G.F. Handel

SUITE No. 8
in Dmajor

Transcribed for Solo Guitar
by
William Kanengiser

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by
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Guitar Solo Publications / San Francisco

G.F. Handel - Suite #8 in D major

In his introduction to the 1720 publication of Suites de Pieces Pour le Clavecin, George Frederic Handel noted that "I have been obliged to publish some of the following lessons, because surreptitious and incoherent copies of them had got abroad." While it is difficult to exactly fix the date of any specific piece in the collection, the suite presented here was certainly composed within a decade of 1720, and quite possibly written to augment his harpsichord instruction to the Princess of Wales.

Originally cast in G major, the Eighth Suite is comprised primarily of Baroque dance-forms from the French School, and is imbued throughout with Handel's melodic gift. It begins with a stately Allemande in the style of a French Overture, followed by an Allegro "Double" on the Allemande in "stile brise" or "broken-chord" style. The Courante features a seamless melody and some lovely upper-pedal effects, while the spry Aria has a good dose of Handel's light-hearted humor, with cascading sequences interrupted by sudden stops and appoggiaturas. The Gavotte with Variations is typical of Handel's approach to variation sets; instead of exploring a variety of moods and permutations of the theme, the rhythmic values are simply sped up with each succeeding division, increasing the musical excitement and momentum. This catapults into the final Gigue, which features lively interplay between upper and lower voices. All of the movements save the Variations are in a modified binary form, recapitulating the opening material in the second section; like Scarlatti's Sonatas, they point the way to the Classical sonata form.

William Kanengiser

The Recording

William Kanengiser's recording of "Suite #8" is available on his recording, *Rondo Alla Turka*. Also on this recording are "El Decameron Negro" by Leo Brouwer, "Sonata in A major, K. 331" by Mozart and "Sketches for Friends" by Brian Head.

Available from GSP on CD: (GSP 1004CD) or Cassette: (GSP 1004C).

Printed editions of "Sketches for Friends" (GSP-29) and "Sonata in A major" (GSP-18) are available from Guitar Solo Publications.

Performance Suggestions

This delightful suite, while a bit of a challenge at some spots, lies quite comfortably on the guitar in D major. The piece is in two voices virtually throughout, which simplifies contrapuntal difficulties for the guitarist but requires an especially clear delineation of upper and lower parts. Special care must be taken to avoid over-ringing of bass notes, particularly when the harmony changes. As always, fingerings and ornaments are personal ideas and may be altered to taste, and further ornamentation on repeats is encouraged. Regarding overall structure, I have found it acceptable at times to only repeat the "A" section of the binary movements.

The *Allemande* is a French overture, and as such sounds much more noble if "over-dotted," including the pick-ups that begin each section. Also, make sure each voice rings for full value in measure 14. Suggested tempo: ♩ = 46.

The *Allegro* is fairly straightforward and should sound light and scampering. One should avoid accenting the second sixteenth note of each group too much, but rather moving towards the next beat in each four-note group. The echo effects near the end of each section might be enhanced by not only observing the suggested slurring but also by varying color and/or dynamics. Tempo: ♩ = ± 88.

The *Courante* should be as legato as possible, with a "strong bar/weak bar" phrasing. The echoed pedal sections should definitely be varied with color and/or dynamics as the original changed registers at some repeats. Tempo: ♩ = 132.

The *Aria* should be lively and highly articulated, especially when the upper voice is in eighth notes. Tempo: ♩ = 88.

The *Gavotte* has a somewhat complex form that must be carefully followed, although I sometimes omit the repeat in the theme and first variation, in addition to the Da Capo of variation II. While challenging, try to keep the tempo constant throughout the movement (hint: don't start too fast!). Note the cross-string fingering for the scale at the end. Tempo: ♩ = 120.

The final *Gigue* should be joyous and quite rhythmic in character. I would suggest measuring the trills as sixteenth notes; there are also ample opportunities for echo effects in this movement. (Check out the sequence at the end that George almost couldn't escape from!) Tempo: ♩.= 92.

GUITAR SOLO PUBLICATIONS
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Suite No. 8
in D major
(original in G major)

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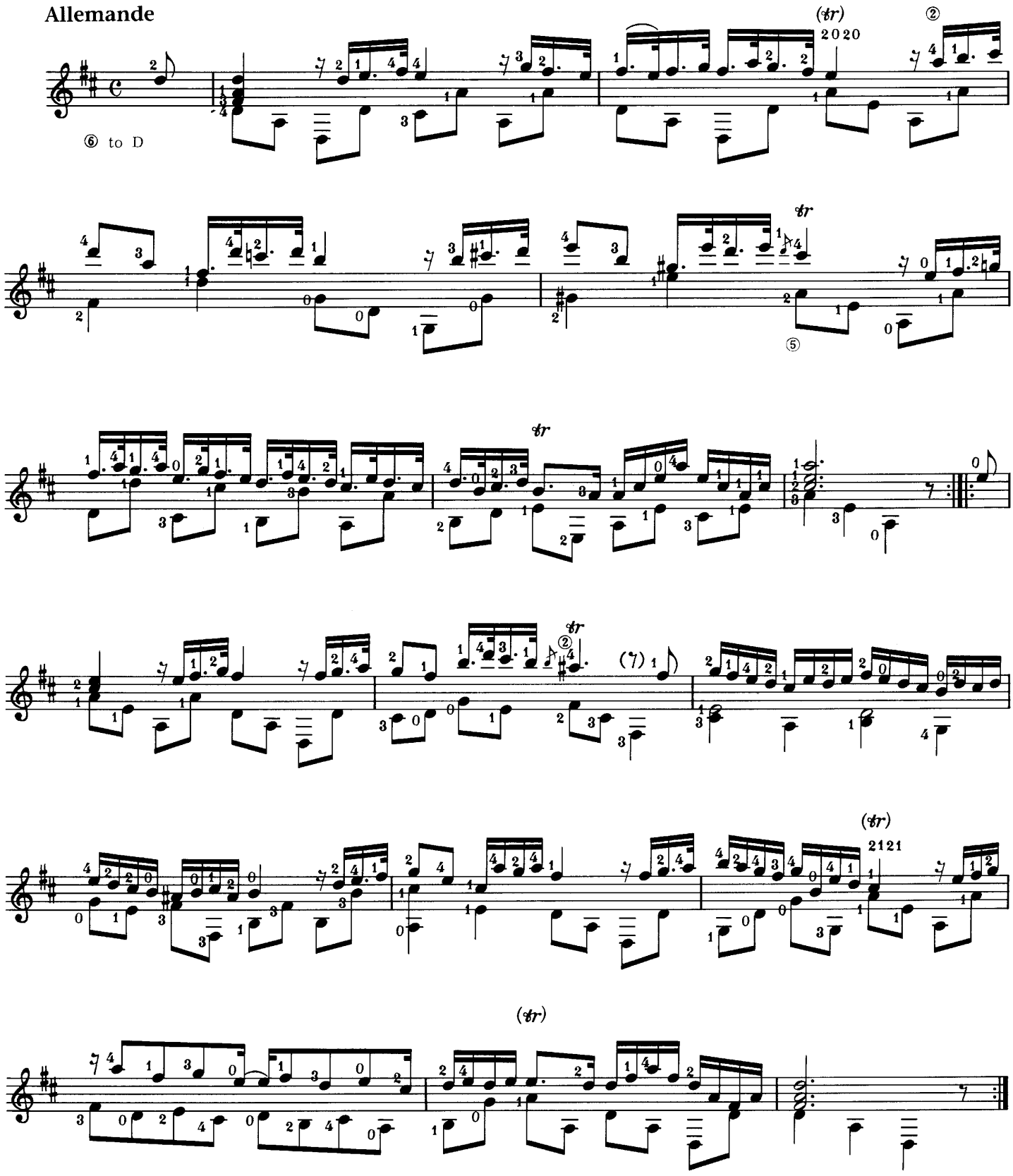
Allemande



