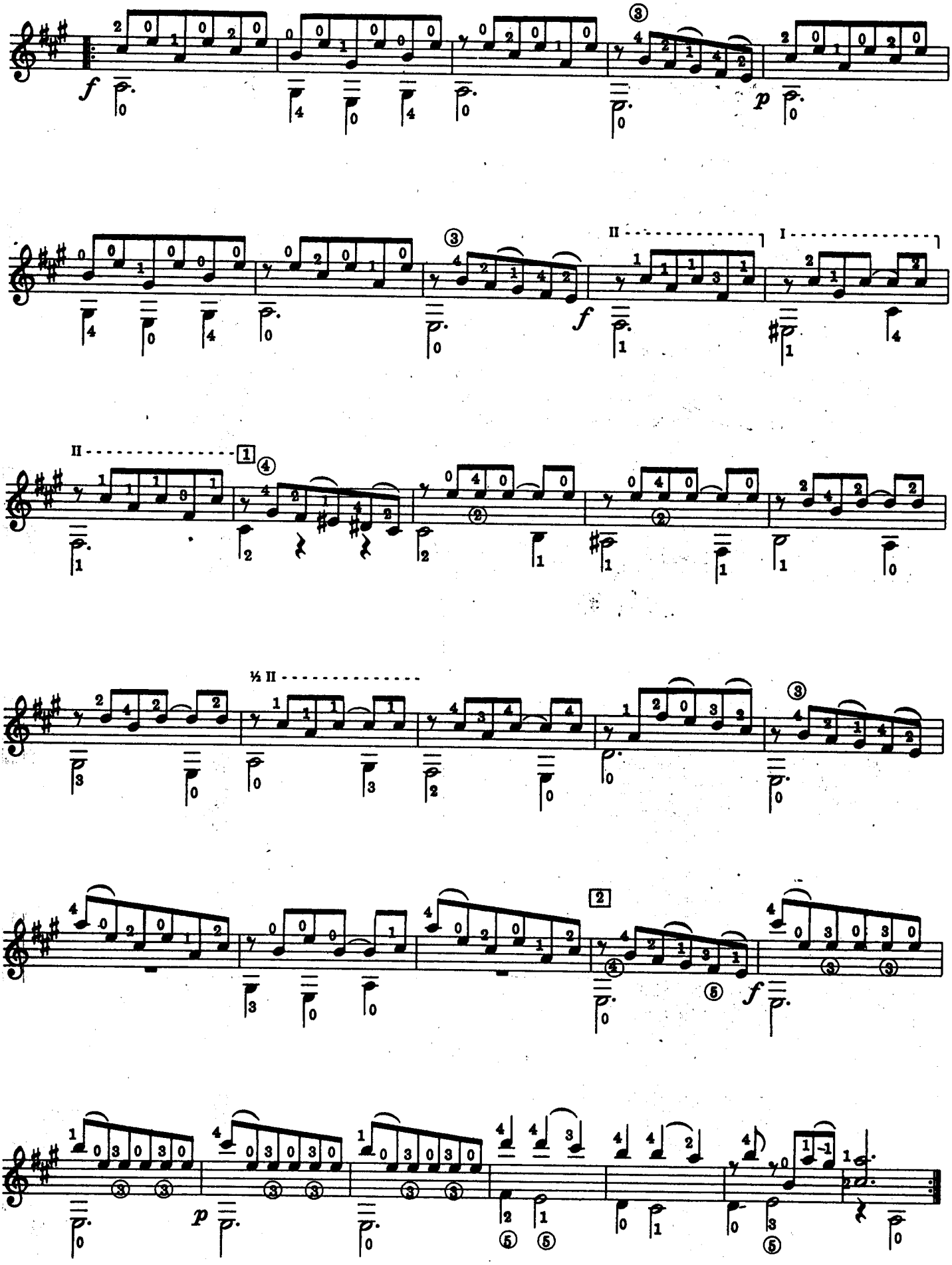
There is a pleasant freshness to this piece if it is played at a lively tempo (♩ = 126). It is in the French *broken style*, depending for interest on typical lute arpeggiation and scales in contrast to the melodic Italian style (for example, the Aria on page 39).
It is technically straightforward except for the two passages noted below.

[1] *The change to the third position is necessary for the execution of the scale. This, and the location of the fourth finger on the second string in the following measure, need care and practice.*

[2] *It is important to note the fingering of this scale on the fourth and fifth strings. The F♯ and E on the fifth string involve a further change of position, but this prepares the hand for an easy movement to the C♯ which follows. The forte and piano marks should be observed so as to give the echo effect so typical of the period. I have omitted a repeat in the original of the final four measures which does not seem to me necessary or effective.*

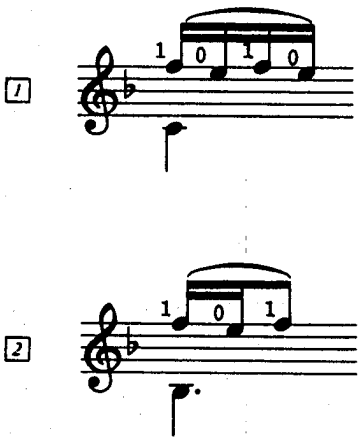
Adam Falckenhagen




f
p
f
II
I
II
1
½ II
2
p

Cancion O Tocata

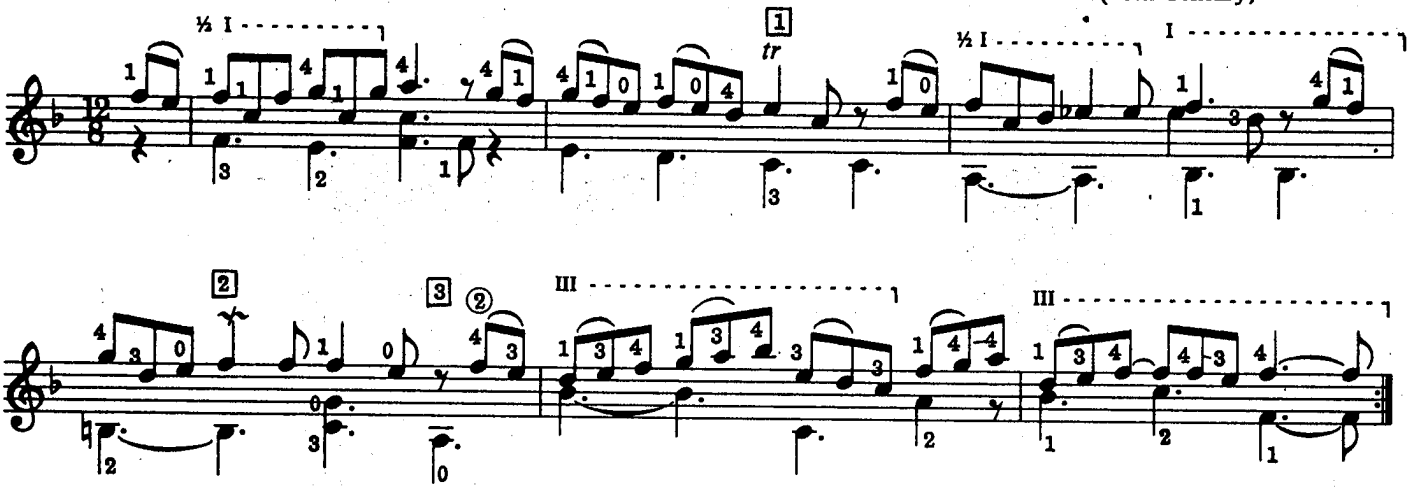
Santiago de Murcia was a court musician to Phillip V of Spain, and guitar instructor to his first wife, Maria Luisa of Savoy. This piece is taken from a manuscript collection of his pieces dated 1732, and is one of the last examples of guitar tablature before the final decline of interest in the five-course guitar.
I would suggest a lively tempo (♩ = 96) and a light hearted approach. The rather nebulous title translates as *Song or Instrumental Piece.*

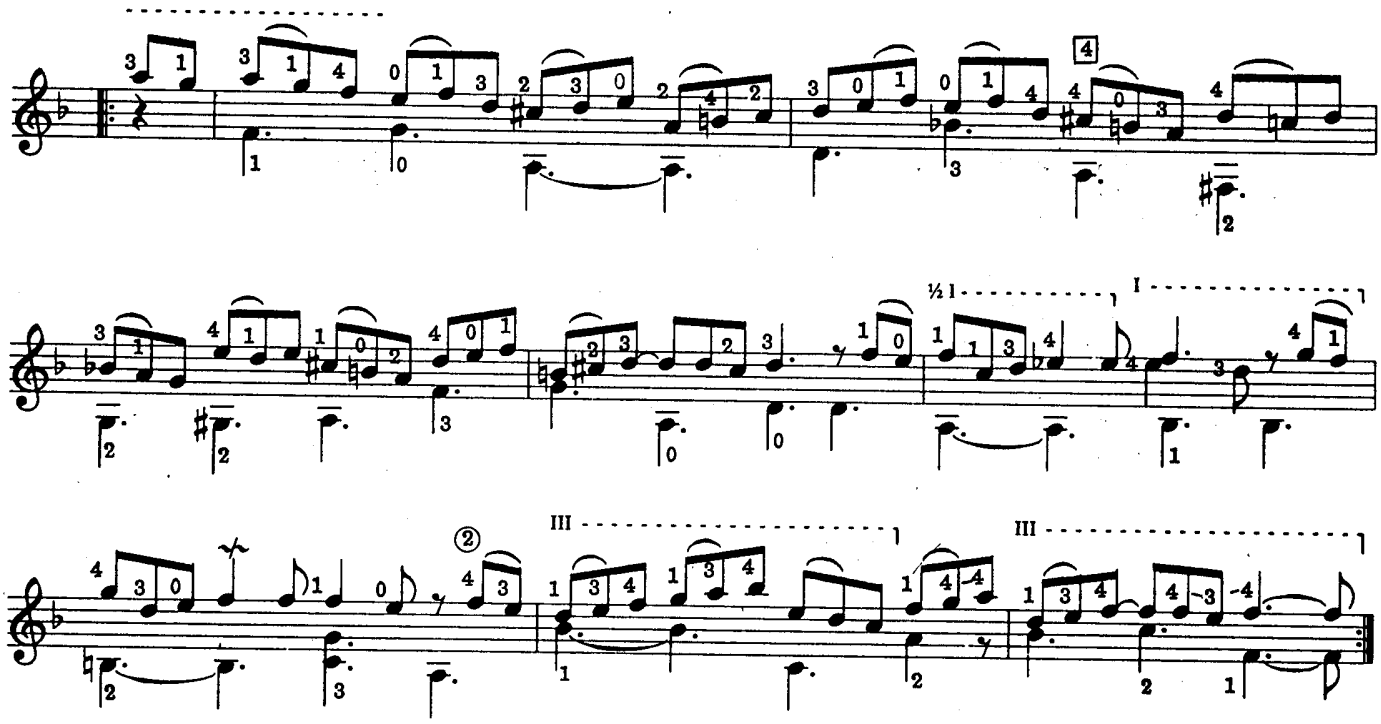


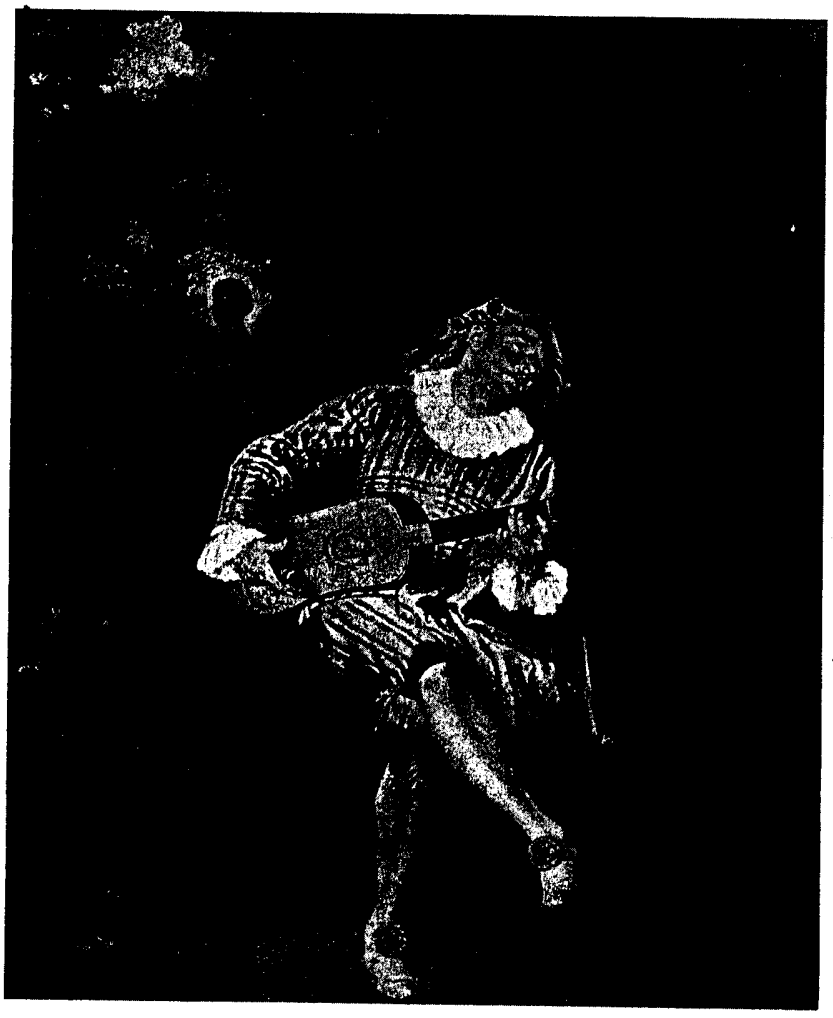
3 *It is important to damp the open A at the end of the measure to prevent an unpleasant over-ring. The right hand thumb is the most convenient to use for this.*

4 *This rather curious fingering facilitates the change to the next chord. The third finger should not leave the string in travelling from the B♭ to the A.*

Santiago de Murcia
(18th Century)



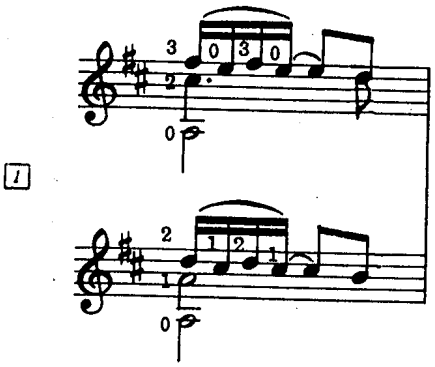




Jean Antoine Mezzetin Watteau
The guitarist's hand indicates that he is playing in the "rasguedo" or strumming style. *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Munsey Fund, 1934, New York, N. Y. 10028.*

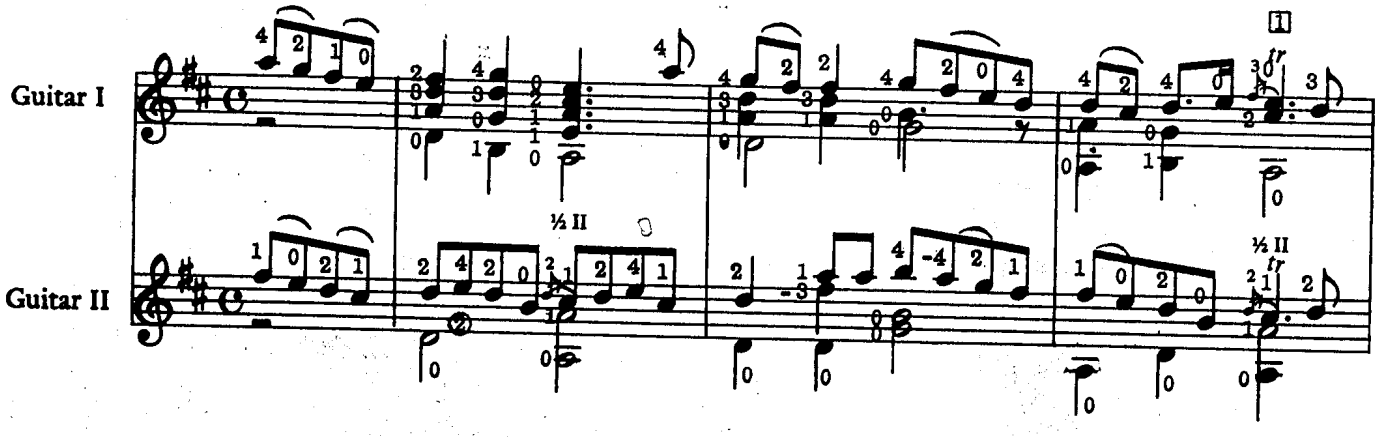
Gavotte Rondeau

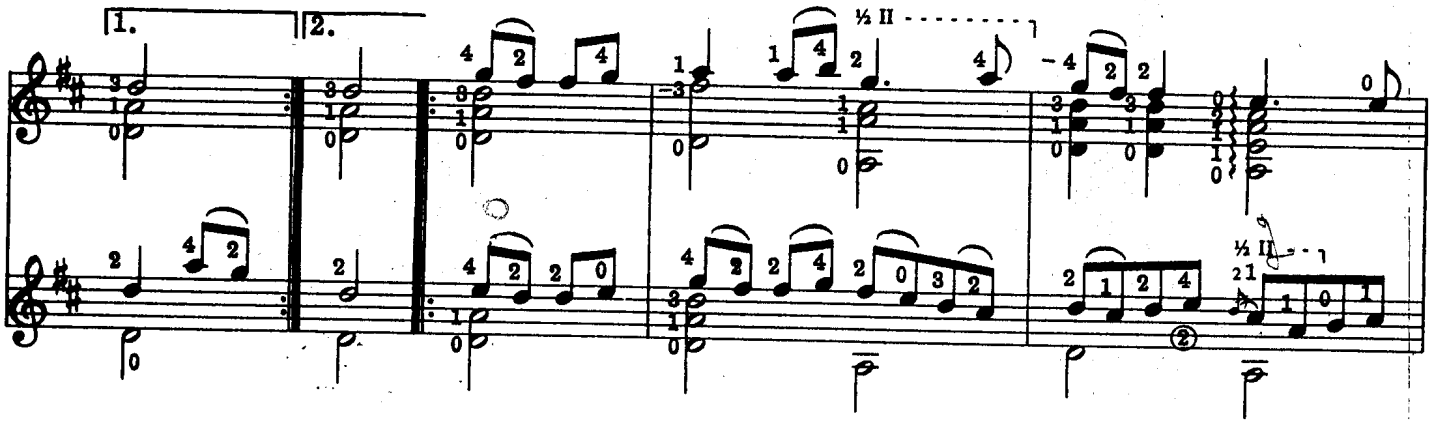
De Visée rarely wrote for two guitars, and this duet is in fact a solo with an optional second part *(contrepartie).* In spite of this the combination makes a pleasing and spirited encore-type piece. It is taken from a beautifully hand written collection of guitar music of the period now in Paris. (Bibliotheque Nationale Vm7 6222.)
The performance will be effective if both players are careful to do the same type of trill when these ornaments coincide, if necessary giving them special practice to achieve a balance. As the tempo should be somewhat brisk ♩ = 120, I would suggest simple trills, e.g.

