Lute Music of J. S. Bach

Transcribed for the Spanish Guitar

edited by C. Nelson

The Bach Lute Suites

These four suites and miscellaneous additional pieces have been drawn from two sources: Ariel Publications AM 27616 © 1980 as edited and fingered for guitar by Jerry Willard and Kjos WG100 © 1989 as edited and fingered by Frank Koonce. I have changed much of the fingering they supplied, which in turn differs considerably between the two. The fingering appearing here is itself preliminary but may be useful as a starting point or in comparison with other editions.

A commonly expressed opinion about fingering is that there is no one "right" way, that everyone's hands are different. I disagree. It is true that some great guitarists have had damaged or otherwise exceptional hands and innovative techniques are certainly possible. But guitarists' hands and their connections to the brain are mostly pretty similar. In any case fluidity of hand movement and the sounds produced as a result will vary considerably with the fingering used. There are perfect moves for every situation. Good luck making them!

The music of Bach for the guitar or even for the lute lies some way from the composer's hand. There is question as to whether much or even any of this material originally was composed for the lute. Much, in fact, may have been written for a "mechanical lute," the *lautenwerk*, a harpsichord-like keyboard instrument of the time. This seems congruent with Bach's involvement with other mechanized instruments then flourishing, the harpsichord and the organ.

The "BWV" number used in the identification of these pieces is the catalog number in the *Bach Werke Verzeichnis* (catalog of Bach's works) of Wolfgang Schmieder (Leipzig, 1958). This numbering system is not based on any chronological ordering in the works.

Suite I, BWV 996, is in the original E minor. Suite II, BWV 997, has been transposed from C minor to A minor. Suite III, BWV 995, derives from Suite V in C minor for cello, BWV 1011, and was further transposed from the G minor of the lute version to A minor for the guitar. Suite IV, BWV 1006a, derives from the Violin Partita III, BWV 1006, and remains in the original E major. The Prelude, Fugue and Allegro, BWV 998, has been transposed from E flat major to D. The Prelude, BWV 999, has been transposed from C minor to D minor.

The fugues BWV 1000 and 1001* are quite similar in that they are both drawn from the Violin Sonata I in G minor, BWV 1001. The first is from the historical lute version. Koonce felt that liberties may have been taken in the lute tablature and therefore transcribed the violin sonata directly for the guitar, producing the second. Both are transposed to A minor.

- C. Nelson
Santa Ynez Valley

Preliminary edition – Hallowe'en, 2000

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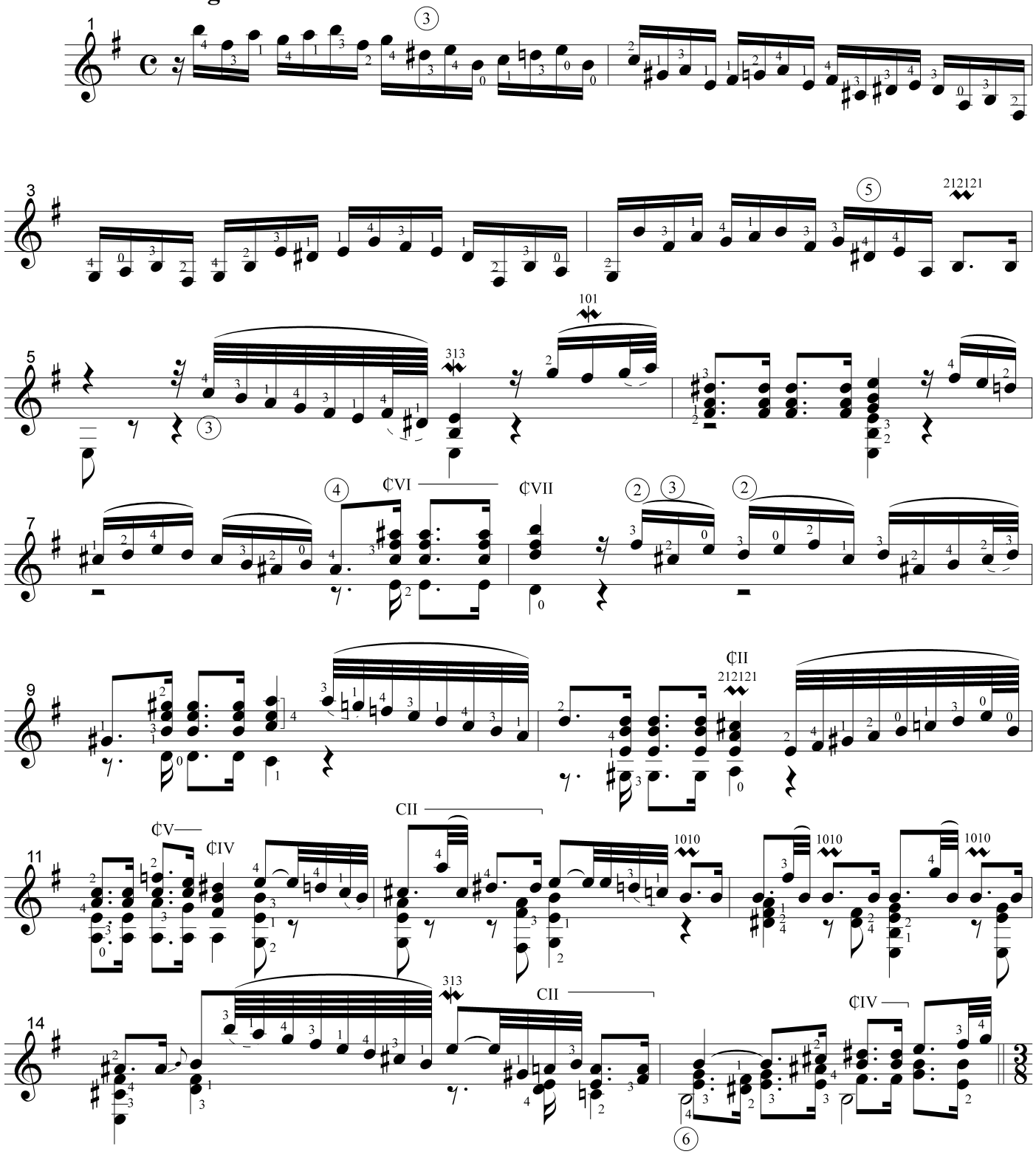
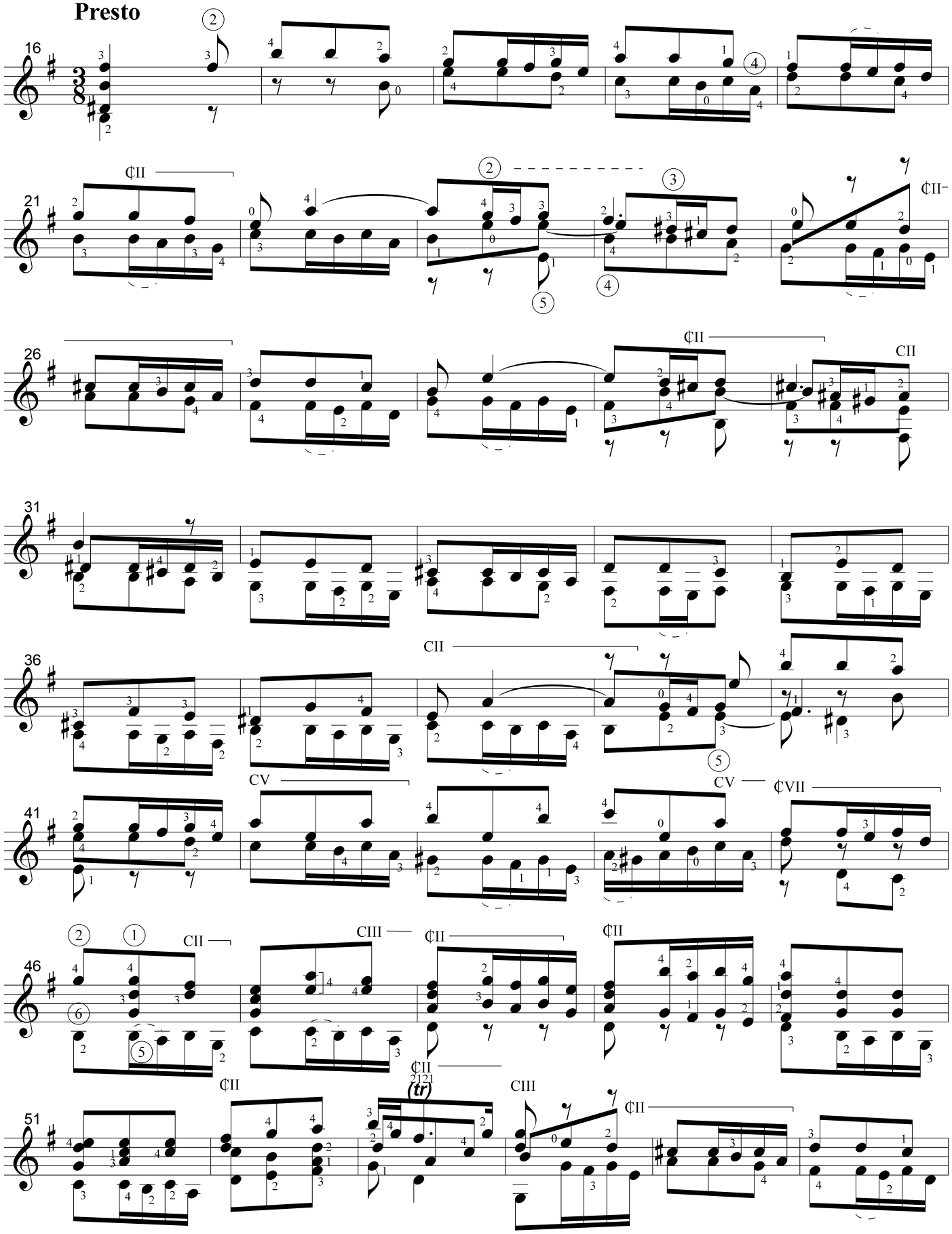
Suite I (bwv 996)

Edited and fingered by Jerry Willard (Ariel, 1980) and Frank Koonce (Kjos, 1989)
Further edited and re-fingered by C. Nelson (1999)

J. S. Bach
Weimar (1708 - 1723)

Passagio

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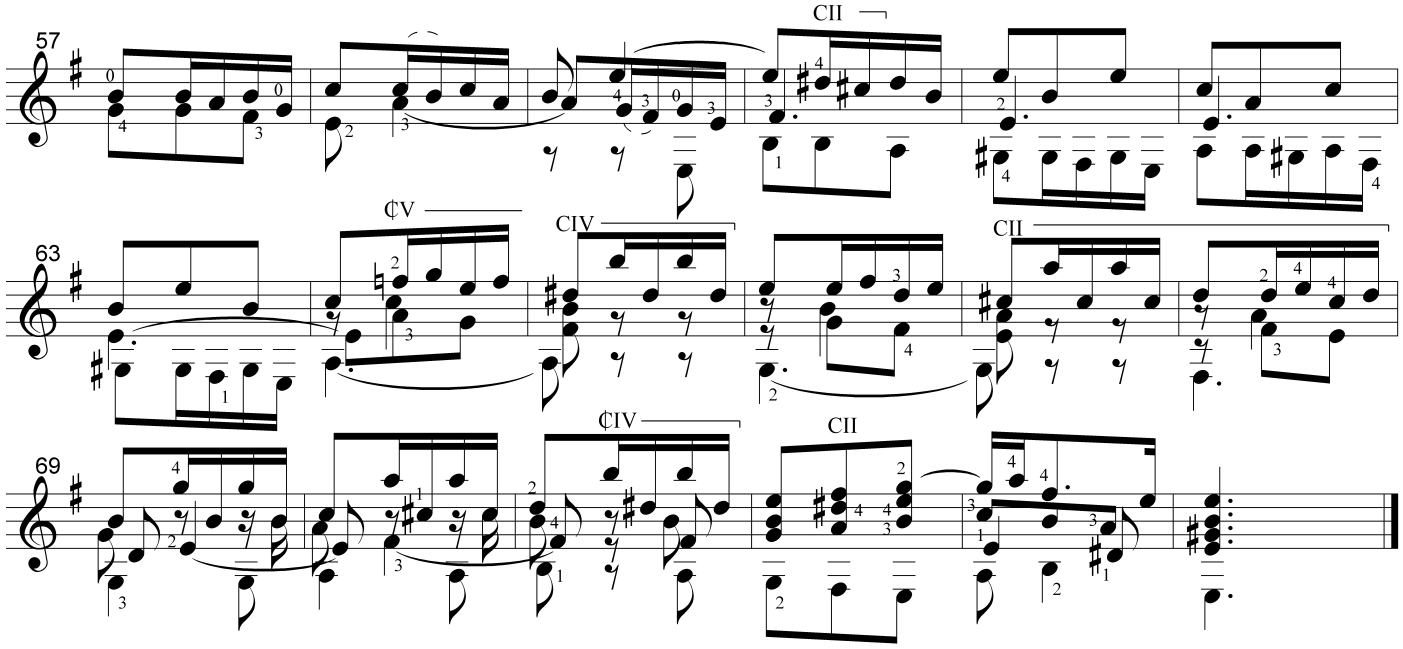
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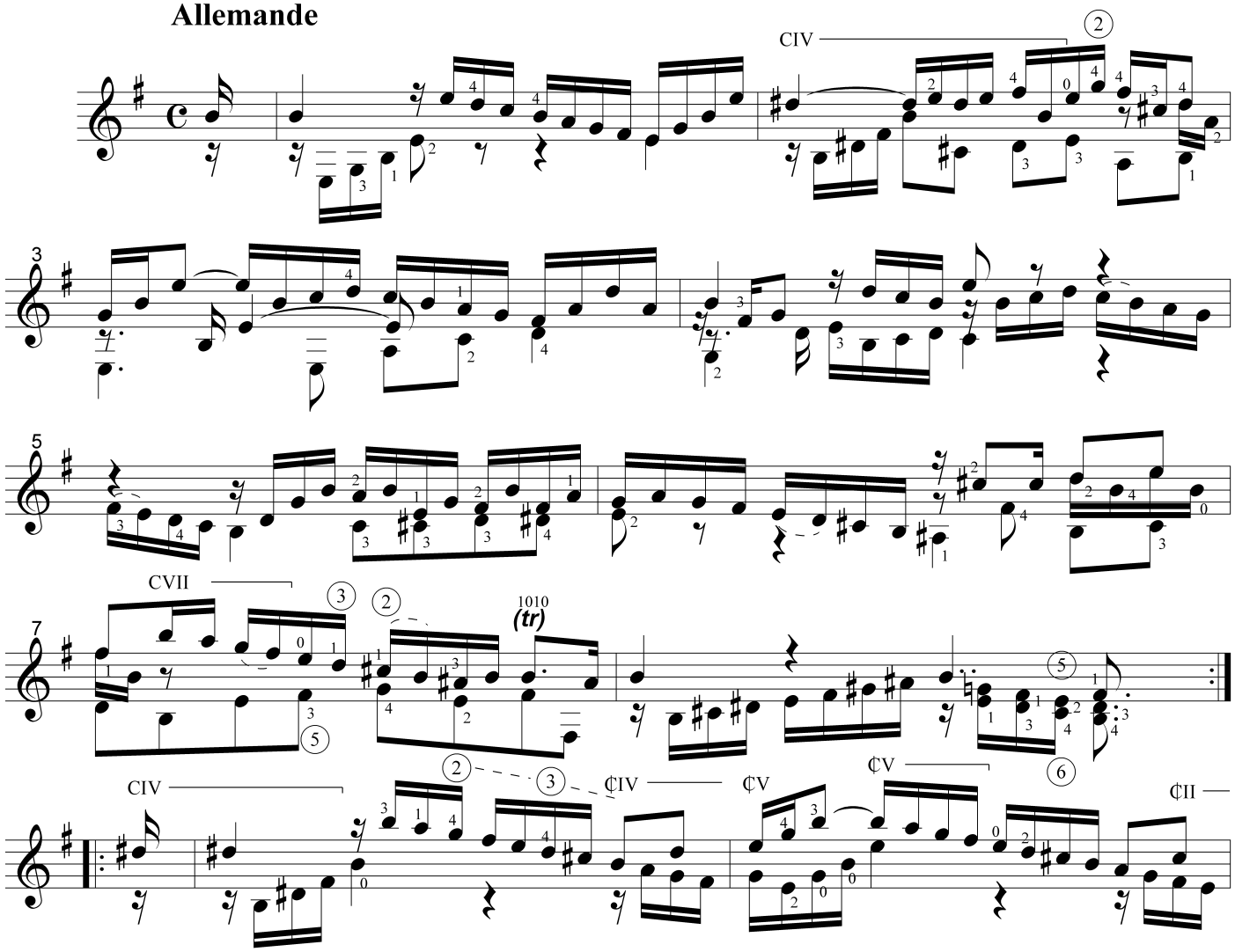
Allemande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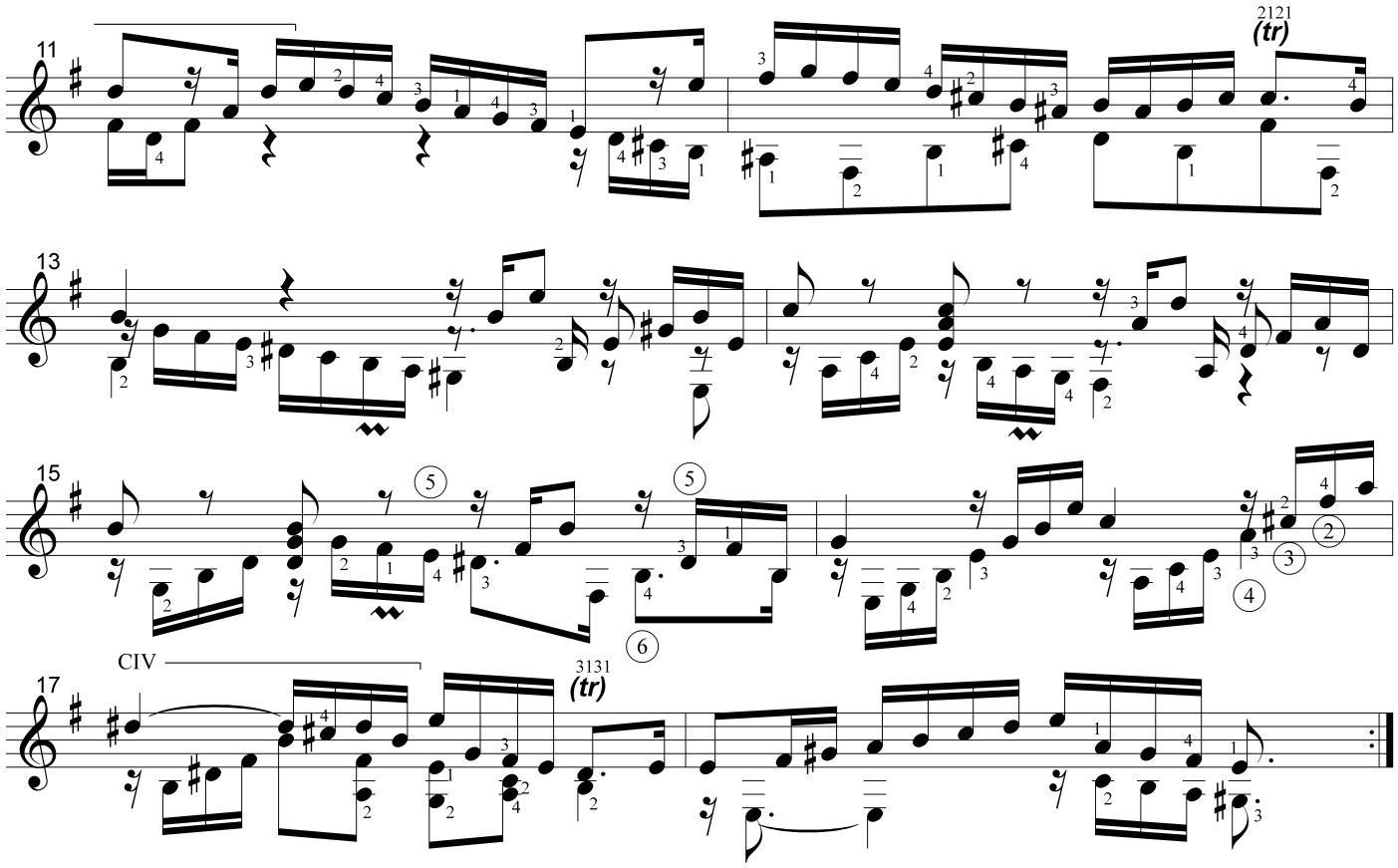
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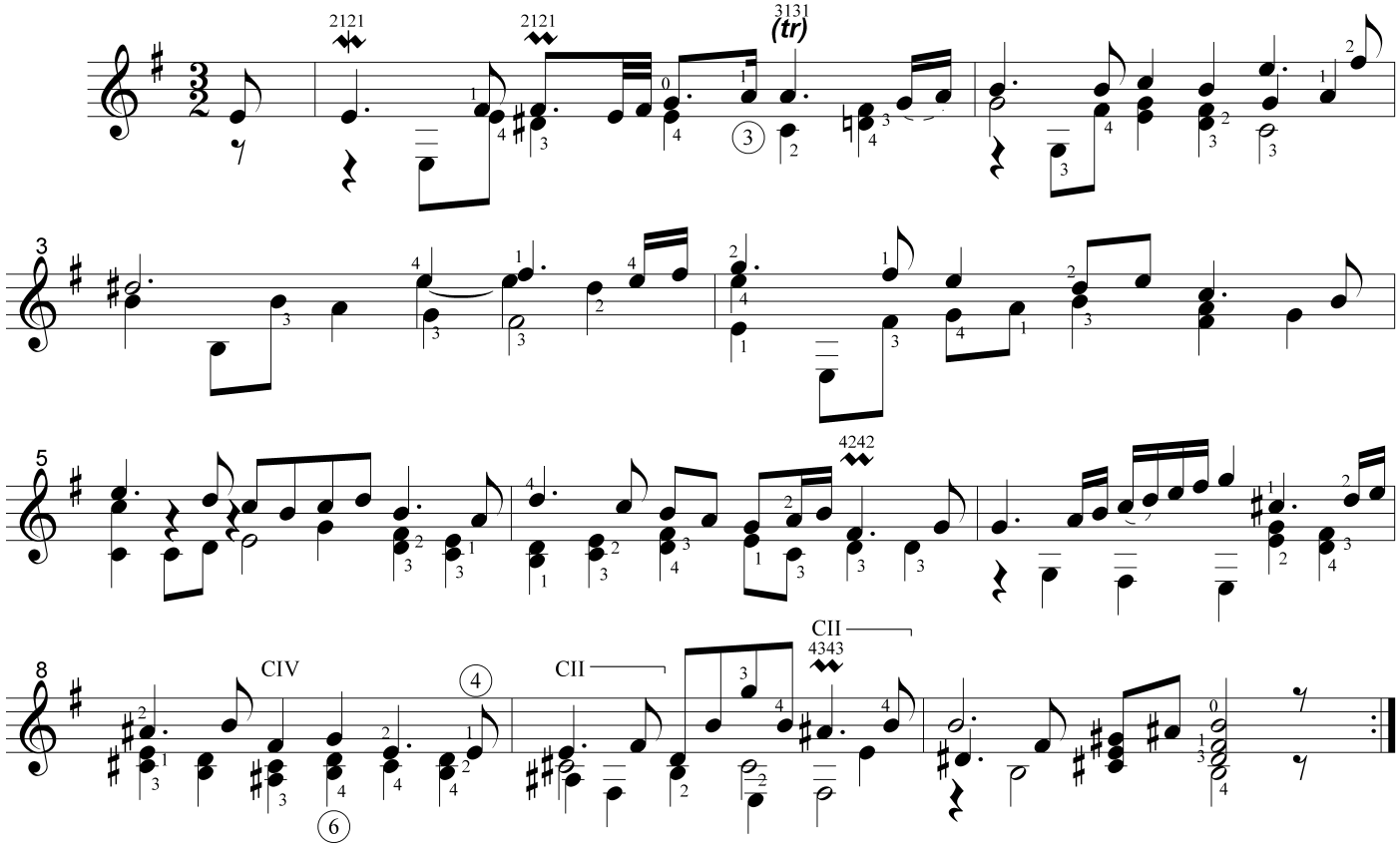
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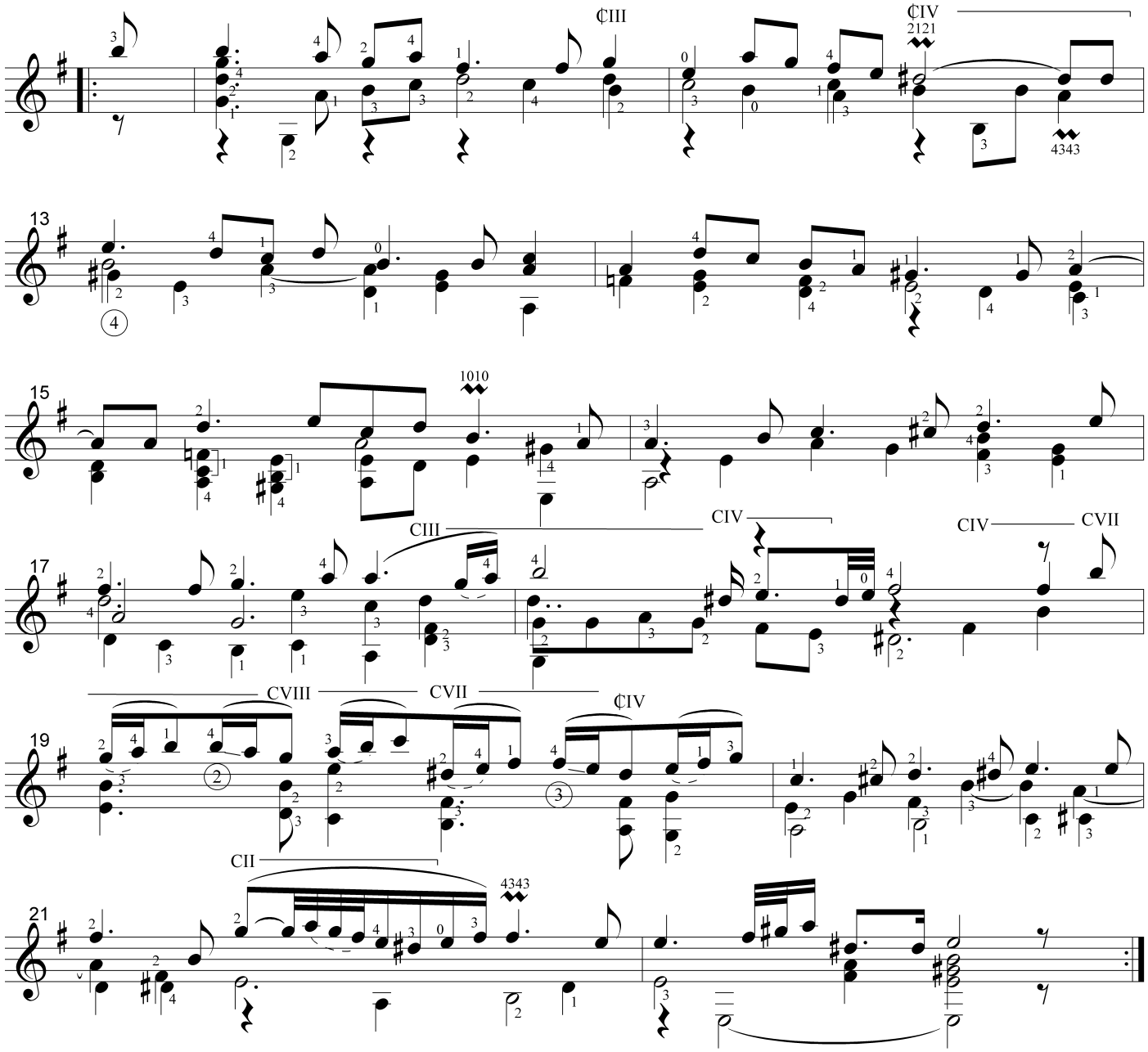
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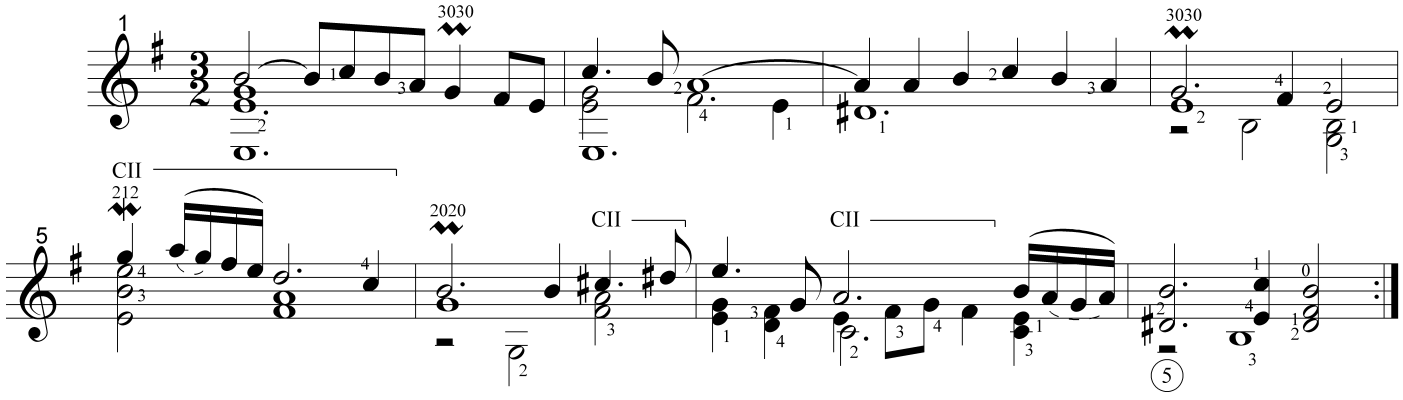
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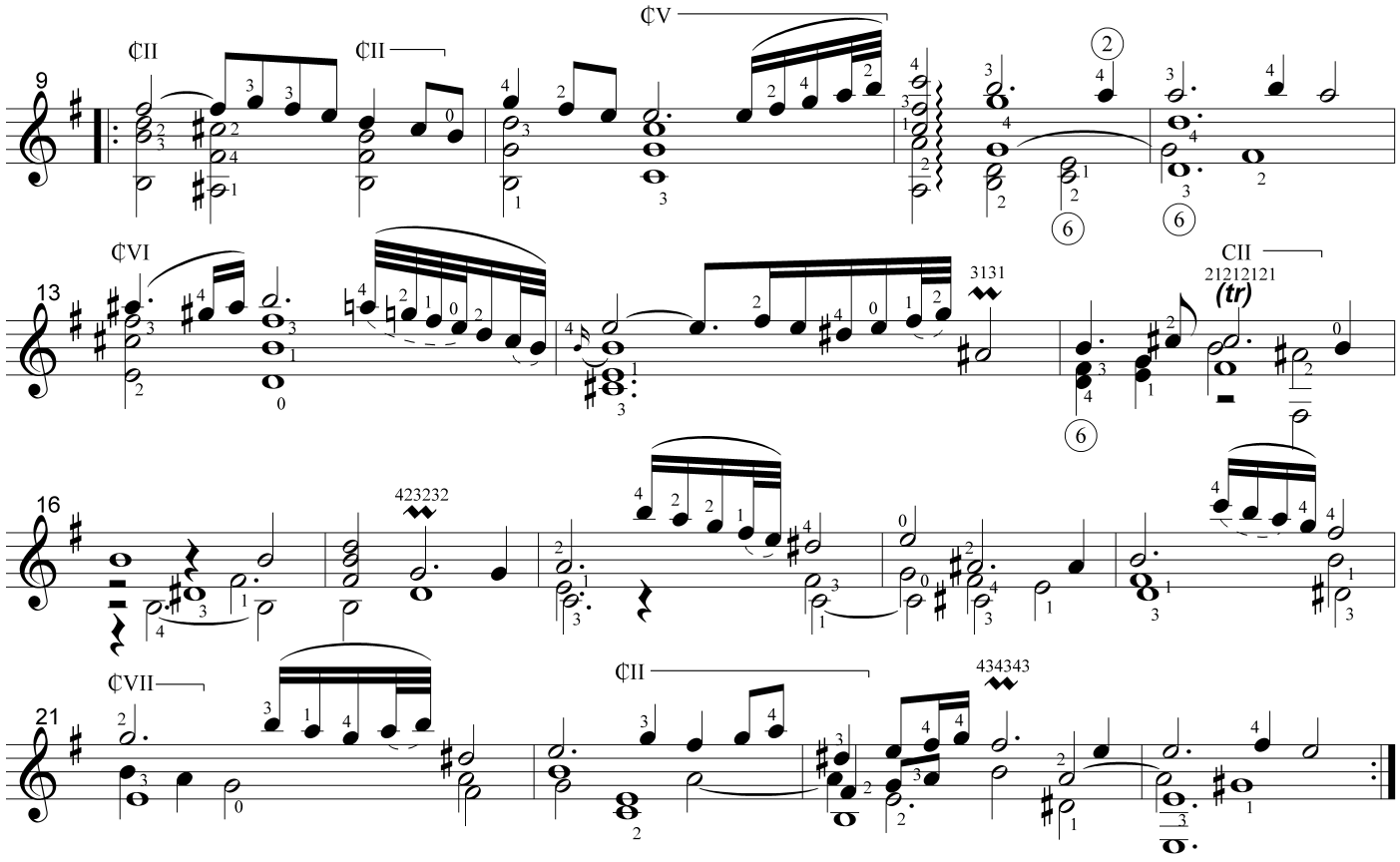
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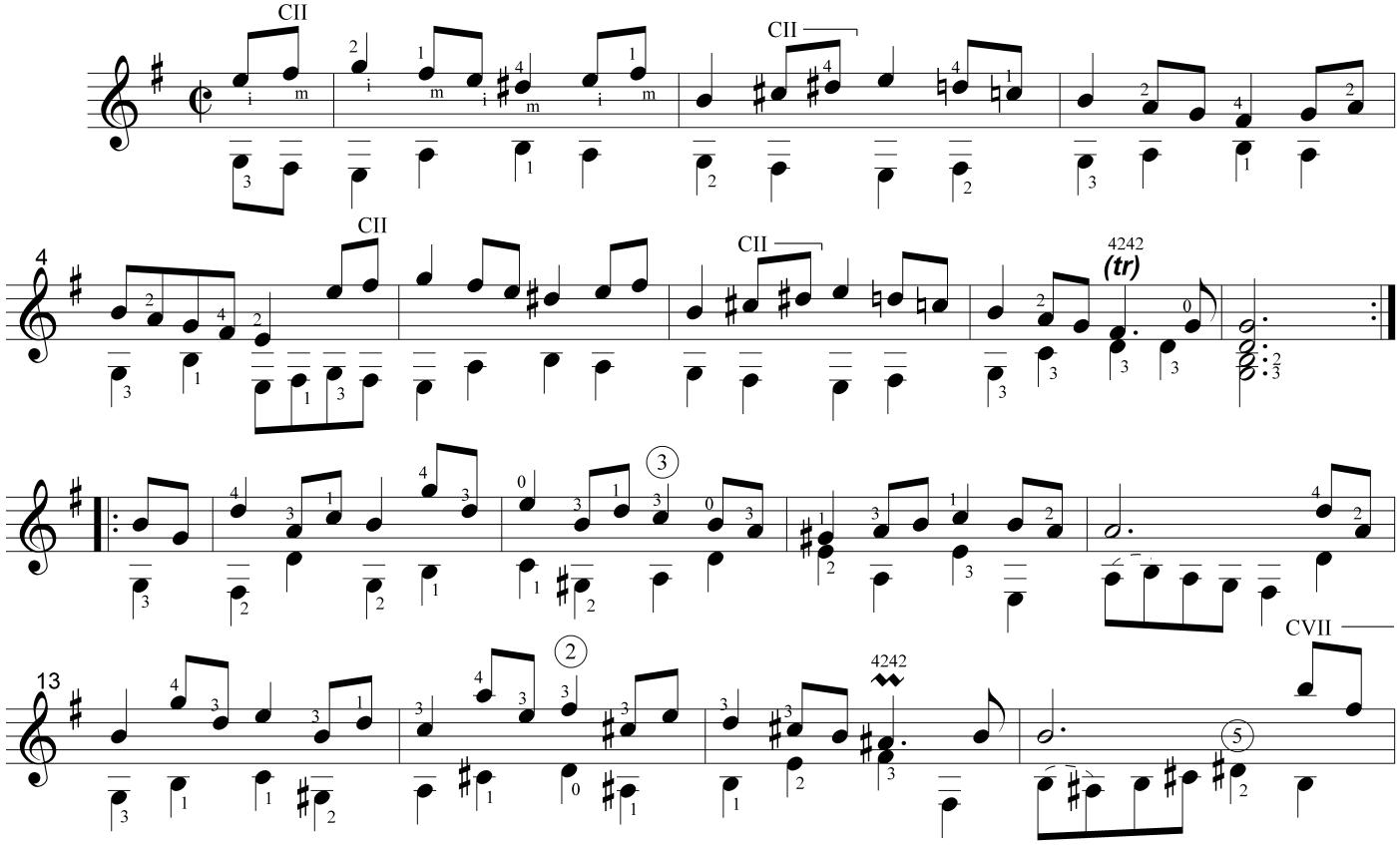
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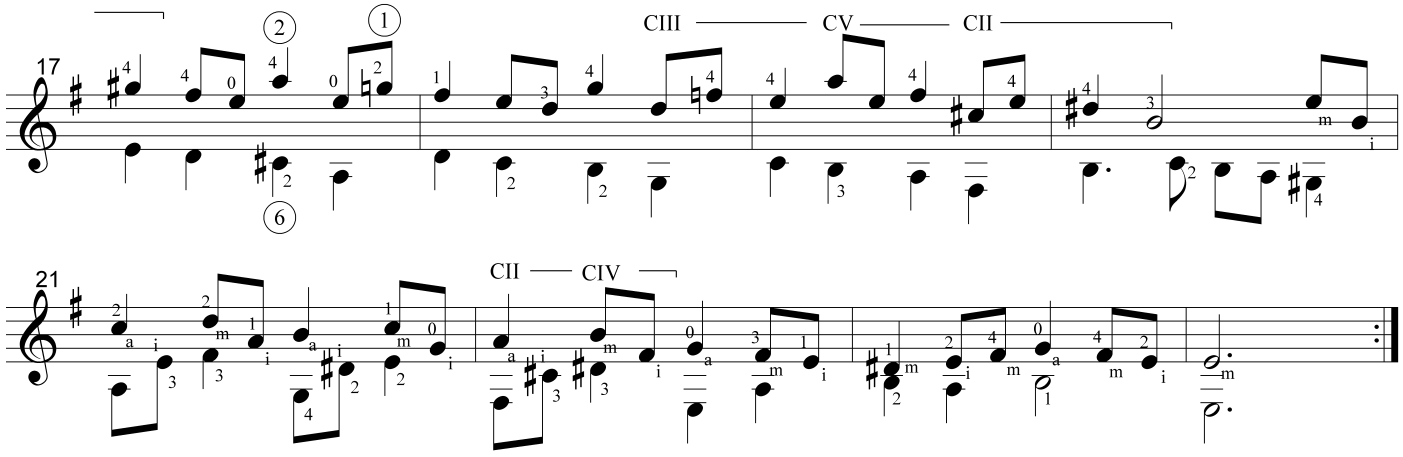

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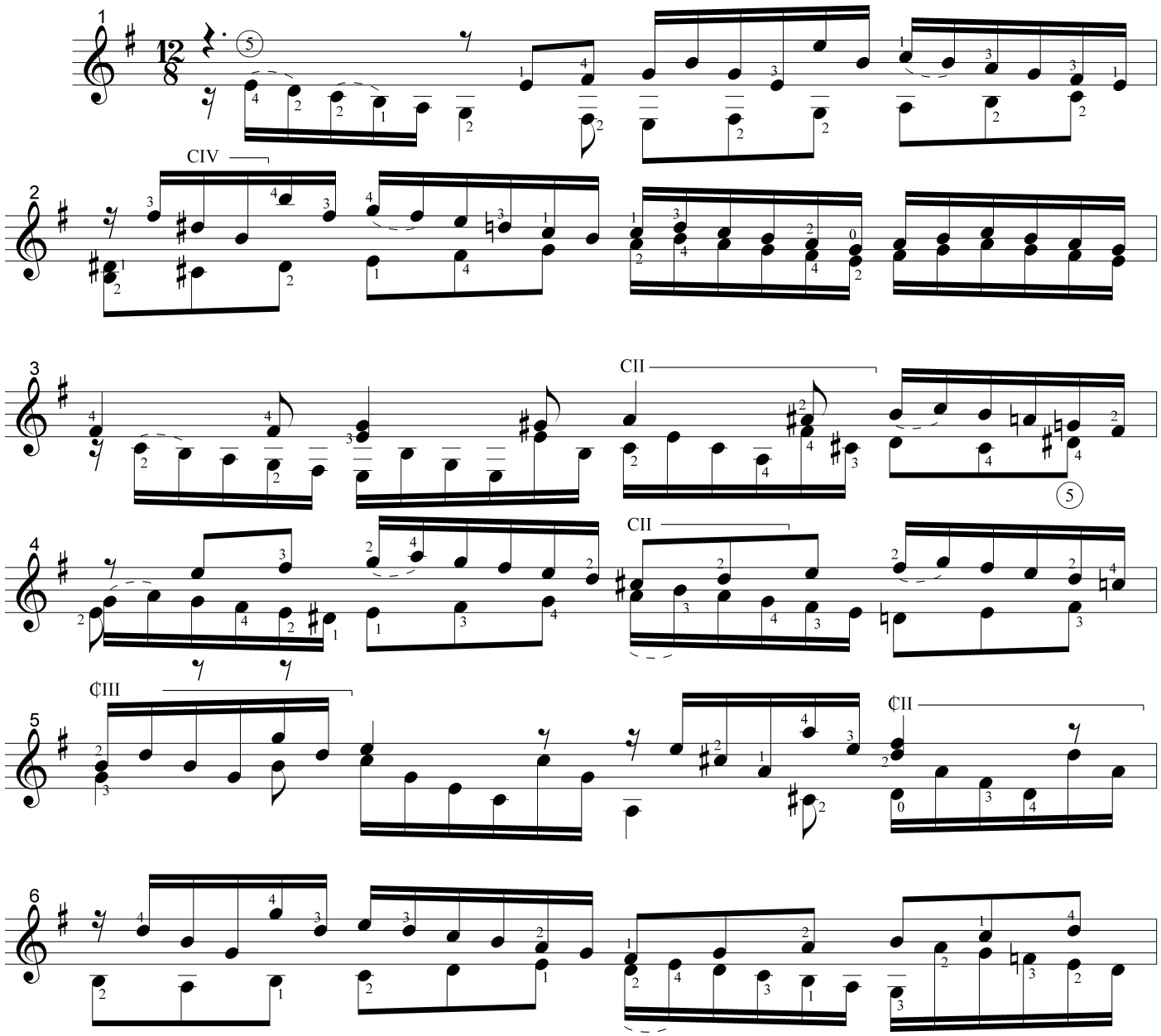