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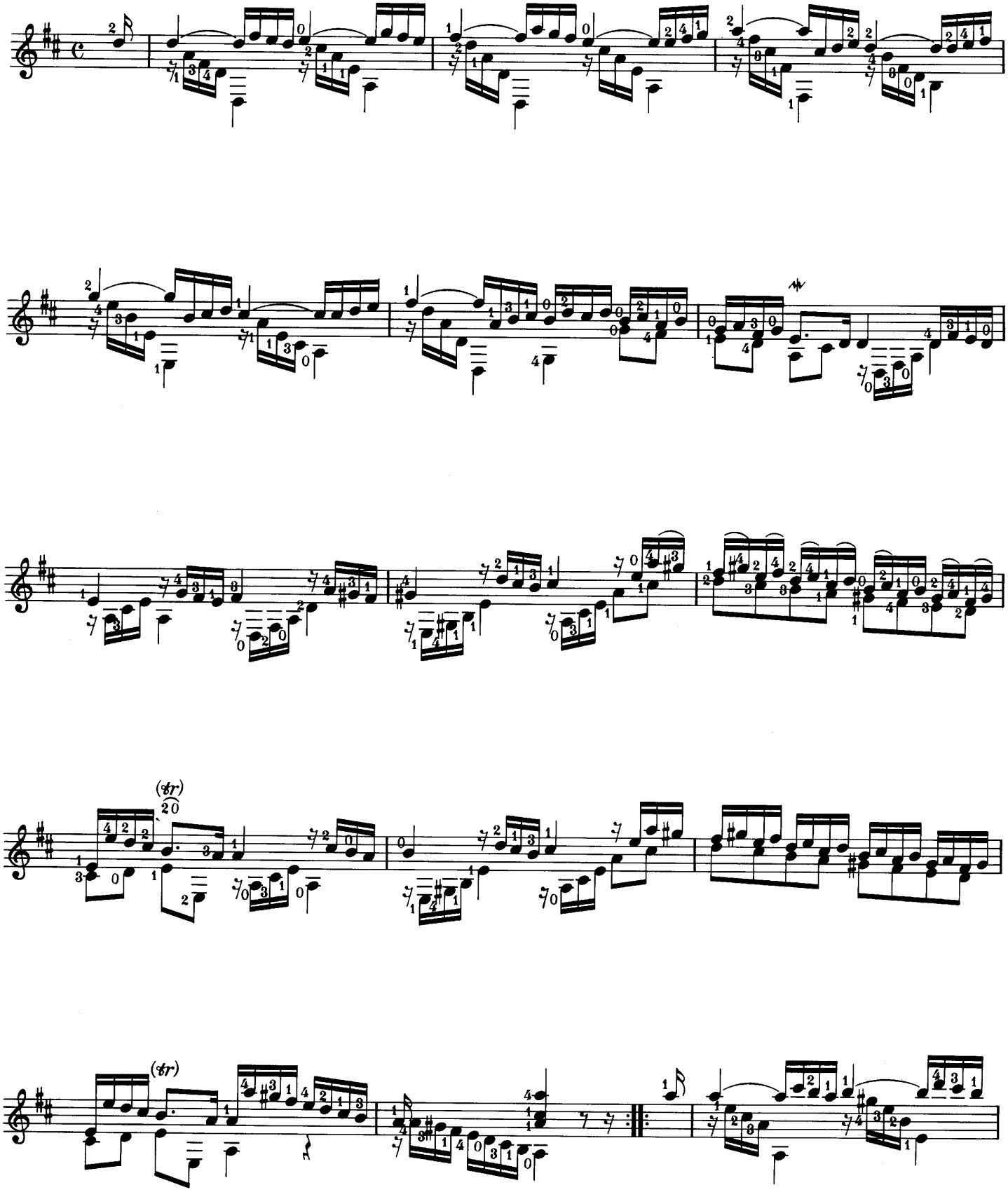