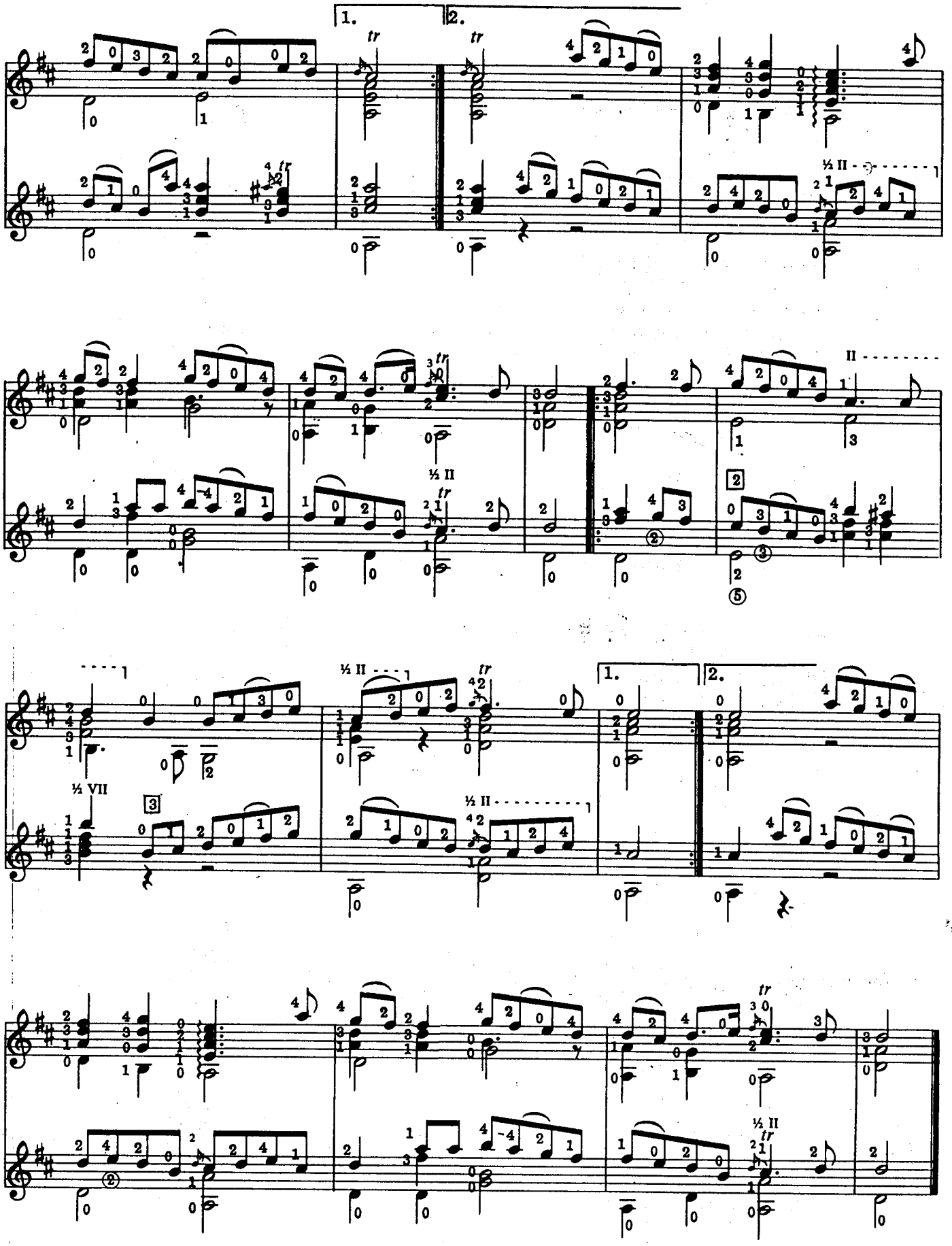


[2] *Second guitar: The fingering of this scale may seem strange, but if the first finger is held on the C♯ the change to the following chord is very simple.*
[3] *Second guitar: These four notes (B to E) were all a step lower in the original. Experiment will show why I have suggested this change.*

Robert de Visée






1.
2.
tr
½ II
½ VII

Minuet In E

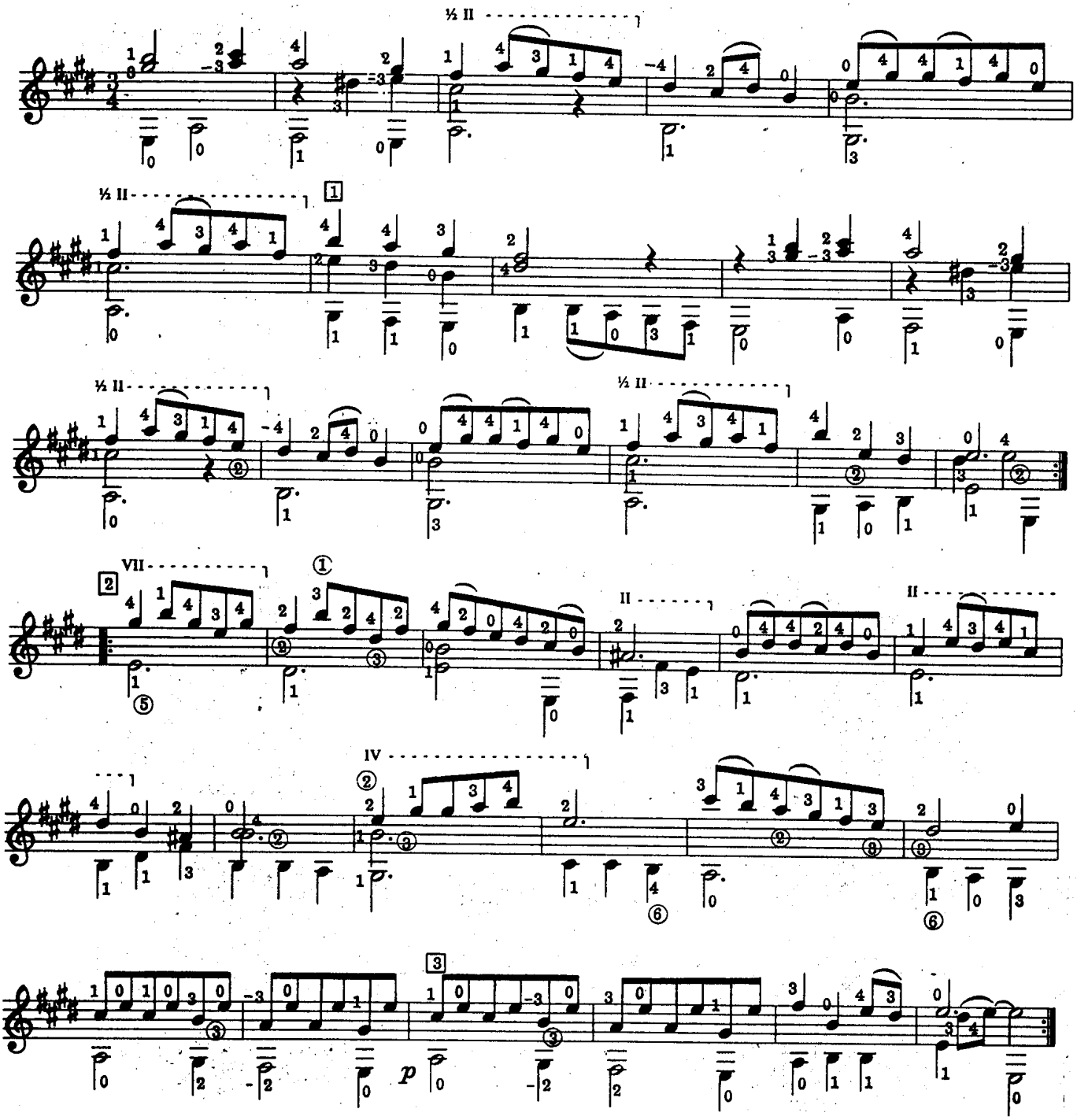
This minuet from the lute book mentioned in the note on p. 18, was chosen for its pleasing balance of the melodic and broken styles of composition. The lyrical opening suggests a moderate tempo, about ♩ = 96.

[1] *This sequence of chords should be practiced separately to achieve clarity in each of the three voices.*

[2] *This measure and the two which follow are slightly more difficult on the guitar than on the lute. The changes of position should be practiced until they are smooth and unhurried.*

[3] *Note the typical* repeat in echo *of these two measures.*

Anonymous
(18th Century)



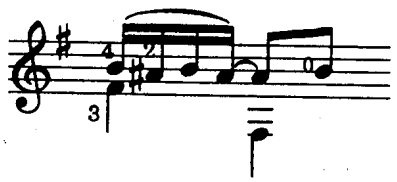
Bourrée

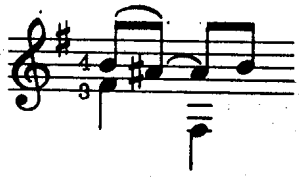
Among the instruments in Bach's collection listed after his death were two lutes and a mechanical instrument known as a *Lautenwerk.* The latter was a form of harpsichord designed by Bach and made for him by the organ builder Zacharias Hildebrand which imitated very exactly the sound of the lute. It is reasonable to suppose that Bach had a working knowledge of the lute, but in view of the difficulty of playing the instrument well on a part-time basis he may have preferred the ease of the keyboard imitation. It is certain that he enjoyed the lute, and when Wilhelm Friedman Bach brought the lutenists S. L. Weiss and J. Kropfgans to see him in July of 1739 it was reported that "something special in the way of music" occurred.

The bourrée below, a most popular piece for guitarists, is from the Suite in E Minor (BWV 996). It occurs in a collection made by Bach's pupil Johann Ludwig Krebs in two staff notation, and a later hand added the words "auf's Lautenwerk."

Suggested tempo is a lively ♩ = 120, and care should be taken to sustain this tempo through the last four or five measures which are slightly more complex than the rest of the piece.

Although by Bach's time the bourrée had become a stylized movement of the baroque suite, it seems to retain the flavour of its origin as a robust French provincial peasant dance.

[1] 

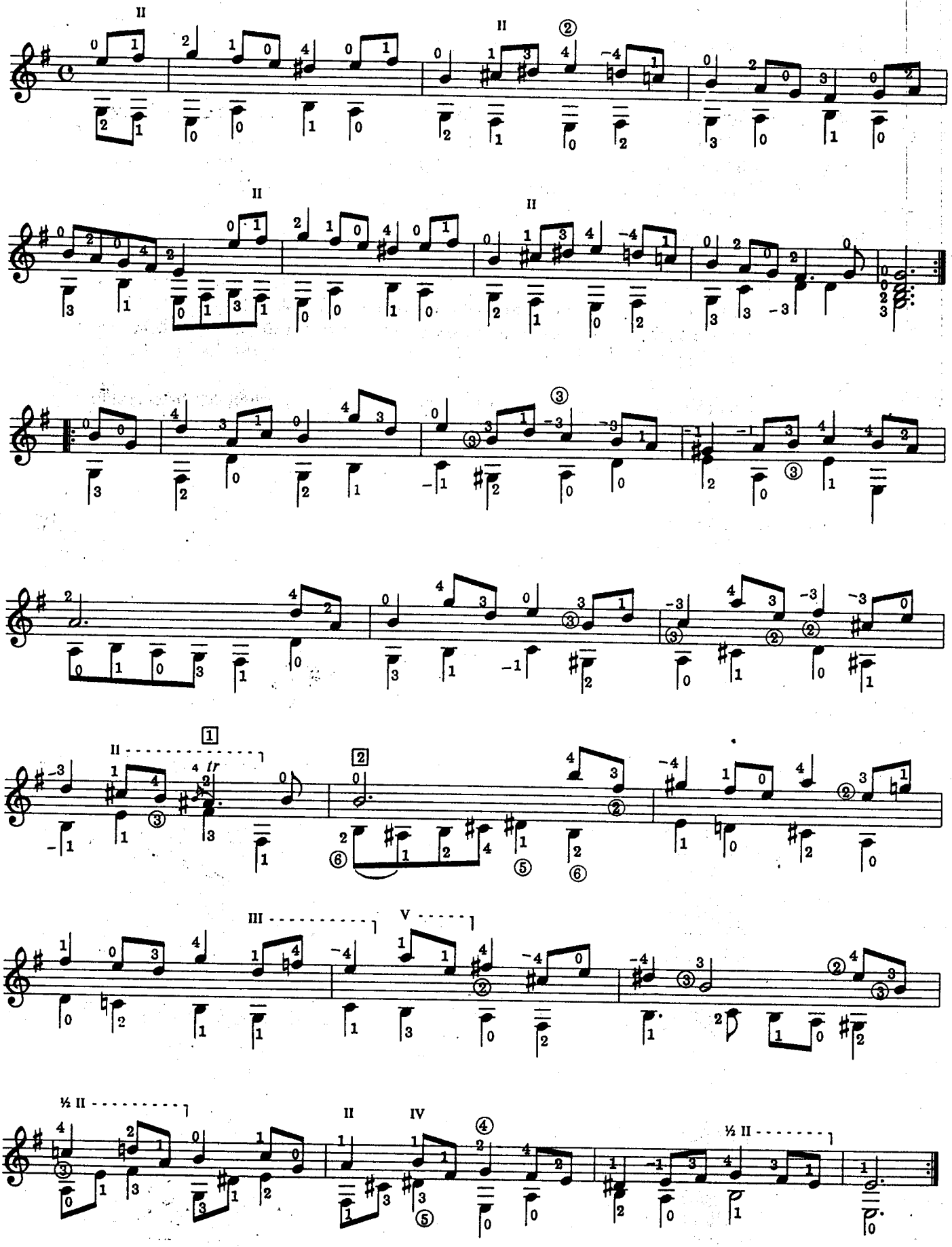
or more simply 

[2] *Note the change of position here, with the B on the sixth string.*

Baroque music printing. Title page of *Frische Clavier Früchte* by Johann Kuhnau

Bourrée

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)



Minuet In Canon

Von Radolt came from a distinguished Vienna family, his father being a high steward in the Emperor's household. His first and only known printed work was entitled *Die Aller Treueste Freindin,* published in Vienna in 1701. It comprised five volumes containing parts for concerted works for three lutes and strings as well as other smaller compositions.