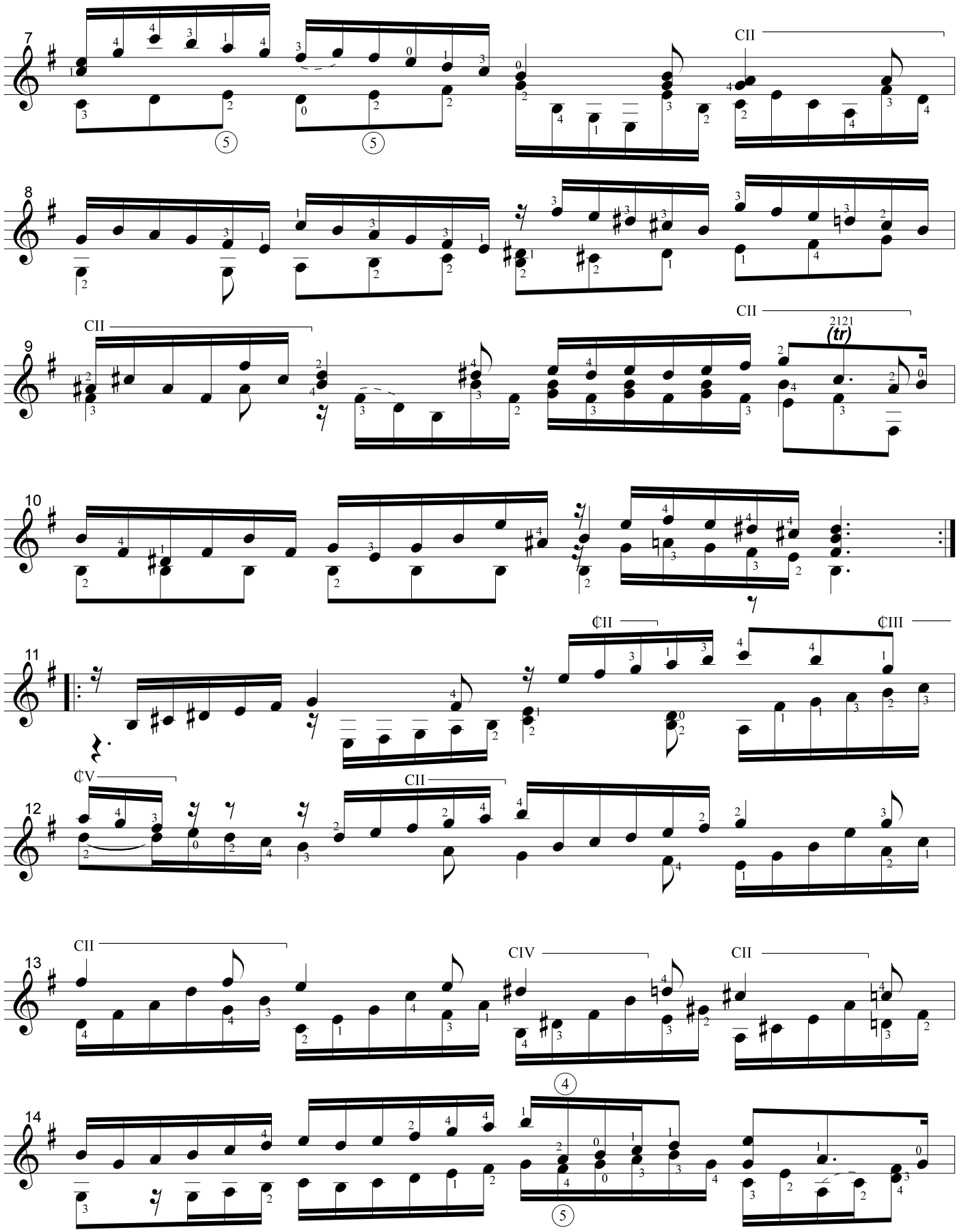
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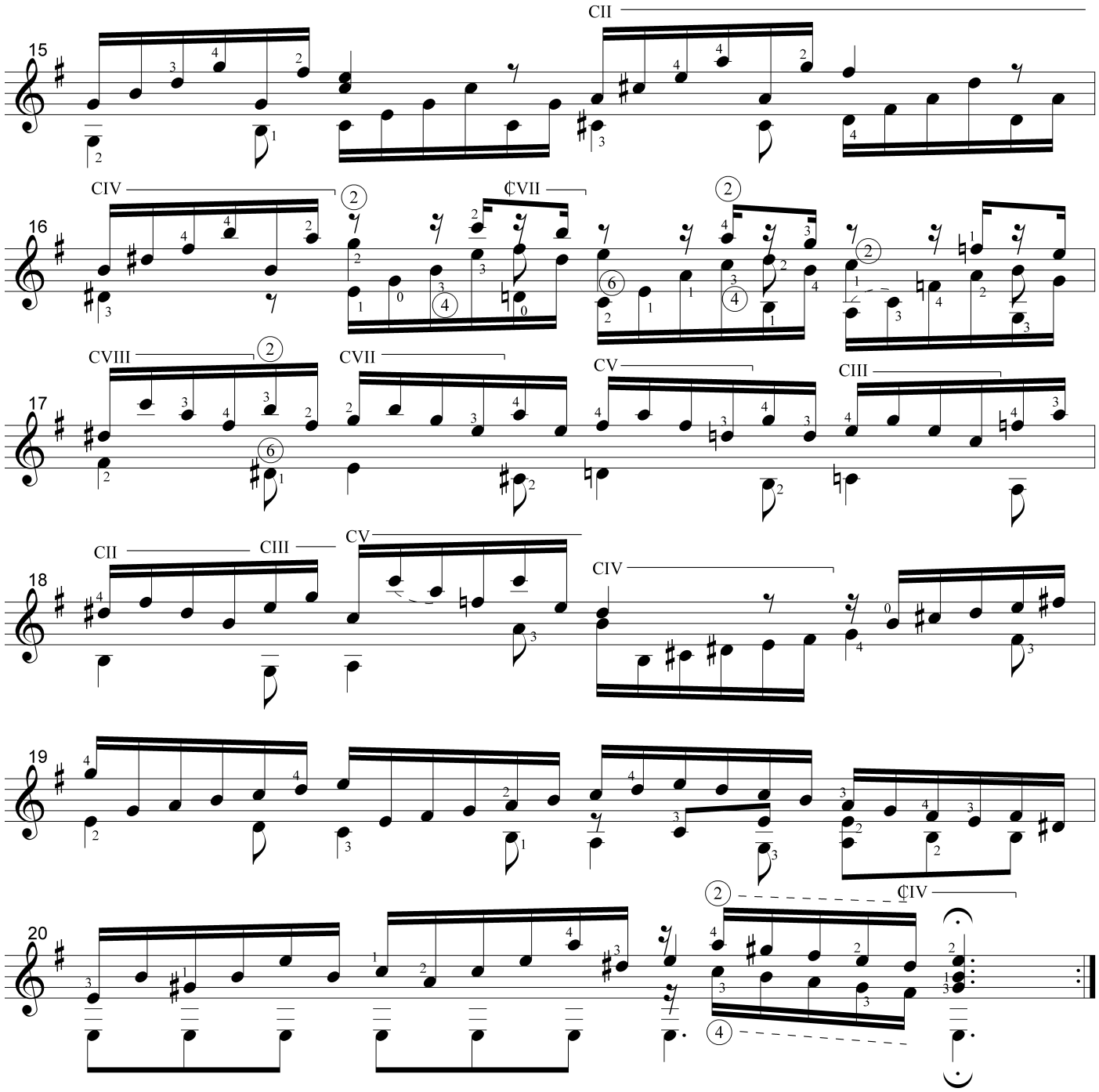
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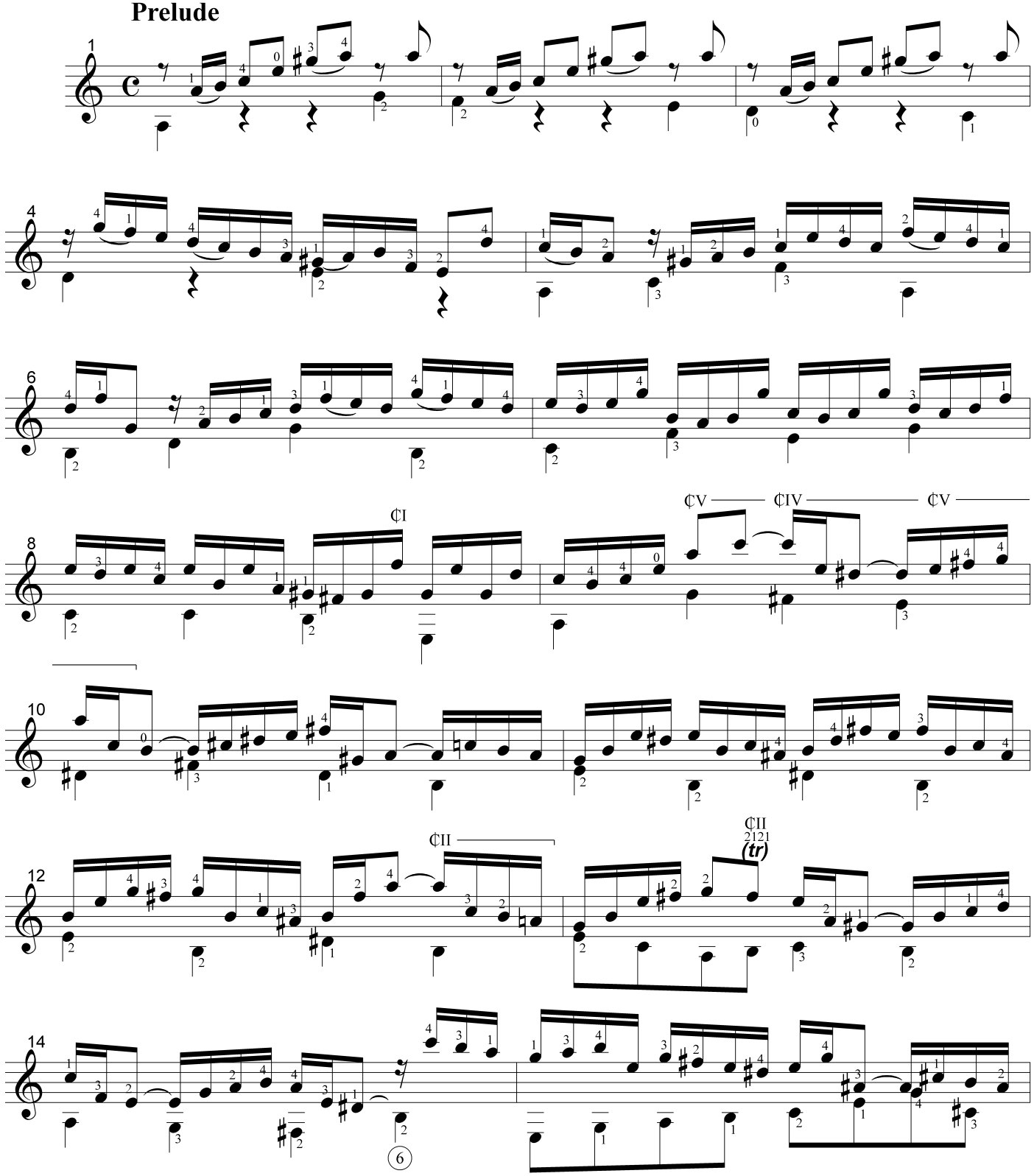
¢IV

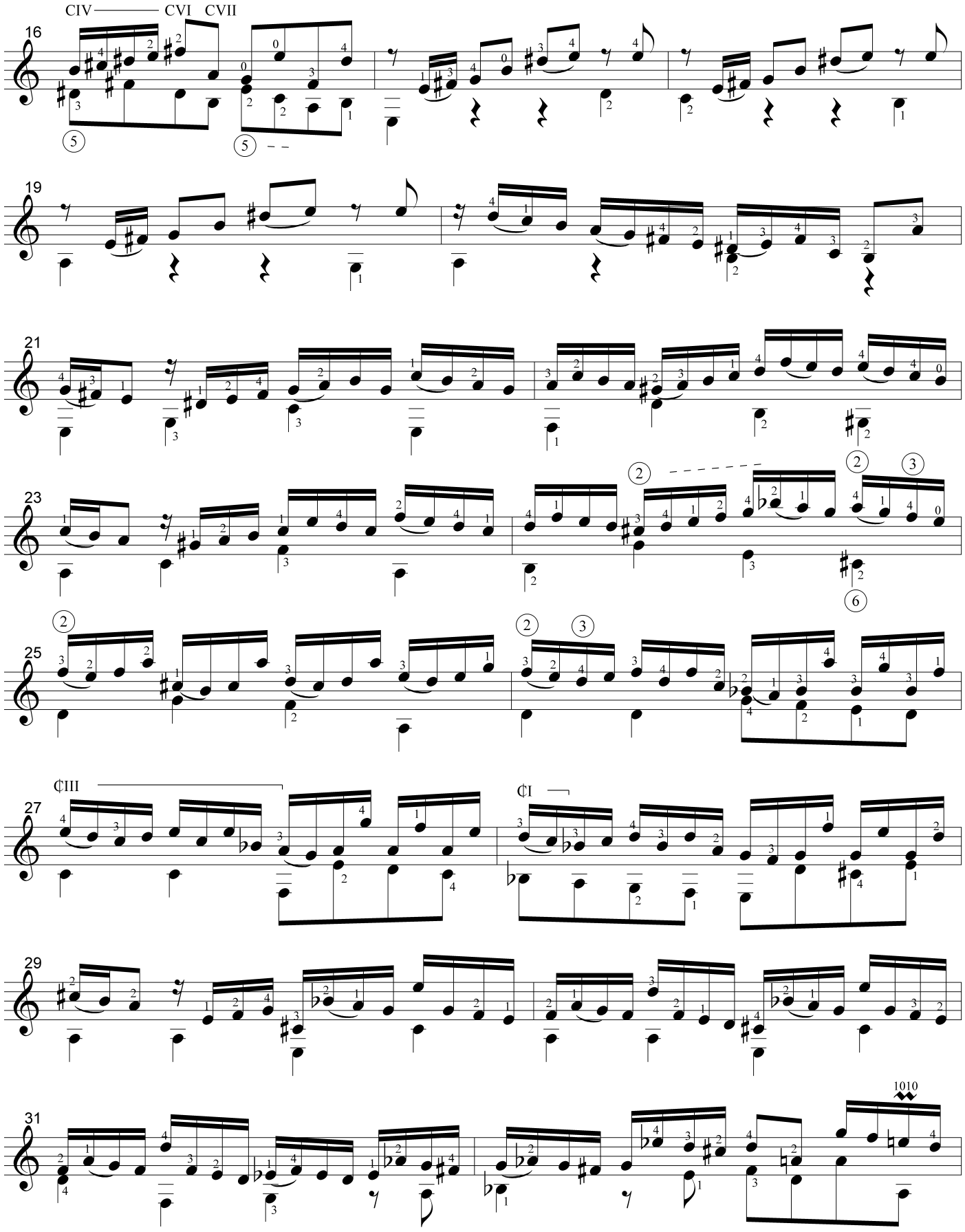
Suite II (bwv 997)

Edited and fingered by Jerry Willard (Ariel, 1980) and Frank Koonce (Kjos, 1989)
Further edited and re-fingered by C. Nelson (1999)

J. S. Bach
Leipzig (1723 - 1750)

Prelude

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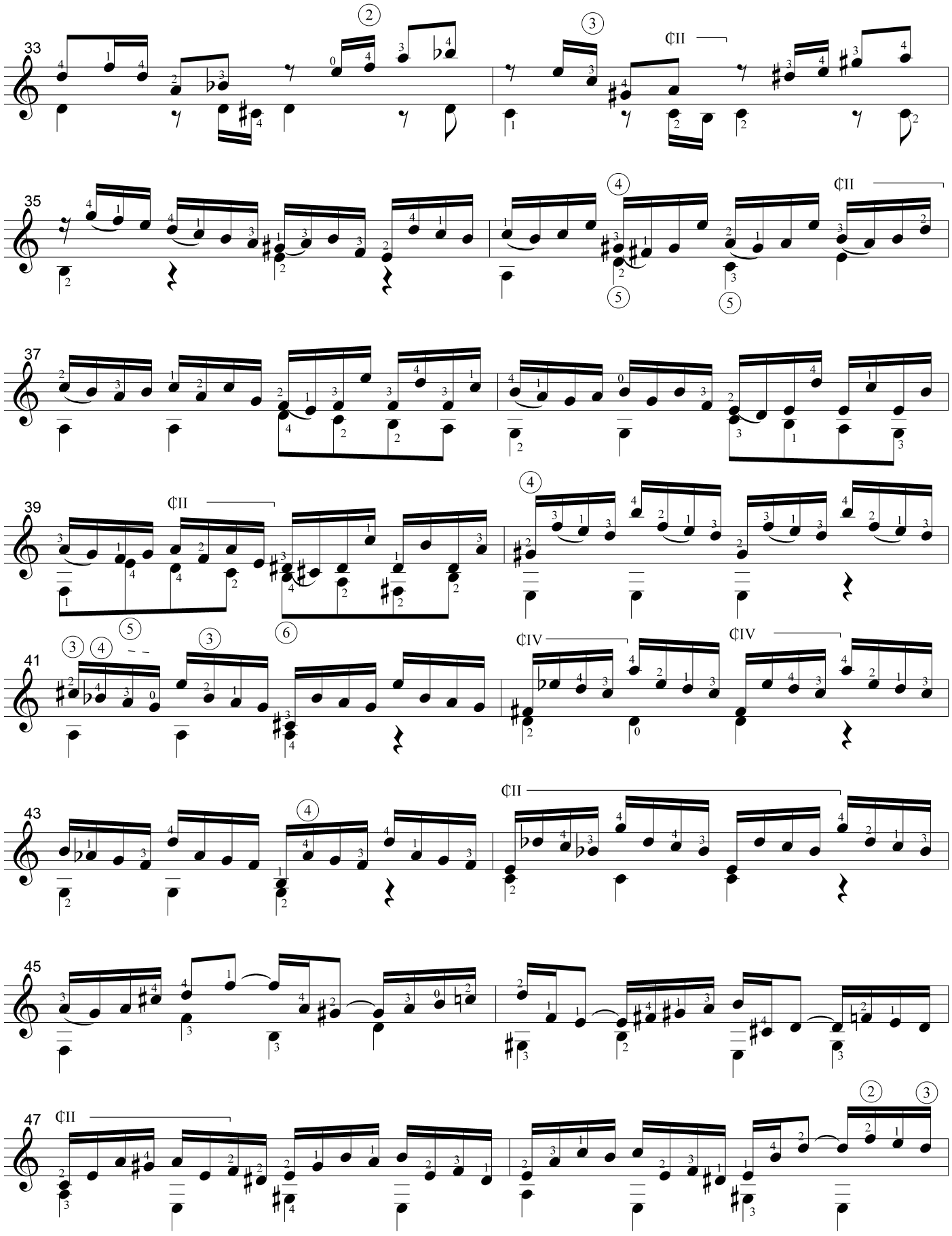
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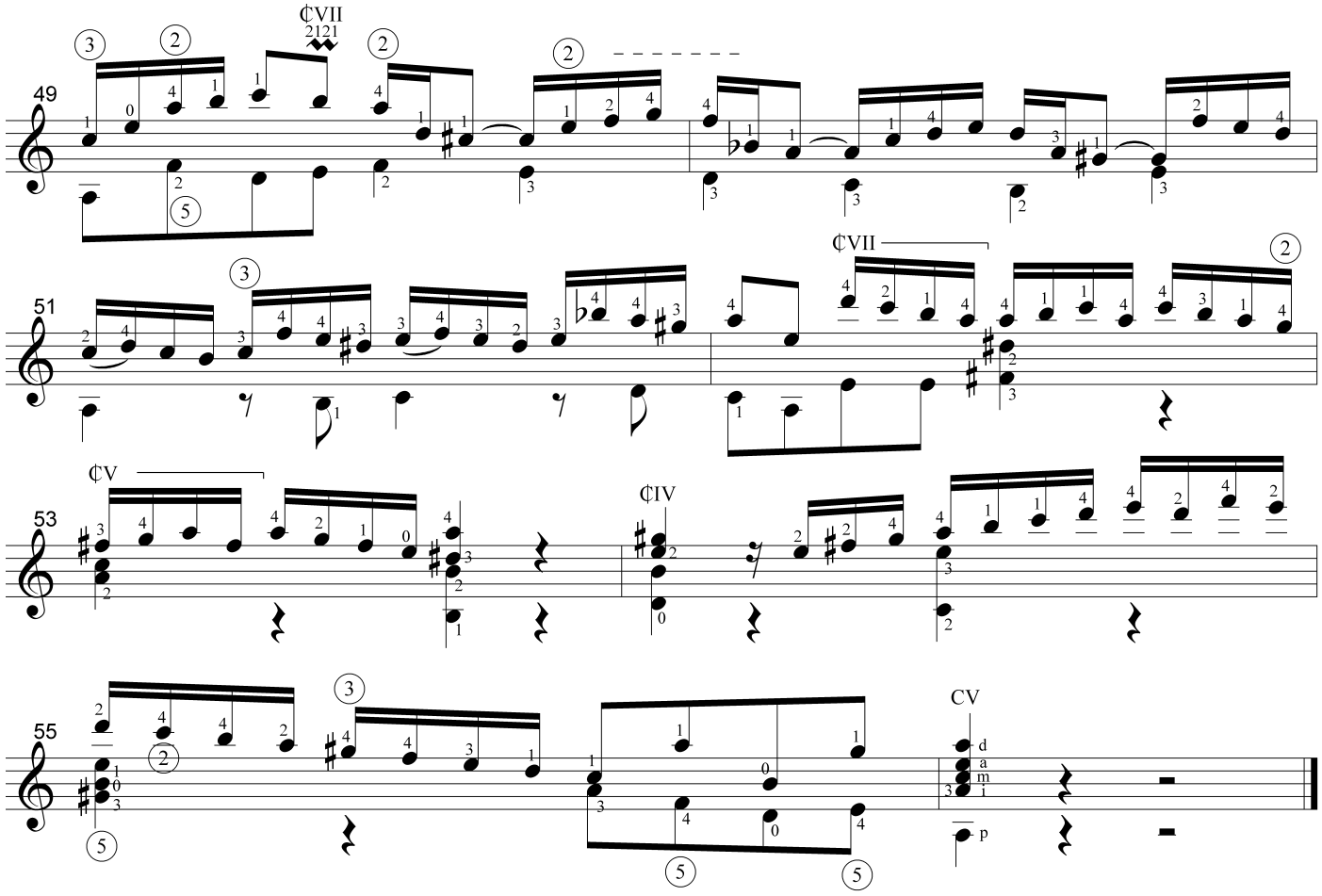
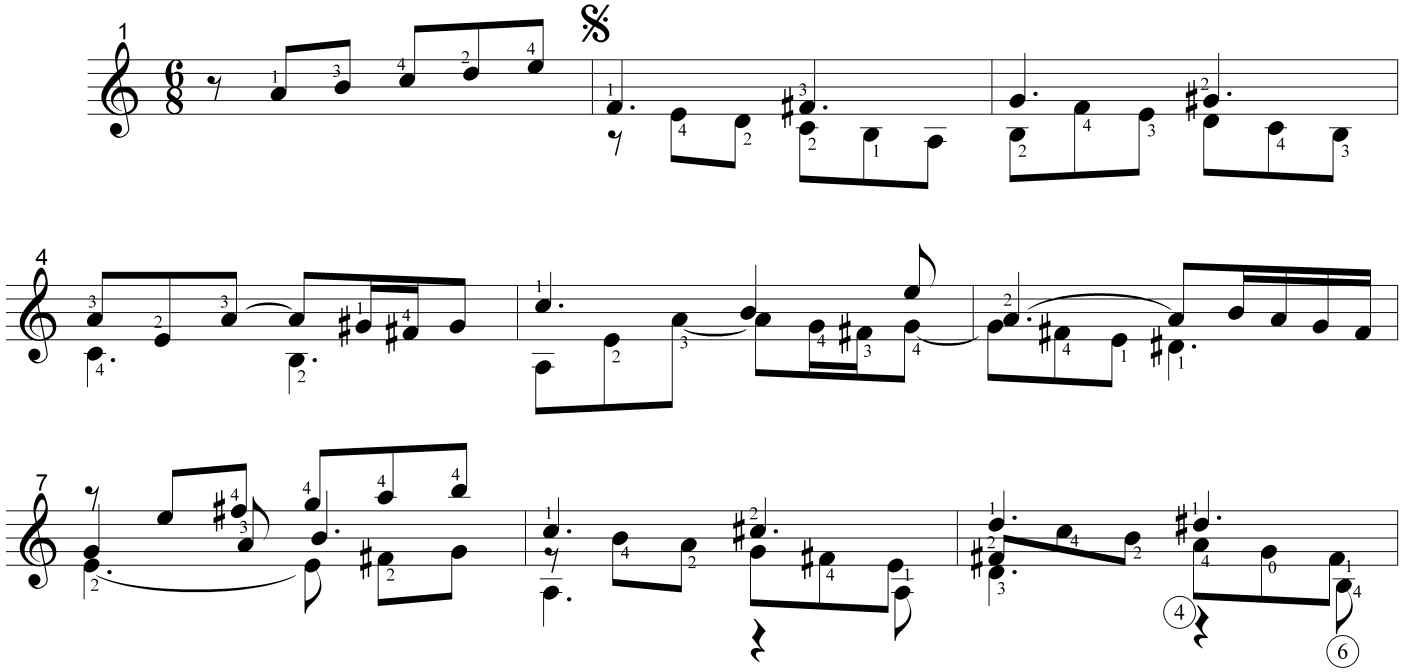
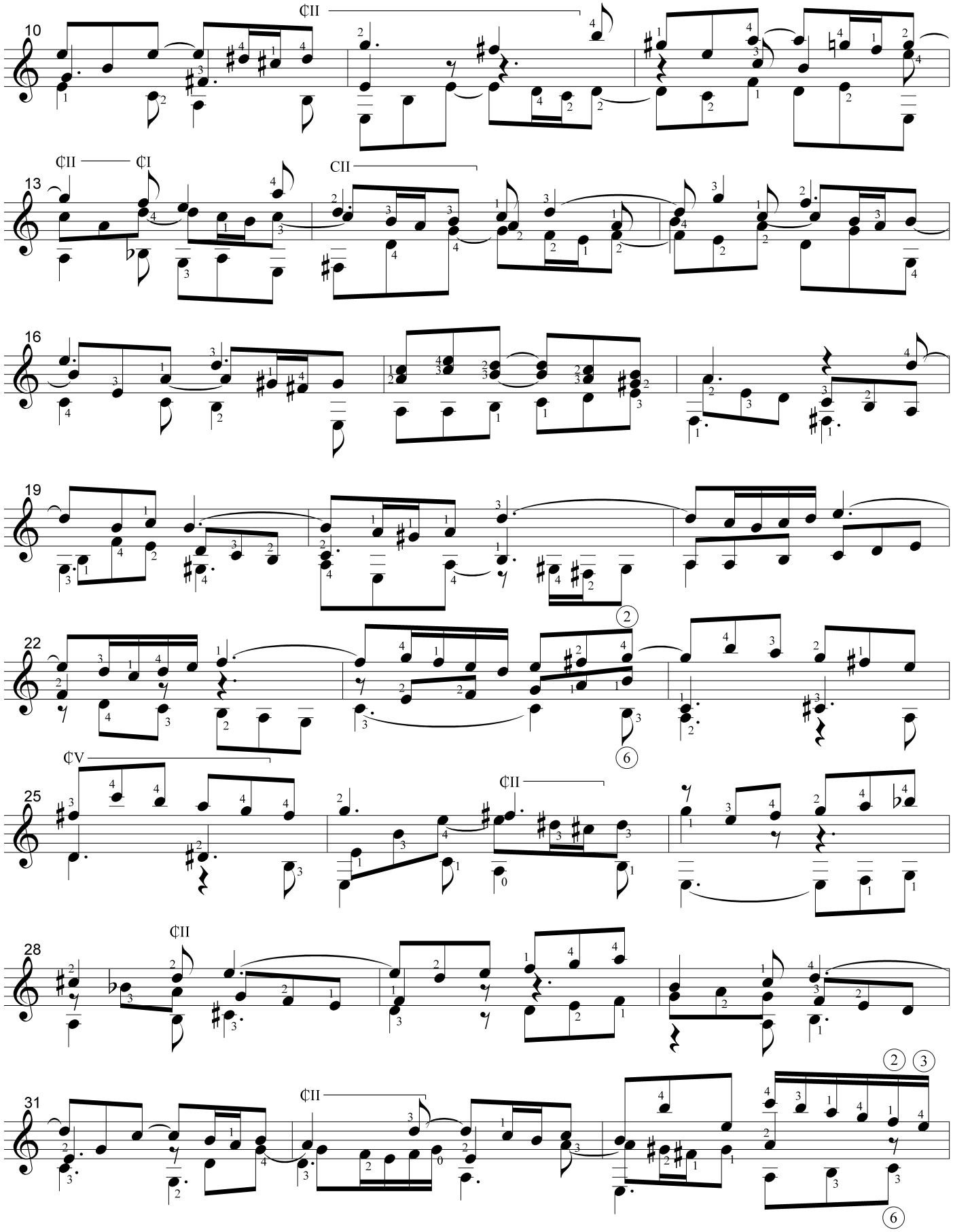


Fugue

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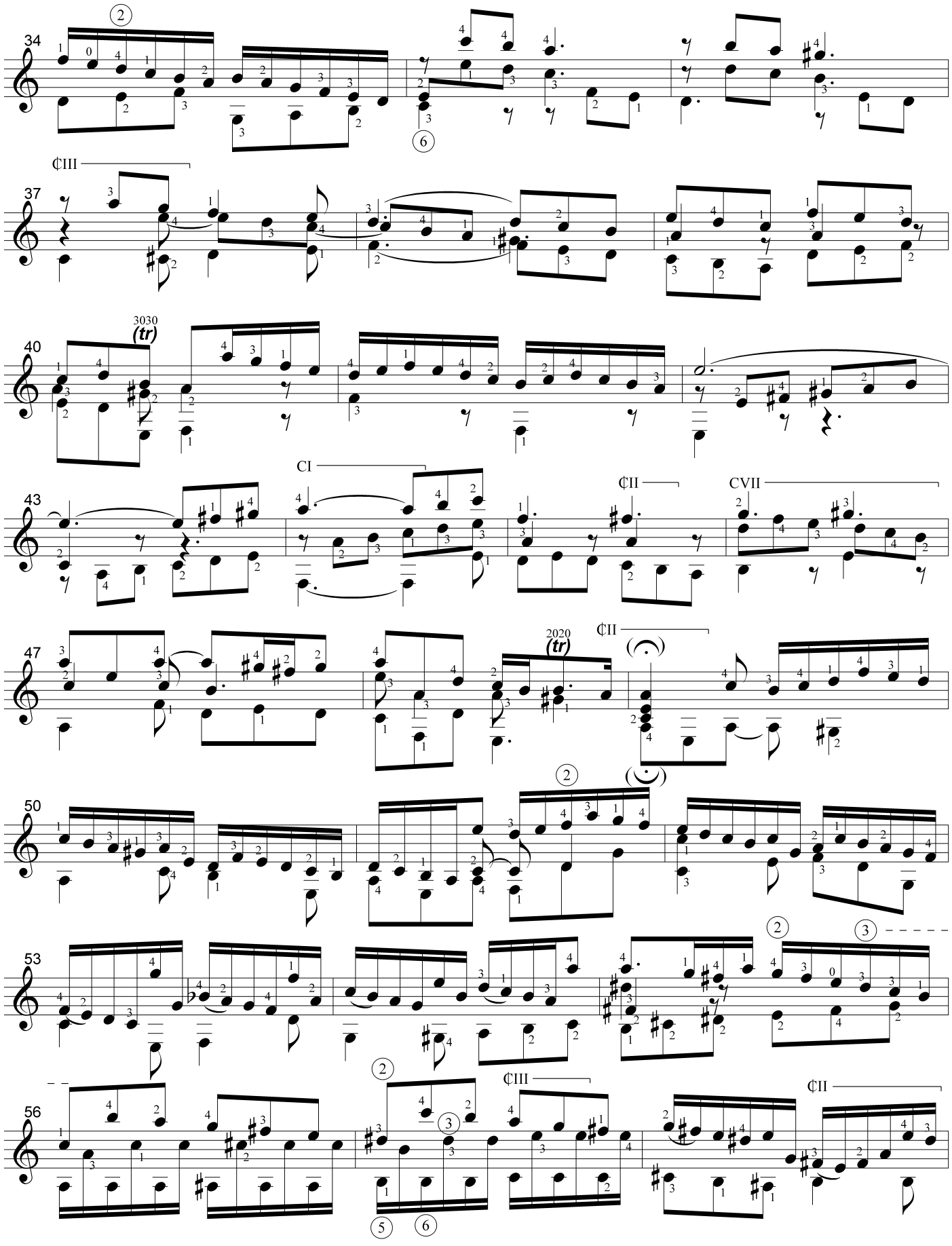
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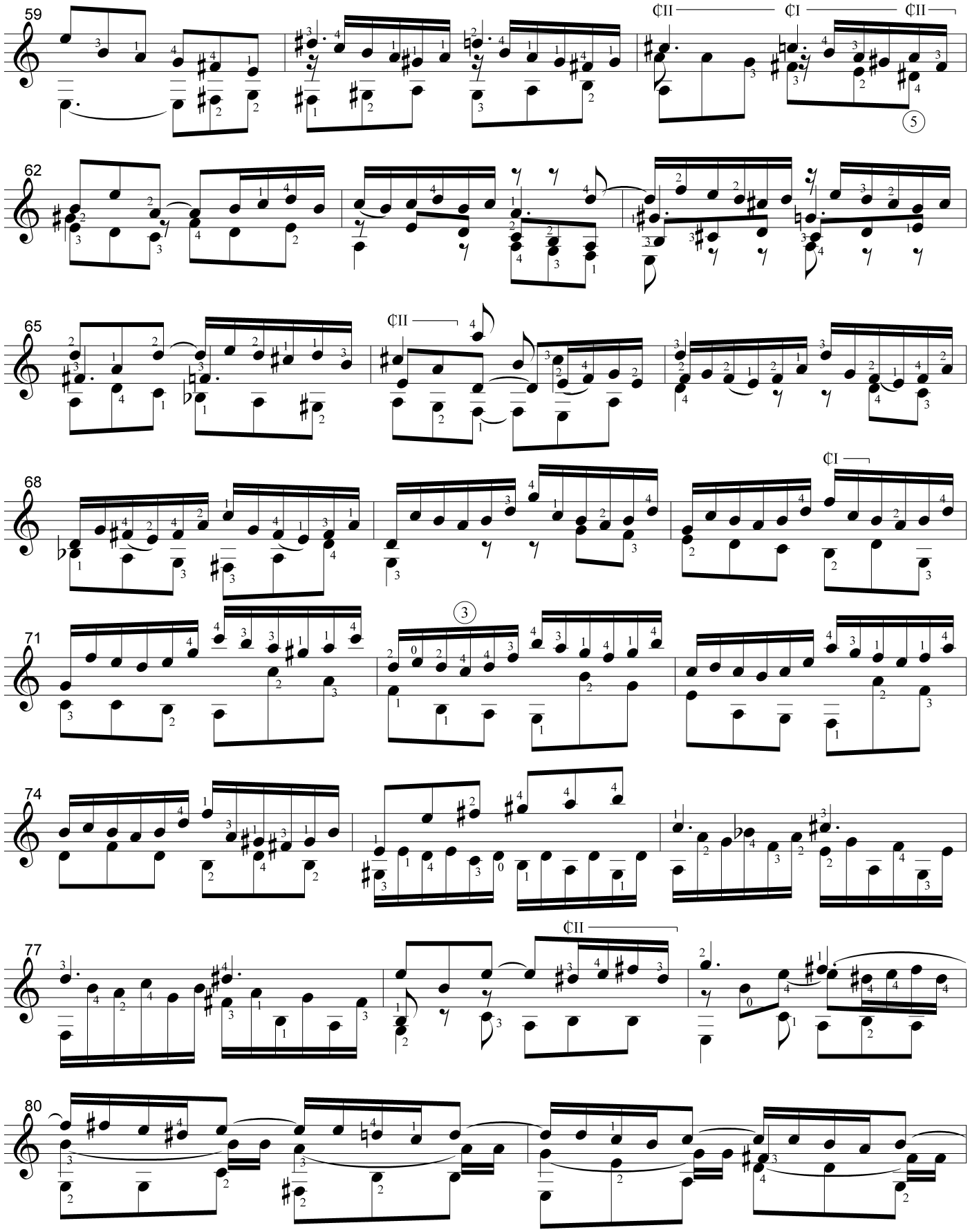
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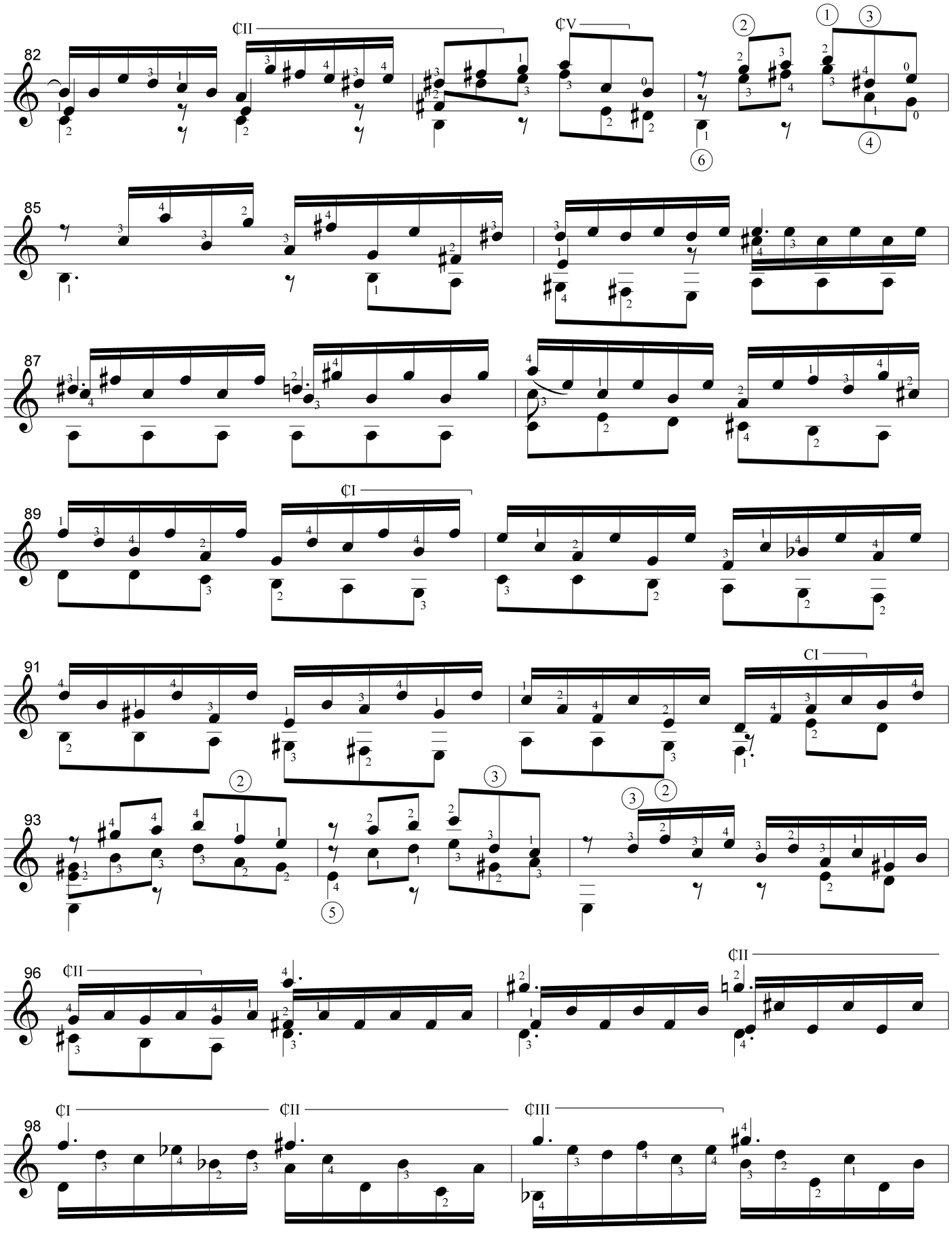
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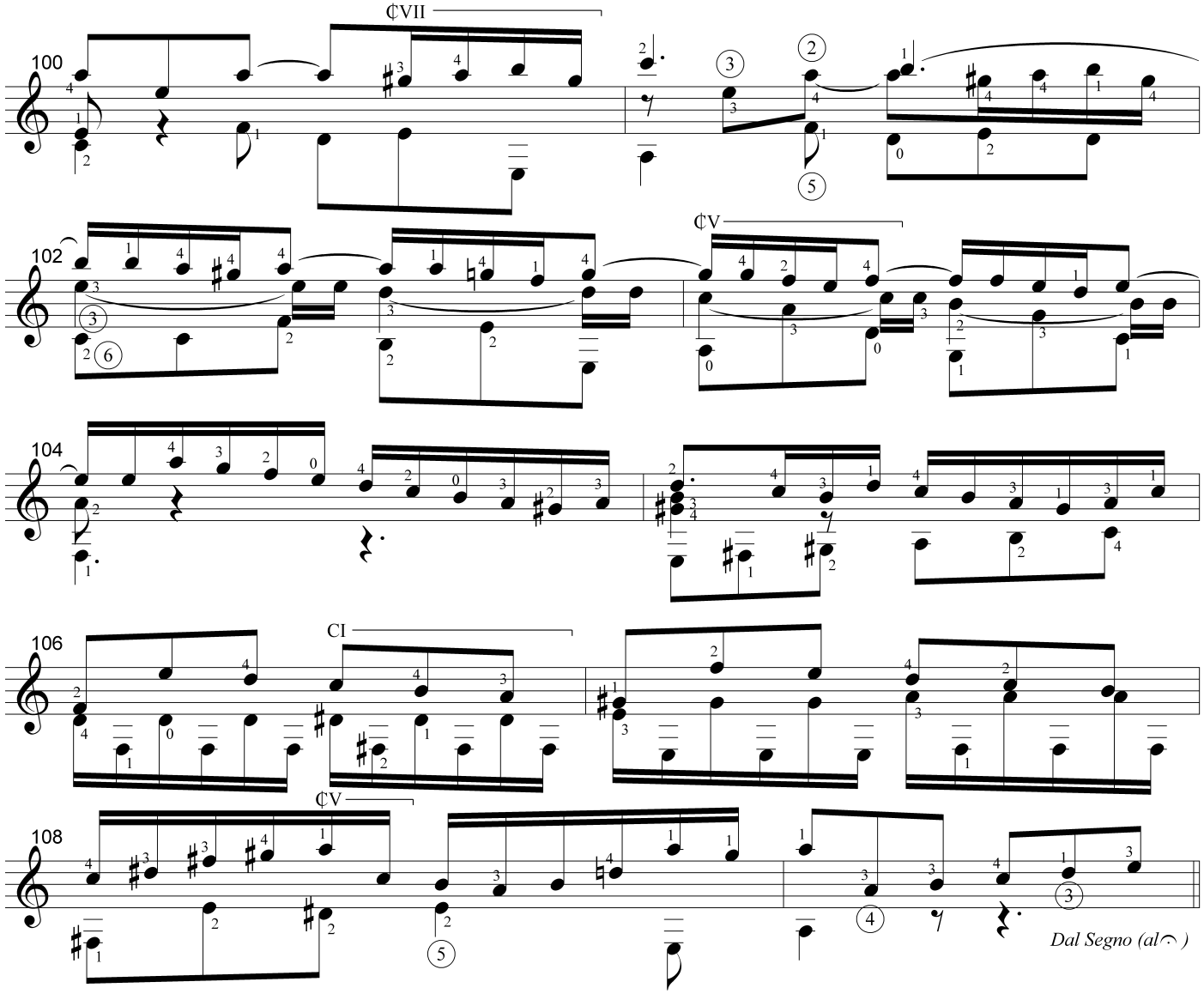