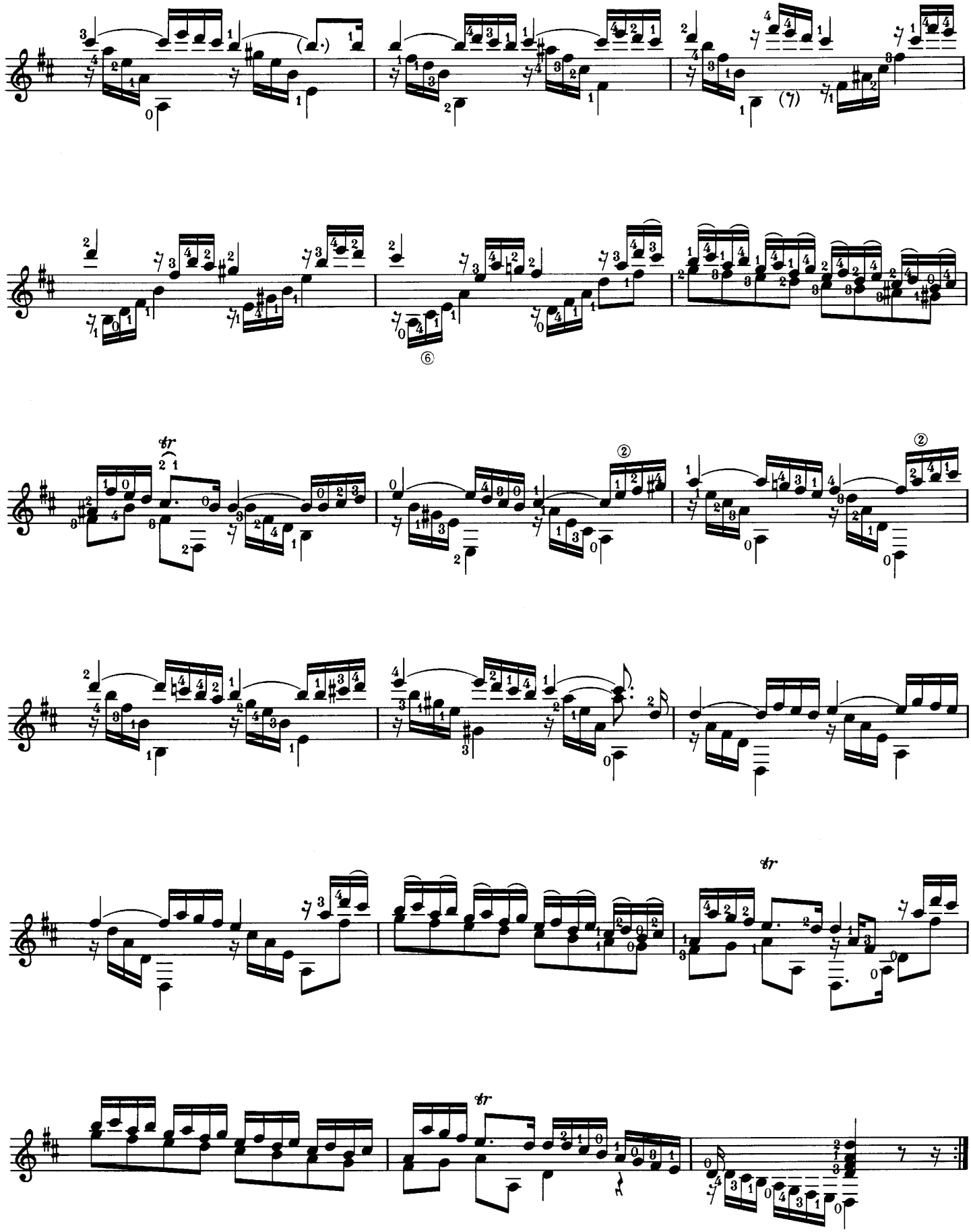
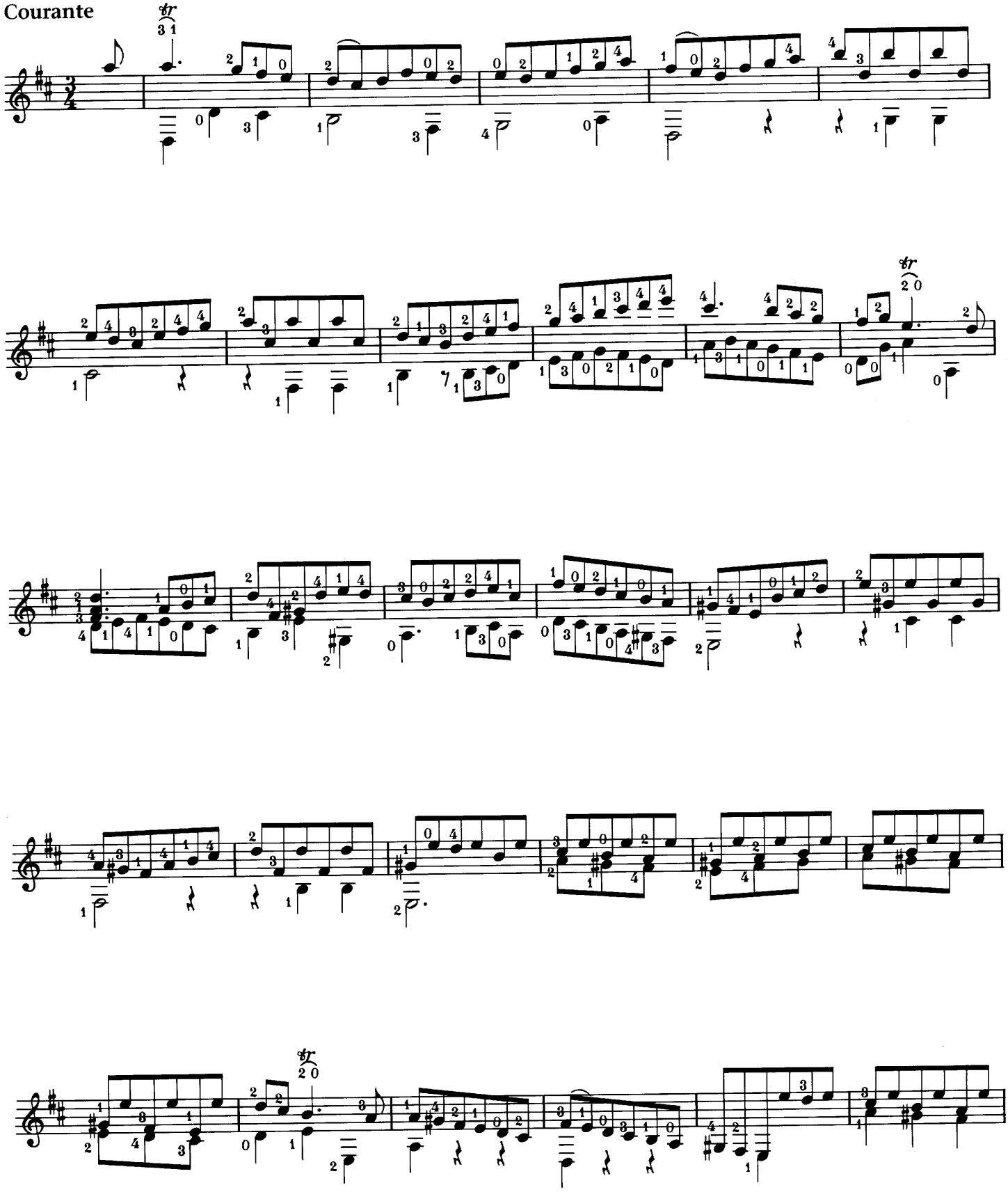
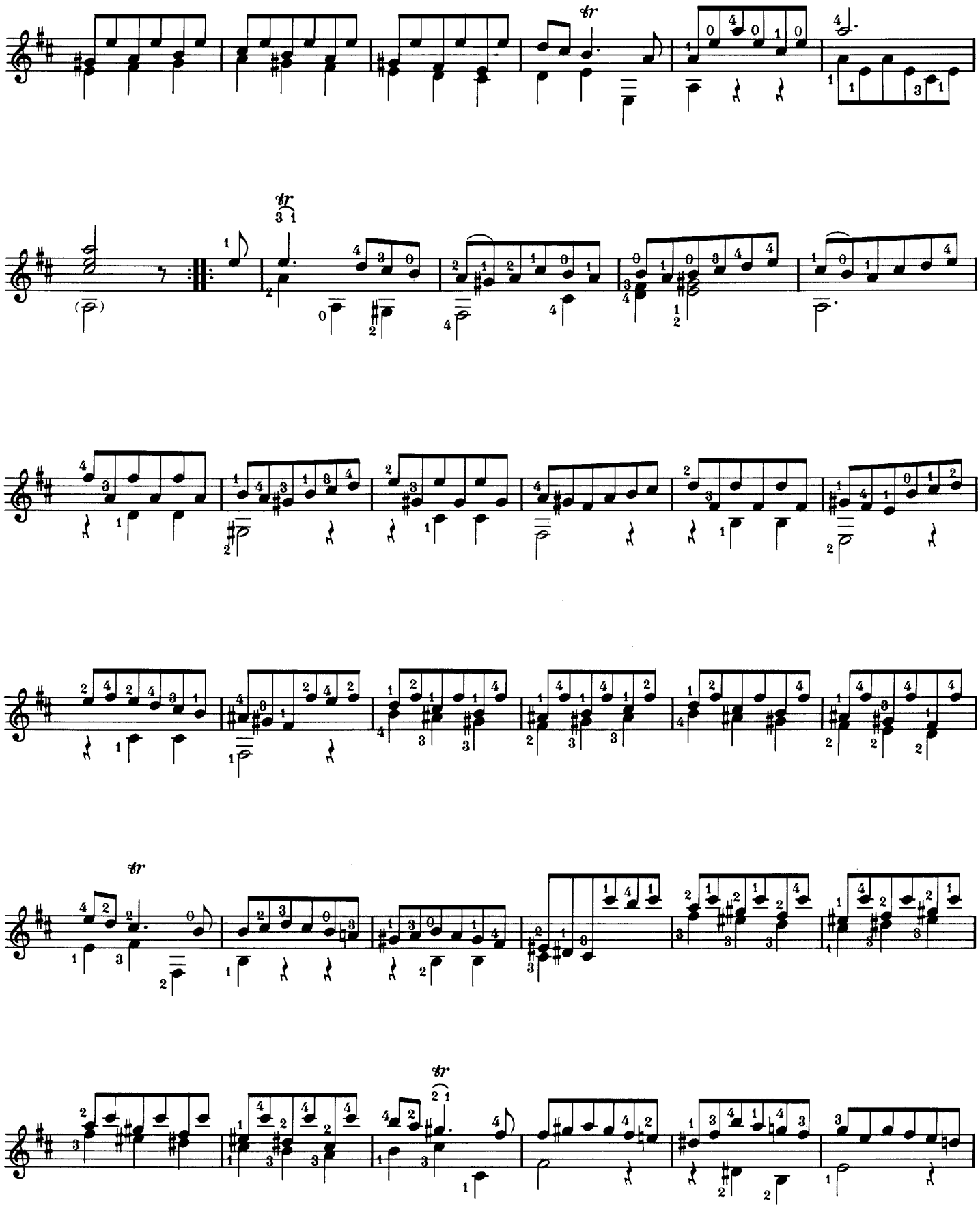
Allegro