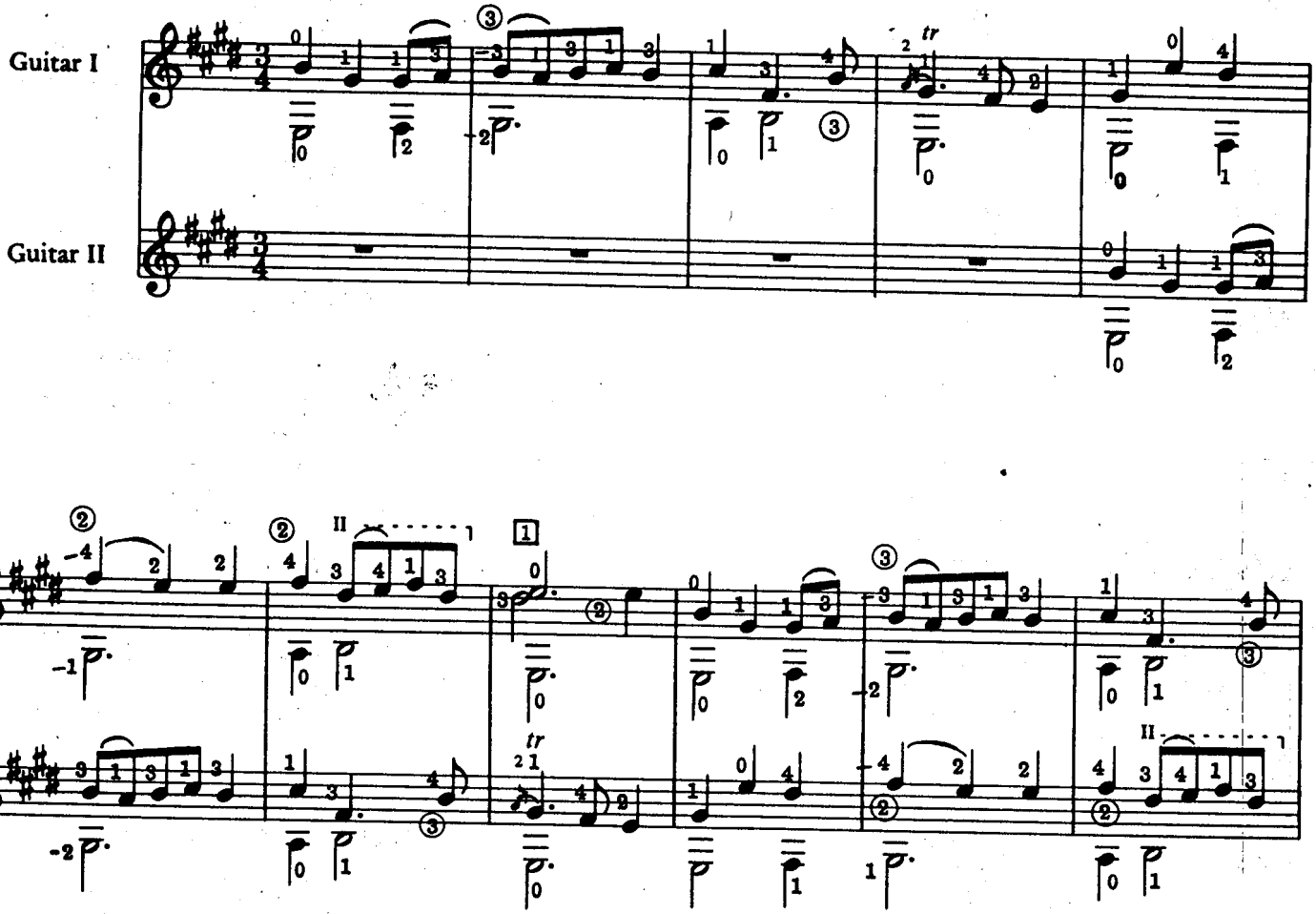
His music shows considerable charm as evidenced by this delightful canon.

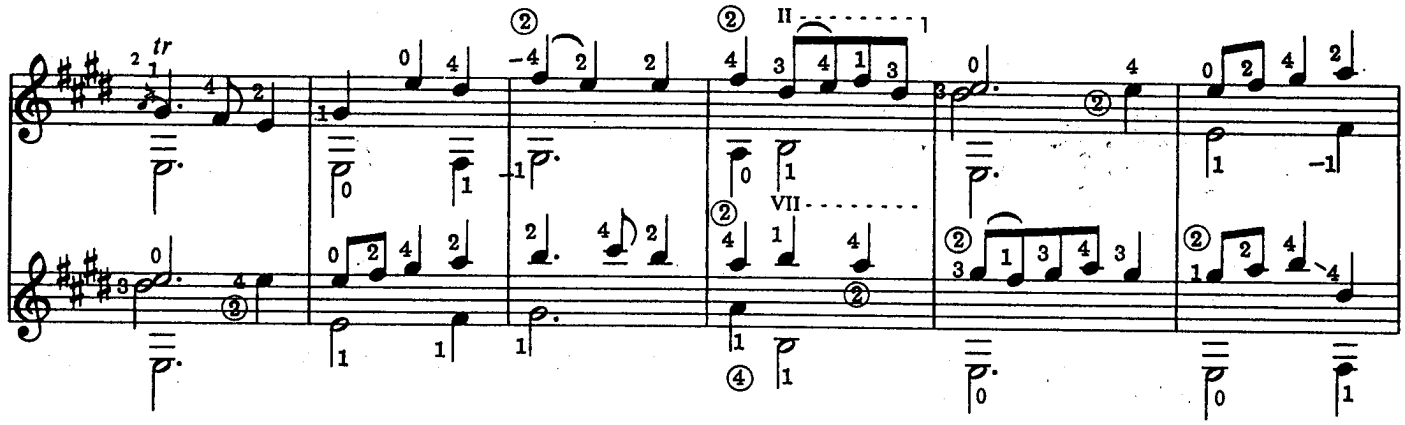
[1] *The original gives a unison here. The suspension is added editorially as it was commonly used in such a situation and would probably be played whether written in or not.*

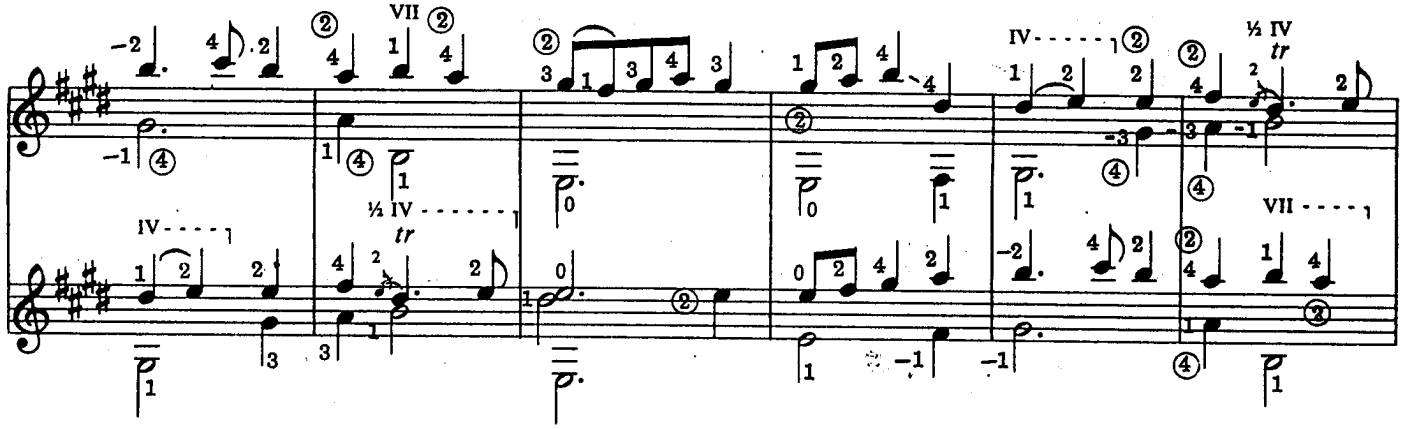
If careful attention is payed to the fingering the piece should present no technical difficulty.

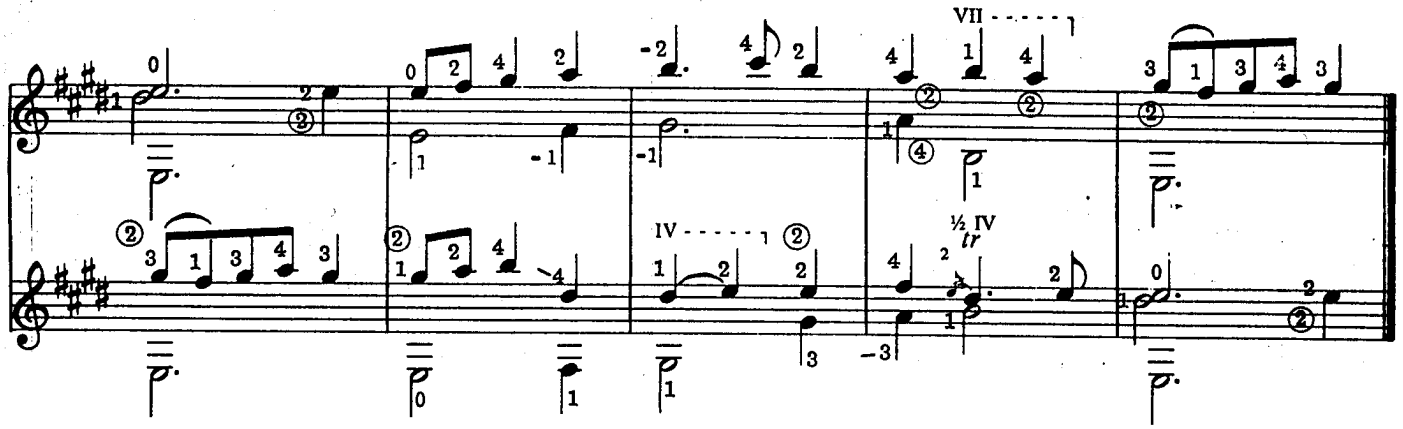
Suggested tempo is ♩ = 106.

Wenzel von Radolt
(1667-1716)




tr
II
VII


VII
IV
½ IV
tr
VII


VII
IV
½ IV
tr

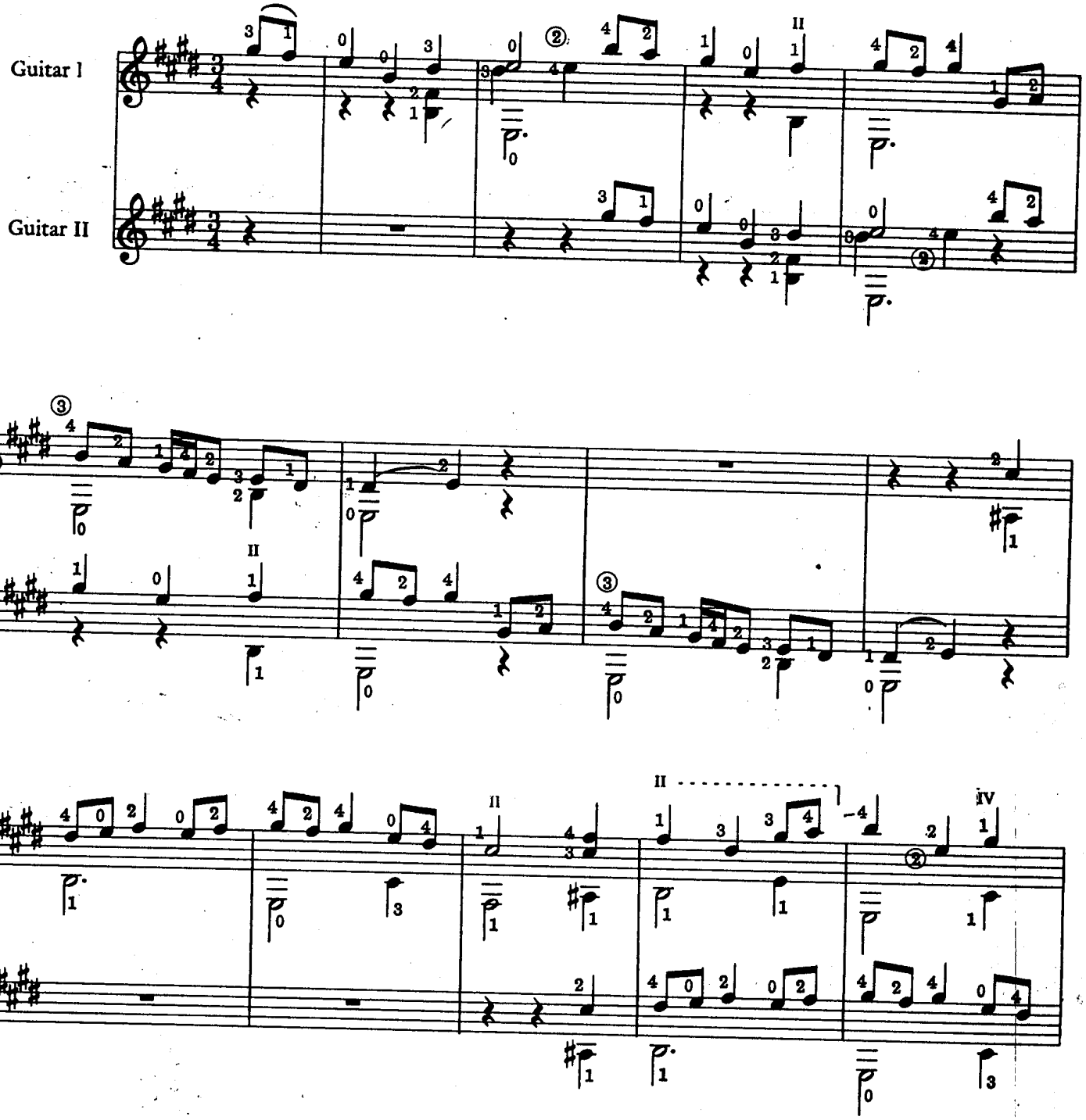
Canon

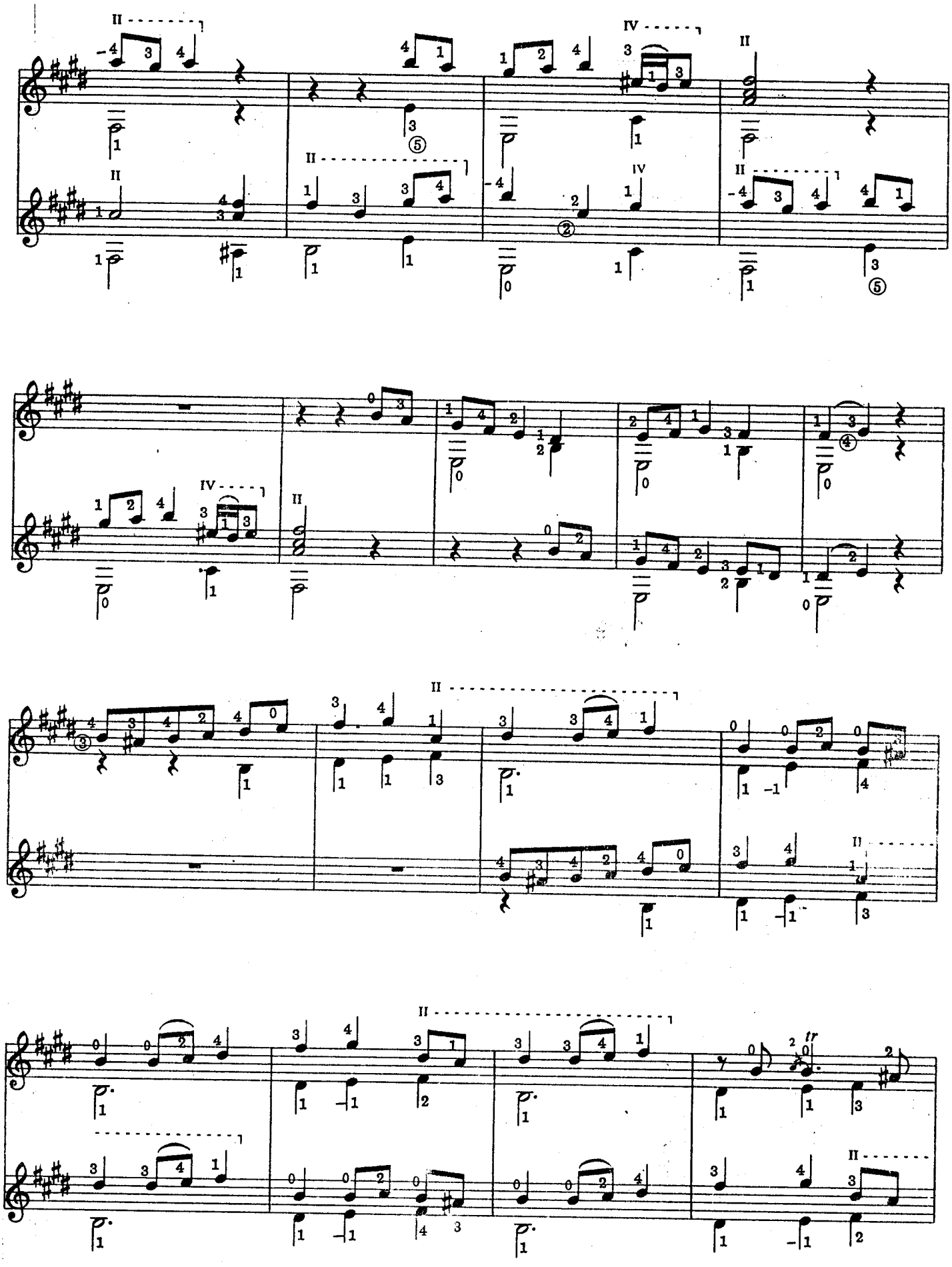
This further example of von Radolt's work is taken from the same source as the preceding piece. I would suggest playing it at a fast tempo, which seems to make it sound much more interesting and coherent than it does at a leisurely pace.