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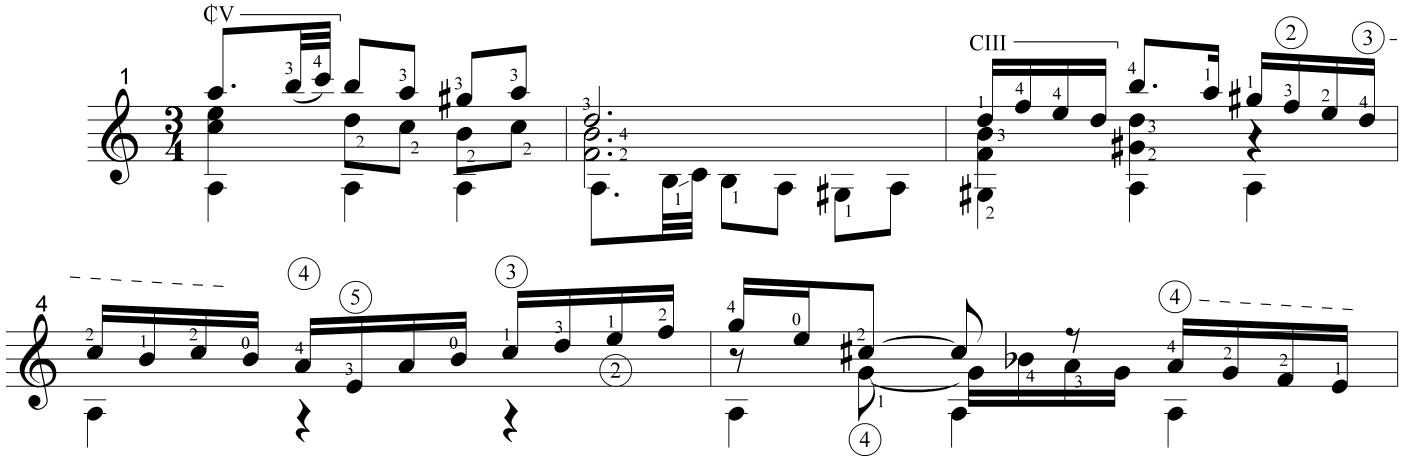

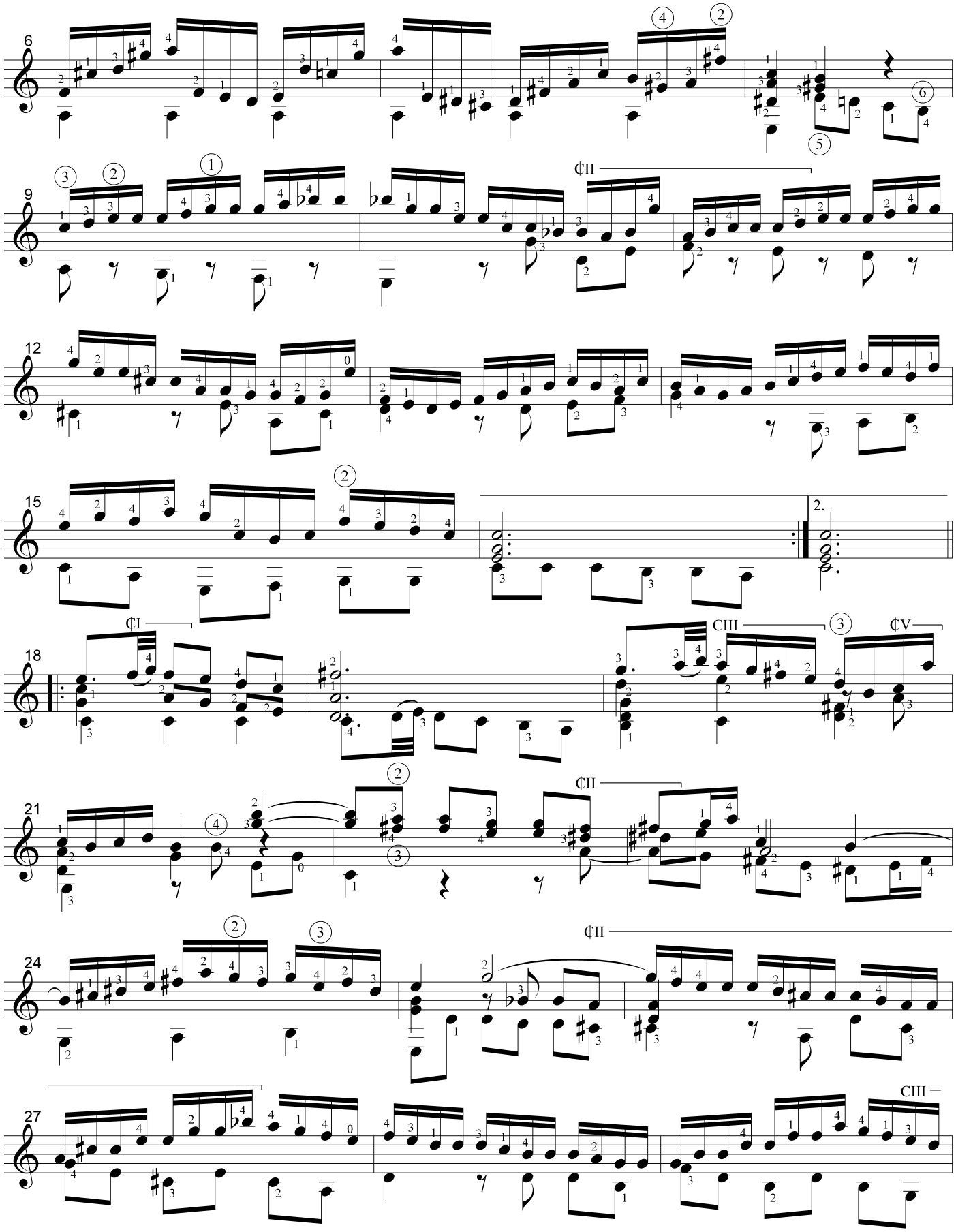
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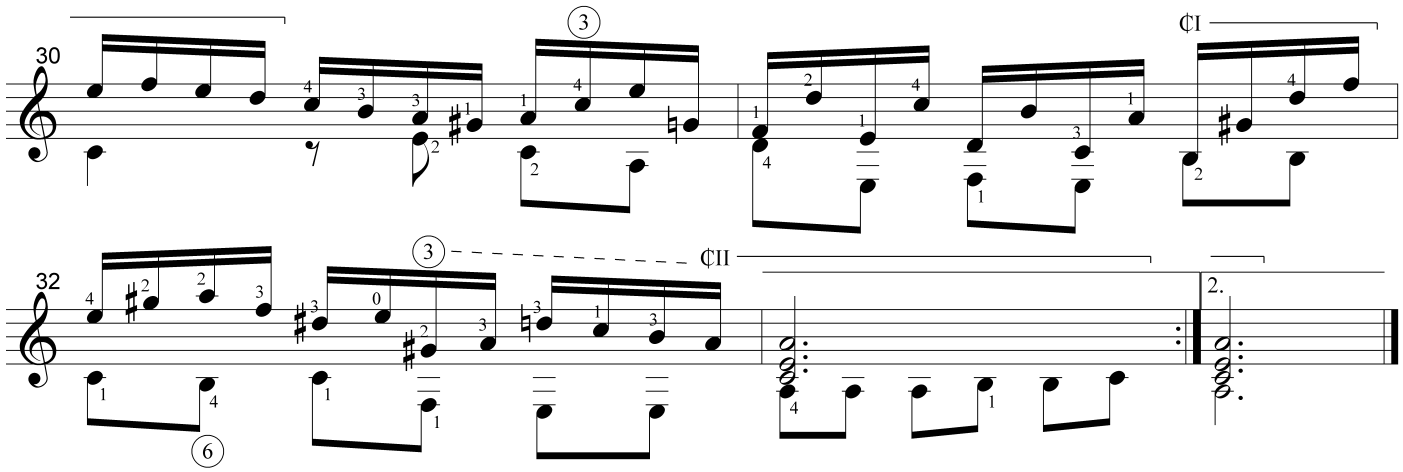

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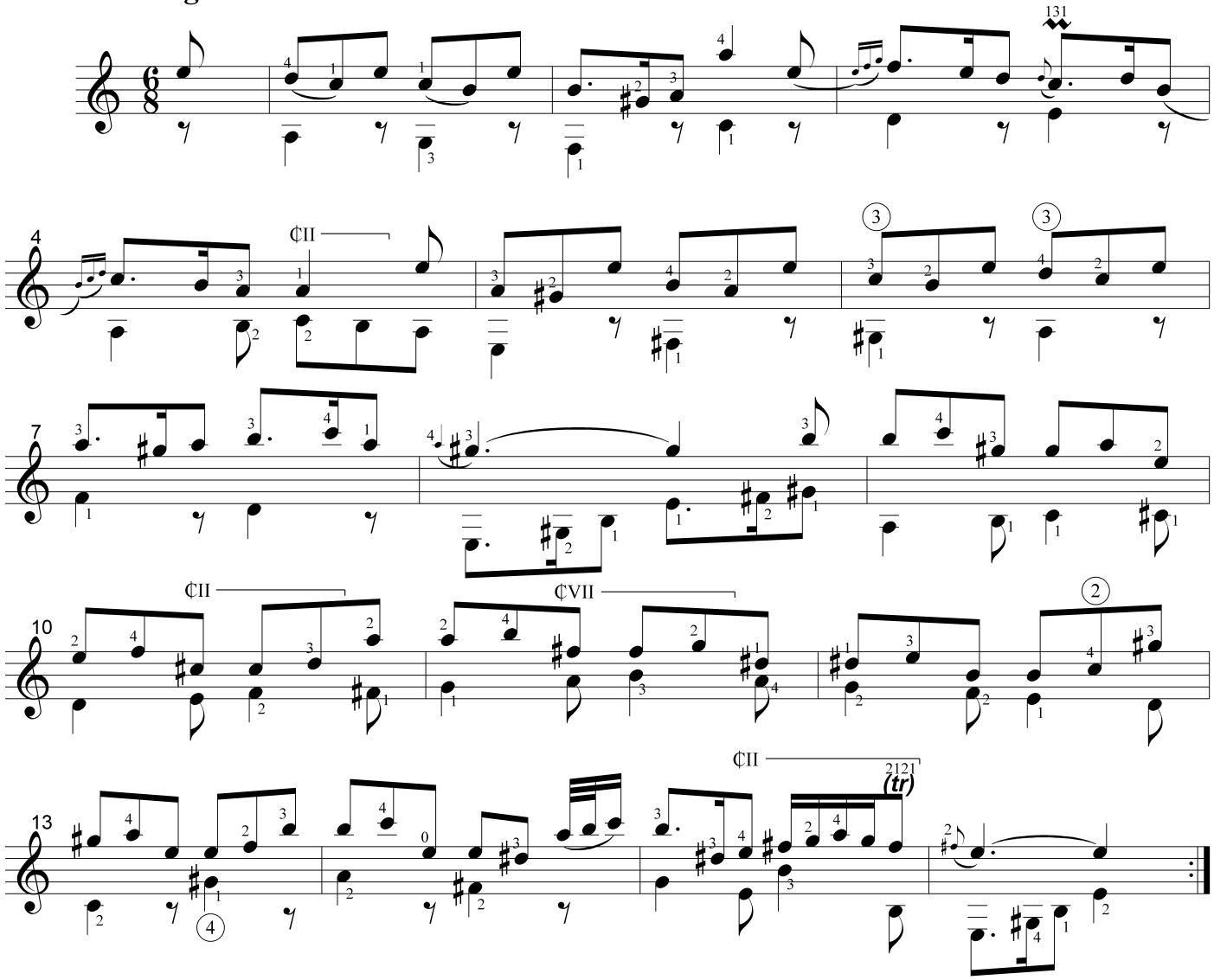

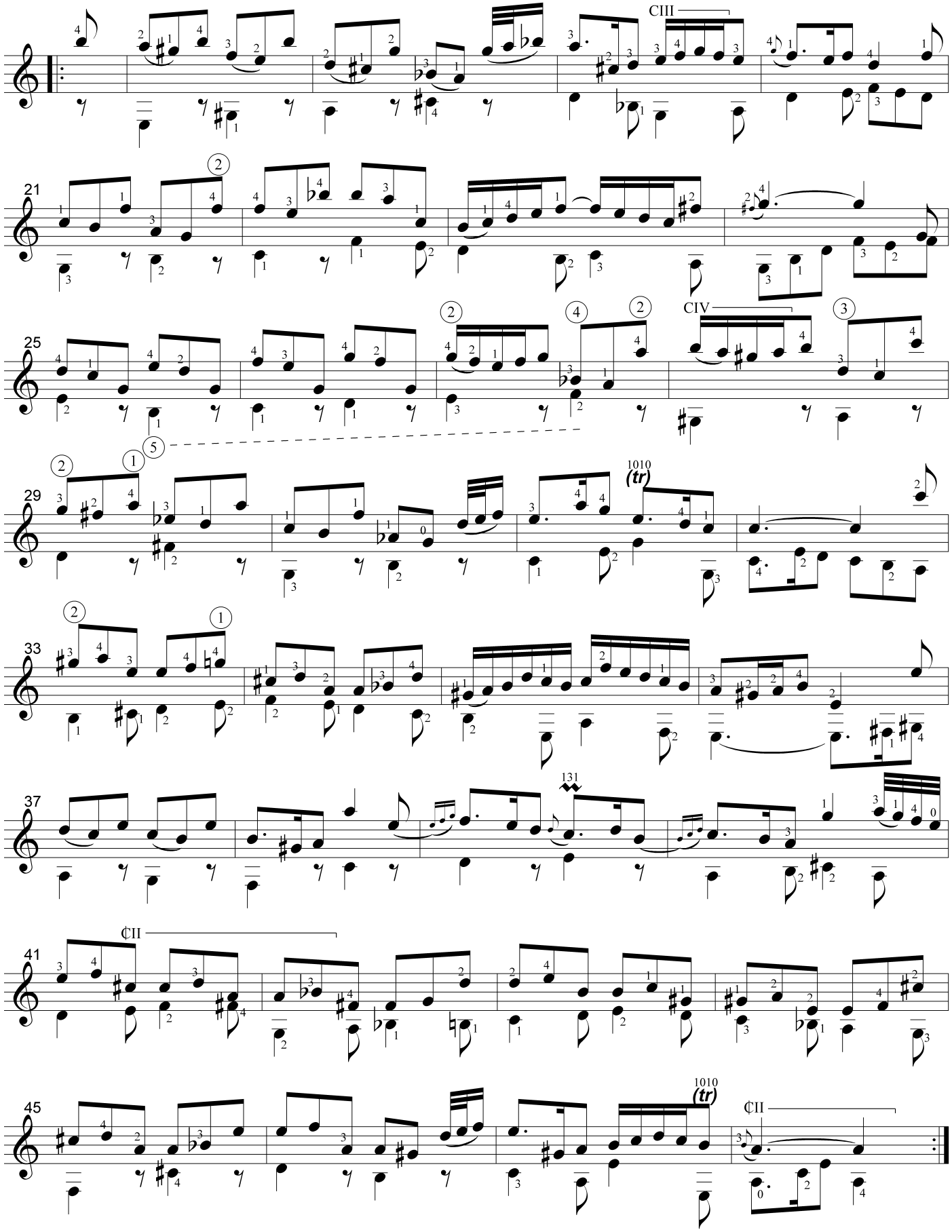
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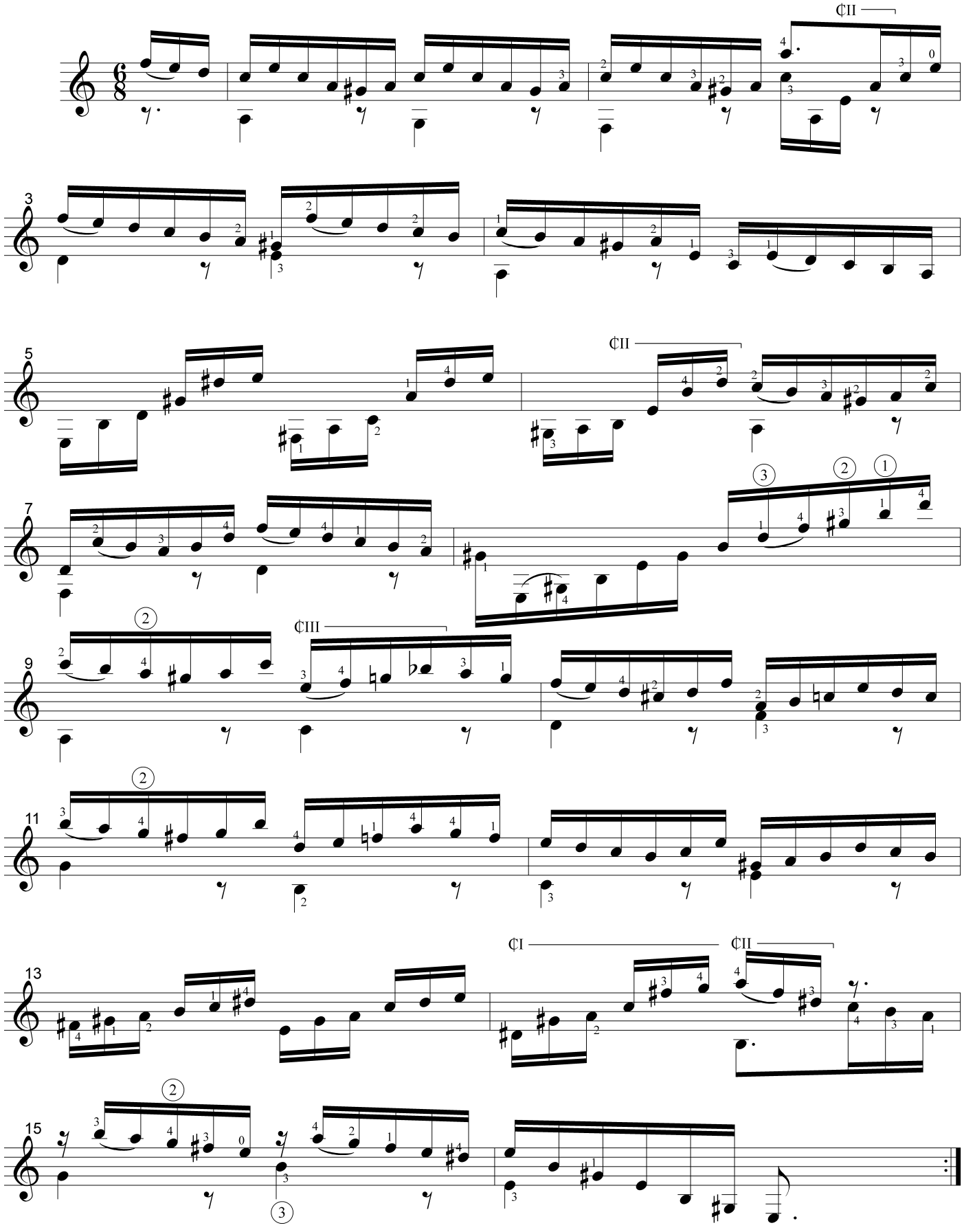

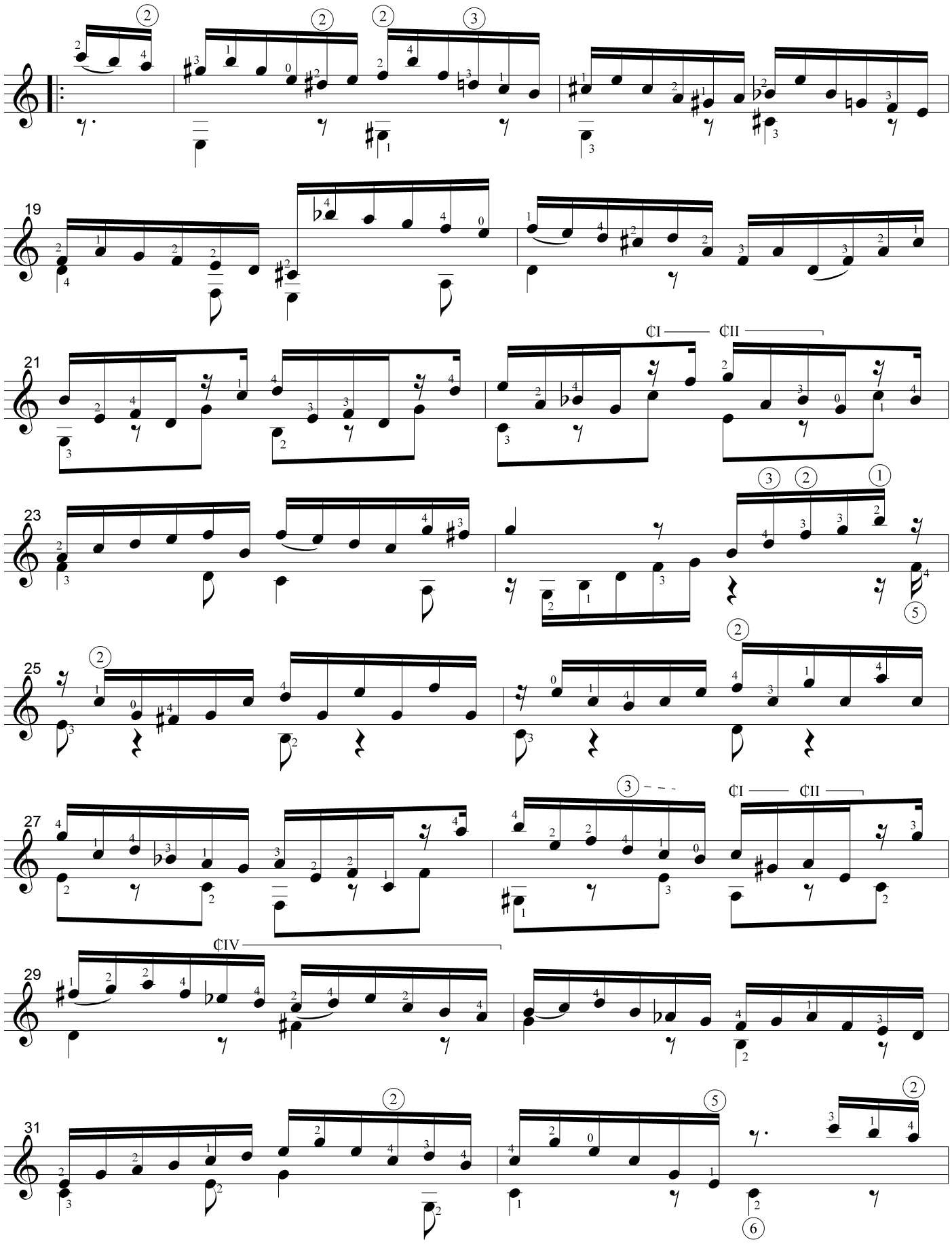
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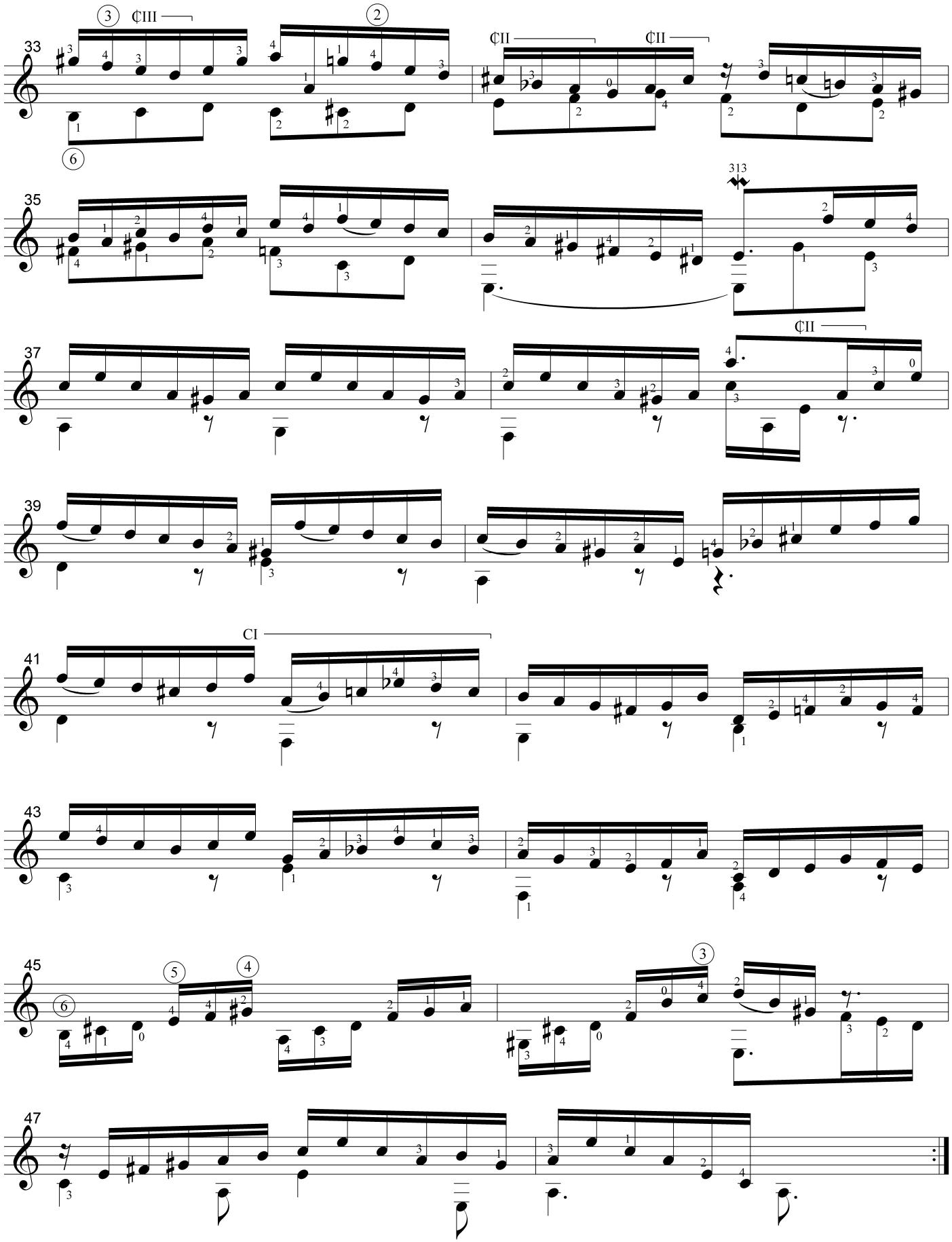
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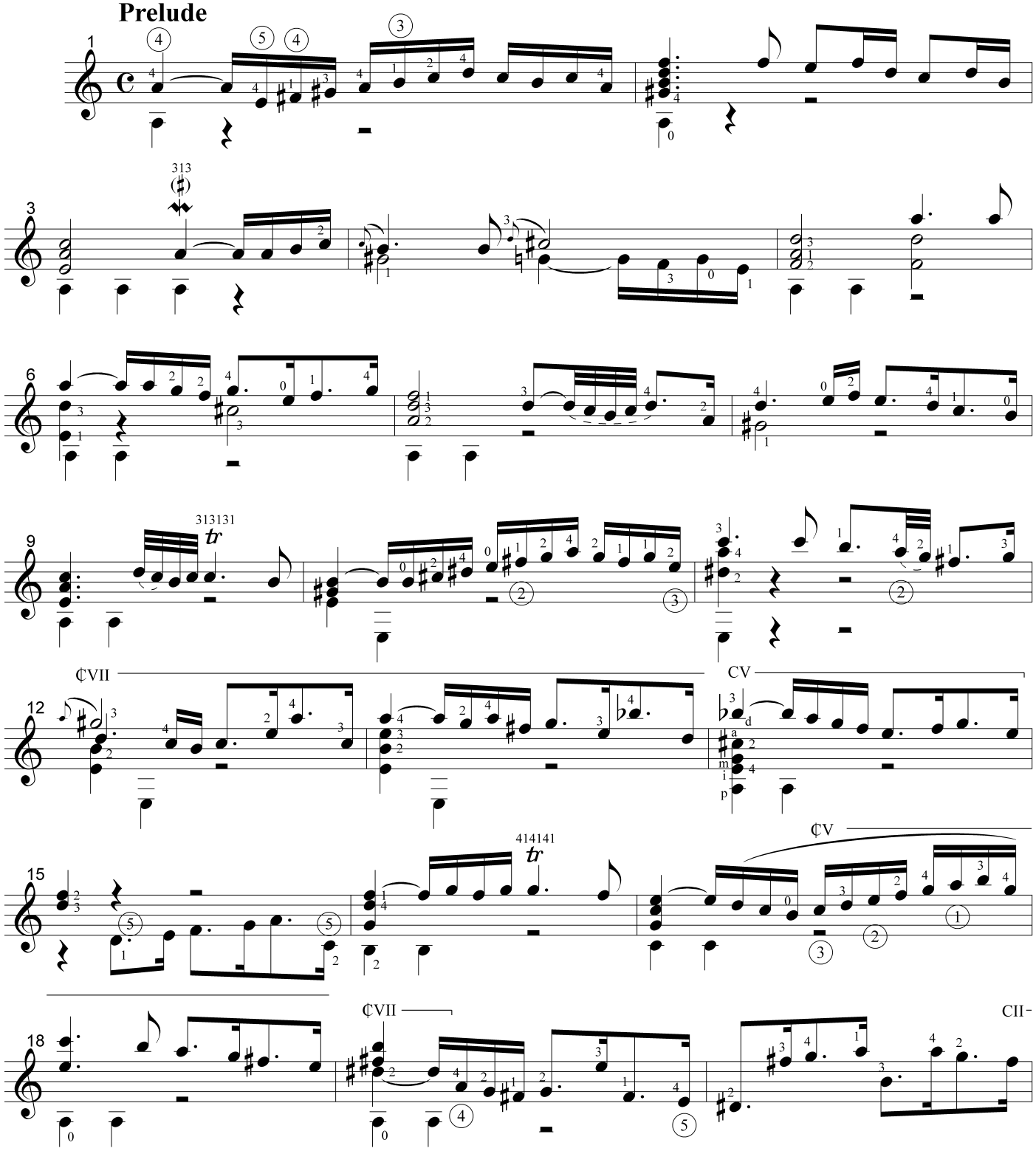
313

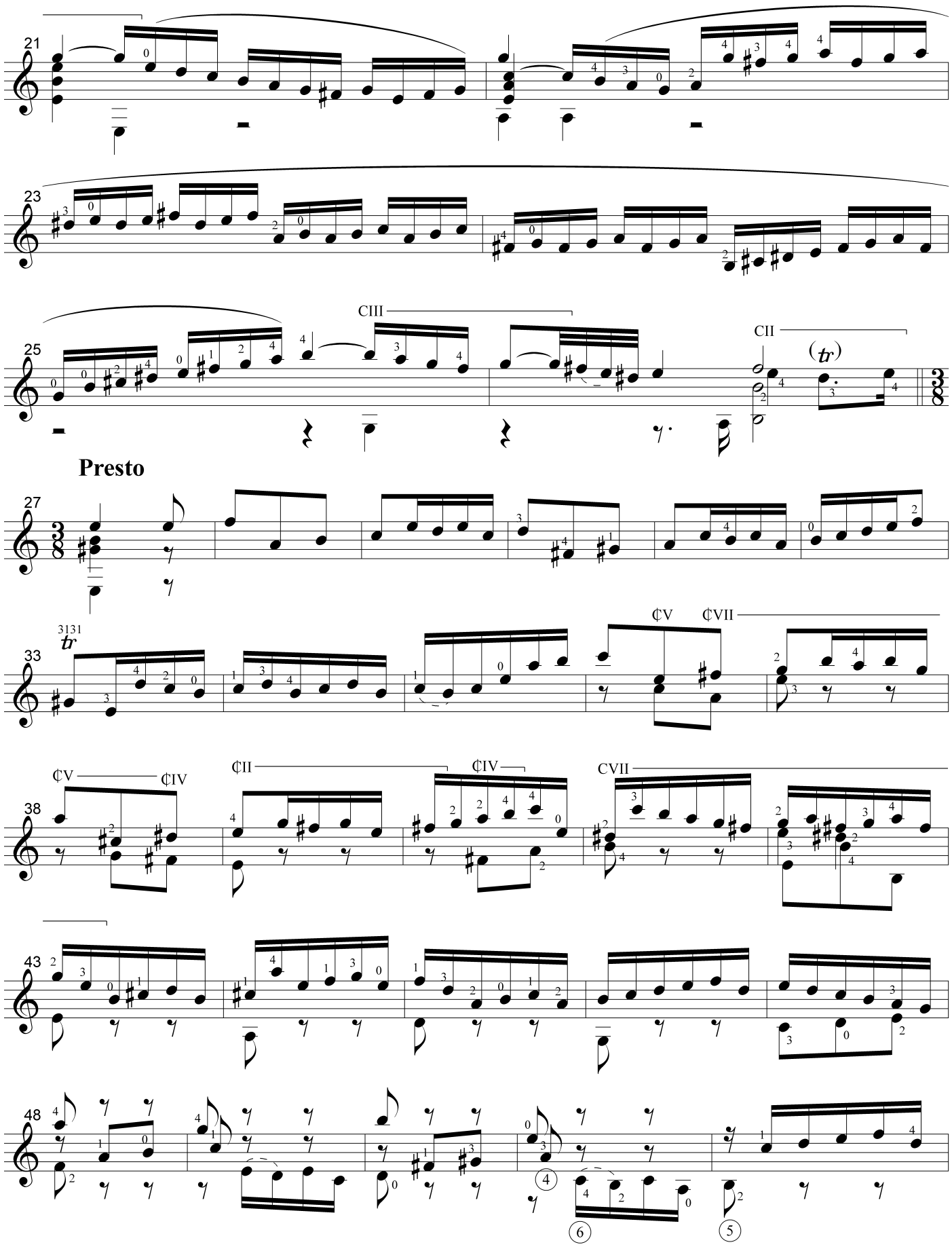
Suite III (bwv 995)

Edited and fingered by Jerry Willard (Ariel, 1980) and Frank Koonce (Kjos, 1989)
Further edited and re-fingered by C. Nelson (2000)