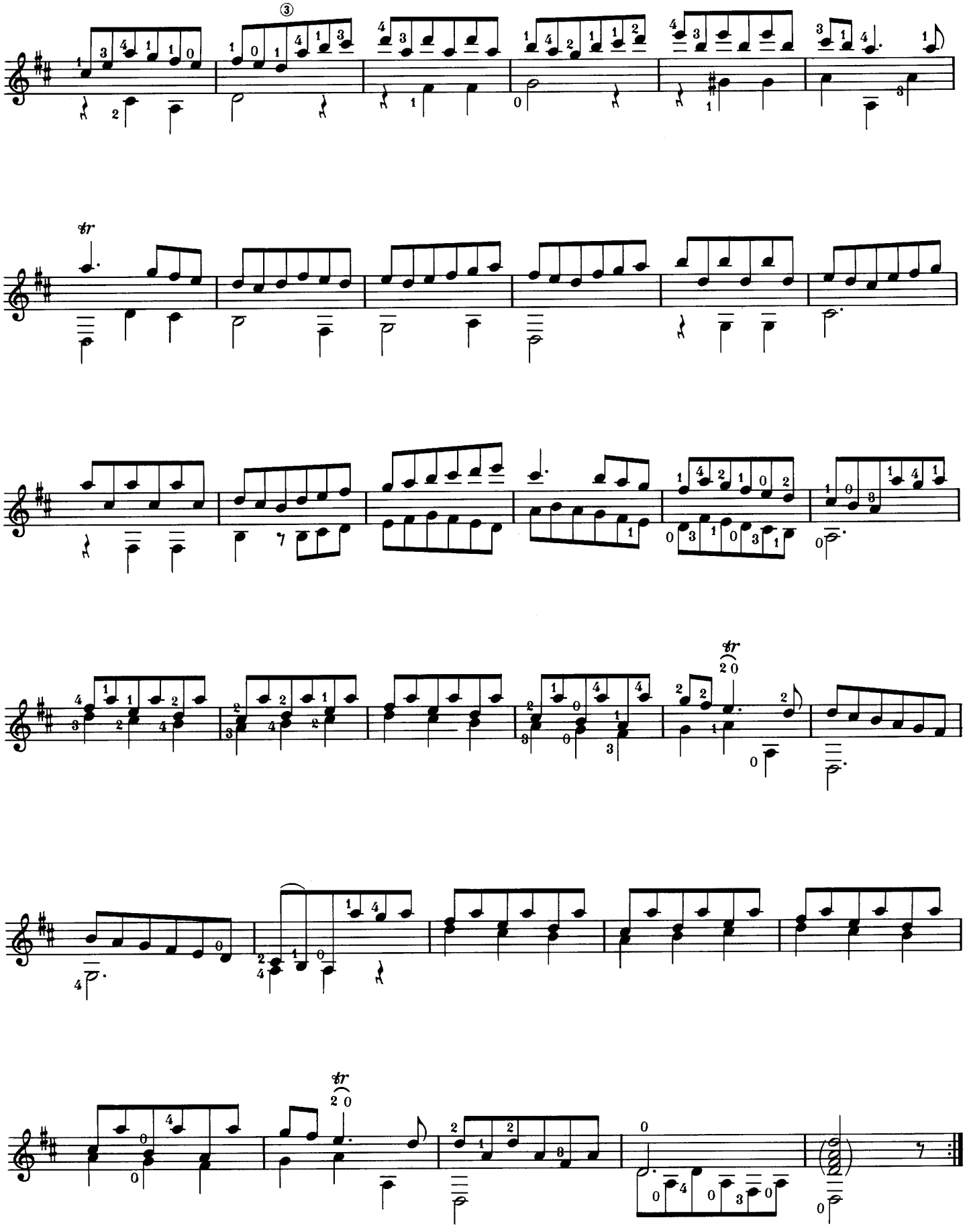




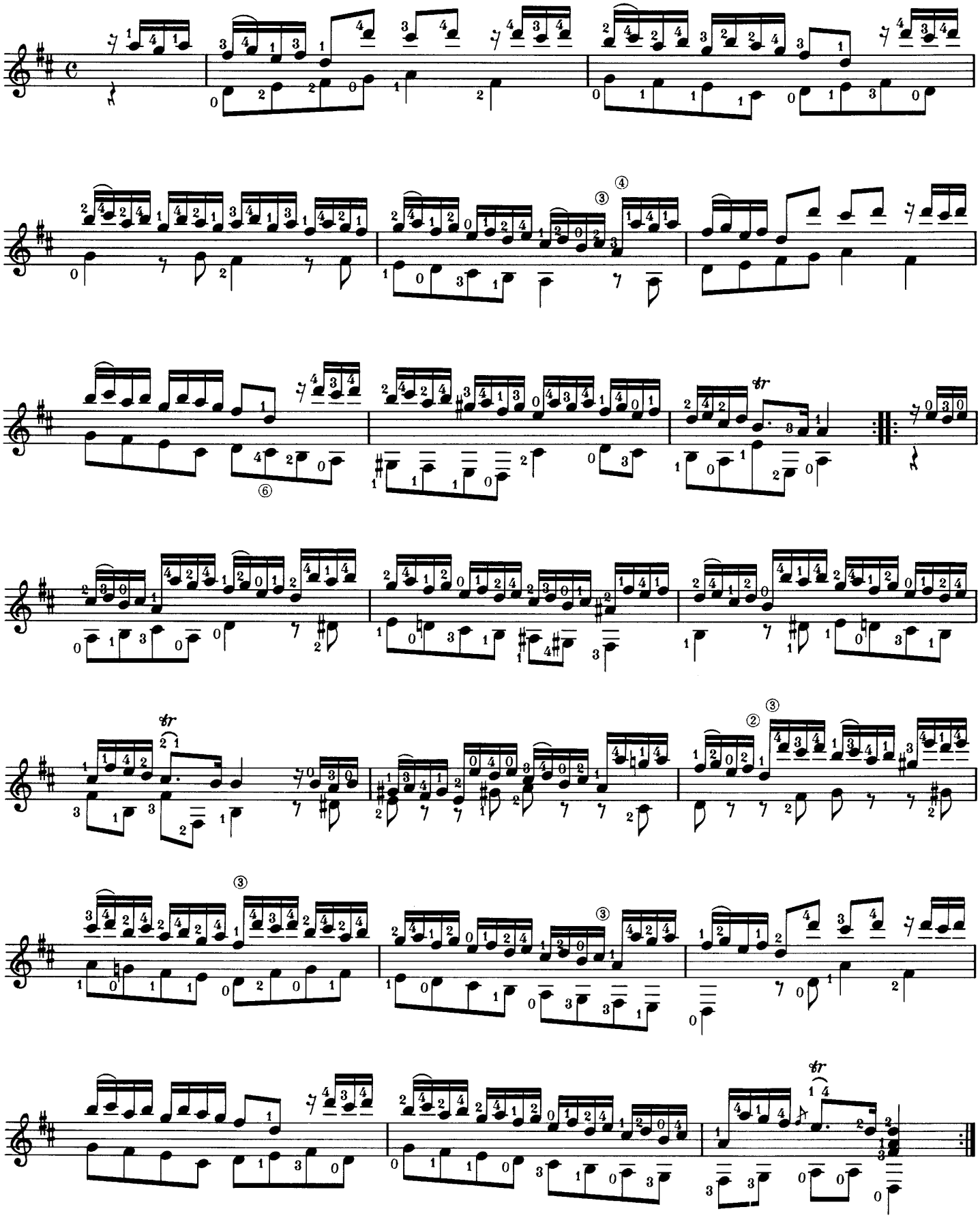
Courante



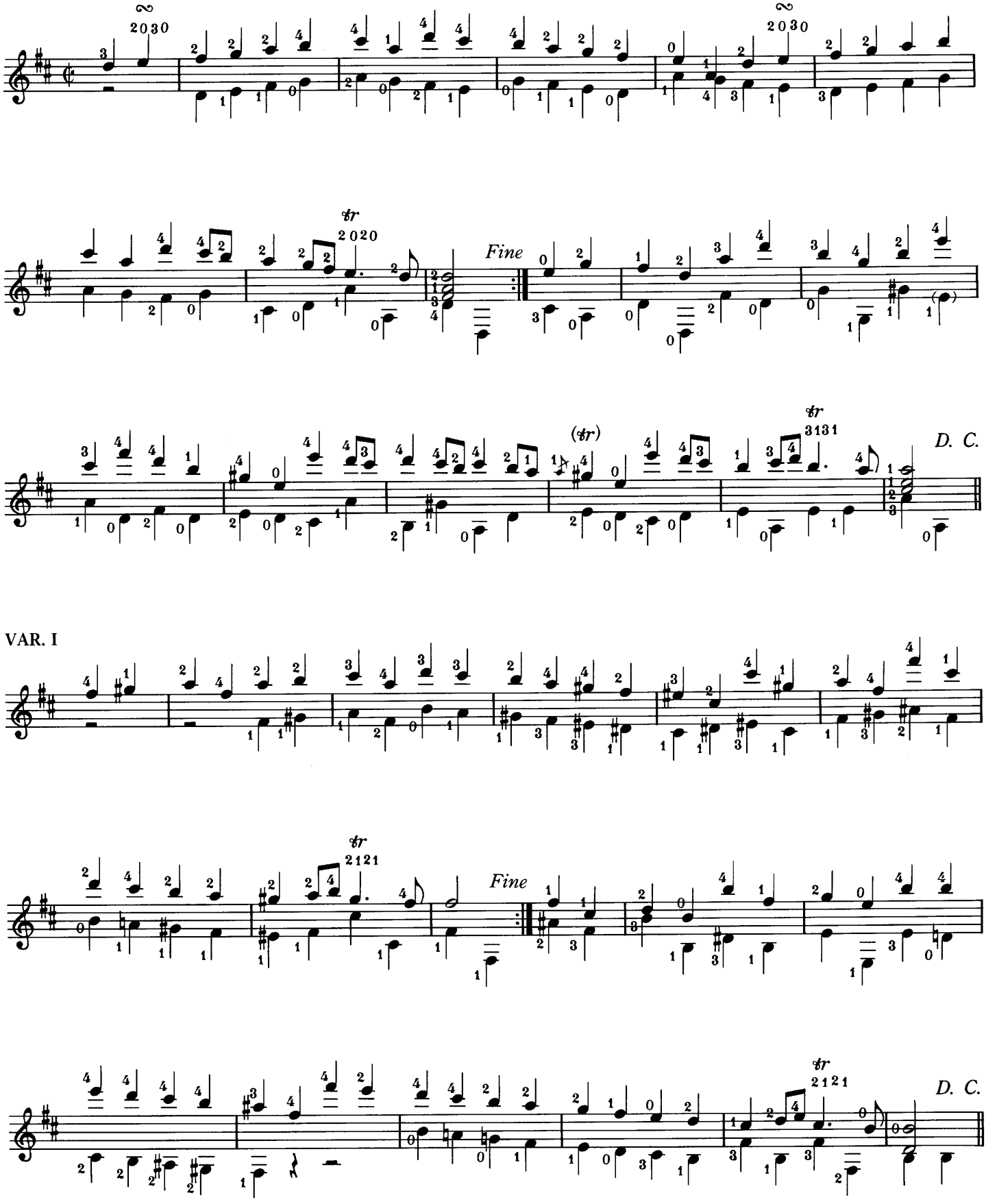