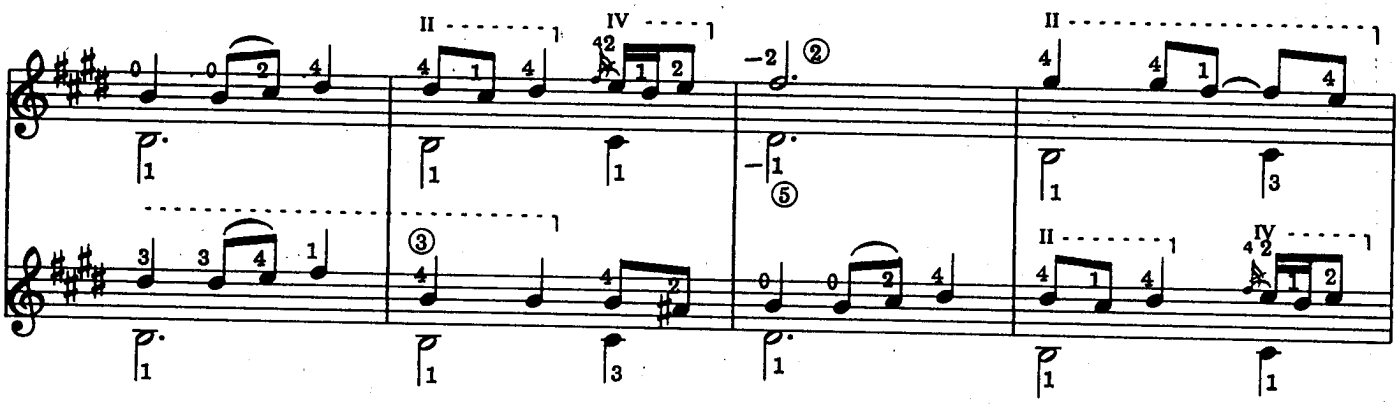
[1] *The trill employing two strings is used in both parts to avoid excessively awkward fingering. The two players should practice for exact synchronization.*

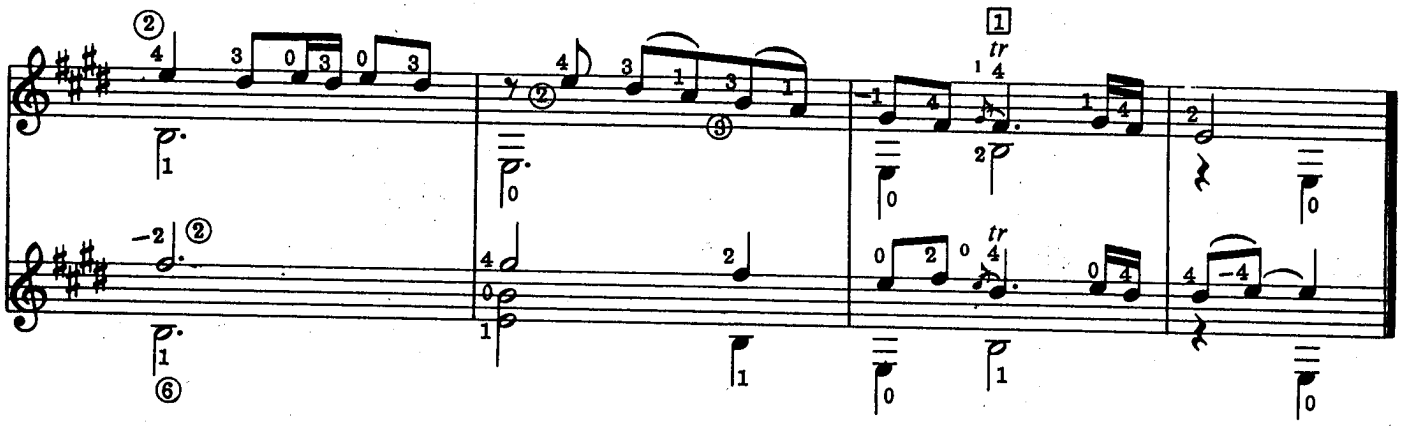
The suggested tempo is ♩ = 116.

Wenzel von Radolt







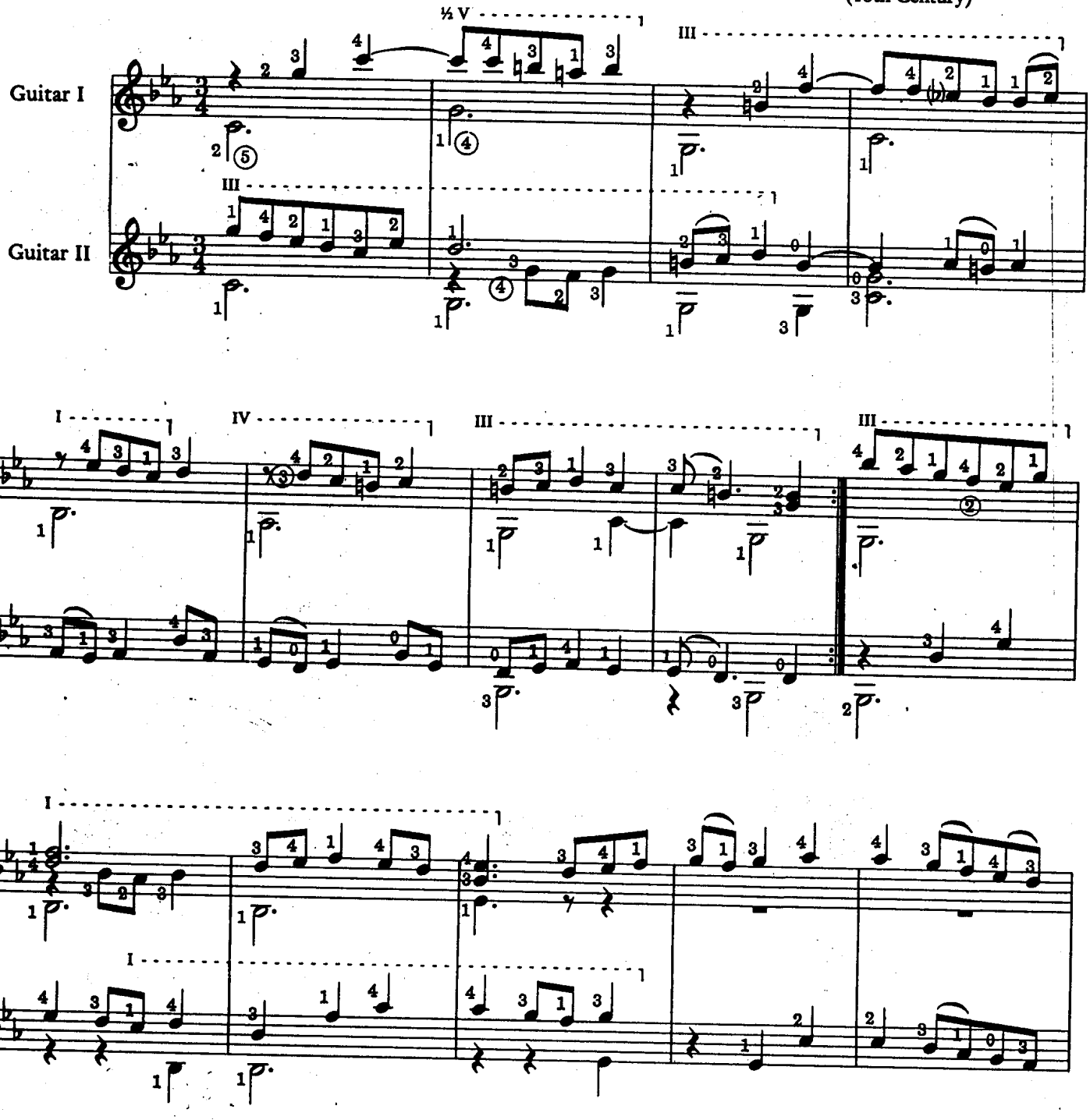


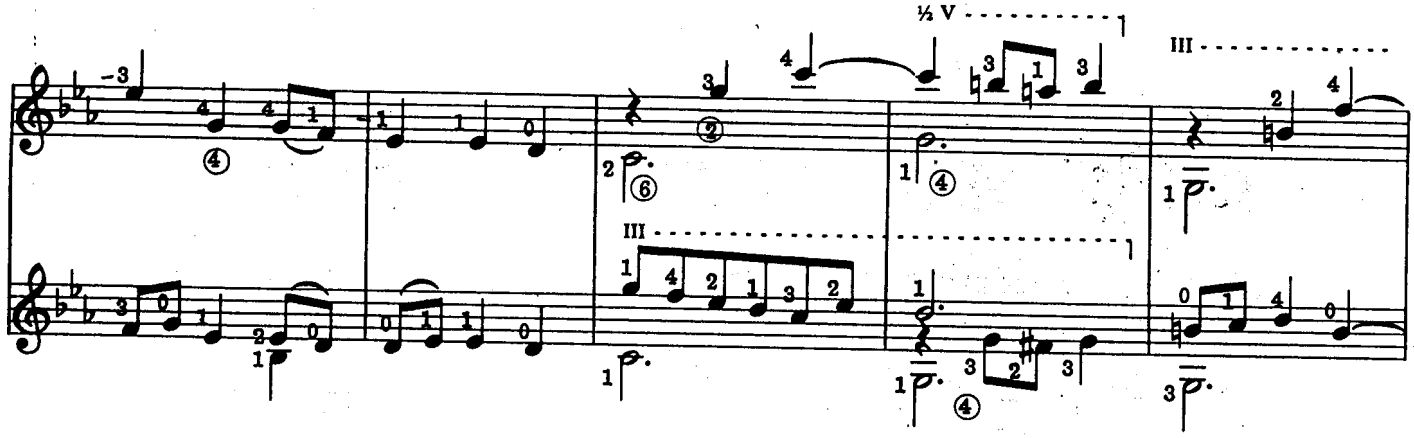
From the title page of *Guitarra Española y Vandola* by Joan Carlos Amat, the first known (1586) method for the five course guitar.

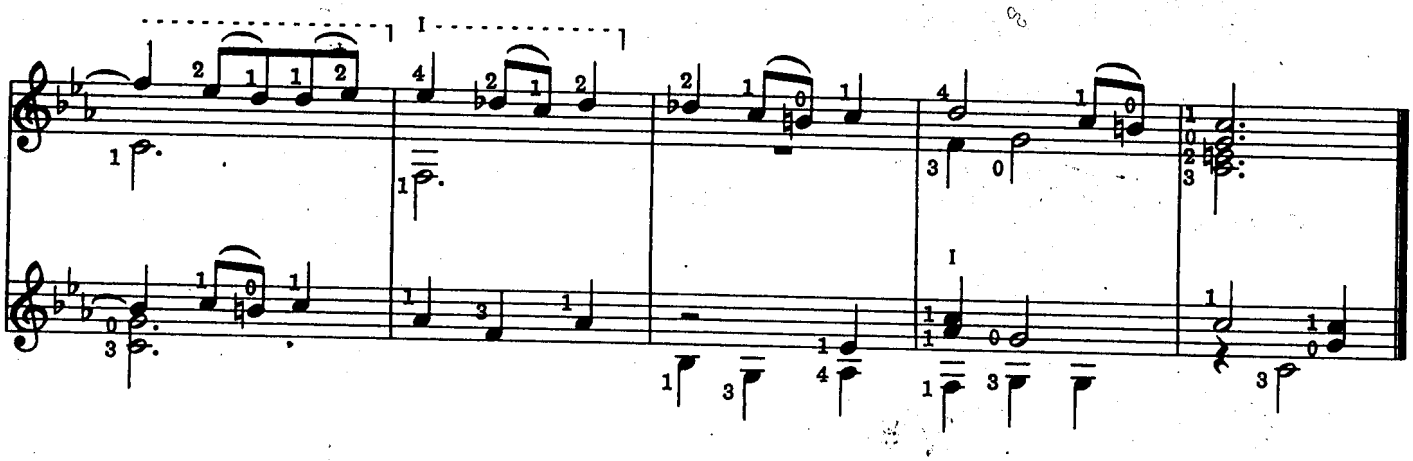
Trio

This trio is from an interesting eighteenth century lute-book now in the Cologne Stadtbibliothek, which includes compositions by Lauffensteiner, Weiss and others.
The minuet to which it belongs is unfortunately not amenable to transposition, but this seems insufficient reason not to include a delightful duet which stands well by itself.
The key of C minor should not deter the less advanced player as the piece is technically straightforward.
Suggested tempo is ♩ = 104.

Anonymous
(18th Century)







Hand position chart from *Instruccion de Musica Sobre la Guitarra Española* by Gaspar Sanz, 1674

Canarios

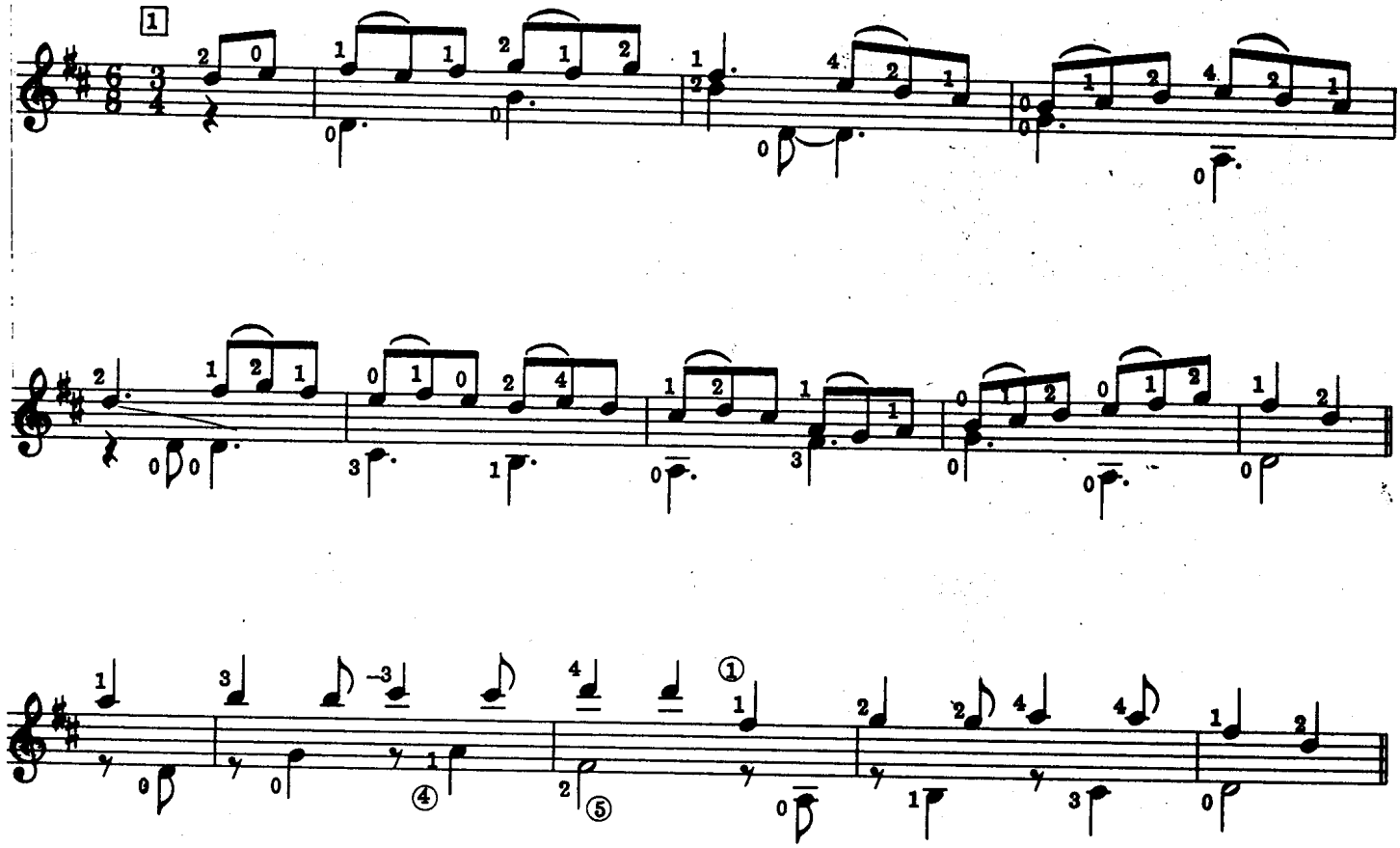
One of the interesting treatises on the guitar of the seventeenth century is that of Gaspar Sanz, who describes himself as from the province of Aragon and a bachelor of theology of the University of Salamanca. The book was published in 1674 in Zaragoza with the title *Instrucción de Musica Sobre la Guitarra Española*, and contains detailed instructions in technique as well as many musical examples of the dance forms popular in Spain such as *Folias, Españoletas, Rujeros* and the *Canarios* transcribed below.
As with most music written for the baroque guitar it is impossible to re-create the original in a transcription, but the particularly Spanish charm of the dance comes through nevertheless.