J. S. Bach
Leipzig (1723 - 1750)

Prelude

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CII
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¢IV
CVII
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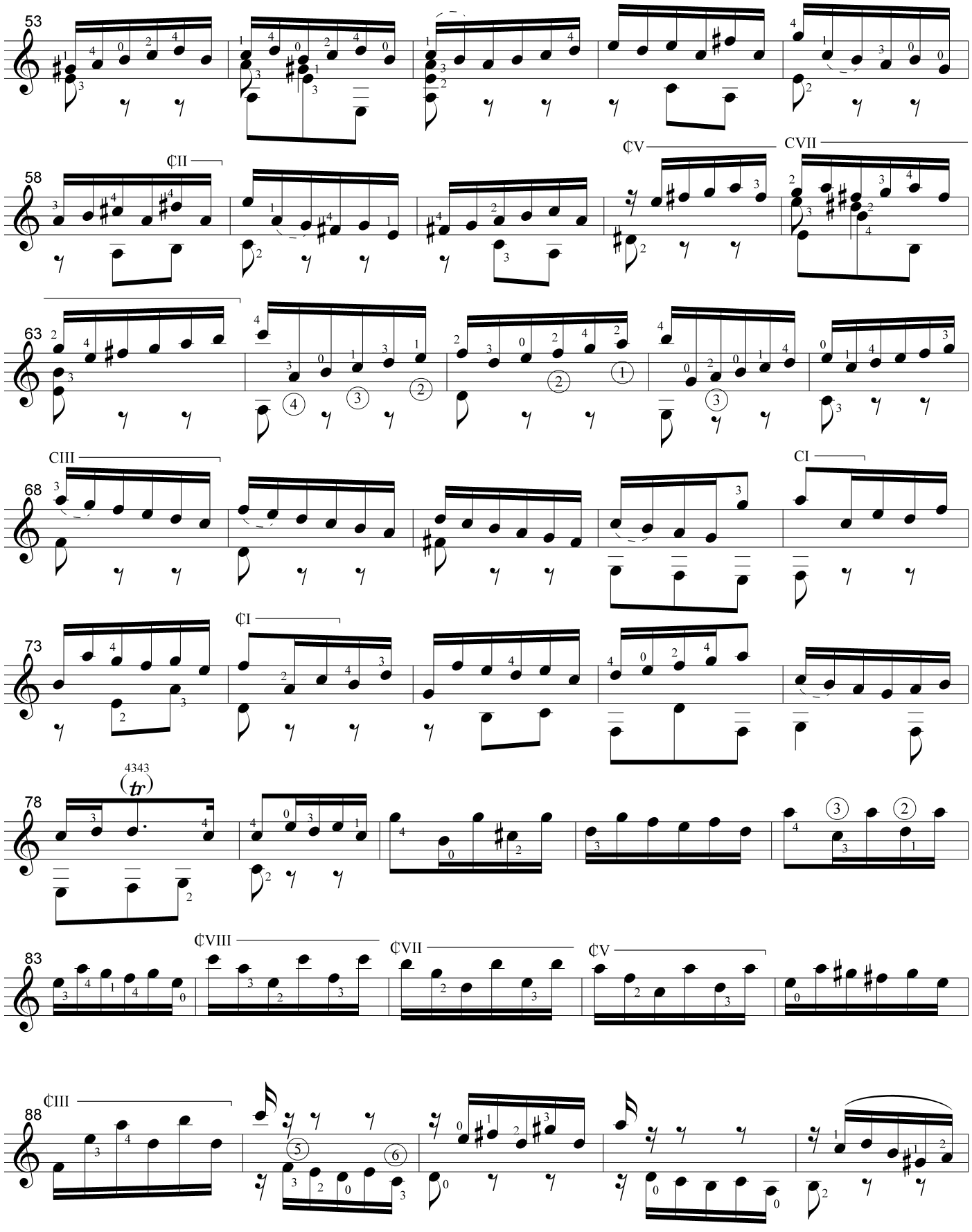
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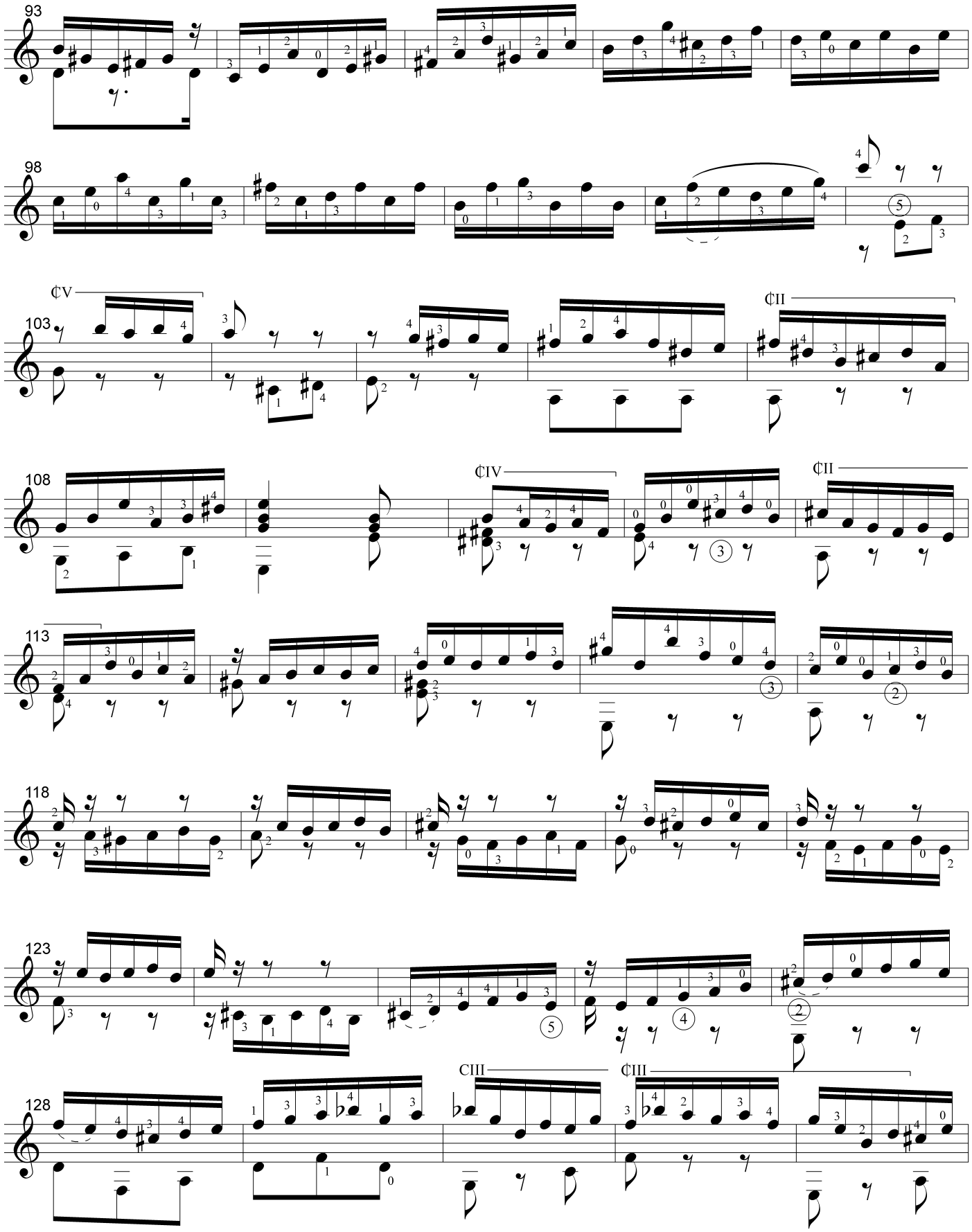
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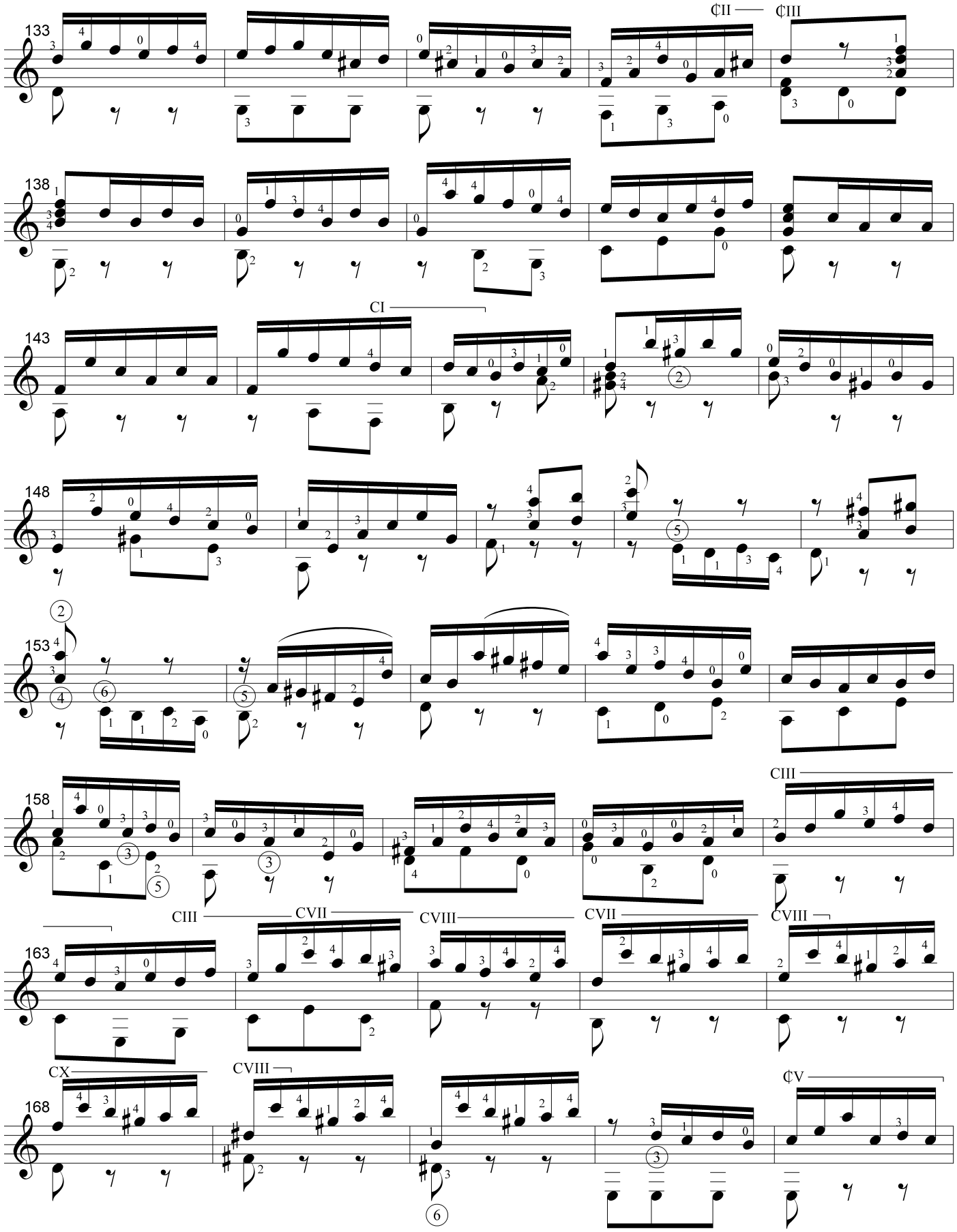
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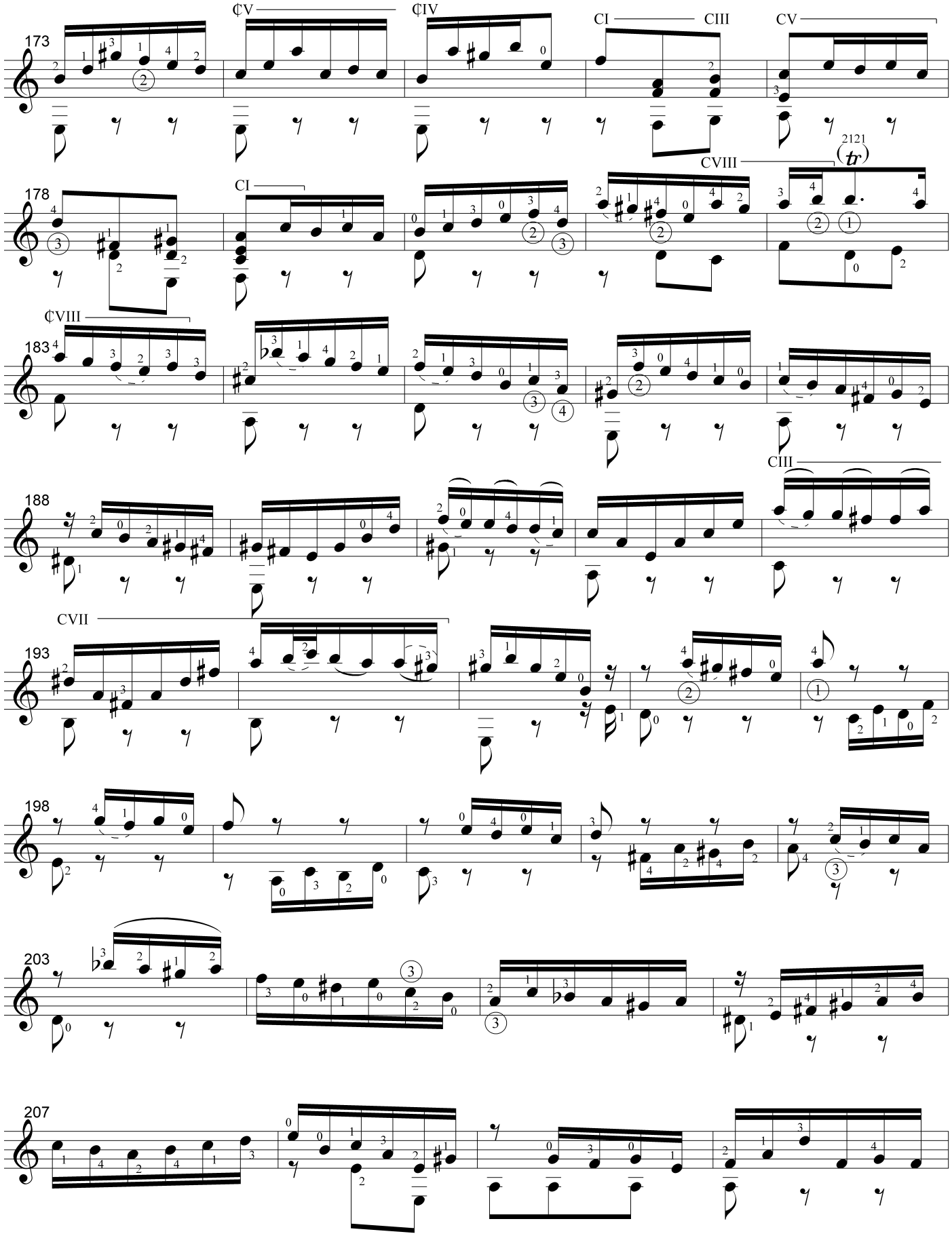
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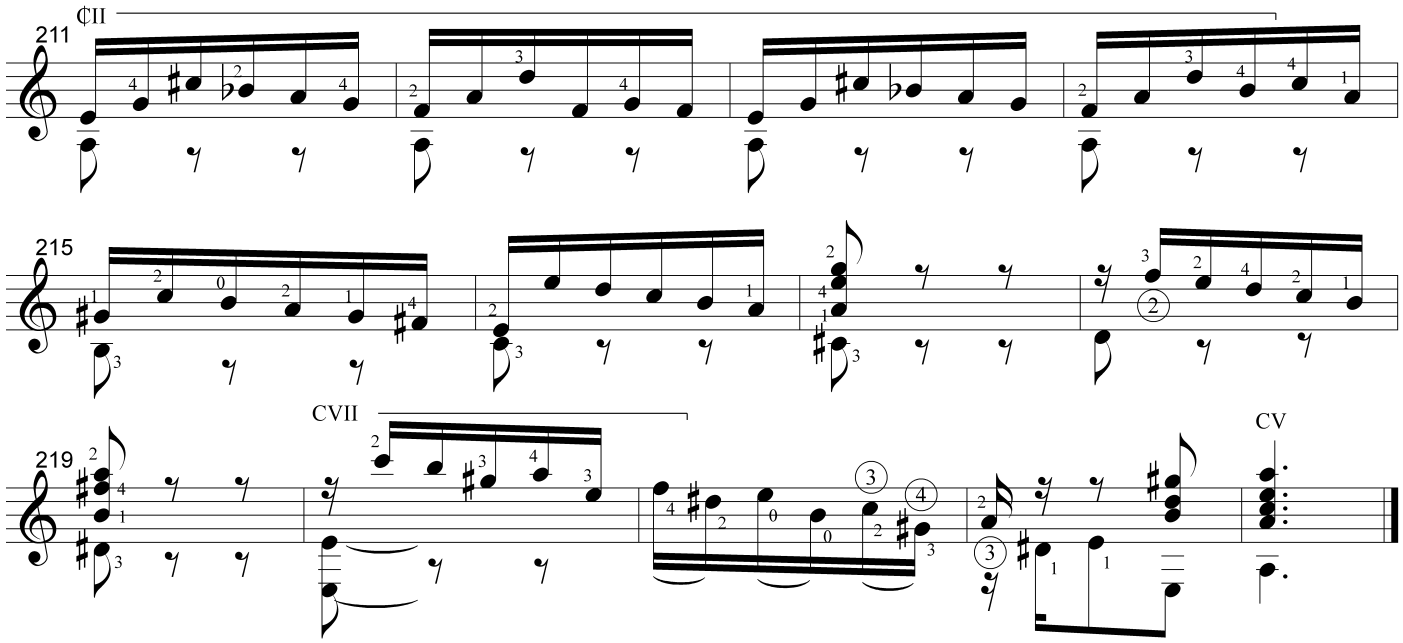
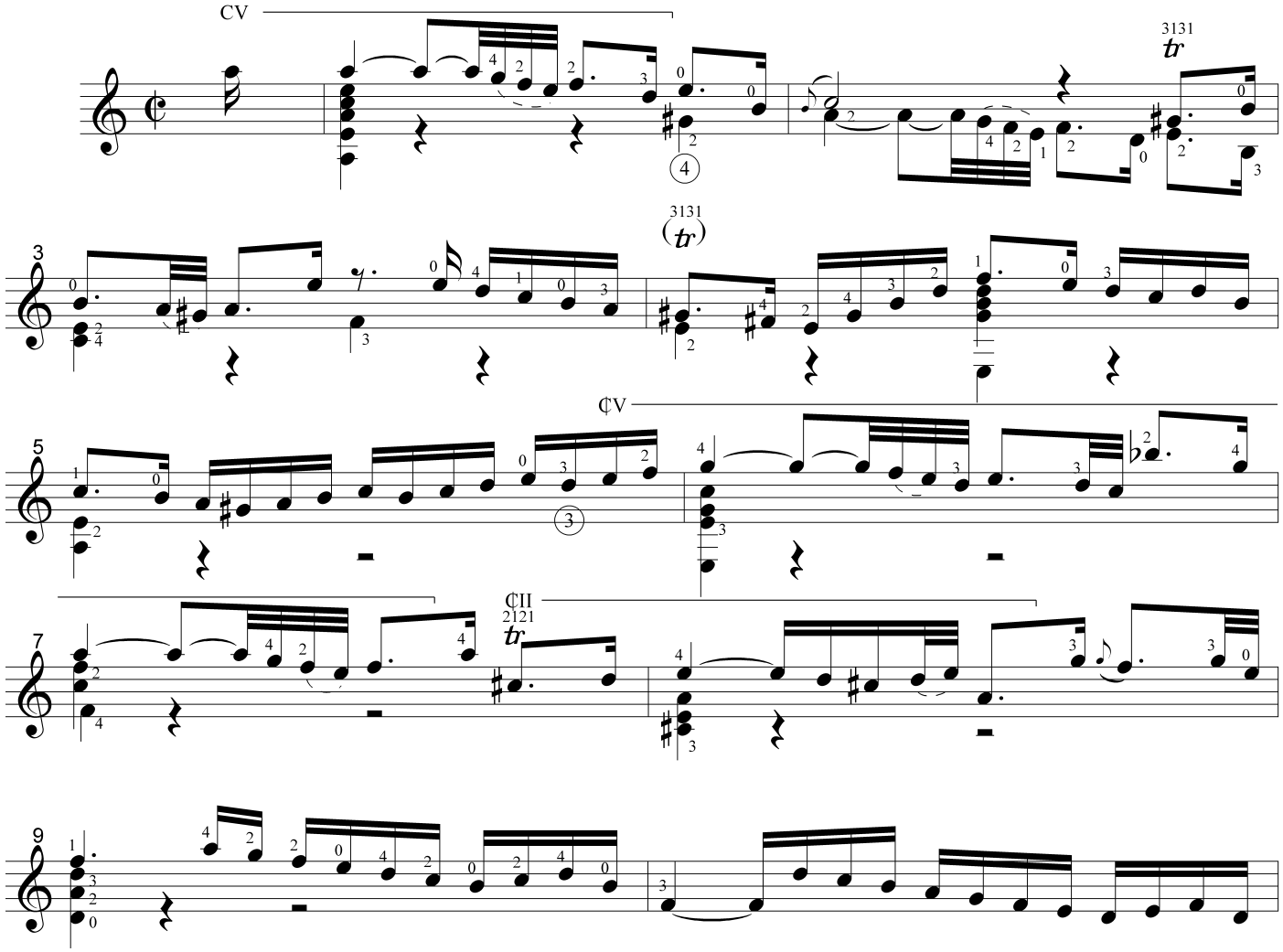
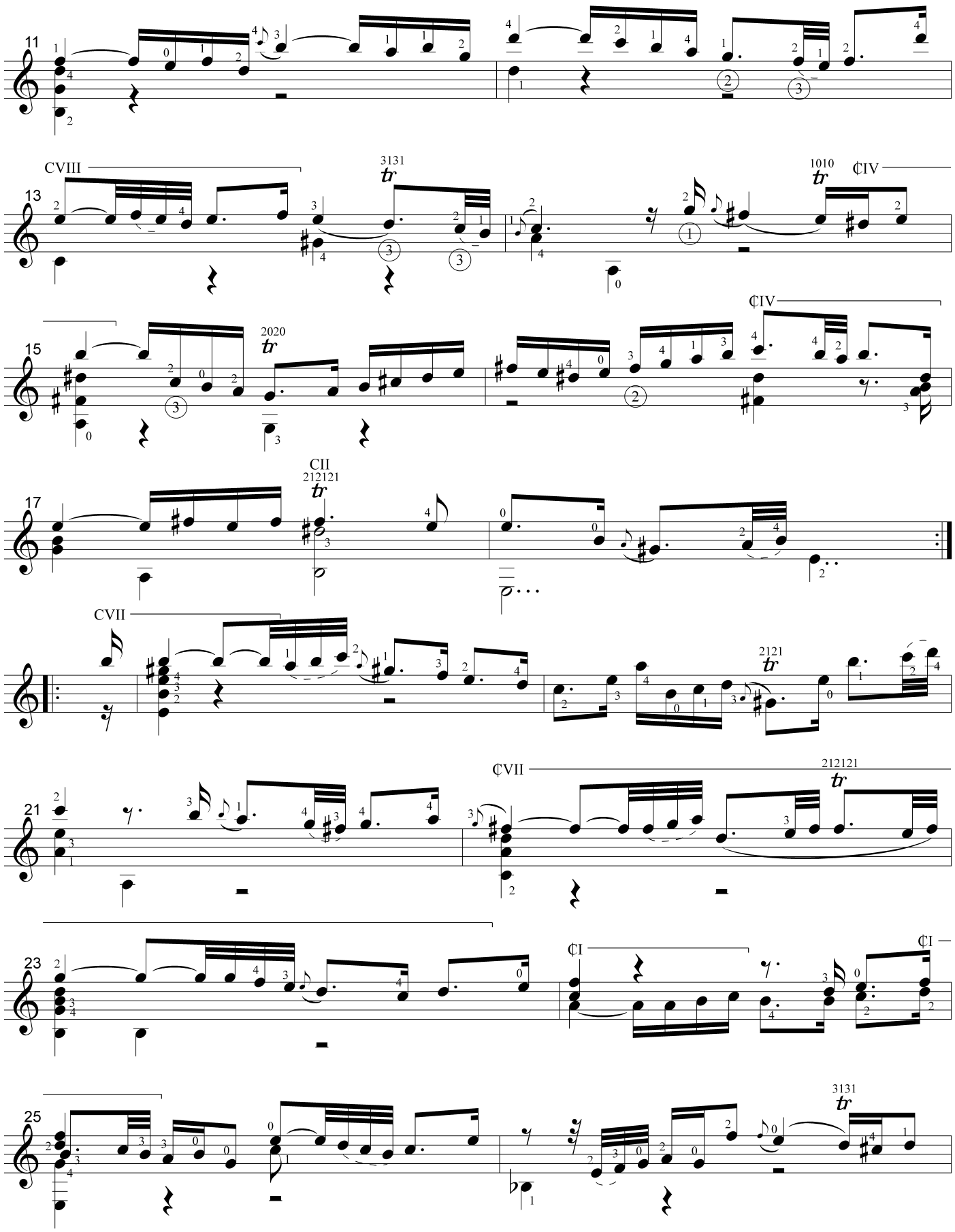
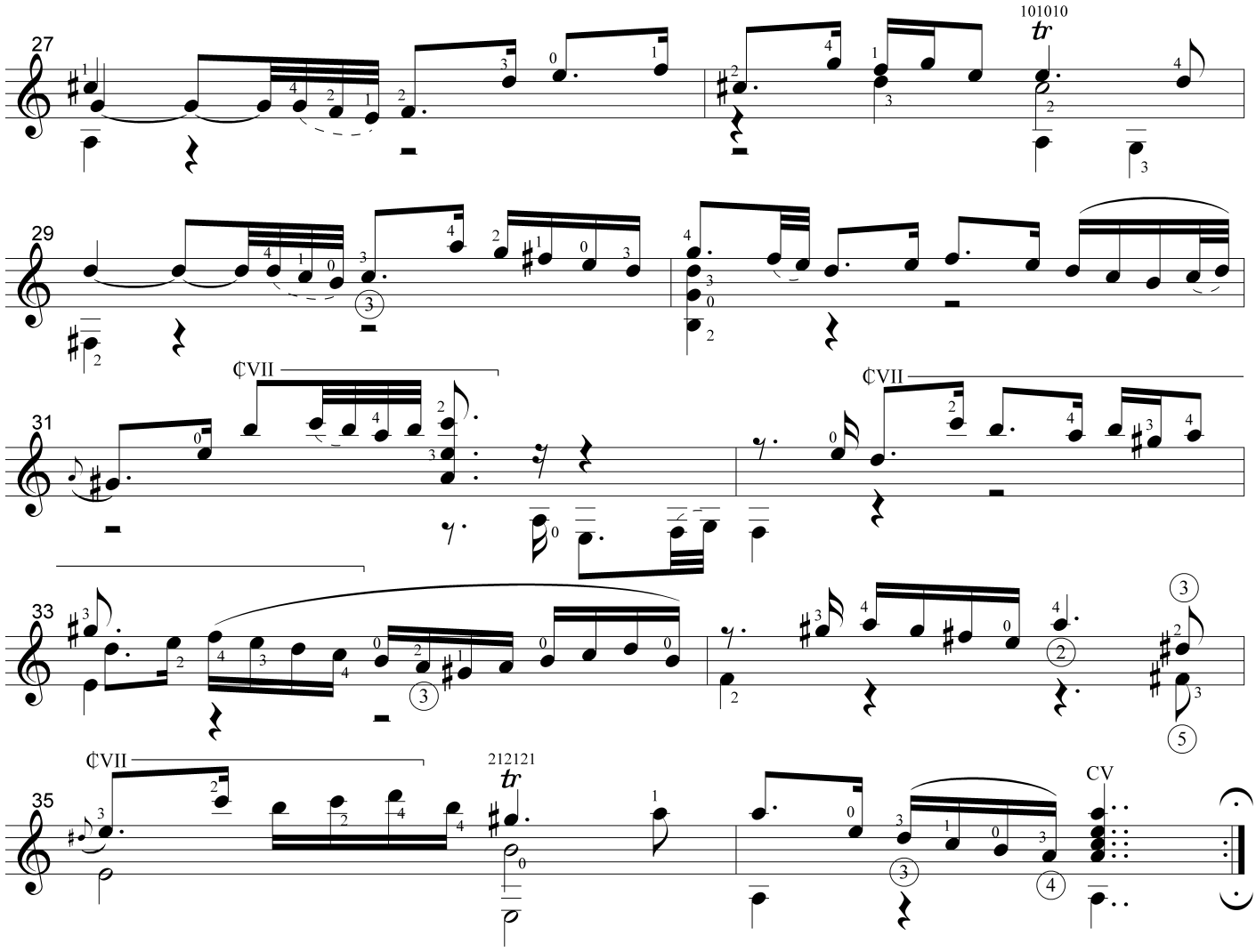


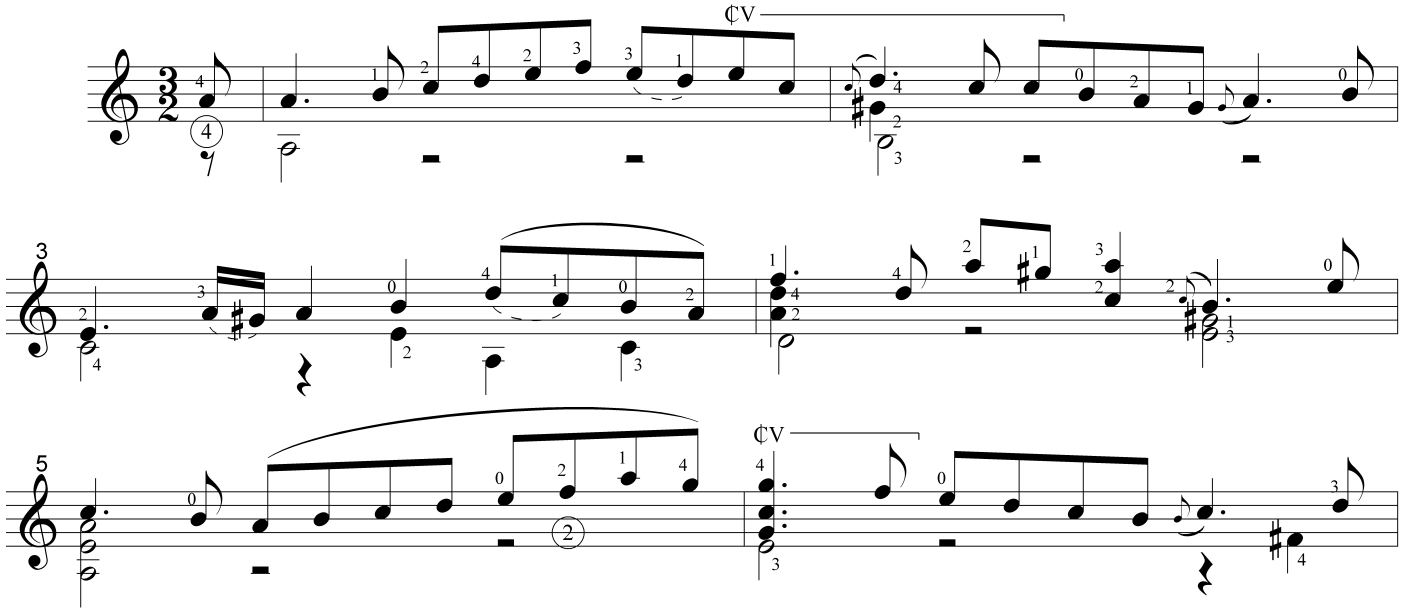
Allemande

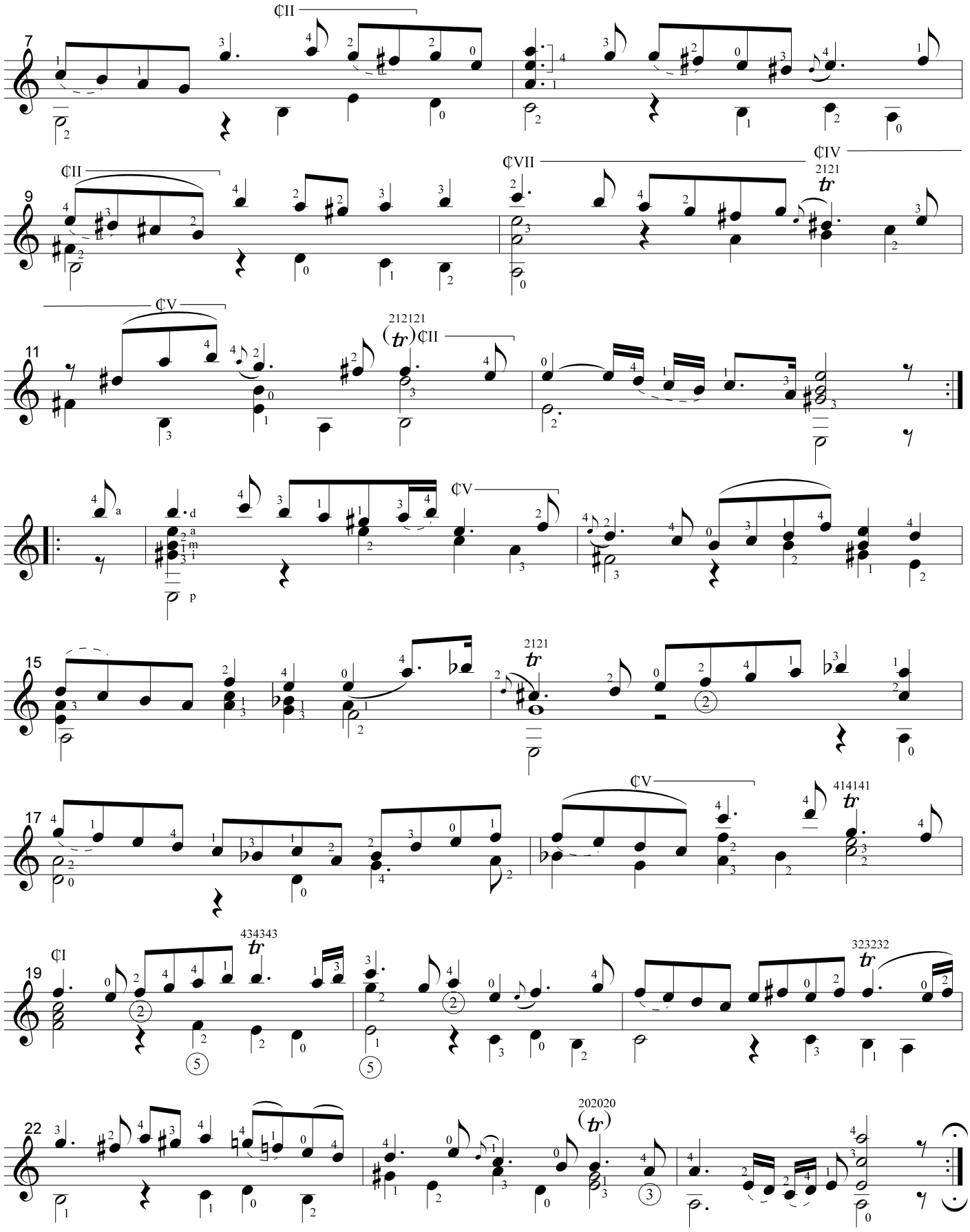



11
CVIII
3131
13
1010
¢IV
¢IV
2020
15
CII
212121
17
CVII
2121
¢VII
212121
21
¢I
¢I
23
3131
25

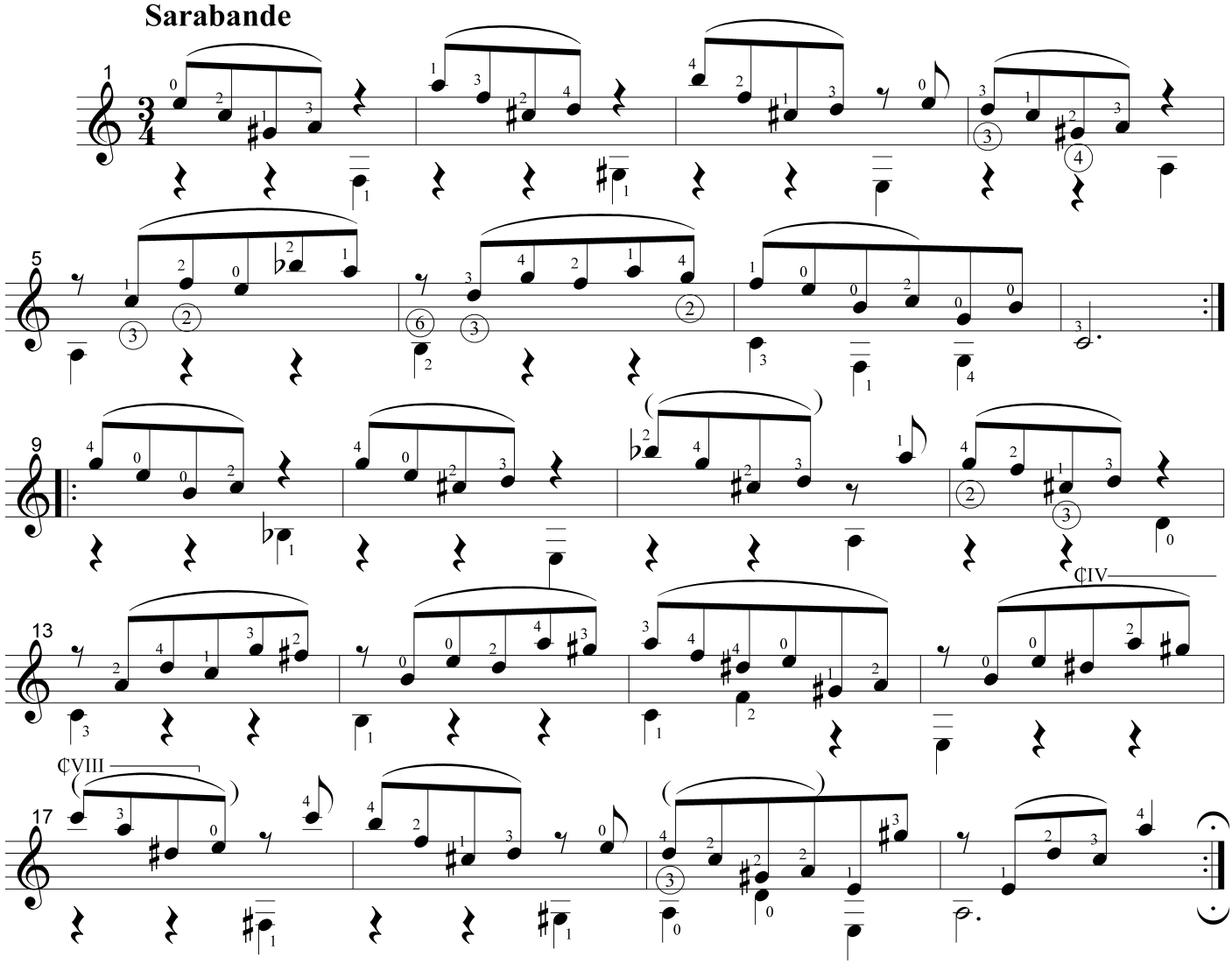


Courante

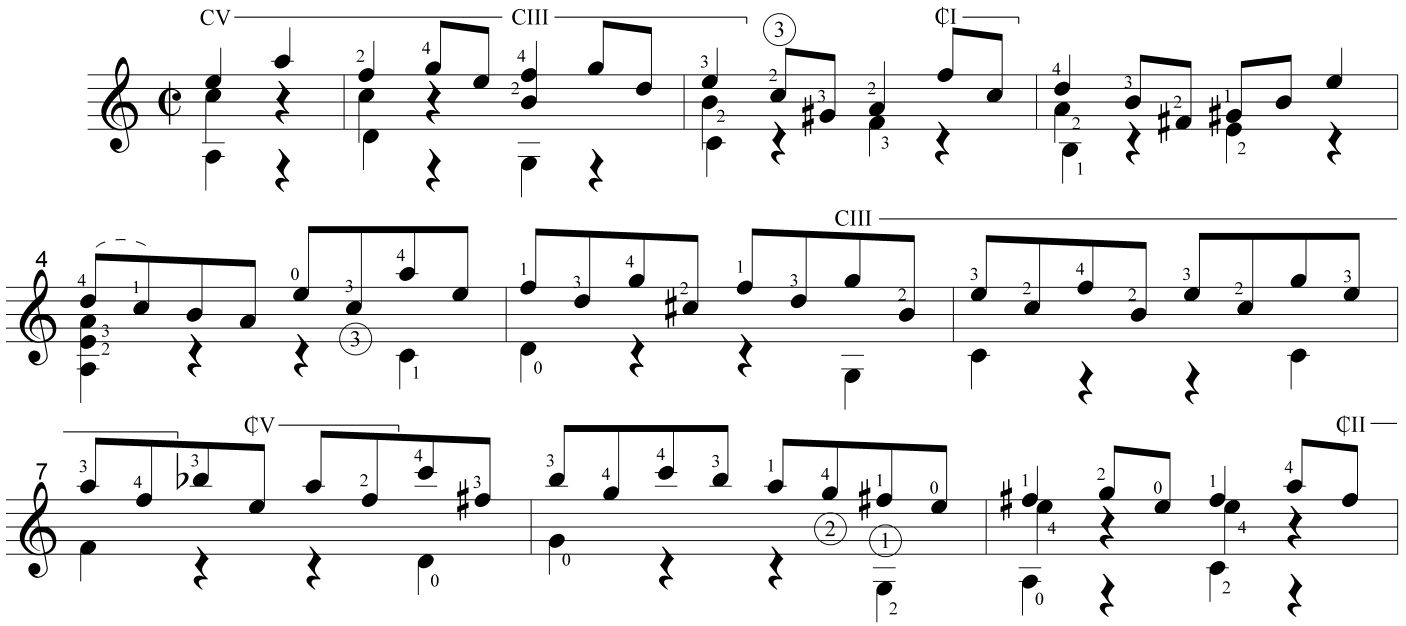


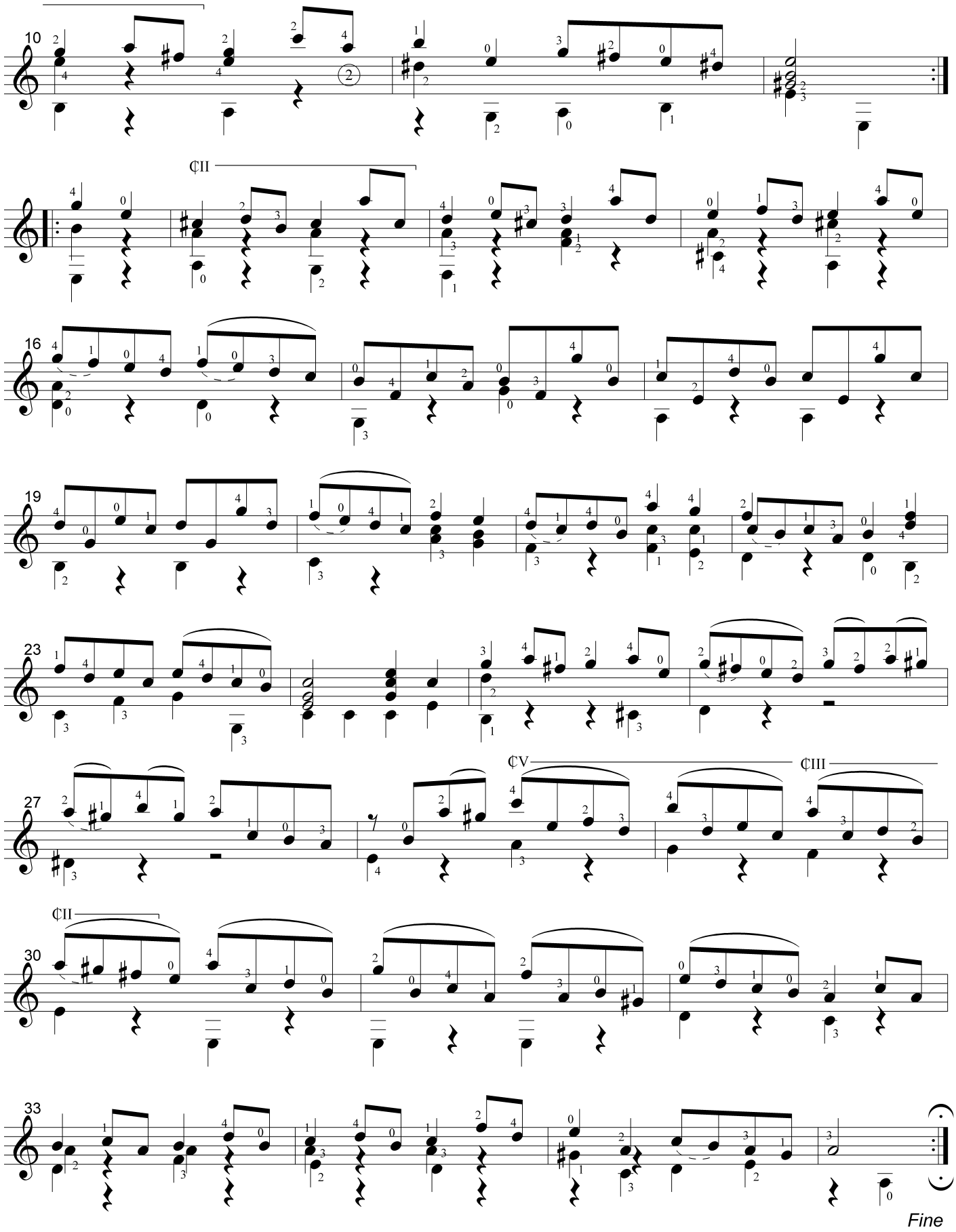

7
¢II
9
¢II
¢VII
¢IV
2121
11
¢V
212121
(tr)¢II
p
¢V
15
2121
17
¢V
414141
19
¢I
434343
323232
22
202020
(tr)