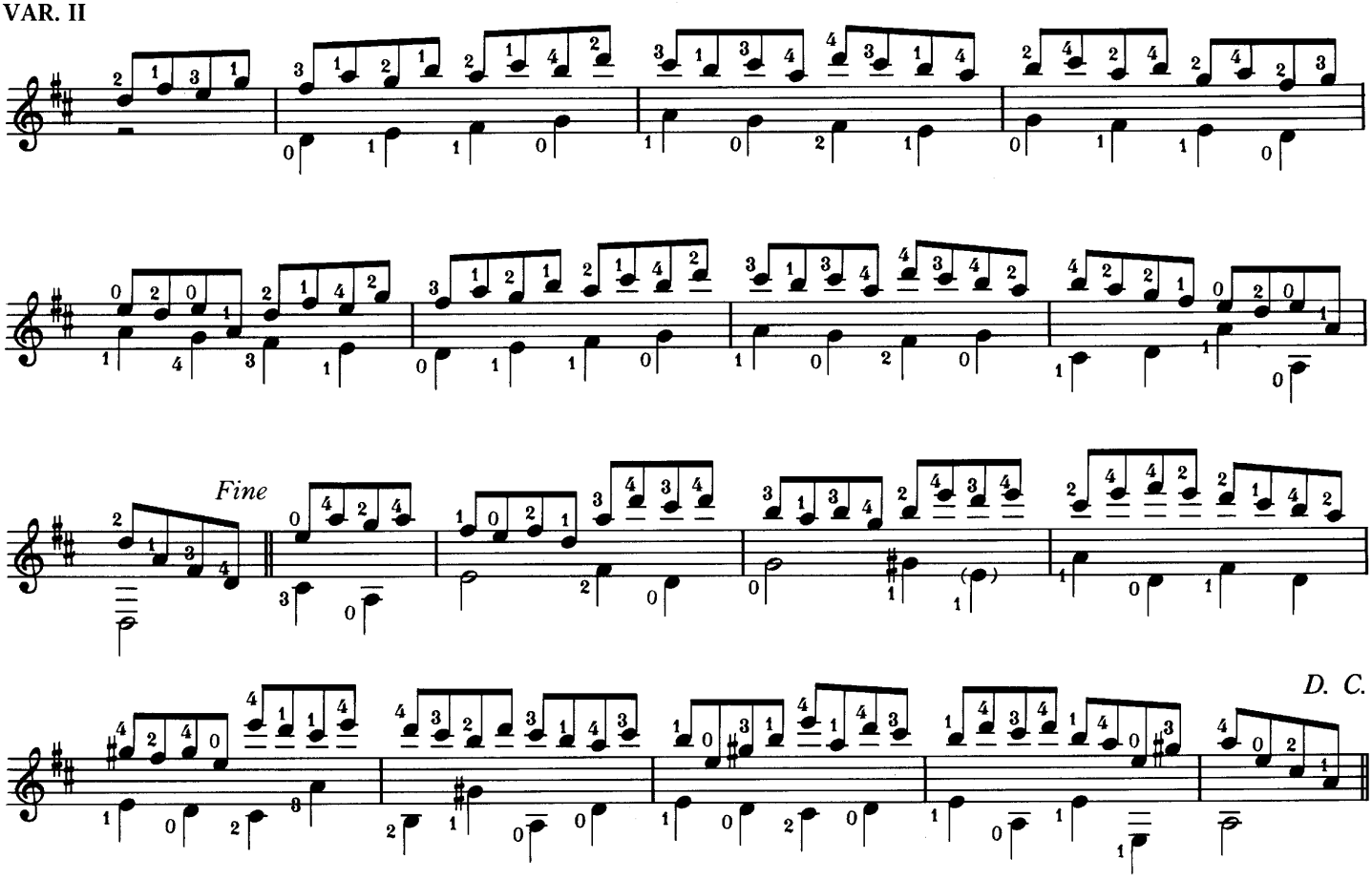
Aria



Gavotte with Variations



VAR. II



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