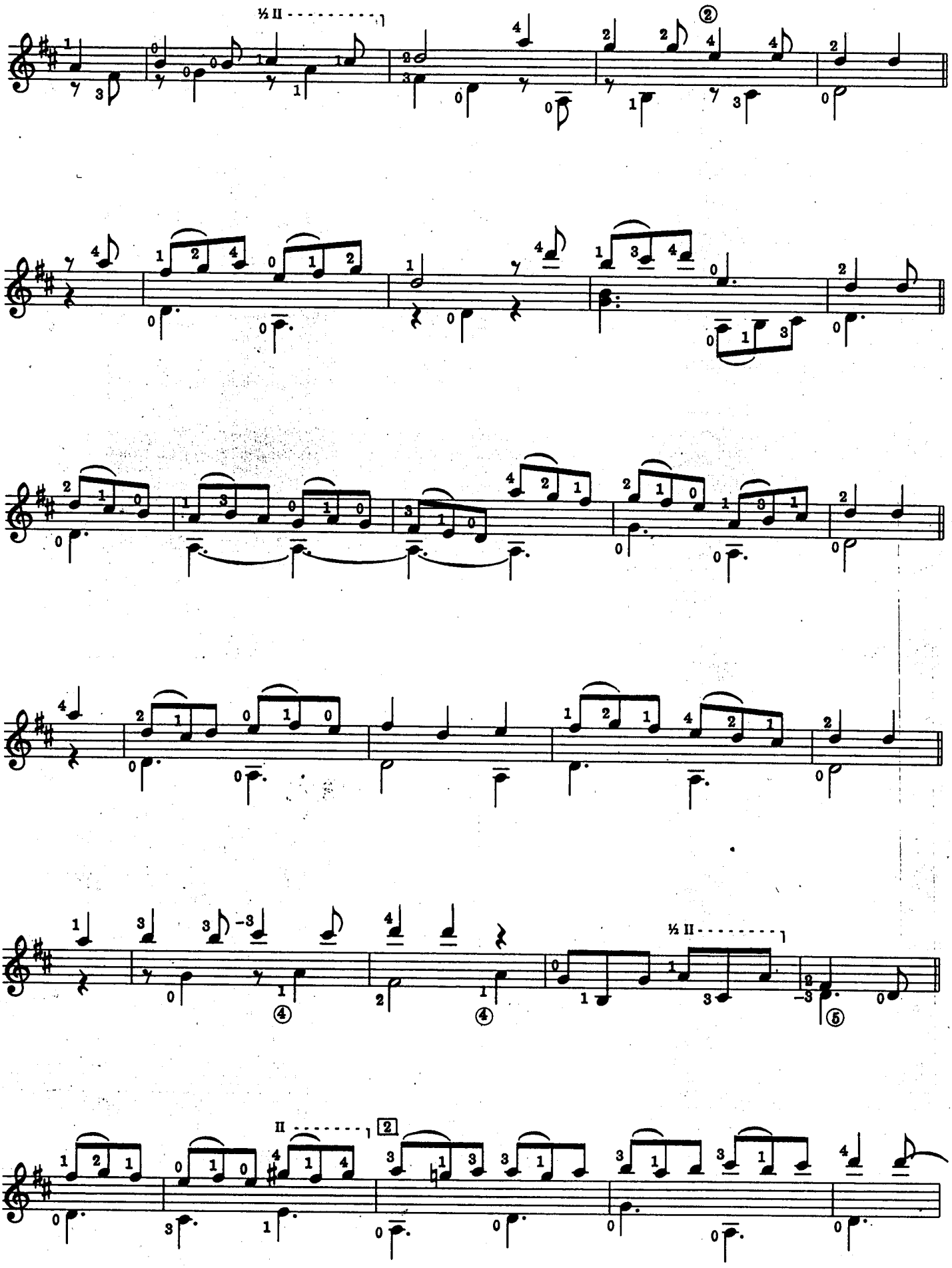
1 *The occasional $\frac{3}{4}$ interspersed with the $\frac{6}{8}$ is particularly Spanish and rhythmically interesting and effective.*

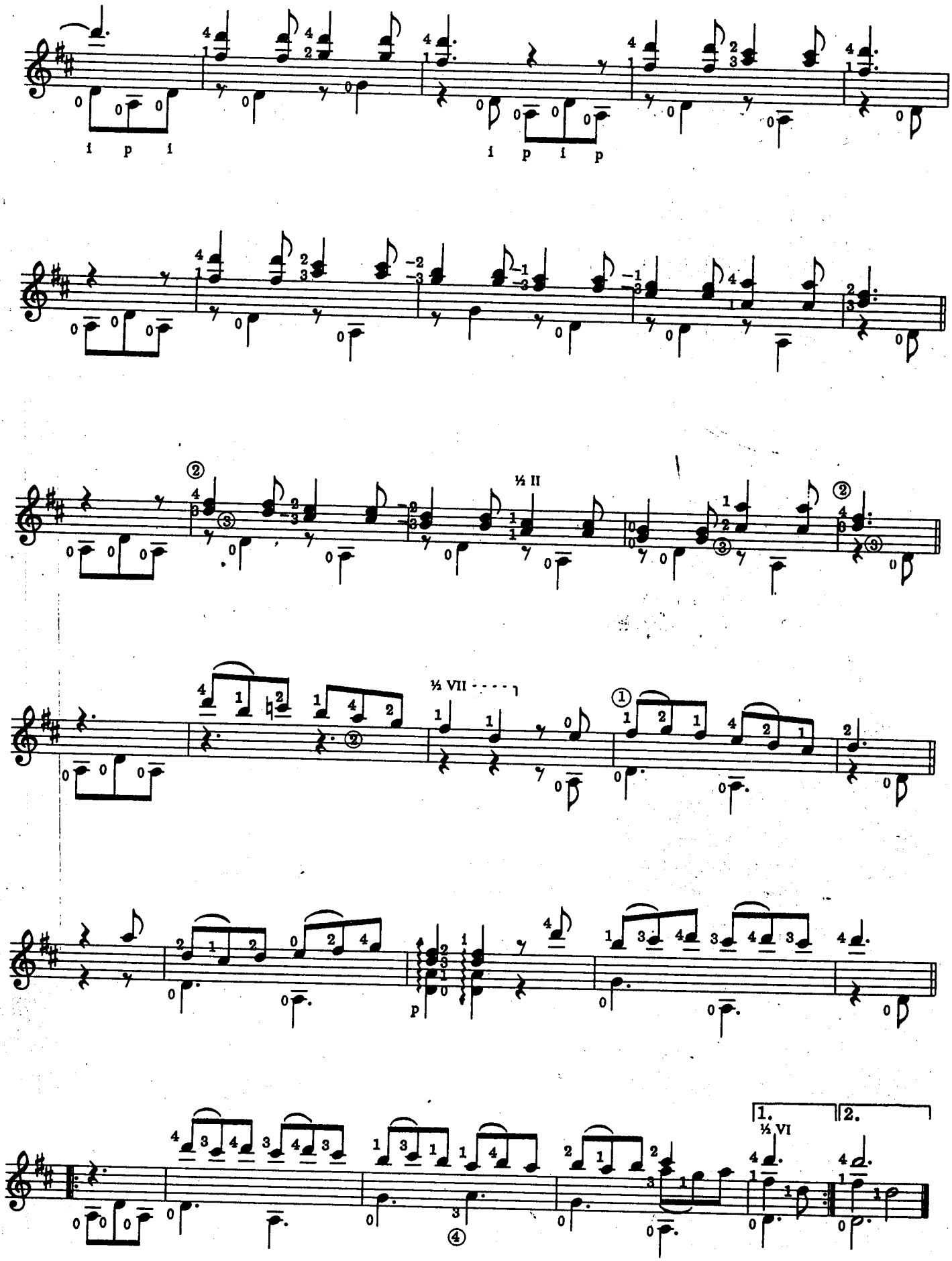
2 *Note the change from fourth to third finger on the A, necessary for what follows.*
The double bars at the end of each section may be taken as optional, rather than essential, repeats.

Suggested tempo for the dance is ♩.= 112.

Gaspar Sanz
(1640–1710)



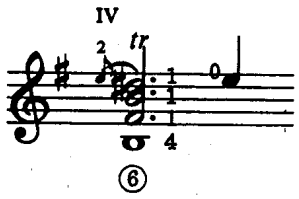

½ II
②
④
④
½ II
⑤
II
2


i p i
i p i p
½ II
½ VII
p
1.
2.
½ VI

Passacaille

In de Visée's book of guitar pieces (1686) this passacaille follows the minuet transcribed on page 22, and may be paired with it for contrast in performance.
It is a very strong piece which lends itself to colorful interpretation. The original statement and its repetitions should be positive so as to throw into relief the more delicate couplets which intervene. Technically quite simple, this is a most rewarding piece to play.

[1] *In the original there is a trill between the E and the D♯. For those who wish to play it, the closest approximation to de Visée's intention would probably be:–*

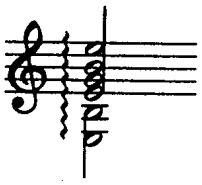


The same situation applies each time this measure is repeated.

[2] *There is a repeat at the end of each couplet, marked here by the double bar. I feel that this should be left optional to the player.*

[3] *The tablature gives the E and D in the lower voice as eighth notes, the following G as a quarter note. This appears to be a simple printer's error from the logic of the passage.*

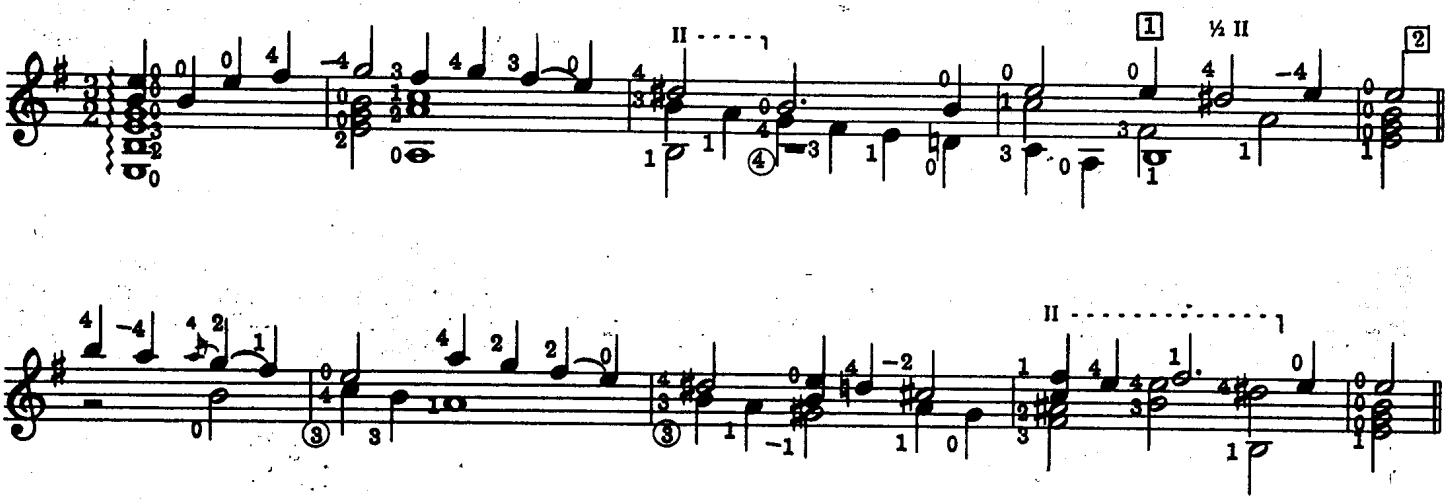
[4] *For the final cadence players may wish to play the full E minor chord, i.e.*

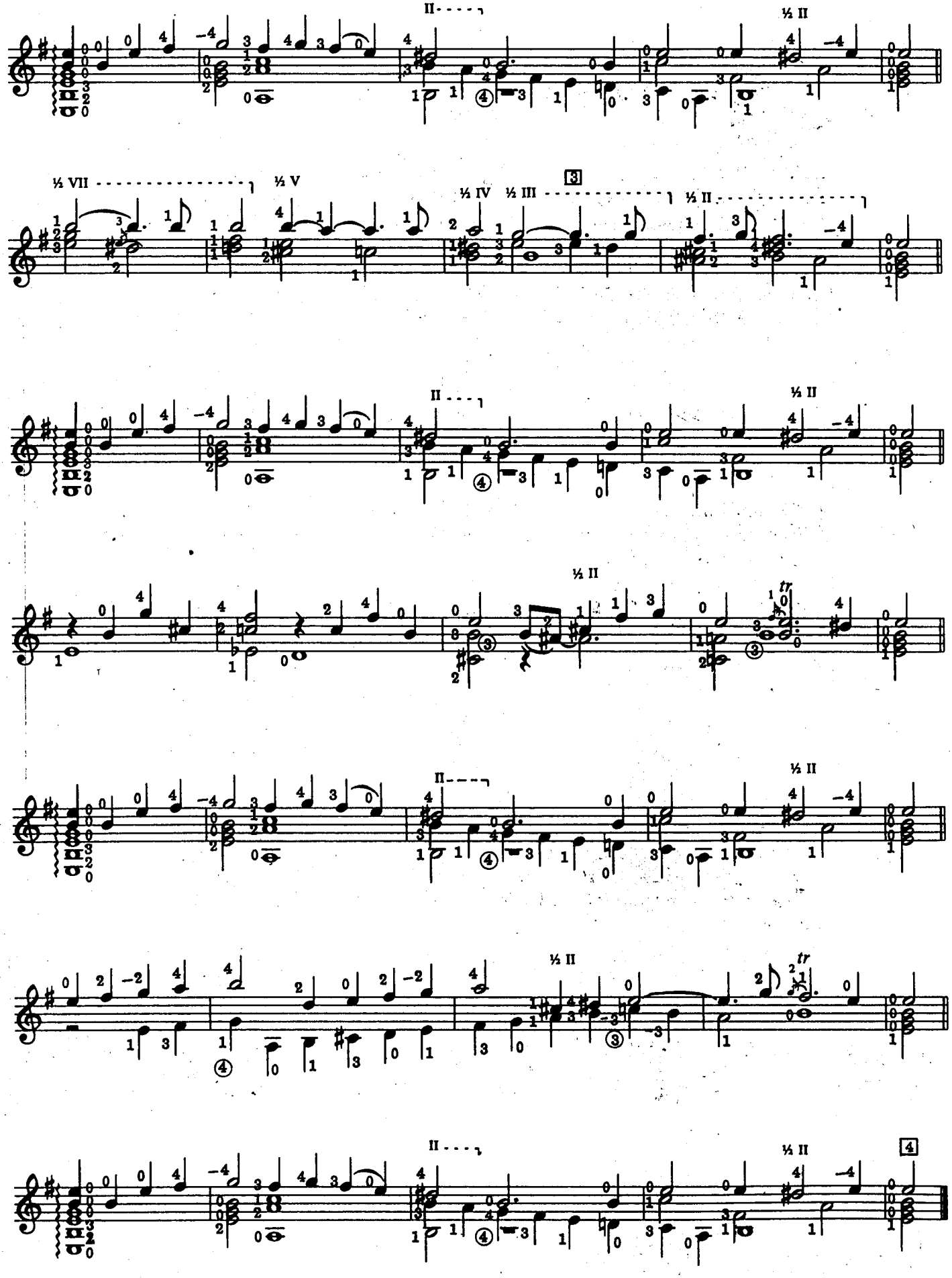


The French passacaille was a type of rondeau, consisting of a repeated refrain interspersed with varied sections known as "couplets." It should be distinguished from the Passacaglia described in the note on p. 90, and the Passacaille on page 118 of Leopold Weiss which in spite of its French title follows the same general form as the piece on p. 90.