Sarabande

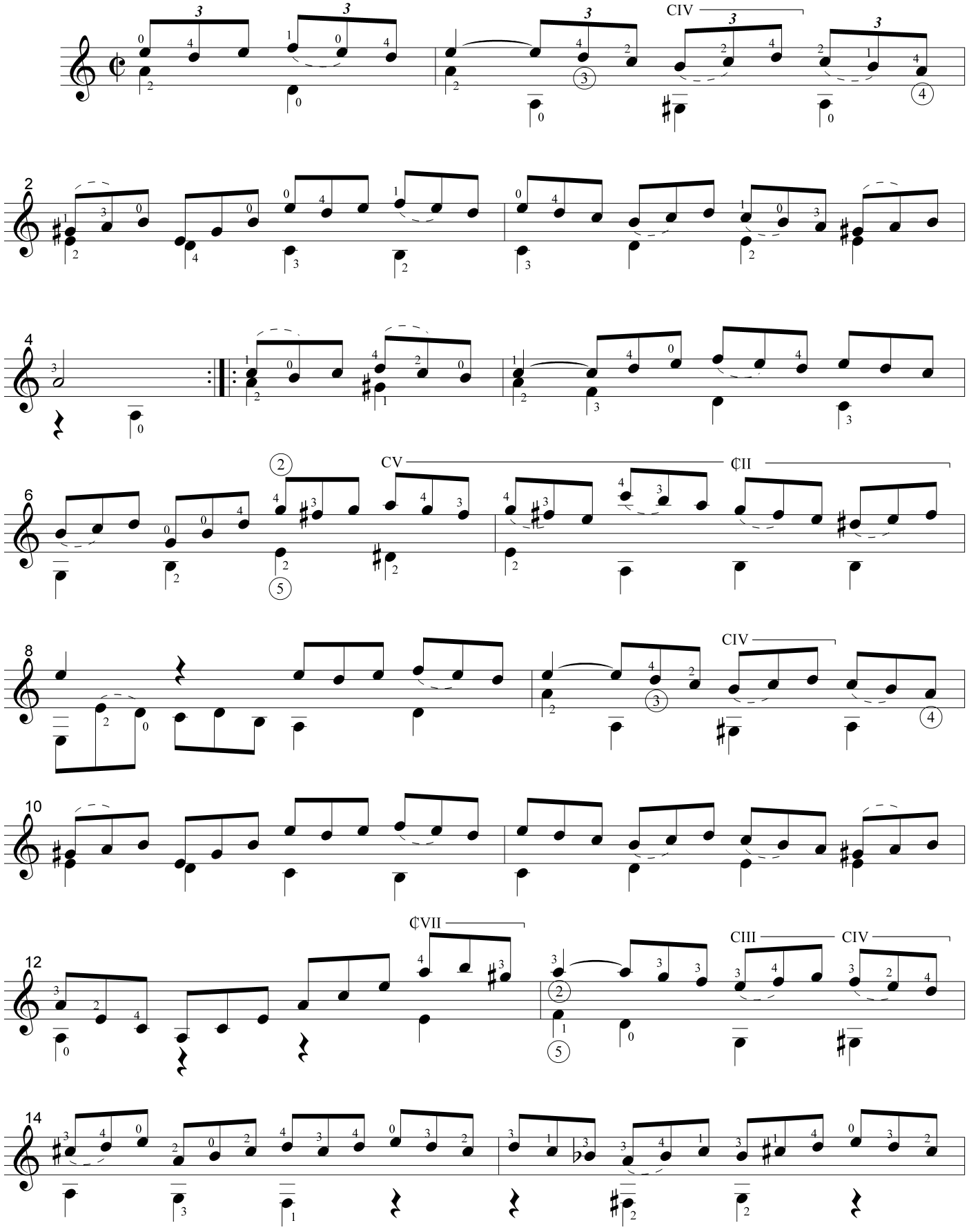


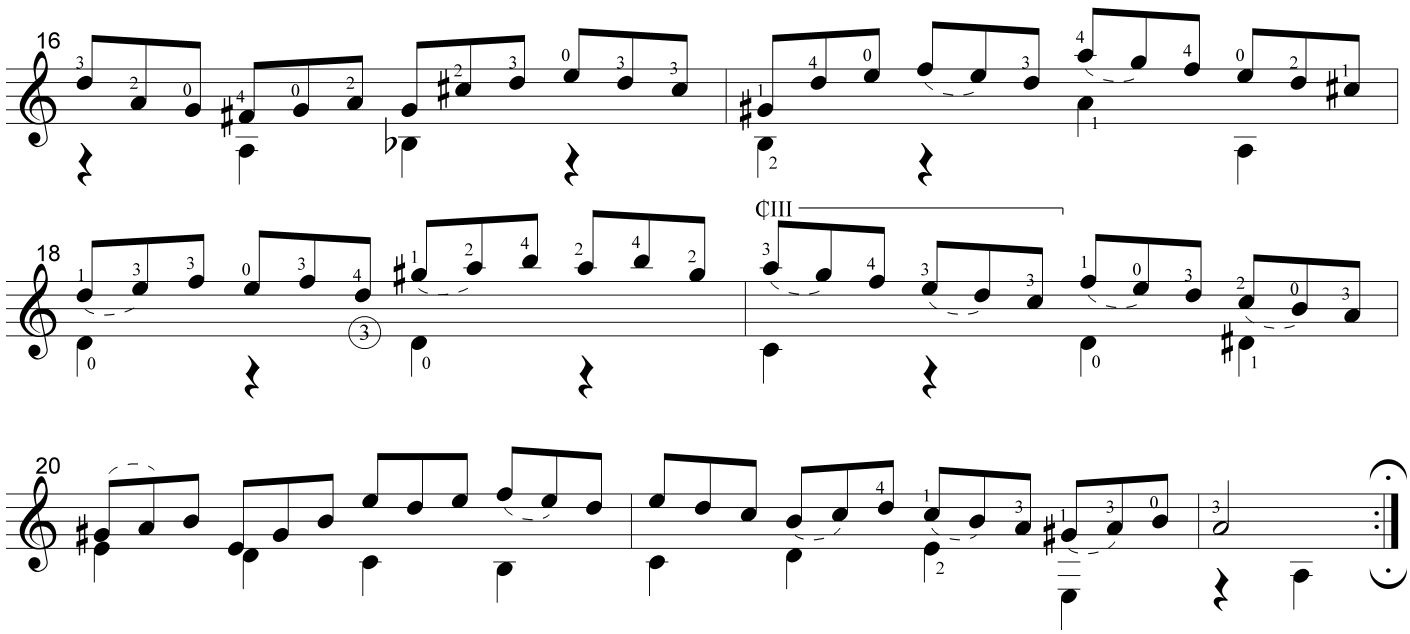
Gavotte I




10
¢II
16
19
23
27
¢V
¢III
¢II
30
33
Fine

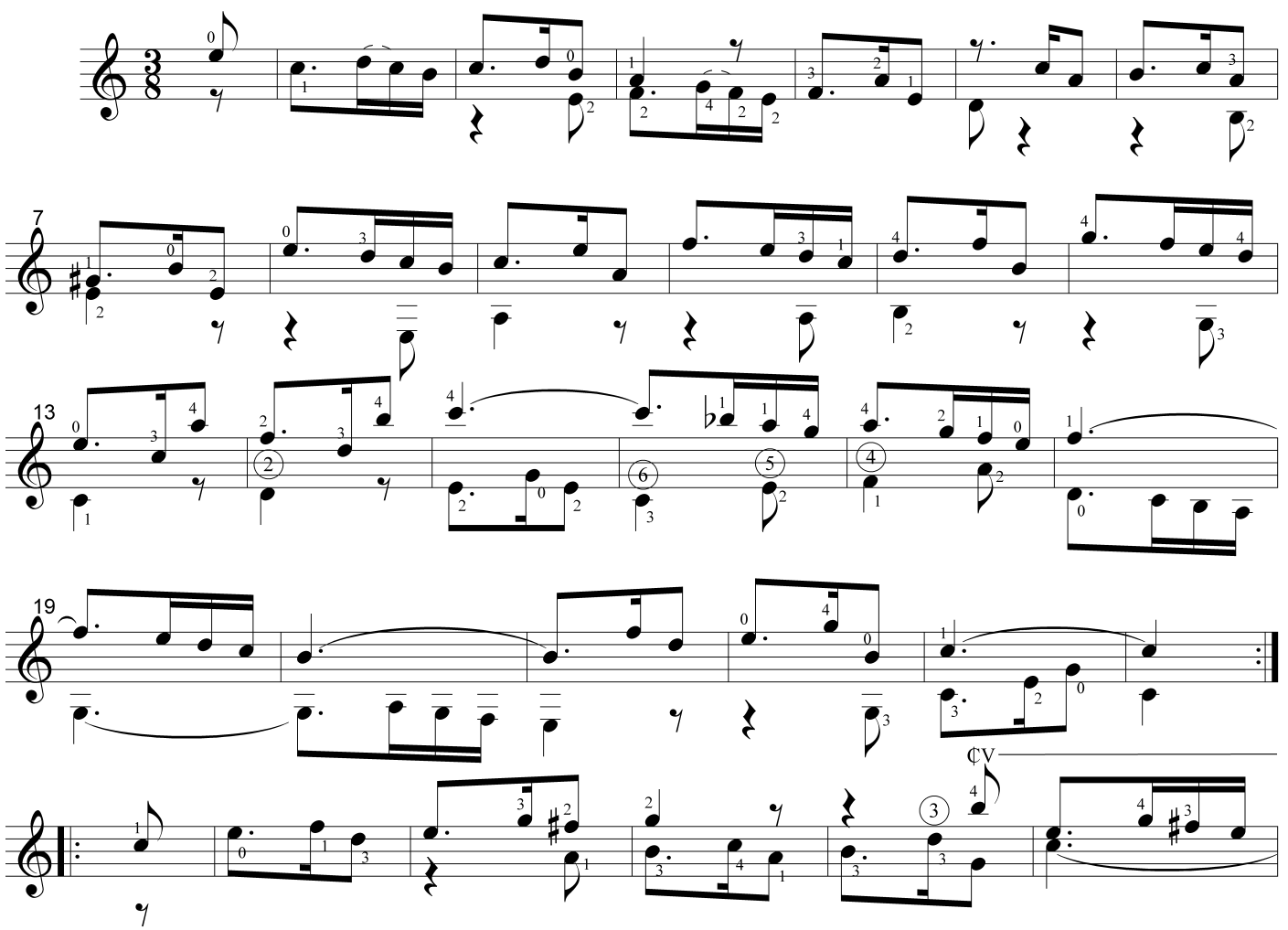
Gavotte II en rondeau

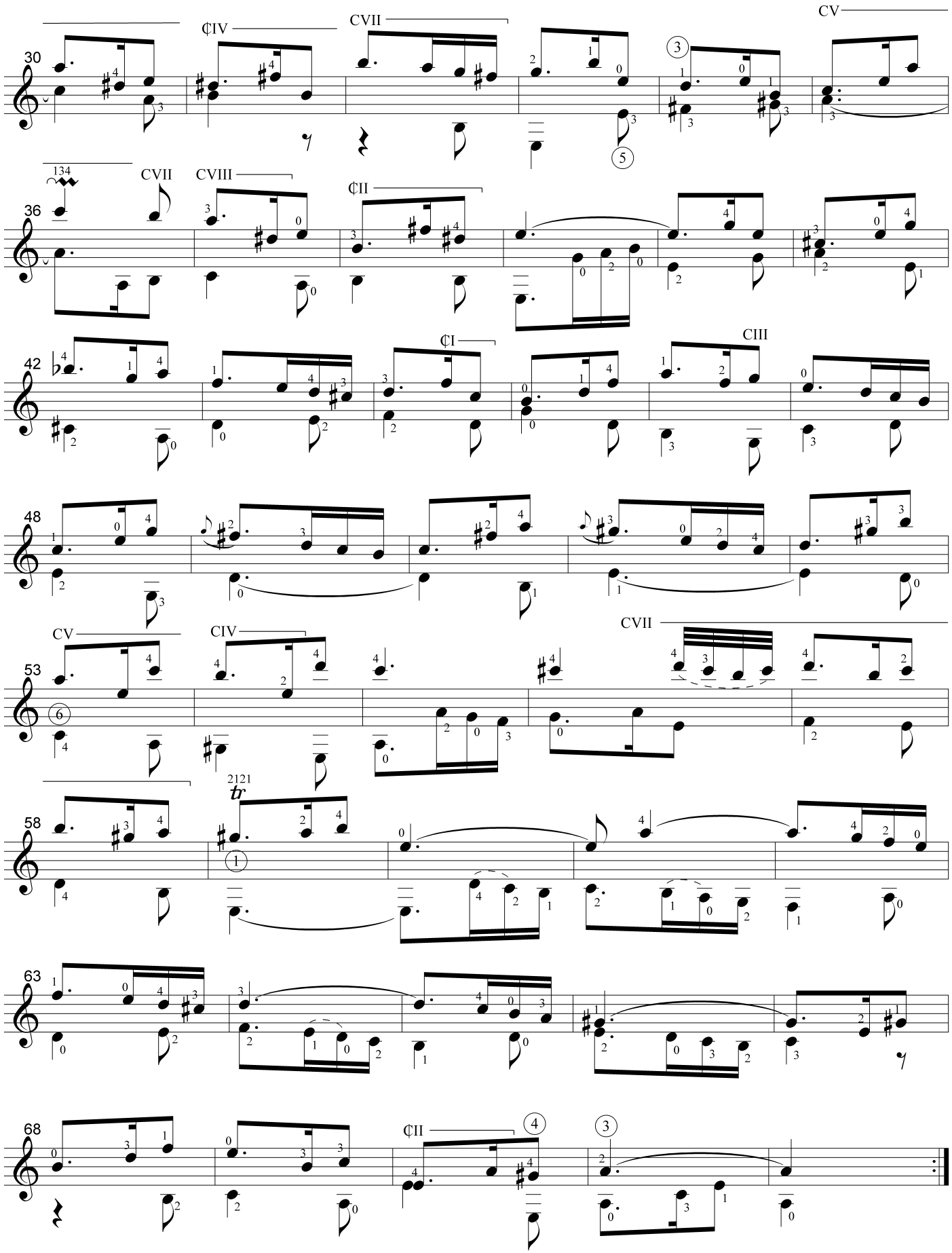




Da Capo Gavotte I al Fine

Gigue



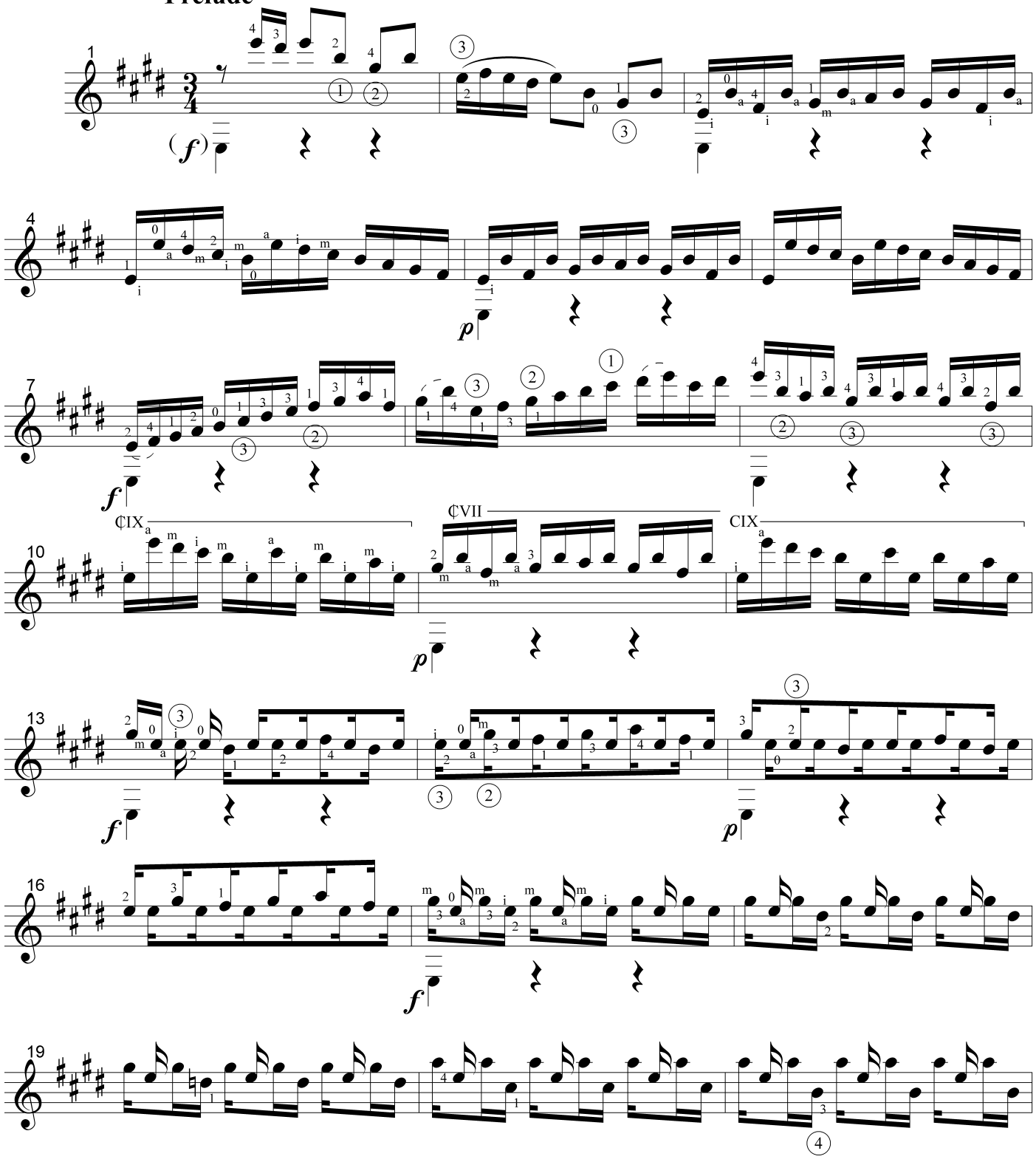

30
CIV
CVII
CV
36
134
CVII
CVIII
CII
42
CI
CIII
48
53
CV
CIV
CVII
58
2121
tr
63
68
CII

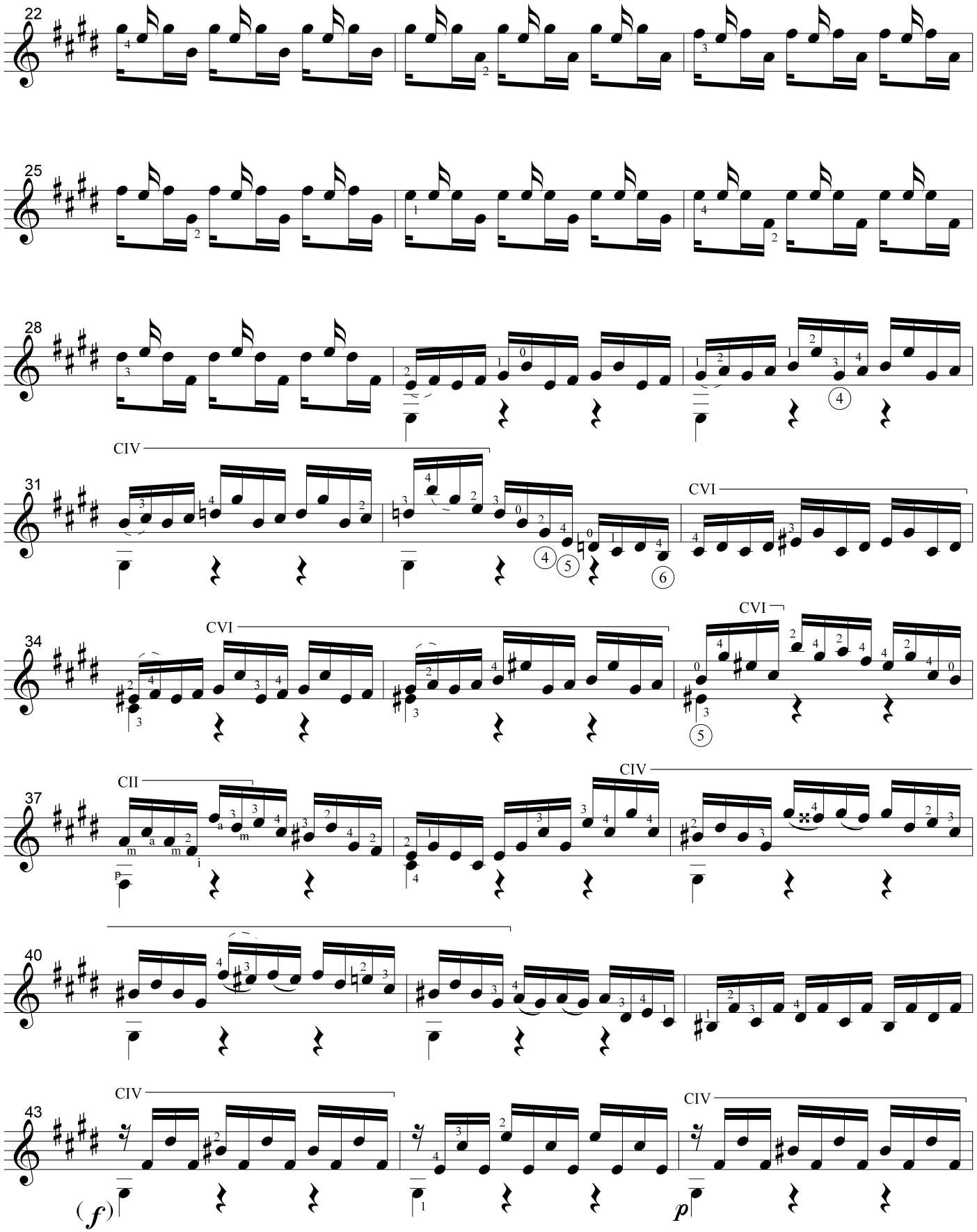
Suite IV (bwv 1006a)

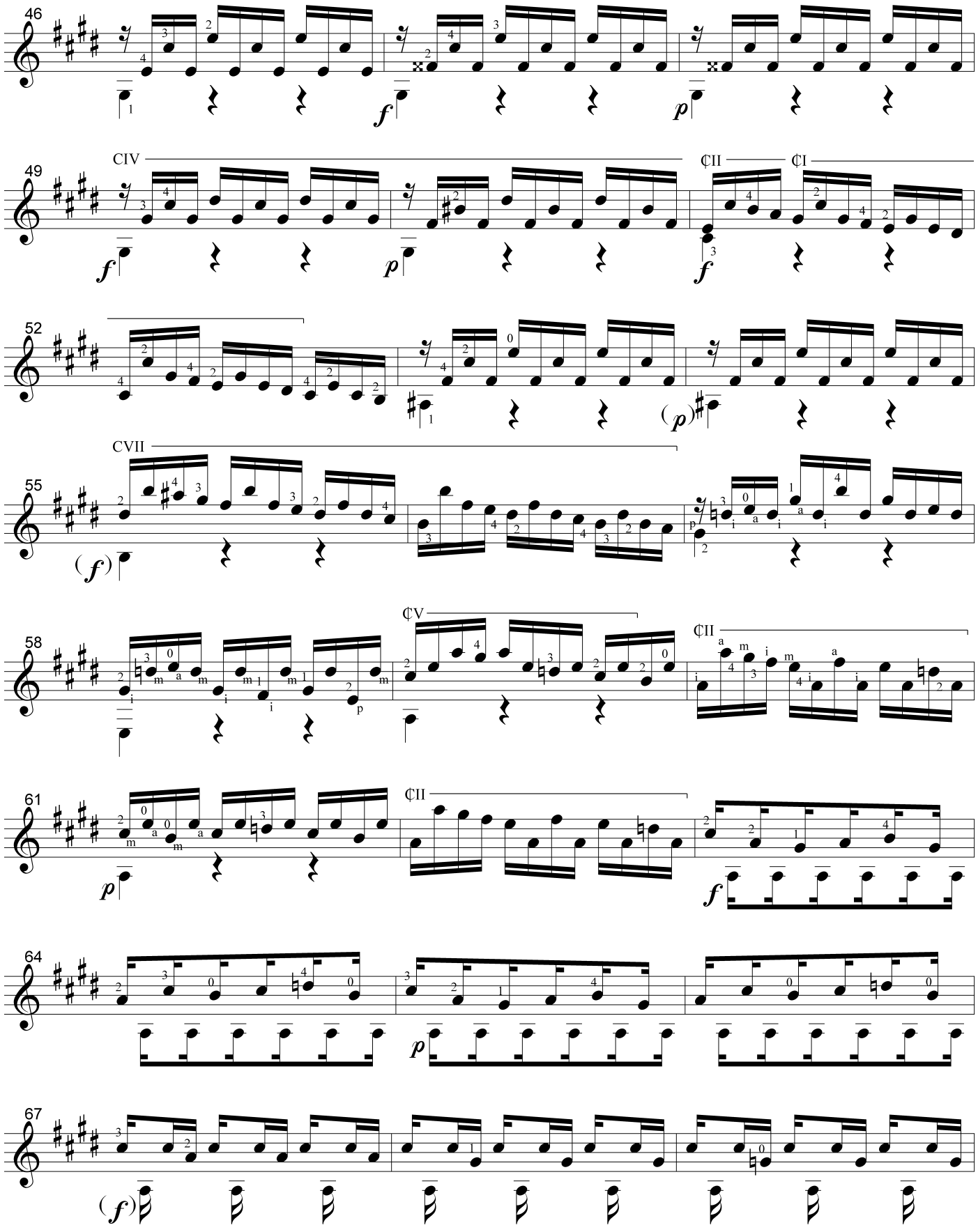
Edited and fingered by Jerry Willard (Ariel, 1980) and Frank Koonce (Kjos, 1989)
Further edited and re-fingered by C. Nelson (2000)

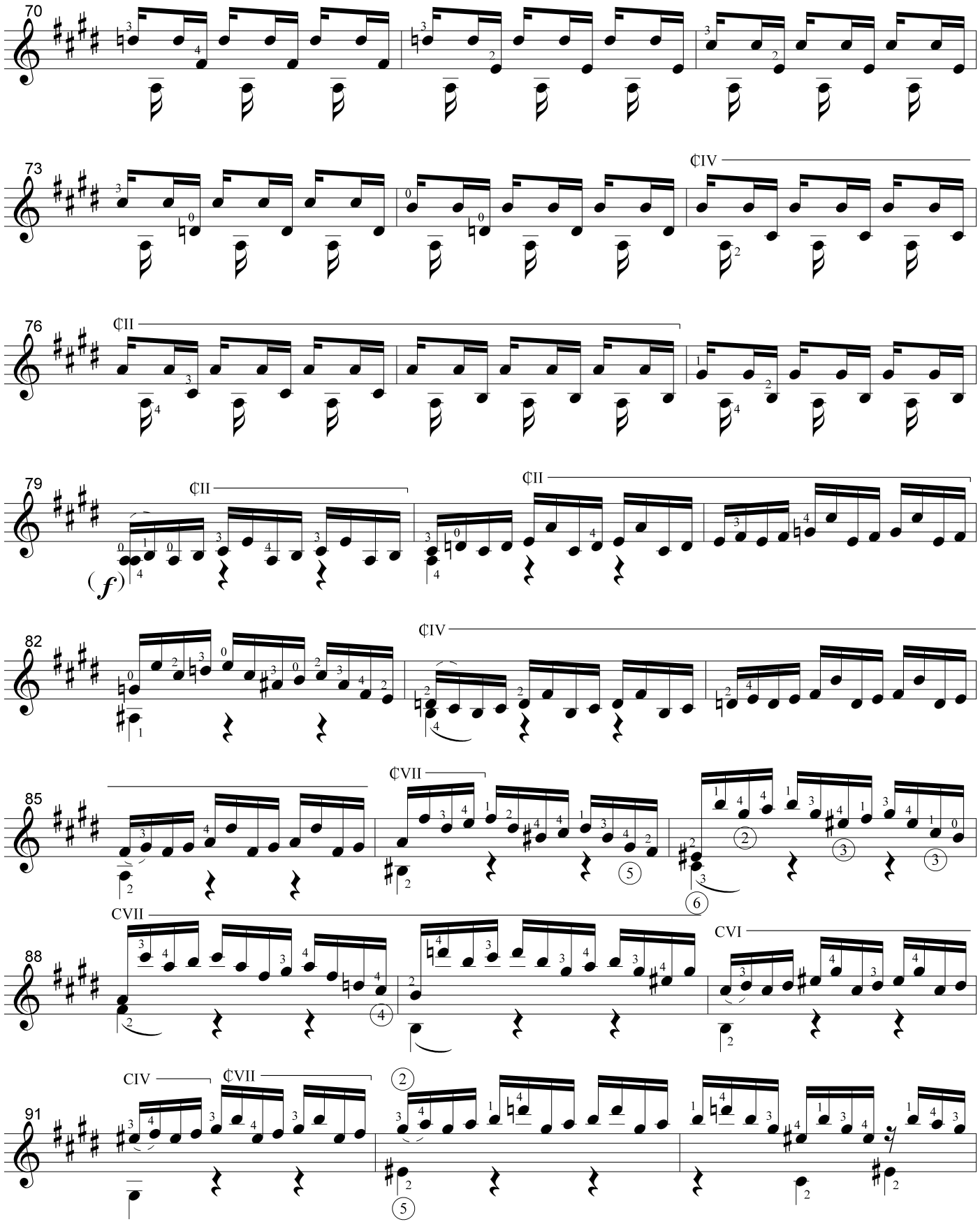
J. S. Bach
Cöthen (1717 - 1723)

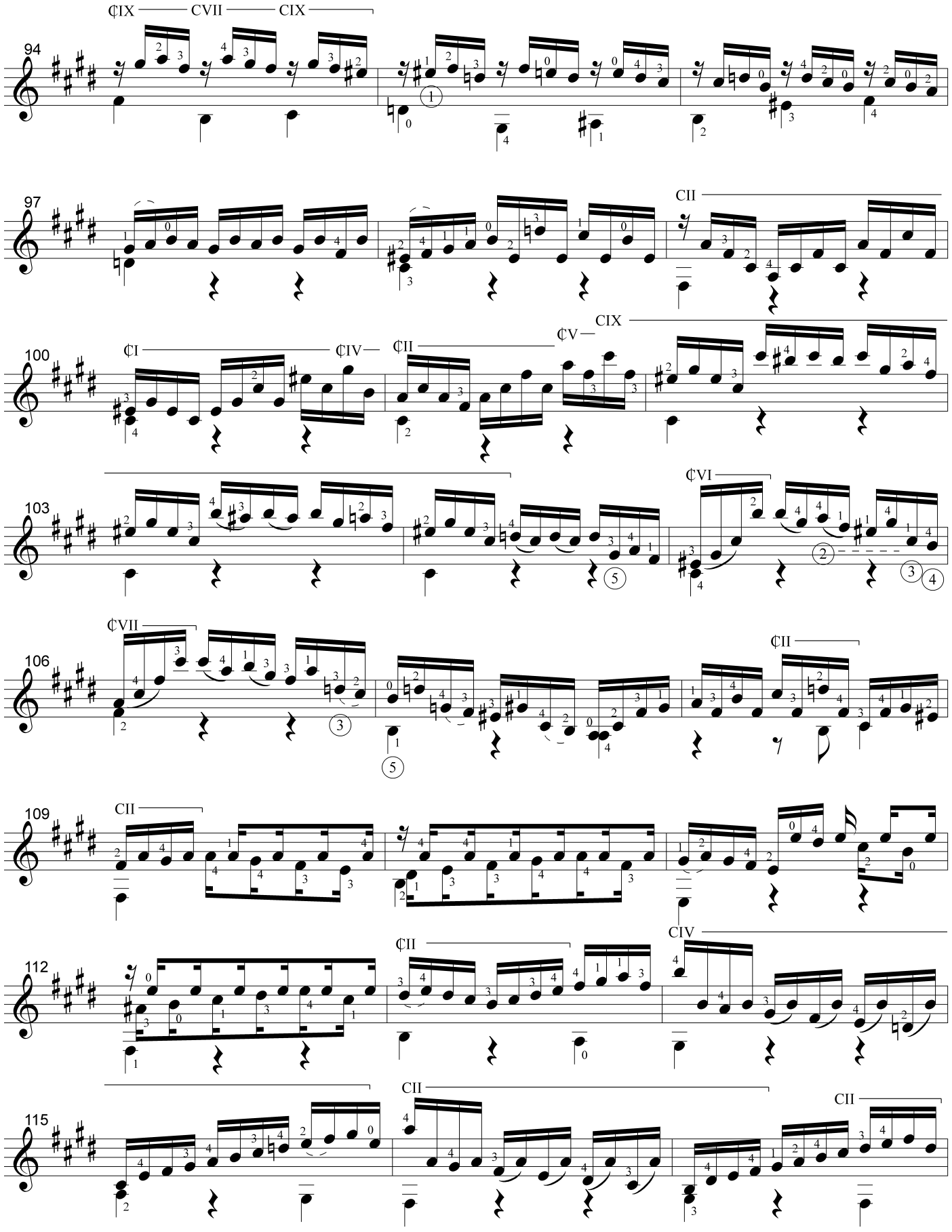
Prelude




22
25
28
CIV
31
CVI
CVI
34
CVI
CII
37
CIV
40
CIV
43
CIV
(f)
p


46
49
CIV
¢II
¢I
52
55
CVII
58
¢V
¢II
61
¢II
64
67


70
73
¢IV
76
¢II
79
¢II
¢II
(f)
82
¢IV
85
¢VII
88
CVII
CVI
91
CIV
¢VII


94
97
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106
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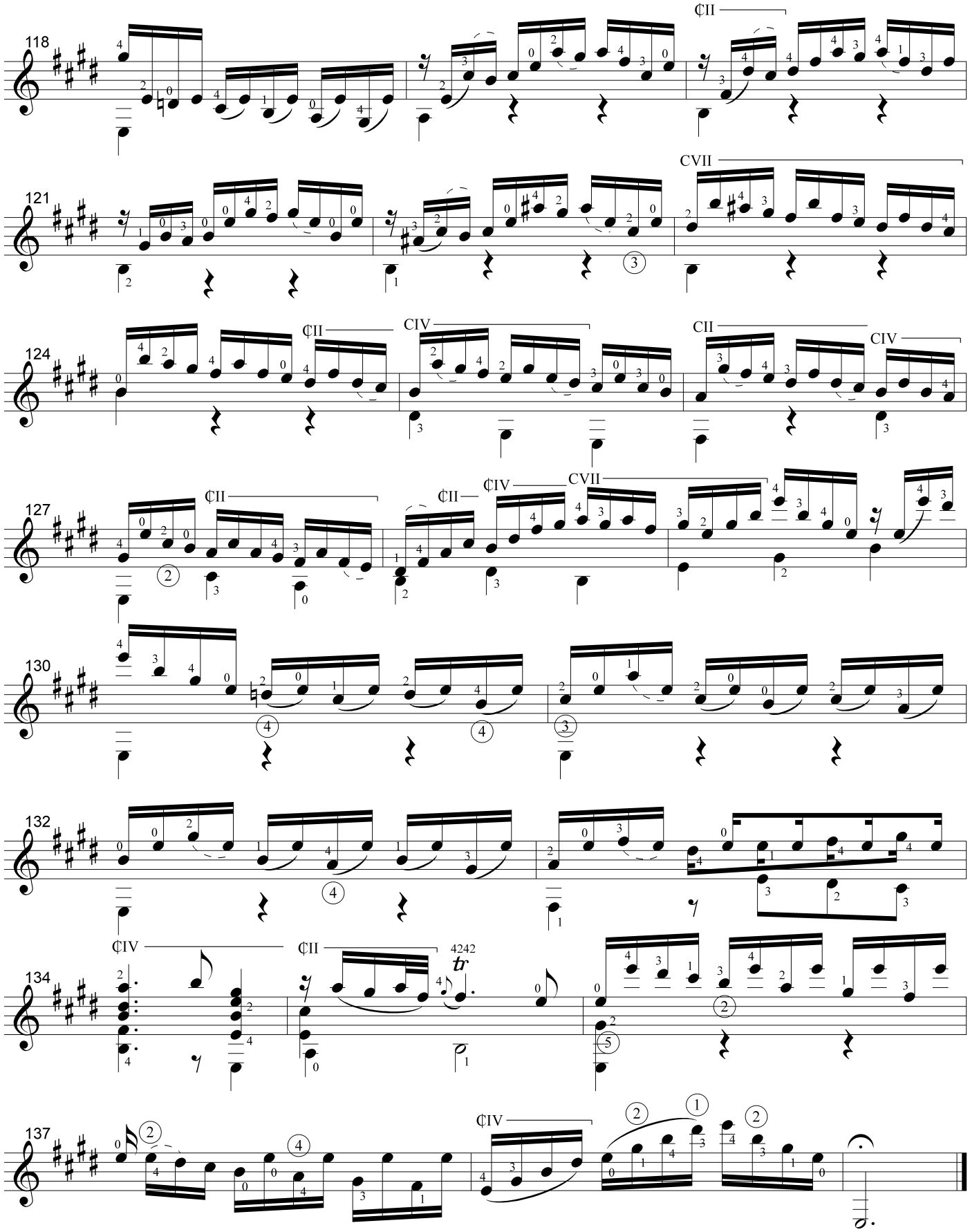
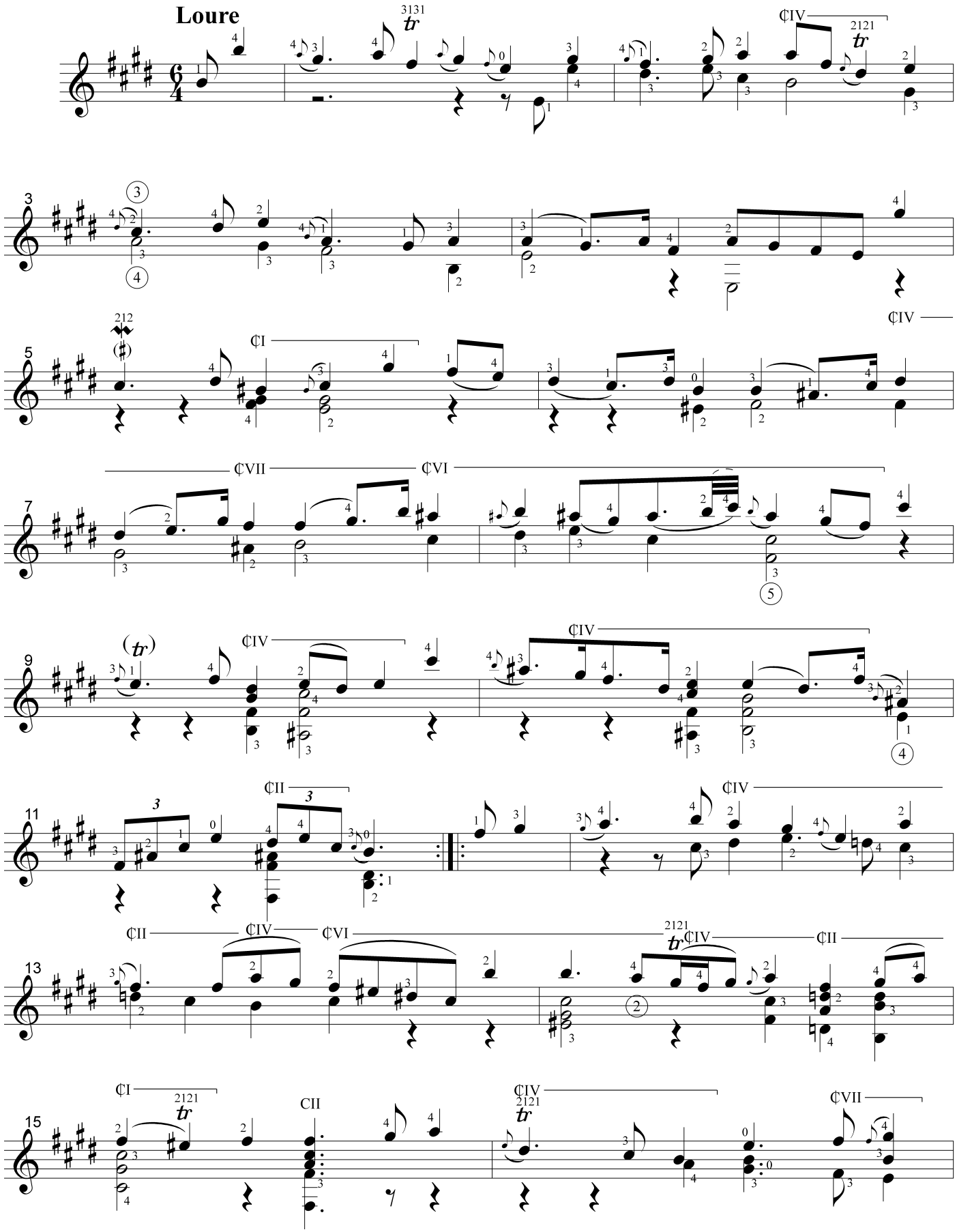
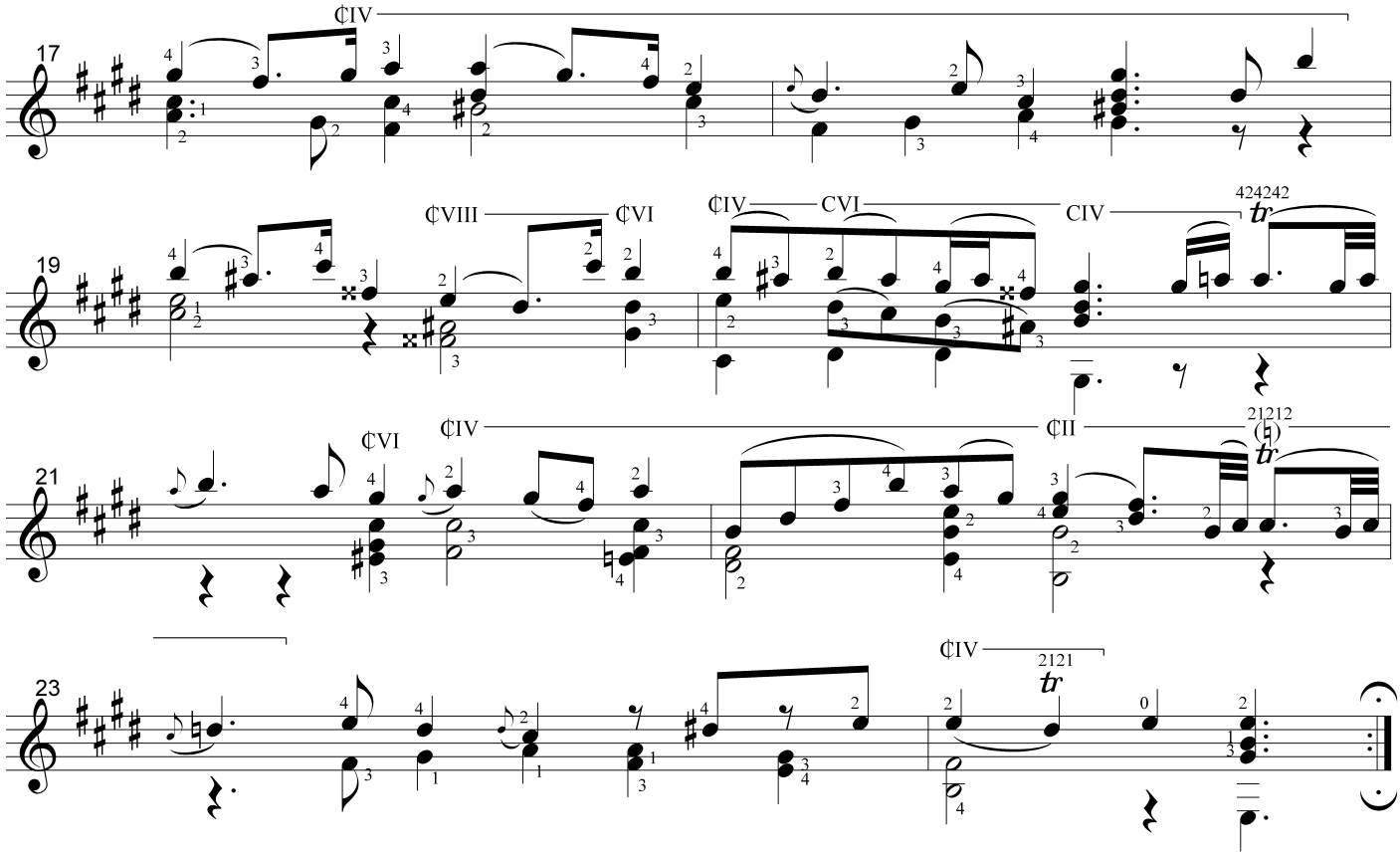
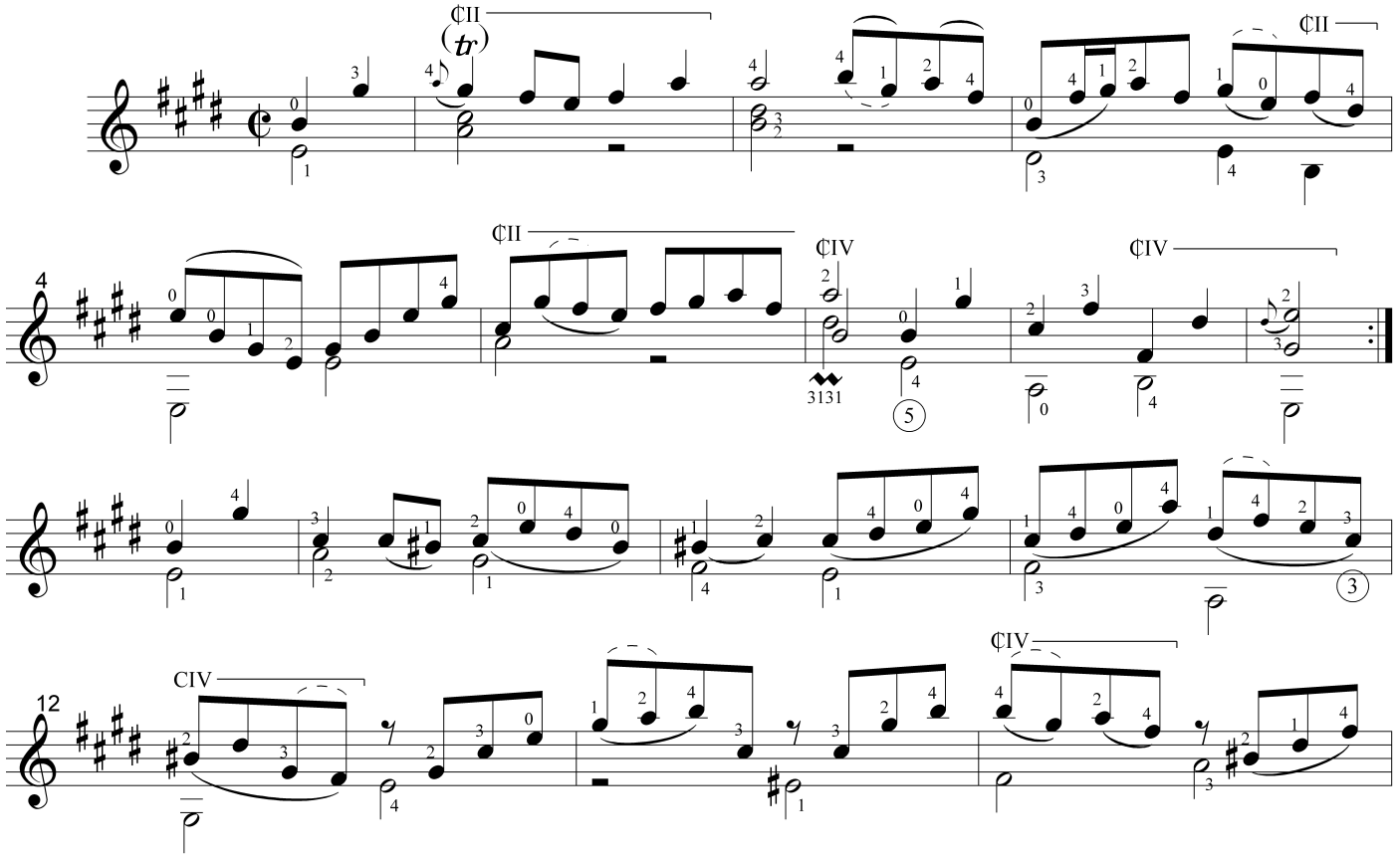
112
115