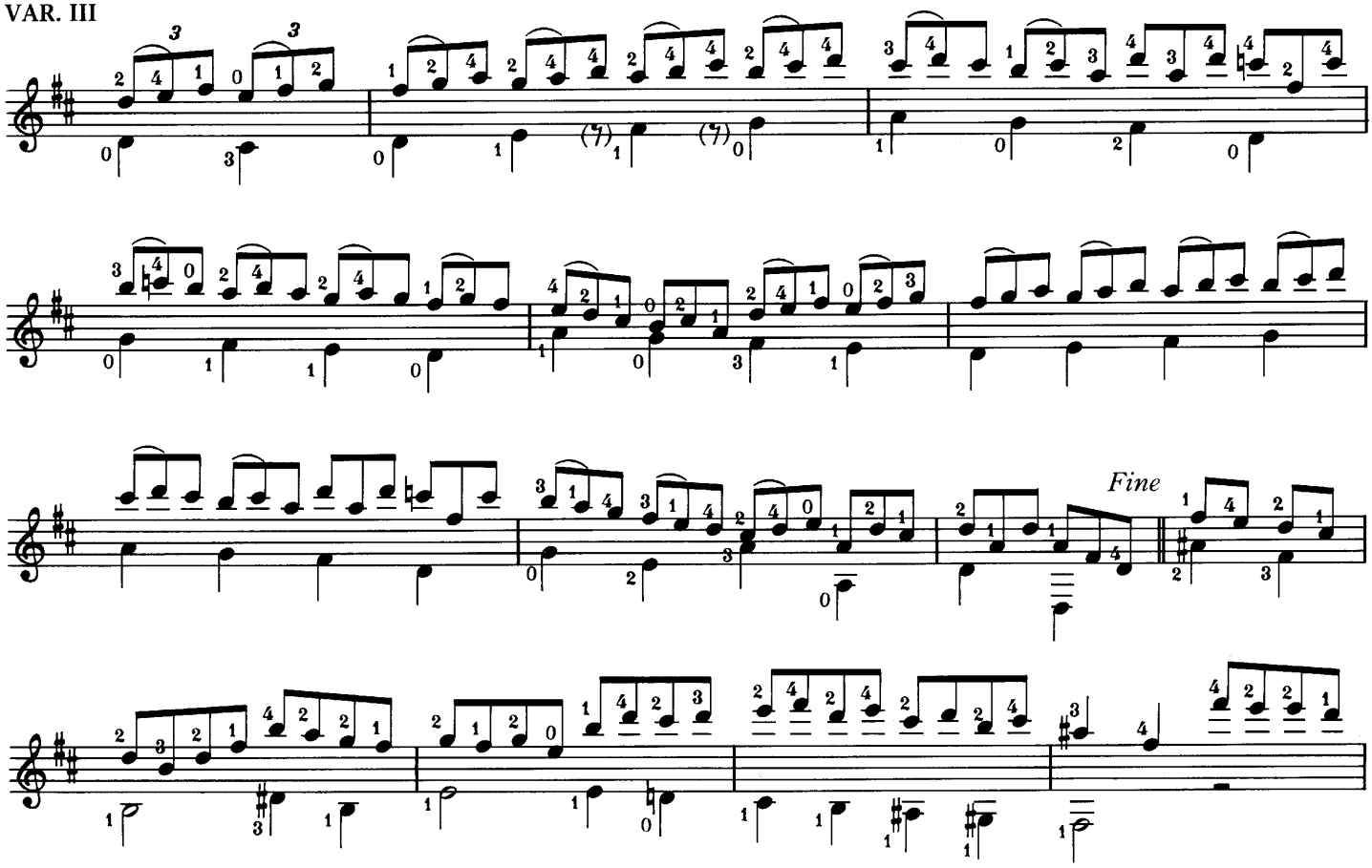

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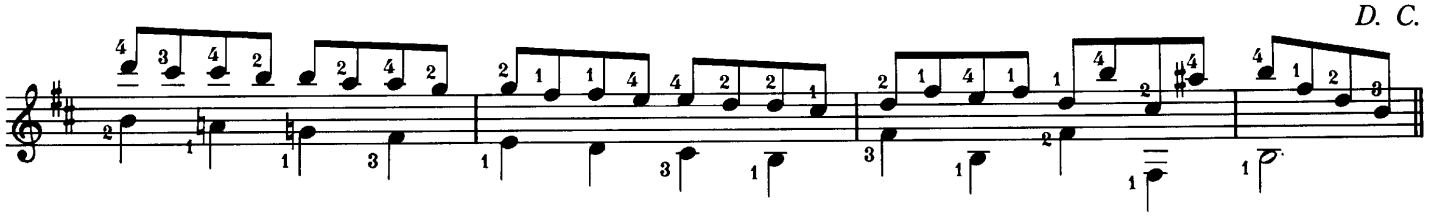