The suggested tempo is ♩ = 80.

Robert de Visée




II
½ II
½ VII
½ V
½ IV
½ III
3
½ II
II
½ II
½ II
tr
II
½ II
tr
II
½ II
4

Allegro

Although Scarlatti did not write for the guitar his music is a favorite source for guitarists, partly because he was one of the outstanding musical geniuses of his day, and also because the long period he spent in Spain (from 1729 until his death) gave a flavour of Spanish dance music to much of his later work. In addition the essentially two line structure of many of his compositions lends itself readily to adaptation to the guitar without loss of the original.

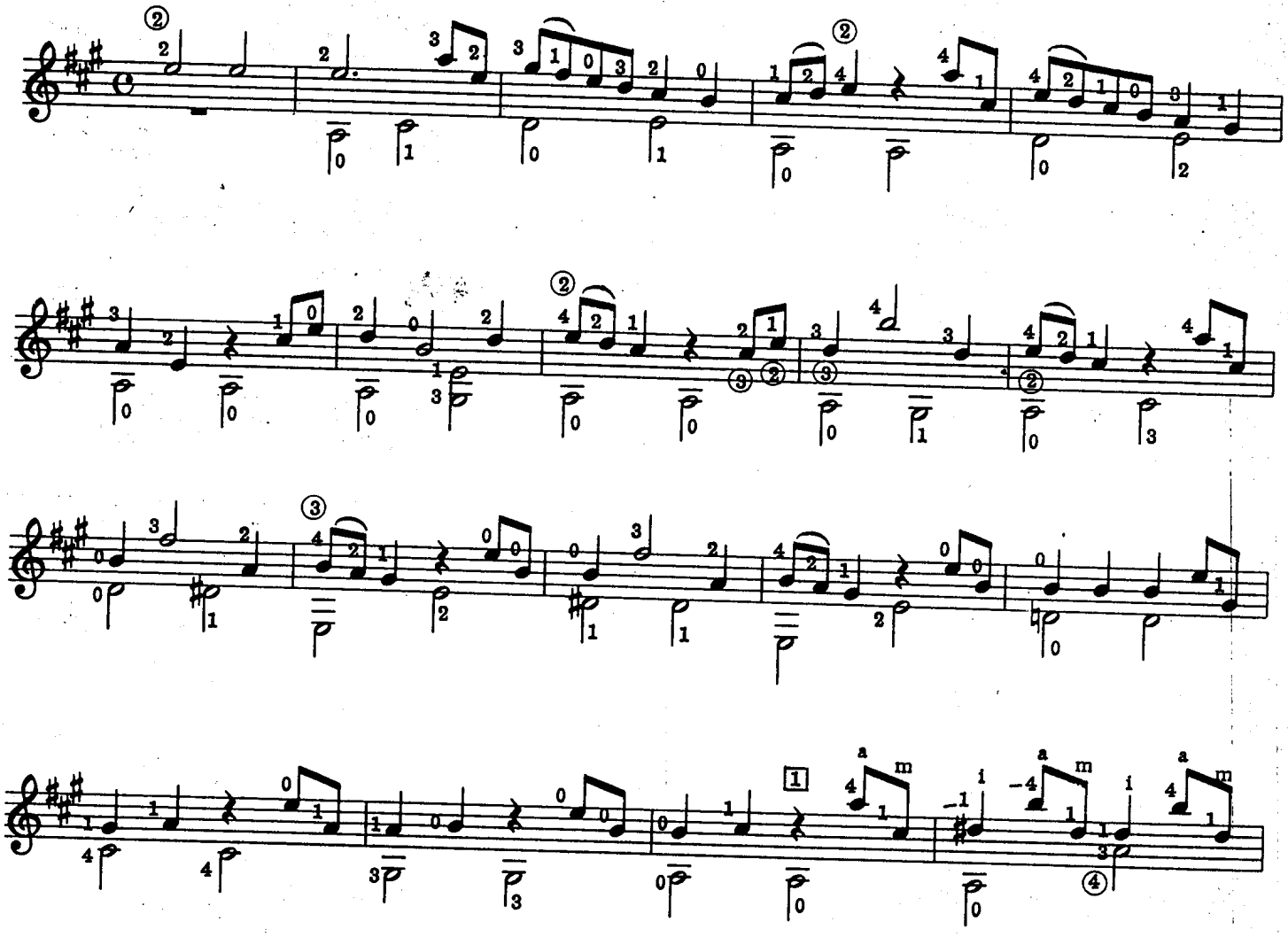
[1] *Particular attention should be given to the right hand fingering given in the following measures. A repeat of the same finger would spoil the clarity of the passage.*

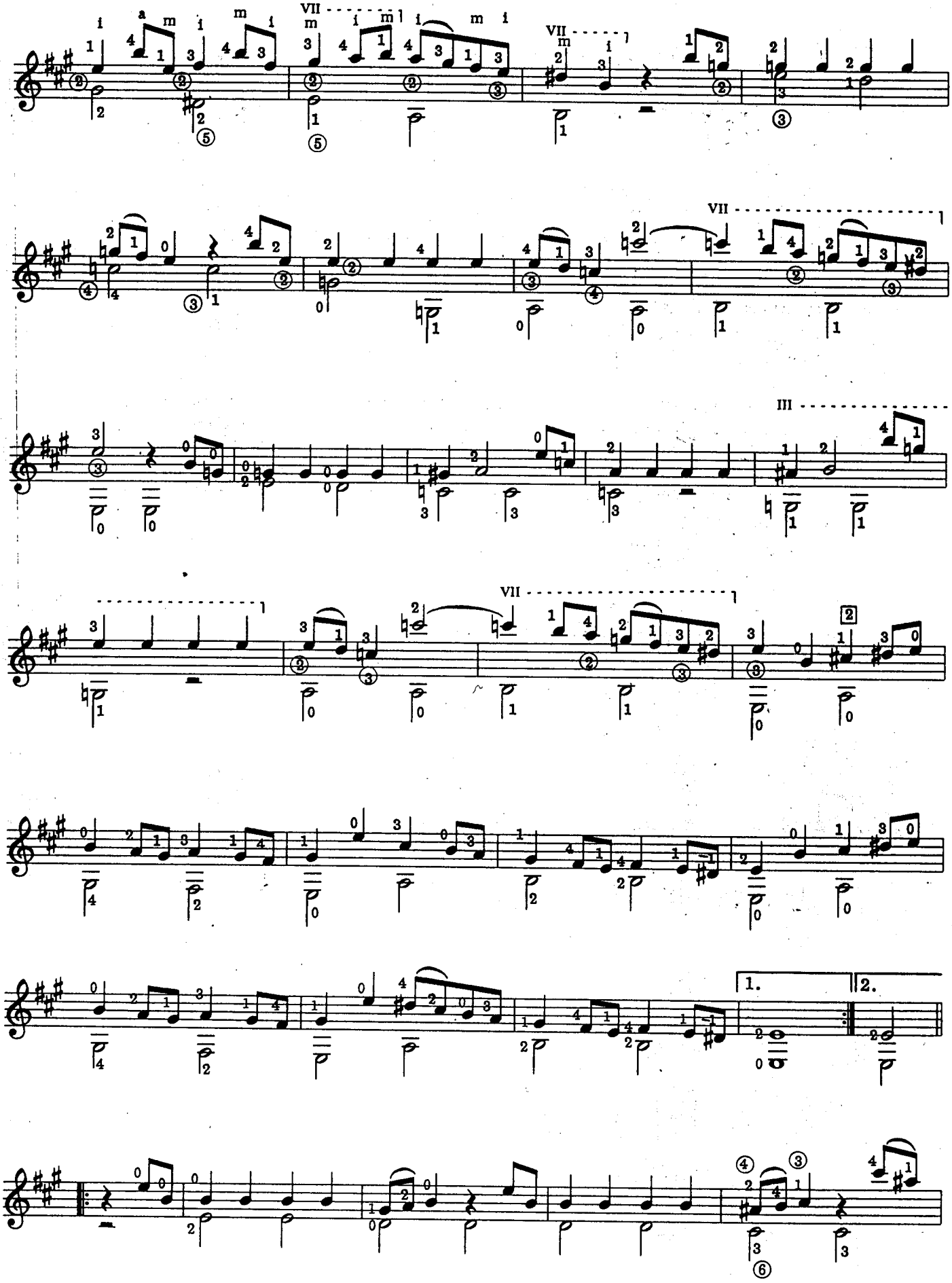
[2] *Care should be taken to sustain the bass notes from this point through to the double bar. There is a natural tendency to lift the fingers holding the bass notes, but the passage is only effective if both parts are clear and sustained.*

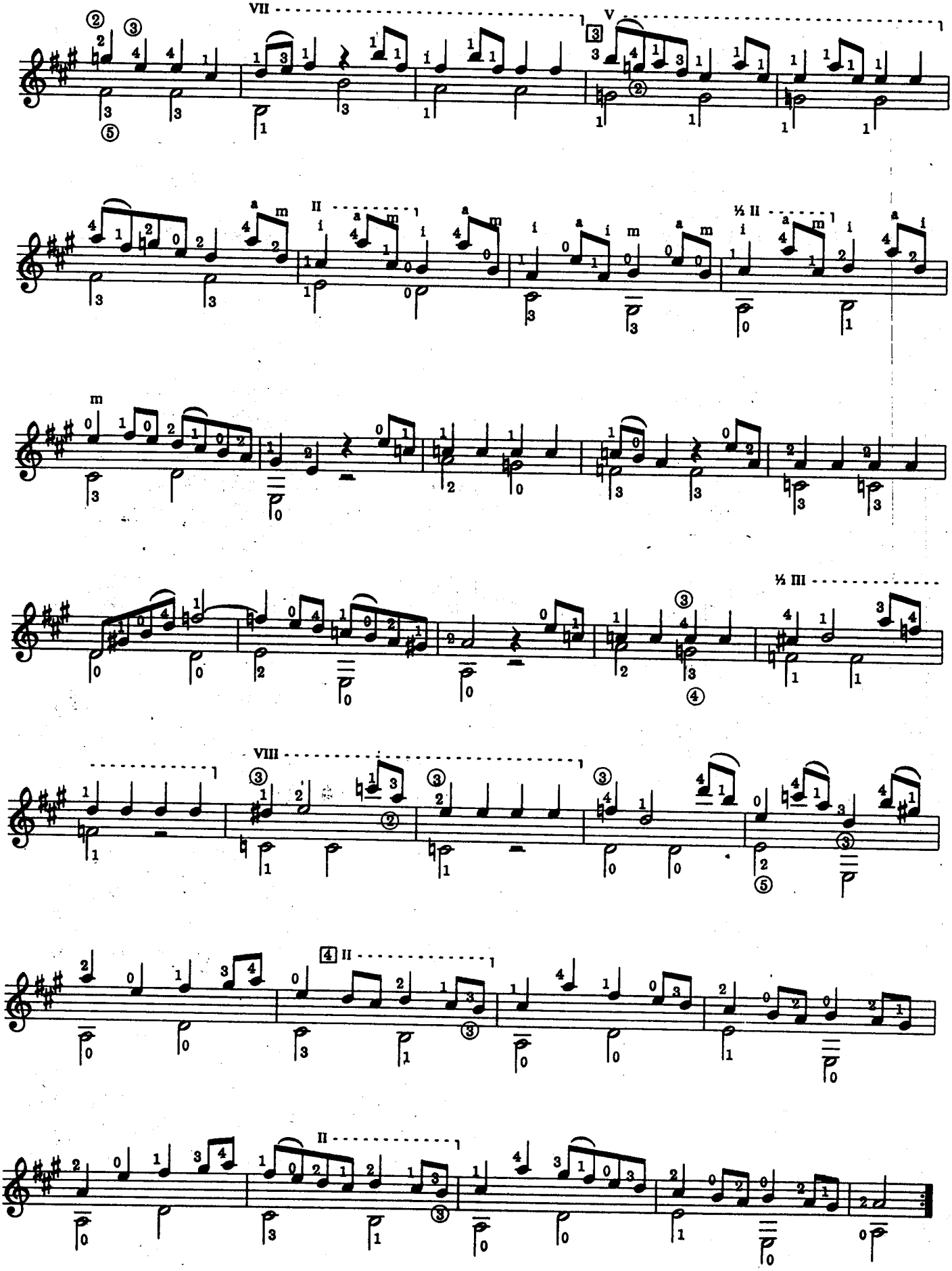
[3] *The ligado is made by hammering the G with the left hand fourth finger without playing it with the right hand. A less than ideal technique it is nevertheless audible in this position, and preferable to the alternative.*

Suggested tempo is ♩ = 184.

Domenico Scarlatti
(1685–1757)






VII
V
II
½ II
½ III
VIII
II

Grave

Austrian-born Wolff Jacob Lauffensteiner was a lutenist in the household of Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria. His duties included such unrelated tasks as the purchase of his employer's wardrobe, and for instructing the Prince in music it is recorded that his salary was increased by 100 florins. Unfortunately as witnessed in a later petition by Lauffensteiner, this sum was mistakenly deducted from, rather than added to, his rather humble wage.

He appears not to have shared the freedom of travel enjoyed by other court lutenists of his time, having been obliged to accompany his employer even into battle; but with the Prince he had the opportunity to visit France and Italy.

Lauffensteiner composed for the solo lute, lute duet and also for small ensemble.

This duet and the two movements which follow are taken from a manuscript in the Staatsbibliothek, Augsburg (Tonk. Fasc. III, 5) entitled *Sonata a Liuto Primo et Secundo ou Violino, Viol de Gamba et Violoncello.* They make extremely effective guitar duets, and are not difficult to play.

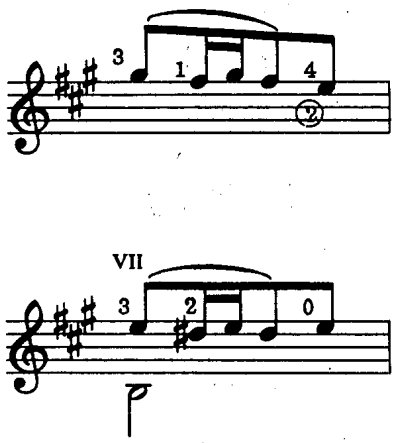
[1] *In the original an identical bass is given to both lute parts probably for convenience when another single voiced instrument substituted for either part. For the purpose of allowing more melodic freedom to the upper part I have at times eliminated the double bass.*

[2] *In the original the B and F# were not dotted. However this kind of detail was often left to the understanding of the performer.*

[3] *The original has a half note A instead of the final two quarter notes.*

[4] *Here too the dotted notes are editorial, to match the pattern at the conclusion of the second half.*

[5] *Whichever form of trill is chosen both players should take care to play the same one, and to align the note values in each part. For this reason I would suggest a simple form of trill, such as:–*