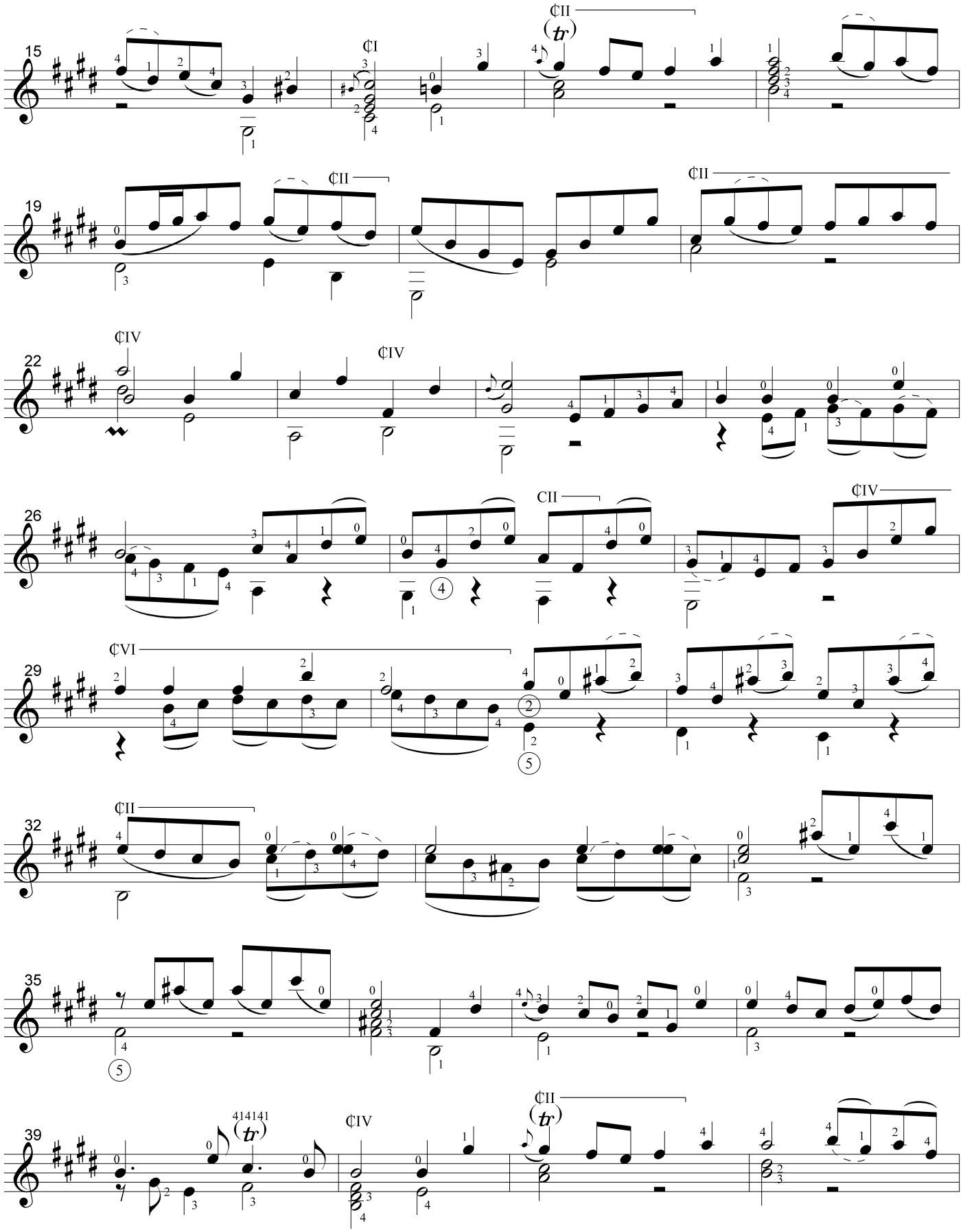

118
121
124
127
130
132
134
137
¢II
CVII
CIV
CII
¢IV
4242
tr

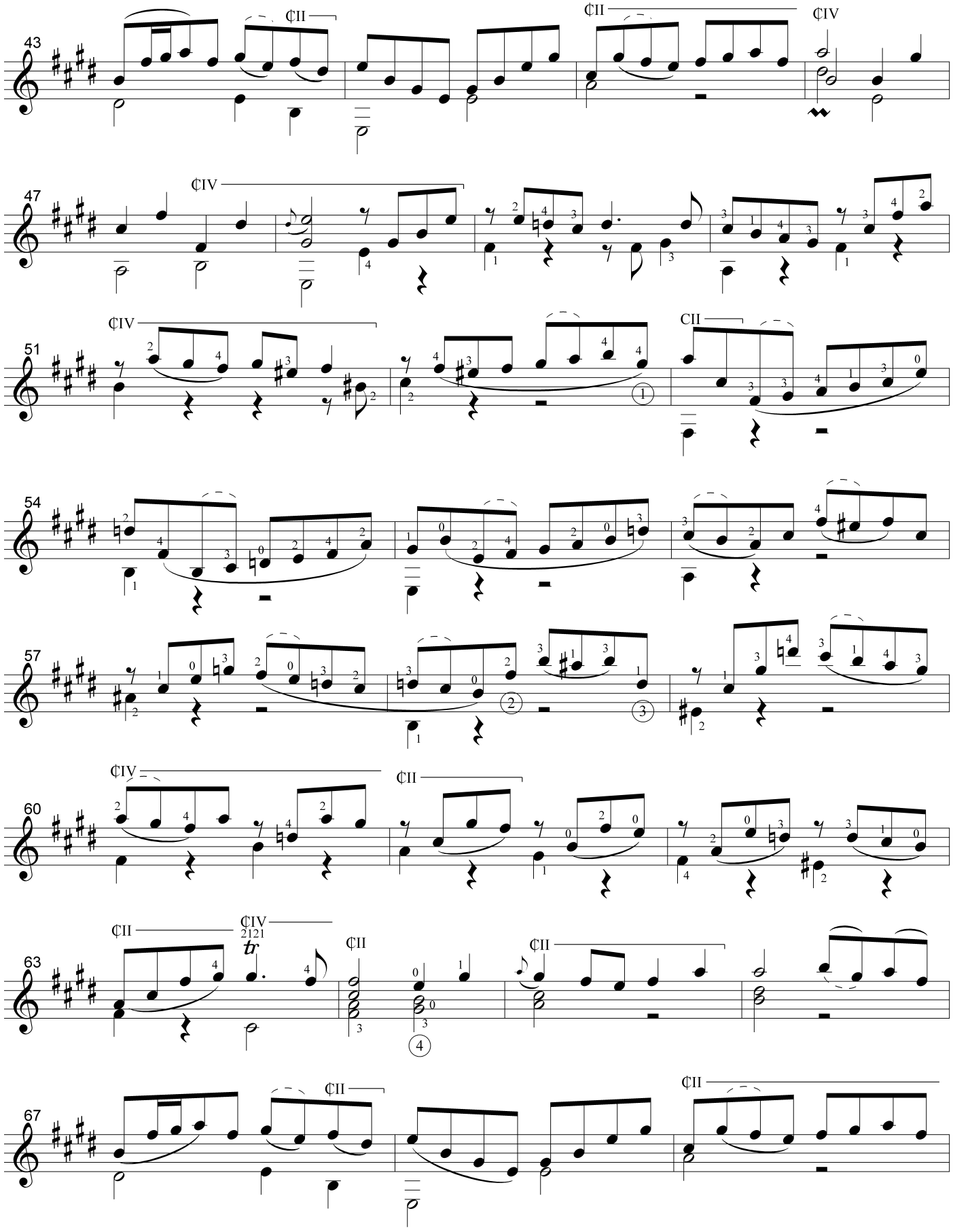

Loure

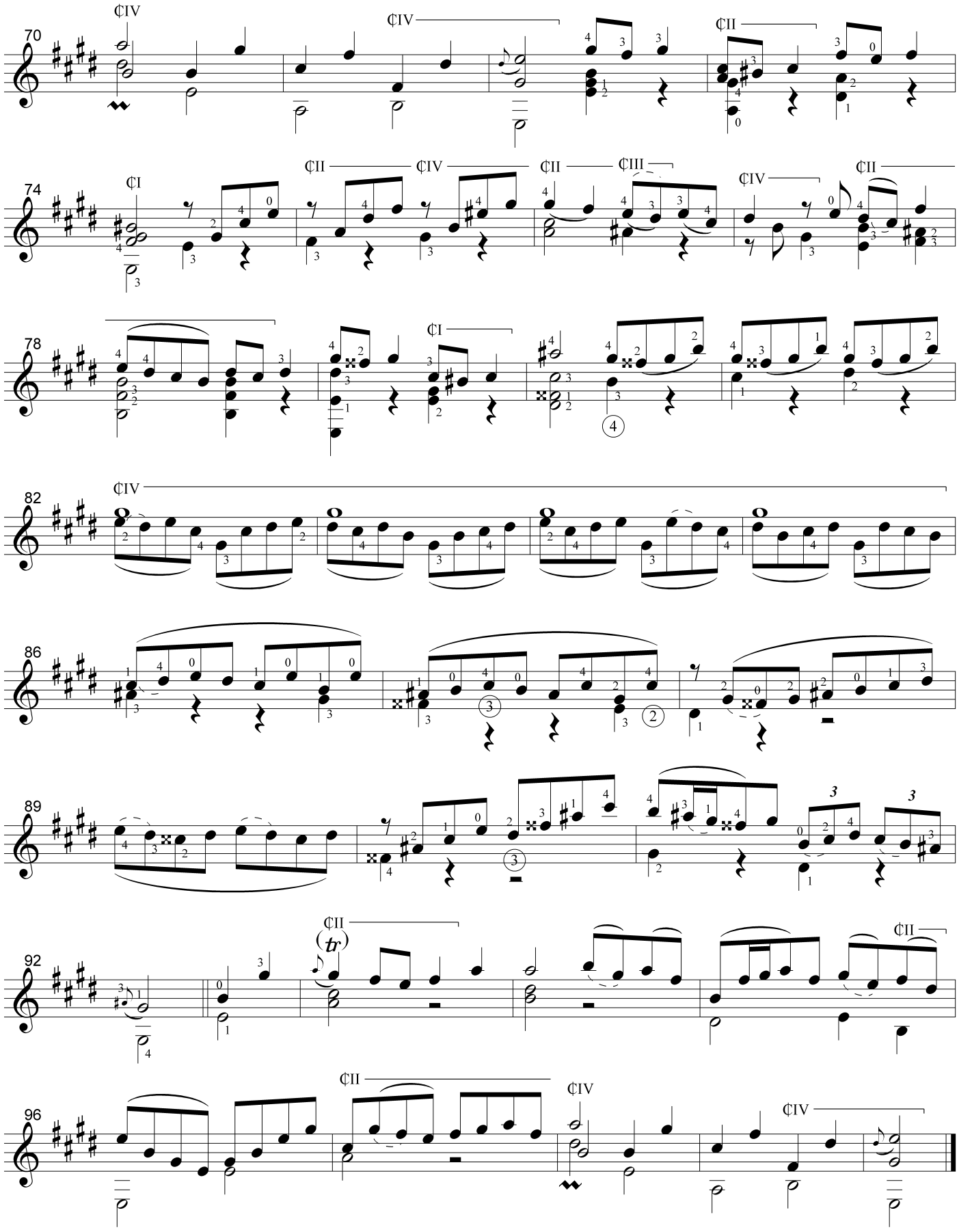


Gavotte en rondeau

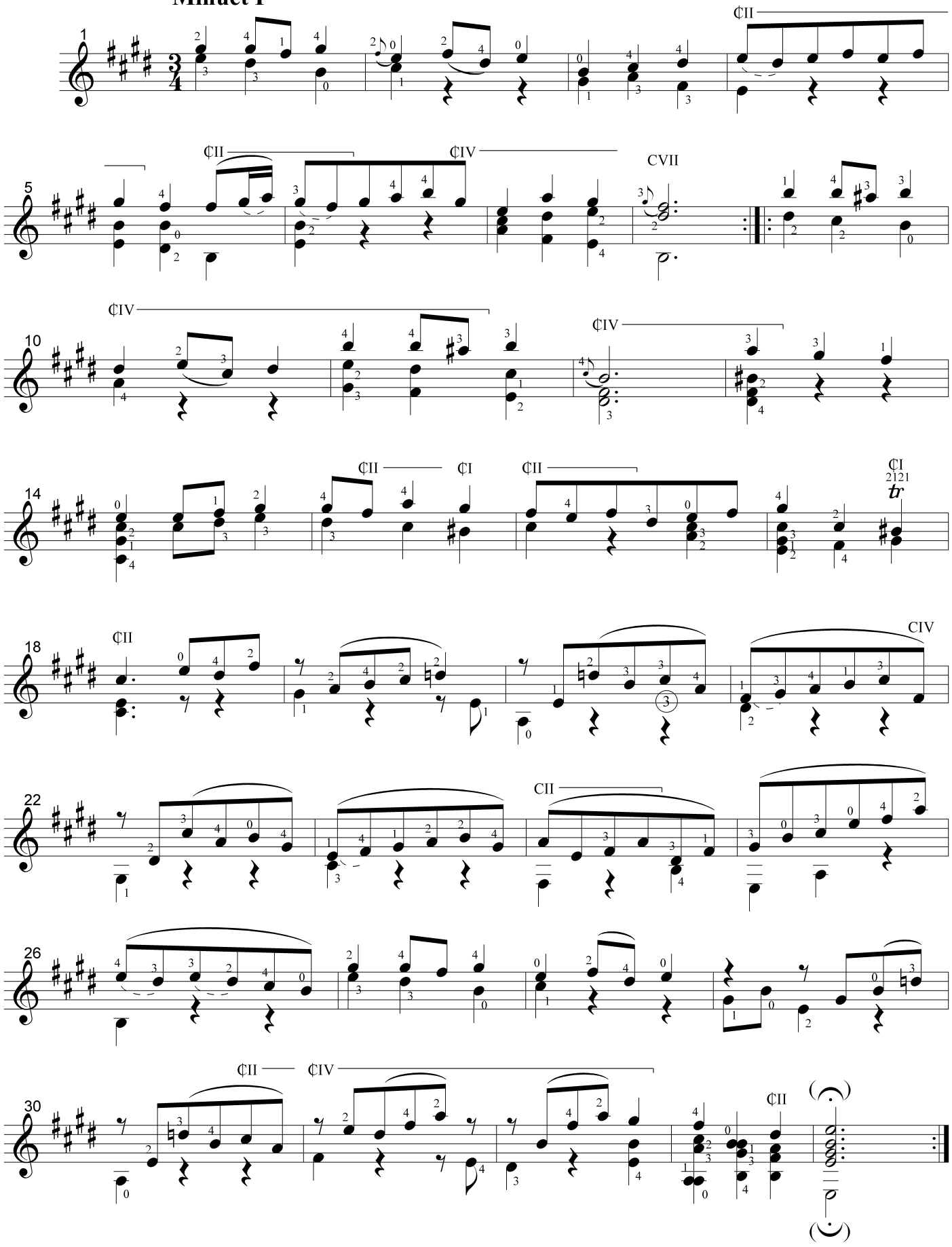



15
¢I
¢II
(tr)
19
¢II
¢II
22
¢IV
¢IV
26
CII
¢IV
29
¢VI
32
¢II
35
39
414141
(tr)
¢IV
¢II
(tr)

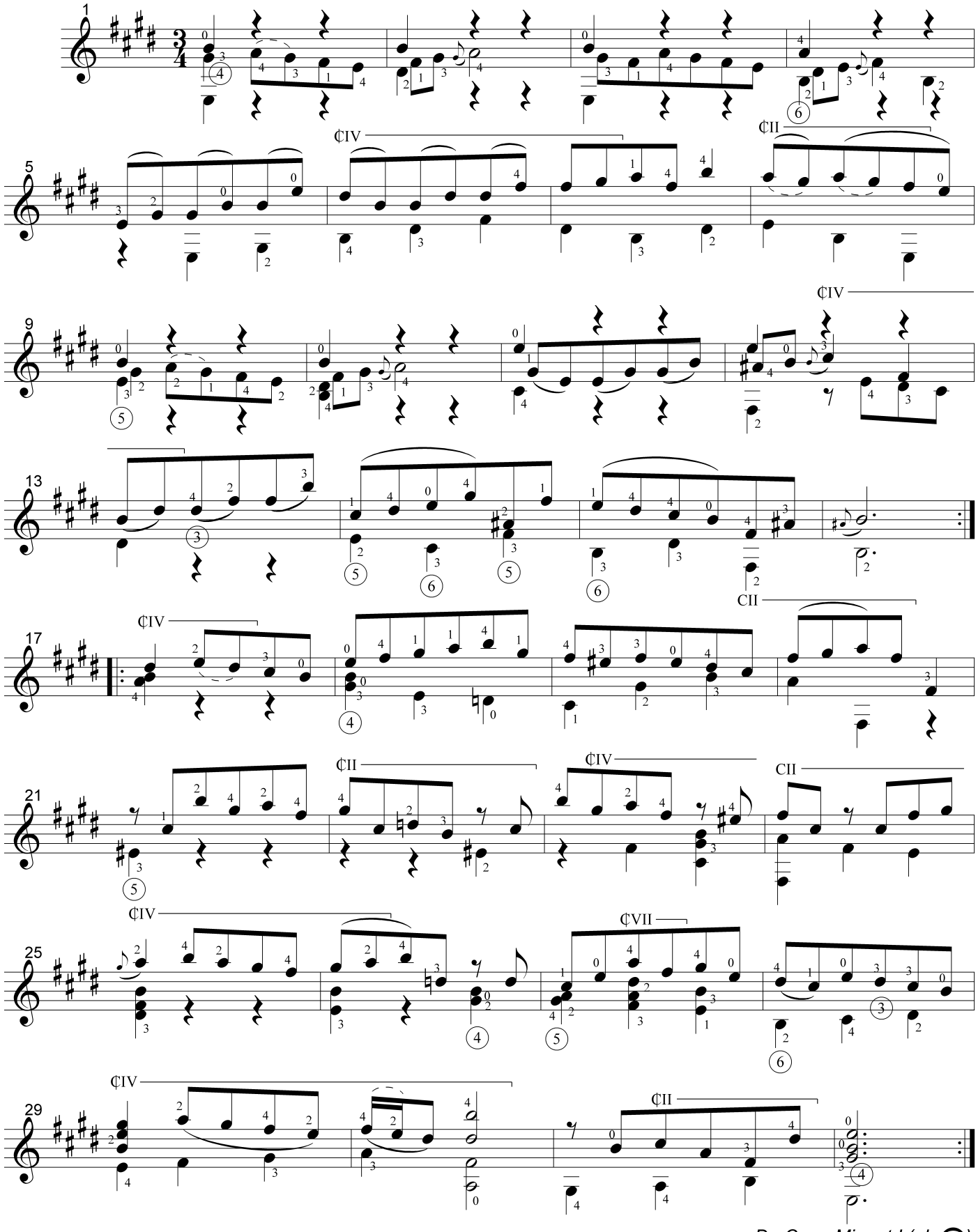

43
¢II
¢II
¢IV
47
¢IV
51
¢IV
CII
54
57
60
¢IV
¢II
63
¢II
¢IV
2121
tr
¢II
¢II
67
¢II
¢II


70
74
78
82
86
89
92
96

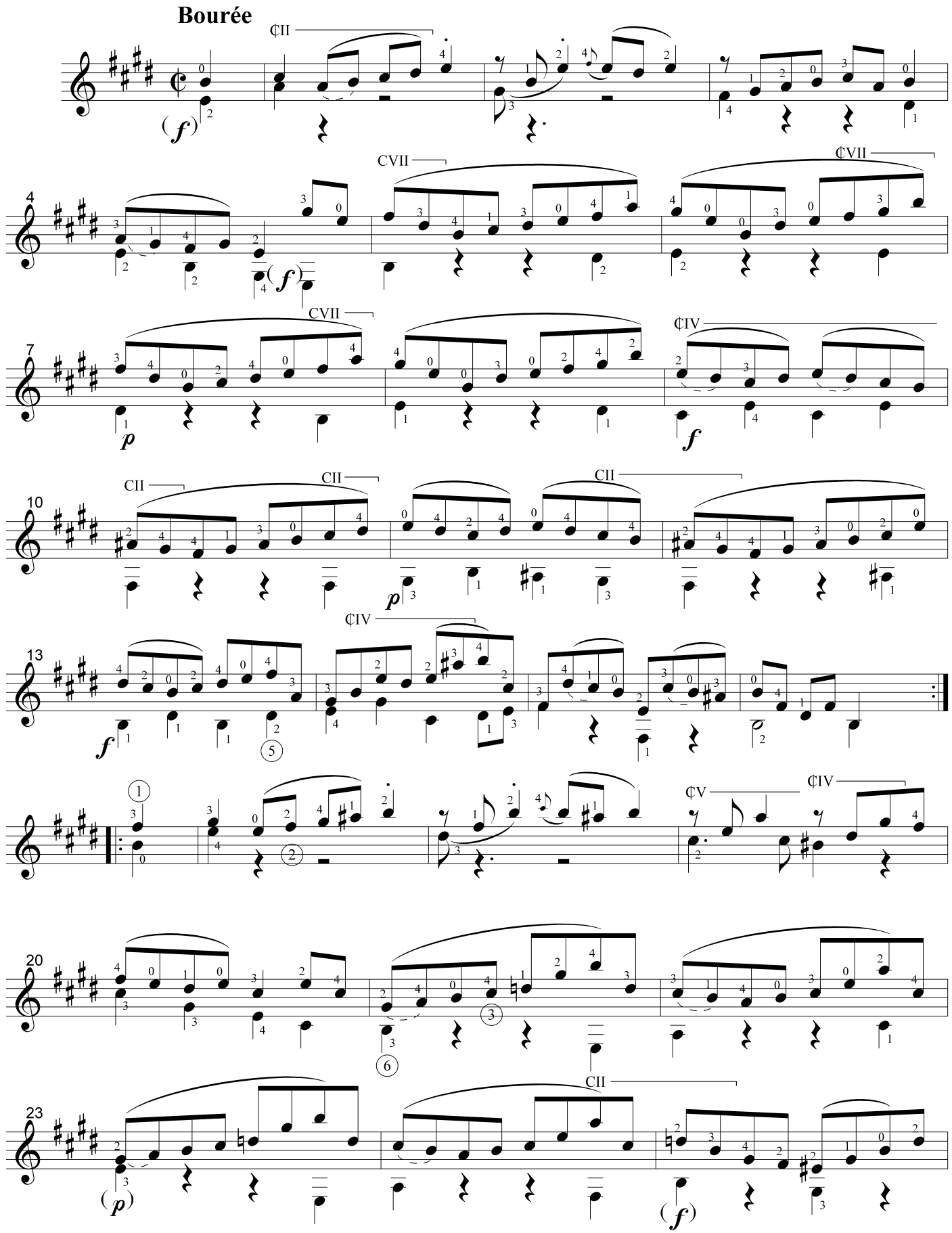
Minuet I

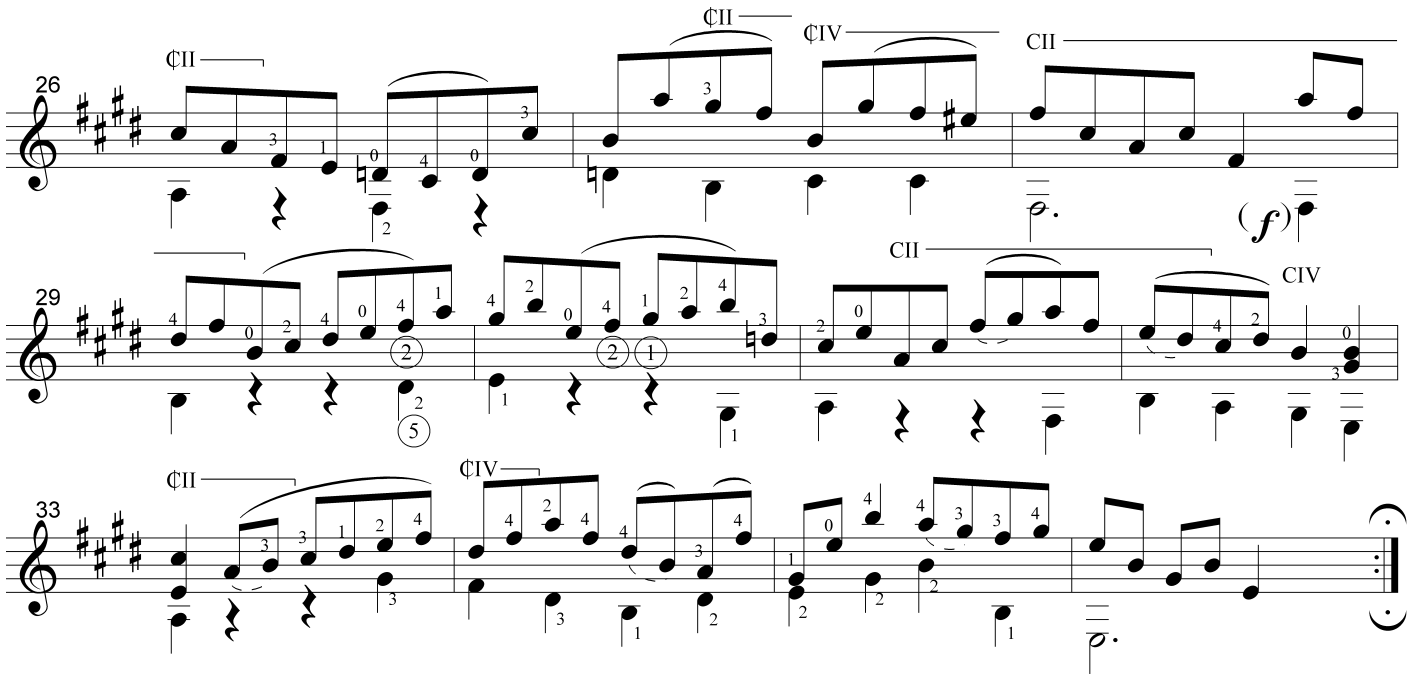

1
¢II
5
¢II
¢IV
CVII
10
¢IV
¢IV
14
¢II
¢I
¢II
¢I
2121
tr
18
¢II
CIV
22
CII
26
30
¢II
¢IV
¢II

Minuet II

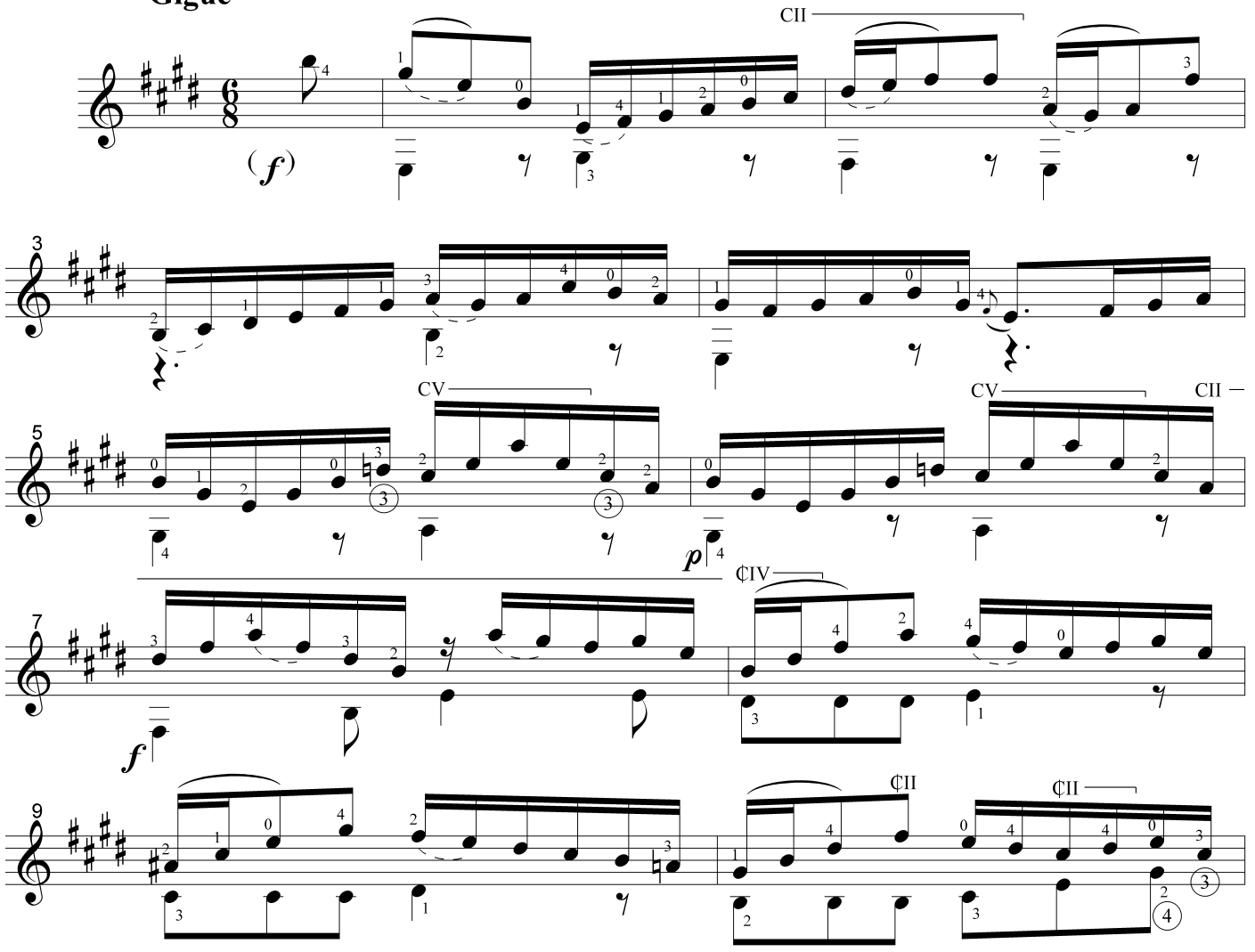


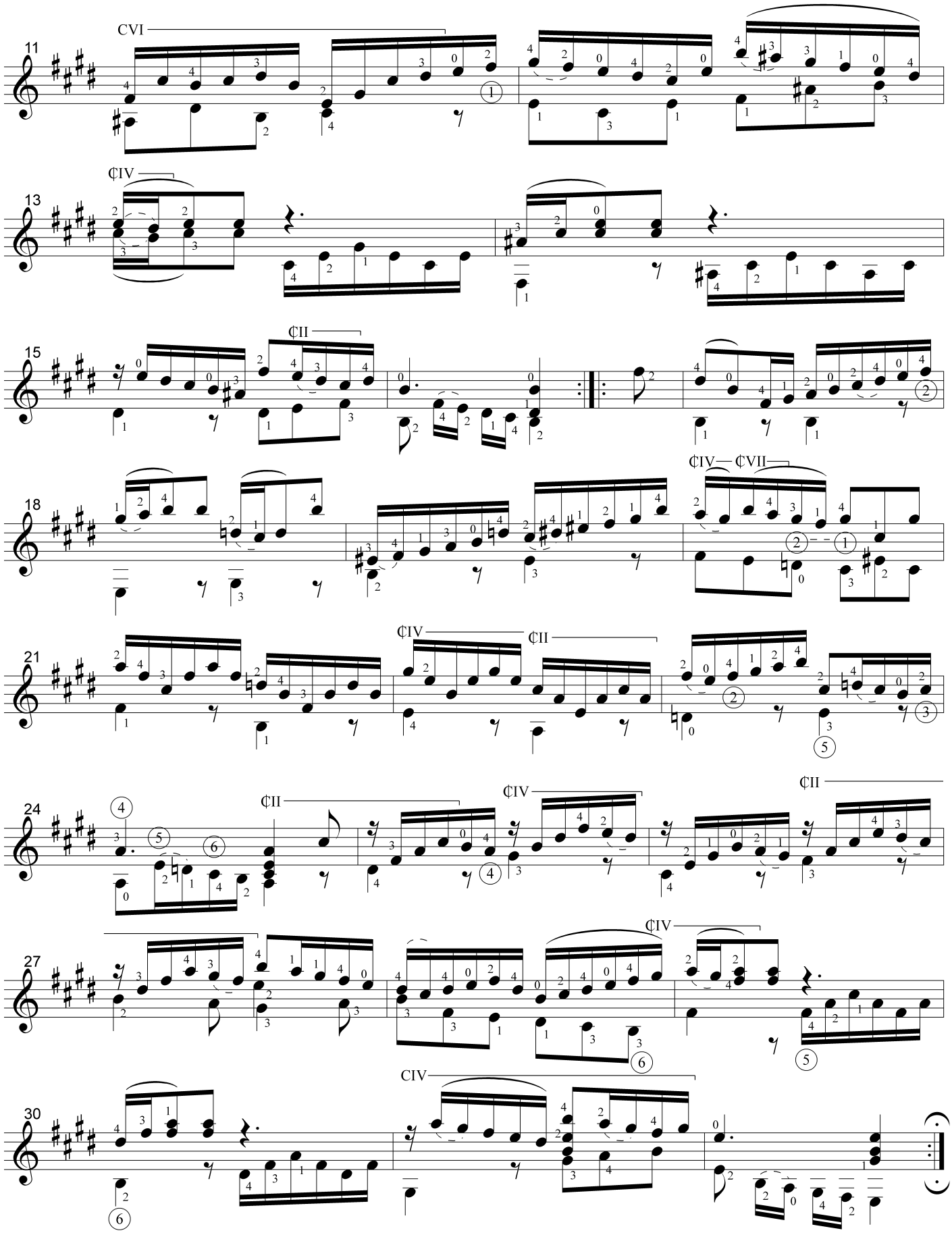
Da Capo Minuet I (al 𝄐)


Bourée
¢II
CVII
¢VII
CVII
¢IV
CII
CII
CII
¢IV
¢V
¢IV
CII



Gigue

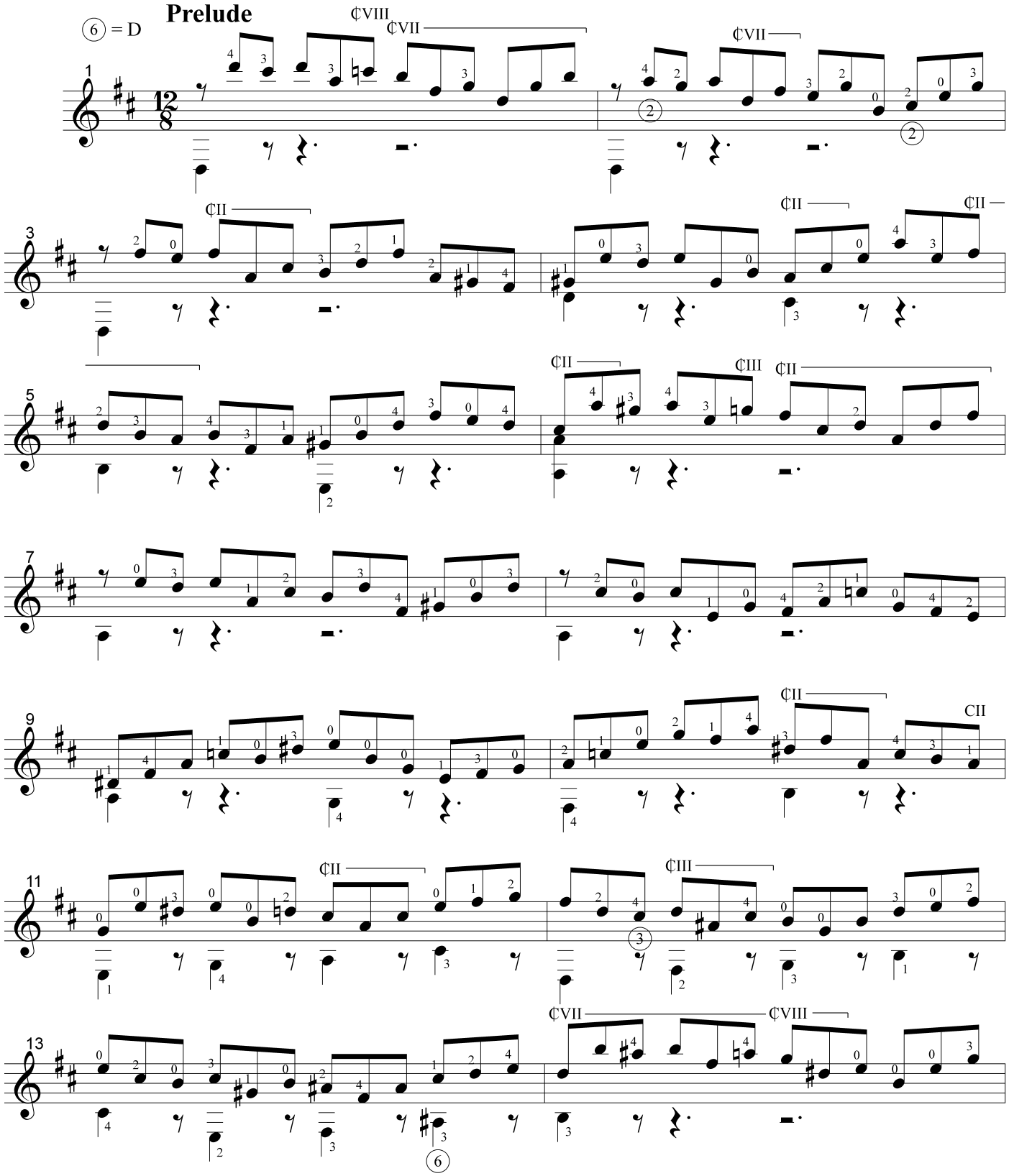


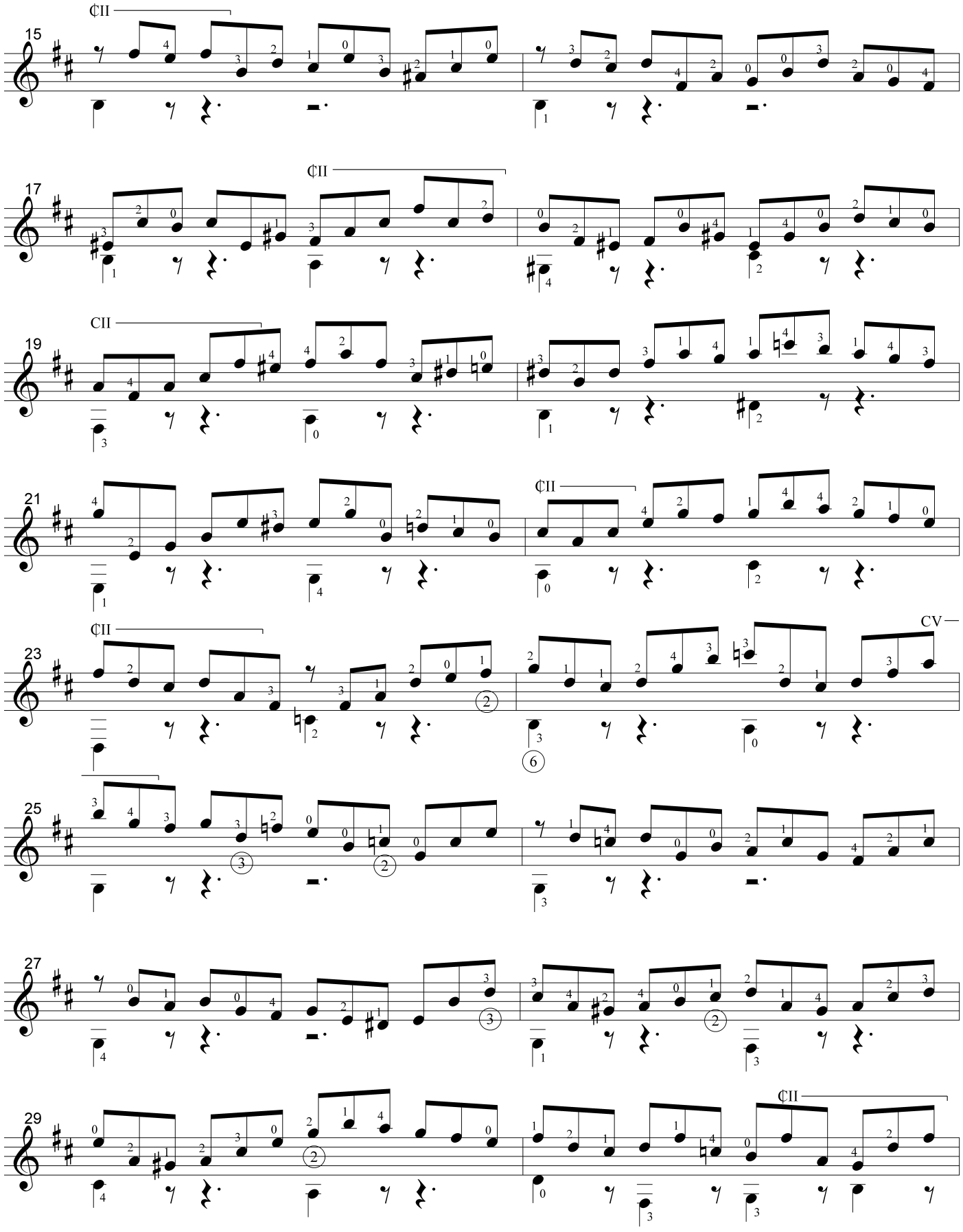

CVI
11
¢IV
13
¢II
15
18
¢IV— ¢VII
¢IV
¢II
21
24
¢II
¢IV
¢II
27
¢IV
CIV
30

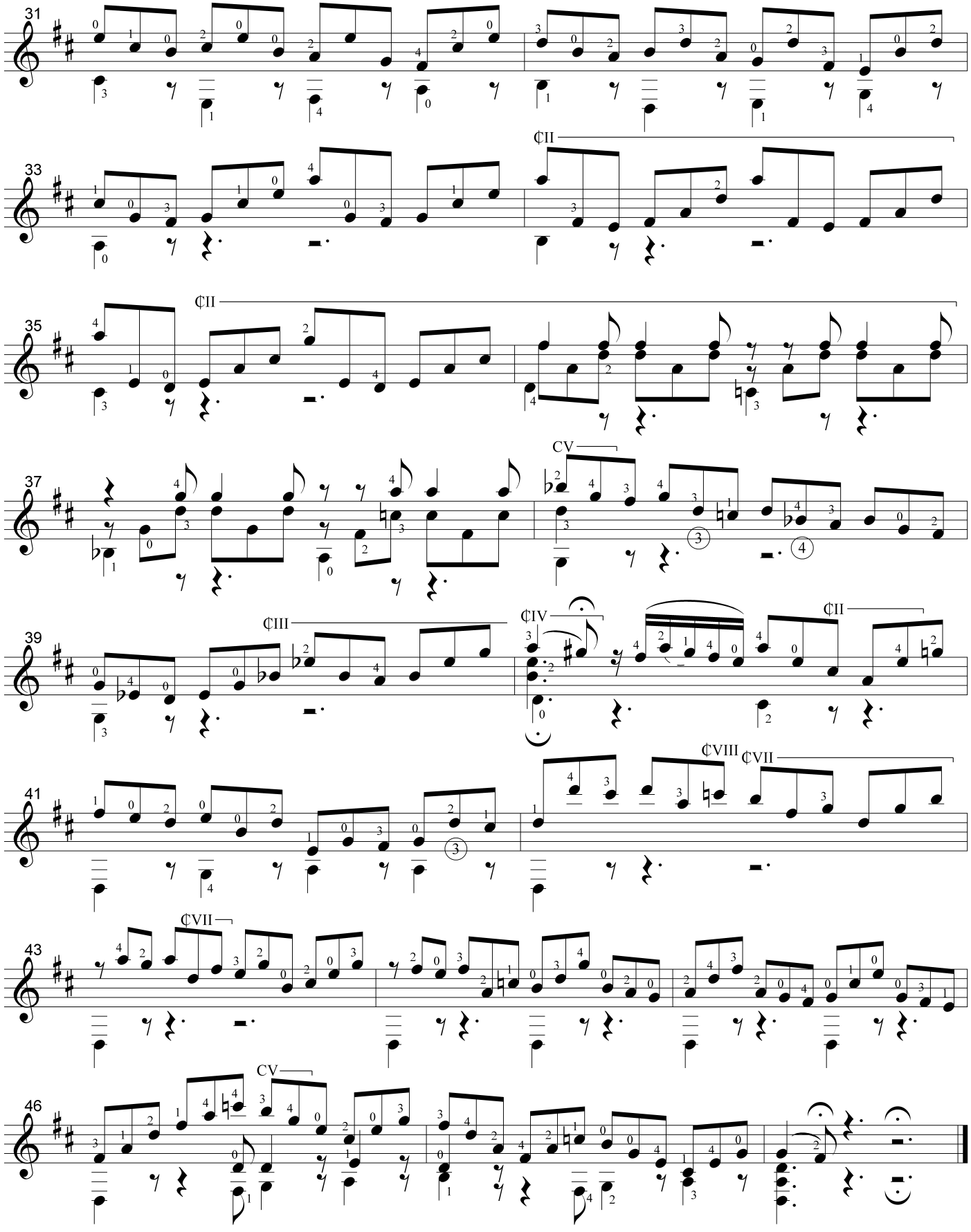
Prelude, Fugue and Allegro (bwv 998)

Edited and fingered by Jerry Willard (Ariel, 1980) and Frank Koonce (Kjos, 1989)
Further edited and re-fingered by C. Nelson (2000)