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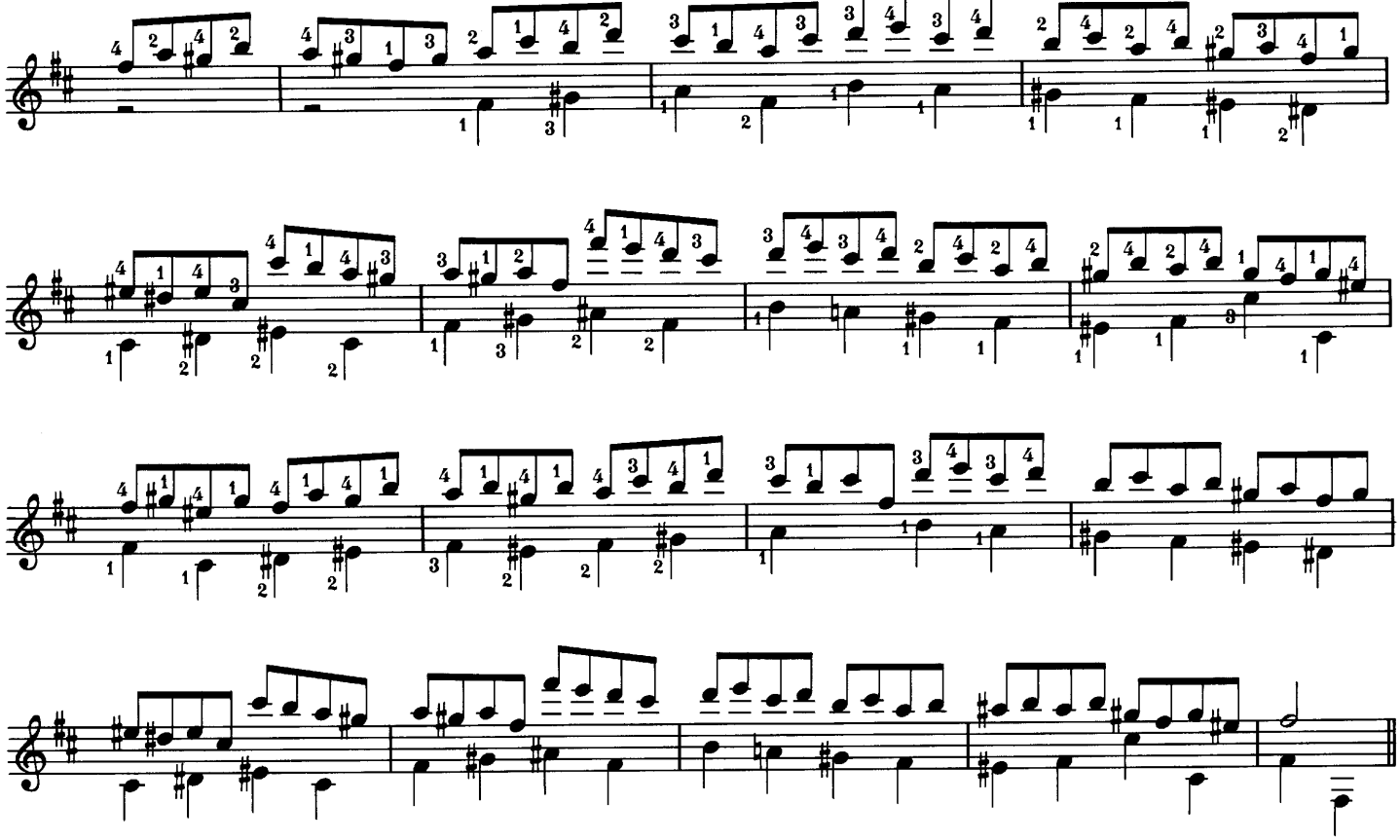