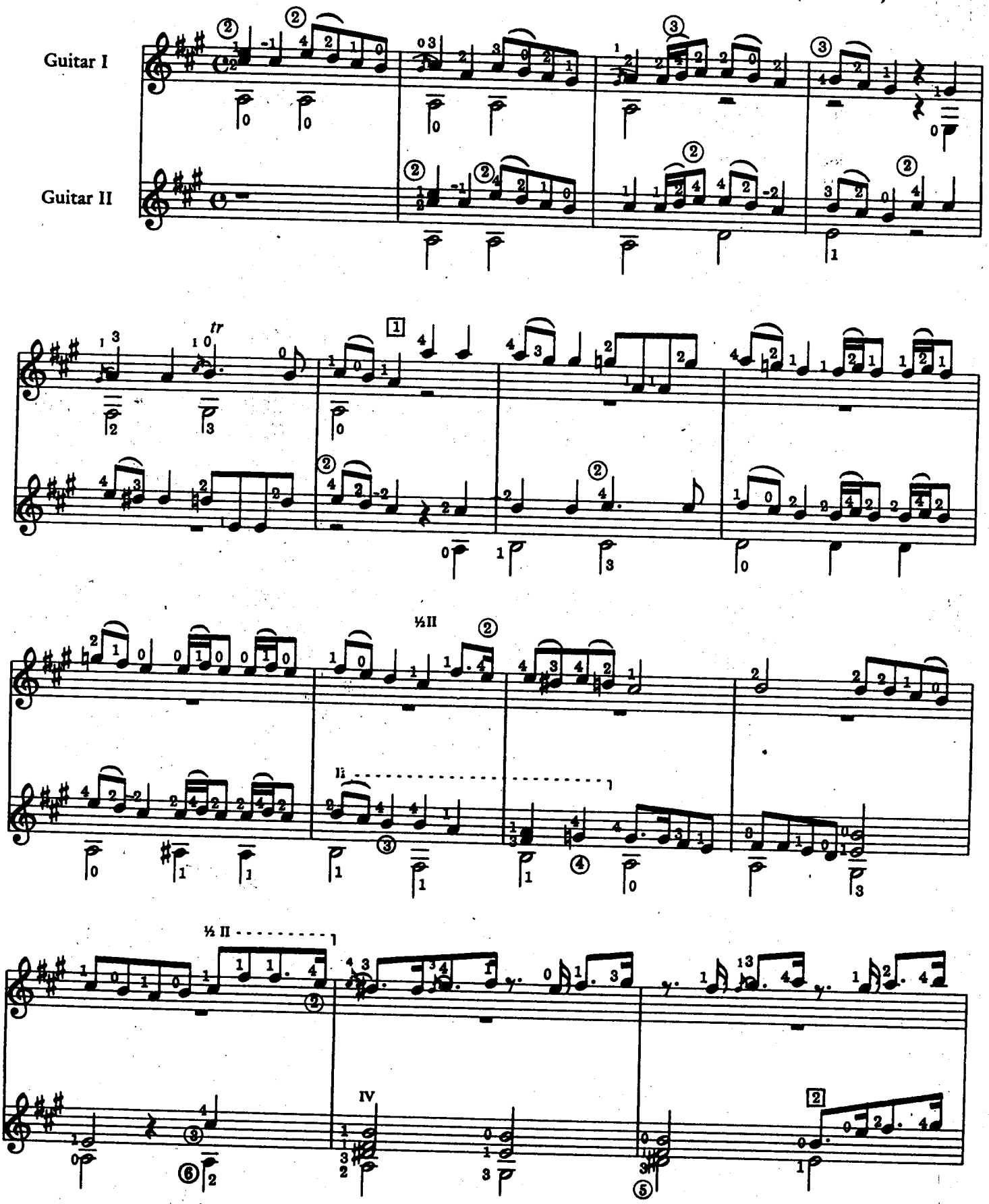


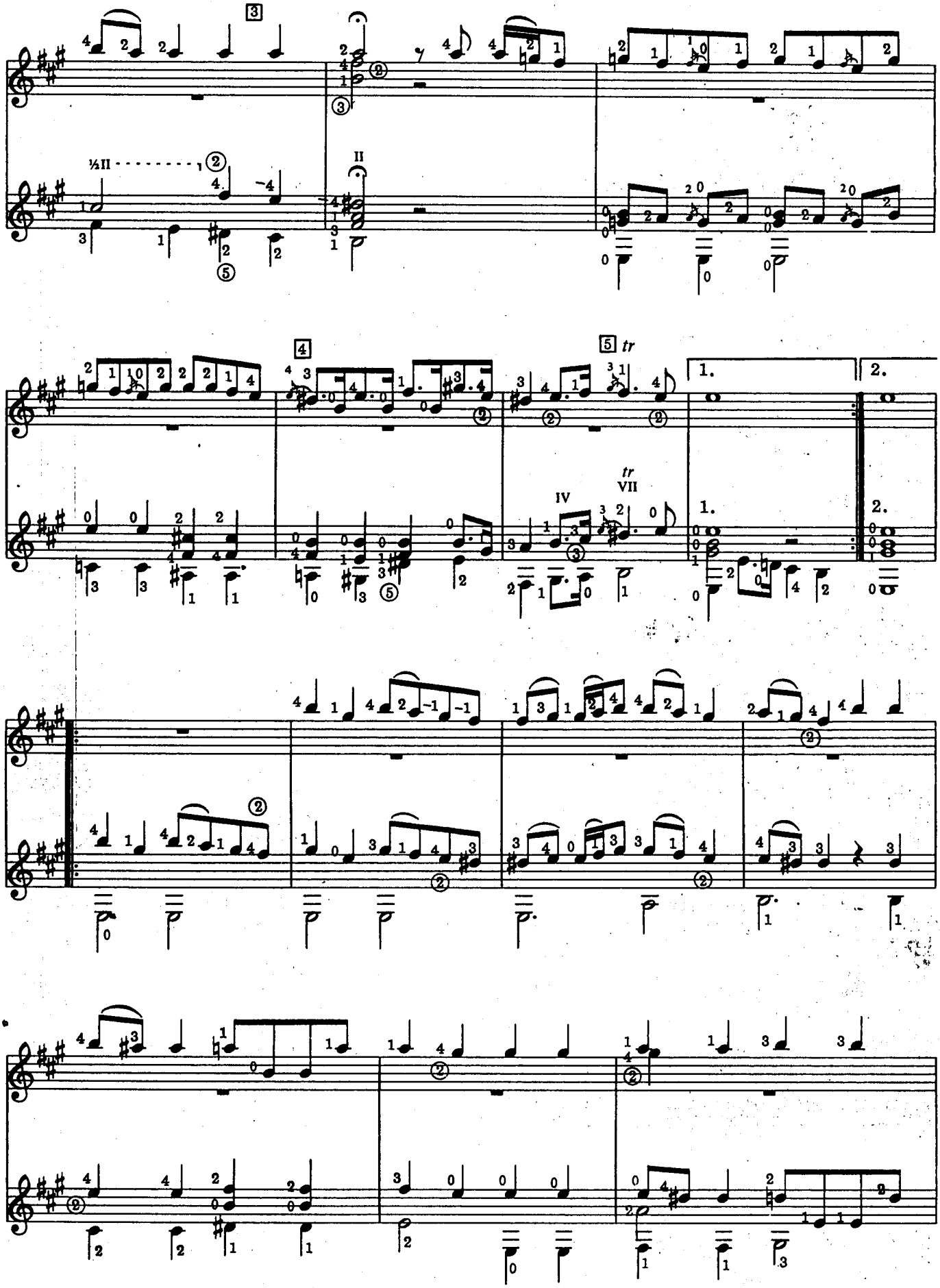
[6] *The original half-note D has been changed to two quarter notes as in note [3]*
The small notes indicate appoggiaturas, which were used with such frequency that a number of them have been left unrealized so that the player may decide whether or not to include them. For information on this ornament see pp. 13 and 14 of the introduction.

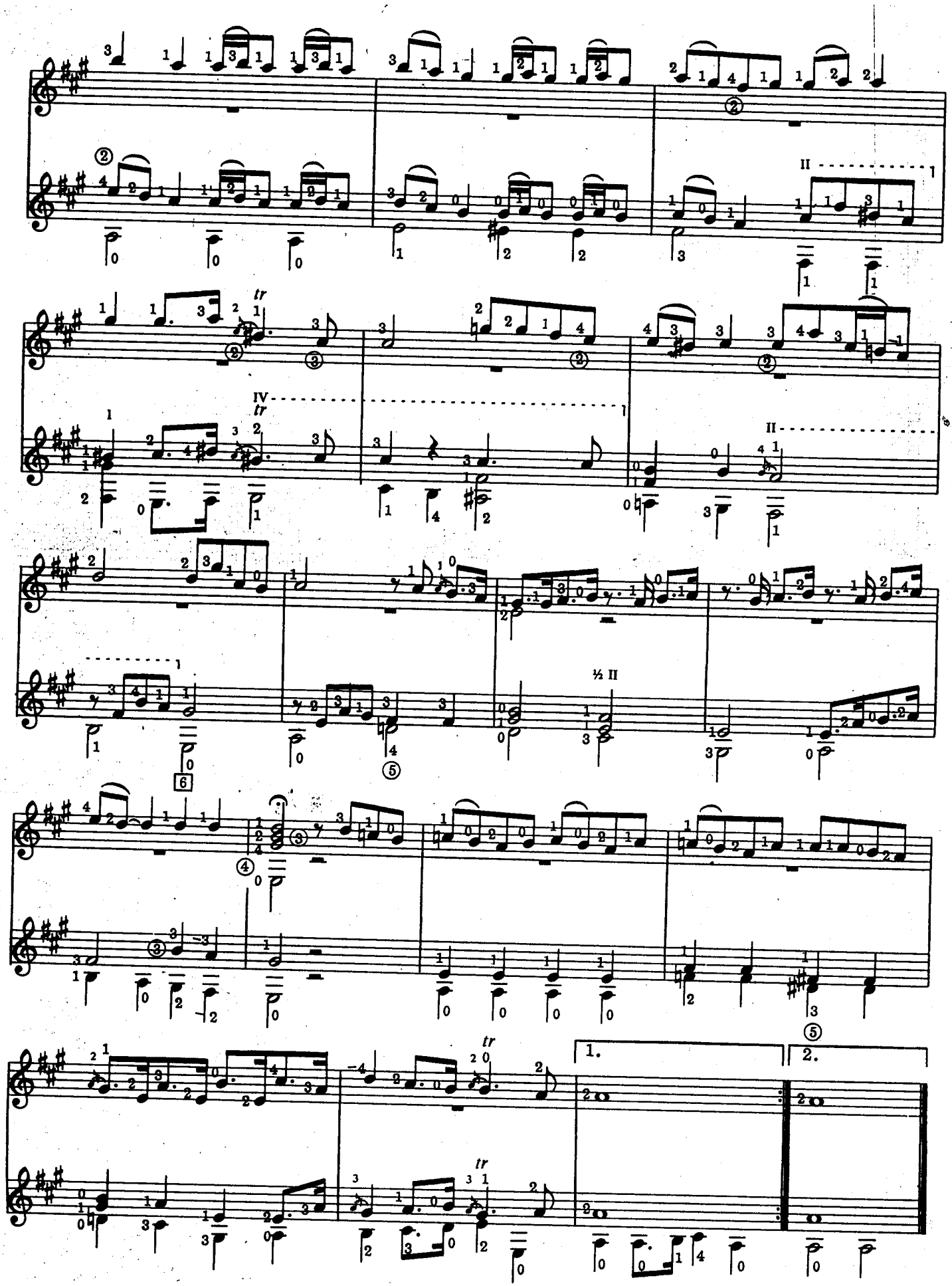
As the title implies the tempo should be slow, ♩ = 76.

Grave

Wolff Jacob Lauffensteiner
(1676–1754)



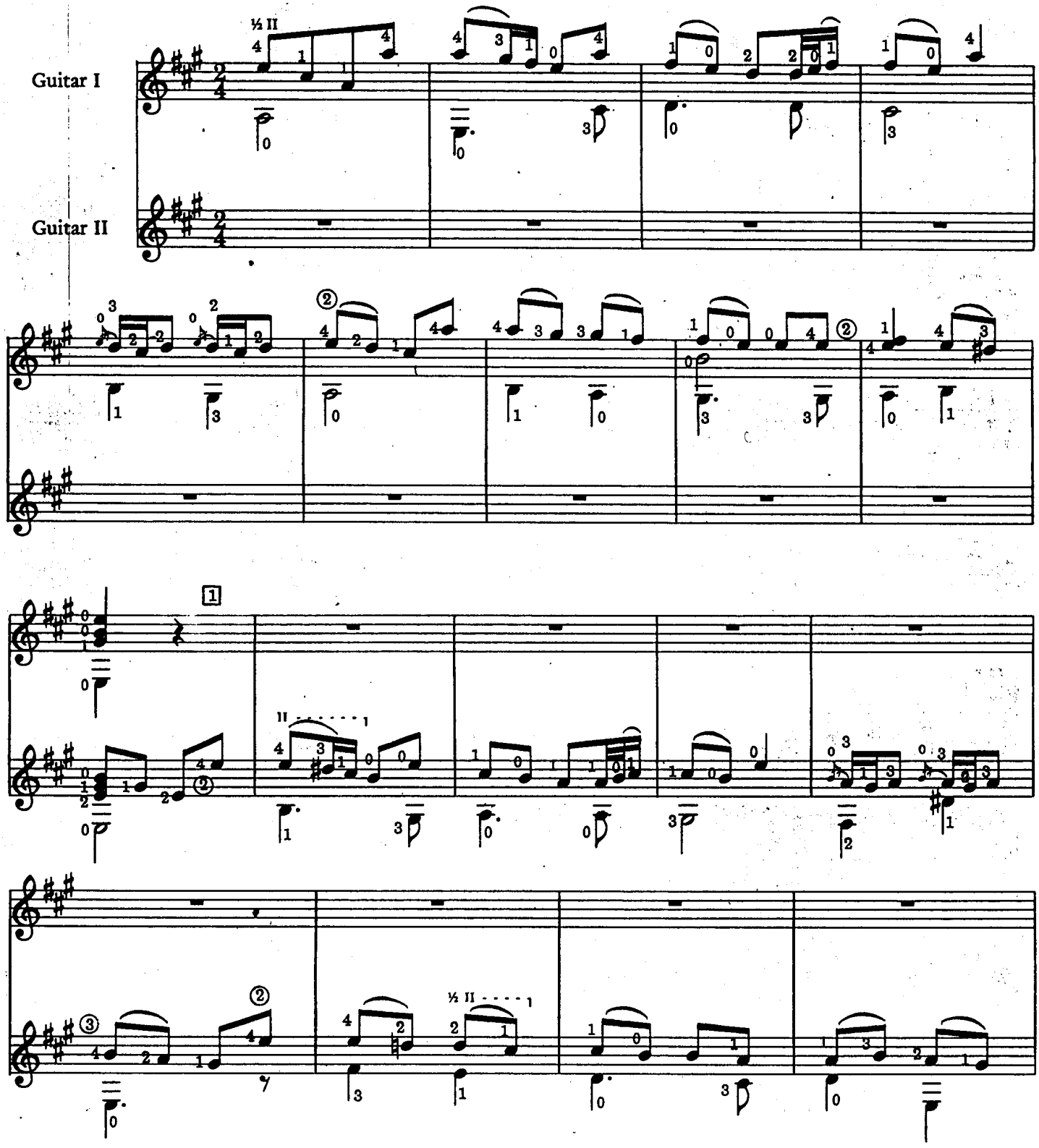

3
½II
II
4
5 tr
tr
IV
VII
1.
2.

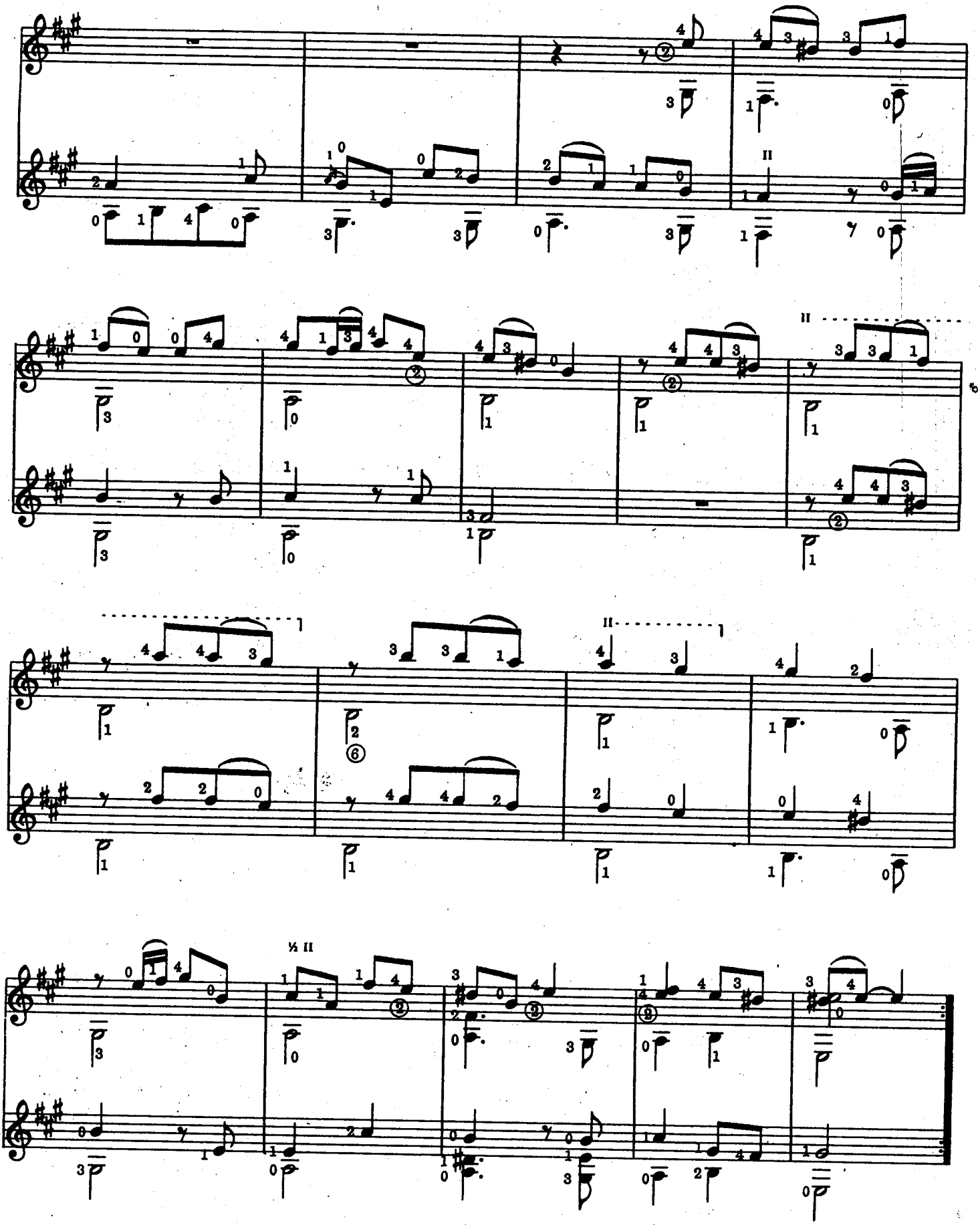

II
IV
tr
½ II
1.
2.