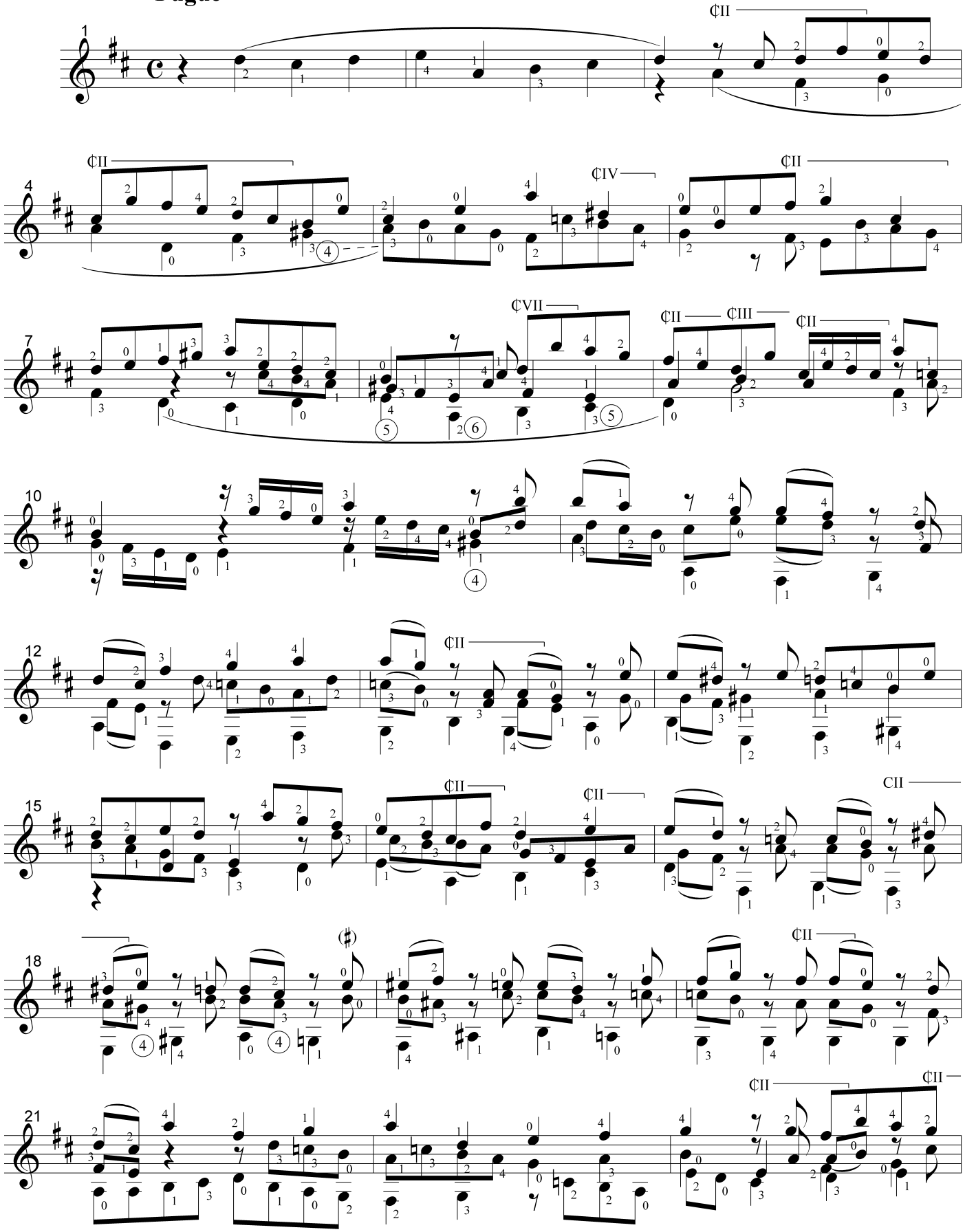
J. S. Bach
Leipzig (1723 - 1750)

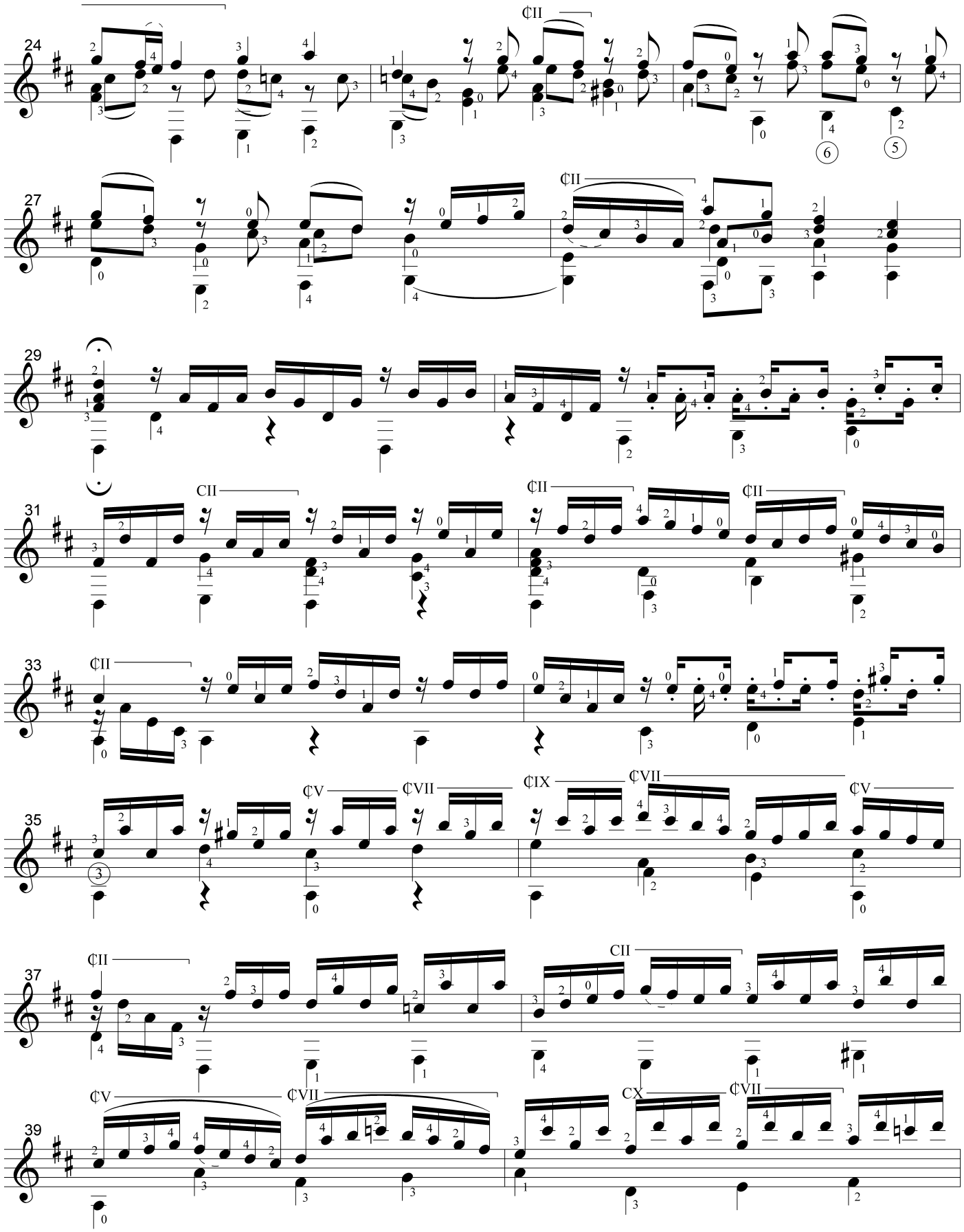


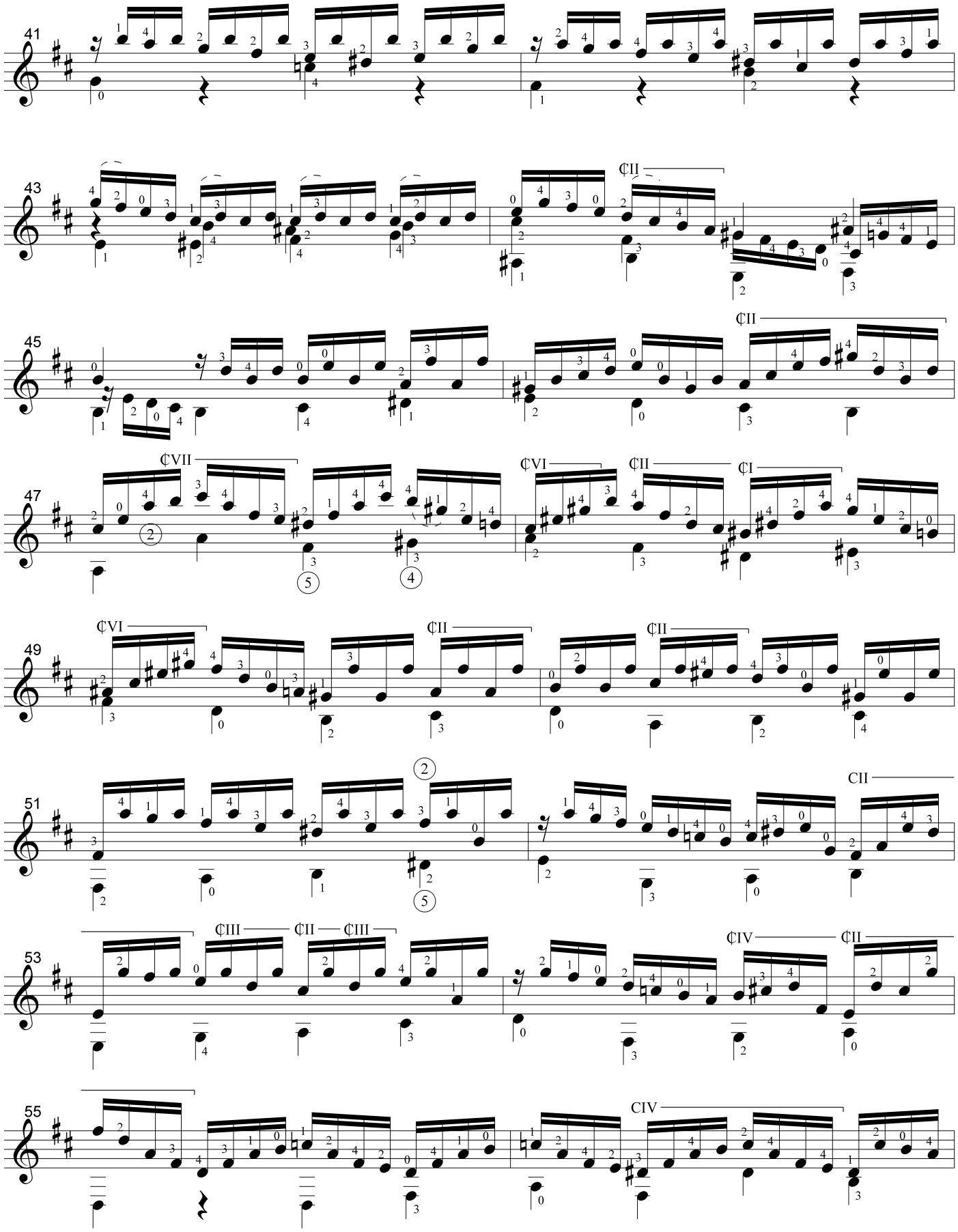

15
¢II
17
¢II
19
CII
21
¢II
23
¢II
CV
25
27
29
¢II

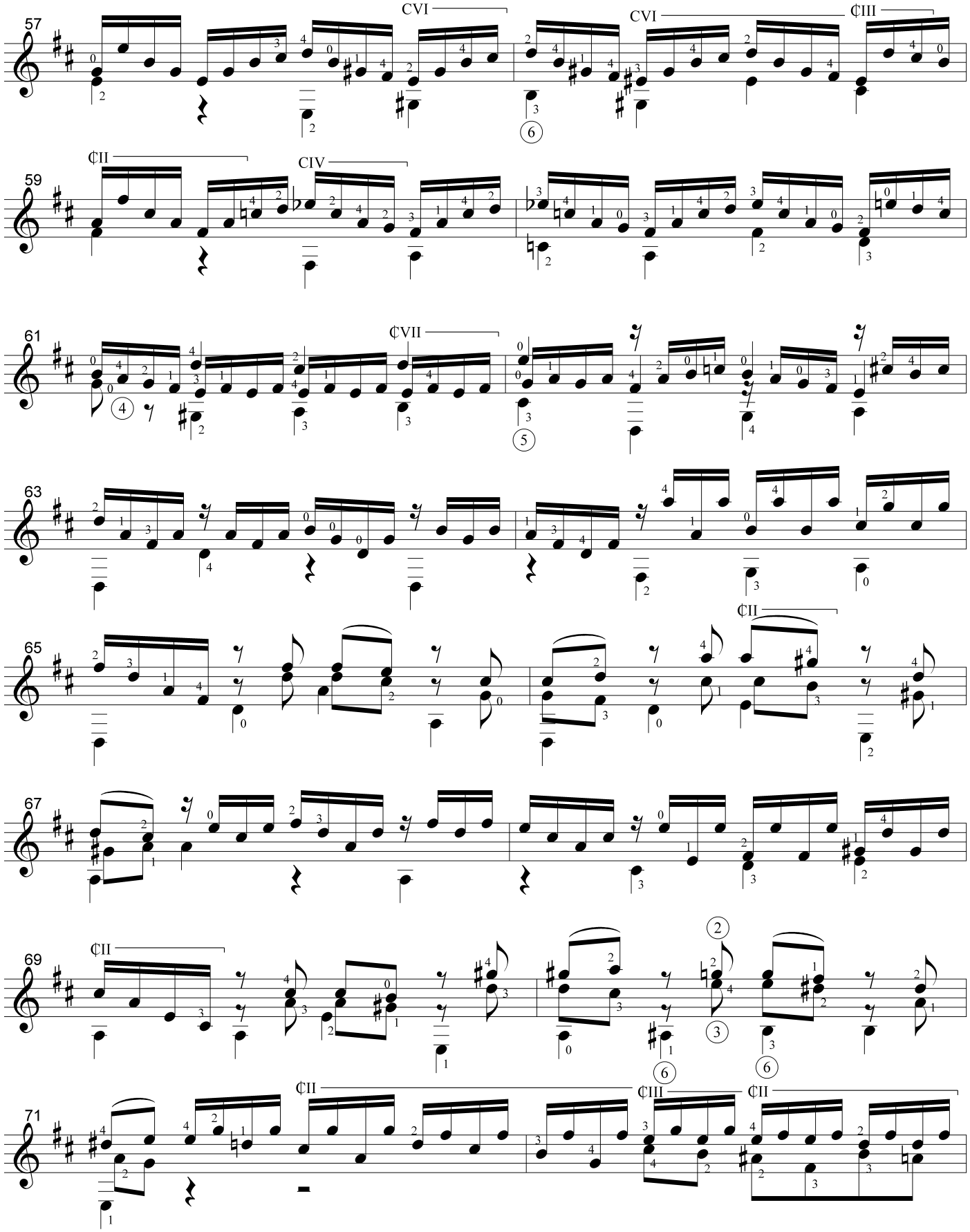

31
33
¢II
35
¢II
37
CV
39
¢III
¢IV
¢II
41
¢VIII
¢VII
43
¢VII
46
CV

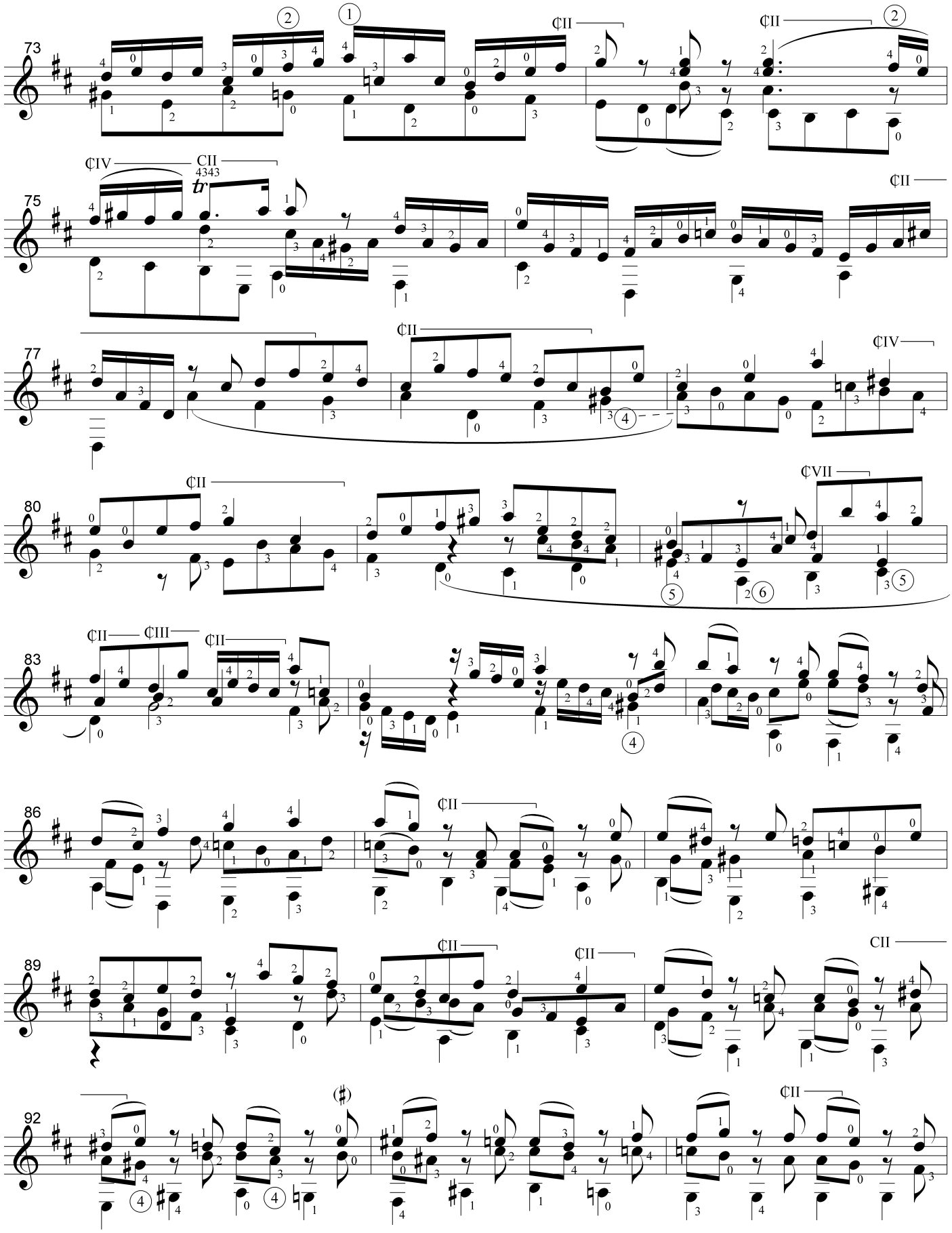
Fugue

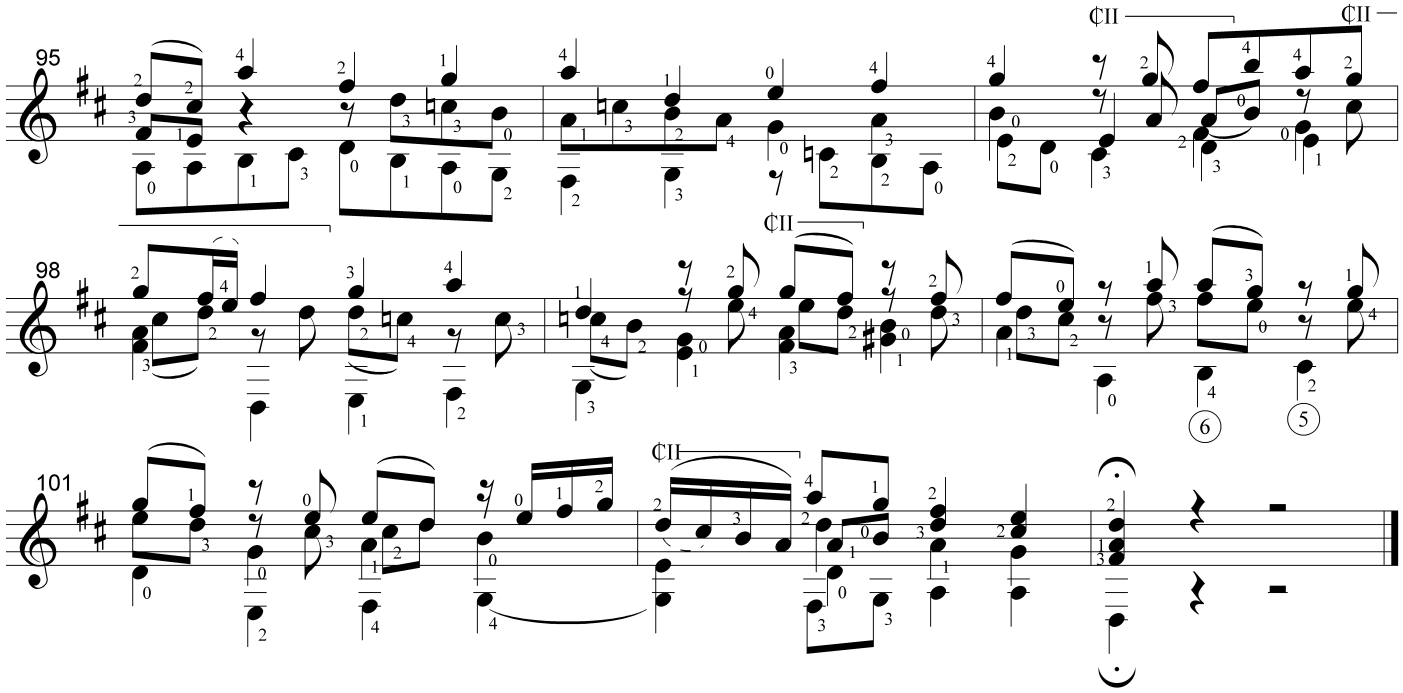



24
¢II
6
5
27
¢II
29
31
CII
¢II
¢II
33
¢II
35
¢V
¢VII
¢IX
¢VII
¢V
37
¢II
CII
39
¢V
¢VII
CX
¢VII

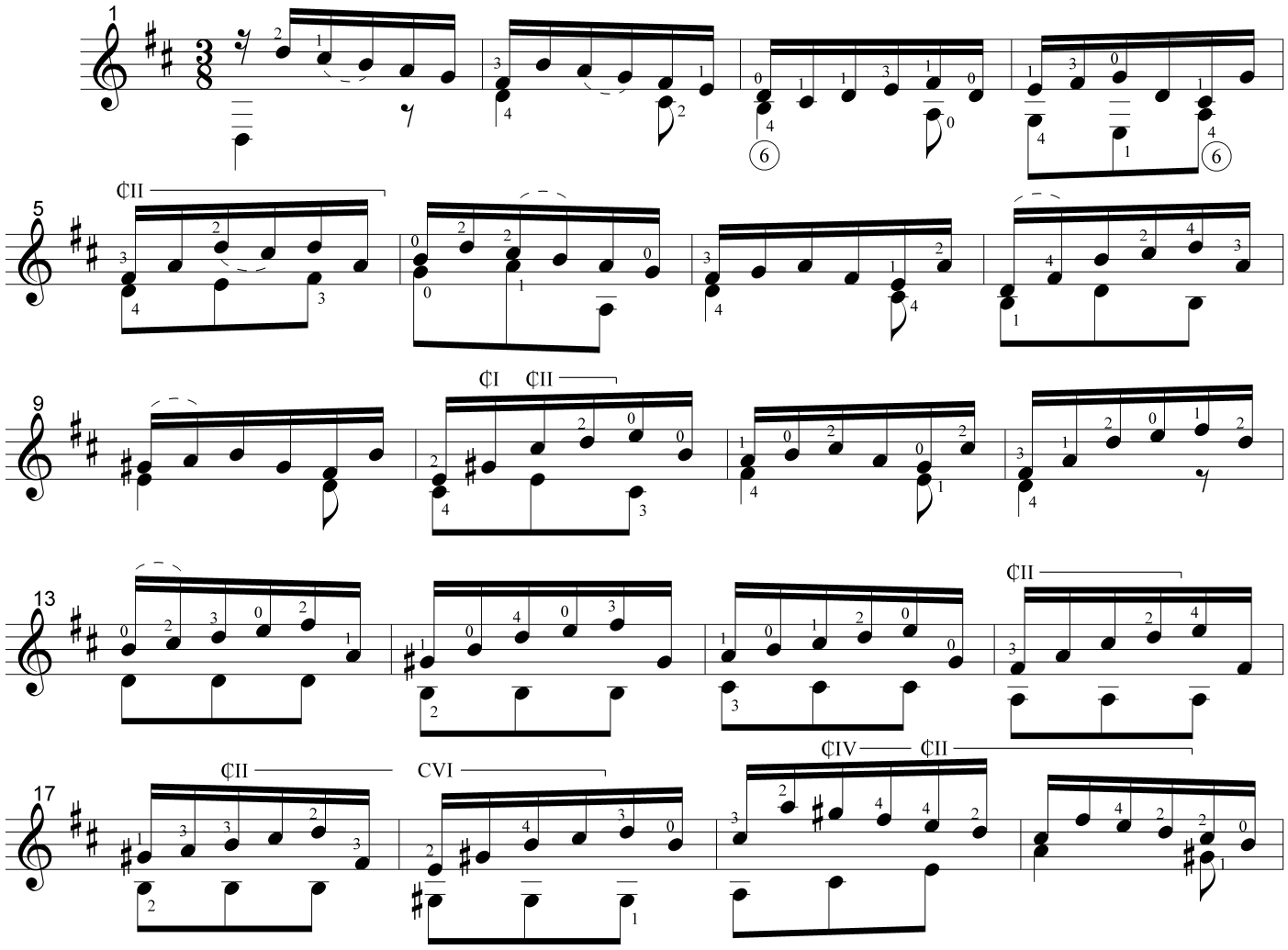

41
43
¢II
45
¢II
47
¢VII
¢VI
¢II
¢I
49
¢VI
¢II
¢II
51
2
5
CII
53
¢III
¢II
¢III
¢IV
¢II
55
CIV

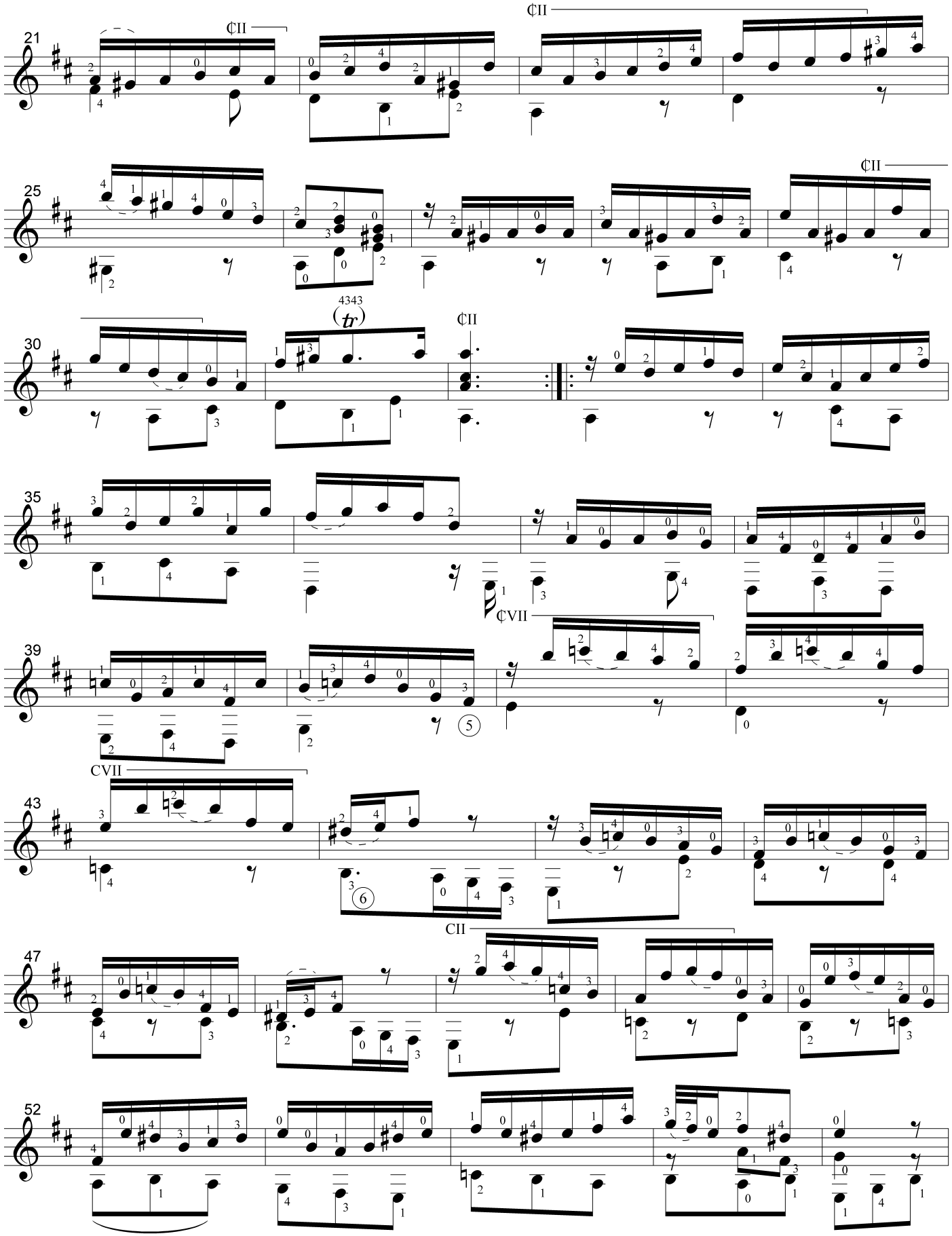

57
CVI
CVI
¢III
59
¢II
CIV
61
¢VII
63
65
¢II
67
69
¢II
71
¢II
¢III
¢II

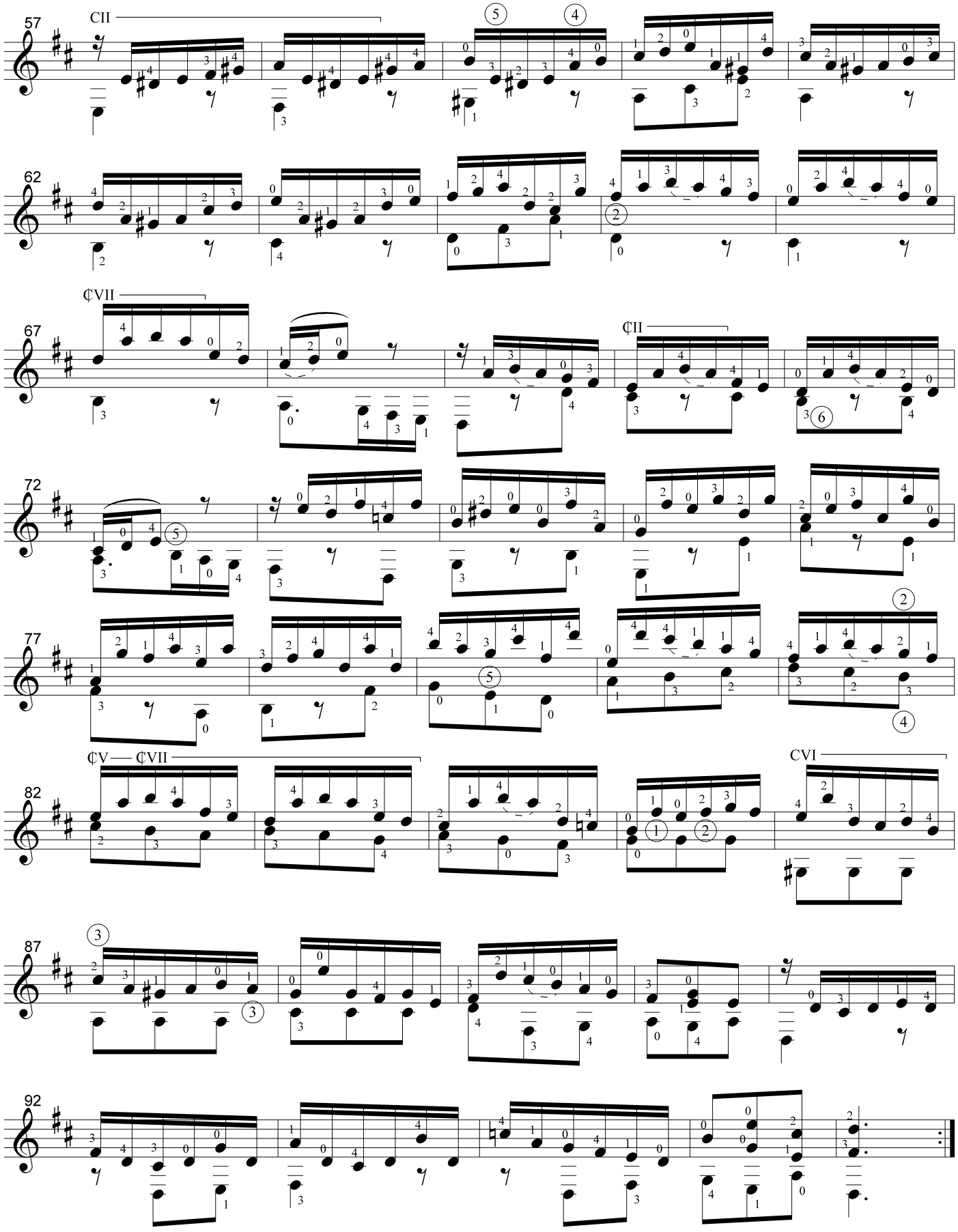

73
75
77
80
83
86
89
92
¢II
¢IV
CII
4343
tr
¢VII
¢III
CII
(♯)



Allegro



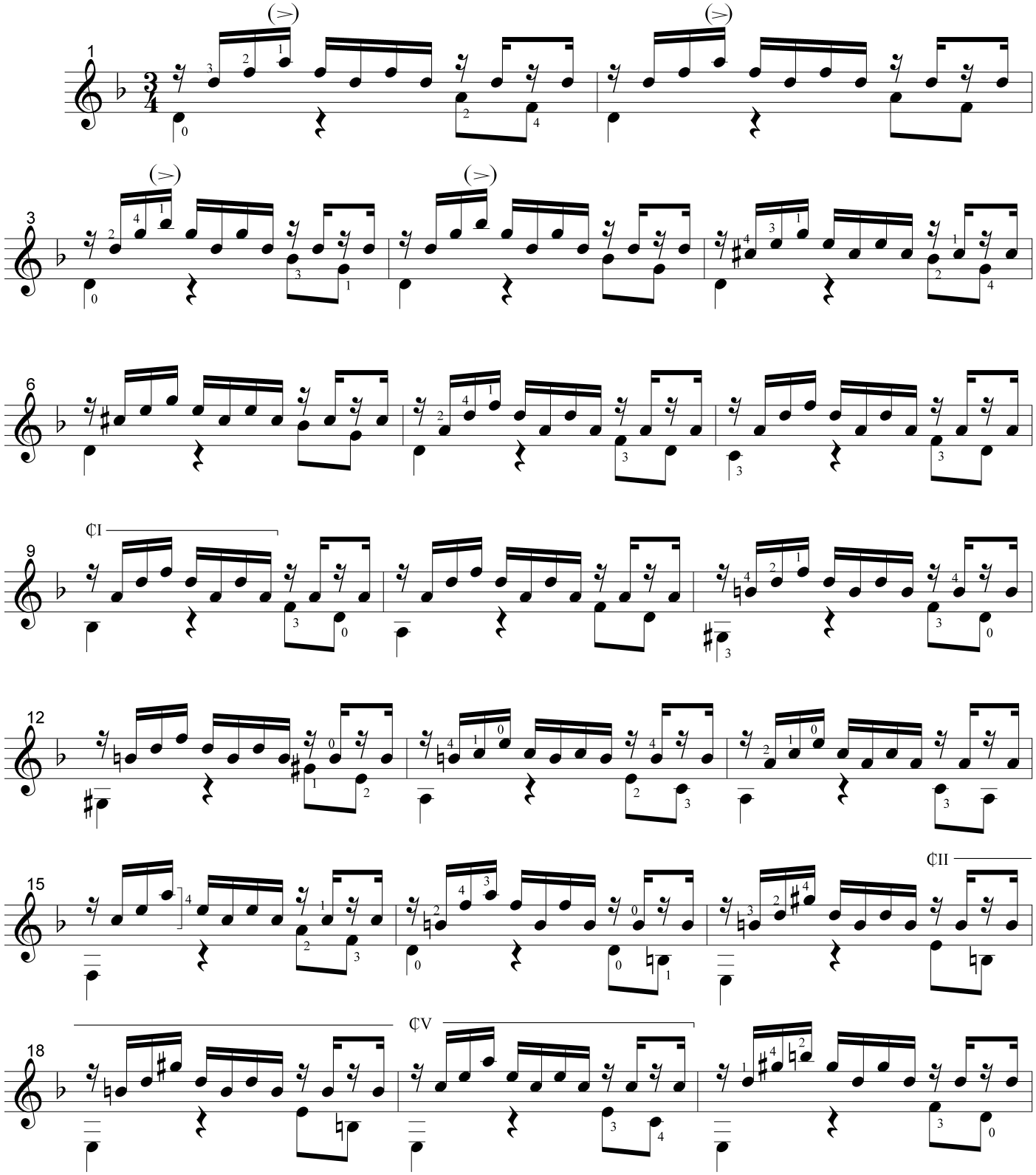

21
¢II
¢II
25
¢II
30
4343
(tr)
¢II
35
39
¢VII
5
CVII
43
6
CII
47
52

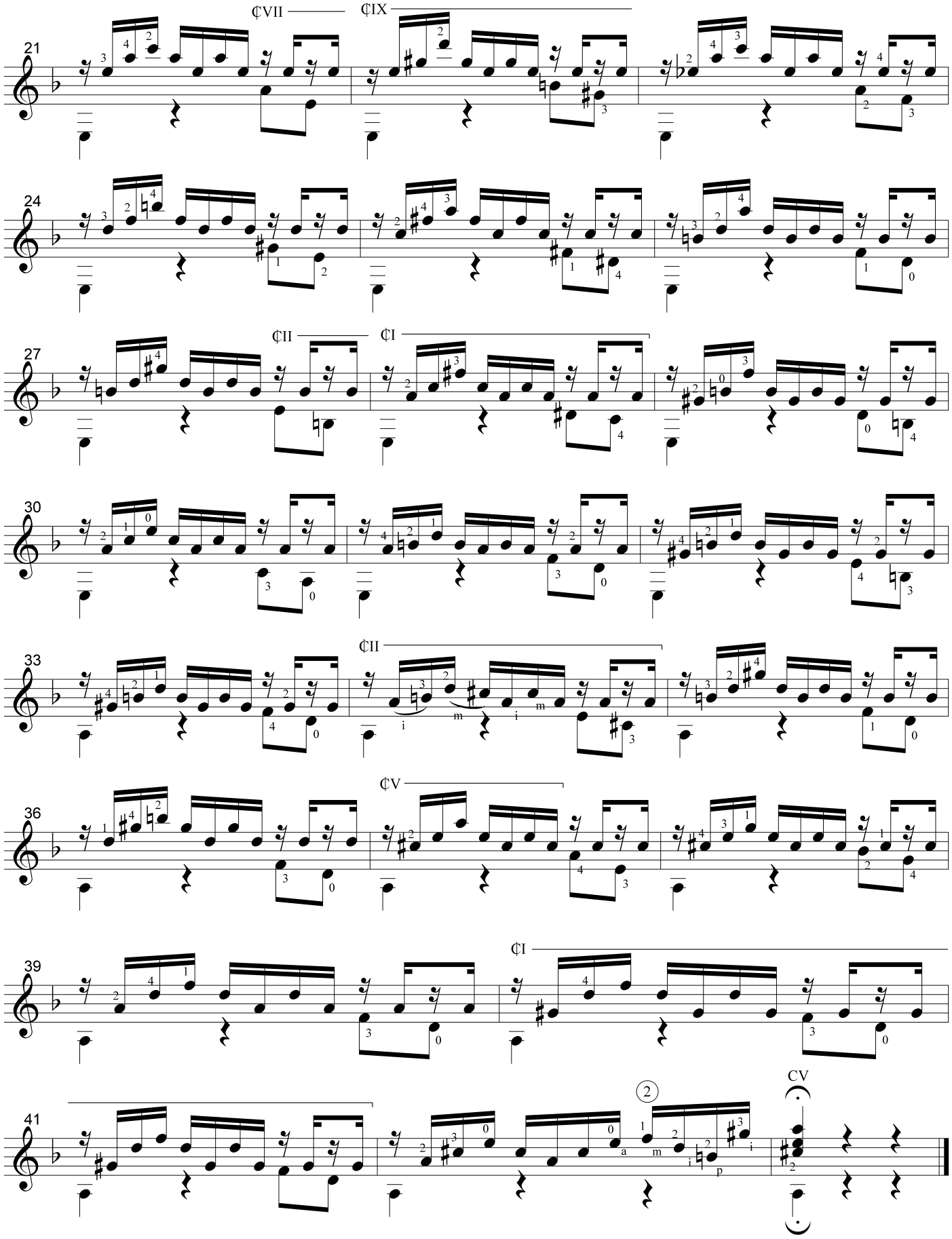

57
CII
62
67
¢VII
¢II
72
77
82
¢V — ¢VII
CVI
87
92

Prelude (bwv 999)

Edited and fingered by Jerry Willard (Ariel, 1980) and Frank Koonce (Kjos, 1989)
Further edited and re-fingered by C. Nelson (2000)