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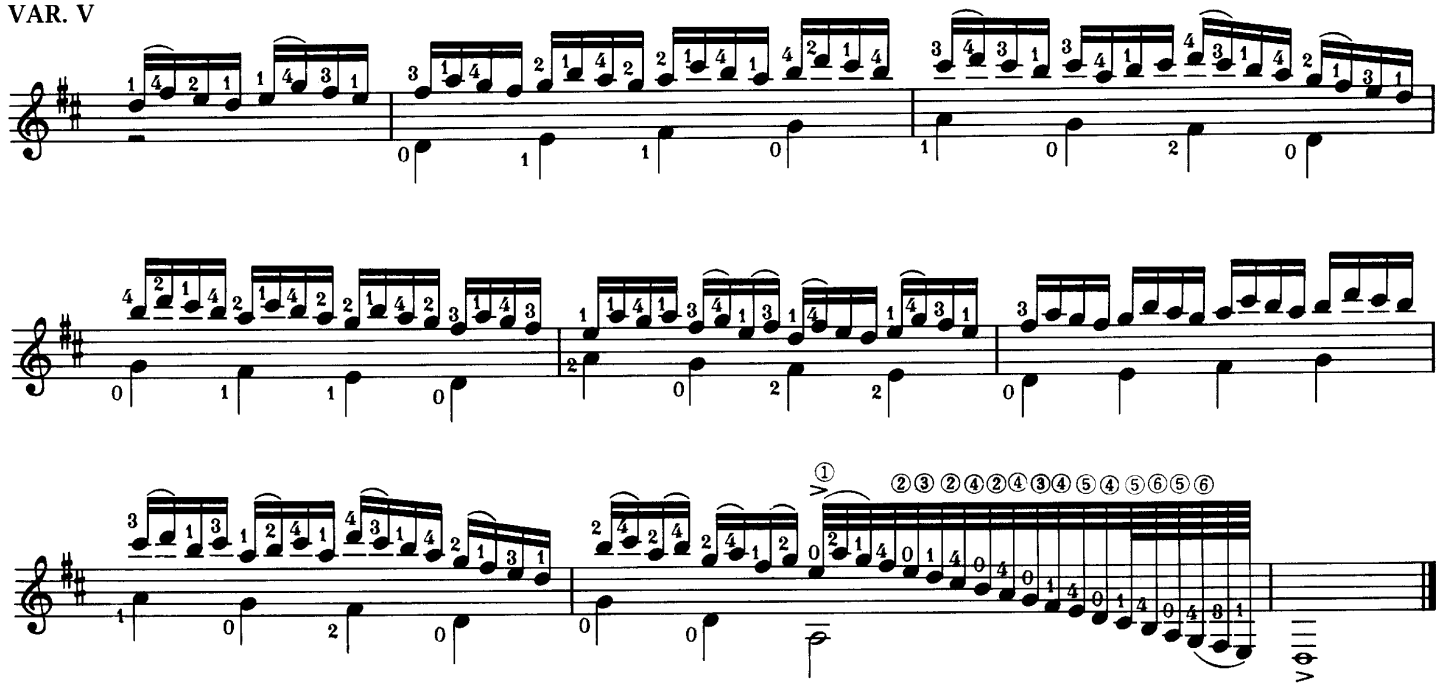
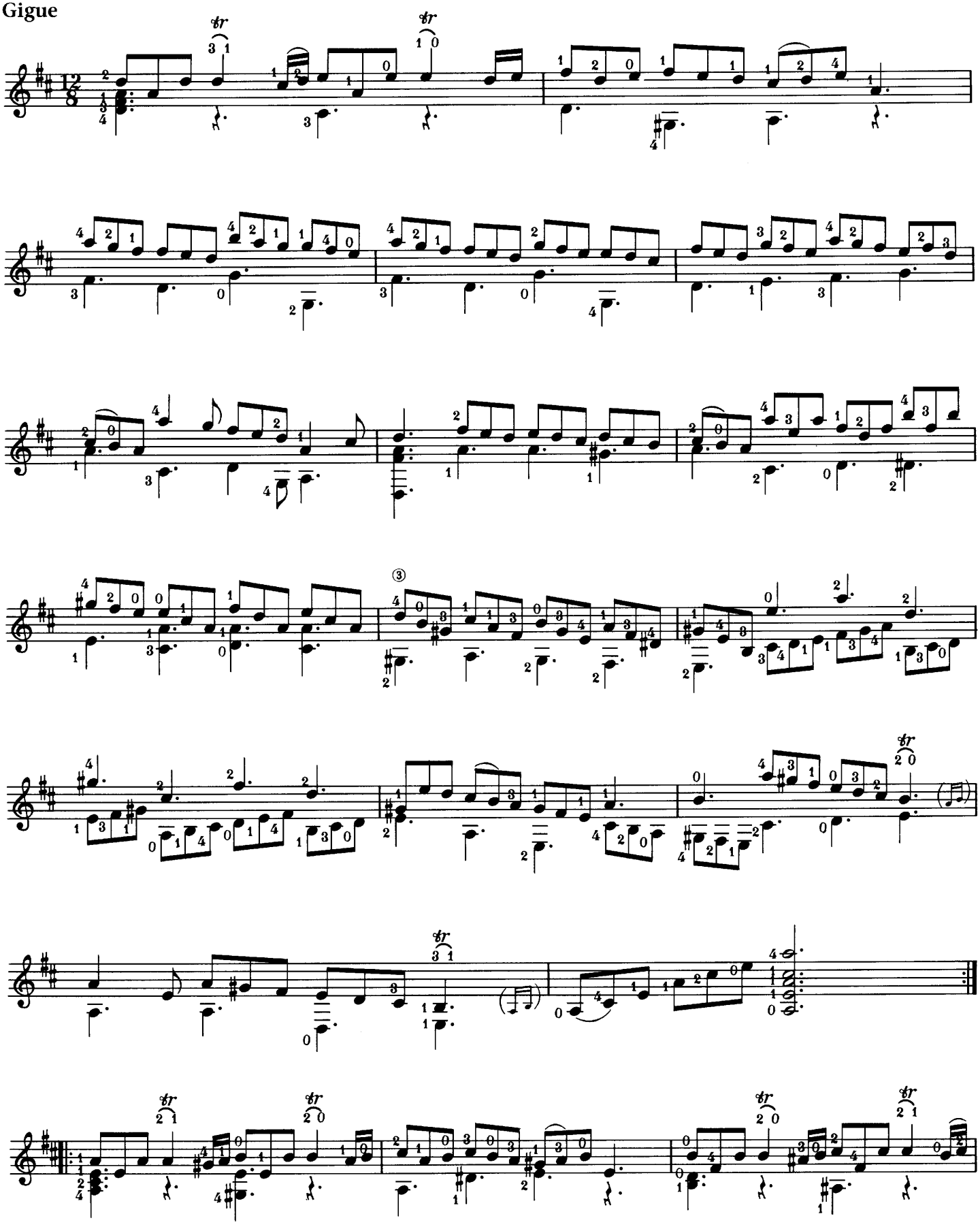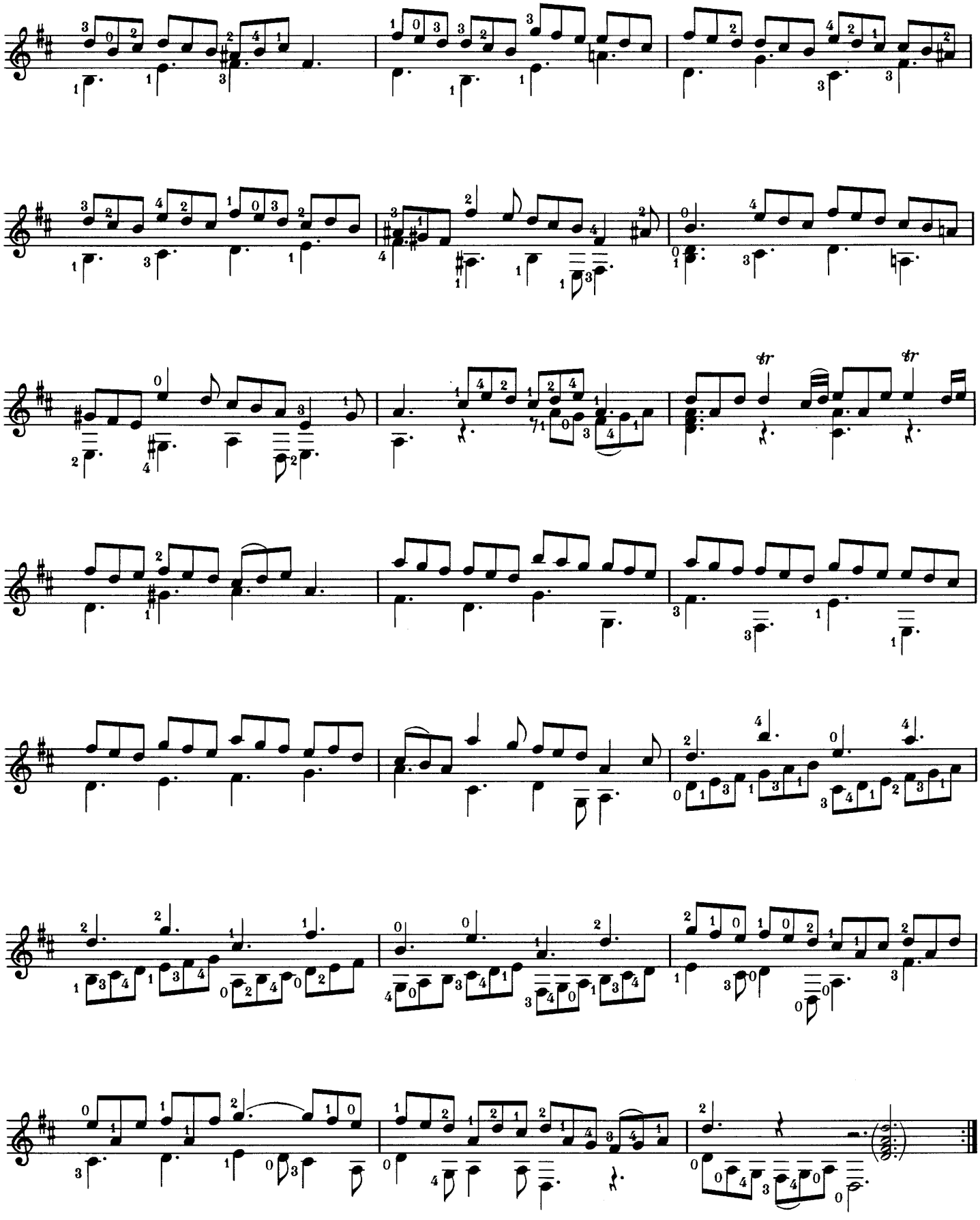
Gigue