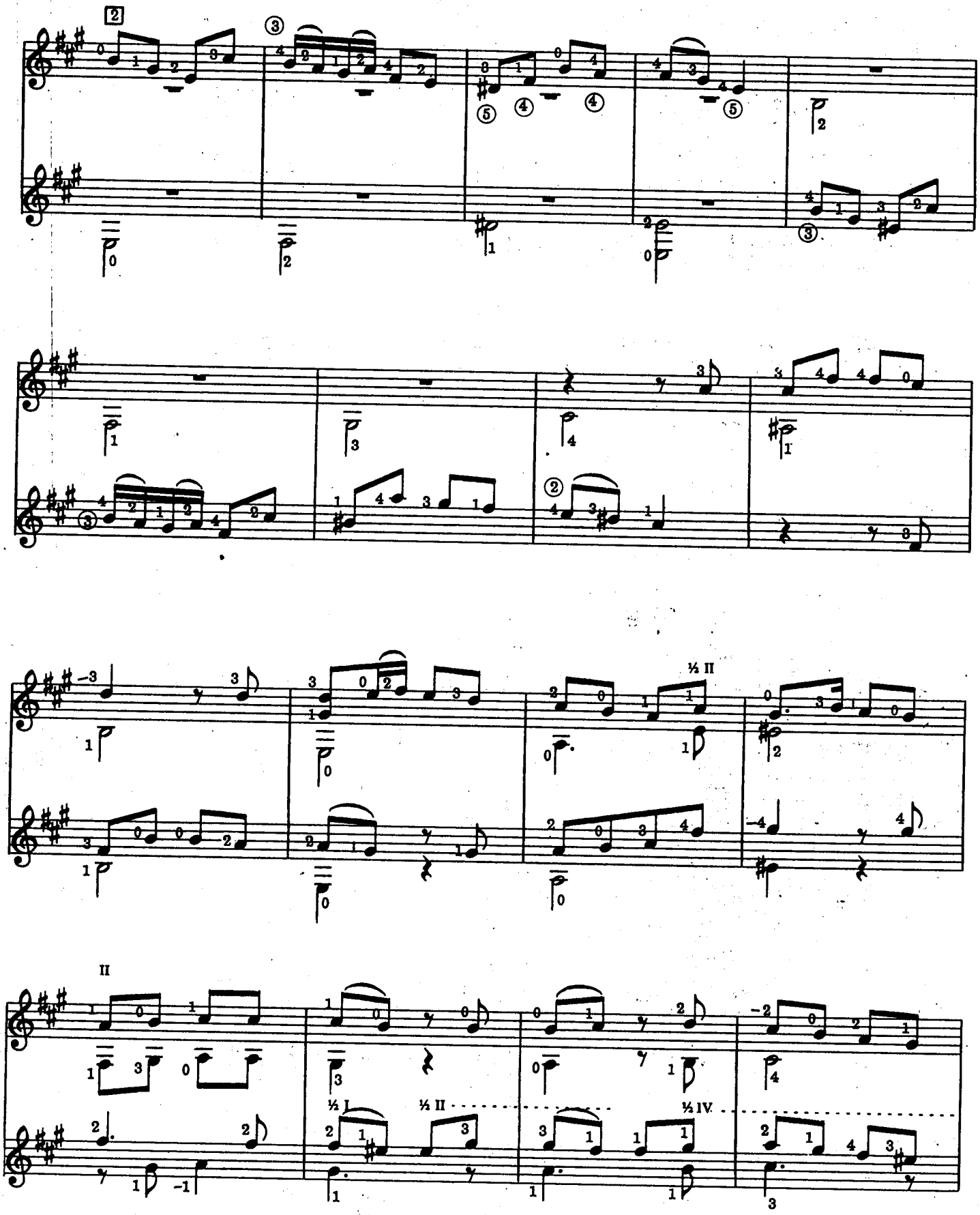
Allegro

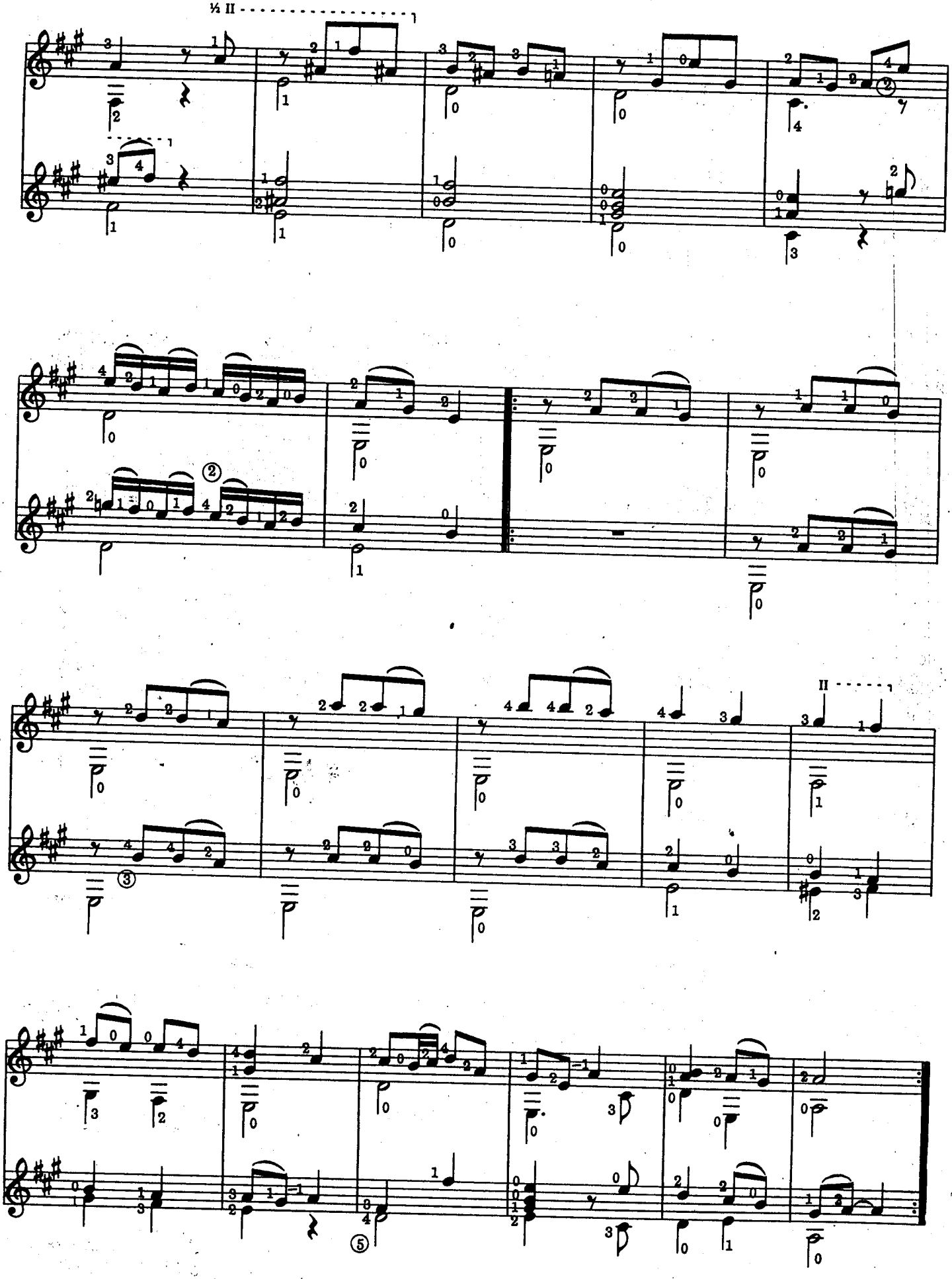
[1] *I have made some minor rhythmic corrections to balance this statement to that of the upper part. The differences were quite possibly copying errors.*
[2] *The bass has been transposed from the first to the second part for technical convenience.*
Suggested tempo is ♩ = 84.

Wolff Jacob Lauffensteiner




II
II
II
½ II

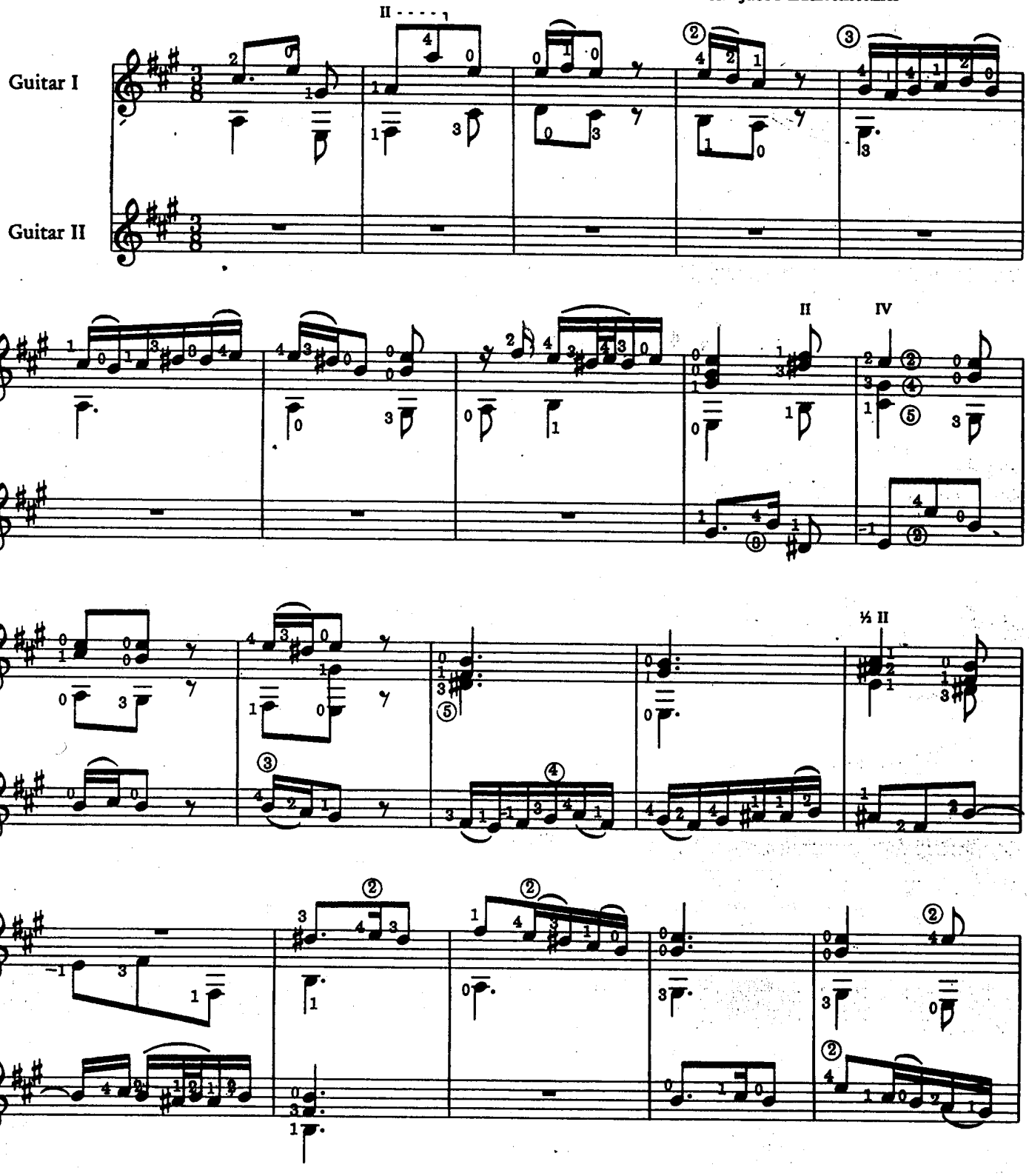

½ II
II
½ I
½ II
½ IV

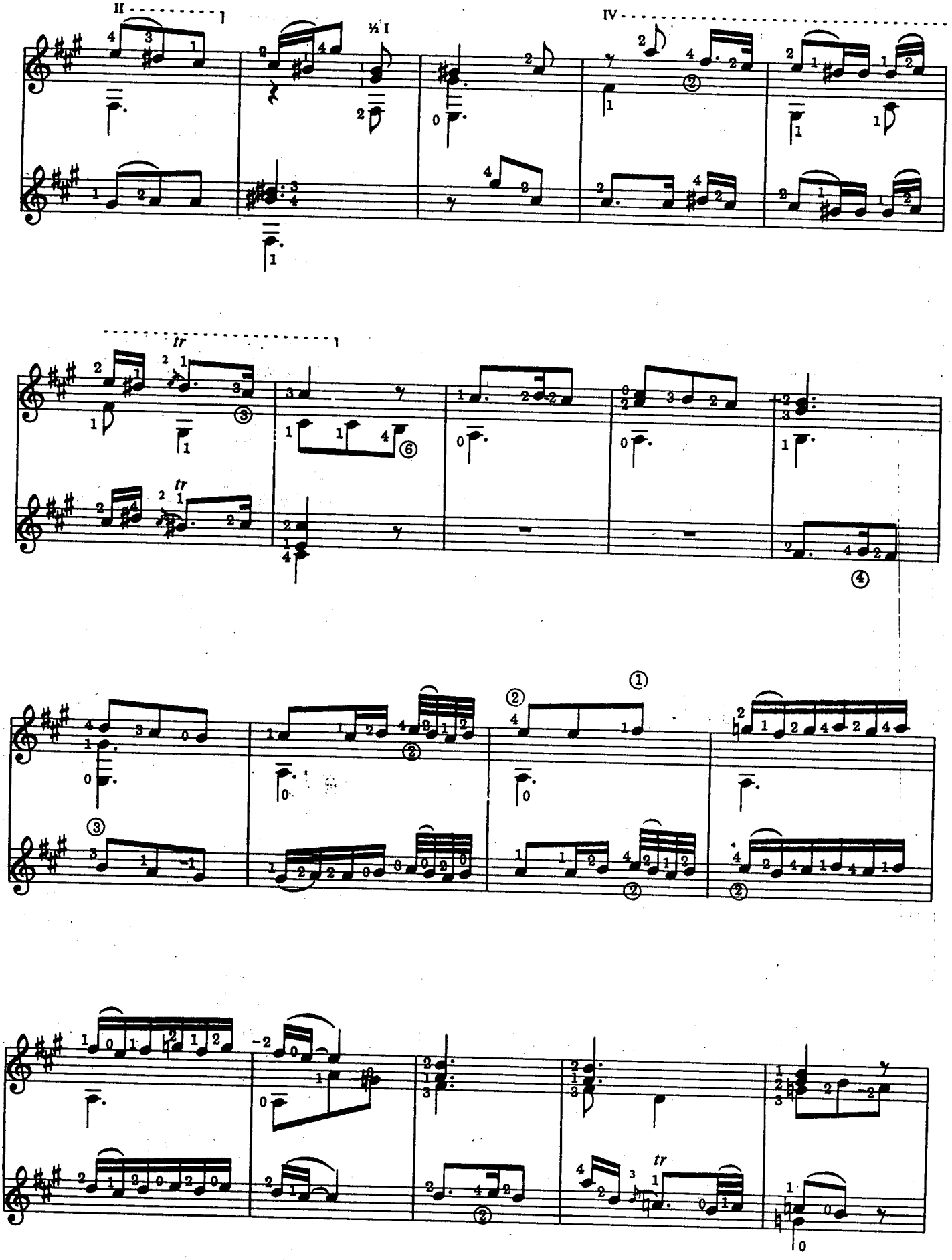

½ II
II

Andante

This very attractive andante translates readily to the guitar and should present few technical difficulties. As in the other movements I have at times left the bass in one part only where the doubling in unison did not seem to add any musical value.
Suggested tempo is a relaxed ♪ = 104.

Wolff Jacob Lauffensteiner




II
I
½ I
IV
tr
tr