J. S. Bach
Cöthen (1717 - 1723)




¢VII
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¢II
¢I
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¢II
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¢V
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¢I
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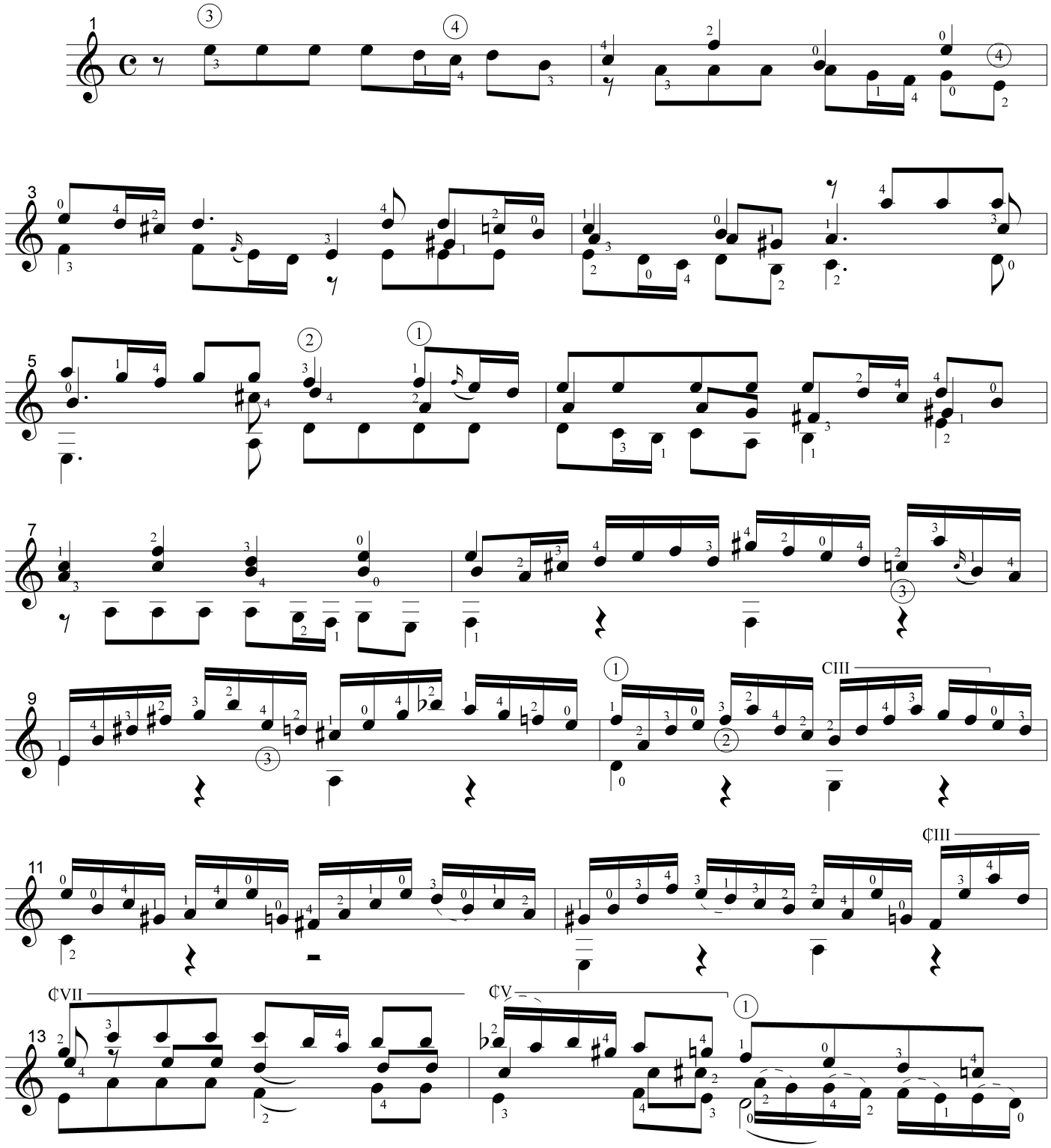
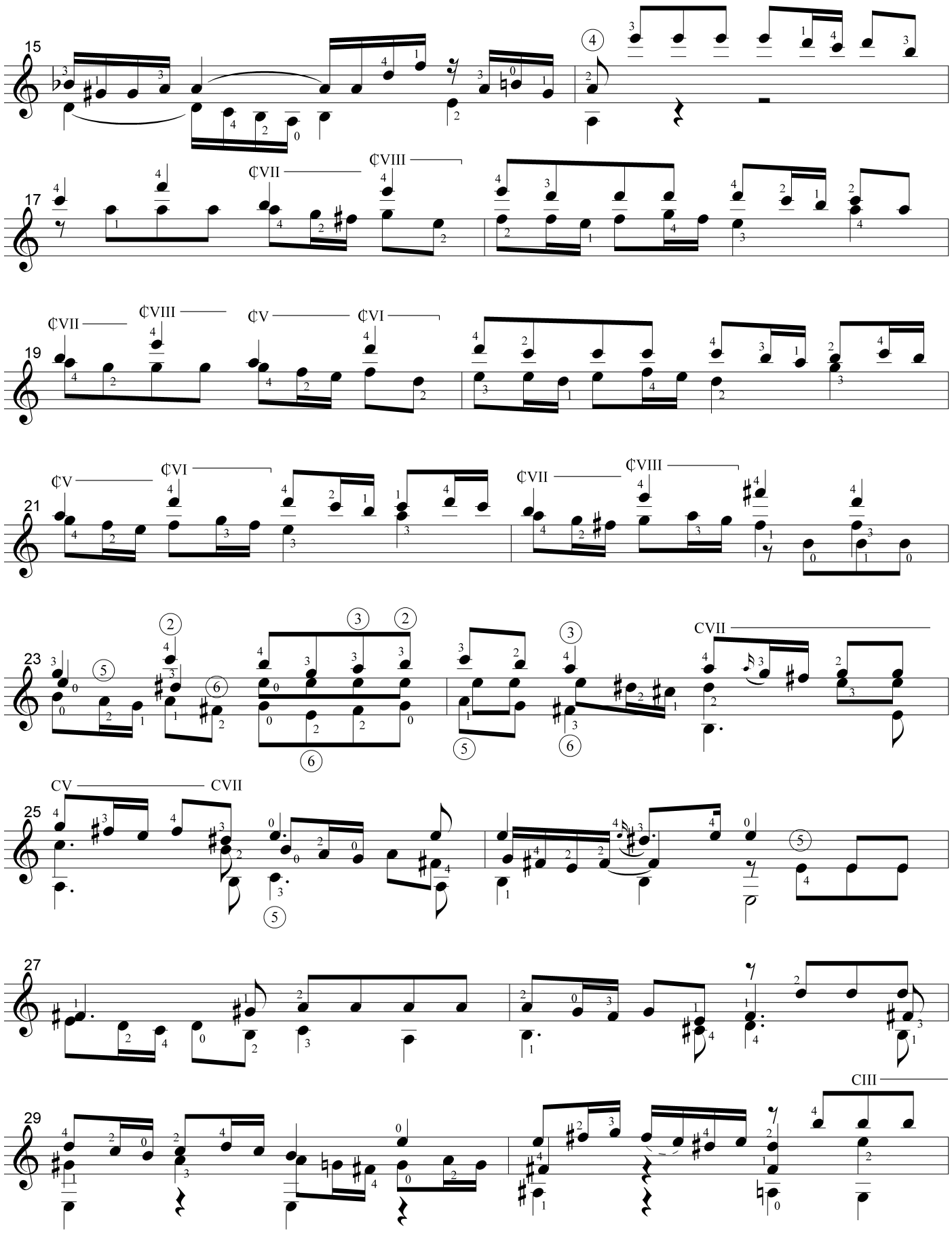
41
CV

Fugue (bwv 1000)

Edited and fingered by Jerry Willard (Ariel, 1980) and Frank Koonce (Kjos, 1989)
Further edited and re-fingered by C. Nelson (2000)

J. S. Bach
Cöthen (1717 - 1723)

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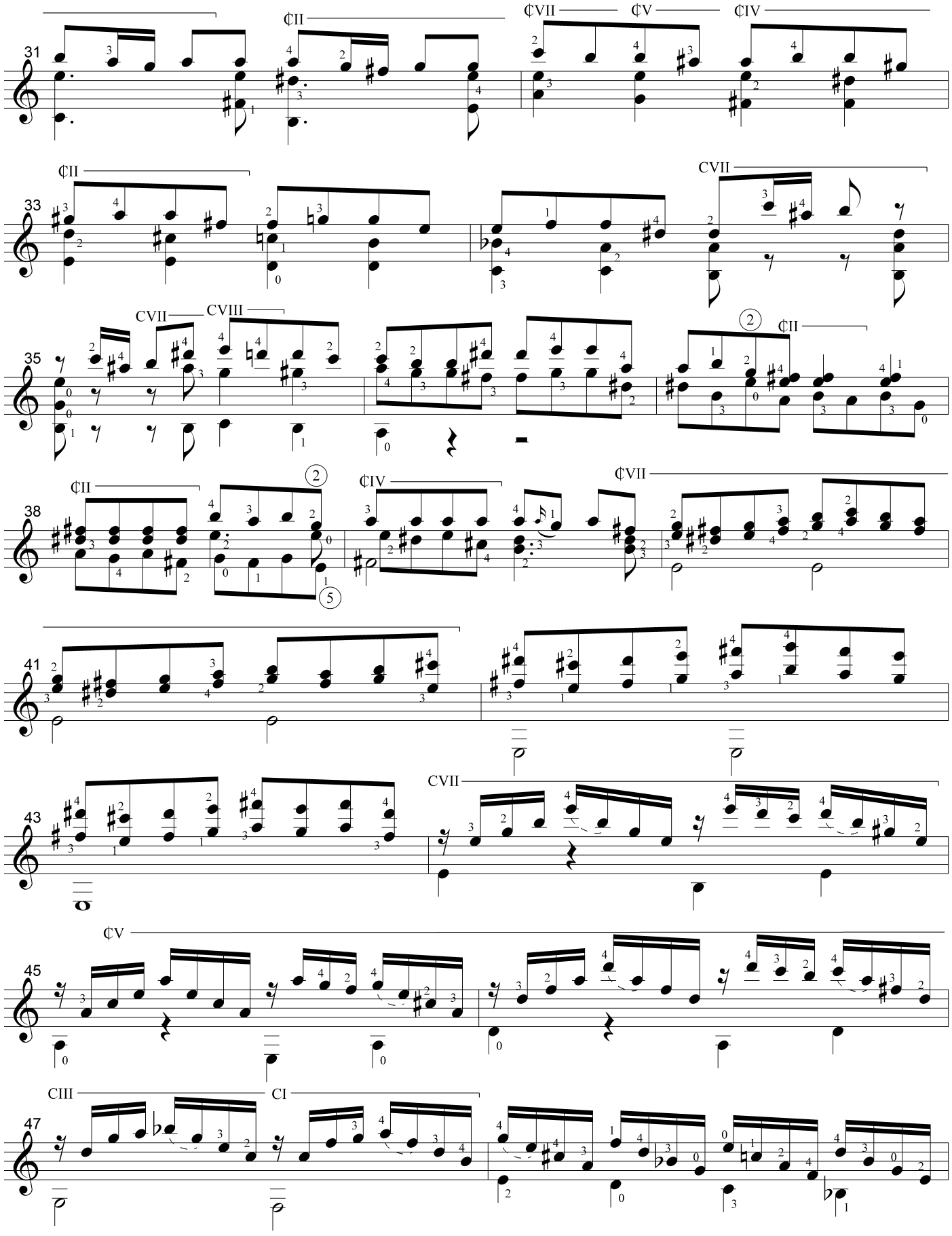
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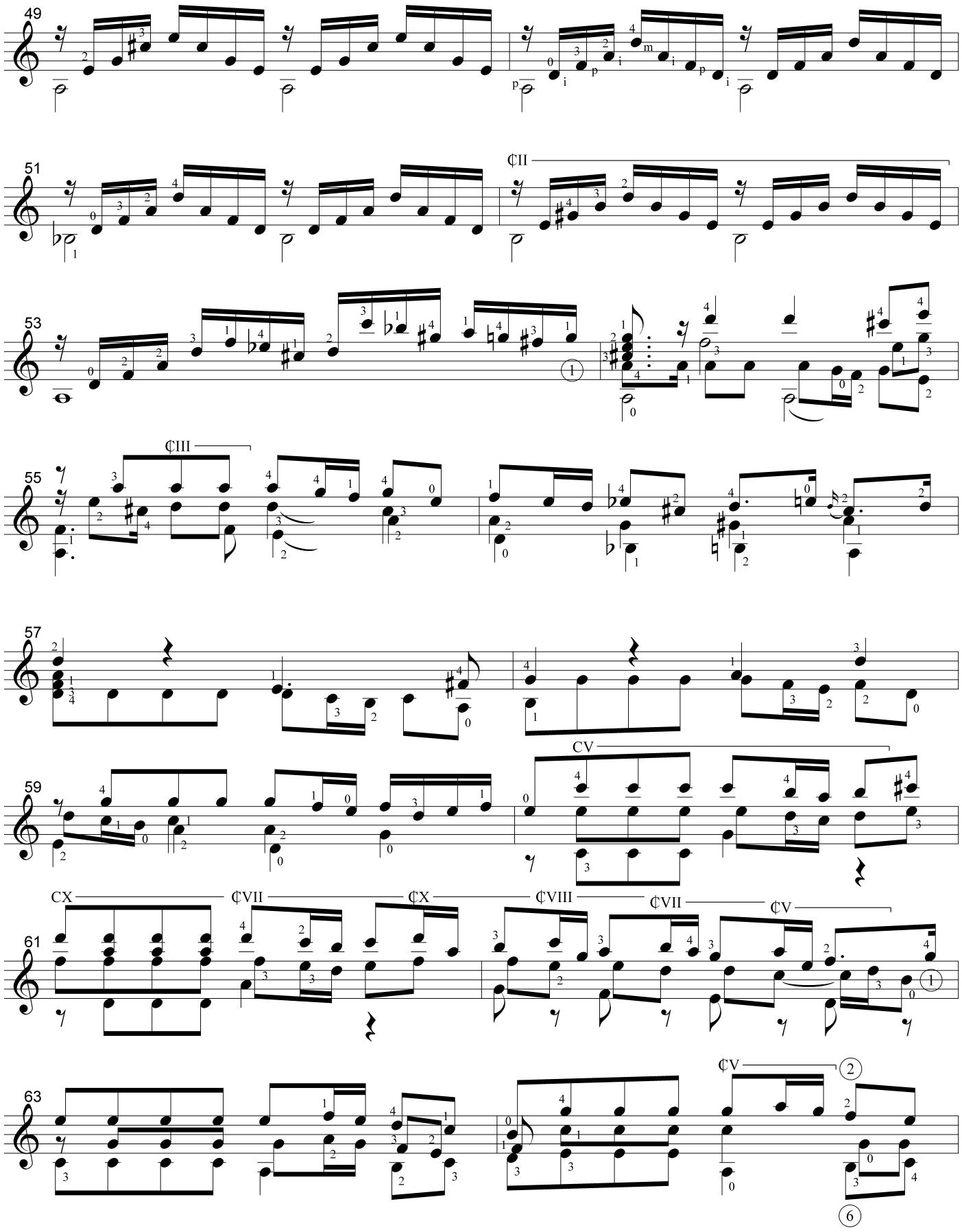
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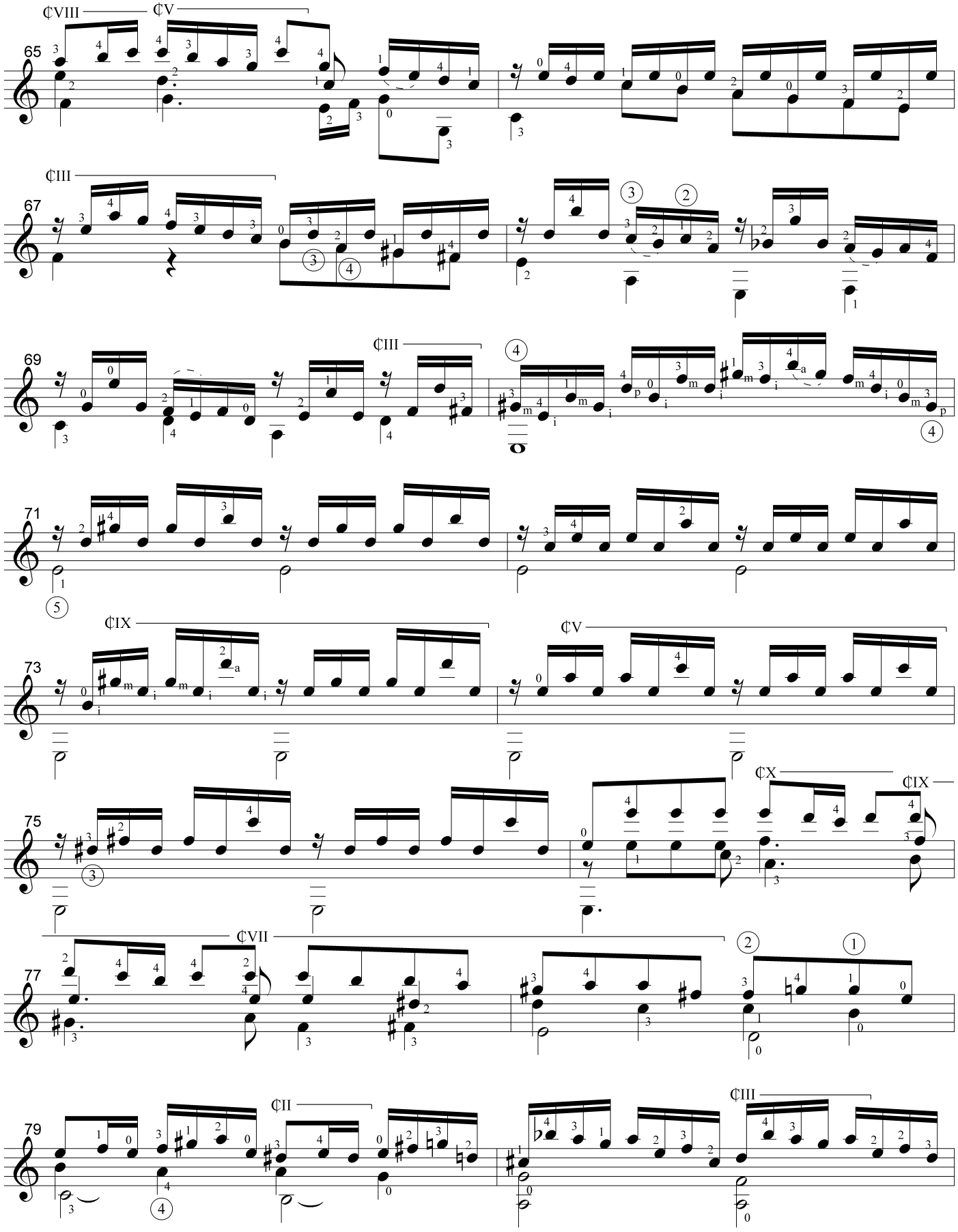
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¢III
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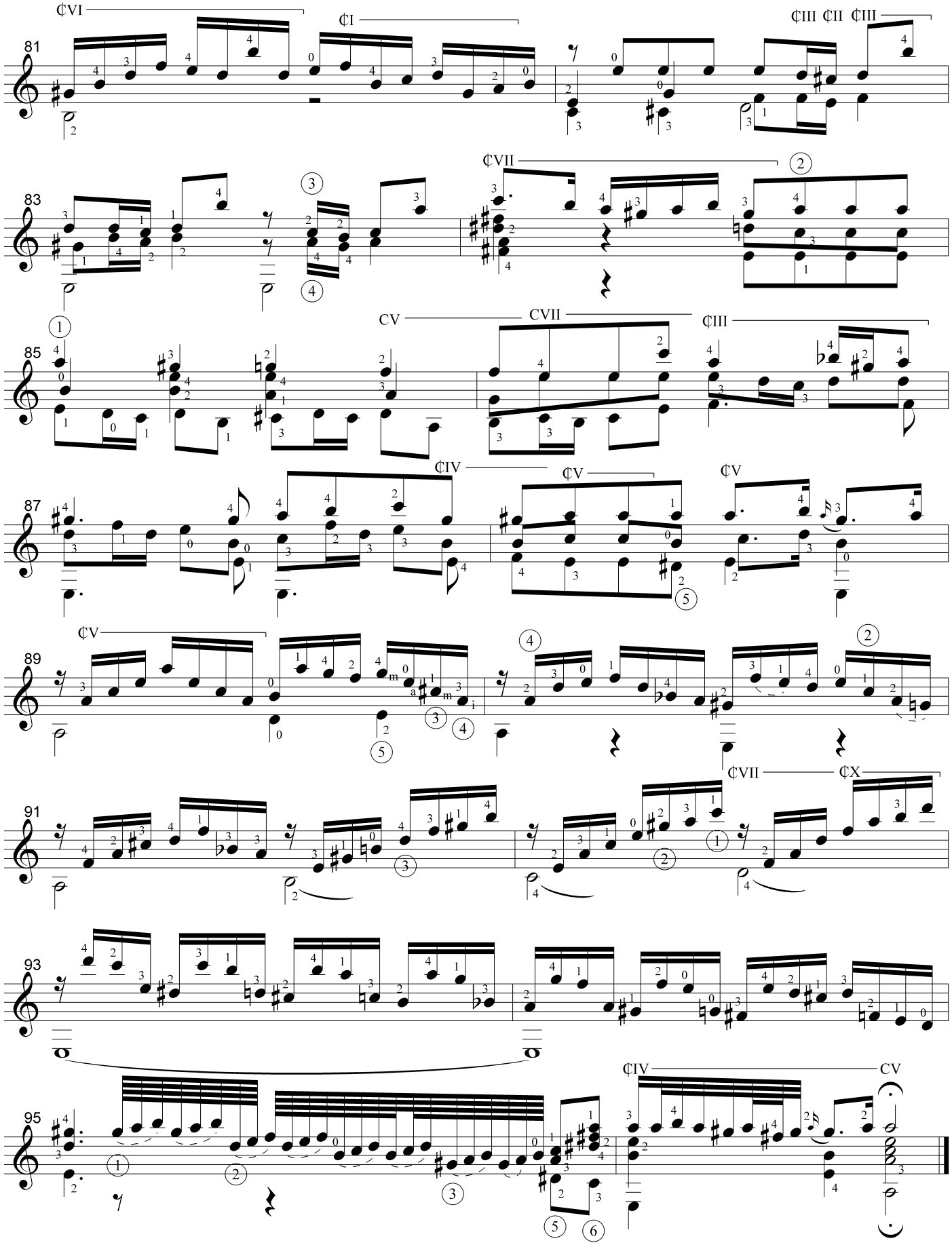
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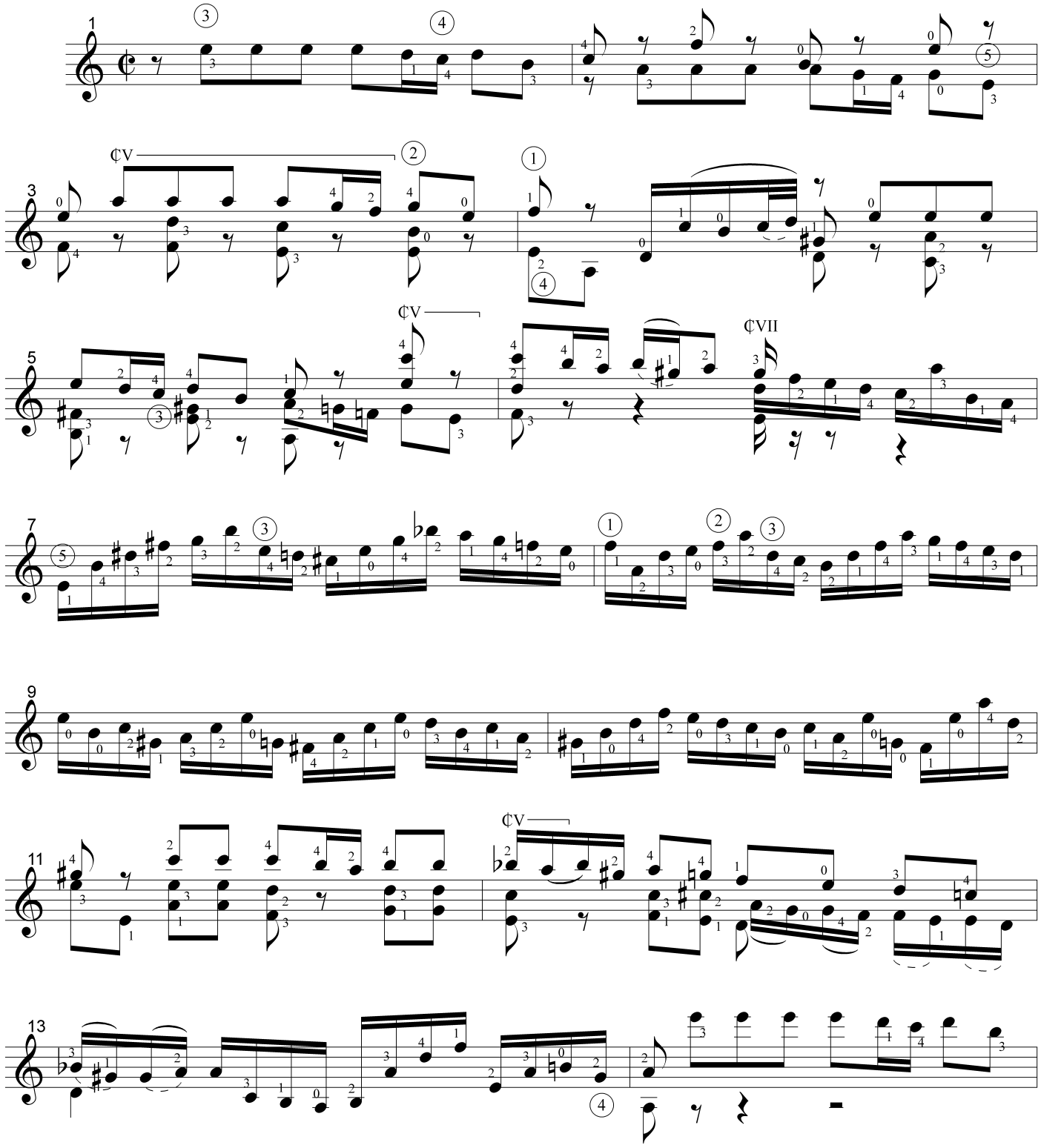
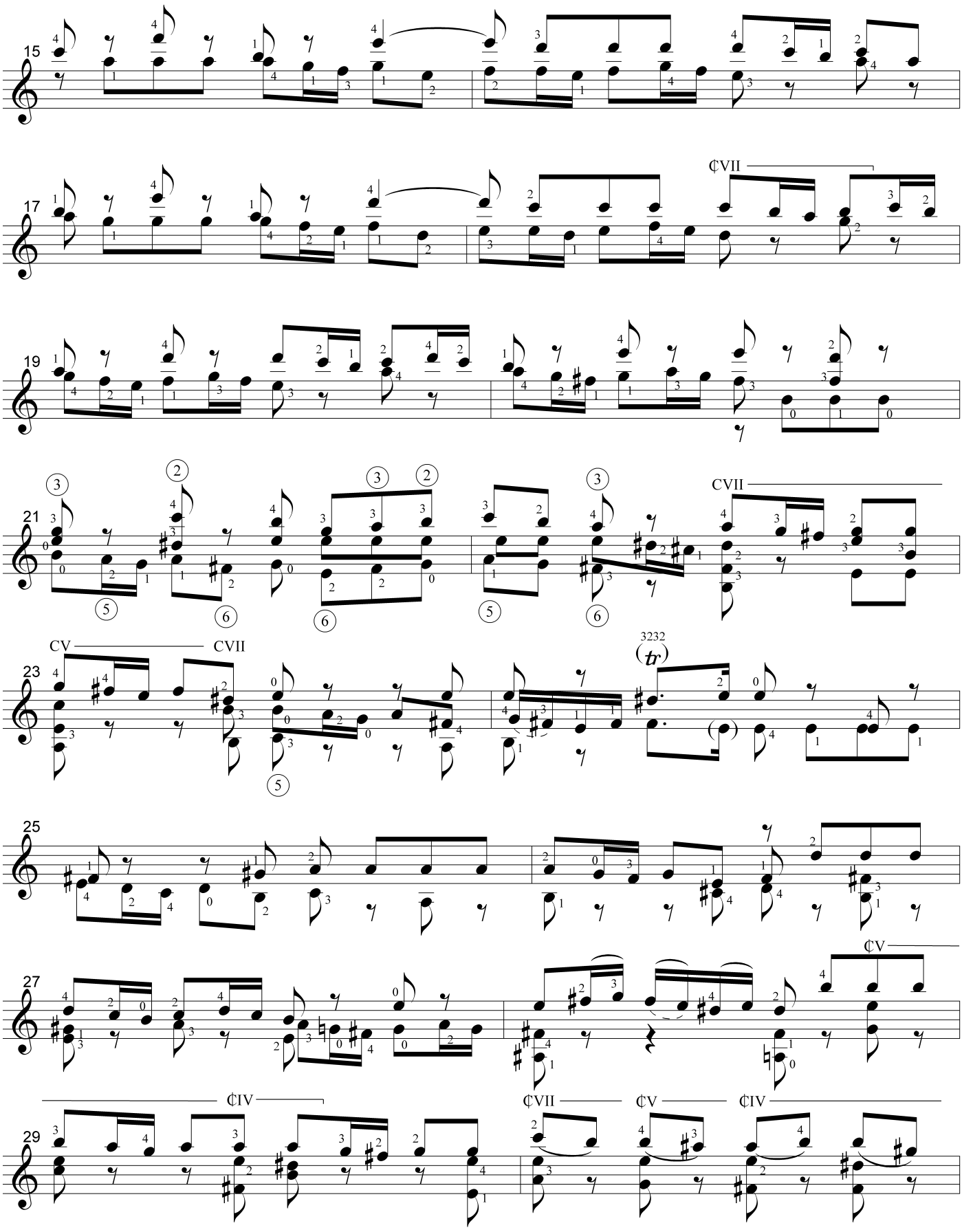
89
¢VII
¢X
91
93
¢IV
CV
95

Fugue (bwv 1001*)

Edited and fingered by Frank Koonce (Kjos 1989)
Further edited and re-fingered by C. Nelson (2000)

J. S. Bach
Cöthen (1717 - 1723)

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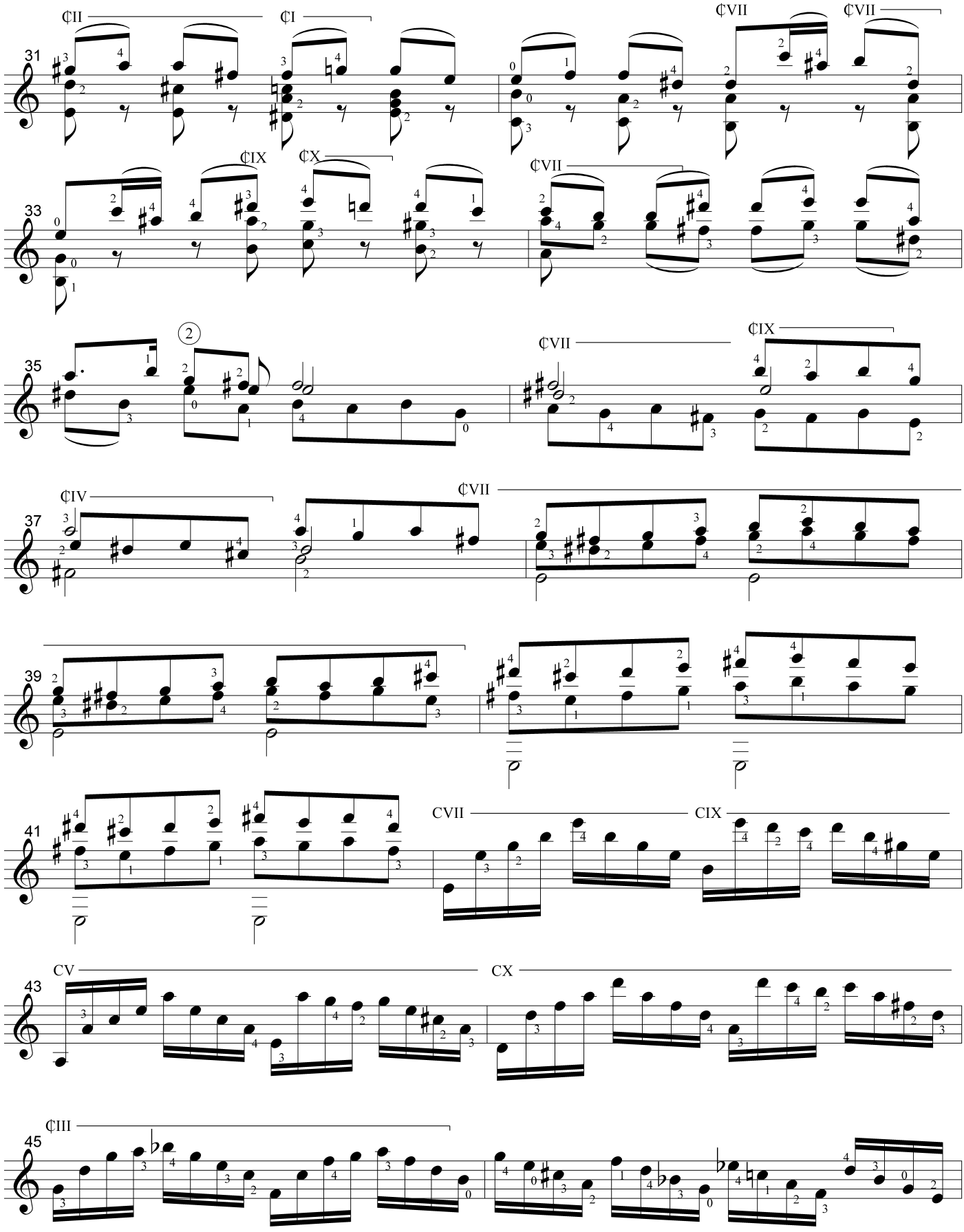
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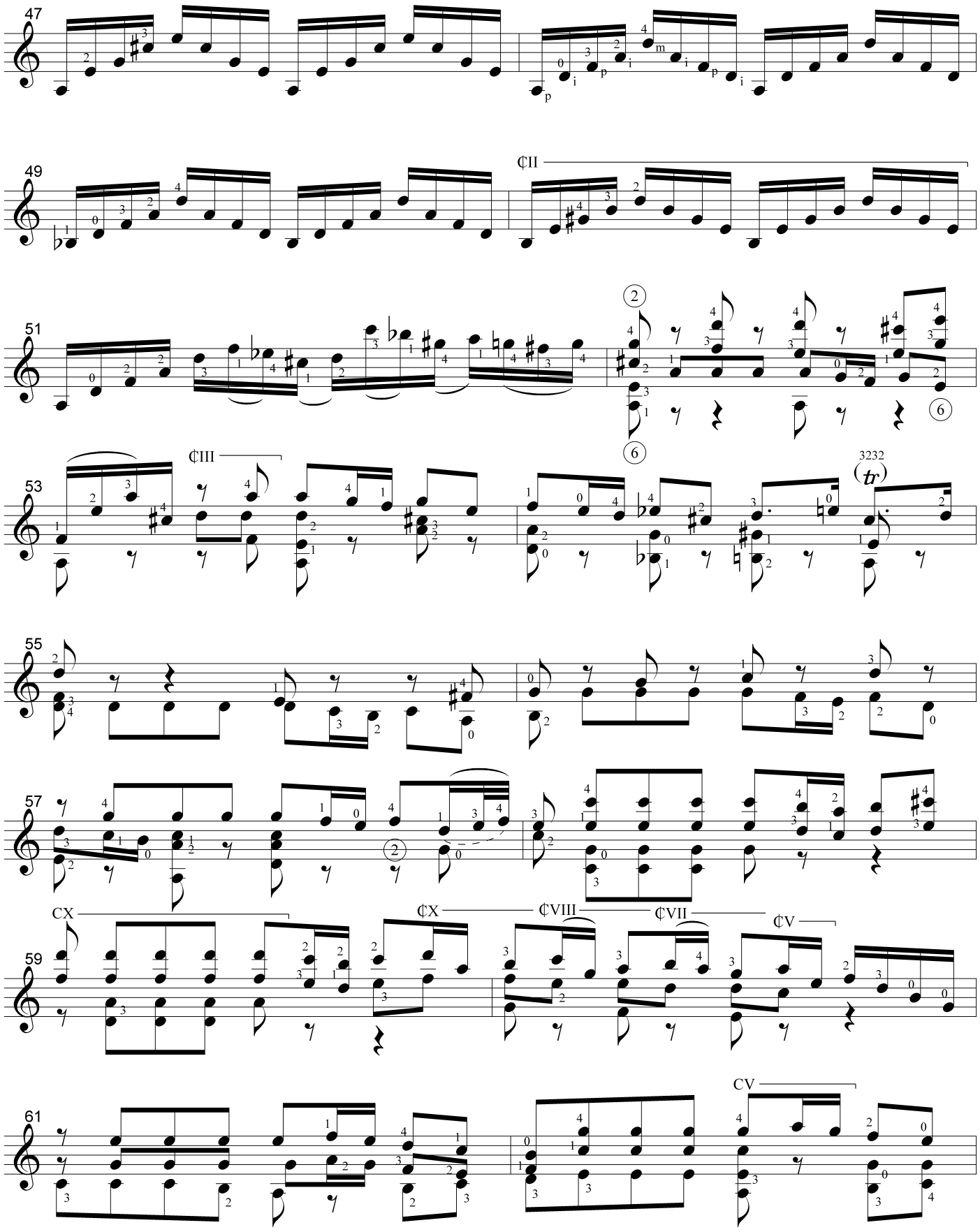
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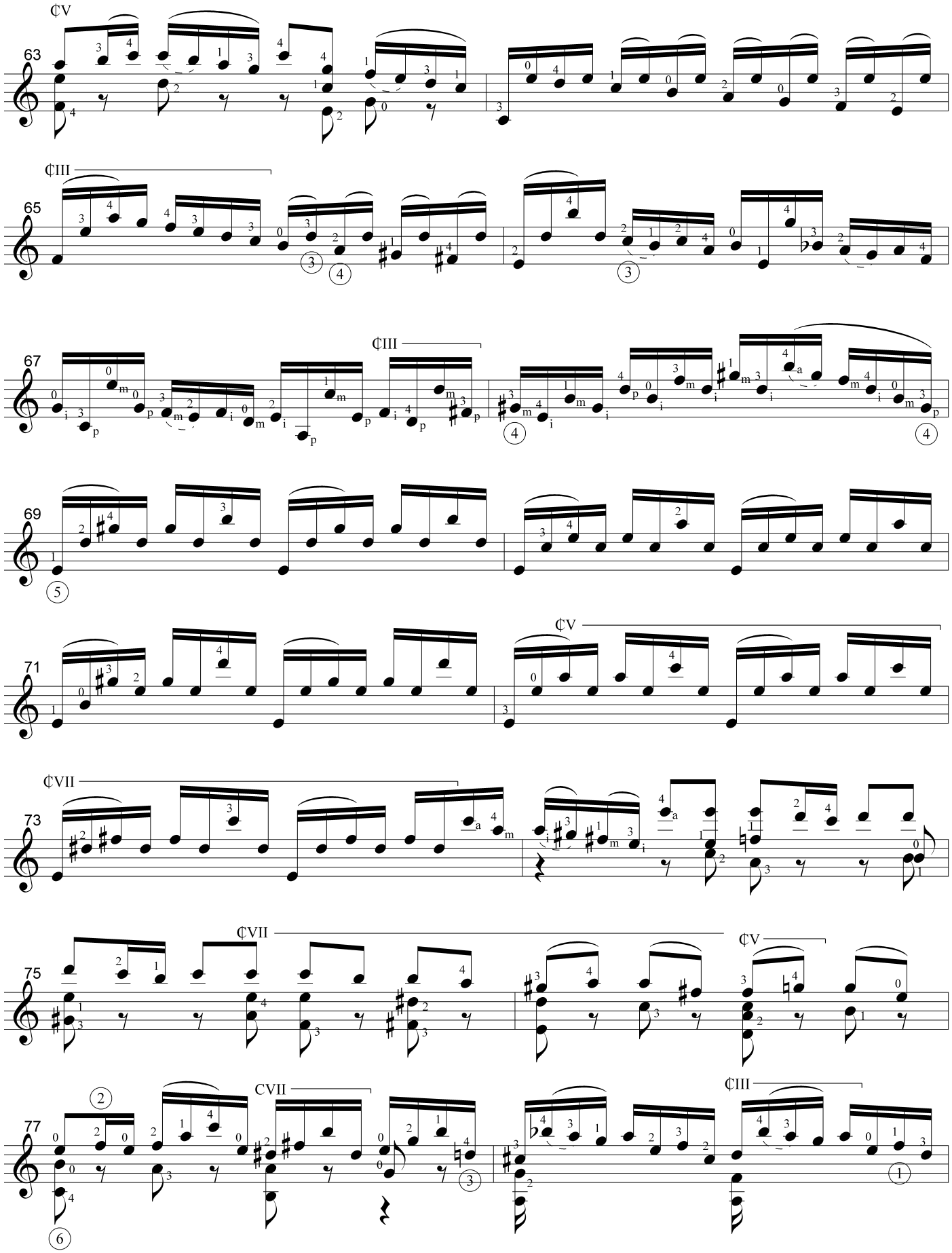
CV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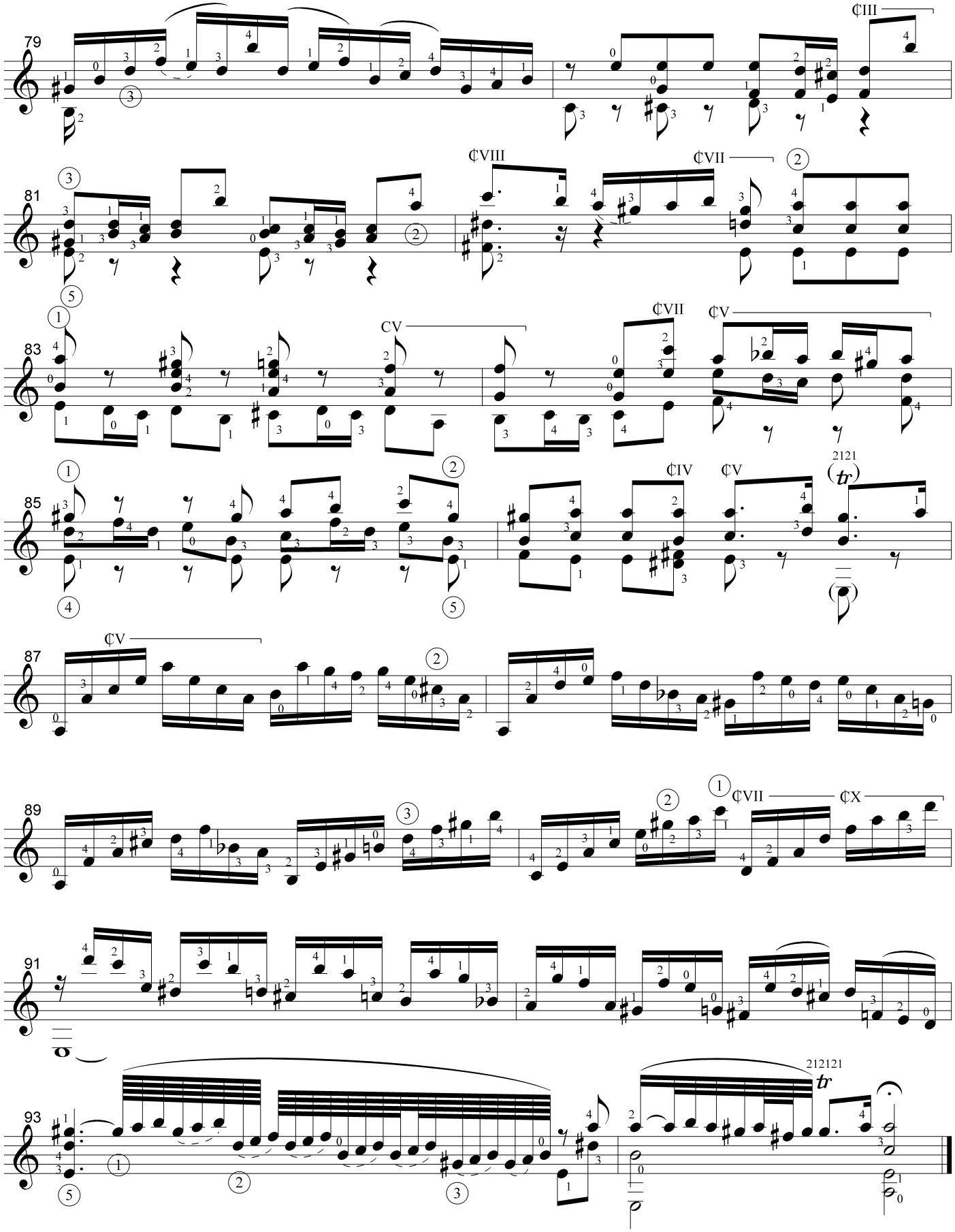
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